



COLUMNISTS

Over the Horizons

Stefan Bucker

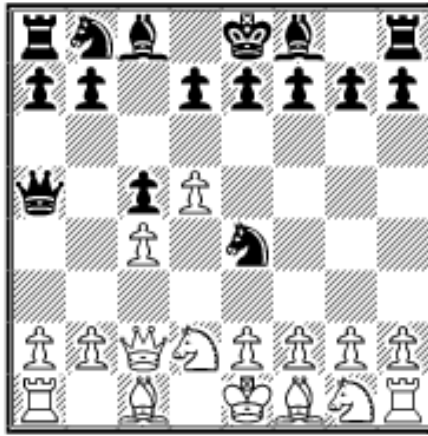


Stefan Bucker, born 1959, won the Championship of North Rhine & Westphalia in 1983 and 1988, and participated in three German Championships (1984 – fifth place, 1987 – eleventh place, 1991 – eleventh place). He is best known for his analysis of unusual chess openings. It started in the early 1980's with privately published booklets on 2...Qf6 in the King's Gambit, on the Vulture, Hawk and Woozle, the Closed Sicilian and a mixture of White gambits. The publishing house Franckh-Kosmos produced improved versions of the first two (1985, 1986) and two new works: *Das neue Königsgambit* (1986) and *Groteske Schacheröffnungen* (1990). The latter also has a chapter on another of Bucker's specialties: 1 e4 Nf6 2 e5 Ne4, the Mokele Mbembe. *Englund Gambit* (1988) was written for publisher Manfred Mädler. From 1991 to 1996, Bucker worked in the editorial staff of the chess monthly *Schach-Report/Deutsche Schachzeitung*. In 1996 he started his own chess magazine *Kaissiber*.



Vulture's Wing Play (Part 2)

Last [month](#) we studied several white continuations after **1 d4 c5 2 d5 Nf6 3 c4 Ne4!?** (the Vulture). Some lead to a difficult struggle, but none looked like a clear refutation of Black's strategy. Now we come to the main line: **4 Qc2! Qa5+ 5 Nd2!**, which is clearly the most popular way to attack Black's Ne4. Here we stand at a crossroads. During the 1980's I almost exclusively favored 5...Nd6, to advance with the b-pawn at the next appropriate moment. An unusual move, but if you have read the first part of this article, you might remember that the strange maneuver worked well for Black against 4 f3 Qa5+ 5 Nd2. However, this is a different situation, and during the last decade it became increasingly obvious that with White's queen on c2, the retreat 5...Nd6 is strongly met by 6 b3!. Fortunately, the second player has an effective alternative at his disposal in his fifth move.



Let's begin with two games, summing up my experiences with the old **5...Nd6?**. Afterwards, we will learn why the other retreat **5...Nf6!** is so much better. Just for completeness, there exists a third possibility: **5...f5**, tested only in a few games [6]. It is better than the traditional version, but clearly worse than 5...Nf6. To avoid confusion, this article ignores the pawn move. You won't lose much, and I am

keeping a little surprise for my blitz practice.

Al. Sidorov (1650) – H. Geaman (1805)

Eforie Nord 1999 (Centrocoop Open) [8]

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 Ne4 4 Qc2 Qa5+ 5 Nd2 Nd6?

It is hard to have to put a question mark behind your favorite move. However, the modern 5...Nf6 is the correct solution, see below.

6 e4? g6 7 Bd3

As after 4 f3, Black's knight on d6 prepares advances on both wings, either ...b5 or ...f5, according to circumstances. In my book I recommended to strive for ...b5, if White plays Bd3, and to prefer the attack ...f7-f5 against Be2.

The gambit 7 b4 leads to heavy complications after the best reply 7...cxb4! 8 c5 Nb5 9 Nb3 Qa4 10 Bb2 Rg8 11 Nf3 Na6, followed by 12...b6. Raetsky and Chetverik [7] only consider 7...Qxb4 saying that "White definitely has good play for the pawn," which certainly is true.

