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COLUMNISTS

The Kibitzer

Tim Harding

Goodbye to the Friendly Orang-Utan

This month I conclude my treatment of the opening 1 b4 which is sometimes called the Sokolsky, the Orang-Utan or the Polish Opening. In case you missed the previous articles in the series, they were published in June and July. You can find both of those articles in the [ChessCafe Archives](#).

I want to thank the many readers who have sent in games and suggestions. These have all been considered, even if they have not been included in the articles.

To recap, Kibitzer 85 (June) introduced some of the history and basic ideas behind 1 b4, chiefly through the practice of the opening's most important early advocate, the Belarus master A.P.Sokolsky. His games with Strugach, Anishchenko and Veinblatt were re-examined. Then Kibitzer 86 (July) looked at some significant games by other players with the opening, notably Miles-Ribli and a win by Akopian, and then some games in a critical sacrificial line and finally some games in which I have been involved myself.

These articles have attracted a good reader response from non-professional players. Masters, however, rarely play the opening, although some have given it the occasional outing. It is still the case that Informator has published no 1 b4 game since Miles-Ribli, 1984, and while databases have a



Order

[*Mega Corr 3*](#)

Edited by Tim Harding

lot of 1 b4 games, not many of them feature genuine masters (let alone grandmasters) as White. Also, while it is true that there have been a lot of correspondence games with the Sokolsky, I think the vast majority were played in thematic events where 1. b4 was the obligatory first move, and not many of those games involved masters either.

The opening 1 b4 probably just is not good. I do not expect to repeat it with the white pieces because Black has many ways to meet it, some of which I underestimated before preparing these articles.

One plan not considered in my earlier articles is to block the diagonal of the Sokolsky bishop by 1...e5 defended by the d-pawn instead of the f-pawn. At first sight this looks cramped but Black compensates for that with 3...f5 which means that he has the potential for a kingside initiative.

Here is a fairly recent correspondence game won in this line by one of my current postal opponents, Albi Gmür, who is an ICCF International Master from Switzerland.

Stefan Gnüchtel (2032) – Albi Gmür (2366)
Chess in Friendship Cup (rd.3) corr 1997

1 b4 e5 2 Bb2 d6 3 c4

I received an email from reader Wieland Belka (Cottbus, Germany) who sent me a game in which he now played 3...g6 — and lost. “I don’t know why, where I played wrong! What was a correct plan as Black?” Before continuing with the Gmür game, let’s take a look at the first part of **T.Lins-W.Belka**, Germany 2002, which went: **1 b4 e5 2 Bb2 d6 3 c4 g6 4 e3 Bg7 5 f4!? Nd7 6 Nf3 Ngf6 7 fxe5 dxe5 8 Be2 [Not 8 Nxe5? Nh5] 8...Qe7 9 Ba3 e4 10 Nd4 Ne5 11 b5 Qd8 12 0–0 Bg4 13 Nc3 Bxe2 14 Qxe2 Qd7 15 Rab1 Qg4 16 Qxg4 Nfxg4 17 Nxe4 Nxc4 18 Bb4**

Nge5 19 Rbc1



It seems to me that White is much better now: both his rooks have nice half-open files whereas the h8-rook is out of the game and the black king is in some discomfort. This situation arises from the fact that Black has been unable to castle. The kingside fianchetto has not worked for Black.

Now we return to Gnüchtel-Gmür. Compare the difficulties Belka had on the dark squares with Gmür's treatment of the black side.

3...f5

This Dutch formation was also played against Sokolsky and seems quite effective. What we get is an English Opening where White's b2-b4 move is less to the point than the normal Nf3, d4 counter to Black's early ...f5.

4 e3 Nf6 5 Nf3 Be7

A new move according to Gmür in his notes but actually it was played against Sokolsky himself. Lyavdansky tried 5...a5 against Sokolsky (Vladimir 1960) but after 6 b5 White's queenside was secure and Black still had to solve the problem of his development.

