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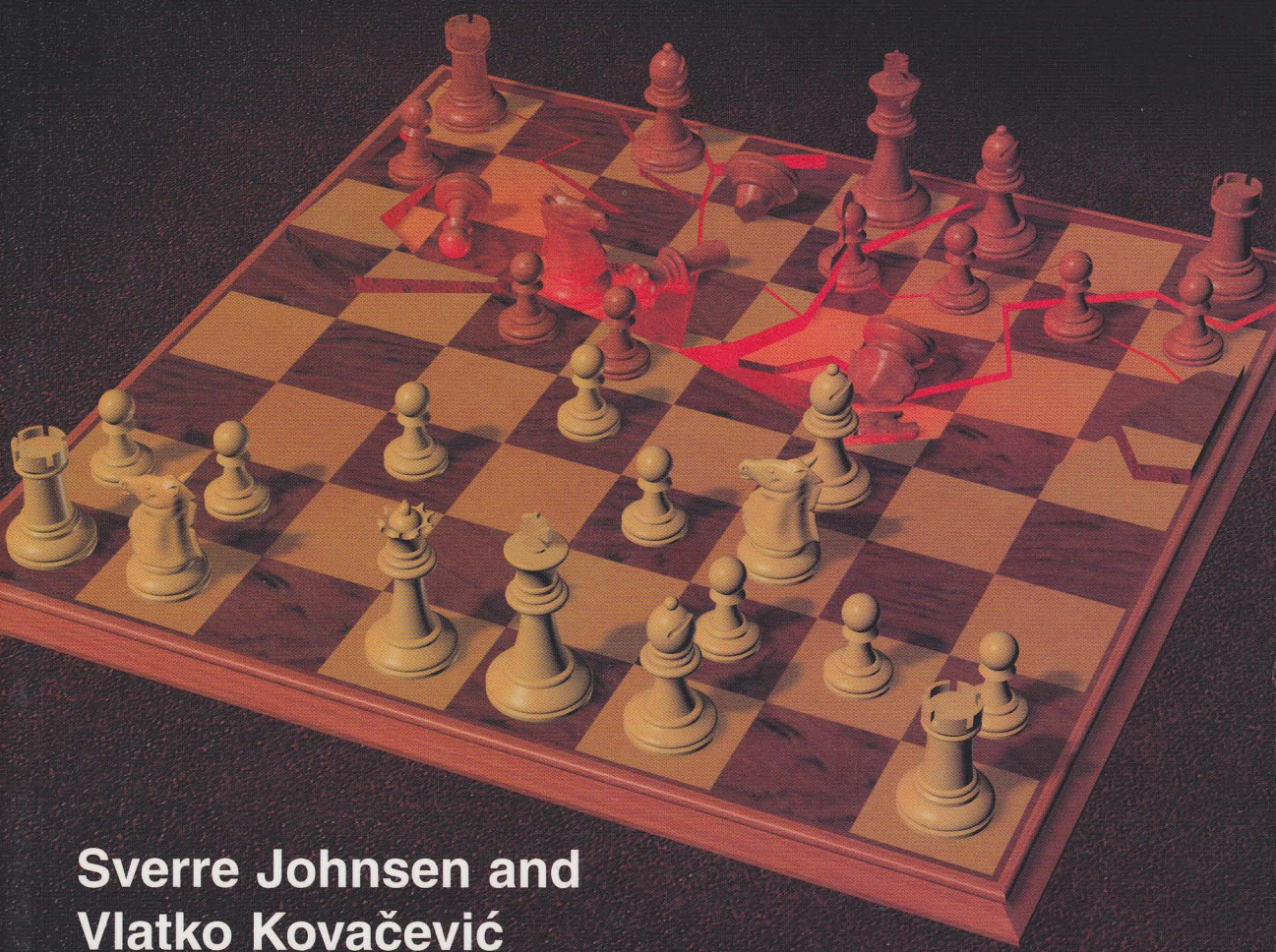
Win with the London System



Sverre Johnsen and
Vlatko Kovačević

Dynamic new approaches to
make your opponents crumble!

Win with the London System

Sverre Johnsen and

Vlatko Kovačević

GAMBIT

First published in the UK by Gambit Publications Ltd 2005

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A copy of the British Library Cataloguing in Publication data is available from the British Library.

ISBN 1 904600 35 2

DISTRIBUTION:
Worldwide (except USA): Central Books Ltd, 99 Wallis Rd, London E9 5LN.
Tel +44 (0)20 8986 4854 Fax +44 (0)20 8533 5821. E-mail: orders@Centralbooks.com
USA: Continental Enterprises Group, Inc., 302 West North 2nd Street, Seneca, SC 29678, USA.

For all other enquiries (including a full list of all Gambit chess titles) please contact the publishers, Gambit Publications Ltd, 6 Bradmore Park Rd, Hammersmith, London W6 0DS, England.
E-mail: info@gambitbooks.com
Or visit the GAMBIT web site at http://www.gambitbooks.com

Edited by Graham Burgess
Typeset by John Nunn
Cover image by Wolff Morrow
Printed in Great Britain by The Cromwell Press, Trowbridge, Wilts.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Symbols

+	check
++	double check
#	checkmate
!!	brilliant move
!	good move
!?	interesting move
?!	dubious move
?	bad move
??	blunder
+–	White is winning
±	White is much better
±	White is slightly better
=	equal position
∓	Black is slightly better
∓	Black is much better
–+	Black is winning
Ch	championship
Cht	team championship
Wch	world championship
Wcht	world team championship
Ech	European championship
Echt	European team championship
ECC	European Clubs Cup
Ct	candidates event
IZ	interzonal event
Z	zonal event
OL	olympiad
jr	junior event
wom	women's event
rpd	rapidplay game
tt	team tournament
corr.	correspondence game
1-0	the game ends in a win for White
½-½	the game ends in a draw
0-1	the game ends in a win for Black
(*n*)	*n*th match game
(D)	see next diagram

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Ideas Behind the Modern Chess Openings, Gary Lane; Batsford, 2003
Winning With the Trompowsky, Peter Wells; Batsford, 2003
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We would like to comment briefly on two of these books:

The London System by Andrew Soltis:

Now obviously dated, this was for a long time *the* book on the London System. Like most of Soltis's opening books (in contrast to his excellent books on other themes) it was obviously written in a hurry, and it is no challenge to find typos and dubious lines. However, it is equally obvious that Soltis knows his stuff: he offers a lot of classic London games (generally extremely lightly annotated) and a lot of useful verbal guidance. Despite the book's obvious weaknesses, it was a useful reference.

Ideas Behind the Modern Chess Openings by Gary Lane:

Despite its misleading title, this is quite a good introduction to the London System (with some other lines, including the Barry and the 150 Attack, thrown in). It clearly makes no pretensions about being a complete theoretical manual, and leaves quite a few questions unanswered. However, Lane has a knack for finding inspirational games and you will find a few games from his book annotated here. Some of them, like Kasparov-Kengis, Riga 1977 and Christiansen-D.Gurevich, Philadelphia 1988, were obvious choices, while others, such as Bawart-Schumi, Austria 1999, might easily have been overlooked if it hadn't been for Lane. We believe, however, that we have added value to the games by independent analysis.

Preface

Whenever I see a chess book co-authored by a GM and an unknown player, I suspect the real author is the unknown one. With this book I know the whole story. And yes, by conventional standards I am the 'real' author:

- I set up the general structure of the book, selected the original illustrative games and checked them over with the assistance of an analysis engine, adding some prose in the process.
- I created the original ChessBase files by picking what seemed the most relevant games from a game database, cut them off at a natural point (normally somewhere between move 10 and 25), added some suggestions and organized the game fragments according to their rough evaluations.
- I edited the final ChessBase files, imported them into a text editor and tried to make the analysis as comprehensible as possible.
- I wrote most of the prose, added diagrams and did a lot of other small things that made the manuscript look a lot like a chess book.

From the above your impression may be that Vlado (the familiar version of Vlatko) played a rather minor role in the making of this book. That is definitely not the case. First of all the analysis of the illustrative games was more his work than mine. He also played an important role in the selection process – of the 40 original illustrative games only 26 still remain. And on a general level he contributed heavily to the book's content (and my chess education) by repeatedly pointing out positional features – in particular Black's problematic light-squared bishop – and endgame prospects when I was desperately looking for a kingside attack.

Secondly the step from the 'original ChessBase files' to the 'final ChessBase files' is a giant one, and a big part of what distinguishes a theory book from a 'database dump'. And even though tools like Fritz and Junior were excellent assistants in tactical positions, they were of less help in evaluating and working out the correct plans in quieter lines. Therefore the chess part of the book is to a great extent the work of Vlatko Kovačević. He has examined every single chapter, turned some of them completely on their head and suggested improvements in most of them. And quite frequently his suggestions were annoying improvements for Black, generating a new search for an advantage for White – often forcing me to reconsider the entire structure of the book.

So to conclude: I could, with the help of a good publisher, have made something on the surface very similar to this book. However, that book would have contained a lot more 'half truths' and poor evaluations than the one you are holding in your hands.

Sverre Johnsen
Oslo, July 2005

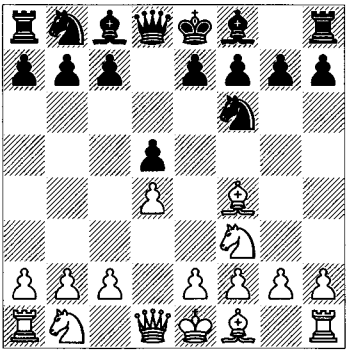
Introduction

What is the London System?

Basically the London is a set of solid lines where after 1 d4 White quickly develops his dark-squared bishop to f4 and normally bolsters his centre with c3 and e3 rather than expanding. Although it has the potential for a quick kingside attack, the white forces are generally flexible enough to engage in a battle anywhere on the board. Historically it developed into a system mainly from three variations:

a) 1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗f4 *(D)*.

B

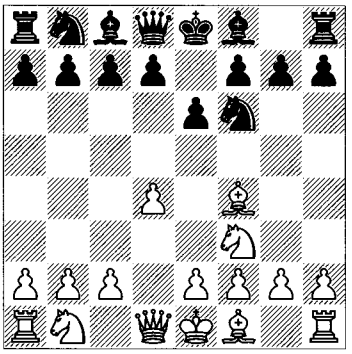


This appeared quite early on the chess scene as a natural way to develop after 1 d4. The oldest game featuring this position in MegaBase 2005 is Caro-Hülsen, Berlin 1888, but there is no reason to assume that was the first occurrence. It has always been a relatively popular alternative to the Queen's Gambit (and a frequent choice of Torre players, as after 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 ♗g5?!, Black immediately equalizes with 3...♘e4!).

b) 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗f4 *(D)*.

While this was played in Mason-Blackburne, London 1883 (returning to more traditional paths on the next move with 3...d5), it could hardly achieve any popularity until the hypermoderns developed the Nimzo-Indian and Queen's Indian into respected openings

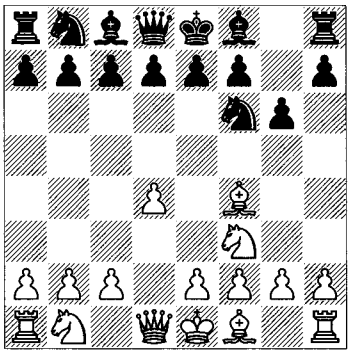
B



around 1914. Since then it has been competing with the Torre (3 ♗g5) for the favour of players looking for a non-theoretical weapon against 2...e6.

c) 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 ♗f4 *(D)*.

B

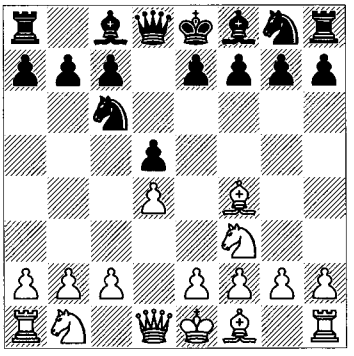


Other branches may be older, but this seems to be the first to have been called 'The London System'. For obvious reasons it could only become important after the Grünfeld and King's Indian systems had become respected. It was introduced at the top level in the London Congress 1922, most notably in Alekhine-Euwe, London 1922. Later it remained popular (again in competition with the Torre) as a way to avoid the most theory-infested King's Indian waters.

Another trend which could only become noticeable after the Chigorin's rise in status in the

1990s is the increasing popularity of 1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗f4 *(D)*.

B



This is frustrating for Chigorin players as they have no targets for their piece-play and is by no means employed only by dedicated London players.

So the London isn't a true 'opening system' but rather a conglomerate of related lines which may or may not be employed as a complete package. However, while each line can be employed independently, there are benefits to be gained by combining them. Not only do they often give rise to the same general type of positions, but they can also frequently transpose into each other. In this book, we try to merge them into one seamless unit. We not only aim to give you all the information necessary to play the four branches given above, but we shall supplement them with a few extra lines in order to make the London an almost complete repertoire for White. In addition we suggest that you change your move-order a little in order to make the London as all-encompassing as possible, recommending 2 ♗f4 rather than 2 ♘f3.

Why Play the London?

Let's be straight about it: the London isn't an attempt to extract the 'maximum advantage' from White's extra move. You will find that some major lines conclude '=' or 'unclear'. However, although these may not be the evaluations you are hoping for, they may not be so bad either: the 'equal' positions are rarely barren and will often have a familiar feel to the experienced London player. Similarly the 'unclear' ones should normally be even more unclear to your opponent!

While the professional chess-player maximizes his results by familiarizing himself with as many typical positions as possible, this idealistic approach isn't realistic for most amateur players. The alternative strategy is to study those positions you are most likely to reach and do your best to increase your chances to get them. And this is what playing the London is all about. No matter what your playing strength is, we bet that you would increase your Elo-rating by several hundred points if in each and every game you got positions where the pawn-structure and the piece placement were familiar and the long-term plans and typical tactical motifs were second nature to you.

And while the 'system approach' shouldn't be taken to the extreme, it cannot be denied that the stabilizing effect of the London pawn-centre (c3-d4-e3) has some practical advantages. It ensures that a lot of the resulting middlegame positions will be familiar to you. And being familiar with the pawn-structure will be of great help – not only in the middlegame, but often even in the endgame. That stable central formation also to some extent lowers the level of tactical alertness demanded. This may not sound like a positive feature if you consider yourself an able tactician. However, assuming you understand the position better than your opponent, it clearly is an advantage if he cannot overthrow all your fine judgement with a lucky tactical stroke!

The main advantage of playing a quiet opening, however, is that it leaves you with more time for studying chess! Not having to spend hours a day memorizing the latest ideas in a dozen or more brain-twisting variations allows you more time for tactical exercises or studying rook endgames and annotated games by your favourite player. In the end, middlegame understanding and endgame skills are what decide most games!

When to Play the London?

The London is flexible enough to be played under most tournament conditions. However, today almost every opponent must be assumed to have prepared with the help of ChessBase and an analysis engine, so you can hardly get by with only one opening – even as White. And

there are situations where the London is a particularly good choice:

First of all, the London is perfect for weekend tournaments with a busy schedule as it can be played with relatively modest pre-game preparation, allowing you time to eat, sleep and relax between games. The value of sitting down for the game with a fresh mind cannot be overestimated. And the risk that your opponent will find a critical hole in your repertoire in the short intervals between rounds is almost non-existent. If he doesn't already know the London well, he will not even have time to acquaint himself with the basic strategies. Of course, he may find a game where your opponent had a good position after the opening and try to copy that. However, even if you don't have the basic self-discipline to analyse your games and improve the openings (we really advise you to), you should have the common sense to vary your play. And one of the strengths of the London is that there is little risk in varying the move-orders a little.

Secondly, the London is a perfect weapon against booked-up juniors who have spent more time studying their favourite Sicilian than the classics and rook endings. When taken outside their prepared lines, they are quite likely to fall back on basic opening advice, securing a foothold in the centre and then castling kingside. And as you will see, that may be the recipe for an opening catastrophe.

Thirdly, the London may be a good choice against a strong but inexperienced master having to play for a win in order to fight for prize money. Young masters tend to be well prepared and excellent calculators, and both of these strengths will to some degree be neutralized in quiet London waters. On the other hand they are sometimes less confident in their ability to win quiet positions or equal endgames. And occasionally when striving for sharp positions where they can beat a weaker opponent, they will take excessive risks or simply misjudge the position, allowing you to exploit the weaknesses in their position.

Finally, the London is a perfect supplementary weapon for players who normally rely on deep preparation in sharp lines. If during a tournament you suddenly discover that your main weapon needs repair and aren't able to fix it between rounds, the London is the ideal temporary solution.

Where to Start?

This is a fairly large book. Part of the reason is that it is in a sense two books in one. The Illustrative Games section is mainly aimed at new London players who need an introduction to the ideas behind White's moves. After you have finished most of this section, you should be ready to play the London with some confidence. You may not know all the finesses but you should have a good idea about where your pieces belong and what to do after development is finished.

The Analytical Section is a more detailed theoretical coverage for the experienced Londoner, but less experienced readers may also turn here for further details. We allowed some overlap between the two sections, but believe they generally complement each other well.

Part 1: Illustrative Games

Naturally, 1 d4 followed by ♗f4 and ♘f3 will not always lead to typical London positions. However, if White gets to support his centre with c3 and e3, the positions tend to have a lot in common. In this chapter you will find some games with typical strategic themes from this class of positions. In addition we shall look at some other set-ups with an early ♗f4. For less typical positions, we give a brief strategic introduction in their respective analytical sections.

How you approach the illustrative games naturally depends on your playing strength and your previous experience with the London System. However, we recommend playing through every game at least two times: the first time to get an impression of what is going on, mainly reading the prose comments; then at least one more time, taking a closer look at opening finesses or tactical lines that interest you.

The critical reader may wonder whether the score 30-0 in White's favour objectively reflects the strength of the London System. Wouldn't it have been better to include some instructive losses too? We certainly considered that approach, but concluded that there are simply too many ways to play badly in chess. So although it certainly is possible to learn chess from mistakes, it seemed wiser to demonstrate how to win. Our hope is that the student will become inspired rather than blindly optimistic.

Double d-Pawn Defences

We shall first look at games with an early ...♗e7, then with an early ...♗d6 and finally at games where the development of the bishop is delayed.

Let us first examine White's basic strategy. Naturally it's hard to find an archetypal London game between two top players, as a GM playing Black will obviously be aware of White's most direct attacking ideas. And if on a bad day he found himself in danger of being overrun in standard fashion, he would do anything to avoid his fate – even if that meant giving up material or seriously weakening his structure. So let us introduce the London with a game played at amateur level. Black is a young Norwegian junior – a promising player but evidently with little experience in combating the London.

Game 1
Sv. Johnsen – W. Kristiansen
Norwegian Cht (Trondheim) 2004

1 d4 d5

The London System can be played against virtually any black set-up, but is probably most effective against this classical reply. The h2-b8 diagonal will normally present the f4-bishop with excellent prospects for activity.

2 ♗f4

This is our recommended move-order. 2 ♘f3 is more flexible, revealing less of White's intentions. Normally that would be the description of a better move. However, for the determined London player, 2...c5 is then an annoying reply because 3 ♗f4?! cxd4 4 ♘xd4?! ♘d7 may already be better for Black. We shall subject the relative merits of the two moves to closer scrutiny in the analytical sections.

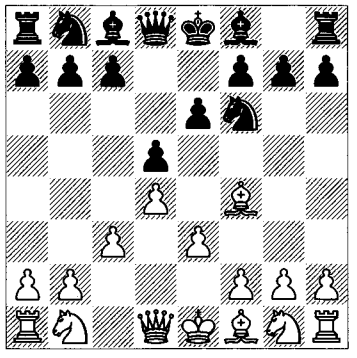
2...♘f6 3 e3 e6

We shall see a lot of games with 3...c5 4 c3, generally leading to the same kind of position. We shall also return to the optimistic 3...♗f5, just noting in passing that it does not give Black an easy life as 4 c4! followed by ♕b3 allows White to attack the unprotected b-pawn.

4 c3 *(D)*

This may not be White's most precise move, but still the diagram displays the London formation in its most basic form. White develops his dark-squared bishop and then goes on to fortify his pawn-centre so that he will be able to concentrate on a kingside initiative.

4...♗e7!?



The ambitious approach. The dark-squared bishop is Black's 'good' bishop and – at least in theory – the f4-bishop is White's 'bad' one, as his central pawns are on dark squares. In practical play, however, matters are not so clear.

5 ♘d2 0-0

Young players are usually taught to castle kingside at the first opportunity. That is excellent advice in 1 e4 e5 openings, but in many closed or semi-closed openings it can be better just to be *ready* to castle at short notice, should there be any sign that the centre might open up.

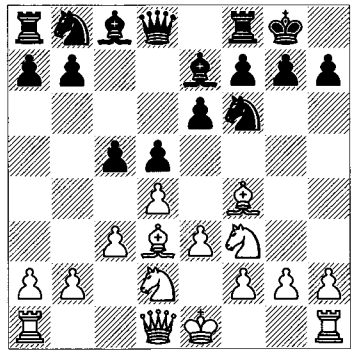
6 ♗d3

Note how harmoniously White's pieces can be developed between his central pawns. Finding, or remembering, the optimal move-order may be difficult, but finding the best squares for your pieces generally isn't.

6...c5

White's modest central formation allows Black to take the initiative on the queenside with this move. Actually most players would prefer to play it even earlier.

7 ♘gf3 *(D)*



We have reached a standard London position. We shall not go into any details at this stage; just note that White's central pawn-wedge allows him to develop quickly and naturally. It should also be noted that in the London, White isn't primarily striving for central superiority. Rather his basic strategy is to control the centre and neutralize any black activity there while seeking an initiative on the kingside.

7...♘c6 8 ♘e5

Controlling, and later occupying, e5 is part of White's standard plan in positions with an early ...d5.

8...♕b6

A drawback of the early development of the dark-squared bishop is that b2 becomes vulnerable. However, here White can protect the pawn with a useful move:

9 ♖b1 ♖d8 10 ♕f3

Generally White will try to transfer most of his pieces to the kingside – especially if the black king is already situated there.

10...♗d7 11 ♕h3

Black's play so far has appeared sensible. However, it turns out he lacks counterplay while White's kingside play is starting to look ominous.

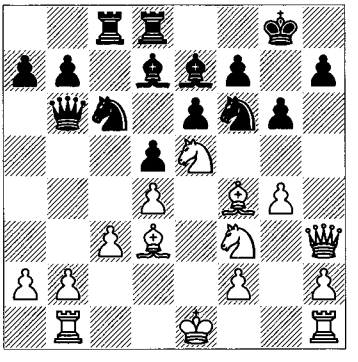
11...♖ac8

White's kingside ambitions allow Black some queenside initiative. However, this is not necessarily a bad thing. Actually it can be argued that everything that keeps Black's attention (or pieces) distracted from the kingside increases White's chances of a successful mating attack.

12 g4!?

It isn't clear that this achieves much against cold-blooded defence. On the other hand White doesn't risk much as it's unlikely that Black can create a counter-attack on the kingside.

12...g6 13 ♘df3 cxd4 14 exd4 *(D)*



14...♘e8??

A blunder in a difficult position. White was threatening ♗g5 and ♕h4, but Black's position is holding up for the moment after 14...♗e8! 15 ♗g5 ♖d6! 16 ♕h4 ♕d8, although it's obvious that White enjoys a dangerous kingside initiative.

15 ♘xf7! 1-0

Black resigned in view of the continuation 15...♔xf7 16 ♕xh7+ ♘g7 17 ♗xg6+ ♔f6 18 g5#.

Lessons to be learned:

1) The London System basically consists of the central pawn-wedge c3-d4-e3 and the dark-squared bishop developed outside it, at f4.

2) White's basic strategy is central control, rather than central activity.

3) Normally White's central control will allow him to concentrate on wing activity, primarily on the kingside.

Game 2
Velazquez – Acosta
Villa Ballester 2003

1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗f4

By shutting in his light-squared bishop, Black gives White the opportunity to head for a favourable ending. White has developed his potentially weak dark-squared bishop functionally by placing it outside the c3-d4-e3 fortress while Black will have difficulties activating his c8-bishop.

3...c5

The characteristic move 3...♗d6 is harder to meet. The text-move aims to destabilize d4, and prepares to attack the weakened b-pawn with ...♕b6.

4 c3

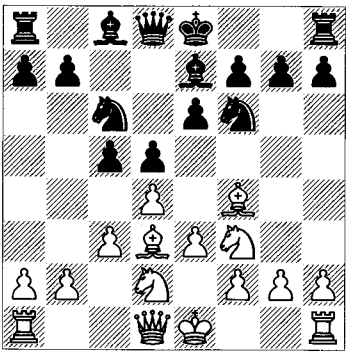
This move should mainly be considered when facing a strong opponent who is unlikely to head for a draw, as 4...cxd4 5 cxd4 ♘c6 would now create a symmetrical pawn-structure in which Black can more easily keep the balance. For winning opportunities 4 e3 with the idea 4...♕b6 5 b3!? is better: 5...cxd4 6 exd4 ♘c6 7 ♗d3 ♗d7 8 c3 ♘f6 9 0-0 reaching a rich position with a small but long-lasting advantage to White because the black queen is poorly placed.

4...♘c6 5 e3 ♘f6 6 ♘bd2 ♗e7

This often is a preparation for ...♘h5, hunting down the dark-squared bishop.

7 ♗d3 *(D)*

B



We shall return to move-orders and refinements later. For the moment we just note that White has again achieved his standard London set-up.

7...c4?

This is a common error by weak players. Black hopes to gain time for a queenside pawn avalanche. In itself that isn't such a bad idea but decreasing the pressure on the centre gives White a free hand on the kingside.

8 ♗c2 0-0?!

With Black having no central pressure, it's quite easy for White to create a raging kingside attack. Relatively often in the London System it's best for Black just to prepare to castle but not actually to do so before he has created some kind of counterplay. 8...b5 9 ♘e5 ♘xe5 10 dxe5 ♘d7 11 h4 b4, with queenside counterplay, is better.

9 ♘e5 ♘xe5

This allows a dangerous kingside attack. However, Black's position is now so difficult that after, e.g., 9...♗d7 10 h4! b5 11 g4 b4 12 g5 ♘e8 13 ♗xh7+!! ♔xh7 14 ♘xf7! ♖xf7 15 ♕h5+ ♔g8 16 g6 ♘f6 17 gxf7+ ♔f8 18 ♕g6 there is no good defence.

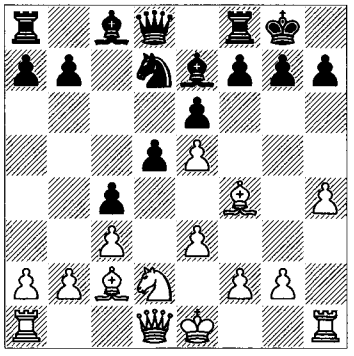
10 dxe5!

It's important to drive the black knight away from the defence of the kingside.

10...♘d7 11 h4!? *(D)*

This is a relatively standard way to attack Black's castled king in the London. The main idea is to support ♘g5.

11...f5



This stops White's most direct attacking ideas, but from a longer perspective allows White to open the g-file against Black's king. If Black unsuspectingly continues his queenside expansion with 11...b5?! White can win in a way very similar to Illustrative Game 5. As we shall return to this theme there, we only give the main lines: 12 ♗xh7+!! ♔xh7 13 ♕h5+ ♔g8 14 ♘f3 f6 (or 14...g6 15 ♕h6 ♖e8 16 ♘g5 ♘f8 17 h5 +–) 15 ♘g5!! fxg5 16 hxg5 ♖f5 17 ♕h7+ ♔f7 18 g6+ ♔e8 19 ♕xg7 ♗f8 20 ♕g8! ♘c5 21 g4 ♘d3+ 22 ♔d2 ♖xf4 23 exf4 ♔d7 24 ♖h8 ♕b6 25 ♖f1 +–.

12 ♘f3

12 g4! is even better: 12...♕b6 13 gxf5 exf5 14 ♖b1; e.g., 14...♘c5 15 ♘f3 ♕a5 16 ♗g5 ♗d8 17 ♘d4 ♕xa2 18 ♕f3 ♕a5 (18...♘d3+? 19 ♔d2 ♘xe5 20 ♕xd5+ ♘f7 21 ♖a1 ♕xb2 22 ♖hb1 +–) 19 ♕xd5+ ♗e6 20 ♕g2 +–.

12...♘c5

12...♕b6, preventing White from castling queenside, is better.

13 ♕e2 a5 14 ♘d4

This illustrates another potential drawback of an early ...c4: the d4-square may become a powerful outpost for a white knight.

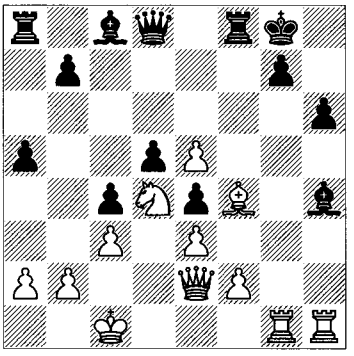
14...h6?

Black prepares to snatch the h-pawn without having to worry too much about ♕h5 and threats to h7. However, this is far too optimistic and creates permanent kingside weaknesses.

15 g4 ♗xh4

Opening the h-file in order to win a pawn seems rather suicidal, but Black isn't able to keep the kingside closed for long anyway. We give just a sample line to illustrate Black's problems: 15...♗d7 16 gxf5 exf5 17 ♕f3 ♘e4 18 0-0-0 ♕b6 19 ♖dg1 a4 20 a3 ♔h8 21 ♕g2 ♖g8 22 e6 ♗e8 23 ♗xh6! +–.

16 gxf5 exf5 17 0-0-0 ♘e4 18 ♗xe4 fxe4 19 ♖dg1 *(D)*



19...♗g5

White was threatening ♕h5 followed by ♗xh6, and the seemingly sensible 19...♖a6 is met by 20 e6!, renewing the threat (20...♗xe6 21 ♘xe6 ♖xe6 22 ♕g4 costs Black a piece).

20 ♗xg5 hxg5 21 ♕h5 1-0

Black resigned in view of variations like 21...♕e8 22 ♕xg5 ♖f7 23 e6 ♖e7 24 ♕h4 ♗xe6 25 ♕h8+ ♔f7 26 ♕xg7#.

Lessons to be learned:

1) Black should generally avoid ...c4 as it releases his pressure on the centre and allows White to pursue his kingside initiative at little risk.

2) Although ...f5 temporarily blocks White's direct attack, it will later allow White to open the g-file with g4.

3) If Black's kingside looks vulnerable, White should consider renouncing castling in favour of h4, preparing ♘g5 and opening various paths for the h1-rook to enter the battle.

Game 3
Blackburne – Harmonist
DSB Congress, Breslau 1889

1 ♘f3

An attraction of the London System is that it can be reached via different move-orders; see Illustrative Game 18 for a more extreme example.

1...d5

Here 1...c5 is the hardest reply to meet for a true London player. White then has many good replies, like 2 e4, 2 c4 and 2 g3, but none of

them leads to London positions. So if White really wants to play the London, he must go for 2 c3, allowing Black to enter the relatively harmless Exchange Slav after 2...d5 3 d4 cxd4 4 cxd4.

2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♗f4 e6 4 e3 ♗e7 *(D)*

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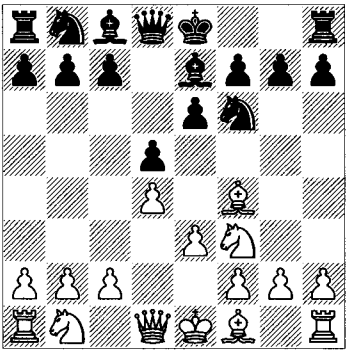


5 ♗d3

This may be slightly inaccurate because the bishop is vulnerable in the variation 5...c5 6 c3 ♕b6 7 ♕b3?! (7 ♕c1 =) 7...c4! 8 ♕xb6 axb6 9 ♗c2 b5, when Black has queenside pressure.

5...0-0 6 ♘bd2 b6 7 ♘e5 ♗b7?!

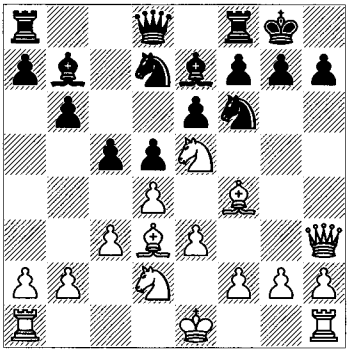
An alternative is 7...♗a6 hoping to exchange light-squared bishops, thus diminishing White's kingside attacking potential. After, e.g., 8 ♘c6 ♘xc6 (or 8...♕e8 9 ♘xe7+ ♕xe7 10 ♗xa6 ♘xa6 11 0-0) 9 ♗xa6 ♘b4 10 ♗e2 c5 11 c3 ♘c6 chances are equal.

8 ♕f3

White is fighting for control over e4 while gradually transferring his pieces to the kingside.

8...c5 9 c3 ♘bd7 10 ♕h3 *(D)*

B



Blackburne's play has a remarkably modern look. This queen manoeuvre, which we also saw in Illustrative Game 1, is almost routine in the double d-pawn London.

10...♖e8?!

This introduces the defensive possibility ...♘f8 but weakens f7. Neither does 10...♘e4 help because 11 f3 ♘ef6 12 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 13 g4 g6 14 ♕g3 followed by h4 gives White strong pressure on the kingside.

11 ♘df3 ♘e4?!

Surprisingly this comes close to losing by force. However, Black's position is already difficult. More than a hundred years later a future women's world champion got a won position from the opening in the same variation: 11...♘xe5 12 ♘xe5 c4 13 ♗c2 b5 14 a3 a5 15 ♘g4 (this forces a crucial weakening of the dark kingside squares) 15...g6 16 ♘h6+ ♔f8 17 ♗e5 ♕d7 18 f4 ♗d8 19 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 20 ♘g4 ♔e7 21 ♘e5 +– Stefanova-An.Rodriguez, Madrid 1997.

12 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 13 ♘e5 ♕d8

Also after 13...♕a4 14 f3 ♘f6 White can force a weakening of the dark squares with 15 ♘g4!.

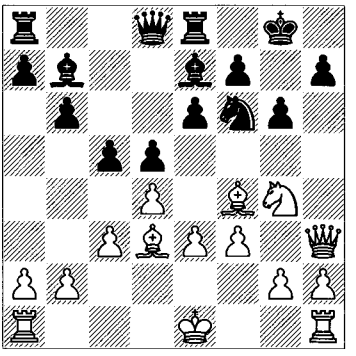
14 f3 ♘f6 15 ♘g4

Blackburne isn't distracted by 15 ♗b5 ♖f8 16 ♘c6, when 16...♗xc6! 17 ♗xc6 ♖c8 18 ♗b7 ♖b8! 19 ♗xb8 ♕xb8 20 ♗c6 cxd4 21 exd4 b5! gives Black excellent chances.

15...g6 *(D)*

This loses material but actually 15...h6 16 ♗xh6! is worse. Black must try to survive with 16...♘xg4 17 ♕xg4 ♗f6 as after 16...gxh6 17 ♕xh6 he must play 17...♘e4 to avoid an immediate loss (e.g., 17...♘xg4 18 ♕h7+ ♔f8 19 ♕h8# or 17...cxd4 18 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 19 ♗h7+ ♔h8 20 ♗g6+ ♔g8 21 ♕h7+ ♔f8 22 ♕xf7#).

W



16 ♗b5!

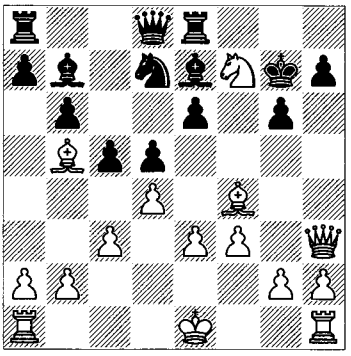
White alertly spots a chance to disrupt the black pieces.

16...♘d7

Black has no real compensation after 16...♖f8 17 ♗h6 ♘xg4 18 fxg4; for example, 18...♗h4+ 19 ♔e2! a6 20 ♗a4 cxd4 21 cxd4 b5 22 ♗xf8 +–.

17 ♘h6+ ♔g7 18 ♘xf7! *(D)*

B



This doesn't really take a lot of calculation. Admittedly some of the mating lines are rather long, but White's material investment is small and Black's king's position is completely destroyed.

18...♗h4+

White, of course, had to take this check into account. The variations after 18...♔xf7 are rather straightforward: 19 ♕xh7+ ♔f6 (19...♔f8 20 ♗h6#) 20 g4 and now:

a) 20...g5 21 ♗xg5+ ♔xg5 22 h4+ ♔f6 23 g5#.

b) 20...♘f8 21 ♗e5+ ♔g5 22 h4#.

c) 20...e5 21 ♗xd7 exf4 (or 21...♕xd7 22 dxe5+ ♔e6 23 ♕xg6+ ♗f6 24 ♕xf6#) 22 g5+ ♔xg5 23 ♖g1+ ♔f6 24 ♖xg6#.

19 ♗g3 ♔xf7

After 19...♗xg3+ 20 hxg3 ♔xf7 White immediately wins back his material with interest after 21 ♗xd7.

20 ♗xh4?

This doesn't spoil anything – White is material up with a better position. Nevertheless 20 ♕xh4! is much stronger: 20...♔g7 (20...♕xh4 21 ♗xh4 costs Black at least an exchange) 21 ♗xd7 ♕xd7 22 ♗e5+ ♔f8 23 ♕h6+! ♔g8 24 h4 ♕f7 25 h5 ♗a6 26 0-0-0 followed by ♖h4 and an easy win.

20...♕c8 21 ♗g3

Now follows a consolidation phase.

21...♔g8 22 0-0 a6 23 ♗d3 e5 24 ♖ae1 ♕c6 *(D)*

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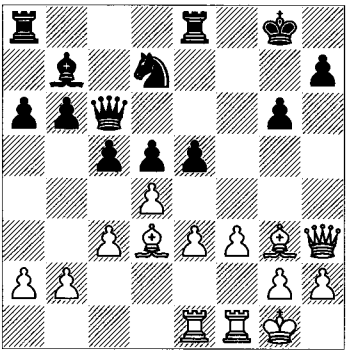


25 e4

White is fully developed and ready to open the centre.

25...cxd4 26 exd5 ♕c8

Obviously not 26...♕xd5 27 ♗e4 +–.

27 cxd4 ♗xd5 28 dxe5 ♕c5+ 29 ♗f2 ♕e7 30 f4 ♗xa2 31 ♗h4

Instead 31 ♗e4! would have won immediately: 31...♗e6 (or 31...♖ad8 32 b3! ♘c5 33 ♗h4) 32 ♕g3 ♖ad8 33 f5 +–.

31...♕g7 32 ♗c2 ♖ac8 33 ♗b3+ ♗xb3 34 ♕xb3+ ♔h8 35 ♖d1 h6 36 ♕h3 ♖c7 37 ♖d6 ♔h7 38 ♖fd1 ♘f8 39 ♗f6 ♕f7 40 ♖6d3

White has a specific idea in mind...

40...♕e6 41 g4 b5

41...h5 would only have prolonged the game for a few moves.

42 ♕xh6+! 1-0

Lessons to be learned:

1) 1 ♘f3 is an alternative way to reach the London set-up.

2) The attacking idea ♘e5 and ♕f3-h3 (which you also saw in Game 1) is a reason to avoid h3.

3) When the white queen has arrived at h3, ♘xf7 followed by ♕xh7(+) becomes a tactical theme.

Game 4
J. Přibyl – Penrose
Nice OL 1974

1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 c5!?

Very challenging – Black takes the initiative in the centre even though White has developed

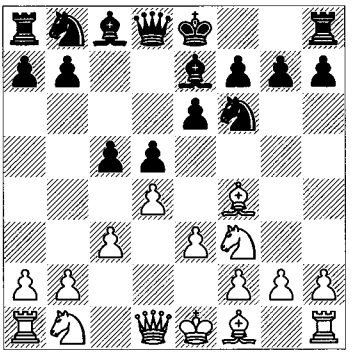
actively. More conservative approaches include 2...♘f6 3 ♗f4 c5 and 2...e6 3 e3 c5.

3 c3

3 c4 and 3 dxc5 are more ambitious, but take us outside the scope of this book. It should be noted that 3 ♗f4?! is poor because of 3...cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘d7! ∓.

3...e6 4 ♗f4 ♘f6 5 e3 ♗e7 *(D)*

W



Black's dark-squared bishop is in principle stronger than its white counterpart because it isn't hindered by its own central pawns. In practical play, however, White's bishop normally proves to be the more influential. However, should Black succeed in exchanging White's dark-squared bishop for his knight, his remaining bishop will often turn out to be very strong.

6 ♘bd2 0-0 7 ♗d3

For 7 ♘e5! see Line 5E.

7...b6 8 ♘e5!

It's no coincidence that this move occurs in most of the double d-pawn games we examine.

8...♗b7 9 ♕f3 ♘c6 10 ♕h3

White is aiming directly at Black's king. Although it makes a rather crude impression, Black cannot easily create counterplay on the queenside as he needs most of his resources to defend his kingside.

10...g6 11 ♗h6 ♖e8 12 f4

With this important move White secures his centre and ensures that in case of an exchange on e5, the f-file will be opened for an attack against Black's weak point at f7.

12...♘d7 13 0-0 f5

Black may seem to have withstood the attack. However, it soon becomes clear that we have only seen the first wave. There is now no way to stop the pawn-levers g4 and h4-h5.

14 ♘df3

14 g4!? ♗f8 15 gxf5 exf5 is a dangerous attacking idea. White can then choose between the 'normal' 16 ♘df3 and the very sharp 16 ♗xf5!? ♘dxe5 17 fxe5 gxf5 18 ♖xf5 ♘e7 19 ♖f6 ♘g6 20 ♖af1 ♗a6 21 ♖1f2 with a strong attack.

14...♘cxe5 15 fxe5!

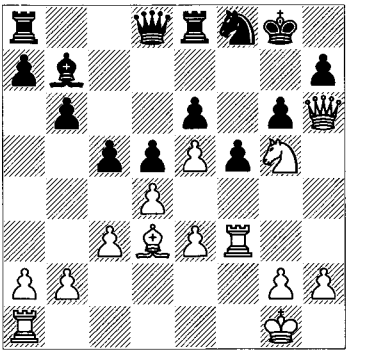
It seems more likely that White can make use of the f-file and the f4-square than the d-file and the d4-square. Nevertheless 15 dxe5 a5 16 ♖ad1! is also good for White: 16...♗a6 17 ♗xa6 ♖xa6 18 c4! dxc4 19 e4 ♕c8 20 ♘d2 b5 21 exf5 exf5 22 a4 ±.

15...♗f8 16 ♘g5 ♗xh6 17 ♕xh6 ♘f8

17...♕e7 isn't better: 18 g4 ♕g7 19 ♕xg7+ ♔xg7 20 ♗b5! ♖ad8 21 gxf5 gxf5 22 ♘h3 followed by 23 ♘f4.

18 ♖f3 *(D)*

B



Black is totally pacified and White calmly organizes his forces before the final onslaught.

18...♖e7

Black's play so far appears rather illogical: first he avoids the ...♗d6 lines in which the dark-squared bishops are usually exchanged quite early. Then he fixes all his pawns on light squares so that his light-squared bishop becomes very weak. Finally he decides to exchange dark-squared bishops after all and is left with a weak bishop and vulnerable dark squares. A better defensive plan would have been 18...♕e7, and 19...♕g7, probably preventing White from winning by a direct attack.

19 g4

Whenever Black blocks the mating threats against h7 with ...f5, this is the standard way to open new lines against the black king. White of course has to show some caution when weakening his own king's shield, but Black is

rarely in a position to counter-attack on the kingside.

19...♖g7 20 ♖af1 ♕d7 21 ♔h1 ♕e7 22 h4 *(D)*

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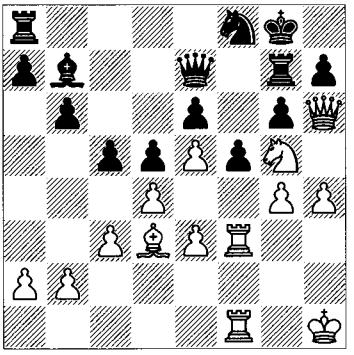


The time has come to break down the walls of the black fortress. There is little risk involved in weakening the white king's position as Black has absolutely no counterplay.

22...♗c8 23 ♖g3 a5 24 ♖fg1 ♖a7 25 ♘h3 ♕d8 26 ♘f4 c4 27 ♗e2 ♖af7 28 gxf5 exf5 29 ♗f3 ♗e6 30 ♕g5?

White unnecessarily simplifies into an ending. 30 h5! ♖d7 31 hxg6 hxg6 32 ♘xg6 would have won easily.

30...♕xg5 31 ♖xg5 ♖d7 32 h5 ♔f7

Black isn't able to close the kingside files with 32...h6 because of the tactical sequence 33 ♖xg6! ♘xg6 34 ♖xg6 ♖xg6 (34...♗f7 35 e6 +–) 35 hxg6 ♖g7 (35...♖e7 36 ♘xe6 ♖xe6 37 ♗xd5 +–) 36 ♘xe6 ♖xg6 37 ♗xd5 ♖g3 38 ♗xc4, when White is winning.

33 ♖1g2 ♔e8 34 hxg6 hxg6 35 ♔g1 ♔d8 36 ♗h5

The g-pawn will now fall, and in reality the game is decided.

36...♖h7 37 ♗xg6 ♖h3??

Even if Black was under time-pressure, this is a horrible blunder, but his position was lost anyway.

38 ♘xh3 1-0

Lessons to be learned:

1) Whenever your opponent is defending passively, you should take your time to post your forces optimally before going for the decisive breakthrough.

2) It may not be such a terrible thing to weaken your own king's position with moves like g4 and/or h4 if you have got the initiative on that wing.

3) White's dark-squared bishop normally isn't inferior to Black's. Even though it is slightly hindered by friendly central pawns, it can be quite active outside the pawn-chain.

Game 5
V. Kovačević – Ree
Maribor 1980

1 d4 ♘f6

Statistically this is slightly more common than 1...d5. It's more flexible and often signals that Black is looking for counterplay rather than equality.

2 ♘f3

This is an excellent move for the flexible player – maybe even rivalling 2 c4 as the objectively best move. However, an insistent London player may find 2...c5 an irritating reply, as after 3 ♗f4?! cxd4! 4 ♘xd4?? e5! 5 ♗xe5 ♕a5+ White loses a piece. 3 d5 is naturally a better move, but normally not very London-like. Therefore in the analytical part of the book we advocate 2 ♗f4!?.

2...d5

2...e6, 2...c5 and 2...g6 are all more consistent with Black's first move. However, Black is probably expecting a Queen's Gambit where White's king's knight has been committed a bit early, depriving him of some of the more promising versions of the Exchange Variation.

3 ♗f4

But White has no intention of entering the Queen's Gambit with 3 c4.

3...e6 4 ♘bd2

Quick development is a main characteristic of the London System, but for practical reasons we shall recommend immediate fortification of the centre with 4 e3 followed by c3 as soon as Black plays ...c5.

4...c5 5 e3 ♗e7 6 c3 0-0

A critical move is 6...♘h5!?, as 7 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 8 ♘e5!? ♘f6 9 ♕a4+ ♗d7 10 ♕xa7?! seems to give Black more than enough for his pawn. Also 6...♘bd7 seems more precise than the text-move, as Black could then contemplate ...♘xg3 without opening the h-file as a direct attacking avenue against his king.

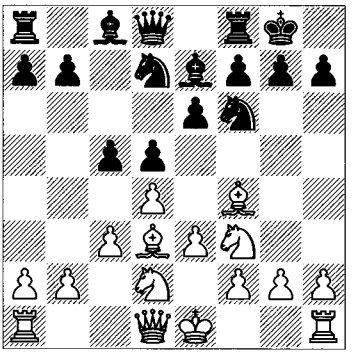
7 ♗d3

This completes the basic London set-up. There certainly are more standard moves, like 0-0, ♘e5, ♕f3 and h3, but they are less essential and more depending on Black's play.

7...♘bd7 *(D)*

This set-up is discussed in more detail in Line 5D. The knight development sometimes prepares the defensive move ...♘f8, protecting h7. Normally it also signals that Black will fight for e4, planning ...b6, ...♗b7 and eventually ...♘e4 followed by ...♘df6 or ...f5. In this game, however, Black never finds the time to complete this development scheme. 7...♘h5 may still be considered, but after 8 ♗g3 Black shouldn't be too eager to open the h-file against his own king.

W



8 h4!?

White declares that he considers his development sufficient and his centre secure enough for an all-out kingside attack! A more restrictive strategy can be initiated by 8 ♘e5.

8...b6 9 ♘e5 ♘xe5?!

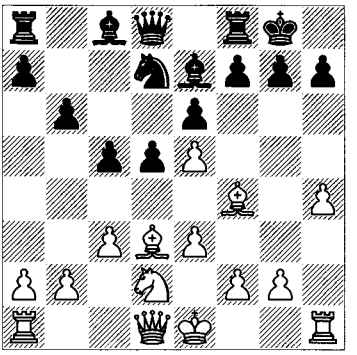
As this leads Black into serious difficulties, the consistent 9...♗b7 should be considered. However, Black's practical difficulties are well illustrated by S.Kovačević-Vilar Lopez, Linares 1996: 10 ♕f3 cxd4 11 exd4 ♖c8 12 ♖h3! (an additional point behind h4) 12...♖e8? 13 ♗b5? (White could have taken advantage of the restricted black queen with 13 ♗xh7+! ♘xh7 {13...♔xh7 14 ♘xf7} 14 ♘xf7 ♔xf7 15 ♗c7+ +–) 13...♘xe5 14 ♗xe5 ♖f8 15 ♖g3 ♔h8 16 ♗d3 ♗d6 17 ♕e2 ♖g8 18 ♘f3 h6 19 ♘g5! ♖c7 (19...♖f8 isn't better: 20 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 21 ♘h7), when White again missed an immediate win, this time by the straightforward 20 ♗xf6! ♕xf6 (20...gxf6 21 ♕h5 ♖xg5 22 ♕xh6+ ♔g8 23 hxg5 +–) 21 ♖f3 ♗f4, when White breaks through with 22 ♘h3 g5 23 hxg5 hxg5 24 g3 +–.

10 dxe5!

Driving away the main defender of the kingside.

10...♘d7 *(D)*

W



11 ♗xh7+!?

This would have been a standard sacrifice, hardly requiring calculation at all, had the white knight already been on f3. With a tempo less, Black's defensive resources are greatly increased.

11...♔xh7 12 ♕h5+

This demonstrates one advantage of not having the knight on f3. In similar positions after ♘g5+ Black can often consider ...♔g6 (but with a white pawn already on h4, the king march would be unlikely to succeed).

12...♔g8 13 ♘f3 f6?

Obviously ♘g5 is a dangerous threat, but this doesn't really help as now the rook enters the attack along with a very annoying pawn. With accurate defence Black can probably still hold the position:

a) Simplest is 13...♗a6 14 ♖d1 (14 0-0-0 ♗e2!) 14...♖e8 (14...g6? 15 ♕h6 ♖e8 16 ♘g5 ♘f8 17 h5 ♗f6 18 hxg6 fxg6 19 exf6 +–) 15 ♘g5 ♘f8 16 ♕xf7+ ♔h8 17 b3 ♕d7! and because of the threat of ...♗d8, White must be content with perpetual check.

b) 13...♖e8 14 ♘g5 ♘f8 is probably also sufficient but much more complicated. However, it isn't very tempting to allow White a certain draw should his mating attempts fail:

b1) 15 ♘xf7? g6 16 ♘h6+ (16 ♕h8+ ♔xf7 17 h5 g5 18 h6 ♗f6 19 exf6 ♕xf6 20 ♕xf6+ ♔xf6 21 ♗d6 ♖d8 –+) 16...♔g7 17 ♕g4 ♘h7! 18 0-0-0 ♖h8 19 e4 d4 ∓.

b2) 15 ♕xf7+ ♔h8 and now:

b21) White can take a draw by 16 ♕h5+ ♔g8, etc.

b22) 16 h5!? ♗xg5 17 h6! (Soltis ends his analysis here) 17...gxh6 (17...♗xh6 18 ♗xh6 gxh6 19 ♖xh6+) 18 ♗xg5 (18 ♖xh6+? ♗xh6 19 ♗xh6 ♕e7 20 ♗g7+ ♔h7 –+) 18...♕xg5 19 ♕xe8 ♗b7 20 ♕f7 ♕g7 21 ♕h5 ♔h7 is still unclear.

b23) 16 0-0-0 ♕d7 17 e4 (17 h5? ♗xg5 –+) 17...d4 (17...♗d8? 18 exd5 ♕xf7 19 ♘xf7+ ♔g8 20 ♘d6 ♖e7 21 ♗g5! ♖d7 22 f4 exd5 23 ♗xd8 ♖xd8 24 f5 ♔h7 25 g4 ±) 18 ♗e3 ♗a6 19 cxd4 cxd4 20 ♖xd4 ♖ec8+ 21 ♔b1 ♕e8 22 ♕f3 ±.

14 ♘g5! fxg5 15 hxg5 ♖f5

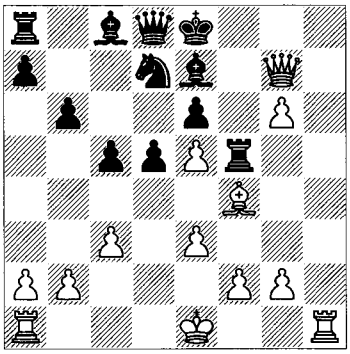
16 g6 was the main threat.

16 ♕h7+ ♔f7

16...♔f8? loses immediately to 17 ♕g6.

17 g6+ ♔e8 18 ♕xg7 *(D)*

B



The passed pawn is now a deadly force in its own right. Black is lost.

18...♗f8

Two other possibilities:

a) 18...♖f8 19 ♖h8 threatening ♕f7#.

b) 18...♘f8 19 ♕h8 ♔d7 20 g7 ♘g6 21 ♕xd8+, queening.

19 ♕h8

19 ♕g8 ♘xe5 20 ♗xe5 ♔d7 21 g7 +– is even more effective.

19...♖g5 20 ♕g8 ♘xe5

20...♖f5 21 ♕xe6+.

21 ♗xe5 ♔d7 22 ♖h8 ♗b7 23 ♕h7+ 1-0

23...♕e7 24 ♗f6 or 23...♔c6 24 g7 +–.

Lessons to be learned:

1) A slightly atypical bishop sacrifice on h7, with the knight not yet ready to go to g5, may work if a few other preconditions (like an advanced h-pawn) are in place.

2) Black should consider not committing himself to ...0-0 too early, but rather stay ready to castle 'at short notice'.

3) It may occasionally be a good idea for White to delay 0-0 for a time, trying to use the attacking power of the king's rook on the h-file.

Game 6
Kamsky – Dlugy
New York (exhibition game) 1989

Chess prodigy Gata Kamsky may have been the strongest player to employ the London regularly. It fitted his practical approach to the game perfectly. Although he did not always achieve an opening advantage, he always got sound positions from which he had a chance to outplay weaker opponents.

1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 c5 3 c3

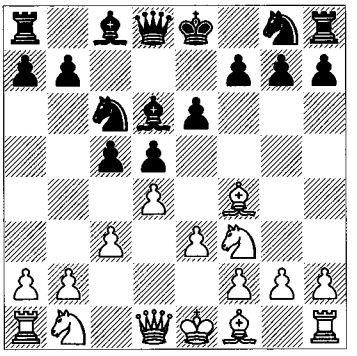
3 c4 and 3 dxc5 may be objectively stronger, but hardly tempting for a London player.

3...e6

Even though the Exchange Slav isn't highly regarded as a winning attempt these days, 3...cxd4 isn't particularly tempting for Black either. White's extra tempo in a symmetrical position gives him some winning chances if Black is a weaker player or has a bad day. And if Black is the stronger player, White will have quite realistic drawing chances. There is also a practical point: how much experience is Black (playing 2...c5) likely to have in defending a position normally arising from the Slav?

4 ♗f4 ♘c6 5 e3 ♗d6 *(D)*

W



Black acknowledges that despite the central pawn-formation, White's dark-squared bishop

is stronger than its black counterpart. In some ways White's position will now be easier to play than after ...♗e7. Among other things ...♘h5 will rarely be a threat, so White doesn't have to consider whether he should play h3. Often the fight will now be over the e5-square; if Black can advance his pawn to e5, he will usually have a very pleasant position. Therefore there is a certain logic in Black's refusal to play ...♘f6. Quite possibly ...♘ge7 followed by ...♘g6 will be a relevant option. White on the other hand would like to exchange dark-squared bishops and his light-squared bishop for the c6-knight, hoping to get an endgame where his e5-knight is stronger than Black's light-squared bishop.

6 ♗g3

This assures that a trade of bishops will open the h-file for White's rook.

6...♗xg3

While undeniably consistent, this makes it harder for the black king to find a safe haven. Now White can continue normal development and delay castling. 6...♘ge7! is a better try, giving Black good control of e5 – see Line 2B for details.

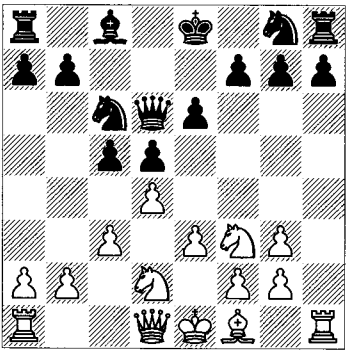
7 hxg3 ♕d6

This appears to be an interesting try for a quick ...e5, but actually Black is mainly setting a trap for himself.

8 ♘bd2(!) *(D)*

Kamsky sees through Black's empty threats.

B



8...♘f6!

We now return to standard positions discussed in Line 5F. The tempting 8...e5? 9 dxe5 ♘xe5 fails to 10 ♘e4! ♘xf3+ 11 gxf3 winning at least a pawn.

9 ♗b5

This move, fighting for control over e5, is one reason why White shouldn't be too quick to develop his light-squared bishop.

9...♗d7 10 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 11 ♘e5 0-0

This appears risky. See Line 5F for alternatives.

12 g4 ♘d7 13 ♕c2 f5?!

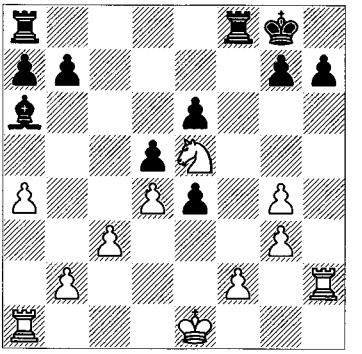
While stopping White's attacking plans, this also allows White full control of e5 and further weakens the light-squared bishop.

14 ♘xd7!

This ensures White a powerful position with an 'eternal' knight on e5, which will be stronger than Black's hemmed-in bishop in almost any endgame. 14 f4 is a promising alternative: 14...♘xe5 15 dxe5! ♕c7 16 ♘f3 with a kingside attack. 14 gxf5? is less effective due to 14...♘xe5! 15 dxe5 ♕xe5 16 fxe6 h6. After 17 ♘f3 Black should avoid 17...♕xe6? since the tactical finesse 18 ♕h7+! ♔xh7 19 ♘g5+ ♔g8 20 ♘xe6 ensures White a clear advantage, but the more accurate 17...♕f6! should equalize.

14...♗xd7 15 ♘f3 cxd4 16 exd4 ♕f4 17 ♘e5 ♗b5 18 a4 ♗a6 19 g3 ♕e4+ 20 ♕xe4 fxe4 21 ♖h2 *(D)*

B



White's knight proves stronger than Black's bishop. In itself, this probably shouldn't be decisive. However, the slight imbalance resulting from White's h-file control versus Black's play on the f-file underlines the difference and generates extra tactical possibilities.

21...♖ac8

After 21...♖f6 22 ♔d2 ♖af8 23 ♔e3 ♖h6! (23...h6?! 24 ♖ah1 b6 25 g5 +–) 24 ♖xh6 gxh6 White has to find 25 b3! ♖c8 26 c4 b6 (26...♔g7 27 c5) 27 ♖c1 ♔g7 28 c5 +– in order to keep his advantage.

22 ♔d2 g5

This may seem unnecessarily weakening, but 22...♖c7 23 ♖ah1 ♖f6 (23...g6? 24 ♘xg6 hxg6? 25 ♖h8+ +–) 24 g5 ♖f5 25 g4 ♖f8 (25...♖xg5 26 ♖xh7 ♔f8 27 ♖h8+ ♔e7 28 ♔e3 followed by ♔f4 also wins for White) 26 ♖xh7 ♖xf2+ 27 ♔e3 ♖e2+ 28 ♔f4 ♔f8 29 ♖h8+ ♔e7 30 ♖1h7 ♔d6 31 ♖d8+ ♔e7 32 ♖hh8 wins for White.

23 ♖ah1 ♖c7 24 ♔e3 b6 25 ♖h6 ♗c8 26 f4

This far from obvious move wins material. Nevertheless 26 ♖1h5! ♖g7 27 b3 is even more effective as it places Black in virtual zugzwang: 27...♗d7 (27...♖c7 28 ♖xg5+ +–) 28 ♘xd7 ♖xd7 29 ♖xg5+ ♖g7 30 ♖xg7+ ♔xg7 31 ♖xe6 ♖f3+ 32 ♔e2 ♖xc3 33 ♖d6 ♖xb3 34 ♖xd5 a5 35 ♖d6 +–.

26...exf3

This at least destroys White's pawn-structure – 26...gxf4+ 27 gxf4 ♖e8 28 g5 ♖ee7 29 ♘g4 is utterly hopeless.

27 ♘xf3 ♖g7 28 ♖6h5 ♗d7 29 ♘xg5!

This demands some calculation but is, of course, no challenge for Kamsky.

29...♗e8 30 ♖xh7 ♖xg5 31 ♖h8+ ♔g7 32 ♖1h7+ ♔g6 33 ♖xf8 ♔xh7 34 ♖xe8 ♖xg4 35 ♔f3

It's time to assess the position, and the verdict is clear: White wins easily.

35...♖e4 36 ♖e7+ ♔g6 37 ♖xa7 e5 38 ♖e7 ♖e1 1-0

Lessons to be learned:

1) Quite frequently White's best reaction to a challenge on the b8-h2 diagonal is to retreat his bishop to g3, ensuring that an exchange of dark-squared bishops will hand him the open h-file.

2) If Black fortifies his king's position with an early ...f5, White may look for possibilities to reach an endgame with a strong knight (on d4 or e5) versus a weak light-squared bishop.

3) The e5-square is very important in the lines with an early ...♗d6, and White may consider delaying the development of his king's bishop in case it turns out to be needed on b5.

Game 7
V. Kovačević – S. Nikolić
Vrnjačka Banja 1965

1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗f4 e6

Trying to develop the queen's bishop outside the central pawn-chain (for instance by 3...♗f5 as in Illustrative Game 11) may simply be too optimistic. So Black limits his ambitions to taking the initiative in the centre with ...c5.

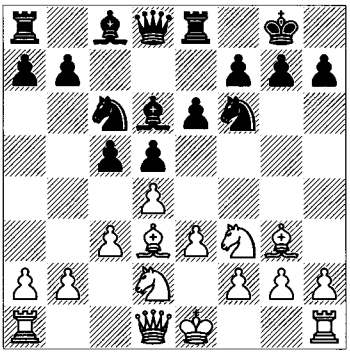
4 ♘bd2 c5 5 e3 ♘c6 6 c3 ♗d6 7 ♗g3 0-0

This is certainly playable, but now White knows where he can find the black king. 7...♕e7 is a very reasonable alternative.

8 ♗d3 ♖e8 *(D)*

35 years later White was happy to reach this position again, this time winning another complicated game against a young grandmaster starting 8...♕e7 9 ♘e5. See Line 5F for the continuation of V.Kovačević-Fressinet, Solin/Split 2000.

W



9 ♘e5

This standard move has to be played now, because otherwise ...e5 would allow Black instant equality.

9...♗xe5

9...♕e7 10 f4 will be the theme for our next game.

10 dxe5 ♘d7 11 f4 c4 12 ♗c2 ♕b6

Obviously Black is now winning a pawn. There aren't many long, theoretical lines in the London that have to be memorized. Possibly not even this line falls into that category. However, the moves so far have been natural and if nothing else you should know that this possibility exists and that White can enter it without fear.

13 ♗f2

Unless this line becomes fashionable in super-GM circles, a definitive verdict may never be established. It was probably first reached in Burn-Marshall, Ostend 1906, where White's attack obviously had failed after 13 ♔f2 ♕xb2

14 ♖c1 ♕xa2 15 ♕e2 (15 ♕h5 may be an improvement) 15...f5 16 exf6 ♘xf6 17 ♗h4 ♖f8 18 ♗xf6 ♖xf6. 13 0-0 has been more popular, when 13...♕xb2 14 ♖c1 gave White a powerful attack after both 14...b5 15 ♘f3 ♘f8 16 f5 exf5 17 ♕xd5 ♗b7 18 ♗xf5 ♖ad8 19 ♕e4 ♘d4 20 ♕xb7 ♘xf5 21 ♗f4 ♘e6, Ziger-Hresc, Werfen 1995, and 14...♕xa2 15 ♘f3 ♘f8 16 ♘d4 ♕a5 17 ♗e1 ♗d7 18 ♖f3 ♘e7 19 ♖h3 ♘f5 20 g4 ♘e7 21 f5 in Wesseln-Blauert, 2nd Bundesliga 1996/7. Moreover, in both games White could probably have improved by 15 ♕h5! ♘f8 16 ♘f3, with a strong initiative.

13...♕xb2 14 ♖c1 b5 15 0-0 b4 16 ♕h5 ♘f8

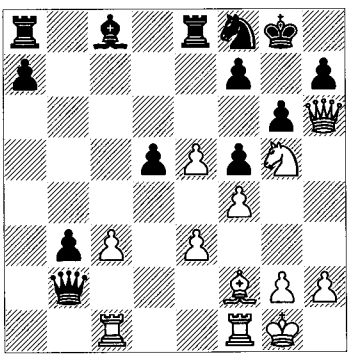
Larsen once claimed in jest that you can never be mated with a knight at f8. There is a grain of truth there, but sometimes that knight can be removed. And in the present game Black will soon be so hopelessly outnumbered on the kingside that not even a magical stallion can help.

17 ♘f3 ♘e7 18 ♘g5 g6 19 ♕h6 b3 20 axb3 cxb3

Black's play may be criticized, but not for inconsistency. The e5-pawn seriously restricts his defensive possibilities so it's hard to say how his kingside defence could have been improved.

21 ♗d3 ♘f5 22 ♗xf5 exf5 *(D)*

W



23 ♗h4?

Black's play so far hasn't been forced but still fairly natural. However, if the game has had theoretical interest so far, it ends here, as White misses a forced win with 23 e4 (threatening ♗c5 followed by ♗xf8) 23...♕a3 24 ♖a1 ♕e7 25 ♖a5! and ♗c5 cannot be stopped.

However, the rest of the game is entertaining:

23...♕a3 24 ♖a1 ♕c5 25 ♖f3 ♕xc3 26 ♖af1 ♖xe5!

The only defence. 26...♕c4 fails to 27 ♘xh7 ♘xh7 28 ♗f6 +–.

27 fxe5 ♕xe5 28 e4! b2

The tactical point is 28...dxe4? 29 ♘xe4! ♘d7 30 ♖xf5! gxf5?! 31 ♗f6 +–.

29 ♗g3 ♕d4+ 30 ♗f2 ♕c4 31 ♖e1 ♖b8?

After 31...♕c1! 32 ♖b3 dxe4 33 ♘xf7 ♕c4! (33...♕xh6? 34 ♘xh6+ ♔g7 35 ♗e3 ±) 34 ♘d8 ♗a6 (34...♕xb3? 35 ♗d4 +–; 34...♕d5!?) 35 ♖xb2 ♖xd8 White's dark-square control should give him slightly the better chances.

32 ♘xh7! ♘xh7 33 ♖h3 b1♕

Now White just has to find the right checks.

34 ♕xh7+ ♔f8 35 ♕h8+ ♔e7 36 ♗h4+ ♔d6 37 ♕f8+ ♔e5 38 ♗f6+! 1-0

38...♔xf6 39 e5+ ♔g5 (39...♔e6 40 ♕e8#) 40 ♕h6+ and mate next move.

Lessons to be learned:

1) There are critical theoretical lines in the London too.

2) The space advantage provided by an e5-pawn is a useful attacking resource.

3) Sometimes the sheer number of white pieces aimed at the kingside is sufficient foundation for a sacrificial attack.

Game 8
Blatny – Luchan
US Open, Boston 2001

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 ♗f4 e6 4 e3 c5 5 c3 ♘c6 6 ♘bd2 ♗d6 7 ♗g3 0-0 8 ♗d3 ♖e8 9 ♘e5 ♕e7

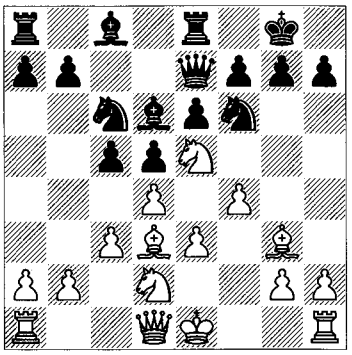
The critical 9...♗xe5 was discussed in the previous game. Now we shall witness what can happen if White is allowed to set up his attacking machinery unhindered. It should be noted that after 9...♕c7 10 f4, 10...♘d7? isn't possible because of 11 ♗xh7+!. For alternatives see Line 5F.

10 f4! *(D)*

White sets up a Stonewall formation, which is a major attacking idea in this kind of position. This begs for an explanation, as the Stonewall attack isn't highly regarded nowadays.

Around 1910, the original Stonewall attack, 1 d4 d5 2 e3 ♘f6 3 ♗d3 was considered a dangerous attacking weapon, and was employed by

B



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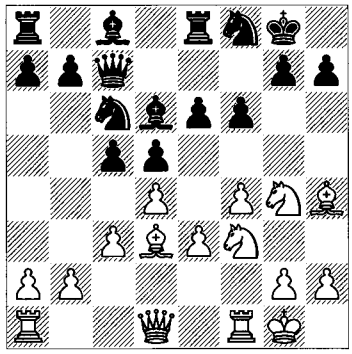


some of the world's top players, including Capablanca and Maroczy. When it later all but disappeared from top-level chess, it was due to three reasons:

1) Black discovered certain finesses that improved his chances. His main ideas were to delay ...0-0 until he had created counterplay in the centre or on the queenside and to delay ...e6 until he had activated his light-squared bishop. A theoretical main line developed: 3...c5 4 c3 ♘c6 5 f4 ♗g4 6 ♘f3 e6 7 0-0 (7 ♘bd2 ♗d6 8 0-0 cxd4! 9 cxd4 =) 7...♗d6 8 ♕e1 0-0 9 ♘e5 ♗f5! and Black is at least equal.

2) The line 3...♘c6! 4 f4 (otherwise Black will play ...e5) 4...♘b4!, winning the bishop-pair, was discovered.

3) It became clear that the Stonewall isn't particularly effective against set-ups with ...g6 and ...♗g7.

However, in the diagram position none of these factors are of any help to Black. White's main attacking plan is ♗h4 and ♕f3-h3, but he also has ideas like g4-g5 or 0-0 and ♖f3-h3/g3.

10...♘d7 11 ♘df3 f6

This weakens g6 and thereby indirectly h7, but the knight at e5 was quite annoying.

12 ♗h4 ♘f8 13 0-0 ♕c7 14 ♘g4 *(D)*

This isn't only a forced retreat but also a dangerous attacking move!

Black has weakened his king's protection somewhat and White has got a lot of pieces directed against the black king, but it's still amazing how dangerous White's attack is.

14...♕e7?

This loses almost by force. However, Black's position is difficult. 14...b6? also seems to lose by force: 15 ♗xf6! h5 (15...gxf6 16 ♘xf6+ ♔f7 17 ♘xe8 ♔xe8 18 ♘e5 ♗b7 19 ♕h5+ ♔d8 20 e4! ♕g7 21 exd5 exd5 22 ♘f7+ ♔c7 23 ♘xd6 ♔xd6 24 dxc5+ bxc5 25 ♖ad1 ♖d8 26 ♗e4 ♘e7 27 c4 +–) 16 ♘h6+ gxh6 17 ♘e5 ♗xe5 18 fxe5 ♕f7 19 ♗h4 ♕d7 20 ♕xh5 +–. It is quite possible that 14...♗e7! is the only move to save Black: 15 ♘f2 c4 (15...e5? 16 fxe5 fxe5 17 ♗g3 ♗d6 18 dxc5 ♗xc5 19 e4 dxe4 20 ♗xe4 ±) 16 ♗c2 ♘g6 and White is only marginally better.

15 ♘fe5! ♗d7

Somewhat surprisingly Black is defenceless:

a) 15...♖d8 16 ♗xf6! gxf6 17 ♘h6+ ♔g7 18 ♕g4+ ♘g6 19 ♗xg6 hxg6 20 ♕xg6+ +–.

b) 15...♖b8 16 ♗xf6! gxf6 17 ♘h6+ ♔h8 18 ♘hf7+ ♔g8 19 ♕g4+ ♘g6 20 ♗xg6 +–.

c) 15...♔h8 16 ♘xf6! gxf6 17 ♕h5 c4 18 ♗xh7! +–.

16 ♗xf6!

Calculating this to the end is no trivial task for most of us (but Blatny probably did so – he is a good calculator). However, common sense tells us that it's worth looking a little deeper when the black king strays to h6.

16...gxf6 17 ♘h6+ ♔g7 18 ♕g4+ 1-0

Fritz helpfully informs that after 18...♔xh6 White mates in 7: 19 ♖f3 ♘g6 20 ♗xg6 ♔g7 21 ♗xh7+ ♔h8 22 ♖h3 ♕g7 23 ♘f7+ ♕xf7 24 ♗f5+ ♕h5 25 ♖xh5#.

Lessons to be learned:

1) The Stonewall formation can be very effective if Black has blocked in his light-squared bishop and castled kingside.

2) When supported by f4, an e5-knight can only be exchanged by allowing a restricting pawn to that square and only driven away by the weakening ...f6.

3) Any weakening of Black's king's pawn-cover should encourage a search for sacrificial attacks.

Game 9
Astl – Holzbauer
Wattens 1995

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4!?

This is the move for faithful Londoners. However, although Gulko has employed it as an anti-computer move, and Capablanca used it in simultaneous exhibitions, no real top player seems to trust this move-order for regular use. Its main virtue is that it allows White to reach a typical London position even against 2...c5 (without allowing the simplification after 2 ♘f3 c5 3 c3 cxd4 4 cxd4).

2...d5

2...c5 would probably have been met with 3 e3. We shall return to the 'Indian' continuations 2...g6 and 2...e6 later, but in general they quickly transpose to orthodox 2 ♘f3 lines.

3 e3

Another practical advantage of 2 ♗f4 is that we now have the same position on the board as after 1...d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3, reducing our analytical workload a bit.

3...c5 4 c3

There of course are exceptions, but as a rule of thumb, this move should come as a reaction to ...c5 (or sometimes to ...c6). It's played only partly in order to meet ...c4 with ♗c2. More importantly it enables White to meet ...♕b6 with ♕b3. However, if Black delays or omits the advance of his c-pawn, White may leave his own c-pawn at home, concentrating on rapid development and maybe looking for a good moment to advance the pawn to c4, attacking the centre rather than consolidating it.

4...♘c6

It's tempting to delay ...e6 as long as possible, keeping the ...♗f5 or ...♗g4 options open. However, as long as Black delays ...e6 he will always be at least three moves away from castling. Besides, there is always a risk that White may take on c5 and hold on to the pawn.

5 ♘f3

If White prefers to stay on less trodden paths, he may try 5 ♘d2, incidentally stopping ...♘h5 for at least another move. The main independent idea is to play a Stonewall without the hemmed-in dark-squared bishop after 5...e6 6 ♗d3 ♗d6 7 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 8 f4. However, although it is certainly a valid try for advantage, it seems that after 8...cxd4! 9 cxd4 Black has enough counterplay on the queenside. V.Kovačević-Beliavsky, Plovdiv Echt 1983 continued 9...♘b4 10 ♗e2 ♕b6 11 ♕b3 ♗d7 12 a3 ♘c6 13 ♕xb6 axb6, when 14 ♖c1 would have been slightly better for White. See Line 5H for details.

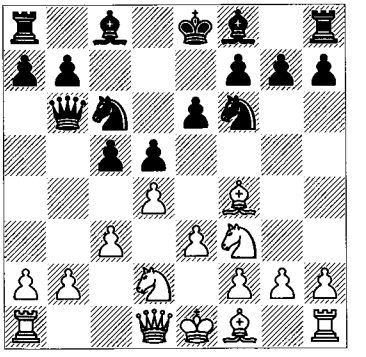
5...e6

5...♘h5!? is critical – see Line 4E for details.

6 ♘bd2 ♕b6 *(D)*

We shall later see lots of examples where this attack on b2 is the critical test of White's set-up. However, at this point the queen's excursion is rather meaningless, as the threat can be parried by a useful move.

W



7 ♖b1

The rook may not be much better here than on a1, but the black queen will almost certainly be worse on b6 than d8.

7...cxd4 8 exd4

This exchange tends to help White, as the semi-open e-file will help him control e5 and transfer his forces to the kingside. However, Black is to some extent compensated by the c-file and possibilities to launch a minority attack on the queenside.

8...♗d7 9 ♗d3 ♗e7 10 h3 ♖c8 11 0-0 ♘a5 12 ♕e2 a6 13 b4

White hopes to reduce Black's queenside pressure by closing the semi-open c-file. The drawback is that he simultaneously frees Black's light-squared bishop and opens the d5-square for a black knight.

13...♘c4!?

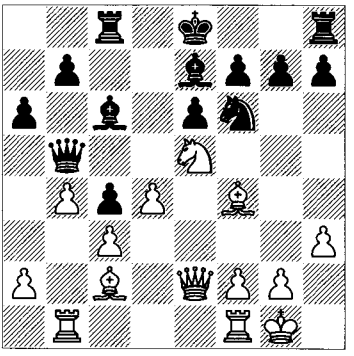
Sacrificing a pawn in return for some activity. 13...♘c6 14 ♘b3 ♘a7 15 ♘c5 ♗b5 16 a4 ♗xd3 17 ♕xd3 0-0 18 ♘e5 ♖fd8 19 ♖fe1 planning 20 ♖e3 also gives White a clear advantage.

14 ♘xc4 dxc4 15 ♗c2

The pawn-grab 15 ♗xc4 also gives White some advantage: 15...♗b5 16 ♗xb5+ ♕xb5 17 ♕c2! (17 ♕xb5+?! axb5 18 ♗d2 ♘d5 19 ♖fc1 ♖a8 20 ♖a1 f6 21 ♔f1 ♔d7 22 a3 ♖a6 =) 17...♘d5 18 ♗d2 ♗f6 19 ♖fc1 ♕c4 20 b5! axb5 21 ♕b2 ±.

15...♕b5 16 ♘e5 ♗c6 *(D)*

W



17 ♗d2!?

Neither 17 ♘xc4? ♗d5! 18 ♘d6+ ♗xd6 19 ♕xb5+ axb5 20 ♗xd6 ♖xc3 ∓ nor 17 ♕xc4 ♘d5! 18 ♗g3 ♕xc4 19 ♘xc4 ♗b5 –+ is attractive for White. Now ...♕d5 can be met by f4 (rather than with f3), partly keeping an iron grip on e5, partly preparing the attacking idea f5.

17...♘d7

Normally it's a good idea for Black to delay castling until the centre becomes too hot. The challenge is to notice exactly when that moment arrives. The variation 17...♕d5 18 f4 b5 19 f5 0-0 (19...exf5? 20 ♖xf5! ♕e6 21 ♖f2 g6 22 ♖e1 ♗d5 23 ♗h6 +–) 20 fxe6 fxe6 21 ♖be1 ♗b7 22 ♘f3 ± may be an indication that 17...0-0 18 f4 ♗d5 19 a4 ♕b6 20 f5 is the lesser evil.

18 f4

White's middlegame play in the London is often quite simple. All his efforts are concentrated on keeping a firm grip on e5.

18...g6

This stops f5, so that the black king can stay safely in the centre a little longer. However, the weakening of the kingside dark squares will now make it very dangerous for Black to exchange on e5, opening the way for White's dark-squared bishop. That in turn makes the c4-pawn vulnerable. 18...♘xe5 doesn't solve Black's problems: 19 dxe5! 0-0 20 a4 ♕b6+ 21 ♗e3 ♕c7 22 ♗d4 ±.

19 ♔h2?!

This useful move may serve as a preparation for g4 and f5, but it seems the immediate 19 a4! is even stronger because of the tactical resource 19...♕d5 20 b5!; e.g., 20...axb5 21 axb5 ♘xe5 (21...♗xb5 22 ♗e4 +–) 22 fxe5 ♗xb5 23 ♗e4 ♕d7 24 ♕f3 0-0 (on 24...♗d8 or 24...♗f8 there follows 25 ♖xb5) 25 ♗h6 and White should be winning.

19...♗d5?

After 19...♕d5 20 a4 ♘f6 (20...0-0? 21 b5! axb5 22 axb5 ♗xb5 23 ♗e4 +–) 21 ♖be1 ± White has a promising attack, but there is no immediate win in sight.

20 a4 ♕b6 21 a5 ♕c7

After 21...♕b5? 22 ♖a1 the queen will be lost to 23 ♗a4.

22 ♗a4!

This is easy to miss in early calculations as one's attention is naturally drawn to the attacking possibilities on the kingside.

22...♗c6

The alternative is to give up the exchange with 22...♖d8, but White will eventually be able to open some lines for his rooks – probably by a kingside pawn-break.

23 ♗xc6 bxc6 24 ♕xc4

Now White is a pawn up in addition to his positional advantage and should be winning comfortably.

24...♕b7 25 ♕e2 0-0?!

The black king cannot stay in the centre much longer but 25...♘f6 is probably a necessary preparation.

26 ♗e1?!

It's possible that White was in time-trouble. We can see no reason not to grab another pawn with 26 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 27 ♕xa6.

26...♖fd8 27 ♗g3 ♕b5 28 ♕f2 ♕d5 29 ♗h4 ♗xh4 30 ♕xh4 ♘xe5 31 fxe5 ♖d7

Black must be very careful in order to prolong the game. 31...♖b8? 32 ♖xf7! ♔xf7 33 ♕xh7+ ♔e8 34 ♖f1 +– is a nice illustration of White's tactical possibilities.

32 ♕f6 ♕c4 33 ♖f3 ♕e2 34 ♖bf1 ♕d2 35 ♕h4 ♔g7 36 ♖1f2

White isn't tempted by 36 ♖xf7+? ♖xf7 37 ♖xf7+ ♔xf7 38 ♕f6+ ♔g8 39 ♕xe6+ ♔g7 40 ♕xc8 ♕f4+ with perpetual check.

36...♕c1 37 ♕f6+ ♔g8 38 ♖g3 ♕h6 39 ♕f3 ♕c1 40 ♕e2 ♖a7 41 h4 1-0

Black resigned – probably because White had made it through his time-pressure. It shouldn't be too difficult to engineer a decisive breakthrough on the kingside as Black is tied to the defence of his a- and c-pawns.

Lessons to be learned:

1) ...♕b6 is normally only a good idea if it forces White to make some kind of concession. If White can safely reply with ♖b1 or ♕c2, the black queen will often be misplaced.

2) You have seen some of the ideas behind delaying ♘f3.

3) It's often a good idea to reinforce a knight at e5 with f4 unless it means giving Black lasting control of e4.

Game 10
V. Kovačević – Pinter
Plovdiv Echt 1983

1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4

While we don't dare to give any guarantees for 1...♘f6 2 ♗f4, we are convinced that this is more accurate than 2 ♘f3 if White is heading for a London System, mainly because it enables him to secure his centre more rapidly with e3 and c3.

2...♘f6

Some independent ideas behind 2 ♗f4 are demonstrated in the variations 2...e6 3 e3 ♗d6 4 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 5 ♕g4!? and the adventurous 2...c5 3 e4!? dxe4 4 d5, which is a reversed Albin Counter-gambit.

3 e3 c5 4 c3

Primary mission accomplished!

4...♘c6 5 ♘d2 ♕b6

Whenever the light-squared bishop leaves its post on c1 early in a queen's pawn opening (e.g., the Trompowsky, Torre or London System), ...♕xb2 becomes a theme. And in contrast to the previous game, this is a critical test of White's opening scheme. The easy solution, b3, is often undesirable as the weakened dark squares a3, b4 and c3 may be embarrassing with the bishop shut out from the defence at f4. Normally ♕b3 (or occasionally ♕c2) is more tempting but White hasn't always got the time to prepare that. So quite often – especially if White plays the orthodox move-order with 2 ♘f3 – he is left with a choice between protecting b2 with slightly awkward moves like ♕c1 or ♖b1 and simply gambiting it for rapid development.

6 ♕b3

Having delayed ♘f3, White is ready to meet the threat to b2 in a number of ways. The text-move seems only to help Black forward on the queenside, but actually the opposite is normally true.

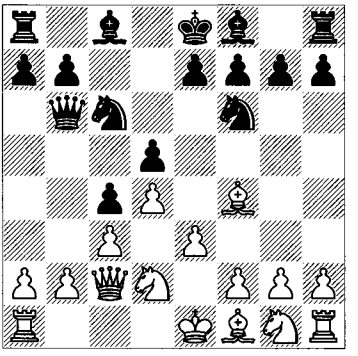
6...c4

Black should play this only if he achieves something significant. Otherwise it can often be punished by a central break (e4 will often be playable as ...dxe4 may be met by ♘xc4) or by a kingside attack (as Black will have very few active plans in the centre). Here Black gains at least one tempo, so if nothing else it's worth investigating.

7 ♕c2 *(D)*

7 ♕xb6 probably isn't a great idea, as the doubled pawns aren't weak and the open a-file may prove very useful for Black. However, it should be noted that an exchange on b6 may be more tempting if White's queen's knight can still go to a3 (heading for b5 and c7).

B



7...♘h5

The following hunt for the dark-squared bishop is very thematic. See Line 4F for alternatives.

8 ♗g5 h6 9 ♗h4 g5 10 ♗e2 ♘g7 11 ♗g3 ♘f5

Obviously Black has succeeded with his plan – his dark-squared bishop will be the only one left on the board. However, his triumph isn't great as he has had to give up his queenside pressure, weaken his kingside and open the h-file.

12 ♘gf3 ♗g7 13 e4

It's hard to tell exactly how large White's advantage is. He has all the likely pawn-breaks,

and Black will be reduced to passivity for a long time. However, if White is too eager to break through, Black's bishops (especially the dark-squared one) may wake from their sleep.

13...♘xg3 14 hxg3 e6

White's task for the next few moves will be to improve the activity of his minor pieces before opening the position. That will demand some slightly counter-intuitive manoeuvring.

15 ♘h2!

Not only preparing to re-employ the knight at g4 but also activating his bishop in a very efficient way.

15...♗d7 16 ♗h5

White achieves nothing with 16 exd5 exd5 17 ♗g4 0-0-0 18 0-0 ♕c7 19 ♖ae1 h5 =.

16...♘e7?!

Black had to try the bold 16...♘xd4! 17 cxd4 ♗xd4, when it isn't easy to prove an advantage; e.g., 18 0-0-0 c3 (18...♗xf2? 19 ♘g4 ±) 19 bxc3 ♗xc3 20 ♕b3 ♕c6 21 ♘g4 ♖c8 22 ♔b1 a5 23 ♖c1 a4 24 ♕xc3 ♕xc3 25 ♖xc3 ♖xc3 26 ♘e5 =.

17 0-0 0-0 18 e5

White still has sufficient kingside breaks to exploit his more active pieces.

18...f5

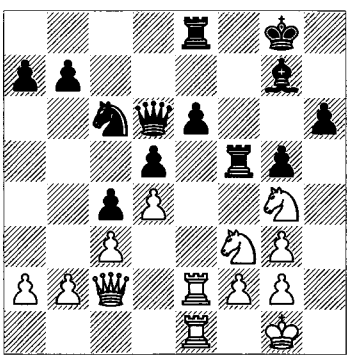
Sensibly, Black forces the opening of the position before White has established complete control with his minor pieces.

19 exf6 ♖xf6 20 ♘g4

White will first ensure complete control over e5, then start to attack the backward e-pawn.

20...♖f5 21 ♘f3 ♕d6 22 ♖fe1 ♗e8 23 ♗xe8 ♖xe8 24 ♖e2 ♘c6 25 ♖ae1 *(D)*

B



White's pieces are all nearly optimally positioned. It isn't yet obvious how he will decide the game, but if the white queen can enter the black kingside via g6, Black should be defenceless. And tactical opportunities are already beginning to present themselves.

25...♖e7?!

Black breaks down somewhat prematurely, but his position is difficult; e.g., 25...♘d8? loses quickly to 26 ♕xf5.

It seems the only move may be 25...♕d7!, when White still has some hard work to do: 26 ♖e3! (26 ♔h2? ♕f7) 26...♕f7 27 ♕e2 ♖f8 28 ♖xe6 h5 29 ♘h6+ ♗xh6 30 ♖xh6 g4 31 ♘h4 ♖f6 (31...♖xf2? 32 ♕e3 +–) 32 ♖xf6 ♕xf6 33 f4 ±.

26 ♖xe6! ♖xe6 27 ♕xf5 ♖xe1+ 28 ♘xe1 ♘e7

Black limps on, but in the long run White's extra pawn should decide.

29 ♕f3 ♕g6 30 ♔f1

30 ♘e3! is more accurate: 30...♕e6 (or 30...♕b1 31 ♔f1 ♕xb2 32 ♘xd5 +–) 31 ♘1c2 a5 32 g4 +–.

30...b5 31 ♘e3 ♕e6 32 a3 a5 33 g4 b4 34 axb4 axb4 35 ♘1c2!

The d-pawn cannot be saved, but Black makes a last desperate attempt:

35...b3 36 ♘b4 ♗xd4 37 cxd4 c3 38 bxc3 b2 39 ♕d1 ♕e4 40 ♘d3 1-0

Lessons to be learned:

1) The move-order 2 ♗f4 allows White to create his typical London formation with ♗f4 and c3-d4-e3 one move earlier. This has various advantages, among others making ♕b3 possible in reply to ...♕b6.

2) After ...c4 White will normally initiate a kingside and central initiative starting with the e4 break.

3) White should always be aware of the thematic bishop-hunt ...♘h5, ..h6, ...g5 and possibly ...♘g7-f5.

Game 11
V. Kovačević – R. Byrne
Wijk aan Zee 1980

1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6

This natural move is clearly Black's most popular, but to a London player 2...c5 and 2...e6 3 ♗f4 ♗d6! are in some ways more challenging.

3 ♗f4 ♗f5

This move may be too optimistic. Now both b-pawns are vulnerable, but White's extra tempo ensures that he will be the first one to attack.

4 e3 c6 5 c4!

Although the London is to some extent a 'opening system', White must always look for the best move in order to maintain some advantage from the opening. Here the c-pawn must advance two squares in order to maximize the pressure against Black's queenside.

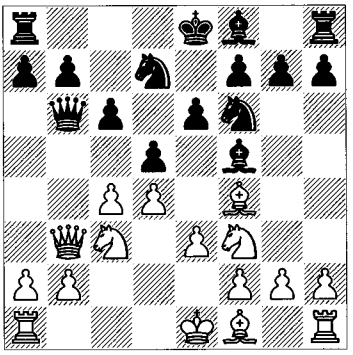
5...e6 6 ♘c3

6 ♕b3 will lead to the same kind of position but may be even more precise, as in the game ...♘bd7 appears more useful than ♘c3.

6...♘bd7 7 ♕b3 ♕b6?! *(D)*

Neither is 7...♕c8 8 cxd5 exd5 9 ♖c1 really tempting, but it probably gives Black better chances to reorganize his queenside gradually. See Line 7C for details.

W



8 c5!

White releases the central pawn tension, but only because he sees that by doing so he can achieve something concrete.

8...♕xb3 9 axb3

The open a-file helps White create an initiative on the queenside. Now b4-b5 is a more dangerous threat than is apparent at first sight.

9...a6

9...♘h5 10 ♗c7 ♖c8 11 ♗e5 a6 also doesn't help Black: 12 h3 ♘hf6 (12...♘xe5? 13 dxe5 ♗e4 14 ♘xe4 dxe4 15 ♘d2 g6 16 ♘xe4 +–) 13 ♗h2 h5 14 b4 ♗e7 15 ♘d2 ♗c2 16 ♗e2 h4 17 f3 with the idea ♔f2, ♖hc1 and ♘b3-a5 gives White the better chances.

10 b4 ♖c8

Black just barely side-steps the b5 break, but White has more long-term queenside ideas. The amusing 10...0-0-0? 11 ♖xa6! bxa6? 12 ♗xa6# hasn't yet occurred in practice. 10...♗e7?! 11 b5! is very uncomfortable for Black: 11...cxb5 12 ♘xb5 (12 ♗xb5 is probably sufficient for a minor advantage too) 12...0-0 13 ♘d6 (not 13 ♘c7?! ♖ac8 14 b4 ♘e4 =) 13...♗xd6 14 ♗xd6; e.g., 14...♖fc8 15 h3 h5 16 ♗e2 ♘e4 17 ♗h2 g5 18 g4! hxg4 19 hxg4 ♗xg4 20 ♘xg5 ♗xe2 21 ♘xe4 dxe4 22 ♔xe2 +–.

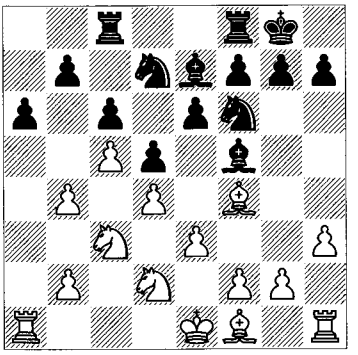
11 h3 ♗e7

11...h6 and 11...♘e4 have also been tested here, but Black's position remains difficult.

12 ♘d2 0-0 *(D)*

Black is fully developed, but he isn't well positioned for his only active idea – the ...e5 break. 12...♗c2 doesn't solve his problems either due to 13 ♗e2 h5 14 0-0 followed by ♖fc1 and ♘b3.

W



13 g4!

White isn't afraid to grab space on both flanks. This of course may rebound if Black is ever allowed to take over the initiative. However, for the moment that doesn't seem a likely scenario.

13...♗g6 14 ♘b3 ♖a8

It seems that White is able to improve his position decisively after 14...♗d8 15 ♘a5 ♗xa5 16 bxa5 too; e.g., 16...♖fe8 17 ♗d6 e5 18 ♔d2 exd4 19 exd4 ♘e4+ 20 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 (20...♖xe4? 21 f3! +–) 21 ♖g1 ♘f8 22 f3! ♗g6 (22...♗xf3 23 ♖g3 ♗e4 24 ♖b3 +–) 23 ♖a4 ♘e6 24 ♖b4 h6 25 h4 ♖a8 26 ♔c3 ♘d8 27 h5 ♗h7 28 f4 +–.

15 ♘a5 ♖a7 16 f3 ♖c8 17 ♔d2

White quietly mobilizes all his pieces. His main chance for a breakthrough may be a piece sacrifice on the queenside, but Black must also watch out for a sudden file-opening on the kingside.

17...b6?

This allows a decisive breakthrough, but that was difficult to prevent in any case, for example:

a) 17...♔f8 18 ♘xb7! ♖xb7 19 ♗xa6 ♖bb8 20 ♗xc8 ♖xc8 21 b5 cxb5 22 b4 +–.

b) 17...♗d8 18 ♘xb7! ♖xb7 19 ♗xa6 ♖bb8 20 ♗xc8 ♖xc8 21 ♖a7 ♘f8 22 b5 cxb5 23 ♘xb5 +–.

18 ♗xa6!

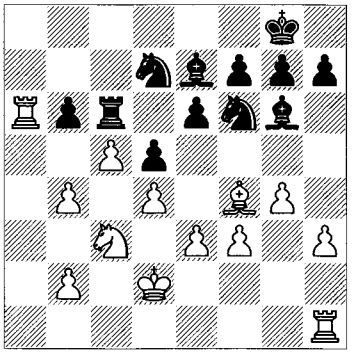
This small tactical finesse secures White a decisive queenside initiative. He doesn't win material at once, but Black's uncoordinated pieces aren't well placed to stop the resulting passed pawn.

18...♖xa6 19 ♘xc6 ♖xc6

Worse is 19...♖xa1 20 ♘xe7+ ♔f8 21 ♘xg6+ hxg6 22 ♖xa1 +–.

20 ♖xa6 *(D)*

B



Despite nominally being material down, White is winning because Black's pieces cannot get to the queenside quickly enough.

20...♖c8

The immediate threat was ♖a8+ followed by b5, trapping the c6-rook. In addition White has some back-rank threats – not really against the king, rather threatening to pin Black's minor pieces down and march the queenside pawns in.

21 ♖ha1! bxc5 22 ♖a8 ♖f8

After 22...♖xa8 23 ♖xa8+ ♘f8 24 bxc5 Black's minor pieces are entirely incapable of stopping the white queenside pawns.

23 bxc5 ♘xc5

This, of course, is desperation, but there really is no way Black can handle the two connected passed pawns. 23...♗xc5 is no better: 24 dxc5 e5 (24...♘xc5 25 ♗d6) 25 ♗g5 ♘xc5 and the nice finesse 26 ♘xd5! decides. The rest is a matter of technique.

24 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 25 ♖a8+ ♘e8 26 dxc5 ♗xc5 27 ♖c8 ♗e7 28 e4 dxe4 29 ♘xe4 f6 30 ♗d6 f5 31 ♗xe7+ ♔xe7 32 ♘c5 ♔d6 33 b4 ♘c7 34 ♖xc7! ♔xc7 35 ♘xe6+ ♔d6 36 ♘xg7 fxg4 37 hxg4 ♔d5 38 ♔e3 ♔c4 39 f4 ♔xb4 40 f5 ♗f7 41 ♘e6 h6 42 ♘d8 1-0

Lessons to be learned:

1) White shouldn't hesitate to deviate from routine London procedures if c4 offers him a strong queenside initiative. This occurs particularly often if Black develops his light-squared bishop outside his central pawn-wedge.

2) The early development of Black's light-squared bishop should normally be met by c4 and ♕b3 with pressure against Black's b-pawn.

3) The opening of the a-file resulting from a queen exchange on b3 often offers White queenside pressure.

Game 12
Mastrapa – Medina
Cuban Ch 2000

1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗f4 c5 4 e3

4 c3 is very playable, but allows 4...cxd4 with a symmetrical pawn-structure.

4...♕b6

In contrast to the last game, this queen sortie is critical for the evaluation of the orthodox London variations. If it ensures Black equal chances, White may have to look into 2 ♗f4 in order to fight for a theoretical advantage. From a practical viewpoint the question may not be very important. Firstly, many London players are perfectly happy to reach a roughly level middlegame where the stronger player will normally win. Secondly, a London player who prepares seriously will have good chances to get an advantage from this variation simply because he should be the better prepared for the slightly odd positions that tend to emerge.

