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32 ♖c4 ♙xc5 33 ♘xe5 ♙xe3 34 ♘xd7
 ♘xd7 35 fxe3 ♘c5 36 ♖f2 ♖f6 37 ♖f3 ♖e5 ♠

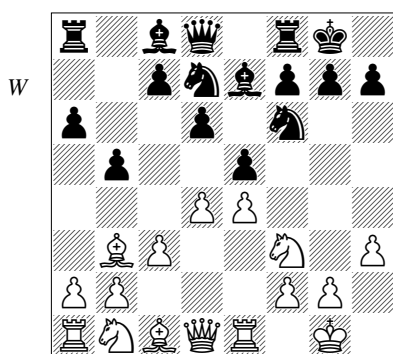
Black has a big endgame advantage, although due to unknown circumstances (probably a forfeit on time) the English grandmaster lost the game on move 65.

Game 69

Robert James Fischer – Lajos Portisch C95 Santa Monica 1966

This game was annotated by me in the tournament book of the Second Piatigorsky Cup. Here I use most of my notes of that time (they are given in quotes), attaching some new ideas and also mentioning important games played since then.

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙a4 ♘f6 5
 0-0 ♙e7 6 ♚e1 b5 7 ♙b3 d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3 ♘b8
 10 d4 ♘bd7 (D)



11 c4

The aim of this move is to create even more tension in the centre.

11 ♘h4 has also been tried, when 11...g6! 12 ♙h6 ♚e8 is the simplest reply. Then:

a) 13 dxe5 ♘xe5 (13...dxe5?? loses immediately to 14 ♙xf7+) 14 f4 ♘c4 15 ♙xc4 bxc4 16 ♘f3 d5! 17 ♘bd2 dxe4 18 ♘xe4 was played in Darga-O'Kelly de Galway, Bordeaux 1964. Here the ambitious 18...♘xe4! TN 19 ♚e3 ♚d3! might have been tried.

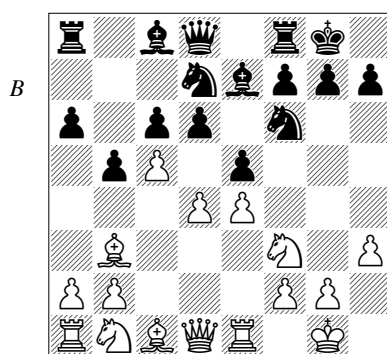
b) 13 f4 c5 14 ♘f3 c4 15 ♙c2 ♙b7 16 ♘bd2 ♙f8 was played in Byrne-Portisch, Amsterdam

1969. I had equalized easily and the game ended in a draw on the next move.

11...c6

The common reply. Other moves are inferior.

12 c5 (D)



This, the oldest method of play in this line of the Breyer, has been rather neglected of late. Perhaps the reason is that this hasty advance tends to favour only Black. The most important alternatives will be discussed in the next game.

12...♚c7!

After the text-move I am of the opinion that Black's position is completely satisfactory.

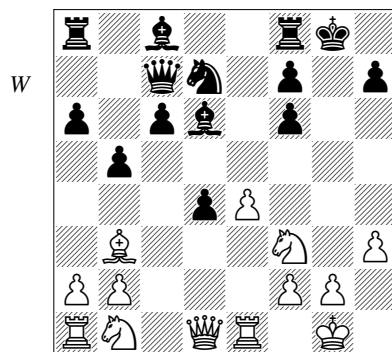
13 cxd6 ♙xd6 14 ♙g5

Other deviations are ineffective:

a) 14 ♘c3 exd4 15 ♘xd4 ♘c5 16 ♚f3 ♙e5 17 ♘f5 ♘xb3 18 axb3 ♙e6 ♠ Klovans-Korchnoi, USSR Ch, Leningrad 1963.

b) 14 a4 exd4 15 ♘xd4 ♘c5 16 axb5 ♚d8! 17 ♙e3 was seen in Quiñones-Reshevsky, Amsterdam Interzonal 1964. 17...♙h2+! TN 18 ♘h1 ♙e5 ♠.

14...exd4! 15 ♙xf6 gxf6 (D)



“This variation was considered favourable for White for a long time. Three years ago in the first Piatigorsky Cup Tournament, Petrosian adopted the line and proved that Black had nothing to fear because of the doubled pawns. It then became popular again.”

16 ♖xd4

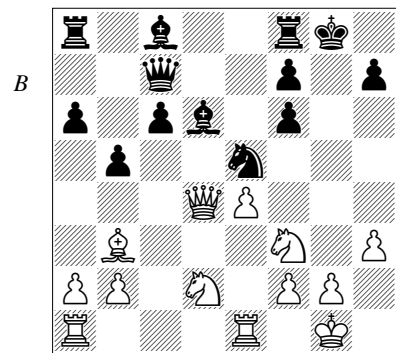
“A new attempt. In the game referred to, Gligorić took with the knight, but Black obtained a good game. Petrosian eventually lost, but it had nothing to do with the opening.”