7...Bg7 8 f4

Or 8 Ngf3, as in Naumkin – Dorfman, Münster 1989 (1-0, 32), discussed on more than a page by Raetsky and Chetverik [7].

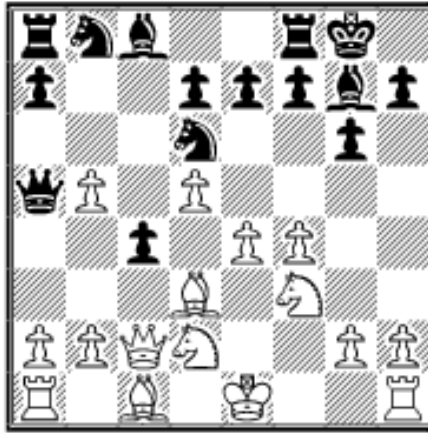
Interesting stuff, but in this article I decided to focus on the critical 5...Nf6! (see below), which unfortunately [7] doesn't mention at all.

8...0-0 9 Ngf3

9 e5 Nf5! 10 Bxf5 gxf5 11 Qxf5 e6 12 Qd3 exd5 13 cxd5 Na6. Black's piece play on the white squares compensates for the sacrificed pawn.

9...b5 10 cxb5

If White had foreseen his opponents move, he might have chosen the cautious 10 0-0 bxc4 11 Nxc4 Nxc4 12 Bxc4 Ba6. The pawn structure vaguely resembles a Benko gambit, but the defender still owns his precious pawn on a7.

10...c4!

Excellent! Later there even follows a blow on the opposite wing, by means of ...f7-f5. Almost a model game for the art of destroying White's pawn center in the Vulture.

11 Bxc4 Bb7 12 0-0 Rc8 13 Qb3 a6 14 bxa6 Nxa6 15 Be2

15 e5 Nc5 16 Qc2 Nxc4 17 Nxc4 Qa6 18 Rd1 Na4, with unclear results.

15...Qc5+?

He had to play 15...Nb4!, for example 16 a3 Nc2 17 Rb1 Nd4 18 Nxd4 Bxd4+ 19 Kh1 Rxc1! =.

16 Kh1 f5 17 Ne5 Rc7 18 Bf3? drawn. The conclusion of peace now seems justified (18...Nb4 =), but White overlooked 18 Ndc4! Nxe4 19 Be3 Qxd5 20 Nb6 +-, when the black queen on d5 is pinned.

Old Main Line in Crisis

Although 6 e4, like in the last game, is seen in the large majority of the games, it isn't the critical continuation. After **6 b3!**, Black's plan to attack with ...b5 clearly fails. In my book I suggested **6...f5**, followed by ...e6, to undermine White's pawn center. One of my main lines went **7 Bb2 e6 8 f3 Qd8! 9 e4 fxe4 10 fxe4 Qh4+ 11 g3 Qh6!** =. Unfortunately, this hidden trick only works against the cozy 8 f3. More dangerous are both 8 Bc3 followed by e4, or 8 g3! (Udo Hobuss). By the way, 8 g3 was the move which deterred Tony Miles from the Vulture. White quickly develops his forces, while Black faces serious problems finding a good plan. In later publications (for example

in [5]) I preferred **6...g6**, but this isn't fully sufficient either. Because of the strength of **6 b3!** the old main line fell in a crisis.

H. Günther – Lensch

Saarland 1994 [8]

1 d4 c5 2 d5 Nf6 3 c4 Ne4 4 Qc2 Qa5+ 5 Nd2 Nd6 6 b3! g6

The strong bishop on b2 cannot be blockaded: **6...e5 7 Bb2 f6 8 e3 Nf7 9 Bd3 g6 10 h4 f5 11 h5 Rg8 12 hxg6 hxg6 13 g4! +/- [3].**

7 Bb2 Rg8 8 Bc3

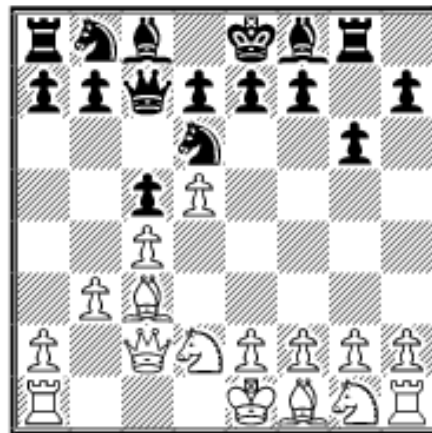
More precise than **8 e4 Bg7 9 Bxg7 Rxg7**, since **10 Qb2?** fails to **Nxe4!**.

