The King's Indian
According to Tigran Petrosian



Igor Yanvarjov

Preface by Levon Aronian

Foreword by Igor Zaitsev

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by Igor Yanvarjov

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Preface

Levon Aronian

It has been a long time since a book was published that has addressed a specialized topic rather than a standard theme in depth. Tigran Vartanovich Petrosian and the King's Indian Defense is the perfect combination! I am glad this book is being published, because whenever the King's Indian Defense became a topic of conversation, my coach, Arshak Petrosian, always emphasized that Tigran Vartanovich himself taught him to play this opening. Arshak learned many ideas from his great namesake, and taught me based on the games played by the ninth world champion.

Of course, Tigran Petrosian is a hero for all Armenian chess players, and not just for chess players, but also for all of our people. He is remembered and loved. In Yerevan, there is a Petrosian Street and a monument in his honor, the Chess Palace is named after him, and his portrait hangs in the tournament hall where I often played.

I always loved the book *The Strategy of Reliability*, which contains a large number of Petrosian's games with his own annotations. I have re-read it many times, at a young age and later, when I had already matured as a chess player. I cannot say that I have never tried to imitate his style, but it is impossible to replicate. It is possible, for example, to win a game in Kasparov or Fischer's style, but when it comes to Petrosian, his play is full of mystery. In my opinion, the 12th world champion, Anatoly Karpov, played the closest to Petrosian's style. I am not sure if other people, and, above all, Anatoly Yevgenyevich himself, would agree with me, but it seems to me that Karpov really learned a lot form Petrosian, and maybe even improved his style of play. Karpov "polished" Petrosian's style and brought it to perfection.

Petrosian's style is very unusual, even a little strange. I do not know any modern chess players who could play like him. Such an approach to the game is hard to explain, to put into words. Imagine sitting and watching a game. It seems that the player is very slow, he is waiting, and whatever he is doing does not seem right. But then you see that his position keeps improving and suddenly all of his pieces are at the best places! This style always feels like some kind of mysticism! It is such a constructive-destructive game.

In our age of computers, is it a good idea to study an opening based on games of a single chess player? I think it is very useful, because many strong chess players understood certain specific structures especially well and their play in the positions of this type remains exemplary. The King's Indian Defense is one of the openings that Petrosian interpreted very creatively. He kept changing his setup a little bit, trying to find original ideas. For example, as White, he often made the move Bg5, provoking the move ...h6, and then retreated the bishop. At first glance, this maneuver looks ridiculous, but there is a profound idea behind it. Of course, there is so much to learn from Petrosian, and not only in the King's Indian Defense. For example, he played the Caro-Kann Defense very well, particularly the variations in which Black plays the isolated pawn on d4. Take a look at the games of Armenian chess players: up to my generation, all of them played the French Defense "by Petrosian." Even now, Vladimir Akopian playes this opening exactly so.

No matter how many years pass, the mark left by Petrosian will not disappear! The current rise of interest in chess in Armenia would have been impossible without Tigran Vartanovich. I think we should all be grateful to him for that.

Foreword “From Seville to Granada ...

Igor Zaitsev

After agreeing to write a foreword to the interesting and detailed book by International Master Igor Yanvarjov *The King's Indian Defense according to Tigran Petrosian*, like the Russian epic character who stood at the fork of three roads, I had to think hard for some time. What should I tell the prospective reader? Should I share my thoughts on the King's Indian Defense, which has been analyzed and played for the past half-century? Perhaps I should convey my impression of this book in great detail. I know that the author worked on this book for more than a dozen years. Or, finally, should I take this opportunity to tell of a few episodes from my many years of interaction with one of the most creative and significant personalities of the modern history of chess, the 9th world champion? I think the answer is obvious.

In the spring of 1971, I was still a young master when, quite unexpectedly, I received an invitation from Tigran Petrosian to join him as his coach for the Candidates quarterfinal match in Spain against Robert Huebner. Do I need to explain that this was the first serious offer at such a level in the very beginning of my chess career as an assistant analyst? So, I had to go through a stack of all kinds of questionnaires for travel documents and get ready for the trip urgently: tidy up the chess notes, doublecheck opening variations prepared with the wellknown theorist and practitioner grandmaster Alexey Suetin, who was at the time the former world champion's permanent coach, etc...

The truth is, all of this easily fit the mold of the usual preparations, but at the same time I could not stop thinking about my inner lack of preparation for the fact that only in a few days I would be in the heart of Andalusia, in Seville, shrouded in literary and historical legends.

The reason for my worries would be easier to understand if we consider that, for Soviet chess players in those years, trips abroad were rare, even to socialist countries, and here is such an exotic destination! Nowadays, chess professionals who travel extensively go to the end of the world in search of prizes and honorariums without batting an eye. I just do not know whether to rejoice in such a dulling of the senses. Our generation must remember that, although at the time the relations between the USSR and Spain, which was still ruled by Francisco Franco, had significantly improved, because of political inertia, direct diplomatic relations between the two countries did not exist yet. France assumed the role of the facilitator, so every time our citizens had to go to the Pyrenees with a transfer in Paris! (By the way, jumping ahead, I would like to add that the official who issued our visas at the Spanish consulate happened to be a nephew of an elderly Spanish caudillo.)

So, that remarkable day of May 9, when the sky over Moscow was colored with fireworks in honor of Victory Day, the three of us, Petrosian, Suetin, and I, took an evening flight to Paris. In the air, either as a result of poor knowledge of the laws of aerodynamics or more likely because of an unconceivable distrust for them, I, using my passion for blindfold chess, always tried to focus on solving some chess problem to calm my nerves and to distract myself from the flight.

So it was this time, too. Somehow I remembered that, during our preparation, the three of us, discussing what the future opponent would play, agreed that, as White, he mostly prefers the move 1.e4. But sometimes he is ready for 1.c4 (in order to avoid certain undesirable openings, in particular, the Nimzo-Indian Defense) and also for closed structures. Regarding that, Petrosian said that he would not mind using his vast experience playing the King's Indian Defense, but first it was necessary to improve White's play against the system with the king's bishop fianchetto that Hubner usually prefers.

That is what I tried to do during the four-hour

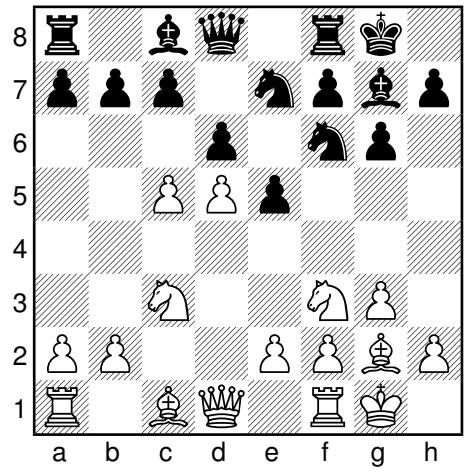
flight. It should be noted that, at the time, in this system, thanks to Robert Fischer, the following development for Black was quite popular:

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘f3 ♗g7 4 g3 O-O 5 ♗g2 d6 6 O-O ♘c6 7 ♘c3 e5

Unlike the most common (but even now, not clearly better) continuation 7...a6, the counter-attack in the center has its own, more easily understandable, logic. After that, Black makes the position strategically clear.

8 d5 ♘e7 9 c5!?

A retaliatory breakthrough in the center prescribed by the theoretical fashion in early 1970s.



Nervously thinking about this position, I suddenly realized that, with the last advance, White weakened control over the b5-square, whereby now Black has a rather unexpected resource. It might not rid him of all of his problems at once, but it would force his opponent to make a crucial decision. So, under the clouds (or rather, of course, above the clouds) a new idea was born - **9...b5**!?.

Right then, I took out a pocket chess set, checked a couple of attractive options for Black, and shared my findings with the ninth world champion, who was already ready to doze off in the seat next to me. After taking a closer look at the position, Tigran Vartanovich good-naturedly joked: "Do not be offended, but if this move was whispered to you from space (referring to the altitude of several thousand meters where our airplane was), it means that up there they do not have good positional understanding either.."

I worked with Petrosian from time to time since I was 20 years old, and his chess authority has always been indisputable to me, so I understood it absolutely clearly: the novelty was accepted for consideration, but, like the biblical adopted son, it would never get his blessing. However, even making no mistake regarding its true value, it was still possible to see something useful in it.

Without any hesitation, I soon began to use this continuation in serious tournament games against such aces as Leonid Stein, Rafael Vaganian, and Jan Smejkal. All of these games featured sharp play with mutual chances, and I could not complain about my position after the opening in any one of them. So, ultimately what is the verdict for 9...b5, is it usable or not? To clarify this issue, I need to take a major detour ...

Most likely, no one would dispute our claim, so obvious it is, that by its very nature a chess game is about achieving a decisive superiority by one side (White or Black) over another. In the most simplified form, it means that, on each move taking us to the desirable "excellent" position, we have two options. We can either destroy the opponent's structure (in this case the game develops by force with a predominance of combinations) or improve our own position (i.e., by conducting an active positional plan).

It is not possible to always employ only one of the two above-mentioned methods because a player controls the pieces of one color only. Yet each chess player, regardless of his practical strength, has a certain predisposition or, if you prefer, has a weakness for one of these two methods. So, the choice of method demonstrates the player's individual style.

I remember how, when I was a student in the 1960s, we, young players, naively tried to establish which approach was better: the aggressive style of Tal, who was literally sweeping through the opponent's position and not sparing his own or the opponent's pieces, or the carefully thought through strengthening of his own bastions of Tigran Petrosian, who valued each military unit? After all, while their creative natures were very much alike

and they both contributed to the unveiling of the essence of chess, these two geniuses were often at odds when it came to methods they employed to achieve their goals.

Subsequently, the ninth world champion told me many times that, in his opinion, chess was essentially a fairly simple game, but the players, instead of trying to find the best way to improve the positions of their pieces, often voluntarily go into tactical complexities without any justification, significantly complicating the game for themselves.

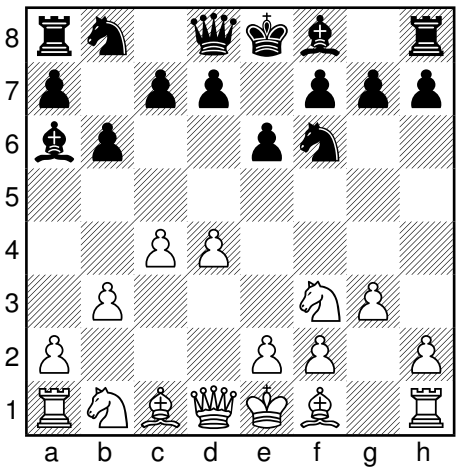
During the game, Petrosian kept a vigilant watch for preserving dynamic balance on the board, fully aware that only its violation may serve as a signal for the opponent to legitimately start combinational play. For himself, based on his resolve to deeply understand the subtleties of the position, he believed that he rarely had the need to resort to highly potent but risky measures.

Petrosian always tried to follow one of his main principles: to avoid unnecessary and unjustified risk. However, despite the natural caution that he demonstrated in his play, he has always been opposed to obvious continuations. I remember how he admired the decision that master Nikolai Georgiyevich Kopylov made when he refused to exchange his minor piece for the opponent's rook and wrote in his annotation that "I considered this exchange disadvantageous"

Thus, it becomes clear that the continuation I have proposed, in his view, was certainly considered of elevated risk because it was associated with the tactical strike 9...b5!?. Therefore, Petrosian simply did not see any logical reason to use such a demarche while other, more reliable, continuations were available. Moreover, his long-range positional intuition, which rarely betrayed this great chess player, told him that sooner or later the weakening of the c6-square would make itself felt and, in the end, could lead to its occupation by the opponent's pieces.

Of course, such a remote possibility did not worry me, a young and adventurous tactician, at the time. But as the years go by, while practical strength decreases, accumulated experience helps to better absorb lessons learned. For example, you begin to notice that a somewhat similar position emerges from a popular version of the Queen's Indian Defense where, after

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 b6 4 g3 ♗a6!? 5 b3,



Black's counterplay is largely dependent on using the weakening of the c3-square. So, step-by-step, every player gradually comes to the inner conviction that playing according to general principles is of the highest priority.

While this episode is insignificant from the point of view of the theory of the King's Indian Defense, I am intentionally dwelling on it. I think that this thorough interpretation can help the reader fully understand what to expect from this book. I would like to emphasize that, while nowadays it is easy to calculate specific tactical variations for, say, the King's Indian Defense by using computer software, who would take on the task of teaching the positional basics of this opening to a young chess player within a reasonable time?

"In my opinion, teaching positional play is the equivalent of teaching chess," Petrosian wrote in the preface to the second edition of the famous book by Nimzowitsch, *The Praxis of My System*. If so, I think that, in the history of chess, very few players fit the role of the Teacher with a capital T as well as Tigran Petrosian. Therefore, I recommend paying close attention to the advice and explanations given in this book by one of the most acclaimed virtuosos of positional play!

One more thing: learning from a great chess player's experience of playing a certain opening, we do not seek to learn variations that could win us a game or a few, but rather something much

more general and valuable. We start to pick up the correct direction of the strategy itself.

After Moscow, festive but immersed in its worries, the Paris of spring stunned us with unusual ads, incredible noise, and unfamiliar smells. Unaccustomed to it, I felt that it was a serpent tempter capable of confusing anyone. However, Tigran Petrosian, who had already visited the French capital many times, confidently navigated its urban turmoil. In no more than an hour on the metro (including a transition from one metro line to another) we reached our destination: a cozy family hotel on Rue du Bac, where Soviet chess players had always stayed for the past several years. In the evenings, we had dinner with the owner and his family. We still had more than a week before the start of the match, and our boss did not mind if we relaxed a little, even though he, as usual, had just a glass of dry wine. The owner, watching as Alexey Stepanovich and I put away strong Pernod, gave me a dubious compliment: "Oh, you drink like a grandmaster!" "Oh, no," I protested, embarrassed. "He is a grandmaster." And I nodded at Suetin. "No, no!" the owner laughed, now looking at Suetin: "Monsieur drinks like a world champion!"

By the way, in my whole life I have seldom met men as generously and diversely gifted as Alexey Suetin. He combined excellent play with rare chess erudition. New opening ideas were born in his head easily and consistently giving him a deserved reputation of one of the leading theorists and chess coaches. Suetin was fluent in German and could converse in another two or three European languages without a dictionary. But I was especially amazed by his encyclopedic knowledge of history and art. He was a great connoisseur of literature and theater and counted many actors among his friends. When it came to art, in my opinion, Alexey Stepanovich had no equal, which I had many opportunities to witness listening to his exhaustive explanations in the art galleries of the Hermitage, Louvre, and Prado.

Seville met us with a slanted rain, bubbling on the surface of the lazily flowing Guadalquivir. But then the sun came out, and the city completely transformed, as if someone had lifted a veil. The Spanish courtyards, covered with mosaic tile, enchant everyone who sees them for the first time, with their special color palette, so pleasing to the eye, evoking warm sadness. The exceptionally welcoming and friendly hosts (among them a wealthy and gallant Se'nor Alfonso and the witty Roman Toran, wellrespected in the chess world) were seemingly concerned only with making our stay more interesting. Most of these great people were far removed from the chess world and could not always understand our quest and anguish, hidden from the eyes of an outside observer. They probably thought that the match that just started would not change much in our recreational activities, since the games were scheduled every other day and each player could call two time-outs. But it was precisely because of their persistent efforts that, in addition to Seville, we were fortunate to see in the ancient capital of Spain, Toledo, all its luxury, including the immortal paintings by El Greco, as well as drive across most of the country and visit a colorful fiesta in Granada!

However, in the match itself, the internal stress inevitably grew from day to day. Although judging by the interim results, one could conclude precisely the opposite: it was a complete quagmire. The opponents had just made the sixth consecutive (!) draw and it seemed that so far neither one had any serious problems in the opening.

Yet all signs indicated that a critical moment in the match was coming. For a brief period, Rosy Armen, a famous French singer of Armenian descent, came from Paris with her producer to support her countryman. And I remember the night before what turned out to be the last and decisive battle: we all stayed late at the popular flamenco show, drinking light wine and pretending that we were very interested, gawking at the Japanese dancer (called "a transistor" by the local smart alecks) who was tap dancing dashingly and tirelessly.

