

(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.)

### Spassky – Botvinnik

6<sup>th</sup> round, Quadrangular match-tournament, Leiden, 26<sup>th</sup> April 1970

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Bf5

This reliable continuation served me well in the return match of 1958 against Smyslov, and I had retained a fondness for this variation.

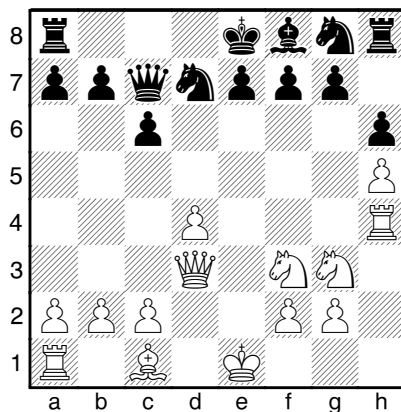
5.Ng3 Bg6 6.Nf3 Nd7 7.h4 h6 8.h5

At one time this advance was regarded with criticism, but through the skilful hands of Gligorić it once again gained recognition. White prepares a favourable pawn position for the endgame. In the 3rd game of the above-mentioned match White played immediately 8.Bd3, which is now assessed by theory as leading to a level game.

8...Bh7 9.Bd3 Bxd3 10.Qxd3 Qc7

Regarding the move 10...Ngf6 see № 334 (between the same opponents).

11.Rh4



Gligorić insistently employed this move, although it was evidently first played in the game Keres-Bagirov (1959). Chess fashion, however, is also ephemeral (sometimes the old unexpectedly returns), and the latest word of opening theory is considered to be the quiet 11.Bd2 followed by castling long.

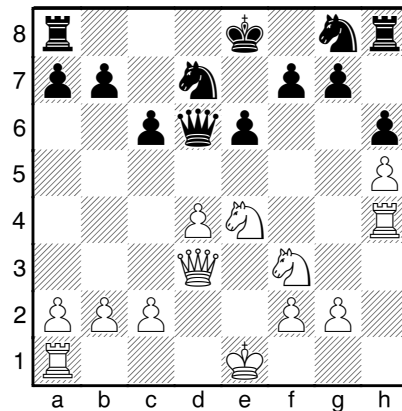
11...e6

Black successfully equalised the chances in the game Sax-Hort (1979): 11...Ngf6 12.Bf4 Qa5+ 13.Bd2 Qb5 14.Qxb5 cxb5 15.a4 bxa4 16.Rxa4 e6 17.b3 Be7 18.Ke2 a6.

## 12.Bf4 Bd6

V. Bagirov recommends for Black 12...Qa5+ 13.Bd2 Qb6 14.0-0-0 Be7 15.Rhh1 Ngf6 16.c4 Qa6.

## 13.Bxd6 Qxd6 14.Ne4



## 14...Qb4+

An unfortunate check. More circumspect, naturally, was 14...Qe7. After 15.0-0-0 Ngf6 16.Nxf6+ Nxf6 Keres, in the above-mentioned game, gained an advantage: 17.Ne5 0-0-0 18.Qg3, but the same year in the Candidates' tournament in Yugoslavia, Petrosian, against Gligorić, strengthened the defence: 16...gxf6.

Therefore, when in the game from the fourth cycle (this one was played in the second) I employed the move 14...Qe7 against Spassky, this rapidly led to a draw: 15.0-0-0 Ngf6 16.Ned2 0-0-0 17.Nc4 Kb8 18.g3 Nb6 19.Qe2 Nbd5.

The further search for White went in the direction of 15.Qa3 (seemingly suggested by Tolush). However, in this situation after 15...Qxa3 16.bxa3 Ke7 17.Rb1 Rb8 18.Nc5 Nxc5 19.dxc5 a5 20.Ra4 Nf6 21.Rxa5 Nd7 Black has sufficient compensation for the minimal material loss.

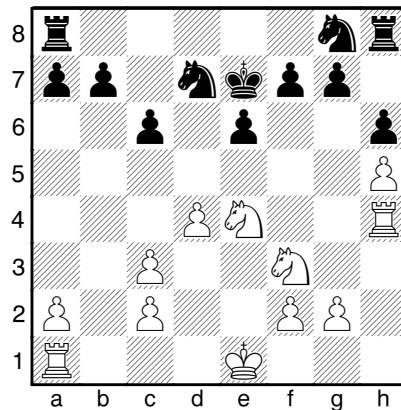
## 15.Qc3

After 15.c3 Black would have had to return to e7 with the queen, since 15...Qxb2 is dangerous on account of 16.Nd6+ and 17.Rb1.

## 15...Qxc3+

Also now it was not too late for 15...Qe7.

## 16.bxc3 Ke7



**17.Nc5! Ngf6**

Or 17...b6 18.Nxd7 Kxd7 19.Ne5+ winning a pawn, while also in the case of 17...Nxc5 18.dxc5 Black loses one or other of his pawns. Therefore he has to go in for a sacrifice, in order to complete the mobilisation of force.

