Ebralidze (Tbilisi) – Levenfish (Leningrad)
Board 1, Match Tbilisi v. Leningrad, Tbilisi, 7th September 1935


A well-known freeing method.

10.Bxc4 b5 11.Be2 a6 12.0–0
Castling is of course a natural move, but in the present situation it is by no means the best. It is absolutely clear that Black’s manoeuvre ...Bb7 and ...c6–c5 must be somehow opposed. 12.a4 is already too late in view of 12...b4 13.Nb1 c5. Possible, White should have continued 12.Ne5.

12...Bb7 13.a3 (?)
A highly suspicious move, weakening the light squares. It does not achieve the aim, towards which White was aiming (b2–b4 or e3–e4).

13...c5 14.dxc5 Nxc5

Now 15.Bxf6 Bxf6 16.Nxb5 will not do in view of 16...Qxd1 17.Rfxd1 Nb3 winning material. Since Black undoubtedly stands more freely, White should have played for simplification: 15.Qxd8 Rfxd8 16.Rfd1 etc. The following move by White weakens the queen’s flank still further.

15.b4 (?) Ncd7 16.Qb3
This is where the negative side of the move 11.Be2 tells. The best square for the queen is occupied by the bishop, while on b3 the queen stands badly.

16...Nd5!
Now the exchange of d5 leads to the loss of a tempo, and White, in the interests of simplification, should have exchanged on e7.

17.Bg3 Qb6 18.Rfd1 Rac8!

This move sets an interesting positional trap for White, into which he falls.

19.e4?
A third ‘natural’ pawn move, permanently ruining White’s game, which it was still possible to save, continuing 19.Ne5.

19...Nxc3 20.Rxc3 Rxc3 21.Qxc3 Nf6!

This is the whole point! The pawn is attacked twice and must advance. White’s position cannot withstand this new weakening of the light squares.

22.e5 Nd5 23.Qb2 Re8
With a double threat: ...Nc3 and ...Qc6.
24.Rc1 Rxc1+ 25.Qxc1 a5!
The decisive attack on White’s weakened queen’s flank initiated by this move leads to the goal within a few moves.


White resigned. The b5–pawn is invulnerable and advances directly to promotion. On 30.Nxb5 there follows 30...Qa1+ 31.Qf1 Qxf1+ 32.Kxf1 Ba6, while on 30.Qxb5, simply 30...Qa1+ and then ...Qxd4.

An instructive game, which graphically demonstrates how a good position can be rapidly brought down with ‘natural’ pawn moves.