



COLUMNISTS

Over the
Horizons

Stefan Bucker



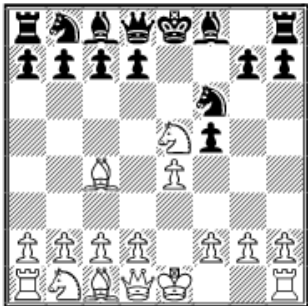
CHESSTHEATRE
Play through and download
the games from
ChessCafe.com in the
DGT Game Viewer.

**The Complete
DGT Product Line**

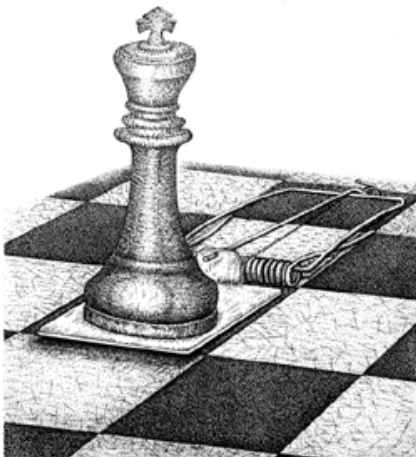


Lower Life in the Latvian Gambit
Part Three

The [last column](#) on the Latvian Gambit’s main line **1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 f5 3 Nxe5** studied one of two established refutations of the Löwenthal Variation **3...Nf6**, namely 4 exf5. It was called “the simplest continuation” by Carl Schlechter [2], and later authors agreed. But according to our analyses, 4 exf5 was no refutation at all. White should choose the more complicated alternative: **4 Bc4!** which transposes to side-lines in the 3 Bc4 complex. In the standard move-order 3 Bc4, there usually follows 3...fxe4!, when White can hardly get any advantage. But after **3 Nxe5 Nf6 4 Bc4!** this main line has been avoided and the second player’s task is much more difficult.



It is another question whether you will actually face the following problems, should you try out Löwenthal’s move 3...Nf6 in your practice. White played the text move in only twenty percent of the available 3...Nf6 games, though it is objectively stronger than 4 exf5 and leads to a significant advantage. This article might raise its popularity. On the positive side for Black we can note that to be prepared against both 3...Qf6 and Löwenthal’s 3...Nf6, White will have to learn a lot more theory than in the past when 3...Nf6 4 exf5 was thought to be +/- . As reported last month, the change was mainly caused by **Joachim Hunstock’s** correspondence games, played about 1989-1991, some of them even in Hunstock’s highly provocative move-order 1 e3 e5 2 e4 Nf6 3 Nf3, wasting a full tempo. In the last column my analysis was guided by eight Hunstock games featuring 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 f5 3 Nxe5 Nf6 4 exf5, while only two of his opponents chose 4 Bc4, our present topic.



Gambit Play
Zygmunt Nasiolkowski, Germany

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 f5 3 Nxe5 Nf6 4 Bc4 Qe7

4...fxe4? 5 Nf7 Qe7 6 Nxh8 d5 7 Be2 (7 Bb5+ Bd7 8 Be2 was recommended by Lein, here 8 Nc3 is also strong) 7...Nc6 (the usual continuation; I also tried 7...Be6 8 b3 g6 9 Ba3 Qg7 10 Bxf8 Qxf8 11 Nxg6 hxg6 12 0-0 Qd6 13 d3 +/-) 8 c4

Visit **Shop.ChessCafe.com** for
the largest selection of chess
books, sets, and clocks in
North America:



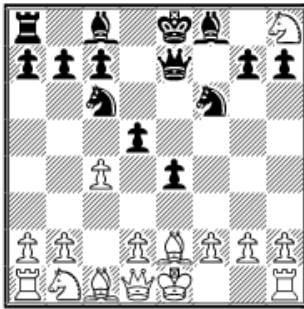
Chess Informant 85
Only .99 cents!



Informant 92 (CD)
Only \$5.95!



