

Viktor Moskalenko

Trompowsky Attack & London System
New Ideas, Dynamic Strategies and Powerful Weapons

New In Chess 2022

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Foreword

The early bishop sortie ♘g5/♘f4



First knights, then bishops is the classical rule. But not in this book!

Dear chess friends,

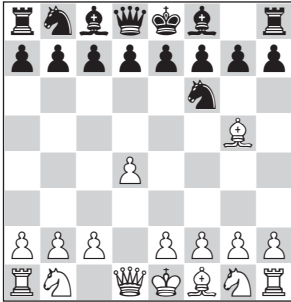
In 2019, I published my first opening repertoire project called *An Attacking Repertoire for White with 1.d4*. There I presented a choice of opening variations that also coincides with my personal approach to chess.

As a continuation, for this next book I decided to study two very popular openings in one project: *The Trompowsky Attack* and *The London System*.

The point of including these two openings together in one book is that they have some patterns in common, and by studying them in parallel, you can compare and supplement each of them with new ideas and concepts!

 **The author's workshop**

- **Part I** – If you want to play a dynamic early bishop sortie after **1.d4** ♖f6, it is relatively best to play the attacking move **2.♗g5!**, thwarting Black's opening plans with the threat of ♗x♖f6.



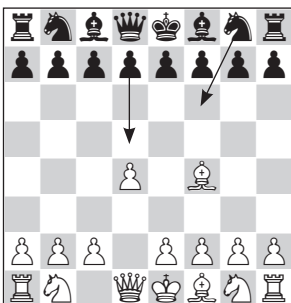
The Trompowsky Attack must be studied first of all with respect to the pawn structure, and only if that is determined, then the set-up of the pieces is chosen:

White's d-pawn may either advance or be exchanged. The c-pawn often remains on c2, allowing Veresov's knight move ♘c3!. Sometimes the pawn itself occupies the c3-square after defending the king against a check with ...♔a5+. Also, the f-pawn can play different roles: after f2-f3 we get a kind of Sämisch structure known from the King's Indian Defence, but f2-f4 will lead to a typical Four Pawns Attack.

The Trompowsky bishop, apart from being traded for the knight on f6, may also manoeuvre back and forth along the c1-h6 diagonal.

Black, in turn, has a choice between various well-known opening schemes – some of which, however, cannot be achieved due to the position of the bishop on g5!

- **Part II** – With the more versatile move **2.♗f4** White spends a key tempo on development and steers for a slow, positional game.



As far as the London System is concerned, the first thing that matters is the 'order of moves' early in the opening. White has three ways to start his further development:

- 1) Strictly following the 3.e3, 4.c3 and 5.♘bd2 order;
- 2) Playing first ♘f3 on move 2-4;
- 3) The Veresov move ♘c3 at some favourable moment.

In addition to the standard set-ups, Black also has an anti-London resource connected with queenside counterplay with a quick ..c7-c5 and ...♖b6.

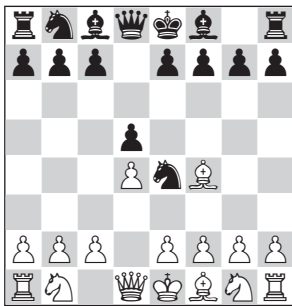


Keep in Mind

Both openings are united by a large number of possible transpositions, but not only that.

As you will see, sometimes there is even a direct switch from the Trompowsky to the London or vice versa. Along the way, White may even win an extra tempo!

For example:



D-1: See Part I, Chapter 3



D-2: Part II: 9.♗g5!?, see the comments to Game 37

There are more such cases throughout the book. Actually, in almost every game you may find several different transpositions.

These two openings demonstrate what dynamic chess is all about. Many times we will have to kiss the classical rules goodbye. Anyway, we have already changed that old mantra into 'First the bishop, then the knight!'

New ideas, dynamic strategies and powerful weapons

When you open this original book, you will be pleasantly surprised by the many practical tips that reveal the key resources of the proposed opening lines. All the important tactics are also highlighted, and some of them have been presented as 'practical exercises' for the reader.

I have carefully chosen the most interesting games. In total there are 46 – 35 by other players and 11 of my own. In my analyses, I have strived for a good understanding of the intentions of the players, during the opening and also beyond, into the middlegame and even sometimes into the endgame. So each of selected games has a lot of interesting new features and exciting lines! My prediction for the future is that these lines will become very popular, and I expect new ideas and many improvements will be found for both sides.

The statistics mentioned in this book date from November 2021.

I wish you lots of success with the Trompowsky and the London!

Grandmaster Viktor Moskalenko
Barcelona, April 2022

Seven symbols

For the convenience of the reader of my books, certain special lines in the analysis are marked with either of the following seven symbols:



TRICK: hidden tactics and tricky ideas, e.g. traps you can set and pitfalls you have to avoid.



PUZZLE: exercises, possible transpositions, move-order subtleties, curiosities and rare lines.



WEAPON: the best lines to choose; strong or surprising options for both attack and defence, which deserve attention.



PLAN: the main ideas for one of the sides in the next phase of the game.



STATISTICS: winning percentages for a line or for either side/player.



WORKSHOP: how the author plans to construct the chapter at hand.



KEEP IN MIND: here, fundamental ideas for either side are given.

game sufficiently demonstrates all the strengths of this move.

Game 5 – The Gambit variation:

3... ♖b6 4. ♘c3!

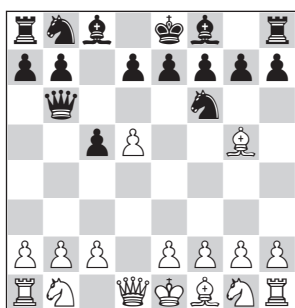
Viktor Moskalenko 2538

Mert Erdogdu 2513

Ankara 2010 (2)

I like this game because it is a good example of combative play in one of the main lines of the Trompowsky.

1.d4 ♘f6 2. ♗g5 c5 3.d5 ♖b6



PUZZLE: A typical counterattack against the early bishop sortie. How should White continue?

4. ♘c3!

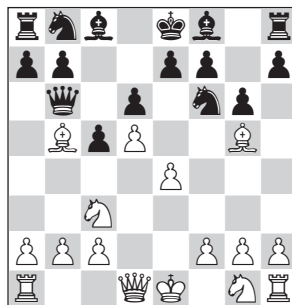
Sacrificing the b2-pawn is a common resource in such openings. 4. ♗xf6 gxf6 transposes to Games 7 and 8.

4... ♖xb2

After Black has played ... ♖b6, this move is 'forced'.



WEAPON: Otherwise, the game may transpose to a Schmid Benoni (Game 4): 4... d6 5.e4! g6 6. ♗b5+! (6. ♖c1!?)



analysis diagram

6... ♗d7 (6... ♘bd7 7.a4!) 7.a4 with the idea 8.a5 and 9. ♗c4, favouring White.

5. ♗d2

White threatens to play 6. ♖b1 and 7. ♘b5, so:

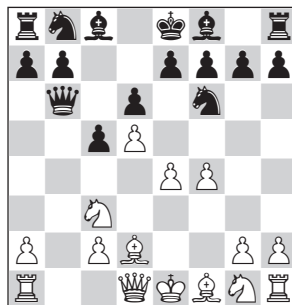
5... ♖b6

The only move.



TRICK: For example, 5...d6?? would lose after 6. ♖b1 ♖a3 7. ♘b5!.

6.e4 d6 7.f4!↑



At the cost of one pawn White is now playing the aggressive Four Pawns Attack with a few extra tempi.

7...e6

Temporarily preventing e4-e5.

The main alternatives are:



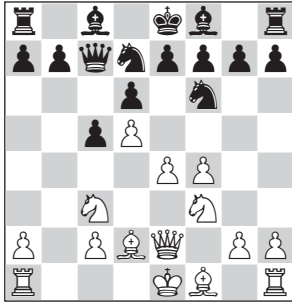
PLAN: The blocking idea 6/7... e5, see next game.