5 ♘c3

From a tactical viewpoint this is indisputably correct, and basic chess principles suggest that ♘c3 should be a better developing move than ...♕b6. Therefore it's somewhat surprising that White scores relatively poorly in this variation. 5 ♕c1 is a well-tested alternative, but although it is solid, it doesn't aspire for much of an opening advantage.

5...a6

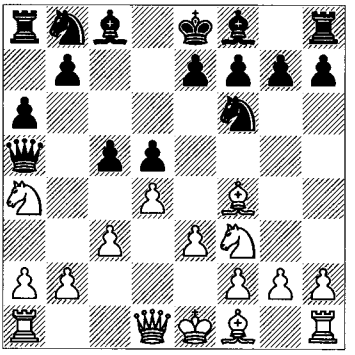
This renews the threat against b2. However, now White has a choice of ways to protect it. 5...♕xb2 isn't tempting since after 6 ♘b5 ♘a6 7 ♖b1 ♕xa2 8 ♖a1 ♕b2 White can choose between 9 ♖b1 with a draw or a likely win with 9 ♖xa6!.

6 ♘a4

In addition to this and the obvious 6 ♖b1, White also has the tricky 6 a3!?, as 6...♕xb2 7 ♘a4 traps the queen. See Line 4C for details.

6...♕a5+ 7 c3 *(D)*

B



It isn't clear whether the knight will be misplaced on a4, but it seems White will be able to direct a lot of the play to the queenside, allowing it to take part in the game.

7...cxd4

7...♘bd7 is another attempt to neutralize White's queenside initiative. However, after 8 ♘xc5! ♘xc5 9 b4! ♕a3 10 bxc5 ♕xc3+ 11 ♘d2, the pawn-structure promises White a long-lasting initiative on the queenside (e.g., 11...♗f5 12 ♕c1 ♕xc1+ 13 ♖xc1 ♖c8 14 ♖c3 ±).

8 exd4 e6 9 b4 ♕d8 10 ♗d3 ♗d6 11 ♘e5 ♕c7 12 0-0 ♘c6 13 ♖e1 b6 14 ♗g3 ♗b7 15 f4 ♘e4 16 ♗xe4 dxe4 17 ♘c4!

Finally it's clear that the a4-knight will not end up as a spectator, but as one of the star pieces of the game. 17 ♖xe4?! would be met by 17...♘xb4!.

17...♗xf4

This move allows a small tactical stroke, but 17...b5? 18 ♘xd6+ ♕xd6 19 ♘c5 ♘d8 20 f5 ♕d5 21 ♖xe4! 0-0 (21...♕xf5 22 ♖e5 ♕g6 23 ♘xb7 ♘xb7 24 ♕f3 +–) 22 f6 +– is even worse. And after 17...♖d8 18 ♘axb6 (18 ♘xd6+ is good too) 18...♗xf4 19 ♗xf4 ♕xf4 20 ♖f1 ♕g5 21 ♕e2 f5 22 a4 ♘e7 23 ♘a5 ♗d5 24 c4 ♗a8 25 ♘xa8 ♖xa8 26 b5 White has a decisive advantage.

18 ♗xf4 ♕xf4 19 ♖xe4! ♕c7 20 ♘axb6 ♖d8

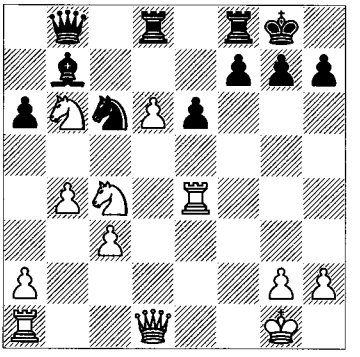
20...♘e7 21 ♕a4+ is even worse for Black.

21 d5 0-0

It isn't clear that the king will feel much safer on the deserted kingside than in the centre.

22 d6 ♕b8 *(D)*

W



23 ♖h4 ♕a7 24 ♕h5 h6 25 ♕c5?!

25 ♖d1 is much simpler. Black is then helpless against the brutal plan of ♖d3-g3; for example, 25...f5 (25...f6 26 ♕c5!) 26 ♕e2 ♖f6 27 d7 e5 28 ♔h1 ♖g6 29 ♘d5 ♖e6 30 ♖h5 and White wins.

25...f5 26 a4 f4 27 ♕f2 f3 28 g3 ♖f5 29 ♖e1 ♖f6 30 ♖he4 e5

There was no way to defend e6; for example, 30...♔f7 31 ♖f4 ♖xf4 32 gxf4 ♘b8 33 ♕e3 ♗c8 34 f5 +–.

For a while the position has looked rather messy, with some pieces on rather unusual squares, but now White is able to simplify the position.

31 ♘d5 ♖fxd6 32 ♘xd6 ♖xd6

32...♕xf2+ loses too: 33 ♔xf2 ♖xd6 34 c4 a5 35 b5 ♘b4 36 ♖d1 ♘xd5 37 cxd5 ♔f7 38 ♖xe5 +–.

33 ♕xa7 ♘xa7 34 c4 ♘c6 35 ♔f2 ♔h7 36 ♔xf3 ♖d7 37 ♔f2 ♘d4 38 ♖xe5 ♖f7+ 39 ♘f4 ♖f6 40 ♖e7 1-0

Lessons to be learned:

1) White's better development may often allow him chances on the queenside even if Black has more space on that wing.

2) You have learned some opening theory in a critical variation with an early ...♕b6, disturbing White's planned London build-up.

3) The tactical theme ♘c3-b5 + ♖b1-a1xa6 often refutes an early ...♕xb2.

The Chigorin Set-up

The Chigorin Queen's Gambit is characterized by the moves 1 d4 d5 2 c4 ♘c6!?, and is a sharp attempt to fight White's pawn-centre with active piece-play. One typical variation runs 3 ♘f3 ♗g4 4 cxd5 ♗xf3! 5 gxf3 ♕xd5 6 e3 e5 7 ♘c3 ♗b4 8 ♗d2 ♗xc3 9 bxc3 and although theorists tend to prefer White's huge centre and bishop-pair, many practical players enjoy playing Black because of his better development and White's somewhat insecure king. However, London players can fight Black with his own weapons: quick development and a pawn-formation without weaknesses.

Game 13
Rogers – Ye Rongguang
Kuala Lumpur Z playoff 1990

1 ♘f3 d5

Another relatively popular way to reach this Chigorin version is 1...♘c6 2 d4.

2 d4 ♘c6

The normal way to reach this position is 1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6. Some classicists still distrust the move ...♘c6 on the grounds that it blocks the c-pawn. That scepticism has largely been refuted by Morozevich and other young players' success with the 1 d4 d5 2 c4 ♘c6 Chigorin. However, the c-pawn is a very important force in the closed openings – not only for attacking the centre, but also for guarding it. We consider this 'Pseudo-Chigorin' variation inferior, simply because there is nothing for Black's active pieces to bite on.

3 ♗f4!

This is a genuinely strong move. Not so much because it allows us to stay within London territory, but because it leaves the black knight looking rather misplaced on c6. Consequently the move has been adopted by a lot of players who would continue 3 c4 or 3 g3 against most other second moves.

3 c4, transposing to a normal Chigorin line, gives Black the type of game he is seeking, where he will often attack a big centre with his pieces. Now there is no realistic target, and White can complete his development before playing c4.

3...♗g4

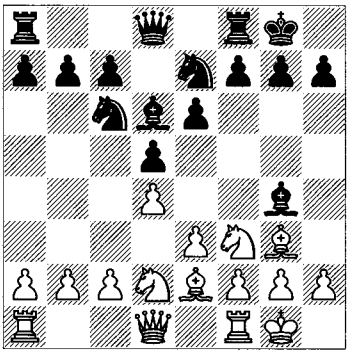
Black develops quickly and seems to be doing fine for a while. 3...♘f6 and 3...♗f5 are playable alternatives but less in the spirit of the Chigorin. If Black plays an early ...♘f6, White should consider ♗b5, planning ♘e5 and ♕a4, but it has less point when Black can meet it with ...♘ge7 and ...a6.

4 e3 e6 5 ♗e2

Our recommendation is 5 c4. See Line 3A for details. However, the text-move perfectly illustrates why the London frustrates Chigorin players.

5...♗d6 6 ♗g3 ♘ge7 7 ♘bd2 0-0 8 0-0 *(D)*

B



Slowly it's becoming obvious that Black lacks a way to increase his central influence.

8...♘f5

As a compensation for his lack of space, Black obtains the bishop-pair. That will help him somewhat but it isn't a great achievement here, as his dark-squared bishop isn't likely to become the star of the board.

9 c4

By delaying this move until development is completed, White has avoided most of Black's usual counterplay (destruction of pawn-structure, attack on the uncastled king, etc.), which makes the Chigorin an attractive opening for many maverick players.

9...♘xg3 10 hxg3

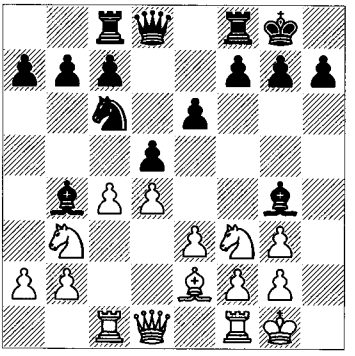
As we shall see, even after castling kingside the open h-file may become useful. Moreover,

the extra control over f4 provided by the g3-pawn may be useful if White plays e4 at some point.

10...♗b4

Black is struggling to find activity for his pieces because of his lack of space.

11 ♖c1 ♖c8 12 ♘b3 *(D)*



12...dxc4

It isn't desirable for Black to give up his central foothold like this, but he needs space for his pieces. Maybe 12...♘e7!? is better, planning ...♘f5 followed by ...c6. It may seem that White would then trap the dark-squared bishop with a combination of a3 and c5, but 13 a3 can be met by 13...dxc4 and 13 c5 with 13...c6, in both cases saving the bishop. In the last variation, however, White's advantage is very clear after 14 a3 ♗a5 15 ♘xa5 ♕xa5 16 b4 ♕c7 (not 16...♕xa3? 17 ♕d2 a5 18 bxa5 ♗f5 19 ♖a1 ♕b3 20 ♖a2 and White wins) 17 a4 f6 18 b5.

13 ♖xc4 ♗d6

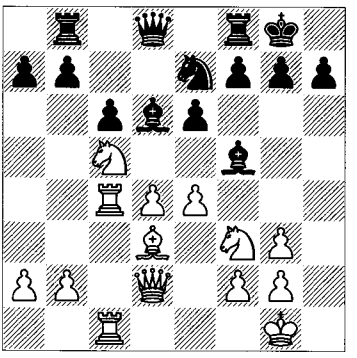
White had the minor threat of 14 d5 with a double attack on the c6-knight and the g4-bishop, which would force Black to give up his light-squared bishop for the knight. Now 14 d5 can be met by 14...♘e5.

14 ♘c5

This knight puts the black queenside under considerable pressure and is in no way inferior to a bishop. Black can of course exchange it for his dark-squared bishop, but that would be giving up his only trump-card in an otherwise unattractive position.

14...♖b8 15 ♕d2 ♘e7 16 ♖fc1 c6 17 ♗d3 ♗f5 18 e4 *(D)*

White's extra centre pawn provides him with a space advantage.



18...♗g6 19 ♕e3 ♖e8 20 ♖4c3 ♘c8 21 g4

Gaining some more space, while planning to make use of the semi-open h-file.

21...♘b6 22 ♖a3 ♘c8 23 ♖b3 ♕c7 24 g3 ♘b6

Black can't muddy the waters by 24...♗xg3? because of the simple 25 e5 +–.

25 ♔g2 ♘d7 26 e5 ♗e7

26...♗xd3? obviously isn't an option due to 27 exd6. Quite possibly the ugly 26...♗f8 27 ♗xg6 fxg6 is the only way to avoid being mated down the h-file as in the game, but Black's pawn weaknesses are serious so it isn't likely that he can save his game.

27 ♗xg6 hxg6 28 ♘e4

One may suspect that White is already winning. His attacking ideas down the h-file are slow but deadly, and in addition there is a thematic knight sacrifice at f6 (after a preparatory g5). While Black has a huge number of legal moves, his rigid pawn-formation on the kingside makes it hard for him to find a sensible defence even against the slow and primitive idea of ♖h1-h3 followed by ♕e1-h1.

28...♕a5

28...♘b6 29 ♖h1 ♘d5 30 ♕c1 ♕d8 31 ♕g1! f5 32 exf6 ♗xf6 33 g5 +– is another example of the mating themes on the h-file.

29 ♖h1 ♕d5

A nice sacrificial line is 29...♕xa2 30 g5 ♖f8 (preparing to defend with ...f6/...f5) 31 ♘f6+! gxf6 32 ♕f4! and again Black is helpless against the mating threats down the h-file.

30 g5 ♗d8 31 ♕f4 ♗c7 32 ♘f6+! ♘xf6 33 gxf6 1-0

Lessons to be learned:

1) If White can stop ...e5, a knight blocking the c7-pawn often turns out to be misplaced.

2) Even with his light-squared bishop outside the central pawn-chain, the central formation with pawns on c7, d5 and e6 doesn't allow Black enough space to organize his minor pieces harmoniously.

3) A semi-open h-file can be useful even after castling kingside.

The Grünfeld Set-up

The normal Grünfeld Defence is characterized by 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 (or 3 ♘f3 ♗g7 4 ♘c3 d5) 3...d5, provoking White to establish a huge pawn-centre. In this book we have chosen to call the set-up with ...d5 combined with ...g6 the Grünfeld set-up. That is a natural designation, as Black's formation is the same as in the Grünfeld (1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 d5), but may nevertheless be somewhat misleading, as the Grünfeld is a counter-attacking opening, where Black normally tries to fight White's big centre with his pieces. In the London the picture is entirely different: White makes no attempt to take the initiative in the centre, preferring to set up a central fortress in order to gain a freer hand on the flanks. This will often leave Grünfeld players rather frustrated.

Game 14
Bawart – Schumi
Austrian Cht 1999

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 d4 g6 3 ♗f4 ♗g7

So far Black might well be heading for the King's Indian, so White's initial challenge when meeting a ...g6 system is to find moves that are useful against both set-ups.

4 ♘bd2

Normally this is just a test of Black's intentions. White shouldn't be particularly eager to play a Pirc-style position with an exposed f4-bishop and a slightly passive d2-knight. However, if Black doesn't normally defend the Pirc, e4 may nevertheless seem a threat, so he may prefer to advance his d-pawn two squares (possibly entering another type of position with which he is unfamiliar!).

4...d5

4...0-0 may be the way to demonstrate that the knight isn't ideally placed at d2. As explained above, 5 e4 isn't very attractive in this case. If White continues in standard London fashion (e.g., 5 e3 d6 6 h3 ♘bd7 7 c4 ♕e8 8 ♗e2 e5), he may also find that the knight would have been better placed on c3.

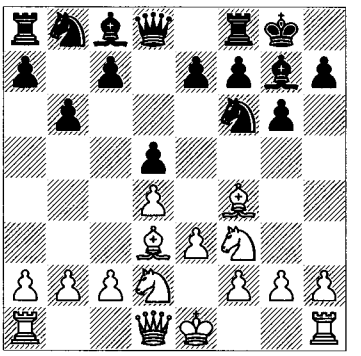
5 e3 0-0 6 ♗d3

Quite possibly this natural move is inaccurate. As can be seen in Line 8B, it seems Black will eventually be able to force ...e5, and in those lines it seems White will have a freer hand with his bishop less exposed on e2.

6...b6 *(D)*

We believe the natural 6...c5 to be stronger, but as attempts to develop the light-squared bishop along the c8-h3 diagonal may often be met by unpleasant attacks on the weakened b-pawn, this is a natural attempt to develop the queenside. The bishop will normally go to b7, fighting for control of e4, but as long as the knight is left at b8, ...♗a6, investing a few tempi in order to exchange off White's dangerous attacking bishop, may be a good alternative.

W



7 ♘e5

7 ♕e2 may be a simpler and better way to prevent ...♗a6.

7...♗b7

7...♗a6 may be playable, as the thematic 8 ♘c6 isn't so clear after 8...♕e8 9 ♘xb8 ♗xd3 10 cxd3 ♕xb8 11 ♖c1 ♖c8 12 ♖c6 ♕b7 because 13 ♕c2 can be met by 13...♘d7! threatening ...♘c5, when 14 ♖xc7?? loses to 14...♖xc7 15 ♕xc7 ♕xc7 16 ♗xc7 ♖c8 –+. 13 ♕a4 is probably better but related themes occur here too: 13...♘d7 14 0-0 e5 15 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 16 dxe5 ♘c5 with unclear play.

8 h4!?

Black's play so far has been slightly passive-looking, so this is quite interesting. The

other rook's pawn advance, 8 a4, also seems promising, but after 8...c5 9 c3 ♘h5 10 ♗g3 ♘d7! (10...f6? 11 ♘xg6! is good for White) White must be careful not to end up worse.

8...♘bd7

It's always hard to judge whether ...h5 is a good way to meet h4, but as it creates long-term weaknesses near the black king, it is rarely successful if Black lacks counterplay. Here 8...h5 9 ♘df3 c5 10 c3 ♘bd7 11 ♕a4 ♕c8 12 ♘xd7 ♘xd7 13 0-0 is at least slightly better for White.

9 h5 ♘xe5?!

Accepting the exchange with 9...♘xh5 10 ♖xh5 gxh5 11 ♕xh5 ♘f6 is hardly better as White quickly wins back his investment with an ongoing attack after 12 ♕h4 ♕c8 13 ♗g5 ♘e4 14 ♗xe7 ±. According to Lane, 9...c5 is relatively best. That is probably correct, as after 10 hxg6 hxg6 11 ♕f3! Black is able to fend off the direct mating threats with 11...♕c8! (11...c4?! 12 ♗xc4! ±; 11...♘h5 12 ♕h3) 12 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 13 c3 ♕g4, but White's control of the h-file still secures him a clear advantage after 14 ♕xg4 ♘xg4 15 ♘f3.

10 dxe5

In similar positions it is quite often difficult to decide how to recapture on e5. A sensible guideline is to capture with the pawn only if you can see it leads to a concrete gain; otherwise White should seek the exchange of dark-squared bishops with ♗xe5. Here the pawn recapture gives White the time he needs to open lines against the enemy king.

10...♘e4 *(D)*

Neither 10...♘xh5 11 ♖xh5! gxh5 12 ♕xh5 h6 (12...f5 13 ♗xf5 ♖xf5 14 ♕xf5 +–) 13 ♕f5 ♖e8 14 e6! fxe6 15 ♕xe6+ ♔h8 16 ♕g6 ♔g8 17 ♗xh6 +– nor 10...♘d7 11 hxg6! hxg6 12 e6 ♘f6 13 exf7+ ♔xf7 14 ♘f3 +– is tempting.

11 hxg6 fxg6

11...hxg6 doesn't help: 12 ♕g4 ♕c8 13 ♕h4 f5 14 ♕h7+ ♔f7 15 ♗h6 ♖g8 16 ♘f3 ♔f8 17 ♘h4 +–.

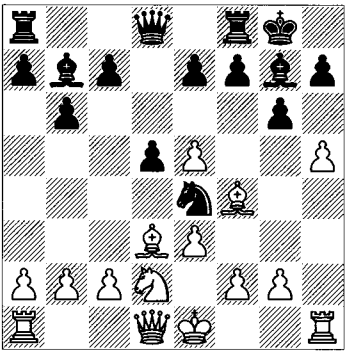
12 ♘xe4 dxe4 13 ♗c4+

In reality the game is already over.

13...♖f7

After 13...♔h8 14 ♕g4 White will rapidly deliver mate; e.g., 14...♕e8 15 ♖xh7+! ♔xh7 16 ♕h4+ ♗h6 17 ♕xh6#.

14 ♗xf7+ ♔xf7 15 ♖xh7 ♔g8 16 ♕xd8+


W

A practical tournament player exchanges queens in positions like this, even though a computer program may prefer 16 ♖h4.

16...♖xd8 17 ♖h1 ♔f7 18 ♖d1 ♖xd1+ 19 ♔xd1 c5 20 ♔c1 ♗d5 21 e6+ ♔xe6 22 ♗b8 ♔d7 23 ♖d1 ♔c6 24 ♗xa7 ♗xa2 25 ♖d8 ♗e5 26 b3 c4 27 ♖c8+ 1-0

Lessons to be learned:

1) The strategic ideas in the Grünfeld formation are closely related to the ideas in the double d-pawn lines, and ♘e5 is an important attacking move.

2) Against an early ♘bd2 it may be a better policy for Black to play ...d6, heading for a King's Indian/Pirc type of position, rather than the ...d5 formation characteristic of the Grünfeld.

3) ...g6 creates weaknesses on the kingside, so Black must play actively to distract White from rather primitive attacking ideas down the h-file.

Game 15
Kharlov – Hillarp Persson
Skellefteå 1999

1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗f4 g6

In some ways this is the link between the double d-pawn openings and the Indian defences. However, the stable central formation and White's control of e5 give the positions a flavour closer to the 1...d5 systems than to the Indian ones.

4 e3

4 ♘c3, transposing to the Barry Attack, will not be discussed in this book, but is a logical way for a London player to expand his repertoire. The extra piece pressure against Black's

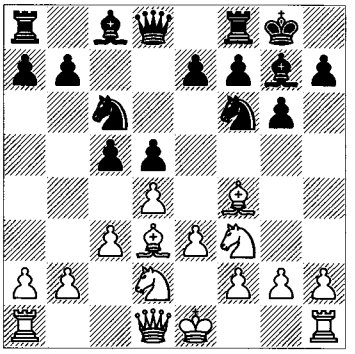
centre somewhat reduces his chances for central activity.

4...♗g7 5 ♗d3

For reasons outlined in the previous game, we believe this may be inaccurate. That doesn't in any way reduce the educational value of the game. Unless you prepare your London System professionally (and honestly – how many do?), you will quite frequently end up in positions with no theoretical advantage. Then your practical advantage will be your general understanding of related London positions.

5...c5 6 c3 ♘c6 7 ♘bd2 0-0 *(D)*

W



This position can be reached via a variety of move-orders – most notably from 1...♘f6 and 2...g6 as in the previous game.

8 h3?!

This is probably superfluous in combination with an early ♗d3, as after 8 0-0 ♘h5?! 9 ♗g5 h6 10 ♗h4 Black cannot play the consistent 10...g5? because of the mate threat after 11 ♘xg5! hxg5 12 ♕xh5.

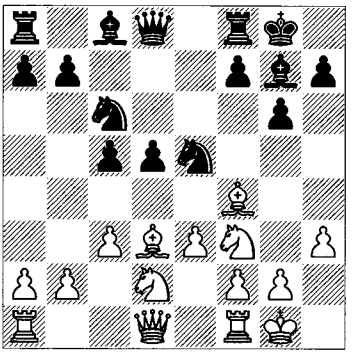
8...♘d7!

This idea is what makes the Grünfeld set-up so hard to meet. Now ...e5, weakening White's centre and gaining tempi on the exposed bishops, cannot be prevented. Other plans tend to give White a comfortable edge. If Black later has to play ...e6 he will have some dark-square weaknesses on the kingside and his light-squared bishop may feel just as uncomfortable outside his pawn-chain as inside it.

9 0-0 e5 10 dxe5 ♘dxe5 *(D)*

This is a quite a typical result of inaccurate play by White in the London. Black has gained a central space advantage without falling behind in development. Obviously, this isn't the ideal result from the opening, but there is no

W



cause for despair. Although it may be slightly in Black's favour, any Slav or Caro-Kann player will recognize the positive features in White's position: the basic solidity, the possible counterplay against d5 and the ease with which White can force e4.

11 ♗c2 h6?!

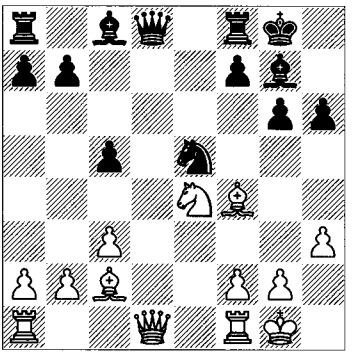
Black probably wanted to play ...♗e6 without being annoyed by ♘g5, but this is too hesitant. Probably 11...♖e8 (11...b6!?) 12 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 13 ♘f3 ♘c4 14 ♖b1 ♗e6 15 ♘g5 ♕f6 16 ♘xe6 ♕xe6 = is better.

12 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 13 e4 dxe4?!

It's possible that Black would still be minimally better after 13...d4; e.g., 14 cxd4 ♕xd4 15 ♖b1 b6 16 ♗e3 ♕d8.

14 ♘xe4 *(D)*

B



The pawn-structure is basically symmetrical and Black's pieces are active. However, his position is still difficult because he isn't fully developed and White's knight will be very annoying at d6.

14...b6?!

The pawn sacrifice 14...♗f5! 15 ♘xc5 ♕xd1 16 ♗xd1 b6 may give Black enough activity to hold the game: 17 g4! ♗d3 18 ♘xd3 ♘xd3 19

♗c1 ♖ad8 20 ♗c2 ♘xc1 21 ♖axc1 ♖d2 22 ♖fd1 ♖fd8 23 ♔g2 ±.

15 ♘d6 ♕f6 16 ♗xe5 ♕xe5 17 ♖e1 ♕g5 18 ♗e4 ♖b8 19 ♗d5 ♗xh3?

This is the result of a miscalculation in a relatively long line. Such things happen even to grandmasters! The 'clever' 19...♔h7?! 20 ♘xf7 ♕f6 is also weak due to 21 ♖e3! ± (21...♖xf7 22 ♖f3 +–). Probably 19...♕f6 20 ♘xc8 ♖bxc8 21 ♕a4 a5 is best, but after 22 ♖e3! ♖cd8 23 ♖d1 White will still have a strong initiative due to his more active pieces, and this is only underlined by the opposite-coloured bishops.

20 ♘xf7 ♖xf7 21 ♗xf7+ ♔h7

What Black probably missed on his 19th move was that 21...♔xf7 22 ♕f3+ ♗f5 is met by 23 ♕d5+ winning the b8-rook. The text-move doesn't really leave Black any hope.

22 ♕d5 ♗f5 23 ♖ad1 ♗f6 24 ♖e8 ♖xe8 25 ♗xe8 1-0

Lessons to be learned:

1) The light-squared bishop is probably better posted at e2 than at d3 versus the Grünfeld set-up.

2) The idea ...♘fd7 supporting ...e5 is a powerful idea for Black in the Grünfeld structure.

3) It isn't necessarily a catastrophe if Black succeeds in forcing ...e5, as White can usually force e4 in return. In the resulting symmetrical position, piece activity will decide who has the better chances.

Game 16
Malakhatko – Niknaddaf
Erevan Wcht 2001

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 ♗f4 ♗g7 4 e3 d5 5 ♗e2 *(D)*

There is no time for 5 h3 0-0 6 ♗e2 c5 7 c3 ♘c6 8 0-0 because 8...♘d7 followed by ...e5 at least equalizes for Black.

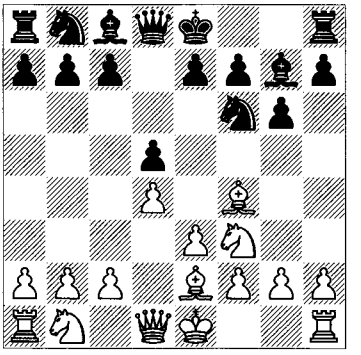
5...0-0

5...♘h5 is quite critical. However, as long as White hasn't castled, he will generally get some compensation for the bishop-pair in the form of a half-open h-file. See Line 8A for details.

6 0-0 c5 7 c3 ♘c6

After 7...cxd4, White may consider 8 cxd4 in order to play ♘c3.

B



8 ♘bd2 ♘h5 9 ♗g5 h6 10 ♗h4 g5 11 ♗g3

11 ♘e1 ♘f6 12 ♗g3 probably gives White better chances of an edge. See Line 8B for details.

11...♘xg3 12 hxg3 cxd4

We shall see more examples of this exchange in the Queen's Indian games. However, here Black's kingside is too vulnerable for him to concentrate on queenside activity, so the open e-file will probably prove more useful for White than the c-file will for Black.

13 exd4 ♗f5 14 ♖e1 ♕d6 15 ♘b3

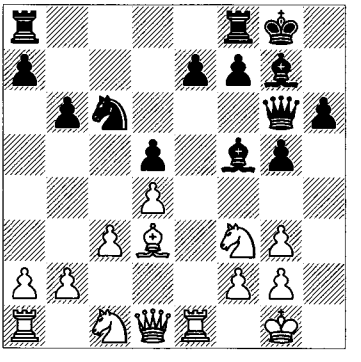
An alternative strategy, trying to take advantage of Black's weakened kingside, is 15 ♘f1 ♗g6 (15...♗e4 16 ♘3d2 ♗g6 17 ♘e3 e6 18 ♗h5 =) 16 ♘e3 e6 17 ♗d3 ♗xd3 18 ♕xd3, but after 18...f5! it seems Black has dynamic equality.

15...b6

Black's position looks sound, and the natural 15...e6 16 ♗d3 ♗xd3 17 ♕xd3 b6 should give practical equality.

16 ♗d3 ♕g6 17 ♘c1 *(D)*

B



At this point White's advantage seems rather small, and it should be possible for Black to hold with accurate play. However, White is

clearly the stronger player and gradually increases his advantage.

17...♗xd3

Maybe the more active 17...♗e4 is a better chance, but after 18 ♕e2 f5 19 ♗b5 ♖ac8 20 ♘d3 White still has slightly the better chances.

18 ♘xd3 e6 19 a4 ♖fe8 20 ♘de5 ♘xe5 21 ♘xe5 ♗xe5

It seems unnecessary for Black to give up his dark-squared bishop which arguably is his only trump.

22 ♖xe5

Still White's advantage seems limited, but it's rather indisputable and he has a clear battle plan: he will combine pressure against e6 with queenside line-opening initiated by a5.

22...a6

Black prepares to meet a5 with ...b5, keeping the queenside closed, but the pawn on a6 becomes a weakness in itself, requiring protection from a rook. Black's position is difficult but it's possible that it can still be held after 22...f6 (22...f5? 23 ♕e2 ♔f7 24 ♖e1 ♖ac8 25 a5 ±) 23 ♖e3 ♖e7 24 ♕e2 ♖ae8 25 a5 bxa5 26 ♖xa5 ♕f7.

23 ♕e2 ♖ec8?!

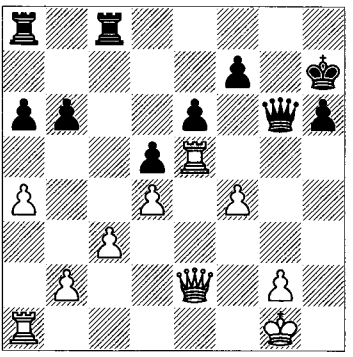
23...g4! is considerably tougher but 24 c4! secures a clear advantage: 24...♖ed8 (24...dxc4? 25 d5 b5 26 ♖e4 h5 27 dxe6 fxe6 28 axb5 axb5 29 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 30 ♖xe6 +–) 25 cxd5 ♖xd5 26 ♖xd5 exd5 27 ♖e1 ±.

24 f4! gxf4

Black cannot keep his kingside intact with 24...g4, as 25 f5 exf5 26 ♖f1 will be very similar to the game continuation.

25 gxf4 ♔h7 *(D)*

Rather similar is 25...♖c6 26 f5! exf5 27 ♕f3 ♖e6 28 ♖xf5 ♖ae8 29 ♖f1 ±.



W

26 f5!

This very temporary pawn sacrifice opens the f-file and isolates Black's d-pawn. Black will not be able to defend all the pawn weaknesses in his position.

26...exf5 27 ♖f1 ♖g8 28 ♖exf5 ♖g7 29 ♖f6

29 ♖1f2! is even more effective: 29...♕e6 30 ♖e5 ♕c6 31 ♕f1 and White wins the pawn with an ongoing attack.

29...♕g5

29...♖e8!? doesn't really change anything; after 30 ♕f2 White should still be winning.

30 ♖xf7 ♖ag8 31 ♕f3 b5 32 axb5 axb5 33 ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 34 ♖e1 ♖d7

There is no perpetual check after 34...♖e7 35 ♖xe7+ ♕xe7 36 ♕d3+ ♔g7 37 ♕xb5 ♕e3+ 38 ♔h2 ♕f4+ 39 g3 +–.

35 ♕d3+ ♔g7 36 ♕xb5

Now White obviously has a winning material advantage. Black hopes for the drawing potential in a queen's ending, but there is nothing even resembling a perpetual check.

36...♖e7

There is no hope in 36...♖f7 37 ♕e2 +–.

37 ♖xe7+ ♕xe7 38 ♕d3 ♕e1+ 39 ♔h2 ♕c1 40 b4 ♔f6 41 ♕g3 ♔f5 42 ♕e5+ ♔g4

This loses quickly, but if Black does nothing active, White will just march his passed b-pawn forward.

43 ♕e6+ ♔h4 44 ♕f6+ ♔g4 45 ♕g6+ 1-0

Lessons to be learned:

1) An early ...♘h5 is an important theme in the Grünfeld positions too. However, if Black has castled kingside and White has not, the open h-file and Black's delay in development normally provide more than sufficient compensation.

2) White's open e-file and his outpost on e5 will often be useful even in the endgame.

3) The queenside pawn-formation a4-b2--c3-d4 versus Black's a-, b- and d-pawns can be very effective in stopping Black's play on that wing.

King's Indian Defence

The normal King's Indian arises after 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 and is considered one of Black's sharpest reactions to 1 d4. Over the years the theoretical body has grown

enormous and the nature of the struggle is often extremely sharp. So there is no wonder that many non-regular London players occasionally go for 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 ♗f4 as a way to defer the struggle to the middlegame.

Game 17
Spassky – Bukić
Bugojno 1978

This is considered the classical demonstration of White's correct strategy against the King's Indian set-up, and did a lot to improve the London's reputation.

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 ♗f4

By 1978 Spassky had put his hard-working days behind him, preferring a non-theoretical fight where his exceptional chess understanding could decide.

3...♗g7

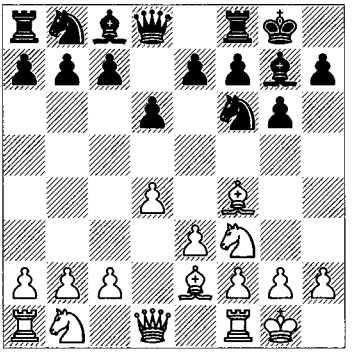
At almost every turn here, Black may consider ...♘h5, trying to exchange White's dark-squared bishop for his knight. We shall discuss this theme in more detail in Illustrative Game 19.

4 e3 0-0 5 ♗e2

This is the normal position for the light-squared bishop in the King's Indian. Here it doesn't obstruct the d-file for the queen and is less exposed to the ...e5 break than on d3.

5...d6 6 0-0 *(D)*

B



6...♘bd7

6...♘c6 and 6...♘fd7 have their points too but the principal alternative is 6...c5, which leads to entirely different play. A critical line is 7 c3 ♕b6, when White has the tactical solution 8 ♘bd2! – see Line 9E for details.

7 h3 ♕e8 8 c4

Although we have seen that White is able to generate queenside play even with the pawn at c3, this is a far more effective strategy.

8...e5 9 ♗h2

It may seem that the bishop has been pushed back to a very modest position. However, bishops are long-range pieces, and the h2-bishop can be favourably compared to most fianchettoed bishops. Besides breathing fire down the h2-b8 diagonal, it's an excellent defensive piece, taking most of the sting out of Black's planned kingside attack.

9...♕e7

On the back rank the queen interrupts the communication lines in Black's camp. 9...♘e4 is examined in Illustrative Game 19.

10 ♘c3 e4?!

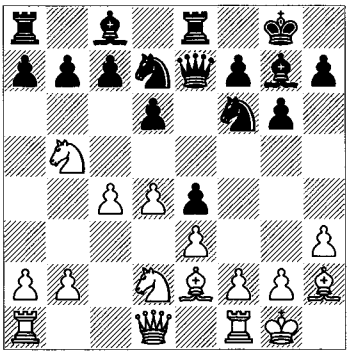
10...c6 is discussed in Illustrative Game 18.

11 ♘d2 ♖e8

Quite surprisingly, 11...b6 has been tried repeatedly lately, even though Black didn't seem to have any compensation for the pawn after 12 ♘cxe4! ♘xe4 13 ♘xe4 in Goldstern-Gallagher, Switzerland 1993. Black can't retake because of ♗f3.

12 ♘b5! *(D)*

B



Spassky alertly spots his chance to demolish the black queenside for virtually no material investment.

12...♕d8 13 c5!

This often is a key move, unleashing the power of the dark-squared bishop.

13...a6 14 cxd6!

This was the idea behind White's 12th move.

14...axb5 15 dxc7 ♕e7 16 ♗xb5

The picture is now clear: for his knight White has got three pawns, giving him a four-to-one majority on the queenside. For some time the

pawns will be somewhat unruly, but their potential power is far greater than the piece.

16...♗f8 17 ♘c4 ♕e6 18 ♕c2

18 ♕b3 ♘d5 19 ♖ac1 ♖e7 20 a4 ± may be more precise.

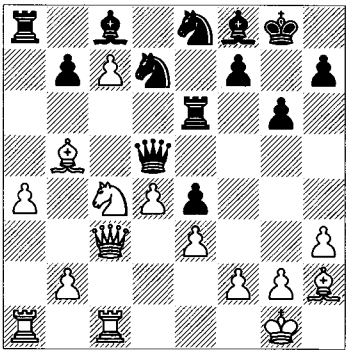
18...♕d5

The exchange sacrifice initiated by 18...♘d5 may be Black's best chance: 19 a3 ♖e7 20 ♖ac1 ♘7f6 21 ♗d6 ♖xc7 22 ♗xc7 ♘xc7 and Black may be able to hold his own. 19 a4! is probably a better idea; e.g., 19...b6 20 ♖fc1 ♖a7 21 ♘a3 ♗d6 22 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 23 ♕b3 ♘xc7 (23...♖xc7 24 ♗c4 ±) 24 ♖c6 ♕f8 25 ♖ac1 ♘e6 26 ♗c4 ♖c7 27 ♗xe6 ♖xc6 28 ♖xc6 ♖xe6 29 ♖xe6 fxe6 30 ♕xe6+ ♔g7 31 ♘b5 ±.

19 a4 ♖e6 20 ♖fc1 ♘e8 21 ♕c3 *(D)*

At this point White could have speeded up his queenside play by 21 b4! with the tactical point 21...♗xb4?! 22 ♖ab1 ♗f8 23 ♗xd7 ♗xd7 24 ♘b6 ♖xb6 25 ♖xb6 ♗c8 26 ♖cb1 +–. 21...♗g7 is better but after 22 ♕b2 h6 23 ♗xd7 ♕xd7 24 a5 with the idea ♘b6, White is clearly winning.

B



21...♘ef6

21...♘d6? loses material immediately to 22 ♗xd7.

22 ♘e5 ♘b6 23 ♘c4 ♘fd7 24 ♕b3

White is planning to advance with a5, slowly uniting his queenside pawns.

24...♖f6 25 ♗xd7?!

This move unnecessarily parts with White's strong light-squared bishop. 25 a5! is better: 25...♘xc4 26 ♗xc4 ♕f5 27 ♖f1 ♕g5 (or 27...♖xa5? 28 g4) 28 ♗d5 ♖a7 29 ♗xe4 +–.

25...♘xd7 26 ♕b5!

Probably White is already winning. His task is eased by the fact that most exchanges will help his queenside pawn-march.

26...♕f5

Against 26...♕e6, White has 27 ♗e5! ♖f5 28 d5 ♕a6 29 ♗d4 with a very clear advantage as 29...h6? 30 g4 ♖f3 fails to 31 ♔g2 followed by ♘d2. 29...h5 is better, but after 30 b4 White's queenside initiative will decide before Black gets anything going on the kingside.

27 ♗g3 ♖fa6 28 d5 ♕f6 29 a5 h5 30 b4 h4

While it's easy to see that White is making progress on the queenside, it isn't clear what Black is doing on the kingside.

31 ♗h2 ♕f5 32 ♖f1 g5 33 f3 ♖g6 34 ♖ad1?

This allows Black too much counterplay. 34 ♖ac1! is probably better, denying the black queen access to c2; e.g., 34...exf3 35 ♖xf3 ♕e4 36 d6 g4 37 ♖f4 ♕e6 38 ♖xg4 ♖xg4 39 hxg4 ♕xg4 40 ♗f4 ±.

34...exf3 35 ♖xf3 ♕c2 36 ♖d2 ♕c3?

36...♕b1+! is much better: 37 ♖f1 ♕xb4 38 ♖b2 ♕c3! ∓.

37 d6 ♖a6

Black isn't in a position to create much confusion any more. After 37...g4 38 hxg4 ♖xg4 39 ♗f4! ♗g7 40 ♔h2 ♕c1 41 ♖df2 followed by 42 e4 White is winning easily.

38 e4 ♕c1+ 39 ♖f1 ♕c3 40 ♕d5 ♘f6 41 ♖xf6! 1-0

41...♕xf6 42 d7 is entirely hopeless for Black, and the alternative 41...♖xf6 42 ♗e5 is even worse.

Lessons to be learned:

1) You should now have a general impression of the typical London vs King's Indian struggle.

2) c7 and d6 are the weak links in Black's pawn-structure and will usually be even more exposed after the space-gaining ...e4.

3) In order to exploit the deserted queenside, White will often need to use his c-pawn as a battering-ram, so it should preferably be advanced to c4 in one move.

Game 18
D. Johansen – Lane
Canberra 2001

1 c4

This ranks below 1 c3 and just above 1 g4 on the 'most likely to transpose to the London' list.

1...♘f6 2 ♘c3 g6 3 d4 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 0-0 5 ♗f4

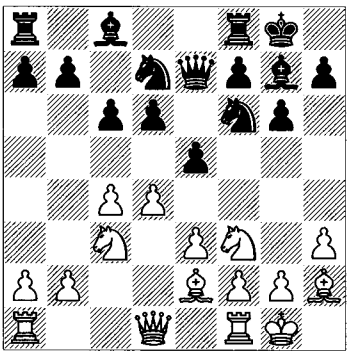
This is a relatively popular weapon against the King's Indian and quite likely to transpose to our recommended London lines.

5...d6

5...c5 6 e3 and 5...d5 6 e3 will lead to positions somewhat related to our recommended lines. However, White's more actively deployed c-pawn will tend to generate more central activity, and correspondingly less play on the wings. The theory of the variation isn't really worked out yet, but 5...♘h5 may be Black's most annoying reply. After 6 ♗g5 h6 7 ♗d2 (7 ♗h4 g5 8 ♗g3 c5 isn't clear but it's obvious that Black's dark-squared bishop will be strong) 7...d6 8 h3 e5 9 dxe5 dxe5 play took an interesting turn in Van Dijke-Van der Weide, Ghent 2003 with 10 ♕c1 g5 11 g4 ♘f4, when White should have tried 12 ♕c2 rather than 12 e3?! ♘d3+, when Black was already better.

6 h3 ♘bd7 7 e3 c6 8 ♗e2 ♕e8 9 0-0 e5 10 ♗h2 ♕e7 *(D)*

W



Finally we are back in familiar London waters. A more typical move-order is 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4 g6 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 d6 5 h3 0-0 6 ♗e2 ♘bd7 7 0-0 ♕e8 8 c4 e5 9 ♗h2 ♕e7 10 ♘c3 c6.

11 ♖c1 e4?!

Black has stopped the ♘b5 idea from Illustrative Game 17, but still White's play on the queenside is more effective than the kingside attack Black is dreaming of.

12 ♘d2 ♖e8 13 b4 a5?!

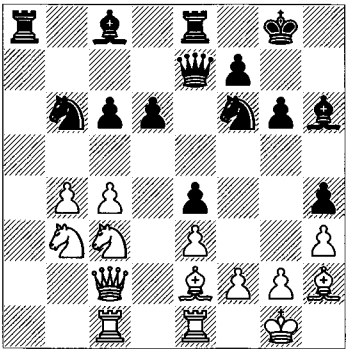
This doesn't really slow down White's queenside play, so Black probably shouldn't help open lines on that wing. However, White still has clearly the better chances after 13...h5 14 c5 d5 15 b5.

14 a3 axb4 15 axb4 h5 16 ♖e1 ♗h6

This bishop never really joins the attack. A minor improvement may be 16...♘f8 17 c5 d5 18 b5 ♗f5 19 ♗d6 ♕e6 20 ♖a1 ♘8h7 21 ♕b3 ♘g5, when Black can at least dream of a sacrificial kingside attack.

17 d5 h4 18 ♕c2 ♘b6 19 dxc6 bxc6 20 ♘b3 *(D)*

B



It may take a while to realize it, but White's attack on the queenside is about to break through in a few moves.

20...g5?!

The kingside attack is far from being a reality – mainly due to the defensive power of the h2-bishop. This move seems to lose material without really testing White's abilities. After 20...♗a6 21 ♘a5 ♖ec8 White has to find 22 c5! ♗xe2 (22...dxc5 23 ♗xa6 ♖xa6 24 ♘xc6 ±) 23 ♗xd6 ♕e6 24 cxb6 ♗d3 25 ♕b3 ♕xd6 26 b7 in order to close the discussion.

21 ♖cd1 ♖d8

It's too late to save the queenside: 21...d5 22 c5 ♘c4 (22...♘bd7 23 ♗d6 ♕d8 24 ♘a5 +–) 23 ♗xc4 dxc4 24 ♘a5 +–.

22 ♘a5

The game is decided without any sacrifice or brilliant creative effort by White. Black's desperate attempt to create kingside counterplay has no positional foundation and quickly backfires.

22...♕e8 23 ♗xd6 g4 24 ♗c7 ♖xd1 25 ♕xd1 ♘bd7 26 ♗xg4 ♘f8 27 ♗xc8 ♖xc8 28 ♗b6 ♘g6 29 ♗d4 ♘e5 30 ♗xe5 ♕xe5 31 ♘e2 ♗f8 32 c5 ♘d5 33 ♘d4 f5

33...♘xb4? is naturally out of the question due to 34 ♕g4+ picking up the c8-rook.

34 ♘axc6 ♕f6 35 ♕b3 1-0

The knight cannot be saved after 35...♕f7 36 ♘e5 ♕b7 37 c6.

Gary went home to find out what had hit him, and two years later he delivered his manuscript on how to play the white side of the London.

Lessons to be learned:

1) In the King's Indian, h3 is generally a very useful move, preserving White's dark-squared bishop from being exchanged for a knight.

2) Playing for a kingside pawn-storm is a risky strategy for Black when the centre isn't fixed.

3) While ...c6 prevents ♘b5, it does weaken d6.

Game 19
Yusupov – Fuller
Esbjerg 1980

1 d4 ♘f6

In this game we shall examine Black's various attempts to exchange his knight for White's dark-squared bishop by means of ...♘h5 and if necessary ...h6 and ...g5. This theme occurs in many variations of the London, and it's hard to say anything general about it. In some cases White can allow Black to take on f4 in order to gain an iron grip on e5 or he can withdraw his bishop to g3 and after the exchange benefit from the open h-file. However, it seems that there is a greater danger that Black's dark-squared bishop will prove a real asset in King's Indian positions, where the bishop is actively placed at g7 and where the central pawn-structure is flexible.

2 ♘f3

We want to point out that a lot of the ...♘h5 themes are less relevant in the lines resulting from 2 ♗f4 and 3 e3 as then the knight tends to be hanging if Black tries to play ...h6 and ...g5.

2...g6 3 ♗f4 ♗g7

The strange-looking 3...♘h5!? is surprisingly hard to meet. The 'natural' 4 ♗g5 h6 5 ♗h4 g5 6 ♗g3 ♘xg3 7 hxg3 is probably roughly balanced as Black's king is somewhat insecure while his dark-squared bishop is a long-term source of power.

Another tricky line is 3...d6!? with the idea 4 e3 ♘h5 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 g5 7 ♘fd2(!) ♘g7! 8 ♗g3 ♘f5 and again Black's dark-squared bishop may become a dominant piece.

These are two of the reasons why we suggest the move-order 2 ♗f4 g6 3 e3, which side-steps both ideas easily.

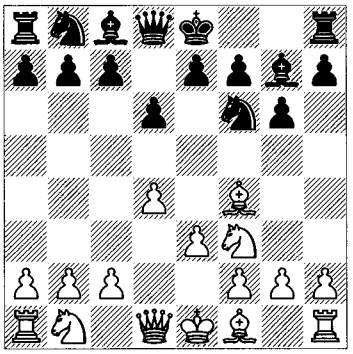
4 e3

The lazy 4 h3 is most likely premature because it allows Black to play 4...d5, switching to a Grünfeld-type of position where h3 is probably not active enough.

4...d6 *(D)*

This may offer Black more options than 4...0-0, as then after 5 ♗e2 d6 6 0-0, 6...♘h5?! is just a waste of time, because of 7 ♗g5 h6 8 ♗h4 g5?! 9 ♘fd2, when Black has only weakened his king's position.

W



5 ♗e2

The cautious 5 h3 is more popular.

5...0-0

5...♘h5 is a hard move to assess. The critical position arises after 6 ♗g5 h6 7 ♗h4 g5 8 ♘fd2, which at first looks very good for White. However, 8...♘f4! makes it rather unclear after all: 9 exf4 gxh4 10 c3 and Black has nice chances in a messy position. See Line 9C for details.

6 h3

Now this move may well be delayed, as after 6 0-0 ♘h5?! 7 ♗g5 h6 8 ♗h4 g5?! 9 ♘fd2 it seems Black has mainly succeeded in weakening his own king's position.

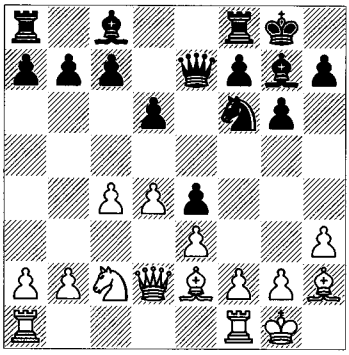
6...♘bd7 7 0-0 ♕e8 8 c4 e5 9 ♗h2 ♘e4

This is yet another way for Black to try to defuse White's queenside initiative before starting his own kingside project. As soon as White develops his knight to d2 or c3, it will be swapped off. You will find a theoretical discussion in Line 9I.

10 ♘bd2 ♘xd2 11 ♕xd2 e4 12 ♘e1 ♕e7 13 ♘c2 ♘f6 *(D)*

This makes a less ambitious impression than 13...f5, but allows Black to defend his queenside more comfortably.

W



14 ♖ac1 h5

This is an alternative way to gain kingside space. However, unlike ...f5 it doesn't give Black any natural pawn-breaks, so he will usually have to create all his attacking chances by piece-play.

15 ♘a3 ♗f5 16 c5 d5 17 ♘b5

Surprisingly often this move forms part of White's queenside strategy. White has a slight advantage here – mainly because he can pursue his queenside initiative with no risk, while there is a definite chance that Black's kingside play may backfire.

17...♖fc8 18 ♕a5 ♘e8 19 c6 b6 20 ♕a4 ♕e6 21 ♕b3 a6 22 ♘c3

Black has succeeded better than in previous games in keeping his queenside intact. However, White's space advantage and Black's weak spot at c7 count for something.

22...♖d8 23 ♗f4 ♗f6 24 f3 g5 25 ♗h2?

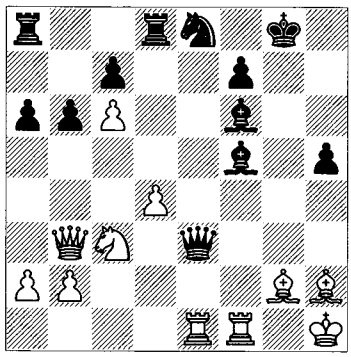
25 ♗e5! ♗xe5 26 dxe5 is stronger, and gives White a clear advantage; e.g., 26...♕xe5 27 fxe4 dxe4 28 ♗xh5 or 26...♗g6 27 fxe4 dxe4 28 ♗c4 (Soltis).

25...exf3 26 ♗xf3 g4 27 ♗xd5 ♕xe3+ 28 ♔h1 gxh3 29 ♖ce1 hxg2+?

Soltis suggests that 29...♕g5 gives Black realistic survival chances. However, after the natural continuation 30 ♗xf7+ ♔h8 31 gxh3 ♗xh3 32 ♖g1 ♗g4 33 ♘e4 ♕h4 34 ♘xf6 ♘xf6 35 ♕e3 Fritz discovers that 35...♖xd4 loses to the counter-intuitive 36 ♖gf1! ♖d6 37 ♔g1!, when Black cannot save his d6-rook.

30 ♗xg2 *(D)*

B



Even with his king completely stripped of pawn-cover, it's obvious that White possesses all the attacking chances due to pure piece activity.

30...♕g5

The black queen is tactically exposed on the g-file. However, it's no better being forced into it after 30...♕d3 31 ♖f3 ♕d2 32 ♖e2 ♕c1+ 33 ♖f1; e.g., 33...♕g5 34 ♘d5 ♗e6? 35 ♖xe6 fxe6 36 ♘xf6+ +–.

31 ♘e4 ♕g6?!

This costs material. Black's position is probably lost anyway but after 31...♗xe4 32 ♗xe4 ♔f8 White at least would have had to find a very beautiful variation to ensure the win: 33 ♖g1! (33 ♕a3+ may be winning too but is not equally convincing) 33...♕h6 (33...♕a5 34 ♗h7 ♗g7 35 ♕e3 ♕d5+ 36 ♖g2 ♗f6 37 ♕a3+ ♘d6 38 ♕g3 +–) 34 ♗xc7!! ♘xc7 35 ♕b4+ ♗e7 36 ♗h7! ♕xc6+ 37 d5! ♕xd5+ 38 ♖e4 +–.

32 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 33 ♕f3 ♗e4 34 ♖xe4 ♘xe4 35 ♕xe4 ♕xe4 36 ♗xe4 ♖xd4 37 ♖g1+ ♔f8 38 ♗xc7!

The decisive blow – now the c-pawn is a deadly force.

38...♖e8

White's point is 38...♖xe4 39 ♗d6+ ♖e7 40 ♖e1 ♖e8 41 c7 and the pawn will queen.

39 ♗xb6 ♖c4 40 ♗f3 ♖e6 41 b4 1-0

Lessons to be learned:

1) White doesn't want to play h3 before ...d6, as there is probably no time for it against the set-up with ...d5 (Grünfeld).

2) White should normally play h3 before castling kingside, because he will have less use of the semi-open h-file after early castling.

3) White often needs a knight on the queenside in order to pursue his initiative there, and

should seriously consider not exchanging his queen's knight for Black's e4-knight.

Game 20
Vera – Popović
Lucerne Wcht 1989

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 ♗f4 c5

This introduces Black's alternative way of attacking the centre in the King's Indian. The ...c5 break takes considerably less preparation than ...e5, but achieves correspondingly little in itself. Black normally follows up with a pawn expansion on the queenside, seeking to make the most of his dark-squared bishop. Normally White's best course of action is to bolster his centre with c3, and simply develop quickly. In this game Black delays ...♗g7 for a surprisingly long time. The reason, of course, is that he hopes to take advantage of the weakened white pawn on b2.

4 e3 ♕b6

Again this move disturbs the harmony of White's position, but the queen is badly placed.

5 ♘c3

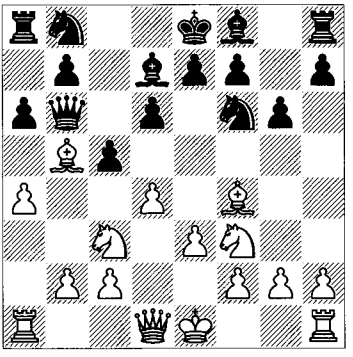
5 ♕c1 cxd4 6 exd4 ♘c6 7 c3 is playable but a little passive.

5...d6

Theoretically the greedy 5...♕xb2 6 ♘b5 is an important variation, but in practical play it isn't very tempting for Black – especially here as he is the higher rated player and White could, as usual, choose between a draw and complications. See Line 9A for details.

6 ♗b5+ ♗d7 7 a4 a6 *(D)*

W



8 a5

This queenside pawn-structure somewhat favours White: partly because it gives him a good grip on c4, partly because if Black now advances his b-pawn, he will be left with an isolated a-pawn on a semi-open file.

8...♕c7 9 ♗e2 ♗g7

Finally Black completes what he started at move 2!

10 0-0 0-0 11 d5 b5?!

Probably Black should have hurried his development with 11...♗g4 and 12...♘bd7.

12 axb6 ♕xb6 13 ♖a2

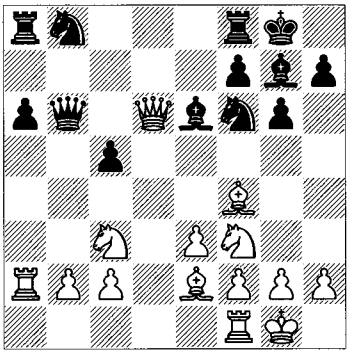
This may appear a little artificial, but White is planning ♘d2-c4 so the rook will only be guarding b2 until the knight arrives.

13...e5?!

Black has serious problems with his development, so he enters complications hoping to activate his pieces. However, as so often happens, the better-developed player emerges from the complications with a bigger advantage than he initially had. After 13...♘h5! 14 ♗g5 ♖e8 (14...f6 15 ♗h4 g5 16 ♘d2!) 15 e4 e6 16 ♘d2! h6 17 ♘c4 ♕c7 18 ♗e3 ♘f6 19 ♖a3 White's advantage is also very clear.

14 dxe6 ♗xe6 15 ♕xd6 *(D)*

B



15...♕b4

Calculating the lines starting with 15...♕xd6 16 ♗xd6 isn't a trivial task at all as there are a few pieces hanging, but 16...♗xa2 17 ♗xf8 ♔xf8 18 ♘xa2 ♘e4 19 b3 and 16...♖d8 17 ♗e7 ♖e8 18 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 19 ♘e4 ♗g7 20 ♖a5 ♗xb2 21 ♖b1 ♗g7 22 ♘xc5 both end up in relatively stable positions where White is a safe pawn up.

16 ♖aa1

The pawn can't be held, but White will activate his entire force while Black regains it.

16...♘e8

The immediate capture of the pawn is no better: 16...♕xb2 17 ♘a4 ♕xc2 18 ♗d3 ♕b3

19 ♘xc5 ♕d5 20 e4 ♕xd6 21 ♗xd6 ♖d8 22 e5 ♘e8 23 ♗e4 ♖a7 24 ♘xe6 fxe6 25 ♗c5 ♖ad7 26 ♗b6 ♖c8 27 ♖fc1 +–.

17 ♕d2 ♕xb2 18 ♘a4 ♕b4 19 c3 ♕a5

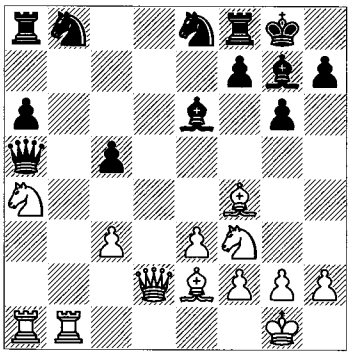
Soltis criticizes this move, but there is no way for Black to avoid losing material:

a) 19...♕e4 20 ♘g5 ♕d5 21 ♕xd5 ♗xd5 22 ♘b6 +–.

b) 19...♕b7 20 ♖fb1 ♕a7 21 ♘b6 also wins for White.

20 ♖fb1 *(D)*

B



The difference in piece activity now has become too great. White threatens ♘b6 and there is nothing Black can do.

20...♘d7

After 20...♘c6 21 ♘b6 ♖d8 22 ♘d4!, the queen is trapped and White wins easily after 22...cxd4 (22...♕xa1 23 ♖xa1 cxd4 24 exd4 +–) 23 ♖xa5 dxc3 24 ♕xd8! ♘xd8 25 ♗f3! +–.

21 ♘b6 ♕xb6 22 ♖xb6 ♘xb6 23 ♖xa6 ♖xa6 24 ♗xa6 ♘f6 25 ♕d6 ♘fd7 26 h3

White is winning comfortably, but 26 ♗b5 ♖a8 27 h3 ♗xc3 28 ♘g5 +– would have been even more effective.

26...♗xc3 27 ♘g5 ♗a2?

It obviously isn't an inspiring task to find 'only moves' just to hang on for a few more moves, but Black could have struggled on a little longer with 27...♗f5 28 e4 h6 29 ♘xf7 ♖xf7 30 exf5 g5.

28 ♗b5 ♖d8 29 ♘e4 ♗g7 30 ♗xd7 ♘xd7 31 ♕e7 ♖c8 32 ♕xd7 ♗e6 33 ♕d6 c4 34 ♗e5 c3 35 ♘xc3 ♖xc3 36 ♕d8+ 1-0

Lessons to be learned:

1) Active piece-play is required to take advantage of an exposed queen on b6.

2) The pawn-structure arising if White is able to meet ...a6 with a5 is generally in White's favour.

3) If Black tries to free his passive position by a tactical blow, there is a good chance you can find a way to exploit your more active pieces – so take some time to look for the refutation.

Game 21
Kasparov – Kengis
USSR jr Ch (Riga) 1977

1 d4

In order to understand what is going on, it's important to remember that Kasparov was only 14 years old at the time, and that he had very little experience with 1 d4.

1...♘f6 2 ♘f3 b6

Normally this will quickly transpose to 2...e6 lines, but the relative tranquillity of the London allows Black to select a more ambitious set-up. We shall now consider positions where Black combines ...g6 and ...♗g7 with ...b6 and ...♗b7. These may also be reached by a Queen's Indian move-order, but as White must normally play an early ♗e2 against the King's Indian, we decided to put the games with this move in the King's Indian section.

3 ♗f4

In later annotations Kasparov explained that in this game his main ambition was to develop quickly and solidly, hoping that his tactical ability would decide in his favour in the middlegame. Sadly this shouldn't really be taken as a recommendation of the London by the world's top player. Rather he implies that the London isn't an opening striving for maximum advantage.

3...♗b7 4 e3 c5 5 ♘bd2

It's still a little early to tell where the light-squared bishop can best be employed. However, there also are reasons to keep options open for the knight. 5 c3 may be best.

5...g6!?

This makes the game eligible for the King's Indian category. Generally the king's fianchetto leads to more dynamic positions than 5...e6. However, even though the bishop is more active on the h8-a1 diagonal, White's pawn-centre blunts its power considerably.

6 c3

This is normally a good reaction versus a king's fianchetto combined with an early ...c5.

6...♗g7

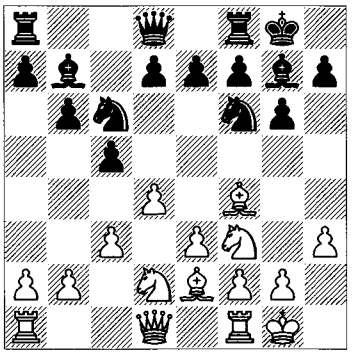
After the immediate 6...♘h5, White has 7 ♗e5 f6 8 ♗xb8 ♕xb8 9 ♗d3, when his harmonious position more than compensates for Black's bishop-pair.

7 h3 0-0 8 ♗e2

This is examined in Line 9D while double fianchetto lines with ♗d3 are discussed in Line 11B.

8...♘c6 9 0-0 *(D)*

B



So far both players have kept maximum flexibility, concentrating almost solely on piece development.

9...d6

It's quite possible to play 9...d5 here, in order to fight for the e4-square. However, in that case the queen's knight would have been better placed on d7, where it doesn't obstruct the light-squared bishop and after ...♘e4 can continue to f6, supporting e4.

10 a4

Gaining some queenside space, but mainly probing for weaknesses.

10...a6

Preparing to meet a5 with ...b5, keeping the queenside pawns mobile. However, the weakening of the b-pawn is significant.

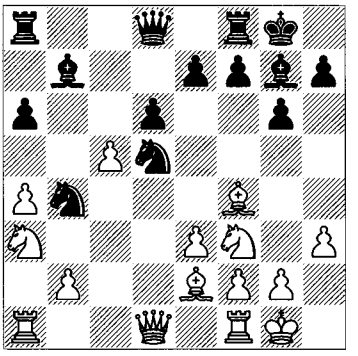
11 ♘c4 b5!?

Black now becomes active but his queenside pawn-structure will be vulnerable.

12 ♘a3 b4 13 cxb4 ♘xb4 14 dxc5 ♘fd5!? *(D)*

It's easy to forget that in this game Kasparov was the underdog. However, even so it's clear that Black is seeking complications in order to fight for the whole point. After 14...dxc5 15 ♗e5! Black is close to equality, since after 15...♕e8 16 ♘c4 ♖d8 17 ♕b3 ♗e4 his piece activity compensates for his isolated c-pawn.

W



15 cxd6!

The young Kasparov was always looking for ways to disturb the equilibrium by a minor material investment.

15...♗xb2

Kasparov's comment: "Kengis was not looking for compensation – he was there to kill".

16 ♗h6!

A roughly equal position results from 16 ♖b1 ♗xa3 17 ♕b3 ♘xf4 18 exf4 ♕xd6 19 ♕xa3 a5.

16...♖e8

After 16...♗xa1 17 ♕xa1 f6 18 ♗xf8 ♔xf8 19 dxe7+ ♕xe7 White's extra central pawn and Black's weakened king's position should prove decisive.

17 d7!

This move could easily be overlooked. The more obvious 17 ♗c4 is met not by 17...♗xa1? 18 ♕xa1 f6 19 e4 +–, but 17...exd6 18 ♖b1 ♗xa3 19 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 20 ♕d4 f6 21 ♖xb4 ♖e5 22 ♘xe5 dxe5 23 ♕b6 ♗xb4 with near equality.

17...♕xd7

The queen is very unhappily placed here.

18 ♘c4 ♗xa1

Luring the e-pawn forward with 18...♗f6 19 e4 ♗xa1 20 ♕xa1 ♘f6 only helps White: 21 e5! ♕e6 (otherwise 22 e6 or 22 ♘b6 will decide) 22 exf6 ♕xe2 23 fxe7 f6 24 ♘d6 ♖xe7 25 ♖e1 +–.

19 ♕xa1 e5?

19...♘f6 seems best; e.g., 20 ♘b6 ♕f5 21 ♘xa8 ♗xa8 22 ♕d4 ♕c2 (22...a5 23 ♖c1 ±)

with only a very small advantage for White after 23 ♖e1 a5 (23...♕xa4? 24 e4!) 24 ♗b5 ♖c8 25 ♘g5 ±. Lane suggests 19...f6, but after 20 e4 White can win his material back with ♘b6 any time he wishes, and Black's king's position is ugly; e.g., 20...♘c7 21 ♕c3! a5 22 ♘b6 ♕c6 23 ♕b3+ e6 24 ♕b2 +–.

20 ♘cxe5 ♕e6 21 ♘g4

The knight has wandered from a3 to g4 and is now ready to decide the battle.

21...f6 22 ♗c4 ♖f8 23 e4 1-0

After 23...♕xe4 24 ♘xf6+ ♖xf6 25 ♕xf6 there is no way to stop the mate.

Lessons to be learned:

1) Don't play too uncompromising if you are Black against a future world-champion.

2) Even against 2...b6, White should be aware that he may end up playing against a King's Indian formation.

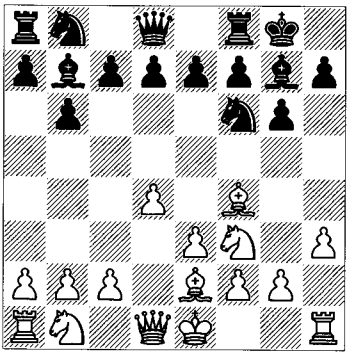
3) Black's dark-squared bishop is a powerful piece but also an important defender. White is well placed to attack on the kingside dark squares if Black parts with this bishop.

Game 22
Ye Rongguang – Donguines
Bacolod 1991

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 ♗f4 ♗g7 4 e3 0-0 5 h3 b6

Double fianchetto lines are no longer popular against the classical queen's pawn openings where White plays an early c4. The main reason is that in those positions ...c5, which is Black's main way to challenge White's central dominance, can usually be met with d5. Experience has shown that in these Benoni-type structures ...b6 is often a waste of time and the light-squared bishop often misplaced at b7. However, in the London System, where White normally responds to ...c5 with c3, White is rarely able to meet ...b6 with d5; therefore the double fianchetto is a natural and sound way for Black to complete his development.

6 ♗e2 ♗b7 *(D)*



7 a4

Generally it's a good idea to hide your intentions as long as possible by playing the obvious moves first, hoping that your opponent's replies will make it easier to take the correct decisions later. Therefore it's interesting to note that White plays this move even before castling kingside. Our guess is that Ye Rongguang was simply hoping to catch his opponent sleeping so early in the game, allowing White to play an advantageous a5. See Line 9D for a theoretical discussion.

7...a6

However, Black reacts in standard fashion. Now a5 can be met by ...b5.

8 0-0 d6 9 ♗h2

This allows White to react more freely to ...e5 at some point. That may seem rather useless as Black can decide not to play for ...e5, but in that case White may retort that ♗h2 certainly is useful if it stops ...e5! Probably it was equally important for White to find a useful move while trying to identify the correct queenside plan.

9...♘bd7 10 c3

After 10 c4?!, 10...a5 slows White's queenside play, but 10 ♘a3!? might save a tempo on the game continuation.

10...♖e8

10...c5 is the main continuation.

11 ♘a3

This is probably stronger than the more routine development to d2, because the extra influence over b5 adds pressure to the black queenside.

11...e6

11...e5 seems more natural, but obviously Black is heading for a Dutch set-up.

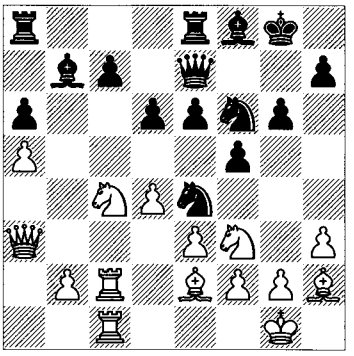
12 a5! b5 13 c4!

The h2-bishop provides the kingside with excellent protection. However, given enough time, Black's extra space will give him an attack on that part of the board. It's therefore absolutely imperative for White to create an initiative on the queenside.

13...bxc4

It seems that 13...b4 just loses a pawn after 14 ♘c2 ♖b8 15 ♖a4! b3 16 ♘a1, but the white forces are slightly uncoordinated, so 16...e5 gives Black good practical chances; e.g., 17 ♘xb3 exd4 18 ♘fxd4 ♘e4 19 ♖a2 c5 20 ♘f3 ♗c6 21 ♘bd2 f5 and Black should have full compensation.

14 ♘xc4 ♕e7 15 ♕a4 ♘e4 16 ♕a3 f5 17 ♖ac1 ♗f8 18 ♖c2 ♘df6 19 ♖fc1 *(D)*



White's chances are slightly better, mainly because his structural advantage on the queenside is of a more permanent nature than Black's kingside initiative. More concretely: most exchanges will favour White as his pressure against the c-pawn will remain important in the majority of likely endgames.

19...♘d5 20 ♘cd2 ♘ef6 21 ♘e1 ♗h6?

Most moves are better as this allows White a small tactical stroke. We suggest 21...♖ab8 or 21...♕f7, when White still has to demonstrate his advantage.

22 ♖xc7!

This is a very short-term sacrifice, as the material balance is restored in three moves.

22...♘xc7 23 ♗xd6 ♕d8 24 ♗xc7

Material is roughly balanced, but White's active pieces and Black's dark-squared weaknesses ensure White a clear advantage.

24...♕d7 25 ♗e5! ♗f8 26 ♕a1

This looks a bit clumsy, and it appears that 26 b4 ♘d5 27 ♘d3 ♕b5 28 ♘c4 is stronger, as 28...♘xb4 29 ♘c5! is very uncomfortable for Black (29...♘d5 30 ♗d6 and 29...♗xc5 30 dxc5 ♘d5 31 ♗f3 are winning for White).

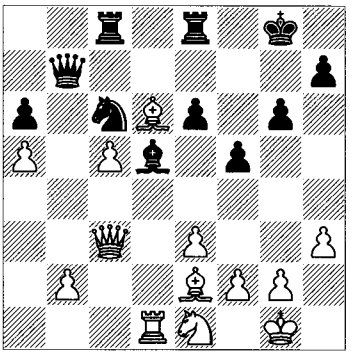
26...♘d5

27 ♖c7 must be prevented.

27 ♘b3 ♖ac8 28 ♘c5 ♗xc5

This leaves Black's dark squares permanently weak and cannot have been made with a light heart. However, after the only sensible alternative, 28...♕e7, White can choose between the simple 29 ♘f3 and the more complicated 29 b4 ♘xb4 30 ♖b1 ♖xc5 31 dxc5 ♕xc5 32 ♗c3 ♘d5 33 ♗d4 ♕c8 34 ♘d3 with superior activity.

29 dxc5 ♘b4 30 ♗d6 ♗d5 31 ♕a3 ♕b7 32 ♖d1 ♘c6 33 ♕c3 *(D)*



Black completely lacks counterplay and can only wait for White to start exploiting the weak dark squares on the kingside.

33...♘d8 34 b4 ♘f7 35 ♗h2 ♖ed8 36 ♖c1 ♖d7 37 h4 ♕c6 38 h5 ♘g5 39 hxg6 hxg6 40 f3!

This is much cleaner than the greedy 40 ♕f6 ♘e4 41 ♕xg6+ ♖g7, which may be winning for White, but allows Black very dangerous activity.

40...♘f7 41 ♘c2

Even quicker is 41 ♕f6, but Black cannot prevent the invasion of his kingside anyway.

41...♖a7 42 ♕f6! e5 43 ♗xe5 ♘xe5 44 ♕xe5 ♖e8 45 ♕c3 g5 46 ♖d1 ♖d7 47 b5!

There are other ways for White to exploit his advantage, but this is fast and elegant.

47...♕e6

The principal reply 47...axb5 loses even faster to 48 ♘b4 ♕e6 49 ♗xb5.

48 ♘b4 ♔h7 49 c6 ♖d6 50 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 51 ♘xd5 ♕xd5 52 c7 ♕d7 53 b6 ♖c8 54 ♗xa6 1-0

Lessons to be learned:

1) You have seen yet another tactical breakthrough on the queenside at d6 and/or c7.

2) In order to maintain a queenside initiative, you should consider ♘a3 as an alternative to ♘bd2.

3) A voluntary ♗h2 may discourage Black from playing ...e5 – either in order to make ♗h2 look useless or because White is now able to meet ...e5 with moves like d5 or c5.

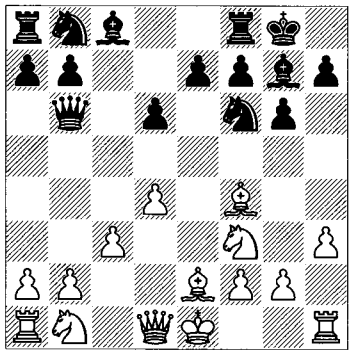
Game 23
Kamsky – Wolff
Philadelphia (World Open) 1991

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 ♗f4

When meeting a somewhat weaker opponent, there is little reason to turn the game into a contest in opening preparation.

3...♗g7 4 e3 0-0 5 h3 c5 6 c3 cxd4 7 exd4 d6 8 ♗e2 ♕b6 *(D)*

The more popular 8...♘c6 is examined in Line 9E.


W

9 ♕b3

9 ♘bd2!? is untested, but also probably quite playable. After 9...♕xb2 10 ♘c4! ♕b5 (not 10...♕xc3+? 11 ♗d2 +–) 11 ♘xd6 ♕c6 White's easier development should promise him some advantage; e.g., 12 ♘c4 ♘d5 13 ♗d2 ♘d7 14 ♕b3 ±. Black should probably decline the offer by 9...♗e6!? 10 ♕b1 ♘d5 11 ♗g3 ♗f5 12 ♘c4 ♕c6, with approximately equal prospects.

9...♕xb3

Now the half-open a-file will be useful for White in the resulting semi-endgame. Kamsky suggests that 9...♘c6 10 ♕xb6 axb6 11 ♘a3 is also nice for White. Quite likely 9...♗e6 is best, even though after 10 ♕xb6 axb6 11 a3 Black's isolated b-pawns are slightly more vulnerable than White's are in the game. Black isn't ready to use the f4-square yet, as 11...♘d5 12 ♗g3 ♗h6 13 ♘bd2 ♘f4 14 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 15 g3 ♗h6 16 h4! planning ♘g5 gives White a clear edge.

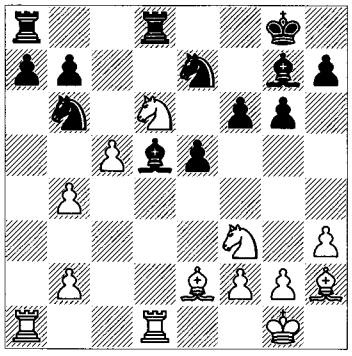
10 axb3 ♘c6 11 0-0

In semi-endgames like this, it isn't always easy to tell whether the king should stay centralized. However, in this position it's obvious that the centre will soon be opened by Black's planned ...e5, and there are still more than enough black pieces left to make the king uncomfortable in the middle of the board.

11...e5 12 dxe5 ♘d5 13 ♗h2 dxe5 14 ♖d1 ♘b6 15 ♘bd2 ♗e6 16 b4 f6

Black is playing to shut the h2-bishop out of the game, but there is a risk his own dark-squared bishop will suffer more in the long term from the pawn-chain he sets up on the dark squares.

17 ♘e4 ♗d5 18 ♘d6 ♘e7 19 c4 ♖fd8 20 c5 *(D)*


B

The piece-play may be bewildering, but the real endgame is nevertheless approaching and it's obvious that White's queenside pawn-majority will be a major factor.

20...a6 21 ♖a5 ♔f8 22 g4 g5

Now White will have to play something like f3, ♔f1 and ♗g1 to activate the h2-bishop.

23 b5 axb5 24 ♖xb5 ♘a4 25 ♖xd5!?

The prosaic 25 ♘xb7 ♖db8 26 ♘d6 ♖xb5 27 ♘xb5 ♘xb2 28 ♖c1 ♘a4 gives White very little.

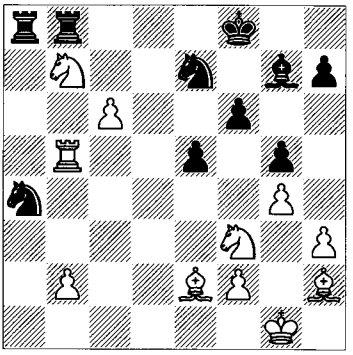
25...♘xd5 26 ♘xb7 ♖db8?!

26...♖dc8 avoids the tactics based on the pinned e-pawn. The position is then very hard to evaluate. Both players have some problems activating their dark-squared bishops. Black may have slightly the better chances after 27 ♗c4; e.g., 27...♘c7 28 ♖b3 ♘e8 29 ♖b5 ♖cb8 (29...♘c7 30 ♖b3 ♘e8 31 ♖b5 =) 30 ♘d2 ♔e7 (30...♖a7 31 c6 ♘c7 32 ♖b3 ♔e7 33 ♘e4 ±) 31 c6 ♘c7 32 ♖b3 ♘e6 33 ♖d3 ♘b6 34 ♗xe6 ♔xe6 35 b4 ♗f8 36 b5 ♖a1+ 37 ♔g2 ♖d1 ∓.

27 c6 ♘e7?! *(D)*

After 27...♘c7 28 ♖b3 ♘e6 White should still be better, but it isn't clear how he should proceed; e.g., 29 ♗c4 ♔e7 30 ♖d3 ♘b6 31 ♗xe6 ♔xe6 32 b4 (no more convincing is 32 ♘c5+ ♔e7 33 ♘d7 ♖d8 34 ♘d4 ♖xd7! 35 ♘f5+ ♔d8 36 cxd7 ♗f8 ∓) 32...♗f8 33 b5 h6 (33...♖a1+ 34 ♔g2 ♖b1 35 ♗xe5 fxe5 36 ♘xg5+ ♔f6 37 ♘xh7+ ♔g7 38 ♘xf8 ♔xf8 39 ♘d6 is still unclear) 34 ♔g2 ♖c8 35 ♘d2 ♖a4 36 f4! planning ♗g1 with further complications.

W



28 ♘d4!

This little tactical trick allows another white piece to enter the battle with devastating effect. There is some irony in the fact that White's dark-squared bishop delivers the decisive blow from its imprisoned position.

28...exd4

The knight cannot be allowed to continue to e6: 28...♖a7 29 ♘e6+ ♔g8 30 ♘ed8 h6 31 c7 ♖c8 32 ♘e6 ♖a6 33 ♖xe5 +–.

29 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 30 c7 ♖c8 31 ♘d6 ♖xc7 32 ♖b8+ ♘c8 33 ♘xc8 f5?

This is an elementary blunder. However, there is no really satisfactory move here. The vulnerable king and knight in combination with Black's restricted bishop ensure that White will win at least an exchange: 33...♖c1+ 34 ♔g2 ♔f7 (34...♘c5 35 ♘d6+ ♔e7 36 ♘f5+ +–) 35 ♘d6+ ♔e6 36 ♘f5 ♖c7 37 ♖g8 +–; 33...♔f7 34 ♗c4+! ♔g6 35 ♗b5 ♖xc8 36 ♖xc8 ♘xb2 37 ♖c2 ♘d1 38 ♗d3+ ♔h6 39 ♖c4 ♘b2 40 ♖xd4 ♘xd3 41 ♖xd3 +–.

34 ♘b6+ 1-0

Lessons to be learned:

1) You have seen yet another tactical antidote to ...♕b6 (9 ♘bd2 in the notes to White's 9th move).

2) The semi-open a-file arising from ...♕xb3 will often underline the power of White's queenside pawn-majority.

3) There is a danger that the h2-bishop may become a problem piece if Black is allowed to play ...e5, ...f6 and ...g5.

Queen's Indian Defence

Here we shall look at positions where Black plays ...b6 relatively quickly, with a set-up similar to the Queen's Indian Defence. Positions where Black develops his pieces quickly without committing his pawn to d5 are difficult to systemize because of Black's great flexibility. He can play a quick ...c5 or delay the advance for some time. The d-pawn can stay at d7 for quite a long time, allowing Black to consider ...d5 in one move. However, it may also advance to d6 quickly, allowing his queen's knight a choice between the d7- and c6-squares. It should also be noted that sometimes Black decides to develop his king's bishop at g7 (even after a preliminary ...e6!), giving the game a King's Indian flavour. Of course White has some choices too. We shall largely restrict ourselves to lines where White plays along standard London lines, but from Black's point of view that will not be so obvious, and he will always have to wonder what happens if, for instance, White plays c4 and ♘c3.

Game 24
Bronstein – A. Sokolov
Moscow Ch 1982

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 c3

This may be slightly toothless, but Black's task is somewhat complicated by the fact that he cannot be sure that White will play the London System. White may well be heading for a Torre set-up with 4 ♗g5 against some of Black's replies and the Colle System with 4 e3 against others.

3...b6

A flexible and good move, but it eliminates all ...♕b6 ideas. And later a4-a5 will quite often be a way for White to generate queenside play. After 3...c5 White might have entered a popular variation of the Torre with 4 ♗g5. This

is no place to discuss that opening in any detail, but we would like to mention the entertaining trap 4...♕b6 5 ♘bd2 ♕xb2?! 6 ♘c4! ♕xc3+?! 7 ♗d2! ♕xc4 8 e4, when White is clearly better even if the material is roughly even. This motif is just as possible if the bishop returns from f4.

4 ♗f4 ♗b7

4...♗a6 is worth considering. In De Francesco-Volke, Munich 1992 Black had full equality after 5 ♘bd2 ♗e7 6 h3 c5 7 e3 ♗xf1 8 ♘xf1 ♕c8 9 ♘1d2 ♕a6.

5 ♘bd2

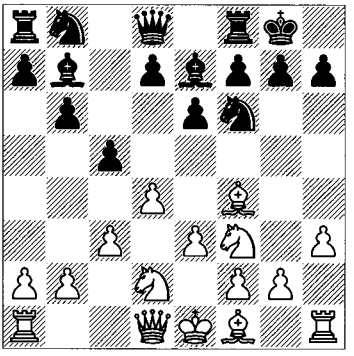
In Line 11C and Game 25 we shall examine attempts to delay this move, hoping to make ...cxd4 less tempting (as cxd4 and ♘c3 is very comfortable for White).

5...♗e7 6 h3

This is the standard reaction to ...♗e7, securing a retreat for the dark-squared bishop.

6...0-0 7 e3 c5 *(D)*

W



8 ♗d3 cxd4 9 exd4 d6

Finally Black reveals his intentions in the centre. He is going to keep the pawn-formation fluid, denying White access to e5. This will allow White a certain spatial advantage, but the flexible nature of the position will ensure that the better player will have a very good chance to win.

10 0-0 ♘bd7 11 ♘c4

This is the standard way to activate the queen's knight when Black holds back his d-pawn. The knight can be driven away by means of ...d5, but that would normally allow ♘ce5 with a nice outpost.

11...♕c7 12 ♖e1 ♖fe8

The more committal 12...b5!? also appears fully playable: 13 ♘e3 a6 14 a4 (14 ♘f5? exf5 15 ♖xe7 ♘d5 –+) 14...♘b6 15 axb5 axb5 16 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 17 ♗xb5 ♘bd5 18 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 19 ♗g3 ♕b6 ±.

13 ♗g3

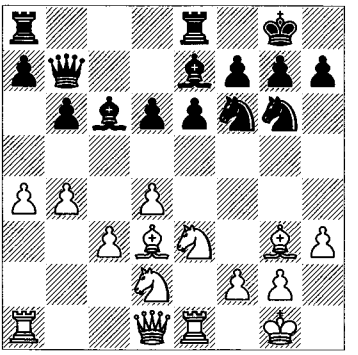
White did not have much after 13 a4 ♗f8 14 ♕e2 h6 15 a5 b5 16 ♘e3 a6 17 ♗h2 e5 18 dxe5 dxe5 19 ♗c2 ♕c6 in S.Clark-R.Bergström, Port Erin 2000 either.

13...♘f8 14 ♘fd2

It's far from obvious what White was hoping to achieve with his last two moves. On the other hand, there isn't much Black can do either, apart from regrouping his forces on his back three ranks.

14...♗c6 15 a4 ♘g6 16 ♘e3 ♕b7 17 b4 *(D)*

B



White can't claim much advantage after the opening, but his position is slightly the more comfortable, mainly due to his extra space – not an uncommon result from the London System.

17...♖ac8 18 c4 a5 19 b5

White is playing for the c5 break. Black is able to stop that, but not without misplacing his pieces somewhat.

19...♗d7 20 ♗e2 e5 21 ♘b3 ♕b8 22 ♖c1 ♘e4 23 ♗g4 ♗xg4 24 ♕xg4 ♘xg3 25 ♕xg3 ♗f8 26 ♕f3

26 ♘d5! is better as Black is crushed after 26...exd4? 27 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 28 ♘xd4 ♕c8 29 ♘c6.

26...♖e6 27 ♖cd1

Again White should probably have occupied the juicy d5-square with his knight.

27...♕a7 28 ♕g4 ♖ce8 29 d5

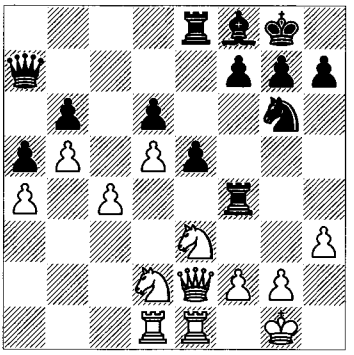
This removes all dynamic possibilities on the queenside, and one might expect Black to have the better chances as his kingside pawn-majority is mobile. However, for the moment the white pieces are considerably better coordinated.

29...♖f6!?

This attempt to keep the rook active is probably correct, but demands accurate play by Black.

30 ♘d2 ♖f4 31 ♕e2 *(D)*

B



31...♖d4?!

The unorthodox position of the black rook makes the position hard to evaluate. However, it seems 31...♖h4 keeps the chances roughly balanced as 32 ♘f5 ♖f4 33 g4 ♗e7 34 ♕e3 ♖c8 may be only nominally better for White, and after 32 ♘f3 ♘f4 33 ♕c2 ♖h6 34 ♘g4 ♖g6 White may have nothing better than 35 ♘h4 (35 ♕f5?! h5 36 ♘e3 ♖f6 37 ♕e4 ♘xh3+! 38 gxh3 ♖f4 39 ♕c2 ♖xf3 ∓) 35...♖g5 36 ♘f3 ♖g6 with a repetition of moves.

32 g3 ♘f4

White was threatening to trap the rook; e.g., 32...♕d7 33 ♘c2. After 33...♖xd2 34 ♖xd2 ♕xh3 it would take extremely accurate technique to convert the exchange into anything tangible but 35 ♘e3! e4 36 ♕g4 ♕xg4 37 ♘xg4 f5 38 ♘h2 seems a good start.

33 gxf4 exf4 34 ♕g4 h5

This weakens Black's king position, but 34...♖xd2 35 ♖xd2 fxe3 36 ♖xe3 +– wasn't tempting.

35 ♕h4 g6 36 ♘g4

36 ♘f3 ♖xd1 37 ♘xd1 +– is even simpler.

36...♖xe1+ 37 ♖xe1 hxg4

After 37...♖xd2, White wins by 38 ♘f6+ ♔g7 39 ♘e8+ ♔g8 40 ♕d8 planning ♘f6+ followed by ♘d7.

38 ♘e4 ♖xe4

This appears somewhat fatalistic as it doesn't give Black any realistic hope of survival, but White has serious threats:

a) 38...♗e7 loses immediately after 39 ♘g5 ♗xg5 40 ♖e8+.

b) 38...gxh3 39 ♘g5! f6 40 ♖e8! fxg5 (after 40...♕d7 41 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 42 ♘e6+ ♔g8 43 ♕xf6 h2+ 44 ♔xh2 ♕h7+ 45 ♔g2 f3+ 46 ♕xf3 Black has no more ammunition) 41 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 42 ♕h8+ ♔e7 43 ♕g7+ ♔d8 44 ♕xa7 +–.

39 ♖xe4 gxh3 40 ♕d8 f5 41 ♖e8 ♕f7 42 ♖e6

The kingside mass of black pawns may appear threatening at first glance. However, closer investigation reveals that they will all fall as Black's pieces are completely tied up in the defence.

42...♔g7 43 ♔h2 f3 44 ♕g5 ♔h7 45 ♔xh3 ♕g7 46 ♔g3 1-0

Lessons to be learned:

1) If Black keeps his d-pawn back, ♘c4 is usually a good way to activate the queen's knight.

2) One of Black's main ideas in the Queen's Indian is to play ...e5, but it takes a lot of preparation.

3) The London may not give you any lasting opening advantage against a well-prepared opponent. However, you will have a solid position which you hopefully understand and from which you can beat a weaker player.

Game 25
Christiansen – D. Gurevich
Philadelphia (World Open) 1988

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗f4 c5 4 e3 b6 5 ♗d3

5 a4 is an interesting idea, planning to meet ...♗a6 with ♗b5, when ...♗xb5 will not be tempting as the backward a-pawn will be vulnerable on the open a-file. In Sonntag-Timmermans, Belgian Cht (Antwerp) 1997 Black interestingly tried to solve that problem by first advancing his a-pawn: 5...cxd4 6 exd4 ♘c6 7 ♘bd2 ♗e7 8 c3 a5 9 ♗b5 ♗a6, but after 10 ♗xa6 ♖xa6 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♕e2 White still had pressure.

5...♗b7

5...♗a6!? is logical now that White has spent one move developing his light-squared bishop and cannot avoid the exchange, but Black didn't quite equalize in Balduan-Steinbrecht, Cologne 1996 after 6 0-0 ♗xd3 7 ♕xd3 ♗e7 8 c4 0-0 9 d5 exd5 10 cxd5 d6 11 h3 ♘bd7 12 ♘c3 a6 13 a4, and 6 c4 may be even harder to meet.

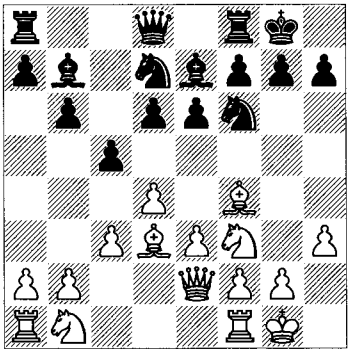
6 c3 ♗e7 7 h3 0-0 8 0-0 d6 9 ♕e2!?

White keeps his queen's knight in its stable, hoping for Black to exchange at d4, allowing cxd4 and ♘c3.

9...♘bd7 *(D)*

Probably 9...♘c6 is stronger. See Line 11C for details.

W



10 e4!?

Technically, of course, this represents the loss of a tempo. However, if White is able to grab central space and defend it comfortably, it's largely irrelevant how this is achieved.

10...cxd4 11 cxd4 ♖e8 12 ♘c3

No matter which move-order one chooses, some opportunities are lost and others are gained. What characterizes the strong player is his ability to make use of the peculiarities of his position. In this game White delayed ♘bd2 and is now able to take advantage by developing his queen's knight to the more active square c3.

12...♗f8

Christiansen suggested 12...g6 as a more precise move-order.

13 ♖fd1

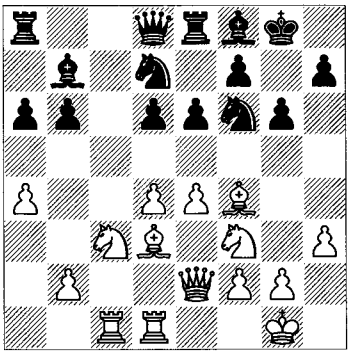
Probably 13 e5! dxe5 14 dxe5 is stronger. In his comments to the game, Christiansen gave 14...♗xf3 15 ♕xf3 ♘d5 16 ♗e4 ± and 14...♘d5 15 ♗xh7+ ♔xh7 16 ♘g5+ ♔g6 17 ♕d3+ f5 18 exf6+ ♔xf6 19 ♘ce4+ +–. However, Lane suggests that Black can hold on with 14...♘c5! 15 ♗c4 (15 ♗b5 ♘fd7 16 b4 a6 leads to equality) 15...♕c7 16 ♘b5 ♕b8 17 ♖fd1 ♘d5 with only a slight advantage for White.

13...g6 14 ♖ac1 a6 15 a4 *(D)*

It should be obvious that White is a bit more comfortable here – after all, space counts for something.

15...♖a7?!

B



Black may be planning to put piece pressure on the white pawn-centre with ...♕a8, which is a well-known idea from similar positions. However, White has got too much kingside play to be annoyed by such sophisticated ideas as this. The direct 15...e5 doesn't solve Black's problems either. After 16 dxe5 dxe5 17 ♗g5 h6 18 ♗xf6! ♕xf6 (18...♘xf6? 19 ♗b5 +–) 19 ♗c4 followed by ♗d5, White's control of d5 gives him a clear advantage.

16 e5 dxe5 17 dxe5 ♘d5 18 ♘xd5 exd5 19 ♕d2

This allows Black to create some activity, demanding accurate play by White. 19 ♗c2 would have kept matters simpler.

19...d4 20 e6!

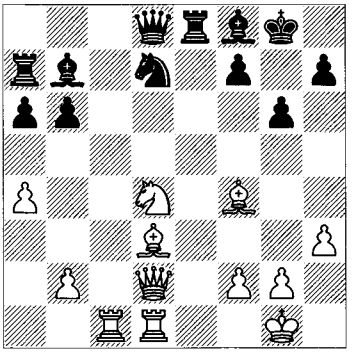
This allows White to keep winning chances in the resulting position, despite the pawn symmetry, thanks to his more active pieces.

20...♖xe6

The trick was 20...fxe6?! 21 ♘xd4 e5? 22 ♗c4+ ♔h8 23 ♘e6 +–.

21 ♘xd4 ♖e8 *(D)*

W



22 ♘b5!!?

We have not been able to prove analytically that this combination wins (or even increases

White's advantage). Nonetheless, we believe that this tactical stroke greatly contributed to White's victory by unsettling Black.

22...axb5 23 ♗xb5 ♗c8

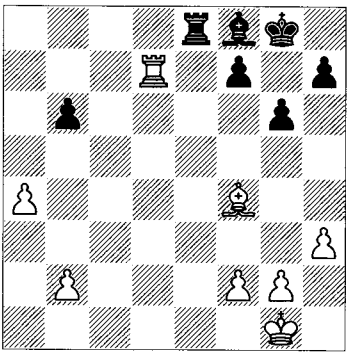
23...♗a6 is probably weaker: 24 ♗xa6 ♖xa6 25 ♖c7 (25 ♕xd7 ♕xd7 26 ♖xd7 ♖xa4 =) 25...♖e7 26 ♕c3! ♕b8 (26...b5 27 axb5 ♖ae6 28 ♗e3 +–; 26...♖a8 27 ♕c6 ♕e8 28 ♖dxd7 ♖xd7 29 ♖xd7 ♖d8 30 ♖xd8! ♕xd8 31 ♗c7 +–) 27 ♗g3 ♖xa4 (27...b5 28 ♖dxd7 ♖xd7 29 ♖xd7 ♕e8 30 ♕c7 ♖a8 31 axb5 +–) 28 ♖cxd7 ♖xd7 29 ♖xd7 ♕e8 30 ♖b7 and Black's position is extremely hard to defend.

24 ♖xc8 ♕xc8 25 ♗xd7 ♖xd7?

It seems that 25...♗b4! 26 ♕d4 (26 ♕d5? ♖e1+ 27 ♖xe1 ♖xd7 ∓) 26...♗c5 27 ♕d5 ♖xd7 28 ♕xd7 ♕xd7 29 ♖xd7 ♖e1+ 30 ♔h2 ♗xf2 31 b4 gives White only a very small advantage.

26 ♕xd7 ♕xd7 27 ♖xd7 *(D)*

B



With active pieces and a healthy extra pawn on the queenside, the win should only be a matter of technique (which in positions like this is often synonymous with patience).

27...♖e4 28 ♗e3 ♗c5

White's extra queenside pawn would ensure him a technical win after 28...♖xa4 29 ♗xb6.

29 ♗h6 ♖e8

The mating threats reduce Black to passivity. 29...♖e1+ would come to roughly the same after 30 ♔h2 f5 31 ♖g7+ ♔h8 32 ♖b7 ♔g8 33 ♗e3.

30 ♔f1 ♗f8 31 ♗e3 ♗c5 32 ♗d2 ♖e4 33 ♗c3 f6 34 b3 ♗e7 35 ♗d4 ♗b4 36 ♗e3 ♗c5 37 ♗d2

37 ♗xc5 bxc5 38 a5 ♖e6 39 ♖c7 is simpler. We assume that White wanted to delay all important decisions until after the time-control at move 40.

37...♗e7 38 ♖b7 ♖e6 39 ♗e3

White has no objections to a couple of repetitions in order to get past the time-control.

39...♗c5 40 ♗xc5 bxc5 41 ♖c7 ♖b6 42 a5! ♖b8

There was no time for 42...♖xb3 because of 43 a6 ♖b1+ 44 ♔e2 ♖a1 45 a7 and the pawn queens immediately.

43 a6 1-0

Lessons to be learned:

1) ...b6 may be the prelude to an exchange of light-squared bishops by ...♗a6 especially when White has moved the bishop from f1.

2) Versus passive play, White should look for central activity with e4, even if that advance has to be played in two steps.