16 ♜xd4 ♜c5 17 ♜f5 (17 ♖c2 ♜d8 18 ♜d1 ♜xb3 19 ♜xb3, Cuellar-Portisch, Sousse Interzonal 1967, and now 19...♙h2+ was of course indicated as equalizing: 20 ♜h1 ♜xd1+ 21 ♖xd1 ♙e5) 17...♙xf5 18 exf5 ♜ad8 19 ♖h5, Gligorić-Petrosian, Los Angeles 1963. Ten years later this game was improved as follows: 19...♙h2+ 20 ♜h1 ♜d3 21 ♜f1 ♙e5 and Black had a superior position in Domnitz-Reshevsky, Netanya 1973.

16...♜e5

A noteworthy alternative is 16...♙c5!? 17 ♖c3 a5, when according to Zaitsev Black’s counterplay is sufficient. 18 ♜bd2 (18 a3? is strongly met by 18...♙b4!; 18 ♜d1 a4 19 ♙c2 b4 20 ♖e1 ♜e5 ♞) 18...a4 19 ♙d1 (19 ♙c2 b4 20 ♖d3 ♜e5 21 ♜xe5 ♖xe5 ♞) 19...♖b6 20 ♜e2 ♙a6 and now 21 ♖c2 ♜ad8 22 ♜c1 ♜fe8 leaves Black with the preferable position. However, 21 ♖c1 looks better, as it gives White direct attacking ideas against the black king, such as e5 and ♜e4, or ♜f1-g3 and ♖h6. So I think my handling is preferable.

17 ♜bd2 (D)

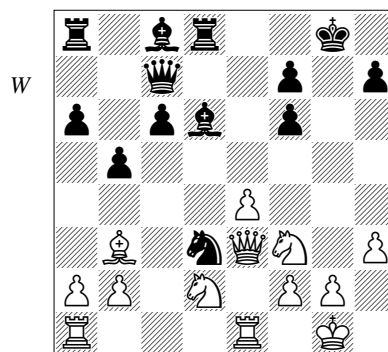


17...♜d8

“Preferable was 17...c5 18 ♖e3 c4. Unfortunately, I did not know that the whole line had been published in the May 1966 issue of *Chess Review*. I saw that Fischer had to sacrifice the exchange, but I did not realize that it was satisfactory for him.” 19 ♙c2 ♜g6! (in his book *Spanisch bis Französisch*, Keres writes “with a good game for Black”) 20 e5 (a tactical player like Zaitsev feels that he should be the one coming first; however, Black shows that there is nothing to be gained from this tempting advance) 20...♙xe5 (20...fxe5 was also possible) 21 ♜xe5 fxe5 22 ♙xg6 fxg6 23 ♖g3 ♙b7 24 ♜xe5 ♜ad8 25 ♜f1 ♜d3 26 ♜e3 ♖f7 27 ♜f5?! ♖xf5 28 ♜xf5 ♜xg3 29 ♜xg3 ♜d8 gave Black a better ending in I.Zaitsev-Balashov, Moscow Ch 1970.

17...♙h8!? could also be considered: Black hopes for some play on the half-open g-file. 18 ♖e3! (the queen evades the ...c4 tempo-gain in order to reply with ♙d5; 18 ♜h4?! is quite harmless: 18...♜g8 19 ♜f5 ♙xf5 20 exf5 ♜ad8 ♞ Robatsch-Averbakh, Palma de Mallorca 1972) 18...♜g8 19 ♜h1 with roughly equal chances.

18 ♖e3 ♜d3 (D)



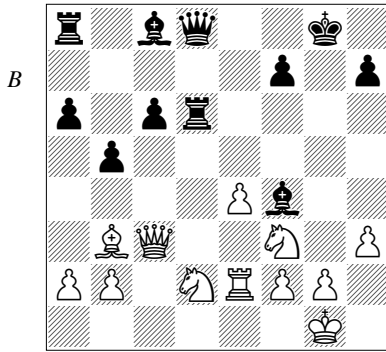
19 ♖h6

“Forced, because of the threats of ...♙f4 and ...♙c5.”

19...♙f4

The safest continuation, although 19...♜xe1 20 ♜xe1 ♙e6 looks like a good defence too because 21 ♙c2? fails to 21...♙f4 22 ♖xf6 ♜xd2 23 ♜xd2 ♙xd2 24 ♜d1 ♖f4, when White’s attack is at an end.

