



C O L U M N I S T S

*The Kibitzer*

Tim Harding

## Remembering Cenek Kottnauer

As is well known, it is a great advantage for a chess player to have a surname beginning with the letter K. This column is about one of the lesser-known masters with that initial, Kottnauer, whom I had the privilege to know and work with for a time in the 1970s.

IM Cenek Kottnauer was born on 24 February 1910 in Czechoslovakia. He emigrated to England in 1953 and subsequently took British citizenship; he represented both Czech and English chess teams with distinction. Cenek Kottnauer was married with one son. He died in London, England, on 14 February 1996. *(Photo: Cenek Kottnauer)*



He was a big man, warm and friendly, and also physically very strong until his final illness. I probably should have written this tribute four years ago, but The Kibitzer series had not begun at the time when he died. Anyway, better late than never.

I had several conversations on non-chess matters with Cenek and his charming wife (also Czech) in their home near Holland Park in London. I remember them telling me that the English were very ignorant about edible fungi, which were common knowledge to Czech people. The Kottnauers would go out early in the morning into the nearby park to harvest these free culinary delights virtually on their doorstep.

Cenek's results in the immediate post-war years were outstanding and earned him the FIDE IM title (1950). There can be little doubt that he would have become a grandmaster had he played as a professional based in his native land, rather than opting for a career and family life in England. Also he was something of a late starter and the war cost him what could have been some of his best years, yet as late as the mid 1960s he was still playing some excellent chess.

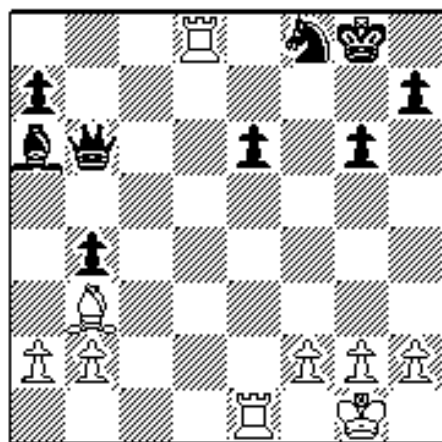
Cenek [pronounced CHEN-EK] worked in Britain as an executive for Charles Forte's hotel and restaurant group, which rather restricted his opportunities for playing chess. At the time in the mid-1970s when I met him regularly, his job involved him travelling around the Trusthouse Forte group as an inspector of their hotels, which were mostly in England but also included one of Dublin's top hotels, The Shelbourne.

Pre-1940 Kottnauer games are hard to find. His earliest game known to me is the following, which Edward Winter included in his book *Kings, Commoners*

and *Knaves*. Strangely for a simultaneous, the GM played Black, but Victor Charushin (the Russian chess historian) states in his new CD on Bogoljubow that this was a clock simultaneous, which probably explains matters. Clock simulms are generally played against a small group of elite players and colours may be divided equally between master and opponents.

***Cenek Kottnauer - Efim Bogoljubow clock simultaneous, Prague, 1932***

**1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 e3 e6 5 Nc3 Nbd7 6 Bd3 dxc4 7 Bxc4 b5 8 Bb3 b4 9 Ne2 Be7 10 0-0 0-0 11 Ng3 c5 12 e4 Bb7 13 Re1 cxd4 14 Nxd4 Nc5 15 Bc2 Rc8 16 Bf4 Qb6 17 e5 Nd5 18 Qh5 g6 19 Qh6 Nxf4 20 Qxf4 Rfd8 21 Rad1 Rd5 22 Nh5 Nd7 23 Ng3 Rc4 24 Nge2 Rxe5 25 Bb3 Re4 26 Bxc4 Rxf4 27 Nxf4 Bc5 28 Nfxe6 Ba6 29 Bb3 Bxd4 30 Rxd4 Nf8 31 Rd8 fxe6**  
(See Diagram)



**32 Rxe6!** 1-0, Black resigned, for if 32...Qxd8 33 Rxg6+ Kh8 34 Rg8 mate. Vera Menchik apparently annotated this game in 1932 but I have not seen her notes.

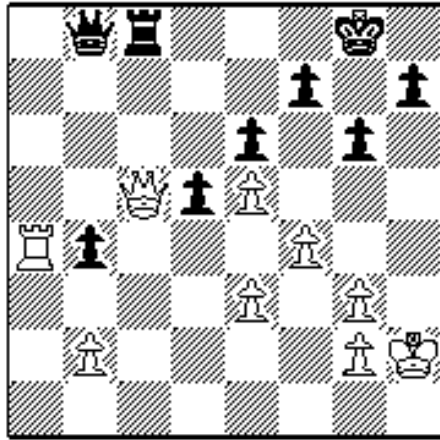
As he was 29 years old at the outbreak of World War Two, Kottnauer was probably already a strong player but unfortunately I never asked him what he did in the 1930s. It is known that he reached master strength in the WW2 years, competing in a 1942 Prague

tournament with Alekhine, Klaus Junge etc. and also a 1943 Prague tournament with many of the top Czech players.

He re-emerged after the war as a very talented attacking player, regularly playing in individual and team international events. He was capable of beating anyone on his day, as he proved in several clashes with Soviet players.

His first major tournament was Groningen 1946 where his performance was promising although inexperience may have let him down sometimes against the top players. He pulled off an instructive swindle in the first round against the veteran Osip Bernstein as follows.

