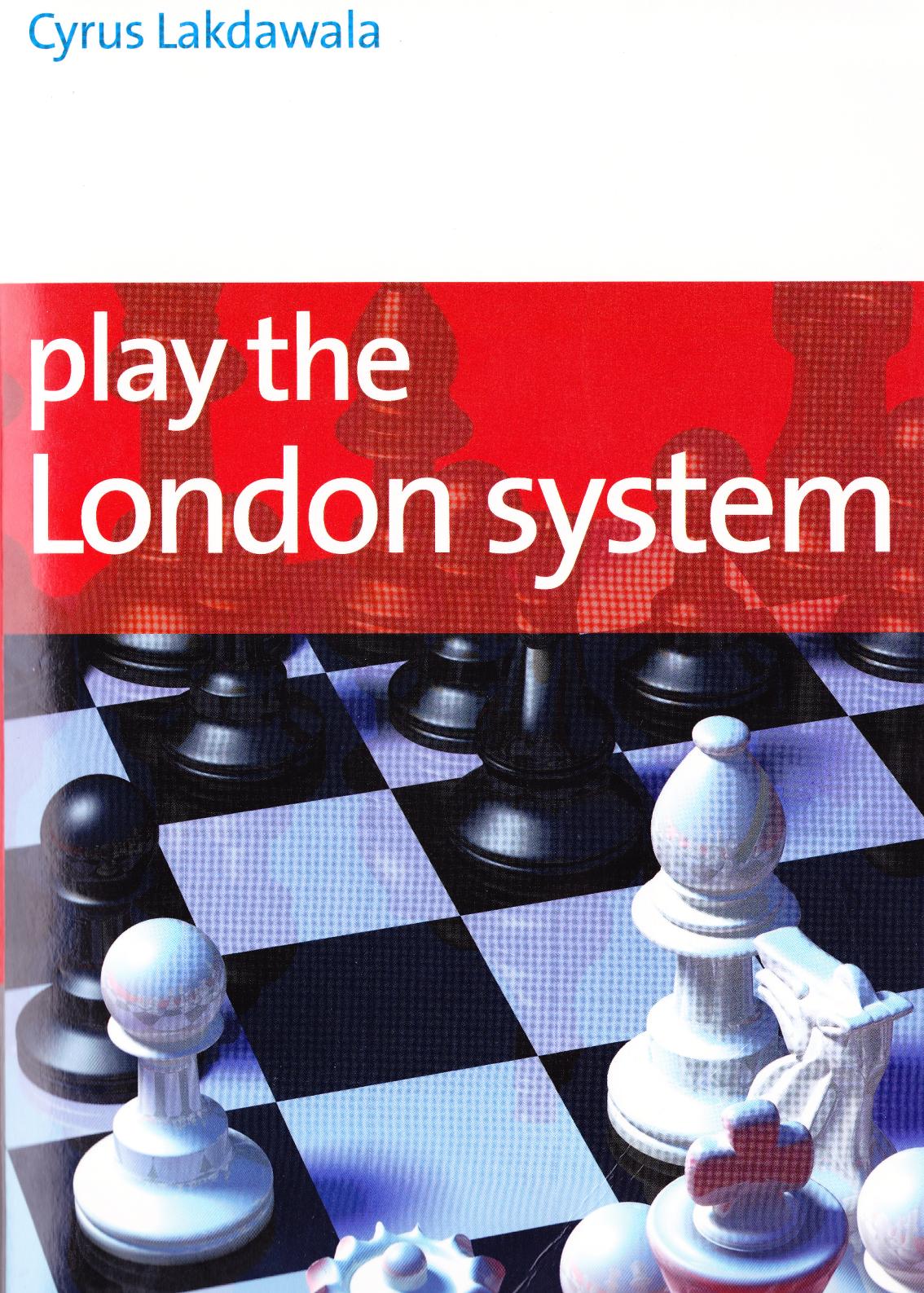


Cyrus Lakdawala

play the London system



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What is the London System?

The London System is one of the safest and most solid methods of handling the White pieces. Basically, we play a Slav a move up, erecting a pawn wall on c3, d4 and e3, and developing a bishop to f4. We don't care how Black sets up. Our structure is preordained and takes on all comers. Don't get fooled by the solidity. This isn't just an opening for the chicken-hearted. From my experience, most Londons begin slowly and then erupt in a clash down the road, often ending with a mating attack for White. The opening may be used as your main line or as a targeted, occasional weapon.

Unlike mainstream openings such as the Sicilian Najdorf and Ruy Lopez, there is no need to tediously memorize lines. Memorization really only works when our opponents cooperate and play the theoretical recommendations.

Let's say you get to move 14 and the opponent plays 14...a6!?. In a panic you think to yourself: "Um ... my book only covered 14... $\mathbb{K}c8$ and 14... $\mathbb{Q}fd7$. Now what am I supposed to do?" When I was younger I often found myself stranded in such situations. The London doesn't work this way. We rely on our understanding of the structure. Whatever the opponent throws at us, we are ready. The London is for dreamers, not mathematicians. You are pretty much safe from computer-prep from the opponent. The best way to study the London is to just play through the games and reflect on their themes.

After playing the London for awhile, you grow more experienced than your opponent in the lines. Let's say you previously opened a chess game with 1 d4 and 2 c4. You face an opponent who replies with Benko Gambit. Black will probably have more experience in the

Play the London System

Benko than you do. But switch to a London: 1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c5 3 c3!. The Benko player has not faced this very often and you are the odds-on favourite to understand the positions better. Our goal is not to go for a += with White. Experienced players understand that chess is essentially a series of battles in a greater war. The opening is just one battle. We position ourselves to outplay the opponents in the middlegames and endings arising from the London. We don't mind an equal position where we navigate the waters better than our confused opponents due to our superior understanding of the London/Slav structures. But with that said, it's amazing how often an edge can be extracted from this opening, as would be expected from a pedigree line like a Ruy Lopez.

I targeted the book for the typical club player rated anywhere between 1400 and 2000 but if you happen to be higher or lower rated than that range, I'm hoping you will still walk away with something valuable from the book.

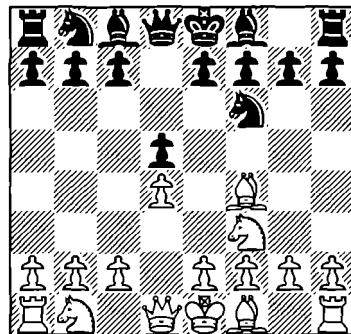
Early Champions of the London

The London was first championed by two 19th Century players, Joseph Henry Blackburn from England, and James Mason from Ireland. Blackburn especially used the London as an attacking weapon.

Let's take a look at one of his games in which he uses the London System to great effect:

Game 1
J.Blackburne-M.Harmonist
Breslau 1889

1 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d5 2 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$

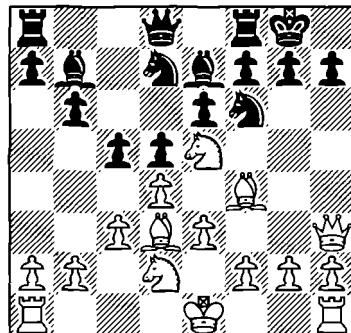


Here we go! One of the first Londons gets a glorious start.

3...e6 4 e3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 0-0?

Maybe Black should wait before committing his king.

6 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ b6 7 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 8 $\mathbb{W}f3!$ c5 9 c3
9 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 10 $\mathbb{W}h3!$



Now g4 is in the air.

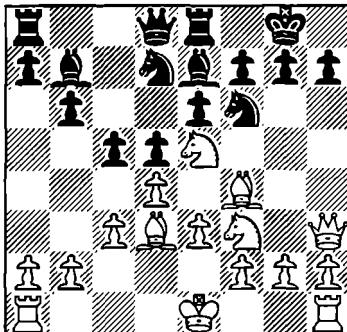
10... $\mathbb{W}e8$

10...c4 11 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ b5 12 0-0 $\mathbb{W}e8$ 13

$\mathbb{Q}df3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ h6 15 f3 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 16 $\mathbb{K}ae1$ a5 17 g4! g5 18 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 19 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 20 fxg5 hxg5 21 $\mathbb{K}xf6!$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 22 $\mathbb{W}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 23 $\mathbb{K}f1$ 1-0 Tu Hoang Thong-Pham Hoa, Hanoi 2009. How little things change in 120 years!

11 $\mathbb{Q}df3$

Threatening $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}g5+$.



11... $\mathbb{Q}e4$

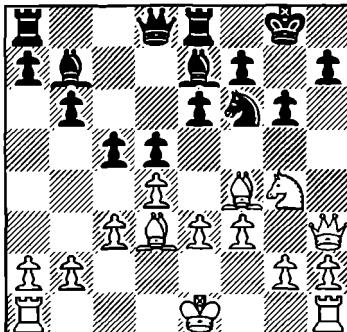
Black's position is already critical. For example, 11...h6 12 g4! looks scary.

12 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 14 f3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$

15 $\mathbb{Q}g4$

15 g4 g6 16 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ is also very favourable for White.

15...g6

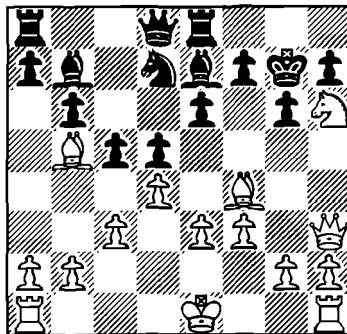


15...h6 16 $\mathbb{Q}xh6!$ $\mathbb{g}xh6$ 17 $\mathbb{W}xh6$ wins.

16 $\mathbb{Q}b5!$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

If 16... $\mathbb{H}f8$, 17 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ picks off an exchange.

17 $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$



18 $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$

And Harmonist got fried!

18... $\mathbb{Q}h4+$

18... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 19 $\mathbb{W}xh7+$ leads to mate in five moves.

19 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 22 0-0 a6 23 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

23 $\mathbb{Q}xd7!$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ doesn't offer Black much hope either.

23...e5 24 $\mathbb{K}ae1$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 25 e4 cxd4 26 exd5 $\mathbb{W}c8$ 27 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 28 dxе5 $\mathbb{W}c5+$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 30 f4 $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{W}g7$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{K}ac8$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}b3+$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 34 $\mathbb{W}xb3+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 35 $\mathbb{K}d1$ h6 36 $\mathbb{W}h3$ $\mathbb{K}c7$ 37 $\mathbb{K}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 38 $\mathbb{K}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 40 $\mathbb{K}6d3$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 41 g4 b5 42 $\mathbb{W}xh6+!$ 1-0

Sweet! What an auspicious beginning to our system. The London is more subtle than first appearances. Try and find the spots where Black went wrong.

Who Plays the London? (The Parable of Penguin and Gooster)

In the 80's, my wife, Nancy, and I had a pair of dogs, Penguin and Gooster, who couldn't have been more dissimilar. Our Black Lab, Penguin, was the model good dog. She was in harmony with the universe and her virtues endless; she was obedient, mild mannered, eager to please, and on good terms with the neighbourhood cats. My students and the mail-carrier always received a friendly wag of the tail.

Then there was Gooster, part German Shepherd, part Coyote. I'm sorry to have to report that Gooster was a bad dog. He flunked doggie training school, and constantly hatched plots to bite my students and the mail-carrier, and eat the neighbourhood cats. On a leash, Gooster reminded onlookers of a 5-year old on his first carnival bumper car ride. If I gave him the command to fetch, then in the style of Ghandian civil disobedience, Gooster would sit.

Grandmasters Gata Kamsky and Boris Grachev represent the Penguin school of the London. Always in harmony with the position, they avoid early clashes and concentrate on building on their superior strategic and technical skills.

Grandmasters Blatny and Miladinovic are students of the Gooster school of the London. Constantly swimming upstream, they spoil for an early fight leaving mainstream opening theory in the dust. Their atonal interpretation of

the London jars their opponents.

You will probably fit into one of these schools of the London.

The Anti-Londites

As a Londoner, you become part of an oppressed minority in the chess world. Many past opponents have interpreted my opening choice of the London as an affront to chess itself and regard it as a defacement of the game. You don't believe me?

Exhibit A: An International Master tells me after repeated beatings he suffered from the London: "You are very much in touch with your feminine side, aren't you?" Now I wish I had to quickness of mind to quote some Klingon proverb back in his face like: "Revenge is a dish best served cold!" Sadly, my not-so-brilliant response was "Yes. I mean no!"

Exhibit B: George, a student and fanatical Londoner, whips an unsuspecting opponent with the London, only to receive this tell: "You are a disgrace to White!" Like most Londoners of the Penguin school who hate confrontation, George froze, declining to respond. Maybe he can email the guy later if something clever and witty comes to mind!

You see my point? This criticism of the opening should be sweet music to our ears. Nobody likes facing our system!

Remember: We don't owe our opponents entertainment.

How the Book is Organized

Play the London System is organized in games rather than analysis format. It's a book you can pick up and begin on any chapter. It is written to be absorbed and understood, not memorized. I didn't necessarily go for big names in the choice for games, and instead looked for games with original ideas. The book was written as if the reader were a student here at my house discussing lines of the London. There will be no Mr. Spock-like lectures. Also, I hope the reader can forgive my unabashed bias towards the opening. You will notice a horribly lopsided win ratio in White's favour with only a smattering of token draws for which Black must beg!

Good luck playing the London. May you use it to frustrate future opponents!

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to the following people for their kind help with this book:

First, IM John Watson for suggesting that I write a book on the London System in a Chess FM interview we did last July.

To my editor, GM John Emms, for leading me out of the wilderness of tangled lines.

To my friend, Carrie Hein, for her suggestions with the introduction.

To my wife and son, Nancy and Timothy, for their editing and techie work with my hateful and uncooperative home computer.

Finally, to my Dad for teaching me how to play chess 41 years ago.

Cyrus Lakdawala,
San Diego,
June 2010

Chapter One

1...d5 with an Early ...e6

Chapter One deals with Black's most common stance, which is ...d5 with ...e6. Players who prefer this setup as Black are usually at home in Queen's Gambit Declined positions. The dividing line is ... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ or ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$:

1. When they develop the bishop to d6 as in Prié-Flear (Game 4), Black intends the simple freeing break ...e5. You can actually allow this and hope to outplay your opponent in an equal but uniquely London/Slav position, but the only attempt at a theoretical advantage lies in preventing ...e5. White disrupts Black's plan by planting a knight on e5. If Black exchanges the knight, we reply dx e 5 and utilize the e5-pawn as a launching pad for our attack. If Black ignores the knight, we employ the plan of $\mathbb{Q}g3$ followed by f4 with a nice version of a Reversed Stonewall Dutch.

2. Here is the good news: If Black develops his bishop to e7 then we fol-

low the exact plan as when he plays ... $\mathbb{Q}d6$.

Game 2
C.Lakdawala-E.Ilfeld
Koltanowski Memorial,
San Francisco 2000

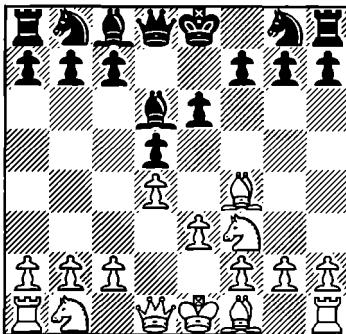
I desperately needed to win this game to get my first IM norm. After studying my opponent's games, I realized he was very comfortable in wild tactical situations but less happy in more controlled, strategic games. The perfect opening choice: The London.

1 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d5 2 d4 e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$

This is a no-nonsense approach by Black, who immediately challenges White's f4-bishop. Some of the ideas behind ... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ are:

1. The ability to capture a white knight if it lands on e5;

2. To swap bishops, reducing White's pressure on e5; and
 3. Perhaps to achieve the freeing break ...e5, freeing Black's game.
- 4 e3?**



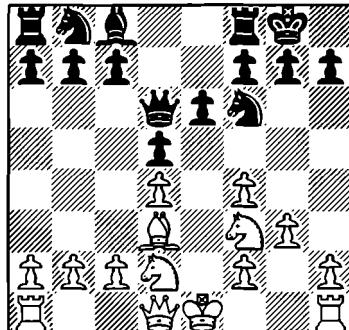
These days I usually play the alternative 4 $\mathbb{Q}g3$, daring Black to take and open the h-file.

4... $\mathbb{Q}f6$

The most accurate continuation is 4... $\mathbb{Q}xf4!$ 5 exf4 $\mathbb{W}d6!$. For example, 6 $\mathbb{W}d2$ (after 6 g3? $\mathbb{W}b4+$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ it's doubtful whether White has compensation for the pawn) 6... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 0-0 8 c3 $\mathbb{Q}d7?$! (8...b6 improves) 9 $\mathbb{Q}b5!$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 10 a4! c6 11 a5 $\mathbb{W}d8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 15 0-0 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 16 g3 c5?! (it's a mistake to give White the d4-square for his pieces; 16...b6! looks better) 17 dxc5! $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ gave White a pleasant edge in E.Prié-M.Saucey, Montpellier 2003: White controls d4 and has extra space.

5 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 6 exf4 $\mathbb{W}d6$ 7 g3 0-0 8 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

White has a tiny pull due to his grip on the e5-square.



8...b6!

Black plans to eliminate his bad bishop via a6.

8...c5? is a strategic error which is punished by 9 dxc5! clearing d4 for a knight: 9... $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 10 c3 and White follows with $\mathbb{Q}b3$, controlling both the d4- and the e5-squares.

9 $\mathbb{W}e2$ a5!

He insists.

10 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 11 $\mathbb{M}ac1!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 12 cxd3

The point of White's 11th move. The doubled pawns are not weak and White exerts some pressure down the c-file.

12...c5 13 $\mathbb{M}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 14 a3 $\mathbb{M}ac8$ 15 $\mathbb{M}fc1$ $\mathbb{W}b8?$

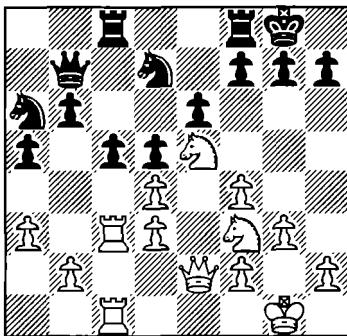
This may be a waste of time. The natural plan 15... $\mathbb{M}c7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{M}fc8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}df3$ looks better than the game continuation.

16 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}b7$

16...cxd4?? falls into a trap after 17 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e7+!$.

17 $\mathbb{Q}df3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18 $\mathbb{M}c3$

Leaving open the possibility of $\mathbb{W}c2$, if the c-file opens.



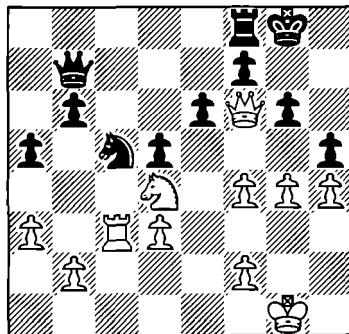
20 h4 h5 21 ♕f6! cxd4 22 ♔xd4 ♜xc3

23 ♜xc3 ♔c5

I have a feeling my opponent intended 23...♜c8?? but then realized that White had the game-ending shot 24 ♔xe6!.

Despite the reduced material, White has a powerful attack after his next move.

24 g4!



18...♜xe5?!

Why allow the white queen to enter the kingside? Black had two other possibilities:

a) 18...f6?! fails to equalize: 19 ♔xd7 ♜xd7 20 dxc5 bxc5 (after 20...♜xc5?! 21 ♜xc5 ♔xc5 22 d4 ♔e4 23 ♜c2 White's total control of the c-file puts Black under pressure) 21 d4 ♜d6 (if 21...c4?, 22 b3 wins a pawn) 22 b3 a4 23 dxc5 ♜xc5 24 b4 ♜xc3 25 ♜xc3. Despite his passed d-pawn, Black is in a bit of trouble here. The main problems are the defence of his weak a-pawn and White's control of the c-file.

b) Probably Black should have kept his cool with 18...♜c7!, with only a microbe of an edge to White.

19 ♜xe5

Now Black must worry about f5. The black defenders are missing in action over on the queenside.

19...g6?

This halts f5 for the moment but creates a larger problem of weak dark squares around the king. White begins a direct attack.

Ripping his king position open, and mine too! The white king is totally secure despite the lack of pawn cover.

24...hxg4 25 h5 gxh5 26 ♜g5+ ♔h7 27 b4

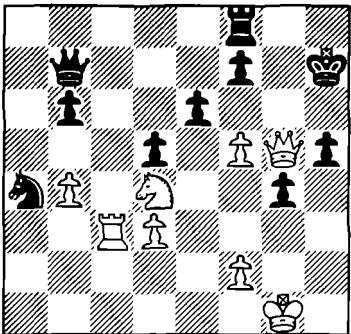
Removing a defender of e6, the key to White's attack.

27...axb4 28 axb4 ♔a4

28...♔d7? loses even faster after 29 ♜xh5+ ♔g7 30 ♜xg4+ ♔h7 31 ♜h5+ ♔g8 (or 31...♔g7 32 ♔f5+! exf5 33 ♜g5+ ♔h7 34 d4! allowing the rook a deadly entry to h3) 32 ♔f5! exf5 33 ♜g5+ ♔h7 34 d4!.

29 f5!

The f-pawn transforms into another attacker.



29...Bg8

Black gets mated if he eats the rook:
29...Qxc3?? 30 f6 Qg8 31 Wxh5 mate.

30 Wxh5+ Kg7 31 Wg5+

Paradoxically, Black's g4-pawn shields White's king.

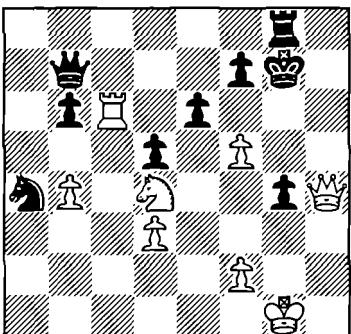
31...Qh7

If 31...Qf8, there follows 32 Wf6!
Qxc3 (or 32...Qe8 33 Qxe6 fxe6 34
Wxe6+ Qf8 35 Qc8+ winning the
queen) 33 Qxe6+ Qe8 34 Qd8 mate.

32 Wh4+

More accurate than 32 Wh5+ because White watches the dark squares f6 and d8 from h4.

32...Qg7 33 Qc6!



Demolition or clearance of the e6-pawn is the quickest path to victory.

33...Qb2

Trying to get this poor guy back into the game, but it's much too late.

34 Qxe6+! fxe6 35 Qxe6 1-0

Black gets mated shortly.

Summary

When Black plays ...Qd6 and swaps bishops on f4, White retains a bind due to his control of e5. But in this game, I mistimed it as Black could have played ...Wd6! double attacking f4 and the check on b4. This would have forced Qd2 with an equal position.

A good point to remember is: It's always okay to play Qg3 when faced with ...Qd6, but leaving your bishop on f4 is only good if you are sure you can deal with the ...Wd6 double attack trick from Black.

Game 3

J.McKenna-J.MacRae
Ron Banwell Memorial,
Coulsdon 2002

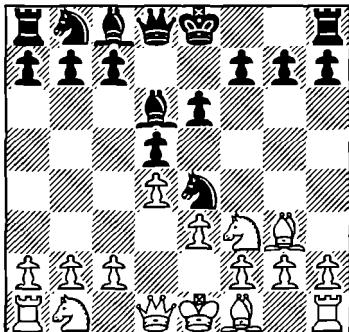
1 d4 d5 2 Qf3 Qf6 3 Qf4 e6 4 e3 Qd6 5 Qg3

White is happy to exchange the bishops, safe in the knowledge that this would open the h-file and restrict Black's castling options.

5...Qe4?

Black takes the dare and will allow White an open h-file in return for the

bishop pair. In general, you should not be afraid of this idea. Most of the time the h-file outweighs Black's bishop pair in the resulting closed positions.



6 $\mathbb{Q}bd2 \mathbb{Q}xg3$

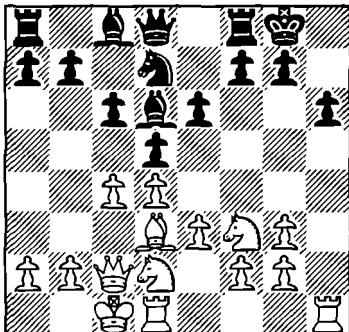
6... $\mathbb{Q}xd2?!$ is illogical and just wastes time for Black, who has moved his knight three times to trade on d2.

7 $h \times g3 \mathbb{Q}d7?!$

White immediately seizes the initiative after this passive move.

Alternatives for Black are:

a) 7...0-0?! 8 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ h6 9 c4 c6 10 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 11 0-0-0 followed by g4, with the faster attack.



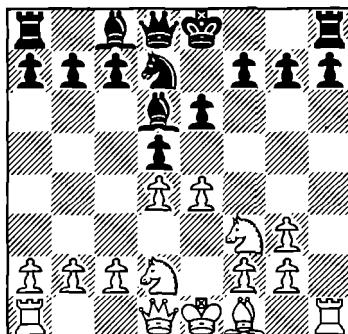
Players often underestimate White's

attacking chances in such positions. Black's bishop pair isn't much of a consolation.

b) 7...b6 8 c3 c5 9 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ g6 (9... $\mathbb{Q}a6??$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 11 $\mathbb{W}a4+$ is a trick beginners occasionally fall for) 10 e4! $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 11 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 0-0-0?!. It's still not clear where Black should place his king, and the centre is opening soon. Black looks uncomfortable.

c) 7...c5! 8 c3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ h6! looked playable for Black in P Schulze-V.Skorzik, correspondence. 1996. The bishop pair may make up for his slightly insecure king situation. Black should at least stall kingside castling if he allows White an open h-file.

8 e4!



Correctly opening the centre despite the opponent's bishop pair.

8 c4. may also give White the edge after 8...c6 9 $\mathbb{W}c2$ h6.

8...dxe4

8...b6 9 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 10 $\mathbb{W}e2!$ retains White's advantage.

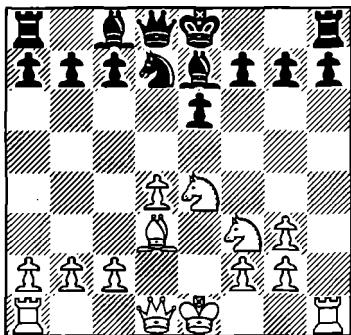
9 $\mathbb{Q}xe4 \mathbb{Q}e7$

The game looks like a Rubinstein

French gone sour for Black.

9... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $h6$ 12 $\mathbb{W}e2$ c6 13 0-0-0 leaves Black cramped and without counterplay.

10 $\mathbb{Q}d3$



10...f5?

This is strategic suicide. However, the thematic moves 10...c5 and 10...b6 also leave Black under pressure:

a) 10...c5 11 dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 13 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 14 c3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 16 0-0-0! and Black is in danger because there is no safe spot for his king. He can't grab the f2-pawn either due to 16... $\mathbb{Q}xf2??$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c4!$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}h5!$ f5 19 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$.

b) 10...b6 11 $\mathbb{Q}b5!$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 14 $\mathbb{W}h5$ g6 15 $\mathbb{W}h6+\mathbb{Q}g8$ 16 $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 17 g4 g5 18 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ hxg6 20 $\mathbb{Q}xh8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh8$ 21 $\mathbb{W}xf7!$ wins, since 21... $\mathbb{W}xd7??$ is met by

22 0-0-0 and it's mate down the h-file.

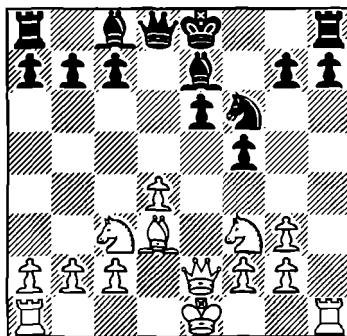
c) Black's best defensive chance may be playing the position in Caro-Kann style with 10...c6! 11 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 12 0-0-0 $h6!$ (an example of the underlying dangers facing Black is the line 12...b6?

13 $\mathbb{Q}eg5!$ $h6$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xe6!!$ winning) 13 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ b6 14 g4!. White is clearly applying pressure, but Black can stay in the game with ... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ and ...0-0-0.

11 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

If Black chips away at White's centre, hoping to free his game a bit, he also opens the position while lagging in development: 11...c5?! (a certain recipe for disaster) 12 dxc5! $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 13 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 14 0-0-0. Black has a real problem here. Where to put his king? It will not be safe on the kingside – White opens lines quickly with g4. He can't hang around the centre much longer. And queenside castling also looks too far distant to accomplish.

12 $\mathbb{W}e2$



The giant hole on e5 and the sickly e6-pawn add up to huge difficulties for Black.

12...c6 13 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$

If 14... $\mathbb{W}xd5?$, 15 $\mathbb{Q}de1!$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ and Black is even worse off than in the game continuation.

15 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}g5+?!$

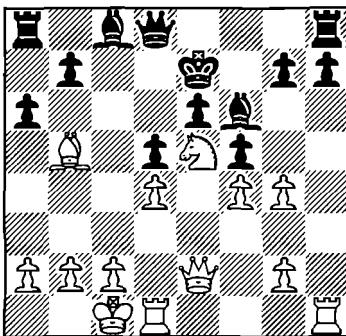
Handing the opponent a tempo

Play the London System

can't be right. Sometimes it's best to face a problem head on.

Black should try 15...0-0!. This obviously allows White a promising attack, but sometimes the best option in a bad situation is to pick the least-worst choice.

16 f4 ♜f6 17 ♜b5+ ♚e7 18 g4 a6



19 ♜a4!

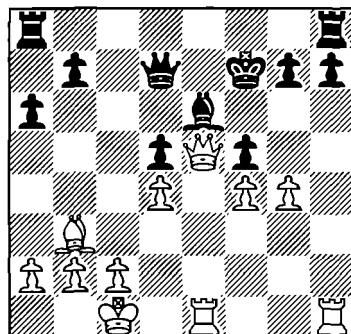
A far-sighted move. It looks like White is putting his bishop out of play, but he continues to control d7 and can always transfer the bishop back to b3 or c2 later. The real point of this move is that White plans on undermining d5, either with a future c4 or, as occurred in the game, g4 and gxf5, which deflects the e6-pawn as a defender of d5.

19...♜xe5

Desperation, but 19...g6 20 gxf5 gxf5 21 ♜h6! ♜g7 22 ♜h5! ♜g8 (22...♜xh6?? 23 ♜h4+! ♜d6 24 ♜f7+ wins the queen) 23 ♜g5+ ♜d6 24 ♜f6! ♜xf6 25 ♜xf6 is also catastrophic for Black.

20 ♜xe5 ♜f7 21 gxf5 exf5 22 ♜b3 ♜e6

23 ♜de1 ♜d7 24 g4!



White gets the pleasure of prying open Black's king position twice with g4, courtesy of Black's capture on g3 in the opening.

24...fxg4 25 f5?

Getting a bit carried away. White can put his opponent away with the calmer 25 ♜h5! which induces a critical weakness with 25...g6 26 ♜h6! ♜ad8 27 ♜eh1, cracking the defence. Now 27...♜g8?? is met by 28 ♜xg6+.

25...♜xf5 26 ♜xd5+?

Natural moves are not always the best, and this one may allow Black to escape.

After 26 ♜hf1! at the minimum White wins Black's queen: 26...♜g6 27 ♜xf5! ♜xf5 28 ♜d6+! ♜f7 (both 28...♜g5 29 ♜e5 and 28...♜f6 29 ♜e6 cost Black his queen) 29 ♜e7+ mates.

26...♚f8??

Black misses 26...♜g6! when suddenly things are not so clear.

27 ♜hf1 1-0

Summary

Black faces serious king safety issues if

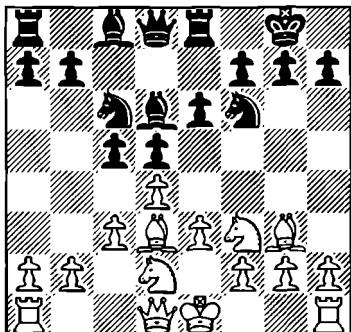
he goes after the bishop on g3 with his knight and allows an open h-file. It's playable but Black must defend very accurately for the next few moves or else his king may easily land in trouble. White can consider e4 at some point, steering the game towards a favourable Rubinstein French.

Game 4
E.Prié-G.Flear
Narbonne Plage 2007

1 d4 d5 2 ♜f4

The preferred move order over 2 ♜f3. Why? Well, with this move order you get 2...♜f6 3 ♜f4 c5 4 c3 (or 4 e3 ♜c6 5 c3 ♜b6 6 ♜b3) 4...♜b6 5 ♜b3 ♜c6 6 e3 c4! 7 ♜c2 (the ending after 7 ♜xb6 axb6 probably favours Black) 7...♜f5! forcing 8 ♜c1. We cover this (or actually ways to avoid this!) in Chapter Ten.

2...♜f6 3 e3 c5 4 c3 ♜c6 5 ♜d2 e6 6 ♜gf3 ♜d6 7 ♜g3 0-0 8 ♜d3 ♜e8



Preparing the equalizing ...e5 break.

8...♜e7 is covered in the next game.

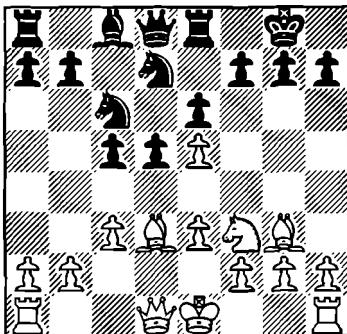
9 ♜e5

9 0-0 ♜xg3 10 hxg3 e5 11 dx5 ♜xe5 12 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 is equal, but many London players who also play the Slav as Black may feel comfortable here too. Black's d-pawn may become a target in the future. On the other hand, Black's extra space may turn into an attack on the white king.

9...♜xe5

Otherwise, White builds his Stone-wall bind next with f4.

10 dx5 ♜d7 11 ♜f3

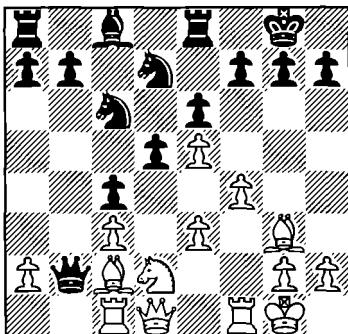


I prefer this route. White keeps a safe edge with the bishop pair and the potential for dark square control in the future, but the London is an equal opportunity opening. It's also for those of us who like to gamble. Gamblers with an all-or-nothing streak may prefer 11 f4!?, a high-risk venture involving the sacrifice of a pawn or two after 11...c4! 12 ♜c2 ♜b6! (with a double attack on b2 and e3) 13 0-0 and now:

a) 13...♜xe3+ 14 ♜h1 gives White good compensation for the pawn. This

was played as early as 1906 in the game S.Renyi-M.Brody, in Gyor.

b) 13... $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 14 $\mathbb{B}c1$ may be the more critical line.



Does White have enough compensation for a pawn? Probably, but you still need strong nerves to play this position from either side:

b1) 14...f5?! does give Black some space around his king, but it also opens lines for White's attack. 15 exf6 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ gave White easy access to the black king in N.Mitkov-Y.Shulman, Bolingbrook 2005.

b2) 14... $\mathbb{Q}c5$! is a very logical suggestion from Prié. Black plans on gumming up the White attack a bit by plugging d3 with a knight. I want to hedge and tell the reader the position remains unclear, but I will be brave and go with my instincts which tell me White has a dangerous attack coming. Black's knight landing on d3 doesn't dissuade me from giving White the edge. The scary-looking pawn on e5, in conjunction with the dark-squared bishop manoeuvring to h4 and perhaps

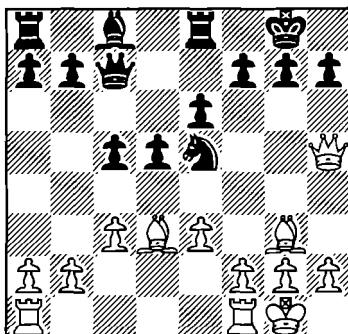
even f6, is looming. If White ever gets in $\mathbb{W}h5$ and lifts a rook via f3, it just looks like too many pieces in that sector for Black to fend off.

11...a6

On 11... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 12 0-0 h6 13 e4!, White's plan would be to build for the attack with $\mathbb{Q}e1$, $\mathbb{W}d2$, h4 and $\mathbb{W}f4$.

Alternatives to 12...h6 are worse:

a) 12... $\mathbb{Q}dxe5??$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 14 $\mathbb{W}h5$ wins a piece.



This is a useful tactic to remember.

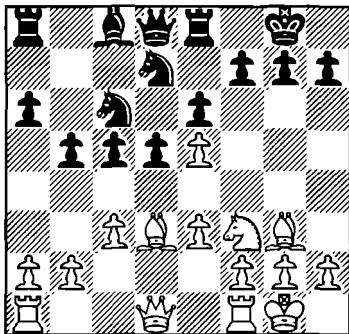
b) 12...g6?! (threatening to take the pawn on e5, but further weakening the dark squares) 13 $\mathbb{Q}b5$!. This eliminates an attacker of e5 and takes the heat off White's e5-pawn. Meanwhile, Black is still burdened with chronic dark-squared weaknesses around his king. For example, 13...a6 14 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 15 e4! $\mathbb{B}b8$ (or 15...dxe4? 16 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 17 $\mathbb{W}d2$ with a crushing attack on the dark squares) 16 b3 a5 17 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ and the dark squares on the kingside are ripe for infiltration.

12 0-0 b5

Blanketing the queenside with his

pawns. Clearly the plan is to just survive on the kingside and try to make something of his extra territory on the queenside.

If 12... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 13 e4 Black can't touch the e5-pawn due to the same trap: 13... $\mathbb{Q}dxe5??$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}h5$.



13 a4!?

White follows one principle but breaks another. He opens the game for his bishop pair, but opening the queenside may benefit Black who has more space there.

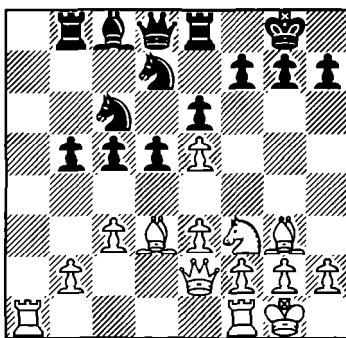
I generally don't like to engage the opponent on his strong wing and would continue with something like 13 e4 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 14 exd5 exd5 15 $\mathbb{Q}e1$. The position resembles an Open Ruy Lopez where White has the bishop pair and some attacking chances on the kingside due to the cramping e5-pawn. Black's compensation is his queenside pawn majority.

13... $\mathbb{Q}b8$

Black is unlikely to survive after 13...c4? 14 axb5! $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 18 f4. The b2-

pawn is well protected and Black has trouble making headway on the b-file. White's attack on the other wing is far more potent.

14 axb5 axb5 15 $\mathbb{Q}e2$



15...b4

Prié gives the line 15... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 17 b4!! $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ (18...h6 19 $\mathbb{Q}ab1$) 19 $\mathbb{Q}xh7+!$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ (20... $\mathbb{Q}g8??$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}d4$) 21 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ f5 22 exf6 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xa6!$ (deflection!) 25... $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ and White is winning.

16 c4 $\mathbb{Q}b6!$

An interesting defensive move. If White tosses in $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5, then the rook on b6 helps with the defence of the kingside. Also, if White moves his a1-rook off the file, then perhaps ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ may be possible.

17 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ g6?!

This ends all sacrifices on h7 but weakens all the kingside dark squares.

17...b3! would have created some counterplay by opening access to b4 for the knight.

18 b3 ♜b7 19 h4

Beginning the kingside attack.

19...♛e7!?

Planning to fianchetto the queen! Black is in serious trouble. He hasn't made much headway on the queenside and White is beginning to roll towards the black king.

20 ♜f4 ♜f8 21 h5 ♜g7 22 h6 ♜f8 23

♛b2 ♜a8 24 ♜e2 ♜xa1 25 ♜xa1 dxc4

25...♝e7 26 ♜h2! (eyeing f6)
26...dxc4 27 ♜xc4 ♜d5 28 ♜g4 keeps a solid plus for White.

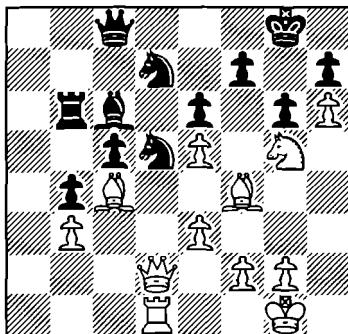
26 ♜xc4 ♜e7 27 ♜d2 ♜c8

27...♜xf3 28 ♜xd7 ♜d5 29 ♜c1
♜xc4 (if 29...♜b7, White plays 30 ♜d6)
30 ♜xc4 ♜d5 31 ♜g5 ♜b8 32 ♜d6 puts c5 under the gun.

28 ♜d1 ♜c6 29 ♜g5!

Heading for d6 at some point.

29...♝d5



30 ♜e4

Refraining from 30 e4 because he wants to use that square for a piece instead of a pawn. But White keeps a clear advantage here too after 30...♝xe4!
31 ♜xe6! ♜xe4! (Black gets mated after

31...♝xd1? 32 ♜g5 ♜c3 33 ♜xf7+ ♜h8
34 e6!) 32 ♜d3! maintaining his domination.

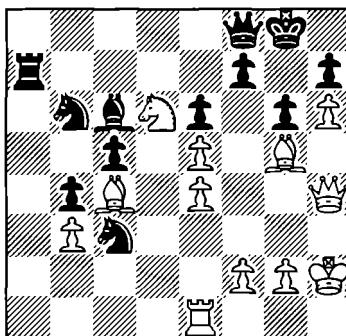
30...♜b8 31 ♜d6 ♜f8 32 e4 ♜c3!?

An alternative would be to eliminate the dark-squared menace with 32...♜xf4 33 ♜xf4 ♜a8 34 ♜d3 ♜b6 35 ♜f3 ♜xc4 36 ♜xc4 ♜a7, and leave it up to White to try and make progress.

**33 ♜e1 ♜a8 34 ♜e3 ♜a2 35 ♜h2 ♜e7
36 ♜g3 ♜b6 37 ♜g5 ♜f8 38 ♜h4!**

I like the way the queen slithers its way into the kingside via the dark squares.

38...♜a7



39 ♜e3

White missed the opportunity of a nice deflection combination here with 39 ♜a1!! ♜d7 (the idea is 39...♜xa1? 40 ♜e7!) 40 ♜a6 ♜xc4 41 ♜xc6 ♜xd6 42 exd6 and Black has no defence to ♜e7.

39...♝xc4 40 ♜xc4 ♜d7 41 ♜d6 ♜b5!

Good defensive play by Flear. He reduces the attackers.

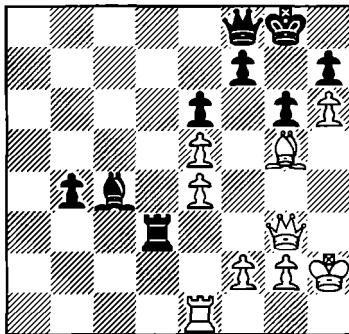
42 ♜xb5 ♜xb5 43 ♜e1 c4 44 bxc4 ♜xc4

45 ♜g3

This position is very hard to assess.

White is in essence a pawn down. But the opposite-coloured bishops come down in his favour. Perhaps it is dynamically balanced here.

45... $\mathbb{B}d3$



46 $\mathbb{Q}e3$

Virtually a draw offer. 46 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $b3$ 47 $\mathbb{B}b1$ also looks equal. Black can't make anything of his extra pawn as long as the mate threats on g7 and the back rank exist.

46... $\mathbb{B}d4!$?

An attempt to play for a win with the passed b-pawn, but Black underestimates his opponent's attack.

46... $\mathbb{B}xe3$ 47 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $b3$ 48 $\mathbb{B}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 49 $\mathbb{B}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ would most likely be drawn. White's constant threats neutralize any attempt Black makes at queening the passed b-pawn.

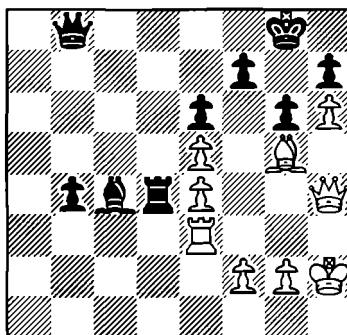
47 $\mathbb{Q}h4!$

Threatening $\mathbb{Q}e7!$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}f6$.

47... $\mathbb{Q}b8?$

Some of the dangers facing Black if he gets too ambitious are shown in the line 47... $\mathbb{B}d7$ 48 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $b3$ 49 $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{B}b7$ 50 $\mathbb{B}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}a3??$ (50... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ is equal) 51 $\mathbb{B}d2!$

$\mathbb{B}b8$ 52 $\mathbb{Q}e7!$ and White wins, since $\mathbb{Q}f6$ follows.



48 $f4?$

Missing an immediate win with 48 $\mathbb{Q}e7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ + 49 $f4!$.

48... $\mathbb{B}d7$

Even after 48... $f6$ 49 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $b3$ 50 $\mathbb{Q}e7!$ White wins: 50... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 51 $\mathbb{Q}d6!$ $b2$ (or 51... $\mathbb{B}xd6$ 52 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $b2$ 53 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 54 $\mathbb{Q}f6$) 52 $\mathbb{Q}f6!$ and Black's extra queen brings no benefit since White forces mate.

49 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 50 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$

Flear is forced to go into the ending, hoping his passed b-pawn will save him.

Black's weak back rank outweighs the passed b-pawn in the line 50... $b3$ 51 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (or 51... $b2$ 52 $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 53 $\mathbb{B}xb2!$ exploiting the back rank again) 52 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $b2$ 53 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $b1\mathbb{Q}$ 54 $\mathbb{Q}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 55 $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ mate.

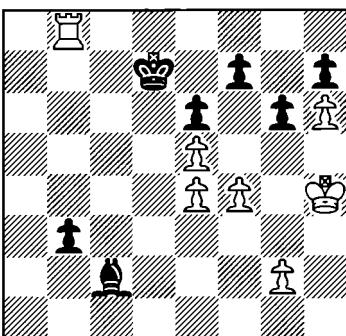
51 $\mathbb{Q}xf8+!$

White doesn't try and become a hero by keeping queens on. The ending is hopeless for Black.

51... $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 52 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $b3$ 53 $\mathbb{Q}c1!$

Getting behind the passer.

53... $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 54 $\mathbb{B}c8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 55 $\mathbb{B}b8$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 56
 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 57 $\mathbb{Q}h4!$



With the awful threat of a king march to h7.

57... $\mathbb{Q}c7$

If 57... $\mathbb{Q}e7$, White wins with 58 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}d1$ 59 $\mathbb{B}b7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 60 $\mathbb{Q}f6$.

58 $\mathbb{B}b4$

White simply sacs his rook for the b-pawn and promotes on the other side of the board.

**58... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 59 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 60 $\mathbb{B}b8$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 61
 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 62 $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 63 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 64
 $\mathbb{Q}g4!$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 65 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$**

White will make a new queen.

**65... $b2$ 66 $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ $b1\mathbb{Q}$ 67 $\mathbb{B}xb1$ $\mathbb{Q}xb1$ 68
 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 69 $h7$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 70 $h8\mathbb{Q}$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 71
 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ 1-0**

Summary

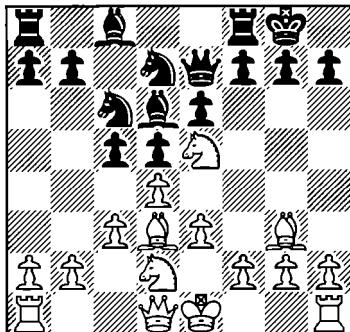
On move 11, you have a choice based on your own personal style and tournament situation:

1. The wild f4 double pawn sac line where you go all out for mate; or
2. The strategic $\mathbb{Q}f3$ line played by Prié in the game.

Game 5

E.Prié-D.Svetushkin
French League 2009

**1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ e6 3 e3 c5 4 c3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 5
 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d5 6 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ 0-0 8 $\mathbb{Q}d3$
 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7?$!**



It's hard to believe such a natural move can be deemed dubious, but strange things are possible in our *Rybka* and *Fritz*-powered world. GM Prié demonstrates a forcing line which puts Black on his heels.

10 $\mathbb{Q}xd7!$

Totally illogical and strong! White trades a piece he has moved three times for its counterpart which has only moved twice. This and White's next few moves are an amazing discovery in the London. White basically makes four totally illogical moves in a row and gets a winning attack! Ah, the magic of computers!

10 f4?!, as played in B.Grachev-V.Zakhartsov, Pardubice 2007, looks rather loose. Black responded with

10...f6! with a nice game, since...e5 will soon follow.

10 h4? was also unimpressive in E.Prié-T.Luther, European Union Championship 2007, but Prié did his homework after that game.

10...♝xd7?

Amazingly, this is a mistake because the bishop on d7 will be en prise. Confused? Well, keep going and you will see.

10...♝xd7! seems to be Black's only move, after which 11 ♜h5 f5 12 ♜f3 is in White's favour, but Black is far better off here than what follows in the game.

11 ♜xd6!

Illogical move number 2! White swaps a bishop which has moved three times for a black bishop which has moved only once.

11...♝xd6 12 dx5!

Illogical move number 3: now he gives up the pawn centre!

12...♛xc5

What is going on? Is White just grovelling for the draw versus a higher-rated GM? The sac on h7 couldn't possibly work, could it?

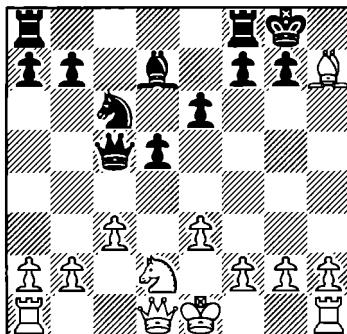
12...♛e7 avoids White's combination but just loses a pawn to 13 b4.

13 ♜xh7+!!

Illogical move number 4: White sacs a piece for a mystery attack. His pieces are nowhere near Black's king.

I had a chance to play this sac in a tournament game in August of 2009, and I still remember the confused "What the heck!?" look my opponent

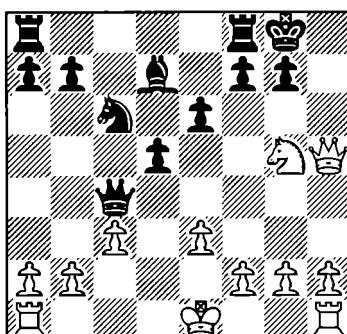
gave me after I took on h7.



13...♜xh7 14 ♜h5+ ♛g8 15 ♜e4!

The point: White utilizes the lateral pin on the d-pawn to introduce another attacker. The knight enters g5 with tremendous force.

15...♛c4 16 ♜g5



16...♜fd8

Or 16...♛d3 17 e4!, as I played in C.Lakdawala-'hannibal2', Internet (blitz) 2009. This is all analysis by Prié! Another bonus was that my opponent had used up a lot of time to get to this point whereas I was going on memory and moving instantly. The game continued 17...♜fe8?! (Black gives back his

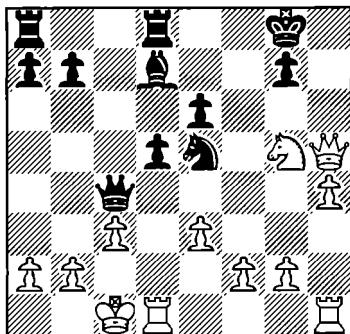
Play the London System

piece; if 17... $\mathbb{Q}fd8$, then 18 $\mathbb{W}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 19 $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 20 $\mathbb{W}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 21 $\mathbb{W}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 22 $\mathbb{W}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}c2$ 24 $exd5$ $exd5$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 26 $\mathbb{W}g3+$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{W}xd8$ 28 0-0 and White mops up) 18 $\mathbb{W}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 19 $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}c4$ 21 $\mathbb{W}f7+$ and I regained the piece and won. Sometimes, doing your homework has its payoffs.

17 $\mathbb{W}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 18 $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 19 $\mathbb{W}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 20 $h4!$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$

After 20... $\mathbb{W}d3$ 21 $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 22 $e4!$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}c2$ 24 0-0! (White calmly completes his development – the attack can wait a move) 24... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 25 $\mathbb{W}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 26 $\mathbb{W}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 27 $\mathbb{W}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}f7+$ White has extra material and an attack to boot.

21 $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 22 0-0-0!



Great attacking judgement. Black can't muster enough threats to seriously bother White's king.

22... $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 23 $\mathbb{W}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 24 $\mathbb{W}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 25 $\mathbb{W}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}e4+!$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 27 $\mathbb{W}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}a1+$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}d2!$

Not 28 $\mathbb{Q}c2??$ $\mathbb{W}a4+$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$.

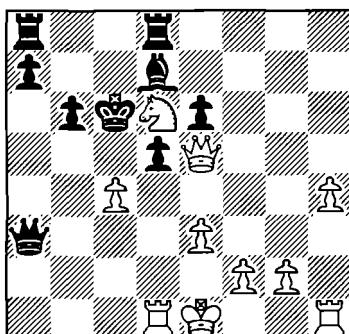
28... $\mathbb{W}xb2+$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}e1$

White has regained the sacrificed piece and continues the assault. Black can't touch the knight: 29... $dxe4??$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}d2+$ picks off the queen.

29... $b6$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}d6!$

Threatening $\mathbb{Q}f7$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}d6+$. **30... $\mathbb{W}a3$ 31 $c4!$**

Once again, the knight is immune to harm: 31... $\mathbb{W}xd6??$ 32 $cxd5+$ $exd5$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}c1+$ and Black drops his queen.



31... $\mathbb{W}b4+$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ $\mathbb{W}c5$

Black's nightmare continues. If he takes the rook on h1, he gets mated: 32... $\mathbb{W}b1+?$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}e2!$ $\mathbb{W}xh1$ 34 $cxd5+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 36 $\mathbb{W}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}a2+$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 39 $\mathbb{W}c4$ mate.

33 $h5!$

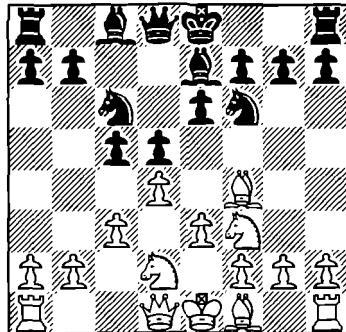
A move which emphasizes Black's helplessness. The h-pawn moves closer to the queening square and also opens up the possibility of activating the rook via h4.

33... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 34 $cxd5+$ $exd5$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 1-0

Black has had enough. The h-pawn continues up the board, the knight dominates, White is up a pawn and the attack continues.

Summary

When Black plays ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$?! to challenge White's e5-knight, always be aware of the bishop sac on h7. As in this game, it may work in the most unlikely cases. If you get your queen to h5 and a knight to g5, make sure Black cannot cover h7, either with a knight that has access to f6 or with a bishop on the b1-h7 diagonal. It would be wise to memorize the first 15 or so moves of this game. This is a forcing line and the fact is that even titled players don't study the London because of its harmless reputation.



7 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$?

This move doesn't make much sense if White isn't forced to play $\mathbb{W}b3$. When I am White in such positions, I always like it when my opponents play ... $\mathbb{W}b6$, because the queen gets in the way of Black's pawn expansion plans on the queenside. If he wants to play ... $b5$ in the future, he must first waste time moving his queen away from b6.

7...c4?! is a move favoured by lower-rated opponents and is universally condemned by annotators.

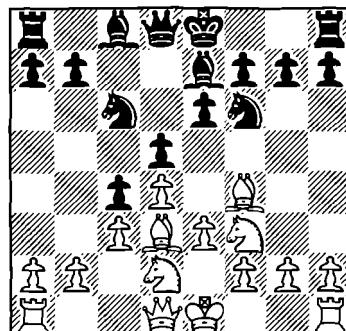
Game 6 B.Larsen-J.Garcia Padrón Las Palmas 1976

1 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 d4 d5 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ e6 4 e3 c5 5 c3
 $\mathbb{Q}c6$

5... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 8 $\mathbb{W}b1$! (White's queen still aims at the h5-knight) 8...h6 9 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ g5 10 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 11 $\mathbb{W}xh5$ gxh4 12 $\mathbb{W}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14 g3 led to interesting complications which probably favour White In C.Lakdawala-Y.Seirawan, Internet (blitz) 2009.

6 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$

When Black develops his bishop to $\mathbb{Q}7$, he basically ignores White's intentions and insists on a Queen's Gambit Declined, Tarrasch-style setup. Players who prefer the QGD as Black versus traditional queen's pawn openings often play this way.



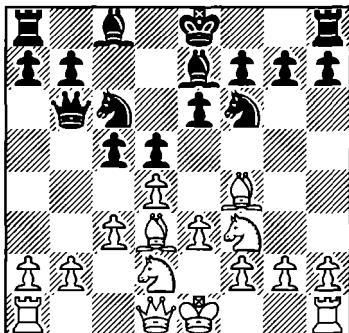
It takes pressure off the centre and allows White to break with a quick e4, but the move is not as bad as previous

London books claim. Black gains space on the queenside and has a rather dangerous no-brainer plan of ...b5, ...a5, ... $\mathbb{B}b8$ and ...b4. The position can look a bit like the Bronstein line of the Winawer French, which goes 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{B}b4$ 4 e5 b6!? 5 $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$!. After 8 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ b5 9 e4, Black can take two routes:

a) 9...dxe4 (clearing d5 for his knight) 10 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{B}b7$ 11 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}g5$!. This takes control of c5, giving White an edge.

b) 9...0-0 (reaching a true French position by allowing White's pawn to e5) 10 e5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 11 a3 a5 12 h4!. White threatens the Greek gift sac on h7. Even if Black prevents this with 12...f6, then 13 exf6 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 14 $\mathbb{W}e2$ resembles a nice-looking French Defence for White, where his control of the e5 hole and kingside chances outweigh Black's chances on the queenside. Still, the position is probably playable for Black.

Let's return to 8... $\mathbb{W}b6$:



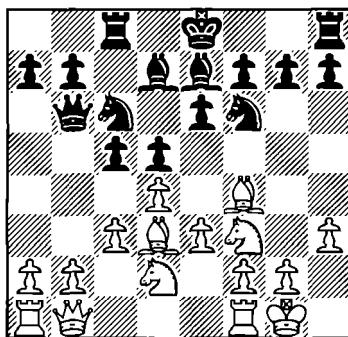
8 $\mathbb{W}b1$!

8 $\mathbb{B}b1$ is a reasonable alternative,

but White should avoid 8 $\mathbb{W}b3$? c4! 9 $\mathbb{W}xb6$ axb6 10 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ b5 11 e4 b4 with strong queenside pressure for Black.

8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9 h3 $\mathbb{B}c8$ 10 0-0

10 a4 h6 11 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ cxd4 12 exd4 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 0-0 14 0-0 a5?! 15 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 16 $\mathbb{B}ae1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 17 $\mathbb{B}e3$! f5? (a panicky reaction which leaves a giant hole on e5; Black should take cover with 17... $\mathbb{B}fe8$ 18 $\mathbb{B}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$) 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$! (eliminating Black's best piece) 18... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 20 $\mathbb{B}b5$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 21 $\mathbb{B}fe1$ $\mathbb{B}ce8$ left Black on the defensive for the remainder of the game in K.Hulak-G.Franzoni, Lucerne Olympiad 1982. He must contend with punctures in his position on b5 and e5, and also constantly defend the frail, backward pawn on e6.



10...cxd4?!

I would maintain the tension with 10...0-0 11 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ h6. There is no good reason to open the e-file for White's rooks.

11 exd4

It's a Reversed Queen's Gambit Declined, Exchange Variation, but with one important difference: Black's light-

squared bishop has been locked inside the pawn chain.

11...♝a5 12 ♜e1 ♜b5

Attempting to solve the problem of the bad bishop by swapping it, but White doesn't oblige.

13 ♜c2

Preserving the attacking bishop. Black's bishop on b5 just shoots out over empty space and doesn't control any important squares. If this bishop were posted on g6 Black would be fine, but on the wrong diagonal it gives White opportunities to launch a kingside attack.

13...0-0 14 a4!?

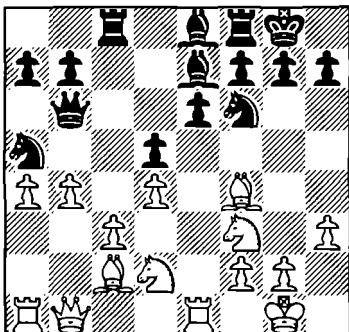
Well, it's Larsen, who always seems to go his own way.

The standard path for White in such positions would be to leave the queen-side alone and proceed by attacking on the other wing with something like 14 ♜e5 h6 15 ♜e3.

14...♞e8

Vacating d7 for his knight.

15 b4!



An important idea to remember in

such structures. Larsen is willing to accept a chronic weakness on c3, realizing that Black will be unable to create a second target on the queenside. Larsen is happy to defend his one weakness on c3 while slowly building up his attack on the kingside.

Playing moves like 15 b4! requires good strategic judgement. You will find that it is good in one game but not so good in your next game due to some slight shift in the position, so your intuition has to be spot on when you decide if you should play b4 or hold back.

15...♝c4 16 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 17 ♜e3!

A dual-purpose move: it protects c3 and builds the kingside attack.

17...♞h8 18 ♜e5 ♜c8 19 ♜d6

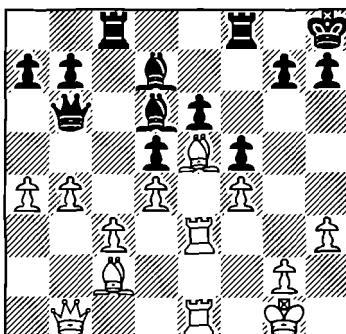
To connect the rooks.

19...♜d7 20 ♜ae1 ♜xe5 21 ♜xe5 ♜d6

22 f4! ♜d7 23 ♜b1!

Continuing to probe for weaknesses on the kingside. Notice how easy it is for White to defend c3.

23...f5!



A good decision which minimizes Black's disadvantage. This move in-

Play the London System

creases Black's king safety at the cost of chronic weaknesses on e5 and e6. Also, Black soon accepts a bad bishop, but it is rather hard for White to make anything of e6 without a knight on the board. In essence, Black is saying to White: "You have one chronic weakness on c3 and I have one on e6. Good luck trying to exploit mine!" The X-factors are Black's king safety and his bad bishop.

24 $\mathbb{E}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 25 $\mathbb{E}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ 26 $\mathbb{W}d1!$

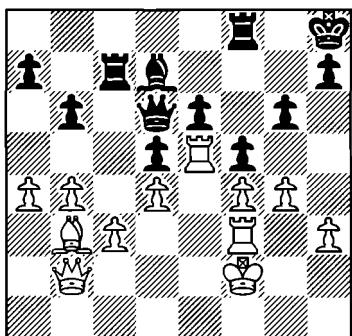
Avoiding opening the queenside with 26 a5?! b6!, which would only help Black.

26... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 27 $\mathbb{g}4!$

The only way to make any progress is to go forward on the kingside and hope something comes of it.

27... g 6 28 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{E}c4$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{E}c7$ 30 $\mathbb{W}d2$

b6 31 $\mathbb{W}b2$



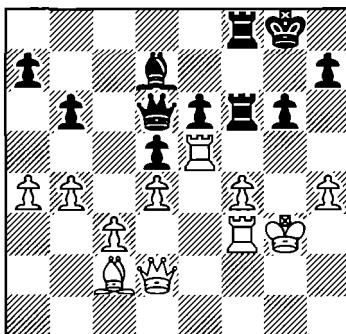
There is no harm in goofing around a bit in a position where the opponent has no counterplay. I remember a game I lost to GM Walter Browne in the late 80's at an American Open. We had reached a position where the grand-

master was a pawn up, but the opposite-coloured bishops gave me excellent drawing chances. Instead of going directly for his plan, Browne would make one move towards his plan and then make five or six aimless moves, and then sneak in another move towards his plan. I was unprepared for this strategy and was getting irritated that my opponent wasn't offering a draw. By the time I realized what he was up to, I was busted. Larsen is doing the same thing here.

31... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 32 $\mathbb{g}xf5$ $\mathbb{E}xf5?$

Black is straining but should get enough counterplay in the line 32... $gxf5!$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}g3+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 34 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{E}g8$ 35 $\mathbb{E}xg8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ 36 $\mathbb{W}f3$. Here 36..a5! breaks into the queenside via a3 and gives Black enough counterplay.

33 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{E}cf8$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{E}5f6$ 36 $h4!$



Now the h5 advance is a constant worry for Black. Notice how Larsen has skilfully induced Black to place most of his pawns on the same colour as his remaining bishop.

36...♝e8 37 ♜e1

Targeting e6, g6 and also the h5 break.

37...♝h8 38 ♜a1

Employing the Browne method of engaging in a series of random moves to confuse and irritate the opponent.

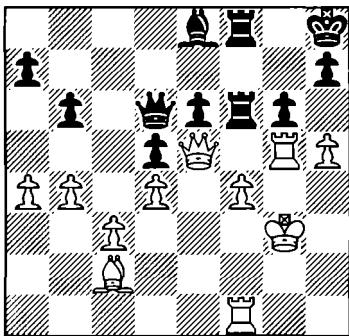
38...♛c7 39 ♛c1 ♜d6 40 ♜e3 ♜g8 41 ♜f2 ♜gf8 42 ♜b3 ♜d7 43 ♜c2 ♜e8 44 ♜g2 ♜d7 45 ♜g3 ♜d6 46 ♜b3 ♜d7 47 ♜g5! ♜f5 48 ♜c2 ♜f7

48...♜xg5+?! 49 hxg5 would strengthen White's bind.

49 ♜f1 ♜f6 50 h5!

At last, a breakthrough.

50...♝e8 51 ♜e5!



The culmination of White's manoeuvring. He wins a pawn by force.

51...♜xe5

If 51...♜e7??, then 52 hxg6 ♜xg6 53 ♜xg6 hxg6 54 ♜xg6 wins for White.

52 dxe5 ♜f7 53 hxg6

White's crafty manoeuvring has netted him a clean pawn, while retaining the superior position.

53...♜c7 54 ♜h1 ♜xc3+ 55 ♜g4 ♜c7

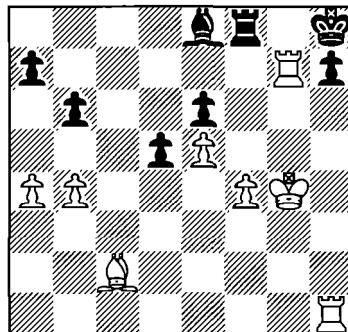
Of course, the bishop can't be

touched due to the threat of g7+.

56 g7+?

A faulty combination! All White had to do to crown his previous play was 56 ♜h2! and Black loses.

56...♜xg7 57 ♜xg7



57...♝xg7?

Apparently, both players overlooked the tricky in-between shot 57...h5+! 58 ♜g5 ♜xg7 and Black is back in business.

58 ♜xh7+ ♜g8 59 ♜xa7

Now it's all over.

59...♜f7 60 ♜a8 ♜f8

60...♝f8? 61 ♜xe8+! ♜xe8 62 ♜g6 wins the king and pawn ending.

61 ♜g5 ♜g7 62 ♜a7+ ♜f7

If 62...♝f7?, then 63 ♜g6 ♜g8 64 ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 65 ♜xf7 ♜xf7 66 a5 bxa5 67 bxa5 d4 68 ♜g4! halts the black d-pawn while promoting his own on the a-file.

63 ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 64 b5!?

Running Black's bishop out of squares. Probably every other player in the world would play 64 a5, which also easily wins.

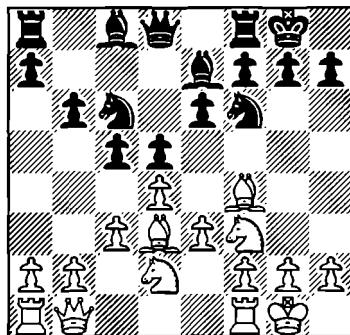
64... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 65 f5 exf5 66 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ d4 67 e6

1-0

Black is in zugzwang.

Summary

In Londons which transpose to Reversed Queen's Gambit Declined Exchange lines, White only has to worry about a single weakness on c3. With moves like $\mathbb{E}e3!$ you can simultaneously defend c3 while building your kingside attack.



1. The queen stays off the c-file and so avoids potential attacks from a black rook on c8.

2. White may be able to get in b4 at some point to initiate queenside play.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with the normal continuation 9 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ (9... $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$! 10 dx5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 11 $\mathbb{W}g4$ also looks very pleasant for White, who won quickly in H.Mawira-L.Bensdorp, Haarlem 2000) 10 $\mathbb{Q}g3!$. White intends f4 with attacking chances.

9... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}c8$

Black eyes a potential trade of bishops via a6. Alternatively:

a) 10... $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$! is a dubious pawn sac: 11 dx5 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ dxe4 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}d2$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 16 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{W}c2$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}fc1$ $\mathbb{W}d3$ 18 c4 and Black doesn't have enough for the missing pawn.

b) 10... $\mathbb{Q}c8?$! looks planless for Black, and after 11 $\mathbb{Q}g3!$ h6 12 f4! White is rolling forward with his attack while Black is drifting.

c) 10...h6! may be best for Black, who can now take on e5 without fear

1 d4 e6 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c5 3 c3

3 e3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ will reach the Colle after 4...d5 5 b3 (or 5 c3), while 4 c4 cxd4 5 exd4 d5 is the Panov-Botvinnik Attack in the Caro-Kann.

3...d5 4 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 5 e3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$

After 5... $\mathbb{W}b6$, you can choose between the solid 6 $\mathbb{W}b3$ and the sharper 6 $\mathbb{W}c2$.

6 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 0-0

7... $\mathbb{W}b6$ and 7...c4 were considered in the previous game.

8 0-0 b6

This kind of position may also arise from a Queen's Indian move order.

9 $\mathbb{W}b1?$

A new move here, and a pretty good one. There are two reasons to play the queen to b1 rather than to c2:

of h7 falling: 11 h3! (11 ♜g3?! ♛xe5 12 dx_e5 ♜h5 looks good for Black) 11...♛xe5 12 dx_e5 ♜d7 13 ♖d1!. The queen has done some damage from the post on b1 and now returns to d1 with White planning to swing it over to g4 or h5. Even so, Black's game looks playable after 13...f5!.

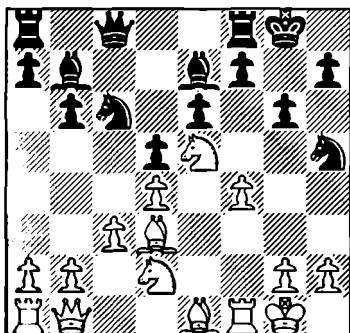
11 ♜g3!

An important idea to remember: White gets the bishop out of the way and clears the path for his f-pawn to go forward. The result will be a nice-looking Reversed Stonewall Dutch position.

11...g6 12 f4 ♜h5 13 ♜e1 cxd4?!

One would have to be very brave to provoke the sac 13...f6! 14 ♜xg6 hxg6 15 ♜xg6 ♜g7 16 ♜h7+ ♜h8 17 ♜f3 ♜d6 18 ♜h3 ♜e7. My computers assure me that Black is okay here. I'm not so sure I should believe them. This may be Black's best line, but he better have some steady nerves to enter the cross-flir in this way.

14 exd4



14...♜xe5?

Terrible! He opens the f-file for his opponent's attack. When Black has already played ...g6, this trade is nearly always wrong.

Black should play 14...f5 intending ...♜f6 and ...♜e4, or he can provoke White with 14...f6!?.

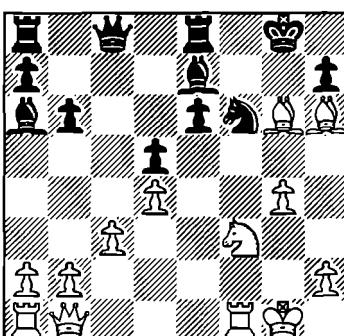
15 fxe5 ♜a6 16 g4! ♜g7 17 ♜f3 ♜e8 18 ♜d2 f5

This weakens e6 and e5, but if Black waits too long to play it, White will probably get a winning attack. For example, if 18...♜xd3 19 ♜xd3 ♜d7 20 ♜h6 ♜g7 21 ♜f2 White's attack is rolling after he doubles rooks on the f-file.

19 exf6 ♜xf6 20 ♜h6 ♜e8?

Black will regret not throwing in 20...♜xd3 21 ♜xd3 before playing 21...♜e8, but even here it looks like it's too late for him after 22 ♜e5 ♜e4 23 ♜f7! ♜f6 24 ♜xf6! ♜xf6 25 ♜f1 ♜d7 26 ♜xg6!.

21 ♜xg6!



Not so hard to see, but very thematic.

21...♜xf1 22 ♜xh7+!

One thing I love about the London is

Play the London System

the simple nature of the kingside attacks. Black has no remaining defenders.

22... $\mathbb{Q}h8$

The miserable alternatives are 22... $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 23 $\mathbb{W}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 24 $\mathbb{W}g7$ mate and 22... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 23 $\mathbb{W}g6$ mate.

23 $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ 1-0

The white pieces swarm around the black king. 23... $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 25 $\mathbb{W}g6$ mate is one way the game could end.

Summary

If you plant a knight on e5 and your opponent refuses to take it, then carry out the manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}g3!$ followed by f4. You get a Reversed Stonewall Dutch, but a nice one with the bishop on the outside of the pawn chain.

Game 8
F.Bruno-A.Opacic
Verona 2005

1 d4 d5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ e6 4 e3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}d3!$?

White must be careful with his move order here. I prefer 5 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ c5 6 c3, or 5 c4 transposing to a $\mathbb{Q}f4$ line of the QGD.

5...c5 6 c3?!

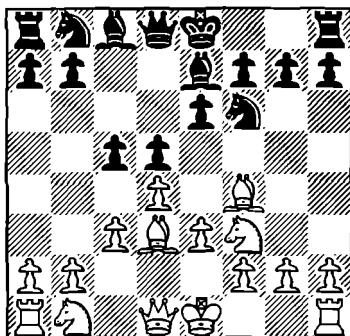
6 $dxc5!$ should be played since Black has already moved his bishop to e7, wasting a tempo. London players should keep open the possibility to head for reversed versions of the

Queen's Gambit Accepted, Queen's Gambit Declined and Slav-type positions.

After 6 $dxc5$ Black has a choice:

a) 6... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ 0-0 8 a3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 c4 and White may have a tiny edge in what is essentially a Queen's Gambit Accepted with an extra move.

b) 6... $\mathbb{Q}bd7!$ 7 b4 a5 8 $\mathbb{Q}c3!$ (White threatens $\mathbb{Q}b5!$) 8... $\mathbb{Q}h5!$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 10 cxd6 axb4 11 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 0-0 12 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 13 c4 bxc3 14 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ with a sharp, unbalanced game.



6... $\mathbb{Q}c6!?$

Letting White off the hook for his sixth move. 6... $\mathbb{W}b6!$ would force White to make an awkward choice:

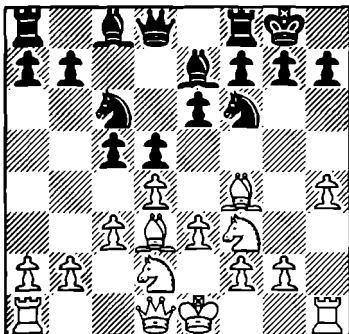
a) After 7 $\mathbb{W}c2$ the queen may be vulnerable later on to tricks along the c-file.

b) If 7 $\mathbb{W}b3$ Black replies 7...c4! 8 $\mathbb{W}xb6$ axb6 9 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ b5 with ...b4 to follow, with a very nice ending.

7 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$

Now we are back to normal London lines.

7...0-0 8 h4!?



An interesting, if not-so-subtle idea! White goes after the black king, caveman-style, by using h4 as a springboard for a knight. He may post a knight on g5 even if ...h6 is played. Also, Black must be careful of sacs on h7.

8 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ is the main move: 8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9 $\mathbb{W}h5$ g6 (if 9...f5, then 10 $\mathbb{Q}df3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 11 $\mathbb{W}h3$ plans g4!, $\mathbb{Q}g1$ and queenside castling) 10 $\mathbb{W}h6$ cxd4 11 exd4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (after 11... $\mathbb{Q}dxe5$ 12 dxе5 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ d4! 14 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}dxc3$ 15 bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ it will be an interesting fight between White's attacking chances and Black's superior pawn structure – a position like this could easily have arisen from a c3 Sicilian) 12 $\mathbb{Q}df3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 13 $\mathbb{W}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}cxe5$ 14 dxе5 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ f6 16 $\mathbb{W}g3$ with an edge for White, I.Gelle-F.Utto, Hungarian League 2007.

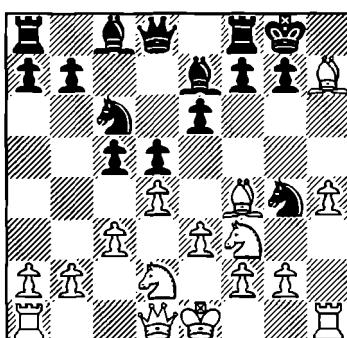
8... $\mathbb{Q}g4?$

Getting overly clever. Black tries to exploit the minor hole on g4 and occupy it for now with a knight. This stops all ideas of White playing g2-g4. Also, Black prepares for ...f5, shutting

out the white bishop on d3. All well and good except for one problem: it is White's move and he has no intention of allowing Black the time to secure his knight with ...f5.

Instead, Black should try 8... $\mathbb{Q}d6!$. It looks counter-intuitive to move this piece a second time, but it follows the principle stating: Counter in the centre when the opponent launches a wing attack. After 9 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}df3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ (10... $\mathbb{Q}d7?$ plays into White's hands with 11 $\mathbb{Q}xh7+!$) 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc6!$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e7+!$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 13 exf4 b6! 14 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 15 0-0-0!? we reach a very sharp, opposite-wing attack position.

9 $\mathbb{Q}xh7+!$



The London is one of the few openings where this classic bishop sac still occurs in games between strong players.

9... $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5?$

Black is in shock for missing the sac on h7. It's better to play 10... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 11 $\mathbb{W}xg4$ e5 12 $\mathbb{W}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 13 dxе5 $\mathbb{W}b6!$ and hope for the best after 14 0-0-0!. Objectively, White must be winning, but at

least the game is still very complicated.

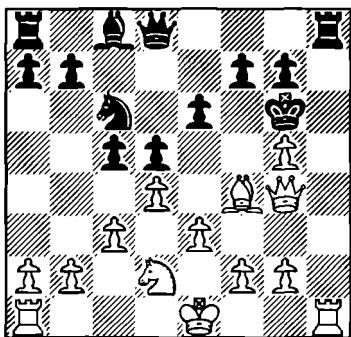
11 hxg5+ ♔g6

11...♔g8 avoids the immediate mate, but is still totally hopeless after 12 ♕xg4 ♜e8 (or 12...e5? 13 ♖h5 f6 14 g6 and White mates) 13 ♖h5 ♔f8 14 g6!.

12 ♕xg4 ♜h8

If 12...e5, White forces mate with the continuation 13 ♖h5+ ♔f5 14 ♖h3+! ♔g6 15 ♖h5.

After 12...♜h8 it looks like Black has survived the brunt of the storm, but his opponent has a surprising game-ending shot.



13 ♖h6+! 1-0

Nice! Mate follows.

Summary

If there is a bit of a Cro-Magnon or Neanderthal in your blood, then try h2-h4 and go all out for mate. Black must be especially vigilant for Greek gift sacs on h7. Also, take note that White's fifth move, ♘d3, may not be the most accurate and should probably be substituted by 5 ♘bd2.

Game 9

G.Agamaliev-F.Abbasov
Iranian League 2006

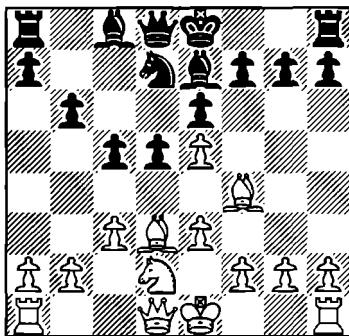
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♘f4 c5

This move order is a bit of a concern for White, who must factor in ...♜b6 ideas. In Chapter Eight we will explore the complicated line 4 e3 ♜b6!? 5 ♘c3! (5 ♘c1 is stodgy and allows Black effortless equality) 5...♜xb2 (Game 76), as well as the safer 4 c3 (Game 75).

4 e3 ♘c6 5 ♘bd2 d5 6 c3 ♜e7 7 ♘d3 b6

Black normally plays 7...0-0 before committing to ...b6, as in Game 7.

8 ♘e5 ♘xe5 9 dxе5 ♘d7



10 c4!?

A trap to avoid is 10 ♜g4?? g5! 11 ♘g3 h5 12 ♜e2 h4 winning a piece. However, 10 ♖h5! looks quite promising: 10...♝b7 11 ♘f3 h6 12 h4 ♜f8 13 ♜g4! g5 (13...♜g8?? 14 ♘h7 wins) 14 hxg5 hxg5 15 ♘g3 and Black was already tied up and in big trouble in S.Jovicic-S.Stiemer, Schleswig Holstein 1992.

10...♞f8?

The knight isn't well posted on d7 and Black hopes to transfer it later to e6 or g6, but he doesn't have time for this manoeuvre.

More natural is 10...♝b7 11 0-0 and now:

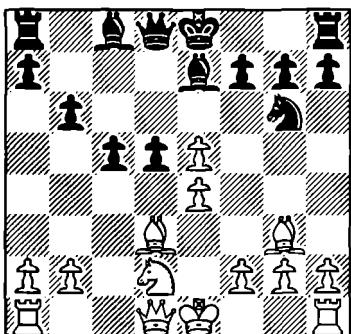
a) 11...♛c7 12 cxd5! ♜xd5 13 e4 ♜b7 14 ♜c4 0-0 15 ♛g4 ♜fd8 16 ♜d6 ♜f8 17 ♜g3 ♜g6 18 ♜c4! (with tricks on f7) 18...♜xd6 19 exd6 ♜xd6 20 ♜ad1. Black doesn't have enough compensation for the exchange because White will take over the d-file in a few moves.

b) 11...0-0 12 ♛g4 ♛c7 13 ♛h3 g6 14 ♛g3. White will follow up with h4 and go for an attack. Black must open the centre and seek counterplay there.

11 ♜g3 ♜g6 12 cxd5 exd5

12...♜xd5?? 13 ♜e4 drops a rook.

13 e4!



Giving Black a tough choice. If he tries 13...♝b7, then 14 ♛a4+! costs him castling rights since he can't block with the queen. After 14...♞f8 15 exd5 ♜xd5 16 ♜e4 ♜xe4 17 ♜xe4 Black is playing a rook down (yes, the one on h8!) for

the moment, and his odds of survival look low.

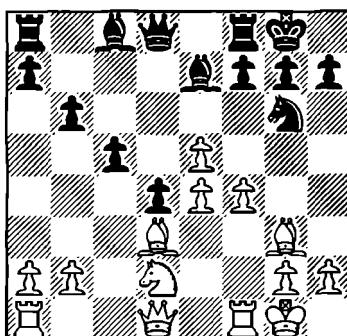
13...d4

Now White's 5 to 3 kingside majority becomes very potent.

14 0-0 0-0

Walking into a huge attack, but at this point it's hard to suggest an improvement.

15 f4



Black is in big trouble. White's massive kingside super-pawn majority is clearly more menacing than Black's majority on the queenside, which for now is firmly blockaded on the light squares.

15...♛c7 16 ♛h5 ♜e8

Black hopes to have time to batten down the hatches with ...♞f8, but he doesn't.

Black is busted no matter what he plays. If he tries 16...♝b7 17 ♜f3! c4 18 ♜ac1 b5 19 b3 ♜a3 20 ♜c2 c3 his central and queenside passers are frozen, whereas White is just beginning on the other wing with 21 f5 ♜h8 22 f6 leading to a ferocious attack.

Play the London System

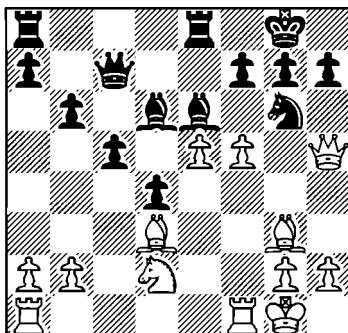
17 e6! ♖xe6

Other moves also fail miserably:

a) 17...fxe6 18 f5 and the knight can't move since it is pinned.

b) 17...♘h8 18 f5 ♘d6 19 e5! ♖xe5 20 ♕ae1! ♖xg3 21 exf7+ mates.

18 f5 ♘d6 19 e5!



19...♘xe5

Or 19...♖xe5 20 fxe5 hxg6 21 ♖xe5 and White is up two pieces.

20 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 21 fxe6 ♕xe6 22 ♖xh7+

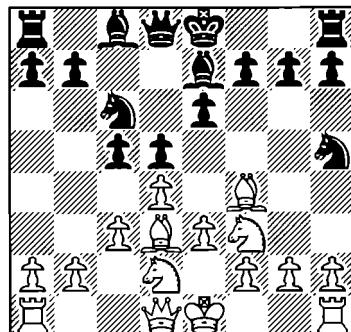
1-0

Summary

Look for the possibility of c4 in positions where White's pawn stands on e5 after an exchange of knights on that square. These changes in the pawn structure often favour White.

Game 10
R.Bitoon-X.Wang
Manila 2008

**1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♘f4 d5 4 ♘bd2 c5
5 e3 ♘c6 6 c3 ♘e7 7 ♘d3 ♘h5!?**



8 ♖g3

I generally play this move. White can also try 8 ♘e5? ♘xe5 9 dxe5 when Black's knight makes an odd impression on h5.

