John Cox

dealing
with
d4 deviations

fighting the Trompowsky, Torre, Blackmar-Diemer,
London, Colle and other problem openings

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CONTENTS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Few if any works cover the same ground as this book: usually only a chapter, if that, was relevant.

Winning with the Trompowsky, Peter Wells (Batsford 2003)
Outstanding white repertoire book; doesn't cover my proposed solution much.

The Trompowsky, Nigel Davies (Everyman 2005)
Only covers 3 e4 against 2...e6 really, and recommends the same solution I do. Better to be right than original, though.

Gambit Guide to the Torre Attack, Graham Burgess (Gambit 1999)
Thorough and useful coverage.

The Ultimate Colle, Gary Lane (Batsford 2002)
A very one-sided look at the opening which omits all mention of 3...♗f5 along with most of Black's other good moves, but actually covers the line I propose in the main Colle rather well.

The Slav, Graham Burgess (Gambit 2001)
Generally good coverage of one line I transpose into from the Colle; rather skates over the main try C12.

The Veresov, Nigel Davies (Everyman 2003)
Provocative and interesting work with good coverage of 3...c5.

Blackmar-Diemer Gambit, Gary Lane (Batsford 1995)
Not worth it for Black players since Black's best moves are by and large omitted.

Play 1 d4!, Richard Palliser (Batsford 2003)
Excellent white repertoire book; good on e3 Queen's Indian lines.

Annoying White d-pawn openings, Andrew Martin (Grandmaster Videos 1996)
Breezy and inspirational rather than detailed coverage, as you'd expect from a video, but extremely good within that limitation.

Symmetrical English, Carsten Hansen (Gambit 2000)
Thorough coverage on some of the lines in Chapter 9.

Eric Prie's subscription service on ChessPublishing.com is a really excellent source for all these irregular 1 d4 ideas. I also made use of ChessBase's Mega Database 2005. I would especially like to thank Richard Palliser for permission to use material from an unpublished series of articles he wrote for *CHESS*. If these ever get published they will be very much worth reading.

INTRODUCTION
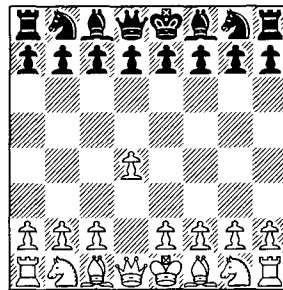
I *begged* Everyman Chess to let me write this book. All my chess-playing life I have had a terrible record against these feeble variants, as I saw them. The final straw was being utterly slaughtered by Richard Pert in a London league match in the 4 e3 line in Chapter 9. I wanted the incentive to study them and give myself the opportunity to put this right. And for me, it's worked splendidly. I believe I have really learned something about these systems, and if I am able to pass on to the reader the confidence I have now gained myself, then the job will have been well done.

I hope this book is a sort of left-handed version of John Emms's popular *Play the Open Games with Black*. White has a succession of irritating, solid yet reputedly harmless openings after 1 d4, and just as the situation was with 1 e4 before John's book, it's very difficult to get the theory on them without buying a whole slew of specialist books on each one, often for the sake of one sub-variation in one chapter. With the aid of this book I hope the reader can put all these openings to bed with one purchase, and leave himself free to focus on the main defence he employs to d4.

I have assumed that Black is planning to play one of the Slav, Semi-Slav, Queen's Gambit Declined, Nimzo-, Bogo-, or Queen's Indians, or the Benoni through the 2...e6 move order. King's Indianers, Grünfelders and the like were well served by Joe Gallagher's *Beating the Anti-King's Indians*, and I've no intention of trying to compete with that. So I shan't be fianchettoing Black's king's bishop, but I've aimed to equip players of any of those defences with everything they need to combat White's various system openings and deviations before we get into the Nimzo or whatever proper.

The white systems which are covered are the Trompowsky Attack, the Queen's Bishop Attack, the Veresov, the Colle, the Colle-Zukertort, the Torre Attack, the London System, the Stonewall Attack, some quiet g3/e3 ways of avoiding the Benoni, the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit and some subsystems which don't even have names. You should be equipped to face any reasonable deviation by White from

whatever your main defence to 1 d4 may be.

I've given two set-ups against some of the more popular 'system' openings: the London, the Colle, and the Torre. Against the Trompowsky I think there is a stand-out choice for Black and I've simply gone for that, and pressure of space has also confined me to one system against the Veresov, although again I think it's a good 'un.

I think it's worth examining why I used to do so badly against these systems. Dealing with these openings successfully is a matter of psychological approach among other things – it's not by chance that every work from Black's point of view called them 'annoying' or some synonym. I set out what I now feel were my main failings in this area in the hope others might recognize some of theirs and be inspired to remedy them at less cost in points than I managed.

1) The most obvious point – I didn't actually have a repertoire at all against, say, the Colle. You just play chess, right? Develop the pieces and equalize.
I remember Grandmaster Vlatko Kovacevic playing the Colle against me back before databases. I had no idea this was his customary weapon of mass destruction, and I thought I must have sat down at the wrong board. A GM playing 3 e3??

With that attitude, it won't surprise you to learn I got torched on the kingside around about move 25. Only the fact that the game was played in a comparatively minor event has saved me from appearing in every Colle book since on the wrong end of a classic White crush. Time has mercifully obscured the details, but I know I went ...d5 and ...c5. Pretty soon a knight appeared on e5 and I didn't seem to be able to shift it. Shortly after that, either the h- or the g-pawn arrived on the premises. Then came ♖e3, ♕h5, and the next thing I knew I was looking like something out of *1001 Winning Chess Combinations*. That wasn't the only such debacle, either; every time my opponent played one of these vile things I was behind on the clock as I worked on my conception of the wheel, and just as you'd expect some of my wheels came out square. Hopefully the remedy to this is obvious – you hold it in your hands.

2) I was bored by these openings: I didn't consider them interesting.
There *is* probably some objective sense in which these openings are not as interesting as the main lines. But to let that affect me was childish. I should have reflected on two things. One, winning any game is more interesting than losing any game. Two, in any chess position there are good moves and bad moves, and telling them apart is fundamentally what the game's about. If you find some types of position more interesting than others, that's a comment about you, not about the positions. I should have recognized that and if necessary taken a moment to refresh my gumption tank when 2 ♘f3 hit the board (if you don't know what your gumption tank is I recommend Jonathan Rowson's *Seven Deadly Sins*).

3) Not only did I not consider them interesting, I didn't consider them dangerous.
Again, dumb. In the 1930s the top guys didn't know whether these openings or the Queen's Gambit were better. These were the 2700s of their day; they understood chess a lot better than I do, and if something wasn't obvious to them, it was arrogant of me to think it would be obvious to me if I just figured it out over the board. I could list easily a hundred 2550+ players who have succumbed to the openings in these books. These openings produce as red-blooded a struggle as any, and if you're not ready for it, you're starting at a big disadvantage.

4) A less obvious point, this: to combat these openings successfully requires a good knowledge of many structures. A good chess education, in fact.
In this book there are transpositions to the Semi-Tarrasch variation of the Queen's Gambit Declined (QGD), the e3 Queen's Indian, the ♗g5 Queen's Indian, the Queen's Gambit Accepted (QGA), the Symmetrical English, the Caro-Kann, the a3 Queen's Indian, the French, the Sicilian, the Slav, the Karpov Nimzo, and more. Not the most critical lines necessarily, but the same structures. And many of these openings are in fact black openings reversed. Transpositions are commoner than in other openings: getting the exact set-up you want can require a lot of thought in the early stages. Nothing much to be done about this except recognize the fact and welcome it, both in building a repertoire and at the board.

5) I didn't experience the adrenalin surge I got defending 'my' openings.
Playing your pet defence is like a football team playing at home. You're defending your ideas, your choice of set-up, to some extent what you believe in about chess. Meeting some random deployment of the white pieces isn't like that. To some extent, solving problem '1' solves this problem as well, but still it exists. Again recognizing it is halfway to solving it.

6) Lastly, I wasn't playing set-ups I was happy and had experience with.
I was 'playing in my opponent's garden' in fact. Both technically and psychologically, I was behind before I started. Again this to some extent disappears once you start to take these openings seriously, but still it's there. If someone has played the London System ever since 1952 (you know the type) then they have an advantage over you that isn't going to go away.

With some of these openings, there's nothing to be done about that last one. But with some of them, there is. If someone wants to play the London System, you have to recognize that the game's going to be pretty quiet for a long time. But with some other openings, you can do something about it. If someone plays the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit, it doesn't take Freud to work out they want to attack wildly while missing a pawn. The Tromp – well, they want an obscure struggle, probably with a strange pawn formation. The Veresov? They probably like the initiative in open posi-

tions. The Torre? Solid non-critical play in the opening leading to positional pressure. And so on. In building a repertoire, I think it pays to remember that these guys play this stuff all the time, and you don't. You need something fairly simple and thematic, you want to stay off the hot theory of the opening – good or bad, he will know it better than you – and most of all you want to stay out of your opponent's garden. If he's offering a pawn for wild play, try and trade his queen off and obtain a complex semi-ending. If he wants a solid game, mix it if you can. And so on. These aren't original ideas, but I've tried to express them in the repertoire that follows. Sometimes, like I say, it can't be done. But when it can, it should be.

That's all. I've learned a huge amount from writing this book. There are several grandmaster move order tricks in here which are tremendously useful, and several crystal GM performances which show exactly how it should be done against this or that opening. If I've managed to pass on half of what I learned, I don't think you'll regret the purchase.

Good luck in your games against these openings.

John Cox,
London,
October 2005

CHAPTER ONE

The Trompowsky
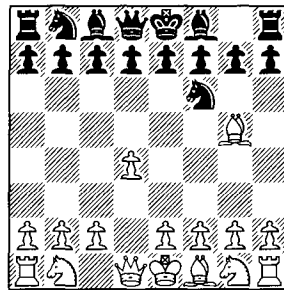
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗g5

Out of all the lines we're going to see in this book, probably the Tromp is the commonest, in the UK at least, and also one of the lines with most pretensions to being an opening which White can play at a high level and legitimately seek an edge.

I've already set out my general approach to dealing with these offbeat lines – stay out of his garden. Ask yourself what his choice of opening tells you about what your opponent wants, and do the opposite. Well, in my experience Trompers want one of two things. Either they want to rip your head off in a sharp game, or at the very least they want an unusual type of game, perhaps with an irregular pawn structure such as arises after doubling the pawns with ♗xf6. And they, or some of them at any rate, know enough theory in the sharp lines as to make those a rather foolish choice for those of us who can't necessarily revise our repertoire before each game.

Fortunately, there is a solution to the Tromp that gives Black excellent play, is not terribly theoretical, and denies White what he wants, and sure enough it is this which has begun rather to puncture the Tromp's balloon after a recent upsurge in its popularity.

2...e6
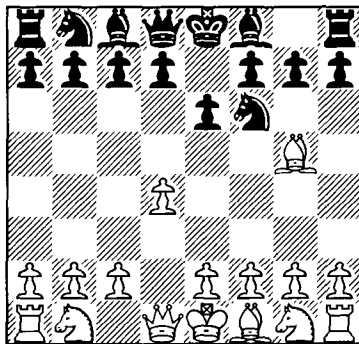
The most natural move, really, certainly for Nimzo/Queen's Indian types. Black refuses to allow his pawn formation to be damaged and declines also to put his knight into e4 and allow White various f3/e4 ideas, or find himself

obliged to venture the likes of 3 ♗h4 c5 4 f3 g5. The true Tromp reply is 3 e4, and as Pete Wells famously said in his fine book, '...if 3 e4 ever ceases to be regarded as a viable approach then the Tromp will become just that little bit less scary.' However, there is a school of thought which holds that 3 e4 amounts to a sacrifice. White can also try 3 ♘d2, or 3 e3 (3 ♘f3 is the Torre Attack, Chapter 3), and by holding back his king's knight he creates some distinctive effects when compared to the normal Torre.
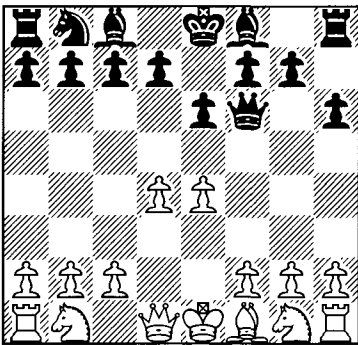
A: 3 e4
B: 3 e3
C: 3 ♘d2

A)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗g5 e6 3 e4 h6

This is the point, of course. Since 4 ♗h4? g5 loses the e-pawn, White's next is forced.
4 ♗xf6 ♕xf6

White now has three possible approaches (5 ♘f3 is again a position from the Torre Attack which is covered in Chapter 3).

A1: 5 ♘c3
A2: 5 c3

White also sometimes plays 5 ♕d2, (he needs to cover f4 to get f2-f4 in and fight for some dark squares) but following our recommended line it makes no difference; White is hardly going to put his queen's knight anywhere but c3 with his queen on d2, and after 5...d6 White has no better move than 6 ♘c3 (or 6 f4 e5 7 ♘c3 c6).

A1)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗g5 e6 3 e4 h6 4 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 5 ♘c3 d6

5...♗b4 is perhaps the main move, and indeed it is that which 5 ♕d2 seeks to avoid, but I am recommending the straightforward text.
6 ♕d2

White's usual move. 6 ♘f3 is Chapter 3 again, while after 6 ♗c4 Black can just carry on with the same plan as the text – 6...c6 7 ♘f3 e5 8 ♕d2 ♗g4 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 0-0-0 ♗e7 was already better for him in M.Roland-E.Matsuura, Brasilia 2000.
6...c6
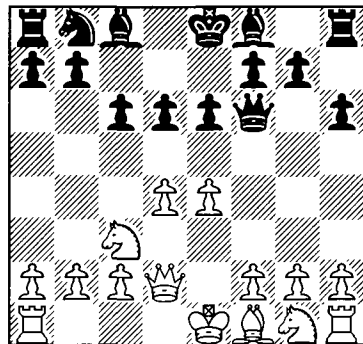
This is the move that gives this varia-

tion its shape. Black has many other moves – Karpov's popular 6...g5, for example. But the text is simple, easy to play, and strong. Black just wants to play ...e5, without allowing ♘d5 (not that 6...e5 7 ♘d5 ♕d8 is fatal, but White gets to transfer his knight to the much more effective square e3 pretty much for free).

7 f4

This move usually has in mind White's next two moves. The main alternative is 7 0-0-0 e5, when the following illustrate Black's sensible approaches:
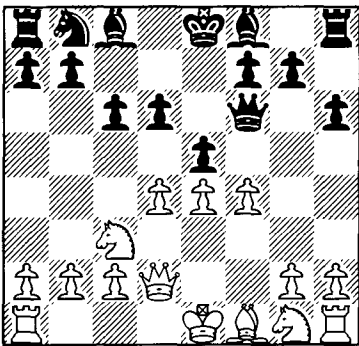
a) 8 g3 exd4 9 ♕xd4 ♕xd4 10 ♖xd4 ♘d7 11 ♗g2 0-0 12 ♘ge2 0-0 13 ♔b1 ♘c5 14 ♘d1!? f5 with an edge for Black, M.Ivanov-U.Kersten, Baunatal 2002.

b) 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 ♘f3 ♗e7 10 ♗c4 0-0 11 ♔b1 ♘d7 again with an edge, C.Dunworth-R.Dive, London 1994.

c) 8 ♘f3 ♗e7 9 h3 ♘d7 10 ♔b1 0-0 11 ♕e3 ♖e8 12 d5 ♗d8 was equal in J.Hall-I.Glek, Germany 1997

d) 8 d5 ♗e7? 9 dxc6 bxc6 10 ♘d5 is a trap to avoid; instead 8...♘d7 is fine.

7...e5

vies. 8...♗e7 9 0-0-0 0-0 now would transpose into J.Trivino Mellado-D.Suarez Pousa, Mondariz 1996, which continued 10 g3. Now 10...♗g4 11 ♗g2 exd4 12 ♕xd4 ♕xd4 13 ♖xd4 'produces an interesting endgame' (Davies). I doubt Black has much to fear there, but Black can also play more ambitiously as in the game with 10...b5 11 ♗g2, and now perhaps the clever 11...♖d8!? (the game went 11...b4 12 ♘a4 ♗a6 13 ♖he1 ♗b5 14 ♕xb4 and the complications worked out well for White). The idea of this move is to allow ...c5 without losing material after dxe5, dxe5; ♕d5. After 11...♖d8 a complicated game will follow, but Black certainly has his trumps with the c3-knight about to be driven out of play and White's king perhaps slightly shaky, for example 12 ♖hf1 b4 13 ♘a4 ♗a6 14 ♗f3 (14 fxe5 ♕e6, 14 ♖f2 c5) 14...♗b5 15 ♕xb4 ♘a6 16 ♕b3 exd4 17 ♖xd4 d5 with a very sharp game (Black's last two moves were aimed chiefly at preventing c4).

8...dxe5

8 dxe5

White might be better advised to try 8 ♘ge2 at this point, as advocated by Da-
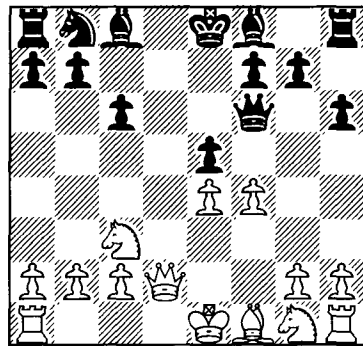
9 f5

This manoeuvre has the support of Hodgson and Wells, two leading Tromp

experts, so it's more than a little presumptuous of me to say so, but I think it's grotesque. Having said that, 9 fxe5 ♕xe5 10 ♘f3 ♕a5 11 ♗c4 ♗b4 12 0-0 0-0 doesn't give White much either: M.Bezold-R.Dive, Wrexham 1994 continued 13 ♔h1 ♘d7 14 ♖ad1, and now I wonder if 14...♘c5 and ...♗e6 wouldn't have been a more effective way of developing than Dive's 14...♕c5 15 ♗b3 a5, after which he needed to play accurately in the complications to draw.

9...♗b4!
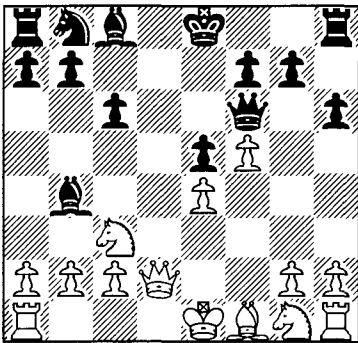
People find aesthetic appeal in the oddest places: to me this is a beautiful positional move. In fact the position would make an excellent example for one of those *Can you be a positional chess genius* textbooks. Looking at the position, what White would like is to establish his bishop on the a2-g8 diagonal and play on the kingside. His Achilles heel is e4: if Black can put this under pressure if will restrict White's movements no end. Black's problems are that he has a bit less space, he has two pieces that want to be on d7, his queen isn't so brilliantly placed and he can't castle queenside at the moment because of the d-file. In the

long term what he would like to do is play ...b5 and perhaps ...c5 to gain space on the queenside and deny White's bishop the diagonal. The text move, with its plan of ...♘d7, ...♕e7, ...♘f6, ...♗d7 and ...0-0-0, promotes all of those objectives by freeing a good square for the queen, bringing the knight to a square where it presses on f6, arranging to block the d-file, and throwing in a awkward pin which restricts White's knight and queen. I believe Black is already better and that White needs to go back and start again if he wants to get anything out of this variation.

10 0-0-0 ♘d7 11 ♘f3 ♕e7!

This move, a vital link in the plan, belongs to the Icelandic GM Hannes Stefansson.
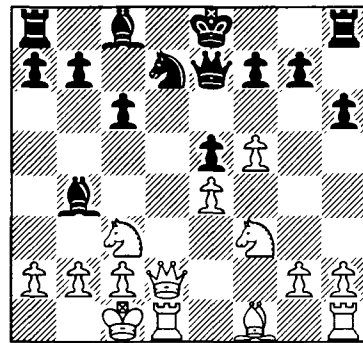
12 a3

In this variation's debut (M.Carlsen-H.Stefansson, Reykjavik 2004) the Norwegian *wunderkind* preferred 12 g4; the game continued thematically with 12...♘f6 13 ♗d3 ♗d7 14 h3 (not 14 h4? ♘xg4, of course) 14...0-0-0 15 ♔b1 ♔b8 16 ♖he1 ♗c8 17 a3 ♗a5, and faced by the prospect of Black carrying on strengthening with ...♖d7, ...♖hd8, or

perhaps ...g5 or ...♘d7-c5, White lashed out with 18 b4 ♗a5 19 ♘a4. Black had a good many nice plans here; he chose 19...g6 20 ♕c3 gxf5 21 exf5 ♖he8. Perhaps this is only equal, but I'd sooner be Black, with his bishops, centre pawns and slightly safer king. Later Stefansson won a thematic ending with queen and two bishops against queen, bishop and knight and just the three queenside pawns each: Black lined up on the long diagonal, White was driven into passivity, his knight couldn't find a foothold, and in the end something dropped off.

The text makes no significant difference to the position.

12...♗a5 13 ♔b1 ♘f6 14 ♗d3

14 ♘d5 ♗xd2 15 ♘xe7 gives White nothing, as Davies says.

14...♗d7 15 ♖he1 b5!

Keeping more options than 15...0-0-0: when White has weakened his queenside and made no progress on the kingside Black can also consider ...0-0.

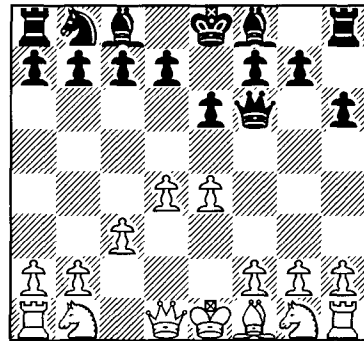**16 g4 ♗b6 17 h3 0-0-0 18 ♘a2 ♔b8 19 ♕c1 c5 20 c4 b4**
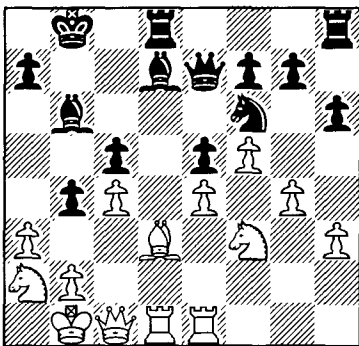
and Black was much better in T.Thorhalsson-H.Stefansson, Reykjavik open 2004. In the game White was so

desperate to change the course that he shortly went in for ♖d5?!, after which only time trouble prevented Stefansson from racking up another victory with his plan.

A2)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗g5 e6 3 e4 h6 4 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 5 c3

Now White is much better placed to protect the dark squares in the centre, with his plan being ♗d3/♘e2/f4. Rather than give this plan something to bite on with ...d6 and ...e5, I suggest a change of approach with

5...d5

'The refutation of 5 c3' – Prie.

6 e5

White has scored terribly after this and I agree with Davies that he would do well to consider 6 ♘d2, not in the hope of advantage but to equalize. Usually after 6 ♘d2 Black plays 6...c5. Now 7 dxc5 ♗xc5 8 ♘f3 0-0 9 exd5 exd5 10 ♗e2? ♕b6! (A.Summerscale-P.Marusenko, South Wales 2000) is good for Black, and 7 exd5 exd5 8 ♗b5+ ♗d7 9 ♗xd7 ♘xd7 10 ♘e2 (10 ♘f3 ♕e6+ 11 ♕e2 ♗d6 is the problem) 0-0-0! was equal in

P.Wells-C.Ward, Southend 2002, so 7 ♘gf3 is the most challenging. Now after 7...cxd4 Davies suggests 8 cxd4 dxe4 9 ♘e5.
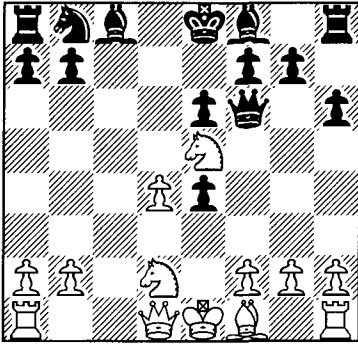
This doesn't look to me to achieve much after 9...♗b4, e.g. 10 ♕a4+ ♘c6 11 ♘xc6 (11 0-0-0 ♖b8!) 11...♗xd2+ 12 ♔xd2 ♗d7, or 10 ♗b5+ ♗d7 11 ♘xd7 (11 ♖c1 ♕d8) 11...♗xd2+ 12 ♕xd2 ♘xd7 13 ♗xd7+ ♔xd7 14 ♕b4 ♖hd8. Another path for White is 8 exd5 exd5 9 ♘xd4 ♘c6 as in A.Bigg-D.King, British League 2003, but now the obvious continuation 10 ♗b5 is well met by 10...♗e7 11 0-0 0-0, which seems very equal indeed.

If these variations understandably seem too dull for Black, another way to play is 5 c3 d6 6 ♗d3 g6 7 ♘e2 ♗g7 8 0-0 0-0 9 f4 ♕e7, although this is not perhaps quite as solid.

6...♕d8 7 ♘f3

In C.Ward-P.Marusenko, Port Erin 2000, White went for 7 ♘d2 c5 8 dxc5 ♗xc5 9 ♘b3 ♗b6 10 ♘f3 ♘c6 11 ♗d3 ♗d7 12 ♕e2 ♕e7 13 0-0 with equality, although possibly this would have been more simply demonstrated by 13...0-0 than the game's double-edged 13...g5!?.
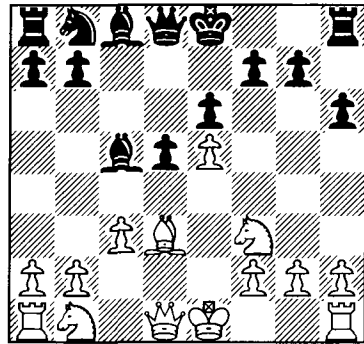
7 b4 a5 8 b5 a4, 7 a3 a5, and 7 f4 c5 8 a3 a5 9 ♘f3 ♕b6 have all been tried without showing anything good for White.

7...c5 8 dxc5
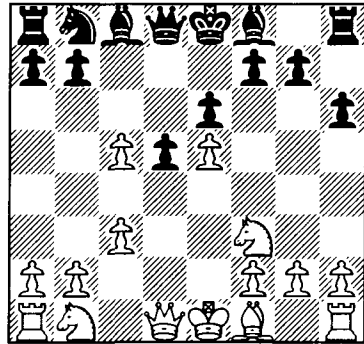
White hasn't often tried to hang onto d4: 8 a3 is still best met with 8...a5 in my view, while a continuation like 8 ♗e2 ♘c6 9 0-0 ♕b6 10 ♕b3 ♕xb3 11 axb3 cxd4 12 cxd4 ♗d7 is fine for Black.

8...♗xc5 9 ♗d3

9...♘c6

There seems to be something of a consensus among Black players in this variation that castling on the kingside is too simple an approach altogether, but I don't see much wrong with 9...0-0: in

fact it seems quite promising and if this were a French Defence I'm sure it would be the first move Black would investigate. 10 0-0 f6 11 ♕e2 ♘c6 12 exf6 ♕xf6 (or 12 b4 – 12 ♘bd2? fxe5 13 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 14 ♕xe5 ♕b6! – 12...♗b6 13 ♘bd2 fxe5 14 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 16 ♕xe5 ♗c7 with an edge for Black) 13 ♘bd2 (13 c4 ♘d4!) 13...e5!
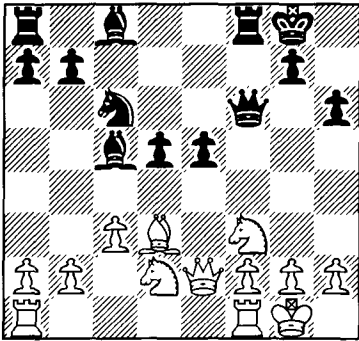

is a good illustration of how quickly routine play can leave White struggling: without the dark-squared bishop he just doesn't have the horses to hold onto e5.

In view of that I wonder if he shouldn't go 10 ♗c2, which at least prevents e5 from disappearing, since 10...f6 11 ♕d3 forces 11...f5. However, after 10...f5 I don't think 11 exf6 ♖xf6 12 ♕d3 is anything to be afraid of – Black just plays 12...♘c6 13 ♕h7+ ♔f7; his next move is ...e5 and pretty soon White will be compelled to put his tail between his legs and retreat the queen to d3. That only leaves 11 0-0, but once he has ...f5 in Black has a comfortable French: a sample line might be 11...♕b6 (White's only plan is c3-c4: by provoking b2-b4 Black works against that) 12 b4 ♗e7 13 ♘bd2 a5 14 a3 ♗d7 15 ♗d3 ♕c7 16

♖c1 ♖fc8, when Black has succeeded in restraining c4 and stands nicely.

Black has another set-up in 9...♕b6 10 ♕e2 ♘c6 11 0-0 ♗d7 12 b4 ♗e7 13 ♘bd2 ♖c8 14 a3 g5!?, which gave him a good position in J.Hodgson-J.Rowson, Southend 2001, after 15 ♘b3 (15 h3 h5!?) 15...a5 16 ♖ac1 a4!, when Hodgson's 17 ♘a1 has been panned, but neither 17 ♘d4 g4 18 ♘d2 ♘xd4 19 cxd4 ♖xc1 20 ♖xc1 ♕xd4, nor 17 ♘d2 g4 18 ♘e1 ♗g5 was pleasant either.

10 0-0 a6!?
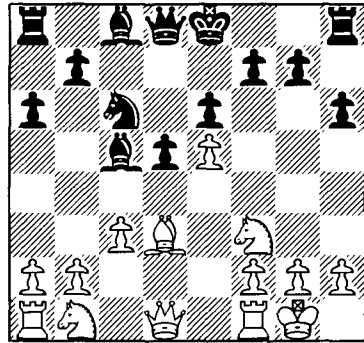
Part of a plan aiming at d4. At the risk of repeating myself, 10...0-0 and a quick ...f6 was also fine, but I dare say Ward was aiming at a more strategically complex game.

11 ♘bd2 ♗d7 12 ♘b3 ♗b6 13 ♕e2 ♕b8

This was the point: even now 13...0-0 is also possible, but that what wasn't what Black played 10...a6 for.
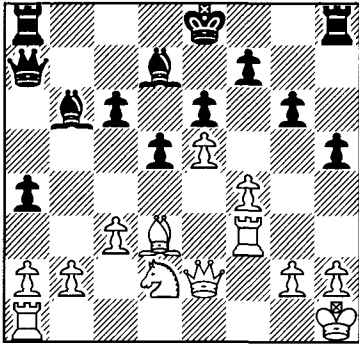
14 ♘bd4 ♕a7 15 ♘xc6 bxc6 16 ♘d2 a5 17 ♔h1 a4

Maybe still 17...0-0 18 f4 f5 19 g4 g6 20 ♕g2 ♔h7 – Prie.

18 f4 g6 19 ♖f3 h5

with an unclear position in P.Hutchin-

son-C.Ward, British Championship, Scarborough 2004.

B) 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗g5 e6 3 e3

Clearly there are those – Peter Wells, for instance, who said that 'people who wanted to play like this could do so without the assistance of a book' – who consider this move a little feeble, but there are others who consider it simply the most accurate way to introduce the Torre Attack, and indeed a spectrum of opinion in between, so it's worth being ready for. And as a matter of fact both 3 e3 and 3 ♘d2 score better in the databases than 3 e4.

3...h6
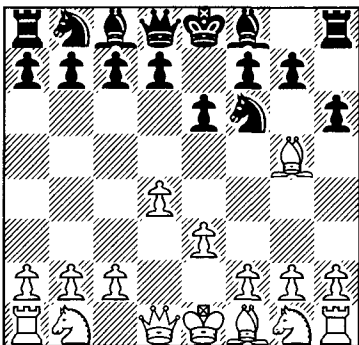
As with the Torre proper, it is best to find out what White is going to do with that bishop.

4 ♗h4

4 ♗xf6 is possible, although really it only makes much sense in conjunction with 4...♕xf6 5 f4.
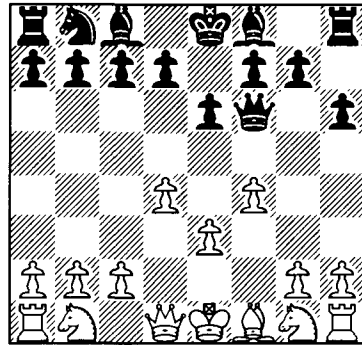
Many players believe strongly in this reversed Stonewall without the 'bad' bishop: I'm not so sure at all – that bishop can have an important role keeping the 'stone wall' standing, and actually I recommend that Black counterattack on the dark squares immediately with 5...g5!?. This hasn't been played so much, but a couple of GMs have ventured it, and anyone who thinks it's a crazy risk and Black should play some nice solid set-up instead should check out what happened to Matthias Wahls when he tried that in the game J.Hodgson-M.Wahls, Bundesliga 1998: 5...d6 6 ♘f3 ♘c6 7 ♘bd2 ♗d7 8 c3 e5 9 fxe5 dxe5 10 ♗c4 0-0-0 11 0-0 ♕e7 12 ♕e1 g6 13 d5 ♘b8 14 e4 ♖e8 15 ♘h4 ♖h7 16 ♔h1 ♕d8 17 ♕f2 ♗d6 18 b4 a6 19 ♖ab1 ♕e7 20 a3 ♖f8 21 ♗d3 c5 22 ♘c4 1-0.

After 5...g5 Black is going to castle

queenside, of course, and then ...g5 starts to look like a very sensible positional move, nibbling away at White's structure like a kind of mirror-image Botvinnik English.
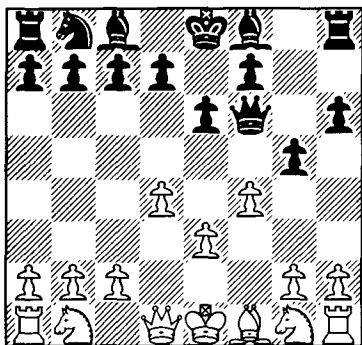
White should avoid 6 g3 gxf4 7 exf4 c5, (K.Wesseln-K.Bischoff, NordWest Cup, Germany 1999), 6 ♘e2 b6 7 ♘c3 ♗b7 8 ♕d2 ♗b4 (L.Floresvillar Gonzalez-G.Hernandez, Mexico City 1991), and 6 fxg5 hxg5 7 ♘c3 ♗b4 8 ♕d2 b6 9 0-0-0 ♗b7 (D.Brumen-T.Polak, Cvitanovic Memorial, Split 2003), all of which show Black's strategy beginning to look good. Probably his best is 6 ♘h3 when I propose 6...d5, followed by ...♗d6, ...♗d7, ...♘c6, ...0-0-0 and the game continues – watch out for 7 ♕f3 threatening to win a pawn with fxg5. White could introduce this same sort of set-up more slowly with 5 c3 b6 6 ♘d2 ♗b7 7 f4, but there's nothing wrong with 7...g5 even now.

4...c5

4...d5 is perfectly possible, of course, but White does still have 5 c4 up his sleeve, probably leading to an Orthodox Queen's Gambit.

Now White has a choice:
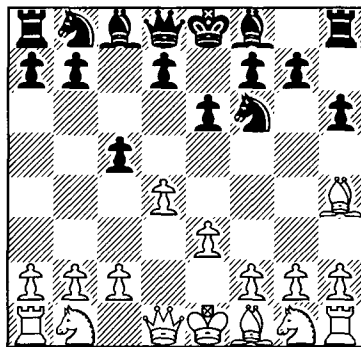
B1: 5 c3
B2: 5 ♘f3

Most players who have started this way will continue with B1, leading to a Torre type of game. There are those, however, who prefer B2. This can also produce a Torre of course, but in B2 I consider the independent possibility of a pure ♗g5 Queen's Indian, which Black has to be ready for. In fact White has cut out what are usually considered Black's strongest replies to that by waiting until ...c5 is played before committing himself to c4.

B1)
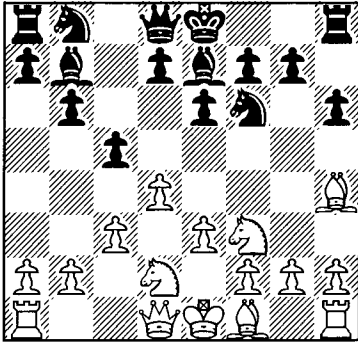**1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗g5 e6 3 e3 h6 4 ♗h4 c5 5 c3 b6 6 ♘d2**

6 ♕f3 d5 is nothing for Black to worry about.

6...♗e7 7 ♘gf3 ♗b7

Reaching a position pretty much from the main line of the Torre Attack, but by this move order White has avoided the cunning sequence we will see from Black in Chapter 3 in the much more common move order 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗g5.
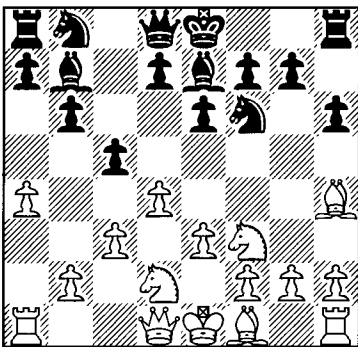
White has tried no fewer than 13

moves after this, but the main ones are the following:

B11: 8 a4
B12: 8 h3
B13: 8 &g3
B14: 8 &d3

Out of these, by far the commonest is B14, although 8 &g3 is the regular choice of Miladinovic, the GM who specializes the most in this line, and we'll see why in B14.

B11)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 &g5 e6 3 e3 h6 4 &h4 c5 5 c3 b6 6 ♘d2 &e7 7 ♘gf3 &b7 8 a4

A move which has the air of being a bit of a luxury at this stage but nonetheless has some useful points: White wants to secure his knight's position at c4, and possibly play a4-a5 if the circumstances are right. A main strategic question in this line is which pawn White is going to use to recapture on d4, and with this move White declares that he will be using the e-pawn: he will hardly play cxd4 and leave b4 gaping.
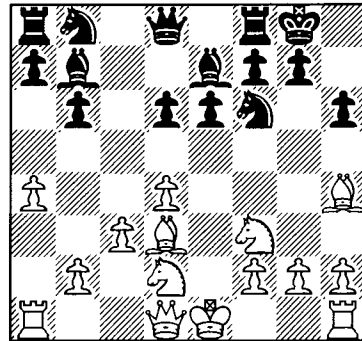
8...0-0 9 &d3 cxd4

Black wants to see which way White recaptures before committing his queen's knight.

10 exd4

10 cxd4?! was played in E.Meduna-R.Dautov, Frankfurt (rapid) 1997, but after 10...♘c6 11 0-0 ♘b4 12 &xf6 &xf6 13 &e4 d5 14 &b1 White must have been regretting it already.

10...d6

This flexible set-up is how the pros normally handle the Torre. The move 10...d5 can hardly be too wrong, but the ♘e5 leap gives White's whole position point – if Black captures with ...♘c6xe5, the h4-bishop can be exchanged and Black is left with the slightly weaker

piece on b7, the d2-knight can now come to f3, the bishop points at the kingside after a recapture on e5, and so on. Denied this easy way to play, White finds it harder to make a plan.

11 0-0 ♘bd7

There's nothing wrong with ...♘c6, but the knight has more options here, and why block the bishop? The idea a4-a5 isn't anything to be afraid of: indeed one of Black's main goals in this position is to go ...b5-b4, and if anything the exchange makes that easier, while the opening of a file on the queenside ensures that White won't be doing anything against the king.
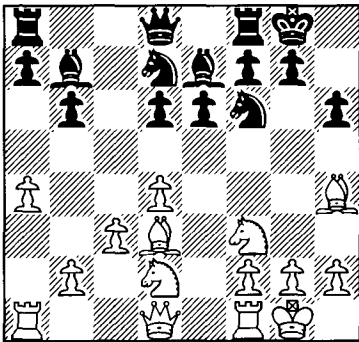
12 a5

Korchnoi deals with this rather neatly, and 12 ♖e1 would lead to a rather more popular position in which Black almost always plays 12...a6 (in fact sometimes it is Black who plays ...a7-a6 inducing a2-a4, perceiving that this favours him as it enables a knight to sit on d5 with a handy retreat to b4 in case of c3-c4) and a normal continuation would be 13 ♘c4 ♕c7 14 ♘e3 ♖fe8 15 ♗g3 (B.Chatalbashev-A.Drei, Montecatini Terme 2001), when Black should have contin-

ued with 15...♗f8 rather than 15...♘h5? 16 d5. To judge from his play in this game, though, Korchnoi doesn't believe that a4-a5 is a threat, and it looks as though he would have played 12...♕c7, which would actually be a novelty even today. One can see that Black doesn't necessarily want to spend a tempo and make a6 a target for the d3-bishop/e2-queen line-up unless he has to, so the text game is quite interesting.
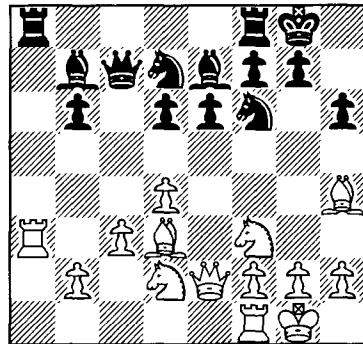
12...♕c7

Not yet 12...♖ab8 13 axb6 axb6 14 ♖a7 ♕c7 15 ♗a6.

13 ♕e2 ♖ab8 14 axb6

This can't give White anything. I suspect that the point of the great man's strategic idea was to meet 14 a6 ♗a8 15 c4 with 15...b5 (now, before b2-b4 can cement White's bind). After 16 cxb5 ♘b6 Black has ample compensation for the pawn, with White's weaknesses on b5 and d4 and the ineffective h4-bishop.
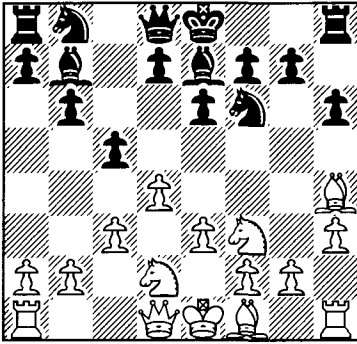
14...axb6 15 ♖a3 ♖a8

with equality, I.Rogers-V.Korchnoi, Lucerne Olympiad 1982. White's queenside excursion has not helped his cause at all; on the contrary Black now has an easy game.

B12)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗g5 e6 3 e3 h6 4 ♗h4 c5 5 c3 b6 6 ♘d2 ♗e7 7 ♘gf3 ♗b7 8 h3

Also a little bit of a half-move; in fact apart from preventing ...g5-g4 I'm not too sure what it adds to White's game, but some pretty good players have thought it useful.
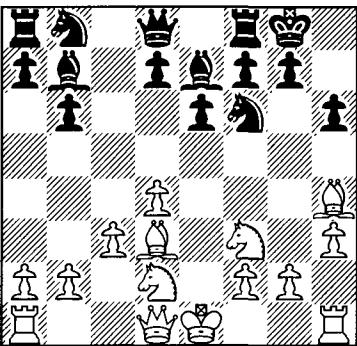**8...0-0**
8...cxd4 9 cxd4 ♘e4, A.Miles-J.Parker, British League 2001, is another method.
9 ♗d3 cxd4
As before, Black wants to see which recapture White chooses before deciding on a set-up.
10 exd4

10 cxd4 is naturally possible, if a little dull. V.Hort-A.Karpov, Biel 1990 then went 10...♘c6 11 a3 (there seems to be consensus that 11 0-0 ♘b4 is undesirable, although clearly it's nothing fatal) 11...♘h5 12 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 13 0-0 ♖fc8 14 ♖c1 ♘a5! (14...d6 15 d5 instead might have given White a shade of a nibble), which was equal and very accurate from Black.
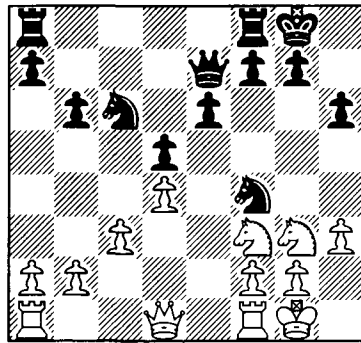**10...♘h5**
A logical and ruthlessly efficient method: if h3 had any point presumably it was connected with ♗g3; notice how Karpov also played this move at the first convenient moment.
11 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 12 0-0 ♘f4
Well timed, before White can go ♖e1 and allow ♗f1.
13 ♗e4 ♗xe4 14 ♘xe4 d5 15 ♘g3 ♘c6

This position was reached in the game D.Krumpacnik-K.Lerner, Oberwart 1998, when White succumbed to Black's minority attack, and again in M.Kujovic-Y.Pelletier, Charleville 2000, where White held on; no doubt the 'correct' assessment is equality, but one would probably choose to play Black here.

B13)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗g5 e6 3 e3 h6 4 ♗h4 c5 5 c3 b6 6 ♘d2 ♗e7 7 ♘gf3 ♗b7 8 ♗g3
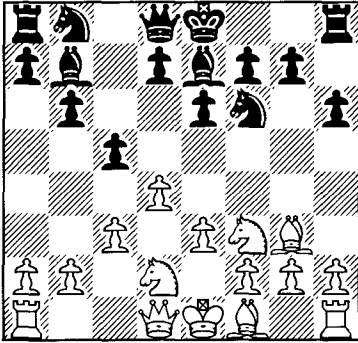
A pet of the Tromp/Torre expert Igor Miladinovic. White's idea is similar to the previous line but this time he's going to leave h2-h3 until he can actually be sure of hanging onto his bishop.

8...0-0 9 ♗d3 d6

When White holds onto his bishop, Black will almost always want to play this, so he waits one move more before committing himself to anything.
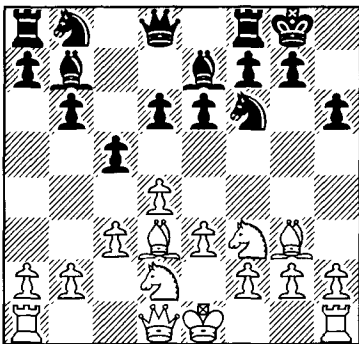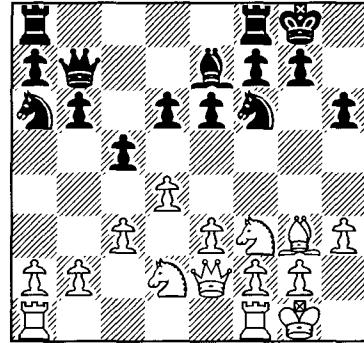

10 h3

Before ...♘h5 comes.

10...♗a6

Black loses a tempo like this, of course, but White's moves on the kingside haven't been terribly critical.

11 ♗xa6 ♘xa6 12 ♕e2 ♕c8 13 0-0 ♕b7

Black surely has equality here, but Miladinovic has tried this position out three times. The first, I.Miladinovic-A.Beliavsky, Ohrid 2001, went 14 a4 ♖ac8 15 ♖fe1 ♘b8 16 e4 cxd4 17 ♘xd4 ♖fd8 with equality (our hero had to defend until move 127, but that didn't put him off and he was back for more). The next two went 14 e4 cxd4 15 ♘xd4 ♘c5 16 ♖fe1 and now first 16...♖fd8 (I.Miladinovic-V.Bogdanovski, Balkan Cup, Thessaloniki 2001), when White got the better of it with an a4/b4/b5/♘c6 manoeuvre and should have won, and in I.Miladinovic-L.Ortega, Porto San Giorgo 2003, the better 16...♖ac8 and later ...♖fe8, the most usual hedgehog rook placement, which lent force to Black's ...d5 counter to Miladinovic's plan, and after which Black should have won.

B14)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗g5 e6 3 e3 h6 4 ♗h4

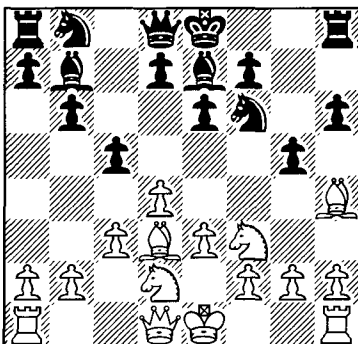c5 5 c3 b6 6 ♘d2 ♗e7 7 ♘gf3 ♗b7
8 ♗d3
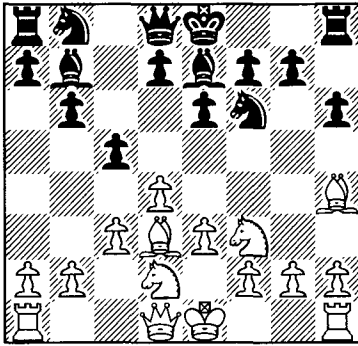
This looks natural, to be sure, and is White's most popular move by far, but it does allow Black to change the course of the game completely. Since line B141 is a little speculative, I'm also going to give the main line in B142.

B141: 8...g5!?
B142: 8...cxd4

B141)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗g5 e6 3 e3 h6 4 ♗h4 c5 5 c3 b6 6 ♘d2 ♗e7 7 ♘gf3 ♗b7 8 ♗d3 g5!?

Opinions on this move vary widely, from Tsesarsky on ChessBase who calls it the refutation of White's previous move, to the contempt of the silent majority who play 8...cxd4 here. However, Black doesn't seem to be worse after 8...g5, and most importantly it wrenches the play away from what White probably wants.
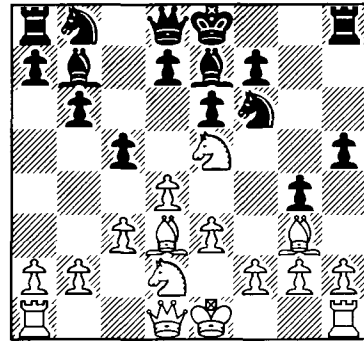
9 ♗g3 g4
This is the idea: g2 is weak.

10 ♘e5
10 ♘h4 ♖g8 is better for Black: although White does retain some tactical resources Black should be able to emerge the better after 11 h3 ♘h5 or 11 dxc5 bxc5 12 ♘c4 d5.

10...h5
I don't fancy Tsesarsky's proposal of 10...♗xg2 11 ♖g1 ♗h3 at all; after 12 dxc5 bxc5 13 ♘e4 I think White has every prospect of 'justifying pawn lack'.

11 f3
White has also tried 11 e4 and 11 0-0, which looks crazy but may even be best. After 11 e4 d6 Black has prospered after both of the following:
a) 12 ♘ec4 cxd4 13 cxd4 d5 14 exd5 ♕xd5 15 ♗e5 ♘bd7 (I don't see why not 15...♕xg2 now) 16 ♕e2 (I.Miladino-vic-T.Roussel Roozmon, Cap d'Agde

2003), when I think 16...♘xe5 17 dxe5 ♕xg2 18 0-0-0 ♘d5 might have made White wish he'd drawn by 16 ♘e3 ♕a5 17 ♘ec4 ♕d5 and so on.

b) 12 ♕a4+ ♔f8 13 ♘ec4 cxd4 14 cxd4 h4 15 ♗f4 d5 16 exd5 ♘xd5, when Black was better already in A.Sandrin-A.Karklins, Chicago 1989.

11 0-0's only outing went 11...d6 12 ♘ec4 b5 13 ♘a3 a6 14 ♗h4 ♘bd7 15 ♘c2 c4 16 ♗e2 ♘d5 17 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 18 ♘b4 ♘xb4 19 cxb4 (J.Harmatosi-M.Orso, Tapolca 2000), when 19...♕g5 with the idea of ...g3 would have produced a most unclear struggle.

11...d6
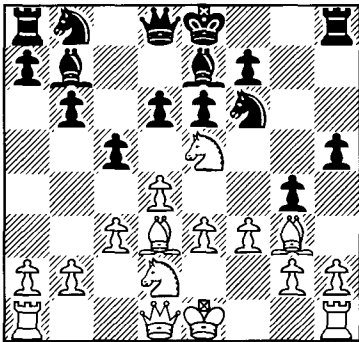
12 ♗b5+

12 ♘ec4 b5 13 ♘a3 a6 doesn't seem much better either; 14 ♕e2 h4 15 ♗f4 h3 16 e4 ♘c6 favoured Black in J.Bourne-C.Ward, St Helier 1999, while 14 ♗h4 ♘d5 and 14 0-0 h4 (15 ♗f4 e5!) are just as bad.

12 ♕a4+ ♔f8 13 ♘ec4 h4 14 ♗f4 was tried in the variation's first outing, A.Pomar-G.Forintos, Caorle 1972. Black might have tried 14...cxd4 15 cxd4 ♘d5 now; in the game 14...a6 15 dxc5 b5 16 ♕b3 also produced a ferocious and un-

clear struggle, but I don't like the way it lets White's knight back into the game.

12...♔f8 13 ♘d3 a6 14 ♗a4 h4 15 ♗f2

After 15 ♗f4 (V.Kovacevic-T.Roschina, Salona rapid 2002) I'm not so sure about 15...h3 16 g3!, which turned out rather well for White in the game; instead 15...cxd4 16 cxd4 ♘d5 removes the important bishop and could do with a try.

