

Imre Hera & Ufuk Tuncer

A Cutting-Edge Gambit against the Queen's Indian

Hit the Nimzowitsch Variation with 6.d5!

The Pawn Sacrifice 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.g3 ♙a6 5.♚c2 c5 6.d5

New In Chess 2014

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Foreword by Alexey Shirov

There is no doubt that nowadays the opening constitutes the main part of a chess game. To play well one sometimes needs to know the opening so deeply that the ideas and motifs of the middlegame and endgame have to be learned automatically. But the question is: how to study, and, even more difficult, how to PLAY openings properly?



Most of the chess players I met in my life use two methods – either they trust grandmaster practice and grandmasters’ recommendations (mostly superficial ones) from books and magazines, or they follow the engines’ analyses. Sometimes they combine these two methods but still they don’t do a lot of thinking about the opening themselves. There are very many lines in chess and there is little time to investigate everything.

Only very few are still able to keep investigating what is not yet investigated in chess and make real further steps in opening theory. For this you need a real devotion to the subject and you have to do very, very accurate work on each idea that comes to your (and not only the computer’s) mind.

Normally such work is done by the world top players and those who help them to prepare for the top events. But no books are written about this. Players have to keep their secrets.

In my opinion, the job done by Imre Hera and Ufuk Tuncer is exactly of this kind, but contrary to what is habitual in today’s chess, their findings are no secret anymore! I remember studying this fascinating line of the Queen’s Indian during the Candidates’ matches in Elista back in 2007 (my game against Aronian is mentioned by Imre and Ufuk). I had a lot of interesting ideas and finally... abandoned the line a few months later because I thought that Black had a safe and easy way of getting good play. Now I can see that had I dug in deeper in those days, I would possibly have been happier with the outcome.

Of course, nobody claims that the moves 5.♖c2 and 6.d5! win the game by force. But this book shows exactly why the line is so attractive for white players. Fascinating chess, great complexity, chances to create fantastic attacking possibilities. This is exactly what we love chess for. And those who play the Queen’s Indian with black can know what they should be afraid of and try to find their answer, in order to make it even more interesting!

This is not only a book on a single variation of the Queen’s Indian, it’s a book on Modern Chess.

Alexey Shirov
Riga, January 2014

Introduction

I got really enthusiastic when I was offered the opportunity to write an opening book for *New In Chess*. After many years of active play now there was a chance to create something of lasting value for a larger audience. Having played lots of games in the 4.g3 line of the Queen's Indian Defence on both sides of the board, my focus of interest fell on a particular variation where White sacrifices a pawn early. For the past seven years this fresh idea has attracted the attention of top players and of many amateur players as well. Although I recommend it mostly for White, I am also giving many examples how to equalize with black in other main lines.

Many contemporary repertoire books and DVDs try to satisfy the reader's expectations by giving model games where the other side defends poorly, they omit the best counter-moves or simply assign a '±' to completely equal positions. Some authors may even be reluctant to reveal novelties before they had the chance to play them in their own games. Not so in this book! I am always searching the truth and I am convinced that many sidelines with a bad reputation are actually quite playable. As Anatoly Karpov once put it, preparing for one of his matches with Kasparov: 'When we are White, everything seems to be equal, while with black we always fail to find balanced positions.' I am sure that many competitors have faced such dilemma during their preparations. Although this book was written mainly for white players, we have also given many examples of how to equalize other main lines with black.

We seize the opportunity to thank all friends and colleagues who helped us: GM Ivan Farago (Olympic silver medalist), GM Robert Markus, GM Laszlo Gonda (winner of the Open Hungarian Championship in 2013), GM Miguel Llanes Hurtado and GM Denes Boros (U16 Youth Olympic winner).

We also mention authors of *Yearbook Surveys* on the same topic, in chronological order these are: Steve Giddins, Alexey Kuzmin, Emil Anka and Tibor Karolyi.

