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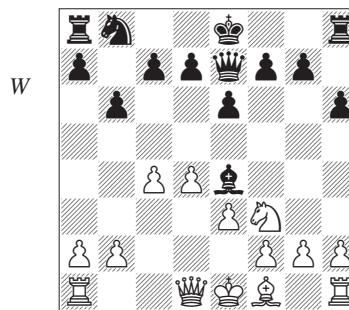
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4 4 ♘c3 ♖b7: 5 ♗g5 and Others

In a major opening like the Queen's Indian, the best move-order for both players is refined over the years in countless grandmaster games. One of the less common move-orders at the moment is 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 b6 4 ♘c3 ♖b7 5 ♗g5, because Black has a choice between the active 5...♗b4 and the supposedly equalizing 5...♗e7. This move-order discussion was central in the late 1980s, when the variation 4...♗b4 5 ♗g5 was especially popular, and the variations 4 a3 or 4 ♘c3 ♖b7 5 a3 were being investigated, but after that the conclusion has remained stable and this move-order has been regarded as safe for Black. However, in this chapter we would like to offer some new thoughts about the status of this variation.

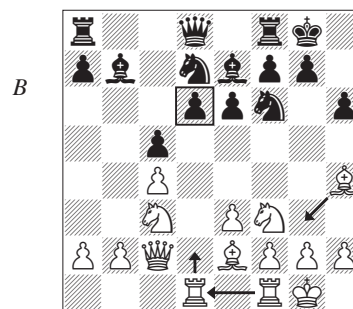
Typical Positions and Plans

The diagram at the top of the next column is from the older form of this variation, when after 5...h6 6 ♗h4 ♗e7 White plays 7 e3 and allows the mass exchange with 7...♘e4. This leads to extremely drawish positions. Many minor pieces disappear after 8 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 9 ♘xe4 ♗xe4, and neither player has the slightest weakness in their



Tella – Yrjölä
Helsinki rpd 2002

position. White cannot even hope to establish a meaningful space advantage, as in similar 4 g3 lines.

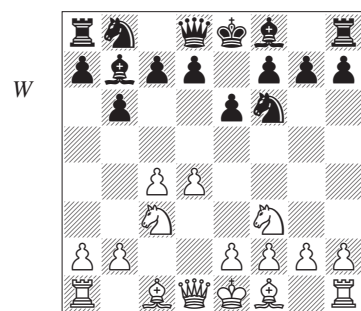


I. Sokolov – Leko
Prague rpd 2002

The matter is not so clear when White refines his play with 7 ♖c2. After Black's usual reply 7...c5 White plays 8 dxc5 and a totally new pawn-formation arises. Usually this is also regarded as equal, but there is one major benefit for White: the position is not balanced or dead. White also has a logical plan of doubling his rooks on the d-file and putting pressure on the backward d-pawn, against which Black has no active plans available.

Ivan Sokolov has played many important games in this variation, and especially his win against Leko emphasizes the unbalanced nature of the positions in this variation. Also many other grandmasters have had occasional games with this variation.

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♖f3 b6 4 ♖c3 ♗b7 (D)



5 ♘g5

There are some other independent moves in this position:

a) 5 ♘f4 transposes to note 'b' to White's 5th move in Chapter 2, where Black should have no problems.

b) 5 g3 is not very common in this move-order, though it can transpose back to the 4 g3 main lines. Then:

b1) 5...♗e7 6 ♘g2 transposes to Line B1 of Chapter 8.

b2) 5...♞e4 6 ♘g2 ♗e7 transposes to Line B11 of Chapter 8.

b3) 5...♗xf3!? is one independent try, and actually a very interesting unbalancing move: 6 exf3 d5 7 cxd5 ♞xd5 8 ♘g2 g6 9 f4 c6 10 0-0 ♘g7 = Grünfeld-Réti, Breslau 1925.

b4) 5...♗b4!? is Black's other independent move. 6 ♘g2 0-0 7 0-0 and now the opening has transposed to a Nimzo-Indian (4 g3 variation), and Black can try, for example, 7...d5 8 ♞e5 ♗e7 9 ♘g5 c6 10 ♖a4 ♞fd7 11 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 with a playable position, Fish-Dragomaretsky, Alushta 1993.

c) 5 ♖c2 and then:

c1) 5...♗b4 6 a3 ♗xc3+ 7 ♖xc3 transposes to a line of the Classical Nimzo-Indian.

c2) 5...d5?! 6 cxd5 exd5 7 ♘g5 ♗e7 8 e3 ♞bd7 9 ♘d3 transposes to an Exchange Queen's Gambit, but the black bishop is not well placed on b7 in this variation, and White has the advantage: 9...0-0 10 h4 ♖e8 11 0-0-0 ♞f8 12 ♞e5 a6 13 f4 ♞6d7 14 ♖b3 ♞xe5 15 dxe5 c6 16 e4 with an attack, Ftačnik-Zaw Win Lay, Istanbul OL 2000.