15...h3 16 e4
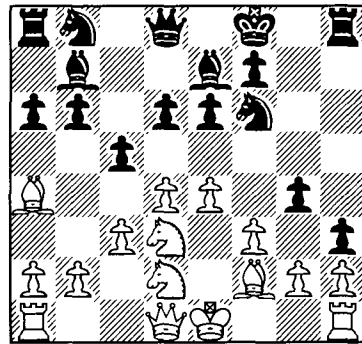
Black is better after 16 0-0 hxg2 or 16 ♖g1 hxg2. After 16 e4, the game A.Miles-J.Speelman, Mondariz 2000 continued with 16...c4 17 ♘f4 e5, which was probably still good for him, but I am inclined to agree with Tsesarsky that 16...hxg2 17 ♖g1 ♖xh2 is also worth thinking about.

B142)

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗g5 e6 3 e3 h6 4 ♗h4 c5 5 c3 b6 6 ♘d2 ♗e7 7 ♘gf3 ♗b7 8 ♗d3 cxd4

There's probably no concrete reason why Black shouldn't castle first, but Karpov always plays this way.

9 exd4
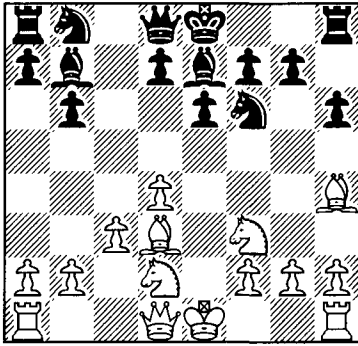
After 9 cxd4 Karpov's approach is 9...♘c6 10 a3 0-0 11 0-0 ♖c8 12 ♕e2 ♘h5 (his trademark method of easing the pressure in this line although ...♘d5, meeting ♗g3 with ...f5, is also played) 13 ♗xe7 ♘xe7, when a rather typical continuation was 14 ♖fc1 ♖c7 (14...f5 is another way to handle this sort of position) 15 ♗a6 ♕b8 16 ♖xc7 ♕xc7 17 ♗xb7 ♕xb7 18 ♖c1 ♘f6 19 ♕d3 ♖c8 with equality, V.Salov-A.Karpov, blitz match, Alma-Ata 1995.

Again there seems to be a consensus that ...♘b4 is annoying enough to prevent, although I'm not sure this is true. W.Hug-K.Bischoff, Nuremberg (rapid) 1990, went 9...0-0 10 0-0 ♘c6 11 ♖c1 ♘b4 12 ♗b1 ♗a6 13 ♖e1 ♘d3 14 ♗xd3 ♗xd3 15 ♘e5 ♗h7 16 ♕a4 d5 17 ♘c6 ♕d7 18 ♘xe7+ ♕xe7 19 ♖c3 when White dominated the c-file and had the plan ♘b3 and a4-a5, while Black had no play at all. If White wants to make a habit of this cxd4 variation he ought to investigate this.

9...d6 10 0-0

White sometimes plays 10 ♗xf6, which looks like a ridiculous move, but isn't quite. The object was well shown in

V.Kovacevic-L.Polugaevsky, European Team Championship, Haifa 1989, which went on 10...♗xf6 11 ♘e4 ♗e7 12 0-0 ♘d7 13 ♖e1 0-0 14 ♗c2 ♘f6?? (14...♖e8 15 ♕d3 g6 16 ♕e3 ♔g7 – and not 16...♗f8 17 ♗a4 with a bit of pressure – was called for: the light-square hack deserves a smidgeon more respect than Polugaevsky allowed...)
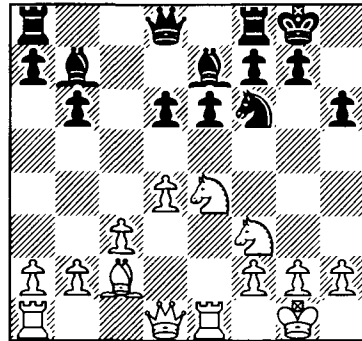
15 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 16 ♕d3 g6 17 ♖xe6!: Polugaevsky was too fly now to fall for 17...fxe6? 18 ♕xg6+ ♗g7 19 ♕h7+ ♔f7 20 ♗g6+ ♔f6 21 ♗h5 when the queen and bishop destroy Black single-handed, but he still stood horribly.

White can also follow up the exchange with 11 ♕e2 ♘d7 12 0-0-0, when Black should follow Dautov in W.Arencibia-R.Dautov, Elista Olympiad 1998 with the careful 12...♕c7 13 ♔b1 ♗e7, intending to castle queenside in the event of some lunge like g4 or h4. Otherwise White is a little pushed for a useful move; the game's 14 c4 0-0 15 d5 ♘c5 16 dxe6 ♘xe6 17 ♖he1 ♖fe8 already favoured Black.

10...♘bd7

11 ♘c4 0-0 12 ♗g3 ♕c7 13 ♘fd2 a6 14 ♖e1 ♖fe8 15 ♖c1 ♗f8 16 ♗b1 ♖ac8

17 a3 b5 18 ♘e3 ♛b6 19 ♕c2 g6 20 ♗a2 ♗g7 21 ♕d3 ♘h5 (it might seem surprising that White never found time for h2-h3, but perhaps he wasn't fussed about this exchange: the knight can be very effective on d5 once Black has ...b5 in) 22 ♖cd1 ½-½ was A.Miles-A.Yermolinsky, Hastings 1995/96, which illustrates Black's play pretty well.

11 ♕e2
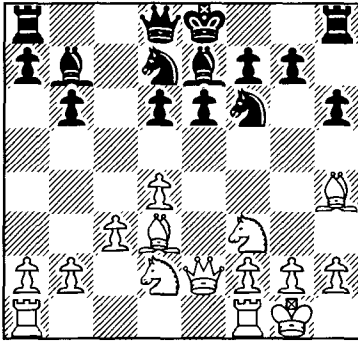
11 ♖e1 is also common, but we are really beyond the point where theory has any relevance, and rather than try and catalogue the moves played I prefer to follow a single thematic example.

11...a6

Black wants to go ...b5 to secure the d5-square and/or help in a minority attack.
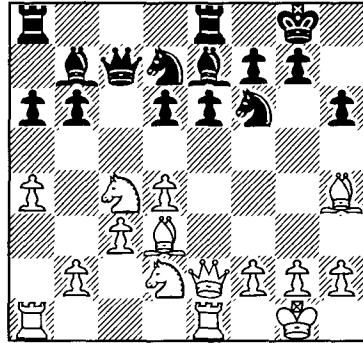
12 a4

It is usual for White to do this and prevent ...b5, although Miles, for example, obviously saw no reason to.

12...0-0 13 ♖fe1 ♖fe8

Always the right square, discouraging any d4-d5 break or happening on the kingside, defending the e7 bishop, and sometimes making room for a retreat with ...♘f8/♗f8.
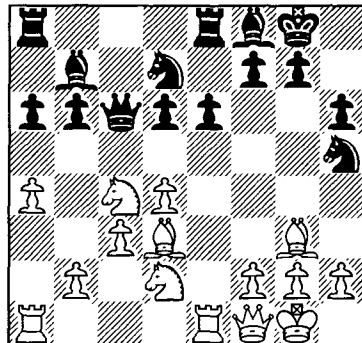
14 ♘c4 ♕c7 15 ♘fd2

White usually feels himself compelled to make this move, which does prevent ...♘h5 and ...♘df6 (quite often a useful idea) but doesn't contribute much positive to his position.

15...♗f8 16 ♗g3 ♕c6 17 ♕f1

Black might have been thinking about 17...e5 after 17 ♘e3, although this break is not common in these positions.

17...♘h5

18 ♗e4

White could have changed the structure with 18 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 19 ♗e4 ♗xh2+ 20 ♔xh2 ♕c7+, which is hard to judge.

18...d5 19 ♗f3 ♘xg3 20 hxg3 ♕c7

21 ♘e3

The alternative method 21 ♘e5 ♘xe5 22 dxe5 doesn't offer anything: Black has good play on the queenside and White can't hold d4 nor do anything useful on the kingside – the a4 weakness will hurt him: if ever he has to defend it with b2-b3 then the c3-square will be terribly weak.

21...♗c6 22 ♕d3
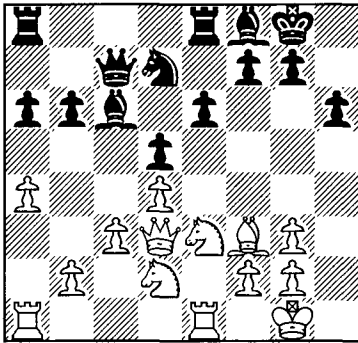
Black definitely stands better here: this pawn structure and piece configuration isn't always good for him by any means, especially if White can dominate e5 and make the b7 bishop look poor, but here Black has two advantages. First, the white knights are miles from e5 and his bishop badly needs rerouting, which will cost time; secondly, the a4 weakness means that Black can easily make things happen on the queenside, and White has no chance to make 'his' moves on the kingside.

22...b5 23 axb5 axb5 24 b4

Black's queen's bishop is always a problem in this set-up, and this move highlights the fact. Black's next move is one way to address that problem, but it doesn't work out. Instead Black needed

to fight for the a-file with 24...♖eb8, which prepares ...♖a4 without allowing ♖xa4, bxa4; b5 in reply. Black can then deal with the manoeuvre ♘b3-c5 by ...♘xc5 and would have maintained a definite advantage.

24...♘b6?! 25 ♘b3 ♘c4 26 ♕e2
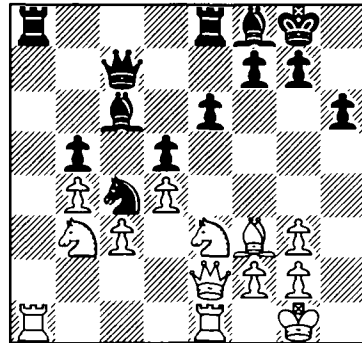
Both sides recognize that White will have to take the knight, and Black hopes then to rid himself of his poor c6-bishop; all very well, but he has reckoned without the common positional theme that the queenside pawns then find themselves without their protector.

26...g6 27 ♘xc4 dxc4 28 ♘c5 ♗g7 29 ♖xa8 ♗xa8 (29...♖xa8? 30 ♘xe6) **30 ♖a1 ♗xf3 31 ♕xf3 ♕b8 32 ♕c6 ♖c8 33 ♕a6 e5 34 d5 ♖d8 35 ♕c6 ♖c8 36 ♕a6 ♖d8 37 ♖d1 e4 38 d6 e3 39 fxe3 ♗xc3 40 ♕b7** (40 ♕c6!?) **♗xb4?** (40...♕xb7 41 ♘xb7 ♖d7 42 ♘c5 ♖d8 43 d7 ♔f8 44 ♘b7 ♔e7 looks as though it holds) **41 ♕xb8 ♖xb8 42 ♘a6 1-0** (V.Akobian-D.Sharavdorj, Burbank 2003).

## B2)

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗g5 e6 3 e3 h6 4 ♗h4 c5 5 ♘f3 b6 6 ♗d3
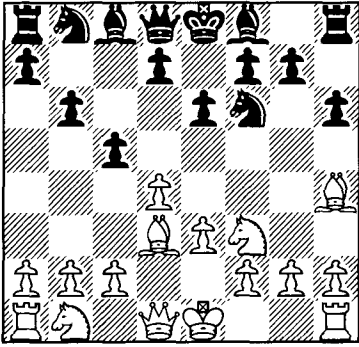
White could also commit himself now with 6 c4: as long as he's persuaded Black to play ...c5 he's avoided the lines with ...g5 or a simplifying ...♘e4 which are perhaps the main objections to the ♗g5 Queen's Indian. The advantage of that order is that White can avoid the unclear gambit in the text by playing ♗e2, e.g. 6...♗b7 7 ♘c3 ♗e7 8 ♗e2.
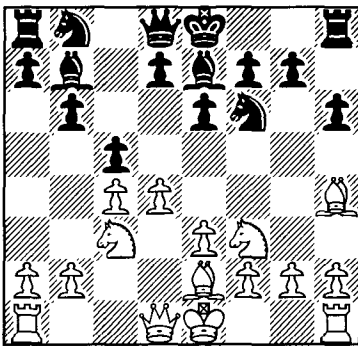
This is a classical line of the Queen's Indian, and Black equalizes easily enough with 8...cxd4 9 ♘xd4 (9 ♕xd4 0-0 10 0-0 d5 is equal too, and so is 9 exd4 d5, but the bishop should not be on e2 in this isolated queen's pawn [IQP] structure) 9...0-0 10 0-0 ♘c6 11 ♖c1 (later Spassky tried 11 ♘db5 when

11...d5 is simplest) 11...♘xd4 (11...♘e5 also equalizes in a hedgehog-type game, L.Ortega-J.Horvath, Sochi 1987) 12 ♕xd4 ♘e4 (B.Spassky-P.Keres, 7th matchgame, Riga 1965).

6...♗b7 7 0-0 ♗e7 8 c4 cxd4
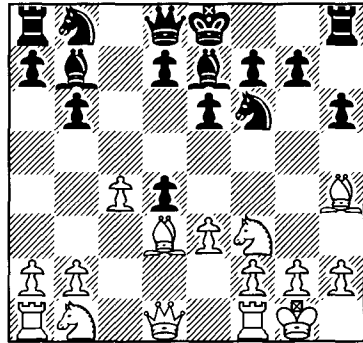
9 exd4

9 ♘xd4 allows Black to equalize rather comfortably with either ...♘c6 and ...d5, or more combatively ...d6/♘bd7 and a hedgehog sort of position with some of White's pieces in rather silly places. The text move, a particular fancy of the Belgian GM Luc Winants, amounts to a gambit.

9...0-0

9...♗xf3 10 ♕xf3 ♘c6 11 ♕h3 is the gambit I mentioned (11 ♕e3 loses material after 11...♘g4 12 ♗xe7 ♘xe3 13 ♗xd8 ♘xf1 14 ♗c7 [14 ♗h4 g5] 14...♘b4 etc. – Finkel). White has surprising compensation after 11...♘xd4 12 ♘c3 0-0 13 ♖ad1 ♖c8 14 ♗b1 ♘c6 15 ♗g3 (L.Winants-K.Bischoff, Chalkidiki 2002). I'm sure White has no more than adequate compensation, but the text is easier.

10 ♘c3 ♘c6

A cunning move, waiting for the right

moment for ...d5. The immediate 10...d5 11 ♕e2 is a reasonably good IQP position for White, and 11 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12 cxd5 is promising too.
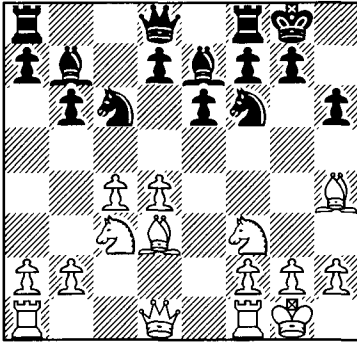

11 ♖e1

White's a little strapped for a good move somehow: Marin gives the lines 11 ♗c2 ♗a6, 11 d5? exd5 12 cxd5 ♘xd5, and 11 a3 ♘h5 12 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 13 ♘e5 ♘f6 14 ♘g4 ♘xg4 15 ♕xg4, and I'll add on my own account 11 ♗b1 ♘a5, 11 ♕e2 ♖c8 with the idea of ...♘b4, ...♗xf3 and ...♖xc4, and 11 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12 ♗e4 (a common Torre theme and perhaps White's best).

11...d5

There is point in choosing this moment, although 11...♖c8 is also very solid. In principle White has a choice between two ways of meeting ...d5; allowing an IQP or playing ♗xf6, ♗xf6; cxd5, exd5 with a type of position familiar from the Tartakower QGD, which can be surprisingly annoying for Black with his passive queen's bishop and the fixed structure favouring White's knights. Black's point in choosing this move order, though, is that the latter method cannot be applied now: 12 ♗xf6

♗xf6 13 cxd5 ♘xd4! (here is the difference) 14 ♘xd4 ♗xd4 15 dxe6 fxe6
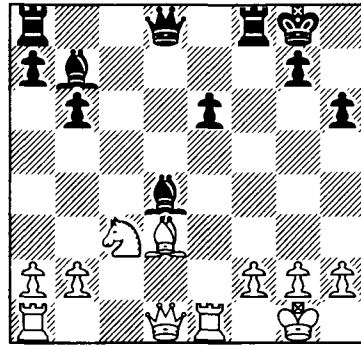
(T.Gouret-M.Marin, Badalona 1994) is already promising for Black with his active pieces and pressure on f2. So White has to play with an IQP: 12 cxd5 ♘xd5 13 ♗xe7 ♘cxe7 is quite a comfortable specimen for Black, hence the text.

12 ♖c1

12 a3 dxc4 13 ♗xc4 ♘h5 (I.Rogers-M.Petursson, Gausdal 1996) is also fine for Black.

12...dxc4 13 ♗xc4 ♖c8
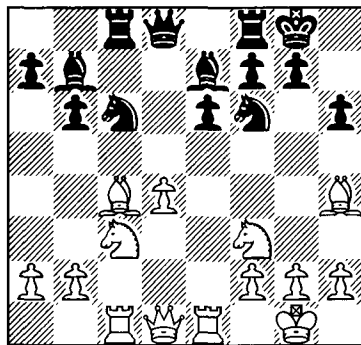
White has now tried 14 ♗d3 ♘b4 15 ♗b1 ♘fd5 (J.Plaskett-P.Zarnicki, Internet blitz 2004), 14 ♗b3 ♘a5 15 ♗c2 ♗xf3 16 ♕xf3 ♕xd4 (A.Chernushevich-

C.Marcelin, French League 2003), and 14 ♗e2 ♘d5 (V.Verdihanov-M.Brodsky, Nikolaev 1993), but in each of these cases Black has nothing to fear: White has not quite brought his pieces into play perfectly for an IQP position: he needed a rook on d1.
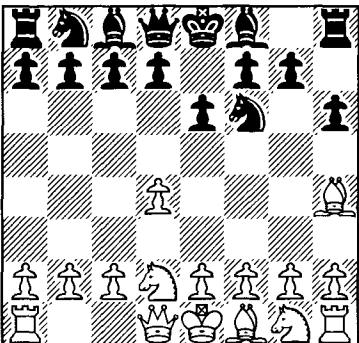
C)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗g5 e6 3 ♘d2
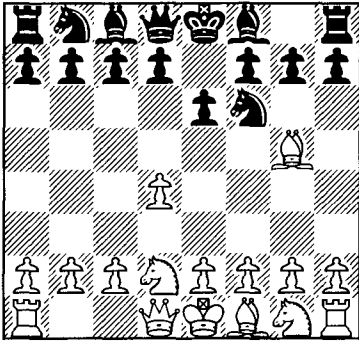
There's not so much about this move in Tromp books, but actually it's a very important alternative to 3 e4. White either wants to slide into a 'Hebden Torre' or just to save on c2-c3. C1 is the former idea, C2 the latter.
3...h6 4 ♗h4

4...c5

For an alternative I rather like the cheeky 4...♘c6: of course normally this is unthinkable in a Torre, but once White has committed his knight to d2 then first of all he now has to spend a tempo on e2-e3 or c2-c3, and secondly Black's plan of hitting at the centre with ...e5 becomes more appealing with no ♘d5 in the offing. Evidence is scarce, but 5 e3 d6 6 c4 ♗d7 7 ♘gf3 g5 8 ♗g3 ♗g7 9 ♗d3 ♕e7 10 a3 ♘h5 (C.Senk-V.Korchnoi, Hessen 1999), 5 c3 d6 6 e4 e5 7 dxe5 ♘xe5 8 ♘gf3 ♘g6 9 ♗g3 ♘h5 10 ♗c4 ♘xg3 11 hxg3 ♕f6 (S.Dishman-J.Rowson, British League 2000, and 5 c3 g5 6 ♗g3 ♘h5 7 e4 ♘xg3 8 hxg3 ♗g7 9 ♗d3 d6 10 ♕f3 ♗d7 11 ♘e2 ♕e7 (V.Popov-A.Lugovoi, St Petersburg 1992) all seemed acceptable enough for Black.
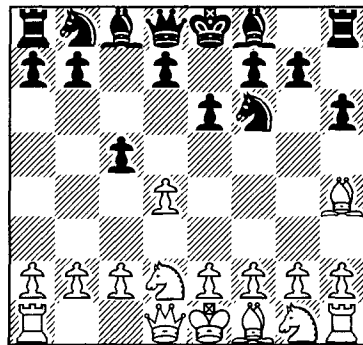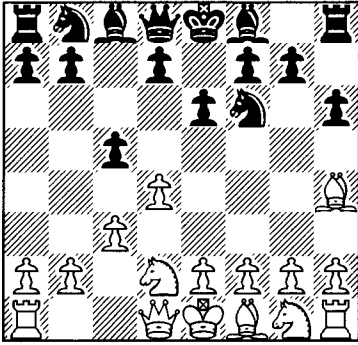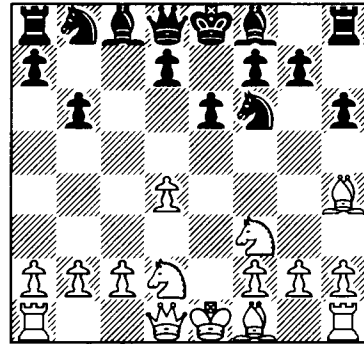

After 4...c5 White has:

C1: 5 c3
C2: 5 e3

C1)
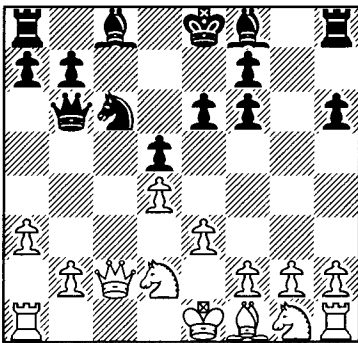**1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗g5 e6 3 ♘d2 h6 4 ♗h4 c5 5 c3**

With this move White announces that he may want e2-e4 in one go, but this move order does have an Achilles heel.

5...cxd4 6 cxd4 ♕b6 7 ♕c2

7 ♘gf3 ♕xb2 is an untried gambit, but the onus is on White.

7...♘c6 8 ♗xf6 gxf6 9 e3 d5 10 a3

This position was reached in G.Israel-O.Foisor, Bethune 1997. White's problem is that his knight really needs to be on c3 in this structure, which is particularly shown by 10 ♘gf3 e5 11 ♖c1 ♗d7, which is fine for Black. With the text I suspect White meant to meet 10...e5 with 11 ♘e2, although if so I don't really understand why not 10 ♘e2 at once. Instead the game continued 10...♗d7 11 ♘e2 ♖c8 12 ♕b3 ♕c7 13 ♖c1 ♗d6 14 g3 ♕b8 with a complex and fairly equal position.

C2)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗g5 e6 3 ♘d2 h6 4 ♗h4 c5 5 e3 cxd4 6 exd4 b6 7 ♘gf3

White has a couple of ways of doubling the f-pawns: 7 ♕f3 ♘c6 8 ♗xf6 gxf6 is one, and 7 ♘e4 ♗e7 8 ♗xf6 gxf6 the other. Neither is too terrifying, but Black has to be a little careful: probably he should play ...d5 – the one break White must at all costs not be allowed is d4-d5 – and if convenient ...h5 is also a useful move. Alternatively, Black can simply start with ...♗e7 before ...b6.

White may also be tempted to set up a Stonewall with 7 c3 ♗e7 8 f4?!, but this is seldom effective before Black is committed to ...d5, and in A.Stefanova-N.Khurtsidze, Groningen 1999, White was already struggling after 8...♗b7 9 ♗xf6 (9 ♘gf3 ♘d5 is vexing) 9...♗xf6 10 ♘gf3 ♕c7 11 g3 g5 12 fxg5 hxg5 13 g4, when I really don't know how White would have answered 13...♕f4.

**7...♗e7 8 ♗d3 ♗b7 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♖e1 d6**
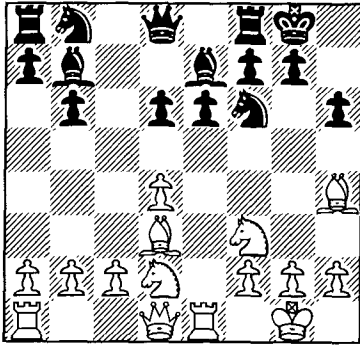
Pretty much as in former variations. Now White could of course play 11 c3 with a position very similar to B142 above, but the column illustrates another idea which wasn't mentioned above.

11 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12 ♗e4

We saw ♘e4 above in Kovacevic-Polugaevsky, but this is another follow-up to ♗xf6. Now 12...♕c7 is one reply, but Bologan prefers a different way, appropriate where White doesn't have c2-c3 in.

12...d5 13 ♗d3 ♗a6 14 ♗xa6 ♘xa6 15 c3 ♘c7
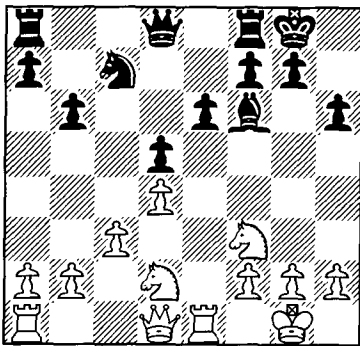
Black is fine (A.Hauchard-V.Bologan, Belfort 1999), and in the game wasted no time in bringing his knight to d6, occupying the c-file, pushing ...b5-b4 and winning. I give the moves without comment since the whole thing flows like the Nile anyway, and it hardly needs any.

16 ♘e5 ♘b5 17 ♘g4 ♗e7 18 ♕e2 ♘d6 19 ♘e3 ♖e8 20 ♕a6 ♕d7 21 a4 ♖ec8 22 ♕d3 ♖c7 23 ♖ec1 ♖ac8 24 ♔f1 ♖c6 25 ♖c2 ♕b7 26 ♔e2 ♖6c7 27 ♔d1 a6 28 g3 b5 29 axb5 axb5 30 ♔e2 b4 31 cxb4 ♖xc2 32 ♘xc2 ♘f5 33 ♔d1 ♗xb4 34 ♕a6 ♖b8 35 ♕xb7 ♖xb7 36 ♘f1 ♗e7 37 ♔c1 ♗g5+ 38 ♘fe3 h5 39 ♖a4 h4 40 ♔b1 ♘xe3 41 fxe3 hxg3 42 hxg3 ♔h7 43 b4 ♔g6 44 ♔b2 ♔h5
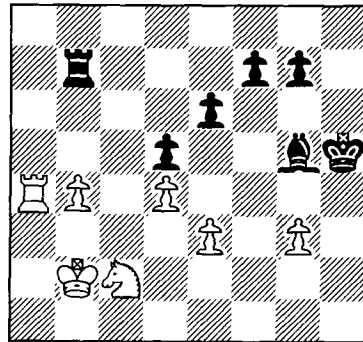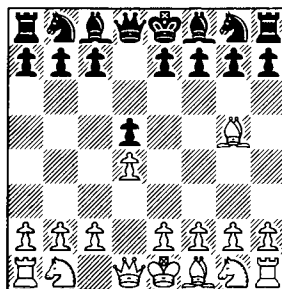
45 ♔b3 ♗e7 46 ♖a1 ♔g4 47 ♔c3 g5 48 ♖g1 ♗d6 49 ♔d3 ♗xg3 50 e4 dxe4 51 ♔xe4 f5+ 52 ♔d3 ♔f3 53 ♘e3 ♗f2 54 ♖f1 ♖xb4 0-1.

Capablanca couldn't have done it better; an object lesson in how to play quietly but powerfully for a win against these rather dull white systems.

CHAPTER TWO

The Pseudo-Trompowsky

1 d4 d5 2 ♗g5

The Pseudo-Tromp, once (and maybe still for all we know) a favourite of Julian Hodgson. The theoretical status of the move is best summed up by a comment of Mickey Adams: 'White is not worse after it', but it's worth having an idea what you're going to do: Anand, Kramnik twice, Shirov and Mikhail Gurevich have all lost in this line in recent years, so it's not a joke.

Black is under a little pressure since he can't move the e-pawn and can't develop his king's knight without some concession, be it doubled f-pawns, playing ...g6 at the risk of ending in a Grünfeld, or going ...♘d7 and blocking the queen's bishop. The line I recommend addresses these problems in a very natural way and has become the usual choice of grandmasters faced with this opening.

2...h6

A useful move: probably Black will be playing ...♗f5 and this will create 'luft' for the bishop; ...g7-g5 may be a useful resource and the bishop may in some

lines be less well placed on h4 than g5.

3 ♗h4 c6
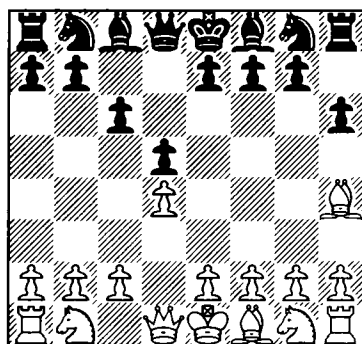
Black prepares to go ...♛b6, gaining a tempo and unpinning the e-pawn. White has a great variety of moves here. The main moves are 4 ♘f3 and 4 e3, but others have their devotees:

a) 4 c3 was well met in I.Miladinovic-G.Timoscenko, Leonardo di Bono 2000: 4...♗f5 5 ♘d2 ♘d7 6 e3 ♘gf6 7 f3?! (7 ♘gf3 is more sensible, with complete equality) 7...♛b6 8 b4 e5! and Black was better already.

b) 4 c4, effectively meeting a Slav De-

fence to the Queen's Gambit with 3 ♗g5?!, is more or less the sole intellectual property of the Russian Genrikh Chepukaitis. After 4...dxc4 his first try was 5 a4 ♕b6 6 ♕d2 e5 7 dxe5 ♗b4 8 ♘c3 ♗e6, but a couple of very rapid losses to Rublevsky and Karjakin seem to have put him off (Black proceeds with a quick ...♘d7 and ...0-0-0) and his latest is 5 e4 b5 6 a4 a6 7 b3 cxb3 8 axb5 (G.Chepukaitis-M.Sebag, playchess.com 2003): in the unlikely event of this happening again I propose 8...♘f6,
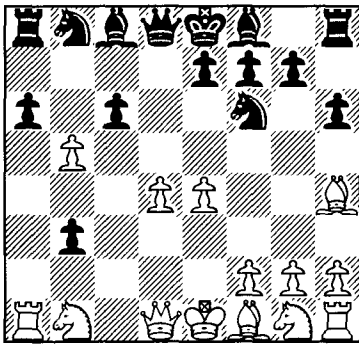
when emerging from the opening in one piece is the very summit of White's ambitions.

c) 4 a3, a sort of ...a6-Slav Attack, is best dealt with by 4...♕b6 5 ♖a2 ♗f5 6 e3 e6 7 c4 ♗e7 (this gain of tempo is one of the ideas of Black's set-up) 8 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 9 ♘c3 ♘d7 10 ♘f3 0-0 11 c5 ♕c7 12 b4 a5 13 ♗e2 axb4 14 axb4 ♖xa2 15 ♘xa2 ♖a8, when Black held the initiative in E.Prie-M.Gurevich, Aosta 2004.

d) 4 ♘c3 is rather like a Veresov, and usually leads to rather equal positions after something like 4...♗f5 5 e3 ♘d7 6 ♗d3 ♗xd3 7 cxd3 ♕b6 8 ♘ge2 e6 9 0-0 ♗e7 10 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 11 ♘a4 ♕c7 12

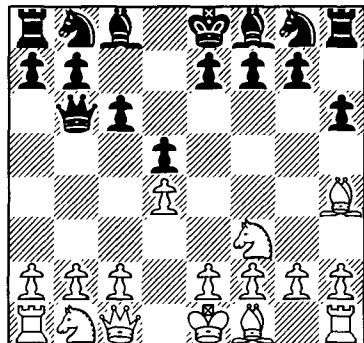♕c2 0-0 13 ♖fc1 e5 (A.Andres Gonzalez-P.Cramling, Vila Real 2001).
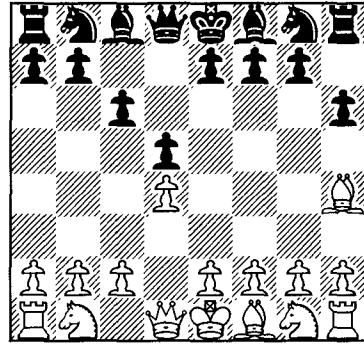
Here White has two main moves:

A: 4 ♘f3
B: 4 e3

Often enough these lead to the same thing: the former only really has independent significance if White intends a controversial gambit, which in line with my usual churlish policy I suggest you decline.

A)
1 d4 d5 2 ♗g5 h6 3 ♗h4 c6 4 ♘f3 ♕b6 5 ♕c1

5 b3 ♗f5 6 e3 now is Line B, while 5 ♘bd2 ♗f5 (5...♕xb2 is possible of course but some good black players including Hodgson himself have declined to take up this challenge) leads to similar play, except that the d2-knight is not in the right place.

The gambit offered by the text was for a while a fearsome weapon in Hodgson's hands. It was thought to have been refuted in the games J.Hodgson-M.Godena, Mondariz 2000, and J.Hodgson-L.Schandorff, Bundesliga 2001, but Miladinovic still goes in for it, and on the whole I'd recommend steering clear: it's one thing to let an opponent get away with offering a pawn if declining involves concessions, but all White's done is play ♕c1, so there is really no reason not to carry on with Black's plan.
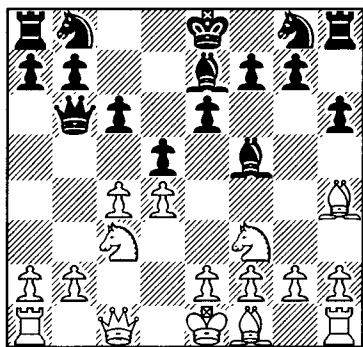
5...♗f5

5...g5 6 ♗g3 g4 7 ♘e5 ♕xd4 is the gambit line.

6 c4 e6 7 ♘c3

7 c5 ♕a5+ 8 ♘c3 b6 is premature.

7...♗e7

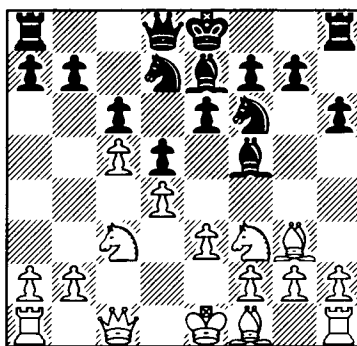Immediately, so as to allow ...♕d8 after c4-c5.

8 ♗g3

8 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 is easy for Black: White's plan is to play c4-c5 and attack on the queenside and for that the bishop controlling b8 is essential.

8...♘f6 9 c5 ♕d8 10 e3 ♘bd7

Castling can wait – the text move is accurate because it threatens ...♘h5 (after 11 ♗e2 ♘h5 12 ♗e5 Black can insist on the trade – or a draw – with 12...♘hf6).

11 h3 0-0

This is very solid, but Black can also consider 11...a5. By this means he prevents White from solidifying his queenside bind, and 12 ♗e2 0-0 13 ♘e5 ♘xe5 14 ♗xe5 ♘d7 15 ♗g3 b6 would transpose into A.Barsov-J.Hector, Vikings GM, York 2000, in which White was forced to continue 16 cxb6 ♕xb6 with a nice game for Black.

12 b4 ♘e4 13 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 14 ♘d2 ♗g6 15 ♕c3

15 ♗e2 can be met the same way: White figures he needs to play ♗d3 to control b1 and give his b4-b5 plan some sting, and he intends to save a tempo by missing out ♗e2.

15...♗f6
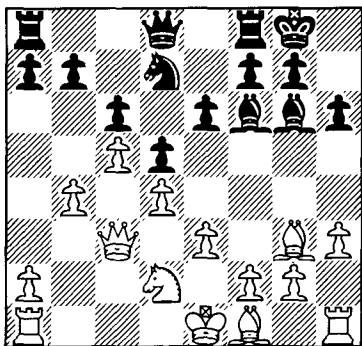
Black means to fight back with ...e5 rather than contesting the queenside. He's been quick enough that his counterplay comes in time, and Black had equal play in J.Hodgson-A.Naumann, Bundesliga 2003. Once ...e5 is achieved, by the way, Black should seldom release the tension with ...e4 in this line: he takes a long while to do anything on the kingside, and White is very quick on the other side.

B)
1 d4 d5 2 &g5 h6 3 &h4 c6 4 e3
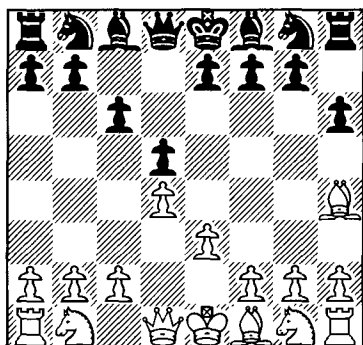
The invariable choice of some heavyweight fans of this variation, for example Adams, Miles and Miladinovic. There are really two points behind the move: first, one can play 5 ♕c1 next go without putting a pawn en prise; second, it has been discovered that 4...♕b6 5 b3/♕c1 e5, exploiting the trick 6 dxe5?? ♕b4+, is not such a simple equalizer for Black as it appears.

4...♕b6
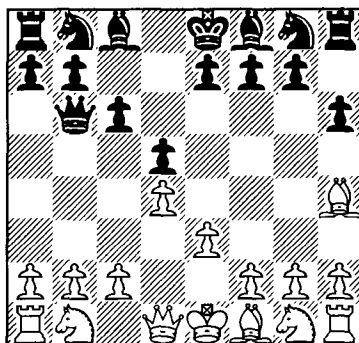
5 b3
5 ♕c1 &f5 is going to transpose to A: White hardly has a better move now than 6 ♘f3 (6 c4 e6 7 ♘c3 &e7 is the same thing).

5...&f5 6 &d3
This almost always is White's plan after b2-b3, since Black's f5 bishop is surely more active than one on e2, and 6 c4 e6 7 ♘c3 &b4 is rather annoying. Of course he can also play *pianissimo* with 6 ♘f3 e6 7 &e2 &e7 8 &xe7 ♘xe7 9 ♘e5 c5 10 c3 ♘bc6 11 ♘d3 cxd4 12 cxd4 (R.Damaso-A.Frois, Portugal 1999). It's never too quiet to blunder, though, and I bet both sides spent a long time eyeing up 12...♘xd4 13 exd4 ♕xd4 14 ♘a3 &xd3 15 0-0 ♕b4 16 ♕xd3 ♕xa3 17 ♕b5+ ♔f8 18 ♕xb7 before Black decided not to bother and the game ambled to a draw.
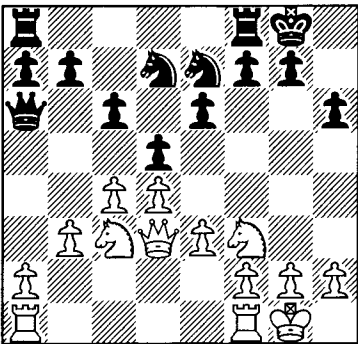
6...♗xd3 7 ♕xd3 e6 8 ♘f3 ♘d7 9 c4
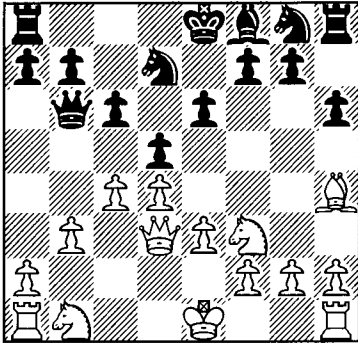
9...♗e7

This, gaining a tempo as it does by the threat of exchange, has been the most popular move, but Karpov's 9...♘e7 might be even better: 10 0-0 ♘f5 11 ♘bd2 ♘xh4 12 ♘xh4 ♗e7 seems to be about as good as White can do, and at least Black can hope that one day his bishop may be more effective than the knight.

10 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♘c3

The tabiya of the variation.

12...♕a6

Black can play many moves here (arranging his rooks on either c8 and d8 or

e8 and d8 being the most popular) but the text has Kramnik's seal of approval. It forces White to move his queen before undertaking anything with the c-pawn, and frees the way for ...b7-b6, which may be useful either to challenge the c-pawn after c4-c5 or to support ...c6-c5.

13 ♖fd1

Universally played, defending the queen and freeing the c-pawn.

13...♖fd8 14 ♖ac1

In A.Morozevich-V.Kramnik, Astana 2001, White tried 14 ♖ab1; this I think is directed against Black's idea of ...dxc4 followed by ...c6-c5. However, it didn't go very well after 14...b6 (White's previous move might also have suggested that he was thinking about c4-c5) 15 ♕f1 (I'm sure Morozevich had an idea with this move but what it was I don't understand at all; Hodgson used to play this way in conjunction with ♖fc1, when one can understand it as otherwise the queen is undefended, but not here). 15...♖ac8 16 ♖d2 (was White's previous move somehow connected with a plan to use this rook on c2 or b2?) 16...♘f6 17 ♘e5 dxc4
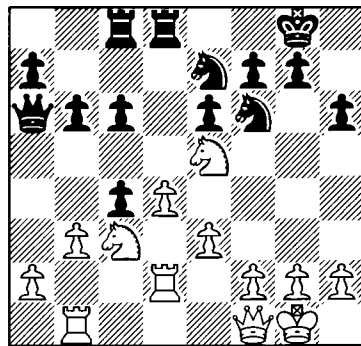
18 ♘xc4 (one would have thought White's formation called for 18 bxc4 c5 or indeed 18 ♕xc4: is White's queen really better than Black's?) 18...♘ed5 19 ♖c2? (the last mistake: 19 ♘xd5 cxd5 20 ♘e5 ♕xf1+ 21 ♖xf1 ♘e4 was necessary: Tsesarsky assures us that a player of Morozevich's level should not lose such an endgame; against a player of Kramnik's level with quite such firm control of the c-file I'm not so sure, although anything is better than losing at once) 19...♘xc3 20 ♖xc3 c5 21 dxc5 b5! and Black won with the idea of ...♘d2.

White has also tried 14 a4, when 14...♖ac8 15 a5 c5 was already comfortable in E.Rozentalis-A.Sulypa, Bad Wiessee 1999. I wonder if White might also consider 14 e4, when 14...dxe4 15 ♘xe4 seems to leave White a little better (the knight on d7 is a little snookered, and perhaps White can think about ♖d3/♖ad1 and the possibility of d4-d5), and 14...dxc4 15 bxc4 c5 16 d5 also seems to leave White slightly more active.

14...♖ac8
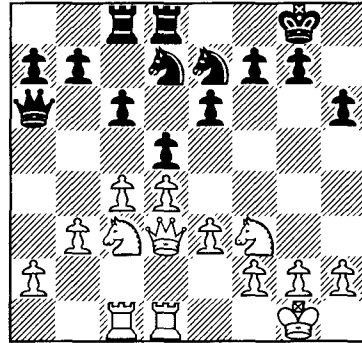
With rather an equal position: White can now try the criminally dull 15 cxd5 or 15 c5 (when Black can play for ...e5 and/or a well-timed ...b6), while the slightly more ambitious 15 ♕b1 b6 16 e4 (why White needed to move the queen from d3 before playing this is not clear to me; 15 e4!?) 16...♘f6 17 e5 ♘d7 18 cxd5 cxd5 19 a4 possibly left a slight edge for White in V.Mikhalevski-B.Villamajor, Goodricke 2001, although Black drew comfortably enough.

CHAPTER THREE

The Torre Attack
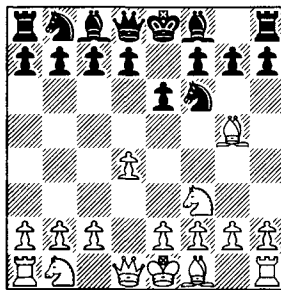
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗g5 (and **1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗g5)**

This is the Torre Attack proper. Unlike the versions which we saw in the Trompowsky chapter, White is willing to allow a direct counter which gains the two bishops and gives Black a rich game with counterchances. I'm not going to give an alternative for Black since if he wants to he can just play the same lines which I gave in the Tromp chapter. Instead I suggest that Black simply bags that bishop directly.

3...h6

The most uncompromising way. In fact I think avoiding this was probably the motive behind the development of what I have christened the Hebden Torre in the next chapter.
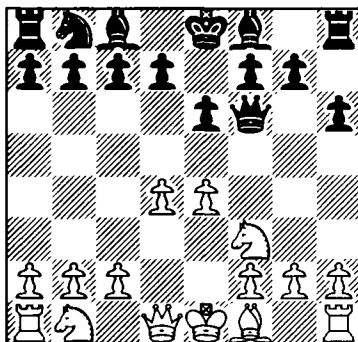
White now has a major choice:

A: 4 ♗xf6
B: 4 ♗h4

A)
**1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗g5 h6 4 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 5 e4**

This isn't the only move, of course, but White's compensation for having given up the bishops lies in having taken the centre, and this is by far the most critical. This position could have arisen from the Trompowsky after 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗g5 e6 3 e4 h6 4 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 5 ♘f3, although usually it doesn't (Wells: 'I have rejected 5 ♘f3 because I cannot conceive that the solution to White's problems lies in blocking the f-pawn').

White sometimes tries a slower set-up with 5 ♘bd2 d6 6 c3 ♘d7 7 a4 (or 7 g3

g6 8 ♗g2 ♗g7 9 0-0 0-0 10 a4 a5 11 ♕b3 e5 12 e4 ♘b6, A.Kosten-M.Adams, London 1990) 7...g6 (not 7...g5?: a good rule is never to play this unless White has played e4) 8 a5 a6 9 g3 ♗g7 10 ♗g2 ♕e7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♕c2 e5 13 e3 ♖e8, which was reasonable for Black in A.Kachur-A.Kharitonov, Aktjubinsk 1985.

5...d6

Black could certainly also play 5...d5 when White probably doesn't have a lot better than 6 e5 ♕d8 7 c3, which is line A2 in the Tromp chapter. His alternative try is 7 c4, when Burgess gives 7...dxc4 8 ♗xc4 ♘d7 9 ♘c3 ♘b6 10 ♗b3 ♗d7 11 0-0 ♗c6 12 ♖c1 ♗e7 13 ♕d3 (J.Hodgson-M.Lodhi, London 1987) as a clear advantage to White: this is not clear to me and I suggest 13...a5.
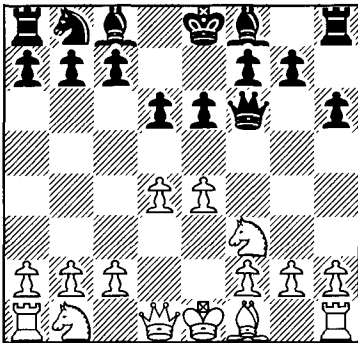
After 5...d6 White has a choice between set-ups based on ♘c3 and those based on c3. In the latter move order can vary but I split them as follows:
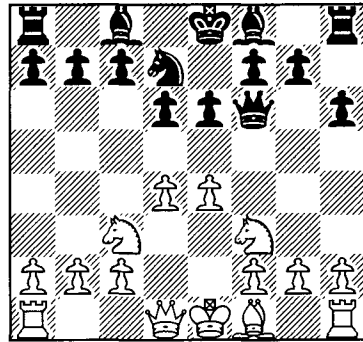
A1: 6 ♘c3
A2: 6 ♗d3

I'm going to mention 6 e5 only to dismiss it: Burgess claimed an edge after 6...dxe5 7 dxe5 ♕e7 8 ♘c3 ♘c6 9 ♗b5 but I don't see this at all, for example 9...♗d7 10 ♕e2 0-0-0 11 0-0-0 a6 12 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 13 ♖xd8+ ♕xd8 14 ♖d1 ♕e7 and so forth, while 9 ♗d3 g5 10 ♕e2 ♗g7 11 ♗b5 ♗d7 12 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 13 0-0-0 ♕b4 was similar, only worse, in K.Shirazi-L.Christiansen, US Championship 1984.

A1)
**1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗g5 h6 4 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 5 e4 d6 6 ♘c3 ♘d7**

Notwithstanding the failure of 6 e5, Black does well to clamp down on it now. White is aiming for quick development and Black needs to keep the centre closed and bide his time; in the long run he hopes the unopposed dark-squared bishop can play a decisive role, but before then he has to avoid getting mated.

7 ♕d2

By far White's main move, aiming for a quick 0-0-0, although he does have some alternatives:

a) 7 d5 e5 is nothing in particular for White.

b) 7 &c4 can be met in much the same style as the text: E.Meduna-S.Kalinichev, Passau 1997, went 7...♕d8 8 0-0 (White is hardly going to go long after &c4, so the play is slightly different, but Black can develop in the same way) 8...&e7 9 ♕e2 a6 10 a4 c5 (Black is well advised to get this in before castling: he looks a little undeveloped but White can't do anything about it, and White otherwise might take it into his head to play ♘d1 and meet ...c5 with c3) 11 d5 e5 (usually the way to meet d4-d5 in this line: Black's king's bishop doesn't look so good after this in the short term, but, as in the King's Indian, its time will come) 12 ♘d1 ♘f6 13 ♘d2 0-0,
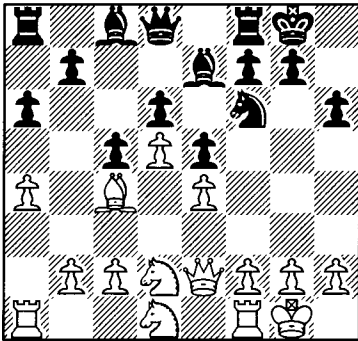
when Black was fine; he went on with ...g6, ...♘h5, ...&g5 and ...f5, and delivered mate.

c) 7 &d3 allows for either long or short castling still; Black can play 7...g5 with ...&g7 or 7...c6 with ...e5, or reply in the same style with 7...♕d8. In the latter case, most often White transposes now with 8 ♕d2 and 9 0-0-0 anyway since if he wanted to play with &d3 and 0-0 probably he would have played ♘bd2 and c3. But if White does play 8 0-0 Black can go on in the same style with 8...a6 (8...c5 9 dxc5 ♘xc5 10 &b5 &d7 11 &xd7+ ♕xd7 12 ♕d4 is a bit annoying) followed by ...c5: again White has an impressive lead in development but difficulty in engaging Black to make use of it.

7...♕d8

I'm not sure it makes too much difference whether this or ...a6 is played first: Adams seems to prefer ...a6 first, Miles ...♕d8. I think the idea of 7...♕d8 first is to avoid 7...a6 8 a4, not that that's so terrifying. In general the queen retreat is necessary to avoid ...c5 being met by e4-e5, for example after 7...a6 8 0-0-0 c5 9 e5!.

8 0-0-0
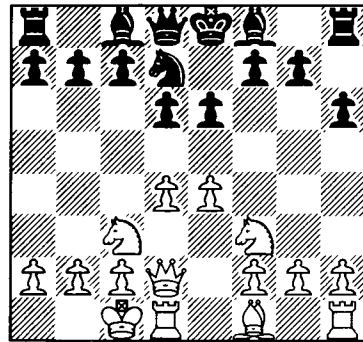
As I say, this is almost always played.

8...a6

This exact sequence, popularized by Tony Miles, has been responsible for the status of White's once common set-up nose-diving in recent years. Black's plan is to play ...b5, ...&b7 and ...c5, obtaining a Sicilian-type position in which White badly misses his bishop and Black has good prospects against White's king. White has tried a good many moves here

but has achieved a miserable score and has really not discovered a decent way to handle the position at all.

9 h4

This has been the most popular, but White has also tried the following:

a) 9 e5 introduces immediately one of the main strategic questions of the position: is Black to meet e4-e5 with ...d6-d5 or by ignoring it? It's not obvious that a move like 9...b5 is bad, but in practice Black has invariably played 9...d5. Now O.Annageldyev-I.Rogers, Istanbul 2000 went on 10 h4 b5 11 ♘e2 ♘b6!? (11...c5 was perhaps more normal and perfectly good) 12 ♘f4 ♘c4 13 ♗xc4 bxc4 14 ♘h5 ♕d7
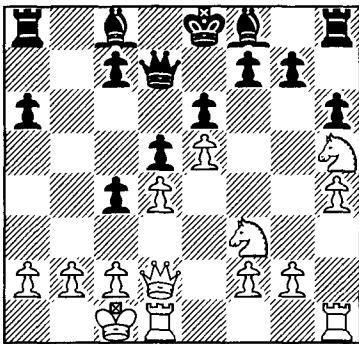

with an interesting game: Black has chances on the queenside with ...a5, ...♖b8, and perhaps ...♕a4 and ...♗b4, while he can defend on the kingside with ...♖h7 and the bishop on f8. S.Guliev-J.Maherramzade, Baku 1996, saw a different idea: 10 ♔b1 b5 11 ♘e2 ♘b6 12 ♘c1 ♘c4 13 ♕f4 c5 14 dxc5 ♗xc5 15 ♘d3 ♗e7 16 h4 ♕c7 17 ♖h3 ♗b7 18 ♖g3 with chances for both sides.

b) 9 ♘e1 c5 10 dxc5 ♘xc5 11 ♘d3 ♕c7 12 f4 ♗e7 13 ♔b1 b5 14 g4 ♗b7

15 ♗g2 was C.Marzolo-A.Kosten, Monte Carlo 1999, where Black had a nice Sicilian-type position.

c) 9 ♗d3 and 9 ♔b1 are not usually independent. In A.Stefanova-M.Gurevich, Antwerp 1997 White tried to miss out ♔b1, but 9 ♗d3 ♗e7 10 h4 b5 11 g4 c5 was nice for Black again: Stefanova closed the centre by 12 d5 e5, but after 13 ♖dg1 c4 14 ♗f1 Black already had the initiative and a pleasant choice between the game's methodical 14...♕a5 15 g5 h5 16 ♕e1 ♗d8, and Gurevich's more flamboyant suggestion 14...b4 15 ♘b1 c3!? with strong compensation.
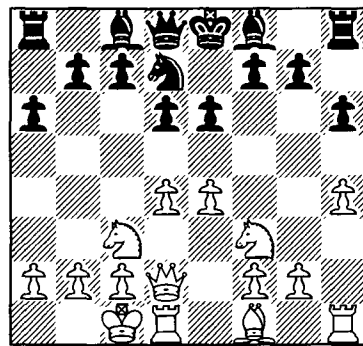

9...b5

The usual routine.