We would also like to express our grateful acknowledgements to the editorial team of *New in Chess*, especially to Mr. Peter Boel, who has given us fantastic support, significantly facilitating our work, and to the specialists working effectively in the background. Without their contribution this book would hardly have been possible.

The prolific collaboration with my friend Ufuk Tuncer, a very experienced author of several *Yearbook Surveys* with *New In Chess* and second of many strong grandmasters, helped me a lot to complete this project successfully. We invested hundreds of hours to make real quality and hope that you will enjoy it!

Imre Héra
Budapest, December 2013

Reader's Guide

We have spiced the following 11 theoretical chapters with complete practical games wherever it was possible. First we deal with early deviations, in order to build a solid foundation for what follows. Later the main lines are introduced, but do not neglect the first chapters, where some amazing discoveries are waiting too! From conversations with tournament players we learned that they largely prefer useful material (speak: analysis) to reading a 'novel'. For this reason many paragraphs of pure and 'undisturbed' analysis alternate with segments of verbal entertainment.

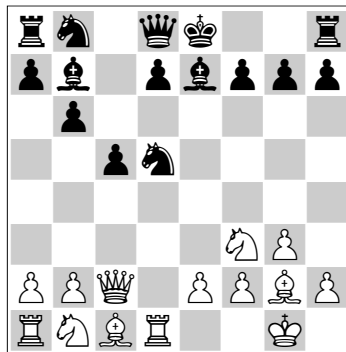
There are some crucial factors distinguishing our book from others. Most important of all, this is not a repertoire book for either side. For example, in Chapters 5 and 8 players with the black pieces can find many opportunities to equalize. On the other hand we worked out countless eye-catching novelties for White, in many cases suggesting even two promising alternatives in order to get a better feeling for the type of positions. It is recommended to study the model games carefully because of their instructive middle- and endgames.

On as yet little-explored territory we invested 9 tough months of work. We are really delighted with the outcome and we do hope that it will cause overall satisfaction with the reader as well. Let's not forget our motto: 'We have nothing to hide!' The material is up to date until the end of December, 2013.

Please fasten your virtual seatbelts and enter the world of magic. Only, our performance is more than an illusion! We wish you a lot of fun and success. Let's have fire on the board!

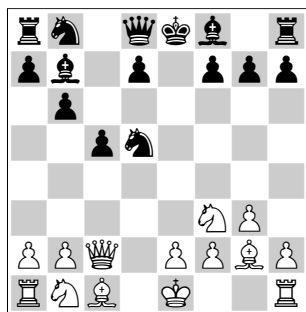
Chapter 6

9.0-0 ♖e7 10.♖d1 – Minor Lines for Black



In this chapter we will deal with a few minor lines as a little warm-up. First we give two interesting alternatives for White on moves 9 and 10. The main alternatives on Black's 10th move are 10...♗c6 and 10...♙c8. But in this chapter we will first examine what other moves Black can play. We will deal with the adventurous 10...♗b4?! and with the more common 10...♗c7.

**1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.g3
♙a6 5.♙c2 c5 6.d5 exd5 7.cxd5
♙b7 8.♙g2 ♗xd5**



Before we go on with the main move 9.0-0, we shall stop for a while, as White has a very naughty option here: Kazhgaleev's invention 9.♙b3 contains a lot of poison. White tries to utilize the

'X-factor' of the h1-a8 and a2-g8 diagonals. Black definitely has to retreat with his knight, but anyway, 10.♗e5 comes next. It is worth mentioning that all the first games with this line were won by White in under 20 moves!

