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Foreword by Anatoly Karpov

Zhenya Sveshnikov and myself are not just contemporaries, but also neighbours – he is from Chelyabinsk and I from nearby Zlatoust. We played together many times on junior teams, first for Russia and then the Soviet Union. We even had the same coach at one point – Leonid Arnoldovich Gratvol, a fanatical teacher of chess to children. It was probably from him that the future grandmaster obtained a love not only of analytical work, but also of teaching, which he took up quite early on. Usually, practical players prefer to play in tournaments, and not to waste time and strength on other things. But Evgeny Ellinovich, a rare case among chess players, has managed not only to play in hundreds of international tournaments, but also to produce a whole raft of players, including dozens of GMs and IMs.

I would like to mention my old comrade's extremely high level of analytical ability, his honesty and his sheer human decency, which I experienced many times during the years when he was one of my seconds for the extremely tough matches against Garry Kasparov. Our cooperation continues in various spheres to this day. Thus, Evgeny Ellinovich helps me prepare for important tournaments, teaches in the Anatoly Karpov Chess School and never declines to help when I am looking for comrades with whom to travel to the far corners of the country, spreading the popularity of chess. I should add that he also does the latter on his own initiative; thus, it is thanks to his generosity that chess schools have opened in Alta and the South Urals region, our home area.

Finally, one cannot fail to mention his fantastic devotion to research work in the openings, which after many years has yielded brilliant results. I remember that over 40 years ago, at the USSR Championship, I sympathised with him, asking 'Zhenya, why do you torture yourself in this Sicilian with ...e7-e5? Why don't you just choose something simpler and easier to play?' But now I can say with objectivity that he was right to ignore me – now the whole world plays the Sveshnikov System! And I, as a proud Urals man, can say that now the line has a name reflecting the region – the Cheliabinsk Variation.

Unfortunately, for various reasons, the book on the Sveshnikov System, published way back in the 1980s, was for a very long time the only one of Sveshnikov's books to appear in Russian. Only at the start of the new century did Evgeny Ellinovich produce a new theoretical work. In recent years he has published four more books with New In Chess! The second work was devoted to the popular 3.e5 system against the French Defence, and the popularity of this system owes a great deal to Sveshnikov, who

has played it all his life, feels its nuances almost in his fingertips and has a huge plus score with it against great specialists in the French Defence, such as Bareev, for example. The book quickly became popular with amateurs and was translated into many foreign languages – English, French, German, Spanish, etc.

The system is seen in tournaments at every level, including the very highest. Here is a striking statistic: at the end of 2005, the computer databases contained about 25,000 games with 3.e5, whereas now the figure is in excess of 75,000! The time has come for a new edition, and in this regard, Evgeny Ellinovich has been greatly helped by his son, Vladimir, an IM and Latvian Champion in 2016. The authors have carried out a serious amount of work: all variations have been checked with computers and an additional chapter added, 'Theoretical discoveries in recent years'. In Evgeny Sveshnikov's opinion, Black does not equalise fully in the system with 3.e5, and so far nobody has been able to prove him wrong. This, in my view, is a true textbook, original in conception and outstanding in execution. It not only teaches you to play a concrete variation of the French Defence, but also to absorb many typical strategic devices in the middlegame, which for the majority of amateurs is even more important.

This book will undoubtedly be of benefit to a wide spectrum of players. For example, lower-rated players can quickly learn a very dangerous plan of attack, whilst masters and even grandmasters have the chance to consult once again with the greatest specialist in the world on this variation.

Anatoly Karpov,
Multiple World Champion
June 2017

CHAPTER 1

'For' and 'against' 3.e5

I am convinced that the initial position is one of the most interesting positions in chess. Therefore one should think about one's actions from the very first moves, and not blindly follow the advice of so-called 'authorities'.