In reality, our thoughts were far away: the match was nearing its end and we were worried that Petrosian looked visibly nervous. We could see the only favorable way out of this difficult situation – we needed at least one victory, not thinking about what would happen next. And as luck would have it, everything was over the very next day, when in the seventh game Petrosian, playing Black, made a mistake and found himself in a difficult position. It was, as they say, a blessing in disguise. To his



Alexey Suetin, Tigran Petrosian, and Igor Zaitsev. Seville, Hotel Lutz, May 1971

credit, on the verge of defeat, the former world champion did not lose heart. He played creatively in his opponent's time trouble and managed not only to avoid losing, but also to tip the scales in his favor.

This, to a certain extent, disheartening defeat affected Huebner so much that he did not find the strength to continue the battle. The next morning he called the chief arbiter, British master Harry Golombek, and declared his anticipatory resignation. For Tigran Petrosian, this success opened the way to the candidates semifinal match against Viktor Korchnoi, which was held shortly after in Moscow, in 1971 as well, which also ended in victory for the ninth world champion. But this, as they say, is another story ...

And even though after Seville I made many other trips abroad with Petrosian - Biel (Switzerland), Varese (Italy), Palma de Mallorca (Spain), Ciocca (Italy) - as it often happens, my memories of this one, my debut as a coach, are perhaps the most vivid and unforgettable.

From the Author

Time flies... Like a flickering footage on film, events, generations, and eras rush by. More and more new names appear on the chess horizon. However, the achievements of the stars of the past do not fade and do not become less important. The world champions' creative work is always important, because each of them, relying on the experience of previous generations and their own talent, brought to chess something of their own, uncovered some new facets, pushing the boundaries of understanding and defining the directions of the development of the game.

The name of Tigran Vartanovich Petrosian is connected to an important stage of chess history, the significance of which remains to be seen. Historical reference: Tigran Vartanovich Petrosian (1929-1984) was the ninth world champion, having won a match against Botvinnik (+5, -2, =15) in 1963. Petrosian held this title for six years, turning away Boris Spassky's challenge (+4, -3, =17) in 1966, and released the chess crown to him three years later (+4, -6, =13). In comparison with other prominent chess players, Petrosian's legacy has received little attention. His creative work remained obscure, which is understandable. His peculiar way of thinking, his unspectacular, rational, and cautious style – all of these made it more difficult to annotate and appraise his games. Of course, no one could explain Petrosian's play better than he himself, but he died too early, having left a lot unfinished. He left behind many admirers of his talent, chess players who knew him and learned from him, as well as his great ideas, profound articles, reflections on chess, and most importantly his beautiful games. In one of his last interviews, Petrosian noted:

"Whether a player leaves his mark in the history of chess depends not only on his results, but also on his creative work. For example, for me, it does not matter whether a player was a world champion. It is most important that he leaves behind great games. Was there enough written about Nimzowitsch in his time? And now so many well-known chess players (including, for example, Larsen and me) call themselves his successors. Bronstein was not a world champion either, but his games are no worse for that."

"Of course, it would be nice to see a book about me while I am still alive. But there is none, and I am fine with that. If I was able to create something in chess, it would be impossible to erase. The time will come, and chess analysts, historians, and researchers will put everything in order, and determine my place in chess. But if I could imagine that, say, fifty years after I die, no one would care about my chess legacy, I would be very upset right now."

I think it is time to take stock, as the big picture is better seen from a distance. Without pretending that it is a comprehensive study, the author (to the best of his modest abilities) has tried to tell about the creative work of the ninth world champion based on his trademark opening, the King's Indian Defense.

A few words about this book itself and its genesis.

It occurred to me to write about Tigran Petrosian a long time ago, in my college years. However, I must admit that, at the time, it was a rather random choice. When the time came to choose the topic of my thesis – and, as we all know, such things always come up unexpectedly – I almost subconsciously picked Petrosian's creative work; even I do not know why. And suddenly fate gave me an unexpected gift: somehow (as luck would have it, we were both members of the Spartak Sports Club) Tigran Vartanovich learned about it, became interested, called me, and offered to collaborate!

We met in 1977, as in a Hollywood story: an eminent grandmaster, renowned ex-world champion and an ordinary, unremarkable candidate master, at the time a third-year student at the chess department of the Institute for Physical Education.

Of course, interaction with such a personality made a lasting impression. I still remember Petrosian's open and kind smile. With gratitude, I recall how he fatherly watched over me and helped me in every way. He readily agreed to become my advisor and was by no means a figurehead. As he ought to, he wrote a review of my thesis, helped find reference literature, and brought bulletins from tournaments in which he participated. In June 1979, despite malaise and a heavy workload, he came to the Institute to personally attend my thesis defense.

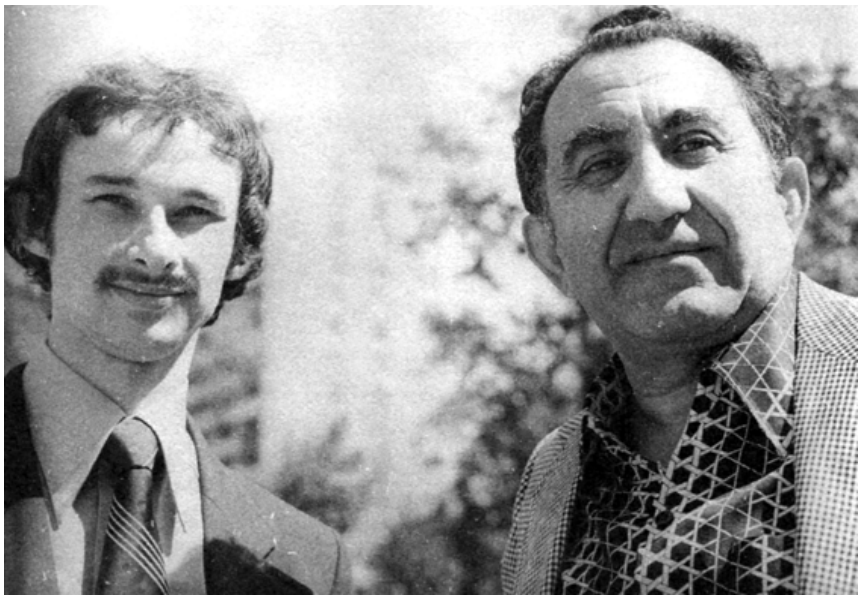
As the greatest relic, I still keep his "review," two typewritten pages with the autograph of the ninth world champion. In particular, he noted the independence of my conclusions and my "extraordinary talent as a researcher" that I demonstrated in the preparation of the thesis (I managed to "dig up" a game from one of his earliest tournaments, which, as it turned out, even Petrosian himself did not have). Over the next two years, we regularly met at the sessions of the newly created All-Union Petrosian school, where he taught the younger generation of Spartak players, and where the author of this book audited classes (by Petrosian's invitation). I prepared materials and reported on the work done; Tigran Vartanovich made corrections and outlined what else needed to be done. In between classes, we often went for a walk and discussed various problems. Petrosian talked about himself remembering the past and expressing his views of the current events that took place in the chess world. I remember the welcoming, creative atmosphere during classes, the close-knit coaching staff (Alexander Nikitin, Nukhim Rashkovsky, Albert Kapengut, Nathan Silberman, and Eduard Shekhtman actively assisted the ex-world champion), as well as the nice and talented students who came from every corner of the country. The first enrollment consisted of Viktor Kuporosov, Igor Novikov, Boris Kantsler, and Irina Chelushkina. Boris Gelfand, Svetlana Matveeva, and others joined later.

For one of these sessions, I prepared a few games played by Petrosian in the 1970s. As it turned out, they were mostly King's Indians. "Well, this is good material. Show it to the students, it will be good for them," suggested Petrosian. Naturally, he could not help himself, and he attended the lectures, inserting his own remarks as they went. I annotated a few more games for the next session. Then, more…

So, gradually, I accumulated about 15-20 King's Indian games by Petrosian (effectively with his annotations). It was the unique, or, as they like to say nowadays, exclusive, material, which served as the foundation for this book.

Usually, the opinion about a chess player is formed based on his selected games, but the author decided to depart from this tradition and include almost all known games played by Petrosian that featured King's Indian structures (including with colors reversed; there were about three hundred games total), bearing in mind Emanuel Lasker's words that it is impossible to objectively judge a chess master's technique until all his achievements, mistakes, and his unfinished research have been investigated and subjected to critical analysis. I think the reader will only benefit from this, which, for example, makes it possible to compare how Petrosian played the same position in various years.

Of course, some opening variations became obsolete, or rather fell out of fashion, but that is not the point. The author's objective was, first of all, to reveal the wealth of Petrosian's chess world and follow the development of the strategy of the King's Indian Defense (and many other chess issues) through the prism of Petrosian's creative work. I tried not to overuse computer analysis and not delve



The author with the ninth world champion, Moscow, Sirenevyi Boulevard, July 1979

into theoretical intricacies, because, after all, chess is more about ideas rather than long, complicated variations. The main emphasis in the annotations was placed on the typical structures arising from this opening and highlighting the critical moments of the game. On the other hand, I tried to preserve, as much as possible, what has been written previously by other chess players, in particular by Petrosian himself. I wanted to avoid clichés and change some preconceived notions about his play, which, unfortunately, proved to be quite persistent. Also, I very much wanted to show to the reader the human being behind the events on the chessboard with all his contradictions and emotions – triumphant, doubtful, fallible. Perhaps, it would all seem old-fashioned to someone, but this book was actually conceived as a narrative about chess in "retro" style.

The work on this book revealed a significant shortcoming of modern computer databases. There are too many errors! This applies to the moves played, names (first and last) of the players, and even the names of the competitions. At this rate, in fifty years, when all media is converted to electronic form, the virtual history of chess may become very approximate and only remotely resemble the actual chess history. By the way, I must say that it is time for the leading chess software companies (primarily ChessBase and Chess Assistant) to give serious consideration not only to the quantity but also the quality of the data they generate, which is then replicated and re-used many times. For example, to develop some standards and create something like a matrix – even if it were, for starters, just for the world champions. By the way, at the moment I am creating such an electronic "database-matrix" for Petrosian's games.

A couple of comments about the new trends in Russian chess literature.

Nowadays, it is common (and is even considered to be a sign of good taste) to badmouth the Soviet past as if the great chess school with its glorious tradition did not even exist. And many authors, afraid of being suspected of sympathizing with totalitarianism, do not spare negativity, focusing on all sorts of intrigues, scandals, and quarrels. Perhaps, this attracts readers, but I do not like it. Yes, it was a difficult time and not all of the grandmasters were defiant "fighters against the regime" then. So what? "Your epoch is not for trying. It is for living and for dying." *[From a Russian poem by Alexander Kushnir translated by Alexander Givental – translator]*. By the way, those who now boast about their "dissident" and "heroic" past sometimes mislead or greatly exaggerate.

And another phenomenon (often demonstrated by young authors) is a sort of patronizing tone that recently flooded the world wide web and the pages of printed publications. Highly respected, distinguished, and, if I dare say, great chess players are unceremoniously called Misha, Tolik, or Vovik *(diminutives of Mikhail, Anatoly, and Vladimir respectively – translator)*. It seems to me that this is either a lack of good manners or a false sense of creative freedom. Let me assure the reader that there is nothing like that in this book, and, of course, no "seamy side" of life.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who in any way contributed to the writing and publication of this book, and especially:

– to Levon Aronian, a representative of the "new wave" of Armenian chess players and one of the most prominent modern grandmasters, for his words of support and encouragement;

– to the well-known journalist Vladimir Barsky, who graciously agreed to take care of preparing the book for publication;

– to grandmaster Igor Zaitsev, "a man of the era," a remarkable chess player and writer, for an excellent essay, valuable advice, and analysis;

– to my "support group," who also served as a kind of "department of quality control," Pavel Kolmakov, Vassily Mirokov, and Mikhail Pilchin, for showing enthusiasm and conscientious work;

– to my wife, Tamara, invaluable friend and helper, and our son Vladislav, who provided perfect solutions to technical issues.

I am excited to bring my first book for the reader to judge and hope that the future reader will be lenient towards the, alas, inevitable errors and will help correct them.

Igor Yanvarjov
International Master

Part One
Tabiyas

What is an opening, comrades?...

An opening is quasi una fantasia, *comrades.*

– Ilya Ilf and Evgeny Petrov

As we know, chess theory and, more specifically, opening theory, is not a theory in the true sense of the word. Rather, it is created by players themselves, above all masters and grandmasters, as a generalization of their experience. Therefore, chess theory is a living organism that is constantly changing: novelties and improvements are added; existing provisions become obsolete; they are questioned, refined, refuted.

After Soviet masters, headed by Mikhail Botvinnik, declared the scientific principles of training, they made chess theory the subject of comprehensive study, and chess started moving definitively towards becoming a game of professionals. I think today no one has any doubt that modern chess, at least at the highest level, is a highly professional occupation. Every year, hundreds of games that are important for theory are played in dozens of tournaments, producing abundant material contributing to opening theory. Anyone who regularly participates in tournaments has to deal with the ever-increasing volume of information and to pay more and more attention to analytical work in preparation for future battles.

Different players explore the depths of chess theory and develop opening variations differently.

Some, such as Botvinnik and Kasparov, are “players-researchers.” They are at the forefront of theoretical knowledge, working non-stop in the quiet of their studies, coming up with opening variations and perfecting them, attaining the highest levels of analysis. No wonder that these players are responsible for the largest number of games that are decided in the opening.

Another group, the “encyclopedists,” consists of players who are able to work through a huge volume of information, skillfully selecting the most valuable and important; they have a great memory and erudition. The most prominent representative of this group was Robert Fischer.

And the last and most numerous group consists of players who can be called “empiricists.” They are strong practitioners who perfect their opening repertoire while successfully playing in a great number of tournaments. Of course, they pay attention to analytical work, inventing and improving novelties, but tournament play remains the most important. A tournament game for them is a kind of test, an exam on theory, where they defend their views and at the same time acquire new knowledge. I would place Tigran Petrosian and Anatoly Karpov in this group.

Petrosian’s opening credo did not form immediately. Certainly, his first mentors, Archil Ebralidze and Andor Lilienthal, as well as, of course, his collaboration with Isaak Boleslavsky in 1959- 1969 at the pinnacle of Petrosian’s career, when he became world champion, significantly influenced Petrosian’s views. Later, in his preface to Boleslavsky’s selected games, Petrosian wrote:

“Remembering our ten-year partnership, to my surprise, I realized that, on the one hand, my collaboration with Boleslavsky was certainly extremely beneficial, far beyond the scope of the analysis of adjourned games and opening consultations. But, at the same time, there were no specific exercises of any kind. Our chess sessions, in which other players sometimes also participated, were discussions by nature. Anyone was free to offer an idea and to defend it, at times facing rather sharp critique.”

“I have never favored placing opening knowledge at the forefront. The habit of playing a variety of lines without fear of bad positions gradually taught me to believe that difficult positions could be defended and develop the skills to play them. And so, when I, true to form, sometimes offered a move during analysis that was not of particularly high quality, Isaak Efremovich would not even argue, much less refute it. He would only say: “There is no need to prepare, only to play like that,” and the issue would be settled. But to an outsider, it must have been fun to watch

when we could not come to a consensus during the analysis of a serious problem."

"We would both get worked up, although almost never in all these years did our relations sour because of inevitable chess imprecisions. Isaak Efremovich, as the embodiment of tactfulness towards his mentor, and I, out of sincere deference to him, always respected each other's chess qualifications."

Over time, players began to use more sophisticated methods of information accumulation and processing. Young readers, armed with modern internet technology and computers, probably cannot clearly understand what our personal opening card catalogs looked like, say, thirty or forty years ago. So, here it goes: there were a few boxes containing 1,500-2,000 games, sorted by opening and the opponent, in addition to several "secret" notebooks and notepads with opening analysis. And that was pretty much it. Petrosian had such a card catalog, too. Today it is very popular to build all sorts of "opening trees" starting from literally the very first move. However, Petrosian did the exact opposite: he would start studying the line from the end. First, a critical position, or "tabiya," would be put on the card, and then new ideas, analysis and more would be added (I still have a few such cards). The author of this book has used the same principle. Whether it is convenient is up to the reader to judge.