A) 9...♗c7 10.♗e5 d5 11.♗c3 ♙d6
The reply 11...♙e7 12.♙f4 0-0
13.0-0 c4 generates further ex-
changes, resulting in a drawish end-
game: 14.♗xc4 dxc4 15.♙xd8 ♙xd8
16.♙xb7 cxb3 17.♙xc7 bxa2 18.♗xa2
♙xc7 19.♙xa8 ♗d7= Gordon-Mirosh-
nichenko, Dresden 2007. 12.♗xf7
♙xf7 13.♗xd5 ♙f8 14.♙g5 ♙d7
15.♙d1!N With the experience from
the previous line, we discovered that
White should delay castling. On
15.0-0-0 ♗b5!N might be a crucial im-

provement (15...♗c6? 16.♖f3+ ♔e8 17.♖e4+ ♗e6 18.♗c7+! ♖xc7 19.♖xe6+ ♖e7 20.♖xc6+ led to a great victory by the young Dutch player in Ris-Spraggett, Gibraltar 2007) 16.e3 c4! 17.♖xc4 (17.♖c2 c3) 17...♖c6 18.♖xc6 ♖xc6 and Black is fine. 15...♗e6 16.♗c7! The resulting variations are very entertaining:

A1) 16...♗d4 17.♖xd4 ♖xg2 18.♗e6+ ♔e8 19.♗xg7+ ♔f8 20.♗e6+ ♔e8 21.♖d2 ♖xh1 22.♗d8!



Analysis diagram

Though he is a rook and a bishop up, Black is helpless against ♖xd6. 22...♗c6 23.♖xd6 ♖xd8 24.♖xd7 ♔xd7 25.♖f7+ – White will have too many pawns on the kingside;

A2) 16...♖xc7 17.♖xe6 ♖xg2 18.♖xd6 ♖xh1 19.♖f5+ ♔g8 20.♖d8+ ♖xd8 21.♖e6+! This is an important intermediate move. 21...♔f8 22.♖xd8 ♗c6 23.♖c7 ♖e8 24.♖d6+ ♗e7 25.♖f5+ ♔g8 26.♖xe7 ♖xe7 27.♖c8+ –

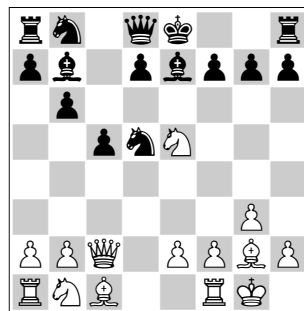
B) 9...♗f6 Clearly the safest reply. 10.♗e5 d5 11.♗c3 ♖e7 11...♗bd7 12.♖f4 c4 13.♖a4 (13.♖c2 ♖b4 14.0-0 ♖xc3 15.♖xc3 ♗c5 with a draw in Slugin-Grigoriants, Moscow 2008) 13...a6 was Miroshnichenko-A. Shneider, Evpatoria 2007. Now White should have proceeded with 14.♗xd7N

♖xd7 15.♖xd7+ ♔xd7 16.0-0-0. 12.♖a4+ ♗bd7 Black equalizes convincingly with this move order. 13.♗c6 ♖xc6 14.♖xc6 ♖c8 15.♖a4 d4 16.♗b5 0-0 17.0-0 17.♗xa7 is strongly met by 17...♖a8!. 17...♗e5 18.♖xa7 ♗c6 19.♖b7 The Russian grandmaster decides not to take any risk: 19.♖a4 ♖d7 20.♗a3 ♖e6 21.♖c4 ♖f5 gives Black counter-chances. 19...♗a5 20.♖a7 ♗c6 21.♖b7 ♗a5 22.♖a7 ♗c6 23.♖b7 and the game ended in a draw by repetition, Kramnik-Leko, Dortmund 2008.

9.0-0 ♖e7 10.♖d1

There are two interesting alternatives.

A) Grandmaster Pantsulaia's move 10.♗e5 was introduced into tournament practice in 2007, when he employed it against R. Ibrahimov. A year later a few top players picked it up – however, mainly in blitz games.



