

Dmitry Kryakvin

Attacking with g2-g4

The Modern Way to Get the Upper Hand in Chess

New In Chess 2019

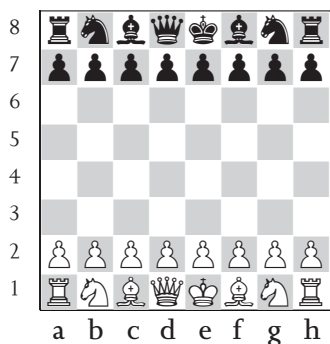
Contents

Explanation of symbols.....	6
Preface	7
Part I Botvinnik's heritage.....	9
Chapter 1 A cultural check	10
Chapter 2 Heavy artillery	21
Chapter 3 Isaak Lipnitsky's favourite position	34
Part II The Dutch Defence.....	39
Chapter 4 The Krejcik Gambit	41
Chapter 5 Attacking with a cast-iron alibi	49
Chapter 6 A pistol shot against the Stonewall.....	65
Part III The Queen's Gambit Declined	75
Chapter 7 Strolls with the Queen's Gambit	76
Part IV The Nimzo-Indian Defence.....	105
Chapter 8 Even if the Devil is helping you	106
Chapter 9 In the footsteps of a great rivalry	124
Part V The Anti-Nimzo-Indian.....	131
Chapter 10 The Groningen Attack, or Zviagintsev-Krasenkow Variation	132
Part VI The Slav Defence.....	148
Chapter 11 The Shabalov-Shirov Gambit	152
Chapter 12 Inverted chess	194

Part VII	The King's Indian Defence	217
Chapter 13	The Portisch-Gipslis Variation	219
Chapter 14	The Riazantsev Variation	233
Chapter 15	The secret nooks and crannies of the Makogonov Variation	244
Part VIII	The Grünfeld Indian Defence	257
Chapter 16	The Murey Attack.....	258
Chapter 17	21st century creations	264
Index of names		275
Index of variations.....		281
Bibliography		287
Author's biography.....		288

Explanation of symbols

The chessboard with its coordinates:



- White to move
- Black to move
- ♔ King
- ♚ Queen
- ♖ Rook
- ♗ Bishop
- ♘ Knight

- ± White stands slightly better
- ∓ Black stands slightly better
- ± White stands better
- ∓ Black stands better
- +− White has a decisive advantage
- −+ Black has a decisive advantage
- = balanced position
- ! good move
- !! excellent move
- ? bad move
- ?? blunder
- ! ? interesting move
- ? ! dubious move

Preface

It was in the early summer of 1995. I, a young second-category player, returned home from the chess section at the Rostov-on-Don Young Pioneer Palace, after an unlikely success. Nowadays, in the era of computers, engines, databases and Stockfish and AlphaZero, it may seem rather an old-fashioned ritual, but I was as happy as Larry – my first trainer, Lidia Grigorievna Petrova, had persuaded my father to buy me the four-volume best games collection of the sixth World Champion, Mikhail Botvinnik.

1995 and the years thereabout were a difficult time in Russia, which are terrible to recall. In buying these books, my father probably parted with his last rouble until the next payday, money he could have spent on food. Despite my youth, I fully realized this, which made the Patriarch's books even more precious in my eyes. The books were not new, but were in excellent condition. After rushing home, barely even pausing to change my clothes, I plunged into the wonderful world of ideas of the great world champion, who had departed this world in that very same year 1995.

Lasker, Capablanca, the war, the battle for the world title, matches and return matches – the personalities of bygone days leapt out from the pages as I replayed the games on my chess set. Then the Botvinnik school, Karpov, Kasparov (I already knew from magazines that Kramnik was another product of the same source)... I was stunned by the power of Mikhail Botvinnik's best games; indeed it was true that, as David Bronstein put it, he rolled over his opponents like a tank.

I don't know why it happened, but the things that amazed me most amongst all this chess information was not the famously sharp Semi-Slav Variation, which bears Botvinnik's name. Nor was it his strategy as White against historic opponents in the King's Indian, nor even his magical handling of positions with the IQP or the Carlsbad structure. And not even his iron handling of the Caro-Kann and Réti openings, both still relevant even to this day.