Moscow, September 1974, USSR Cup. The author records Tigran Petrosian's game with Viacheslav Chebanenko. Avigdor Bykhovsky is in the background.

Chapter 1
The Classical Variation

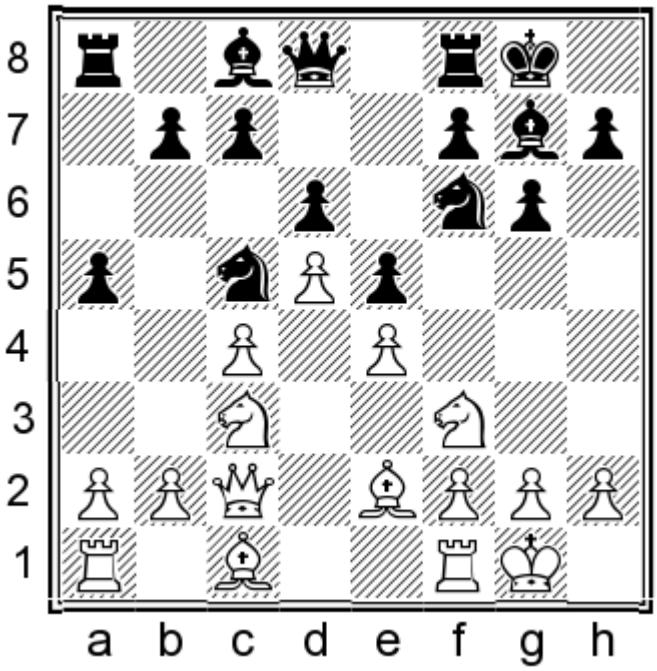
Let's begin our overview with the "classics," the most popular and logical setup in this opening.

Here, as in many other variations, Petrosian readily used rare and unpopular systems. Thus, over a number of years he defended Flohr's old continuation d4-d5, finding more and more



opportunities for White. One of the most successful of his finds was the system with 8.Bg5, known today as the Petrosian System. With Black, he was also not a slave of fashion, giving preference to the traditional method of defense: 7...Nbd7.

A1



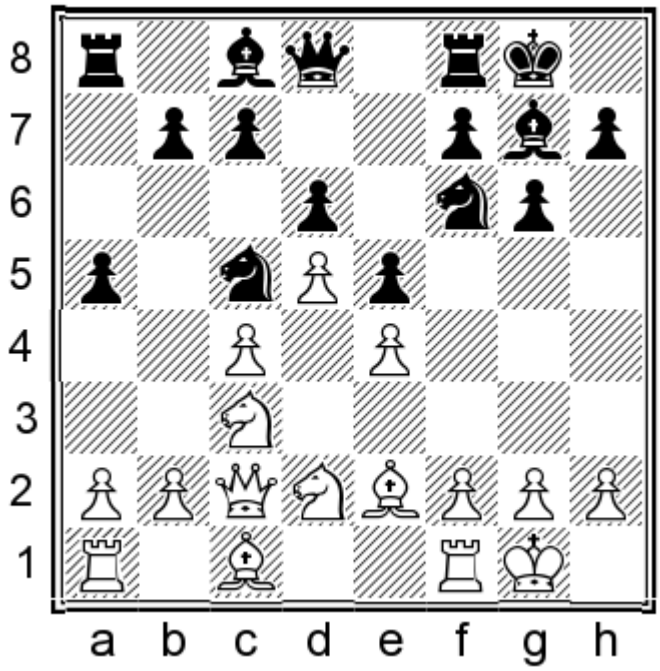
White to move

When this position just started to appear in tournaments, it was considered almost a must to continue with 10.Nd2 (see games A1-1, 2, 3)

or 10.Ne1 with the idea of promptly exchanging the knight on c5. In his game against Alexey Suetin (A1-4) Tigran Petrosian turned a new page in the theory of this variation, proving that the harmlesslooking bishop move on g5 is not so harmless. However, his relationship with the King's Indian Defense was rocky at first...

(1) A1.1 **Petrosian – Geller**
17th USSR Championship
Moscow 1949

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.c4 Bg7 4.Nc3 0-0 5.e4 d6 6.Be2 e5 7.d5 Nbd7 8.0-0 Nc5 9.Nd2 a5 10.Qc2



All the moves were made according to the theory *circa* 1949. Geller's next move was a novelty, which he had prepared for this game specifically.

10...Bh6!?

Using the knight's temporary stop on d2 to force the exchange of the dark-square bishops. Today, such an interpretation of King's Indian Defense has already become standard and even basic, but in those days its evaluation was controversial. For example, the well-known theorist Peter Romanovsky, thinking that the g7-bishop had to defend the king, annotated this idea as rather dubious, and the game's commentator, master Victor Goglidze, called it "original, but wrong."

11.Nb3 Bxc1 12.Nxc5

A positional error, very uncommon for Petrosian. However, being young at the time, he probably had not yet mastered all the subtleties of his trademark opening.

12...Bh6 13.Nd3 Nd7

The King's Indian bishop, after miraculously escaping death, soon starts to retaliate for the disrespect.

14.a3 f5 15.b4 Nf6 16.Nb2

The subpar exchange starts to bear fruit. White is denied the natural opportunity to reinforce the e4-square with a pawn, for example, 16.f3 Be3+ 17.Kh1 f4 and then ...Nh5, ...Qh4 with a typical checkmate idea on the dark squares. It seems that 16.Bf3 was still better, as d3 was the perfect square for the knight and it should have been left there.

16...fxe4 17.c5

White's last active move in the game. Maybe it would have been better to risk 17.Nxe4 Nxe4 18.Qxe4 Bf5 19.Qf3, a continuation certainly not for the faint of heart, but there is nothing decisive for Black.

17...axb4 18.axb4 Rxa1 19.Rxa1 Bf5

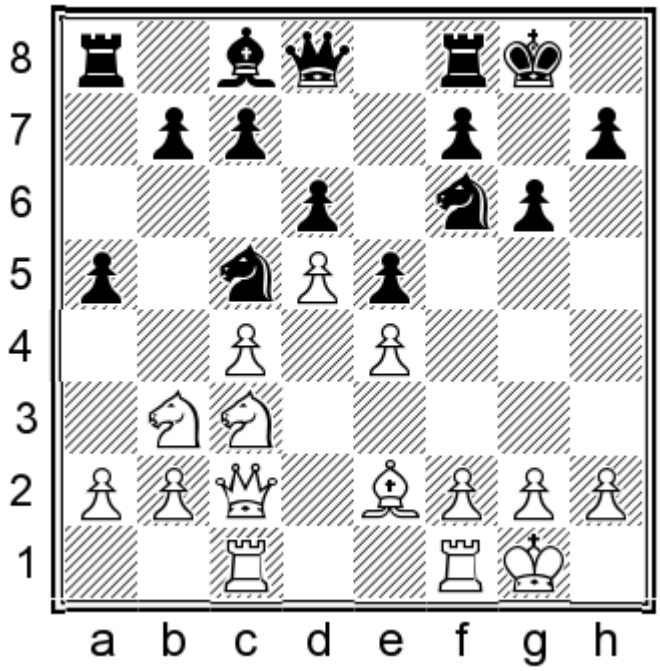
The rest requires no explanation.

20.Qb3 e3 21.f3 e4 22.Nc4 exf3 23.Bxf3 Ng4 24.g3 Qf6 25.Bg2 Bd3 26.h3 Qf2+ 27.Kh1 Qxg3 White resigned.

Petrosian liked Geller's novelty and added it to his arsenal.

(2) A1.2 **Flohr – Petrosian**
18th USSR Championship
Moscow 1950

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.d4 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 Nbd7 8.d5 Nc5 9.Nd2 a5 10.Qc2 Bh6 11.Nb3 Bxc1 12.Raxc1



12...Nfd7 13.Rcd1

White is patiently waiting for a move, ...f5, counting on the strength of the standard maneuver exf5 and f2-f4, but Petrosian finds a significant improvement that casts doubt on this plan.

13...Nxb3 14.Qxb3 Nc5 15.Qc2 f5 16.exf5 Bxf5!

An instructive moment. While the standard recommendation in the King's Indian Defense is to take on f5 with the pawn, in the absence of darksquare bishops, taking with a piece is usually quite good. Here, there are at least three reasons for such a choice:

(1) It is more or less clear that the weakening of the e4-square is harmless and even useful as Black aspires to exchange minor pieces;

(2) Therefore, it is clear that with the pawn on the f5-square, the black king's position would be less secure in the heavy piece endgame;

(3) On the other hand, the g-pawn is necessary to further take over the dark squares, while this plan gains a tempo because of the text move.

But what would have happened if Black had played the standard 16...gxf5 ? White would reply 17.f4, then, sooner or later, force ...e4, and move the knight to e3 and the queen to d4, getting a wellknown typical position. There was a time when it was used to trap players, because it arises from a number of variations in this defense. For example, I would like to mention Botvinnik's classic victory over Boleslavsky (Moscow 1940).

Petrosian's original reply must have caught Flohr off guard, and he wanted to end the game peacefully as quickly as possible.

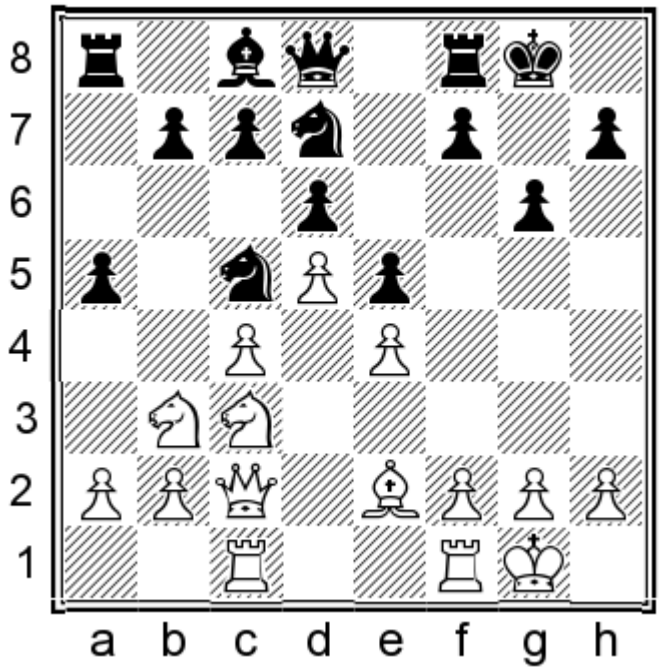
17.Qc1 g5! 18.Qe3 Qf6 19.Rd2 Bd7 20.Ne4 Nxe4 21.Qxe4 Qf4 22.Qe3 A draw, and a rather unexpected one.

What made Black stop fighting? After all, his position was clearly better, and he would risk nothing playing for a win. Perhaps Petrosian was in a peaceful mood because this game was canceled and took place on the rest day. After all, chess players are humans too.

(3) A1.3 **Bobotsov – Petrosian**
European Team Championship
Kapfenberg 1970

Up until the 12th move this game was identical to the previous one. Then the Bulgarian grandmaster made an attempt to simplify the position and to pave the way for peace negotiations, but Petrosian, who was in a fighting mood this time, refused to comply.

1.d4 g6 2.c4 Bg7 3.Nc3 d6 4.e4 e5 5.Nf3 Nd7 6.Be2 Ngf6 7.d5 Nc5 8.Nd2 a5 9.Qc2 Bh6 10.0-0 0-0 11.Nb3 Bxc1 12.Raxc1 Nfd7



13.Bg4 Nxb3 14.axb3 f5!?

His opponent's evident desire to draw provokes in Petrosian an understandable inclination to complicate the game. However, as he noted later, just as reasonable was 14...Nc5 15.Bxc8 Qxc8, with the idea of taking with a piece after ...f5 exf5 and to aim for a better endgame.

15.exf5 Nc5 16.Na4 Na6

Black wants to keep the knight, especially since it is not yet possible to win back the pawn advantageously. For example, 16...Nxa4 17.bxa4 Bxf5 18.Bxf5 Rxf5 19.c5 or 17...gxf5 18.Be2 b6 19.f4 e4 20.Kh1 with the idea of g2-g4. In both cases, White has counterplay.

17.Qd2

Attacking the a5-pawn and threatening a rook lift to g3 via c3, White starts forced play and achieves the desired simplification.

17...gxf5 18.Be2 b6 19.f4 Bd7 20.fxe5 Bxa4 21.bxa4 dxe5

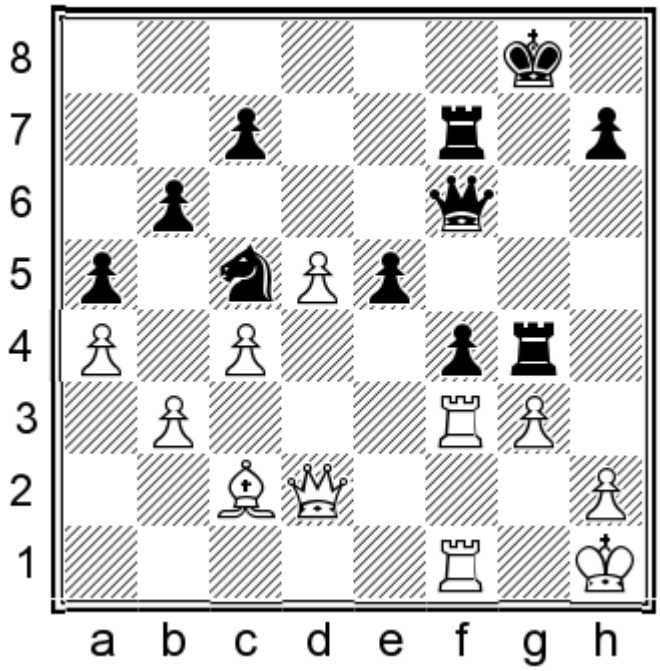
The situation has cleared up to Black's advantage: his central pawns are more mobile, and his knight, after soon returning to c5, will be stronger than the white bishop. However, Black needs another move or two to consolidate and to begin the actual realization of his chances. But in chess, one move is plenty. Now it is White's turn, and he still has more pieces in the game. Bobotsov skillfully uses this circumstance.

22.Rc3 Nc5 23.Rg3+ Kh8 24.Rgf3 f4 25.Bd3!

An important resource, possible because of a fine check on the 23rd move. Now 25...e4? does not work because of 26.Rxf4 Rxf4 27.Rxf4, and Black cannot take the white bishop: 27...Nxd3 28.Qc3+ Kg8 29.Rg4+ with a quick checkmate.

25.g3 is no better than the move in the game because of 25...Rg8 or 25...Ne4 26.Qc2 Ng5, and White's rook cannot stay on the f-file.

25...Qf6 26.Bc2 Rf7 27.Kh1 Rg8 28.g3 Rg4 29.b3 Kg8



White is effectively playing a pawn down, because he cannot use his material advantage on the queenside. Incidentally, this is when, according to the last move, Black decided to hide his king. Bobotsov does not wait for that to happen and opens the position.

30.gxf4 Rxf4

A solid move, so that "the team does not worry." With four rooks on the board, Black would have had more attacking chances, but White would have them too, for example, 30...exf4 31.h3 Qh4 32.d6!?, and the game gets more complicated.

31.Rxf4 exf4 32.Qg2+

Using the tactical opportunity that has arisen – the somewhat exposed position of the black king – White activates the queen and forces a draw.

32...Kf8

Bad is 32...Kh8? 33.Rg1 Rf8 34.Qh3 Qf7 35.Bxh7! with checkmate or 33...Rg7 34.Qxg7+ and Black will face a joyless endgame.

33.Qh3 Ke7 Draw.

The king cannot find peace on the other flank either, for example, 33...Ke7 34.Qc8 Qe5 35.Bd1 Rg7 36.Bh5! Qe4+! (but not 36...Qxh5? 37.Qxc7+) 37.Bf3 Qe5 38.Bh5 with repetition.

In the early 1950s, when the King's Indian Defense became a frequent guest at grandmaster tournaments, a variety of systems in this opening cropped up like mushrooms after rain.

It is usually an extremely rare opportunity to look into the "Holy Grail" of the chess master, his creative opening laboratory, to learn firsthand when and how he came up with the idea of a new move, system, or variation.