6 d4

Sokolsky also tried 6 Nc3 in the 7th USSR Correspondence Championship against B.Persits. After 6...0-0 7 Qb3 Kh8 8 d4 e4 Sokolsky played very aggressively with 9 Ng5 (9 Nd2

is also possible.) 9...c6 (9...h6? 10 h4) 10 h4 Ng4?! (Better to develop by 10...Na6) 11 Ne2! (to meet 11...h6 by 12 Nf4) 11...Na6 (Black declines the pawn sacrifice rather than allow the h-file be opened after 11...Bxg5!?) 12 Nf4 Nc7 13 a4 d5 14 b5 Bxg5 (Black now takes the risk; 14...Nf6 was more prudent.) 15 hxg5 Qxg5 16 Ba3 with good compensation for the pawn (not now 16...Rd8? 17 Be7! Qxe7 18 Ng6+). This game is annotated on the CD-ROM accompanying the new book 'Red Letters' by Sergey Grodzensky and myself.

6...0-0

Black just plays simple moves. Instead Sokolsky-S.Samarian, corr 1961, went 6...e4 7 Nfd2 d5 8 b5 (Improving on Sokolsky-Suetin, USSR Team Ch, Leningrad 1953, which went 8 Qb3 c6 9 Nc3 0-0 10 g3 Kh8 11 h4 dxc4 12 Bxc4 b5 13 Be2 Na6 14 a3 Nc7 15 Qc2 Be6 with the edge to Black, who won eventually.) 9 a4 0-0 10 Qb3 Be6 11 Nc3 Nbd7 12 Be2 c5?! 13 Nxd5 Nxd5 14 cxd5 Bf7 15 Rc1 Rc8 16 0-0 Nb6 17 dxc5 Nxd5 18 Bc4 Rxc5 19 Rfd1 Rc7 20 Nxe4 Rxc4 21 Qxc4 fxe4 22 Qxe4 Qd6 23 Qg4 Qh6 24 Qd7 Be6 25 Qxb7 Qh4 26 Rd2 Qb4 27 Rcd1 Nb6 28 Bc3 Qa3 29 Qe4 Bf7 30 Bb2 Qc5 31 Rc1 Qb4 32 Qd4 Qxd4 33 Bxd4 Bb4 34 Rdc2 1-0.

That game is well known but a recent opening repertoire book pointed out that Black should have preferred 12...Kh8, e.g. 13 h3 Qc7 14 c5 f4!? 15 Nd1 (White's king is vulnerable after 15 Ncxe4 fxe3 16 fxe3 Nxe4 17 Nxe4 b6.) 15...Rab8 16 exf4 Qxf4 17 g3 Qh6 18 Qe3 Qg6 and Black had the edge in Rocznik-Walczak, Poland 1981.

After that digression, once more we return to Gnüchtel-Gmür.



Black's move in the present game, 6...0-0, makes the point that White is not threatening to win a pawn. A queen exchange is likely to exacerbate the weakness of the advanced b-pawn in the long run.

7 dxe5

This is probably a strategic mistake. Sokolsky would probably have played 7 Qb3 Kh8 8 Nc3 when 8...e4 would transpose to the Persits game mentioned above.

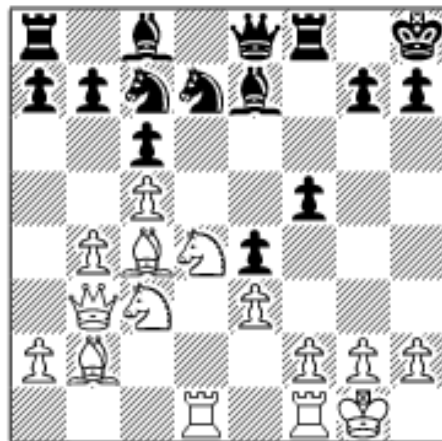
7...dxe5 8 Qb3

Not 8 Nxe5 Bxb4+ 9 Nc3 Ne4 with advantage to Black but maybe White should have tried 8 Qxd8 Rxd8 9 c5 followed by Bc4; this is probably the real test of 5...Be7. Now both players fight for space and control of the light squares but Black has enough resources.