3) Against a Queen's Indian set-up, you should consider delaying Nbd2, making ...cxd4 less tempting.

Anti-Benoni Lines

Here we shall look at lines with an early ...c5, either prepared by ...e6 or without any preparation. If White is able to reply with d5, he will secure a spatial advantage in the centre, but that isn't normally an option for White in the London. The lines we cover here represent a major challenge to the London System. Not only must White defend his strongpoint at d4, but he must also be ready to meet ...♕b6.

Game 26
Damljanović – Lukacs
Kolhapur 1987

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6

2...c5 is a bigger challenge for a London player. Then 3 d5 is probably the best try for an advantage, but most London players go for 3 c3, offering Black the somewhat dry positions resulting from 3...cxd4 4 cxd4.

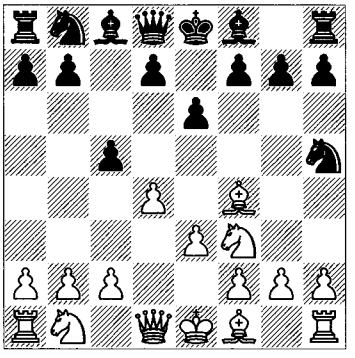
3 ♗f4 c5

Normally this just delays ...b6 for a few moves, but White will now have to be aware of various ...♕b6 motifs.

4 e3 ♘h5?! *(D)*

This move, intending to eliminate White's active dark-squared bishop, is the main theme

W



in many critical variations. However, it tends to backfire whenever the bishop escapes as the knight is unhappily placed on the edge not only from a strategic point of view, but is also somewhat exposed tactically. More sensible alternatives are explored in Lines 12A to 12C.

5 ♗g5 ♕b6?

This is far too optimistic. Black tries to combine two of the most critical anti-London ideas, but only succeeds in misplacing his forces. The lesser evil was 5...♗e7 6 ♗xe7 ♕xe7, but Black would then still have to redeploy his h5-knight.

6 ♘bd2! h6

The consistent 6...♕xb2? loses quickly to 7 ♘e5!, trapping the queen if Black saves his knight: 7...♘f6 8 ♘ec4 ♕c3 (8...♕b4 9 c3! ♕xc3 10 ♖c1 ♕b4 11 a3 +–) 9 ♖b1 cxd4 (9...d5 10 ♖b3 cxd4 11 ♗xf6 gxf6 12 ♖xc3 dxc3 13 ♘b1 dxc4 14 ♗xc4 +–) 10 ♖b3 d5 11 ♗xf6 gxf6 12 ♖xc3 dxc3 13 ♘b1 dxc4 14 ♗xc4 +–.

7 ♘c4 ♕c7 8 ♗h4 g5 9 ♘fe5

This leads to a convincing win, but 9 ♘fd2 gxh4 10 ♕xh5 may be a simpler way to a superior position; e.g., 10...d5 11 ♘e5 ♘c6 12 ♗b5 ♗g7 13 0-0-0 cxd4 14 exd4 0-0 15 ♗xc6 bxc6 16 ♘b3 ±.

9...♘f6

Possibly 9...gxh4 10 ♕xh5 d5 11 ♘d2 ♘c6 was a lesser evil.

10 ♗g3 *(D)*

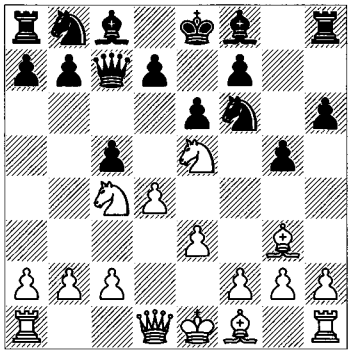
The contrast between White's harmonious forces and Black's disorganized army is striking.

10...d6

Black's counter-attack with 10...♘e4? 11 ♘xf7! ♘xg3 12 ♘xh8 cxd4 13 hxg3 ♗b4+ proves harmless after 14 c3 dxc3 15 ♕h5+ +–.

11 ♕f3 ♗e7?

B



In a very difficult position Black allows a winning combination. However, White's advantage may already be winning even against the better 11...♕d8 12 h4!? (12 ♘d3 g4 13 ♕d1 b5 14 ♘d2 c4 15 ♘f4 ♕c7 isn't clear) and now:

a) 12...dxe5? seems to be losing: 13 hxg5 ♘fd7 (the alternative 13...♘d5 14 ♗xe5 ♖g8 15 gxh6 is equally hopeless for Black) 14 ♘xe5 ♕e7 (14...♘xe5 15 ♗xe5 ♖h7 16 ♗d3 +–) 15 g6 f5 16 ♘f7 ♕f6 (16...♖g8 17 ♘d6+ ♔d8 18 ♘xb7+ ♗xb7 19 ♕xb7 +–) 17 ♗e5 ♘xe5 18 dxe5 ♕g7 19 ♗b5+ ♘d7 20 0-0-0 ♖b8 21 g4! wins for White.

b) 12...♖g8 allows Black to fight on from an inferior position after 13 hxg5 hxg5 14 ♘g4 ♘xg4 15 ♕xg4 d5. However, after 16 ♘e5! it seems likely that Black will soon succumb thanks to his weakened kingside and poor development.

12 ♘xd6+! ♕xd6 *(D)*

12...♗xd6 13 ♕xf6 ♖g8 14 0-0-0 is also utterly hopeless.

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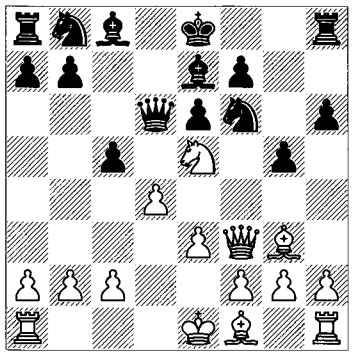


13 ♗b5+!

Best. ChessBase claims 13 ♘c6? was played, but this must be a data error because simply 13...♕xc6 wins for Black; also 13 ♘g6 ♕b6 14

♘xh8 ♕b4+ 15 ♔d1 ♕xb2 is less convincing than the move played.

13...♘c6

Or 13...♔f8 14 ♘g6+ +–.

14 ♘xc6 1-0

Black will lose a lot of material.

Lessons to be learned:

1) The combination of ...e6 and ...c5 weakens the dark squares on the h2-b8 diagonal and may quickly be exploited if Black is careless.

2) Although both ...♘h5 and ...♕b6 appear in some of Black's most critical variations against the London, they involve an element of risk. Combining them is normally just too risky.

3) Until White has played his solid but somewhat slow moves c3 and h3, he is usually active enough to punish unsound play by tactical means.

Game 27
Singer – Schramm
German Ch (Altenkirchen) 2001

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4!?

This will normally transpose quickly to orthodox lines, but has some independent significance.

2...e6

This is a good move. However, it allows White to transpose to standard London waters with 3 ♘f3, and therefore cannot really be critical. Actually only 2...c5 prevents White from transposing to more orthodox lines with 3 ♘f3.

3 e3!

Top priority is given to strengthening the London centre. It's also quite convenient not to have to worry about ...♘h5 yet. 3 ♘f3 ♘h5 may not be too scary but if you are just slightly lazy you don't want to allow Black an extra option.

3...c5

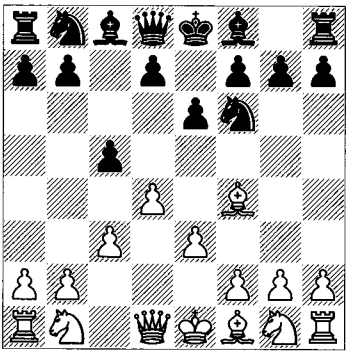
This wonderfully flexible move can be followed up by either ...b6, ...♕b6, or ...d5, but it shouldn't worry White because his next move fits in well against all of them:

4 c3! *(D)*

4 ♘f3 is naturally playable, but then 4...♕b6 may be slightly annoying. Now the centre is fortified and White is ready to meet ...♕b6 with ♕b3.

4...cxd4?!

B



It may be too harsh to call this an inaccuracy, but it seems a little early to release the central tension and the e-file is normally more useful for White than the c-file is for Black. The critical 4...♕b6 is discussed in Line 12D.

5 exd4

This allows Black a numerical central superiority but by unbalancing the pawn-structure White hopes to exploit his greater piece activity. The alternative recapture, 5 cxd4, leads to a symmetrical and slightly drawish position, but White's more active queen's bishop should give him some initiative in the short term, and no risk in the long term.

5...♗e7 6 ♘f3

Normally when Black plays ...♗e7, gaining some control over g5, White has to wonder whether ...♘h5 might be a threat. However, after the exchange on d4, the bishop can always retreat to e3, leaving the knight out of play.

6...0-0 7 ♗d3 d6 8 h3

This may not be strictly necessary, but White really has no hurry. It's now obvious that the king's knight will not find an active outpost on e5 in the near future, so queuing up the other knight for the kingside too with 8 ♘bd2 may not be the best strategy.

8...♖e8 9 0-0 ♘bd7 10 ♖e1 *(D)*

10...♘f8

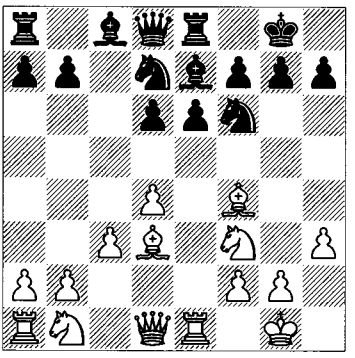
Black is slowly preparing the advance ...e5, asking White how he intends to improve his safe but slightly static position. By getting the knight out of the way, he is also able to develop his bishop without weakening his queenside with ...b6.

11 ♕e2 ♘g6 12 ♗h2

This is quite useful, as White will now have a lot of possible replies to ...e5.

12...♗d7

B



Black's play is slow, but he avoids all weaknesses and hopes that his extra central pawn will eventually prove its worth.

13 c4!?

Most London players aren't eager space-grabbers, preferring development over territorial claims. Indeed, there can hardly be anything wrong with the routine 13 ♘bd2. However, if it can be comfortably defended, central space shouldn't be turned down. The big centre will allow White active piece-play, and Black isn't well placed to put pressure on d4.

13...♗c6 14 ♘c3

Obviously this active development of the queen's knight has been a part of White's strategy for some time now.

14...♕b6 15 ♖ad1 ♗f8 16 ♘g5 *(D)*

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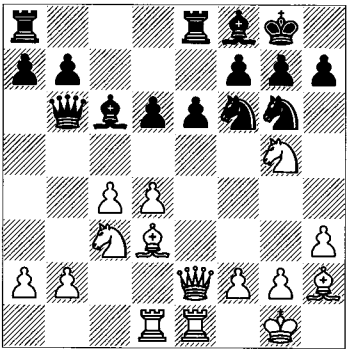


...♗xf3 followed by ...♕xb2 wasn't a real threat, as White could then exchange on g6, protecting the c3-knight, and play ♖b1, penetrating on b7. However, the knight is quite well placed at g5. It cannot easily be driven away, has a nice retreat square at e4 and in the meantime creates some vague tactical possibilities around the black king.

16...e5!?

This must be the critical move as Black has been preparing it for a long time, and it isn't likely there will be a better chance. Generally ...h6 isn't attractive as long as White can reply ♗xg6. After 16...♕a5 White can calmly increase his space advantage: 17 ♕d2 a6 18 a3 ♖ac8 19 b4 ♕b6 (naturally not 19...♕xa3?? 20 ♖a1 ♕xb4 21 ♖eb1 +–) 20 ♗g3 ±.

17 c5!

This nicely illustrates the dangers of playing for ...e5 when there is no bishop to hit at f4.

17...♕a5

Black can't play 17...dxc5? as he will lose material after 18 dxe5; e.g., 18...h6 19 ♗xg6 fxg6 (19...hxg5 20 ♕c4 +–) 20 ♕c4+ ♔h8 21 ♘f7+ ♔h7 22 exf6 +– or 18...♖e7 19 ♗c4 ♗e8 20 ♕c2 ♕b4 (20...♘d7 21 ♘d5 +–) 21 ♗d3 ♘h5 22 ♘d5 +–.

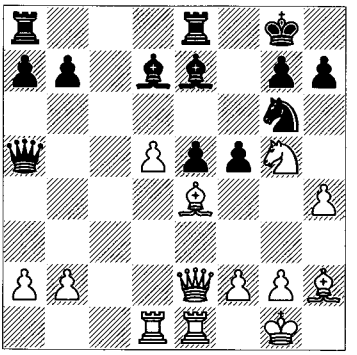
18 d5 ♗d7 19 cxd6 ♗xd6 20 ♘ce4 ♘xe4 21 ♗xe4 ♗e7

21...♗b4? isn't an option as White has 22 ♕h5! ♗xe1 (22...h6 23 ♘xf7 ±) 23 ♗xg6 hxg6 24 ♕h7+ ♔f8 25 d6 with an unstoppable mate.

22 h4 f5 *(D)*

Now 22...♗b5 23 ♕h5 ♗xg5 24 ♕xg5 f6 25 ♕d2 ♕xa2 26 h5 ♘f8 27 h6 would give White a very dangerous initiative.

W



23 d6!

The following tactical sequence doesn't win any material but it still ensures a probably won position.

23...♗xg5 24 ♗d5+ ♗e6

The simplifications resulting from 24...♔h8 25 hxg5 ♘f4 26 ♗xf4 exf4 27 ♕d2 ♕xd2 28 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 29 ♖xd2 b6 would not ease Black's problems after 30 ♔h2! (30 ♖c2? ♖e1+ 31 ♔h2 ♖d1 32 ♖c7 ♖xd5 33 ♖xd7 ♔g8 isn't at all easy) 30...♖e1 (30...h6 31 g6; 30...g6 31 g3

fxg3+ 32 ♔xg3 ♔g7 33 ♖c2) 31 b4 ♖b1 32 ♗b3 +–.

25 ♗xe6+ ♖xe6 26 ♕c4 ♘f8

26...♔f7 is no better. 27 hxg5 ♖d8 28 b4 ♕a4 29 f4! (29 ♖d5 ♕c6 30 ♖c5 ♕xd6 31 ♗xe5 ♘xe5 32 ♖cxe5 ♖de8 should be won for White too, but proving that isn't a theme for an opening manual) 29...♕c6 (29...e4 30 ♖d5 +–) 30 ♕xc6 bxc6 31 fxe5 f4 32 ♖d4 is a relatively easy win for White.

27 hxg5 ♔h8

White threatened ♖xe5 and 27...e4 28 d7 ♕d8 29 ♗c7 +– wasn't an option. The combination of White's more active pieces and his dangerous passed pawn is decisive.

28 ♕c7 ♕xc7 29 dxc7 ♖c8

There is no salvation. 29...e4 may present White with more resistance but Black is helpless after 30 ♖d5! g6 31 ♖c1 ♖ee8 32 ♖e5 ♖ec8 33 ♖e7.

30 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 31 ♗xe5 ♘e6 32 ♖d7 ♔g8 33 ♖e7 ♔f8 34 ♖xe6 ♔f7 35 ♖d6 ♖xc7 1-0

Lessons to be learned:

1) The early pawn exchange ...cxd4 and exd4 tends to give White an early initiative because of his increased piece activity. However, Black's extra central pawn may become a factor in the middlegame.

2) If Black sets up a solid defensive position on his back ranks, White should consider grabbing central space with c4.

3) Even after meeting ...cxd4 with exd4 it may be worth retaining the option of developing the queen's knight actively on c3.

Game 28
Blatny – Chernyshov
Stare Mesto 1992

1 d4 c5 2 c3

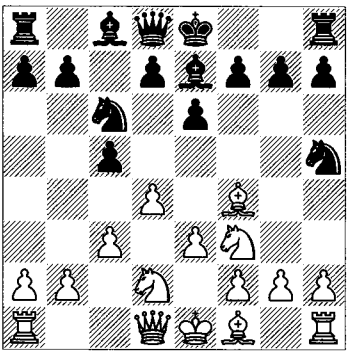
After 2 d5! Black has to fight hard for equality. Occasionally grandmaster colleagues joke about Blatny's opening play (the London may be his most ambitious weapon with White). However, he is able to play at a good grandmaster level with a relatively harmless set of openings mainly because of his tactical ability. Can it be that the energy he saves by his opening approach allows him to invest a little more in his middlegame play?

2...♘f6 3 ♘f3 e6 4 ♗f4 ♘c6 5 e3 ♗e7 6 ♘bd2

This is roughly as popular as 6 h3 but in our opinion less accurate.

6...♘h5! *(D)*

W



This probably comes close to equalizing.

7 ♗g3 b6?!

It isn't easy to pinpoint where Black goes wrong in this game. Possibly 7...d6 is best – see the note to White's 6th move in Line 12A. Black has also scored surprisingly well after 7...d5 8 ♗d3 ♘xg3 (or 8...f5).

8 ♘c4 ♘xg3 9 hxg3 d6 10 d5!

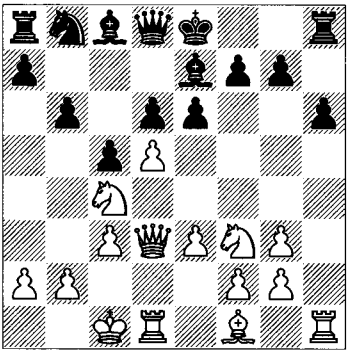
Suddenly White is clearly better.

10...♘b8

This isn't tempting, but 10...exd5 simply loses a pawn after 11 ♕xd5 ♕c7 12 0-0-0.

11 ♕d3 h6 12 0-0-0!? *(D)*

B



Queenside castling is relatively rare in the London. Of course, it's more natural after Black has opened the h-file and to some extent neglected his development.

12...0-0

Black would like to close the position with 12...e5 so that he gets the time to finish his

development, but 13 ♘cxe5! wins; for example, 13...dxe5 14 d6 ♕xd6 (14...♗f8 15 ♕e4 +–) 15 ♕e4 ♕c6 16 ♗b5 ♕xb5 17 ♕xa8 0-0 18 ♕xb8 and although he needs to be precise, White is winning.

13 dxe6 ♗xe6 14 ♘xd6 ♘d7

After 14...♗xa2 White can win in various ways, but 15 ♘f5 ♗e6 16 ♘xh6+ gxh6 17 ♕e4 ♘d7 18 ♖xh6 +– may be the most effective.

15 ♕b1?!

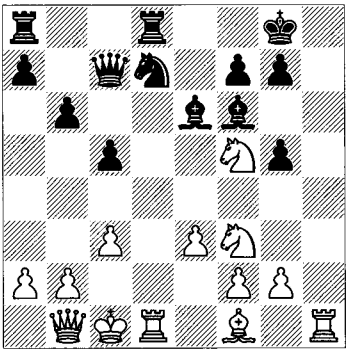
This is unnecessarily passive. 15 ♘f5! ♗f6 16 g4 ♘e5 17 ♕e4, with a winning advantage to White, is simpler. In some variations, exchanges will lead to opposite-coloured bishops, but as long as there is at least one pair of major pieces left, they tend to underline White's attacking possibilities.

15...♕c7 16 ♘f5 ♗f6 17 g4!

With opposite castling White's extra pawn may not be decisive. However, this move ensures that his attack is the faster one.

17...♖fd8 18 g5! hxg5 *(D)*

W



19 ♘e7+!

The point. The more obvious 19 ♘d6?! keeps the advantage, but doesn't lead to anything concrete after 19...♘e5.

19...♔f8 20 ♘d5 ♗xd5 21 ♖xd5 ♘e5 22 ♘xe5

This is sufficient for a win, but Fritz quickly discovers the nice line 22 ♖xe5! ♗xe5 23 ♕e4 f6 24 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 25 ♕b7! +–.

22...♗xe5

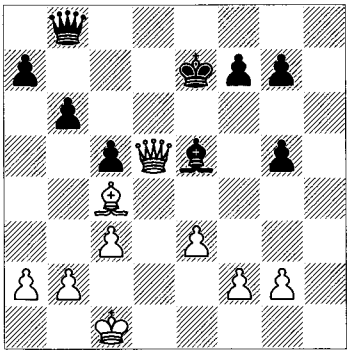
22...♖xd5 23 ♖h8+ ♔e7 is better but after 24 ♘g6+! fxg6 25 ♖xa8 ♖d8 26 ♕e4+ ♔f8 27 ♖xd8+ ♕xd8 28 ♕xg6 White keeps his advantage.

23 ♕e4 ♖xd5 24 ♕xd5 ♖b8

24...♖e8 25 ♗b5 ♖b8 26 ♖h8+ ♔e7 27 ♖xb8 ♕xb8 28 ♗c4 is just a different road to the same position.

25 ♖h8+ ♔e7 26 ♖xb8 ♕xb8 27 ♗c4 *(D)*

B



This position nicely illustrates how opposite-coloured bishops enhance the attacker's chances.

27...f6 28 ♕f7+ ♔d6 29 ♕e6+ ♔c7 30 ♕e7+ ♔c6 31 a4 ♕c7

31...♕d6 is a little more stubborn but White still has a forced win: 32 ♗b5+ ♔d5 33 ♕f7+ ♔e4 34 ♕c4+ ♔f5 35 g4+ ♔g6 36 ♕g8 ♕e7 37 ♗e8+ +–.

32 ♕e8+ 1-0

Lessons to be learned:

1) If you aren't planning to prepare your London System properly, you had better spend the time saved on some tactics books so you can win the middlegame instead!

2) Although queenside castling is relatively rare in the London, it may sometimes pay to keep the option open.

3) As soon as Black plays ...♗e7, White should consider h3 in order to preserve his bishop.

Dutch and Various Others

The relatively quiet nature of the London allows Black to start his game in various ways. However, at some point during his first 10 moves or so, he must find a way to activate his pieces and get a grip on the centre. Given White's hold on e5, Black will normally secure a central foothold with either ...c5, ...d5 or ...f5, giving the fight a relatively familiar look.

Game 29
Scekić – Paulić
Belgrade 2003

1 d4 e6

This may stop the Trompowsky, but not the London! Many Dutch players prefer this move-order because it avoids a few scary variations like 1...f5 2 e4 and 2 ♗g5. However, Black must now be prepared for the French and can no longer play the dynamic Leningrad variation.

2 ♘f3

Here we recommend the more committal 2 ♗f4 – primarily because it gives White extra options should Black continue 2...d5.

2...f5

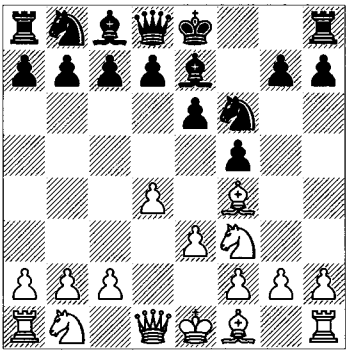
Here 2...d5 3 ♗f4 ♗d6 comes close to equality. White can of course play 3 c4 instead, but even in the Queen's Gambit Declined, an early ♘f3 is a minor concession, as White will have fewer options in the Exchange Variation.

3 ♗f4

As we shall see, the London formation is quite promising, even against the Dutch.

3...♘f6 4 e3 ♗e7 *(D)*

W



5 h3

White doesn't need to play this in order to preserve his dark-squared bishop, as after 5 ♗d3 ♘h5 6 ♘bd2 ♘xf4 7 exf4 the half-open e-file will give him promising play against e6. However, the h-pawn move is just as much a preparation for the line-opening g4.

5...0-0 6 ♗d3 b6!

Generally this is an attractive move in the Dutch as the bishop is hard to activate otherwise and now it underlines Black's control of d5 and e4. The only drawback is that now Black will be slightly slower to create counterplay on the queenside if White castles queenside. See Line 13B for analytical detail.

7 ♘bd2 ♗b7 8 ♕e2

This is probably a better way to activate the queen than c3 and ♕c2.

8...♘e4 9 0-0-0!?

This isn't a common move in standard London lines. However, here Black has weakened his kingside with an early ...f5, and hasn't yet put pressure on the queenside with ...c5. 9 0-0 is a sensible alternative.

9...d6?!

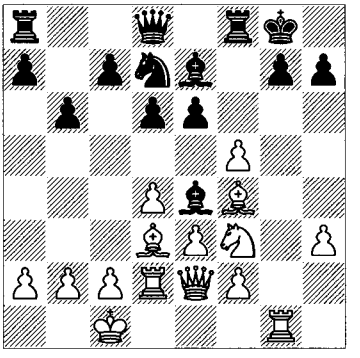
This looks sensible but may be a bit too slow. 9...c5 is probably preferable.

10 ♖hg1 ♘d7 11 g4 ♘xd2?!

There is no reason to play this so quickly. After the more active 11...c5 12 gxf5 exf5, it isn't so obvious how White should continue his kingside campaign. 13 ♖g2 is natural, but then after 13...♘xd2 14 ♖xd2 his rooks aren't well coordinated, and 14...cxd4 15 exd4 ♔h8 should be playable for Black.

12 ♖xd2 ♗e4 13 gxf5 *(D)*

B



13...exf5

13...♗xd3 may be slightly better but basically leads to a similar position with a dangerous attack on the semi-open g-file; e.g., 14 ♕xd3 and now:

a) 14...exf5 15 h4 ♔h8 (15...♗xh4 16 ♕c4+ ♔h8 17 ♘xh4 ♕xh4 18 ♕xc7) 16 h5 ±.

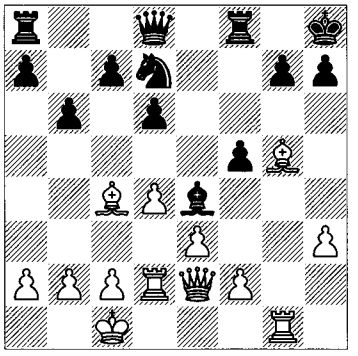
b) 14...♖xf5 15 ♕e4 ♖f6 (15...♘f8 16 d5 ♖xd5 17 ♗h6 ♗f6 18 ♖xd5 exd5 19 ♕xd5+ ♔h8 20 ♗xg7+! ♗xg7 21 ♘g5 +–) 16 ♘e5! dxe5 17 dxe5 ♖f7 18 ♖xd7 ♕xd7 19 ♕xa8+ ♖f8 20 ♕g2 g6 21 ♖d1 ±.

14 ♗c4+ ♔h8

After 14...d5 15 ♗b5 Black will have serious tactical problems, partly related to the e4-bishop

which may be trapped; e.g., 15...♗xf3 (15...a6? 16 ♗c6 ♖a7 17 ♘e5 +–) 16 ♕xf3 ♘f6 17 ♗c6 ♖c8 18 ♗e5 ±. Black's best practical chance is probably 15...c6! 16 ♗xc6 ♖c8, but after 17 ♘e5 ♘xe5 18 ♗xe5 ♖f7 19 ♗a4 f4 20 ♗xf4 White is again winning.

15 ♘g5 ♗xg5 16 ♗xg5 *(D)*



White's attack is probably already decisive. In addition to his pressure on the g-file, he can use threats against Black's f-pawn to accelerate his kingside attack.

16...♕e8 17 f3 ♗b7 18 ♕g2 g6

This weakens the dark squares around the black king and provides White with an extra target, so that he can quickly open the h-file. 18...♕g6 is probably better, but White's advantage is very clear after 19 ♗e7! ♖fe8 (19...♕xg2 20 ♖dxg2 +–) 20 ♕xg6 hxg6 21 ♗g5 ♔h7 (21...♗xf3 22 ♖f2 ♗c6 23 ♗f7 ♖f8 24 ♗xg6 +–) 22 ♗b5; e.g., 22...c6 23 ♗d3 ♘f6 24 ♖dg2 ♘h5 25 ♗h4 ♖xe3 26 ♖xg6 ♗c8 27 ♖6g5 g6 28 ♖xg6 +–.

19 ♗h6 ♖f6 20 h4 d5 21 ♗d3 ♕f7 22 ♕h3 ♖g8 23 ♖dg2 c5 24 c3 b5

Black is clearly losing the battle on the kingside, so he desperately tries to create chances on the queenside.

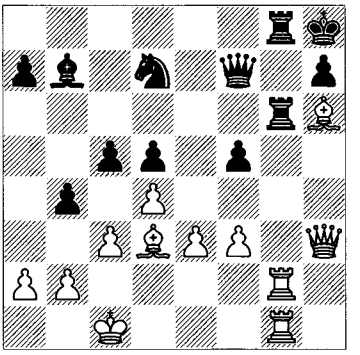
25 h5!

There is absolutely no reason for White to be side-tracked by a mere pawn when he will soon have access to the royal chamber.

25...b4 26 hxg6 ♖fxg6 *(D)*

27 ♗xf5!

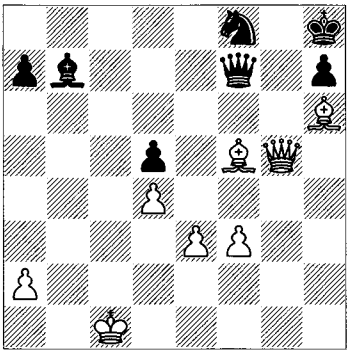
It doesn't take much calculation to see that this pawn is *en prise* after all. Now White has the luxury of choosing between winning by a direct attack or by exchanging down to an endgame.



27...♖xg2 28 ♖xg2 ♖xg2 29 ♕xg2 ♘f8 30 ♕g5

30 ♕g3, threatening ♕e5+, is even more effective; e.g., 30...bxc3 (or 30...♕f6 31 ♗xf8 ♕xf8 32 ♕e5+ ♕g7 33 ♕b8+ ♕g8 34 ♕xb7 +–) 31 ♗xf8 cxb2+ 32 ♔xb2 ♕xf8 33 ♕e5+ ♕g7 34 ♕b8+ ♕g8 35 ♕xb7 +–.

30...bxc3 31 bxc3 cxd4 32 cxd4 *(D)*



32...♘g6?

This loses immediately but after 32...♗c6 33 ♗c2 ♘e6 34 ♕e5+ ♔g8 35 ♕g3+ ♔h8 36 ♕b8+ ♗e8 37 ♕e5+ ♔g8 38 ♕xd5 ♕f6 39 ♗f4 White's three connected passed pawns decide quickly.

33 ♕d8+ 1-0

Lessons to be learned:

1) Against 1...e6, you have to play either 2 ♘f3 or 2 ♗f4 in order to have a consistent London repertoire.

2) You rarely have to worry about ...♘h5 in the Dutch, as it will normally not be in Black's interest to exchange on g3 or f4, opening lines against his somewhat exposed kingside.

3) It may be a good idea for White to delay castling a little – if Black plays a little too

slowly, queenside castling may well come into consideration.

4) The g4 break is often an effective line-opener whenever Black puts a pawn on f5.

Game 30
L. Ortega – Tomescu
Padova 1998

1 d4

An alternative route to the Polish Defence is 1 ♘f3 b5, when 2 d4 ♗b7 3 ♗f4 ♘f6 leads to the game position.

1...♘f6

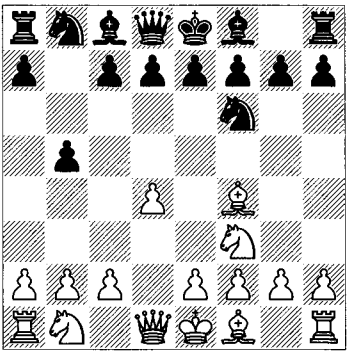
The direct path to the Polish Defence is 1...b5, when 2 e4 may be critical, but 2 ♘f3 ♗b7 3 ♗f4 is more than adequate. This may be the right place to point out that although the London can be played against most set-ups, we cannot recommend heading blindly for it after 1 d4 d6 or 1...g6 – 2 ♘f3 is of course good enough, but the f4-bishop can easily become vulnerable. See Line 14A for details.

2 ♘f3 b5

This isn't at all illogical – White delays c4, so Black tries to stop it entirely. However, ultimately there is the risk that the b-pawn move will actually lose control of c4 if White can find a good moment to attack b5 with his a-pawn.

3 ♗f4 *(D)*

B



This may not be an attempt to refute the Polish, but neither is the Polish much of a challenge to the London.

3...♗b7 4 e3 a6 5 ♘bd2 e6 6 ♗d3 c5 7 c3 ♘c6 8 0-0 d6

Black's play is slightly provocative – he is still two moves away from castling. If White wants to take advantage of that, he will have to become active in the centre.

9 e4 e5

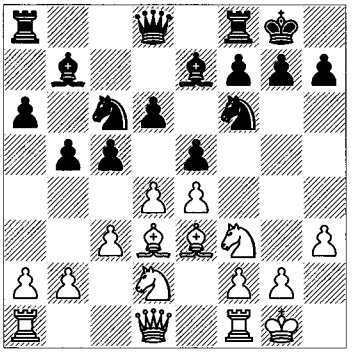
The two tempo losses e3-e4 and ...e6-e5 balance each other out. Nevertheless, 9...♗e7 may be a better move.

10 ♗e3 ♗e7

10...♘g4 is probably the critical test of White's play. After the continuation 11 ♗g5 ♗e7 12 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 White's advantage is modest.

11 h3 0-0 *(D)*

W



The position has now become strikingly similar to a Ruy Lopez. Only the white bishops are slightly atypically placed.

12 d5 ♘b8?!

This looks natural, but allows White some very real pressure against b5. It's possible that 12...♘a7 13 a4 ♘d7 is better. In some cases Black may eventually initiate kingside counterplay by ...f5.

13 a4 c4

Now Black's queenside pawns lose all their elasticity.

14 ♗e2

Compared to standard Ruy Lopez positions, White's light-squared bishop is applying more pressure on the queenside.

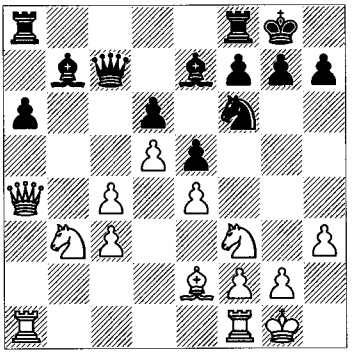
14...♘bd7 15 b3 ♕c7

Black may avoid losing a pawn with 15...b4 16 ♖c1 bxc3 17 ♖xc3 cxb3 18 ♖xb3, but his queenside will be terribly disorganized. A definitely worse way to lose the pawn is 15...cxb3? 16 ♕xb3 ♕c7 17 axb5 ±.

16 bxc4 bxa4

After 16...bxc4 White also rounds up the pawn: 17 ♖b1 ♖fb8 18 ♕c2 ♘c5 19 ♗xc5 ♕xc5 20 ♖b4 ±.

17 ♕xa4 ♘c5 18 ♗xc5 ♕xc5 19 ♘b3 ♕c7 *(D)*



20 c5!?

The extra c-pawn isn't easy to make use of, so White decides to convert it into piece activity. That may be a wise decision, but 20 ♕a5 also seems to improve his position.

20...dxc5 21 ♘a5 ♗c8

Black can try a lot of moves, but the difference between his isolated rook's pawn and White's passed and protected central pawn shines through in all lines; e.g., 21...♖fb8 22 ♖fd1 ♗c8 23 ♕c6! ♗d6 24 ♕xc7 ♗xc7 25 ♘c6 ♖b6 26 ♘e7+ ♔f8 27 ♘xc8 ♖xc8 28 ♘d2 +–.

22 ♕c6 ♕a7

This seems to lose at least a pawn. However, after 22...♕xc6 23 ♘xc6 ♗d6 White's advantage would consist of a strong passed central pawn, the better bishop, a useful knight outpost on c4 and some pressure against the a-pawn.

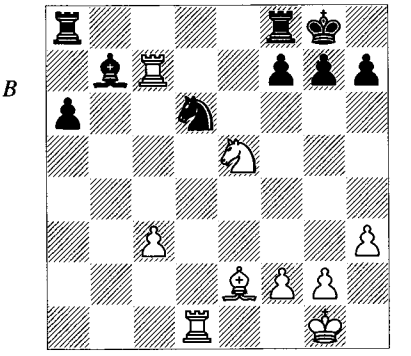
23 d6!

In the following semi-forced variation Black may at various points opt out with the loss of a pawn in a bad position, but it seems unlikely that this would save his game.

23...♗d8

After 23...♗d7 24 dxe7! ♗xc6 25 exf8♕+ ♔xf8 26 ♘xc6 ♕c7 27 ♘fxe5 ♖e8 28 f4 ♘xe4 29 ♖xa6 Black's queen is no match for White's well-coordinated army.

24 ♘xe5 ♗xa5 25 ♖xa5 ♗b7 26 ♕xc5 ♕xc5 27 ♖xc5 ♘xe4 28 ♖c7 ♘xd6 29 ♖d1 *(D)*



It may not be obvious at first glance, but Black has to lose material here.

29...♖ac8

After 29...♖fe8, White can demonstrate another tactical motif: 30 ♘xf7! ♘xf7 31 ♗c4 ♔h8 32 ♗xf7 ♖eb8 33 ♖dd7 +–.

30 ♖d7

Now the rest is simple.

30...♘e4

30...♖ce8 doesn't help in any way after 31 f4, and 30...♖fe8 31 ♖1xd6 ♖xe5 is most effectively met by 32 ♗c4! ♗a8 33 ♖xa6 ♗e4 34 ♗xf7+ +–.

31 ♖xb7 ♘xc3 32 ♖e1 ♖fe8 33 ♗xa6 f6 34 ♘f3 ♖xe1+ 35 ♘xe1 ♘e4 36 ♖e7 ♘d6 37 ♗xc8 1-0

Lessons to be learned:

1) The London System isn't easy to avoid.

2) An early ...b5 will often allow White to take control over c4 by means of a4.

3) Even if you intend to play only the London System as White, you will need to have a basic understanding of all major openings in order to play consistently well.

Part 2: Analytical Section

While the London can obviously be played with rather limited preparation, it's equally obvious that your results will improve if you do prepare properly. However, somewhat surprisingly that hasn't been a particularly easy task. You will find that a lot of very strong GMs have occasionally played the London. However, for most of them it's primarily a back-up weapon, chosen to avoid prepared lines. Consequently a lot of 'GM lines' are improvised during the game, rather than being the result of meticulous home preparation. In particular you will find quite a lot of solid moves which 'cannot be bad', but which are not serious bids for an opening advantage either. Therefore it isn't easy to extract hard theory from these games.

A London Repertoire

We have tried to write a good repertoire book for White. We assume this is a well-known concept and will not spend much space explaining it. We have striven to remain objective and not downplay problems or good moves for Black. We must, however, admit that whenever we had problems finding a promising line for White, we had a long look for it – probably longer than we would have had for Black in a similar situation.

Given the need to cater for those who prefer the traditional 2 ♘f3 move-order as well as those willing to test the more experimental 2 ♗f4 lines, we felt obliged to offer almost two different repertoires (admittedly mostly merging at some point). And although we would have liked to, it isn't possible within the limits of this book to offer additional repertoires for, e.g., 'the attacking player' or 'the solid player'. However, whenever there is a move of particular interest for a certain category of players, we shall try to point it out.

Staying true to a narrow repertoire has its price. Not only is it easier for your opponents to prepare, but in some cases it will even tempt you not to play the strongest move. The scenario is this: your opponent plays a move you have never seen before and suspect can be refuted. However, the variations are complicated and you notice that by a quieter move you can reach a position you would normally arrive at from a different move-order. What to do?

The decision of course must depend on at least two factors: how much do you like the position resulting from your repertoire move, and how tempting is the alternative? In general we have sought the middle ground: we seek to make the repertoire consistent, recommending transpositions wherever reasonable. However, if an alternative really is tempting, we shall at least examine it briefly. A typical example is 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4 e6 3 ♘f3 b6 4 e3 c5 when White has a perfectly good transposition to the Queen's Indian set-up with 5 c3 or 5 ♗d3. However, the attempt to exploit the weakened dark squares with 5 ♘c3 is tempting, as is 5 a4!?, so we offer a brief discussion of those moves too (see Line 11D).

Organization of the Material

A major challenge when writing this book was the multitude of possible move-orders. In general we recommend lines where White delays ♘f3 for a few moves, prioritizing queenside development and supporting his centre. However, this isn't a particularly common move-order. The great majority of games start out 2 ♘f3 and quite frequently the number of available games will greatly increase whenever ♘f3 is played. So we had to decide how to cope with all possibilities for White to play a delayed ♘f3, transposing back to main lines normally arising from 2 ♘f3.

We decided in general to examine the independent ♘f3 variations as early as possible in every chapter or line. However, ♘f3 lines that can just as well be reached by a move-order with a delayed ♘f3 will be considered there. So

if you prefer 2 ♘f3, you will find most relevant lines under the move-order 2 ♗f4 and 3 ♘f3 (sometimes with a further reference to 3 e3 and 4 ♘f3 or 4 c3 and 5 ♘f3 or even 5 ♘d2 and 6 ♘gf3). Obviously this forced us to take great liberties with move-orders. So if you should find your games listed under a move-order you would never consider playing, please accept our apologies.

Move-Orders

A London System player will quite frequently have to choose between two or more moves that generally fit into the normal London development scheme (e.g. ♗d3, ♘bd2 and c3). The differences may be subtle to the point of being irrelevant, but may also be very significant for the further course of the game. As this is a repertoire book, we have generally picked only one of White's options for further analysis. If there is a clear reason for our choice, we have tried to state it; and if a seemingly natural move definitely should be avoided, we have tried to point that out too. If no explanation is offered we have simply done our best to find the move that is most flexible and gives your opponent the least information about your further plans.

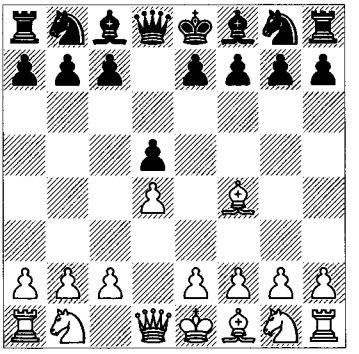
1 Introduction and 2...c5

Chapter Outline

1 d4 d5

1A:	**(2 ♗f4)**	65
1B:	**2 ♗f4 c5 (3 e4!?)**	66
1C:	**2 ♗f4 c5 3 e3 (3...♘c6)**	68
1D:	**2 ♗f4 c5 3 e3 cxd4 4 exd4 ♘f6 5 c3 ♘c6 (6 ♗d3)**	71
1E:	**2 ♗f4 c5 3 e3 cxd4 4 exd4 ♘f6 5 c3 ♘c6 6 ♘f3**	71
1F:	**2 ♗f4 c5 3 e3 ♕b6**	72

B



1A: 2 ♗f4 Introduction

(1 d4 d5)

2 ♗f4!? *(D)*

If you are serious about playing the London, this is the move for you. However, if you are a flexible player, willing to enter the Torre, the Colle or even the Queen's Gambit, depending on circumstances, then 2 ♘f3 may be a better option. After some of Black's second moves, White may try something more ambitious than 3 ♗f4. We believe this sums it up:

a) 2 ♘f3 ♗f5?! may allow White more energetic measures than 3 ♗f4, but there is nothing wrong with a standard London set-up.

b) 2 ♘f3 ♗g4?! is occasionally tested, but 3 ♘e5! is probably stronger than 3 ♗f4 (which would allow Black to consider 3...♗xf3!?).

c) 2 ♘f3 c5 is slightly uncomfortable for the exclusive London player, as 3 ♗f4 isn't very promising (see *2 ♗f4 c5 3 ♘f3* for analysis) and 3 c3 'allows' Black to transpose to the Exchange Slav by 3...cxd4 4 cxd4. For the flexible 2 ♘f3 player, however, more critical replies like 3 c4 and 3 dxc5 are available.

With 2 ♗f4, as opposed to 2 ♘f3, White makes it perfectly clear that he intends to play a London System. So the early bishop move seems to conflict with one of the golden rules for good opening play, namely to keep maximum flexibility, revealing as little information as possible about your plans. That rule, however, applies mainly to positions where there are no clear-cut plans available. If you are able to formulate a clear plan of action, you should go for it immediately and with no hesitation. With 1...d5, Black presented a nice, clean diagonal for a bishop on f4, so what could be more natural than occupying it immediately?

The main advantages of 2 ♗f4 are:

1) It avoids the problematic line 2 ♘f3 c5.

2) The time saved by delaying ♘f3 may be used to secure the centre with c3 and e3.

3) The move is hardly mentioned in most books. So after move 2, most opponents will basically be on their own – at least for a few moves until play possibly returns to familiar lines.

4) White's accelerated queenside development may allow him to defend b2 with a more comfortable move than ♕c1.

5) By keeping the d1-h5 diagonal open, White will normally not have to worry about ...♘h5, harassing the f4-bishop. Moreover the queen supports pawn attacks like g4 or h4 followed by h5. And sometimes even the queen herself may join a kingside attack via f3, g4 or h5.

In addition there are some minor points:

- Occasionally White, not having blocked his f-pawn, will find a way to enter an advantageous Stonewall-type position (usually after exchanging his dark-squared bishop).

- Sometimes White will be quicker in launching an attack against c7 or b7.
- Sometimes, especially after an early ...c4, White can attack the centre more effectively with f3 followed by e4 (and possibly ♘e2-g3) with his knight still on g1.

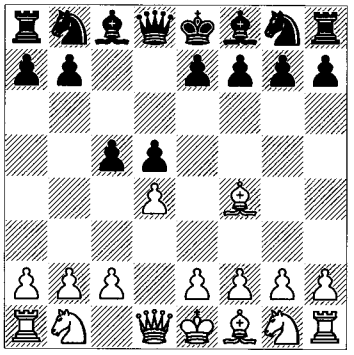
1B: Albin Reversed

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4)

2...c5 *(D)*

The immediate ...c5 is one reason we recommend 2 ♗f4 over 2 ♘f3, as after 2 ♘f3 c5 White must play the modest 3 c3 if he wants to reach the London (3 ♗f4?! – *2 ♗f4 c5 3 ♘f3?!*). On the other hand, if there is any serious objection to entering the London via the 1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 move-order, it is probably this very move. After most other moves (like 2...♘f6, 2...♗f5 or 2...c6) White can, if he so desires, reply 3 ♘f3 reaching the same position as after 2 ♘f3 followed by 3 ♗f4. However, White, not yet having played his normal, slightly sedate moves (c3, e3, h3, etc.), may be ready to meet Black's challenge with fire.

W



3 e4!?

This risky move isn't for the professional player relying on his tournament results to provide the bread on his table. Among insiders, it's known as the Morris Gambit, but it may be more useful to think of it as an Albin Countergambit (1 d4 d5 2 c4 e5!?) with an extra move. That tempo may be very significant, as one of the main lines of the Albin runs 3 dxe5 d4 4 ♘f3 ♘c6 5 g3 ♗f5!?. Another factor may also be of practical importance: most serious 1 d4 players will have prepared something against the Albin. However, given that Black may be a 1 e4 player, odds are a little better that this version will come as a complete surprise.

Of the alternatives, 3 ♘f3?! (3 c3 cxd4 4 cxd4 is the Exchange Slav) has special significance as that position could arise from the move-order 2 ♘f3 c5 3 ♗f4?! too. Unfortunately it doesn't quite work: 3...cxd4 4 ♗xb8 ♕a5+! 5 c3 ♖xb8 6 ♕xd4 ♘f6 7 ♘bd2 e6 (not 7...♗f5?? 8 ♕e5 and White wins) 8 ♘b3 (8 e3!? ♕c5 9 ♕h4 ♗d6 10 ♗d3 0-0 {Skachkov-Bezgodov, St Petersburg 1998} 11 g4! gives White a nice attack, but Black can safely delay castling) 8...♕b6 9 ♕xb6 axb6 10 e3 ♗d6 11 ♗b5+ ♔e7 12 0-0 ♖a8 13 c4 dxc4 14 ♗xc4 ♗d7 15 ♘bd2 ½-½ A.Sokolov-Westerinen, Gausdal 1996. Black's bishop-pair and open a-file at least compensate for the doubled b-pawns.

3...dxe4

Black should accept the pawn. Other moves:

a) 3...cxd4?! only helps White develop: 4 ♕xd4 ♘f6 (4...♘c6 5 ♕xd5 ♕xd5 6 exd5 ♘b4 7 ♘a3 ♘xd5 8 ♖d1! e6 9 ♗b5+ ♔e7 10 ♗g3 ±) 5 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 6 ♕xa7 ♗d7 7 e5 ♘g4 8 ♘f3 ♕c7 9 ♕d4 ±.

b) 3...♘f6 4 e5 ♘g8 5 dxc5 e6 6 ♘d2 ♗xc5 7 ♘b3 ♗b6 8 ♕g4 ± Laurent-Savchenko, Metz 2005. This may not be very relevant from a theoretical point of view but indicates that White's gambit appears quite reasonable even to a strong GM.

c) 3...♘c6 4 ♘c3 cxd4 5 exd5 dxc3 6 dxc6 and then:

c1) 6...♕a5 7 b4 ♕xb4 8 ♕d5 ♗e6 (8...e6 9 cxb7 +–) 9 ♕f3 0-0-0 (9...♗c8 10 a4! a6 11 ♗b5! axb5 12 cxb7 +–) 10 cxb7+ ♕xb7 11 ♗a6!, Bischoff-Estes, corr. 1945.

c2) 6...♕xd1+ 7 ♖xd1 bxc6 8 ♗c7 f6 9 ♖d8+ ♔f7 10 b3 ♗b7 11 ♖xa8 ♗xa8 12 ♗b8 a5 13 ♗c7 with a slight advantage for White, Marzano-Zichichi, Bratto 2000.

d) After 3...♕b6?! White is a whole tempo up on the Grau Gambit from the Baltic Defence (1 d4 d5 2 c4 ♗f5!? 3 ♕b3 e5!), and seems likely to gain a sizeable advantage. We suggest 4 ♘c3, and now:

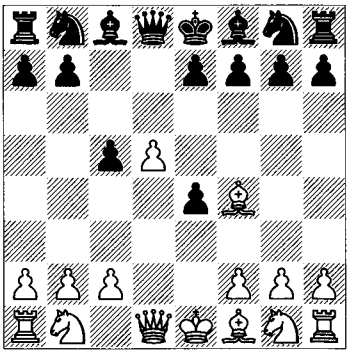
d1) 4...e6 5 exd5 ♕xb2 6 ♗b5+ ♗d7 7 ♗xd7+ ♘xd7 8 ♘ge2 cxd4 9 ♖b1 ♕a3 10 dxe6 fxe6 11 ♕xd4 ♘gf6 12 ♖xb7 ±.

d2) 4...♘f6 5 ♗b5+ ♗d7 6 dxc5 ♕xc5 7 ♗e3 and now:

d21) 7...♕b4 only makes matters worse: 8 a3 ♕xb2 9 ♗d4 ♗xb5 (9...e5 10 ♖a2 ±) 10 ♘xd5 +−.

d22) After 7...♕d6 8 exd5 Black cannot afford to maintain material equality: 8...♗xb5 9 ♘xb5 ♕b4+ 10 ♘c3 ♕xb2 11 ♘ge2 (11 ♗d4!?) 11...♕b4 (11...♕a3 12 ♖b1 ♕a6 13 ♘b5 ♕a5+ 14 ♗d2 ♕b6 15 c4 ♘e4 16 0-0 ±) 12 ♖b1 ♕g4 13 ♖xb7 ♕xg2 14 ♖g1 ♕h3 (14...♕xh2 15 ♗f4 ♕h3 16 ♗xb8 +−) 15 ♘b5 ♘a6 16 c4 e6 17 ♕a4 ♗b4+ 18 ♘bc3+ +−.

4 d5 *(D)*



B

The characteristic Albin move. Schiller comments: "it becomes clear that White is playing an Albin Counter-gambit in reverse, with the extra tempo used for ♗f4. The problem is that this isn't the best square for the bishop. More importantly, White's early declaration allows Black to choose an appropriate reaction." An interesting point of view, but in our opinion not quite applicable to this position.

4...♕b6!?

This is Schiller's recommendation. Naturally Black has alternatives but an immediate ...e5 has been ruled out by the bishop on f4, so at least there seems to be no parallel to the Spassky variation (*1 d4 d5 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5 d4 4 e4!?*). Alternatively:

a) The odds for getting in that ancient but still charming 4...e6? 5 ♗b5+ ♗d7 6 dxe6! ♗xb5?? 7 exf7+ ♔e7 8 fxg8♘+ trap may be poor but still better than in the normal Albin.

b) 4...a6 5 a4 ♘f6 6 ♘c3 g6 (6...♗f5) 7 ♗c4 ♘bd7 8 ♘ge2 (8 f3!?) 8...♘b6 9 ♗a2 ♗d7 10 a5 ♘c8 (Daly-N.Bernstein, Omaha 1949) 11 0-0 ♗g7 12 ♘g3 and White will either win back his pawn with a good position or obtain excellent compensation.

c) There has been a surprising lack of practical experience with the sensible 4...♘f6, but it may soon be re-established as the main line. After 5 ♘c3 Black has:

c1) 5...g6 6 ♗c4 a6 7 a4 ♘bd7 8 f3 exf3 (8...♕b6?! 9 a5 ♕xb2?! 10 ♘ge2 exf3 11 gxf3 ♗g7 12 ♖b1 ♕a3 13 ♗c7 ±) 9 ♘xf3 ♗g7 10 0-0 0-0 11 d6 ♘b6 12 ♗a2 and White has nice compensation.

c2) 5...a6 and now:

c21) 6 a4!? e6 (6...♗f5 7 f3!?) 7 ♗c4 exd5 8 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 9 ♗xd5 ♕b6 10 ♘e2 is unclear, Hohm-Wolfrum, corr. 1982.

c22) 6 ♕e2 e6 (6...♗f5 7 0-0-0 ♘bd7 8 h3 ♕b6 9 g4 ♗g6 10 f3 e5 11 dxe6 fxe6 12 fxe4 e5 13 ♗h2 0-0-0 14 ♘f3 ± Winants-Korneev, Warsaw Ech 2005) 7 0-0-0 ♕a5 8 d6 ♘c6 9 ♔b1 e5 10 ♗d2 ♘d4 (10...♕d8!?) 11 ♕e1 ♕b6 12 ♗g5 ♗e6 13 ♗xf6 gxf6 14 ♘xe4 0-0-0 15 c3 ♘f5 16 ♘xf6 ♖xd6 17 ♖xd6 ♗xd6 = Winants-Tregubov, Warsaw Ech 2005.

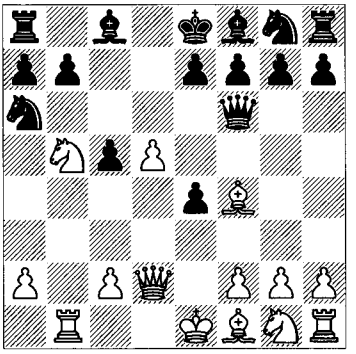
5 ♘c3

Schiller only analyses 5 ♕c1 ♘f6 and concludes that Black is better. That is no doubt correct. However, having sacrificed a pawn, White cannot wimp out with a move like ♕c1.

5...♕xb2

This looks like the only consistent move.

6 ♘b5 ♘a6 7 ♖b1 ♕f6 8 ♕d2 *(D)*



B

This position is hard to evaluate. Black has two extra pawns and a relatively solid structure but is seriously behind in development. The fact that the lines given below are mainly in White's favour shouldn't be taken as any kind of guarantee.

8...♕f5

This is a natural way to untangle the kingside. Alternatively:

a) 8...g6 9 ♗c4 ♗g7 10 ♘e2 (10 d6!? is also possible) 10...♗f5 11 0-0 h5 12 ♘bc3 ±.

b) 8...e6 9 ♘c3! e5 (9...♕d4 10 ♗b5+ ♗d7 11 ♗xd7+ ♔xd7 12 ♖xb7+ ♔c8 13 ♖xf7 wins for White) 10 ♗b5+ ♗d7 11 ♗xd7+ ♔xd7 12 ♗g3 ♔c8 13 ♕e2 ♕d6 14 ♘xe4 ♕xd5 15 ♘f3 and White's development advantage is overwhelming; e.g., 15...f6 16 0-0 ♘c7 17 ♖fd1 ♕c6 18 ♘xe5!.

9 ♗c4 ♘f6 10 ♘e2 ♘h5

Other moves don't solve Black's basic problem – how to complete his development:

a) 10...♗d7 11 0-0 e6 12 ♘g3 ♕g6 13 dxe6 ♗xe6 14 ♗xe6 fxe6 15 ♕a5 ♘d5 16 ♕a4 ♔f7 17 ♘d6+ ♗xd6 18 ♗xd6 ±.

b) 10...g6 11 ♘g3 and now:

b1) 11...♕g4 12 h3 ♕h4 (12...♕d7 13 ♘d6+ exd6 14 ♗b5 +–) 13 ♗g5 +–.

b2) 11...♕d7 12 ♘d6+ exd6 13 ♗b5 +–.

c) 10...e6 11 ♘g3 ♕g6 12 d6 ♗d7 13 ♘c7+ ♘xc7 14 dxc7 b6 15 ♗a6 ♗e7 16 ♗b7 0-0 17 ♗xa8 ♖xa8 18 0-0 ♖c8 19 ♗d6 ♗xd6 20 ♕xd6 ±.

11 ♗e3 b6

11...g6 is worse: 12 ♗xc5 ♘xc5 13 ♘c7+ ♔d8 14 ♘xa8 b6 15 ♘d4 +–.

12 0-0 g6 13 f3 exf3

White also has promising play after 13...♕e5 14 d6; e.g., 14...♗e6 15 ♗xe6 fxe6 (15...♕xe6 16 ♕c3 ♗g7 17 ♕a3 +–) 16 d7+ ♔d8 17 fxe4 ♕xe4 18 ♗g5 ♕d5 19 ♕e3 ♘b4 20 ♖bd1 ♘xc2 21 ♕c3 ♗g7 22 ♕xc2 ♕xg5 23 ♕e4 ♖b8 24 ♘xa7 +–.

14 ♖xf3 ♕g4

15 ♘a3 ♘b8 16 d6 e6 17 ♘b5 ♘a6 18 ♘c7+ ♘xc7 19 dxc7 ♗d7 (19...♗b7 20 ♗b5+ +–) 20 ♖d1 +–.

Conclusion:

We can't promise that you will score well with the reversed Albin, but good preparation may pay off handsomely in the sharp positions that usually arise – and we can certainly promise some fun.

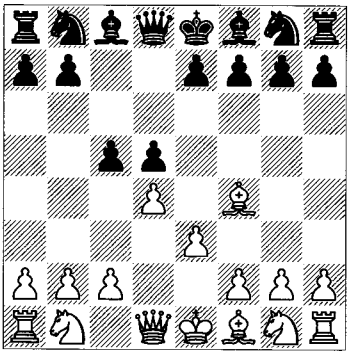
1C: 3 e3

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 c5)

3 e3 *(D)*

This definitely looks saner than 3 e4, but still doesn't really prepare a defence to ...♕b6.

B



3...♘c6

For 3...♕b6 see 1F and for 3...cxd4 see 1D and 1E. Other moves: 3...♘f6 – *2...♘f6 3 e3 c5*; 3...e6 – *2...e6 3 e3 c5*; 3...♗f5 4 dxc5! ♕a5+ (4...e6 5 ♗xb8 ♕xb8 6 ♗b5+ ±; 4...♘c6 5 ♘f3 ♕a5+ {5...e6 6 ♘d4! ±} 6 ♘c3 e6 7 ♘d4 ±) 5 ♘c3 ♘f6 (5...e6 6 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 7 ♗b5+ ±) 6 ♘f3 ♕xc5 7 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 8 ♗b5+ ±.

4 c3

This is the idea behind delaying ♘f3. Now White's pawn-centre is well supported and attacks on b2 can be met by either ♕b3 or ♕c2.

4 ♘f3 should transpose to later chapters after 4...♘f6 or 4...e6. After 4...♕b6 5 ♘c3 cxd4 (Wind-Smyslov, London 1989) White can play 6 ♘b5 e5 (6...♕a5+ 7 c3 dxc3 8 bxc3 e5 9 ♘xe5 +–) 7 ♘xe5 dxe3 8 ♗xe3 with a clear advantage.

4...♕b6

Or:

a) 4...♘f6 – *2...♘f6 3 e3 c5 4 c3 ♘c6.*

b) 4...cxd4 5 exd4 – *3...cxd4 4 exd4 ♘c6 5 c3.*

5 ♕b3

At this point White has a wider choice of moves than after 3...♕b6, but this seems the most consistent follow-up.

5...c4!?

This leads to position-types we shall examine more closely later. In itself the advance of the c-pawn is detrimental to Black's position as it reduces his central influence. However, if it forces White to open the a-file for Black's rook or wins time by tactical means, the balance may end up as positive after all.

6 ♕c2 *(D)*

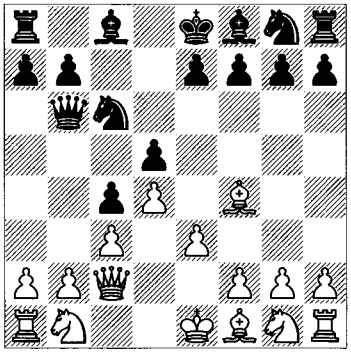
6 ♕xb6!? is certainly playable, but it isn't clear whether White can expect any advantage after 6...axb6:

a) 7 ♘a3?! looks thematic, but is strongly met by 7...e5! 8 ♘b5 ♖a5 ∓ Dangelowski-Ehrke, Hamburg 1999.

b) 7 ♘d2?! allows Black a queenside initiative by well-known means: 7...b5 8 a3 b4! ∓ Fritze-Z.Varga, Budapest 1993.

c) 7 e4 is probably the only critical move, and after 7...e6 White is obliged to follow up energetically with 8 g3! b5 9 ♘d2 ♘f6 (9...b4!?) 10 ♗g2 ♗e7 11 ♘e2 h6 12 0-0 0-0 13 a3 ♖d8 14 e5 ± Dmitriev-Alavkin, Voronezh 2002.

B



6...♗f5!?

"A well-known position ... with ♘f3 and ...♘f6 already on the board, in which case the bishop is really immune, and this 'development with tempo' is a pretty clean equalizer. Here there is a twist to the story – d5 hangs, and with it, a good deal of Black's queenside!!" – Wells.

7 ♕xf5!?

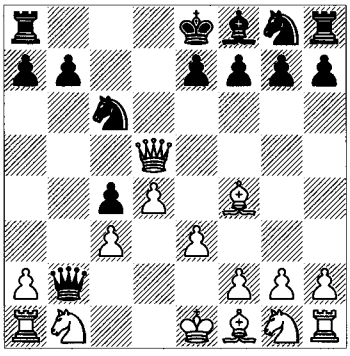
This is certainly the most enterprising choice. However, 7 ♕c1 may also be better than similar positions with knights already on f3 and f6, as White may now prepare e4 with either ♘e2-g3 or f3. Unfortunately, we have been unable to support this with analysis; e.g., 7...♘f6 8 ♘d2 e6 9 ♗e2 (9 f3?! e5!; 9 b3 ♕a5 10 b4 ♗xb4! 11 cxb4 ♘xb4 ∓) 9...♗e7! 10 h3 (10 f3 ♘h5 ∓) 10...0-0 11 ♘gf3 (11 g4 ♗d3 ∓) 11...♕d8 12 0-0 h6 13 ♗d1 b5 14 a3 a5 ∓ S.Kovačević-Korneev, Sitges 1996. So unless someone comes up with a bright idea, White should transpose back to known lines with a quick ♘gf3.

7...♕xb2 8 ♕xd5 *(D)*

8...♕xa1

8...♕c1+ 9 ♔e2 ♕b2+ 10 ♔f3 hardly improves Black's chances: 10...♘f6? (10...♕xa1 11 ♗xc4 e6 12 ♕b5 0-0-0 13 ♘e2 ♘f6 14 ♖c1 ±) 11 ♕xc4 ♕xa1 12 ♕b3! traps the black

B



queen: 12...0-0-0 (12...♘a5 13 ♗b5+ ♔d8 14 ♕c2 ±) 13 ♗b5 (Wells comments: "Black's queen has little to look forward to, whilst the other advanced monarch is sitting fairly comfortably thank you.") 13...♘a5 14 ♕c2 a6 (14...e6 15 ♘e2 ♗d6 16 ♖c1 ♗xf4 17 exf4 +–) 15 ♗d3 e5 16 ♗xe5 ♘d7 17 ♗f4 ♗e7 18 ♘h3 g5 19 ♘xg5 1-0 Miles-Minasian, Ohrid Ech 2001.

9 ♕b5 a6 10 ♕xb7 ♘d8 11 ♕xa8!

This leads to hair-raising complications, and is clearly better than 11 ♕b4 ♖c8 12 ♘f3 ♕xa2 13 ♘e5 e6 14 ♗xc4 ♖xc4 15 ♕xc4 ♕xb1+ 16 ♔d2 ♕b5 ∓ Bistrić-Sveshnikov, Bled 1991.

11...♕xb1+ 12 ♔e2 e5

The alternatives seem weaker:

a) 12...♘f6 13 f3 ♕xa2+ 14 ♔e1 e6 15 ♕c8 ♘d5 16 ♕xc4 +–.

b) 12...♕d3+ 13 ♔f3 ♕xf1 14 ♗c7 ±; e.g., 14...f5 15 ♕xd8+ ♔f7 16 ♕d5+ e6 17 ♕d7+ ♗e7 18 d5 ♕d1+ 19 ♘e2 ♕xd5+ 20 ♕xd5 exd5 21 ♖b1 ♘f6 22 ♖b7 ♖e8 (22...♘e4 23 ♘f4 ♘xc3 24 ♗e5 ♘e4 25 ♘xd5 +–) 23 ♘d4 g6 24 ♗d6 ♔f8 25 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 26 ♘c6 ♘g8 27 ♔f4 +–.

13 ♗xe5 ♕d3+ 14 ♔f3 ♕xf1 15 ♕xa6!?

From a practical viewpoint it's nice for White to know that although the position is complicated, he probably can force a draw with 15 ♗c7 ♗e7 16 ♗xd8 ♗xd8 17 ♕c6+ ♔e7 18 ♕c5+.

15...♕d1+ 16 ♔g3 ♘e7 17 h3

White is better. When the king reaches h2, it will not only be relatively safe, but it will protect the h1-rook so that development can be completed. A possible continuation is 17...♕d3 18 ♘f3 f6 19 ♕a4+ ♘ec6 20 ♗c7 ♔d7 21 ♗f4 g5 22 ♗e5 ♕f5 23 e4 ♕xe4 24 ♖e1 ♕f5 25 d5 fxe5 26 dxc6+ +–.

Conclusion:

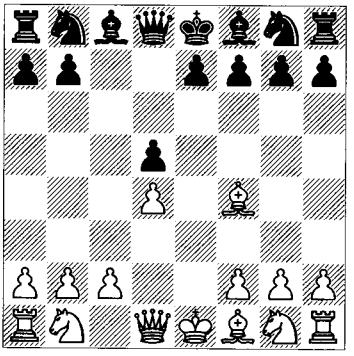
This is a bonus possibility, and if you aren't confident in your preparation you should play 7 ♕c1.

1D: Exchange Caro-Kann

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 c5 3 e3)

3...cxd4 4 exd4 *(D)*

B



This position can also arise after 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 ♗f4 – the Exchange Variation of the Caro-Kann where 4 ♗f4 is a respected move, but only fourth in popularity after 4 c4 (the Panov Attack), 4 ♗d3 and 4 c3. This raises a question: why play the London if at several junctures Black can transpose to a relatively harmless Caro-Kann variation? If you have to face the Caro-Kann anyway, why not open 1 e4 and meet it with one of the main lines?

The answer isn't a simple one. However, perhaps we can first agree that the Caro-Kann isn't the most feared reply to 1 e4, and quite a few players would be happy to face it a lot more frequently if that meant a correspondingly lower frequency of Sicilians? Actually they might well be willing to go for a less than optimal Caro-Kann line rather than a Najdorf main-line duel.

There also is a practical point: how likely is your opponent to be well prepared for the Caro-Kann? After all, the game opened 1 d4 d5. Seen in this perspective it may not be such a bad thing to play a slightly off-beat variation as long as it has at least some bite. So in the end it comes down to that basic question: is it any good?

4...♘f6

Black may also try to get his queenside into shape first by 4...♘c6!? 5 c3 ♗f5 6 ♕b3 ♕d7 7 ♘f3. Black has then tried:

a) 7...♗xb1? is tempting but weak: 8 ♖xb1 ♕f5? 9 ♕xb7! ♖c8 (9...♕xb1+ 10 ♔d2 +–) 10 ♗d3 ♕e6+ 11 ♔f1 ♕d7 12 ♗a6 +–.

b) After 7...e6 8 ♘e5 ♘xe5 9 ♗xe5 ♘e7 10 ♘d2 ♘c6 11 ♘f3 Black embarked on a very risky strategy in Wohl-Sashikiran, British Ch (Torquay) 2002: 11...f6 12 ♗g3 g5 13 ♗e2 h5 14 h4 g4 15 ♘h2 ♖g8 16 0-0 with highly unbalanced play.

c) 7...a6 8 ♘bd2 e6 9 h3 h6 10 ♗e2 ♘f6 11 ♘e5 ♘xe5 12 ♗xe5 ♗e7 13 c4!? 0-0 14 c5 ♕c6 15 ♕g3 ± Morozevich-Anand, Monte Carlo rpd 2003.

5 c3 ♘c6

This is natural, but there are playable alternatives:

a) 5...♗g4 6 ♕b3 ♕c8 7 h3 ♗f5 8 ♘f3 ♘c6 9 ♘bd2 h6 10 ♗e2 e6 11 0-0 ♗e7 12 ♗h2 0-0 13 ♘e5 ± Midoux-Kallio, Andorra 2003.

b) 5...♗f5 6 ♘d2 ♘c6 7 ♘gf3 ♖c8 (7...e6 8 ♘e5 ♗d6 9 ♗b5 ♖c8 10 ♗g3 0-0 11 0-0 ♗xe5 12 dxe5 ♘d7 13 ♕e2 ♕b6 = Vorotnikov-Evseev, Moscow 1999) 8 ♘e5 ♕b6 9 ♕b3 g6 10 ♘df3 ♗g7 11 ♕xb6 axb6 12 ♘xc6 bxc6 13 ♗a6 ♖a8 14 ♗b7 ♖a7 15 ♗xc6+ ± Shabanov-Zakharevich, Kursk 1987.

c) 5...♕b6 6 ♕b3 ♘bd7 (6...♕xb3 7 axb3 ♘c6 8 ♗d3 ♘h5 9 ♗e3 e6 ± Holzhäuer-C.Werner, 2nd Bundesliga 1998/9) 7 ♘f3 e6 8 ♗d3 ♕xb3 9 axb3 ♘h5 10 ♗c7 ± Beikert-Grundherr, 2nd Bundesliga 2002/3.

6 ♗d3

We shall discuss the natural 6 ♘f3 in the next section (1E). 6 ♘d2 is also fully playable:

a) 6...a6 7 a4 ♗f5 8 ♘gf3 e6 9 ♗e2 ♘e4 ½-½ Spraggett-Hauchard, Portuguese Cht (Barreiro) 2001.

b) 6...♗g4 7 ♕b3 ♕c8 8 h3 ♗d7 9 ♘gf3 e6 10 ♗d3 a6 11 0-0 ♗e7 12 ♖ae1 ± Vorotnikov-Donchenko, Leningrad 1987.

6...♗g4

6...g6 is popular too: 7 ♘f3 ♗g7 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♖e1 ♘h5 (9...♗g4 10 h3 ♗xf3 11 ♕xf3 ♕d7 12 ♘d2 e6 13 g4 ♘e8 14 ♕g3 ♖d8 15 ♖e2 ± Solomon-Rogers, Gold Coast 1998) 10 ♗e3 and then:

a) 10...♕c7 11 ♗f1 ♗d7 12 ♕b3 e6 13 ♘a3 ± Menvielle Lacourrelle-A.Marić, Las Palmas 1996.

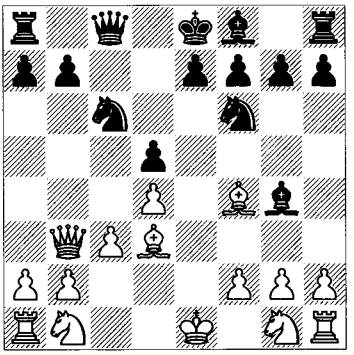
b) 10...♕d6 11 ♘bd2 ♖b8 12 a4 f6 13 b4! e6 (13...e5? 14 dxe5 fxe5 15 ♗c5 wins for

White) 14 b5 ♘e7 15 c4 ± Andruet-Cocozza, Rome 1984.

These lines should be compared to those in Line 8A (where White's bishop is on e2).

7 ♕b3 ♕c8 *(D)*

This is Black's standard reply to ♕b3 in the Exchange Caro-Kann. It may not be the ideal square for the queen, but 7...♕d7 is probably weaker. This is typical of what you can expect in amateur games: 8 ♘d2 e6 9 ♘gf3 ♗e7?! (9...♗d6 10 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♖ae1 ±) 10 ♘e5 ♕c8 11 ♗g5 ♗h5 12 0-0 0-0 13 f4 ♗g6 14 ♗xg6 hxg6 15 ♖ae1 ♖b8 16 ♕d1 b5 17 a3 a5 18 ♖e3 ± ♗d8 19 ♖h3 ♘e7 20 ♕e1 ♖e8 (20...♘f5 21 g4 +–) 21 ♗xf6 gxf6 22 ♕h4 1-0 Scherer-Ricter, Neumühl 2003.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8 ♘d2 e6 9 ♘gf3 ♗e7

Giving up the bishop-pair also doesn't fully equalize; e.g., 9...♗xf3 10 ♘xf3 ♗e7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♖fe1 a6 13 a4 ♘a5 14 ♕c2 ♘c4 15 ♘e5 ♖d8 16 ♗g5 ± Brynell-Zilberman, Manila OL 1992.

10 0-0 0-0 11 ♖ae1 ♗h5 12 ♘e5 ♘xe5

White is somewhat more comfortable: 13 dxe5!? (13 ♗xe5 ±) 13...♘d7 14 c4!? (this probably improves over the old and safe 14 ♕c2) 14...h6 (14...♘c5 15 ♗xh7+ ♔xh7 16 ♕h3 g6 17 g4 f5 18 exf6 e5 19 ♗xe5 ♗xf6 20 ♗d6 ±) 15 ♗b1 ♗g6 (15...dxc4 16 ♕h3 ♗g6 17 ♗xg6 fxg6 18 ♕xe6+ ±) 16 cxd5 ♗xb1 17 ♖xb1 exd5 18 ♕xd5 ± King-J.Houska, London 2004.

Conclusion:

It's essential to realize that at almost any point in the London System, Black has the option of playing ...cxd4, changing the pawn-structure into one akin to the Exchange Caro-Kann. This generally becomes less tempting after he has played ...e6, shutting in his light-squared bishop. The position after 9...♗e7 is relatively even.

1E: Exchange Caro-Kann with ♘f3

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 c5 3 e3 cxd4 4 exd4 ♘f6 5 c3 ♘c6)

6 ♘f3

This move might not deserve a section of its own were it not for the fact that many London players will reach this position from the move-order 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗f4 c5 4 e3 cxd4 5 exd4 ♘c6 6 c3.

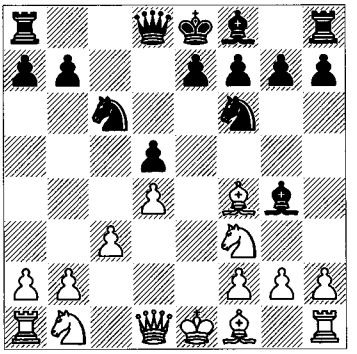
6...♗g4 *(D)*

This looks consistent, but other moves are fine too:

a) 6...g6 7 ♘bd2 ♗g7 8 ♗d3 0-0 9 0-0 ♗f5 10 ♗xf5 gxf5 11 ♘e5 ♘xe5 12 ♗xe5 ♘e4 13 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 14 ♘xe4 fxe4 15 f3 f5 16 fxe4 dxe4 17 ♕d2 ± Kharlov-Galkin, Ekaterinburg 1997.

b) 6...a6 7 ♘bd2 ♗f5 8 ♗e2 e6 9 0-0 ♗d6 10 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 11 ♖e1 0-0 12 ♗f1 ♗g4 13 ♕e2 ♖ab8 14 a4 ♘d7 15 ♕e3 ± Sveshnikov-Evseev, Minsk 2000.

c) 6...♗f5 7 ♕b3 ♕c8 8 ♗e2 e6 9 0-0 ♗e7 10 ♘bd2 0-0 11 ♖ac1 ♘e4 12 ♖fe1 h6 13 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 14 ♘e5 ± Kovalevskaya-Kadymova, Moscow wom OL 1994.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7 ♘bd2

This position may appear from other move-orders (most likely a delayed ...cxd4). In this exact position 7 ♕b3 may be more testing:

a) 7...♕c8 8 ♘e5 ♗d7 (8...♘xe5? 9 dxe5 ♘d7 10 ♕xd5 +–) 9 ♘d2 g6 10 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 11 ♗b5 a6 12 ♗e2 ♗g7 13 0-0 0-0 14 a4 ♖ac8 15 a5 ± Pavasović-S.Orel, Ljubljana 1993.

b) 7...♘a5 8 ♕a4+ ♗d7 9 ♕c2 ♖c8 (9...♕b6 10 ♘e5 ♗b5 11 b4 ♘c6 12 ♗xb5 ♕xb5 13 a4 ♕b6 14 a5 ± Rausis-Gerstner, 2nd Bundesliga 1995/6) 10 ♗d3 ♕b6 11 0-0 ± Schlindwein-Dittmar, Bodensee 1999.

7...a6

This useful little move has been popular lately, but other moves are playable too:

a) 7...♕b6 8 ♕b3 e6 9 h3 ♗h5 10 ♗d3 ♗e7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♖fe1 ♖ac8 13 ♕xb6 axb6 14 ♘e5 ♘xe5 15 ♗xe5 ± J.Přibyl-Krutti, London 1999.

b) 7...e6 8 ♕b3 ♕c8 9 ♘e5 ♘xe5 (9...♗e7? 10 f3 ♗f5 11 g4 ♗g6 12 h4 h5 13 ♘xg6 fxg6 14 ♕c2 wins for White, K.Pytel-Grimberg, French Ch (Chambéry) 1994) 10 ♗xe5 a6 11 ♗d3 ♗e7 12 0-0 ♘d7 (12...♗f5? {Shabanov-Guliev, Oriol 1992} 13 ♗xf5 exf5 14 ♗xf6 +–) 13 ♗f4 ♕c6 ±.

8 ♗d3 e6 *(D)*

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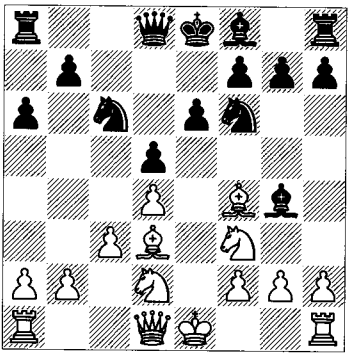

9 0-0

a) 9 a4 is sensible: 9...♗d6 10 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 11 0-0 ♗h5 12 ♖e1 ♘d7 13 ♕e2 0-0 14 ♕e3 ♗g6 15 ♗xg6 hxg6 16 a5 ♖fe8 17 ♘e5 ± S.Kovačević-Blagojević, Yugoslav Cht (Niš) 1994.

b) It's now too late to attack the b-pawn. After 9 ♕b3 ♗d6!? White must be careful:

b1) 10 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 11 ♕xb7?! 0-0 12 ♕b3 e5! 13 dxe5 ♘xe5 14 ♘xe5 ♕xe5+ 15 ♔f1 ♖fe8 16 ♕c2 ♗e2+ 17 ♔g1 (17 ♗xe2 ♕xe2+ 18 ♔g1 ♘e4 –+) 17...♗xd3 18 ♕xd3 ♕e2 19 ♕xe2 ♖xe2 20 ♘f1 ♖xb2 ∓.

b2) 10 ♘e5 0-0 11 0-0 (not 11 ♕xb7?? ♘a5 and Black wins) 11...♘xe5 12 ♗xe5 (12 dxe5?! ♘h5 13 ♗e3 ♗xe5 14 f4 ♗d6 15 h3 ♗f5 16 ♗xf5 exf5 17 ♕xb7 ♖e8 ∓) 12...♗xe5 13 dxe5 ♘d7 14 ♖ae1 ♘c5 15 ♕c2 ♘xd3 16 ♕xd3 ♗f5 is equal.

9...♗d6

After 9...♗h5 10 ♖e1 ♗e7 11 ♕c2 ♗g6 12 ♘e5 ♘xe5 13 ♗xe5 0-0 14 ♗xg6 hxg6 15 ♕b3 ♕d7 16 ♘f3 White was a little more comfortable in Fejtek-S.Kasparov, Tatranske Zruby 2001.

10 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 11 ♕e1 ♘d7

In Larsen-Pachman, Amsterdam IZ 1964 White met 11...♘e7 with the unbalancing 12 c4!? dxc4 13 ♘xc4 ♕d8 14 ♘fe5 ♗f5 but chances remained even.

12 ♕e3 ♗h5

13 ♖fe1 ♗g6 14 ♗f1 0-0 15 ♘e5 ♘cxe5 16 dxe5 ♕b6 17 ♕xb6 ♘xb6 18 a4 ± T.Rakić-Bagirov, Frunze 1983.

Conclusion:

White has reasonable chances to reach a theoretical advantage, although a rather small one in the main line. In addition 7 ♕b3 seems quite a good try.

1F: 3...♕b6

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 c5 3 e3)

3...♕b6!? *(D)*

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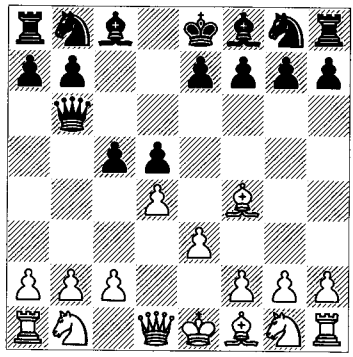


If Black is really determined to prove that 2 ♗f4 was a mistake, this must be the critical test. However, playing too hard for a win with Black is often risky.

4 ♘c3!

4 b3!? isn't aesthetically pleasing, but appears to give roughly even chances:

a) 4...♗f5 5 ♘f3 ♘c6 6 c3 ♘f6 7 ♗d3 ♗xd3 8 ♕xd3 e6 9 0-0 h6 10 h3 ♗e7 11 ♘bd2 a5 12 ♘e5 ♘h5 13 ♗h2 ♘f6 = (not 13...♗f6? 14 ♘xc6 ♕xc6, Torborg-G.Schmidt, Pinneberg 1998, 15 g4 ±).

b) 4...♘c6 5 ♘f3 ♗g4 6 c3 ♘f6 7 ♗d3 cxd4 8 exd4 e6 9 0-0 ♗e7 10 ♘bd2 = Cayon-Caldera, Barranquilla 2000.

4...e6!? *(D)*

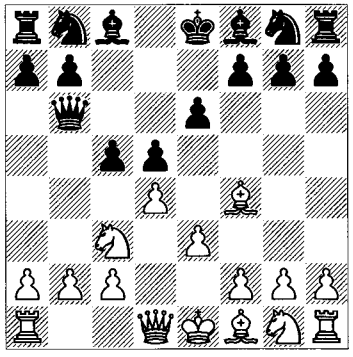
Carelessness or a calculated attempt to lure White into premature simplification?

Other moves:

a) 4...♘f6 5 ♘f3 – *2...♘f6 3 e3 c5 4 ♘f3 ♕b6 5 ♘c3.*

b) After 4...♕xb2?, in addition to the standard 5 ♘b5 White also has the simple 5 ♘xd5!, with a huge advantage.

c) 4...cxd4 should probably be answered by 5 ♗b5+! ♔d8 (other moves are met by 6 ♘xd5 and 7 ♘c7+) 6 exd4 ♘f6 7 ♘f3 ♗d7 8 a4 a6 9 a5 ♕e6+ 10 ♗e2 ± Spielmann-Landau, Amsterdam 1936.



5 ♗xb8!?

5 a3 is slow but sensible. After 5...♗d7 (not 5...♕xb2?? 6 ♘a4 +–) 6 ♖b1 ♘e7 7 ♘f3 ♘f5 the play in Crompvoets-Meijer, Willemstad 2001 took a sharp turn with 8 g4 cxd4 9 exd4 ♗d6 and now 10 ♕d2 ♗xf4 11 ♕xf4 ♘d6 12 ♗d3 ± may have been more precise than 10 ♗xd6 ♘xd6 11 ♘e5 f6 12 ♘xd7 ♔xd7 13 ♘e2 ♘c6 14 ♗g2, when Black's loss of castling rights wasn't a problem for him.

5...♖xb8 6 ♗b5+ ♗d7

Exchanging another pair of minor pieces should reduce White's attacking potential. On the other hand, the b5-bishop is slightly exposed, so after 6...♔d8 White must take care. In the game Kraev-Filipenko, Russian Ch (Perm) 1997 White was soon worse: 7 ♕f3 cxd4 8 exd4 (8 ♕xf7? ♘f6 9 exd4 a6 ∓) 8...a6 9 ♗a4 (9 ♕xf7? ♘f6 ∓) 9...♕xb2 10 ♖b1 ♕a3 11 ♘ge2 ♘f6 ∓. Therefore we suggest 7 dxc5 ♗xc5 8 ♕g4 g6 9 0-0-0 with quite a promising attack.

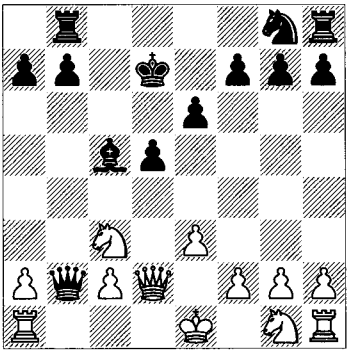
7 ♗xd7+ ♔xd7 8 dxc5

This seems to be at least a modest improvement over earlier tries:

a) 8 ♖b1 ♘f6 9 ♘f3 ♗d6 10 0-0 ♔e7 11 ♕e2 ♖hd8 was equal in Schlechter-Tarrasch, Cologne 1911.

b) 8 ♘ge2 ♘f6 9 0-0 ♗d6 10 dxc5 ♕xc5 ½-½ Rithnovszky-Herpai, Hungarian Cht 1994.

8...♗xc5 9 ♕d2 ♕xb2 *(D)*



After other moves White is at least more comfortable due to Black's exposed king.

10 ♖b1 ♕a3 11 ♖b3

Not 11 e4?! ♘f6 12 exd5? ♗xf2+! 13 ♔xf2 ♕xc3 ∓.

11...♕a6 12 ♘ge2 ♘f6 13 0-0

We believe White has more than enough compensation for his pawn here; e.g., 13...♔c8 14 ♘b5 ♘e4 15 ♕d3 ♖d8 16 c4 ±.

Conclusion:

5 ♗xb8 seems relatively promising but must be followed up consistently – quite likely with a pawn sacrifice. Otherwise you may be better off with 5 a3.

2 The Tarrasch Approach: 2...e6

This variation has to be considered in close connection with 2...♘f6 3 e3 (or 3 ♘f3) 3...e6 as transpositional possibilities are many. However, leaving the knight at g8 for the moment gives Black some additional possibilities – either to omit ...♘f6 entirely (maybe in order to fight for e5 with ...♘ge7-g6), to delay it (giving priority to other tasks), to play ...f5 first or occasionally to employ the knight at h6 or e7. See Illustrative Game 6 for a discussion of lines where Black plays ...c5 but delays ...♘f6.

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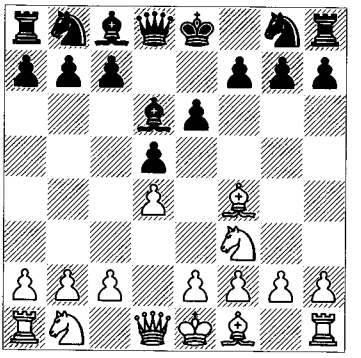


Chapter Outline

1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 e6

2A:	**3 ♘f3**	74
2B:	**3 e3**	76

2A: Introduction

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4)

2...e6

This is the most likely choice of a Tarrasch player. However, Black may also be an ordinary Queen's Gambit Declined player, choosing this move-order because he knows that 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗f4 ♗d6 is supposed to give easy equality, and now expects 3 ♘f3.

3 ♘f3

White scores quite well with this move, but we believe that with accurate play Black can achieve rapid equality and that White therefore should prefer 3 e3 (Line 2B).

3...♗d6! *(D)*

3...c5 4 e3 and 3...c6 4 e3 transpose to variations discussed under 3 e3.

In his book *Meeting 1 d4*, Aagaard considers this an immediate equalizer, and statistics to some extent support his claim. This is slightly surprising because in principle White shouldn't object to an exchange of dark-squared bishops, as his central pawn fortress is set up on the dark squares. The problem is that most exchanges will be on Black's terms: ♗xd6 and ...cxd6 will strengthen Black's control of e5, while ...♗xf4 and exf4 will to some extent weaken White's pawn-structure. And ♗g3 will if nothing else cost White a tempo which Black may use to fight for the e5-square.

4 e3!?

By accepting a nominal weakening of his pawn-structure, White gains total control of the important e5-square, and also a useful semi-open e-file. Other moves are playable, but seem less consistent:

a) 4 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 5 e3 ♕b4+ 6 ♘bd2 ♕xb2 7 ♗d3 ♘f6 8 0-0 ♘bd7 9 ♕e2 (Schaefer-Gasthofer, Staufer 1999) 9...♕c3 10 e4 dxe4 11 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 12 ♗xe4 ♘f6 13 ♖ab1 c6 ∓.

b) 4 ♗g3 and now:

b1) 4...♘f6 5 e3 – *2...♘f6 3 e3 e6 4 ♘f3 ♗d6 5 ♗g3.*

b2) 4...f5 is a not very promising Stonewall set-up. Compare with analysis after *1...e6 2 ♗f4 f5 3 e3 d5.*

b3) 4...♘e7 5 ♘bd2 c5 6 e3 0-0 7 ♗d3 h6 8 c3 ♘bc6 9 0-0 ♗xg3 10 hxg3 ♕d6 11 ♕c2 ♗d7 12 dxc5 ♕xc5 13 e4 ♖ac8 = Van de Mortel-Piket, Leeuwarden 1993.

c) The somewhat exotic 4 g3 has a keen supporter in Bangkok-based Bruce Bell. If Black exchanges on f4, White's resulting central grip and open g-file will often give him fine attacking chances. A critical line is 4...♗xf4 5 gxf4 ♕d6 6 e3 ♕b4+ 7 ♘bd2 ♕xb2. However, both 8 ♘e5 ♘e7 9 ♗d3 ♘d7 10 ♖b1 ♕a3 11 ♕h5 g6

12 ♕h6 ♘f5 13 ♗xf5 exf5 14 ♘xd7 ♗xd7 (As.Arnason-Ar.Arnason, Reykjavik 1988) and 8 ♖g1 g6 9 c4 dxc4 10 ♗xc4 ♘f6 11 ♘e5 give White excellent compensation for his pawn.

4...♗xf4

4...♘e7 (4...♘f6 – *2...♘f6 3 ♘f3 e6 4 e3 ♗d6*) is an attempt to fight for the e5-square. After 5 ♘bd2 Black has:

a) 5...♘g6 6 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 7 c4 ±.

b) 5...c5 6 dxc5 ♗xc5 7 ♗d3 ♘bc6 8 0-0 ♘g6 9 ♗g3 ♕f6 10 e4 0-0 11 c3 ♗b6 12 ♕c2 ± Bagheri-Akobian, Moscow 2000.

c) 5...♗xf4 6 exf4 ♕d6 7 g3 c5 8 dxc5 ♕xc5 9 c3 ♘bc6 10 ♗d3 b6 11 0-0 ♗b7 12 ♖e1 g6 13 ♕e2 0-0 14 ♘b3 ♕d6 15 ♖ad1 a6 16 h4 ♔g7 17 ♘e5 ± Chuprikov-Al.Karpov, Russian Cht (Smolensk) 2000.

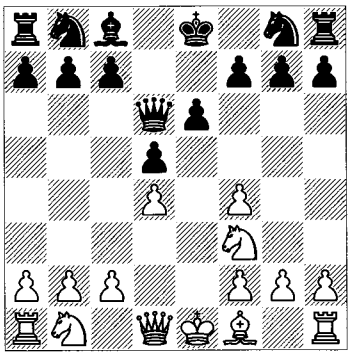
5 exf4 ♕d6 *(D)*

This seems the most pointed. Playable alternatives include:

a) 5...b6 6 c3 ♘e7 7 ♗d3 0-0 8 ♕e2 a5 9 ♘bd2 ♗a6 10 ♘e5 c5 11 ♗xa6 ♘xa6 12 ♘df3 ♕d6 13 0-0 f6 = Gretarsson-Luther, Clichy 1995.

b) 5...c5 6 dxc5 ♕a5+ 7 c3 ♕xc5 8 ♗d3 ♘f6 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♘bd2 b6 11 ♖e1 ♗a6 12 ♗c2 ♘bd7 13 ♘e5 ♖ad8 14 ♘b3 ♕c7 15 ♘d4 ± Plaskett-Bönsch, Sochi 1984.

c) 5...♘f6 6 c3 0-0 7 ♗d3 b6 8 0-0 ♗a6 9 ♗xa6 ♘xa6 10 ♕d3 ♕c8 11 ♘bd2 c5 12 a3 c4 13 ♕c2 ♘c7 14 ♖fe1 ♘ce8 15 ♘e5 ± I.Horvath-Boguszlavszkij, Hungarian Cht 2000.



6 ♕d2

6 ♕c1 looks strange, but avoids the annoying ...♘e4 threats. After 6...♘d7 7 ♗d3 c5 8 0-0 ♘gf6 9 c3 0-0 10 ♖e1 ♖e8 11 ♘e5 White's position was the more comfortable in Alekhine-Rivier, Bern 1932.

6...♘f6

Natural, but White hasn't been able to prove much against these alternatives either:

a) 6...b6 7 ♘c3 a5 8 ♗d3 ♗a6 9 f5 exf5 10 ♗xf5 ♘e7 11 ♗d3 0-0 12 0-0 ♘g6 13 ♖fe1 ♗xd3 14 ♕xd3 ♘c6 15 ♘e5 ♘b4 = Storm-Blatny, 2nd Bundesliga 1990/1.

b) 6...♘e7 and now:

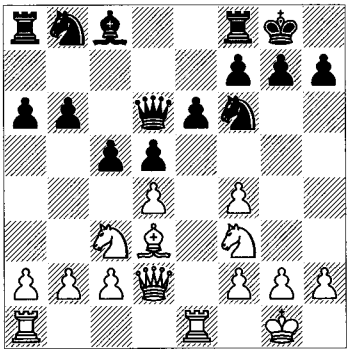
b1) 7 ♘c3 0-0 8 0-0-0!? gave Black very real queenside chances after 8...b6 9 h4 c5 10 g3 c4 11 ♕e2 ♘d7 12 ♗h3 ♖b8 in Efimov-Luther, Asti 1996. In the subsequent play White was either extremely lucky to scramble a draw, or else there is an error in the databases.

b2) 7 ♘a3 may be a little more flexible: 7...0-0 8 c3 ♘d7 9 ♘b5 ♕b6 10 a4 c6 11 a5 ♕d8 12 ♘d6 ♘f6 13 ♘xc8 ♘xc8 14 ♗d3 ♘d6 leads to equality, Prié-Saucey, Montpellier 2003.

7 ♘c3 a6

Or 7...0-0 8 ♗d3 ♗d7 9 0-0 c5 10 dxc5 ♕xc5 11 ♘e5 ♖d8 12 ♖fe1 ♘c6 13 ♖ad1 ♗e8 14 ♘e2 ♘d7 15 ♘g3 g6 16 h4 ± Eliet-Barsov, Bogny sur Meuse 2003.

8 ♗d3 b6 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♖fe1 c5 *(D)*



After 11 ♘e5 ♘c6 (11...cxd4 12 ♘e2 ♘e4 13 ♗xe4 dxe4 14 ♕xd4 ±) 12 ♘xc6 ♕xc6 13 ♕e3 ♗b7 14 ♖ad1 ♖fe8 15 a3 ♘g4 16 ♕h3 f5 Black's queenside initiative roughly compensated for his weakness at e6 in V.Kovačević-Vaganian, Hastings 1982/3.

Conclusion:

Against correct counterplay, the position after 4 e3 ♗xf4 5 exf4 seems to hold rather limited promise for White. However, against passive play by Black combined with a quick

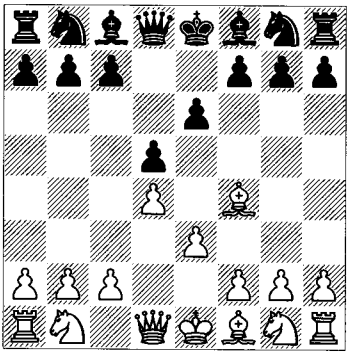
...0-0, here too White will be able to execute a lot of simple kingside attacks.

2B: 3 e3

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 e6)

3 e3 *(D)*

B



This move contains a lot more poison than is obvious at first sight.

3...♗d6

This must be the main point behind Black's move-order. As discussed earlier, White should in theory not object too strongly to an exchange of dark-squared bishops. However, if this logical follow-up to 2...e6 is inaccurate, it's more because of tactical tricks than strategic considerations.

Two alternatives merit attention:

a) 3...♘e7!? is untested at international level but seems a reasonable attempt to fight for the important e5-square while taking advantage of the somewhat exposed f4-bishop; but if Black cannot force ...e5, the knight may find itself misplaced at g6.

b) 3...c5 4 c3 and now:

b1) 4...♕b6 5 ♕b3 c4 6 ♕c2 is slightly better for White.

b2) 4...♗d6 5 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 6 ♕g4!? should compare favourably with *3...♗d6 4 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 5 ♕g4*.

b3) 4...♘c6 and now:

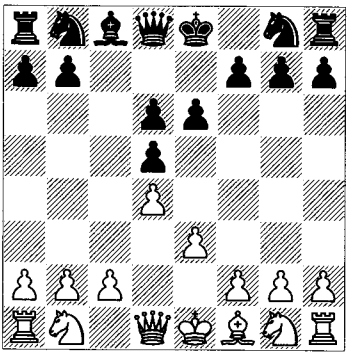
b31) 5 ♘f3 ♗d6 (5...♘f6 – *2...♘f6 3 e3 e6 4 ♘f3 c5 5 c3 ♘c6*) 6 ♗g3 ♘ge7 (6...♗xg3 – Illustrative Game 6, Kamsky-Dlugy, New York 1989) 7 ♗d3 ♘f5 (7...♘g6 – *5 ♘d2 ♘ge7 6 ♘gf3 ♘g6 7 ♗g3 ♗d6*) 8 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 9 ♘bd2 cxd4 10 exd4 0-0 11 0-0 ± Platonov-Lputian, Krasnodar 1980.

b32) 5 ♘d2 ♘ge7!? seems extremely logical given that one of Black's main priorities in the fight against the London is to force through ...e5. Nevertheless we have been unable to find a single practical example, so we just suggest a possible line: 6 ♘gf3 (6 dxc5 ♘g6 7 b4 d4! gives Black nice compensation) 6...♘g6 7 ♗g3 ♗d6 8 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 9 ♗d3 e5 10 dxe5 ♘gxe5 11 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 12 ♘f3 ♕h5 13 ♕a4 ♗h3 14 ♗e2 ♗d7 (14...♗xg2?? 15 ♘h4 +–) 15 ♕f4! and White should have at least a small advantage as 15...0-0?! fails to 16 ♕d6 ±.

