

The Nimzo-Indian Bible for White

Volume 1 A Complete Opening Repertoire for White

4.  d2 & 4.  c2

Milos Pavlovic

First edition 2023 by Thinkers Publishing
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All sales or enquiries should be directed to Thinkers Publishing, 9850 Landegem, Belgium.

Email: info@thinkerspublishing.com
Website: www.thinkerspublishing.com

Managing Editor: Adrien Demuth

Assistant Editor: Daniël Vanheirzeele

Proofreading: Bernard Carpinter

Software: Hub van de Laar

Cover Design: Iwan Kerkhof

Graphic Artist: Philippe Tonnard

Production: BESTinGraphics

ISBN: 9789464201819
D/2023/13732/16

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Key to Symbols

!	a good move
?	a weak move
!!	an excellent move
??	a blunder
!?	an interesting move
?!	a dubious move
□	only move
N	novelty
☉	lead in development
⊙	zugzwang
=	equality
∞	unclear position
∞̄	with compensation for the sacrificed material
±	White stands slightly better
∓	Black stands slightly better
±	White has a serious advantage
∓	Black has a serious advantage
+−	White has a decisive advantage
−+	Black has a decisive advantage
→	with an attack
↑	with initiative
↔	with counterplay
Δ	with the idea of
△	better is
≤	worse is
+	check
#	mate

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Preface

This book is about the Nimzo-Indian Classical line 4.♔c2 (also known as the Capablanca Variation) and the 4.♙d2-line, for which basically I could not find an established name.

As far as I know, the 4.♙d2 line has never been covered in such a comprehensive way in any book before. In the text I suggest that this line should have the combined name of Tartakower-Duchamp line because Savielly Tartakower played it often, while to my surprise Marcel Duchamp (who was also a famous French artist) played it too in the 1930s and indeed in a very good positional fashion against strong players. Some of those games are in the book.

Now this line enjoys greater popularity than ever before. About the Classical line with 4.♔c2 there is nothing much to add, except for the fact that it has become hugely popular, but unfortunately from my point of view it involves too much engine-style chess.

Milos Pavlovic, December 2022

Part I

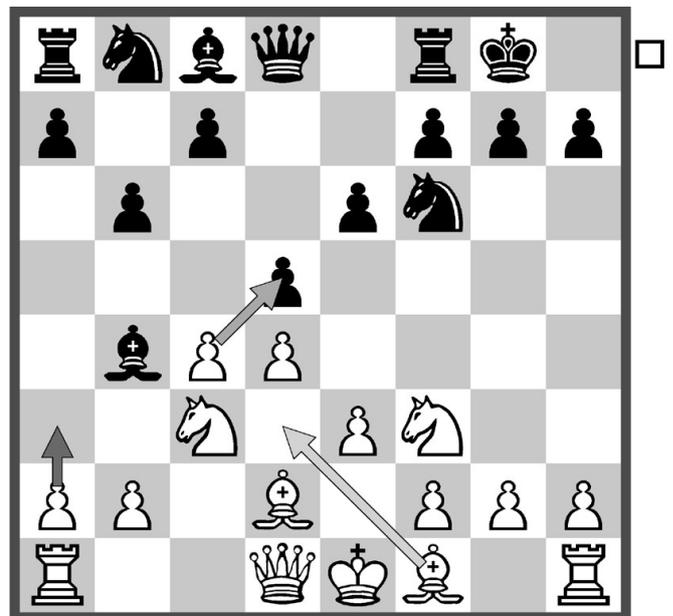
4.  d2 b6



Other Sidelines on Move 7

1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 e6 3.♞c3 ♝b4

4.♞d2 b6 5.e3 0-0 6.♞f3 d5



Chapter Guide

Chapter 1 – Other Sidelines on Move 7

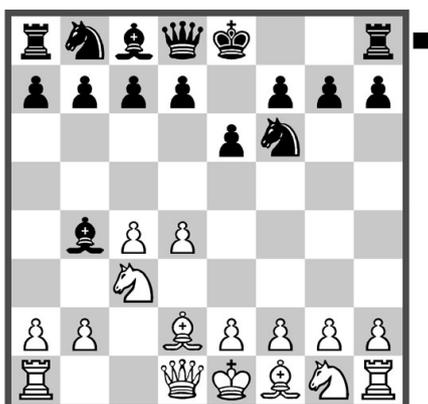
1.d4 f6 2.c4 e6 3.c3 b4 4.d2 b6 5.e3 0-0 6.f3 d5

