

<p>Bernstein, Ossip S. • Capablanca, Jose R. Exhibition Game (1) [A.J.G.]</p>	<p>D63 2675 2750 1914</p>	<p>5.Bg5 0-0 ; 6.e3 Nbd7 ; 7.Rc1 b6!? ; {Fianchetto?} An early form of the "T.M.B. System." . [More 'normal' at that time was the continuation of: 7...c6!? ; 8.Bd3² , etc. This is the <main line> of the "Queen's Gambit Declined." . See MCO-14; or any good book on this particular opening.] . . 8.cxd5! exd5 ; 9.Qa4! Bb7!? ; Interesting ... and not at all bad. . [The more normal 'book' continuation is: 9...c5!? ; 10.Ba6!??² , {D?} with a slight edge to White. . S. Makarichev - Z. Sturua; Frunze, (3); 1985.] . . 10.Ba6 , White plays to remove the B's. .</p>
<p>. While 'just an exhibition' game, the mighty Capa considered this the finest game he ever played. (From an artistic point of view.)</p>		
<p>. The ratings are purely estimates. No reliable ELO exists for that period of time.</p>		
<p>. Sonas gives Capa as # 2 in the World, with a rating of 2735. (The # 2 player today is considerably higher, by at least 50 points.) Sonas gives Bernstein as # 10 in the World, with a rating of 2585. (In 2001, when I first did this game, the # 10 player was high-2600's. In 2003, the # 10 player is usually over 2700.)</p>		
<p>. 1.d4 d5 ; 2.c4 e6 ; 3.Nc3 Nf6 ; 4.Nf3 Be7 ;</p>		

[10.Bd3!?]

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10...Bxa6 ; 11.Qxa6 c5 ;
12.Bxf6!? , (Maybe - '?!') {D?}
White gives up the Bishop, but
he does so in order to weaken
Black's Pawn structure.
(This move has been criticized
by many Masters for prematurely
surrendering this piece.)

[Better is: ¹ 12.0-0² , {D?}
and White holds a slight edge.]

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12...Nxf6 ; 13.dxc5 bxc5 ; {D?}
Capa now has 'hanging pawns.'

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14.0-0 Qb6! ; 15.Qe2!? c4! ;
Chernev awards this an exclam.

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Black cuts off the Queen and
leaves a gaping hole at d4
for the White Knights ...
but gets play against White's
Queen-side. (initiative)

.
"Perhaps the most significant
move of the whole game."
- GM John Emms.

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Kasparov praises this as a

good move and a new and
radical idea in chess.
(See Bertok - Fischer; Stockholm
{FIDE} Interzonal, 1962.)

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[Interesting was: 15...Rad8!?!÷]

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.
16.Rfd1 Rfd8 ; 17.Nd4 Bb4! ;
The Bishop becomes aggressive.
(The base of Black's pawn chain
here is d5. So the Knight on f6
guards this pawn. White's Knight
on c3 - attacking this key pawn ...
is probably more valuable than
the Bishop in this position.)

.
'!' - Irving Chernev.

.
[Or 17...Rab8!?! ; 18.Qf3!=]

.
White decides to rid himself of
the b2-pawn ... which is nothing
more than a target ... and give
Black an isolated c-pawn as well.
18.b3!? Rac8 ; **19.bxc4 dxc4 ;**
20.Rc2!? Bxc3! ; **21.Rxc3 Nd5! ;**
Black's piece activity is becoming
more evident - and compensates
for his structural problems. (Black
naturally asks the Rook to remove

itself from in front of his passer.)

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'!' - Irving Chernev.

'!' - GM Garry Kasparov.

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.

Naturally, White must retreat,
(if White takes the Pawn, then
Black plays his Knight to c3,
and wins the exchange).

22.Rc2 , Forced.

(White had no choice here.)

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[<22.Rxc4? Nc3-+]

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.

22...c3 ; {Diagram?}

"The Black Pawn is now a source
of great strength." - Capablanca.