4 ♗xd6 ♕xd6

4...cxd6!? *(D)* has structural pros and cons but may be a better choice:

W



a) 5 ♘f3 is sensible: 5...a6 (5...♕b6 6 ♘c3 ♕xb2 7 ♘b5 ±) 6 ♗d3 ♘f6 7 ♘bd2 ♗d7 8 0-0 (8 g4!?) 8...♘c6 9 c3 0-0 10 e4 dxe4 11 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 12 ♗xe4 ± Duval-François, Elancourt 2004.

b) 5 ♕g4!? leads to sharp play, but is less convincing than in the main line:

b1) After 5...♘f6 6 ♕xg7 ♖g8 7 ♕h6 ♖g6 8 ♕f4 ♕b6 Black may have enough for the pawn.

b2) 5...♔f8 6 ♕g3 ♘c6 7 ♘f3 ♘f6 8 ♘c3 ♕e7 9 ♗e2 g6 10 0-0 a6 11 ♖ad1 ± De Francesco-Kuijf, Munich 1992.

b3) Probably the active 5...♕f6 is correct: 6 ♕g3 e5 7 ♘c3 ♘e7 8 dxe5 dxe5 and then:

b31) 9 0-0-0?! 0-0! 10 ♘xd5?! ♘xd5 11 ♖xd5 ♗e6 12 ♖xe5 ♘c6 13 ♖h5 ♘b4 14 a3 ♘a2+ 15 ♔b1 (Sv.Johnsen-Engli, Oslo 2005) 15...♖fd8 16 ♗d3 ♖xd3! 17 cxd3 ♘c3+! 18 ♔a1 ♘d1 19 ♖b5 ♘xf2 ∓.

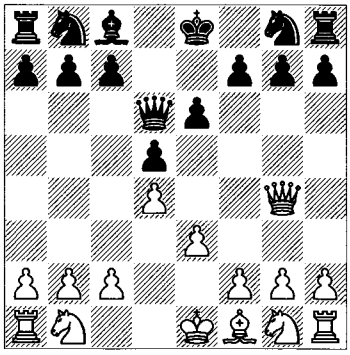
b32) 9 ♖d1 may be an improvement:

b321) 9...♗e6 10 ♘b5 ♘f5 11 ♘c7+ ♔d8 12 ♘xd5 ♘xg3 13 ♘xf6+ ♔e7 14 hxg3 ♔xf6 15 a3 ±.

b322) 9...0-0 10 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 11 ♖xd5 ♘c6 and it seems very likely that Black has compensation.

5 ♕g4!? *(D)*

B



This is the point. We cannot guarantee a genuine opening advantage, but it should certainly worry any unprepared opponent.

5...g6

The untested alternatives seem less tempting:

a) 5...♕b4+? 6 ♘d2 g6 7 0-0-0 is much better for White.

b) 5...♔f8 6 ♘d2 ♘f6 7 ♕h4 c5 8 ♘gf3 ♘c6 9 c3 ±.

c) 5...♘e7 6 ♕xg7 ♖g8 7 ♕xh7 ♕b4+ 8 ♘d2 ♕xb2 9 ♖b1 ♕xa2 10 h4 ±.

d) 5...♕f8 6 ♕g3 c6 7 ♘d2 ♘f6 8 ♘gf3 ♘bd7 9 ♗d3 ♕b4 10 0-0 ♕xb2?! 11 e4 dxe4 12 ♘c4 ♕c3 13 ♘d6+ ♔f8 14 ♗xe4 ±.

6 ♘d2

Not 6 ♘f3?! ♕b4+ 7 ♘bd2 ♕xb2 8 ♘b3 ♕c3+ ∓ Krcil-Horak, Rokycany (blind) 2000.

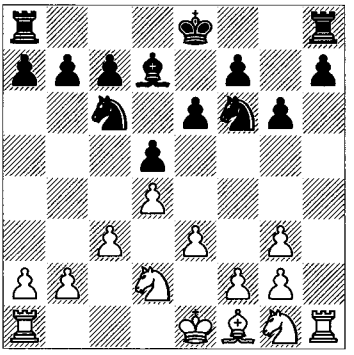
6...♘c6 7 c3

7 ♕g3 should also secure a small pull. 7 ♘gf3 ♘b4 looks somewhat less clear but 8 ♗d3 h5 9 ♕g5 ♘xd3+ 10 cxd3 is probably better for White.

7...♘f6 8 ♕g3 ♕xg3 9 hxg3 ♗d7 *(D)*

Or 9...e5 10 ♗b5 e4 11 f3 ±.

W



10 ♘gf3 ♘g4

11 ♗e2 (11 e4 dxe4 12 ♘xe4 ±) 11...e5 12 dxe5 ♘cxe5 13 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 14 ♘f3 and the open h-file in combination with the better bishop gave White a slight advantage in Sv.Johnsen-E.Lie, Telemark 2003.

Conclusion:

5 ♕g4 not only has excellent surprise value but may well be White's best try for an objective opening advantage.

3 Pseudo-Chigorin and Minor Lines

Before moving on to the important positions arising from 2...♘f6, we shall have a look at some second moves which mainly make sense if seen in context with the rest of Black's repertoire. See Illustrative Game 13 for a demonstration of Black's problems creating activity with his c-pawn (temporarily) immobilized.

Chapter Outline

1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4

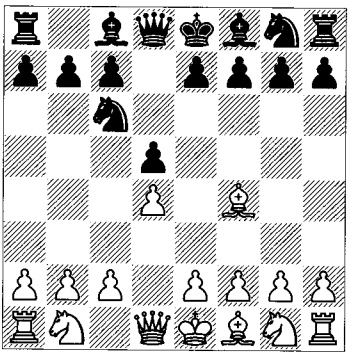
3A:	**2...♘c6 (3 ♘f3)**	78
3B:	**2...♘c6 3 e3**	80
3C:	**(2...a6)**	81

3A: 2...♘c6 3 ♘f3

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4)

2...♘c6 *(D)*

This will normally be the choice of Chigorin (1 d4 d5 2 c4 ♘c6) players. Black prepares rapid piece development, striving for ...e5. 2...♘f6 3 e3 ♘c6 is a less common move-order.



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3 ♘f3

This takes us more or less back into theoretical main lines. The normal move-order is 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗f4. 3 c4?! would transpose to the relatively rare 3 ♗f4 variation in the Chigorin and it seems too cooperative to enter Black's territory (and 3...dxc4 seems to solve most of Black's opening problems).

3...♗g4

Aiming to double White's pawns in thematic Chigorin style.

a) The position after 3...♘f6 can also be reached via 2...♘f6 3 ♘f3 ♘c6, but as Chigorin players tend to block their c-pawn at the first opportunity, we believe this is the most likely move-order. An independent line is 4 e3 ♘h5!? (4...♗g4 – *3...♗g4 4 e3 ♘f6*; 4...♗f5 – *3...♗f5 4 e3 ♘f6*) 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 g5 7 ♘fd2 ♘g7 8 ♗g3 ♘f5 9 c4 ♘xg3 10 hxg3 ♗g7 11 cxd5 ♕xd5 12 ♘c3 ♕d8 13 ♗b5 ± Yedidia-Curdo, USA 1997.

b) 3...♗f5 applies less pressure on White's centre. After 4 e3 play is quite likely to transpose to Line 3B. Some independent lines are:

b1) 4...♘f6 5 c4 e6 6 ♘c3 – *3 e3 ♘f6 4 c4 ♗f5 5 ♘c3 e6 6 ♘f3*.

b2) 4...a6 5 c4 e6 6 ♘c3 ♘f6 (6...♗b4 7 cxd5 exd5 8 ♖c1 ± Miles-Merwin, Reno 1999) 7 ♗e2 ♗d6 8 ♗g5 ♗e7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♕b3 ♘e7 12 ♕xb7 ± Wojtkiewicz-Mahmuti, Bern 1996.

b3) 4...♘b4 5 ♘a3 e6 6 c3 ♘c6 7 ♘b5 ♗d6 8 ♘xd6+ ± Apicella-Prié, French Ch (Nantes) 1993.

b4) 4...e6 5 c4 ♗d6 (5...♘f6 – *3 e3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 ♗f5 5 c4 e6*) 6 ♗g3 ♘ge7 7 ♘c3 0-0 8 ♗h4 dxc4 9 ♗xc4 ♕d7 10 ♖c1 ♘g6 11 ♗g3 ♗xg3 12 hxg3 ± Belikov-Tishin, Alushta 2001.

4 e3 e6 *(D)*

4...♘f6 seems less flexible, as ...♘ge7 can be a useful option.

5 c4!

Having secured his centre and caught up in development, White can safely grab central space.

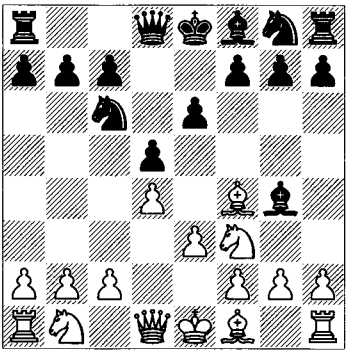
5...♘f6

Now that ♗b5 is less of an option, it seems less likely that the knight will be needed at e7.

a) 5...dxc4 is sound but slightly meek. 6 ♗xc4 ♗d6 7 ♗g3 and now:

a1) 7...♘f6 8 ♘c3 0-0 (8...♗xg3 9 hxg3 ♕d6 10 a3 a6 11 ♕c2 h6 12 ♗d3 e5 13 ♘e4 ♘xe4 14

W



♗xe4 ♗xf3 15 gxf3 exd4 16 0-0-0 0-0-0 17 ♖h5 ± Cu.Hansen-Miladinović, Malmö 1998) 9 0-0 ♘a5 10 ♗e2 c5? 11 dxc5 ♗xc5 12 ♕xd8 1-0 Szekely-Veltkamp, Haarlem 2001.

a2) 7...a6 8 ♘c3 ♘f6 9 0-0 ♗xg3 10 hxg3 0-0 11 ♗e2 ♕d6 12 ♖c1 ♖fd8 13 a3 ♘e7 14 b4 ♗xf3 15 ♗xf3 c6 16 ♕b3 ♘g6 17 ♖fd1 ± Malakhatko-Swic, Polanica Zdroj 2001.

b) 5...♗d6 is a popular alternative: 6 ♗g3 ♘f6 (6...♘ge7 7 ♗e2 dxc4 8 ♗xc4 ♘f5 9 ♘c3 a6 10 ♗e2 0-0 11 ♗xd6 ♘xd6 12 h3 ♗h5 13 0-0 ♕f6 14 ♖c1 ♖fd8 15 ♕c2 ♖ac8 16 ♖fe1 ± Nordahl-Bromann, Gausdal 2003) 7 ♘c3 0-0 8 cxd5 exd5 (8...♘xd5 9 ♗e2 ♘xc3 10 bxc3 ♕f6 11 ♖b1 b6 and now 12 ♘d2 ♗xe2 13 ♕xe2 ♘a5 14 0-0 ♗xg3 was equal in Martinović-Degraeve, Sremić Krsko 1998, but 12 e4 seems more to the point) 9 ♗e2 ♖e8 10 0-0 ♗xg3 11 hxg3 ♘e7 12 ♕b3 ♕d6 13 ♖fc1 ♕b6 14 ♕xb6 axb6 15 ♘b5 ± Martinović-D.Trifunović, Estensi 2001.

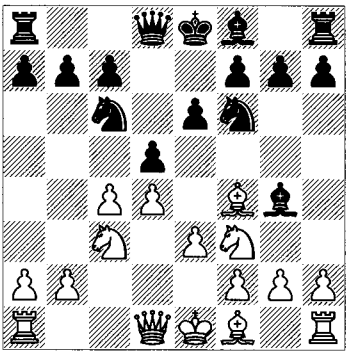
c) 5...♗b4+ is consistent with the Chigorin tradition of early bishop development: 6 ♘c3 ♘ge7 (6...♗xc3+!? 7 bxc3 ♘ge7 8 h3 ♗f5 9 ♖c1 {9 ♘h4 ±} 9...0-0 10 ♗e2 ♘a5 11 cxd5 exd5 12 ♘d2 ♖c8 13 ♕a4 c5 14 ♘b3 ♘xb3 15 axb3 ± T.Karlsen-S.Johannessen, Oslo 2003) 7 ♖c1 0-0 8 ♗d3 (8 h3 ♗xf3!? 9 ♕xf3 e5!? 10 dxe5 d4 11 exd4 ♕xd4 12 ♗e2 ♘g6 13 ♗e3 ♕xe5 14 0-0 ♗d6 15 g3 ♗c5 16 ♗xc5 ♕xc5 = Vezzosi-Skembris, Montecatini Terme 2000) 8...♘g6 and White must be careful:

c1) 9 h3? ♗xf3 10 ♕xf3 dxc4 11 ♗xc4 ♘xd4! 12 ♕xb7 ♘xf4 13 exf4 (13 ♕xb4? ♘xg2+ 14 ♔f1 ♘xe3+ 15 fxe3 ♕f6+ −+) 13...♖b8 14 ♕e4 (Schüssler-Hector, Swedish Ch (Malmö) 1986) 14...♘f5! 15 0-0 (15 ♗d3 ♗d6 ∓) 15...♘d6 16 ♕d3 ♘xc4 17 ♕xc4 ♗d6 18 b3 ♖b4 ∓.

c2) 9 ♗g3 f5!? (9...dxc4 10 ♗xc4 ♗d6 11 ♗b5 ♘ce7 12 0-0 ♘f5 13 ♗e2 ♘xg3 14 hxg3 c6 15 ♘e4 ♗c7 16 ♘c5 ± Yermolinsky-Rahman, Stratton Mountain 2000) 10 h3 ♗h5 11 cxd5 exd5 12 0-0 f4 13 ♗xg6 ♗xf3 14 ♕xf3 fxg3 (14...hxg6 15 ♗h2 fxe3 16 ♕xe3 ♕d7 17 ♕d3 ±) 15 ♗f5 ♗xc3 16 bxc3 gxf2+ 17 ♖xf2 ♖f6?! 18 ♗e6+ ♔h8 19 ♕xd5 ±.

6 ♘c3 *(D)*

B



6...♗b4

The modest 6...a6 may well be best: 7 ♗e2 (7 h3 ♗h5 8 ♗g5 dxc4 9 ♗xc4 ♗e7 10 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 11 ♗e2 ♗g6 12 0-0 e5 13 dxe5 ♘xe5 14 ♕b3 ± S.Agdestein-E.Agdestein, Norwegian Ch (Steinkjer) 1986) 7...dxc4 8 ♗xc4 ♗d6 9 ♗xd6 (9 ♗g5 ±) 9...cxd6 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♗e2 e5 12 dxe5 dxe5 = Frois-Skembris, Linares 2000.

7 ♖c1

White has other good options:

a) 7 ♗g5 h6 8 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 9 cxd5 exd5 10 ♗e2 0-0 11 0-0 ♗xc3 12 bxc3 ♘a5 13 ♘e5 ± P.Cramling-Arencibia, Malaga 2000.

b) 7 h3 ♗xf3 8 ♕xf3 ♘e4 9 ♖c1 ♕e7 10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♕d1 0-0 12 ♗e2 ♘d8 13 0-0 ♗xc3 14 bxc3 ♘e6 15 ♗h2 ♖fd8 16 c4 ± Ki.Georgiev-Pirrot, Bad Wörishofen 2002.

7...0-0

7...♘e4!? 8 h3 ♗xf3 (8...♗h5 9 ♗d3 0-0 10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♕c2 ♗xf3 12 gxf3 ♘g5 13 h4! ♘xf3+ 14 ♔f1 ±) 9 ♕xf3 ♕e7 10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♕d1 ♕h4 12 ♖c2 0-0 13 ♗d3 ♖ae8 14 0-0 ±.

8 h3

Or 8 ♗e2 ♖e8 9 0-0 dxc4 10 ♗xc4 e5?! (10...♘h5) 11 dxe5 ♕xd1 12 ♖fxd1 ♗xf3 13 gxf3 ♘xe5 (13...♗xc3 14 exf6 ♗xf6 15 ♗b5 ±) and in Simić-Yeo, Belgrade 2003 White could have ensured a clear advantage with 14 ♘b5.

8...♗xf3

8...♗h5 doesn't really improve: 9 a3 ♗xc3+ 10 ♖xc3 ♕e7 11 ♗e2 dxc4 12 ♖xc4 ♘d5 13 ♗h2 f5 14 0-0 ± Cebalo-Gruskovnjak, Portorož 2004.

9 ♕xf3 ♕e7

It is hard to see how 9...♗xc3+ can improve: 10 bxc3 (10 ♖xc3 ♕e7 11 ♗g5 transposes to *9...♕e7 10 ♗g5 ♗xc3+ 11 ♖xc3* but Black may have planned 10...♘e4) 10...♕e7 11 ♕d1 e5 12 ♗g5 exd4 13 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 14 cxd4 ± Moreno Ruiz-Moreno Carnero, Spanish Ch (Seville) 2004.

10 ♗g5 ♗xc3+

11 ♖xc3 ♕b4 12 ♗xf6 ♕xb2 13 ♖b3 ♕c1+ 14 ♕d1 ♕xd1+ 15 ♔xd1 dxc4 16 ♖xb7 gxf6 17 ♔d2 ♖ab8 18 ♖xc7 ± Kramnik-Ivanchuk, Linares 1998.

Conclusion:

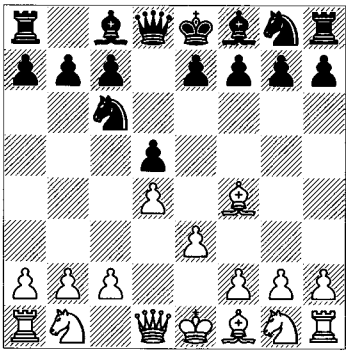
The London with an early ♘f3 against the Chigorin has been thoroughly tested at top level. The main line provides White with steady pressure at very low risk.

3B: 3 e3

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘c6)

3 e3 *(D)*

B



Again we believe there may be a little to be gained by this move-order. One point is that Black cannot play 3...♗g4, which is the main move in the parallel position after 3 ♘f3.

3...♘f6

This can be seen as preparation for ...♗g4, but without the option of ...♘ge7 to support the c6-knight, Black may be vulnerable on the a4-e8 diagonal.

3...♗f5 4 c4 e6 5 ♘c3 ♘f6 6 ♘f3 is just another way to the main line and White may also consider 4 ♘f3 or 4 ♗b5.

4 c4

4 ♗b5!? is worth consideration now that ...♘ge7 isn't an option any more. By concentrating on piece-play, White is fighting Black with his own weapons.

4...♗f5

Alternatively:

a) 4...e6?! 5 ♘c3 ♗d6 6 ♗g3 0-0 7 ♘f3 ♗xg3 8 hxg3 ♕e7 9 ♘e5 g6 10 f4 ± Zhao Jun-Hermann, Bad Zwesten 2003.

b) 4...♗g4!? 5 f3 ♗f5 (5...♗h5 6 ♘c3 e6 7 ♕b3 ♘a5 8 ♕a4+ c6 9 c5 ♗e7 10 b4 ♘c4 11 b5 ±) 6 ♘c3 e6 7 ♗g5 ♗b4 8 ♕b3 0-0 9 cxd5 exd5 10 ♗b5 ±.

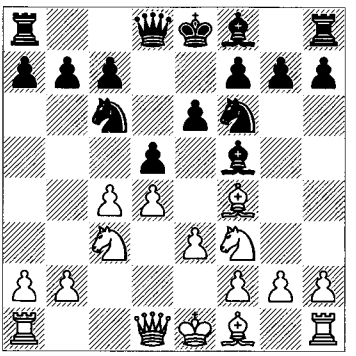
c) 4...dxc4 is tricky. White should probably avoid 5 ♗xc4?! e5! 6 dxe5 ♕xd1+ 7 ♔xd1 ♘g4 8 ♔e2 ♘gxe5 9 ♗b5 = Vladi.Kovačević-B.Maksimović, Vrnjačka Banja 1988 and instead go for 5 ♘f3 ♘d5 6 ♗g3 ♘b6 7 ♘bd2 ± Bahamonde-Rossetto, Argentine Ch (Buenos Aires) 1946.

5 ♘c3

5 ♕b3!? is too logical to remain untried.

5...e6 6 ♘f3 *(D)*

B



This position can also be reached via 3 ♘f3 ♗f5.

6...♗e7

Other moves don't fundamentally change the nature of the position:

a) 6...a6 7 ♗e2 ♗d6 8 ♗g5 ♗e7 9 ♗xf6 gxf6 10 ♘h4 ♗e4 11 cxd5 ♗xd5 12 0-0 f5 13 ♘f3 ♖g8 14 ♘e1 ♖g6 15 ♖c1 ♗d6 16 ♘xd5 ± Barlov-Lejlić, Banja Vrucica 1991.

b) 6...♘b4 7 ♖c1 dxc4 8 ♗xc4 c6 9 0-0 ♘bd5 10 ♗e5 ♗e7 11 ♕e2 0-0 12 h3 ♗g6 13

♖fd1 is slightly better for White, Xu Jun-Miladinović, Istanbul OL 2000.

c) 6...♗b4 7 a3 ♗xc3+ 8 bxc3 0-0 9 ♗g5 ♕e7 10 ♗d3 ♗xd3 11 ♕xd3 dxc4 12 ♕xc4 ± Gulko-*Battle Chess 4000*, Boston 1993.

7 cxd5

White has a small structural advantage so he may improve his position in different ways:

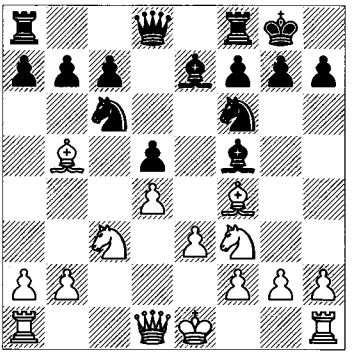
a) 7 ♗e2 dxc4 8 ♗xc4 ♘b4 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♖c1 c6 11 ♗g5 ♘bd5 12 ♕b3 was slightly more comfortable for White in Hübner-Vaganian, Münster 1995.

b) After 7 ♖c1 0-0 8 ♗e2 a6 9 0-0 h6 White achieved nothing with 10 a3 dxc4 11 ♗xc4 ♘h5 12 ♗g3 ♘xg3 13 hxg3 ♕d7 in Andersson-V.Kovačević, Bugojno 1984. Possibly White should have taken his time for 10 h3, preserving his bishop.

7...exd5

7...♘xd5 has been tested in a high-powered clash: 8 ♗g3 0-0 9 ♗e2 ♗b4 10 ♕c1 ♗d6 11 0-0 ♗xg3 12 hxg3 ♕d6 13 ♘d2 ♗g6 14 ♗f3 ♘ce7 15 ♖d1 c6 16 ♘c4 ± Kramnik-Short, Horgen 1995.

8 ♗b5 0-0 *(D)*



W

9 ♗xc6 (9 0-0 ♗d6 10 ♗xc6 bxc6 – *9 ♗xc6 bxc6 10 0-0 ♗d6*) 9...bxc6 10 0-0 and now:

a) 10...♗g4 11 ♘a4 appears to give White the better chances: 11...♕d7 (11...♘e4 12 ♕c2 ♗xf3 13 gxf3 ♘g5 14 ♗xg5 ♗xg5 15 ♕xc6 is much better for White, Cahuana-Reyes, Peru Cht 2000) 12 ♖c1 ♖fe8 13 ♕c2 ♗xf3 14 gxf3 ♕h3 15 ♗g3 (or 15 ♕e2 ♘h5 16 ♗xc7 ♖ac8 with compensation) 15...♗d6 16 ♕xc6 ♖ab8 17 ♗xd6 cxd6 18 ♕xd6 ♕xf3 19 ♕g3 ±.

b) It seems Black can hold the balance with the quiet 10...♗d6 11 ♘e5 ♕e8 12 ♘a4 ♖b8 13 ♖c1 c5 14 ♘xc5 ♖xb2 =.

Conclusion:

By delaying ♘f3 White will normally lure Black's bishop to f5 rather than to g4, thereby further reducing Black's central pressure.

3C: Rare Second Moves

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4)

2...a6

This is certainly a curious move. However, White hardly has anything better than 3 ♘f3 entering a position normally arising after 1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 a6!? 3 ♗f4. This has been played twice by none less than Anand, but still looks mysterious until you realize that Black was heading for the position arising after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 a6!?, which is actually a rather critical line of the Queen's Gambit Accepted! Some of the alternatives are interesting too:

a) 2...f5 – *1...f5 2 ♗f4 d5.*

b) 2...g6 is discussed in Line 8A.

c) 2...b5?! has never been tested but 3 ♘f3 transposes to Henley-Shirazi, USA Ch (Berkeley) 1984, which continued 3...♘f6 4 e3 a6 5 c3 e6 6 ♘bd2 c5 7 ♗d3 ♗d6 8 ♕e2 (8 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 9 e4 dxe4 10 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 11 ♗xe4 ♖a7 12 ♕e2 ±) 8...♗b7 (8...♗xf4 9 exf4 cxd4 10 cxd4 ♕d6 =) 9 dxc5 ♗xc5 and White could have won a pawn by 10 ♗xb5+!.

d) 2...b6 3 ♘f3 (3 e3) 3...♘d7 (3...♗a6!? 4 ♘bd2 ♘f6 – *1...♘f6 2 ♗f4 b6 3 ♘f3 ♗a6 4 ♘bd2 d5*; 3...♘f6 – *2...♘f6 3 ♘f3 b6*) 4 c4 ♗b7 5 e3 c5 6 ♘c3 e6? 7 ♘b5 ± Sadek-Mercier, Plainpalais 1994.

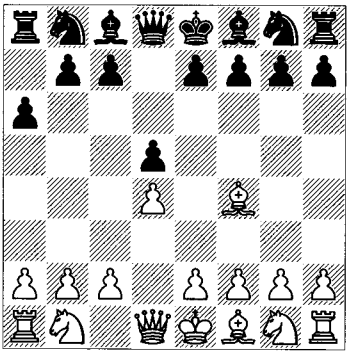
e) 2...♗g4!?, although apparently a little artificial, is perfectly logical – stopping e3 and taking advantage of the fact that White cannot reply with ♘e5 (which is a good reason not to play 2 ♘f3 ♗g4). If White now plays ♘f3 (with the idea ♘e5), Black will probably respond with ...♗xf3, damaging White's pawn-structure in return for ceding the bishop-pair. A lot of moves, including 3 h3, 3 ♕d3, 3 c3 and 3 c4, should be sufficient to secure a small advantage. However, it seems most consistent with our recommendation of 2...♘f6 3 e3 ♗g4 4 f3 to play along the same lines here too: 3 f3!? (surprisingly, this move appears untested) 3...♗h5 (after 3...♗f5, 4 e3?! ♘f6 transposes to *2...♘f6 3 e3 ♗g4 4 f3 ♗f5* but the immediate 4 c4, hoping for e4 in one go, seems better) and

now one interesting try is 4 ♕d3!?. Here are some preliminary lines: 4...c5!? (4...♘c6!?) 5 e4 dxe4 6 ♕b5+ ♘c6! (6...♕d7? 7 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 8 ♕xc5 +–; 6...♘d7 7 ♕xb7 exf3 8 ♘xf3 ♗xf3 9 gxf3 cxd4 10 ♗c7 ♕c8 11 ♗a6 ±) 7 d5 a6 (7...♕xd5 8 ♕xb7 +–) 8 ♕xb7 ♘b4 9 ♗xa6! ♖xa6 (9...♘xc2+ 10 ♔f1 ♖xa6 11 ♗c7 ♕a8 12 ♕b5+ +–) 10 ♗c7 (10 ♕b5+ ♕d7 11 ♕b8+ is a perpetual) 10...♕a8 11 ♕b5+ ±.

f) 2...♘d7 is based on a similar logic to 2...a6. Black has probably prepared 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘d7 and 2 ♘f3 ♘d7 (including the possibility 3 ♗f4), and hopes to stay inside his prepared repertoire. However, by seeking to make his repertoire consistent, Black makes a minor concession: while ...♘bd7 is often a good move against the London, it neither has particularly high priority, nor is it always the best way to develop the queenside. Our recommendation is normal London development with 3 ♘f3 (3 ♘c3!? c6 {3...♘gf6?? 4 ♘b5 +–} 4 e4 dxe4 5 ♘xe4 can be considered a Caro-Kann sideline), when Black can hardly have anything better than 3...♘gf6 followed by ...e6, with a likely transposition to Line 5D.

We now return to 2...a6 *(D)*:

W



3 ♘f3

After 3 e4?! White is almost an entire tempo up on a standard Blackmar-Diemer Gambit (1 d4 d5 2 e4). However, a pawn is a pawn, and while ♗f4 is a relatively useful extra move, ...a6 isn't a bad defensive move at all. After the natural 3...dxe4 4 ♘c3 ♘f6 5 f3 exf3 6 ♘xf3 e6 7 ♗d3 ♗e7 8 0-0 0-0 Black should be able to survive and eventually win an endgame with his extra pawn.

3...♘f6

3...c6 is quite similar: 4 e3 ♗g4 5 c4 ♗xf3 6 gxf3 (6 ♕xf3 ♕b6 7 ♘d2 ±) 6...e6 7 ♕b3 b5 8 cxd5 cxd5 9 a4 b4 10 ♘d2 ♗d6 11 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 12 ♖c1 ± Alberton-Drazić, Bratto 2003.

4 e3 ♗g4

Alternatives include:

a) 4...♗f5 5 c4 e6 6 ♕b3 ♕c8 7 ♘c3 c6 8 ♖c1 ± Zilberman-Klenburg, Israeli Ch (Tel-Aviv) 2002.

b) 4...♘h5 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 g5 7 ♘e5 ♘f6 8 ♗g3 c6 9 ♗d3 ♗g7 10 ♘d2 ♘bd7 11 h4 ♘xe5 12 ♗xe5 ♕b6 13 ♕c1 g4 14 h5 ± Gretarsson-Varga, Balatonlelle 2002.

c) 4...c5 5 c3 should transpose to line 'd' as the a-pawn move isn't very relevant in sharper lines without ...e6.

d) 4...e6 5 ♗d3 c5 6 c3 ♗d6 7 0-0 (7 ♘e5 ±) 7...♘c6 8 dxc5 ♗xc5 9 ♘bd2 ♗d6 = E.Vladimirov-Yuldachev, Mumbai 2003.

5 c4 c6

5...dxc4 is less consistent. Black has achieved a Slav set-up with his bishop outside the pawn-chain, so why give up the central foothold? 6 ♗xc4 e6 7 h3 ♗xf3 8 ♕xf3 ♘c6 9 ♘c3 ♗d6 10 ♗g5 ± Cebalo-Feletar, Belišče 1999.

6 ♘c3

6 ♕b3 b5 (or 6...♖a7) allows Black to demonstrate that ...a6 can be useful but may still be best.

6...e6 7 c5 ♘bd7 8 ♗e2 b5 9 a3 ♗e7 10 0-0 0-0

11 h3 ♗h5 12 ♖e1 ♖e8 13 b4 a5 = Gibiec-Velička, Pribram 2000.

Conclusion:

While most of Black's alternatives investigated here are hard to refute completely, they are in no way superior to more orthodox ones, and generally White will achieve a nice plus by simply developing in standard London fashion.

4 2...♘f6: Introduction and 3...c5

We now enter terrain where move-orders can be quite bewildering. In order to keep things as orderly as possible, lines with an early ...e6 (without first developing the c8-bishop) are discussed under the 3...e6 move-order and systems with an early ...g6 in the Grünfeld chapter.

The play is too varied to discuss general strategies, maybe with an exception for the most basic of them all: White must try to show that Black's play is too optimistic.

Chapter Outline

1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6

4A:	**(3 ♘f3)**	83
4B:	**3 e3 (3...♗g4!?)**	84
4C:	**3 e3 c5 (4 ♘f3)**	86
4D:	**3 e3 c5 4 c3 (4...♕b6)**	89
4E:	**3 e3 c5 4 c3 ♘c6 (5 ♘f3)**	90
4F:	**3 e3 c5 4 c3 ♘c6 5 ♘d2**	93

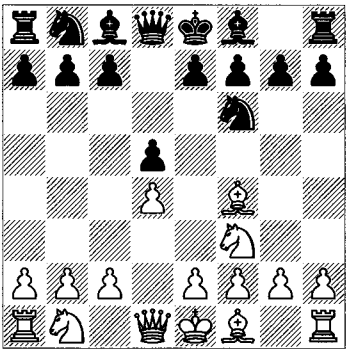
4A: Introduction

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4)

2...♘f6

With this natural and flexible move, Black reveals nothing more than his intention to develop his kingside. This is no doubt a crucial position. It can equally well be reached after 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4 d5. However, that is a somewhat less common move-order.

3 ♘f3 *(D)*


B

This move (and thereby the orthodox move-order 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗f4) has a couple of potential drawbacks. In addition to 3...♘h5 below there are 3...c5 4 e3 ♕b6 and possibly also 3...c6 4 e3 ♕b6, which are both discussed under the 3 e3 move-order.

The position after 3 c3 has been tested quite a lot, mostly from the move-order 1...♘f6 2 c3!? d5 3 ♗f4, but has little independent significance.

3...♘h5!?

This is hard to take seriously but equally hard to meet and could actually be another reason to prefer the 3 e3 move-order (3...♘h5 is of course not a possibility after 3 e3). Other moves tend to transpose to lines discussed after 3 e3:

a) 3...c6!? 4 e3 – *3 e3 c6 4 ♘f3*.

b) 3...♗g4?! may be imprecise, as 4 ♘e5 gives White the advantage: 4...♗h5 (4...♗f5 5 ♘d2 ♘bd7 6 e3 e6 7 g4 ♗e4 8 f3 ♗g6 9 h4 h6 10 ♘xg6 fxg6 11 ♗d3 ± Berkes-Antal, Paks 1999) 5 f3 e6 6 g4 ♗g6 7 h4 h6 8 ♘xg6 fxg6 9 ♕d3 ± Kovacs-Schipkov, Budapest 1992.

c) 3...c5 and then:

c1) We recommend 4 e3, which you will find under the 3 e3 c5 4 ♘f3 move-order.

Other moves seem less promising:

c2) On principle we dislike 4 c3 allowing 4...cxd4 5 cxd4, which is a form of Exchange Slav where one critical line starts with 5...♕b6. This does not really indicate that we dislike the Exchange Slav for White. However, in the Slav, it's White who decides whether he wants to play the (rather colourless) Exchange Variation. Here the decision is handed over to Black, and that is an important practical/psychological difference.

c3) 4 dxc5!? has been played by some very strong players. It reminds Black that 3...c5 isn't entirely without risk. However, we haven't been able to identify a path leading to an advantage for White. Most importantly after 4...e6, the consistent 5 b4?! is probably weak: 5...a5 6 c3

axb4 7 ♗xb8 (7 cxb4?! ♘c6 8 ♘c3 ♘xb4 9 ♘b5 ♘a6 10 ♘d6+ ♗xd6 11 ♗xd6 ♘xc5 12 ♗e5 0-0 ∓ Orso-Gonzalez Garcia, Budapest 1998) 7...b3 8 ♕xb3 ♖xb8 9 c6 ♗d6 10 cxb7 ♖xb7 11 ♕c2 ♗d7 12 ♘bd2 0-0 13 e3 ♕a5 14 ♘b3 ♖xb3! 15 ♕xb3 ♖b8 16 ♕c2 ♖c8 17 ♗d3 (17 ♘d2 ♖xc3 18 ♕b2 ♗a3 19 ♕b8+ ♖c8 −+) 17...♖xc3 −+ Tobak-Sumets, Odessa Ch 2000.

4 ♗g5

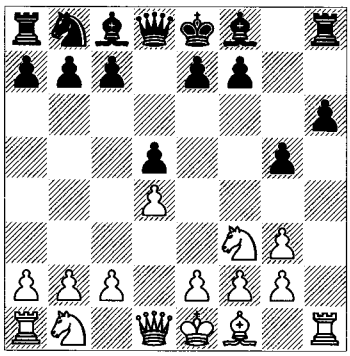
The bishop doesn't seem well placed on e3 or d2. 4 ♗c1?! may be an invitation to a quick draw after 4...♘f6 5 ♗f4 ♘h5 but Black can of course consider 4...f5 with an odd kind of Dutch.

4...h6 5 ♗h4 g5

5...♘c6 6 e3 g5 (Vaquero-Sousa, corr. 1999) can be countered by 7 ♘fd2, with some chances for an advantage after 7...♘g7 8 ♗g3 ♘f5 9 c4.

6 ♗g3 ♘xg3 7 hxg3 *(D)*

B



The evaluation of this kind of position is mainly a matter of personal taste but of great importance, as they can hardly be avoided if you prefer the 2 ♘f3 move-order. Our general impression is that White's chances are very slightly better. Provided that neither player has castled and Black has played his pawn to d5, we believe the open h-file and the weakness at h6 just outweigh Black's bishop-pair. However, the unbalanced nature of the position tends to favour the player with the more experience of playing this kind of position. From a theoretical viewpoint this isn't much to brag about, but for the practical player it may work very well.

7...♗g7

7...♗f5 8 e3 ♗g7 9 ♘bd2 ♘c6 10 c3 ♕d6 11 ♕b3 0-0-0 was unbalanced but probably equal in Salamon-Kelly, Budapest 2003.

8 e3 c5 9 c3 ♘c6!?

Not 9...b6?! 10 dxc5 bxc5 11 ♗b5+ ±, but 9...♕d6 looks fine. After 10 ♗d3 ♘c6 11 ♘bd2 ♗d7 12 ♕e2 0-0-0 13 0-0-0 ♔b8 Black's bishop-pair and activity at least compensated for his pawn weaknesses in Sevillano Leal-Magem, Dos Hermanas 2000.

10 dxc5

10 ♘bd2 is less critical: 10...e5 11 dxe5 g4 12 ♘h4 0-0 13 ♗d3 ♘xe5 (13...d4 14 ♘c4 b5?! 15 ♗e4 ± P.Matović-Pisk, Brno 2001) 14 ♗f5 ♗xf5 15 ♘xf5 ♘d3+ 16 ♔f1 ♕g5 17 ♘xg7 ♔xg7 =.

10...0-0 11 ♕c2 e5

As we consider this line more a practical matter than a theoretical one, it seems appropriate to give a practical example: 12 ♘a3 ♕e7 13 ♘b5 d4 14 ♘d6 dxe3 15 0-0-0 ♗e6 16 fxe3 f5 17 g4 fxg4 18 ♖xh6! ♗xh6 (18...♖fd8 19 ♖xe6 ♕xe6 20 ♗c4 +−) 19 ♕g6+ ♗g7?! (19...♕g7 20 ♕xe6+ ♔h8 21 ♕xg4 ±) 20 ♘xg5 ♖f6 21 ♕h7+ ♔f8 22 ♘xe6+ ♖xe6 23 ♗c4 ♕g5 (23...♖d8 24 ♖f1+ ♗f6 25 ♕h8#) 24 ♗xe6 ♔e7 25 ♘f5+ ♔xe6 26 ♘xg7+ 1-0 Masek-Trefny, Czech Ch 1993. The conclusion could have been 26...♔f6 (26...♔f7 27 ♘e6+! ♔xe6 {27...♔f6 28 ♖f1+ ♔xe6 29 ♕f7#} 28 ♖d6#) 27 ♖d6+ ♔e7 28 ♘e6+ (comments based on those in the tournament bulletin).

Conclusion:

If you like White after 7 hxg3, playing the London will be much easier as you will generally not have to worry much about ...♘h5. From a theoretical point of view, however, we suspect that Black should be able to equalize.

4B: 3 e3

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6)

3 e3 *(D)*

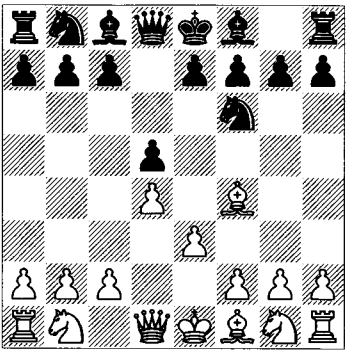
In contrast to 3 ♘f3, this immediately provides pawn support to the d4-pawn, thereby giving White a freer hand to develop his queenside. Now ...c5 or ...c6 can always be met with c3 (so that ...♕b6 can be countered rather comfortably with ♕b3).

3...♗g4!?

This is one of the few attempts to take advantage of White's move-order.

a) 3...b6 4 ♘f3 e6 (4...♗a6 5 ♗xa6 ♘xa6 6 c4 ±) 5 c3 ♗e7 6 ♘bd2 0-0 7 ♘e5 ♘fd7 8 ♗d3

B



♘xe5 9 dxe5 ♗a6 10 ♗c2 ♘d7 11 ♕g4 ♖e8 12 0-0-0 c5 13 h4 ♕c7 14 ♘f3 ± ♗f8? 15 ♗xh7+ +– Drill-H.Schneider, Dörnigheim 1994.

b) 3...♘bd7 4 ♘d2 e6 (4...c5 5 c3 e6 – *3...e6 4 ♘d2 c5 5 c3 ♘bd7*) 5 c3 ♗e7 6 ♗d3 b6 7 ♘gf3 ♗b7 (7...♘h5 8 ♗e5 f6?! 9 ♘g5! ±) 8 ♘e5 a6 9 ♘df3 ♘xe5 10 ♘xe5 0-0 11 0-0 ± Belamarić-S.Nikolić, Bad Wildbad 2000.

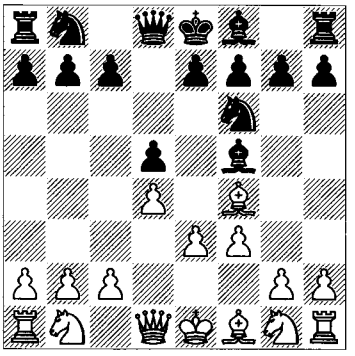
4 f3!?

This must be the critical response. The position after 4 ♘f3 is actually not very likely to arise from 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗f4 ♗g4?! as few players would prefer 4 e3 over 4 ♘e5.

4...♗f5 *(D)*

Less active is 4...♗d7!? (4...♗h5 5 ♗d3 c6 – *3...c6 4 ♗d3 ♗g4 5 f3 ♗h5*). After 5 ♘c3 e6 6 e4 ♗b4 7 e5 it may be interesting to compare with the Trompowsky variation 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗g5 ♘e4 3 ♗f4 d5 4 f3 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 e6 6 e4 ♗b4 7 e5 where Black plays 7...♘fd7 with relatively good equalizing prospects. Our position may offer White a little more but 7...♘g8 8 ♗e3 ½-½ Miles-Arencibia, Havana 2001 wasn't very revealing.

W



This position has more often arisen with one extra move from the Trompowsky after 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗g5 ♘e4 3 ♗f4 d5 4 e3 ♗f5 5 f3 ♘f6. The variations below draw heavily upon Wells's analysis in *Winning with the Trompowsky*. We have standardized the move-numbers to fit our move-order.

5 c4!

Whenever Black develops his light-squared bishop early, ♕xb7 becomes a major theme.

5...c6

Other moves are weaker:

a) 5...e6 6 ♘c3 c6 – *5...c6 6 ♘c3 e6*.

b) 5...♗xb1 6 ♖xb1 c6 7 ♗d3 e6 8 ♘e2 ♗b4+ 9 ♔f2 ♗e7 10 g4 dxc4 11 ♗xc4 0-0 12 e4 is slightly better for White, Adams-Emms, British Ch (Hove) 1997.

c) 5...c5?! 6 cxd5 ♘xd5 7 ♗xb8 and now:

c1) 7...♕a5+ 8 ♕d2 ♘b4 9 ♘c3 ♘c2+ 10 ♔f2 ♘xa1 11 ♗b5+ ± Wells.

c2) 7...♘xe3 8 ♗b5+ ♗d7 9 ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 10 ♕e2 ♘xg2+ 11 ♕xg2 ♖xb8 12 dxc5 ± Adams-Van Wely, Tilburg 1996.

c3) 7...♖xb8 8 e4 ♘e3 (8...♕a5+ 9 ♔f2 +–) 9 exf5! ♕a5+ (9...♘xd1 10 ♗b5+ ♕d7 11 ♗xd7+ ♔xd7 12 ♔xd1 +–) 10 ♕d2 ♘c2+ 11 ♔f2 ♕xd2+ 12 ♘xd2 ♘xa1 13 ♗b5+ ♔d8 14 ♗d3 ± Wells.

6 ♘c3 e6 7 ♕b3 b6

Alternatively:

a) 7...♕b6?! 8 c5 ♕xb3 9 axb3 ♗e7 10 b4 (White should probably not be tempted by 10 ♗xb8?! ♖xb8 11 ♖xa7 b6 12 g4 ♗g6 13 b4 bxc5 14 bxc5 ♖xb2, when Black is quite active) 10...0-0 11 b5 ♖c8 12 g4 ♗g6 13 h4 h5 14 g5 ♘fd7 15 ♘h3 ±.

b) 7...♕d7 8 c5 ♗e7 9 g4 ♗g6 10 h4 h6 11 ♘b5 cxb5 12 ♗xb8 a6 13 ♗g3 0-0 14 ♘e2 b6 15 cxb6 ♖ac8 16 ♗c7 ♘e8 17 b7 ♖xc7 18 b8♕ ♘d6 19 ♕xc7 ± Wells-Cafferty, Hastings 2003/4.

8 g4 ♗g6 9 h4 h6

Or 9...h5 10 g5 dxc4 11 ♕xc4 ♘fd7 12 0-0-0 b5 13 ♕b3 a5 14 a4 b4 15 ♘e4 ± Arkhangelsky-Ziska, Copenhagen 2004.

10 ♘h3

10 0-0-0!? may be a more flexible continuation. After 10...♗e7 11 ♗g3 (11 ♘h3 – *10 ♘h3 ♗e7 11 0-0-0*) 11...♗d6 12 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 13 ♘h3 ♕g3 14 ♗e2 ♕xh4 15 ♖dg1 White had more than enough compensation for the pawn in Winants-Mohandesi, France 2003.

10...♗e7

10...dxc4 11 ♗xc4 ♘d5 12 0-0-0 ♗d6 13 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 14 e4 ♘xc3 15 ♕xc3 ♘d7 16 h5 ♗h7 17 ♔b1 0-0-0 18 ♔a1 ± Conquest-Xie Jun, Hastings 1996/7.

11 0-0-0 a5

12 cxd5 exd5 13 ♗d3 (Wells suggests 13 ♘f2 intending ♗d3 and ♘xd3) 13...♗xd3 14 ♖xd3 ♘bd7 15 ♖dd1 ± Winants-Wiedenkeller, Neum ECC 2000.

Conclusion:

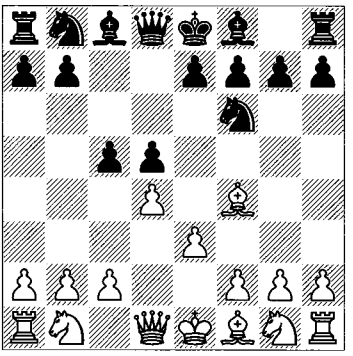
Unless you feel uneasy transposing to the Trompowsky, you should be quite happy with your chances after 5 c4 as the position has given White good results at strong international level.

4C: 3...c5

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3)

3...c5!? *(D)*

W



This is logical – simultaneously attacking the centre and preparing ...♕b6. It allows Black some more active options than the related 3...e6 (mainly connected with the early development of the light-squared bishop to f5 or g4) and no doubt is more tempting. However, at the same time there are certain risks: Black doesn't prepare castling, the pawn is only indirectly protected and c7 may be subject to an attack. Play is varied and hard to categorize, but Illustrative Game 10 shows how White should proceed if Black is tempted to immobilize his centre with ...c4, and Game 12 demonstrates White's queenside opportunities.

4 ♘f3

Due to space considerations we cannot go into details on 4 dxc5 and 4 ♘c3, but for an opponent considering the 3...c5 move-order they represent additional obstacles. For the curious, we just give a few lines demonstrating that Black doesn't have a simple solution after 4 dxc5 ♕a5+ 5 ♘c3 (and accordingly that 4 ♘c3 ♕a5 5 dxc5 is a challenge too):

a) 5...e6?! 6 a3! ♕xc5 7 ♘b5 ♘a6 8 ♗e5! b6 (8...♗d7 9 ♗d4 ♕c8 10 ♘xa7 ±) 9 ♗d3 ♗e7 10 b4 ♕c6 11 ♘f3 0-0 12 ♘fd4 ♕d7 13 ♕f3 ♗b7 14 ♖d1 ♖fc8 15 ♕h3 ±.

b) 5...♕xc5 6 ♘b5 ♘a6 7 ♗e5 and now:

b1) 7...♗g4 8 ♘f3!? ♘d7 (8...e6 9 c3 ♗e7?! 10 ♕a4 +–; 8...♗xf3 9 ♕xf3 ♕xc2 10 ♘c3 ♘d7 11 ♗b5 ♘c5 12 ♕xd5 e6 13 ♗xd7+ ♘xd7 14 ♕xb7 +–) 9 ♗d4 ±.

b2) 7...b6 8 ♗d4 ♕c6 9 ♘f3 ♘d7 (9...♘e4 10 c4 e6 11 cxd5 ♗b4+ 12 ♘c3 exd5 13 ♘e5 ±) 10 c4 dxc4 11 ♕a4 ♗b7 12 ♖c1 ♘ac5 13 ♗xc5 a6 14 ♘fd4 ♕xc5 15 b4 ±.

4...♕b6!?

This is another attempt to take advantage of White's delayed mobilization of his queenside (compared to the 4 c3 system).

a) 4...♗f5 – note 'a' to Black's 4th move in Line 7C.

b) 4...♘c6 5 c3 – *4 c3 ♘c6 5 ♘f3*.

c) 4...cxd4 5 exd4 ♘c6 (5...♘h5?! 6 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 7 ♗b5+ ♗d7 8 ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 9 ♘e5 ♕f5 10 ♕e2 a6 11 g4 ♕f4 12 gxh5 ♕c1+ 13 ♕d1 ♕xb2 14 ♘d2 ♕xd4 15 ♘ef3 ±) 6 c3 is the Exchange Caro-Kann (Line 1E).

d) 4...♘h5? 5 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 6 ♗b5+! ♗d7 7 ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 8 ♘e5 ♕f5 9 ♕e2! ♘f6 10 ♕b5+ ♘d7 11 ♘c3 cxd4 12 exd4 ♖d8 (12...f6 13 g4 ♕e6 14 ♘xd5 +–) 13 ♘xd5 ♕e4+ 14 ♔f1 +–.

e) 4...♗g4 gives White a choice:

e1) 5 dxc5!? is tempting, as Black has only lasted a total of 24 moves in two of the games where it has been tested. However, it seems that a well-timed ...a6 solves most of his problems:

e11) 5...♕a5+ 6 ♘c3 ♘e4? (6...a6!) 7 ♕xd5 ♘xc3 8 ♕xb7 +– Gozzoli-Fauconnier, France 1998.

e12) 5...♘c6 6 ♗b5 ♕a5+ 7 ♘c3 a6 (7...e6!) 8 ♗xc6+ bxc6 9 ♕d4 ♗xf3 10 gxf3 g6 11 ♗e5 ♗g7 12 a4 0-0 13 b4 ± Z.Nemeth-Grabher, Budapest 1993.

e13) 5...♘bd7 6 ♗b5 ♗xf3 7 gxf3 g6 8 c4 dxc4 (8...a6!) 9 ♕a4 ♕c8 (Gochelashvili-Khlian, Krasnodar 2001; 9...♗g7 10 ♘c3 0-0? 11 ♖d1 +–) 10 c6 +–.

e2) We therefore recommend 5 c3:

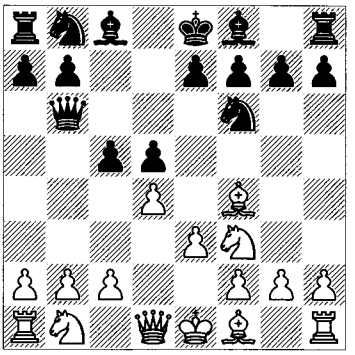
e21) 5...♘c6 – *4 c3 ♘c6 5 ♘f3 ♗g4.*

e22) 5...e6!? 6 ♕b3 (after 6 ♗xb8?! Black should play 6...♗xf3! with rough equality rather than 6...♕xb8? or 6...♖xb8? allowing a check at a4) 6...♕b6 7 ♘e5 ♕xb3 (7...♗f5 8 ♗b5+ ♘c6 9 a4 ±) 8 axb3 ♗f5 9 ♗b5+ ±.

e23) 5...♕b6 6 ♕b3 c4 7 ♕xb6 axb6 8 ♘e5 (8 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 9 b3 b5 ½-½ Montalvo-Borges Mateos, Santo Domingo 2001) 8...♗f5 9 ♘a3 ±.

We now return to 4...♕b6!? *(D)*:

W



5 ♘c3!

Or:

a) 5 b3!? is obviously a minor concession. However, if White can get away with this slight weakening of his dark queenside squares until he has completed his development, his queen will probably be better off on d1 than on c1, and the extra support for c4 may come in handy at some point:

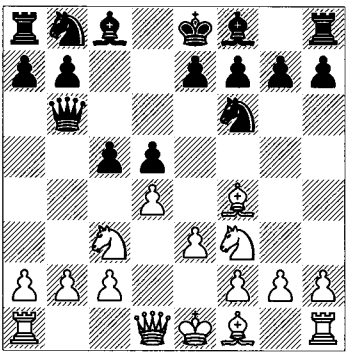
a1) 5...♗f5 6 ♗e2 ♘c6 7 c3 e6 8 dxc5 ♗xc5 9 b4 ♗e7 10 a4 a6 11 a5 ♕d8 12 ♘d4 ♘xd4 13 exd4 0-0 = Kadas-Hajnal, Heves 2000.

a2) 5...♘c6 6 c3 ♗g4 is logical as this pin isn't an option after 5 ♕c1. After 7 ♗e2 e6 8 0-0 ♗e7 9 ♘bd2 0-0 10 h3 ♗h5 11 a4 ♖fc8 12 a5 ♕d8 13 a6 b6 chances were balanced in Šahović-Komarov, Belgrade 1995.

b) 5 ♕c1 is popular. However, after 5...♘c6 6 c3 ♗f5 7 ♗e2 White has easy development and no weaknesses, but that's all. He has neither any initiative nor any central advantage. There is no wonder the London hasn't gained status as a serious opening if this kind of position is supposed to be all White can hope for. Move-order subtleties don't seem to make much difference here – White can play ♗e2, ♘bd2, h3 and 0-0 in almost any order. After, e.g., 7...e6 8 ♘bd2 ♖c8 9 0-0 cxd4 10 exd4 ♗e7 11 a3 0-0 12 b4 (12 ♖e1 h6 13 ♗f1 ♘e4 14 ♘e5?! ♘xe5 15 ♗xe5 ♗g5 –+ M.Piket-Van der Sterren, Rotterdam 1990) 12...♘e4 13 ♘b3 ♗d6 14 ♗xd6 ♘xd6 15 ♖e1 ♕c7 16 ♕f4 ♘e4 17 ♕xc7 ♖xc7 chances were even in Gretarsson-Schandorff, Reykjavik 1997.

We now return to 5 ♘c3! *(D)*:

B



This works perfectly well from a purely tactical viewpoint and one would assume that the black queen is more misplaced on b6 than the white knight is on c3. So it's slightly surprising that statistically White scores relatively badly in this variation. One reason may actually be that most London lovers enjoy the secure c3-d4-e3 centre so much that they are slightly disturbed when not allowed the peace to set it up.

5...c4

Black gains queenside space while stopping ♘b5, thereby renewing the threat to b2.

a) 5...♕xb2?! appears to be untested, but isn't very attractive as White has a choice between an immediate draw and complications probably favourable for him. After 6 ♘b5 ♘a6 it isn't inconceivable that White can find a way to gain an advantage after 7 ♖b1, but 7 a3! seems stronger as after 7...♗f5 8 dxc5 White threatens 9 ♗e5!. Then:

a1) 8...♘d7 9 ♘fd4 ♗g4 10 f3 e5 11 ♖b1 ♕a2 12 ♕c1 exd4 13 ♖b2 ♕xb2 14 ♕xb2 +–.

a2) 8...♗xc2 9 ♕c1 ♕xc1+ 10 ♖xc1 ♗f5 (10...♗a4 11 c6 b6 12 ♘d6+! exd6 13 ♗xa6 +–) 11 ♘bd4! ♗g6 (11...♗d7 12 c6; 11...♗c8 12 ♗b5+ ♘d7 13 c6 +–) 12 ♗b5+ ♔d8 13 c6 +–.

Other moves are playable but hardly critical:

b) 5...e6 6 ♘b5 ♘a6 and now:

b1) 7 c3!? c4 (7...♗d7 8 a4 c4 9 b3 cxb3 10 ♕xb3 ♗e7 11 a5 ♕d8 12 ♘d6+ ±) 8 a4 ♘h5 (8...♗d7 9 b3 ♗xb5 10 axb5 ♕xb5 11 bxc4 dxc4 12 ♘e5 ♖c8 13 ♗xc4 ♖xc4 14 ♕e2 ±; 8...♗e7 9 b3 cxb3 10 ♕xb3 0-0 11 ♗d3 ♗d7 12 a5 ♕c6 13 0-0 ± Mary-Yepez Gutierrez, corr. 2002) 9 ♗g5 h6 10 ♗h4 g5 11 ♘e5 ♘f6 12 ♕f3 ♗e7 13 ♗g3 ±.

b2) 7 a4 and then:

b21) 7...c4 8 b3 cxb3 9 c3 ♗e7 10 ♕xb3 0-0 11 h3 ♘e4 12 ♗d3 (12 ♖b1 ♗d7 13 ♗d3 f5 14 0-0 ♗c6 15 c4 ± S.Kovačević-Catalan Escale, Manresa 1996) 12...♗d7 13 ♗xe4 dxe4 14 ♘e5 ♗c6 15 0-0 ♖fc8 16 ♖fc1 ♕d8 17 ♖ab1 ♗e8 18 ♘c4 ± Kosić-A.Kovačević, Herceg Novi 2001.

b22) 7...♗e7 8 h3 (8 a5 ♕d8 9 c3 c4 10 b3 cxb3 11 ♕xb3 0-0 12 ♗d3 ♘h5 13 ♗e5 f6 14 ♗g3 ♘xg3 15 hxg3 f5 16 g4 ± Zsu.Polgar-Lukez, Val Maubuée 1988) 8...0-0 9 ♗e2 ♗d7 10 0-0 ♗xb5 11 axb5 ♘c7 12 dxc5 ♗xc5 13 ♕d3 ♖fd8 14 ♖a4 ♗d6 15 ♗xd6 ♖xd6 16 ♖fa1 ± Miles-Bologan, Ohrid Ech 2001.

c) 5...♗d7 6 ♖b1 e6 7 ♗e2 ♗d6 8 ♘e5 ♗xe5 (8...♘c6? 9 ♘xd7 ♔xd7 10 ♗xd6 ♔xd6 11 ♘a4 ±; 8...0-0 9 0-0 ♖d8 10 ♗g5 ±) 9 ♗xe5 ♘c6 10 0-0 ♘xe5 11 dxe5 ± Vogel-Acar, Dresden 2004.

d) 5...♗f5 6 ♗b5+ ♘c6 7 dxc5 ♕xc5 8 ♘d4 ♗d7 9 ♘b3 ♕b6 10 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 11 ♕xd5 e6 12 ♕h5 ± Forbes-Summerscale, British Ch (Eastbourne) 1991.

e) 5...a6 has ideas similar to 5...c4 – stopping ♘b5 and renewing the threat to b2. Then 6 a3! (for 6 ♘a4!? see Illustrative Game 12) is probably best:

e1) Note the tactical point 6...♕xb2?? 7 ♘a4 +–.

e2) After 6...♗g4 7 ♗e2 e6 8 0-0 ♘bd7 (S.Kovačević-Sagall, Cappelle la Grande 1994), White should probably try 9 ♘a4 ♕c6 10 ♘xc5 ♘xc5 11 dxc5 ♗xc5 12 ♘e5 ♗xe2 13 ♕xe2 ♕a4 14 c4 with a minimal plus.

e3) 6...cxd4 7 exd4 ♘c6 8 h3 ♗f5 9 ♘a4 ♕d8 10 ♘c5 and now:

e31) 10...♕c8 11 c3 ♘d7 12 b4 e6 13 c4 ♘b6 14 ♖c1 dxc4 15 ♗xc4 ♘xc4 16 ♖xc4 ♗xc5 17 dxc5 ± V.Kovačević-Kuljasević, Pula 2002.

e32) The more active 10...e6!? 11 b4 (11 ♘xb7? ♕b6 12 ♘d6+ ♗xd6 13 ♗xd6 ♕xb2 14 ♗d3 ♕c3+ ∓) 11...♗xc5 12 bxc5 b6 may be an improvement. After 13 cxb6 ♕xb6 Black should have no real difficulties, but after 14 ♗d3 he should probably avoid the ambitious 14...♘e4 15 0-0 ♘c3 as White seems to come out on top after long but not too complicated lines.

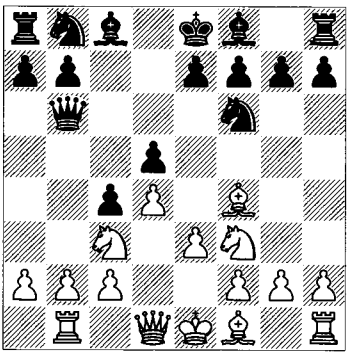
6 ♖b1

The evaluation of this rather quiet position (and a few rather similar ones) is important for the evaluation of the entire orthodox London System. White's hope for an advantage lies in attempts to attack Black's rigid central pawns at c4 and d5 either by b3 or e4. However, this can only succeed if White has the greater piece activity, and although for the moment Black isn't particularly well developed, he is to move and his pieces are ready for speedy development.

After 6 a4!? there is the practical question of whether White has more than a draw after 6...♕xb2 7 ♘b5 ♘a6 (when 8 ♖b1 ♕a2 9 ♖a1 ♕b2 repeats). Secondly, one may ask who has profited from the extra a-pawn moves after 6...a6. Heinzel-Stross, Liberec 2003 did not provide any conclusive answer: 7 ♕c1 (7 ♖b1!?) 7...♗f5 8 ♗e2 h6 9 0-0 (after 9 a5!? ♕d8 10 0-0 ♘c6 11 b3 the a5-pawn will fall but at least in the short run White's better development will compensate) 9...e6 10 b3 cxb3 11 cxb3 (11 a5 ♕b4 12 cxb3 ♘c6 13 ♖a4 ♕e7 14 ♕d2 ±) 11...♘c6 12 a5 ♕d8 (12...♘xa5 seems risky as White can choose between 13 ♘b5!? axb5 14 ♗c7 ♕c6 15 ♖xa5 ♖xa5 16 ♗xa5 ♗d6 = and 13 ♘a4, when 13...♕xb3 seems too risky due to 14 ♕c7) 13 ♘a4 ♕xa5 14 ♘e5 ♖c8 15 ♘c5 ♕b6 16 ♘xb7! ±.

We now return to the position after 6 ♖b1 *(D)*:

B



6...♗g4

Other moves seem less in accordance with the position:

a) 6...e6 7 a3 and now:

a1) 7...♘h5 8 ♗g5 h6 9 ♗h4 g5 10 ♘e5 ♘g7 11 ♗g3 ♘f5 12 e4 (12 ♕h5!?) 12...♘xg3 13 hxg3 ± Condie-Bryson, Troon 1986.

a2) 7...♗d6 8 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 9 ♘e5 seems to give White a lasting edge. After 9...♘bd7 10 f4 a6 11 ♗e2 b5 12 ♗f3 ♗b7 13 0-0 0-0 14 ♕e1 ♘b6 15 g4 ♕e7 16 ♕h4 ♘c8 (M.Piket-Rogozenko, Dutch Ch 2001) White should probably go for 17 ♗g2!? ♘d6 18 ♖f3 planning ♖h3.

b) 6...♗f5 7 ♘e5 e6 allows White to choose an ambitious approach with 8 f3 ♘c6 9 g4 ♗g6 10 h4, but after 10...♘b4 11 e4 h6 12 ♘xg6 fxg6, he should probably prefer 13 a3 ♘c6 14 e5 ♘d7 15 ♘e2, with good prospects, over 13 e5 ♘d7 14 a3? (Vidmar-Réti, Košice 1918), when Black can get an advantage with 14...♕xd4!.

7 ♗e2 e6 8 0-0 ♘c6 9 h3

9 b3?! is premature: 9...♕a5 10 ♘a4 b5 11 ♘c5 ♗xc5 12 dxc5 ♘e4 ∓.

9...♗xf3 10 ♗xf3 ♗e7 11 ♘e2

11 b3!? ♕a5 12 ♘e2 is worth considering, as is 11 b4!?.

11...♕a5 12 a3

12 b3 c3 doesn't seem to improve White's prospects.

12...h6

13 c3 g5 14 ♗h2 h5! ∓ E.Meduna-Van der Sterren, Prague 1992.

Conclusion:

By playing ...c4 and exchanging his light-squared bishop for White's f3-knight, Black achieves a stable pawn-structure with possibilities for play on both wings. Black's position is the easier one to play.

4D: 4 c3

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 c5)

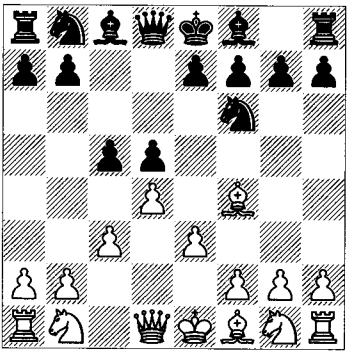
4 c3! *(D)*

Once again White has found time to set up his basic London formation. Black must now consider whether ♗xb8 followed by ♕a4+ and ♕xa7 is a threat.

4...♕b6

Black has also tried:

a) 4...e6 – *3...e6 4 c3 c5.*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b) 4...cxd4 and now 5 exd4 is the Exchange Caro-Kann (Line 1D). 5 cxd4 is a rather tame Exchange Slav, but does allow White the natural development of his queen's knight to c3.

c) 4...♗f5?! and now:

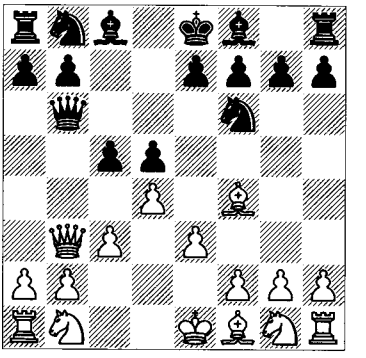
c1) 5 ♕b3 seems to be the logical reply even though it has never been tested. 5...♕b6 will be met with 6 dxc5.

c2) 5 ♘f3 e6? (5...♘c6 – *4 c3 ♘c6 5 ♘f3 ♗f5?!*) 6 ♗xb8! ♖xb8 7 ♗b5+ ♔e7 8 dxc5 ♕c7 9 b4 +– Stefanova-Giddins, Antwerp 1997.

d) 4...b6 is tactically playable, as 5 ♗xb8?! ♖xb8 6 ♕a4+?! ♗d7 7 ♕xa7 gives White at best a draw after 7...c4 8 b4 ♖a8 9 ♕b7 ♖b8 10 ♕a6 ♖a8 =.

e) 4...g6 is an important transposition to the Grünfeld set-ups, as both sides have sidestepped some major possibilities.

5 ♕b3 *(D)*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5...c4

5...♘c6 6 ♘d2 – *4...♘c6 5 ♘d2 ♕b6 6 ♕b3.*

6 ♕c2

6 ♕xb6 axb6 is similar to, but less explored than, the position we dismiss in Line 4E. However, it does not seem to promise much here either.

6...g6!

Black must avoid 6...♗f5?? 7 ♕xf5 ♕xb2 8 ♕c8#.

6...♘c6 is less energetic. Then 7 b3!? looks promising for White: 7...cxb3 8 axb3 g6 9 b4 ♗f5 (9...♘h5!?) 10 ♕a4 ♗g7 11 b5 ♗xb1 (11...♘d8 12 ♗e5 0-0 13 c4 ±) 12 bxc6 0-0 (12...bxc6 13 ♕a6 ±) 13 ♕b4 +– V.Kovačević-Polajzer, Pula 1990.

7 ♘d2

This is the only move tested in practical play. There are several reasons to expect White to have better chances here than in similar positions examined in Line 4E. Most importantly, Black has had to prepare ...♗f5 with ...g6, which he normally would not play. In addition, White may be able to attack the centre and kingside more easily with his knight still at home (f3 followed by e4 and/or g4 is one option which is often useful in similar positions in the Queen's Gambit Declined). Despite this we have been unable to identify a path to an advantage after 7 ♘d2 and this may be the place to look for an improvement. We suggest that you take a closer look at the logical but risky 7 f3!?:

a) 7...♘h5!? is decentralizing but helps force through ...e5. After 8 ♗g5 Black must decide how to benefit from the exposed bishop:

a1) 8...f6 9 ♗h4 e5 10 g4 ♘g7 11 b3 exd4 12 cxd4 ♕e6 13 ♔f2 (13 ♘c3!?) 13...b5 14 bxc4 bxc4 15 e4 g5 16 ♗g3 ♘c6 17 ♘c3 ♘xd4 18 ♕d2 ♗c5 19 ♔g2 ±.

a2) 8...h6 9 ♗h4 e5 is more challenging. We suggest 10 e4!? exd4 11 cxd4, which really needs practical tests. The following variations should be considered a starting point for analysis rather than the definite truth: 11...♕xd4 (11...♘c6 12 ♗f2 ♘xd4 13 ♕d2 ♗c5 14 ♘c3 ♘f4 15 ♖d1 ±) 12 ♘c3 ♕e3+ 13 ♗e2 ±.

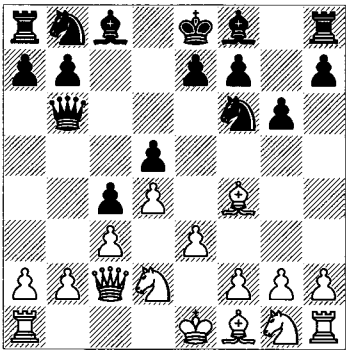
b) 7...♗f5 8 e4 dxe4 9 g4 ♗d7 10 fxe4 and now:

b1) 10...♗xg4?! 11 ♘d2 ±.

b2) 10...♘xe4?! 11 ♕xe4 ♕xb2 12 ♗e5 ♖g8 (12...f6 13 ♗xf6 ♗c6 14 d5 +–) 13 ♗xc4 ♘c6 (13...♗c6 14 d5 ♗d7 15 ♘e2 f5 16 ♕e3 ±) 14 ♘f3 ♕xa1 15 0-0 ±.

b3) 10...♘xg4 11 ♘f3 ♕f6 12 ♕d2 ♘c6 (12...♗h6 13 ♗xh6 ♕xf3 14 ♗g2 ♕d3 15 ♕xd3 cxd3 16 ♗c1 ±) 13 e5 ♕f5 14 ♗xc4 ♕e4+ 15 ♗e2 f6 16 exf6 exf6 17 0-0 ±.

We now return to 7 ♘d2 *(D)*:



B

7...♗f5 8 ♕c1 ♘bd7

Black isn't under a lot of pressure and can develop in various ways:

a) 8...♘h5!? needs further testing: 9 ♗e5 f6 10 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 11 ♗e2 ♗d7 12 ♗f3 (after, e.g., 12 ♗xh5 gxh5 13 e4 ♗h6 14 exd5 ♕b5 15 ♘gf3 ♕xd5 Black's bishops are powerful and White must avoid 16 0-0? ♗h3! ∓) 12...e6 13 ♘e2 ♗d6 14 b3 ♕c7 15 bxc4 dxc4 16 ♘e4 ♗e7 17 ♗xh5 gxh5 18 ♘f4 f5 and in the game Condie-Muir, Scottish Ch (St Andrews) 1989 Black's bishop-pair compensated for his damaged pawn-structure.

b) 8...♗g7 9 h3 ♘c6 10 ♘gf3 ♖c8 11 ♗e2 ♕a5 12 ♘e5 b5 13 a3 ♘e4 14 ♘xc6 ♖xc6 15 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 16 0-0 h5 17 ♕d2 = Zaitseva-Shaidullina, St Petersburg wom 2003.

9 h3

There may be alternative ideas here. 9 f3?! e5! doesn't seem promising for White (e.g., 10 dxe5 ♘h5 11 g4 ♘xf4 12 exf4 ♕e3+ ∓) but 9 b3 or 9 ♘e2 may be worth exploring.

9...♗g7 10 ♘gf3 0-0 11 ♗e2 ♖fc8 12 0-0 h6 13 ♗d1

The game is equal. 13...♕c6 14 ♗c2 e6 15 a4 ♗f8 16 ♖e1 b6 ½-½ S.Kovačević-Palac, Cannes 1996.

Conclusion:

Although by playing ...c4 Black reduces his pressure on the centre, his strong control of e4 seems to inhibit White's activity. In our main line Black equalizes fully, but we have pointed out various experimental ideas for White.

4E: 4...♘c6 Introduction

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 c5 4 c3)

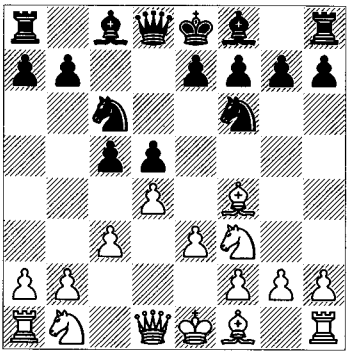
4...♘c6

Seeing that White can now protect b2 rather comfortably, Black prefers normal development over the queen excursion.

5 ♘f3 *(D)*

While White can fight for an advantage after this natural move, there are a few critical junctures where we have not been able to demonstrate anything for White. We therefore suggest a closer look at the less explored 5 ♘d2 (see Line 4F).

B



5...♕b6!

a) 5...cxd4 6 exd4 is a variation of the Exchange Caro-Kann (Line 1E).

b) 5...♗f5?! 6 dxc5 ♗xb1?! (6...e6 7 ♘d4 ♗xb1 8 ♖xb1 ♗xc5 9 ♕a4 ±) 7 ♖xb1 ♘e4 8 ♘e5 ♘xc5 9 ♗b5 ± ♖c8?! 10 ♕f3! +– ♕a5?! (10...♘e4? 11 ♘xf7! also wins for White) 11 ♕xd5 +– Cibulka-Husek, Slovakia 2001.

c) 5...♘h5!? again must be considered carefully. Quite possibly 6 dxc5!? is White's best try: 6...♘xf4 7 exf4 e6 8 b4 ♕f6 9 ♕d2 and now 9...♘xb4!? (9...a5 ½-½ V.Kovačević-Greenfeld, Ljubljana/Portorož 1989; then after 10 b5 ♘b8 White has some nice knight outposts in the centre) 10 cxb4 ♕xa1 11 ♗b5+ ♔d8 12 0-0 ♕f6 is the starting point for some quite entertaining complications; e.g., 13 ♘c3 ♔c7 14 ♖e1 with the idea ♘e5 and White has compensation.

d) 5...♗g4!? is natural and one of the major challenges in the orthodox London System. Now 6 ♕b3!? has been recommended. However, we have been unable to find anything clear against 6...♕b6; e.g., 7 dxc5 (7 ♕xb6 axb6 8 ♘a3!?) 7...♕xb3 8 axb3 ♗xf3 9 gxf3 e5 = D.König-Oesterle, 2nd Bundesliga 1990/1 so we instead suggest 6 ♘bd2 e6 (6...cxd4 7 exd4 again transposes to the Exchange Caro-Kann in Line 1E) 7 ♕a4!?. Now 7...♗xf3! (7...♗d6? 8 ♗a6!) 8 ♘xf3 ♕b6 has been highly regarded ever since Reshevsky employed it successfully against Keres in 1937. White has tried:

d1) 9 ♖b1 ♗e7 10 ♗d3 0-0 11 0-0 ♖fd8 12 ♗g3 ♖ac8 13 ♘e5 ♘h5 14 ♕c2 g6 15 ♘xc6 ♕xc6 offered Black comfortable equality in Keres-Reshevsky, Kemeri 1937. However, it's possible that White could have improved the prospects for his bishop-pair somewhat by playing dxc5 somewhere around his 11th or 12th move.

d2) 9 ♕b5 (! Soltis) 9...♕xb5 10 ♗xb5 a6 11 ♗e2 c4 12 ♘e5 (12 b3!?) 12...♗d6 13 b3 cxb3 14 ♘xc6 ♗xf4 15 exf4 bxc6 16 axb3, when Soltis claims an advantage for White. To us the position seems roughly balanced after 16...♘e4 (Herzog-Nogueiras, Lucerne OL 1982).

d3) We instead suggest the untested 9 ♗d3:

d31) 9...♕xb2?! 10 0-0 c4 (10...♗e7? 11 ♖ab1 ♕xc3 12 ♖xb7 0-0 13 ♕xc6 ♕xd3 14 ♖xe7 +–) 11 ♖ab1 ♕xc3 12 ♖xb7 cxd3 13 ♖c7 ♕c4 14 ♕xc4 dxc4 15 ♖xc6 ♘d5 16 ♖xc4 ♘xf4 17 exf4 ♗d6 18 ♘e5 ±.

d32) 9...c4 10 ♗c2 ♕xb2 11 0-0 with a further split:

d321) 11...♕xc3? 12 ♘e5 ♘d7 (12...♗d6 13 ♘xc6 +–) 13 ♘xc6 bxc6 14 ♕xc6 ±.

d322) 11...♗e7? 12 ♖ab1 ♕xc3 13 ♖xb7 +–.

d323) 11...♗a3! is best, but White still seems to come out on top: 12 ♖ab1 ♕xc3 13 ♖xb7 0-0 14 ♗xh7+ ♘xh7 (14...♔xh7 15 ♘g5+ ♔g8 16 ♕xc6 ♖ac8 17 ♕a6 ♘e4 18 ♘xe4 dxe4 19 ♖xa7 ♗b2 20 ♗d6 ±) 15 ♕xc6 ♗b4 16 ♘e5 ♖ac8 17 ♕a6 ♕a3 18 ♕b5 ♗d6 19 ♘xf7 ♗xf4 (19...♖xf7 20 ♖xf7 ♔xf7 21 ♕d7+ ♗e7 22 ♕xc8 ±) 20 exf4 ♘f6 21 ♘g5 ±.

d33) 9...♘h5 is probably best. 10 0-0 ♘xf4 11 exf4 and now:

d331) 11...cxd4 12 f5!? ♗c5 (12...♗d6 13 fxe6 fxe6 14 ♘xd4 e5 15 ♘f5 ♕c7 16 c4 d4 17 ♕b5 ±) 13 fxe6 fxe6 14 b4 ♗d6 15 ♘xd4 0-0 16 ♘xe6 ♖f6 17 ♘g5 h6 18 ♘f3 ♘e5 19 ♗e2 ±.

d332) 11...c4 12 ♗c2 ♗d6 13 f5 0-0 14 b3 cxb3 15 axb3 is by no means clear but looks fairly promising for White with the opposite-coloured bishops strengthening his kingside attacking chances.

6 ♕b3

This is the traditional main line. Instead:

a) 6 ♕c1 – *4 ♘f3 ♕b6 5 ♕c1 ♘c6 6 c3.*

In his book *Ideas Behind the Modern Chess Openings* Gary Lane suggests two alternatives:

b) 6 ♘a3 is an interesting idea but allows Black to choose between wild complications after 6...♕xb2 7 ♘b5 ♘e4 (heavily favouring the better-prepared player) and a quiet positional game after 6...c4 7 ♕c1 (7 b4 ♗f5 8 ♘e5 ♘e4! 9 ♖c1 ♘xe5 10 ♗xe5 f6 11 ♗g3 ♕a6 ∓) 7...♗f5 8 b3 (8 ♘h4 ♗g6 9 b3 cxb3 10 axb3 ♖c8 11 ♘xg6 hxg6 12 ♗d3 =) 8...cxb3 9 axb3 ♖c8 10 ♗b5 a6 11 ♗a4 ♕d8 12 c4 (12 b4 b5 13 ♗c2 =) 12...dxc4 13 ♗xc6+ ♖xc6 14 bxc4 (J.Fernandez-Bertona, Argentine Ch (Ezeiza) 2000) and now 14...♘d5 seems to equalize.

c) 6 ♕c2!? is Lane's main recommendation. However, while it's not a bad surprise weapon at all, we don't believe it will give much against correct play. And the surprise value has certainly been somewhat reduced by it having been exposed in a popular book.

c1) 6...cxd4 7 exd4 ♗f5! is logical but untested. If White has any advantage at all after 8 ♕b3, it certainly is small (but at least ...c4 isn't a worry any more).

c2) 6...g6 7 ♘bd2 ♗g7 8 ♗e2 0-0 9 0-0 ♘h5 10 ♗g5 h6 11 ♗h4 cxd4 12 ♘xd4 ♘f6 13 ♕b3 ♕a5 14 ♗g3 = Wirthensohn-Pelletier, Swiss Cht 1999.

c3) 6...♗g4 7 ♘bd2 e6 8 h3 ♗f5 9 ♕b3 h6 10 ♘e5 c4 11 ♕xb6 axb6 12 a3 ♘a5 13 f3 h5 14 ♔f2 ♘g8 15 g4 hxg4 16 fxg4 ♗h7 17 ♗g2 = Borbjerggård-Hector, Stockholm 2002.

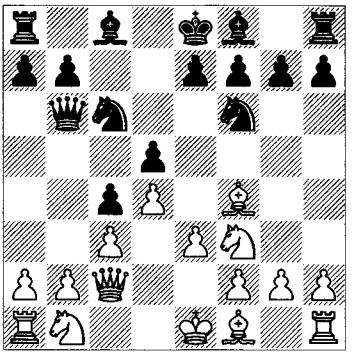
6...c4

This releases the pressure on White's centre, but nevertheless is the consistent follow-up to 5...♕b6. 6...♗f5 seems dubious on account of 7 dxc5 ♕xb3 8 axb3 ♘d7 (8...♘h5 9 ♘d4 ±) 9 b4 e5 10 ♗g3 f6 11 b5 ♘e7 12 b4 ±.

7 ♕c2 *(D)*

7 ♕xb6 axb6 8 ♘a3 has been the subject of a surprisingly heated debate. White to some extent threatens 9 ♘b5, but Black has many ways to parry that. One may suspect that 8...♖xa3 and 8...e5 aren't quite correct. It also seems likely that White may achieve something against 8...♘a7 and 8...♘e4. However, both 8...e6 and 8...♖a5 have proved fully satisfactory in practical play. Play often becomes complicated with White trying to create confusion in the black camp with his minor pieces. However, even if White should succeed in picking up the b6-pawn, his knight and bishop often end up in danger of being trapped or shut out of play. We therefore will not go into any detail on this.

B



7...♗f5!

Although chosen by some fairly strong players, 7...g6 is mainly a wasted tempo.

8 ♕c1 e6

This is natural but somewhat committal, allowing White to hunt down the light-squared bishop with his knight.

a) 8...♘h5!? 9 ♗g5 h6 10 ♗h4 g5 11 ♗g3 ♕a5 12 ♘bd2 ♘xg3 13 hxg3 ♗g7 14 e4 dxe4 15 ♘xc4 ♕c7 16 ♘fd2 0-0 17 ♕b1 ± Semeniuk-Rublevsky, Russian Cht (Tomsk) 2001.

b) 8...♖c8 9 ♘bd2 h6 10 ♗e2 e6 11 0-0 ♗e7 12 ♘e5 (12 b3 cxb3 13 axb3 0-0 14 ♕b2 a5 15 h3 ♖a8 16 ♖a4 ♖fc8 17 ♖fa1 ± Meduna-Jirovsky, Czech Republic 1993) and Black seems OK:

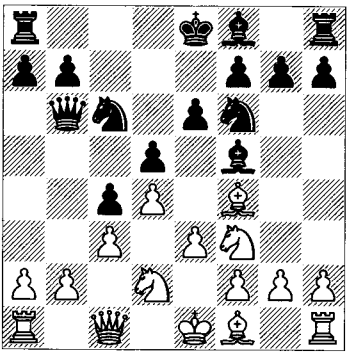
b1) 12...0-0 13 ♖e1 ♕a5 14 ♗f3 ♖fd8 15 e4 ♘xe5 16 ♗xe5 ♘xe4 17 ♘xe4 dxe4 18 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 19 ♖xe4 = Piankov-Flear, Castellar 1995.

b2) 12...♘xe5 13 ♗xe5 0-0 14 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 15 ♗f3 ♗g5 16 ♖e1 ♕c6 17 g3 ♗d3 18 h4 ♗d8 19 e4 = Nedela-Jirovsky, Czech Cht 1996.

c) 8...h6, although a little slow, might be Black's most flexible option – before shutting out his light-squared bishop with ...e6, he prepares a retreat for it. Chances are roughly level: 9 h3 e6 10 ♗e2 ♕a5 11 ♘bd2 b5 (after 11...♗e7 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♖e1 b5 14 b4 ♕b6 15 g4, Kharlov-Volzhin, Linares 1997 was agreed drawn in this unresolved position) 12 a3 ♕b6 13 0-0 ♖c8 14 ♖e1 ♗e7 15 ♗d1 0-0 16 ♗c2 ♕b7 17 ♕b1 ♗xc2 18 ♕xc2 a5 19 e4 b4 = Drazić-Brancaleoni, Saint Vincent 2003.

9 ♘bd2 *(D)*

9 ♘h4 gave White nothing in Kamsky-Pinter, Paris 1990: 9...♗e4 10 ♘d2 ♗e7 11 ♗e2 0-0 12 ♘hf3 ♗g6 =.



B

This is a critical position. While ...c4 mainly benefits White, ...♗f5 is a quite useful tempo-win for Black. So it's logical to expect that the long-term prospects are with White, who has the useful pawn-breaks b3 and e4, while Black must hurry to make his more active pieces count. And because the position is relatively closed, we would expect the long-term perspective to be the more important – at least between skilled technicians.

9...♕d8

This is a natural way to prepare ...b5, but again Black has a wide selection of alternatives:

a) 9...♖c8 10 ♗e2 ♗e7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♖e1 ♕a5 13 a3 b5 14 ♗d1 ♕b6 15 ♗c2 a5 16 ♗g5 = Petran-Gonda, Budapest 2001.

b) 9...♗e7 10 ♗e2 0-0 11 0-0 ♖fc8 12 ♖e1 ♕d8 13 ♘e5 ♘xe5 14 ♗xe5 b5 15 ♗f3 ♗d3 16 e4 b4 17 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 18 exd5 exd5 19 ♘f1 = V.Kovačević-Dizdarević, Mravinci 1995.

c) 9...♕a5 10 ♗e2 b5 11 b4 ♕b6 12 a4 bxa4 13 ♖xa4 ♗e7 14 0-0 0-0 = Plaskett-Pinter, Copenhagen 1985.

10 b3

There is no real consensus as to what is best here. Probably the position is roughly balanced, allowing the stronger player (be it White or Black) to search for an advantage in various directions:

a) 10 ♗e2 h6 (10...♗e7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♘e5 ♘xe5 13 ♗xe5 b5 14 f3 ♗g6 15 g4 ♘d7 16 ♗g3 f6 17 f4 ♕b6 18 ♗f3 = Blatny-Zso.Polgar, Brno 1991) 11 0-0 (11 ♘e5 ♖c8 12 0-0 b5 13 b4 a5 14 a3 ♗d6 15 ♘xc6 ♖xc6 16 ♗xd6 ♖xd6 17 ♕b2 0-0 = Meduna-Van Wely, Moscow OL 1994) 11...♗e7 12 ♘e5 ♘xe5 13 ♗xe5 b5 14 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 15 f4 0-0 16 ♗f3 ♗d3 ∓ Bagheri-Yagupov, Moscow 2000.

b) 10 ♘h4!? ♗e4 (10...♗g4 11 h3 ♗h5 12 g4 ♗g6 13 ♘xg6 hxg6 14 ♗g2 ♗d6 15 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 16 b3 ± Schlindwein – Har-Zvi, Rotterdam 1998) 11 f3 ♗g6 12 e4 ♘h5 13 ♗g3 ♗e7 (13...♘xg3 14 hxg3 ♕g5 15 ♖h3 ♕e3+ 16 ♗e2 ♘e7 17 ♘f1 ♕xc1+ 18 ♖xc1 =) 14 ♘xg6 hxg6 15 ♗f2 f5 16 ♕c2 ♕d7 17 b3 cxb3 18 axb3 ♖c8 19 ♕b1 = Schlindwein-Pinter, 2nd Bundesliga 1997/8.

10...b5 11 a4 a6 12 ♗e2 ♗e7

White hasn't been able to prove anything here: 13 0-0 (13 ♘e5 ♘xe5 14 dxe5 ♘d7 15 axb5 axb5 16 e4 dxe4 17 bxc4 b4 18 0-0 0-0 =) 13...0-0 14 ♕b2 ♕d7 15 ♖fd1 h6 16 ♘e5 ♘xe5 17 dxe5 ♘e4 18 bxc4 bxc4 19 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 20 ♗xc4 = Kharlov-Sadler, Bern 1996.

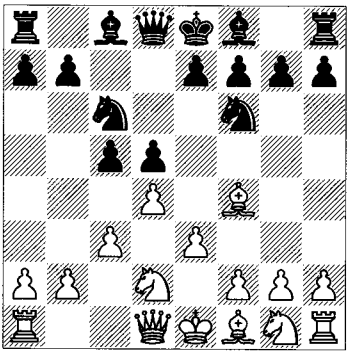
Conclusion:

A skilled player may use the white position as a safety-first weapon which allows him to outplay weaker opponents and draw against his equals. However, objectively Black's combined advantage in space and development at least balances White's more flexible pawn-structure.

4F: 4...♘c6 5 ♘d2

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 c5 4 c3 ♘c6)

5 ♘d2!? *(D)*



B

White's idea isn't so much to delay ♘gf3 – even though it's nice not having to worry about ...♘h5 – as to speed up his queenside development (thereby making it less vulnerable to

Black's typical ...♕b6 attack). ...♗g4 also appears less tempting when there is no knight to pin. However, it's still hard to tell whether this really is better than 5 ♘f3.

5...♗f5

Some other moves are fine too:

a) 5...e6 – *3...e6 4 c3 c5 5 ♘d2 ♘c6.*

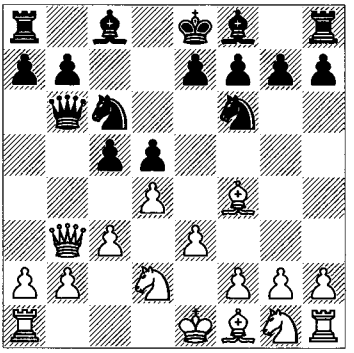
b) For 5...cxd4 6 exd4 see Line 1D on the Exchange Caro-Kann.

c) 5...g6! will probably transpose to the Grünfeld set-up, and may well be the most precise path to the main lines in that system, as the dangerous Barry Attack has been avoided and White's knight is committed to d2. An independent continuation was seen in Karlik-Jirka, Czech Cht 2002: 6 ♘gf3 ♘h5!? 7 dxc5 ♗g7 8 ♗b5 ♘xf4 9 exf4 ♕c7 10 ♗xc6+ bxc6 11 ♕a4 0-0 12 0-0 ♗f5 13 ♖fe1 ♖ac8 14 ♘b3 ♗e4 15 ♘fd2 ±.

d) 5...♗g4 6 ♕b1!? (6 ♘gf3 – *5 ♘f3 ♗g4 6 ♘bd2*) 6...e6 7 ♗d3 c4 8 ♗c2 ♗d6 9 ♗g3 ♗xg3 10 hxg3 e5 11 f3 ♗e6 12 ♘e2 ♕c7 13 g4 h6 14 ♘f1 0-0 15 g5 ± Blokhuis-*Fritz*, The Hague 1991.

e) 5...♕b6 6 ♕b3 *(D)* (6 ♕b1?! deserves to be mentioned as it avoids the potential pin on the c-file and fights for the b1-h7 diagonal, but there is a tactical problem: 6...cxd4 7 exd4 e5! 8 ♗e3 exd4 9 cxd4 ♗b4 10 ♘f3 ♗g4 ∓ Rithnovszky-Dupsky, Hungarian Cht 1998) and now:

B



e1) 6...♗f5 – *5...♗f5 6 ♕b3 ♕b6.*

e2) 6...c4?! only weakens Black's central influence when it cannot be followed up by the tempo-gaining ...♗f5. After 7 ♕c2 Black has tried:

e21) 7...g6 8 e4 dxe4 (8...♘xe4 9 ♘xe4 dxe4 10 ♗xc4 ♗g7 11 ♗e3 ♘a5 12 d5 ♕c7 13 ♗b5+ ± S.Kovačević-Franco, Calvia OL 2004) 9 ♘xc4 ♕d8 10 g3 ♗g7 11 ♗g2 0-0 12 ♘e2 ♗e6 13 ♘e3 ♕a5 14 0-0 ♕h5 15 ♖fe1 ♖ac8 16 ♗xe4 ♘b4 17 ♕b1 ♗xa2 18 ♖xa2 ♘xe4 19 g4 is much better for White, Kaunzinger-Varga, Nuremberg 1989.

e22) 7...♘h5 8 ♗g5 h6 9 ♗h4 g5 10 ♗e2 ♘g7 11 ♗g3 ♘f5 12 ♘gf3 ♗g7 13 e4 ± V.Kovačević-Pinter, Plovdiv Echt 1983 (see Illustrative Game 10).

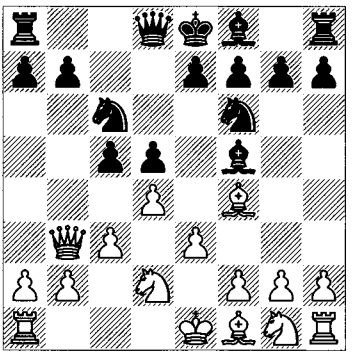
e3) 6...♕xb3 7 axb3 e6 8 h3 ♗d7 9 ♘gf3 ♖c8 10 dxc5 ♗xc5 11 b4 ♗b6 12 b5 ♘e7 13 ♗d6 ♘f5 14 ♗b4 h5 15 ♗d3 ♔d8 16 ♘g5 ♗e8 17 c4 ♖c7 18 b3 ± Schlindwein-Menacher, Austrian Cht 2002.

e4) 6...cxd4 7 ♕xb6 axb6 8 exd4 ♗f5 9 ♘gf3 ♖c8 10 h3 e6 11 ♘e5 ♘xe5 12 ♗xe5 ♔d8 13 ♗b5 ♘e8 14 0-0 f6 15 ♗h2 ♗d6 16 ♗xe8 ♗xh2+ 17 ♔xh2 ♖xe8 18 ♖fe1 = Keitlinghaus-Thesing, Bundesliga 1998/9.

6 ♕b3 *(D)*

After 6 ♘gf3, 6...♕b6 7 ♘h4!? ♗d7 8 ♕b3 may be slightly better for White. However, Black scores remarkably well with the unpretentious 6...e6; e.g., 7 ♘e5 ♗e7 8 g4 ♗g6 9 ♗b5 ♕b6 10 ♕b3 ♖c8 11 ♘xg6 hxg6 12 ♗e2 ♘d7 13 ♕xb6 ♘xb6 14 ♘f3 ♘c4 15 ♗xc4 dxc4 16 ♘e5 cxd4 17 exd4 0-0 = König-Stangl, Austrian Cht 1997.

B



6...♕b6!?

Some of the alternatives are critical too:

a) 6...♘a5 7 ♕a4+ ♗d7 8 ♕c2 cxd4 9 exd4 e6 10 ♗d3 a6 (10...♕b6) 11 ♘gf3 ♗e7 12 h3 ♗b5 13 ♗xb5+ axb5 14 a3 0-0 15 0-0 ♕b6 16 ♖ab1 ♖fc8 17 ♕d3 ♘c4 18 ♖fe1 ± S.Kovačević-Sarmiento Alfonso, Las Palmas 1995.

b) 6...♕c8 was a success in Dür-L.Milov, Wattens 1993 when Black was probably already better after 7 h3?! e6 8 ♘gf3 c4. However, there

is no need for h3 when Black isn't ready for ...♘h5, so we suggest 7 ♘gf3. Then:

b1) 7...e6 8 ♘h4 c4 9 ♕d1 ♗g4 10 f3 ♗h5 11 g4 ♗g6 12 e4 ±.

b2) 7...c4 8 ♕d1 h6 9 b3 b5 10 a4 a6 may be OK for Black, but we would like to point out a tactical theme: 11 ♗e2 ♘h5?! 12 ♗e5 ♘xe5 13 ♘xe5 ♘f6 14 ♗f3 e6 (14...♖b8 15 axb5 ±) 15 axb5 axb5 16 bxc4 bxc4 17 ♘dxc4! ±, when 17...♖xa1 18 ♕xa1 dxc4? loses to 19 ♗c6+.

c) 6...♕d7! might be the toughest nut to crack:

c1) 7 ♘gf3, planning ♗b5 and ♘e5, is untested, but 7...c4 8 ♕b5 e6 (8...a6 9 ♕b6 doesn't seem to improve) 9 b3 cxb3 10 axb3 ♘h5 11 ♘e5 ♘xe5 12 ♗xe5 f6 13 ♗c7 is promising for White.

c2) 7 dxc5 e5 (7...e6 8 ♕a3!? b6? 9 ♗b5 ♗xc5 10 ♕a4 ♖c8 11 ♘gf3 +–) 8 ♗g3 ♗xc5 9 ♘gf3 appears critical. White must put immediate pressure on Black's pawn-centre if he is to play for an opening advantage:

c21) In Schlindwein-Brühl, Altenkirchen 2001 White's advantage was obvious after 9...d4 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 cxd4 ♗e6 12 ♕b5 ♗xd4 13 ♕xd7+ ♘fxd7 14 exd4 ♘c6 15 ♘f3 ♘b4 16 ♔d2 ♘xa2 17 ♗d6.

c22) 9...♗d6 10 ♗b5 ♕c7 11 c4 may be an improvement for Black:

c221) 11...a6 12 ♗xc6+ bxc6 13 c5 ♗xc5 14 ♗xe5 ♗d6 (14...♕e7 15 ♖c1 ♖c8 16 0-0 0-0?! 17 ♗xf6 ±) 15 ♗xf6 gxf6 16 ♖c1 =.

c222) 11...0-0 12 cxd5 ♘a5 13 ♕a4 a6 14 ♗e2 ♘xd5 15 0-0 ♖fd8 is probably balanced.

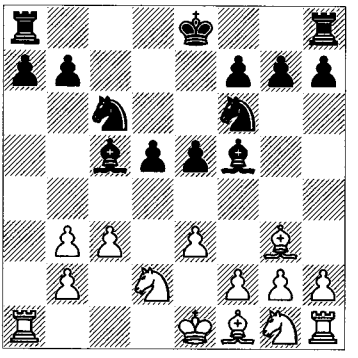
7 dxc5

Black's position looks active and sound – so if White hopes to demonstrate an advantage, he will certainly have to play energetically.

