

Another Look at the Traxler Gambit (4): 5. ♖f7 ♙f2 6. ♚f2

Maarten de Zeeuw

1. e4 e5
2. ♘f3 ♘c6
3. ♙c4 ♘f6
4. ♘g5 ♙c5
5. ♘f7 ♙f2
6. ♚f2



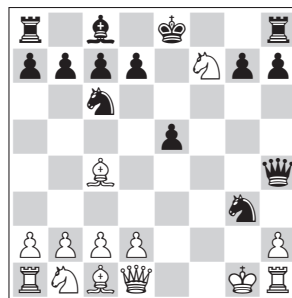
After dealing with the side-line 5.d4 in Yearbook 63 and with 5.♙f7 in Yearbook 65 and 66 now is the time to turn our attention to the main move: 5.♘f7! I believe that the diagrammed position after 6.♚f2? leads by force to a repetition of position. The fifth and final installment of this series will be dedicated to what I consider to be the refutation of the Traxler, viz. 6.♚f1! ♖e7 7.♘h8 d5 8.ed5

6...♘e4 7.♚g1

In Yearbook 55 pp. 108-111 Christophe and Moll attempted to prove that it is 7.♚e3 (a move long derided by theory) 7...♖h4! (7...♖e7? 8.♘h8+-) 8.g3 ♘g3 9.hg3 ♖d4 10.♚f3 d5 11.♖h4 e4 12.♚g2 0-0 13.♘c3 which refutes the gambit. In vain, in view of the line 13...dc4! 14.♖h5

♘e7!, as was correctly pointed out in the next Yearbook (Volume 56, page 12) by reader Martin Bennedik from Göttingen, Germany. The main line runs 15.♘e4 ♙f5 (only move) 16.♘fg5 h6! 17.♘c3 (only move) 17...♙g4! 18.♘h3! (controlling f2) 18...♖f6 19.♖g4 ♖f1 20.♚h2 ♖f2 21.♘f2 ♖f2, with perpetual check.

7...♖h4 8.g3 ♘g3



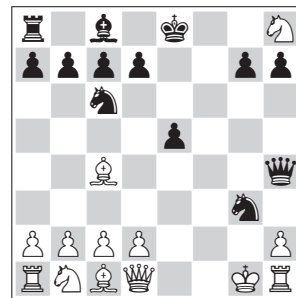
This carries 6 or 7 lethal threats: 9...♖f8; 9...♘e4 10.♖f1 ♖f8 or 10.♖e2/f3 ♘d4 11.♖g2 ♖f8; 9...♖c4; 9...♖d4 10.♚g2 ♘h1 11.♘h8 ♖c4; 9...♘h1 10.♘h8 ♖c4; and finally 9...d5 or even 9...d6 with the point 10.♘h8 ♙g4 11.♖e1 ♘e2 winning White's queen.

9.♘h8!

The only move, eliminating a dangerous attacker, and threatening 10.♖f3 (to revisit f7, this time with the queen, or to capture on g3) 10...♖c4 11.hg3.

For 9.hg3? ♖g3, which gives Black at least an ending with an

extra pawn, I refer to the gem Pionerskaya Pravda-Tal, corr. 1968/69 in the Game Section. Not better is 9.d4? ♘e4! (♖h1 does nothing but obstruct the white king, so 9...♘h1? 10.♘h8 is not logical and all attention paid to it by the theory books is a waste of energy; 9...♖f8? allows 10.♙g5!±) 10.♙e3 ed4 (10...♖h3 is also strong, e.g. 11.♖e2 d5 12.♙f2 ♖f8 13.♙d5 ♘f2) 11.♘h8 (11.♙d4 ♘d4 12.♖d4 ♖g4! 13.♚f1 ♘g3 winning the queen) 11...de3 12.♖f3 (12.♖f1 ♖g5 13.♖g2 e2! and it will be mate on move 20) 12...♘e5! 13.♙f7 (just to save the bishop) 13...♚f8 (the books only give 13...♚d8 and claim it is drawing, although 14.♖e3 ♖g4 15.♚f1 ♘f3! also looks winning for Black) 14.♖e3 ♖g4 15.♚f1 ♖d1 (picking up the c2 pawn first) 16.♚g2 ♖c2 17.♚g1 (17.♘d2 can be met by 17...♘d2, which is obviously impossible after 13...♚d8) 17...♖d1 18.♚g2 ♖g4 19.♚f1 b6, with ♙a6 to come.