1.e4 e6

Strictly speaking, not the strongest move, since now White can seize the centre with 2.d4. In addition, Black will have problems developing his light-squared bishop. On the other hand, he has no weaknesses, whilst after 1...e5 the e-pawn immediately becomes an object of attack. Possibly the strongest move is 1...c5!, not allowing 2.d4. Even so, in recent times Black has obtained good results in the French Defence, and many young grandmasters have included this opening in their armoury.

2.d4 d5

Now White has three main continuations: 3.♘d2, 3.♗c3 and 3.e5. In the 19th century, White often played 3.exd5 exd5 4.c4, trying to open the game as quickly as possible, but practice showed that after 4...♗f6 5.♗c3 ♕b4! it is hard for White to count on an advantage.

3.♘d2 is the move of grandmaster S.Tarrasch and was most popular in the 1970s and 80s. However, on closer examination, it is clear that the move sharply breaks the principles of opening play; in particular, White does not fight for the centre (note that the d4-pawn has been weakened), he does not worry about developing his pieces (the ♘d2 obstructs the ♗c1 and the white queen) and concerns himself only with the principle of safety. But safety is something that should mainly be the concern of Black, whereas White, having the advantage, should be thinking of attack, else his advantage will dissipate. Thus, by somewhat paraphrasing the teachings of Steinitz, one may characterise the move 3.♘d2.

So why was this move so popular – surely grandmasters could see its drawbacks? The main culprit is fashion, since at the time, World Champion Anatoly Karpov used this continuation at the highest level. But his matches with Kortchnoi, in which he did not win a single game against the French, and also more recent practice, have shown that by means of 3...c5! Black practically equalises the position. An additional confirmation of the strength of 3.♘d2 c5 is provided by the games of Bareev, in which he regularly obtained a good position. And when in 1984, Karpov played

3.♘c3 against Agdestein, this was the beginning of a gradual decline in interest in the Tarrasch Variation at grandmaster level.

Undoubtedly, 3.♘c3! is the strongest and most principled continuation, which answers to all of the principles of opening play. I played this way, even when already a master, at the end of the 1960s and start of the 1970s, but then I switched to 3.e5. After 3.♘c3 very complicated tactical and strategical positions arise and even at that time a great many very complicated games had been played in these variations. Therefore, by playing 3.♘c3, one concedes the opponent an obvious advantage in preparation and knowledge.

But it is another matter with 3.e5.



This move has been known since the time of El Greco (1600-1634). Its pluses are obvious:

- 1) It gains space;
- 2) It shuts in the ♔c8;
- 3) The pawn takes away the important f6-square, as a result of which it will later be difficult for Black to defend his kingside, and White will have the grounds for an attack on this side of the board.

But there are also drawbacks:

- 1) By making the second successive move with one pawn, White loses time;
- 2) The pawn structure assumes a semi-closed character and it is more difficult for White to exploit his trumps.
- 3) Black now has no weak pawns in the centre, so White lacks an object of attack.

But now we will conclude this brief excursion into history with a look at one of the earliest surviving games in this variation with 3.e5.

1

El Greco

NN

1620

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 cxd4?!

Of course, the exchange on d4 is premature, because now White gets the c3-square for his knight. However, we will not criticise the black player too harshly, since the same mistake has been repeated by others years later.

5.cxd4 ♖b4+ 6.♗c3 ♘xc3+?!

Exchanging off the enemy dark-squared bishop is one of White's main ideas in this line, since this exchange greatly weakens a whole complex of dark squares in Black's camp. And here Black voluntarily parts with this key defender.

7.bxc3 ♗c6 8.♙d3 ♗ge7 9.f4± ♗f5 10.♗f3 0-0 11.g4 ♗h4 12.0-0 ♗xf3+ 13.♖xf3± ♙d7

It is interesting to find out how this 'prehistoric' position appears in the eyes of the unsentimental computer: 13...♖a5 14.♙b2 b6 (14...f5 15.exf6 ♖xf6 16.g5→) 15.♖h3 (15.♖e2 f5 16.exf6 ♖xf6 17.g5+-) 15...h6 (15...g6 16.f5+-) 16.g5+-

14.♖h3 g6



15.f5

White has a decisive attack: Black has nothing with which to defend the dark squares.

