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Over the
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Stefan Bücker



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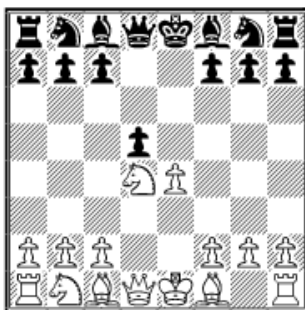
Fast development was the ideal of the old masters. In the chess books of the 19th century there are plenty of King's Gambits or other Open Games that celebrated this direct style. Wasting time was considered a cardinal sin. Therefore, it is quite astonishing that the German *Handbuch*, then a leading opening manual, gave the strange fourth move for Black as the main line of Philidor's Defence in all of its eight editions, from 1843 to 1916:

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 Nxd4



Carl Friedrich von Jaenisch regarded 4 Qxd4 as better: "The correct move according to the Italian authors; but those writers have never told us why we should not retake with N; and consequently the majority of amateurs prefer the latter move. The reason is indeed curious enough why 4 Nxd4 is in reality a bad move; yet it has escaped all the classics, however simple. Ex. 4 Nxd4 d5, and he regains the move upon you. [...]". *Jaenisch's Chess Preceptor*, 1847.

4...d5??!



Black moves his d-pawn for the second time and will lose further time with his queen. We are reminded of another ancient line in the Scandinavian Defence: 1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qa5 4 d4 e5?! 5 Nf3, and White is better. Today we understand, thanks to the work of Nimzowitsch, that Black can better defend a slightly passive position than

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exchange White's center pawn in such a brutal way. Although the line is dubious, its refutation is far from obvious.

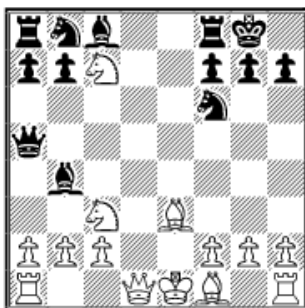
5 exd5 Qxd5 6 Qe2+!

A novelty found by **Louis Paulsen** in a game against C. Lepge, 1863 (*Schachzeitung* 1863, p. 366). Today many opening systems are named after this inventive player, but surprisingly his brother Wilfried included 6 Qe2+! in a list of the best opening ideas by Louis Paulsen (*Schachzeitung* 1870, p.5).

The text move improved upon 6 Nc3 Bb4 (Jaenisch):

(a) 7 Bf4 Bxc3+ (7...Ne7? 8 Qd2 Bxc3 9 Qxc3 0-0 10 0-0-0 Ng6?! 11 Bxc7 Bd7 12 Bc4 Qxg2 13 h4 Nc6 14 h5 Qg5+ 15 Kb1 Nge5 16 f4! +- Jan Sprenger – Bückner, Echternach 2005) 8 bxc3 Ne7 9 Qe2 Nbc6! 10 Nb5 0-0 11 Nxc7 Qa5 and Black has sufficient compensation.

(b) 7 Be3 Nf6 8 Ndb5 0-0 9 Nxc7 Qa5!

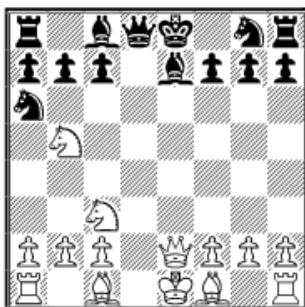


10 Nxa8 Bg4 11 Be2 Rd8 12 Qb1 Bxe2 13 Kxe2 Qa6+ 14 Ke1 Ne4 15 Nc7 Qc4 16 N7b5 Qxb5 17 f3 Nxc3 18 bxc3 Bxc3+ 19 Kf2 Qe5 20 Qc1 Bxa1 21 Qxa1 Qd6 =+ (0-1, 33) Grund – Chikovani, Tallinn 1997 (European Championship U18).

