

(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 – Simagin

12<sup>th</sup> round, 19<sup>th</sup> USSR Championship, Moscow, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1951

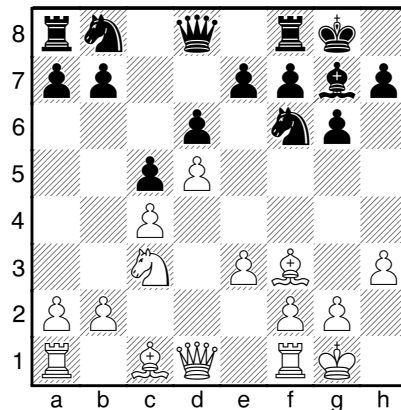
1.c4 c5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.Nf3 g6 4.e3

White prepares the advance of the queen's pawn, so as on ...c5xd4 to reply e3xd4 and to obtain a pawn centre. If 4.d4 is played immediately, then after 4...cxd4 5.Nxd4 Bg7 the dark-squared bishop would have exerted strong pressure along the diagonal a1–h8.

4...d6 5.d4 Bg4 6.Be2 Bg7 7.d5

Advancing with gain of tempo, White secures himself an advantage in space. Impossible now is 7...Ne5 on account of 8.Nxe5 Bxe2 9.Qa4+; therefore the attacked knight has to withdraw to a less favourable position.

7...Nb8 8.h3 Bxf3 9.Bxf3 Nf6 10.0–0 0–0



11.Qd2

This manoeuvre has the aim of preparing the flank development of the dark-squared bishop. On 11.b3 there could have followed 11...Nxd5 12.Bxd5 Bxc3 13.Bxb7 Bxa1 14.Bxa8 Nd7, and Black's opening difficulties have been left behind.

11...a6

Intending a pawn break on the queen's flank, Black had prepared on 12.b3 the variation: 12...b5 13.cxb5 axb5, and 14.Nxb5 is impossible in view of the reply 14...Ne4.

12.Rb1

It is useful to remove the rook from the threatened diagonal. If now 12...b5 13.cxb5 axb5, then

it is possible to continue 14.b4 Na6 15.a3 with advantage for White.

### 12...Nbd7 13.Be2 Ne8 14.b3

White has managed to carry out his plan of development. From the opening he has achieved the freer and more promising position.

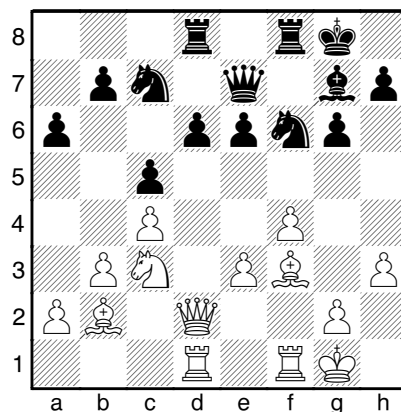
### 14...e5 15.dxe6

This exchange is in keeping with the strategic conduct of the struggle, since it is well known that in open play the strength of the long-ranging bishops grows. Incidentally, on the d-file an object for attack is created – the d6-pawn.

### 15...fxe6 16.Bb2 Qe7 17.Rbd1 Rd8 18.f4

Intending to complete the most expedient arrangement of the white pieces with the transfer of the bishop to f3. Such a set-up permits White to establish control over the central squares, and also to create the necessary preconditions for active operations on the king's flank.

### 18...Ndf6 19.Bf3 Nc7



Black gives up a pawn, so as to change the unfavourable course of the game with tactical complications. After 20.Bxb7 d5 chances appear for Black thanks to the isolated position of White's light-squared bishop.

### 20.g4!

Avoiding the problematic variations with the win of a pawn, White prefers to carry out an attack against the enemy king.

### 20...b5 21.g5 Nfe8 22.h4

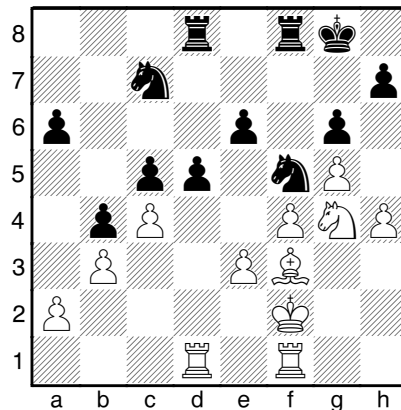
More consistent appears 22.Ne4, hindering Black's counter-play in the centre. On the move in the text Black could have replied 22...d5 and if 23.cxd5, then 23...b4 24.Na4 exd5, opening up an attack on the white e3-pawn. After 22...d5 White would probably have had to play 23.a3, and

now the variation 23...b4 24.axb4 cxb4 25.Na4 left White with the better possibilities.

**22...b4 23.Ne4 Bxb2 24.Qxb2 d5 25.Nf2 Qg7**

A dangerous attack in connection with the transfer of the white knight to g4 was brewing; therefore Black's desire to exchange queens is natural.