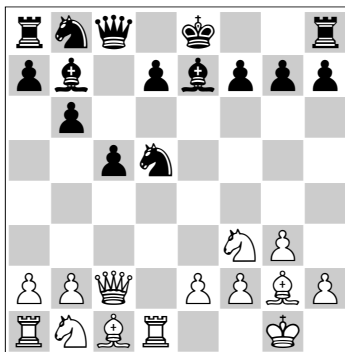
Analysis diagram

10...♖c7 is a logical reply, and probably the only acceptable one as well: 11.♖e4 White increases the pressure on the long diagonal. A big motley is forming in the centre. 11...♗c6! Peter Leko's witty invention seems to solve Black's opening problems immediately. 12.♖xd5 12.♗xf7!? ♗f6 13.♖f4 ♗xe4 14.♖xc7 ♗xf7 15.♖xe4 ♖ac8. 12...♗d8 13.♖xd7+ ♖xd7 14.♗xd7

Chapter 7

10. ♖d1 ♔c8 – Side Moves

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.g3 ♙a6 5.♚c2 c5 6.d5 ♗b7 7.♙g2 exd5
8.cxd5 ♘xd5 9.0-0 ♙e7 10.♖d1 ♔c8



This strange-looking move introduces one of the two very main lines. It was first employed by Armenian grandmaster Arman Pashikian at the World Youth Championship against Maxim Rodshtein in 2006. The idea behind it is to protect the often problematic fianchetto bishop, meanwhile moving away from the ‘eyes’ of the white rook on d1.

Before going deeper into the details we would like to mention White’s main possibilities. Our brief selection gives a wider overview of the possible variations, also showing some lines where Black can equalize. So our analysis may also be useful for those who play the Queen’s Indian with black.

Although this chapter was written mainly for black players, we are sure that it contains several useful ideas for those interested in playing this line with white.

We will investigate the harmless 11. ♚f5, the dissolute 11. ♘h4, the tempting 11.e4 and finally the interesting 11. ♙g5.

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.g3
♙a6 5.♚c2 c5 6.d5 ♗b7 7.♙g2
exd5 8.cxd5 ♘xd5 9.0-0 ♙e7
10.♖d1 ♔c8 11.♙g5**

Aronian’s invention, which he tried against Carlsen at the Corus tournament in 2007, won the approval of many

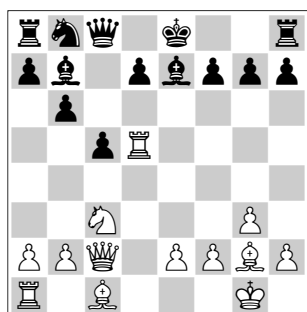
players for a while – basically until 2009.

Let’s first examine White’s other options.

A) 11. ♚f5 is still the second-most common continuation, though we hardly understand why, as the queen

just steps into a discovered attack after any move by the black d-pawn. **11... ♗f6 12. ♗c3 0-0 13. ♕g5** 13.e4 d6 shows the main defect of the variation from White's point of view: in most cases Black does not manage to trade the queens so easily. After 14. ♜xc8 ♜xc8 15. ♗h4 ♗e8 16. ♗f5 ♕f8 17. ♕f4 ♗c6= White gets the pawn back, but that's all for us. **13...h6** With 13...d6 14. ♜xc8 ♜xc8 15. ♗b5 ♕c6 16. ♗xd6 ♕xd6 17. ♕xf6 ♕f8 18. ♕c3 b5= White also failed to get any advantage in Sargissian-Leko, Yerevan rapid 2008. **14. ♕xf6 ♕xf6 15.e4 d6! 16. ♜xc8 ♜xc8=** and Black had successfully solved the opening problems in Paragua-So, Manila 2008;

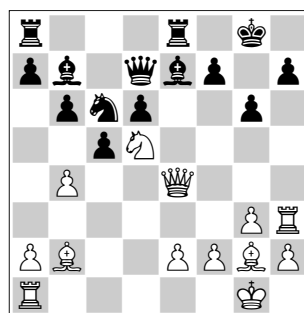
B) **11. ♗h4** is a romantic move, which had its best days in 2007 and 2008. Since then it has completely gone out of fashion. **11... ♕xh4 12. ♜xd5 ♕e7 13. ♗c3**