7...♕xb3 8 axb3 e5 9 ♗g3 ♗xc5 *(D)*

This position isn't easy to assess. White's semi-open a-file is useful, but the doubled b-pawn may make it harder for him to create a queenside passed pawn. Black's pawn-centre looks nice but his d-pawn is the most obvious target in the position. Moreover, space is less clearly an asset in an endgame than in a middlegame – mainly because the board is less crowded.

W



10 ♘gf3 ♘d7

10...d4 weakens White's pawn-structure but loses time and, hence, a pawn: 11 b4 dxe3 12 fxe3 ♗b6 (12...♗xe3?? 13 ♘c4 +–) 13 ♘c4 0-0 14 b5 ♘e7 15 ♗xe5 ♘ed5 16 ♘d4 ♗g6 17 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 18 ♗e2 ± S.Kovačević-Garcia, Mislata 1993.

11 b4 ♗d6 12 ♗b5

We suspect that 12 ♗e2 is too slow: 12...0-0 13 ♘b3 ♖fe8 14 0-0 = S.Kovačević-Garcia Paolicchi, La Pobla de Lillet 1998.

12...♔e7

12...f6 may be more flexible, but doesn't improve substantially: 13 0-0 0-0 14 e4!? dxe4 (14...♗xe4 15 ♘xe4 dxe4 16 ♘d2 f5 17 ♖fd1 ♘b6 18 ♘c4 ♗c7 19 ♘xb6 ♗xb6 20 ♗c4+ ♔h8 21 b5 f4 22 ♗h4 ♘d8 23 ♖d7 ±) 15 ♗c4+ ♔h8 16 ♘h4 ♗g4 17 h3 ♗h5 18 ♘xe4 ♗c7 19 ♘f5 ±.

13 0-0 f6

Now:

a) 14 ♖a2 led to rough equality in Schlindwein-Egartner, Austrian Cht 2002: 14...♖hc8 15 ♖fa1 a6 16 ♗a4 ♖ab8 17 ♖e1 ♘b6 18 ♗b3 ♗d3 =.

b) 14 ♘h4!? may improve: 14...♗e6 15 e4 dxe4 16 ♘xe4 ♗c7 17 f4 exf4 (17...♖hd8 18 fxe5 ♗b6+ 19 ♔h1 ♘dxe5 20 ♘f5+ ♔f8 21 ♖ae1 ±) 18 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 19 ♖xf4 ♖hc8 20 ♘f5+ ♗xf5 21 ♖xf5 ♘de5 22 ♖f2 and White may be marginally better.

Conclusion:

It's quite likely that White is able to keep an edge in this line, but it demands energetic play against Black's big pawn-centre.

5 Common Ground: 3...e6

Here we shall examine most lines with an early ...e6 (although some of them actually arise just as frequently from 3...c5). These can arise not only from 1...d5 or 1...♘f6 and 2...d5, but also from 1...♘f6, 2...e6 and 3...d5. Therefore, we suggest reading this chapter in conjunction with Chapter 11.

Generally this chapter is rather pleasant for White. Analysis and statistics indicate that White should be happy with his chances. Most of the reason for this probably can be found in the possible minor-piece configurations that may occur in the late middlegame. Thanks to his more active queen's bishop, White will normally be quite happy in an endgame with:

a) Either of his bishops facing a knight;

b) His light-squared bishop facing its black counterpart;

c) A centralized knight facing the light-squared bishop.

See Illustrative Games 1 to 5 for typical kingside attacks, mostly based on a knight on e5 and a queen manoeuvre to h3. Game 8 illustrates what may happen if Black impatiently tries to drive away the knight with ...f6, while Game 7 is a more nerve-wrecking example where in a theoretically crucial line White must give up his queenside in order to get to the enemy king.

Chapter Outline

1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 e6

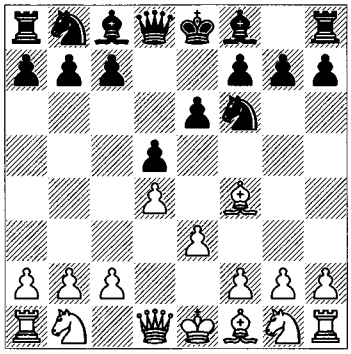
5A:	**(4 ♘f3 ♗e7)**	96
5B:	**4 ♘f3 ♗d6**	98
5C:	**4 ♘d2 (4...♗d6)**	100
5D:	**4 ♘d2 c5 5 c3 (5...♘bd7)**	101
5E:	**4 ♘d2 c5 5 c3 ♘c6 6 ♘gf3 (6...♗e7)**	103
5F:	**4 ♘d2 c5 5 c3 ♘c6 6 ♘gf3 ♗d6 7 ♗g3**	105
5G:	**4 ♘d2 c5 5 c3 ♘c6 6 ♘gf3 ♗d6 7 ♘e5**	107
5H:	**4 ♘d2 c5 5 c3 ♘c6 6 ♗d3**	108

5A: Introduction

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3)

3...e6 *(D)*

W



By shutting in his queen's bishop, Black announces a more modest, but possibly more realistic, approach than with 3...♗f5 or 3...♗g4. However, he does not challenge the logic behind White's second move – the assumption that having an active bishop outside the central pawn-wedge may suffice for a long-lasting initiative.

4 ♘f3

Black has given up his chance to pin the knight with ...♗g4, so it isn't illogical to return to orthodox lines at this point. On the other hand we don't see much point in hurrying kingside development either, and recommend 4 ♘d2! (see Lines 5C-5H). The alternatives are of minor significance even though some of them will frequently transpose:

a) 4 c3 will generally transpose but allows Black some ...b6 and ...♗a6 ideas as c4 is now a less tempting response.

b) 4 ♗d3 is likely to transpose but seems less flexible than 4 ♘d2, and allows Black some ideas with ...c5 followed by ...♕b6 as White normally cannot reply with ♕b3 due to ...c4.

4...♗e7!?

Threatening ...♘h5. Black has also tried:

a) 4...♗d6 5 ♘e5 ♘bd7 6 ♘d2 ♕e7 7 c3 0-0 8 ♗d3 ♘e8 9 ♕f3 f6 10 ♘xd7 ♗xd7 11

♗xd6 ♘xd6 12 0-0 ♗c6 13 ♖fe1 f5 14 ♕h3 ♘e4 15 ♘f3 ♘g5 16 ♘xg5 ♕xg5 17 f4 ± Gnjezdur-Zovko, Croatian Cht (Osijek) 2004.

b) 4...c5 5 c3 should normally transpose to 5E-5G after a quick ♘bd2 but there are a few independent lines:

b1) After 5...♘c6 White should avoid 6 ♗d3?! (6 ♘bd2 – *4 ♘d2 c5 5 c3 ♘c6 6 ♘gf3*) 6...♕b6 7 ♕b3?! (7 ♕c1 =) 7...c4 8 ♕xb6 axb6 9 ♗c2 b5 ∓.

b2) 5...♕b6 6 ♕b3 should be less attractive for Black than the lines discussed in 4E, as ...c4 will mainly reduce his options when ♕c2 cannot be met with ...♗f5: 6...♘c6 7 ♘bd2 ♗d7!? (7...♗e7 8 h3 0-0 9 ♗e2 ♗d7 10 0-0 ♖fc8 11 ♕xb6 axb6 12 ♖fe1 ♗e8 13 a3 ♘d7 14 ♖ac1 ± Jirovsky-Movsesian, Czech Cht 2003/3) 8 h3 ♗e7 (8...♘a5?! 9 ♕xb6 axb6 10 ♗c7 cxd4 11 ♘xd4 ♗c5 12 b4 ♖c8 13 ♘b5 ± Balashov-Hraček, Bundesliga 1997/8) 9 ♗e2 0-0 10 g4!? ♖fc8 11 g5 ♘e8 12 h4 ♘d6 13 h5 ± Kamsky-Vladimirov, Barnaul 1988.

c) 4...♘h5?! 5 ♗g5! and now:

c1) After 5...♗e7 6 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 7 ♘bd2 ♘d7 Black's h5-knight is misplaced, and he must also be careful not to end up in an endgame with a weak light-squared bishop.

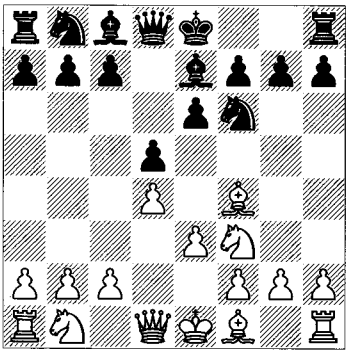
c11) 8 c4 ♘hf6 9 ♕c2 is a nice Queen's Gambit type of position, but as the more standard London options are promising we shall not explore this path.

c12) The modest 8 ♗e2 may be best: 8...b6 (8...♘hf6 9 c4! ±) 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♘e5 ♘hf6 11 f4 ♘e8 (11...a5 12 ♕e1 ♗a6 13 c4 ±) 12 ♗d3 c5 13 c3 c4?! 14 ♗c2 f5 15 b3 b5 16 a4 bxa4 17 bxc4 ± Rozić-Jozsa, Peniscola girls 2002.

c2) 5...♕d6 6 ♘e5 g6 (6...♘f6 7 c3 ±) 7 ♕f3! f5 8 g4! seems to give White a promising attack: 8...♕b4+ (8...♘g7 9 ♘c3 ±) 9 ♘d2 ♘g7 10 gxf5 ♘xf5 11 0-0-0 ±.

c3) 5...f6 6 ♗h4 leaves the h5-knight vulnerable: 6...g6 (6...♗d6 7 ♗d3 0-0 8 ♘g5 fxg5 9 ♕xh5 h6 10 ♗g3 ±) 7 ♗d3 ♗d7 8 ♘e5 ♘g7 9 ♕f3 ♗e7 10 ♘xd7 ♘xd7 ±.

We now return to 4...♗e7!? *(D)*:


W

5 ♘e5!

White should probably take precautions against ...♘h5, but it's quite possible that even other moves give an edge if followed up energetically.

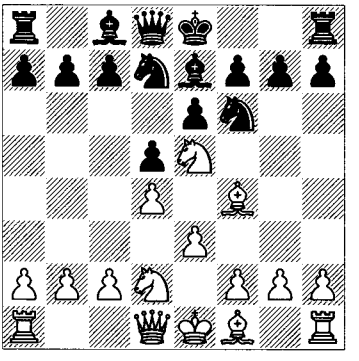
5...♘bd7

a) 5...0-0 will probably transpose elsewhere (e.g., 6 ♗d3 c5 7 c3 ♘bd7 8 ♘d2 – *4 ♘d2 c5 5 c3 ♘bd7 6 ♗d3 ♗e7 7 ♘gf3 0-0 8 ♘e5*) but it really is a bit too early to commit the king to the kingside.

b) 5...c5 6 c3 is also natural and very likely to transpose. However, quite surprisingly it seems that 6...♘c6 has never been tested. It isn't quite clear what Black fears. As 7 ♘xc6 bxc6 doesn't seem to promise White much, he may try either 7 ♗b5, hoping for an endgame with a good knight against a weak bishop, or 7 ♘d2 transposing to Line 5E (so may 7 ♗d3, but 7...♕b6 is an interesting test).

6 ♘d2 *(D)*

This is probably the most precise as White is now prepared to meet ...♕b6 with ♖b1. 6 ♗d3 is quite likely to transpose, but White must consider 6...c5 7 c3 ♕b6.


B

6...a6

Most other natural moves will transpose to Line 5D:

a) 6...0-0 7 ♗d3 c5 8 c3 – Line 5D.

b) 6...c5 7 c3 ♕b6 (7...0-0 8 ♗d3 is again 5D) 8 ♖b1 0-0 9 ♗d3 ♖d8 10 h4!? ♘f8 11 ♕f3 ♗d7 12 ♘xd7 (12 h5 may be even stronger)

12...♖xd7 13 h5 h6 14 ♕g3 ♔h8 15 ♘f3 ♗d6 (Witkowski-Kasperek, Myslenice 1987) 16 ♘e5 ±.

c) 6...♘xe5 may remain independent:

c1) The uncompromising 7 dxe5 ♘d7 8 ♗d3 (8 ♕g4?? g5! –+ Rothsprach-Giese, Mecklenburg 1998) 8...c6 9 ♕e2 ♕b6 10 0-0-0!? ♘c5 11 h4 led to unbalanced play in Matović-Kettenburg, Prague 2005.

c2) 7 ♗xe5 c5 8 c3 0-0 9 ♗d3 ♘d7 10 ♗g3 ♖e8 11 0-0 ♗f6 12 ♘f3 b6 13 e4! ♗b7 14 e5 is slightly better for White, King-Tisdall, Gausdal 1993.

7 c3 c5 8 ♗d3 c4?!

This combination of ...♗e7, ...♘bd7 and ...a6 looks somewhat passive, and no top player has tested it. Also 8...♘xe5 9 dxe5 ♘d7 seems risky, but it should be noted that the tempting 10 ♕g4?? (Hebesberger-A.Neubauer, St Veit 1998) actually turns out to be a blunder due to 10...g5! planning ...h5.

9 ♗c2 b5?! 10 ♕f3?!

Possibly 10 ♘c6! ♕b6 11 ♘xe7 is even stronger when White only needs to castle and open some lines in the centre to get at the black king.

10...0-0

11 ♕h3 g6 12 ♘c6 ♕e8 13 ♘f3 ♗b7 14 ♘xe7+ ♕xe7 (Oliveira-Da Silva, Fortaleza 1999) 15 ♕h4! b4 16 ♖b1 ♖fc8 17 ♗g5 ♗c6 18 ♘e5 ♔g7 19 e4 dxe4 20 ♘xc6 ♖xc6 21 ♗xe4 +–.

Conclusion:

4...♘h5 seems to favour White if he finds his way through the complications after 5 ♗g5. After 4...♗e7 5 ♘e5! Black should look for a transposition to Line 5E with a quick ...c5 and ...♘c6.

5B: 4 ♘f3 ♗d6

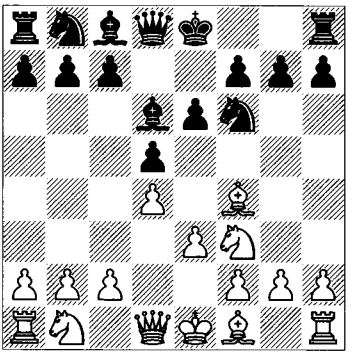
(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 e6 4 ♘f3)

4...♗d6 *(D)*

Besides attacking the d4 strongpoint with 4...c5, this challenge to the dark-squared bishop is Black's most active option at this point. The exchange of dark-squared bishops – somewhat surprisingly – often eases Black's position in the London.

5 ♘e5!

W



This possibility is one of the (relatively few) advantages of an early ♘f3. Other moves don't seem to promise much:

a) 5 ♗xd6 is relatively popular, but mainly among weak or obviously peacefully inclined players: 5...♕xd6 6 c4 b6 (6...0-0 7 ♘c3 a6 8 ♖c1 ♖d8 9 cxd5 exd5 10 ♗d3 ♗g4 11 h3 ♗h5 12 g4 ♗g6 13 ♘e5 ♗xd3 = Hodgson-Westerinen, Stavanger 1989) 7 cxd5 exd5 8 ♘c3 0-0 9 ♗e2 a6 10 0-0 ♘bd7 11 ♖c1 ½-½ Simić-Draško, Ulcinj 1998.

b) The trio 5 ♗d3, 5 ♘bd2 and 5 c3 all lead to the same pawn-structure if Black takes on f4, and may all transpose. They may also all lead to promising kingside attacks based on White's general space advantage and control of e5. However, we were not really able to identify a path to advantage for White in any of them.

c) Therefore only 5 ♗g3 remains as a serious alternative. However, it will often transpose to Line 5C or 5F after the moves ...c5 and c3 at some point:

c1) 5...♘bd7 6 ♘bd2 – *4 ♘d2 ♗d6 5 ♗g3 ♘bd7 6 ♘gf3.*

c2) 5...♗xg3 6 hxg3 and then:

c21) 6...♕e7 7 c3 ♘bd7 8 ♘bd2 e5 9 ♗e2 c5 10 dxe5 ♘xe5 11 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 12 ♗b5+ ± Vatter-Wegner, Bundesliga 1994/5.

c22) 6...b6 7 ♘e5 c6 8 ♘d2 ♕d6 9 c3 ♘fd7 10 f4 ♘xe5 11 fxe5 ♕e7 12 ♕g4 ± Blatny-Streitberg, Biel 1991.

c3) 5...♘e4 may be one of Black's better tries, but it's worth noting that some fairly strong Trompowsky players enter it a tempo down (after the ♗g5-f4-g3 manoeuvre). 6 ♘bd2 ♘xg3 7 hxg3 and now:

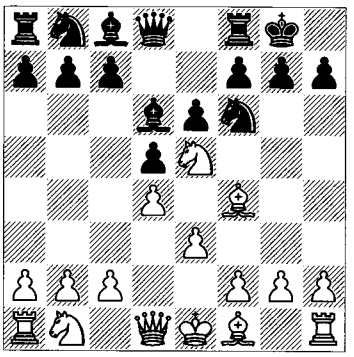
c31) 7...♘d7 8 ♗d3 c6 9 e4 ♕b6 10 e5 ♗e7 11 ♖b1 ♕c7 12 c3 ± Kocovski-Mitkov, La Coruña 1995.

c32) After 7...c5 8 c3 ♘c6 9 ♕c2 g6 10 0-0-0!? ♗d7 11 ♗b5 cxd4 12 exd4 ♕f6 13 ♖h6 chances were balanced in M.Piket-Van der Werf, Dutch Cht 2001.

5...0-0 *(D)*

5...♘bd7 may initiate an interesting plan: 6 ♘d2 ♘f8 7 ♗d3 ♘g6 8 ♗g3 ♗xe5 9 dxe5 ♘d7 10 ♕h5 ♘gxe5 11 ♗xe5 g6 12 ♗xc7 ♕xc7 13 ♕h6 ♕e5 14 c3 ♘c5 15 ♗c2 ± Schmittdiel-Prandstetter, Prague 1990.

W



6 ♘d2

Now the moves ...c5 from Black and c3 from White at almost any point will lead to Line 5G, so we shall only examine variations where at least one of these moves is left out.

6...b6

6...♘bd7 7 ♗d3 b6 8 c3 ♗b7 9 ♕f3 ♕e7 10 0-0 c5 11 a4 a6 12 ♖fe1 ♖ac8 13 ♖ad1 ♖fe8 14 ♗b1 ♖ed8 15 ♕h3 b5 16 axb5 axb5 17 g4 ± S.Kovačević-Moeschinger, Mendrisio 1988.

7 ♗d3!?

White avoids moving his c-pawn for the time being, so as to answer ...♗a6 with c4.

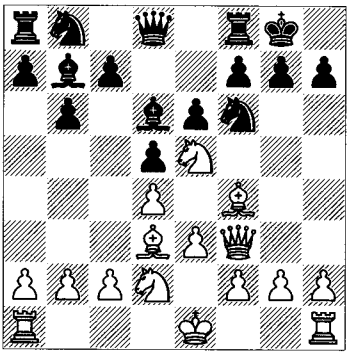
7...♗b7

Black fights for control of e4. 7...♗a6 is an attempt to exchange White's attacking bishop. After 8 c4 dxc4 White should avoid 9 ♕f3? cxd3 10 ♕xa8 ♘d5 11 ♘c6? ♘xc6 12 ♕xc6 ♘b4, when Black is winning. Fortunately, the position after 9 ♘dxc4 ♗b4+ 10 ♔f1 is much more promising for White than is apparent at first glance: 10...♘d5 (10...♗b7 11 a3 ♗e7 12 ♖c1 ±) 11 ♗g3 b5 12 ♘d2 and now the natural 12...c5?! led to a quick win for White in Gulko-*MChess Pro 3.85*, Boston 1994: 13 dxc5 f6 (13...♗xc5 14 ♗xh7+ ♔xh7 15 ♕c2+ f5 16 ♕xc5 b4+ 17 ♔g1 ±) 14 ♕h5 ♘xe3+ (14...h6 15 ♕g6 fxe5 16 ♕h7+ ♔f7 17 ♗g6+ ♔e7 18 ♕xg7+ +–) 15 fxe3 fxe5+ 16 ♔e2 g6 17 ♕xe5 ♕c8 18 ♘e4 ♘c6 19 ♕g5 ♔g7 20 ♖hf1 ♖f5 21 ♖xf5 exf5 22 ♕f6+ ♔g8 23 ♗c2 1-0.

8 ♕f3!? *(D)*

Although this is untested, we recommend it over the intriguing 8 ♘df3!?, which gives up control over e5 and allows 8...♘e4!, after which Black will equalize – and more if White continues routinely; e.g., 9 h3 (9 0-0? f6 10 ♘g4 h5 –+) 9...f6 10 ♘g4 ♗xf4 11 exf4 ♕d6 12 ♕c1 c5 13 c3 ♗a6 14 ♗xa6 ♘xa6 15 0-0 cxd4 16 ♘xd4 e5 17 ♘f5 ♕e6 ∓. Instead White tried 9 h4!? f6 10 ♘g5 in Sadauskas-Kozlowicz, corr. 1989. After 10...fxg5 (it's far from clear what happens after 10...fxe5 11 dxe5 ♗b4+ 12 c3 ♕e7, but it seems White has a perpetual check as a safety-net in a lot of variations) 11 hxg5 ♗xe5 12 dxe5 ♕e7 13 ♖xh7 ♕b4+ 14 ♔f1 ♔xh7 15 ♕h5+ ♔g8 16 g6 the game continued 16...♖e8? 17 ♗xe4 ♕xe4 18 ♗g5 ♕xg6 19 ♕xg6 ♘d7 20 ♗f6 +–. The critical line is 16...♖xf4 17 exf4 ♘c6 18 ♕h7+ ♔f8 19 ♕h8+ ♔e7 20 ♕xg7+ ♔d8, when 21 f5 or 21 ♖d1 looks promising but it's not clear whether the kingside pawns compensate for the pieces.

B



8...♘bd7

There aren't many independent alternatives, as White's kingside threats are becoming quite concrete (8...c5! 9 c3 – *4 ♘d2 c5 5 c3 b6 6 ♘gf3 ♗d6 7 ♘e5 ♗b7 8 ♗d3 0-0 9 ♕f3*).

9 ♕h3

This position is difficult for Black, but it's hard to suggest a variation with no practical examples to draw on. It's already too late for ...♘e4 as the knight will only be forced back by f3. Fritz seems to like 9...♕e8 10 g4 c5 and indeed 11 ♘g6!? ♗xf4 12 ♘xf8 ♘xf8 13 exf4 cxd4 14 ♘f3 isn't too clear. A more practical

approach is probably 11 c3, when Black still needs to free his position.

Conclusion:

Black doesn't really achieve anything by delaying ...c5 for very long. White should in general play as he would do against normal ...c5 lines as Black can transpose back at almost any point.

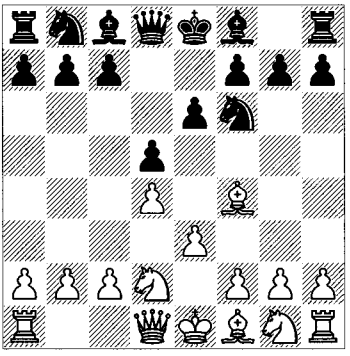
5C: 4 ♘d2

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 e6)

4 ♘d2 *(D)*

Although it often comes to the same thing, this is probably more accurate than 4 c3. There is no reason to support the centre before Black attacks it, and White may wish to meet ...b6 and ...♗a6 with c4.

B



White is now ready to play c3 followed by ♗d3, as ...♕b6 can always be comfortably met by ♖b1 since Black can't harass the rook with ...♗f5. As usual ...c4 will only give up central pressure (and will usually be met by a quick e4).

4...♗d6

This is a logical attempt to take advantage of White's delayed ♘gf3 as now ♘e5, blocking the bishop exchange, isn't an option.

a) 4...h6?! at first doesn't seem to make a great deal of sense, but Black's idea is quite cunning: now ♘gf3 can be met by ...♘h5, exchanging off White's strong bishop. However, there is no reason for White to play a quick ♘gf3: 5 ♗d3 ♗d6 6 ♗g3 ♗xg3 7 hxg3 ♘bd7 8 f4 b6 9 g4 ♗b7 10 ♕f3 ♕e7 11 g5 ♘g8 12 0-0-0 0-0-0 13 ♕g4 ± S.Kovačević-Lalović, Yugoslav Cht (Niš) 1994.

b) 4...♗e7?! is better designed to meet the orthodox London System with a knight on f3. In that position Black threatens to exchange the London bishop by means of ...♘h5 (as ♗g5 is ruled out). 5 ♗d3 0-0 6 c3 ♘bd7 (6...c5 – *4...c5 5 c3 ♗e7 6 ♗d3 0-0*) 7 h4!? c5 8 ♘gf3 transposes to Illustrative Game 5, V.Kovačević-Ree, Maribor 1980.

c) After 4...♘bd7 White should probably return to orthodox lines with 5 ♘gf3 (though 5 c3 ♗e7 6 ♗d3 b6 7 ♘gf3 ♗b7 8 ♘e5 a6 9 ♘df3 ♘xe5 10 ♘xe5 0-0 11 0-0 was ± in Belamarić-S.Nikolić, Bad Wildbad 2000) and here:

c1) 5...c6 6 h3 ♗e7 7 c3 b5 8 a4 b4 9 a5 ♘e4 10 ♘xe4 dxe4 11 ♘d2 bxc3 12 bxc3 f5 13 ♕a4 ± S.Kovačević-Alabarce Bustos, Seville 1994.

c2) 5...c5 6 c3 h6 7 h3 c4 8 a4 a5 9 ♕c2 b6 10 e4 ♗b7 11 e5 ♘e4 12 ♘xe4 dxe4 13 ♘d2 ± S.Kovačević-Fernandez, Osuna 1992.

c3) 5...♗e7 again threatens ...♘h5, so White should probably play 6 h3. Jugelt-W.Becker, 2nd Bundesliga 1997/8 continued 6...c5 7 c3 b6 8 ♗b5 ♗b7 9 ♘e5 a6 10 ♘c6 ♗xc6 11 ♗xc6 ♖a7 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♗a4 b5 14 ♗c2 ±.

5 ♗g3

The alternatives aren't without merit, but whenever ♘e5 isn't available (as is often the case in our recommended repertoire), this retreat remains White's principal reaction. 5 ♗xd6?! is logical in principle as White wants to exchange the dark-squared bishops but it probably helps Black's development too much. In general, White will be most happy if Black exchanges on g3 immediately so that he can make use of the open h-file. However, even after White has castled kingside, hxg3 can normally be considered an improvement of his pawn-structure.

Now most combinations of ...c5 plus ...♘c6 and c3 will transpose elsewhere.

5...0-0 *(D)*

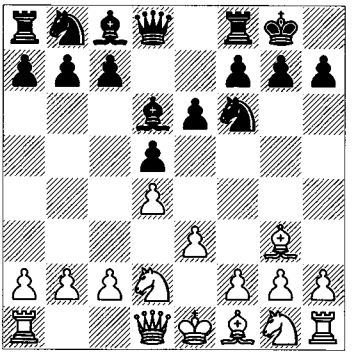
Alternatively:

a) 5...c5 6 c3 – *4...c5 5 c3 ♗d6 6 ♗g3.*

b) 5...♘e4? 6 ♘xe4 dxe4 7 ♕g4 ±.

c) 5...♘bd7 6 ♘gf3 ♕e7 (6...♘h5 7 c3 ♘xg3 8 hxg3 e5 9 dxe5 ♘xe5 10 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 11 ♗e2 g6 12 ♗g4 f5 13 ♗f3 c6 14 a4 0-0 15 ♘b3 ♕f6 16 a5 ♗e6 = Vladi.Kovačević-Diaz, Vrnjačka Banja 1988) 7 ♘e5 ♘e4 8 ♘xe4 dxe4

9 ♘c4 ♗xg3 10 hxg3 b6 11 d5 exd5 12 ♕xd5 is much better for White, Karlik-Netusil, Czechoslovak Cht 1992.



6 ♗d3 b6

Or 6...♕e7 7 ♘gf3 ♘bd7 8 ♘e5 c5 9 c3 ♘b6 10 ♗h4 ♗d7 (S.Kovačević-Rizzo, Bern 1988) 11 ♘g4 +–.

7 c3

7 ♘gf3 will normally transpose to 5F after ...c5 and c3. Relatively independent lines are:

a) 7...♗b7 8 ♘e5 ♘bd7 9 ♕f3 c5 10 c3 ♕c7 11 ♘xd7 ♘xd7 12 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 13 ♕g3 ♕xg3 14 hxg3 h6 15 ♔e2 ± Szabolcsi-Z.Horvath, Hungarian Cht 2002.

b) After 7...♗a6!? White has had problems demonstrating an advantage:

b1) 8 ♘e5 ♗xd3 9 cxd3 ♘fd7 10 ♕a4 ♘xe5 11 dxe5 ♗e7 12 ♕g4 ♕d7 13 0-0 ♕b5 14 ♕d4 c5 15 ♕c3 ♘c6 16 ♖fd1 ♖fd8 and Black's chances are no worse, Miladinović-Paunović, Kavala 1998.

b2) 8 ♗xa6 ♘xa6 9 0-0 ♗xg3 10 hxg3 c5 11 ♕e2 ♕c8 12 c4 ♕b7 13 ♖fd1 ♖fd8 14 cxd5 exd5 15 ♘e5 cxd4 16 exd4 ♘c7 = Sapis-Weglarz, Czestochowa 1998.

7...♗b7

7...♗a6 needs further testing. 8 ♗b1!? may be risky so White should probably be happy with 8 ♗xa6 ♘xa6 9 ♘gf3 c5 10 ♘e5, when the a6-knight is misplaced.

8 ♕b1 h6

Alternatively:

a) 8...♘bd7 9 ♘gf3 ♕e7 10 ♘e5 g6 11 f4 ♗xe5 12 fxe5 ♘g4 13 ♗f4 g5 14 ♕d1 f5 15 h3 gxf4 16 hxg4 fxe3 17 ♘f3 ± Blanchard-Konijn, Haarlem 2004.

b) 8...c5 9 ♘gf3 ♘c6 10 0-0 ♗xg3 11 hxg3 h6 12 ♖e1 ♕c7 13 b4 ♖ab8 14 b5 ♘e7 15 ♘e5 was slightly better for White in Khagurov-Korneev, Krasnodar 1998.

9 ♘gf3 c5 10 ♘e5 ♘c6

11 f4 ♖c8 12 ♕d1 ♘e7 (12...♗e7 13 ♕f3 ♘xe5 14 fxe5 ♘d7 15 0-0 ♗g5 16 ♕e2 ± Gogolis-Trabert, Athens 1999) 13 ♕f3 cxd4 14 exd4 ♘h7 15 0-0 f6 16 ♘g4 f5 17 ♘e5 ♘f6 18 ♗h4 ± S.Kovačević-Valero Perez, Mislata 1997.

Conclusion:

The main significance of this section may be that with 5 ♗g3 White basically commits himself to playing the 7 ♗g3 lines of 5F rather than 7 ♘e5 of 5G.

5D: 4 ♘d2 c5

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 e6 4 ♘d2)

4...c5

Note that what distinguishes this from Chapter 4 is the black pawn on e6.

5 c3

This is the standard reaction to ...c5 in the London – mainly in order to support the central pawn fortress, but also in order to meet ...♕b6 with ♕b3.

5...♘bd7

Or:

a) 5...♗e7 should be met by 6 ♗d3 (after 6 ♗xb8?! ♖xb8 7 ♕a4+?! ♗d7 8 ♕xa7? c4 only Black has winning chances) and then after 6...0-0, 7 ♘gf3 is probably best (7 h3 ♘c6 – note 'b2' to Black's 6th move in Line 5H) as 7...♘h5 8 ♗g3 ♘xg3 9 hxg3 h6 10 ♘e5 ♘c6 11 ♕h5 gives White a strong attack.

b) 5...b6 probably shouldn't be combined with a quick ...0-0. Here are two examples after 6 ♘gf3:

b1) 6...♗d6 7 ♘e5 ♗b7 8 ♗d3 0-0 9 ♕f3 ♕c7 10 ♕h3 ♘bd7 11 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 12 ♗e5 ♘e4 13 f3 ♘g5 14 ♕h5 ♗xe5 15 dxe5 h6 16 h4 ♘h7 17 f4 ± Averbakh-Matanović, Titovo Užice 1966.

b2) 6...♗e7 7 ♗d3 0-0 8 ♘e5 ♗b7 (8...♗a6 9 ♘c6! ♘xc6 10 ♗xa6 cxd4!? 11 ♗b7 dxc3 12 bxc3 ♖c8 13 ♗xc8 ♕xc8 14 0-0 ±) 9 ♕f3 ± transposes to Blackburne-Harmonist, Breslau 1889 (see Illustrative Game 3).

c) 5...♗d6 can lead to Stonewall positions slightly different from those where the knight is

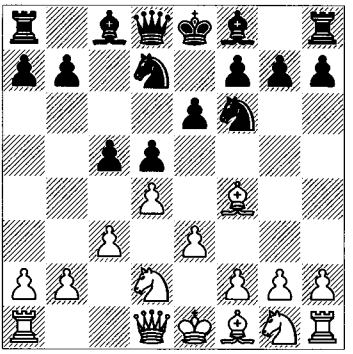
already at c6. While ...♘b4 isn't an option, ...♗a6 may well be:

c1) 6 ♗xd6!? ♕xd6 7 f4 0-0 (7...b6 8 ♘h3 0-0 9 ♕f3 a5 10 ♗d3 ♘c6 11 e4 dxe4 12 ♘xe4 ♕d7 13 ♘hg5 h6 14 ♘xf6+ gxf6 15 ♘h7 +– C.Santos-J.Santos, Portuguese Cht 1999) 8 ♗d3 b6 9 ♕e2 cxd4 10 cxd4 a5 11 ♘gf3 ♗a6 12 0-0 ♗xd3 13 ♕xd3 ½-½ V.Kovačević-Cirić, Yugoslav Ch (Kraljevo) 1967.

c2) 6 ♗g3 and now after either 6...♕c7, 6...0-0 or 6...♘c6, 7 f4!? seems strange, but may not compare too badly with a Dutch Stonewall where Black plays ...♗d7-e8-h5.

We now return to 5...♘bd7 *(D)*:

W



6 ♗d3

6 ♘gf3 should transpose as 6...♕b6 7 ♖b1 only improves White's chances and 6...♘h5 7 ♗g5 ♗e7 8 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 9 ♗d3 hardly eases Black's play.

6...♗e7

6...a6 should probably be met not by 7 a4 but 7 ♘gf3, when 7...b5 8 ♘e5 ♗b7 9 0-0 c4?! 10 ♗c2 ♗e7 11 ♕f3 0-0?! 12 ♕h3 g6 13 ♘df3 ♘h5 14 ♗h6 ♖e8 15 g4 ♘g7? 16 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 17 ♘xf7 +– Eade-Feltner, Las Vegas 1996 was a typical demonstration of White's attacking possibilities.

7 ♘gf3 0-0 *(D)*

This isn't at all illogical as ...♖e8 and ...♘f8 is a useful resource and sometimes it also is nice to be recapturing on f6 with a new knight.

a) 7...♕b6 8 ♖b1 0-0 9 0-0 ♗d6 10 ♘e5 ♕c7 (Holzbauer-Burmakin, Graz 2001) 11 ♘df3 ±.

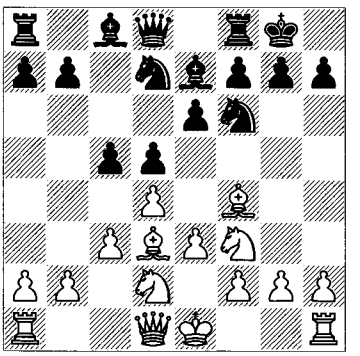
b) 7...b6 is also quite logical. Black tries to fight for control over e4 without committing his king. 8 ♘e5 ♗b7 9 ♕f3 and then:

b1) 9...0-0?! 10 ♕h3 g6 11 ♘df3 cxd4 12 exd4 ♘h5 13 ♗h6 ♘g7 14 ♘g4 ♖e8 15 0-0 ♘f5 16 ♖fe1 ♘f6 17 ♘fe5 ± Djurhuus-Polak, Arnhem jr Ech 1990.

b2) 9...♘xe5 10 dxe5 ♘d7 11 h4 ♕c7 12 ♕g3 g6 13 ♘f3 0-0-0 14 ♗g5 f6 15 ♗f4 fxe5 16 ♘xe5 ♗d6 17 ♘f7 ± Panić-Skarić, Belgrade 2003.

b3) After 9...a6 10 a4 ♘xe5 11 dxe5 ♘d7 12 h4 ♕c7 13 ♕g3 g6 14 ♘f3 0-0-0 (Si.Kovačević-Olivier, Lugano 1989) it is not clear how either side should best proceed.

W



8 ♘e5

The optimistic 8 h4!? b6 9 ♘e5 ♘xe5 10 dxe5 ♘d7 11 ♗xh7+ is discussed in Illustrative Game 5 (V.Kovačević-Ree, Maribor 1980).

8...♘e8

Black has also tried:

a) 8...♘xe5?! 9 dxe5 gives White a strong kingside attack.

b) 8...b6 9 ♘c6 ♕e8 10 ♕f3 ♗b7 11 ♘xe7+ ♕xe7 12 ♕g3 ♖fc8 (12...♘h5 13 ♕h3 ±) 13 ♗d6 ♕d8 14 0-0 ±.

c) 8...♖e8 9 ♕f3 ♘xe5 10 ♗xe5 ♘d7 11 ♕h3 ♘f8 12 ♕g3 f6 13 ♗c7 ♕d7 14 ♗f4 ♔h8 15 h4 b5 16 ♘f3 ♗b7 17 h5 ± Linhart-Habermann, 2nd Bundesliga 1998/9.

d) 8...c4 9 ♗c2 ♘xe5 10 dxe5 ♘d7 11 e4 ♖e8 12 0-0 ♘b6 13 ♕e2 ♗d7 14 ♘f3 ♗c5 15 ♖ad1 ± Pekarek-Feco, Prague 1985.

e) 8...cxd4 9 exd4 ♖e8 10 ♕f3 ♘f8 11 h4 ♕b6 12 ♖b1 ♖d8 13 h5 ♘8d7 14 ♕g3 ♘xe5 15 dxe5 ♘e8 16 ♘f3 ♗d7 17 ♗h6 ♔h8 18 ♗g5 (18 ♘g5 +–) 18...♕c5 19 ♕f4 ± Giardelli-Schuster, Buenos Aires 1985.

9 h4 ♘xe5 10 dxe5 ♗d7

Now 11 ♗xh7+! ♔xh7 12 ♕h5+ ♔g8 13 ♘f3 appears to be close to winning:

a) 13...♗b5 14 ♖d1 g6 15 ♕h6 f6 16 ♕xg6+ ♘g7 17 ♘g5 fxg5 18 hxg5 ♖f5 (18...♕e8 19

♕h7+ ♔f7 20 g6#) 19 ♕h7+ ♔f8 20 g6 ♔e8 21 ♕xg7 ±.

b) 13...f6 14 ♘g5 fxg5 15 hxg5 ♖f5 (or 15...♗xg5 16 ♗xg5 ♕b6 17 ♕h7+ ♔f7 18 ♖h4 ♘f6 19 exf6 1-0 Rinaldi-Kaminskas, corr. 1992) 16 ♕h7+ ♔f8 17 g6 ♗g5 18 ♕h8+ ♔e7 19 ♗xg5+ ♖xg5 20 ♕h4 ±.

c) 13...g6 14 ♕h6 f6 15 ♕xg6+ ♘g7 16 ♗h6 ♖f7 17 h5 ♗e8 18 0-0-0 ♗f8 19 g4 ±.

Conclusion:

There are some good reasons for preferring to develop the knight to d7 rather than c6. However, Black's reduced central pressure makes this rather pleasant for White.

5E: 5 c3 ♘c6

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 e6 4 ♘d2 c5 5 c3)

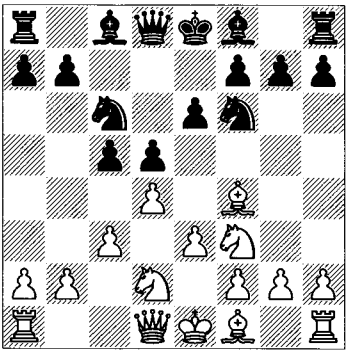
5...♘c6

Given that Black is in no hurry to castle kingside, this is extremely natural.

6 ♘gf3 *(D)*

By now this developing move is starting to look extremely natural. Nevertheless, 6 ♗d3 (Line 5H) is a very real alternative.

B



6...♗e7

Normally ...♗e7 is a bit passive, but it's often justified if Black, as here, threatens to win the bishop-pair by ...♘h5. Minor alternatives include:

a) 6...♘h5?! 7 ♗g5 ♕b6!? (after 7...♗e7 8 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 the h5-knight is simply misplaced) 8 dxc5!? ♗xc5 9 b4! ♗e7 10 b5 ♘b8 11 ♗xe7 ♔xe7 12 c4 ± Dgebuadze-Savchenko, Ubeda 1998.

b) 6...♕b6?! 7 ♖b1 cxd4 (7...♗d7 8 ♗d3 cxd4 9 exd4 ♖c8 10 0-0 ♘a5 11 ♕e2 ♗e7 12 ♘e5 0-0 13 ♗g5 ♕c7 14 f4 ± Bai-Bagoly, Aggtelek 1998) 8 exd4 ♗e7 9 ♗d3 ♗d7 10 0-0 (10 h3 ♖c8 11 0-0 ± Astl-Holzbauer, Wattens 1995) 10...♘h5 11 ♗g5 ♕d8 12 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 13 ♖e1 ♘f4 14 ♗f1 0-0 15 g3 ♘g6 16 ♗d3 ♖ab8 17 h4 ± Sv.Johnsen-M.Persson, Oslo rpd 2004.

c) 6...a6 7 ♗d3 ♗e7 8 ♘e5 ♘d7 9 ♘df3 ♘cxe5 10 dxe5 b5 11 h4 h6 12 h5 b4 13 0-0 ♗b7 14 cxb4 cxb4 15 ♖c1 ♖c8 16 ♕e2 0-0 17 ♘d4 ± V.Kovačević-Pisar, Karlovac 1979.

d) 6...h6 7 ♘e5 ♕b6 8 ♖b1 cxd4 9 exd4 ♘xe5 10 ♗xe5 ♗e7 11 ♗d3 ♗d7 12 ♕e2 a6 13 h4!? (the natural 13 0-0 may promise more: 13...♗b5 14 c4 dxc4 15 ♘xc4 ♕d8 16 f4 0-0 17 f5 ±) 13...♗b5 14 ♗xb5+ ♕xb5 15 ♕xb5+ axb5 16 a3 h5 17 ♔e2 and White's advantage was microscopic in J.Přibyl-Bönsch, Sochi 1984.

e) 6...b6 7 ♗b5 ♗d7 8 ♗d3 cxd4 (8...♗e7 9 ♘e5 0-0 10 g4 ♘xe5 11 dxe5 ♘e8 12 g5 g6 13 h4 ♘g7 14 ♕g4 ± Heinzel-Oberhofer, Bad Wörishofen 2001) 9 exd4 ♘h5 10 ♗g3 ♘xg3 11 hxg3 h6 12 ♕e2 ♗d6 13 ♘h2 ♕e7 14 ♘g4 e5 15 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 16 dxe5 ♕xe5 17 ♕xe5+ ♗xe5 18 ♘f3 ♗f6 19 0-0-0 0-0 20 ♗c2 ± S.Kovačević-Conceicao, Loures 1999.

f) 6...♗d7 7 h3 ♖c8 8 ♗d3 cxd4 9 exd4 ♘e7 10 ♕e2 ♘g6 11 ♗h2 ♕b6 12 ♖b1 a6 13 0-0 ♗b5 = Singer-Golda, Freising 2001.

g) The position after 6...cxd4 7 exd4 could technically be categorized under the Exchange Caro-Kann, as it could arise from 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c3 e6, but Black would not normally lock his light-squared bishop in voluntarily. Now:

g1) 7...♗e7 8 ♗d3 ♘h5 9 ♗e3 ♕c7 10 0-0 h6 11 ♘e5 ♘xe5 12 dxe5 g6 13 ♕g4 ♖g8 (13...♕xe5 14 ♗d4 ♕f4 15 ♗b5+ ♗d7 16 ♕e2 ♘f6 17 ♗xd7+ ♔xd7 18 ♗e5 ±) 14 ♖fe1 ♕xe5 15 ♗b5+ ♗d7 16 ♗xd7+ ♔xd7 17 ♕a4+ ± Schlindwein-Gervais, Cappelle la Grande 1995.

g2) 7...♗d6 and now:

g21) 8 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 9 ♗d3 0-0 10 0-0 e5 11 dxe5 ♘xe5 12 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 13 ♘f3 ± Dorfman-Bellon, Platja d'Aro 1994.

g22) After 8 ♗g3 there is a further split:

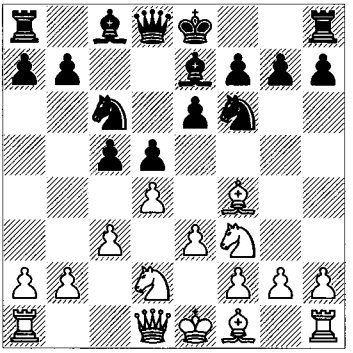
g221) 8...0-0 9 ♗d3 ♖e8 10 ♘e5 ♕e7 11 ♕e2 ♘d7 12 0-0 ♘f8 13 ♕h5 ♘xe5 14 dxe5 ♗c5 15 ♘f3 is much better for White, Ortega-Piancatelli, Italy 1998.

g222) 8...♗xg3 9 hxg3 ♕d6 10 ♗d3 h6 (10...♗d7 11 ♕e2 ♘g4 12 0-0-0 h6 13 ♖h4 ♘f6 14 ♘e5 ♕e7 15 ♖dh1 0-0-0 16 g4 ± Knežević-Asmundsson, Grindavik 1984) 11 ♕e2 ♗d7 12 ♘e5 ♖c8 13 g4 ♘e4 14 ♘xc6 ♗xc6 15 ♘xe4 dxe4 16 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 17 ♕xe4 ± S.Kovačević-Bobbia, Mendrisio 1985.

g223) 8...♕c7 9 ♗d3 0-0 10 ♕e2 ♘d7 11 ♘g5 ♘f6 12 ♘gf3 ♘d7 13 0-0 ♗xg3 14 hxg3 e5 15 ♘xe5 ♘dxe5 16 dxe5 ♘xe5 17 ♘f3 = Van de Mortel-Jongsma, Haarlem 2001.

We now return to 6...♗e7 *(D)*:

W



7 ♘e5!

Simultaneously stopping ...♘h5 and Black's most natural developing plan with ...b6 and ...♗b7. White should avoid 7 ♗d3?! ♘h5! 8 ♗e5 f6 9 ♗g3 g6 10 ♕e2 0-0 11 ♗c2 e5! (11...a6?! = Eslon-P.Cramling, Biel 1984) 12 dxe5 ♘xg3 13 hxg3 fxe5 ∓ Franke.

7...0-0?!

This is natural but should probably be delayed, as castling gives White a clear target. Other moves:

a) 7...♕b6 8 ♖b1 ♘d7 9 ♗d3 (9 ♘xd7 ♗xd7 10 ♕g4 ±) 9...♘dxe5 10 dxe5 g5!? 11 ♗g3 h5 12 h3 ♗d7 13 ♗e2 h4 and in Zurek-Polak, Czechoslovak Cht 1991 both kings were vulnerable.

b) 7...♘xe5 8 ♗xe5 (8 dxe5 is ineffective when Black has not castled) and now:

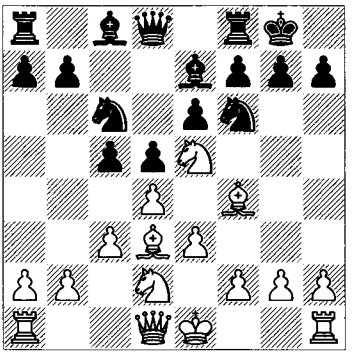
b1) 8...♕b6 9 ♕c2 (9 ♖b1 is also possible) 9...♗d7 10 a4 a5 11 ♗d3 h6 12 0-0 0-0 13 h3 (13 dxc5!?, planning to use d4 for the knight, may be quite promising) 13...♗c6 14 g4 ♘d7 15 ♗g3 and chances are fairly balanced, Brandics-Kern, Kecskemet 1992.

b2) 8...♗d7 9 ♗d3 ♕b6 10 ♕c2 cxd4 11 exd4 ♗b5 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♗xb5 ♕xb5 14 ♖ae1 ♘d7 15 ♗g3 ♖ac8 = Susković-Dumitrache, Zagreb 1997.

b3) 8...0-0 9 ♗d3 ♘d7 10 ♗g3 f5 11 0-0 c4 12 ♗c2 b5 13 ♘f3 b4 14 ♘e5 ♘xe5 15 ♗xe5 ♕a5 16 ♕d2 ♗d7 17 f3 ♕b6 18 e4 a5 = Georgievski-Stamnov, Struga 1993.

8 ♗d3 *(D)*

B



8...♗d7

There is no simple solution:

a) 8...♘xe5?! 9 dxe5 is highly unpleasant for Black – compare Line 5D and Game 5.

b) 8...♘d7 9 ♕h5 f5 10 g4 ♘dxe5 11 dxe5 g6 12 ♕h3 ♖f7 (Needleman-Hungaski, Buenos Aires 2003) 13 0-0-0 ±.

c) 8...♗d6 9 ♕f3 ♕c7 10 ♘xc6 ♗xf4 11 ♕xf4 ♕xc6 12 ♕h4 ♕b6 13 0-0-0 cxd4 14 exd4 ♕d8 15 ♖he1 g6 16 f4 ± Ernst-Ekström, Baden 1997.

d) 8...cxd4 9 exd4 ♗d7 (9...g6 10 ♗h6 ♖e8 11 f4 ♘h5 12 0-0 ♘g7 13 ♗xg7 ± B.Balogh-Rosta, Hungarian Cht 1992) 10 0-0 a6 11 ♖e1 b5 12 a3 g6 and now the finish of Panić-Stanković, Belgrade 2003 was quite attractive: 13 ♖e3 ♘xe5 14 ♗xe5 a5 15 ♖h3 ♖c8 16 ♕f3 ♘e8? (16...♖e8 17 ♕f4 ±) 17 ♖xh7! ♗f6 (17...♔xh7 18 ♕h5+ ♔g8 19 ♕h8#) 18 ♕h3 1-0.

9 ♕f3 ♖c8

9...♘e8 doesn't improve: 10 ♕h3 g6 11 ♘df3 ♘xe5 12 ♘xe5 f6 13 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 14 0-0 c4 15 ♗c2 ♗d6 16 ♗h6 ♖f7 17 e4 ± Knežević-Cekro, Sarajevo 1981.

10 ♕h3 g6 11 ♗h6 ♖e8 12 f4

Black is struggling:

a) 12...♘xe5 13 fxe5 ♘h5 14 g4 ♘g7 15 0-0 ♖f8 16 ♘f3 b5 17 ♗f4 h5 18 gxh5 ♘xh5 19 ♗h6 ♘g7 20 ♔h1 b4 21 ♖g1 ♘f5 22 ♘g5 bxc3 23 ♗g7 wins for White, Šahović-Franzoni, Biel 1980.

b) 12...♗f8 13 ♗g5 ♘b8 14 ♕h4 ♗e7 15 0-0 ♘h5 16 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 17 ♕xe7 ♖xe7 18 g4 ♘g7 ±.

c) 12...♕b6 13 ♖b1 ♘b8 14 g4 ♗b5 ±.

Conclusion:

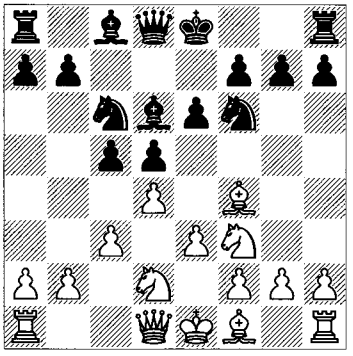
The kind of position arising after 7...0-0 is probably what attracts most players who take up the London. Black can probably defend by accurate play but White is quite likely to win by a quick kingside attack.

5F: 6 ♘gf3 ♗d6

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 e6 4 ♘d2 c5 5 c3 ♘c6 6 ♘gf3)

6...♗d6! *(D)*

W



It isn't at all easy to prove an advantage against this natural set-up. Black intends to exchange the dark-squared bishops and then force ...e5, freeing his light-squared one. However, if he succeeds in his first ambition but not in his second he may have to play a rather uncomfortable endgame.

7 ♗g3

In certain lines this bishop retreat may indeed be a tempo loss. However, generally it's quite useful, preparing ♘e5 followed by f4 and making an exchange of dark-squared bishops less tempting for Black. It's also worth noting that there are lines where White plays ♗g3 quite early, thus committing himself to this line.

7 ♘e5 is the subject of Line 5G.

Surprisingly, Miles has played the meek 7 dxc5 which in our opinion gives up any immediate hopes of an opening advantage.

7...♗xg3

This isn't entirely desirable, opening the h-file and giving White more control of f4. However, Black is planning ...e5, and it is certainly better to open the h-file now than after castling. Almost every move has been explored here:

a) 7...♕e7!? 8 ♘e5 and now:

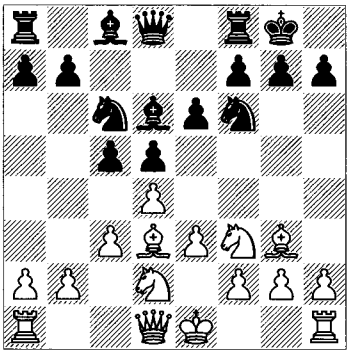
a1) 8...♗xe5 9 dxe5 ♘d7 10 ♘f3 ♕d8 11 ♗d3 ♕b6 12 ♕c2 c4 13 ♗e2 ♘c5 14 ♘d2 ♗d7 15 0-0 ± Rubinstein – Duz-Khotimirsky, Karlsbad 1907.

a2) 8...♘d7 9 f4 0-0 10 ♗d3 f6 11 ♘xc6 bxc6 12 ♕c2 f5 (12...g6 13 0-0 c4 14 ♗e2 e5 {Kveinys-Nybäck, Plovdiv Echt 2003} 15 e4 exd4 16 cxd4 ♘b6 17 b3 ±) 13 ♘f3 a5 14 ♗h4 ♕e8 (Vega Holm-Vallejo Pons, Ponferrada 1997) 15 ♘e5 ♗xe5 16 dxe5 ♗a6 17 c4 ♘b6 18 b3 a4 19 0-0 ±.

b) 7...♘e4 8 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 9 ♘xe4 dxe4 10 ♘d2 cxd4 11 exd4 f5 12 f3 0-0 13 fxe4 fxe4 14 ♗c4 e3 15 ♘f3 ± S.Kovačević-Lalev, Ruse 1983.

c) The natural 7...0-0 may still be premature as after 8 ♗d3 *(D)* White has quite a dangerous kingside initiative:

B



c1) 8...h6 9 ♕e2 b6 10 ♘e5 ♗xe5 11 dxe5 ♘d7 12 f4 a5 13 a4 c4 14 ♗c2 ♘c5 15 0-0 ♘e7 16 ♗h4 ± Blatny-Sjöberg, Kecskemet 1992.

c2) 8...♕c7 9 dxc5 ♗xg3 10 hxg3 e5 11 e4 ♗e6 12 ♘g5 h6 13 ♘xe6 fxe6 14 g4 ±.

c3) 8...cxd4 9 exd4 ♕c7 10 ♕e2 ♖e8 11 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 12 ♘e5 ♕e7 13 f4 ♘d7 14 0-0 ♘f8 15 ♖ae1 f6 16 ♘xc6 bxc6 17 ♘b3 ± S.Kovačević-Perić, Salsomaggiore Terme 1998.

c4) ECO gives 8...b6 as leading to equality, but 9 e4 may be promising: 9...dxe4 10 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 11 ♗xe4 ♗b7 (Vager-Egin, St Petersburg 1997) 12 ♕a4 ♕c7 13 dxc5 ±.

c5) 8...♕e7 9 ♘e5 and now Black has:

c51) 9...♘d7 10 ♘df3! f5 11 0-0 ♘f6 12 ♘xc6 bxc6 13 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 14 ♘e5 cxd4 15 exd4 c5 16 ♕a4 c4 17 ♗e2 ± Yedidia-Inkiov, French Cht 1996.

c52) 9...♗xe5 10 dxe5 ♘d7 11 ♘f3 b6 12 ♕a4 ♗b7 13 ♕g4 ♖fe8 (13...f5) 14 ♕h3 h6 15 0-0 ± Dresen-Stanetzek, Aachen 2003.

c53) 9...cxd4 10 exd4 ♘d7 11 f4 f5 12 0-0 ♘f6 13 ♗h4 ♕c7 14 ♕e2 ♘e4 15 ♔h1 ♗d7 16 g4 ♗e8 17 gxf5 exf5 18 ♖g1 ± V.Kovačević-Fressinet, Solin/Split 2000.

c54) 9...♖d8 10 f4 ♘d7 11 0-0 ♘f8 12 ♕e2 f6 13 ♗h4 ♗d7 14 ♘xd7 ♖xd7 15 ♔h1 ♖e8 16 ♖ae1 ± Bisguier-Frias Pablaza, Lone Pine 1981.

c6) 8...♖e8 9 ♘e5 and here:

c61) 9...♕e7 10 f4 is quite unpleasant for Black, Blatny-Luchan, Boston 2001 (see Illustrative Game 8).

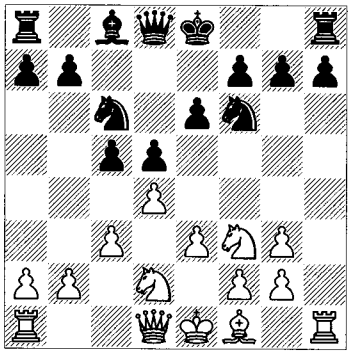
c62) 9...♕c7 10 f4 c4 11 ♗c2 b5 12 0-0 ♘e7 13 ♗h4 (13 ♕f3) 13...♘f5 14 ♗f2 b4 (14...♗f8 15 g4 ♘d6 16 g5 ♘fe4 =) 15 g4 ♘e7 16 g5 (Khagurov-Khosroev, Krasnodar 2002) 16...♘d7 (16...♘e4 17 ♘xe4 dxe4 18 ♗xe4 +–) 17 ♗xh7+ ♔xh7 18 ♕h5+ ♔g8 19 ♕xf7+ ♔h7 20 ♕h5+ ♔g8 21 ♕xe8+ +–.

c63) 9...♗xe5 10 dxe5 ♘d7 11 f4 c4 12 ♗c2 ♕b6 is fairly extensively analysed in Illustrative Game 7.

c64) 9...g6 10 f4 ♘h5 11 ♗f2 f6 12 ♘xg6 was a low-risk sacrifice in Minasian-Tissir, Abu Dhabi 2004. After 12...hxg6 13 ♗xg6 ♘g7 14 ♗xe8 ♕xe8 15 dxc5 ♗xc5 16 ♕f3 ♕g6 17 h4 ♗d7 18 h5 ♕d3 19 g4 it was obvious that Black's minor pieces weren't well organized.

8 hxg3 *(D)*

B



8...♕d6

Black now threatens ...e5 but White can stop it in various ways. First of all it should be noted that following an immediate ...e5 and subsequent exchanges on e5, there may come a slightly inconvenient ♗b5+. If Black chooses to castle first, the open h-file and White's g4 ideas may cause just as big problems. Even if Black finds a way to force ...e5 without exposing his king, White still has ways to put pressure on Black's big centre. The alternatives are less goal-oriented:

a) 8...♕e7 9 ♕a4 0-0 10 ♘e5 ♘xe5 11 dxe5 ♘d7 12 ♘f3 c4 13 ♕d1 f6 14 exf6 ♘xf6 15 ♕d4 ♘e4 16 ♗xc4 ♘xf2 17 ♔xf2 dxc4 18 ♕xc4 with a clear advantage for White, Hebden-Arkell, London 1999.

b) 8...cxd4 9 exd4 ♘g4!? 10 ♗b5 ♗d7 11 ♕e2 ♕c7 ± S.Kovačević-Diaz Flores Garcia, Manresa 1996.

9 ♗b5!

This is the positional approach. 9 ♗d3 and 9 ♕c2 are promising alternatives.

9...♗d7

Black has also tried:

a) 9...a6 10 ♕a4 ♖b8 11 ♗xc6+ ♕xc6 12 ♕c2 ♕c7 13 ♘e5 h6 14 g4 ♘d7 15 ♘df3 ♘f8 16 dxc5 ♕xc5 17 ♕a4+ b5 18 ♕f4 ♖b7 19 ♕d4 ♕xd4 20 cxd4 ± Barva-Turzo, Aggtelek 2000.

b) 9...0-0 10 ♕c2 h6 11 ♗xc6 bxc6 12 ♘e5 ♘d7 (12...♖b8 {Colović-Todorović, Yugoslav Cht (Herceg Novi) 2001} 13 g4! cxd4 14 exd4 c5 15 g5 cxd4 16 cxd4 hxg5 17 ♕d3 g4 18 ♘xg4 +–) 13 ♘df3 cxd4 14 exd4 c5 15 dxc5 ♘xc5 16 0-0-0 ♕e7 17 ♖h4 ♗b7 18 ♖dh1 ± Blatny-Stone, Groningen 1990.

c) 9...♘d7 10 ♕c2 h6 11 g4 ♖g8 (11...a6 12 ♗xc6 bxc6 13 g5 ♖b8 14 gxh6 ±) 12 0-0-0 ♘e7 13 ♘e5 cxd4 14 exd4 a6 15 ♗xd7+ ♗xd7 16 ♖de1 a5 17 ♖h3 ♖a6 18 ♖f3 ± Barva-Bencze, Hungarian Cht 2003.

10 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 11 ♘e5 h6

Alternatively:

a) 11...0-0 12 g4 ♘d7 13 ♕c2 f5 14 ♘xd7 ♗xd7 ± Kamsky-Dlugy, New York 1989 (see Illustrative Game 6).

b) 11...♘d7 12 ♘df3 ♔e7 (12...f6? 13 ♘g6) 13 ♕c2 and then:

b1) 13...♘f8 14 0-0-0 ♗e8 15 dxc5 ♕xc5 16 e4 f6 17 ♘d3 ♕c4 18 exd5 ± Knežević-Langeweg, Sarajevo 1981.

b2) 13...h6 14 g4 ♖ac8 and now Pozin-Potkin, Eforie Nord 1998 continued 15 ♖h3 b5 16 a3 a5 17 g5 hxg5 18 ♖h7 g4 19 ♖xg7? gxf3 20

♕g6 and Black should have won by 20...♘xe5 21 dxe5 ♔d8!! 22 ♖g8+ (22 ♕xf7 ♕f8 +–) 22...♔d7. Probably 15 0-0-0 is more promising, even though Black will then have some counterplay on the queenside.

12 g4!?

This may improve on 12 a3 (Gyimesi-Sergienko, Kecskemet 1992).

12...♘d7 13 ♘df3 ♖c8 14 g5

Now we offer the following analysis:

a) 14...♕e7 15 gxh6 gxh6 16 ♘xd7 ♗xd7 17 ♘e5 ♗b5 18 ♕f3 ♖c7 19 ♖h5 ±.

b) 14...♕f8 15 g6 ♘xe5 (15...f6 16 ♘f7 ♖g8 17 dxc5 ♘xc5 18 ♘d4 ♕e7 19 a4 ±) 16 ♘xe5 f6 17 ♘f7 ♖g8 18 ♕g4 f5 19 ♕f4 ♔d7 ±.

Conclusion:

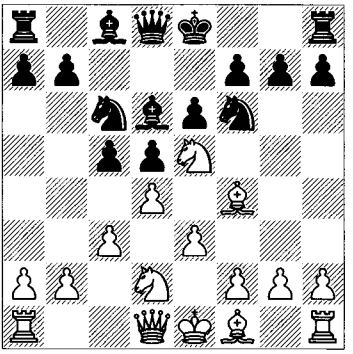
In order to achieve an advantage in this line, White can't rely solely on his kingside attacking chances but must also look out for chances to reach a better endgame – most likely with a good knight versus a bad bishop. Fortunately this is quite a realistic approach after the dark-squared bishops have been exchanged.

5G: 7 ♘e5

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 e6 4 ♘d2 c5 5 c3 ♘c6 6 ♘gf3 ♗d6)

7 ♘e5 *(D)*

B



This is an important line, but White may not be able to reach it if he plays a delayed ♘f3 and Black responds with a quick ...♗d6. It is also unclear if White can maintain his central knight or will have to exchange down to a lifeless ending.

7...♕c7

This is the natural way to continue the fight for e5. Black also has:

a) 7...♕b6?? 8 ♘dc4! dxc4 9 ♘xc4 ♕d8 10 ♘xd6+ ♔e7 11 dxc5 1-0 Mehmet-Nadjar, Val Maubuée 1990.

b) 7...♗xe5 8 dxe5 ♘d7 9 ♕g4 ♖g8 10 ♘f3 g5 11 ♗g3 ± Tobak-Ugolik, Odessa Ch 2001.

c) 7...0-0 in principle should be wrong, as White has everything set up for a kingside attack. However, it seems that if Black turns all his attention to the e4-square, he can reach a playable position with precise play:

c1) 8 ♘df3 is sensible, but not particularly ambitious: 8...♘h5 (8...♘e4!?) 9 ♘xc6 bxc6 10 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 11 ♘e5 ♘f6 12 ♕a4 cxd4 13 exd4 c5 14 ♕a3 ♘e4 15 ♗d3 cxd4 16 ♕xd6 ♘xd6 17 cxd4 = Ristić-Stojanović, Yugoslav Cht (Budva) 2002.

c2) 8 ♗g3 ♕c7 is critical:

c21) 9 ♘df3 ♘e4 10 ♗d3 f5 11 ♘xc6 bxc6 12 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 13 ♘e5 cxd4 14 exd4 c5 15 0-0 ♕b6 (Helling-Keres, Dresden 1936) 16 ♕b3 will give White a promising endgame; e.g., 16...cxd4 17 ♕xb6 axb6 18 cxd4 ♖a4 19 ♘c6 ♗b7 20 b3 ♖a3 21 ♘b4 ±.

c22) 9 f4!? is more tempting, planning a quick mating attack along the general lines of Illustrative Game 8.

c221) 9...b6 fails to equalize: 10 ♗d3 ♘e7 11 ♕f3 (11 0-0 ♗b7 12 ♕f3 ♘f5 13 ♗f2 is also pleasant for White: 13...♗e7 14 ♘g4 ♘xg4 15 ♕xg4 ♘d6 16 ♕h3 f5 17 ♗h4 ♗xh4 18 ♕xh4 c4 19 ♗c2 b5 20 a3 a5 21 g4 ± S.Kovačević-del Rio, Mancha Real 2000) 11...g6 12 ♗h4 ♘e8 13 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 14 0-0 f6 15 ♘g4 h5 16 ♘f2 f5 17 ♕g3 ♔g7 18 ♘f3 ± S.Kovačević-Carbonell Bofill, Aragon Cht 1997.

c222) 9...♘e7! may be sufficient for equality. After 10 ♗d3 ♘f5 11 ♗f2 c4 12 ♗c2 ♗e7! 13 g4 ♘d6 Black is planning ...b5 and ...♗b7, which gives him at least central equality. However, flank play ensures that there is scope for fighting chess. After 14 ♕f3 ♘fe4 15 g5 (15 ♘xe4?! dxe4 16 ♗xe4 f6! 17 ♗xh7+ ♔xh7 18 g5 fxg5 19 ♕h3+ ♔g8 ∓) Black has to be careful, as 15...♘xd2?! 16 ♔xd2 b5 comes close to losing by force: 17 ♘g4 ♗b7 18 ♘f6+ gxf6 19 ♗xh7+ ♔xh7 20 ♕h5+ ♔g8 21 gxf6 +–. A better try is 15...b5 16 h4 ♗b7, when White should probably insert 17 a3! so that after 17...a5 18 h5 b4 19 g6 bxc3 20 bxc3 ♘xd2 21 ♔xd2 the black queen doesn't have access to

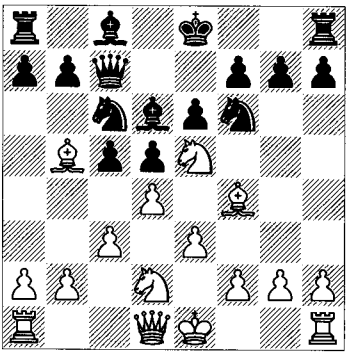
a5. After 21...fxg6 22 hxg6 h6 23 ♗h4 White has the stronger minor pieces and at least a small advantage.

8 ♗b5 *(D)*

This is the positional approach. The natural 8 ♘df3 weakens e4 somewhat:

a) 8...♘e4 9 ♗b5 0-0 10 0-0 ♗d7 11 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 12 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 13 ♕e2 c4 14 ♘d2 ♘xd2 15 ♕xd2 a6 = J.Přibyl-Jacek, Ceske Budejovice 1995.

b) 8...cxd4 9 ♘xc6 bxc6 10 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 11 exd4 0-0 12 ♗d3 c5 13 0-0 ♖b8 14 ♖b1 a5 15 ♖e1 ♗d7 16 ♘e5 = L.Gonzalez-Topalov, Mesa 1992.


B

8...♗d7!

The alternatives seem weaker:

a) 8...a6 9 ♕a4 0-0 10 ♗xc6 bxc6 11 ♕xc6 ♕b8 12 0-0 cxd4 13 cxd4 ♘h5 14 ♘b3 is much better for White.

b) 8...0-0 9 ♗xc6 bxc6 10 0-0 ♗a6 (10...♖b8 11 ♖b1 ♗a6 12 ♖e1 ♗b7 13 ♘b3 c4 14 ♘c5 ♖bd8 15 b4 ± Umetsubo-Lafuente, Panamerican Ch 1996) 11 ♖e1 ♖ab8 12 ♘b3 c4 13 ♘c5 ♗xc5 14 dxc5 g5? (14...♕c8 15 ♕a4 ♖b5 16 b4 ±) 15 ♘g4! gxf4 16 ♘xf6+ ♔g7 17 ♘h5+ ♔h8 18 exf4 f6 19 ♖xe6 ♕f7 20 ♖xf6 1-0 De Rooi-Haldane, Guernsey 1987.

9 ♘xd7 ♘xd7 10 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 11 ♕g4!?

This may be better and certainly is sharper than 11 0-0 0-0 12 f4 a6 13 ♗d3 c4 14 ♗c2 f5 15 ♘f3 b5 = M.Vasilev-Demirel, Izmir 2002.

11...0-0 12 f4 ♘f6

13 ♕f3 ♘e7 14 ♗d3 ♕b6 15 ♖b1 ±.

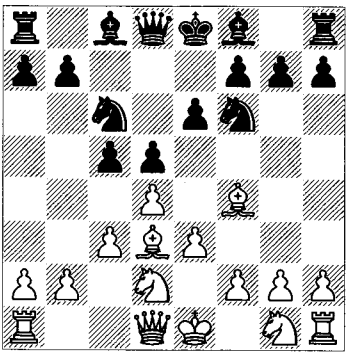
Conclusion:

Here too, White's chances may just as often be found in an endgame as in an immediate kingside attack.

5H: 6 ♗d3

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 e6 4 ♘d2 c5 5 c3 ♘c6)

6 ♗d3!? *(D)*


B

This position is less explored than the one arising after 6 ♘gf3 – mainly because it can only be reached via a move-order with a delayed ♘gf3. It probably isn't objectively stronger, but may lead to more unbalanced positions and thus provide better winning chances against weaker opposition (the other side of the coin, of course, is that it may be easier for a strong player with Black to play for a win too...).

6...♗d6

a) 6...♕b6 is rather pointless: 7 ♖b1 ♘d7 8 ♘gf3 f6 9 ♗g3 ♗e7 10 0-0 f5 11 c4 cxd4 12 cxd5 exd5 13 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 14 exd4 f4 15 ♗h4 ♗xh4 16 ♕h5+ ♔d8 17 ♕xh4+ ± Morozevich-*Fritz/Primergy K800*, Frankfurt 2000.

b) 6...♗e7!? is another attempt to profit from White's delayed ♘f3. White probably has to play 7 h3 if he wants to complete development without giving up his dark-squared bishop to ...♘h5:

b1) 7...b6 8 ♘gf3 ♗b7 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♖e1 h6 11 ♖c1 ♖e8 12 ♗b1 ♖c8 13 ♘e5 ♗d6 14 ♘df3 ♘e7 15 ♘h2 ♘c6 16 ♘hg4 ♘xg4 17 ♕xg4 ♕c7 18 ♘xc6 ♗xf4 19 ♘xa7 ♗h2+ 20 ♔h1 ♖a8 21 ♘b5 ± Dybowski-Murdzia, Lublin 1993.

b2) 7...0-0 8 ♘gf3 and now:

b21) 8...♗d6 9 ♘e5 ♗xe5 10 dxe5 ♘d7 11 ♘f3 h6 12 ♗c2 ♖e8 13 0-0 b6 14 e4 ♘e7 15 ♕d2 ♘f8 16 ♖ad1 ± Shirov-Sakaev, Sochi jr 1986.

b22) 8...a6 9 0-0 cxd4 10 exd4 ♗d7 11 ♕e2 ♖c8 12 ♖fe1 ♘a5 13 ♘e5 ± Ravisekhar-Waddingham, British Ch (Brighton) 1984.

b23) 8...c4, releasing the central tension, shouldn't be the correct strategy but after 9 ♗c2 b5 10 a3 a5 it isn't so clear how White should continue:

b231) 11 ♕e2 ♗b7 12 e4!? and now 12...b4 13 e5 ♘e8 14 h4 bxc3 15 ♗xh7+! ♔xh7 16 ♘g5+ ♔g8 17 ♕h5 cxd2+ 18 ♗xd2 1-0 was a success for White in Tkeshelashvili-I.Ioseliani, Batumi open 2003, but 12...dxe4 13 ♘xe4 ♘d5 (Besser-Hildebrand, Bundesliga 1980/1) seems OK for Black.

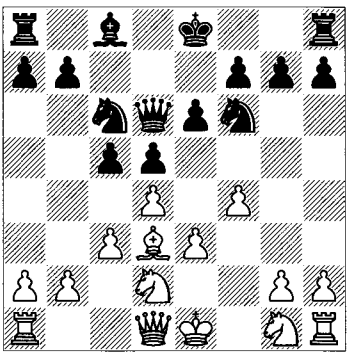
b232) 11 0-0 ♗b7 12 ♘e5 seems more to the point, but after 12...b4, 13 ♗a4 ♘xe5 14 dxe5 ♘e4 15 ♘xe4 dxe4 16 axb4 axb4 17 cxb4 ♗xb4 was fine for Black in Galkin-Malakhov, Lausanne 2000. Maybe 13 ♕f3 promises more.

7 ♗xd6

Most other moves should be met by a quick ...e5. It seems 7 ♘gf3?! ♗xf4 8 exf4 cxd4 9 cxd4 ♕d6 10 g3 ♕b4!? is at least equal for Black.

7...♕xd6 8 f4 *(D)*

B



This must be the point of not playing the natural 5 ♘gf3. Some authors seem to believe this set-up is the only independent idea behind 2 ♗f4. And it indeed is an interesting concept: White is playing a Stonewall defence with colours reversed, but only after exchanging off his 'bad' dark-squared bishop. As an extra bonus, he can still reach his ideal set-up with ♕f3 (preventing ...♘e4 followed by ...f5) and ♘h3-f2 before continuing the attack with ♕f3-h3 and g4-g5. Nevertheless it has proved very hard to demonstrate an advantage for White in this position.

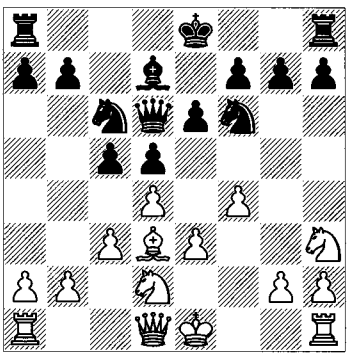
8...cxd4

This is extremely logical, as for the moment White cannot recapture with the e-pawn.

a) 8...♖b8 prepares queenside expansion but is probably just too slow: 9 ♘h3 b5 10 a3 b4 11 axb4 cxb4 12 0-0 bxc3 13 bxc3 0-0 14 e4 dxe4 15 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 16 ♗xe4 h6 (16...♗b7? 17 ♗xh7+! ♔xh7 18 ♕h5+ ♔g8 19 ♘g5 ♖fd8 20 ♕xf7+ ♔h8 21 ♖f3 +–) 17 ♕f3 ± Zaitseva-Sudakova, St Petersburg 2003.

b) The complex 8...♗d7 is also popular. This may be a preparation for ...cxd4 and ...♗b5, or also for ...♗c6 fighting for control of e4. After 9 ♘h3 *(D)* Black has tried:

B



b1) 9...♖b8 10 0-0 b5 11 a3 a5 12 ♘f3 0-0 13 ♘e5 b4 14 axb4 axb4 15 ♖f3 bxc3 16 bxc3 cxd4 17 cxd4 ♘b4 18 ♗b1 ♖a8 = Jeremić-Benković, Subotica jr 2000.

b2) 9...0-0-0 10 ♖c1 ♔b8 11 ♕e2 h6 12 a3 c4 13 ♗c2 ♘a5 14 0-0 ♗c6 15 ♖ce1 ♕d7 16 ♘f3 ♘g4 17 ♘e5 ♘xe5 18 fxe5 ± Boguszlavszkij-Cooke, Budapest 2001.

b3) 9...♘e7 10 0-0 (or 10 ♕f3 ♕b6 with the idea ...♗b5 = Hulak-Abramović, Yugoslavia 1983) 10...♗c6 (10...♕b6 11 ♕b3 ♘g4 12 ♖fe1 c4 13 ♕xb6 axb6 14 ♗c2 f5 15 ♘g5 ♘c6 16 ♘gf3 ± V.Kovačević-Rajković, Yugoslavia 1983) 11 ♕b1 b6 12 ♘g5 h6 13 ♘gf3 0-0 14 ♘e5 ♘d7 15 g4 f6 16 ♗h7+ ♔h8 17 ♘g6+ ♘xg6 18 ♗xg6 f5 19 gxf5 exf5 20 ♗xf5 ♖ae8 = Szabolcsi-Lukacs, Budapest 1996.

9 cxd4 ♘b4 *(D)*

Black has some playable alternatives:

a) 9...♕b4 10 ♖b1 ♘e4 11 ♗xe4 dxe4 12 a3 ♕a5 13 ♘e2 f5 14 b4 ♕d8 15 ♘c3 0-0 (or 15...♕h4+!? 16 g3 ♕h3 17 ♕e2 ±) 16 ♘c4 b6 17 0-0 and White is slightly better, Sv.Johnsen-G.Henriksen, Molde 2004.

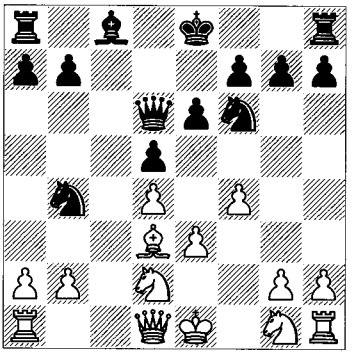
b) 9...♗d7 10 a3 and now:

b1) 10...♖c8 11 ♘gf3 ♘a5 12 ♕e2 0-0 13 0-0 a6 14 ♘e5 b5 15 ♖f3 ♘c4 16 ♖h3 g6 17

♘df3 ♔g7 18 ♘g5 ♗e8 19 ♘g4 ± Alekseev-Sarichev, Minsk 2000.

b2) 10...h6 11 ♘gf3 g5!? (11...♘g4 12 ♕e2 f5 13 0-0 ♖c8 14 ♖ac1 0-0 15 ♖c2 ±) 12 g3 gxf4 13 exf4 (13 gxf4!?) 13...♕c7 (Csuri-Egedi, Hungarian Cht 2003) 14 ♖c1 ♖c8 15 b4 ±.

b3) 10...♘e7 11 ♘gf3 ♘f5 12 ♕e2 ♕b6 13 ♘e5 ♘d6 14 0-0 0-0 15 ♘xd7 ♘xd7 16 ♘f3 ♘f6 17 ♘e5 ♖ad8 18 ♖f3 ♘fe4 19 ♖h3 f6 = Sirnik-Jerić, Ljubljana 2003.



10 ♗b1

10 ♗e2 led to roughly even play in the game V.Kovačević-Beliavsky, Plovdiv Echt 1983 after 10...♕b6 11 ♕b3 ♗d7 12 a3 ♘c6 13 ♕xb6 axb6 14 ♗d3 ♘b4 15 ♗b1 ♔e7.

10...♕b6 *(D)*

Other moves seeking to exchange or activate the light-squared bishop are also playable:

a) 10...♗d7 11 a3 ♘c6 12 ♘gf3 a5 13 0-0 ♘g4 14 ♕e2 f5 15 ♘e5 ♘cxe5 16 fxe5 ♕b6 17 ♘f3 ♗b5 18 ♗d3 = Niehaus-Nogly, Dortmund 1992.

b) 10...b6 11 a3 ♘c6 12 ♗d3 a5 13 ♕e2 0-0 14 ♘gf3 ♗b7 15 0-0 and now:

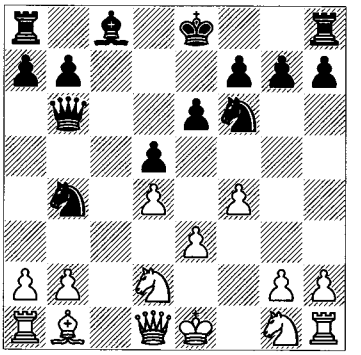
b1) 15...a4!?.

b2) 15...♘e7 16 ♖ac1 ♘f5 17 ♘e5 ♖fc8 18 ♕f3 ♖c7 19 g4 ♘h4 20 ♕h3 ♘g6 21 ♘df3 ♖ac8 22 ♖xc7 ± Gulko-*Virtual Chess*, Boston 1995.

b3) 15...♖fc8 16 ♘e5 ♖c7 17 g4 ♘e7 18 g5 ♘e4 = Colom Andres-Camarasa Rodriguez, Mataro 1996.

11 ♕b3

This is untested. Boguszlavszkij-Vajda, Budapest 2000 was quite interesting: after 11 a3 ♘c6 12 b3 ♗d7 13 ♘gf3 ♕a5! 14 b4!? ♘xb4 15

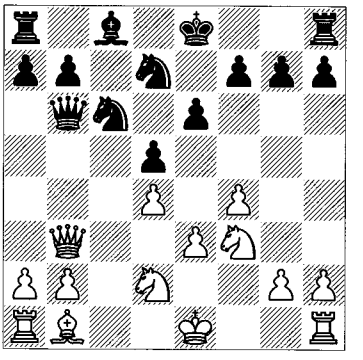


0-0, the open b-file and White's active pieces were adequate compensation for the pawn. Following 15...♘a6 16 ♗d3 ♖c8 17 ♘b3 ♕b6 18 ♖b1 ♗a4 19 ♕e2 White even got the advantage as 19...♗xb3 20 ♗b5+ ♔f8 21 ♖xb3 ♘c7 22 ♖c1 would have been very promising for him.

11...♘d7

It isn't clear that the doubled b-pawns will be a weakness after 11...0-0 12 a3 ♘c6 13 ♕xb6 axb6 14 h3 ♗d7 15 g4, but White's better bishop should give him some edge.

12 ♘gf3 ♘c6 *(D)*



13 ♕c3 f5 14 0-0 ♘f6 15 a4 ♗d7 16 a5 ♕b4 17 ♖c1 ±.

Conclusion:

We have not been able to prove analytically that 6 ♗d3 is a better move than 6 ♘gf3 (actually that would have been a suspicious conclusion). However, it presents Black with a slightly different set of challenges and if nothing else it will be a nice supplementary weapon, making preparation a bit more difficult for your opponents.

6 The Slav Approach: 2...c6 and 3...c6

These two move-orders (2...c6 and 3...c6) obviously have to be considered in connection. Transpositions abound, but there are also independent lines – mainly those in which Black chooses to attack b2 immediately with ...♕b6. The single-step advance of the black c-pawn announces that Black intends to combine ambitions (attacking b2) with solidity (fortifying the centre). And it seems that this idea is becoming more and more well known, even at club level, possibly as an effect of the increasing popularity of the Trompowsky and 1 d4 d5 2 ♗g5. The solid central formation allows Black rapid development and flexibility for his queen's bishop, which can head for g4 or f5 according to White's set-up, while in certain variations it may even go to e6, helping to safeguard a stolen pawn on c4. If you are looking for set-ups with ...g6 please consult Line 8C on the Schlechter formation.

Chapter Outline

1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4

6A:	**2...c6 (3 ♘f3 ♗g4)**	111
6B:	**2...c6 3 ♘f3 ♕b6**	112
6C:	**2...♘f6 3 e3 c6 4 ♘f3 (4...♘h5)**	114
6D:	**2...♘f6 3 e3 c6 4 ♘f3 ♗g4**	114
6E:	**2...♘f6 3 e3 c6 4 ♘f3 ♕b6**	115
6F:	**2...♘f6 3 e3 c6 4 ♗d3**	116

6A: 2...c6 Introduction

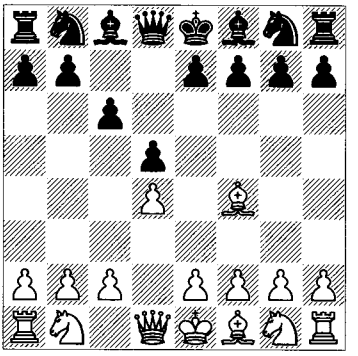
(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4)

2...c6 *(D)*

There is a fair chance that a player choosing this move normally plays the Slav (1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6). However, he may also be a solid player aware of the fact that early excursions by the c1-bishop can normally be put to the toughest test by an early ...♕b6. And being unfamiliar with 2 ♗f4, he reasons that while 2...c5 may be risky, advancing the pawn just one square should be a safe try.

Generally, in the London, ...c6 is a signal for White to look for a good moment to play c4. While ♕c1 is still slightly clumsy, in comparison to ...♕b6 it may well be the better move.

W



3 ♘f3

Of the alternatives, 3 ♘d2 and 3 c3 are playable, but will not win you any quick games. 3 c4 is quite another matter, and possibly White's objectively strongest move. However, even if it's a relatively minor 'standard Slav' line (normally arising from 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♗f4!?), we couldn't really find space for it in a book on the London.

This position (after 3 ♘f3) can also be reached after 1 d4 c6!? 2 ♘f3 (2 ♗f4?! ♕b6) 2...d5 3 ♗f4, so unless you intend to counter that with 2 e4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 ♗f4 (Line 1D), this must be a part of your repertoire. It isn't clear whether White gains anything from the 3 e3 move-order. In some variations it may be useful to play c4 or ♗d3 one move earlier, and it may be relevant that the position after 3...♗f5 is the same that may arise from 2...♗f5 3 e3 c6, thereby making the repertoire more consistent (for 2 ♗f4 players). However, after 3...♕b6 4

♕c1 ♗f5 White has nothing better than 5 ♘f3, transposing to our main line. So if White wants an independent line he must try 4 b3!? and after 4...♗f5, 5 a3! is probably a good idea, stopping all Black's hopes of ...♗a3/...♗b4. Now 5...♘f6 6 c4!? may appear risky, playing for space on the queenside before finishing development. The reason White can safely do so, obviously, is that Black isn't able to open the centre. 6...e6 7 c5 ♕d8 8 ♘c3 ♘bd7 9 b4 a6 10 h3 ♗e7 (10...♘e4 11 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 12 ♘e2 ♗e7 13 ♘c3 ♗g6 14 ♗e2 0-0 15 0-0 f6 16 ♗g4 ♗f7 17 ♗g3 ♖e8 18 f4 ♗f8 = V.Kovačević-Vukelić, Croatian Cht (Poreč) 1998) 11 ♘f3 h6 12 ♗e2 0-0 13 0-0 ♖e8 14 a4 ♘e4 15 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 16 ♘d2 ♗g6 17 ♗g3 e5 18 ♘b3 ♗f6 = Vujić-J.Petrov, Pula 2003.

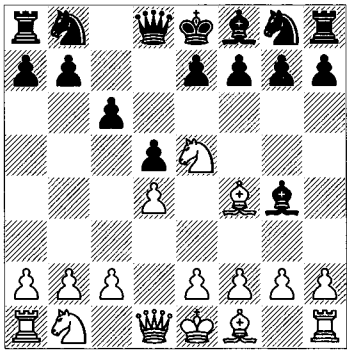
3...♗g4

Or: 3...♘f6 4 e3 – *2...♘f6 3 e3 c6 4 ♘f3*; 3...♘d7 4 e3 ♕b6 5 ♕c1 ♘gf6 – *2...♘f6 3 e3 c6 4 ♘f3 ♕b6 5 ♕c1 ♘bd7*; 3...♗f5 – *2...♗f5 3 ♘f3 c6*.

4 ♘e5!? *(D)*

This is the most direct attempt to take advantage of the exposed bishop. 4 ♘bd2 (4 e3 ♘f6 – *3 e3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 ♗g4*), hoping to play ♘e5 only after ...♘f6, is sensible but unlikely to remain independent.

B



4...♗f5

4...♗h5 retains the pin, but 5 g4!? may be promising when the bishop only has one retreat-square: 5...♗g6 6 h4 f6 (6...♕b6 7 ♘c3 ♕xb2 8 ♖h3 ♕xc2 9 h5 ♗e4 10 ♕xc2 ♗xc2 11 ♖c1 f6 12 ♖xc2 fxe5 13 dxe5 e6 ±) 7 ♘xg6 hxg6 8 ♗g2 e5 9 dxe5 fxe5 10 ♗xe5 ♖xh4 11 ♕d4 ♖xh1+ 12 ♗xh1 ♘d7 13 ♗g3 ± P.Horvath-B.Steiner, Zalakaros 1991.

5 e3

5 g4!? may be too committal when Black can still retreat his bishop along the h3-c8 diagonal:

a) 5...♗g6 – *4...♗h5 5 g4 ♗g6*.

b) 5...♗e6 6 e3 ♘d7 7 ♘d2 ♘gf6 8 ♘xd7 ♘xd7 9 ♗d3 g6 10 h4 ♕b6 11 h5 ♖g8 12 hxg6 hxg6 13 b3 ♗g7 14 a4 a5 15 c3 ♖h8 16 ♖xh8+ ♗xh8 17 ♕f3 ± Lobron-Hodgson, Amsterdam 1995.

c) 5...♗c8!? may be best. After 6 e3 ♘d7 7 c4 ♘xe5 8 ♗xe5 ♘f6 it's not clear that the charge of the g-pawn has improved White's position.

5...f6

Or 5...♘d7 6 ♗d3 ♗xd3 7 cxd3 e6 8 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 9 0-0 ♘f6 10 ♘c3 ♗e7 11 ♕e2 0-0 12 ♖ab1 b5 13 ♖bc1 ♕b7 14 ♗g5 ♗d8 15 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 16 f4 ± Eiber-Kreuzer, Germany tt 1995/6.

6 ♘f3 ♘d7 7 c4 ♗xb1

8 ♕xb1 e6 9 a3 f5 10 ♗e2 ♘gf6 11 0-0 ♘e4 12 ♕c2 ♗e7 13 ♘e5 0-0 14 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 15 b4 ♗d6 16 c5 ♗xf4 17 exf4 ± Karlik-Shishkin, Litomysl 1996.

Conclusion:

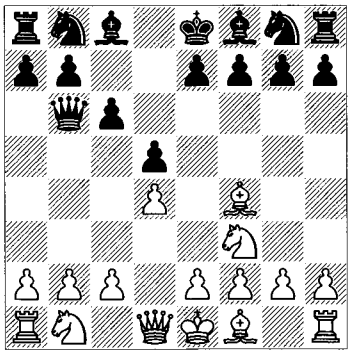
If there is a problem with 3 ♘f3, it definitely isn't 3...♗g4.

6B: 3 ♘f3 ♕b6

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 c6 3 ♘f3)

3...♕b6 *(D)*

W



This must be the point of Black's move-order.

4 ♕c1

This is the traditional main line. While similar variations with a black pawn on c5 don't promise much, this version should give White his normal initiative.

a) 4 ♘bd2!? is a brave gambit which has been fairly successful in practice:

a1) 4...♗f5 5 ♘b3 ♘d7 6 e3 a5 7 a4 e6 8 ♗e2 ♘gf6 9 h3 ♗e7 10 0-0 ♘e4 with an equal position, Gagloshvili-Stripunsky, Ceske Budejovice 1994.

a2) 4...♕xb2 5 e4 ♘f6 6 ♗d3 (6 e5 ♘e4 is less convincing) and now:

a21) After 6...♘xe4 7 ♘xe4 dxe4 8 ♗xe4 ♕b4+ 9 ♗d2 ♕d6 10 0-0 ♘d7 11 ♖b1 e6 12 ♖e1 ♕c7 13 ♘e5 ♘xe5 14 dxe5 White had compensation in Csiszar-Varga, Zalakaros 2002.

a22) After 6...e6 7 0-0 ♘bd7 (7...♕b6?! 8 c4 ♗e7 9 ♕c2 ♕d8 10 cxd5 exd5 11 e5 ♘h5 12 ♗e3 g6 13 ♗h6 ± Rutman-Shabanov, Sochi 1998) 8 ♗c7 ♘xe4 9 ♗xe4 dxe4 10 ♘xe4 ♕a3 11 ♖e1 ♘f6 12 ♘xf6+ gxf6 13 c4 Black had great problems completing his development in Jost-Papa, Baden 2002.

b) 4 b3 may be theoretically inferior but leads to more complex positions and may be a better practical choice against a weaker opponent. 4...♗f5 5 e3 and now:

b1) 5...♘d7 6 ♘h4 ♗e4 7 f3 ♗g6 8 ♘xg6 hxg6 9 c4?! (9 ♗d3, allowing 9...e5!? 10 dxe5 g5 11 ♗xg5 ♘xe5, also seems excessively risky, but 9 a3 may be slightly better for White) 9...dxc4 10 ♗xc4 e5 11 ♗g3 (11 dxe5 ♕a5+ 12 ♔f2 ♘xe5 ∓) 11...♗b4+ 12 ♔f1 ♘h6 ∓ Usov-Burmakin, Kstovo 1997.

b2) After 5...e6, 6 a3! is probably best. After an early b3 this defensive move tends to be sensible whenever Black plays ...e6. The light squares on the queenside are strengthened and Black isn't exactly ready to blast the position open in order to take advantage of White's slow development. 6...♘d7 7 ♗e2 h6 8 0-0 ♘gf6 9 ♘e5 ♗e7 10 ♘d2 ♘xe5 11 ♗xe5 0-0 (= ECO) 12 c4 ♘d7 13 ♗g3 ♕d8 14 b4 dxc4 15 ♘xc4 ♘b6 16 ♘a5 ♕d7 17 ♗f3 ± Ardiansyah-Ljubojević, Indonesia 1983.

4...♗g4 *(D)*

Or:

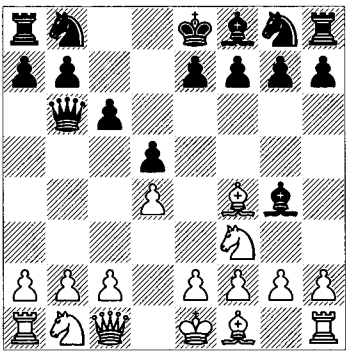
a) 4...c5!? is probably too optimistic: 5 dxc5!? ♕xc5 6 ♘c3 f6 7 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 8 ♕d2 e6 9 e4 dxe4 10 ♘xe4 ♕c6 11 0-0-0 ♗e7 12 ♕f4 ♖a8 (12...e5 13 ♘xe5! fxe5 14 ♕xe5 +−) 13 ♘d6+ ♗xd6 14 ♖xd6 ♕c5 (Raud-Sergejev, Estonian Cht 1996) 15 b4! g5 (15...♕f5 16 ♕d4) 16 ♕xf6 ♘xf6 17 bxc5 ±.

b) 4...♗f5 5 e3 e6 6 c4 and now:

b1) 6...♗xb1 7 ♖xb1 ♗b4+ 8 ♘d2 ♕d8 9 c5 a6 10 ♗d3 ♘d7 11 0-0 ♗a5 12 ♗g3 ♗c7 13 f4 f5 14 b4 ♘df6 15 a4 ♘e4 16 ♘xe4 dxe4 17 ♗c4 ± Eliet-Marcelin, Belgian Cht 2003.

b2) 6...♘f6 transposes to Line 6E.

W



5 ♘e5

Again this is the way to demonstrate the drawbacks of ...♗g4.

5...♗f5 6 e3 ♘d7

Or 6...f6 7 ♘f3 g5 8 ♗g3 ♘d7 9 c4 e6 10 ♘c3 h5 11 h3 ♘h6 12 ♘d2 h4 13 ♗h2 ♔f7 (unclear according to ECO) 14 ♘f3 ♗e7 15 ♕d2 ♖ac8 16 ♗e2 ♕a5 17 a3 ± V.Kovačević-P.Nikolić, Sarajevo 1983.

7 ♘xd7 ♗xd7 8 c4 ♘f6 9 ♘c3 g6

10 ♗e5 dxc4 11 ♗xc4 ♗g7 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♘a4 ♕d8 14 ♘c5 ± Stohl-Shirov, Dresden rpd 1999.

Conclusion:

3...♕b6 is the critical test of 3 ♘f3, but with the black c-pawn modestly parked at c6, 4 ♕c1 is quite an acceptable reply.

6C: 3...c6 Introduction

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3)

3...c6!?

This, of course, will lead to positions very similar to those arising from 2...c6.

4 ♘f3 *(D)*

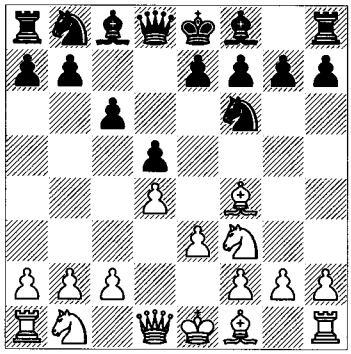
Our main recommendation is 4 ♗d3. However, the text-move is of course flexible and sound. There are plenty of alternatives but they have little independent merit.

4...♘h5

Other moves tend to transpose elsewhere:

a) 4...g6 transposes to the note to Black's 3rd move in Line 8C.

