

(The annotations to this game, by L. A. Shamkovich, are from the Soviet chess yearbook *Shakhmaty za 1958–59 gg.*, edited by I. Z. Romanov & M. A. Beilin and published in Moscow in 1960 by Fizkultura i Sport. The translation from the original Russian is by Douglas Griffin.)

A. Zaitsev – Shamkovich
19th RSFSR Championship Semi-final, 1959

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 a6 5.Nc3 Qc7

An opening system introduced into practice a hundred years ago by Louis Paulsen, which has been enriched with modern ideas and which is now experiencing a second youth. White chooses a continuation, the idea of which consist in the rapid development of his pieces.

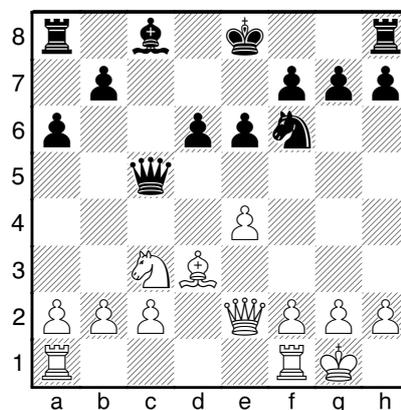
6.Bd3 Nc6 7.Be3 Nf6 8.0–0

In a theoretical article dedicated to this variation (*Shakhmaty v SSSR*, № 8, 1958) grandmaster Boleslavsky recommended 8.Qe2, so as on 8...Nxd4 9.Bxd4 Bc5 to continue 10.Bxc5 Qxc5 11.e5!. But subsequent tournament practice demonstrated that after 8...Bd6 or 8...Ne5 Black has fully-developed counter-play.

8...Nxd4 9.Bxd4 Bc5 10.Bxc5 Qxc5 11.Qe2

More promising is 11.Qe1 with the aim of transferring the queen to the king's flank.

11...d6



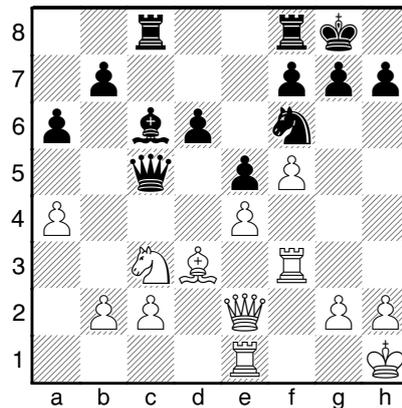
12.a4?

The 'threat' of ...b7–b5 is not so dangerous that it should be parried at the cost of a serious weakening of the queen's flank. As in many variations of the Sicilian Defence, White should strive in every possible way for the breakthrough e4–e5. To this end he ought to play 12.Kh1 0–0 13.f4, although after 13...e5 14.fxe5 Qxe5! (but not 14...dxe5 15.Rxf6! gxf6 16.Nd5) Black maintains the positional equilibrium.

12...Bd7 13.Kh1 e5 14.f4 Rc8 15.Rae1 0-0 16.f5 Bc6

Taking the strategically-important central squares d5 and e4 under control. Weaker is 16...Qb4 on account of 17.Nd5! Nxd5 18.exd5 Qxb2 19.f6! with an attack for White.

17.Rf3!



Now the struggle takes on a fully-defined character: White intends to break down the opponent's defences on the king's flank; Black's plans are tied up in a counter-attack in the centre and on the queen's wing.

17...Qb4!

The situation demands the most resolute action. Indeed, after 17...Rfe8 18.Qe3!, as also after 17...b5 18.axb5 axb5 19.Bxb5 Bxb5 20.Qxb5, no method of strengthening Black's position is apparent. But at the same time the positional advantage is on his side: White's queen's flank has been seriously weakened, while the position of his king is solid enough for the attack to be repulsed. Naturally, such straightforward play for the win involves the risk of defeat – in the following play Black more than once proves to be on the edge of the abyss.

18.Qd2 h6

Necessary: on 18...Qxb2? there follows 19.Rg3 Ne8 20.f6!. Now, however, 19.Rg3 is parried with the simple 19...Kh7, and if 20.Rh3, then 20...d5!.

19.Rh3

Putting his finger on the most vulnerable spot in Black's camp; the threat of Rxf6 now hangs over his camp. For instance, 19...Qxb2 20.Rxf6 gxf6 21.Qxf6 Nh7 22.f6!, and White is guaranteed a draw.

19...d5

Black opens lines for a counter-attack. Now 20.Rxf6 will not do on account of 20...dxe4 21.Rxf6 exd3 22.Qg5 Qf4! 23.Qxf4 exf4 24.Rd6 dxc2 25.Rd2 Bxa4 with a decisive advantage.