9...d4!

The only move. Black not only stops the threat of 10.♖f3, but is threatening 10...d4 himself, thus forcing 11.♖h5 ♖h5 12.♙f7 ♗f7 when Black, with knight and two pawns for a rook, has an advantage due to this superior development. Not to mention 10...d5!.

A) The direct 9...d4? would allow 10.♖f3! ♘g5 11.♗g3+- (or other moves);

B) 9...d5? (this attempt to involve ♗c8 with tempo, threatening 10...g4! as well as 10...h3 or 10...d4 can be thwarted by accurate defence)

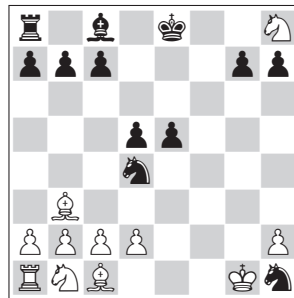
B1) 10.hg3? ♗g3 11.♙f1 h3! (here 9...d5 proves useful) 12.♖h3 ♖h3 13.♙g1 (only move) 13...♗g3 (13...dc4 14.♖f1 and Black must accept the exchange of queens or a repetition of positions) 14.♙h1 ½-½ Mutafov-Sapundzhiev, corr 1966/67. Here, too, Black cannot avoid both the exchange of queens and a perpetual: 14...dc4 (14...c6 15.♙d5 ♖f8 16.♙f7 ♖h3 17.♙g1 ♗g3 18.♙f1 ♖h3 and only 19.♙g1! avoids a disadvantage; 14...0-0-0 15.♗g1) 15.♗g1=;

B2) 10.♙d5? ♙h3! (controlling g2, thereby threatening 11...♗d4) and Black achieves a draw by repetition (but nothing more) after for instance 11.♙c6 bc6 12.♖e1! ♘e2 13.♖e2 ♗d4/g5. 12...♗d4 13.♖e3 ♗d5 14.♗g3 ♗d4 draws in the same way.

B3) 10.♖f3! (White consistently carries out his idea, threatening 11.♖f7 or 11.hg3) 10...♗d4 (10...d5 11.♙d5 ♘cd4 12.♖e4 ♗g5 13.♗g2 ♖h4 threatens mate by 14...♖e1 15.♖e1 ♘e2, but 14.♘c3 parries both that threat and the threat against ♖a1, and therefore wins; Heisman's 11.♙e2 intending

12.♖h5 is also winning) 11.♖e3 10.♖e1! ♗d4 11.♖e3 below. 11.♙g2 ♘f5 is much less clear, although Black should be able to draw;

B4) 10.♖e1! ♗d4 11.♖e3 ♘h1 12.♗d4 (the main line favoured by theory is 12.♙b5 after which significant improvements may be possible, e.g. 12...♗g4 13.♙h1 ♙f5 14.♘c3!? d4 15.♖e5 ♙f8 unclear or 14.d3 ♙f8 15.♘d2 ♗d1 16.♙g2 ♖c2 17.♖f3 ♘e7 18.♖h5!?, the text move leads to a simpler position) 12...d4 13.♙b3



13...h3 (theory gives 13...e6 which is met by 14.♙h1 0-0-0 15.d3 ♖h8 16.♙e3+-; Heisman has 15...f8 but then is silent on 16.♙g2+-) and now:

B41) 14.d3 (14.c3? 0-0-0 ♖15.cd4?? ♖f8 and mate, or 14...b3 15.ab3 ♘d7+-; 14.♙d5 c6= 15.♙c4 ♘c2 16.♙f7 b5; 14.♘c3 0-0-0= 15.♙d5 ♖h8 16.♙h1 ♘c2 17.♖b1 ♖f8; 14.♙h1 0-0-0= 15.d3 ♖f8 16.♘d2 c6 17.c3 ♘e2) 14...0-0-0 15.♙e3 ♖f8! (15...h8 16.♙h1 ♘b3 17.ab3 ♖f8 18.♘d2±) 16.♘d2 ♘b3 17.ab3 d4 18.♙g5 ♘f2 19.♙e7 ♖f4 20.♙h4 ♘g4=;

B42) 14.♘a3! is the right move to gain an advantage, e.g. 14...b3 (alternatively 14...0-0-0 15.♙f7 ♘b3 16.♘d8 ♘a1 17.♙f7, and White will be one piece up; 14...c6 15.d3 0-0-0

16.♘g6 hg6 17.♙h1±) 15.ab3 ♘d7 16.d3 ♖h8 17.♙h1 ♖f8 18.♙e3 d4 19.♙g1 and the pawns don't compensate for the minus piece;

C) 9...d4!