20 ♖xf6 ♜d6 21 ♖c3 ♜xe1 22 ♜xe1 ♖d8! 23 ♜e2 (D)

**23...Tg6**

Here I missed my best chance. 23...Td3! would have given Bobby real trouble: 24 Wxc6 (24 Wc5 Wd6) 24...Ta7! and suddenly Black's pieces have been activated considerably; e.g., 25 e5 Tc7 26 We4 Qxd2 27 e6 (the only move) 27...Qxe6 28 Qxe6 Te7! 29 Wg4+ Qf8 30 Wf5 Td6 31 Qb3 Wd7 32 Wxd7 Txd7 ♠.

24 Qh1

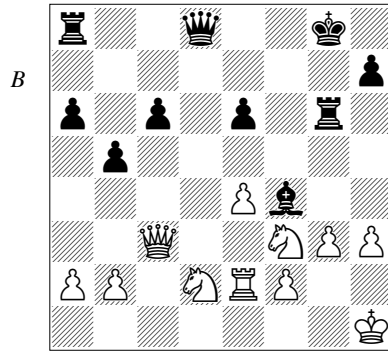
"To be considered is 24 Qf1."

24...Qe6 25 Qxe6 fxe6

I certainly might have tried the plausible 25...Txe6. It is not favourable for White to force the endgame with 26 Qd4?! Qxd2 27 Qxe6 Qxc3 28 Qxd8 Txd8 as Black's queen-side majority will be much more dangerous. However, at that time I was of the opinion that 26 Qb3! "would have given White a perfectly good game." But now it turns out with the contribution of the computer that the story is not that simple: 26...Td6 27 Qbd4 b4! and it is becoming clear that it is White who has to find a drawish line, as follows: 28 Wc5 (28 Wxb4? c5 29 Wxc5 Tc8 30 Wf5 Tc1+ 31 Te1 Txe1+ 32 Qxe1 Txd4 33 Wxf4 Td1 34 Wg3+ Qf8 35 Wc3 Wd4 36 Wxd4 Txd4 37 Qg1 Td2 leaves Black close to victory) 28...Wd7 29 g4! (the right way to open the back rank in time) 29...Td8 30 Qf5 Td1+ 31 Qg2 Wd3 32 Qe7+ Qg7 (not 32...Qh8? 33 Wf5! and suddenly White is winning) 33 Qf5+ =.

26 g3 (D)**26...Qh6**

"Black needs the bishop." 26...Qxd2?! 27 Txd2 "followed by Qe5 would be even more unpleasant."

27 Qg2

Another crucial stage of the game.

Interesting is 27 Wxc6 Tc8 28 Wxa6 Tc1+ 29 Qg2 Wd3 30 Qb3! Wxe2 31 Qxc1 Wc2 (31...Wxe4 32 Wxb5) 32 Wa8+ Qg7 33 Wa7+ Qg8 34 Qb3 Qf4 with a probably drawish outcome.

On 27 Qb3 Black could reply 27...Wd6 28 Qg2 Tf8.

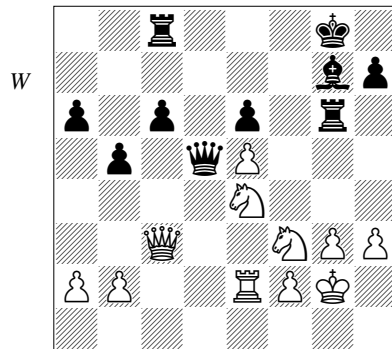
27...Tc8?!

Too passive. 27...c5! offered more counter-chances: 28 e5 (28 Wxc5? Wd3) 28...c4 29 Qe4 Wd3 30 Wxd3 cxd3 31 Te1 Td8 32 Td1 Qf8 (32...Tg7 33 Qd6 Tgd7 34 Qd4 =) 33 Qe1 and White regains enough material for the exchange.

28 e5!

28 Qb3 leads nowhere after 28...c5! 29 Qxc5 a5 30 Wd3 Wxd3 31 Qxd3 Tg7, when Black is certainly not worse.

28 Qe5!? is another serious candidate move: 28...Qg7 29 Qdf3 Wc7 30 Wc5 Qxe5 31 Qxe5 Tg5 32 f4 Tg7 with a double-edged position.

28...Wd5 29 Qe4 Qg7 (D)**30 b3?**

Now White goes astray. He could have obtained a big advantage as follows: 30 ♖e3! ♖xa2 (30...c5 31 ♖d2 ♖h6 32 ♖xd5 ♖xe3 33 ♖d7 ♖d4 34 ♖xd4 cxd4 35 ♖f6+ ♖f8 36 ♖xh7+ ♖e8 37 ♖xd4 +-) 31 ♖h4 ♖h6 32 ♖d2! ±.