PLAN: 7...g6 allows 8.e5!
 ♖fd7 9.♗f3 ♕g7 10.e6! fxe6
 11.♗g5+- Samavat-Aroshidze,
 Adana 2006.



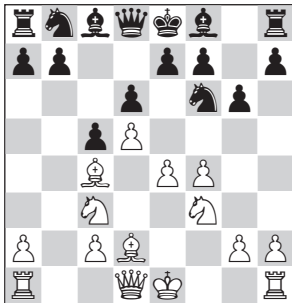
PLAN: 7...♗bd7 is too passive:
 8.♗f3 ♖c7 (8...g6? 9.e5!)
 9.♖e2!.



analysis diagram



Threatening 10.e5!. 9...♗b6
 10.a4! ♕g4 11.a5 ♗bd7 12.a6!N
 and White is winning;
 PLAN: 7...♖d8 8.♗f3 g6
 9.♕c4! (9.♕b5+!? Andreikin-
 Ivanchuk, Huai'an blitz 2017).



analysis diagram

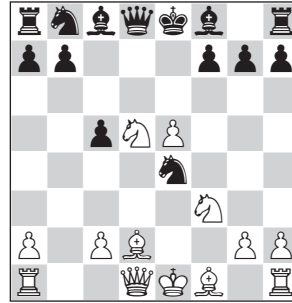
Preparing the standard push
 e4-e5: 9...♕g7 10.e5! ♗fd7
 11.e6! fxe6 12.♗g5♗ exd5
 13.♗xd5!N with a winning
 initiative.

8. ♖b1

It is logical to include this natural
 move.



WEAPON: However, 8.♗f3!?,
 first developing the knight,
 is another interesting move
 order: 8...exd5 9.e5! dxe5
 10.fxe5 ♗e4 11.♗xd5 ♖d8



analysis diagram

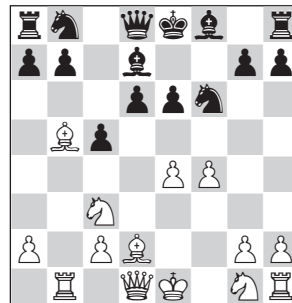
12.♕c4 (12.c4!? McShane-Ni
 Hua, Bled 2002) 12...♕e6
 13.0-0!?N ♗c6 (13...♗xd5?
 14.♕a5!+-) 14.♕e1!↑,
 intending 15.♖d3.

8... ♖c7

The idea behind this retreat is to
 control the square e5.



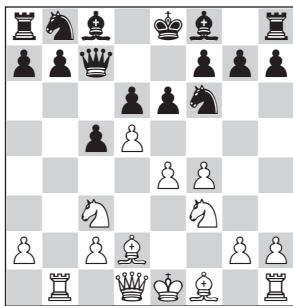
WEAPON: After 8...♖d8
 9.♕b5+! (9.dxe6!? fxe6
 (9...♕xe6 10.♖xb7) 10.e5!)
 9...♕d7 10.dxe6! fxe6



analysis diagram

White has a clear initiative, for instance: 11.♔c4 (also, 11.♘f3!? ♕xb5 12.♘xb5!N; or 11.♘h3!?N with the idea 11...♕xb5 12.♘xb5!↑) 11...♘c6 12.♘f3 (intending 13.♘g5!) 12...♘a5 13.♕e2 ♕e7 14.e5! dxe5 15.fxe5 ♘h5 (15...♘d5?! 16.♘xd5 exd5 17.0-0↑) 16.0-0 0-0 17.♖e1!↑, and both black knights (on a5 and h5) are vulnerable.

9.♘f3



Also interesting is 9.♕b5+!?, transposing to line B) on the next move.

9...a6

Defending against ♕b5+.

A) After 9...exd5? 10.e5! dxe5 11.fxe5 ♘e4 12.♘xd5 ♖d8 13.♕f4 (13.♕c4!?) 13...♕e6 14.c4!N White is winning due to his advantage in development;

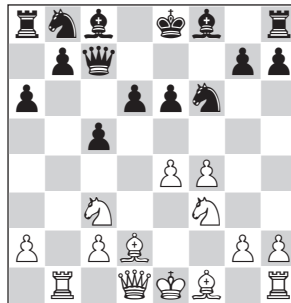
B) A 'correspondence attack' appears after 9...♕e7 10.♕b5+! ♕d7 11.dxe6 fxe6 12.♕c4!? ♘c6 13.0-0 0-0 14.♘g5 ♘d4 15.e5!↑ Wecke-Fuhr, cr 2008.

10.dxe6



WEAPON: The engine suggests 10.♕c4!N, supporting the push e4-e5, even after 10...b5 11.e5!±.

10...fxe6



PUZZLE: How should White continue?

11.e5!

We have to gain the initiative in the centre.

11...dxe5 12.fxe5 ♘g4

12...♘fd7 13.♘g5!+–.

13.♕d3!

White's superior development gives him the advantage.

13...♘xe5 14.♕e4!?

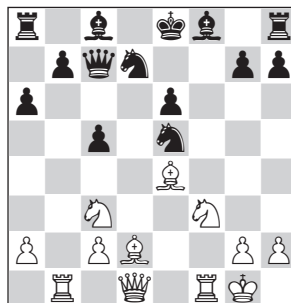
Human thinking: the bishop is very well placed on e4, controlling all the light-squared diagonals.

However, according to the engine, after 14.0-0! or 14.♘g5! White should win in a direct attack.

14...♘bd7!?

14...♕d6 is not enough: 15.♘xe5 ♕xe5 16.0-0!+–.

15.0-0



The critical moment of the game.

15... ♖f7?

After this retreat White definitively gains the initiative. But it is difficult to find the best defence in such situations:

A) 15... ♖f6 16. ♗g5!? ♕d6 17. ♖xh7!↑;

B) 15... ♕e7? 16. ♕f4! 0-0 17. ♖xe5 ♜xf4 18. ♖h5!, winning.

16. ♗g5!

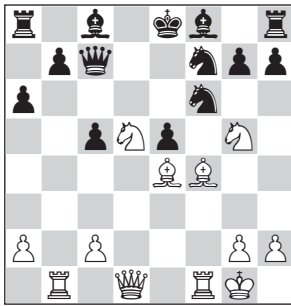
Now Black's position is hopeless.

16... ♖f6 17. ♕f4!

Gaining more tempi for development.

17. ♖xf7!? ♖xf7 18. ♖f3→.

17...e5 18. ♗d5!



All White's pieces are working in harmony. Strategy and tactics in action!

18... ♖d7

18... ♗xd5 19. ♕xd5+→.

19. ♖xf7 ♖xf7 20. ♕xe5 ♕e7

21. ♖h5+ ♖g8 22. ♕xf6 gxf6

23. ♜xf6!

Black resigned.

Summary:

After 3... ♖b6, the b2-pawn should be sacrificed. After that, White's key motif is to prepare the e4-e5 advance in the most effective way.

Game 6 – Blocked centre:

3... ♖b6 and 6/7...e5

Dragutin Sahovic

2370

Lars Degerman

2405

Biel 1990 (7)

1.d4 ♖f6 2. ♕g5 c5



PUZZLE: Remember this transposition from the main alternative: 2... ♖e4 (Chapter 2) 3. ♕f4 c5 4.f3 ♖f6 5.d5 ♖b6 and now 6. ♖c3!? (6.e4!?: 6. ♕c1!?) 6... ♖xb2 7. ♕d2 ♖b6 8.e4 d6 9.f4! leads to Games 5 and 6.

3.d5 ♖b6 4. ♖c3!

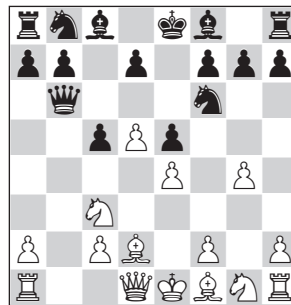
As in the previous game, this gambit is White's best option.