8...♘xg3!?

It's very dangerous to open the h-file. Black should stall with 8...0-0 9 ♘e5 g6 and only capture on g3 if White castles kingside.

9 hxg3 h6!

White got the advantage after 9...g6?! 10 ♖e2 f5 11 g4! in Z.Djukic-T.Drnic, Bosnjaci 2008.

10 g4 ♘d7

After the provocative 10...0-0!? 11 ♖e2, White can either castle queenside or just put his king on f1 and continue attacking.

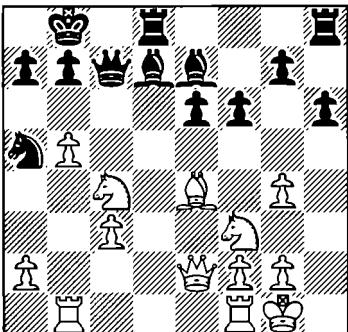
11 ♖e2 ♖b6 12 ♕b1 0-0-0 13 dxc5!

Black isn't so safe on the other wing either.

**13...♘xc5 14 b4 ♘e7 15 0-0 ♖c7 16 e4
dxe4 17 ♘xe4 ♖b8 18 ♘c4 f6?**

Too slow. Black should counter the wing attack with 18...f5!, with an unclear position.

19 b5 ♜a5



20 b6!

A deeply calculated, temporary piece sac.

20...♜xc4

Certainly not 20...axb6?? 21 ♜xa5 and Black can't recapture.

21 ♜xa7+ ♜a8!

The alternatives all lose quickly:

a) 21...♜c8?? 22 a8♚+.

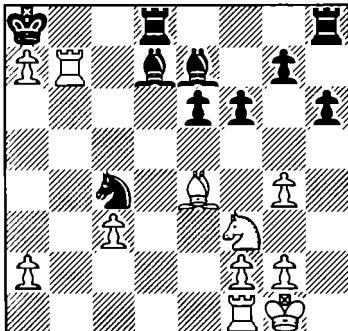
b) 21...♜xa7?? 22 ♜xb7+! ♜a6 23

♜f1 (threatening to mate on b6) 23...♜c5 24 ♜d3 wins the queen.

c) 21...♜c7?? 22 ♜xb7+! ♜d6 23

♜d1+ ♜c5 24 ♜e3+ mates next move.

22 ♜xc4! ♜xc4 23 ♜xb7



The threat of a discovered check costs Black all his extra material, plus interest.

23...f5

The a7-pawn is too strong in the line 23...♜d6 24 ♜xd7+ ♜xe4 25 ♜xe7 ♜xc3 26 ♜xg7.

24 gx f5 exf5 25 ♜d5 ♜e6 26 ♜c6

That discovered check will not run away.

26...♜a5

Black can try 26...♜d6 but after 27 ♜xe7+ ♜xc6 28 ♜d4! ♜d5 29 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 30 ♜xg7 he is too tied up to put up much resistance.

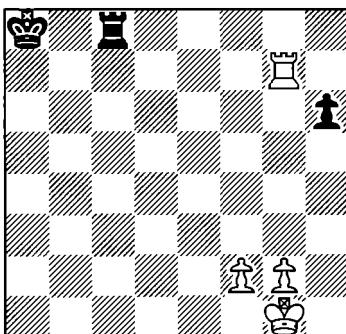
27 ♜xe7+ ♜xc6 28 ♜xe6 ♜xa7 29 ♜d4

So White's combination has netted a pawn.

29...♜d5 30 ♜b1 ♜c8 31 ♜b3 ♜a5 32 ♜e7 ♜c6

Black cannot save his kingside with 32...g5 33 ♜h7 ♜a6 34 ♜xf5.

33 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 34 ♜xg7 ♜xa2 35 ♜b5 ♜c2 36 ♜xf5 ♜2xc3 37 ♜f8+ ♜c8 38 ♜xc8+ ♜xc8



We always read that a two versus one pawn majority is a draw, but not

Play the London System

here. Black's king is on the other side of the world and can't ever get back to save the h6-pawn.

39 $\mathbb{B}g6$ $\mathbb{B}h8$ 40 $\mathbb{B}b6!$

Insuring that Black's king remains imprisoned on the a-file for life.

40... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 41 $\mathbb{B}b3$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ 42 $g3$ $\mathbb{B}f6$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 44 $f4$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 45 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{B}g6$ 46 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 47 $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 48 $g4$ $\mathbb{B}f6$ 49 $f5$ 1-0

Summary

When ... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ are played, Black may get clever and castle queen-side. In these cases, vigorously pry him open on that wing with $dxc5!$ and $b4!$

Game 11

C.Lakdawala-P.Graves
Gambito (rapid),
San Diego 2009

1 d4 e6 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d5 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4 e3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 5 c4

This is a direct transposition to a Queen's Gambit Declined, $\mathbb{Q}f4$ variation. My opponent normally plays Ragozin-style with ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ when on the Black side of the Queen's Gambit, so my fifth move basically took him out of his book.

If you are a purist and insist on a London, then play 5 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$.

5...0-0 6 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ c5

6...c6 is very passive but also quite solid for Black.

7 dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 8 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{W}e7?$

My opponent's lack of familiarity

with the line shows here. The queen on e7 is vulnerable to a pin on g5.

A recent GM disaster for Black in this line went 8... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 9 a3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 10 $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{B}d8!?$ (now Black's queen is short of safe squares; the main line with 10... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ is a lot safer) 11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $dxc4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6??$ (12... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ had to be played) 13 $\mathbb{Q}b3!$ (Oops! Black drops a piece) 13... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 14 $\mathbb{B}xd6!$ $\mathbb{B}xd6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 1-0, A.Rychagov-A.Lanin, Sochi 2008.

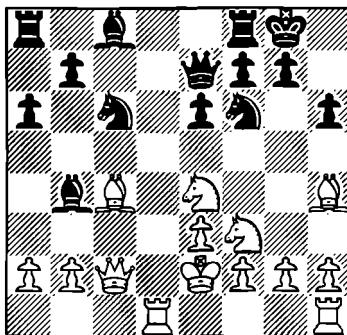
9 $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$

On 9... $dxc4$, I would play 10 $\mathbb{Q}g5!.$

10 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$

It will be hard for Black to escape this pin. Eventually he will have to weaken his kingside with ...h6 and ...g5.

10... $dxc4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ h6 12 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ a6 13 $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ $\mathbb{Q}b4+$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$



14... $g5!$

I didn't think he would have the nerve, but it's the best move.

14... $b5?$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ (15... $\mathbb{Q}b7??$ loses even faster to 16 $\mathbb{Q}xf6!$ $gxf6$ 17 $\mathbb{B}d7!)$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $gxf6$ 17 $\mathbb{B}d4!$ gives White a winning attack since 17... $e5??$ is impossible due to 18 $\mathbb{W}g6+.$

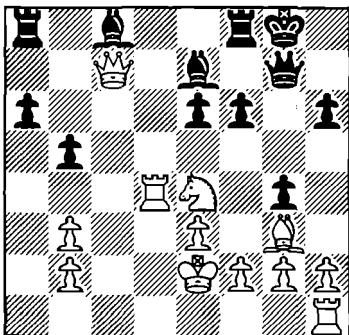
15 ♜xf6+

I hated to let him off the hook for ...g5, but 15 ♜exg5?! didn't look totally sound after 15...hxg5 16 ♜xg5 b5 17 ♜d3 ♜b7 – I didn't see a good follow-up for White.

15...♜xf6 16 ♜g3 g4!

Again in a precarious situation, Graves finds the only move to stay alive. 16...b5? loses quickly to 17 ♜d3 ♜b7 18 ♜h7+! ♜g7 19 ♜d7!.

17 ♜d2 b5 18 ♜e4 ♜g7 19 ♜b3 ♜a5 20 ♜d4! ♜e7 21 ♜c7 ♜xb3 22 axb3 f6

**23 ♜d6!**

Forcing a favourable ending is a good practical decision. I was worried he would shut the bishop out with ...e5 soon but I confess I did miss a combination with 23 ♜c6! ♜a7 24 ♜d6 ♜d7!, ♜b6 ♜fa8 26 ♜f5! exf5 27 ♜b8!. Even had I seen this line, I probably would have picked the game continuation which is a lot cleaner.

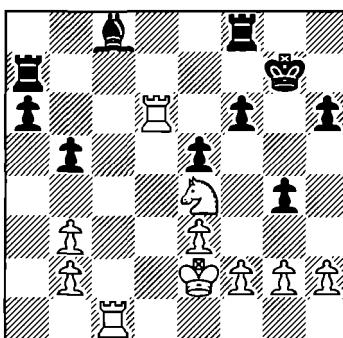
23...♜xd6 24 ♜xg7+ ♜xg7 25 ♜xd6 e5**26 ♜c1**

Black's position is under enormous strain. White eyes targets on f6 and a6,

as well as infiltrations on c6 and c7. The key factor is that White's rooks control the only open files.

26...♜a7?!

This drops a pawn. The best shot at survival was 26...♜f5 27 ♜c7+ ♜g6 28 ♜c5 ♜fd8 29 ♜cc6 ♜xd6 30 ♜xd6 a5 31 e4 ♜c8. Black is tied down and cannot unravel easily but at least he keeps material equality.

**27 ♜xf6!**

Overloading the f8-rook, which can't simultaneously cover c8 and f6.

27...♜f5 28 ♜xf8 ♜xf8 29 ♜c5 b4

Of course, he can't pin with 29...♜c7?? because of 30 ♜e6+.

30 e4 ♜c8 31 ♜d3 ♜e6 32 ♜xb4 ♜b7**33 ♜xa6 ♜xb3 34 ♜c2 1-0**

Summary

If your opponent plays the 3...e6 and 4...♜e7 move order, you have the option of transposing to the Queen's Gambit Declined, ♜f4 variation, which has great similarities to the London. This can be handy if your opponent is not familiar with this line and you are.

Chapter Two

1...d5 without an Early ...e6

This chapter will deal with all of Black's ...d5 responses to the London other than those that depend upon playing an early ...e6:

Black plays Tarrasch style with 1 d4 d5 2 ♜f4 c5

In response, we can hit back with the Morris Gambit, otherwise known as the Reversed Albin Counter-Gambit, with the startling 3 e4!? (Games 12-14) which takes the game into bizarre, non-London positions. This gambit has bite to it. An extra move turns the normally shaky Albin Counter-Gambit into a real weapon. Another bonus is we take our opponent out of his comfort zone and insert him into a totally unfamiliar situation. Don't underestimate the psychological benefits. Black often finds himself flailing in dark and unfamiliar waters.

If White wants to play more safely,

there's the option of 3 e3 (see Game 16).

Black hits the b2-pawn with ...♝b6

We cover various versions of Black hitting b2. We virtually always respond to this with ♜b3. These lines can lead to equal endings where we rely on our greater experience with the structure to defeat our opponents (see Games 15-16).

The symmetrical line

Black imitates White's moves (the sincerest form of flattery!) with the belief that White's opening is too innocuous to secure a real advantage. I disagree with this assessment and believe that you can make your opponent sweat with a quick c2-c4, transposing into more mainstream queen's pawn lines, and then ♜b3 (see Games 18-19).

The Reversed Torre

The simple solution against ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ is a quick h3, which virtually forces Black to cough up the bishop pair, as in Kamsky-Lerner (see Game 21).

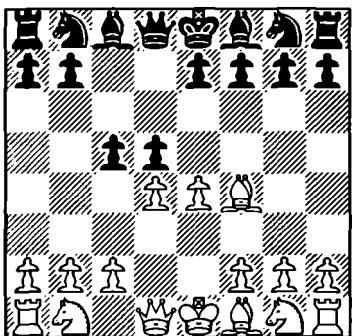
The Chigorin

We have two possible plans against 2... $\mathbb{Q}c6$:

1. We pin with $\mathbb{Q}b5$, as in Game 22.
2. We eventually play c4 and transpose to a Queen's Gambit Declined position with Black's knight slightly out of place on c6 (see Games 23-24).

Game 12 L.Winants-D.Collas France 2003

1 d4 d5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ c5 3 e4!?



The Morris Gambit. I usually play this way as White. If this gambit doesn't appeal to you, there is nothing wrong with 3 e3 which will lead to normal lines.

3...dxe4

Black accepts the challenge. Alternatives are:

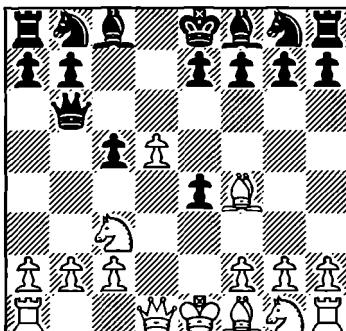
a) 3...cxd4? 4 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (Black falls seriously behind in development and his king gets hounded in the line 4...dxe4 5 $\mathbb{W}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 7 0-0-0+ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ $\mathbb{Q}gf6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}gxe4!$, regaining the pawn with a strong initiative) 5 $\mathbb{Q}xb8!$ $\mathbb{B}xb8$ 6 $\mathbb{W}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 7 e5 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 8 f3! $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ and Black has absolutely no compensation for the pawn.

b) 3...e6?! is covered in my game against Avram Zaydenberg (Game 13).

c) 3... $\mathbb{Q}f6$! is the only good way to decline. We will discuss this line further in my game versus Igor Ivanov (Game 14).

4 d5 $\mathbb{Q}f6$

Let's see what happens if Black shamelessly goes pawn hunting with 4... $\mathbb{W}b6$! 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ and now:



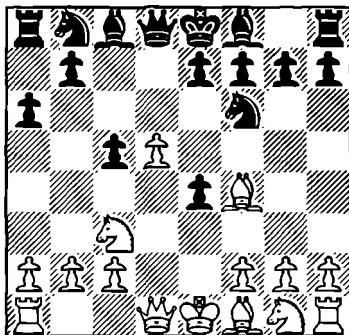
a) 5... $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}a3$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xd7!$ forces the horrible 9... $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xb7+$ and Black's extra pawn will not do him much good in this ruin of a position.

Play the London System

b) 5... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (I don't see the point of playing ... $\mathbb{W}b6$ if Black is unwilling to take on b2) 6 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 7 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 8 $f3!$ $exf3$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ gave White excellent compensation for the pawn in B.Steiner-J.Hatzl, Koeflach 2006.

5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ a6

A trap that Black occasionally falls for occurred in C.Lakdawala-B.Baker, San Diego (rapid) 2007, after 5...e6? 6 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 7 $dxe6$ $fxe6$ when Black's pawn structure is a total mess. I eventually picked up both of Black's e-pawns.



6 $\mathbb{W}e2!$

Not only hitting e4, but also planning to castle queenside.

6... $\mathbb{Q}f5$

6... $\mathbb{Q}xd5?$ 7 0-0-0 e6 8 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ allows White to regain the pawn with a giant lead in development.

7 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 8 h3!

Much stronger than 8 f3 $exf3$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ b5!.

8... $\mathbb{W}a5$

8...h5? 9 f3! is clearly in White's favour, since the insertion of ...h5 will

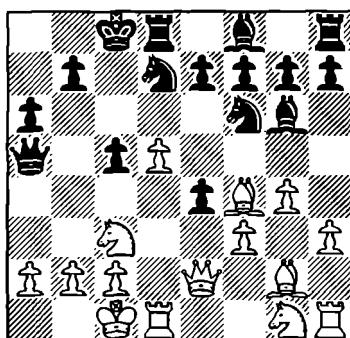
make castling kingside extremely risky for Black, for two reasons:

1. At some point, White may sac a second pawn with the line-opening g4; and

2. The simple $\mathbb{Q}h4$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ seriously erodes Black's pawn cover around his king.

After 9... $exf3$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ g6 11 $\mathbb{Q}h4!$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $gxf5$ Black's king lacks a safe haven.

9 g4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ 0-0-0 11 f3!



11... $\mathbb{Q}b6$

If Black insists on keeping his extra pawn with 11... $exf3$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ h6, 13 $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ puts him on the defensive. His buried bishop on f8 and rook on h8 are not yet participating in the game.

12 fxe4

White has regained the pawn with a clear advantage.

12... $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ e6

If 13... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{W}xa2??$, 15 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ traps the queen.

14 $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ $\mathbb{W}xa4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{W}b4$

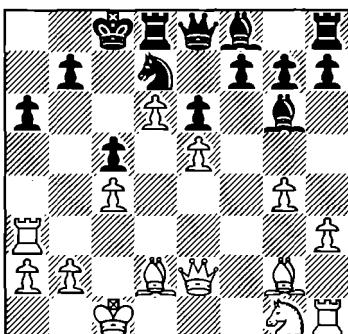
If Black retreats the queen with 15... $\mathbb{W}d7$, 16 d6! is very annoying for

him since 16... $\mathbb{Q}xd6??$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd6 \mathbb{W}xd6$ 18 e5 wins a piece.

16 $\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{B}b5$ 17 c4!

Black's king is insecure and there is no reason to agree to a queen trade.

17... $\mathbb{W}e8$ 18 e5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19 d6



Now 20 $\mathbb{W}f3$ is a terrible threat.

19... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}a5$

20 $\mathbb{W}f2!$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 21 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ looks even stronger.

20... $\mathbb{Q}c6$

Black must part with material since 20... $\mathbb{Q}d7??$ 21 $\mathbb{W}f2$ loses instantly.

21 $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 22 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{W}xd8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xd4!$

Avoiding any complications arising from the line 24 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 25 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$.

24... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 25 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}a7$ 26 $\mathbb{W}b4!$

Black's game is in ruins. He is down the exchange, and the boxed-in bishop and rook ensure his defeat.

26... $f6$ 27 $\mathbb{W}a5$ b6

Black must part with more pawns since 27... $\mathbb{W}b8??$ is met by 28 $\mathbb{Q}b3!$.

28 $\mathbb{W}xa6+$ $\mathbb{W}xa6$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ fxe5 30 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 0-1 31 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ e5 32 c5 h5 33 g5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ e3 35 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 1-0

Summary

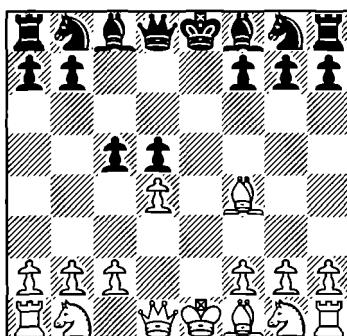
The Albin Counter-Gambit may be a shaky opening when it's played by Black. Get it a move up as White and it becomes a very dangerous weapon. 3 e4! also has value as a psychological weapon. Black sometimes goes into shock when the boring London guy goes ballistic, and begins to sac pawns and attack on move three!

Game 13
C.Lakdawala-A.Zaydenburg
Gambito (rapid),
San Diego 2008

1 d4 d5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ c5 3 e4? e6?!

This move and 3... $\mathbb{Q}xd4?$ are both dubious. 3... $\mathbb{Q}f6!$ is the only playable way to decline the gambit (see the next game).

4 exd5 exd5



On 4... $\mathbb{W}xd5$, I always sac with 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3!$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 6 $\mathbb{W}f3!$. White has monstrous compensation for the pawn after 6...a6 7 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 9

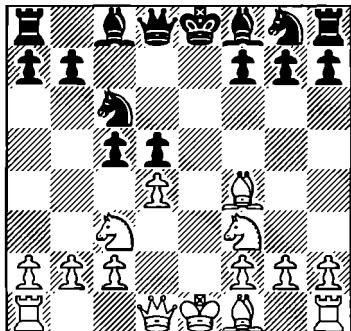
Play the London System

0-0-0, with a scary-looking lead in development.

5 ♜f3

5 ♜b5+ ♜c6 6 ♜e2+ ♜e7 7 ♜c3 ♜f6 8 ♜g5 ♜e6 9 ♜f3 a6 10 ♜xc6+ bxc6 11 0-0 ♜b7 12 ♜xf6 gxf6 13 ♜a4 c4 14 b3 ♜b5 15 ♜e3 0-0-0 favoured White in the game P.Dittmar-A.Stabolewski, Bad Wörishofen 2006, and 9 dxc5! ♜xc5 10 ♜xf6 gxf6 11 0-0-0 looks even stronger.

5... ♜c6 6 ♜c3!



Developing the knight to d2 would just transpose to a Tarrasch French-style position. The knight on c3 hits the d5-pawn and menaces ♜b5 too. Black is in serious trouble due to his lag in development.

6... ♜e6!

6... ♜g4?! 7 ♜b5 ♜c8 8 ♜e2+! is awkward for Black, who is forced to retreat with 8... ♜e6.

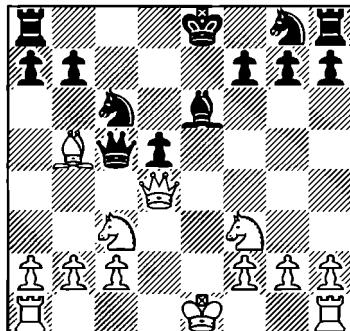
7 ♜b5 ♜d6?!

Swaps are normally not a good idea for the side with the isolated pawn.

Black should play 7... ♜f6. For example, 8 0-0 ♜e7 9 ♜e5 ♜b6 10 dxc5 ♜xc5 11 ♜d3!. This gains another

tempo by forcing 11...a6, since 11...0-0? 12 ♜a4! ♜f5 13 ♜xb6 ♜xd3 14 cxd3! axb6 15 ♜xc6 bxc6 16 ♜xc6 drops a pawn. After 12 ♜xc6+ bxc6 13 ♜a4 Black will be weak on the dark squares and still may get blockaded on c5, but at least he has a playable position.

8 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 9 dxc5 ♜xc5 10 ♜d4!



Forcing Black into a miserably passive ending.

10... ♜xd4 11 ♜xd4

White's strategic goal is to end up with a knight vs. the bad bishop, with rooks still on the board.

11... ♜ge7 12 0-0-0 0-0 13 ♜xc6! ♜xc6

Forced: if Black attempts to fix his pawns with 13...bxc6?, 14 ♜he1 ♜ae8 15 ♜a4! ♜c8 16 ♜c5 f6 17 ♜d3 ♜f7 18 ♜de3 leaves him horribly tangled.

14 ♜he1 a6

14... ♜fe8 15 ♜ce2! would be similar to the game continuation.

15 ♜ce2

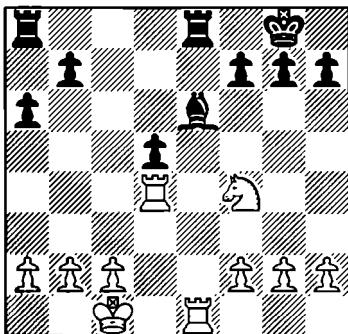
The idea is ♜f4, targeting both e6 and d5.

15... ♜fe8 16 ♜f4 ♜xd4

On 16... ♜d8? White takes advan-

tage of the weak back rank with 17 ♘xd5!.

17 ♘xd4



Okay, White has achieved the dream position of good knight versus bad bishop and isolani. Black now offers a pawn to rid himself of both of these.

17...♞f8? 18 ♕d2!

There is no reason to cash in too early with 18 ♔xd5 ♘xd5 19 ♜xe8+ ♜xh8 20 ♘xd5 ♜e2 21 ♜f5, which may give Black some drawing chances. White's goal now is to win the d5-pawn without trading the knight for the bishop.

18...♜ad8 19 ♜e5!

Halting ...g5 and putting more heat on d5.

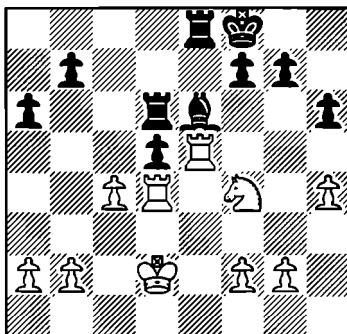
20...h6 20 h4 ♜d6!

20...g6 21 a4 ♜g7 22 a5 increases White's bind.

21 c4?

Premature. White should just continue gaining space. Part of the charm of the game with a 45-minute time control is that no matter how well we

play early on, it seems like we always goof things up when the time gets lower.



21...♝ed8?

He misses his chance with 21...♜b6!! 22 cxd5 ♜xb2+ 23 ♜c3 ♜b5! 24 ♜xe6+ fxe6 25 ♜f4+ ♜g8 26 ♜xe6 ♜xe6 27 dxe6 ♜e5, which should hold the draw. Neither player noticed 23...♜b5 during the game. We were under the mistaken impression that Black was forced into 23...♜xf2?? 24 dxe6 ♜xa2 25 e7+!, which wins for White.

22 cxd5 ♜c8 23 h5 b5?!

It is hard to submit to total passivity, but pawn moves like this only help White make progress.

24 ♜c3!

The king infiltrates with ♜b4 and ♜c5, or ♜b4 and ♜a5.

24...g5?

Black needed to keep the white king out of b4 with 24...a5!.

25 hxg6 fxg6 26 ♜b4 ♜f7

After 26...g5 27 ♜d3 ♜b7 28 ♜c5 the king's entry is decisive.

27 ♜c5 ♜f6 28 ♜d3 ♜f5 29 ♜e3 ♜d6??

Now that White's king has reached c5, it doesn't matter if Black swaps the bishop for the knight. 29... $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ g5 31 g4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}de3$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}e8+!$ breaks down the defensive barrier of Black's doubled rooks, and wins.

30 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}8d7$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 1-0

Summary

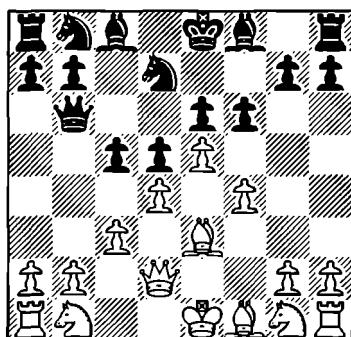
If Black doesn't want to go into the Albin a move down, and plays Tarrasch French-style with the isolani on d5, it favours White because he can develop his knight to c3, putting more pressure on d5. White's knight sits on the more passive square d2 in the normal Tarrasch.

$\mathbb{Q}c3$ a3 15 b3 0-0 16 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ Black couldn't extract anything from the pin, while White retained his massive space advantage in C.Lakdawala-A.Pixton, Internet (blitz) 2000.

2 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ c5 3 e4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4 e5 $\mathbb{Q}fd7$

4... $\mathbb{Q}g8?$ wastes too much time and can be met by 5 $dxc5!$. Principle: Open the game when leading in development. Now it's a bad Advance Caro position for Black; for example, 5...e6 6 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 10 c3, B.Laurent-S.Savchenko, Metz 2005.

5 c3 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ e6 7 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ f6 8 f4



1 d4 d5

A more common way to reach our game position is through the Trompowsky, with 1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ d5 4 f3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 e4 e6 (5...dxe4!?) 6 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ gives White a Blackmar-Diemer Gambit a move up) 6 e5 $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ c5 8 c3 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ f6 10 f4, with both sides having played two extra moves. In fact, this is how GM Ivanov and I arrived at this position. Alternatively, after 8... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 f4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ a5! 11 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ a4 12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ cxd4 13 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 14

White has space but also has some troubles. The queen is awkwardly placed on d2 and it may be difficult to develop the b1-knight. I realize that it's strange to get this French-style position from the London, but the London is very fluid and you should be willing to play several quirky positions where it's almost guaranteed that you will be in more familiar territory than your opponents. Sometimes "unclear" just means unclear to your opponent!

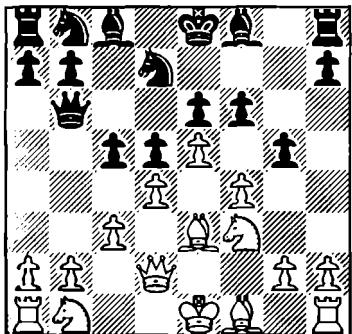
8...g5!

It's very difficult when you are hit with a theoretical novelty in a quick-play game! Well, let me explain this one. Our tournament situation called for such a strategy. I had started the tournament with a stinging loss on the White side of a London versus GM Shabalov. I was a bit weary of getting pushed around by higher-rated players! My old friend, the late GM Igor Ivanov, was in the same situation as me with a first-round loss to another grandmaster. We were both spoiling for a fight because we had nothing to lose.

Having said this, 8...g5! is a good move too. White's centre is hit in every direction. The following positions get pretty chaotic.

9 ♜xf3

I felt Black was dictating the tempo of the game in the line 9 exf6 gxf4 10 ♜xf7+ 11 ♜xf4 cxd4 12 cxd4 ♜g7 13 ♜f3 ♜c6 14 ♜e3 ♜f6, with an unclear position.

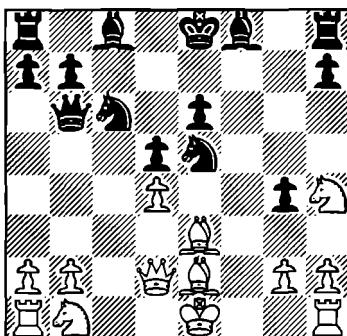
**9...g4?!**

He lets the pressure off White's centre to gain time on the knight. However, White's knight is not so badly posted on h4.

9...gxf4! 10 ♜xf4 ♜c6 would have been better. Black has gotten away with 8...g5 because there is no White queen on the d1-h5 diagonal. Here 11 exf6 ♜xf6 12 ♜d3 ♜d7 looks reasonable for Black, who will castle queen-side.

10 ♜h4 ♜c6 11 ♜e2 fxe5

11...f5? would be terrible since White could open the game favourably on the kingside with 12 h3!.

12 fxe5 cxd4 13 cxd4 ♜dx e5!

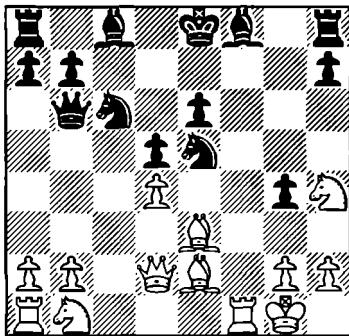
Gulp! I didn't see this coming! Ivanov exploits a pin trick.

14 0-0!

A good practical move. Instead of grabbing the knight and plunging into crazy complications, White simply ignores the piece and gains several tempi for his own attack. After all, Black hasn't exactly followed opening principles and has fallen behind in development.

Play the London System

Fritz, greedy as always, doesn't buy any of this and gives the line 14 dxe5 d4 15 ♜xg4! (15 ♜f2 ♜b4!, regaining the piece, was Ivanov's idea behind the sham sacrifice of the knight on e5) 15...h5 (15...dxe3?? allows mate with 16 ♜h5+ ♜e7 17 ♜d6) 16 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 17 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 18 ♜d1 ♜g7 19 ♜d2! ♜c6 20 ♜g6! ♜h6 21 ♜c4! and White stubbornly hangs on to his extra pawn, but only computers, Nakamura, and Morozevich get away with lines like this. I would almost certainly have flubbed it with so many white pieces en prise.



14...♜g6!

This is the only move which keeps Black alive. He cannot survive either with:

a) 14...♞c4? 15 ♜xc4 dxc4 16 ♜xf8+! (16 d5? ♜c5! is good for Black) 16...♜xf8 17 d5 ♜d8 18 dxc6 ♜xh4 19 ♜g5! ♜h5 20 ♜c3! bringing White's remaining pieces into the attack; or

b) 14...♜b4 15 ♜c3 ♜d8 16 g3 ♜c4

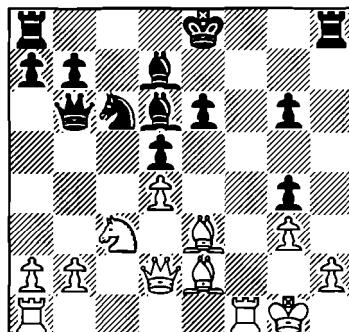
17 ♜xc4 dxc4 18 ♜e2! ♜g8 19 ♜xc4.

Since White has regained the pawn, Black's chances of survival look pretty

bleak.

15 ♜xg6 hxg6 16 ♜c3 ♜d6 17 g3 ♜d7

Black gets ready to castle queenside and go after the white king. I found a good way to disrupt that plan.



18 ♜b5! ♜b8

18...♜e7 19 ♜ac1 a6 (19...0-0-0?? is met by 20 ♜f4! intending 21 ♜c7!) 20 ♜c3 0-0-0 21 ♜a4 ♜b4 22 ♜xb4 ♜xb4 23 ♜b6+ ♜c7 24 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 25 ♜xg4 leaves Black with a very tough ending.

19 a4 a6 20 a5! ♜d8

20...♜xa5?? 21 ♜xa5 wins a piece due to the pin on the a6-pawn.

21 ♜g5 ♜e7 22 ♜c3

Black's pieces are out of synch, and his king is still stuck in the centre and a long way from his earlier intention to go queenside.

22...♜d6 23 ♜f6 ♜h7 24 ♜g5! ♜h5?

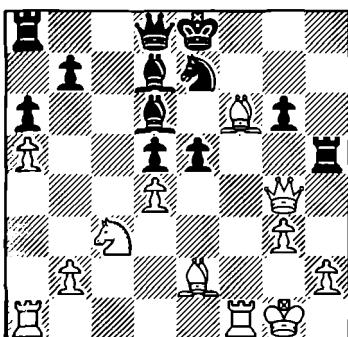
24...♜c7 also fails to save Black after 25 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 26 ♜xg6+ ♜d8 27 ♜f8+ ♜e8 28 ♜b5!! ♜d7 29 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 30 ♜xg4.

25 ♜xg4?

I missed 25 ♜g7! in time pressure, which wins Black's queen or his king.

25...e5!?

Igor attempts to seize the initiative but walks into a combination. Also hopeless is 25... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 27 $\mathbb{W}xg6+$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xf5!$ $\mathbb{W}xg6$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 0-0-0 30 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$, netting White two clean pawns.



I used up most of my remaining time and found:

26 $\mathbb{W}xh5!!$

I hope it is not egotistical to award myself a second exclamation mark here, but really the second one is for finding the win with about two minutes left on the clock.

26...gxh5 27 $\mathbb{Q}xh5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xe7+!$

Igor had counted on the line 28 $\mathbb{Q}xe7+?$ $\mathbb{Q}f5!$ with a totally irrational position.

28... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$

29... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ leaves Black down a full rook.

29 $\mathbb{Q}xd5+ 1-0$

Igor smiled when resigning and pointed to the f7-square, indicating that he had missed 29... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ mate.

Summary

If you play the Reversed Albin Counter-Gambit pawn sac line as White, be prepared to go into some funky hybrid French structures if Black declines. You may argue that you are not a French player, but your opponent probably isn't either. In fact, I will bet you a quarter that even French players will get confused! Just be familiar with the structure and be aware of Black's pawn breaks on c5, f6 and even g5.

Game 15 V.Sergeev- L.Cernousek Jirasek Memorial, Rakovnik 2008

1 d4 d5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3 e3 c5 4 c3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}d2!!$

This is definitely White's best move order. 5 $\mathbb{Q}f3?!$ allows Black at least equality after 5... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 6 $\mathbb{W}b3$ c4!, transposing to a line we really want to avoid (see Chapter Ten).

5... $\mathbb{W}b6$

Alternatively:

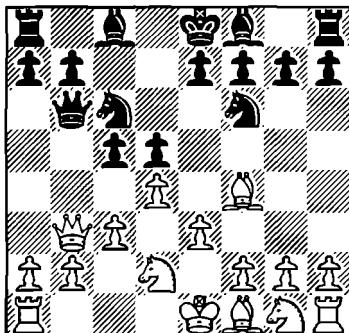
a) 5... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 6 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}gf3$ c4 8 $\mathbb{W}d1$ e6 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ (11 dx5?!) $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g5! 13 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ h5! favours Black) 11...0-0 12 g4! $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 13 h4 $\mathbb{W}b5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 15 h5 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 17 $\mathbb{W}b3$, F.Berkes-Y.Shulman, Dresden Olympiad 2008. I like White's chances in either the ending or middlegame.

b) 5... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ is also a common choice

Play the London System

at this point. Here is a recent Internet Chess Club (ICC) blitz game of mine versus an IM opponent: 6 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 7 $dxc5!$ $\mathbb{W}xb3$ 8 $axb3$ e5 9 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 10 b4 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}gf3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ (or 12...0-0 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$ $\mathbb{Q}dxe5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 16 $hxg3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}hb1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $dxc4$ 20 b5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}ba1!$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}e4$, winning a couple of pawns) 13 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 14 e4! (breaking up Black's pawn centre and eying d6) 14... $dxe4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}gxe4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 16 f3 f6 17 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 0-0 (Black also gets a rotten ending arising from 17... $\mathbb{Q}xe4?$! 18 $fxe4$ 0-0 19 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$) 18 $\mathbb{Q}cd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6?$ (dropping material; 18... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ gives White good winning chances due to the bishop pair and the superior pawn majority on the queenside) 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ and White won in C.Lakdawala-R.Pert, Internet (blitz) 2009.

6 $\mathbb{W}b3$



6... $\mathbb{Q}f5$

Intending to play ...c4 next.

Boris Grachev, one of the World's highest-rated London players, tried 6...g6! against me in an ICC 5-minute game. This is a tough one to crack for White. The game went 7 $\mathbb{Q}gf3$ c4 8 $\mathbb{W}xb6$ (perhaps White should try 8 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 9 $\mathbb{W}c1$ – at least Black had to expend a tempo on ...g6) 8... $axb6$ 9 a3 b5 10 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ h6 11 h3 g5 12 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e6 14 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 16 0-0 f6 17 $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 20 e4 $\mathbb{Q}ae8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ f5 22 exd5 exd5 23 g3 with a dynamically balanced game, C.Lakdawala-B.Grachev, Internet (blitz) 2009.

7 $dxc5!$ $\mathbb{W}xb3$ 8 $axb3$

The unnatural *Fritz* suggestion of 8 $\mathbb{Q}xb3?$ is an interesting try, which nobody seems to play as White. Let's look:

a) 8...e5 9 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ f6 11 $\mathbb{Q}a5!$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 15 b4 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 16 a3 keeps the extra material.

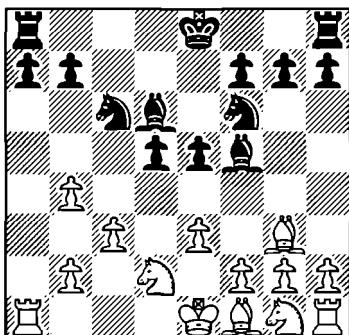
b) 8...a5 9 $\mathbb{Q}d4!$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}gf3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 0-0-0 12 $\mathbb{Q}c7!$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ e6 (13...e5? is met by 14 $\mathbb{Q}c7$) 14 $\mathbb{Q}fd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}b7!$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 18 b4. Yes, still hanging on to the extra material, but honestly, I don't trust these artificial computer-generated lines. In real life, we humans botch such positions with alarming consistency!

8...e5 9 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 10 b4 $\mathbb{Q}d6$

Note that 10... $\mathbb{Q}b6??$ just drops an important pawn after 11 b5! $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$.

A critical opening position. Black's

"advantage" after the 10th move is an optical illusion.



At first sight, it looks rather glum for White who looks like he is getting squeezed by Black's central space. But upon closer examination, White has:

1. The open a-file;
2. Pressure on the Black centre; and
3. The possibility of some interesting tactical ideas based on $\mathbb{Q}gf3$ and $\mathbb{Q}d4$.

This position is deceptive and many of your opponents may be under the false belief that they have a comfortable advantage, when in fact, Black may be barely equal. Also, such positions usually favour the side with the space when queens are on the board but here, Black's space may later become a liability in the ending.

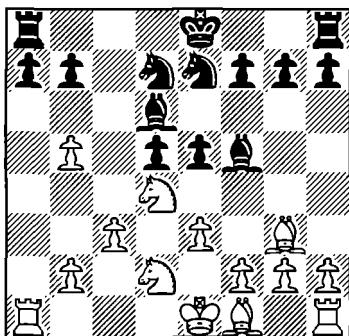
11 b5!

11 $\mathbb{Q}gf3?$! $\mathbb{Q}h5!$ nets Black the bishop pair and takes some of the pressure off the centre.

11...e7 12 $\mathbb{Q}gf3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

Another possibility would be 11... $\mathbb{Q}g6?$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d4!$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d3$.

13 $\mathbb{Q}d4!$



Remember this trick! White transfers the f3-knight into the battle.

13... $\mathbb{Q}g6$

After 13... $\mathbb{Q}g6$? 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $dxe3$ 15 $fxe3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ (intending ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$) 16 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ White's bishop pair gives him the edge.

14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0 15 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}4b3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 17 c4!

Finally fighting back against the mammoth pawn centre.

17...f6 18 $\mathbb{Q}a5!$

A strong plan. White forces his opponent to take on c4.

18... $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 19 b4! $dxc4$

Otherwise, c5 follows.

20 $\mathbb{Q}xc4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$

The d6-square could be a potential problem for Black if a white knight manages to land there.

21... $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xa5?$

22... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}ed6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ may have been a better idea.

23 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 24 $bxa5$ a6 25 f4?

Sergeev is anxious to bring his

bishop back into the game so he lashes out on the kingside. He still keeps a nagging edge after this move, but the immediate 25...bxa6! ties Black up badly after 25...bxa6 26 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{E}a8$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}f1$. Black can't unravel with 28... $\mathbb{Q}f8??$ because he loses material after 29 $\mathbb{Q}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}d6+$.

25...axb5 26 $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}c5?$

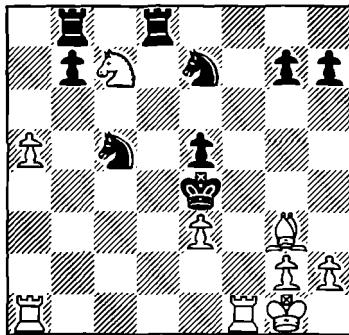
After this, the black king gets harassed until the end of the game.

27... $\mathbb{Q}f5!$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 29 fxe5 fxe5 (29... $\mathbb{Q}xe5??$ loses the exchange to 30 g4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}g3+$) 30 g4! $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 32 h3 would have kept White's edge to a minimum.

28 fxe5 fxe5 29 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$! $\mathbb{Q}f5$

Or else Black drops the e-pawn after 29... $\mathbb{Q}f6?$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}f1+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$.

30 $\mathbb{Q}f1+$ $\mathbb{Q}e4!$



Objectively, Black must be lost here but this is the best practical chance. It was Steinitz who said, "The king is a fighting piece. Use it!" Black is intent on hanging on to his e-pawn and may even threaten White's pawn on e3 at some point. On the down side, Black's

king is now in serious danger despite the reduced material on the board.

31 $\mathbb{Q}ac1!$

$\mathbb{Q}b3$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}c4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ puts the black king in greater danger than he faced in the actual game. For example, 34... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}dc8$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}c5+$ and Black must fork over the exchange, since on 36... $\mathbb{Q}e2??$ or 36... $\mathbb{Q}xe3??$, there is 37 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ mate.

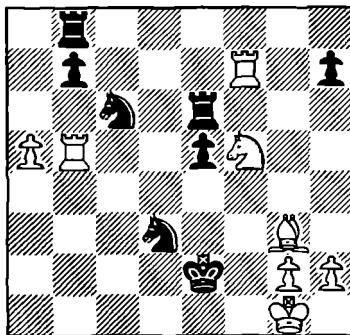
31... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$

34... $\mathbb{Q}dc8$ is answered by 35 $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}f2!$ with some nasty threats! 36... $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}c5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ continues the pressure.

35 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}e2!$

Onward!

36 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$



37 $\mathbb{Q}h4!$

Clearing g3 for the knight.

37... $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}g3+$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$

If 38... $\mathbb{Q}e3$, White plays 39 $\mathbb{Q}d7!$.

39 $\mathbb{Q}fxb7$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$

If 39... $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ e4 43 $\mathbb{Q}e2+$ and White should win without too much trouble.

40 $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d1$

White also keeps a decisive advantage in the line 40... $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}d2+$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ h6 44 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 45 $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 46 $\mathbb{Q}dd7$.

41 $\mathbb{Q}b1+$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}a1$ e4 43 $\mathbb{Q}e3!$

The e-pawn isn't going anywhere.

43... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 44 $\mathbb{Q}a2+$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 45 $\mathbb{Q}e2+$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 46 $\mathbb{Q}c2+$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 47 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 48 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 49 $\mathbb{Q}f4+$

Winning more material.

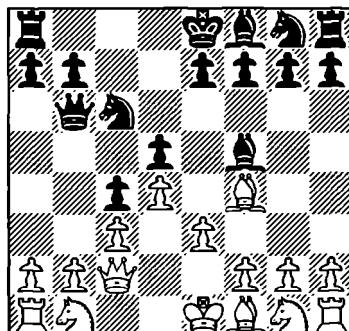
49... $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 50 $\mathbb{Q}c5+!$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 51 $\mathbb{Q}bxc6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 52 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 53 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ e3 54 $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ 1-0

Summary

Black's space "advantage" may actually just be a liability for him after the 10th move. With queens off the board, Black doesn't have the normal attacking chances which typically come with a territorial advantage. Also, remember that 5 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ is the more exact move order. In general, if you have a choice, pick $\mathbb{Q}d2$ over $\mathbb{Q}f3$ for your move order.

6 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

If Black tries the familiar trick 6... $\mathbb{Q}f5?$, we are not going to back down.



White has the unexpected 7 $\mathbb{Q}xf5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}b5!$ 0-0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ e5!. Now there's a choice:

a) 11 $\mathbb{Q}e2?$ will eventually trap Black's queen and lead to a totally unbalanced game: 11...exf4 12 0-0 a6 13 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1+$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ fxe3 18 fxe3 $\mathbb{Q}h6!$. I like White at the end of this line.

b) White can also take a more strategic route with 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4!$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3+$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f3$. In return for the exchange White has:

1. An extra pawn;
2. A giant pawn centre; and
3. Open lines to attack on the queenside.

7 $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ $\mathbb{Q}h5?$

Black tries to bag the bishop pair but we use our standard trick to mess things up.

8 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 9 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ g5 10 $\mathbb{Q}e2!$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$

Let's say Black insists on going after

Game 16

N.Sedlak-Todorovic

Serbian League, Subotica 2008

1 d4 d5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ c5 3 e3

The Reversed Albin Counter-Gambit with 3 e4 is White's other option (see Games 12-14).

3... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 4 c3 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ c4

Exchanging on b3 just gives White the better ending.

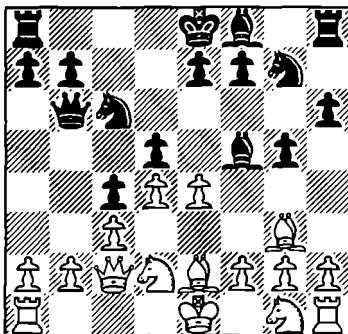
Play the London System

the bishop pair:

a) 10...gxh4?! 11 ♖xh5 ♕g8 12 ♖f3 is clearly in White's favour.

b) 10...♗f4?! 11 exf4 gxh4 12 ♗gf3 h3 13 g3 and Black's pawn on h3 will very likely become a target if the game becomes simplified later on.

11 ♖g3 ♖f5 12 e4!



White is unafraid of the pin.

The passive 12 ♕c1?! e6 13 h4 ♕g8 gave Black a decent game in V.Karlik-T.Pokorny, Czech League 2004.

12...♗g6 13 h4

Attempting to punish Black for his earlier thrust 9...g5. The alternative plan is 13 ♗h3! with the idea of castling kingside followed by ♘h1 and f4.

13...gxh4

13...♗e6? 14 ♕c1! ♕a5 (14...♗xe4?? 15 ♗xe4 dxe4 16 d5 wins) 15 exd5 ♕xd5 16 ♗xc4! is winning for White since 16...♕xg2?? 17 ♖f3 traps the queen.

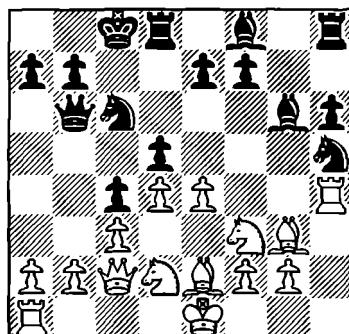
14 ♖xh4

White holds a clear advantage due to his superior pawn structure.

14...0-0-0 15 ♗gf3 ♗h5?

Trying to bring his offside knight back into the game but White has a combination.

15...e6! was a better try: 16 ♗e5 ♕xe5 17 ♖xe5 ♕e7 18 ♖h3 f6 19 ♖h2! (in such lines, White must be very careful not to allow Black ...e5! with tempo: for example, 19 ♖f4?! ♗e8 20 b3 ♗d6 21 f3 e5! and the game has suddenly turned into a free-for-all) 19...♗e8 20 b3 ♗d6 21 ♖f3 and Black's king is in some danger.



16 ♖xh5!

White destroys Black's pawn centre by deflecting the bishop from g6, which breaks the pin on the e-pawn.

16...♖xh5 17 exd5 ♕xd5

17...♗g6 18 ♗xc4! ♕b5 (18...♕xc2 19 ♗xb6+ axb6 20 dxc6 bxc6 21 ♗e5 wins because 21...♗g6? 22 ♗a6+) 19 ♗d6+ exd6 20 ♗xb5 ♕xc2 21 dxc6 gives White two pawns for the exchange plus a damaged black pawn structure in the ending.

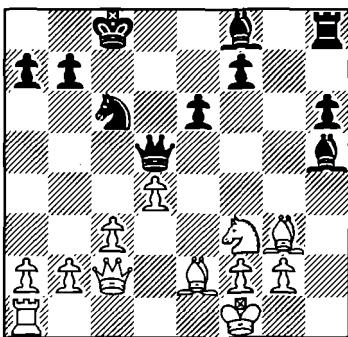
18 ♗xc4 ♕d8 19 ♗e3 e6

Returning the exchange and agreeing to go a pawn down for no compen-

1...d5 without an Early ...e6

sation. The alternatives didn't look good either:

- a) 19... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}gg8$ (21... $\mathbb{Q}g6?$ 22 $\mathbb{W}xg6!$ $fxg6$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ wins) 22 d5 $\mathbb{Q}b8$ with a dismal situation for Black;
- b) 19... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 20 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ also looks awful for Black.
- 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}f1!$**



Castling kingside manually. White's king is snug and safe while Black's problems are just beginning on the other side of the board.

21... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 22 $\mathbb{b}4!$

The attack begins.

22... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 23 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$

23...a6 24 b5 shreds the queenside pawn cover.

24 b5 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 25 $\mathbb{W}xa7$

Threatening 26 $\mathbb{W}b8+$.

25... $\mathbb{W}xg3$ 26 $\mathbb{W}a8+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 27 $fxg3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}g1!$

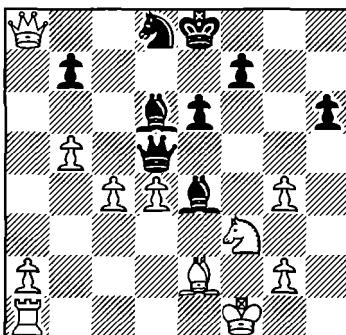
Setting up a trap which Black misses.

28... $\mathbb{Q}e8?$

28... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 29 $gxf3$ $\mathbb{W}g5$ was Black's only chance, but White should win

comfortably after 30 $\mathbb{W}a4$.

29 $c4!$ 1-0



Unexpectedly, Black's queen, in the middle of the board, has no place to hide.

Summary

Don't be afraid to self-pin in this line with 12 e4!. Black has no easy way of exploiting it, and in the meantime White chips away at the black centre.

Game 17

F.Berkes-C.Lupulescu
Dresden Olympiad 2008

1 d4 d5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ c6

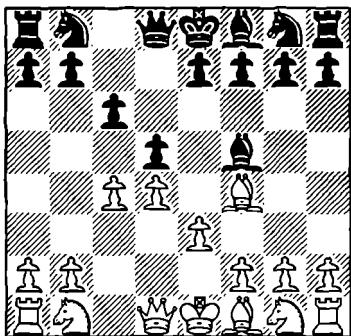
The London versus the Slav.

3 e3 $\mathbb{Q}f5$

In general, symmetrical lines are no fun for Black. As a Slav and French player, I always grate my teeth when opponents play the Exchange lines. Here too in the London, it's not so easy for Black to equalize.

4 c4

The only move to try for the advantage. All other moves are too passive.



4...Qxb1?!

I love it when my opponents make this move. It always ends up badly for Black. On the surface, it looks dangerous as White's king is prevented from castling and is forced out into the open centre. Black gets all of this just at the cost of a pawn. The problem for Black is that he simply doesn't have enough developed pieces to exploit White's king position.

5 Qxb1 e5?

The logical follow-up to his last move, but the sacrifice is unsound.

Black should admit his inaccuracy and back down with 5...e6. Then 6 c5! Qd7 7 Qf3 Qg6 8 h3! (preserving the bishop) 8...Qe4 9 Qd3 f5 10 Qc2 Qe7 gave White a favourable London versus Stonewall Dutch setup in S.Kovacevic-Z.Varga, Harkany 1994.

6 Qxe5 Wa5+ 7 Qd1 Qd7 8 Qg3 c5

This looks deadly but White has things under control.

9 Qf3 Qg6 10 a3!

This move is the key to the defence: b4! may follow with great force.

10...cxd4

10...Qd8? 11 b4! cxb4 12 axb4 Wxb4 13 Wxb4 Qxb4 14 Qxa7 leaves Black a pawn down for no compensation.

11 exd4 Qe7

Black can't continue to open the position up with 11...dxc4?. After 12 Qxc4 Qe7 13 Qe1 Qc8 14 Qd3! it is Black who should be worried about his king, not White.

12 c5! Qe4 13 Qd3 f5 14 b4! Qd8

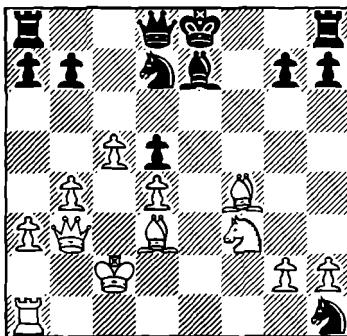
Now Black has the double threat to fork on c3 and also deflect the g3-bishop with ...f4.

If 14...Qc3+?? 15 Qc2 Qxb1, then 16 bxa5 strands the knight.

15 Qb3!

"Falling" for it.

15...f4 16 Qxf4 Qxf2+ 17 Qc2 Qxh1



18 Wxd5!!

Giving up a full rook to keep Black's king in the centre.

18...Qf6

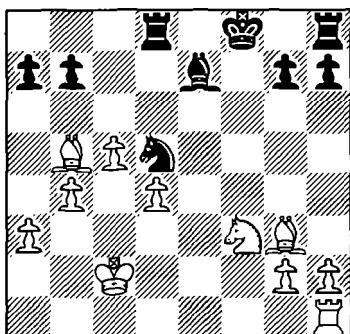
If Black tries to extricate the knight with 18...Qf2, his king gets trapped in

the centre: 19 ♜b5 ♛g4 20 ♛g5! ♜xg5 21 ♜xg5 ♛gf6 22 ♜e1+ ♛f8 23 ♜d6+ ♜f7 24 ♜e6+ ♛g6 25 ♜f4 and there is no defence to ♜d3+.

19 ♜b5+ ♛f8 20 ♜xd8+!

The best practical move. White avoids the complications arising from 20 ♜xb7?!, ♜d5! 21 ♜c6 ♜f5+.

20...♜xd8 21 ♜xh1 ♜d5 22 ♜g3



White has more than enough for the exchange:

1. Two healthy pawns;
2. A monster central and queenside pawn majority;
3. Active pieces; and
4. A lead in development.

22...h5!

Black finds an efficient method of developing the h8-rook, and he also avoids the rather obvious trap 22...♜e3+? 23 ♜d3 ♜xg2?? 24 ♜g1.

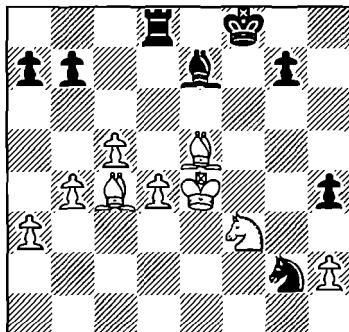
23 ♜e1 h4 24 ♜e5 ♜h6 25 ♜c4 ♜g6 26 ♜e2!

Another brilliant move. White deliberately falls for a mini-combination but he has assessed the position deeper than his opponent.

26...♜xg2

This looks like a shot.

27 ♜xg2 ♜e3+ 28 ♜d3 ♜xg2 29 ♜e4!



In return for only a pawn, White has centralized his king which helps support the passed queenside pawn majority. Also, the black knight is stuck on g2 and is in great danger.

29...♜f6 30 ♜d6+ ♜e7 31 ♜c7 ♜c8

After 31...♜d7 32 ♜e5 g5! 33 d5 ♜d8 34 ♜d4, not much can be done by Black. Advances with b5 and c6 follow, creating unstoppable passed pawns.

32 ♜e5 ♜f6?!

Cracking under the strain of the relentless White pressure, but to be fair, Black didn't have much of a chance of survival after 32...g5 33 d5 either.

33 ♜e6! ♜c6 34 ♜h3 ♜xe5 35 ♜xe5 ♜a6 36 ♜xg2 ♜xa3 37 ♜f5! ♜a2 38 ♜xb7 ♜xh2 39 c6 ♜c2 1-0

40 ♜e6! h3 41 ♜d7! h2 42 c7 ends all resistance.

Summary

In the symmetrical line, play c4! and do not fear ...♜xb1. After a bishop or

queen check on the a5-e1 diagonal, the white king is surprisingly safe on d1.

Game 18

A.Yermolinsky-E.Lu

US Open, Dallas 2008

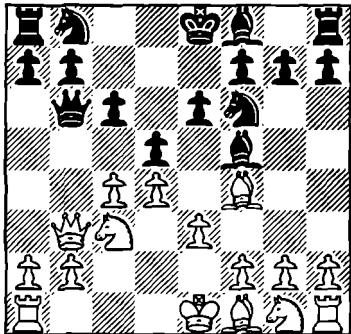
1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 c6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ d5 4 e3 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$

We reach our position through a Slav move order.

5...e6 6 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$

This line leads to a miserably hard ending for Black.

6... $\mathbb{W}c8$ is covered in the next game.



7 c5! $\mathbb{W}xb3$ 8 axb3

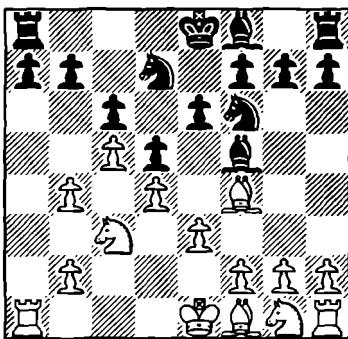
White has a nagging space advantage on the queenside, with the possibility of b4 and b5.

8... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$

8... $\mathbb{Q}h5?$ just loses a pawn to 9 $\mathbb{Q}xb8!$ $\mathbb{W}xb8$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$. If Black tries to open the game on the queenside to exploit his development lead with 10...b6, then 11 cxb6 $\mathbb{W}xb6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}a8+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (12... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ is

simple enough) 13 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf8!$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}a4!$ regains the exchange while retaining the extra pawn, since 16... $\mathbb{Q}a8??$ is met with 17 g4 f6 18 $\mathbb{Q}d7!$ winning more material. 9 $b4!$

The b5 advance is coming. 9 b4 is an improvement over 9 h3?! $\mathbb{Q}e7$?! (9...a6! 10 b4 $\mathbb{Q}c8$! sidesteps b5) 10 b4 0-0 11 b5 e5! 12 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ exd4 13 exd4 $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 15 bxc6 bxc6 16 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ a5 17 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3+$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$!, when Black had counterplay against the d4-pawn in A.Miles-Qian Jifu, Beijing 1993.



9... $\mathbb{Q}h5$

Black can try to mess things up with 9... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10 b5 e5?!. However, the complications still favour White after 11 dxе5 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 12 b4 g5! (a good try – it looks like Black is taking the initiative) 13 $\mathbb{Q}xg5!$ (without this piece sac, Black would be okay) 13... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f3$. Black's entire queenside is dissolving. White threatens $\mathbb{Q}d4$, hitting c6 and the bishop on f5. He will then consolidate with f4. At a minimum, White

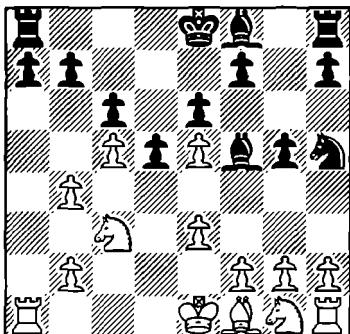
gets three healthy pawns for the piece and leaves Black with damaged remaining pawns.

10 \mathbb{Q} e5!

Provoking Black's next move.

10...f6?!

10... \mathbb{Q} xe5! 11 dx5 g5! may be the best option, but I still don't trust Black's position.



White has several trumps here:

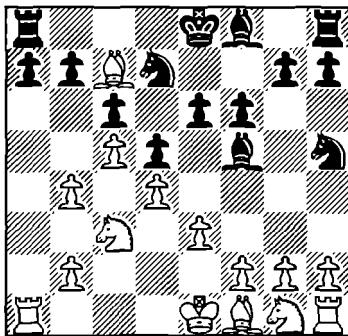
1. Black's knight on h5 is offside;
2. White has access to d4 for a knight;
3. The open a-file adds pressure to Black's position; and
4. White has a space advantage.

Black has a rather solid position and the bishop pair, but he will have to play very accurately to keep the balance. For instance, 12 \mathbb{Q} e2 \mathbb{Q} g7 13 \mathbb{Q} f3 13... \mathbb{Q} e7 14 0-0 f6 15 exf6 \mathbb{Q} xf6 16 b5 e5 17 bxc6 bxc6 18 \mathbb{Q} a6! d4 19 exd4 exd4 20 \mathbb{Q} b5! with multiple threats.

If 11...g6? (instead of 11...g5), then 12 f3! \mathbb{Q} c2 13 \mathbb{Q} d2! \mathbb{Q} b3 14 \mathbb{Q} a3 (no rest for the bishop) 14... \mathbb{Q} c4 15 \mathbb{Q} xc4 dxc4 16 \mathbb{Q} e4 with a winning bind for

White. The c4-pawn is doomed and White will land a knight on d6. Black's knight will also be out of play for a very long time.

11 \mathbb{Q} c7!



11...g5!

Black doesn't get lured into 11... \mathbb{Q} c8? 12 \mathbb{Q} d6! \mathbb{Q} xd6 13 cxd6 g5 (13...a6?? drops a piece: 14 \mathbb{Q} e2 \mathbb{Q} g6 15 \mathbb{Q} g4 and the offside knight has no place to go) 14 \mathbb{Q} xa7 \mathbb{Q} b8 15 \mathbb{Q} a4 b6 16 \mathbb{Q} e2 \mathbb{Q} g7 17 b5! c5 18 \mathbb{Q} xb6! \mathbb{Q} xb6 (if 18... \mathbb{Q} xb6 19 dxc5 \mathbb{Q} xc5 20 \mathbb{Q} a8+ \mathbb{Q} d7 21 \mathbb{Q} xh8 \mathbb{Q} e8 22 \mathbb{Q} f3 \mathbb{Q} xd6 23 h4!, White unravels and the extra exchange wins the game) 19 dxc5 when White's armada of pawns cannot be halted.

12 b5 cxb5

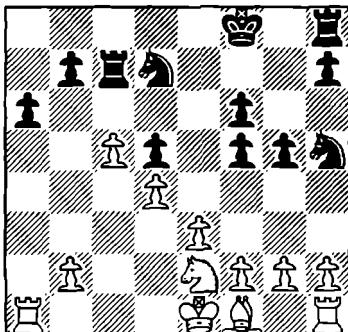
12... \mathbb{Q} c8? loses the a7-pawn to 13 bxc6 \mathbb{Q} xc7 14 cxd7+ \mathbb{Q} xd7 15 \mathbb{Q} xa7.

13 \mathbb{Q} xb5 a6 14 \mathbb{Q} d6! \mathbb{Q} c8 15 \mathbb{Q} xf8 \mathbb{Q} xf8

If 15...axb5?, 16 \mathbb{Q} d6 b4 17 \mathbb{Q} a7 wins for White.

16 \mathbb{Q} d6 \mathbb{Q} c7 17 \mathbb{Q} xf5 exf5 18 \mathbb{Q} e2!

Targeting the d5-pawn. Black's pawn structure is a train wreck and d5 soon falls.



18...f4

18... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ (20...g4? 21 h3!) 21 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ wins the pawn.

19 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ fxe3 20 fxe3 $\mathbb{E}c6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$

22 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

The game is essentially over. Grandmaster Yermolinsky has a healthy extra central pawn.

23... $\mathbb{A}e8$ 24 b4 $\mathbb{E}cc8$ 25 b5 $\mathbb{E}cd8$

Or 25...axb5 26 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ and either f6 or b7 will fall.

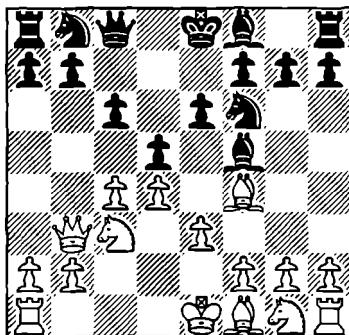
26 c6 bxc6 27 bxc6 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 28 dxе5 1-0

The white knight can't be touched.

Summary

The ending arising after the eighth move gives White lasting strategic pressure in the symmetrical line.

rather difficult for Black. His queen doesn't seem too comfortable looking down the barrel of the c-file with a white rook on c1. Black plans to eventually take on c4 and use the d5-square for a knight to initiate swaps. The trouble with this plan is that White takes over the centre.



7 $\mathbb{E}c1$ a6

Black is worried about tactics based on $\mathbb{Q}b5$, due to the unfortunate position of the queen. 7...dxc4 8 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ prevents most of these tactics but just gives White a great position. For example, 8... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 0-0 10 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}fe1!$ $\mathbb{Q}h5?$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ $\mathbb{Q}hf6$ (Black probably realized here that 12... $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 14 e4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 15 d5! leads to disaster) 13 e4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 15 e5! $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ and White won a pawn, B.Finegold-J.Kleiman, Tulsa 2008.

8 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$

White doesn't have to worry about his bishop on f4 just yet: 8... $\mathbb{Q}h5?$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7?$ 10 cxd5 exd5 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$ wins after 11... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{W}xc7$ 13 $\mathbb{W}xe6+$ fxe6 14 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$.

Game 19
B.Laurent-V.Dreux
Metz 2006

1 d4 d5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3 e3 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 4 c4 c6 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ e6 6 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}c8?!$

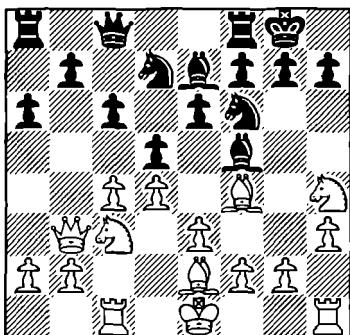
This super-passive option looks

9 h3!

One of the most important skills to develop for London players is to get a feel for the correct timing for h3, and also knowing when h3 is not necessary.

9... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0

10...h6 11 0-0 0-0 12 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ looks like an orthodox Queen's Gambit Declined, except Black's queen is rather uncomfortably placed on c8.

11 $\mathbb{Q}h4!$ **11... $\mathbb{Q}g6$**

11... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ doesn't escape the problems after 12 0-0 dxc4 (or 12... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 13 cx d5 exd5 14 f3 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ hxg6 16 e4 with strong pressure for White) 13 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5 15 $\mathbb{Q}f5!$, with a clear advantage for White.

12 0-0 dxc4 13 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ hxg6

A forced move. 13...cx b3?? drops a piece after 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}axc8$ 16 axb3.

14 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$

White has emerged from the opening with three considerable strategic plusses:

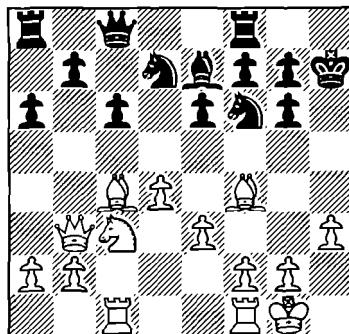
1. The bishop pair;

2. A bigger pawn centre; and

3. A central space advantage.

14... $\mathbb{Q}h7?$

This move is a sure sign that Black is having trouble coming up with a defensive plan.

**15 e4?!**

It's important to prevent Black from untangling on the queenside with ...b5, ... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ and ...c5. He can do this by playing 15 $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ maintaining the bind, since if Black insists on 15...b5?, then 16 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}g5+!$ (exploiting Black's aimless 14th move) 17... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xe6!$ fxe6 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ wins.

15...b5!

Seizing his chance to fight back.

16 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ c5 17 dxc5?!

Losing almost all of his advantages.

White still has a very promising attack after 17 e5! c4 18 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ (after 18... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 20 d5 exd5 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}cd1$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ Black is too tangled up to survive) 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5 20 $\mathbb{Q}e3!$. Now f4, f5 and maybe even g4 follow with great effect.

17...Qxc5 18 Rxc2 b4! 19 Ra4 Qcxe4

Black is close to equalizing.

20 Rxc8 Rfxc8 21 Qb6 Rxc1 22 Rxc1 Qd8

22...Ra7 23 Qc8 Rd7 24 Qxe7 Rxe7 25 Rh2! (threatening to corral the e4-knight with f3) 25...Qd5 26 Rxa6 Ra7 27 Qd3 Qef6 28 Ra1! still gives White some chances to win. He intends to eventually create a passed pawn with a4.

23 Rxa6??

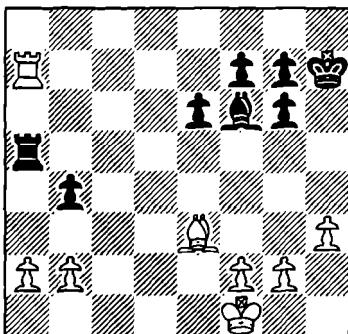
Missing Black's threat.

23 Re3! a5 24 Rc7 Qg8 25 Ra7 Rf6 26 Qc4 would keep Black under pressure.

23...Qc5??

He returns the favour. Black wins with 23...Qc5! 24 Qc8 Rxf2+ 25 Qf1 Rh5 26 Rh2 Rd2 27 Re2 (forced) 27...Rxb2.

24 Rc4 Qd3 25 Rxd3 Rxd3 26 Re3 Qd5 27 Rxd5 Rxd5 28 Qf1 Ra5 29 Rc7 Rf6 30 Ra7!



After a few serious missteps, White wins the critical final battle. His last move displays excellent judgement.

White temporarily sacs a pawn to swap rooks. His king, much closer to the queenside thanks to Black's weak 14th move, regains the pawn and decides the outcome of the game.

30...Rxa7

30...Rb5 31 a4 bxa3 32 bxa3 Qg8 33 Ra8+ Rh7 34 a4 is also lost for Black, since he has no good way of halting the march of the a-pawn.

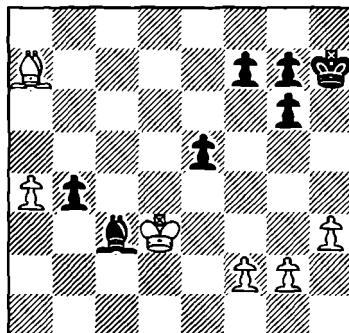
31 Rxa7 Rxb2 32 Qe2

Black's b4-pawn is doomed, after which White emerges with a deadly outside, passed a-pawn.

32...e5 33 Qd3 Rc3

If Black avoids ...Rc3 he is still too slow: 33...g5 34 Qc4 Qg6 35 Rxb4 f5 36 a4 e4 37 a5 f4 38 a6 and White is just faster.

34 a4!



Creating the passer without even bothering to win the b-pawn.

34...e4+? 35 Qc2?

Complicating the win a bit. Much simpler was calling the bluff with 35 Qxe4! b3 36 Qd3 Re5 37 a5.

35...Re1 36 Qb3 f5 37 a5 f4 38 a6 Qd2

39 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ e3 40 fxe3 fxe3

After 40... $\mathbb{Q}xe3?$ White ignores the bishop and promotes with 41 a7!.

41 $\mathbb{Q}c2!$

Not falling for the trap 41 a7?? e2

42 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}e3!$ (a saving deflection) 43

$\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ 44 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ with a draw.

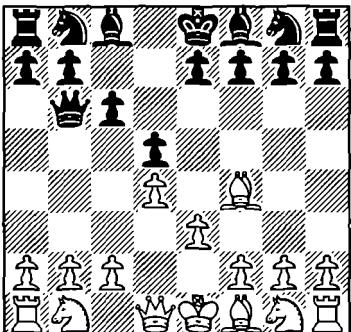
41... $b3+$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}xb3!$ e2 43 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 44 **$\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 45 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 46 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 1-0**

After taking the pawn on e2, White wins a piece with $\mathbb{Q}f2$.

Summary

When Black goes in for the super-passive ... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ in the Symmetrical, the game turns into a type of orthodox Queen's Gambit Declined where the black queen is misplaced on the c-file.

Game 20 L.Winants-V.Georgiev Turin Olympiad 2006

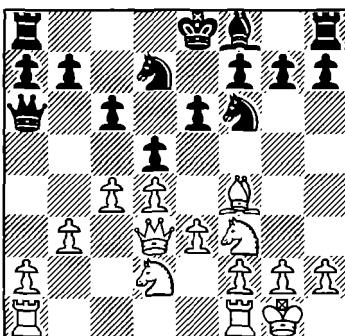
1 d4 d5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ c6 3 e3 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ **4 b3**

Sac'ing the b-pawn is dubious. This

is one of the few times in the London System where White plays b3 in response to ... $\mathbb{Q}b6$.

4... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

After 5 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ e6 6 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 7 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 8 c4 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 9 c5 $\mathbb{W}d8$ 10 b4 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 12 exf4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 13 a4, White's queenside space and his grip on e5 counts for more than Black's ownership of the dark-squared bishop, P.Elianov-V.Golod, Netanya 2009.

5... $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 6 $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 8 0-0**e6 9 c4 $\mathbb{W}a6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$** 

There is no need to preserve the bishop with 10 h3.

10... $\mathbb{Q}h5?$

Given that Black ends up rejecting ... $\mathbb{Q}xf4$, he should have continued to develop with 10... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 11 e4 dxe4 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 13 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 0-0, with a microscopic edge for White due to his extra space.

11 h4!?

11 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ f6 12 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 13 hxg3 also looks good for White, since e6 may turn into a problem after White plays e4.

11... $\mathbb{A}e7$

Black now realizes that he can't take the bishop without trouble. 11... $\mathbb{Q}xf4$

12 exf4 g6 13 $\mathbb{A}fe1$ and now:

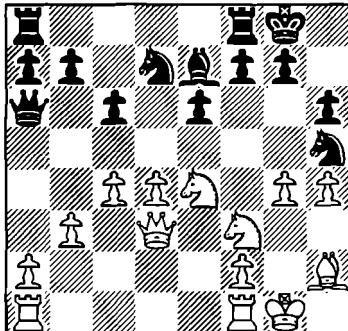
a) 13...0-0-0?? 14 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ wins material.

b) 13... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 14 f5! gxf5 15 $\mathbb{W}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

16 $\mathbb{W}f4$ and Black suffers with unresolved king safety issues.

12 $\mathbb{A}h2$ h6 13 e4 dxe4 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 0-0 15

g4!



With Black's queen vacationing on the east coast, this risky-looking thrust is absolutely correct.

15... $\mathbb{Q}hf6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$

Things also look grim for Black after 16... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 17 g5 hxg5 18 hxg5 $\mathbb{A}e7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}g2$! with $\mathbb{A}h1$ to follow.

17 g5 hxg5 18 hxg5 $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 19 $\mathbb{A}f4$ $\mathbb{A}fd8$
20 $\mathbb{Q}g2$!

A rook or two will enter along the h-file.

20... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}e5$!

21 $\mathbb{A}h1$?! $\mathbb{Q}g6$ would allow Black to defend.

21... $\mathbb{A}c5$

Nothing can save Black now:

a) 21... $\mathbb{A}d6$ 22 $\mathbb{W}h3$ $\mathbb{A}xe5$ 23 $\mathbb{A}h1$

$\mathbb{Q}g6$ 24 $\mathbb{W}h7+$ $\mathbb{W}f8$ 25 $\mathbb{A}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 26 $\mathbb{dxe5}$ c5 27 $\mathbb{W}h8+$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 28 $\mathbb{W}xg7$ $\mathbb{W}c6+$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}f3$ 30 $\mathbb{W}f6+$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 31 $\mathbb{exf6}$ + wins.

b) 21...c5 22 $\mathbb{A}h1$ f6 23 gxf6 $\mathbb{A}xf6$ 24 $\mathbb{W}h3$ $\mathbb{A}xe5$ 25 $\mathbb{W}h8+$ $\mathbb{A}f7$ 26 $\mathbb{A}xe5$ and g7 falls.

22 $\mathbb{A}h1$ $\mathbb{A}xd4$ 23 $\mathbb{W}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 1-0

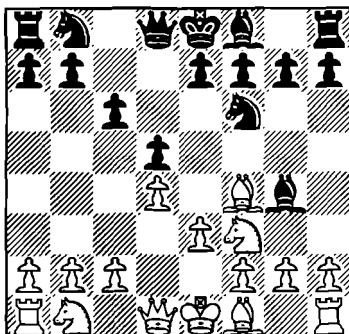
Summary

White gets a slight space advantage in the London versus Slav lines when Black opts for an early ... $\mathbb{W}b6$ and ... $\mathbb{A}f5$. This is one of the few lines I know of where White meets ... $\mathbb{W}b6$ with b3.

Game 21

G.Kamsky-K.Lerner
New York Open, 1990

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d5 3 $\mathbb{A}f4$ c6 4 e3 $\mathbb{A}g4$



This is the London versus the Torre Attack.

5 $\mathbb{A}bd2$

White can play in traditional style with 5 c4 here. For example, 5...e6 6 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}c8$?! (I never understand why

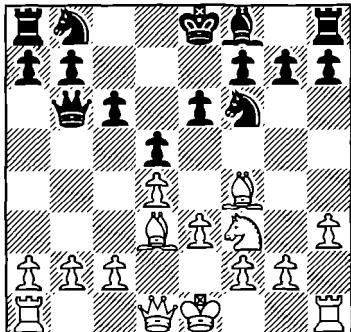
anyone plays this passive move when (they have 6... $\mathbb{W}b6$ as an option) 7 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{A}f5$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 9 $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$? (Black should play 9...h6 here) 10 cxd5! exd5 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{A}xe4$ 12 $\mathbb{A}g4!$ f5 13 f3! fxg4 14 fxe4 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{A}xf4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 17 exd5 g5 18 dxg6! and Black was a pawn down and defending a nauseating position in G.Kamsky-L.Aronian, Nice (rapid) 2009.

5...e6 6 h3 $\mathbb{A}xf3$

Black must cede the bishop pair. If 6... $\mathbb{A}h5?$ 7 g4! $\mathbb{A}g6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 9 h4!, the threat of h5 forces a dreadful weakening move, and after 9...h5 10 $\mathbb{A}xg6$ fxg6 11 g5 $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 12 $\mathbb{A}h3$ Black is strategically lost:

1. His structure is a train wreck;
2. White has the bishop pair;
3. White leads in development and this will almost certainly lead to an attack;
4. White controls the key e5-square; and finally
5. White may open at will with either e4, c4, or both moves.

7 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}d3!$?



8...c5

If Black plays the greedy 8... $\mathbb{W}xb2!?$, then 9 0-0 gives White a huge lead in development for the pawn. The question remains: if Black had no intention of capturing on b2, why play ... $\mathbb{W}b6$ in the first place?

9 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 10 c3!? cxd4

It's too late to grab the pawn: 10... $\mathbb{W}xb2??$ 11 $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 12 $\mathbb{E}xb7$ c4 13 $\mathbb{A}c2$ and there is no reasonable way to deal with $\mathbb{A}a4$.

11 exd4 $\mathbb{A}e7$

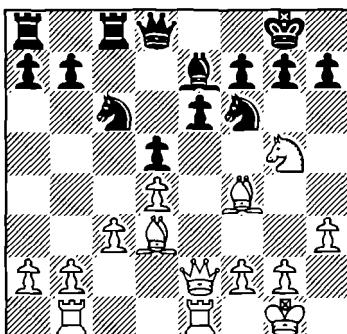
Black can take the pawn once again, but there is still risk: 11... $\mathbb{W}xb2!?$ 12 $\mathbb{E}b1$ and now:

- a) 12... $\mathbb{W}xc3??$ 13 $\mathbb{E}xb7$ $\mathbb{A}c8$ 14 $\mathbb{A}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{A}a4$ and White wins.
- b) 12... $\mathbb{W}xa2!$ 13 $\mathbb{E}xb7$ a6! 14 $\mathbb{A}c2!$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ gives White good compensation for the pawn but still may be playable for Black.

12 $\mathbb{W}e2$

Finally protecting his b-pawn.

12...0-0 13 $\mathbb{E}ab1$ $\mathbb{A}fc8$ 14 $\mathbb{E}fe1$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}g5$



15... $\mathbb{W}f8$

Certainly not 15...h6?? 16 ♜xf7 ♜xf7
17 ♜xe6+ ♜f8 18 ♜g6.

16 g4 ♜e8

Lerner refuses to weaken his king with ...h6.

17 ♜e3 ♜d6 18 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 19 f4! a6!

Both sides follow the correct plan and begin minority attacks on opposite wings.

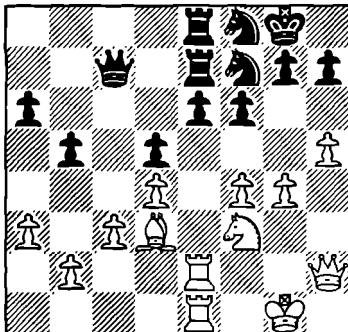
20 ♜f3 ♜d7 21 a3 b5 22 ♜e2 ♜a5

22...♜ab8 (intending ...a5 and ...b4)
23 ♜e5 a5 24 ♜xh7+! ♜xh7 25 ♜xf7
♜e7 26 ♜d3+ ♜g8 27 ♜g5 ♜f8 28
♜xe6! gives White three healthy pawns for the piece. I'm not sure who stands better but the computers prefer White by about half a pawn.

**23 ♜e5 ♜c4 24 ♜g3 ♜f8 25 h4 ♜c7 26
♞f1 ♜d6 27 h5 f6 28 ♜f3 ♜e7 29 ♜h4!**

Threatening to play h6.

29...♜f7 30 ♜h2 ♜ae8 31 ♜fe1

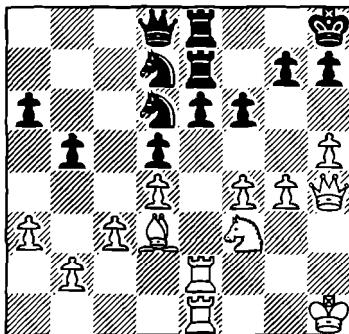


I'm not sure where Black went wrong but the momentum has clearly swung towards White, who has coerced Black into abandoning his queenside play.

31...♜d6 32 ♜g2! ♜b6 33 ♜h1 ♜d8!

If Black presses on the other wing with the natural 33...a5?, there follows 34 ♜h4 ♜d7 35 h6 g6 36 ♜ge2 b4 37 axb4 axb4 38 f5! and White breaks through first.

34 ♜h4! ♜d7 35 ♜ge2 ♜h8



Kamsky's policy of constant harassment has paid dividends, but here he misses an immediate win with 36 ♜g6! ♜g8 37 ♜xe6.

**36 ♜h2? ♜f7 37 g5! f5 38 g6 ♜h6 39
♜g5 ♜f8 40 gxh7 ♜d6 41 ♜g1 ♜c7 42
♜g3 ♜d8 43 ♜e3 ♜ee7 44 ♜h3 ♜e8 45
♜eg2 ♜b7 46 ♜f3 ♜f7 47 ♜e5 ♜f6 48
♜h4 ♜xh7 49 ♜e2 ♜d8 50 ♜c6 ♜e8 51
♜b4 a5 52 ♜d3 ♜g8 53 ♜g5 ♜h8 54
♜e5 ♜h6 55 ♜h2 ♜f6 56 ♜f3! ♜h7 57
♜g2 ♜f6?!**

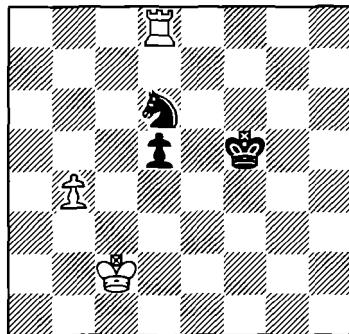
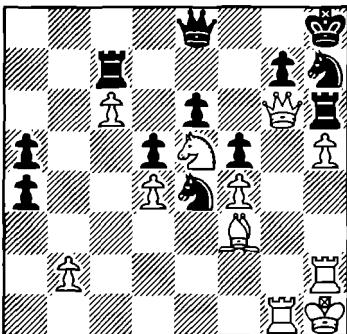
57...♜c7! avoids the game continuation.

58 a4!

Sacking a pawn to create a powerful passed c-pawn.

**58...bxa4 59 c4 ♜e4 60 c5 ♜h7 61 c6
♜c7 62 ♜g6!**

This flashy move is designed to reach a winning ending.



