

Efstratios Grivas

# GRIVAS OPENING LABORATORY

VOLUME 7



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Key to symbols.....	5
Foreword .....	7
Description .....	11

## **PART 1. THE MODERN DEFENCE (A21-A42)**

Chapter 1. The Modern Defence (A21) .....	17
Chapter 2. The Modern Defence (A42).....	27
Chapter 3. Typical Middlegame Strategy.....	47
Chapter 4. Endgame Technique.....	63
Chapter 5. Tactical Motifs .....	71

## **PART 2. THE POLISH DEFENCE (A40)**

Chapter 1. The Polish Defence (A40).....	83
Chapter 2. Typical Middlegame Strategy .....	91
Chapter 3. Endgame Technique.....	97
Chapter 4. Tactical Motifs.....	99

## **PART 3. VARIOUS DEFENCES (A40-E10)**

Chapter 1. The Dzindzi-Indian Defence (E10).....	105
Chapter 2. The Tango Defence (E10).....	111
Chapter 3. The Bozo-Indian Defence (A40).....	117
Chapter 4. The Englund Gambit (A40).....	123
Chapter 5. The Owen Defence (A40) .....	129
Chapter 6. Typical Middlegame Strategy .....	133
Chapter 7. Endgame Technique .....	145
Chapter 8. Tactical Motifs.....	153

## **PART 4. THE BENONI DEFENCE (A43-72)**

Chapter 1. The Old Benoni (A43-A44).....	163
Chapter 2. The Czech Benoni (A56).....	171
Chapter 3. The Schmid Benoni (A56/E74).....	183
Chapter 4. The Snake Benoni (A43-A60).....	185
Chapter 5. The Classical Modern Benoni (A70-A72) .....	201
Chapter 6. Typical Middlegame Strategy .....	225
Chapter 7. Endgame Technique .....	243
Chapter 8. Tactical Motifs.....	255

## **PART 5. THE OLD INDIAN DEFENCE (A55)**

Chapter 1. The Old Indian Defence (A55) .....	265
Chapter 2. Typical Middlegame Strategy .....	273
Chapter 3. Endgame Technique.....	281
Chapter 4. Tactical Motifs.....	289
Bibliography .....	297
Curriculum Vitae.....	299

# KEY TO SYMBOLS

=	Equality or equal chances
±	White has a slight advantage
∓	Black has a slight advantage
±	White is better
∓	Black is better
+-	White has a decisive advantage
-+	Black has a decisive advantage
∞	unclear
∞	with compensation
↔	with counterplay
↑	with initiative
→	with an attack
Δ	with the idea
□	only move
N	novelty
!	a good move
!!	an excellent move
?	a weak move
??	a blunder
!?	an interesting move
?!	a dubious move
+	check
#	mate



# FOREWORD

Dear Reader,

The series continuing with this book is aimed at offering a full repertoire for White based on **1.d4**.

The idea of small opening repertoire books is not new, but here the purpose and the presentation are different.

The choice of variations against each reply from Black will be mine and will be based on my long experience, having played the game for over 40 years, and also served as a professional coach for approximately 20 of those!

I hope that each book in the series will come out every two months and one to three openings will be offered in each of them.

Maybe not all of the choices will appeal to you, but you should understand that what is important is to learn them in depth, rather than looking for something astounding — this is simply an illusion.

What I mean by this is that nowadays no opening offers all that much; what you can expect is something between a tiny bit better and slightly better, if

you have done your homework! Otherwise there is no point in the Black player following it!

The recommendations are geared towards posing Black unconventional problems. Your opponents will not be able to churn out lengthy, memorised variations but will need to solve problems at the board, in positions that are somewhat different in character from those normally reached in the openings under discussion.

I have also selected the systems within the repertoire in such a way that they form a seamless whole and are also reachable by transpositions.

I have tried to describe the suggested systems in detail, giving my assessments as clearly and responsibly as possible, and have generally aimed to provide useful guidelines as well as many new ideas and moves.

Many things in chess theory, as in life, are relative and a matter of taste. Actually, there are no 'good' or 'bad' openings. There are openings that you know and understand, and openings that you do not know and do not understand.