30...♖f8 31 ♖c2

“With the astonishing threat of ♖d2.”

31...♖f4! 32 ♖ed2?!

White might opt for the tricky 32 h4! ♖xe5 33 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 34 ♖xc6. Due to his centralized pieces and the vulnerable black king, White’s position is certainly not worse.

32...c5

The initiative has passed to Black.

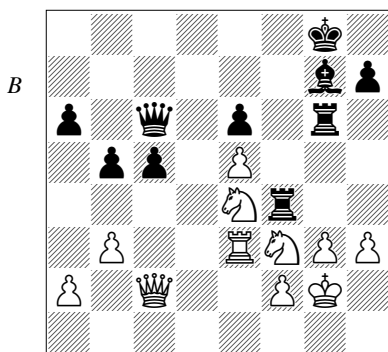
33 ♖e3 ♖c6?!

“A rather questionable move.” 33...♖f8 was correct:

a) 34 ♖d3 ♖d4 35 ♖xd4 cxd4 36 ♖d3 (36 ♖e4 ♖b4!) 36...♖g7 “and Black has the better of it.”

b) 34 ♖e4 ♖e7 ♣ “improves the position of the bishop. Black has a slight edge, but White can probably hold the game.”

34 ♖e4 (D)



34...c4?

“I had this pawn advance in mind when I played ...♖c6, but it turns out badly.”

The difficult move 34...♖d5! would still have held the equilibrium: 35 ♖c3 (or 35 ♖h2 ♖f8 36 ♖c3 c4 37 bxc4 bxc4, when we get an improved version of the game; 35 ♖xc5 is risky, because 35...♖c6! 36 ♖c3 b4 37 ♖c1 ♖xe5 leaves Black completely fine) 35...♖c6 36 ♖e4 could end in a repetition.

35 bxc4 bxc4 36 ♖ed2

“Unfortunately I had overlooked this simple move. The pawn cannot be defended.”

36...♖h6 37 ♖c3 ♖g7 38 ♖d3?

By means of 38 ♖h2 ♖f8 39 ♖xc4 ± the second pawn could have been easily taken.

38...♖a8?

38...♖f8 39 ♖d6 ♖b7 40 ♖e4 ♖gf7 41 ♖f6+ ♖xf6 42 exf6 ♖xf6 43 ♖c3 ♖g7 would have given Black good drawing chances.

39 ♖xc4 ♖c6 40 ♖a3?

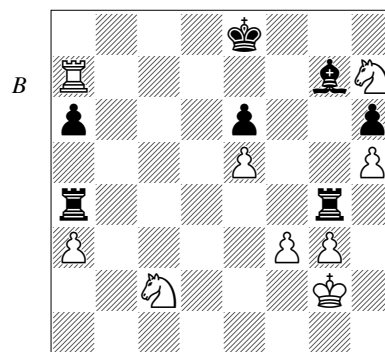
40 ♖d8+ ♖f8 41 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 42 ♖b3 would have kept the queens on board, so the winning chances remain high.

40...♖xc2 41 ♖xc2 ♖a4 42 ♖d8+ ♖f7 43 a3 ♖g6?

Black’s position is still very difficult. The alternative 43...♖c1! “offered better chances. At least the bishop is more active after” 44 ♖d1 ♖b2 45 ♖b1 ♖c3 46 ♖b3 ♖c4.

44 h4 ♖f8 45 ♖g5+ ♖e7 46 ♖a8 h6 47 ♖h7 ♖g7 48 ♖a7+ ♖e8 49 h5 ♖gg4 50 f3? (D)

“The text gives Black a way out.” “Fischer could now have forced the win as follows”: 50 ♖e3 ♖xe5 51 ♖xg4 ♖xg4 52 f4 ♖a1 53 ♖g5! +-.



50...♖gc4 51 ♖xg7 ♖xc2+ 52 ♖h3 ♖xa3 53 f4 ♖f2! 54 ♖f6+ ♖f8 55 ♖g4 a5 56 ♖e4 ♖c2 57 ♖g6 ♖e3 58 ♖d6 ♖cc3 59 ♖xe6 ♖xg3+ 60 ♖h4 ♖g1 61 f5 ♖c2 62 ♖e8+ ♖g7 63 f6+ ♖h7 64 ♖e7+ ♖g8 65 ♖h3 ♖c3+ 66 ♖h4 ♖c2 67 ♖h3 ♖c3+ 68 ♖h2 ♖cg3

“The alternative 68...♖e1 is also drawn.”

69 f7+ ♖g7 70 ♖f5+ ♖f8 71 ♖xg3 ♖xg3 1/2-1/2

“We agreed here, because 72 ♖a7 ♖e3 leads to a theoretical draw.”