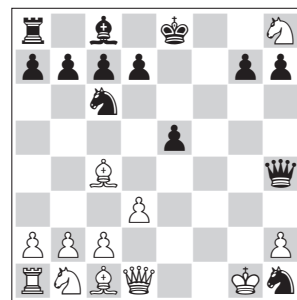
C1) 10.♖f3? (useless now) 10...♖c4 (White cannot reply 11.hg3 anymore) 11.♘a3 ♖c5 (11...♗g8? 12.♘b5! ♖b8 13.d3! ♖h8?! 14.♙g5!+-) 12.d4 (12.♙h1 ♖f8) 12...♖f8 13.♖f8 ♙f8 14.d5 and according to theory White is better, but after 14...d4 it is Black with his two extra pawns who is better, e.g. 15.♙e3 ♘f5! 16.♖f1 d6;

C2) 10.♖f1 ♗g4 (or 10...♗d4) 11.♙h1 ♖e4=;

C3) 10.♖e2?! d5! (ignored by Heisman) 11.♙b5 e4 12.♖f1 h3 13.♖f7 ♘d8 14.♙f1 ♖e1 15.♘c3 ♖f1=;

C4) 10.d4!? is the line which can also be reached by 9.d4? ♘h1? 10.♘h8; probably White is better;

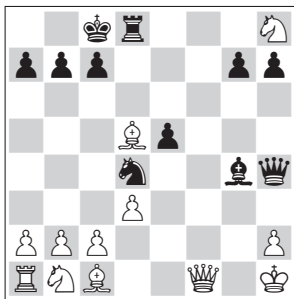
C5) 10.d3! (a very healthy developing move, protecting both ♙c4 and the e4 square, which is key in black efforts to give perpetual check after ♙h1. It is ignored by theory and by Heisman)



C51) 10...d2 11.♖f3 ♘h3 (11...♗g4 12.♗g4 ♘g4 13.♘c3+-) 12.♙g2 d5 (12...♘g5 13.♖f5 d5! 14.♙g5 ♖h5 15.♖f7 ♖f7 16.♙f7 dc4 17.♘e5! ♘e5 18.♘a3 is only slightly better for White, but

13. ♖f7! and 14. ♗f5! wins;
 12... ♗f4 13. ♖f4 ef4 14. ♗c3 d6
 15. ♗d5 ♖g4 16. ♗f4 0-0-0
 17. ♗g3! allowing ♗h8 to es-
 cape, e.g. 17... ♗g3 18. ♖g3 ♖e6
 19. ♗b6) 13. ♖d5 ♗d4 14. ♗f7
 ♗d8 15. ♗f8 ♗d7 16. ♗g7 ♗d6
 17. ♗f7 ♗d5 18. ♗c3 ♗e6
 19. ♗e4 ♗c2 20. ♗fg5! ♗g5
 21. ♗f6! ♗d7 22. ♖g5+-;

C52) 10... ♗d4 (the best reply
 to 10.d4; but White has retained
 his pawn on d3) 11. ♖h1 d5
 12. ♖d5 ♖g4 13. ♗f1 0-0-0



(in the analogous position after
 10.d4, theory claims White is
 lost; I believe the following
 move was overlooked) 14. ♖g5!
 (in the position without the pawn
 on d3 this would be the best
 move as well) 14... ♗g5
 15. ♗f7!+-;

C53) 10... d5 11. ♖d5 ♗d4
 12. ♖e3! (a direct result of 10.d3)
 12... ♗d5 (12... ♗e3 13. ♖h1
 ♖h3 14. ♗d2? ♗c5 15. ♗c3
 0-0-0 16. ♗f7 ♖d5, with equality.
 White should play 14. ♗d2!
 0-0-0 15. ♖c6 bc6 16. ♗f7 ♖f8
 17. ♗h5!±) 13. ♗h5 g6 14. ♗h7
 ♖e6 (14... ♖f5 15. ♗c3 ♗f3
 16. ♗f7 mating) 15. ♗g6 ♗d7
 16. ♗g7 and it's all over.