62... $\mathbb{Q}hf6$

If 62... $\mathbb{E}xg6??$ White wins after 63 $\mathbb{H}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}ef6$ 64 $\mathbb{G}xh7$ g5 (White threatened to move his knight to g6) 65 $\mathbb{F}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 66 $\mathbb{E}xg4$ $\mathbb{F}xg4$ 67 g6 $\mathbb{E}g7$ 68 $\mathbb{E}xg4$ $\mathbb{W}f8$ 69 $\mathbb{Q}f7+$ $\mathbb{E}xf7$ 70 $\mathbb{G}xf7$ and $\mathbb{E}g8+$.
63 $\mathbb{W}xe8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 64 $\mathbb{E}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 65 $\mathbb{E}xa4$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 66 $\mathbb{E}xg4$ $\mathbb{F}xg4$ 67 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{E}xc6$

Otherwise the c6-pawn chokes Black.

68 $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{E}c1+$ 69 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{G}xh6$ 70 $\mathbb{E}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 71 $\mathbb{E}a7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 72 $\mathbb{E}f3$ $\mathbb{E}f1+$ 73 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g1$ 74 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{E}d1+$ 75 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{E}xd4$ 76 $\mathbb{E}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 77 $\mathbb{E}c7$ $\mathbb{E}c4+$ 78 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 79 $\mathbb{E}c2!$

Removing Black's rook makes it easy for Kamsky to shepherd his b-pawn up the board.

79... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 80 $\mathbb{E}2xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}d2+$ 81 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 82 $\mathbb{E}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 83 $\mathbb{E}f6$ $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 84 $\mathbb{E}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 85 $\mathbb{E}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 86 b4 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 87 $\mathbb{E}e6!$

A nice touch, cutting off Black's king.

87... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 88 $\mathbb{E}e8$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 89 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6!$ 90 $\mathbb{E}d8!$

More accurate than 90 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 91 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 92 b5 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 93 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 94 $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6+$.

90... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 91 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$

Or 91... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 92 $\mathbb{E}a8$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 93 $\mathbb{E}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 94 b5 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 95 b6, threatening b7 and also $\mathbb{E}xd5$.

92 $\mathbb{E}b8$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 93 b5 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 94 $\mathbb{E}e8??$

It's move 94! Perhaps fatigue played a role. I hear constant protests on the Internet about the declining quality of play in quick-play games. I disagree. In quick-play, time pressure creates blunders, whereas in classical 40 moves in 2-hour time controls it is fatigue blunders which ruin the hard work!

94 $\mathbb{E}c8!$ was correct.

94... $\mathbb{Q}e5+??$

Lerner is tired too! He misses the draw with 94... $\mathbb{Q}c5!$, and if 95 $\mathbb{E}b8$ Black wins the pawn with 95... $\mathbb{Q}b6$.

95 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ 96 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

96... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 97 $\mathbb{E}c8!$ cuts off the black king again.

97 $\mathbb{E}f8$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 98 $\mathbb{E}f5$ 1-0

Summary

When Black meets the London Torre-style, with ...c6 and ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$, just kick the bishop with h3 and pocket the bishop

Play the London System

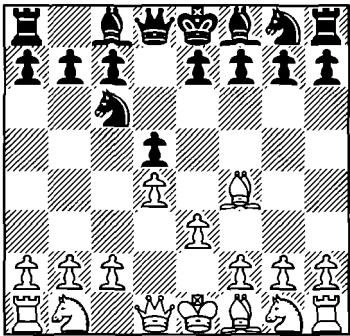
pair, which is good enough for an opening edge. Sac'ing your b-pawn after ... $\mathbb{W}b6$ is optional. There is nothing wrong with tossing in b3.

Game 22
C.Bauer-L.Marie
Vandoeuvre les Nancy 2008

1 d4 d5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$

This is a Chigorin versus London setup.

3 e3



This move order has the benefit of not allowing Black to play ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$, hitting or pinning a knight on f3.

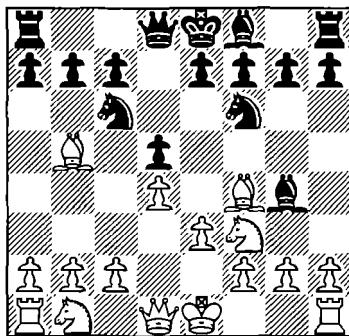
3... $\mathbb{Q}f6$

3... $\mathbb{Q}f6$? is an interesting idea here:

- a) In the game N.Levar-H.Jurkovic, Kastav 2002, White complied with 4 c4?! and there followed 4...e5! 5 dx5 fxе5 6 cxd5 exf4 7 dxc6 $\mathbb{W}xd1+$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ fxе3 9 cxб7? $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 10 fxe3 0-0-0+ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 13 e4 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}hf8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2+$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2+0-1$.

b) I would continue with 4 $\mathbb{Q}f3!$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ e6 6 c4 $\mathbb{Q}b4+$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}ge7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}b3$. I prefer White in this sharp position.

4 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}b5$



5... $\mathbb{Q}xf3?$

This breaks the principle stating: Don't capture a pinned piece unless there is a concrete gain from it. Here Black gives away the bishop pair without even getting a tempo (h3) for it.

6 $\mathbb{W}xf3$ e6 7 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ a6?!

Wasting more time.

9 $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$ $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 10 e4

Threatening to play e5.

10... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 11 $\mathbb{W}c3!$ c5

A desperate move. 11... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 12 e5 $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ is strategically horrible for Black. White's knight will either sit comfortably on c5, or may go to a5 to put pressure on the weak c6-pawn. Black tries to avoid this lingering death by giving up a pawn.

12 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$

12...gx $f6$ 13 dxc5 d4 14 $\mathbb{W}c4$ is even worse for Black.

13 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}d6!$

13...dxe4? is met by 14 $\mathbb{W}c6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 15

$\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 16 0-0-0.

14 $\mathbb{W}xd6$ cxd6 15 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

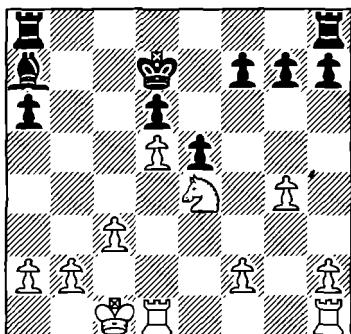
15...exd5 16 c3 $\mathbb{B}b8$ 17 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 18

$\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ also looks rather easy for White.

16 c3 $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 17 0-0-0! e5

Black doesn't have the time for 17... $\mathbb{Q}xf2$, as 18 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}e3+$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20 dxe6 fxe6 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ is hopeless.

18 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19 g4!



19...f6?

Passive defence will definitely lose. Black should try blasting open the f-file with 19... $\mathbb{Q}hf8$ 20 g5! f5 21 gxf6 gxf6 22 $\mathbb{Q}hg1$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ f5 24 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}d2$. Black's central pawns may make it hard for White to force victory.

20 $\mathbb{Q}hg1$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 21 b3 a5 22 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c7?$!

Black places her hopes on the queenside, where White dominates.

23 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}b8?!$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$

26 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 28 h4 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 29 h5 g6?

This can only help White, who will seize control of the h-file.

30 hxg6 hxg6 31 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}be7$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}h8+$

$\mathbb{Q}d7$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}f8+$

A second pawn falls.

33... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}xe8+$

$\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}f5$

$\mathbb{Q}d7$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$

40... $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ is no better: 41 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 44 $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 45 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ threatening $\mathbb{Q}d7$.

41 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 42 f3 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 43 a4 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 44 b4 $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 45 g5! $\mathbb{Q}g6$

After 45... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 46 gxf6! $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 47 fxe7, the e7-pawn costs Black the rook.

46 gxf6 1-0

Summary

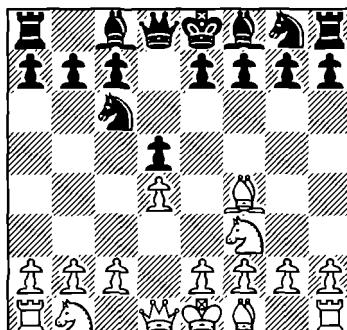
If Black plays ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ prematurely in the Chigorin line, White should consider counter-pinning with $\mathbb{Q}b5$ to damage Black's queenside.

Game 23

C.Lakdawala-D.Hart

Gambito (rapid),
San Diego 2009

1 d4 d5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$

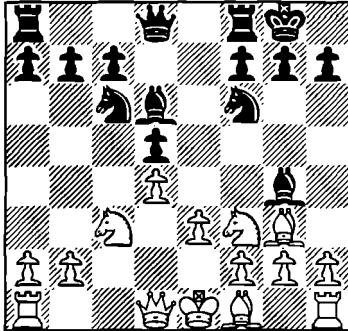


The London throws off Chigorin players, who usually just study the main lines like 3 c4 ♜g4 4 cxd5 ♜xf3 5 gxf3 ♜xd5. Most are unprepared to deal with White's unassuming setup. An exception would be my opponent in this game, who plays the London himself as White.

3...♜g4 4 e3 e6 5 c4 ♜d6

After 5...♜f6 6 ♜c3 ♜e7 7 h3 ♜xf3 8 ♜xf3 0-0 9 ♜e2 ♜a5 10 cxd5 ♜xd5 11 ♜xd5 exd5 12 0-0 c6 13 ♜ac1 ♜d6 14 ♜c2! ♜xf4 15 ♜xf4 ♜e7 16 ♜fc1! ♜ad8 17 ♜d3 ♜fe8 18 ♜c3 Black has not equalized. His knight is offside and he must move his b-pawn to bring it back, weakening him down the c-file: 18...b6 (if Black avoids ...b6, White can force it: 18...g6 19 ♜h6 ♜d7 20 ♜c5!) 19 ♜1c2 ♜d6 20 b4 ♜f6? 21 ♜h4! ♜xb4 22 ♜xh7+ ♜f8 23 ♜h8+ ♜e7 24 ♜xg7 left Black busted in E.Grivas-R.Hristopoulos, Athens 1984.

6 ♜g3 ♜f6 7 ♜c3 0-0 8 cxd5 exd5



9 ♜h4?

Getting fancy. The simple 9 ♜e2! is an improvement and keeps the advan-

tage, since 9...♜e7? 10 ♜h4! would be awkward for Black. White would inflict damage to the pawn structure after 10...c6 (it's either this move or drop the d-pawn) 11 ♜xf6 gxf6.

9...♜e7 10 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 11 ♜e2

I am embarrassed to admit that my original plan was the incredibly greedy line 11 ♜b3? ♜xf3 12 gxf3, but then I realized Black had 12...♜xd4! 13 exd4 ♜xd4 14 ♜a4 ♜xf3+ 15 ♜d1 ♜g5 16 ♜c2 ♜fe8 with three healthy pawns and a big attack for the piece.

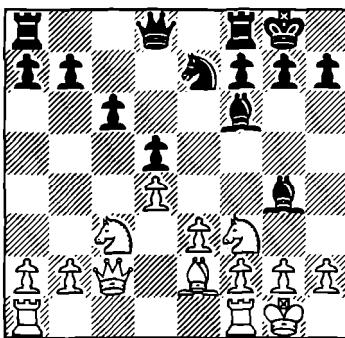
11...♜e7!

Good positional play, redeploying the knight over to the kingside. The knight was not effective anymore on c6.

12 0-0 c6

The position resembles a Queen's Gambit Declined Exchange Variation where Black has equalized with ease.

13 ♜c2



13...♜f5?

Black plunges into unfavourable complications. He has a number of ways of retaining safe equality here,

but this move is not one of them:

a) 13... $\mathbb{Q}xf3?$! 14 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ a5 15 a3 $\mathbb{Q}c8!$ 16 b4 axb4 17 axb4 $\mathbb{Qxa1}$ 18 $\mathbb{Qxa1}$ b5! 19 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Wd6}$ 20 $\mathbb{Wc5}!$ may keep a tiny edge for White.

b) 13...a5! stalls White's minority attack ideas and gives Black a easy game.

c) 13... $\mathbb{We8}!$ also looks fine for Black.

14 $\mathbb{Qd3}!$ g6

14... $\mathbb{Qxf3}??$ just loses a pawn to 15 $\mathbb{Qxf5}$ and h7 falls.

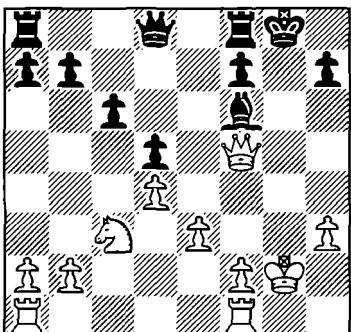
15 h3?

15 $\mathbb{Qe5}!$ may have been a better plan. After 15... $\mathbb{Qxe5}$ 16 dx $e5$ $\mathbb{Qg7}$ 17 e4! dx $e4$! (if 17...d4? 18 $\mathbb{Qa4}!$ f6 19 exf6 $\mathbb{Wxf6}$ 20 f4 and White's kingside pawn majority is clearly more potent than Black's disorganized majority on the queenside) 18 $\mathbb{Qxe4}$ $\mathbb{Wd4}$ 19 $\mathbb{Qf6+}$ $\mathbb{Qh8}$ 20 $\mathbb{Qae1}$, White controls a lot of key squares and may have chances for a kingside attack.

15... $\mathbb{Qxf3}$ 16 $\mathbb{Qxf5} \mathbb{Qxg2}?$

Hart missed 16...gx $f5$! 17 gx $f3$ f4! with good counterplay.

17 $\mathbb{Qxg2}$ gx $f5$ 18 $\mathbb{Wxf5}$



Now White hangs on to a strategic

advantage for the rest of the game. He controls the light squares and the knight is superior to the bishop.

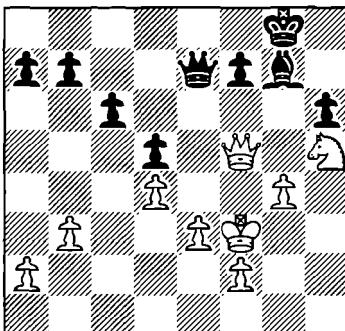
18... $\mathbb{Qh8}$ 19 $\mathbb{Qg1}$ $\mathbb{We7}$ 20 $\mathbb{Qh2}$ $\mathbb{Qg8}$ 21 $\mathbb{Qg4}$ $\mathbb{Qg6}$ 22 $\mathbb{Qag1}$ $\mathbb{Qag8}$ 23 $\mathbb{Qe2}$ $\mathbb{Qg5}$ 24 $\mathbb{Qf4}!$

The queen is immune from capture on f5 due to the mate threat on g8. If Black tries to improve his pawn structure with 24...h6 25 $\mathbb{Qxg5}$ $\mathbb{Qxg5}$ 26 $\mathbb{Qxg5}$ hx $g5$ 27 $\mathbb{Qh5}$ $\mathbb{Qg7}$ 28 $\mathbb{Qg3}!$ $\mathbb{Qg8}$ 29 $\mathbb{Qg4}$ f6, White continues to make progress with 30 f3!.

24... $\mathbb{Qxg4}$ 25 $\mathbb{Qxg4}$ $\mathbb{Qxg4}$ 26 $\mathbb{Qxg4}$ h6 27 $\mathbb{Qg3}$ $\mathbb{Qh4+}$ 28 $\mathbb{Qf3}$ $\mathbb{Qf6}$ 29 $\mathbb{Qd3}$ $\mathbb{Qg7}$ 30 $\mathbb{Qf4}$

Threatening to fork on h5.

30... $\mathbb{Qg8}$ 31 $\mathbb{Qh5}$ $\mathbb{Qg7}$ 32 b3



White has several advantages in the ending:

1. He has centralized his king position;
2. His queen and knight pair outgun Black's queen and bishop pair;
3. Black's pawn structure has sustained damage on the kingside; and
4. White has the possibility to ex-

Play the London System

band in the centre with the plan of f3 and e4 at some point.

32... $\mathbb{W}h4?$!

A time pressure blunder, but Black was in a very difficult situation:

a) 32... $\mathbb{W}a3?$ 33 $\mathbb{W}c8+$ $\mathbb{W}h7$ (or 33... $\mathbb{A}f8$ 34 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{W}g7$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{W}b1$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}e4+$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}g3$) 34 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ and White wins.

b) 32... $\mathbb{W}e6!$ is Black's best defensive chance. He is actually lost in the king and pawn ending, but White must continue very accurately: 33 $\mathbb{Q}xg7!$ $\mathbb{W}xg7$ 34 $\mathbb{W}xe6!$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 36 b4 b6

Queen's Gambit Declined structure where Black's knight is slightly misplaced on c6.

Game 24

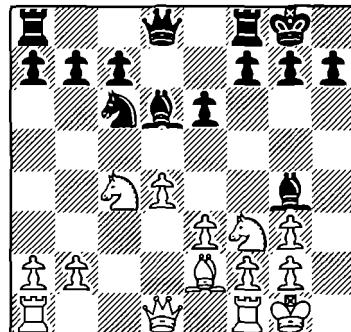
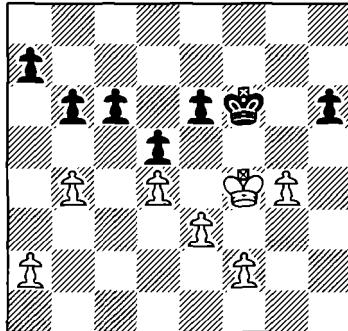
A.Riazantsev-R.Aschenbrenner

Oberwart 2003

1 d4 d5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 4 e3 e6 5 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 6 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 9 $\mathbb{W}hg3$ 0-0 10 c4 $\mathbb{W}xc4$

Black has no other useful moves. The bishop pair doesn't mean much in this static structure.

11 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$



37 e4! a6 (37... $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 39 f3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ b5 41 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ a6 42 a3! is zugzwang, and 42... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 44 f4 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 45 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ wins) 38 a3 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ a5 40 $\mathbb{W}xa5$ $\mathbb{W}xa5$ 41 a4 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 42 f3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 44 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 45 f4 and once again Black is zugzwanged.

33 $\mathbb{W}c8+$ $\mathbb{W}h7$ 34 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}h1+$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}e4$ 36 $\mathbb{W}d7$ 1-0

11... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

It isn't so easy for Black to free himself with the ...e5 break, because 11... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ e5? just drops a pawn after 13 $\mathbb{Q}fxe5!$ $\mathbb{W}xe2$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}fxd1$.

12 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 13 a3 $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 14 b4! a6

14...a5?! 15 b5! $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{W}h5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}db8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ leaves Black with a target on c7 and an extra pawn island.

Summary

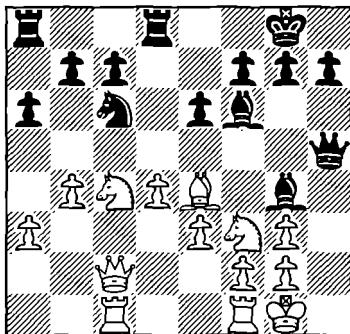
It may be best for White to play c4 and cxd5 in Chigorin lines, leading to a

15 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{W}h5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d3!$

Improving the bishop's position.

16... $\mathbb{Q}f6$

16... $\mathbb{Q}xf3?$! 17 gxf3 $\mathbb{W}xf3??$ would be a terrible decision: 18 $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{W}h5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}g2!$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ with the deadly double threat of taking the queen on b5 and mating on h8.

17 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 

The pressure mounts. Black has not achieved any of the ...a5, ...c5 or ...e5 breaks and remains bound. Now White threatens to destroy the queenside pawn structure by capturing on c6.

17... $\mathbb{Q}f5!$

Forced.

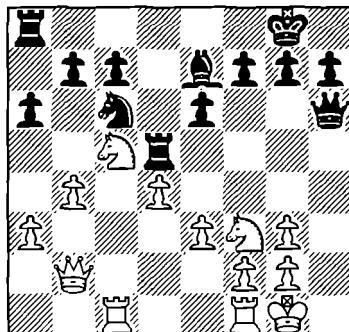
18 $\mathbb{Q}cd2?$!

White wants control of the e4-square. The alternative would be 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{W}xf5$ 19 $\mathbb{W}xf5$ exf5 20 $\mathbb{Q}cd2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}b3$, with pressure along the c-file and the opportunity to land a knight on c5.

18... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20 $\mathbb{W}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{W}h6!$

A clever idea, intending to swing

the rook to h5.

**22 $\mathbb{Q}fd1!$**

White is willing to run all the way to e2 with his king if necessary.

Now was not the time for avarice with 22 $\mathbb{Q}xb7?$, in view of 22... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 25 f4 $\mathbb{Q}h1+$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}h4+$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}h5+$ and White must agree to a draw by perpetual check with 28 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}h4+$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}h5+$, since 28 $\mathbb{Q}d2??$ loses to 28... $\mathbb{Q}xf1!$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{W}b5!$ with a double attack.

22... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$

After 22... $\mathbb{Q}h5?$! 23 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}h1+$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ b6 26 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 28 e4 Black feels the squeeze.

23 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ $\mathbb{W}xh5$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}c1$

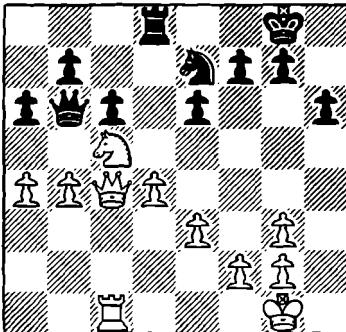
The pressure continues. Black still has not achieved any of his freeing breaks.

25... $\mathbb{W}b5$ 26 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$

Heading for c5.

27...h6 28 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 30 $\mathbb{W}c4$ c6 31 a4!

White rolls forward with the 2 on 3 minority attack. The plan is to insert b5 at some point.



31...d5 32 d3 f6!?

I would have played 32...a5 just out of irritation, hoping for some degree of freedom.

33 c5 c7

If 33...xc5? 34 bxc5 and then White's plan would be to tie Black down to the defence of b7 by playing $\mathbb{B}b1$ and manoeuvring his knight to a5.

34 b5 axb5 35 axb5 d7 36 e7 c8 37

b4 b8 38 c5!

A good decision. After 38 $\mathbb{W}xc7$ $\mathbb{B}xc7$ 39 $\mathbb{B}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 41 $\mathbb{B}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}xc6$ White is unable to exploit the single Black weakness on c6 in the king and pawn ending.

38...g6 39 d5!

Milking the pin on the c-file. Black can't get impatient with 39...exd5??, because 40 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}e7+$ picks off the exchange.

39...b6 40 c4 exd5 41 Qxd5 Wd8 42

e4!?

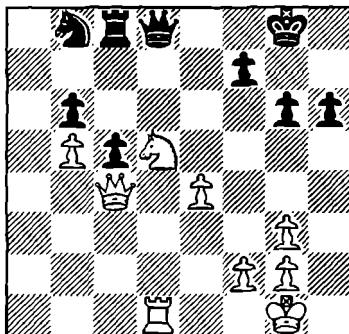
Riazantsev misses a trick with 42 $\mathbb{W}g4!$ (threatening to take on c8) 42... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}xb6!$ (overloading the black queen) 43...f5 44 $\mathbb{W}d4+$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 45

$\mathbb{exd4}$ $\mathbb{Wc7}$ 46 $\mathbb{Wc5!}$ and Black has no defence to the threat of 47 $d5!$.

42...c5

Black's best shot at survival would be to get the queens off the board, even at the cost of a pawn. Maybe something like 42...h5! 43 $\mathbb{Wc3!}$ c5 44 $\mathbb{Ba1}$ $\mathbb{Wd6}$ 45 $\mathbb{Qf6+}$ $\mathbb{Qf8}$ 46 $\mathbb{Qxh5!}$ $\mathbb{Wd4}$ 47 $\mathbb{Wxd4}$ $\mathbb{cxsd4}$ 48 $\mathbb{Qf4}$ and White still faces some technical difficulties to convert.

43 d1



43...d7

This drops a pawn without a fight, but Black cannot survive: 43... $\mathbb{Wd6}$ 44 $\mathbb{Qe3!}$ $\mathbb{We7}$ 45 $\mathbb{Wd5}$ $\mathbb{We8}$ 46 $\mathbb{Wd6!}$ $\mathbb{Wxe4}$ 47 $\mathbb{Qd5!}$ with the threat of 48 $\mathbb{Qf6}.$

44 Qxb6! Wxb6 45 Bxd7 Bf8 46 e5 h5?

Missing a giant threat, but Black's position was past saving.

47 Bd6 Wa5 48 Qxg6+ Bh7 49 Bg5 1-0

Summary

Notice how skilfully White played to prevent his opponent from breaking from the bind with any of the ...c5, ...a5 or ...e5 breaks. Black's bishop pair proved to be no help at all in this game.

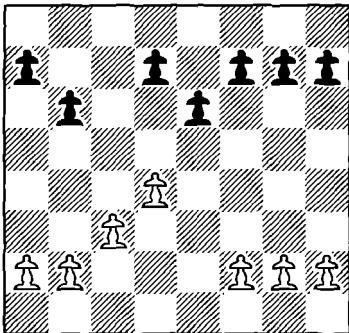
Chapter Three

London versus Queen's Indian

In this chapter we consider lines where Black adopts the Queen's Indian set-up with ... $b6$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}b7$.

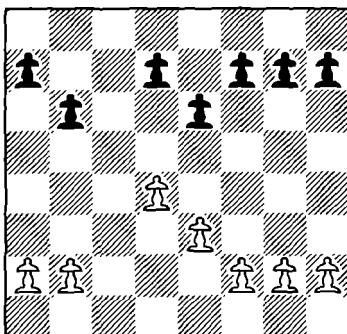
If Black plays ... $c5$ and ... $cxd4$, White has a choice of recaptures:

1. White recaptures with $exd4$



This asymmetrical recapture sharpens play. White usually builds an attack on the kingside by using the open e-file and gradually transferring pieces to that wing (see Games 25-26).

2. White recaptures towards the centre with $cx d4$



If Black later plays ... $d5$, the game transposes to an ... $e6$ version of the Exchange Slav. If Black holds back his d-pawn then White gains a useful space advantage with $e3-e4$. There are several demonstrations by Prié in this chapter of how to play the White pieces in the $cxd4$ lines (see Games 27-29).

White normally plays $h2-h3$ at some point to give the bishop an escape

Play the London System

square on h2, but not always. Blatny does not consider ... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ to be a threat and ignores it, playing $\mathbb{W}e2?$, 0-0-0! and h4 going for opposite-wing attacks. He reasons that if Black chooses ... $\mathbb{Q}h5xf4$, Black is moving his knight three times to take a bishop which has moved only once and also strengthens White's grip over e5. It is an interesting idea which almost certainly will throw your opponents (see Games 32-33).

Miles-Gurevich (Game 34) and Meduna-Vavruk (Game 35) provide examples of 5 c4?, which tends to take the game into more mainstream Queen's Indian waters. London purists tend to refrain from the move c4 and favour the more conservative 5 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ and 6 c3 lines. My philosophy is to play both and mix it up. The more you expand your flexibility in the London, the more weapons there are in your arsenal.

7 c3 0-0 8 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ cxd4 10 exd4

The asymmetrical recapture sharpens the game and increases White's winning (and losing!) chances.

10...d6 11 $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}g3$

An improvement over 12 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 13 a4 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}b5$?! $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ g6 17 a5?! b5 18 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$! 19 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}ed5$ 20 h4 f5! 21 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22 f4? (halting ...e5 at much too high a price) 22... $\mathbb{Q}f6$, B.Soos-R.Hübner, Bad Kissingen 1979. All White has managed to do with his baroque manoeuvres is to weaken a multitude of light squares: h5, g4, e4, and d5.

12... $\mathbb{Q}d5$

I would have tried for activity on the queen's wing with 12...b5 13 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ a6.

13 $\mathbb{Q}g3$!

Displaying real depth of understanding. By playing to g3 rather than h2, White prepares h4! planting the seeds of his kingside attack.

Game 25

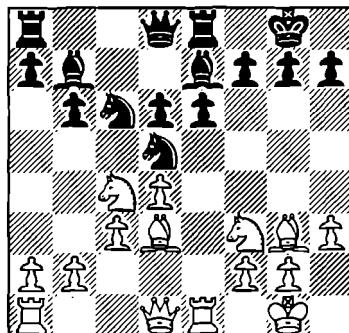
L.Christiansen-G.Peter
Bad Mergentheim 1988

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ b6 4 e3 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 6 h3

A well timed h3. Black is ready to play ... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ once the bishop is posted on e7.

6...c5

6... $\mathbb{Q}a6$?! 7 c4! simply loses a tempo for Black, since he will almost certainly need to redevelop the bishop to b7 later.



13...g6?!

Black may be forced to play this move eventually, but he should at least make White work to force it.

14 a4 a6 15 h4!

Serving a double purpose:

1. White may chip away at Black's kingside cover with a future h5; and
2. The h4-pawn may provide a launching pad for a knight heading to g5.

15...♞a5!?

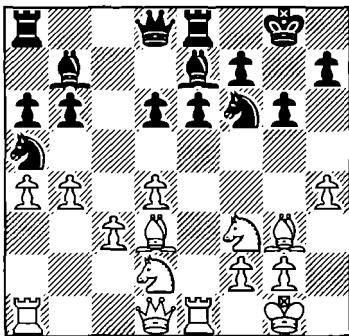
An idea borrowed from the Sicilian.

16 ♞cd2

White prefers to keep all the pieces on the board for his kingside attack.

16 ♞xa5 bxa5 creates long-term pawn weaknesses on the queenside, but this would be offset by the pressure Black gains down the b-file.

16...♝f6 17 b4!



Playing a similar plan to the one seen in Larsen-Garcia Padron (Game 5). White agrees to take on a single queenside weakness at c3, reasoning that his kingside attack could be more potent than Black's queenside play.

17...♞c6 18 ♞g5!

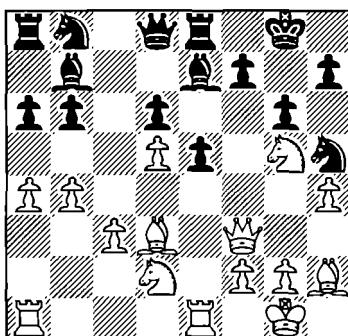
Eyeing future sacs on h7, f7 and e6. Of course, White would love it if Black played the weakening ...h6.

18...♝h5 19 ♜h2 e5!

Meeting White's wing attack with a central counter.

Black pays for it if he takes the pawn: 19...♛xg5?! 20 hxg5 ♛xg5? 21 ♜e4 ♛e7 (21...♛d8?? loses to 22 ♜xd6 ♜e7 23 ♜e4! ♛d7 24 ♜xb7 ♛xb7 25 b5) 22 ♜xd6 ♛ed8 23 ♜c4! wins a pawn and Black's king position also looks vulnerable on the dark squares.

20 d5 ♜b8 21 ♛f3!



21...♜f8!

Black finds the only move to keep him in the game. For example:

a) 21...♛xg5? 22 hxg5 ♛xg5 23 ♜c4! hits d6 and b6, the weakest links in Black's pawn chain. If 23...♛d8, then 24 ♛e3! regains the pawn with a clear advantage.

b) 21...♝f6?! 22 c4 b5? 23 cxb5! ♜xd5 24 ♜de4 ♜fd7! 25 ♛ad1 f5? 26 ♜xd6!! ♛xf3 27 ♜c4+ and White regains the queen with interest.

22 ♜xh7! ♛xh7 23 ♛xh5+ ♜g7 24 ♛f3 ♛xh4 25 ♜c4!

Threatening 26 ♜xd6.

25...♛e7 26 a5 ♜d7 27 axb6 ♜xb6 28

28... $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{W}xb6$ 29 c4! $\mathbb{W}xb4?$

He can't get away with this.

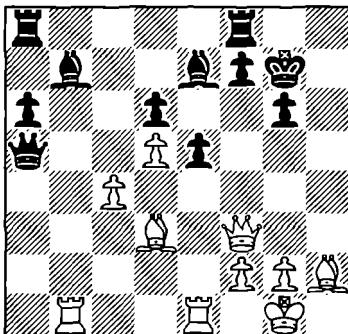
Black should turn his attention to the h-file with 29... $\mathbb{Q}h8!$ 30 $\mathbb{B}ab1$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 31 c5 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 32 g4 $\mathbb{Q}ah8$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ with a tense and difficult-to-assess situation. White exerts strong pressure in the centre and on the queenside while Black's play on the h-file also looks menacing. The game looks dynamically balanced.

30 $\mathbb{B}ab1$

30 $\mathbb{B}eb1?$ $\mathbb{W}c3!$ allows Black to get away with his pawn grab.

30... $\mathbb{W}a5$

Black relied on this trick to save his bishop on b7. But he missed White's next move:



31 $\mathbb{B}xe5!!$

This powerful shot demolishes Black's defensive barrier.

31...dxe5

If Black declines the gift, hoping to get counterplay with the passed a-pawn, White wins material. For example, 31... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 32 $\mathbb{B}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 33 $\mathbb{W}e3!$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 34 $\mathbb{W}b6$ $\mathbb{W}xb6$ 35 $\mathbb{B}xb6$ a5 36 c5! dx5

37 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}c6!$

winning a piece.

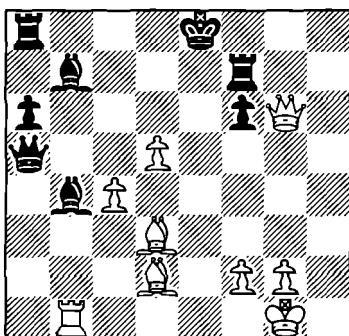
32 $\mathbb{Q}xe5+f6$

32... $\mathbb{Q}g8?$ 33 $\mathbb{W}h3$ f6 34 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{B}f7$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 36 $\mathbb{W}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 37 $\mathbb{W}h6+1$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}xf6!$ puts Black away.

33 $\mathbb{W}g4!$ $\mathbb{B}f7$ 34 $\mathbb{W}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$

Or 35... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 37 $\mathbb{W}g8+$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ and White mates.

36 $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}d2!$



Another computer shot. IM Jack Peters once advised me that if you are paired against GM Christiansen, never ever allow him an open position where he has the initiative, even if he offers material for it. This game proves his point!

37... $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 38 $\mathbb{B}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}a1+$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ 1-0

Summary

If Black has weakened his kingside with ...g6, remember the trick $\mathbb{Q}g3!$ (instead of $\mathbb{Q}h2$) to force h4!. This manoeuvre will allow you either to further erode Black's kingside with h5 or to post a

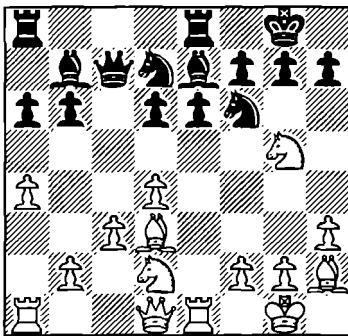
knight on g5, strengthening your attack.

Game 26
D.Kosic-M.Drasko
 Belgrade 1994

1 d4 e6 2 ♜f3 ♜f6 3 ♜f4 b6 4 e3 ♜b7 5 ♜bd2 ♜e7 6 h3 c5 7 c3 0-0 8 ♜d3 cxd4
 9 exd4

If you prefer to lead the game towards a more strategic path, then 9 cxd4 is White's best shot at a low-risk try for the advantage (see the next game).

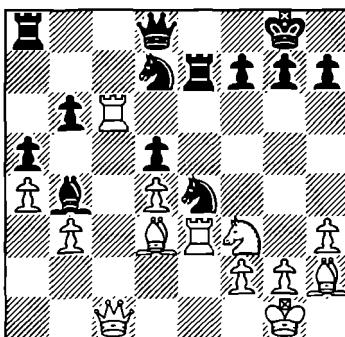
9...d6 10 0-0 ♜bd7 11 ♜e1 ♜e8 12 ♜h2
 a6 13 a4 ♜c7 14 ♜g5!?



Not a bad idea, to provoke ...h6.

In a more recent game in this position, Kamsky focused on the other wing and seized space with 14 c4. G.Kamsky-S.Tiviakov, Montreal 2007, continued 14...a5?! (Tiviakov didn't want White to continue gaining space on the queenside, but this move creates a hole on b5, which Kamsky immediately

pounces on) 15 ♜b1! (despite the loss of time, Kamsky optimizes the knight's position, heading for b5) 15...♛d8 16 ♜c3 d5 17 b3 ♜b4 18 ♜c1 ♜c8 (White gets a pawn for the exchange and a good position after 18...♜e4!? 19 ♜xe4! dxе4 20 ♜xe4 ♜xe1 21 ♜xb7 ♜a7) 19 ♜e3 ♜f8!? (exchanging on c4 would only help White) 20 ♜b5 ♜e4 21 ♜c2! (Kamsky comes up with a deep plan to get the bishop pair and to take control of the c-file) 21...♜e7 22 ♜c1! ♜d7 23 ♜a7! ♜a8 24 cxd5! exd5 (24...♜xa7? 25 ♜xe4 exd5 26 ♜xd5! clips a pawn due to the pin trick on c8) 25 ♜c6 ♜xc6 26 ♜xc6.



White has huge strategic advantages in this position:

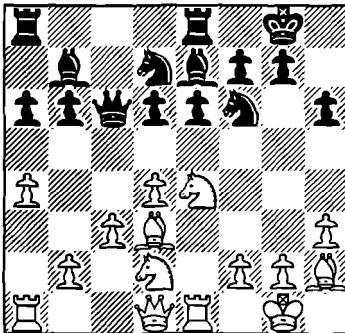
1. Total control of the c-file;
2. The bishop pair in a semi-open position; and
3. A grip on the queenside light squares b5 and c6.

Tiviakov was unable to shake off the positional pressure for the remainder of the game.

14...h6 15 ♜ge4 ♜c6?!

Play the London System

The position looks dead even, yet Black must still play carefully to fully equalize. Trading down would be logical, starting with 15... $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 18 $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ with a solid game.



16 $\mathbb{W}f3!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

16... $\mathbb{Q}f8?$ drops a pawn after 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd6!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 19 $\mathbb{W}xb7$.

17 $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$

Forcing Black's next move.

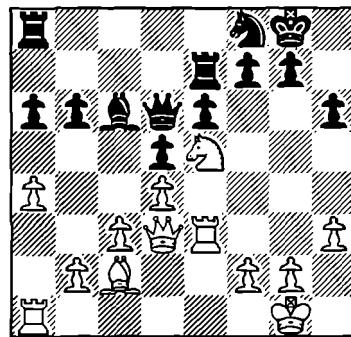
17...d5 18 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6?$

Black allows himself to be saddled with a rotten remaining bishop in order to relieve some of the pressure on his kingside. The problem with this plan is that it really doesn't make Black's king all that much safer.

Black should try and create some counterplay by setting his minority attack in motion with 18...b5 19 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ b4 21 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 22 $\mathbb{E}e3!$ $bxc3$ 23 $bxc3$. White's attacking chances outweigh any trouble he may later have defending his only weakness on c3. Still, this looks better for Black than the passive continuation he

picked in the game.

19 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 20 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$
22 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{E}e7$ 23 $\mathbb{E}e3!$



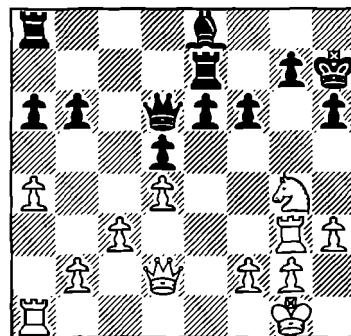
This is the ideal attacking setup for White.

23... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 24 $\mathbb{E}g3$ f6 25 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 26 $\mathbb{W}d2!$

The deadly threat to sac on h6 or f6 forces Black to create a giant structural weakness in order to protect his king.

26...f5

An unfortunate necessity, since 26... $\mathbb{Q}h7?$ loses to the pretty combination 27 $\mathbb{Q}xh7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$



28 $\mathbb{W}xh6+$ $\mathbb{G}xh6$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 30 $\mathbb{E}g8$ mate.

27 ♜e5 ♜c8 28 ♜e1 ♜ec7

Better late than never. Black hopes he can stir up some counterplay with ...b5 and ...b4.

29 ♜f3!

The g7-pawn is no longer the target. White gets ready to rip open the kingside with g4.

29...♝g6

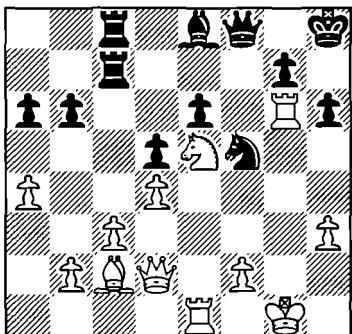
Eliminating an attacker.

If Black pursues his own agenda on the queenside, White arrives first: 29...b5 30 axb5 axb5 31 g4 fxg4 32 hxg4 b4 33 g5 and now:

a) 33...h5 34 g6! ♛e7 35 ♜h3 h4 36 ♜f4 bxc3 37 ♜xh4+ ♜g8 38 ♜e3!. If you have the guns, engage them. Swinging the rook over to h3 is decisive.

b) 33...bxc3 34 ♜f4! ♜g8 35 gxh6 cxb2 36 ♜xf8+! ♜xf8 37 h7+ ♜h8 38 ♜xf8 mate.

30 g4 ♜h4 31 ♜g3 ♜f8 32 gx f5 ♜xf5 33 ♜g6!



Using a fork tactic to add heat to e6, the base of Black's pawn structure.

33...♜e7 34 ♜f4 ♜g8?!

Black puts up a better fight with

34...b5 but should still lose in a line like 35 axb5 axb5 36 ♜a1! b4 37 ♜a6 ♜g8 38 ♜xf5 exf5 39 ♜xf5, hitting the rook on c8 and hanging on to the pawn.

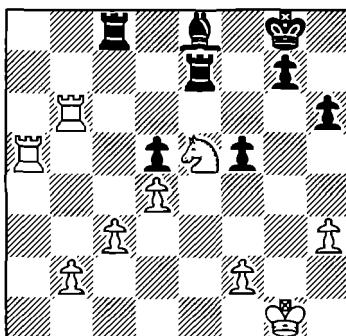
35 ♜xf5 ♜xf5 36 ♜xf5 exf5 37 ♜xb6 ♜xa4 38 ♜xa6

The rest is easy, with White having an extra pawn and the stronger minor piece in the form of the knight.

38...♝c2 39 ♜c1 ♜b3 40 ♜b6 ♜a4

After 40...♜c4? White runs the bishop out of squares on the open board with 41 ♜a1! intending f3, ♜f2 and b3.

41 ♜a1 ♜e8 42 ♜a5



The difference between White's monster on e5 and Black's sorry-looking bishop is quite clear here.

42...♜d8 43 ♜g2 ♜h7 44 ♜g3 ♜c7

Black is helpless to keep White's king out: 44...g5? 45 f4 ♜g7 46 ♜aa6 leads to even more pain.

45 ♜f4 ♜h5 46 f3 ♜cc8

46...g5+ would just be a bluff after 47 ♜xf5! ♜f8+ 48 ♜f6!, halting the would-be counterattack.

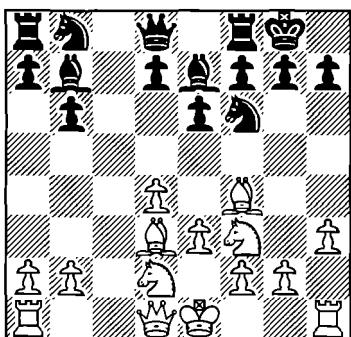
47 h4 ♜a8 48 ♜xa8 ♜xa8 49 ♜b5 1-0

Summary

Learn to probe Black's kingside and induce pawn weaknesses in this line. When you have created some weaknesses, begin to line up for sacs. Often, as in this game, you may be able to force a strategically horrible concession like ...f5. Then it may be time to cash out and switch to positional play.

Game 27
E.Prié-S.Garza Marco
 Castell de Sant Ferran 2008

1 d4 e6 2 ♜f3 ♜f6 3 ♜f4 b6 4 e3 ♜b7 5
 ♜d3 c5 6 c3 ♜e7 7 h3 0-0 8 ♜bd2 cxd4
 9 cxd4



Capturing towards the centre leads to positions where Black has a very hard time getting winning chances. White's chances arise from the ability to take more central territory and to try to turn it into a strategic queenside edge or a kingside attack.

9...♜c6

The paradoxical 9...♜a6!? makes

sense if Black doesn't mind grovelling a bit for the draw. Removing the light-squared bishops takes some of the sting out of White's future attacking chances but few players are willing to defend a slightly worse but drawable position if it means almost no winning chances: 10 ♜xa6 ♜xa6 11 0-0! (11 a3 is too mild and allowed Black equality following 11...b5 12 0-0 ♜b6 in M.Zurek-T.Polak, Czech League 1995) 11...♝b4 12 a3 ♜c6 13 ♜c1 a6 14 e4 b5. I'm not so sure White can do anything meaningful with the space advantage if the light-squared bishops are missing. Still, few players would prefer Black here. White may yet make something of the central space.

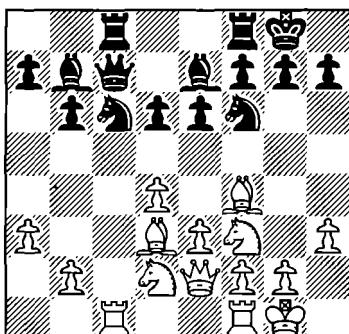
10 0-0

10 a3 preventing ...♝b4 may be more accurate.

10...♜c8

Black probably comes very close to equality with 10...♝b4! 11 ♜e2 ♜a6 12 ♜xa6 ♜xa6 13 ♜a4 ♜b4 14 a3 ♜c6 15 e4 a6!.

11 a3 d6 12 ♜e2 ♜c7 13 ♜ac1



13...♝b8

Heading for a8. Naturally, Black feels uncomfortable parking a queen on c7, on the same file as White's rook. But the manoeuvre has other dangers: Black's queen is drawn away from the defence of the kingside.

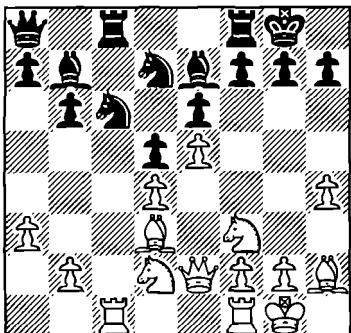
Prié recommends 13... $\mathbb{W}d7$ but I'm not sure the queen is well placed here after 14 e4. I don't see a useful defensive plan for Black, and the queen may be vulnerable to a future pin with $\mathbb{Q}b5$.

14 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}a8$ 15 e4 d5?

A huge strategic error. Black gets himself into a bind by entering a dreadfully bad version of the French Defence. After this move, White's king-side attack flows with ease, Black's queen is a spectator on a8 and the bishop on b7 isn't exactly a spectacular performer either.

15... $\mathbb{E}fd8!$ keeps d5 open for a piece when White pushes with 16 e5. After 16...dxe5 17 dxе5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c4$, although White's control of d6 gives him the edge, the powerful knight on d5 definitely offers Black counter-chances.

16 e5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17 h4!



Starting the assault.

17... $\mathbb{E}ce8$

The pawn break ...f6 may need to be played soon, so Black backs up the e6-pawn with a rook.

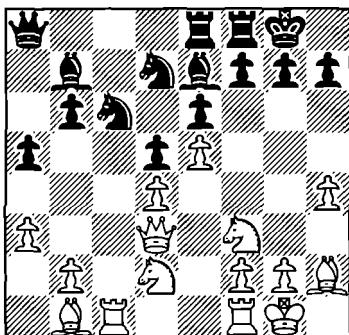
18 $\mathbb{B}b1$!

$\mathbb{W}d3$ will force Black to weaken himself around his king.

18...a5

With the idea of activating the bishop via a6.

19 $\mathbb{W}d3$



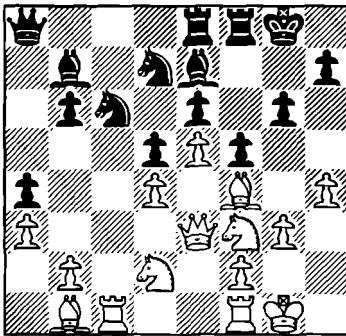
19...g6

Black must choose his poison. The alternative, 19...f5, creates a chronic pawn weakness on e6, which White exploits by 20 exf6 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 21 $\mathbb{E}fe1$ $\mathbb{A}a6$ 22 $\mathbb{W}c3$! (gaining a tempo) 22... $\mathbb{E}c8$ 23 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}c7$!, simultaneously hitting b6 and threatening to remove the defender of e6.

20 $\mathbb{W}e3$ f5 21 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ a4

If Black insists on keeping the h-file closed with 21...h5?!, it leads to a strategic disaster after 22 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{E}f7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ when Black's kingside dark squares leak like old plumbing.

22 g3!



Iron logic. Prié sees that the h-file may open soon, so he gets ready for the manoeuvre ♔g2! and ♔h1.

22...b5 23 ♔h6 ♕f7 24 ♔g5 ♔xg5

Black's position is almost resignable after such a move. White owns every dark square on the kingside and will soon open the h-file for his rooks to enter.

He could try a desperado sac like 24...f4!? but it doesn't alter the result after 25 gxf4 ♔xg5 26 ♔xg5 ♔e7 27 ♔xe7 ♕exe7 28 ♕g3. White has an extra pawn, an attack and strategic domination.

25 ♔xg5 ♔b6 26 ♔f3 ♔c4 27 ♕f4!

Bravely refusing to be distracted from the attack by defending the b2-pawn. The meek 27 ♕e2?! slows White down.

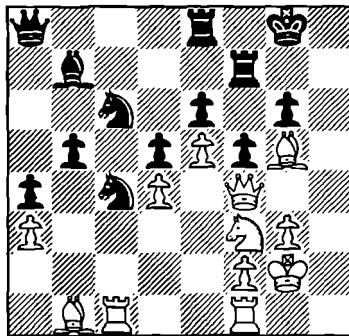
27...♔xb2

A condemned prisoner doesn't have to worry about calories if it is his final meal!

It doesn't help if Black avoids the pawn grab either: 27...♕c8 28 ♔f6 ♕cc7

29 h5 ♕e8 30 hxg6 hxg6 31 ♔g5 ♔xb2 32 ♔g2! and there is no good way to stop ♔h1 and entry to h8.

28 h5 ♔c4 29 hxg6 hxg6 30 ♔g2!



White's 22nd move comes to fruition. Black can't challenge the h-file. If 30...♔h7 31 ♔h1 ♔xh1 32 ♔xh1, there is nothing to be done about ♕h4.

31 ♔h1 ♕c7 32 ♔f6! ♕g7

Black collapses after 32...♔xf6 33 ♕h4! ♕g7 34 exf6.

33 ♕h6 1-0

Summary

When White recaptures with cxd4 and then achieves the e4 advance, if Black challenges the centre with ...d5 White gets a very favourable French-style attack with e5.

Game 28

E.Prié–P.Braun

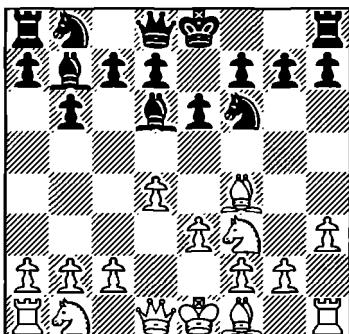
Bad Kreuznach 2006

1 d4 ♔f6 2 ♔f3 e6 3 ♔f4 b6 4 e3 ♔b7 5 h3

A premature h3 is probably the most common inaccuracy for White in the London. After the more accurate 5 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$, you should not fear 5... $\mathbb{Q}h5?!$, as 6 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ f6 7 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ just leaves Black's knight dangling on h5. If 7...g6 (naturally not 7...g5?? 8 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$) 8 $\mathbb{Q}d3$, once again the knight on h5 leaves an odd impression. This is also the case after 6... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$.

5...c5

5... $\mathbb{Q}d6!$ is the way to exploit White's move order.



The problem for White is that he is denied the normal $\mathbb{Q}g3$ in this line and must take on d6, handing Black easy equality. For example, 6 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ cxd6 7 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ 0-0 8 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ d5 9 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 10 c4 f5 11 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe4?!$ (White shouldn't open the f-file for Black; 12 $\mathbb{W}c2$ was better) 12...fxe4 13 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 15 a3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 16 $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ and Black already stood better in M.Stefanovic-B.Certic, Belgrade 2006.

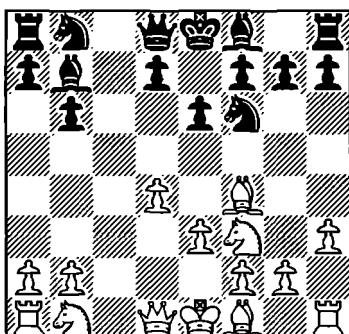
6 c3 cxd4?!

Premature. Why not wait for White to commit to $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ before initiating

this capture?

The following game is a good example of a careful handling of Black's position: 6... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ 0-0 8 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ d6 9 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 10 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 11 e4 $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ cxd4! (good timing; now Black controls the c-file) 13 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 14 a4 (if White wants to go after the black king, then the setup would be 14 $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$) 14... $\mathbb{W}b8$ 15 a5 bxa5 16 $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 17 b4 $\mathbb{Q}dc8$ 18 b5 $\mathbb{Q}c1!$ (swaps help Black) 19 $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1+$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ and it isn't easy for White to convert the extra space into anything concrete, G.Kamsky-M.Adams, Moscow 2007.

7 cxd4!



The principled move, recapturing towards the centre. A key point is that White's b1-knight will be developed to the superior c3-square.

7... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8 a3?!

It's hard to argue with one of the greatest experts on the London, but I'm not sure why 8 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ wasn't played.

8...0-0

If 8... $\mathbb{Q}e4?!$ with the idea of trading

Play the London System

on c3 and making 8 a3 a lost tempo, White shouldn't cooperate with 9 $\mathbb{Q}c3?$! but instead continue 9 $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ 0-0 10 0-0 f5 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ d6 12 $\mathbb{W}c2$, taking control of the e4-square or enticing Black into ...d5?!.

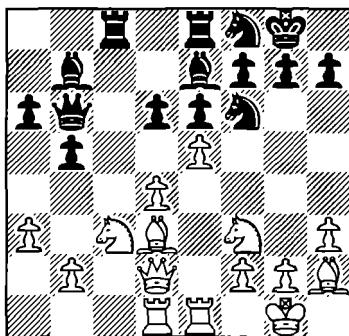
9 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d6

I have always trusted in White's queenside play in hybrid lines like 9... $\mathbb{Q}e4?$! 10 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ f5 11 $\mathbb{Q}e2$.

10 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 11 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 12 e4 $\mathbb{Q}f8$

An alert move, avoiding 12... $\mathbb{Q}f8?$ 13 e5! dx e 5 14 dx e 5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xh7+!$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d3+!$ f5 18 ex f 6+ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}ce4+$ with a decisive attack. However, 12...g6! intending ... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ looks like a sensible plan for Black.

13 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ a6 14 $\mathbb{W}d2$ b5 15 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 17 e5!



White can't improve his position through manoeuvring any longer and takes the plunge.

17... $\mathbb{Q}d5?$!

This natural move helpfully allows White to jump into e4. Alternatively:

a) 17... $\mathbb{Q}xf3?$ would be foolish: 18 ex f 6 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 19 fx e 7 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 20 ex f 8 $\mathbb{W}+$

$\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 21 $\mathbb{W}f4$ gives White both extra material and an attack.

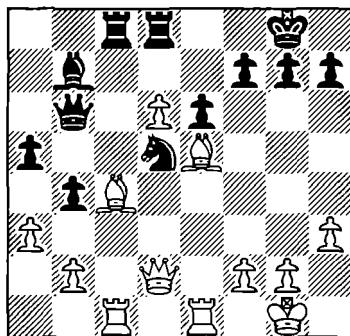
b) Black should keep an eye on e4 with 17... $\mathbb{Q}6d7!$, controlling e4. 18 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ d5 20 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ b4 21 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ arrives at a decent French-style position where Black has rid himself of his bad bishop and generated some play on the queenside. White's kingside space and attacking potential result in an interesting fight to come.

18 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ dx e 5 19 dx e 5 b4 20 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 21 ex d 6 $\mathbb{Q}ed8$

Black hopes to later round up the entrenched pawn.

22 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}c1!$ $\mathbb{Q}dd8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}c4!$

Beginning an instructive plan.
25...a5 26 $\mathbb{Q}e5!$



The idea is revealed. White plans to eliminate the knight on d5 and then swoop in with $\mathbb{Q}g5$!

26...h6

If 26...f6?, 27 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ leaves e6 in trouble.

27 $\mathbb{Q}d3!$

Threatening to swing over to g3.

The black king is in serious danger.

27...f6 28 ♜xf6!

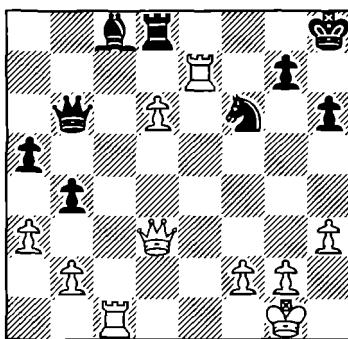
Preferring the sacrificial route but it may not be the best.

The simple 28 ♜g3! wins for White:

a) 28...♜xd6 29 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 30 ♜xd5! ♜xc1 31 ♜xe6+ ♜xe6 32 ♜xc1 and White is up a clean exchange.

b) The attempt to hang on to the material with 28...♝f7 gives White a ferocious attack. For example, 29 axb4 axb4 30 ♜h7 ♜xd6 31 ♜e2! ♜e7 32 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 33 ♜h5+ ♜f8 34 ♜xc8+ ♜xc8 35 ♜d1 ♜c7 and now 36 ♜c2! overloads the black queen.

28...♝xf6 29 ♜xe6+ ♜h8 30 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 31 ♜e7



31...♝g8

If 31...♜g8, 32 ♜cc7 increases White's pressure.

32 ♜g6 ♜d4 33 ♜e8?

33 ♜cc7! looks easier than the game continuation: 33...♝f5 34 ♜xg7+! ♜xg7 35 ♜xg7 ♜xd6 36 g4 ♜b1 37 ♜gd7 with a winning position.

33...♜xe8 34 ♜xe8 ♜b7?

34...♝f5! 35 axb4 axb4 keeps Black

alive for the moment.

35 d7 ♜d5 36 f3 ♜d4+ 37 ♜h1 ♜d2 38 ♜g1

The d-pawn promotes.

38...♛c6 39 d8♛ ♜xe8 40 ♜xd2 1-0

Summary

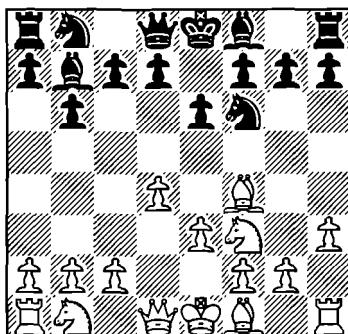
A premature ...cxd4 is a common inaccuracy in Queen's Indian lines. If Black plays this move too early, then White should recapture with cxd4! to open up c3 for his queen's knight. The knight on c3 is more aggressively placed than on its normal home of d2.

Game 29

E.Prié-A.Karpov

European Blitz Championship,
Ajaccio 2007

1 d4 ♜f6 2 ♜f3 e6 3 ♜f4 b6 4 e3 ♜b7 5 h3?!



5...c5

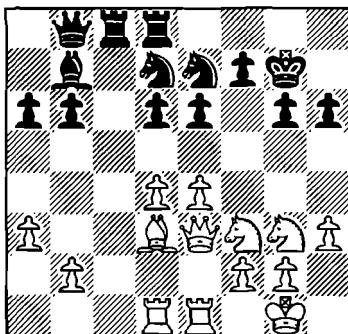
5...♝d6! is a good way to exploit White's inaccurate fifth move, as noted in the previous game.

Play the London System

6 c3 cxd4?!

Too early! Again this move allows White's knight to develop to c3 instead of the more passive d2-square. Even ex-World Champions don't study London theory. If top GMs are too busy studying topical lines like the Dragon, Ruy Lopez, etc, imagine your local club player when facing the London! Odds are he or she will just be winging it.

Here's another example of a successful kingside attack, with Bronstein behind the white pieces: 6... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 0-0 8 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ d6 11 $\mathbb{K}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}g3$?! $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 13 $\mathbb{K}fe1$ g6 14 a3 (so that e4 is possible without worrying about a ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$) 14... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 15 e4 cxd4 16 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}b1$?! (The Lopez manoeuvre 17 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ seems more natural) 17... $\mathbb{W}b8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}a8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ a6 20 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ (20...b5!?) 21 $\mathbb{W}e3$! $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ h6 24 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}b8$ (Black can't come up with a plan; he should have tried something on the queen's wing instead of just waiting)



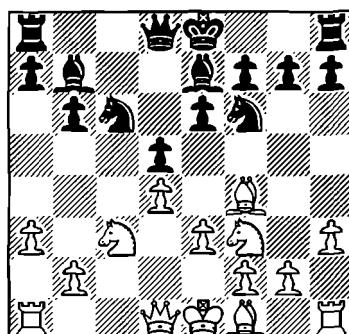
25 h4 h5? 26 $\mathbb{W}g5$! $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (or 26... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 27 $\mathbb{W}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 29 e5 with a

winning attack) 27 e5 dxe5 28 dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}fg8$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xh5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{K}d4$ 32 h5 1-0, D.Bronstein-W.Schmidt, Dnepropetrovsk 1970.

7 cxd4! $\mathbb{Q}c6$

7... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ may be Black's best line if he is happy to play for a draw. The higher-rated Karpov was probably playing for a win in this game.

8 a3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5?!



Such positions are deceptive. It looks like Black has achieved equality, but he hasn't. The bad bishop on b7 ensures that he still has an uphill battle. The position looks a lot like an Exchange Slav where Black has failed to equalize.

10 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 0-0 11 0-0 $\mathbb{K}c8$ 12 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$!

Playing on White's only vulnerable squares, c4 and b3.

13 $\mathbb{Q}e5$?

This knight may be swapped, or hit with a future ...f6.

13 $\mathbb{K}ac1$, intending to double rooks on the c-file, keeps a nagging edge for White.

13... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

Trades help Black, who is slightly cramped.

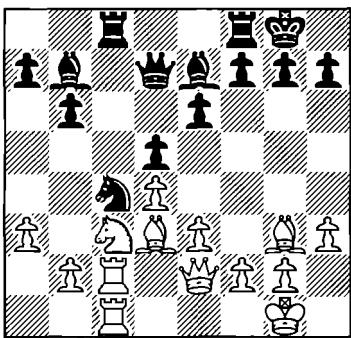
14 $\mathbb{H}fe1$

14 $\mathbb{H}ac1 \mathbb{Q}xe5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe5 \mathbb{Q}c4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ is equal.

14... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe5 \mathbb{Q}c4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}g3 \mathbb{Q}d6?$

Wasting time – there is no reason to retreat. Black equalizes with 16... $a6!$ 17 $\mathbb{H}ec1$ $b5$ 18 $a4$ $b4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 20 $b3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 21 $\mathbb{W}b2$.

17 $\mathbb{H}ac1 \mathbb{W}d7$ 18 $\mathbb{H}c2 \mathbb{Q}c4$ 19 $\mathbb{H}ec1!$



Setting a trap. Now Fritz, in all its innocence, advocates the strategic error 19... $\mathbb{Q}xb2?$ 20 $\mathbb{H}xb2 \mathbb{Q}xa3$ 21 $\mathbb{W}d2 f6$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}a1 \mathbb{Q}xb2$ 23 $\mathbb{W}xb2 \mathbb{Q}c6$. Yes, Black has full material compensation of a rook and two pawns for two minor pieces, but it will be nearly impossible for him to move his pawns up the board without dropping them. Meanwhile, they are sitting targets for the White forces. Flesh-and-blood GMs still demonstrate a clear superiority over computers when it comes to strategic judgment.

19... $a6!$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}b1!$

Preparing to eject the intruder with $b3$.

20... $b5$ 21 $b3! \mathbb{Q}d6!$

21... $\mathbb{Q}xa3?!$ allows entry into Black's camp with 22 $\mathbb{H}c7!$

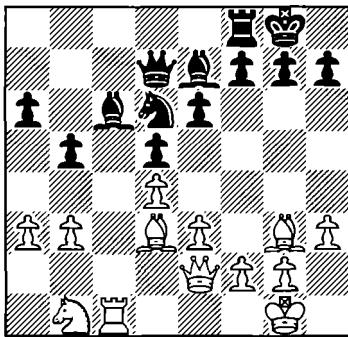
22 $\mathbb{H}c5?!$

A bold move, which tacitly offers an exchange for a pawn.

22... $\mathbb{H}c6?$

Allowing a combination. 22... $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 25 $dxc5 f6$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ gives White good compensation for the exchange, but Black has reasonable chances too with the extra material.

23 $\mathbb{H}xc6 \mathbb{Q}xc6$



24 $\mathbb{Q}xh7+! \mathbb{Q}xh7$ 25 $\mathbb{W}c2+?$

The in-between move 25 $\mathbb{Q}xd6!$ destroys Black. After 25... $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 26 $\mathbb{W}c2+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 27 $\mathbb{W}xc6$ White remains a pawn up and controls the only open file.

25... $\mathbb{Q}e4!$

Now Black gets some counterplay for the pawn by inflicting some damage to White's structure.

26 $\mathbb{W}xc6 \mathbb{W}xc6$ 27 $\mathbb{H}xc6 \mathbb{Q}xg3$ 28 $fxg3$ $a5$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}f2 \mathbb{Q}g6$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}f3$

White should try 30 $\mathbb{Q}c3!$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$.

Play the London System

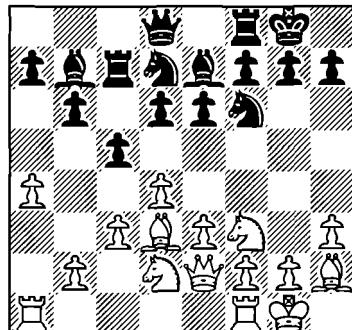
30... $\mathbb{B}b8$ 31 $\mathbb{B}c7$ $\mathbb{A}d6$ 32 $\mathbb{B}c6$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 33
 $\mathbb{B}c7 \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$

White was okay with a draw. The problem is that his knight is tied down to a3 and it's very difficult to make progress. Also, this was a blitz game and perhaps Prié was behind on time.

Summary

When Black transposes from Queen's Indian lines to an Exchange Slav by playing ...d5, the path to an equal game is difficult to find.

12 a4!



The a-file opens soon, thwarting Black's queen manoeuvre to a8. Also, the rook sits precariously on c7, in the line of fire of White's h2-bishop.

12... $\mathbb{A}b8$

13...cx d4 13 ex d4 $\mathbb{W}a8$ 14 a5 bxa5 15 $\mathbb{B}xa5$ hands White the simple plan of targeting a7. Of course, 12...a5? prevents this plan, but only at the heavy cost of creating a huge gash on b5.

13 a5 $\mathbb{B}c6$ 14 axb6 axb6 15 $\mathbb{B}b5$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 16
 $\mathbb{B}a6$

1 d4 $\mathbb{B}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{B}f3$ e6 3 $\mathbb{B}f4$ b6 4 e3 $\mathbb{B}b7$ 5
h3?! d6

Once again, Black should play 5... $\mathbb{B}d6$!

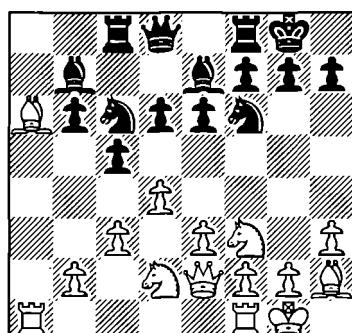
6 $\mathbb{B}d3$ $\mathbb{B}bd7$ 7 0-0 $\mathbb{B}e7$ 8 $\mathbb{B}bd2$ 0-0 9
 $\mathbb{B}h2$ c5 10 c3 $\mathbb{B}c8$?

A natural but inaccurate move. Now White takes control of a6, allowing him to play a4 and a5 unimpeded. As a result, Black loses control of the b5-square and must allow the a-file to be opened.

10...a6! is correct, to answer a4-a5 with ...b5.

11 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{B}c7$

Perhaps opening up the possibility of ... $\mathbb{W}a8$ to fight for key central squares, but White ruins this plan on his next move.



Weakening the light squares on the queenside.

An alternative plan would be to tar-

get the kingside, starting with 16 $\mathbb{E}fd1$ d5 17 e4! $\mathbb{E}a8$ 18 e5 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ cxd4 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 22 cxd4, when an attack is brewing.

16... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 18 $\mathbb{W}b5!$

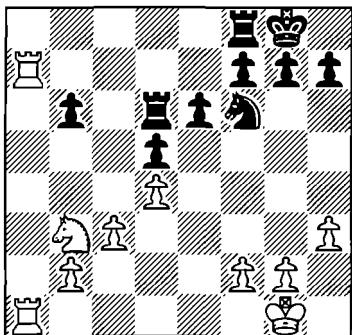
Intending $\mathbb{Q}c4$, targeting b6 and d6.

18...d5 19 dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}fd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

If Black refuses to trade, then 21... $\mathbb{E}fe8$ 22 $\mathbb{E}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 23 $\mathbb{E}fa1$ with mounting queenside pressure.

22 exd4 $\mathbb{W}c6$ 23 $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 24 $\mathbb{E}a7$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$

25 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{E}xd6$ 26 $\mathbb{E}fa1$



White has several advantages in the ending:

1. Absolute control of the only open file;
2. Control of the seventh rank; and
3. Targets on f7 and b6.

26... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}c1$

Rerouting the knight to its optimal spot on d3, where it watches both the queenside and centre.

27... $\mathbb{E}fd8$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{E}xa7$

$\mathbb{Q}e5$ was coming.

29 $\mathbb{E}xa7$

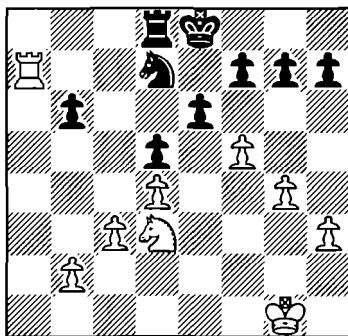
Again, White threatens $\mathbb{Q}e5$. If

29... $\mathbb{Q}e4?$, there follows 30 $\mathbb{E}b7$ $\mathbb{E}a8$ 31 f3 and White will clip the b-pawn.

29... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 30 f4

Having tied Black down, Bronstein now begins to seize space on the kingside.

30... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 31 g4 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 32 f5!



Risky, but it works. A more cautious player would have centralized the king first.

32... $\mathbb{E}b8$

32... $\mathbb{E}xf5?$ 33 $\mathbb{G}xf5$ weakens d5 and leaves Black totally passive. For example, 33... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 37 $\mathbb{E}b7$ and White wins a pawn.

33 $\mathbb{F}xe6$ $\mathbb{F}xe6$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$

36 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{E}c7$ 37 $\mathbb{E}a6$ $\mathbb{E}b7$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}b8!$

Alternatives are worse:

a) 38... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 39 $\mathbb{E}a8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 40 g5 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 41 h4 b5 42 h5 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ and the Black position is under enormous strain.

b) 38... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 40 $\mathbb{E}a8$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 41 h4 (Black is almost in zugzwang; White threatens a king infiltration to d6) 41...b5 42 $\mathbb{E}a6$ b4 43

$\blacksquare x e 6$ $\blacksquare b c 3$ 44 $\blacksquare b c 3$ $\blacksquare c 7$ 45 $\blacksquare x d 5$ $\blacksquare x c 3$ 46 $h 5$ $\blacksquare a 3$ 47 $\blacksquare e 5$! cutting off Black's king from the queenside and winning.

39 $\blacksquare a 8$ $\blacksquare c 7$ 40 $g 5$ $\blacksquare d 6$ 41 $h 4$ $\blacksquare c 6$ 42 $\blacksquare c 8$! $\blacksquare x e 5$

If 42... $\blacksquare e 7$?, 43 $\blacksquare d 8+$ $\blacksquare c 7$ 44 $\blacksquare h 8$ picks off at least one pawn.

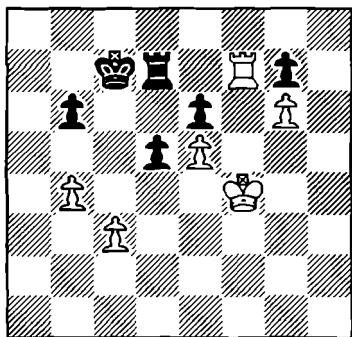
43 $d x e 5+$ $\blacksquare e 7$ 44 $h 5$!

Even stronger than 44 $\blacksquare h 8$ $\blacksquare a 7$ 45 $\blacksquare x h 7$ $\blacksquare f 7$ 46 $\blacksquare h 8$ $\blacksquare a 4+$ 47 $b 4$ $d 4$.

44... $\blacksquare a 7$ 45 $g 6$ $h x g 6$ 46 $h x g 6$ $\blacksquare d 7$

After 46... $\blacksquare a 2$, White wins with 47 $\blacksquare c 7+$ $\blacksquare f 8$ 48 $\blacksquare f 7+$ $\blacksquare g 8$ 49 $\blacksquare b 7$ $\blacksquare f 8$ (or 49... $\blacksquare x b 2??$ 50 $\blacksquare b 8$ mate) 50 $\blacksquare x b 6$ $\blacksquare a 4+$ 51 $b 4$.

47 $\blacksquare f 8$ $\blacksquare c 6$ 48 $\blacksquare f 7$ $\blacksquare d 7$ 49 $b 4$ $\blacksquare c 7$



Black has managed to create something of a fortress. What is the path to break into his position?

50 $\blacksquare g 5!!$

Bronstein calculated the position at least 26 ply deep, in multiple lines.

50... $b 5$

50... $\blacksquare c 6$ doesn't help. White wins in similar fashion after 51 $b 5+!$ $\blacksquare c 7$ 52 $\blacksquare x g 7!$ $\blacksquare x g 7$ 53 $\blacksquare f 6$ $\blacksquare g 8$ 54 $\blacksquare f 7$ $\blacksquare d 8$ 55 $g 7$ $\blacksquare d 7$ 56 $g 8\blacksquare$ $\blacksquare x g 8$ 57 $\blacksquare x g 8$ $\blacksquare e 7$ 58

$\blacksquare g 7$ $\blacksquare e 8$ 59 $\blacksquare f 6$ $\blacksquare d 7$ 60 $\blacksquare f 7$ and it's zugzwang.

51 $\blacksquare x g 7!$

The point of 50 $\blacksquare g 5!!$ is this perfectly calculated temporary rook sac. The idea is to force a winning king and pawn ending.

51... $\blacksquare x g 7$ 52 $\blacksquare f 6$ $\blacksquare g 8$ 53 $\blacksquare f 7$ $\blacksquare d 8$ 54 $g 7 d 4$

Or 54... $\blacksquare d 7+$ 55 $\blacksquare g 6$ $\blacksquare d 8$ 56 $\blacksquare h 7$ $\blacksquare d 7$ 57 $\blacksquare h 8$ $\blacksquare d 8+$ 58 $g 8\blacksquare$ $\blacksquare x g 8+$ 59 $\blacksquare x g 8$ $d 4$ 60 $c x d 4$ $\blacksquare c 6$ 61 $\blacksquare f 7$ $\blacksquare d 5$ 62 $\blacksquare e 7$ $\blacksquare x d 4$ 63 $\blacksquare x e 6$ and White queens first.

55 $c x d 4$ $\blacksquare d 7+$ 56 $\blacksquare g 6$ $\blacksquare x d 4$ 57 $g 8\blacksquare$ $\blacksquare g 4+$ 58 $\blacksquare f 7$ $\blacksquare x g 8$ 59 $\blacksquare x g 8$ 1-0

On 59... $\blacksquare c 6$, 60 $\blacksquare f 7$ $\blacksquare d 5$ 61 $\blacksquare f 6!$ zugzwangs Black and wins the queening race.

Summary

If you take control of a6, then you have the possibility of a4! and a5. The pawn swap gives you control of b5.

Game 31

J.Andersen-S.Christensen

Aarhus 1999

1 $d 4$ $\blacksquare f 6$ 2 $\blacksquare f 3$ $e 6$ 3 $\blacksquare f 4$ $b 6$ 4 $\blacksquare b d 2$ $\blacksquare b 7$ 5 $e 3$ $\blacksquare d 6$

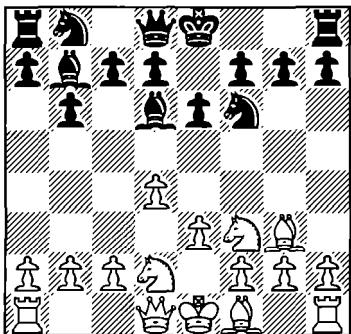
I get this move a lot in blitz games but don't think much of it.

6 $\blacksquare g 3!$

And this move is the reason why. Black ends up trading on g3, which helps White. Compare 5 $h 3$ $\blacksquare d 6!$

which, as we've seen previously, exploits the early h-pawn advance.

Don't be tempted by 6 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$?! $cx d6$, when Black's added control of the centre assures equality.



6... $\mathbb{Q}xg3$

6...0-0 doesn't work out well because Black will either lose a tempo by retreating the bishop to e7 or take on g3 anyway. For example, 7 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 8 $c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ (as I have mentioned about 20 times before in this book, taking on g3 nearly always leads to trouble for Black if he has already castled kingside; but the problem is White was about to play e4, virtually forcing the move) 9 $hxg3$ $h6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 11 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 12 $e4$ $e5$ 13 $d5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $d6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $c6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $cx d5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}hf5$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 18 $exd5$ $e4$ (the d5-pawn can't be touched: 18... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$? 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xh6+$! $gxh6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$) 19 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 20 $f4$ $exf3$ 21 $gxf3$ $b5$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 23 $g4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 24 $g5$! $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ (opening the h-file leads to a disaster for Black: 25... $hxg5$?? 26 $\mathbb{Q}h2$) 26 $f4$ $\mathbb{Q}ee8$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 29 $g6$! $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}dg1$

$\mathbb{Q}e3$ 31 $gxf7+$ 1-0, F.Braga-C.Valiente, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988.

7 $hxg3$ $d6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $e5$!

Black responds logically. He switches his pawn structure to the opposite colour of his remaining bishop and also refuses to castle kingside.

10 $e4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$!

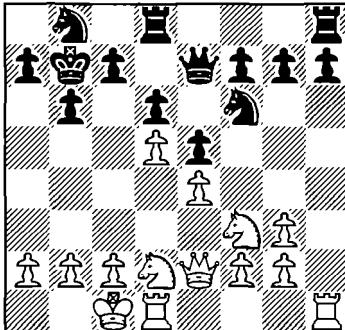
Black makes the most out of a slightly inferior position. The queenside is the safest place for his king.

10... $exd4$?! 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ would be unwise. It allows the white knight to look at f5, c6 and b5.

11 0-0-0 0-0-0 12 $\mathbb{Q}a6$!

Eliminating the defensive bishop, which guards the light squares around Black's king.

12... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xb7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 14 $d5$



14... $\mathbb{Q}a6$

The space advantage should be challenged immediately with 14... $c6$! 15 $dxc6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $h6$, with just a tiny edge for White.

15 $\mathbb{Q}he1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e3!$ $c6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 19 $dxc6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$

More accurate than 19... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ –

Play the London System

Black must fight for d5.

20 ♜g5

20...♛xf7+? simply swaps e4 for a wing pawn, and 20...♜c7 21 ♛c4 ♜fxe4

22 ♜xe4 ♜xe4 gives Black a central initiative.

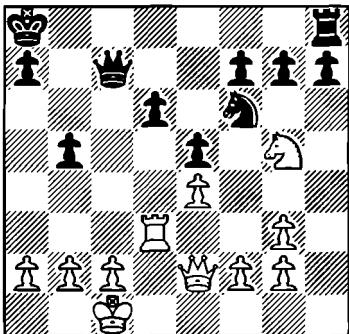
20...b5 21 ♛e2 ♜c7 22 ♜b3

Threatening to fork on a5.

22...♝a8 23 ♜xc5 ♛xc5

Black's position deteriorates after 23...dxc5?! 24 ♜ad3 h6 25 ♜d6 ♛e8 26 ♜f3.

24 ♜c3 ♛b6 25 ♜xc7 ♛xc7 26 ♜d3!



Airlifting fresh reserves for the attack. Black has been close to equality, but his insecure king position keeps him just short of it.

26...h6 27 ♜f3 ♛c4?

Losing a tempo. 27...♛c6! was better, but White still retains a tiny pull due to Black's slightly insecure king after 28 ♜d2 b4! 29 f3 ♜c8 30 ♜b3.

28 ♜d2! ♛c6

Trading the b5-pawn for White's a-pawn, with 28...♛xa2? 29 ♜a3 ♛e6 30 ♛xb5, isn't a good deal for Black.

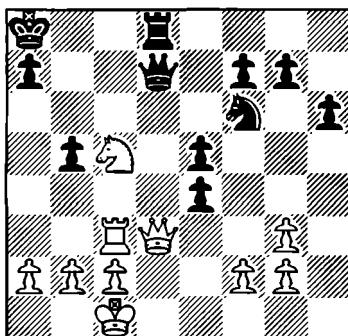
29 ♜c3 ♛d7 30 ♛d3 ♜d8 31 ♜b3 d5!

Black decides that White's attack is gaining momentum and counters in the centre.

32 ♜c5 dxe4?

White's sustained pressure pays dividends.

The best defensive path lies in 32...♛c6! 33 exd5 ♜xd5 34 ♜b3 ♛d7 (34...♜xd3? lands Black in big trouble after 35 ♜xc6 ♜d7 36 ♜c5! ♜d8 37 ♜c7) 35 ♛e2 ♛d6!. This powerful centralization keeps Black's king secure for now.



33 ♜xd7!

Forcing a very favourable rook ending.

33...exd3 34 ♜xf6 d2+

34...gxsf6 doesn't save Black after 35 ♜c6 dxc2 36 ♜xc2 f5 37 ♜xh6 f4 38 gxsf4 exf4 39 ♜f6 ♜g8 40 ♜xf4 ♜xg2 41 ♜xf7. The extra pawn and dominant rook on the seventh ensure the victory.

35 ♜d1 gxsf6 36 ♜c6 f5 37 ♜f6 f4 38 gxsf4 exf4 39 ♜xf4 ♜g8

Deciding to go totally passive is generally a fatal strategy in rook endings. Even after the superior alternative 39...♜d7, the continuation 40 c3! ♜b7

41 $\mathbb{E}d4$ $\mathbb{E}e7$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ should win easily

- not only because of the extra pawn, but also because Black is saddled with weak pawns on f7 and h6.

40 g3 $\mathbb{E}g7$ 41 $\mathbb{E}f6$ $\mathbb{E}h7$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $h5$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}c3$

Heading for a5.

43... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 44 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ a6 45 $\mathbb{Q}a5$

Black could resign here.

45...h4 46 gxh4 $\mathbb{E}xh4$ 47 $\mathbb{E}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 48 $\mathbb{E}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 49 b4+! 1-0

Summary

When both sides castle queenside, White still retains an edge if he can get in e4 and d5.

Game 32 P.Blatny-J.Jurek Czech League 1991

1 d4 e6 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ b6 4 e3 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}d3!$?

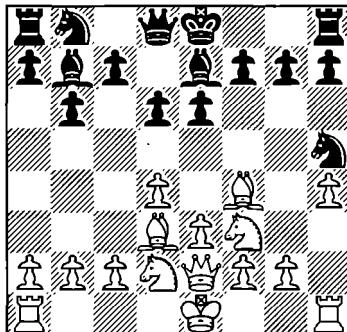
Blatny loves a confrontation. He is one of the few players who consistently refuses to play h3 in the London. He never seems to mind if Black plays ... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ and chops his bishop on f4. I have played Blatny three times, and in each game he incited crazy complications right from the beginning.

6 h3 is the move to play if you want to hang on to the bishop.

6... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}e2!$?

Now the game takes an original turn. 7 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ was White's last chance for normalcy.

7...d6 8 h4!



Revealing his idea - Blatny has no intention of castling kingside.

8 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ would be the more standard response. For example, 8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9 e4 $\mathbb{Q}df6$ 10 c3 c5 11 e5 $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 12 hxg3 $\mathbb{Q}d7!$ (after 12... $\mathbb{Q}d5?$! 13 dxc5 bxc5 14 o-o-o Black faces a dilemma over where to put his king) 13 exd6 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 15 dxc5 bxc5! (15... $\mathbb{Q}xc5?$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 17 o-o-o puts Black's king in serious danger) 16 o-o-o and Black stood worse but managed to draw in M.Sadauskas-L.Holms, correspondence 1991.

8... $\mathbb{Q}xf4$

Black cannot delay, otherwise $\mathbb{Q}h2$ and g4 follow.

9 exf5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 f5?!

An impatient move; the pawn on f4 cramped Black. White's position looks like fun after the calmer 10 o-o-o.

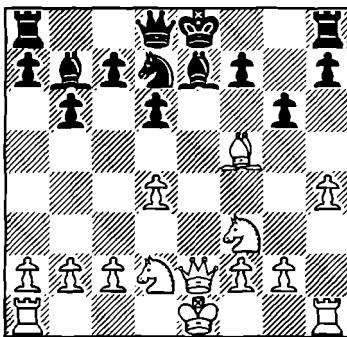
10...exf5 11 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ g6?!

This creates a target for White to open lines with h5 in the future.

