

(The annotations to this game, by L. A. Shamkovich, are from the Soviet tournament book, *XXI championnat SSSR po shakhmatam* (Fizkultura i Sport, Moscow 1955). The translation from the original Russian is by Douglas Griffin.)

Shamkovich – Geller

19th round, 21st USSR Championship, Kiev, 6th February 1954

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Nf3 0–0 5.Bf4

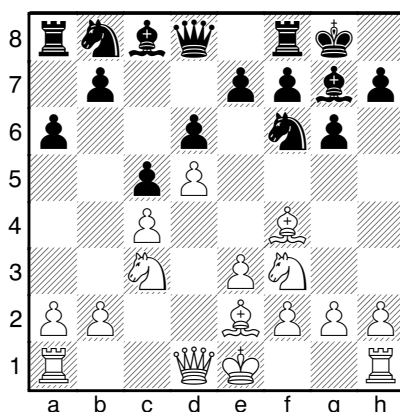
This system has the aim of hindering the advance ...e7–e5 by Black. Black has several possibilities at his disposal:

- transposing to the Grünfeld Defence – 5...d5 (games № 29, Furman-Livshin and № 67, Furman-Korchnoi);
- preparing and all the same carrying out ...e7–e5 (game № 53, Shamkovich-Borisenko);
- carrying out the suggestion of I. Boleslavsky (survey *Shakhmaty za 1951–1952 gg.* of an immediate diversion on the queen's flank and the exchange of the f4–bishop, but for this Black must employ a slightly different order of moves: 4...d6 5.Bf4 c6 6.e3 Qa5 7.Bd3 Nh5. In this case for White it is probably stronger, instead of 6.e3, to play the queen to d2 and on 6...Qa5 to reply 7.h3;
- to carry out the undermining ...c7–c5, which Geller does in the present game.

5...c5 6.d5 d6 7.e3

White refrained from 7.e4 in view of 7...a6 8.Be2 b5 or 8.Bd3 e5!. Playing the move 7.e3, he believed that the advance ...b7–b5 was prevented for a long time; however, this break all the same proves possible, and this means that White ought to play 7.e4 a6 8.Qd2 Qa5 9.Bd3 b5 10.0–0 with good prospects in the centre.

7...a6 8.Be2



8...b5!

Brilliant! The pawn sacrifice is quite correct, for instance: 9.cxb5 axb5 10.Bxb5 Ne4! 11.Nxe4

Qa5+ 12.Nc3 Bxc3+ 13.bxc3 Qxb5 with sufficient compensation; or 10.Nxb5 Qa5+ 11.Kf1 Ba6 with an attack for White.

White refrains from accepting the sacrifice, but all the same he soon falls into a difficult position.

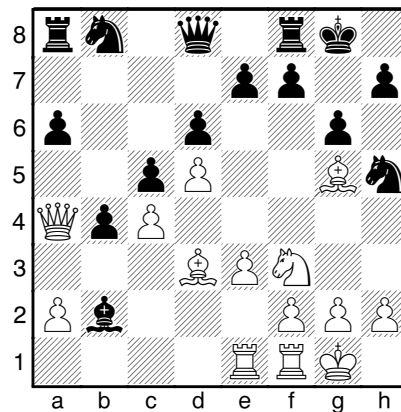
9.0–0 b4 10.Na4 Bd7 11.Bd3

Hardly better was 11.Rb1 Qa5 12.b3 Bxa4 13.bxa4 Nbd7.

11...Nh5 12.Bg5

It was possible to retain material equality with 12.Rb1, but in this case Black obtained an excellent game with 12...Nxf4 13.exf4 Qa5 14.Bc2 e6, and therefore I decided to give up a pawn, obtaining in return significant freedom of action.

12...Bxa4 13.Qxa4 Bxb2 14.Rae1



White does not conceal his plan: with the advance of the e- and f-pawns to create an attack on the king's flank. As a counter-weight to this Black should aim at exchanges. One of the possible continuations was 14...Bf6 15.Bh6 Bg7 16.Bg5 Nd7 17.e4 Ne5 18.Be2 Nxf3+ 19.Bxf3 Nf6, and White has only insignificant attacking chances. Also not bad was the intermediate 16...Bc3, so as to force the rook to e2, strengthening the manoeuvre ...Nb8–d7–e5.

In the game, over the course of the next moves Black completely ignores White's threats and soon falls under an attack.

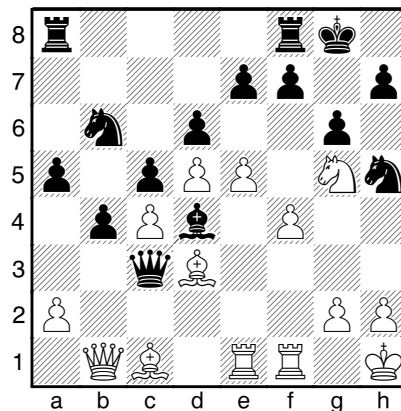
14...Nd7 15.e4 a5 16.Bd2 Bg7 17.Ng5 Nb6 18.Qd1 Qd7

Black undertakes an attempt to exchange queens, so as to weaken White's growing initiative on the queen's flank. 18...h6 would have been a dangerous weakening of the black king's position.

19.f4 Bd4+ 20.Kh1 Qa4 21.Qb1

Doubtful is the sacrifice of a second pawn: 21.Qe2 Qxa2 22.e5 Ng7.