Thus, I believe that my recommended systems will offer a lot of possibilities, new ideas and practical benefits, aspects that should not be underestimated in modern chess. Among other things, I have tried to make them 'understandable' to you.

This book series' main purpose is to train and educate the reader in territory that is 'unknown' to him. We must not forget that this is a theory book series, where concrete reaction to the opponent's moves is of primary importance.

General principles and plans do merit a place in this project but, in my opinion, move-by-move consideration is most significant.

Of course, it is not necessary to memorise all the variations and moves mentioned in the books — this would probably be impossible.

But then, you may ask, what is the reason for someone to deal with a theory book, one that he does not need to 'memorise' in full?

The theory of 'subconscious education' will help us to answer this question. By playing through the moves and variations in the books, our subconscious processes and stores similar motifs, repeated moves and plans, and also 'learns' to avoid traps and unwelcome positions.

Such proper 'subconscious memorisation' will, at the critical moment, enforce the correct choice upon us.

Many of the opening books I have read mainly focus on the general characteristics of the opening or the variation in question, and much less so on move-by-move theory.

This can lead to unresolved questions in the reader's mind, and the danger that he will mix things up at moments when it is necessary to find one specific concrete move or sequence.

The recommended repertoire is that of a Grandmaster, without omissions or hidden secrets. On the contrary, it contains a great number of new and deeply analysed suggestions, plans, novelties, new ideas, moves, etc!

Let us not forget that the basic characteristics of the openings do not frequently undergo radical changes. On the other hand, the development of move-by-move theory is explosive.

Every chess player stands on the shoulders of those who came before him. Every generation of good chess players learns from and builds upon the experience and creativity of the previous generations.

The chess player of the year 2021 has encountered more types of positions than the chess-player of 1980 and



---

knows the proper ways to deal with these positions.

Therefore, a chess player today would have a great advantage over a chess player (even one of equal or greater talent) of 40 years ago, simply because he could play the opening with deeper understanding; this understanding is offered to him by the multitude of deeply-analysed variations.

On no occasion do I underestimate the necessity and value of learning the general characteristics and plans of each opening or variation. However, I do strongly believe that move-by-move theory and its (at least) subconscious absorption are necessary in order to survive in the labyrinth of the chess openings.

One question often posed by my students is whether we must simultaneously prepare two or more different systems against an opening. My personal opinion is that only professional Grandmasters can afford this luxury.

All other chess players should focus on one specific system every time, so as to specialise in it and reap maxi-

imum benefit. Only if this choice eventually proves undesirable should one change his systems.

As Ernest Hemingway once wrote: 'I guess really good soldiers are really good at very little else'.

The massive development of theory in all openings has clarified that White cannot hope for anything more than a slight advantage, but in some cases even this is unattainable! My recommendations are purely based on a healthy approach.

I must clarify that I took the liberty of changing the original move-order of many games. In this way it was possible to provide clearer coverage and guidance.

Of course, the way you reach a certain position is important, but equally important is to examine how you want to proceed upon reaching it. True value comes from knowing what to keep and what to throw away.

Efstratios Grivas  
Sharjah, March 2021



# DESCRIPTION

In the seventh and final book of the series we will complete our quest and finalise the building of our White repertoire based on 1.d4.

Firstly, we deal with how to face the 'Modern Defence', a duo of mainly strategic systems that were never extremely popular but are still played today, mostly at club players' level.

The proposed systems are based on healthy central schemes, which score a modest 50.6% in a good number of games (approximately 27,500).

Well, this looks a bit low, as the average expected score of White's 'superiority' is 51.5% to 52%, but it seems that players of the black pieces are better prepared and know the middlegame strategies in more depth.

Then we turn to the 'Polish Defence', an opening which can transpose to the 'St. George Defence'. This is an active opening, which was never extremely popular but is still played today, mostly at club level.

The proposed systems are again based on healthy central schemes, which

score a good 60.0% across a good number of games (approximately 2,000).

This looks very high, against the average expectation of 51.5% to 52%, but it seems that White's central advantage is a crucial factor and gives White the upper hand.