10 ♔b1

10 ♖h3 ♗b7 11 ♕f4 b4 12 ♘e2 c5 13 dxc5 ♘xc5 14 e5 was C.Crouch-M.Adams, London 1996, in which Black now closed the centre with 14...d5 and stood fine, although Palliser's 14...♗d5 was very conceivable, while *Fritz* seems to think 14...♘e4 is downright good for Black and I must say it seems to be right.

10 ♘e2 c5 11 d5 e5 12 h5 c4 13 ♘g3 ♘c5 14 ♔b1 ♖b8 15 ♘h4 ♗e7 15 ♘hf5 ♗g5 16 ♕e1 was another centre-closing

plan in A.Stefanova-A.Kolev, Madrid 1997, and as usual Black stood well with his dark-squared control on the kingside and chances on the queenside.

10...&b7
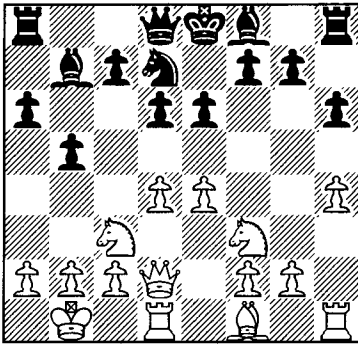
11 &d3

In I.Rogers-H.Stefansson, Iceland 2000, White played 11 d5 and Black eschewed the usual 11...e5 in favour of 11...&b6!?. Myself, I think I would have met that with 12 dxe6 fxe6 13 &d3, but Rogers preferred 12 &xb5+?!, which after entertaining complications basically turned out to lose (12...axb5 13 &xb5+ &d7 14 dxe6 fxe6 15 &e5 was the idea, but Rogers must have underestimated 15...c6!).
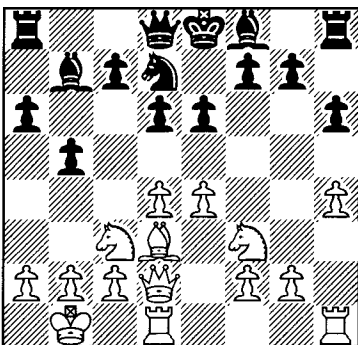
11...c5

This position was reached in the seminal game J.Hodgson-A.Miles, Kuala Lumpur 1992, which continued
**12 dxc5 &xc5 13 &e3 &c7 14 &d4 0-0-0 15 f4 &b8**
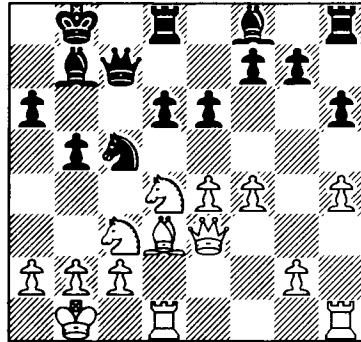
A very natural series of moves which leave us in a position which might well have been some kind of Sicilian Defence. Now Spraggett showed how to meet the direct 16 f5 in N.Ristic-K.Spraggett, Metz 1997, with 16...b4 17 &ce2 exf5 18 exf5 &e7, when the f6-bishop more than compensated for the slight defects of Black's pawn structure. Gallagher suggested 16 h5 b4 17 &ce2, when I rather suspect Black should be aiming for ...e5 rather than the 17...d5 18 e5 which Gallagher mentioned; perhaps by 17...&c8 18 &c1 e5.

Hodgson thought ...b4 was worth preventing with 16 a3 h5 17 f5 &e7 (if 17...exf5? now then 18 &d5, of course) 18 fxe6 fxe6 19 &e2 &f6 20 &h3 &c8, and now perhaps White had to change the course of the game with Gallagher's unclear proposal 21 &dxb5 axb5 22 &xb5 &b6 23 &xd6 &c6 24 e5 &e7 25 &xc6 &xc6 26 &d6 – in the game White

rejected this and went swiftly downhill once the bishop came to e5 and dominated the position. Mind you, Miles obviously wasn't afraid of this since 20...♖c8 isn't exactly the only move; for example 20...♕e7 comes into consideration.

A2)

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗g5 h6 4 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 5 e4 d6 6 ♗d3
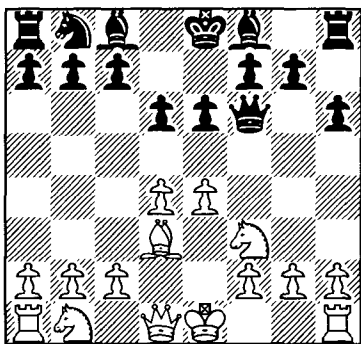
White is not going to go for the sharp sort of game we saw in A1; instead he means to develop with c3 and ♘bd2. This plan is more ambitious from the Tromp move order with ♘f3 delayed so that f4 can be played, but here too it is a solid way to play and aim for a slight edge.

6...♘d7

Again this is Black's most flexible move.

7 0-0

7 ♘bd2 might be a bit inaccurate since it lends force to Black's 7...g5!?. Now 8 c3 g4 9 ♘g1 h5 seems to be necessary. White might well be best off here with 10 ♘e2, just developing again and hoping to prove Black's advances to be

weaknesses, but practice has seen only 10 h3 ♗h6 11 ♕e2 a6 12 0-0-0 c5 13 dxc5 ♘xc5 14 ♔b1 b5 15 ♗c2 (A.Monteleone-L.Ortega, Rome 1991), when Black should have played 15...♗b7 with equality. Otherwise Black can set up the same way as the text: White's sixth to tenth moves can be played in any order without altering Black's set-up much except that ♖e1 should be met immediately with ...e5.

7...g6 8 ♘bd2 ♗g7 9 c3 0-0 10 ♖e1 e5
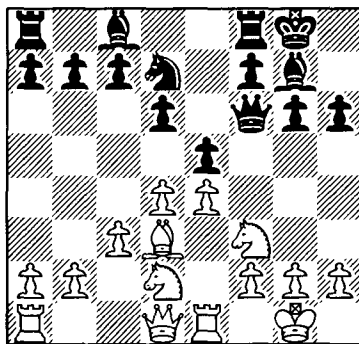
The most natural position to reach in this line. White could also have arranged this position with his bishop on c4 instead of d3, after which Y.Seirawan-A.Karpov, Monaco (blindfold) 1994, continued 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 ♕c2 a5 13 a3 a4 14 ♘f1 ♘c5 15 ♘e3 c6 16 ♖ad1, which looks at least okay for Black to me, though White won and Burgess assesses it as slightly better for White, so who am I to argue? White might also have tried an early a2-a4: in general Black is best to let this come to a5 and then meet it with ...a7-a6.
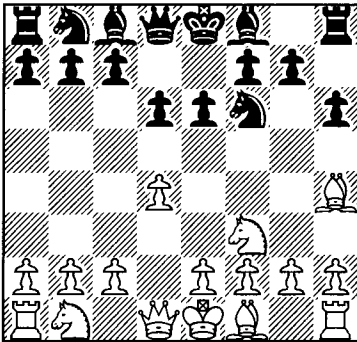
The chances after 10...e5 are rather level, although the continuation of

R.Ovetchkin-A.Lugovoi, Alma-Ata 1991 was notable for the future grandmaster's way of spicing the play up; after 11 ♘f1 ♖e8 12 ♕d2?! (12 ♘e3) he went in for 12...exd4 13 cxd4 c5.
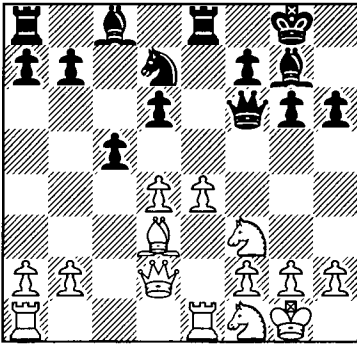
This is still no more than equal, I dare say, but more interesting than the structure that arises after dxe5, dxe5.

B)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗g5 h6 4 ♗h4 d6

Another cunning little move from the Romanian stable; this one developed by Mihai Suba and Marin. Black still intends ...g5 and ...♘h5 in due course, but he doesn't want to go for the bishop at once and allow the position after 4...g5 5 ♗g3 ♘h5 6 c3 d6 7 e4 ♗g7 8 ♘fd2 ♘xg3 9 hxg3, which Marin judges slightly better for White. It certainly isn't beyond dispute that that's true, but there's no harm in waiting for ♘bd2 before going after the bishop. Black, incidentally, has scored 60% after the move 4...d6.
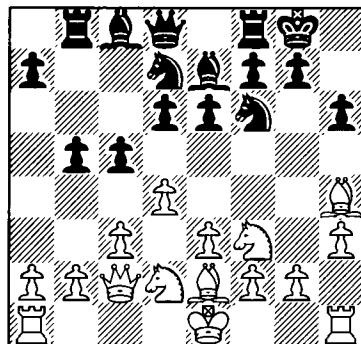
White has many moves now, although most of them are not independent.

B1: 5 h3
B2: 5 ♘c3
B3: 5 ♘bd2
B4: 5 e3

B1) 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗g5 h6 4 ♗h4 d6 5 h3

Of course White can preserve the bishop like this, but he is basically just losing a tempo. Black found an interesting method of unbalancing the game in R.Bellin-V.Epishin, Gibraltar 2003, which continued...
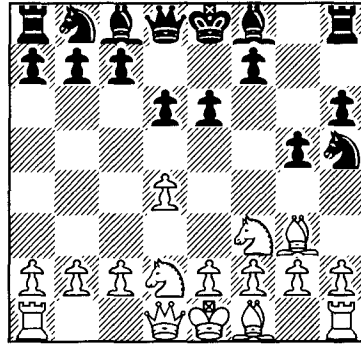**5...♘bd7 6 ♘bd2 ♗e7 7 e3 0-0 8 c3 ♖b8!? 9 ♕c2 b5 10 ♗e2 c5**

and already Black was starting to take the initiative.

B2)
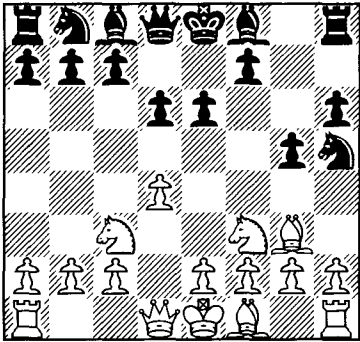**1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗g5 h6 4 ♗h4 d6 5 ♘c3**

I don't see how this can be a good move, but various grandmasters have disagreed with me. 5...d5 is by no means stupid now, but

5...g5 6 ♗g3 ♘h5

is more thematic. Now both 7 e3 ♗g7 8 ♘d2 ♘xg3 9 hxg3 a6 10 ♗e2 ♘d7 11 g4 d5 (usually desirable at some point in this line) 12 ♗f3 ♘f6 (S.Cicak-E.Agrest, Skara 2002), and 7 e4 ♘d7 8 ♗c4 a6 9 a4 ♕e7 10 0-0 ♗g7 11 ♖e1 ♘xg3 12 hxg3 0-0 13 ♘h2 c6 14 ♘g4 ♕d8 15 ♗b3 d5 (E.Torre-S.B.Hansen, Calvia 2004) illustrated typical black procedures and were equal.

B3)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗g5 h6 4 ♗h4 d6 5 ♘bd2

Commonest: 5 c3 ♘bd7! comes to the same thing – White hardly has a sensible move now other than 6 ♘bd2.
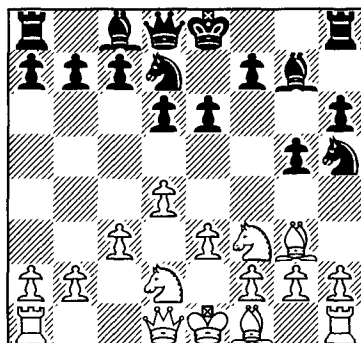
5...g5

Now ♘fd2 is ruled out Black is happy to play this.

6 ♗g3 ♘h5

White must choose now between a set-up based on e2-e4 and one based on e2-e3.

B31: 7 e3
B32: 7 e4

B31)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗g5 h6 4 ♗h4 d6 5 ♘bd2 g5 6 ♗g3 ♘h5 7 e3 ♗g7

Black's scheme of development is always the same in the early going.

8 c3 ♘d7

This piece can also be developed on c6, but I have stuck to lines with ...♘d7. The motivation for this placement of the knight is twofold: it may be well placed

on f6, perhaps defending its colleague on h5 and enabling the useful delay of ...♘xg3; and the c-pawn is free for ...c5, working to free the unopposed g7-bishop on the long diagonal.

9 ♗d3

White has tried many set-ups here:

a) Certainly not wise is 9 h4 g4 10 ♘h2 f5 11 ♗d3 0-0! (Black quite often goes short in this line: the king is hard to get at behind the g7-bishop), transposing to E.Karadeniz-Z.Izoria, Batumi 2002, in which White was overrun after ...♕e7 and ...e5 and deservedly collapsed on g3.

b) 9 ♗e2 ♘df6 10 0-0 ♕e7 can't have pleased Yasser Seirawan much in Y.Seirawan-J.Ehlvest, Skelleftea 1989, since his next moves were 11 e4 ♘xg3 12 hxg3 0-0 and now 13 ♗d3!?.

c) 9 ♘g1
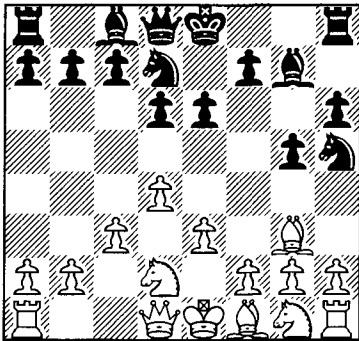
is not as foolish as it looks (White aims to ensure that he can get in g3-g4 to fix the h6-weakness) and was played in R.Appel-G.Kasparov, Internet (blitz) 1998, which continued 9...♘xg3 10 hxg3 c5 (there's not much point my saying how Kasparov should have played, but bearing in mind the provenance of this game perhaps I may be forgiven for say-

ing that 'FWIW' 10...♕e7 looks arguably wiser to me) 11 ♘e4 ♕e7 12 dxc5 d5 13 ♘d6+ ♔f8, with rough equality.

d) Finally, White sometimes reaches for the a-pawn in the hope of dissuading Black from an eventual queenside fianchetto: 9 a4 ♕e7 10 a5 a6 11 ♕c2 f5 12 ♗c4 ♘df6 13 ♕b3 was an attempt to take particular advantage of this in X.Lopez Sanchez-A.Cherniaev, Manresa 1997. Alex must have had his reasons for avoiding the natural 13...0-0 14 0-0 ♗d7 at this point, but I must say I'm not sure what they were. In any case Black is fine.

9...♕e7
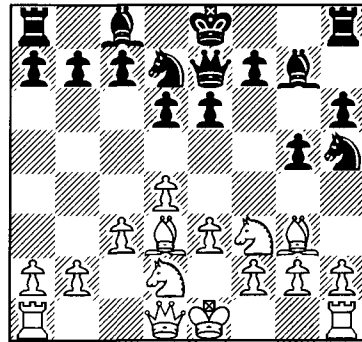
10 ♕e2

10 a4 0-0 11 ♘c4 f5 12 ♘fd2 ♘df6 13 f3 ♘xg3 14 hxg3 c5 was all very natural-looking from White's angle in N.Sivan-Z.Izoria, New York 2002, but also already nice for Black.

10 ♕c2 is often played, when 10...a6 or 10...b6 are natural, but in K.Müller-M.Wahls, Dudweiler 1996, Black developed another way: 10...♘b6!? 11 0-0-0 ♗d7 12 e4 ♖c8, again with counterplay.

10...a6 11 ♗c2

11 0-0-0 b5 gave Black an equal share

of the attacking prospects in A.Stefanova-Ki.Georgiev, Recklinghausen 1996, especially after the improbable 12 ♘b3 0-0 13 ♘fd2 ♘xg3 14 hxg3 c5 15 dxc5 ♘xc5. White's best is probably 11 e4, but in that case he might as well have chosen Line B32.

11...b6
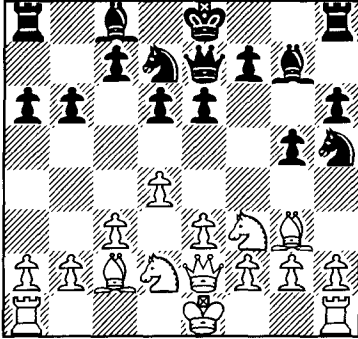
This was T.Nalbandian-V.Malaniuk, Yerevan Olympiad 1996, in which White now didn't find a plan, continuing 12 ♕c4 ♘xg3 13 hxg3 c5 14 ♕d3 ♗b7 15 e4 ♖c8, when Black was already comfortable.

B32)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗g5 h6 4 ♗h4 d6 5 ♘bd2 g5 6 ♗g3 ♘h5 7 e4 ♗g7 8 c3 ♘d7 9 ♗d3

Natural. As before White can also play other moves, for example 9 ♘c4, which tries to avoid the trouble caused in the text with ...f5-f4 by preparing to force the exchange on g3 by ♘fd2. Black then continues with 9...♕e7 10 ♘fd2 ♘xg3 11 hxg3 and now Black is fine after either 11...c5 12 dxc5 ♘xc5 13 ♘e3 ♗d7, when White wisely tried to simplify with 14 a4 ♗c6 15 ♗b5 in I.Radziewicz-

M.Marin, MK Cafe Cup, Koszalin 1999, or 11...b6 12 ♘e3 ♗b7 13 ♗d3 c5 14 d5 0-0-0 (S.Kovacevic-K.Spraggett, Andorra 1997).
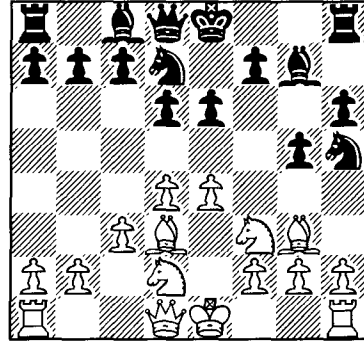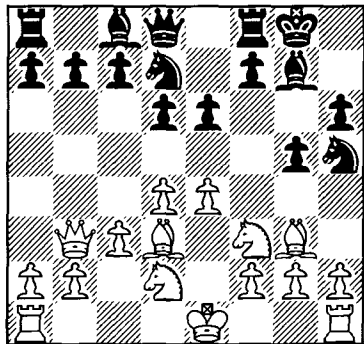

9...0-0

Black has also done okay with 9...a6 and 9...♕e7 (e.g. 10 ♕e2 a6 11 ♘b3 e5 12 ♘fd2 ♘xg3 13 hxg3 cxd4 14 ♘xd4, W.Hug-K.Hulak, Istanbul 2003 – equal and shortly drawn), but the text challenges White by immediately getting ready for ...f7-f5-f4.
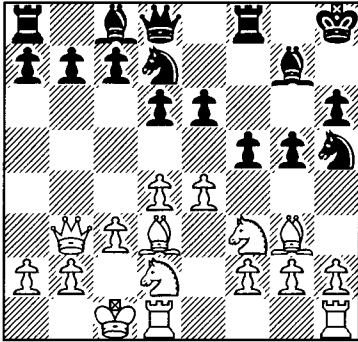
10 ♕b3

10 ♕e2 f5 11 e5 produces some interesting complications – Black can consider either 11...♘b6 or 11...g4 12 ♘h4 dxe5 13 ♘g6 exd4!?.

10...♔h8

Later Marin took against this natural move, and suggested 10...a6 11 0-0-0 b5, but his reason seems to have been wrong.

11 0-0-0 f5!?

Marin suggested this move after the game A.Miles-M.Marin, Andorra 1995 (in which 11...a6?! 12 ♗b1! g4!? 13 ♗h4 ♕e8 14 ♘g1 e5 15 h3 was good for White) but thought at first that it allowed 12 h4 g4 13 ♘g5!?. In fact, however, this just seems bad – 13...hxg5 14 hxg5 ♕xg5 15 exf5 exf5 16 ♖h2 ♗h6 unpins the knight and ties down the queen's rook for long enough for Black to defend and apparently win fairly handily. Obviously that isn't the end of the question, but if White is reduced to 12 exf5 exf5 13 h3 then one would think Black must have a decent position, for example 13...♘xg3 14 fxg3 c5!? would be sensible.

B4)

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗g5 h6 4 ♗h4 d6 5 e3

This can of course lead to Line B3, but here I show only two White ideas that don't.
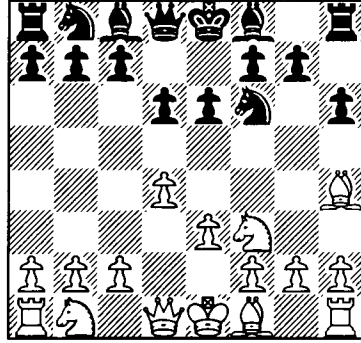
5...♘bd7 6 c4

6 ♗d3 still hopes to meet ...g5/...♘h5 by ♘fd2 forcing a premature exchange on g3, but now Black can play 6...g5 7 ♗g3 ♘h5 8 ♘fd2 ♘df6, still refusing to exchange, as in K.Sasikiran-P.Kiriakov, Internet (blitz) 2004, which went on 9 c4 ♗g7 10 ♘c3 a6 11 ♕c2 b6 12 0-0-0 ♗b7 13 d5!?. Black could certainly consider accepting this pawn sacrifice, but instead 13...♘xg3 14 hxg3 ♕e7 15 dxe6 fxe6 16 ♗g6+ ♔d8 led to a most unclear struggle – Black's next few moves will include ...♔c8-b8, and if White doesn't find some way to get to grips meantime he will probably end up worse.

6...g5 7 ♗g3 ♘h5 8 ♘c3 ♗g7
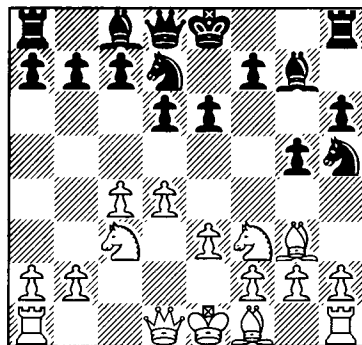
9 ♗e2

This quiet plan, aiming to exchange the bishops with ♗f3 should Black fianchetto, seems the most logical to me. 9 ♕c2, aiming for queenside castling, was played in A.Korotylev-P.Maletin, Russia 2004. Black's bold 9...0-0 led to a complex game after 10 0-0-0 f5 11 ♗d3 ♕e7 12 h4 g4 13 ♘g1 c5 (always thematic: the g7-bishop is Black's main trump) 14 ♘ge2 ♘xg3 15 fxg3 and now the excellent 15...♘b8!. However, Roiz's 9...♕e7 10 0-0-0 ♘df6 11 ♗d3 ♗d7 was also a valid option.
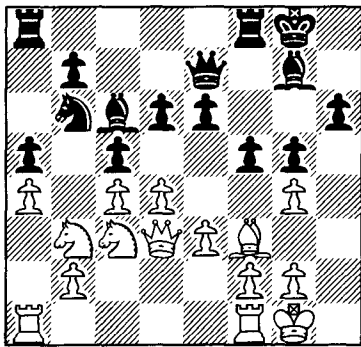
9...♕e7

This seems better than 9...b6 in view of White's intentions.

10 ♘d2 ♘xg3 11 hxg3 c5

Maybe 11...e5!? here.

**12 ♘b3 0-0 13 g4 ♘b6 14 0-0 f5 15 a4 a5 16 ♕d3 ♗d7 17 ♗f3 ♗c6**

with equality, V.Sergeev-B.Chatalbashev, Balaton 2002. This was a difficult game where both sides had options on almost every move: if White wants to get something from the Torre in the original move order this might be a good place for him to look, in my opinion.

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 ♗g5

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 ♗g5

Players who intend to defend any kind of Queen's Gambit Declined and start with ...♘f6 either to play a Nimzo if possible or merely in the hope White will play ♘f3 early to avoid a Nimzo should certainly go for ...d5 as soon as ♘f3 is played, for this order essentially prevents White from getting a 'proper' Torre. 'I won't beat around the bush here: after 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5, the move 3 ♗g5 is ineffective.' (Burgess).
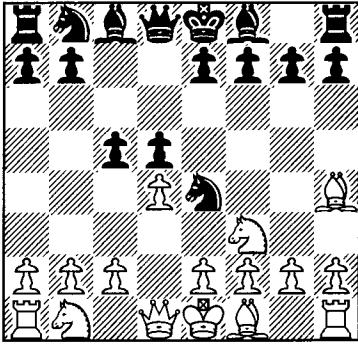
3...♘e4
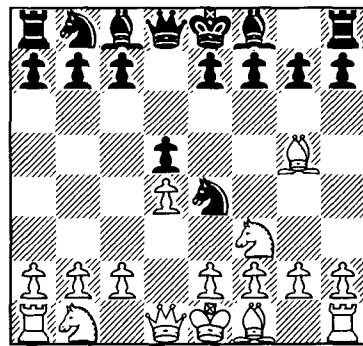
Certainly! Unlike the Tromp, White no longer has the option to remove this beast with f2-f3. Moves that leave the g5-bishop to be taken have been amazingly popular now, but one has to draw the line somewhere, so:

A: 4 ♗h4
B: 4 ♗f4

A)
**1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 ♗g5 ♘e4 4 ♗h4 c5**

Taking advantage of the h4-bishop's absence.

5 e3

The most popular move but not the best: White has to start thinking about equality and either 5 c3 or 5 dxc5 is better. 5 c3 cxd4 6 cxd4 ♘c6 7 e3 ♕b6 8 ♕b3 ♕xb3 (J.Simon-P.Acs, San Agustin 1998) or 7 ♘c3 ♕b6 8 e3 (J.Costa-E.Dizdarevic, Biel 1989) and now 8...e5!, are both already a little better for Black.

5 dxc5 is the most reliable;
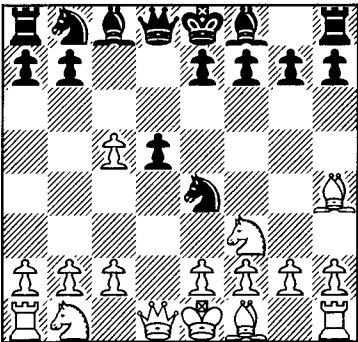
now J.Timman-A.Shirov, Wijk aan Zee 2001, went 5...♘c6 6 e3 g6 7 ♘bd2 ♘xc5 8 ♘b3 ♗g7 9 c3 (9 ♘xc5 ♕a5+ 10 c3 ♕xc5 11 ♕b3 0-0 was equal in A.Kharitonov-Y.Yakovich, Leeuwarden

1997) 9...♘e4 10 ♗d3 0-0 (Timman repeated this position later when 10...♗g4 11 0-0 ♕b6 12 h3 ♗xf3 13 ♕xf3 ♘e5 14 ♕e2 ♘xd3 15 ♕xd3 e6 was completely equal in J.Timman-L.Fressinet, Bundesliga 2001) 11 ♗xe4 (perhaps White shouldn't do this) 11...dxe4 12 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 13 ♘fd4 ♘e5! 14 ♗xe7 ♖e8 15 ♗a3 ♘d3+ 16 ♔e2 b6 17 f4 a5 18 ♘c1 b5! 19 ♘xb5 ♗a6 20 c4, when Black proved to have enough for his two pawns.

5...♕b6
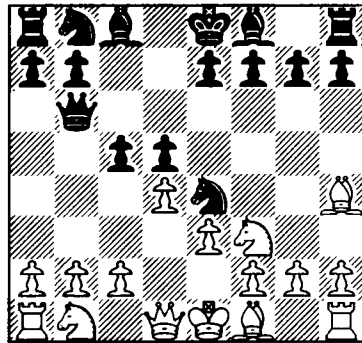
6 ♕c1?

The most popular move, but really in view of the main column line White has to play something else. I'm sure both 6 ♘bd2 ♘xd2 7 ♕xd2 ♕xb2 8 ♖d1 e6 9 ♗e2 c4 (M.Donk-P.Wells, Lost Boys Open, Antwerp 1997) and 6 ♘c3 (a pet of the Chinese GM Ye Rongguang and therefore probably better than it looks) 6...♘xc3 7 bxc3 ♕b2 8 ♖b1 ♕xc3+ 9 ♘d2 e6 10 ♗b5+ ♗d7 (M.S.Hansen-L.B.Hansen, Danish Championship 1995) objectively leave White a pawn down for more or less nothing, but the text just looks grim.

6...cxd4 7 exd4

7 ♘xd4 ♕h6 8 ♘f3 g5 9 ♗g3 ♘xg3 10 fxg3, with a miserable position for White, is a typical twist.

7...g5!

Some surprisingly strong players have been willing to play White here – Jan Timman, for a start – and some surprisingly strong players haven't played this move, but after it White is extremely pressed even to emerge from the opening in one piece. 8 ♗g3 g4 wins a pawn for nothing; 8 ♘xg5 ♕h6! 9 ♕f4 f6 10 ♘h3 ♗xh3 11 ♕xh6 ♗xh6 12 gxh3 ♗c1 was already virtually winning for Black in R.Phillips-J.Szabolcsi, Berlin 1996; and 8 ♗xg5 ♘xg5 leaves White a most unpleasant choice between 9 ♘xg5 ♗h6 and 9 ♕xg5 ♕xb2 10 ♕xd5 ♕c1+ (or 10...♕xa1, I dare say, but why bother?) 11 ♔e2 ♘c6 12 ♕c4 ♗g7, when clearly the opening has been a disaster for White.

C2)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 ♗g5 ♘e4 4 ♗f4

More sensible.

4...c5

Again the best.

5 e3

White can now play this without too much fear of losing horribly in the opening, which is nice. 5 c3 cxd4 6 cxd4 ♘c6 7 ♘c3 e6 8 e3?! (8 ♖c1 leaves Black only slightly better) 8...g5 9 ♗g3 h5 left White already struggling, if not actually lost, in A.Webster-Y.Yakovich, Hastings 1993, while 5 dxc5 ♘c6 6 c3 (6 e3 f6 7 c4 e5 8 ♗g3 ♗e6 was equal for Black at the very least in K.Hulak-G.Sosonko, Wijk aan Zee 1987) 6...g6 7 ♘bd2 ♘xc5 8 e3 ♗g7 9 ♘b3 ♘e4 10 ♗d3 e5! 11 ♗xe4 dxe4 12 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 13 ♘g5 ♔e7 14 ♗g3 f5 with advantage to Black showed the difference from 4 ♗h4 in S.Bartha-J.Pinter, Paris 1990.

5...♕b6 6 ♕c1 ♘c6

Of course 6...cxd4 7 exd4 g5? 8 ♗xb8 is no longer good, but Black is still doing nicely.

7 c3 f6!?

7...♗f5 among others is fine, but this unbalancing move of Alexander Graf's is the trickiest.

8 ♗e2

White is already faced with a difficult decision. 8 dxc5 ♕xc5 and ...e5 has to be a little better for Black. 8 ♗d3 g5 9 ♗g3 cxd4! (9...h5 10 dxc5) 10 ♘xd4 (10 exd4 h5 is the same story) 10.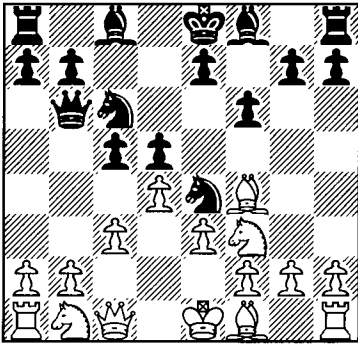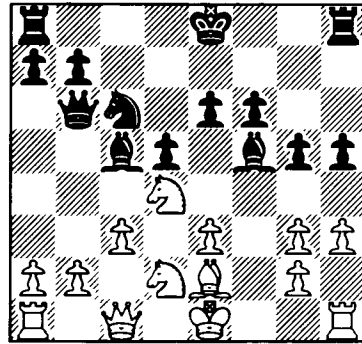..♘c5 11 ♗c2 e5 12 ♘xc6 ♕xc6 is also pleasant for Black with his big centre. 8 ♘bd2 might be best, although clearly after 8...cxd4 9 exd4 e5 10 ♗e3 ♘xd2 11 ♕xd2 e4 12 ♘g1 ♗d6 Black has at least equalized.

8...g5 9 ♗g3 h5 10 h3

After this White must be worse, but I'm not sure he had anything better.

10...♘xg3 11 fxg3 ♗f5 12 ♘bd2 e6 13 dxc5 ♗xc5 14 ♘d4

This was the game E.Kounalakis-A.Graf, Korinthos 2001, and now 14...♘xd4 15 exd4 ♗d6 leaves Black with a stable advantage.

Conclusion

It seems to me that the Torre is downright bad against 2...d5. In its traditional 2...e6 3 ♗g5 form the system shown here allows Black active and interesting play. Perhaps this accounts for the popularity of the Tromp move order and the growing interest in the white system shown in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Hebden Torre
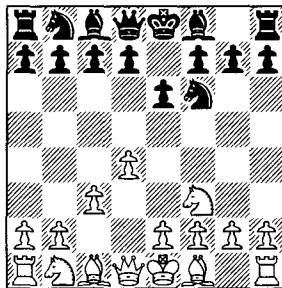
1 d4 ♞f6 2 ♞f3 e6 3 c3

3 c3 is the Hebden Torre. Mark Hebden was by no means the first to play the move, but he and the late Tony Miles have been far and away the most devoted GM practitioners, so I'm going to name it after him. The move 3 c3 looks like a remarkably feeble effort, but actually White simply wants to avoid the system described against the conventional Torre in the previous chapter. When compared to the move order 3 ♗g5 c5 4 e3, White also hopes that he may be able to go e2-e4 in a single turn.

White may also intend with 3 c3 to play the London system with ♗f4, but in that case the move has no independent significance, so I have considered it only in connection with 4 ♗g5. Of course if Black wishes to defend the Torre with the ...d5, ...e6 variations, then he is not inconvenienced at all. To fit in with our Tromp repertoire, though, Black will probably want to aim for the position after 1 d4 ♞f6 2 ♞f3 e6 3 c3 b6 4 ♗g5 ♗b7 5 ♞bd2 ♗e7 6 e3 h6 7 ♗h4 c5,

which was discussed in Chapter 1. There are some move order issues on the way, though, and this chapter is devoted to the tricks White can employ to stop Black reaching his target position. It's worth pointing out that for a long time Mark Hebden would not allow this position, which in its own way is as good a tribute to the methods presented here both in the Tromp and Torre chapters as anything I might say.
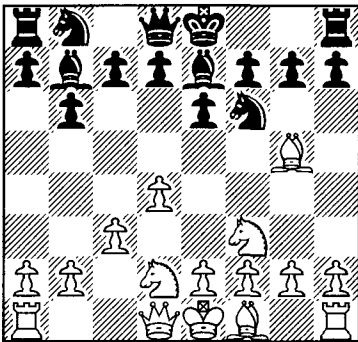
3...b6 4 ♗g5 ♗b7
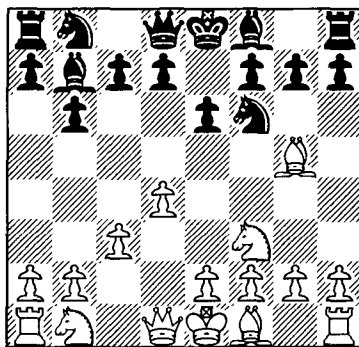
5 ♞bd2

Renewing the threat of e2-e4. After c3

White is hardly going to develop this piece anywhere else, so other moves are merely less flexible.

5...♗e7

Really Black's immediate choices only involve the right moment to play ...h6. The immediate 5...h6 6 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 7 e4 g5 now is Mickey Adams' invariable choice, but I'm not sure I like this combination of ...g5 and an early ...b6, ...♗b7. To me it makes more sense to wait for e2-e3 before playing ...h6, since if White does go in for ♗xf6 he usually wants to place his two pawns abreast at e4 and d4 as part of his compensation for giving up the two bishops.

Besides 6 e3 (C), there are two other moves White has played now with reasonable frequency:
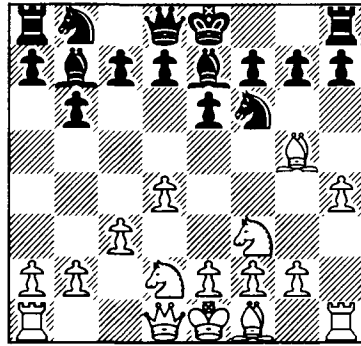
A: 6 h4!?
B: 6 ♕c2
C: 6 e3

A)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 c3 b6 4 ♗g5 ♗b7 5 ♘bd2 ♗e7 6 h4!?

This is, or was, Mark Hebden's patent. It doesn't look as though it can really be a good move, but he did very well with it before he gave it up.

6...h6

A logical reply in my view.

7 ♗f4

Always Hebden's choice. After 7 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 8 e4 Black has a variety of methods: the cool 8...0-0 9 ♗d3 ♗e7 10 ♕e2 c5 is one; another is 8...d5 9 e5 ♗e7 10 ♗d3 c5 11 h5 ♘c6 12 0-0 with a pretty decent French-type position for Black; he is probably wise to delay castling for the moment, but 12...c4 and 13...b5 is certainly a possibility.
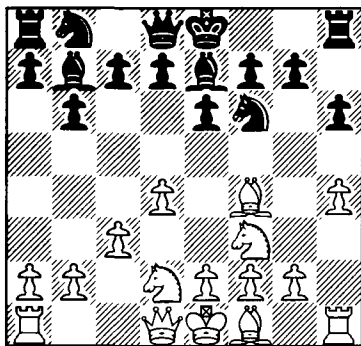
7...c5

This is basically a London system in which Black has the extra (weakening?!)

...h6, while White has suddenly taken it into his head to play h4?!. This can't really be a good deal for White, which is no doubt why Hebden has given the line up (he now plays 6 e3).

8 e3 ♘c6

9 a3

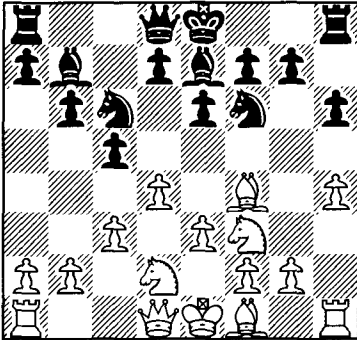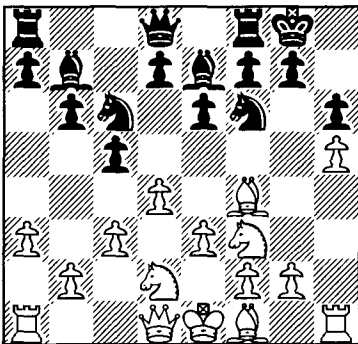White wants to meet ...cxd4 with cxd4 without being annoyed by ...♘b4; 9 ♗d3 cxd4 10 exd4 0-0 11 0-0 d6 12 ♕e2 ♖e8 is a type of position familiar from the London system: Black will play ...♕d7 and perhaps ...a6 and ...b5.
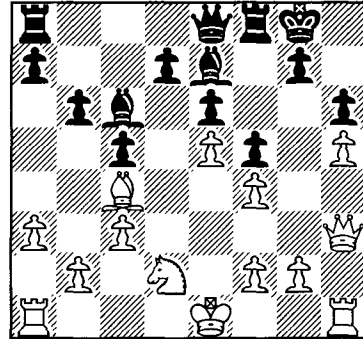
9...0-0 10 h5

10...♘d5

Black might very well have considered 10...cxd4 11 cxd4 d6 here. The constant

threat of ...e5 would have made it very hard for White to mass his forces for a kingside attack, and without that the pawn on h5 is merely an embarrassment. I think Black would stand better then.

11 ♗h2 f5 12 ♗c4 ♘f6 13 ♗f4 ♕e8 14 ♘e5 ♘xe5 15 dxe5 ♘d5 16 ♕f3 ♗c6 17 ♕h3 ♘xf4 18 exf4

M.Hebden-R.Britton, British Rapidplay Championship, Bradford 2002. Here 18...d5 19 ♗e2 ♗b5 would have left Black with decidedly the better chances.

A2)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 c3 b6 4 ♗g5 ♗b7 5 ♘bd2 ♗e7 6 ♕c2

Logical enough: White wants to take advantage of his move order to force through e2-e4.

6...h6 7 ♗h4

White doesn't seem ever to have tried 7 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 8 e4, though this looks sensible. Black might play 8...d5 again as in Line A; whether h4 or ♕c2 is more useful in such a position is open to debate (at any rate if White's going to go e4-e5; one advantage of ♕c2 might be to make exd5 an option).

7...c5

This looks the most logical to me, raising the spectre of an open c-file.
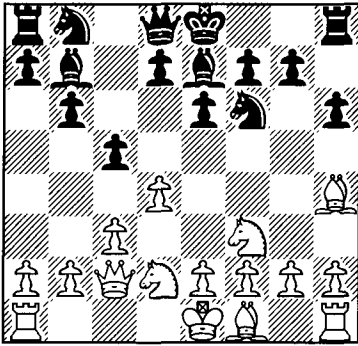
8 e4

This doesn't lead anywhere: White could try 8 dxc5 bxc5 9 e4 d5 10 exd5 exd5 11 &d3, although I don't think it's anything: Black can develop with ...0-0, ...&bd7, ...&e8, ...&b6 and ...&ad8.

8...cxd4 9 &xd4

This is hardly going to bring White an advantage, but 9 cxd4 g5 10 &g3 &c6 leaves the white queen a bit embarrassed, especially since ...g4 and ...&xd4 is also in the air, for example 11 &a4 a6, or 11 &d1 g4.

9...0-0 10 &e2 &c6 11 &xc6 &xc6 12 0-0 &c7 13 f4 d6
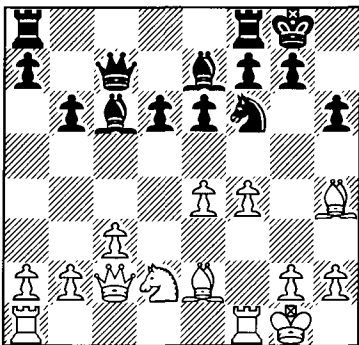
This is completely equal – in fact I suspect most would take Black for choice. T.Parameswaran-A.Kunte, Goodricke Open, Calcutta 1997 was swiftly drawn after 14 &f3 &fe8 15 f5 e5 16 &ad1 &ad8 17 &fe1.

A3)
1 d4 &f6 2 &f3 e6 3 c3 b6 4 &g5 &b7 5 &bd2 &e7 6 e3 h6 7 &xf6

Obviously 7 &h4 c5 allows Black his objective. You would think that &xf6 has little force with e4 in one go no longer available and with Black still having ...d5 available, but grandmasters do sometimes go in for the position after **7...&xf6 8 &d3 c5 9 0-0 &c6**
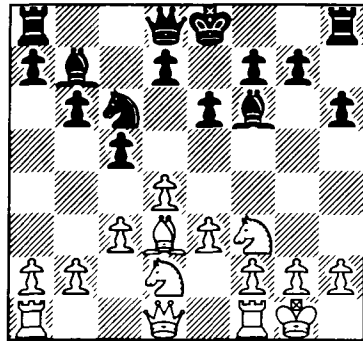
White can try a few ideas here. 10 &e4 &e7 11 &c2 d5 12 &g3 0-0 13 &e5 &d6 was agreed drawn in J.Hodgson-J.Benjamin, San Francisco 1998: after 14 f4 a6 Black can meet any &d3 with ...f5 and has no problems; he can create enough distraction on the queenside fast enough that a g4 hack isn't feasible. Most popular though is **10 &e2 &c7**

11 &a6 now was played in the gloriously-named game E.Limp-R.Disconzi

da Silva, Rio de Janeiro 2003, in which 11...♗xa6 12 ♕xa6 0-0 13 ♖ac1 ♖ac8 14 g3 ♕b8 15 ♖fd1 d5 16 a3 ♖c7 was already beginning to favour Black, who won a thematic game after meeting b4 with ...c4, then arranging ...e5; dxe5, ♗xe5!; ♘xe5, ♘xe5 when the d3-hole kept White's pieces passive and proved his downfall in the end. Burgess, however, approved White's play in A.Sygulski-Z.Ksieski, Polish Championship 1982, which went

11 ♖ad1 0-0 12 ♗b1 d5 13 ♖fe1
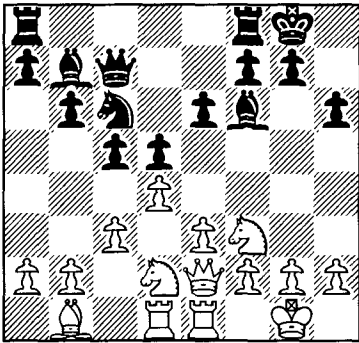
when Burgess gives White the edge.

In both games from this position, however, Black has gratuitously fallen for the twist ...e5; e4!. This favours White since pawn captures on d4 lose material to exd5, and ...dxe4; ♘xe4 embarrassingly hits f6. If Black instead continues sensibly with a move like 13...♖fd8 or even 13...a5, preparing to molest the White queen with ...♗a6, I don't believe he has any problems. Indeed to my mind it would be strange if White could hope for anything after giving up the bishop pair without getting more space in the centre to compensate him, and without managing a ♘e5/f4 bunk-up either.

Conclusion

Given the recommended repertoire the Hebden Torre isn't significant. It avoids our specific anti-Torre lines but so does the Tromp move order. The variations shown here are not dangerous, as we can see from the fact that the man himself now accepts the transposition to the main line Torre positions from Chapter 1.

CHAPTER FIVE

The London System
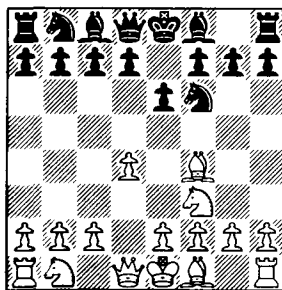
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗f4 (and 1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗f4)

It would be silly not to be honest – this is not the sharpest opening chess has to offer. White's system is immensely solid and I'm afraid Black just doesn't have a sound aggressive option. These openings do exist: the only reaction really is to hunker down, recall the Russian mantra that it is easier to win from an equal position than a bad one, and resolve to make like Capablanca if necessary. There are many ways for Black to play, but the main danger is not failing to equalize, but trying too hard.

Despite those wise words, though, I am providing two solutions: Line A is slightly more unbalancing; Line B is safer.

The London System also arises after 1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗f4, which is covered in Line C (although Black can also employ B from this position). Also dealt with in Line C is the sequence 1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 which won the British Championship for Jonathan Rowson in 2004.

A: 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗f4 c5
B: 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗f4 d5
C: 1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗f4 c5

A)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗f4 c5
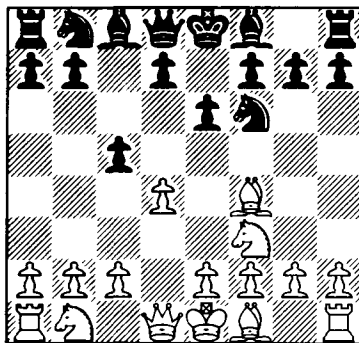
White will invariably now support the d-pawn; the choice is between:

A11: 4 c3
A12: 4 e3

A11)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗f4 c5 4 c3

cxd4 5 cxd4

5...b5!?

An interesting move recommended by *ECO* and by Andrew Martin. Black takes a little space on the queenside and ensures that he will have good squares for all his pieces.

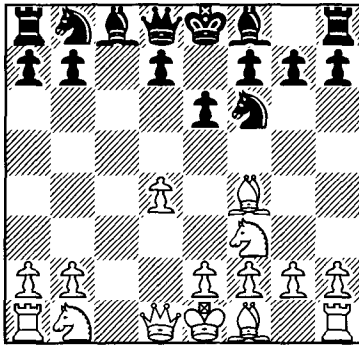It is also possible to play 5...♕b6. Now 6 ♕c1 d5 will probably lead to the variation of the Exchange Slav which runs 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 cxd5 cxd5 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 ♘c6 6 ♗f4 e6, save that Black has played ...♕b6 (which on the whole is part of his plan of ...♗e7, ...♗d7, ...0-0, ...♕b6 and ...♖fc8), while White has played the ridiculous move ♕c1, which is just a loss of tempo. 6 ♕b3 is more usual, after which 6...♕xb3 7 axb3 ♘c6 8 ♘c3 ♗b4 is completely equal, and I suppose Black can point to the doubled b-pawns as offering him some prospect of obtaining a tiny edge, but one has to draw the line at some point.

6 e3 a6 7 ♗d3 ♗b7 8 ♘bd2 ♘c6 9 h3 ♕b6 10 0-0 ♗e7

This is too natural a sequence to need much comment, and Black has equalized comfortably.
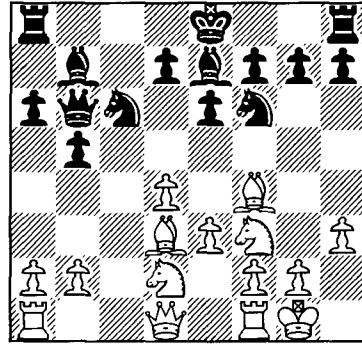
M.Knezevic-D.Velimirovic, Belgrade 1978 now went 11 ♘e5 ♘b4 12 ♗b1 d6 13 ♘d3 ♘c6 14 a3?! 0-0 15 ♗g5 ♘a5 16 ♘f4 g6: White's play has not been inspired but that's probably because White didn't have any inspiring options; in the game White now threw himself into an unsound kingside attack and lost rather miserably.

A12)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗f4 c5 4 e3

White's normal move.
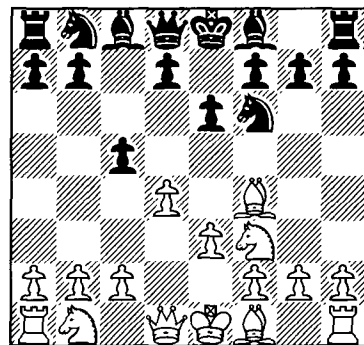
4...♗e7

There are some quite tricky move order questions here:

a) 4...♘c6 will probably lead to Line B.

b) 4...♕b6 is a main line move played by dozens of grandmasters over the years, but I'm not totally wild about Black's prospects after 5 ♘a3 (which no one ever plays), for example:

b1) 5...♕xb2 6 ♘b5 ♘d5 7 a3 is supposed to be bad for Black, and anyway White has an immediate draw with 7 ♖b1

b2) 5...d5 6 ♘b5 ♘a6 7 a4 also has a slightly dubious reputation (both these lines are normally reached after 5 ♘c3).

b3) 5...cxd4 6 ♘b5 ♘a6 7 exd4 is certainly possible but I don't care greatly for it.
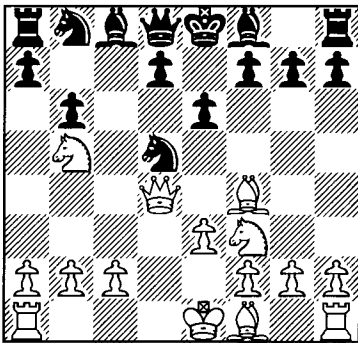
c) 4...b6 is an alternative (and more popular) move order to reach the same set-up as the column, but it seems to me that the move in the text is the most accurate. White has racked up a few wins after 4...b6 5 ♘c3 cxd4 6 ♘b5 ♘d5 (or 6...d6) 7 ♕xd4!,

and it is not clear to me at all how Black should meet this idea. The text, however, has no drawback that I can see.