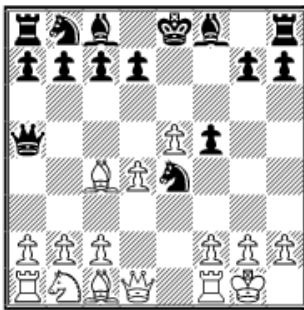
Informant 95 (CD)
Only \$5.95!



(a new idea; 8 d4 exd3 9 cxd3 Bg4 10 Nc3 +/- Gamman – Blackburne, London 1869, is also excellent, but Blackburne won after some mistakes from his opponent) 8...d4 9 0-0 Be6 10 d3 0-0-0 11 Nd2 Qd7 12 Nxe4 Nxe4 13 dxe4 Bc5 14 Bd3 Rxe4 15 a3 Ne5 16 b4 +-.

5 d4

5 0-0?! was an original and “generous“ continuation in Uwe Scholz – Joachim Hunstock, corr. 13th PZ-48. White wins back the piece, but should not be able to get an advantage against accurate play: 5...Qxe5 6 d4 Qa5 7 e5 Ne4



8 f3 (8 c3 Be7 9 Qh5+ Bf8 10 Qh6 Bf8 11 Qe3 Qb6, about =) 8...Nc5 9 Qe2 Ne6 10 d5 Bc5+ (10...Nd4! first would have been more precise, when White’s queen cannot go to d1: 11 Qd1? Qc5 etc.) 11 Kh1 Nd4 12 Qd3? (to allow the retreat Bc4-d3, 12 Qd1 would be better) 12...b5 13 Bb3 0-0 14 Bd2 Qb6 15 c3 Nxb3 16 axb3 b4 17 c4 Na6 (17...f4! Hunstock) 18 Bg5 Bb7 19 f4 Qg6 20 Rf3 Rae8 21 Nd2 (21 Rg3 d6 22 e6 Bf2! 23 Rf3 Bb6 followed by Nc5) 21...Bb6 and “White“ resigned. Another game that Joachim Hunstock played with reversed colors, so in reality it was 1-0, Hunstock – Scholz.

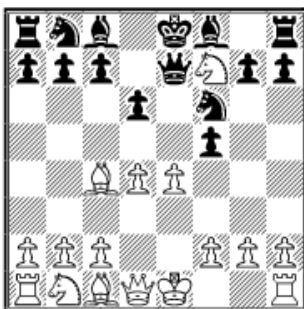
5...Nc6!



A key move in the “Morgado Defense“ 3 Bc4 Nf6 which we have entered via a transposition of moves. Alternatives are worse:

(a) 5...fxe4? 6 Bg5! is hopeless: 6...Nc6 (or 6...d6 7 Nf7 Rg8 8 Nd6+ Qxd6 9 Bxf6; 6...c6 7 Nc3 d5 8 Bxd5! +/-) 7 Nf7 Rg8 (7...Qb4+ 8 Nd2 d5 9 c3 Qxb2 10 Bxf6 Kxf7 11 Bxd5+ Kxf6 12 Nxe4+ with a winning attack) 8 Nc3 Qb4 9 Ne5 Nxe5 10 Bxg8 Nxg8 11 dxe5 Qxb2 12 Bd2 and wins.

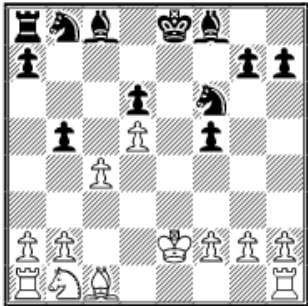
(b) 5...d6? 6 Nf7! (even stronger than 6 Bf7+ Kd8 7 Bb3 dxe5 8 dxe5+ Bd7 9 exf6 Qxe4+ 10 Kf1 gxf6 11 Nc3 +/- Qg4 Pogats – Szilagyi, Hungary 1950; maybe 11...Qh4 instead would have slightly improved Black’s chances for a draw) and now:



(b1) The move so far preferred in practice was 6...d5 7 Nxh8 dxc4 8 e5 Nd5 Markland – Simm, Manchester 1967, when Black’s knight on d5 is

annoying for White and secures some compensation. But 8 Nc3! is a refutation: 8...fxe4 (or 8...g6 9 Bg5, or 8...Be6 9 0-0) 9 Bg5 Bf5 (9...Be6 10 0-0 Nc6 11 Bxf6 Qxf6 12 Qh5+ g6 13 Qxh7 Ne7 14 Rae1 +-) 10 Nd5 Qd7 11 Nxf6+ gxf6 12 Qh5+ etc., +-.

