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Part 8: Latest Ideas

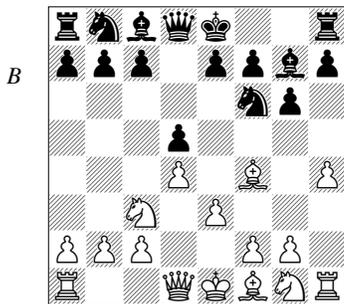
Surprise 101 W

Soundness: 2 Surprise Value: 4

The New Barry

The Old Barry, in case you didn't know, is 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 ♘c3 d5 (3...♙g7 4 e4 leads to a Pirc) 4 ♙f4. White plans kingside play (in some lines he breaks open lines with h4-h5), but 4...♙g7 5 e3 0-0 6 ♙e2 c5 forces attention back on the centre, and is pretty well worked out by now to give Black equal play.

In the New Barry, White first of all places the bishop on f4 (as part of a new awareness of the benefits of playing 1 d4 followed by 2 ♙f4 – for more on this, see *Win with the London System* by Johnsen and Kovačević) and sets the h-pawn quickly in motion: **1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♙f4 g6 3 ♘c3 d5** (3...♙g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♙d2 is an unusual Pirc line – though it may transpose to a '150 Attack' if White plays ♙h6 – where White has scored well; in comparison, the Old Barry committed White to Pirc lines with ♘f3) **4 e3 ♙g7** (4...c6 5 ♘f3 transposes to an 'Old' Barry, having side-stepped Black's best response with a quick ...c5; 5 h4 is of course also possible) **5 h4 (D)**.



Then it is yet to be determined how Black should best respond:

a) **5...0-0?!** is really asking for it. 6 h5 c5 (6...♘h5? 7 ♙xh5 gxh5 8 ♙xh5 gives White a

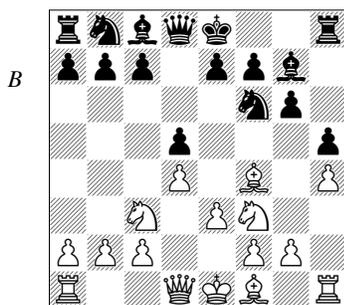
devastating attack; e.g., 8...c6 9 ♙d3 f5 10 ♘f3 ♘d7 11 0-0-0 ♘f6 12 ♙h3 ♘g4 13 ♙h1 h6 14 ♙g3 threatening ♘e5 or ♙xh6) 7 hxg6 hxg6 (this severely exposes Black on the h-file, but 7...fxg6 8 dxc5 left Black positionally worse in Tuncer-Nevednichy, Izmir 2017) 8 ♙d2 ♘c6 9 ♘ge2 b5 10 f3 b4 11 ♘a4 cxd4 12 exd4 ♙e8 13 ♙h6 ♙h8 14 0-0-0 ± Kleinert-W.Class, corr. 2013.

b) **5...c5** has a significant and surprising disadvantage: White can tie Black up on the queenside and then go about pursuing his kingside and central ambitions: 6 ♘b5 ♘a6 7 c3 (7 a4 and in particular 7 ♙e2!? could also be tried) 7...0-0 (7...♙g4 is an annoying reply, and an argument in favour of the 7 ♙e2 move-order) 8 ♙e2 h6 (8...h5 9 ♘f3 gives White a nice grip on the centre) 9 ♘f3 (9 a4!?) 9...♘e4 (9...♙g4 10 ♘e5 ♙xe2 11 ♙xe2 with good attacking chances, because h5 is already a threat, meeting ...g5 with ♙xg5!) 10 ♘e5 ± Zhang Zhong-Praggnanandhaa, Dubai 2017. White went on to claim a scalp that will perhaps become rather prized before long.

c) **5...c6 6 ♘f3** (6 h5?! ♘xh5 7 ♙xh5 gxh5 8 ♙xh5 ♘d7 clearly shouldn't be enough compensation, even though it may be tricky for Black to defend in practice; 6 ♙e2 h5 7 ♘f3 and now 7...♙g4 transposes to line 'd1', while 7...♙f5 can be answered by 8 ♘g5!?) 6...♙g4 (6...♙b6!?) 7 ♙e2 ♘bd7 8 ♘e5 ♙xe2 9 ♙xe2 ♘h5 (9...h5 is again line 'd1') 10 ♙h2 and now **10...♙xe5!?** 11 dxe5 ♙a5 looks like Black's best option. Instead **10...f5** led to unclear play after **11 0-0-0** ♘xe5 12 dxe5 ♙c7 13 f4 0-0 14 g4 fxg4 15 ♙xg4 ♙c8 in Nemcova-Gaponenko, Women's World Team Ch, Khanty-Mansiisk 2017, but **11 ♘d3**, intending 0-0-0, f3 and g4, looks more promising.