***Osip Bernstein - Cenek Kottnauer Groningen 1946 (See Diagram)***

**44 Qxb4?**

Bernstein allows counterplay whereas 44 Rxb4 Qa8 45 Qe7, threatening Rb7, would have kept his advantage clear.

**44...Qc7 45 Qd4? Qc2 46 Ra3! Rb8 47 b3**

Apparently 47 b4 was better, as Black now seizes the initiative with a fine example of the damage that can be wrought by a Queen and Rook when they can create threats against the enemy

King. Maybe there is already no defence?

**47...Rc8 48 b4 Qe2!**

With threats of both 49...Rc2 and 49...Qh5+ followed by 50...Rc1+.

**49 Rc3 Ra8 50 Qd3**

If 50 Rc1 Ra2 51 Rg1 Qh5 mate.

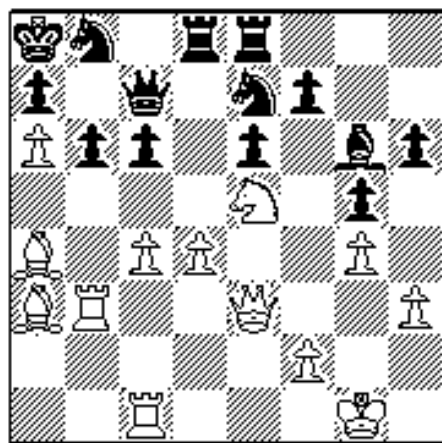
**50...Qh5+ 51 Kg1 Ra1+ 52 Kf2 Qh1 53 Rc2 Qg1+ 54 Kf3 Rf1+ 55 Kg4 Qh2 0-1.**

White resigned in view of the threat 56...Qh5 mate, and if 56.Kg5 Qxg3+ and 57...Qh4 mate.

At Groningen in 1946, Kottnauer he suffered against future world champion Smyslov what he called "my most instructive loss", when he played an opening with Black that was unsuitable for use at such a high level. However, the same year he also won the following game.

***Cenek Kottnauer - Vassily Smyslov Prague, 1946***

**1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Nc3 dxc4 5 a4 Bf5 6 e3 e6 7 Bxc4 Nbd7 8 0-0 Bb4 9 Qe2 Bg6 10 e4 Bxc3 11 bxc3 Nxe4 12 Ba3 Qc7 13 Rfc1 0-0-0 14 a5 Nd6 Better 14...Kb8 according to modern theory. 15 a6 b6 16 Bb3 Bh5 17 h3 Kb8 18 c4 Nc8 19 Qe3 Rhe8 20 Bb2 h6 21 Ba4 Ne7 22 Ra3 g5 23 Rb3 Ka8 24 Ba3 Nb8 25 g4 Bg6 26 Ne5 (See Diagram)**



Under heavy pressure, Smyslov decides to give up the exchange and head for an endgame.

**26...f6?! 27 Bxe7 fxe5 28 Bxd8 Rxd8 29 Qxe5 Qxe5 30 dxe5 Be8**

The point; Black will pick up the a-pawn and so create a passed pawn which gives counterplay. However, the infiltration of a white Rook into Black's weakened kingside exposes the dark side of the defender's plan.

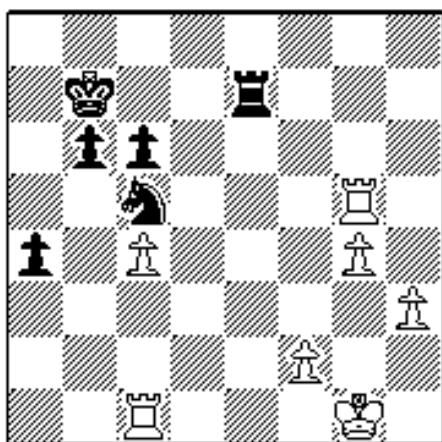
**31 Rf3! Nxa6 32 Rf8 Kb7 33 Rh8 Nc5 34 Bc2 Kc7 35 Rxh6 Rd4 36 Rh7+ Bd7 37 Bg6 a5 38 Be8 a4 39 Bxd7 Nxd7 40 Re7 Kb7 41 Rxe6 Nc5 42 Re7+ Ka6 43 Re8**

Now that White has his own passed pawn, the issue is not in doubt. Smyslov, however, tests White's technique.

**43...Kb7 44 e6 Re4 45 e7 Na6**

The e-pawn must fall but in exchange the black g-pawn, which has been restraining three pawns, will die.

**46 Rg8 Rxe7 47 Rxg5 Nc5 (See Diagram)**



Now Kottnauer takes the opportunity to conclude with a pure rook endgame.

**48 Rxc5! bxc5 49 Ra1 Kc7 50 Rxa4 Kd6 51 Ra3 Re1+ 52 Kg2 Rc1 53 Re3**

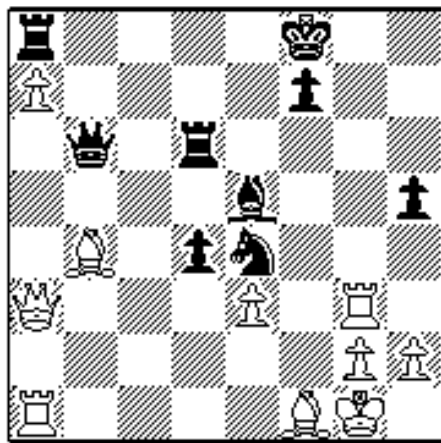
To cut the black King off from the white passed pawns.