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**23.Rdc1 Rc5 ; 24.Nb3!? Rc6 ;
25.Nd4 Rc7!!** ; {Diagram?}

Black declines the draw.

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He also sets an incredibly deep
trap for Bernstein.

.

'!' - GM Garry Kasparov.

.

[After the moves:

25...Rc5 ; 26.Nb3 Rc6 ;

27.Nd4 Rc5 ; 28.Nb3= ,

we have a draw by a 3-time
repetition of the position.]

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26.Nb5!? **Rc5** ; **27.Nxc3!?** , {D?}

White decides he may snap up
the seemingly helpless c-pawn.

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(Really this move is an error ...
and you could give it at least
one question mark ...
some have given it two.)

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[White has to play:

27.Nd4!? [], {Diagram?}

and pray that Capa cannot find
a way to improve his position.
(I like ...Qf6 or ...Qg6!; both of
which appears to give Black a
fairly solid edge. At least - '3')]

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The next few moves are
all forced.

27...Nxc3 ; **28.Rxc3 Rxc3** ;
29.Rxc3 , (hmmmm) {Diag?}

White has won a pawn, and it
would seem Black's own weak
'home-row' (first rank) would
prevent him from getting frisky
or trying anything really cute.

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X A B C D E F G H Y
8 - + - t - + k + ( {
7 p - + - + p p p '
6 - ♖ - + - + - + &
5 + - + - + - + - %
4 - + - + - + - + $
3 + - R - P - + - #
2 P + - + Q P P P "
1 + - + - + - K - !
x a b c d e f g h y
    
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(Not < 30...Rxd3? ; 31.Rc8+ , etc.).
31.Qf1 Qxc3-+]

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X A B C D E F G H Y
8 - + - t - + k + (
7 p - + - + p p p '
6 - + - + - + - + &
5 + - + - + - + - %
4 - + - + - + - + $
3 + - R - P - + - #
2 P ♖ - + Q P P P "
1 + - + - + - K - ! [
x a b c d e f g h y
    
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So what is Capa's plan?

29... **Qb2!!** ; (WOW!!!)

White Resigns.

If 30.Qxb2?, then Black simply plays 30...Rd1#.)

Chernev points out that White has like 10 different ways to lose. (Probably the two cutest are: Qe1, QxR/c3!!; or Rc2, Qb1+. Both of these continuations cost White an entire Rook. Also amazing is Qc2, Qa1+; Qc1, Rd1+!; which leads to a mate.)

[RR29...Qb2 ; 30.Qd3!? Qa1+ ;

"Bernstein resigned gracefully. Playing even one more move would have been an anti-climax. (Besides there is no reply to a thunderbolt.)" - Irving Chernev.

Many consider this Capa's best game, and the mighty player himself also considered it one of his best efforts.

Bibliography:

I have seen this game in print

more times than I care to count. It is a classic exploitation of a weak back-rank. But the main books I used to annotate this game were:

1.) "THE GOLDEN DOZEN." ('The twelve greatest chess players of all time.' Short bio's and some career highlights, then a small selection of that player's best games.)

By Irving Chernev.

Copyright (c) 1976.

Published by The Oxford University Press.

ISBN: # 0-19-217536-X

2.) "The Immortal Games Of Jose Raul Capablanca," by (the incomparable)

Fred Reinfeld. Copyright (c) 1942.

Published by Horowitz & Harkness; of New York, NY. (USA)

3.) "The World's Greatest Chess Games," (that were ever played) by GM John Nunn, GM John Emms, and FM Graham Burgess.

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Published by Carroll & Graf Books. (New York.)

ISBN: # 0-7867-0587-6

---> As a Master, I must say this is some of the best analysis I have ever seen, anytime ... anywhere.

(This game is also in Capa's book, "My Chess Career.")
4.) Garry Kasparov on "My Great Predecessors," (Part I); by GM G. Kasparov ... and D. Plisetsky. (et al) Copyright (c) 2003, by the author(s). Published by Everyman Chess Books. (formerly Cadogan Books) ISBN: # 1-85744-330-6

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0-1