d) **5...h5** (chosen by Carlsen) **6 ♘f3 (D)** and then:

d1) **6...♙g4 7 ♙e2 c6 8 ♘e5 ♙xe2 9 ♙xe2 ♘bd7 10 0-0-0 ♙a5** (10...♘e5 11 ♙xe5 ♙d7?! 12 f3 b5 13 e4 ± Kariakin-Li Chao, Doha blitz



2016) 11 ♖b1 ♜c8 (intending ...b5) 12 e4 gave White good central play and some advantage in Kariakin-Giri, Stavanger blitz 2017.

d2) **6...0-0** 7 ♗e2 (7 ♘e5 is an untested idea, though the h-pawns' moves may well help White in comparison to the related Old Barry line) 7...c5 8 dxc5 is analogous to the Old Barry's old main line. Now **8...♗bd7** was the move that ended White's interest in that variation, but here the exchange sacrifice 9 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 10 ♖xd5 ♗xb2 11 0-0 ♗xa1 12 ♜xa1 has more bite since Black's kingside is weaker, and White's control of g5 shows up in lines like 12...♗a5 13 ♗h6 ♖xc5 14 ♗b3 b6?! 15 ♜d1 ♗f6 16 ♗xf8 ♗xf8? 17 ♗g5 +- . **8...♗a5** 9 0-0 (9 ♖d2!? ♖xc5 10 0-0-0 has its logic; 9 ♗d2 ♖xc5 10 ♗b3 ♖b6 11 ♗b5 ♗a6 12 ♗e5 is analogous to the 'old' line, but the h-pawns argue against it here) 9...♖xc5 10 ♗b5 a6 11 ♗c7 ♜a7 12 ♗b5 (12 a3!?) 12...axb5 (rejecting a repetition) 13 ♗xb8 ♜a8 14 ♗e5 led to unclear play in Naiditsch-Carlsen, Karlsruhe 2017.

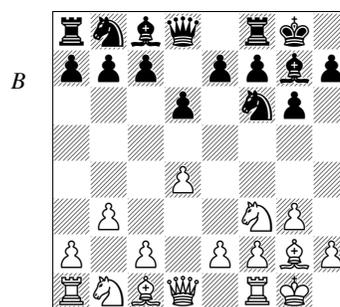
Assessment: Clearly the New Barry is playable, and White whips up an attack or a central initiative in many lines. But it isn't obvious if it is truly an improvement over the Old Barry – Carlsen's response looks sensible. As the lines become better worked out, it will become clearer if White can make something of the differences in the position.

Surprise 102 W

Soundness: 3 Surprise Value: 2

KID without c4: 6 b3

This line, **1 d4 ♗f6 2 ♗f3 g6 3 g3 ♗g7 4 ♗g2 0-0 5 0-0 d6 6 b3 (D)**, is nothing especially new, but following Kramnik's use, it suddenly appears a lot more dynamic. We shall just take a look at some of the more notable lines and new ideas.



Before proceeding further, let's note that many King's Indian players will be keen to smash out an ...e5 advance and exploit the pin on the long diagonal. This urge can lead to problems if it is not implemented precisely.

a) **6...c5** and now **7 c4** is the most topical response:

a1) **7...♗c6** 8 ♗b2 ♗e4 (8...cxd4 9 ♗xd4 transposes to 'a2') 9 ♗bd2 (even the simple 9 h3 ♗f5 10 e3 denied Black full equality in Kramnik-Caruana, Zurich rapid 2015, and 9 e3 is also a sensible move) 9...♗f5 10 ♗h4 ♗xd2 11 ♖xd2 ♗xd4 (otherwise Black is pushed back or suffers structural weaknesses) 12 ♗xd4!? (12 ♗xf5 is also a little better for White) and however Black recaptures, White will get an opposite-bishops middlegame where his is the safer king: **12...♗xd4** 13 ♗xf5 gxf5 14 ♜ab1 (Zaragatski-Sethuraman, Leiden 2013) and if Black tries to keep the extra pawn with 14...♖d7?!, then 15 b4! comes with great force; **12...cxd4** 13 ♗xf5 gxf5 14 ♗xb7 ♜b8 15 ♗g2 and White's game is the easier to play, D.Fridman-Mamedov, European Ch, Plovdiv 2008.

