

# b2 or not b2

THE HUMBLE existence of this correspondent is not always brightened by the arrival of review copies of books. Usually they contain vast tracts of opening theory that one has not quite got around to learning, and hint darkly at what will befall one's Elo rating on the international circuit if immediate attention is not given to such and such a variation.

Consequently it was with some pleasure that I received two unusual new books recently. The first, unlike the second, still contains moves, being *The Encyclopaedia of Chess Middle-game Combinations* (Batsford/Sahovski Informant) at £14.95 hardback. Last month I praised a New Zealand booklet, *The Power of Chess Tactics* by Lev Aptekar, which also catalogues the standard combinational themes. That book is an excellent practical tournament guide, while this encyclopaedia is the definitive reference work. The authors have arranged 1817 positions from recent play by theme — discovered attack, pinning, decoy, interception etc — with solutions given in international figurine notation.

But if that's too heavy for your Christmas stocking, and explicit scenes of people playing chess don't upset you, an ideal present might be Bill Hartston's new book *Soft Pawn* (Hutchinson). In inimitable style, the author of *How to Cheat at Chess* has written another brilliant spoof of the current scene.

Chapters include "A Fable", which reveals exclusively how chess really was invented, an astrological guide, and "Somewhat Compromised", where our hero at a tournament in Moscow is lured by a pawn-pushing redhead to her room and then blackmailed for Big Tony's new move in the Dragon variation.

The highlight of the book, which assumes a reasonable general knowledge of chess, is "The Tragedy of Viktor the Second" — satirising that fateful 1978 Karpov v Viktor Korchnoi world championship match in the Philippines, and written in superb Shakespearean style. At one point, pondering his queen's bishop development, Viktor laments: "b2 or not b2, that is the question."

That those opening books can in fact be useful, however, is shown by this week's game from the Auckland club championships. It illustrates that even the player with the first move cannot neglect the basic opening principle: do not develop the queen too early or the opponent will gain time by attacking it.

## QUEEN PAWN OPENING

P. GREEN	M. LEVENE
1. d4	Nf6
2. c4	c5
3. Nf3	g6
4. Nc3	cxd4
5. Nx d4	d5
6. Qa4 ch?	

After this queen sortie White falls

behind in development — better was 6.Bg5.

6. ...	Bd7
7. Qb3	Nc6
8. Nxc6	Bxc6
9. Bg5?!	

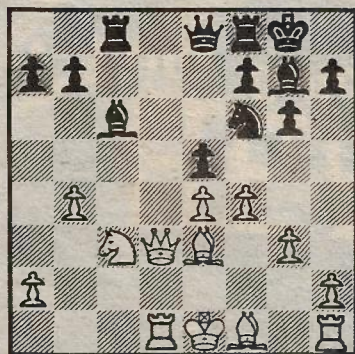
White should be thinking about developing his kingside pieces and castling. Here 9.cxd5 Nxd5 10.e4! Nb6 11.Bb5 would have given an equal position.

9. ...	dxc4
10. Qxc4	Bg7
11. e4	Qa5
12. Bd2	0-0
13. b4	Qe5
14. f4!?	Qh5
15. Be2	Qh4 ch
16. g3	Qh3
17. Bf1	Qd7

White is still in the opening, and the exposed position of his queen will mean more development tempi lost when Black centralises his rooks. Black, on the other hand, has completed castling and is in his middlegame, while Levene's own queen excursion has induced a serious loosening of Green's position. The immediate threat is 18... Bxe4.

18. Rd1	Rac8
19. Be3	Qe8
20. Qd3	e5!

M. LEVENE



P. GREEN

21. b5?

After this mistake and Levene's subsequent prising open of the centre White is doomed. Necessary was 21.Bg2 (21.Bc5? exf4 22.Bxf8 Bxf8 is a winning sacrifice) b6 22.0-0 when Black maintains the initiative with 22... exf4 and if 23.gxf4 Ng4.

21. ...	exf4!
22. bxc6	fxe3
23. cxb7	Rxc3!
24. Qxc3	Qxe4
25. Qb2	e2!?

A more prosaic path to victory was 25... Nd7 26.Bg2 Qf5 27.Rd5 (only move) Bxb2 winning a piece.

26. b8=Q	exf1=Q ch
27. Kxf1	Qxh1 ch
28. Ke2	Qe4 ch
29. Kf1	Qf3 ch
30. Ke1	Ne4!

A remarkable position — even an extra White queen is not enough against the multitude of threats.

31. Rd8	Bc3 ch!
32. Qxc3	Qh1 ch!
33. Ke2	Nxc3 ch
34. Resigns	

On 34.Kd2 Qd1 ch wins the White rook; while on 34.Ke3 Qe1 ch 35.Kf3 Qe2 ch 36.Kf4 Qe4 ch 37.Kg5 Qf5 ch forces mate by ... Qh5 next move.

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