



## COLUMNISTS

### *Let's Take A Look...*

Nigel Davies

We invite you to submit games to be considered by Nigel in this column. For all games submitted, please provide the following information: (1) Names of both players; (2) Ratings of both players; (3) When and where the game was played; (4) The time control used in the game; and (5) Any other information you think would be helpful for us to know. Please submit the games (in PGN or CBV format if possible) to: [nigeldavies@chesscafe.com](mailto:nigeldavies@chesscafe.com) . Who knows, perhaps you will see the game in an upcoming column, as Nigel says to you, "Let's take a look..."

### Bucking the Trend

It's hard to buck the trend. When the word's out that a particular variation is good or bad it's difficult to avoid being influenced. Usually the fashion is set by the reigning World Champion when games are published in which the Champ wins brilliantly. Yet by the time this variation becomes popular he has moved on to pastures new...

You can see this process quite clearly in the games of Garry Kasparov. To take just one example, he created a wave of popularity with the Petrosian Variation of the Queen's Indian Defence (1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 a3) which in turn was taken up by a host of other players. Yet just when this variation was at the height of its popularity, Kasparov moved on; he played variations such as 4 Nf3 and 4 Qc2 against the Nimzo-Indian and then turned to 1 e4.

There's a subtle message contained in these switches; it's not the variations you play but when you play them. By creating the fashion Kasparov reaped the reward of surprise and confronted his opponents with new problems. When everyone's playing the same way these lines don't surprise

anyone and the problems have been largely or fully solved.

All this leads to a big question; if it's the trendsetters who succeed in many fields, why is it that so many people choose to be followers? The answer lies in the notion that people tend to conform to the behavior of others, which is one of the most accepted principles in psychology. We often go to see films just because everyone we know has seen them or buy books that everyone seems to be talking about. The influence of those around us can be very persuasive.

On the whole such conformity is very useful; if people didn't accept certain standards of behavior then how would we drive a car without fear of a head-on collision? Yet problems arise when an activity requires the rejection of the popular view, creative chess being one of them.

Can we learn to buck the trend? I think so, the first step being to know that we are conforming whenever we accept information uncritically. As a second step I think it's useful to read books of players such as Tony Miles and Bent Larsen who are known for their individuality and lack of routine. Miles, for example, has consistently favored offbeat openings to wrong foot his opponents, once remarking that he like to play the Nimzovitsch Defense (1 e4 Nc6!?) early in a tournament so that everyone would waste time preparing for it! As for Larsen he has been accused of only writing about variations which were no longer in his repertoire, which the maestro admitted contained an element of truth. Examples such as these can do much to nurture the spirit of independence, but there are also rich sources outside chess.

The value of thinking differently is highly prized, for example, in the world of investment. The excesses of crowd behavior, such as Holland's tulip mania and the South Sea bubble, are beautifully described in Charles Mackay's classic, *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*. Further education is also provided in *The Art of Contrary Thinking* (The Caxton Printers Ltd, 1954) by

Humphrey B Neill in which the author noted that: "Obvious thinking - or thinking the same way in which everyone else is thinking - commonly leads to wrong judgements and wrong conclusions."

Having outlined the joys of a contrarian approach, let's see how it might work out in practice. One opening whose stocks are hitting new lows is the King's Indian Defense with this one time darling of dynamic players having been abandoned wholesale by its former practitioners. Top players such as Kasparov and Alexei Shirov have stopped playing it and many of its past masters (including Bobby Fischer, David Bronstein, Eduard Gufeld, Efim Geller, Leonid Stein, Miguel Najdorf and Larry Evans) have either passed on or are retired. In short there are very few people around to defend the King's Indian's honor and so the followers have been leaving in droves.

A young player at my chess club recently gave the King's Indian up and I asked him what the problem was. He then recited a list of the lines which he thought were good for White, from the Petrosian System to the Four Pawns Attack. But was this really the case or had he just been influenced by the current wave of negative sentiment?

Being contrary by nature, my interest is piqued when I see the crowd going the other way. I've started to wonder what the problem is. Are all these lines really so bad for Black? And does its increasingly poor reputation not contain the advantage that it might set White's heart beating a little faster? I've therefore promised myself to take another look at the King's Indian which I last played regularly in the 1980s.