5 h3

Whether Black is actually threatening 5...♘h5 is a little unclear. More White players than not prefer to prevent it,

though. Two examples of White choosing not to do so are 5 c3 ♘h5 6 ♗g3 ♘xg3 7 hxg3 d5 8 ♘e5 ♘d7 9 ♗b5 ♗d6 10 ♘xd7 ♗xd7 11 ♕a4 a6 12 ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 13 ♕xd7+ ♔xd7 when Black has anything that is going (J.Ratolistka-G.Tunik, Ceske Budejovice 1995), and 5 ♘bd2 ♘h5 6 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 7 dxc5 ♕a5 8 ♗d3 ♕xc5 9 0-0 (K.Volke-A.Kapengut, Kecskemet 1989), when Black now played the slightly obscure 9...g6, although 9...♘f6 was also simple and good – White is going to miss his dark-squared bishop.

5 c4 does not force Black to choose between a ♗f4 QGD and a ♗f4 QID: 5...cxd4 6 exd4 d5 is neither (in the QGD with ♗f4 White does not allow Black to get in ...c5 and...cxd4 but meets ...c5 with dxc5) and is not particularly good for White, whose f4 bishop is not well placed for an IQP position.

5...0-0 6 ♘bd2
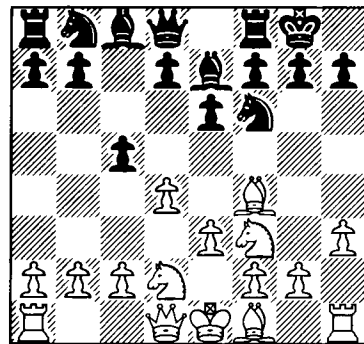
6...cxd4

There isn't really any significance to the move order around these parts. I have shown an early ...cxd4 in order to avoid the reply cxd4, although that is hardly fearsome. Black may also consider

...♗a6 in some move orders, but I've chosen to assume he doesn't care to.

7 exd4 b6 8 ♗d3 ♗b7 9 0-0 d6 10 c3

So ineptly are White's pieces placed for an IQP that even with a tempo extra 10 c4 d5 is very acceptable for Black.

10...♘bd7 11 ♖e1 ♖e8
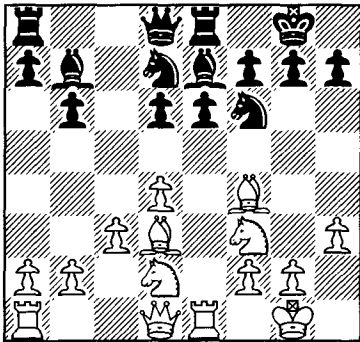
This is something of a tabiya: it seems to produce either a quick draw or a heavy manoeuvring struggle. The position is similar to one that arises from the Colle, save that White has played ♗f4 and h3.

12 a4

Commonest. Alternatively:

a) 12 ♕e2 a6 13 ♘e4 (this never does much) 13...♘xe4 14 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 15 ♕xe4 ♘f6 16 ♕d3 b5 was A.Jakab-P.Horvath, Budapest 2004. Black's positive ideas in this line are either a minority attack with ...b5-b4 or to set his central pawns in motion with ...e5 and here he is reasonably placed for the former.

b) 12 ♕c2 ♘f8 13 ♘e4 ♘xe4 14 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 15 ♕xe4 d5 16 ♕e3 ♘g6 17 ♗g3 ♖c8 18 ♘e5 ♘xe5 19 ♗xe5 ♗d6 20 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 21 ♕e5 was another (pretty single-minded!) example in T.Neuzil-R.Nepsen, Internet (blitz) 2003; this end-

ing is a draw of course, but I would prefer to be Black.

c) Tigran Petrosian, as so often, had a unique plan in T.Petrosian-I.Csom, Vilnius 1978, with 12 ♗g3 a6 13 a4 ♗f8 (13...♕c7 is also played) 14 ♕c2 h6 15 b4!?, but after 15...♗c6
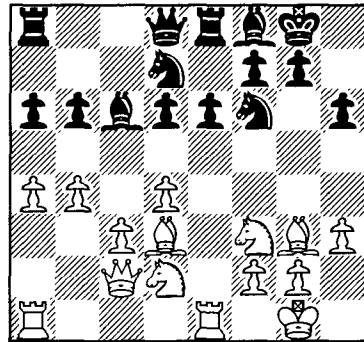
he obviously didn't think much of it, since he played 16 b5 and offered a draw. 16 c4 is optically impressive but in fact doesn't achieve much after 16...♖c8. If the queen moves then ...a5 is annoying (White needs the c4-square for his pieces in such a structure), while 17 a5 b5 leads nowhere special after either 18 c5 ♘d5 or 18 ♕b3 bxc4 19 ♗xc4 ♗d5.

12...a6
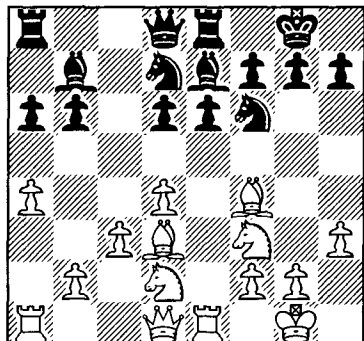
13 ♘f1

A tactical turn to avoid was illustrated by M.Petrovic-N.Bojkovic, Yugoslav Women's Championship 1993, which went 13 ♗h2 ♘f8 14 ♕b3 ♗c6 15 c4 ♕d7 16 ♗c2 (a slightly random-looking collection of moves on White's part) and now 16...b5?! 17 axb5 axb5 18 d5! ♖xa1 19 ♖xa1 exd5 20 cxb5 ♗xb5 21 ♘d4 saw Black struggling a bit to achieve a draw; better was to prepare ...b5 with 16...♖ec8 (so that ...♗c4 should be possible at the end of this sequence).
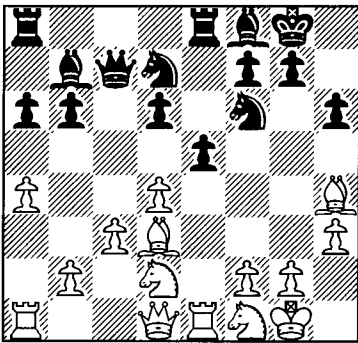
13...♗f8 14 ♗g5 ♕c7 15 ♘3d2

Exactly what David Bronstein had in mind with this move is not clear to me, but I am far from being able to say what he should have done instead.

15...h6 16 ♗h4 e5

showed Black's other plan in action in D.Bronstein-A.Vyzmanavin, Copenhagen 1991. Now 17 ♘e3 e4 18 ♗f1 d5 19 ♕b3 left a sharp and balanced position in which 19...♗d6, forcing ♗xf6, was a tempting alternative to the game's 19...♕d6.

B)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗f4 d5 4 e3

c5
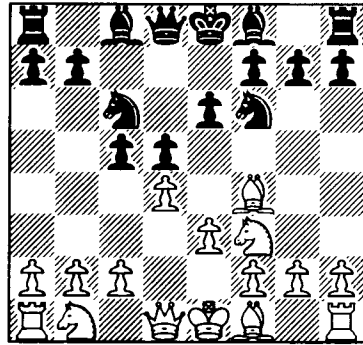
5 c3

Occasionally White plays 5 ♘c3 when 5...a6 is the easiest, for example 6 ♗e2 ♘c6 7 0-0 ♗e7 8 ♖e1 0-0 9 h3 b5 10 ♗f1 ♗b7 11 ♘e5 ♖c8 12 a4 b4 and Black took over the initiative in C.Barlocco-M.Godena, Bratto 2004; White was a little more supine than needs be here, perhaps, but it is clear that the knight on c3 is just in the wrong place.

5...♘c6
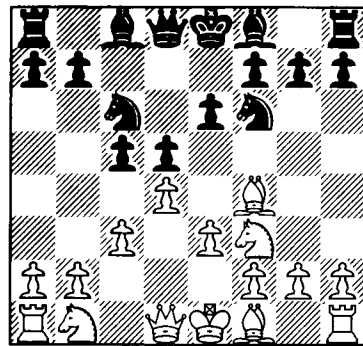
A natural, solid line: the invariable choice of a certain type of positional player. Black is going to oppose the f4-bishop with ...♗d6. After an exchange of

the dark-squared bishops his remaining bishop is a little less active than White's, but he has good control of the centre and assuming he can arrange ...e5 in he will be able to get his bishop active.

White has a few moves here:

B1: 6 ♘bd2
B2: 6 ♗d3
B3: 6 ♘e5
B4: 6 h3

B1)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗f4 d5 4 e3 c5 5 c3 ♘c6 6 ♘bd2

The commonest move.

6...♗d6

Black continues with the plan.

7 ♗g3

This is the most popular move, although White has tried a host of alternatives.

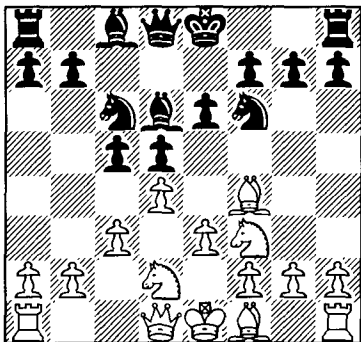a) 7 dxc5 has been played by some better players than you might think. Black showed a good method in A.Kharlov-E.Khlian, Azov 1996: 7...♗xc5 8 ♗d3 0-0 9 0-0 h6 10 h3 ♗d6 11 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 12 e4 ♖d8 13 ♗c2 dxe4 14 ♘xe4 ♕e7 with equality.

b) 7 ♗d3 ♗xf4 8 exf4 is not effective here (if White is going to allow the doubled f-pawns he wants to be able to play dxc5). 8...cxd4 9 ♘xd4 (9 cxd4 ♕b6 10 ♘b3 a5 leaves White without an adequate reply as ...a4; ♘c5 ♘xd4 is threatened) 9...♘xd4 10 cxd4 ♕b6 11 ♘b3 ♗d7 (11...a5 is now less effective as ...a4 is met by ♘c5) is nice for Black, H.Wirthensohn-J.Schwalfenberg, Baden 2001.

c) 7 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 seems to be thought a little compliant.
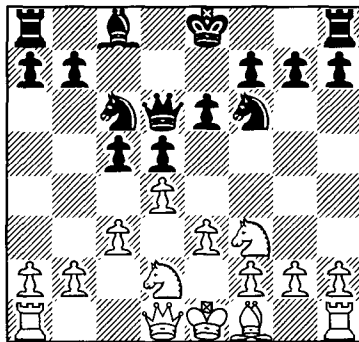
R.Schlindwein-J.Timman, Walldorf 1998 went on 8 ♗b5 (this is quite a common move in this system, aimed against ...e5; 8 ♗d3 0-0 9 0-0 e5 10 dxc5 ♕xc5 11 e4 ♗g4 and 10 dxe5 ♘xe5 11 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 12 ♘f3 ♕e7 are comfortable too) 8...0-0 9 0-0 ♗d7 10 ♗xc6 (this really is a little meek since Black's next move was surely going to be ...a6 anyway) 10...♗xc6 11 ♘e5 ♘d7 12 f4 f6 13 ♘xd7 ♗xd7 and White found like many before him that the way to draw with a stronger player is not to make a series of exchanges into a slightly inferior position.

d) 7 ♘e5 is really the crucial move, in the sense that it is the only one which

might cross Black's plans, but Black has the firepower to win control of e5.
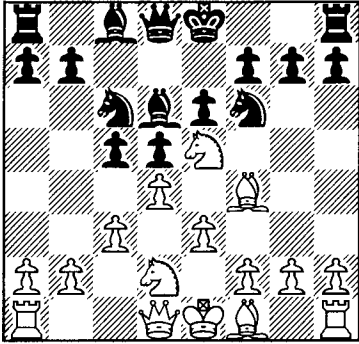
7...♕c7 8 ♘df3 (8 ♘xc6 ♗xf4 9 ♘xa7 ♖xa7 10 exf4 cxd4 11 cxd4 ♕xf4 12 ♘f3 0-0 is perhaps a touch better for Black – Ftacnik) 8...♘d7 9 ♘xd7 ♗xd7 10 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 11 ♗b5 0-0 12 0-0 f6 13 c4 cxd4 14 ♘xd4 ♖fd8 was all a bit equal in P.Matovic-A.Kovacevic, Vrnjacka Banja 1999.

e) 7 ♗g5 can hardly be critical, although Black may find himself in a variation of the Torre he didn't necessarily want if he is later forced into ...♗e7. Play continues with 7...0-0 and now:

e1) 8 ♕c2 h6 9 ♗h4 (8 ♕c2 was directed against 9...e5, when White intends to go 10 dxe5 ♘xe5 11 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 12 ♘f3 ♕e7 13 0-0-0 and perhaps c4 next) 9...♗e7 10 ♗e2 b6 11 ♖d1 ♗b7 12 ♗g3 ♗d6 13 0-0 ♗xg3 14 hxg3 ♕e7 was fine for Black in D.Bronstein-R.Dzindzichashvili, USSR Championship, Leningrad 1971; Bronstein's next effort of 15 ♘e5 looks a little uncalled for to me; after 15...♘xe5 16 dxe5 ♘d7 17 f4 f6 the weakened white kingside became exposed and the great man was very fortunate to survive.

e2) 8 ♗d3 h6 (this hasn't been played as far as I can see but I think it ought to be) 9 ♗h4 e5 (this plan fits in better with Black's play to date than ...♗e7 in my opinion) 10 dxe5 ♘xe5 11 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 12 ♘f3 ♗c7 13 ♗c2 ♗e6 14 ♕d3 g6.
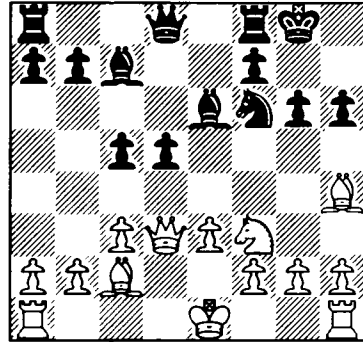
This position was reached in P.Harikrishna-E.Ghaem Maghami, Calcutta 2001 but without the moves ...h6; ♗h4. In that position White has a few dangerous attacking ideas: besides Tsesarsky's 14 h4 Black can also lose quite quickly if he's not careful after 14 ♕b5, e.g. 14...b6 15 ♕a4 ♗d6 16 ♕h4 ♗e7 17 ♘e5 ♖c8 18 ♗a4. In the game, though, 14 0-0 ♔g7 15 ♖ad1 h6 16 ♗h4 ♕e7 was comfortable for Black and the same position might very well arise after 8...h6.

After that lengthy diversion, I return to 7 ♗g3.

7...♕e7

White's system demands more respect than initially appears, and in my opinion this is the most accurate move. Commoner are both 7...♗xg3 8 hxg3 ♕d6 and 7...0-0, but in the former case I'm not keen on 9 ♗b5 ♗d7 10 ♕c2 ♖c8 11 g4 (K.Arkell-G.Timoscenko, Metz 2000), and in the latter on 8 ♗b5 ♕e7 9 ♗xc6

bxc6 10 ♕a4 cxd4 11 cxd4 ♗d7 12 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 13 0-0 (J.Nogueiras-A.Kunte, Calvia Olympiad 2004).
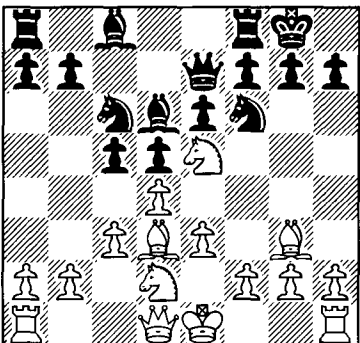
8 ♘e5
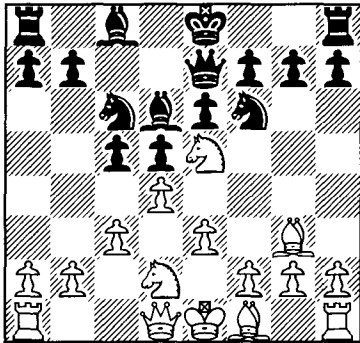
8 ♗b5 now is smoothly met with 8...♗d7 when 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♕a4 ♗xg3 11 hxg3 a6 12 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 13 ♕a3 ♘d7 is at least equal for Black (Z.Nikolic-I.Morovic Fernandez, Pancevo 1985), while 8 ♗d3 0-0 9 ♕e2 e5 9 dxe5 ♘xe5 10 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 11 ♗xe5 ♕xe5 (M.Müller-V.Kupreichik, Goch 1999) also enables Black to achieve his positional goal and equalize.

8...0-0 9 ♗d3

♗b5 is pointless once ♘e5 has been played; 9...♗d7 is equal.

9...♘d7

Black can also opt for the immediate capture 9...♗xe5 10 dxe5 ♘d7 with a quite different style of game, but the text is thematic.

10 0-0

Much more common is 10 f4, when I prefer the temerarious 10...f6 to the usual 10...f5.
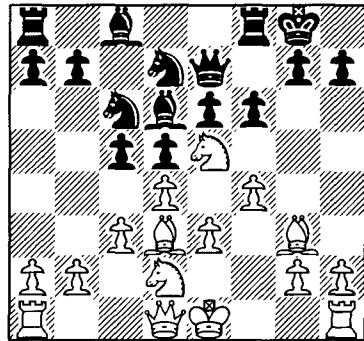
After 10...f6 I don't believe 11 ♕h5 g6 12 ♘xg6 is quite sound (and nor is 11 ♘df3 fxe5 12 dxe5 ♗c7 13 ♗xh7+ ♔xh7 14 ♘g5+ ♔g8 15 ♕h5 ♘f6 0-1, M.Boric-A.Korobov, Dubai 2004), but otherwise White has to exchange his advanced knight and concede defeat in the struggle for the e5-square.

10 ♕h5 g6 and 10 ♘df3 f6, meanwhile, achieve little, while if White plays 10 ♘xc6 bxc6 11 ♕a4 Black can choose between the obscure and perhaps quite reasonable gambit 11...e5!?, and 11...♗b7, when 12 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 13 ♕a3 ♕e7 14 ♘b3? ♕g5! is an important trick, so that after 14 0-0 Black has time for the move 14...♖fe8.

10...♘dxe5 11 dxe5 ♗xe5 12 ♗xe5 ♘xe5 13 ♗xh7+ ♔xh7 14 ♕h5+ ♔g8 15 ♕xe5 f6 16 ♕g3 e5
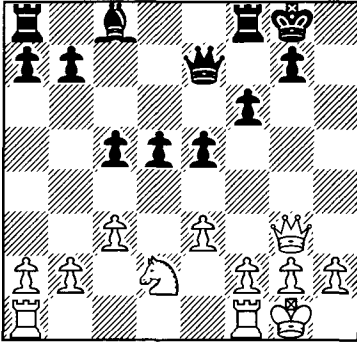
This forced sequence produced an interesting and unbalanced position in F.Bistric-M.Mchedlishvili, Bled Olympiad 2002.

B2)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗f4 d5 4 e3 c5 5 c3 ♘c6 6 ♗d3

White's remaining moves are less accurate, and since the coverage of 6 ♘bd2 tries to cover the main ideas in the opening I take other tries in less detail.

6...♗d6

7 ♗g3 0-0

In comparison to 6 ♘bd2, White has simply deprived himself of the ♗b5 option.
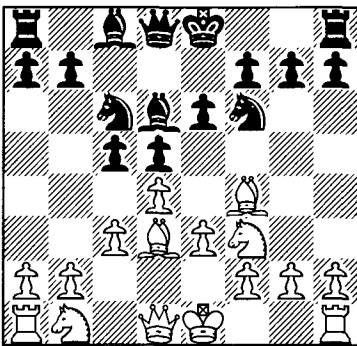
8 ♘bd2 ♕e7

8...b6 is very reasonable in this exact position but I have shown the text for repertoire consistency. After 8...♕e7, 9 ♘e5 of course simply transposes to Line B1; I just take the chance to illustrate another rare but quite dangerous try for White.

9 dxc5 ♗xc5 10 e4
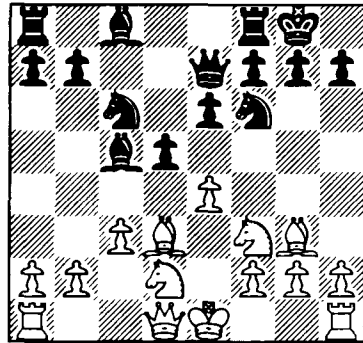
Note 'a' to White's 7th move in Line B1 was a similar idea but Black's ...♕e7 is not perfectly adapted for this structure change. White now obtained the advantage in J.Magem Badals-J.de la Villa Garcia, Spanish Championship 1990 after 10...dxe4 11 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 12 ♗xe4 e5 13 0-0 ♗g4 14 ♖e1 ♗d6 15 ♕a4, when Black saw no alternative to 15...♗xf3 16 ♗xf3 ♖ac8, leaving White clearly better. It looks as though Black didn't play very well here, and perhaps he didn't, but it's not easy to improve upon his play. White already seems to have the edge at move 12, for example 12...♖d8 13 ♕c2 h6 14 0-0 ♗d7 15 ♖fe1 with decidedly greater freedom of action for White.

The most natural idea is 10...e5. De la Villa must have had something fairly serious against this, as in such positions

...e5 is always the reply Black wants to make to e4 if he can. Indeed, 11 exd5 ♘xd5 (11...e4? 12 0-0 is bad after 12...exf3 13 dxc6 fxg2 14 ♖e1 or 12...exd3 13 dxc6 bxc6 14 ♖e1 ♗e6 15 ♘e5) 12 ♕e2 ♖e8 13 0-0-0 (13 ♗xh7+ wins a pawn but gives Black too much play) 13...♘f6 14 ♖he1 gives White at least a slight advantage.

Another possibility is the rather cheeky 10...♘h5.
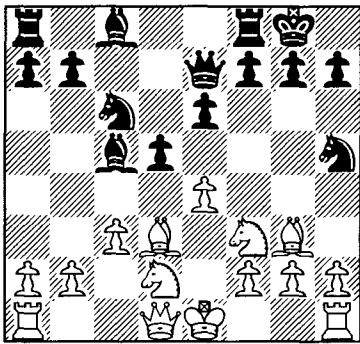
I don't see how White can take much advantage of this, for example 11 ♕e2 ♘xg3 12 hxg3 h6 13 ♘b3 ♗b6 14 exd5 exd5 15 ♕xe7 is equal, while 14 0-0-0 ♖e8 15 g4 a5 produces an extremely sharp game with chances for both sides.

Finally, back at move nine Black might consider 9...♗xg3 10 hxg3 e5. Then 11 e4 ♕xc5 seems normal, and now 12 exd5 ♕xd5 or 12 ♕c2 d4 is nothing for White. Critical is 12 ♘b3 ♕e7! 13 exd5 e4 with some perplexing complications. It seems to me that Black has quite reasonable play after 14 dxc6 exd3+ 15 ♔f1 ♗f5, while 14 0-0 ♖d8 15 dxc6 ♖xd3 16 cxb7 ♗xb7 17 ♕c2 ♘g4 is downright dangerous for White. But all of these ideas need tests: be warned

though that this is not an easy line for Black to counter off the cuff.

B3)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗f4 d5 4 e3 c5 5 c3 ♘c6 6 ♘e5
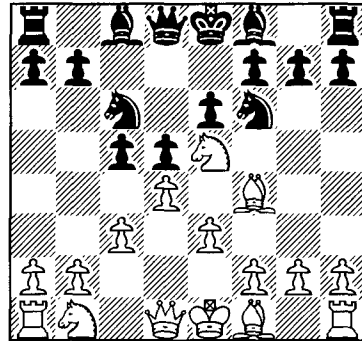
Committal, of course, but White knows how he wants to play and gets on with it.

6...♗d6 7 ♗b5 ♕c7

The same recipe. Now 8 ♘d2 0-0 9 ♘df3 could have arisen after 9 ♗b5 in note 'd' to White's 7th move in Line B1, but 9...cxd4 10 exd4 ♘e4 followed by ...f6 is nice for Black. In Z.Pakleza-M.Krystoflan, Zakopane 2001, White instead tried 8 ♕a4 ♗d7 9 ♘xd7 ♘xd7 10 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 11 ♘d2 0-0 12 0-0, which was also equal.
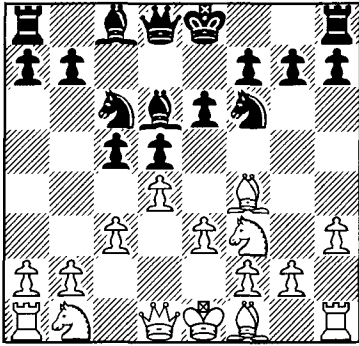
B4)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 ♗f4 d5 4 e3 c5 5 c3 ♘c6 6 h3

I would say this was a clueless move if it hadn't been played by Galkin. Black should go ahead as usual with

6...♗d6

White's best now is probably 7 dxc5 aiming to reach note 'a' to White's 7th

move in Line B1. In T.Reich-'Raluy2', playchess.com 2004 he instead tried

7 ♘e5 0-0 8 ♘d2 ♕c7 9 ♘df3

and now Black half-demonstrated why the missing tempo mattered with
9...♘e4 10 ♗e2

but then for some reason refrained from the obvious 10...cxd4 11 cxd4 f6 12 ♘xc6 ♗xf4 13 exf4 bxc6, which leaves White struggling.

Before making Line B your sole defence to the London, be warned about one move-order point. There are players who consider 3 ♗f4 a bit too daring, and prefer 3 c3. If Black is aiming for Line B, then he needs to play either 3...d5 or 3...c5. The trouble with 3...d5 is that 4 ♗g5 is a line of the Torre outside our repertoire. And 3...c5 4 ♗g5 also makes it a little more difficult for Black to achieve the Torre lines shown in Chapter 1, since once ...c5 has been played it is not so easy to find a moment for ...h6 when it cannot be met by ♗xf6 (e.g. 3...c5 4 ♗g5 h6 5 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 6 e4 is a line accounted slightly better for White). There is no solution to this. You either have to know which bishop move White

favours and bluff him, or else you need to be prepared to go 3 c3 b6 and adopt line A if White's next move is ♗f4.

C)
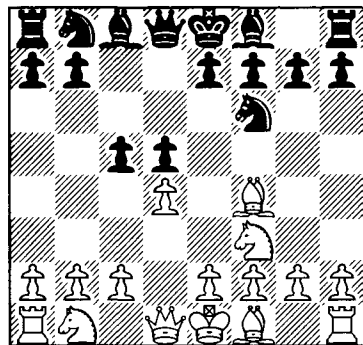**1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗f4** (or 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 ♗f4)
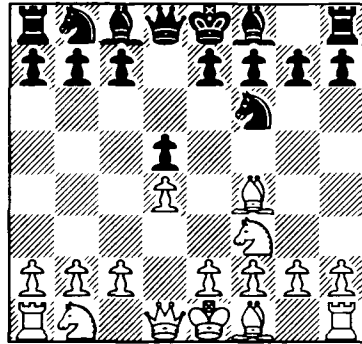
As with most of these systems, the London is less fearsome if Black's queen's bishop is free to develop. In fact a very respectable method is to play 3...♗f5 right now and ask White what his point is. I'm going to suggest something a little more combative, though.
**3...c5**

'Hitting where it hurts' (Prie). If White wants to develop his f1-bishop he'll have

to play e2-e3 some time, and when he does the f4-bishop may be missed back home. Before going any further, a couple of move order points.

First, White may play 3 c3. Now 3...♗f5 4 ♗f4 now is fine, but if you want to play either line B or C, then 3...c5 is mandatory (3...e6 4 ♗g5 is a non-repertoire Torre again). After 3...c5, 4 ♗g5 ♘e4 takes us back to the QGD player's near-refutation of the Torre in Chapter 3. White, however, may try the interesting plan 3 c3 c5 4 dxc5,
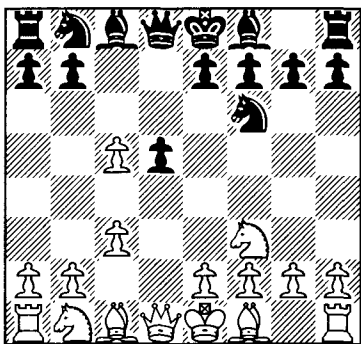

a sort of reversed Slav. With the tempo ♘c3/c6 missing it is not so easy to recover the pawn, but Black can reply 4...e6 5 b4 (the only critical move; 5 ♗g5 ♗xc5 6 e3 0-0 7 ♗e2 ♘c6 8 0-0 h6 9 ♗h4 ♕e7 10 ♘bd2 ♖e8 11 ♖e1 e5 12 ♕c2 ♗e6 is fine for Black, K.Valkesalmi-J.Plaskett, Jarvenpaa 1985, while 5 ♗e3 ♘c6 6 b4 a5 7 b5 ♘e7 8 ♘bd2 ♘g6 9 ♗d4 ♗d7 10 e3 ♖c8 was also okay in I.Almasi-Nguyen Anh Dung, Budapest 2000) 5...a5. White has tried a great many moves here, but the only two that really address the queenside issues are 6 ♕b3 and 6 e3.

a) After 6 ♕b3 Black should not be in

a hurry with ...axb4: 6...b6 7 cxb6 ♕xb6 8 b5 (8 ♗e3 ♕b7 9 bxa5 ♖xa5 – D.Norwood-M.Wahls, Bundesliga 1993 – is no better: White has no prospect of holding both his split queenside pawns in the long term) 8...a4 9 ♕b2 ♘bd7 10 e3 ♗d6 11 ♗e2 0-0 12 0-0 (A.Stefanova-A.Graf, Recklinghausen 1998) and now either 12...e5 or 12...♗b7 gives good compensation for the pawn.

b) 6 e3 axb4 7 cxb4 b6
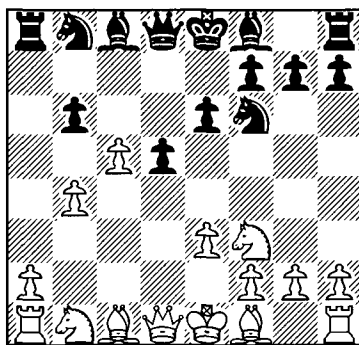
8 ♗b5+ (sometimes 8 a4 bxc5 9 b5 ♗d6 is preferred, but in this Noteboom-style continuation the presence of all the minor pieces favours the side with the centre, and Black's chances are at least equal here) 8...♗d7 9 ♗xd7+ ♘bxd7 10 a4 bxc5 11 b5 (if White simply gives back the pawn then Black has the edge with his better development and pressure against the a-pawn) 11...♗d6 12 ♗b2 0-0 13 ♘bd2 ♕c7 and Black's chances are probably preferable (F.Christenson-Y.Yakovich, Bergen 2002).

Second, if one is playing 1 d4 d5 then White may try 2 ♗f4. It is not necessarily now possible to reach Line C, but Line B should be within reach. After 2...♘f6 3 e3 e6 4 ♘f3 c5 5 c3 ♘c6, or

some such sequence, we are back where we want to be. White hardly has better than this, but one move order wrinkle turned up in J.Rowson-S.Haslinger, British Championship 2004 (and other games): Black should not allow 1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 e6 3 e3 c5 4 c3 ♘c6 5 ♘d2 ♗d6?! (5...♘f6) 6 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 7 ♕g4. Black has to make some sort of concession now to defend the g-pawn; he may or may not be able to equalize anyway but it's better simply not to go there.

Returning to 3...c5.
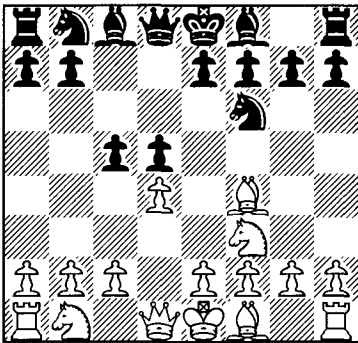
Now 4 ♘c3 a6 and 4 c4 cxd4 need not detain us, so White has three alternatives:
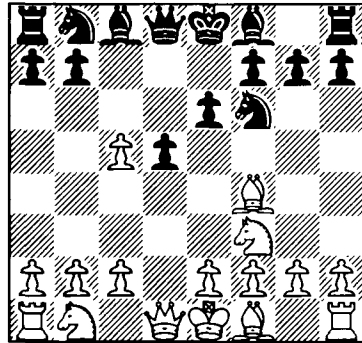
C1: 4 dxc5
C2: 4 e3 (the main move)
C3: 4 c3

C1)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 ♗f4 c5 4 dxc5

A sort of Queen's Gambit Accepted reversed with the extra move ♗f4. It turns out that this does not help White to hold on to the c5-pawn, and in the usual QGA structure the move is of little relevance.

4...e6

5 b4

Probably this is just a bad move, but if White allows ...♗xc5 then his choices are to play c2-c4 and play a ♗f4 QGD a tempo down (since Black has not had to play...♗e7xc5), or to allow Black free development and slightly better command of the centre, e.g. 5 c3 ♘c6 6 ♘bd2 ♗xc5 7 e3 0-0 8 ♗d3 (8 ♗e2 looks more sensible) 8...♖e8 9 ♗g3 e5 10 e4 d4 11 ♘b3 dxc3 12 bxc3 ♗b6 13 0-0 ♘h5 14 ♗h4 ♕d6, B.Soos-P.Wells, Koszeg 2000.

5...a5 6 c3 axb4

Simple and good, although the more enigmatic 6...♗d7 also worked well in C.Crouch-Y.Yakovich, Port Erin 2001: 7 ♘bd2 b6 8 cxb6 axb4 9 cxb4 ♗xb4 10 ♗c7 ♕c8 11 ♕b3 ♘c6 12 a3 0-0 13 ♕b2 ♗e7 14 b7 ♕xc7 15 bxa8 ♖xa8 (a typical sort of exchange sacrifice for these structures) gave Black overwhelming compensation.

7 axb4

If 7 ♗xb8 then the unexpected reply 7...b3! (A.Tobak-A.Sumets, Odessa 2000) is strong.

7...♘c6
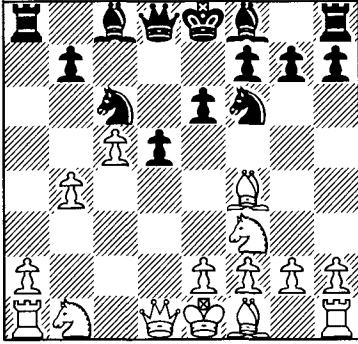
Now in M.Orso-J.Gonzalev Garcia, Budapest 1998, White could find no better than 8 ♘c3 ♘xb4 9 ♘b5 ♘a6 10 ♘d6+ ♗xd6 11 ♗xd6? (but 11 cxd6 0-0 brings no good either) 11...♘xc5!. However, the b4-pawn is not to be defended: 8 ♕b3 b6 is at least equal for Black; after 8 ♕d2, 8...b6 again or even speculation with 8...♘e4 9 ♕b2 ♘xb4!? is possible, while 8 b5? ♕a5+ is unthinkable.

C2)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 ♗f4 c5 4 e3 ♘c6
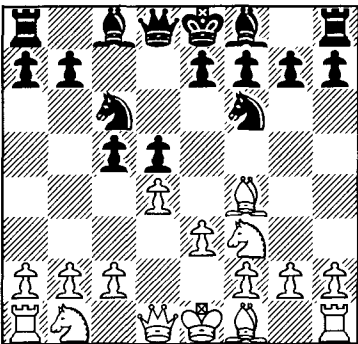
Black could play 4...cxd4 5 exd4 ♘c6 with a position from the Exchange Caro-Kann, and one at that where White

has played ♘f3 a little earlier than devotees of that line think quite right.

After 4...♘c6 White has two main moves:

C21: 5 ♘c3
C22: 5 c3

Alternatively:

a) 5 c4 cxd4 6 exd4 ♗g4 is a Panov-Botvinnik Caro where White has chosen an unlikely ♗f4 and Black is fine.

b) 5 dxc5 e6 6 ♘bd2 ♗xc5 is harmless as in Soos-Wells above.

c) 5 ♗b5?! ♕a5+ 6 ♘c3 ♘e4 is an unsound gambit once beloved of the Czech GM Meduna; 7 0-0 ♘xc3 8 ♗xc6+ bxc6 9 bxc3 (9 ♕d2? ♘e2+ 10 ♕xe2 ♗a6 is an even more unsound gambit) 9...♕xc3 10 ♘e5 cxd4 11 exd4 ♗f5 12 ♖b1 f6 13 ♘d3 ♕xd4 saw White already lost in E.Meduna-Y.Yakovich, Sochi 1986.

d) 5 ♘bd2 ♕b6 is also bad, since 6 c3 ♕xb2, 6 dxc5 ♕xb2 and 6 ♕c1 cxd4 all tend to leave White a pawn down.

C21)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 ♗f4 c5 4 e3 ♘c6 5 ♘c3
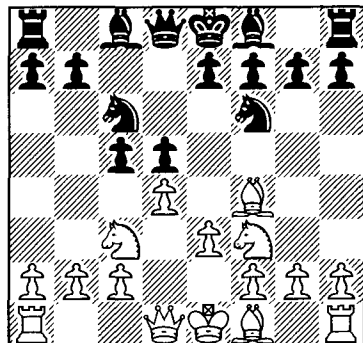
A slightly wrong-looking set-up, but quite common. White at least prevents ...♛b6.

5...♗g4

5...♛b6?? 6 ♘b5 of course.
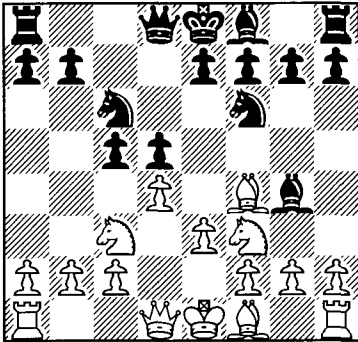
6 ♗e2

Most natural. 6 ♗b5 e6 7 h3 ♗xf3 8 ♕xf3 cxd4 9 exd4 a6 10 ♗xc6+ bxc6 11 0-0 ♗e7 12 ♘a4 ♕a5 was equal in B.Kogan-V.Alterman, Tel Aviv (rapid) 1996, while 6 dxc5 e6 7 ♗e2 ♗xc5 8 h3 ♗h5 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♘e5 was so depressing that White couldn't think of anything better than a draw offer in J.Hodgson-K.Klundt, Kecskemet 1988.

6...e6 7 0-0 ♗e7
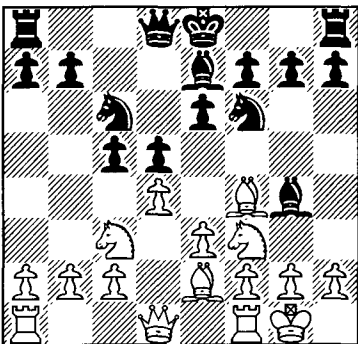
8 ♘e5

Not forced, but it's not easy to see what White might play.

8...♗xe2 9 ♕xe2 cxd4 10 ♘xc6 bxc6 11 exd4 ♕b6 12 ♕d3 0-0
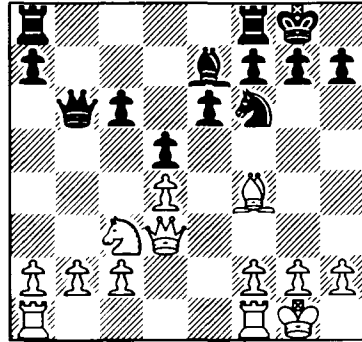
and Black had comfortable equality in T.Rakic-B.Abramovic, Kladovo 1991.

C22)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 ♗f4 c5 4 e3 ♘c6 5 c3 ♕b6
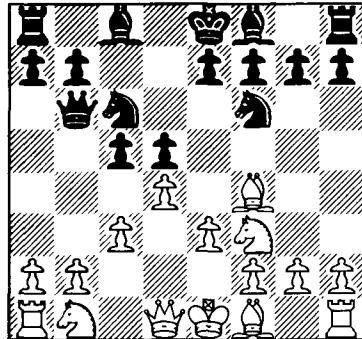
Many feel this move to be the Achilles heel of the whole London system. 5...e6 is Line B, of course.

6 ♕b3

By far the most popular move, although some of the others are probably no worse:

a) 6 b3 ♗g4 7 ♗e2 e6 8 0-0 ♗e7 9 ♘bd2 0-0 10 ♘e5 ♗xe2 11 ♕xe2 ♖fc8 12 ♗g5 ♕d8 is harmless (R.Schlindwein-L.Portisch, Hockenheim [rapid] 1997).

b) 6 ♕c1 ♗f5 7 ♘bd2 is also easy for Black, for example 7...♖c8 8 ♗e2 cxd4 9 ♘xd4 (the idea of Black's early ...♖c8 was that she would not need to use a tempo on ...h6, as ♘h4 at any point loses the d-pawn) 9...♘xd4 10 exd4 e6 11 a4 ♗d6 12 ♗b5+ ♔e7 13 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 14 ♘f3 a6 15 ♗e2 ♗g4 (A.Stefanova-S.Matveeva, Belgrade 1998).

c) After 6 ♕c2,

6...♗f5 is not so good, as 7 dxc5 ♗xc2 8 cxb6 compels a real weakness on b6. This is unlike the analogous Baltic Slav position (1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♗f5 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 c6 5 ♕b3 ♕c7 6 ♗f4 dxc4 7 ♗xc7 cxb3, V.Kramnik-G.Hertneck, Bundesliga 1994) when, in effect, ♘f3 has not been played. With colours reversed White can pla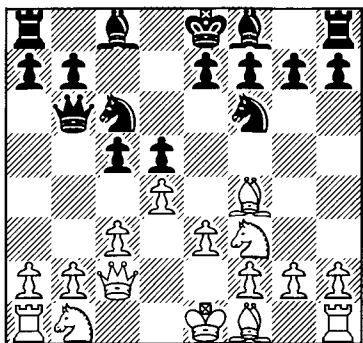y 8 e4 ♗g6 9 a3 ♗e7 10 ♘d2 and ♘xb3. Instead 6...♗g4 is fine, e.g. 7 ♘e5 ♘xe5 8 dxe5 ♘d7 9 c4 d4 10 exd4 cxd4 11 ♘d2 g6 12 ♕b3 ½-½ A.Miles-L.Fressinet, Mondariz 2000.

d) 6 ♘a3 is a bit of a problem since 6...♕xb2 7 ♘b5 ♘e4 8 ♗g3 enables White to force a draw with ♖b1-a1, as 8...♘xc3 9 ♕c1 is bad. 6....♗f5?? 7 ♘b5 ♖c8 8 ♗c7 ♖xc7 9 dxc5 (a common trick) loses, so if Black intends to win then either 6...a6 or 6...c4 is called for.

6...c4
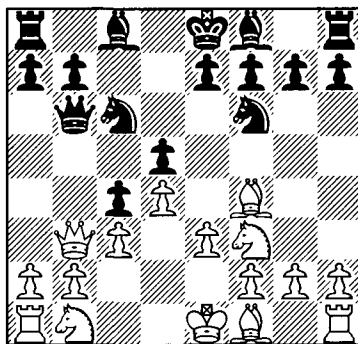
White has a choice here of two equally popular ways to approach the position:

C221: 7 ♕xb6
C222: 7 ♕c2

C221)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 ♗f4 c5 4 e3 ♘c6 5 c3 ♕b6 6 ♕b3 c4 7 ♕xb6 axb6 8 ♘a3

The only decent move; many, many games have shown that if Black gets going on the queenside with ...b5-b4 White will always be on the defensive. For example, 8 a3 b5 9 ♘e5 e6 10 b4 ♘h5 11 ♘xc6 ♘xf4 12 exf4 bxc6 13 ♘d2 f6 14 ♘f3 ♗d6 15 g3 0-0 was V.Kovacevic-Z.Ribli, Bugojno 1984, in which perhaps the leading exponent of these irregular d4 systems was already lost, or 8 ♘bd2 b5 9 ♗e2 b4 10 0-0 e6 11 ♘e5 ♘xe5 12 ♗xe5 ♘d7 13 e4?! ♘xe5 14 dxe5 bxc3 15 bxc3

♖a3, and the tide was already flowing Black's way in M.de Waal-P.Wells, Lost Boys Open, Antwerp 1997.

8...♗f5
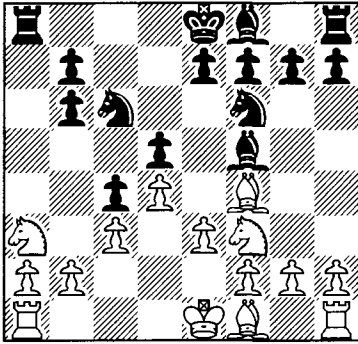
There is no unanimity about White's best now:

a) 9 ♘b5 is a shot in the dark; 9...♖a5 10 ♘c7+ ♔d7 11 ♗e2 e6 12 0-0 ♗d6 was already comfortable for Black in S.Sulyok-V.Vamos, Hungary 1995.

b) 9 ♗c7 also has no point:
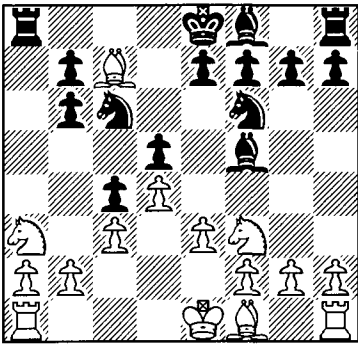
9...e6 10 ♘b5 ♖a6 11 ♘d6+ (this exchange is not to be feared) 11...♗xd6 12 ♗xd6 ♘e4 13 ♗f4 b5 14 ♘d2 ♘xd2 15 ♔xd2 b4 16 cxb4 ♘xb4 17 a3 ♘c6 18 ♗e2 ♔d7 19 f3 ♖b6 20 ♖a2 left White grovelling in A.Borsuk-P.Cramling,

Women's Olympiad, Calvia 2004.

c) 9 ♘d2 e6 10 ♘b5 ♔d7 11 ♗e2 ♗e7 12 0-0 ♖a5 13 a4 ♖ha8 14 ♘c7 ♖c8 15 ♘b5 ♗c2 saw Black taking control in N.Monin-Y.Yakovich, St Petersburg 1994.

d) 9 ♗e2 is best met with 9...e6 10 ♘b5 ♖a5, when 11 ♘c7+ is note 'a', 11 ♘d6+ ♗xd6 12 ♗xd6 ♔d7 13 ♗e5 b5 14 ♘h4 ♗g6 15 ♘xg6 hxg6 was nice for Black in S.Witkowski-I.Farago, Lodz 1979, and 11 a4 ♔d7 12 ♘d2 ♗c2 13 ♗d1 ♗xd1 14 ♔xd1 ♗e7 (A.Barva-Z.Zambo, Cseppko 2001) was at least equal too.

e) 9 ♘h4 ♗d7 10 ♗e2 ♘e4 11 ♘b5 ♖a5 12 f3 was C.Dunworth-R.Tischbierek, Copenhagen 1990.
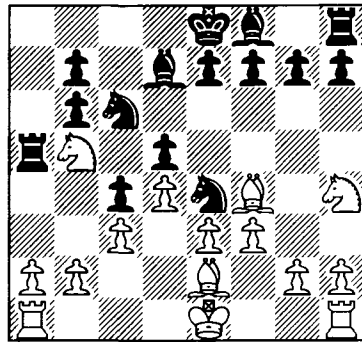
12...♘f6 was about equal in the game, but I wonder if Black could have got away with 12...♖xb5!? here. 13 fxe4 dxe4 14 b4 e5 15 ♗xc4 (15 ♗g3 g5 16 ♗xc4 gxh4 17 ♗xh4 ♗xb4) 15...♖xb4 16 cxb4 ♗xb4+ 17 ♔f2 exf4 is certainly far from clear, but Black has very active pieces and near material equality.

C222)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 ♗f4 c5 4 e3

♘c6 5 c3 ♕b6 6 ♕b3 c4 7 ♕c2 ♗f5 8 ♕c1 ♘h5

A popular position: 8...e6 and 8...h6 are both commoner, while Prie gives 8...♕d8 a '!', but I believe in securing that bishop before going any further.

9 ♗g5

This must be the right move. White doesn't have enough control to get away with the likes of 9 ♗e2 ♘xf4 10 exf4 e6 11 0-0 ♗e7 12 ♘bd2 ♕c7 13 g3 b5 14 ♘e5 b4 (U.Scotti-I.Khenkin, Bratto 2003), or 9 ♘h4 ♗xb1 10 ♖xb1 ♘xf4 11 exf4 e6 12 ♘f3 ♗d6 13 g3 0-0 14 b3 cxb3 15 axb3 ♖fc8, while 9 ♗e5 f6 10 ♗g3 e5 is good for Black,
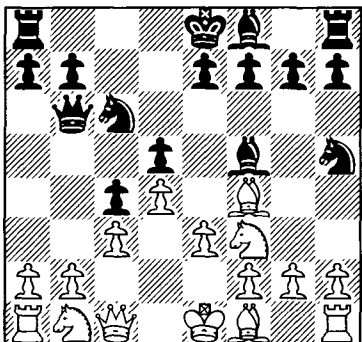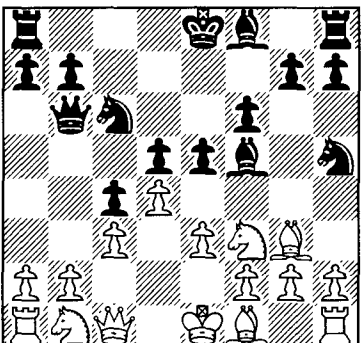

e.g. 11 ♗e2 ♗d3 12 ♘bd2 e4 13 ♘g1

♘xg3 14 hxg3 ♕a5, V.Polo-J.Borges Mateos, Abel Cardona 2000. Calmer is 9 ♗g3 ♘xg3 10 hxg3 e6 11 ♘bd2 ♕d8 12 ♗e2 h6 13 0-0 ♗d6 14 ♗d1 0-0 15 ♗c2 ♗xc2 16 ♕xc2, S.Nikolic-V.Raicevic, Niksic 1997, when either the game's 16...f5 or 16...b5 leaves Black a little better.

9...h6 10 ♗h4 g5 11 ♗g3 ♗g7 12 ♘bd2 ♘xg3 13 hxg3
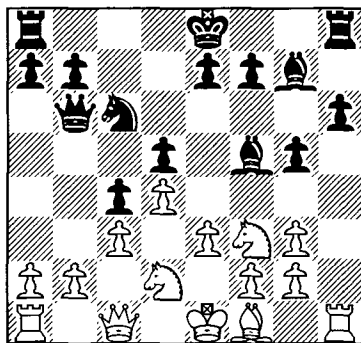
13...0-0

Up to here both sides' moves have been too obvious to need comment, but besides this Rublevsky's 13...♕a5 is interesting. A.Semenyuk-S.Rublevsky, Tomsk 2001, then went 14 e4 dxe4 15 ♘xc4 ♕c7 16 ♘fd2 0-0 with a sharp game (17 ♕b1 ♖ad8 18 ♘xe4 ♘xd4 19 ♘e3 ♗xe4 20 ♕xe4 f5 21 ♕b1 and now 21...♘f3+ would have won at once). However, the acid test is 14 b3 b5 15 a4; if Rublevsky intended 15...b4 16 bxc4 bxc3 17 ♘b3 ♕b4 18 cxd5 I don't think it quite works after 18...♕xb3 19 dxc6 when ♖a3 is threatened, or 18...♘a5 19 ♗b5+ ♔d8 20 ♘xa5 ♕xa5 21 0-0.

14 ♗e2 ♕c7

Ivanov had previously played 14...♖ac8 but had presumably concluded that he

can't stop b2-b3 anyway and that after that the rook is best on a8.
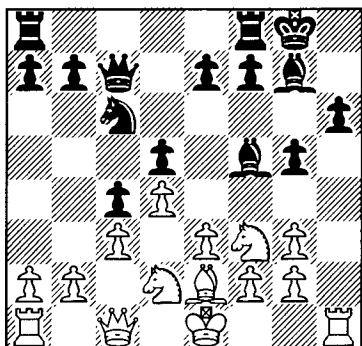
15 &d1

15 0-0 b5 16 &d1 &d3 is worse, and Black is reasonably prepared for 15 b3 b5 16 a4 a6 17 0-0 (17 ♕a3? b4) 17...♖fb8.

15...b5 16 &c2 &xc2 17 ♕xc2 f5 18 0-0 e6 19 ♖fd1 g4 20 ♘e1
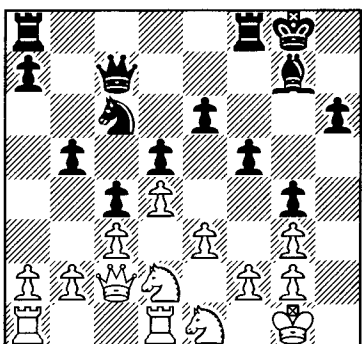
Black is better here, although perhaps 20...a5 would have been better than the game's 20...e5, which didn't really work out (D.Lopushnoy-V.Ivanov, Moscow 1996).

