

(The annotations to this game, by V. V. Smyslov, are from his autobiographical work *Izbrannye partii* (published by Fizkultura i Sport in 1952). The translation from the original Russian is by Douglas Griffin.)

Smyslov – Bronstein

9th round, 19th USSR Championship, Moscow, 28th November 1951

1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.g3 g6 4.Bg2 Bg7 5.d3 d6 6.Be3 Nh6

An unusual position for the knight. Black's idea is revealed in the variation 7.h3 f5 8.Qd2 Nf7, but White prefers to give the game a different direction.

7.Qc1 Ng4 8.Bd2 Nd4 9.h3 Ne5 10.Nce2

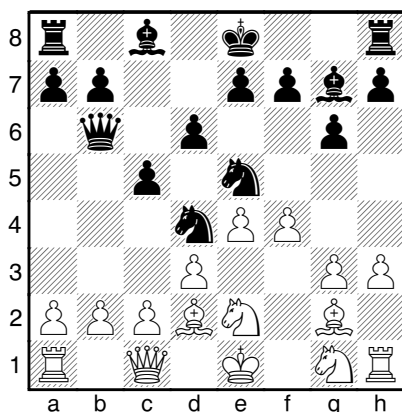
White is ready to set in motion his central pawn chain and with gain of tempo to drive back the enemy pieces with f2–f4 and c2–c3. The manoeuvre Nc3–e2 with the undeveloped position of the other knight on g1 is characteristic of White's handling of the Closed Variation (compare game № 29).

10...Qb6

Here the queen creates an indirect attack on the b2–pawn. Black opposes the systematic development of the game with the threat of combinational complications.

11.f4

White does not deviate from his intended path, assessing the prospective sharp struggle as being favourable for himself.



11...Nxc2+!?

A tempting, but not wholly correct continuation. The piece sacrifice has the aim of creating a pawn majority on the queen's flank. All the same, it was better to agree to the variation 11...Nec6 12.c3 Nxe2 13.Nxe2, in which White obtains the freer game. (*Translator's note:* Incidentally, this subsequently occurred in the game Pachman-Bronstein, Gotha 1957.)

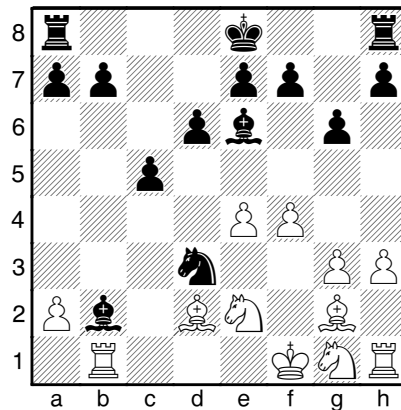
12.Qxc2 Qxb2 13.Qxb2 Nxd3+ 14.Kf1!

The correct move of the king. The situation would have unfolded more promisingly for Black in the case of 14.Kd1 Nxb2+ 15.Kc2 Nc4, and the knight occupies an active position on c4.

14...Bxb2

On 14...Nxb2 there could have followed 15.Bc3 with the exchange of dark-squared bishops.

15.Rb1 Be6



Leading to a further sharpening of the struggle. Now White had the possibility of achieving new material gain with 16.Rxb2 Nxb2 17.Bc3. But after 17...Nd1 18.Bxh8 f6 19.Bg7 Bxa2 the opponent's passed pawns could have become dangerous.

16.Bc3!

This reply discharges the tension of the situation. In the case of 16...Bxc3 17.Nxc3 Bc4 18.Nge2 0-0-0 19.Bf3 followed by 20.Kg2 White completes development, retaining the better chances.

16...Bxa2

Black strives at any costs to create absolute supremacy in the pawn material on the queen's flank. However, in the subsequent course of the game he does not manage to demonstrate the correctness of this decision. Possibly he ought to have settled on the variation 16...Bxc3 17.Nxc3 Bc4, where with a trio of pawns for the piece Black retained practical possibilities of organising a defence.

17.Rxb2 Nxb2 18.Bxb2

An original situation has arisen, in which White has two knights and a bishop against Black's rook and four pawns.