10.hg3

All alternatives lose but one.

A) 10.d3? (unguarding e2)
 10... ♗ge2! (another example of
 putting ♗g3 to better use than
 capturing on h1. 10... ♗h1?
 would transpose to 9... ♗h1?)

10.d3! ♗d4, which is winning for
 White);

B) 10. ♖d5 (the same evil)
 10... ♗ge2!+- 11. ♖f1 (11. ♖g2
 ♗f4) 11... d6! (Black does not
 content himself with a draw by
 perpetual check) 12. ♖g2 ♖h3;

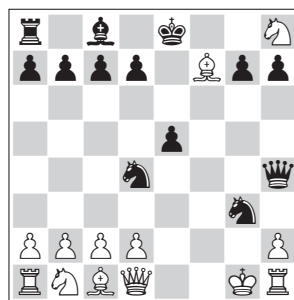
C) 10. ♗c3? (guarding e4
 against 10... ♗e4) 10... d5!
 11. ♗d5 (11. ♖d5 ♖g4 and 11. hg3
 ♗g3 12. ♖f1 ♖h3! 13. ♖h3 ♗h3
 followed by 14... dc4 and
 15... 0-0-0 16. ♗f7 ♖f8 also lose)
 11... ♗e4+- (the original plan;
 11... ♖g4 is also strong) 12. ♗f1
 ♗g5 13. ♗g2 ♖h3! 14. ♗g5 ♗f3
 mate;

D) 10. ♗g6? hg6 11. hg3 ♗g3
 12. ♖f1 d5!+-, White's extra op-
 tion of 13. ♖h8 is of no use;

E) 10. ♖g2? ♗h1! (threaten-
 ing 11... ♗f2 12. ♖h1 ♗f3)
 11. ♖h1 d5! 12. ♖d5 ♖g4 13. ♗f1
 0-0-0, with a winning attack;

F) 10. c3? d5! 11. cd4 ♖g4!+-
 (Angelov-Sax, Budapest 1967),
 for instance 12. ♖b5 c6 13. ♗g6
 hg6 14. ♗c2 (with threats against
 g6 and c6) 14... 0-0-0! 15. ♖c6
 ♗e2 and mate will follow;

G) 10. ♖f7!?



10... ♖e7 (now not one, but two
 white pieces are stranded in the
 upper right-hand corner.
 10... ♖f8 11. hg3 (the only move)
 11... ♗g3 12. ♖f1 ♗f4 is an im-
 mediate draw of course) 11. hg3
 (again the only defence against
 the threat of 11... ♗ge2 now that
 e2 has been unguarded)

11... ♗g3 12. ♖f1 d5/6 (trying
 for more. 12... ♗f4 leads to a
 draw by repetition) 13. ♗h5 (ig-
 nored by Heisman, who for that
 reason believes 10. ♖f7 back-
 fires. White protects h3 and in-
 tends to exchange queens with
 14. ♗h4) 13... ♗f4! 14. ♖g1/2
 and it will be a draw by repetition
 after all.

10... ♗g3 11. ♖f1

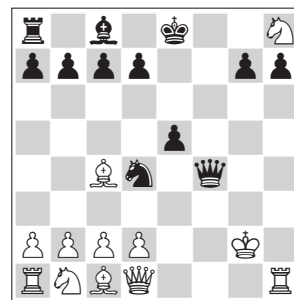
Threatening 12. ♗h5+-.

11... ♗f4!

11... d5? 12. ♗h5 (the option for-
 feited by 10. ♗g6?) 12... g6
 13. ♗g6+-.

12. ♖g2

Provoking the last error Black
 can possibly make.



12... ♗g5!

12... ♗e4?? gave rise to a re-
 markable draw in Nun-Trap1,
 Czechoslovak Championship,
 Brno 1964: 13. ♖f2?? ♗f4
 14. ♖g2 ♗e4?? 15. ♖f2?? ½-½.
 After the all too obvious
 13. ♖g1! the knight on h8 in a
 highly remarkable way inter-
 ferer with the piece play on the
 rest of the board by controlling
 g6. White wins.

After the text move, however, it
 is perpetual check.