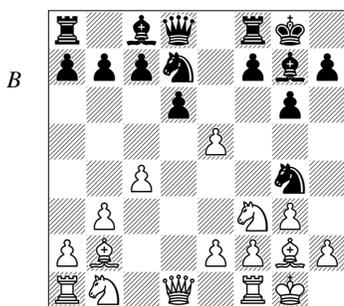
a2) White scores quite well after **7...cxd4** 8 ♗xd4 ♗c6 9 ♗b2 when following 9...♗d7, 10 ♗c2 simply avoids exchanges while retaining a spatial plus.

a3) **7...d5** 8 ♗b2 and it is not so easy for Black to resolve the central tension in a favourable way: **8...dxc4** 9 dxc5 ♖c7 10 ♖c1 ♖xc5 (So – Vachier-Lagrave, Stavanger 2017) 11 ♗e5 leaves Black with some problems to

solve; after **8...cxd4**, **9 ♖a3!** is a good way to retain all options about how to recapture and thus make Black's choice of move harder.

a4) **7...e5** was Avrukh's suggestion. Here is a recent example: **8 dxe5 dxe5 9 ♖b2 e4 10 ♗xd8 ♗xd8 11 ♜fd2 ♙f5 12 g4 ♙xg4 13 ♜xe4 ♜xe4 14 ♙xg7 ♗xg7 15 ♙xe4 ♜d7 16 ♜c3** (finally deviating from Avrukh's analysis) **16...♗ab8 17 ♗fd1 ♗e8 18 ♗d2 ♜f6 19 ♙g2** (19 f3 ♗e5) **19...♙f5?! 20 ♜b5 a6 21 ♜d6 ±** D.Fridman-G.Jones, European Ch, Minsk 2017.

b) **6...♜bd7 7 ♙b2 e5 8 dxe5 ♜g4 9 c4 (D)** gives Black a tricky choice:



b1) **9...dxe5 10 h3** forces **10...♜h6**, when **11 e4** gives White a mildly pleasant version of a 'regular' King's Indian.

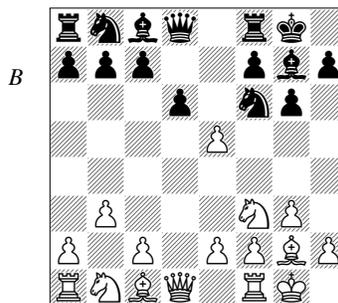
b2) **9...♗e8 10 ♗c2 ♜gxe5 11 ♜c3 ♜xf3+** and now White has scored quite well with **12 ♙xf3**, but there is also **12 exf3!** with a view to playing **f4**, denying Black the **e5**-square and looking to dominate the central files.

b3) **9...♜gxe5 10 ♜xe5 dxe5 (10...♜xe5 11 ♜c3** is a position where it is hard for Black to generate counterplay; White will advance his e- and f-pawns once he is good and ready) **11 ♜c3 f5 12 ♙a3 ♗e8 (12...♗f6 13 e4 f4 14 ♜d5 ♗f7 15 ♙h3** puts Black under pressure) **13 e4 ±**.

c) **6...e5 7 dxe5 (D)** and here Black should just play the sensible move (though more often than not he doesn't):

c1) **7...♜g4?!** **8 ♙g5** (just because White has played **b3**, it doesn't mean that the bishop has to go to **b2**) **8...♗d7 9 ♜c3** and the knight coming to **d5** causes Black problems. **9...h6 10 ♙d2** is pleasant for White, as the black queen is clumsier than White's 'unfianchettoed' bishop.

c2) **7...♜fd7?!** is a similar story: **8 ♙g5 ♗e8 9 ♜c3** favours White. Don't be put off by his 0/3 in the database after **9...h6?!**, since **10**



♜d5 hxg5 11 ♜xc7 ♗d8 (Ristić-Marjanović, Smederevska Palanka 1980) **12 ♗xd6!** is dreadful for Black thanks to the comical queen trap **12...g4 13 e6 gxf3 14 e7**.