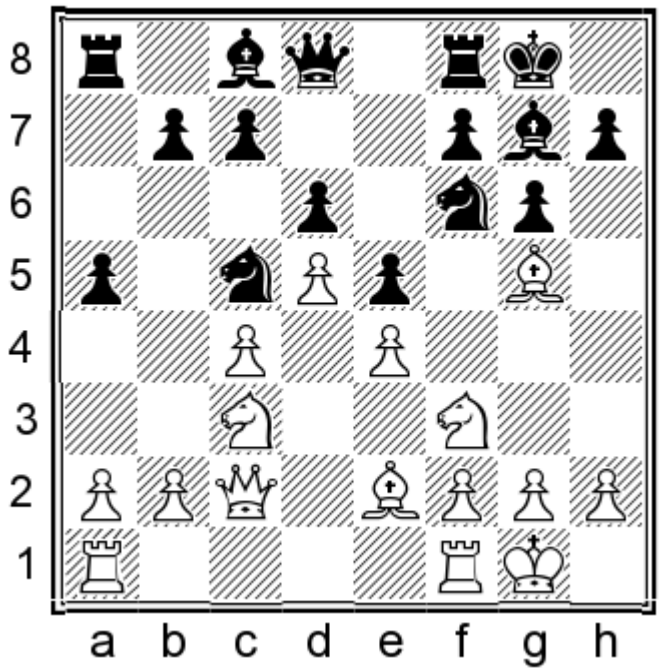
The case of the idea Bg5 in the King's Indian Defense is an exception. In the 1970s, Petrosian himself lifted the curtain, publishing a series of articles in *64* magazine, which was called "Why I love the move Bg5." Here is what he wrote:

"In 1946, someone (probably master Boris Ratner) unexpectedly decided to pin the f6-knight. After the natural reaction ...h6, he retreated his bishop along the c1-h6 diagonal and did not earn any advantage. In 1953, grandmaster Gideon Ståhlberg played Bg5 with White against me in the Candidates' Tournament, (see game 118), and then exchanged the bishop for the knight, trying to prove that White has good chances as a result of the possibility of leaving the opponent with a bad bishop on g7. Needless to say, all this occurred when the center was locked. This game did not make any impression on me, mainly because I already knew well how important Black's king bishop is when it has no counterpart.

"I first proved that the bishop move to g5 is far from harmless in a game against Alexey Suetin at the USSR Team Championship in 1954."

(4) A1.4 **Petrosian – Suetin**
USSR Team
Championship Riga 1954

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.e4 d6 4.d4 Bg7 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 e5 7.d5 Nbd7 8.0-0 Nc5 9.Qc2 a5 10.Bg5



10...h6 11.Be3

As can be seen, Petrosian followed Ratner's continuation, having found specific meaning in White's back-and-forth maneuver. The first subtlety is that it is necessary to retreat the bishop only to e3; the move 11.Bd2, for example, is immediately refuted by 11...Nfxe4! 12.Nxe4 Bf5 13.Bd3 Bxe4 14.Bxe4 f5, and Black regains the piece

with great play. The second subtlety manifests itself if Black goes into the critical variation 11...Ng4 12.Bxc5 dxc5 13.h3, and, since the knight does not have the h6-square, Black is left with 13...Nf6 14.Nxe5 Nxd5 15.cxd5 Bxe5 16.f4 Bd4+ 17.Kh2. Practice has shown that White's strong center more than compensates for his lack of an important bishop, although if Black wants to play aggressively, this continuation is not only possible but also necessary. Suetin however, coming across a new move, decided not to take risks.

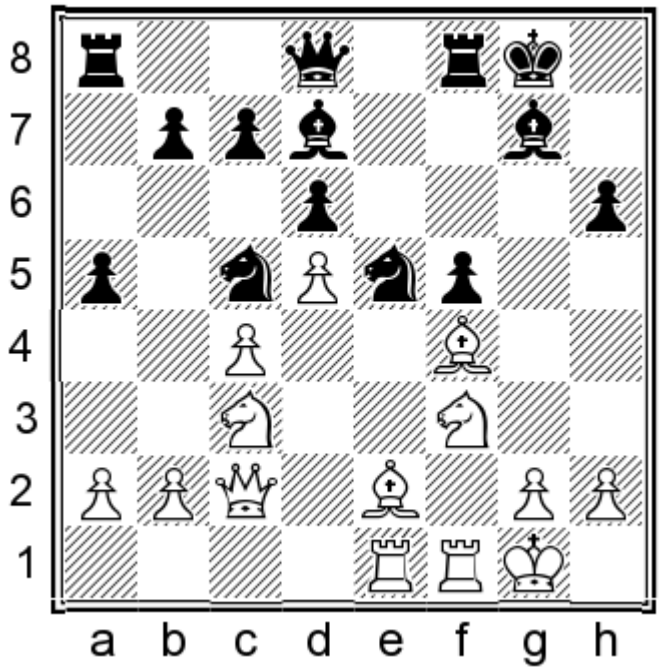
11...Nfd7

Black goes for a setup that was fashionable in those years, proposed by a great expert of the King's Indian Defense, Isaak Boleslavsky.

12.Nd2 f5 13.exf5 gxf5 14.f4 exf4 15.Bxf4 Ne5

All of this, including the unconventional exchange ...exf4, is according to Boleslavsky's recommendation. The setup of the black pieces looks very harmonious and would be quite good if not for a tiny "but": the h-pawn has to be on its original square.

16.Rae1 Bd7 17.Nf3



17...Qf6

Here is the specific proof. "If the pawn were on h7, 17...Ng6 would be a good move. However, now, after 18.Be3, Black does not have the appealing advance of the f-pawn in view of the loss of a piece." (Petrosian).

18.Qd2 Rae8 19.Nxe5!? dxe5 20.Be3 b6

The further phase is a beautiful example of play against "hanging" pawns: probing for weaknesses and a gradual build-up of strength (approximately up to the 26th move), increasing piece pressure on the f- and e-files, veiled preparation for a breakthrough (moves 27-31), and, finally, the pawn breakthrough (32nd move) and subsequent blockade.

21.Bh5 Re7 22.Bd1

If 22.d6 Qxd6 23.Qxd6 cxd6 24.Nd5 Re6 25.Nc7 White could force a draw by repetition but no more than that.

22...Qd6 23.Bc2 Ref7 24.Kh1 Ra8

Neither side forgets about prophylaxis. The purpose of Black's last move is to prevent the possible advance a2-a3 and b2-b4.

25.Re2 Qf8 26.Ref2 Nb7 27.Qe2

The hanging pawns are weak. The knight transfer to d6 conceived by Black will be countered by White with c4-c5 and Qe2-h5, further increasing the pressure. It is not advantageous for Black to advance the pawns: ...f4 gives White the e4-square, and the serious threat g2-g4 arises after ...e4.

27...Nd6 28.c5 bxc5 29.Bxc5 Rb8 30.b3 Qc8

Black's queen retreats, and after that Black's position is strategically lost. Instead, Black could have somewhat livened up the game: 30...e4, using the fact that the knight on c3 lost its support and cannot retreat: 31.Nxe4? Bb5.

31.Qh5 Qa6

An obvious trap: 32.Bxd6 cxd6 33.Bxf5? Bxf5 34.Rxf5 Qxf1+.

32.g4! f4 33.Re1 Qc8 34.Bxd6

Now the black pawns are easily blocked, and White starts to attack the king. The game ended with both sides playing inaccurately in time pressure.

34...cxd6 35.Bg6 Rf8 36.Ne4 f3

Taking on g4 is dangerous, for example, because of 36...Bxg4 37.Qh4 Rb6 38.Rg1 Bh3 39.Ng5! with strong threats.

37.g5 Rf4 38.Rg1?

"An exchange of pleasantries." Instead of the impulsive rook move, 38.gxh6 immediately won. Suetin could, in turn, put in doubt White's win by moving the bishop all the way to the fourth rank: 38...Bg4 39.Qh4 Bh3 or 39.Bf7+ Kh8!.

38...Bf5? 39.gxh6 Bxe4 40.Bxe4 Black resigned.

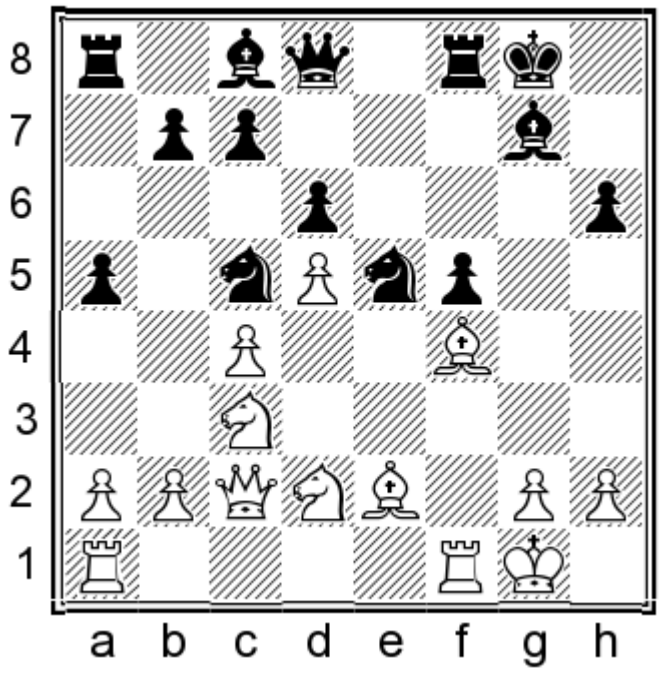
(5) A1.5 **Petrosian – Gligorić**
XV Olympiad
Varna 1962

This game is in many ways similar to the previous one: the same opening variation, the same tense and exciting battle over the hanging pawns; only the result is different.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 e5 7.d5 Nbd7 8.0-0 Nc5 9.Qc2 a5 10.Bg5 h6 11.Be3 Nfd7 12.Nd2

12.g3!? is interesting (Tigran Petrosian), with the idea of 12...f5 13.exf5 gxf5 14.Nh4!.

12...f5 13.exf5 gxf5 14.f4 exf4 15.Bxf4 Ne5



16.Nf3

Absentmindedly, Petrosian immediately moves the knight, forgetting to include 16.Rae1, as he had played against Suetin, and soon gets into a precarious position.

16...Ng6 17.Be3 Qe7!

Now the bishop on e3 is unprotected, and Black wins an important tempo.

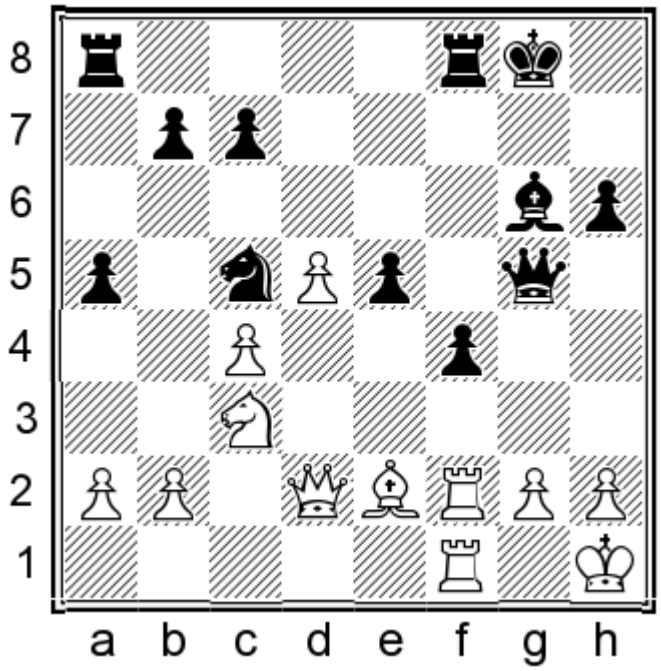
18.Qd2

The only reasonable reply. If 18.Bf2, then 18...Ne4 is unpleasant.

18...f4 19.Bf2 Ne5 20.Nxe5 Bxe5 21.Bd4 Bf5

In this system, White has a hard time gaining an advantage as is; but if he lets the pawn come to f4, Black should take over the advantage.

22.Rf2 Bg6 23.Raf1 Qg5 24.Bxe5 dxe5 25.Kh1



Petrosian wrote about how he evaluated his chances in this position and about the rather interesting further developments:

“An experienced chess player can immediately see that White’s position is quite difficult. Black’s pieces are very active and his central pawns are mobile. If he manages to play ...e4 after first placing the rooks on f6 and f8, it will become quite clear that White is not to be envied in this situation. Usually, when the opponent has hanging pawns, we try to force one of them to move (the f5-pawn moved to f4), and then place a piece between these pawns to block them. In this case, it seems that all White has left to do is to block the e4-square, but that is not so. Black has a very good combination of pieces. The knight on c5 and lightsquare bishop make this goal unattainable for White.”

25...Ra6

“Possible was 25...Rf6 and then 26...Raf8. The move in the game is more sophisticated. Svetozar Gligorić moves the rook on f6 along the 6th rank and at the same time eliminates the necessity to calculate the move d5-d6.”

26.Bf3

“It seems that White is making a mistake, because now 26...e4 is possible with tempo. But the thing is that then 27.Qd4 will follow. If 27...Nd3, White would sacrifice an exchange, and, on the other hand, the e4-pawn is under attack. If 27...Qe7, then 28.Re2 and it is a very sharp and tense battle. Gligorić is not in a hurry.”

26...Raf6

“It seems that White’s position is hopeless. Black plans to play ...e4 or first ...b6 and then ...e4. It is hard to see how to control the e4-square, because the rooks’ positions are so unfortunate that they cannot move to the e-file. If 27.Re2, then 27...Bd3, and if 27.Re1, it is necessary to take into account the move 27...Nd3. In both cases, White, at first glance, is in big trouble. Still, I played

27.Re1!

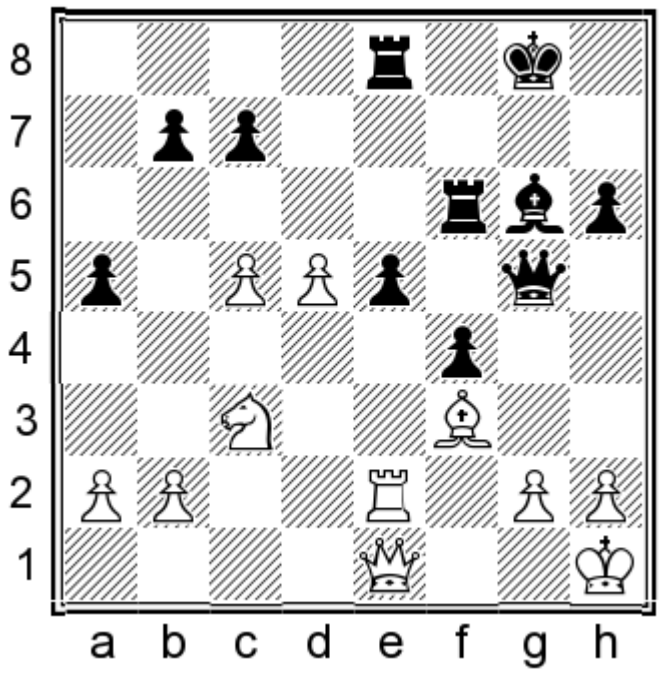
A purely positional exchange sacrifice. Moreover, White does not wait for the opponent to force him to make a decision, and instead tries to anticipate what will happen in a few moves and take measures in advance.”

27...Nd3 28.Rfe2 Nxe1 29.Qxe1

“The e5-pawn is hanging. If it is lost, White will now have a pawn for the exchange.”