Instead, I was just stunned by the battering ram idea g2-g4. It came so suddenly, like lightning from a clear sky, seemingly in breach of all the established rules of strategy and positional play. And the cream of the first Soviet World Champion's opponents went down, one after the other, unable to oppose the strategy of their powerful adversary. Years later,

Garry Kasparov gave Botvinnik due credit for this strategy in his *Great Predecessors* series.

Of course, not all of us are destined to become Botvinniks or Kasparovs, but an acquaintance with the classics gave me a great deal. While going through the four-volume series, that same year I won the district junior championship, and then qualified for the first time for the First League of the Russian junior championship. And later, I always, in many different circumstances, tried to fight for the initiative, by means of the advance g2-g4 in closed openings. I believe that without this thrust and without Botvinnik's four-volume work, I would never have achieved success as a player and trainer.

The Dutch Defence, Queen's Gambit, Nimzo-Indian and Anti-Nimzo-Indian, Slav and King's Indian, the Symmetrical English and the Reversed Sicilian, all with the same pawn thrust g2-g4 – my own experience and also that of other top players, it is set out before you in the following pages.

This book is devoted to the creative successes and inevitable bumps along the way, which make up the path of a chess player, who decides to make use of Botvinnik's favourite device and plays in a sharp, dynamic style.

Go on, push that g2-pawn!

Grandmaster Dmitry Kryakvin,
Rostov-on-Don,
October 2019

The author would like to thank his student and trusty assistant International Master Mikhail Popov for his valuable ideas and help in the work on the manuscript, and also Grandmaster Maxim Turov for his creative work in seeking out possible variations for inclusion in the book.

CHAPTER 1

A cultural check

As often happens, the first step is to dig out the roots in a time long ago. 1930, almost 100 years ago. Leningrad is experiencing chess fever, and with the white pieces is the young Misha Botvinnik. His opponent is one of the strongest Leningrad first-category players (a ranking which, when the system was changed, started being called Candidate Master) and later a participant in the Great Patriotic War. Grigory Miasoedov was a year older than Botvinnik and was also considered very promising, as shown by the fact that, like Botvinnik, he had also been included in the list of opponents at Capablanca’s famous 1925 simultaneous display.

Game 1

Mikhail Botvinnik
Grigory Miasoedov

Leningrad ch-city 1930/31 (11)

This game has already long since become a unique test of chess culture. The tricky question ‘Do you know my game against Miasoedov?’ is one with which in later years Mikhail Botvinnik regularly baffled holders even of the highest chess title.

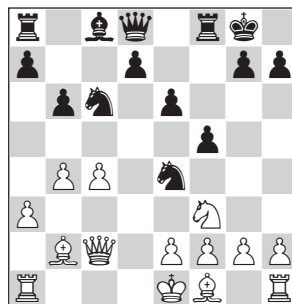
In 2011, at a press conference at the Botvinnik Memorial tournament, the then Editor of 64 (and now executive director of the Russian Chess Federation) Mark Glukhovsky posed this very question to the elite grandmasters playing in the event. Levon Aronian did not bat an eyelid before immediately recalling all of the subtleties of this surprising battle! We will not lag behind the

Armenian GM but will examine this fascinating game in detail.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♝c3 ♙b4 4.♞b3 c5 5.dxc5 ♘c6 6.♘f3

In another game against Miasoedov in 1932, Botvinnik played 6.♙g5, avoiding the complicated variations which occur in the game. Much water has flowed since then and one can improve both sides’ play. But that is not why we are studying this game, so we will refrain from any opening debates.

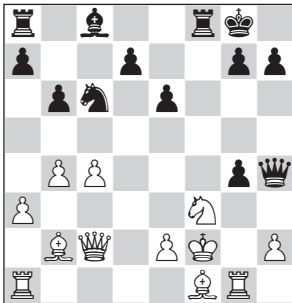
6...♘e4 7.♙d2 ♘xc5 8.♞c2 f5 9.a3 ♙xc3 10.♙xc3 0-0 11.b4 ♘e4 12.♙b2 b6



13.g4!?

The Patriarch admitted that this brave thrust had been prepared at home. Brave, daring and interesting! Analysis shows that Black has only one continuation which allows him to hold the balance, and Miasoedov finds it.

13... ♖xf2! 14. ♕xf2 fxe4 15. ♖g1 ♗h4+

**16. ♕e3**

The variations 16. ♖g3 gxf3 17. ♕g1 ♖d4! and 16. ♕g2 gxf3+ 17. ♕h1 ♖d4!, as given by Mikhail Moiseevich, are correct and favour Black, so the king must come forward.