21...Qa3 22.Bc1 Qc3 23.e5!



The beginning of a sharp attack, in which the main motif is the exploitation of the poor position of the black queen.

23...dxe5

More prudent was 23...Ng7 24.exd6 exd6 25.Ne4 Qa1 26.Qxa1 Bxa1 27.Nxd6 but in this case White, having regained the pawn, retained some advantage. Playing 23...dxe5 Black probably reckoned on 24.Ne4 Qa1 25.Qc2 exf4! 26.Ba3 Qxe1 27.Rxe1 bxa3 with an excellent game. But White has the possibility of gaining a decisive advantage.

24.fxe5

Precisely thus. Now White's pieces gain enormous activity. Weaker is 24.f5 Ng7 25.fxc6 f5! with counter-play for Black.

24...Bxe5 25.Ne4 Qa1

More chances of a successful defence were given by the continuation: 25...Qd4 26.Be3 Qb2 27.Qxb2 Bxb2 28.Bxc5 Nc8 29.g4 Ng7 30.Ng3 Re8 31.Re2 Bf6 32.Ne4 Be5 33.Ng5 Bd6 34.Bd4, although in this case too White's passed pawns are very dangerous.

26.Qc2 Nd7

Black is ready to give up the exchange for the sake of retaining the c5-pawn: 27.Bh6 Qb2 28.Qxb2 Bxb2 29.Bxf8 Rxf8, and the advantage is rather on the side of Black.

However, White has a stronger continuation, which leads not only to a material, but also to a positional advantage.

27.Bg5! Qb2 28.Qxb2 Bxb2 29.Bxe7 Bd4

Nothing good is promised for Black by 29...Rfe8 or 29...Rfc8 30.Nd6, nor by 29...Rfb8 30.Nxc5.

30. Bxf8 Rxf8

Thus, as a result of the attack White has won the exchange and has control of the open e-file.

31. g4 Ng7

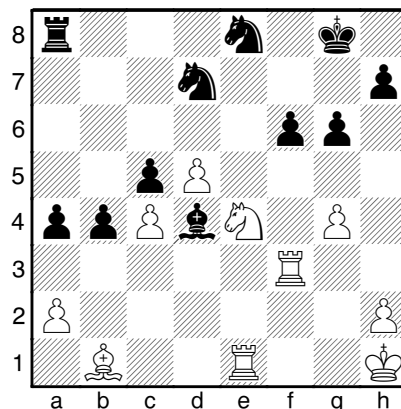
Somewhat more resilient was 31...Nhf6 32.Nxf6+ Bxf6 33.Bc2 Kg7 34.Ba4 Nb6 35.Bb5 Rd8 or 35...Nc8 but ultimately the matter comes down to the technique of realisation of the advantage. After 31...Ng7 White could have brought about the finale more quickly: 32.Nd6 with the threats of Re1–7 and Nd6–b5; for instance: 32...Ne5 33.Be2 Rd8 34.Nb5; or 32...Bf6 33.Bc2, and in all variations the poor position of the knight on g7 tells.

Beginning from this point, serious time trouble set in, disrupting the logical flow of the struggle.

32. Rf3 f6 33. Ref1 a4 34. Bb1

Defending against the possible breakthrough ...b4–b3 and ...a4–a3.

34...Ra8 35. Re1 Ne8



36. d6?

Premature activity, completely letting slip the advantage. Essential was 36.h3, not fearing 36...Ne5 in view of 37.Nxf6+ Nxf6 38.Rxf6 Nxc4 39.Rfe6 Rd8 40.g5 etc.

36...Rd8

But not 36...Ra6 37.Nxc5.

37. Rd1

Still another mistake. Stronger was 37.Rd3 Ne5 38.Rxd4 with very sharp play.

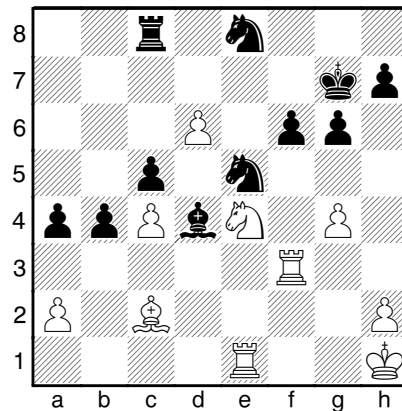
Now, however, Black could have obtained the advantage, continuing 37...Ne5 38.Nxf6+ Nxf6 39.Rxf6 Nxc4! with the threat of 40...Nf2+, but he fails to notice this possibility and once again falls into a losing position.

37...Rc8 38.Bc2 Kg7 39.Re1

The opponents are playing typical 'time-trouble' moves, thinking only of not losing a piece. Now 39.Bxa4 won immediately.

39...Ne5

Finally, Black made this move, but at that moment his flag fell.



However, in the given position 39...Ne5 would not now have saved him, since after 40.Rf4 White retained the advantage, for instance: 40...Rd8 41.g5 f5 42.Nxc5; or 40...g5 41.Nxg5 fxg5 42.d7 Nxd7 43.Re7+ Kg8 44.Bxh7+ Kh8 45.Rf3 Ndf6 46.Rh3, and White wins. Thus, the comment in the article by V. Ragozin & V. Mikénas (*Shakhmaty v SSSR*, № 5 for 1954) that "Geller lost once again, not having time, in a fairly good position, to make the last move before the time control" is only partly correct.