a) 7.d3 & 7.a3 11

b) 7.cxd5 15

a) 7. ♖d3 & 7.a3

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♘c3 ♙b4 4. ♙d2



Position after: 4. ♙d2

This line has been completely neglected over the last 100 years or so, which is amazing. White is simply ready to take back with a bishop on c3 and that is a clear positional idea. Only in recent years, when players started to seriously investigate all kinds of positions, mostly in less explored variations, in order to avoid forced engine lines, did this line rise to the surface. I could not even find a name for this line, so my suggestion is to call it the Tartakower-Duchamp line. Why? While searching and analyzing many games I discovered that the renowned artist and passionate chess player Marcel Duchamp actually played this line. His games with Znosko-Borovsky from Nice 1930 and 1931 do have a place in modern theory and strategy, and that is quite an accomplishment. As for Tartakower, he was playing it on a regular basis, at least more than other famous players. I want

to emphasize that this is probably the first time this line has appeared in a chess book covered in detail, and it is also one of two main systems presented in this book. That is something that I am proud of.

It should be noted here that in practice the ♙d2 lines most often arise after 4.e3, when White moves the bishop to d2 within the next few moves.

b6 5. e3 0-0 6. ♘f3 d5 7. a3



Position after: 7. a3

We will deal here with early deviations for White, meaning ideas different from 7. ♖c1 or 7.cxd5 followed by ♙d3.

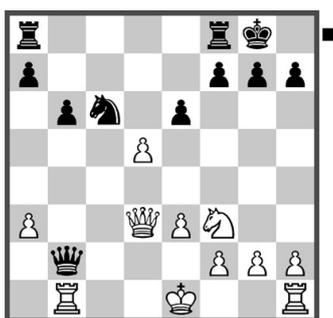
7. ♙d3

A) 7... ♙a6 8. ♙e2 c5

A1) 9. dxc5 dxc4 10. ♙xc4 ♙xc4
11. ♙xc4 ♙xc5 12. b4 ♙e7 13.
♖c1 ♘bd7 14. 0-0 ♖c8 15. ♙b3 a6
Black is doing OK here, ½-½ (31)

Mikhalchishin, A (2467) – Van Haastert, E (2439) Budva 2019.

A2) 9. a3 ♖xc3 10. ♖xc3 cxd4 11. ♖xd4 ♞c6 12. ♖xf6 ♞xf6 13. cxd5 ♖xd3 14. ♞xd3 ♞xb2 15. ♞b1

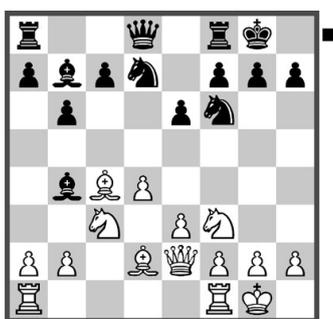


Position after: 15. ♞b1

15... ♞e5! Black has equalized, ½-½ (20) Radovanovic, N (2398) – Beliavsky, A (2547) Mali Losinj 2017.

A3) 9. 0-0!? cxd4 10. ♞xd4 e5 11. ♞db5 ♖xc3 12. ♖xc3 ♖xb5 13. cxb5 ♞bd7 14. f4 An unusual position, but it seems that the white bishops are doing a good job.

B) 7... dxc4 Gaining a tempo is always a good thing. 8. ♖xc4 ♖b7 9. 0-0 ♞bd7 10. ♞e2



Position after: 10. ♞e2

B1) 10... a6 11. ♞fd1 b5 12. ♖d3 c5 13. ♞ac1 [13. a4 bxa4 14. ♞xa4 ♖xf3 15. ♞xf3 ♖xd2 16. ♞xd2 cxd4 17. exd4 a5 it's an equal position] 13... cxd4 14. ♞xd4 ♞e7 15. ♖b1 ♞ac8 16. a3 ♖d6 Black is fine, 0-1 (36) Jakovenko, D (2735) – Giri, A (2783) St Petersburg 2018.