Or **8 h4 Bg7 9 Bxg7 Rxg7 10 h5 Rg8 11 Ngf3 Na6 12 a3 f6**, followed by **...Nf7**.

8...Qc7



Z. Nasiolkowski, Lüdenscheid



By means of **...Bg7** Black wants to exchange off the nasty bishop on c3, and then continue **...f6, ...Nf7, ...d6** and castle long. However this is only a beautiful dream.

9 e4 Bg7 10 Bxg7 Rxg7 11 Qc3!

11 Bd3? e5 12 Qc3 f6 lead to a draw in Rossmanith – Wippich, Regionalliga 2001.

11...Kf8 12 Bd3 f6 13 Ne2?

White allows the blockade. Better was **13 e5 fxe5 14 Qxe5 Na6 15 Ngf3 Nf7 16 Qe3 e5 17 dxe6 dxe6 18 a3 Bd7 19 0-0 +/-**.

13...Nf7 14 f4 d6 15 Nf3

15 0-0 would have avoided the simplifying exchange of Bc8.

15...Bg4 16 0-0 Nd7 17 h3 Bxf3 18 Rxf3 g5 19 Raf1 h6 20 Bb1 Re8

21 Rg3 Kg8 22 h4 e5 23 hxg5?

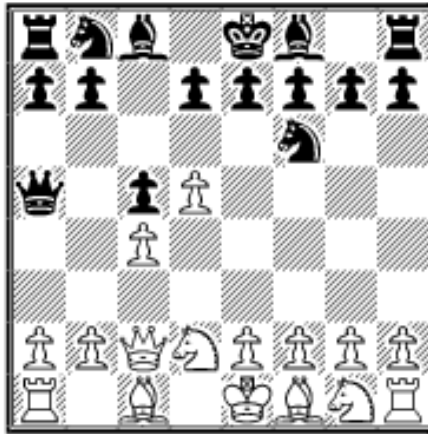
23 dxe6 Rxe6 24 Qf3! still gives White an advantage.

23...hxg5 24 f5 Kf8 25 Kf2 Ke7 26 Rh1 Qd8 27 Rgh3 Rh8 28 a3 Rxh3 29 Rxh3 b6 30 Qe1 Qg8 31 Qh1 Nf8 32 Ng3 Rh7 33 Nh5 Nd7 34 Bd3 Qc8 35 Qc1 Qa6 drawn.

5...Nf6 – A Courageous Loss of Time

In general my analyses in the book *Der Geier* (1986, [2]) proved to be useful, but there was a grave exception. As the last game clearly demonstrated, after **1 d4 c5 2 d5 Nf6 3 c4 Ne4 4 Qc2! Qa5+ 5 Nd2!** my recommended **5...Nd6? 6 b3!** results in a big advantage for White. In the majority of games White didn't find this refutation, but from a theoretical point of view today the old main line has become unplayable.

In 1986 Manfred Zitzman, an American correspondence player and retired professor of chemistry, suggested **5...Nf6!**. He preferred this retreat not only in the main line, but also against 4 f3. Later his idea advanced to a secret weapon and now it is the main line.



Where does Black find his courage for such a loss of time? Didn't the knight's "aimless" traveling cost him exactly two tempi? Now it is White on the move, the second lost tempo is the move Nb1-d2. The latter development, however, is more a handicap than a real gift. White may want to rearrange his pieces. For example, he can play Ng1-e2-c3, or he may castle short and continue Nd2-b1-c3. In a

Benoni position, it is an understandable desire to get a knight to the c3-square. From here it protects his own pawns on d5 and e4 and stops the opponent's plans in connection with ...b7-b5.