(b2) 6...Rg8 is a new attempt which was successful in Sörensen - Hunstock, Corr. World-Cup, Gr. 92: 7 Nxd6+ cxd6 8 Bxg8 Qxe4+ 9 Qe2 Qxe2+ 10 Kxe2 Nxc8 11 d5 Nf6 12 c4 b5!



13 cxb5 Nxd5 14 Rd1 Be6 15 Nc3 Nxc3+ 16 bxc3 Bc4+ 17 Ke1 d5 18 a4 Nd7 19 Be3 Bc5 20 Bxc5 Nxc5 21 f3 Nd3+ 22 Kd2 Kd7 23 Kc2 Nc5 24 Ra3 Re8 25 Rd2 Kd6 26 Rd4 Re2+ 27 Rd2 Bb3+ 28 Kc1 Re1+ 29 Kb2 Bc4 30 Kc2 g5 31 h3 h5 32 Rd4 Rf1 33 Rd2 g4 34 hxg4 fxg4 35 fxg4 hxg4 36 Rd1 Rf2+ 37 Rd2 Bd3+ 38 Kc1 g3 0-1. However, the knight move is a refinement also in this case: 7 Nc3! fxe4 8 0-0 Be6 9 Bxe6 Qxe6 10 Ng5 Qf5 11 f3 and Black's chances to survive are slim, e.g., 11...e3 12 Re1 Nc6 13 Rxe3+ Kd7 14 d5 Nb4 15 g4 Qxc2 16 Qd4 c5 17 dxc6 + Nxc6 18 Qc3 d5 19 Qb5 Kc8 20 Re2 +-.

6 0-0!



(a) 6 Nf7 d5 7 Nxh8 dxc4 8 e5 (note that 8 Nc3?! Be6 9 d5 0-0-0 is only unclear, not nearly as convincing as it was after the time-wasting 5...d6? 6 Nf7 d5 above) 8...Nd5 may be playable for Black:

(a1) 9 h4!? Be6 10 c3 g6 11 Bg5 Qg7 12 h5 Be7 13 Bxe7 Kxe7 14 Nxg6 + hxg6 15 h6 Rh8 16 Qc1 g5 17 hxg7 Rxh1+ 18 Kd2 Rxc1 19 Kxc1 Nf4 +=

(a2) 9 Qh5+ g6 10 Nxg6 hxg6 11 Qxg6+ Qf7 12 Qxf7+ Kxf7 13 c3 Be6 with sufficient compensation (0-1, 28), Pupols - Morgado, corr. 1970-72 [\[7\]](#).

(b) 6 Nc3 Nxe5 7 dxe5 Qxe5 8 0-0. Here Tony Kosten recommends 8...Bd6!? 9 g3 fxe4 [\[7\]](#), but White could reply 10 Re1 Kd8 11 Nxe4!. More precise seems the move-order 8...fxe4 9 Nd5 Nxd5 10 Bxd5 Bd6! (10...c6 11 Bxe4 Bd6 12 f4!?) 11 g3 c6 12 Bxe4 0-0 13 Qd3 h6 when Black can probably hold, e.g. 14 c3 b6 15 Bf4 Rxf4!.