**18.Nxb7 Rhc8 19.Ne5**

Deserving attention is 19.Nc5, blocking the c6–pawn, which would have limited the action of Black's heavy pieces.

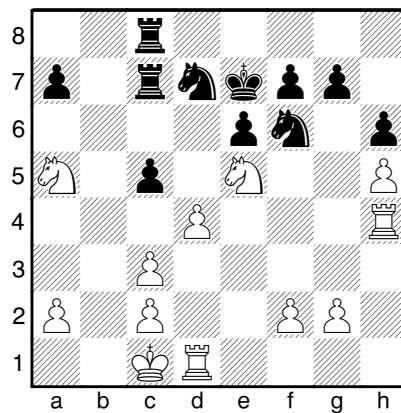
**19...c5**

It seems that a slight initiative has appeared for Black.

**20.Na5 Rc7**

On 20...cxd4 White advantageously replies 21.Nac6+.

**21.0–0–0 Rac8**



With a double threat (22...cxd4, as well as 22...c4), but Spassky skilfully demonstrates the inadequacy of this idea. After 21...Nd5 the struggle would have taken on a more complicated character, although then too White's position remained preferable.

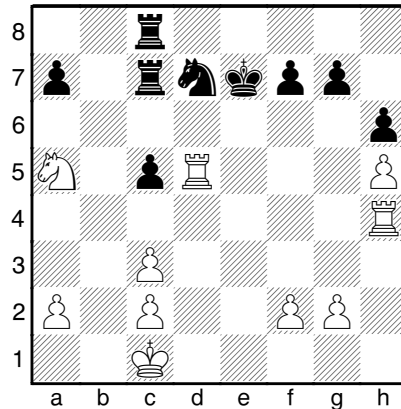
### 22.Nxd7! Nxd7

In the case of 22...Rxd7 White calmly retains an advantage – 23.Nb3.

### 23.d5!

Now White's material advantage is reduced to a minimum, since the presence of the c5-pawn neutralises the doubled pawns at c2 and c3, but this same pawn at c5 blocks the black pieces, and the initiative once again returns to the World Champion. In view of the unpleasant threat of 24.d6+, Black's reply is forced.

### 23...exd5 24.Rxd5



### 24...Nb6

Trying to exclude the a5-knight from play, but perhaps this ought to have been realised with 24...c4, in order after 25.Re4+ Kf8 26.Rxc4 Rxc4 27.Nxc4 Nf6 28.Rd4 Nxh5 to gain a satisfactory endgame.

### 25.Re5+ Kf8

During the game it was difficult to decide on the continuation 25...Kf6 26.Re3 c4 – the position of the black king becomes insecure. However, as a result of the cautious retreat of the king the opponent has time to introduce his unfortunate knight to the game.

### 26.Nb3! c4

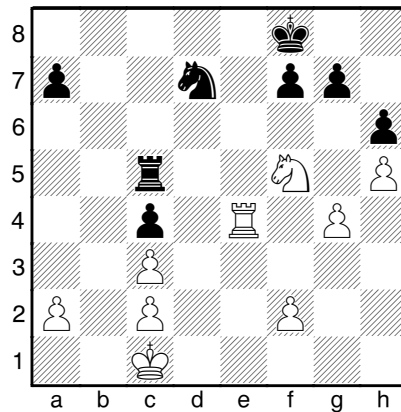
A difficult decision, since now the knight takes up an ideal position at d4. However, it is essential for Black to free the 5th rank, in order to activate his rooks.

### 27.Nd4 Rc5 28.Rhe4 Nd7 29.Rf5

This reply Black had under-estimated, when playing 26...c4. White succeeds in parrying the action of the enemy rooks on the 5th rank, and achieves an obvious advantage.

**29...Rxf5 30.Nxf5 Rc5 31.g4**

After 31.Nd6 Nf6 32.Rxc4 Rxc4 33.Nxc4 Nxh5 Black would have escaped from all of the unpleasantness at too inexpensive a price. Now there is the very strong threat of 32.Nd6 Nf6 33.Rd4.



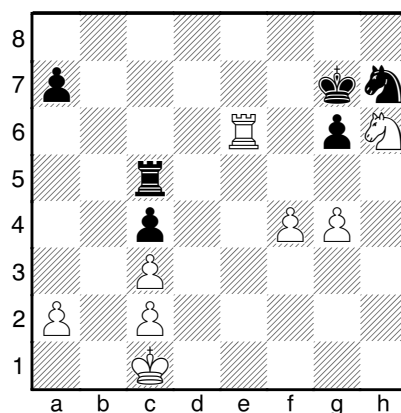
**31...g6**

The last tactical chance. While the white knight safely withdrew from the poor position on the queen's wing at a5, perhaps it will be possible to exploit its bad position on the square h6? It is for this that Black sacrifices a pawn.