I do not claim that *Black* had an advantage in time. In any case the white set-up is suffering from the uncomfortable position of his Nd2. When Black avoids serious mistakes (as to invite, for example, the Nd2 to the c4-square), I cannot see a significant advantage in time for either color. **5...Nf6!** has much in common with the normal Benoni, but there are differences. It is not even completely clear, whether Black chooses ...e7-e5 (as in my main line), or tries something else. **5...Nf6!** opens a new field for exploration, but it is still a Benoni defense, and the Benoni expert will like the position, no matter whether he plays it with white or black.

M. Loemker (2096) – St. Bücker (2349)

Herford 2005 (rapid chess, 2 x 30 minutes) [8]

1 d4 c5 2 d5 Nf6 3 c4 Ne4 4 Nf3

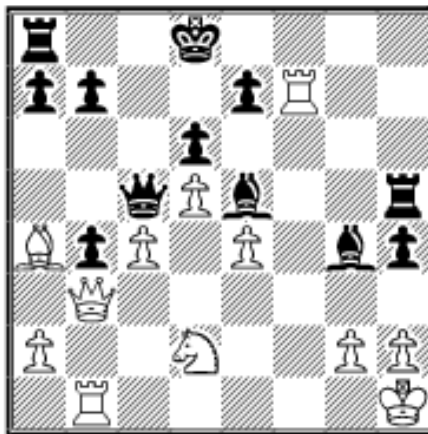
Before this tournament I had prepared the new idea 4 Qc2 Qa5+ 5 Nd2 Nf6 6 e4 d6 7 Ne2 g5?!, which explains the adventurous beginning.

4...Qa5+ 5 Nfd2 Nf6 (5...d6! 6 Qc2 Nf6) 6 Nc3 Qc7 7 e4 g5?

With the knight already on c3, this advance was unplayable: 8 Nb5!, followed by 9 e5 +-.

8 Bd3? d6 9 0-0 Nbd7 10 Bc2 Bg7 11 Ne2 Ne5 12 Rb1 h5 13 b4 h4! 14 Bb2 Nh5 15 f4 gxf4 16 Nxf4 Bg4 17 Ba4+ Kd8 18 Qb3 cxb4 19 Nxb4 Qc5+ 20 Kh1 Rxh5 21 Bxe5 Bxe5 22 Rxf7?

22 h3 Be2 23 Rxf7 Rh8 =



22...h3 23 g3 Bc3! -+ 24 Rbf1

The rook is taboo: 24 Rf8+ Kc7 25 Rxa8 Qf2, and White gets mated.

24...Qe3 25 Nf3 Qe2 26 Ne1 Qxe4+ 27 Nf3 Qe2 28 Ne1 Bxe1 29 Qc2 Bc3 30 Kg1 Bd4+ 31 Kh1 Re5 32 c5 Bxc5? (32...Qxf1+!) 33 R7f4 Qxf1+ 34 Rxf1 Bf3+ White resigns.

5...Nf6: The Analysis

1 d4 c5 2 d5 Nf6 3 c4 Ne4 4 Qc2 Qa5+ 5 Nd2 Nf6! 6 e4

6 f4 can lead to attractive gambits:

a) 6...Qc7 7 g3 (7 Ndf3 d6 8 e4 e5 9 fxe5 Ng4 bzw 9 f5 g6 =) 7...e5!? 8 fxe5 Ng4 9 Ndf3 d6 10 exd6 Bxd6 11 Bh3 (11 Qe4+ Kd8 12 Nh3 g6) h5 12 Qe4+ Kf8 13 Bf4 Nd7 14 Nd2 Ndf6 15 Qf3 Bxf4 16 gxf4 Bf5, and Black is better.

b) 6...d6 7 e4 g5!?



8 e5 (8 fxg5 Ng4 9 Qb3 Rg8 10 Ngf3 Nd7 11 Bd3 h6) Ng4 9 exd6 (9 Qe4 f5) gxf4 10 dxe7 Bg7 11 Ne2 Ne3 12 Qb3 Qb6 13 Qd3 Na6 14 a3 Bf5 15 Ne4 Bxe4 16 Qxe4 Qg6 =.