Another good line is 6 Bf4!? Nf6 7 Nc3 (7 Qe2+ Be7 8 Nb5 Na6 9. N1c3 Qd8 returns to the main line) 7...Bb4 (7...Qc5 8 Qe2+ Be7 9 0-0-0 0-0 10 Nb3 Qf5 looks risky) 8 Ndb5 Bxc3+ 9 Nxc3 Qxd1+ 10 Rxd1 c6 followed by Be6, Nbd7 and 0-0-0. Of course White has the bishop-pair, which gives him an advantage.

6...Be7 7 Nb5 Na6 8 N1c3 Qd8

Jaenisch's attempt to rescue his line in *La Stratégie* 1870. Theoretician **von der Lasa** also trusted the text move (*Deutsche Schachzeitung* 1873, p. 195). In the game mentioned above, C. Lepge continued 8...Qf5 9 Be3 Nf6 10 Nd4 Qg6 11 Qb5+ Nd7 12 Bd3! +/- (but drawn, 53). And 9... Bf6?!! certainly fails to 10 Nd4!. Altogether Jaenisch's move seems best.



A critical position. **William Steinitz** now liked 9 Bf4 Nf6 10 Qc4 in his *The Modern Chess Instructor*, following an earlier analysis of **Lipschütz**. Another well-known theoretician, **Oskar Cordel**, preferred 9 Be3 (*Führer*, 1888). To me a longer bishop move looked more dangerous: 9

Bg5! To identify the best of these alternatives, I tried to defend the position in six correspondence games against *Kaissiber's* co-editor **Maurits Wind**. Our conclusion, in short, was (a) the books are right to say that Black is worse; but (b) they are not able to prove this claim.

Variation A. White Plays 9 Bf4 (Lipschütz, Steinitz)

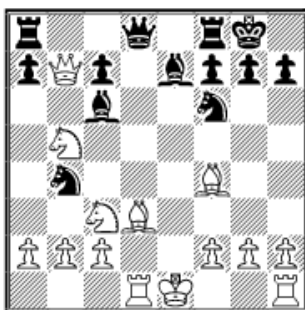
1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 Nxd4 d5 5 exd5 Qxd5 6 Qe2+ Be7 7 Nb5 Na6 8 N1c3 Qd8 9 Bf4 Nf6 10 Rd1

More dangerous than two old continuations: 10 Qe5 0-0 11 Nxc7 (Cordel) 11...Ng4! or 10 Qc4 c6 11 Rd1 (Bilguer) 11...Qb6! 12 Nd6+ Bxd6 13 Bxd6 Be6 14 Qd4 0-0-0.

10...Bd7 11 Qf3 0-0!

Avoids 11...Qc8? 12 Rxd7!! Nxd7 13 Nd5 +/- with a devastating attack.

12 Qxb7 Nb4 13 Bd3 Bc6

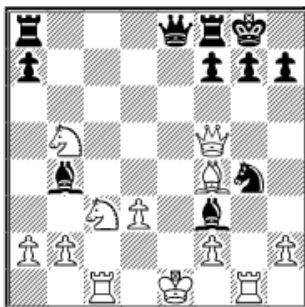


Black gets active play for his sacrificed pawn.

14 Qxc7 Qe8 15 Qe5

15 0-0? Nfd5 16 Nxd5 Nxd5 17 Qe5 Nxf4.

15...Nxd3+ 16 exd3 Bxg2 17 Rg1 Bf3 18 Rc1 Ng4 19 Qf5 Bb4+



So far **Maurits Wind** – **Bücker**, corr. 2005. The chances are equal. Since 20 Kf1 Bxc3 21 Nxc3 Qe6 22 Qxe6 fxe6 23 Bg3 Rad8 24 h3 Nf6 25 Na4 Rxd3 26 Nc5 Rd5 =+ is risky, White should rather play it safe: 20 Be3! Nxe3 21 Rxg7+ ½-½.