C3)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 &f4 c5 4 c3

Not quite so timorous as it looks, or at least a psychological effort.
4...♕b6

Slav Exchange devotees will have no trouble in playing 4...cxd4, of course, but the likelihood is that by selecting 4 c3 White wants to lure Black into 4...♘c6 5 dxc5. Black may well be doing fine here, but he doesn't have a simple way to regain the pawn: 5...e6 (5...a5 6 ♘a3!?) 6 b4 ♘e4 (6...a5 7 ♘d4!?) in A.Bagheri-E.Kengis, ADCF Masters, Abu Dhabi 2003, for example, led to ferocious complications in which Black was obliged to make a positional queen sacrifice; great fun but not what you need for an obscure corner of your repertoire like this.
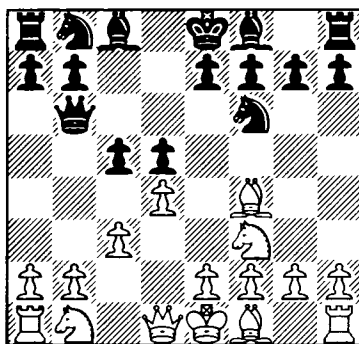
5 ♕b3

Well-nigh invariable; both 5 b3 and putting the queen on the c-file involve positional concessions.
5...♘c6 6 dxc5

Alternatively:

a) 6 e3 c4 now is Line C2, of course.

b) 6 ♕xb6 axb6 7 &c7 is well met by 7...&f5: 8 ♘bd2 cxd4 9 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 10 cxd4 ♖c8 gives Black ample play.

c) 6 ♘a3 c4 7 ♕xb6 axb6 8 e3 is Line

C2; White can instead try 8 ♘b5 ♖a5 9 a4 ♗f5 10 g4!? ♗xg4 11 ♘d2 (P.Blatny-M.Palac, Kecskemet 1991), when White threatens b4, but Black met this with 11...♔d7 and went on to win, or 8 ♗c7 ♖a6 9 e3 ♗f5 10 ♘h4 ♔d7 11 ♘xf5 ♔xc7 12 ♘g3 h5 13 ♗e2 (G.Olarasu-L.Fressinet, Creon 1999),
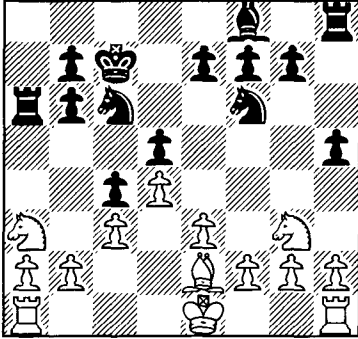
in which Black's next was the typical stroke 13...♖xa3!, followed by ...e6, ...♗xa3, ...♖a8-a5, ...b5-b4 and a further crushing advance on the queenside, a plan White found remarkably little to counter.

d) 6 ♘bd2 c4 7 ♕xb6 (7 ♕c2 ♗g4) axb6 would only have independent merit if White could come up with a plan avoiding e3; since 8 e4 misses the mark after 8...dxe4 9 ♘g5 ♘d5 10 ♗g3 b5 11 ♘dxe4? f5 12 ♘d2 f4 13 ♗h4 h6 winning a piece, it is not easy to see what

that could be.

6...♕xc5

As Prie points out, this position is a Slav reversed (1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♕c2 dxc4 5 ♕xc4 ♗f5), save that White has the extra move ♕b3. This inconveniences him in two ways: first, it means that he cannot meet ...♘h5 with ♘b3 winning the d-pawn; second, it means that b2-b4 is not practical.

7 e3 g6 8 ♘bd2 ♗g7 9 h3

9 ♗e2 ♘h5 illustrates Prie's point.

9...0-0 10 ♗e2 ♘d7!
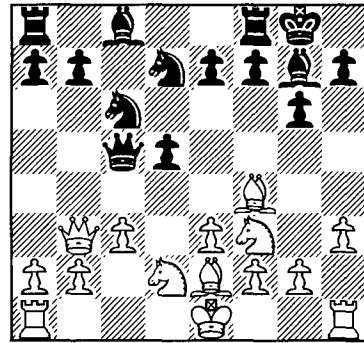
White was ready with ♘e5.

11 0-0 e5 12 ♗h2 ♘b6 13 a4 ♗d7 14 ♗b5 ♖fe8 15 a5 ♘c8 16 a6.

This was H.Ricart-E.Prie, Montpellier 1998: according to Prie both sides have played well since move 6, and now 16...♖b8 would have left Black a shade better if anything.
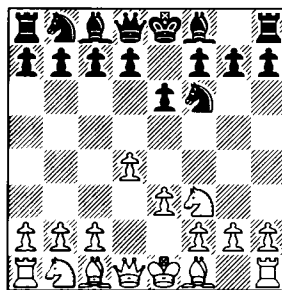
The Colle System

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 e3 (and 1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 e3)

A nasty little transpositional move: if White is playing fair it introduces the Colle or Colle-Zukertort systems, but White's next move may also be c2-c4. Like many of these systems it is less fearsome if Black's second move was 2...d5.

Line A deals with the Colle, Line B with the Colle-Zukertort, and Line C gives an independent system for use if Black's c8-bishop is still free. The move orders are not easy, but I hope my suggestions in A and B are compatible. There is an unavoidable trade-off for Black in defending this system: either he allows White to play an e3 Queen's Indian if he so chooses, or he plays ...d5 fairly early, which is probably what White wants if he is playing a pure Colle. I have chosen the former of these evils: no problem for QID players but those who were still hoping to sneak into a Benoni will have to resign themselves to it.

A: 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 e3 (Pure Colle)

B: 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 e3 (with c4/b3)

C: 1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 e3

A)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 e3

In this section I deal only with the pure Colle, which is characterized by the moves ♗d3, ♘db2 and in particular c3. If the London System can be considered as a sort of Slav Attack, here we have the Semi-Slav Attack. The Colle is not well regarded by theory, but it is nonetheless a dangerous weapon in the hands of a certain type of player: an opponent against whom a draw would be a poor result even with Black, but is nonetheless fairly sprightly with the cheaper sort of tactic.

It is not particularly hard to equalize by carefully liquidating the centre, but if you want to unbalance the game, very usually the trade-off is that White has

attacking chances and Black longer-term chances. It is no coincidence that any book on the Colle (which for some reason seems to attract White-to-play-and-win manuals) will begin with a few examples where White is permitted to launch some ♗xh7+ onslaught (if one were to give Black one tip on handling this opening, it would be to check this tactic before every move).

3...b6
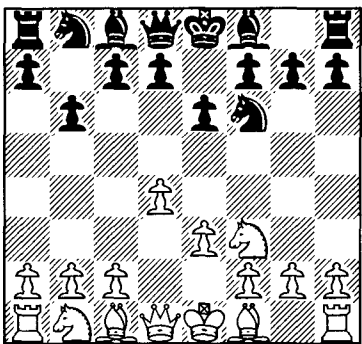
4 ♗d3

White could play c2-c4, which will transpose to Line B, but in fact he will almost always choose to play the text and keep his options open; even if he means to play c4 it cannot be prevented and he keeps Black guessing a little longer.

4...♗b7 5 0-0 c5 6 ♘bd2

White has now to commit himself at least to some extent. 6 ♘bd2 means that in all probability White wishes to stay within the Colle spirit.

6...♗e7 7 c3

And this is the moment at which White has finally to commit himself; this is a pure Colle as opposed to the Colle-Zukertort, which is B2 and is character-

ized by 7 b3 at this point.

7...♘c6
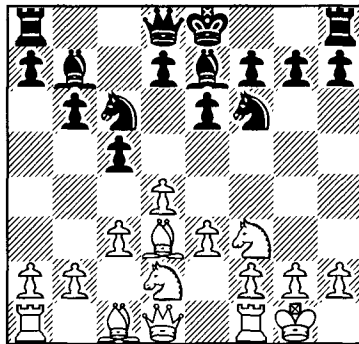
A system with a fair pedigree: the choice of Alekhine and Capablanca (and Colle, as it happens!) in their day and of Psakhis and Seirawan in ours. Black's immediate hope is that he has prevented e3-e4 by the threat of ...cxd4; cxd4 ♘b4. White now has the choice of falling into this cunning positional trap, preparing e4 blatantly with a2-a3, changing the structure with dxc5, or developing in some other way.

Now White can play the following:

A1: 8 e4
A2: 8 a3
A3: 8 dxc5
A4: 8 ♕e2 and others

A1)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 e3 b6 4 ♗d3 ♗b7 5 0-0 c5 6 ♘bd2 ♗e7 7 c3 ♘c6 8 e4

This move was long thought to be a mistake, but recently it has been played a bit and Black certainly needs to know what he is doing to combat it. In fact, any regular and prepared Colle player is

likely to have an opinion about this position, so to some extent I am contradicting my principles by recommending this set-up.

8...cxd4 9 cxd4

Critical, of course. Colle himself used to play 9 ♘xd4, as in the famous game Colle-Capablanca, Carlsbad 1929, in which it seemed to Colle 'that I did not make a weak move, but that my opponent made some very strong ones'.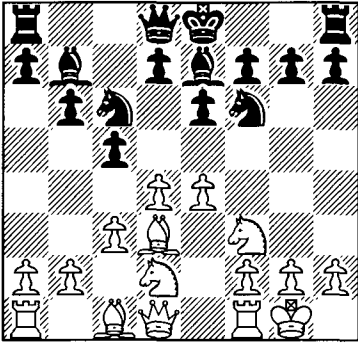 That went 9...0-0 10 ♕e2 ♘e5 (10...d6 is fine also: to modern eyes it is evident that White's anti-Sicilian set-up is unlikely to be terribly effective) 11 ♗c2 ♕c8 12 f4 ♗a6 13 ♕d1 ♘c6 14 ♖f3 g6 (prophylaxis, but there was no threat and a move like 14...♕c7 or ...♗b7 was also well possible) 15 ♘2b3 ♘xd4 16 ♘xd4 ♗b7 with equal chances.

9...♘b4 10 ♗b1 ♗a6 11 ♖e1 ♘d3 12 ♗xd3 ♗xd3 13 d5!

Nothing else poses any problems at all; in particular the positions after e5, ♘d5 are comfortable for Black with White's king's bishop absent.

By Colle standards the position is now quite theoretical: Black's sequence was long thought to be the reason 8 e4 was

bad, but 13 d5 casts a new light on the matter. Black's first task is to notice that 13...0-0? 14 d6 wins a piece, and his second to see that 13...exd5 14 exd5 ♘xd5 15 ♘f1! ♘b4 16 a3 ♗xf1 17 axb4 ♗c4 18 ♕d4 favours White. 13...♗c5 14 b4 ♗xb4 15 ♕b3 ♗xd2 16 ♘xd2 ♗a6 17 ♗a3 has also seen Black sustain a number of spankings, so his next move is an essential one.

13...♕c8 14 ♘e5

I take this as the main line because Gary Lane gave it as such, although 14 d6 has also been popular and I think if White can get anything in this line it will not be in the main column. 14 d6 ♗d8 15 ♘e5 was G.Soppe-A.Giaccio, Buenos Aires 1991, and now Black should have played 15...♗c2, for example 16 ♕e2 0-0 with an unclear position. Now 17 b3 ♕c3 18 ♗b2 ♕xb2 19 ♘dc4 ♕d4 20 ♕xc2 b5
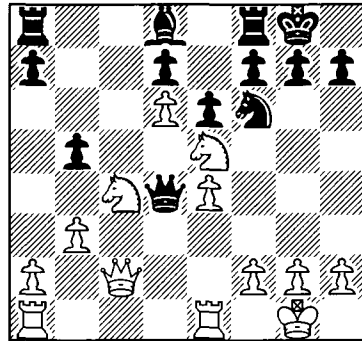
is nowhere near as good as computers think it is. In fact it is striking how computers overestimate White's position in this line generally; perhaps they overrate the pawn at d6 and Black's short-term problem with the bishop stuck on d8. The whole battle tends to turn on

whether Black can solve this problem with either or both of ...b5 and ...♗b6, or ...f6 and ...fxe5. After 15 ♘d4 (L.Zaitseva-V.Gansvind, Moscow 1999) 15...0-0 was correct, holding back 16 ♘2f3 a little longer. Now after 16 ♖e3 ♗a6 17 ♕a4 the positional pawn sacrifice 17...b5 18 ♘xb5 ♕c6 19 ♘c3 ♖c8 gives Black very reasonable compensation, while 16 ♕f3 ♗a6 17 ♘2b3 ♕b7 18 ♗g5 ♖c8 is similar to W.Arencibia-L.Psakhis, Terres Catalanes 1996. There White kept d6 in reserve with 14 ♘d4 and following 14...0-0 15 ♕b3 ♗a6 16 ♘2f3 ♖e8 (! – Psakhis, although 16...exd5 17 e5 ♘e4 deserved attention, for example 18 ♘f5 ♗c5 19 ♗e3 ♖e8 20 ♕xd5 ♗b7 21 ♕d3 d5) 17 d6 ♗d8 18 ♗g5 ♕b7 19 ♕a3 ♖c8 a draw was agreed.

14...♗c2 15 ♕f3 0-0
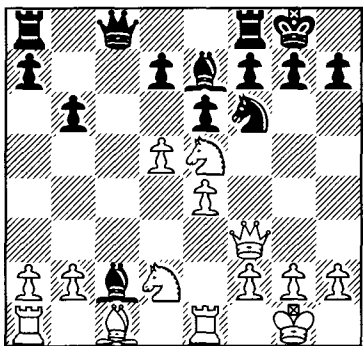
Psakhis had proposed 15...♕c5, but the text is much better. White's problem is that 16 ♘dc4 ♗xe4 17 ♖xe4 exd5 is bad, and so is 16 ♘ec4 exd5 17 exd5 ♗b4. Yet he needs to move the d2-knight so as to develop, and when he does with

16 ♘b3

Black has
16...♗d6

when he has now overcome his development problems and stands better, E.Vancini-G.Sax, Bratto 2004.

A2)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 e3 b6 4 ♗d3 ♗b7 5 0-0 c5 6 ♘bd2 ♗e7 7 c3 ♘c6 8 a3
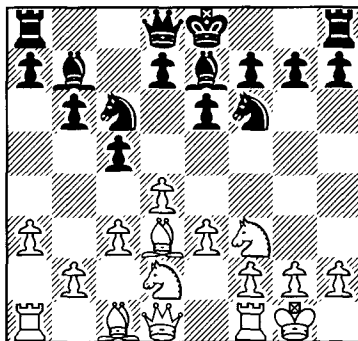
A popular move, preparing e4, although if you were to feel that such a slow and weakening move could hardly be good you would have some supporters.
8...d5

The most natural, although if Black wants a more obscure struggle he should certainly consider Black's play in V.Kovacevic-Y.Seirawan, Indonesia, which went 8...a5 9 e4 d5 10 e5 ♘d7 11 ♖e1 ♗a6 12 ♗xa6 (12 ♗c2!?) ♖xa6 13 ♕e2 ♖a7, when Black had already equalized and went on to win a fine game.
9 ♘e5

9 b4 doesn't do much: 9...♕c7 10 ♗b2 c4 11 ♗c2 b5 12 ♖e1 0-0 13 e4 a5 14 e5 ♘d7 was at least equal in C.Guimard-J.Sunye Neto, Porto Velho 1988. 9 dxc5

makes nonsense of a2-a3; 9...bxc5 10 e4 ♕c7 11 ♖e1 0-0 12 exd5 exd5 was fine in O.Chernikov-P.Rahls, European Senior Team Ch, Dresden 2001.
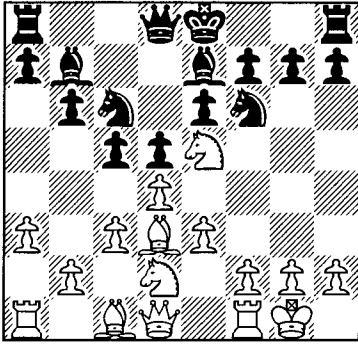
9...♘xe5

Solid, although 9...0-0 10 f4 and now either 10...♘e8 or 10...♗d6 11 ♕f3 ♘e7 12 g4 ♘g6 (K.Pytel-V.Ikonnikov, Parthenay 1992) gives more complicated play with mutual chances.

10 dxe5 ♘d7 11 f4

11 ♕g4 ♘xe5 12 ♕xg7 ♗f6 13 ♗b5+ ♔e7 is fine for Black.

11...♕c7
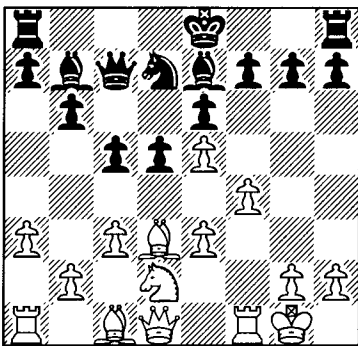
From here G.Danner-L.Psakhis, Vienna 1995 went on 12 ♕e2 c4 13 ♗c2 ♘c5 14 e4 dxe4 15 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 16 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 17 ♕xe4 0-0, and G.Danner-V.Yemelin, Berlin 1995 equally tediously with 12 ♕g4 g6 13 e4 c4 14 ♗c2 ♘c5 15 exd5 ♗xd5 16 ♘f3 h5 17 ♕h3 ♕b7 18 ♗e3 ♗e4 19 ♗xe4 ♕xe4 20 ♘g5 ♗xg5 21 ♗xc5. Computers vigorously prefer 11...c4 12 ♗c2 0-0; their intention being to save the queen for taking on d5 with after 13 e4 ♘c5 14 exd5 ♕xd5 or such. I don't *think* White can do anything at once on the kingside: 13 ♗xh7+ ♔xh7 14 ♕h5+ ♔g8 15 ♖f3 f6 and 13 ♕h5 f5 both seem to defend, and if so this might be worth a thought.

A3)

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 e3 b6 4 ♗d3 ♗b7 5 0-0 c5 6 ♘bd2 ♗e7 7 c3 ♘c6 8 dxc5
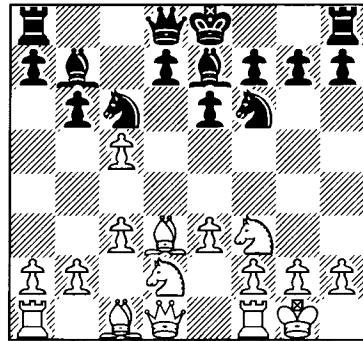
A common idea in the Colle (as in the Semi-Slav), although a bit less common when Black can recapture with the b-pawn and get more influence in the centre. It's another way to arrange e3-e4 early by forestalling ...cxd4; cxd4 ♘b4, but as with 8 a3 there's a concession involved too.

8...bxc5 9 e4 ♕c7

Not allowing e4-e5 just yet, while

keeping the choice between ...d6 and ...d5 a moment longer.

10 ♖e1

10 ♕e2 d5 now is well timed, as in E.Colle-G.Thomas, Nice 1930. 11 e5 ♘d7 12 ♖e1 (or 12 ♗b5) g5 is not good, so 11 exd5 ♘xd5 (or 11...exd5 12 ♖e1 0-0 13 ♘f1 ♗d6) 12 ♘c4 ♘f4 was equal in the game.

10...d6

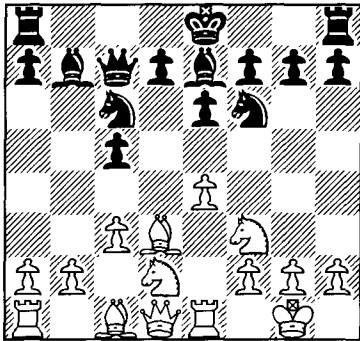Another equally good plan is 10...d5. Neither 11 exd5 exd5 12 ♘h4 (or 12 ♘f1 0-0 13 ♗g5 h6 14 ♗h4 ♖ab8 15 ♘e3 ♗c8) 12...0-0 13 ♘f5 ♖fe8 14 ♘xe7+ nor 11 e5 ♘d7 12 ♗b5 0-0 13 ♕e2 is much to be feared, while 11 ♕e2 0-0 12 e5 ♘d7 13 ♘f1 ♖ae8 (another plan is ...c4, ...♖ab8, ...♖fd8 and ...♘c5) 14 ♗f4 c4 15 ♗c2 ♕b6 16 ♖ad1 f6 was about equal in A.Sydor-J.Smejkal, Sandomierz 1976.

11 ♘f1 0-0 12 ♕e2

White doesn't have a lot here, for example 12...♘d7 13 ♗f4 ♖fd8 14 ♖ad1 a5 15 a4 ♘ce5 was equal in A.Bulat-P.Nikolic, Yugoslav Championship 1984.

A4)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 e3 b6 4 ♗d3

♗b7 5 0-0 c5 6 ♘bd2 ♗e7 7 c3 ♘c6 8 ♕e2

White has tried a number of moves, as one can imagine:

(a) 8 a4 doesn't look very relevant but was played by a great connoisseur: 8...♕c7 9 ♕e2 0-0 10 ♘g5!? h6 11 ♘gf3 d6 12 ♖e1 ♖fe8 13 h3 ♗f8 14 dxc5 bxc5 15 e4 was V.Kovacevic-I.Farago, Vinkovci 1993. Farago played 15...♘d7 and later recommended 15...♖ad8. It seems to me 15...d5 was worth thinking about too, but in any case it's fairly clear that White would be very happy to continue with a4-a2.

(b) 8 b3 is a mixture of systems; 8...♖c8 9 ♗b2 cxd4 10 exd4 0-0 11 ♖e1 g6 12 ♖c1 ♖e8 13 ♘e4 was equal in J.Fischer-F.Gheorghiu, Graz 1987.

(c) 8 ♘e5 d6 9 ♘xc6 ♗xc6 10 e4
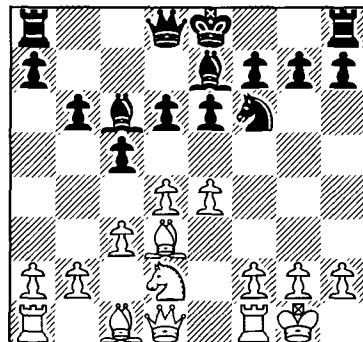
was once a pet of the Yugoslav player Osmanagic. Black usually met this with 10...e5 but 10...0-0 seems more sensible to me: 11 ♕e2 ♕c7 12 e5 dxe5 13 dxe5 ♘d5 is fine for Black.

(d) 8 ♖e1 is another way of preparing e3-e4 since ....♗a6 no longer gains a tempo: 8...♕c7 9 a3 (necessary anyway since 9 e4 cxd4 10 cxd4 ♘b4 11 ♗b1

⍐c8 is annoying) 9...d5 10 b4 (now that ♘e5 is too late, White is pushed for another idea) 10...0-0 11 ♕e2 e5 12 dxe5 ♘xe5 13 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 14 ♗b2 was M.Glienke-S.Atalik, Berlin 2000, and now Black had several appealing options; besides the game's 14...♘e4, 14...♗d6 15 ♘f3 ♕h5 was also plausible.

8...0-0

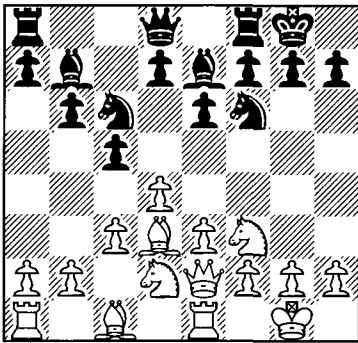Logical: since White's last did nothing to prepare e4 (although 9 e4 cxd4 10 cxd4 ♘b4 11 ♗b1? ♗a6 has been astonishingly popular) it is not yet necessary to take any steps against it.

9 ⍐e1

White has the same sorts of ideas as before but Black can try plans without ...♕c7:

a) 9 dxc5 bxc5 10 e4 d5 11 ⍐e1 (11 e5 ♘d7 12 ⍐e1 f6 13 exf6 ⍐xf6 14 ♘g5 ♘f8 15 ♘df3 h6 16 ♘h3 e5 was another non-♕c7 plan in G.Gonzales-A.Vaisser, Las Palmas 1989) 11...♕c7 is Sydor-Smejkal above; another plan is 11...a5 12 e5 ♘e8 13 ♘f1 ♘c7 when in L.Winants-M.Suba, Ostend 1989 White decided to allow the exchange with 14 ♗f4 ♗a6 15 ♗xa6 ⍐xa6 16 ⍐ad1 ♕b8 17 c4 ⍐b6 which was about equal, although many

might have preferred 13 or 14 ♗c2.

b) 9 a3 d5 is like A2; 10 b4 ♘d7 11 e4!? dxe4 12 ♘xe4 cxd4 13 cxd4 ♘f6 14 ♗b2 ♘d5 was a different way to play in H.Kilicasian-E.Jobava, Istanbul 2003.

9...♕c7

Still holding back e4.

10 dxc5

White is a bit out of other ideas: 10 ♘f1 d5 11 ♘g3 ♗d6; 10 a3 d5; 10 ♗a6 ♗xa6 11 ♕xa6 d5; 10 b3 cxd4 11 exd4 ♘d5, and 10 ♘c4 d5 11 ♘ce5 ♗d6 all in their different ways fail to make much progress.

10...bxc5 11 e4 d5 12 e5 ♘d7

This is Sydor-Smejkal above; another example was 13 ♘f1 c4 14 ♗b1 ♘c5 15 ♘g5?! h6 16 ♘h3 f5 17 exf6 ⍐xf6,
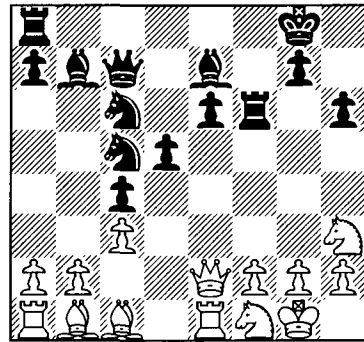
when Black was already better in F.Hoffmeyer-J.Brueggemann, Germany 2002.

B)

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 e3 (with c4/b3)

I now move on to consider lines without c3 but with b3 and c4. These probably owe more to Rubinstein than anyone else, but are rather ahistorically called the Colle-Zukertort. Probably of

all the lines in this book, these are the ones you are most likely to see 2600 players essaying against each other, and hence I dare say they the most genuine tries for an opening advantage. In our day far and away its greatest exponent has been Yusupov.

The material in these 'system' openings is naturally recalcitrant to exact classification, but I have divided play into B1 (with an early c4, reserving the possibility of ♘c3 and usually avoiding b2-b3) and B2 (with the 'pure' b2-b3 method).
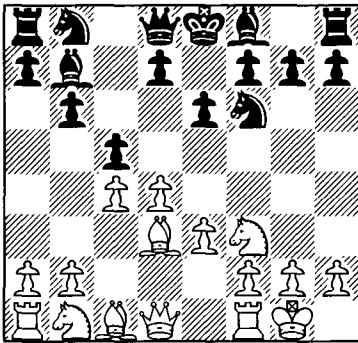
B1)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 e3 b6 4 ♗d3 ♗b7 5 0-0 c5 6 c4

A cunning twist. This looks like a regular e3 Queen's Indian, and so it is, but Black has been deprived of the ...d5, ...♗d6 set-up which most people consider the strongest answer.

6...cxd4

This accepts the transposition to a variation of the e3 QID. Black has to be happy to play against an IQP, however. Instead 6...g6 is a well-respected move played by many grandmasters, but I just haven't been able to find a satisfactory

reply to the gambit 7 d5. Players determined to follow their own course might do worse then Klaus Bischoff's 6...cxd4 7 exd4 ♗xf3 8 ♕xf3 ♘c6 9 d5 (9 ♗e3 ♘b4) ♘e5 10 ♕e2 ♘xd3 11 ♕xd3: White probably holds some advantage here but there is no theory. Alternatively of course Black might have played ...♗e7 at his fifth turn: he could then continue now with ...d5, another respectable defence to the e3 QID.

7 exd4 ♗e7

7...d5 8 ♘c3 ♗e7 is the same thing of course but gives White the option of 8 cxd5 ♘xd5 9 ♘e5, not that that's necessarily anything to be afraid of as long as Black is wiser than he was in B.Kurajica-R.Zelcic, Pula 1999, where a 2550 GM met 8 cxd5 ♘xd5 9 ♘e5 with the incautious 9...♗e7? and was reduced to 10 ♗b5+ ♔f8.
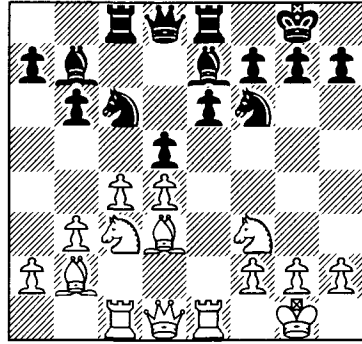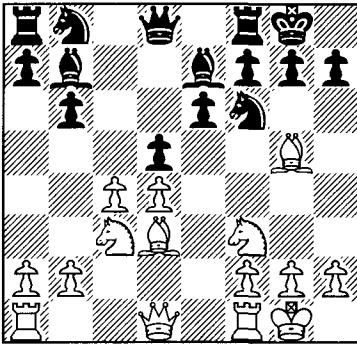
8 ♘c3 d5
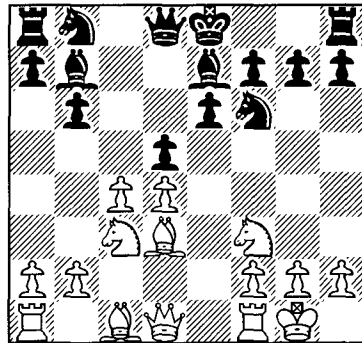
9 cxd5

This is the most popular move and also the best, but White can also keep the tension either with 9 b3, in the Colle-Zukertort spirit, or 9 ♗g5.

a) 9 ♗g5 leads to a position similar to one that can arise from the Furman

Variation of the QGA. Black will have an extra tempo since White will play ♗d3xc4, but equally he will have his queenside pawns on a7/b6 rather than a6/b5. Against this the bishop will still be little exposed on c4. On balance these differences ought to favour Black. 9...0-0


10 ♕e2 (the purest and best set-up in these IQP positions: if White chooses a less direct approach then ...♘c6 may become an option, e.g. 10 a3 dxc4 11 ♗xc4 ♘c6 12 ♗a2 ♖c8 13 ♕d3 h6 14 ♗h4 ♘h5 when Black is better; A.Kochiev-V.Eingorn, Minsk 1983) 10...♘bd7 11 ♖ad1 ♖e8 (a key move in these set-ups, discouraging d4-d5, permitting ...♘f8 and also possibly ...♖xe7) 12 ♖fe1 dxc4 13 ♗xc4 a6 (many players have dropped an exchange to ♗b5 in this line). This position arose by a very different route in R.Sherbakov-Ki.Georgiev, Niksic 1996, when White continued with 14 ♗d3 b5 15 ♘e5 ♖c8 16 a3 ♘xe5 17 dxe5 ♘d5 18 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 19 ♘e4 ♘f4 with approximate equality.

b) 9 b3 leads very naturally to a position which is fine for Black but which needs considerable care: 9...0-0 10 ♗b2 ♘c6 11 ♖e1 ♖c8 12 ♖c1 ♖e8.

White could now continue with a move like ♘e5 or ♕e2, in which case Black will no doubt play ...♗f8, ...g6, ...♗g7 (the usual plan in such positions) with about equal chances. 13 cxd5 ♘xd5 14 ♘xd5 ♕xd5 (14...exd5 15 ♗f5 gives White some pressure) 15 ♗e4 has occurred in many games, however, and Black has quite a few ways of losing: 15...♕d7? 16 ♖xc6 ♗xc6 17 ♘e5 ♕b7 18 ♗xh7+ with a winning attack in L.Portisch-N.De Firmian, Reggio Emilia 1989, was one, while 15...♕d6 16 d5 exd5 17 ♕xd5 (17...♘a5?? 18 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 19 ♗xh7+ ♔xh7 20 ♘g5+ was more of the same in B.Kovacevic-J.Nikolac, Medulin 1997) 17...♕xd5 18 ♗xd5 ♔f8! 19 h4 f6! 20 h5 ♘a5 is the narrow path to equality, A.Yusupov-U.Andersson, Elista 1998.

In view of the rather tedious nature of this previous variation, one might want an alternative: very solid is 12...♘b4 13 ♗f1 ♘e4 14 a3 ♘xc3 15 ♖xc3 ♘c6, which has occurred a few times: students of the game will recognize Keres-Smyslov, Zurich 1953 as the most prominent of these (16 ♘e5 ♘xe5 17 ♖xe5 ♗f6 18 ♖h5!? g6 19 ♖ch3 and now the cool and much-praised

19...dxc4! rather than the panicky 19...gxh5? 20 ♕xh5 ♖e8 21 a4, winning).

9...♘xd5
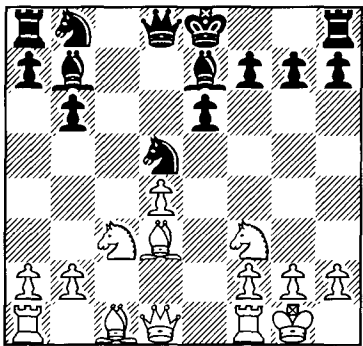
10 ♘e5

A thrusting modern continuation, but again White has some alternatives:

a) 10 a3 is a slightly irrelevant more giving a position which can arise from the a3 QID, although White normally avoids it. 10...♘d7 11 ♗d2 0-0 12 ♖e1 (12 ♘e4 ♘5f6 13 ♘g3 ♘c5! was worse in W.Arencibia-R.Hübner, Capablanca Memorial, Havana 1998) 12...♖c8 13 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 14 ♗a6 ♖c6 15 ♗b5 ♖c8 16 ♗a6 and a draw in B.Gulko-A.Chernin, Volgodonsk 1981, was fairly typical: Black could go on if he wanted with 16...♖a8.

b) 10 ♗b5+ ♗c6 11 ♗c4 (for such a feeble continuation, 11 ♕a4 ♕d7 12 ♗xc6 ♘xc6 has been amazingly popular; for example 13 ♘xd5 ♕xd5 14 ♗e3 0-0 15 ♖fc1 b5 16 ♕a6 ♘b4, K.Frey Beckman-L.Yudasin, Budapest 1982), and now a business-like continuation is 11...♘xc3 12 bxc3 ♘d7 (preventing ♘e5) 13 ♕e2 0-0 14 ♖d1 ♕c7 15 ♗b3 ♗d6 (H.Wirthensohn-J.Sunye Neto, Dubai Olympiad 1986).

c) 10 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 11 ♘e5 is more

dangerous than it looks: 11...0-0 12 ♕h5 f5 13 ♕e2! ♘d7 14 ♘c6 ♕e8 15 ♗f4 ♗f6 16 ♖ac1 ♕g6 17 g3 ♖fe8 18 ♘b4 left Black in deep trouble in J.Speelman-N.Short, Hastings 1983/84. I suspect the most pragmatic solution is to accept a slight disadvantage with 13...♗d6 and ...♗xe5, but also 12...g6 is possible. 13 ♘xg6 and ♗xg6 is a draw by perpetual, while 13 ♕g4 ♗f6 doesn't achieve anything very much (but not 13...♘d7 14 ♗h6 ♖e8 15 ♗b5).

d) 10 ♕e2 isn't quite specific enough: 10...0-0 11 ♖e1 ♘c6 12 ♗d2 ♘f6 13 ♗e3 ♘b4 14 ♗b1 ♖c8 15 a3 ♘bd5 16 ♗d2 g6 was equal in A.Lombard-M.Tal, Skopje Olympiad 1972.

e) 10 ♖e1 is likely the best alternative. 10...♘d7
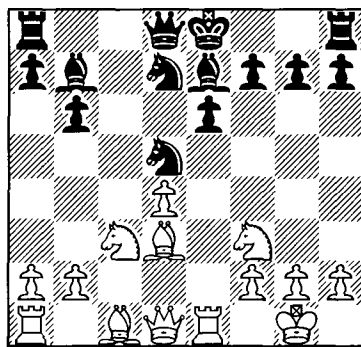
and now:

e1) 11 ♘e4!?. is a move which had an impressive success in I.Sokolov-S.Kudrin, FIDE World Ch, Las Vegas 1999. White will transfer the knight to g3 and build up slowly. After 11...0-0 12 a3 I thought Black did better than Kudrin's 12...♘5f6 in J.Nielsen-P.Stempin, Naestved 1988, with 12...♖c8, when 13 ♗d2 (13 ♕e2 ♘5f6 14 ♘g3 ♖e8 15 ♗f4 ♘f8 16 ♖ad1

♘g6 didn't do any better in E.Gausel-E.Sidorenko, Bled Olympiad 2002) 13...♕c7 14 ♖c1 ♕b8 15 ♘e5 ♖xc1 16 ♗xc1 ♘5f6 was equal.

e2) Instead 11 a3 0-0 12 ♗c2 ♖c8 13 ♕d3 g6 14 ♗h6 ♖e8 15 ♘e4 ♘5f6 was a more conventional approach in R.Djurhuus-D.King, Gausdal 1993, where White was forced to admit by 16 ♘c3 that Black had equality.

10...0-0 11 ♕h5

The feature of this particular position is that White can get his queen quickly to the kingside in this manner. He has a few other queen moves as well:

a) 11 ♕f3 ♘d7 12 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 13 ♕h3 f5 (this move frequently crops up in this variation: positionally it looks a bit of a shocker but the effect on the d3-bishop is sometimes worth the weakening of e6) 14 ♗f4 ♘xe5 15 ♗xe5 ♗f6 16 ♕g3 ♖c8 17 ♖fe1 ♗xe5 18 ♖xe5 ½-½ Y.Averbakh-P.Keres, USSR Championship 1961, illustrates the logic of ...f5 nicely; White is not better here at all.

A stronger try for White is 12 ♕h3 f5 13 ♗c4 (13 ♘f3 ♖c8 is fine) 13...♘xe5 14 dxe5.
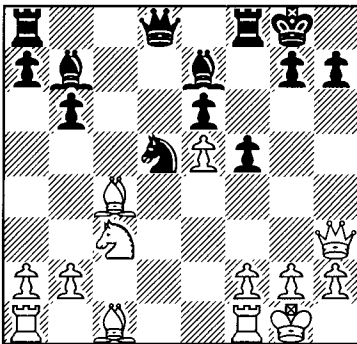
Black has to be careful here: after the tempting 14...♕c7 White was better with 15 ♗xd5 exd5 16 ♕g3 d4 17 ♘b5 ♕d7 18 ♘d6 in K.Volke-A.Goldberg, Bundesliga 1996. 16...♗c5 17 ♗f4? d4 18 ♘b5 ♕d7 19 e6 was worse still in U.Bönsch-T.Tolnai, Budapest 1989. However, 14...♖c8 should be okay: after 15 ♗xd5 exd5 16 ♖d1 ♕d7 I don't see how White can enforce a blockade on d4 (17 ♕d3 ♖fd8 18 ♘e2 d4!?).

b) 11 ♕g4 can be respectably met with 11...f5, but similar to the main text is 11...♘f6 12 ♕g3 (12 ♕h4 is the text and 12 ♕f4 ♘c6 13 ♖d1 ♘b4 14 ♗b1 ♘bd5 was equal in F.Olafsson-G.Sosonko, Tilburg 1977). It's not at all clear that 12...♕xd4 is bad, but simpler is 12...♘c6 13 ♖d1 ♘b4 14 ♗h6 ♘e8 15 ♗c4 (15 ♗b5 ♗h4 16 ♕g4 f5 17 ♕h5 ♘c7 is fine) 15...♖c8 16 ♗b3 ♘bd5, when Black had equalized in E.Dizdarevic-D.Collas, Cannes 1995.

11...♘f6

Black has to be careful here: after the ...
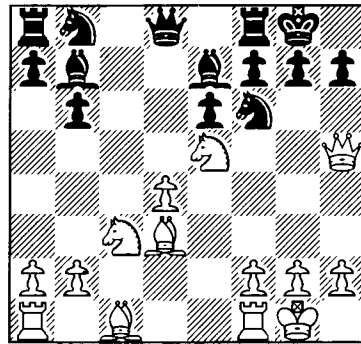
12 ♕h4

White is committed to a pawn sacrifice of one kind or another. After 12 ♕h3 Black can get away with 12...♕xd4 since he is gaining a tempo on e5, although it's still close: 13 ♗g5 g6 14 ♖fe1 ♘c6 15

♗a6 ♘xe5 16 ♗xb7 ♘d3 17 ♖e3 ♘xf2 is an important resource, while after 13 ♖e1 ♘c6 14 ♖e4 ♕d6 15 ♗f4 ♘b4 Black appears to be doing well (16 ♘g6 ♕d8 or 16 ♖c4 ♖fc8).

12...♘e4

There are other moves but I think Black should accept the sacrifice.

13 ♕h3

13 ♕f4 ♘xc3 14 bxc3 ♘d7 is fine for Black, but of course the caddish 13 ♕h5 ♘f6 14 ♕h4 is a possibility. I'm afraid if White wants the draw in this position he can more or less force it, since 12...♘bd7 13 ♗g5 h6 14 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 15 ♗xh6 gxh6 16 ♕xh6 ♕xd4 17 ♕g5+ is also a draw. I can only suggest either 12 ♕h4 ♘e4 13 ♕h5 g6, or 13 ♕g4 f5: both of these are quite promising for White but at least play continues. Alternatively, playing 5...♗e7 and meeting 6 c4 with 6...d5 is a more far-sighted option.

13...♕xd4
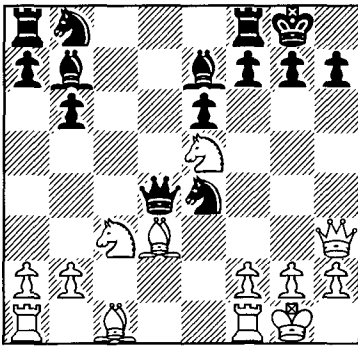
14 ♗f4

White can play for a small advantage with 14 ♘xf7 ♖xf7 15 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 16 ♕g4, but he soon gave up trying to find it in E.Gausel-M.Womacka, Gausdal 2003, after 16...♘c6 17 ♕xe4 ♕xe4 18 ♘xe4

♖c8 19 ♗e3 ♘b4 20 ♖fc1 ♖ff8 21 a4 ♘c2 ½-½.

14...♘f6 15 ♘e2

15 ♗g3 is cleverly met by 15...♘c6 (15...♗a6 16 ♘b5 ♗xb5 17 ♗xb5 ♕xb2 18 ♗c4 is very dangerous). 16 ♖ad1 now looks like a good move but it isn't: 16...♘xe5 17 ♗xh7+ ♘xh7 18 ♖xd4 ♘g5 19 ♕h5 ♘ef3+ 20 gxf3 ♘xf3+ 21 ♔g2 ♘xd4+ is good for Black. Instead 16 ♘b5 ♕xb2 17 ♘d7 h6 18 ♘xf8 ♖xf8 (surely best) wins the exchange but dissipates White's initiative and allows Black enough compensation with the two pawns and the d5-square, while in P.Lukacs-E.Postny, Budapest 2000, 16 ♖ae1 ♘xe5 17 ♗xe5 ♕g4 18 ♗xh7+ ♔h8 19 ♕xg4 ♘xg4 20 ♗e4 ♗xe4 21 ♖xe4 ♘xe5 22 ♖xe5 was also better for Black.

15...♕a4
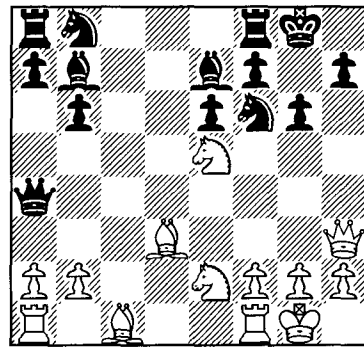
16 ♗g5

I doubt this is the best move, although other commentators have recommended it. 16 ♖fe1 is a sensible move which hasn't been tried (16...g6!?), but practice has seen:

a) 16 b3 ♕e8 17 ♗g5 (17 ♖ac1 ♗a6) ♘e4 18 ♗f4 (A.Khalifman-E.Lobron,

Groningen 1993), when 18...♘a6 is worth a thought, since 19 f3 ♘f6 20 ♘g4 h5! 21 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 22 ♖ad1 ♘c5 is quite nice for Black

b) 16 ♖ac1 ♗a6 17 ♘c4 ♖d8 18 ♖fd1, when Black settled for equality in M.Matlak-G.Gajewski, Lubniewice 2002 with 18...♕xd1+ 19 ♖xd1 ♗xc4, although I don't know why he rejected the obvious 18...♗xc4 19 b3 ♗xb3 20 axb3 ♕e8 when I don't see White's compensation for two pawns. 18 ♗c7 ♖c8 19 ♗e5 ♘bd7 20 b3 ♕b4 21 a3 ♕c5 22 b4 ♕d5 23 ♘f4 ♕b7 24 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 25 ♘xe6 was a long semi-forced sequence in B.Chatalbashev-S.Kristjansson, European Teams Ch, Plovdiv 2003, which just about allowed White to obtain equality.

16...g6

Not 16...♖d8 17 ♘c3 followed by ♗xf6 and ♕xh7+, and certainly not 16...h6 17 ♗xh6 followed by all sorts of unpleasantness.
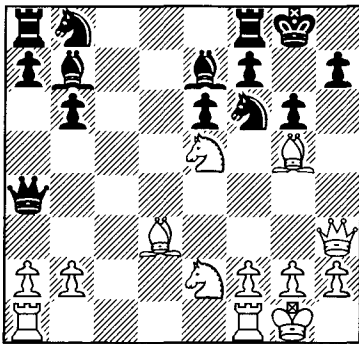
After 16...g6, however, White is struggling for compensation. In A.Payen-D.Dumitrache, Avoine 2004, he could do no better than 17 ♘f4 ♘bd7 18 ♗xg6? (but after 18 b3 ♕d4 19 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 20 ♖ad1 ♘d5 White is just a pawn down)

18...♘xe5 when Black won at once. White needs a new move 17: I can offer 17 ♘c3 ♕d4 18 ♖fe1 ♘c6 19 ♗a6 ♘xe5 20 ♗xb7 ♖ad8 21 ♖ad1 ♕c5 22 ♕h4 ♘eg4, 17 ♖ad1 ♕a5, 17 ♖fe1 ♘c6 18 b3 ♕a3 and 17 ♖ae1 ♘bd7 (17...♘c6 18 b3 ♕a3 19 ♗xf6 and ♘d7 is the idea of using the a-rook to go to e1) 18 ♘c3 ♕d4 19 ♘b5 ♕c5 20 ♘xd7 ♘xd7 21 ♗e3 ♕b4 22 ♘c7 ♘e5! (not 22...♖ac8 23 ♘xe6!) as a few ideas that don't work, but that's as far as I go.
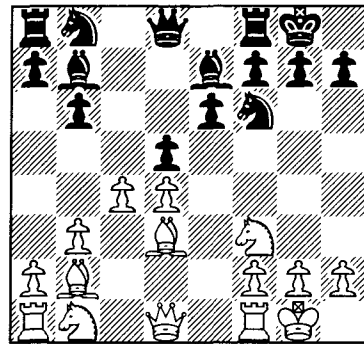
B2)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 e3 b6 4 ♗d3 ♗b7 5 0-0 c5 6 b3

White can start with 6 ♘bd2 as well of course, but it makes no difference.

6...cxd4

Black might just as well play this now: the bishop is hardly going anywhere but b2.
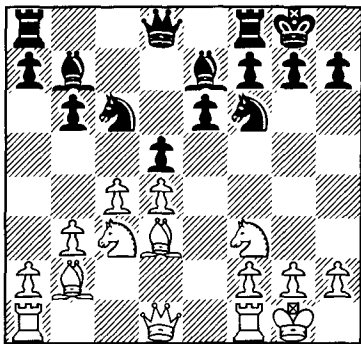
7 exd4 ♗e7 8 ♗b2 0-0 9 c4 d5

This position is almost bound to be reached one way or another, (although Black should wait for c2-c4 before playing ...d5; otherwise some ♘e5/f2-f4 plan may well be strong) and now I split the material into:

B21: 10 ♘c3
B22: 10 ♘bd2

B21)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 e3 b6 4 ♗d3
♗b7 5 0-0 c5 6 b3 cxd4 7 exd4 ♗e7
8 ♗b2 0-0 9 c4 d5 10 ♘c3 ♘c6

11 ♖c1

11 ♕e2 allows a similar caper to the text: 11...♘b4 12 ♗b1 dxc4 13 bxc4 ♗xf3 14 ♕xf3? (14 gxf3 is like the text only worse with the rook stuck on a1) 14...♕xd4 15 a3 ♘a6 16 ♕b7 (the only way to try and justify White's play) 16...♗d6 and the game is over, T.Straeter-E.Van den Doel, Bundesliga 2002.

11 ♖e1 gives Black a choice between 11...dxc4 12 bxc4 ♖c8 13 ♖c1 ♖e8 with the usual sort of game, or 11...♖c8, although White may then play the dull 12 cxd5 ♘xd5 13 ♘xd5 ♕xd5 14 ♗e4 ♕d6 15 d5 exd5 16 ♕xd5 ♕xd5 17 ♗xd5 ♗c5, G.Danner-P.Wells, Hungarian League 1997.

11...♖c8 12 ♕e2

12 ♖e1 was note 'b' to White's 9th move in Line B1, and as we saw there has the drawback of allowing Black to free himself with a well-timed ...♘b4 sortie.

Another way of putting a stop to that is 12 a3, when a good example was R.Vaganian-M.Shereshevski, Minsk 1972, which went 12...♖e8 13 ♖e1 ♗f8 14 ♘a4 dxc4 15 bxc4 g6 16 ♖c2 ♗g7 17 ♖d2 ♘a5 18 ♘e5 ♘d7 19 ♗f1 ♘xe5 20 dxe5 ♕c7 21 ♘c3, and now 21...♖ed8 would have completed an exemplary handling of the early middlegame. Inept is 12 ♗b1? dxc4 13 bxc4 ♘a5 attacking both hanging pawns at once, while 12 cxd5 ♘xd5 13 ♘xd5 (or 13 ♘e4 ♘f4) ♕xd5 only helps Black, so the text is the commonest.

12...♘b4
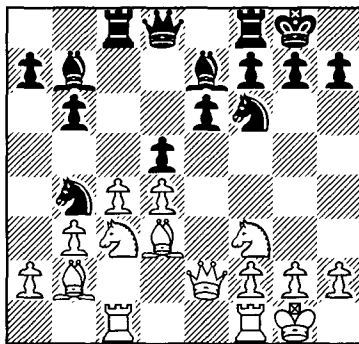
Of course Black doesn't have to go in for this, although it's quite promising. 12...♖e8 13 ♖fd1 ♗f8 is an alternative, when 14 h3 g6 15 ♗b1? (15 ♕e3 is equal, but the queen is not well placed here) 15...♗h6 winning material illustrates another common accident.
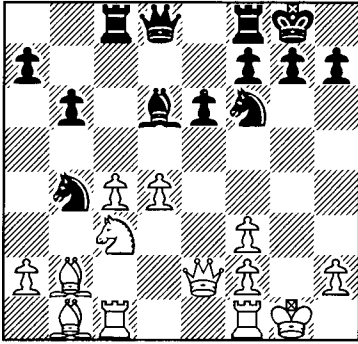
13 ♗b1 dxc4 14 bxc4 ♗xf3 15 gxf3

15 ♕xf3 ♖xc4 16 d5 ♘bxd5 17 ♖fd1 ♕c8 was more or less winning for Black in A.Czebe-H.Koneru, Budapest 2001.
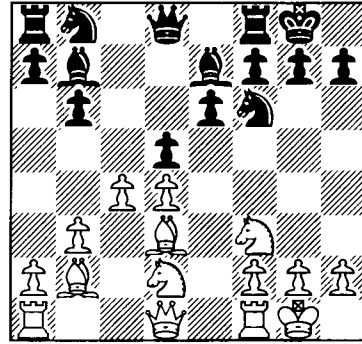
15...♗d6

15...♕xd4 allows a virtually forced draw with 16 ♘e4 ♕d8 17 ♖fd1 ♕c7 18 ♘xf6 ♗xf6 19 ♗xf6 gxf6 20 ♕d2 ♕e7

21 Wh6 f5 22 Rd7. Yakovich maintained that 19 We4 here was much better for White but after 19...Rfd8 this seems anything but true.

After 15...Bd6 experience suggests that Black is very well placed:

a) 16 Kh1 Nh5 17 We4 was H.Gretarsson-O.Salmensuu, Reykjavik 2000, in which Black now went mad with the unclear 17...f5?!, but just 17...g6 was good, 18 Ne2 Nf4! being the point Black presumably overlooked.

b) 16 Ne4 Bf4 17 a3?! Nxe4 18 fxe4 Wh4 19 f3 Bxc1 20 Rxc1 Nc6 21 Kh1 e5 left White lost in J.Gil Capape-G.Milos, World Junior Ch, Copenhagen 1982, while 17 Rcd1 Nxe4 18 fxe4 Wh4 19 f3 Rxc4 gives White at least some compensation after 20 Rf2; in I.Frog-V.Malakhov, Elista 1995, 20 a3? would have left White really struggling if Black had found 20...Nc2.