6...d6

Or 6...e5. The text move keeps the option of alternatives, but none of them is preferable to the Old Benoni

(cf. the comment after 7...e5, below).

7 Ne2

Perhaps 7 Ngf3 e5! is only a transposition of moves: 8 Be2 (8 dxe6 Bxe6 9 Be2 Nc6) Be7 etc. In our main line White plays Ne2-c3 and Nf3, after 7 Ngf3 there might follow Nd2-b1-c3.

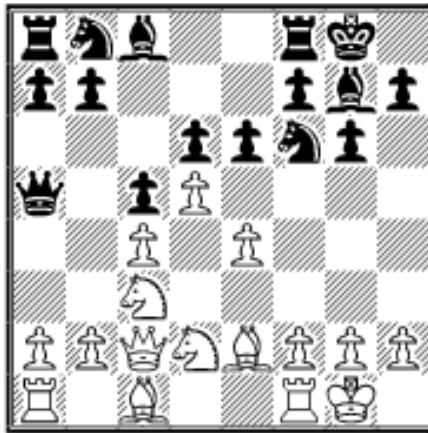
7...g6?! (instead of 7...e5) 8 Be2 Bg7 9 0-0 0-0 10 Nb1! (10 h3 Na6 11 a3 Bd7 12 Nb1 Nb4 13 Qd1 Nxe4 14 Nbd2 Ba4! with compensation) 10...b5 11 cxb5 a6 12 Bd2 Qb6 13 Nc3 axb5 14 Bxb5 leads to a kind of Benko Gambit. 14...Na6 15 a3 Bd7 16 Bc4 Rfb8 17 Rfb1 Nc7, White is slightly better.

7 a3 Na6 8 Rb1? g6 9 Bd3 Bg7 10 Ne2 0-0 11 0-0 e6 12 b4 cxb4 13 Nb3 Qd8 14 Ned4 exd5 15 cxd5 Bd7 =+ (0-1, 66) Vaisser – Todorov, Cappelle la Grande 1994.

7...e5

a) The bold 7...g5?! fights for possession of the e5-square: 8 Nc3 Rg8 9 Be2 h5 (9...Nbd7 10 Nb3 Qc7 11 g4!) 10 Nb3 Qb6 11 Bd2 Nbd7 12 0-0-0! Ne5 13 f3 Bd7 14 g3 a5 15 a4 h4 16 gxh4 gxh4 17 f4 Ng6 18 e5! dxe5 19 fxe5 Nxe5 20 Be3 +/-.

b) 7...g6!? 8 Nc3 Bg7 9 Be2 0-0 10 0-0 e6



In the style of a Modern Benoni. Black refrains from taking on d5, until the Nd2 has moved. 11 a3 Na6 12 Rb1! (12 Nb3 Qb6 13 Bg5 Nc7 14 Rad1 exd5 15 cxd5 Bd7 16 Nd2 Nb5 [=, 53] Shipov – Todorov, Cappelle la Grande 1994) 12...e5 +=.

8 Nc3 Be7 9 Be2



A plausible sequence would be: 9...0-0 10 0-0 Ne8 (to exchange the Be7 via g5) 11 Nf3 g6 12 Bh6 Ng7 13 a3 Qd8 14 Qd2 Nd7. In comparison with the Old Benoni, Black is *one tempo behind*. Were he allowed to move again, we would enter known theory: 15...Nf6 16 Ne1 Kh8 17 Nd3 Ng8 18 Be3 f5 19 f4 etc.

That White has gained a tempo, doesn't *necessarily* lead to a disaster: 15 Ne1 f5! (Nd7 isn't in the way on f6) or 15 b4 a5! (Nd7 can take back on c5). Instead of 9...0-0, our recommended main line will take another course anyway (see below). My hint was just meant as a general warning for the reader: even in this opening, which resembles an Old Benoni, we are not too far away from inhabited territory; some critical lines of the Old Benoni are well-known. Sources like [\[1\]](#) can provide useful information.