15...exf5 16.gxf5 gxf5 17.♖xf5

17.♙h6+-

17...♙xf5

He also loses after 17...♗h8 18.♗h1 ♖g8 19.♖xh7+ ♗xh7 20.♖xf7+ ♗h8 21.♖h7#.

18.♙xf5 1-0

Great contributions to the development of this system were made by Louis Paulsen and Aron Nimzowitsch. You can find a detailed discussion of the latter in the lecture about the blockade, but we will speak here about Paulsen. The German player Louis Paulsen (15.01.1833-18.08.1891) was born in Hassengründe (Germany) into a family which loved chess. His older brother was a strong player who played in many international tournaments. His sister Amalia was also an excellent player. By profession, Louis was a businessman. In 1854, together with his older brother, he emigrated to America.

One of Louis' first tournaments in his new country was the American Congress of 1857, where he lost in the final against Paul Morphy, by a score of 2-6. This score must be considered more of an achievement for Paulsen, than a failure. After all, he was just 24 years old and his growth as a player was slow, unlike the 'meteor' Morphy. Paulsen

reached his greatest strength when in his 40s, if not 50s.

In 1860 Paulsen returned home. Two years later, he played his first match with the ‘uncrowned’ World Champion Adolf Anderssen. The result was a hard battle, which ended drawn (+3 -3 =2); thanks to great strength of will, Anderssen won the last two games to save the match. The permanent opponents met twice more in matches, Paulsen winning both times: in 1876 (+5 -4 =1) and 1877 (+5 -3 =1). He also finished ahead of his great opponent many times in tournaments. Their overall score was +20 -17 =7 in favour of Anderssen.

Whereas Anderssen is considered the unsurpassed master of attack, Paulsen can be regarded as the founder of the modern approach to playing the opening. He was a chess theoretician, if you wish, a chess student. His opening ideas taught not only his contemporaries, but many subsequent generations. Several lines he introduced even retain their relevance to the present day and have become *tabiyas*. This is true of the 3.e5 French and the system in the Sicilian which bears his name (1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 a6), whilst the Boleslavsky System (1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 d6 6.♙e2 e5!) was played five times by Paulsen 70 years before Boleslavsky!

If Chigorin is rightly considered the greatest specialist in open

games in the 19th century, then Paulsen undoubtedly had the best understanding of the Sicilian and French Defences; in this respect, he was a century ahead of his time. In modern computer databases, one can find 20 games in which Paulsen adopted 3.e5 against the French. White’s play in the following game is noteworthy – 73 years later Paulsen’s first ten moves were repeated by Unzicker, whilst 115 years later, the position after 10.♘a4 became a *tabiya*!

2

Louis Paulsen Adolf Schwarz

Leipzig (m) 1879 (3)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6
5.♘f3 ♖b6 6.a3 ♙d7 7.b4 cxd4
8.cxd4 ♘ge7 9.♘c3 ♘f5 10.♘a4



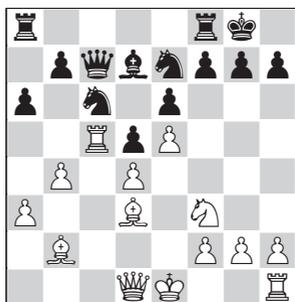
10...♖c7

10...♖d8 was played in Unzicker-Gligoric, Saltsjöbaden 1952.

11.♙b2 ♙e7 12.♞c1 a6 13.♘c5
♙xc5 14.♞xc5 0-0 15.♙d3

With the threat of 16.♙xf5 exf5
17.♞xd5.

15...♘fe7



White has cramped his opponent on the queenside and Black's mistaken last move allows Paulsen to start a direct attack on the king.

16. ♖xh7+! ♕xh7

White's attack is not weakened by 16...♖h8, e.g.: 17.♗g5 g6 18.♞f3 ♗g8 19.♙xg8 ♕xg8 20.♞h3 ♜fd8 21.♞h7+ ♕f8 22.♞xf7#.