4... ♖xb2 5. ♕d2 ♖b6 6.e4 d6

Preparing a blockade in the centre this time.



WEAPON: The premature 6... e5?! allows White to start an immediate attack with his kingside pawns: 7.g4! (7.f4 d6 see main game).



analysis diagram

With this advance, White gains a few extra tempi and even more space. 7...h6 (otherwise, 7...d6 8.g5! ♖fd7

9.h4± Clarke-Cole, Lichess.org 2021) 8.f4! d6 9.f5! g6 10.h4! gxf5 (Flom-Dvoirys, Herzliya 2019) and now best is 11.♖b1! ♔d8 12.exf5 ♘bd7 13.♗h3!? with a large advantage.

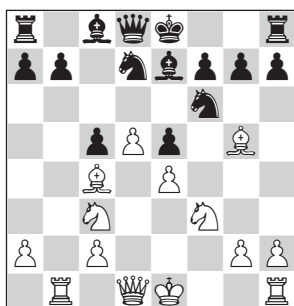
7.f4! e5

Black blockades à la Nimzowitsch; a genuine classical concept. However, in this game, he ends up being blocked by himself!

8.f5!

After some more study, I really liked this option: White will follow up with g2-g4-g5!

The alternative is to open up the game with 8.fxe5!?, e.g. 8...dxe5 9.♘f3 ♘bd7 10.♖c4!? ♕e7 11.♖b1!? ♔d8 12.♖g5!



analysis diagram



TRICK: 12...h6? (12...♖a5 13.♖d2⊘) 13.d6! hxg5 14.♗xg5!→ 0-0 15.0-0 ♘b6 16.dxe7 ♖xe7 17.♖xb6! axb6 18.♗d5 ♗xd5 19.♖h5+— Bruzon Batista-Nijboer, Wijk aan Zee 2004.

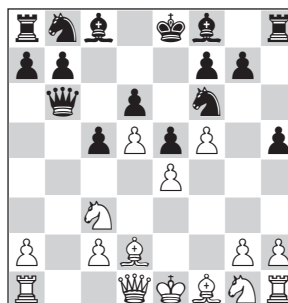
8...♖e7



PLAN: For instance, 8...c4 9.g4! h6 10.h4!? etc.



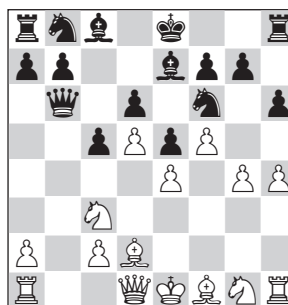
PLAN: Black can build another block with 8...h5 but in this way he weakens other points in his fortress.



analysis diagram

9.♗f3 ♕e7 10.♖c4 ♘bd7 11.♖e2 ♖c7 12.a4! ♗b6 13.♖b5+ ♕d7 14.a5! with complete zugzwang, Soors-Navalgund, Chennai 2011.

9.g4! h6 10.h4!



In this attractive position, Black is already lost; the upcoming advance g4-g5 is a deadly threat!

10...♖d8

Here are some useful sample lines:



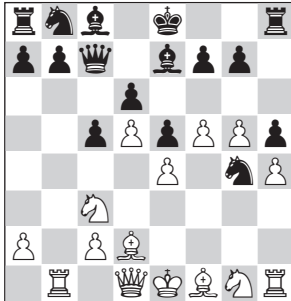
PLAN: 10...a6 11.♖f3 ♖d8 12.g5!+— Spörk-Sandhöfner, Oberwart 2009.



PLAN: 10...♗a6 11.♖b1 ♖d8 12.♖f3 ♗d7 (Prié-Cossin,



Caen 2011) and now 13.g5!+-;
 PLAN: 10...h5 11.♖b1 ♜c7
 12.g5 ♘g4



analysis diagram

13.♙e2 (13.♘ge2 and
 14.♘g3+-) 13...a6 14.a4 g6
 15.♙xg4 hxg4 16.f6 ♙d8
 17.♘ge2 c4 18.♘g3 ♜c5 19.♚e2
 ♙a5 20.h5! with a winning
 attack, Prié-Tripoteau, France
 tt 2011/12.

11.♜f3 ♘h7

11...♘fd7 12.♜g3!

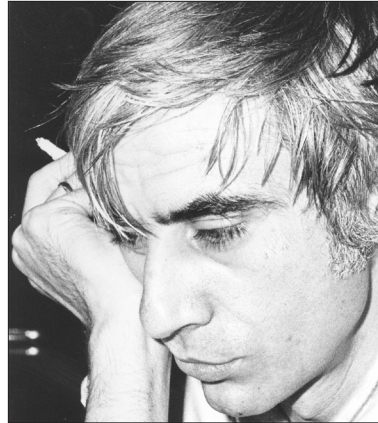
12.♜g3!

There is no hurry; the black army is restricted on the back ranks. 12.g5 was possible, but more complicated.

12...♙g8 13.♘f3 f6



Somehow Black defends against g4-g5. But now White moves the game to the other side of the board:



The creative Yugoslav GM Dragutin Sahovic (1940-2005) played a very nice stem game with the strategic plan 8.f5!?

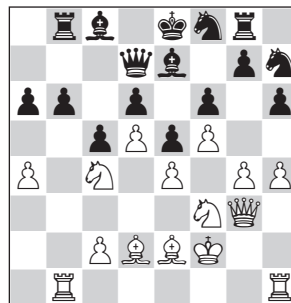
14.♖b1 a6 15.a4 ♘d7 16.♘d1

Intending ♘d1-e3-c4.

Any other solid plan would lead to the same result: 16.♙c4!/?/♙e2!/? and 17.♙f2, connecting the rooks first.

16...b6 17.♘e3 ♖b8 18.♙e2 ♘df8

19.♚f2 ♜d7 20.♘c4+-



20...♜xa4

Facing defeat, Black has to initiate some tactics, but the conditions are very unfavourable for him – everything is winning for White... 20...♜a7 21.g5!+/-.

21.♖xb6 ♖xb6 22.♘xb6 ♜xc2

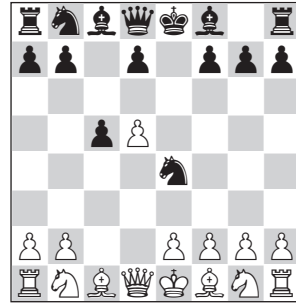
23.♘xc8 ♜xe4 24.♙xa6 ♜xd5

25.♙b5+ ♚d8 26.♘b6 ♜b3 27.♙c4

♙xb6 28. ♖xg8 c4+ 29. ♔g2 ♜c6
 30. ♝c1 d5 31. ♜e1 ♖c5 32. ♗a5+
 ♜e7 33. ♜d2 e4 34. ♗xd5 exf3+
 35. ♗xf3 ♜d6 36. ♜e2+ 1-0

Summary of the Gambit variation:

Obviously, Games 5 and 6 cast great doubt on Black's counterplan with 3...♜b6 and 4...♜xb2.



analysis diagram

Game 7 – The knight jump 3...♗e4
Jonathan Ramirez 2286
Aivars Kazoks 2341
 cr 2016

1.d4 ♗f6 2. ♗g5 c5



PUZZLE: We can also get to this line through the move order from Chapter 2: 2...♗e4 3. ♗f4 c5 and now 4.d5 etc.

3.d5 ♗e4!?



This position is important to complete our study of White's option 3.d5.

4. ♗f4



WEAPON: White can also start from scratch by playing 4. ♗c1!? versus the 'over-developed' ♗e4: 4...e6 5.c4 exd5 (5...b5 6.g3!?) 6.cxd5±.

The databases give only 9 games with this position.