**53...Rxc4 54 g5 Rb4 55 g6 c4 56 h4 1-0.**

His two victories against Russian grandmaster Kotov in 1946 are probably Kottnauer's best known wins. His BCM

obituary published the Groningen game (without notes), possibly by mistake. Here is the final phase.

***Cenek Kottnauer - Alexander Kotov Groningen 1946 (See Diagram)***



Excellent play had brought Kottnauer this winning position. Now, however (according to analysis by Vladimir Simagin) the correct way to finish would be 46 Rb1! e.g. (a) 46...Qc7 47 Rh3 Rxa7 48 Bxd6+ Bxd6 49 Qd3+-; (b) 46...Bxg3 47 Bxd6+ Qxd6 48 Rb8+ Kg7 49 Qxd6 Bxd6 50 Rxa8+-; (c) 46...Rxa7 47 Bxd6+ Bxd6 48 Qd3!+-; and (d) 46...Qxa7 47 Qxa7 Rxa7 48 Rh3! dxe3 49 Rd1 with clear advantage to White.

Instead the game continued **46 Rf3?**

**dxe3 47 Be2 Bxa1 48 Qxa1 Qxb4?**

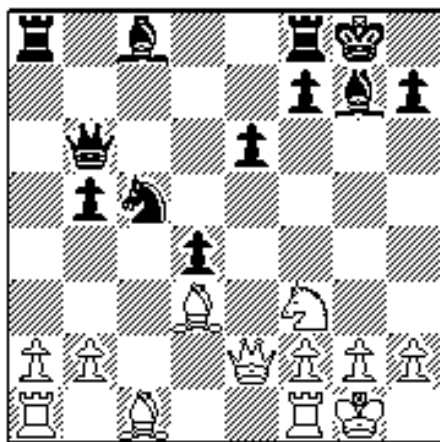
Kotov missed two possible defences (a) 48...Kg8! 49 Bxd6 Qxd6=; and (b) 48...Rxa7! 49 Qh8+ Ke7 50 Qe5+ Kd8.

After the capture on b4, he was lost: **49 Qh8+ Ke7 50 Qxa8 Rf6 51 Rxf6 Kxf6** (51...Nxf6 52 Qf3+-) **52 Qh8+!+- Ke6 53 Qa1 Nc3 54 a8Q Nxe2+ 55 Kh1** 1-0.

The real brilliancy, however, is the other game, from the Prague v Moscow match.

**Cenek Kottnauer - Alexander Kotov Moscow-Prague, 1946**

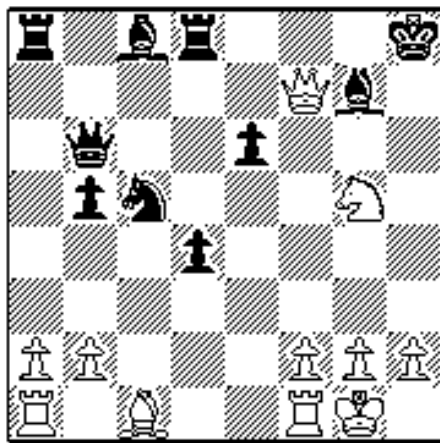
**1 c4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 c6 4 Nf3 Nf6 5 e3 Nbd7 6 Bd3 dxc4 7 Bxc4 b5 8 Bd3 a6 9 e4 c5 10 e5 cxd4 11 Nxb5 axb5 12 exf6 Qb6 13 fxg7 Bxg7 14 0-0 0-0 15 Qe2 Nc5? (See Diagram)**



In the game just mentioned, at Groningen 1946, Kotov played 15...Bb7 here against Kottnauer. The text move was the subject of some theoretical debate at this time and the Czech master showed that he had delved far more deeply into the secrets of the position than his opponent.

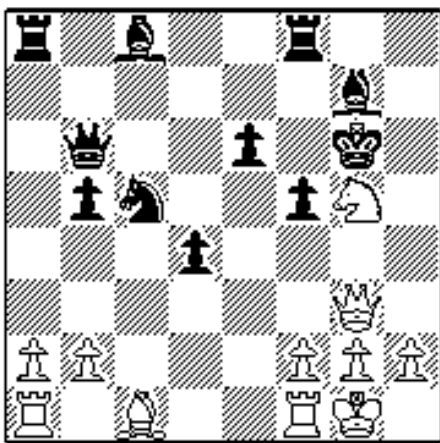
**16 Bxh7+! Kxh7 17 Ng5+ Kg6**

A game played by Czech master Sajtar had gone instead 17...Kg8? 18 Qh5 Rd8 19 Qxf7+ Kh8 (See Analysis Diagram)



From the analysis diagram: (a) 20 Qh5+ leads to a draw; (b) Earlier some books had claimed a win for White by 20 f4 Qb7 21 Rf3? but Black can play 21...Qxf7 22 Nxf7+ Kg8 23 Nxd8 Bd7 with excellent compensation for the exchange according to Vukovic in *The Art of Attack in Chess*. The Yugoslav analyst wrote that 21 Qg6 is better but White has only a draw after 21...Kg8 22 Rf3 Qe7 23 Rh3 (threatening Rh8+) 23...Kf8; and (c) Kottnauer had found the improvement 20 Bf4!! with "an irresistible attack". For details, see the Vukovic book, p.133 of John Nunn's new Everyman algebraic edition.