B2) 10... c5 This alternative is also sensible. 11. ♞fd1 cxd4 12. ♞xd4 a6 13. ♞e4 ♖xd2 14. ♞xf6+ ♞xf6 15. ♞xd2 ♞c5 Here too Black is experiencing no problems whatsoever, 0-1 (35) Mikhalchishin, A (2455) – Kryvoruchko, Y (2689) Struga 2021.

7... ♖d6

Black also has the options to take on c3 or go all the way back to e7.

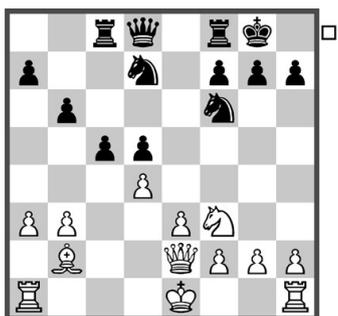
A) 7... ♖xc3 8. ♖xc3



Position after: 8. ♖xc3

8... ♖a6 [8... ♞e4 9. ♞c1 ♖a6 10. ♞c2 ♞d7 11. ♖d3 f5 12. cxd5 ♖xd3 13. ♞xd3 exd5 14. ♞b5 c5 15. 0-0 ♞c8 16. dxc5 ♞dxc5 17. ♖e5 White has an edge, ½-½ (54) Ghaem Maghami, E

(2552) – Asgarizadeh, A (2449) Tehran 2019] 9. b3 That's the idea: White keeps his structure intact and retains both bishops. 9... ♞bd7 10. ♞b2 c5 11. ♞e2 ♜c8 12. cxd5 ♞xe2 13. ♚xe2 exd5



Position after: 13... exd5

14. ♜c1! [14. 0-0 c4 15. a4 a6 16. bxc4 dxc4 17. ♞a3 ♜e8 18. ♜fb1 ♞e4 Black has gained the advantage, 1-0 (62) Indjic, A (2607) – Yilmaz, M (2630) Tornele INT 2021] 14... ♚e7 15. 0-0 ♚e6 With the idea of pushing ...c4 at some moment. 16. ♜fd1 ♜fd8 17. ♚b5 White can perhaps extract a small edge from this position.

B) 7... ♞e7 8. cxd5 exd5 9. ♞e5 c5 10. ♞d3 ♞b7 11. 0-0 ♞c6



Position after: 11... ♞c6

B1) 12. ♚f3!? A tricky idea. 12... ♞d6! It is important to challenge

the knight on e5, especially at a moment when White cannot support it by playing f4. [12... ♞xe5 13. dxe5 ♞d7 14. ♚h3 g6 15. f4 already this is dangerous for Black, ½-½ (30) Votava, J (2529) – Brkic, A (2565) Austria 2018] 13. ♞g4 ♞xg4 14. ♚xg4 ♞e7 This is OK for Black.

B2) 12. ♞e1 cxd4 13. ♞xc6 ♞xc6 14. exd4 ♞e4 15. ♜c1 ♞b7 16. f3 ♞xc3 17. ♞xc3 ♞f6 Black is fine here, 1-0 (41) Ivanchuk, V (2678) – Dzagnidze, N (2523) chess.com INT 2021.