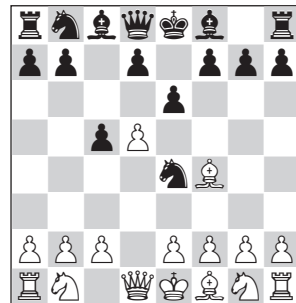
TRICK: 6...d6?? (2 games; 6...g6 7.g3!? can lead to the main Benoni Defence with g2-g3) 7. ♜a4+!N, winning the knight on e4.

4...♜b6

The most popular move, but the paradox of this line is that Black's two active moves may be useless.

A) 4...g6 5.f3! leads to King's Indian Sämisch structures, see Game 10 in Chapter 2;

B) The Benoni break 4...e6!? is probably the best idea for Black against 3.d5. However, he has to know (or find) the main defensive trick on the next moves.



analysis diagram

5.f3 (5.dxe6 fxe6=) 5...♟f6 (the safest defence is 5...♞d6!? 6.♞xd6 ♟xd6 7.e4 b5!?, which seems pretty balanced) 6.e4! exd5 7.exd5 d6± (now White has a space advantage) 8.♟c3 (8.♞b5+!? ♟bd7 9.♞e2+! ♞e7 10.c4!?N with the idea 10...a6 11.♞xd7+ ♞xd7 12.g4! 0-0-0 13.h4! ♞e8 14.♞xe7 ♞xe7 15.♟f2±) 8...♞e7 9.♞d2 a6 (9...0-0 10.g4!?) 10.a4 0-0 11.♟ge2 ♞e8 12.g4!↑



analysis diagram

12...♞a5 (intending ...b7-b5; if 12...♟bd7, 13.♟g3!) 13.♟g3! b5 14.g5 b4. This was the game Stefanova-Shirov, Drammen 2005. Here, according to the engine, after the correct 15.♟d1! White would have been completely winning.

5. ♞c1!

5.♞c1?! c4!⇒; 5.♟d2 ♞xb2 6.♟xe4 ♞b4+ 7.c3 ♞xe4 8.e3 g5!⇒.



This paradoxical concept, the manoeuvre ♞c1-g5-f4-c1, appeared for the first time in the early 1970s (Alburt-Kupreichik, Leningrad 1974). See also the next chapter on 2...♟e4 for similar ideas.

5...g6

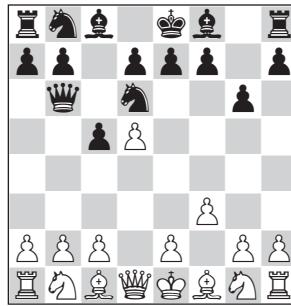
A) 5...e6 6.f3 – Chapter 2;

B) 5...c4?! 6.e3 e6 (6...♞a5+ 7.c3±)

7.f3 ♟f6 8.♞xc4!N.


6.f3! ♟d6

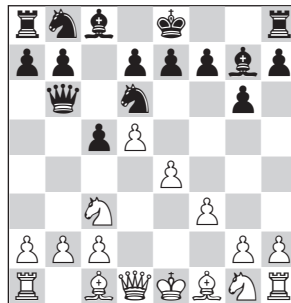
6...♟f6 7.e4± would be a favourable Sämisch KID for White.



Intending ...f7-f5.

7.e4 ♞g7 8.c3!?

 WEAPON: Also strong is 8.♟c3!?



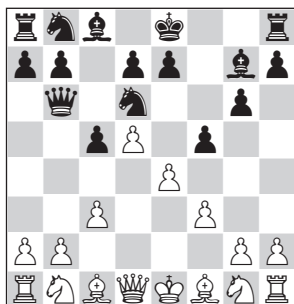
analysis diagram

8...f5 (8...0-0 9.h4!?) 9.exf5 ♟xf5 (9...gxf5 10.♟h3!?) 10.g4! ♟d4 (10...♟h4 11.d6!; 10...♟d6 11.h4!;

10...♘h6 11.♘h3!?) 11.♘e4!±
Orzechowski-Pedzich, Poland
tt 1998.

8...0-0

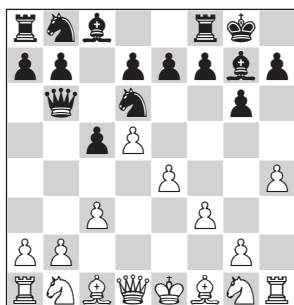
WEAPON: Similar is 8...f5



analysis diagram

9.♘d2 (9.exf5!?) 9...0-0 10.h4!
(10.exf5!? Santacruz-Granda
Zuniga, Santiago de Chile
1987) 10...e6 (10...fxe4
11.h5! main game) 11.♘c4±
Osmak-Gueci, Batumi 2019.

9.h4!



A common advance against the fianchetto.

9...f5

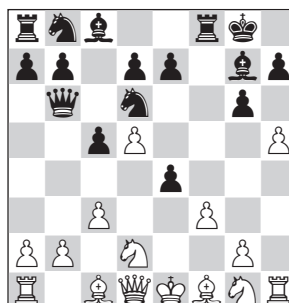
This is the main idea behind Black's opening plan with ...♘f6-e4-d6.

9...♘a6 10.h5 e6 11.♘a3± Zordick-Dahm, cr 2017.

10.h5!

Also good is 10.♘d2!?, transposing to the above weapon.

10...fxe4 11.♘d2!



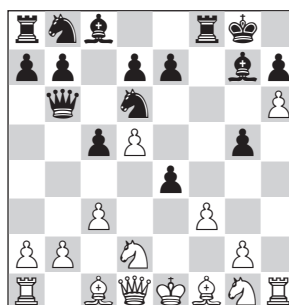
Oddly enough, with only a single piece developed (the ♘d2) White's position is already winning, thanks to his favourable pawn structure! Black cannot bring his pieces into play – they are stuck on the queenside.

11...g5

Here are a few other lines:

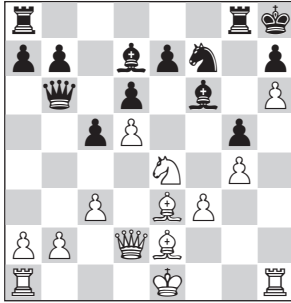
- A) 11...♙e5 12.♚c2!;
- B) 11...e3 12.♘c4+-;
- C) 11...exf3 12.♘gxf3+-;
- D) 11...c4 12.hxg6 hxg6 13.♚c2!+-.

12.h6!



Summarizing: Black's attempts to save himself have not led to anything good, while White's attacking machine is running rapidly.

12... ♖f6 13. ♖c2
 13. ♖e2!?, 13. fxe4!?.
 13... ♗h8 14. ♗h3! e3 15. ♗c4 ♗xc4
 16. ♖xc4 d6 17.g4! ♗d7 18. ♖xe3
 ♗e5 19. ♖e2 ♖g8 20. ♖d2 ♗f7
 21. ♗f2! ♖d7 22. ♗e4→



22... ♖a5 23.b4 cxb4 24.cxb4 ♖d8
 25. ♖c1 ♖g6 26. ♗f1 b5 27. ♖h5
 a5 28.bxa5 ♖xa5 29. ♗xg5 ♗xg5
 30. ♖xg5 ♖a4 31. ♖xf6+ exf6 32. ♖d1
 ♖a3 33. ♖b3 ♖a8 34. ♖f4 ♖c8
 35. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 36. ♖h2 ♖f8 37. ♖c2
 f5 38. ♖xf5
 Black resigned.

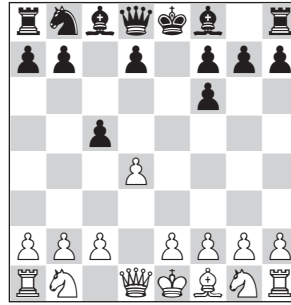
Game 8 – The old main Trompowsky:
 3. ♖xf6 and 5. ♖c1

Jan-Krzysztof Duda 2731
Hikaru Nakamura 2749

St Louis Showdown blitz 2019 (23)

1.d4 ♗f6 2. ♖g5 c5 3. ♖xf6!?
 This is the original Trompowsky motif, hoping to exploit Black's damaged pawn structure in the long run.