Of course, White could have taken either of the attacked pieces, but after 18.Bxh8 f6 the dark-squared bishop would have proved to be out of play. Therefore he prefers to have a smaller

material advantage, but on the other hand to keep his bishop in an active position.

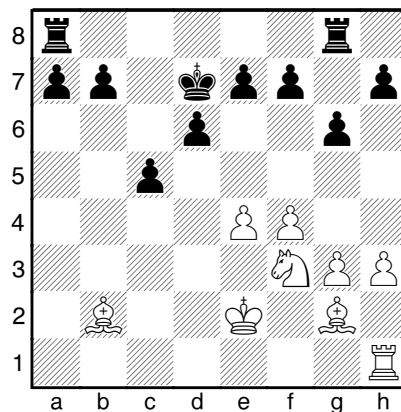
18...Rg8

Black renounces castling and leaves his king in the centre. On 18...f6 there could have followed 19.e5 fxe5 20.Bxb7 Rb8 21.Bc6+ Kd8 22.Bc3, achieving the opening of diagonals for his bishops.

19.Kf2 Bc4 20.Nf3 Bxe2

Black probably hoped with this exchange to forestall the activation of the white pieces in connection with his decision to hide his king on the queen's flank. If 20...b5, then 21.Nd2 Bxe2 22.Kxe2, threatening the move 23.e5. As a result White also gains the advantage of the two bishops.

21.Kxe2 Kd7



22.Rd1!

The initiative belongs to White. The transfer of the rook onto the d-file defines the object of attack – the square d6. It soon transpires that the position of the black king on d7 is also unsafe.

22...a5

Of course, Black chances are associated with a pawn offensive on the flank; but White has already had time to mobilise his pieces for counter-operations in the centre.

23.Ne5+ Kc7

Black gives up a pawn, since on 23...Ke6 there follows 24.f5+ gxf5 25.exf5+ Kxf5 26.g4+ with dangerous threats. If 23...Ke8 then 24.Nc4 b5 25.e5, opening up the game.

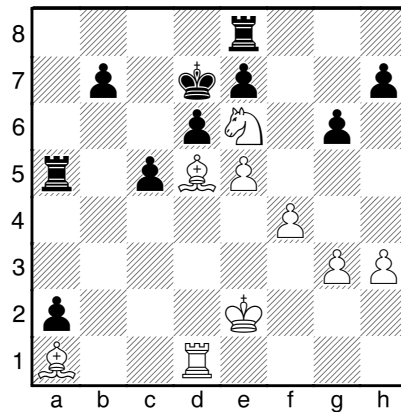
24.Nxf7 a4 25.e5 a3 26.Ba1 Rge8

In this way the point d6 is held. 26...Ra6 is of no help in view of 27.exd6+ exd6 28.Nxd6 Rxd6 29.Be5 Rgd8 30.Bxb7 Kxb7 31.Rxd6 etc. Now on 27.exd6+ there follows 27...exd6+ with a discovered check to the white king.

27.Ng5

The piece centralisation carried out with this move represents one of the basis principles of the strategic conduct of the struggle. Now 28.Ne6+ Kd7 29.Nxc5+ is threatened. In contrast, the attack on the d6-square with 27.Kf2 Ra6 28.exd6+ exd6 29.Nxd6 Rxd6 30.Be5 fails to achieve its aim on account of 30...Rxe5.

27...Ra5 28.Ne6+ Kd7 29.Bd5 a2



30.g4!

White's minor pieces are successfully holding back the enemy pawns. Now the white pawns rush forward, in order to create a passed pawn on the f-file.

30...Rc8 31.Ng5 Rf8 32.f5

White consistently carries out his plan of realising his pawn majority on the king's flank.

32...gxf5 33.gxf5 h6

33...Rxf5 is of course impossible on account of 34.Be6+.

34.Be6+ Kc7 35.exd6+ exd6 36.Ne4

The concluding moment of the struggle is approaching, when the black rooks and pawns no longer prove capable of resisting the onslaught of White's minor pieces.

36...Ra3 37.Nxd6 Rxh3 38.Be5 Ra8 39.Nc4+

In view of the inevitable mate on the following move, Black resigned.