8...e4 9 c5+ Nd5 10 Bc4 c6

This reinforces the points b5 and d5.

11 Nd4 Kh8 12 Nc3 Nc7 13 Rd1 Qe8 14 0-0 Nd7



15 f3?!

White eliminates the advanced bastion on e4 but at the cost of incurring a weak e-pawn. Instead of this, 15 Nce2 looks correct to me. Now the counterplay gets going.

15...exf3 16 Nxf3 a5 17 a3 axb4

18 axb4 Bf6 19 Rde1 b5 20 Bd3 Ne5 21 Nxe5 Bxe5 22 e4

White tries to eliminate the weakling but the move has tactical drawbacks. White has already lost the initiative.

22...Qd8 23 Qc2 Na6 24 Rd1?

This just loses a pawn but against the flashy 24 Nd5 Gmür had calculated that 24...Bxb2! brings Black the advantage e.g. 25 Qxb2 cxd5 26 exd5 Nxc5 27 bxc5 Qxd5 and White must grovel a pawn down with 28 Qc3 because 28 Qxb5? loses to 28 ..Ba6 29 Qxa6 Rxa6 30 Bxa6 Qxc5+ 31 Kh1 g6.

24...Nxb4 25 Qe2 Nxd3 26 Rxd3 Qe7 27 Qf2 b4 28 Nd5 cxd5 29 Bxe5 Qxe5

Not 29...dxe4?! 30 Bd6 Qe6 31 Bxf8 exd3 32 Qd4 with complications.

30 exd5 Ba6 31 Re1 Qxe1+!

Giving back the material is strongest, writes Gmür

32 Qxe1 Bxd3 33 Qxb4 Ra1+ 34 Kf2 f4 0–1

White resigned because of the mate threat (35 Kf3 h5).

Nevertheless, it is true that White did not lose that game in the opening.

I now want to show a few of my favourite Sokolsky Opening games. First, we revisit the gambit line seen in the opening article. The winner of this game was evidently a disciple of Sokolsky, who annotated it first.

Nikiforovich – Noy

Minsk championship semi-final, 1963

[Notes based on those by Sokolsky]

1 b4 e5 2 Bb2 f6

As we have seen, 2...Bxb4 3 Bxe5 Nf6 is a major line (that I do not want to revisit here) but White also has 3 f4!?. One reader pointed out that Black can use the move order 2...Nf6 3 Bxe5 Bxb4 to circumvent that possibility. It is hard to believe that 2...f6 can be good from a positional point of view.

Another reader, M. Freeke (The Netherlands), makes the bizarre suggestion of 2...Bd6!? “with the plan of ...Qe7, ...Nf6, ...0-0, and if White plays c4 then ...c6 to play ...Bc7 (expanding the centre with ...d7-d5 or Ruy Lopez themes with ...d6, ...Nbd7-f8 according to White’s setup or mood.”

3 e4 Bxb4 4 Bc4 Qe7 5 Ne2 Nh6 6 Ng3

Not 6 f4? Qc5 7 Bb3 Ng4 but 6 0-0 d6 7 c3 Bc5 8 d4 is not bad.

6...d6

If 6...Nf7 then 7 Nf5! forces 7...Qf8 with loss of time.

7 c3 Bc5 8 d4 Bb6

Now the position looks like an Evans Gambit where Black has played the weakening ...f6 instead of ...Nc6.

9 a4 a5

If 9...Nc6 10 a5! Nxa5 11 Rxa5! Bxa5 12 Qa4+, which is a trick well-known to Evans players.

Instead 9...a6 10 a5 Ba7 11 Nd2 Nf7 12 0-0 0-0 13 f4

occurred in Schiffler-Skirl, Leipzig 1950. Schiffler was one of the pioneers of 1 b4 in the mid-20th century.

10 Qb3

White decides to prevent ...Be6. 10 0–0 Be6 11 Nd2 is an alternative, planning f2-f4.

10...Nc6 11 Bd5 Nd8

Black is determined to play ...Be6. If 11...exd4 White could continue in gambit style by 12 0–0.

