Geller (USSR) – Gligorić ('Rest of the World')
Board 5, 1st round, 'Match of the Century', Belgrade, 29th March 1970


Geller: Beginning with this move is Smyslov’s System, which is perhaps Gligorić’s main weapon against the Spanish Game. The Yugoslav grandmaster is among the World’s greatest experts in this system. During the match USSR-Yugoslavia (Sochi, 1968) I tried to breach the opponent’s defensive lines, but without success. In this game I was successful only because Gligorić himself later refrained from the correct order of moves.


Gligorić: With Black I vigorously defend this method of development, which launches the counter-attack ...d6–d5 in the centre and brings pressure to bear on the e4–pawn, instead of the more cautious and more passive 12...Bd7, which protects the sensitive points f5 and b5. Admittedly, some grandmasters prefer the latter treatment.

13.Ng3 Na5 14.Bc2 Nc4

Gligorić: This occurred in the game Spassky-Stein (Amsterdam, 1964). Black improves the position of his worst piece - the queen’s knight at the edge of the board. 14...c5 could have been followed by 15.b3, making it more difficult for Black to find the correct place for this piece.

15.b3

Gligorić: Geller played this way in 1968, against the same opponent in the USSR-Yugoslavia match.

15...Nb6 16.Bb2
16...Nbd7

Geller: In Sochi, Gligorić played 16...c5, whereas now White obtains the possibility of disposing his major pieces in the optimal fashion.

Gligorić: For the first time in the game, it took Black somewhat longer to decide on his move. The game played at Sochi went 16...c5 17.dxe5 dxe5 18.c4 Qc7 19.Qe2 b4! (after 19...bxc4 20.bxc4 White’s bishop would have had an undesirable exit at a4) 20.Rad1 Nbd7 21.Nd2 Nb8 22.Nf5 Nc6 23.f4 g6 24.fxe5 Nxe5 25.Ng3 Bg7, and with each side having equal assets, the game ended in a draw at the 28th move.

Black’s chosen move shows that he intends to thwart any preparation that White might have made for this course of play. He decided on it directly at the board.

17.Qd2

Gligorić: Not the strongest. White lets himself be taken in by Black, and his manoeuvre to avoid the course of the earlier encounter. Certainly, White’s queen could not have been posted at e2 because of 17...exd4 18.cxd4 Nxe4!, but 17.a4! would have been more unpleasant for Black, now that the b5–square has been weakened by the knight’s move to d7.

17...c5 18.Rad1 Qa5

Gligorić: (?) Black relies on an obvious threat instead of the sounder 18...Qc7 19.dxe5 dxe5 20.c4 Nb8! with a rapid transfer of the knight to c6. Black’s troubles begin from this point. In fact, White had given him a chance to recover by bringing his heavy pieces to the d-file, but Black failed to take advantage of the opportunity.

19.dxc5 dxc5 20.c4

Gligorić: (!) The only possibility, but a decisive one. After 20.Bb1 Black would have had enough time to regroup his pieces.

20...b4

Geller: Better was to transpose to a slightly worse endgame after 20...Qxd2. Gligorić hoped, by the usual manoeuvre in such circumstances, ...Nd7–b8–c6, to equalise the game. However, he had
overlooked, or under-estimated, a combinational blow for the opponent.

Gligorić: 20...Qxd2 21.Rxd2 would have given Black a passive role, since there would not be time for the vital manoeuvre ...Nd7–b8–c6, while 20...Qxa2 21.Ra1 Qxb2 22.Reb1 would have trapped the queen.

21.a4 Qc7 22.Nf5 Nb8

Geller: Here it is, the decisive moment in the present game. Black is only one move away from complete security, and White cannot delay.

Gligorić: This is a mistake, but Black had no other way to strengthen his position. The time lost by the manoeuvre ...Qd8–a5–c7 has been the cause of all Black’s troubles. Had he played 22...Rad8 23.Qe2 Black could still not have posted his knight at b8 because of the threat to the e5-square.

23.Nxe5

Geller: (!)

Gligorić: The only possibility, but again a decisive one. All of White’s pieces are deployed so as to put pressure on the king’s wing and along the central files.

23...Rxe5 24.Bxe5 Qxe5 25.f4 Qe6

Geller: After 25...Qc3 26.Qf2 the black queen falls into a trap.

26.e5 Ne8

Gligorić: Black defends as well as he can. After 27.Nd6 Nxd6 28.exd6 Qf6 29.d7 Nc6 30.Re8 Nd4! he has some hope for the future.

27.Nh4

Geller: The most energetic way of continuing the attack.

Gligorić: (!) An excellent move. White is preparing to crush Black on the king’s wing. The way to victory is now open and clear.
27...Nc6 28.Qd3 g6 29.f5 gxf5 30.Nxf5

_Geller_: In view of the threat of 31.Ne7+ and 32.Qh7+, the following move by Black is forced.

_Gligorić_: Black is now helpless, unable to defend himself against the threat of 31.Ne7+ with mate at h7. For instance, 30...Bg7 31.Nxg7 Kxg7 32.Qh7+ Kf8 33.Bf5!, or 31...Nxg7 32.Qh7+ Kf8 33.Qh8+ Ke7 34.Qxg7 etc.

30...Qg6 31.Qe2

_Gligorić_: 31.Qd7 is also a winning move.

![Chess board diagram](image)

31...Qg5

_Geller_: After this Black loses his queen. But also after 31...Qe6 32.Qe4 Qg6 the attack was irresistible. I had examined during the game the following two methods:

1) 33.Re3 Nd8 34.Rd5 Bxd5 35.cxd5 etc.;
2) 33.Rd7! Bc8 34.e6! Bxd7 35.exd7 Ng7 36.Nxg7 Kxg7 37.Qxg6+ fxg6 38.Be4.

_Gligorić_: (?) Black loses immediately, but in any case there was no defence. He would have done better to resign earlier.

32.h4 Qf4 33.g3 Qxe5 34.Qg4+ Qg7 35.Nxg7 Nf6 36.Qf4 Bxg7 37.Qc7 Rb8 38.Rd6 Ng4 39.Rxc6 Bd4+ 40.Kf1

Black resigned.