8. ♜c1

8. b4



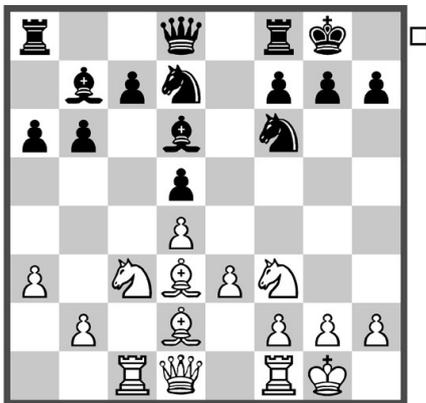
Position after: 8. b4

A) 8... dxc4 9. ♞xc4 ♞b7 10. 0-0 ♞bd7 11. ♜c1 c5 12. ♞b5 ♞e7 13. dxc5 bxc5 14. bxc5 ♞xc5 15. ♞b4 ♚b6 Black is fine. [15... a6 16. ♚xd8 ♜fxd8 17. ♞c7 suddenly White has gotten the upper hand in this endgame, 1-0 (57) Volkov, S (2557) – Girya, O (2432) Cheboksary 2021]

B) 8... c6!? 9. c5 ♞c7 The point, Black has secured a position to retreat his

bishop to. 10. ♖e2 ♘bd7 11. 0-0 e5
 12. h3 ♜e8 13. ♚c2 e4 14. ♘h2 ♘f8
 A good plan for Black, 0-1 (36) Besciu,
 V (2140) – Parligras, M (2601) Cali-
 manesti-Caciulata 2017.

8... a6 9. ♖d3 ♖b7 10. cxd5 exd5 11.
 0-0 ♘bd7



Position after: 11... ♘bd7

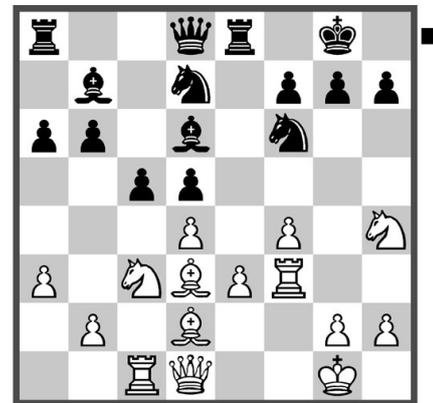
This is not a favorable version of the
 Nimzo; the bishop on d2 is misplaced
 now and the e5-square is out of reach
 for the knight on f3. White must do
 something, otherwise it's one-way traf-
 fic.

12. ♘h4!?

White needed to generate some
 activity.

12. ♘e2?! ♚e7 13. ♘g3 g6 14. ♖b4 c5
 15. dxc5 bxc5 16. ♖c3 ♜fd8 17. ♜e1
 a5 18. ♚a4 c4 19. ♖b1 ♘c5 20. ♚d1
 ♘b3 21. ♜c2 ♘e4 Black has better
 play, 0-1 (36) Georgiev, K (2577) –
 Gukesh, D (2640) Riga 2021.

12... ♜e8 13. f4 c5 14. ♜f3



Position after: 14. ♜f3

14... g6 15. ♜h3

With the black knight on d7 instead of
 c6, White need not worry about pres-
 sure on his d4-pawn. So now the plan is
 for the h4-knight to go back to f3 and
 then to e5, with unclear play.

b) 7.cxd5

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. Bd2
b6 5. e3 0-0 6. Nf3 d5 7. cxd5 exd5 8.
Bd3



Position after: 8. Bd3

White wants to transpose to a main Nimzo line, as we will see later, but Black has alternatives here apart from the standard placement of the bishop on b7.

8... Ba6

The main alternative to the fianchetto. The idea is clear: by exchanging this bishop Black practically eliminates White's usual attacking plan and the game now is more positional; it's more about playing in the center. We will see that often we get a slower type of game with lots of maneuvering.

A) 8... c5 9. 0-0



Position after: 9. 0-0

A1) 9... Bb7 This transposes to another line, which is discussed under the ...Bb7 system.

A2) 9... Bxc3 10. Bxc3 c4 11. Bc2 b5 12. a4! White is better.

A3) 9... Bg4 10. h3 Bh5 11. dxc5 bxc5 12. a3 Ba5 13. g4 Bg6 14. Bxg6 hxg6



Position after: 14... hxg6

15. Nxd5! White has an edge.

A4) 9... Nc6 10. a3 Ba5 11. Bb5!?



Position after: 11. ♖b5!?

White exploits the moment when the black bishop is on a5. 11... ♖b7 12. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 13. ♘e5 ♖e8 14. f3 ♖c8 15. ♖e1! It seems White has potential for an advantage.