12 0–0 Be6 13 f4 Bxd5 14 Qxd5 Ra6

The Rook is not well-placed here. Black should have played 14 ..Qe6 15 Qb5+ Qd7 16 Qd3 0–0.

15 Nd2 Qe6 16 Qb5+ c6 17 Qd3 0–0 18 Ba3! exf4

If 18...Nef7 or 18...Nhf7 then 19 Nc4 and 20 Rab1.

19 Rxf4 Ndf7 20 Rb1 Rd8!

The threat was 21 Nc4 but now Black can answer it strongly by 21...Ne5!.

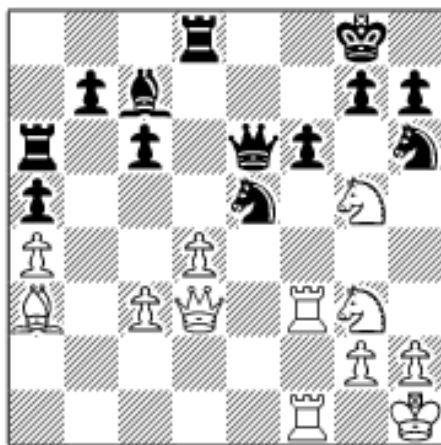
21 Kh1 d5

21...Ne5 would now be ineffective after 22 Qe2.

22 Rbf1! Bc7 23 R4f3 dxe4

Now the d2-Knight becomes active. 23...Ng5 offered better chances of a defence, e.g. 24 Re3 Bxg3 25 exd5 Qxd5 26 Rxg3 Kh8.

24 Ndx4 Ne5 25 Ng5!



A dramatic situation has arisen. White's Queen, Rook and Knight are all attacked while Black's own Queen, e5-Knight and h-pawn are threatened. The threat of mate limits Black's choice and it soon becomes clear that he has no defence.

25...Nxd3 26 Nxe6 Ne1 27 Rxe1 Bxg3 28 Rxg3 Re8 29 Rxg7+ Kh8 30 Re7 Rxe7 31 Bxe7 Ng8 32 Bf8 h6 33 Rb1 1-0

The following is another game, from late in his career, that Sokolsky himself was fond of showing.

A.P. Sokolsky – L. Szölliösi
USSR-Hungary corr match, 1964

1 b4 a5?!

This is probably unwise because now both sides have a compromised queenside. If Black wants to launch a direct attack on the b-pawn, he should precede this move with 1...c6, as explained in my first article of the series. However, in that case, White may have sufficient resources to equalize.

Yudasin-Epishin, New York open 1990, went 1 b4 c6 2 Bb2 Qb6 3 a3 a5 4 c4 d6 5 Nc3 Nf6 6 b5 g6 7 Rb1 Qd8 8 g3 Bg7 9 Bg2 0-0 10 Nf3 d5 11 bxc6 bxc6 12 0-0 Ba6 13 cxd5 cxd5 14 d3 Nc6 15 Qa4 Rc8 16 Rfc1 e6 17 Nd1 Qd7 18 Bc3 h6 19 Bxa5 Nxa5 20 Qxa5 Rxc1 21 Rxc1 Qb5 22 Qxb5 Bxb5 23 Rb1 Bd7 24 Ne3 Ra8 25 Nc2 Bf8 26 d4 Ba4 27 Nfe1 Rc8 28 Nb4 Rc3 29 Ra1 Ne4 30 Ned3 Nd2 31 e3 Nc4 32 Nc5 Bxc5 33 dxc5 Na5 34 Na6 ½-½.

2 b5 Nf6 3 Bb2 d6 4 c4 e5 5 e3 Nbd7 6 Nf3 e4?

Black over-extends himself.

7 Nd4 Nc5 8 Nc3 Ng4 9 Qc2 f5 10 d3!



10...Nf6

White also stands better after
10...exd3 11 Bxd3 Nxd3+ 12
Qxd3.