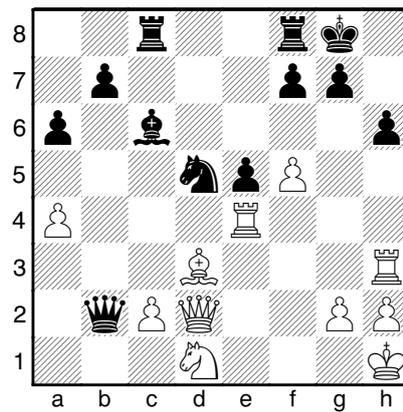
20.exd5 Nxd5

On 20...Bxd5 possible is 21.Rxh6, which is now not dangerous in view of the reply 21...Nf4!. But White finds another way of strengthening the attack.

21.Re4

Nothing is given by 21.Rxe5 Qxb2.

21...Qxb2 22.Nd1

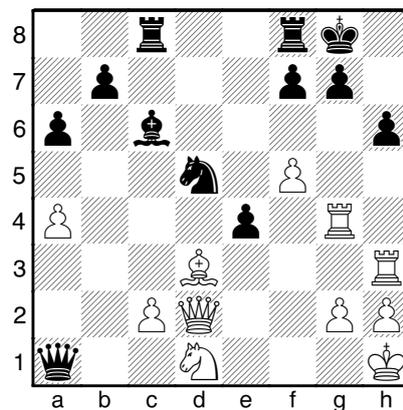


22...Qa1!

On this 'critical' square the black queen combines the functions of attack and defence in remarkable fashion. Just how careful Black must be is seen from the variation 22...Qb6? 23.Qxh6!! gxh6 24.Rg4+ Kh7 25.f6+, and mate in 2 moves.

23.Rg4 e4

The black queen is included in the defence of the king's flank (24.Rxg7+ was threatened).



24.Bxe4

24.Rxe4 is weaker on account of 24...Nc3!, but very tempting appears the blow suggested by Fridstein, 24.Rxh6 exd3 25.f6! Qxf6! (not 25...Nxf6? 26.Rxg7+!) 26.Rxf6 Nxf6 27.Rxg7+ with a draw. However, after 24.Rxh6 Black is by no means obliged to force a draw. Leading to victory is the elegant move 24...Ne3!. Also in his favour is the continuation 24.Rxg7+ Qxg7 25.Rg3 exd3 26.Qxh6 Qxg3 27.hxg3 Rfe8.

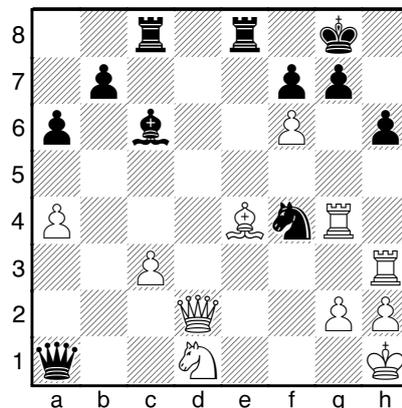
24...Rfe8 25.c3

White's position is strategically lost: there are too many weaknesses in his camp. But the opponent was set the most difficulties after 25.Rhg3!. The only move to retain the advantage is 25...Kf8! and on 26.Rxg7 Rxe4 27.Rg8+ Ke7 28.Rxc8 Qc1!! (a variation proposed by Fridstein). White's move contains an unambiguous threat (26.Rxg7+), but at the same time it gives Black a tempo for the counter-attack.

25...Nf4

Black extracts the maximum advantage from the weakness of the 1st rank. On 26.Rxf4 there follows 26...Bxe4; on 26.Bxc6 – 26...Rcd8!. Nor does White obtain anything from 26.Rxg7+ Kxg7 27.Qd4+ f6. White makes use of his last resort.

26.f6



The culminating moment of the struggle. To many of the participants and spectators it seemed that Black now loses. Here are the main variations of White's clever idea:

- 26...Rcd8 27.Bh7+! Kh8 28.fxg7+ Kxh7 29.Rxh6+! Kxh6 30.Qxf4+ and mate in a few moves;
- 26...g6 27.Rxf4 Bxe4 28.Rxh6 Rcd8 29.Rh8+! Kxh8 30.Rh4+ Kg8 31.Rh8+ Kxh8 32.Qh6+, also mating;
- 26...Nxh3 27.Rxg7+ Kf8 28.Qd6+.

26...g5!

A cold shower! With this somewhat crude method Black repulses all of the threats, since on

27.Rxh6 there follows 27...Bxe4 28.Rxg5+ Bg6 etc.

The remaining moves were:

27.Bh7+ Kxh7 28.Rxg5 Rg8 29.Qc2+ Rg6 30.Rxg6 fxg6 31.Re3 Rd8 32.Re1 Nxc2 33.Re7+ Kh8

and White resigned.