

(The annotations to this game, by M. M. Botvinnik, are from *Analyticheskie i kriticheskie raboty 1957–70* (Fizkultura i Sport, 1986). The translation from the original Russian is by Douglas Griffin.)

### Botvinnik – Spassky

3<sup>rd</sup> round, Quadrangular match-tournament, Leiden, 21<sup>st</sup> April 1970

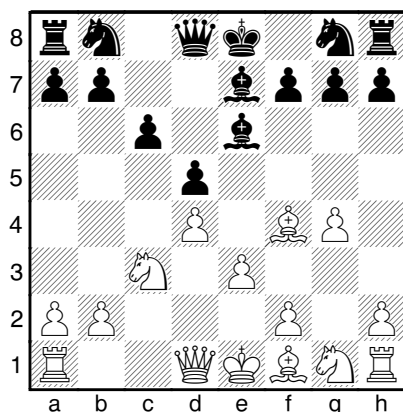
1.c4 e6 2.Nc3 d5 3.d4 Be7

Although the initiator of this rejection of the normal move-order of the Orthodox Defence is Black, it is perhaps White who has the greater possibilities of choosing a non-standard continuation. The present game is a characteristic example.

4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bf4 c6 6.e3 Bf5

Regarding Portisch's move 6...Bd6, see № 372.

7.g4 Be6



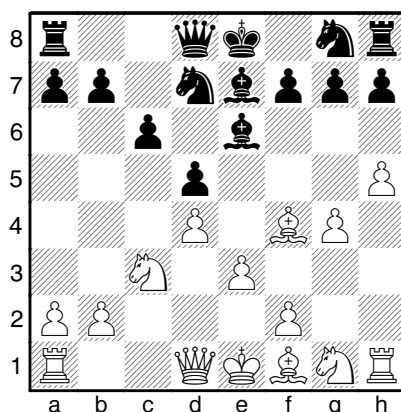
All this is theory. 8.h3 was usually played by White here (№ 312), after which events develop unhurriedly and Black, as a rule, achieves approximately level chances. But on this occasion I had gone in for this position with other intentions, which have their history.

Immediately after the end of the ‘excursion rounds’\* (Palma de Mallorca, 1967), a storm developed on the island of Menorca. (\*Translator’s note: Rounds played on the neighbouring Balearic island of Menorca.) The airport was closed. It was impossible to return to Majorca, and the participants were inactive for a whole day. I sat in the foyer of the hotel and under the howling of the hurricane I analysed the position in the diagram, which I had avoided on the eve of the game with Portisch (then there was played 7.Bd3 Bg6, and the opponents soon signed a peace agreement). Finally, I burst out laughing and with a cheerful air closed my pocket chess set. “Have you found something?”, O’Kelly asked me (while I was labouring, the considerate Alberic had kept his distance).

I had indeed found that if 8.h4 is now played, then the acceptance of the sacrifice is extremely dangerous for Black: 8...Bxh4 9.Qb3 b6 (9...Bc8 10.e4) 10.Nf3 Be7 11.Bxb8 Rxb8 12.Ne5 Rc8 (12...Bd7 13.e4) 13.Qa4 b5 14.Qxa7. White played differently, but also strongly, in the game Vladimirov-Kaminsky (1974): 11.Ne5 Nf6 12.Be2 Qc8 13.Rc1 Qb7 14.g5.

Here, two and a half years later, the chance to exploit the prepared novelty presented itself.

### 8.h4 Nd7 9.h5



### 9...Qb6

An unsuccessful move, since Black himself prevents the development of an initiative with ...b7–b5. However, also after other continuations White retains an advantage. For example, after the game we examined two variations indicated by Spassky. After the immediate advance 9...b5 White would have had a rich choice of reasonable replies (10.Bh3 or 10.Be2 followed by Bf3 and Nge2); if instead the preliminary 9...Ngf6 10.f3 and now 10...b5 is played, there follows 11.Nge2! Nb6 12.Nc1 Nc4 13.Nd3.

### 10.Rb1 Ngf6 11.f3 h6

Already the unpleasant 12.g5 was threatened. But after this the position of black's king will be weakened and in danger after either long or short castling.

### 12.Bd3 Qa5

In the game Furman-Geller (1975) Black immediately castled, on which it would have been quite good to play 13.g5, while the continuation 13.Nge2 c5 14.Kf1 Rfe8 15.Kg2 Rac8 16.Qe1 Nh7 17.Qf2 cxd4 18.exd4 Bd6 led to an unclear situation.

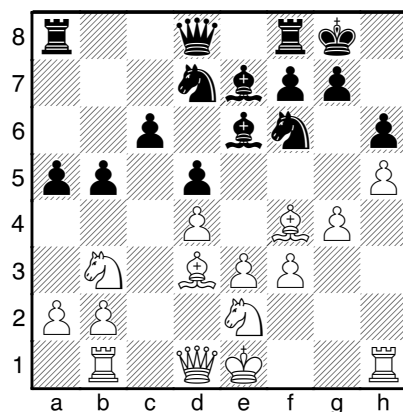
### 13.Nge2 b5

As a result, Black has lost a least one tempo and is late with this advance. As a result White is in time to take the c5–square under control.

14.Nc1! Qd8 15.Nb3 0–0

A very casual move, after which Black's situation becomes critical.

16.Ne2 a5



Here indecisiveness took hold of me. For a long time I examined the natural continuation 17.Rc1 a4 18.Nc5 Nxc5 19.dxc5 Nd7, but considered that there was no point in sacrificing a pawn – the position is so good...

Meanwhile, after the game I discovered that after 20.Bb1! (20...Nxc5 21.Rxc5 Bxc5 22.Qc2) White gains a winning position. (*Translator's note:* Here it seems that Botvinnik overlooked the check at b4 followed by ...f7–f5. While White has compensation for the sacrificed material after 22...Bb4+ 23.Kf2 f5 24.Qxc6, matters are hardly clear.)

17.Ng3

Instead now control over the square c5 passes to Black; he opens the game in the centre, carries out a series of exchanges, and the sides' chances are completely equalised.

17...a4 18.Nc1 c5! 19.Nf5 Bxf5 20.Bxf5 cxd4 21.exd4 Qb6

Nothing remains of White's superiority. Black has a completely secure position, and already it was I who had to seek a suitable moment in order to offer a draw.

22.Ne2 Bd6 23.Qd2 Bxf4 24.Nxf4 Rfe8+ 25.Kf1 Nb8

Agreed drawn.