**11 dxe4 fxe4 12 h3 Qe7 13 Nb3
h5 14 Nxc5 dxc5 15 0-0-0 c6
16 f3 Bd7 17 fxe4 0-0-0 18
Qa4 Be8 19 Be2 Rxd1+ 20**

**Rxd1 Qc7 21 e5 Nd7 22 bxc6 bxc6 23 Nd5! cxd5 24 cxd5
Nf6 25 Ba6+ Kd8 26 Qh4 1-0**

This game, played after Sokolsky wrote his monograph on 1 b4, was annotated in a later book which was translated into English by Golombek under the title *The Chess Game Through its Development*.

The following is a comedy of errors, but worth reproducing because there are not many GM v GM games in the Sokolsky nowadays. The great Bent Larsen beat two grandmasters with the Sokolsky at Las Palmas; the other was Pomar (in a long game from an earlier round).

***Bent Larsen – Walter Browne*
Las Palmas 1974**

1 b4 d5 2 Bb2 Bf5

As in the Baltic Defence (1 d4 d5 2 c4 Bf5) this bishop move can be aggressive, but after a later ...e6 the fact that the bishop is outside the pawn chain can pose problems for

the defence of the queenside.

3 Nf3 e6 4 e3 Nf6 5 a3 c5

Browne targets the b-pawn; Larsen finds an indirect defence that begins the fight for the centre.

6 c4 cxb4 7 axb4



7...Nc6

One point of 6 c4 is seen in the line 7...Bxb4 8 Qa4+ Nc6 9 Nd4 Be7 10 Nxc6 bxc6 11 Qxc6+ Kf8 when White regains the pawn and Black loses castling rights.

8 Qa4 Be7 9 cxd5 exd5 10 Nd4

Bd7 11 b5 Nb4 12 Ba3?!

Other games have shown that this bishop sometimes has a better future on this square than on b2, but Larsen (in 'The Chess Player') awarded a question mark to both this move and his next.

12...a5 13 Nc3? 0-0 14 Be2 Ne4

Now Black has the edge according to Larsen. 15 Nxe4 would transform the pawn structure to Black's advantage so he just leaves his d-pawn to be taken.

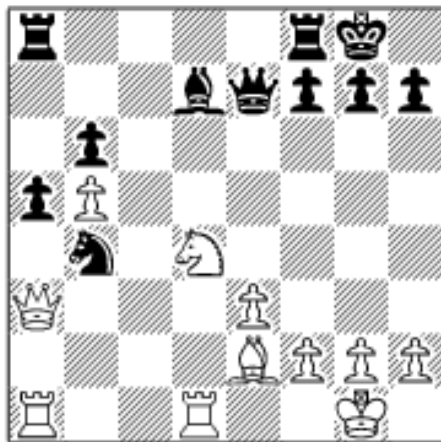
15 0-0! Nxd2 16 Rfd1 Nc4

The players were now in time trouble - or at least Black was.

17 Nxd5 Nxa3 18 Nxe7+ Qxe7 19 Qxa3?

19 Rxa3 b6 (19...Rfc8 20 Bf3) 20 Rc3 Rac8 21 Nc6 was better according to Larsen.

19...b6



The air has cleared somewhat. Black has a protected passed pawn on the a-file but it is only a long-term advantage. In the meantime, White has more central firepower but if he cannot make use of this he will lose the endgame.

20 Rd2 Rac8 21 Rad1 Rc7 22

h3

A useful precaution before going to war.

22...Rfc8 23 Qa1?

Larsen says he should have played Nf3. Now Browne missed his chance to consolidate his advantage.

23...g6?

23...Qf6 would have prevented the sequel because White could not afford to allow the simplification.

24 Nf3 Be8 25 Rd6

Larsen is OK now. He invites an endgame, his favourite phase.

25...Qxd6!