16... ♗h6+ 17. ♕f2 ♗h4+

Black has no choice – on 17... ♗xh2+ there follows 18. ♖g2! ♗f4 19. ♖d1, and the white king soon runs to g1, beating off the attack.

18. ♕e3 ♗h6+

So, a draw? Certainly not – that is not why the future World Champion prepared the flank thrust.

19. ♕d3

Botvinnik wrote that at the board, the king flight to the queenside, which he had prepared at home, did not come easily to him, and his intuition did not deceive him

– with correct play, it should lead to a difficult position for White. But White's provocative play is not easy to refute – for example, nothing comes from 19...e5 20. ♗d2! ♗d6+ 21. ♕c2, and the king march triumphs. Surprisingly, in this position (without the repetition on moves 17-18), two strong players mistakenly took the knight here: 17...gxf3?? 18. ♖xg7+ ♗xg7 19. ♕xg7 ♕xg7 20. ♗b2+! (the white queen is lost after 20.exf3?? ♖xf3+ 21. ♕e4 d5+! – Stepanov-Romanovsky, Leningrad 1929) 20...♕g8 21.exf3 ♖xf3+ 22.♕e2 ♖f7 23.♕g2 ♖g7 24.♖g1 ♖b8 25.♕xc6 1-0 Belavenets-Kotov, Moscow 1935. Miasoedov plays better.

19...d5!

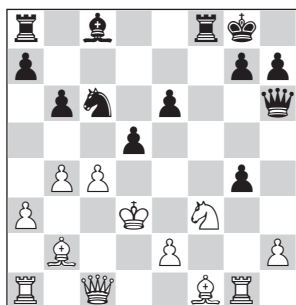
The situation is heating up – now there is the serious threat of ...e6-e5, and Botvinnik tries to coordinate his pieces on the queenside.

20. ♗c1

The sixth World Champion awards this move an exclamation mark, correctly pointing out that the tempting 20. ♖xg4 loses after the simple 20...e5, but in the variation 20. ♗d2 ♗g6+ 21. ♕c3 ♗e4 the computer points out a stunning improvement: 22.cxd5!. Now after 22...exd5 23. ♖d4 only Black risks losing, since after the apparently winning 22...♕a6 23. ♗g5 ♖xb4! White has the cold-blooded 24. ♖c1!!, maintaining the balance! This is one of the drawing lines: 24...♖f5 25. ♗xg4 ♖c8+ 26. ♕d2

♖c2+ 27.♖xc2 ♖xc2+ 28.♕e1 ♘d3+ 29.exd3 ♖b1+ 30.♕f2 ♖xb2+.

Here White can agree a draw immediately or even try to run with his king, although this does not change the assessment. It looks as though having the queen on c1 is no worse, but in his variation another computer discovery awaits us.



20...dxc4+

The move 20...♖f4!! leads to a very dangerous position for White. If the knight retreats by 21.♘e5 Black simply brings his last piece into play with 21...♙b7 with a whole bunch of threats, whilst the intended 21.♕c2 is met by 21...e5!, so as... to defend the ♘c6! After 22.♙xe5 ♖xc4+ 23.♙c3 ♖xc3+ 24.♕xc3 ♖f6+ 25.♕b3 Black can take the knight without loss of time with 25...gxf3, continuing a terrible attack with practically equal material. Of course, delving into such subtleties without a computer is practically impossible (especially over the board) and Botvinnik justifiably felt throughout the whole game that he was seeking ways to play for a win.

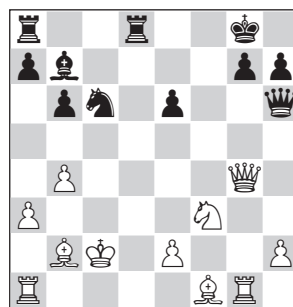
21. ♖xc4

Less successful is 21.♕xc4? ♖f4+ 22.♕b3 e5! – the king does not find a comfortable hiding-place.

21...♗d8+

Apart from his inaccuracy on the last move, Miasoedov continues to play the game very strongly. In the variation 21...♖f4!? 22.♖xc6 ♙a6+ 23.b5 ♖c8 24.♖d7 ♖f7 the queen is trapped, but after 25.♖xf7+ ♕xf7 26.♘e5+ ♕g8 27.bxa6 ♗d8+ 28.♕e4 ♖d2 29.♘d3 ♖xd3 30.exd3 ♖xb2 31.♙g2 White has more than enough for it and he is the one playing for a win.

