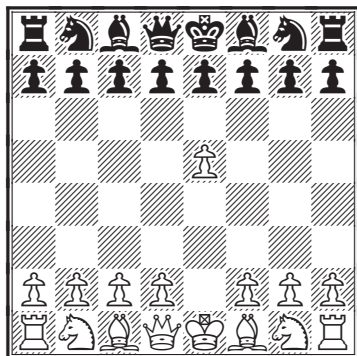


ALEKHINE DEFENSE

BROOKLYN VARIATION



1.e4 Nf6
2.e5 Ng8

The **Brooklyn Variation**, or **Retreat Variation**, is a radical twist on Alekhine's plan. There is still the hypermodern goal of encouraging the opponent to overextend, but in this case Black tucks the knight away at g8, instead of moving it to d5, where it is vulnerable to attack by White's pawns. The opening has been used by the author and by 1997 United States Champion Joel Benjamin, but it is best used as a surprise weapon or against inexperienced players.

White obtains a small advantage by developing normally.

EXAMPLES AND DISCUSSION

3.d4 d6. 3...d5!? is only different if White doesn't capture. 4.Nf3. 4.f4 Nh6; 5.Nf3 g6; 6.Bd3 Bg7; 7.O-O was the continuation of Young-Benjamin, Manhattan Chess Club (rapid) 1985. Here Black should have castled, where White has only a small advantage.

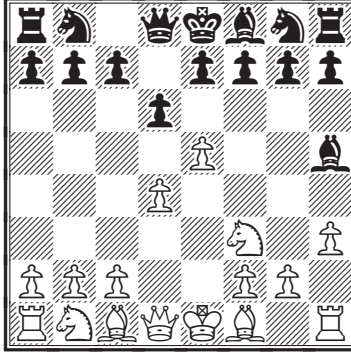
4.exd6 is not an effective plan here, and all three recaptures are possible.

a) 4...exd6; 5.Nf3 Nf6. It is clear that Black is not behind in development, and this position could also arise on 1.e4 e5; 2.Nf3 Nf6; 3.Nxe5 d6; 4.Nf3 Nxe4; 5.d4 Nf6, 6.d4, the Russian Game, though the retreat of the Black knight is not normal there. 6.c4 Be7; 7.Nc3 O-O; 8.h3 gave White the advantage in Velimirovic-Reshevsky, Skopje 1976, so Black should play ...Bg4 before White plays h3.

b) 4...cxd6; 5.Bd3 Nc6; 6.c3 Nf6; 7.Nf3 Bg4; 8.O-O Qd7; 9.Re1 O-O-O; 10.b4 h5 gave Black good counterplay in Forster-Schiller, England 1982.

c) 4...Qxd6 see the Gubinsky-Melts Defense and Schiller-Pytel Variation in the Scandinavian.

4...Bg4. Black logically attempts to undermine the support of the pawn at e5, a key aspect of Black's strategy. 5.h3 Bh5.

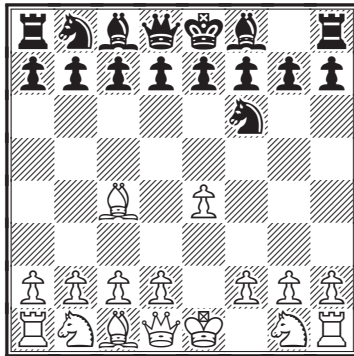


White has not yet found a way to crack this position.

6.Be2. 6.e6?! is far too optimistic, and after 6...fxe6; 7.g4 Bg6; 8.Bd3 Bxd3; 9.Qxd3 Nc6. White was unable to justify the investment of the pawn in Kaner-Benjamin, World Open 1980, while 6.Nc3 dxe5; 7.dxe5 Qxd1+; 8.Nxd1 did not scare Black in Blumenfeld-Benjamin, New York 1979. 6.g4 Bg6; 7.Nc3 might be better, as in Ernst-Welling, Copenhagen 1988.

6...e6; 7.O-O d5. Black has every reason to be satisfied with this position, which resembles a French Defense except that Black's light-squared bishop has been developed outside of the pawn chain.

KREJCIK VARIATION



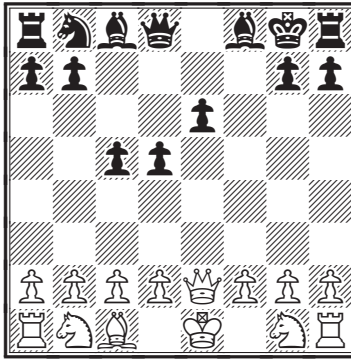
1.e4 Nf6
2.Bc4

The Krejcik Variation is a groggy opening, with only one stumbling idea behind the sacrifice of the e-pawn.

EXAMPLES AND DISCUSSION

2...Nxe4; 3.Bxf7+. Otherwise there is nothing at all to show for the material. 3...Kxf7; 4.Qh5+ Kg8. 4...g6; 5.Qd5+ e6; 6.Qxe4 Bg7 is the other form of defense, for example 7.Nf3 Rf8; 8.d4 d5; 9.Qd3 Nc6; 10.Nc3 Kg8 and Black was a little better in Zavorsky-Minic, Slovak League 1995.