6...Nxe5

The main line in The Latvian Gambit Lives! [\[7\]](#) goes 6...fxe4 7 Nc3, which would be quite acceptable for Black (transposing to 6 Nc3 above). But White has a strong alternative: 7 Ng4! d5 (7...Nxc3 8 Qxg4 Nb4 9 d5 Qe5 10 Re1 d6 11 Qd1 +/- or 8...d6 9 Qd1 Bf5 10 f3 0-0-0 11 fxe4 Qxe4 12 Rf4! Qxc2 13 Qf1! +/- g6? 14 Na3 Qa4 15 Bd2 +-) 8 Nxf6+ Qxf6 9 Bxd5 (9 Qh5+ Qg6 10 Qxd5 Bh3 11 Qg5 Nxd4 +=) 9...Bf5 10 Nc3 0-0-0 11 Be3

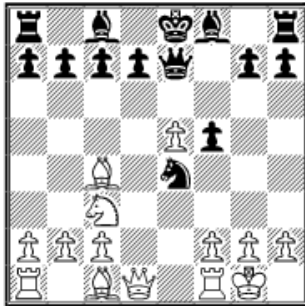


Black has no compensation for the pawn. But I cannot claim that the text move is better, so it would be too hard to attribute a question mark to 6...

fxe4.

7 dxe5 Qxe5

The Argentinean correspondence player Juan Sebastian Morgado, after whom the variation 3 Bc4 Nf6 is named, had preferred 7...Nxe4 to the text move. But he never encountered the critical reply 8 Nc3! (while 8 Be3 Nc5 9 Nc3 Ne6 Saavedra - Morgado, corr. 1969, and 8 Qe2 d6 9 f3 Nc5 10 b4 Ne6 Maly - Morgado, corr. 1976, gave Black a reasonable position; in fact Morgado won both games)



8...Nxc3 (8...c6 9 Nxe4 fxe4 10 Bf4, and pawn e4 will soon fall, with a miserable position) 9 bxc3 c6 10 a4 Qh4 11 Bb3 Bc5 12 a5 f4 13 Ra4 g5 14 Be3! Be7 15 g3 Qh3 16 gxf4 h6 17 Re1 Rf8 18 Bc1 Bc5 19 Qd3 etc., +/- (at least). Other continuations are possible, for example 9...Qc5 10 Qd3 Be7 11 Rb1 Rf8 12 Re1 or 9...b5 10 Bxb5 Qe6 11 Qf3 c6 12 Ba4 Ba6 13 Bb3 Bc4 14 Bxc4 Qxc4 15 Qxf5, but there is nothing which I'd like to play for Black.

8 exf5

8 Nc3 allows Black to escape into a less critical line: 8...fxe4 9 Nd5 Nxd5 10 Bxd5 Bd6 11 g3 c6 12 Bxe4 0-0 +=. See 6 Nc3, instead of our main line 6 0-0!.

8...Qxf5 9 Nc3

9 Re1+!? Kd8 (9...Be7? 10 Qe2 Qc5 11 b4 Qd6 12 Nc3 Qxb4 13 a3 +-) and then:

(a) 10 Be6?! Qg6 11 Nc3 was successful in a corr. game Grava - Grivainis, Betins Memorial 1970. Instead, the exchange of queens 10...Qh5 11 Qxh5 Nxh5 would have limited White's advantage (+=).

(b) 10 Nc3 is more straightforward, but there may be a small difference in comparison with our main line, since now Black could try 10...Bc5 11 Be3 Bxe3 12 Rxe3 Qf4. I may be wrong, but the exchange of bishops could make Black's task easier:



13 Qe2 (else 13...Re8) 13...c6 14 g3 Qg4 15 f3

(b1) 15...Qh5 16 Qd2!? (16 Re1 Qc5 17 Na4 Qb4 18 Bb3) 16...Re8 17 Rae1 Rxe3 18 Rxe3 d5, and Black is not without chances, e.g.: 19 Ne2 Qf7 20 Bd3 Qf8 21 Nd4 a5 22 Kg2 Kc7 23 Qe1 Kb6 24 a3 Bd7 25 Re7 c5 26 Re6+ Kc7 27 Qe5+ Kd8 28 Nb5 Rc8 29 Rb6 Bc6 30 Na7 Nd7 31 Qg5+ Kc7 32 Rxc6+ bxc6 33 Nxc8 Kxc8 34 Bxh7 Kb7 35 Bf5 Nb6 36 Bd3 c4 37 Bg6 Qd6 38 Bf5 Qc7 39 h4 Na4 40 b3 cxb3 41 cxb3 Nc5 +=.