3...gxf6
 Instead 3...exf6 is playable, but it leaves too many weak squares in the centre:



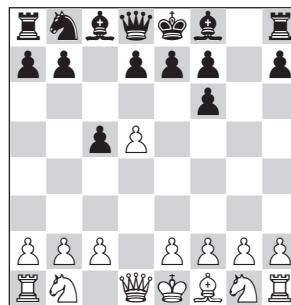
analysis diagram

A) 4. ♗c3!? cxd4 (4...d5 5.e3±)
 5. ♖xd4 ♗c6 6. ♖e4+! ♖e7 7.e3 0-0
 8. ♖c4↑ and White controls the strategic d5-square;
 B) 4.e3 ♖b6 5. ♖c4!? ♖xb2 6. ♗d2∞
 is an interesting gambit, Gavrijski-Veselinov, cr 2017.



PLAN: 4.c3 (the most solid idea) 4... ♖b6 5. ♖b3 ♖xb3 (5...cxd4 6. ♖xb6±) 6.axb3 cxd4 7.cxd4 ♗c6 8.e3 d5 9. ♗c3±. Black's pawn on d5 will remain a weakness in this ending, Shmirina-Kuzubov, Ukraine tt 1999.

4.d5!?



Again, the Benoni structure is the best option for White: the closed centre limits the activity of Black's pieces.

4... ♖b6!?

Compared with 3.d5 (Games 1-7), here the attack on b2 is the main and critical line.

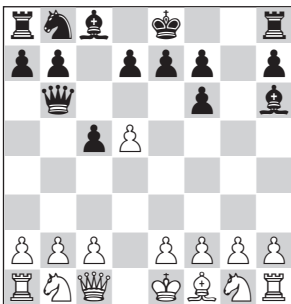
PLAN: White can also continue according to general concepts, for example: 4... f5 5.♘d2!? ♙g7 6.c3 d6 7.e4! fxe4 8.♗xe4 ♚b6 9.♚d2±
PUZZLE: 4...b5 leads to Game 3.

5. ♚c1

This has always been the basic plan: White defends the b-pawn and plays for a structural advantage. However, as will become clear on moves 5, 9, and later, Black has enough resources to defend. Perhaps for this reason, a more promising alternative is the gambit idea 5.♘d2!?, see next game.

5...f5

Black's option 5...♙h6!? is an attempt to complicate, using ...f5-f4 as a battering ram. But in the end, Black's bishop is better positioned on the g7-a1 diagonal.



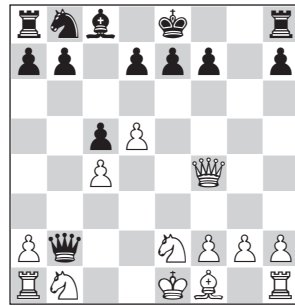
analysis diagram

6.e3 f5 and now 7.c4 (I would prefer a strategic solution: 7.♘e2!? d6 8.c4 ♘d7 9.♘bc3 ♘e5 10.♗f4 when at



The final score in this event was Nakamura 29.5-Duda 18.5, but the Polish player had a plus score with the Trompowsky.

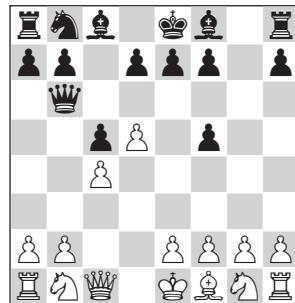
least White is safe and solid) 7...f4! leads to a well-known artificial line: 8.exf4 ♙xf4 9.♚xf4 (9.♚c3 ♚b4 is balanced) 9...♚xb2 10.♘e2∞.



analysis diagram

This position is known to be very tricky.

6.c4



6...♙g7!

Black has activated his two pieces ($\text{♔}+\text{♕}$).

A) $6...\text{♕h6?!}$ is too late: $7.\text{♖c2!}$
 ♗b4+ $8.\text{♗c3!}$ ♖xc4 $9.\text{e4!}$ Corke-Kahn, Budapest 2009;

B) $6...\text{♗b4+?!}$ $7.\text{♗c3!}$ (playing for the initiative; $7.\text{♗d2!}$ is a more solid option, e.g. $7...\text{♕g7}$ $8.\text{♖b1}$ $d6$ $9.\text{e3}$ ♗d7 $10.\text{♗e2!}?\text{N}$, intending $11.\text{♗g3}$ when the knight puts pressure on Black's kingside) $7...\text{♖xc4}$ $8.\text{e4}$ ♗b4 $9.\text{a3}$ ♗b6 $10.\text{exf5}\pm$.



analysis diagram

White keeps a positional advantage after $10...\text{♗f6}$ ($10...\text{♕g7}$ $11.\text{♗f3}\pm$ Bagirov-Vuckovic, Aix-les-Bains 2011) $11.\text{♕d3}$ $d6$ $12.\text{♖c2}$ ♗d7 $13.\text{♗f3}$ ♗e5 $14.\text{♗xe5}$ ♖xe5+ $15.\text{♕f1!}$ Fels-Slamenik, cr 2009.

7.♗c3 d6 8.e3



8...♗d7



PLAN: If $8...e5$ $9.\text{dxe6!}$? ($9.\text{♗ge2!}$?) $9...fxe6$ $10.\text{♕e2}$ 0-0 $11.\text{♗h3!}?\pm$ Zegarac-Maric, Belgrade tt 2018.

9.♗f3

This natural move is the second most popular.

A) White usually transfers this knight to the f4-outpost, with complex play. But if now $9.\text{♗h3}$, Black obtains good counterplay after $9...\text{♗b4!}$ and $10...\text{♗b6!}$, Almeida Saenz-Hernandez Guerrero, Aguascalientes 2008;

B) More often White prefers $9.\text{♖c2}$.



analysis diagram

However, the resulting play is fairly balanced. Here are a few typical lines:

B1) $9...\text{♗e5!}$ is premature due to $10.\text{♗h3!}\pm$;

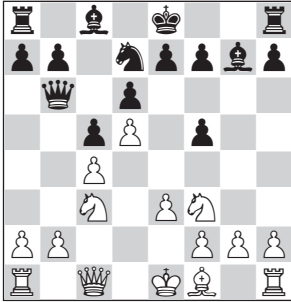
B2) $9...0-0!$ is not good either, in view of $10.\text{♗ge2!}$ ♗f6 $11.\text{♗g3!}\pm$ Malek-Neukirchner, Wiesbaden 2016;

B3) But $9...\text{♗f6}$ $10.\text{♕d3}$ e5! ? is nearly equal, as in the next line;

B4) After $9...e5!$ Black seems OK: $10.\text{♗ge2}$ ($10.\text{dxe6 fxe6}\infty$) $10...\text{♗f6}$

11. ♖g3 h5!? ⇒ Kobo-Santos Latasa, Gibraltar 2020;

B5) 9... ♖a5!? (intending 10... ♕xc3 to block the position) 10. ♘f3 (10. ♘h3 ♘b6!? ⇒) 10... ♕xc3+ (10... b5∞) 11. bxc3 ♖g8 12. g3 ♘f6= and a draw in 25 moves, Yakubboev-Adhiban, Hamedan 2018.

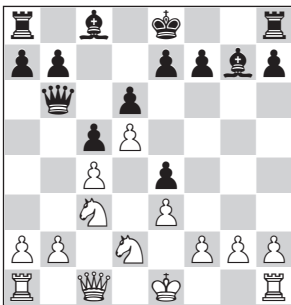


9...e5!?N

With a complex struggle.