Then we move on to examine various side-lines, which are included in the 'Various Defences' chapter.

These openings are the 'Dzindzi-Indian Defence', the 'Tango Defence', the 'Bozo-Indian Defence', the 'Englund Gambit' and the 'Owen Defence'.

Well, when well-prepared there is no reason to be afraid of these openings, but rather smile when facing them! Our proposed systems are based on healthy central schemes, which score quite well.

A reasonably big chapter in modern chess is the 'Benoni Defence', a bucket of mainly tactical systems which have never been hugely popular, but are still played nowadays, again mostly at the level of the club player.

We will deal with the ‘Old Benoni’, the ‘Czech Benoni’, the ‘Schmid Benoni’, the ‘Snake Benoni’ and, finally, the ‘Classical Modern Benoni’.

The proposed White systems are based on ♙g5 schemes, an approach that has served me well for approximately 40 years, scoring an excellent 70% over a good number of games.

Well, this looks a bit too high, as the general score in these variations is 55%, against the average expected score of 51.5% to 52%. My quite high score is purely based on study and understanding of the systems, so that many equal positions were turned into full points!

And finally we will deal with how to face the ‘Old Indian Defence’, a modest but stable strategic system which never gained huge popularity, but as with the others is still played today, mostly at the club players’ level.

Our proposed systems are based, as always, on healthy central schemes,

which score a strong 58.8% across a good number of games (approximately 4,550).

Well, this looks a bit high too, as the average expectation as we know is 51.5% to 52%, but it seems that White’s spatial advantage is a crucial factor and gives White the upper hand.

In the book you will find not only a concrete and well-structured, move-by-move presentation, but also chapters on middlegames, endgames and tactics that are typical for the variations and will help you to understand things better.

The only two things you have to do are to buy the book (!) and study it!

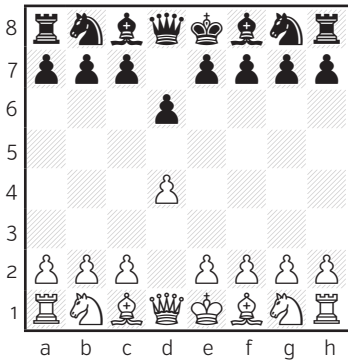
Note that the research on the games played is up to the end of March 2021.

Efstratios Grivas  
Sharjah, March 2021

# PART 1.

## THE MODERN DEFENCE [A21-A42]

The 'Modern Defence' is characterised by the moves **1.d4 d6**



The 'Modern Defence' is a hyper-modern opening in which Black allows White to occupy the centre with pawns on d4 and e4, then proceeds to attack and undermine this 'ideal' centre without attempting to occupy it himself.

The 'Modern Defence' is closely related to the 'Pirc Defence' (also known as the 'Robatsch Defence' after Austrian GM Karl Robatsch — B06-09), if White continues without the c4 move.

The primary difference being that in the 'Modern Defence', Black delays developing his knight on f6.

When White goes for the c4 lines, then the 'Modern Defence' can be considered as a sideline of the 'King's Indian Defence'. The main difference again is that Black does not rush to develop his knight on the f6 square, a standard move in the KID.

Of course, when Black continues with ...♘f6 at any point, play transposes to the 'King's Indian Defence'. Thus, only lines without ...♘f6 will be analysed.

Black's main objective is an early attack on the white centre, in an effort to grab the initiative.

The 'Modern Defence' is not a mainstream opening choice for elite chess players. However, it still surfaces at the top as an occasional surprise weapon.

It is quite natural that several side lines that were deemed bad back in the days have been revived with the help of computers in modern days.

Even though the 'Modern Defence' was never a bad choice, it still remains low on the priority list given that

White is allowed to take complete control of the centre, and at times even gain a huge amount of space.

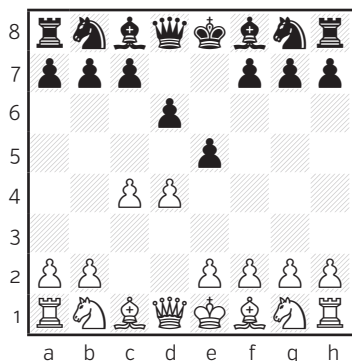
The 'Modern Defence' leads to complex, imbalanced games, which make it a favorite of players who want to rely on knowledge and positional strength over rote memorisation of opening theory.