**32.hxg6 fxg6 33.Nxh6 Nf6**

Of course, not 33...Kg7 on account of 34.Re7+.

**34.Re6 Kg7 35.f4 Nh7**



The point of Black's plan! If White now plays 36.g5, then 36...Nxf5 37.fxf5 Rxf5, the h6-knight is lost, and Black has every chance of steering the game to a draw.

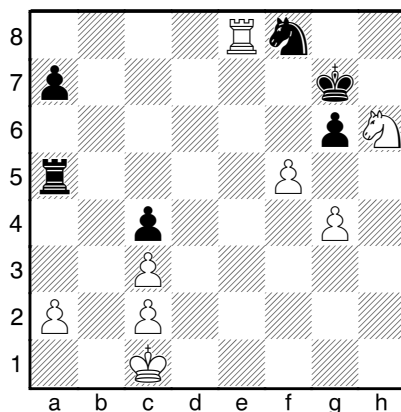
### 36.f5

A serious unpleasantness! For the time being, the knight is invulnerable ( 36...Kxh6 37.Rxf6#).

### 36...Nf8 37.Re8

Now it is difficult for Black to find a useful continuation (naturally, it is impossible to play 37...Nh7? on account of 38.Rg8+ Kxh6? 39.Rxf6# ). In mutual time trouble he decides on a move that presents White with the right to choose. Not a bad practical method.

### 37...Ra5



### 38.Kd2

The 'method' unexpectedly works. Evidently, this move lets slip the win, since in the rook endgame a weak pawn is created for White at f5.

During the game it seemed to me that White wins most simply of all with 38.Kb2, and if 38...Rb5+ 39.Ka3 Ra5+ (otherwise Black falls into zugzwang), then 40.Kb4 Rxa2 41.g5 with a material and positional advantage. Also dangerous for Black is 38.f6+ Kxf6 39.Rxf8+ Kg7 40.Rc8 Kxh6 41.Rxc4 Rxa2 42.Re4! with a highly favourable rook endgame. In Spassky's opinion, also quite good for White is 38.fxf6 Nxf6 39.Nf5+ Kf6 40.Re4.

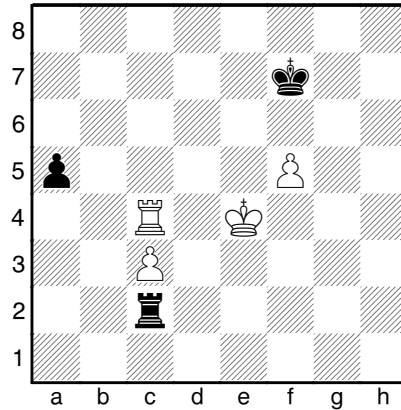
### 38...Kxh6

Now, when the a2-pawn will be won, Black himself goes in for the rook endgame.

### 39.Rxf8 Kg7 40.Rc8 gxf5 41.gxf5 Rxa2 42.Ke3

In the case of 42.Rxc4 Ra5 43.Rf4 Kf6 Black has every chance of steering the game to a draw.

42...Kf6 43.Ke4 Rxc2 44.Rc6+ Kf7 45.Rxc4 a5



Black easily achieves the draw: the f-pawn is blocked by the king, while the c-pawn counter-balances the enemy a-pawn.

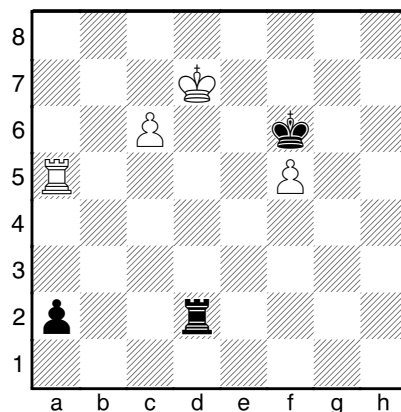
46.Rc7+ Kf6 47.Rc6+ Kf7 48.Kd4 Rf2

The main thing for the weaker side is the activity of the rook.

49.Ke5 Re2+ 50.Kd5 Rf2 51.Rc7+ Kf6 52.Ra7 Ra2

It is simplest of all to retain his passed pawn and not to give White any practical chances associated with the continuation 52...Rxf5+ 53.Kd6 and then 54.c4.

53.c4 a4 54.c5 a3 55.c6 Rd2+ 56.Kc5 Rc2+ 57.Kd6 Rd2+ 58.Kc7 a2 59.Ra5 Rc2 60.Kd7 Rd2+



It is not clear what White was counting on. It is impossible to simultaneously exploit the rook for the defence of the king from checks and for the control of the a1-square.

61.Kc8 Rc2 62.c7 Rd2 63.Kb7 Rb2+ 64.Kc6 Rc2+ 65.Kd7 Rd2+  
Agreed drawn.