It's understandable that Black is a little gun-shy about castling kingside,

Play the London System

but this is the route he should have taken. 11...0-0! 12 0-0-0 $\text{Ke}8$ 13 $\text{Wd}3$ $\text{Qf}6$ is sharp and probably balanced. Black's bishop pair doesn't mean much with this static pawn structure. The position reminds me of lines in the Petróff Defence where the opponents castle on opposite wings. Black tends to hold his own in those variations.



12 $\text{Qe}4!$?

White provokes ...d5, but this may help Black.

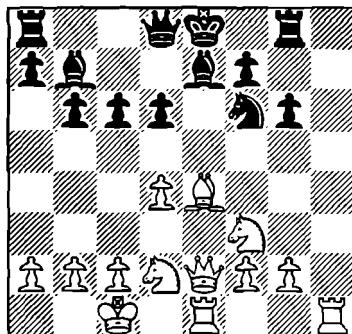
12 $\text{Qd}3!$ would have been stronger, even though 12...0-0 13 h5 $\text{Ke}8$ 14 hxg6! hxg6 (getting greedy with 14... $\text{Qf}6?$ leads to crazy complications favouring White: 15 gxf7+ $\text{Qxf}7$ 16 $\text{Qe}4$ d5 17 $\text{Kxh}7+$ $\text{Qf}8$ 18 $\text{Qf}5!$ with a powerful attack) 15 0-0-0 $\text{Qf}6$ 16 $\text{Wf}1$ d5 looks okay for Black.

12...c6?!

Rather than this meek choice, Black should move forward with 12...d5! 13 $\text{Qd}3$ 0-0 14 h5 $\text{Ke}8$ 15 0-0-0 $\text{Qf}6$ 16 $\text{Wf}1$ c5, drumming up some counterplay on the other wing.

13 h5 $\text{Kg}8$ 14 0-0-0 $\text{Qf}6$ 15 hxg6 hxg6

16 $\text{Ede}1$



If Black plays 16... $\text{Qxe}4?!$ here, 17 $\text{Qxe}4$ threatens a knight fork on f6. Now:

- a) Black's position deteriorates rapidly after 17... $\text{Qf}8?$ 18 $\text{Wd}2$ g5 19 $\text{Kh}5$ f6 20 $\text{We}3$ $\text{Qc}8$ 21 $\text{Kh}7$ $\text{Qf}5$ 22 $\text{Qexg}5!$.
- b) 17... $\text{Qd}7$ 18 d5! would be similar to the game continuation.

16... $\text{Qd}7!$

A radical attempt to get out of town.

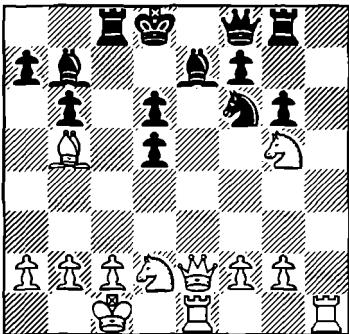
17 $\text{Qg}5 \text{Wf}8$ 18 d5!

Ensuring that Black's king will not feel so safe on the queenside either.

18...cxd5

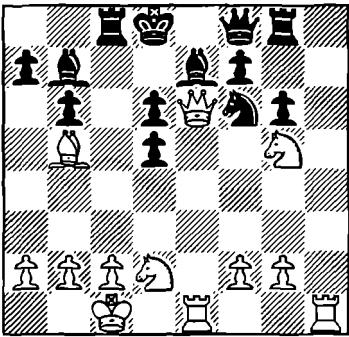
A line which displays some of the dangers to the black king is 18... $\text{Qxd}5$ 19 $\text{Qxd}5$ $\text{Qxg}5?$ 20 $\text{Wg}4+$ $\text{Qc}7$ 21 $\text{Wxg}5$ cxd5 22 $\text{Ee}7+$ $\text{Qc}8$ 23 $\text{Kh}7$ $\text{Eg}7$ 24 $\text{Qc}4!!$ $\text{dxc}4$ 25 $\text{Wg}4+!$ $\text{Qb}8$ 26 $\text{Wd}7$ $\text{Wxe}7$ 27 $\text{Eh}8+!$, and White mates in three moves. 19...cxd5 improves, but this still looks very tough for Black after 20 $\text{Qh}7$ $\text{Wd}8$ 21 $\text{Wf}3$ f5 22 g4! and the attack continues.

19 $\text{Qd}3 \text{Qc}8$ 20 $\text{Qb}5+$ $\text{Qd}8$



21 ♜e6!

Very pretty, totally sound and it's only the second best move in the position! The startling 21 ♜h7!! is even stronger and wins on the spot.



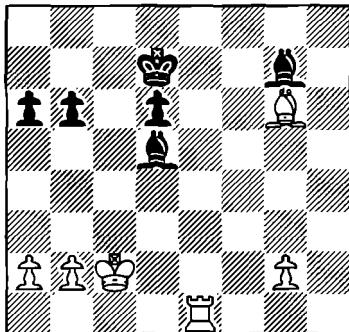
21... ♜xc2+!

The only move. Others lose:

- a) 21...fxe6?? allows 22 ♜xe6 mate.
 - b) If 21...♜g7??, the deflection 22 ♜h8! finishes Black off.
- 22 ♜xc2 fxe6 23 ♜xe6+ ♜c8 24 ♜xf8 ♜xf8 25 ♜b3

The combination has netted White the exchange. Black's extra pawn, doubled and isolated, doesn't help him much. Now it is a matter of technique.

25...a6 26 ♜d3 ♜d7 27 ♜d4 ♜e4 28 f3 ♜g7 29 fxe4 ♜xd4 30 ♜h7+ ♜g7 31 ♜xg7+ ♜xg7 32 exd5 ♜xd5 33 ♜xg6



33... ♜e5

Black can't regain the lost pawn:

- a) 33...♜xg2?? 34 ♜f5+ ♜c6 35 ♜g1 picks up a piece.

b) 33...♜xa2? 34 b3 locks in the bishop, and 34...b5 35 ♜e2! ♜c6 (or 35...a5?? 36 ♜e8+!) 36 ♜f7! d5 37 ♜e6+ ♜b7 38 ♜g6 wins for White.

34 g4 ♜e6 35 ♜f1 ♜e7 36 ♜d3 b5 37 g5 ♜e6 38 b3 ♜d7 39 b4 ♜e6 40 a3 ♜d5 41 g6 ♜g7 42 ♜e1+! ♜e5 43 ♜e4!

This either eliminates Black's bishop pair, or infiltrates to b7.

43... ♜e6 44 ♜f1!

Now ♜b7 is threatened.

44... ♜c4

If 44...d5?, White wins with 45 ♜f5 ♜g8 46 ♜c8.

45 ♜f3 ♜f6 46 ♜b7 d5 47 ♜f5! ♜e6

Or 47...d4 48 ♜xa6 d3+ 49 ♜d2 ♜g7 50 ♜xb5 ♜h6+ 51 ♜c3 d2 52 ♜a4, ending the resistance.

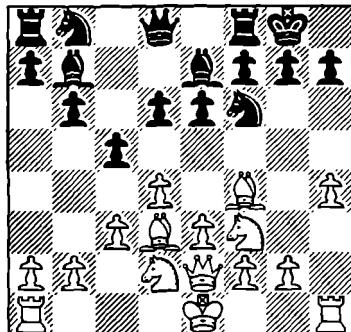
48 ♜c8+ ♜e7 49 ♜xa6 ♜e6 50 ♜c8+ ♜e7 51 ♜f3 d4 52 ♜f5 ♜d5 53 ♜f1 1-0

Summary

6 $\mathbb{Q}d3!$?, ignoring Black's threat to play ... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ and exchange the f4-bishop, is a creative and risky plan. White follows up with 0-0-0 and h4, with opposite-wing attacks.

couldn't hold the game.

8...0-0 9 $\mathbb{h}4!$?



Game 33

P.Blatny-T.Pioch

Triberg (rapid) 1991

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ b6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 4 e3 e6 5

$\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

Again, Blatny doesn't consider ... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ a threat and dispenses with 6 h3. On this occasion Black shows considerable restraint by refraining from 6... $\mathbb{Q}h5!$.

6...c5 7 c3 d6 8 $\mathbb{Q}e2?$

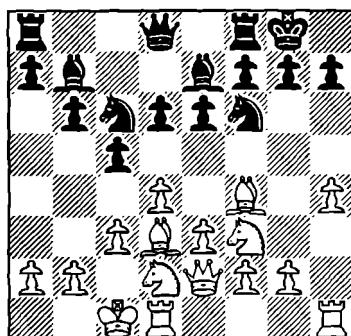
Keeping open the option of castling queenside.

A more mainstream handling of White's position was seen in S.Sulyok-N.Tamas, Hungarian League 1997: 8 h3 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 9 0-0 0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 13 e4 e5?! (13...b5 14 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ e5 15 dx5 dx5 16 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ c4 17 $\mathbb{Q}c2$, reaching a Closed Lopez-style position, may have been a better try – even here White stands a shade better because he will pick up the bishop pair) 14 dx5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}cxe5$ dx5 16 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ a6 20 $\mathbb{Q}xf6!$ (seizing control of d5) 20... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ b5 22 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ c4 23 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}d2$, when Black was tied up and

Blatny's favourite plan.

9... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 10 0-0-0

Intuitively, one would think that Black should be able to get to White's king first, but this may not be the case.



10... $\mathbb{Q}c8?$!

Black needs ...a6 and ...b5 in his attack. I would go for 10...cxd4 11 exd4 a6, when 12 g4! b5! 13 g5 looks like fun. Black should avoid the suicidal 12... $\mathbb{Q}xg4?$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}hg1$ h5 14 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xg7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ f5 18 $\mathbb{Q}xg7+!$ with a crushing attack for White.

11 ♜b1 cxd4 12 exd4 ♜e8 13 ♜e4

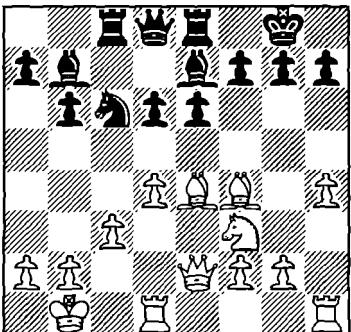
Simple play, reducing the defenders.

13...♜xe4

Black's attack stalls after 13...♜d5?!

14 ♜h2 ♜d7 15 g4 ♜f8 16 g5.

14 ♜xe4



14...g6!

This looks crazy but it is the most accurate defensive move:

a) If Black relaxes with 14...♜f8?? he gets hit with the familiar 15 ♜xh7+! (always be on the alert for the sac on h7) 15...♜xh7 16 ♜g5+ ♜g6 17 h5+ ♜f6 18 ♜f3 ♜e7 19 ♜xd6+! ♜xd6 20 ♜xf7+ ♜d8 21 ♜xb7 ♜c7 22 d5! and White wins.

b) White's attack becomes faster after 14...h6?! 15 g4!

15 ♜g5!

Weakening the dark squares around Black's king.

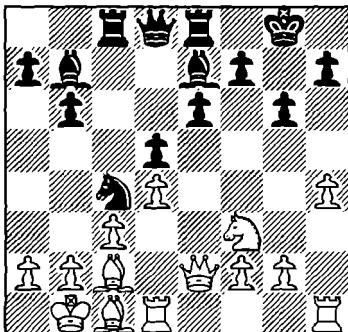
15...d5?!

Stabilizing the centre only helps White, who now has no fear of an ...e5 counterattack.

16 ♜c2 ♜a5 17 ♜c1?!

A little wishy-washy on White's part. The principled move 17 ♜xe7! makes a lot of sense, saddling Black with a bad bishop and weakening f6, g7 and h6.

17...♜c4



18 ♜e5?!

White continues to spurn the h5 advance because he fears that Black would block with 18 h5 ♜a6 19 ♜e1 g5 20 h6, but even here White's attack looks rather potent.

18...♜xe5 19 ♜xe5 ♜d6 20 ♜e3 ♜f6 21 h5

Good timing.

21...e5

Bypassing with 21...g5?? is disastrous after 22 ♜d3.

22 hxg6 hxg6 23 ♜h6?

This slows the attack by allowing Black to block out the influence of the c2-bishop. Black would have been in huge danger after 23 dxе5! ♜xe5 24 ♜h6.

23...e4!

Clogging one of the major arteries of White's attack.

24 ♜g5 ♜g7 25 ♜h7+ ♜f8 26 ♜h6

The idea is to prevent ...f6 or ...f5 as an escape route for Black. White now has the simple threat of ♜dh1 followed by ♜xg7+.

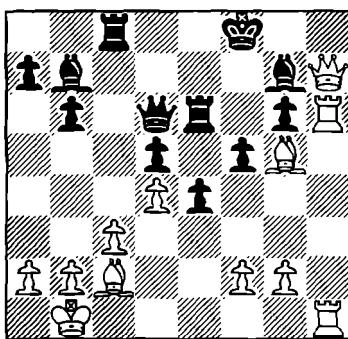
However, the most accurate move is 26 ♜h4! to leave h6 open for both his bishop and queen. For example, 26...♜e6 27 ♜dh1 ♜f6 28 ♜h6+ ♜e7 (blocking with 28...♜g7?? leads to mate after 29 ♜h8+! ♜xh8 30 ♜xh8+ ♜g7 31 ♜h7) 29 ♜d1! ♜xg5 30 ♜xg5+ ♜f6 31 f3! with continued pressure.

26...♜e6

Not 26...♜xh6?? which allows 27 ♜h8 mate.

27 ♜dh1! f5??

Missing White's gigantic threat. 27...♜f6! was a forced move.



28 ♜xg7+! 1-0

Summary

Keep an option open for queenside castling, especially when your opponent commits to kingside castling first. It is unexplored territory and will almost certainly confuse your opponent.

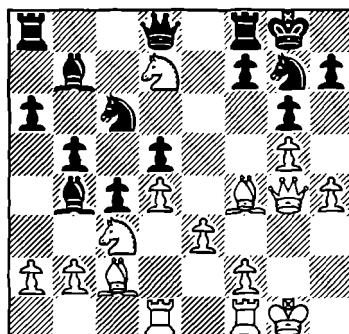
Game 34 A.Miles-A.Gurevich Canadian Open, Sackville 2001

1 d4 ♜f6 2 ♜f3 e6 3 ♜f4 b6 4 e3 ♜b7 5 c4

This move horrifies London System purists, who avoid it and choose 5 ♜bd2 and 6 c3.

5...♜b4+

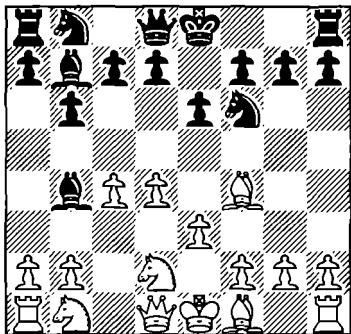
The following is a London System classic: 5...♜e7 6 h3 0-0 7 ♜c3 d5 8 cxd5 exd5 9 ♜d3 c5 10 0-0 ♜c6 11 ♜e5 c4 12 ♜c2 a6 13 g4! (White must attack before Black's queenside pawn majority begins its march forward) 13...b5 14 g5 ♜e8 15 ♜g4 g6 16 ♜ad1 (discouraging ...♜xe5) 16...♜g7 17 h4 ♜b4?! 18 ♜d7!! (brilliantly calculated)



18...♜c8 19 ♜xd5! ♜h8 20 ♜f6 ♜a7 21 d5 ♜e7 22 ♜e5! ♜xd7! (if 22...♜xd7?, 23 ♜d4! ♜b7 24 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 25 ♜xg7+ wins) 23 h5! ♜xd5 24 ♜f4! ♜xd1 25 ♜xd1 ♜a5 26 ♜e8! f6 27 gxsf6 ♜g8 28 ♜xg7 1-0, A.Miles-B.Spassky, Montilla 1978. Having spent many

hours analysing the Slav with my late friend Tony Miles over the ICC, I soon realized that he (like Igor Ivanov) was something of an underachieving genius. Games like this offer a glimpse of what could have been had he taken better care of his health.

6 ♘fd2!



More accurate than the continuation 6 ♘bd2 c5. We preserve our b1-knight for c3.

6...0-0 7 a3 ♖e7

7...♖d6 is covered in the next game.

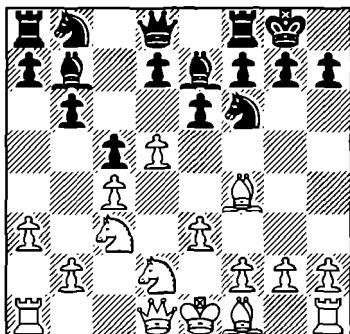
8 ♘c3 c5?!

The Benoni setups don't work well for Black in this variation of the London.

Black should play classically with 8...d5! 9 cxd5 exd5. He stands well in the middlegame because White's extra tempo (♘d2) actually hurts him since the knight belongs on f3.

9 d5!

White uses a tactical trick to get a good Benoni-style position where Black's bishop on b7 hits a pawn wall on d5.



9...d6

9...exd5 10 cxd5! is a pawn sac that Miles successfully played against Timman: 10...♗xd5?! (very brave, but Black should probably decline the pawn offer; note also that 10...♗xd5?? loses instantly to 11 ♕f3) 11 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 12 ♕f3 ♘c7 13 ♕b7! d6 14 ♘e4 ♕d7 15 0-0-0 ♕c6 16 ♘xd6 ♕xb7 17 ♘xb7 ♘e6 18 ♘g3 a6 19 ♘c4 ♕a7 20 ♘d5 and Black couldn't unravel, A.Miles-J.Timman, Wijk aan Zee 1979. Earlier, 10 ♕f3 also looks good for White.

10 e4 ♕e8 11 ♘e2 ♘bd7 12 0-0 ♘f8 13 ♘e3 ♘g6 14 ♕c2 ♘f8 15 ♕ae1

White may be thinking about attacking on the kingside. 15 ♕ab1 intending b4 is a logical alternative.

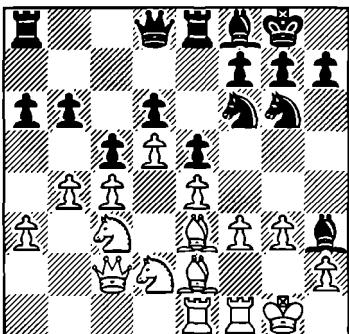
15...a6 16 b4 e5

Okay, so Black has made his choice. He prefers to enter an inferior Czech Benoni structure. White enjoys a huge space advantage both in the centre and on the queenside. On top of this, Black's bishop is clearly misplaced on b7.

Attempts to blast his way out of the

Play the London System

bind backfire on Black: 16...exd5!? 17 exd5! cxb4 18 axb4 b5? 19 cxb5 ♜xd5 20 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 21 bxa6 ♜h4 22 g3 ♜g2 23 ♜d3 ♜xe1 24 ♜xe1 and the extra exchange offers Black little comfort as he tries in vain to stop the passed pawns on the a- and b-files.
17 g3 ♜c8 18 f3 ♜h3?



The beginning of a bad plan, for two reasons:

1. White plans to double rooks on the b-file, so forcing the rook to f2 helps White achieve the swing over to b2.
2. That is Black's good bishop on h3. White will simply challenge it with ♜f1, in which case Black must either trade his best piece or back off, losing time.

Black's best shot at survival would be to forget about the fantasy attack on the kingside and try to hunker down for the defence of the queenside with 18...♜e7!, preparing to meet White's plan by doubling rooks on the b-file via b7 and b8.

19 ♜f2 ♜e7 20 ♜f1

Challenging Black's good bishop.

20...♛c8 21 ♜b1

It is time to take over on the queen-side.

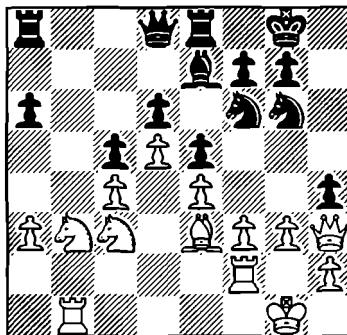
21...h5 22 ♜d1 ♜xf1?!

Black's "attack" is much like wealth accumulated in a dream. Soon he wakes up and sees that his attack never really existed. He should back off with 22...♜d7.

23 ♜xf1 h4 24 bxc5 bxc5 25 ♜b3!

Eyeing infiltration via a5 and c6, and also clearing the way for ♜fb2.

25...♛d8 26 ♜h3!



The queen serves as a defender and also prevents manoeuvres like ...♛d7.

26...♜b8 27 ♜fb2 ♜h7 28 ♜d1 ♜g5 29 ♜f2

Preserving his good bishop.

29...♛f6 30 ♜g4 ♜h6 31 ♜e3 ♜g5

White also continues to make progress in other lines:

a) 31...♜e7 32 gxh4! ♜f8 33 h5.

b) 31...hxg3 32 hxg3 ♜b6 33 ♜a5 ♜xb2 34 ♜xb2.

c) 31...♜xe3 32 ♜xe3 denies Black use of g5.

32 ♜f5 h3?

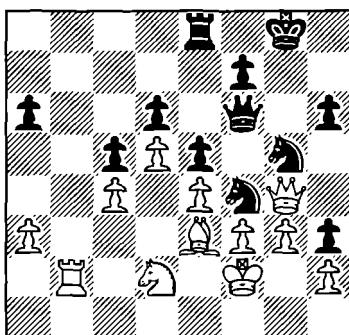
This pawn is a goner if Black's attack fails. And it will!

33 ♜e3! ♜e7 34 ♜xh6+ gxh6 35 ♜d2! ♜xb2 36 ♜xb2

Black's position is in ruins and his pawn weaknesses are almost too many to count.

36...♜g6 37 ♜f2 ♜f4

Clever, but White simply ignores the intrusion.



38 ♜b3!

This calm move shows the futility of Black's demonstration.

There is absolutely no reason for White to take the bait with 38 gxsf4!? exf4 39 ♜xf4 ♜xb2 40 ♜xd6. Although White is still winning here, he has allowed complications to arise.

38...♜g2 39 ♜xg5 ♜xg5

This leads to a hopeless ending, but after 39...hxg5?? 40 ♜xh3 the knight perishes.

40 ♜xg5+ hxg5 41 ♜b6

Going into lawnmower mode.

41...♚f8

41...♜d8 42 ♜xa6 ♜f8 43 ♜e2 is also

hopeless for Black.

42 ♜xd6!

White realizes that Black's infiltration down the b-file is toothless.

42...♜b8 43 ♜xa6 ♜b2 44 ♜e2 ♜a2 45 ♜a5 ♜a1 46 ♜xc5 1-0

46...♜h1 would be met by 47 ♜f1!.

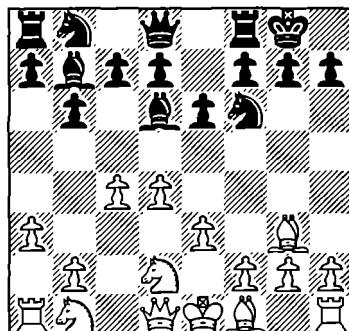
Summary

In Queen's Indian lines where White plays his c-pawn to c4, be aware of the possibility of meeting ...c5 with d5! to achieve a good Benoni-type position for White.

Game 35

E.Meduna-P.Vavruk
Czech League 1999

1 d4 e6 2 ♜f3 ♜f6 3 ♜f4 b6 4 e3 ♜b7 5 c4 ♜b4+ 6 ♜fd2! 0-0 7 a3 ♜d6 8 ♜g3!



Our universal recipe for meeting ...d6.

8...♜e7 9 ♜c3 ♜xg3?!

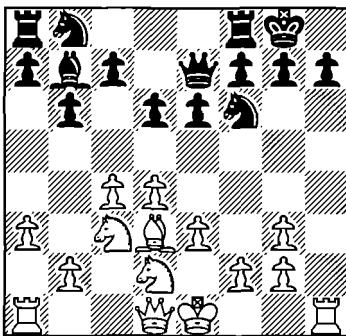
Opening the h-file after having castled is asking for it. Alternatively:

Play the London System

a) 9...c5?! 10 $\mathbb{Q}h4!$ would be a tough pin to break.

b) The unlikely 9...e5! yields some play: 10 $\mathbb{Q}b5!$ exd4 (otherwise Black loses a pawn) 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ cxd6 12 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ d5 13 $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ dxc4 14 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ is only a shade better for White.

10 hxg3 d6 11 $\mathbb{Q}d3!$



11... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$

The g2-pawn can't be touched: 11... $\mathbb{Q}xg2??$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$! $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 14 $\mathbb{W}h5$ f6 15 $\mathbb{W}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 16 $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 17 0-0-0 and Black won't survive for long.

12 g4 g6

After 12...h6 White should proceed with the calm 13 f3! and castle queen-side, instead of over-pressing with the impatient 13 g5? hxg5 14 $\mathbb{W}c2$ g6! 15 e4 e5 16 d5 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g4 when Black's king is safe and he retains the extra pawn.

13 g5 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 14 $\mathbb{W}g4$ f5 15 gxf6 $\mathbb{Q}exf6$ 16 $\mathbb{W}h4$ $\mathbb{W}g7$

Of course, White would love it if Black were to oblige with 16... $\mathbb{Q}xg2?$ 17

$\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 18 0-0-0 c5 19 $\mathbb{Q}g1$, with both barrels pointing toward the black king.

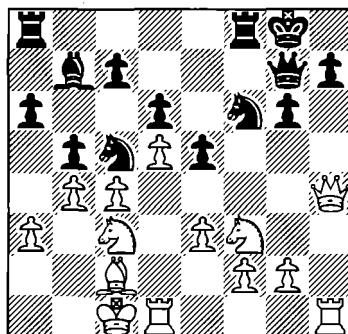
17 0-0-0 e5 18 d5 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ a6

An attempt to counterattack is much too slow, but I don't have any useful suggestions for Black.

20 $\mathbb{Q}f3!$

From g5, the knight will break down the defence.

20...b5 21 b4!



Ejecting the knight to take control of e6.

21... $\mathbb{Q}cd7$

21... $\mathbb{Q}a4$ is also completely hopeless. 22 $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ bxa4 23 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ a5 25 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 26 b5! slams the door shut on Black's would-be attack.

22 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}fc8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}h3!$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$

The point of White's last move is revealed in the line 24...bxc4? 25 $\mathbb{Q}xg6!$.

25 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 26 g4 1-0

Summary

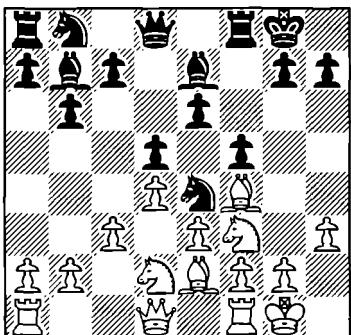
When your opponent castles kingside and then helpfully opens the h-file, the normal result is usually a very happy one for White.

Game 36
C.Lakdawala-R.Bruno
 Gambito (rapid),
 San Diego 2005

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ b6 4 e3 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

Choosing e2 instead of d3 for the bishop.

5... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 6 h3 0-0 7 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e4!$? 8 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ f5 9 c3 d5!?



Turning the game into a hybrid Queen's Indian/Stonewall Dutch formation. When facing a creative opponent, the London is often a good choice. Players frequently get induced into strange manoeuvres in an attempt to liven things up.

Black tried to get a normal Dutch with 9...d6 in A.Seidel-M.Bolduan, Wiesbaden 1999, but after 10 a4 a5 11 $\mathbb{W}b3!$ he got swayed into playing 11...d5 anyway.

10 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$

For some reason I didn't expect this from my normally very aggressive op-

ponent. Instead I thought he might go psycho with 10...g5!? 11 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}g7$ 15 f3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ h5!?, which leads to a very sharp situation where Black either mates or horribly overextends. When defending such situations, just keep in mind the principle that you should counter in the centre when attacked on the wing, and work actively to hit back at some point with c4, e4, f4 or even g4.

11 $\mathbb{W}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 c4 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ c5?!

Black should try 13... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 14 f4 c5.

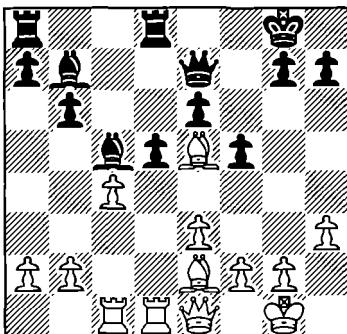
14 dx5

There is nothing wrong with maintaining the central tension with 14 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$.

14... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$

I expected 14...bxc5 15 $\mathbb{E}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 17 cxd5 exd5 18 $\mathbb{E}fd1$ $\mathbb{E}ac8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{E}fd8$ 20 a3 intending b4, to force the black pawn to c4 and to saddle him with a bad bishop and a target on d5.

15 $\mathbb{E}fd1$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 16 $\mathbb{E}ac1$ $\mathbb{E}fd8$ 17 $\mathbb{W}e1!$

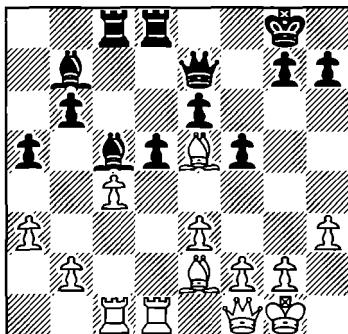


A deceptive position. It looks equal but it isn't easy for Black to find an ex-

act line which leads to a clear draw.

17... $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 18 $a3$ $a5$ 19 $\mathbb{W}f1!$

This covers the sensitive g2-pawn while eyeing holes on b5 and a6.



19... $\mathbb{Q}a6?$

Black can't tolerate another pawn weakness. 19...dxc4 20 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ was better, with a pull for White due to the holes on e5 and b5.

20 $cxd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 21 $\mathbb{W}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

Perhaps Black should keep an extra pair of rooks on the board with 21...exd5 22 $\mathbb{Q}d4$.

22 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $exd5$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}d4$

White has multiple targets and entry points: d5, b5, a6 and the pin on the c-file.

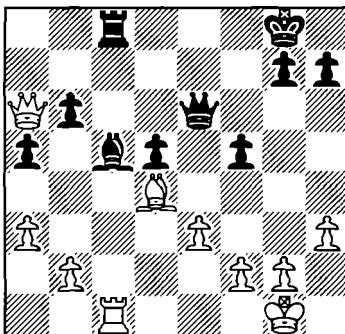
23... $\mathbb{W}e6?$

23... $\mathbb{W}d7$ was necessary.

24 $\mathbb{Q}a6!$

Pinning laterally as well as horizontally, and threatening both 25 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$

and 25 $b4$. Black must part with material.



24... $\mathbb{W}e8$

Also hopeless is 24... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{B}xc5$ (if 25... $\mathbb{Q}c8??$, 26 $\mathbb{Q}c3!$ wins) 26 $\mathbb{W}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{B}b6$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$.

25 $\mathbb{W}b7!$

Too many threats! There's mate on g7, 26 $b4$ winning a piece, and 26 $\mathbb{W}xd5+$.

25 $b4?!$ $axb4$ 26 $AXB4$ $\mathbb{Q}a8!$ 27 $\mathbb{W}b7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 28 $\mathbb{W}xd5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 29 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ would allow Black to bail out at the relatively low cost of a pawn.

25... $\mathbb{W}f8$ 26 $b4$ $AXB4$ 27 $AXB4$ 1-0

Summary

When Black goes for a Stonewall/Queen's Indian setup just look for central counters, trade pieces and try to exploit the holes in Black's position later on.

Chapter Four

London versus Grünfeld

Your choices against the Grünfeld setup (...g6 and ...d5) are polarized:

1. The traditional plan and a safe method of playing for a win is to avoid c4 and bog Black down in trench warfare with the Reversed Closed Catalan setup. The secret here is to actually allow Black the freeing break ...e5 (unlike in Chapter One, where we fight like tigers to prevent this break). After capturing on e5, you saddle your opponent with a tender d5-pawn which is easy to attack utilizing ideas like ♕b3, ♖d1 and ♜f3. The space advantage Black achieves is not worth much and most players overestimate its value. See Mamedjarova-Khudaverdieva (Game 39) for a good example of this. From my experience, Grünfeld players hate this setup because you refrain from giving them any targets by holding back on c4.

2. There is a psycho alternative with

the Barry Attack, as seen in Games 45-46. We set up with ♜f3, ♜c3, ♜f4, ♜e5, h4, ♜d2 and often queenside castling for a wild opposite-wing attack game. The Barry Attack is especially effective if Black refrains from a ...c5 and ...♜b6 counter.

Game 37

S.Kovacevic-D.McMahon,
Massy 1993

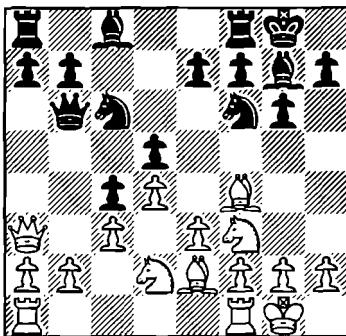
1 d4 ♜f6 2 ♜f3 d5 3 ♜f4 g6 4 e3 ♜g7 5 c3 0-0 6 ♜bd2 c5 7 ♜e2 ♜c6 8 0-0

It's a Reversed Closed Catalan. Generally, these turn into heavy duty manoeuvring games.

8...♜b6 9 ♜b3 c4

Never fear 9...♜xb3?! 10 axb3. Black has helpfully opened the a-file and strengthened White's pawn structure for the ending.

10 ♜a3!



The only serious try for an advantage. White makes way for b2-b3 to quickly strike at the c4-pawn.

10 ♜c2?! ♜f5 11 ♜c1 is lame.

10...♝h5?

10...♝e8 11 b3 cxb3 12 axb3 ♜h5 13 ♜g5 h6 14 ♜h4 g5 15 ♜e1! ♜f6 16 ♜g3 e5 was played in Tu Hoang Thong-D.Causo, Subic Bay 2009. Perhaps White can try for an advantage here with 17 dxe5! ♜xe5 18 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 19 ♜c2! ♜e4 20 ♜xe4 dxe4 21 ♜d4. I prefer White in this position for four reasons:

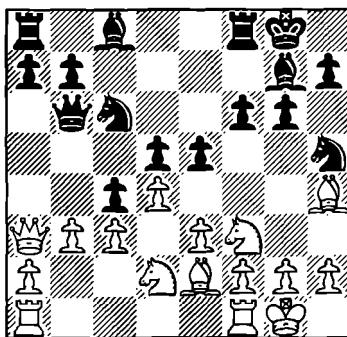
1. White's d4-knight outguns either black bishop;
2. White may be first to the d-file with his rooks;
3. Black has weakened his kingside without obtaining an attack in return; and
4. White can press on the queen-side, and could later push his b- and c-pawns up the board.

11 ♜g5 f6 12 ♜h4 e5

On 12...g5?!, make sure you don't

forget about the trick 13 ♜e1! which leads to an edge for White after either 13...gxh4 14 ♜xh5 or 13...♜f4 14 exf4 gxh4 15 ♜df3.

13 b3!



We always meet ...c4 with an eventual b3 or e4 break. Black's centre looks a bit unstable.

13...cxb3 14 axb3 g5 15 ♜g3 ♜xg3 16 hxg3 e4 17 ♜h2!

I like this move better than 17 ♜e1, after which 17...f5 18 ♜c2 f4 19 gxf4 gxf4 20 exf4 ♜xf4 21 ♜e3 ♜e6 may give Black some attacking chances along the open f- and g-files.

17...f5 18 c4?

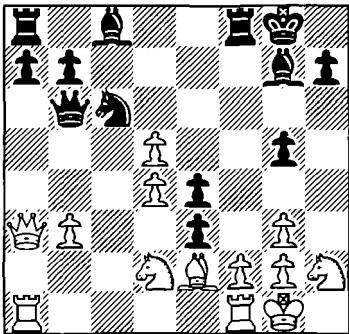
A French player like myself might have gone for 18 f4?!. I like White's position at the end of the line 18...exf3 19 ♜xf3 ♜e6 20 g4! ♜ae8 21 gxf5 ♜xf5 22 ♜h1. Both e4 and c4 are potential pawn breaks.

18...f4?!

No reverse gear! Black chooses to go forward and sacrifice a piece for several pawns; however, the complications favour White.

If Black attempts to consolidate first with 18... $\mathbb{Q}e6$, then 19 $cxd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 21 $g4$ dissolves what remains of Black's centre. Even so, Black still looks all right after 21... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 22 $gxf5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$.

19 cxd5 fxe3



20 $\mathbb{Q}c4!$

Winning a piece for about three pawns. The position is crazy, but in White's favour.

20...exf2+ 21 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$

21... $\mathbb{W}xd4$ is also good for White after 22 $dxc6$ $bxcc6$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}c3$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}d6!$, with the dual threats 25 $\mathbb{Q}c4+!$ and 25 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$.

22 dxc6 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5?$

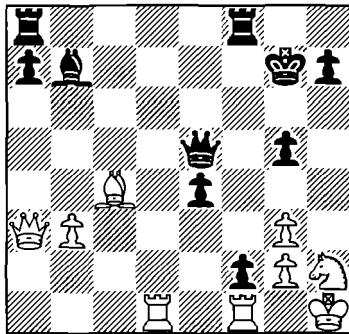
Losing his bearings in this irrational position, but Black is already busted no matter what he plays. For example, 23... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}d6!$ (principle: meet a wing attack with a central counter) 24... $bxcc6$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}c4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}d6!$ and White will convert without too much trouble.

24 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}c4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$

25... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ doesn't work either, as 26

$\mathbb{Q}g4!$ disconnects the black queen from the bishop. Black has no choice but to sac the queen with 26... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $e3$ 29 $\mathbb{W}c5!$ $e2$ 30 $\mathbb{W}c4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 31 $\mathbb{W}xe2$ and the passed pawns, Black's last hope, fall.

26 $cxb7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb7$



27 $\mathbb{Q}d7+$

This is what McMahon must have overlooked on his 23rd move.

27... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$

28... $e3$ loses quickly to 29 $\mathbb{W}a6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ mate.

29 $\mathbb{W}xa7$ 1-0

On 29... $e3$, Black gets slaughtered with 30 $\mathbb{Q}b6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 31 $\mathbb{W}f7+!$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 32 $\mathbb{W}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 33 $\mathbb{W}xg6$ mate.

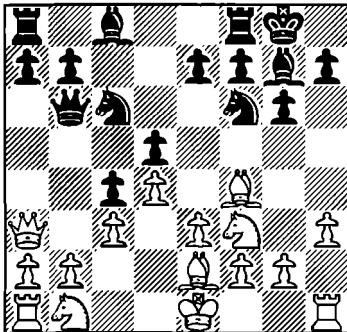
Summary

Don't get nervous if Black grabs a massive space advantage with moves like ...c4, ...f6, ...e5 and ...g5. Shouldering the responsibility for so much territory is not easy for Black either. Just remember to challenge the opponent's centre at every possible contact point.

Play the London System

Game 38 B.Grachev-A.Rakhmanov Moscow 2007

1 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d5 2 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ g6 4 e3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 5 h3 0-0 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ c5 7 c3 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 8 $\mathbb{W}b3$ c4 9 $\mathbb{W}a3!$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$



10 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$

The immediate 10 b3!, forcing Black to swap his c-pawn for White's a-pawn, may be an improvement.

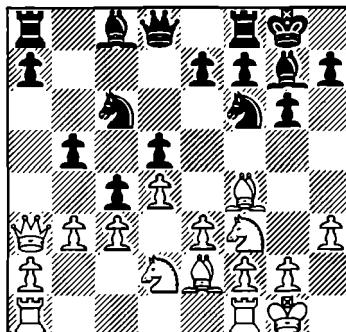
10... $\mathbb{W}d8$

The idea is to play ...b5 in response to b3, but it doesn't fully equalize.

Let's follow another game: 10... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 11 b3 (standard operating procedure: give Black space and then chip away at it) 11...cx b 3 12 ax b 3 (the opening has worked out in White's favour: all that Black has achieved from the ...c5-c4 manoeuvre is to waste time and trade his c-pawn for a less valuable a-pawn) 12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13 g4! $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ (the key to counterplay lies in an effective ...e5 break) 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ dx e 4 15 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ e5 16 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ f5?! (or 16...ex d 4 17 ex d 4 f5 18 gx f 5 gx f 5 19

$\mathbb{Q}c4$ 19... $\mathbb{W}d8$ 20 $\mathbb{W}d6!$ with advantage to White in a sharp position – his pieces control the centre and the f4-square is also under control) 17 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 18 gx f 5 gx f 5 19 d5! $\mathbb{Q}cb8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ with advantage to White, whose king will be safer than Black's, A.Kolev-D.Laylo, National Open, Las Vegas 2008.

11 b3 b5 12 0-0



12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

12... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 13 g4! $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (if 13... $\mathbb{Q}d3?$, then 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ cx d 3 and d3 falls at some point) 14 bx c 4 bx c 4 15 $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ keeps Black passive.

13 bx c 4 bx c 4

If Black attempts to break the symmetry with 13...dx c 4?!, after 14 $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ e5 15 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ (15...a6?? simply drops a pawn to 16 $\mathbb{Q}xb5!$) 16 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ a6 17 dx e 5! $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ he is tied up and under heavy central pressure.

14 e4 e6 15 $\mathbb{W}d6!$

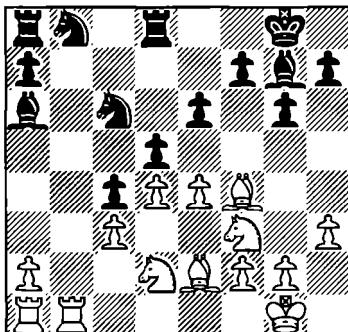
Forcing a favourable ending.

15... $\mathbb{Q}db8$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$

Grachev's next few moves are very instructive. His pieces slowly land on their best squares.

17 $\mathbb{R}fb1!$

An odd choice, but very strong. Grachev keeps open the possibility of a4-a5 and possibly a6, so White keeps the rook on a1 to back up the pawn.

17... $\mathbb{A}a6$ **18 $\mathbb{B}d1!$**

Maximizing the bishop's effectiveness from a4.

18... $\mathbb{B}d7$ 19 $\mathbb{E}xd5$ $\mathbb{E}xd5$ 20 $\mathbb{A}a4$ $\mathbb{E}ac8$ 21 $\mathbb{A}b5!$

Displaying great positional judgment. White voluntarily swaps his good bishop for Black's bad counterpart. In exchange, White gains two concessions:

1. He weakens the d5-pawn; and
2. He eliminates the defender of the infiltration point b7.

21... $\mathbb{A}xb5$ 22 $\mathbb{E}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 23 $g4!?$

Beginning to expand on the kingside. The downside of this move is the weakness created on f4.

23... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 24 $\mathbb{A}g3$ $\mathbb{E}d7$

24... $\mathbb{A}h6$ eyes the f4-square. Rakhmanov may have wanted to keep this bishop where it stood to retain op-

tions of a piece sac on d4.

25 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $h6$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}f1!?$

26 $\mathbb{Q}g2!$ covers f3 and protects White from tactical shots on d4.

26... $\mathbb{Q}h7!?$

Black decides to continue with a policy of passive defence and slowly loses ground.

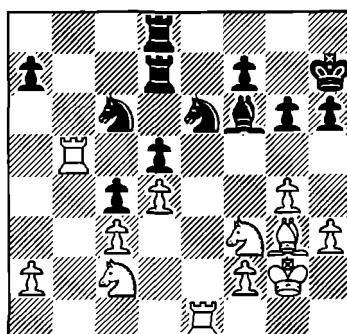
It was time to complicate with 26... $\mathbb{A}xd4!$. Now:

a) 27 $cxd4?!$ $\mathbb{Q}exd4$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ simultaneously hits the rook on b5 and the fork square on f3. This is why White should have tossed in 26 $\mathbb{Q}g2!$.

b) 27 $\mathbb{E}xe6!$ $\mathbb{A}xf2+$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $fxe6$ with an unbalanced position. The central pawns, if later mobilized, may cause White serious difficulties.

27 $\mathbb{Q}g2!$

This not only brings the king a step forward, but also covers f3 in case Black sacs a piece on d4 later on.

27... $\mathbb{A}f6$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{E}cd8$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}c2!$ 

Another subtle idea. The plan is a3 and $\mathbb{Q}b4$, possibly followed by $\mathbb{Q}d2$, $\mathbb{Q}f1$ and $\mathbb{Q}e3$. The pressure will force Black to capture on b4 which in turn

improves White's pawn structure considerably.

Boris Grachev and I have played many times over the ICC, and it's almost always a London since we both play it as White. Each time I believe I am holding the draw, he has a knack of throwing cold water in my face by finding some unexpected manoeuvre which keeps improving his position.

29...♝e8 30 a3! ♜e7 31 ♜b4 ♜xb4 32 axb4

The rook on b5 looks precariously placed but Black has no way to exploit it.

32...f6!

He keeps White out of e5 and prepares to centralize his king laterally.

33 ♜a1 ♛g7 34 h4! ♜f7!?

Black can prevent White from playing g5 with 34...g5 35 ♜a6 ♜c8, and although Black is tied down he holds his position together for the moment. However, White will continue to make progress by directing his knight to e3 where it watches both d5 and f5.

35 ♜a6 ♜c8 36 g5!

The point of 34 h4!: White sacs a pawn to attain access to the e5-square.

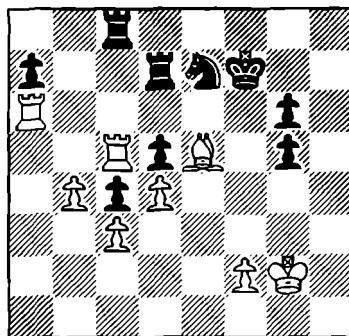
36...hxg5 37 hxg5 ♜xg5

Black probably didn't want to trade off this knight, which hampers White's rook on b5. However, the alternative 37...f5?? drops a piece to 38 ♜xc6! ♜xc6 39 ♜e5+.

38 ♜xg5+ fxe5 39 ♜c5

Free at last!

39...♜e7 40 ♜e5!



White's unrelenting strategic pressure is very instructive. Note how his "bad bishop" dominates. White has no less than six targets: a7, d5, g6, g5, the f6-square and a rook infiltration via h7.

40...♜f8 41 ♜ca5 ♜a8

If 41...♜c8?, 42 ♜f6+ ♜e8 43 ♜xg6 ♜df7 44 ♜g3 ♜f5 45 ♜c6 threatens ♜cc5. There is no way Black can hang on to all his pawns.

42 ♜a1!

Planning to enter via h7. 42 ♜g3 intending ♜g4 and ♜xg5 is a good alternative.

42...♝b7!

Black foresees White's plan and meets it with ...♜b6.

43 ♜h1 ♜b6 44 ♜ha1 ♜c8 45 ♜a6a5 ♜e6 46 ♜e1!

Despite staunch defensive play, Rakhmanov can't hold things together anymore. There is no good defence to White's threat of ♜g3+ followed by ♜xd5. White also threatens ♜c7+ winning the exchange.

46...♜d6 47 ♜xd6+! ♜xd6 48 ♜e5

Pawns begin to fall.

48... $\mathbb{E}f8$ 49 $\mathbb{E}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 50 $\mathbb{E}gxd5$ $\mathbb{E}bf6$

51 $\mathbb{E}a2$

Perhaps I'm quibbling but 51 $\mathbb{E}xa7+$! is a tad more accurate.

51... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 52 $\mathbb{E}c5$ 1-0

If 52... $\mathbb{E}c6$, 53 $\mathbb{E}xc6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 54 $\mathbb{E}xa7$ picks off another pawn.

Summary

Even when Black meets b3 with ...b5, White sustains strategic pressure by trading on c4 and getting in e4. The London bishop on the h2-b8 diagonal ensures that Black has a hard time challenging the b-file. Also, take note of the $\mathbb{Q}d1!$ idea, to manoeuvre the bishop to a more effective square on a4 or c2.

Game 39
Z.Mamedjarova-
A.Khudaverdieva
 3rd President's Cup,
 Baku 2008

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d5 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ g6 4 e3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 5

$\mathbb{Q}bd2$ c5 6 c3 0-0 7 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 8 h3

8 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 10 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ g5 11
 $\mathbb{Q}g3?$! $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 12 hxg3 reached an equal position in H.Pountzas-V.Kotronias, Athens 1987, but the usual trick 11 $\mathbb{Q}e1!$ favours White.

8...b6

White must be patient in the closed manoeuvring game which follows.

9 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 10 a4 $\mathbb{Q}e4?!$

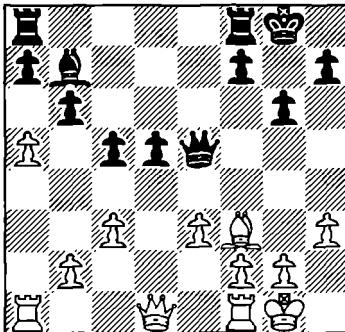
Trying something different. White

has a harder time achieving an edge after the normal 10...a6 11 b4! c4 12 $\mathbb{Q}e5$. White should be playing for e4 at some point.

11 a5 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ e5 13 dxе5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

14 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

$\mathbb{W}e5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f3$



This type of position occurs a lot in the London. White actually stands a shade better because there are pawn targets to pick on, while Black's space advantage is rather meaningless. The even better news is that virtually all your opponents playing Black in such positions will be under the false impression that it is they, not you, who stand a shade better.

17...b5?!

17... $\mathbb{E}fd8$ is the safer alternative.

18 a6! $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 19 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{E}fd8$ 20 $\mathbb{E}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}ab8$

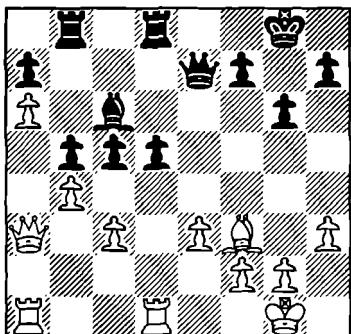
21 $\mathbb{W}a3!$ $\mathbb{W}e7$

The natural 21...b4 does not escape the pressure after 22 cx b 4 $\mathbb{E}xb4$ 23 $\mathbb{E}ac1$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ (23... $\mathbb{W}xb2?!$ 24 $\mathbb{W}xb2$ $\mathbb{E}xb2$ 25 $\mathbb{E}xc5$ $\mathbb{E}b6$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}e2$) will be tough for Black to hold – White targets both d5 and a7) 24 $\mathbb{E}d2$ $\mathbb{E}d7$ 25 b3 c4 26 $\mathbb{E}c3$

$\mathbb{W}c5$ 27 $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{A}b5$ 28 $\mathbb{W}a5!$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 29 $\mathbb{M}d4$.

Black is tangled up and her pawns are weak.

22 $b4!$



A key move, fixing more black pawns on the same colour as her remaining bishop.

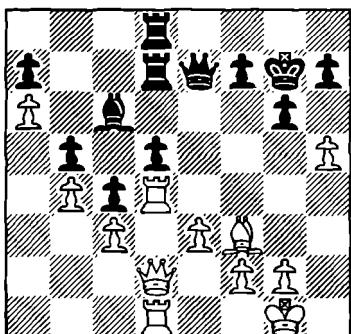
22... $c4$ 23 $\mathbb{M}d4$ $\mathbb{M}d6$ 24 $\mathbb{M}ad1$ $\mathbb{M}bd8$

If 24... $\mathbb{M}b6$, 25 $e4!$ $\mathbb{A}a8$ 26 $exd5$ $\mathbb{M}xa6$ 27 $\mathbb{W}c1$ $\mathbb{M}ab6$ 28 $\mathbb{M}e4$ $\mathbb{W}f8$ 29 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{M}d8$ 30 $\mathbb{W}e7$ ties Black down.

25 $\mathbb{W}a5$ $\mathbb{W}g7$ 26 $h4$ $\mathbb{M}8d7$ 27 $h5$ $\mathbb{M}d8$

27... $g5!$ 28 $\mathbb{A}g4$ $\mathbb{M}d8$ at least makes White nervous about the extended h-pawn.

28 $\mathbb{W}a2$ $\mathbb{M}6d7$ 29 $\mathbb{W}d2$



White has two ideas in the position:

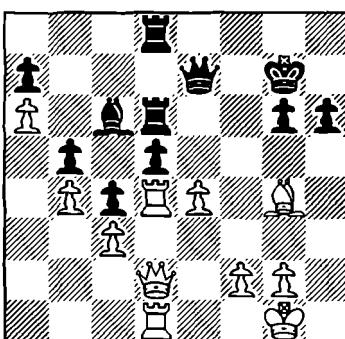
1. Target $d5$ and strike later with a favourably timed $e4$.

2. Exchange on $g6$ to weaken Black's kingside a bit. Move the rook from $d4$, either to $f4$ or $h4$ (in conjunction with $g2-g3$). Then play $\mathbb{M}d4$, going after Black's king.

29... $h6?$

This weakens Black's kingside even further. If Black is unwilling to play for ... $g5$, it would be best to just wait with 29... $\mathbb{W}e5$ 30 $hxg6$ $hxg6$ and it's not easy for White to make progress.

30 $hxg6$ $fxg6$ 31 $\mathbb{A}g4$ $\mathbb{M}d6$ 32 $e4!$



32... $\mathbb{A}e8?$

This looks like panic. 32... $\mathbb{A}a8$ 33 $\mathbb{A}f3$ $\mathbb{M}xa6$ 34 $exd5$ $\mathbb{M}ad6$ 35 $\mathbb{M}e1$ was better, with a position similar to the game except the material would still be level.

33 $\mathbb{M}xd5$ $\mathbb{M}xd5$ 34 $exd5$ $\mathbb{M}d6$ 35 $\mathbb{M}e1$

Black gets pushed back and White infiltrates with ease.

35... $\mathbb{W}f7$ 36 $\mathbb{M}d4+$ $\mathbb{A}h7$ 37 $\mathbb{W}e5!$ $\mathbb{M}d8$ 38 $\mathbb{W}e7$ $\mathbb{M}b8$ 39 $\mathbb{W}d6!$ 1-0

With a deadly double attack on the

b8-rook and the e7-square. If Black responds with 39... $\mathbb{B}b6$ then 40 $\mathbb{W}d8!$ does the trick.

Summary

Don't get fooled by Black's space advantage in such positions. The pawn targets on d5 and on the queenside outweigh any benefit Black gets through space.

Game 40
F.Bruno-S.Samuelsson
Gibtelecom Masters,
Caleta 2009

1 d4 d5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3 e3 g6 4 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 0-0 6 0-0 c5 7 c3 b6 8 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$

After 8... $\mathbb{Q}a6$, White has a choice of two plans:

a) 9 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 10 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 11 b4 c4 and then play for the e4 pawn break. This is the more traditional handling of the position.

b) 9 c4!? cxd4 10 exd4 dxc4 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ with a Reversed Queen's Gambit Declined, Tarrasch-style isolani position.

9 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 10 b4

White must disturb the queenside to get anything going.

10 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 12 f4!? (going Stonewall style; 12 b4!? is more in sync with this kind of position) 12... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 13 dxc5!?

$\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xe2$ bxc5 15 e4 was played in M.Carl-M.Duesterwald, German League 1991. Here Black loosened his structure with

15...d4?!, but instead 15...e6 looks fine for him.

10... $\mathbb{Q}d7$?

Maintaining the pawn tension leads to big trouble. Let's look at alternatives:

a) 10...cxb4?!

11 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 12 cxb4

$\mathbb{W}d7$ 13 a4 $\mathbb{Q}fc8$ 14 b5 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 15 a5! with queenside pressure for White.

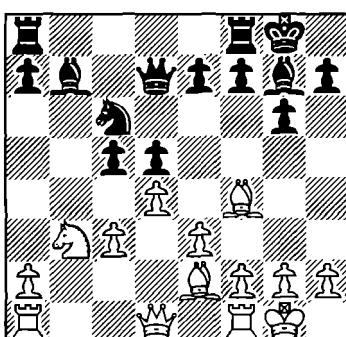
b) 10...c4! 11 a4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (13 e4?!

e5! favours Black)

13...e5 14 dxе5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$. I have a fondness

for White in such positions because of the long-term possibilities of picking on d5 and using the hole on d4. Black's chances are based on the weaknesses of c3 and d3.

11 $\mathbb{Q}xd7!$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 12 bxc5 bxc5 13 $\mathbb{Q}b3!$



Now White's knight reaches a powerful post on c5.

13...c4

13...cxd4? 14 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 15 cxd4 e5 16 $\mathbb{Q}g3!$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ (if 16...exd4?!, 17 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ wins the knight) 17 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ puts Black under heavy fire.

14 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}f3!$

This is even stronger than 15 e4, which also looks very good for White.

15...♝d8 16 ♜xb7 ♕xb7 17 ♕b1?

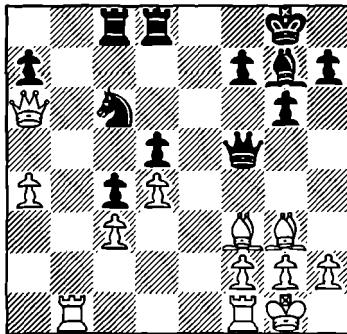
White retains pressure with this move, but there was an instant knock-out punch with 17 ♕a4! (threatening ♕xc4!) 17...♜c8 18 ♜ab1 ♕a8 19 ♜b5! e6 20 ♜d6!, winning an exchange since 20...♜e8? 21 ♜xd5! would be even worse for Black.

17...♛d7 18 e4 e6 19 a4 ♜c6 20 exd5 exd5 21 ♜b5 ♜fd8 22 ♜ab1 ♜ac8

The sac on d4 doesn't work yet: 22...♜xd4? 23 cxd4! ♜xd4 24 ♜xd7 ♜xf3+ 25 gxf3 ♜xd7 26 ♜fc1 ♜c8 27 ♜e5!, and now if 27...d4?? White exploits the back rank with 28 ♜xc4!.

23 ♜a6 ♜f5 24 ♜g3?

A careless move which lets Black back into the fight. 24 ♜e3! followed by ♜b5 would keep up the pressure.



24...♜xd4!

Now the sac is completely sound and the passed central pawns move forward.

Black's position deteriorates in other lines: 24...♛d3?? 25 ♜xd5! or 24...♛d7? 25 ♜h4! f6 26 ♜b5 ♜e7 27 ♜b7.

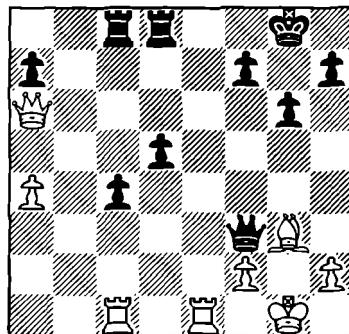
25 cxd4 ♜xd4 26 ♜bc1?

White's best shot at neutralizing the pawns is in the line 26 ♜xa7! ♜xf3+ 27 gxf3 d4 28 ♜b8! d3 29 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 30 ♜d4 c3 31 ♜f4 and for now, the central passers are thwarted in their queening attempt.

26...♜xf3+?

White would have had a rough time constructing a blockade after 26...c3! 27 ♜e2 ♜xe2+ 28 ♜xe2 d4.

27 gxf3 ♜xf3 28 ♜fe1



28...d4?

An impatient move which loses. White still must work hard for the win after 28...♛f5 29 ♜c3!.

29 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 30 ♜xc4 d3 31 ♜h4! ♜c8

31...♛d5 32 ♜f4! halts the pawn's march.

32 ♜f4 ♜d5 33 ♜e3 h5 34 ♜d1

The danger is over.

34...♜d8 35 ♜e7 ♜d7 36 ♜f6 ♜e4 37 ♜b1 ♜b7 38 ♜xb7 1-0

38...♛xb7 39 ♜e5! mates.

Summary

Whenever there is tension on c5 in the

reversed Closed Catalan lines, look for a favourable time to play the sequence bxc5! , ... bxc5 and then Qb3! , taking control of c5.

Game 41

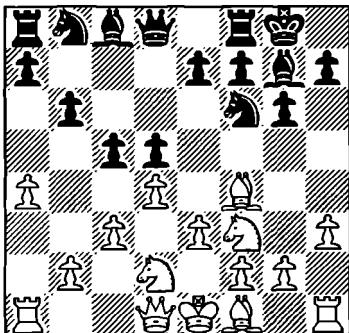
C.Lakdawala-P.Charbonneau
Internet Chess Club
(blitz) 2005

1 d4 d5 2 Qf3 Qf6 3 Qf4 g6 4 e3 Qg7 5 h3

Why not tempt Black? Today, I would play 5 Qe2 hoping for 5... $\text{Qh5}?$ 6 Qg5 h6 7 Qh4 g5 8 $\text{Qfd2}!$

5...0-0 6 Qbd2 c5 7 c3 b6 8 a4

More accurate than 8 Qe2 Qa6 .



8...a5?!

If Black is looking to simplify with 8... Qa6 , White can sharpen the play with 9 $\text{Qb5}?$. If Black takes on b5, the a-file is opened for White.

8... Qc6 9 Qe2 Qb7 10 0-0 Qd7 11 Wb3! e5 12 dxe5 Qdxe5 13 Qxe5 Qxe5 14 Qxe5 Qxe5 15 Qf3 Qc6 16 Qfd1 , with the very basic plan of picking on

the weakling on d5, already had Black squirming a bit in G.Soppe-J.Riverol, Colonia 2008.

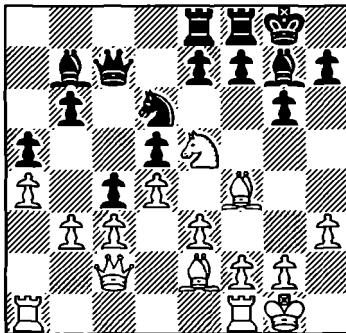
9 Qe2 Qbd7 10 0-0 Qb7 11 Qe5 Qe8 12 Qdf3 Qd6 13 Qxd7 Wxd7 14 Qe5 Wc7 15 Wb3 c4

The plan to force ...e5 is not so easy to implement. After 15...f6 16 Qf3 Qae8?! 17 Qb5! Qc6 18 dxc5 bxc5 19 e4! c4 20 Wd1 dxe4 21 Qxc4+ Qh8 22 Qxd6 exd6 23 Qd4, White's grip on d4 and b5 outweighs Black's potential for an attack with his kingside pawn majority.

16 Wc2

16 $\text{Wc2}?$, keeping an eye on d6, is another option.

16...Qae8 17 b3



White's play comes down the b-file.

17...f6 18 Qf3 Qa6 19 Wfb1 e5 20 Qh2 Wc6 21 bxc5 Qxc4 22 Qxc4 Qxc4 23 Qd2 Qxd2 24 Wxd2 Wc8 25 Qb3

White stands slightly better: b6 and d5 are weaker than c3 and a4.

25...Wfd8 26 Wb2 Qd6 27 Qg3

A dual-purpose move:

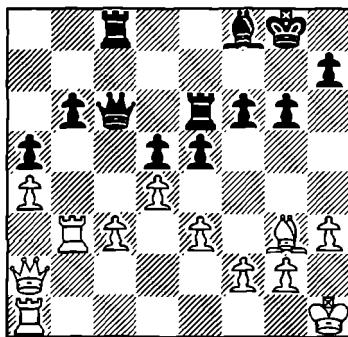
1. It prevents back rankers; and

2. It creates the potential for the plan of f3 and ♜f2, or ♜e1.

27...♜e6 28 ♜h1

Sometimes it's an advantage to be the weaker player! I often pretend to be happy to with a draw when facing a higher-rated opponent. Secretly, I'm just stalling, playing for the win by inducing opponents to do something rash.

28...♝f8 29 ♜a2!



Target: d5.

29...♝e7 30 ♜ab1 ♜d8 31 ♜g1 e4?!

Black should retain the central tension with 31...♝c4. GM Charbonneau was perhaps dreaming of storming the kingside with ...f5, ...g5 and ...f4, but there is simply not enough time for this plan.

32 ♜b5! ♜c4

32...♝xc3?? loses immediately to 33 ♜xd5! ♜f7 34 ♜d7+ ♜e7 35 d5.

33 ♜xc4 dxc4?

He had to try to hold with the passive line 33...♜xc4! 34 ♜xd5 ♜e8 35 ♜a1 ♜xc3 36 ♜d7 ♜c2.

34 ♜d5 ♜f7 35 ♜bb5 ♜e7 36 ♜f1 ♜b7

37 ♜e2 ♜e7 38 f3

The blueprint for the win is simple:

1. Trade Black's e-pawn for White's g-pawn.

2. The central pawns roll forward while Black's pawns remain frozen on the queenside.

38...exf3+ 39 gxf3 ♜e6 40 e4 ♜d8?!

40...g5 was a must, to keep White from creating two connected passed pawns in the centre. Now the central passers will decide the outcome.

41 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 42 d5+ ♜d7 43 f4 g5 44 fxe5 fxe5 45 e5 ♜e7 46 ♜e3 h5 47 ♜d4 h4 48 ♜h2 ♜f7 49 ♜xc4 ♜g6 50 d6 ♜f7 51 ♜d5 ♜f3 52 e6 ♜d3+ 53 ♜c6 ♜xh3 54 ♜d7 1-0

Summary

You will often land in situations where you must play on the queenside versus your opponent's ...e5 break. Trust that your queenside play will be at least equal to your opponent's attacking chances on the kingside.

Game 42

Z.Ilic-V.Trkaljanov

Struga 2007

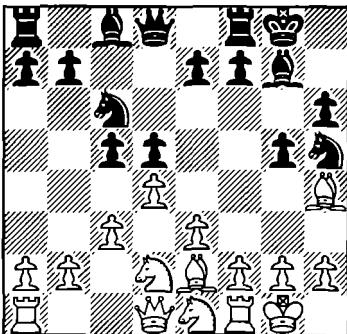
1 d4 ♜f6 2 ♜f3 g6 3 ♜f4 ♜g7 4 e3 d5 5 ♜e2 0-0 6 0-0 c5 7 c3 ♜c6 8 ♜bd2 ♜h5?!

Tacticians hungry for a fight often take the bait by playing this move.

9 ♜g5 h6 10 ♜h4 g5 11 ♜e1!

This is a clear improvement over 11

$\mathbb{A}g3 \mathfrak{Q}xg3$ 12 $h \times g3$.



11... $\mathfrak{Q}f6$

Returning home empty-handed. If Black refuses to back down, his situation is even more perilous:

a) 11... $\mathfrak{Q}f4?$ 12 $e \times f4$ $g \times h4$ 13 $d \times c5$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 14 $\mathfrak{Q}df3$ $\mathbb{W}xf4$ 15 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{R}d8$ 16 $\mathbb{W}c4$ and Black doesn't have enough compensation for the pawn.

b) 11... $g \times h4$ 12 $\mathfrak{Q}xh5$ and White's superior pawn structure trumps Black's bishop pair.

12 $\mathfrak{Q}g3$

The opening has gone in White's favour, having provoked his opponent into the weakening ... $g5$ and ... $h6$ without any compensation.

12... $\mathfrak{Q}e4!$?

Continuing his policy of hyperaggression.

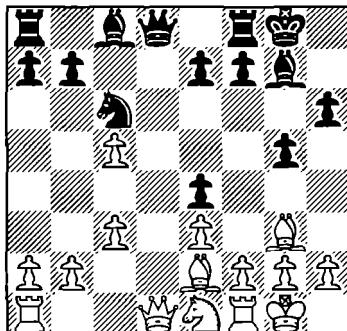
If Black plays a bit more calmly with 12... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 13 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathfrak{Q}d7$ 14 $\mathfrak{Q}d3$ $c4$ 15 $\mathfrak{Q}e1$ $e5$ 16 $d \times e5$ $\mathfrak{Q}dxe5$ 17 $\mathfrak{Q}ef3$, White still has the advantage for three reasons:

1. He can target the backward pawn on $d5$;

2. He has control of the $d4$ -square; and

3. Black may later be held accountable for weakening his kingside.

13 $\mathfrak{Q}xe4$ $d \times e4$ 14 $d \times c5$!



I have always admired computer-like greed when you can get away with it!

This move required precise calculation. In any Slav structure (remember, most Londons are just Slavs a move up), eat the c -pawn if you can do it and live.

14... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 15 $\mathbb{W}d5$!

Hanging on to his extra pawn. Perhaps Black expected 15 $b4?$ $\mathbb{W}a3$.

15... $\mathbb{R}d8$ 16 $\mathfrak{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{R}d2$

If 16... $\mathbb{W}xc5$, the reply 17 $\mathfrak{Q}d3$ consolidates.

17 $b4$ $\mathbb{W}d8$

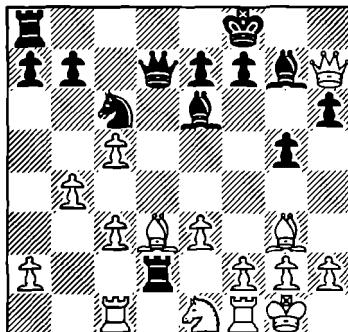
Black can regain the lost pawn with 17... $\mathbb{W}a3$ but his position still looks bad after 18 $b5!$ $\mathfrak{Q}a5$ 19 $\mathbb{R}d1$! (exploiting the back rank) 19... $\mathbb{R}xd1$ (naturally not 19... $\mathbb{W}xe2??$ 20 $\mathbb{R}d8+$ $\mathfrak{Q}f8$ 21 $\mathbb{W}xe7$) 20 $\mathbb{R}xd1$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 21 $\mathfrak{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 22 $\mathfrak{Q}c2$ $\mathfrak{Q}g7$ 23 $h4!$. Black must deal with a com-

promised pawn cover on the kingside and faces growing problems there.

18 ♜d3 ♜e6 19 ♜c1 ♜d7

If 19...♜xa2 20 f4! and again that early ...g5 haunts Black.

20 ♜h7+ ♜f8



21 ♜b1

Good enough. A powerful alternative is 21 ♜c2! ♜d1 22 f4!.

21...♜c4 22 ♜f3 ♜xf1 23 ♜xd2 ♜xg2

24 ♜xg2 ♜xd2 25 ♜c2

After all that fancy footwork, White retains the extra pawn.

25...♜d8 26 ♜xd2 ♜xd2 27 ♜e4! e5!?

Black wants to shut out White's bishop sitting on g3, but with his move he also voluntarily shuts down the only plus he had going for him in the position, which was pressure on c3.

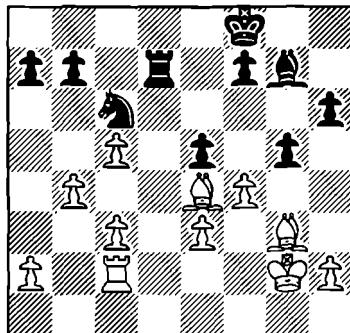
Alternatives do not look too healthy for Black:

a) 27...♜xa2?? 28 b5 ♜d8 29 c6 bxc6 30 bxc6 and Black must part with a piece.

b) He can try 27...a6 28 a4, but it just looks like a matter of time before White forces a pawn through on the

queenside.

28 ♜c2 ♜d7 29 f4!



White doesn't mind opening the black bishop's diagonal if he can get the g3-bishop into play.

29...♝e7 30 b5 ♜a5 31 c4 exf4 32 exf4 ♜d4 33 ♜d5! gxf4 34 ♜e1! b6 35 cxb6! axb6 36 ♜f2!

The game is over. Black cannot allow his opponent three connected passed pawns and must part with the exchange.

36...♝d6 37 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 38 ♜xf7 ♜b7 39 ♜f3 ♜e3 40 ♜g2 ♜c5 41 ♜g6 ♜d6 42 ♜e6 ♜xc4 43 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 44 ♜xh6 ♜xb5 45 ♜e6 ♜b4 46 h4 ♜a3 47 ♜xe3+!

Not allowing Black to later play ...♜d4 and sac on the h-pawn.

47...fxe3 48 h5 1-0

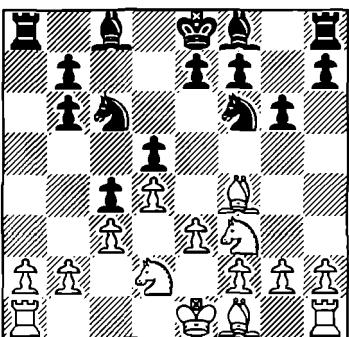
Summary

When Black is goaded into the ...♝h5, ...h6 and ...g5 plan, it hardly ever works out well for him. Also, if Black leaves the c5-pawn en prise for one move too long, call his bluff and grab the pawn if you think you can get away with it.

Game 43
L.Winants-W.Kobese
 Turin Olympiad 2006

1 d4 d5 2 ♜f4 c5 3 e3 ♜c6 4 c3 ♜f6 5 ♜d2 g6 6 ♜gf3 ♜g7

In the position after 6... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 7 $\mathbb{W}b3$, amazingly I can't find a single game in all my databases where Black plays the very logical 7...c4!. Following 8 $\mathbb{W}xb6$ (8 $\mathbb{W}c2?$! $\mathbb{Q}f5$ plays into Black's hands) 8...axb6 White has a choice:



a) 9 e4 (White disrupts the centre quickly before Black consolidates with ...b5 and ...b4) 9...dxe4 (on 9...e6!? 10 e5! $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 11 a3 b5 12 $\mathbb{M}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 14 $\mathbb{M}c2$, I don't see a way for Black to make progress on the queenside, other than fishy piece sacs on b2; White, on the other hand, continues to annex space on the kingside) 10 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ e3 12 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ with an interesting position. I doubt that Black's extra piece activity makes up for the damage to his doubled, isolated b-pawns.

b) 9 a3 is the more conservative

choice, and 9...b5 10 $\mathbb{M}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ bxa4 14 e4 e6 15 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 16 $\mathbb{M}fe1$ reaches an unbalanced position. Black's bishop pair doesn't mean anything here. White will play in the centre while Black may try to organize a bit of pressure down the b-file through the manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{M}a5$ and ... $\mathbb{M}b5$. But then what? I prefer White.

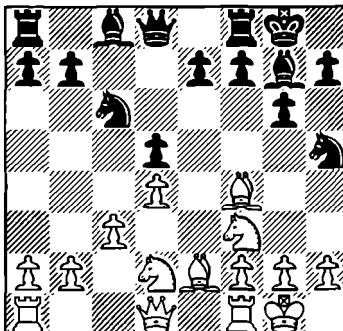
7 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0 8 0-0 cxd4

Relieving the central tension. Previously we have covered 8... $\mathbb{W}b6$, 8...b6 and 8... $\mathbb{Q}h5$.

9 exd4

The only way to recapture if White is playing for the win. 9 cxd4 allows Black easy equality due to the passive and slightly misplaced position of White's knight on d2.

9... $\mathbb{Q}h5$?



Well, you already know what I think about this move.

10 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}d6$

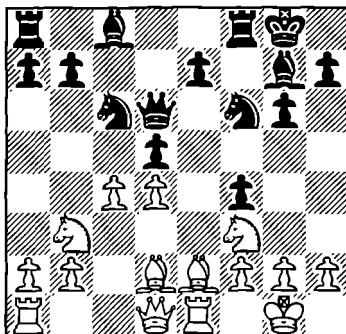
Bronstein played 10... $\mathbb{W}c7$ against Keres and went crazy in that game: 11 $\mathbb{M}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$! (I

don't get it; what is Black doing?) 14 h3 ♘d7 15 ♖c1 ♜fe8 16 ♘h6 ♘h8 17 ♘f1 ♜ad8 18 ♗c5 ♘f5?!, P.Keres-D.Bronstein, Tbilisi 1959. Here Keres backed down and played it safe with 19 b4?!, but he should have called Bronstein's bluff with 19 g4!. After 19... ♘e4 20 ♗xe4 dxe4 21 ♖xe4 ♘f6 22 ♘f4! ♜c8 23 ♗e1 h5 24 g5 ♘d5 25 ♘g3 Black has only fishy compensation for the pawn.

11 ♜e1 f5?!

Black spoils for a fight against his higher-rated GM opponent and is even willing to create a self-inflicted wound to his structure in exchange for the right to push White around a bit. I can tell you from experience that seasoned Londoners love facing such hyper-aggressive opponents.

12 ♗b3 f4 13 ♘d2 ♘f6 14 c4!



Very sensible, meeting a wing attack with a central counter. When I suggest a move like this to London-loving students, they invariably give me a speech like: "If I wanted isolani positions, I would play the Queen's

Gambit Tarrasch as Black!" True, but this is a very good Reversed Tarrasch-style position for White.

14... ♘h8 15 ♖c1 ♜b8

15... ♘f5 16 ♗c5! b6 17 ♘d3 re-routes the knight to a superior square.

16 ♗a5!

A subtle positional idea where White either removes the c6-knight, a defender of e5, or improves his own knight's position to c4.

16... ♘g4

16... ♘xa5 17 ♘xa5 dxc4 (or 17...b6 18 c5!) 18 ♜xc4 b6 19 ♗c3 gives White sustained central pressure, mainly due to Black's earlier reckless 11...f5?!

17 cxd5 ♘xd5 18 ♗c4

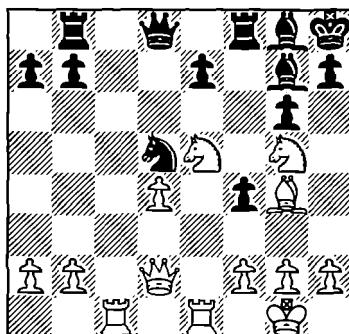
White has achieved a favourable isolani position.

18... ♜d8 19 ♗c3 ♘cb4 20 ♗xb4 ♘xb4 21 ♜d2 ♘d5

21... ♘xa2?! lands Black in trouble after 22 ♜a1.

22 ♗ce5 ♘e6 23 ♘g5 ♘g8 24 ♘g4?

Overlooking a little tactic. 24 ♜ed1! gives White a clear advantage.



24... ♘e3!

A very annoying move for White, who suddenly must defend several loose pieces.

25 $\mathbb{W}e2!$

25 fxe3? $\mathbb{A}xe5$ leaves Black standing better.

25... $\mathbb{A}f5!$

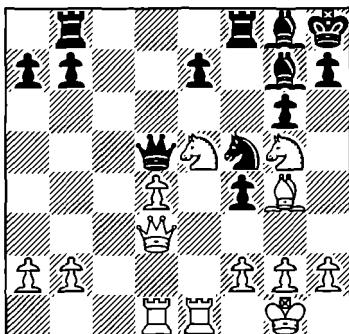
If Black gets greedy with the very risky 25... $\mathbb{Q}xg4?$! 26 $\mathbb{W}xg4$ $\mathbb{A}xe5$ (26... $\mathbb{W}xd4??$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xg6+!$ $\mathbb{h}xg6$ 28 $\mathbb{W}h4+$ mates) 27 dxe5 $\mathbb{W}d2$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 29 $\mathbb{K}c7$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 30 $\mathbb{K}xe7$ $\mathbb{K}f7$ 31 $\mathbb{K}d7$, White's chances look better for two reasons:

1. He has the safer king; and
2. His e-pawn looks faster and far more dangerous than Black's stragglers on a7 and b7.

26 $\mathbb{K}cd1!$ $\mathbb{W}d5$

If 26... $\mathbb{A}xa2?$, White wins with 27 d5! (threatening $\mathbb{Q}e6$) 27... $\mathbb{A}xd5$ 28 $\mathbb{W}b5!$.

27 $\mathbb{A}d3!$



27... $\mathbb{A}h6$

That juicy pawn on a2 continues to be poisoned: 27... $\mathbb{W}xa2?$ 28 $\mathbb{A}xf5!$ $\mathbb{A}xe5$ (if 28... $\mathbb{A}xf5??$, White mates after 29 $\mathbb{Q}xg6+!$ $\mathbb{h}xg6$ 30 $\mathbb{W}h3+)$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xg6!$ is

rather horrible for Black.

28 $\mathbb{Q}gf3$ $\mathbb{A}bd8$

If 28... $\mathbb{W}xa2?$, this time it's 29 $\mathbb{Q}d7!$.

29 $a3$

Winants finally defends a2.

29... $\mathbb{A}g7$ 30 $\mathbb{h}4!$

The h5 advance will worry Black.

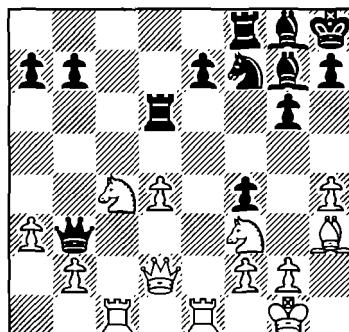
30... $\mathbb{W}b3$ 31 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{A}d6$

I would have centralized with 31... $\mathbb{A}d5$.

32 $\mathbb{K}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}h6?$!

32... $\mathbb{Q}xd4!$ may have been a good practical choice for Black, who at least gets some initiative for the exchange in the line 33 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 34 $\mathbb{W}c2!$ $\mathbb{K}xd4$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{K}xd7$ 36 $\mathbb{A}xd7$ $f3$ 37 $g3$. Black doesn't get full compensation, but I like this position better than the one he gets in the game.

33 $\mathbb{A}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}f7?$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}c4!$



Winning the pawn on e7.

34... $\mathbb{A}g5!$?

Kobese is full of tricks. However, this one has no force to it as he still loses the e7-pawn.

35 $\mathbb{h}xg5$ $\mathbb{A}xc4$ 36 $\mathbb{K}xe7$ $b5$

If Black plays 36...a6, 37 $\mathbb{W}e1$

threatening 38 $\mathbb{K}xg7$ and also 38 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ is decisive.

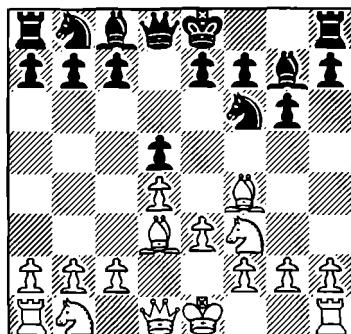
37 $\mathbb{K}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}dd8$ 38 $\mathbb{K}e1$ $\mathbb{K}fe8$ 1-0

Black has no compensation for the missing pawns.

Summary

When Black gets confrontational with ... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ and ... $f5$, remember to hit back with a central counter at some point. Don't rule out $c4!$ with a favourable isolani position. Most London players hate playing with an isolani, so fight this bias, be bold and take on the isolani when it is under favourable circumstances.

Kharlov has an interesting plan in mind.



Normally, White plays 5 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ here.

For example, 5...0-0 6 0-0 c5 7 c3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (using the same plan as in our main game) 9 $\mathbb{W}b3$! (the d5-pawn is normally the target in this line) 9...e5

(releasing the central tension favours White after 9...c4?! 10 $\mathbb{W}c2$ e5 11 dx5 $\mathbb{Q}dx5$ 12 $\mathbb{K}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 13 e4! dx5 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ –

Black is in deep trouble because White threatens both 17 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ and 17 $\mathbb{Q}e3$, destabilizing the d3-knight) 10 dx5 $\mathbb{Q}dx5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 12 $\mathbb{K}ad1$ (deceptively simple play; Black is already in an uncomfortable situation and strains to defend his pawns) 12... $\mathbb{Q}e6$!? (sac'ing for what he hopes to be piece activity; if Black plays 12...c4, he falls into total passivity after 13 $\mathbb{W}a3$! – threatening to take on c4 – 13... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f3$! $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ and it's just a matter of time before Black drops his chronically weak pawn on d5) 13 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ (Black is a pawn down and grovelling for a draw after 13... $\mathbb{K}b8$

Game 44

A.Kharlov-T.Hillarp Persson Skellefteå 1999

1 d4 d5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$

This is an excellent psychological choice against GM Tiger Hillarp Persson, who revels in messy complications. Sometimes in the London System, White has the power to suck the air out of an opponent's attempts to complicate. Also, it is nearly always White's choice whether to make the game complex or boring. It reminds me of the lyrics of a Frank Sinatra song which go: "Some people get their kicks stomping on a dream!"

3...g6 4 e3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}d3$?

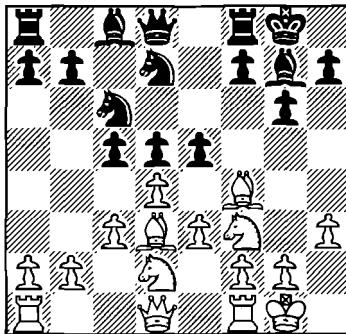
This may lead to the loss of a tempo if Black plays for a quick ...e5 break, but

14 $\mathbb{W}xa7$ $\mathbb{B}xb2$ 15 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{B}xa2$ 16 $c4!$) 14 $\mathbb{W}a6!$ $\mathbb{W}xa6$ 15 $\mathbb{B}xa6$ and Black was left without a trace of compensation for his missing pawn in A.Anastasian-P.Sobolewski, Leningrad 1990.

3...c5 6 c3 $\mathbb{B}c6$

The most accurate way to exploit White's strange 5 $\mathbb{B}d3$ would be 6... $\mathbb{W}b6!$, which forces an even ending after 7 $\mathbb{W}b3$ c4 8 $\mathbb{W}xb6$ axb6 9 $\mathbb{B}c2$ b5 10 $\mathbb{B}xb8$ $\mathbb{B}xb8$ 11 a3.

7 $\mathbb{B}bd2$ 0-0 8 h3 $\mathbb{B}d7$ 9 0-0 e5



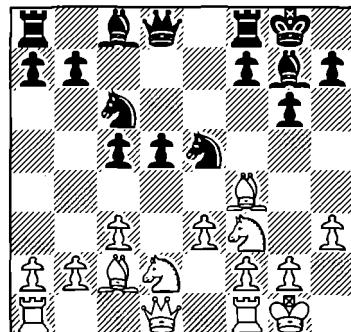
Certainly this is the most logical method of meeting the London when you are a Grünfeld player. Basically, Black blasts the centre with the freeing break ...e5 after which his space should compensate for his slightly weakened d-pawn. Also note that if on move five, White had played $\mathbb{B}bd2$ or $\mathbb{B}e2$ instead of $\mathbb{B}d3$, he would not lose a tempo to the knight.