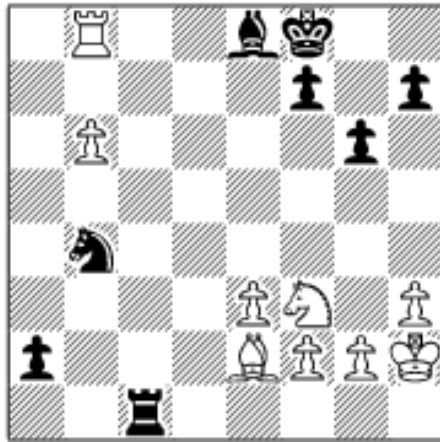
This commits Black to a pawn race but the alternative was

to lose the initiative. If 25...Rb8 26 Ne5 or 25...Rc1 26 Rxg6+ hxg6 27 Rxc1.

26 Rxd6 Rc1+ 27 Qxc1 Rxc1+ 28 Kh2 a4 29 Rxb6! a3

He must press on. If 29 ..Rc8? 30 Rb7 Ra8 31 b6 (Larsen).

30 Rb8 Kf8 31 b6 a2



32 Bb5 Nc6

Black makes life difficult for himself. 32...Na6 33 Rxe8+ Kg7 34 Bxa6 a1Q is equal says Larsen. White has a fortress after 35 b7 Rh1+ 36 Kg3 Rb1 37 b8Q Rxb8 38 Rxb8 Qxa6 39 Rd8 followed by Rd4.

33 Bxc6 a1Q 34 Rxe8+ Kg7 35 b7 Rb1??

Browne's habitual time trouble costs him the game as he omits a vital intermediate move. 35...Rh1+ 36 Kg3 Rb1 37 b8Q Rxb8 38 Rxb8 Qf6! would hold because 39 Rb6?? (39 Rc8 Qe6=) 39...Qd6+ wins for Black.

36 b8Q Rxb8 37 Rxb8 Qa5

37...Qf6 doesn't work now because of 38 Rb6 Qd6+ 39 g3 so White has too much material for the queen.

38 Rb7 Kf8 39 e4 Qc5 40 Bd5 f5 41 Ne5 1-0

There are not even many recent 1 b4 games in which the players' ratings average over 2500. Here is an exciting one; see how the grandmaster (then 2633) outplays his 2461-rated opponent: first positionally and then tactically. The decisive combination flows from the positional superiority

achieved in the first 20 moves.

Manuel Bosboom - Jeroen Piket
Dutch Championship, Rotterdam 2000

1 b4 d5 2 e3 Nf6 3 Bb2 c6 4 c4 Nbd7 5 Nf3 e6 6 b5 Bd6

White was probably hoping to surprise his eminent opponent but Piket avoids the fashionable replies to the Sokolsky. His first objective is a solid centralised position, avoiding any tactical tricks in unfamiliar sharp lines. This is a good policy as Black if you don't know much theory on the opening.

7 Nc3 0–0 8 Qc2 Re8 9 Rc1 a6 10 bxc6 bxc6 11 Be2 e5 12 cxd5 cxd5



White's queenside pawns have been exchanged but weak squares remain, as we shall see. Clearly Black has more space as he is playing on four ranks and White is only occupying three.

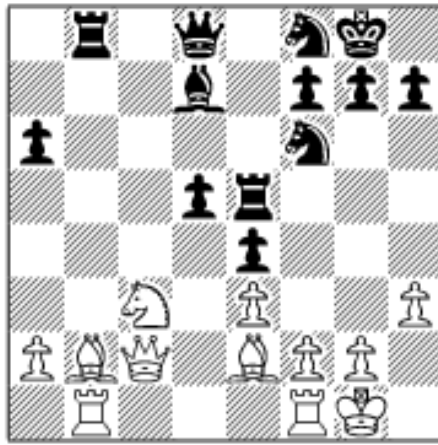
13 d3 Rb8 14 0–0 Nf8 15 Rb1 Bg4 16 h3 Bd7 17 d4

White fights for air but it's too late.

17...e4 18 Ne5 Bxe5

Black takes up the gauntlet; his rook will be a strong attacking piece in the coming tactical phase.