5.Qd5+ e6; 6.Qxe4 d5; 7.Qe2 c5.

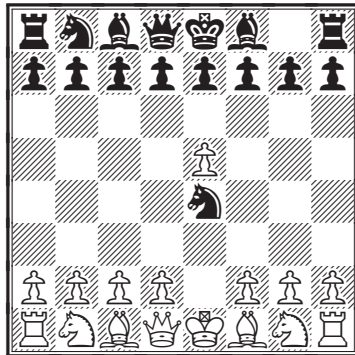


This is Joel Benjamin's plan. Black will develop rapidly with good attacking chances. The Black king is relatively safe at g8, and the inability to develop the rook from h8 is only a minor problem.

Play might continue 8.Nf3 Nc6; 9.O-O. 9.d3 Bd6; 10.Nc3 h6; 11.Bd2 Kh7; 12.d4 cxd4; 13.Nxd4 Nxd4; 14.Qd3+ Nf5; 15.g4 Rf8; 16.O-O-O Qf6; 17.h4 Qd4 was clearly better for Black in Jongman-Van der Klashorst, Netherlands Postal Championship 1986.

9...Bd7; 10.c3 Bd6; 11.d4 Qf6; 12.Bg5 Qg6; 13.Bh4 Re8; 14.Nbd2 h6 and Black will continue with ...Kh7 and ...Rh8.

MOKELE MBEMBE



1.e4 Nf6
2.e5 Ne4

The Mokele Mbembe has been studied intensively by German theoretician Stefan Buecker, who has written extensively in defense of his pet opening. He has given it the strange name Mokele Mbembe, which refers to an African beast, which is reported to be powerful enough to stop the flow of rivers.

Chernev once strongly recommended 3.b4, which is a reasonable approach, but modern analysts have concentrated on another line. Even Buecker seems to have overlooked Chernev's analysis, which was pointed out to me by Jeff Caveney.

After 3...e6; 4.c3 Kari Heinola has tried the idea 4...f6, somewhat analagous to our main line. This is necessary because 4...Qh4, proposed by Fahrni, is considered refuted by 5.Qe2. After 4...f6; 5.d3 Ng5, Auvinen-Heinola, Finland Open Championship 1987, White should continue 6.exf6 Qxf6; 7.d4. I consider the position marginally better for White, on the grounds that Black's light squared bishop is going to find it difficult to take an active role in the game. White can continue to develop in comfort. Still, Black's position is not all that bad.

EXAMPLES AND DISCUSSION

The dismissal of the opening with 3.d4 in *Unorthodox Openings* was premature, as we had not given sufficient attention to a defense which Buecker had already worked out but which was not in our possession in 1986. There is no room here to go into even a superficial examination of the many lines he analyzes, but here is my latest thinking on a good counter by White. 3...f6. This is the move that Buecker touts as the salvation of Black's position.

4.Bd3. 4.Qh5+ g6; 5.Qe2 d5; 6.f3 Ng5; 7.exf6 Ne6 is an idea from the unorthodox Finn, Kari Heinola, described as a critical variation by Buecker. I don't think that this shuffling by the queen helps, and after 8.f7+ Kxf7; 9.c3 Bg7 I evaluate the position as roughly level.

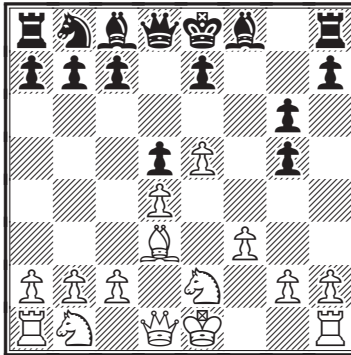
4...d5; 5.f3. 5.Nc3 Bf5; 6.Qf3 e6 was played in Rausis-Buecker, Dortmund 1990, and Buecker found 7.g4! which he judges to be clearly better for White. He prefers 5.Nc3 to 5.f3, and he may well be right, which just goes to show how bad the opening is.

5...Ng5; 6.Bxg5 fxc5; 7.Ne2 aims to work on the light squares. Logically, Black will advance the g-pawn to eliminate invasions by the White knight.

7.f4 is an old suggestion from Fahrni, back in 1922. I failed to credit it when researching *The Big Book of Busts* because it was buried in a note to one of Buecker's games against a computer in his *Grotesque Schacheroeffnungen*. He extends the analysis as follows in an article in his journal *Kaissiber*: 7...g6; 8.f5 (On 8.Nf3, then 8...gxf4; 9.Ng5 Bh6 and Black is better. True enough.) 8...Bxf5; 9.Bxf5 gxf5; 10.Qh5+ Kd7; 11.Qf7 was published in *The Big Book of Busts*, and Buecker counters with 11...c6; 12.Nf3 Bh6; 13.Qxf5+ e6 and now 14.Qf6 is ignored by Buecker, but I think it brings a small advantage to White. (14.Qh3 Bf8 is about equal.) 14...Qf8 (14...Qxf6; 15.exf6 Ke8; 16.Ne5 Nd7; 17.Rf1 is surely better for White.) 15.Rf1! White must be better here. Black has problems defending the pawn at a6 and White owns the f-file.