Note that apart from White's
 alternatives 10. ♖f7, 12. ♖e1 and
 12. ♖g1, the course after 7. ♖g1
 was completely forced. Both
 sides continuously play the only
 move not to lose, and it is only
 fair that a draw is the final result.

**Pionerskaya Pravda readership
Tal, Mikhail**

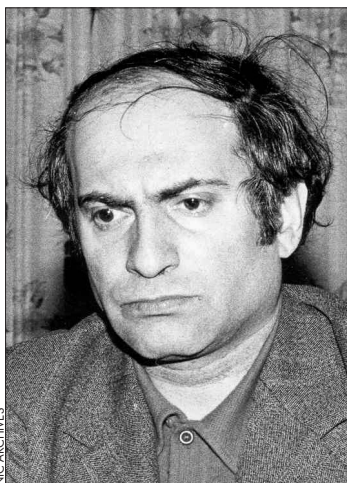
or 1968/69

Four cases are on record in which world top players (rating 2500) adopted the Traxler Gambit: Tal in the present game; Beliavsky against Karpov, Moscow (Spartakiad) 1983 and Anand, Linares 1991; and Shirov against Efimov, Gausdal 1991.

The white players in this game were the readers of the magazine for Soviet pioneers *Pionerskaya Pravda*. The game is also known under the name 'White Rook'-Tal: *Byelaya Ladya* was the chess department of the pioneer movement which in 1968 had just been founded. Later this department helped Dolmatov, Yusupov, Ioseliani, Salov, A. Sokolov and Chiburdanidze to make the first steps in their chess career.

The course of the game is hectic. After White fails to adopt one of the theoretical Traxler refutations by playing the drawing 6.♔f2? it is first a draw, then won for White, lost, drawn, lost, drawn, won, drawn and won, with a draw as the final result.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙c4 ♘f6
4.♘g5 ♙c5?+- 5.♘f7! ♙f2
6.♔f2?= ♘e4 7.♔g1 ♖h4 8.g3
♘g3



Mikhail Tal (1976)

Tim Krabbé, quoting the East-German periodical *Schach* in his book *Schaakkuriosa* p. 134-138, says that from this move on every time over 20,000 readers turned in the white move of their preference. If true, this game represents the largest chess event ever.

9.hg3?+-

Principally wrong. White eliminates a piece, which looks dangerous, but is not the main enemy. ♘g3 should try to achieve better things than eliminating the passive ♖h1. Illustrative in this respect is the line 9.d4? ♘e4!+- with the threat of 10...♗f2 mate; intentionally the knight does *not* eliminate the rook, as it obstructs the king. The text move allows Black's queen to penetrate deeper and force the white king to f1, where it is exposed to attacks by ...♗f8 and/or ...♙h3. In endings Black has a strong trump in the two connected passed kingside pawns.

9...♗g3 10.♔f1 ♖f8!

Now 11...♗f4 becomes a winning threat, and 11...♘d8 followed by 12...♘f7 as well. 10...d5? 11.♙d5 would be badly timed, as it would activate White's king bishop along the long diagonal: 11...♗f8? 12.♗f3± (by playing 10...♗f8 first this possibility is excluded), or 11...♙h3 12.♖h3 ♖h3 13.♙g2 ♗f5 14.♗f3 =.

11.♗h5

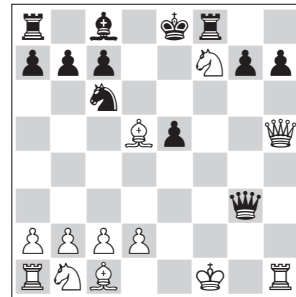
Protecting not only ♘f7, but especially the h3 square, and creating the option of driving ♗g3 away with ♖h4 or ♖h2. Black will also win after 11.d3 d5! (11...d6? 12.♗h5!)= 12.♙d5 ♘d4! (threatens 13...c6, 13...♙h3) 13.c3 c6! (13...♙h3? is still too early: 14.♖h3 ♖h3 15.♔g1 ♗g3 16.♙g2 and repetition of positions after 16...♗f7 or 16...♘e6/c2/f5) 14.♙c4 (14.♗e1 ♙h3+-) 14...b5!+-.

11...d5!

Analysed in 1955 by the Czech Rohlicek in *Šachovy Sbornik*. Other moves like 11...d6? and

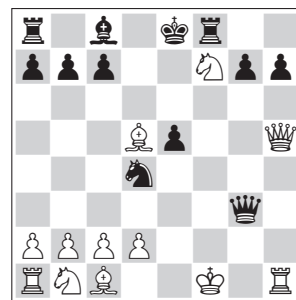
11...♘d4? do not yield more than a draw.