B22)
**1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 e6 3 e3 b6 4 Bd3 Bb7 5 0-0 c5 6 b3 cxd4 7 exd4 Be7 8 Bb2 0-0 9 c4 d5 10 Nbd2**

On the whole this version attracts the great and good rather more; with the knight on d2 both c4 and d4 have an extra defender which means that the ...Nb4/...Bxf3 ideas of the previous section are not going to work.

10...Nc6 11 We2

Kramnik's choice. On the whole White's only decision over the next few moves is how to arrange the rooks: c1/e1, e1/d1 and c1/d1 all have their supporters. Also White has sometimes played a2-a3 before this point: often after 7...Nc6 in the sequence above White either judges it right to play a3 at once or else the sequence ...Nb4; Be2 (move); a3 Nc6; Bd3 occurs. An example of that position is L.M.Campos Gambuti-A.Chernin, Benidorm 1993: 11 a3 Rc8 12 Rc1 Wc7 (a slightly unusual plan but Chernin perhaps judges he has more time than usual: more regular is 12...Re8 13 Re1 Bf8 14 c5 a5 15 Bb5 Nd7 16 cxb6 with equality, A.Yusupov-A.Chernin, Minsk 1987) 13 We2 Rfd8 14 c5 a5 (usually the response to c5 in this set-up, preventing b4) 15 Rfe1 Nd7 16 cxb6 Wxb6 17 We3 Ba6 18 Bb1 Nf8 19 Ne5 Nxe5 20 Wxe5, and clearly things were going well for Black.
11...Re8

Kasparov doesn't see the point of a rook on c8 with the c-pawn so well defended.
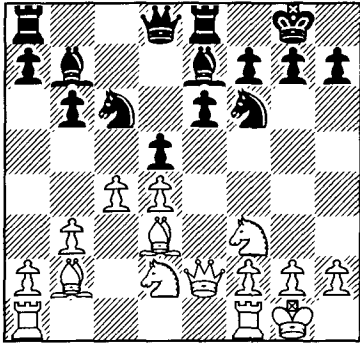

12 ♖ad1

Kramnik wants his rooks on d1 and e1. An excellent example of c1 and d1 was A.Ivanov-V.Korchnoi, Pasadena 1983: 12 ♖ac1 ♖c8 13 ♖fd1 ♗f8 (there is a school of thought that holds that ...g6 first is more accurate in these positions, so that in the event of c5 bxc5; dxc5 occurring the bishop can come to the long diagonal in one move, but evidently Korchnoi doesn't agree) 14 h3 (quite often played, restraining ...♘g4, possibly enabling g4 and giving luft, although not obviously immediately necessary) 14...g6 15 ♕e3 (defending d4 to allow ♘e5 without being obliged to play ♘xc6 after ...dxc4) 15...♗g7 16 ♘e5 dxc4 17 bxc4 ♕c7 (not at once 17...♘xe5? 18 dxe5 ♘d7 19 ♗e4, but now Black is ready for this) 18 ♘df3 (more ambitious is 18 f4) 18...♘xe5 19 ♘xe5 ♕e7 and Black had equalized: ...♖ed8 will be the next move.

With the rooks on c1 and e1 after 11 ♖ac1 ♖c8 12 ♖fe1 ♖e8 White for no reason I can discern tends to play not 13 ♕e2 but 13 ♘e5, when Black played well

in H.Dobosz-A.Kosten, Naestved, 1988: 13...dxc4 14 ♘xc6 ♖xc6 (14...♗xc6 15 bxc4 ♕d7 16 ♘f3 ♕b7 17 ♘e5 ♗xg2 18 d5 exd5 19 ♔xg2 ♗b4 is unclear) 15 bxc4 ♖c7 16 ♘f3 ♗b4 17 ♖f1 ♘h5 18 c5 bxc5 19 ♗b5. Kosten's 19...♖f8 now was fine, but he must have looked long and longingly at 19...c4!?.

12...♗f8 13 ♖fe1 g6 14 ♗b1 ♗g7 15 ♘e5 ♖c8 16 ♘df3 ♘d7
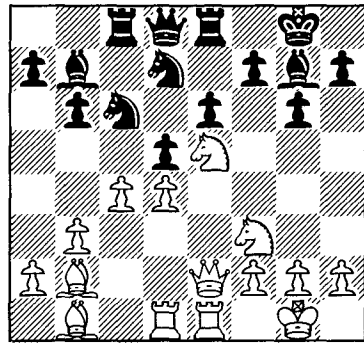
This was Kramnik-Kasparov, Botvinnik Memorial (blitz), Moscow 2001, which is worth following a bit longer.

17 ♘g4 h5 18 ♘e3 ♘e7! 19 h3 ♘f6 20 ♘e5 ♘f5 21 ♘f1

The two great men agree that Black's activity and e4 compensate for the crumpled pawns after 21 ♘xf5 exf5 22 ♕f1 ♘e4.

21...♘d6 22 ♘e3 ♘f5 23 ♘f1 ♘e4 24 ♗xe4 dxe4

with a complex position which turned out in Black's favour in the game: a model display by Black.

Before leaving this last line; it is possible for White to be cunning and delay c4, e.g. 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 e3 b6 4 ♗d3 ♗b7 5 0-0 c5 6 b3 cxd4 7 exd4 ♗e7 8 ♗b2 0-0 9 ♘bd2 ♘c6
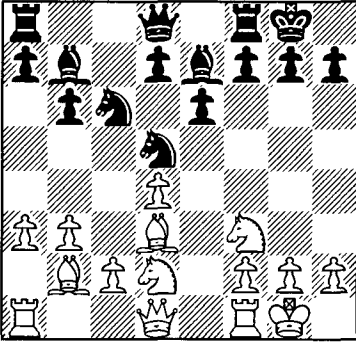
10 a3 (pretty much necessary as 10 ♖e1 ♘b4 is annoying). Black can now alter the play with 10...♘d5!?. White will surely play 11 ♖e1 ♘f4 12 ♗f1 and now Black can reasonably choose between the 12...d5 13 g3 ♘g6 of D.Markosian-A.Goldin, Israel 2003, 12...f5 13 b3 ♘g6 14 c4 ♗f6 of S.Polgar-L.B.Hansen, Vejstrup 1989 and 12...♖c8 13 g3 ♘g6 14 h4 h6 15 h5 ♘h8, A.Yusupov-N.Miezis, Ordix (rapid), Mainz 2002, all of which give interesting and untried play.

C)

We now look at lines beginning 1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 e3. Nothing is now preventing Black from playing 3...e6, of course, but he is moving outside our repertoire in defending the ordinary Colle, and anyway it's a crime not to develop the c8-bishop now if it's possible, which it is. Black pretty much has to be prepared to play some variations of either the Slav or the QGA, and I've recommended allowing some of White's less frightening Slav lines.

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 e3 ♗f5

A little move order trick. I won't say it refutes the Colle in this version, but it's

certainly inconvenient enough that Colle books usually like to sweep it under the carpet. White has three approaches: he can change track and go for c2-c4 (the only way to try for anything); he can ignore Black and go for his Colle-Zukertort anyway, or he can just trade the bishop and pretend he's playing an ordinary Colle. So:
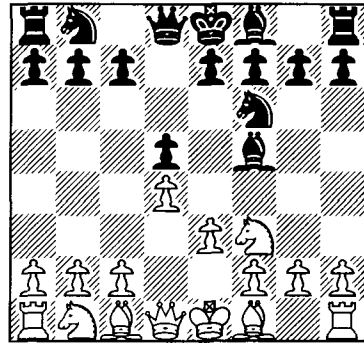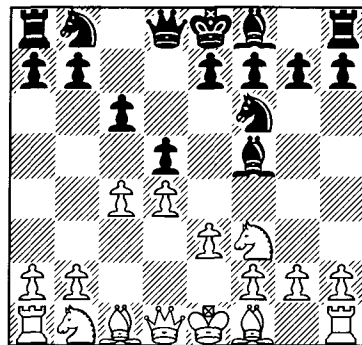

C1: 4 c4
C2: 4 ♗e2
C3: 4 ♗d3

C1)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 e3 ♗f5 4 c4 c6

Colle books, if they tell you this line exists at all, normally give 4...e6, but the text simply transposes to a line of the Slav which has perhaps the solidest reputation in all of that solid opening. The immediate point is that 5 ♕b3 ♕b6 is nothing for White: 6 ♕xb6 axb6 7 cxd5 ♘xd5 8 ♘c3 ♘b4 and 6 cxd5 ♕xb3 7 axb3 ♘xd5 are both at least equal for Black. Instead White normally chooses between:
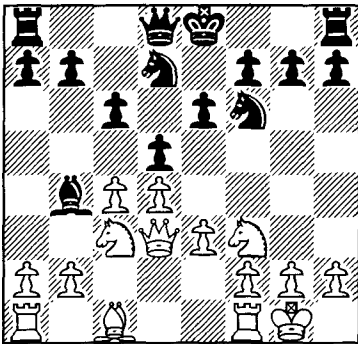
C11: 5 ♗d3
C12: 5 ♘c3
C13: 5 cxd5

C11)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 e3 ♗f5 4 c4 c6 5 ♗d3 ♗xd3 6 ♕xd3

If this line is too equal for you, then 5...e6 is an offbeat alternative. White's structure after an exchange on f5 and ...dxc4 is strangely ossified, and e4 is a fine square for Black.
6...e6 7 0-0 ♘bd7 8 ♘c3 ♗b4

To control e4. 8...♗e7 is fine also.
9 ♗d2

White wants to recapture with the bishop. 9 a3 ♗xc3 is fine for Black; after 10 bxc3 he should concentrate on c4, and

after 10 ♕xc3 developing and aiming for ...b5 is his most reliable.
9...a5

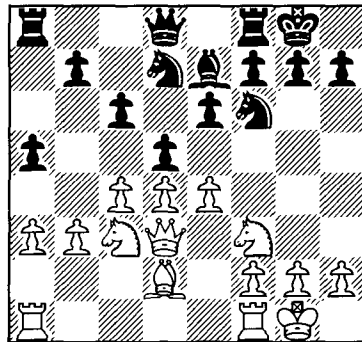Deduct ten points for 9...0-0? 10 ♘xd5.
10 a3 ♗e7

10...♗xc3 is fine too, but the text sets a trap which several 2600 players have missed, so why not?
11 b3

White has played many moves here: 11 e4 ♘c5 is much like the text only equal, and 11...dxe4 12 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 13 ♕xe4 ♘f6 14 ♕d3 a4 is fine too. 11 b4 0-0 12 bxa5 is also equal.
11...0-0 12 e4??

And here it is. 12 ♖fd1, for example, is equal.

12...♘c5!

And Black wins, as in several games: 13 dxc5 dxe4 14 ♕xd8 ♖fxd8 and Black regains the piece with a pawn as interest.

C12)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 e3 ♗f5 4 c4 c6 5 ♘c3 e6 6 ♘h4

6 ♕b3 ♕b6 still does nothing: in this structure White's problem is that 7 ♕xb6 axb6 8 cxd5 exd5 is very nice for Black,

since the a-pawn is exposed and if a3 then ...b5 followed by bringing a knight to c4 in the long term is worrying. Meanwhile 8 ♘h4 ♗c2 followed by ...h6 is also fine.
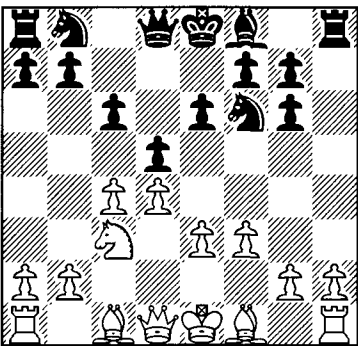
6...♗e4
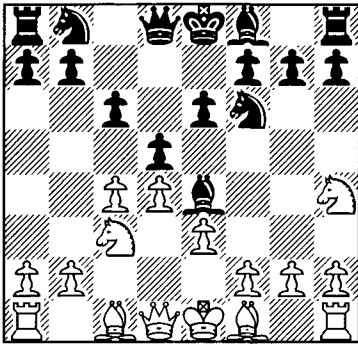
Black can also play either 6...♗g4 or...♗g6.

7 f3

The main alternative is 7 ♕b3 ♕b6 8 c5 (8 ♕xb6 axb6 9 cxd5 exd5 10 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 is nothing) but after 8...♕c7 9 f3 ♗g6 10 g3 b6 11 cxb6 axb6 Black already stood well in J.Piket-A.Miles, Linares 1995.

7...♗g6 8 ♘xg6 hxg6

9 ♕b3

After 9 g3 ♗d6 10 ♔f2 ♘bd7 11 ♗d2

0-0 12 c5 ♗c7 13 f4 b6 Black was comfortable in Karpov-Shirov, Monaco (rapid) 2001, while after 9 ♗d3 Black can either contemplate the unclear adventure 9...dxc4 10 ♗xc4 ♗d6 11 f4 g5 or just develop with 9...♘bd7 10 f4 ♗e7 11 0-0, although I think he might now be well advised to play with 11...dxc4 12 ♗xc4 ♘b6 or some such, rather than the 11...0-0 12 ♕f3 ♕c7 13 b3 c5 of B.Chatalbashev-G.Timoscenko, Padova 1998: if White just takes the d-pawn now I don't see that Black has quite equalized.

9...♕b6

9...♕c7 has some supporters as well.
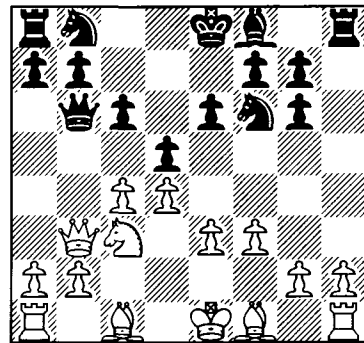
10 ♗d2

10 c5 ♕c7 11 ♗d2 ♘bd7 12 f4 ♗e7 was fine for Black in V.Milov-A.Hauchard, Istanbul Olympiad 2000.

10...♘bd7 11 0-0-0

11 ♕xb6 axb6 12 0-0-0 ♗d6 13 h3 ♘h5 14 cxd5 exd5 15 ♗d3 0-0-0 16 ♘e2 ♘g3 was equal in S.Porat-A.Kharitonov, Chalkidiki 2003, while 11 ♕c2 ♗e7 12 0-0-0 0-0-0 13 ♔b1 ♔b8 with approximate equality would transpose to V.Tkachiev-A.Shirov, Corsica (rapid) 2003.

11...♕xb3 12 axb3 ♗d6 13 h3 a6

Black has played a variety of other

moves, for example 13...♞h5, 13...g5, 13...0-0 and 13...0-0-0, but the text has always done well.
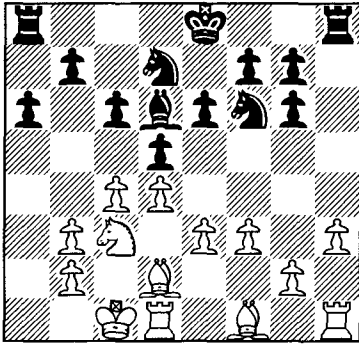
14 ♗d3

14 g4 0-0-0 15 ♗g2 ♗c7 16 ♖hf1 ♞b6 17 c5 ♞bd7 18 ♔c2 e5 19 b4 ♖he8 20 ♗e1 exd4 21 exd4 ♞f8 22 ♗f2 ♞e6 23 ♖fe1 g5, with a slight edge to Black, was another solid effort by Black in V.Cmilyte-P.Cramling, Women's European Championship (rapid) 2003, while Dautov's original idea with ...a6 was 14...♖c8 15 ♔b1 c5 16 cxd5 exd5 17 dxc5 ♗xc5 18 e4 (! – Dautov) ♞e5 19 ♗c2 d4 20 ♗f4 ♞xf3 (with an edge for White – Dautov), although what he has against the natural 20...♞c6 when Black seems to be doing fine I'm not sure.

14...0-0-0 15 ♗c2 ♗c7 16 e4 dxe4 17 fxe4 e5 18 d5 c5 19 ♞e2 ♞e8

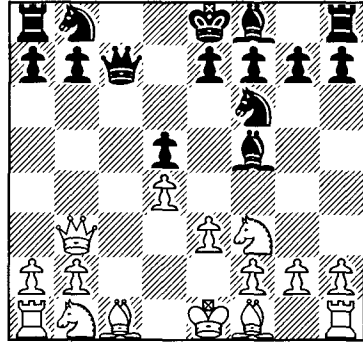with equality was a black model in J.Lautier-P.Cramling, Bundesliga 2003.

C13)
1 d4 ♞f6 2 ♞f3 d5 3 e3 ♗f5 4 c4 c6 5 cxd5

Mark Hebden has been using this a lot recently, which is always a recommendation, although it does seem that Black
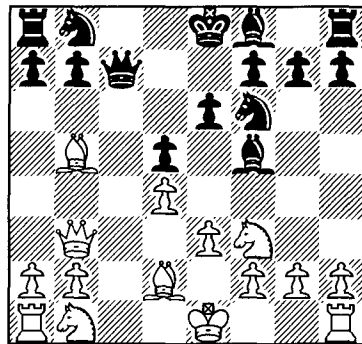
might now have the answer.
5...cxd5 6 ♕b3 ♕c7

7 ♗d2

This is the idea: a sort of Slav Exchange Reversed. Nothing stops White playing 7 ♞c3 e6 8 ♗d2 ♞c6 9 ♗b5 ♗e7 (better than 9...♗d6 as 10 ♖c1 0-0? loses to ♗xc6 and ♞b5, so Black has to stop for 10...♖b8) 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♖fc1 ♖fc8 12 ♞e5 ♞g4 as in A.Yusupov-P.Nikolic, Belgrade 1991, but White has nothing here.
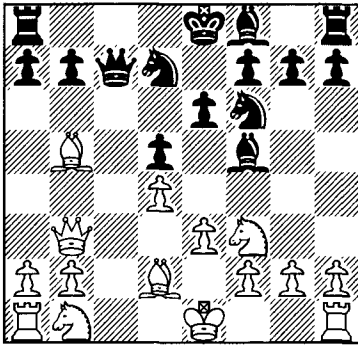
7...e6 8 ♗b5+

8...♞bd7

What White wants is the line 8...♞c6 9 0-0 ♗d6 10 ♗b4 with hopes of a technical edge on the queenside dark squares.

This is perfectly possible but the text is easier.

9 0-0

9 ♘c3 a6 10 ♖c1 is Hebden's latest try, but in M.Hebden-A.Ledger, British League 2005, Black equalized easily with 10...♕b6 11 ♕a4 ♕d8 12 ♗e2 ♗d6 13 0-0, when apart from the game's solid 13...h6, seeking the initiative with 13...b5 14 ♕d1 ♘e4 was also a possibility.

9...a6 10 ♗xd7+ ♘xd7 11 ♘e5

Richard Palliser gave this an exclamation mark in *Play 1 d4!*, but I'm not convinced.
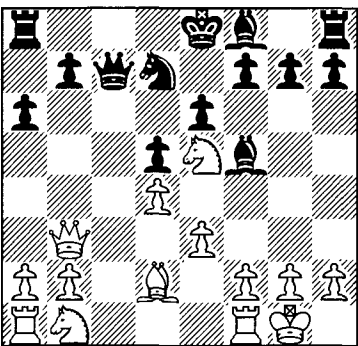
11...♖c8

Palliser doesn't mention 11...♗c2; both he and Houska must have had something in mind but I confess I don't see what it was.

12 ♘c3 ♗d6 13 ♖ac1

At this point Black rather rashly played 13...♘c5 in R.Palliser-J.Houska, British League 2003. Instead 13...♗xe5 14 dxe5 ♕b8 was extremely equal.

C2)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 e3 ♗f5 4 ♗e2

This can't be good. White plays one of Black's less accurate lines against the London System with colours reversed. Still, he has that extra tempo, and White can't be worse. An excellent example from Black's viewpoint was S.Kasparov-S.Vysochin, Kiev 2000, which went

4...c6 5 0-0 h6 6 b3 e6 7 ♗b2 ♘bd7 8 ♘bd2 ♗d6 9 ♘e5 0-0 10 ♘df3 ♕c7 11 c4 a5 12 ♘xd7 ♘xd7 13 a3 ♗g4
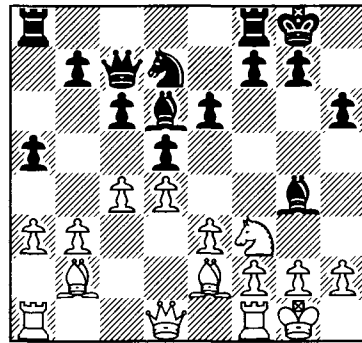

with at least equality for Black, whose moves are too natural really to require any comment. (The rest of this game is well worth playing through if you can find it.)

C3)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 e3 ♗f5 4 ♗d3

This is a tamer version of Line C11, if

such a thing is possible. Obviously it is nothing to be alarmed by, but if you can't face it, a useful move order trick is 3...c6, when 4 c4 ♗f5 is C1, 4 ♗e2 ♗f5 is C2 and 4 ♗d3 can be met by 4...♗g4.
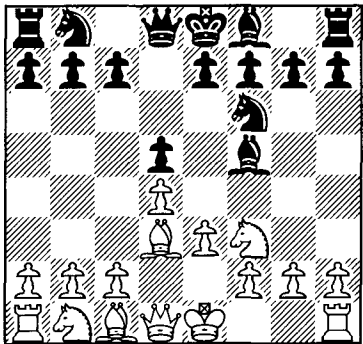
4...♗xd3

4...e6 is a perfectly reasonable alternative and is quite tempting.

5 ♕xd3

5 cxd3 ♘bd7 6 0-0 e6 7 b3 b5 (against ♗a3) 8 ♗b2 ♗e7 9 ♕c2 c5 was equal too

in M.Annaberdiev-S.Erenburg, World Junior Ch, Goa 2002.

5...♘bd7 6 0-0 e6 7 ♘bd2 ♗e7 8 e4 dxe4 9 ♘xe4 0-0 10 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 11 ♗e3 c6 12 ♖ad1 ♕a5 13 a3 ♖fd8 14 ♕d2 ♕h5
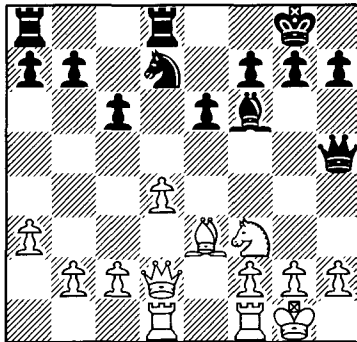
This position is also extremely equal, not to mention dull, although in N.Saleh-M.Al Sayed, Dubai 2003, White now enlivened it by falling for 15 ♗g5? ♘e5! and should really have lost.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Veresov
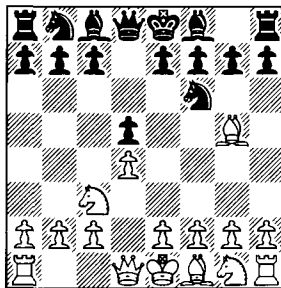
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 ♗g5

The Veresov Opening. This can arise either by the move order given or by 1 d4 d5 2 ♘c3 ♘f6 3 ♗g5: in the latter case Black has some options but I'm going to assume the same position arises.

White pays no heed to the ancient trope about blocking one's c-pawn in the d-pawn openings: we can assume that his plan involves playing e4, either at once after f2-f3 or ♕d3, or after a more stately build-up with e2-e3. White can also start with 3 ♘f3, which perhaps leaves him rather better placed against 3...c5 than the text. I suggest then 3...♗f5, when 4 ♗g5 e6 allows Black a formation he can't quite get in the Veresov proper, and should make for a fairly easy life.

After 3 ♗g5 the first issue for Black is whether to take any notice of the 'threat' ♗xf6: the traditional main line is 3...♘bd7 but instead I'm recommending taking immediate action against White's e4 idea, and exploiting the blocking of the c3-square, with

3...c5
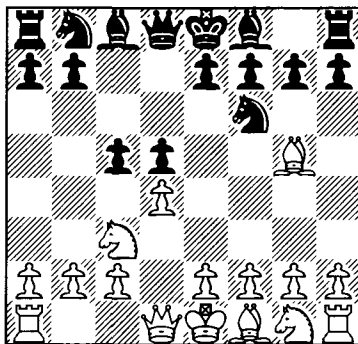
White doesn't have to play 4 ♗xf6 now, although that, followed either by 5 e4 or 5 e3, is the traditional move; he can be more temperate with 4 e3, or lash out inconti-nently with 4 e4. Two things he shouldn't do are 4 dxc5? d4 or 4 ♘f3 ♘e4, both of which are at least equal for Black.

A: 4 ♗xf6
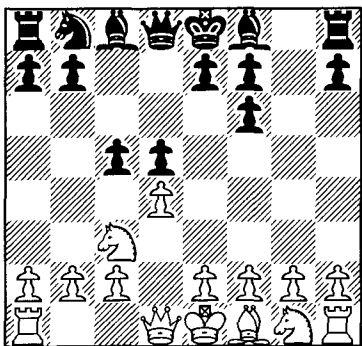**B: 4 e3**
C: 4 e4?!

A)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 ♗g5 c5 4

♗xf6 gxf6

Of course 4...exf6 is daft in conjunction with ...c5; White has a nice game with pressure on d5.
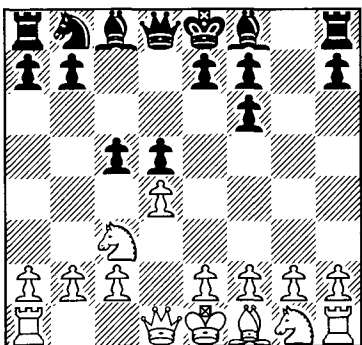
After 4...gxf6 White has a choice.

A1: 5 e4
A2: 5 e3
A3: 5 ♘f3

A1)
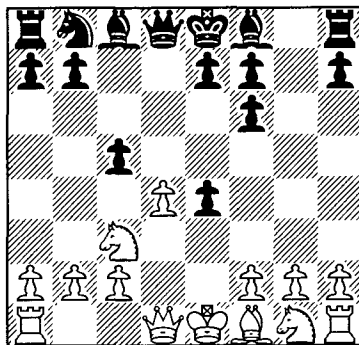**1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 ♗g5 c5 4 ♗xf6 gxf6**

5 e4

This tends to be what Veresov books concentrate on, although in truth I think the main question in this position is whether White can emerge from the opening at all.

5...dxe4

6 dxc5

6 d5 is also possible so long as White doesn't mind being a pawn down for nothing; M.Hebden-V.Milov, Port Erin 1995 continued 6...f5 7 ♕h5 (I wonder if the untried 7 f3!? might be better) 7...♗g7 8 ♘ge2 ♕b6 9 0-0-0 ♕h6+ and Black not surprisingly won, while C.Hoi-A.Ornstein, Malmö 1979 had the same result after 8 ♗b5+ ♔f8 9 ♘h3 ♕d6 10 0-0 a6 11 ♗e2 ♕g6 12 ♖fd1 ♘d7 13 ♕h4 ♗f6 14 ♕f4 ♖g8 15 g3 ♗e5 (in fact every game after 6 d5 has had the same result, bar one draw).

6...f5

6...♕a5 is good too, but the text more or less obliges White to accept the worse endgame straight away.

7 ♕xd8+

The alternatives are worse:

a) White was crushed in I.Miladinovic-S.Smagin, Montreal 2000 after 7 ♗b5+ ♗d7 (always better than ...♘d7 as a means of blocking checks in these lines) 8 ♘ge2 (8 ♗xd7+ ♘xd7 9 ♕d5 e6 10 ♕xb7 ♖b8 11 ♕xa7 ♗xc5 12 ♕a4 ♖g8 –

Gershon – is most unwise) 8...♘c6 9 ♕d2 e6 10 0-0 ♖g8! (10...♗xc5? 11 ♘xe4 and ♕c3) 11 ♖ad1 ♗xc5 12 ♘a4 (12 ♘g3 ♖g6; 12 ♕h6 ♕g5) 12...♗b4 13 c3 ♗f8 14 b4 ♘e5, when White was already lost.

b) 7 ♕h5 is a usual sort of move.
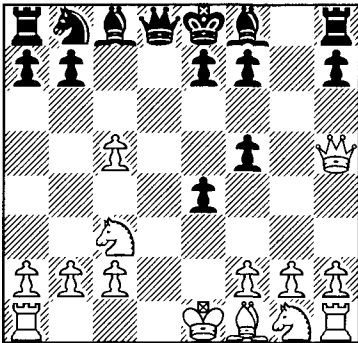
Now I like 7...♗g7 8 ♗b5+ (8 ♗c4 ♗xc3+! 9 bxc3 e6 10 ♕h6 ♘d7 11 ♗b5 ♕a5 12 ♕f6 ♖f8 was winning for Black in Z.Mestrovic-J.Banas, Keszthely 1981) 8...♘c6 9 ♘ge2 0-0 (C.Perdomo-M.Narciso Dublan, Foment Martinenc 1996), when White started to collapse after 10 ♖d1 ♕a5 11 0-0 ♕b4. However, the more sensible 10 0-0 ♕a5 11 a3 ♕c7 would have transposed to the old (and model) game Z.Mestrovic-S.Gligoric, Hastings 1971, in which Black had the edge after 12 b4 ♗e6 13 ♖ad1 ♖ad8, when White could find nothing better than 14 ♗a4 a5 15 ♘b5 ♕e5.

c) 7 g4 seems to be strongly met by 7...♕a5, since 8 ♕d4 ♖g8 9 b4? loses to 9...♘c6 10 ♗b5 ♕xb5 11 ♘xb5 ♘xd4 (Davies), while 9 ♗b5+ (Palliser) also seems to leave Black comfortably better after 9...♗d7 10 b4 (or 10 ♗xd7+ ♘xd7 11 ♖d1 0-0-0, but White's development is

looking alarmingly shabby here) 10...♕d8 11 ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 12 ♕xd7 ♘xd7 13 gxf5 ♗g7 14 ♘ge2 a5. Meanwhile 8 ♕d5 ♗g7 9 ♗b5+ ♗d7 10 0-0-0? ♗xb5! is also terrible for White.

d) 7 f3 ♗g7 8 ♕xd8+ transposes below; White doesn't have much choice since 8 fxe4? ♗xc3+ and ...♕xd1+ is good for Black, and 8 ♘ge2 ♕a5 9 fxe4 ♘c6 is already looking ominous.

7...♚xd8
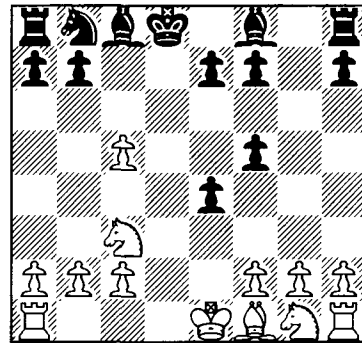
8 0-0-0+

8 ♖d1+ ♗d7 9 ♗c4 e6 was played in M.Vasilev-M.Krasenkow, Kavala 2001, with the same sort of position as the text: in the game White now lost it with 10 g4? fxg4 11 ♘xe4 ♚e7.

8...♗d7 9 g4

White has to tackle the pawns, and 9 f3 ♗g7 doesn't do any good – the trouble is that the threat of ...♗xc3 compels some ugly move now; either 10 ♘ge2 exf3 11 gxf3 ♘a6 with an edge for Black (B.Heberla-G.Gajewski, Bartkowa 2002) or 10 ♘b5 (N.Van der Matt-H.Jonkman, Alphen aan den Rijn 1995), when 10...♖g8 or 10...♘a6 are both nice for Black.

Meanwhile 9 ♗c4 e6 10 g4 fxg4 11 ♘xe4 ♚e7 (D.Floreen-L.Alburt, New

York 1993), is similar to Vasilev-Krasenkow above, while 9 &b5 ♘c6 would transpose to T.Vogler-M.Krasenkow, Germany 2002, in which Black was again better after 10 f3 ♖g8 11 g3 &g7 (Black refuses as usual to develop White's men by ...exf3) 12 fxe4 &xc3 13 bxc3 fxe4 14 &xc6 bxc6 15 ♖d4 ♖g5.
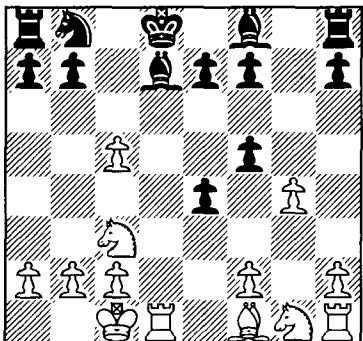
9...&h6+

This was Ruslan Sherbakov's choice, but 9...fxg4 10 ♘xe4 ♔c7, planning to bring the bishop to c6, was also strong – ...&xc5 may yet be a useful resource.

10 ♔b1 &g7
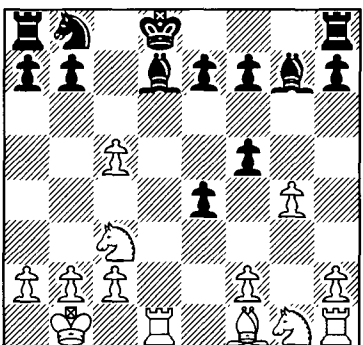
11 ♘ge2

11 gxf5 &xc3 12 bxc3 ♔e8 13 ♖d4 &xf5 14 ♖b4 ♘d7 is winning for Black.

11...fxg4 12 ♘xe4 ♘c6

12...♔e8, aiming for...&c6, was also good.

13 h3 ♔c7 14 ♘f4 ♖ae8 15 ♘d5+ ♔c8
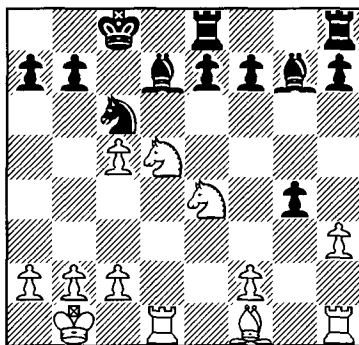
and Black, with his sounder pawns and the two bishops, was better (S.Wielecki-R.Sherbakov, Polanica Zdroj 1998).

A2)

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 &g5 c5 4 &xf6 gxf6 5 e3

A much more sensible proposition in my view; White plays as in a Chigorin reversed.

5...♘c6

The received wisdom of the ages holds

that this is a mistake because of White's reply, but practice has seen careless Whites mated rather regularly and even the more prudent getting nowhere in particular, and it's noticeable that some shrewd Veresov practitioners – Hort, for example – generally steer clear of this line.
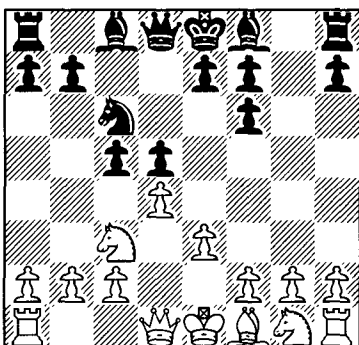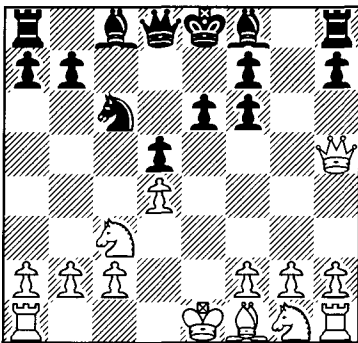
6 ♕h5

Whether this is good or bad, it is certain that nothing else upsets Black's equilibrium much, for example 6 ♘f3 cxd4 7 exd4 ♗g4 8 ♗e2 e6 9 0-0 ♖c8 10 ♖e1 ♗b4 11 ♕d2 0-0 12 ♖ad1 ♔h8 13 ♕h6 ♖g8, M.Levin-E.Lazarev, Ukraine 1954.

**6...cxd4 7 exd4 e6**

8 0-0-0 ♗d7

The most flexible. Black can also play 8...♗b4 at once, but the king's bishop may find other squares whereas the queen's bishop never will.

9 ♘ge2 ♗b4 10 h4

I take this as the main line because Rogozenko advertised its merits in *Secrets of Opening Surprises 2*.

The first game in this line was Pasman-Schneider, Beersheva 1980, which even today cannot be bettered as a 'gruesome warning' (Bellin) – 10 g4 ♕e7 11 f4 0-0-0 12 ♗g2 (rarely a good idea in this set-up;

it asks for...♘a5-c4) 12...♘a5 13 ♖d3
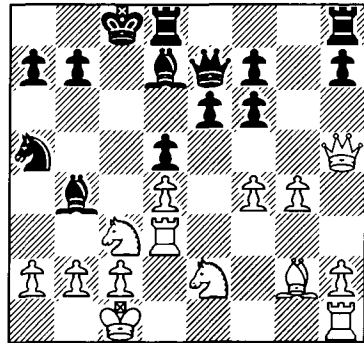
13...♘c4 14 ♔b1 ♔b8 15 b3 ♘a3+ 16 ♔b2 ♖c8 17 ♖e3 ♗b5 18 ♖e1 ♕c7 19 ♕h3 ♕a5 20 ♘c1 ♖c7 and White resigned, being too disgusted to wait for ...♖hc8. White was also mated in O.Sagalchik-I.Krush, Seattle 2003 after 13...♔b8 14 f5 ♖c8 15 ♖f1 ♘c4 16 ♕h6 ♖hf8 17 h4 ♔a8 18 fxe6 fxe6 19 ♖df3 ♖c7, although this position is still unclear and at least this time White managed to make some moves on the kingside.

10 f4 is most simply met by 10...f5 (Davies), e.g. 11 g4 fxg4 12 ♕xg4 ♕f6 with an equal position. 10 ♖d3 needs a little care: 10...♕e7??
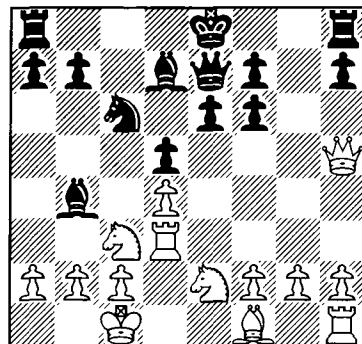
loses to 11 ♖e3. Instead C.Weiss-

I.Farago, Austrian League 1999 went 10...♘e7 11 ♖f3 ♘g6 12 ♖e3 ♗c6 13 f4 ♗xc3 14 ♖xc3 f5 with a position which probably looks better for White than it is; Black continued with ...♕d6, ...0-0-0, ...♔b8, ...♘e7-g8-f6-e4, ...♗e8 and ...f6, and won handily.
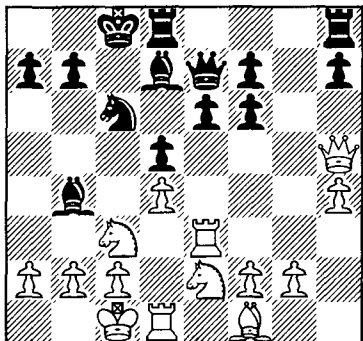
10...♕e7 11 ♖h3 0-0-0 12 ♖e3

This is White's idea.

12...♕f8

White is better here according to Rogozenko, but the game G.Mohr-I.Farago, Bled 2001, didn't show this.

13 g3 ♔b8 14 ♘f4 ♘e7 15 ♗h3 ♘c8 16 a3 ♗d6
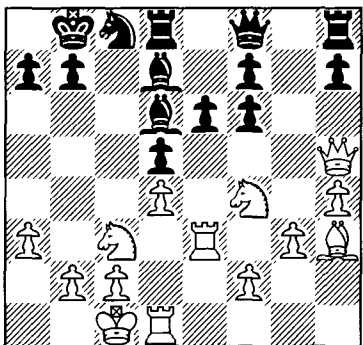
Black has manoeuvred steadily, and a normal continuation like 17 ♘ce2 ♘b6

18 ♖c3 ♕g7 19 ♔b1 f5 20 ♗g2 ♖c8 is approximately equal. Instead White went in for

17 ♘fxd5 exd5 18 ♗xd7 ♖xd7 19 ♘xd5 ♕d8 20 ♕f3

White must have had some resources here I can't see, because 20...♗c7 21 c4 ♘b6, trying to hold on to his third pawn, looks well possible for Black to me. Instead there came

20...♗e7 21 ♘xe7 ♘xe7 22 ♕xf6
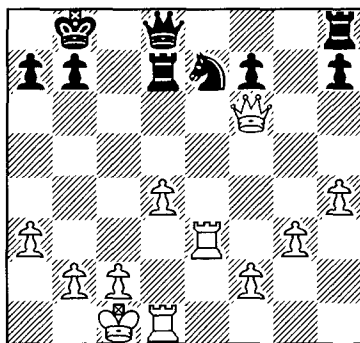
and now

22...♘c6 23 ♕xd8+

led to an ending in which the players immediately agreed a draw, although as Palliser points out either side could still play for a win.

A3)

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 ♗g5 c5 4 ♗xf6 gxf6 5 ♘f3

This is not a move to which Veresov theorists have given any attention, but Davies suggested a very interesting possibility after it.

5...♘c6 6 e4!?

This is Davies' idea. 6 e3 transposes to Levin-Lazarev above, and the likes of 6 g3 don't make much impression either.

Instead White follows John Watson's dictum that the player who has acquired the knight pair must immediately strive to destabilize the position.

6...dxe4

Not the only move. 6...cxd4 7 ♘xd4 dxe4 8 ♘xc6 bxc6 9 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 10 ♘xe4 ♗f5 11 0-0-0+ ♔c7 (Palliser) is probably about equal also. Even the 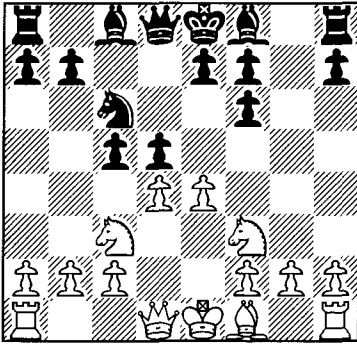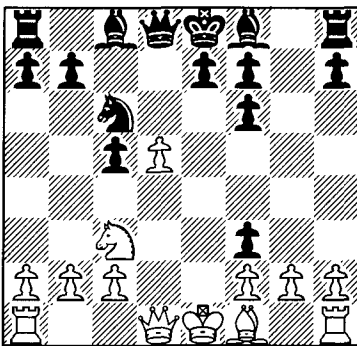sur-realist 6...e5 might be possible, e.g. 7 dxe5 d4 8 ♘d5 fxe5 followed by ...♗e6, ...♗g7 and ...0-0, or 7 dxc5 d4 8 ♘d5 ♗xc5 9 c3 ʹ9 ♗c4 ♗e6 10 ♘d2 ♘b4!?) 9...♗e6 (10 ♕b3 0-0; 10 b4 ♗d6).

7 d5 exf3

8 dxc6

Davies' idea was 8...fxg2 9 ♗xg2 ♕b6

10 ♕f3 ♖b8 11 0-0-0 ♗h6+ 12 ♔b1 bxc6 13 ♘a4 with an edge for White. The line 8...♕xd1+?! 9 ♖xd1 ♗h6 10 ♘d5 0-0 11 cxb7 ♗xb7 12 gxf3 ♔h8 13 ♗e2 ♖ad8 gave Black an edge in K.Gasparian-D.Arutunian, Batumi 2003, but 11 gxf3 ♔h8 12 ♗e2 would have given White slightly the better of it.

8...♗h6

Richard Palliser's move. Since 9 ♗b5 0-0 is dangerous for him now, White has nothing better than

9 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 10 ♖d1+ ♔c7 11 ♘d5+ ♔xc6 12 ♘xe7+ ♔c7 13 ♘d5+
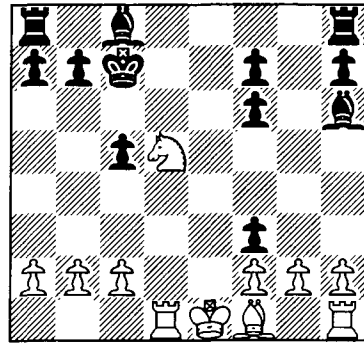
and now Black can continue the strug-gle in a two-edged semi-ending after 13...♔b8 14 gxf3 ♗f5, or draw at once with 13...♔c6.

B)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 ♗g5 c5 4 e3

White waits to see whether ♗xf6 is a good idea.

4...♘c6

Black is not troubled by the prospect of 5 ♗xf6 gxf6, transposing to Line A2.

5 ♘f3

White has some other moves:

a) In Sollers-Tukmakov, Malta 1980 the unfortunate White player wrote his name into Veresov theory with 5 dxc5?! e6 6 Na4?? Qa5+ 7 c3 b5!,

but I think the poor fellow's suffered enough over the years, so I won't show you the remaining six moves.

b) Speelman's 5 a3 is perhaps best met with 5...cxd4 6 exd4 Bf5, when J.Lys-P.Pisk, Czech Championship 1992 went 7 Bd3 Nxd4 8 Bxf5 Nxf5 9 Bxf6 gxf6 10 Qxd5 Qxd5 11 Nxd5 0-0-0 with at least equality for Black.

c) 5 Bb5 was Korchnoi's choice:

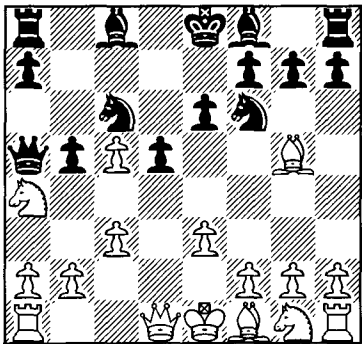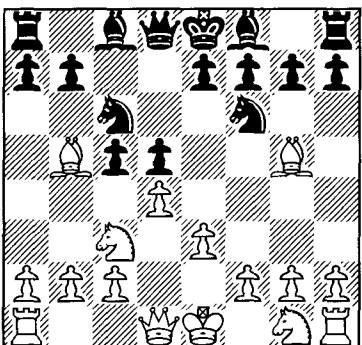5...a6 now is quite possible but also sensible is 5...e6 6 Nf3 Be7, after which A.Kogan-S.Savchenko, Cappelle la Grande

1995 went on 7 0-0 0-0 8 dxc5 Bxc5 9 Qe2 Be7 10 Rfd1 a6 11 Bd3 Nd7! (a manoeuvre to note) 12 Bxe7 Qxe7 with equality.

5...Bg4

Very solid is 5...cxd4 6 exd4 Bg4, but the text allows for a little more interest.
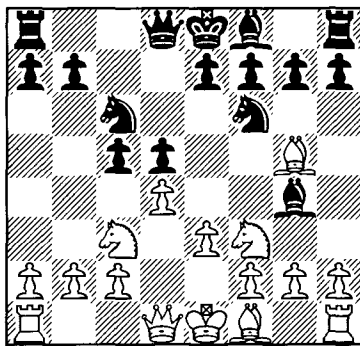
6 dxc5

6 Bxf6 gxf6 7 Be2 e6 8 0-0 f5 is fine for Black after either 9 dxc5 Bxc5 10 Nd4 (C.Hoi-J.Kristiansen, Naestved 1985), and now perhaps 10...Qg5 rather than the game's 10...h5!?, or 9 Re1 cxd4 10 Nxd4 Bxe2 11 Qxe2 Bg7 (Y.Zilberman-D.Rotman, Rishon le Ziyyon 1993). Meanwhile 6 Be2 e6 is comfortable.

6...e6 7 h3

According to Davies, Hort said that 7 Na4 was critical here, but if so I think he was wrong – after 7...Bxf3 White suffers a sort of mini-Sollers disaster: 8 gxf3 Qa5+ 9 c3 b5 10 cxb6 axb6 11 Qb3 (11 b4 Bxb4!) 11...Qxa4 12 Qxa4 Rxa4 13 Bb5 Rc4 with a plus for Black, and 9 Nc3 Bxc5 is also pretty unpleasant.

Other moves give nothing, e.g. 7 Nb5?! Bxc5 8 Bxf6 gxf6 9 Nbd4 Bxd4! 10 exd4 Qb6 with an edge, R.Eidelson-A,Bezgodov, Minsk 1996, or 7 Be2

♗xc5 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♘d4 (S.Skembris-J.Van der Wiel, European Junior Ch, Groningen 1977) and now 9...♗xe2 is equal.

7...♗xf3 8 ♕xf3
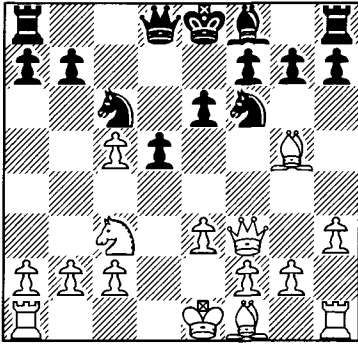
8...♕a5

I don't see a lot wrong with 8...♗xc5 either; both moves are about equal.

9 ♗xf6 gxf6
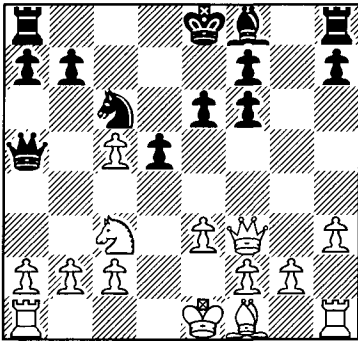
10 ♗b5

10 ♕xf6 ♖g8 is too dangerous.

10...f5 11 0-0 ♗xc5

Not 11...♗g7 12 ♖ab1!. The position after 11...♗xc5 is equal, with V.Hort-J.Van der Wiel, Amsterdam 1982 seeing

12 a3 ♗d6 13 b4 ♕b6 14 ♕e2 ♖c8 15 ♘a4 ♕c7 16 c4 a6 17 ♗xc6+ ♕xc6 18 c5
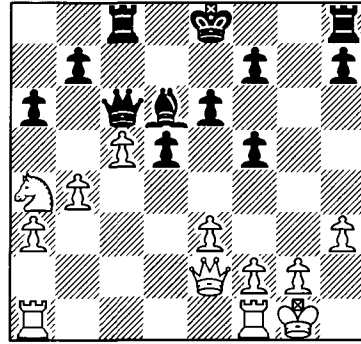
Now Black could perfectly well have played on with 18...♗e5 instead of settling for a draw after 18...♕xa4.

C)

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 ♗g5 c5 4 e4?!

And why not?!

4...♘xe4 5 ♘xe4 dxe4 6 d5

Objectively 6 dxc5 is probably more sensible, when Black's easiest method is 6...♕a5+ 7 ♕d2 ♕xd2+ 8 ♗xd2 e5, with a good game after either 9 ♗e3 ♗e7 (M.Douven-Bu Xiangzhi, Budapest 1999) or 9 b4 ♗e6.

6...♕b6
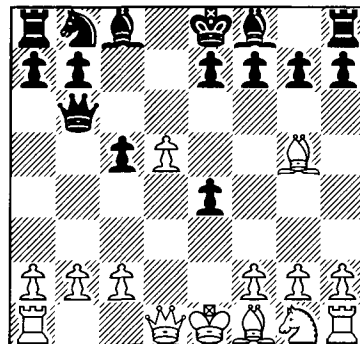
This move, first played it appears by Yuri Yakovich, seems to be best, aiming

to prevent White from setting up with ♕d2 and 0-0-0. The two alternatives both allow White possibilities which have not yet been tried, 6...g6 7 c3!?, and 6...♘d7 7 ♕d2 g6 8 ♕c3!?: it seems to me that both of these give White a better chance of equality than he deserves.

7 ♘e2

In S.Rocha-Y.Yakovich, San Antonio 1999, White submitted to 7 b3 but Black was soon on the verge of winning: 7...g6 8 ♕d2 ♗g7 9 ♖c1 ♘d7 10 ♘e2 ♘f6 11 ♘g3 0-0 12 ♗e2 ♖d8 13 c4 e6 14 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 15 ♘xe4, although according to the database Black now played 15...exd5?! rather than 15...♗d4, when White ought to have tried 16 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 17 exd5 with chances to defend.

7...g6

Commentators are united in declaring that 7...♕xb2 leaves White with inadequate compensation, and no doubt they're right, but the text is easier and doesn't let White have the sort of game he wants.

8 ♖b1 ♗g7 9 ♘c3 f5

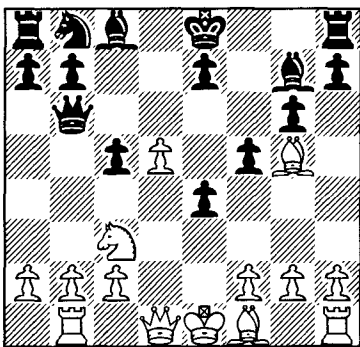Certainly! Black should at least force White to make it a real gambit if he wants to remove the cramping e4-pawn.

10 ♗e2 h6

Black could also consider ...♘d7, ...a6 and ...♕d6, e.g. 10...♘d7 11 0-0 a6 12 ♕d2 ♕d6 13 f3 (13 a4 ♗e5) exf3 14 ♗xf3 b5 15 ♗f4 ♗d4+ 16 ♔h1 ♗e5 17 ♗xe5 ♘xe5 with a plus for Black.