Variation B. White Plays 9 Be3 (Cordel)

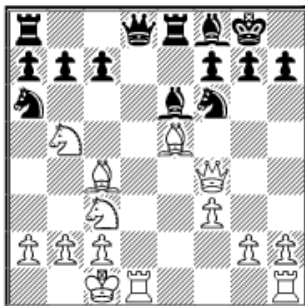
1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 Nxd4 d5 5 exd5 Qxd5 6 Qe2+ Be7 7 Nb5 Na6 8 N1c3 Qd8 9 Be3 Nf6

Improving upon Cordel's original analysis 9...c6 10 Rd1 Bd7 11 Nd6+ Bxd6 12 Rxd6 Qe7, when 13 Rd2! would give White an advantage.

10 Bd4!

The bishop blocks the d-file, so that White can castle to the queenside.

10...0-0 11 0-0-0 Bg4 12 f3 Bd7 13 Qe5 Re8 14 Bc4 Bf8 15 Qf4 Be6 16 Be5



16...Nh5 17 Rxd8

After the game Maurits Wind preferred 17 Qe4, to secure some positional advantage.

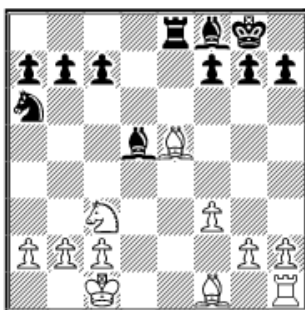
17...Nxf4 18 Rxa8 Rxa8 19 Bf1

19 Bxf4 Bxc4 20 Nxc7 came into consideration. White has an extra pawn, but the bishop-pair gives Black fair chances for a draw.

19...Nd5 20 Nxd5 Bxd5 21 Nc3

21 Bxc7 Bxa2!.

21...Re8



22 Nxd5

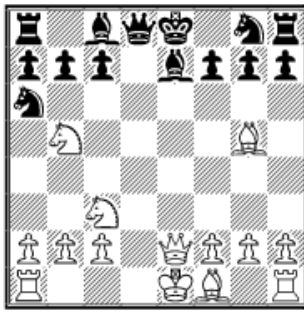
The saving trick that White had missed some moves ago was 22 Bg3 Nb4! 23 a3 Na2+ 24 Nxa2 Bxa2 25 Bd3 c6!.

22...Rxe5 23 Bxa6 bxa6 ½-½, Maurits Wind – Bückner, corr. 2005.

Apparently 9 Be3 offers better chances for some advantage than 9 Bf4. But there is still the third bishop move on our agenda, and as we will see, it is even stronger:

Variation C. White Plays 9 Bg5!

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 Nxd4 d5 5 exd5 Qxd5 6 Qe2+ Be7 7 Nb5 Na6 8 N1c3 Qd8 9 Bg5!

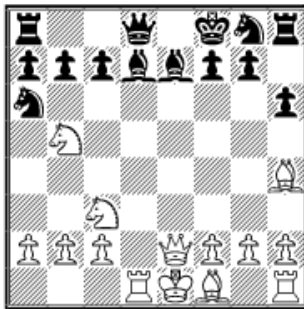


9...h6 10 Rd1 Bd7 11 Bh4!

Clearly better than 11 Bxe7 Nxe7 12 Qe4 0-0 13 Qxb7 Nb4 14 Rd2 Ng6! with counterplay.

11...Kf8

From a practical perspective it may be tempting to try 11...h5?!. However, White's advantage is obvious after 12 g3! (12 Qe5 Kf8 13 Bxe7 + Qxe7 14 Qxe7+ Kxe7 15 Nd5+ Kd8 gives Black the extra move h6-h5, in comparison with the main line. This could be useful after, say, 16 Bc4 Nh6) 12...Rh6 (12...f6 13 Bg2 Rb8 14 0-0 c6 15 Rd4! cxb5 16 Rfd1 Nc5 17 Ne4 +-) 13 Bg5 Rg6 14 Bf4 Qc8 (14...Kf8 15 Qxh5 Bg5 16 Rxd7! Qxd7 17 Bxg5 +/-) 15 Bg2 Bg4 16 f3 Bd7 17 0-0 Kf8 +/-, White is in firm control of the position. Nevertheless 11...h5?! deserves attention, because 12 g3 is difficult to find.