c3) 5...♗xf3!? 6 exf3 g6 and now 7 ♗e3!? and 7 ♘g5!? are of course possible, while 7 a3 transposes to Line B2 of Chapter 7.

c4) 5...c5 (the best and most natural move) 6 dxc5 (6 e4 cxd4 7 ♞xd4 allows Black the thematic 7...♗c5 8

♞b3 ♜c6 with counterplay; for example, 9 ♜xc5?! bxc5 10 ♙e3 ♞d4 11 ♖d3 e5 12 ♙e2 0-0 13 ♚d1 d6 with equality, Santos-Gomez Esteban, Manila OL 1992) and now:

c41) 6...bxc5!? 7 ♙g5 (7 ♙f4 ♙e7 8 ♞b5?! ♞a6 9 a3 d5 10 e3 0-0 11 ♚d1 ♖a5+ 12 ♖c3 ♖b6! 13 ♙e2 ♞e4 and Black has the initiative, Burmakin-Aseev, St Petersburg 1995) 7...♙e7 transposes to note 'b22' to Black's 5th move.

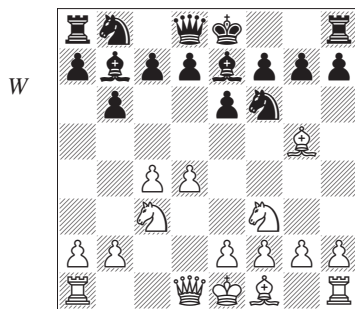
c42) 6...♙xc5 7 ♙g5 0-0 8 e3 ♙e7 9 ♙e2 h6 10 ♙h4 and now Black can play 10...♞a6! which takes the knight directly to its best square, namely e4, and Black is OK: 11 0-0 ♞c5 12 ♚fd1 ♞fe4 13 ♙xe7 (13 ♙g3 ♞xc3! 14 ♖xc3 ♞e4 =) 13...♖xe7, Tolnai-Adorjan, Hungarian Ch 1992.

5...h6

Or:

a) It is worth noting that 5...♙b4!? transposes to Line B of Chapter 5, with much more complicated play than in this variation.

b) 5...♙e7 (D) and then:



b1) 6 e3 is the old starting position. Now:

b11) 6...c5 is a major option, and fully playable. 7 ♙d3 cxd4 8 exd4 0-0 9 0-0 d5 and here:

b111) 10 ♖e2 and then:

b1111) 10...h6 weakens Black's kingside, and after 11 ♙e3 dxc4 12 ♙xc4 ♞c6 13 ♚ad1 ♞b4 14 ♞e5! ♚c8 15 ♙c1 ♖c7 (according to Yermolinsky, Black should play 15...♞bd5!? 16 ♚d3 ♞xc3 17 bxc3 ♚xc4 18 ♞xc4 ♙a6, which is unclear) 16 a3! ♞bd5 (16...♞c6 17 ♙a2 ♚fd8? 18 ♞xf7! ±) 17 ♞b5 ♖b8 18 ♚d3 a6 White has the beautiful and strong 19 ♚g3! ♚xc4 20 ♙xh6 ♞f4 21 ♚xg7+ ♙h8 22 ♖xc4 +- Yermolinsky-D.Gurevich, USA Ch (Los Angeles) 1993.

b1112) 10...dxc4 leads to a classical position with White having an isolated queen's pawn: 11 ♙xc4 ♞c6 12 ♚ad1 ♞a5 13 ♙d3 ♞d5 14 ♙d2 ♞b4 15 ♙b1 g6 16 ♚fe1 ♚c8 17 ♙h6 ♚e8 18 a3 ♞d5 19 ♞e4 and both players have made the normal moves, and White has attacking chances that compensate for his weaker pawn-structure, Kamsky-Korchnoi, Monaco Amber rpd 1994.

b1113) 10...♞c6 11 cxd5! (it is not possible for White to get the standard IQP position, as Black has ...♞b4: 11 ♚ad1 ♞b4 12 ♙b1 dxc4 13 ♞e5 ♞bd5 14 ♚fe1 ♚c8 15 ♖f3 ♞xc3 16 ♖xc3 ♞d5 17 ♖h3 f5 ♚ Janowski-Yates, Semmering 1926) 11...♞xd5 (11...exd5 12 ♚fe1 is also slightly better for White) 12 ♖e4 g6 13 ♙h6 and White has chances of an advantage on the dark squares; e.g., 13...♞xc3 14 bxc3 ♚e8 15 h4 ♙f8 16 ♙xf8 ♚xf8 17 h5 ± Grivas-Kalesis, Glyfada 1995.