Both players will get their fair share of winning chances in the resulting middlegame positions.

From the initial diagram, and after the natural **2.c4**, Black can go for two main set-ups:

## The Direct Central Assault

Black goes for the direct **2...e5**



The text move is quite direct, since Black forces his opponent to clarify the situation in the centre at once.

White has numerous possibilities now. He can exchange on e5, advance his central pawn, protect it with another pawn or the knight, or ignore altogether the threat of capturing on d4.

However, the point is that White has to make up his mind right at this moment and cannot postpone his decision even for one move.

This is very different from the 'King's Indian Defence', for example, where White practically knows in advance Black's first five moves (... $\text{Nf6}$ , ... $\text{g6}$ , ... $\text{Bg7}$ , ... $\text{d6}$ , ... $\text{o-o}$ ).

The basis of our suggested systems here will be the continuation **3.Nc3** (ECO A21).

Well, an interesting statistical fact is that Black scores extremely well here (56.5% in a sample of approximately 11,500 games).

Obviously this is not because the opening is great for Black, but simply because the white side doesn't care enough to do his homework properly! Nevertheless, this statistical fact proves that the system can be dangerous and can offer the second player real chances!

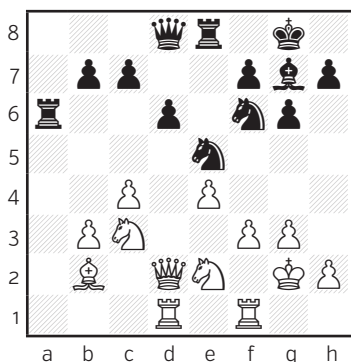
The first historical game (as per the ChessBase Mega Database) seems to be the following:

▷ **Martin Pedro**

▶ **Trifunovic Petar**

**A53** Mar del Plata 1950

1.d4 d6 2.c4 e5 3.♘c3 exd4 4.♙xd4  
 ♘c6 5.♙d2 ♘f6 6.e4 g6 7.g3 ♙g7  
 8.♙g2 o-o 9.♘ge2 ♘e5 10.b3 ♙h3  
 11.o-o ♖e8 12.f3 ♙xg2 13.♙xg2 a5  
 14.♙a3 a4 15.♙b2 ♖a6 16.♖ad1 axb3  
 17.axb3

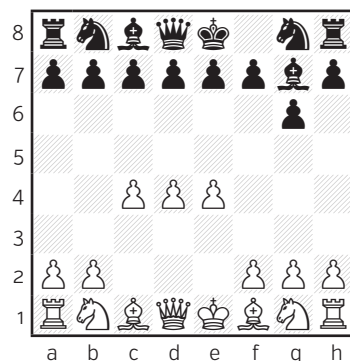


17...♘ed7 18.♙c2 ♙e7 19.♖a1 ♖ea8  
 20.♘f4 c6 21.♖xa6 ♖xa6 22.♘a4  
 ♘e8 23.♖d1 ♙xb2 24.♙xb2 ½-½

## The Fianchetto Systems

This is another big chapter of the 'Modern Defence' — in fact, the main one.

Note that the position in question can arise from various move orders, such as 1.d4 g6 2.c4 ♙g7 3.e4



This move order will be our basis, as there are some side-lines to be examined, other than the main 3...d6 (ECO A42).

In these systems the powerful black g7-bishop operates at full force as it is not blocked by the f6-knight and, with the help of moves like ...♙g4, ...♘c6 and ...e5, Black tries to clarify matters in his favour early in the opening.

On the other hand, White's privilege of the first move cannot be underestimated. As he controls more space and can develop more harmoniously (or, at least, with greater freedom), he is usually able to obtain an important spatial advantage and organise play on both sides of the board.

It must be mentioned that the main 'White' expert of this system is the

Russian GM Vladimir Epishin, and the 'Black' experts are the Georgian GM Zurab Azmaiparashvili, and the Romanian GM Andrei Istratescu.