c3) **7...dxe5 8 ♙a3 ♗xd1 (8...♗e8 9 ♜c3** scores well for White, though any advantage is small) **9 ♗xd1 ♗e8 10 c4 e4 (10...c6 11 ♜c3 ♙f5 12 h3 h5** looked rather solid in Ashiku-Bailet, Menton 2016) **11 ♜d4 c6 (11...e3 12 f3 c6 13 ♜c3**, as in Salomon-B.Amin, Dubai 2017, is not easy for Black, but **11...♜g4** could be tried) **12 ♜c3 ♜a6 13 e3 ♙g4 (13...♜c7!?) 14 ♗d2 ♗ad8 15 h3 ♙c8 16 ♗ad1 h5** and in the game Kramnik-Vocaturro, Baku Olympiad 2016, White struck with the beautiful **17 ♙e7! ♗xd4 18 ♗xd4 ♗xe7 19 ♗d8+ ♜e8 20 ♜xe4 ♙e6 21 ♗a8** and went on to win in impressive fashion.

Assessment: The **6 b3** line can be recommended to patient players who don't mind simplified positions and are willing to work with very slight advantages. The primary danger for Black is responding in overly aggressive fashion.

Surprise 103 B

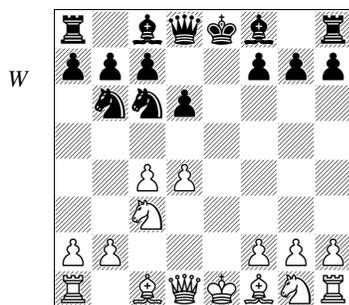
Soundness: 3 Surprise Value: 2

Exchange Alekhine: 6...♜c6

In recent years, the Exchange Variation has become almost the main line of the Alekhine, due to some relatively simple plans for White that have a degree of sting while avoiding most of the specialist 'rabbit holes' that abound in this opening. Here we look at Black's symmetrical recapture with the e-pawn, followed by quickly

putting the knight on c6 to keep pressure on White's centre pawns. The point is that White is generally seeking a set-up with ♞c3 , ♙d3 and ♜ge2 , and Black should disrupt this in some way. White has other ways to develop, of course, but Black finds counterplay more easily against them.

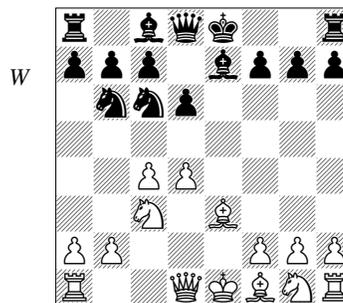
1 e4 ♞f6 2 e5 ♞d5 3 d4 d6 4 c4 ♞b6 5 exd6 exd6 (the other main line runs $5...cxd6$ 6 ♞c3 g6 7 ♙e3 ♙g7 8 ♞c1 , when a critical line is $8...0-0$ 9 b3 e5 { $9...♙f5!$ }) 10 $dxe5$ $dxe5$ 11 ♞xd8 ♞xd8 12 c5 ♞d6 13 ♙c4 ♞c6 14 ♞f3 h6, when Black should claim equality, though it is a little dry) **6 ♞c3** (if White starts with 6 ♙d3 ♞c6 7 ♙e3 , then 7... ♞b4 hunts down a white bishop; 6 h3 allows Black more freedom with his set-up – he should probably develop his kingside before deciding how to deploy his queen's knight) **6...♞c6 (D)** ($6...♙e7$ 7 ♙d3 ♞c6 8 ♜ge2 sees White achieving his desired set-up, and the attempt to sabotage it with $8...♙g4$ 9 f3 ♙h4+ 10 g3 ♙xf3 fails to 11 0-0! ♙xe2 12 ♞xe2+ ♙e7 13 $\text{♞d5!$ ±).



White now has three main options: accept that he will need to put his bishop on e3 in order to continue with the planned ♙d3 and ♜ge2 ; use a different set-up; or play directly against the irritating c6-knight.

a) **7 ♞f3 ♙g4** 8 ♙e2 (8 ♙e3 g6!?) 8... ♙e7 9 0-0 (9 d5 ♙xf3 10 ♙xf3 ♞e5 11 ♙e2 0-0 12 b3 ♙f6 13 ♞c2 {13 ♙b2 a5} 13...c6! gave Black good play in Ghaem Maghami-Maghsoodloo, Teheran Zonal 2017) 9...0-0 10 b3 (10 d5 ♙xf3) 10... ♙f6 (10...d5 11 c5 ♞c8 12 ♙f4 explains the need for one more preparatory move) 11 ♙e3 d5 12 c5 ♞c8 13 h3 offers Black a choice between **13...♙e6** and **13...♙xf3** 14 ♙xf3 ♞8e7 – both are playable.