B



b) 4...♗f5 – Line 7C.

c) 4...♘bd7 5 ♘bd2 ♘h5!? 6 ♗g5 h6 7 ♗h4 g5 8 ♗g3 (8 ♘e5!?) 8...♘xg3 9 hxg3 ♗g7 10 ♗d3 e5 11 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 12 dxe5 ♗xe5 = M.Olbrich-Meister, Germany tt 1994/5.

d) 4...♕b6 5 ♕c1 ♗f5 6 h3 ♘bd7 7 ♘bd2 e6 8 ♗e2 (8 ♘h4 ♗e4 9 ♘hf3 =) 8...h6 9 0-0 ♗e7 10 ♘e5 ♘xe5 11 ♗xe5 0-0 12 c4 ± J.Santos-Popchev, Manila OL 1992.

e) After 4...e6, we suggest 5 c4. Technically it may be classified as a Queen's Gambit, but White isn't sacrificing his c-pawn (even temporarily) and Black's recommended antidote to ♗f4 lines is an early ...c5 (which will at best be a tempo-loss here). Now:

e1) 5...♗e7 6 h3 ♘e4 7 ♗d3 ♕a5+ 8 ♘bd2 ♘xd2 9 ♘xd2 dxc4 10 ♗xc4 ♘d7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♗d3 c5 13 ♘b3 ♕d8 14 dxc5 e5 15 ♗g3 a5 16 ♗b5 a4 17 ♘d2 f6 18 ♗xa4 ♘xc5 19 ♗c2 ± V.Savon-Maiorov, Cherkessk 1997.

e2) 5...♗b4+ 6 ♘bd2 0-0 7 a3 ♗e7 8 h3 b6 9 ♖c1 ♗b7 10 ♗d3 ♘bd7 11 0-0 ♖c8 12 b4 c5 13 dxc5 bxc5 = Drazić-Cecchetto, Cesenatico 2000.

5 ♗g5 h6

5...♕b6 should be explored: 6 b3 (6 ♕c1) 6...h6 7 ♗h4 g5 8 ♘fd2 ♘f6 9 ♗g3 ♗f5 10 ♗e2 ♘bd7 11 c4 ♗g7 12 ♘c3 0-0 13 0-0 ± Karlik-Cvicela, Hlohovec 1996.

6 ♗h4 g5

Or:

a) 6...♘f6 looks inconsistent but probably cannot really be punished: 7 c4 (7 ♗xf6 exf6 is a line from the Trompowsky) 7...♘bd7 8 ♘c3 g6 9 cxd5 ♘xd5 10 e4 ♘c7 11 ♗c4 ♘b6 12 ♗b3 (Esposito-Coppini, Formia 1995) 12...♗g7 13 ♗g3 0-0 14 0-0 ♗g4 15 h3 ♗xf3 16 ♕xf3 ±.

b) 6...♗g4 7 ♗e2 ♘d7 8 ♘bd2 ♕c7 9 c3 e6 10 h3 ♗xf3 11 ♗xf3 ♘hf6 12 ♗g3 ♗d6 13 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 14 0-0 ± Kamaluddin-Erichsen, Internet rpd 2004.

7 ♘fd2 ♘f6 8 ♗g3 ♗g7

9 c4 a6 10 ♘c3 ♘bd7 11 ♖c1 0-0 12 cxd5 ♘xd5 13 ♘xd5 cxd5 14 ♗c7 ♕e8 15 h4 ± Kraidman-Kozarcanin, Saint Vincent 2002.

Conclusion:

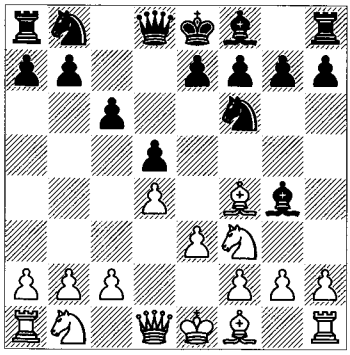
There is little to be gained for Black by chasing the dark-squared bishop with 4...♘h5.

6D: 4 ♘f3 ♗g4

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 c6 4 ♘f3)

4...♗g4 *(D)*

W



This line is one of Black's soundest antidotes to the London and although it is not very threatening, it constitutes a possible reason to delay ♘f3.

5 c4

There is no reason to prepare this with ♘bd2.

5...♕b6

Black has also tried:

a) 5...a6 6 ♕b3 b5?! (6...♕c8 7 ♘e5 ♗f5 8 ♘c3 e6 9 ♖c1 ±) 7 cxb5 cxb5 8 ♘e5 ♕a5+ 9 ♘c3 ♗e6 (9...♗f5 10 g4 ♗e6 11 ♗g2 ±) 10 ♗e2 ♘e4 11 ♗f3 b4 12 ♕a4+ ♕xa4 13 ♘xa4 f6 14 ♘d3 ± P.Petran-M.Nemeth, Zalakaros 1995.

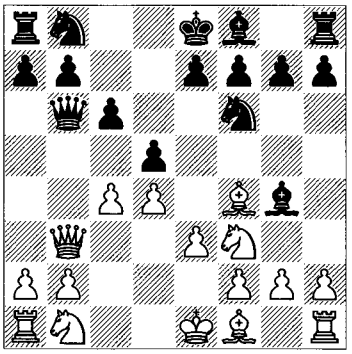
b) 5...♘bd7 6 ♘c3 e6 7 ♕b3 ♗xf3 8 gxf3 ♘h5 (8...♕c8 9 cxd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xd5 exd5 11 ♗h3 a5 12 0-0-0 a4 13 ♕c2 ♕d8 14 ♖hg1 g6 15 e4 ♕h4 16 ♗xd7+ ♔xd7 17 ♖g4 ♕h3 {Crouch-Baburin, British League (4NCL) 2000/1} 18 ♖g3 ♕h4 19 ♗e5 f6 20 ♖g4 ♕h3 21 ♗g3 ±) 9 ♗g3 ♘xg3 10 hxg3 ♖b8 11 ♕c2 g6 12 ♗d3 ♗g7 13 ♔f1 dxc4 14 ♗xc4 0-0 15 ♔g2 ± Wirthensohn-Cherniaev, Scuol 2001.

c) 5...♗xf3 6 gxf3 ♘bd7 (6...e6 7 ♕b3 ♕a5+ 8 ♘c3 ♗b4 9 a3 ♗xc3+ 10 ♕xc3 ♕xc3+ 11 bxc3 dxc4 12 ♗xc4 ♘d5 13 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 14 ♔d2 ♔e7 15 a4 ♖he8 ½-½ Meduna-Hort, Bundesliga 1989/90) 7 ♕b3 ♕b6 8 ♘c3 e6 9 c5 ♕xb3 10 axb3 ♘h5 11 ♗g3 a6 12 b4 ♖c8 13 ♗d3 ± Hulak-Wessman, Novi Sad OL 1990.

d) 5...e6 6 ♕b3 ♕c8 (6...♕b6 – *5...♕b6 6 ♕b3 e6*) 7 ♘e5 ♗f5 8 ♘c3 ♘bd7 9 cxd5 exd5 10 ♘xd7 ♗xd7 11 ♖c1 ♗e7 12 ♗e5 0-0 13 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 14 ♘xd5 ♗g5 15 ♘c3 b5 16 ♗d3 ± Gretarsson-K.Rasmussen, Copenhagen 1997.

6 ♕b3 *(D)*

B



6...e6 7 c5 ♕xb3

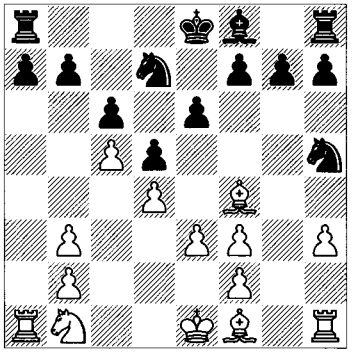
7...♕a5+ 8 ♘c3 b6 9 ♘e5 ♗f5 10 a3 ♗e7 11 ♗e2 0-0 12 g4 ♗e4 13 f3 ♗g6 14 h4 h6 (14...bxc5 15 h5 +– V.Kovačević-Böhm, Wijk aan Zee 1980) 15 ♘xg6 fxg6 16 ♕b4 ♕xb4 17 axb4 ±.

8 axb3 ♘bd7 9 h3 ♗xf3

9...♗f5?! can go very wrong for Black: 10 ♘c3 h6 (10...a6 11 b4 ♖c8 12 ♘d2 ♗c2 13 ♗e2 ±) 11 b4 ♗e7 12 b5 0-0 13 bxc6 bxc6 14 ♗a6 1-0 S.Kovačević-Gomez Manzano, Valencia 2001.

10 gxf3 ♘h5 *(D)*

W



11 ♗h2 f5 12 b4 a6 13 b5 cxb5 14 ♗xb5 ♖c8 15 ♗d3 g5 16 ♖g1 ± S.Kovačević-Moloney, Cappelle la Grande 1995.

Conclusion:

White's more active stance in the centre should provide him with some kind of advantage. However, the position is just sufficiently unbalanced to allow both sides to play for a win.

6E: 4...♕b6

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 c6 4 ♘f3)

4...♕b6 5 ♕c1 *(D)*

5 b3!? is a demanding move leading to complex play in which the stronger player will most probably win:

a) 5...♗g4 6 ♗e2 and here Black has tried:

a1) 6...♘bd7 7 h3 ♗h5 8 0-0 e6 9 c4 ♗e7 10 c5 ♕d8 11 b4 a5 12 b5 ± Z.Nikolić-Kirov, Smederevska Palanka 1984.

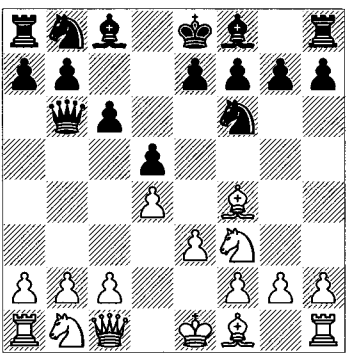
a2) 6...e6 7 0-0 c5 8 ♘c3 ♘bd7 9 ♘b5 ♖c8 10 a4 a6 (E.Kahn-Varga, Budapest 2000) 11 a5 ♕d8 12 ♘d6+ ♗xd6 13 ♗xd6 cxd4 14 exd4 =.

b) 5...♗f5 6 ♗e2 and now:

b1) After 6...e6 White should probably prefer 7 0-0 over the murky 7 ♘h4 ♗b4+ 8 ♔f1 ♗g6 9 ♘xg6 fxg6 10 c3 ♗e7 11 ♘d2 ♘bd7 12 g4 0-0 13 g5 ♘e8 14 ♗g4, Rozentalis-Rõtšagov, Tallinn Z 1998.

b2) 6...♕a5+! 7 ♘fd2 c5 8 0-0 ♘c6 9 c3 e6 = Radziewicz-Slobodjan, Koszalin 1998.

B



This kind of position is very important for the evaluation of the London System, especially the orthodox London with 2 ♘f3. The statistics hint that it doesn't promise White too much. And indeed, the white queen is far from

ideally placed. However, it may still be better placed than its counterpart on b6. If nothing else, the white queen supports the advance c4, after which the constant possibility of c5 may be quite annoying for Black.

5...♗f5

We shall consider this the main line because it has been extensively tested at a high level and the position can arise via a number of move-orders.

a) 5...♘e4 6 ♘bd2 ♘xd2 7 ♘xd2 ♗f5 8 c4 ♘d7 9 c5 ♕d8 10 b4 h6 11 ♕c3 g5 12 ♗g3 ♗g7 13 ♗e2 0-0 14 0-0 ± Thomsen-An.Bykhovsky, Torshavn 2000.

b) 5...♗g4 6 ♗e2 (6 ♘e5!? looks like an improvement, as the position after 6...♗f5 has been reached in GM games with Black to move as the bishop went to f5 in one move) 6...♘bd7 7 h3 ♗h5 8 c4 c5 9 dxc5 ♕xc5 10 ♘bd2 ♖c8 11 b3 e6 12 0-0 ♗e7 13 ♗h2 ½-½ Miles-Slobodjan, Varadero 2000.

c) 5...♘h5! should equalize and may be the best reason to delay ♘f3 in this line: 6 ♗g5 h6 7 ♗h4 g5 8 ♗g3 ♘xg3 9 hxg3 ♗g7 10 ♗d3 ♘d7 11 c3 (11 c4!?) 11...e5 12 dxe5 ♘xe5 13 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 14 ♘d2 ♗g4 (14...♗g7 15 ♕c2 ♗g4 16 ♘f3 ♗xf3 17 gxf3 0-0-0 18 0-0-0 ♔b8 19 f4 c5 20 fxg5 hxg5 21 ♖xh8 ♗xh8 22 ♗f5 ± V.Kovačević-Smagin, Zenica 1987) 15 ♘f3 ♗xf3 16 gxf3 0-0-0 17 ♕c2 ♔b8 18 0-0-0 = Surjadnji-El Gindy, Cairo 1998.

6 c4

Of the other options 6 ♗d3, trying to make something positive out of the queen's position on the c-file, is probably the principal alternative.

6...e6

6...♘a6 7 a3 ♘h5 8 c5 ♕d8 9 ♘bd2 f6 10 b4 g5 11 ♗g3 ♘xg3 12 hxg3 ♘c7 13 ♕c3 ♔f7 14 ♗d3 ♕d7 (= ECO) 15 ♕c2 ♗xd3 16 ♕xd3 ± Hulak-Kuligowski, Wijk aan Zee 1983.

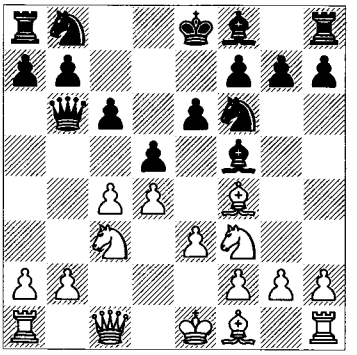
7 ♘c3 *(D)*

7...♘bd7

Black can also try:

a) 7...♗e7 8 c5 ♕d8 9 h3 h6 10 ♗e2 0-0 11 0-0 b5 12 b4 a5 13 a3 ♘e4 14 ♘xe4 dxe4 15 ♘d2 axb4 16 axb4 ♘d7 17 ♕b2 ± Ionescu-Savchenko, Bucharest 1996.

b) 7...♘h5 8 c5 ♕a5 9 ♗g5 (9 ♗e5!? ♘d7 {9...f6 10 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 11 ♘h4 ±} 10 ♗e2 ♘xe5 11 ♘xe5 ♘f6 12 g4 ♗g6 13 h4 ♘g8 14 h5 ♗e4 15 f3 f6 16 ♘xc6 bxc6 17 fxe4 ±) 9...h6 10 ♗h4 g5 11 ♗g3 ♘xg3 12 hxg3 ♗g7 13 ♕d2 ♘d7 14 ♗d3 ♗xd3 15 ♕xd3 e5?! (too weakening) 16 ♕f5 ♕c7 17 0-0-0 e4 18 ♘d2 (18 ♘xe4!? dxe4 19 ♕xe4+ ♔d8 20 ♕f5 f6 21 d5 ±) 18...♘f6 19 f3 ♕xg3?! 20 fxe4 dxe4 21 ♘cxe4 ♘xe4 22 ♕xe4+ ♔f8 23 ♖df1 ♖e8 24 ♕f5 ♔g8 25 ♕xf7+ ♔h7 26 ♖f6 1-0 Bagheri-Pozdnjakov, Cap d'Agde 2003.


B

8 c5 ♕d8

The queen will mainly be a target on a5: 8...♕a5 9 ♘h4 ♘h5 10 ♘xf5 ♘xf4 11 exf4 exf5 12 ♗d3 g6 13 ♕e3+ ♗e7 14 0-0 ♔f8 15 a3 ± ½-½ Gulko-Smagin, USSR Ch (Riga) 1985.

9 h3 ♘e4 10 b4 ♗e7

11 ♗e2 0-0 12 0-0 ♗f6 13 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 14 ♗d6 ♗xf3 15 ♗xf3 (Miles-Wojtkiewicz, Reykjavik 2000) 15...♖e8 16 ♕c3 e5 17 b5 ±.

Conclusion:

For practical purposes Black equalizes in a number of lines we have examined here. However, in all of them there is enough play left in the position for the better player to have it his way.

6F: 4 ♗d3

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 c6)

4 ♗d3 *(D)*

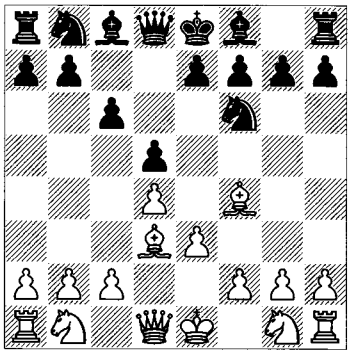
One of the main ideas behind 3...c6 is to cover the d-pawn (after all, c4 is still an option) while preparing to develop the light-squared bishop actively. Therefore this bishop move, preventing ...♗f5, is a very logical choice.

4...♕b6

Other moves are easier to meet:

a) 4...g6 5 ♘f3 ♗g7 leads to play similar to the lines discussed in Line 8C (but with the

B



bishop at d3 rather than e2). One example is 6 ♘bd2 0-0 7 h3 c5 8 c3 ♘c6 9 ♘e5 ± Negulescu-Ceteras, Bucharest 1994.

b) 4...♘bd7 5 ♘d2 g6 6 h3 ♗g7 7 ♘gf3 0-0 8 0-0 ♖e8 9 ♗h2 ♘f8 10 c4 ♘e6 11 b4 ♘c7 12 ♕c2 dxc4 13 ♗xc4 ♖f8 14 a3 ♗d7 15 e4 ♘fe8 16 ♘b3 ♗e6 17 ♘c5 ± Zaitseva-Grigoriants, Moscow 1998.

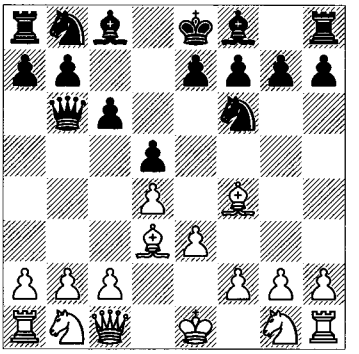
c) 4...e6 5 ♘d2 ♗d6 6 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 7 f4 c5 8 c3 ♘c6 9 ♘gf3 c4 10 ♗c2 a5 11 0-0 ♘g4 12 ♕e2 f5 13 h3 ♘f6 14 ♘e5 b5 15 g4 g6 16 g5 ♘h5 17 ♕f2 ± Dobai-Varadi, Eger 1998.

d) 4...♗g4!? seems like the most challenging response. 5 ♘f3 is possible, but it feels wrong to enter the pin voluntarily. Instead we recommend 5 f3, which is slightly loosening but if White can now force through e4 with central superiority, this will be a pure gain of time. If not, he may regret the weakening of his kingside pawn-cover. It isn't at all clear how these positions compare to those arising from 3...♗g4 4 f3. Transpositions of course occur, and it seems clear that the general flavour of the play will be rather similar. However, f5 isn't immediately available for Black's bishop (although ...♗h5-g6 will bring it to the same diagonal) and Black will arguably win a tempo if he meets c4 with ...dxc4, forcing White's bishop to move twice to get to c4. However, that may not be an attractive option for Black anyway. 5...♗h5 (5...♗d7 appears passive) 6 c4 e6 7 ♕b3 ♕b6 8 c5 ♕xb3 9 axb3 ♘bd7 10 b4 ♗g6 11 ♔d2 ♗e7 12 ♘c3 ♘h5 13 b5 (13 ♘ge2 ♗xd3 14 ♔xd3 ♘xf4+ 15 exf4 0-0 16 b5 ± Elina-Yadvizhena, Ukrainian Ch (Alushta) 1998) 13...♗xd3 14 ♔xd3 ♘xf4+ 15 exf4 a6 16 bxc6 bxc6 17 ♘ge2 ♔d8 18 ♖a5 ±.

5 ♕c1 *(D)*

Possibly 5 b3 is stronger: 5...♗g4 6 ♘e2 (6 f3 ♗h5 7 ♘e2 ♗g6 8 ♗g3 e6 9 0-0 ±) 6...♘bd7 7 0-0 e6 8 c4 ♗e7 9 ♘bc3 0-0 10 f3 ♗h5 11 ♗g3 ♗g6 12 c5 ♕d8 13 b4 ♘h5 14 ♗xg6 (14 f4 ♗xd3 15 ♕xd3 f5 = Shirov-J.Garcia, Oviedo rpd 1992) 14...hxg6 15 ♗f2 ±.

B



5...c5!?

At the cost of a tempo Black hurries to take the initiative in the centre before White can get in g4.

Or:

a) 5...♘a6 looks a little peculiar: 6 c3 ♘c7 7 ♘f3 ♘e6 8 ♗e5 g6 9 ♘bd2 ♗g7 10 0-0 0-0 (Bykov-Chubakov, Tomsk 2003) 11 e4 dxe4 12 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 13 ♗xg7 ♘xg7 14 ♗xe4 ♗f5 15 ♖e1 ±.

b) 5...♘h5!? is based on some tactical tricks along the 4th rank (watch out for ...♕b4+): 6 ♗g5 e5 7 ♗e2 (7 dxe5 h6 8 ♗f4 ♘xf4 9 exf4 ♗c5 ∓) 7...h6 8 ♗h4 ♘f6 9 dxe5 ♘e4 10 ♘f3 ♘d7 11 0-0 g5 12 ♗g3 ♘xg3 13 hxg3 ♗g7 and Black's activity probably compensates for his weaknesses.

6 c3 ♘c6 7 ♘f3 ♗g4 8 ♘bd2 e6 9 0-0 ♗e7 10 ♘e5 ♗h5

11 ♘df3 ♘xe5 12 ♘xe5 ♖d8 13 ♗g5 ♗g6 14 ♘xg6 hxg6 15 f4 ♘e4 16 ♗xe7 ♔xe7 17 ♗xe4 dxe4 18 ♖f2 ± Karlik-Beil, Czech Cht 2001.

Conclusion:

These lines are insufficiently explored. Quite possibly 5 b3 is White's most promising try.

7 Symmetrical: 2...♗f5 and 3...♗f5

The 'test of symmetry' is tougher than most players realize. If an opening lacks bite, one of the main symptoms is that White's moves can safely be copied until development is completed and central parity is ensured. This is particularly problematic if the opening set-up isn't aimed at achieving one major strategic idea (which White naturally should be the first to achieve) but rather aims for harmonious development. Fortunately the weakness created at b2 is mirrored at b7 and ensures that Black will not find peace by simply copying White's scheme of development. Illustrative Game 11 demonstrates how the advance of White's c-pawn to c5 may be a promising strategy (at least if the queenside play is enhanced by an open a-file).

Chapter Outline

1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4

7A:	**2...♗f5 3 ♘f3**	118
7B:	**2...♗f5 (3 c4)**	119
7C:	**2...♘f6 3 e3 ♗f5 4 ♘f3 (4...c6)**	120
7D:	**2...♘f6 3 e3 ♗f5 4 ♘f3 e6**	121
7E:	**2...♘f6 3 e3 ♗f5 4 c4**	122

7A: 2...♗f5 Introduction

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4)

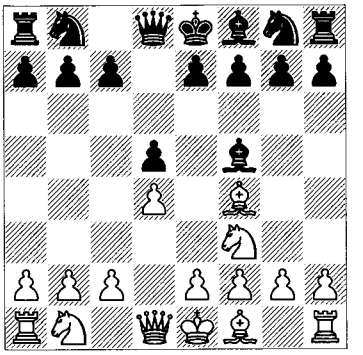
2...♗f5

This may be slightly overoptimistic. If White now plays too routinely, Black will have a very comfortable game – after all he too achieves a London set-up with pawns on c6, d5 and e6 and his bishop outside his pawn-chain. However, White can create some real problems for Black by attacking b7. If Black could solve all his problems with this simple developing move, the 2 ♗f4 London would not have much practical value. In reality, however, the temptation for Black to play this move is one of the best reasons for playing the London as White.

3 ♘f3 *(D)*

Actually this isn't a likely transposition from the 2 ♘f3 move-order, as in that case White is much more likely to meet 2...♗f5?! with 3 c4. We are recommending 3 c4, while 3 e3 also deserves attention – it seems consistent with our recommendation of 2...♘f6 3 e3, which may easily transpose after 3...♗f5. For a discussion of these moves, see Line 7B.

B



3...c6

Black has also tried:

a) 3...♘c6 – *2...♘c6 3 ♘f3 ♗f5.*

b) 3...♘d7 4 e3 c5?! 5 dxc5 e6 (5...♘xc5 6 b4 ♘d7 {6...♘e4 7 ♗b5+ ♗d7 8 ♕xd5 ±} 7 ♕xd5 ♗xc2 8 ♕xb7 ±) 6 ♘d4 ♗e4 7 f3 e5 8 ♗xe5 ♘xe5 9 ♗b5+ ♘d7 10 fxe4 dxe4 11 ♘f5 ♖c8 12 ♕d4 +–.

c) 3...c5!? 4 dxc5 ♘c6 (4...e6 5 ♘d4 ♗g6 6 ♘b5 ♘a6 7 ♘d6+ ♗xd6 8 ♗xd6 ♘e7 9 e4 ♗xe4 10 ♘c3 ♗g6 11 ♗b5+ ♘c6 12 ♘xd5 exd5 13 ♗xc6+ bxc6 14 ♕e2+ ♔d7 15 ♕xa6 ♖e8+ 16 ♔f1 ±) 5 e3 e6 6 ♘d4 ♗g6 7 ♗b5 ♖c8 8 ♘d2 ♗xc5 9 ♘xc6 bxc6 10 ♗a6 ±.

d) 3...e6 4 c4 and now:

d1) 4...♘c6 5 e3 ♘b4 6 ♘a3 c6 7 ♗e2 a5 8 0-0 f6 9 ♘h4 ♗g6 10 ♘xg6 hxg6 11 ♘b1! ♗d6 12 a3 ♘a6 13 c5 ♗xf4 14 exf4 ♕b8 15 g3 ♘c7 16 ♘c3 b6 17 cxb6 ♕xb6 18 ♘a4 ±.

d2) 4...♗d6 5 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 6 c5 ♕e7 7 ♘c3 c6 8 e3 ♘d7 9 ♕b3 ♖b8 10 ♕a4 a6 11 ♗e2 h6 12 0-0 ♘gf6 13 h3 0-0 14 ♖fe1 ♖fe8 15 ♖ad1 e5 = D.Gurevich-Speelman, Tilburg 1994.

4 c4 dxc4

Alternatively:

a) 4...e6 5 ♘c3 ♘d7 6 ♕b3 ♕b6 7 e3 ♘gf6 8 h3 dxc4 9 ♗xc4 ♗b4 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♘h4 ♗e4 12 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 13 ♘f3 ± Hergott-Serper, Moscow OL 1994.

b) 4...♕b6 may be Black's best:

b1) 5 ♕d2 ♘f6 6 ♘c3 ♘e4 7 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 8 e3 ♘d7 9 c5 ♕d8 10 ♖c1 f6 11 h4 e6 12 b4 ♗e7 and Black's central counterplay seemed as promising as White's flank play in Rakić-Semkov, West Berlin 1988.

b2) 5 ♕c1 ♘d7 6 ♘c3 e6 7 e3 ♘gf6 8 ♗e2 ♗e7 9 h3 0-0 10 c5 ♕d8 11 b4 ♘e4 12 0-0 ♗f6 13 ♗h2 ♖e8 14 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 15 ♘d2 e5 = Lastin-Arzumanian, Marganets 1999.

5 ♘bd2 b5

Black doesn't quite achieve equality with the 'energetic' 5...♘f6 6 ♘xc4 ♘d5 7 ♗g3 ♘b4 8 ♘e3 ♗e4 9 a3 ♘d5 10 ♘xd5 ♕xd5 11 e3 ♘d7 12 ♖c1 ♘f6 13 ♗c4 ±.

6 e4 ♗g4 7 a4 e6 8 axb5 cxb5 9 b3 ♘f6

10 bxc4 ♗b4 (10...bxc4 11 ♗xc4 ♗e7 12 ♕a4+ ± Barva-Molnar, Hajduboszormeny 1995) 11 ♕b3 seems good for White: 11...♘c6 12 d5 ♘xe4 13 dxc6 ♗xd2+ 14 ♗xd2 ♗xf3 15 ♗e3 +– or 11...♗xf3 12 ♕xb4.

Conclusion:

There are too many lines here to draw definite conclusions. However, in general White has good chances for an advantage.

7B: 3 c4

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♗f5)

3 c4 *(D)*

A more popular move is 3 e3, which we believe will also have a more familiar feel for most Londoners. We were, however, unable to find a truly tempting continuation after 3...e6! as 4 c4 ♗xb1! 5 ♕a4+ ♘c6 6 ♖xb1 ♗b4+ is uncomfortable (but possibly fine for White) and 4 ♘f3 ♗d6 equalizes immediately.

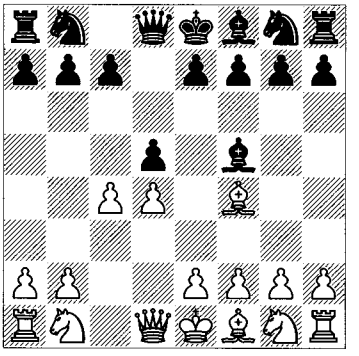
3...c6

Alternatives include:

a) 3...♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♕b3 ♕c8 6 ♘c3 c6 – note to Black's 6th move in Line 7E.

b) 3...♘c6 4 ♘c3 e6 5 e3 ♘f6 6 ♘f3 dxc4 7 ♗xc4 ♗b4 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♖c1 ± Fritze-Schmedders, Dortmund 1992.

B



c) 3...dxc4 4 ♘c3 ♘f6 5 f3 ♘d5?? (5...♘h5 6 ♗g5 h6 7 ♗h4 ♘f4 8 e4 ♗h7 9 ♗g3 ±) 6 ♘xd5 ♕xd5 (Karlik-Chernikov, Česke Budejovice 1995) 7 e4 +–.

d) 3...e6 4 ♘c3 ♗d6 (4...♘f6 5 e3 – Line 7E; 4...c6 5 e3 – *3...c6 4 e3 e6 5 ♘c3*) 5 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 6 e3 c6 7 ♕b3 b6 (7...♕e7 8 ♘f3 ♘f6 9 ♗e2 0-0 10 0-0 with a slight advantage for White, Ibragimov-Shure, New York 1992) 8 ♘f3 ♘d7 9 ♗e2 ♘gf6 10 0-0 ♘e4 11 ♖ac1 0-0 12 ♖fd1 ♗g4 13 ♕c2 f5 14 ♘e1 ♗xe2 15 ♘xe2 ♖f6 ½-½ Gheorghiu-Klarić, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

4 e3

This position has more often arisen after 3 e3 c6 4 c4.

4...e6

4...♗xb1?! 5 ♕xb1 e6 (5...e5?! is more consistent but it doesn't give enough play for the pawn: 6 ♗xe5 ♗b4+ 7 ♔d1 ♘f6 8 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 9 ♘f3 ±) gives up the bishop-pair too easily as White can stop the check on b4 with the simple 6 c5. White's advantage was clear after 6...♘d7 7 ♘f3 ♘gf6 8 h3 ♘e4 9 ♗d3 f5 10 ♕c2 ♗e7 11 ♗h2 0-0 12 0-0 ♗f6 13 b4 a6 14 a4 in S.Kovačević-Z.Varga, Harkany 1994.

5 ♘c3 ♕b6

5...♗d6 (5...♘f6 – Line 7E) allows the aggressive 6 g4!? (6 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 7 cxd5 exd5 8 ♗d3 ♗xd3 9 ♕xd3 ♘f6 10 ♘f3 0-0 ½-½ Vaganian-Malaniuk, Moscow 1990) 6...♗g6 7 ♘h3 ♘e7 8 ♕b3 b6 9 cxd5 exd5 10 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 11 ♘f4 ♘d7 12 h4 h5 13 gxh5 ♗xh5 14 ♘xh5 ♖xh5 15 ♗e2 ± Beliavsky-Schlindwein, Frankfurt rpd 1997.

6 ♕b3 ♘d7 7 c5 ♕xb3 8 axb3 a6

We know this type of position from Illustrative Game 11. White's chances are preferable.

9 b4 ♖c8 10 f3 ♘gf6

11 g4 ♗g6 12 h4 h6 13 ♘ge2 ♗e7 14 ♘c1 ♗d8 15 ♘b3 ♗c7 16 ♗xc7 ♖xc7 17 b5 ± V.Kovačević-Mufić, Croatian Cht (Pula) 1992.

Conclusion:

By immediately attacking b7, White gets either an advantageous pawn-formation or the more active pieces.

7C: 3...♗f5

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4)

2...♘f6 3 e3

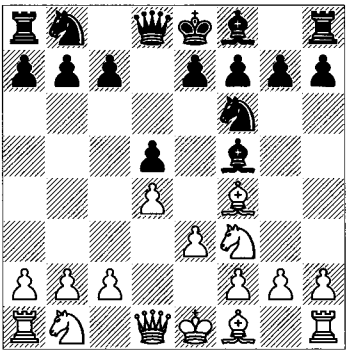
3 ♘f3 ♗f5 4 e3 just transposes.

3...♗f5

This appears slightly more reliable now than at move two, as Black is one move closer to castling. However, White is still entitled to be optimistic due to the weakening of b7.

4 ♘f3 *(D)*

B



This is actually quite an unlikely move-order, as 4 c4 is much more tempting. A more likely way to reach the above position is 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗f4 ♗f5 4 e3.

4...c6

The alternatives are quite hard to deal with – partly because there is very little practical experience at international level:

a) 4...c5 can be met with 5 c3, transposing to note 'c2' to Black's 4th move in Line 4D, but probably White should just steal that pawn by 5 dxc5!?. Then:

a1) 5...♘bd7 6 b4 a5 7 c3 ±.

a2) 5...♕a5+ 6 ♘c3 ♕xc5 7 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 8 ♗b5+ ♗d7 9 ♗xd7+ ♔xd7 10 ♘e5+ ♔e8 11 0-0 ±.

a3) 5...e6 6 ♗xb8 ♕xb8 7 ♗b5+ ♔d8 8 b4 ±.

b) 4...♘bd7 has been a favourite in Girls Under-14 Championships, but the final verdict is still open:

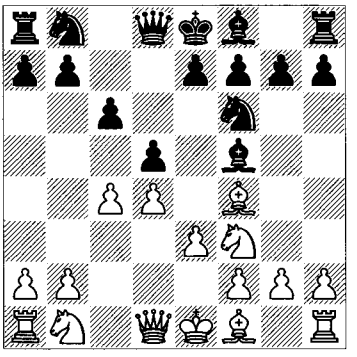
b1) 5 c4 looks sensible, but it isn't clear whether after 5...e6 6 ♘c3 c6 White should go for the loosening 7 ♘h4 ♗g4 8 f3 ♗h5 9 g4 ♗g6 10 ♕b3, when White's position may be preferable but is difficult to handle.

b2) 5 ♗d3 is probably a bit too cautious to gain a serious advantage: 5...♗xd3 6 cxd3 (6 ♕xd3 e6 7 0-0 ♗d6 =) 6...e6 7 0-0 c5 8 ♗g3 ♗e7 9 ♘c3 0-0 10 dxc5 ♘xc5 11 b4 ♘cd7 12 ♕b3 ♕b6 13 ♖ab1 ♖fc8 = Bacha-Chevrier, French Ch (Chambéry) 1994.

c) 4...♘h5!? is as usual critical. The minor pieces on the kingside look vulnerable but after 5 ♗e5!? ♘d7 (5...e6 6 ♗d3 ♗g6 7 ♗xg6 hxg6 8 ♕d3 ±) 6 ♘h4 ♗g6 7 ♘xg6 hxg6 8 ♗d3 e6 (8...♘xe5 9 dxe5 is clearly better for White as 9...e6?? 10 g4 isn't an option) 9 ♘d2 ♘hf6 10 e4 ♘xe5 11 dxe5 ♘d7 12 ♘f3 dxe4 13 ♗xe4 ♘c5 chances look roughly level.

5 c4! *(D)*

B



Routine development will give White absolutely nothing from a theoretical point of view.

5...e6

Alternatively:

a) 5...♗xb1?! 6 ♕xb1 e5 7 ♘xe5 ♗b4+ 8 ♔d1 0-0 9 c5 ♖e8 10 ♗d3 ♘bd7 11 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 12 ♗f5 ♕d8 13 ♗g5 ± Bagheri-Bezgodov, Cap d'Agde 2002.

b) 5...♕b6 6 ♕b3 dxc4 7 ♗xc4 e6 8 ♘bd2 ♘bd7 9 0-0 a5 10 ♘h4 a4 11 ♕xb6 ♘xb6 12 ♘xf5 exf5 13 ♗d3 ♗b4 14 ♖ad1 g6 15 ♘c4 ♘bd5 16 ♗e5 gives White a slight advantage, Nikolac-Ostl, Bundesliga 1988/9.

6 ♘c3 ♕b6

Black must start worrying about b7:

a) 6...♗e7 7 ♕b3 ♕b6 8 c5 ♕xb3 9 axb3 ♘bd7 – *6...♕b6 7 ♕b3 ♘bd7 8 c5 ♕xb3 9 axb3 ♗e7.*

b) 6...h6 7 ♕b3 ♕c8 8 ♖c1 ♗e7 9 ♘e5 ♘bd7 10 ♗e2 ♘xe5 11 ♗xe5 0-0 12 cxd5 ♘xd5 13 0-0 ♘xc3 14 ♕xc3 a5 15 a3 ♖d8 16 ♗f3 with a slight advantage for White, Crouch-J.Houska, British League (4NCL) 2001/2.

c) 6...♗d6 7 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 8 ♗d3 ♗g6 9 0-0 ♘bd7 10 ♖c1 0-0 11 ♗xg6 hxg6 12 ♕b3 dxc4 13 ♕xc4 ± Muzychuk-Yakivchik, Dnepropetrovsk 2004.

d) 6...♘bd7?! 7 ♕b3! ♕c8 (7...♕b6 – *6...♕b6 7 ♕b3 ♘bd7*) 8 ♘h4 ♗g6 9 ♖c1 ♗e7 10 ♘xg6 hxg6 11 cxd5 ♘xd5 12 ♘xd5 exd5 13 ♗d3 ♘f6 14 0-0 ± Nideroest-Good, Switzerland 2004.

7 ♕b3 dxc4

Black should probably avoid the characteristic pawn-formation arising from 7...♘bd7 8 c5 ♕xb3 9 axb3, when White's open a-file gives him dangerous queenside pressure and Black has very few chances to create play elsewhere:

a) 9...♗e7 10 h3 (10 b4 ♘h5 =) 10...0-0 11 b4 a6 12 ♘d2 ♖fe8 13 ♘b3 ♗d8 14 b5 e5 15 dxe5 ♘xe5 16 bxa6 ± Wirthensohn-Saesseli, Swiss Cht 2002.

b) 9...a6 10 b4 ♖c8 11 h3 ♗e7 12 ♘d2 ♗d8 (12...0-0 13 g4 ± V.Kovačević-R.Byrne, Wijk aan Zee 1980 – see Illustrative Game 11) 13 ♘b3 0-0 14 ♗d6 ♖e8 15 ♘a5 ♗xa5 16 bxa5 e5 17 ♖a4 ± Kharlov-Dokuchaev, Russian Cht (Kazan) 1995.

8 ♗xc4 ♘bd7 9 h3

This precaution against ...♘h5 may not be absolutely necessary. 9 ♘h4 ♕xb3 10 ♗xb3 ♗d3 11 0-0-0 ♗a6 12 ♘f3 seems to give White a minimal advantage.

9...♗e7

Actually 9...♘d5 may be an even more efficient equalizer: 10 ♗g3 ♕xb3 11 ♗xb3 ♗b4 12 ♖c1 ♘7f6 13 ♗xd5 exd5 14 a3 = Haba-W.Richter, Bundesliga 1992/3.

10 0-0 0-0 11 ♖fe1 ♗g6

12 ♖ad1 ♖fe8 13 ♘e5 ♘xe5 14 ♗xe5 ♘e4 15 ♘xe4 ♕xb3 16 ♗xb3 ♗xe4 17 a3 ♖ed8 = Taleb-Anand, Dubai rpd 2002.

Conclusion:

By exchanging on c4 rather than allowing the pawn to reach c5, Black reduces the strategic tension in the position and comes very close to equality.

7D: 4...e6

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 ♗f5 4 ♘f3)

4...e6!

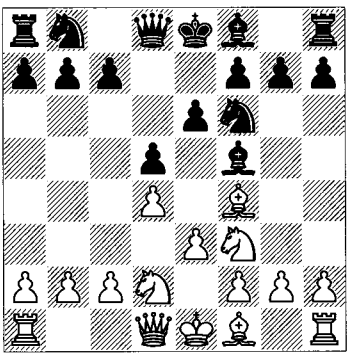
This logical move is designed to deter 5 c4, and is the main obstacle for White to overcome if he is to achieve an advantage with the early ♘f3 move-order.

5 ♘bd2 *(D)*

a) There has been a lot of practical experience at a rather high level with 5 ♗d3, but it seems unlikely that White can fight for a genuine opening advantage by such means. A typically bland line is 5...♗xd3 6 ♕xd3 c6 7 0-0 ♗d6 8 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 9 ♘bd2 0-0 10 e4 dxe4 11 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 12 ♕xe4 ♘d7 13 c3 h6 ½-½ Golubović-Medančić, Montecatini Terme 1998.

b) 5 c4!? may well be best, preparing to put pressure on b7 and d5 in well-known style. However, we couldn't bring ourselves to give it as our recommended line. Black can give up the bishop-pair in exchange for stranding the white king in the centre with 5...♗xb1 6 ♕xb1 (6 ♕a4+!?) 6...♗b4+ and we would expect only a small percentage of our readers to combine the defensive technique required to survive with a centralized king and the technical skills demanded to exploit the advantage of the bishop-pair.

B



5...♗d6

Alternatively:

a) 5...♘e4 6 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 7 ♗d3 ♗xd3 8 ♕xd3 c5 9 dxc5 ♕a5+ 10 c3 ♕xc5 11 0-0 ♘c6 12 e4 ♖d8 = M.Vasilev-Dobrev, Bulgarian Cht (Pamporovo) 2001.

b) 5...h6 6 h3 ♗d6 7 ♘e5 0-0?! 8 g4 ♗e4 9 ♖h2 ♗xe5?! 10 dxe5 ♘h7 11 h4 ± Vasilev-Kubacsny, Neuhausen 2004.

c) 5...c5?! 6 ♗xb8! ♕xb8 (6...♖xb8 7 ♗b5+ ♔e7 8 dxc5 ♕a5 9 ♘d4 ♗g6 10 a3 e5 11 b4 ♕c7 12 ♘4b3 ± Krpelan-Fusi, Austrian Cht 2000) 7 ♗b5+ ♔d8 (7...♔e7 8 dxc5 ♕c7 9 ♘d4 ♗g6 10 c6 ♖b8 11 cxb7 ♖xb7 12 c4 ±) 8 ♘e5 a6? 9 ♘xf7+ ♔e7 10 ♘xh8 axb5 11 ♘f3 g6 12 ♘e5 +–.

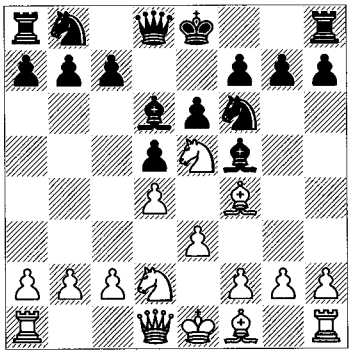
d) 5...♘bd7 6 c3 c6 7 ♗e2 h6 8 ♕b3 ♕b6 9 ♘e5 ♗e7 10 h3 ♖c8 11 ♘df3 a6 12 ♘xd7 ♘xd7 13 ♘e5 ♕xb3 14 axb3 ♘xe5 15 ♗xe5 f6 with an equal position, Feibert-Kargoll, Pirmasens 1992.

e) 5...♗e7 6 ♘e5 ♘bd7 7 g4 ♗g6 8 h4 ♘e4 9 h5 ♗h4 10 ♖h2 ♘xd2 11 ♔xd2 ♗e4 12 ♘xd7 ♔xd7 13 f3 ± Reddmann-Bartels, Hamburg 1999.

6 ♘e5 *(D)*

6 ♗g3 doesn't seem to promise much when the black bishop is actively employed on the b1-h7 diagonal.

B



6...0-0

There is a definite lack of high-level experience with this position.

a) 6...♘fd7 7 c4 ♗xe5 8 dxe5 0-0 9 h4 ♘c5 10 ♘b3 ♘xb3 11 ♕xb3 ±.

b) 6...♘bd7 7 c4 ♘e4 8 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 9 f3 ♗f5 10 ♕b3 ±.

c) 6...♗xe5 7 ♗xe5 0-0 (M.Vasilev-Moncamp, Marseilles 2003) 8 c4 c6 9 ♕b3 b6 10 ♖c1 ♘bd7 11 ♗d6 ♖e8 12 cxd5 cxd5 13 ♗a6 ±.

7 c4 ♘bd7 8 ♗e2 dxc4

This is probably best. Certainly not 8...c5? (Petrović-Stevandić, Yugoslav wom Cht (Bečići) 1994), which should be punished with 9 g4! ♗e4 10 f3 cxd4 (10...♗g6 11 ♘xg6 +–) 11 exd4 ♘xg4 12 ♘xe4 dxe4 13 fxg4 ♗b4+ 14 ♔f2 +–.

9 ♗xc4 ♘b6 10 ♗b3

White is slightly better.

Conclusion:

At least from a practical viewpoint we think 5 ♘bd2 is White's best try for an advantage. However, further testing at GM level is necessary to establish the main lines.

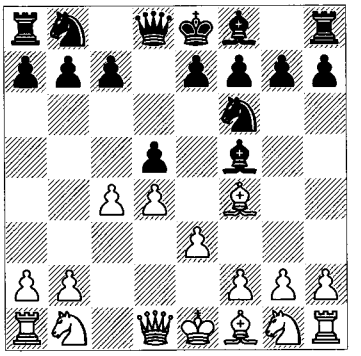
7E: 4 c4

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 ♗f5)

4 c4! *(D)*

Attacking Black's queenside in general, and the weak pawn at b7 in particular, is White's best way to try for an advantage.

B



4...e6

Or:

a) 4...♘c6 – *2...♘c6 3 e3 ♗f5 4 c4 ♘f6.*

b) Black gains nothing from 4...♗xb1?! 5 ♖xb1 e5?! 6 dxe5 ♗b4+ 7 ♔e2, when White is much better.

c) 4...c6 5 ♕b3!? (5 ♘f3 – Line 7C) 5...♕b6 6 c5 ♕xb3 7 axb3 ♘bd7 (7...♘h5 8 ♘c3 ♘d7 9 b4 f6 10 ♘f3 e5 11 ♗g3 ♗e7 12 b5 ♔d8 13 b4 e4 14 ♘d2 ♗e6 15 b6 ♘xg3 16 ♖xa7 ♖xa7 17 bxa7 ♔c7 18 hxg3 ± Blokhuis-Chernin, Philadelphia 1993) 8 b4 e5 (8...a6 9 h3 h6 10 ♘f3 g5 11 ♗h2 ♗g7 12 ♘bd2 0-0 13 ♘b3 ♘e4 14 ♘a5 ♖a7 15 ♗e2 ± Kaunzinger-Reilein, Germany tt 1996/7) 9 dxe5 ♘g4 10 ♘f3 g5 11 ♗xg5 ♗g7 12 ♘d4 ♗e6 13 ♘d2 h6 14 ♗f4 ♘gxe5 15 ♗e2 0-0 16 ♗xe5 ± Sulskis-Marrero, Las Vegas 2001.

5 ♘c3

5 ♕b3 is more forcing but doesn't seem to achieve more – so why help Black make his choice?

a) 5...b6 seems wrong on principle, weakening the light queenside squares with the bishop shut out from defence. Demonstrating anything more than the usual pleasant edge, however, isn't easy. 6 ♘c3 c6 7 ♘f3 and now:

a1) 7...♘bd7?! 8 cxd5 ♘xd5 (8...cxd5 9 ♘b5 ♖c8 10 ♘xa7 ♗c2 11 ♕b5 ♖a8 12 ♘c6 ♕c8 13 a4 ±) 9 ♘xd5 exd5 10 ♗a6 +– Vassallo Barroche-Vedreno Rios, Aragon Cht 1997.

a2) 7...♗d6 8 ♘e5 0-0 9 ♗e2 ♘e4 10 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 11 0-0 f6 12 ♘d3 ♗xd3 13 ♗xd3 ♗xf4 14 exf4 and then:

a21) 14...♕d6 15 f5! e5 16 cxd5 exd4 17 dxc6+ ♔h8 18 c7! ♘d7 (18...♕xc7 19 ♖ac1 ♕d6 20 ♗e4 +–) 19 ♖ac1 ♘c5 20 ♕d1 ±.

a22) 14...f5 15 ♖fe1 ♕d6 16 g3 ♘d7 17 ♖e2 ± Sv.Johnsen-Smeby, Molde 2004.

b) 5...♘bd7! is no doubt better: 6 ♘c3 (6 ♕xb7?! ♖b8 7 ♕xa7 ♖xb2 8 ♘d2 ♗b4 9 ♘gf3 ♘e4 ∓) 6...dxc4 7 ♗xc4 ♘b6 8 ♗e2 ♘fd5 (8...♗e7 9 ♘f3 0-0 10 0-0 ♘fd5 11 ♗g3 a5 12 a4 ♘b4 13 e4 ♗g4 14 ♖fd1 ♗d6 15 ♘e5 ♗xe2 16 ♘xe2 ± V.Kovačević-J.Nikolac, Belgrade 1978) 9 ♗e5 ♘xc3 10 bxc3 ♗e4 11 ♘f3 ♗d6 12 0-0 ♗xf3 13 ♗xf3 ♗xe5 14 ♕b5+ c6 15 ♕xe5 0-0 16 ♕c5 ± Szabolcsi-Schlusnik, Budapest 1998.

5...c6

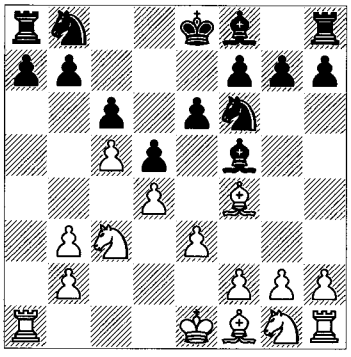
Or 5...♗d6 (5...♘bd7 6 ♕b3 – *5 ♕b3 ♘bd7 6 ♘c3*) 6 ♗g3 ♘c6 7 ♘f3 0-0 8 ♗e2 ♖e8 9 0-0 a6 10 ♖c1 ♗xg3 11 hxg3 ♗g4 12 cxd5 exd5 13 ♘a4 ♘e4 14 ♘c5 ♘xc5 15 ♖xc5 ± Giddins-O.Rause, Hastings 1995/6.

6 ♕b3 ♕b6

Quite likely 6...♕c8 is the more sensible choice: 7 cxd5 exd5 (7...♘xd5 8 ♗g3 ♗e7 9 ♘f3 0-0 10 ♗e2 ♘d7 11 0-0 ♘7f6 12 ♘d2 ♖d8 13 ♖ac1 h6 14 ♘a4 ♗b4 15 ♖fd1 ♗xd2 16 ♖xd2 ♘e4 17 ♖dd1 ♘xg3 18 hxg3 ♕c7 19 ♘c5 ± Miles-Cu.Hansen, Biel 1992) 8 ♖c1 a6 9 h3 ♘bd7 10 ♘f3 h6 11 ♗e2 ♗e7 12 a4 0-0 13 0-0 ♖a7 14 a5 ♕d8 15 ♕a4 ♖e8 16 ♖fd1 ± Schlindwein-Sandhoefner, Austrian Cht 2002.

7 c5 ♕xb3 8 axb3 *(D)*

B



For a better understanding of this kind of position, see Illustrative Game 11.

8...♘bd7 9 h3 a6

Other moves don't change the fact that White has queenside pressure:

a) 9...h6 10 b4 ♗e7 11 ♘f3 0-0 12 b5 ♘e4 13 bxc6 bxc6 14 ♗a6 ♘dxc5 15 dxc5 ♘xc5 16 ♘d4 +– S.Kovačević-Parramon Guillaumet, Mislata 1997.

b) 9...♗e7 10 b4 0-0 11 b5 (11 ♘f3 ♘e4 12 ♗e2 f6 13 ♘h4 ♗g6 14 ♘xg6 hxg6 15 ♘xe4 dxe4 16 ♗c4 ± Karlik-Goriachev, Ceske Budejovice 1996) 11...♘e4 (11...cxb5 12 ♗xb5 a6 13 ♗e2 ♖ac8 14 ♘f3 ♘b8 15 g4 ♗g6 16 ♘e5 ♘fd7 17 ♘xg6 hxg6 18 b4 ± Medancić-Rossi, Toscolano 1997) 12 ♘f3 f6 13 ♘h4 ♗g6 14 ♘xg6 hxg6 15 ♘xe4 dxe4 16 ♗c4 ♔f7 17 bxc6 bxc6 18 ♖a6 +– S.Kovačević-Proenca, Lisbon 1999.

10 b4 ♖c8 11 ♘f3 ♗e7 12 ♘d2 ♗d8 13 ♗d6 ♗c7 14 ♗xc7 ♖xc7

15 b5 0-0 (15...♘b8 16 bxa6 bxa6 17 ♖a2 ± S.Kovačević-Arizmendi, Mislata 1995) 16 bxa6 ♖a8 (16...bxa6 17 ♖xa6 ♖b8 18 ♖a2 e5 (18...♖cb7 19 g4 ♗g6 20 g5 ♘e4 21 ♘dxe4 ♗xe4 22 ♘xe4 dxe4 23 ♗g2 ±) 19 ♗e2 exd4 20 exd4 ♖cb7 21 ♘d1 ± S.Kovačević-Perić, Cannes 1996) 17 ♖a2 bxa6 18 ♖xa6 ♖xa6 19 ♗xa6 ♖a7 20 ♗e2 ± S.Kovačević-Asensio Soto, Albacete 2001.

Conclusion:

Again we see that the pawn-formation resulting from ...♕xb3 and axb3 provides White with excellent queenside chances.

8 The Grünfeld Formation

Here we shall examine king's fianchetto lines with ...d5. These can equally well arise from 1...d5 as from 1...♘f6, but we have placed them in the double d-pawn section, as the pawn on d5 tends to make the centre relatively static.

We shall concentrate rather heavily on Black's most critical idea, which is to complete development and then play ...♘fd7, ensuring the central break ...e5. This mainly reflects the fact that the ...e5 plan is hard to battle. However, Illustrative Game 15 demonstrates that it isn't necessarily a catastrophe for White if Black succeeds in his ambition. The emphasis is due partly to the fact that lines where Black doesn't play for ...e5 tend to be pleasant for White, as Black's bishops have some trouble finding activity. See Game 14 for a demonstration of White's attacking possibilities and Game 16 for long-term pressure if Black fails to generate central activity.

Chapter Outline

1 d4

8A: (1...d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 g6 4 ♘f3 ♗g7 5 ♗e2 0-0 6 0-0 c5 7 c3 cxd4) 124

8B: 1...d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 g6 4 ♘f3 ♗g7 5 ♗e2 0-0 6 0-0 c5 7 c3 ♘c6 126

8C: 1...d5 2 ♗f4 with ...c6 and ...g6 127

8A: Introduction and Move-Orders

(1 d4)

1...d5

The King's Indian move-order 1...♘f6, 2...g6, 3...♗g7, 4...0-0, 5...d6 and 6...c5 tends to provoke an early ♗e2. However, that is no big deal, as it's our recommendation anyway. However, White should avoid playing h3 before Black plays ...d6, as otherwise he will end up with a position reminiscent of the one examined in Illustrative Game 15.

The Benoni move-order 1...♘f6, 2...c5, 3...g6, 4...♗g7 and 5...d5, tends to provoke an early c3. However, as we shall play that against most move-orders anyway it doesn't affect our repertoire much either. Generally, of course, all move-orders tend to merge around moves 5 to 7. On the way, there are obviously deviations for both sides which have nothing to do with the Grünfeld set-up. However, those are discussed under the King's Indian, Benoni or 2...♘f6 3 e3 c5 move-orders. We shall also largely ignore the question of when White should play ♘f3, as he invariably plays both e3 and ♘f3 before Black has completed his Grünfeld set-up.

2 ♗f4 ♘f6

After 2...g6, 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♗e2!? may be the most precise as 4 ♘f3 ♘h6!? planning ...f6, ...♘f7 and ...e5 is quite interesting. See 2...c6 3 e3 g6 in Line 8C for some similar ideas. After 4 ♗e2 this is less tempting as the h4-h5 plan is quite frightening. Actually the untested 4...c5 5 h4!? (5 c3 should lead to well-known patterns) is quite interesting too.

3 e3 g6 *(D)*

We consider this the main path to the Grünfeld as the risk that White can take the c-pawn and keep it is relatively small after Black has completed kingside development.

An important move-order issue is whether 3...c5 4 c3 ♘c6 5 ♘f3 (5 ♘d2 g6 should lead to main lines but of course with White committed to early ♘bd2 lines) 5...g6 is a safe path for Black or if White can munch the c-pawn by 6 dxc5!?:

a) 6...♗g7 7 ♘e5 ♘xe5 8 ♗xe5 0-0 9 ♗b5 ♗d7 10 ♗e2 ♗c6 11 b4 ±.

b) 6...♘e4 7 ♗b5 and then:

b1) 7...♘xc5?? 8 ♕d4 +−.

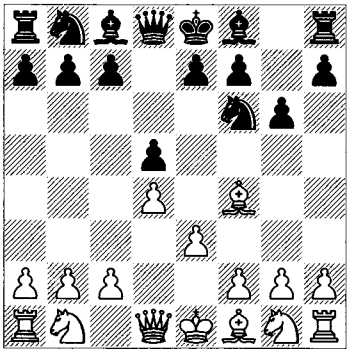
b2) 7...f6!? 8 b4 e5 9 ♗g3 ♗g7, when White can keep his pawn, but Black is active.

b3) 7...♗g7 8 0-0 ♘xc5 wins the pawn back but after 9 ♘e5 Black still has problems:

b31) 9...♗d7 10 ♕xd5 ♘xe5 11 ♕xc5 is much better for White.

b32) 9...♗xe5 10 ♗xe5 f6 11 ♗d4 ♘e4 12 ♘d2 ♘d6 13 a4 ±.

b33) 9...♕b6 10 ♕xd5 ♗xe5 11 ♗xe5 0-0 (11...f6 12 ♗d4 ♕xb5 13 c4 ♘b4 14 ♘c3 ♘xd5 15 ♘xb5 ♗d7 16 ♗xc5 ♗xb5 17 cxb5 ±) 12 ♗d4 ♕xb5 13 c4 ♕b6 14 ♕xc5 ♕xc5 15 ♗xc5 ♖d8 ±.



W

4 ♘f3

4 ♘d2 is playable, but by delaying ♘d2 White makes ...♘fd7 followed by ...e5 harder to achieve, as the queen is more likely to pick up the d5-pawn when the d-file isn't blocked. In addition, it makes ...cxd4 less tempting for Black, as the reply cxd4 allows a later ♘c3.

4...♗g7 5 ♗e2

Although many strong players have played ♗d3 set-ups here, we believe that the bishop is generally better placed at e2, where it's less vulnerable to the ...e5 break and allows the queen to exert some pressure in the open d-file. Equally importantly, ♗d3 can hardly be the basis for a consistent London repertoire as it isn't recommended to play ♗d3 when the black d-pawn can still go to d6, supporting ...e5.

5...0-0

5...♘h5!? 6 ♗g5 h6 7 ♗h4 g5 8 ♘e5 (8 ♘fd2 ♘f4! is reminiscent of play in Line 9C but possibly Black is a little less dynamic with a pawn on d5 rather than on d6) 8...♘f6 (8...♘f4 9 exf4 gxh4 10 ♕d3 is also slightly better for White) 9 ♗g3 ♘e4 and now 10 c4 ♘xg3 11 hxg3 dxc4 12 ♘a3 ± may improve over 10 0-0 (Ree-Langeweg, Amsterdam 1967).

6 0-0 c5

Or:

a) 6...♗g4 gives up the bishop-pair a little too easily: 7 h3 ♗xf3 8 ♗xf3 c6 (Davidović-Anka, Szolnok 1987) 9 c4! ♘bd7 (9...dxc4 10 ♕c2 ± b5?! 11 a4 ♘d5 12 ♗g3 ±) 10 ♕b3 ♕b6 11 ♘c3 dxc4 12 ♕xc4 ♖ae8 13 ♗g3 ±.

b) Preparing ...c5 with 6...b6 is a little slow: 7 ♘bd2 ♗b7 8 c3 c5 (8...♘bd7 9 a4 ♘h5 10 ♗g5 h6 11 ♗h4 g5 12 ♘e1 ♘hf6 13 ♗g3 ♘e4 14 ♘xe4 dxe4 15 a5 ± Andrianov-Löffler, Cannes 1995) 9 h3 ♘bd7 10 ♘e5 ♘xe5 11 ♗xe5 ♘d7 12 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 (½-½ Watanabe-Braga, Brazil 1991) 13 f4 ±.

c) The position after 6...♘h5 7 ♗g5 h6 8 ♗h4 g5 9 ♘e5 ♘f6 10 ♗g3 ♘e4 is probably roughly equal, but interesting complications can arise after 11 ♘c3 ♘xg3 12 fxg3 ♗xe5 13 dxe5 ♗e6 14 ♗g4.

7 c3

Generally ...♘h5 is risky after Black has played ...c5, as it may be hard for Black to regain his pawn with his knight offside. Therefore White should normally skip h3.

7...cxd4

This relieves Black of all worries about dxc5 but eases White's development.

After 7...♘h5 8 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 9 dxc5 it isn't easy for Black to regain his pawn, as White has some pressure on d5 and some tactical ideas based on Black's unprotected a-pawn.

See Line 8B for 7...♘c6.

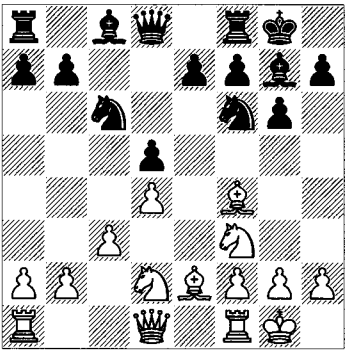
8 exd4

We consider this the main line because retaking with the e-pawn is the logical choice if White has played an early ♘bd2. However, 8 cxd4, transposing to a slightly unbalanced Exchange Slav line, is logical too, cashing in the bonus for delaying ♘bd2: 8...♘c6 9 ♘c3 ♘h5 (9...♗g4 10 ♖c1 ♖c8 11 h3 ♗xf3 12 ♗xf3 e6 13 ♘a4 ♘d7 14 ♗e2 e5 15 dxe5 ♘dxe5 16 ♕b3 ± Teske-Trzaska, Essen 2003) 10 ♗e5 (10 ♗g5 f6 11 ♗h4 g5 12 ♘e1 gxh4 13 ♗xh5 f5 14 f4 e6 15 ♖f3 ± Sunthornpongsathorn-Skembris, Novi Sad OL 1990) 10...f6 11 ♗g3 ♘xg3 12 hxg3 e6 (12...♗e6 13 ♕b3 ♘a5 14 ♕b4 ♗f7 15 ♖fd1 e6 16 e4 ♖b8 = Tal-Bronstein, USSR Ch (Moscow) 1957) 13 ♖c1 ♖f7 14 ♘e1 ♗d7 15 ♘d3 ♗f8 16 ♕d2 ♖c8 17 ♖fd1 = Filip-Kirov, Polanica Zdroj 1976.

8...♘c6 9 ♘bd2 *(D)*

This position has extra significance as it can also arise from the move-order 3...c5 4 c3 ♘c6 5 ♘d2 g6 6 ♘gf3 ♗g7 7 ♗e2 0-0 8 0-0 cxd4 9 exd4. Strictly speaking it could be classified as an Exchange Caro-Kann but in that variation the bishop is usually at d3 (sometimes retreating to e2 as a reaction to ...♗f5).

B



9...♘h5

Black's main source of counterplay is the advance of his f-pawn, and his control of f4, so 9...♗f5 appears slightly inconsistent – even more so because that position sometimes occurs with Black having an extra move in the Exchange Caro-Kann. 10 ♖e1 ♖c8 11 ♘e5 ♘d7 12 ♘xc6 ♖xc6 13 ♕b3 ♖b6 14 ♕xd5 ♖xb2 15 ♘c4 ♗e6 16 ♕f3 ± Zilberman-Kantsler, Tel-Aviv 2002.

10 ♗e3 ♕c7

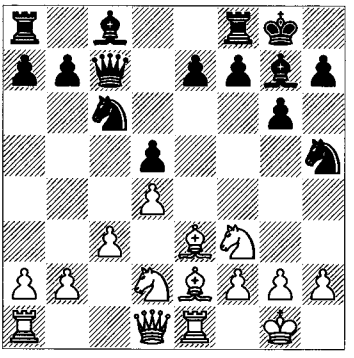
This seems a sensible preparation for kingside play based on occupation of f4. Black has also tried:

a) After 10...♕d6 11 ♖e1 f5 12 ♘b3 f4 13 ♗d2 ♔h8 (Turov-Burmakin, Moscow OL 1994) we believe 14 ♘g5 is critical.

b) 10...f5 11 ♘b3 f4 (11...♘f6 12 ♕c1 a5 13 ♖e1 b6 14 ♗b5 ± Sygulski-Szymczak, Polanica Zdroj 1983) 12 ♗d2 ♔h8 13 ♘c5 ♕d6 14 ♘d3 ♗f5 15 ♖e1 ♗xd3 16 ♗xd3 ♖ae8 (Sydor-Maciejewski, Lodz 1980) 17 ♘g5!? e5 18 ♘xh7 ♔xh7 19 ♕xh5+ ♗h6 20 dxe5 ♘xe5 21 ♗c2 ±.

11 ♖e1 *(D)*

B



11...♗g4

After 11...f5 12 ♘b3 in Andrianov-M.Damjanović, Tel-Aviv 1991 Black should have tried the consistent 12...f4!? rather than 12...e6 13 ♖c1 ♘f6 14 ♗b5 ♘g4 15 ♗d2 ♘d8?! 16 c4 dxc4 17 ♗b4, when White was already winning.

12 ♘b3 ♘f4 13 ♗b5!?

Now:

a) After 13...♘h5 14 h3 ♗d7 15 ♕c1 (15 ♘c5!?) 15...♖fe8 16 ♗h6 ♗h8 17 ♗f1 White had a very pleasant edge in Keres-Bronstein, USSR Ch (Tbilisi) 1959.

b) It would be interesting to know how Keres had planned to meet 13...a6!?. Probably he just wanted to provoke a weakening of the queenside with 14 ♗f1 b6, when 15 h3 ♗f5 16 ♘e5 cannot be met by 16...♘e6? 17 ♘xc6 ♕xc6 18 g4 +–.

Conclusion:

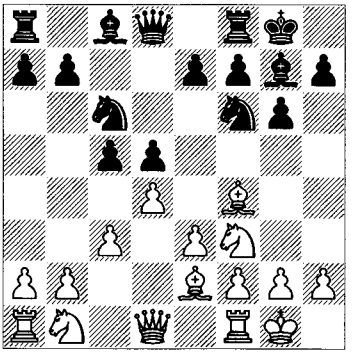
Black's byways in the Grünfeld are relatively promising for White – mainly because of Black's problems with activating his light-squared bishop. Delaying ♘bd2 may somewhat reduce Black's options, but probably isn't necessary in order for White to achieve an advantage.

8B: Grünfeld Main Line

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 g6 4 ♘f3 ♗g7 5 ♗e2 0-0 6 0-0 c5 7 c3)

7...♘c6 *(D)*

W



8 ♘bd2

If you have kept your queen's knight back until now, 8 ♘e5!? may be promising:

a) After 8...♘d7?! Black must struggle to get his pawn back: 9 ♘xd7 ♗xd7 (9...♕xd7 10

dxc5 ±) 10 dxc5 e5 11 ♗g3 ♗e6 12 ♘d2 and now:

a1) 12...♘e7 13 c4 ♖c8 14 b4 b6 15 cxb6 ♕xb6 16 ♕b3 dxc4 17 ♘xc4 ♕b5 18 ♖ac1 ± Andruet-Kouatly, Royan 1988.

a2) 12...f5 13 f3 ♖f7 (13...f4 14 exf4 exf4 15 ♗f2 ♕g5 16 ♖e1 ±) 14 ♕c2 ♕g5 15 ♗f2 ♖d8 16 ♖ad1 f4 17 exf4 exf4 18 ♔h1 ♘e7 19 ♘e4 ± Marangunić-Postl, Graz 1992.

b) Also after 8...♕b6 9 ♕b3 Black must be careful:

b1) 9...♘e8 10 ♘xc6 bxc6 11 ♕a3 a5 12 ♘d2 cxd4 13 cxd4 c5 14 dxc5 ± C.Hansen-Birnboim, Jerusalem 1986.

b2) 9...♗e6 10 ♘d2 ♖fc8 (10...♘e4!?) 11 ♕a3 cxd4 12 exd4 ♕a5 13 ♕b3 ♘d8 14 a4 ♘e4 15 ♕b5 ♕xb5 16 axb5 ± Hacche-Feldman, Melbourne 2002.

b3) However, there is one obstacle: 9...♘e4! is a logical attempt to take advantage of White delaying ♘d2. White achieved nothing by 10 ♕xb6 axb6 11 ♘f3 ♗f5 12 ♖d1 f6 in Andrianov-Smirin, USSR Cht (Naberezhnye Chelny) 1988. We examined 10 f3!? quite closely too, but were unable to demonstrate a genuine opening advantage for White after either 10...♘d6 or 10...♘f6.

8...♘h5

This ambitious plan may not be the best. However, White has got pleasant positions against the alternatives:

a) 8...♕b6 9 ♕b3 c4 10 ♕xb6 axb6 11 ♘e5 ♘xe5 12 ♗xe5 ♗d7 13 ♗f3 ♗c6 14 ♖fe1 ♖fe8 15 a3 e6 16 ♖e2 ♘d7 17 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 18 e4 ± Wang Rui-Li Haoyu, Tianjin 2001.

b) 8...b6 9 h3 ♗b7 10 ♘e5 ♘d7 11 ♘xc6 ♗xc6 12 ♘f3 e6 (12...♖c8 13 ♗a6 ♖a8 14 a4 ♘b8 15 ♗e2 ± Kosikov-Shianovsky, Kiev 2001) 13 a4 a6 (13...♕e7 14 ♖e1 a6 15 ♕b3 ♖fc8 16 ♕a3 h6 = Soos-Dževlan, Budapest 1991) 14 ♕c2 ♕e7 15 ♖fc1 h6 16 h4 f5 17 c4 with roughly even chances in Mensing-Zso.Polgar, Curaçao 2002.

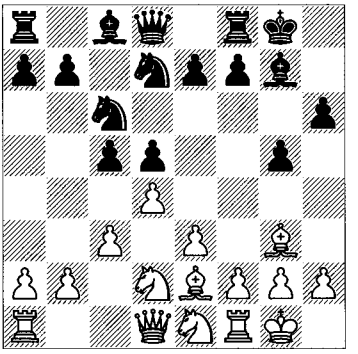
c) 8...♘d7 is a critical alternative. Quite surprisingly there has only been one practical test: 9 ♕b3 e5?! (9...c4 10 ♕a3 b5 11 b3 ±) 10 dxe5 ♘dxe5 11 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 12 ♖ad1 ♗e6 (12...c4 13 ♕a3 ♕b6 14 ♘f3 ±) 13 ♕xb7 ♕a5 14 ♕a6 ♕xa6 15 ♗xa6 c4 16 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 17 e4 ± Anastasian-P.Sobolewski, Leningrad 1990.

9 ♗g5 h6 10 ♗h4 g5 11 ♘e1

For 11 ♗g3 see Illustrative Game 16, Malakhatko-Niknaddaf, Erevan Wcht 2001.

11...♘f6 12 ♗g3 ♘d7 *(D)*

W



This may be a critical position for the entire ♘bd2 complex as well as for the Grünfeld formation. Black's king's position is weakened but he is ready to play ...e5 and initiate central activity. White's position is solid, but his pieces aren't set up to play on the kingside. 13 ♘d3 c4 14 ♘e1 e5 led to a complicated game with roughly equal chances in Alvarez Fernandez-Lopez del Alamo, Oropesa del Mar 2001. However, 13 ♗f3 may be promising. By attacking d5, White halts Black's planned central expansion:

a) 13...e5?! 14 ♗xd5 cxd4 15 cxd4 exd4 16 e4 ♘e7 17 ♗c4 ♘g6 18 ♘d3 ±.

b) 13...cxd4 14 cxd4 ♘f6 (14...e6 15 ♘d3 ±) 15 ♘d3 ♕b6 16 ♖c1 ♗f5 17 ♘b3 ±.

Conclusion:

The evaluation of the entire system depends on an untested move. If that should fail under further analytical scrutiny, White may investigate 8 ♘e5 but that isn't an option if the position arises from 3...c5 4 c3 ♘c6 5 ♘d2 g6.

8C: Schlechter Formation

(1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4)

2...♘f6

Here we shall only examine lines where Black plays ...c6 at various points along what we consider the main road to the Grünfeld set-up. This set-up is often referred to as the Schlechter System and has a reputation for being slightly passive. It's quite tempting for White to return to traditional QGD Slav lines with an early c4

as these are considered very comfortable for White, but we shall concentrate on a relatively pure London approach.

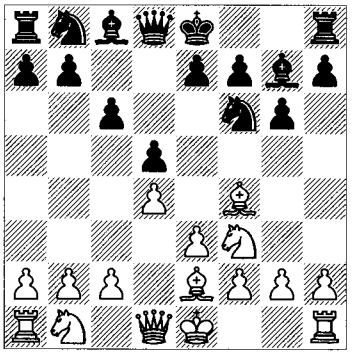
Delaying ...♘f6 with 2...c6 (or 2...g6 3 e3 ♗g7 followed by a quick ...c6) 3 e3 g6 4 ♘f3 ♗g7 has little independent merit unless Black plays for ...f6 and ...e5; e.g., 5 h3 ♕b6 6 ♕c1 ♘d7 7 ♘bd2 f6 8 ♘b3 e5 9 ♗h2 a5 10 a4 ♘e7 11 ♗e2 0-0 12 0-0 e4 13 ♘fd2 f5 14 c4 = Reiss-G.Mester, Eger 1997. We recommend 5 ♘bd2, when White can meet 5...♘h6 with the fittingly aggressive 6 h4!? rather than 6 h3 0-0 7 ♗e2 f6 8 0-0 ♘f7 9 c4 e5 10 ♗h2 e4 11 ♘e1 f5, which wasn't clear in Zeka-Tochtrop, Hermannen 1997.

3 e3 g6

Or 3...c6 4 ♘f3 g6 5 c4 ♗g7 6 ♘c3 0-0 7 ♗d3 ♗g4 8 h3 ♗xf3 9 ♕xf3 dxc4 10 ♗xc4 ± Dreev-Bagirov, Sevastopol 1986.

4 ♘f3 ♗g7 5 ♗e2 c6 *(D)*

W



6 0-0

6 ♘c3 transposes to a line of the Barry Attack in which Black is already committed to ...c6.

6...0-0 7 c4

If White prefers a more typical London set-up, 7 h3 is probably the simplest solution (7 ♘bd2 and 7 c3 may be met with 7...♘h5 but 7 ♘e5!? may be worth a try): 7...♕b6 (7...♘bd7 8 ♘bd2 ♖e8 9 c4 e6 10 b4 b6 11 ♖c1 ♗b7 12 a4 ♖c8 13 ♕b3 ± Gerasimenyk-Kopasov, St Petersburg 2003) 8 ♕c1 c5! (8...♘e4 9 c4 ♗e6 10 c5 ♕d8 11 b4 b6 12 ♘bd2 ♘xd2 13 ♕xd2 f6?! 14 ♖fc1 ♘d7?! 15 b5! bxc5 16 bxc6 ♘b6 17 ♖xc5 1-0 Falchetta-Plesec, Caorle 1984) 9 c3 ♘c6 10 ♘bd2 ♗f5 11 a4 cxd4 12 exd4 ♖ac8 13 ♖a3 ♘a5 14 b4 ♘c6 15 a5 ♕d8 16 ♕a1 ♘e4 17 b5 ± Galego-Frois, Caldas de Felgueira 1999.

7...♘bd7

7...♘h5?! doesn't improve: 8 ♗e5 f6 9 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 10 ♘fd2 f5 11 ♗xh5 gxh5 12 cxd5 ♕xd5 13 ♘c3 (13 ♕xh5 e5 14 ♘f3 e4 15 ♘g5 h6 16 ♘c3 ♕d6 17 ♘h3 ±) 13...♕f7 14 f4 ±.

8 ♘c3 dxc4

Neither is 8...♖e8 comfortable: 9 ♖c1 ♘f8 10 cxd5 ♘xd5 11 ♘xd5 ♕xd5 12 ♗c4 ♕h5? (12...♕f5 13 ♗e5 ±) 13 ♘g5 +– Kirpichnikov-Ten, Togliatti 2001.

9 ♗xc4 ♘b6 10 ♗b3 ♗f5

Or 10...♘bd5 11 ♗e5 ♗g4 12 h3 ♗xf3 13 ♕xf3 ♘xc3 14 bxc3 ♘d7 15 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 16 e4 e5 17 ♕e3 ♕e7 18 f4 ± Röder-Marek, Cappelle la Grande 1994.

11 ♕e2 a5 12 a3 ♘bd5 *(D)*

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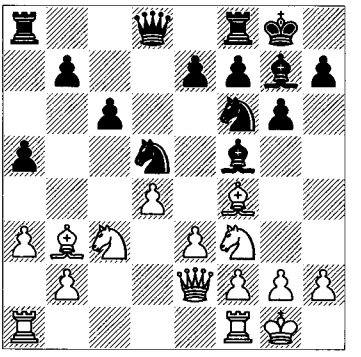


13 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 14 ♗e5 f6 15 ♗g3 ♗e6 16 ♕c2 ♗f7 17 ♖fd1 e6 18 ♖ac1 ± Askarian-Grinblat, Kharkov 2002.

Conclusion:

This system is solid but White can expect some advantage whether he prefers a traditional London formation with his pawn on c3 or a more active central stance with a pawn on c4.

9 The King's Indian Formation

In this chapter we shall look at kingside fianchetto lines where Black leaves his d-pawn at d6 (or even d7). Illustrative Games 17-19 are all typical examples of pressure against the c7/d6-pawns after Black has played ...e5. Game 20 is an example of play against a temporarily disorganized queenside, while Games 21 and 22 demonstrate play against queenside pawn weaknesses. Game 23 illustrates the extra queenside pressure provided by a semi-open a-file.

Chapter Outline

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4

9A:	**2...g6 (3 ♘f3)**	129
9B:	**2...g6 3 e3 (3...d6)**	131
9C:	**2...g6 3 e3 ♗g7 (4 ♘f3 d6)**	132
9D:	**2...g6 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 0-0 5 ♗e2 b6**	133
9E:	**2...g6 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 0-0 5 ♗e2 (5...d6 6 0-0 c5 7 c3 ♕b6)**	134
9F:	**2...g6 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 0-0 5 ♗e2 d6 6 0-0 c5 7 c3 b6**	136
9G:	**2...g6 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 0-0 5 ♗e2 d6 6 0-0 ♘fd7/♘c6**	137
9H:	**2...g6 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 0-0 5 ♗e2 d6 6 0-0 ♘bd7 7 h3 (7...♘e4)**	138
9I:	**2...g6 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 0-0 5 ♗e2 d6 6 0-0 ♘bd7 7 h3 (7...♕e8 8 c4 e5 9 ♗h2 ♘e4)**	140
9J:	**2...g6 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 0-0 5 ♗e2 d6 6 0-0 ♘bd7 7 h3 ♕e8 8 c4 e5 9 ♗h2 ♕e7**	141

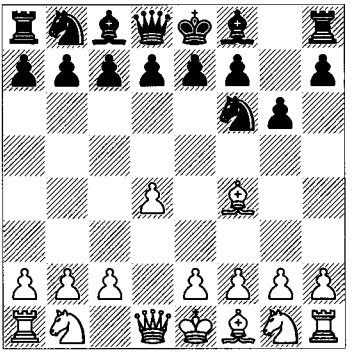
9A: 2...g6 Introduction

(1 d4 ♘f6)

2 ♗f4

As will soon become clear, there are certain advantages to this move against most of Black's opening systems, including the King's Indian. However, it isn't all glory. The main drawback is that by declaring his intention to play the London so early, White allows Black to design his set-up solely to meet the typical London strategy.

2...g6 *(D)*



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Most likely this is the move of a King's Indian player. And probably an optimistic one too – expecting sooner or later to gain a tempo on the exposed f4-bishop by playing ...e5. He of course realizes (and probably expects) that White can enter orthodox London lines with 3 ♘f3. We shall have a closer look at that position below, but we shall concentrate on 3 e3. Please note that 2...d6 followed by a quick ...g6 is an alternative and in some ways more precise path to the King's Indian.

3 ♘f3

In this section we shall only examine positions that couldn't normally occur after 3 e3 followed by 4 ♘f3.

3 ♘d2 may be imprecise as in some lines White should play c4 and ♘c3 rather than ♘bd2. It's sometimes played in the hope that Black will respond to the 'threat' of e4 by 3...d5, leading to a Grünfeld formation. We consider that an insufficient motivation – partly because the Grünfeld formation is one of the hardest to prove an advantage against, but primarily because the Pirc-like formation with pawns at e4 and d4, a knight at d2 and a bishop at f4 isn't attractive for White; compare with 3 ♘f3 ♗g7 4 ♘bd2 below.

3...♘h5!?

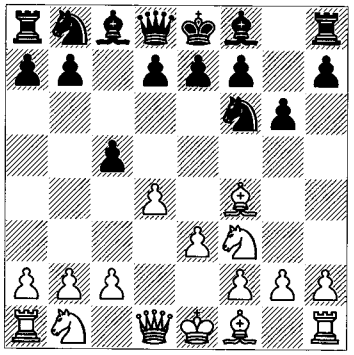
This somewhat strange-looking move may be a reason to prefer 3 e3 over 3 ♘f3. The alternatives will mostly transpose:

a) 3...d6 4 e3 – *3 e3 d6 4 ♘f3*.

b) 3...♗g7 4 ♘bd2?! (4 e3 – *3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3*) 4...0-0 5 e4 d6 is rather similar to the Pirc, but the knight is passive at d2 and without the possibility to play ♕d2 and ♗h6, the bishop will probably be more vulnerable than menacing on f4. There is a little tactical trick worth noting: 6 ♗d3?! (the modest 6 c3 ♘c6 7 ♗e2 is better) 6...♘c6 7 0-0 (7 c3 e5 8 ♗e3 ♘g4 =) 7...♘xd4! 8 ♘xd4 e5 9 ♗e3 exd4 10 ♗xd4 ♘xe4 11 ♗xg7 ♘xd2 12 ♗xf8 ♘xf1 13 ♗h6 (13 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 14 ♗xf1 =) 13...♕h4 ∓.

c) 3...c5 may remain independent. After 4 e3 *(D)* we have:

B



c1) 4...♗g7 – *3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 c5*.

c2) 4...cxd4 5 exd4 ♗g7 6 c3 0-0 7 h3 d6 8 ♗d3 ♗e6 9 0-0 ♕b6 10 ♕e2 ♘c6 11 ♘a3 ♖ac8 12 ♘c4 ♕c7 13 ♘e3 = Pacuszka-Wojtkiewicz, Bydgoszcz 2001.

c3) 4...♕b6?! 5 ♘c3 and then:

c31) 5...d6 6 ♗b5+ ♗d7 7 a4 a6 8 a5 ♕c7 9 ♗e2 ♗g7 10 0-0 0-0 11 d5 ± Vera-Popović, Lucerne Wcht 1989 (see Illustrative Game 20).

c32) 5...♕xb2? 6 ♘b5 and now:

c321) 6...♘a6 7 a3! ♘e4 8 ♖b1 ♕a2 9 ♘e5 ♕e6 10 f3 ♘f6 (10...d6 11 ♗c4 d5 12 fxe4 dxc4 13 d5 ♕f6 14 0-0 +–) 11 dxc5 ♕d5 12 ♗c4 ♕xd1+ 13 ♖xd1 e6 14 ♘d6+ ♗xd6 15 cxd6 and although material is even, White is obviously winning – mainly because of Black's dark-square weaknesses and missing development.

c322) 6...♘d5 7 ♘d2! also seems a close to forced win for White: 7...a6 (7...d6 8 ♖b1 ♕xa2 9 ♗c4 ♕a5 10 ♗xd5 ±) 8 ♖b1 ♕xa2 9 ♗c4 ♕a5 10 ♖a1 ♕b6 11 ♗e5 f6 12 dxc5 ♕xc5 13 ♗d4 ♕c6 14 ♗xd5 ♕xb5 15 c4 ♕b4 16 ♖a4 ♕d6 17 ♘e4 ♕c7 18 ♘xf6+! +–.

4 ♗e5!?

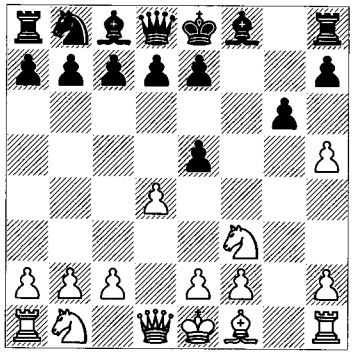
4 ♗c1 is no answer, unless White intends to answer 4...♘f6 with 5 ♗f4 and a draw offer (or leave London territory altogether). And in the pseudo-Dutch after 4 ♗d2 f5 the knight may be better placed at h5 than the bishop at d2. That leaves us with 4 ♗g5 h6 5 ♗h4 g5 6 ♗g3 ♗g7 as the most promising alternative. The position is unbalanced; Black has kingside weaknesses but can work up pressure on the dark squares with ...♗g7, ...c5 and ...♕b6. Most likely, play will transpose to Line 9C. White may try to play for e4 with extra central activity, but that is likely to make Black's dark-squared bishop more influential.

4...f6 5 g4!?

This is Soltis's suggestion. Gallagher adorns it with an '!', claiming that Black is in trouble without giving any variations. After 5 ♗g3 ♘xg3 6 hxg3 ♗g7, White has activity but Black's dark-squared bishop will be a long-term power source. 7 e4!? will be quite double-edged as White will become more active, but it will be easier for Black to activate his bishop-pair.

5...fxe5 6 gxh5 *(D)*

B



This messy position never seems to have been tested in tournament play. A possible continuation is 6...e4 7 ♘e5 d6 8 ♘c4 ♗g7, when our impression is that Black's dark-square play may be the dominant positional feature. However, in a practical game his insecure king position will give White excellent chances.

Conclusion:

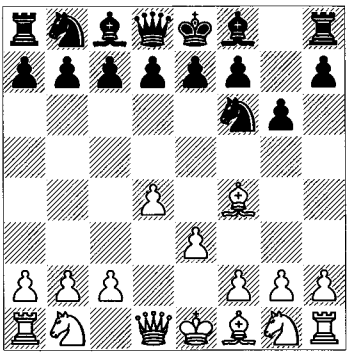
There are certain problems with the immediate ♘f3 move-order, but nothing that should worry White too much. Correspondingly it seems 2 ♘f3 g6 3 ♗f4 is a fully valid move-order.

9B: 3 e3

(1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4 g6)

3 e3 *(D)*

B



There may not be much to be gained by holding back ♘f3 for long in the King's Indian, but occasionally it stops ...♘h5 followed by ...h6 and ...g5.

3...d6(!)

This is a difficult move to counter. Black doesn't seem to achieve anything with the immediate 3...♘h5 4 ♗g5 h6 5 ♗h4 as the h5-knight will soon have to retreat (5...f5 6 ♗e2 ♘f6 {6...♘g7!?} 7 ♗xf6!? exf6 8 ♘f3 seems clearly better for White).

4 ♘f3

White cannot really avoid this position as Black can force it with the Old Indian move-order 2...d6 3 ♘f3, when after 3...g6! White has nothing better than 4 e3. However, it's possible that the clever 4 ♗e2!? is better. In all available games Black has transposed back to standard waters with 4...♗g7 – *3...♗g7 4 ♗e2 d6*. More testing is 4...♘bd7!?, when it's hard to suggest a good alternative to 5 ♘f3, when Black can again try 5...♘h5!? (5...♗g7 – *3...♗g7 4 ♘f3 0-0 5 ♗e2 d6*) 6 ♗g5 h6 7 ♗h4 g5 8 ♗g3 ♘df6 (8...♘xg3 9 hxg3 ♗g7 10 c3 e6 = Bartha-J.Tiller, Bavaria 2002) 9 c4 ♗f5 10 ♘c3 ♗g7 11 ♘d2 ♘xg3 12 hxg3 c5 with unbalanced play; e.g., 13 dxc5 dxc5 14 e4 ♗h7 15 e5 ♘d7 16 f4 ♘f8 (16...♘b6 17 ♕b3 ♕d7 18 0-0-0 ±) and in Burmakin-Kupreichik, Tula 2002, White could have secured a clear advantage with 17 ♕a4+! ♕d7 18 ♕xd7+ ♘xd7 19 ♗h5 ♘f8 20 ♘d5 ♘e6 21 0-0 ±; e.g., 21...♗d3 22 f5! ♗xf1 23 ♖xf1 ♔d8.

4...♘h5!? 5 ♗g5 h6

Kupreichik has repeatedly preferred the less direct 5...♗g7!?, when White has to be careful so the exchange at g3 doesn't take place under unfavourable circumstances. After 6 ♗e2 h6 7 ♗h4 f5 White should probably play 8 h3 (8 g4!?) 8...c5 9 c3 ♕b6 10 ♘a3 ♗e6 11 ♘d2 ♘f6 12 ♘dc4 ♕d8 13 dxc5 dxc5 14 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 15 ♗g3 ± M.Berg-Kupreichik, Stockholm 1992.

6 ♗h4 g5

Or 6...♘d7 7 ♗c4 ♘df6 8 ♘bd2 g5 9 ♗g3 ♗g7 10 c3 a6 11 e4 b5 12 ♗b3 ♘xg3 13 hxg3 e6 14 ♕e2 ♗b7 15 e5 ♘d7 16 d5 exd5 17 exd6+ ♔f8 18 dxc7 ♕xc7 19 0-0 ♖e8 and Black's piece-play and bishop-pair compensated for his pawn weaknesses in S.Ledger-Bronstein, Hastings 1995/6.

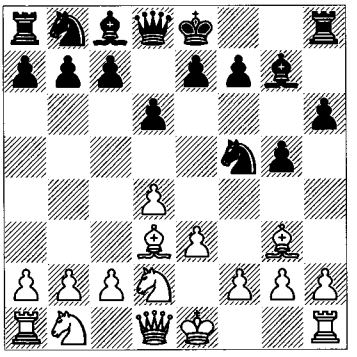
7 ♘fd2! ♘g7

After 7...♘f6?! (or 7...♘f4?! 8 ♗g3 ±) Black has weakened his kingside for very little in return: 8 ♗g3 ♗g7 9 ♘c3 ♘bd7 10 ♗d3 c5 11 ♕e2 b6 12 d5 ♘f8 13 h4 ♗b7 14 e4 a6 15 a4 ♘g6 16 hxg5 hxg5 17 0-0-0 ± Koziak-Kazmin, Voronezh 1999.

8 ♗g3 ♘f5 9 ♗d3 ♗g7 *(D)*

Chances were balanced after 9...♘xg3 10 hxg3 ♗g7 11 c3 ♘d7 12 ♘f3 ♘f6 13 ♘bd2 c6 14 ♕c2 ♕c7 15 ♗f5 (15 e4 planning ♘f1-e3 is better) 15...♗xf5 16 ♕xf5 e6 17 ♕c2 in Franklin-Gligorić, Hastings 1971/2.

W



10 ♕f3

It may be wise to force Black to execute his threat of ...♘xg3 at once. Otherwise Black may be able to play ...h5, forcing h3 after which ...♘xg3 will damage White's pawn-structure.

10...♘xg3 11 hxg3 ♘c6 12 c3 g4

13 ♕e2 h5 14 ♘a3 ♗d7 15 ♘c2 e5 16 d5 ♘e7 17 e4 and White is slightly better, Bacrot-Schekachev, Cannes 1995.

Conclusion:

White may not be able to prove any theoretical advantage against 3...d6, but in practice his position is easier to play.

9C: 3 e3 ♗g7

(1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4 g6 3 e3)

3...♗g7 *(D)*

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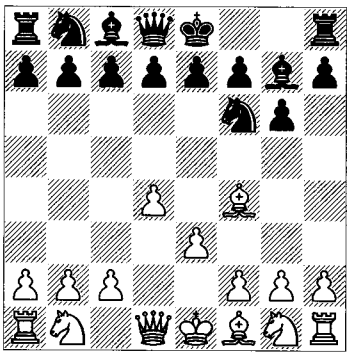
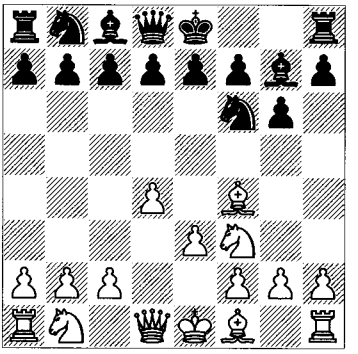


Certainly this is the most natural move.

4 ♘f3 *(D)*

Of the alternatives, 4 ♘d2!? is a logical attempt to avoid problems with ...♘h5 for a while, thus delaying or possibly avoiding the somewhat slow h3. However, to appreciate the move fully, one must realize that White is playing a very sensible black system a tempo up. So if you believe that, for instance, 1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 c6 3 ♗g2 ♗f5 4 0-0 ♘d7 5 d3 e6 is a good line for Black, then you should certainly consider playing it with an extra move too. The validity of this reasoning of course depends on the nature of the system. In a sharp line an extra tempo may make a decisive difference, while in a slower setting, structural considerations may be the more important. Here the critical line seems to be 4...0-0 5 c3 d6 6 ♗e2 ♘bd7 7 ♘gf3 ♕e8 and it will be hard to demonstrate much more than equality, as White's knights to some extent are treading on each other's toes; e.g., 8 0-0 e5 9 ♗g5 e4 10 ♘e1 h6 11 ♗h4 with roughly equal chances.

B



4...d6!

This is a good attempt to force White to play an early h3.

4...♘h5?! (for 4...0-0 see Lines 9D-9J) is an attempt to exploit White's exposed bishop, but seems to fail for at least one reason: 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 g5 7 ♘fd2! and Black has weakened his kingside for no good reason unless he wants to try the consistent 7...♘f6 (7...♘f4 8 ♗g3! ♘g6 9 ♕h5 ±) 8 ♗g3 h5?! 9 h4 g4 10 ♗d3 d6 11 ♘c3 ♘bd7 12 e4 ±.

5 ♗e2!?

The most popular move is 5 h3 which should, after 5...0-0 6 ♗e2, transpose to a line we briefly consider under the move-order 4...0-0 5 ♗e2 d6 6 h3 in Line 9E. This is riskier but may transpose to 4...0-0 5 ♗e2 lines, saving us some work. 5 ♗c4!? may discourage some opponents from an early ...d6, but after 5...0-0 we had to conclude that chances are roughly even.

5...♘h5!

Quiet moves allow White to get away with delaying or maybe even omitting h3 (5...0-0 – *4...0-0 5 ♗e2 d6*).

6 ♗g5 h6 7 ♗h4 g5 8 ♘fd2

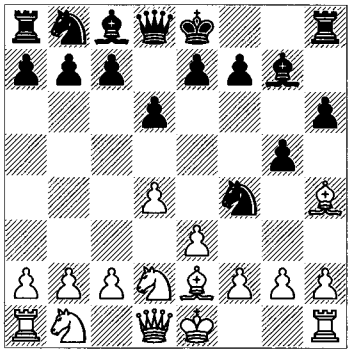
This seemingly forces Black's knight to retreat, having weakened his kingside for no good reason.

8...♘f4! *(D)*

This somewhat surprising move makes the position hard to evaluate. 8...gxh4 9 ♗xh5 e5 should be met by 10 c3 as 10 dxe5 ♘c6! is fine for Black.

9 exf4 gxh4 10 c3 c5

Two other moves are OK too:



a) 10...e6 11 ♘f3 ♘d7 12 g3 hxg3 13 hxg3 ♕e7 14 ♘a3 ♘f6 15 ♘c2 ♗d7 16 ♗d3 0-0-0 17 ♕e2 ♔b8 18 0-0-0 = S.Andrews-Brenninkmeijer, New York 1993.

b) After 10...♘d7 11 ♘a3 (11 0-0 c5 12 d5 – *10...c5 11 d5 ♘d7 12 0-0*) 11...c5 12 ♘c2 cxd4 13 ♘xd4 ♗xd4 14 cxd4 ♘f6 15 ♗f3 chances were balanced in a slightly irrational position in Gonzalez Camps-Romero, Las Palmas 1994.

11 d5

11 0-0!? may be an option for the adventurous. The compensation may be of a mainly practical nature but it's hard to imagine a genuinely safe resort for Black's king; e.g., 11...cxd4 12 cxd4 ♗xd4 13 ♘c3 h3 14 g3 ♘c6 15 ♖e1 and 15...0-0 may be best as the dark-squared bishop provides some protection to Black's king.

11...♘d7

11...e6 looks risky, but after 12 ♘c4 h3 (not 12...b5? 13 dxe6 bxc4 14 ♗f3 +–) 13 g3 0-0 14 dxe6 ♗xe6 15 ♘xd6 ♕e7 16 f5 ♗xa2 17 ♖xa2 ♖d8 chances are balanced.

12 0-0

This is a little more flexible than 12 ♗f3.

12...♘f6 13 ♘c4 h5 14 ♖e1

The knight is quite well placed at c4 so this may be worth testing as an alternative to 14 ♘e3 ♔f8 15 ♘d2 ♗h6 16 g3 ♗h3 17 ♖e1 hxg3 (17...♖g8!? Gallagher) 18 fxg3 h4, when the position was unbalanced and no worse for Black in Rivas-Romero, Leon 1995.

14...♗h6

After 14...h3 15 g3 h4 16 g4 the mobile kingside pawns appear to improve White's chances.

15 ♗xh5 ♗xf4 16 ♗f3 ♖g8 17 ♘bd2

White is better mobilized and may have the better chances; e.g., 17...b5 18 ♘e4 ♘xe4 19 ♖xe4 ♗g5 20 ♘e3 h3 21 g3 ♗d7 (21...♕c7 22 ♗h5 a6 23 ♕f3 ♖f8 24 ♘f5 ±) 22 ♗h5 ♕c8 23 ♕f3 ♖g7 24 ♗g4 ♗xg4 (24...♗xe3?? 25 ♕f6 +–) 25 ♖xg4 ±.

Conclusion:

These lines are lightly tested. If your opponent enters the 8...♘f4 line he is likely to be prepared. Make sure your preparation is deeper!

9D: Double Fianchetto Lines

(1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4 g6 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3)

4...0-0

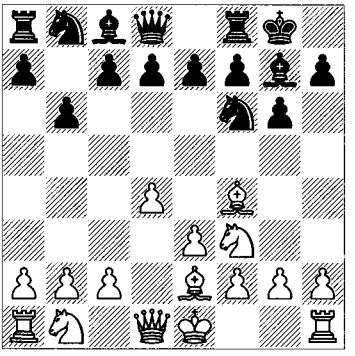
This natural move retains the option of playing ...d5, but allows White to dispense with h3 (at least for some time). Here we shall examine lines where Black plays ...b6 and ...♗b7 at an early stage. At some point he will usually play ...d6 and ...c5 too, leading to positions which could just as easily have arisen from a 5...d6 and 6...c5 move-order.