12.♙d5



12...♘d4?+-

Black can win by 12...♘b4! 13.♙c4 (13.♙b3 ♙g4 14.♗h4=; 13...♘c2! 14.♙a4 c6+-; 13.♘c3 ♘d5 14.♘e2 ♗g4 15.♗e5 ♙e6 16.♖h7 ♖f7 17.♔e1 0-0-0 18.d3 ♙f5+-) 13...b5! 14.♙b5 (14.♙b3 ♘c2! 15.d4 ♘d4!+-) 14...c6 15.♙c4 ♘d5+-, as had been published by Rohlicek and others. Possibly when playing this game Tal did not have theory at hand. The text move hold the threat of ...♙g4, preferably preceded by 13...c6 (so f3 will no longer be protected).



13.♗h2?±

Correct was 13.♘c3! which protects e2 (useful in case of ...♙g4), clears b1 for ♖a1 in case of ...♘c2, and creates the option ♘e4 (eventually ♘e2) to chase the queen away from her dominant position. Khalifman et al. in their monumental Tal-biography then give 13...c6 (13...♙g4 14.♗h2+-; 13...♙e6 14.♘e2+- or 14.♙e6

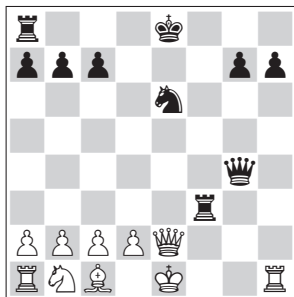
♟e6 15.♟e2!+-) 14.♞c4 (or directly 14.♟e4!?) ♜f4 15.♔g2 cd5 16.♟ed6 ♟e7 17.d3 ♜g4 18.♜g4 ♞g4 19.♟e5 ♟d6 20.♟g4 ♟c2 21.♞d2 with a piece for two pawns; this should also be won) 14...b5 15.♟e4 ♜f4 (15...♞g4 16.♟g3 ♞h5 17.♞h5 bc4 18.♔g2+-) 16.♟g1 bc4 17.d3 ♜g4 18.♜g4 ♞g4 19.♟fd6+-.

13...♜g4!?=

Black can regain material by 13...♜h2 14.♞h2 ♟c2 15.♞f2 ♟a1 16.♟e5 (with two pieces for a rook and two pawns; White will not be able to capture ♟a1) 16...♞h3+, but that only leads to simplification.

14.♜e5 ♞e6 15.♞e6 ♜f3

The third piece sacrifice in the game. Black could regain two of the three invested pieces with 15...♟e6 16.♟e1 ♞f7 17.♜e2! (17.♟c3? ♞e7 18.♟d5 ♜g2 and Black gets an extra pawn, e.g. 19.♞f1 ♜d5!) 17...♞f3!. His compensation for the remaining piece is then sufficient for a draw:



A) 18.♞f1 ♜h4= 19.♟d1 ♞f1 20.♜f1 ♜g4/h5, or 19.♞f2 ♞f2 20.♜f2 ♜h1 21.♜f1 ♜h4, in both cases with a perpetual;

B) 18.d4 0-0-0 19.c3 ♟c5= 20.♟d2 ♟d3 21.♟d1 ♟f2 22.♟e1 (not 22.♟c2?? ♞c3+-) 22...♟d3, with a repetition of position;

C) 18.d3 0-0-0 19.♞e3 ♟f4 20.♞f4 ♜f4 21.♟d1 ♞f2 22.♜e1 g5 23.♟c3 ♜f3 24.♟c1 ♜g2=.

But that would imply that ♟d4 would temporarily leave its active position on d4. Instead Tal opts for an attack of queen and knight

against the white king, which can result in nothing more than a draw as long as ♜e5 protects the only potential mating square (g3).

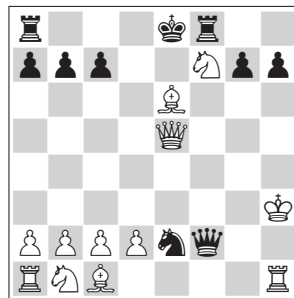
16.♟g1 ♟e2!