**18 Qg4 f5 19 Qg3** (See Diagram)



Black is in trouble because his g7-Bishop is subject to attack. Moving it does not help, e.g. 19...Bf6 20 Nxe6+ Kf7 21 Nxf8 Kxf8 22 Qg6 Ne4 23 f3! (stronger than 23 Bh6+ as given by Vukovic) 23...d3+ 24 Kh1 d2. Here Vukovic wrote that "Black has at least equal chances" but Nunn gives 25 fxe4 dxc1Q 26 Raxc1 saying "White has a material advantage and a strong attack".

**19...Kf6**

After this game, 19...Rf7 was recommended for Black by Kovalev, and tried the next year in Kottnauer-Pachman, Chigorin Memorial (Moscow). The best reply may be 20 b4! (Vukovic) but Kottnauer played 20 Bf4 (only equal) and did eventually win that game.

**20 Bf4!**

Keres had analysed 20 Qh4? Rh8 when White must take perpetual check. This explains why Kotov went in for 15...Nc5.

**20...Ke7**

20...Nd7 loses to 21 Nxe6 Qxe6 22 Rae1 Qd5 23 Qg5+ Kf7 24 Re7+.

**21 Rac1 Ra7**

21...b4 allows the threat 22 Bc7! (stronger than 22 Nh7 as given by Vukovic) 22...Qc6 23 Nxe6! Bxe6 24 Qxg7+ Ke8 25 Qe5+- Nunn.

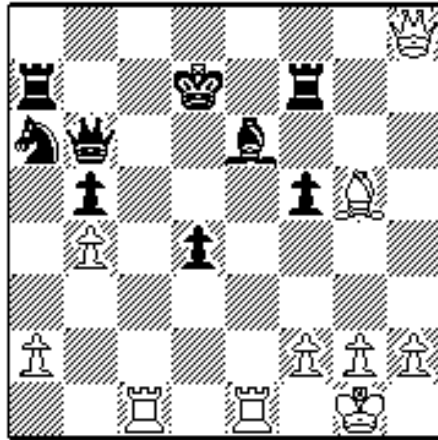
**22 Rfe1 Bd7**

If 22...Bf6 23 Nh7 Rf7 (23...Ne4 24 Rxe4) 24 Nxf6 Rxf6 25 b4 Now Kottnauer said he saw the final breakthrough "in a flash".

### 23 b4! Na6?

This error was not noticed by Vukovic and nor does Nunn comment on it. 23...Na4 would be better, as will become clear in a minute.

**24 Nxe6 Bxe6 25 Qxg7+ Rf7 26 Bg5+ Kd7 27 Qh8! (See Diagram)**



If Black's Knight were on a4, he could now play 27...Nc3 which obliges White to win in a (not difficult) endgame after 28 Rxe6 Qxe6 29 Qxd4+ Kc8 30 Rxc3+ Rac7 31 Rxc7+ Rxc7 32 h4+-.

Now, however, Black cannot block the c-file: if 27...Nc7 (or 27...Rc7) then 28 Qd8 mate.

**27...Qb8 28 Qxd4+ 1-0**

On the strength of games like these, Kottnauer was invited to the Chigorin

Memorial in Moscow in 1947 but this tournament was perhaps too strong for him at that stage of his development. He was a strong IM but could only record six draws and one win, finishing 13th of 16 players. His friend Ludek Pachman scored 8.5 and the winner Botvinnik had 11 points. Probably this was something of a watershed for them, as Pachman became a GM and famous theoretician while Kottnauer was perhaps already beginning to think of moving to the west. Many years later, Cenek helped Pachman when the latter, after several years of imprisonment and political persecution following the Prague Spring of 1968, was finally in the mid-1970s allowed to emigrate. I understand that for a time Cenek helped Pachman earn money, by writing articles in his name which the grandmaster was in too poor health to write for himself.

Overall, Kottnauer had a bad record against Gligoric, O'Kelly, Szabo and a couple of other GMs. However, he did take quite a few grandmaster scalps. He also twice beat V.Simagin before the latter won the GM title. The Chigorin Memorial was the end of him playing in elite events but Kottnauer continued to play in strong master events such as Vienna (Schlechter Memorial) 1947, Beverwijk 1948, Venice 1949, Trencianske Teplice 1949, Szczawno Zdroj 1950 and Amsterdam 1950, and Budapest 1952. Shortly before coming to Britain, he won the Lucerne 1953 international tournament. He also became an International Judge (FIDE arbiter) in 1951.

Any impression that his chess career was in decline when he emigrated would be quite wrong. He played the Helsinki olympiad 1952 on board 4 for Czechoslovakia, and had one of his best career results, showing once more how he could be completely dominant against national-master and IM-level opposition whose opening knowledge, technique and defensive skills were not quite up to scratch. (Photo: *Cenek Kottnauer*)



Cenek Kottnauer scored +10 =5 -0 (an incredibly high 83.3%) - by far the best result on that board and contributing in a big way to his team's eventual fourth place. This included a draw with the olympiad top gun Boleslavsky, who scored +6 =2 -0 as the Soviet first reserve for an 87.5% result. Overall, Kottnauer's result is much more impressive as he was only rested for one round whereas Boleslavsky only played in half the matches.