A5) 9... c4 10. ♖c2 ♖g4 11. ♔b1 ♖xf3 12. gxf3 ♘c6 13. ♔h1 ♘e7 14. a3 ♖a5 15. ♖g1!



Position after: 15. ♖g1!

15... ♔h8 16. ♔f1 ♔d7 17. e4 This shows the correct way to go.

B) 8... ♖e8 9. 0-0 Black is trying to profit from not having the bishop on b7 at an early stage. 9... ♖d6 [9... ♖f8 10. ♘e5 c5 11. f4 ♖b7 12. ♖e1 cxd4 13. exd4 ♘c6 14. ♖f2 ♖c8 15. ♔f3 g6 16. ♖ad1 ♖g7 17. ♖b1 a6 18. a3 ♘a5 19. f5 White has pressure on the kingside, ½-½ (33) Akshat, K (2403) – Pacher, M

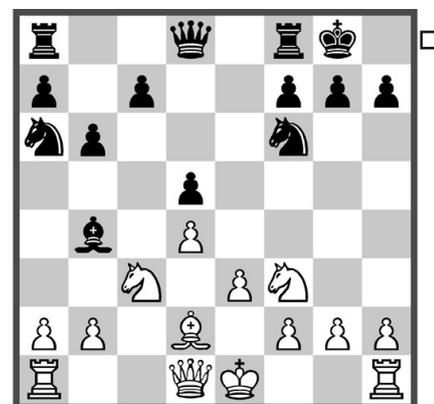
(2446) Budapest 2018] 10. ♘b5 ♖f8 11. ♘e5



Position after: 11. ♘e5

11... ♖a6!? [11... c5 12. f4 a6 13. ♘c3 b5 14. ♔f3 c4 15. ♖c2 ♖b7 16. a3 ♘bd7 17. g4 g6 18. ♖e1! White has better chances, 1-0 (38) Bluebaum, M (2670) – Huschenbeth, N (2604) Magdeburg 2021] 12. ♖c1 c5 13. a4 ♖b7 14. f4 a6 15. ♘c3 ♘c6 16. ♘e2 ♖c8 17. ♖e1 cxd4 18. exd4 ♘b4 19. ♖b1 ♖xc1 20. ♔xc1 ♔c8 21. ♘c3 ♘e4 22. ♔d1 With typical balanced play, 1-0 (45) Nakamura, H (2736) – Vidit, S (2726) chess.com INT 2020.

9. ♖xa6 ♘xa6



Position after: 9... ♘xa6

10. ♔a4

This is White's main idea but is not necessarily forced in any way. Let's see.

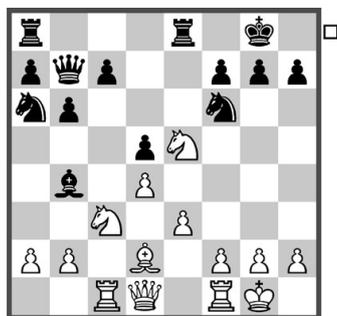
10. 0-0



Position after: 10. 0-0

A) 10... c5 11. dxc5 bxc5 12. a3 ♖xc3 [12... ♖a5 13. ♘xd5! ♖xd2 14. ♘xf6+ ♔xf6 15. ♔xd2 ♖ab8 16. ♖ab1 White is simply better, 1-0 (31) Gukesh, D (2563) – Tomashevsky, E (2706) chess.com INT 2020] 13. ♖xc3 ♘e4 14. ♖e5 f6 15. ♖f4 ♔d7 16. ♖c1 ♖ac8 17. h3 ♖fd8 18. b3 ♔b7 19. ♔c2 ♘b8 20. ♖fd1 It's a balanced game, ½-½ (94) Suleymenov, A (2440) – Iljin, T (2314) Chelyabinsk 2021.