16...♜d1? 17.♟h2! ♟f3 18.♔g2 would only help White.

17.♟h2

At this point White does not have much of a choice. After 17.♜e2? ♜e2 18.♞b3 for a brief moment he has four minor pieces for queen and pawn, but his backward development tells against him after 18...♞f7! 19.♞f7 ♟f7, e.g. 20.♟c3 ♜g4 21.♟h2 ♟g8 22.♞f1 ♞e8+-.

17...♜f2 18.♟h3



18...♜f3??+-

Correct was 18...♞f7! 19.♞f7 (after 19.♞g4/c4 ♞e7 the rook protects ♟e2) 19...♟f7 20.♜e3 (20.d3/d4 ♜f3 21.♟h2 ♜f2 22.♟h3 repetition of position; 20.♞h2 ♜f1 21.♟g4 ♜g1 22.♟h5 ♟g3 23.♟h4 ♜h2 24.♟g4 h5 25.♟f3 ♜h1 26.♟g3 ♜g1 perpetual) 20...♟f4 21.♟g4 ♜g2 22.♜g3 (22.♟f4 g5 23.♟f5 ♜d5 24.♟g4 ♜g2 and repetition, e.g. 25.♜g3 ♜e4) 22...♜h1 23.♜f4 ♟g8 24.♟c3 ♞f8 25.♜c4 ♟h8 26.♜e2 ♜g1 27.♟h3 ♜h1 28.♟g3 ♜g1 29.♟h3 with a draw by repetition.

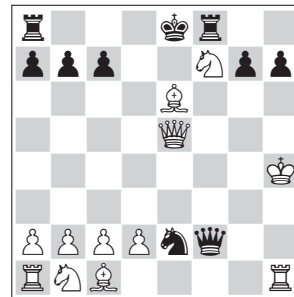
Alternatively, 29.♜g2?! ♜e1 30.♟h3 ♞f4 or 30.♟g4 ♞f2, results in a kind of ending with rook, bishop and knight vs. queen and pawn, in which White is underdeveloped and Black has the two connected passed kingside pawns mentioned before; if necessary Black has a perpetual.

19.♟h4!

Exploiting the turn 19...♜h1??

20.♞h3 ♟f7 21.♜e6 mate.

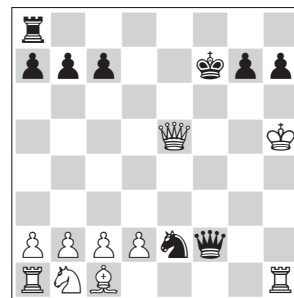
19...♜f2



20.♟h5?=-

Khalifman et al. rightly suggest 20.♟g5! (with two points: the possible exchange of queens on f5, and the possibility to answer a queen check by a countercheck by moving the bishop; 20.♟g4 doing without the latter point wins as well) 20...♞f7 21.♞f7 ♟f7 22.♜f5 (this is the sort of simplification which Heisman tends to miss) 22...♜f5 23.♟f5 ♟g3 24.♟f4 ♟h1 25.♟c3+-.

20...♞f7 21.♞f7 ♟f7



22.♞h2??+-

Best seems 22.♞h3 (avoiding 22...♜f3) 22...♟f4 23.♟g4 ♟h3 24.♜f5 (24.♟h3?! is risky) 24...♜f5 25.♟f5 h5! 26.♟e4 (26.♟c3?? ♞e8! and 27...g6 mate) 26...g5 27.d4 ♞e8 28.♟f3 ♞e1! (with the idea 29...♞g1, to control g3, and 30...g4, to keep White's king away from the pawns) 29.♟d2 (29.♟c3 ♞g1 30.b3 g4 31.♟e3 h4 32.♞b2 ♞g3 33.♟d2

♖g2 34.♘e2? ♘f4!—+ 35.♞e1 ♘e2 36.♞e2 h3, queening) 29...♞g1 30.b3 g4 31.♙e2 g3 32.♘f3 ♞h1 33.♘e5 ♙e8 34.♙f3 h4 and White can make no progress (35.♙b2? ♘g5 and 36...g2 even loses) because Black has 35...♘f4 36.♙f4 ♞f1 37.♘f3 g2 which forces 38.♙e3 (38.♙g4? ♞f3!—+) 38...♞a1 39.♘g1=.

22...♞f3! 23.♙h4

23.♙g5 h6 is immediately mate.