5 ♗e2

Double fianchetto lines with ♗d3 are discussed in Line 11B. There really is no reason to play 5 h3, but it's occasionally done anyway and is likely to transpose to the note to White's 9th move in Line 9E.

5...b6 *(D)*

5...d6 6 0-0 b6 (or 6...c5 7 c3 b6) will normally just be a transposition.



6 0-0 ♗b7

Or:

a) 6...♗a6 is rather meaningless when White has 7 c4.

b) 6...c5 7 ♘bd2 ♘c6 8 c3 ♘h5 9 ♗g5 h6 10 ♗h4 g5 11 ♘e1 cxd4 12 exd4 ♘f4 13 ♗g3 ♘xe2+ 14 ♕xe2 a5 15 f4 ♗a6 16 ♘d3 e6 17 ♘f3 ± Sonntag-Adorjan, Übach rpd 1996.

c) 6...d6 will transpose unless Black is heading for ...♗a6. In Matlak-Rechel, Groningen 1998 Black didn't quite equalize after 7 h3 c5 8 c3 ♗a6 9 ♘bd2 ♗xe2 10 ♕xe2 ♘c6 11 e4 ♘h5 12 ♗e3 cxd4 13 cxd4 d5 14 e5.

7 h3

Move-orders are flexible in the double fianchetto lines, so 7 a4, 7 c3 and 7 ♘bd2 may all come to the same. There is something to be said for 7 c4!? but it may not give you that comfortable 'London feeling'.

7...d6 8 a4

Out of many options we prefer this, probing for queenside weaknesses.

8...a6

Illustrative Game 22 examines some pros and cons of this reaction to a4.

a) 8...a5 9 c3 ♘fd7 doesn't look particularly strong but after 10 ♘a3 e5 11 ♗h2 ♘a6 12 ♖b1 exd4 13 cxd4 ♘b4 14 ♘b5 ♘f6 15 ♘d2 ♘e8 16 ♘c4 d5 17 ♘e5 c6 18 ♘a3 ♘c7 19 ♘c2 c5 chances were balanced in Anastasian-Ubilava, Protvino Z 1993.

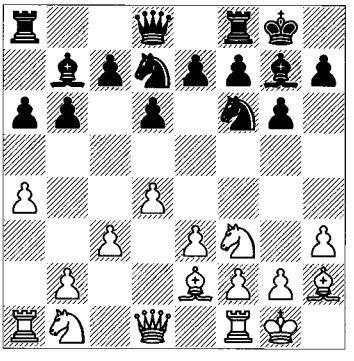
b) 8...♘c6 9 ♘bd2 ♕e8 10 ♘c4 a6 11 c3 ♖d8 (11...♖b8 12 ♗h2 ♘d7 13 b4 e5 14 b5 axb5 15 axb5 ± Wikström-Westerinen, Gausdal 2001) and now 12 ♕b1 ♘d5 13 ♗h2 e5 was equal in Römer-Tukmakov, Zurich 1996. Maybe the sharper 12 ♕c2 ♘d5 13 ♗h2 e5 14 e4 ♘f4 15 ♗xf4 exf4 16 ♖fe1 is sufficient for a minor edge.

9 ♗h2

This is often best when you aren't sure whether Black is playing for ...c5 or ...e5.

9...♘bd7 10 c3 *(D)*

B



White is able to generate a queenside initiative without c4 in case Black should play for ...e5.

10...♘e4

Or:

a) 10...c5 – *5...d6 6 0-0 c5 7 c3 b6 8 a4 a6 9 h3 ♗b7 10 ♗h2 ♘bd7.*

Playing for ...e5 doesn't quite seem to equalize:

b) 10...♖e8 11 ♘a3 ± Ye Rongguang-Donguines, Bacolod 1991 (see Illustrative Game 22).

c) 10...♕e8 11 ♖e1 e5 12 c4 ♘e4 13 a5 ♔h8 14 ♘c3 (14 ♘fd2!?) 14...f5 (14...♘xc3 15 bxc3 f5 16 ♕b3 ♕f7 17 ♖eb1 ±) 15 ♘d5 ♕d8 16 ♕c2 exd4 17 exd4 ± Bouhallel-Szekely, Douai 1993.

11 ♘bd2 ♘df6

11...♘xd2 12 ♘xd2 c5 13 ♗f3 ♕c7 14 ♕e2 ♖fe8 15 ♖fd1 ♖ac8 16 ♗g3 ♗xf3 17 ♘xf3 ♕b7 18 d5 b5 19 e4 ± Kožul-Grivas, Sharjah jr Wch 1985.

12 ♕c2 ♖a7

13 ♖fd1 ♕a8 14 ♗f1 h6 15 a5 b5 16 c4 ♘xd2 17 ♘xd2 bxc4 18 ♘xc4 ♗e4 19 ♕d2 ♖b7 20 f3 ♗c6 = Karlik-Walek, Czech Ch (Prerov) 1995.

Conclusion:

Black seems to be holding his own in these lines – mainly because of his ability to play ...c5, transposing to lines normally arising from 5...d6 6 0-0 c5 7 c3 b6 (Line 9F).

9E: 5...d6

(1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4 g6 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 0-0 5 ♗e2)

5...d6

This may be the least logical moment to play ...♘h5 – when Black has castled and White has not – but this move has nevertheless been tested. After 5...♘h5 White has tried:

a) 6 ♗e5 f6 7 g4?! (7 ♗g3 is better) doesn't quite seem to work: 7...fxe5 8 gxh5 e4 9 ♘g5 e5 10 h4 exd4 11 hxg6 hxg6 12 c3 d5! 13 exd4 ♕f6 ∓.

b) 6 ♗g5 h6 7 ♗h4 g5 8 ♘fd2 gxh4 9 ♗xh5 f5 10 f4 d6 11 ♘f3 e6 12 ♕e2 ♘d7 13 ♕f2 e5 14 ♘c3 ♘f6 15 ♕xh4 exd4 16 exd4 ♘xh5 17 ♕xh5 ± De Rooij-Riemens, Dutch Cht 1995.

6 0-0!

We are quite convinced this is the most precise at this point. However, we shall also take a good look at 6 h3!? since Black has a lot of

different move-orders, and against a few of them, it's very convenient to play a quick h3.

a) After 6...♘bd7 White should avoid 7 c4?! (7 0-0 – Lines 9H-9J) when Black has the immediate 7...e5!:

a1) 8 dxe5?! dxe5 9 ♘xe5 (9 ♗xe5 ♘xe5 10 ♘xe5 ♘e4 11 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 12 ♘d3 ♗e6 ∓) 9...♘h5 10 ♗xh5 ♘xe5 ∓.

a2) 8 ♗h2 exd4 9 ♘xd4 ♘e4 10 ♘d2 ♘df6 11 0-0 ♖e8 = Anastasian-Röder, Cappelle la Grande 1991.

b) 6...c5! demonstrates the drawbacks of the slow h-pawn move. 7 ♘bd2 cxd4 8 exd4 ♘c6 (8...♕b6 – Illustrative Game 23, Kamsky-Wolff, Philadelphia 1991) and now:

b1) The sensible 9 0-0 has been surprisingly lightly tested:

b11) 9...♘d5!? 10 ♗g3 e5 11 ♖e1! ♘b6 12 ♗b5 f6 13 c4 ± Nalbandian-Hellers, Biel IZ 1993.

b12) 9...♗e6 10 c3 a6 (10...♕b6 11 ♕b1 ♖ac8 12 ♖e1 ♖fe8 13 ♗d3 ♗d5 14 ♗e3 ♘h5 15 ♗e4 ♘f6 16 ♗d3 ♘h5 17 ♗e4 ♘f6 ½-½ Andersson-Hellers, Eksjö 1993) 11 a4 ♖c8 12 ♖e1 ♘a5 gave Black a very reasonable position in V.Kovačević-Gufeld, Vinkovci 1982.

b13) 9...♗f5 10 c3 ♖c8 11 ♗h2 a6 12 a4 ♖e8 13 ♘c4 d5 14 ♘ce5 ♕b6 15 ♖a2 ♘e4 (Polugaevsky-Gufeld, Moscow 1979) 16 g4!? is unclear according to ECO.

b2) 9 c3 can lead to huge complications and should be avoided unless White has studied it in detail:

b21) 9...♖e8 10 ♘c4 ♘d5 11 ♗h2 e5 12 0-0 b5 13 dxe5 dxe5 14 ♘e3 ♘xe3 15 ♕xd8 ♘xd8 16 fxe3 ± V.Milov-Sutovsky, Israeli Ch (Tel-Aviv) 1994.

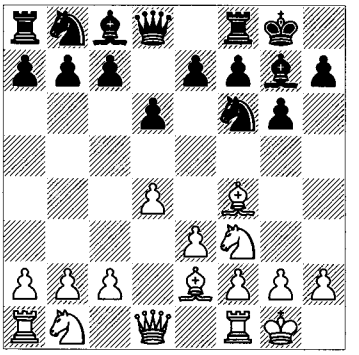
b22) 9...♗e6 10 ♗c4 ♗xc4 11 ♘xc4 ♖c8 12 ♘e3 ♕b6 13 ♕e2 e5 14 dxe5 ♘h5 15 ♗h2 dxe5 16 ♘c4 ± Nosenko-Romanishin, Donetsk Z 1998.

b23) 9...♘d5 10 ♗h2 e5 11 0-0 ♘b6 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 ♘e4 ♕e7 14 ♕d6 ♖e8 15 ♗b5 f6 16 ♖fd1 ± V.Kovačević-Rogulj, Zagreb 1993.

b24) 9...e5 is the critical line. After the principled 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 ♘xe5 ♘d5 12 ♘xc6 bxc6 13 ♗g3 ♖e8, Black's active pieces have given him a good tournament record. However, the cold-blooded 14 0-0 ♗xc3 15 ♕c1! ♗g7 16 ♗f3 may after all be good for White: 16...♗a6 (16...♗e6 17 ♘c4 ± Zoler-Cvitan, Biel 2002) 17 ♘c4 ♕f6 18 ♖d1 ♘c3?! (18...♖ad8 19 ♘a5 ±) 19 ♕xc3 ♕xc3 20 bxc3 ♗xc4 21 ♗xc6 +– Granda-Komljenović, Cordoba 1990.

We now return to 6 0-0! *(D)*:

B



6...c5!

If Black is playing for ...c5, he should do it now, and not after ...♘bd7 has been played, as ...♗e6 can be a useful option. Instead:

a) 6...b6 – *5...b6 6 0-0 d6.*

b) It doesn't seem that 6...♘h5 disturbs White much. 7 ♗g5 and now:

b1) 7...h6 8 ♗h4 g5 (Watson/Schiller suggest 8...f5!?; due to a misprint it's not entirely clear how they suggest White should continue but a transposition to 7...f5 below seems likely) 9 ♘fd2 gxh4 (after 9...♘f6 10 ♗g3 Black has weakened his king's position to no avail) 10 ♗xh5 weakens Black's kingside, but he gets the bishop-pair as compensation:

b11) 10...c5 11 c3 cxd4 (11...♘c6 12 f4 cxd4 13 cxd4 ♗f5 14 ♘c3 ♕b6 15 ♘c4 ♕c7 16 ♖c1 ♖ac8 and now Chemin-De Souza Haro, São Paulo 1997 demonstrated White's attacking potential quite convincingly: 17 e4 ♗xd4+ 18 ♔h1 ♗xc3 19 ♖xc3 ♗xe4 20 ♕g4+ ♔h7 21 f5 d5 22 ♗g6+ ♔h8 23 ♕xh4 ♔g7 24 f6+ +–) 12 cxd4 e5 13 dxe5 dxe5 14 ♘c3 ♗e6 15 ♗e2 ♘d7 16 ♗c4 ± Estrada Martinez-Vazquez, Madrid Z 2002.

b12) Watson/Schiller evaluate 10...e5 as unclear. Chemin-Sunye, São Paulo 2000 continued 11 c3 ♘d7 12 f4 exd4 13 cxd4 c5 14 ♘b3 cxd4 15 ♘xd4 ♘f6, when we suggest 16 ♗f3 ♖e8 17 ♖e1 ♕b6 18 ♘c3 ♕xb2 19 ♘cb5 ±.

b2) 7...f5!? and now:

b21) After 8 ♘bd2 h6 9 ♗h4, 9...♘d7 10 c3 ♕e8 11 e4 fxe4 12 ♘xe4 ♘f4 13 ♖e1 ♘b6 14 ♗f1 ♗g4 15 ♘ed2 g5 16 ♗g3 ♕d7 17 a4 was

fairly pleasant for White in Lima-Kožul, Erevan OL 1996, but we suspect 9...g5 10 ♘e1 ♘f6 11 ♗g3 ♘c6 may be fine for Black.

b22) Therefore we suggest 8 ♘fd2!? ♘f6 9 f4 ±.

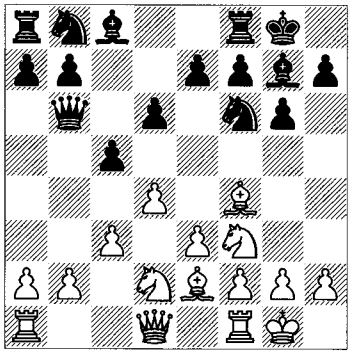
7 c3 ♕b6

7...cxd4 (for 7...b6 see Line 9F) allows White to develop his queen's knight actively: 8 cxd4 ♘bd7 (8...♕b6?! 9 ♘bd2! ♕xb2? 10 ♘c4 ♕b5 {10...♕c3? 11 ♖c1 ♕b4 12 ♖b1 ♕c3 13 ♖b3 +−} 11 ♘xd6 ±) 9 ♘c3 a6 10 a4 ♕a5 11 ♘d2 e5 12 ♘c4 ♕c7 13 ♗g3 ± Dreev-Burnier, Bern 1993.

8 ♘bd2! *(D)*

This is the point of holding back h3. The routine 8 ♕b3 doesn't promise White much: 8...♗e6 9 dxc5 ♕xc5 (9...♕xb3 10 axb3 dxc5 11 ♘bd2 ♘c6 12 e4 ±) 10 ♕xb7 ♘bd7 11 b4 ♕b6 12 ♕xb6 axb6 13 a4 ♖fc8 14 ♗b5 with equality.

B



8...♗e6

a) White's tactical point is 8...♕xb2? 9 ♘c4 ♕b5 (9...♕xc3? 10 ♖c1 ♕b4 11 ♖b1 ♕c3 12 ♖b3 +−) 10 ♘xd6 ♕a5 11 ♘xc8 ♖xc8 12 ♕b3 ♕b6 13 ♕c4 ±.

b) 8...♘h5!? is more testing but 9 dxc5 dxc5 (9...♕xc5 10 ♗g5 ♕c7 11 e4 ±) 10 ♘c4 ♕d8 11 ♗g5 ♕c7 12 ♗h4 h6 13 ♘fd2 ♗f6 14 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 15 ♕c2 should give White at least a minimal advantage.

9 ♘g5 ♗d7 10 ♘c4 ♕c7

Now:

a) 11 a4 h6 12 ♘f3 ♘h5 gives Black counterplay: 13 ♗g3 ♘xg3 14 hxg3 ♗g4 15 d5 ♗c8 16 a5 ♘d7 = Karpov-Gelfand, Cap d'Agde rpd (2) 1994.

b) 11 h3 h6 12 ♘f3 ♗f5 13 ♗h2 ♘bd7 14 a4 ♖ad8 15 a5 ♗e6 16 ♕a4 ♕c6 17 ♘fd2 ♗d5 18 f3 ♕xa4 19 ♖xa4 ♖c8 20 ♖aa1 = Karpov-Gelfand, Cap d'Agde rpd (4) 1994.

Conclusion:

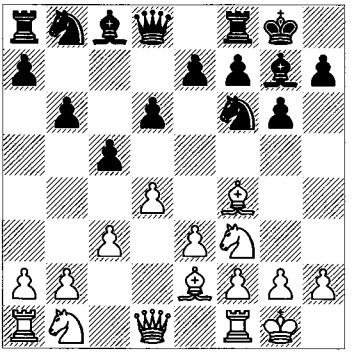
In the main line White's position certainly is a little easier to play around move 10. However, there doesn't seem to be any way to prevent Black from catching up in development and eventually equalizing.

9F: 7...b6

(1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4 g6 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 0-0 5 ♗e2 d6 6 0-0 c5 7 c3)

7...b6 *(D)*

W



8 a4

8 h3 and 8 ♘bd2 are likely to transpose, but 8...♗a6 may be more of an option then.

8...a6

Now 8...♗a6 can be met by 9 ♗b5!?.

9 h3 ♗b7 10 ♘bd2 ♘bd7 11 ♗h2

11 ♕b1!? may deserve further testing; e.g., 11...e5! 12 ♗h2 (Black's tactical point is 12 dxe5?! dxe5 13 ♗xe5? ♘xe5 14 ♘xe5 ♕xd2 15 ♗d3 ♖fd8 16 ♖d1 ♖xd3 ∓) 12...e4 13 ♘e1 d5 14 ♘c2 ♘e8 15 f3 exf3 (15...f5) 16 ♗xf3 ♘df6 17 a5 ♘d6 18 axb6 ♕xb6 19 ♕a2 (19 ♗e5) 19...a5 20 ♕b3 ± Nosenko-Kobylkin, Ukrainian Ch (Alushta) 2001.

11...♕c7

This move, preparing queenside expansion with ...b5, is probably critical.

a) 11...♖e8 12 ♕b1 e5 13 dxe5 dxe5 14 ♘c4 ♘e4 15 ♖d1 ♕e7 16 ♖xd7 ♕xd7 17 ♘xb6 ♕e7 18 ♘xa8 ♖xa8 19 ♕c2 ± Nosenko-Deriabin, Mariupol 2003.

b) 11...♖c8 12 ♖e1 ♖c7 13 ♕b3 ♕a8 14 c4 cxd4 15 exd4 ♘e4 16 d5 ♘xd2 17 ♘xd2 ♗c8

18 ♖a3 ♘c5 19 ♕a2 a5 20 ♗d1 ♘a6 21 ♖ae3 ± V.Kovačević-Nemet, Bjelovar 1979.

c) 11...♘e4 12 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 13 ♘d2 ♗b7 (13...♗c6!?) 14 ♖e1 (14 ♕b3 ♕c7 – *11...♕c7 12 ♕b3 ♘e4 13 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 14 ♘d2 ♗b7*) 14...♕c7 15 ♕b3 ♕c6 16 ♗f3 ♕c7 17 ♗e2 ♕c6 18 ♗f3 ♕c7 ½-½ Dorfman-Macieja, Elista OL 1998.

d) 11...♖a7!? is an interesting attempt to control d5 and e4, but the rook isn't ideally placed; for example, 12 b4 cxb4 (12...♕a8 13 a5 is unclear) 13 cxb4 ♕a8 (13...♘d5 14 ♕b3 a5 15 bxa5 bxa5 16 ♖fc1 ± Sydor – Brinck-Claussen, Lyngby 1988) 14 ♕b3 ♗d5 15 ♕b2 ♖c8 16 ♖fc1 ♖ac7 17 ♖xc7 ♖xc7 18 ♖c1 ♖xc1+ 19 ♕xc1 ♕b7 with equality, Nikolić-Vukić, Sombor 1980.

12 ♕b1 *(D)*

White prepares queenside activity with b4. 12 ♕b3 also leads to roughly balanced chances:

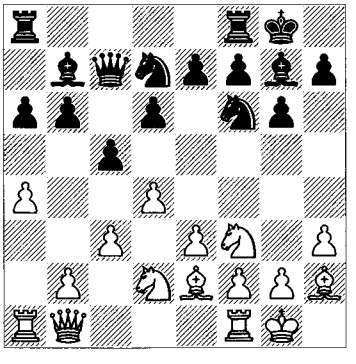
a) 12...♘e4 13 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 and then:

a1) 14 ♖fd1 ♘f6 15 ♘d2 ♗b7 16 ♘c4 ♘d7 17 ♗g4 ♗d5 18 e4 ♗xe4 19 ♗xd7 ♕xd7 20 ♘xb6 ♕b7 21 d5 ♗c2 = Karpov-Gelfand, Cap d'Agde rpd (8) 1994.

a2) 14 ♘d2 ♗b7 15 d5 ♖ae8 16 ♖ad1 ♖b8 17 e4 ± Apicella-Moldovan, Bucharest 2000.

b) 12...♗c6 13 ♕a3 ♕b7 (13...♖fc8 14 b4 cxb4 15 cxb4 ♕b7 16 ♖fc1 ♘e4 {16...b5} 17 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 18 ♖xc8+ ♖xc8 19 ♖c1 = Dabek-Bielczyk, Polish Cht 1995) 14 b4 ♘e4 15 ♖a2 cxd4 16 cxd4 ♘xd2 17 ♖xd2 b5 18 a5 ♖ac8 ± Annaberdiev-Külaots, Bled OL 2002.

B



12...cxd4!

This is particularly hard to meet. Alternatives include:

a) 12...♖ad8 13 ♖d1 ♕c8 14 e4 ♕a8 15 d5 ♘e8 16 ♘c4 ♕b8 17 ♘e3 ♗c8 18 ♖a3 ♘c7 19 g4 b5 20 axb5 axb5 21 b4 c4 22 ♘d4 ± Gausel-Hvenekilde, Copenhagen 1996.

b) 12...♖ac8 13 ♖e1 ♗h6 (after 13...♕b8 14 ♗f1 ♖fe8 15 ♕a2 ♗d5 16 ♕b1 ♗b7 17 ♕a2 ♕a8 chances were balanced in Ehrke-Reeh, Hamburg 1999) 14 e4 cxd4 15 cxd4 e5 16 d5 ♕c2 and in Dydyshko-Svidler, Moscow OL 1994 White preferred 17 ♗d3 over the critical 17 ♕xc2 ♖xc2 18 ♘c4 ♘xe4 19 ♗d3 ♖xc4 20 ♗xc4 ♘ef6, when Black will, at least temporarily, get another pawn for the exchange.

c) 12...♖fe8 13 ♖d1 ♖ad8 14 ♗c4 ♕c6 15 e4 b5 16 ♗f1 e5 17 d5 ♕b6 18 b3 ♖b8 19 ♕c2 is slightly better for White, J.Fernandez-Zapata, Cienfuegos 1983.

d) 12...♗c6 is also good: 13 b4 a5 14 b5 ♗b7 15 ♖c1 ♖ac8 16 ♗c4 ♕b8 17 ♕d3 ♕a8 18 ♕f1 ♖c7 19 ♖e1 ♖fc8 20 ♖ac1 cxd4 21 cxd4 ♘e4 (21...♘d5? 22 e4 ♘b4 23 ♘g5 ± R.Pert-Goloshchapov, Port Erin 2002) 22 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 23 ♘d2 ♗b7 24 ♗g3 =.

13 cxd4

After 13 exd4?! ♘d5 14 ♖e1 ♖fe8 15 ♕a2 ♗h6 16 ♕b3 ♘f4 Black was possibly already better in Portisch-Gulko, Linares 1990.

13...♖ac8

14 ♖c1 ♕b8 15 ♕a2 ♕a8 16 ♕b3 ♗d5 17 ♕d3 ♘b8 18 ♘e1 a5 19 ♗f1 ♘c6 = Matlak-Dvoirys, Polanica Zdroj 1989.

Conclusion:

White can hardly claim an objective advantage after 11...♕c7 and a single improvement is unlikely to change that. What he can claim is a position with a familiar feel and chances for both players. And that's not a bad starting point.

9G: 6...♘fd7

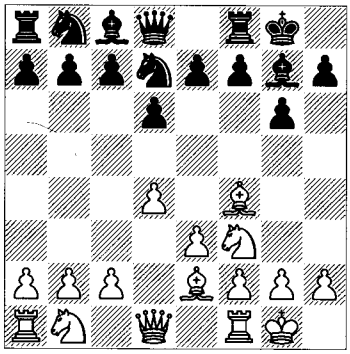
(1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4 g6 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 0-0 5 ♗e2 d6 6 0-0)

6...♘fd7!? *(D)*

This logical move ensures a quick ...e5. However, Black's queenside looks a little congested and the knight may be required on the kingside to participate in Black's attack. 6...♘c6 will normally transpose below after 7 h3 ♘d7. Independent but very similar to the main lines is 7...♕e8 8 c4 e5 9 ♗h2 ♘e4 10 d5 ♘e7 11 ♘bd2 ♘f6 12 e4 c5 13 dxc6 ♘xc6 14 ♖e1 ♗e6

15 ♗f1 ♘d7 16 ♘b1 ♕e7 17 ♘c3 ± P.Nikolić-Ničevski, Yugoslav Ch (Borovo) 1981.

W



7 h3

It again seems sensible to prepare a retreat for the bishop. However, in games reaching the diagram position (where h3 hasn't already been played), 7 c4!? has actually been the preferred move. Indeed, with the black knights away from the kingside, the bishop may well be better off at g3 than at h2. 7...e5 8 ♗g3 ♘c6 9 ♘c3 and now:

a) After 9...h6 10 ♖c1 f5 (Saud-Le Thanh Minh, Elista OL 1998), 11 ♘d5 may be best; e.g., 11...f4 12 exf4 ♘xd4 13 fxe5 ♘xf3+ 14 ♗xf3 ♘xe5 15 ♗e4 c6 16 ♘f4 and Black's loose pawn-structure may give White a small plus.

b) 9...♖e8 10 d5 ♘e7 11 e4 f5 12 ♗h4 h6 13 exf5 gxf5 14 ♘d2 ♘f6 15 ♗h5 ± Estrada Martinez-Alonso, Madrid 2002.

7...e5 8 ♗h2 ♘c6

This develops while remaining flexible. Other moves allow White to adapt to Black's set-up:

a) 8...f5 9 c4 ♘c6 10 ♘c3 g5 11 dxe5 ♘dxe5 12 ♘xe5 dxe5 13 ♕xd8 (13 ♕b3 ±) 13...♘xd8 (Payen-Nijboer, Koszalin 1998) 14 ♘d5 ♘e6 15 ♘e7+ ♔h8 16 ♖ad1 ±.

b) 8...exd4 9 exd4 ♘c6 10 a4 ♔h8 11 ♖e1 ♘f6 12 ♗c4 h6 13 ♖a3 ♘e7 14 ♖ae3 ♘ed5 15 ♖3e2 ± V.Kovačević-Nurkić, Tuzla 1981.

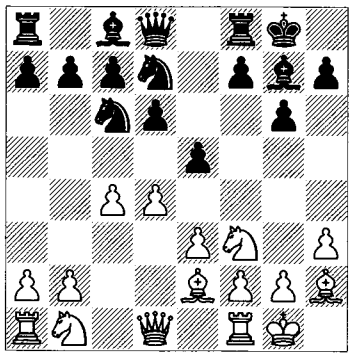
9 c4 *(D)*

This is the only principled move, even though it increases the scope of Black's fianchettoed bishop.

9...exd4 10 exd4 ♕f6

Routine development with 10...♘f6 is easier to meet: 11 ♘c3 ♗f5 12 ♗f4 h6 13 d5 ♘e7 14

B



♘d4 ♖e8 15 ♖e1 ♗d7 16 ♕d2 ± Franklin-P.Thipsay, London 2001.

11 ♘c3!?

This temporary pawn sacrifice is probably the only way to fight for an advantage.

11...♘xd4 12 ♘xd4 ♕xd4 13 ♘d5

13 ♘b5 is interesting, but we found nothing clear against 13...♕b6!.

13...c6 14 ♘e7+ ♔h8 15 ♕xd4 ♗xd4 16 ♗xd6 ♖e8

16...♗c5 17 ♖ad1 ±.

17 ♖fe1!?

This may be an improvement over 17 ♗g4 (17 ♖ae1 Hazai) 17...f5 18 ♗f3 ♘b6 19 ♖ad1 ♗xb2 20 ♖fe1 ♔g7 21 c5 ♘c4 22 ♘xc6! = Pasman-Kantsler, Israeli Ch (Tel-Aviv) 2002.

We give a few sample lines after 17 ♖fe1:

a) 17...♘f6 18 ♖ad1 ♗xb2 19 ♗f3 ♗e6 20 ♖b1 ±.

b) 17...♘f8 18 ♖ad1 ♗xb2 19 ♖b1 ♗c3 20 ♗f3 ♘e6 (20...♗xe1?? 21 ♗e5+ f6 22 ♗xf6#) 21 ♖ec1 ♗g7 22 ♘xc8 ♖axc8 23 ♖xb7 ±.

c) 17...♔g7 18 ♗f3 ♘b6 19 ♘xc6 ♖xe1+ 20 ♖xe1 ♘xc4 21 ♘xd4 ♘xd6 22 ♖d1 ♔f6 23 ♘c6 ♘f5 24 ♘a5 ±.

d) 17...♗xb2 18 ♖ab1 ♗c3 19 ♖ed1 ♗f6 20 ♘xc8 ♖xe2 21 ♖xb7 ♖xc8 22 ♖xd7 ♖xa2 23 ♖xf7 ♗c3 24 ♗c5 a5 25 ♖dd7 ±.

Conclusion:

The endgame seems to be better for White. Whether it's enough to win against qualified opposition is another question.

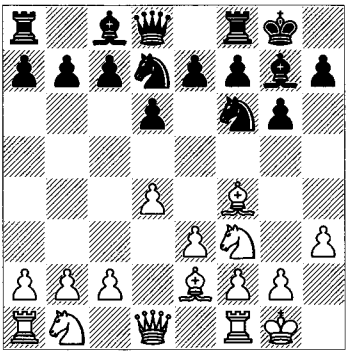
9H: 6...♘bd7 Introduction

(1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4 g6 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 0-0 5 ♗e2 d6 6 0-0)

6...♘bd7 7 h3 *(D)*

Once it's clear that Black is heading for ...e5 rather than ...c5, White should consider preparing a retreat for his bishop.

B



This position more frequently arises from 6 h3 ♘bd7 7 0-0. Black has a bewildering array of playable moves, many of which are likely to transpose. Against most of them, strong players have disagreed about what is White's best reply. The position is flexible enough to allow different interpretations from both sides, but we believe White cannot go too far astray if he follows these guidelines:

1) If Black seems to be heading for the ...e5 break, play ♗h2 and be ready to continue c4 and preferably ♘c3.

2) If Black seems to be aiming for ...c5, be ready to strengthen your centre with c3.

3) If Black plays ...b6, a4 is normally a good reply.

4) If you aren't sure what Black is planning, ♗h2 is often a useful waiting move.

7...♘e4!?

Although lightly tested, this is quite possibly Black's best, preparing ...f5 while relieving his cramped position with exchanges. However, first of all he prepares ...e5 followed by ...♕e7, gaining a tempo over the cumbersome ...♕e8, ...e5, ...♕e7 or ...e6, ...♕e7, ...e5 manoeuvre, which we shall examine in Line 9J. Alternatively:

a) 7...c5 8 c3 b6 9 a4 a6 10 ♗h2 ♗b7 – *5...b6 6 0-0 ♗b7 7 h3 d6 8 a4 a6 9 ♗h2 ♘bd7 10 c3 c5.*

b) For 7...e6 see Line 9I.

c) 7...♔h8?! 8 c4 ♘g8 9 ♘c3 e5 10 ♗g3 ♘e7 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 ♕d2 ♘f5 13 ♗h2 f6 14 ♖fd1 ♘h6 15 c5 ± Prameshuber-Robatsch, Graz 1961.

d) 7...a6 8 c4 b6 9 ♘c3 ♗b7 10 ♖c1 ♕e8 11 ♗h2 e5 12 ♖e1 ♕e7 13 b4 ♘e4 14 ♘d5 ♗xd5 15 cxd5 ♖fc8 16 a4 f5 17 ♕b3 ♔h8 18 ♖c2 ± A.Nagy-Biro, Paks 1997.

e) 7...♖e8 8 ♗h2 e5 9 c4 e4 10 ♘e1 ♘f8 11 ♘c3 h5 12 ♘c2 ♘8h7 13 b4 ♘g5 14 ♗f4 ♘fh7 15 b5 ♗f5 16 ♘b4 a5 17 bxa6 bxa6 18 ♗h2 c5 19 ♘bd5 cxd4 20 exd4 ± Fedorowicz-Shirov, Stockholm 1990.

f) 7...♘h5 8 ♗h2 e5 9 c4 ♕e7 10 ♘c3 c6 11 b4 f5 12 ♖c1 (12 c5 ±) 12...f4 13 c5 d5 14 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 15 dxe5 ♗xe5 16 ♗xh5 gxh5 17 exf4 ± Glienke-Siebrecht, Heringsdorf 2000.

g) 7...c6 8 c4 and here:

g1) 8...♕e8 9 ♘c3 ♔h8 10 ♗h2 b6 11 ♕c2 ♗b7 12 ♖ad1 c5 13 d5 a6 14 a4 ♕d8 15 e4 is slightly better for White, Plaskett-Fransson, Gausdal 1981.

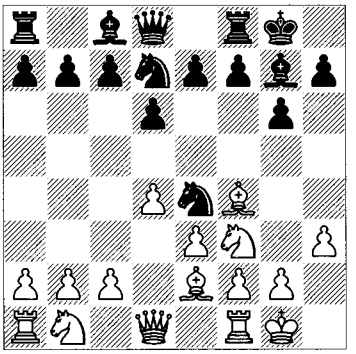
g2) 8...a6 9 ♘bd2 c5 10 a3 b6 11 ♖c1 ♗b7 12 ♕c2 ♖c8 13 d5 b5 14 e4 ♘e8 15 cxb5 axb5 16 ♗xb5 ± Sprotte-Tratar, Bled 1995.

g3) 8...♘e4!? 9 ♘bd2 ♘xd2 10 ♕xd2 e5 11 ♗h2 ♕e7 12 ♖ab1 a5 13 b3 ♖e8 14 a3 c5 15 dxe5 dxe5 16 ♖fd1 ♖a6 17 ♕c2 ♘b8 18 ♘d2 f5 19 b4 = S.Agdestein-T.Harestad, Norwegian Ch (Kirkenes) 1981.

h) 7...b6 8 c4 ♗b7 9 ♘c3 ♘e4 10 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 11 ♖c1 e5 (11...c5 12 b3 ♘f6 13 d5 a6 14 ♘h4 ♘e8 15 ♗f3 ♗xf3 16 ♘xf3 b5 17 e4 e5 18 dxe6 ± Ostl-Howell, 2nd Bundesliga 1992/3) 12 ♗h2 ♗b7 13 b4 ♕e7 14 ♕c2 c5 15 bxc5 dxc5 16 d5 e4 17 ♘d2 f5 and while White's passed central pawn was a long-term asset in Yusupov-Grigorian, Frunze 1979 this was roughly offset by the rigidity of his position.

We now return to 7...♘e4!? *(D)*:

W



8 ♕d3

This appears more logical than 8 ♘bd2 ♘xd2 9 ♕xd2 e5 10 ♗h2 ♕e7 11 c4, when Black has won a tempo, but White may still have nice chances after 11...♖e8 12 ♕a5!?.

8...f5

8...♘df6 9 ♘e1 h6 10 f3 ♘g5 11 ♘d2 c5 12 c3 ♘e6 13 ♗h2 appears quite pleasant for White.

9 ♘c3

9 ♖d1 is logical as it prevents ...e5, but the queen isn't entirely comfortable on d3: 9...e6 10 c4 b6 11 ♘c3 ♗b7 12 b4 (12 ♗h2 g5!?) 12...e5 13 ♗h2 ♘xf2 14 ♔xf2 e4 15 ♕d2 exf3 ∓ Ehrke-Volke, Munich 1993.

9...♘xc3 10 ♕xc3 c6 11 ♖ad1!

Probably this is better than:

a) 11 ♕b3+ ♔h8 12 ♘g5?! e5 and in Lagopatis-Youvantsioudis, Mitilini 1997 White won after 13 ♘e6?!, but 13...♘c5! would actually have been good for Black after, e.g., 14 dxc5 ♗xe6 15 ♕xe6 exf4.

b) Also 11 ♗c4+?! ♔h8 12 ♘g5?! seems to fail for tactical reasons after 12...♘b6, when 13 ♘f7+?! ♖xf7 14 ♗xf7 e6 traps the bishop.

11...♘b6 12 ♕b3+ ♔h8 13 c4

White is slightly better.

Conclusion:

There are a lot of possibilities listed here, but in most lines it should be possible for White to find his way by using common sense and the guidelines provided.

9I: 7 h3 ♕e8

(1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4 g6 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 0-0 5 ♗e2 d6 6 0-0 ♘bd7 7 h3)

7...♕e8 *(D)*

This may at first appear slightly artificial, shutting in the f8-rook rather than completing development. However, it's rather likely that the rook will find itself usefully placed at f8, supporting a pawn-storm on the kingside. The queen will usually go to e7 later, but may occasionally find a path to the kingside via g6 or h5 after a pawn expansion there.

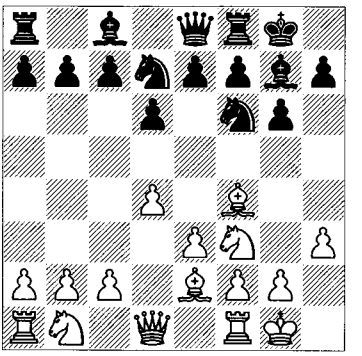
7...e6 8 c4 will normally transpose to Line 9J after 8...♕e7 9 ♘c3 e5, but there are some independent lines:

a) 8...♘h5 9 ♗h2 f5 10 ♘e1 ♘hf6 11 ♘d3 ♘e4 12 ♘d2 g5 13 ♖c1 ♘df6 14 c5 h5 15 cxd6 cxd6 16 ♘c4 h4 17 ♕e1 a5 18 f3 ± Moiseev-Gutman, Vilnius 1979.

b) 8...♘e4 9 ♘bd2 f5!? (9...♘xd2 10 ♕xd2 f5 11 ♖ac1 h6 12 c5 dxc5 13 ♖fd1 g5 14 ♗h2 c6 15 ♗d6 ♖e8 16 dxc5 ± Soppe-Casafus, San Martin 1994) 10 ♘xe4 fxe4 11 ♘d2 ♗xd4!? 12 exd4 ♖xf4 13 g3 ♖f8 14 ♘xe4 is slightly better for White.

c) 8...b6 9 ♘c3 ♗b7 10 ♕c2 ♕e7 11 ♖ac1 ♘h5 12 ♗h2 f5 13 b4 ♘hf6 14 c5 bxc5 15 bxc5 ±.

W



8 c4!

8 ♗h2 e5 9 c4 is just a transposition. On the other hand, bolstering the centre with c3 is probably too slow.

8...e5 9 ♗h2 ♘e4!?

This prepares ...f5 and the exchange of a knight pair and is the main alternative to 9...♕e7 of Line 9J. Black has also tried:

a) 9...a6 10 ♘c3 h6 11 ♕c2 c5 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 ♖ad1 b6 14 ♘d2 ♖a7 15 a4 ♕e6 16 e4 ± Tošić-Zivić, Nisa 2003.

b) 9...b6?! 10 ♘c3 a6 11 a4 ♗b7 12 a5 ♕e7 (12...e4? 13 ♘d2) 13 axb6 cxb6 14 ♕b3 ♘e4 15 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 16 ♖fe1 ± ♖fe8 (16...♕f6 17 ♘d2 ♗b7 18 ♗f3 ♗xf3 19 ♘xf3 exd4 20 ♘xd4 ±) 17 ♘d2 ♗b7 18 ♗f3 e4 19 ♗e2 ± Gausel-J.Kristensen, Års 1995.

c) 9...c6 10 ♘c3 and now:

c1) 10...♕e7 – *9...♕e7 10 ♘c3 c6.*

c2) 10...♔h8 11 ♕c2 ♕e7 12 ♖ad1 ♘e8 13 b4 f5 14 c5 d5 15 dxe5 ♘xe5 16 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 17 ♗xe5+ ♕xe5 18 ♕d2 ± B.Tiller-Lane, Oslo 1987.

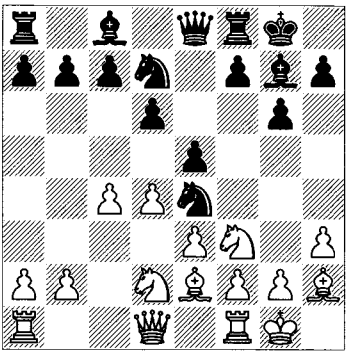
c3) 10...♕e6 11 b4 ♖e8 12 ♖c1 h6 13 d5 ♕e7 14 dxc6 bxc6 15 ♕d2 ♗b7 16 ♖fd1 ♗f8 17 ♗g3 with a slight advantage for White, Dumitrache-Grigore, Romania 1992.

c4) 10...e4 11 ♘d2 ♕e7 12 ♕b3 ♖e8 13 ♕a3 ♗f8 14 b4 ± Dao Thien Hai-Nunez Vallina, Oviedo rpd 1993.

10 ♘bd2 *(D)*

10 ♘a3!? may deserve further tests: 10...♕e7 11 ♖c1 ♖e8 12 ♘b5 ♘f8 13 ♗d3 (Zpevak-Babula, Czech Cht 1995; 13 c5!?) 13...exd4 (13...♘f6 14 dxe5 ±) 14 ♗xe4 a6 15 ♘xc7 ♕xc7 16 ♗d5 dxe3 17 ♗xd6 e2 18 ♗xc7 exd1♕ 19 ♖fxd1 ♖e2! 20 c5 ♘e6 21 ♔f1 ♖xb2 22 ♗e5 ♖b5 23 c6 ±.

B



10...♘xd2

10...f5 is probably weaker: 11 dxe5 ♘xd2 12 ♕xd2 dxe5 13 ♖ad1 ♕e7 14 c5 e4 15 c6 bxc6 (15...exf3? 16 ♗c4+ ♔h8 17 cxd7 +–) 16 ♘d4 ♘e5 17 ♕a5 c5 18 ♘b5 ♖f7 (18...c6 19 ♘d6 ♗e6 20 ♕xc5 ±) 19 ♘xc7 ± Kasparov-Negulescu, Cagnes sur Mer U-16 Wch 1977.

11 ♕xd2 e4

Or 11...b6 12 ♖ac1 a5 13 b3 ♗b7 14 a3 e4 15 ♘e1 ♕e7 16 ♘c2 f5 17 b4 axb4 18 axb4 g5 19 c5 with a slight advantage for White, Brecht-Dončević, 2nd Bundesliga 1996/7.

12 ♘e1 ♕e7

Black can also defend c7 with his queen: 12...f5 13 ♘c2 g5 14 ♕a5 ♕d8 15 f4 exf3 16 ♖xf3 ♘f6 17 ♗d3 b6 18 ♕e1 ♕e8 19 ♕e2 ♘e4 20 ♖e1 ♗d7 21 ♘b4 ♗e6 22 ♘d5 ± Speelman-Sax, Lucerne OL 1982.

13 ♘c2 f5

For 13...♘f6 see Illustrative Game 19, Yusupov-Fuller, Esbjerg 1980.

14 ♕a5!?

This probably improves over 14 b4 g5 15 c5 ♘f6 16 ♘a3 f4! 17 exf4 g4!, when Black had sufficient kingside counterplay in Yusupov-Tukmakov, Ashkhabad 1978.

14...♘f6 15 c5 g5

16 cxd6 cxd6 17 ♘a3 ± Payen-Gross, New York 1999.

Conclusion:

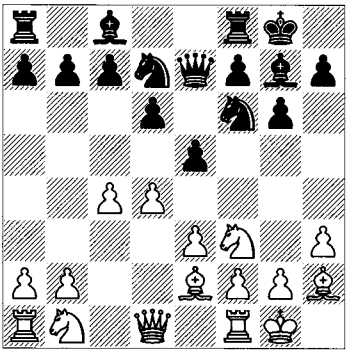
White's queenside attack seems more promising than Black's on the kingside, and a single improvement for Black will hardly be sufficient to change that assessment.

9J: 9...♕e7

(1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4 g6 3 e3 ♗g7 4 ♘f3 0-0 5 ♗e2 d6 6 0-0 ♘bd7 7 h3 ♕e8 8 c4 e5 9 ♗h2)

9...♕e7 *(D)*

W



This is the traditional main line. Indeed it's a sensible move, as it's hard for Black to complete his development (or protect a pawn at e4) without it.

10 ♘c3

This position can also arise from 7...e6 8 c4 ♕e7 9 ♘c3 e5 10 ♗h2.

10...c6 *(D)*

Black has a wide choice, but against most moves White's formula for success is simple: put a rook on the c-file and play for the c5 push.

a) 10...b6 11 ♘b5 e4 12 ♘d2 ♘e8 13 ♘xe4 f5 14 ♘d2 ± Gulko-Petrushin, Baku 1977.

b) 10...e4?! 11 ♘d2 ♖e8 (not 11...b6? 12 ♘dxe4!, Szmetan-Nakamura, Buenos Aires 2003, 12...♘xe4 13 ♘xe4 ♗b7 14 ♘c3 ±) 12 ♘b5! ♕d8 13 c5! a6 14 cxd6 axb5 15 dxc7 ♕e7 16 ♗xb5 ± Spassky-Bukić, Bugojno 1978 (see Illustrative Game 17).

c) 10...♖d8 11 ♕c2 b6 12 ♘b5 ♘e8 13 ♕e4 ♗a6 14 ♖ac1 ♖db8 15 ♕c2 c6 16 ♘c3 ♗b7 17 ♖fe1 ± Askarian-Maximov, Ukrainian Ch (Alushta) 2001.

d) 10...♖e8 11 c5 e4 12 cxd6 cxd6 13 ♘d2 ♘f8 14 ♖c1 ♖d8 15 ♘b5 ♘e8 16 ♕a4 ♗d7 17 ♕b4 ♗c6 18 ♘c4 ± E.Pedersen-Gallagher, London 1986.

e) 10...♘e8 11 ♘d5 ♕d8 12 ♕b3 ♔h8 13 dxe5 dxe5 14 ♕a3 f6 15 ♖fd1 c6 16 ♘e7 ♖f7 17 ♘xc8 ♕xc8 (Prameshuber-Lombardy, Munich OL 1958) 18 c5 ♘c7 19 ♗c4 ♖e7 20 e4 ±.

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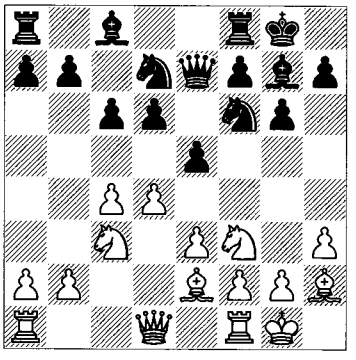


11 b4

White can play for c5 in different ways, and 11 ♕c2 and 11 ♖c1 are good alternatives, but this is straightforward and probably good.

11...exd4

a) 11...e4 12 ♘d2 ♖e8 13 ♕b3 h5 14 c5 d5 15 b5 ± V.Kovačević-Osterman, Maribor 1980.

b) 11...♖d8 12 ♕b3 e4 13 ♘d2 h5?! 14 c5 d5 15 b5 ♘e8 16 bxc6 bxc6 17 ♕a4 ♕e6 18 ♕a5 ± Spiridonov-Lanc, Brno Ch 1975.

12 exd4 d5 13 c5 ♘e4 14 ♖c1 f5

15 ♖e1 ♖f6 16 b5 ♖e6 17 ♗f1 h6 18 bxc6 bxc6 19 ♕b3 ± Anastasian-Wang Zili, Beijing 1991.

Conclusion:

Here too White's chances seem superior on a general level. Our guess is that for any improvement Black can come up with, White will at least be able to match him.

10 The Pseudo Old Indian

At the risk of stating the obvious, the Old Indian is one of Black's oldest Indian defences. Normally in the Old Indian Black plays ...♘bd7 followed by a quick ...e5 and ...♗e7, which is quite solid but not really dynamic. This inherent passivity has prevented it from becoming a popular weapon against the ordinary Queen's Pawn openings (with an early c4).

If your opponent plays 2...d6, it is quite likely to be a specific response to your second move, planning to transpose to the King's Indian with a quick ...g6. However, Black also has some independent ideas, which will be our main focus in this chapter. These include ...c6 followed by a quick queen development to c7, b6 or a5 and some very direct preparations for ...e5, attacking the f4-bishop.

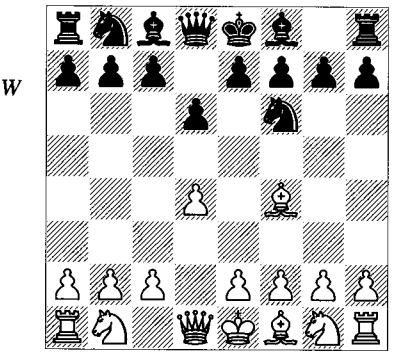
Chapter Outline

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4 d6!?
10A: (3 ♘f3 c6) 143
10B: 3 ♘f3: 3...♗g4 and 3...♗f5 144
10C: 3 ♘f3: 3...♘bd7 and 3...c5 146

10A: Old Indian Introduction

(1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4)

2...d6!? *(D)*



This may be one of Black's best reactions to the London vs 1...♘f6. Black combines threats of ...e5, hitting the f4-bishop, with ...♘h5 ideas. In addition White always has to remember that ...g6 will probably transpose to a variation from the King's Indian. Whether the move should be considered an argument against the 2 ♗f4 move-order is mainly a question of perspective. The position after 3 ♘f3 could of course just as well have arisen after 2 ♘f3 d6 3 ♗f4, so for the determined London player there is no practical difference. The difference is that after 2 ♘f3 d6 White may consider 3 c4 or 3 g3, which may give good chances for an advantage if White knows what he is doing (but after both Black can play 3...g6, heading for the King's Indian).

3 ♘f3!

This may be the only line where it's necessary for White to return immediately to orthodox lines with this move rather than 3 e3 or some other semi-independent line.

3 e3?! (3 h3 ♘bd7 4 ♘f3 – Line 10C) 3...♘bd7! 4 ♘f3 (otherwise 4...e5 will equalize) 4...♘h5 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 g5 leads to a position where Black is a whole tempo up on the King's Indian variation 2...g6 3 ♘f3 d6 4 e3 ♘h5 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 g5.

3...c6

This position can also arise from 2...c6 3 ♘f3 d6. However, the main significance of 2...d6 may lie in the continuation 3...g6, leading to a position from the King's Indian (2...g6 3 ♘f3 d6) that we would normally prefer to avoid by the move-order 2...g6 3 e3. The text-move also has a good pedigree though, being Kasparov's choice against Short. Indeed this is a natural continuation, preparing either ...♕b6, attacking the weak pawn at b2 or ...♕c7/...♕a5 supporting the ...e5 break. We shall look at 3...♗g4 and 3...♗f5 in Line 10B and 3...♘bd7 and 3...c5 in 10C.

3...♘h5!? is again surprisingly hard to counter:

a) 4 ♗c1 can only be recommended if White is content with a draw after 4...♘f6 5 ♗f4 ♘h5.

b) 4 ♗g5 mainly makes sense if the idea is to provoke 4...h6 before returning with 5 ♗d2 and playing in similar fashion to 4 ♗d2.

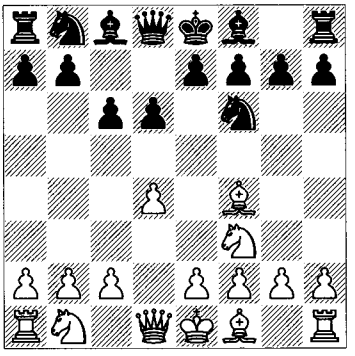
c) However, while 4 ♗d2 looks natural, the bishop isn't doing much, and actually may prove misplaced as it hinders White's play on the d-file.

d) So although it is artificial-looking, we recommend 4 ♗e3. If Black has to return his knight to f6, the bishop development will be a bonus move (White's bishop moves once, Black's knight twice) and after all it supports White's centre and allows White to consider ♕d2 followed by ♗h6 if Black plays an early ...g6. After 4...f5 we have some kind of Dutch Defence with two slightly strange-looking minor pieces. A natural continuation is 5 g3 g6 6 ♗g2 ♗g7 7 0-0 0-0, when White should probably grab some queenside space by 8 c4 ♘c6 and now the ambitious 9 d5!? may be promising; e.g., 9...♗xb2 10 dxc6 bxc6 11 ♘bd2! ♗xa1 12 ♕xa1 and then:

d1) 12...e5? 13 ♘xe5! dxe5 14 ♗xc6 f4 15 ♗d5+! ♔g7 (15...♖f7 16 ♘f3 ♗b7 17 ♗xb7 fxe3 18 ♗d5 ♘f6 19 ♗xf7+ ♔xf7 20 ♘xe5+ +–) 16 ♕xe5+ ♘f6 17 ♗d4 ♗h3 18 ♗xa8 c5 19 ♗c3 ♕xa8 20 ♘e4 ♗xf1 21 ♔xf1 fxg3 22 hxg3 ♖f7 23 f3 +–.

d2) 12...f4 13 ♗xf4 ♘xf4 14 gxf4 ♖xf4 15 e3 ♖f7 16 ♘d4 ♗d7 17 ♘xc6 ±.

We now return to 3...c6 *(D)*:



4 h3

We present this as the main line mainly because it was Short's choice against Kasparov. However, 4 c3 seems at least as logical: 4...g6 5 h3 ♕b6 6 ♕c1 ♗g7 7 a4 ♘a6 8 ♘bd2 ♕d8 9 e3 (why not 9 e4 0-0 10 ♗d3 ±?) 9...♘c7 10 ♗e2 0-0 11 0-0 ♘e6 12 ♗h2 ♘d5 13 c4 ♘b4 14 a5 c5 15 d5 ± Bellon-M.Gonzalez, Las Palmas 1999.

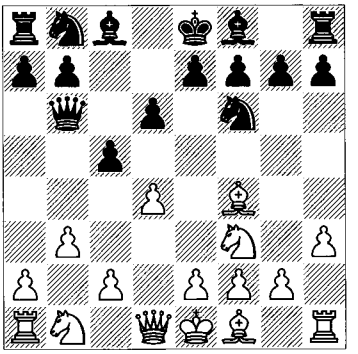
4...♕b6 5 b3

a) 5 ♘bd2!? probably isn't 100% correct, but after 5...♕xb2 6 e4 ♕c3 (White's initiative flows more freely after 6...♕b6 7 ♗d3 ♘bd7 8 0-0) 7 ♗d3 ♘bd7 8 0-0 e5 9 ♗e3 White has approximate compensation for a pawn.

b) 5 ♕c1 c5 6 e3 cxd4 7 exd4 ♘c6 8 c3 e5 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♗xe5 ♗c5 12 ♗d4 ♗xd4 13 cxd4 0-0 14 ♗e2 ♖e8 ∓ Stevanović-Paunović, Belgrade 1989.

5...c5 *(D)*

5...♗f5!? 6 ♘bd2 ♘d5 7 ♘c4 ♕b4+? loses to 8 ♗d2 ♘c3 9 ♕c1.



6 dxc5

It certainly would be interesting to know what might have happened had Short simply grabbed central space with 6 d5!?. After 6...g6 7 c4 ♗g7 8 ♘c3 we cannot see anything special, and all else being equal, space is a nice thing to have.

6...♕xc5 7 c4 g6 8 ♘c3 ♗g7 9 ♖c1 ♗f5 10 ♗e3 ♕a5

11 ♗d2 ♕d8 12 ♘d4 ♗e4 13 e3 (13 f3 ♘c6 14 e3 ♘xd4 15 exd4 ♗f5 =) 13...♘c6 14 ♘de2 ♗d3 15 ♘f4 ♗xf1 16 ♔xf1 0-0 = Short-Kasparov, Skellefteå 1989.

Conclusion:

Here there are a lot of questions that have not yet been answered. However, we shall be surprised if 3...c6 or 3...♘h5 seriously threatens the viability of the London System.

10B: Early Bishop Developments

(1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4 d6 3 ♘f3)

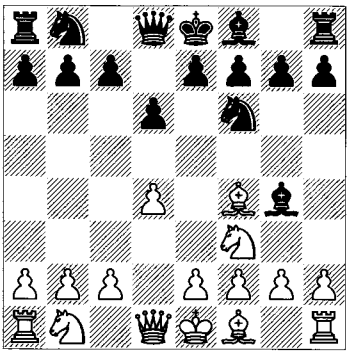
3...♗g4 *(D)*

With this developing move Black threatens to double White's pawns. 3...♗f5 is another sound developing move, attempting to take as firm control over e4 as White has taken over e5. There is insufficient practical experience to draw any conclusions, but Black seems to be holding his own so far. 4 e3 (4 c4 planning 5 ♕b3 should be investigated) and then:

a) 4...♘bd7 5 ♗e2 c5 6 c3 ♕b6 7 ♕b3 ♖c8 8 ♘bd2 g6 9 h3 ♗g7 10 0-0 0-0 = Porth-Weigert, German Cup 1993.

b) 4...e6 5 h3 d5 6 ♗e2 ♗d6 7 ♗xd6 cxd6 8 0-0 ♘c6 9 ♘bd2 (9 ♘h4!?) 9...♕b6 10 b3 0-0 11 c4 = Prameshuber-Kottnauer, Leysin 1967.

W



4 ♘bd2

Developing while avoiding the doubling of his pawns is natural now that the dark-squared bishop is already developed. 4 e3 ♘h5 is slightly annoying.

4...♘bd7

Alternatively:

a) 4...e6 5 c3 ♘bd7 6 ♕b3 ♖b8 7 e4 ♗e7 8 ♗d3 ♗h5 9 ♕c2 ♗g6 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♘h4 ♘xe4 12 ♘xg6 fxg6 13 ♘xe4 ♖xf4 = Fauland-Mokry, Graz 1991.

b) 4...♘h5!? 5 ♗e3 ♘d7 6 h3 ♗xf3 7 ♘xf3 e5 (Cibulka-Dolezal, Czechoslovak Cht 1992) 8 g4!? ♘hf6 9 ♗g2 e4 10 ♘d2 d5 11 c4 c6 12 ♕b3 ±.

5 h3

After 5 c3, 5...h6?! 6 h3 ♗f5 7 ♕b3 ♕c8 (Filep-Réti, Utrecht 1920) allows White to gain a large advantage with 8 e4! based on the tactics 8...♘xe4 9 ♗c4 e6 10 ♘xe4 d5 (10...♗xe4 11 ♗xe6 ♗g6 12 ♘h4 +–) 11 ♗xd5 exd5 12 ♕xd5 ♗e6 13 ♕h5 b6 14 0-0-0 ♗xa2 15 ♖he1 ♗e7 16 ♗d6 +–. However, White must again be prepared for 5...♘h5!?.

5...♗h5 6 c3

Not 6 e3?! e5! with instant equality.

6...c6

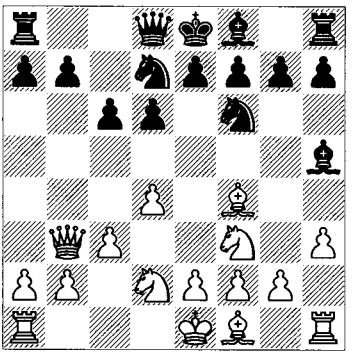
This continues preparations for ...e5. Less consistent are:

a) 6...h6 7 e4 (7 ♕b3!?) 7...e5 8 ♗h2 d5 9 ♗e2! ♗xf3 10 ♗xf3 exd4 11 e5 dxc3 12 bxc3 ♘e4 13 ♘xe4 dxe4 14 ♗xe4 ♘c5 15 ♗f3 ±.

b) 6...e6 7 e4 ♗e7 8 ♗e2 0-0 9 0-0 c6 10 ♖e1 ♖e8 11 a4 ♗f8 12 e5 dxe5 13 dxe5 ♘d5 14 ♗g3 a5 15 ♘d4 ♗g6 16 ♗h5 ♘e7 17 ♘c4 ± Stefanova-Pazos, Quito 1997.

7 ♕b3 *(D)*

B



7...♕c7

Or 7...♕b6 8 e3 ♗xf3 9 ♘xf3 g6 10 ♗c4 d5 11 ♗e2 ♗g7 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♖fd1 ♘e4 14 c4 e6 15 ♕c2 ± Glienke-Pritchett, 2nd Bundesliga 1990/1.

8 e3 ♗g6

It's quite possible that 8...e5!? is stronger. However, after 9 ♗h2, 9...0-0-0?! looks too risky: 10 ♗d3 ♗xf3 11 gxf3 d5 12 c4 ♕a5 13 0-0-0 exd4 14 exd4 g6 15 ♔b1 ♗h6? (15...♕b6 might still have held) 16 cxd5 ♗xd2 (16...♕xd5 17 ♘c4 +–) 17 dxc6 ♘b6 (17...bxc6 18 ♖xd2! +–) 18 ♕xf7 ♘fd7 19 cxd7+ ♖xd7 20 ♖c1+ +– Levenfish-Alekhine, St Petersburg 1913.

9 ♗e2 h6 10 0-0 ♗h7

11 ♖ac1 g5 12 ♗h2 ♗g7 13 c4 c5 14 ♗d3 0-0 15 ♕c2 ± Werhonig-Dimitrov, Velden 1993.

Conclusion:

The flexible nature of this line makes it hard to identify the critical lines. However, White's development in general is smooth and natural so we trust that he will be able to fight for an advantage.

10C: 3...♘bd7

(1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4 d6 3 ♘f3)

3...♘bd7 *(D)*

A closely related move is 3...c5, which is quite likely to transpose if Black continues with ...♘bd7; e.g., 4 e3 and now:

a) 4...g6 5 c3 ♕b6 6 ♕b3 ♗e6 7 dxc5 dxc5 8 ♕xb6 axb6 9 ♘a3 ♗g7 10 ♗b5+ ± Vestly-Gelencser, Budapest 2002.

b) 4...♕b6 and now:

b1) 5 b3 ♘d5 (5...♘c6 6 ♗e2 ♘h5 7 ♗g3 ♘xg3 8 hxg3 g6 9 c3 ♗g7 10 ♘bd2 cxd4 11 cxd4 d5 12 ♖c1 0-0 = J.Garcia-Andres Gonzalez, Asturias 1998) 6 ♗g5 ♕b4+ 7 ♕d2 cxd4 8 exd4 h6 9 a3 ♕xd2+ 10 ♗xd2 =.

b2) 5 ♕c1 ♘c6 6 c3 ♗g4 7 ♗e2 ♖c8 8 dxc5 ♕xc5 9 ♘bd2 e5 10 ♗g3 ♗e7 = Schoeppl-Laube, Austria 1997.

b3) A brave soul will some day try 5 ♘bd2 ♕xb2 6 ♖b1 ♕c3 7 ♗b5+ ♘c6 8 0-0 with roughly enough play for the pawn.

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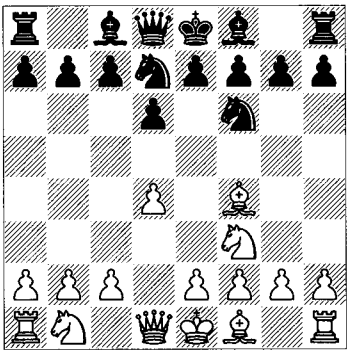


4 h3! *(D)*

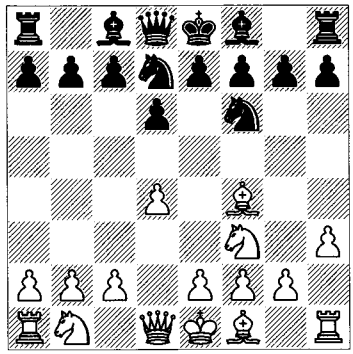
This isn't a move White is eager to play. However, we believe it's necessary to preserve the dark-squared bishop. It should also be taken into consideration that even though in some of the King's Indian lines with an early ...c5 White would like to delay h3, Black has lost the opportunity to hit a queen at b3 with ...♗e6.

a) 4 ♘bd2!?.

b) Although a few strong players have played it, we hardly can recommend 4 e3 ♘h5 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 g5, when Black is an important tempo up on the King's Indian variation where the g-pawn takes two moves to reach the fifth rank (i.e. *2...g6 3 e3 d6 4 ♘f3 ♘h5 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 g5*).

c) 4 ♘c3!? seems eminently playable. The only problem is it takes us from London territory to a form of the Pirc as soon as White plays e4. A relatively independent idea is to keep the e-pawn back: 4...g6 5 ♕d2 ♗g7 6 0-0-0 0-0 7 ♗h6, which seems untested at international level.

B



4...c5

4...g6 5 e3 ♗g7 6 ♗e2 0-0 takes us to King's Indian territory (Lines 9H to 9J).

5 c3!?

More common is 5 e3, which normally transposes to the King's Indian after 5...g6. An independent line is 5...♕b6 6 ♕c1 (6 b3 ♘d5 7 ♗g3 cxd4 8 exd4 ♕a5+ 9 ♕d2 ♕xd2+ 10 ♘bxd2 =) 6...♕c7 =.

5...♕b6 *(D)*

5...cxd4 6 cxd4 g6 (6...b5 7 e3 ♕a5+ 8 ♘bd2 g6 9 ♗e2 ♗g7 10 0-0 0-0 11 a4 b4 12 ♘c4 ± J.Paulsen-Østenstad, Gausdal 1990) 7 ♘c3 ± is slightly drawish due to the symmetrical pawn-structure, but White's space advantage and easier development gives him good chances to play for a win.

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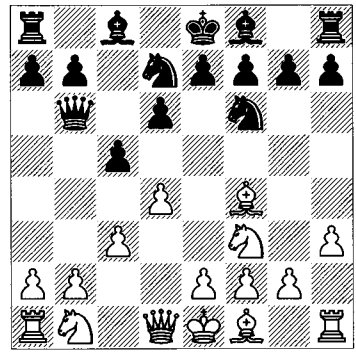

6 ♘bd2!?

6 ♕b3 is quite likely to transpose to King's Indian variations unless Black tries 6...c4?!.

6...♕xb2 7 ♘c4 ♕b5

7...♕xc3+?! 8 ♗d2! ♕xc4 9 e4 ♕xf1+ 10 ♔xf1 ♘xe4 11 ♗e3 has more often arisen from the Torre, and although there is a rough material equality, White's advantage seems clear.

8 e4 ♕c6 *(D)*

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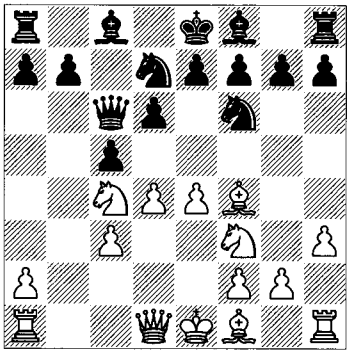

Everything else simply loses. It isn't easy to tell exactly how much compensation White has for his pawn in this untested position.

9 ♗d3

a) 9 e5!? has the right look, but we were unable to establish a really promising line.

b) 9 d5 closes the position somewhat, but after 9...♕c7 10 e5 dxe5 11 ♘cxe5 ♕d8 12 ♗c4 it seems obvious that White has compensation for his pawn, but it will probably take a few tournament games to decide whether it is more than enough. A preliminary line could be 12...♕a5 13 ♕b3 ♘e4 14 d6 ♘xe5 15 ♗xe5 exd6 (15...e6 16 ♗b5+ +–) 16 ♗xf7+ ♔e7 17 ♗d5 dxe5 18 ♗xe4 ♔f6 19 0-0 ♕c7 20 ♖fe1 ±.

9...♘xe4

This isn't entirely forced, but if White is allowed to castle and then break the centre open with Black's king still stranded there, his compensation will be indisputable.

10 0-0 d5

After 10...♘xc3 11 ♕e1 e5 12 dxe5 d5 13 ♕xc3 dxc4 14 ♗xc4 ♘b6 15 e6! fxe6 (15...♗xe6 16 ♘e5 ♕e4 17 ♗b5+ ±) 16 ♘e5, White's advantage is evident. However, there are no forcing lines, so a sample line will have to do: 16...♕a4 17 ♖ab1 ♘xc4 18 ♘xc4 ♕c6 19 ♖fd1 b6 20 ♕e3 ♗e7 21 ♘d6+ ♗xd6 22 ♗xd6 h6 23 ♕g3 ♕b7 24 ♗xc5 +–.

11 ♘ce5 ♕f6 12 ♗h2 ♘xc3 *(D)*

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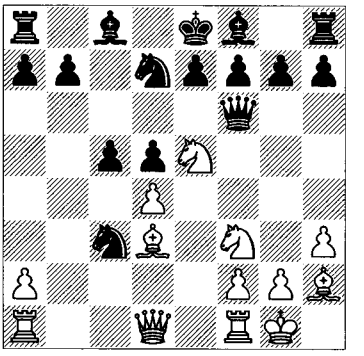


After 13 ♕e1 cxd4 14 ♘xd4 a6 15 ♕xc3 ♘xe5 it's again clear that White has the advantage. He is fully mobilized while Black will still need many moves to evacuate his king from the centre.

Conclusion:

Our recommended main line depends on a lot of untested analysis. If you don't want to test it, 6 ♕b3 is relatively safe.

11 The Queen's Indian Formation: 2...b6 or 3...b6

The Queen's Indian/Nimzo-Indian complex is the weapon of choice for a confident defender. Black unbalances the position sufficiently to avoid the slightly lifeless/passive positions that can arise from the Queen's Gambit Declined, while also avoiding the risky King's Indian. The quiet development of Black's queenside is also a good weapon against the London. Black may not fully equalize from the opening, but he can complete his development while creating enough counterplay to beat a weaker opponent.

At almost any point Black has the possibility to transpose to lines from the double d-pawn lines by ...d5. It will not be possible to point out all transpositions, but in our recommended repertoire we shall pay attention to transpositions favourable for Black.

Illustrative Game 24 highlights the manoeuvring play typical of positions where Black keeps e5 under control, while Game 25 demonstrates how White can take advantage of Black's restrained central policy by grabbing some central space after due preparation.

Chapter Outline

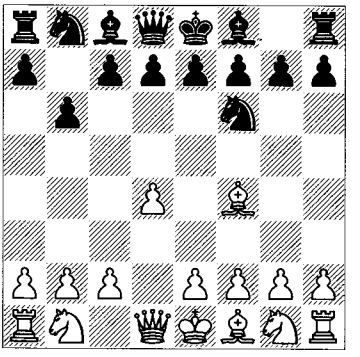
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4

11A: 2...b6 (3 ♘f3)	148
11B: 2...b6 3 e3 (3...♗b7 4 ♘f3 g6)	149
11C: 2...b6 3 e3 ♗b7 4 ♘f3 e6	150
11D: 2...e6	153

11A: 2...b6

(1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4)

2...b6 *(D)*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As a matter of fact, the positions we shall be discussing in this chapter more frequently arise from the 2...e6, 3...b6 move-order. However, in Lines 11A and 11B we shall examine variations unique to 2...b6.

3 ♘f3

3 f3!? is obviously a critical try. If White can force e4 without serious concessions, a bishop at b7 will be quite out of play: 3...d5 (this looks almost forced in order to prevent e4, but actually 3...♗a6!? may be worth a try) 4 ♘c3 e6 5 ♘h3 (5 e4!?) 5...♗a6 6 e4 ♗xf1 7 ♖xf1 c6 8 ♕e2 ♗e7 9 0-0-0 0-0 10 ♔b1 a5 11 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 12 e5 ♘d7 13 f4 gave an interesting position with roughly balanced chances in Boguszlavszkij-Magyar, Hungarian Cht 2001.

3...♗a6!?

Or:

a) Quite surprisingly 3...♘h5!? seems untested. After 4 ♗g5 h6 5 ♗h4 g5 6 ♗g3 ♘xg3 7 hxg3 ♗g7 it is again unclear whether White should avail himself of the opportunity to play 8 e4. After, e.g., 8...c5 9 c3 ♗b7 10 ♘bd2 cxd4 11 cxd4 ♘c6 12 d5 ♘e5 13 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 14 ♘c4 ♗g7 Black's bishops are strong and may compensate for his weaknesses.

b) 3...g6 4 e3 ♗g7 will normally transpose to either 9D (if White plays ♗e2) or 11B (if he plays ♗d3).

4 ♘bd2 e6

Or 4...c5 5 e3 ♗xf1 6 ♘xf1 g6 7 ♕d3 ♗g7 8 ♘1d2 ♘c6 9 c3 ♘h5 (Van Coppenolle-Kogan, French Cht 2001) 10 d5! ♘xf4 11 exf4 ♘a5 12 0-0-0 ±.

5 h3

5 c4 may be best, but 5...c5 comes close to equalizing: 6 e3 ♗e7 7 ♗e2 0-0 8 0-0 cxd4 9 exd4 d5 10 b3 ♘bd7 11 h3 ½-½ Van de Mortel-Burkart, 2nd Bundesliga 2001/2.

5...c5 *(D)*

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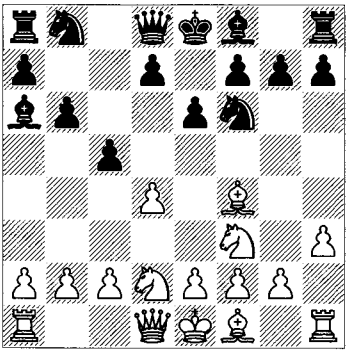


6 e3

A later attempt to improve wasn't successful: 6 c3 ♗e7 7 a4 (7 g4, planning ♗g2, could be an idea) 7...♘c6 8 ♘b3 0-0 9 ♕c2 d5 10 g3 ♗d6 11 e3 ♗xf1 12 ♔xf1 ♗e7 13 ♗g5 ♘e4 and Black had a slight advantage in S.Kovačević-Lopez Gracia, Zaragoza 1998.

6...♗xf1 7 ♘xf1 ♘c6

7...♗e7 is also satisfactory: 8 ♘1d2 d5 9 c3 0-0 10 ♘e5 ♘fd7 = Gašić-Votruba, Budapest 1982.

8 a4 ♖c8 9 c3 ♗e7 10 ♘1d2 d5

11 ♕e2 ♗d6 12 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 13 0-0 0-0 with an equal position, S.Kovačević-Vujović, Cattolica 1989.

Conclusion:

3...♗a6 disturbs White's plans quite a bit, and could well be a reason to prefer the 2 ♗f4 b6 3 e3 move-order. Of course there is a chance that the a6-bishop will end up out of play after White plays c4 but exactly how to achieve that hasn't been demonstrated yet.

11B: 3 e3 Double Fianchetto and Various

(1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4 b6)

3 e3

It may not be a big deal, but this makes ...♗a6, as seen in Line 11A, less tempting.

3...♗b7

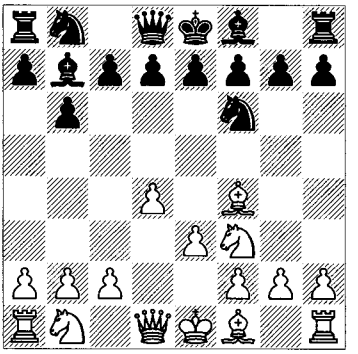
Slightly surprisingly 3...♗a6?! appears untried, but after 4 ♗xa6 ♘xa6 5 ♕e2 ♘b4 6 e4 e6 7 d5! White's advantage is obvious:

a) 7...exd5 8 a3 ♘c6 9 exd5+ ♘e7 10 ♘c3 ±.

b) 7...a5 8 ♘c3 ♗c5 9 a3 ♘a6 10 dxe6 dxe6 11 ♗g5 ±.

4 ♘f3 *(D)*

B



4...g6!?

If Black is clearly stronger than his opponent, this may be his best choice. The real fight will only start after both players have developed their pieces. So we see a clear tendency that Black is the stronger player in the games examined here. In order to get some structure we have decided to discuss double-fianchetto lines with ♗d3 here, and in Line 9D (in the King's Indian chapter) only lines with an early ♗e2. Some positions we examine could as well have arisen from a King's Indian move-order, so it may be a good idea to study these two chapters simultaneously.

After 4...♘h5 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 there are:

a) 6...d6 7 ♘bd2 ♘d7 8 ♗d3 g5 9 ♗g3 ♗g7 10 c3 c5 11 ♕e2 a6 12 a4 ♕c7 13 0-0 e6 14 b4 ♘xg3 (14...f5!?) 15 fxg3 ♘f6, when play in J.Piket-Sunye, Amsterdam 1984 might have become even more interesting with 16 a5!?.

b) 6...g5 7 ♘e5 ♘f6 (7...♘g7?! 8 ♗g3 ♘f5? 9 ♕h5 ♗d5 10 e4 ♘xg3 11 hxg3 d6 12 ♗b5+! c6 13 exd5 dxe5 14 dxc6 ♕c7 15 d5 +–) 8 ♗g3 d6 9 ♘f3 ♘e4 (after 9...♗g7 10 h3 ♘e4 11 ♗h2 Black had mainly weakened his king's position in Gliksman-Augustin, Stary Smokovec 1976) 10 ♘bd2 ♘xg3 11 hxg3 ♗g7 12 ♗d3 e6 13 c3 ♘d7 14 ♕e2 ♕e7 15 ♗a6 ♗xa6 16 ♕xa6 0-0 17 ♕d3 (17 0-0-0!?) 17...d5 and now 18 ♔f1, as played in Hesse-Enders, Dresden 1984,

is slightly mysterious. We suggest 18 g4 with good chances for White.

We now return to 4...g6!? *(D)*:

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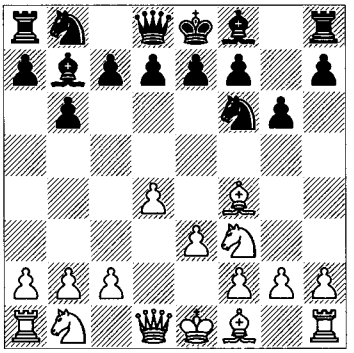


5 ♘bd2 ♗g7

Here 5...♘h5?! doesn't achieve anything: 6 ♗g5 h6 7 ♗h4 g5 8 ♘e5 ♘f6 (8...♘g7 9 ♗g3 ♘f5 10 ♕h5 ±) 9 ♗g3 d6 10 ♘g4 ♘bd7 11 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 12 ♗b5+ c6 13 ♗d3 ±.

6 ♗d3

Lines with 6 ♗e2 or ♗e2 after some preparatory moves like h3, c3, etc., are examined in Line 9D.

6...0-0

There are no direct threats, and this seems the most flexible.

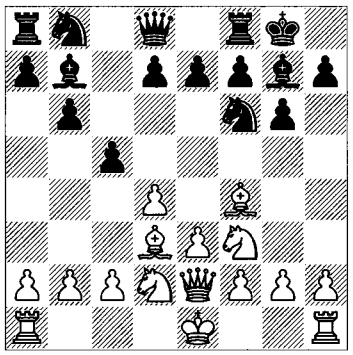
7 ♕e2 c5 *(D)*

Black has also tried:

a) 7...♘d5 8 ♗e5 f6 9 ♗g3 f5 10 h4 e6 11 c3 ♘f6 12 0-0-0 ♘c6 13 e4 ♘e7 14 ♗e5 ♘h5 15 exf5 exf5 16 ♗xg7 ♘xg7 17 ♗c4+ ± Barva-Hallossy, Paks 1996.

b) 7...d6 8 0-0 ♘c6, playing for ...e5, is quite logical, as the d3-bishop may then be slightly misplaced; e.g., 9 c3 ♕e8 10 e4 e5 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 ♗g3 ♘h5 13 ♖fe1 ♖d8 = Appel-Spassky, Cologne rpd 1989.

W



8 c3 d6 9 0-0 ♘c6

Or 9...♘bd7 10 h3 ♖e8 11 ♗h2 e5 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 e4 ♕e7 14 ♗a6 ♗xa6 15 ♕xa6 ♘h5 16 ♖ad1 ♘f8 17 ♘c4 ± Matlak-M.Přibyl, Czech Cht 1997.

10 h3 ♖e8 11 ♗h2 e5

Black may also try:

a) 11...♖c8 12 ♖fe1 ♘d7 13 ♗a6 ♗xa6 14 ♕xa6 ♕c7 15 ♖ad1 ± Modrova-Wittmann, Oberwart 1995.

b) 11...a6 12 ♖fd1 cxd4 13 cxd4 ♘b4 14 ♗c4 b5 15 ♗b3 ♕b6 = Augustin-Vaisman, Halle 1976.

12 dxe5 ♘xe5

13 ♘xe5 dxe5 14 ♖fd1 ♕e7 15 e4 ♘h5 16 ♗a6 ♘f4 17 ♗xf4 ♗xa6 18 ♕xa6 exf4 19 f3 ♖ed8 20 ♘c4 ± Sydor-Balinas, Dortmund 1976.

Conclusion:

White should be able to claim some theoretical edge when Black refuses to stake a central claim. However, with no direct contact between the armies, precise analysis isn't really an option. You should rather seek to familiarize yourself with the typical middlegame patterns.

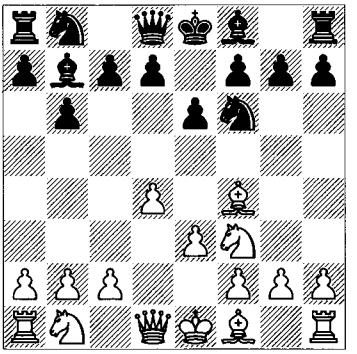
11C: 4 ♘f3 e6 5 ♗d3

(1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4 b6 3 e3 ♗b7 4 ♘f3)

4...e6 *(D)*

This position is just as likely to arise from 2...e6.

W



5 ♗d3!

This is actually more flexible than 5 ♘bd2. The idea is to make ...cxd4 less tempting for Black as that will allow White to reply cxd4 followed by ♘c3. This in turn makes ...♘bd7 less

tempting (the knight is only well placed on d7 if Black intends to exchange on d4) considerably easing White's preparations.

a) 5 h3?! d5! followed by ...♗d6 is a comfortable version of the double d-pawn positions for Black, as h3 is normally not very useful for White in those lines.

b) 5 c3 will probably transpose to the main line, but why bolster the centre before it's necessary?

5...♗e7

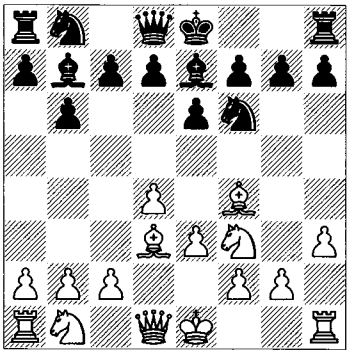
This probably threatens ...♘h5. Alternatively Black can try 5...♘h5!? (5...c5 6 c3 ♘c6 7 0-0 ♗e7 8 h3 0-0 – *5...♗e7 6 h3 c5 7 c3 0-0 8 0-0 ♘c6*) 6 ♗g5, and now:

a) 6...f6?! 7 ♗h4 ♗e7 (7...g5?? 8 ♘xg5 +–) 8 g4!? g5 9 gxh5 gxh4 10 ♖g1 ±.

b) 6...♗e7 7 ♗xe7 (7 h4!?) 7...♕xe7 8 c4 d6 9 ♘c3 ♘d7 10 ♗e4 (10 g4!? ♘hf6 11 g5 ♘h5 12 ♖g1 ±) 10...♗xe4 11 ♘xe4 ♘hf6 12 ♘g3 0-0 13 0-0 c5 14 ♕a4 ♖fc8 = G.Wall-King, Dublin Z 1993.

6 h3 *(D)*

B



6...c5

6...0-0 7 0-0 c5 8 c3 d6 or 6...d6 7 0-0 0-0 8 c3 c5 merges with the main line.

7 c3 0-0

This can be delayed but hardly dispensed with.

8 0-0 d6

Or:

a) 8...d5 9 ♘bd2 – note 'b1' to Black's 6th move in Line 5H.

b) After 8...cxd4 White decides the strategic complexity of the fight:

b1) 9 exd4, unbalancing the pawn-structure, is confident but slightly inconsistent when White has delayed ♘bd2 for so long: 9...d6 10 ♘bd2 ♖e8 11 ♖e1 ♘bd7! 12 ♕e2 ♗f8 13 ♗h2 a6 14 a4 is typical of the challenges White faces after ♘bd2 and exd4. White has the freer game but in some ways Black's position is the more dynamic. Our impression is that chances are roughly level. However, the delicate balance makes it an excellent weapon for strong players trying for a win with the black pieces. A close investigation of the two game fragments below may reveal what Black did wrong in the first and right in the second (which he eventually won), but mainly the results reflect the relative playing strength of the contestants.

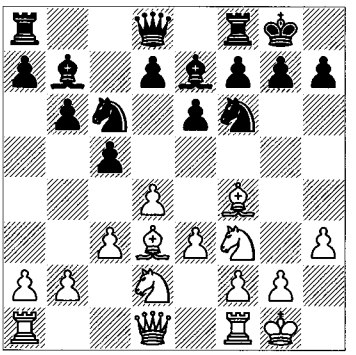
b11) 14...♕c7 15 ♖ac1 ♕c6 16 ♕d1 g6 17 ♕b3 ♗h6 18 ♖cd1 ♘d5 19 ♗e4 ♘7f6 20 c4 ♘xe4 21 ♘xe4 is much better for White, Lein-Denny, St Martin 1993.

b12) 14...♕c8 15 ♘c4 ♕c7 16 ♘e3 g6 17 ♘c2 ♕c8 18 ♘e3 ♗c6 19 ♘c4 ♕c7 20 ♘fd2 b5 21 axb5 axb5 22 ♘e3 ♕b6 = P.Kovačević-Cebalo, Martigny 1986.

b2) 9 cxd4 demonstrates White's idea, but doesn't necessarily promise a lasting advantage: 9...♘c6 10 ♘c3 ♖c8 11 ♗h2 a6 12 e4 (12 d5!?) 12...d5 13 e5 ♘d7 and in McCarthy-Tolnai, New York 1993 Black equalized after 14 a4 ♘b4. Probably White is minimally better after 14 ♖c1 but it's not clear what to do with his space advantage.

c) 8...♘c6 temporarily blocks the a8-h1 diagonal and now 9 ♘bd2 *(D)*, planning to retake with the e-pawn if Black plays ...cxd4, is OK.

B



Black's pieces are less actively placed for queenside operations, and White will have more realistic attacking prospects on the kingside when the knight cannot go to f6 or f8:

c1) 9...d5 – note 'b1' to Black's 6th move in Line 5H.

c2) 9...h6 10 ♕e2 ♖e8 11 ♖fe1 d6 12 ♗a6 ♕c8 13 ♗xb7 ♕xb7 14 e4 ♗f8 = S.Jensen-Aleksandrov, Køge 1997.

c3) 9...a6 10 e4 d6 11 a3 e5 = Wirthensohn-Gabriel, Swiss Cht 1999.

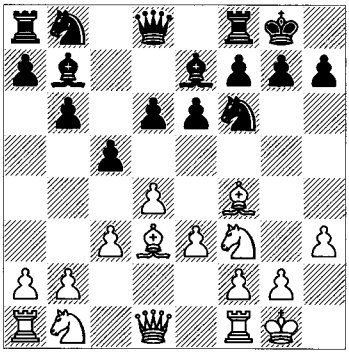
c4) 9...cxd4 10 exd4 (10 cxd4 is solid but has less point with the knight on c6) and now:

c41) 10...d6 11 ♖e1 ♖e8 12 ♘c4 ♘d5 13 ♗g3 g6 14 a4 a6 15 h4 ♘a5 16 ♘cd2 (16 ♘xa5!? bxa5 probably improves Black's prospects on the queenside, but wins a tempo for kingside play; Black must watch out for lines like 17 h5 ♘f6 18 hxg6 hxg6 19 ♕e2 ♖b8 20 ♘g5 ♔g7 21 ♗c4 ♕c8 22 ♘xf7 +–) 16...♘f6 17 b4 ♘c6 18 ♘g5 ♘h5 = Christiansen-Peter, Bad Mergentheim 1988.

c42) 10...a6 11 ♕e2 b5 12 a4 b4 13 c4 d6 14 ♖fe1 ♖e8 15 ♗h2 ♗f8 16 ♖ad1 g6 17 ♘f1 ♕a5 18 ♕d2 ♖ad8 19 b3 e5 20 d5 ♘b8 21 ♗c2 ± Eade-de Firmian, California 1993.

We now return to 8...d6 *(D)*:

W



9 ♕e2!?

White is preparing e4 in leisurely fashion. When and if it comes, it may technically represent a tempo-loss (e2-e3-e4), but that doesn't really matter. When development is completed, structure is what counts, and with most of the pieces still on the board a central space advantage is a strategic plus.

9...♘c6

Or:

a) 9...♖e8!? is one possible idea.

b) 9...♘bd7?! isn't the best square for the knight, which is demonstrated in Illustrative Game 25, Christiansen-D.Gurevich, Philadelphia 1988.

c) 9...♕c8 is a sensible attempt to simplify: 10 e4 ♗a6 11 ♘bd2 ♗xd3 12 ♕xd3 cxd4 13 cxd4 ♕a6 14 ♕b3 ♘bd7 15 a4 ± Papaioannou-Sigalas, Aspropyrgos 2003.

d) 9...cxd4 and again White must decide if he wants to unbalance the structure:

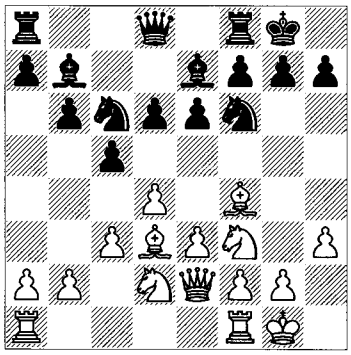
d1) 10 exd4 ♘bd7 11 ♘bd2 ♕c7 12 ♗h2 ♗c6 13 ♖fe1 ♕b7 14 ♗a6 ♕c7 15 a4 ♗b7 16 ♗d3 a6 = De Lange-R.Bjerke, Gausdal 1981.

d2) 10 cxd4 ♘c6 (10...♘d5!? 11 ♗g3 ♘b4 12 ♗b5 a6 13 ♗a4 b5 14 ♗b3 ♘d7 =) 11 ♘c3 (11 a3 ±) 11...♘b4 12 ♗c4 (12 ♗b1 ♗a6 ∓) 12...♖c8 13 a3 ♘bd5 14 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 15 ♗a6 ♖c6 16 ♗b5 ♖c7 = Seegers-Weber, 2nd Bundesliga 1988/9.

10 ♘bd2 *(D)*

10 a3!?, stopping ...♘b4 after an exchange of c-pawns, is worth considering.

B



10...♖e8

These alternatives are roughly equivalent:

a) After 10...♘d7 11 ♗h2 ♖e8 White simplified with 12 ♗a6 ♕c8 13 ♗xb7 ♕xb7 14 ♖ad1 b5 15 ♘e4 d5 16 ♘xc5 ♗xc5 17 dxc5 ♘xc5 18 ♘d4 a6 = in Drabke-Rahman, Dresden 2002. 12 a3 preparing either e4 or b4 may be more promising.

b) 10...♕c7 11 ♗h2 ♖fe8 12 ♖ad1 ♗f8 13 ♖fe1 e5 14 dxe5 dxe5 15 ♘e4 ♘xe4 16 ♗xe4 g6 17 ♖d2 ± Schandorff-Pulkkinen, Oslo tt 1983.

c) 10...a6 11 a3 ♕c7 12 ♗h2 ♖fe8 13 e4 e5 14 d5 ♘b8 15 a4 ± Trikaliotis-Hulak, Budva Z 1981.

d) 10...cxd4 11 exd4 ♕d7 12 ♖fe1 ♖fe8 13 ♘e4 ♘xe4 14 ♗xe4 g6 15 ♖ad1 ♗f8 16 ♕b5 d5 17 ♗b1 ♗g7 18 a4 ♕c8 19 ♕e2 ♗a6 20 ♕e3 ± Bruno-Kindermann, Lienz 1983.

e) 10...♖c8 11 ♗h2 ♖e8 12 ♖fe1 cxd4 13 exd4 ♗f8 14 ♗b5 ♖a8 15 a4 a6 16 ♗d3 ± S.Kovačević-Marciano, Suances 1997.

11 ♖ad1

11 e4!? cxd4 12 cxd4 a6 13 ♖ac1 b5 14 ♗e3 ♗f8 15 e5 ± Sleisz-Neverov, Gyongyos 1995.

11...♘d7

Or 11...cxd4 12 exd4 ♘d7 13 ♘c4 ♘f8 14 ♖fe1 a6 15 ♘e3 d5 16 ♘e5 ± Knežević-Groszpeter, Keszthely 1981.

12 ♗h2 ♘f8

13 ♖fe1 d5 (13...♕d7 14 e4 ±) 14 a3 cxd4 15 exd4 ♗d6 (Braga-Rechlis, Thessaloniki OL 1988) 16 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 17 ♘e5 ♖ac8 18 ♕h5 ♘xe5 19 dxe5 ♕c7 20 ♘f3 ±.

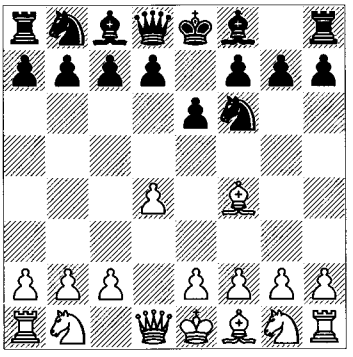
Conclusion:

We aren't sure how much of an edge White should expect. However, from a practical/psychological viewpoint the benefits of delaying ♘bd2 are obvious – in particular if Black is a stronger player hoping to unbalance the position.

11D: 2...e6 3 ♘f3

(1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4)

2...e6 *(D)*



This is quite likely to be the choice of a Nimzo-Indian/Queen's Indian player. However, Black may also simply want to attack b2 (by ...♕b6), but prefers to protect his pawn or restrain d5 before playing ...c5.

There are obviously lots of possible transpositions to earlier chapters with 1...d5 if Black plays an early ...d5.

3 ♘f3

3 e3 is our main recommendation and transposes elsewhere (3...d5 – *1...d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 e6*; 3...c5 – *2...c5 3 e3 e6*; 3...b6 – *2...b6 3 e3 e6*). However, playing 3 ♘f3 at this point is quite logical, probably indicating that White, now that the sharp set-ups with ...g6 have been eliminated and the c8-bishop can no longer take up an active position at f5 or g4, believes the Orthodox London will give him an advantage.

3...♗e7! *(D)*

This accentuates a possible drawback of the early ♘f3 move-order. Now ...♘h5 is a minor threat. 3...c5 is also good (4 e3 – *2...c5 3 e3 e6 4 ♘f3*).

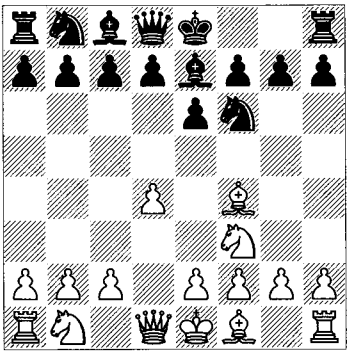
Other moves:

a) It isn't clear whether 3...♘h5 4 ♗g5 ♗e7 5 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 eases Black's position: 6 c3 d5 7 e3 b6 8 ♘e5 ♘f6 9 ♘d2 0-0 10 ♗d3 ♗b7 11 ♕c2 c5 12 0-0 ♘bd7 13 f4 ± Aasman-Brosig, Niedersachsen 1995.

b) 3...b6 will transpose to Line 11C if Black meets 4 e3 with 4...♗b7, but 4...c5 may be independent if Black plans ...♗a6. The standard moves (5 c3, 5 ♗d3 and 5 ♘bd2) should be playable, but two other moves are interesting:

b1) 5 a4!?, intending to meet ...♗a6 with ♗b5, looks a good idea: 5...♘c6 (5...cxd4 6 exd4 ♘c6 7 ♘bd2 ♗e7 8 c3 a5 9 ♗b5 ♗a6 10 ♗xa6 ♖xa6 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♕e2 ± Sonntag-Timmermans, Belgian Cht (Antwerp) 1997) 6 c3 ♗b7 7 ♘bd2 cxd4 8 exd4 ♗e7 9 ♘c4 0-0 10 ♗d3 d6 11 0-0 a6 12 ♕b3 ± Glienke-Furlan, Bled 1995.

b2) 5 ♘c3!? is an attempt to take advantage of Black's slow development and dark-square vulnerability. After 5...cxd4 White has tried 6 ♕xd4 and 6 ♘b5 with promising attacks, but 6 ♘xd4! seems even stronger; e.g., 6...♗b4 (6...a6 7 ♕f3 ±) 7 ♘b5 ♘d5 8 ♗d6 ♗xc3+ 9 bxc3 a6 10 c4 ±.



4 ♘bd2

It appears White has no perfect solution:

a) 4 e3 ♘h5.

b) 4 c3 c5 5 e3 (5 h3 cxd4 6 cxd4 ♕b6 =) 5...♘h5 =.

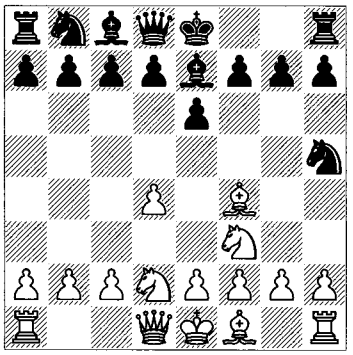
c) 4 h3?! saves the bishop but is too slow: 4...c5 5 e3 (5 c3 cxd4 6 cxd4 d5 =) 5...♕b6 6 ♕c1 ♘c6 7 c3 ♘e4 (7...d5) 8 ♘bd2 ♘xd2 9 ♕xd2 d5 10 ♗d3 ♗d7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♕e2 f5 13 ♖ac1 ♖ac8 14 ♖fd1 c4 15 ♗b1 ♗e8 16 g4 ♗g6, when Kharitonov-Yudasin, Sverdlovsk 1984 was agreed drawn in a far from exhausted position.

4...♘h5! *(D)*

Or:

a) 4...d5 5 e3 – *1...d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 e6 4 ♘d2 ♗e7 5 ♘gf3*.

b) 4...b6 is easier to meet than the text-move: 5 e4 ♗b7 6 ♗d3 c5 7 c3 ±.



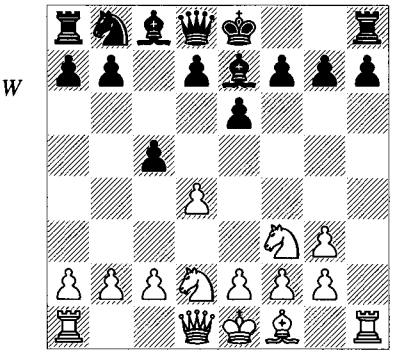
5 ♗g3

5 ♗e3?! is probably too artificial: 5...f5 6 g3 0-0 7 ♗g2 d6 8 0-0 f4! ∓.

5...♘xg3

Now White at least gets an open h-file in return for the bishop-pair. As usual the more ambitious approach for Black is to leave the bishop alone for a while, waiting for the perfect moment: 5...d6!? 6 e3 ♘d7 7 ♗d3 c5 8 c3 h6 9 ♕e2 a6 10 a4 b6 11 b4 0-0 12 0-0 ♗b7 13 bxc5 bxc5 14 a5 ♘xg3 15 hxg3 ♕c7 16 ♖fb1 was unclear in V.Kovačević-Matanović, Yugoslav Ch (Kraljevo) 1967.