22. ♕c2 ♙b7 23. ♖xg4



Now what? There is no time for 23...♖ac8 because of the problem with g7, nor is there time to defend this square. The only way out is to give check!

23...♘b4+! 24.axb4

Now even the all-powerful computer cannot find anything but drawing lines. A peaceful outcome also results from Botvinnik’s line 24.♖xb4 ♖ac8+ 25.♙c3 ♙xf3 26.♗d1 ♖xc3+ 27.♖xc3 ♙e4+ 28.♗d3 ♖xd3 29.exd3 ♖xh2+, and even the daring 24.♕b3!? ♙d5+ 25.♕xb4

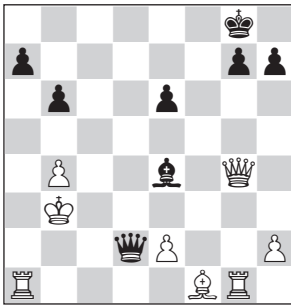
a5+ 26. ♖b5 ♙c6+! 27. ♖xb6 ♖e3+ 28. ♗d4! ♜ab8+ 29. ♖xc6= – Black must give perpetual check.

24... ♜ac8+ 25. ♙c3 ♜xc3+

Continuing the carousel of sacrifices, which have still not come to an end – soon Miasoedov throws another exchange onto the fire.

26. ♖xc3 ♖e3+ 27. ♖b2

27. ♖c2 only includes the bishop in the attack after 27... ♙e4+ 28. ♖b2 ♜d2+ 29. ♗xd2 ♖xd2+, and now it is White who must play accurately – for example, 30. ♖b3? loses.



Test 1. Find how?

Solution: All is simple: 30... ♙d5+ 31. ♖a3 (he can give up the queen, but this only prolongs the game) 31... ♖c3 32. ♖a4 ♖c2+! 33. ♖b5 ♖c6+ 34. ♖a6 b5+, and mate next move.

27... ♜d2+ 28. ♗xd2 ♖xd2+ 29. ♖b1 ♖d1+ 30. ♖b2 ♖d2+

The fog clears. Draw.

This is how Leningrad first-category players played in those days! Of course, from the modern viewpoint of total erudition, knowledge and the computer, it is hard to compare modern players

with those of last century, but we are struck by the power with which Grigory Miasoedov battled against the well-prepared future World Champion.

Game 2

Mikhail Botvinnik

Leonid Savitsky

Leningrad ch-city 1932 (10)

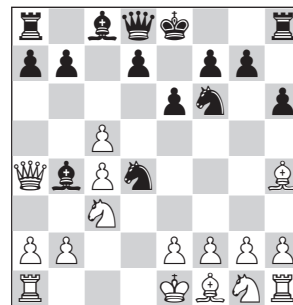
1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 e6 3. ♗c3 ♙b4 4. ♖b3 c5 5.dxc5 ♗c6 6. ♙g5 h6 7. ♙h4

After the game with Miasoedov, Botvinnik changes system, and quite successfully – the best reply to the bishop raid was not found immediately.

7... ♗d4

The most precise route to a satisfactory game was shown by Vyacheslav Ragozin: 7...g5 8. ♙g3 ♗e4 with numerous threats, from 9... ♗d4 to 9... ♖a5. Savitsky demonstrates an equally interesting idea, but in an imprecise form.

8. ♖a4



8... ♙xc3+

Botvinnik considered that Black had no alternative to the capture on c3, but he underestimated the

Game 32

Peter Leko

2669

Alexey Sarana

2618

Moscow 2018 (4)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3
 ♘bd7 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♙g5 ♙e7 7.e3
 0-0 8.♙d3 ♜e8 9.0-0 c6 10.♚c2 ♘f8



We have the classical Carlsbad structure, named after the 1923 international tournament, where it was used several times.

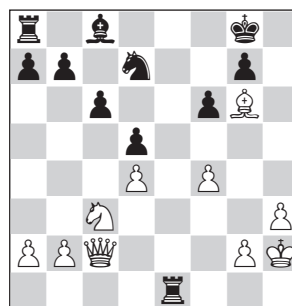
White has adopted many plans here: 11.♞ab1 (the Minority Attack), 11.♞ae1 (an attack in the centre), 11.♙xf6 (another Minority Attack), but the most dangerous set-up here is the one much liked by Anatoly Karpov:

11.h3 g6

After the typical Carlsbad knight jump 11...♘e4 there is 12.♙f4 ♘xc3 (the central squares are weakened after 12...f5 13.♘e5) 13.bxc3 ♙e6 14.c4 with a small, but stable advantage for White.