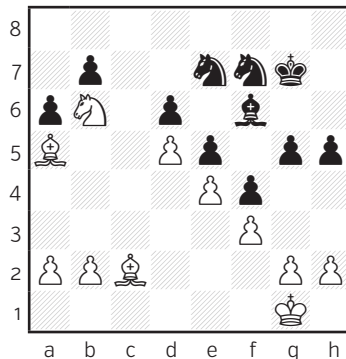
Their contribution to the theoretical development of this system is unique and valuable, and their games must be taken seriously into account and serve as instructive examples. Remember: we learn from the experts! Also note that from a statistical point of view White is doing well (56% in a sample of approximately 16,000 games).

The first historical game (as per the ChessBase Mega Database) seems to be the following:

- ▷ **Grigoriev B.**
- ▶ **Yankovich Boris Alexeevich**  
A42 Moscow 1902

1.e4 d6 2.d4 g6 3.c4 ♗g7 4.♘c3 ♘c6  
5.♙e3 e5 6.d5 ♗ce7 7.c5 ♗h6 8.f3 f5

9.cxd6 cxd6 10.♙b5+ ♔f8 11.♚a4  
f4 12.♙f2 ♙f6 13.♞ge2 ♚g7 14.♞c1  
a6 15.o-o g5 16.♞c2 ♞b8 17.♙d3 ♞f7  
18.♞fc1 ♚d7 19.♙b6 ♚xa4 20.♞xa4  
♙d7 21.♞ec3 ♞bc8 22.♙a5 ♙xa4  
23.♞xa4 ♞xc2 24.♞xc2 ♞c8 25.♞b6  
♞xc2 26.♙xc2 h5



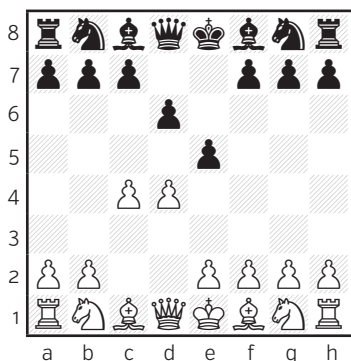
27.♙a4 g4 28.♙d7 gxf3 29.gxf3 ♞g5  
30.♙f2 ♙f8 31.♞c4 ♞g6 32.♙c8  
♙e7 33.♙xb7 ♞h4 34.♞d2 ♞h3+  
35.♙f1 1-0



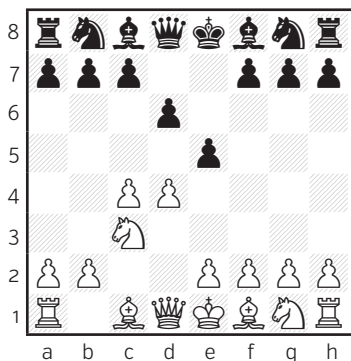
# CHAPTER 1.

## THE MODERN DEFENCE (A21)

The system is characterised by the moves **1.d4 d6 2.c4 e5**



And here White should make a 'wise' choice, avoiding getting lured into 'unwanted' systems by a mere transposition. So, he should go for **3.♘c3**



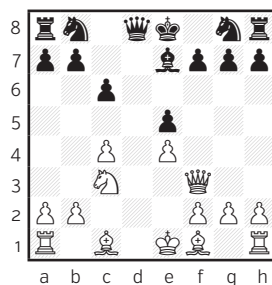
This is the suggested continuation, taking into account various trans-

positions to other systems/openings. Note that **3.dxe5 dxe5 4.♙xd8+ ♔xd8**, fares well for Black.