17. ♗g5+ ♕g6

Nor is Black helped by either 17...♕g8 18.♞h5 ♜fe8 19.♞xf7+ ♖h8 20.♜c3, or 17...♖h6 18.♙c1 (with the threat of 19.♗xe6+; even quicker is 18.♜c3) 18...♞c8 (18...♕g6 19.h4+-; 19.♞g4? f6!∞) 19.♞g4 ♕g6 (19...♗f5 20.♞h3+ ♕g6 21.♞h7#) 20.♗xe6+ ♖h7 21.♞xg7#.

18. ♞g4?!

Significantly stronger is 18.♞d3+ f5 (18...♗f5 19.g4+-) 19.h4+- or 19.♞h3 ♜h8 20.♞g3 f4 21.♞xf4 ♜af8 22.♞g4+-.

18...f5?

Black misses his chance. Extremely unclear play results from 18...f6! 19.♗xe6+ ♕f7 20.♗xc7 ♙xg4 21.♗xa8 ♜xa8=.

19. ♞g3 ♞c8 20. ♜c3

It is time to bring up the reserves. Rushing in does not work: 20.♗xe6+? ♕f7 21.♞xg7+?? (21.♗xf8±) 21...♕xe6

(21...♕e8?? 22.♞xf8#) 22.♞h6+ ♕f7 23.♞f6+ ♕e8+-

20...f4 21. ♞g4 ♗f5 22. ♜h3 ♜h8

23. ♗xe6+ ♕f7 24. ♞xf5+



24...♕e7

The king has no safe square:

24...♕e8 25.♜xh8+; 24...♕g8

25.♜xh8+ ♕xh8 26.♞h5+ ♕g8

27.♗g5 ♙f5 28.g4 fxg3 29.hxg3 ♕f8

30.♞f7#

25. ♞g5+ ♕xe6

Or 25...♕f7 26.♞xg7+ ♕xe6

(26...♕e8 27.♜xh8#) 27.♞f6#.

26. ♞g6+ ♕e7 27. ♞xg7+

And Black resigned in view of 27...♕d8 (27...♕e6 28.♞f6#)

28.♜xh8+. Classical play on both wings!

Paulsen realised the idea of a central blockade many years before Nimzowitsch!

3

Louis Paulsen

Joseph Blackburne

Berlin 1881 (4)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♗c6

5. ♗f3 ♙d7 6. ♙e3 ♞b6 7. ♞d2 ♜c8

8.dxc5 ♙xc5 9. ♙xc5 ♞xc5 10. ♙d3

f6 11. ♖e2 fxe5 12. ♗xe5 ♗xe5

13. ♖xe5 ♗f6 14. 0-0 0-0

If 14... ♖b6!? White does not manage to establish control over the squares d4 and e5.

15. ♗d2 ♖ce8 16. h3 ♖b5



17.c4

It looks more consistent to complete the central blockade:

17. ♗b3 ♖b6 18. ♖xb5 ♖xb5 19. ♖ad1, although the computer gives Black equality.

17... ♖b4?!

17... ♗d7∞

18. ♖e2

The balance is maintained by 18. cxb5 ♖xd2 19. ♖ad1 ♖a5 20. a3±.

18... ♖c6 19. ♖ab1 g6

19... e5!? is also interesting.

20. a3 ♖d6 21. b4 b6 22. ♖fe1 ♗h5

23. ♖e5 ♖d7 24. ♖f1 ♖f5 25. ♖b2

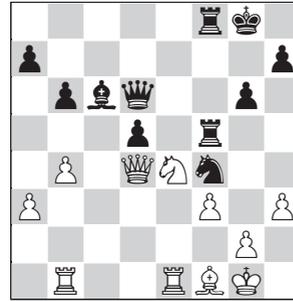
♖ef8 26. f3

Unclear play results from 26. b5 ♖b7 27. ♗f3 ♖xf3 (27... ♖e7?) 28. gxf3 dxc4 29. ♖xc4 (29. ♖bc1±) 29... ♗f4.