Analysis diagram

13... ♗c6! Calmly rejecting the tempting material gain. Indeed, it would be very dangerous to take the rook; instead, waiting while developing further is a good decision. White does not have a really useful option here. **14. ♜e4** This continuation was criticized by GM Krasenkow in *ChessBase Magazine* 118. Instead he suggests the following line:

14. ♕f4 ♗b4 15. ♜f5 ♗xd5 16. ♗xd5 ♕xd5 17. ♕xd5 0-0 18. ♖d1 d6 19. ♜e4. However, after 19... ♜e8 White had nothing better than forcing a draw with 20. ♜f3 ♜f8 21. ♜e4 ♜e8 22. ♜f3 ♜f8 23. ♜e4 with a draw by repetition in Gelfand-Carlsen, Monaco (blind) 2007. **14...0-0 15. ♜h5** This is the point of the whole variation. **15...g6 16. ♜h3** The best way for Black to handle this position was showed by Jan Timman in a game between two legendary players: **16...d6 17. ♗d5 ♜e8 18. b4 ♜d7 19. ♕b2**



Analysis diagram

19... ♗d4!? Black starts to force exchanges and after these simplifications White does not have any chance for a win. **20. ♕xd4 cxd4 21. ♗xe7+ ♜xe7 22. ♜xb7 ♜xb7 23. ♕xb7 ♜xb7 24. ♜h4 ♜e8=** and soon the game was drawn, Beliavsky-Timman, Bazna 2008;

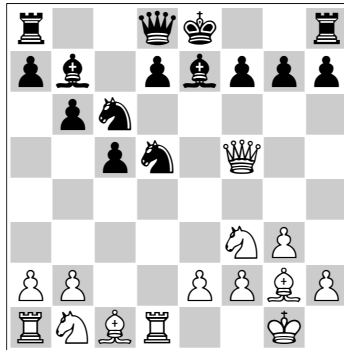
C) **11.e4** This straightforward move has been hallmarked even by Carlsen. However, we also have to mention that nobody has tested it since 2008.

C1) **11... ♗b4** is a seemingly aggressive but rather unfortunate reply. The knight will not be strong on b4: **12. ♜c3** It is a bit difficult to understand White's decision. In our opinion, 12. ♜c4N is the ideal place for the queen: 12...0-0 13.a3 ♗c6 14. ♕f4∞.

Chapter 11

10.♖d1 ♘c6 – Main Line 11.♙f5

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.g3 ♙a6 5.♙c2 c5 6.d5 exd5 7.cxd5 ♙b7
8.♙g2 ♘xd5 9.0-0 ♙e7 10.♖d1 ♘c6 11.♙f5



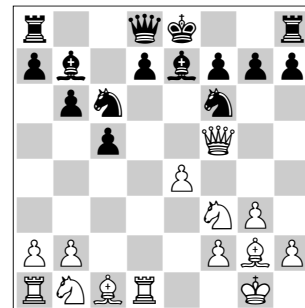
We go over to an examination of the main lines after Leko's move 10... ♘c6. It is worth comparing the statements between Anka (Yearbook 89) and Karolyi (Yearbook 98). In the former it is written that Black's main move is clearly 10... ♙c8, while in the latter we can read that 'Black's most common move is 10... ♘c6.' These are good examples that illustrate how fast theory has grown.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.g3
♙a6 5.♙c2 c5 6.d5 exd5 7.cxd5
♙b7 8.♙g2 ♘xd5 9.0-0 ♙e7
10.♖d1 ♘c6 11.♙f5 ♘f6

It is interesting to compare the statistics here. According to Mega Database 2013, only a little more than 25% of the games ended in a draw from this position, while White's winning percentage is about 49%, almost doubling Black's. However, we should note that the number of games (only 2 from last year) has apparently fallen back.

12.e4

White starts with the usual pawn advance.



His main aim is to kick away the knight from f6 with e4-e5. Then the d7-pawn would immediately hang too, while the d5-square might easily be occupied later on. At the same time, the black kingside would become more vulnerable.