### 1.1. – 1.d4 d6 2.c4 e5 3.♘c3 exd4

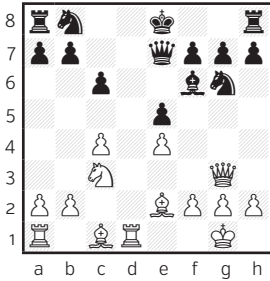
This is considered to be the main choice, although Black has also opted for:

a) **3...♙e7 4.e4 c6 5.♘f3 ♙g4 (5...♘d7, transposes to the 'Old Indian Defence') 6.dxe5! ♙xf3 (6...dxe5? 7.♙xd8+ ♙xd8 8.♘xe5±) 7.♙xf3 dxe5**



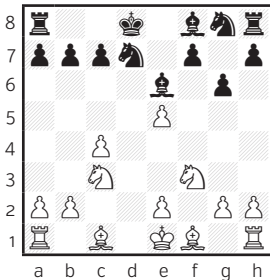
**8.♙g3! ♙f6 (8...♘f6!? 9.♙e2 ♘bd7 10.o-o o-o 11.♙h6 ♘e8 12.♙ad1±) 9.♙e2 ♘e7 10.o-o ♘g6 (10...o-o?! 11.♙d1 ♙c7 12.♙g4 [12.b3 ♘a6**

13. ♖e3 ♜ad8 14.f3 ♘g6 15.♙f2± Ko-  
pasz,R-Papp,A Hungary 2009) 12...♞d8  
[12...♞a6 13.♞d7±] 13.♞xd8+ [13.♙g5!  
♙xg5 14.♙xe5!±] 13...♙xd8 14.♙e3  
♞a6 15.♞d1 ♙a5 16.a3± Bacso,G-Pap-  
p,A Hungary 2009) 11.♞d1 ♙e7



12. ♙g4 (12.♞a4 o-o 13.♙b3 ♞a6  
14.♙e3 ♞f4 15.♙g4± To,N-Pap-  
p,A Miskolc 2008) 12...o-o 13.a3±

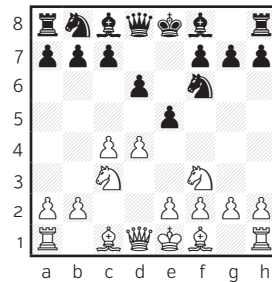
b) 3...g6 4.dxe5 dxe5 5.♙xd8+ ♖xd8  
6.f4! ♙e6 (6...♞c6 7.♞f3 ♞d4 8.♙d1!  
♞xf3 9.exf3 ♙g7 10.♙d3 ♙e6 11.fxe5  
♙xe5 12.♙c2±) 7.♞f3 (7.e4 ♞d7  
8.♞f3 ♙g7 9.fxe5 ♞e7 10.♞g5 ♞c6  
11.♞xe6+ fxe6 12.♙g5+ ♖e8 13.o-  
o-o a6 14.♙e2± Tuncer,U-Held,P  
Wuerttemberg 1998) 7...♞d7 (7...exf4  
8.♙xf4 ♙xc4 9.o-o-o+ ♖c8 10.e4  
♙e6 11.♞g5± Vogel,R-Keitlinghaus,L  
Germany 1986) 8.fxe5



8... ♙g7 (8... ♙xc4 9. ♙f4 ♙b4 10.e4  
♙e6 11.♞d4 ♙xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♞c5 13.o-  
o-o± Petursson,M-Fioramonti,H  
Horgen 1994) 9. ♙g5+ ♖c8 10.o-o-o  
h6 11. ♙f4± Gaprindashvili,N-Har-  
toch,R Haarlem 2005.

c) 3...c6 4.e4 ♞d7 5.♙e2, transposes  
either to the 'Old Indian Defence', or  
the 'King's Indian Defence'.