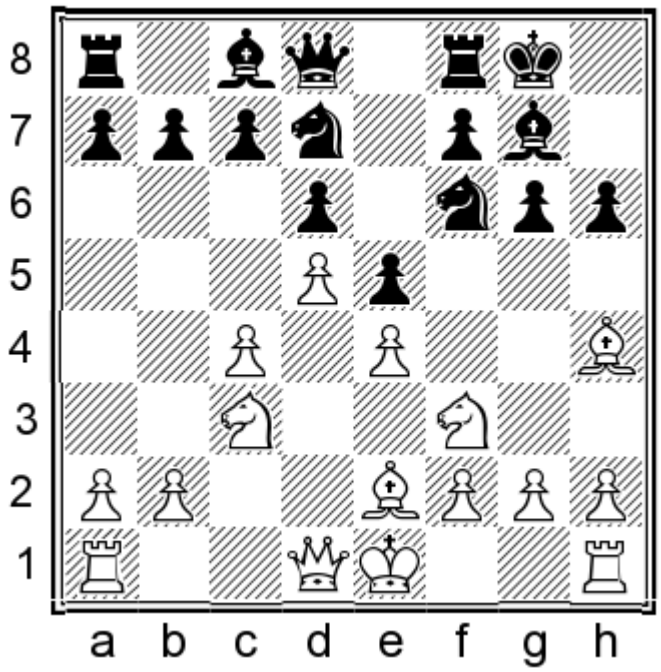
29...Re8 30.c5

“Black is up an exchange. But if you sit down and play this type of position, you’ll see that you would not notice the exchange.”



“At any rate, Gligorić found nothing better than **30...Rff8**. I replied **31.Ne4** at which point he offered a draw. White has no reason to play for a win, hence a draw.”

A2



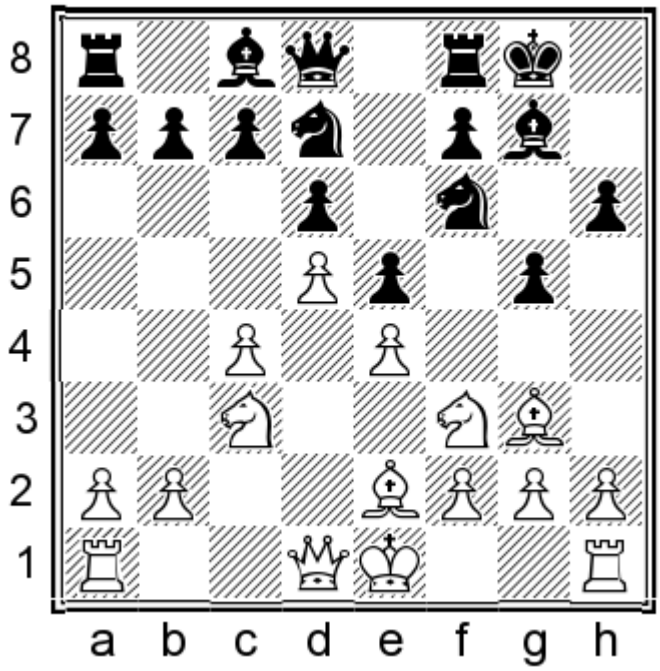
Black to move

One of the main positions of Petrosian's system.

What does White achieve by pinning the knight on f6? Steinitz used to mark such pins with a question mark, because they do not present any specific threat and give the opponent the opportunity to force the bishop back with tempi. However, in this position, it is not so simple. If the g5-pawn moves it would greatly weaken the standard move ...f5, and if this last move is prepared in some other way, it will be necessary to spend more effort – in any case, one move more than Black usually needs in this system.

(6) A2.1 **Petrosian – Suetin**
25th USSR Championship
Riga 1958

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 e5 7.d5 Nbd7 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 g5 10.Bg3



10...Nh5 11.0-0

I would like to take this opportunity to restore “historical justice” for the continuation 11.h4, known in theory as the Keres Attack. According to Petrosian, he took a quick look at this idea even before his match against Mikhail Botvinnik. But it was finally perfected after a joint analysis with Paul Keres, a remarkable chess player and Petrosian’s long-time friend. By chance, their tournament careers intersected: first they both played in Los Angeles, and then – straight off the plane – started playing in the Spartakiad of the Peoples of the USSR. All this time, the work continued. After it was completed, they made a gentleman’s agreement that each of them had the right to use the analysis at the earliest opportunity. As we know, Keres got this opportunity first in his game against Aleksandar Matanović (Moscow 1963). This is the “birth” story of one of the most important theoretical novelties of 1963.

Going back to the game, let’s note that 11.Nd2 is often played instead of castling, but the combination 11.Nxe5 does not work: 11...Nxg3 12.Nxd7 Nxe2!, and the black knight is more “gluttonous.”

11...a5

A waste of time. As we will see, the knight on c5 is going to stay there for just one move, so it does not need to be protected by the pawn. 11...Nf4 12.Nd2 Nc5 and so on would be in the spirit of the position. The reader will see this development in the game 11.

12.Ne1

Promptly responding to Black’s inaccuracy by changing the knight’s route.

12...Nf4 13.Nc2

“Probably, the immediate 13.Bg4 is not bad either, but White prefers to transfer the knight to e3 first, and only then, having established firm control of the f5- and g4-squares, threaten the positional maneuver Be2-g4.” (Tigran Petrosian)

13...Nc5 14.Ne3 Nxe4

Black went for this combination out of desperation, for he could not allow the exchange of his main defender of the light squares.

15.Nxe4 Nxe2+ 16.Qxe2 f5 17.f3!

The best of White's numerous opportunities.

17...f4

After 17...fxe4 18.fxe4, the prospect of the knight invasion on f5 determines White's advantage. In such positions, the move ...Rf4, etc. is sometimes possible, with the goal of activating the dark-square bishop at the cost of the exchange, but here it is nothing more than an idea because (18...Rf4) 19.Bxf4 exf4 20.Nf5 is clearly disadvantageous for Black. Also, White might not accept the sacrifice.

18.c5!

Again, a very good, and, most importantly, timely move: if Black had had time to play ...b6, the speed of the attack would sharply decrease.

18...fxe3

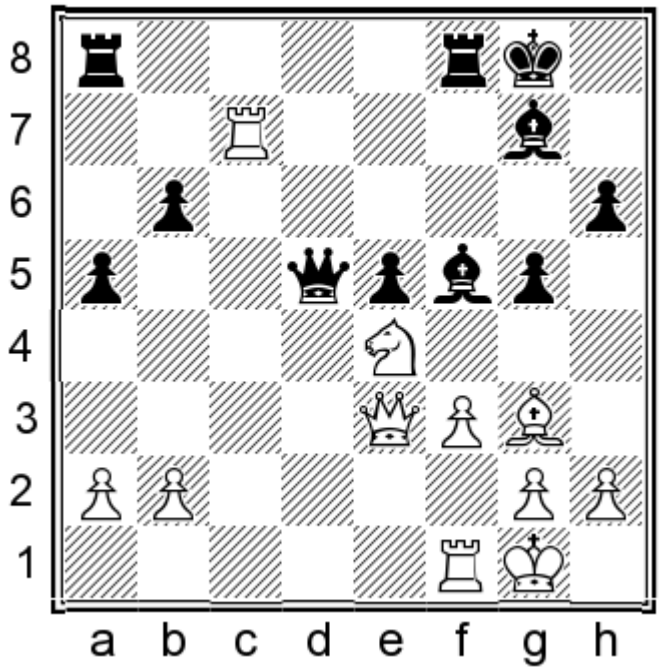
In case of 18...fxg3 19.hxg3, followed by g3-g4, the white knights are clearly more powerful than the black bishops.

19.Qxe3 Bf5 20.Rac1 Qd7 21.Rc4!

It is too early for the invasion yet: 21.cxd6 cxd6 22.Qb6?! Bxe4 23.fxe4 Qa4, and Black starts to stir up trouble, attacking the pawns on a2 and e4 and threatening ...Qb4. Therefore, for now, White makes a preparatory move with the intention of doubling or even tripling his major pieces on the c-file.

In response, Suetin makes a bold attempt to initiate counterplay, but does not carry it to its logical conclusion.

21...dxc5 22.Qxc5 b6 23.Qe3 Qxd5 24.Rxc7



24...Qd4

Of course, it is not worth taking on a2. Suetin suggested 24...Qxa2 25.Re1 (25.Nd6 Qd5! 26.Re1!, and 26...Qxd6 or 26...Qd4 does not work because of 27.Rxg7+!).

25.Bf2 Qxe3

At this point, it is imperative to calculate variations and boldly take the pawn: 25...Qxb2!. Now the “frontal attack” 26.Nxg5 hxg5 27.Qxg5 can be refuted by 27...e4!, and White would have to fight to prove his advantage. Going into the endgame condemns Black to a difficult and unpromising defense.

26.Bxe3 Be6 27.a3 b5 28.Bd2!

White outlines a perfect alignment of forces: the bishop moves to c3, where it will take aim at the a5- and e5-pawns, then the rook will support it from the e1-square, and then another tandem, rook and knight, will start to attack the Black’s weaknesses from behind.

28...Rfd8 29.Bc3 a4 30.Re1 Rac8 31.Rb7!

It is important to save the active rook from exchange because after 31...Rb8, White would have a “little combination”: 32.Rxg7+ Kxg7 33.Bxe5+, winning a pawn.

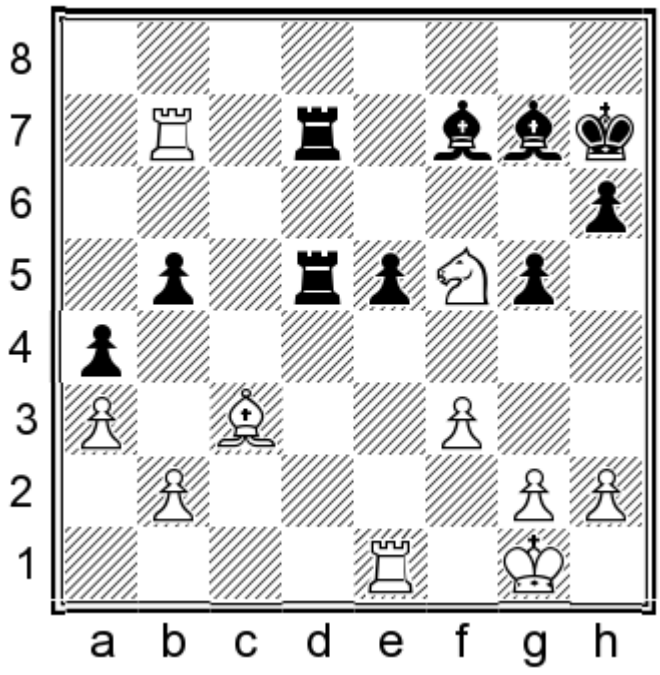
31...Rd5 32.Rb6 Bf7

After that, Black suffers material loss, but already no good defense existed. 32...Bd7 would be countered with 33.Rxh6! and 32...Re8, with 33.Nd6.

33.Nd6 Rd8 34.Nf5!

This is stronger than the straightforward 34.Nxb5 because it still leaves some hope for Black’s two bishops.

34...Kh7 35.Rb7 R8d7



36.Rxd7 Rxd7 37.Nxg7 Kxg7 38.Rxe5 Kg6 39.Rxb5

Winning with two extra pawns is, as they say, a matter of technique. Opposite-color bishops are not an obstacle.

39...Rd1+ 40.Kf2 Rc1 41.Rb6+ Kh7 42.g4 Rh1 43.h3 Bd5

This is a poisoned pawn: 43...Rxh3 44.Kg2 Rh4 45.Be1 and Black’s rook is trapped.

44.Rd6 Rd1 45.Rd7+ Kg8 46.Ke3 Bb3 47.Rg7+ Kf8 48.Rg6

The rest of this “battle” is only of historical interest.

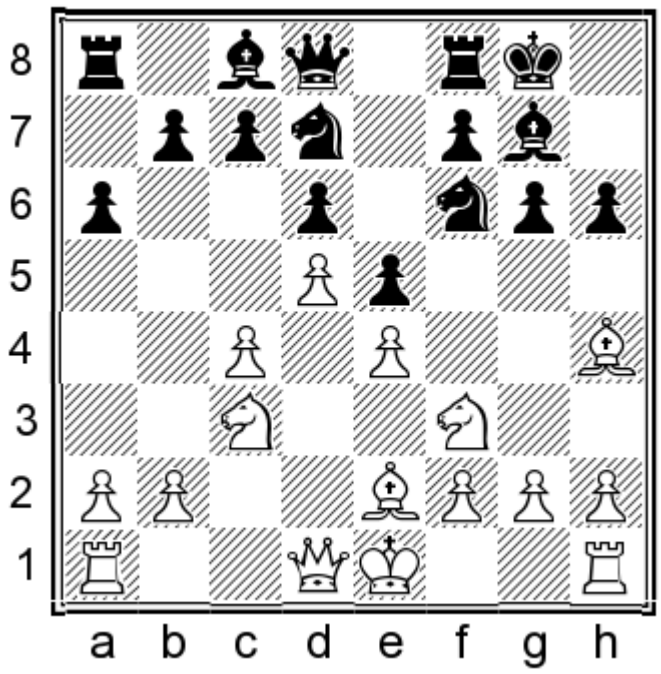
48...Bc2 49.Rxh6 Rd3+ 50.Ke2 Rd5 51.h4 gxh4 52.Rxh4 Kf7 53.f4 Bd1+ 54.Ke3 Kg6 55.g5 Bh5 56.Bf6 Rc5 57.Kd4 Rb5 58.Ke4 Bd1 59.f5+ Kf7 60.Be5 Bc2+ 61.Kf4 Black resigned.

(7) A2.2 **De Greiff – Petrosian**
Portorož 1958

To force the opponent to play against his own opening is a psychological weapon that often brings good results. But in this case it did not bring any benefit; if anything, only White had problems.

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.d4 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.d5 Nbd7 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 a6

A solid, if slightly slow plan, proposed by Robert Fischer. Black wants to get rid of the pin via ...Qe8 and carry out ...f5, with the intent to continue using the advanced position of the bishop on h4 to develop an attack. In some cases, the queen is useful to support the breakthrough ...b5, especially if White castles queenside. The move ...a6 is also necessary as prophylaxis against the knight move to b5.



10.0-0 Qe8 11.Ne1

Since Black already threatened the maneuver ...Nh5-f4 without the weakening move ...g5, White has to retreat the knight. However, being insufficiently versed in the nuances of this system, De Greiff was not able to guess the only correct move in this position, 11.Nd2. Later, Petrosian himself played this move against both Gligorić (game 8) and Stein (game 9). The main disadvantage of the text move is the weakening of the e4-square which Black actively used.

11...Nxe4!

Ultimately, this combination only equalizes, but now White has to play very precisely.

12.Nxe4 f5 13.Nc3

An important feature of the situation is that Black has not played ...g5 yet, and White cannot reply 13.f3 fxe4

14.fxe4 Rf4! or 13.Bd3 fxe4 14.Bxe4 because of the lethal response 14...Rf4!.

13...g5 14.Bg3 f4 15.Bh5

Only in this convoluted way can White manage to somehow establish harmony among his forces. After 15.Ne4 Nc5 16.f3 (or 16.Nxc5 dxc5 and ...e4) 16...fxg3 17.hxg3 Bf5 18.Bd3 Nxd3 19.Nxd3 g4, Black has easy play with the possibility of gradually strengthening his position: ...Qg6, ...Rf7, ...Raf8, ... h5, ...Bh6, etc.

15...Qe7 16.Ne4 Nc5

If you place the knight on d2 instead of e1, you will see that Black's position would simply be bad.

17.Bg6 Nxe4 18.Bxe4 g4!?

Black tries to squeeze as much as possible out of this position.

19.Nc2 h5 20.h4 Bd7 21.Qd3

Bad is 21.Bh2 Qxh4, and, in spite of the extra piece, White's position is absolutely helpless.

21...fxg3 22.fxg3 Bh6 23.Ne3

Black's initiative has gradually petered out. Regardless of whether he trades on e3 or not, White, firmly holding the e4-square, has nothing to be afraid of.