Objectively, Black has equalized. Now watch how quickly he loses!

10 dxe5 $\mathbb{B}dxe5$ 11 $\mathbb{B}c2!$

This is the idea behind posting the bishop on d3. Admittedly the bishop

loses a tempo, but on c2 it helps to prepare the e4 break.



11...h6

11... $\mathbb{B}e8$ looks more useful.

12 $\mathbb{B}xe5$ $\mathbb{B}xe5$ 13 e4!

Eliminating Black's space advantage. After the centre clears, White's knight will have access to d6.

13...dxe4?

Ignoring the principle which states: Don't be the one to break the central pawn tension if it allows the opponent to centralize his pieces.

Black's best option is 13...d4! 14 cxd4 cxd4 15 $\mathbb{B}xe5$ $\mathbb{B}xe5$ 16 $\mathbb{B}b3$ $\mathbb{B}g7$ 17 $\mathbb{B}c1$, when it's a kingside majority versus a passed but isolated d-pawn. Black has the bishop pair, but the white minor pieces – especially the bishop – are posted actively. Chances are dynamically balanced.

14 $\mathbb{B}xe4$ b6 15 $\mathbb{B}d6!$

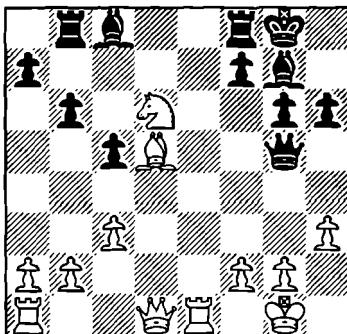
It takes excellent judgment to appreciate that White will be able to maintain the powerful post on d6.

15... $\mathbb{W}f6$ 16 $\mathbb{B}xe5!$

Eliminating Black's most active piece.

16... $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 17 $\mathbb{K}e1$ $\mathbb{W}g5$ 18 $\mathbb{A}e4!$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 19

$\mathbb{Q}d5!$



Ignoring the threat to h3. The powerfully centralized bishop and knight pair rule the board.

19... $\mathbb{A}xh3?$

2600+ players rarely hang pawns! White has seen more deeply and had this covered with a combination:

20 $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$ $\mathbb{R}xf7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$

Sad, but there is no choice. The point of the combination is revealed if Black grabs the bishop: 21... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 22 $\mathbb{W}f3+$ $\mathbb{Q}f5?$ 23 $\mathbb{W}d5+!$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 24 $\mathbb{W}d6+$ picks off the rook on b8.

22 $\mathbb{W}d5!$

This dual-purpose move, which covers the mate on g2 and also threatens to swap queens, kills all hopes of a Black attack.

22... $\mathbb{A}f5$ 23 $\mathbb{R}ad1$ $\mathbb{A}f6$ 24 $\mathbb{A}e8$ $\mathbb{R}xe8$ 25 $\mathbb{A}xe8$ 1-0

Summary

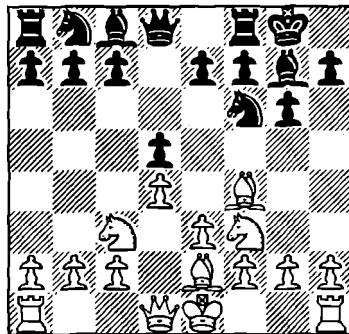
Take note of White's interesting plan of $\mathbb{Q}d3$ and $\mathbb{Q}c2$, with the idea of forcing e4.

Game 45

L.Ortega-V.Luciani

Verona 2007

1 d4 d5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3 e3 g6 4 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0 6 $\mathbb{Q}c3?$



The beginning of a hybrid sideline of the London called the Barry Attack. It was popularized by English GM Mark Hebden back in the 80's.

6...c6

The Barry attack is especially effective when Black refrains from ...c5 and plays it Schlechter-Slav style.

If Black hits in the centre with 6...c5, then 7 $\mathbb{D}xc5!$ transposes to a favourable Reversed Catalan. For example, 7... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ $\mathbb{Q}e4?$ (it's not so easy to equalize after 8... $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}b5!$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$, as 11 $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ is a very annoying move - $\mathbb{Q}d4$ is in the air) 9 $\mathbb{Q}cxe4$ $dxe4$ 10 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ (the b2-pawn can't be touched: 10... $\mathbb{Q}xb2??$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}c3$ 12 $\mathbb{B}b1$ traps the bishop) 11 c3 f5 12 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ didn't give Black enough for the pawn in J.Hodgson-E.Gullaksen, Stavanger 1989.

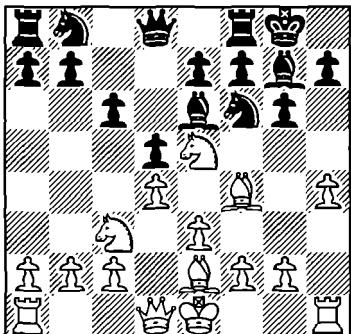
7 ♜e5 ♜e6?!

This looks too slow. Black may be thinking about a manoeuvre like ... $\mathbb{A}fd7$, ...f6, ... $\mathbb{A}f7$ and ...e5. All well and good if White castles kingside, but Ortega has no intention of cooperating.

7... $\mathbb{A}bd7$ didn't completely equalize after 8 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{A}xe5$ 9 $\mathbb{A}xe5$ $\mathbb{A}e6$ 10 h4 $\mathbb{W}a5$ 11 h5 in C.Garcia Palermo-J.Sieglein, German League 1988.

Black's best bet may be 7... $\mathbb{A}fd7$? (clearing the way for ...f6) 8 h4 f6 9 $\mathbb{A}xd7$ $\mathbb{A}xd7$, when ...e5 will give him central counterplay to meet White's coming attack.

8 h4!



Playing the London in Dragon style! The idea is to play h5 and castle queen-side.

8... $\mathbb{A}fd7$

The natural 8...h5?, which is often thrown in by Black in Dragons, only accelerates White's onslaught. 9 g4 $\mathbb{A}xg4$ 10 $\mathbb{A}xg4$ and now:

a) 10... $\mathbb{A}xg4$ 11 $\mathbb{A}xg4$ $\mathbb{A}xg4$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xg4$ $\mathbb{A}d7$ 13 h5! $\mathbb{A}f6$ 14 $\mathbb{W}g3$ with a crushing attack, since 14... $\mathbb{A}xh5??$ is

met by 15 $\mathbb{A}xh5$ gxh5 16 $\mathbb{A}h6$ mating.

b) 10... $\mathbb{A}h5$ 11 $\mathbb{A}h6+$ $\mathbb{A}h7$ 12 $\mathbb{A}xh5$ $\mathbb{A}xh6$ 13 $\mathbb{A}xh6$ $\mathbb{A}xh6$ 14 $\mathbb{A}f3$ $\mathbb{A}h8$ 15 $\mathbb{A}d2$ $\mathbb{A}g7$ 16 0-0-0 and White's attack is clearly very fast. The plan would be $\mathbb{A}dg1$, h5 and possibly e4.

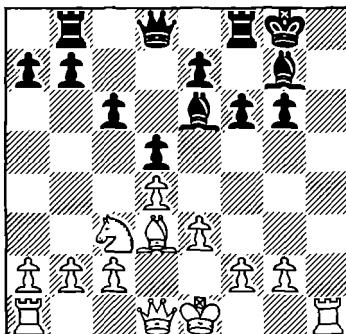
9 h5 $\mathbb{A}xe5$ 10 $\mathbb{A}xe5$ f6

Or 10... $\mathbb{A}xe5$ 11 dxе5 $\mathbb{A}d7$ 12 hxg6 hxg6 13 $\mathbb{A}d4$ $\mathbb{A}g7$ 14 0-0-0 $\mathbb{A}h8$ 15 $\mathbb{A}xh8$ $\mathbb{A}xh8$ 16 f4 with the initiative.

11 $\mathbb{A}xb8!$

The bishop is not needed anymore and would just get in the way when Black hits back with ...e5.

11... $\mathbb{A}xb8$ 12 hxg6 hxg6 13 $\mathbb{A}d3$



Taking aim at the black king.

13...f5

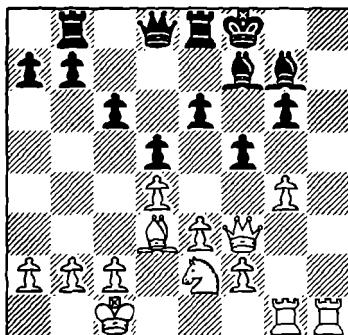
13... $\mathbb{A}f7$ 14 $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{A}e8$ 15 $\mathbb{W}h3$ looks grim for Black.

14 $\mathbb{A}f3$ $\mathbb{A}f7?$!

Allowing White to open the position further with g4 looks like suicide, but the alternative is just marginally better: 14... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 15 0-0-0 c5 16 $\mathbb{A}b5$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 17 dxc5 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 18 $\mathbb{A}d4$ $\mathbb{A}d7$ 19 $\mathbb{W}h3$ $\mathbb{A}f6$ 20 f4! and White's attack clearly has more force than Black's disorganized

attempt on the other wing.

15 g4 e6 16 0-0-0 $\mathbb{K}e8$ 17 $\mathbb{K}dg1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e2!$



Another attacker enters the battlefield.

18...e5?

Speeding up his defeat, but after 18... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ White wins with the straightforward 19 gxf5 exf5 20 $\mathbb{K}h7$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ c5 22 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$!.

19 dx e 5 $\mathbb{K}xe5$ 20 gxf5 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ gxf5
22 $\mathbb{Q}d4?$!

Missing the much simpler 22 $\mathbb{K}h7$!
 $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}h2!$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 24 $\mathbb{K}h6!$, winning heavy material.

22... $\mathbb{K}be8$

Also hopeless is 22...f4 23 exf4 $\mathbb{Q}h6$
24 $\mathbb{Q}f5!$ $\mathbb{K}xf5$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$.

23 $\mathbb{K}h7!$

Now he sees it.

23... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}h2!$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 25 $\mathbb{K}h6!$ 1-0

Summary

The psycho attack beginning with $\mathbb{Q}c3$, $\mathbb{Q}e5$ and $h4!$ was popularized by GM Hebden, who scored many wins with it against unsuspecting opponents. Black

has adequate resources to deal with it if he or she is aware of the theory (which I doubt!). It may be fun as an occasional surprise weapon, or just play it if the line suits your chess temperament.

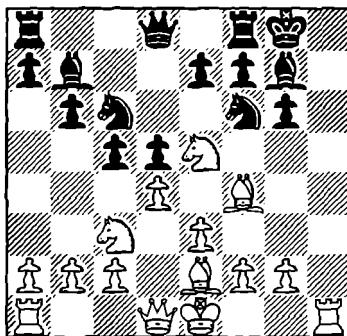
Game 46

M.Hebden-N.Legky
Vrnjacka Banja 1989

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5 4 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$
5 e3 0-0 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ b6 7 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 8 h4!

White wastes no time delaying this advance.

8...c5 9 h5 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 10 hxg6 hxg6



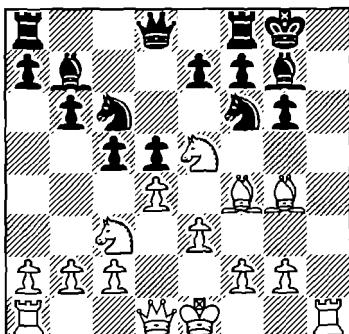
There is a defensive principle which states: Capture away from the centre if you feel that your king is in danger of getting mated. This example is an exception to the rule: 10...fxg6? 11 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ (threatening to check on e6 and mate on g6) 11... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ (or 11... $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 13 dx c 5! $bxc5$ 14 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ h5 16 a3 a5 17 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ with an overwhelming attack) 12 dx e 5 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ (if

12... $\mathbb{Q}e8??$, White plays 13 $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 14 $\mathbb{W}g4$ and there is no defence to $\mathbb{W}xg8$) 13 $\mathbb{W}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 14 $\mathbb{W}h3$ h5 15 g4 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ (15... $h\times g4??$ 16 $\mathbb{W}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}h6!$ is crushing) 16 exf4 d4 17 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xh1$ 18 $\mathbb{W}xh1$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ (19... $h\times g4$ is met by 20 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ e6 21 $\mathbb{Q}xe6!$) 20 gxh5 gxh5 21 $\mathbb{Q}g3!$ (it's not even going to be close; White reaches the target first) 21...d3 22 $\mathbb{Q}xh5?!$ (the more accurate continuation of the attack was 22 cxd3! $\mathbb{W}f7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}g1+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ $\mathbb{W}xh5$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}h1!$) 22... $\mathbb{W}a4?$ (the only way to continue playing is 22...dxc2! 23 $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{W}xd8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 25 $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 26 a4) 23 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 24 $\mathbb{W}g1!$ 1-0, M.Hebden-R.O'Rourke, Kilkenny 1998.

11 $\mathbb{Q}g4!$

I like this move, for three reasons:

1. It controls d7 and prevents Black from fighting for control of e5 with... $\mathbb{Q}d7$;
2. It clears a path for $\mathbb{W}f3$ followed by $\mathbb{W}h3$; and
3. If at some point Black takes the bishop, the white queen can join the attack from g4.

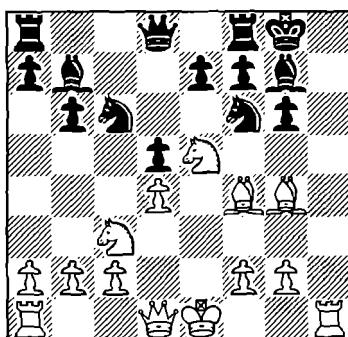


11...cx d4

11... $\mathbb{Q}xg4?$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xg4$, allowing White's queen in, would be suicidal:

- a) 12...cx d4 13 $\mathbb{W}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 14 $\mathbb{W}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ e6 16 $\mathbb{Q}xg6+!$ mates.
- b) 12... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 13 dxe5 d4 14 $\mathbb{W}h3$ f5 15 e6 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 16 $\mathbb{W}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ wins.

12 exd4?



I'm not sure whether this was a sac or just an oversight. If White throws in 12 $\mathbb{Q}xc6!$ he still gets to attack without the loss of a central pawn after 12... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 13 exd4.

12... $\mathbb{Q}xd4!$

A cute trick which wins a pawn. Unfortunately for Black, Hebden's attack is so strong that White still has full compensation for the fallen pawn!

13 $\mathbb{W}d3!$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4?!$

This knight defended h7. Black does better to retain the knight with 13... $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ 14 $\mathbb{W}h3$ and now:

- a) 14...d4? allows another attacker to participate, and 15 $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$ is crushing: 16... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 18 $\mathbb{W}h7+!!$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ mate.

Play the London System

b) After 14... $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe5 \mathbb{E}e8$ 16 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ e6 18 $\mathbb{Q}b5!$ Black's position is under heavy strain, but at least he has the extra pawn to comfort him.

14 $\mathbb{Q}xg4 \mathbb{Q}f5$

14... $\mathbb{E}e8$ looks logical, to give the king space to run to f8 and also to prepare ...e5. Amazingly, all this doesn't matter and the attack accelerates at an alarming rate after 15 $\mathbb{W}h3!$, ignoring the threat to c2:

a) 15... $\mathbb{Q}xc2+?$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{Q}xa1$ 17 $\mathbb{W}h7+ \mathbb{Q}f8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ e6 19 $\mathbb{W}xg7+ \mathbb{Q}e7$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ picks off the queen.

b) 15...e5 16 $\mathbb{Q}h6!$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2+$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f1 \mathbb{Q}h8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ mates or wins the queen.

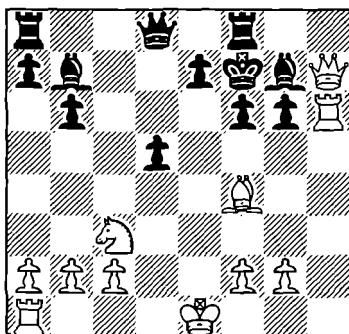
15 $\mathbb{W}h3$ f6

If 15... $\mathbb{E}e8??$, 16 $\mathbb{W}h7+ \mathbb{Q}f8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}h6!$ wins on the spot.

16 $\mathbb{W}h7+$

Finally, the queen muscles her way into the enemy camp.

16... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 18 $\mathbb{E}xh6!$



18...g5

Nothing works for Black. After 18... $\mathbb{E}g8$ 19 $\mathbb{E}xg6$ d4 20 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e5 21 $\mathbb{Q}h6$

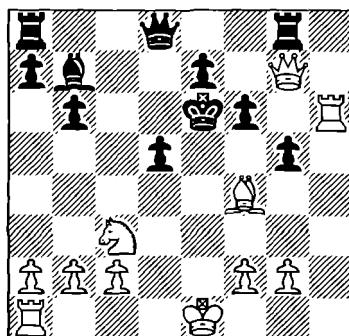
$\mathbb{W}f8$ 22 $\mathbb{E}g4!$ he doesn't have a satisfactory answer to the threat of 23 $\mathbb{W}g6+$.

19 $\mathbb{W}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$

The black king takes a hike up the mountain. Retreating leads to an immediate loss: 19... $\mathbb{Q}g8?$ 20 $\mathbb{E}h7 \mathbb{E}f7$ 21 0-0-0! $\mathbb{Q}f8$ (21... $\mathbb{Q}xf4?$ 22 $\mathbb{E}dh1$ mates) 22 $\mathbb{E}dh1$ e5 23 $\mathbb{E}xg7!$, etc.

20 $\mathbb{W}xg7 \mathbb{E}g8$

20... $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 21 0-0-0 $\mathbb{E}g8$ 22 $\mathbb{E}xf6+!$ $\mathbb{E}xf6$ 23 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ doesn't change anything.



21 $\mathbb{E}xf6+!$ $\mathbb{E}xf6$ 22 $\mathbb{W}xb7 \mathbb{Q}xf4$ 23 0-0-0

Black's unsheltered king is a leaf blown by the wind.

23... $\mathbb{E}g5$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}b5 \mathbb{E}c8$ 25 $\mathbb{W}xa7 \mathbb{E}c4$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}d4+$ $\mathbb{E}xd4$

Black can't hang on to the exchange. 26... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 27 $\mathbb{W}a3+!$ and now:

a) 27... $\mathbb{E}c5$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}b3 \mathbb{E}xg2?$ (Black is still quite busted after the superior 28... $\mathbb{W}e8!$ 29 $\mathbb{W}b4!$) 29 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{B}xc5$ 30 $\mathbb{E}xd5+!$ wins the queen.

b) 27... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 28 $\mathbb{W}h3+!$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}e6 \mathbb{E}c8$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}xg5 \mathbb{E}xc2+$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}b1 \mathbb{F}xg5$ 32 $\mathbb{W}h6+!$ hunts down Black's king.

27 $\mathbb{E}xd4 \mathbb{E}xg2$ 28 c4! $\mathbb{W}d6$ 29 $\mathbb{W}a8 \mathbb{Q}f7$ 30 $\mathbb{W}b7+ \mathbb{Q}g6$

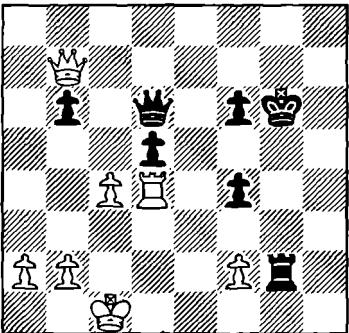
32 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 33 $\mathbb{W}e4+$!

Insisting on cashing out into a comfortably won rook ending.

33... $\mathbb{W}xe4+$ 34 $\mathbb{E}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 35 $\mathbb{E}e2$ $f3$ 36 $\mathbb{E}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 37 $b4$

Black's king is cut off and passed pawns will be created soon. Black could resign here.

37... $\mathbb{E}a1$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{E}e1$ 39 $c5$ $bxcc5$ 40 $bxcc5$ $\mathbb{E}e2$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{E}e1$ 42 $c6$ $\mathbb{E}c1+$ 43 $\mathbb{E}c2$ $\mathbb{E}h1$ 44 $c7$ $\mathbb{E}h8$ 45 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 46 $a4$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 47 $a5$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 48 $a6$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 49 $a7$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 50 $\mathbb{E}c1$ 1-0



31 $\mathbb{W}xd5!$

A practical decision. White has not signed a contract requiring that he must checkmate at all costs. A winning endgame will do just fine.

31... $\mathbb{E}g1+$

31... $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 32 $cxsd5$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 33 $\mathbb{E}xf4$ is also hopeless.

Summary

The Barry Attack is especially dangerous when White doesn't have to worry about ... $\mathbb{W}b6$ counters on the other wing.

Chapter Five

London versus Reversed Réti

Be patient when facing reversed Réti lines (that is, ...g6 in combination with ...c5). There is no crazy option for White against this tough line. We must learn to outplay Black in a closed manoeuvring game.

Here are some possibilities to think about:

1. A favourite of Black's is the ...c5, ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ setup. The idea is to play ... $\mathbb{W}b6$ next and block White from responding with $\mathbb{W}b3$. Grachev-Dembo (Game 51) shows us a good path for White to disrupt this plan. By playing dxc5!, we open the d-file and harass the black queen on d8 with a rook on d1. Black has only awkward options to deal with this plan.

2. If Black plays ... $\mathbb{W}b6$ without ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$, White usually responds with $\mathbb{W}b3$, as in Grachev-Navara (Game 52). Sometimes, though, White can leave the b2-pawn hanging (see Schuyler-

Khachiyan, Game 53).

3. In Lakdawala-Gufeld (Game 55), I experimented with a strange move-order trick, playing h3 and $\mathbb{Q}h2$, and holding back the development of the f1-bishop. The idea is to wait and see how Black sets up. If Black goes for a Réti setup, we develop the bishop to the more aggressive d3-square.

Game 47 G.Kamsky-L.Ftacnik Manila Interzonal 1990

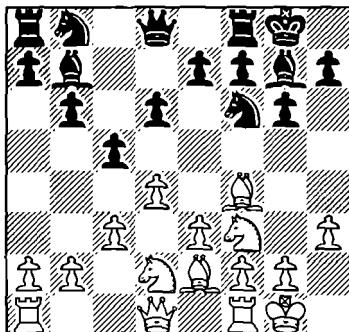
1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$

As the highest-rated player who regularly employs the London, Kamsky is our king!

3... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 e3 0-0 5 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ c5 6 c3 b6 7 h3 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ d6 9 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c6$

More common is 9... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$, to keep the b7-bishop's control of the centre

unimpeded (see Lakdawala-Wolski, Game 49).



10 ♜h2 cxd4

10...♝c8 is covered in the next game.

11 exd4

11 cxd4 is only a good move if your opponent is higher rated and desperate to beat you.

11...♜h6 12 a4 ♜d5

Black controls f4, but it is very difficult to get anything concrete out of it.

13 ♜e1 ♜f4?!

Perhaps it was unwise to swap off the dark-squared bishop, which is a good defender.

14 ♜e4 ♜xh2+ 15 ♜xh2 e6

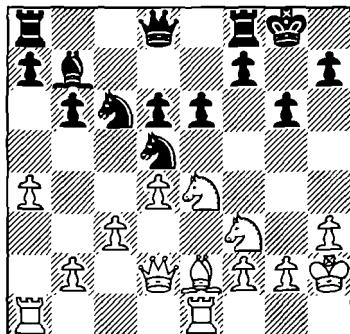
A cautious move.

15...e5! works out well for White in the line 16 ♜b5! f6 (16...f5?? drops a key central pawn to 17 ♜eg5 ♜c8 18 dxe5) 17 c4! ♜de7 18 c5! bxc5 19 dxe5! ♜xe5 20 ♜xe5 dxe5 21 ♜xc5 ♜d5 22 b4. The queenside pawn majority supports White's pieces nicely on c5 and b5.

16 ♜d2

Kamsky takes aim at the weakened

dark squares around Black's king.



16...♜f6 17 ♜d3 ♜g7 18 ♜f4 ♜xe4 19 ♜xe4 ♜b8?!

Intuitively, 19...d5! hemming in the bishop on b7 looks wrong, but this may be Black's best line: 20 ♜c2 ♜b8 21 ♜e5 and now:

a) 21...♜xe5?! 22 dxe5 f6 23 f3 fxe5 24 ♜xe5+ ♜xe5+ 25 ♜xe5 ♜f6 26 a5 with a promising ending for White. He enjoys two advantages:

1. Black suffers from a bad bishop; and
2. Black must defend his backward e-pawn.

b) 21...f6! 22 ♜d3 e5! 23 ♜g3 e4 24 ♜xb8 ♜axb8 25 ♜f4 ♜fe8 26 ♜xd5 ♜xd4 27 ♜xe4 ♜b3 28 ♜ad1 ♜c5 29 ♜f3 ♜xe1 30 ♜xe1 ♜xd5 31 ♜xd5 ♜xa4 32 ♜e7+ ♜h8 33 ♜xa7 ♜xb2 34 ♜c7. Despite his passivity, Black should hold the ending due to the reduced material.

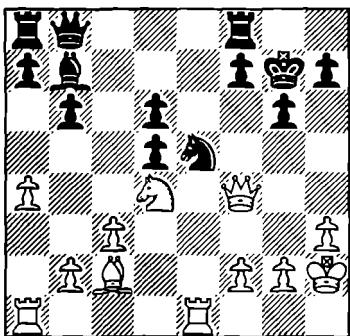
20 d5! ♜e5 21 ♜d4! exd5 22 ♜c2

White has achieved a lot with his pawn sac:

1. Black is afflicted with doubled

isolanis on d6 and d5;

2. Black's bishop is blocked in on b7;
3. White has a powerful outpost on d4; and
4. White has attacking chances based on ideas like f4-f5, h4-h5, and $\mathbb{H}e3$.



22... $\mathbb{W}d8$ 23 $\mathbb{B}ad1$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 24 $\mathbb{B}e3$ $\mathbb{W}f6$!?

Agreeing to bail out into an inferior ending. The alternative, 24... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 25 $\mathbb{B}f3$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 26 $b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 27 $\mathbb{B}g3$, gives White a strong attack.

25 $\mathbb{W}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 26 $\mathbb{B}b5$ $\mathbb{B}ed8$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}b3$

$\mathbb{Q}c4$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $dxc4$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$

White has regained his pawn with the far superior position. The knight dominates, tagging b7, c4 and f7.

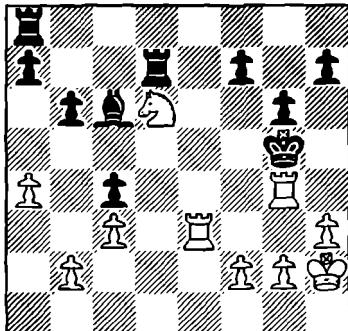
29... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 30 $\mathbb{B}d4$ $\mathbb{B}d7$

Black doesn't escape his difficulties with 30... $\mathbb{Q}xa4$?! 31 $\mathbb{B}f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$! (on 31... $\mathbb{Q}g5$??, 32 $h4+$ either mates or wins material) 32 $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{B}d2$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}g5$! $\mathbb{B}d7$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$.

31 $\mathbb{B}f4+$! $\mathbb{Q}g5$!

If Black plays 31... $\mathbb{Q}g7$, 32 $\mathbb{Q}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ wins the c4-pawn.

32 $\mathbb{Q}g4+$!



White's two rooks and knight coordinate in perfect harmony.

32... $\mathbb{Q}h6$

If 32... $\mathbb{Q}f6$? White whips up a mating attack with minimal material starting with 33 $\mathbb{Q}e8+$! $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 35 $g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ and now:

a) 36... $f5$ 37 $h4+$! $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 38 $gx5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 39 $fxg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 44 $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 45 $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 46 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ mate. Sweet! Sam Loyd would have loved this line!

b) 36... $\mathbb{Q}h6$? 37 $g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ mate!

33 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $f5$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$

34... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}hxh7$ wins for White.

35 $\mathbb{Q}g3$!

Keeping a firm grip of the dark squares.

35... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}f4$!

Black's pawns remain firmly fixed on the light squares, the same colour as his remaining bishop. White's a-pawn still can't be touched.

36... $\mathbb{Q}e4$??

Most certainly a time pressure error, but in any case White was a healthy pawn up with a winning position.

17 ♜xe4 1-0

Summary

This game is an example of how to whip up a kingside attack from the meekest of beginnings.

Game 48

B.Grachev-A.Timofeev

Aeroflot Open, Moscow 2008

1 d4 ♜f6 2 ♜f3 g6 3 ♜f4 ♜g7 4 e3 0-0 5 ♜e2 d6 6 h3 c5 7 c3 b6 8 0-0 ♜b7 9 ♜bd2 ♜c6 10 ♜h2 ♜c8 11 a4 cxd4

A nice trick you should know is that the mistake 11...♜c7? is met by the unexpected 12 a5! intending 12...♝xa5? 13 dxc5 ♜d7 14 cxd6 exd6 and the weakness of d6 will be a source of worry for Black.

12 exd4 ♜a5 13 ♜e1 ♜h6 14 b4!

Black cannot exploit the weakness on c3.

14...♝c6 15 ♜b3 e5

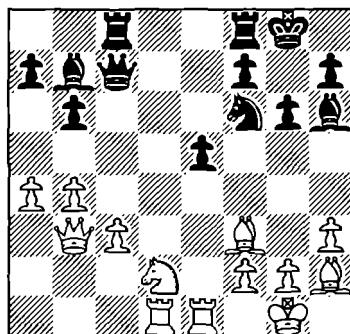
15...d5 is met by 16 ♜d3 e6 17 a5 bxa5, and here White has a happy choice:

a) 18 bxa5 ♜e7 19 ♜f1 with pressure down the b-file.

b) 18 b5 ♜e7 19 ♜a4 will regain the pawn, with sustained pressure.

16 dxe5 ♜xe5 17 ♜ad1 ♜c7 18 ♜xe5 dxe5 19 ♜f3!

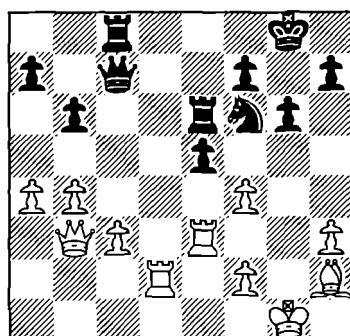
A dazzling strategic decision. White correctly allows his kingside pawn structure to break apart in return for central piece pressure.



19...♜xd2 20 ♜xd2 ♜xf3 21 gxf3 ♜fe8

21...♜xc3 leads to a very difficult ending for Black after 22 ♜xc3 ♜xc3 23 ♜xe5 ♜xf3 24 ♜g2 ♜f5 25 ♜d6 ♜h5 26 ♜d7 ♜e8 27 ♜d4! ♜f8 28 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 29 ♜xa7 ♜f4+ 30 ♜h2 b5 31 a5! ♜h5 32 ♜c5 ♜xh3+ 33 ♜g1. Despite his extra pawn, it is unlikely Black can muster a defence to the surging a-pawn on the other side of the board.

22 ♜e3 ♜e6 23 f4!



23...exf4?

Of course, Black can't bypass with 23...e4?? because of 24 f5.

He should just give the e-pawn away in the hope of a blockade: 23... $\mathbb{Q}e8!$ 24 fxe5 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 25 $\mathbb{W}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 26 $\mathbb{H}d7$ $\mathbb{W}c4$ 27 $\mathbb{H}ed3$ a6 and White still has some work ahead of him to convert this one.

24 $\mathbb{E}xe6$ fxe6 25 $\mathbb{W}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 26 $\mathbb{H}d6!$ $\mathbb{H}f8$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$

27... $\mathbb{W}f7?$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ doesn't help Black one bit.

28 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}f3$ 29 $\mathbb{W}g4!$ 1-0

Black is curiously helpless in the eternal pin after a queen trade. The winning plan for White would be to march the king to a6 and then swap all the pieces into a winning king and pawn ending.

Summary

When Black trades pawns on d4 and you recapture with the e-pawn, your options are to expand on the queen-side, as in this game, or to play for mate on the kingside like Kamsky did against Ftacnik.

Game 49
C.Lakdawala-T.Wolski
Memorial Day Classic,
Los Angeles 1998

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 e3 0-0 5 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ c5 6 c3 b6 7 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 8 h3 d6 9 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$

9 a4 a6 can also be tossed in before

developing the b1-knight.

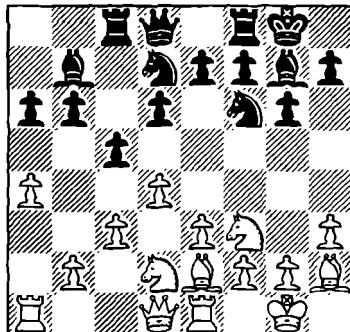
9... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}c8$

10... $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ frees Black's position a bit through trades.

11 a4

A more recent game continued 10 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 11 $\mathbb{W}b3?$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 12 a4 a6 13 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{W}a8$ 14 c4! (planning d5 to block out Black's queen and b7-bishop) 14...cxsd4 15 exd4 a5 16 $\mathbb{W}a3!$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 17 b4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ (White's pieces come to life in the line 17...axb4 18 $\mathbb{W}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 19 a5 bxa5 20 $\mathbb{W}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 23 c5!) 18 b5 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}fc8$ 20 d5! and Black was in a choke hold in V.Burmakin-K.Laciner, Baku 2007. At some point White will play $\mathbb{Q}b3$, then one of the knights to d4 and finally $\mathbb{Q}c6$.

11...a6 12 $\mathbb{Q}e1$



12... $\mathbb{W}c7?$!

12... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}a8$ achieves the same plan, but a move sooner. Réti himself carried out this plan in a game against Emanuel Lasker, with reversed colours (New York, 1924). Lasker won playing the London a move down.

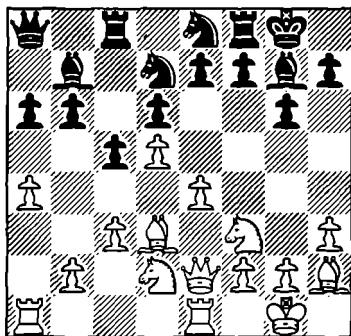
13 ♜d3 ♜b8 14 ♜e2 ♜a8 15 e4

White stands better. He has annexed a lot of central space, and e5 followed by e6 is a serious threat which could yield White a winning attack.

15...♝e8

15...cxd4 16 cxd4 ♜fd8? 17 e5 dxe5 18 dxe5 ♜d5 19 e6 would be very unpleasant for Black.

16 d5



Now Black's queen and b7-bishop look rather embarrassed, staring at the pawn wall on d5.

16...♜d8 17 ♜ab1 ♜c8 18 c4 a5!?

Black doesn't want to worry about White tossing in b4 at a later date, but by sealing the queenside he allows White to press forward in the centre and on the kingside unimpeded.

19 ♜g5!?

Provoking ...h6.

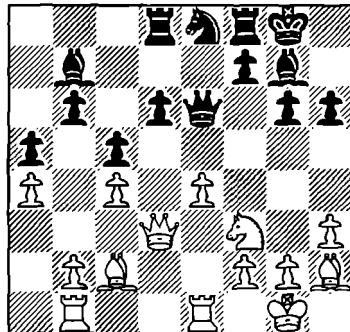
19...♝e5 20 ♜c2 h6 21 ♜gf3 ♜xf3+ 22 ♜xf3 e5

Otherwise White plays e5 himself.

23 dxe6 ♜xe6!?

23...fxe6! is stronger but 24 ♜d3!, eyeing g6, still holds an edge.

24 ♜d3



Now b6 and d6 are clear targets.

24...♝c7 25 ♜b3 ♜a6

It's very difficult for anyone to make a grovelling move like 25...♝a8.

26 ♜xb6 ♜b4 27 ♜xb7 ♜xc2 28 ♜ed1 ♜d4

28...♜fe8 29 ♜d2 ♜b8 30 ♜c7 ♜f8
31 b3! holds on to the extra pawn.

29 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 30 ♜d5 ♜fe8 31 ♜e1 ♜b8 32 ♜xd6 ♜xd5 33 cxd5 ♜b4 34 b3 f6 35 ♜bc1 ♜c8 36 ♜c4 ♜xb3 37 ♜ec1 ♜e8 38 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 39 ♜xc5 1-0

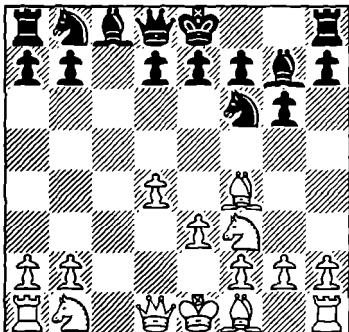
Wolski had no wish to be shown the continuation 39...♜xe4 40 ♜c8+ ♜f7 41 ♜1c7+ ♜e7 42 d6 ♜xc7 43 dxc7 ♜c3 44 ♜h8!.

Summary

If Black goes for the original Réti plan of ...♜c7 and ...♜a8, just take control of the centre with e4 and you will attain a small but firm space advantage to work with. When Black's queen reaches a8, advance with d5. Then both the queen on a8 and the bishop on b7 look silly staring at the brick wall on d5.

Game 50
B.Gelfand-M.Golubev
 Odessa (rapid) 2008

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 e3 c5 5 c3 cxd4 6 cxd4?



White has fewer chances to win or lose if he recaptures this way, maintaining the symmetry. I usually play 6 exd4.

6...0-0 7 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d6

After 7...d5, White maintains a solid edge with 8 $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 11 $\mathbb{W}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$.

8 h3 b6 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 10 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 11 $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 14 $\mathbb{W}a4!$ $\mathbb{E}c7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d2!$

The plan is to gain space with e4.

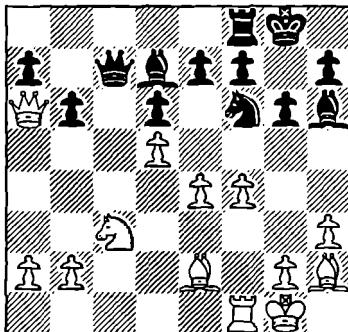
15... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b1!$

Now there is a possibility of the knight reaching b5.

16... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 17 $\mathbb{E}xc7$ $\mathbb{W}xc7$ 18 f3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 20 e4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 21 $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 22 d5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 23 $\mathbb{W}a6$ $\mathbb{W}c7?$

If Black swaps queens with 23... $\mathbb{W}xa6!$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}e3+$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$

26 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ White still retains the better chances due to his space advantage and the ability to quickly centralize his king. But Black's position remains weakness free and it is not easy for White to exploit his advantage. 24 f4!



Black has serious problems here:

1. The b5- and c6-squares are weak and prone to occupation;
2. White's central space advantage takes on alarming proportions; and
3. The e5 advance is coming soon.

24... $\mathbb{E}c8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 26 e5 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5?$

Now Black's game sours fast and he goes down without a fight.

Black should still lose in the more complicated line 27... $\mathbb{W}c2$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{E}a8$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 30 e6! $\mathbb{E}xa7$ 31 exd7 $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 32 $\mathbb{W}xb6$ $\mathbb{E}xa2$ 33 b4 $\mathbb{E}b2$ 34 $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{W}a4$ 35 $\mathbb{E}c8$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{E}xb4$. Here White has 37 $\mathbb{Q}d1!!$, a deadly deflection which at a minimum wins a piece.

28 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ dxе5 29 fxе5 $\mathbb{W}d8$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

Black is busted: the bishops rule,

White's pawn duo on e5 and d5 chokes Black, and a passed pawn will soon emerge from this central pair.

11...wf8

Black gets tied into knots in the line
11...e6 32 e4 c5 33 wf3 f5 34 exf6
xf6 35 d6 d7 36 wd5+ wh8 37 e1.

12 d7! xd8 33 e6!

Both c7 and f7 hang.

13...xd7 34 exd7 wd8 35 wc4 1-0

Summary

The cxd4 option allows White to play risk-free for the win. The plan is to eventually push your central pawns and seize a space advantage.

an advantage, however slight. Black's queen doesn't have a totally safe haven and will be vulnerable to a rook coming to the d-file.

9 dg5 fd7 10 0-0 cxd4 11 exd4 e5! allows Black to exploit the absence of a knight on f3 by rolling his centre pawns forward, M.Apicella-J.Lautier, Clichy 2001.

9...dxc5 10 wc2 a6 11 a4 kf5?!

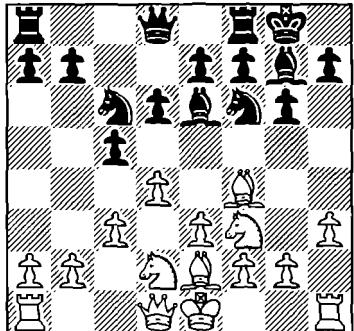
As so often happens in the London, Black can't come up with a plan and allows White a useful move with tempo.

12 e4 kd7 13 0-0 kh5 14 ke3 b6 15
fd1 wc7 16 dc4 ke6 17 a5!

Game 51

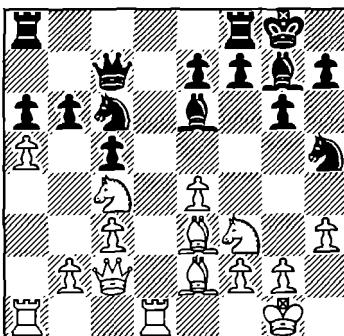
B.Grachev-Y.Dembo
European Championship,
Budva 2009

1 d4 kf6 2 kf3 g6 3 kf4 kg7 4 e3 0-0 5
ke2 d6 6 h3 c5 7 bd2 kc6 8 c3 kf6



9 dxc5!

This move allows White to play for



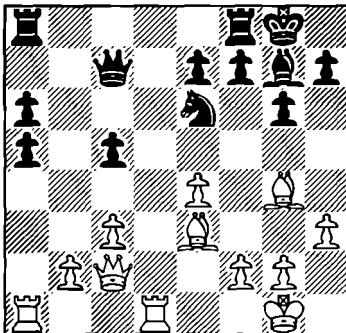
17...xa5

Having damaged her pawn structure, Black will suffer for a long time.

An alternative is to sac for piece activity: **17...b5? 18 kb6 xd8 19 xc5**
xa5 20 xa5 xc5 21 xa6 kf4 22
kf1 b4 23 c4 xd1 24 xb4 xb2 25
wd2 ke5 26 xe5 xb4 xe4 28
xe7 wb1 (threatening a knight check on e2) **29 f3 gxg2? 30 xg2**
xh3+ 31 xh3 xf1+ 32 g3. There

is no perpetual check and White obviously has all the winning chances.

18 ♜xa5 bxa5 19 ♜g5 ♜f4 20 ♜xe6 ♜xe6 21 ♜g4!



White has emerged with some clear advantages:

1. The bishop pair is potent in the open position.

2. Black has three isolanis so far, and White's threat to take on e6 will saddle Black with a miserably poor structure.

3. White's one weakness on b2 is easily defended by ♜c1, so in effect White remains weakness free.

21...♜ab8 22 ♜d5!

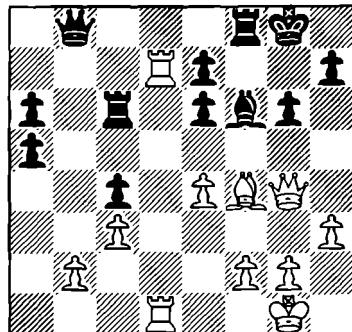
There is no rush to take on e6 and Grachev makes Black sweat a bit before he exchanges.

22...♜b5 23 ♜ad1 ♜b8 24 ♜c1 c4 25 ♜xe6 fxe6

Gulp! Five isolanis to defend.

26 ♜d7 ♜f6 27 ♜e2 ♜c5 28 ♜g4 ♜c6

It looks like Black is holding things together. How can White make progress with his bishop tied down on c1? 29 ♜f4!!



29...e5!

The only move.

Black cannot take on b2 and allow White to play e5: 29...♜xb2? 30 e5 ♜g7 31 ♜xe7 and now:

a) 31...♝b8 32 ♜dd7 ♜xe5 33 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 34 ♜e4!! is an overload shot which wins on the spot.

b) 31...♝xc3 32 ♜h4! and Black is helpless to stop ♜dd7.

c) 31...♝c2 32 ♜xg7+! ♜g7 33 ♜h6+ ♜g8 34 ♜xf8 ♜xf8 35 ♜d8+ mates.

30 ♜h6 ♜e8 31 ♜e2 ♜b5 32 ♜d5 ♜b6 33 ♜d2

White is in no rush for 33 ♜e3 ♜b8 34 ♜xa5. The a5-pawn isn't running away.

33...♝f7 34 ♜e3! ♜b8 35 ♜xa5 ♜c8 36 ♜ad5 ♜g7 37 ♜g5 ♜e6 38 ♜d6! ♜c5 39 ♜xe6 ♜xe6 40 ♜a7 ♜f7 41 ♜xa6

The pawns fall one by one.

41...♜b5 42 ♜a7 ♜f6 43 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 44 ♜h6 ♜b6 45 ♜a1 ♜h8!

If 45...♜xb2??, White mates with 46 ♜a6+ e6 47 ♜h4+ g5 48 ♜h6+ ♜f7 49 ♜a7+.

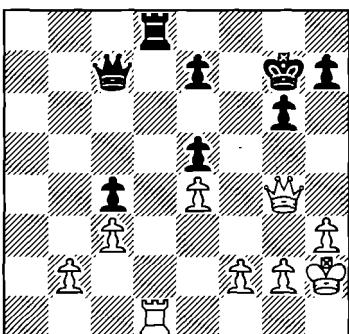
46 ♜h4+ ♜f7 47 ♜h2 ♜c7

Black must keep watch over e7.
47...♜xb2?? is met by 48 ♜a7.

48 ♜d1

White is a pawn up and retains the far superior structure.

48...♝g7 49 ♜g4 ♜d8!



It will be harder for White to win a queen ending. From this point onwards, Dembo puts up fierce resistance.

50 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 51 ♜e6 ♜c7 52 ♜g3 ♜f8
 53 h4 ♜c5 54 ♜d5 ♜c7 55 ♜g4 ♜g7 56
 ♜e6 ♜c5 57 ♜f3 h5 58 g3 ♜c7 59 ♜d5
 ♜f6 60 ♜b5 ♜c8 61 ♜e3 ♜c7 62 f4
 exf4+ 63 gxf4 ♜a7+ 64 ♜e2 ♜a1 65
 ♜xc4 ♜xb2+ 66 ♜d3 ♜b1+ 67 ♜d4
 ♜d1+ 68 ♜d3 ♜g1+ 69 ♜c4 ♜g4 70
 ♜d4+ ♜f7 71 ♜d5+ ♜g7 72 ♜e5+ ♜f7
 73 ♜d5+ ♜g7 74 ♜g5 ♜e2+ 75 ♜d4
 ♜d2+ 76 ♜c4 ♜e2+ 77 ♜c5 ♜e3+ 78
 ♜b5 ♜xe4 79 c4

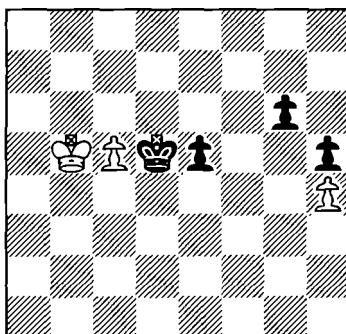
The other pawns don't matter. The passed c-pawn and avoidance of a perpetual check are all that count.

79...♜b7+ 80 ♜c5 ♜c7+ 81 ♜d4 ♜d6+
 82 ♜e4 ♜b4 83 ♜e5+ ♜f7 84 ♜d5+ e6

85 ♜d7+ ♜f6 86 ♜d8+ ♜f7 87 ♜c7+
 ♜f6 88 ♜d4 ♜a3 89 ♜e5+ ♜f7 90 ♜c7+
 ♜f6 91 ♜e5+ ♜f7 92 ♜b8 ♜f6 93 ♜d8+
 ♜f7 94 ♜b6 ♜f6 95 c5 ♜a1+ 96 ♜c4
 ♜f1+ 97 ♜b4 ♜xf4+ 98 ♜a5 ♜d2+ 99
 ♜a6 ♜d3+ 100 ♜b5 ♜d8 101 ♜b2+
 ♜f5 102 ♜c2+ ♜f6 103 ♜c3+ e5 104
 ♜f3+ ♜e6 105 ♜b3+ ♜d5?

A miscalculation. Black's best chance is 105...♜e7 106 ♜b7+! ♜f8 (106...♜f6?? 107 ♜b6+! wins the queening race) 107 c6. If White is careful to avoid perpetual check, the win shouldn't be difficult.

106 ♜xd5+! ♜xd5 107 ♜b5!



A cute finesse which ends the marathon. Black must have counted on 107 ♜b6?? e4 108 c6 e3 109 c7 e2 110 c8 ♜e1 and it is White who must fight for the draw.

107...♜e6

The point of 107 ♜b5 is 107...e4 108 c6 e3 109 c7 e2 110 c8 ♜e1 111 ♜d7+! ♜e4 112 ♜e6+, and White wins Black's newly promoted queen.

108 c6 e4 109 ♜b6! 1-0

White promotes with check.

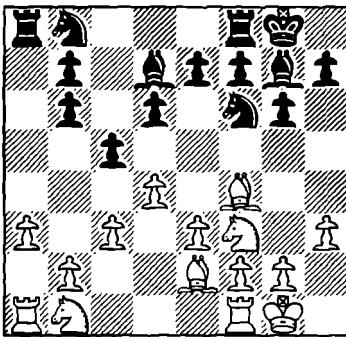
Summary

When Black sets up with ...d6, ...c5, ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$, the only way to try for an edge is $dxc5!$.

Game 52 B.Grachev-D.Navarra European Championship, Budva 2009

**1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ d6 4 h3!? $\mathbb{Q}g7$
5 e3 0-0 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ c5 7 c3 $\mathbb{Q}b6$**

In this game Black plays ... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ without preventing $\mathbb{Q}b3$ with ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$.
8 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ axb6 10 a3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 11 0-0



11...b5!?

An improvement over 11... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ b5?! 13 $dxc5!$ $dxc5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ b4 15 $\mathbb{Q}c4$, as played in B.Grachev-A.Volokitin, Moscow 2008. Black had to part with the bishop pair and was under pressure.

12 dxc5!

This clears e5 for a knight entry.

12...dxc5 13 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ b4 14 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 15

$\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$

After 15... $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 18 g4! $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ White is still ahead in development.

16 $\mathbb{Q}xb4!$ $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

The knight is too powerful and must be eliminated. If 18... $\mathbb{Q}c8$?, 19 $\mathbb{Q}a7!$ ties Black up.

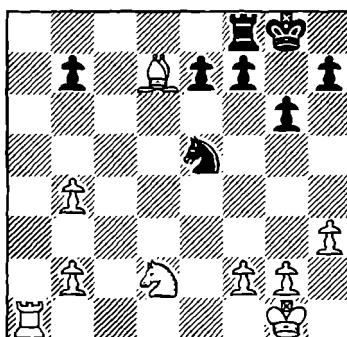
19 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$

Black counted on this move to regain the sac'ed pawn.

20 $\mathbb{Q}b5!$

This is stronger than 20 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$, when White still has the edge due to his passed b-pawn.

20... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$



21... $\mathbb{Q}d8!$

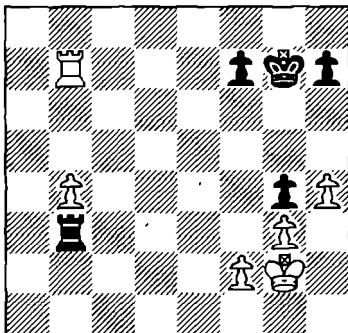
Avoiding the passive defence in the line 21... $\mathbb{Q}xd7$?! 22 $\mathbb{Q}a7$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 25 b5 b6 26 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$. Black would have to sweat to hold this one.

22 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$

So White has won a pawn, but Black

should hold the draw if he knows his rook and pawn endings. And Navara proves he does.

25...g5! 26 g3 ♜g7 27 ♜g2 ♜b3 28 h4 ♜d1



Finding the best defensive setup. Black ensures that f2 will be a target for the rook should White's king head for the queenside to assist the passed b-pawn.

29 ♜b5 h5 30 ♜f1

Going lateral with the rook doesn't help White: 30 ♜g5+ ♜h6 31 b5 f6 32 ♜d5 ♜g6, etc.

30...♜h6 31 ♜e2 f5 32 ♜b6+ ♜g7 33 b5 ♜f1! 34 gxsf4 ♜f3 35 ♜c6 ♜xf4 36 b6

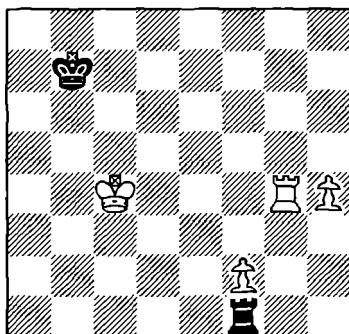
White also can't win after 36 ♜c5 ♜h6 37 ♜c8 ♜b4 38 ♜b8 ♜b2+ 39 ♜e3 ♜b3+ 40 ♜d4 ♜f3 41 b6 ♜g7 42 b7 ♜b3 43 ♜e5 ♜b2.

36...♜f7 37 ♜c7+ ♜f6 38 b7 ♜b4 39 ♜d3 ♜e5 40 ♜h7 ♜d6 41 ♜c3 ♜b1 42 ♜d4

42 ♜xh5? ♜xb7 43 ♜g5 ♜f7 is an easier draw.

42...♜b4+ 43 ♜d3 ♜b2 44 ♜c4 ♜b1 45 ♜h6+ ♜c7 46 ♜xh5 ♜f1 47 ♜g5 ♜xb7

48 ♜xg4



48...♜c6!

48...♜xf2? loses after 49 ♜d5 ♜c7 50 ♜e6 ♜h2 51 ♜d4.

49 ♜f4 ♜d6 50 ♜d4 ♜e6 51 ♜e4 ♜g1 52 ♜f3 ♜e7 53 h5 ♜g7 54 h6 ♜h7 55 ♜h4 ♜f7 56 ♜g4 ♜g8 57 ♜g5 ♜a7 58 ♜f4

It's a book draw after 58 f4 ♜h7 59 f5, although even titled players lose this from the Black side on a regular basis.

58...♜a1 59 ♜e4 ♜a5+ 60 ♜f6 ♜h7 61 ♜e8 ♜a4 62 ♜g5 ♜a5+ 63 ♜f6 ♜a4 64 ♜f8 ♜f4+ 65 ♜e7 ♜xf8!

This rook exchange allows Black to transpose to a drawn king and pawn ending.

66 ♜xf8 ♜xh6 67 f4 ♜g6 68 f5+ ♜xf5 ½-½

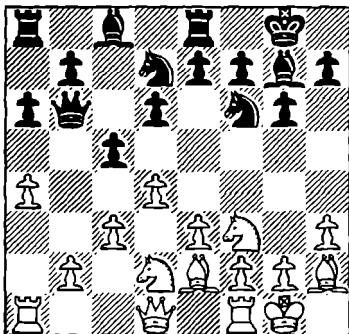
Summary

The ending after trading queens on b6 isn't as equal as it looks. Time your dx5! correctly so that Black must recapture with the d-pawn. Then we gain access to e5 for our knight.

Game 53
J.Schuyler-M.Khachiyan
National Open,
Las Vegas 2008

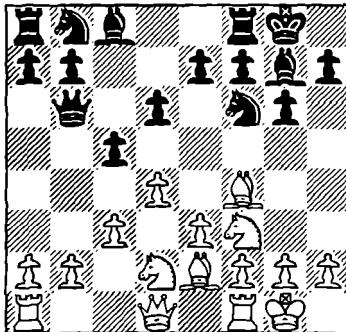
1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 e3 d6 5
 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0 6 0-0 c5 7 c3 $\mathbb{W}b6$

C.Lakdawala-B.Baker, San Diego (rapid) 2009, continued 7... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ (it would be better to postpone this move since Black often later needs ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ to eject a white queen from b3) 8 h3 $\mathbb{Q}e8$!? (Black plays this move a lot in these Réti systems, but sometimes White can exploit the weakening of f7) 9 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$!? (9...e5?? 10 dx5 dx5 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$, winning a pawn, is another stock trap you should be familiar with) 10 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$! a6 (Black can't take on b2: 10... $\mathbb{W}xb2$?? 11 $\mathbb{Q}c4$! $\mathbb{W}xc3$ – 11... $\mathbb{W}b5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ wins a clear exchange – 12 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}c3$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ corners the queen) 11 a4! (this gains a tempo on the queen; White has a solid plus now)



11... $\mathbb{W}xb2$?? (I'm not sure what Black

had in mind; maybe he thought would be forced into a draw by repetition) 12 $\mathbb{Q}c4$! $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ cxd4 (now he sees that his queen is caught) 14 exd4!. The black queen has no place to run after 14... $\mathbb{W}b4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}c3$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b3$. 8 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$!



This is a good trick to know against the Reversed Réti. You may be able to ignore attacks on your b2-pawn if the tactics allow it.

8... $\mathbb{Q}e6$

8... $\mathbb{W}xb2$? 9 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ (9... $\mathbb{W}xc3$?? 10 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}c3$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ repeats the queen trap seen in the note above) 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ gives White a clear advantage, with his bishop pair, strong centre and queen-side pressure.

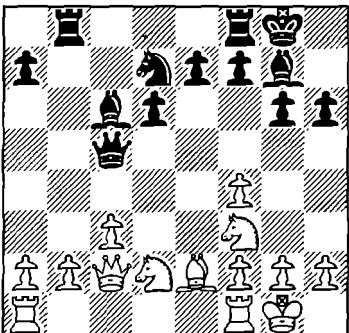
9 $\mathbb{Q}g5$! $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 $\mathbb{W}b3$ h6 11 $\mathbb{Q}gf3$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$!?

Black should force an ending with 11... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 12 dxc5! dxc5 13 $\mathbb{W}xb6$ axb6 14 a3. Even so, I always prefer White in such endings. The black pawns on the queenside may become vulnerable to attack and White has the use of b5 and c4 for his pieces.

12 dxc5! $\mathbb{W}xc5!$?

The GM sacs a pawn to complicate against his lower-rated opponent. He probably rejected the dry 12...dxc5 13 $\mathbb{A}e5!$ $\mathbb{A}e6$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xb6$ axb6 15 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 16 a3, which gives White a tiny structural advantage and few losing chances.

13 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 14 exf4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{W}ab8$



For the pawn, Black has the bishop pair and he hopes for some queenside pressure – a kind of a poor man's Benko Gambit. The reality is White stands very solidly and it's hard to believe Black has full compensation for the pawn.

17 $\mathbb{W}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 19 f5!

Seizing some light squares in the centre.

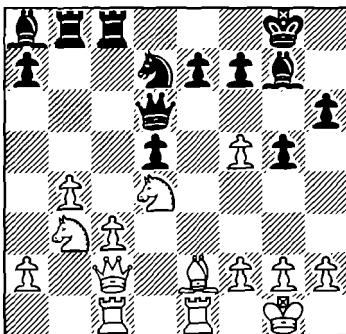
19...g5 20 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d5 21 $\mathbb{W}fe1$ $\mathbb{W}fe8$ 22 b4!?

Aggressive defence. White doesn't mind weakening a bit to stake out space on the queenside.

22... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}2b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}ec8$ $\mathbb{Q}2-1/2$

Black has yet to prove he has full

compensation for the pawn, so Kharlanian probably bailed out of the dubious position by utilizing his rating advantage and offering (or accepting) a draw here.



Summary

You don't always have to respond with the automatic $\mathbb{W}b3$ in lines where Black plays ... $\mathbb{W}b6$. Remember the trick with $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ which entices Black to grab the b2 pawn, often with disastrous consequences.

Game 54

**A.Dreev-S.Arkhipov
Moscow 1988**

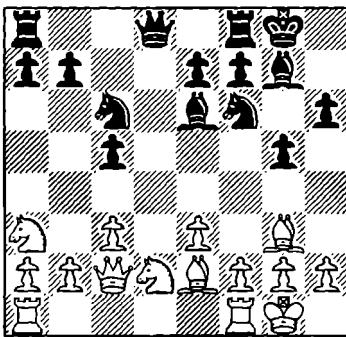
1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g6 3 c3

A slightly committal move order, but it's just fine if you are one of those Londoners who never likes to play c4.

3... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ d6 5 e3 0-0 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ c5 7 0-0

I like Prié's treatment starting with 7 dxc5! dxc5 8 $\mathbb{Q}a3!$. Here 8... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ (if 9... $\mathbb{Q}f5$, 10 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 11 $\mathbb{W}xb6$

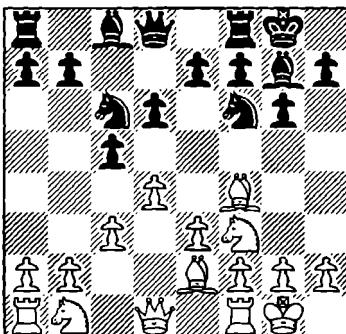
axb6 12 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ keeps Black worried about $\mathbb{A}c7$) 10 $\mathbb{A}g5$ $h6$ 11 $\mathbb{A}h4$ $g5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 13 $\mathbb{A}g3$ $\mathbb{A}e6$ 14 $\mathbb{W}c2$ gave White a nagging edge in E.Prié-O.Simon, Villeneuve Tolosane 2007.



White has two advantages in this position:

1. Black has been induced to weaken his kingside for no compensation; and
2. It isn't clear where Black's queen should go. A white rook will arrive soon on d1, but on b6 or a5 the queen will be vulnerable to $\mathbb{Q}c4$.

7... $\mathbb{Q}c6$!?



Provoking d5.

8 d5!?

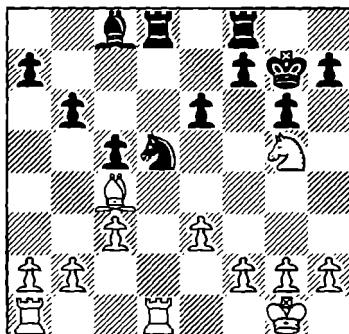
Provocation successful!

Let's follow a London game with Kasparov playing White: 8 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $cxd4$ 9 $\mathbb{exd4}$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$!? 10 $\mathbb{A}e3$ $f5$!? (rather optimistic – let's try and blow Kasparov off the board!) 11 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $d5$!? (consistent with his previous bullying tactics would be 11... $f4$ 12 $\mathbb{A}c1$ $e5$ 13 $\mathbb{dx5}$ $dxe5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d6$!, when White has control of e4 and some tricks along the a2-g8 diagonal) 12 $\mathbb{Q}ce5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 13 $\mathbb{W}c1$! $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}gxe5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 16 $\mathbb{dx5}$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 17 $\mathbb{We3}$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 18 $h4$! and Black got squeezed in G.Kasparov-E.Bann, Sao Paulo (simul) 2004.

8... $\mathbb{Q}e5$! 9 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $dxe5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 11 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$

Nobody would blame the players if they agreed to a draw at this point. Dreev proves otherwise and gives a good demonstration of how to play such endings arising from the London structure.

13 $\mathbb{Ed}1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Ead8}$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $b6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $e6$!?



This innocuous-looking move plants

the seed for Black's defeat. White has only the tiniest of edges after 17... $\mathbb{A}b7$? 18 $\mathbb{E}d3$ $h6$! 19 $\mathbb{E}ad1!$ $hxg5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{A}c8$!.

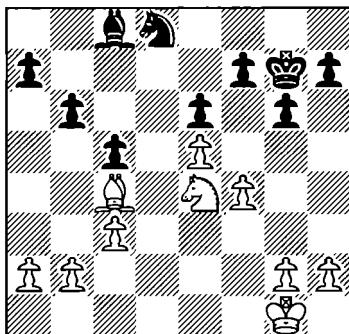
18 e4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 19 e5?

A little too eager. Dreev finds the correct plan but picks the wrong way to implement it. 19 f4! doesn't allow the e-pawn to be cut off and promises White a nagging edge.

19... $\mathbb{Q}c6$?

The losing move, which allows White to establish a bind on the dark squares.

Black missed an opportunity to transform the e5-pawn into a liability by cutting it off with 19...h6! 20 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $g5$! 21 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{E}d2$, and now it is White who is fighting for the draw. **20 f4 $\mathbb{E}xd1+$ 21 $\mathbb{E}xd1$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ 22 $\mathbb{E}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}e4$**



Suddenly it's not so equal. White has accumulated five advantages:

1. A space advantage, courtesy of the e5-pawn;
2. Black's kingside pawns are fixed and on the same colour as his remain-

ing bishop;

3. White's king enters the centre quicker than Black's;
4. Black's minor pieces have strayed into passivity; and
5. Black's queenside pawns are not as secure as they look.

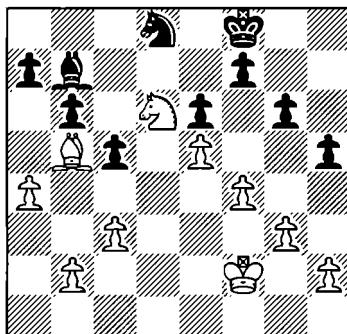
23...h5?!

Black wants to prevent a potential clamp with g4 and g5, but this move fixes another pawn on the wrong colour.

24 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 26 a4!

With the intention of invading on c8.

26... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 27 g3 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}f2$



28... $\mathbb{Q}a8$?

The best plan for Black is to go totally passive with 28... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 30 b4 cxb4 31 cxb4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}d4$, with a5 to follow. Black must hope his opponent can't puncture the queenside and enter with his king.

29 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$!

This is even simpler than winning the pawn right away with 31 b3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$.

31... $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}c8!$ b5 33 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 34
 $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

Absolute desperation but after 34... $\mathbb{Q}e7?$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ c4, the king just sails in: 36 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ is just too easy.

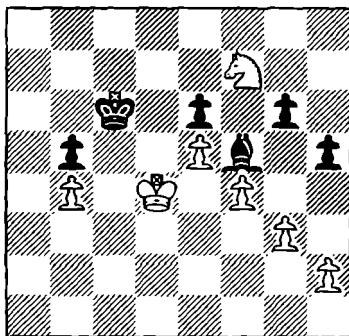
35 $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 36 b4!

Ensuring an entry for the king via d4.

36...cxb4

Also completely hopeless is 36... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}d8+!$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (if 37... $\mathbb{Q}d5$, 38 bxc5 wins another pawn) 38 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ cxb4 39 cxb4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}b1$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}d4$.

37 cxb4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$



What a nightmare for Black. Every single pawn on the board is on the wrong colour for his remaining bishop. White's king will enter the dark squares on the kingside. Talk about a bad bishop!

39 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}f6!$

Sealing off the black king's entry point, d5.

41... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}e3!$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 44 g4! $\mathbb{Q}xg4+$ 45 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

White queens first by a mile in the

following lines:

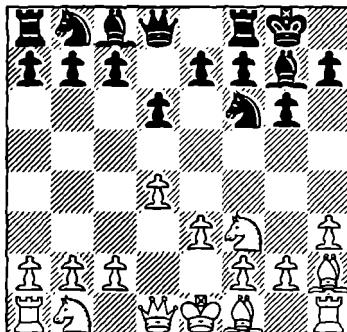
- a) 45... $\mathbb{Q}d5?$ 46 $\mathbb{Q}e3+$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 47 $\mathbb{Q}xf5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 48 h4.
b) 45... $\mathbb{Q}xg4?$ 46 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 47 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 48 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 49 f5.
46 $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 47 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 48 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$
49 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 50 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 51 $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$
52 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 53 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 54 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 1-0

Summary

In my experience, it is only White who has all the chances in such "dead drawn" endings arising after 13 $\mathbb{Q}d1$.

Game 55
C.Lakdawala-E.Gufeld
Western Class Championship,
Los Angeles 1999

1 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g6 2 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 e3 0-0 5 h3 d6 6 $\mathbb{Q}h2?$



A very rare move. I was experimenting with this odd move order at the time. My idea was to wait to see how Black sets up. If he chooses a Réti then I move my bishop to d3 rather than the

more passive e2-square.

Developing to d3 immediately is premature since Black has not yet committed to a Réti. He has the option to switch to a King's Indian formation, playing for ...e5 and ...e4, which would fork a piece. After 6 Qd3? Bd7! 7 0-0 Rc8 8 h2 e5 , White has to admit that his sixth move was a lemon and simply lose a full tempo by moving his bishop again.

6...c5

Wow! I didn't see this coming. GM Eduard Gufeld was a life-long King's Indian devotee and wrote several books on it, but here he dodges his favourite opening. Even the most booked-up GMs sometimes get caught unprepared for the London.

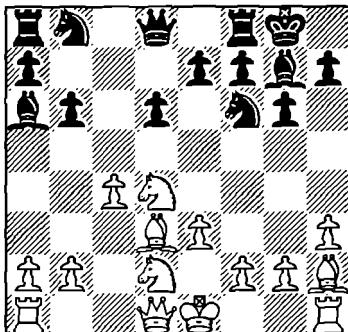
7 $\text{Bd2 b6 } 8 \text{ Qd3}$

The idea worked.

8... $\text{Ba6!?$

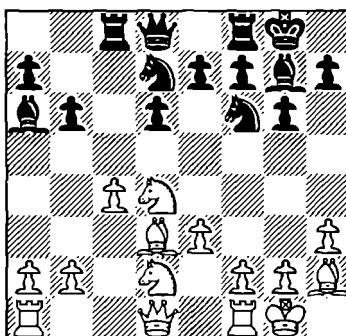
The mercurial Gufeld, even late in his life, always strove for creativity. He gives me c4 for free, just to get me out my normal London comfort zone.

9 $\text{c4 cxd4 } 10 \text{ Qxd4}$



I knew this deadening move would irritate Gufeld. The sharper 10 exd4 d5 leads to an isolani position.

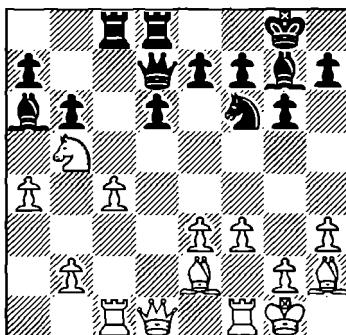
10... $\text{Bd7 } 11 \text{ 0-0 Rc8}$



12 $\text{Bb5!?$ Qc5

Another surprise for me. Gufeld declines the offer to enter the line 12... $\text{Bxb5!?$ 13 cxb5 d5, which leads to an unbalanced position: White has the bishop pair and the potential to land a piece on c6; Black has a strong pawn centre and a healthy pawn majority.

13 $\text{Le2 Rd7 } 14 \text{ a4 Rfd8 } 15 \text{ Lc1 Qfe4 } 16 \text{ Qxe4 Qxe4 } 17 \text{ f3 Qf6}$



18 e4

Now we have a Maroczy Bind situa-

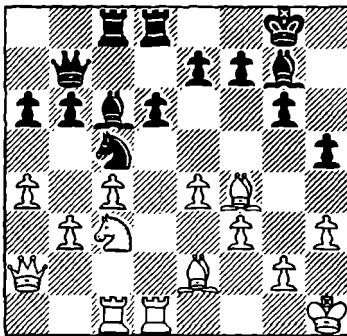
... I was happy here because I knew in my bones that Gufeld was not the type to patiently manoeuvre for the next 30 moves. On his next turn, he lashes out with a weakening move.

18...h5?!

It is rare for the player with less space to actually get an attack, and the weaknesses created by this move outweigh any attacking potential. I was hoping to get in f4 and f5 at some point to try and exploit them.

19 ♜d2 ♜b7 20 ♜f4 a6 21 ♜c3 ♜c6 22

**b3 ♜b7 23 ♜fd1 ♜d7 24 ♜h1 ♜c5 25
♚a2**



Contemplating both b4 and a5 at some future point. Black shuts this down, but in return he gives me control of b5.

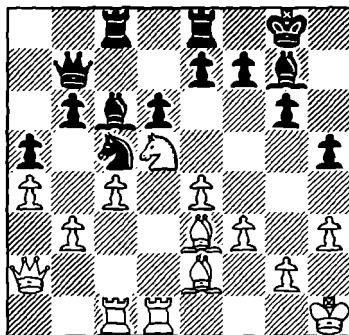
25...a5 26 ♜g5 ♜e8 27 ♜d5

The powerfully centralized knight will be very annoying for Black. If he takes it, I get the bishop pair and improve my pawn structure. If he leaves it alone, it exerts pressure on e7 and f6.

27...♜e6 28 ♜e3 ♜c5

A tacit draw offer. The GM dislikes

his position.



29 ♜f1 e6?!

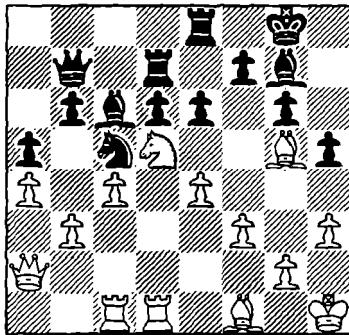
Ah, finally! He loses patience and creates another weakness by kicking the knight.

30 ♜c3 ♜cd8 31 ♜g5 ♜d7

This allows White a mini combination, but Black's position clearly deteriorates after 31...f6!?

32 ♜d5!

Still, this move was really just a bluff.



32...exd5?

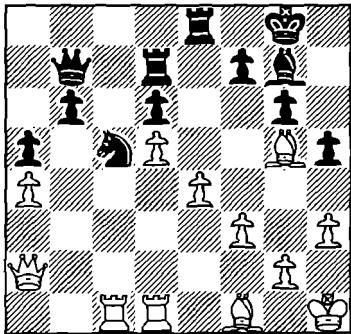
He believes me and accepts a bad position just to get rid of the knight.

Had he remained cool with 32...e5!, I

probably would have just played something like 33 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ (plunging in with 33 $\mathbb{Q}f6+?$) isn't as good as it looks: 33... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{E}e6$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ f5 36 $\mathbb{Exf5}$ gxf5 37 $\mathbb{Qc3}$ $\mathbb{Qg7}$ and Black has gained a lot of counterplay) 33... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}e3$. Although Fritz congratulates me on how great my game is, the reality is that White has only a tiny pull.

33 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 34 bxa4

Black is in big trouble here. White has four advantages:



1. The bishop pair in an open position;
2. Domination of the light squares;
3. Black's pawn on b6 is a chronic weakness; and
4. White has a healthy 5 to 4 kingside pawn majority, whereas Black's 2 to 1 majority on the queenside is hopelessly restrained. In essence, Black is down a pawn.

34... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}dc7$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}cc8$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}g5$

Degrading Black's kingside pawns.
40...f6 41 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}c4$

Threatening the cheap shot 43 $\mathbb{Q}xc5!$, which would win a piece.

42... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}db1$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 44 f4

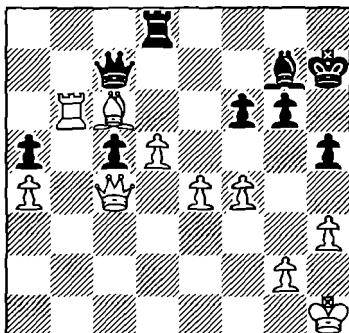
Black is tied up on the queenside defending b6, so it's time to go after his king.

44... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 45 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}dx5$ 46 $\mathbb{Q}xb6?$

This is premature. White should keep building with 46 $\mathbb{Q}e2!$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 47 $\mathbb{Q}f1$, and here his ideas include:

1. The pawn advance f5, which would destroy Black's pawn cover around his king;
2. $\mathbb{Q}b3-e3$, which threatens to create two central passed pawns with e5; and
3. $\mathbb{Q}b3-g3$, targeting g6.

46... $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 47 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}c7!$



Dang it! I missed this double attack. Both clocks were below the 5-minute mark in a sudden death time control.

48 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 49 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 50 $\mathbb{Q}xa5$

White is winning here but still needs to be careful not to walk into perpetual checks. Both players stopped keeping score at this point.

It was a virtual impossibility for Gufeld to get through a tournament

without some kind of controversy bubbling up. Later in the time scramble, he made a move and punched his clock, then promptly took his move back and made another one! But the other one led to mate in three, which I found. Gufeld, after getting mated, demanded to the director that the mate didn't count and the original move before his take-back should be played. Essentially, he wanted a take-back on his take-back! Luckily for me, the director wasn't buying any of this and let the mate stand. At the end of the game,

Gufeld yelled out his familiar battle cry whenever a director ruled against him: "This is not chess!" Every game against Gufeld was an adventure.

Summary

Against the Reversed Réti, you can try the move order of h3 and ♘h2, leaving open the possibility of developing your f1-bishop to the more aggressive d3-square. But remember to move it to d3 only after Black has committed to the Réti formation.

Chapter Six

London versus King's Indian

The King's Indian is the acid test for the London. Unlike most other chapters, where we experience a pleasant feeling of security on the White side of the London, against the King's Indian Defence there is good reason for us to feel uneasy. Black goes directly after our king and we need good nerves to withstand the onslaught. The main benefit we receive is that we throw the generally booked up King's Indian players out of their normal lines. Once again we seize the familiarity advantage.

Here are some ideas to remember from this chapter:

Black chooses the Reversed King's Indian Attack

This one is a dream for White, who is up two full tempi over normal King's Indian Attack lines. Our first tempo is simply from the fact that we have the white pieces. The second tempo comes

from Black straining to play ...e5 with the time-wasting manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{W}e8$, ...e5 and only then ... $\mathbb{W}e7$. Another plus for White is that ...c5 counters are usually ruled out due to the latent power of the white bishop lurking on h2. Your queenside attack should beat Black's kingside attack if you play it correctly. Try hard to force through the centre-blasting c5, which is a recurring theme in several games.

See Spassky-Bukic (Game 56) and Lakdawala-Shirov (Game 57) for two examples of the Reversed King's Indian Attack.

Black sets up with ...d6, ...a6, ...c6 and ... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$

Black's idea is ...b5 and queenside counterplay. Dreev shows how to effectively deal with this plan in his game against Berg (Game 61). With 9 a4! White deliberately accepts a hole on b4

to halt Black's queenside expansion. If Black tries to exploit the hole with ...a5, ... $\mathbb{Q}b8$, ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$, this all comes too slowly and White simply expands in the centre with advantage.

Black plays ... $\mathbb{Q}fd7$!

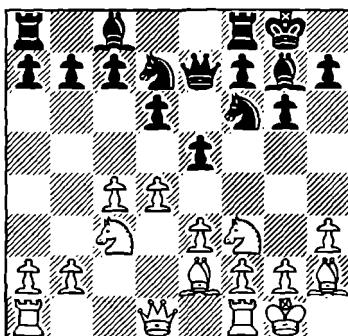
The ... $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ idea played against me by Mexican GM Gilberto Hernandez (Game 63) is the one critical line you should be well prepared for. It is by far the best King's Indian option against the London. Black launches an armada of pawns on e5, f5 and g5 and these three thugs go after the throat of our king. We must react quickly in the centre or risk getting overwhelmed. This is the one line in the chapter where you cannot just wing it. Study the notes of this game and try to become familiar with the centralizing ideas to counter Black's surge on the kingside.

ter 11 f4 e5 12 c3 I still prefer White in this strange Stonewall setup. The straggler on h4 could be a source of worry for Black later in the game, and I doubt the open g-file will be of much use.

7 $\mathbb{h}3 \mathbb{W}e8$ 8 c4

White hurries to expand on the queenside. We explore the more solid c2-c3 lines later in this chapter.

8...e5 9 $\mathbb{A}h2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}c3$



10...e4

Very committal. 10... $\mathbb{W}e8$ (see the next game) prevents what follows.

11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}e8?$

Natural, and also incorrect. 11...c6 needs to be played to keep the knight out of b5.

12 $\mathbb{Q}b5!$

Much stronger than the routine 12 b4 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 13 $\mathbb{W}c2$, which was played in G.Bagaturov-G.Olarasu, La Fere 2006.

12... $\mathbb{W}d8$

On 12... $\mathbb{Q}f8$, 13 c5! rips open the queenside. Following 13... $\mathbb{W}d8$ 14 cxd6 cxd6 15 $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$, White enjoys some significant advantages:

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 e3 0-0 5

$\mathbb{Q}e2$ d6 6 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$

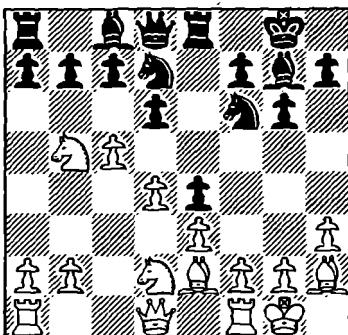
Another line is 6... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 8 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ g5 9 $\mathbb{Q}fd2$ gxh4 10 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ and now:

a) 10...e5? is a strategic error. After 11 dx \mathbb{Q} dx \mathbb{Q} 12 e4!, not allowing Black to roll with ...f5, White has a clear advantage.

b) Black should play 10...f5!, but af-

1. He has levered open the c-file;
2. Black's pieces have been forced into full retreat;
3. There is little danger to White's king since Black has been pushed back into passivity on that wing; and
4. White has targets on d6, c7 and, in general, the dark squares on the queenside.

13 c5!



A lead up to a powerful piece sac.

13...a6 14 cxd6! axb5 15 dxc7 ♕e7 16 ♖xb5

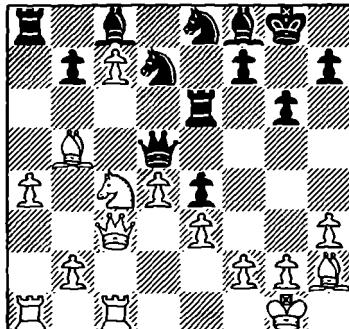
White has three healthy pawns for the piece, including the choking c7-pawn which ties Black down so that he will not have any opportunities on the kingside.

16...♕f8 17 ♜c4

The d6- and b6-squares are especially vulnerable.

17...♔e6 18 ♜c2 ♔d5 19 a4 ♔e6 20 ♜fc1 ♜e8 21 ♜c3!

A strong creeping move. White opens up the possibility of b4 followed by future queenside pawn advances and strengthens his grip on e5.



21...♜ef6

Heading for d5.

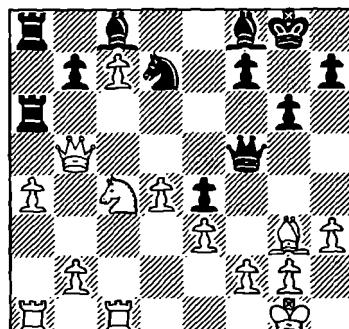
**22 ♜e5 ♜b6 23 ♜c4 ♜fd7 24 ♜b3 ♔f6
25 ♜xd7! ♜xd7 26 ♜b5!**

All hopes of a Black attack go up in cinders if the queens come off the board.

26...♗f5!

Opening the a-file allows White to regain the piece: 26...♗xb5?? 27 axb5 ♜xa1 28 ♜xa1 ♔e6 29 ♜a8 ♔e8 30 ♜a5 ♜b6 (or 30...b6 31 ♜c6 and the threat of ♜d8 wins material) 31 ♜b8 f5 32 ♜xb7 ♔e7 33 ♜a5 ♜d5 34 b6 and White wins.

27 ♜g3 ♜fa6



28 d5!

Spassky remains true to his style and changes his mind, retaining his queen which exerts tremendous force. Black's pieces are nowhere near the white king, so why trade?

I interviewed Spassky in 1987 for the local newspaper. I asked him what makes a player reach the pinnacle and become World Champion, as opposed to a very talented world-class player who never becomes champion. He answered: "A player must stop lying to himself and remain true to his style. The players who do not make it to the very top play to their egos and lie to themselves, engaging in styles which do not suit their temperaments or skills."

In my misspent youth, I would play the King's Gambit as White and the Najdorf as Black. The problem was that I was a strong positional player and a bit of a turkey as a tactician. Now I understand that I'm not the second coming of Tal, I follow the advice of the former world champ, and I remain true to my style (a chicken!) and play the London.

**28...wf6 29 a5 h5 30 b4 h4 31 hh2 wf5
32 ff1!**

Intending f3. It is Black who should worry about his king now. Most of his army is hopelessly tangled on the other wing.

**32...g5 33 f3 gg6 34 dd1 exf3 35 xf3
wc2 36 dd2 wc3 37 d6 aa6 38 e4 wc1+
39 ff1 wc3 40 dd5 ff6 41 xf6! 1-0**

On 41...xf6, 42 ee5 forks queen and rook. Or if 41...wx6, White wins with 42 d7.

Summary

If Black plays a premature ...e4 rather than first playing ...ee8, remember Spassky's piece sac idea beginning with ff5! and c5!.

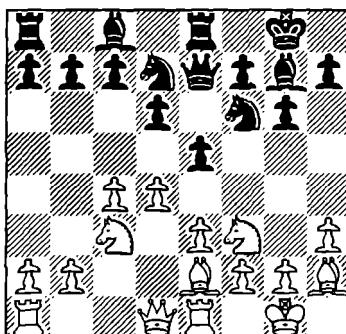
Game 57

C.Lakdawala-A.Shirov
Internet Chess Club
(blitz) 1996

**1 d4 ff6 2 ff3 g6 3 ff4 gg7 4 e3 0-0 5
ee2 d6 6 0-0 bb7 7 h3 ee8**

A common trap which lower-rated players fall into is 7...ee8?! 8 c3 e5?? 9 dx5 dx5 10 ff5! and White wins a pawn for zero compensation.

8 hh2 e5 9 c4 we7 10 cc3 ee8 11 ee1!