So let's buck the trend of King's Indian bashing by taking a look at a Black win in one of the supposed 'problem-lines'. The Bayonet attack with 10 Re1 has been causing Black some headaches, but the danger of his king side attack should not be underestimated.

*Dagan, Y (1935) - Vaisman, F (1994)*

## **King's Indian Defence**

Israeli Ch Qualifier, 2003

**1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6**

This shouldn't necessarily be an automatic choice. Black can also play 4...0-0 5 Nf3 c6 intending 6...d5, as played in a number of games by Grandmaster Lev Gutman.

**5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5**

Before announcing the death of the King's Indian, it's worth remembering that this isn't Black's only move. There are in fact as many as seven alternatives that I know of:

a) 6...c5 may well be best met by 7 0-0 when 7...cxd4 8 Nxd4 Nc6 leads to a Maroczy Bind Sicilian, currently thought to be very reasonable for Black. After 7 d5 e6 8 0-0 Re8 9 Nd2 Na6 White can find himself running out of useful moves, in Ghane Gardeh - Iuldachev, Abu Dhabi 2002 he found himself in all sorts of trouble after 10 f4 exd5 11 cxd5 Rb8 12 Re1 Nc7 13 a4 a6 14 Bf3 b5 15 a5 h5 16 h3 Ng4! etc.

b) 6...a6 is a speciality of my chess club (the "3Cs" in Oldham) which contains a number

of interesting points. One of them is that after 7 0-0 Bg4 8 Be3 Nfd7 9 Rc1 c5 10 d5 Black can play 10...Bxf3! 11 Bxf3 b5! as in Beaumont - Bentley, 4NCL Birmingham 2001.

c) Simagin's 6...Bg4 7 Be3 Nfd7 is still being played by strong players, one recent example being the game Cummings - Hebert, Richmond 2002 in which Black stood better after 8 Ng1 Bxe2 9 Ngxe2 c5 10 d5 a6 11 a4 Qa5 12 Rc1 Qb4 13 b3 b5 14 cxb5 axb5 15 axb5 Ra3 etc.

d) 6...c6 7 0-0 a6 intending 8...b5 is a plan that has been used extensively by Bulgaria's Krum Georgiev.

e) 6...Nbd7 intending 7...e5 transposes into the 6...e5 7 0-0

Nbd7 variation.

f) 6...Na6 followed by 7...e5 probably leads to the 6 e5 7 0-0 Na6 line.

g) 6...Qe8 can transpose into either 6...e5 7 0-0 Qe8 should Black follow up with 7...e5 or into 6...e5 7 0-0 Na6 should Black play 7...Na6.

The hydra appears to have many heads and it isn't enough to cut one of them off to claim victory.

### **7 0-0 Nc6**

The main line, though once again Black has a number of alternatives:

a) 7...Na6 is still being played by King's Indian notables such as Joe Gallagher and Branko Damljanovic, for example 8 Be3 (8 Re1 c6 9 Rb1 exd4 10 Nxd4 Nc5 11 Bf1 Ng4 12 h3 Qf6 13 Nf3 Ne5 14 Nh2 Be6 15 b3 Rad8 was Atalik - Damljanovic, Bled 2002) 8...Ng4 9 Bg5 Qe8 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 h3 h6 12 Bd2 Nf6 13 Be3 Qe7 14 Qa4 c6 15 Rfd1 Nh5 16 c5 Nc7 17 b4 Nf4 18 Bf1 g5 and Black had nothing to worry about in Pelletier - Gallagher, Leukerbad 2002.

b) I played 7...Qe8 myself against Ronen Lev in Tel Aviv 1989 and obtained a good position after 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 b3 Qe7 10 Nd5 Nxd5 11 cxd5 c6 12 Bb2 Rd8 13 Re1 Na6 14 Qc1 cxd5 15 exd5 f6 16 Bc4 Kh8 17 Ba3 Qd7 18 d6 b5 19 Bd5 Bb7 20 Rd1 Rac8 when White's d-pawn proved to be weak rather than strong.

c) 7...Nbd7.

d) 7...c6.