23...Kg7 24.Nf5+ Bxf5 25.Rxf5 Rxf5 26.Bxf5 Qf6 27.Be4 Rf8

Setting a little trap just in case:

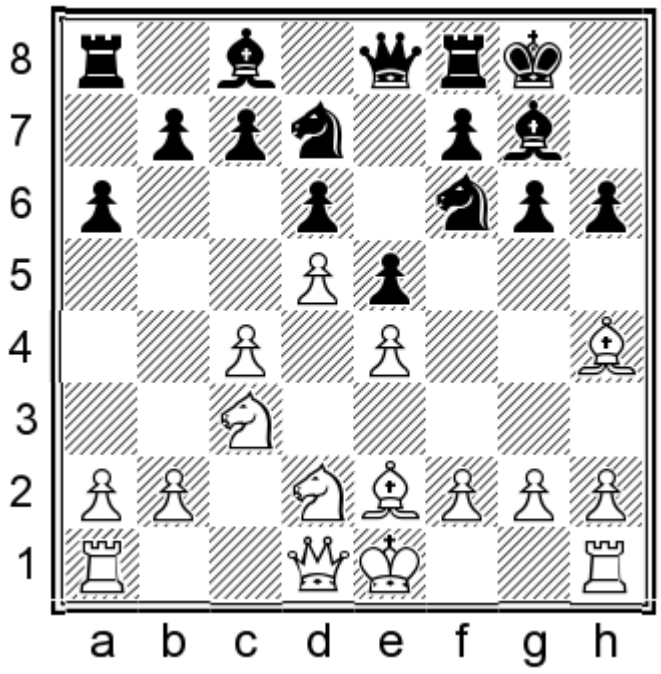
28.Rf1 Qxf1+ 29.Qxf1 and 29...Be3+.

28.Qe2 Rf7 29.Rd1 a5 30.b3 Draw.

(8) A2.3 **Petrosian – Gligorić**
Candidates' Tournament
Yugoslavia 1959

The popularity of Petrosian's system peaked during the Candidates Tournament in Yugoslavia, where White used it in five games and achieved a perfect result, five points!

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.d5 Nbd7 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 a6 10.Nd2 Qe8



11.0-0 Nh7 12.b4 Ng5

12...f5 would have been a clear mistake because of 13.exf5, so Black has to take with the rook (13...gxf5 14.Bh5), giving up the e4-square, with all the related consequences.

13.Rc1 f5 14.f3 Qe7

All of this had occurred previously in the very same tournament, in two games (Tal-Fischer and Olafsson-Gligorić) that attracted a lot of attention. Thus, both opponents were well prepared and began the game with new hopes.

The following is mostly quotes from Petrosian's analysis and annotations published in the book *Shakhmaty za 1958-1959 gody*.

15.Kh1!

"This continuation, which Fridrik Olafsson played against Svetozar Gligorić, is stronger than 15.Bf2, which Mikhail Tal played against Robert Fischer. Although the bishop on f2 helps support the pawn advance c4-c5, it is more useful on the h4-d8 diagonal. In order to develop the queenside pieces, Black needs to transfer the knight from d7 to the kingside, and then White can advance the c4-pawn without interference."

15...Nf6 16.c5 Nh5

It is not to Black's advantage to take twice on c5 because he would lose the c7-pawn.

"This is exactly the position Gligorić defended against Olafsson a day earlier. Although Gligorić lost, in the middle of the game the position was about equal. Presumably, Gligorić thought so too, otherwise why would he again follow this lethal scenario in the final round?

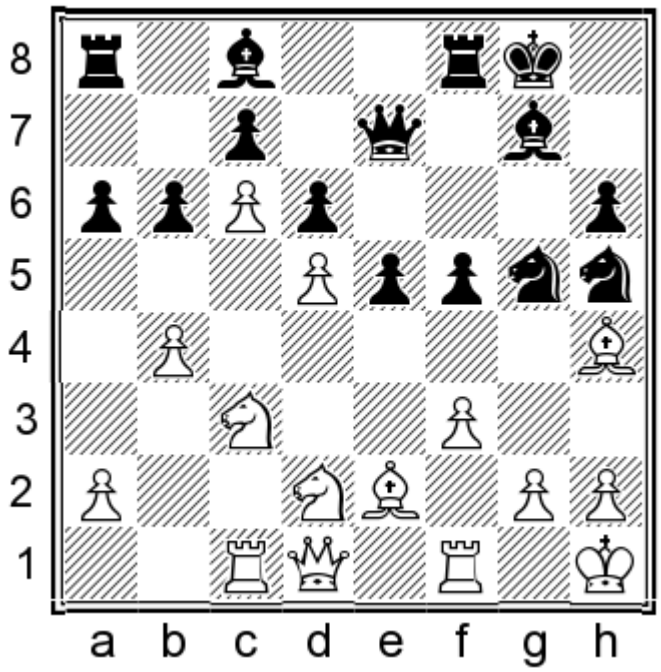
"Olafsson continued with 17.cxd6, and then 17...cxd6 18.Na4 Nf4 19.Nb6 Rb8 20.b5 a5 21.Nxc8 Rbxc8 22.Rxc8 Rxc8 23.Nc4 Bf6 24.exf5 gxf5 25.Ne3 Qh7 26.Be1 Bd8 27.Qd2 Rc5 leads to a position that cannot be "weighed" using even the finest pharmaceutical scale. I would have preferred to play it as White while Gligorić probably liked Black's position better.

"When I watched this game I noticed a rather amusing positional trap. And literally just a day later I was able to "catch" Gligorić using it."

17.c6!

“It is unlikely that Black would agree to take on c6, since White’s play becomes simple, as he gains control of the d5-square and can quickly advance the a- and b-pawns, which should lead to a far advanced passed pawn. However, Black can push the b6-pawn and tightly seal the queenside. Then the game would continue effectively on just one side of the board, the one where Black is traditionally considered stronger.”

17...b6 18.exf5 gxf5



19.g3!

“This innocuous-looking move is White’s idea. The threat of winning a piece with 20.f4 can be refuted without incurring material losses, but significant positional costs are inevitable.”

“You may notice a common feature in the positions after 19...f4 20.g4 Nf6 and 19...Nf6 20.f4 exf4 21.gxf4 Nge4. In the first variation, White’s g4-pawn, and in the second, Black’s f5-pawn imprisons the queen’s bishop in its own house, walling it up along with the a8-rook.”

Gligorić chose a third continuation, but neither the structure of the position nor its evaluation changed.

19...Bf6 20.f4 Ng7 21.Nc4

Stronger is 21.a4!, ensuring the inviolability of the queenside. Petrosian also considered the attractive continuation 21.fxe5 dxe5 22.Nc4, with the idea of d5-d6, but he found a response for Black: 21...Bxe5!?, and if 22.Nc4 , then 22...f4.

21...exf4 22.gxf4 b5

“In a difficult position, Gligorić uses one of his few chances, blocking the b4-pawn and opening the a-file for the rook. Here, I did not like the natural 23.Na5 because of 23...Bxc3 24.Rxc3 Qe4+ 25.Kg1 Qxb4 26.Be1 Ne4.”

23.Nd2 Ne4 24.Bxf6 Rxf6 25.Bf3

“Another inaccuracy. The conceptually sound move 25.Nb3 was associated with a pawn sacrifice, 25...Nxc3 26.Rxc3 Qe4+, but then, after 27.Rcf3! Qxb4 28.Rg1, White storms the opponent’s kingside. Here I still thought that I could win without resorting to drastic measures.”

25...a5 26.a3 axb4 27.axb4 Rg6

White planned to counter 27...Ra3 with 28.Ndb1 Ra1 29.Qd4.

28.Ndxe4

“Time pressure was creeping up, and I did not like the threat of the black rook’s raid along the a-file and the queen’s move to e3 or h4. A pawn is a small price to pay to reactivate Black’s two minor pieces.”

28...fxe4 29.Bxe4 Bf5 30.Bxf5 Nxf5 31.Qh5 Rf6!

The only defense. Also losing is 31...Qf7 because of 32.Qxg6+ Qxg6 33.Rg1.

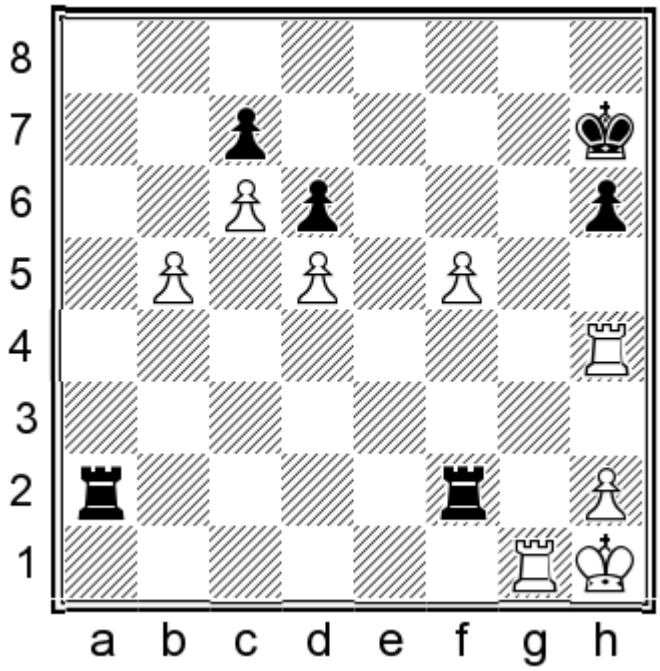
32.Rg1+ Kh8 33.Rce1 Qf7 34.Qxf7 Rxf7 35.Re4 Kh7

Correct! The passive defense 35...Rb8 is not in the spirit of the position.

36.Nxb5 Ra2 37.Nd4

“After that, another black rook invades the second rank. But White had no better options.”

37...Nxd4 38.Rxd4 Re7 39.f5 Ree2 40.Rh4 Rf2 41.b5



“The time control was passed, and White, making an obvious move, invited the opponent’s no less obvious reply...”

41...Rab2?

“Here is another example of how even the most natural move, seemingly in line with all the rules of the chess strategy, may be a gross mistake. Curiously, Gligorić made this move without thinking. After even a cursory examination, he undoubtedly would have played 41...Rac2, and his brilliant defense would have been rewarded.”

42.b6!

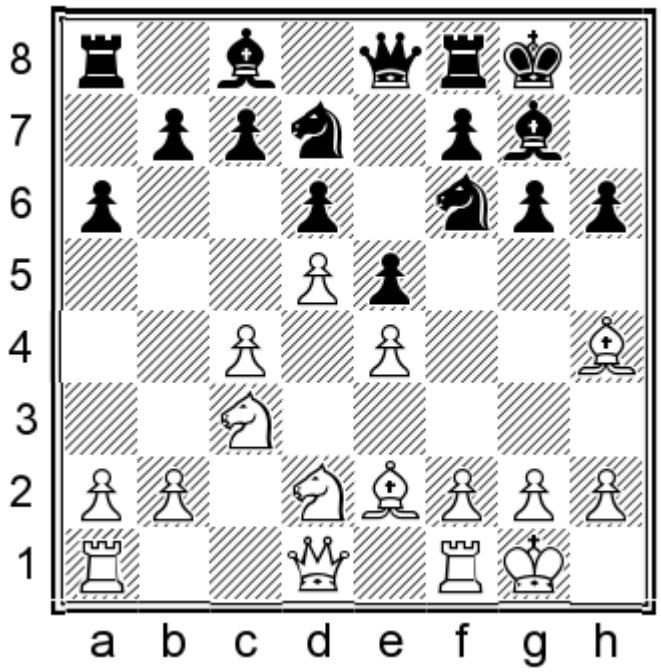
“Here Black spent forty minutes thinking about the sealed move, but, alas, there was no escape. If 42...cxb6, then 43.Rc1 Rbc2 44.Rxc2 Rxc2 45.Rg4!, and White queens one of the pawns.”

42...Rxb6 43.Rhg4 Rb8 44.Rg7+ Kh8 45.R7g6

Black resigned in view of 45...Kh7 46.f6 Rf8 47.Rg7+ Kh8 48.Rxc7 with an easy win.

(9) A2.4 **Petrosian – Stein**
USSR Team Championship
Moscow 1961

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 d6 3.d4 g6 4.e4 Bg7 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 e5 7.d5 Nbd7 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 a6 10.0-0 Qe8 11.Nd2



11...c5

A well-known attempt to radically solve the problem of the breakthrough c4-c5, which in this case meets a spirited retort.

12.dxc6!

A decision of an experienced master. Not everyone would go for such an exchange, but Petrosian accurately calculated that White will have time to build up pressure before the mass of black pawns is able to make a single move.

12...bxc6 13.b4 Rb8 14.a3!

The exclamation point is for the original idea. Before this game, the move dxc6 was known only in connection with the idea of creating a passed pawn on the b-file (Rb1, a2-a4, b4-b5). Since Black controls the c5-square and has an opportunity for his pieces to play on the other flank, he also has counter-chances.

With this move of the rook pawn, Petrosian starts a new and very good plan; he plans to transfer the knight to a5 via b3, play c4-c5, and capture the a6-pawn.

14...Bb7 15.Nb3 Qe6 16.Na5 Ba8 17.f3 d5

This simplifies White’s task. It seems that the immediate 17...Nh5 was better.

18.c5 Nh5 19.Bxa6

White realized his plan and has a nearly, if not entirely, winning position. You snooze, you lose, and realizing that, Stein throws himself into a desperate counterattack.

19...Nf4 20.Ne2 g5 21.Bf2 f5 22.Rc1

Entering the last reserves into the fight.

22...fxe4 23.fxe4 Nf6 24.exd5 N6xd5

If 24...cxd5 25.c6 and the rapid advance of the c-pawn immediately decides the outcome of the battle.

25.Ng3 e4 26.Bd4

An important exchange that weakens the position of the black king.

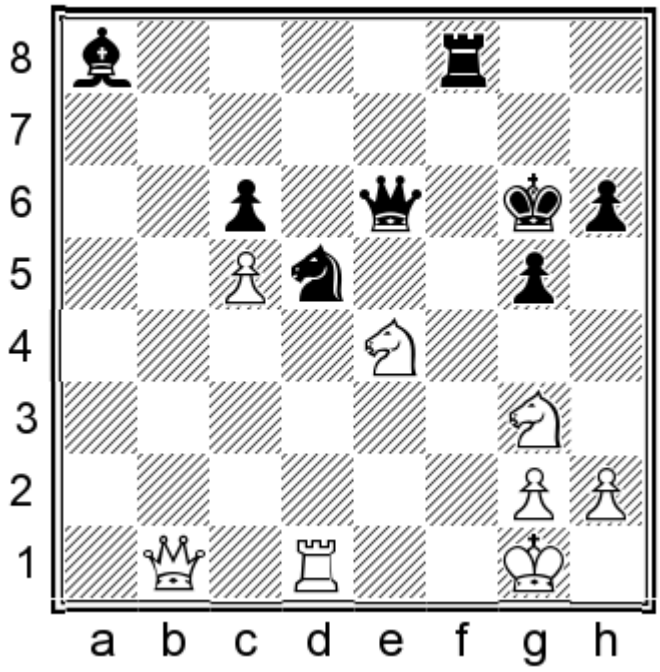
26...Rbd8 27.Bxg7 Kxg7 28.Qd4+ Nf6 29.Qc3 Kg6 30.Nc4!

The beginning of the beautiful final attack. Petrosian precisely calculated the exchange of blows and the bishop sacrifice that followed on the 33rd move.

30...Nd3 31.Rcd1 Nd5 32.Qc2 Nc7 33.Nd6!

Clearing the path to the black king. If 33...Rxf1+ 34.Rxf1 Rxd6 (or 34...Nxa6 35.Ngxe4 Nf4 36.g3) 35.cxd6 Nxa6 36.Qe2!, and White's attack is quickly decisive.

33...Nxa6 34.Rxf8 Rxf8 35.Ndxe4 Naxb4 36.axb4 Nxb4 37.Qb1 Nd5



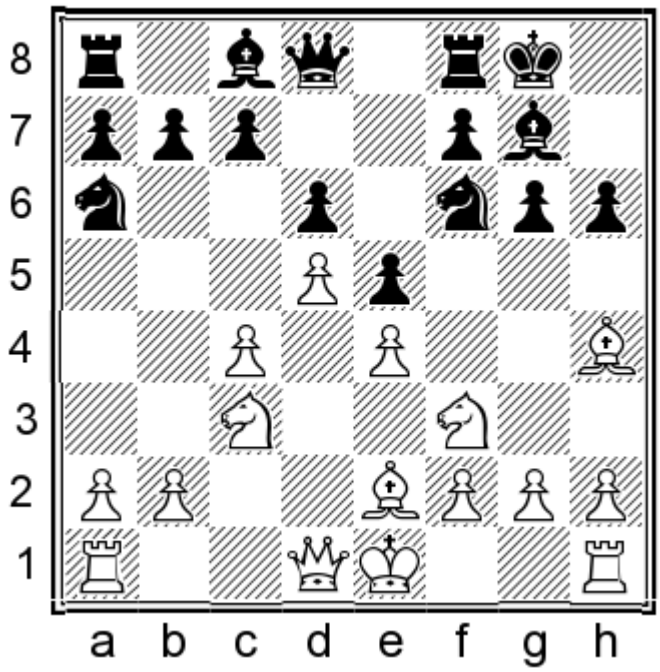
38.Re1!