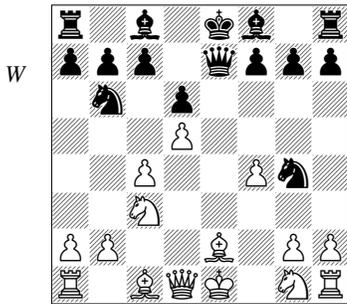
b) **7 ♙e3 ♙e7 (D)** and then:



b1) **8 ♞f3 ♙f6!?** (8... ♙g4 9 h3 puts a question to the bishop that it isn't yet ready to answer; after $8...0-0$ 9 d5 ♞e5 10 ♞xe5 $dxe5$ 11 ♙d3 f5 12 0-0 White has changed the structure mildly in his favour) 9 h3 (9 ♞e4 ♙g4 steps up the pressure on d4, while 9 d5 can be answered by the simple 9... ♞e5 10 ♞xe5 ♙xe5 or the more unbalancing 9... $\text{♙xc3+!$? 10 bxc3 ♞e7) 9...0-0 reaches a rather traditional Exchange Variation position, though care is needed from Black to make sure he gets a decent central transformation and doesn't get squeezed on the kingside. 10 ♞c1 ♞e8 (10... ♙f5 unwisely invites 11 g4) 11 b3 (after 11 ♙e2 it is time for 11...d5 12 c5 ♞c4 , a point being 13 ♞xd5 ♞xe3 14 ♞xf6+ ♞xf6 15 fxe3 ♞xe3 , as in Kulik-M.Kopylov, Nuremberg 2008) 11...h6 (11... ♙f5 is still hit by 12 g4, while 11... ♙g5 12 ♞xg5 ♞xg5 13 ♞d2 achieves nothing, but 11... $\text{♞e7!$? is worth considering) 12 ♙e2 ♙f5 13 0-0 d5 14 c5 ♞c8 intending ... ♞8e7 gives Black a playable game and a standard Alekhine set-up.

b2) **8 ♙d3** 0-0 9 b3 (9 ♜ge2 ♞b4 again demonstrates the point of Black's early ... ♞c6) 9... ♞e8 (9...a5!?) 10 ♞f3 (10 ♜ge2 invites 10... ♙g5 , as in Delgado-Nogueiras, Santa Clara 2008) 10... ♙g4 11 0-0 ♙f6 12 ♙e4 and now the plan of 12...a5 and ...a4 looks more effective than is often the case.

c) **7 d5 ♞e7+!?** (Sam Collins drew attention to this tricky move, which is preferable to 7... ♞e5 8 f4 ♞g4 9 ♙d3 ♞e7+ 10 ♞e2 ♞xe2+ 11 ♞gxe2) **8 ♙e2 ♞e5 9 f4** (9 b3 g6 10 ♙e3 ♙g7 =; 9 ♙e3 , as in Akopian-Maghsoodloo, Sharjah 2017, should also be met by 9...g6, a tactical point being 10 f4? ♞exc4 11 ♙d4 $\text{♙h6!$ 12 ♙xh8 ♞e3 – messy but good for Black) **9...♞g4 (D)** (not 9... ♞exc4?? 10 $\text{♞f2!$ +-) is an untested but critical position:



c1) **10** ♖f3 ♗e3 **11** ♖b3 ♗d7 (but not **11...♗xg2+?** **12** ♖f2 ♗h4 **13** ♗e1) **12** ♗e3 (12 ♗b5?! ♗xg2+ **13** ♖f2 ♗c5 **14** ♖d1 ♗h4 **15** ♗e1 ♗d8!) **12...♗xe3** **13** ♗b5 ♖b6 looks roughly level.