It is more cunning to exchange with the move 11...♘h5, trying to exploit the h3-pawn as a target for the attack.

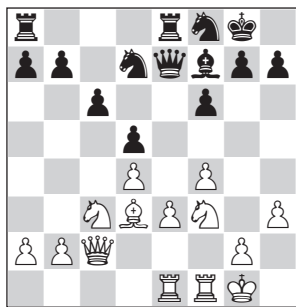
It has been known for a long time that the following line is refuted: 11...♘g6?! 12.♘e5 ♘d7 (after 12...♘xe5 13.dxe5 ♘d7 14.♙xe7 ♚xe7 there is no need to grab the pawn with 15.♙xh7+?! ♘h8 16.f4 g6, since there is the simple 15.f4!) 13.♙xe7 ♚xe7 14.f4 f6? (more solid is 14...♘df8 15.♞ae1, but this does not ease Black’s position) 15.♘xg6! hxg6 16.♙xg6 ♚xe3+ 17.♘h2 ♜e7 18.♞ae1 ♚xe1 19.♞xe1 ♞xe1.



Test 22. The white queen should be stronger than the two black rooks in this position. But how can this be demonstrated arithmetically?

Solution: One of the black rooks simply gets trapped: 20.♘e2! ♘f8 21.♙d3 ♙d7 22.♚d2 ♞a1 (or 22...♞f1 23.♘c1) 23.b4 ♘e6 24.f5 ♘g5 25.♘c1! ♘e4 26.♚b2 ♞xc1 27.♚xc1 is a disaster and the rest did not last long. 27...a5 28.b5 ♘d6 29.♚c5 ♘xf5 30.g4 ♘h4 31.♚e7+– Khenkin-Arkipov, Moscow 1988.

The intrigue is preserved in the variation 11...♙e6 12.♘e5 ♘d7 13.♙xe7 ♚xe7 14.f4 f6 15.♘f3 ♙f7 16.♞ae1.



White is ready to carry out the so-called ‘Pillsbury Attack’ – the white king gives way to the g1-rook and the g2-pawn goes to g4-g5, trying to knock out the black pawn on f6 and provide an outpost on e5 for the knight. True, the position remains complicated, Black aims for counterplay on the queenside, whilst it is not even easy for White to land a serious blow on the kingside: 16...c5!? 17.♖f2 c4 18.♙b1 ♟b6 19.f5 ♜c7 20.♝h1 ♞ad8 21.g4 ♟fd7 22.♞g1 ♜d6 23.g5 ♙h5 Ggg-Amadeus Chess, playchess 2007. Alexey Sarana regroupes in accordance with classical advice, aiming to exchange the ♙c8, but here there is a surprise in store.

12. ♙h6!

Transposing by 12.♟e5?! fails to 12...♟d7!.

12... ♟e6 13. ♟e5 ♟g7



14.g4!

There will be no exchange on f5! In addition, the black ♟g7 is now rather oddly placed.

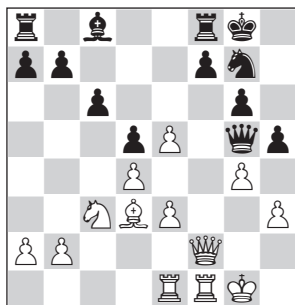
14... ♟d7 15.f4 ♙b4

It is not so easy for Black to find a solid answer to the white set-up, which was adopted as far back as 1988 by Slobodan Mirkovic. Later in the 1990s the Russian GM Andrey Shariyazdanov won a number of precious games in this line. After the committal 15...f6 the sacrifice is not so clear: 16.♙xg6 hxg6 17.♙xg7 ♟xe5 18.♙xf6, but White can settle for the simple 16.♟f3 ♙f8 17.♞ae1 ♟b6, and now very strong is 18.f5! gxf5 (or 18...g5 19.e4) 19.♟h4 with a fearsome attack.