A) 9... ♘e5 10. ♘d2!? 0-0 11. ♕e2 ♘g6 12. 0-0 e5 13. f4!± De-Hamilton, cr 1998;

B) More common is 9... ♘f6!? 10. ♕d3 ♘e4 11. ♕xe4 (11. a4 ♘xc3=) 11... fxe4 12. ♘d2.



analysis diagram

Two knights vs two bishops. The position is balanced, but Black should not castle short here: 12... f5 13. 0-0 0-0?! (better is 13... ♕d7=)

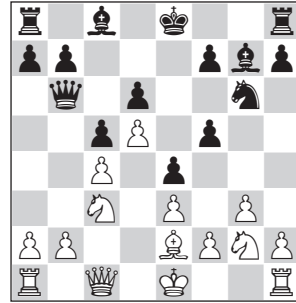
14. f3 exf3 15. ♖xf3 ♕d7 16. ♖c2± and White continues with ♖af1/ b2-b3/ ♘c3-e2-f4 (2½-½ for White).

10. ♘h4

10. dxe6 fxe6 is unclear.

10... ♘f8 11. g3 ♘g6 12. ♘g2 e4

13. ♕e2



The key moment for Black in this line.

13... ♖a5!?

Preparing 14. ♕xc3 to block the position.

13... ♕d7!? or 13... a6!? are more flexible options.

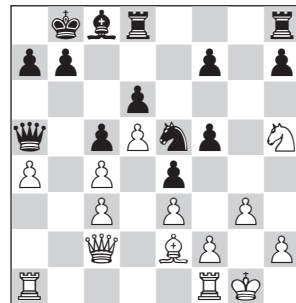
14. 0-0 ♕xc3

Still, 14... ♕d7∞.

15. bxc3 ♘e5 16. a4 ♕d7 17. ♘f4

0-0-0 18. ♘h5 ♖b8 19. ♖c2 ♕c8

19... ♖c7!? 20. ♖fb1 ♖b8 looks like a fortress.



Fighting in the centre – Games

Game 36 – A passive plan:
...♗e7 and ...0-0

Iulija Osmak 2355

Laura Unuk 2334

Kiev m W 2017 (3)

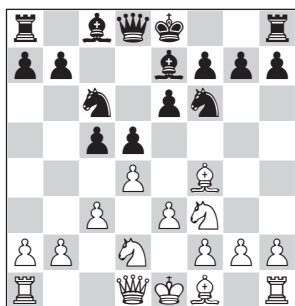
1.d4 ♗f6 2.♗f3 d5 3.♖f4 e6 4.e3 ♗e7

This is not a bad move, but the plan of quick castling itself may be too passive.

More logical is 4...♗d6, see the next games.



PLAN: 4...c5 5.♗bd2 ♗c6 6.c3 ♗e7! (6...♗d6 is Game 38).



analysis diagram

We will now have a look at a multitude of motifs that are characteristic of this opening: 7.♗e5!? (timely preventing ...♗h5; 7.♗d3 ♗h5!?!; 7.h3 ♗d6!?! and White cannot play his typical plan with ♗g3, ♗e5 and f2-f4) 7...0-0 (7...♗d7 8.♗xd7!?! ♗xd7 9.♗d3 0-0 10.h4!?!; 7...♗xe5 8.dxe5 ♗d7 9.h4!♗ ♗xh4? 10.♗g4 g5 11.♗xh4!+–). Black is not in a hurry with his reaction in



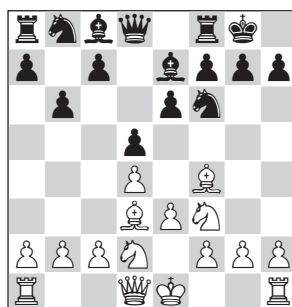
The match between these two stars in progress.

the centre: 8.♗d3 ♗d7 9.♗df3 (9.h4!?) 9...♗dxe5 (9...f6 10.♗xc6 bxc6 11.0-0±) 10.dxe5 (with the pawn on e5 White gets better attacking prospects on the kingside) 10...f5□ (10...f6? 11.h4!↑ – this move supports ideas of ♗xh7+ and ♗g5) 11.h4! c4 12.♗c2 b5 13.g4!→ Gorovets-Ynojosa Aponte, cr 2015.

5.♗bd2

5.c4 transposes to the normal Queen's Gambit.

5...0-0 6.♗d3 b6



7.♗e5!?

Also in the spirit of the position is 7.♗e2!?! to prevent ...♗a6, or 7.c3 ♗a6 8.♗c2!?!.

7...♔b7
 7...♙a6 8.♙xa6 ♘xa6 9.♚e2 ♘b8
 10.h4!↑
 8.♚f3!



Black has played the opening passively, and with this move my student starts a typical London System kingside attack.

8...c5

The stem game for this line saw 8...♘bd7 9.h4! (Vlatko Kovacevic; 9.♚h3! is a piece assault similar to the main game) 9...♘xe5 10.dxe5 ♘d7 11.0-0-0 ♘c5 12.♙xh7+! ♙xh7 13.♚h5+ ♙g8 14.♘f3 f6 15.♘g5!→ Kovacevic-O'Donnell, Toronto 1990.

9.c3 ♘c6 10.♚h3!

Actually, here the queen manoeuvre ♚d1-f3-h3 (instead of h2-h4) wins the game!

10...♞e8

Black is trying to carry out ...h7-h6 and ...♙f8.

- A) 10...h6 11.♙xh6!; and
- B) 10...g6 11.♙h6 ♞e8 12.f4 are

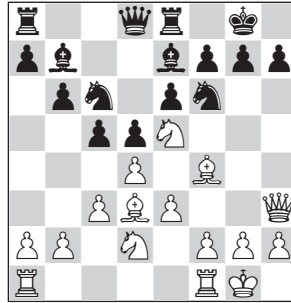
both winning for White.

11.♘df3

This allows Black to ease her defence a little by exchanging a pair of knights.



PLAN: Strong enough was the simple 11.0-0!?



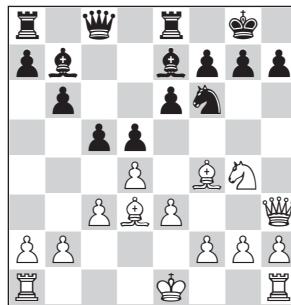
analysis diagram

with the further idea of ♞ad1 and then ♘df3: 11...g6? (11...h6 12.♞ad1±) 12.♘df3 ♙f8 13.♙g5 ♙g7 14.♚h4+- with a deadly pin on f6, Hracek-Jirovsky, Prague blitz 2016.

11...♘xe5 12.♘xe5 ♚c8

- A) 12...h6 13.g4!;
- B) With 12...♙d6 Black can try to exchange the strong knight, but after 13.0-0-0! her position is still bad.

13.♘g4!+-



All roads lead to Rome, but this one is the shortest!

13...g6

13...♘e4 also loses after 14.f3.

14.♘h6+ ♙f8

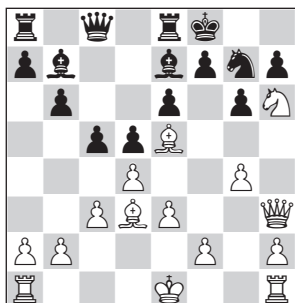
On 14...♗g7 would follow 15. ♖e5 ♗d8 16.f4! ♖d6 17.0-0 ♗f8 18.f5! with a devastating attack.

15. ♖e5 ♗h5

There is no defence.

If 15...♗d8, 16.♗f3 wins a piece after g4-g5.

16.g4 ♗g7



PUZZLE: White to move.

17. ♗xf7! ♖xf7 18. ♗xh7 ♗g8

19. ♖xg6+ ♖f8 20.h4!

Bringing the rook into the attack via h3.

20... ♗d8 21. ♗h3

And Black resigned. Anyone who thinks it is possible to counter the London with passive play is quite wrong!