26... ♖d6

26... d4!? is worth considering.

27. cxd5 exd5 28. ♖d4 ♗f4 29. ♗e4



29... ♖d7

Black misses 29... ♗xh3+ 30. gxh3 ♖f4, and White has definite problems: the knight will be regained, whilst the king remains exposed.

30. ♗f2 ♗e6?! 31. ♖e3 ♗f4 32. ♗g4± ♖g7 33. ♖e7

White gets a decisive advantage after 33. g3 d4 34. ♖e7 ♖f7 35. ♖d6. Later Paulsen even lost, but the result of the game does not influence the assessment of the opening strategy.

In games between Paulsen and Schwarz, a really hot theoretical battle developed over a variation popular at the time: 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♗c6 5. ♗f3 f6 6. ♖d3 fxe5 7.dxe5 g6. The players exchanged successes, until in 1882 at Vienna, Paulsen adopted the plan 8.h4! ♖g7 9.h5, and White's advantage is indisputable. White played the whole game at the level of contemporary masters and the variation was pretty much closed.

4

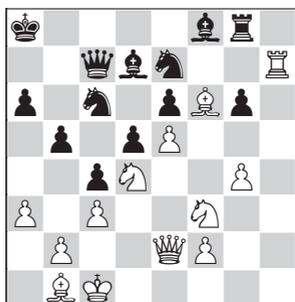
Louis Paulsen
Adolf Schwarz

Vienna 1882 (18)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6
5.♗f3 f6 6.♙d3 fxe5 7.dxe5 g6



8.h4! ♙g7 9.h5 ♗ge7 10.hxg6 hxg6
11.♖xh8+ ♙xh8 12.♗e2 ♗c7
13.♙f4 ♙d7 14.♗a3! a6 15.0-0-0
0-0-0 16.♖h1 ♗g8 17.♖h7 b5
18.♙g5! ♙g7 19.g3 c4 20.♙b1 ♗b7
21.♙f6+- ♙f8 22.♗c2 ♗a8 23.a3
Prophylaxis!
23...♗f5 24.g4
Constriction!
24...♗fe7 25.♗cd4



Blockade!

25...♗c8 26.♗e3 ♗xd4 27.♗xd4
♗c6 28.♗b6 ♗b8 29.♗e3 ♙c5
30.♗d2 ♗c6 31.♗g5 ♗a5 32.♙d1

♗c6 33.♗f4 ♙c8 34.♗e4 ♙b6
35.♗d6 ♗c5 36.♙h4 g5 37.♗f7 ♖d8
38.♙xg5 ♖d7 39.♗f8 ♖xh7 40.♙xh7
♗b8 41.♙e3

Black resigned. An excellent achievement by Paulsen!

Paulsen's contribution to the development of this variation is so great that I think it would be perfectly reasonable to call it the Paulsen-Nimzowitsch Variation. Some 50 or so years later, Aron Nimzowitsch also found many new ideas here.

The system with 3.e5 is often associated with the name of the first World Champion, Wilhelm Steinitz. For a start, he played the move three times at the great Vienna 1898 tournament, although in the first two of these, against Burn and Maroczy, he did not even equalise.

5

Wilhelm Steinitz
Geza Maroczy

Vienna 1898

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3

In his third game in this tournament, Steinitz gave up the centre in return for piece control of d4 and e5, and obtained the advantage: **4.dxc5 ♗c6 5.♗f3 ♙xc5**
6.♙d3 ♗ge7 7.0-0 ♗g6 8.♖e1 ♙d7
9.c3 a5 10.a4 ♗b8 11.♗e2 ♙b6
12.♗a3 0-0 13.♗b5 ♗a7 14.♙e3 ♙xe3
15.♗xe3 ♗xb5 16.axb5 b6 17.♗d4 f5