After 15...♙f8 one can play the classical 16.♖f2 f6 (16...♟xe5 17.fxe5 ♙e6 18.e4! is dangerous for Black) 17.♟f3 ♟b6 18.♞ae1 (Christiansen-Van der Sterren, Lucerne Wch-tt 1989), going over to the Pillsbury plan. But it also looks very strong to use the plan invented by a top Czech GM: 16.♞f3 ♟e6 17.♙xf8 ♟exf8 18.♖f2 f6 19.♟xd7 ♙xd7 20.f5 g5 21.h4 h6 22.hxg5 hxg5 23.e4 with a strong attack, Navara-Duda, Yerevan 2014.

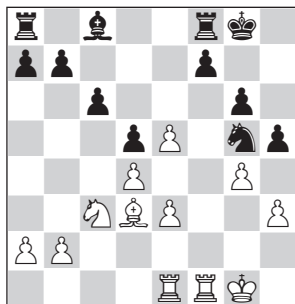
Finally, exchanging knights with 15...♟xe5 16.fxe5 also condemns Black to a prospectless defence, because of the white pressure on the f-file: 16...♙g5 (I cannot omit to mention a memorable game for me: 16...♞f8 17.♞f3 ♙e6 18.♞af1 c5 19.♖f2 ♙h4 20.♖g2 cxd4 21.exd4

♙g5 22. ♙xg5 ♖xg5 23. ♖f4 ♗ad8
 24. ♙c2 ♘e8 25. ♗f2, and Black’s
 position is difficult, Kryakvin-
 Kuipers, Hoogeveen (2018) 17. ♙xg5
 ♖xg5 18. ♗f2 ♖f8 (18... ♙e6 19. ♗ae1
 ♖f8 20. ♗f6! ♖xf6 21. ♖xf6 ♘e8
 22. ♖f2 with the better endgame,
 Shariyazdanov-Saptarshi, Raipur
 2002) 19. ♗ae1 h5.



analysis diagram

Here again there follows a typical
 queen raid, which Shariyazdanov
 has used a number of times to pour
 water on the flames of the black
 counterplay: 20. ♗f6! ♘e6 (bad is
 20... ♖xf6 21. exf6 ♘e8 22. ♙e2 hxg4
 23. hxg4 ♘d6 24. ♙f2 ♖e8 25. ♖h1,
 and with the pawn on f6, Black has
 hardly any moves, whilst his king is
 in deadly danger) 21. ♗xg5 ♘xg5.



Test 23. The pawn on e3 is under
 attack, and if it is defended,
 the pawn g4 is lost. But Andrey
 Shariyazdanov had prepared a
 subtle idea. White to play.

Solution: The GM from
 Yekaterinburg played 22. h4!. After
 22... ♘h3+ 23. ♙h2 hxg4 (23... ♙xg4
 24. ♖f6+–) 24. ♙g3 ♖e8 25. ♖f6! ♖e6
 26. ♖xe6 ♙xe6 27. ♙e2+– the black
 knight is trapped, so Karen Asrian
 moved it back with 22... ♘h7, but
 still ended up with a very difficult
 position: 23. gxh5 gxh5 24. ♙h2
 ♙g4 25. ♖f4 ♙g7 (no help is 25...
 f6 26. ♖ef1 ♖ae8 27. ♙xh7+ ♙xh7
 28. ♖xf6+–) 26. ♖ef1 ♙e6 27. ♘e2!
 ♖h8 28. ♘g3 ♘f8 (28... ♖ae8 29. ♘f5+
 ♙f8 30. ♘d6 ♖e7 31. ♙g6+–)
 29. ♘f5+ ♙g8 30. ♖g1+ ♘g6 31. ♘e7+
 1-0 Shariyazdanov-Asrian, Elista
 1998.

16. ♗f2 f6 17. ♘f3 ♘f8

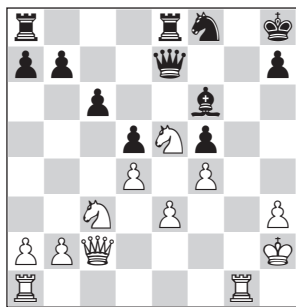
We must pay tribute to Alexey
 Sarana – the young grandmaster
 has managed to pose serious
 problems to the 2004 vice-World
 Champion, and Peter Leko did not
 understand these problems at the
 board. With the accurate 18. a3 or
 18. ♗ae1, the advantage remains with
 White, whereas after

18. ♘h4?! f5!

Black obtained counterplay.