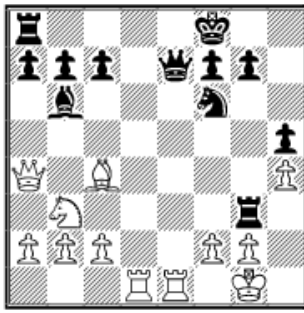
12 Bxe7+!

A subtle idea: With his king on f8, Black can no longer play 12...Qxe7 13 Qxe7+ Nxe7, because then Bd7 would not be protected. Less critical is 12 Bg3 h5, when Black develops sufficient activity by bringing his king's rook to the sixth rank:

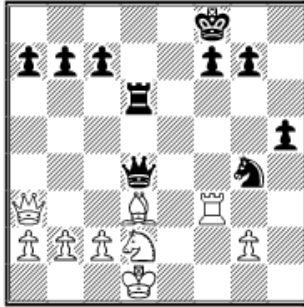
(a) 13 Qc4 h4 14 Bxc7 Qe8 15 Qe2 Bxb5 16 Nxb5 Rh6 17 Bf4 Re6 18 Be3 Bc5 19 Nd4 Re4 20 c3 Nf6 21 Qb5 Ng4 22 Kd2 Bxd4, soon drawn, **Maurits Wind – Bückner**, corr. 2005.

(b) 13 Nd5 h4 14 Bf4 Bg5! 15 Be5 Rh6 16 f4 Bf6 17 Nxf6 Nxf6 18 Qf3 Qe7 19 Nd4 (or 19 Qxb7 Re8 20 Nc3 Ng4 21 Bxa6 Nxe5 22 fxe5 Bc6 23 Qxa7 h3!) 19...Qb4+ ½-½, **Maurits Wind – Bückner**, corr. 2005.

(c) 13 Qd2 Nf6 14 h4 Rh6 15 Bc4 Rg6! 16 0-0 Bc5 17 Nd4 Nb4 18 Nb3 Bb6 19 Na4 Bxa4!? 20 Qxb4+ Qe7 21 Qxa4 Rg3 22 Rfe1



22...Bxf2+ 23 Kxf2 Re3. The rook is taboo because of Ng4+. 24 Kf1 Qe5! (24...Kg8? 25 Qb5! Re8 26 Rxe3 Qxe3 27 Be2 +/-) 25 Rxe3 Qxe3 26 Rd3 (26 Qa3+!? +=) 26...Qf4+ 27 Rf3 Qh2 28 Ke1 Qxh4+ 29 Kd1 Rd8 + 30 Nd2 Qd4 31 Qa3+ Rd6 32 Bd3 Ng4



33 Qb3 Qg1+ 34 Nf1 Ne5 35 Qxb7 Nxf3 36 Qa8+ Ke7 37 Qxf3 g6 38 c3 Rf6 39 Qe3+ Qxe3 40 Nxe3. A sequence of almost forced moves leads to a situation with asymmetrical material. Black holds with precise play: 40... Kd6 41 Ke2 h4 42 a4 Rf4 43 a5 f5 44 b4 Ke5 45 c4 h3 46 gxh3 Rh4 47 Nd5 Rxh3 48 Nxc7 Rh2+ 49 Ke1 Kd4 50 Be2 g5 51 b5 g4 52 Kf1 f4 53 Bxg4 Kxc4 54 Be2+ 1/2-1/2, **Maurits Wind – Bückner**, corr. 2005.

Unfortunately, the text move (**12 Bxe7+!**) hits the nail on the head. In spite of the following simplifications Black will find it difficult to survive.

12...Qxe7

To keep the queens on the board is even worse: 12...Nxe7 13 Qd2 Nb8 14 Qf4 +/-.