(b2) 15...Qd4 16 Rd1 Qc5 17 Na4 Qb4 18 Bb3 b5 19 a3 Qf8 20 Nc3 Qc5 21 Kh1 Re8 22 Rxe8+ Nxe8. White is better, but Black has a reasonable chance to consolidate his position by means of Nf6 and an eventual d7-d5.

9...Kd8

Probably best. 9...Bc5? 10 Bd3 Qg4 11 Re1+ Kd8 12 Qxg4 Nxg4 13 Ne4 (the decisive tempo gained by Black's inaccurate ninth move) 13...Be7 14 Ng5 Bxg5 15 Bxg5+ Nf6 16 Re3 followed by Rae1 and an attack on Black's weak kingside pawns.



10 Bd3!?

In a situation where Black is so much behind in development, White usually isn't eager to exchange queens. Nevertheless the text move involves such an exchange. After analyzing more complicated variations, I got the idea that by taking the queens off the board White might already have a "technical win" in an ending where Black's half army is slumbering on a8 and c8. While the following variations are not entirely clear from a theoretical point of view, in practice the text move is quite unpleasant for Black. He has practically no winning chances, the only question remains whether White's advantage is sufficient to win.

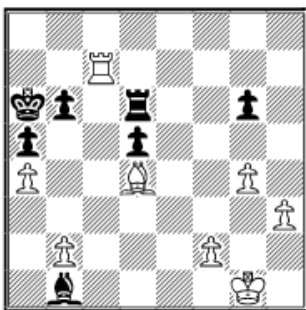
There are plenty of alternatives, but I'll mention only two:

(a) 10 Re1 Bc5 transposes to 9 Re1+ Kd8 10 Nc3.

(b) 10 h3 is a useful move which avoids Qg4. White intends to keep the queens on board and hopes to profit from Black's exposed king: 10...c6 11 Ne2 d5 12 Bd3 Qd7 13 c4, e.g.,

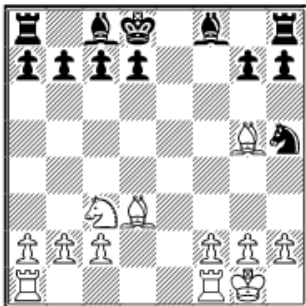
(b1) 13...dxc4?! 14 Bxc4 Qxd1 15 Rxd1+ Bd7 16 Bf4 Bb4 17 Nd4 Kc8 18 a3 Ba5 19 Ne6 Re8 20 Rd6 Re7 21 Nxg7 Ne4 22 Rxd7 Rxd7 23 Be6 Kd8 24 Bxd7 Kxd7 25 Rd1+ Ke7 26 Be3 +/-, White has a sound extra pawn.

(b2) 13...Bd6 14 Qb3 (14 Be3 Re8 15 Qb3 Rxe3! 16 fxe3 Qe7 17 Rf3 dxc4 18 Bxc4 Qe5 and Black has considerable compensation for the exchange) 14...Re8 15 Rd1 (White has many alternatives, this line is just an example) 15...Kc7 16 cxd5 Nxd5 17 Nd4 a5 18 Nb5+ Kb8 19 a4 Qe7 20 Nxd6 Qxd6 21 Bxh7 g6 22 Qa3 Qxa3 23 Rxa3 Bf5 24 Rg3 Re6 25 Bg8 Rd6 26 Bxd5 Rxd5 27 Rxd5 cxd5 28 Rc3 (28 Rg5!? Kc7 29 g4 Be4 30 f3) 28...b6 29 Bf4+ Ka7 30 g4 Bb1 31 Rc7+ Ka6 32 Be3 Rd8 33 Bd4 Rd6