19 dxe5 Rxe5



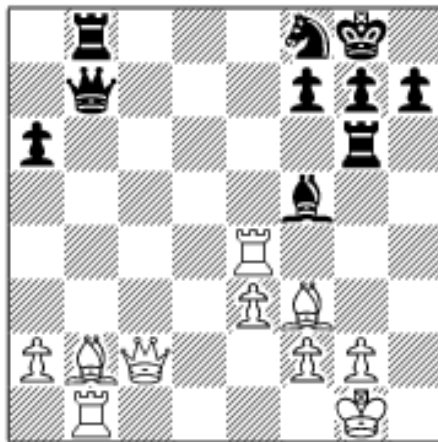
20 Rfd1

Not 20 Bxa6 Rg5 and White comes under crushing attack, e.g. 21 Kh1 Rb6 22 Be2 Bxh3 23 gxh3 Qd7. This means White has sacrificed a pawn.

20...Rg5 21 h4 Rg6 22 Nxd5

Perhaps White should have tried 22 h5 Rg5 23 h6 but I still don't like his position.

22...Nxd5 23 Rxd5 Qxh4 24 Rh5 Qe7 25 Re5 Qb4 26 Rxe4 Qb7 27 Bf3 Bf5



The crossfire around the point e4 continues for quite a while. The skewer on the f5-b1 diagonal and pressure on the b-file should eventually cost White material but he wriggles hard.

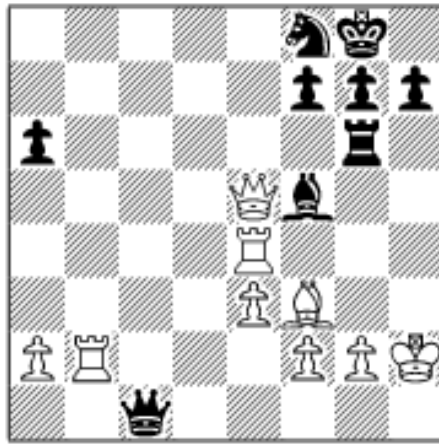
28 Qc4 Qb5 29 Qc3 Qc6!

Obviously White obtains a very strong attack after 29...Bxe4? 30 Bxe4 but a queen exchange would be fatal for White.

30 Qe5 Rxb2 31 Rxb2

31 Qxb2 simply leaves White a piece down after 31...Bxe4.

31...Qc1+ 32 Kh2



32...Bxe4?!

Black plays materialistically instead of going for mate. It looks to me as if 32 ..Rh6+ 33 Kg3 Qh1 is even stronger. I guess there was serious time trouble at this stage.

33 Bxe4 Re6 34 Qb8 Rxe4

White could resign now but he probably did not have time to do so.

35 Rb6 Rh4+ 36 Kg3 Qh1 37 Kf3 Qd1+ 0-1

A New Sokolsky Site

I mentioned in the first article a couple of sites where you can do more research into 1 b4. Now there is a new one called "Orangutan by Carel" whose webmaster is Zdenek Nemec (a/k/a Carel).

He writes: "I'm a big Orangutan fan and I'm building step by step a web about this opening on www.b2-b4.com. I would like to make something to popularize this favorite opening...

"I'm dreaming about a very good Orangutan server with opening information, history, games collections, comment games, analysis, tournament section, discussion group, newsletter etc., etc. I've more other ideas about Orangutan web pages, but this can't be a one-man show. It isn't only my 'free time' problem but also my knowledge problem. I'm not very strong player and I'm also not a good analyzer and so I'm looking for cooperators.

“I started a small cooperation with Jens Kucharkowski. He prepares for me an annotated ‘Game of the month’. Bill Wall sent me some games and information about the Orangutan. I also got a professional tournament arbiter for my e-mail tournaments...”

So I suggest that readers now visit this site and maybe they would like to help Carel make it even better.

Summing Up

I once wrote an article called “The Refutation of the Sokolsky?” but that was thirty years ago. I no longer believe that a refutation of the Sokolsky, as such, is likely.

Black will win, when he does, by superior positional play and tactical alertness not by some forced variation or unanswerable strategic recipe. I think the Bosboom-Piket game is a good example of this. Some of the other games in these articles show what can go badly wrong for Black when he tries to force the pace.