When you are studying books on the Old Benoni, you will learn that the "longer route" through the territory of the Vulture has avoided some uncomfortable lines for Black. For example, in the Old Benoni White likes to fianchetto his f1-bishop, but in our case the position of Qa5 and Nd2 invites an early ...b7-b5. Another set-up full of poison is h3, Bd3, g4, followed by castling queenside. This aggression, too, is hardly probable in the present position.

9...Nbd7!

In an Old Benoni the usual procedure would be 9...0-0, followed by ...Ne8, which doesn't seem quite appropriate with the queen on a5. Black prefers a different solution and plays ...Nd7-f8-g6. There could follow ...h5-h4, ...Nh5 and ...Ngf4. Or the direct ...Nh5-f4, when the h7-pawn stays at home. Besides ...f7-f5 remains an option, and even sacrifices like ...Qc8, ...Bxh3 belong in the quiet arsenal.

10 a3 Qd8

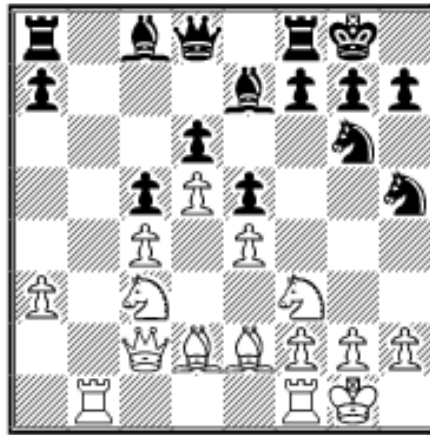
10...Nf8? 11 b4 Qd8 12 bxc5 +=.

11 Nf3 Nf8 12 0-0

Black concentrates his pieces on the king's wing, so that White probably has nothing better than to play b2-b4. It would be wrong, for example, to try 12 Bd2 and prepare to castle long. Black simply replies ...a6, ...Bd7 and waits for the best moment for ...b7-b5. Even when he plays h2-h4-h5, White doesn't achieve much on the king's wing. With his strong defensive forces, Black will always be able to repel the attack.

12...Ng6 13 b4 b6 14 bxc5 bxc5 15 Rb1

Surely White has other possibilities. Any maneuvering, however, costs time, and if meanwhile Black advances ...h7-h5-h4, White is quickly getting under pressure.

15...0-0 16 Bd2 Nh5!

To provoke 17 g3, for example 17...Bh3 18 Rfc1 Bg4 (intending 19...f5) 19 Ne1 Bxe2 20 Nxe2 Bg5 21 f3 Bxd2 22 Qxd2 Rb8, about equal.

Timid – and perhaps too passive – alternatives to the sharper text move are: 16...a6 17 Na4 Ra7 or 16...Bd7 17 Rb7 Qc8 18 Rfb1 Bd8 (threatening ...Bb6) 19 R7b2 Ba5.

17 Nxe5

17 Rfc1 Ngf4 18 Bf1 f5 19 Be3 fxe4 20 Nxe4 Qe8 = or 17 Rfe1 Nhf4 18 Bf1 Bg4 19 Re3 Rb8 =.

17...Nxe5 18 Bxh5 f5!

If 18...Nxc4 19 Bc1 Bf6 20 Be2, White stands somewhat better.

19 Be2

The second player gets nice wing play for the sacrificed pawn.
Alternatives:

- a) 19 Nd1 (19 exf5 Nxc4) fxe4 20 Ne3 Bg5 21 Qxe4 Bxe3 22 fxe3 g6!.
- b) 19 Qb3 f4 20 Ne2 Bg5 21 Bf3 a5 22 a4 Ba6 23 Rfc1 Qe7 etc.
- c) 19 Bc1 Nxc4 20 Nd1 Nb6 21 Bf3 Bg5 22 Ne3 Bxe3 23 Bxe3 Qf6 =.
- d) 19 Ne2 fxe4 20 Ng3 Bg5 =.