**19. ♙xg7 ♙xg7 20. gxh5 ♙e7 21. ♘f3
 ♙xf5 22. ♙xf5 gxh5 23. ♙h2 ♙f6
 24. ♖g1+ ♙h8 25. ♘e5 ♖e7 26. ♖c2**

There followed another excellent
 move, after which Sarana’s position
 is out of danger:



26... ♖e6! 27. ♗xf5 ♙xe5 28. dxe5 ♜f8
29. ♗g4 d4

And Black’s active pieces ensured him a draw.

Incidentally, in rapid chess, Alexey used the Pillsbury-Karpov-Shariyazdanov variation against Nigel Short and achieved an important victory, eventually becoming the best among the young players in the event.

The background of the next game is simply amazing and could serve as an idea for a whole book. The event took place at the popular Aeroflot festival, where a ticket to the Dortmund Super Tournament was competed for in the main tournament. And in the first round, one of the favourites, Rapid World Champion Daniil Dubov, used a rare version of the Queen’s Gambit against his opponent, the talented Uzbek junior Nordibek Abdusattorov. Dubov achieved a big advantage, but at that moment the unexpected happened!! A Moscow terrorist called the police and said that a bomb had been placed in the Cosmos Hotel, where

the Aeroflot tournament was taking place! The special services urgently evacuated all the hotel guests, the round was interrupted... employees from the relevant departments with trained dogs were looking for a bomb, but the threat was fake. Naturally, given that everyone has phones with built-in engines and Internet access, resuming the games was impossible. Those who already had a large advantage by the time of evacuation suffered, primarily Dubov. When a new round was played, Abdusattorov was ready, played accurately and easily drew. But it is surprising that Daniel’s shot was fired on one of the neighbouring boards, where another of the talented young Russian grandmasters used his idea.

Game 33

Andrey Esipenko	2603
Dai Changren	2473

Moscow 2019 (1)

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. ♘c3 ♙e7 4. ♘f3
♙f6 5. ♙g5 h6 6. ♙f4

Strange-looking, but modern engines often list such moves as their first choice. White counts on exploiting the weakening of the black kingside.

6...0-0

Interestingly, long before the advent of Stockfish and AlphaZero, the retreat of the bishop to f4 was played by the Danish prince, Bent Larsen. Here is one example: 6...c5 7. dxc5 ♙xc5 8. e3 ♘c6 9. cxd5 exd5

CHAPTER 14

The Riazantsev Variation

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 ♕g7 4.e4 d6 5.♖e2 0-0 6.♗e3 followed by g2-g4



Some history

Due to the fact that there is no fixed *tabiya* in this variation, but only a general idea related to the holding back of the g1-knight and playing a quick g2-g4, it is difficult to say which player invented the variation. From my point of view, despite the fact that individual games with a similar pattern were played back in the 1930s, the flowering of this variation began with the games of Matthew Sadler in the late 1980s. For several years, the Englishman valiantly defended the honour of the variation, and managed to achieve several important victories over such players as, for example, Andrei Istratescu and Michal Krasenkow.

In our time, the variation has not lost relevance. Many 2700s have tested their opponents with a dashing pawn attack, and in my opinion, Alexander Riazantsev can be considered the main modern supporter of the variation – once I myself had to capitulate against him in this line.

Important nuances

More often than not, White resorts to this idea after Black has carried out ...e7-e5 – in response, the centre is closed with d4-d5 and then the advance of the wing pawns gains in strength. Therefore, Black often tries not to rush with the move of the e-pawn, keeping in reserve ...c7-c5. But often the blocked centre does not scare the black players. White has to hide the king on the queenside, and with accurate play, Black manages to create counterplay associated with an attack on the enemy monarch.

Despite the bold pawn play, the opening stage often ends with the fixing of the pawn structure, after which the strategic skills of the opponents come to the fore and the player who can better reorganize his pieces for the decisive blow wins.

We start the review with two contrasting portraits of the line – in the first White’s opening idea worked out with a bang, and in the second, the black player played almost perfectly and achieved a beautiful, confident victory.