d) 3...♞f6 4.♞f3

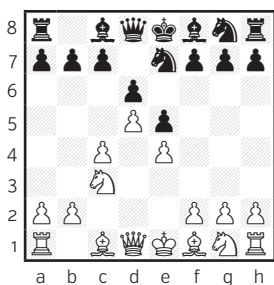


d1) 4...e4 5.♞g5 ♙f5 6.g4 ♙xg4 7.♙g2  
♙e7 (7...♞c6 8.♞gxe4 ♞xe4 9.♞xe4  
♙d7 10.h3 ♙f5 11.♞g3 ♙g6 12.e4±  
Grivas,E-Lenhert,S Aegina 1996)  
8.♞gxe4 ♞xe4 9.♙xe4 (9.♞xe4  
♞c6 10.o-o [10.♞g3 ♙f6 11.♙e3 o-o  
12.♙d2 ♞b8∞ Piket,J-Van der Wiel,J  
Amsterdam 1995] 10...♙d7 11.♞g3  
♙f6 12.d5± Nikolic,P-Benjamin,J  
Horgen 1994) 9...c6 10.♙d3 ♙h5  
11.♙h3 ♙g6 (11...g6 12.♙h6 ♙d7  
13.♙g3 ♞a6 14.a3 ♞c7 15.d5 c5 16.b4±  
Perdomo,L-Zampronha,W Sao Ber-  
nardo do Campo 2014) 12. ♙xg6 fxxg6  
13.e4 (13. ♙f4 o-o 14.e3 [14. ♙e6+ ♖h8  
15. ♙g3 ♞a6 16.h4 ♞f5 17.o-o-o ½-½  
Psakhis,L-Hickl,J Dortmund 1989]  
14...♞a6 15.o-o-o± Kasparov,G-Speel-  
man,J Belfort 1988) 13...♞a6 14. ♙e3

o-o 15.o-o ♖c7 16.f4± Reich,T-Hickl,J Bad Woerishofen 1990.

d2) 4...♗bd7 5.e4, transposes either to the 'Old Indian Defence', or the 'King's Indian Defence', depending on where Black develops his dark-squared bishop.

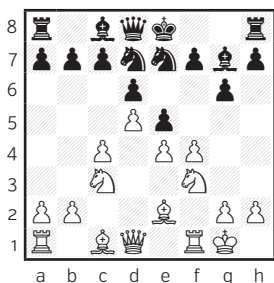
e) 3...♗c6 4.d5 ♗ce7 5.e4



e1) 5...♗f6 6.♗e2

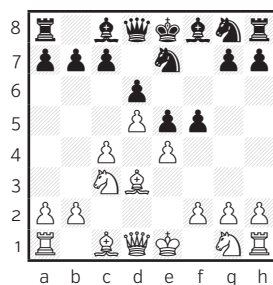
e11) 6...♗g6 7.h4 h5 (7...♗e7 8.h5 ♗f8 9.♗e3 [9.h6 g6 10.g4±] 9...h6 10.♖d3 ♗8h7 11.f3 o-o 12.f4 ♗d7 13.♗h3 ♗h4+ 14.♗d1 ♗c5 15.♖d2 b6 16.♗c2 a6 17.b4 ♗d7 18.a4 ♗f6 1-o Xheladini,F-Kasumi,G Pristina 2015) 8.♗f3 ♗g4 (8...♗f4 9.♗xf4 exf4 10.♖d2±) 9.♗g5 ♗xe2 10.♖xe2 ♗e7 11.g3±

e12) 6...g6 7.f4 ♗d7 8.♗f3 ♗g7 9.o-o



9...exf4 (9...f5 10.♗g5 [10.fxe5 ♗xe5 11.♗g5 h6 12.♗h4± Guardado,F-Carmona Blanco,J Asturias 1995] 10...♗c5 11.fxe5 ♗xe5 12.exf5 ♗xf5 13.g4±) 10.♗xf4 h6 11.♖d2 g5 12.♗e3 ♗g6 13.♗d4 ♗de5 14.♗f5 ♗xf5 15.exf5 ♗f8 16.c5± Koehler,R-Emmerich,D Germany 2007.

e2) 5...f5 6.♗d3

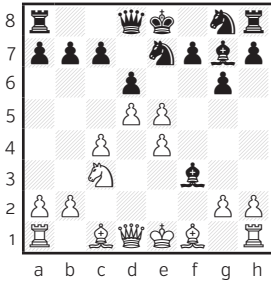


e21) 6...f4 7.g3 ♗g6 8.h4 fxg3 (8...h5 9.♗h3 [9.♗f3 fxg3 10.fxg3 ♗e7 11.♗g5±] 9...♗e7 10.gxf4 ♗xh3 11.♖xh3 exf4 12.♗e2 ♖d7 13.♖h1± Bobrowski,P-Ehrenfeucht,W Warsaw 1978) 9.fxg3 ♗f6 10.h5 ♗g4 11.♖a4+ ♗d7 12.♖b3 ♗e7 13.♖xb7± Gochelashvili,D-Krikunov,V Anapa 2010.