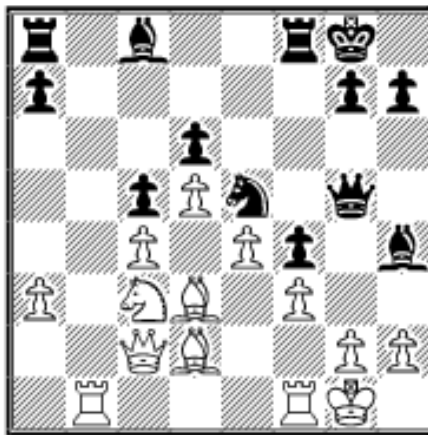
19...f4 20 f3

20 Qd1 f3 and equality. Probably 20...a6!? =+ is even better.

20...Bh4 21 Bd3

21 Be1 Bxe1 22 Rfxe1 Qh4 23 Bf1 Rf6 24 Qf2 Qh5 25 Kh1 Rh6 26 h3 Bxh3 27 gxh3 Nxf3 28 e5 Qg4!!.

21...Qg5



21...Bg3 fails to 22 hxg3 fxg3 23 Ne2 Qh4 24 Nxc3. The text move avoids Ne2, followed by Kh1, h3 and Ng1.

22 Rbd1

To be able to parry 22...Bh3 with 23 Bc1. On 22 Ne2 Bh3 23 g3 Black disposes of 23...Bxc3! 24 hxg3 Qg6 25 Bxf4 Rxf4 26 Nxf4 Qxc3+ 27 Ng2 Rf8! 28 Rb3 Rxf3.

22...Qh5 23 Ne2 g5 24 Rb1

24 Bc3 g4 =+.

24...Rf6 25 Rb3 Rh6 26 Nxf4

Or 26 Qd1 Be1! 27 Qxe1 Qxh2+ 28 Kf2 Rh3 -/+.

26...gxf4 27 Bxf4 Rg6 28 Kh1 Rg7 29 Qb1 Kh8 30 Be2 Qg6 31 g3 Bh3 32 Rf2 Rag8 -/+. Black keeps the situation under control.

After the publication of *Der Geier*, Tim Harding* made a prophecy in 1989 [4]: “However, now that his system has been fully exposed to the public gaze and the fire of tournament and postal play, many of his over-optimistic analyses and assessments are being overturned and total

refutation may not be far over the horizon.”

The old main line 4 Qc2 Qa5+ 5 Nd2 Nd6 *was* dubious. But Zitzman’s emergency measure 5...Nf6! later turned out to be a direct hit. The Vulture *is* logical, and it remains unrefuted.

* My last [column](#) referred to Tim Harding an “Irish author.” According to Paul Dunne, “although Tim Harding has lived in Ireland for many years, he is in fact English.” Other readers sent analyses, mainly concerning the line 4 Qc2 Qa5+ 5 Nc3 from part 1. Thanks for all your reactions. The analytical questions will be covered next month, together with all your ideas against 5...Nf6!.

Sources

- [1] Stoljar/Kondratjew: *Alt-Benoni-Verteidigung*, Heidelberg 1985
- [2] S. Bucker: *Der Geier*, Stuttgart 1986
- [3] S. Bucker: *The Vulture & Associated Opening Systems*, Wiltshire 1989
- [4] T. Harding: *Dynamic Black Defenses*, Dallas 1989
- [5] S. Bucker: “Der Geier. Bauer d5 als Schwäche”, in *Groteske Schacheröffnungen*, Stuttgart 1990.
- [6] S. Bucker: “Neu vermeldeter Höhenflug”, in *Kaissiber* 3 (1997).
- [7] A.RAETSKY/M.CHETVERIK: *Starting out: Benoni Systems*, London 2005
- [8] S. Bucker: “Geiers flottes Flügelspiel”, in *Kaissiber* 21 (2005)

Send your games or comments to redaktion@kaissiber.de



[\[ChessCafe Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Review\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)
[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[Skittles Room\]](#) [\[Archives\]](#)
[\[Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About ChessCafe.com\]](#) [\[Contact Us\]](#)

Copyright 2005 CyberCafes, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

"The Chess Cafe®" is a registered trademark of Russell Enterprises, Inc.