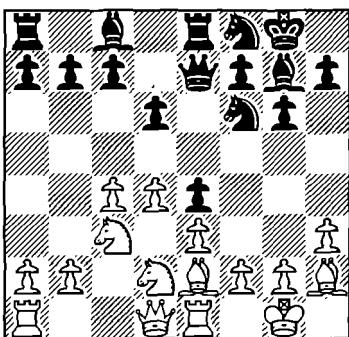
A triple purpose move:

1. If Black trades pawns on d4, his queen on e7 faces a white rook on the open e-file.

2. When Black plays ...e4, he often tries to set up a sac on h3. By playing $\mathbb{E}e1$, White clears f1 for the defensive retreat of the bishop.

3. White keeps open the possibility of playing f3 to counterattack in the centre, in which case the e3-pawn is secure with a rook on e1.

11...e4 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{Q}f8$



13 $\mathbb{Q}c2$

I have also tried 13 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ here. If Black responds with 13...c6, there can follow 14 b4 h5 15 c5 d5 16 b5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17 bxc6 bxc6 18 $\mathbb{W}a4$ and White's queenside attack arrives with alarming speed as Black cannot challenge the b-file. For example, 18... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}b1 \mathbb{Q}g5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}b7$. The plan is to win the a7-pawn and just push the a-pawn all the way down the board towards promotion. It is surprisingly hard for Black to muster anything on the other wing.

13...h5 14 $\mathbb{Q}ac1 \mathbb{Q}8h7$

He allows my knight into d5. The alternative would be 14...c6, which gives White more opportunities to pry open the centre and queen's wing.

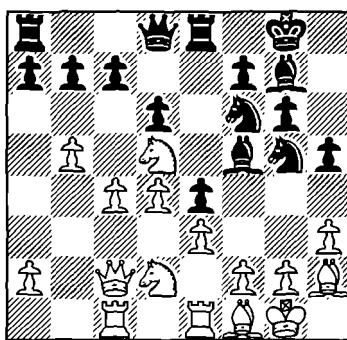
15 $\mathbb{Q}d5 \mathbb{W}d8$

This is the third time the queen has moved, only to return to its birthplace on d8.

16 b4 $\mathbb{Q}f5$

Black would love to play 16...c6 to get rid of the knight. The problem is it gives White a hook to open the queen-side after 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 18 b5.

17 b5 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}f1$



18... $\mathbb{Q}xd5?$

Shirov tires of the intruder on d5.

19 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}c8$

Essentially Black is sac'ing the a7-pawn to gain time for his attack on the kingside. 19... $\mathbb{Q}e7$?! would block the black queen's access to the kingside via the g5- or h4-square.

20 $\mathbb{W}a4$ b6!

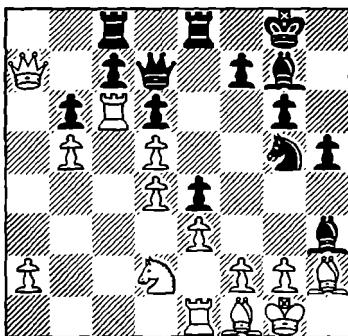
I was positive he wouldn't go passive with 20... $\mathbb{Q}a8$?! 21 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}ec1$, when Black is tied up and his attack has come to a halt.

21 $\mathbb{W}xa7 \mathbb{W}d7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}c6$

A tough decision. I didn't trust 22 $\mathbb{h}4$?! $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}d8$! 25 $\mathbb{Q}ec1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 26 $\mathbb{W}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 27 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 28

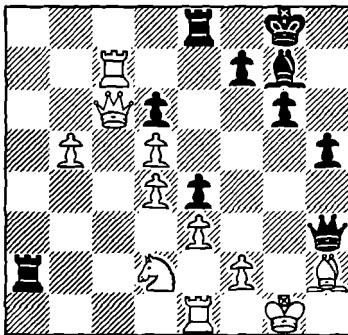
$\mathbb{Q}xh4$ $\mathbb{W}xh4$ 29 $\mathbb{B}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$, when suddenly Black's attack looks very potent.

22... $\mathbb{Q}xh3$



Banzai! I saw this one coming. Black gets two pawns for the piece and exposes White's king. I felt intuitively that White should successfully defend by transferring the queen to the kingside in time via c7 and d6.

23 $g\mathbf{x}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}xh3+$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ $\mathbb{W}xh3$ 25 $\mathbb{B}xc7$ $\mathbb{B}a8$ 26 $\mathbb{W}xb6$ $\mathbb{B}xa2$ 27 $\mathbb{W}c6!$



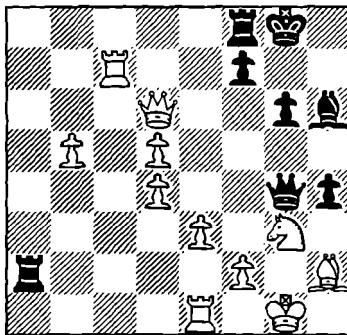
27... $\mathbb{W}f8!$

Avoiding the trap 27... $\mathbb{B}ea8?$ 28 $\mathbb{W}d7!$, returning the piece for simplification. For example, 28... $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 29 $\mathbb{B}xd7$ $\mathbb{B}xd2$ 30 $\mathbb{B}b1!$ $\mathbb{B}aa2$ 31 b6 $\mathbb{B}xf2$ 32

$\mathbb{B}xd6$ $\mathbb{B}g2+$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{B}gb2$ 34 $\mathbb{B}xb2$ $\mathbb{B}xb2$ 35 b7, winning a rook.

28 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}g4+$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ h4 30 $\mathbb{W}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}h6!$

I had planned on meeting 30... $\mathbb{W}f3?$ with 31 $\mathbb{W}f4!$. This move prevents that possibility.



Black now has a serious threat of 31... $\mathbb{W}f3!$ which hits f2 and also threatens ...h3!, mating on g2.

31 $\mathbb{W}e5!$

The counter threat $\mathbb{Q}e4$ and $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ saves White.

31... $\mathbb{W}f3$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{W}g4+$

If 32...h3, 33 $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 35 $\mathbb{W}g3$ ends the attack.

33 $\mathbb{Q}g3!$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$

33...hxg3?? is met by 34 $\mathbb{Q}f6+$, forking king and queen.

34 $\mathbb{W}f4$ 1-0

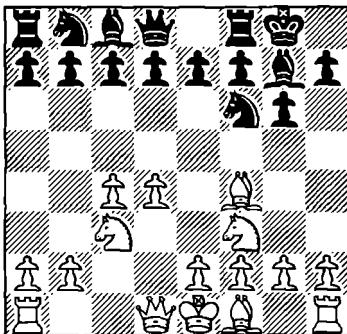
The attack is over.

Summary

$\mathbb{B}e1$ is a key move to remember in such positions. It permits the reinforcement of your king with $\mathbb{Q}f1$ and also allows you to play for f3.

Game 58
C.Lakdawala-L.Sussman
Gambito (rapid),
San Diego 2008

1 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 d4 0-0 5 $\mathbb{N}f4?$



5...d6

If you use this move order for White, you must also be ready for:

- a) 5...d5 6 $\mathbb{Q}c1!$ leading to the London hybrid line of the Grünfeld; and
- b) 5...c5 6 d5 which is some kind of strange London/Benoni setup.

6 e3 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e6

7... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ is covered in the next game. Other choices for Black include 7...c6, 7... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ and 7...b6.

8 h3 $\mathbb{Q}e8$

Still working to get in ...e5. 8...b6 may be Black's best move.

9 0-0 a6

My opponent wants to keep me guessing about his intended pawn placement.

Once again, 9...e5?? just drops a

pawn to 10 dx5 dx5 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$.

10 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ e5 12 b4??

12 c5! is much stronger. Black gets into difficulties after:

a) 12...exd4 13 cxd6 cxd6 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ and Black doesn't have any compensation for his weak pawn on d6; or

b) 12...dxc5?? 13 dx5 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ (14 g4 also wins but looks more messy)

14... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 15 e6 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ and Black can resign.

12...b6 13 c5!

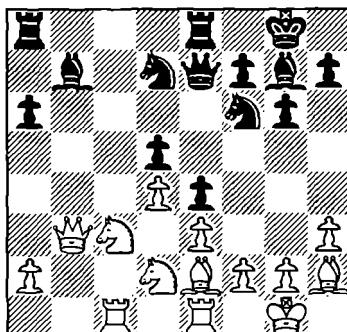
This is the pawn break you should always be angling for.

13... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ bxc5?

Principle: Don't open the game in the sector of the board where your opponent has space.

14...e4! 15 cxd6 cxd6 16 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ d5 was better and keeps things under control on the queenside.

15 bxc5 e4 16 cxd6 cxd6 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ d5 18 $\mathbb{Q}b3$



18... $\mathbb{Q}a7!$

Black must take care not to hang something:

a) 18... $\mathbb{Q}c6?$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}cxe4!$; or

b) 18... $\mathbb{Q}f8?$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}cxe4!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $dxe4$ 21 $\mathbb{B}c7.$

19 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 20 $\mathbb{B}c3$ $\mathbb{B}b7?!$

20... $\mathbb{W}e6$ was better.

21 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $a5?!$

He should have admitted that his last move was a lemon and returned with 21... $\mathbb{A}a7.$

22 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}ac5?$

Missing a forced win of material with 23 $\mathbb{Q}bc5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{B}b6$ (24... $\mathbb{A}a7?$ 25 $\mathbb{B}b1$ traps the queen as in the game) 25 $\mathbb{Q}c7!$ $\mathbb{B}c6?$ 26 a3, cutting off the queen's escape routes.

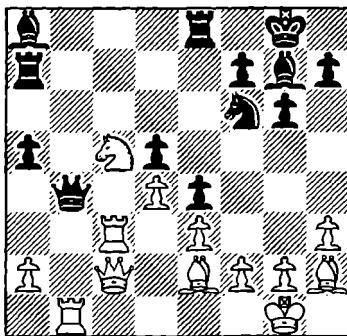
23... $\mathbb{Q}xc5?$

Black can still defend with 23...a4! 24 $\mathbb{B}c1!$ $\mathbb{B}b6$ (the knight can't be touched: 24... $\mathbb{a}xb3??$ 25 $\mathbb{B}xb3$ wins material) 25 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 28 $\mathbb{B}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}ee6!.$

24 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{B}a7$

If 24... $\mathbb{B}b6$, 25 $\mathbb{Q}c7!$ wins.

25 $\mathbb{B}b1$ 1-0



The queen has no place to go.

Summary

On many occasions White doesn't even

need to play b4 to force the c5 pawn break. In this game, I played 12 b4? instead of the superior and more direct 12 c5!.

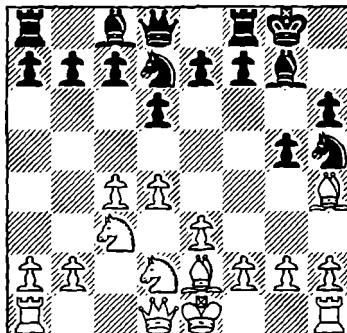
Game 59

C.Lakdawala-C.Tanaka
SCCF State Championship,
Los Angeles 2008

1 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 d4 0-0 5 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ d6 6 e3 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}h5!?$

There is no way a junior can resist playing this move.

8 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 9 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ g5 10 $\mathbb{Q}d2$



Our familiar manoeuvre, which gums up Black's plan of picking off the white bishop on g3 for the knight. He gets the bishop, but at a heavy cost.

10... $\mathbb{g}xh4!$

This move gives Black the most counterplay in the position.

10... $\mathbb{Q}f4?!$ 11 exf4 gxh4 12 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ h3 13 g3 will favour White, who has two possible plans:

1. Just castle kingside, centralize

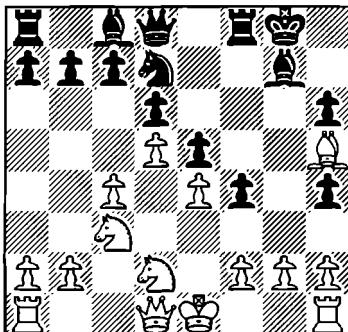
ooks and play for trades to exploit the wayward pawn on h3 in an ending; or

2. Play $\mathbb{W}d2$, castle queenside and try to blow Black out of the water!

11 $\mathbb{W}xh5$ e5 12 d5!

An improvement over 12 dx e 5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 13 0-0 $\mathbb{A}e6$, when Black's piece activity and bishop pair compensates him for his damaged pawn structure, W.Balcerowski-V.Jansa, Bad Liebenstein 1963.

12...f5 13 e4 f4?



My opponent, at that time 15 years old, is a gifted tactician who often plays on a par with titled players in wild positions. But like almost all juniors, his positional judgment lags behind.

This move is wrong for two reasons:

1. It blocks the position, when Black has the bishop pair; and
2. It allows White to swap off his bad bishop.

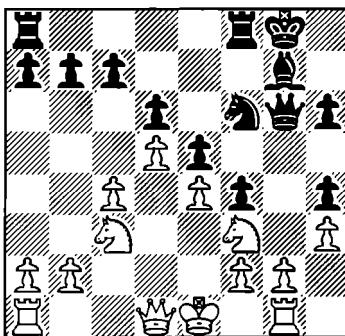
A thematic plan for Black would be to retain the central tension and then later sac pawns in the centre or queenside, hoping for an attack. After 13... $\mathbb{W}g5$ 14 $\mathbb{A}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 15 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{A}d7$ 16

0-0-0 White still has the edge due to his extra space, but Black can begin to attack with a well timed ...c6.

14 $\mathbb{A}g4$

Guaranteeing a swap of White's bad bishop and Black's good one.

14... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{W}xc8$ 16 h3 $\mathbb{W}e8$ 17 $\mathbb{A}f3$ $\mathbb{W}g6$ 18 $\mathbb{A}g1$



Black is in big trouble here:

1. The kingside, his theatre of action, has been blocked;
2. He has a rotten bishop;
3. He is weak on the light squares; and
4. White can expand on the queenside.

18... $\mathbb{W}h5$

The e-pawn can't be touched: 18... $\mathbb{Q}xe4??$ drops the knight to 19 $\mathbb{A}d3$.

19 $\mathbb{W}e2$ a6 20 0-0-0

If Black goes crazy on the queenside and sacs pawns, White will just take them. The attack has very little chance of working. Black, in essence, is missing a piece because his bishop on g7 is so bad.

20... $\mathbb{B}f7$ 21 $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{B}h8$ 22 $\mathbb{K}d2$ $\mathbb{B}g8$

He decides to play on the open g-file, pressuring g2.

23 $\mathbb{Q}e1$

An ending would be in White's favour. I would simply break at the appropriate time with c5.

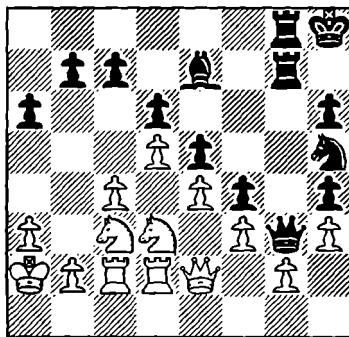
23... $\mathbb{W}g6$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}h5$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{W}g6$ 26 $f3$

No draw!

26... $\mathbb{W}g3$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

White prepares the queenside break with c5.

27... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 28 $\mathbb{K}c1$ $\mathbb{B}fg7$ 29 $\mathbb{K}cc2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 30 $a3$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}a2$



White is in no rush. Black can't do anything meaningful on the kingside.

31... $\mathbb{W}h2$ 32 $\mathbb{W}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}g3$ 33 $\mathbb{W}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 34 $c5$ $dxc5?$

Allowing White to take on e5, but at least Black activates his horrible bishop.

35 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

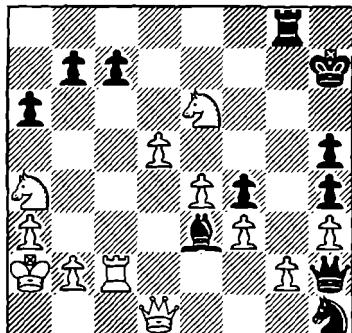
Threat: 36 $\mathbb{Q}g4$.

35... $h5$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

36... $b6$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 38 $e5$ looks awful for Black.

37 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}dxc5$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}e6$

$\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}h1$



42 $\mathbb{W}f1?$

A bit cowardly on my part. 42 $\mathbb{Q}xc7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 43 $d6$ $\mathbb{B}xg2$ 44 $d7$ $b5$ 45 $d8\mathbb{W}$ $bxa4$ 46 $\mathbb{W}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 47 $\mathbb{W}h8$ mate would have been a more efficient way to end the game.

42... $b5$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}ac5$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 44 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}f2$ 45 $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ 46 $\mathbb{W}xf2$ $\mathbb{B}xg2$ 47 $\mathbb{W}d4$ 1-0

Summary

As usual we don't worry about ... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ lines. We play our manoeuvre B(f4)-g5-h4 and $\mathbb{Q}fd2!$ to deal with it.

Game 60

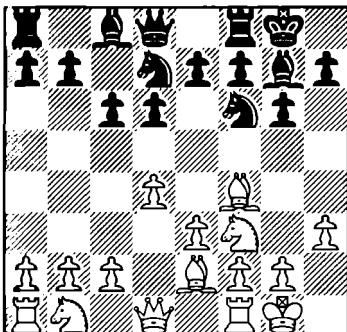
S.Muhammad-A.Simutowe

Wilbert Paige Memorial,
New York 2001

1 $d4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $g6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 $e3$ $d6$ 5

$h3$ $0-0$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $c6$ 7 $0-0$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$

Black goes for a flexible setup. He can aim for ...a6 and ...b5, or ...e5 and ...f5.

**8 c4**

There is nothing wrong with 8 c3 but since Black has developed in such a non threatening way, White may as well accelerate his queenside play and push the pawn to c4.

9...h5!?

Muhammad also has experience against 8...a6. He continued with 9 $\mathbb{h}bd2!$ b5 10 $\mathbb{w}c2$ $\mathbb{b}b7$ 11 $\mathbb{w}ac1$ $\mathbb{w}c8$ 12 $\mathbb{r}f5$ $dxc5$ 13 $dxc5$ $\mathbb{w}e8$ 14 $\mathbb{d}b3!$ (the point of White's ninth move) 14...e5 15 $\mathbb{h}h2$ and Black was under pressure, with weaknesses on a5 and d6, in Muhammad-D.Di Berardino, Internet (blitz) 2003.

9 $\mathbb{w}h2$ e5 10 $\mathbb{d}c3$ $\mathbb{w}e7?$

Taking his sweet time. Black needs to move more quickly with 10...f5.

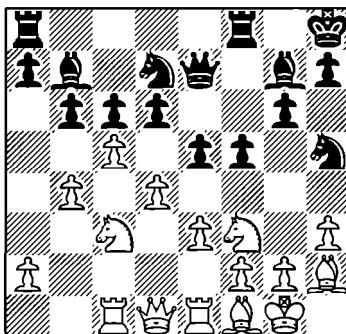
11 $\mathbb{w}e1$! f5

11...e4 12 $\mathbb{d}d2$ $\mathbb{h}hf6$ would simply leave Black down two tempi. His ... $\mathbb{h}h5$ and ... $\mathbb{h}hf6$ would be totally wasted moves.

12 $\mathbb{d}f1$!?

The bishop was posted perfectly on e2, where it eyed the offside knight on

h5. Also, Muhammad missed an opportunity for a well-timed c5 break: 12 c5! $dxc5$ 13 $dxe5$ $\mathbb{d}b6$ 14 $\mathbb{d}d2$ $\mathbb{w}f7$ 15 f4! (threatening to trap the knight with g4) 15... $\mathbb{h}h8$ 16 $\mathbb{d}xh5$ $gxf5$ 17 e4 leaves Black in a dire situation.

12... $\mathbb{d}h8$ 13 $\mathbb{w}c1$ b6 14 b4 $\mathbb{d}b7$ 15 c5!

Better late than never. The break is still quite effective.

15... $dxc5$ 16 $bxc5$ $bxcc5$

Black can try to maintain the central pawn tension with 16... $\mathbb{w}fe8$ 17 g4! $fxg4$ 18 $hgx4$ $\mathbb{d}hf6$ 19 $\mathbb{d}xe5$ $\mathbb{d}xe5$ 20 $\mathbb{d}xe5$ $bxcc5$ 21 $\mathbb{d}g2$ $cxd4$ 22 $exd4$ $\mathbb{d}d7$ 23 $\mathbb{d}xg7+$ $\mathbb{w}xg7$ 24 $\mathbb{d}e4$. Even here, White has achieved enduring strategic advantages:

1. Black's isolated pawn on c6 is weaker than White's on d4;
2. The e4-knight is very powerful and threatens to land on c5 or d6; and
3. Black's bishop is tied down and passive.

17 $dxe5$ f4

After 17... $\mathbb{d}xe5$ 18 $\mathbb{d}xe5$ $\mathbb{d}xe5$ 19 $\mathbb{d}xe5+$ $\mathbb{w}xe5$ 20 $\mathbb{d}a4$ $\mathbb{w}ad8$ 21 $\mathbb{w}b3$ $\mathbb{d}c8$ 22 $\mathbb{d}xc5$ White regains the pawn with

the strategically superior position. His knight is very powerful on c5 and the weakling on c6 is vulnerable.

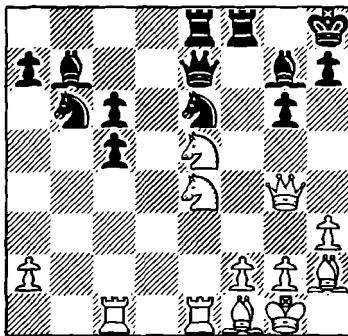
18 e6!

A strong alternative was 18 exf4? $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}e4$, with a dominating position.

18... $\mathbb{Q}b6$

18... $\mathbb{W}xe6??$ 19 exf4 wins a piece in all lines. The queen gets disconnected from the d7-knight.

19 exf4 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 21 $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{E}ae8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}e4!$



Black is still under heavy pressure and the centralized knights rule. Simutowe finds a trick to swap a pair of pieces, but perhaps his position is beyond repair.

22... $\mathbb{Q}f4!$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xe5+$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}f6?$!

The piece sac is unsound, but all lines are hopeless. For example, 25... $\mathbb{W}b2$ 26 $\mathbb{E}xe8$ $\mathbb{E}xe8$ 27 $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 28 $\mathbb{W}f7$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 29 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 30 $\mathbb{E}e8$ $\mathbb{W}g7$ 31 $\mathbb{E}xg8+$ $\mathbb{W}xg8$ 32 $\mathbb{W}xa7$ and White simply marches the a-pawn down the board.

26 $\mathbb{E}xe8$ $\mathbb{W}xf2+$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{E}xe8$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{E}e3$ 30 $\mathbb{W}c8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 31 $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 32 $\mathbb{W}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

Black's king also gets hunted down after 32... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 36 $\mathbb{W}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}g8+!$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 39 $\mathbb{E}c5+$ and White mates.

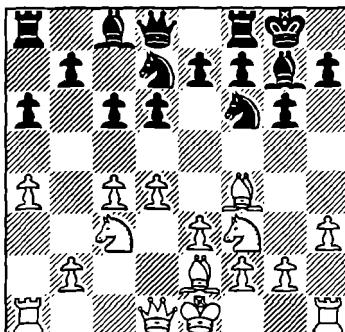
33 $\mathbb{W}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 34 $\mathbb{E}c5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 35 $\mathbb{W}f6+$ 1-0

Summary

When Black gets hostile with ...e5, ...f5 and ... $\mathbb{Q}h5$, hit back with a timely c5! central counter.

Game 61
A.Dreev-K.Berg
European Championship,
Dresden 2007

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 c6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ d6 4 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ g6 5 e3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 6 h3 0-0 7 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ a6 9 a4!



If Black has already developed the knight to d7, then it's okay to create a hole on b4 to halt the intended queen-

side expansion.

9...a5 10 0-0 ♜b8?

Onward to b4, but this is very slow.

10...h6 11 ♜c2 ♜e8 12 ♜h2 e5 13

♞ad1 ♜e7 14 c5! (our favourite break has been achieved) 14...dxc5 15 dxe5 ♜h7 16 ♜c4 ♜b6 17 ♜a2 c4 18 ♜d6 ♜g5 19 ♜xg5 hxg5 20 f4 left Black struggling in the game A.Khalifman-M.Rodshtein, European Championship, Dresden 2007.

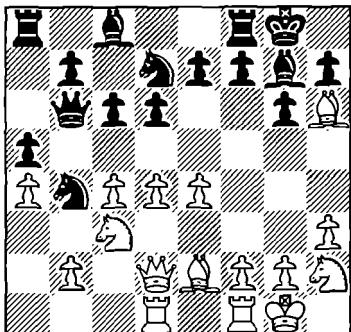
11 e4!

Turning the game into a real King's Indian. Black has invested a lot of time to get his knight to b4, so White hits back hard in the centre and on the kingside.

11...♜a6 12 ♜d2 ♜b6 13 ♜ad1 ♜d7 14 ♜h6 ♜b4

Black gets mated after the obviously greedy 14...♜xh6? 15 ♜xh6 ♜xb2?? 16 ♜g5 ♜f6 17 e5.

15 ♜h2!



Dreev finds a way to enter h6.

15...♜e8 16 ♜xg7 ♜xg7 17 ♜g4 ♜f6 18
♜h6+ ♜g8 19 e5?!

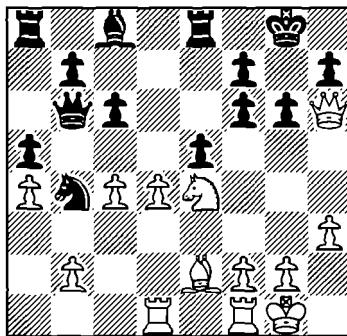
White has a stronger alternative in

19 ♜xf6+! exf6 20 ♜f4 ♜d8 21 e5! and he either clears e4 for the knight or wins a pawn.

19...dxe5??

This loses. It was critical for Black to keep White's knight out of e4 with the sequence 19...♜xg4 20 ♜xg4 d5 21 ♜f3! ♜e6 22 c5 ♜c7. Black is cramped but still has a solid position.

20 ♜xf6+ exf6 21 ♜e4



21...♜d5

Black is helpless. Alternatives are even worse:

a) 21...c5? 22 dxc5 ♜c6 23 ♜f3, threatening both 24 ♜g5 and 24 ♜d6, destroys Black's defences.

b) 21...♜e6? 22 ♜g4! wins since 22...f5 is met by 23 ♜g5.

c) 21...♜d8?? 22 dxe5 double attacks d8 and f6.

22 cxd5 cxd5 23 ♜c3 exd4 24 ♜xd5
♜d6 25 ♜f3 1-0

Summary

If Black has already developed his knight to d7 and then tries the plan of ...c6 and ...a6, it is okay to create a hole

by playing a4. Black loses a lot of time when his knight retraces its steps from d7 to b8 to a6 to b4.

Game 62
G.Kamsky-I.Smirin
FIDE World Cup,
Khanty-Mansiysk 2005

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 e3 d6 5 h3 0-0 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ b6 7 c4

Or 7 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ and now:

a) 8 c4 c5? 9 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 10 d5! a6 11 e4 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 12 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ landed Black in an inferior King's Indian/Benoni position in I.Khairullin-A.Ipatov, Moscow 2009. Instead, 9...cx d4 10 exd4 d5 gives White a Queen's Gambit Declined, Tarrasch Variation a full two moves up over the normal position. The first tempo was gained because he has the white pieces; the second tempo was gained when Black played ...d6 and then ...d5.

b) Sometimes I play the position in pure London style, without c4. For example, 8 a4 a6 9 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 10 c3 e6 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$, C.Lakdawala-'Survivor', Internet (blitz) 2009. White will attempt to disturb the queenside with b4 and possibly a5.

7... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 9 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e4!$

Trades help the side which is more cramped, and Black equalizes after this move. In fact, 9... $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ is the reason I prefer playing a4 instead of c4 in this line.

10 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ e5

11...c5! 12 $\mathbb{W}d2$ also looks fine for Black.

12 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ a5?

Slowing down White's idea of b4 and c5, but also weakening b5 and leaving open the possibility for White to transfer his knight to b5 with $\mathbb{Q}e1$, $\mathbb{Q}c2$, $\mathbb{Q}a3$ and $\mathbb{Q}b5$.

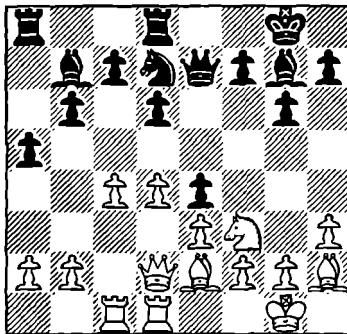
15 $\mathbb{W}e1?$

I'm not sure why Kamsky didn't play 15 b3! with the plan of a3, b4 and eventually c5.

15... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 16 $\mathbb{W}d2?$

White is just waiting and possibly provoking his opponent into kingside aggression. I suppose doing nothing can also be a plan!

16...e4?!



Black accepts the challenge and begins to attack the white king. The problem is White gets his c5 break in quickly, overshadowing Black's kingside attack.

The alternative is the very safe line 16... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 17 b3 exd4! 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$, when Black achieves dull equality.

17 ♜e1 f5 18 ♜c2!

Heading for b5.

19...g5 20 ♜b5 ♜f6

White's central play arrives with great speed after 20...♜ac8? 21 c5! dxc5

22 ♜c4+ ♜h8 23 ♜xc7 cxd4 24 ♜d6 dxr3 25 fxe3 ♜f6 26 ♜xf8 ♜xf8 27 ♜d6.

Black is quite busted here, as 27...♜b8 is met by 28 ♜f7+ ♜g8 29 ♜xg5+ ♜h8 30 ♜f7+ ♜g8 31 ♜d8+ ♜h8 32 ♜xb7 ♜xb7

33 ♜d5 simultaneously threatening 34 ♜xb7 and 34 ♜g8 mate.

21 c5! dxc5 22 dxc5?

Overly cautious. White should plunge in with 22 ♜xc7! which menaces both the rook on a8 and also ♜c4+ followed by ♜e6.

22...♜ad8 23 ♜c4+ ♜h8 24 ♜e2 ♜xd1+

25 ♜xd1 f4?!

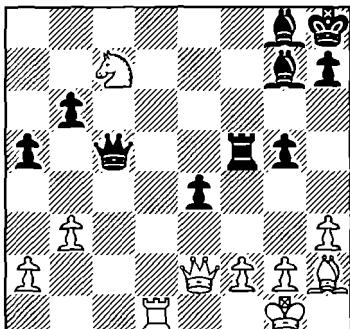
Smirin avoids passive defence with 25...♜e8 26 cxb6 cxb6 27 ♜d6.

26 exf4 ♜xc5 27 f5?

I don't understand why Kamsky rejected 27 ♜xc7! ♜xc7 28 fxe5 ♜c6 29 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 30 ♜d6 ♜g5 31 ♜g3.

27...♜d5! 28 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 29 ♜xc7 ♜xf5

30 b3 ♜g8



Let's assess this position:

1. Black's bishop pair looks good in the open position.

2. It is uncertain which king is the safer one.

3. White's knight is very powerful and threatens ♜e8 followed by ♜d6.

4. Black's position is loose and he has weak pawns to worry about, especially the one on e4.

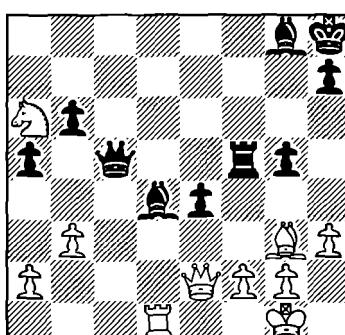
Conclusion: White stands clearly better.

31 ♜e8! ♜d4 32 ♜g3 ♜d5 33 ♜c7 ♜f5

Avoiding the trap 33...♜xf2+? 34 ♜xf2 ♜xc7 35 ♜b2+ ♜g7 36 ♜xd5! ♜xb2 37 ♜d4+ and White emerges the exchange up.

34 ♜b5?!

The problem-like move 34 ♜a6!! forces Black into a deadly pin:



34...♜d5 35 ♜d2! b5 36 ♜d1 ♜b7 37 ♜xd4 ♜xa6 38 ♜d6 and Black cannot protect himself on the a1-h8 diagonal. For example, 38...♜b7 39 ♜d7 ♜b6 40 ♜a1+ ♜f6 41 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 42 ♜e5 and White wins.

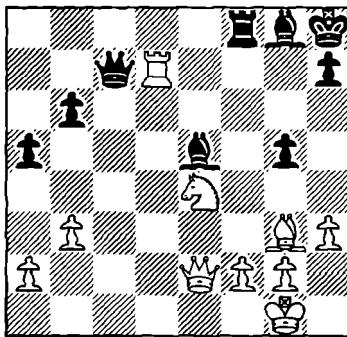
34...♜e5!

Avoiding another trap in 34... $\mathbb{W}xb5$?
 35 $\mathbb{W}xb5$ $\mathbb{B}xb5$ 36 $\mathbb{B}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}c7!$
 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}d6$, when Black will lose at least one pawn.

35 $\mathbb{Q}d6!$

There goes the e-pawn. Black will not survive any scenario with opposite-coloured bishops. He just can't afford to take the knight, no matter how much it torments him.

35... $\mathbb{B}f8$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}d7!$



A nice trick to take control of the seventh rank.

37... $\mathbb{W}c1+$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3+$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ $\mathbb{W}c3$
 40 $f3$ $\mathbb{W}f6$

White improved his position over the last 10 moves and Black is hanging on by his fingernails. White is a healthy pawn up, he has the safer king, both b6 and g5 are weak, and the knight is at least as strong as the bishop.

41 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{W}f4$

Forced. Black gets fried if he insists on keeping queens on the board:
 41... $h6??$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}h5!$ $\mathbb{W}b2$ (the queen must stay on the long diagonal) 43 $\mathbb{W}xb6$
 $\mathbb{W}e5+$ 44 f4!.

42 $\mathbb{W}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

Now f4 is added to the list of targets.

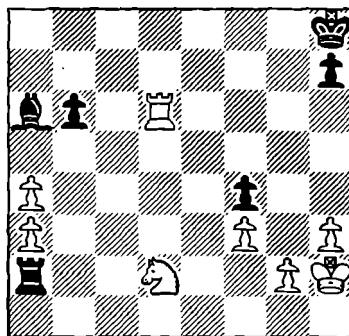
43... $a4$ 44 $\mathbb{B}xa4$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$

If 44... $\mathbb{Q}xa2$, 45 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{B}a8$ 46 $\mathbb{B}b4$ wins another pawn.

45 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{B}g8$

Threatening ... $\mathbb{Q}f1$.

46 $\mathbb{B}d2$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 47 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}f1$ 48 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{B}c2$ 49
 $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 50 a3 $\mathbb{B}a2$ 51 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{B}c2$ 52
 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{B}a2$ 53 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{B}a1+$ 54 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{B}a2$ 55
 $\mathbb{Q}d6!$



Another pawn falls, no matter how Black plays it.

55... $\mathbb{B}xa3$

55... $\mathbb{B}b2$ is met by 56 a5!.

56 $\mathbb{B}xb6$ $\mathbb{B}xa4$ 57 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{B}a2$ 58 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{B}a5$
 59 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ $\mathbb{B}a3$ 60 $\mathbb{Q}e4$

Rounding up the straggler on f4.

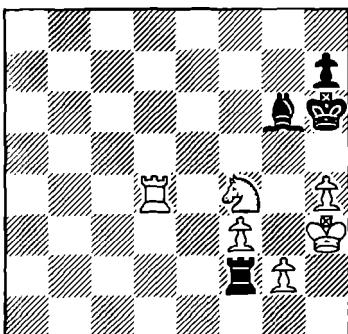
60... $\mathbb{Q}f1$ 61 $\mathbb{B}xf4$ $\mathbb{B}a2$ 62 $\mathbb{B}g4$

Just in time.

62... $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 63 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 64 h4 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 65
 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 66 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{B}b2$ 67 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{F}f2$ 68
 $\mathbb{Q}f4!$

Deceptively powerful endgame technique by Kamsky. I love the way the nimble knight swims around the

board with perfect ease, totally unbothered by the black pieces. It has now reached its optimal placement on f4 where it controls h5, g6 and, most importantly, g2.



White begins a 4-step winning plan:

1. Push the h-pawn to h6 to fix Black's pawn on h7.
2. Push Black's king to the back rank with the help of rook, knight and h-pawn.
3. Use threats of mate or threats to win the h-pawn to force Black's rook into passivity.
4. This allows White to untangle his king and push forward his g-pawn, creating mating threats.

68...Qf5+ 69 Kg3 Ra2 70 Qd5 Qc8 71 Qc5 Qb7 72 Bb5 Qa6 73 Bb6+ Qg7 74 h5 Qf1 75 h6+! Qf7 76 Bb7+

Notice how the knight on f4 forces Black's king to the back rank, while defending g2.

76...Qg8 77 Bg7+ Qh8 78 Ke7 Ra8

Unfortunately he must submit to passivity, as 78...Qg8? 79 Be8+ Qf7 80 Rh8 picks off Black's final pawn.

79 Qf2

White has untangled in perfect harmony and now proceeds to push the g-pawn, the final stage of his plan.

79...Qc4 80 Qc7 Qg8 81 g4 Ra2+ 82 Qg3 Ra3 83 g5 Ra5 84 g6! 1-0

Summary

When Black plays ...b6 in the King's Indian, you may want to forgo c4 in favour of a4. Even though Kamsky won this game in great style, he got nothing out of the opening.

Game 63

C.Lakdawala-G.Hernandez

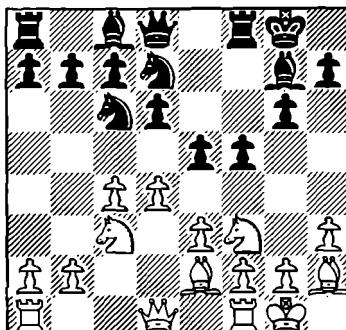
Internet Chess Club

(blitz) 2008

1 Qf3 Qf6 2 c4 g6 3 Qc3 Qg7 4 d4 0-0 5 Qf4 d6 6 e3 Qfd7!

This is by far the most dangerous system for White to meet, and is the choice of most of the titled players I face over the ICC.

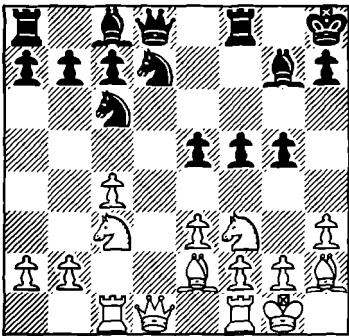
7 h3 e5 8 Qh2 Qc6 9 Qe2 f5 10 0-0



10...g5

This is the most critical position for White when facing the King's Indian. Black doesn't want to get bogged down in manoeuvring games and attempts to blow White out of the water by trying to exploit the slight weakening of White's king position after h3. The obvious downside of this plan is that, with an open centre, Black is also exposing his own king by pushing all his pawns.

GM Radjabov, arguably the World's leading authority on the King's Indian, played 10...h8 against me in an ICC blitz game. This move comes in handy for Black for two reasons: it avoids $\mathbb{W}d5+$, and Black may use the g-file for his attack. Here's how our game developed: 11 $\mathbb{E}c1$ g5 12 dx5 dx5

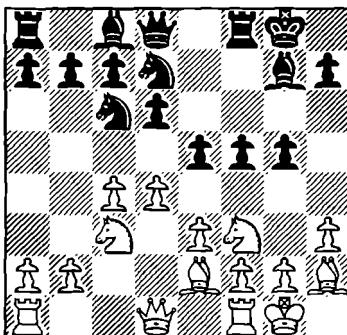


13 $\mathbb{W}d5$?! (an attempt to repeat my success in my game versus Hernandez, but the slight shift of the position changes things; 13 $\mathbb{Q}d5$! may be the best move and after 13... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 14 $\mathbb{W}b3$ g4 15 hxg4 fxg4 16 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{E}e6$ 17 $\mathbb{E}cd1$! $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 18 $\mathbb{C}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ h5 20 f3

White has excellent compensation for the pawn) 13... $\mathbb{E}e7$ 14 $\mathbb{E}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ (threatening ... $\mathbb{Q}d8$; now, to my embarrassment, instead of humbly retreating with 15 $\mathbb{W}d2$, I found a "combination" 15 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$?? (this works in all lines...) 15... $\mathbb{Q}b4$! (...except this one! White hangs a piece) 16 $\mathbb{W}d2$? (going down without a fight; the only chance to complicate was 16 $\mathbb{Q}xh7$! $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{W}xf8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$) 16... $\mathbb{W}xg5$ and Black won, C.Lakdawala-T.Radjabov, Internet (blitz) 2009.

Okay, I have learned my lesson to play 13 $\mathbb{Q}d5$! in that position. Fortunately, past pain is a great teacher!

Let's return to the main game and 10...g5:



11 dxe5

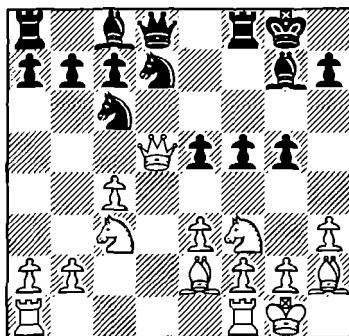
Principle: Counter in the centre when attacked on the wing.

It's a very bad decision for White to close the centre in such positions with 11 d5? $\mathbb{Q}cb8$!, as Black will be faster on the kingside than White will be on the other wing.

11...dx5!

It is in Black's best interests to keep all the pieces on the board. After 11... $\mathbb{Q}dxe5?$! 12 $\mathbb{W}d5+!$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ (13... $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$ 14 c5! favours White, who opens the centre quickly) 14 $\mathbb{B}fd1$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 15 $\mathbb{W}b5!$ the position looks unclear but I prefer White. The central play looks good and I am not afraid of getting mated on the kingside.

18 $\mathbb{W}d5+?$



Fritz likes this move. The queen is a real pain here, and it's maddeningly difficult for Black to try and exploit its advanced position.

12 $\mathbb{W}b3+?$, clearing the d-file for a rook, also looks interesting.

12... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 13 $\mathbb{B}ad1$

The f1-rook retains its post for now to watch over the sensitive f2-square in case Black plays ...g4.

13...e4+?

Charging forward frees White's bishop on h2. Perhaps Black should build with 13...h5 14 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}b3$.

14 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 15 $\mathbb{exd4}$

Both sides have pawn majorities, and White's queen may or may not be

in a precarious situation.

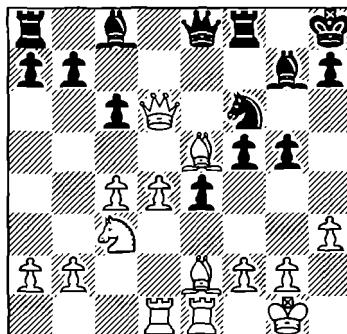
15...c6 16 $\mathbb{W}d6$ $\mathbb{We8}$

16... $\mathbb{B}f6$ 17 $\mathbb{W}c7$ $\mathbb{We8}$ 18 $\mathbb{B}fe1$! prepares a central counter with $\mathbb{Q}f1$ and f3. Black's forces are too clumsily placed to mount a serious kingside attack.

17 $\mathbb{B}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

After 17... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 18 d5 e3 19 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ f4 20 fxe3 f3 21 gxf3 $\mathbb{B}xf3$ 22 dxc6 bxc6 23 c5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 24 $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}xe3$ 25 $\mathbb{B}xe3$ $\mathbb{W}xe3+$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}h1$, the rook on a8 is trapped and White's king is safe.

18 $\mathbb{B}e5$



I went through Fischer's games when I was a kid. What struck me was his defensive genius. Studying the games more deeply, I discovered his secret: Centralize with a one-track mind when your opponent launches an attack on your king.

18... $\mathbb{Q}e6+?$ 19 d5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 20 $\mathbb{B}f1$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{cxsd5}$ 22 $\mathbb{cxsd5}$

A dubious exchange sac.

After the correct 22 $\mathbb{W}b4!$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 23 $\mathbb{B}xd5$ b6 24 f3 $\mathbb{W}g6$ 25 fxe4 fxe4 26 $\mathbb{B}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}f4$ 28 g3! $\mathbb{W}e5$ 29 d6, I

doubt that Black has full compensation for the pawn. White's pawn on d6 ties Black down.

22...f4?

It is understandable that Hernandez didn't want to be distracted from his kingside attack and he goes all out. After 22... $\mathbb{Q}a4!$ 23 $\mathbb{W}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 24 $\mathbb{B}xd1$ a6 25 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{B}f7$ 26 d6 I prefer Black.

23 $\mathbb{W}c7!$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 24 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{B}d7$

Black can't enter on the seventh rank in the line 24... $\mathbb{B}b8?$ 25 $\mathbb{W}xa7$ $\mathbb{B}xb2??$, as 26 $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$ wins for White.

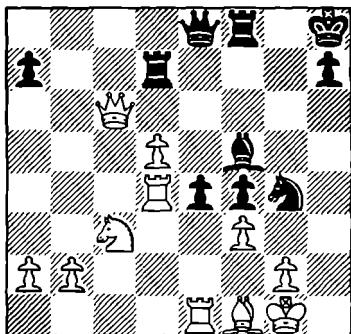
25 $\mathbb{W}c6$ g4 26 hxg4 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$

Threatening ... $\mathbb{W}h5$.

27 f3

A critical move which saves White from the looming mate.

27... $\mathbb{Q}xd4+$ 28 $\mathbb{B}xd4$



28...exf3?

The mating idea doesn't work for Black. Better was 28... $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ 29 $\mathbb{W}c5$ $\mathbb{B}g7$ 30 $\mathbb{B}xe4$ and now:

a) 30... $\mathbb{Q}xf3+??$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 32 $\mathbb{B}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 33 $\mathbb{B}xe5$ overloads Black's queen.

b) After 30... $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$ 31 $\mathbb{B}xe4$ $\mathbb{B}f5$ 32

$\mathbb{Q}f2$ White has two healthy pawns for the exchange and stands better, though Black is by no means lost.

29 $\mathbb{B}xe8$ f2+

Black banks on the power of the pawn to create mating threats on h1 and also the first rank. He just doesn't have time to implement his idea.

30 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{B}xe8$ 31 $\mathbb{B}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}e1$ 32 $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathbb{B}d6$

Threatening to mate on h6. White's simple solution is to remove the nasty f2-pawn.

33 $\mathbb{W}d4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 34 $\mathbb{B}xf2$ 1-0

Summary

Be well prepared against the ... $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ line. It is Black's most dangerous option in the King's Indian versus the London.

Game 64

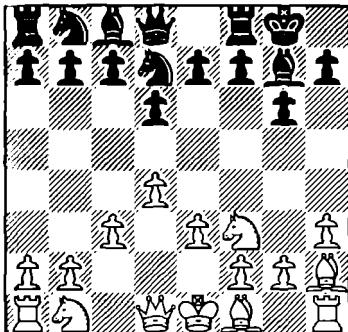
C.Lakdawala-B.Baker
Gambito (rapid),
San Diego 2006

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 e3 d6 5 h3 o-o 6 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$

The sad part is that I told Bruce Baker about this strong move!

Bruce and I have played in the Gambito, a G/45 tournament (45 minutes each on the clock), every Saturday since 2002 - just like in the movie Groundhog Day. By my count, we have met over the board more than 200 times. This fact may be of interest to *The Guinness Book of World Records!*

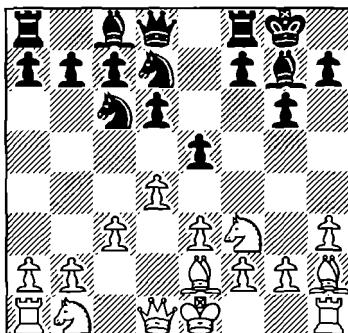
7 c3?



The c3 lines are slower but more solid than their wilder cousin 7 c4. The main benefit of playing c3 is that it keeps the c4-square open for a white knight or bishop.

7...e5 8.Qe2 Qc6

B.Grachev-S.Movsesian, Moscow (blitz) 2008, deviated with 8...f5 9 0-0 Qc6 10 b4 h6 11 b5 Qe7 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 Qa3 g5 14 Qc4 Qg6 15 Qfd2 e4 16 Qb3! (offering the c3-pawn for play down the c-file; Movsesian declines) 16...Qh7. Now instead of Grachev's 17 Qh5?!, I prefer 17 Qd4 with a sharp position and equal chances.



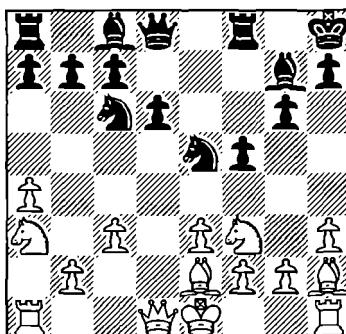
9 a4!?

One idea I have used in this position is to stall castling for a while. If Black goes berserk with the usual ...f5 and ...g5, then White can either keep his king in the centre or even pull the old switcheroo and castle queenside to exploit Black's aggression.

9...f5 10.Qa3 Qh8 11.dxe5

Once again White counters in the centre when attacked on the wing.

11...Qdxe5



Going for pure piece play.

11...dxe5 12.Qc4 is sharper:

a) 12...We7 13 0-0 g5 14 b4 with mutual chances.

b) 12...e4 13 Qd4 Qxd4 (13...Qde5? drops a pawn to 14 Qxc6 Qxc6 15 Qxd8 Qxd8 16 Qxc7) 14 cxd4 a5 and I prefer White's chances on the queen-side to Black's on the other wing.

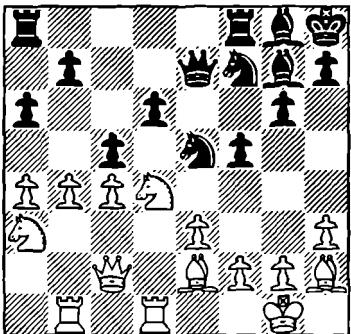
12 0-0

Now it's a lot safer to castle.

12...Qe6 13.Qd4 Qg8 14.Qc2 a6 15.Qfd1 We7 16.b4

White's plan is a slow advance of pawns on the queenside.

16...Qd8 17.Qab1 Qdf7 18.c4 c5!



White's attack looks fast after 18... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 19 c5 so Black counters in the centre.

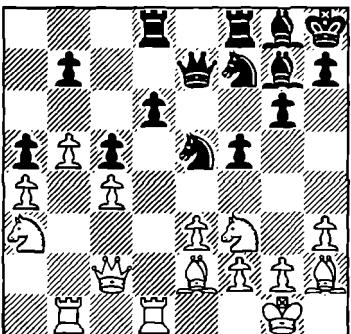
19 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{M}ad8?$

Black should seal the queenside with 19... $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ 20 bxc5 dxc5 21 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ a5 23 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{M}ad8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}b5!$. I still prefer White here because he has a healthy kingside pawn majority, whereas Black's 3 versus 2 on the other wing is frozen solid.

20 b5!

Eliminating Black's plan of ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$.

20...a5



Let's take stock of the position:

1. The backward pawn on d6 is a potential target;

2. There is a hole on d5, just begging to be occupied by a knight; and

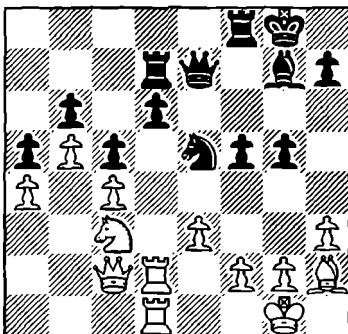
3. Black may develop counterplay by engineering ...g5 and going after White's king.

Overall, we can say that White stands better.

21 $\mathbb{M}d2$ b6 22 $\mathbb{M}bd1$ $\mathbb{M}d7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}b1$

Onward to d5.

23... $\mathbb{Q}xf3+$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ g5 26 $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}c3!$



27...f4?

Black sacs a pawn to open lines, but it isn't sound. White's centralized forces easily repel the attack.

Black had a choice between two alternatives in a bad situation, one aggressive, one passive:

a) 27... $\mathbb{Q}xc4?$! 28 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}e4$ 29 $\mathbb{W}a2!$ and now:

a1) After 29... $\mathbb{M}df7??$ 30 f3 $\mathbb{W}h4$ 31 g3 $\mathbb{W}h5$ 32 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xf3$ 33 $\mathbb{M}f1$ White forces queens off the board and remains a piece up.

a2) 29... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ doesn't work for Black

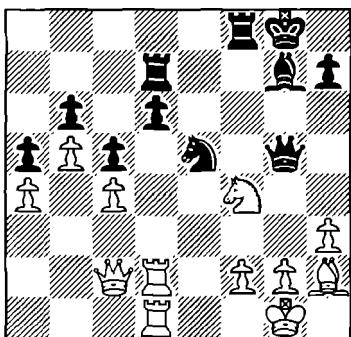
After the continuation 30 f3 $\mathbb{W}h4$ 31 g3 $\mathbb{W}xh3$ 32 $\mathbb{W}xc4$.

a3) After 29... $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ Black doesn't have enough for the queen.

b) 27... $\mathbb{B}b7!$ (the passive route is best) 28 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 29 f4 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 30 $\mathbb{B}e2$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 31 e4! $fxe4$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $gxf4$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{W}g6$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}de1$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{W}xg5$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ and it isn't so easy to convert White's advantage since his dark squares are weak.

28 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 29 $exf4$ $gxf4$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{W}g5??$

30... $\mathbb{B}e8$ had to be played.



31 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 1-0

He resigned here, seeing the line 31... $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{W}xf8$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 36 $\mathbb{W}e4$ which is winning for White.

Summary

When you exchange pawns on e5 and Black recaptures with a knight instead of the d6-pawn, the position takes a quieter tone and your king will usually be safer.

Game 65

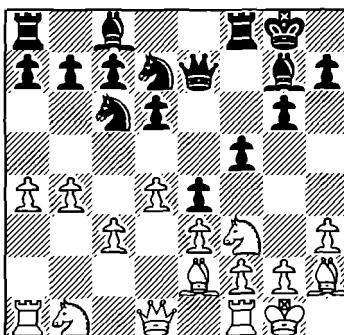
V.Golod-E.Sutovsky
Netanya (rapid) 2009

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 e3 d6 5 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0

Against 5... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ we do our usual dance: 6 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 7 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ g5 8 $\mathbb{Q}fd2!$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 9 exf4 $gxh4$ 10 c3 with a pleasant advantage for White, C.Lakdawala-S.Agdestein, Internet (blitz) 2009.

6 h3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 7 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 8 c3 e5 9 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ f5 10 a4 $\mathbb{W}e7$ 11 b4 e4?!

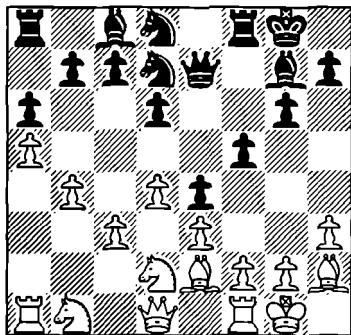
I am always happy to see this move, which stabilizes the centre and allows White f3 counters in the future.



11...g5 is more thematic in such positions. Here I like 12 $\mathbb{Q}a3$, leaving d2 open for the f3-knight in case it gets kicked. White's position is more resilient than it looks and cannot be bowled over with blatant aggression such as 12...e4?! 13 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ f4 14 $exf4!$ $gxf4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c4+!$ (as I mentioned previously, one big advantage c3 lines have over c4 is that White can use the c4-square for

his pieces) 15... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 16 $\mathbb{M}e1$ e3 17 fxe3 fxe3 18 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}g5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$. I doubt whether Black, despite his aggressive posture, has enough compensation for the pawn here.

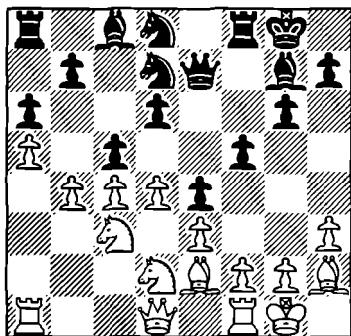
12 $\mathbb{Q}fd2$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 13 a5 a6



14 c4!

This move must be timed correctly. The second you play it you are vulnerable to ...c5.

14...c5 15 $\mathbb{Q}c3!$



15...cx d 4 16 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 17 exd4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$

Sutovsky recognizes that the pawn is poisoned. 17... $\mathbb{Q}xd4?$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$ $\mathbb{Q}xa1$

19 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}g7$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xa1$ $\mathbb{W}xa1$ 21 $\mathbb{W}xa1$

gives White too much for the e1 change: a pawn, the bishop pair, dark squared control, a pair of powerful centralized knights and a cramped queenside pawn majority.

18 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4!$

Black gets reasonable compensation for the exchange.

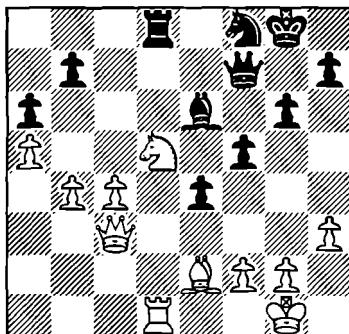
19 $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}b3!$

My mother always says it is better to give than to receive. Golod takes mom's advice, returns the material in exchange for the initiative and removes the powerful bishop from g7.

The alternative, which would probably be my choice, is to disobey mom and keep the loot with 20 $\mathbb{M}c1?$, daring Black to mate.

20... $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 21 $\mathbb{W}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 22 $\mathbb{W}xa1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$

23 $\mathbb{M}d1$ $\mathbb{M}d8$ 24 $\mathbb{W}c3!$



24... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

Forced. Black must avoid getting into a tangle with 24... $\mathbb{Q}d7??$ after which 25 $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 26 c5 $\mathbb{W}e7$ 27 $\mathbb{W}d4!$ h6 28 $\mathbb{Q}c4!$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xd7+$ wins for White.

25 $\mathbb{M}xd5$ $\mathbb{M}xd5$ 26 cx d 5

The d-pawn will be hard to stop.
Black's king isn't so secure either.

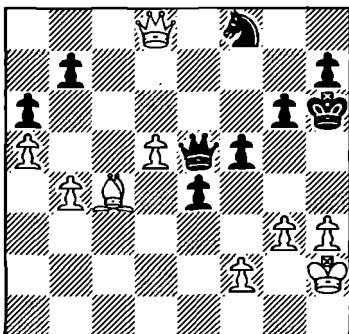
26... $\mathbb{W}g7$ 27 $\mathbb{W}c5$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}a1+$ 29
 $\mathbb{W}h2$ $\mathbb{W}e5+$ 30 g3

Request denied. No draw!

30... $\mathbb{W}g7$ 31 $\mathbb{W}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$

31... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 32 d6 $\mathbb{W}d7$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ is a slow
death for Black.

32 $\mathbb{W}d8!$



The knight's position is a major li-

ability for Black.

32... $\mathbb{W}g7$ 33 d6

With the deadly threat 34 $\mathbb{W}e7+$.

33... $\mathbb{W}b2$

33... $\mathbb{W}d4??$ fails miserably to 34
 $\mathbb{W}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 35 $\mathbb{W}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}e2+$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$
37 h4 mate.

34 $\mathbb{W}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 35 $\mathbb{W}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}f1$

36 g4+! fxg4 37 hxg4+ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 38 d7
 $\mathbb{W}e5+$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ also worked.

36...e3 37 d7 e2 38 $\mathbb{Q}g2!$ 1-0

White mates first after 38...e1 \mathbb{W} 39
d8 \mathbb{W} , threatening both 40 $\mathbb{W}h4$ mate
and 40 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ mate.

Summary

Playing c3 creates a wall on d4 and this
is perhaps a more solid choice than the
c4 lines. White's centre is fortified but,
on the other hand, his queenside play
may be a bit slower than in the c4 lines.

Chapter Seven

London versus Dutch

In a way this is most atypical chapter of the book. I have never had much respect for the Dutch and usually come out swinging against it. Warning: Most of the lines in this chapter require opposite-wing castling and pawn sacrifices!

Here's a quick summary of the lines:

1. Against the Leningrad Dutch setup, Garcia Palermo likes the confusing $\mathbb{Q}c4!$, either preventing castling or forcing Black into strange hybrids like ...e6 or ...d5. White then castles queenside and often tosses in the pawn sac g4, with an interesting opposite-wing attack position (see Games 66-68). You can also play Barry Attack style against the Leningrad if that setup appeals to you (see Games 70-71).

2. Bruno-Guanciale (Game 73) is the setup I favour against the Classical Dutch. White plays the normal London moves and then c4, $\mathbb{Q}c3$, $\mathbb{Q}d3$, $\mathbb{W}c2$ and

0-0-0. Once again the line-opening g4 is in the air.

3. You do not have to go nuts as Mladinovic did against the Stonewall Dutch in Game 72. The Stonewall is tailor-made for the London. All the white pieces aim at e5 and Black helpfully creates a hole on e5. Just castling kingside and playing for queenside expansion assures you of an edge.

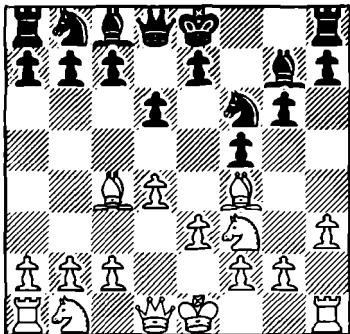
Game 66

C.Garcia Palermo-M.Corvi

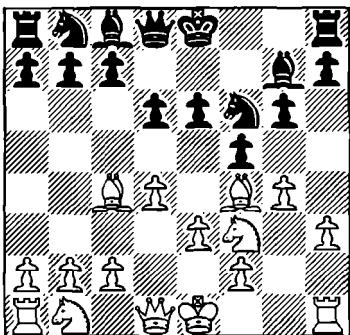
Frascati, 2005

**1 d4 f5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ d6 4 h3 g6 5 e3
 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}c4!$**

I like this aggressive move for White when facing the Leningrad Dutch. Black must either waste a tempo on ...e6, or play ...d5 which leads to a hybrid Leningrad/Stonewall.

**6...e6**

After 6...d5 7 $\mathbb{Q}b3!$? c6 8 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 10 $\mathbb{W}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 12 f3 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ e6 14 $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 15 0-0-0 a5 16 a3 0-0 17 g4 White was faster in J.Nielsen-C.Fehmer, Hamburg 2005.

7 g4!

A sound sac. Garcia Palermo turns it into a Benko-style gambit on the king's wing.

7... $\mathbb{W}e7$

Black can't accept the offer: 7...fxg4? 8 hxg4 and now:

a) 8...d5 9 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4?$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xh7!$ with a winning attack.

b) 8... $\mathbb{Q}xg4?$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ is great for White, who has regained the pawn without losing any of his advantages.

8 $\mathbb{Q}c3!$?

8 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ is a safer alternative.

8... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$

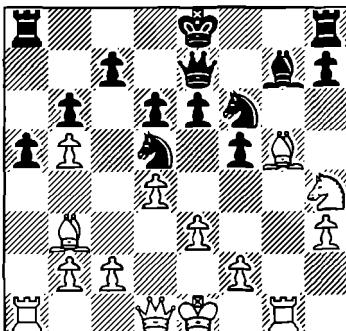
Now Black may accept the sac, although 8...fxg4?! 9 hxg4 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 10 $\mathbb{W}e2$, intending to castle queenside, certainly gives White excellent compensation in the form of the open g- and h-files.

9 gxf5 gxsf5 10 $\mathbb{E}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 a4 a5?

Black should enter the line 12...0-0-0! 13 a5 $\mathbb{Q}bd5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5 15 a6 b6 16 $\mathbb{W}d3$, with only a micro-edge for White.

13 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 14 axb5 $\mathbb{Q}bd5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ b6?

Black is in big trouble, and this move makes matters even worse.

16 $\mathbb{Q}h4!$ 

Threatening 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ followed by 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$.

16... $\mathbb{W}f7$

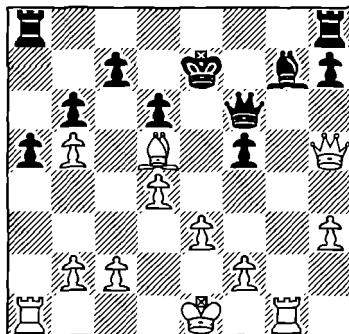
Black also cannot avoid material

loss after 16... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 17 $\mathbb{W}f3!$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ (or 17...0-0-0 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$) 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ (if 18... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$, 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe6!$ overloads the queen) 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5 20 $\mathbb{W}xd5!$. The knight is immune due to the threat 21 $\mathbb{Q}g8+$.

17 $\mathbb{Q}xf5!$ exf5 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$

If 18... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$, 19 $\mathbb{W}f3$ regains the piece.

19 $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$



White has a winning position here, due to three reasons:

1. He is a clean pawn up;
2. He dominates the light squares; and
3. Black's king is insecure due to the principle stating: Opposite-coloured bishops favour the attacker.

20... $\mathbb{Q}ae8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ f4 22 $\mathbb{W}g5$

Playing it safe. I would have kept the queens on the board with 22 c3 fxe3+ 23 fxe3 $\mathbb{W}f2+$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ when Black won't survive for long.

22... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 23 $\mathbb{W}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 24 $\mathbb{E}4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}a4!$

Forcing Black to defend c7.

25... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

The f3-square is the ideal place for the king.

26... $\mathbb{Q}he8$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}ge7$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}c6$

White can forgo this move and should play the immediate 29 e5+. For example:

a) 29...dxe5 30 $\mathbb{Q}c6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ mate.

b) 29... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ and White wins.

29...h6 30 h4 $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 31 e5+! $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

If 33... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$, White plays 35 $\mathbb{Q}h5!$ and runs the bishop out of squares.

34 $\mathbb{Q}f5+!$ 1-0

Black must fork over a rook, since 34... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ is met by 35 $\mathbb{Q}gxd6+$ cd6 36 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ mate.

Summary

$\mathbb{Q}c4!$ is a move which will most likely confuse Black in the Leningrad Dutch lines.

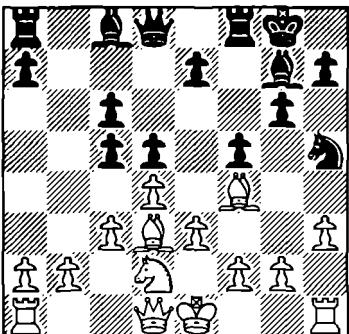
Game 67

J.Meyer-D.Sprengle
US Open, Pasadena 1983

1 d4 f5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ d6 4 h3 g6 5 e3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ 0-0 7 $\mathbb{Q}c4+$ d5 8 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ c5 9 c3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}e5$

10 dxc5!? $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ e5 12 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ offers Black significant compensation for the pawn.

10... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6

**12 dxc5!?**

I played in the '83 US Open and remember walking by this board, around the time White played this move, and thinking: "Wow, that looks pretty greedy!" Looking at the move now in 2010, it doesn't seem so bad!

12 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ is an interesting alternative which leads to a strange position after 12... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 13 dxe5 f4 14 e4.

12... $\mathbb{Q}xf4$!?

A better option for Black is 12...e5 13 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ e4 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ f4! 15 exf4 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ (the knight sits too powerfully on f4 and must be eliminated) 16... $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}g5$ 18 g3 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c1$. Black probably has compensation, with the bishop pair and pressure down the f-file; but I would still take White, with the extra pawn and a grip over d4.

13 exf4 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 14 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 15 g3 e5 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ f4

If 16... $\mathbb{W}xe5$? there follows 17 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ f4 19 g4. White's king looks safe, his pieces well placed and Black's initiative at a dead end.

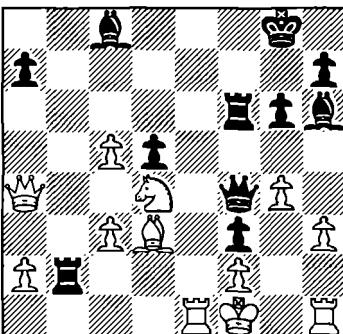
17 g4 f3! 18 $\mathbb{Q}b3$?

Now White's king must hang around in the danger zone. He could have consolidated after 18 0-0-0! $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}he1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}b3$.

18... $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xe5+$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 22 $\mathbb{W}a4$

White is curiously helpless in the line 22 $\mathbb{Q}e1$? $\mathbb{W}xe1+$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$. The rook's power on the seventh rank outweighs White's extra piece.

22... $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{W}f4$



The position is nightmarishly complicated.

24 $\mathbb{Q}c2$!?

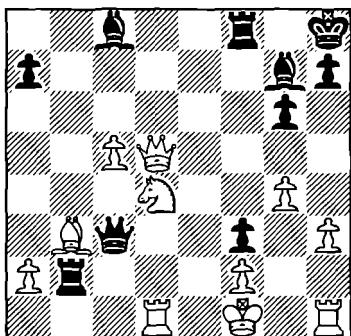
White should keep Black's queen out of d2 with 24 $\mathbb{Q}d1$! $\mathbb{Q}e6$! (taking advantage of the pin on the d4-knight) 25 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}g3+$! 26 fxg3 $\mathbb{Q}e3+$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}f2+$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2+$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}f2+$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}a2+$, with perpetual check.

24... $\mathbb{W}d2$!

Black also gets a huge attack if he sacs in the line 24... $\mathbb{Q}a6+$! 25 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}d2$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 27 g5! $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 28 $\mathbb{W}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 29 $\mathbb{W}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 30 $\mathbb{W}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$. It's doubtful whether White can survive this as-

sault with a cornered king and a dead rook on h1.

25 ♜e8+ ♜f8 26 ♜e5 ♜xc3 27 ♜b3 ♜g7
28 ♜xd5+ ♜h8 29 ♜d1



29...♜d2??

Turning a win into a loss in just one move.

After 29...♜a6+! 30 ♜g1 ♜e2! 31 ♜e6 ♜xd1 32 ♜xd1 ♜e2 33 ♜f1 ♜e8, White is helpless.

30 ♜xd2 ♜xd2 31 ♜xf3

Suddenly, everything is covered and White's bank balance has risen by two pawns. More importantly, his king reaches safety on g2 and the dormant h1-rook regains consciousness.

31...♛c3 32 ♜g2 ♜e6 33 ♛c6 ♜xb3 34 axb3 ♜xb3 35 ♜e1 a5 36 ♜e8!

Black is busted:

1. His back rank is weak;
2. The white queen and knight team up to make a nasty attacking couple; and
3. The c5-pawn is faster than Black's on a5.

36...♛c3 37 ♜g5! a4 38 ♜f7+! ♜g8 39 ♜e6! ♜xe8 40 ♜h6+ 1-0

There is no pain more horrible for a chess player than landing in a smothered mate.

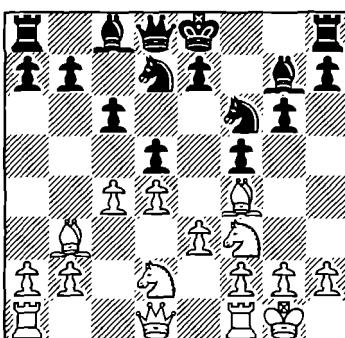
Summary

♝c4+ in the Leningrad can be met by ...d5!?. This turns the game into a hybrid Stonewall/Leningrad that usually confuses both sides!

Game 68

C.Csiszar-M.Landenberger
Feffernitz 2000

1 d4 f5 2 ♜f3 ♜f6 3 ♜f4 c6 4 ♜bd2! d6
5 e3 g6 6 ♜c4! ♜g7 7 0-0 d5 8 ♜b3
♜bd7 9 c4



White developed his knight to d2 so he could push his c-pawn.

9...e6 10 ♜d6 ♜e4 11 ♜xe4 fxe4 12 ♜d2 ♜f6 13 c5!

Black can't tolerate the intruder on d6 and must agree to swap off his good bishop.

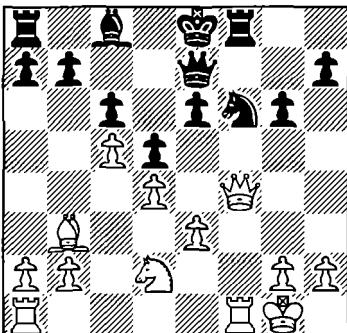
13...♜f8 14 ♜xf8 ♜xf8 15 f3

Principle: Open the position when

already in development.

15...exf3 16 ♜xf3 ♜e7 17 ♜f4!

Optically 17 e4, to further open the position, looks logical: 17...♝xe4 18 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 19 ♜xf8+ ♔xf8 20 ♜xe4 dxe4 21 ♜e1 ♜d7 22 ♜xe4 ♜e7 23 ♜f2 ♜f8+ 24 ♜e2. Yet when we reach this point, we have to realize that despite Black's weak pawn and horrible bishop, it is far from straightforward to win. It is not easy to win when you pick on just a single weakness.



17...♜d7

After 17...♜d7 18 ♜g3 ♜xf1+ 19 ♜xf1 e5 20 ♜f3 exd4 21 exd4 ♜f6 22 ♜e1 ♜e4 23 ♜f4 ♜f5 24 g4! ♜e6 25 ♜c2 0-0-0 26 ♜xe4 dxe4 27 ♜xe4 ♜e8 Black lacks full compensation for the missing pawn because his pieces are still in a tangle due to the pin on the e-file, and the white knight on e5 should keep his king safe.

18 ♜c7 ♜c8 19 ♜g3 ♜d7 20 ♜c7

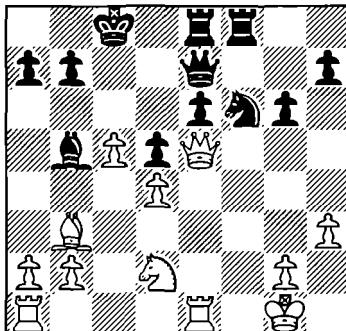
Repetition, just to irritate the opponent, is always great fun!

20...♜c8 21 ♜e5 ♜d7 22 e4!

After 22 ♜f4 0-0-0 23 ♜af1 ♜h5 24

♜xf8 ♜xf8 25 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 26 ♜c2 ♜f6 27 ♜f3, although Black still struggles, White probably won't be able to convert his advantage into a win.

22...0-0-0 23 exd5 cxd5 24 h3 ♜b5 25 ♜fe1 ♜de8



It's time for an assessment of the position:

1. White has the better pawn majority.
2. White controls more territory.
3. White owns the e5-square.
4. Black's e6-pawn is backward and weak.

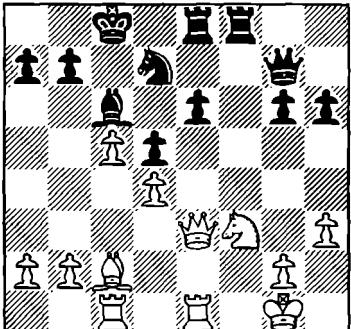
Overall, White has superior attacking chances due to his pawn majority on the queenside, whereas Black is passive and hasn't got anything going on the other wing;

26 ♜ac1 ♜d7 27 ♜e3 ♜c6 28 ♜f3 ♜g7 29 ♜c2

A useful move which covers e4 and also prepares a pawn storm with b4, a4 and b5.

29...h6

Very slow. I would be contemplating sacrifices like 29...♜xf3!? 30 gxf3 e5.



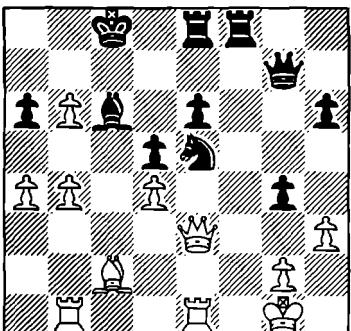
30 b4 g5 31 a4 a6 32 Bb1

The slower, deliberate path is better than getting huffy with 32 b5?! axb5 33 axb5 Bxb5 34 Bb1 Bc6 35 Ba1 g4 36 hxg4 Bxg4 37 Qe5Bg5 when Black may be able to save himself.

32...b5!

Otherwise Black gets clobbered when b5 arrives.

33 cxb6 g4 34 Qe5 Bxe5



35 Bxe5?

White picks a practical move which gives him a better ending, but he settles for too little. I confess that I am often guilty of this fault.

Here the braver move is also the su-

perior one. White should take the plunge with 35 dx5! gxh3 36 Bxh3 d4 37 Qe4 which is admittedly a more complicated line, but also a clear win. 37...Bxa4 38 b5! and now:

a) 38...Bxb5 39 Bxb5! axb5 40 Ba3 with a winning attack.

b) 38...axb5 39 Bc1+ Bb8 40 Bxb5!! Bxb5 41 Ba3 and now White mates in six.

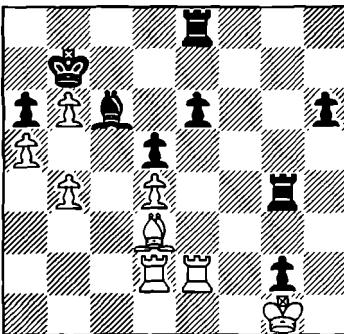
35...Bxe5 36 Bxe5 gxh3 37 Qd3

37 a5 Bg8 38 Be2 Bg4 puts White on the defensive.

37...Bb7

Black may also be able to survive the line 37...Bxa4! 38 Bxa6+ Bb8 39 gxh3 Bf4.

38 a5 Bg8 39 Bb2 Bg4 40 Bd2 hxg2 41 Bee2



41...Bxd4!

A great practical move. Intuition tells the experienced player that this sac should save Black. In return for the exchange, he gains these benefits:

1. Suddenly he has four passed pawns.
2. The dangerous e- and d-pawns

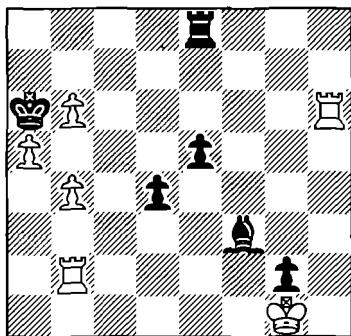
can roll down the board.

3. His turkey of a bishop transforms into a powerful piece.

4. For now, White's passers are blockaded on the light squares.

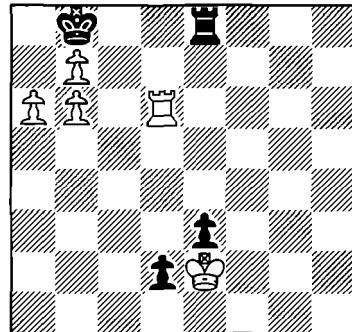
After saying all this, *Rybka* still finds a problem-like win for White later in the game!

**42 ♜xa6+ ♚xa6 43 ♜xd4 e5 44 ♜h4 d4
45 ♜xh6 ♜f3 46 ♜b2**



46...♜c8?

46...e4! puts up fierce resistance and forces White to play like *Rybka* to force the win: 47 b5+ ♜b7 (if 47...♜xa5??, White plays 48 b7 e3 49 ♜a6 mate) 48 a6+ ♜b8 49 ♜f2 d3! (49...e3?? is met by 50 ♜xf3 e2 51 ♜e6! taking advantage of the back rank to win) 50 ♜d6 ♜c8 51 ♜xg2! (this wins by the smallest of margins) 51...♜xg2 52 ♜xg2 ♜e8 53 ♜f2 e3+ 54 ♜f1 d2 55 ♜e2 (White must now find a way to play b7 and b6 to run Black out of moves) 55...♜a8 56 ♜d5! ♜b8 57 ♜d7 ♜a8 (if 57...♜c8, 58 a7! ♜xd7 59 b7 wins) 58 b7+ ♜a7 59 ♜d6! ♜b8 60 b6! (zugzwang!)



60...♜f8 61 ♜d7! and a7+ is coming. (Not 61 ♜xe3?? when Black draws via stalemate: 61...d1! 62 ♜xd1 ♜f3+!).)

47 ♜xg2!

Returning the exchange gives White a winning rook and pawn ending.

47...♜xg2 48 ♜xg2 ♜c2+

48...d3 49 ♜d6 e4 50 ♜f2 ♜c2+ 51 ♜e3 ♜e2+ 52 ♜d4! d2 53 ♜c5! e3 54 ♜d7 catches Black in a mating net.

49 ♜f3 ♜b2 50 ♜h7 ♜xb4 51 ♜a7+ ♜b5

52 b7 ♜c4 53 a6 ♜b3+ 54 ♜e4 1-0

White will be faster after ♜a8.

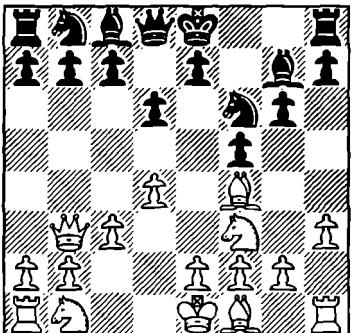
Summary

It's important to note that White developed his knight on d2 rather than c3, to be able to play ♜b3 followed by the pawn break c4.

Game 69

C.Garcia Palermo-L.Rodi
Pinamar 2004

**1 d4 f5 2 ♜f3 ♜f6 3 ♜f4 d6 4 h3 g6 5 c3
♜g7 6 ♜b3?!**



White has a ton of compensation for the pawn. The plan is:

1. Load up on the h-file. If Black doesn't do something drastic, White engineers some kind of sac on g6 or h7.

2. If there is no immediate sac, then White slowly pushes in the centre with e4, e5 and possibly even f4 and f5, removes defenders, and only then looks for sacs on h7 and g6.

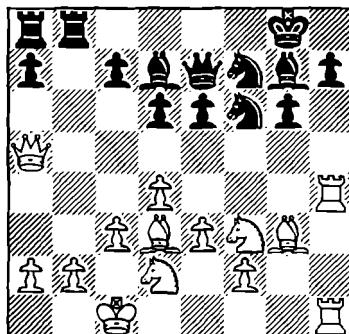
15...Qd7!?

An attempt to distract White on the other wing.

16 Wxb7!

Excellent judgment: Black is too passively placed to mount a serious attack so why not regain the pawn?

16...Bfc8 17 Wa6 Bcb8 18 Wa5

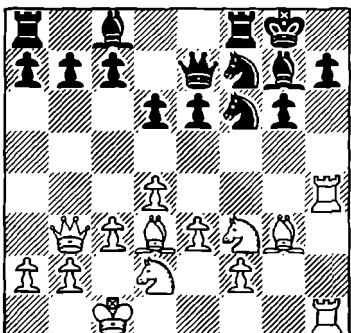


18...c5?

Going completely nuts. Black gives up too much material in his attempt to open lines against White's king.

He should practice patience and play 18...Bb7, but even then White gets a terrific attack after 19 Qg5! Qxg5 20 Wxg5 and now:

a) 20...Wf7! 21 e4! and White's at-



tack clearly has more force than Black's peaceful protest on the b-file.

b) 20... $\mathbb{H}ab8?$ 21 $\mathbb{H}xh7!$ $\mathbb{H}xb2$ 22 $\mathbb{A}xg6$ $\mathbb{W}f8$ 23 $\mathbb{W}h4$ and Black gets mated soon.

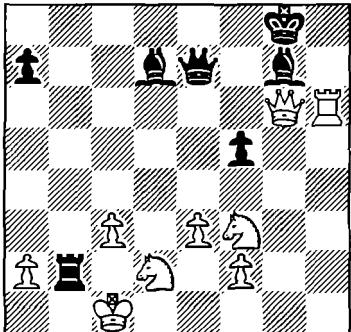
19 $\mathbb{d}xc5$ $\mathbb{A}h5$ 20 $\mathbb{cxd6}$ $\mathbb{A}xd6$ 21 $\mathbb{A}xh5$

A sac so obviously strong that White does not even deserve an exclam for it!

21... g xh5 22 $\mathbb{W}xh5$ h6 23 $\mathbb{W}g6$ $\mathbb{A}f5$

If 23... $\mathbb{A}f8$, 24 $\mathbb{A}xh6!$ destroys the defence after 24... $\mathbb{A}xh6$ 25 $\mathbb{W}xh6+$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 26 $\mathbb{W}h8+$ $\mathbb{A}f7$ 27 $\mathbb{A}e5$ mate.

24 $\mathbb{A}xf5$ exf5 25 $\mathbb{A}xb8$ $\mathbb{H}xb8$ 26 $\mathbb{A}xh6$ $\mathbb{H}xb2!$



A nice try but White isn't going to bite.

27 $\mathbb{A}g5!$

Of course, 27 $\mathbb{A}xb2??$ $\mathbb{W}b4+$ would be moronic since Black is rewarded with a perpetual check.

27... $\mathbb{H}b6$ 28 $\mathbb{A}h8+! 1-0$

Summary

Another option for White is $\mathbb{W}b3$ with the idea of castling queenside and then attacking on the other wing with $h3$ and $g4$.

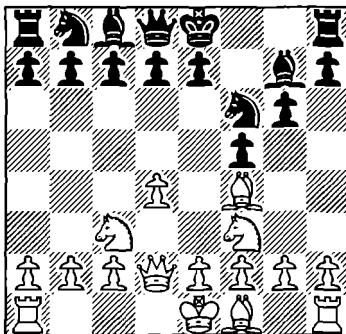
Game 70

A.Needleman-D.Izquierdo

San Luis 2007

1 $\mathbb{A}f3$ f5 2 d4 $\mathbb{A}f6$ 3 $\mathbb{A}f4$ g6 4 $\mathbb{A}c3!?$

$\mathbb{A}g7$ 5 $\mathbb{W}d2$



Beginning the not-so-subtle plan: $\mathbb{A}h6$, castle queenside and play for mate, Barry Attack-style.

5...c5?!

This is a logical response, meeting a wing attack with a central counter. But Black also opens the game when behind in development.