The following game was played against the well-known annotator IM Rellstab (Federal Republic of Germany) in the finals.

***Ludwig Rellstab - Cenek Kottnauer Helsinki ol final-A, 1952*** (Notes by Kottnauer)

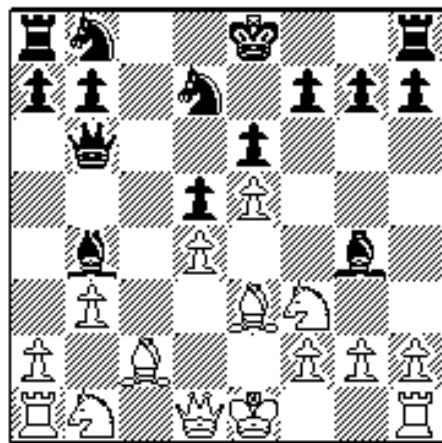
**1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 c3 Nf6 4 Bd3 Bg4 5 Bc2**

This allows Black complete and immediate equality - if not more. In the game Pfeiffer-Kottnauer "from the preliminaries", White played correctly 5 h3 Bh5 and only then 6 Bc2. The point is that 6...d5 can be answered by 7 e5 Nfd7 8 g4 Bg6 9 Bxg6 hxg6 10 e6! fxe6 11 Ng5 with a promising attack.

**5...d5 6 e5 Nfd7 7 d4 e6**

This position is similar to an Advance (or Nimzowitsch) French except Black has no problems regarding the development of his light-squared Bishop.

**8 Be3 Qb6 9 b3 cxd4 10 cxd4 Bb4+** (See Diagram)

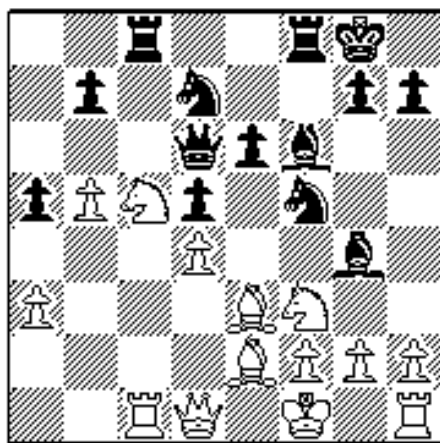


**11 Kf1**

The King is forced to retreat for 11 Nbd2 loses a pawn after 11...Bc3 12 Rc1 Bxf3 13 Qxf3 Bxd4.

**11...Nc6 12 a3 Be7 13 Nc3 Rc8 14 Na4 Qc7 15 Bd3 f6 16 exf6 Bxf6 17 Rc1 Qd6 18 b4 0-0 19 Be2 a5 20 b5 Ne7 21 Nc5 Nf5!** (See Diagram)





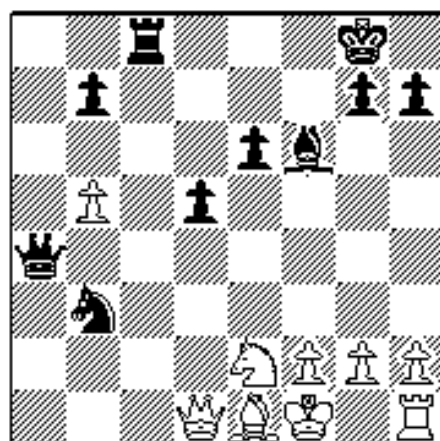
If 22 Nxb7 then 22...Qxa3 threatening ...Nxe3+.

**22 Nxd7 Qxd7 23 Rxc8 Rxc8 24 a4 Qd6 25 Ng1 Qa3**

Now Black threatens 26...Nxe3+ followed by ...Rc1.

**26 Bd2 Bxe2+ 27 Nxe2 Nxd4 28 Bxa5 Nb3 29 Be1 Qxa4**

The struggle is over. (*See Diagram*)



**30 g4 Qxb5 31 Kg2 Rc4 32 h3 d4 33 Ng3 Qd5+ 34 Qf3 d3 35 Nf1 Bg5 36 Qxd5 exd5 37 f4 Bxf4 38 Bg3 d2 39 Nh2 Bxg3 0-1.**

In his first years in England, Cenek played very little, having to establish his career to provide for his family. However, from around 1959 he became an active master player again, though of course not to his former standard at first. A lot of his chess in the 1950s was played in events like the London league,

county matches and minor tournaments, albeit against tough opposition a lot of the time. However, the general standard in England at that time was probably rather lower than in Czechoslovakia.

As a result of his comparative invisibility, Kottnauer was very little known in his adopted country in the 1950s and early 1960s. In those days, Britain had no GMs and the only native IMs were Alexander, Penrose and Golombek (plus the New Zealander, Bob Wade) . In those days, the British Championships (dominated by Penrose), the olympiads and Hastings were the main events recognised by the chess public. (Later Penrose and Golombek were upgraded to GM by FIDE.)