As so often in the Latvian Gambit, in the ending Black has merely drawing chances. In this case he should be able to defend, in spite of White's extra pawn: 34 h4 Bd3 35 Kg2 Be2 36 Kg3 Re6 37 f3 Bd1 38 h5 gxh5 39 gxh5 Bxa4 40 Bg7 d4 41 Bxd4 (41 h6 d3 =) 41...Be8 42 Kg4 Rh6 43 Re7 Bxh5+ 44 Kg5 Rd6 45 Be5 Rd3 46 Kxh5 Rxf3 47 Kg4 Rb3 =.

10...Qh5 11 Qxh5 Nxb5 12 Bg5+



(a) 12 Be3 Nf6 13 Rad1 c6 14 Ne4 Nxe4 15 Bxe4 g6 16 Rfe1 Be7 17 g3 Re8 18 Re2 Bf6 +=.

(b) 12 Re1 Nf6 13 Bg5 Be7 14 Re2 h6 15 Rae1 Bc5 16 Bxf6+ gxf6, e.g. 17 Nd5 c6 18 Nxf6 Bd4 19 Re8+ Rxe8 20 Rxe8+ Kc7 21 Ng8 Bxb2 22 Nxb6 b5 23 h4 Bb7 24 Rxa8 Bxa8 25 g4 a6 26 g5 c5 27 f4 Bd5, and Black's chances are not too bad (+=).

(c) 12 Nd5 h6 13 Bd2 Bd6 14 Bc3 b6 15 Rad1 Bb7 16 Ne3 Be7 17 Rfe1 Bf6 18 Bxf6+ Nxf6 19 f3 with lasting pressure, e.g., 19...Ne8 20 Bg6 Nd6 21 Ng4 Rf8 22 Rd4 Rb8 23 c3 Ba8 24 Ne5 b5 25 Bh5 Rb6 26 Bg4 Bc6 27 Rd2 Rf6 28 Rde2 Ra6 29 a3 with an advantage for White, but I am not sure whether it is sufficient to gain a full point.

12...Be7

12...Nf6 13 Nd5 h6 14 Bxf6 gxf6 15 c3 c6 16 Nxf6 with an extra pawn.

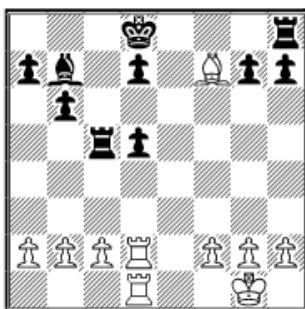
13 Bxe7+ Kxe7 14 Rfe1+ Kd8 15 Nd5

15 Re3 Nf4 16 Rae1 comes into consideration.



15...g6

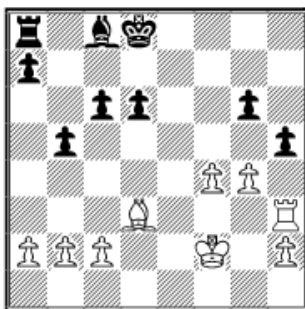
The only alternative is 15...c6!? (15...h6? 16 Re2 is too slow) 16 Be2 cxd5 17 Bxh5 b6 18 Rad1 Bb7 19 Bf7 Rc8 20 Re2 Rc5 21 Red2



The rook endings after 21...Ke7 22 Bxd5 Bxd5 23 Rxd5 Rxd5 (or 23...Rxc2) 24 Rxd5 Rc8 or 21...Rf8 22 Bxd5 Bxd5 23 Rxd5 Rxc2 (23...Rxd5) 24 Rxd7+ Ke8 25 f3 Rf7 26 Rd8+ Ke7 27 R8d2 Rxd2 28 Rxd2 g5 offer White good chances to play for a win, but if you are a pawn behind, a playable rook ending might still be considered as a lesser evil.