Although I am pessimistic about the future of 1 b4 in master chess, it remains a fruitful field of investigation for amateurs who want to reach unusual, non-routine positions rather than bash out 20 moves of theory in a King’s Indian or Sveshnikov Sicilian.

I guess there is still hope that some new genius like Sokolsky may come forward with new plans for White that regenerate the opening by showing how the move b2-b4 can be useful rather than weakening.

Until such a time, the fundamental problem remains that 1 b4 has these disadvantages:

- a) It advances the pawn to a square where it is

- undefended, so giving the opponent a target for attack;
- b) The b-pawn exerts no direct influence on the centre;
- c) The only piece whose development is assisted is the c1-bishop, and 1 b3 is sounder for that purpose.
- d) White shows his hand prematurely (compared with the Reti or English for example), enabling Black to choose a set-up accordingly. Since pawn moves cannot be retracted, White will ultimately be weak on the queenside in endgames if Black can avoid making any concessions in that zone. Other things being equal, White's extravagant first move should ultimately lead to an endgame advantage for Black.

Black, in my opinion, should resist the temptation to get involved in a direct tactical fight with White, i.e. he should avoid all the 1 b4 e5 2 Bb2 Bxb4 and 2...f6 lines. Instead he should play 2...d6 3 c4 f5 or, more likely, one of the positional lines with 1...Nf6 2 Bb2 e6 in which the downsides of the white formation are more likely to be exploited.

Let's not be too pessimistic, though, so I will end with one last game where the 1 b4 player is triumphant.

Efim Grigorevich Rodin – German A. Ushakov
RSFSR (Russian) correspondence championship 1976-77

1 b4 e5 2 Bb2 f6 3 e4 d5!?

In this way, Black avoids the gambit variation 3...Bxb4 4 Bc4 but he does not rule out all the gambit possibilities.

4 f4!

First played by Sokolsky against Estrin in Baku 1958.

4...exf4 5 Qh5+ g6 6 Qxd5 Qxd5 7 exd5 Bxb4

Despite the exchange of queens and the extra black pawn, White has a clear advantage. The f4-pawn is weak.

8 Bc4 Bf5 9 Ne2 Bxc2?

In a postal game between Hausniemi (Finland) and Schulz (East Germany) 1973/74, White obtained the better chances after 9...Nd7? 10 Nxf4 0–0–0 11 Ne6 Bxe6 12 dxe6 Ne5 13 Bxe5 fxe5 14 0–0.

After the correct reply 9...Bd6 (as in Katalimov-Estrin, 1962) White can still obtain the better game by 10 Nbc3 Nd7 11 Nd4 Ne5 12 Bb3 Ne7 13 Ncb5!, according to Rodin.

10 Nxf4 Nd7 11 Ne6 Bd6 12 d3 Ne5 13 Bb5+ Kf7 14 Kd2 Bxb1 15 Raxb1 a6

If 15...c6 16 d4 Ng4 (or 16...cxb5 17 dxe5 with a strong attack) 17 Bc4 White has the better game.

16 Ba4 b5 17 Bb3 Ne7 18 Rhf1 Nf5 19 Rbe1!

Exchanges on e5 would not give an advantage. Rodin calculated 19 Bxe5 Bxe5 20 d6 (20 Nxc7 Bxc7 21 d6+ Ke8 22 dxc7 Kd7 23 Rbc1 Rac8 24 g4 Nd6 25 Rxf6 Rxc7 26 Be6+ Ke7=) 20...cxd6 21 Nc7+ Ke7 22 Nxa8 Rxa8=.

19...h5 20 Nxc7 Bb4+

If 20...Bxc7 21 d6+ Kg7 22 dxc7 Rhc8 23 Rxe5.

21 Bc3 Bxc3+ 22 Kxc3 Ra7 23 d6+ Kg7 24 Rxf5!

This exchange sacrifices secures the dominant position of the c7-Knight and forces the win.

24...gxf5 25 d4 b4+ 26 Kd2 Ng6 27 Ba4 Kh6 28 Ne8
Black resigned 1–0.

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