e22) 6...g6 7.exf5 ♗xf5 (7...♗xf5?! 8.f4!±; 7...gxf5? 8.♖h5+ ♗g6 9.♗xf5+-) 8.♗f3 ♗f6 9.o-o± Guzman Freire,J-Otero Diaz,O Bayamon 2013.

e3) 5...g6 6.f4 ♗g7 (6...exf4 7.♖d4! f6 8.♗xf4 h6 [8...♗h6? 9.♖xf6 ♖g8 10.♗f3 ♗g4 11.♖h4 h6 12.h3 g5 13.♖h5+ ♗g6 14.hxg4 gxf4 15.e5 dxex5 16.♗d3 ♖f6 1-o Maki Uuro,M-Leht-

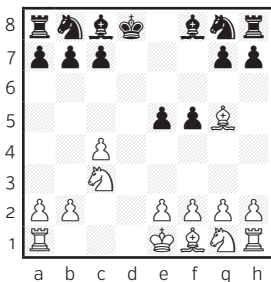
inen, A Salokangas 1996] 9. ♖e2 ♗g7 10. o-o-o± Jimenez Martinez, J-Lara Lopez, J Cullera 2005) 7. ♘f3 (7. fxe5 dxe5 8. c5± Kovacevic, B-Bratovic, B Pula 1999) 7... ♗g4 8. fxe5 ♗xf3



9. gxf3 (9. ♖xf3 ♗xe5 10. ♗f4 ♗xf4 11. ♖xf4 h6 12. ♗e2± Mellado Trivino, J-Popchev, M Orense 1994) 9... ♗xe5 10. f4 ♗g7 11. ♖e2 c6 12. ♗g2± Barlov, D-Perez Aleman, P Mesa 1992.

f) 3... ♘d7 4. e4 ♘gf6 5. ♘f3, transposes either to the 'Old Indian Defence', or the 'King's Indian Defence', again depending on where Black will develop his dark-squared bishop.

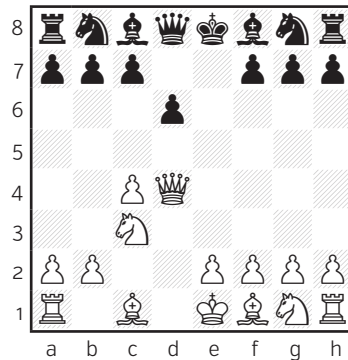
g) 3... f5 4. dxe5 dxe5 5. ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 6. ♗g5+



6... ♗e7 (6... ♗e8 7. o-o-o ♗d7 8. ♘d5 ♘a6 9. ♘f3± Rotondi, P-Vannel-

li, V Ostia 1996) 7. o-o-o+ ♗d7 8. ♘f3 ♘c6 (8... ♗xg5+ 9. ♘xg5± Reizniece Ozola, D-Gjergji, R Internet 2020; 8... ♗f6 9. e4± Teixeira, R-Deus Filho, J Rio de Janeiro 2002) 9. ♗xe7+ (9. e4 fxe4 10. ♘xe4± Wahls, M-Nakamura, H Internet 2004; 9. ♘d5 h6 10. ♗xe7+ ♘gxe7 11. e3 e4∞ Shashade, M-Erdal, G Chicago 1994) 9... ♘gxe7 10. e4!± (10. ♘g5 ♗e8∞ Ambarsumova, K-Meenakshi, S Internet 2020) Vledouts, S-Fernandez, L Marseille 2004.

#### 4. ♖xd4



And here the main choices for Black are 4... ♘f6 and 4... ♘c6.

### 1.2. – 4... ♘f6

1. d4 d6 2. c4 e5 3. ♘c3 exd4 4. ♖xd4 ♘f6

Black is in no hurry to place his knight on c6, as it seems that the d4-queen will have to retreat anyway. In general, Black plans to try to control the e4-square by means of ... ♘bd7-c5.