11 ♗e3 ♘d7 12 0-0

After 12 ♕d2 Black would have had to try the above-mentioned plan, which probably still retains some edge for him.

12...0-0

I still rather like 12...a6.

13 ♕d2 ♔h7 14 f3 exf3 15 ♗xf3 ♕a5
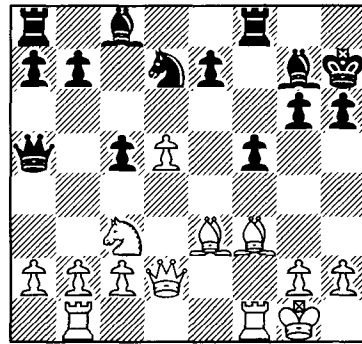
15...♘f6 is met by 16 b4, After 15...♕a5 I'm not sure about this position for Black – White has managed to acquire compensation for his pawn. In G.Sagalchik-D.Ariel, US Championship, Seattle 2002 White now played 16 ♕e2 and Black took the remarkable view to play 16...♗xc3 17 bxc3 ♕xc3. White has many attacking possibilities after that, although of course the position is still rather unclear. Instead, according to both Davies and Finkel, after 16...♘f6 White can sacrifice a piece with 17 ♗f4!? allowing 17...g5. I must say I don't see this myself, but a quiet continuation like 17 ♗f2 still leaves White with a good deal of compensation for his pawn.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Blackmar-Diemer Gambit
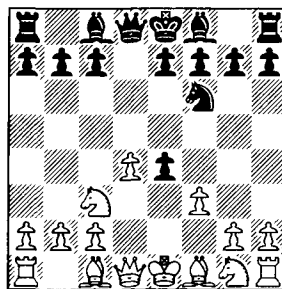
The Blackmar-Diemer Gambit (or BDG) comes in two forms, although in either case White is aiming for the same position. The first is 1 d4 d5 2 e4 dxe4 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 f3, and the second is 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 e4 dxe4 4 f3.

The BDG is one of those things you have to be practical about. There's no doubt it is objectively weak, and that 4...exf3 is the best move. However, for some reason the BDG attracts the most fanatical followers of any opening, bar none. If you've ever felt that wounded tigresses can be a little overprotective of their cubs, hop over to one of the numerous BDG websites and venture the view that you've always wondered whether perhaps the gambit is unsound and that maybe the Catalan is a better bet for long-term pressure.

You aren't going to face it more than once or twice in a chess lifetime, you are – unlike your opponent – hardly likely to have more than a dim recollection of the theory, and sod's law dictates that this happy event will probably occur in the third Saturday game of a weekender, when few of us are at our sharpest tactically. In these circumstances, if you run into some knife-wielding maniac with a glint in his eye and a yard of BDG workbooks on his shelf at home, then by all means take his pawn, but don't blame me if one slip sees you getting torched.

Witness the following debacle: 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 e4 dxe4 4 f3 exf3 5 ♘xf3 e6 6 ♗g5 ♗e7 7 ♗d3 ♘bd7 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♕e1 c5 10 ♕h4 g6
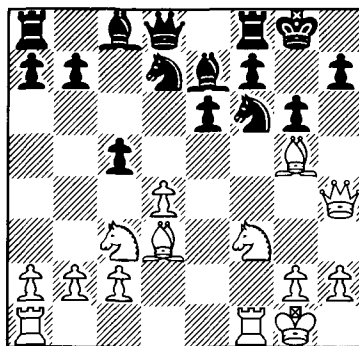
You can't say that Black's moves haven't been at least a little bit natural, but

unfortunately he is already lost: 11 ♘e5 ♖e8 12 ♘xf7 ♕c7 13 ♗xg6 hxg6 14 ♕h8+ ♔f7 15 ♕h7+ ♔f8 16 ♗h6 mate (M.Houska-D.Moskovic, Smith & Williamson Young Masters, Witley 1999). The loser here had a rating of 2260, so evidently it's not quite as simple as all that.

No. We need something which will be simple to learn, will give Black a decent shot at the initiative, and above all will spoil White's fun. Call me cowardly, but I suggest that Black doesn't allow White's target position to arise at all. The exact evasive action I propose depends on the move order White chooses:

A: 1 d4 d5 2 e4

B: 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 e4

A)
1 d4 d5 2 e4 dxe4 3 ♘c3

This, by the way, is where the Diemer bit comes in. Blackmar used to play 3 f3 in the nineteenth century, but after 3...e5 (a move known since the 1890s at least) Black is already better, for example 4 dxe5 ♕xd1+ 5 ♔xd1 ♘c6 6 ♗f4 ♘ge7. The move 3 ♘c3 was Diemer's refinement, although he was by no means the first to propose it.

3...e5

This goes by the marvellous name of the Lemberger Counter-Gambit (although in fact Black isn't gambiting anything) but in spite of that it is perfectly sound.

White has tried many moves here, although 4 ♕h5, the Sneiders Attack (the BDG abounds as no other opening with these tags) is the main hope for BDG fans.
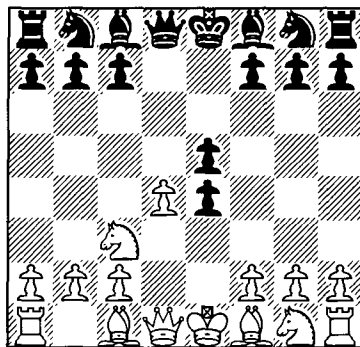
A1: 4 ♕h5
A2: 4 ♘ge2
A3: 4 ♘xe4
A4: 4 Others

A1)
1 d4 d5 2 e4 dxe4 3 ♘c3 e5 4 ♕h5 ♘c6

4...exd4 is possible also, but as you know by now my churlish attitude is that BDG exponents should not be allowed to have even the modicum of fun provided by 5 ♗c4 ♕e7 6 ♗g5 and so on.
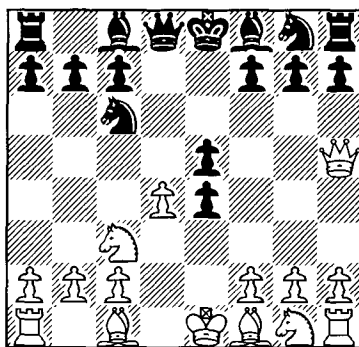
5 dxe5

This is really the only sensible move: 5 d5? ♘f6 is terrible, and 5 ♗b5 exd4 is

not much better after either 6 ♗xc6+ bxc6 7 ♕e5+ ♗e6 8 ♘xe4 ♕d5, or 7 ♘xe4 ♕e7 8 ♕e2 ♗f5 9 f3 ♖b8. Here 6 ♘xe4 ♗e6 is a little better, but Black is still basically a pawn up for nothing.

5...♗b4 6 ♗d2

6 ♗b5+ ♗xc3+ 7 bxc3 ♕d5 is unimpressive but 6 ♗c4 needs a bit of care since 6...g6 7 ♕e2 ♕d4 is not as good as it looks at first sight: after 8 ♗d2 ♘xe5 9 ♗b3 ♗g4 10 f3 exf3 11 gxf3 ♗d7 12 0-0-0 White has considerable compensation. Instead the simple 7...♘xe5 8 ♕xe4 ♕e7 is fine.
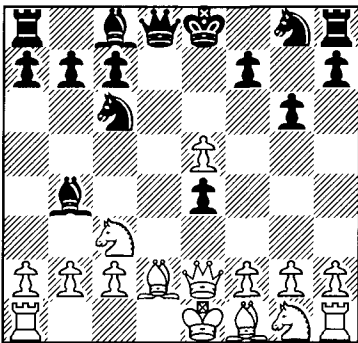
6...g6 7 ♕e2

7...♘d4 8 ♕d1

The idea of White's two-step with the queen is to force Black to block the d4-square and thus avoid 7 ♕d1 ♕d4, when White is struggling for equality, for example 8 a3 ♗a5 9 ♗b5 ♗d7 10 ♕e2 ♕xe5 11 ♘xe4 0-0-0 or 9 ♘ge2 ♕xe5 10 b4 ♗b6 11 ♗f4 ♕g7.

8...♗f5 9 ♗e3

This has the blessing of theory, such as it is, but actually I wonder whether White might not have more chances with 9 ♖c1 (the threat of ...e3 has to be met) 9...♕d7 10 a3, putting the question to the b4-

bishop before tackling the d4-knight with ♘ge2 and ♗e3.

9...c5

This was suggested by Prie on ChessPublishing.com instead of the very drawish 9...♘c6, and it seems to give Black good chances to play for the advantage.

10 ♘ge2

10 a3 ♗xc3+ 11 bxc3 ♕a5 is nice for Black.

10...♕a5
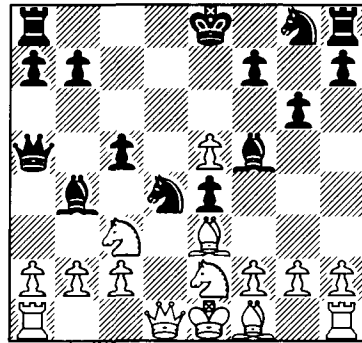
Black has some nice tactical points in mind:

a) 11 a3 0-0-0! 12 ♗xd4 (12 axb4? ♕xa1!, of course, or 12 ♕c1 ♗xc3+ 13 ♘xc3 ♘e7 with an edge) 12...♖xd4! 13 ♕c1 (13 ♘xd4 ♗xc3+ 14 bxc3 ♕xc3+ 15 ♔e2 cxd4 is crushing) 13...♗xc3+ 14 ♘xc3 ♘e7 with a small advantage for Black.

b) 11 ♗xd4 0-0-0! 12 a3 transposes to note 'a'.

c) 11 ♘xd4 0-0-0 forces White to give up the queen speculatively with 12 ♘db5.

A2)
1 d4 d5 2 e4 dxe4 3 ♘c3 e5 4 ♘ge2 f5
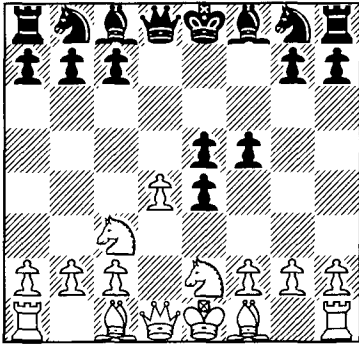
With this move Black forces a semi-ending where he has good chances to play for the advantage. After 4...exd4 5 ♕xd4 (not 5 ♘xd4? ♗b4 when White has nothing) ♕xd4 6 ♘xd4 ♘f6 7 ♗g5 ♗e7 8 0-0-0 0-0 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 ♘xe4 White has a shade the better of a very drawish position.

5 dxe5 ♕xd1+ 6 ♔xd1

6 ♘xd1 ♘c6 is worse as the forced 7 ♗f4 ♗e6 leaves e5 horribly weak.

6...♘c6

6...c6 is also possible, but I like the idea of luring the bishop to f4 with this move.

7 ♘b5

7 ♘d5 ♔d8 achieves nothing, e.g. 8 ♗g5+ ♘ge7.

7...♔d8 8 ♗f4 a6 9 ♘bd4 ♘ge7
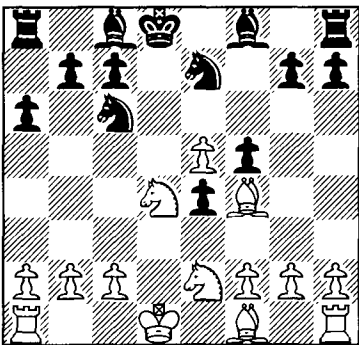
Black's idea is to proceed with ...♘xd4 and ...♘g6, and hope to prove that the e5-pawn is weak. This position has not been tested, but I think it offers reasonable prospects for Black.

A3)
1 d4 d5 2 e4 dxe4 3 ♘c3 e5 4 ♘xe4

White insists on being a pawn down, but this is even less promising than the gambit proper. Nonetheless, this move was the choice of the best player ever to play the BDG, the great Paul Keres. For some reason most of the high-rated games in the databases are in fact errors and arose from the Burn French, for example Sergei Tiviakov did not venture the BDG against Julian Hodgson in the Holland-England match at the Istanbul Olympiad in 2000, and Julian did not introduce the previously untested 4...♘d7?! in this position.

4...♕xd4
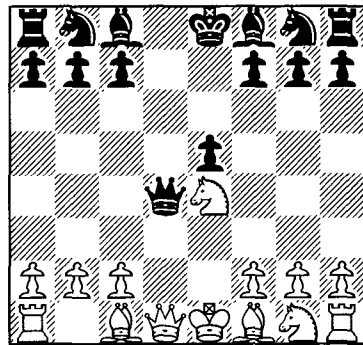
5 ♗d3

The miserable 5 ♕xd4 exd4 might actually be White's best. After 6 ♗f4 Black should avoid the tempting 6...♗b4+ 7 ♔d1, when the attack on the c-pawn enables White to keep a tenuous balance, in

favour of 6...♗f5, for example 7 ♗d3 ♘a6 8 0-0-0?! ♘b4!.

5...♘c6 6 ♘f3 ♕d5 7 ♕e2

7 ♘c3 ♗b4 8 ♗d2 ♗xc3 9 ♗xc3 ♗g4, or 7 0-0 ♗g4 8 h3 ♗h5 (Black should not give up this pin) 9 ♘c3 ♕a5 10 ♗e4 ♗d6; in either case Black will shortly consolidate with ...♘e7 and ...f6.

7...♗g4 8 ♗c4 ♕d7 9 ♗e3 0-0-0 10 h3 ♗h5 11 0-0

This was O.Lie-P.Lindblom, correspondence 1965, in which Black continued with 11...♗d6 12 ♖ad1 and now fell for 12...♘ge7? 13 ♗c5! and lost ingloriously. Instead at this point it was time to be brave with 11...f5, after which 12 ♘eg5 ♖e8 13 ♖ad1 ♗d6 is very good for Black, and the point is 12 ♖ad1 ♗xf3! 13 gxf3 (13 ♕xf3 fxe4, of course) when something like 13...♕e7 14 ♖xd8+ ♘xd8 15 ♘c3 ♘c6 leaves Black with all the chances.
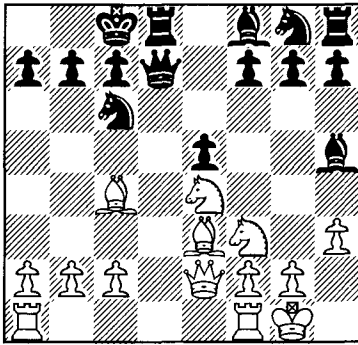
A4)

1 d4 d5 2 e4 dxe4 3 ♘c3 e5 4 ♗e3

White can also try 4 d5, when Black can hold onto his pawn for the moment with 4...f5, for example 5 f3 ♗b4 6 ♗d2 (6 fxe4?? loses to 6...♕h4+, S.Samuel-

sson-J.Hector, Stockholm 1993) after which Black should focus on developing quickly and restraining White's queen's bishop rather than hanging on to his pawn, thus 6...c6 7 dxc6 ♘xc6 8 ♗b5 ♗d7 9 a3 e3 10 ♗xe3 ♗xc3+ 11 bxc3 ♕a5 12 ♗d3 f4 followed by ...♘f6 and ...0-0 with advantage rather than 6...♘f6 7 fxe4 fxe4 8 ♗c4 0-0 9 a3, which is nothing like so clear.

4 dxe5 ♕xd1+ is obviously feeble and after either 5 ♔xd1 ♘c6 or 5 ♘xd1 ♘c6 (6 ♘c3? ♘b4!) Black is slightly better.

4...exd4 5 ♕xd4

5 ♗xd4 ♘c6 6 ♗b5 ♗d7 is nice for Black, especially since 7 ♘xe4 ♕e7 pretty much wins for him, and 7 ♘ge2 ♕h4! is a good move.

5...♕xd4 6 ♗xd4 ♘c6 7 0-0-0
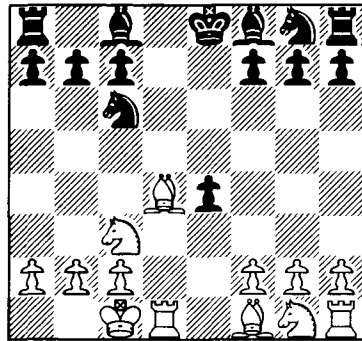
Or 7 ♗b5 ♗d7 with an edge for Black. After 7 0-0-0, 7...♘xd4 was played in G.Baete-M.Dutreeuw, Antwerp 2000), but I think that Black ought to have preferred 7...♗f5. White is then struggling to recover his pawn at all, and if he does will surely concede Black the two bishops and a promising lead in development, for example 8 ♗b5 ♘ge7 9 ♗e5 ♖c8, or 9 ♘ge2 0-0-0.

B)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 e4 ♘xe4

This is the Hubsch Defence. It has a very sound positional base: Black's idea is that after
4 ♘xe4 dxe4

he is again preventing 5 f3 for the same reason as before; 5...e5 is a strong reply. Meanwhile, the removal of the knights means that Black can defend the front e-pawn with either ...f5 or ...♗f5, and in the latter case cannot be inconvenienced with the g4-g5 thrust which is common in the BDG proper. 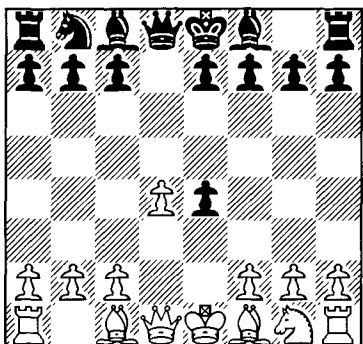White therefore has to leave the e4-pawn where it is for the moment, which in turn means that he cannot develop his knight naturally to f3 and finds it awkward to demonstrate any compensation at all. White has three main tries here:

B1: 5 ♗c4
B2: 5 ♗e3
B3: 5 f3

B1)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 e4 ♘xe4 4 ♘xe4 dxe4 5 ♗c4 ♘c6

Even 5...e5 is not bad – 6 ♕h5 ♕e7 7

♕xe5 ♘c6 is fine for Black.
6 c3 e5 7 d5 ♘e7 8 f3 exf3

I'm not quite so convinced by Eric Prie's 'refutation' of the BDG, 8...♘f5, which he advocated on his (excellent) site on ChessPublishing.com. After 9 ♗b5+ ♗d7 10 ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 11 fxe4 ♘d6 White is certainly worse after Lane's 12 ♕e2?! ♕a4! (Prie), but I'm not so sure about 12 ♘f3. After 12...0-0-0 13 ♕e2, 13...♕a4 is no longer effective (14 b4!) and I'm not wild about 13...♕g4 14 ♘d2 or 13...f6 14 0-0 either: it seems to me that White has chances with his ideas of c4-c5. I know I said I wasn't going to accept any of White's pawn sacrifices, but the text is too good to resist.
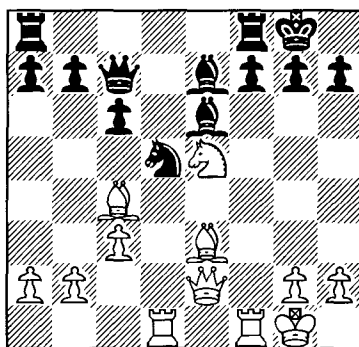**9 ♘xf3 c6!**

This is the key move.
10 ♘xe5

Worse is 10 d6 ♘f5 11 ♘xe5 ♕h4+, and 10 0-0 ♘xd5 11 ♘xe5 ♗e6 12 ♕h5 ♕c7 also leaves White no compensation.
10...♘xd5 11 ♕e2 ♗e7 12 ♗e3 ♗e6 13 0-0 0-0 14 ♖ad1 ♕c7

These moves weren't forced, but they seem like a sensible way to develop, and really White doesn't have anything like enough for his pawn here.

B2)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 e4 ♘xe4 4 ♘xe4 dxe4 5 ♗e3 ♗f5

White's last was directed against ...e5 ideas since he can now take on e5 and recapture on d1 with the rook, so Black changes course and defends the e-pawn.

6 g4

White could play many moves here, but I am following a game of one of the more dangerous US exponents of the gambit, and this thrust is normally considered necessary.

6...♗g6 7 ♘e2

7 h4 fared no better in T.Stevens-L.Remlinger, Concord 1995 after 7...h5 8 g5 ♗f5 9 ♘e2 e6 10 c3 c6 11 ♘g3 ♗g4 12 ♗e2 ♗xe2 13 ♕xe2 ♗g7 14 ♘xe4 when Black was better; later he predictably managed to exchange his bishop for the knight and manoeuvre the knight to f5 with carnage following.

7...e6 8 h4 h6 9 ♘f4 ♗h7
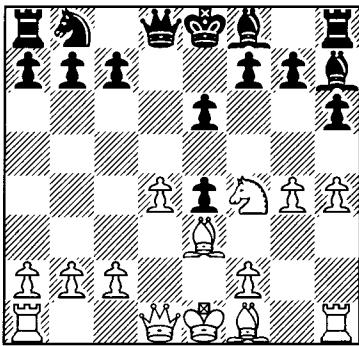
All very natural, and really I'm not sure what White is meant to do now. In C.Diebert-E.Kostur, Columbus 1987, 10 g5 ♗f5 11 ♘h5 ♘d7 12 gxh6 gxh6 13 ♘g3 ♕f6 14 ♕d2 led to a position in which Black should have taken the bull by the horns and played 14...0-0-0. No doubt he was afraid of something to do with ♕a5, but 15 ♕a5 ♔b8 doesn't in fact achieve anything for White, and Black is considerably better with his extra pawn, the cramping one on e4, and decent development. I'm not convinced by 10 g5 but I don't see that, say 10 ♕e2 c6 11 0-0-0 ♗e7 is all that much better; Black is basically a pawn up with no particular problems.

B3)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 e4 ♘xe4 4 ♘xe4 dxe4 5 f3?! e5!
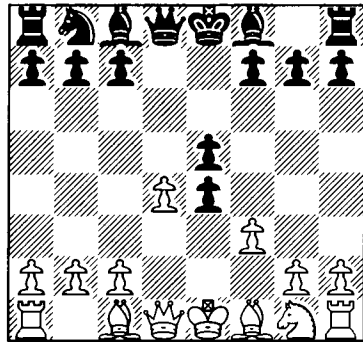
It was for the sake of this move that Black exchanged knights, or should have been. The struggle for equality is already over for White and he is searching for drawing chances, e.g. 6 ♗e3 (Lane) 6...exd4 (and not Lane's absurd 6...exf3) 7 ♗xd4 (or 7 ♕xd4 ♕xd4 8 ♗xd4 ♘c6 when White is already looking at a gruelling struggle for a draw) 7...♘c6 8 ♗e3 ♕xd1+ 9 ♖xd1 ♘b4 when White is virtually lost, or (probably best) the miserable 6 dxe5 ♕xd1+ 7 ♔xd1 ♗f5, when 8 fxe4 ♗xe4 9 ♘f3 ♘c6 10 ♗d3 ♖d8 may still offer White some chances to hold on. 6 d5 ♗c5 is horrible, of course.

CHAPTER NINE

Anti-Benoni Lines
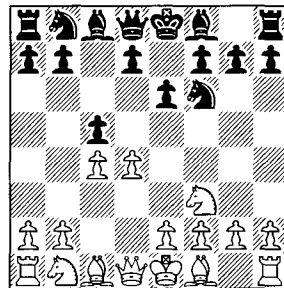
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 c5

This chapter is intended for those like to play the Benoni but aren't man enough to allow the Taimanov Attack and other critical variations and instead seek to slide into the Benoni by the move order above, preferring to meet 3 ♘c3 with the Nimzo. If White doesn't want to let Black get away with this scheme then he has a couple of ways of refusing to play along with 4 d5: these break down really into defending the d-pawn with e2-e3 (A), or planning to recapture on d4 with a knight and probably to fianchetto the king's bishop (B and C).

A: 4 e3
B: 4 g3
C: 4 ♘c3

A)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 c5 4 e3

An annoying move for many Benoni players to face. Not only does it lead to a much more technical game than 4 d5, but also it announces that White is not prepared to enter the deal which most Be-

noni/Nimzo players are looking for, whereby Black has both reasonable prospects for the initiative *and* the sounder structure. If Black plays the Caro-Kann, then his choice presents few difficulties: 4...cxd4 5 exd4 d5 is the Panov-Botvinnik Attack, in which White has already avoided the challenging 5 ♘c3/6 ♗g5 line. And 4...d5 5 cxd5 ♘xd5 is much the same. However, most Benoni players are not comfortable with the play against the isolated pawn which this involves, and to stay within the Benoni spirit is not easy since 4...g6 is not entirely satisfactory.
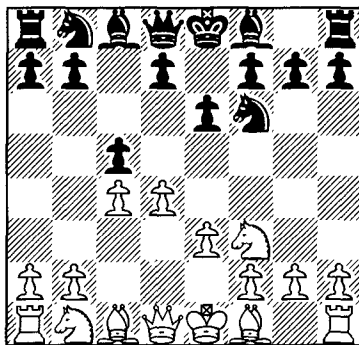
There is of course a line available which has always been regarded as fine for Black, and that is 4...d5 5 ♘c3 ♘c6 5 cxd5 exd5. This form of Tarrasch with White's c1-bishop restricted by e2-e3 has been regarded theoretically as equal for many decades, and this is my recommendation, with the addition of a little twist at the beginning.

4...a6!?
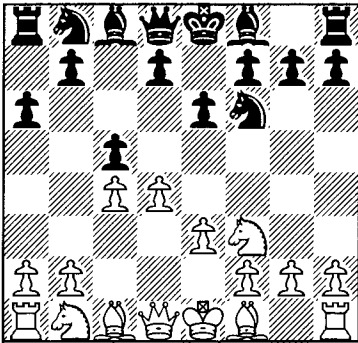
This transpositional little move, originally introduced I think by Suba, is surprisingly unknown outside the grandmaster fraternity, but it has a phenomenal score in the databases (58% in Mega Database 2005) and I commend it to you. It has two purposes. First, it prevents the slightly irritating line 4...d5 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♗b5+. Second, it makes it hard for White to maintain the tension in the centre (e.g. 4...d5 5 ♘c3 ♘c6 6 a3), for a reason we will see in Line A1. Meanwhile, it is a useful move either in a Benoni set-up if White does change his mind and go d4-d5, or more likely in the isolated queen's pawn positions which now tend to arise. Black's next move is going to be ...d5, but by playing ...a6 first he is aiming to ensure that White has to isolate Black's d-pawn

and give him the free play which comes with that.

In reply White's choice is limited; really for the reason shown in A21 he has to let Black have his isolated queen's pawn position if he wants to play for the advantage. The standard sequence is that in Line A22, but A1 is an attempt to improve on this.

A1: 5 a3
A2: 5 ♘c3

A1)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 c5 4 e3 a6 5 a3

The idea of this move is to follow up with dxc5 and b2-b4 and so obtain a more aggressive set-up than White's usual b3/♗b2 development, at the cost of a tempo.

5...d5
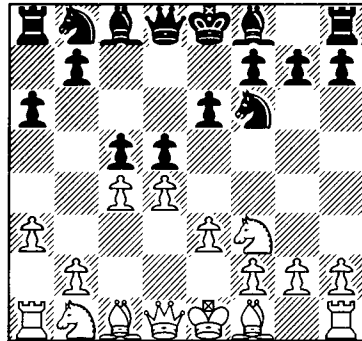
6 dxc5

White can also play 6 cxd5 exd5, but he doesn't gain much from releasing the tension in this way. 6 ♘c3 is Line A21.

6...♗xc5 7 b4 ♗e7

Black can also play 7...♗a7, which is commoner and perhaps more natural,

keeping in touch with d4. But the text has it in mind to exploit directly the fact that White has not waited for Black's ...♘c6 before committing himself to his advances on the queenside.

8 ♗b2

In D.Gurevich-N.Ioseliani, Mulhouse 1997, White played 8 cxd5 exd5 9 ♗e2 0-0 10 0-0, deferring the choice of square for his queen's knight. In the game Ioseliani had a different scheme, but the drawback of this move order for White if Black intends to play along the lines in the column is that 10...a5 11 b5 ♗e6 is now possible, when the occupation of c5 by a knight can be left to a more convenient moment.

8 ♗e2 is also possible, although the alarmingly equal equality of 8...dxc4 9 ♕xd8+ ♗xd8 10 ♗xc4 b5 may deter White; alternatively of course Black could play upon the lines in the column.

8...0-0 9 ♘bd2 a5!
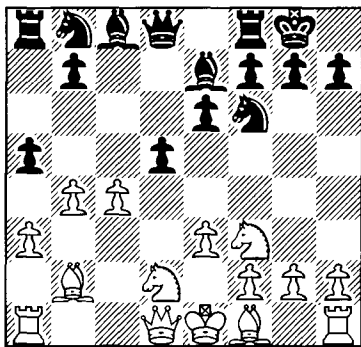
This is the point of Black's 7...♗e7: White cannot prevent Black obtaining control of the c5-square for his pieces.

10 b5 ♘bd7 11 cxd5

If White doesn't play this now Black can recapture with a piece, for example

I.Levitina-I.Chelushkina, Subotica 1991 went 11 ♗e2 ♘c5 12 0-0, and now Black might well have continued with 12...b6 and ...♗b7, intending to meet cxd5 with ...♘xd5 reaching equality.

11...exd5 12 ♗e2 ♘c5

Should White be bothered now to prevent Black's ...♗f5? Smyslov and Rashkovsky provide two different answers.
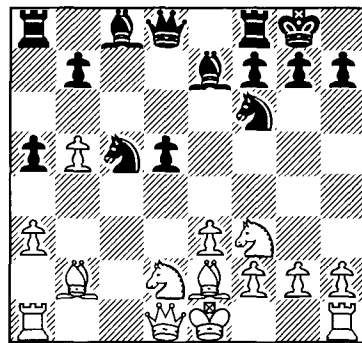
13 ♘d4

In V.Smyslov-P.Cramling, Ladies vs. Veterans, Aruba 1992, the ex-world champion played 13 0-0, and Pia Cramling replied 13...♗f5 14 ♘d4 ♗g6. The game was drawn but I am not sure about this manoeuvre at all. In my opinion the bishop is best on the e6-square in this system: if it is captured by a knight the reply ...fxe6 will prevent White making anything of the d-pawn. Indeed, it seems to me there is much to be said for the oafishly simple set-up ...♗e6, ...♖ac8, ...♕b6; alternatively Black could meet 13 0-0 much as Bauer plays in the main text. As usual in these IQP positions, White's b4-b5 is not a positional achievement for him (the same theme can be seen in QGD minority attack positions where

Black meets b5 with ...c6-c5).
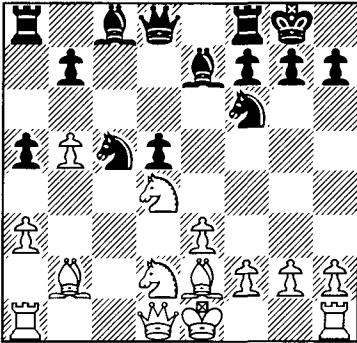
13...♗d6

Black's main problem piece is his queen; this move clears e7 for it, which has the merit of fingering the a3-pawn (White does not terribly want to play a4 and leave this pawn under permanent observation by the c5-knight).
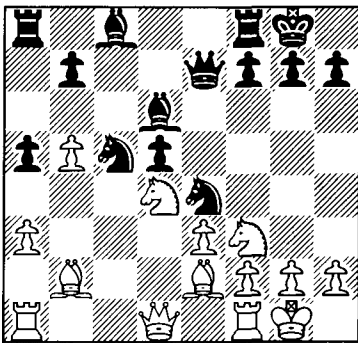
14 0-0 ♕e7 15 ♘2f3 ♘fe4

Black has equalized here; after something like 16 ♖c1 he will go on with ...♗e6 and ...♖ac8. In the game N.Rashkovsky-C.Bauer, Biel 2002, White went in for an adventure with 16 b6 ♗d7 17 ♘b5 ♗xb5 18 ♗xb5, but he never looked like getting anywhere. The game was drawn.

A2)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 c5 4 e3 a6
5 ♘c3 d5
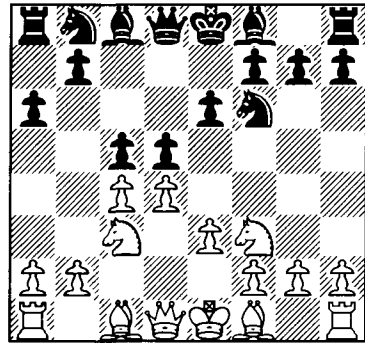
Now White has two main tries: the latter is by far the main move; the former line is included only to show a point of Black's system.

A21 6 a3
A22 6 cxd5

A21)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 c5 4 e3 a6
5 ♘c3 d5 6 a3

White may be attempting to transpose to a symmetrical Semi-Tarrasch proper, after 6...♘c6, or to some Semi-Tarrasch/Panov-Botvinnik hybrid after 6...cxd4 7 exd4 (in which he hopes to have avoided the main ...♗b4 defences), or he may want to play dxc5 and b2-b4. But in any event his timing is off and Black can equalize immediately.

6...dxc4!

Lest you get the impression that what I am presenting here is some modern wrinkle, by the way, this useful transposition to a comfortable version of the Queen's Gambit Accepted was first

played in 1907. (6 ♗e2 or 6 ♗d3 can be met in the same way – the absence of a2-a3 makes little difference.)
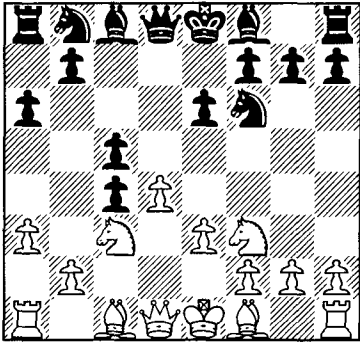
7 ♗xc4

7 dxc5 is as innocuous as it looked in B.Ivkov-M.Suba, Medina del Campo 1980, whose riotous further course was 7...♕xd1+ 8 ♔xd1 ♗xc5 9 ♗xc4 b5 10 ♗d3 ♗b7 11 ♔e2 ♘bd7 12 b4 ♗d6 13 ♗b2 ♔e7 ½-½.

7...b5

This position could be reached in the main line of the Queen's Gambit Accepted if, after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♗xc4 c5, White were to essay the sequence 6 ♘c3 a6 7 a3?!. Normally White doesn't do that, for the very good reason that ♘c3 is inflexible and that a2-a3 contributes virtually nothing to his game, so this position usually arises from this side wind. Black has no difficulties here at all.

8 ♗a2

The alternative, equally popular, is 8 ♗d3 ♗b7 9 0-0 ♘bd7 (a position which can arise from an insipid line of the Meran) 10 ♕e2, when Black has a number of good moves: modern players tend to play either 10...♗d6 or 10...♕b8 as in

the QGA, intending to develop while dominating e5 and hoping to wring the tempo h2-h3 from White. However, this doesn't do much for the a8-rook, and I don't actually know that it's a great deal better than the archaic method 10...♖c8 11 ♖d1 ♕b6, when 12 a4?! c4 13 ♗b1 b4 14 a5 ♕c6 15 d5 exd5 16 e4 (K.Opocensky-A.Rubinstein, Marienbad 1925) would not have worked out half so well for White if Black had now played 16...♕e6 or, earlier, 14...♕c7. Another option for White is 10 dxc5; A.Karpov-G.Kasparov, Reykjavik (blitz) 2004 continued 10 dxc5 ♗xc5 11 b4 ♗e7 12 ♗b2 0-0 13 ♕e2 ♗xf3 14 gxf3 ♘e5 with equality (15 ♗c2? ♕d2!).

11...♗b7 9 0-0 ♘bd7
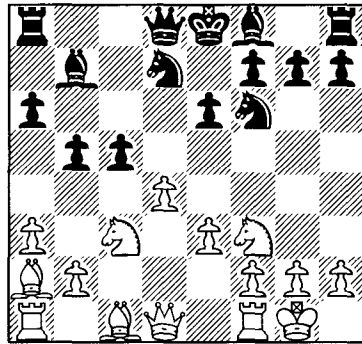
10 ♕e2

In J.Kraai-Y.Seirawan, Seattle 2002, White played for a draw with 10 d5 exd5 11 ♘xd5 ♗e7 12 ♖e1 ♘xd5 13 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 14 ♕xd5 0-0 15 e4 ♘f6 16 ♕f5 ♕c8 and succeeded, although only after a lot of suffering.

10...♕b8

Just as in the QGA, Black plays for the b8-h2 diagonal.

11 ♖d1

11 e4 is also possible. 11...b4 now leads to dangerous complications; more sensible is 11...cxd4 12 ♘xd4 ♗c5, when neither 13 ♘b3 ♗b6 14 ♗e3 ♗xe3 15 ♕xe3 ♕a7 (S.Atalik-B.Lalic, Szeged 1997), nor 13 ♗e3 0-0 14 f3 ♘e5 15 ♖fd1 ♕a7 16 ♔f2 (S.Atalik-C.Horvath, Hungary 1992) promises White anything at all. More combative was 13 ♗e3 0-0 14 ♖ad1 (Z.Kozul-I.Ibragimov, Graz 1994), when the idea is f2-f4. Perhaps the best reply is the computer's cunning prophylactic 14...♖e8: the idea is that 15 f4?! now loses material after 15...♗xe4 16 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 17 ♘xe6? ♗xe3+ 18 ♕xe3 ♘ef6, and with being denied this tactic White has difficulty going on with his plan and has probably simply chosen the wrong rook to put on d1.

11...♗d6 12 h3 0-0 13 dxc5 ♘xc5 14 b4 ♘cd7 15 ♗b2
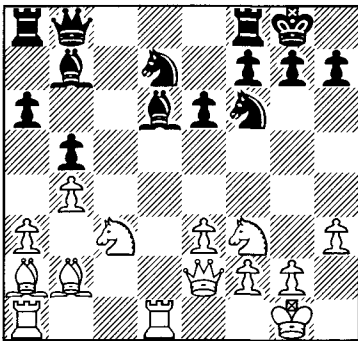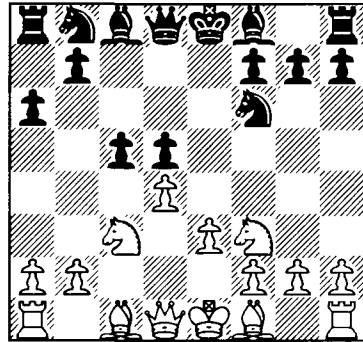

15...♗xf3!?

Normal and equal was 15...♘e5, but the text is interesting too

16 ♕xf3 ♗h2+ 17 ♔h1 ♗e5

when Black was at least equal in T.Wedberg-E.Agrest, Linkoping 2001 (0-1 in 41 moves – a model game for Black in this structure).

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 c5 4 e3 a6 5 ♘c3 d5 6 cxd5 exd5

7 ♗e2

White has many moves here, of course. For example:

a) 7 a3 can perfectly well be met with just 7...♘c6, allowing White his 8 dxc5 ♗xc5 9 b4 ♗a7. That is fine for Black, but 7...c4 8 ♗e2 ♗d6 gives the game a more interesting shape: 7 ♗e2 c4, a Seirawan patent, is a feasible enough method, and here Black just about has an extra tempo, since to play for advantage against this plan White has to attack the pawn phalanx, and a2-a3 plays no part in that.

b) 7 dxc5 ♗xc5 8 a3 is another way of introducing this plan, but Black can continue with 8...0-0, when 9 b4 ♗e7 is similar to Line A1 except that White's knight is on c3 and not d2, which is no great improvement. 9 ♗e2 ♗e6 10 0-0 ♘bd7 doesn't make much difference – White is hardly going to be able to refrain from b2-b4 for ever, and he is in danger of permitting Black to save a tempo by the reply ...♗d6 and ...♕e7. Alternatively Black can meet either method by simple

development, for example the black model 7 dxc5 ♗xc5 8 ♗e2 0-0 9 0-0 ♘c6 10 a3 ♗a7 11 b4 ♖e8 12 ♗b2 ♗g4 13 ♖c1 ♕d6 14 ♖e1 ♖ad8 15 ♘a4 ♘e4 16 ♘d4 ♗d7 17 ♘xc6?? (17 ♘c5 is equal) ♘xf2! and Black is winning, L.Nikolaiczuk-P.Cramling, Dortmund 1986. In effect Black is a tempo ahead of the note to White's 10th move here.

7...♘c6 8 0-0 ♗d6

This is the moment White has been waiting for to play dxc5, of course. If Black wants to win and is not afraid to go against most scientific opinion, he can consider 8...c4.
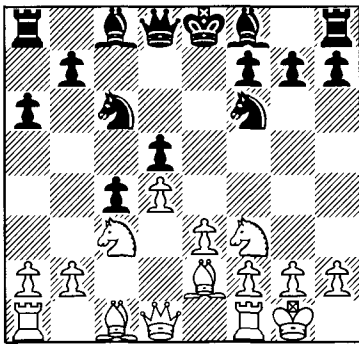

This idea is not considered quite *comme il faut* in the Tarrasch as a whole, but the circumstances here are as propitious as they will ever be – Black has snuck in the preparatory ...a6, White has developed his king's bishop to e2 rather than g2, menacing the d-pawn, and best of all White has played e2-e3 and thus cannot attack the pawn phalanx either with ♗g5 or (without sacrificing a tempo) with e4. Experience after 8...c4 is limited (the famous game Petrosian-Suetin, USSR Championship, Leningrad 1960, excepted). White really has to play either 9 ♘e5 (the most

popular, though perhaps not the best) or 9 b3.

a) After 9 ♘e5 the most effective reply seems to be 9...♗d6. White has always met that with 10 f4 (an amusing trap is 10 ♕a4 ♗d7 11 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 12 b3? ♗b4 13 ♗b2 ♘e4!; more sensible is 10 ♘xc6 bxc6 11 b3 but it doesn't seem to give much after 11...cxb3 12 axb3 ♕e7 followed by ...0-0, ...♖e8, ...a5 and...♗a6), but now Black has a good move in 10...♘e7!. From this position N.Skalkotas-M.Knezevic, Balkaniad 1982 continued 11 e4 0-0 12 exd5 b5 13 ♘c6 ♕c7, when already White was the one struggling to equalize.

b) Less common but perhaps more critical is 9 b3 ♗b4 (9...b5 10 bxc4 bxc4 11 ♘e5 ♕c7 12 ♘xc6 ♕xc6 13 e4 transposes to the above-mentioned Petrosian-Suetin game, where Black was flattened). Now the spectacular game A.Ornstein-N.De Firmian, Smederevska Palanka 1981, went on 10 ♕c2 b5 11 bxc4 bxc4 12 ♘e5 ♕c7, when White, presumably despairing of achieving much after something like 13 ♗f3 ♗xc3 14 ♕xc3 0-0 15 ♗a3 ♖e8 with solid equality for Black, went in for 13 ♘xd5?! ♘xd5 14 ♗f3.
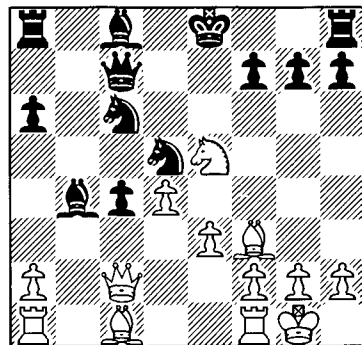
White went on to win after 14...♘ce7 15 e4 ♘b6 16 ♖b1 ♗d6 17 ♖xb6 ♗xe5 18 ♖b4 ♗xd4 19 ♖xc4 ♕b6 20 e5 ♖b8 21 ♗a3 ♗xe5 (21...♗e6 22 ♖b4 ♕xb4 23 ♗xb4 ♖xb4 must surely be better for Black in the long run) 22 ♗c6+ ♔f8 23 ♖e1 ♗f6 24 ♗d5 ♗d7 25 ♖ce4 ♖e8 26 ♕e2 ♕d8 27 ♗b3 h5 28 ♕c4 ♗e6 29 ♖xe6 ♔g8 30 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 31 ♗xe7 ♕a5 32 ♗b4 ♕c7 1-0. A brilliant game, but the soundness of the entire project is deeply questionable and in particular I don't know what White can have meant to play after just 14...♘xe5. The line 15 ♗xd5 ♘g4 16 f4 ♖b8 seems to leave Black a piece up without adequate compensation, and 15 dxe5 ♕xe5 also seems to leave White without much good to do (16 ♗b2? c3; 16 ♕xc4 ♗d6 17 ♖d1 ♕xh2+ 18 ♔f1 ♘b6 19 ♕c6+ ♗d7 20 ♕xb6 ♗b5+ 21 ♕xb5 axb5 22 ♗xa8, and 16 ♖d1 ♕xa1 – or 16...♘c3 – 17 ♗xd5 ♖b8 18 ♗b2 ♕xd1+ 19 ♕xd1 c3 all seem to leave White struggling to a greater or lesser degree).

Another possibility after 9 b3 ♗b4 was 10 ♗d2 b5 11 ♘e5 (11 bxc4 dxc4!?) ♕c7 12 bxc4 bxc4 13 ♗f3 ♗xc3 14 ♗xc3 0-0.
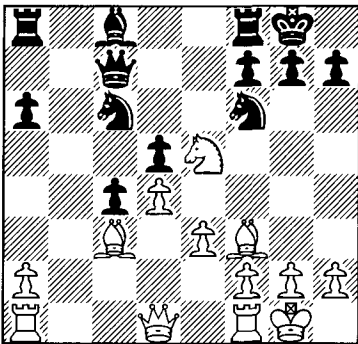
This looks pretty equal to me as well, but what this variation needs is less talk and more action. Perhaps more relevant than these shards of theory is the fact that the position after 8...c4 has occurred on sixteen occasions: White has won eight games and Black six, but there are only two draws.

After this long digression we return to the main line.
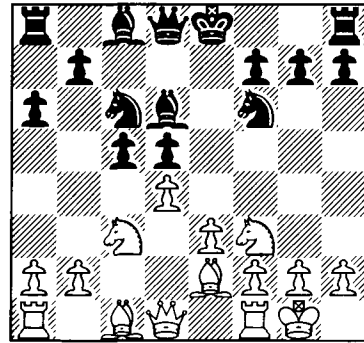
9 dxc5

White can also just develop and if he is going to do that then 9 b3 is the commonest, but it does allow Black a sequence which gives him quite easy equality: 9 b3 cxd4 10 ♘xd4 ♕c7! (Black might as well help himself to this tempo) 11 ♘f3 (of course 11 g3 blunders a piece to 11...♘xd4 since 12 ♕xd4 loses to 12...♗e5; 11 f4 is not so stupid as it looks but is not how White wants to play) 11...♗e6 12 ♗b2 0-0 13 ♖c1 ♖fd8 (or ...♖ad8 and ♖fe8) 14 g3 ♕e7, when Black was fine after both 15 ♘a4?! ♗h3 16 ♖e1 ♗b4 (M.Podgaets-V.Eingorn, Kharkov 1985) and the more sensible alternative 15 ♕d3 ♖ac8 16 ♖fd1 h6 (I.Tsesarsky-M.Ulibin, Kursk 1987). A model for Black in this system is D.Allan-J.Benjamin, Szirak 1987: 13 g3 ♖fe8 14

Rc1 Rad8 15 ♘g5 ♕e7 16 ♘xe6 ♕xe6 17 ♗f3 ♗e5 18 Re1 ♕f5 19 ♘a4 h5 20 ♗xe5 ♘xe5 21 ♗e2 h4 22 ♘c3 ♘fg4 23 ♗xg4 ♘xg4 24 Rc2 hxg3 25 hxg3 d4 26 exd4 Rxe1+ 27 ♕xe1 ♕xc2 0-1.

9...♗xc5
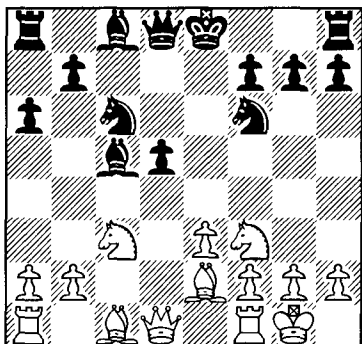
10 b3

The most natural move, but 10 a3 is an important alternative, and if White wants this set-up this is surely the moment for it, once Black has wasted a tempo with ...♗d6xc5, and also developed the knight to c6 to deprive himself of the ...a5/♘bd7 plan. After 10...0-0 11 b4 ♗a7 12 b5 axb5 13 ♘xb5 ♗b8 14 ♗b2 ♘e4 15 Rc1 ♗g4 (S.Agdestein-R.Akesson, Nordic GP Final, Gentofte 1999) Black is equal.

The natural 12 ♗b2 ignores the d4-square and allows the drawing attempt 12...d4 13 exd4 ♘xd4 14 ♘xd4 ♗xd4 15 ♗f3 Rb8 (or 15...a5 16 b5 ♗e6 [P.Kiriakov-P.Cech, Copenhagen 2002] 17 ♗xb7 Rb8 18 ♗c6 ♗c4 19 Re1 ♗xb5 20 ♗xb5 ♗xc3 21 ♗xc3 Rxb5 with an edge for White), which has occurred in several games, most of them drawn shortly (16 ♕d2 ♗g4 17 ♗xg4 ♘xg4 18 ♕f4 ♕f6 ½-½ B.Gulko-J.Speelman, Oropesa del

Mar 1996, for example). However Black has a definite defensive task ahead of him here after something like 16 Re1.

More interesting is 12...♗g4
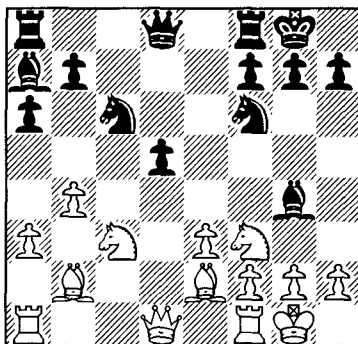
and now:

a) 13 b5 doesn't transpose to 12 b5 since after 13...axb5?! 14 ♘xb5 ♗b8 White has 15 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 16 ♕xd5 with some advantage. Instead Black should play 13...♘a5 with decent play after any of 14 ♕a4 ♗xf3 15 ♗xf3 ♘c4 (M.Petursson-M.Tal, Reykjavik 1986), 14 bxa6 bxa6 15 ♘a4 ♘e4 16 ♗d4 ♗xf3, J.Kjeldsen-M.Petursson(!), Aarhus 1993, or 14 bxa6 bxa6 15 ♘a2 ♘e4 16 Rc1 Re8 17 ♘b4 (or 17 Rc2 ♘xf2) ♗xf3 18 gxf3 ♘xf2

b) White's timing is less good with 13 ♘a4 ♘e4 14 Rc1 ♕d6! when ♘c5 is prevented (R.Mascarinas-A.Vaisser, Switzerland 1990).

c) 13 Rc1 Re8 14 ♘a4 (some typical themes are illustrated by 14 Rc2 d4 15 ♘xd4 [15 exd4 ♗xf3 16 ♗xf3 ♘xd4 17 ♗xb7? ♘xc2 18 ♕xc2 ♘g4, or 15 Rd2? dxc3] 15...♘xd4 16 exd4 ♕xd4 17 ♗xg4 ♘xg4 18 ♕f3 ♕c4! with an equal position as 19 ♕xb7 is met by 19...♘xh2, and 14 h3 ♗xf3 15 ♗xf3 d4 16 exd4 ♗xd4

17 ♖c2 ♗e5 is also equal; 14 b5 ♘a5 transposes to 13 b5) 14...♘e4 (usually the reaction to ♘a4) 15 ♘c5 (15 ♗xa6 produces only equality after 15...♘xb4 16 ♗xb7 ♖b8 17 axb4 ♖xb7) ♗xc5 16 bxc5 ♖c8 17 ♗a1 f6 with a tense game ahead in which the weak c5-pawn approximately balances the weak d5-pawn and the bishop pair (F.Braga-V.Moskalenko, Majorca 2000); perhaps this is White's best approach in this whole variation.

10...0-0 11 ♗b2 ♗a7
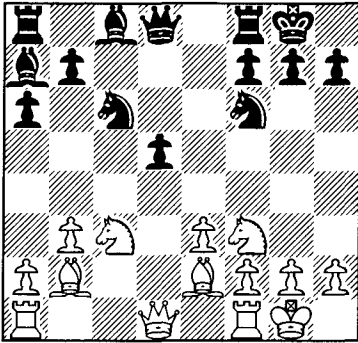
It will be necessary to move this piece again after ♖c1 in any case, and White was vaguely threatening 12 ♘a4 ♗a7 13 ♗xf6. Black has some respectable alternatives, notably 11...♕d6 followed by 12...♖d8 (White can play to win a pawn by 12 ♘a4 ♗a7 13 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 14 ♕xd5 but Black has pretty reasonable compensation, for example 14...♗f5 15 ♕d2 b5 16 ♘c3 ♖fd8 17 ♕b2 ♘b4 was already a bit awkward for White in A.Deze-S.Gligoric, Novi Sad 1979).