5...b6 is covered in the next game. Alternatively:

a) 5...0-0?! 6 $\mathbb{h}4$ d6 7 0-0-0 $\mathbb{A}bd7?!$ 8 $e4$ $fxe4$ (8... $\mathbb{A}xe4$ 9 $\mathbb{A}c4+$ $\mathbb{W}h8$ 10 $\mathbb{A}xe4$ $fxe4$ 11 $\mathbb{A}g5$ isn't much of an improvement for Black) 9 $\mathbb{A}c4+$ $\mathbb{W}h8$ 10 $\mathbb{A}g5$ $\mathbb{A}b6$ 11 $\mathbb{A}f7+$ $\mathbb{H}xf7$ 12 $\mathbb{A}xf7$ e6 was played in E.Holzinger-T.Hedler, Oeffingen 2002. Now instead of 13 d5? as in the game, 13 $\mathbb{h}5!$ $\mathbb{A}xh5$ 14 g4! $\mathbb{A}c4$ 15 $gxh5!$ $\mathbb{A}xd2$ 16 $hxg6$ h6 17 $\mathbb{A}xh6+!$ $\mathbb{W}xh6$ 18 $\mathbb{A}xh6$ $\mathbb{W}g8$ 19 $\mathbb{A}h1!$ is crushing.

b) Black should prefer 5... $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $f xe4$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ d6 8 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 0-0 9 $\mathbb{Q}h6$, with a complex position.

6 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 7 $\mathbb{W}xh6$ $cxd4$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 9 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 10 e3 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 11 h3

Halting any thoughts of ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$.

11... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 12 $\mathbb{W}h4$ d5 13 g4! g5

13...fxg4 14 hxg4 $\mathbb{Q}xg4?$ is met by 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xg4$ and Black's king is in grave danger.

14 $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4?$

Black still struggles after 14...fxg4 15 hxg4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ e6 17 f4!, but he is better off here than in the game continuation.

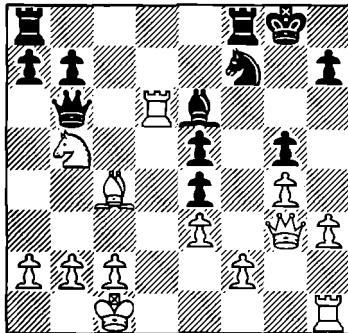
15 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $f xe4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b5!$

With the dual threat of taking on d5 and the big fork on c7.

16...e5 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 0-0 18 $\mathbb{Q}c4!$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$

18... $\mathbb{W}c6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d6!$ is similar to the game continuation.

19 $\mathbb{Q}d6!$



Revealing the point behind White's 18th move. He sacs an exchange to obliterate the pawn cover around Black's king.

19... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 21 $\mathbb{W}xe5$

Mad8

21...h6 22 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ is hopeless for Black,
22 $\mathbb{W}xg5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 23 $\mathbb{W}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}d4$
 $\mathbb{W}d6$ 25 a3! 1-0

White avoided the obvious trap 25
 $\mathbb{Q}f5??$ $\mathbb{W}d2+$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}d1+$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$
 $\mathbb{W}xd1$ mate. After 25 a3 there is no reasonable defence to $\mathbb{Q}f5$.

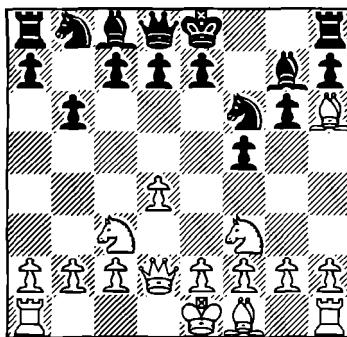
Summary

You can play in Conan the Barbarian style against the Leningrad by choosing $\mathbb{Q}c3$, $\mathbb{W}d2$ and 0-0-0.

Game 71

Z.Mestrovic-Z.Padjen
Nova Gorica 2004

1 d4 f5 2 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g6 4 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$
5 $\mathbb{W}d2$ b6 6 $\mathbb{Q}h6$



6...0-0?!

It seems too obliging to castle into the zone of White's planned attack.

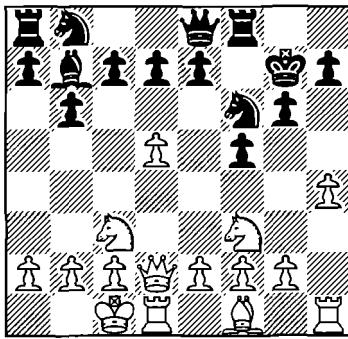
Leningrad Dutch players rarely castle queenside, but this may well be Black's best plan. For example, 6... $\mathbb{Q}xh6$

/ $\mathbb{W}xh6$ e6! (preparations are underway to transfer the king to the queenside) 8 $\mathbb{A}e5$ $\mathbb{B}g8$ 9 h4 $\mathbb{W}e7$ 10 f3 $\mathbb{A}b7$ 11 0-0-0, 11 d6 12 $\mathbb{A}d3$ a6 13 $\mathbb{A}f2$ $\mathbb{A}bd7$ 14 e4 0-0-0, as played in A.Csukerda-G.Hunko, Hungarian League 2006. Black's flexibility and safe king neutralize White's extra space here.

7 h4 $\mathbb{W}e8$ 8 $\mathbb{A}xg7$ $\mathbb{W}xg7$ 9 0-0-0

9 h5! is a sharp alternative. 9... $\mathbb{A}xh5$ 10 $\mathbb{A}d5!$ $\mathbb{A}a6$ 11 $\mathbb{W}g5$ (threatening $\mathbb{W}xh5$) 11...h6 12 $\mathbb{W}h4$ e6 13 $\mathbb{A}f4$ promises White a large amount of compensation for the pawn, which he can regain at any moment he likes.

9... $\mathbb{A}b7$ 10 d5!



10...e5

If 10...e6, 11 h5! once again offers White excellent compensation:

a) 11...exd5 12 hxg6 hxg6 (12... $\mathbb{W}xg6$?? is met by 13 $\mathbb{A}e5$ and Black can resign) 13 $\mathbb{W}h6+$ $\mathbb{A}f7$ 14 $\mathbb{A}g5+$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 15 $\mathbb{W}g7+$ keeps Black on the run.

b) 11... $\mathbb{A}xh5$ 12 $\mathbb{A}b5$ $\mathbb{A}a6$ 13 dxе6 dxе6 14 $\mathbb{W}c3+$ $\mathbb{A}g8$ 15 $\mathbb{A}xc7$ $\mathbb{A}xc7$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xc7$ also gives White the upper hand.

11 e4 fxe4

11...f4 12 h5! $\mathbb{A}xh5$ 13 $\mathbb{A}b5!$ $\mathbb{A}a6$ 14 $\mathbb{W}c3!$ favourably regains the pawn.

12 $\mathbb{A}g5$ c6 13 $\mathbb{A}gxe4$

Threatening $\mathbb{A}d6$.

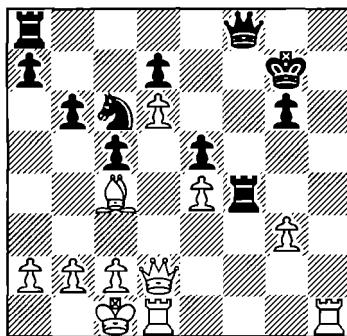
13... $\mathbb{A}xe4$ 14 $\mathbb{A}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}e7$

14...cxе5?? loses. After 15 $\mathbb{A}d6$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 16 $\mathbb{A}xb7$ d4 17 $\mathbb{A}b1$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 18 h5 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 19 hxg6 Black has regained the piece, but at the cost of getting fried on the other wing.

15 h5 $\mathbb{W}f4$ 16 hxg6! hxg6 17 d6 $\mathbb{W}f8$ 18 f3 c5 19 $\mathbb{A}c4$ $\mathbb{A}xe4$

The knight must be removed before it reaches g5. For example, 19... $\mathbb{A}c6?$ 20 $\mathbb{A}g5!$ $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 21 $\mathbb{A}h7+$ $\mathbb{A}f6$ 22 $\mathbb{A}xd7$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 23 $\mathbb{A}f7$ mate.

20 fxe4 $\mathbb{A}c6$ 21 g3!



Clearing a path to h6.

21... $\mathbb{A}f2$ 22 $\mathbb{W}h6+$ $\mathbb{A}f6$ 23 $\mathbb{W}e3$

23 $\mathbb{W}h4+!$ $\mathbb{A}g7$ (or 23...g5 24 $\mathbb{W}h7!$ and $\mathbb{W}h6+$ follows) 24 $\mathbb{W}h7+$ $\mathbb{A}f6$ 25 $\mathbb{W}hf1$ also polishes Black off.

23... $\mathbb{A}g7$ 24 $\mathbb{A}df1$ 1-0

Summary

White will continue racking up points

in this line until Leningrad Dutch players figure out not to castle into the jaws of an attack on the kingside.

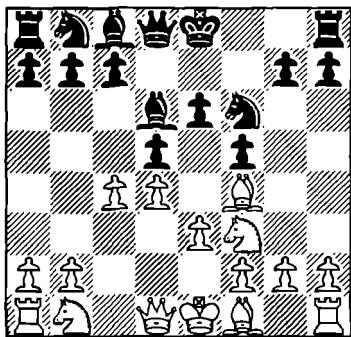
Game 72
I.Miladinovic-M.Piccardo
Valle d'Aosta Open,
Saint Vincent 2000

1 d4 f5 2 ♜f3 ♜f6 3 ♜f4 e6 4 e3 d5

Black meets the London with the Stonewall Dutch.

5 c4 ♜d6?!

Black should avoid any possibility of trading his good bishop with so many pawns on the light squares. After 5...♜e7 6 ♜c3 0-0 7 h3 c6 8 ♜c2 ♜e4 9 g4! (I prefer this to the positional option of 9 ♜e2 followed by castling kingside; Black would get chances for a kingside attack with a timely ...g5 later on) 9...♜d7 10 gx5 exf5 11 ♜g1 ♜h8 12 0-0-0 ♜df6 13 ♜e5 White's chances on the kingside look good, N.Sedlak-V.Sikula, Hungarian League 2009.



6 ♜e5?!

Miladinovic is a true "Grandmesster", who loves to muddy the game up.

A more positional, and possibly superior approach would be 6 ♜c3! c6 7 ♜d3 ♜xf4 8 exf4 0-0 9 0-0 ♜bd7 10 c5, as played in P.Czarnolewski-A.Adamowski, correspondence 1992. White enjoys some clear strategic advantages here:

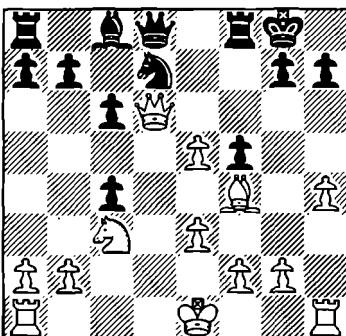
1. He has a powerful grip on the e5-square;
 2. Black has a terrible bishop;
 3. The e6-pawn is backward and weak along the open e-file; and
 4. White has a no-brainer plan of a pawn advance on the queenside.
- 6...c6 7 ♜c3 0-0 8 ♜d3 ♜e4 9 h4?!**

White is clearly in no mood for a strategic battle.

9...♜d7 10 ♜xe4! ♜xe5

10...fxe4? should be met by 11 ♜g6! ♜f6 12 ♜xd6 ♜xg6 13 ♜g3 with an uncontested dominance of the dark squares, rather than 11 ♜xc6? ♜f6! which turns the tables on White.

11 ♜xd5! exd5 12 dx5 dxc4 13 ♜d6!



The central scramble over the last few moves has cleared in White's favour:

1. He leads in development;
2. His 5-3 pawn majority on the kingside cramps Black; and
3. His dark-squared control outweighs Black's power on the light squares.

13...h6 14 0-0-0 ♜xd6 15 ♜xd6

Control of the open file is more important than straightening out the pawns with 15 exd6.

15...e8 16 ♜hd1 ♜e6 17 e4

White gives up his control of d5 to activate his knight.

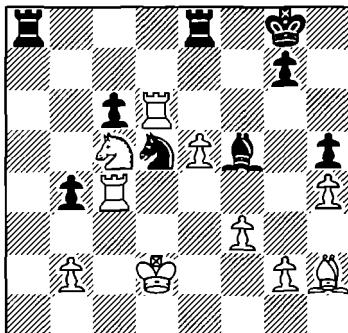
17...fxe4 18 ♜xe4 ♜d5 19 ♜h2 ♜f5 20 ♜d4 b5?!

Black shouldn't allow the white knight to occupy the dominating post on c5. 20...♜xe4 21 ♜xe4 c3 was a better choice.

21 ♜c5 h5 22 ♜d2 ♜ac8 23 a3 a5 24 f3 b4!

Black tires of passive defence and sacs a pawn to enter via the a-file.

25 axb4 axb4 26 ♜xc4 ♜a8



27 g4!?

Having played Miladinovic over the ICC, I've noticed that he is magnetically drawn towards the crazy lines!

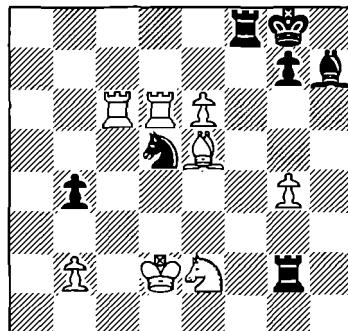
Simpler was 27 ♜d3! ♜a2 28 ♜dxc6 ♜xd3 29 ♜xd3 ♜xb2 30 e6! ♜xg2 31 ♜c8 ♜xc8 32 ♜xc8+ ♜h7 33 ♜d6 and the passed e-pawn costs Black a piece.

27...hxg4 28 fxg4 ♜h7 29 e6 ♜f8 30 ♜g1!?

White can escape harassment with 30 ♜e2! ♜a2 31 ♜e5! ♜c3+ 32 ♜xc3! ♜xb2+ 33 ♜e3 bxc3 and here he has the crushing 34 ♜d7!.

30...♜a1 31 ♜d4 ♜h1 32 ♜d3! ♜xh4

32...♜h2+ 33 ♜f2! ♜xf2+ 34 ♜xf2 ♜xf2+ 35 ♜e1! ♜f8 (Black must cover the back rank, as 35...♜xb2?? 36 ♜d8 is mate) 36 ♜cxc6 is winning for White. The e-pawn is too powerful and is bound to eventually cost Black a piece.
33 ♜e5 ♜h3 34 ♜f4 ♜h2+ 35 ♜e2! ♜g2 36 ♜cxc6 1-0



This seems a strange place for Black to resign, but his position is hopeless. For instance, 36...♜e4 37 ♜d7 ♜f6 38 ♜cc7 ♜xd7 39 ed7 ♜f3 40 ♜c8 and

there is no good defence to $\mathbb{K}xf8+$ followed by promotion on d8.

Summary

You can go nuts and try castling queenside if you face the Stonewall Dutch, but the strategic lines promise White a clear advantage.

pawn offer, since 9...fxg4? 10 hxg4 $\mathbb{W}xg4??$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}h4!$ unexpectedly traps his queen and 10... $\mathbb{Q}xg4??$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ is also disastrous for him.

7 $\mathbb{Q}c3 \mathbb{Q}f8!?$

The knight heads for g6, where it could end up just being a target for White.

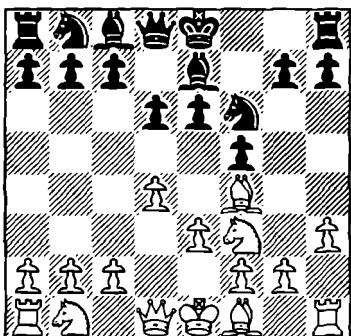
8 $\mathbb{Q}d3 \mathbb{Q}g6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ 0-0 10 $\mathbb{W}c2 \mathbb{Q}d7$ 11 0-0-0!

Game 73

F.Bruno-O.Guanciale

Porto Mannu 2008

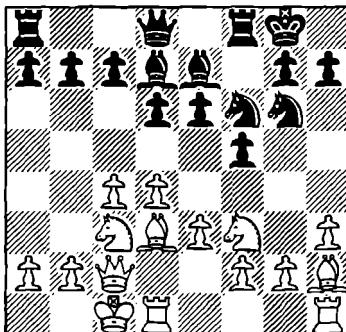
1 d4 f5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ d6 4 e3 e6 5 h3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$



The Ilyin-Zhenevsky, or Classical Dutch, is a very passive setup for Black. I have never understood its appeal, but a few of my students play it and swear by it.

6 c4 $\mathbb{Q}bd7!?$

A strange choice. The game J.Petronic-D.Kontic, Cetinje 1992, deviated with 6...0-0 7 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}g6!?$ and now White played the promising 9 g4!. Black declined the



One glance tells you that White is quicker with his attack.

11...a6 12 g4

This move is just begging to be played.

12...b5 13 $\mathbb{Q}g5!?$

A superior path to the persecution of Black's king starts with 13 gxf5! exf5 14 $\mathbb{E}hg1$.

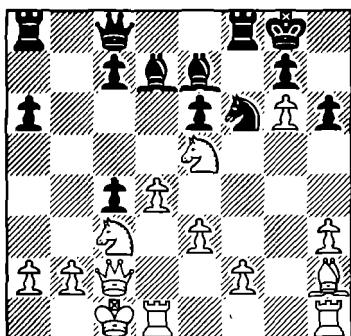
13...bx c 4?

13... $\mathbb{Q}xg4!$ 14 hxg4 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 15 gxf5 exf5 16 $\mathbb{E}dg1$ leads to an unclear position where White has reasonable but not great compensation for his pawn.

14 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ d5 15 gxf5! dx c 4 16 fxg6 h6 17 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e5$

Perhaps 18 e4! was the most accu-

rate move, but still, Black is in bad shape:

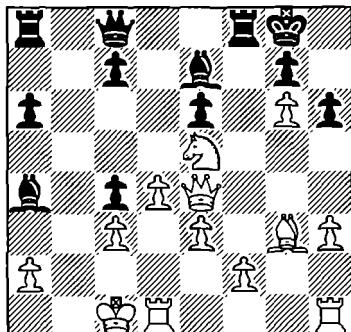


1. His position is riddled with pawn weaknesses on a6, c4, c7 and e6;
 2. White controls the centre and may push forward there; and
 3. White has sole ownership of e5.
- Black's only prayer is the open b-file and the attacking chances associated with it.

18...Qd5 19 Qg3 Qb5 20 We4!?

White should invite Black in with 20 e4! Qb4 21 Wd2 Qd3+ 22 Qb1 Qb4 23 a3 Qa5 24 Wc2, with the threat of Qxb5 followed by Qxd3.

20...Qxc3 21 bxc3 Qa4



22 Qd2!

White gives up the exchange to break up the attack.

Fritz tells me that White stands better after 22 Bh2?! Bb8 23 Qxc4 Wd7 24 Bh2 Wb5 25 Wd3, but I don't trust such high-wire lines. Black gets an enduring attack and one slip would mean the end for White.

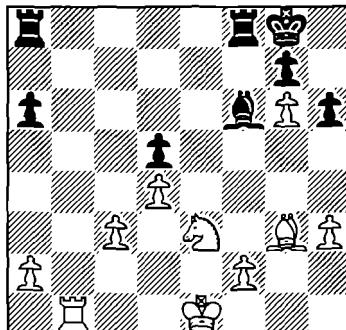
22...Qxd1 23 Bxd1 c5 24 We1 Qf6 25 Bb1 cxd4 26 exd4 Wd8?!

26...We8! may be a superior way to go about returning a pawn. 27 Qf7 Wd7 28 Qd6 Web8 29 Bc1 Ba7 30 Qxc4 Bb5 looks rather unclear since Black remains active.

27 Qxc4 Wd5?

Misjudging the ending. Black will not be able to hold on to the d-pawn.

28 Wxd5 exd5 29 Qe3



White has emerged with a clear advantage in the ending. He has two pawns for the exchange and the promise of more to follow.

29...We8 30 Qd2 Be6

30...Bd8? 31 Bb6 makes matters even worse.

31 ♜d3 ♜d8

Black has to let d5 go. If 31...♜d8, there follows 32 ♜c7 ♜de8 (Black falls for a back rank mate after 32...♜d7?? 33 ♜b8+) 33 ♜xd5 and White wins the pawn anyway.

32 ♜xd5 ♜xg6 33 ♜b7 ♜c8 34 c4 ♜f8 35 c5 ♜e8 36 ♜e4 1-0

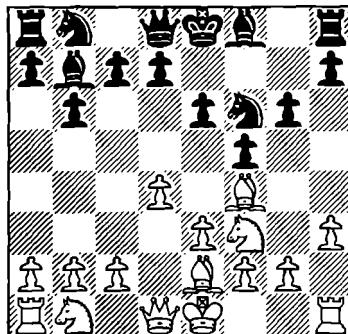
The d- and c-pawns roll forward with nobody to stop them.

Summary

Against the ...e6, ...d6 and ...e7 setup, we once again castle queenside and play for h3 and g4!

turned into a French where Black has been suckered into a good knight versus bad bishop situation.

5 ♜e2 ♜b7 6 h3 g6

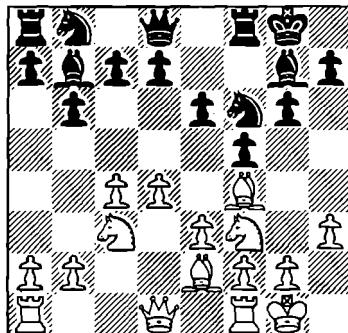


Not a bad way for Black to set up his pieces, mixing Leningrad Dutch with Queen's Indian. The position becomes similar to the Kamsky-Smirin game from the previous chapter.

7 c4

Playing for an eventual c5 pawn break. Today I would probably opt for 7 c3 ♜g7 8 0-0 0-0 9 a4.

7...♜g7 8 ♜c3 0-0 9 0-0



9...♝e4!

As we saw in the Kamsky-Smirin

1 d4 f5 2 ♜f3 ♜f6 3 ♜f4 e6 4 e3 b6

Here's an example involving a former world champion, Tigran Petrosian, playing White: 4...♝e7 5 ♜d3 0-0 6 ♜bd2 d6 7 c3 ♜c6 8 ♜c2 (since White later moves his queen to e2, why not play it there right away?) 8...♝e8 (still rejecting ...♝h5) 9 h3 ♜d7 10 ♜h2 g6 11 e4 fxe4 12 ♜xe4 ♜xe4 13 ♜xe4 d5?! 14 ♜d3 ♜d6 15 ♜e2! ♜e7 16 0-0 ♜xh2+ 17 ♜xh2 ♜f4 18 ♜b5 ♜d6? (Black should offer to repeat with 18...♝b8! 19 ♜d3 ♜c6) 19 g3 ♜f5 20 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 21 ♜e5, T.Petrosian-A.Chistiakov, Riga 1954. The game has

Dear, this knight swap often helps Black to free his position when White plays c4 lines.

10 $\mathbb{H}c1$ d6 11 $\mathbb{A}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 12 $\mathbb{E}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7?!$

12...a5! gains a tempo over the game continuation since White must waste a move on 13 b3, and after 13... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 a3 e5 Black has managed to equalize.

Black should avoid the temptation to exploit the rook's position with 12...c5??, as after 13 $\mathbb{E}d3$! $\mathbb{E}e4$ 14 $\mathbb{E}d2$ suddenly Black is in danger down the d-file:

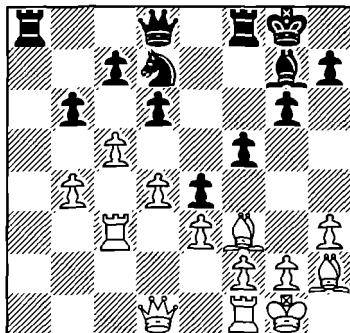
a) 14... $\mathbb{C}xd4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ wins material.

b) 14...d5 15 $\mathbb{D}xc5$ $\mathbb{B}xc5$ 16 $\mathbb{C}xd5$ $\mathbb{Exd5}$ 17 $\mathbb{A}c4!$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 18 $\mathbb{D}xd5!$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ is crushing.

13 b4 a5 14 a3 axb4 15 axb4 e5

Now the position looks very similar to King's Indian lines.

16 c5? $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ e4



18 $\mathbb{C}xd6?!$

Sac'ing a piece for three pawns, but this one is not nearly as strong as Spassky's similar sacrifice in Game 56.

There was a safer and superior alternative in 18 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{B}xc5$ 19 $\mathbb{B}xc5$ $\mathbb{D}xc5$ 20 $\mathbb{A}c2$ $\mathbb{C}xd4$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 22 $\mathbb{Exd4}$ $\mathbb{A}a4!$ (22... $\mathbb{W}xd4??$ 23 $\mathbb{E}d2$ drops a piece) 23 d5 $\mathbb{Q}fa8$ 24 d6. White has several advantages here:

1. The d-pawn is deeply entrenched and forces Black's knight into a passive stance;

2. The bishop pair will be tough for Black to neutralize in the open position;

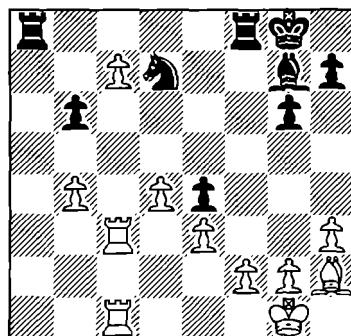
3. White has firm control of the light squares; and

4. Black is too tangled up to make use of his kingside pawn majority.

18... $\mathbb{Exf3}$ 19 $\mathbb{D}xc7$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}e4!$

He avoids the trap 20... $\mathbb{W}xb4??$ 21 $\mathbb{C}8\mathbb{W}!$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 22 $\mathbb{D}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 23 $\mathbb{W}d5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 24 $\mathbb{W}xd7$, regaining the piece with a winning position.

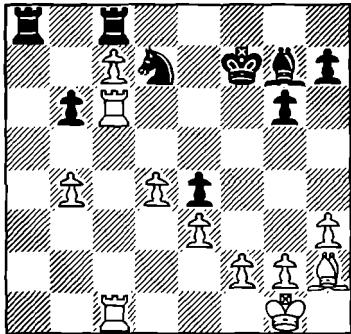
21 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{fxe4}$ 22 $\mathbb{E}fc1$



Let's evaluate the position. White's piece sac has netted him three pawns. Also, the c7-pawn is just one square away from promoting and ties Black up. On the other hand, White's pawn

on b4 may become vulnerable, and Black has access to d5 for his knight. My assessment: unclear.

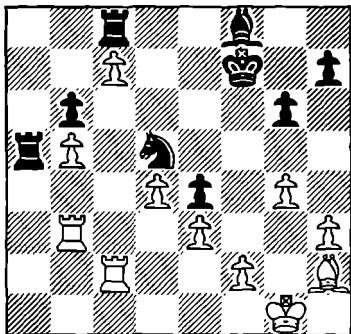
22... $\mathbb{E}fc8$ 23 $\mathbb{E}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$



24 g4

To give the king some air.

24... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 25 b5 $\mathbb{E}a2$ 26 $\mathbb{E}6c2$ $\mathbb{E}a5$ 27 $\mathbb{E}b1$
 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 28 $\mathbb{E}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$



29 f3!

That black pawn on e4 has been a thorn in White's side. The central pawns must roll forward.

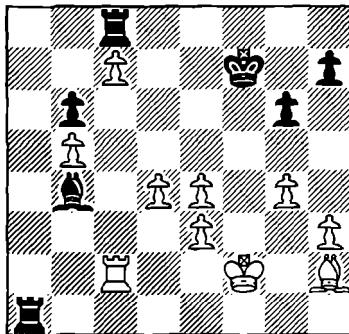
29... $\mathbb{E}a1+$

On 29...exf3?, 30 e4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 31 $\mathbb{E}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 32 $\mathbb{E}cf2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 33 d5 $\mathbb{E}xb5$ 34 $\mathbb{E}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 35 d6 is decisive since Black has no

good way to stop e5 and e6.

30 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4!$ 31 $\mathbb{E}xb4$

31 $\mathbb{E}d2?$ $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}e2??$ $\mathbb{E}e1$ mate would be a dumb way to lose the game
31... $\mathbb{E}xb4$ 32 $\mathbb{E}xe4$



Four passed pawns for a rook. Is it worth it? It is if I can keep rolling them forward without dropping any of them.

32... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 33 e5 $\mathbb{E}a5$

If 33... $\mathbb{Q}d7$, White plays 34 d5 with the threat of e6+.

34 $\mathbb{Q}f4!$

My plan consists of the following:

1. Transfer the king to e4;
2. Play $\mathbb{E}c6$ followed by e6;
4. Check on g5 with the bishop, locking the black king down on the back rank; and
5. Play d5 followed by d6.

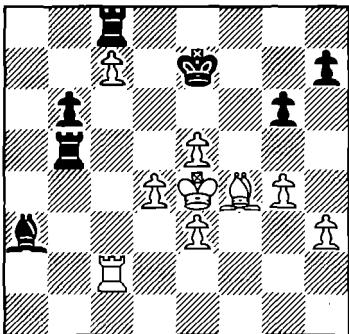
34... $\mathbb{E}xb5$

I didn't care about this pawn. My fate hung on the mobility or blockade of the central pawns.

35 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}a3$

After 35... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ Black still can't touch the pawn on c7 due to the threat of e6+.

36 ♜e4



36...♜b2+?

Was he playing for a win or did he miss the drawing line 36...♚d7 37 d5 ♜c5 38 e6+ ♚e7 39 ♜g5+ ♚d6 40 ♜f4+?

37 ♜c3 ♜b4 38 ♜c6 ♜a3

A draw offer to see if I would repeat moves with 39 ♜c3.

39 e6

Going for the win. Now ♜g5+ will force the black king to the back rank.

39...♜b1 40 ♜g5+ ♚e8 41 d5 h6?

Missing a draw with 41...♜b4+! 42 ♜d3 ♜b3+! and now:

a) 43 ♜e4 ♜b4+ and White must accept the draw since 44 ♜e5?? loses to 44...♜b2+ 45 ♜d6 ♜e4! threatening 46...♚e5 mate.

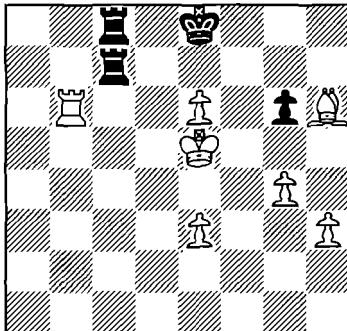
b) 43 ♜e2! ♜b2+ 44 ♜f3 ♜b5! 45 e4

♜b3+ 46 ♜e2 ♜b2+ 47 ♜d3 ♜b3+ 48 ♜c4 ♜b4+ is a perpetual check unless White is willing to give up e4, which I wasn't!

42 ♜xh6 ♜e7 43 d6 ♜xd6 44 ♜xd6 ♜c1

If 44...♜xc7??, then 45 ♜g5 ♜e7 (otherwise e7 and ♜d8+ follow) 46 ♜e5! ♜b5+ 47 ♜f6 and White wins since next comes ♜xg5.

45 ♜xb6 ♜1xc7 46 ♜e5



Three pawns for the exchange is too much for Black to cope with.

46...♜c6 47 ♜b7 ♜6c7 48 ♜xc7 ♜xc7 49 ♜f6 ♜c2 50 ♜g5 ♜h2 51 h4 ♜g2 52 ♜xg6 1-0

Summary

Playing ...♜e4 is a good way for Black to free his position when White sets up with c4 and ♜c3.

Chapter Eight

London versus Benoni

Well, we really do not get a Benoni at all since the vast majority of Londoners dread pushing their d-pawns past the fourth rank.

If Black plays ...c5 in conjunction with a quick ... $\mathbb{W}b6$, it is your choice whether to sac or not. In Game 75, I refused to sac and played c3, intending to meet ... $\mathbb{W}b6$ with the boring and very solid $\mathbb{W}b3$. Kosic-Berczes (Game 76) is a good example of White playing the bold e3 and, on ... $\mathbb{W}b6$, offering the b2-pawn with $\mathbb{Q}c3$.

If you are the brave sort and do venture your d-pawn to the fifth rank, then give the pawn sac in Vaganian-Kupreichik (Game 77) a try. You get a sustained initiative for a small investment.

The final three games in this chapter cover the Exchange Slav, which you can get in certain move orders. After 1 d4 c5, if you want to be true to the Lon-

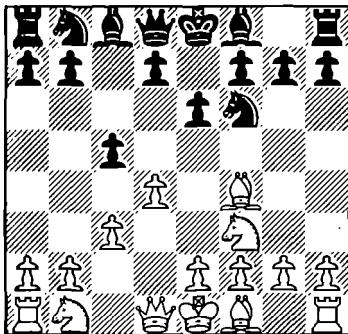
London, you now play 2 c3 and then after 2...cxd4 3 cxd4 we reach an Exchange Slav. Alternatively, there's 1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c5 3 c3 cxd4 4 cxd4, again with an Exchange Slav. I get this quite often so be warned that you need to know the basic ideas of the Exchange Slav. Some opening books dismiss this line as easy equality for Black, but I do not believe it is so straightforward for Black to equalize. Having the move in a symmetrical position is like having the serve in tennis.

Game 75
C.Lakdawala-D.Aldama
Gambito (rapid),
San Diego 2009

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ e6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ c5 4 c3

IM Aldama is a pure tactician and tailor-made for the most boring lines

The London has to offer! He is definitely not the right guy for the continuation 4 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$.



4... $\mathbb{Q}d5?$!

The “threat” of a dull game works like magic and induces a dubious move. Aldama insists on complications, but this artificial move will almost certainly lose some time.

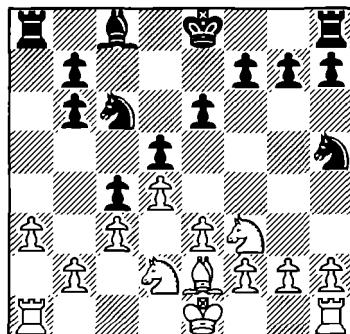
Alternatively:

a) 4...d5 5 e3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ transposes to lines considered in Chapter One.

b) 4... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 5 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6 e3 d5 7 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ and now:

b1) 8...0-0 9 0-0 was played in C.Lakdawala-B.Baker, Gambito (rapid), San Diego 2009. Well, nobody said that every line in the London had to be exciting. I have a lot of Slav experience in these structures, whereas my opponent doesn't get the Slav with Black or White. Sometimes “equal” is not exactly equal!

b1) 8... $\mathbb{Q}h5?$! 9 $\mathbb{W}xb6$ axb6 10 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}b3!$ c4 13 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14 a3 gives White the edge due to three factors:



1. White has the only good break, with e4;

2. Black is saddled with a bad bishop for now; and

3. Black will lose time with his off-side knight on h5.

5 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

5... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ can just be met by 6 e4!.

6 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4+?$!

Illogical: Black will have to either swap off his good bishop or lose a tempo to a future a3.

On 6... $\mathbb{W}b6$, I planned on following the successful policy of enforced boredom with 7 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 8 e3.

7 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ f5 8 e3 0-0 9 $\mathbb{Q}c4!$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

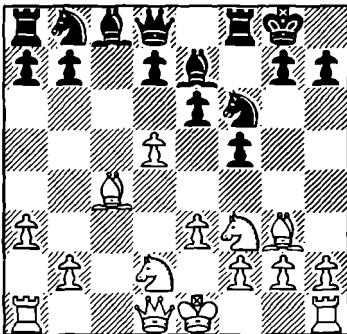
If Black tries to get cute with 9...f4? he ends up in a wretched position after 10 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 11 e4 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 12 fxe3 fxe3 13 0-0 exd2 14 a3 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 15 $\mathbb{W}xd2$.

10 a3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$

10... $\mathbb{Q}xd2+$ 11 $\mathbb{W}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 12 $\mathbb{W}e2$ only achieves a rather shaky-looking Dutch for Black.

11 d5!

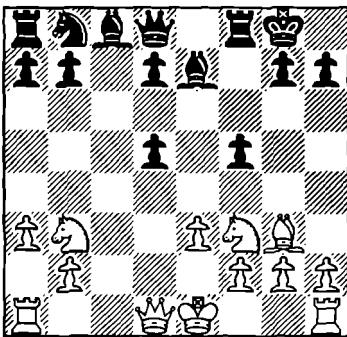
Sac'ing the d-pawn to ruin his pawn structure.



11... $\mathbb{Q}xd5?$!

Even after the superior 11...exd5, 12 $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ nets White excellent compensation for the pawn.

12 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5 13 $\mathbb{Q}b3$



13...a5!?

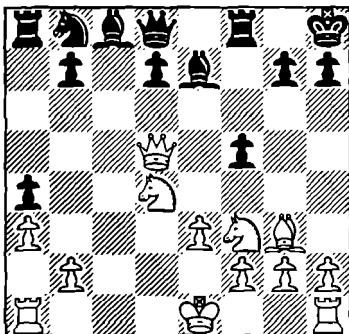
The opening phase has been a disaster for Black. Aldama told me after the game that he hated his position and felt he had to complicate at all costs. The idea is to activate the rook via a5.

14 $\mathbb{W}xd5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}bd4$!

There was no way I was going to allow him to bribe his way out with 15

$\mathbb{Q}xb8$?! $\mathbb{B}xb8$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xa5$ b6 17 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ when suddenly Black has compensation for the pawn in the form of the bishop pair and White's insecure king.

15...a4



16 0-0?

An example of the Londoner's disease: excessive caution. There was no reason (except cowardice!) to refrain from winning a pawn with 16 $\mathbb{Q}xb8$! $\mathbb{B}xb8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$. There could follow 17... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d6$! (if 18 $\mathbb{Q}5d4$?, Black does well with 18...b5! 19 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 20 $\mathbb{W}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$) 18... $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}g5$! $\mathbb{W}f6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}gf7+$ $\mathbb{B}xf7$ (it's smothered mate after 20... $\mathbb{Q}g8$?? 21 $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 22 $\mathbb{W}g8+$! $\mathbb{B}xg8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}df7+$ $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xf7$) 21 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{W}c3$ + 24 $\mathbb{W}d2$ and Black is busted.

16... $\mathbb{Q}a5$! 17 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ d5 20 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{W}a6$

Black has unravelled nicely and now stands just a shade worse.

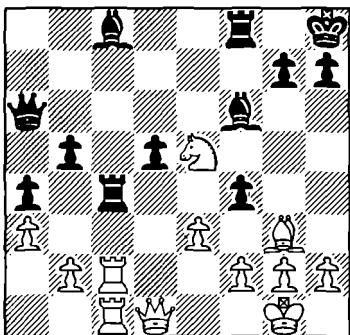
21 $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{E}c5$ 22 $\mathbb{W}d1$ $\mathbb{E}c4$!

I was really getting frustrated at this point. My opponent's position was getting better and better.

18 ♜dc2 ♜xd4 24 ♜xd4 ♜f6

Black hopes to hold through an exchange on d4 to reach a position with opposite-coloured bishops.

19 ♜f3 b5 26 ♜e5 f4!?



Black tires of his bad bishop on c8 and hands over a pawn to activate it. He can fight for a draw if he plays passively with 26...♜xe5 27 ♜xe5 ♜e6 28 ♜xc4 bxc4 29 ♜d4 ♜f7, but he will suffer from chronic dark-square pain.

27 ♜xf4 ♜f5 28 ♜d2?

White still has chances to win after 28 ♜xc4 ♜xc2 29 ♜xc2 bxc4 30 ♜d1 ♜b5 31 ♜d6 ♜e8 32 ♜b4.

28...♜xc1 29 ♜xc1 ♜c8 30 ♜d1 ♜e6 31 ♜f3 h6 32 ♜d4 ♜xd4 33 ♜xd4?

Sigh... another mistake. White's last chance was 33 exd4! ♜c2! 34 ♜xc2 ♜xc2 35 ♜d2, when Black must still work to earn the draw.

33...♜c2 34 ♜d2 ♜c6 35 ♜xc2 ♜xc2 36 ♜xc2 ♜xc2 37 ♜f1 ♜g8 38 ♜e2 ♜f7 39 ♜d2 ♜b3 40 ♜c3 ♜e6 41 ♜d4 ♜c4 42 h4 ½-½

White's extra pawn is useless for winning purposes.

Summary

When you face a really bloodthirsty opponent in the London, go into full throttle boredom mode. They tend to get frustrated at the lack of tactical opportunities and lash out, as Black did in this game.

Game 76

D.Kosic-D.Berczes
Budapest 2007

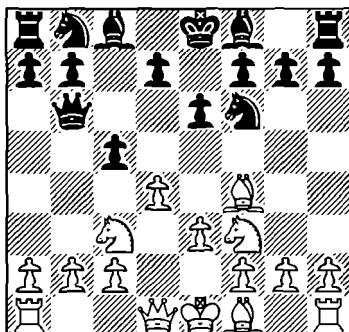
1 d4 ♜f6 2 ♜f3 e6 3 ♜f4 c5 4 e3!?

Be prepared to sac a pawn if you play this move order. 4 e3 is the wild cousin of 4 c3.

4...♜b6!?

Several annotators have condemned this move with a question mark. I don't believe matters are so clear, however, and have not found an obvious way to punish Black for his avarice.

5 ♜c3!



The only way to challenge Black's greed. Both 5 ♜c1?! and 5 b3?! are

much too passive and obviously lame.

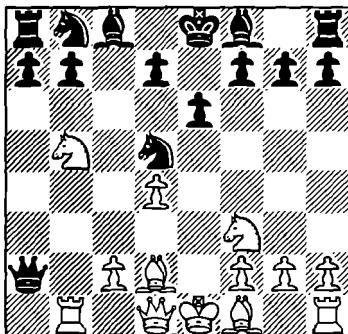
5...cxd4?

The immediate 5... $\mathbb{W}xb2$ is the critical choice. By refraining from 5...cxd4? Black denies the f4-bishop the use of the d2-square. White plays 6 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ and now:

a) 6... $\mathbb{Q}a6$?! 7 a3! (cutting off the queen's retreat squares) 7... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 8 $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{W}a2$ 9 $\mathbb{C}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}xb1$ 11 $\mathbb{W}xb1$ and White stands better, with a queen for a bishop, rook and pawn.

b) 6... $\mathbb{Q}d5$! 7 $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 8 c4?! $\mathbb{W}a5+$ 9 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xd2+$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ cxd4 15 exd4 with a strange position which is very difficult to evaluate. Black has plenty of material for the exchange in the form of two pawns, but his development still lags and White may be able to make something of his lead.

6 exd4 $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 8 $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d2$!



9... $\mathbb{Q}a6$

After 9...a6? 10 $\mathbb{B}a1$ $\mathbb{W}b2$ 11 c4 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}c2$ 13 $\mathbb{W}xc2$! $\mathbb{Q}xc2+$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d2$

$\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}b3+$ 17

$\mathbb{Q}c2$ Black's knight is trapped, while White's escapes via b6.

10 $\mathbb{B}a1$ $\mathbb{W}b2$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}c4$!

Threatening 12 $\mathbb{B}a2$.

11... $\mathbb{Q}ab4$ 12 0-0 $\mathbb{W}xc2$ 13 $\mathbb{W}xc2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$
14 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$
 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e5$?

17 $\mathbb{Q}e4$! $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e5$! wins more material.

17... $\mathbb{E}g8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$! 19 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$
20 $\mathbb{Q}xh7$! $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

If 20... $\mathbb{Q}xf7??$, White wins with 21 $\mathbb{Q}xg8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}c1$! $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xc2$.

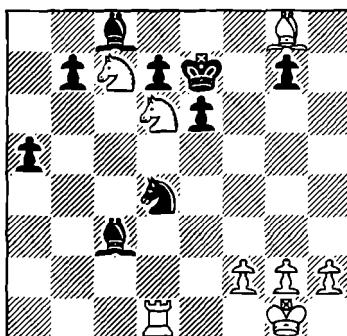
21 $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

Black can't win a piece after 21... $\mathbb{Q}f8$, due to 22 $\mathbb{Q}d6$!.

22 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}c7$

The knight escapes and Black's queenside passed pawns are not enough for a rook.

23...a5 24 $\mathbb{Q}d6$!



A cute trick. White swaps down and simplifies.

24... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ b5

Nothing works for Black. For example:

a) 26...d5? 27 ♜a4+ ♜c4 28 ♜b6+ picks off the bishop on c8.

b) 26...e5 27 ♜e4+ ♜b6 28 f4! ♜e2+

19 ♜f1 ♜xf4 30 ♜b1+ ♜c7 31 ♜c1+ ♜b8 32 ♜d6 and once again the c8-bishop falls.

c) 26...♜f5 27 ♜e4+ ♜b4 28 ♜h7 d5 19 ♜xf5 exf5 30 ♜b1+ ♜a3 31 ♜d6 ♜e6 32 ♜xb7 easily halts the passed pawns.

17 ♜xb5!

White finds one trick after another.

18...♜xb5 28 ♜c1+ ♜b4 29 ♜xc8 a4 30 ♜d8 a3 31 ♜xd7 a2 32 ♜d1 ♜c7 33 f4!

The key is to unlock the bishop's diagonal to the passed pawn on a2.

33...g6 34 h4! ♜c3 35 h5 gxh5 36 f5 1-0

Summary

When Black plays an early ...♝b6 and takes on b2, White gets compensation through his development lead. At the very least, you have options of a draw by repetition by attacking the queen with ♜b1, ♜a1, etc. If this line doesn't appeal to you, then replace e3 with c3 and meet ...♝b6 with ♜b3.

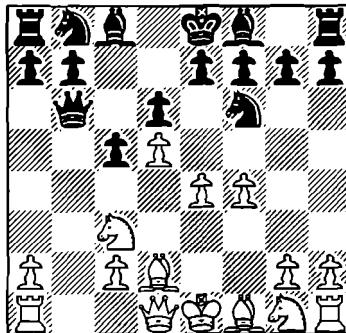
Game 77 R.Vaganian-V.Kupreichik Leningrad 1974

1 d4 ♜f6 2 ♜g5

We get this line in the London by 2 ♜f4!? c5 3 d5 ♜b6 4 ♜c3! ♜xb2 5 ♜d2!. If you play this funky move order, you had better be ready to sac your b2-

pawn! In my experience, very few London players like to push their d-pawn to the fifth rank.

2...c5 3 d5 ♜b6 4 ♜c3 ♜xb2 5 ♜d2! ♜b6 6 e4 d6 7 f4



White has excellent compensation for the pawn:

1. A souped-up King's Indian four-pawn attack (well, okay, maybe we should call it a three-pawn attack since the c-pawn sits on c2) with the potential for a quick e5 and even an e6 thrust;
2. A lead in development;
3. An open b-file for the rook; and
4. Black's queen is vulnerable and will be further harassed.

7...g6

Gilberto Hernandez put an end to my e5 ideas by playing the move himself: 7...e5!? 8 fxe5 dx5 (yes, Black has stopped e5 but he has also handed over a protected passed d-pawn and opened the f-file for White's rook) 9 ♜f3 ♜d6 10 ♜b1 ♜d8 11 ♜b5+ ♜bd7 12 a4 0-0 13 0-0 a6 14 ♜d3 ♜c7 15 ♜e2 b6 16 ♜h4! forced the weakening concession ...g6 and gave White terrific compensa-

tion for the pawn in C.Lakdawala-G.Hernandez, Internet (blitz) 2000.

8 e5 dxe5

Or 8... $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 10 $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 11 e6 fxe6 12 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 dxe6 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 16 0-0 a6 17 $\mathbb{Q}c3!$ axb5 18 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{B}g8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{B}xf8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ $\mathbb{B}g8$ 21 f5! with an attack on the way, R.Vaganian-V.Jansa, Kragujevac 1974.

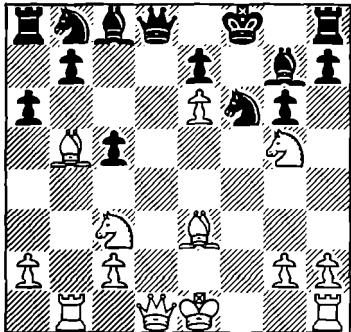
9 fxe5 $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 11 $\mathbb{B}b1$

Kicking the queen away to force e6 next move.

11... $\mathbb{W}d8$ 12 e6 fxe6 13 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$

Much stronger than 13 dxe6? $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$ bxc6 16 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 0-0 when Black has emerged with a good position: he has retained his extra pawn, managed to castle and owns the bishop pair.

13... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$! $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 15 dxe6 a6 16 $\mathbb{Q}e3!!$



A brilliant piece sac which exploits Black's tangled development by creating a confrontation in the centre.

16... $\mathbb{W}a5?$

Acceptance of the offer is suicide.

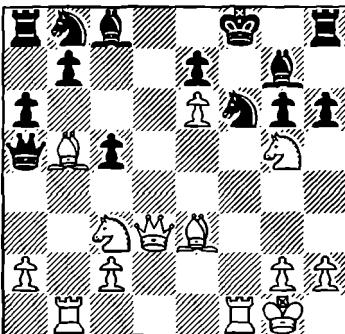
After 16... $\mathbb{W}xd1+?$ 17 $\mathbb{B}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 19 $\mathbb{B}xh8$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 20 $\mathbb{B}xc1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ Black can't untangle his queenside pieces.

16... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ doesn't look like much fun for Black, but had to be tried.

17 0-0 h6

Taking on b5 leads to a bloodbath after 17...axb5 18 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xe7+!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xf6!$, with threats everywhere: mate on d8, a hanging queen on e5 and discovered checks on the f-file.

18 $\mathbb{W}d3!$



Beginning a home invasion by breaking down the door on g6.

18... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 19 $\mathbb{W}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$

If 19...hxg5, White plays 20 $\mathbb{W}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ and it's mate in two.

20 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{B}h7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xf6!$

Removing the defender of e8. Vaganian's blatant contempt for material is refreshing!

21... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

Or 21... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ and White mates.

22 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 1-0

Summary

If you want to experiment with the move order 1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f4!$?, then brace yourself for a crazy game after 2...c5 3 d5 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}c3!$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}d2!$.

Game 78

C.Lakdawala-A.Kretchetov 2nd Rowell International, Century City 2002

1 d4 d5

Your move orders could be:

- a) 1 d4 c5 2 c3 cxd4 3 cxd4 d5 4 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$;
- b) 1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c5 3 c3 cxd4 4 cxd4 d5; or
- c) 1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c5 3 c3 and now if 3...d5 4 dx \mathbb{c} 5!, covered in Chapter Ten.

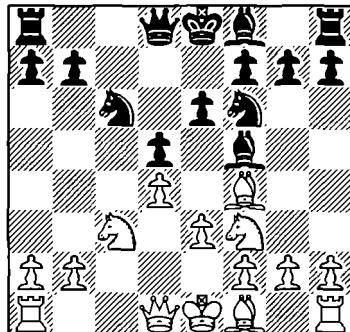
2 c4 c6 3 cxd5

I needed to beat Kretchetov to earn a second IM norm (I'm a procrastinator and only began searching for norms at the ripe old age of 40!). The problem was that I got hit by the flu and could barely see straight. The Exchange Slav was a relief because I wouldn't have to calculate much and strategic judgment doesn't disappear when you get a fever.

3...cxd5 4 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$

The symmetrical line is Black's best shot at an equal game. Alternatives for Black are considered in the next two games.

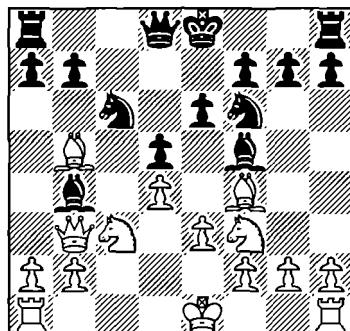
7 e3 e6



8 $\mathbb{W}b3$

After 8 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9 0-0 (9 $\mathbb{W}a4$ is most commonly played) 9... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10 $\mathbb{W}b3$ 0-0 (Black can also go psycho with 10...g5! 11 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ h5, reaching a tense position) 11 $\mathbb{M}fc1$ $\mathbb{M}c8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 13 $\mathbb{W}b7$ g5! 14 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ h5 15 h3 g4 16 hxg4 hxg4 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$, White will win a pawn on the queenside soon but Black gets sufficient kingside play for it, V.Milov-R.Hübner, Swiss League 1998.

8... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}b5$

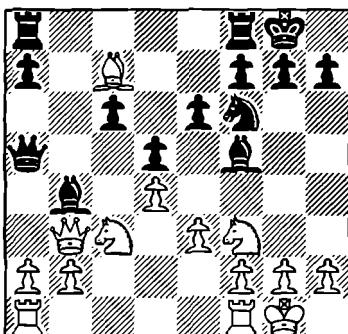


9... $\mathbb{W}a5$

An alternative line is 9...0-0 10 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ $\mathbb{M}b8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ $\mathbb{W}xb8$ 15 $\mathbb{M}c1$.

White may still hold a microscopic advantage here because Black can't easily challenge the c-file. For example, 15...h6 16 h3 ♜e4 17 ♜e5 ♜w8 18 ♜c8 ♜a5? (18...♜e7 19 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 20 ♜c6 ♜c7 should draw) 19 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 20 ♜xd5! and Black has only bad choices:

- 20...exd5 drops the queen to 21 ♜b8+ ♜e7 22 ♜c6+.
 - 20...♜e1+ 21 ♜h2 exd5 22 ♜b8+ ♜e7 23 ♜c7+ ♜e8 24 ♜c6! ♜d7 25 ♜d8 mate.
 - 20...♜xd5 21 ♜b8+ ♜e7 22 ♜c7+ ♜e8 23 ♜c6! 1-0, D.Fridman-V.Malakhatko, Zurich 2003.
- 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♜xc6 bxc6 12 ♜c7!**



Forcing a swap of Black's good bishop.

12...♜xc7 13 ♜xb4 ♜d7 14 ♜fc1?

Allowing Black to achieve ...c5, but Black doesn't fully equalize with this freeing break. The alternative would be 14 ♜a4.

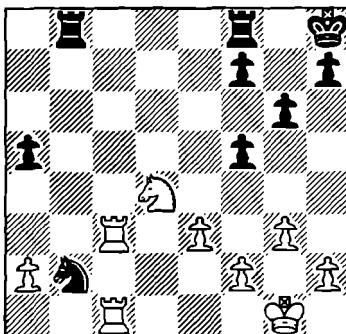
14...♜ab8 15 ♜a3 c5? 16 dxc5 ♜xc5 17 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 18 ♜xd5! ♜d3 19 ♜e7+ ♜h8 20 ♜c3 ♜xb2 21 ♜xf5 exf5 22 ♜d4 g6 23 ♜ac1?!

Dumb! 23 ♜c7!, taking control of the seventh rank, is an obvious improvement.

23...a5?!

23...♜b7! would make it much harder for White.

24 g3



24...♜b6!

Black sees that White has tricks if he protects his second rank after 24...♜b7?

25 ♜b3! and now:

a) 25...♜xb3 26 axb3 a4 27 ♜b1 a3 28 ♜c2! ♜a8 29 ♜xa3 ♜d3 30 ♜c4 ♜a2 31 b4! and the passed b-pawn is hard to stop.

b) 25...♜fb8 26 ♜c7! ♜xb3 27 axb3 a4 28 bxa4 ♜xa4 29 ♜xf7. Not only is Black down a pawn but his king and the h7-pawn are in serious danger.

25 ♜f1?!

For some reason I kept refusing to take the seventh rank.

25...♜a8 26 ♜a3 ♜b4 27 ♜c7

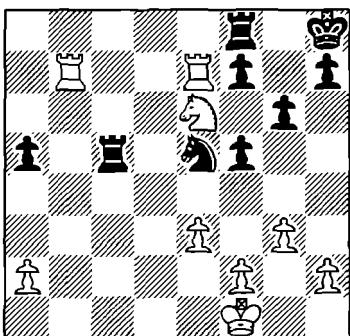
I had an epiphany and finally realized that a rook on the seventh rank is a good thing!

27...♜c4 28 ♜c3 ♜e5 29 ♜e7 ♜c4 30

■b3!

I didn't trust my fever-plagued calculation abilities in the line 30 $\mathbb{E}xc4$ $\mathfrak{Q}xc4$ 31 $\mathbb{E}xf7$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ 32 $\mathbb{E}c7$ $\mathfrak{Q}d2+$ 33 $\mathfrak{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{E}b2$, when Black threatens both ... $\mathbb{E}xa2$ and ... $\mathfrak{Q}e4$. I wasn't sure at all whether I could generate enough threats against his king.

30... $\mathbb{E}c5$ 31 $\mathbb{E}bb7$ $\mathbb{E}f8$ 32 $\mathfrak{Q}e6!$



Exploiting a mating idea on the seventh rank. The knight totally disrupts the harmony of Black's defence of f7.

32... $\mathbb{E}c1+$ 33 $\mathfrak{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{E}fc8$ 34 $\mathfrak{Q}g5$ $\mathfrak{Q}c6$ 35 $\mathbb{E}xf7$ 1-0

Summary

In the Symmetrical Exchange Slav, I prefer 8 $\mathbb{W}b3$ to the more usual 8 $\mathbb{W}b5$ as White's best try to extract an edge.

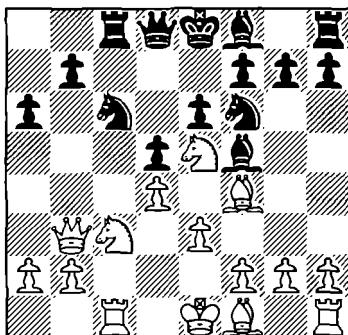
■c3 $\mathfrak{Q}c6$

A reminder: You could get this position through the move order 1 d4 $\mathfrak{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathfrak{Q}f3$ c5 3 c3 cxd4 4 cxd4 d5 5 $\mathfrak{Q}c3$ $\mathfrak{Q}c6$, or 1 d4 c5 2 c3 cxd4 3 cxd4 d5 4 $\mathfrak{Q}f3$ $\mathfrak{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathfrak{Q}c3$ $\mathfrak{Q}c6$.

6 $\mathfrak{Q}f4$ e6

6...a6 is also commonly played here: 7 $\mathbb{E}c1!$ (the most accurate move; Black equalizes after 7 e3 $\mathfrak{Q}g4$) and now:

a) 7... $\mathfrak{Q}f5$ 8 e3 $\mathbb{E}c8!$ led to a draw in C.Lakdawala-V.Akopian, Pasadena 2002. Instead of my lame 9 $\mathfrak{Q}e2$, White should play 9 $\mathfrak{Q}e5!$ e6 10 $\mathbb{W}b3!$ and now:



a1) 10... $\mathfrak{Q}a5?$ 11 $\mathbb{W}a4+!$ b5 (if 11... $\mathfrak{Q}c6??$, White wins by 12 $\mathfrak{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{E}xc6$ 13 $\mathfrak{Q}xa6!$) 12 $\mathbb{E}xb5+$ axb5 13 $\mathbb{W}xb5+$ $\mathfrak{Q}e7$ 14 0-0 gives White a powerful and sustained attack for the piece. Black's king on e7 creates a traffic jam for his pieces and he will be playing a rook and bishop down for a while. It is hard to imagine him surviving.

a2) 10... $\mathfrak{Q}xe5!$ 11 $\mathfrak{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xf6$ gxf6 13 $\mathfrak{Q}e2$. I would be happy to

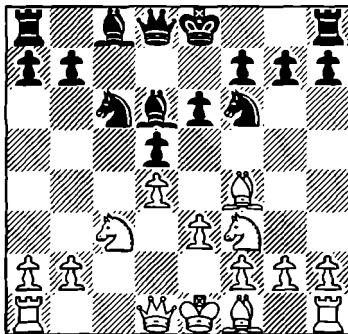
Game 79
C.Lakdawala-S.Jones
SCCF State Championship,
Irvine 1997
1 $\mathfrak{Q}f3$ d5 2 c4 c6 3 cxd5 cxd5 4 d4 $\mathfrak{Q}f6$ 5

take White in this unbalanced position.

b) 7...e6 8 e3 $\mathbb{A}d6$ 9 $\mathbb{A}g3$ 0-0 10 $\mathbb{A}d3$

$\mathbb{A}e8$ 11 $\mathbb{A}e5!$ $\mathbb{A}f8$ (11... $\mathbb{A}xe5$ 12 dx5 $\mathbb{A}d7$ 13 f4 $\mathbb{A}c5$ 14 $\mathbb{A}b1$ doesn't look like much fun for Black) 12 0-0 $\mathbb{A}d7?$! (12... $\mathbb{A}e7$ is an improvement) 13 f4 (White has achieved a good Stonewall Dutch with very real attacking chances) 13... $\mathbb{A}c8$ 14 $\mathbb{A}h4$ $\mathbb{A}e7?$ 15 $\mathbb{A}xf6!$ $\mathbb{A}xf6$ 16 $\mathbb{A}xh7+$ and White won, C.Lakdawala-M.Khachian, Internet (blitz) 2006.

7 e3 $\mathbb{A}d6$



7... $\mathbb{A}e7$ 8 $\mathbb{A}d3$ 0-0 9 $\mathbb{A}c1$ $\mathbb{A}d7$ 10 $\mathbb{A}e5$ $\mathbb{A}xe5$ 11 dx5 $\mathbb{A}e4!$ 12 $\mathbb{A}xe4$ dx5 13 $\mathbb{A}xe4$ $\mathbb{A}a5+$ 14 $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{A}fd8$ offers Black good compensation for the pawn. But 11 $\mathbb{A}xe5?$ is an improvement, and 11... $\mathbb{A}a5$ 12 0-0 b5 13 a3 $\mathbb{A}fc8$ 14 $\mathbb{A}e2$ b4 15 axb4 $\mathbb{A}xb4$ 16 f4! allowed White to roll forward on the kingside in A.Rakhmanov-B.Grachev, Ulan Ude 2009.

8 $\mathbb{A}xd6$

The temptation to saddle Black with a bad bishop may also be resisted in favour of 8 $\mathbb{A}g3$, intending $\mathbb{A}e5$ and f4 to lead to a more complex position.

8... $\mathbb{A}xd6$ 9 $\mathbb{A}d3$ 0-0 10 $\mathbb{A}c1$ a6 11 0-0

e5?

Black agrees to an isolani position to free his game. However, with the dark-squared bishops off the board it will be very difficult for Black to generate threats against the white king.

Black's best plan may be to accept a passive position with the more patient move 11...b6. For example, 12 a3 $\mathbb{A}b7$ 13 b4 $\mathbb{A}fc8$ and White's advantage is less than what he gets in the game.

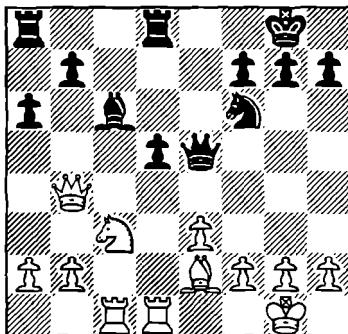
12 dx5 $\mathbb{A}xe5$ 13 $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{A}d8$ 14 $\mathbb{A}xe5$ $\mathbb{A}xe5$

Black is ready to play ...d4 and draw the game.

15 $\mathbb{A}a4!$

Now 15...d4? is met by 16 $\mathbb{A}fd1$, exploiting the pin on the d-file to win a pawn.

15... $\mathbb{A}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{A}b4$ $\mathbb{A}c6$ 17 $\mathbb{A}fd1$

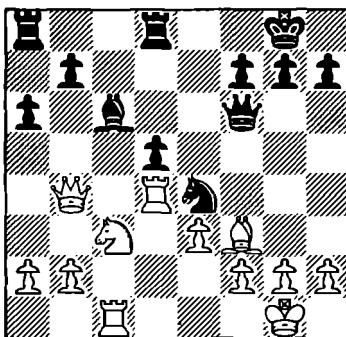


White has accumulated three advantages:

1. He controls d4 and other dark squares on the queenside;
2. The isolani on d5 remains a target; and

3. Black is burdened with a bad bishop.

17... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 18 $\mathbb{H}d4$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f3$



19... $\mathbb{Q}xc3?!$

Trades benefit White, as Black's weaknesses become more prominent.

20 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 21 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 22 $\mathbb{H}c3$ $g6$ 23 $h3$ $\mathbb{W}g5$ 24 $\mathbb{W}d1$ $\mathbb{H}d7$ 25 $a4!$

Intending $b4$ followed by $\mathbb{W}b3$ and $b5$.

25... $h5$

25... $a5?!$ just offers another target. White can reply with 26 $\mathbb{H}c5$.

26 $b4$ $\mathbb{H}ad8$ 27 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{H}d6$ 28 $\mathbb{H}cd3?!$

Preferring a slow squeeze over winning a pawn right away with 28 $b5$ $axb5$ 29 $axb5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 30 $\mathbb{H}xd5$ $\mathbb{H}xd5$, and now:

a) 31 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ gives Black excellent drawing chances, with all the remaining pawns on the same side of the board.

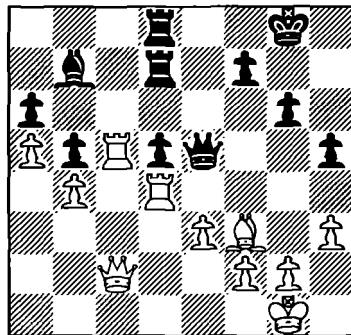
b) 31 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 33 $\mathbb{W}b1$ $\mathbb{H}d2$ and Black may soon generate threats to White's king.

28... $b5?!$

Fixing more pawns on the same

colour as his remaining bishop. 28... $b6$ was a slight improvement.

29 $a5$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 30 $\mathbb{H}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 31 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{H}6d7$ 32 $\mathbb{H}c5$



White's advantages continue to grow. He controls the c-file, the d4-square and the dark squares in general; Black's bishop has turned into a glorified pawn; and the isolani is still a big source of worry for Black.

33... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 33 $h4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 34 $g3$

Every single pawn on the board is on a favourable colour for White, and an unfavourable colour for Black!

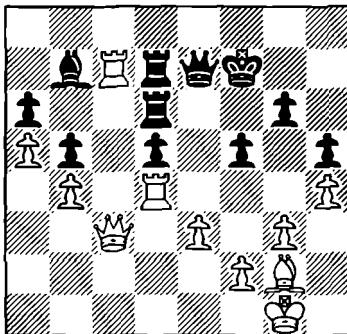
34... $\mathbb{H}d6$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $f5?!$

This weakens the kingside to prevent White from engineering the e4 break. This may be the tipping point for Black. Instead he should go into a holding pattern with 35... $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 36 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ and wait to see how White intends to make progress.

36 $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f7?$

Walking into a combination. Just waiting with 36... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 37 $\mathbb{H}d3$ $\mathbb{H}8d7$ 38 $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{H}d8$ 39 $\mathbb{H}dc3$ $\mathbb{H}8d7$ was the best option.

37 $\mathbb{Kc}7 \mathbb{Bd}7$



38 $\mathbb{Bxb}7!$

Winning a pawn.

38... $\mathbb{Bxb}7$ 39 $\mathbb{Qxd}5+$ $\mathbb{Bxd}5$ 40 $\mathbb{Bxd}5 \mathbb{Kc}7$

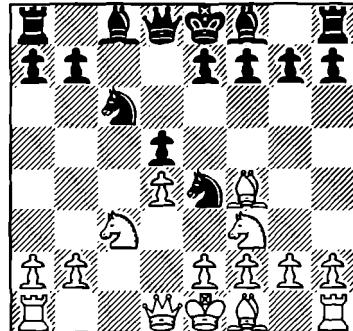
41 $\mathbb{Wd}2$

The key, decisive factors are the extra pawn, the breezy position of Black's king and the new targets on a6 and g6.

41... $\mathbb{We}6$

Preventing $\mathbb{Ed}6$, but it won't be difficult for White to tag Black's king.

42 $\mathbb{Id}8 \mathbb{Kc}1+$ 43 $\mathbb{Kh}2 \mathbb{Wc}7$ 44 $\mathbb{Wd}5+ \mathbb{We}7$
45 $\mathbb{Bg}8 \mathbb{Wf}6$ 46 $\mathbb{Wd}4+$ 1-0



I am going to be brave and give this move a dubious mark, even though players as strong as Kramnik have employed it in the past. The 6... $\mathbb{We}4$ line is by far your opponent's most aggressive option in the Exchange Slav. Black wants nothing to do with defending a symmetrical position a move down and is willing to invest time to turn the game into a Grünfeld structure. I doubt whether Black can get away with this. He takes three moves just to swap off White's knight on c3 and also strengthens White's pawn structure, all in the name of achieving a dynamic position.

7 $\mathbb{e}3 \mathbb{Qxc}3$ 8 $\mathbb{Bxc}3 \mathbb{g}6?!$

Commonly played, but inferior in my opinion. Basically Black is a move down in a Grünfeld.

The only way for Black to play is with 8...e6. After 9 $\mathbb{Id}3 \mathbb{We}7$ 10 0-0 0-0, I like the aggressive 11 $e4!$ (B.Golubovic-B.Bannink, Oberwart 2001) which reminds Black that his king has very few defenders. You can also play the safer option 11 c4, when White retains

Summary

In the ...e6 lines of the Exchange Slav, Black must either endure a bad light-squared bishop or else take on an isolani.

Game 80

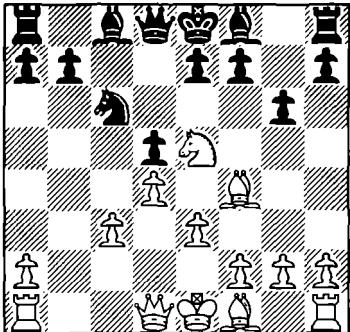
O.Renet-P.Vavra

Czech Open, Pardubice 2006

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 cxd5 cxd5 4 $\mathbb{Qf}3 \mathbb{Qf}6$ 5 $\mathbb{Qc}3 \mathbb{Qc}6$ 6 $\mathbb{Qf}4 \mathbb{Qe}4?!$

A pull due to his central pawn majority.

9...e5!



This simple continuation ensures White a long-lasting advantage.

I have tried a kooky idea, suggested by one of my old computers, MChess: 9 $\mathbb{B}b1?$ $\mathbb{A}g7$ 10 c4 0-0 11 $\mathbb{B}b5?$ with the idea of making Black take on c4 without White having wasted a tempo on $\mathbb{A}e2$. The obvious trouble with the plan is the precarious placement of White's rook. For example, 11...dxc4 12 $\mathbb{A}xc4$ a6 13 $\mathbb{A}d5?$ (Asking for it, but what can I do? The computer made me play it!) 13... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 14 0-0 $\mathbb{A}e6$ 15 $\mathbb{A}c5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5?$! 16 dxc5 $\mathbb{A}xc4$ 17 $\mathbb{A}e1$ $\mathbb{A}c3$ 18 $\mathbb{W}c1$ with crazy complications, C.Lakdawala-G.Grigore, Internet (blitz) 2006.

9... $\mathbb{A}xe5$

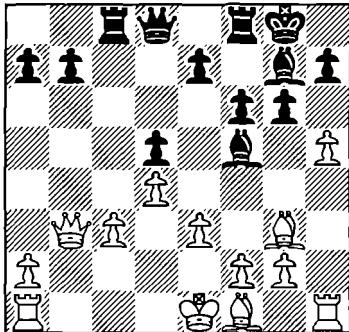
9... $\mathbb{A}g7?$! 10 $\mathbb{A}xc6$ bxc6 11 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{A}d7$ 12 $\mathbb{B}b1$ gives White unpleasant queen-side pressure.

10 $\mathbb{A}xe5$ f6 11 $\mathbb{A}g3$ $\mathbb{A}g7$ 12 h4?

Renet signals that he isn't messing around. White can also opt for the safer and simpler 12 c4 $\mathbb{W}a5+$ 13 $\mathbb{W}d2$, and he presses down

the b- and c-files.

12... $\mathbb{A}f5$ 13 h5 0-0 14 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{A}c8?$



15 h6!

Excellent judgment: White realizes that the far advanced h-pawn's ability to weaken Black's back rank outweighs its vulnerability in an ending.

The alternative is 15 hxg6 hxg6 and now:

a) 16 $\mathbb{A}e2!$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 17 $\mathbb{A}c1$ and White stands a shade better.

b) 16 $\mathbb{W}xb7?$ $\mathbb{A}xc3$ 17 $\mathbb{W}xa7$ $\mathbb{W}c8!$ 18 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{A}xe3+!$ 19 fxe3 $\mathbb{W}c3+$ and White has to fight for equality.

15... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 16 $\mathbb{A}c1$ $\mathbb{A}h8$ 17 $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{A}c6$

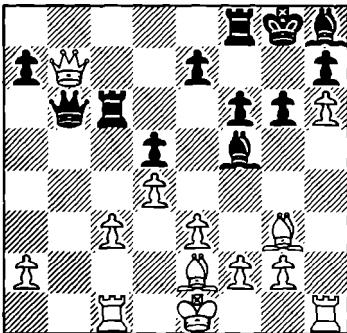
17...b6 doesn't solve Black's problems either. After 18 0-0 $\mathbb{A}fd8$ 19 c4 $\mathbb{A}e6$ 20 cxd5 $\mathbb{A}xd5$ 21 $\mathbb{A}c4$ $\mathbb{A}xc4$ 22 $\mathbb{A}xc4$ $\mathbb{A}xc4$ 23 $\mathbb{W}xc4+$ $\mathbb{A}f8$ 24 $\mathbb{A}c1$, White controls the only open file and Black's king looks insecure thanks to the intruder on h6.

18 $\mathbb{W}xb7!$ $\mathbb{W}b6$

Black agrees to a pawn-down ending. Alternatively:

a) White remains a pawn up after 18... $\mathbb{A}fc8$ 19 0-0 $\mathbb{W}d8$ 20 $\mathbb{W}b4$.

b) 18... \blacksquare xc3? 19 0-0 \blacksquare xc1 20 \blacksquare xc1
 \blacksquare e8 21 \blacksquare c7 \blacksquare f8 (Black gets mated after
21... \blacksquare e1+? 22 \blacksquare f1! \blacksquare d3 23 \blacksquare xe7!
 \blacksquare xf1+ 24 \blacksquare h2 – White's king sits safe
and snug, Black's king doesn't!) 22
 \blacksquare d6! and Black's king is toast.



19 \blacksquare xb6!

19 \blacksquare xe7?! allows Black to gain counterplay with 19... \blacksquare b2! 20 \blacksquare d1
 \blacksquare xc3+ 21 \blacksquare f1 \blacksquare a5.

19... \blacksquare xb6 20 c4 \blacksquare c8 21 0-0 \blacksquare b2 22 \blacksquare f3!

Just like that, Black is busted.

22...g5?!

22...dxc4 23 \blacksquare d5+ \blacksquare f8 24 \blacksquare xc4
 \blacksquare xc4 25 \blacksquare xcc4 was better, but this
would still leave Black minus one pawn
with a vulnerable back rank and also a
weak second rank.

23 cxd5 1-0

Summary

I have trouble pinpointing just where
Black went wrong in this game. The
reality may be that the entire 6... \blacksquare e4?!
line just stinks for Black!

Chapter Nine

Other Lines

In this chapter we are going to examine some odds and ends, lines with transpositions which could have gone into more than one chapter, and also some lines which do not deserve their own chapter.

Hebden-Rowson (Game 81) is a rare example of a London where White pushes his e-pawn to the fourth rank.

Fischer-Petrosian (Game 84) is an Exchange Caro-Kann. This line is just another option for White. If you recapture on d4 with your c-pawn, you get an Exchange Slav instead.

Ortega-Tomescu (Game 85) covers the Polish Defence, where Black tries to exploit the fact that White avoids 2 c4 by playing 2...b5!?. Ortega cleverly manages to turn it into a favourable Ruy Lopez where White has not wasted time playing ♜b5-a4-b3-c2.

Kasparov-Oblitas (Game 86) considers 1 d4 d6 2 ♜f3 ♜g4. This line has

been used by some players as a surprise weapon, but it is a bit toothless since White can either kick the bishop around or get the bishop pair with a pleasant edge.

Finally, Movszisian-Schaffarth (Game 87) covers the dubious Englund Gambit, 1 d4 e5?. The best method against it is to immediately return the pawn for a big development lead.

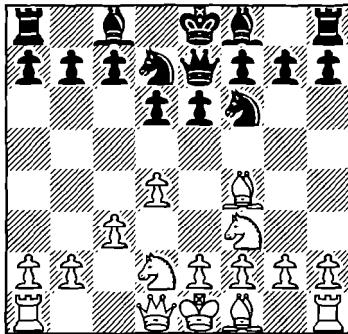
Game 81
M.Hebden-J.Rowson
Scottish Championship,
Edinburgh 2009

1 d4 ♜f6 2 ♜f3 e6 3 c3 d6!? 4 ♜f4
♜bd7 5 ♜bd2

5 h3! looks more accurate, to allow the bishop access to h2 rather than g3 if necessary.

5...♛e7!?

Cagey play from GM Rowson. Black keeps the centre pawns fluid and plans to develop both his bishops by fianchettoing them. The London is so mild-mannered an opening that Black can set up pretty much how he chooses without fear of punishment.



6 ♜g3!

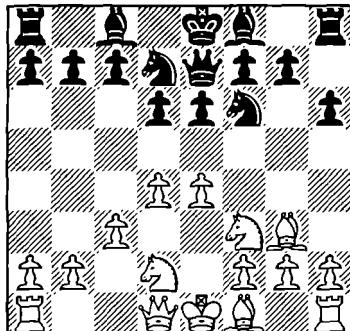
6 h3? e5 7 dx_e5 dx_e5 8 ♜g3 e4 9 ♜d4 e3! 10 fx_e3 c6! gives Black excellent play for the pawn, while 6 e4 e5 7 dx_e5 ♜x_e5 8 ♜e2 g6 is equal.

6...h6

A line which may appeal to a hyper-aggressive opponent is 6...e5!? 7 e3 e4 8 ♜g5 h6 9 ♜h3 g5 10 ♜g1! ♜g7 11 h4. Admittedly, White has been bullied for the last few moves but isn't the worse for it. Black has paid the price for loosening his kingside pawns and risks over-extension. I prefer White, who has not committed his king to that wing.

7 e4!?

For some strange reason only a psychologist would understand, most Londoners loathe pushing their e-pawn two squares to e4.



There is no scriptural reference commanding us to always play our e-pawns to e3 but if you insist, you can take this route by 7 h3 e5 8 e3. Here Black has a choice:

a) 8...e4 9 ♜g1 c6 10 c4 intends ♜e2 and ♜c3. It's similar to a Reversed French, with the bad bishop no longer so bad on the outside of the pawn chain on g3.

b) 8...g6! gives Black equality because White's bishop sits on g3 rather than the superior h2-square. With the bishop on g3, White may lose time to a future ...h5 or some form of ...f5, ...g5 and ...f4.

7...♜h5!? 8 ♜d3 g6

8...♜xg3!? 9 fxg3! e5 10 0-0 c6 looks interesting. The main factors are:

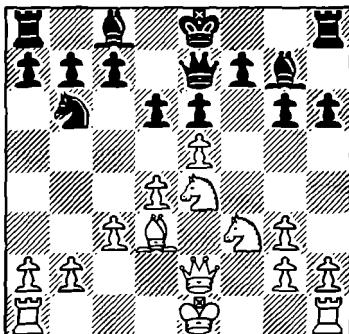
1. White has pressure down the f-file and against f7 with ♜c4 and ♜b3;
2. White has the possibility of ♜h4;
3. White leads in development;
4. The d6-pawn is a potential target;
5. Black has the bishop pair; and
6. Black's dark-squared bishop is unopposed.

Conclusion: If Black survives the next 15 moves, he will stand equal or better.

9 ♜e2 ♜g7 10 e5! ♜b6

If Black tries to win the e-pawn with 10...♜xg3 11 fxg3! dx5 12 dx5 ♜c5?!, he just loses time after 13 ♜b3 ♜b6 14 0-0-0.

11 ♜e4 ♜xg3 12 fxg3!



A good decision. Hebden compromises his pawn structure, capturing away from the centre, in order to attack down the f-file.

12...♝d7 13 0-0 0-0-0!

Bold. After 13...0-0 14 ♜ae1 ♜c6 15 ♜f2 ♜d7, White's kingside space and attacking chances give him an edge.

14 a4!

No time to waste!

14...♝c6

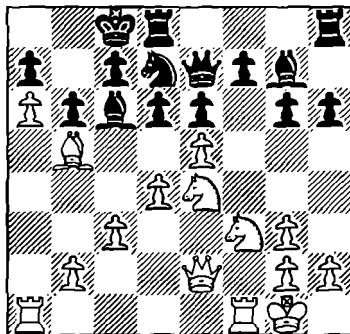
Very few titled players would consider the incredibly greedy 14...♝xa4?! 15 exd6 cxd6 16 b3 ♜xb3 17 ♜fb1 ♜d5 18 ♜xa7, with a strong attack for the pawn.

15 a5 ♜d7 16 a6

16 exd6! cxd6 17 b4 f5 18 ♜ed2 e5

19 b5 ♜xf3 20 gxf3 looks more promising for White.

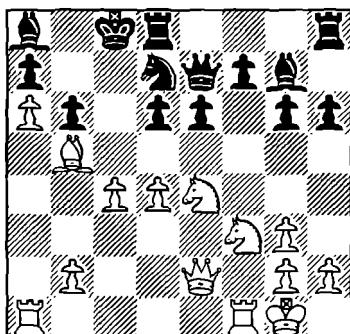
16...b6 17 ♜b5



17...♝d5?

Goading White into playing c4 in an attempt to loosen the central pawns, but White's attacking chances after c4 may outweigh the odds of overextending.

18 c4 ♜a8 19 exd6 cxd6



20 b4!

Threatening to rip open Black's king position with c5.

20...♝b8

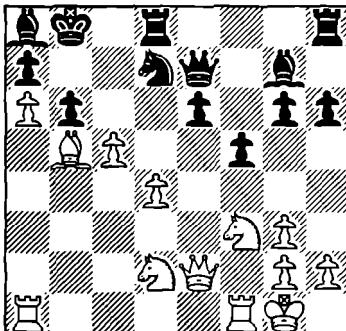
20...d5?! 21 ♜ed2 dxc4 22 ♜xc4 ♜b8 23 ♜e3!, intending ♜f4+, keeps

the attack rolling.

21 c5 dxc5 22 bxc5 f5! 23 ♜ed2?

Underestimating or overlooking Black's next move.

23 ♜f2! ♜xc5 24 dxc5 ♜xa1 25 ♜xa1 ♜xc5 reaches a superior version of the game continuation.



23...♜xc5!

Instead, 23...♝d5? 24 ♜ab1 gives White a winning attack.

24 dxc5 ♜xc5+ 25 ♜h1 ♜xa1 26 ♜xa1 e5 27 ♜b3 ♜d5 28 ♜xe5 ♜h7 29 ♜c4 ♜e4 30 ♜xe4 ♜xe4 31 ♜g1

Black's excellent defence has kept the attack at bay. White is in danger here because his minor pieces are floating in the centre without support.

31...♜c7 32 ♜a4 g5?

Missing a win with 32...♜c2! 33 ♜b4 ♜e8! 34 ♜xg6 ♜e4! 35 ♜a5 ♜d3 36 ♜xd3 ♜xb4 37 ♜b7 ♜b2 38 h4 b5! when it's near certain that the b-pawn will cost White a piece.

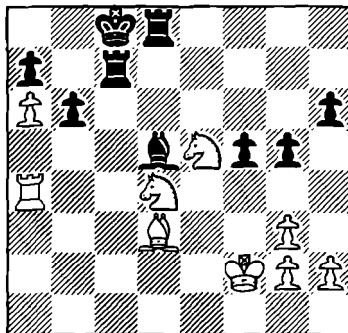
33 ♜f2 ♜d5?! 34 ♜d4! ♜c8?

Black blunders, probably in time pressure.

Black also loses after 34...♜xc4?? 35

♜dc6+ ♜c8 36 ♜xc4 ♜d2+ 37 ♜e3 ♜xg2 38 ♜xa7+ ♜d8 (if 38...♜b8, 39 ♜ec6+ ♜a8 40 ♜d4 mates) 39 ♜ac6+ ♜e8 40 ♜a4 ♜c8 41 a7 ♜a8 42 ♜b4!, but he can hang on with 34...♜a8!.

35 ♜d3!



Suddenly, the previously awkward white pieces generate threats and coordinate in harmony.

35...♜c5 36 ♜xf5+ ♜c7 37 ♜d3 ♜c4 38 ♜b4 ♜g8?

Black still struggles after the superior 38...♜xb4 39 ♜xb4 ♜c4 40 ♜e3.

39 ♜b5+ ♜b8 40 ♜e5! ♜c1

40...♜xb4? is met by 41 ♜c6+ ♜a8 42 ♜c7 mate.

41 ♜d7+! 1-0

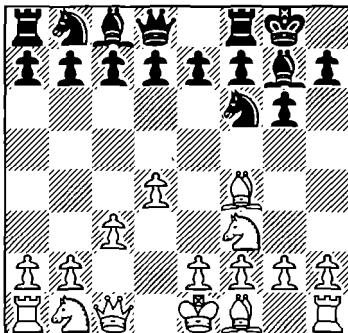
It is hopeless for Black after 41...♜a8?? 42 ♜e4+, 41...♜xd7 42 ♜xd7, or 41...♜c8 42 ♜d4!.

Summary

You can try e4 rather than e3 on rare occasions, but it is optional. One of my students has played the London for the last 10 years and has yet to play his e-pawn to e4 in a single game!

Game 82
R.Schlindwein–I.Solomunovic
Untergrombach 1999

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g6 3 c3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 0-0 5
 $\mathbb{W}c1?$



Talk about a passive/aggressive personality! The game begins with the super-solid c3 London and by move five White is playing for mate!