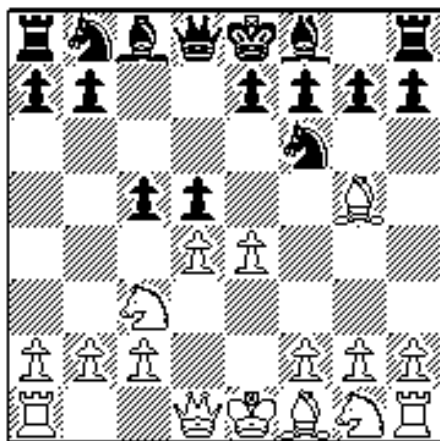
It was probably not until 1964 that Kottnauer's fine play at Tel Aviv that led to his general recognition as Britain's number two player for a few years. On board 1 (the only titled player in the team), he scored +8 =7 -3 for 63.9%, not at all bad at the age of 54. His opponents included GMs Uhlmann, Stahlberg and Reshevsky and he drew with two of them. England were fourth in the B final, very respectable in the absence of Penrose who had job commitments.

Kottnauer even beat the British number one in the following game, played in a Saturday afternoon traditional county championship match. The fixture list would have meant he would have a good idea well in advance of whom his

opponent would be.

***Cenek Kottnauer - Jonathan Penrose Middlesex-Essex, 1964***

**1 d4 Nf6 2 Nc3 d5 3 Bg5 c5 4 e4!?** (See Diagram)



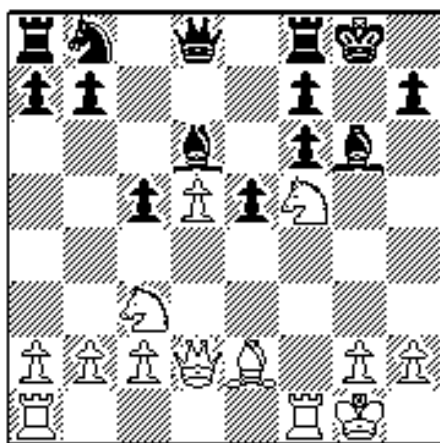
A very sharp and unusual continuation, typical of Kottnauer's aggressive style, and most likely prepared specially for the occasion. The normal move is 4 Bxf6.

**4...dxe4?!**

The new Gufeld and Stetsko book on the Richter-Veresov only gives 4...Nxe4! 5 Nxe4 dxe4 6 dxc5 (Note also 6 d5 g6! 7 f3 Qb6 8 fxe4 Qb4+! 9 Qd2 Qxb2 Benjamin-Bellin, British Ch 1977) 6...Nd7 7 Be3 e6 8 Qd2 Qc7 9 b4 Be7 10 Bb5 0-0 11 Ne2 Nf6 12 Nc3 Rd8 leads

to complicated play where Black's chances are not worse.

**5 d5 Bg4 6 Be2!? Bf5 7 Qd2 e5 8 f3 exf3?! 9 Nxf3 Bd6 10 0-0 0-0? 11 Nh4 Bg6 12 Bxf6 gxf6 13 Nf5** (See Diagram)



After uncharacteristically weak opening play by Penrose, White has a "virtually decisive positional advantage" (as IM Robert Bellin puts it in his 1983 book *Queen's Pawn Veresov System*).

**13...Kh8 14 Ne4 Bc7 15 Nfg3 Nd7 16 Bg4 f5**

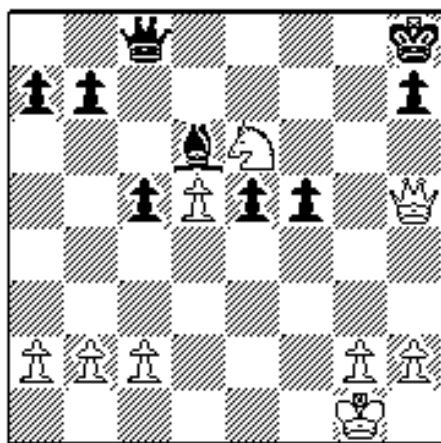
Penrose returns the worthless gambit pawn in the hope of some simplification but White's initiative persists.

**17 Bxf5 Nf6 18 Bxg6 fxg6 19 Nxf6**

**Rxf6 20 Rxf6 Qxf6 21 Ne4**

On this central blockading square, the Knight is worth more than the Bishop, creating threats on both wings.

**21...Qf5 22 Qe2 Rf8 23 Rf1 Qc8 24 Ng5 Rf5 25 Ne6 Bd6 26 Rxf5 gxf5 27 Qh5** (See Diagram)



**27...Qd7**

Black cannot save the pawn because if 27...f4 28 Qf7.

**28 Qxf5 Qe7 29 c4 a6 30 Ng5 h6 31 Nf7+ Kg7 32 Nxd6 Qxd6**

Kottnauer now wins the queen and pawn ending by a bold king march.

**33 Kf2 b5 34 b3 bxc4 35 bxc4 Qb8 36 Kf3 a5 37 Ke4 Qb1+ 38 Kxe5 Qb2+ 39 Ke6 1-0**

He played one more olympiad, Lugano 1968. England finished second in the B final. Kottnauer was on board 2 below Penrose and played some of his games on top board. His individual score was a fairly solid +3 =5 -4. One of his losses was to Petrosian.

Cenek only played twice at Hastings. In 1959-60, when he was just starting his international comeback, he scored 4.5/9 (appropriately sharing midfield with Golombek) and 1968-69 when he had a disappointing 3.5/11 finishing second last. This appears to have prompted his retirement from active international play but in the 1970s he became one of England's top coaches of young players, as Bernard Cafferty's obituary for *British Chess Magazine* stressed. Thus he played his part in bringing forward the Julian Hodgson generation of British GMs.