**26.Qxg7+ Nxg7 27.Ng4 Nf5 28.Kf2**



In the endgame White's advantage has taken on real dimensions in the form of an active piece and pawn position. Now 29.Nf6+ is threatened, which forces the opponent to define his intentions in the centre. The white h4–pawn cannot be taken, since in the case of 28...Nxb4 29.Nf6+ Kg7 30.Rh1 threats arise along the h-file.

**28...dxc4**

Opening the central file, Black reckons on obtaining a pawn majority on the queen's flank. The other plan with the move 28...d4 led after 29.e4 Nd6 30.Kg3 to a position where White could have prepared an attack with the doubling of his rooks on the h-file followed by the advance h4–h5.

**29.bxc4 a5 30.Nf6+**

The beginning of a forced manoeuvre leading to the win of the c5–pawn.

**30...Kg7 31.Nd7 Rf7**

Black must renounce the struggle for the open file; otherwise it is difficult to maintain the material balance. If, for instance, 31...Rfe8, then possible is 32.h5 h6 33.Rg1, and White creates a direct attack on the enemy king.

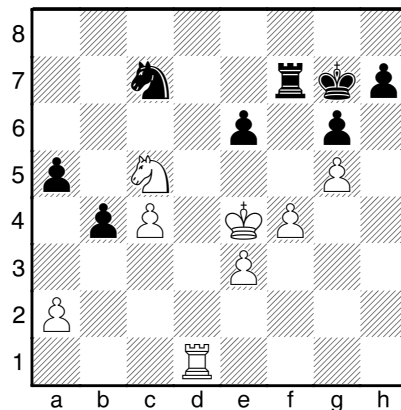
**32.Nxc5 Rxd1 33.Rxd1 Nxb4 34.Nd7!**

This manoeuvre prevents Black from ridding himself of the backward pawn by means of ...e6–e5.

**34...Nxf3 35.Kxf3 Nd5**

An unsuccessful attempt to take the game into a rook ending, where in the event of ( 35...Nd5 ) 36.cxd5 Rxd7 37.d6 Kf7 38.Ke4 Rd8 39.Ke5 Rb8 with the threat of...♖b5+ Black gained counter-chances.

36.Nc5 Nc7 37.Ke4



White is following the well-known principles of play in endgames: the king occupies a strong position in the centre, while the white rook controls the open file. Despite the material equality, Black has no possibility of preventing the further activation of the white pieces. 37...Rf5 cannot be played in view of 38.Rd7+ Rf7 39.Rxc7 Rxc7 40.Nxe6+ followed by 41.Nxc7.

Black exploits his best chance, trying with the advance of the h-pawn to at least somewhat free himself from his cramped position.

37...h6 38.Rd6 hgx5 39.fxg5 Kf8 40.Rc6 Ke8 41.Ke5!

White consistently carries out his plan of the invasion of his pieces into the opponent's camp. Now his king is aiming at the d6-square; this is a stronger continuation than the prosaic resolution of the question with 41.Nxe6 Re7 42.Rxc7 Rxe6+, and at the cost of a pawn Black rids himself of the 'bad' knight on c7.

41...Kd8 42.Rb6!

Space is needed for the successful penetration of the white king onto the 6th rank. The immediate 42.Kd6 would have been premature in view of 42...Ne8+ 43.Kxe6 Re7+ and 44...Rxe3. The move in the text significantly increases the effectiveness of White's final attack. Now on 42...Rf5+ there follows 43.Kd6 Ne8+ 44.Kc6 Ke7 45.Rb7+ Kf8 46.Nxe6+ Kg8 47.Re7 etc. If 42...Ke7, then 43.e4 Rf2 44.Rb7 Kd8 45.Kd6 Rd2+ 46.Kc6, and again Black is not to be saved.

42...Kc8 43.Kd6 Rf2

In search of counter-chances. If 43...Ne8+ is played, then 44.Kc6 Rc7+ 45.Kb5, and Black's pawns prove to be under attack.

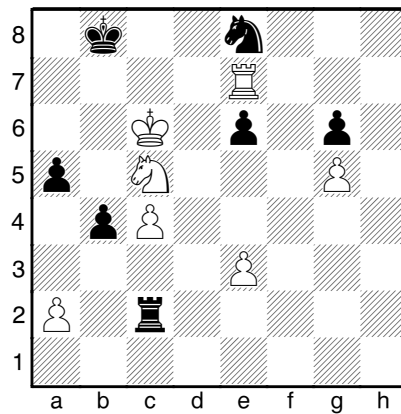
**44.Kc6!**

Of course, not 44.Rb7 on account of 44...Na6. White's king has taken the opposition; now the end is not far off.

**44...Rc2 45.Rb7 Ne8**

Of no help is the 'sacrifice' 45...Nd5 in view of 46.cxd5 Rxc5+ 47.Kxc5 Kxb7 48.dxe6, and the pawn endgame is easily won for White.

**46.Ra7 Kb8 47.Re7**



Black resigned.