c2) **10** ♖d4 c5 (10...♗f6 **11** a4) and now Collins gave **11 dxc6** bxc6 **12** ♗f3 c5 **13** ♖e4 as advantageous for White, but **13...♗xe4** (or **13...♗b7!?**) **14** ♗xe4 ♗e7 looks equal. **11** ♖e4 h5 (I prefer this over **11...g6** **12** h3 or **11...f5** **12** ♖xe7+ ♗xe7) **12** ♗f3 (12 a4 ♖xe4 **13** ♗xe4 ♗e7 **14** ♗f3 ♗f5 **15** ♗g3 ♗c2 with counterplay) **12...♗h6** (12...g6!?) **13** a4 ♗f5 **14** ♖xe7+ ♗xe7 **15** a5 ♗d7 **16** a6 bxa6!? **17** ♗xa6 0-0 **18** ♗b5 ♗b6 looks OK for Black; for example, **19 ♗xa7?! ♗fe8** gives Black excellent compensation; **19** b3 ♗d7; **19** ♗xa7 ♗xa7 **20** ♗xa7 ♗a8 **21** ♗b5 (21 ♗c6 ♗f6) **21...♗d7** **22** ♗c3 (22 ♗a3 ♗a4 and ...♗f6) **22...♗a4** with compensation.

Assessment: Black must play a delicate balancing act, but he seems to stay afloat while keeping prospects for an interesting struggle. The young Iranian GM Maghsoodloo is generating some new ideas in these lines, so look out for new games from him.

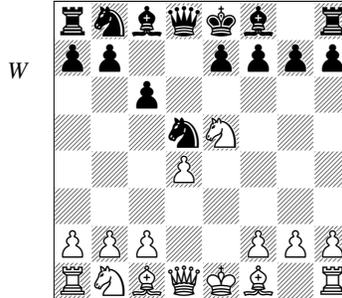
Surprise 104 W

Soundness: 4 Surprise Value: 2

Alekhine: Miles Variation

In his final years, the legendary English GM Tony Miles developed a liking for the Alekhine, and in particular systems with ...c6. His efforts with **1** e4 ♗f6 **2** e5 ♗d5 **3** d4 d6 **4** ♗f3

dxe5 **5** ♗xe5 c6 (D), led to it becoming the main line of the whole opening.



It was also advocated for Black by Evgeny and Vladimir Sveshnikov in their blitz/rapid repertoire book. I hope my fellow Alekhine enthusiasts will forgive me if I present a few ideas for White against it. We'll start with **6** ♗e2 ♗f5 (other moves are less good: **6...♗d7** **7** ♗f3 makes it hard for Black to develop his bishop effectively, while **6...g6** discards the main benefit of the ...c6 line, viz., the fact that Black has complete flexibility in how to develop his king's bishop; after **7** c4 both **7...♗b6** **8** 0-0 ♗g7 **9** ♗c3 0-0 **10** ♗e3 ♗d7 {10...c5 wastes a tempo} **11** f4 ♗xe5 **12** fxe5 and **7...♗c7** **8** ♗c3 ♗g7 **9** f4 ♗d7 **10** 0-0 {10 ♗e3 ♗xe5 **11** fxe5} **10...♗xe5** **11** fxe5 c5 **12** dxc5 ♖xd1 **13** ♗xd1 ♗xe5 **14** ♗f3 favour White). Then I shall offer both a hyper-aggressive option and a sensible (and promising) main line:

a) **7** g4 ♗e6 **8** f4 is an attempt to run Black off the board. Then:

a1) **8...g6** **9** c4 ♗c7 **10** f5! (10 ♗f1 gives Black time for **10...f6**) whips up strong threats, though Black has resources: **10...gxf5** **11** gxf5 ♗xf5 **12** ♗h5 ♗g6 **13** ♗f1 e6 **14** ♖g4 (14 ♗xg6?! ♖h4+) **14...♗d7** **15** ♗xf7 ♗f6 **16** ♗xf6 ♖xf6 **17** ♗xh8 ♖xh8 **18** ♗xg6+ hxg6 **19** ♖xg6+ ♗d7 **20** ♖f7+ ♗e7 **21** ♗g5 ♗e8 **22** ♗d2 ±.

a2) **8...f6** **9** f5!? (D) (9 ♗f3? ♗xg4 can't give White enough compensation, while **9** ♗d3 ♗f7 {9...♗a6 is a reasonable alternative} is the standard line, for which the assessment is far from clear, but Black has scored well).

This move has never been played, and it is not mentioned in the Sveshnikovs' book. It is highly likely that your opponent will be completely on his own from this point on, and