The winning move. The threat of a discovered attack on Black's queen and king by the e4-knight can be prevented only by moving away both of these pieces simultaneously, but this is against the rules.

38...Qd7 39.Nf6+!

Black resigned because of the inevitable checkmate.

A2*



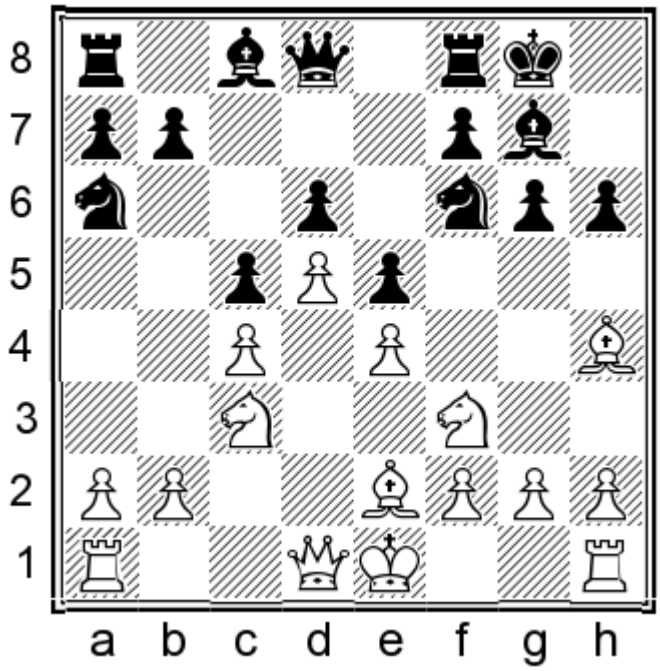
A slight modification of the Petrosian system: on the seventh move, the black knight moves to a6 instead of d7.

Petrosian played three relevant games. Two of them (games 11, 12) featured the double-edged continuation 9...g5.

In game 10, Black deviated from the theoretical path and quickly steered the game into maneuvering channels with 9...c5

(10) A2*.1 **Petrosian – Lutikov**
26th USSR Championship
Tbilisi 1959

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.Be2 e5 7.d5 Na6 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 c5



Thus, after a small transposition of moves, the game transposes to the Benoni Defense.

In this system, developing the knight to a6 is often associated with the preparation of ...b5: ...Nc7, ...Rb8, etc. However, this idea usually does not work. As soon as Black gets closer to this goal, White makes the move b2-b4 and seizes the initiative.

At the same time, on the edge of the board, the knight is well positioned for defense, making it difficult for the white pawns to advance and exercising control over the c5-square. Therefore, a different, more popular plan is trying to keep the knight on a6 longer, buying time to prepare the move ...f5.

10.Nd2 Bd7

"An inaccuracy," Petrosian wrote in his comments to the game, and he recommended 10...Nc7. Of course, this is a possible move, but does Black really have nothing better? Maybe it is time to prepare ...f5 ? It turns out that this is not so simple. Recall, for example, the well-known game Geller- Ljubojević from the Interzonal Tournament (Petropolis 1973), where, after 10...Qe8 11.0-0 Nh7 12.Nb5 Qd7 13.Bg3! Nc7 14.f4! Geller discovered the main flaw in Black's structure, the remoteness of his "cavalry" from the key square e5.

Thus, we have to admit that Black is already experiencing some difficulties.

11.Nb5! Be8

"The bishop has to retreat because the straightforward 11...Bxb5 does not hold water from a positional point of view: after 12.cxb5, White's knight gets a "permanent lease" of the very important strategic square c4. After 11...Qe7, it will be difficult for Black to get rid of the pin on the h4-d8 diagonal and prepare the ...f5 advance." (Tigran Petrosian).

12.a3

From this moment on, White's clever pawn play draws attention. The move in the text is aimed against the plan with ...b5, for example, 12...Nc7 13.Nc3 a6 14.b4!.

12...Qd7 13.g4

Another important prophylactic move, possible because White has not castled yet.

13...Nc7

If 13...Nh7 with the idea ...Bf6-g5, White was going to play 14.Bg3 and if 14...Bf6, then 15.h4.

14.Nc3 a6 15.a4

This looks illogical. You would think that Petrosian, God forbid, grabbed the wrong pawn! But this is not the case. After the g-pawn moved forward, playing b2-b4 was unsafe: White's position would be full of holes and it would be difficult to find a safe shelter for the king.

15...Qc8

Now and in the future Black could lock the queenside (...a5), but this would only help White directly attack the king.

16.h3!

"This modest-looking move is difficult to find and deserves an exclamation mark. White intends to transfer the knight to e3. However, in order to carry out this maneuver, the d1-square needs to be vacated, and this, in turn, requires protecting the g4-pawn. Also, if Black later plays ...f5, after the exchanges on f5, White would have the move Be2-g4. Besides 16.h3, also strong was 16.g5 with the goal of a direct attack against the king." (Tigran Petrosian)

16...Rb8 17.Qc2 Bd7 18.b3 b6

Lutikov is waiting for something. Now, and especially on the previous move, the immediate ...b5 deserved attention.

19.Nd1 b5 20.a5

A well-known technique to limit the mobility of the c7-knight.

20...Kh8

As Petrosian pointed out, in the case of 20...bxc4 21.bxc4 Rb4, the white knight would have changed its route: 22.Nb2 and 23.Nd3, forcing the rook from the b4-square.

21.Bg3 Ng8 22.Ne3 Ne7

Now, 22...bxc4 23.bxc4 Rb4 would be followed by 24.Qc3 and Ne3-c2.

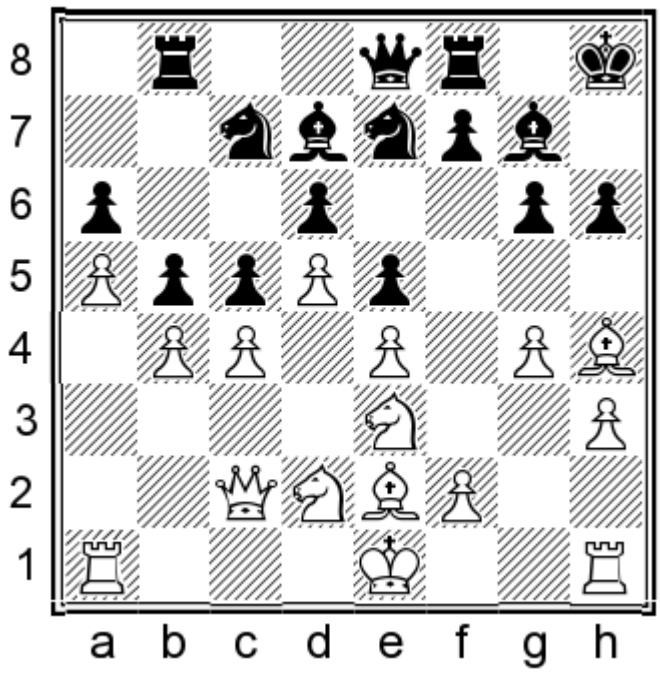
23.Bh4

Petrosian was already here considering the tempting breakthrough 23.b4, but eventually decided against it because of 23...f5! 24.bxc5 f4! 25.cxd6 fxe3, and now 26.fxe3 Ncxd5 27.exd5 Nxd5 or 26.dxe7 exd2+ 27.Qxd2 Rf7 leads to unclear play.

23...Qe8?

A tactical mistake. Petrosian considered 23...Ng8 to be the best move, planning 24.0-0 and not worrying about 24...Bf6 because of 25.Bxf6+ Nxf6 26.f4! (also good is 26.b4!), and in both cases White would have the advantage.

24.b4!



Tactics in service of strategy! Black cannot prevent the collapse of the queenside, since 24...cxb4 is obviously met with 25.c5!. Now, if 25...dxc5, strong is 26.Qxc5 with an overwhelming advantage, and in case of 25...Rc8 (relatively best), according to Petrosian, the easiest way for White to play is 26.c6! Nxc6 27.dxc6 Bxc6, and three pawns for a piece is not enough in the resulting position. Therefore, Lutikov does not intend to take the brash pawn and instead tries to protect the d6-square, the “Achilles heel” of this position.

24...Nc8 25.bxc5 dxc5 26.cxb5 Nxb5

26...Bxb5 would be met with the simple 27.Qxc5, but on the following move the bishop capture on b5 was worth some thought.

27.Bxb5 Rxb5 28.0-0

Castling on the 28th move (!), a record of sorts.

28...f5 29.f3 Rf7

Necessary was 29...h5, trying to create at least some counterplay.

30.Ndc4 Rb4

“After this move, Black’s position becomes hopeless, as White implements the necessary piece regrouping with tempo.” (Tigran Petrosian)

31.Be1 Rb7 32.Bc3 h5

Now this is just a sign of desperation.

33.gxf5 gxf5 34.exf5 e4 35.Kh2

Petrosian saw that 35.fxe4 Bxc3 36.Qxc3+ Rg7+ 37.Kh2 Qxe4 38.f6 also wins, but did not want to give the opponent even the small satisfaction of declaring check.

35...exf3 36.Rxf3 Bd4 37.Qd3 Bf6 38.Rg1 Kh7 39.Bxf6 Rxf6 40.Qc3 Qf8 41.Rg6 Rf7

At this point, the game was adjourned and White recorded the move

42.Rg5

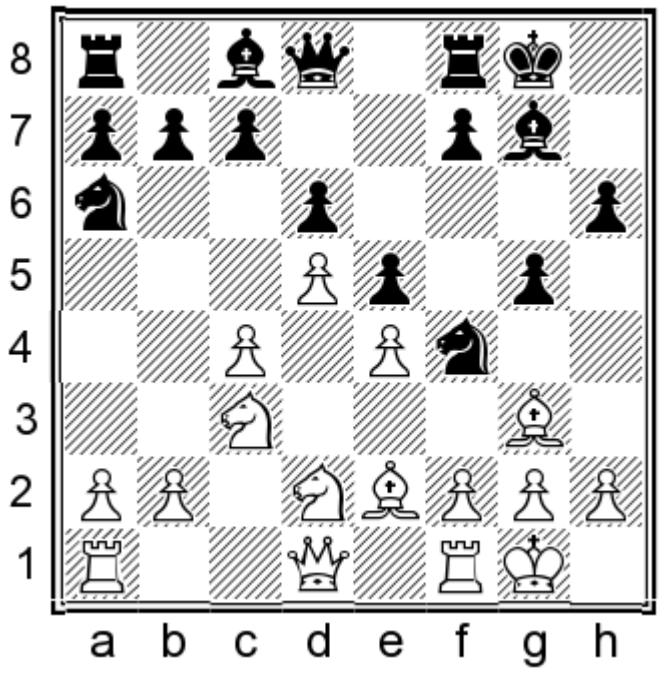
Black resigned without resuming the game, because after 42...Qh6 43.Rg6 Qf8 44.Ne5, White clearly wins.

(11) A2*.2 **Petrosian – Yukhtman**
26th USSR Championship
Tbilisi 1959

An instructive game that demonstrates the dangers that await Black in this system if he does not play aggressively.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 e5 7.d5 Na6 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 g5 10.Bg3 Nh5 11.Nd2 Nf4 12.0-0

The key position of this variation. Despite superficial signs of activity, Black should not kid himself: the knight will leave f4 sooner or later, but the weaknesses will persist. Black’s immediate goal is to come up with a good defense against the positional threat Be2-g4. It seems that in this game Yukhtman did not clearly understand the impending danger.



12...Nc5

This is a reliable move, which Black associated with a standard, and in this case, erroneous idea. For 12...f5, see the next game.

13.Bg4 a5

Roughly the same mistake as in game 6. Black simply does not have time for such moves! Here is what Petrosian wrote about it:

“This move shows that Black has high hopes for the strong f4-knight. Indeed, the position of the knight looks unshakeable. After all, exchanging the bishop on f4 means providing the g7-bishop with a wonderful diagonal after ...exf4.”

Sometime later, it was discovered that, instead of 13...a5, Black can play 13...Bxg4 14.Qxg4 h5! 15.Qf5 h4 16.Bxf4 exf4 17.Nf3 Qf6! (the only way, because if 17...f6 or 17...Bf6, then 18.g3 gives White the advantage) with chances to defend.

Black also found this idea: 13...Nxe4 14.Ndxe4 f5 and if, for example, 15.Bxf5 Bxf5, then the queen is transferred to g6 with good play. After 14...f5, the move 15.f3 is better for White, although he does not have a real advantage here either.”

14.f3!

“Now the outline of White’s subsequent play can be traced. The bishop leaves the g3-square, vacating it for the pawn. The black knight will not be able to hold out on f4, and any activity is impossible without it. White’s plan is simple: he must try to transfer the knight to e3, and then soon after, to the f5-square.”

Analyzing the game further, you will not see a white knight on f5. Do not be surprised. In practical play, unrealized intentions sometimes play a bigger part than clearly demonstrated ones.”

14...Ncd3

Interestingly, Stein walked into the exact same position playing Black against Gligorić in the Moscow International tournament in 1967. The Ukrainian grandmaster was able to find the only chance, 14...c6!?, and after 15.Qc2 cxd5 16.cxd5 b5 17.a4 (weak is 17.Nxb5 Qb6) 17...bxa4 18.Nc4 h5 19.Bxc8 Rxc8 20.Nxa4 Qc7 21.Ne3 Qa7 22.Bf2 Ncd3 23.Qd2 Nxf2 24.Rxf2 g4!, having completely confused the opponent, he even won. Note that

Petrosian indicated the move 14...c6!? immediately after the game ended.

15.Qc2 c6

Now, one move late, this does not change anything, and Black quickly goes under.

16.Kh1! h5 17.Bxc8 Rxc8 18.a3!

“White is in no hurry to force the issue. In the case of 18.Bxf4, the in-between move 18...Nb4 leads to complications: 19.Bxg5 (bad is 19.Qb3 exf4 20.a3 Na6 21.Qxb7? because of 21...Nc5 22.Qa7 Ra8) 19...Nxc2 20.Bxd8 Nxa1 21.Be7 Rfe8 22.Bxd6 Nc2 23.c5. If 19...Qxg5, then 20.Qd1. All this is quite beneficial for White, but Black gets some tactical chances. I wanted to achieve more.”

18...cxd5 19.cxd5

“Also very strong was 19.Nxd5 Nxd5 20.exd5 Nf4 21.Qf5, followed by Ne4.”

19...Nc5

“Necessary was 19...Qb6. After 20.Bxf4 Nxf4 21.g3, Black has 21...Ne2, and if 21.Rae1, then 21...Qd4, rushing to the d3-square.”

20.Bf2 g4

Opening the f-file only accelerates Black’s demise.

21.g3 Ng6

After 21...Nfd3, White has a pleasant choice between 22.Bxc5 and 22.Be3.

22.fxg4 hxg4 23.Be3

Black has been completely outplayed, and, in such a situation, hardly anyone would be willing to wait quietly until the end.

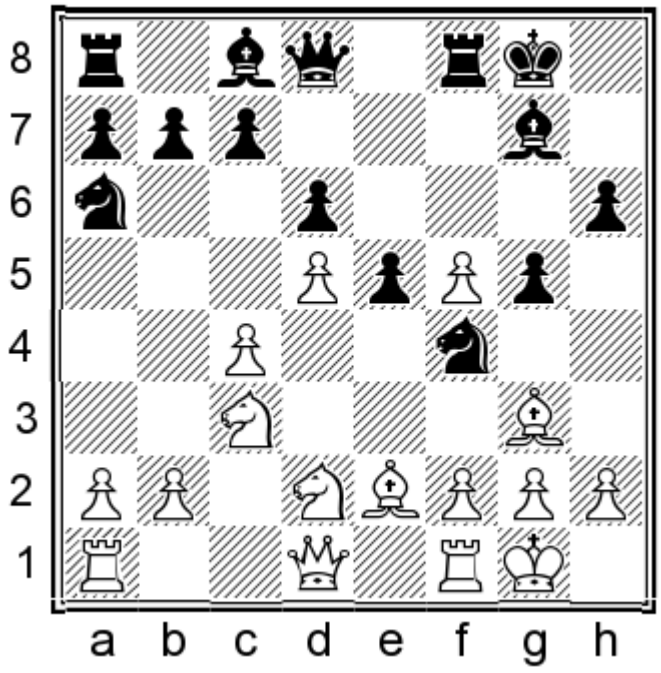
23...b5?! 24.Nxb5 Qb6 25.a4

Black spent the rest of the game in very severe time pressure.