12 ♖c1 ♖e8

Again there are other moves but this has performed best and looks the most natural to me.

13 ♘a4

White needs to attend to d4. 13 ♖c2 fails to restrain 13...d4, when 14 exd4 (14 ♖c2? dxc3 again) ♘xd4 15 ♖d2 (15 ♘xd4 ♕xd4 is drawish of course) ♘xe2+ 16 ♘xe2 ♕e7 17 ♘g3 (or 17 ♖e1 ♗g4 with an equal position – *ECO*) 17...♗g4 18 h3 ♘h5!
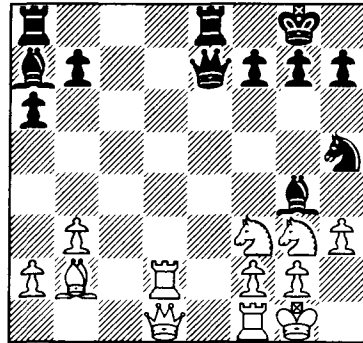
(P.Littlewood-J.Cox, Wellington 2005, an important trick) equalizes efficiently, e.g. 19 hxg4 ♘xg3 20 ♖e1 ♘e4 21 ♖ce2 ♘xf2 22 ♖xf2 ♖ad8.

Other moves like 13 ♕d2 or 13 ♕d3 also allow equality after 13...d4; alternatively Black can achieve a more complex game with a set-up based on ...♗e6, ...♕d6 and ...♖ad8, similar to positions which arise in the c3 Sicilian with colours reversed, although if this is what he wanted to do he should perhaps have tried 11...♕d6 earlier.

Another move which does restrain ...d4 is 13 ♖e1 (13...d4 14 exd4 ♘xd4 15 ♘xd4 ♗xd4 16 ♗f3 gives White a little pressure); perhaps Black should then revert to a ...♕d6/...♗e6 plan.

13...♘e4

Always the reply to ♘a4.

14 ♘d4

The natural follow-up to ♘a4, aiming

either for exchanges on d4 and a technical edge, or for ♘xc6 bxc6 and occupation of the c5-square, one of White's major plans in these Tarrasch position-types, especially where Black's a-pawn has advanced to a6.

Don't faint if White tries 14 ♗xa6 instead; the 2590-rated Vladimir Georgiev has ventured it a couple of times. 14...♗xe3 15 ♖xc6 bxc6 16 ♗xc8 ♘xf2 17 ♖xf2 ♕xc8 18 ♗d4 ♗xf2+ 19 ♗xf2 ♕g4 20 h3 ♕f4 21 ♕c2 ♕e4 appears to be the idea; if anything I would have said Black was for choice here, and Georgiev didn't prove different in either game.

14...♕g5
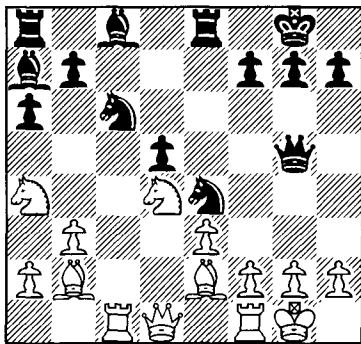
This move of Stuart Conquest's (O.Renet-S.Conquest, Clichy 2001) looks the most challenging at the moment, although 14...♕d6 is much more popular, and another solid move is 14...♗d7 15 ♘xc6 ♗xc6, when 16 ♗d4 ♗xd4 17 ♕d4 ♗xa4 18 bxa4 (18 ♕xa4 ♕f6) 18...♕a5 (P.Schlosser-P.Bachmayr, Austria 1996) is fairly equal, and 16 ♘c3? (V.Kozlov-S.Dvoirys, Chigorin Memorial, St Petersburg 2000) 16...♘xf2 17 ♖xf2 ♗xe3 is worse, White's difficulties being shown by 18 ♕f1 ♕g5! 19 ♖d1? d4 20

♘b1?? ♗xg2! 21 ♕xg2 ♗xf2+ 22 ♔xf2 ♖xe2+.

15 ♘xc6 bxc6 16 ♗d4

After 16 ♖xc6?, 16...♘xf2 wins, for example 17 ♖xf2 ♕xe3 or 17 ♔xf2 ♗g4! (best and instructive; Black should not yet choose with which piece to capture on e3), after which Black has a crushing attack, for example 18 ♖c2 ♖xe3 – see how important it is that Black can still introduce the rook in this way.

16...♗h3

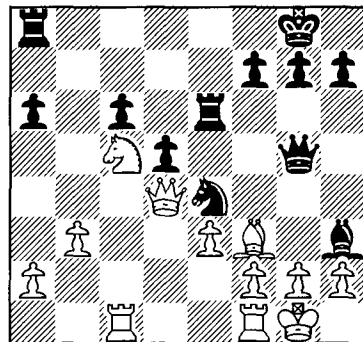This tempo-gaining development of the bishop is the point of 14...♕g5.

17 ♗f3 ♗xd4 18 ♕xd4 ♖e6

White's position is already critical: in the game Renet went astray with 19 ♖c2 and was lost after 19...♖g6 20 ♗xe4 dxe4 21 f4 exf3 22 ♖xf3 ♖d8. Necessary is

19 ♘c5

White must eliminate the e4-knight without losing his defensive bishop. Wells now gives the curious 19...♖g6 'with an attack' in Mega Database 2005, but unless my eyes deceive me 20 ♘xe4 dxe4 21 ♕xe4 defends rather handily. Instead Black should play 19...♘xc5 20 ♖xc5, when 20...♗xg2? 21 h4 defends and wins, so Black can choose between 20...♖g6

(probably what Wells meant to write) 21 ♕f4 ♕xf4 22 exf4 with an approximately equal endgame, and 20...♖f6 21 ♕d1 when Black can draw at once with 21...♖g6 22 ♕c2 ♗xg2 23 h4 ♕xh4 24 ♗xg2 ♖xg2+, or continue the game with a move like 21...♖e8.

B)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 c5 4 g3

Again White refuses to play the game: this position can also of course arise after 3 g3, when most Nimzo-Benoni players will react with 3...c5 4 ♘f3, leading to the same position.
4...cxd4 5 ♘xd4 ♗b4+
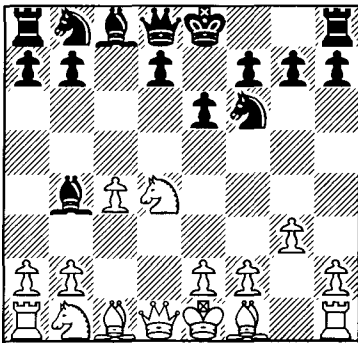
The obvious choice for Nimzo players; unfortunately by a quirk of the *ECO* opening classification system coverage of it tends to be divided between Nimzo books (6 ♘c3), Symmetrical English (6 ♗d2) and Catalan, if you're lucky (6 ♘d2). The line 6 ♘c3 is dubbed by Chris Ward the Kasparov variation of the Nimzo-Indian in his 2003 Everyman book on the subject. I know how some readers will hate to hear this, but since Black may well have this position in his repertoire already, and it was better cov-
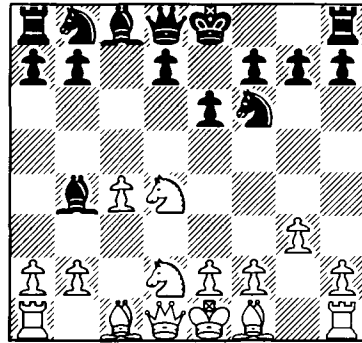
ered in the aforementioned book than I could do it anyway, I don't propose to deal with it here.

B1: 6 ♘d2
B2: 6 ♗d2

B1)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 c5 4 g3 cxd4 5 ♘xd4 ♗b4+ 6 ♘d2

A rare move, which probably deserves to be rarer, although some strong players have used it. White is not interested in allowing the doubled c-pawns but baulks at the simplification that 6 ♗d2 entails.
6...♕b6

An efficient reply, used by Akopian. The point is that (unlike 6...♘c6) the reply 7 ♘c2 is impossible, since 7...♘e4 8 e3 ♗xd2+ 9 ♗xd2 ♕xb2 is good for Black. The line 7 ♘4f3 ♘e4 8 e3 d5 9 a3 ♗xd2+ 10 ♘xd2 ♘xd2 11 ♕xd2 dxc4 also gives White no chance of the advantage, and nor does 7 e3 ♘c6 8 a3 ♗e7. The problem with this whole line for White is the possibility of being forced into the unaesthetic and time-wasting e2-e3.
7 a3 ♗c5

Introduced in D.Blagojevic-V.Akopian, Chalkidiki 2002, this move continues the theme of pressure on d4 and f2.

8 ②2b3 ②c6
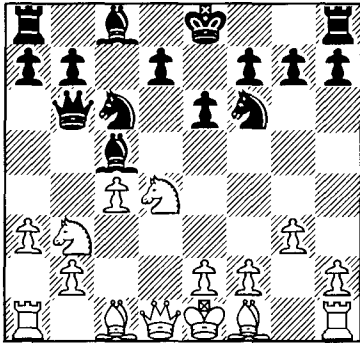
9 ②xc5

9 e3 is possible too, although after 9...♗e7 10 ♗g2 0-0 11 0-0 Black has reasonable prospects, for example 11...♖d8 12 ♗d2 d5 13 cxd5 ②xd4 14 exd4 a5! 15 dxe6 ♗xe6 16 ♗xa5 ♖xa5 17 ②xa5 ♕xa5, with a difficult position to judge.

9...♕xc5 10 e3

In the end White cannot resist this. 10 ②xc6? ♕xc6 wins a pawn, but Ribli proposed 10 ②b5!? 0-0 11 ♗e3 (11 ②d6 ②d4 12 ♗e3 ♕c6 13 ♖g1 e5 14 ♗xd4 ♕xd6 15 ♗c3 ♕c7 leads to a similar type of game to the text) 11...♕xc4 12 ②d6 'with compensation'. White has some compensation to be sure, but after 12...♕d5 13 ♕xd5 ②xd5 14 ♗d2 ②f6 15 ♗c3 ②e8 I prefer Black's chances of unravelling in the long run.

10...②xd4 11 ♕xd4 ♕c6

Black has equalized according to Ribli; his better development and the weaknesses on White's kingside compensate for the bishop pair. The Blagojevic-Akopian game continued
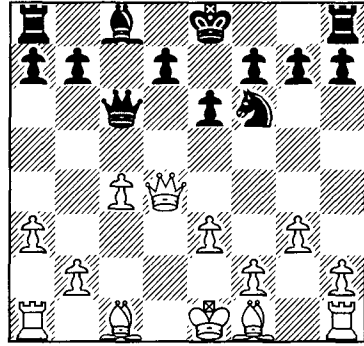
12 ♖g1 d6 13 ♗g2 ♕c7 14 b3 e5! 15 ♕d3 0-0 16 ♗b2 ♖d8!

after which White rashly continued with 17 ♔d2 and succumbed to Black's initiative after 17...♗e6 18 ♖fc1 ♕e7 19 ♔e1 d5. Instead Ribli suggests that 17 e4 was necessary, with equality, but I think most players would still prefer Black with his possible activity by ...a6 and ...b5: White has not yet solved the problem with his king.

B2)
1 d4 ②f6 2 c4 e6 3 ②f3 c5 4 g3 cxd4 5 ②xd4 ♗b4+ 6 ♗d2 ♕b6
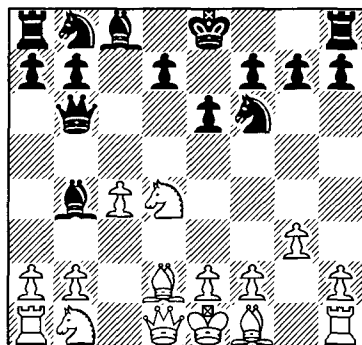
Beware: this move is sharper than it looks. Black is committing himself to

some tactical variations. White has a number of moves here:

B21: 7 &g2
B22: 7 &xb4
B23: 7 e3

B21)
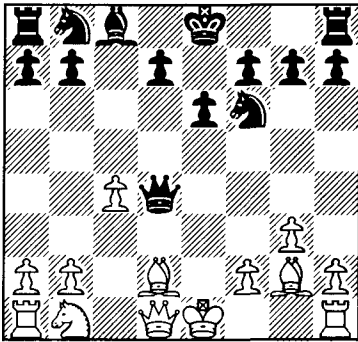**1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 c5 4 g3 cxd4 5 ♘xd4 &b4+ 6 &d2 ♕b6 7 &g2 &c5**

Not the only move; 7...♘c6 is sound.
8 e3

Since 8 &c3 e5 causes unpleasantness, White is committed to this sacrifice.
8...&xd4 9 exd4 ♕xd4

10 0-0

White has little choice but to invest a second pawn: 10 ♕b3 ♕e5+ 11 &e3 ♘g4 is nice for Black, so the only serious alternative is 10 ♕e2, when J.Garcia Padron- J Hernandez-Rodrigo, Barcelona 2002 continued 10...♕xb2 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♘c3 ♘c6 13 g4, and now I think the way to defend was to reclaim some dark squares with 13...♕a3 – White has some play for his pawns, of course, but I think Black is better.
10...♕xc4

10...♘c6 is also played, but 10...♕xb2 11 ♘c3 is too dangerous.
11 ♘a3

This is the commonest move, although 11 &c3 was played in N.Rashkovsky-S.Palatnik, Kirovabad 1973. 11...d5 12 ♘a3 ♕a6 13 ♖e1 0-0 14 ♖c1 ♘c6 15 &xf6 gxf6 16 ♕g4+ ♔h8 17 ♕h4 led to a draw; this is hard to improve upon for either side.
11...♕d3 12 &b4

12 ♖e1 is possible, when it seems to me that more sensible than the 12...0-0 which has been played so far is 12...♘c6, preventing &b4; then White can choose between 13 ♖e3 ♕f5, when I doubt he has adequate compensation for the two pawns, or 13 &f4 ♕xd1 14 ♖axd1 d5, when both 15 &xd5 ♘xd5 16 ♖xd5 f6 and 15 ♘b5 0-0 16 ♘c7 ♖b8 17 ♘b5 &d7 favour Black. Meanwhile 12 ♕e1 was efficiently dealt with by 12...♘c6 13 ♖d1 d5 14 &c3 ♕f5 in B.Kohlweyer-J.Horvath, Leeuwarden 1993.
12...♕xd1 13 ♖fxd1
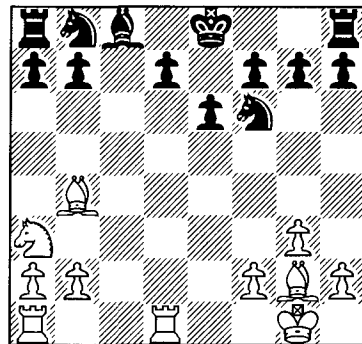
13...d5

It seems to me that 13...♘c6 might be worth a try here. 14 ♘b5 ♘xb4 15 ♘c7+ ♔e7 16 ♘xa8 d5 is no good for White,

so presumably he proceeds 14 ♗d6, when 14...♔d8 15 ♘c4 ♘e8 forces the exchange of the powerful dark-squared bishop. White still has a most unpleasant bind on d6, but I don't see that he has any way of breaking through, and Black can think about moves such as ...f5 and ...a5 to gain space, ...♔e7, ...♖d8 and ...♖b8, and perhaps one day ...♔f6, ...♘e7 and ...b6. White has several turns while this happens, of course, but I don't know that he can make any real impact.

14 ♘b5 ♘c6 15 ♗a3

15 ♘c7+ ♔d7 16 ♘xa8 ♘xb4 is still no good.

15...♔d7 16 ♘d6 ♘d8

Before this game 16...♖f8 17 ♖ac1 ♖b8 18 ♗h3 a5 19 ♘e4 ♔e8, V.Tukmakov-R.Vaganian, Duben 1970, was the last word of theory, when White should have made a draw with 20 ♘d6+ instead of losing after 20 ♗xf8 ♔xf8. But this is obviously uncomfortable for Black and Yemelin is a very well prepared fellow: I wouldn't be surprised if White has better.

17 ♖ac1 ♘e8 18 ♗xd5 exd5 19 ♘xc8 ♘c6 20 ♘d6 ♘xd6 21 ♖xd5 ♖ad8 22 ♖cd1
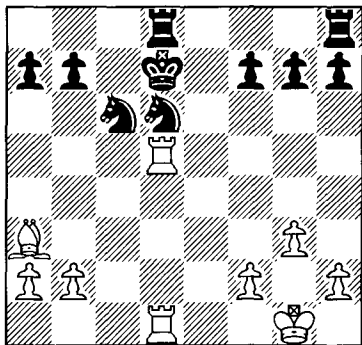
22...♘e7!

Essential: Vaganian had previously lost horribly after allowing the bishop to d6 in an earlier game.
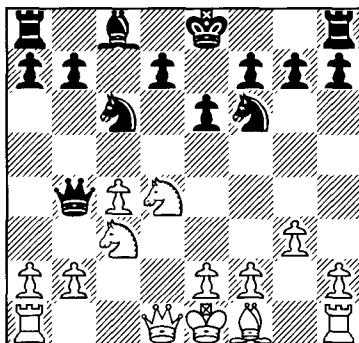
23 ♖xd6+

with a slight advantage to White, D.Yevseev-V.Yemelin, St Petersburg 2004.

B22)

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 c5 4 g3 cxd4 5 ♘xd4 ♗b4+ 6 ♗d2 ♕b6 7 ♗xb4 ♕xb4+ 8 ♘c3

Best; 8 ♘d2 ♕xb2 9 ♘b5 ♘a6 is fine for Black.

8...♘c6

By continuing to press on d4 Black prevents 9 ♕b3 (9...♘xd4) which is a good reply to 8...0-0.
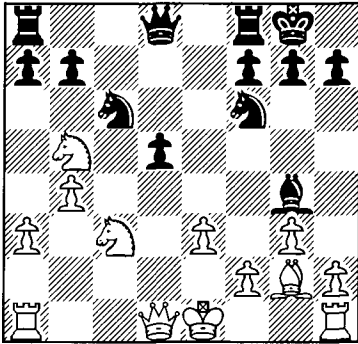
9 ♘db5

More or less the only move. 9 ♗g2 0-0 10 0-0 ♕xc4 is a feeble gambit which left White with virtually no compensation after 11 ♘b3 d5 12 ♖c1 ♕b4 13 e4 ♖d8 in I.Hausner-L.Zsinka, Zamardi 1980.

9...0-0 10 e3 d5 11 a3 ♕a5 12 b4

12 c5 ♕d8 13 ♗e2 ♕e7 14 ♘d6 b6 ♘xc8 ♖fxc8 16 cxb6 axb6 is already a little better for Black, N.Rashkovsky-

A.Schneider, Frunze 1983.

12...♕d8 13 cxd5 exd5 14 ♗g2 ♗g4

This is equal: Black's better development and control of c4 make up for the isolated d-pawn. After 15 ♕d2 Black has the choice between Ulf Andersson's characteristically ruthless method of liquidating – 15...♕b6 16 0-0 ♖fd8 17 ♘d4 ♘e4! with equality, M.Quinteros-U.Andersson, Buenos Aires 1978, Pinter's more combative 15...♘e5 (I.Hausner-J.Pinter, European Team Ch, Skara 1980), and the still more pragmatic ½-½ (M.Petursson-G.Sosonko, Reykjavik 1980).

B23)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 c5 4 g3 cxd4 5 ♘xd4 ♗b4+ 6 ♗d2 ♕b6 7 e3

A hideous move according to Carsten Hansen, and you can see where he's coming from, although plenty of good players have used it.
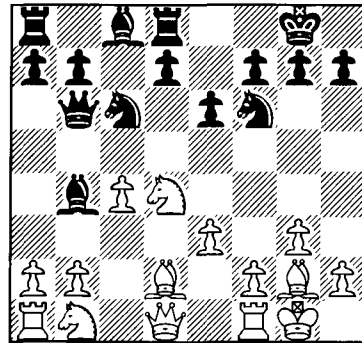
7...♘c6

Others are possible, but keeping up the uncomfortable pressure on d4 is thematic.

8 ♗g2

White can also essay the unambitious 8

♗xb4 ♕xb4+ 9 ♕d2, when perhaps 9...d5 is the most efficient of several ways.

8...0-0 9 0-0 ♖d8

Jan Timman's clever idea; again 9...d5 or 9...♗e7 are possible, but the text will always be useful, keeps ...d5 in the air, and poses White the problem of how he's going to develop, since ♘c3 leaves d4 en prise.

10 ♗xb4 ♕xb4
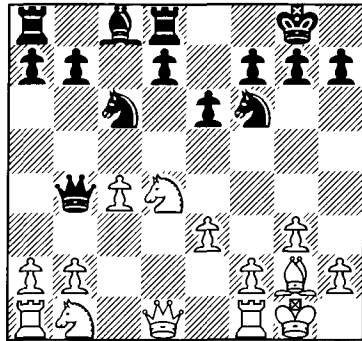
11 ♗xc6

The c4-pawn was attacked again; defending it is inconvenient, and 11 ♘xc6 bxc6 12 ♗xc6 ♖b8 13 b3 ♗a6 gives Black more than enough for his pawn, so White doesn't have much choice if he is still seeking the edge, although it may

already be time to play for equality with 11 ♕d2 or 11 ♕b3.

11...bxc6 12 ♘xc6 ♕xb2 13 ♘xd8 ♕xa1 14 ♕d6

More or less forced to here. The move 14 ♕b3 might be more prudent now, but White is still following the critical path.

14...h6 15 ♘a3

White plays this rather than 15 ♕e7 at once in order to commit Black's queen: 15 ♕e7 ♗a6 16 ♘a3 ♕c3! with and edge for Black is the point. 15 a3 ♕a2 16 ♘d2 ♗a6! is no better.

15...♕xa2 16 ♕e7
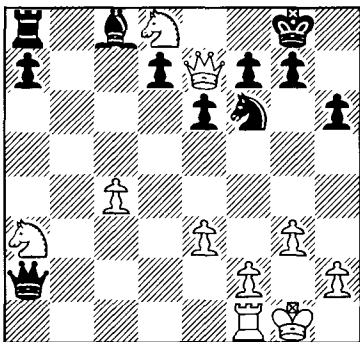
From here the game U.Adianto-J.Timman, Bali 2000 continued 16...♗a6 17 ♘xf7 (Black's point is that 17 ♕xf7+ ♔h7 leaves White's pieces surprisingly poorly placed; the knight has to be extricated via f7 and the sooner White starts that process the better) 17...♖f8 18 ♘e5 ♕d2 with equality according to Hansen, although this would still have to be shown after 19 ♘b5, perhaps.

Instead Hansen proposes 16...♘e4, and this does indeed seem quite promising for Black: after 17 ♘xf7 ♗b7 18 ♘e5, stronger than Hansen's 18...♘xf2 seems the simple and positional 18...♘g5

19 h4 ♘f3+, which leaves Black clearly better.

C)

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 c5 4 ♘c3 cxd4 5 ♘xd4 ♗b4
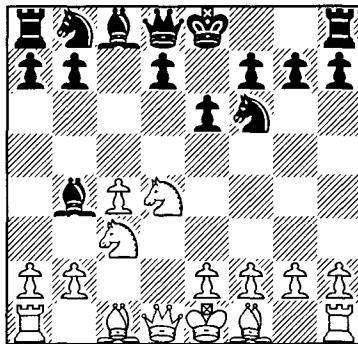
And now:

C1: 6 ♗d2
C2: 6 ♘b5

Of course 6 g3 leads back to Chris Ward's book mentioned above.

C1)

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 c5 4 ♘c3 cxd4 5 ♘xd4 ♗b4 6 ♗d2

A dull and passive move, frankly.

6...♘c6

Again pressing d4 and hoping to force White into some concession in order to develop.

7 a3

The commonest: nothing makes much impression on Black here, for example ‾ ♘c2 ♗c5 8 e3 d5 9 cxd5 exd5 10 ♗e2 0-0 11 0-0 a6, 7 ♘xc6?! dxc6 8 g3 e5 9 ♗g2 ♗e6, or 7 e3 0-0 8 ♗e2 d5 9 cxd5 exd5 10 ♘xc6 bxc6 11 0-0 ♗d6, all of which

have occurred in various games.

7...♗e7 8 ♗g5

The least dull; there have been some corking games played from this position along the lines 8 e3 0-0 9 ♗e2 d5 10 cxd5 exd5 11 0-0 ♘xd4 12 exd4 ♗f5 and so on (M.Novikov-M.Rusanov, St Petersburg 2000).

8...h6 9 ♗h4 0-0 10 e3
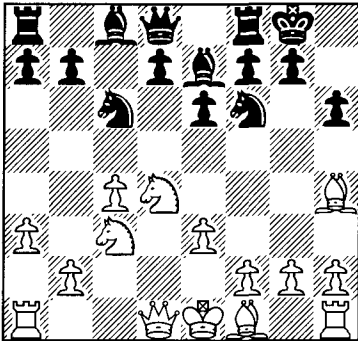
10...d5

ECO gives 10...♕b6 11 b4 a5 12 c5 ♕d8 (Cu.Hansen-S.Kindermann, Dortmund 1988), and now 13 b5 ♘xd4 14 exd4 d6, but since I don't understand why 14 ♕xd4 isn't quite nice for White (14...♕c7 15 ♘e4 or 14...d6 15 cxd6 ♕xd6 16 ♕xd6 ♗xd6 17 ♗xf6 gxf6 18 g4) I'm giving the text. 10...b6 and ...♗b7 is also eminently possible.

11 ♖c1 ♘xd4 12 ♕xd4 dxc4 13 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 14 ♗xc4 ♗d7 15 ♔e2 ♖ac8 16 ♗d3

with an equal position, V.Korchnoi-Y.Dokhoian, Wijk aan Zee 1990.

C2)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 c5 4 ♘c3 cxd4 5 ♘xd4 ♗b4 6 ♘b5

Another rather uninspiring move; the best that can be said about it is that probably White can maintain equality with careful play. Some other rather poor moves are 6 ♘c2? ♗xc3+ 7 bxc3 ♕a5 with excellent prospects for Black, and 6 e3 ♘e4, but 6 ♗g5 is more challenging, when probably better than 6...♗xc3+ is 6...♘c6 7 ♖c1 h6 8 ♗h4 g5 9 ♗g3 ♘e4 10 ♘b5 ♘xg3 11 hxg3 a6 12 ♘d6+ ♔e7 13 ♘xc8+ ♖xc8 14 e3 d5 with a level position, B.Gelfand-A.Shirov, Monaco (blindfold) 1999.

6...d5
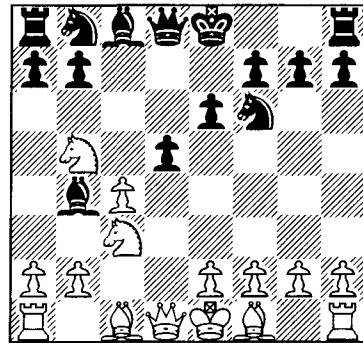
7 ♗f4

Or:

a) Feeble is 7 a3? ♗xc3+ 8 ♘xc3 d4 9 ♘a4 0-0 10 b4 e5 11 ♗b2 ♘c6 when Black is already better, (Xie Jun-U.Adianto, Beijing 1992).

b) 7 cxd5 exd5 8 ♗g5 makes more sense, and now 8...0-0 9 e3 ♘c6 10 ♗e2 a6 11 ♘d4 ♗xc3+ 12 bxc3 ♕a5 13 f3 ♕xc3+ 14 ♔f2 ♘xd4 15 ♗xf6 gxf6 16 ♖c1 ♕b2 which is equal (L.Aronian-J.Gustafsson, Neckar 2002), and 9...a6 10 a3 axb5 11 axb4 ♖xa1 12 ♕xa1 ♘c6 13 ♗xb5 d4 14 exd4 ♖e8+ with compensation (B.Kogan-B.Gulko, USSR 1971) are both possible.

7...0-0 8 e3

8 ♘c7 ♘h5 is good for Black, although it is probably reassuring to be told about 9 ♘xa8 ♘xf4 10 ♕d4 e5! before the position arises rather than after.

8 a3 ♗xc3+ 9 bxc3 (9 ♘xc3? d4!) 9...♘c6
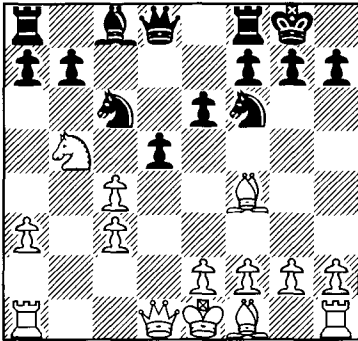
is usually frowned on by theory because of 10 ♗d6 ♖e8 c5 ♘e4 12 ♘c7 ♕f6 13 ♕d3 ♕xf2+ 14 ♔d1 ♗d7 15 ♘xa8 ♖xa8 16 ♔c2 ♘a5, which was disastrous for White in Raicevic-Bertok, Yugoslav Championship 1977. Here 11 ♗c7 ♕d7 12 ♗g3 ♘e4 13 ♕d3 ♘xg3 14 ♕xg3 ♖d8 was perhaps a touch better for Black in F.Kleist-B.Gulko, Cardosa 1998,

but 10 cxd5 exd5 11 e3 (11 ♘c7? ♘h5! again, of course) is more sensible, when perhaps 11...a6 12 ♘d6 ♕a5 13 ♕b3 (R.Debarnot-J.Rubinetti, Buenos Ares 1972) 13...♖d8 is Black's best.
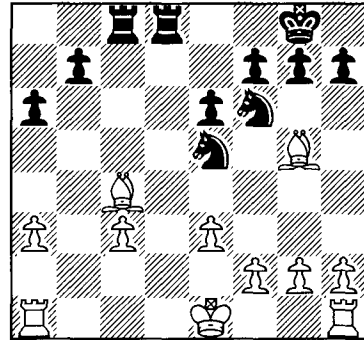
8...a6 9 a3

9 ♘c7 ♖a7 10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♕b3 ♘c6 is untried; 10 ♕b3? ♗d6 favours Black.

9...♗a5 10 ♘d6 ♘c6 11 ♘xc8?!

Or 11 ♗g3 ♗xc3+ 12 bxc3 ♕a5 13 ♕b3 d4 with a plus for Black, L.Konings-A.Barsov, Dutch League 1996.
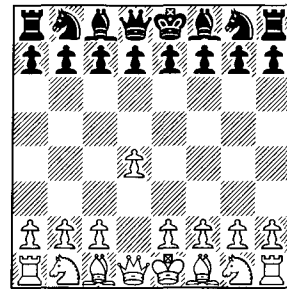
♗xc3+ 12 bxc3 ♖xc8 13 ♗g5?! dxc4 14 ♕xd8 ♖fxd8 15 ♗xc4 ♘e5

Black has a clear edge, R.Cifuentes Parada-M.Tal, Lucerne Olympiad 1982.

CHAPTER TEN

Rare Lines

In this final chapter I round up various other irregular tries for White. The first two sections deal with a couple of quite respectable sneaky transpositional attempts: Line A with Seirawan's 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♗g5!?, Line B with 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 g3. In C we look at attempts by White to establish a Stonewall formation, and finally D shows a couple of contrasting efforts with the g-pawn.

A)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♗g5
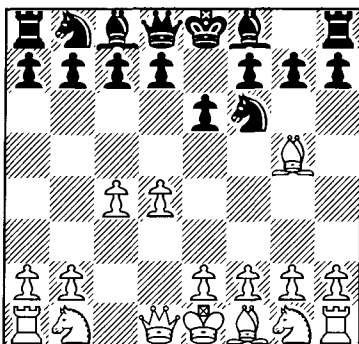
A cunning move once favoured by Yasser Seirawan. Of course QGD players can curl their lip and reply 3...d5, but White's idea is to inconvenience Nimzo players.

3...♗b4+

Actually unless the Benoni is simply an anathema to Black then 3...c5 is a good move: 4 d5 exd5 5 cxd5 d6 6 ♘c3 is the equivalent of meeting the Modern Benoni with 6 ♗g5, which is considered feeble because of 6...♗e7 as Kramnik showed in M.Dlugy-V.Kramnik, Internet [blitz] 1999, with 7 ♘f3 0-0 8 ♕d2 ♖e8 9 g3 ♘a6 10 ♗g2 ♘c7 11 0-0 b5 12 a3 h6 13 ♗f4 ♗b7 and Black has good play already. However, allowing...cxd4 hardly goes with c4 and ♗g5 either, and 4 e3 ♕b6 is downright embarrassing.

4 ♘d2

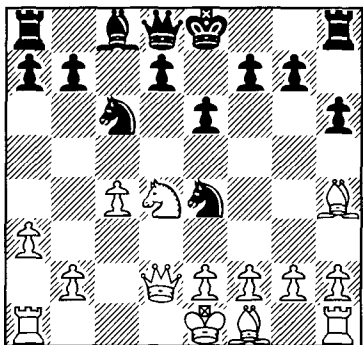This is the idea: 4 ♘c3 is of course the Leningrad Variation of the Nimzo.

4...h6 5 ♗h4 c5 6 a3 ♗xd2+ 7 ♕xd2 cxd4

I don't entirely trust 7...g5 8 ♗g3 ♘e4 9 ♕e3 ♘xg3 10 hxg3 ♕a5+ 11 ♔d1!? for Black, strange as that may seem.

8 ♘f3

After 8 ♕xd4 ♘c6 9 ♕c3, 9...e5 is a good move, for example 10 e3 g5 11 ♗g3 ♘e4 and ...♕a5+.

8...♘c6 9 ♘xd4 ♘e4

This equalizes simply; S.Ivanov-K.Aseev, St Petersburg 2000 now went 10 ♗xd8 ♘xd2 11 ♘xc6 dxc6 12 ♔xd2 ♔xd8 with a level endgame.

**B)**

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 g3

White has some other occasional tries here:

a) 3 a3 invites an a3 Queens Indian after 3...b6 4 c4 or some kind of Symmetrical Semi-Tarrasch after 3...d5 4 e3. Black might perhaps play 3...g6 and ask White whether a2-a3 or ...e7-e6 is less useful in a King's Indian, but 3...c5 is also adequate. White's idea then is usually 4 dxc5 ♗xc5 5 b4 ♗e7 6 ♗b2 when I suggest 6...a5 7 b5 d5 with play similar to the lines in Chapter 9. The line 4 e3 d5 5 c4 a6 is also a transposition to that chapter.

b) 3 b3 will almost certainly lead to the e3 Queen's Indian lines in the Colle-Zukertort section.

c) 3 ♘c3 can be well met by 3...♗b4

(3...d5 4 ♗g5 ♘bd7 with a tame Veresov is also good).
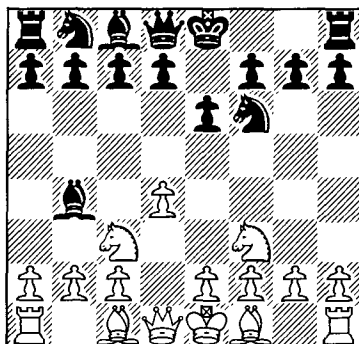
For example, 4 ♗d2 c5 5 a3 ♗xc3 6 ♗xc3 0-0 ½-½(!) J.Ehlvest-A.Veingold, Finland 1997, or 4 ♗g5 h6 5 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 6 e4 with a position which could (but seldom does) arise from the Tromp. Black has many ideas now but I like 6...d5 7 e5 ♕d8 8 a3 and now 8...♗xc3+ (8...♗e7 worked out better for White in V.Akopian-R.Antonio, FIDE World Ch, Las Vegas 1999) 9 bxc3 c5 when Black can continue with ...♗d7, ...♘c6, ...♕c7 with an acceptable French-type position.

d) Also seen is the self-block 3 ♘bd2, which is actually a tiny bit tricky for our repertoire since 3...c5 4 c3 (4 e3 b6 is back in our anti-Colle repertoire of course) 4...d5 allows a non-repertoire type of Colle, while (say) 4...b6 5 e4 probably favours White. One ruthless solution is 4...cxd4 5 cxd4 d5 with a quieter than usual Exchange Slav type of position.

With 3 g3 White's idea is usually to play a Catalan but without the dreadfully committal c2-c4, when Black might for example opt for a Bogo-Indian with ...♗b4+, or a Benoni/English after ...c5. Of course there's nothing wrong with

3...d5 to defend a Catalan, but if you'd rather avoid that I recommend:

3...b5
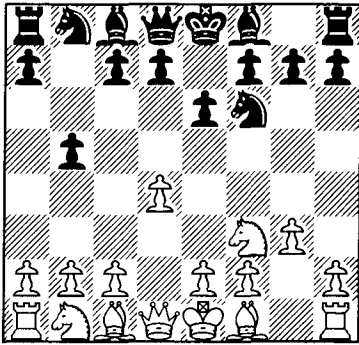
Another of those little twists known to GMs but not always exploited by amateurs. This extended fianchetto is very respectable (played over 1000 times with lots of GM games and a black score of 53%), and White really hasn't shown anything much against it; in fact Alterman declared that Black had already equalized.

4 ♗g2

Alternatively:

a) 4 a4 b4 doesn't help much, for example 5 ♗g2 ♗b7 6 0-0 (6 c4 can be met either with 6...c5 7 d5 exd5 8 ♘h4 with a type of Benoni position, or 6...bxc3 7 ♘xc3 – 7 bxc3 c5 8 0-0 ♗e7 is equal also – 7...♘a6 8 0-0 ♗e7 9 ♗g5 0-0 10 ♖c1 ♖b8 with equality as in H.Ardiansyah-U.Andersson, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988) 6...c5 7 c3 cxd4 8 cxd4 ♗e7 9 ♘bd2 0-0 10 ♖e1 ♘e4 11 ♘e5 d5 12 ♘b3?! ♘d7 13 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 14 f3 ♘f6 with a nice game for Black, R.Fyllingen-H.Stefansson, Nordic Net Club Cup 2000.

b) 4 c3 ♗b7 5 ♕b3 a6 6 a4 is ineffective since axb5 is not a threat: Black can cheerfully continue 6...c5 and meet 7 axb5 with either with 7...c4 or 7...♗d5 8 c4? ♗xc4!.

c) 4 ♕d3 is sometimes played, e.g. 4...a6 5 a4 (or 5 e4 ♗b7 6 e5 ♘d5 7 ♗g2 c5 8 dxc5 ♗xc5 9 0-0 d6 10 ♘c3 ♘xc3 11 ♕xc3 0-0 with chances for both sides in J.Ehlvest-R.Hübner, European Club Cup, Germany 1991) 5..b4 6 e4 ♗b7 7 e5 ♘e4 (commoner and also very sound is 7...♘d5) 8 ♘bd2 d5 9 exd6 ♘xd2 10 ♗xd2 ♗xd6 11 ♗g2 ♘d7 12 0-0 ♘f6 13 ♖fe1 0-0 with equality in S.Djuric-M.Taimanov, Titograd 1984.

4...♗b7
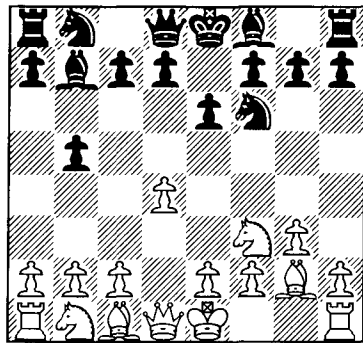
5 ♗g5

There seems to be consensus among GMs that White has to fight for e4 in this way. Otherwise Black's plan of ...♗e7, ...c5, ...♘a6 and ...0-0 gives him a good game without problems, for example 5 0-0 c5 6 c3 ♘a6 7 a4 b4 8 ♗f4 ♖c8 9 dxc5 ♗xc5 10 ♗d6?! ♕b6 11 ♗xc5 ♖xc5 12 cxb4 ♕xb4 with Black already comfortably better in M.Ornolfsson-J.Hjartarson, Icelandic Championship 1994.

5...♗e7

Onischuk's 5...d5 is a good alternative; this 'anti-positional' move is often useful

for Black in this system.

6 0-0 c5 7 c3 ♘a6 8 ♘bd2 0-0
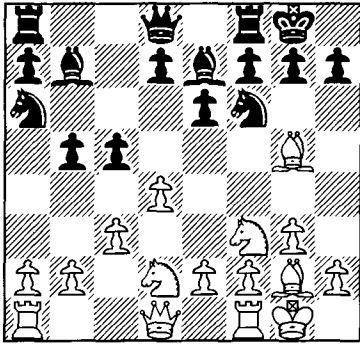
Something of a tabiya for the variation: White has tried a few moves now:

a) 9 a3 ♖c8 10 ♖e1 cxd4 11 cxd4 h6 12 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 13 e3 d6 14 ♕b1 ♕b6 15 ♕d3 ♘b8 16 ♖ac1 ♘d7 17 h4 ♗e7 18 ♘h2 d5 was a very thematic display from Black, as you would expect, in C.Gouvela-G.Kasparov, Rio de Janeiro (simultaneous display) 1996.

b) 9 ♕b1 cxd4 10 cxd4 d5 11 ♖c1 ♕b6 12 e3 ♖fc8 13 ♖xc8+ ♖xc8 14 ♗f1 b4 15 ♘e5 ♘b8 16 ♗d3 h6 17 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 was similar in M.Steinbacher-M.Chandler, Bundesliga 1985.

c) 9 ♕b3 ♖b8 10 ♕xb5 (10 ♖ad1 cxd4 11 ♘xd4 ♗xg2 12 ♔xg2 ♘c5 is nothing either, M.Paunovic-L.Psakhis, Mondariz 1997) 10...♗xf3 11 ♕xa6 ♗xg2 12 ♔xg2 ♖xb2 is a bit of a theoretical position for 3 g3 fans: 13 ♕xa7 cxd4 14 cxd4 h6 15 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 gives White nothing, while 13 ♘b3 ♕a8+ 14 ♔g1 cxd4 15 cxd4 ♕e4 (15...♖c8!?) gave Black enough play in R.Cifuentes Parada-M.Marin, Mondariz 2002.
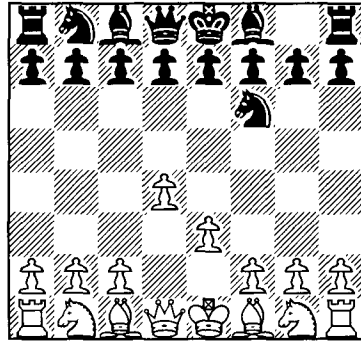
d) 9 e3 h6 10 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 11 ♕e2 ♖b8 12 e4 b4 13 e5 ♗e7 14 ♘e4 bxc3 15 bxc3

♕a5 16 ♘fd2 cxd4 17 cxd4 ♘b4 with good play for Black, J.Plachetka- M.Suba, Belgrade 1984.

e) 9 ♖e1 h6 10 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 11 e4 ♕b6 12 a4 cxd4 13 e5 ♗e7 14 ♘xd4 ♗xg2 15 ♔xg2 b4 16 ♘e4 f5 17 exf6 ♗xf6 with active play for Black was more of the same in N.Pert-P.Wells, British Ch, Torquay 1998.

C)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 e3

This move may of course have no independent significance whatsoever: White's next move might be ♘f3 taking us right back to Chapter 6. More often however he wants to play a Stonewall Attack with f4, but he doesn't fancy 2 f4 since that can really be met a bit too effectively with 2...d5, 3...♗f5 and so on, and he wants to go ♗d3 first so as to stop ...♗f5. Moreover this move does present a small move order dilemma: 2...d5 3 ♗d3 ♗g4 is a very effective way of disrupting White's plan, but then Black can't necessarily play what we'd like to play against the Colle proper. 2...g6 is another extremely effective move, since e3 is almost never a good idea against a

King's Indian, but we said we weren't going to fianchetto either. So...

2...c5 3 c3

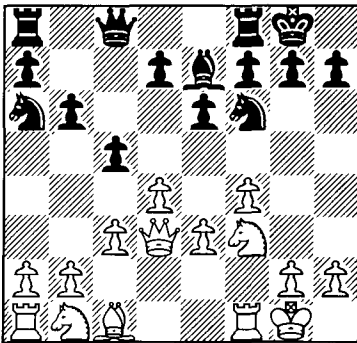Stonewallites will usually play this: anything else makes it easy enough to slip into our anti-Colle methods.

3...e6 4 f4 b6 5 ♘f3 ♗e7

Black waits for ♗d3.

6 ♗d3

6 ♘bd2 0-0 doesn't help: White has to lose the tempo

6...♗a6 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♗xa6 ♘xa6 9 ♕d3 ♕c8

10 e4

I'm not wild about this: something like 10 ♘bd2 ♕b7 11 a4 ♖ac8 12 f5!? (S.Sigfusson-H.Olafsson, Reykjavik (blindfold) 1997, is sounder.

10...cxd4 11 e5 ♘d5 12 ♘xd4 f5!?

Black has equalized and a move like 12...d6 or indeed 12...f6 would show this. After the text the critical 13 b4 was necessary to restrain the a6 knight, but in M.Babar-A.Zapata, Münsterland Open, Senden 2002, White lost at once with 13 c4? ♘ab4 14 ♕e2 ♗c5 15 ♖d1 ♘c6 0-1.

D)
1 d4 ♘f6 2 g3

This is a move order with some point since it does rule out the solution shown in Line B. There is a flaw, however. An extended version with 2 g4 has an even more serious flaw. Of course 2...♘xg4 is the best move, for example 3 e4 d6 4 ♗e2 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 e5 6 d5 c6 7 ♗g5 ♗e7 when Black was already just winning in J.Calder-P.Zarnicki, Internet (blitz) 2004. For curmudgeons, however, 2...d5 3 g5 ♘e4 4 f3 ♘d6 5 ♘c3 ♘f5! (still preventing e4) also leaves Black a little better while denying White what he wants.

2...d5
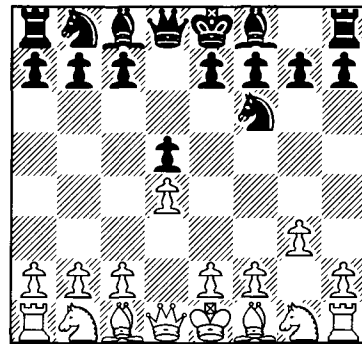
This is the problem: Black wasn't committed to ...e6 and rather than a Catalan White is playing a sort of inept g3 system against the Slav. The game A.Roesch-L.Van Wely, Bundesliga 1998 demonstrated White's problems splendidly.
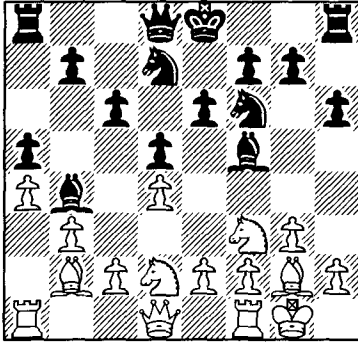
3 ♘f3 c6 4 ♗g2 ♗f5 5 ♘bd2 h6

Van Wely wants to keep the effective f5-bishop: 5 ♘h4 ♗e4 wasn't a threat, but perhaps 6 ♘h4 was now.

6 0-0 e6 7 b3 ♘bd7 8 ♗b2 a5 9 a4

With the pawn on d3 and hence the possibility of c4 White's normal reply to this thrust would be a3, since ...a4; b4 is

not a problem with c4 still on the agenda. Here, however, White does not care for b4 and d4 together, hence a4, but now...

9...&b4

Notice how Black delayed ...&e7 to allow this. The position can also be thought of as a Réti with d4 instead of d3, but that is exactly the problem: without d3 White cannot shut the f5 bishop out, nor can he really aim for either e4 or c4, so Black is comfortable.

10 ♘e5 0-0 11 ♘xd7 ♕xd7

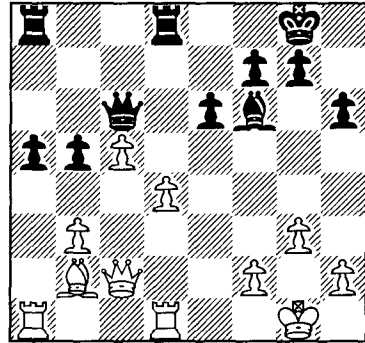This isn't helping, but White cannot find a plan.

12 c3

The annoying b4-bishop provokes this, but the b2-bishop isn't happy about it, and nor is the queenside pawn chain.

12...&d6 13 ♖e1 b5! 14 e4 dxe4 15 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 16 &xe4 &xe4 17 ♖xe4 ♖fd8

Black is already a little better: to get in

e2-e4 White had to play c3, but now he wishes he hadn't.

18 ♕c2 &e7 19 ♖ee1 ♕b7 20 axb5 cxb5 21 c4 &f6 22 ♖ed1 ♕b6 23 c5 ♕c6

and Black was in total control (the game concluded 24 ♕c3 b4 25 ♕c4 ♖d5 26 ♕e2 ♖a7 27 ♖a4 &d8 28 ♖da1 ♖ad7 29 ♖xa5 &xa5 30 ♖xa5 e5 31 ♖a6 ♕c8 32 c6 ♖7d6 33 dxe5 ♖xc6 34 ♖xc6 ♕xc6 35 h4 ♕d7 0-1).

A really classy example to finish the book with: Black knew exactly why White's move order is irregular and demonstrated; he knew what order his own developing moves should come in and why; he showed eloquently why forcing c2-c3 out of White was desirable and the result was the sort of Meister-gegen-Amateur positional crush which epitomises the sort of efficiency against these deviations which we're looking for.

INDEX OF VARIATIONS

The London System
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6

>2...d5 3 ♗f4 c5 4 e3 (4 dxc5 *71*; 4 c3 *77*) ♘c6 5 c3 (5 ♘c3 *72*) 5...♕b6
>6 ♕b3 c4 7 ♕xb6 *74* (7 ♕c2 *76*)

3 ♗f4 d5

>3...c5 4 e3 *60* (4 c3 *59*)

4 e3 c5 5 c3 ♘c6 6 ♘bd2 *64* (6 ♗d3 *67*; 6 h3 *68*; 6 ♘e5 *68*)

The Colle System

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6

>2...d5 3 e3 ♗f5 4 c4 (4 ♗e2 *99*; 4 ♗d3 *99*) 4...c6 5 cxd5 *98* (5 ♗d3 *96*; 5 ♘c3 *96*)

3 e3 b6 4 ♗d3 ♗b7 5 0–0 c5 6 ♘bd2

>6 c4 *86*

>6 b3 cxd4 7 exd4 ♗e7 8 ♗b2 0–0 9 c4 d5 10 ♘c3 *92* (10 ♘bd2 *93*)

6...♗e7 7 c3 ♘c6 8 e4 *80* (8 a3 *82*; 8 dxc5 *83*; 8 ♕e2 *84*)

The Veresov
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 ♗g5 c5 4 ♗xf6

>4 e3 *107*; 4 e4 *109*

4...gxf6 5 e4 *102*

>5 e3 *104*; 5 ♘f3 *106*

The Blackmar-Diemer Gambit
1 d4 d5

>1...♘f6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 e4 ♘xe4 4 ♘xe4 dxe4 5 ♗c4 *116* (5 ♗e3 *117*; 5 f3 *117*)

2 e4 dxe4 3 ♘c3 e5 4 ♕h5 *112* (4 ♘ge2 *113*; 4 ♘xe4 *114*; 4 ♗e3 *115*)

Anti-Benoni Lines
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 c5 4 g3

>4 e3 a6 5 ♘c3 (5 a3 *120*) 5...d5 6 cxd5 *124* (6 a3 *122*)
>4 ♘c3 cxd4 5 ♘xd4 ♗b4 6 ♗d2 *135* (6 ♘db5 *136*)

4...cxd4 5 ♘xd4 ♗b4+ 6 ♗d2

>6 ♘d2 *130*

6...♕b6 7 ♗g2 *132*

>7 ♗xb4 *133*; 7 e3 *134*

Rare lines
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3

>2 c4 e6 3 ♗g5 *138*; 2 e3 *141*; 2 g3 *142*

2...e6 3 g3 *139*

dealing
with
d4 deviations

fighting the Trompowsky, Torre, Blackmar-Diemer, London, Colle and other problem openings

This book fills an enormous void in chess literature. There are a countless number of players who are very happy to defend the black side of the Queen's Gambit or play the Nimzo-Indian, Queen's Indian, Bogo-Indian or Benoni. However, more often than not they have been forced to muddle their way through a whole variety of annoying sidelines White has at his or her disposal, including the dreaded Trompowsky, the tricky Blackmar-Diemer Gambit and the tiresome Colle Variation. Now finally help is at hand! In this unique book John Cox reveals everything Black players need to know about all of White's offbeat tries, presenting Black with no-nonsense answers to every white option. Read this book and you will be fully armed to deal with anything that White can throw at you. In fact, you'll have all the White players running back to the main lines!

- Covers all of White's options
- Written by an openings expert
- Ideal for club and tournament players

John Cox is a former British Junior Champion who has recently secured his final qualification for the International Master title. This is his second book for Everyman Chess; his first was *Starting Out: Alekhine's Defence.*