### **8 d5 Ne7 9 b4 Nh5 10 Re1 f5 11 Nd2**

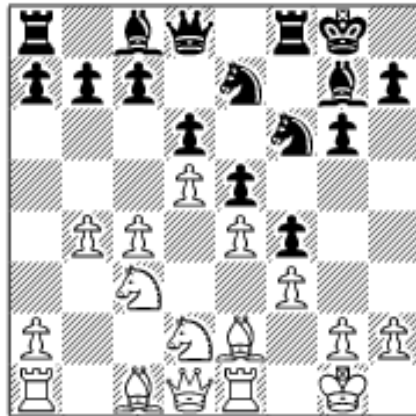
White has also played 11 c5 after which 11...fxe4 12 Nxe4

Nf4 13 Bxf4 Rxf4 led to complex play in Kramnik - Gelfand, Novgorod 1996.

### 11...Nf6 12 f3

Arguably a slight loss of time. Usually White plays the immediate 12 c5, with a position which seems too complicated to label with a definitive judgement.

### 12...f4



This turns the game into a race of attacks which is not strictly necessary at this point. In the game Shulte - Mareck, Switzerland 2001 Black first got his bishop outside the pawn chain with 12...Bh6 13 c5 Be3+ 14 Kh1 before playing 14...f4.

Another possibility is 12...c6 as in Simutowe - Smirin, Moscow 2001. The idea of this move is not to open the queenside with ...cxd5, but to apply pressure to the d5 pawn in order to inhibit c4-c5 by White.

### 13 c5 g5 14 Nc4 Ne8 15 Ba3 Ng6 16 b5 h5

One of the most difficult things to decide in chess is when to punch and when to duck. I would have chosen to duck with 16...b6 in order to prevent d6 from being undermined.

### 17 Rb1

I think White should play an immediate 17 b6. The text gives Black another chance to hold up White's play on the queenside.

### 17...g4

Once again I'd play 17...b6.

**18 fxg4 hxg4 19 Bxg4 Qg5 20 Bf3**

After 20 Bxc8 Rxc8 21 Qd2 (21 cxd6 cxd6 22 Nxd6 leaves the knight on c3 hanging) Black can block the queenside with 21...b6!. The point is that 22 cxd6 cxd6 23 Nxd6 is answered by 23...Nh4 threatening 24...Nf3+ and 24...Rxc3.

**20...Nh4**

Unless I'm missing something it seems better to protect the d6 pawn with 20...Rf6. Now

I think White can just capture on d6 as after 21 cxd6 cxd6 (21...Nxc2 can be answered by

22 Bxg2 f3 23 Rb2) 22 Nxd6 Nxd6 23 Bxd6 Bh3 24 Rb2 Rfc8 25 Na4 Rc1 doesn't work because of 26 Qxc1 Nxf3+ 27 Kh1 etc.

After the move chosen in the game Black's attack becomes very strong.

**21 Kh1? Rf6 22 b6 Rh6 23 h3**

The most beautiful lines often remain in the footnotes. After 23 Qe2 Black wins with 23...Qg3!! 24 hxg3 (or 24 Kg1 Nxf3+ 25 Qxf3 Qxh2+ etc) 24...Nxf3 mate.

**23...Nxc2! 24 Bxg2 Bxh3 25 Re2 Bxg2+ 26 Kg1 Bf3+**

26...Rh1+ 27 Kf2 Qg3 mate was

quicker.

**27 Kf2 Qg3+ 0-1****Further Reading**

*Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*

by Charles Mackay

*The Art of Contrary Thinking* by Humphrey B Neill (The Caxton Printers Ltd, 1954)

*Larsen's Selected Games of Chess 1948-69* by Bent Larsen (Bell & Sons Ltd., 1970)

Tony Miles: 'It's Only Me' by Geoff Lawton, Mike Fox and Malcolm Hunt (Batsford 2003)

*World Champion at the Third Attempt* by Grigory Sanakoev (Gambit, 1999): Sanakoev's superb collection of games.

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