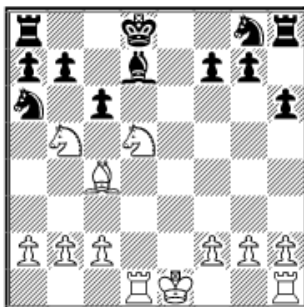
13 Qxe7+

13 Nd5? Bxb5! 14 Qxe7+ Nxe7 15 Bxb5 Nxd5 16 Bxa6 Re8+ 17 Kf1 Rd8 18 Bd3 =.

13...Kxe7 14 Nd5+ Kd8 15 Bc4

The quiet 15 Be2 Ne7 16 Nf4 +/- is also advantageous for White.

15...c6!?



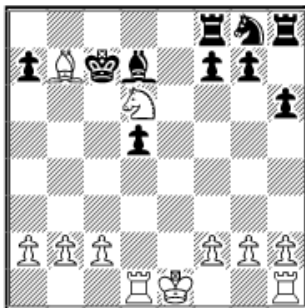
Looks like a mistake, but the move contains some poison. Moreover,

there is nothing better: 15...Ne7 16 Ndc3!, White has the upper hand: 16...Nb4 17 Rd2 a6 18 Bxf7 axb5 19 Be6 +/-.

16 Nd6 cxd5 17 Bxa6 Kc7 18 Bxb7!

White doesn't fall into 18 Nxf7 Re8+ 19 Be2 Bb5 20 Rd2 Rh7 21 f4 g5! 22 Ne5 Bxe2 23 Rxe2 Rhe7 24 g3 Nf6 25 0-0 gxf4 26 gxf4 Nh5 =.

18...Rf8



19 Rxd5 Nf6 20 Rd4 Re8+

20...Rb8 21 Bf3 Rxb2 22 Kd2 +/-.

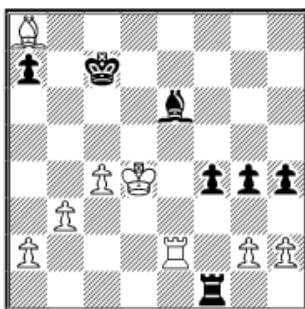
21 Kd2! Re6 22 Ne4 Rb8 23 Nxf6 Rxf6 24 Bd5 Rxf2+ 25 Kc1!

25 Kc3 Bf5 26 Rc1 Re8, and Black is not without chances: 27 Rc4+ Kb8 28 Bf3 Rc8! 29 Rxc8+ Kxc8 30 Kb3 Bh3! 31 Rg1 Be6+ 32 c4 g5.

25...Be6

Still hoping for a draw, in spite of the pawn deficit, since there isn't much left on the board.

26 Bf3 Rd8 27 Rxd8 Kxd8 28 Rd1+ Kc7 29 b3 g5 30 Rd2 Rf1+ 31 Kb2 f5 32 c4 g4 33 Ba8 f4 34 Kc3 h5 35 Kd4 h4 36 Re2



36...Kd6

I had missed 36...Kd7 37 Kc5!. Nevertheless there remained a last chance for Black, which was pointed out by Maurits Wind after the game: 36...Bc8! 37 Re7+ Kb8 38 Be4 f3 39 gxf3 gxf3 40 Rf7 Rf2, and it isn't easy for White to convert his advantage into a point.

37 c5+ Ke7 38 Be4 Kf6 39 c6 Rd1+ 40 Kc3 h3 41 gxh3 f3 42 Rf2 1-0, Maurits Wind – Bückner, corr. 2005.

With some regret I have to admit that the unusual 4...d5??! is a bad idea, although the clearest refutation 9 Bg5 wasn't in the books, nor was it easy to find. Undeniably Jaenisch's 4...d5 has some surprise effect, but perhaps we should reserve the move for blitz games.

This column is based on my article "Eine historische Frage" (*Kaissiber*

21; 2005), expanding on that article by analyses and games at move six and (in C) 11...h5.

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