Game 37 – Rubinstein's set-up:

...♖d6 without ♖g3

Magnus Carlsen 2863

Shakhriyar Mamedyarov 2764

Steinitz Memorial online blitz 2020 (3)

1.d4 d5 2. ♖f4 ♗f6

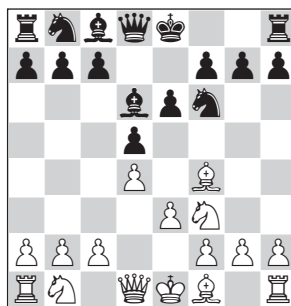


PLAN: 2...e6 3.e3 ♖d6 4.♗f3!?
 ♖xf4 5.exf4 ♗d6 6.♗d2 ♗e7
 7.♗c3± Moskalenko-Narciso
 Dublan, Barcelona 2021.

3.e3 e6 4.♗f3 ♖d6!?



Current World Champion Magnus Carlsen is well-known for his universal style and his endgame technique. In the opening phase, his main strength lies in his versatility and his ability to avoid the home preparation of his opponents. Against an ultra-dynamic player like Mamedyarov, the London System is a logical choice!



According to GM Eljanov, this is the best move order for Black. After making these moves, depending on White's set-up, he will follow up with ...c7-c5 or ...b7-b6. Previously, Black more often played ...c7-c5 and then ...♖d6. However, this gives White additional possibilities related to dxc5 or ♖b5+ in many lines (see also Game 38).

5. ♗bd2!?

White does not move his London bishop, continuing his development instead. This is a set-up Rubinstein used very often, and which has also become very popular recently.

5.♔g3 will be examined in Game 38.

5...0-0

The stem game saw 5...♔xf4 6.exf4.



analysis diagram

After ...♔xf4 and exf4, the ensuing pawn structure allows White to control the e5-square and thereby exert pressure on the centre (see also the PLAN indicated after the next move). 6...c5 7.dxc5 ♖c7 8.g3 ♜xc5 9.♔d3 ♘c6 10.c3 0-0 11.0-0 h6 (11...b5?! Rubinstein-Capablanca, London 1922) 12.♘b3 ♜b6 13.♞e1±, Black does not have any active plan, Rubinstein-Tartakower, London 1922.



6.c3!?

In this London line, the delay of ♔d3 is usually directed against Black's plan of ...b7-b6 and ...♔a6. White wants to take ♔f1x♔a6 right away, without wasting a tempo.



PLAN: However, 6.♔d3 also has its advantages: 6...♔xf4 (6...b6 7.♘e5!?, see the main game; 6...c5 7.dxc5!? ♔xc5 8.0-0 ♘c6 9.c4!?!±) 7.exf4 ♜d6 8.g3 b6 9.♞e2 c5 10.c3 a5 11.0-0 ♔a6 12.♔xa6 ♘xa6 13.♞fd1!? ♘c7 14.c4! a4 15.a3 cxd4 16.♞ac1↑ Jumabayev-Yilmaz, Sharjah 2021.

6...b6

Eljanov: 'This is a very solid way to deal with the London System, but it wasn't well known...'



PLAN: In Eljanov's opinion, starting with 6...c5 gives White additional opportunities, e.g. 7.♔d3.



analysis diagram

Compared to the systems with ♔g3 (Game 38), the idea of 7...♞c7?! followed by ...♘bd7 and ...e6-e5 does not work in this move order due to lack of time: 8.♔xd6 ♜xd6 9.♘e5!

b6 10.f4 (I prefer 10.h4! or 10.♖e2!? which works very effectively in practice) 10...♗a6 11.♗xa6 ♘xa6 12.g4! and White retains some initiative on the kingside. At the same time, Black's counterplay is not easy to see.

7. ♘e5!?

If anything, White has powerful attacking potential. Recent games have convincingly refuted Eljanov's theory (and as we shall see, even he himself did!):

🔪 WEAPON: For example, 7.h4!? is another interesting option.

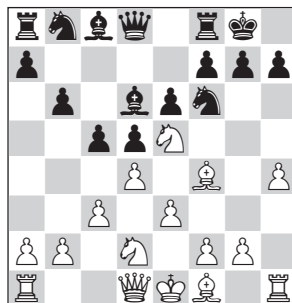


analysis diagram

This was played in only 6 games in the 2020-2021 period. 7...♗b7 (7...c5 8.h5!? – only 3 games; 7...♗a6 8.♗xa6 ♘xa6 9.h5! Duda-Giri, Speed Chess 2021) 8.h5! h6 9.♗e5! with good attacking prospects on the kingside, Matlakov-Tristan, Titled Tuesday blitz 2020.

7...c5 8. ♗d3

🔪 WEAPON: White could still postpone ♗d3 a little longer: 8.h4!?



analysis diagram

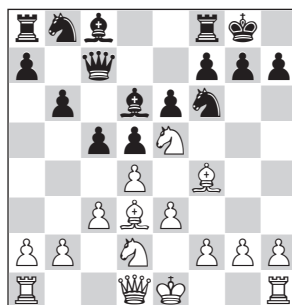
8...♖c7 9.h5! ♗bd7 10.♗df3 cxd4 11.exd4 ♗e4 12.♗d3↑ Van Foreest-Kriebel, Prague 2020.

8... ♗b7

This sloppy old move usually results in some version of Kovacevic's immortal attack.



PLAN: Eljanov: 'At this point, Black's most precise move order seems to be the one starting with 8...♖c7!.'



analysis diagram

His main idea is simplification with ...♗a6 or ...♗bd7. Even so, recent games demonstrate that Black's position is not so pleasant: 9.h4! (quite similar is 9.♖f3 ♗a6 (9...♗bd7 10.♖g3! Erigaisi-Shankland,

Kolkata rapid 2021)
 10. ♖xa6 ♜xa6 11.h4!
 Prohaszka-Berczes, Ajka rapid
 2021) 9... ♖a6 (9... ♜bd7 10. ♜df3
 ♖b7 (10... ♜e4 11.h5!?) 11.h5!
 Donchenko-Belova, Titled
 Tuesday blitz 2020) 10. ♖xa6
 ♜xa6 11.h5! ♜d7 (11... ♜b8
 12.h6!) 12.h6!↑ Demchenko-So,
 Khanty-Mansiysk 2019.

9.h4!?

This h-pawn trust is becoming the main resource in this line (as also noted in our introduction).

WEAPON: However, in this position, 9. ♖g5!? is also strong.



analysis diagram

Back to the Trompowsky!
 Thus, White also clears the way for the f2-pawn: 9... ♖e7
 (9... ♜c6? 10. ♖xf6!) 10.h4
 (or 10. ♖f3!? ♜bd7 11. ♖h3↑)
 10... ♜bd7 11. ♜xd7 ♖xd7
 (11... ♜xd7 12. ♖h5!) 12. ♖xf6!?
 ♖xf6 13.f4!↑ with the further
 plan of g2-g4-g5 or ♜f3.

9... ♜c6 10. ♖f3!?

I watched this game live online:
 at first glance, especially in a blitz
 game, the text seems like a natural

move, but it turns out to be a waste
 of time.

WEAPON: Actually, Eljanov
 himself demonstrated how
 White should react in this
 position: 10.h5!



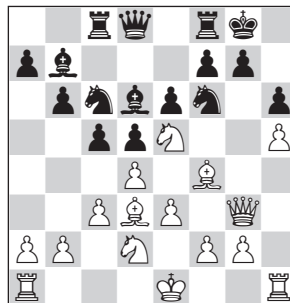
analysis diagram

10... ♖c7 (10... h6 11. ♖f3!↑
 Demchenko-Svane, Leon
 online blitz 2020) 11. ♜df3
 ♜e4 12.h6 g6 13. ♜xc6
 ♖xc6 (13... ♖xf4 14.exf4±
 Mousavi-Hakemi, Teheran
 2021) 14. ♖xd6 ♖xd6 15. ♜e5!↑
 Eljanov-Solon, Titled Tuesday
 blitz 2021.