6 hxg3 c5 *(D)*



In order to make something out of his dark-squared bishop, Black has to soften White's central bastion. However, for the moment the bishop looks rather modest, and our impression is that chances are roughly level.

7 dxc5!?

The safer alternatives 7 c3 and 7 e3 probably lead to rather even chances.

7...♕a5

Or 7...♗xc5 8 ♘e4 ♗b4+!? 9 c3 d5 10 cxb4 (10 ♘eg5!? ♗c5 11 ♘xh7 may appear ridiculous but after 11...♕b6 12 e3 White still threatens ♘f6+) 10...dxe4 11 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 12 ♘g5 ♔e7 13 ♘xe4 ♘c6 14 ♖c1 with a clear advantage for White.

8 e3 ♕xc5 9 ♗d3 h6 10 a3 d6

Now Rakić-Lukov, West Berlin 1988 was interesting: after 11 g4!? ♘d7 12 g5 (12 ♕e2 =) 12...♘e5 13 gxh6 ♖xh6 14 ♖xh6 ♘xd3+ 15 cxd3 gxh6 White's activity roughly compensated for the bishop-pair.

Conclusion:

Quite possibly after 3 ♘f3 ♗e7 (or more likely 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗f4) White can't claim a theoretical edge. A more pragmatic question is how you feel about the position after Black's 6th move. Objectively, chances should be roughly even, but Black may have the greater worries about his king's position.

12 Anti-Benoni: 2...c5

The Modern Benoni (1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 e6) and the Benko Gambit (1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5) are popular choices for fighting players. The position is quickly unbalanced and although White may have theoretically better chances, this is often compensated by Black being the better prepared (or more familiar with the typical themes). However, a practical problem for Benoni and Benko fans is that they cannot force their beloved opening structures upon White. Hence, the heading 'Anti-Benoni'. A quick ...c5 is nevertheless one of Black's most logical ways to meet the London. Not only is White's central foothold at d4 challenged, but Black also opens the way for ...♕b6, attacking the weakened pawn at b2. It's therefore clear that this plan must be a major factor when choosing your London move-order. We recommend 2 ♗f4 because after 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 c5 White has no really tempting way to reach the London (although 3 d5 is a good move). However, 2...c5 is probably the critical test of 1...♘f6 2 ♗f4 too, and although we believe White can realistically play for an advantage, some lines are sharp and could conceivably be refuted analytically.

Illustrative Games 26 and 28 are mainly tactical lessons on how to punish delayed development, while Game 27 is another example of White claiming central territory after completing development.

Chapter Outline

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4

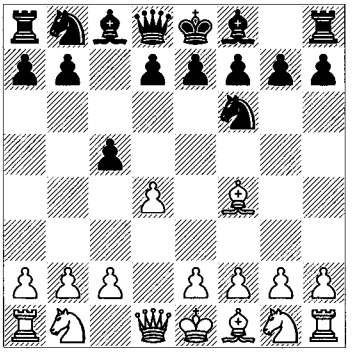
12A: 2...c5 (3 e3 e6 4 ♘f3 ♘c6)	155
12B: 2...c5 3 e3 e6 4 ♘f3 ♗e7	157
12C: 2...c5 3 e3 e6 4 ♘f3 ♕b6	157
12D: 2...c5 3 e3 e6 4 c3	159
12E: 2...c5 3 e3 ♕b6	160

12A: Introduction

(1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4)

2...c5! *(D)*

Logically, this should be the critical test of 2 ♗f4, as after most other 2nd moves (like 2...e6, 2...b6 or 2...g6), White can, if he wishes, simply transpose back to orthodox London lines by playing 3 ♘f3.



3 e3

Right or wrong, this is our reason for recommending 2 ♗f4 over 2 ♘f3. Should further exploration prove it to be inferior, the adventurous player may explore 3 d5. And if all else fails, a return to 2 ♘f3 c5 3 d5 for the ambitious player and 2 ♗f4 c5 3 c3 for the more timid soul must be the solution.

a) After 3 ♘f3?! cxd4!, 4 ♗xb8 (4 ♘xd4?? e5 5 ♗xe5 ♕a5+ 6 c3 ♕xe5 0-1 Shuler-Hall, USA 1990) is the only consistent continuation. By removing the guard of a7 and eliminating the tempo-gaining ...♘c6, White hopes to keep some initiative, but giving up his centre and the bishop-pair is probably too high a price to pay: 4...♕a5+ 5 ♕d2 (5 ♘bd2 ♖xb8 6 ♘xd4 d5 ∓) 5...♕xd2+ 6 ♘bxd2 ♖xb8 7 ♘xd4 d5 8 e4 dxe4 9 ♗b5+ ♗d7 ∓ B.Maksimović-Matulović, Niš 1983.

b) 3 c3 allows Black to transpose, if he wishes, to an Exchange Slav with 3...cxd4 4 cxd4 d5. White nevertheless needs to know at least one variation to avoid going down in flames. 3...♕b6!? 4 ♕b3?! cxd4 5 ♕xb6 axb6 6 ♗xb8?! (6 ♘f3!? dxc3 7 ♘xc3 should give

White just about enough for the pawn) 6...dxc3 7 ♘xc3 (7 ♗e5? ♖xa2!! –+ Dorner-Jacob, Germany tt 2002/3 is a well-known tactical trick) 7...♖xb8 8 e4 d6 ∓.

c) 3 d5!? is worthy of further investigation:

c1) The logical 3...♕b6 4 ♘c3 ♕xb2 5 ♗d2 shouldn't be a great theoretical obstacle, as this is known as a relatively promising gambit, normally arising from the Trompowsky (*1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗g5 c5 3 d5 ♕b6 4 ♘c3 ♕xb2 5 ♗d2*).

c2) 3...e6 is a tougher test: 4 c4?! is tempting, but seems to fail for tactical reasons as after 4...♕b6! we couldn't come up with sufficient compensation for White. It therefore seems White has to look for his chances after 4 ♘c3; e.g., 4...d6 5 e4 ♗e7 6 dxe6 ♗xe6 7 e5 dxe5 8 ♕xd8+ ♗xd8 9 ♗xe5 0-0 10 ♗d6 ♖e8 11 ♗xc5 ♗xa2+ 12 ♗e2 ♗c4 13 ♖xa7 ♖xa7 14 ♗xa7 ♘c6 15 ♗e3 ♗xe2 16 ♔xe2 ± Klees-Der, Rechlinghausen 2002.

3...e6

Black has also tried:

a) 3...♘c6?! 4 d5 e5 5 ♗g3 ♘e7 6 d6 ♘c6 7 ♘c3 ♕a5 (7...a6 8 ♘f3 b5 9 ♘xe5 ±) 8 ♘f3 ♘e4 9 ♘xe5 ♘xc3 (9...♘xg3 10 ♘c4 is winning for White) 10 ♘xc6 dxc6 11 ♕d2 ♗e6 12 ♖d1 ♖d8 13 ♕xc3 ♕xc3+ 14 bxc3 ♗xa2? 15 c4 +–.

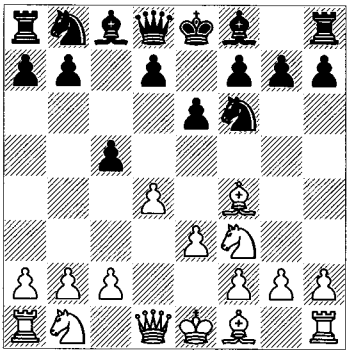
b) 3...g6!? 4 c3 b6 5 ♘f3 ♗g7 6 h3 0-0 7 ♘bd2 ♗b7 transposes to Game 21 (Kasparov-Kengis, USSR jr Ch (Riga) 1977).

c) 3...♕b6 is the subject of Line 12E.

4 ♘f3 *(D)*

This may well be a better move than 4 c3.

B



4...♘c6

The critical line is 4...♕b6 (Line 12C), while the Queen's Indian-style moves 4...b6 and 4...♗e7 are discussed in Line 12B. Other lines:

a) 4...b6 – note 'b' to Black's 3rd move in Line 11D.

b) 4...d5 – note 'a' to Black's 4th move in Line 5A.

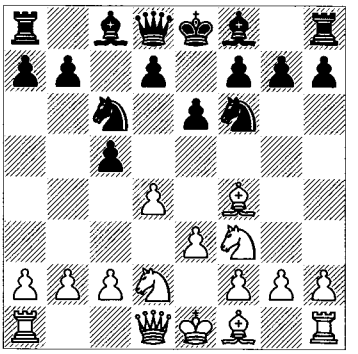
c) 4...♘h5 5 ♗g5 ♕b6 6 ♘bd2 h6 7 ♘c4 ♕c7 8 ♗h4 g5 9 ♘fe5 ± Damljanović-Lukacs, Kolhapur 1987 (see Illustrative Game 26).

d) 4...b5?! may just barely be playable: 5 ♘c3 (5 ♗xb5 ♕a5+ 6 ♘c3 ♘d5 7 ♖b1 ±) 5...a6 6 e4 cxd4 7 ♕xd4 ♘c6 8 ♕d3 ♗e7 9 e5 ♘b4 10 ♕d2 ♘fd5, when Black had a central foothold and almost equality in Hort-Renet, Lugano 1988.

e) 4...cxd4 5 exd4 ♗e7 (5...d6 6 c3 ♗e7 7 ♗d3 0-0 8 0-0 b6 9 a4 ♗b7 10 ♘bd2 ♘bd7 11 h3 e5 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 ♗xe5 ♘xe5 14 ♘xe5 ♕c7 15 ♖e1 ± S.Kovačević-Badii, Massy 1993) 6 ♗d3 0-0 7 0-0 d6 8 c4 ♘bd7 9 ♘c3 ♘h5 10 ♗d2 g6 11 ♖e1 ♖e8 12 b4 ♘df6 13 ♕b3 a5 14 bxa5 ♖xa5 15 ♘a4 ± G.Wall-Arkell, British Ch (Torquay) 1998.

5 ♘bd2 *(D)*

B



Now ...♕b6 is more or less ruled out.

5...♗e7!

This useful developing move to some extent threatens ...♘h5. Alternatively:

a) 5...b6 6 c3 ♗b7 7 ♗d3 d6 8 ♕e2 ♕c7 9 h3 e5 10 ♗h2 ♗e7 11 0-0 0-0 12 dxc5 bxc5 13 e4 ♖ab8 with equality, J.Andersen-O.Vovk, Århus 1999.

b) 5...cxd4 6 exd4 d5 7 ♗d3 ♕b6 8 ♘b3 ♗d7 9 0-0 ♘b4 10 ♗e2 ♗a4 11 ♕b1 ♗b5 12 ♖e1 ♗xe2 13 ♖xe2 ♗e7 = Kargoll-Dietzsch, Landau 1988.

6 h3

6 c3 is probably less precise because of 6...♘h5, but not at all harmless (it's worth noting that White can hardly avoid this from the

1...♘f6 2 ♘f3 c5 3 c3 move-order). After 7 ♗g3 we have:

a) Black should probably avoid 7...b6?! 8 ♘c4 ♘xg3 9 hxg3 cxd4 (9...d6 10 d5! ± Blatny-Chernyshov, Stare Mesto 1992 – see Illustrative Game 28) 10 exd4 ♕c7 (10...d5 11 ♘ce5 ♘xe5 12 ♘xe5 0-0 13 ♕h5 h6 14 ♗d3 ♗d7 15 ♘g4 +–) 11 d5! exd5 12 ♕xd5 ♗b7 13 0-0-0 ♖c8 14 ♖e1 ±.

b) 7...d6 8 ♗b5 ♗d7 9 dxc5 ♘xg3 10 hxg3 dxc5 11 ♘c4 a6 12 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 13 ♕c2 h6 14 ♘ce5 ♕d5 15 ♘xc6 ♕xc6 = Doda-Keres, Wijk aan Zee 1969.

6...0-0 7 c3 cxd4

Or 7...b6 (7...d5 8 ♗d3 – note 'b2' to Black's 6th move in Line 5H) 8 ♗d3 ♗b7 9 0-0 d6 10 ♕e2 ♖e8 11 a3 ♕c7 12 e4 cxd4 13 cxd4 e5 14 d5 exf4 15 ♖ac1 ♗d8 16 dxc6 ♗c8 17 ♖fe1 a6 (Braga-Arnason, Thessaloniki OL 1988) 18 ♘d4! ±.

8 exd4 d6 9 ♗d3 e5 10 ♗g3 exd4

11 cxd4 ♘b4 12 ♗b1 g6 13 0-0 ♘h5 14 ♗h2 ♗e6 15 ♘e4 ± Harmon-Gligorić, Vancouver 2000.

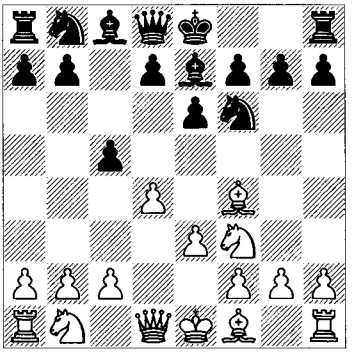
Conclusion:

Of White's alternatives to 3 e3, only 3 d5 promises any hope for a real advantage, but improvements are needed.

12B: 4...♗e7

(1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4 c5 3 e3 e6 4 ♘f3)

4...♗e7 *(D)*



W

5 h3 ♕b6

Exchanging on d4 before White has had the time to play c3 may be the right way to reach the more strategically unbalanced lines of the Queen's Indian: 5...cxd4 6 exd4 b6 7 ♗d3 ♗b7 8 ♘bd2 d6 9 ♕e2 0-0 10 0-0. In Nikovits-Orgovan, Eger 1987, however, Black quickly went astray: 10...♘d5? (10...♕c7 11 ♖fe1 ♘bd7 12 c3 ♘d5 13 ♗h2 ♖fe8 is equal) 11 ♕e4 g6 12 ♗h6 ♘d7? (12...♖e8 13 c4) 13 c4 ♘7f6 14 ♕e2 +–.

6 ♕c1

6 ♘c3!? is untested but appears tactically sound: 6...♕xb2? 7 ♘b5 ♘d5 8 a3 cxd4 9 ♖b1 (9 ♗c4?! ♘c3 isn't clear) 9...♕a2 10 ♘e5 a6 11 ♗c4 ♕xb1 12 ♕xb1 axb5 13 ♗xd5 exd5 14 ♕xb5 ±.

6...♘c6

6...0-0 is also natural: 7 c3 cxd4 8 exd4 d5 9 ♗d3 ♗d7 10 a4 ♖c8 11 0-0 ♘c6 12 ♘bd2 ♘b4 13 ♗e2 ♕d8 14 ♘b3 a5 15 ♕b1 ♘a6 16 ♘e5 ± Kurajica-Toth, Biel 1981.

7 c3 ♘e4 8 ♘bd2 ♘xd2 9 ♕xd2 d5 10 ♗d3 ♗d7

11 0-0 0-0 12 ♕e2 f5 13 ♖ac1 ♖ac8 14 ♖fd1 c4 15 ♗b1 ♗e8 16 g4 ♗g6 ½-½ Kharitonov-Yudasin, Sverdlovsk 1984.

Conclusion:

6 ♕c1 is more solid than really promising. You should seriously consider the 6 ♘c3 gambit.

12C: 4...♕b6

(1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4 c5 3 e3 e6 4 ♘f3)

4...♕b6

If this queen excursion is to have any impact, this is the last chance.

5 ♘c3! *(D)*

If there is a reason to prefer 4 ♘f3 over 4 c3, this must be it. 5 ♕c1 is safe but promises very little: 5...♘h5 6 ♗g5 (6 ♗g3 cxd4 7 exd4 ♘c6 8 c3 ♗e7 9 ♘bd2 0-0 10 ♗d3 ♕d8 11 ♕c2 g6 12 ♘c4 d6 13 0-0 f5 = Knežević-Nikolaev, Podolsk 1991) 6...h6 7 ♗h4 g5 8 ♗g3 ♘xg3 9 hxg3 cxd4 10 ♘xd4 ♗g7 = V.Kovačević-Henley, Indonesia 1983.

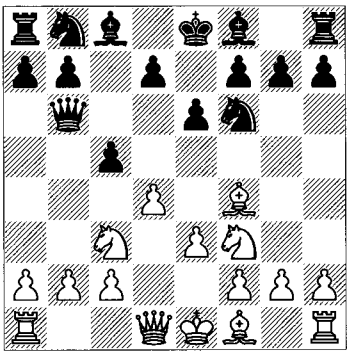
5...a6

Black has a multitude of alternatives, most of them preventing ♘b5:

a) 5...d5 – note 'b' to Black's 5th move in Line 4C.

b) 5...♘a6 6 a3! ♗e7 7 ♘e5 cxd4 8 exd4 ♕d8 9 ♗xa6! bxa6 10 ♕f3 d5 11 ♘c6 ♕b6 12

B



♘xe7 ♔xe7 13 0-0-0 ± Zsu.Polgar-Chandler, Biel 1987.

c) 5...♕xb2? 6 ♘b5 ♘a6 7 a3! threatens 8 ♗c4, ♖a2 and 8 ♘d2-c4 +–. Black may try:

c1) 7...♘e4 8 ♖b1 ♕a2 9 ♘e5 d5 10 ♕c1 g5 11 ♗xg5 ♘xg5 12 ♘c3 ♕xb1 13 ♕xb1 f6 14 ♗b5+ +–.

c2) 7...d5 8 ♖b1 ♕a2 9 ♕c1 cxd4 10 exd4 +–.

c3) 7...cxd4 8 ♗e5 ♗c5 9 exd4 ♗b6 10 ♗xf6 ♗a5+ (10...0-0 11 ♖b1 ♗a5+ 12 ♘d2 ♕a2 13 c3 ♕d5 14 ♕g4 g6 15 ♕h4 +–) 11 ♘d2 gxf6 12 ♖b1 +–.

c4) 7...♘d5 8 ♖b1 ♕a2 9 ♗d6 cxd4 (or 9...♗xd6 10 ♗xc4 +–) 10 ♘fxd4 ♘c5 11 ♕c1 ♘a4 12 c4 ♗xd6 (12...♘f6 13 ♖a1 +–) 13 ♘xd6+ ♔e7 14 cxd5 ♕xd5 15 ♘6b5 +–.

d) 5...♘c6 6 ♘b5 ♘d5 7 dxc5! ♗xc5 8 ♗d6! and here:

d1) 8...♘d4 9 ♘fxd4 ♗xd6 10 ♘xd6+ ♕xd6 11 ♘b5 ±.

d2) 8...♗xd6 9 ♘xd6+ ♔e7 10 ♘c4 ±.

d3) 8...a6 9 ♗xc5 ♕xc5 10 c4 axb5 11 cxd5 exd5 12 ♗d3 ±.

e) 5...cxd4 6 exd4 and here:

e1) 6...a6 7 a3 – *5...a6 6 a3 cxd4 7 exd4.*

e2) 6...♗b4 7 ♗d3 ♘d5 8 ♗d2 ♘xc3 9 bxc3 ♗e7 10 0-0 d6 11 ♖e1 ♘d7 12 ♘g5 ♘f6 13 ♕f3 ♕c7 14 ♖ab1 ♖b8 15 ♕g3 g6 16 c4 = Pozin-Tikhomirov, Eforie Nord 1998.

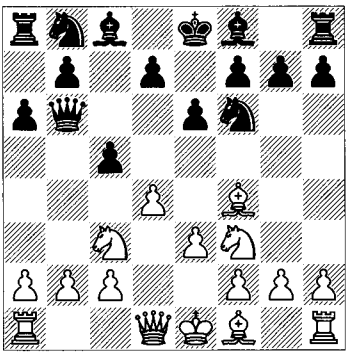
e3) 6...♘c6 7 a3 a6 8 ♗e2 d5 9 0-0 ♘h5 10 ♗e3 ♗d6 11 ♖e1 0-0 12 ♘a4 ♕c7 13 b3 f5 14 c4 ♘f4 15 ♗f1 ± S.Kovačević-Melchor, Mislata 1993.

e4) 6...♗e7 7 ♗d3 0-0 8 0-0 d6 9 ♖b1 ♘bd7 10 ♖e1 ♖e8 11 b4 ♘f8 12 ♘a4 ♕d8 13 c4 b6 14 h3 ♗b7 15 ♗h2 ♘g6 16 ♘c3 ♗f8 17 ♘d2 e5 18 d5 ± Nep-Iordachescu, Wijk aan Zee 2002.

e5) 6...♕xb2?! 7 ♘b5 ♘d5 8 ♖b1 ♕xa2 9 ♗d2 (9 ♖a1 repeats) 9...♘a6 (Dos Santos-Limp, Curitiba 1999) 10 ♖a1 ♕b2 11 ♗c4 and White wins material: 11...♘ab4 (11...♘db4 is best met by 12 ♖c1!, when Black can't untangle his pieces without major loss of material) 12 0-0 ♕xc2 (12...a6 13 ♗b3 ♖b8 14 c4 axb5 15 cxd5 b6 16 ♗xb4 ♗xb4 17 ♖a2 ♕c3 18 ♖c2 +–) 13 ♕xc2 ♘xc2 14 ♗xd5 ♘xa1 15 ♘c7+ ♔d8 16 ♘xa8 +–.

We now return to 5...a6 *(D)*:

W



6 a3

This stops some annoying checks and pins and is at least as useful as Black's a-pawn move.

6...♘c6

Alternatively:

a) 6...♘h5?! 7 ♗g5 h6 8 ♗h4 g5?! 9 ♘e5! and now:

a1) 9...♘f6 10 ♗g3 ±.

a2) 9...♘f4 10 exf4 gxh4 11 ♘e4! ♕xb2 (11...cxd4 12 ♘c4 ♕a7 13 ♕h5 +–) 12 dxc5 d5 13 ♖b1 ♕xa3 14 ♕h5 +–.

a3) 9...gxh4? 10 ♕xh5! ♕xb2 (Zsu.Polgar-Browne, Dortmund 1990) 11 ♘d1! ♕xa1 12 ♕xf7+ ♔d8 13 ♕f6+ ♔c7 14 ♕xh8 ±.

b) After 6...cxd4 7 exd4 Black has tried:

b1) 7...♗e7 8 ♗d3 0-0 9 0-0 d5 10 ♖e1 ♗d7 11 ♖b1 ♖c8 12 ♕d2 ♗c6 13 ♘e5 ♘bd7 14 h3 ♕d8 15 ♕e2 ± S.Kovačević-Oms Pallise, Dos Hermanas 2000.

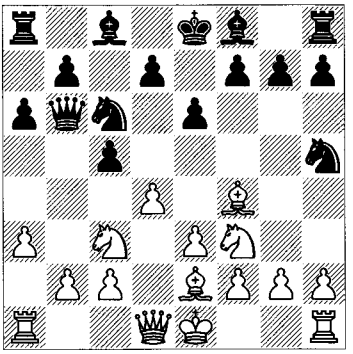
b2) 7...d6 8 ♗e2 ♗d7 9 0-0 ♗e7 10 ♕d2 ♗c6 11 a4 ♘bd7 12 b4 0-0 13 b5 axb5 14 axb5 ♗xf3 15 ♗xf3 d5 = Karlik-Chernyshov, Dečin 1997.

b3) 7...d5 8 ♗d3 ♗e7 9 0-0 ♗d7 10 b4 0-0 11 ♘e5 ♖c8 12 ♘xd7 ♘bxd7 13 ♘a4 ♕a7 14 ♖e1 = S.Kovačević-Pogorelov, Lorca 2003.

7 ♗e2 ♘h5 *(D)*

Or 7...d5 8 0-0 cxd4 9 exd4 ♗d7 10 ♖b1 ♖c8 11 ♖e1 ♗e7 12 ♗f1 0-0 13 ♘e5 ♗e8 14 ♘xc6 ♕xc6 15 ♗d3 ± Zimmer-Podlesnik, Schmiden 1995.

W



8 dxc5 ♗xc5 9 ♗g5 h6 10 ♗h4 g5 11 ♗g3

Or 11 ♘d2 gxh4 12 ♗xh5 ♗e7 13 ♘c4 ♕c5 (Forbes-Chandler, London 1992) 14 b3 ±.

11...♘xg3

12 hxg3 ♕xb2 13 ♘a4 ♕g7 14 ♘xc5 ♕c3+ 15 ♘d2 ♕xc5 16 c4 ♔e7 (16...♕e5 17 ♖c1 ♔f8 18 c5 d6 19 cxd6 ♕xd6 20 ♕b3 ±) 17 ♘b3 ♕e5 18 ♕d2 ♖d8 19 ♖xh6 d5 20 cxd5 ♖xd5 21 ♕c2 ± S.Kovačević-Tiviakov, Linares 1998.

Conclusion:

The positions discussed here are complicated, with regard to both strategy and tactics. However, they have been extensively tested at GM level and we feel confident that there is no easy way for Black to equalize.

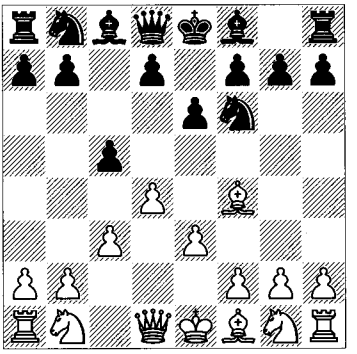
12D: 4 c3

(1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4 c5 3 e3 e6)

4 c3 *(D)*

White can always feel a little relieved whenever he succeeds in setting up the essentials of his London formation. It's now clear that the game will be fought on White's home ground. That being said, it should be noted that 4 ♘d2!? is a good move which stops ...♕b6. At least one high-level game is worth citing: 4...b6 5 ♘gf3 ♗e7 6 c3 ♘h5 7 ♗g3 ♗b7 8 ♗d3 ♘c6 9 ♕e2 g6 10 ♘c4 ♘xg3 11 hxg3 b5 12 ♘cd2 cxd4 13 exd4 b4 14 ♔f1 bxc3 15 bxc3 ± Ljubisavljević-Velimirović, Smederevska Palanka 1979. However, we must remind you that against the Queen's Indian set-up we are recommending a system where White holds back ♘bd2 for some time.

B



4...♕b6

Or:

a) 4...b6 5 ♘f3 ♗b7 6 ♗d3 ♗e7 7 h3 – Line 11C.

b) 4...♗e7 takes control of g5 and therefore makes 5 ♘f3 less tempting. However, the move isn't very active so White should have time for 5 h3 before continuing ♘f3 (but possibly Black should then play a quick ...d5 as White's h-pawn advance deprives him of the standard ♕f3-h3 manoeuvre.

c) 4...cxd4 5 exd4 ♗e7 (5...b6 is another idea) 6 ♘f3, Singer-Schramm, Altenkirchen 2001 (see Illustrative Game 27).

d) 4...♘c6 5 ♘d2 ♗e7 (5...d5) 6 ♗d3 d6 7 dxc5 dxc5 8 ♘c4 0-0 9 a4 b6 10 ♕c2 h6 11 ♖d1 is slightly better for White, Kargoll-Bruch, Hillscheid 1994.

5 ♕b3

Here 5 ♕c2 seems very playable: 5...d5 6 ♘d2 ♘c6 7 ♘gf3 ♗d7 8 ♗e2 ♖c8 9 ♕b1 ♗e7 10 h3 0-0 11 0-0 ♕d8 12 ♘e5 ♘e8 13 ♗d3 f5 14 ♘df3 with a slight advantage for White, Doderer-Ksieski, Germany tt 1993.

5...♘c6

5...♘d5 is probably premature: 6 ♗g3 cxd4 7 exd4 ♘c6 8 ♘d2! ±.

6 ♘f3 *(D)*

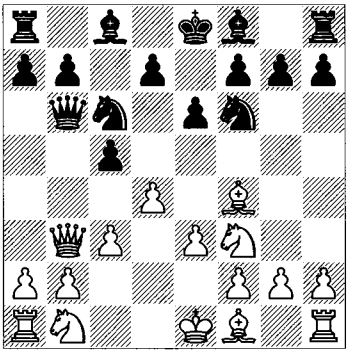
6...♘d5?!

White can make good use of the a-file after 6...♕xb3?! (6...d5 – *1...d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 e3 e6 4 c3 c5 5 ♘f3 ♕b6 6 ♕b3*) 7 axb3:

a) 7...cxd4 8 exd4 ♗e7 9 b4 ♘d5 10 ♗d2 0-0 11 b5 ♘d8 12 c4 ± Bronstein-Foster, Hastings 1991/2.

b) 7...b6?! 8 ♘a3! and now:

B



b1) 8...♔e7 9 ♘b5 ♘e8 10 ♗e2 ♗b7 11 0-0 d6 12 dxc5 bxc5 13 ♖fd1 e5 14 ♗g3 f6 15 e4 ± De Rooij-Van Gisbergen, Den Bosch 1992.

b2) 8...♘a5 9 ♘d2 ♘d5 10 ♗g3 cxd4 11 exd4 a6 12 ♘ac4 ♘c6 13 ♘e4 f5 14 ♘ed6+ ♗xd6 15 ♘xd6+ ♔e7 16 ♗e5 ± ½-½ Sielaff-Medunova, Seefeld 1999.

b3) 8...♘d5 9 ♗g3 cxd4 10 exd4 ♗b7 11 ♘c4 ♗e7 12 b4 0-0 13 b5 ±.

7 ♗g3 f5!?

Or 7...cxd4 8 exd4 d6 (8...♕xb3 9 axb3 d6 10 ♘bd2 f5 11 ♗c4 ♘c7 12 0-0 ± Kraev-Sviridov, Pskov 1998) 9 ♘bd2 ♗e7 10 ♘c4 ♕xb3 11 axb3 ♔d7 12 b4 ± Salac-Truc, Czech Republic 1999.

8 ♘bd2! ♗e7

Neither is 8...♘f6?! tempting: 9 ♘c4 ♕xb3 10 axb3 ♘e4 (10...♘d5 11 dxc5 ♗xc5 12 b4 ♗e7 13 ♘d6+ ♗xd6 14 ♗xd6 ±) 11 ♗c7! (11 ♗e2 ♘xg3 12 hxg3 ± Iguti-Carvalho, São Paulo 1995) 11...cxd4 12 exd4 d6 13 ♘b6 +–.

9 dxc5! ♗xc5 10 ♘c4 ♕d8

11 ♗d6 b6 12 ♕c2 ♘f6 (12...♕f6 13 ♖d1 ♗a6 14 ♗xc5 ♗xc4 15 ♗xc4 bxc5 16 ♗xd5 +–) 13 b4 ♗xd6 14 ♘xd6+ ♔f8 15 ♖d1 ±.

Conclusion:

6...♘d5, planning ...f5, is probably too ambitious and should backfire against correct play.

12E: 3...♕b6 4 ♘c3

(1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f4 c5 3 e3)

3...♕b6

In a sense this is the most critical line in the entire book. Should White fail to prove an advantage, he must probably go for the 1...♘f6 2 ♘f3 move-order.

4 ♘c3

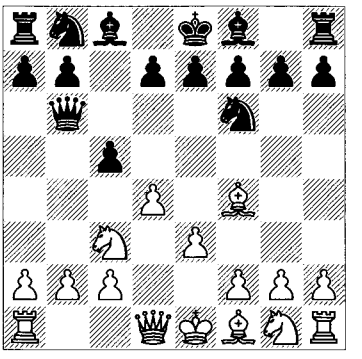
This centralizing knight move is obviously sound from a purely tactical viewpoint, so it's somewhat surprising that White's score is slightly depressing. A closer look reveals that this may be a case where the numbers are lying. At least ChessBase informs us that White is heavily out-rated in most of Black's wins. However, that of course raises new questions: is this a variation only weak players enter as White? Or is it attracting strong players trying to win as Black?

a) 4 b3?! is one of the few sensible ways to avoid any material investment after 3...♕b6. That isn't to say that there is no risk involved. Weakening the light squares like this with the light-squared bishop shut out from the queenside involves a considerable strategic risk: 4...g6 5 c3 (5 ♘f3 ♗g7 6 ♗e2 0-0 7 0-0 ♘c6 8 ♘c3 d6 9 ♘a4 ♕a5 10 c4 ♘h5 11 ♗g3 ♘xg3 12 hxg3 cxd4 13 exd4 ♗g4 ∓ Backwinkel-Maus, Bundesliga 1991/2) 5...♗g7 6 ♘f3 d6 7 h3 cxd4 8 exd4 0-0 9 ♗c4 ♘c6 10 0-0 ♗f5 with equality, Frometa-Ocampo Vargas, Havana 2002.

b) Quite possibly the peculiar 4 ♘a3!? is the most accurate. White intends to play ♘c4, hitting the black queen if Black doesn't capture on b2 or play ...d5. Then both 4...♕xb2?! 5 ♘b5 and 4...d5 5 ♘b5 transpose to 4 ♘c3 lines, so Black has only a few independent tries: 4...♕b4+ (4...cxd4 5 exd4 ♕xb2? 6 ♘b5 *– 4 ♘c3 cxd4 5 exd4 ♕xb2? 6 ♘b5*) 5 c3 ♕xb2 6 ♘b5 ♘a6 (6...♘d5 7 ♗c4 ♘xf4 8 exf4 ♘a6 9 ♖b1 +–) 7 ♖b1! ♕xa2 8 ♖a1 ♕b2 9 ♗c4! ♘e4 10 ♘e2 ♘d2 11 ♖a2 ♘xc4 12 ♖xb2 ♘xb2 13 ♕c2 ♘c4 14 dxc5 +–.

We now return to 4 ♘c3 *(D)*:

B



4...cxd4

Black opens the e-file, so that after ...♕xb2, ♖b1, ...♕xa2, ♖a1 he has ...♕e6+. However, this idea isn't White's main resource against ...♕xb2. Other lines:

a) 4...e6 5 ♘f3 – Line 12C.

b) 4...♕xb2(?!) 5 ♘b5 is unattractive for Black from a practical viewpoint at least, as White has a repetition, and can try for more:

b1) 5...♘a6?! 6 a3! (more effective here than 6 ♖b1 followed by ♖a1 and ♖xa6) and now:

b11) 6...♘e4 7 ♖b1 ♕a2 8 ♖b3 d5 9 dxc5 ♗f5 10 ♘d4 ♘axc5 11 ♘xf5 e6 12 ♗b5+ ♔d8 13 ♘g3 ♘xf2 14 ♔xf2 ♘xb3 15 ♗c4 ♕a1 16 ♘f3 ♕xd1 17 ♖xd1 ♘a5 18 ♗xd5 ±.

b12) 6...d6 7 ♗c4 ♗e6 8 ♖a2 ♕xa2 9 ♗xa2 ♗xa2 10 c4 ±.

b13) 6...♘d5 7 ♖b1 ♕a2 8 ♖b3 cxd4 (or 8...♘xf4 9 ♘c3 ♕xb3 10 cxb3 ±) 9 ♗e5 ♘c5 10 ♗c4 ♘b6 11 ♗xd4 ♘xc4 (11...♘xb3 12 ♗xb3 +–) 12 ♗xc5 b6 13 ♗d4 e5 14 ♘c3 ♘b2 15 ♘xa2 ♘xd1 16 ♗xe5 ±.

b2) 5...♘d5 6 a3 a6! (6...cxd4? 7 ♖b1 ♕a2 8 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 9 ♕c1 a6 10 ♖b2 +–) 7 ♖b1 ♕a2 8 ♕c1 (8 ♖a1 repeats) 8...axb5 9 ♖a1 ♕xa1 10 ♕xa1 and now Black's best chance to stay afloat seems to be 10...♘c6 intending ...b4.

c) 4...a6 5 ♖b1 d6 6 h3 ♘c6 7 ♘f3 ♗f5 8 a3 ♖d8 9 d5 ♘b8 10 ♗d3 ♗xd3 11 ♕xd3 e5 12 ♗g5 ♗e7 13 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 14 a4 0-0 15 ♘d2 ♗e7 16 e4 ± Rohrmüller-Kuraszkiewicz, Bavaria 1994.

d) 4...d6 5 ♗d3 g6 6 ♘ge2 ♗g7 (Boguszlavszkij-P.Horvath, Hungary 2002) and now we would have liked to see something along the lines of 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♕d2 rather than the colourless 7 dxc5.

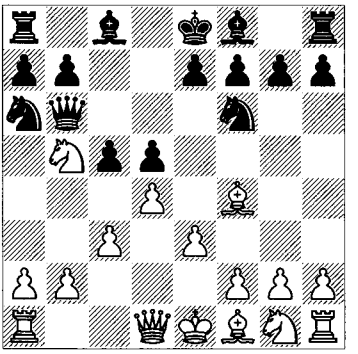
e) 4...d5 is an important alternative – even more so because the main line is one of Black's few sensible reactions to 4 ♘a3.

e1) 5 ♘f3 – Line 4C.

e2) 5 a3 ♗f5 6 ♗b5+ ♘c6 7 ♘f3 e6 8 0-0 a6 9 dxc5 ♗xc5 10 ♗d3 ♗g4 11 ♘a4 ♕a7 12 ♘xc5 ♕xc5 13 ♗e2 0-0 = ½-½ M.Lang-Längl, Württemberg 1992.

e3) A critical position arises after 5 ♘b5 ♘a6. It may seem that Black has generally preferred to avoid it with moves preventing ♘b5 (4...a6 above and 5...c4 in Line 4C), but that may rather reflect a wish to renew the ...♕xb2 threat, hoping for a concession from White. After 6 c3 *(D)* (6 a4!? seems less precise as in a few variations White can do without the a-pawn move) we have a major split:

B



e31) 6...♗f5?! 7 dxc5! ♕xc5 8 ♗e5! ♘e4 9 ♗d4 ±.

e32) 6...e6 7 ♘f3 – note 'b1' to Black's 5th move in Line 4C.

e33) 6...c4 7 a4 ♗f5 8 ♘f3 e6 (8...♘e4 9 b3 ♖c8 10 bxc4 dxc4 11 ♘e5 ±) 9 b3 cxb3 10 ♕xb3 ♘d7 (10...♗e7? 11 ♗c7! ♘xc7 12 a5 +–) 11 ♘e5 ♘xe5 12 ♗xe5 f6 13 ♘d6+ ♗xd6 14 ♕xb6 axb6 15 ♗xd6 ♔d7 16 ♗g3 ±.

e34) 6...♗d7 appears the best try. 7 a4 c4 8 ♘f3 ♘h5 (8...♗xb5 9 axb5 ♕xb5 10 b3 ♕xb3 11 ♕xb3 cxb3 12 ♖b1 ±) 9 ♘e5 ♘xf4 (9...♗xb5 10 ♕xh5 g6 11 ♕d1 ♗c6 12 b3 ±) 10 ♘xd7 ♔xd7 11 exf4 and now:

e341) 11...♘c7?! 12 b3 ♘xb5 13 axb5 ♕xb5 14 bxc4 dxc4 15 ♗e2 ±.

e342) 11...e6 12 b3 cxb3 13 ♕xb3 ♘c7 14 a5 ♕c6 15 ♗d3 a6 16 ♘xc7 ♕xc7 17 f5 ±.

e343) 11...♘b8! 12 b4 a6 13 ♘a3 ♕e6+ 14 ♗e2 ♕e4 15 f5! ♔c7! (15...♕xg2?! 16 ♗f3 ♕h3 17 ♗xd5 ♕xc3+ 18 ♔f1 ±) 16 0-0 ♕xf5 17 b5 and White will be able to open the position somewhat, when his superior development should at least compensate for the pawn.

5 exd4 ♘c6!

Or:

a) 5...e6 6 ♘f3 – note 'e' to Black's 5th move in Line 12C.

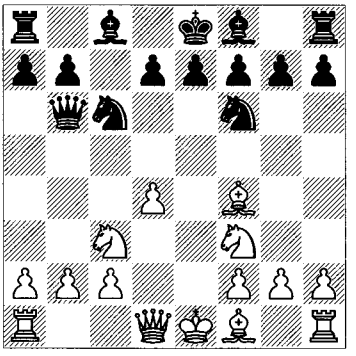
b) 5...♕xb2? again loses to 6 ♘b5:

b1) 6...♘a6 7 a3 ♘d5 8 ♗d2 ♘ac7 9 ♖b1 ♕a2 10 ♕c1 ♘xb5 11 ♖a1 ♕xa1 12 ♕xa1 ♘d6 13 c4 ±.

b2) 6...♘d5 7 ♗d2 a6 8 ♖b1 ♕xa2 9 ♖a1 ♕b2 10 c4 ♘b4 11 ♗c3 ♕xa1 (11...♘c2+ 12 ♔d2 ♘xa1+ 13 ♗xb2 axb5 14 cxb5 +–) 12 ♘c7+ ♔d8 13 ♗xa1 ♔xc7 +–.

c) 5...d5 6 ♘b5 ♘a6 7 a4 ♗f5 (7...♗d7 8 ♘f3 ♘h5 9 a5 ♕e6+ 10 ♗e3 g6 11 ♗e2 ♗g7 12 ♘c3 ♘f6 13 0-0 0-0 14 ♕d2 ± Bonnez-J.L.Nielsen, Århus 1992) 8 a5 ♕d8 9 c3 (9 h3 e6 10 c3 ♗e7 11 ♘f3 0-0 12 ♗d3 ♗e4 13 0-0 ♗xd3 14 ♕xd3 ♘e4 15 ♘e5 ± Dickinson-Armstrong, British League (4NCL) 2000/1) 9...e6 10 ♕a4 ♘d7 11 ♘d6+ ♗xd6 12 ♗xd6 ±.

6 ♘f3 *(D)*



6...e6

The pawn is still poisoned: 6...♕xb2? 7 ♘b5 ♘d5 8 ♖b1 ♕xa2 9 ♗d2 a6 10 ♖a1 ♕b2 11 ♗c4 e6 (11...♘cb4 12 0-0 axb5 13 ♖xa8 +–) 12 ♗b3 ♗b4 (12...♘a7 13 ♖a2 ♕xa2 14 ♗xa2 ♘xb5 15 ♗xd5 exd5 16 ♕e2+ ♗e7 17 ♕e5 is also winning for White) 13 ♖a2 ♕xa2 14 ♗xa2 ♗xd2+ 15 ♔xd2 axb5 16 ♗xd5 exd5 17 ♖e1+ and White wins.

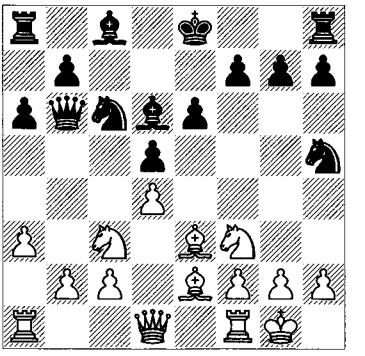
7 a3 a6 8 ♗e2 d5 9 0-0 ♘h5

This decentralization achieves little. 9...♗e7 should come close to equalizing.

10 ♗e3

10 ♘a4!? deserves consideration. The idea is that 10...♕a5 (10...♕d8 11 ♗e3 =) 11 ♗d2 in a sense gains a tempo as 11...♕xa4?? 12 b3 +– isn't an option.

10...♗d6 *(D)*



11 ♖e1 0-0 12 ♘a4 ♕c7 13 b3 f5 (13...♘f6 14 h3 ±) 14 c4 ♘f4 15 ♗f1 ♗d7 (15...dxc4 16 bxc4 ♖b8 17 c5 ±) 16 c5 +– S.Kovačević-Melchor, Mislata 1993.

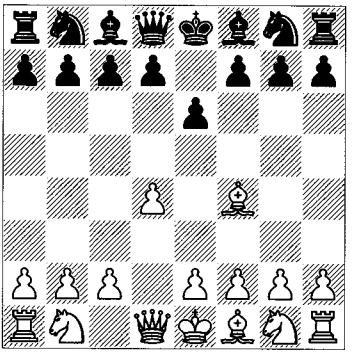
Conclusion:

We believe we have shown that 3...♕b6 isn't a tactical problem. Whether it's a strategic problem remains to be seen.

13 1...e6 and the Dutch Connection

The London shouldn't necessarily be considered an all-round weapon to be employed against all Black's possible set-ups. However, you should be able to meet 1...e6 with either 2 ♘f3 or 2 ♗f4 (according to your preferences after 1...d5 and 1...♘f6), as you could otherwise easily be tricked onto unfamiliar territory after 2...d5 or 2...♘f6. Illustrative Game 29 is a demonstration of a kingside attack down the semi-open g-file resulting from g4 and gxf5 against a Classical Dutch.

B



Chapter Outline

1 d4

13A: 1...e6 (2 ♗f4 c5)	163
13B: 1...e6 2 ♗f4 f5 (3 e3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 b6)	164
13C: 1...e6 2 ♗f4 f5 3 e3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 d5 or 1...f5 2 ♗f4 d5	166
13D: 1...f5 2 ♗f4	168

13A: 1...e6

(1 d4)

1...e6

Avoiding the Trompowsky and proposing a French.

2 ♗f4 *(D)*

In Line 2A, we concluded that 2 ♘f3 d5 3 ♗f4 ♗d6 promises White no real advantage, so this appears most consistent. However, even if you are a dedicated Londoner, you should consider the occasional 2 e4 just to make this a less tempting option to non-French players.

2...c5!?

2...d5 and 2...♘f6 have already been discussed, and 2...f5 is examined in Lines 13B and 13C. Other moves:

a) 2...b6 should be compared with note 'd' to Black's 1st move in 14C, and with Chapter 11.

b) 2...♗d6 3 ♗xd6 cxd6 4 e3 (we can't see any reason not to play 4 e4!?) 4...♘f6 5 ♗d3 0-0 6 c4 ♘c6 7 ♘c3 b6 8 ♘f3 ♗b7 9 0-0 d5 10 cxd5 exd5 11 a3 ♖e8 12 b4 ♘e4 13 ♖c1 ♘xc3 14 ♖xc3 ± Frohlich-Brabec, Czech open Ch 1996.

c) 2...b5 3 e3 ♗b7 (3...a6 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 5 h3 ♗b7 6 c4 bxc4 7 ♗xc4 d5 8 ♗b3 c5 9 ♗xb8 ♕xb8 10 ♗a4+ ± Hargens-Steffens, 2nd Bundesliga 1995/6) 4 ♘f3 a6 5 c3 c5 6 ♘bd2 ♘f6 7 ♗d3 d6 8 h3 ♘bd7 9 0-0 ♕c7 10 a4 e5 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 ♗h2 c4 13 ♗c2 ♗d6 14 axb5 axb5 15 ♖xa8+ ♗xa8 16 e4 0-0 = Zayats-Remizov, Moscow 1992.

3 e3

3 c3 is definitely playable. However, if you win, it will not be because of your opening preparation.

3...♕b6 4 ♘c3!

a) 4 ♘a3!? may be worth testing for the experimentally minded – compare with *1...♘f6 2 ♗f4 c5 3 e3 ♕b6 4 ♘a3!?* in Line 12E.

b) 4 b3 ♘c6 5 ♘f3 ♘f6 6 c3 d5 7 ♗d3 ♗e7 8 0-0 ♗d7 9 ♘bd2 cxd4 10 exd4 h6 11 ♘e5 with a slight advantage for White, Rudakov-Schukin, St Petersburg 2001.

4...cxd4

Not 4...♕xb2? (4...♘f6 5 ♘f3 – Line 12C), which seems to lose in familiar style: 5 ♘b5 ♘a6 6 a3! cxd4 (6...♔d8 7 ♖b1 ♕a2 8 ♖b3 +–) 7 ♗e5 ♘b4! 8 ♖c1! ♘c6 (8...♗c5 9 axb4 ♗xb4+ 10 c3 +–) 9 ♖b1 ♕a2 10 exd4 ♘xe5 11 dxe5 ♔d8 12 ♖b3 +–.

5 exd4 ♕xb2!? 6 ♘b5

6 ♘ge2 will also give White a certain amount of compensation: 6...♗b4 7 ♗d2 ♗xc3 8 ♘xc3 ♕b6 9 ♕g4 ♘c6 10 ♘b5 and White has practical chances at the very least.

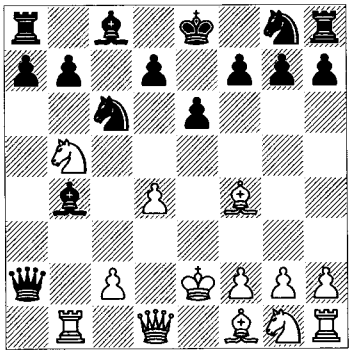
6...♗b4+

Not 6...♘a6 7 a3 ♘f6 8 ♗c4 ♘d5 9 ♗d2 +–.

7 ♔e2 ♘c6!

7...♘a6? 8 a3 ♗a5 (8...♗e7 9 ♖b1 ♕a2 10 ♖b3 +–) 9 ♔f3! d5 10 ♖b1 ♕a2 11 ♕c1 e5 12 dxe5 h5 13 ♖b2 ♗g4+ 14 ♔g3 +–.

8 ♖b1 ♕xa2 *(D)*



9 ♖a1

We dare not recommend 9 d5 exd5 10 ♔f3!?, but if you are feeling brave it may be an option. On the other hand, 9 ♘c7+? comes close to losing by force: 9...♔e7 10 ♘xa8 ♘xd4+ 11 ♕xd4 (11 ♔e3 ♘xc2+ 12 ♔f3 ♘f6 13 ♗g5 ♗c5 14 ♔g3 ♘a3 15 ♗xf6+ gxf6 16 ♖a1 ♕xf2+ 17 ♔h3 d5 –+) 11...♕xb1 12 c3 ♕c2+ 13 ♗d2 ♗d6 14 ♕xg7 b6 –+.

9...♕b2 10 ♖b1

White should take the repetition.

Conclusion:

This line represents a real challenge for serious Londoners, but there is ample scope for home investigation.

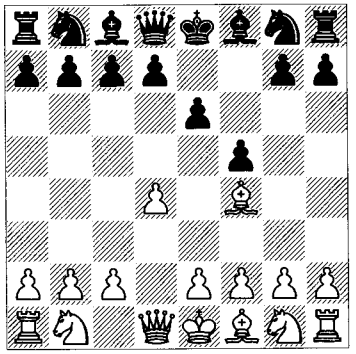
13B: 2...f5 Classical Dutch

(1 d4 e6 2 ♗f4)

2...f5 *(D)*

2...b5 can be found in Line 14A (and, yes, 2...g5 has been played!).

This Dutch position could equally well have occurred after 1...f5 2 ♗f4 e6. However, Black's first move prevents him from playing the most dynamic Dutch variation – the Leningrad.



3 e3

In our recommended repertoire this and 3 ♘f3 transpose.

3...♘f6 4 ♘f3

4 h3 isn't necessary, as ...♘h5 isn't a threat (see comment to 6...♗e7), but it is fully playable and will probably transpose.

4...b6

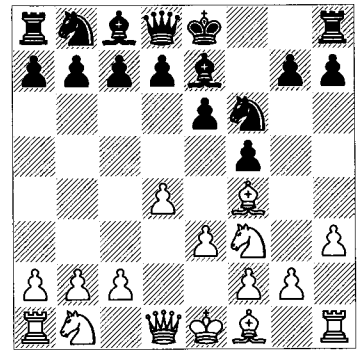
Generally this is an attractive move for Black in the Dutch and a major reason why White usually plays an early g3 against it.

a) 4...d5 is Line 13C.

b) 4...♘h5?! 5 ♘bd2 ♘xf4 6 exf4 ♗e7 7 ♗c4 0-0 8 0-0 b6 9 ♘e5 ♗b7 10 ♖e1 ±.

c) 4...d6!? 5 h3 ♘c6 6 c4 ♕e7 7 ♘c3 g6 (7...♘e4!? 8 d5 ±) 8 ♗e2 (8 d5!? ♘d8 9 c5 dxc5 10 ♗b5+ c6 11 dxc6 ♘xc6 12 ♗xc6+ bxc6 13 ♕a4 ♗d7 14 e4 ♗g7 15 ♖d1 ±) 8...♗g7 9 ♗h2 0-0 10 0-0 ♘d8 11 b4 ♘f7 = S.Kovačević-Narciso Dublan, Vendrell 1996.

d) 4...♗e7 5 h3 *(D)* and in this position Black has played:



d1) 5...0-0 6 ♗d3 d6 (6...b6 7 ♘bd2 ♗b7 – *4...b6 5 ♗d3 ♗b7 6 ♘bd2 ♗e7 7 h3 0-0*) 7 g4!? (7 c3 ♘c6 8 ♘bd2 ♕e8 9 ♕c2 ±) 7...♘d5 8 ♗h2 ♗h4 (8...♘b4!?) 9 ♕e2 ♘b4 10 ♘xh4

♘xd3+ 11 ♕xd3 ♕xh4 12 ♗g3 ♕h6 13 gxf5 ♖xf5 14 ♘c3 ± Ovseevich-Manakova, Alushta 1994.

d2) 5...d6 6 ♗d3 ♘c6 7 c4 (7 c3 0-0 8 ♘bd2 may allow White to concentrate more fully on his kingside potential) 7...0-0 8 ♘c3 and then:

d21) 8...♕e8 9 ♗h2 ♗d8 10 d5 (10 ♕b3!?) 10...♘b4 11 dxe6 ♘xd3+ 12 ♕xd3 ♗xe6 13 ♘d4 ♘e4 and Black had fine chances in an unbalanced position in Benjamin-Wolff, USA jr Ch (New York) 1983.

d22) 8...♘d7 9 ♗h2 e5 10 ♗c2 ♕e8 11 ♕e2 ♗d8 12 0-0-0 ♘f6 and Black has again succeeded in unbalancing the position, Hass-Gleizerov, Warsaw 1991.

5 ♗d3 ♗b7 6 ♘bd2 ♗e7

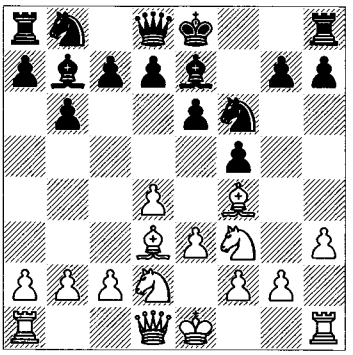
6...♘h5 and 6...♘d5 are rather meaningless as capturing on f4 isn't really a threat. White's open e-file and pawns on d4 and f4 would give him an iron grip on e5. The main difference from similar positions with a black pawn on d5 rather than on f5 is that in that case Black could most likely leave his f-pawn at home, thereby covering the e-file weaknesses. However, leaving the d-pawn at d7 would cause Black serious difficulties in mobilizing his pieces.

a) 6...♗d6 7 c3 0-0 8 ♕c2 ♗xf4 9 exf4 c5 10 0-0 ♕c7 11 g3 cxd4 12 ♘xd4 ♘c6 gave Black a slight advantage in Wesseln-Dgebuadze, Oldenburg 2000.

b) 6...d6 7 ♕e2 ♘d5 (Muranyi-Scherer, Altenkirchen 2001) 8 0-0! ±.

7 h3 *(D)*

B



This isn't primarily a precaution against ...♘h5, but rather a preparation for a kingside attack with the line-opening g4 if Black closes the centre or otherwise plays passively.

7...0-0 8 c3

The more committal 8 g4!? is also popular and quite promising. For 8 ♕e2!? see Illustrative Game 29.

8...♘e4

Alternatively:

a) 8...c5 9 0-0 ♘e4 10 a4 d5 11 ♘e5 ♘xd2 12 ♕xd2 ♘d7 13 ♕e2 ♘xe5 14 ♗xe5 ♗d6 15 f4 ♗xe5 16 fxe5 c4 17 ♗c2 ♗c6 18 ♔h2 g6 19 g4 ± S.Kovačević-Fernandez Romero, Almassora 2000.

b) After 8...♗e4 9 ♗xe4 ♘xe4 (Diachkov-Ulybin, Russian Clubs Cup (Maikop) 1998) White should consider 10 d5!? ♘a6 (10...exd5?? 11 ♘xe4 dxe4 12 ♕d5+ +–) 11 ♘e5 ♗d6 12 ♘xe4 fxe4 13 dxe6 ±.

9 ♕e2

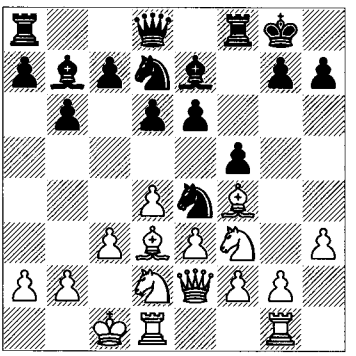
This is probably the best square for the queen, so why reveal more than necessary? Black instantly struck back in the centre after 9 ♖g1 in Schlindwein-Onishchuk, Viernheim 1995: 9...c5 10 ♕c2 (10 ♕e2!?) 10...d5 11 g4 ♘c6 12 gxf5 exf5 13 ♘e5 ♘xe5 14 ♗xe5 ♗f6 15 ♘f3 ♗xe5 16 ♘xe5 ♕h4, when Black's chances were probably no worse.

9...d6

The more energetic 9...c5 may be better. White should then consider the solid 10 0-0.

10 ♖g1 ♘d7 11 0-0-0 *(D)*

B



11...♘df6

Other moves are probably inferior:

a) 11...♔h8 12 g4 c5 13 gxf5 exf5 14 h4 ♘df6 15 dxc5 bxc5 16 ♘g5 ♕a5 17 ♘dxe4 fxe4 18 ♗b1 ♗a6 19 ♕c2 d5? (19...♗c4 20 ♘xe4 ♗xa2 21 ♘xf6 ♗xb1 22 ♔xb1 ♖xf6 23 h5 ±) 20 ♖xd5! ♘xd5 21 ♕xe4 g6 22 ♕xd5 1-0 Kosikov-Malykin, Kiev 1999.

b) 11...c5 12 g4 ♘xd2?! 13 ♘xd2 e5?! (or 13...♖c8 14 gxf5 exf5 15 ♕h5 ♕e8 16 ♕h6 g6

17 h4 ±) 14 dxe5 dxe5 15 ♗h2 f4 16 exf4 exf4 17 ♘c4 1-0 Jovičić-Reher, Bad Segeberg 1995.

12 g4 ♔h8 13 gxf5!

13 c4 looks somewhat inconsistent. 13...b5 14 gxf5 exf5 15 ♘g5 ♘xg5 16 ♗xg5 bxc4 17 ♗xf5 ♘d5 18 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 19 ♕h5 g6 20 ♗xg6 c3 was murky in N.Popov-Makarychev, Ukrainian Ch (Rostov) 1976, but Black's attack appeared a little easier to conduct.

13...exf5 14 h4 ♕d7

14...♘h5 is no better: 15 ♘g5 ♘xf4 16 exf4 ±.

15 ♘g5 h6

White is close to winning by force. 16 f3 ♘xd2 17 ♖xd2 ♘d5 18 ♗h2 and then:

a) 18...hxg5?! 19 hxg5 c5 (19...♔g8 20 e4 ±; 19...g6 20 e4 ±) 20 g6 ♔g8 21 dxc5 dxc5 22 e4 +–.

b) 18...♖ae8 19 e4 ♗d8 20 ♕g2 ♘e3 21 ♕h3 ♗c8 22 e5 f4 23 e6 ♕a4 24 d5 ♗f6 (24...♕xa2 25 ♘f7+ ♔g8 26 ♗xf4 +–) 25 ♔b1 ±.

Conclusion:

The Dutch is an ambitious but correspondingly risky opening. The London lines examined in this section are among White's more direct attacking lines, and we would expect them to score particularly well below international level.

13C: Dutch Stonewall

(1 d4)

1...e6

1...f5 2 ♗f4 d5 and 1...d5 2 ♗f4 f5 don't strike us as attractive paths to the Dutch Stonewall as they allow a few murky gambits. However, many Dutch players are happy to enter a dogfight whenever possible, and are never more pleased than when White offers an 'interesting' gambit. Anyway, our recommendation is 3 e3 – mainly because the position after 3...e6 can also be reached from 2...e6 3 e3 f5. Then 3...♘f6 4 c4 e6 5 ♘f3 transposes to our main line below.

2 ♗f4 f5 3 e3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 d5 5 c4

5 c3 is playable but this comes close to a refutation of Black's set-up.

5...c6

After 5...♗d6 6 ♘c3 0-0 (6...♗xf4?! 7 exf4 0-0 8 ♗e2 b6 9 0-0 ♗b7 10 ♖c1 ♘bd7 11 b4 dxc4 12 ♗xc4 ♘d5 13 ♗xd5 exd5 14 ♖e1 ♘f6 15 ♘e5 ± Sakaev-Radulski, Yugoslav Cht (Vrnjačka Banja) 1996) 7 ♗d3 Black has tried:

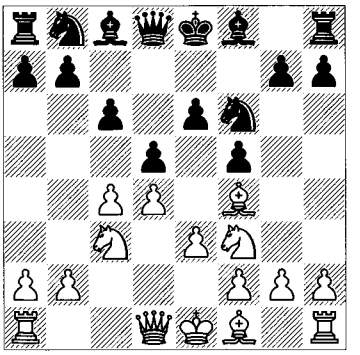
a) 7...b6 8 0-0 ♘e4 9 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♖c1 c6 12 ♘e5 ♗b7 13 f4 ± Suran-Orlowski, Bavaria 1997.

b) 7...♘c6 8 0-0 ♗d7 9 ♗xd6 cxd6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♕b3 ± Vyzhmanavin-Padevsky, Gelsenkirchen 1991.

c) 7...c6 8 0-0 ♕c7 (8...♘e4 and now 9 ♗xe4?! fxe4 10 ♘e5 ♕e7 11 c5 ♗c7 12 f3 exf3 13 ♖xf3 b6 14 ♘a4 ♗a6 15 ♖c1 b5 16 ♘c3 b4 was hard to evaluate in I.Sokolov-Lukov, Maribor 1990, but 9 ♕c2 looks more thematic) 9 ♘e2 (9 g3 is also good) 9...♘h5 10 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 11 c5 ♕c7 12 b4 ♘d7 13 ♕c2 g6 14 ♕b2 ♖e8 15 ♘e5! ♘xe5 16 dxe5 g5 17 f4 g4 18 ♘d4 ± Lalić-de los Santos, Malaga 2002.

6 ♘c3 *(D)*

B



6...♗e7

6...♗d6?! seems wrong in principle but has been played by some fairly strong players. White should probably just develop, hoping that Black exchanges on f4, opening the e-file for pressure against e6; e.g., 7 ♗d3 0-0 8 0-0 ♘e4 9 ♕c2 ♗xf4 10 exf4 ♘d7 11 ♖fe1 ♘df6 12 ♘e5 ♘d6 13 c5 ♘f7 14 b4 ± Savchenko-Iliushin, Linares 1998.

7 ♗d3 0-0

If Black delays castling, White may go for a central break with e4: 7...♘bd7 8 h3 ♘e4 9 ♕c2 ♘df6 10 ♘e5 ♘xc3 11 bxc3 ♘e4 12 0-0 0-0 13 f3 ♘d6 14 ♖ab1 ♘f7 15 e4 ± Sulypa-Baron, Elancourt 2004.

8 ♕c2

8 ♘e5 and the quiet developing 8 0-0 are popular and promising alternatives. 8 h3 is also

very playable, but if White is playing for the line-opening g4, the move may prove unnecessary: 8...♘e4 9 ♕c2 ♕a5 10 ♔e2 ♗d7 11 g4 ♗e8 12 gxf5 exf5 13 ♘e5 ♘d7 14 ♘xd7 ♗xd7 15 ♕b3 ♘xc3+ 16 bxc3 b6 = Gheorghiu-Zambo, Winterthur 2003.

8...♘e4

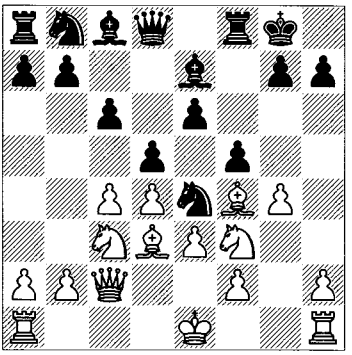
Or:

a) 8...♗d7 9 ♘e5 ♘a6 10 a3 ♘c7 11 cxd5 (11 c5!?) 11...♘cxd5 12 ♗g3 ♘h5 13 ♘f3 ♘xg3 14 hxg3 is slightly better for White, Scherbakov-Grabarczyk, Koszalin 1997.

b) 8...♔h8 9 h3 ♘e4 10 g4 ♗d6 11 ♗xd6 ♘xd6 12 ♘e5 ♘d7 13 0-0-0 ♕e7 14 cxd5 cxd5 15 f4 ♘f6 16 h4 ♗d7 17 h5 ± Pogorelov-Guliev, Moscow 1996.

9 g4 *(D)*

B



9...♘a6

At this critical juncture Black has tried many moves:

a) 9...♘d7?! 10 gxf5 exf5 11 cxd5 cxd5 12 ♘xd5 ♕a5+ 13 ♔e2 ♗d6 14 b4 ♕d8 15 ♗xd6 ♘xd6 16 ♘c7 1-0 Arkhipov-Stöckmann, Münster 1991.

b) 9...♗d6 10 ♗e5 ♘xc3 11 bxc3 ♗xe5 12 ♘xe5 ♘d7 13 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 14 a4 ♕d6 15 f4 ♔h8 16 g5 b6 17 a5 ± Jakab-Antal, Budapest 2002.

c) 9...♗b4 10 ♔e2 ♗xc3 11 bxc3 b6 12 ♖hg1 ♗a6 13 gxf5 exf5 14 ♘e5 ♘d7 15 f3 ♕h4?! 16 ♖g2 ♘ef6?! (16...♘xe5 17 ♗xe5 ♘f6 is much better for White) 17 ♖ag1 ♘xe5 18 ♖xg7+ ♔h8 19 ♗xe5 ♖ae8 20 ♔d1 ♖xe5 21 dxe5 ♘h5 22 ♕g2 1-0 Seres-Vajda, Eger 2002.

d) 9...♘xc3 10 bxc3 dxc4 11 ♗xc4 fxg4 12 ♘e5 ♗g5?! 13 ♗d3 +– Volzhin-Farrell, Canberra 2001.

e) 9...♔h8!? is a useful waiting move: 10 gxf5 exf5 11 0-0-0 ♗e6 12 ♘e5 ± Novikov-Makarychev, Tallinn rpd 1988.

f) 9...♕a5 pins the c3-knight:

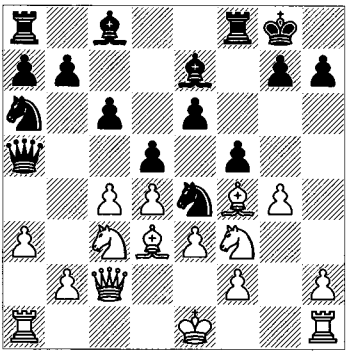
f1) 10 a3 has been played by some strong players but looks a little anaemic.

f2) After 10 ♔e2 ♗a3!? 11 ♖ac1 ♘xc3+ 12 ♕xc3 ♕xc3 13 ♖xc3 ♗xb2 14 ♖b3 fxg4 (Shariyazdanov-Radjabov, Biel 2000) Black has a surprising array of tactical resources but one still suspects that White should be winning.

f3) 10 gxf5 exf5 11 ♔e2 ♘xc3+ (11...♗e6 12 cxd5 cxd5 13 ♕b3 ♘d7 14 ♖hg1 ♔h8 15 ♘e5 ♖fc8?! 16 ♗xe4 fxe4 17 ♘xd7 ♕a6+ 18 ♕b5 ± Aagaard-N.Pedersen, Ringsted 1992; 11...♗a3!?) 12 bxc3 ♗e6 13 ♕b3 dxc4 14 ♗xc4 ♗xc4+ 15 ♕xc4+ ♕d5 16 ♕xd5+ cxd5 17 ♖hb1 b6 18 ♖b5 ♖d8 19 ♖c1 ♘a6 20 a4 ♖ac8 21 a5 +– Rustemov-Schaffarth, Bad Wiessee 1999.

10 a3 ♕a5 *(D)*

W



Black renews the ...♘b4 threat and prepares queenside counterplay.

11 ♔e2!

The queen's rook needs to be mobilized and the centre is probably the safest place for the king.

11...dxc4

White tends to win short games in this variation but he also tends to out-rate Black heavily:

a) 11...g5 12 ♗e5 fxg4 13 ♗xe4 dxe4 (Yermolinsky-Milicević, Los Angeles 2002) 14 ♘d2! ♘b8 15 ♕xe4 ♘d7 16 b4 ♕d8 17 ♕xg4 ±.

b) 11...♗d7 12 ♘e5 ♗e8 13 f3 ♘xc3+ 14 bxc3 ♘c7 (14...g6 15 gxf5 exf5 16 ♖ag1 ♔h8 17 h4 ♕d8 18 ♗h6 ♖g8 19 ♗xf5 gxf5 20 ♖xg8+ ♔xg8 21 ♖g1+ ♔h8 22 ♕xf5 1-0 Khenkin-Hustert, Ruhrgebiet 1995) 15 gxf5 dxc4 16

♘xc4 ♕d5 17 ♗xc7 exf5 18 ♘e5 1-0 Ikonnikov-Speck, Winterthur 2002.

12 ♗xc4 ♘xc3+

13 ♕xc3 ♕b6 14 gxf5 ♖xf5 15 ♖hg1 ♘c7 (Hellsten-Straeter, Bundesliga 2001/2) and now White should play 16 ♗e5! ♖f7 17 ♕c2 ♗d7 18 ♗d3 +– according to Hellsten.

Conclusion:

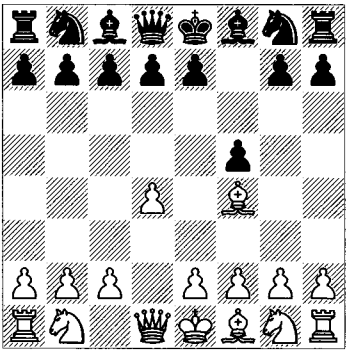
The Stonewall isn't an attractive option for Black when White has established a bishop on f4. White will normally meet ...♗d6 with e3 and after ...♗xf4 open the e-file with exf4.

13D: The Leningrad Approach

(1 d4)

1...f5 2 ♗f4 *(D)*

B



Whereas your repertoire will end up slightly inconsistent if you cannot meet 1...e6 with 2 ♗f4 or 2 ♘f3, there is no logical necessity to play the London against the normal Dutch. However, it will certainly save you some work as 2...e6 or 2...♘f6 3 e3 e6 will transpose to Line 13B or 13C. The big question is whether White can gain any advantage against the Leningrad and Ilyin-Zhenevsky set-ups. We have taken the liberty to present a rather limited approach. We cannot guarantee it will give you an advantage, but it's likely to give you a nice attack. And should it prove not to be theoretically sound, you will not need to change your entire repertoire.

2...♘f6

Although in theory Black may find it easier to force ...e5 without it, there seems to be little reason to delay this flexible move. After 2...d6 3 ♘f3 (3 e3 g6 4 h4 h6 5 ♗c4 ♘f6 6 ♘f3 – *2...♘f6 3 e3 g6 4 h4 h6 5 ♘f3 d6 6 ♗c4)* 3...g6 4 e3 ♗g7 5 ♗c4 Black will soon have to play ...♘f6 anyway:

a) 5...c6 6 a4 ♘f6 7 c3 ♘d5 8 ♕b3 e6 9 ♗xd5 cxd5 10 ♘a3 ♘c6 11 ♘b5 ♗f8 12 ♕a3 e5 13 ♗g5 ♕d7 14 ♗f6 ± Guidez-Yedlin, French Cht 1989.

b) 5...e6 6 h4 ♘f6 7 ♘c3 ♕e7 8 ♕e2 ♘c6 9 0-0-0 ♗d7 10 a3 0-0-0 ± Miladinović-Ochoa, Las Palmas 1994.

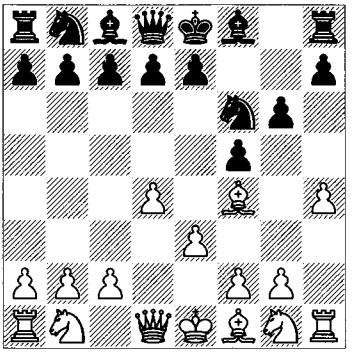
3 e3!

This way the h-pawn will march with more force, if Black is careless.

3...d6!

3...g6 may be inaccurate because of 4 h4! *(D)*. Then:

B



a) 4...♗g7 5 h5 and here:

a1) 5...♘xh5 6 ♖xh5 gxh5 7 ♕xh5+ ♔f8 8 ♕xf5+ ♔g8 (8...♗f6 9 ♗h6+ ♔f7 10 e4 d5 11 ♕h5+ ♔g8 12 ♘f3 ♗g7 13 ♕g5 ♕f8 14 ♗xg7 ♕xg7 15 ♕xd5+ e6 16 ♕d8+ ♕f8 17 ♕xc7 +–) 9 ♘c3 e6 10 ♕h5 d6 11 ♘f3 ♗d7 12 ♗c4 ± ♘c6 13 d5 ♗e8 14 ♕g4 ♘a5 15 ♗g5 h5 16 ♕g3 ♘xc4? 17 ♗xd8 ♖xd8 18 ♕h4 ♘xb2 19 ♕xd8 ♗xc3+ 20 ♔f1 1-0 Schlindwein-Schoenfeld, Binz 1994.

a2) 5...d6 6 h6 ♗f8 7 c4 e6 8 ♘c3 ♗e7 9 ♕c2 0-0 10 0-0-0 ♕e8 11 ♘f3 ♘g4 12 ♗g3 a6 13 e4 ± A.Rabinovich-Hnydiuk, Rimavska Sobota U-18 Ech 1996.

b) 4...c5 5 h5 ♖g8 6 hxg6 hxg6 7 ♘d2 ♘c6 8 ♘gf3 d5 9 c3 cxd4 10 cxd4 ♕a5 11 a3 ♗d7 12 ♗e2 ♖c8 (½-½ Witkowski-Grabarczyk, Lubniewice 1995) 13 b4 ♕b6 14 ♖c1 ±.

c) 4...h6 (intending to meet h5 with ...g5) 5 ♘f3 d6 6 ♗c4!? e6 7 ♘c3 and now:

c1) 7...♗g7 8 ♕e2 ♕e7 9 e4 fxe4 10 ♘xe4 ♘h5 11 ♗h2 ♘c6 (Matveeva-Lagvilava, Warsaw

wom 2001) 12 g4 ♘f6 13 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 14 0-0-0 ±.

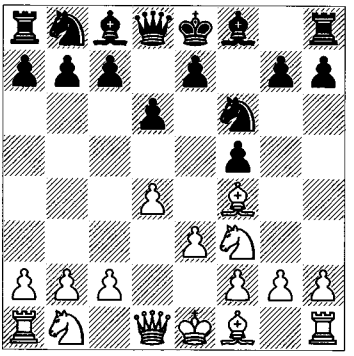
c2) 7...♕e7 8 ♕e2 ♘c6 9 0-0-0 a6 with another branch:

c21) 10 d5 ♘a5 11 dxe6 ♘xc4 12 ♕xc4 ♗xe6 13 ♕a4+ ♗d7 14 ♕b3 0-0-0 is roughly even.

c22) 10 e4 is risky as Black can win a piece by 10...fxe4 11 ♘xe4 d5 but White has a lot of compensation after 12 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 13 ♗xc7 dxc4 14 ♕xc4 ♗d7 15 ♕b3. In Lempert-Kontić, Yugoslav Cht (Vrnjačka Banja) 1996, Black preferred 10...b5 11 ♗d3 b4 12 ♘a4 e5 13 dxe5 dxe5 14 ♗e3 fxe4 15 ♗xe4 ♘xe4 16 ♕c4 ♕f6 17 ♕xe4 ♗f5, again with unclear complications.

4 ♘f3 *(D)*

B



There are promising alternatives available, but this is the most flexible.

4...g6

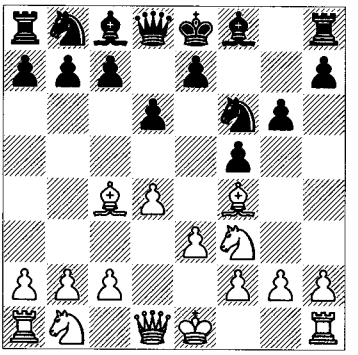
Now the h-pawn run is less dangerous, so Black can probably afford this weakening of his kingside.

a) 4...c6 is flexible and tends to end up in genuinely unclear positions: 5 ♘bd2 g6 6 ♗c4 ♗g7 7 h3 ♘a6 8 ♗b3 ♘c7 9 ♕e2 a5 10 a3 a4 11 ♗a2 ♗e6 12 c4 0-0 13 ♗h2 ♔h8 14 0-0 ♕d7 15 ♖fe1 ♖ae8 16 ♕d1 b5 was unclear in Petronić-Nikac, Nikšić 1996.

b) 4...h6 looks overly ambitious but is hard to refute: 5 h3 g5 6 ♗h2 ♗g7 7 ♗e2 e6 8 c4 ♕e7 9 ♘c3 0-0 10 0-0 was unclear in S.Kovačević-Avshalumov, Paris 1992. 5 h4!? could be worth a try especially if you believe 3...g6 4 h4 shouldn't be met by 4...h6.

5 ♗c4 *(D)*

B



5...e6 6 h3

White shouldn't fear ...♘h5, so 6 c3 is playable: 6...♗g7 (6...♘h5 7 0-0 ♗g7 8 ♕b3 ♘xf4 9 exf4 d5 10 ♗d3 0-0 11 ♖e1 ±) 7 ♕b3 d5 8 ♗d3 0-0 9 0-0 c6 10 c4 ±.

6...♘c6

6...♕e7 is an attempt to force ...e5: 7 ♘c3 c6 8 a3 ♘bd7 9 ♗a2 h6 10 ♕e2 e5 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 ♗h2 ♗g7 13 0-0-0 ♘h7 (13...e4 14 ♘h4 ♘d5 15 ♖xd5 ♕xh4 16 ♖d6 ♗xc3 17 bxc3 ♘f8 18 ♕c4 ♕e7 19 ♖hd1 ±) 14 ♖d2 ♗f6 15 ♖hd1 ± Vasiljević-Zarković, Yugoslav Cht (Zlatibor) 1989.

7 g4!?

7 ♘c3, planning ♕e2 and 0-0-0, looks OK too.

7...♕e7 8 gxf5 gxf5 9 ♘c3 ♘d8

Here we would have liked to see the natural 10 ♕e2 rather than the 10 ♗e2 of Certić-Petković, Tivat open 1995.

Conclusion:

Rushing the kingside pawns forward has a certain charm. Black has to take care to survive the first 20 moves, but don't expect to refute the Dutch with pure brutality.

14 Early Divergences

Our primary concern has been to demonstrate that 2 ♗f4 is a strong move against 1...d5, 1...♘f6 and 1...e6. We were also happy to note that 1...f5 2 ♗f4 at least seems to secure White very good practical chances. Here follows a brief look at some alternatives. However, please bear in mind that against most of them, 2 e4 or 2 c4 will give you a very good position if you are willing to invest some time in a bit of study.

Chapter Outline

1 d4

14A: Lines with ...b5	170
14B: Lines with ...c6	171
14C: 1...d6 and other moves	172

14A: Polish Defence

(1 d4)

1...♘f6

There are some alternative move-orders:

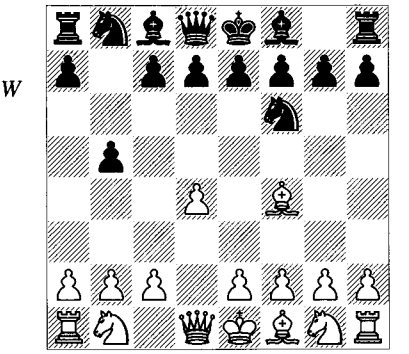
a) 1...b5 is the basic Polish Defence. 2 ♘f3 ♗b7 3 ♗f4 is a good try for an advantage; e.g., 3...g6 4 ♘bd2 ♘f6 5 e3 a6 6 h3 ♗g7 7 a4 ± (7 c3 0-0 8 ♕c2 d6 9 ♗e2 ♘bd7 10 0-0 = Mross-Richter, Munich 1941).

b) Also possible is 1...e6 2 ♗f4 b5, which gave White a small plus after 3 e3 ♗b7 4 ♘f3 a6 5 ♘bd2 f5 6 a4 b4 7 c4 ♘f6 8 ♘b3 ♗e7 9 ♘a5 ♗e4 10 ♘d2 in Ortega-Rossi, Verona 1998.

2 ♗f4

2 ♘f3 b5 3 ♗f4 leads to the same thing.

2...b5 *(D)*



While not particularly popular (and possibly not very good), this is a perfectly logical move. When White doesn't occupy the centre with 2 c4, Black tries to stop the c-pawn's advance. However, the b-pawn move may be premature and lose control over the very square it was intended to conquer.

3 ♘f3

3 e3 ♗b7 is likely to transpose.

3...♗b7

This is obviously the best square for the bishop, so other moves will normally transpose sooner or later (the main question being what Black does with his d-pawn): 3...e6 4 e3 a6 (4...c5 5 ♘bd2 a6 6 a4 cxd4 7 exd4 bxa4 8 ♖xa4 ♗e7 9 ♘c4 0-0 10 ♗d3 ♘c6 11 c3 ± Ortega-Sibilio, Rome 1991) 5 h3 ♗b7 6 ♗d3 d6 7 0-0 ♘bd7 8 ♘bd2 c5 9 c3 ♗e7 10 a4 ♕b6 11 axb5 axb5 12 ♖xa8+ ♗xa8 13 ♕e2 c4 = Seirawan-Spassky, USA 1990.

4 e3 a6

Other moves are rare:

a) 4...c5 is tactically playable as 5 ♗xb5 ♕a5+ 6 ♘c3 ♘d5 is far from clear. However, 5 c3 seems sufficient for some advantage: 5...♕b6 6 ♘bd2 ♘h5 7 ♗g3 ♘xg3 8 hxg3 e6 9 ♗d3 h6 10 g4 d6 11 ♕e2 a6 12 g5 ± Wisskirchen-Vogler, 2nd Bundesliga 1996/7.

b) 4...b4 5 a3 a5 6 axb4 axb4 7 ♖xa8 ♗xa8 8 ♘bd2 e6 9 ♗d3 ♗e7 10 ♕a1 ♗xf3 11 ♘xf3 ♘h5 12 ♗g3 f5 13 ♕a5 ♘xg3 14 hxg3 ♘c6 15 ♕a2 ± Ek-Hecht, Eksjö 1973.

5 ♘bd2 e6

5...♘h5 6 ♗g5 h6 7 ♗h4 g5 8 ♘e5 ♘f6 9 ♗g3 d6 10 ♘d3 ±.

6 ♗d3 c5

Black has also tried:

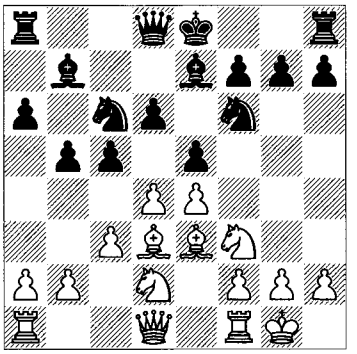
a) 6...♗e7 7 e4 d6 8 c3 ♘bd7 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♕e2 e5 11 dxe5 ♘h5 12 ♗e3 dxe5 13 a4 bxa4 14 ♖xa4 ♘f4 15 ♗xf4 exf4 16 ♘b3 ♖b8 17 ♘a5 ± H.Danielsen-E.Pedersen, Denmark 1988.

b) 6...h6!? threatens ...♘h5. After 7 h3?! Black was allowed to demonstrate his main idea in Ravisekhar-Basman, British Ch (Brighton) 1984: 7...c5 8 c3 ♘c6 9 0-0 g5! 10 ♗h2 g4 with quite a promising attack. 7 e4 is probably stronger: 7...c5 (7...♘h5?! 8 ♗e3 ±) 8 c3 ♘c6 9 ♕e2 ±.

7 c3 ♘c6

7...h6!? 8 e4 will not be so different from 6...h6.

8 0-0 d6 9 e4 e5 10 ♗e3 ♗e7 *(D)*



11 h3 0-0 12 d5 ♘b8 13 a4 ± Ortega-Tomescu, Padova 1998. See Illustrative Game 30.

Conclusion:

If the Polish can be refuted, the London isn't likely to deliver the final blow. On the other hand the Polish does not challenge the logic behind the London and should allow White at least a pleasant plus.

14B: Slav/Indian Hybrids

(1 d4)

1...♘f6

1...c6 is possibly even harder to deal with as 2 ♗f4?! ♕b6 is unpleasant when ♕c1 isn't available. However, 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 (2...d5 3 ♗f4 – *1...d5 2 ♗f4 c6 3 ♘f3*) 3 ♗f4 transposes to our main line below. We should also mention that the Exchange Caro-Kann (2 e4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5) with 4 ♗f4 is a part of our repertoire. See Lines 1D and 1E.

2 ♗f4 c6 *(D)*

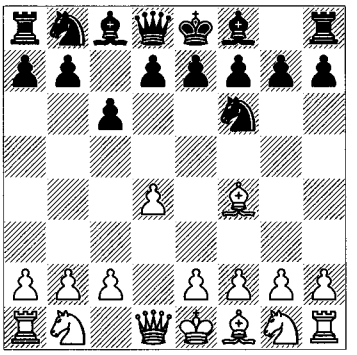
We have seen the variation 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 c6!? named the 'Sortof Indian' – based on the dialogue: "Did he play an Indian defence?" "Well, yes ... sort of ...". Maybe this variation could be called the 'Double Sortof Indian', imagining the possible dialogue: "Did he play the Sortof Indian?" "Well, yes ... sort of".

With the possible exception of 2...♘c6, the alternatives look just too experimental:

a) 2...♘d5?! 3 ♗g3 e6 (3...f5? 4 e4 +–; 3...h5 4 e4 h4 5 ♗xh4 ♖xh4 6 exd5 ±) 4 e4 ♘f6 5 ♗d3 ±.

b) 2...♘h5?! 3 ♗g5 h6 4 ♗h4 g5 5 e3 (5 e4 ♘f6 6 e5 gxh4 7 exf6 e6 ∓) 5...♘g7 (5...♘f6 6 ♗g3 ♗g7 {6...♘e4 7 ♗e5 ±} 7 ♘d2 d6 8 ♗d3 ±) 6 ♗g3 ♘f5 7 ♗e5 ♖g8 8 d5 d6 9 ♗c3 ♗g7 10 e4 ♗xc3+ 11 ♘xc3 ♘h4 12 g3 (12 ♕h5 ♘d7 13 ♕xh6 ♘f6 ∓) 12...♘g6 13 ♗g2 ±.

c) 2...♘c6 3 ♘f3 (3 d5 e5 4 ♗g3 ♘e7 {4...♘b4 5 ♘c3 c6 6 e4 cxd5 7 exd5 ♕a5 8 ♗c4 b5 9 ♗b3 ♗b7 10 ♗xe5 ♘bxd5 11 ♕e2 ±} 5 ♘c3 ♘g6 =) 3...e6 4 c4 ♗b4+ 5 ♘bd2 d6 6 a3 ♗xd2+ 7 ♕xd2 0-0 8 e3 ♕e8 9 ♗e2 e5 10 ♗g3 e4 11 ♘g1 ♗f5 12 ♗h4 ♕e7 13 ♗d1 a6 14 ♘e2 h6 15 ♘c3 ± Gulko-*Kasparov's Gambit*, Boston 1993.



3 ♘f3

3 e3 ♕b6 4 b3 (4 ♕c1 allows the same trick) 4...g5!? is a noteworthy idea: 5 ♗e5 ♗g7 6 h4 gxh4 7 ♖xh4 d6 8 ♗g3 ♗f5 9 ♗d3 ♗g6 10 ♘h3 ♘bd7 11 ♘f4 0-0-0 12 c3 e5 ∓ Pietersma-Hoogendoorn, Nijmegen 1998.

3...♕b6

It's slightly surprising that even though the position after 3 ♘f3 has occurred quite a few times, this thematic move never seems to have been tested. Alternatively:

a) 3...d5 4 e3 – Lines 6C-6F.

b) 3...d6 – Line 10A.

c) 3...♘h5 is probably playable but shouldn't be combined with pawn-grabbing: 4 ♗d2 d5 5 c4 e6 6 ♘c3 dxc4 7 e3 b5?! 8 a4 ♕b6 9 axb5

cxb5 10 b3 cxb3 11 ♗xb5+ ♗d7 12 ♕xb3 ♘f6 13 ♘e5 ♗d6? 14 ♘c4 ♕c7 15 ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 16 ♕b7! 0-0 17 ♕xd7 1-0 M.Olbrich-Ehrke, Bundesliga wom 1998/9.

4 ♕c1

4 b3 d5 5 e3 – the note to White's 5th move in Line 6E.

4...d6

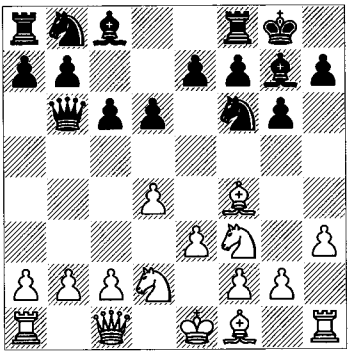
4...d5 5 e3 – Line 6E.

5 h3 g6 6 e3

6 ♘bd2!? may improve: 6...♗g7 (6...d5) 7 e4 d5 8 e5 ♘e4 9 c3 ±.

6...♗g7 7 ♘bd2 0-0 *(D)*

W



8 ♗d3 c5 9 c3 ♘c6 10 0-0 cxd4 11 exd4 ♗e6 12 ♘e4 ♗d5 13 ♖e1 ♖ac8 = Glatman-Goldin, Israel 1996.

Conclusion:

We believe that the normal Sortof Indian is an excellent weapon for flexible players who know their way around in both Slav and King's Indian/Old Indian waters. Fortunately there aren't so many players of that kind around below GM level. In this version White has to watch out for ...♕b6 as well, so Black should come fairly close to equalizing.

14C: Other 1st Moves

(1 d4)

1...d6

This isn't an easy move to meet if your only weapon with White is the London. Others:

a) 1...g6 2 ♘f3 ♗g7 3 ♗f4 d6 – *1...d6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 ♗f4 ♗g7.*

b) It may be possible to reach a London-like position even against 1...c5 if you are willing to play 2 c3, allowing 2...cxd4 leading to rather barren positions. We recommend 2 d5! leading to Benoni-type positions where White does not have to play c4. This should give him good chances for a lasting advantage.

c) 1...e5 is the definitive anti-London move. Fortunately there are many ways to get an advantage. Perhaps simplest is 2 dxe5 ♘c6 3 ♘f3 ♕e7 4 ♘c3! (4 ♗f4 ♕b4+ 5 ♗d2 ♕xb2 6 ♘c3! is also excellent but you can expect Black to be well prepared) 4...♘xe5 5 e4 ±.

d) 1...b6, like some other rare first moves, is quite an interesting try if Black trusts that White will be faithful to his London System. 2 ♗f4 (2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗f4 ♗a6!? raises many of the same questions as 2...♗a6 below) and here:

d1) 2...♗a6 although not illogical, seems untested, so let us just suggest a few moves in order to open a debate: 3 ♘d2 e6 (3...f5 4 e4 ♗xf1 5 ♔xf1 fxe4 6 ♘xe4 ±) 4 e4 ♗xf1 5 ♘xf1 d5 6 ♘g3 ±.

d2) 2...♗b7 3 e3 e6 4 ♘f3 f5 (4...♘f6 – Line 11C) should transpose to the Classical Dutch.

e) 1...♘c6 may be a good antidote to London-style development: 2 ♗f4 (2 ♘f3 d5 3 ♗f4 – Line 3A) 2...d6 3 ♘f3 and then:

e1) 3...g6 4 e3 ♗g7 5 c3 ♘f6 6 h3 0-0 7 ♗e2 ♘e4 8 ♘bd2 ♘xd2 9 ♘xd2 e5 10 ♗h2 ♕g5 11 ♗f3 d5 12 ♘b3 e4 13 ♗f4 ♕e7 14 ♗e2 g5 15 ♗h2 f5 = Krivko-Ambrus, St Petersburg 2002.

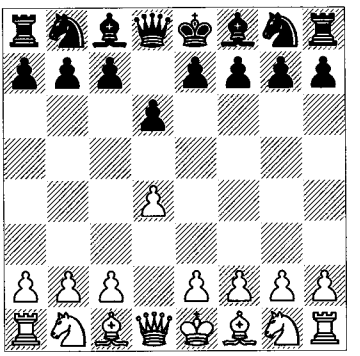
e2) 3...♘f6 4 d5 and here:

e21) 4...♘b4? 5 e4! e5 6 ♗e3 c6 (6...♘xe4? 7 c3 ♘a6 8 ♕a4+ +–) 7 c3 cxd5 8 cxb4 dxe4 9 ♘fd2 d5 10 ♗g5 ±.

e22) 4...e5! 5 ♗g5 ♘e7 6 ♘c3 ♘g6 7 e4 c6 is unbalanced and not bad for Black.

We now return to 1...d6 *(D)*:

W



2 ♘f3

2 e4! seems the way to fight for maximum advantage. A constructive way to expand your repertoire is the 2...♘f6 3 ♘c3 g6 4 ♗f4!? version of the 150 Attack (the standard version is with the bishop on e3). This may also arise after 1...♘f6 2 ♗f4 g6 3 ♘c3!? d6 (3...d5 is the Barry Attack) 4 e4. Theory is rather undeveloped but White is scoring well. Unfortunately this falls outside the scope of our work.

2...g6 3 ♗f4?!

We can't wholeheartedly recommend our standard move in this position, as Black can force ...e5 with an attack on the exposed bishop without the cumbersome preparations necessary in the King's Indian (...♘fd7, ...♕e8, etc.). 3 c3!? delays the development of the bishop for another move but if Black chooses a King's Indian set-up with 3...♘f6, White is committed to an early c3 system, which isn't our recommendation. And after 3...♗g7 it becomes really hard to find a reasonable London-style move except for 4 ♗f4, when Black will soon play ...e5 with equality.

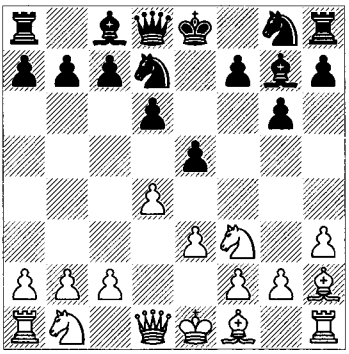
3...♗g7 4 e3 ♘d7

4...♘c6 – *1...♘c6 2 ♗f4 d6 3 ♘f3 g6 4 e3 ♗g7.*

4...f5 – *1...f5 2 ♗f4 d6 3 ♘f3 g6 4 e3 ♗g7.*

5 h3! e5 6 ♗h2 *(D)*

B



6...♘h6

Most alternatives are OK too:

a) 6...f5 7 ♗e2 ♕e7 – *6...♕e7 7 ♗e2 f5.*

b) 6...e4 7 ♘fd2 f5 8 c4 ♘gf6 9 ♘c3 0-0 10 b4 ♕e7 11 c5 d5 12 ♕b3 ± Sapis-Přibyl, Marianske Lazne 1989.

c) 6...♘e7 7 ♗e2 0-0 8 0-0 b6 9 c3 ♗b7 10 a4 a6 with equality, E.Pedersen-Sokolovs, Morso 2002.

d) 6...♕e7 7 ♗e2 and here:

d1) 7...f5 8 c4 (after 8 0-0 ♘gf6 9 c4 0-0 10 ♘c3 ♘e4 11 ♘d5 ♕d8 12 ♖c1 c6 13 ♘c3 ♘xc3 14 ♖xc3 f4 15 dxe5 dxe5 16 exf4 exf4 Black was quite possibly already better in S.Ledger-Tiller, British League (4NCL) 2000/1) 8...♘h6 9 ♘c3 c6 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♖c1 ♔h8 12 b4 ♘f7 13 b5 g5 14 ♘e1 ♘f6 is genuinely unclear, Sapis-Krasenkow, Krynica 1997.

d2) 7...♘gf6 8 0-0 0-0 9 c4! and now:

d21) 9...b6 10 ♘c3 ♗b7 and Soltis thinks that White stands well after 11 ♖c1 or 11 b4.

d22) 9...♘e4 and then:

d221) 10 ♕c2 f5 11 ♖e1 b6 12 a4 a5 = Kožul-Cvitan, Novi Sad 1985.

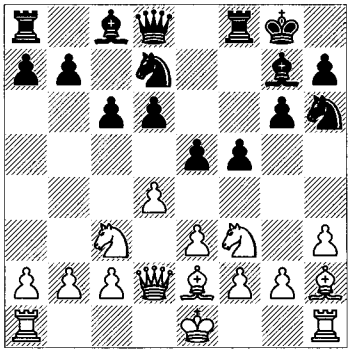
d222) Soltis suggests 10 ♘a3 ♖e8 11 c5 dxc5 12 dxe5 with no evaluation, but we can see no compensation after 12...♘xe5 and assume that he must have meant 12 ♘b5 ♘b6, when both 13 ♕c2!? and 13 dxe5 may be fine for White.

7 ♘c3 0-0

Or 7...♘f5 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 ♕d5 0-0 10 ♖d1 c6 11 ♕d2 ♕e7 12 g4 ♘h4 13 ♘xh4 ♕xh4 14 ♗g3 ♕e7 15 ♕d6 ♕xd6 16 ♖xd6 ♘b6 = Glienke-Seres, Balatonbereny 1997.

8 ♕d2 c6 9 ♗e2 f5 *(D)*

W



The position is unbalanced; e.g., 10 0-0-0 e4 11 ♘g1 d5 12 ♗d6 ♖f7 13 h4 b5 14 ♘h3 ♕xh4 15 ♗f4 ♕d8 16 ♘g5 ♖f6 17 f3, when the position is complicated but White's chances appear slightly better, Glienke-Movsziszian, Dudweil 1996.

Conclusion:

You should play the London System against 1...d6 and 1...g6 only if you are more concerned with reaching a familiar-looking position than with obtaining an opening advantage.

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GAMBIT

The London System is a perennial favourite of club players, as it is a very sound and solid system with a real practical sting. In a ground-breaking work, Johnsen and Kovačević seek to maximize this sting in two principal ways:

• They explain in detail the typical plans for White, helping readers to make the most of their chances, whether they are based on a kingside attack, queenside penetration, central play, or transition to a favourable endgame.

• By advocating some subtle move-orders that limit Black's options, they show how White can change the nature of the game and go straight for the kill if Black responds casually or inappropriately. These move-orders have been tested successfully by co-author Kovačević at grandmaster level, and much of the analysis presented here is of totally new variations, and is previously unpublished.

Win with the London System covers all responses to 1 d4 against which White can use the London System. The authors – a pairing of a researcher and a seasoned grandmaster – have drawn upon a wealth of sources to present a thorough guide to a popular chess opening, and open up new territory for readers to explore.

Sverre Johnsen is a FIDE-rated player from Norway. He is an enthusiastic chess analyst, researcher and writer. **Vlatko Kovačević** is a grandmaster from Croatia, and arguably the world's leading authority on the London System. However, he is probably best known for a convincing victory against Bobby Fischer in 1970. He has represented Croatia, and previously Yugoslavia, in many international team events.

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