16 g4 Ng7 17 Re3 c6 18 Nf6 Ne6

(a) 18...Ne8?! must be worse: 19 Nxe8 Rxe8 20 Rae1 Re6 (20...Rxe3 21 Rxe3 d6 22 Rh3 h5 23 f3 Rb8 24 Bxg6 hxg4 25 Rh8+ Kc7 26 fxg4 Bxg4 27 Rxb8 Kxb8 28 h4 +-) 21 f4 b5 22 Kf2 Rxe3 (22...Kc7 23 Rh3) 23 Rxe3 d6 24 Rh3 h5



25 f5 Ke7 (25...a5 26 f6) 26 Re3+ Kf6 27 g5+! Kxg5 28 Rg3+ Kf6 29 Rxg6+ Ke5 30 Rg8 Bb7 31 Rg7 Bc8 32 Re7+ Kf6 33 Re8 d5 34 Kf3 Bb7 35 Re6+ Kf7 36 Rh6 +/-.

(b) 18...b5 comes into consideration and can lead to similar variations as the text move.

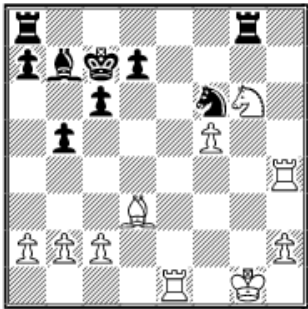
19 Rf1

An attempt to strive for f4-f5 and chase the knight away from e6. The main alternative is 19 h4 (or 19 Rae1 b5 20 h4) 19...b5 20 Rae1 Rb8 21 Kg2 c5 22 Kg3 (22 b3) 22...c4 23 Be4 Rb6 24 c3 Ng7 25 g5 Rf8!? 26 Kg2 Rf7 27 Rd1 Re7.

19...h5 20 g5 Nxe5 21 f4 Nf7

21...Ne6? 22 Bxg6, with f4-f5 to follow.

22 Rfe1 Nd6 23 Rg3 h4 24 Rxg6 b5 25 Ng4 Ne8 26 Ne5 Rf8 27 Rh6



White has an extra pawn, and two of his pawns are passed pawns. Maybe the simplest continuation is 31 Re7 (31 Kf2 Rg7) 31...Raf8 32 Kf2 Kd6 33 Nxf8 Kxe7 34 Ng6+ Kf7 35 Kg3 Kg7 36 Ne5 with an eventual Ng4 to break Black's blockade on the black squares, or 35...a6 36 Rh8. White has good winning chances.

The Löwenthal Variation 3...Nf6 remains an interesting alternative to 3...Qf6, but the analysis above shows that in the critical position after 8...Qxf5 White has some advantage. While 3...Nf6 may not be objectively better than 3...Qf6, the move is still quite unknown and underestimated in all sources on the Latvian Gambit printed on paper. It could be a useful surprise weapon against anybody who has only a superficial knowledge of the Latvian Gambit's main line 3 Nxe5 Qf6 4 Nc4.

Sources:

[1] G. H. D. Gossip: *Theory of the Chess Openings*, 2nd ed. London 1891.
[2] S. Alapin: "Falkbeerartige Wendungen", in: *Deutsches Wochenschach* 1907, p. 325.
[3] C. Schlechter (ed.): *Handbuch des Schachspiels*, 8th ed. 1916
[4] L. C. M. Diepstraten: *Lettisch Gambiet. Deel 1*, Venlo-Antwerp 1993.
[5] T. Kosten: *The Latvian Gambit*, London 1995.
[6] A. Lein, S. Pickard: *The Latvian Gambit. A Grandmaster View*, Dallas 1995
[7] T. Kosten: *The Latvian Gambit Lives!*, London 2001
[8] J. Silman: "[Splat the Lat](#)" and more on the Latvian Gambit.
[9] "Latvian Gambit Refuted"; [chesspub.com](#).

Correction Last month I quoted a game "Klar – Hunstock." The correct name of the white player was Ernst Klee, as Mr. Hunstock kindly informs me.

Send your games or comments to redaktion@kaissiber.de.