10... ♖c8?

A strange error by the Azeri star
 that immediately leads to collapse.
 Black must fight for the e5-square
 by means of 10... ♖c7!∞.

11.h5! h6 12. ♖g3!+–



Now the black fortress falls apart like a house of cards.

12...♞e8 13.♟xh6 cxd4 14.♟xg7
 ♞xg7 15.h6 ♟f6 16.hxg7 ♟xg7
 17.♟h7+ ♞h8 18.♞xf7+ ♜xf7
 19.♟g6+ ♞g8 20.♟xf7+ ♞xf7
 21.♟xd6 dxc3 22.bxc3 ♞e5



23.0-0

23.♜h5!

23...d4 24.f3 dxe3 25.♞e4 e2 26.♜f2
 ♞g8 27.♟xe6+ ♞h8 28.♟h3+ ♞g8
 29.♜xe2 ♜f8 30.♟e6+ ♞h8 31.♞g5
 ♞xf3+ 32.♞xf3 ♟xf3 33.♜f2 ♟xc3
 34.♜af1 1-0

Summary of Rubinstein's set-up:

From move 7 onwards, White's best attempt is to push the h-pawn!

Game 38 – The main line: ...♟d6 ♟g3

Jorden van Forest 2615

Rasmus Svane 2552

Germany Bundesliga 2016/17 (6)

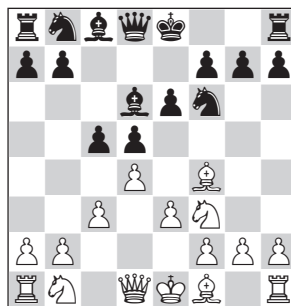
1.d4 d5 2.♟f4 ♞f6 3.e3 e6 4.♞d2!?

Sometimes it is very difficult to spot the difference between two apparently similar move orders.

WEAPON: Another basic position arises after 4.♞f3 c5 5.c3 ♟d6.



It's neither a coincidence nor a surprise that Dutch grandmaster Jorden van Forest recently joined the World Champion's team.



analysis diagram

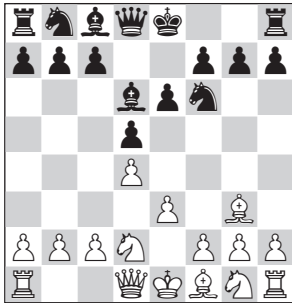
After the previous move ...c7-c5, an additional option is 6.♟b5+!? ♞c6 7.♟xc6+ bxc6 8.♟xd6 ♟xd6 9.♟a4 0-0!? 10.♟a3 (10.♞bd2 cxd4 11.cxd4 c5⇒) 10...♞e4 11.♞fd2 e5!? (11...cxd4?! 12.♞xe4± Aronian-So, New In Chess Classic KO rapid 2021) 12.♞xe4 dxe4 13.♟xc5 ♟g6 14.♞d2∞ Sevian-So, St Louis 2021.

4...c5

Compared to the previous game, here Black continues first 4...c5 and

...♖c6 and then ...♗d6, with direct pressure on e5.

🔪 WEAPON: However, let's also have a look at 4...♗d6 5.♗g3 (the main move in this game; remember, 5.♖gf3!?, the move order based on postponing ♗g3, is getting very popular lately (Game 37))



analysis diagram

5...0-0 6.♖gf3!? (White adds control to the key e5-square and delays ♗d3, which makes the exchange via a6 unfavourable for Black) 6...c5 7.c3! ♖c7 (the alternative 7...b6!? follows a similar strategy – after ♗d3 to answer with ...♗a6: 8.a4! (if 8.♗e5, then Black has another useful move: 8...♖c7!?) 8...♖c6 9.♗b5∞ Artemiev-Halkias, Doha Blitz 2016). Anticipating 8.♗d3 ♗bd7! with equality. Nevertheless, since the knight is on f3, White again has an additional plan: 8.♗e5 ♗bd7 9.f4 ♗e4! and now 10.♗xe4! (instead of 10.♗d3?! suggested by Eljanov) 10...dxe4 11.♖c4!↑ with 13 games = 78% for White.

5.♖gf3 ♗c6

If 5...♗d6 6.dxc5!? ♗xc5 7.♗d3 ♗c6 8.0-0 0-0 9.c4± is a possible line, also pointed out in our previous game.

6.c3 ♗d6 7.♗g3!?



The best move here. White is hoping to open the h-file some day. At the same time, he prepares a different plan: a fight in the centre with ♗d3 and e3-e4!

7...0-0 8.♗d3

🔪 WEAPON: An alternative is 8.♗b5!?, indirectly controlling e5: 8...♗e7 9.♗d3! b6 10.e4!.



analysis diagram

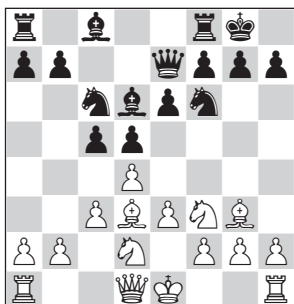
The main line after 8.♗b5. From this position White has achieved many victories: 51 games = 80%! For example, 10...dxe4 (10...

c4? 11. ♖xd6 cxd3 12.e5±
 Osmak-Ghukasyan, Stary
 Smokovec 2018) 11. ♗xe4
 ♗xe4 12. ♖xe4 ♗d5 13.dxc5
 ♖xc5 14. ♖e2!? with the idea
 14... ♖b7 15.0-0-0!? Salinas
 Herrera-Nilsen, Titled
 Tuesday blitz 2021.

8...b6

The main move.

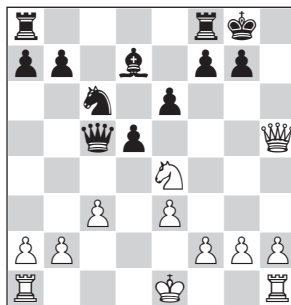
♜ WEAPON: 8... ♖e7.



analysis diagram

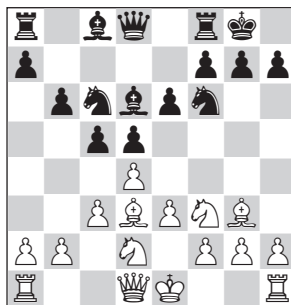
Black chooses a very natural set-up and gets ready to push ...e7-e5. So, 9. ♗e5! ♗d7 10. ♗xd7!? ♖xd7? (if 10... ♖xd7 11.0-0 b6 12. ♖xd6 (12. ♖h5!?) 12... ♖xd6 13.f4± with a typical Stonewall position without the c1-bishop). It's hard to believe, but this recapture is a bad move; Black falls into a hidden trap, which became known after the correspondence game Kögler-Matheis, ICCF email 2007: 11. ♖xd6 ♖xd6 12.dxc5 ♖xc5 13. ♖xh7+!+- . This thematic sacrifice works here thanks to the pin. The knight joins the attack with tempo via

e4: 13... ♗xh7 14. ♖h5+ ♖g8
 15. ♗e4!



analysis diagram

15... ♖c4 (after 15...g6 16. ♗xc5 the bishop is hanging on d7) 16. ♗g5 ♖fd8 (16... ♖d3 17.e4!) 17. ♖xf7+ ♖h8 18. ♖h5+! ♖g8 19. ♖d1! – a crucial move, not allowing 19... ♖d3. White's attack is irresistible, and he won all 7 games from here.



9.e4!

Not yet the most popular, but actually this is the critical move in the line with ...♗c6 and ...♖d6. 9. ♗e5 is worse due to 9... ♖b7 10.f4 ♗e7!±; Black threatens to play ...♗e4 and subsequently ...f7-f6 to expel the powerful knight from e5. ♜ WEAPON: After the natural 9. ♖e2!?, an interesting