23...g5

An equally winning alternative is 23...♘f4, threatening 24...♘g6 and mate. There are only two replies:

A) 24.♞f5 ♙g8 (threatening 25...h6 and ...g5) 25.♞g4 (25.d3/d4 ♘g6 26.♙g5 ♞g3 27.♞g4 ♞h2 and Black is threatening both 28...♞f8 and mate on the 32nd move, as well as 28...♞h6—+) 25...♘g6 26.♙h5 ♞f7 (threatening 27...♘e5 28.♙h4 ♘g4 29.♙g4 when White still has rook, bishop and knight for queen and pawn but Black's queen will come to the bottom rank) 27.♞e4 ♞e8 28.♞e8 ♞e8 29.♙g4 ♞e1 and Black picks up ♙c1 or ♞h2;

B) 24.♞c7 ♙g8 (again with multiple threats: 25...h6 and mate on the 29th move by ...g5 etc.; 25...♞f8 and mate on the 30th move; 25...h5, which would force White's queen to capture on f4; 25...♘g6 26.♙g5 ♞f8—+; or finally 25...g5 26.♙g5 ♘e6—+) 25.♞c4 ♙h8 26.d3 (26.♞f7 h6 27.♞g6 ♞f8—+) 26...♞f8 (or 26...♘g6 27.♙g5 ♞g3 28.♞g4 ♞h2—+, or 27...♞f6 and

28...♘e5) 27.♙f4 ♞f4 28.♞f4 ♞f4 29.♙h3 ♞f3 30.♙h4 h5 and it will be mate on move 35.

24.♞g5

24.♙g5? ♞g8 and mate on the 28th move, e.g. 25.♙h6 ♞c6!.

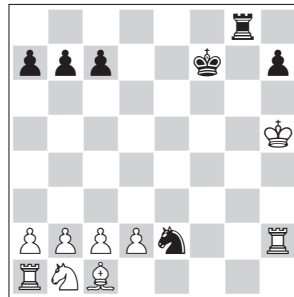
24...♞g8 25.♞h5

According to Khalifman et al. White still has a draw after 25.♞g8 ♙g8 26.♞e2, but as argued in New In Chess Magazine 1997/7 Black wins by 26...♞e2 (threatening to pick up ♙c1 after a couple of checks) 27.♘c/a3 ♞f3 (threatening 28...h5 29.♙g5 ♙g7 mating on the next move) and White must give the knight, or with 26...h5 27.♙g5 ♙f7.

25...♞h5

White should now be mated ultimately on the 31st move.

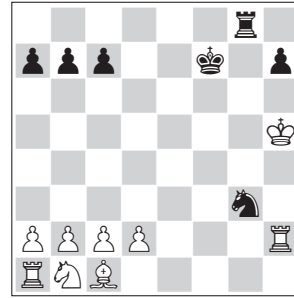
26.♙h5



26...♘g3??=

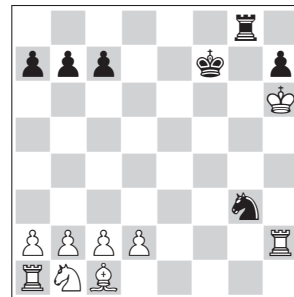
A few months later one of the 'White Rook' players, Vadim Brodsky, discovered that Tal could have won in this position. Smyslov published the lines: 26...♘f4 27.♙h6 (27.♙h4 h5! and the threat of 28...♞g4 mate is impossible to parry) 27...♞g6! 28.♙h7 ♞g7!

29.♙h6 (29.♙h8 ♘g6 mate) 29...♙g8! and now the mate on g6 is impossible to parry.



27.♙h6??—+

Necessary was 27.♙h4 ♘f5 28.♙h5 (28.♙h3?? ♞g3 mate) 28...h6 (threatens mate) with a draw after 29.d3 or 29.d4. A last winning attempt is 29.♞g2 (clearing h2 for the king) 29...♞g2 30.d3 ♞g3 (controlling h3, with the idea 31...♘g7 32.♙h4 ♘f5) 31.♙h6 (controlling g7), but 31...♞g1 with a pin along the first rank deprives White from all winning prospects.



27...♘f5??=

27...♞g6! 28.♙h7 ♘e4! and mate on the 32nd move.

28.♙h7 ♞g7 29.♙h8 1/2-1/2