It was also in the mid-1970s that Bob Wade recruited Cenek Kottnauer to assist George Botterill and myself with a book project on the Sozin Sicilian. At this time, George (who had twice won the British Championship) had taken a university job in Wales and had to make most of his contribution by post. It was felt that a master was needed to help analyse positions that my researches identified as critical so for several months I used to visit the Kottnauer household.

The work was divided up so that (as the book's preface says) Cenek assisted in the chapters dealing with the Velimirovic Attack (1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 d6 6 Bc4 e6 7 Be3 (followed by Qe2 and 0-0-0) and the Benko variation (6...Qb6). These were the currently critical lines of the Sozin at the time (1973-74) we were working on the book, with many sharp sacrificial ideas. (There was some overlap of input as Botterill played the Velimirovic sometimes.)

Typically, Cenek was not very interested in analysing games that had already been played. he could find them in chess magazines. He had a very good feel for whether a game was important or likely to be improved upon. His approach was always to ask "what will the masters try next?" Consequently our book had several ideas which subsequently were tried in master games, but theory has moved on so much in the past quarter century that the variations we analysed then are not really relevant today. [*The*

*Sicilian Sozin* by Harding, Botterill and Kottnauer was published by Batsford in 1974 (English descriptive notation). It is long out of print.]

A detail I learned from re-reading Bernard Cafferty's obituary in *British Chess Magazine* is that Cenek was one of the first British players to play as a "hired gun" in the German Bundesliga, in the days when travelling was not so easy as it is now.

So far as I know, he never played in correspondence events, as I don't find him mentioned in the admirable history of CC in Czechoslovakia that was published last year. However, he did win the following remarkable game. The notes below are adapted and updated from the ones I wrote many years ago for the compilation book *British Chess* (p.136).

### ***Kottnauer, C - BBC Listeners Radio correspondence game, circa 1960***

This game was played against the listeners of the BBC radio chess magazine programme which used to be broadcast on Network 3 on Sunday afternoons each week in the late 1950s and early 1960s. I remember hearing some of these broadcasts.

One move was played each week, the public sending in their suggested moves on postcards. The item was presented by Harry Golombek who selected what he thought was the best move among those suggested. I don't know how often he used his discretion to reject the majority move. So Kottnauer was playing correspondence chess against Golombek and all the chess players of Britain - and still he won!

**1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 f3!?**

This move is a good choice for a game like this where it is more appropriate to have "real chess" than discuss a long theoretical variation. It was a favourite of Lodewijk Prins, the Dutch master. Prins played 5 f3 against Kottnauer on one occasion in the late 1940s and this seems to have made an impression.. Subsequently Kottnauer played this move as White on several occasions.

If you are interested in theory, note that this game is not in the *New In Chess Yearbook 36* survey of the 5 f3 line.

**5...e5**

Of course Black can also play 5...e6 which may transpose into the English Attack against the Najdorf if he follows up with...a6.

**6 Nb3**

This move is played much less frequently than 6 Bb5+.

**6...d5**

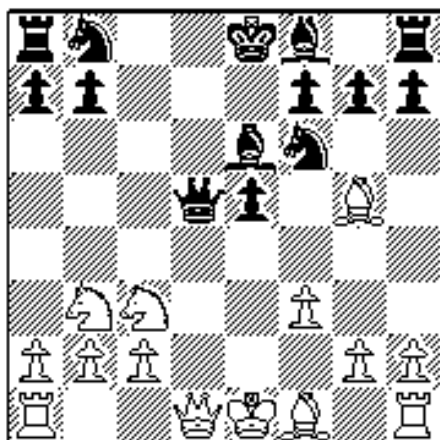
If 6...Be7 (or 6...Be6) then 7 c4 reveals one of the main ideas behind 5 f3.#

**7 Bg5 Be6 8 exd5**

I see that *Nunn's Chess Openings* prefers 8 Bxf6 gxf6 9 exd5 claiming a

slight advantage for White.

**8...Qxd5 9 Nc3** (*See Diagram*)



**9...Bb4**

In this position as Black, Kottnauer preferred to exchange Queens 9...Qxd1+ 10 Rxd1 Bb4 11 Bd2 a6 12 Na4 Bxd2+ 13 Rxd2 Nbd7 14 Nbc5 Nxc5 15 Nxc5 Ke7 and now: (a) 16 Nxb7 Rab8 17 Nc5 Rxb2 18 Nxe6 fxe6 19 Bc4 Rb4 20 Bb3 a5 21 Kf2 a4 22 c3 Rf4 ½-½, 35 in Prins-Kottnauer, Venice 1949; (b) 16 Nxe6 fxe6 17 Bd3 Rad8 18 Re2 Rd5 19 0-0 Kd6 20 Be4 Nxe4 21 fxe4 Rc5 (draw in 62 moves) in Foltys-Kottnauer,

Scwazno Zdroj 1950.

**10 Bd2 Qd8**

In Kottnauer-Franklin, Ilford 1956, Black played 10...Bxc3 11 Bxc3 Nc6 12 Bd3 0-0 13 0-0 Rfe8 14 Qe1 Qd8 15 Qh4 h6 16 Rae1 and now Black gave up a pawn by 16...Nd5 17 Qxd8 Raxd8 18 Bxe5 Ndb4 but after 19 Bg3 Bxb3 20 Rxe8+ Rxe8 21 axb3 Nxd3 22 cxd3 Re2 23 Rd1 Kf8 24 d4 Ke7 25 d5 White went on to win.