Game 71

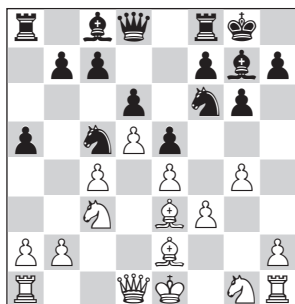
Maxim Rodshtein 2699

Vladislav Kovalev 2636

Heraklio Ech-tt 2017 (9)

The match between the national teams of Israel and Belarus took place in the last round of the European Team Championship and was of great sporting significance. Due to this victory on the second board, the Israelis managed to win the match by the minimum score and finish directly behind the teams of Azerbaijan, Russia, Ukraine, Croatia and Hungary.

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♙g7 4.e4 d6
5.♙e2 0-0 6.♙e3 e5 7.d5 ♘a6 8.g4
♘c5 9.f3 a5**



This position can be reached via several move-orders (for example, the knight on c5 can come via a6 or

d7). The black player here is one of the most determined King’s Indian adherents, Vladislav Kovalev – this makes it all the more interesting to see how Maxim Rodshtein poses him problems even on his own ‘home field’.

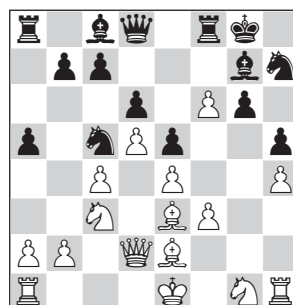
10.h4 h5

A sensible decision – Black does not want to allow h4-h5.

11.g5 ♘h7 12.♙d2 f6

This break cannot really be avoided, so the KID player should not hesitate to advance the f-pawn.

13.gxf6



13...♙xf6

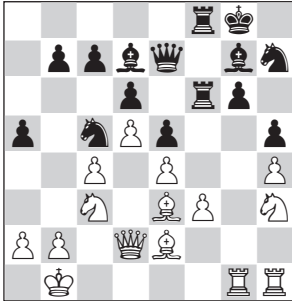
Later Vladislav somewhat improved his opening approach, choosing 13...♙xf6, but didn’t equalize: 14.♙f2 ♙d7 15.0-0-0 ♙e7 16.♙b1 ♙ad8 17.♙f1 ♙h8 18.♘ge2 ♙g7 19.♙g2, and despite the fact that a draw

was soon agreed, one can hardly recommend this line to Black, Badelka-V.Kovalev, Orsha 2018.

14.0-0-0 ♖d7 15. ♘h3 ♚e7

It is a bit late for counterplay against the white king, so Kovalev banks on completing his development.

16. ♜dg1 ♞af8 17. ♞b1



17... ♚e8

Black could try the sacrifice 17... ♜xf3 18. ♖xf3 ♜xf3, but after the simple 19. ♘f2 it is not quite clear what he has for the exchange. Black's position is quite solid, and the Belarussian GM does not rush to force events.

18. ♜g3 b6 19. ♞hg1 ♘h8 20. ♘b5 ♚c8 21. ♘g5

Rodshtein places his pieces ideally and goes over to the decisive storm.



21... ♘a6

Again Black has an exchange sacrifice at his disposal, and this time it looks rather more promising: 21... ♖xb5!? 22. cxb5 ♘xg5 23. ♖xg5 ♘h7 24. ♖xf6 ♜xf6 25. ♖d1 ♖h6 26. ♚g2 ♚e8 – of course, Black can hardly count on more than a draw, but his chances of holding are quite high.

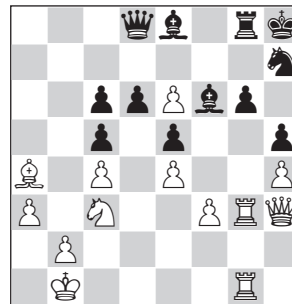
22.a3

Maxim understandably refrains from the immediate 22. ♘e6!? ♖xe6 23. dxe6 ♚xe6 24. ♘c3 – although this retains the advantage, there is no need for White to hurry.

22...a4 23. ♖d1 ♘c5 24. ♚g2 ♖e8 25. ♖xc5

But now the bishop has been deflected to cover the pawn on g6, White can turn to concrete play.

25...bxc5 26. ♘e6 ♜xe6 27. dxe6 ♖f6 28. ♚h3 ♜g8 29. ♖xa4 ♚d8 30. ♘c3 c6



Rodshtein easily conducted the game to its logical conclusion:

31. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 32. ♜xg6 ♜xg6 33. ♜xg6 ♖e8 34. ♜g1 ♖xh4 35. ♘d5 ♖g5 36. f4!

Opening the long diagonal. White won in 45 moves. A brilliant achievement by the Israeli GM!