The bishop on h6 looks pretty pathetic. Black can try 15...Na6; 16.c3 Nc7; 17.Nbd2 Ne8 getting rid of the queens, but 18.Qxf8 Rxf8; 19.h3 leads to an endgame where the knight is better than the bishop.

7...g6.

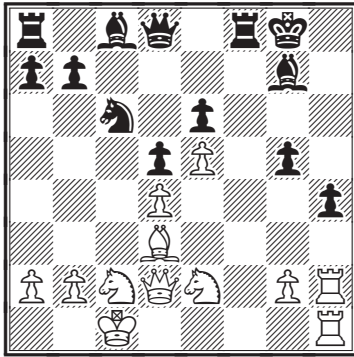


What can we conclude from this position? Black's pawns are a little weak, but there is the bishop pair to compensate for that. White can intensify the pressure.

8.Qd2 e6. A major concession, locking in the bishop, but how else to defend the g-pawn? 8...Bh6 is very artificial. 9.h4 wins a pawn, and 8...h6?; 9.Bxg6+ Kd7; 10.e6+! Kxe6; 11.Qe3+ Kd7; 12.Bf7 and the Black king must try to survive.

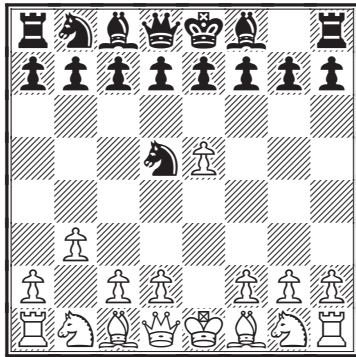
9.c3 Bg7; 10.Na3 O-O. White has an advantage in space, development, and structure. I think that this encourages opposite wing castling, and I present a few lines for Buecker to think about, as he will no doubt continue the debate in his next publication. A strong and tenacious analyst, it will not surprise me at all if he comes up with something.

11.O-O-O c5; 12.h4. As they say in Hawaii, "want beef?" 12...cxd4; 13.cxd4 gxh4; 14.Rh2 Nc6; 15.Rdh1 g5. 15...Nxd4; 16.Nxd4 Bxe5; 17.Rxh4 Bf4; 18.Rxf4 Qc7+!; 19.Nac2 Rxf4; 20.Nb5 and I prefer White.
16.f4! h6; 17.fxg5 hxg5; 18.Nc2.



With d4 under control White is better.

WELLING VARIATION



- 1.e4 Nf6
- 2.e5 Nd5
- 3.b3

The Welling Variation is based on avoiding an immediate confrontation in

the center, choosing instead to play along the long diagonal. The plan is not especially unorthodox, but there are many possibilities for early queen excursions.

EXAMPLES AND DISCUSSION

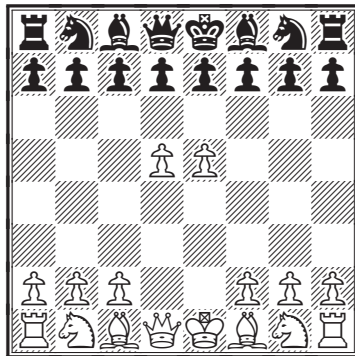
3...g6 is the best reply. 4.Bb2 Bg7. This position can arise from the Alekhine Defense or from the Nimzo-Larsen Attack via 1.b3 or 1.Nf3. 5.Qf3 is not at all unreasonable, since the queen is safe from any enemy attacks.

5.c4 Nb6; 6.d4 d6; 7.f4 O-O (7...dxe5; 8.fxe5 O-O; 9.Be2 c5 is another vigorous response, seen in Sartor-Robledo Nestor, Argentinean Under-16 Championship 1992.) 8.Nf3 dxe5; 9.fxe5 c5; 10.d5 Bg4; 11.h3 Bxf3; 12.Qxf3 and White had an overextended center. 12...e6; 13.Nc3 exd5; 14.Nxd5 Nxd5; 15.cxd5 Nd7; 16.O-O-O Nxe5 was better for Black in Gruebner-Konopka, Bundesliga 1996.

Defending the knight with ...e6 weakens the dark squares on the kingside, and ...c6 takes away the best square for the Black knight, so 5...Nb4. 5...c6; 6.c4 Nc7; 7.Qg3 d6; 8.d4 dxe5; 9.dxe5 a5; 10.Bd3 Nba6; 11.Ne2 gave White the freer game in Sirigos-Hinks Edwards, World Under-16 Championship 1993.

Here 6.Na3 O-O is the most logical continuation. Black has an acceptable game.

ZAIRE DEFENSE



1.e4	Nf6
2.e5	Ng8
3.d4	Nc6
4.d5	Nb8

EXAMPLES AND DISCUSSION

An extreme form of this hypermodern strategy is the Zaire Defense. In this variation, Black hopes to attack the overextended pawns.

After 5.c4 and an eventual f4, White can hold the big center without much difficulty and use the d4 and e4 squares for safely maneuvering close to enemy lines.