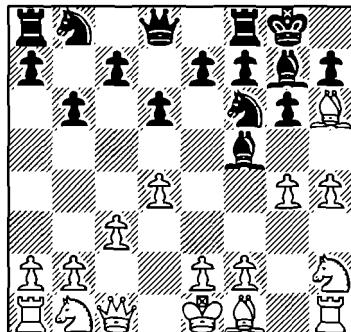
5...b6?!

A meek reaction to White's blatant aggression. Black has better options here:

a) He can sac a pawn, Benko Gambit style, in response to the unnatural $\mathbb{W}c1$ with 5...c5 6 dx5 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 7 b4 b6 8 cxb6 $\mathbb{W}xb6$ 9 e3 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}e5$, which may give Black enough compensation. As a Slav/London guy, I always take such pawns and try to ride out the storm with the extra loot.

b) 5...d6! may be best. White can continue with 6 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ but at least Black has not wasted a tempo with ...b6.

6 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ d6 7 h4 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5?!$ 9 g4?



Embracing chaos!

9... $\mathbb{Q}xg4?$

It's hard to resist taking such a pawn. After all, White is actually behind in development. Here are the other options:

a) 9... $\mathbb{Q}xg4?$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ d5 12 h5! gives White a powerful attack.

b) 9... $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 10 $\mathbb{W}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ c6. I will chicken out here and assess this position as unclear.

c) Perhaps Black should humbly back down with 9... $\mathbb{Q}d7!$. After 10 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 11 g5 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 13 d5 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ Black will get some counterplay with ...c6 and/or ...e6.

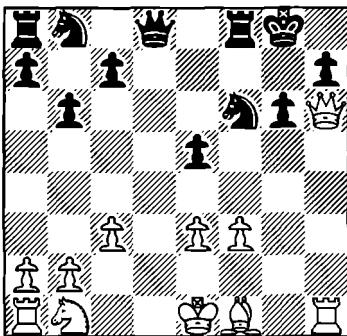
10 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 12 h5 e5

This central counter looks perfectly logical, but it doesn't help. What a baffling game – White breaks all the rules and still stands better.

12... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ doesn't let Black off the hook either: 13 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ c6 14 $\mathbb{W}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 15 e4 h6 16 $\mathbb{W}g3$ g5 17 f4 $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ with a huge attack for the pawn.

13 f3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 15 $\mathbb{W}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$

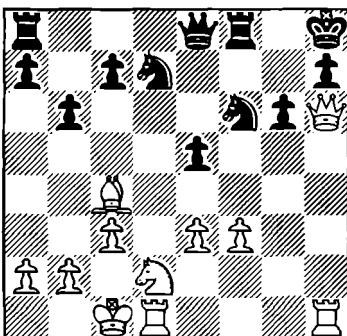
16 dxe5 dxe5 17 e3!



The sleeping bishop awakes.

17...We8 18 Qc4+ Wh8 19 Qd2 Qbd7

20 0-0-0



20...Qh5?

I would have bailed out into a bad ending by returning the pawn. After 20...We7 21 Hdg1 Wg7 22 Hxg6 Wxh6 23 Hgxh6 Hae8 24 Qe4 He7 25 Qg5! Black is under pressure but still alive.

21 Hdg1 Qdf6 22 Qe4 Hg8

This looks like panic, but White breaks through after 22...Qxe4 23 Hxh5 Hd7 24 Hh2 Qf6 25 Hxg6.

23 Hxg8 Qxg8 24 Wg5 We7 25 Wxe7 Qxe7 26 Hd1 Qf5 27 Hd7 1-0

Summary

This Twilight Zone game shows that there is still a lot of scope for creativity (5 Wc1?) in the London, and some people play it just to lure booked-up opponents out of their comfort zones.

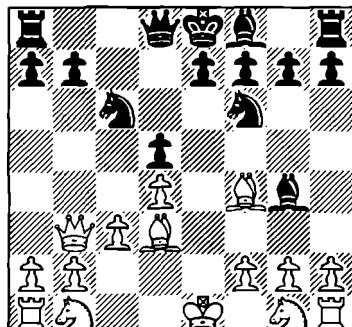
Game 83

R.Fischer-T.Petrosian
USSR versus the World,
Belgrade 1970

1 e4

The horror! Please try to remain calm. The London can transpose to the Exchange Caro-Kann in this way: 1 d4! (an obvious improvement over Fischer's dubious first move!) 1...d5 2 Qf4 Qf6 3 e3 c5 4 c3 cxd4 5 exd4 Qc6 6 Qd3 and we get our game position. Instead 5 cxd4 reaches an Exchange Slav, which we discussed in the previous chapter.

1...c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 Qd3 Qc6 5 c3 Qf6 6 Qf4 Qg4 7 Wb3



7...Qa5

Or:

a) 7... $\mathbb{W}c8$ looks clumsy. After 8 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $r6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}gf3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10 0-0 0-0 11 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 12 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $hxg6$, the bishop pair gave White the advantage in W.Browne-B.Larsen, San Antonio 1972.

b) 7... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $e6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}gf3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$? (better is 10... $\mathbb{W}c7$! 11 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}ae1$ with a complicated position) 11 $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $a6$ (12... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14 $f3!$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 15 $g4$ wins) 13 $h3!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 15 $g4$ and Black didn't have enough for the piece, G.Kasparov-C.Costa, Lisbon (simul) 1999.

8 $\mathbb{W}a4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $e6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 11 $a4!$

Denying Black the chance to swap his bad bishop via ... $\mathbb{Q}b5$. Black can't make good use of the weakening of b3.

11... $\mathbb{Q}c8$

11... $\mathbb{W}b3$ doesn't help Black at all after 12 $\mathbb{W}e2!$ (12 $\mathbb{W}c1?$! $\mathbb{Q}c4$ looks good for Black) 12... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}c1!$ and Black's queen gets ejected with $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ next.

12 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 13 $\mathbb{W}b1$

Sidestepping ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$.

13... $\mathbb{Q}h5!$

Botvinnik wrote that he had great difficulties playing Petrosian because of his unpredictability. Here, Petrosian tries to confuse Fischer. If he develops normally with 13... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14 0-0 0-0, then 15 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ offers White attacking chances with standard ideas like $\mathbb{Q}e1-e3$.

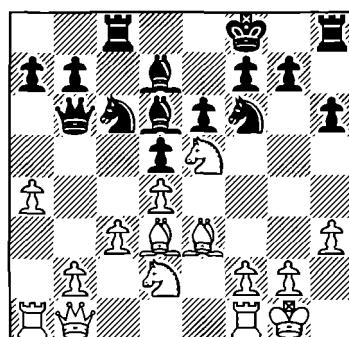
14 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $h6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e5!$

After the routine 15 0-0?!, $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 16 $g3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ Black looks fine.

15... $\mathbb{Q}f6$

After 15... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 16 $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 18 0-0! (Black turns things around following 18 $g3?$ $d4!$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 0-0 20 0-0 $dxc3$ 21 $bxcc3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$) 18... $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f3$, White's control of d4 and the extra space give him a clear advantage.

16 $h3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 17 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}f8!$?



If one of my students showed me this move, I would be yelling bloody murder but when Petrosian does it's another matter. His finely tuned sense of danger warned him that Black walks into a hailstorm after castling kingside. His king is safer after ... $\mathbb{Q}f8$, but it also puts his h8-rook out of play for a long time.

18 $f4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$

Black drops a piece if he tries to get clever with 18... $\mathbb{Q}xe5??$ 19 $fxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$, as 20 $a5!$ breaks the queen's pin on the d4-pawn.

19 $\mathbb{Q}f2!$

The bishop joins the attack via h4.

19... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}h4$

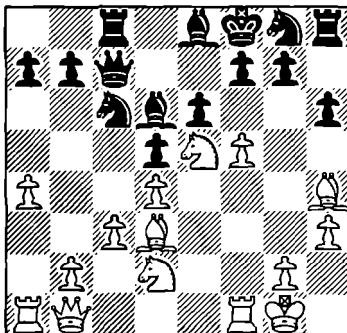
The position looks similar to some of the favourable Reversed Stonewall

Dutch attacks from Chapter One.

20... $\mathbb{Q}g8?$

After this move, Fischer runs roughshod over Black. 20... $\mathbb{Q}e7$, adding a defender, had to be tried.

21 f5!



Now lines open quickly in the centre.

21... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

21... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 22 dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ also leaves Black fighting for his life.

22 dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 23 fxe6 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 24 exf7 $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$

Black's big problem is the snoozing rook on h8. It's hard to play a rook down in an open position.

28... $\mathbb{Q}e7!$

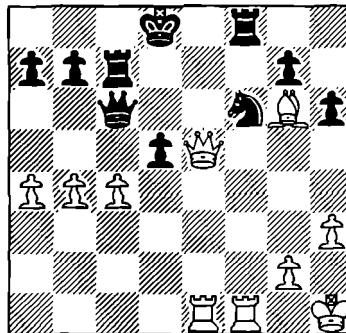
Petrosian decides to gamble on king safety in order to bring the h8-rook to life. This is Black's only chance.

29 $\mathbb{W}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$

Or 29... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 30 $\mathbb{M}ae1$ $\mathbb{W}c5+$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 32 $\mathbb{W}f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 33 b4! $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 34 $\mathbb{M}c1$ $\mathbb{W}b2$ 35 $\mathbb{W}d6+$ $\mathbb{M}c6$ 36 $\mathbb{M}xc6+$ $bxc6$ 37 a5+ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 38 $\mathbb{W}c5+$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}c2+$ $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 40 a6! and White forces mate.

30 $\mathbb{M}ae1$ $\mathbb{W}c5+$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{M}f8$ 32 $\mathbb{W}e5!$

Preventing ... $\mathbb{Q}c7-b8$. If now 32... $\mathbb{W}c7??$, White wins with 33 $\mathbb{W}xd5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 34 $\mathbb{M}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 35 $\mathbb{M}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 36 $\mathbb{M}xc8$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 37 $\mathbb{M}e6+$.
32... $\mathbb{M}c7$ 33 b4 $\mathbb{W}c6$ 34 c4!



A deadly line-opener.

34... $\mathbb{d}xc4$ 35 $\mathbb{M}f5!$

When beginners start a king hunt, they tend to chase the enemy king to safety. The key to a successful attack is to cut off the surrounding squares and encircle the defending king.

35... $\mathbb{M}ff7$ 36 $\mathbb{M}d1+$ $\mathbb{M}fd7$

Black must fork over material since 36... $\mathbb{Q}d7??$ 37 $\mathbb{M}fe1$ loses instantly.

37 $\mathbb{M}xd7$ $\mathbb{M}xd7$ 38 $\mathbb{W}b8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7?$

The overwhelming pressure is too much even for Petrosian. The only way to play on would be 38... $\mathbb{W}c8$, but 39 $\mathbb{M}xd7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 40 $\mathbb{W}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 41 $\mathbb{W}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 42 $\mathbb{M}f4!$ still wins.

39 $\mathbb{M}de1+$ 1-0

39... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ is met by 40 $\mathbb{W}e8$ mate.

Summary

It is worth going over a few Exchange

Caro games just so you know the plans for White in case you get the transposition through the London. If you don't like these positions for White, then just recapture with cxd4 and play the Exchange Slav.

Game 84
C.Lakdawala-R.Bruno
 Gambito (rapid),
 San Diego 2009

1 d4 ♜f6 2 ♜f3 c5

It begins as a Benoni.

3 c3 b6

Now it could turn into a Reversed Réti, if Black plays ...g6.

4 ♜f4 ♜b7 5 e3 e6

My mistake – now we have a Queen's Indian.

6 ♜d3

White should delay the development of the b1-knight in case Black plays ...cxd4, when White responds with cxd4! and gains access to the c3-square for his knight. See Prié-Braun (Game 28) for an example.

6...♜e7 7 h3 0-0 8 0-0 d5

8...♜c6 and 8...cxd4 are covered in the Queen's Indian chapter.

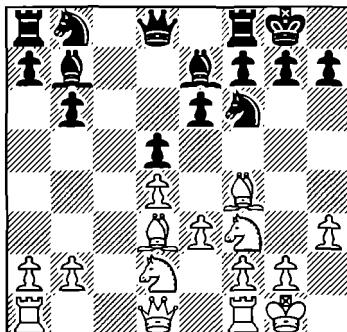
9 ♜bd2 cxd4!

If Black is after a draw he can try 9...♜a6. After 10 ♜xa6 ♜xa6 11 c4 cxd4 12 ♜xd4 ♜c5 13 ♜e2 ♜c8 14 ♜ac1 ♜d7 15 ♜f3 he is very close to equalizing.

10 cxd4

And here we go. Finally the game

has crystallized into an Exchange Slav. That is four separate transpositions!



10...♝e4!?

My opponent in this game is a very aggressive player, so why on earth did he pick the Black side of an Exchange Slav when facing the London?

After the logical-looking 10...♜a6?
11 ♜xa6 ♜xa6 12 ♜c1 Black is faced with a series of problems:

1. White controls the c-file;

2. The c6-square is weak and may become vulnerable to ♜e5 and ♜c6;

3. ♜a4 is a serious problem for Black; and

4. If White chases the knight from a6, then c7 and possibly a7 become targets.

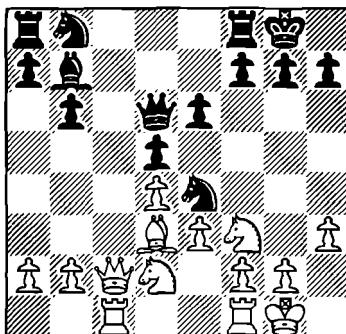
Black's best option may be 10...♜c6
11 a3 ♜c8, with a passive but weakness-free position.

11 ♜c1 ♜d6?

Black doesn't like the pressure mounting on c7 and grudgingly agrees to swap off his good bishop. However, this decision still leaves c7 open to infiltration.

11... $\mathbb{Q}d6$! 12 $\mathbb{W}c2$ g6 was better, and Black stands just slightly worse.

12 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 13 $\mathbb{W}c2$



Hitting e4 and c7.

13... $\mathbb{Q}c6?$

Black sacs a pawn to activate his bad bishop, but perhaps this is an over-reaction.

Passive defence with 13... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ didn't appeal to my opponent. After 14 $\mathbb{W}c7$ $\mathbb{W}xc7$ 15 $\mathbb{B}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 18 $\mathbb{B}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $dxe4$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 21 a3 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 22 $\mathbb{B}c4$ Black has serious problems in the ending because White controls both the c-file and the c6-square. Still, this is the line he should play.

13...f5?! isn't very appealing either. After 14 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e2!$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ (if 15... $\mathbb{B}ac8??$, 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $fxe4$ 17 $\mathbb{W}a4$ wins) 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $dxe4$ 17 $\mathbb{W}c7$ $\mathbb{W}xc7$ 18 $\mathbb{B}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 20 $\mathbb{B}c4$ Black is fighting for his life: his knight on a6 is out of play; White controls the c-file; and, furthermore, the knight on e5 radiates strength.

14 $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$

Stronger than 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe4?$ $\mathbb{Q}dxe4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ and now:

a) 16 $\mathbb{W}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 17 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ g6 and Black stands worse but at least he keeps the material balance.

b) 16 $\mathbb{Q}xh7+?$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 17 $\mathbb{W}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 18 $\mathbb{gxf3}$ g6 19 $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ and White is in big trouble.

14... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 15 $\mathbb{W}xe4$

This is superior to 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ because the white queen would have lost time anyway along the c-file.

15... $\mathbb{B}ac8?$

Missing White's threat. 15...h6 was necessary.

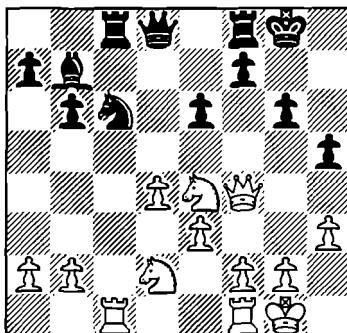
16 $\mathbb{Q}g5$

Forcing Black to puncture all the dark squares around his king.

16... $\mathbb{g}6$ 17 $\mathbb{W}h4$ $h5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}ge4$

I didn't want to allow messy complications with 18 g4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4!$ 19 $exd4$ $\mathbb{W}f4$.

18... $\mathbb{W}d8$ 19 $\mathbb{W}f4!$



The queen and knight's trajectories hit the stress points d6, e5, f6 and h6. Black scrambles to defend the punctured squares.

19... $\mathbb{Q}b4!$

Activating his bishop while his knight watches d3, d5 and a2. It's a good try but it's too late for Black to save himself. There are just too many weak dark squares to cover.

20 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$

Forced: 20... $\mathbb{Q}xc8?$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 23 g4! wins immediately.

21 $\mathbb{Q}h6$

Threat: $\mathbb{Q}g5$.

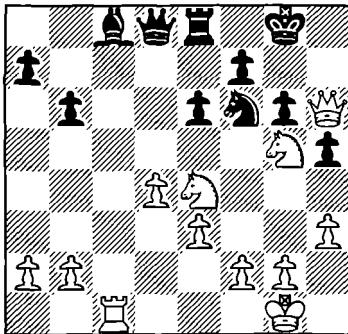
21... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}c1$

Threat: $\mathbb{Q}xc8$.

22... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

23... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ fails to 24 $\mathbb{Q}de4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}d6$.

24 $\mathbb{Q}de4$



Threat: $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ again!

24... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}c7!$ 1-0

Taking advantage of the exhausted and overworked black queen to force mate. Every white piece did its fair share participating in the final attack.

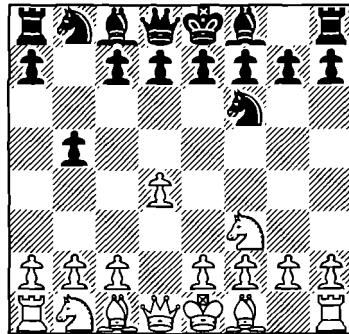
Summary

Don't get confused by the many transpositional possibilities in the London.

You may reach an Exchange Slav via other lines. This one began as a Benoni, could have turned into a Réti, morphed into a Queen's Indian, then a double queen's pawn, and only then settled into an Exchange Slav. I could easily have inserted this game into four different chapters. It ended up in this chapter to remind you to be careful about transpositions.

Game 85 L.Ortega-V.Tomescu Padova 1998

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ b5



The Polish Defence. Black takes advantage of the fact that White did not play 2 c4 to push his b-pawn two squares.

3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$

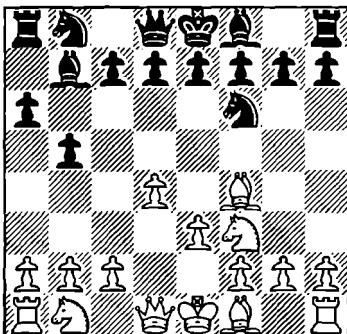
You can also play Torre-style with 3 $\mathbb{Q}g5$, and now:

a) 3... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ g6 6 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 7 e3 a6 8 c4 and White has the edge due to his development lead.

b) 3...e6? 4 e4 a6 5 e5 h6 6 ♜h4 g5 7 ♜xg5 hxg5 8 ♜xg5 ♜e7 9 exf6 and Black can't recapture because of 10 ♜f3.

c) 3...♜b7 4 ♜bd2 h6? (now Black gets a move-down version of a Trompowsky) 5 ♜xf6 exf6 6 e3 and White has a terrific position, although I managed to mess things up later on in C.Lakdawala-E.Sevillano, SCCF State Championship 2008.

3...♜b7 4 e3 a6



5 ♜bd2

Another possibility is to disrupt Black immediately with 5 a4 b4 6 ♜bd2 d5 7 ♜b3, and the knight eyes both a5 and c5, C.Lakdawala-H.Waren, Internet (blitz) 2009.

5...e6 6 ♜d3 c5 7 c3 ♜c6 8 0-0 d6 9 e4!

9 h3?! allows Black to take advantage of White's bishop on d3 to achieve the break 9...e5!.

9...e5 10 ♜e3 ♜e7

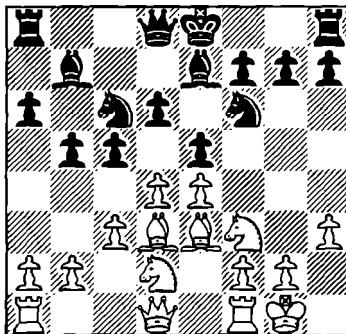
Normally Black would love to pick off the dark-squared bishop, but he doesn't seem to have the time to do so here: 10...♜g4?! 11 d5 and now:

a) 11...♜xe3 12 fxe3 ♜e7 13 ♜g5 f6

14 ♜e6 ♜b8 15 ♜h5+ leaves Black in serious difficulties.

b) 11...♜b8 12 a4 (open the position when ahead in development) 12...c4 13 ♜c2 ♜xe3 14 fxe3 ♜e7 15 axb5 axb5 16 ♜xa8 ♜xa8 17 b3 cxb3 18 ♜d3! ♜b6 19 ♜e1 ♜a6 20 ♜xb3 ♜c7 21 ♜b4 f5 22 c4 fxe4 23 ♜xe4 0-0 24 ♜c3 and White eventually wins the b-pawn.

11 h3



We reach a favourable Chigorin Lopez position. Why favourable? Well, White didn't waste time with ♜b5-a4-b3-c2 as he does in the normal Lopez lines. Instead, he saved time by playing his bishop to d3 in one shot. Note also that Black really didn't gain a tempo with ...e5, since he moved his e-pawn twice to kick the bishop on f4.

11...0-0

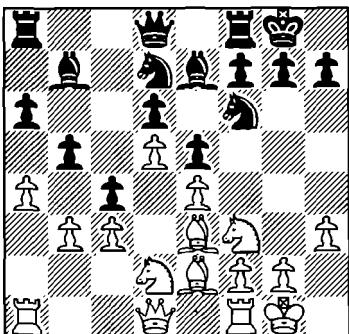
11...cxsd4 12 cxd4 ♜b4? 13 ♜b1 exd4 14 ♜xd4 only helps White.

12 d5 ♜b8

12...♜a7 helps safeguard b5 at the cost of posting the knight on a poor square.

13 a4 c4 14 ♜e2!

Much stronger than the routine 14 $\mathbb{B}c2$. The bishop takes aim at c4 and b5.
14... $\mathbb{B}bd7$ 15 $b3!$



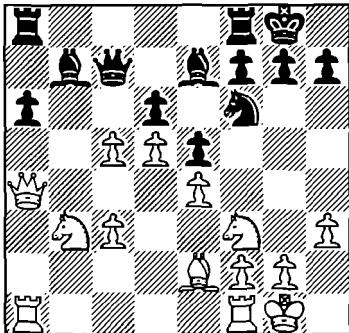
The queenside collapse begins.
15... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 16 $bxcc4!$

Stronger than 16 $axb5$ $axb5$ 17 $bxcc4$ $\mathbb{W}xa1$ 18 $\mathbb{W}xa1$ $\mathbb{A}a8$ 19 $\mathbb{W}b1$ $bxcc4$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xc4$, after which Black's control of c5 gives him some chances to blockade and hold the game.

16... $bxcc4!?$

16... $bxcc4$ 17 $a5$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 18 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{E}ab8$ 19 $\mathbb{E}fb1$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ leaves White in firm control and with an extra pawn.

17 $\mathbb{W}xa4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xc5!$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 20 $c5!$



White returns the extra pawn for two reasons:

1. To clear c4 for a white knight; and
2. To gum up the c5-square with a black pawn.

20... $dxcc5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}c8?$

Black had to try 21... $\mathbb{E}fb8$.

22 $\mathbb{W}c6$ $\mathbb{W}a7!?$

Allowing himself to get completely pushed around.

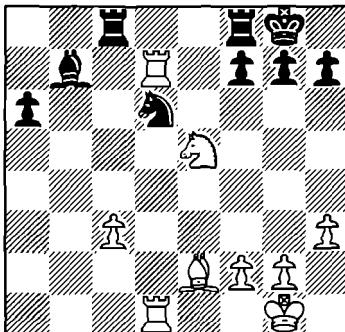
Black can try to grovel a draw in the line 22... $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{E}fb8$ 26 $\mathbb{E}fb1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}ac4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{E}a7$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{E}xc8$ 30 $\mathbb{E}xa6$.

23 $d6$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ 25 $\mathbb{E}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$

26 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 27 $\mathbb{E}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 28 $\mathbb{E}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$

28... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 29 $\mathbb{E}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 30 $\mathbb{E}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}g4!$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 33 $\mathbb{E}e7$ breaks the blockade of d7.

29 $\mathbb{E}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 30 $\mathbb{E}d7!$



It's over now. Black loses material.

30... $\mathbb{Q}e4$

30... $\mathbb{E}ce8$ also drops a piece, after 31 $f4$ $f6$ 32 $\mathbb{E}1xd6$.

31 $\mathbb{E}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 32 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{E}fe8$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $f6$

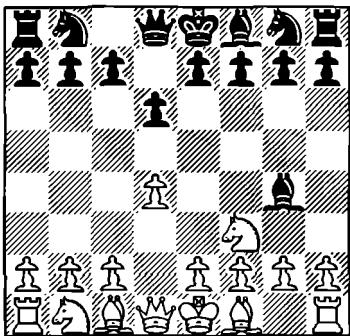
34 ♜f3 ♜xe1+ 35 ♜xe1 ♜e4 36 ♜e7
♝d6 37 ♜xc8 1-0

Summary

Be prepared to enter Chigorin Lopez-style positions in the 2...b5 lines.

Game 86 G.Kasparov-C.Oblitas Guerrero Simultaneous Display, Lima 1993

1 d4 d6 2 ♜f3 ♜g4



Black intends to either take the knight, creating a structural imbalance, or pin the knight if White moves his e-pawn.

3 e4

If you want to keep the game within queen's pawn opening lines, you can try 3 c4. Here are two examples:

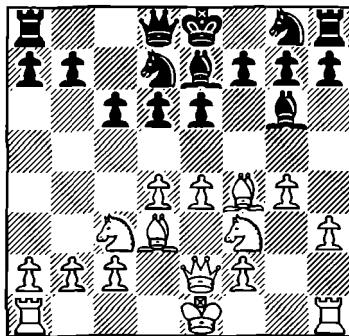
a) 3...♜d7 4 ♜b3 ♜b8 5 h3 ♜xf3 6 ♜xf3 g6 7 ♜a3 ♜g7 8 e3 a6 9 ♜e2 ♜gf6 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♜d1 c6 12 ♜d2 ♜c7 13 ♜e1 b5 14 ♜a5 ♜b7 15 ♜d2 and White's bishop pair gave him the supe-

rior chances in A.Karpov-J.Hickl, Baden Baden 1995.

b) 3...♜xf3 4 exf3 g6 5 ♜c3 ♜g7 has been played quite a few times. In L.Van Wely-J.Van der Wiel, Leeuwarden 2002, Van Wely attempted to punish his opponent with the super-aggressive continuation 6 h4!? h5 7 ♜e3 c6 8 ♜d3 ♜f6 9 g4!?

3...♜d7 4 h3 ♜h5 5 ♜c3 e6 6 ♜d3 6 g4 ♜g6 7 ♜e2, intending h4 and ♜h3, is also a plan.

6...♜e7 7 ♜e2 c6 8 g4! ♜g6 9 ♜f4



Kasparov has emerged from the opening very well:

1. He controls greater territory, including the centre;

2. He has attacking chances, whichever way Black goes with his king; and

3. Black is seriously cramped and limited in his development choices.

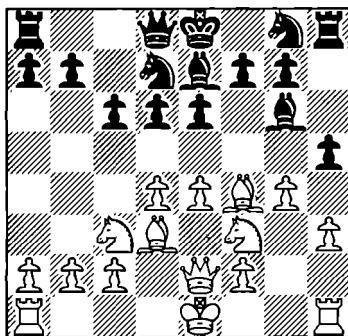
9...h5?!

A confrontation is not in your best interests when you are cramped and behind in development.

Black can minimize his disadvantage by playing it Caro-Kann style with

9...d5! 10 0-0-0 dx e4 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}gf6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ 0-0-0.

White still holds the advantage due to his space and bishop pair, but at least Black has a solid position.

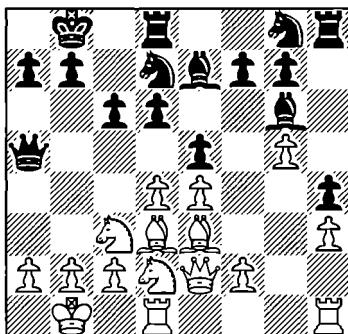


10 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ 0-0-0 12 g5 h4 13 $\mathbb{Q}d2!$

Sidestepping ... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ and transferring the knight to the assault on the black king.

13...e5 14 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$

Opening the position only helps White after 14...exd4? 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 16 f3.



15 d5! $\mathbb{Q}f8$

Black's pieces are tripping over each

other.

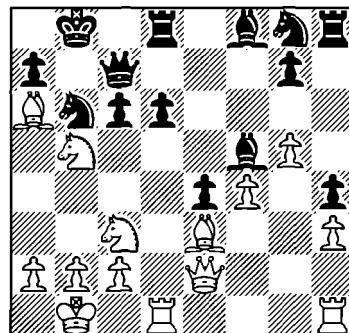
16 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$

Black must accept exposure to his king or a slow squeeze after 17...c5 18 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ a6 19 a4.

18 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}bc6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ f5?!

The best chance was to rush another defender into the danger zone, with 19... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}ec8$.

20 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 21 f4! e4 22 $\mathbb{Q}ab5!!$



With a black rook, knight and bishop snoozing on the kingside, Kasparov breaks through on the other wing. This shot requires some heavy-duty calculation, and this is a simul game!

22... $\mathbb{Q}xb5$

Black must accept since he collapses after 22... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}f2$.

23 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}d4!$

Another path to victory would be 25 $\mathbb{Q}xb6!$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xd6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xd8$.

25... $\mathbb{Q}c6$

If 25... $\mathbb{Q}e6$, 26 $\mathbb{Q}b4!$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ wins.

26 $\mathbb{Q}xa7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}c4$

27 $\mathbb{Q}b4!$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ was simpler.

27... $\mathbb{Q}d5$

Black could hardly hope to survive after 27... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xb6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}e3!$ $d5$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 31 $a4!$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}c3!$.

28 $\mathbb{Q}xb6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}a4+!$ 1-0

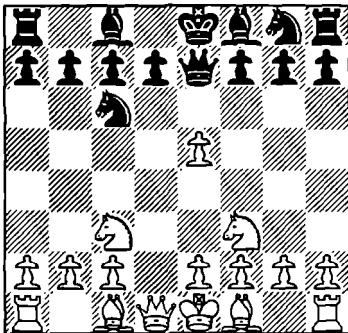
Summary

After 1... $d6$ and 2... $\mathbb{Q}g4$, White has two main paths:

1. To play it Pirc style, with $e4$, $h3$ and $g4$; and
2. To play it queen's pawn style, with $c4$.

Both lead to an edge for White.

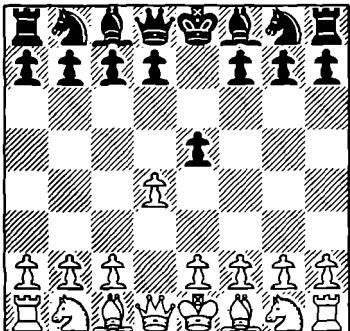
3... $d6$ is also seen. After 4 $exd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ Black will play ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$, ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ and castle queenside, with some play for the pawn. However, 4 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ is a simple move which messes up Black's plans. 4 $\mathbb{Q}c3!$



Game 87

K.Movsziszian-P.Schaffarth
Bad Wörishofen 1995

1 $d4$ $e5?$



The dorky Englund Gambit, which is seen at club level and also used in blitz games in an attempt to confuse opponents.

2 $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$

This move refutes Black's opening. White returns the pawn for a great position.

The silly point of the gambit is that 4 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ allows Black to regain his pawn with 4... $\mathbb{Q}b4+$. Even so, White stands better after 5 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}c3$, threatening $\mathbb{Q}b1$ and $\mathbb{Q}b5$.

4... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 5 $e4$ $c6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

Black has a sorry-looking game after 6 $\mathbb{Q}d4!$ intending $f4$.

6... $d6$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}d4!$ $g5!$

Black gets steamrollered if he allows $f4$.

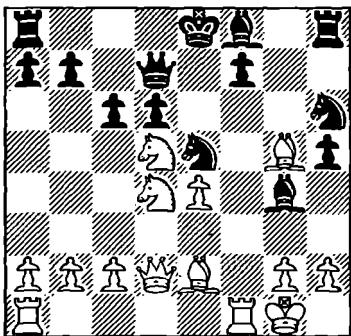
8 $o-o$ $h5?!$

We are obviously dealing with an optimist! Black sacs a pawn unsoundly, then boldly launches an attack when behind in development and lacking space!

9 $f4!$

Of course White opens the game with such a large development lead.

9...gxf4 10 ♜xf4 ♜h6 11 ♜d2 ♜g4 12 ♜g5 ♜d7 13 ♜d5!



13...♜g8

13...cxd5?? 14 ♜b5 ♜c6 15 exd5 is a nightmare for Black.

14 ♜a5!?

Tricky, but the simple 14 ♜e3! gives White a fantastic position. Curiously, Fritz, in its great strategic wisdom, proclaims the game to be equal here!

14...cxd5?

This is suicide! 14...♜c8! 15 ♜f6+ ♜xf6 16 ♜xf6 b6! would keep Black alive.

15 ♜b5 ♜c6 16 ♜a4 ♜c8?!

Losing right away. Also hopeless was 16...♜e2 17 ♜xe2 dxе4 18 ♜xe4+ ♜e7 19 ♜d4 d5 20 ♜e3 and the Black king is stranded.

**17 exd5 ♜g7 18 dxc6 bxc6 19 ♜xc6 ♜f8
20 ♜e5 1-0**

Summary

I wouldn't lose much sleep over 1 d4 e5?.

Chapter Ten

An Inconvenient Move Order

You need to be aware of a slick move order at Black's disposal, specifically designed to throw London players out of sync. It goes like this:

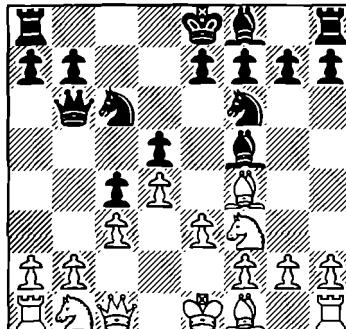
1 d4 ♜f6 2 ♜f3 d5!

You see what has happened? Normally, in double queen's pawn lines we avoid bringing out our g1-knight early and play 2 ♜f4. Here Black has tricked us into bringing out our knight early.

Why does this matter? Well, if we insist on a London move order with 3 ♜f4 c5 4 c3 ♜b6 5 ♜b3 ♜c6 6 e3, Black has 6...c4! 7 ♜c2 ♜f5! which forces 8 ♜c1 (see following diagram).

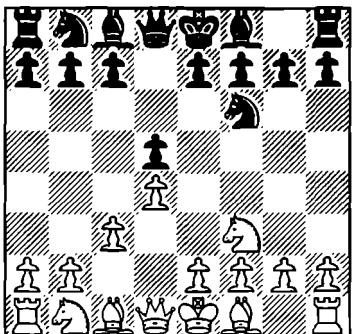
Witness the dark underbelly of the London, much like turning over a rock and watching the bugs creep about below! Now I don't know about you, but I don't find White's position too inspirational and advise you to avoid it entirely. Just look at the white queen cowering on c1. This is not a good han-

dling of the white pieces, despite King Kamsky's frequent arrival at this position.



In this chapter I offer some ways to dodge this position and bulletproof yourself from Black's dirty trick. The best method of avoiding the above diagram may be the sequence 1 d4 ♜f6 2 ♜f3 d5! 3 c3! (see following diagram).

Use Kamsky-Karjakin (Game 89) as your model on how to battle against Black's annoying move order.

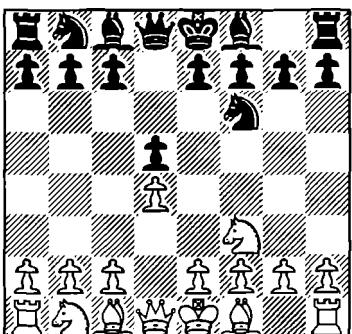


Game 88
G.Kamsky-B.Gelfand
 World Blitz Championship,
 Moscow 2007

1 d4 ♜f6 2 ♜f3

2 ♜f4 avoids Black's line, but then you need to be ready for the pawn sac 2...c5 3 d5 ♜b6 4 ♜c3 ♜xb2 5 ♜d2, covered in Vaganian-Kupreichik (Game 77).

2...d5!



Behold the terror which surpasses all imagining! Sorry, I lost my cool for a second, as I always do when Black plays

this dreaded move order. I wish FIDE would ban it for unsportsmanlike conduct by Black. Actually, there is a solution to the problem which we look at next game.

3 ♜f4?

Admirable gumption from King Kamsky, who unfurls the London banner despite Gelfand's nasty anti-London move order. Kamsky spurns the option to just dodge the London altogether and play the White side of a Queen's Gambit or Slav with 3 c4. In the next game he changes his mind and plays the superior 3 c3!.

3...c5 4 c3?

Kamsky may be taking party loyalty a bit too far in this instance.

4 e3 ♜c6 5 c3 ♜b6 6 ♜b3 c4! reaches the same position as in the game. 4 dxc5 is White's last chance to escape Black's "refutation" line (see Games 90-91).

4...♜b6 5 ♜b3

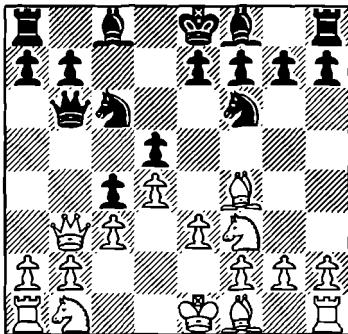
5 ♜c2!? is a radical attempt to avoid the game continuation. 5...♜c6 6 e3 ♜f5 7 dxc5! axb6 9 ♜a3 ♜e4 10 ♜b5 ♜d7 (A.Sakri-D.Marciano, Tarbes 2003) 11 ♜e5+ ♜xe5 12 ♜xe5 may be equal, but I would take White here. He has the b5-square and I think this means more than Black's centre and open a-file.

5...♜c6 6 e3

6 dxc5!? ♜xc5 7 ♜bd2 g6 is equal.

6...c4!

Black equalizes at the very minimum and Kamsky simply relies on his Slav/London skills to win from equality!

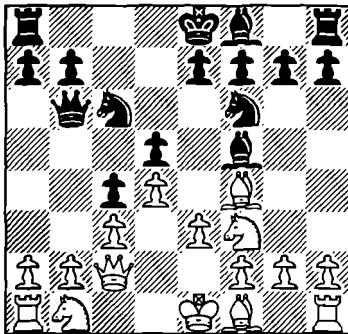


7 $\mathbb{W}c2$

This is what we normally try to achieve, but with a white knight on d2 instead of f3. Black exploits this difference.

The ending after 7 $\mathbb{W}xb6?!$ axb6 8 $\mathbb{Q}a3 \mathbb{Q}a5!$ is without promise for White. I already prefer Black, who is ready for ...b5, ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$, ...e6 and ...b4.

7... $\mathbb{Q}f5!$



This annoying move is the problem. Black gains a tempo and forces the queen back.

8 $\mathbb{W}c1$

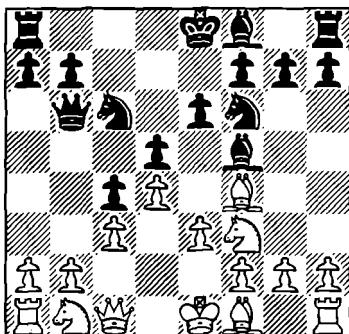
It is with deep regret that I must now blaspheme King Kamsky and this

particular variation of our beloved opening! I loathe this position for White and advise you to try and avoid it with 3 c3!, which still allows the London. Maybe I'm overreacting, because Kamsky has played the White side of this position no less than nine times. To me the line is a clunker and it just feels like White has the black pieces and trying to equalize!

Naturally not 8 $\mathbb{W}xf5??$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ and the rook falls.

8...e6

Black can also just pick off the bishop pair, but this shouldn't worry White too much since the position remains closed for the moment. I wouldn't mind playing White after 8... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 10 $hxg3$ g6 11 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 12 b3 cxb3 13 axb3. C.Bauer-L.Salgado Lopez, Ourense (blitz) 2009. The swap of Black's c-pawn for White's a-pawn makes up for the fact that Black owns the bishop pair.



9 h3 h6 10 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{W}d8$

10... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (Black's idea is to meet 11 b3?? with 11... $\mathbb{Q}a3!$) 11... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

11 0 0 0-0 13 $\mathbb{E}e1$ b5 14 b4 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 15 g4

was agreed drawn in A.Kharlov-A.Volzhin, Linares 1997. Obviously there is a lot of play left and either side may continue the game.

11... $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12 0-0 0-0 13 $\mathbb{E}e1$

Not the most exciting position we have covered in the book! White's plan is simple: play for the e4 pawn break. Normally Black aims for queenside expansion with ...b5, ...a5 and ...b4.

13... $\mathbb{Q}e4$

This may not be best and only seems to help White achieve the e4 break.

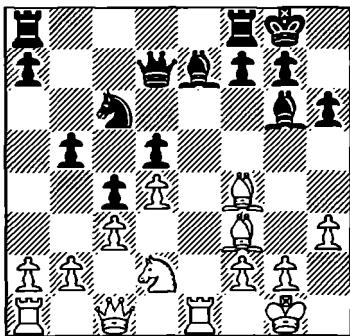
14 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f3!$ b5

Avoiding the trap 16...f5?! 17 b3 b5? (17...cxb3 trades c-pawn for a-pawn but is forced) 18 a4 a6 19 axb5 axb5 20 bxc4 bxc4 21 $\mathbb{Q}xc4!$, picking off a pawn.

17 e4

White achieves equality! His central play and Black's queenside space balance each other out.

17... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 18 exd5! exd5



19 $\mathbb{Q}f1!$

Targeting d5.

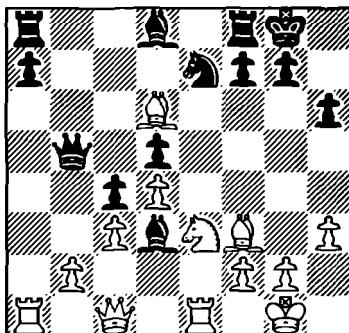
19... $\mathbb{Q}d8?$

This innocent move, disconnecting the rooks, loses. Black should play 19... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ with an equal position.

20 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$

Black is under tremendous pressure after 20... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ dx $e4$ 22 $\mathbb{W}c2$ f5 23 a4 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 24 axb5 $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 27 d5 $\mathbb{W}c5$ 28 $\mathbb{W}a4$.

21 a4 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 22 axb5 $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}d6!$



Targeting a key defender of d5. Black's centre is on the verge of complete collapse.

23... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ dx $e4$ 25 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{W}c6$

25...f5 26 $\mathbb{W}a4!$ wins a pawn since 26... $\mathbb{W}xb2??$ loses instantly to 27 $\mathbb{W}xc4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ $\mathbb{W}d2$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}ed1$.

26 $\mathbb{Q}c5!$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 27 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xa4$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xa4$

Black can resign since he is about to leak pawns left and right.

29... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 31 g3 f5 32 $\mathbb{Q}ea1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}aa7$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}ab7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ h5 38 $\mathbb{Q}b5!$ h4 39 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ hxg3 40 $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 43 b4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 44 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 1-0

Summary

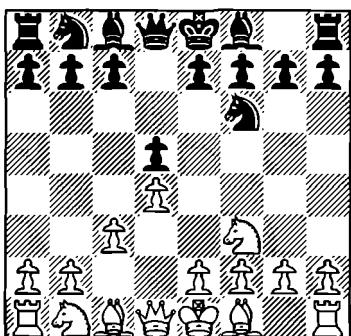
I would definitely avoid the position after 8 $\mathbb{W}c1$. White gets kicked around and Black is very comfortable. That being said, did you notice how Gelfand clearly didn't feel at home?

If you do choose to enter the line then you must simply rely on your deeper understanding of the resulting positions to win. Your plan is straightforward:

1. Play for the e4 break;
2. Exchange pawns on d5;
3. Target the pawn on d5 by manoeuvring a bishop to f3 and a knight to e3;
4. Destroy all possible black defenders of d5; and
5. Try to keep Black at bay on the queenside.

Game 89 G.Kamsky-S.Karjakin Wijk aan Zee 2009

1 d4 d5 2 $\mathfrak{Q}f3$ $\mathfrak{Q}f6$ 3 c3!



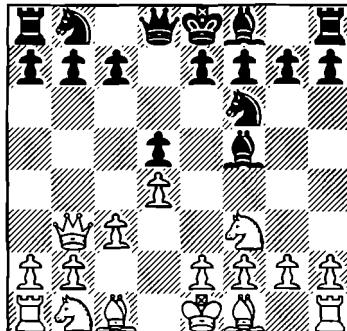
Our refutation of Black's refutation!

We avoid the annoying 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ c5 4 $\mathfrak{c}3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 5 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathfrak{Q}c6$ 6 e3 c4! 7 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathfrak{Q}f5$ $\mathfrak{Q}c1$ but still keep the possibility of transposing back to several London lines.

3...c5

The most natural move, but it may not be Black's best. His options:

- a) 3...e6 (the most common choice)
4 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ c5 5 e3 transposes to Chapter One.
- b) 3...g6 4 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 5 $\mathfrak{Q}bd2$ 0-0 6 e3 transposes to the London versus Grünfeld (Chapter Four).
- c) 3... $\mathfrak{Q}f5$! 4 $\mathbb{W}b3$



and now:

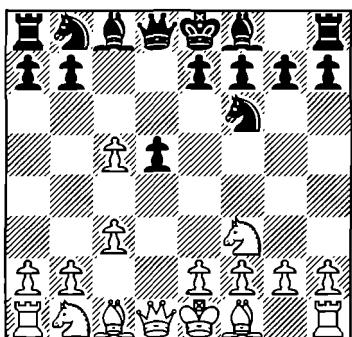
c1) 4...b6 5 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ e6 6 $\mathfrak{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 7 e3 0-0 was O.Gritsak-E.Bacrot, Calatrava (rapid) 2007. The inclusion of the moves $\mathbb{W}b3$ and ...b6 favours White, who went on to score a big upset.

c2) 4... $\mathbb{W}c8$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ e6 6 c4 c6 7 $\mathfrak{Q}c3$ $\mathfrak{Q}bd7$ 8 $\mathfrak{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 9 $\mathfrak{Q}xg6$ hxg6 10 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ and Black's queen found itself awkwardly placed on c8 with the white rook staring at it on c1, M.Taleb-Tan

Han Ann, Kuala Lumpur 2005.

d) With 3...c6 Black mimics White, hoping for easy equality. This is not a bad way for Black to play it if he doesn't mind working a little for the draw. A.Stefanova-A.Maric, Belgrade 1998, went 4 ♜f4 ♜b6 5 ♜b3 ♜f5 6 ♜bd2 h6 7 h3 e6 8 a4!? intending a5, with a microbe of a pull. Granted, the position is drawish, but wouldn't you rather be in a symmetrical position up a move rather than down one?

4 dxc5!



4...g6!?

Turning it into a pure gambit.

Black can regain the pawn with 4...e6 5 b4 a5 6 e3 axb4 7 cxb4 b6, but after 8 ♜b5+ ♜d7 9 ♜xd7+ ♜bxsd7 10 a4! bxc5 11 b5 White achieves a favourable type of Noteboom Variation with two advantages:

1. He is a move up since he is White; and
2. He hasn't given up the bishop pair as you normally would do in the Noteboom.

White's strategy will be to advance

his two connected passed pawns while containing Black's centre.

4...a5!? allows White to enter a mainline Slav a move up, while 5 b4 e6 transposes to 4...e6.

5 g3!?

Kamsky is very comfortable in the Schlechter Slav structures, but 5 b4! may even be stronger: 5...♜g7 6 ♜b2 0-0 7 ♜bd2 a5 8 a3 ♜c6 9 e3 (this looks too slow for Black and I don't see real compensation for the pawn) 9...♜e4 10 ♜xe4 dxe4 11 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 12 ♜d4, I.Rogers-J.Morris, Adelaide 2007. I will take White here anytime. I have successfully played this kind of Slav position too many times with colours reversed to have any faith in Black's compensation.

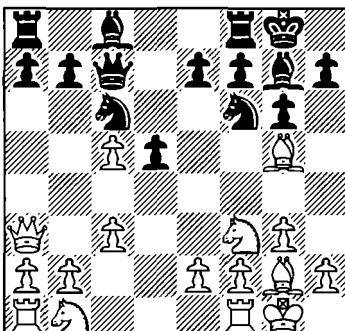
5...♜g7 6 ♜g2 0-0 7 0-0 ♜c6 8 ♜b3

This hits b7 and prepares ♜d1.

8...♛a5

8...♜e4 9 ♛a3 is admittedly a bit convoluted, but White retains his extra pawn. (9 ♜e3?! ♜a5 10 ♜b4 ♜c4 looks good for Black.)

9 ♛a3! ♜c7 10 ♜g5!



Inducing Black's next move.

10...♝e4 11 ♜e3

Now White doesn't have to worry about ...♝g4.

11...e5 12 ♜bd2 f5

Is ...f4 a threat?

13 ♞ad1

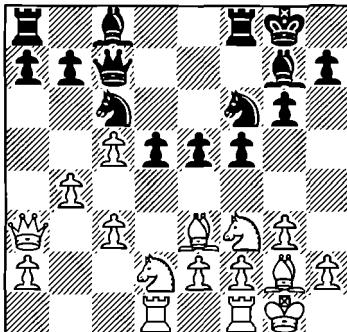
Apparently Kamsky doesn't believe it is.

13...♝f6?!

The strategic threat is ...♝g4.

Perhaps Black should take action with 13...f4!? 14 gxf4 exf4 15 ♜d4, giving up the d4-square in exchange for some attacking chances against White's king.

14 b4!



Ignoring Black's "strategic threat"!

14...♜e8

It turns out that 14...♝g4? is a hollow threat. After 15 ♜b3! ♜xe3 16 fxe3 ♜d8? 17 e4! Black is on the verge of dropping another pawn.

15 ♜b3 ♜e4

Déjà vu. Weren't you just here before? It looks like Black may be out of ideas on how to exploit his big centre

and he waits for White to take action.

16 b5!?

White destabilizes his queenside pawns in exchange for some activity. The alternative is the quieter 16 ♜c1.

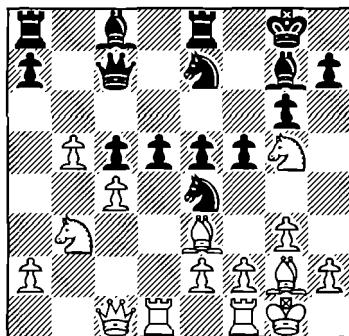
16...♝e7 17 ♜c1 b6!?

Or 17...a6 18 b6 ♜c6 19 c4 d4 20 ♜h6 (threatening to undermine the e5 pawn) 20...♜f6 (20...♝h8? 21 ♜g5! puts Black under great pressure) 21 ♜xg7 ♜xg7 22 e3! dxe3 23 ♜xe3 ♜c6 24 ♜h6 ♜g5 25 ♜d6 and Black looks busted.

18 ♜g5! bxc5

18...♝xc5? loses to 19 ♜xc5 bxc5 20 ♜xd5.

19 c4!



From here until the end of the game Kamsky puts on an impressive Nimzowitsch-like strategic performance. In just a few strokes he manages to plug up Black's once mobile and ominous-looking centre with an iron blockade.

19...d4 20 ♜xe4 fxe4 21 ♜g5 ♜b7 22 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 23 ♜c2 ♜f8 24 ♜xe4 ♜c8 25 ♜g2

Black is in deep trouble. He is down

a pawn and his centre is firmly under a light-squared blockade.

25...h6 26 d3!

An original way to challenge the f-file. Every single white piece stands on the colour he dominates: White!

26...g7 27 f3 d8 28 h3 e6 29 a4 a5

This stops the majority from rolling but it also creates a protected passed pawn on b5 and a new target on a5.

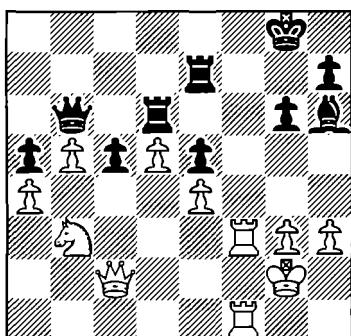
30 c6 b6 31 e4! dxе3?

This probably helps White.

32 fxe3 g8

Perhaps Karjakin should have tried the disruptive 32...e4!?

33 e4 d6 34 d5 xd5 35 cxd5



Researchers of the human brain say we dream in black and white. This has turned into a light-squared nightmare for Black. White's advantages are:

1. He is a pawn up;
2. He has two connected passed pawns;
3. His knight outguns Black's bad bishop and hits targets on a5 and c5;
4. His rooks rule the f-file; and

5. He dominates the light squares.

Conclusion: Black is dead!

35...c7 36 c3 f6 37 xf6 xf6 38

xc5 f7 39 e2 d2

Cute, but it doesn't do a thing.

40 f3

Avoiding Black's little joke: 40 **xd2?? f1+ 41 h2 f2+**.

40...g5 41 e6 1-0

Summary

Hooray! 3 c3! looks to me like a complete answer to Black's London refutation move order.

Game 90

R.Hasangatin-E.Sveshnikov

Aeroflot Open, Moscow 2006

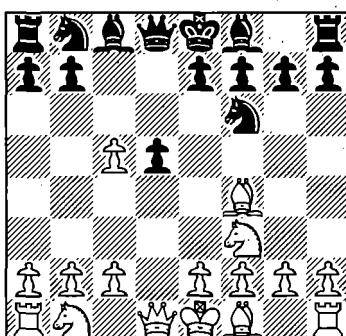
1 d4 d5 2 f3

2 f4! avoids the move order problems.

2...f6 3 f4

I can't repeat this enough, but 3 c3!

3...c5 4 dxc5?!



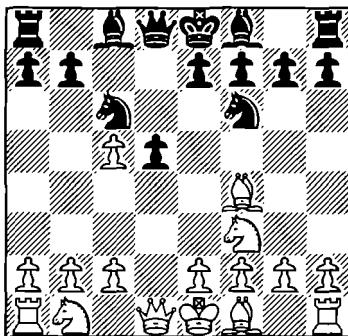
Playing it like a funky Reversed

Queen's Gambit Accepted with the bishop on f4, in yet another attempt to evade the dreaded 4 e3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 5 c3 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 6 $\mathbb{W}b3$ c4! (or 4 c3 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 5 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6 e3 c4!).

4... $\mathbb{Q}c6$?

The most combative response but probably the one White wants!

If Black wants simple equality, he can get it with 4...e6 5 e3 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0 7 0-0 b6 8 c4 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$, B.Roselli Mailhe-V.Marques, Buenos Aires 2001. Or 4... $\mathbb{W}a5+$ 5 c3 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 6 e3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 9 0-0 e6 (R.Hasangatin-M.Luch, Olomouc 2007) and here 10 $\mathbb{W}b3$ is a move up, but equal Slav.



5 c3!

Hoping to hang on to c5.

5...a5

5...e6 is covered in the next game.

6 $\mathbb{Q}a3$

Now $\mathbb{Q}b5$ is a big threat.

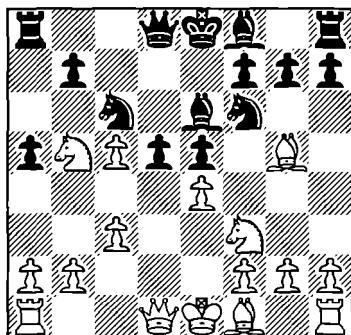
6... $\mathbb{Q}h5!$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ e5 8 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$

Black has full compensation for the pawn after 9 h3 a4!

9... $\mathbb{Q}e6$

After 9... $\mathbb{Q}e6$? 10 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 11 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$! $\mathbb{W}xc7$ 13 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ b6 14 $\mathbb{W}a3$ Black doesn't have enough for the pawn.

10 e4!



Hitting back hard in the centre while he can.

10... $\mathbb{Q}c8$

After 10... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 15 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 0-0 White can either take the immediate draw with 17 $\mathbb{W}g5+$ or play for the win with 17 $\mathbb{Q}e2!$.

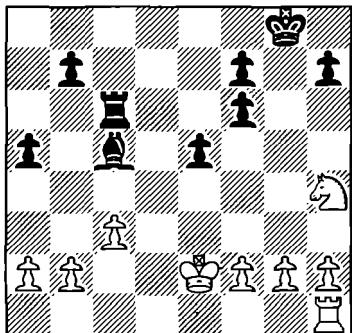
11 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 0-0 17 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xc6!$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}h4!$

The situation has gelled into a White advantage, for the following reasons:

1. The blockade on f5 turns White's knight into a monster who towers over Black's bishop.
2. White's queenside pawn majority is mobile whereas Black's is frozen on the other wing. This, in essence, puts

White up a pawn for the moment.

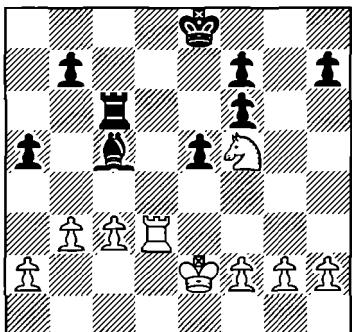
3. White's king is already centralized since he didn't bother to castle!



21... $\mathbb{R}f8$

21... $\mathbb{R}d6$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{R}d8$ 23 $a4$ $\mathbb{R}f8$ 24 $b4!$ keeps up the pressure.

22 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{R}b6$ 23 $b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 24 $\mathbb{R}d1$ $\mathbb{R}c6$ 25 $\mathbb{R}d3!$



The rook operates nicely along the third rank. Target: h7.

25... $\mathbb{R}f8$ 26 $a4$ $e4!$

Defending passively in such positions results in a slow death. Sveshnikov disrupts White's smooth transition to the win.

27 $\mathbb{R}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 28 $c4?$

A concession – now Black's two queenside pawns hold back White's three-pawn majority. 28 $g4!$ is probably a superior move.

28... $\mathbb{R}b6$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}d4$

There goes the e-pawn.

29... $f5!$

Black can't save himself in the rook and pawn ending after 29... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 30 $\mathbb{R}xe4$ $\mathbb{R}xd4$ 31 $\mathbb{R}xd4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 32 $\mathbb{R}d3$. His disfigured structure ensures his defeat.

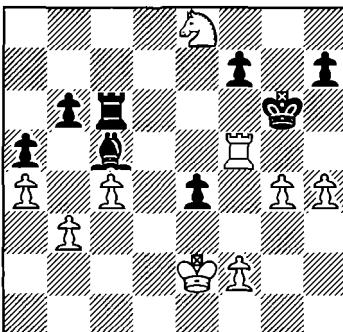
30 $\mathbb{R}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 31 $\mathbb{R}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 32 $g4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5!$

Suddenly Black achieves counterplay and threatens to move his king into f4.

33 $\mathbb{Q}g7!$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

After 33... $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 34 $\mathbb{R}h5!$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 35 $h3!$ (threatening mate on f5) 35... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 36 $\mathbb{R}xh7$ $\mathbb{R}xb3$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 38 $\mathbb{R}xf7$ White should convert.

34 $\mathbb{Q}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 35 $\mathbb{R}h5$ $\mathbb{R}c6$ 36 $\mathbb{R}f5$ $b6$ 37 $h4$



37... $\mathbb{R}e6??$

Black is still in the game after 37... $f6!$ 38 $\mathbb{R}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 39 $\mathbb{R}d8$.

38 $\mathbb{R}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}g7!$ 1-0

40 $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ will cost the exchange.

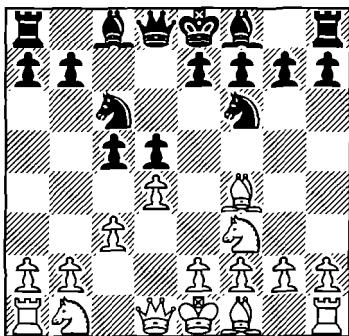
Summary

3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ c5 4 dxc5!? allows Black equality if he follows up with 4...e6!.

Game 91 A.Bagheri-E.Kengis Abu Dhabi 2003

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d5 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ c5 4 c3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$!

Mutual boredom may be achieved by 4... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 5 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6 e3 c4.



5 dxc5!

Just in time! Bagheri doesn't give Kengis a second chance at 5 e3 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 6 $\mathbb{W}b3$ c4. Now we have transposed to 4 dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 5 c3.

5...e6 6 b4 $\mathbb{Q}e4$

6...a5 is the more standard method.
Now:

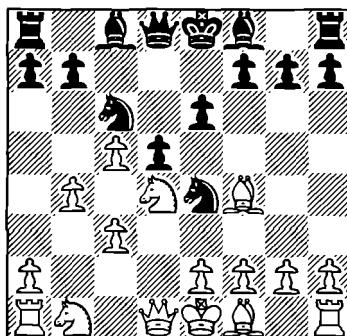
a) 7 $\mathbb{Q}d4$? pushes the normally admirable greed philosophy too far:
7...axb4 8 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 9 cxb4 $\mathbb{Q}g4$! 10 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ (10 $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ e5! 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 13 $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 0-0 gives Black a huge attack for only two pawns) 10... $\mathbb{W}f6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ h5! 12 h4 $\mathbb{Q}a3$! (threatening

... $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ followed by ... $\mathbb{W}f2$ mate) 13 e3 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$! and White's defences have been breached, A.Bagheri-H.Stevic, Dresden Olympiad 2008.

b) The safer 7 b5! $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 8 e3 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ 0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 11 0-0 $\mathbb{W}e8$ 12 c4 is equal, J.Richardson-C.Duncan, British League 2007. Black completes his development with ...b6 and ... $\mathbb{Q}b7$.

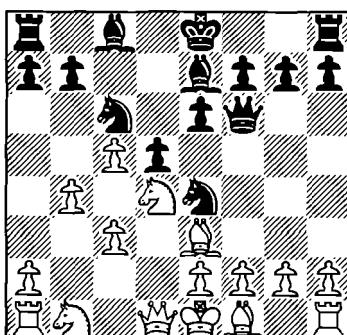
7 $\mathbb{Q}d4$!

My favourite of the seven deadly sins: gluttony! White holds on to his extra pawn for dear life.



7... $\mathbb{W}f6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}e3$! $\mathbb{Q}e7$

8...e5? 9 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 10 $\mathbb{W}xd5$! wins pawn number two.

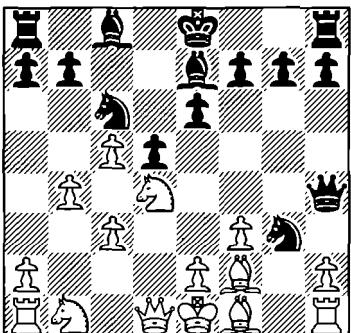


9 f3

Opening the gates of hell.

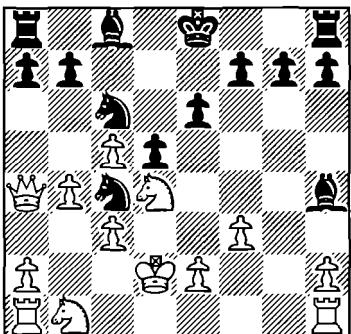
9...Wh4+!

This is a queen sac!

10 g3 Qxg3 11 Af2**11...Qxf1!**

Black's attack doesn't have as much bite after 11...Qxh1 12 Qxh4 Qxh4+ 13 Ad2.

12 Qxh4 Ae3 13 Wa4 Qxh4+ 14 Ad2
Qc4+



The angry villagers chase Frankenstein's monster with pitchforks and flaming torches.

15 Ac2 Ad7 16 Qxc6 bxc6 17 Ad2
Ae3+ 18 Ab2 Af6

Black, with only a bishop and knight for a queen, counts on his enduring attack to compensate. All the computers have White winning easily at this point, but we humans know better! Over the board, such situations are exceptionally difficult to navigate with your king bouncing around.

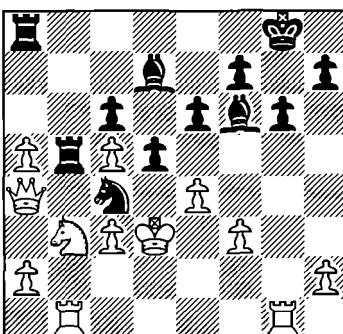
19 Ab3 a5!

Black is past caring about material. Open lines are what matter now.

20 bxa5?!

White wants the passed a-pawn rather than 20 Qxa5 0-0 21 Ab3 e5, with an enduring attack for Black.

20...0-0 21 Bhg1 Qc4+ 22 Qc2 Bf8 23
e4 Bb5 24 Bab1 g6 25 Ad3?!

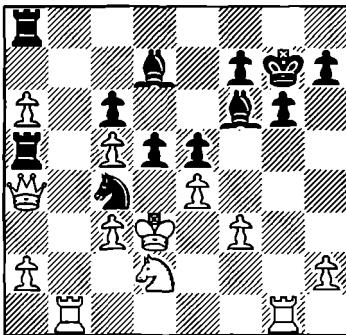


White's position begins to look a lot like a Picasso painting. Nothing is quite where it should be and hallucinogens are optional. I'm hoping you aren't going to ask for an assessment. At this point I'm as confused as you are!

25...e5 26 a6 Ag7 27 Ad2?

White blunders after excellent defense. He should continue his avoidance of the angry mob with 27 Ae2.

27... $\mathbb{K}a5!$



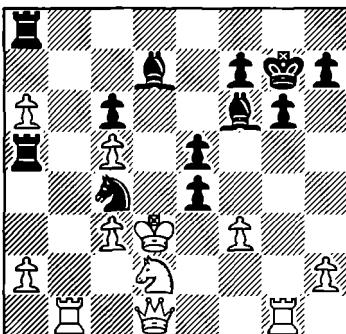
Black's initiative flares up.

28 $\mathbb{W}d1?$

A second blunder! Matters remain confused after 28 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{K}8xa6$.

28... $dxe4+$?

Missing his opportunity: 28... $\mathbb{K}xa2!$ 29 $\mathbb{K}g2$ (White gets fried after 29 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $dxc4+$ 30 $\mathbb{K}e3$ $\mathbb{K}e7!$) 29... $\mathbb{K}e6!$ and White is busted since Black threatens to open the d-file.



29 $f \times e4$

White loses if he takes the bait: 29 $\mathbb{Q}xc4?$ $\mathbb{K}e6+$ 30 $\mathbb{K}b4$ $\mathbb{K}b5+$ 31 $\mathbb{K}a3$ $\mathbb{K}xa6+$ 32 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{K}xa4+$ 33 $\mathbb{K}xa4$ $e3$ 34 $\mathbb{K}e4$ $\mathbb{K}xb1$ 35 $\mathbb{K}xb1$ $\mathbb{K}h4!$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $f5$ 37

$\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{K}xa2$, etc.

29... $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 30 $\mathbb{W}xd2$ $\mathbb{K}e6$ 31 $\mathbb{K}e3$ $\mathbb{K}e7$ 32 $\mathbb{K}g2$ $\mathbb{K}8xa6$ 33 $\mathbb{K}b2$ $\mathbb{K}xc5+$ 34 $\mathbb{K}f3$ $\mathbb{K}a3$ 35 $\mathbb{K}c2$ $\mathbb{K}6a4$ 36 $h4$ $f5!$?

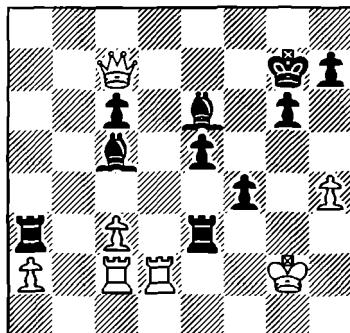
Black begins to expose his own king in the pursuit of White's.

37 $\mathbb{W}d8!$

Correctly trying to stir up something against Black's king.

37 $exf5?!$ $\mathbb{K}xf5$ 38 $\mathbb{K}b2$ $\mathbb{K}f4+$ 39 $\mathbb{K}e2$ $\mathbb{K}a7$ doesn't look too healthy for White's king, who is under siege.

37... $\mathbb{K}xe4$ 38 $\mathbb{K}gd2$ $\mathbb{K}e3+$ 39 $\mathbb{K}g2$ $f4$ 40 $\mathbb{W}c7+$



40... $\mathbb{K}h6?$

40... $\mathbb{K}f6!$ 41 $\mathbb{W}d8+$ $\mathbb{K}f5!$ 42 $\mathbb{K}d3$ leads to a totally irrational position, where your guess is as good as mine as to who is beating whom.

41 $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{K}g3+?$

41... $\mathbb{K}h3+$ 42 $\mathbb{K}h1$ $\mathbb{K}a5$ 43 $\mathbb{K}e2$ was Black's last chance.

42 $\mathbb{K}h1$

Both bishops are en prise and Black's once ferocious attack is a thing of the past.

42... $\mathbb{K}h3+$ 43 $\mathbb{K}h2$ $\mathbb{K}d3?$

He had to try 43... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 44 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 45 $\mathbb{W}xe6$ but White wins here also.

44 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5+$ 45 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ 1-0

The white king logged an impressive number of frequent flyer miles in this game. His destinations: d2, c2, b2, c2, d3, e3, f3, g2, h1 and g1!

Summary

If your cardiologist gives you the go ahead, try 5 $dxc5!$ and then hang on for dear life!

Game 92
C.Lakdawala-K.Griffith
 Gambito (rapid),
 San Diego 2010

1 d4 c5 2 c3

My opponent is a 15-year-old master. Translation: He gets the driest line possible from me. It is only within the realm of tedium where old age and deceit overcomes youth and talent!

2...d5 3 $\mathbb{Q}f3$

1 d4 d5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (2 $\mathbb{Q}f4!$) 2...c5 3 c3 reaches the same position.

3... $\mathbb{Q}c6$

Black can get away with this move order, but he must proceed with care.

3... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ transposes to Kamsky-Karjakin (Game 89).

4 $dxc5!$

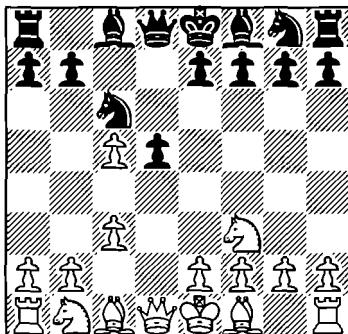
A bumper sticker once wisely declared: "If you love something then set it free!" I abandon my beloved London

against certain move orders, and this is one of them. White gets better chances of an opening advantage with a pure Slav, a move up.

Alternatively:

a) 4 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 5 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ transposes to the line we dread (see Kamsky-Gelfand, Game 88).

b) 4 a3!? is an ...a6 Slav a move up. If Black lets me, I will take on c5 next move, follow up with b4 and just keep the extra pawn.



4...a5?

Black doesn't have time for this luxury.

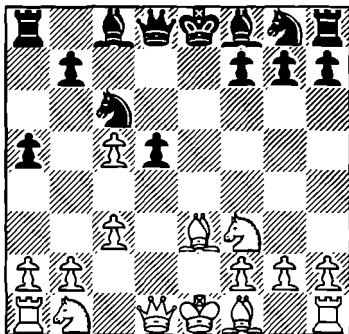
4...e6 5 b4 a5 6 b5 $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 7 a4 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ 0-0 10 e3, C.Cacco-M.Astengo, Italy 1998, directly transposes to a line of the Slav with an extra move.

5 e4! e6

5...dxe4 6 $\mathbb{W}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ f5 11 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ was a total disaster for Black in M.Konopka-J.Brandics, Hungarian League 1997. His king is on a joy ride, his queenside is full of holes

and he is far behind in development.

6 exd5 exd5 7 ♜e3

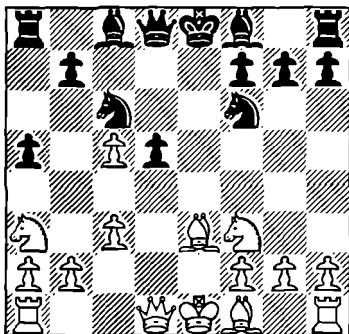


Black may already be strategically lost:

1. He is down a pawn and will lose time to regain it. In fact, it isn't clear at all whether he will ever regain it;
2. He has no compensation for the isolani on d5; and
3. His position has suffered puncture wounds on b5 and d4.

7... ♜f6 8 ♜a3

The b5-square awaits.



8... ♜e6

Avoiding the dirty trick 8... ♜e4 9 ♜b5 ♜xc5 10 ♜xd5!.

9 ♜b5

The pin is more important than posting a knight on b5.

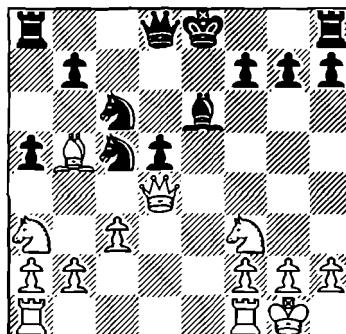
9... ♜e4 10 0-0

Uncharacteristically choosing initiative over greed! White can also just hang on to the extra pawn with 10 ♜e5 ♜c8 11 ♜d3.

10... ♜xc5

He bites. It may have been better to remain a pawn down with 10... ♜e7 11 ♜e5 ♜c8 12 ♜d3, when at least Black gets to castle.

11 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 12 ♜d4!



Double attacking c5 and g7.

12... ♜d6?!

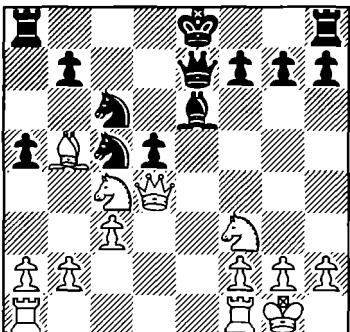
I would have tried 12... ♜e7 13 ♜xg7 0-0-0 but even here Black's fishing expedition on the g-file doesn't compensate for the missing pawn and the airy king.

13 ♜c4

Gaining a tempo over the immediate grab on g7.

13... ♜e7

Black can barely move after 13... ♜f8 14 ♜b6 ♜d8 15 ♜fe1.



14 ♜xc6+ bxc6 15 ♜xg7 0-0-0 16 ♜xa5 ♜dg8

Possibly the wrong rook, but my opponent hoped to induce g3 and then attack with ...h5.

17 ♜e5

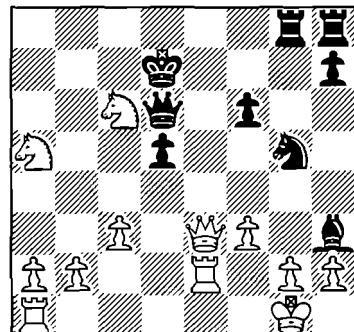
It's well known in the San Diego chess community that I get easily startled by loud noises and unsound attacks! However, in this case Black just doesn't have the firepower or the time to generate anything on the kingside if White keeps a vigilant watch for sacs on g2.

17...♚d7! 18 ♜fd1 f6 19 ♜e3

Eyeing possible c5, b6 and a7 infiltrations.

19...♜d6

Black doesn't have time to line up rooks on the g-file: 19...♜g6 20 ♜b3! ♜b7 21 ♜b6! and White arrives first.



24...♝xf3+

Going kamikaze. Black's position was hopeless in any case.

25 ♜xf3 ♜g4 26 ♜f2!?

My philosophy in rapid games is: Cultivate superficiality! I didn't have the time (or talent for that matter!) to work out a spectacular finish with 26 ♜e7+! ♜xe7 27 ♜xd5+ ♜d6 28 ♜f7+ ♜c8 29 ♜b7 mate.

26...♝xe2 27 ♜xe2 ♜c5+ 28 ♜f2 ♜xf2+ 29 ♜xf2 ♜c8 30 ♜b4 1-0

Summary

Against the move order ...c5, ...d5 and ...♝c6, your best shot at an opening edge may be to abandon the London and go into a pure tempo-up Slav with dxc5.

Index of Variations

1...d5 with an early...e6

1 d4 d5 2 ♜f4 ♜f6

2...e6 3 ♜f3 ♜d6 4 e3 – 10

3 e3 c5

3...e6 4 ♜f3

4...♜d6 – 13

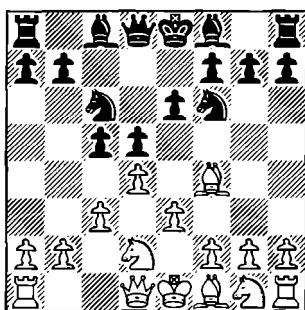
4...♜e7

5 c4 – 38

5 ♜d3 c5 6 c3 ♜c6 7 ♜bd2 – 3...c5

4 c3 ♜c6 5 ♜d2 e6

Others – Chapter 2



6 ♜gf3 ♜e7

6... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ 0-0 8 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

8... $\mathbb{K}e8$ – 17

8... $\mathbb{W}e7$ – 22

7 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 0-0

7... $\mathbb{W}b6$ – 25

7...b6 – 34

7... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ – 36

7...c4 – 25

8 0-0 – 30

8 h4 – 32

1...d5 without an early ...e6

1 d4 d5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f4$

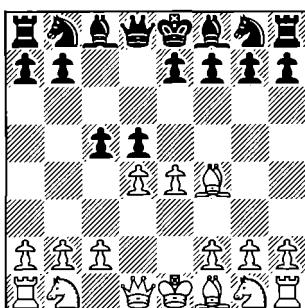
2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ – Chapter 10

2... $\mathbb{Q}f6$

2...c5

3 e3 – 53

3 e4



3...dxe4 – 41

3...e6 – 43

3... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ – 46

2...c6 3 e3

3... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ – 55

3... $\mathbb{W}b6$ – 63

2... $\mathbb{Q}c6$

3 e3 – 68

3 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 4 e3 e6

5 c4 – 70

5 ♜e2 – 72

3 e3 c5

3...♜f5 4 c4 c6 5 ♜c3 e6 6 ♜b3

6...♝b6 – 58

6...♝c8 – 60

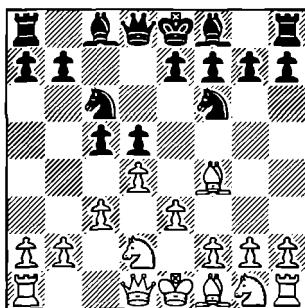
3...c6 4 ♜f3 ♜g4 – 64

4 c3 ♜c6

4...cxd4 5 exd4 ♜c6 – 218

5 ♜d2

5 ♜f3 ♜b6! – 49



5...♜b6 – 49

5...♜g4 – 49

5...♜f5 – 49

5...e6 – Chapter 1

5...g6 – Chapter 4

London versus Queen's Indian

1 d4 ♜f6 2 ♜f3 e6 3 ♜f4 b6 4 e3 ♜b7 5 ♜bd2

5 h3

5...d6 – 90

5...♜d6 – 85

5...c5 6 c3 cxd4 7 cxd4

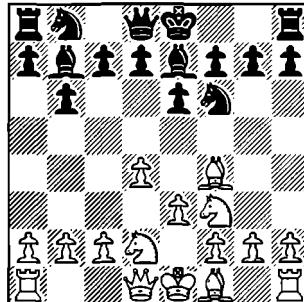
7...♜e7 – 85

7...♜c6 – 88

5 c4 ♜b4+ 6 ♜fd2 0-0 7 a3

7...♜e7 – 100

- 7... $\mathbb{A}d6$ - 103
 5 $\mathbb{A}e2$ - 105
 5... $\mathbb{A}e7$
 5... $\mathbb{A}d6$ 6 $\mathbb{A}g3$ - 92



- 6 h3
 6 $\mathbb{A}d3$
 6... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ - 95
 6...c5 - 98
 6...c5 7 c3 0-0 8 $\mathbb{A}d3$ cxd4
 8... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ - 76
 8...d5 - 221
 9 exd4 - 79
 9 cxd4 - 82

London versus Grünfeld

- 1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 e3 d5 5 c3
 5 $\mathbb{A}d3$ - 124
 5 h3 0-0
 6 $\mathbb{A}e2$ c5 7 c3 $\mathbb{W}b6$ - 110
 6 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ c5 7 c3 b6 - 117
 5 $\mathbb{A}e2$ 0-0 6 $\mathbb{Q}c3$
 6...c6 - 126
 6...c5 - 126
 6...b6 - 128
 5...0-0 6 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ c5 7 $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$
 7... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ - 113

8 0-0 cxd4

8...b6 – 115

8... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ – 118

8... $\mathbb{W}b6$ – 107

9 exd4 – 121

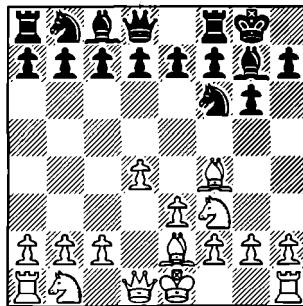
London versus Reversed Réti

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 e3 0-0

4...c5 5 c3 cxd4 6 cxd4 138

5 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

5 h3 d6 6 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ c5 – 148



5...d6

5...c5 6 c3 b6 7 h3 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ d6 9 0-0

9... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ – 136

9... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}h2$

10... $\mathbb{W}c8$ – 135

10...cxd4 11 exd4 – 132

6 h3

6 0-0 c5 7 c3

7... $\mathbb{W}b6$ – 144

7... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ – 146

6 c3 c5 7 dx5 – 145

6...c5 7 c3

7 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 8 c3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ – 139

7... $\mathbb{W}b6$

7...b6 8 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ – 5...c5

8 $\mathbb{W}b3$ – 142

London versus King's Indian

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 e3

4 c4 0-0 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d6 6 e3

6... $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ – 169

6... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

7...e6 – 159

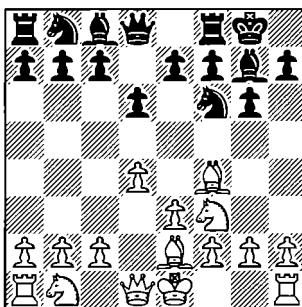
7... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ – 160

4 c3 0-0 5 $\mathbb{W}c1$ – 217

4...0-0 5 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

5 h3 d6 6 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ – 172

5...d6



6 0-0

6 h3

6...b6 – 166

6... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ – 175

6...c6 7 c4 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$

8 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ – 164

8 0-0 – 162

6... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 7 h3 $\mathbb{W}e8$ 8 c4 e5 9 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ e4 – 154

10... $\mathbb{W}e8$ – 156

London versus Dutch

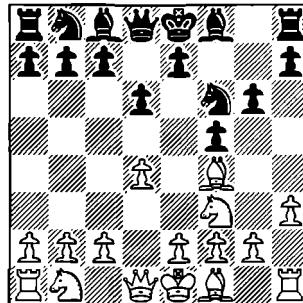
1 d4 f5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ d6

3...c6 – 182

3...g6 4 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 5 $\mathbb{W}d2$

5...c5 – 187

- 5...b6 – 188
 3...e6 4 e3
 4...d5 190
 4...b6 – 194
4 h3
 4 e3 e6 5 h3 – 192
4...g6



- 5 e3**
 5 c3 ♜g7 6 ♜b3 – 185
5...♜g7 6 ♜c4 – 178
 6 ♜bd2 0-0 7 ♜c4+ – 180

London versus Benoni

- 1 d4 ♜f6**
 1...c5 2 c3 cxd4 3 cxd4 d5 4 ♜f3 – 1...♜f6
2 ♜f3
 2 ♜f4 c5 3 d5 – 203
2...c5
 2...e6 3 ♜f4 c5
 4 e3 ♜b6 5 ♜c3 – 201
 4 c3
 4...♜d5 – 199
 4...♜b6 – 199
 4...d5 – Chapter 1
3 c3 cxd4
 3...d5 – 234
4 cxd4 d5 5 ♜c3 ♜c6 6 ♜f4 ♜f5 – 205

6... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ – 210

6...e6 – 207

6...a6 – 207

Other Lines

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$

1...e5 – 228

1...d6 – 226

2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ e6

2...g6 3 c3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 0-0 5 $\mathbb{W}c1$ – 217

2...b5 – 223

2...c5 3 c3 b6 4 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ – 221

3 c3 d6 4 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ – 213

An Inconvenient Move Order

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$

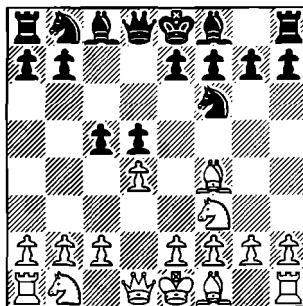
1...d5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (2 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ Chapters 1-2) 2...c5 (2... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ – 1... $\mathbb{Q}f6$) 3 c3 – 1...c5

1...c5 2 c3 d5 3 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ – 243

2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d5 3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$

3 c3 – 234

3...c5



4 dx c 5

4 c3

4... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ – 240

4... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 5 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6 e3 c4 – 231

4... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 5 c3 a5 – 238

5...e6 – 240

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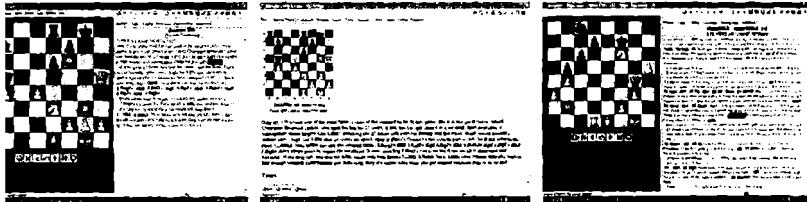
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