**11 Bd3!**

Kottnauer varies from Prins' idea to play 11 Nb5 and attack the somewhat weakened squares on Black's queenside. Instead Kottnauer tries for a direct kingside attack.

**11...Nc6**

At Hastings 1968-69, Smejkal tried 11...0-0 12 0-0 Nbd7 which Kottnauer met by 13 Qe1 Re8 14 Qh4 Be7 15 Kh1 Qc7 16 Rad1 a6 17 Rfe1 Rad8 18 Be3 h6 19 Qf2 Rc8 20 Re2 b5 21 Bd2 Bc4 22 Be3 Bxd3 23 Rxd3 b4 24 Nd5 Nxd5 25 Rxd5 Bf8 26 Rd1 Nf6 27 Red2 Qc4 28 Qf1 Qe6 29 Re1 Rc7 30 Bf2 Rec8 31 Bg3 Rxc2 32 Rxc2 Rxc2 33 Bxe5 Qc4 34 Qxc4 Rxc4 35 Bxf6 gxf6 36 Rc1 and White won the endgame on move 57.

**12 0-0 0-0 13 Qe1**

Not 13 Qe2 which would have transposed to Cortlever-Rossolimo, Beverwijk 1953, won by Black.

**13...Nd5**

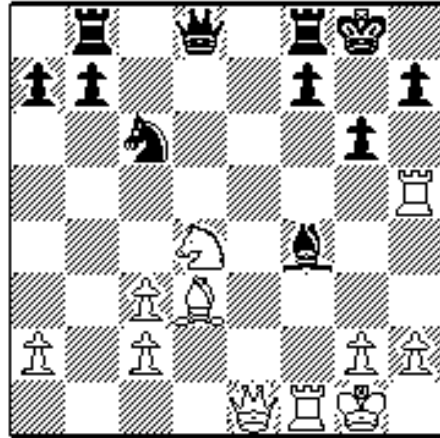
I doubt if Kottnauer, if he knew the game, would have been very impressed by 13...Re8 14 Rd1 Qc7 15 Bg5 Be7 16 Nb5 Qb8 17 Bxf6 Bxf6 18 Nc5 a6 19 Nd6! Qa7 (19...Qxd6 20 Bxh7+) 20 b4 Reb8 21 Kh1 Nd8 22 Ne8 Be7 23 Qxe5 1-0 L.Engels-Canabrava, Sao Paulo 1960.

**14 Rd1 Nxc3 15 bxc3 Bd6 16 f4 Bg4 17 Rb1 exf4 18 Bxf4 Bh5 19 Nd4**

**Rb8 20 Rb5! Bxf4**

Not 20...Bg6? 21 Rd5.

**21 Rxb5 g6 (See Diagram)**



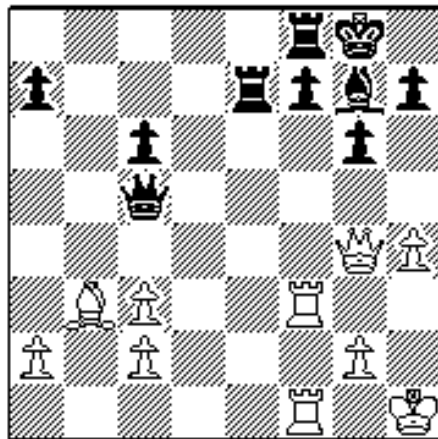
**22 Rh3**

Kottnauer was very tempted to play 22 Rxf4!? but he saw 22...gxh5 23 Qe4 f5 24 Nxf5 Qg5 refuting the attack. The Listeners avoid the trap but spoil their defence on move 30.

**22...Bg5!**

The Listeners avoid the trap 22...Bd6? 23 Ne6! Qb6+ (23...fxe6 allows mate in 4 by 24 Qxe6+ Kg7 25 Rxb7+) 24 Kh1 threatening Qh4.

**23 Nxc6 bxc6 24 Bc4 Rb7 25 Qe4 Qb6+ 26 Kh1 Re7 27 Qg4 Qc5 28 Rhf3 Bh6 29 Bb3 Bg7 30 h4 (See Diagram)**



**30...Bxc3?**

Kottnauer: "The position was a little awkward to defend, but Black could have obtained good drawing prospects after 30...Kh8. Now the attack really comes..."

**31 h5 Kg7 32 hxg6 hxg6 33 Qh4! Qb4**

If 33...Rh8 34 Rxf7+ Rxf7 35 Rxf7+ Kg8 36 Rh7+.

**34 Bc4 f5 35 Rh3 Bd2 36 Qd4+ Rf6 37 Rd1 Be1**

37...Bg5 38 Rh7+ Kxh7 39 Bg8+ Kxg8 40 Qxb4 was relatively the best chance for the Listeners but they should still lose.

**38 c3! Qb6 39 Qf4 1-0.**

As Golombek had beaten him in Prague 1946 and Vienna 1949, this win probably gave Cenek some extra satisfaction.

To sum up, Cenek Kottnauer was an admirable person and a great asset to British chess. May he rest in peace.

His games are still well worth studying and a large file with 274 of his wins and draws is available for download from my website, <http://www.chessmail.com/freegames.html>.

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