B) 10... ♔c8 11. ♖c1 ♔b7 12. ♘e5 ♖fe8

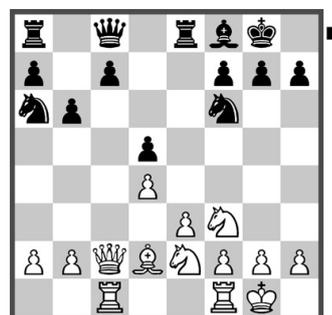


Position after: 12... ♖fe8

13. ♖e1!? This is an interesting idea.

White is aiming to shift his dark-squared bishop to the typical h4-square, but has still not decided whether to push f4, because f3 could be a good option [at this point it is premature to push the f-pawn two squares: 13. f4 c5 14. ♘b5 ♖xd2 15. ♔xd2 ♘e4 16. ♔d1 f6 17. ♘f3 ♖ad8 Black is better here, ½-½ (60) Bouget, A (2247) – Eljanov, P (2672) chess.com INT 2021]. 13... ♖d6 [13... c5 14. ♘b5! ♖ad8 15. ♔a4 ♖xe1 16. ♖fxe1 White is somehow more active, the black knight on a6 is not standing well at the edge of a board now] 14. f4! c5 15. ♖h4 ♖e7 16. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 17. ♔f3 ♖ad8 18. ♘e2 ♘b4 19. a3 ♘c6 20. ♘g4 ♖e7 21. f5 ♖f8 22. ♘f4 White has achieved a good game, ½-½ (115) Bluebaum, M (2647) – Najer, E (2648) chess.com INT 2020.

C) 10... ♖e8 11. ♖c1 ♖f8 12. ♘e2 ♔c8 13. ♔c2



Position after: 13. ♔c2

13... ♔b7 [Black doesn't need to hurry with his c-pawn push. 13... c5 14. dxc5 bxc5 15. ♖c3 ♘e4 16. ♖fd1 ♔b7 17. ♘f4 ♖ad8 18. ♔a4 White

has easier play and pressure on the central pawns con 5 and d5, ½-½ (51) Anton Guijarro, D (2675) – Carlsen, M (2862) chess24.com INT 2020]. 14. ♖c6 ♗xc6 15. ♜xc6 ♙d6 16. ♜d1 ♞b8 17. ♜c2 a5 18. ♚e1 c6 19. h3 A complex endgame lies ahead of us.

10... ♗c8

Black reveals the main point of his strategy. His queen will be well placed on b7 and after further development he will be ready to go ...c5.

11. 0-0

11. ♗c6!?



Position after: 11. ♗c6!?

This is just a minor disturbance, rather than some deep tactical idea.

A) 11... ♜e8 12. ♞xd5 ♞xd5 13. ♗xd5 ♙xd2+ 14. ♞xd2 c5 15. 0-0 cxd4 16. exd4 White is better, 1-0 (57) Batsiashvili, N (2480) – Socko, M (2421) lichess.org INT 2021.

B) 11... ♙xc3 12. ♙xc3 ♜e8 13. 0-0

♜e6 14. ♗a4 ♞e4 15. ♜ac1 ♗b7

16. ♜fd1 ♜c8 17. ♗b3 c6 18. a4 ♞b8 19. a5 ♞d7 20. ♚e1 White preserves some edge. but it's going to be a long and interesting game in any case, 1-0 (44) Batsiashvili, N (2467) – Janik, I (2489) Figueira da Foz 2020.

C) 11... ♜d8 12. 0-0 ♜d6 13. ♗a4



Position after: 13. ♗a4

I guess White's point was to drive the rook to the unusual d6-square, and now the game will proceed in the usual manner. 13... ♙xc3 14. ♙xc3 ♞e4 15. ♜fc1 c5 16. ♚e1 ♗b7 17. ♞e5 f6 18. ♞d3 c4 19. ♞f4 b5 20. ♗c2 ♜e8 21. b3 White has preferable chances here too, theoretically speaking, but it is complex, 0-1 (75) Batsiashvili, N (2466) – Grigoryan, K (2651) Barcelona 2020.

11... ♗b7

11... c5 12. dxc5 bxc5 13. a3 ♙xc3 14. ♙xc3 ♞e4 15. ♜ac1 ♗b7 16. b3

(see analysis diagram next page)