25...Qa6 26.Nc4 f5 27.Rxf5 Rxf5 28.exf5 Qb7 29.Qg2 Nb3 30.Ncxd6 Qd7 31.Rf1 and Black ran out of time.

(12) A2*.3 **Petrosian – Geller**
Interzonal Tournament
Stockholm 1962

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 e5 7.d5 Na6 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 g5 10.Bg3 Nh5 11.Nd2 Nf4 12.0-0 f5 13.exf5



13...Bxf5

As usual, Geller chooses the most principled and active plan. Black will compensate the concession of the e4-square with active play on the kingside. The same idea could be carried out slightly differently via 13...Nxe2+ 14.Qxe2 Bxf5, followed by the already familiar queen transfer to g6, for example, 15.f3 (otherwise 15...g4) 15...Qf6 16.Nde4 Qg6 17.h3 h5!, and Black is just in time to carry out the breakthrough ...g4 with counterplay.

The practical benefit of Geller's plan is that Black does not have to calculate the complicated variations with the advance of the h- and g-pawns, because with the knight on f4, White cannot even consider the blocking move g2-g4.

14.Bg4 Qf6

By agreeing to exchange the light-square bishops, Black wins several tempi for the planned setup.

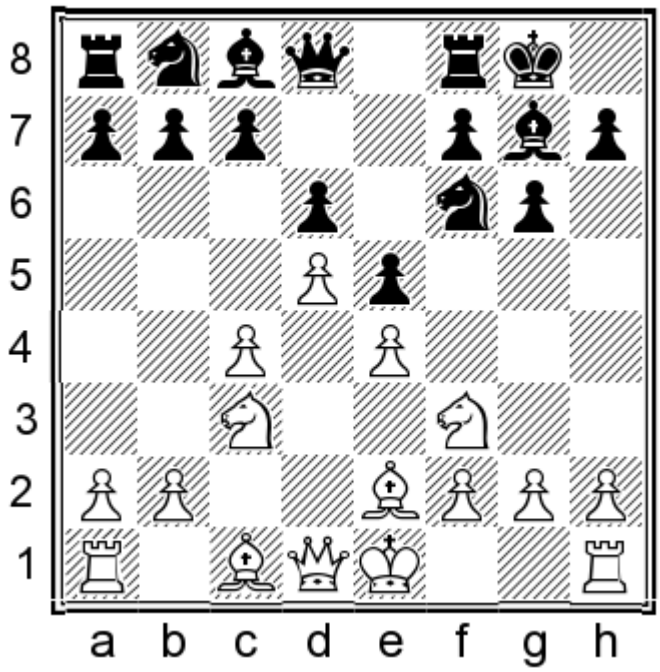
15.Nde4 Qg6 16.Bxf5 Rxf5 17.b4 h5 18.h3

Forced, because of the unpleasant threat ...h4.

18...Nxb4 19.Rb1 a5 20.a3 Nbd3 21.Rxb7 Rf7 22.f3 Raf8

Major events are developing. As Petrosian used to say, "there is still no fire, but there is already smoke." Black is all set for the explosive move ...g4, but he probably did not like the opponent's rook on the seventh rank and the powerful position of the e4-knight. Undoubtedly, the tense atmosphere inherent to the qualifiers also played its role. In any case, the opponents decided not to tempt fate. Draw.

A3



Black to move

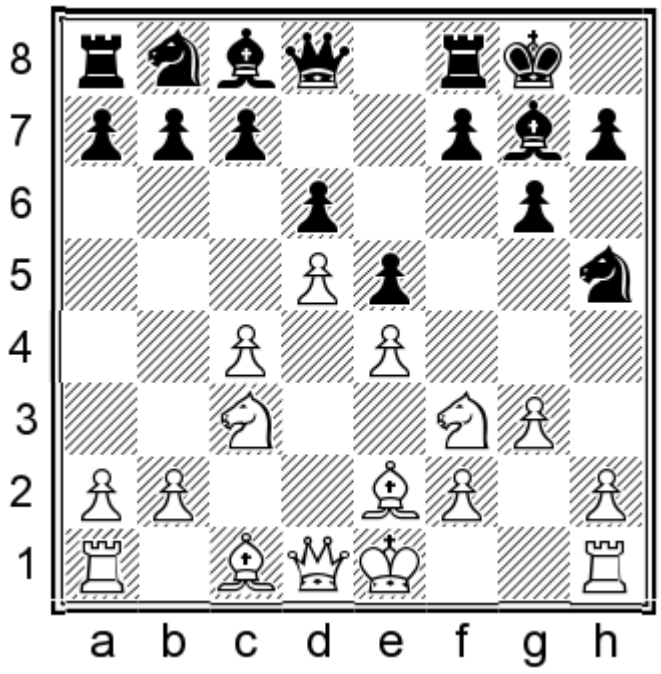
White's first successes in the Petrosian System instilled fear in the supporters of King's Indian structures. At one time, all sorts of deviations from the main line were popular for Black. So much so that Stein once played 7...h6?!! in the position shown on the diagram just to prevent that "horrible" move Bg5.

The sideline 7...Nh5 was most often played against Petrosian, with various variations after 8.g3 (games 13, 15, 16, 17, 18).

7...Ne8 was played in game 14, but this is clearly a "second-rate" move.

(13) A3.1 **Petrosian – Geller**
19th USSR Championship
Moscow 1951

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.d5 Nh5 8.g3



8...Nd7 9.Bg5 Ndf6

First Black moves his knight to the edge of the board, and now he cuts off all its retreats. Why? Firstly, the knight on h5 is not idle: it physically prevents the advance h2-h4-h5, which is sometimes possible in such positions. Secondly, if White ever plays g3-g4, Black will be happy to reply with ...Nf4, sacrificing a pawn in exchange for excellent communications for his pieces. Moreover, by forcing his opponent's pawn to g3, Geller took away Petrosian's favorite move Bh4. All this is very cute, but no more than that.

10.h3 c5 11.Qd2

A solid move, but also noteworthy was 11.Nh4. The game Hort-Visier (Las Palmas 1975) continued 11...Qa5 12.Bd2 a6 13.Qc2 Qc7 14.Ng2! Bd7 15.g4 Nf4 16.Nxf4 exf4 17.Bxf4, and White managed to pick up a pawn while saving the valuable dark-square bishop.

11...a6 12.a4

This move is difficult to avoid in the King's Indian Defense.

12...Bd7 13.g4

Petrosian decides to ask the main question: is the pawn sacrifice sound? Nothing forced him to make this decision; for example, quite good was 13.Ra3, with the same idea of Nh4-g2 and g3-g4. But for some reason, in his games against Geller (see game 1), Petrosian easily parted with his queen's bishop, which, generally speaking, he did extremely rarely did in this opening.

13...Nf4 14.Bxf4 exf4 15.Qxf4 b5!

For a true King's Indian player, there is no alternative in this position, especially in the variations 16.cxb5 axb5 17.Nxb5 Bxb5 18.Bxb5 Qe7 or 17.Bxb5 Bxb5 18.Nxb5 Nxe4, etc. – one pawn is recovered immediately. However, now White faces a difficult psychological dilemma: either avoid getting involved and make a sort of neutral move such as castling, which would lead to the loss of the initiative, or pick up a second pawn via 16.axb5 axb5 17.Rxa8 Qxa8 18.Qxd6, getting some chances to win ... or lose, because the position becomes very sharp.

Petrosian does not want to take extreme risks and maintains the *status quo*.

16.0-0 b4

Strengthening the g7-bishop and disrupting the harmony of the white pieces.

17.Nd1 Qe7 18.Bd3 Rae8 19.Re1 h5

Petrosian strengthened the e4-square, but the tireless Geller begins to attack the g4- and h3-pawns.

20.Nh2 Nh7 21.Nf3

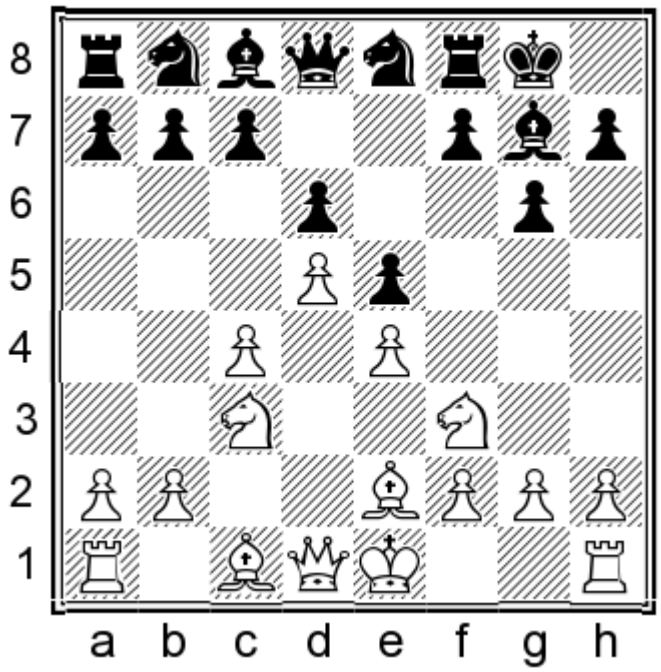
White is afraid to move the g-pawn or let the opponent's knight come to g5, while Black does not want to continue the game down a pawn. Understanding each other, the opponents repeat the position.

21...Nf6 22.Nh2 Nh7 23.Nf3 Draw

(14) A3.2 **Petrosian – Aronson**
24th USSR Championship
Moscow 1957

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.d4 0-0 5.e4 d6 6.Be2 e5 7.d5 Ne8

Avoiding the pin, Black at the same time prepares ...f5, which would have made sense at such an early stage of the game if White had already castled. The drawback of the move in the game is that the knight no longer protects the h5-square. Petrosian uses this to start a sharp attack with the rapid advance of the h-pawn. The g-pawn is like a hook to which the white infantry clings.



8.h4! f5 9.Bg5

Another good opportunity is 9.h5, and if 9...f4, then 10.hxg6 hxg6 11.g3, opening another file for attack. The tempo move chosen by Petrosian was dictated by a desire to develop the queenside as quickly as possible.

9...Bf6 10.exf5 gxf5 11.Qd2 Nd7 12.0-0-0 c5 13.Rdg1

A consistent continuation of the plan, but not the only possibility. The same problem, opening lines on the flank, could have been solved (perhaps, a bit more elegantly) via 13.dxc6 bxc6 14.Nd5!, and, because it is not possible to

take on d5 and bad to allow Nd5xf6, Black has to accept the variation 14...Bxg5 15.hxg5.

13...e4 14.Nh2 Bxg5 15.hxg5 Ne5 16.f4 exf3 17.Nxf3 Qe7

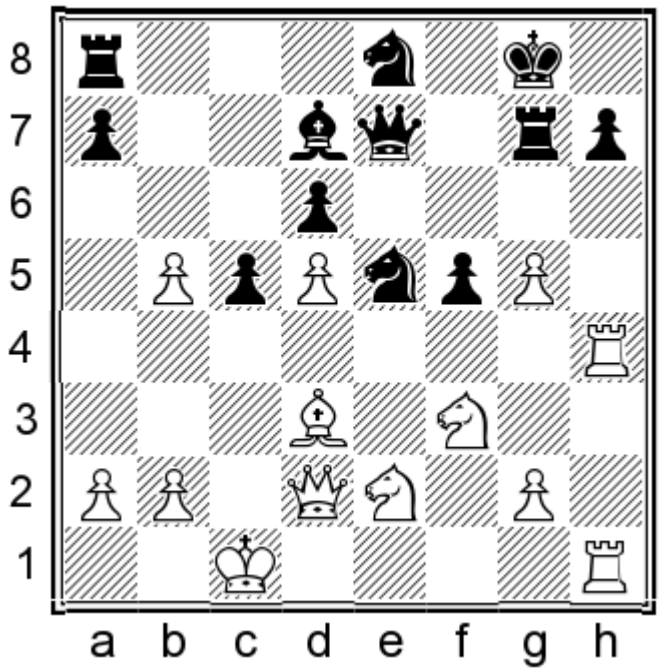
The e5-square, which Black has taken for his pieces, in no way compensates for the h-file that White controls, because, in terms of importance for the attack, these positional elements are incomparable.

18.Rh4 Rf7 19.Rgh1 Rg7 20.Bd3 Bd7 21.Ne2 b5

Striving to divert White's attention from the kingside at any cost. The normal continuation 21...Nxf3 22.gxf3 Qxg5 23.Qxg5 Rxg5 24.Rxh7, also possible on the previous move, did not help Black's position.

22.cxb5

Desperate sacrifices ought to be accepted! Petrosian's favorite expression for such situations comes to mind: "Is there anything else?!" It was usually addressed to a temperamental opponent during analysis or blitz.



22...Rb8

Connected with some sort of miscalculation, because after White's obvious response, Aronson has nothing else than to follow the variation he previously rejected. He could possibly get some semblance of counterplay by continuing 22...Nxd3+ 23.Qxd3 c4!, and the black pawn is untouchable: 24.Qxc4? Rc8; 24.Rxc4? Bxb5.

23.Nc3 Nxf3 24.gxf3 Qxg5 25.Qxg5 Rxg5 26.Rxh7 Rg1+!

Without this move, Black would have to resign. Now, however, play enters the endgame, where Black has absolutely nothing to counter White's extra pawn.

27.Rxg1+ Kxh7 28.a4 Nf6 29.Kc2 Re8 30.Kd2 Rb8 31.b3

White avoids active play until the game is adjourned.

31...Kh6 32.Bc4 Nh7 33.f4 Nf8 34.Ne2 Ng6 35.Rb1 Kg7 36.b4

Probably, White cannot do without this move.

36...cxb4 37.Rxb4 a6

A creative resource: if now 38.b6, then 38...a5!.

38.Bd3 axb5 39.axb5 Ne7 40.Nc3 Nc8 41.Ra4 Kf6 42.Ra1 Nb6

Petrosian's further play is a good example of the principle of "two weaknesses." Specifically, White's plan consists of the following:

(1) sending the king to protect the b5-pawn;

(2) sneaking the rook behind the enemy lines;

(3) exchanging the rooks;

(4) attacking the pawn on f5 using the combined efforts of the knight and the bishop in order to immobilize Black's pieces;

(5) giving the final push to the passed b-pawn with the help of the king.

43.Ke3 Rb7 44.Kd4 Be8 45.Rh1 Nc8 46.Rh8 Bd7 47.Kc4 Ne7 48.Rh1

Petrosian was one of those practical players who did not like tedious analysis and felt that major decisions were best made over the board and with a fresh mind. And this time too, the rook's indecisiveness is explained by the fact that he fleshed out some details of his plan as the game progressed and at the same time saved up his time so as not to get into time trouble by the next control. Besides, 48...Ng6 was a threat.

48...Nc8 49.Kb4 Kg6 50.Rg1+ Kf6 51.Be2 Be8 52.Rg8 Kf7 53.Rh8 Bd7 54.Bh5+ Ke7 55.Rh7+ Kd8 56.Rh8+ Ke7

The control on the 56th move has been passed and White now takes decisive action.

57.Bg6 Rb8

It turns out that the black rook has to leave the seventh rank, for example, 57...Na7 58.Rh7+ Kd8 59.Bxf5 or 58...Kf6 59.Bh5 threatening checkmate.

58.Rh7+ Kd8 59.Bf7

Destroying Black's defense with the threat of 60.Be6.

59...Ne7 60.Rh8+ Kc7 61.Rxb8 Kxb8

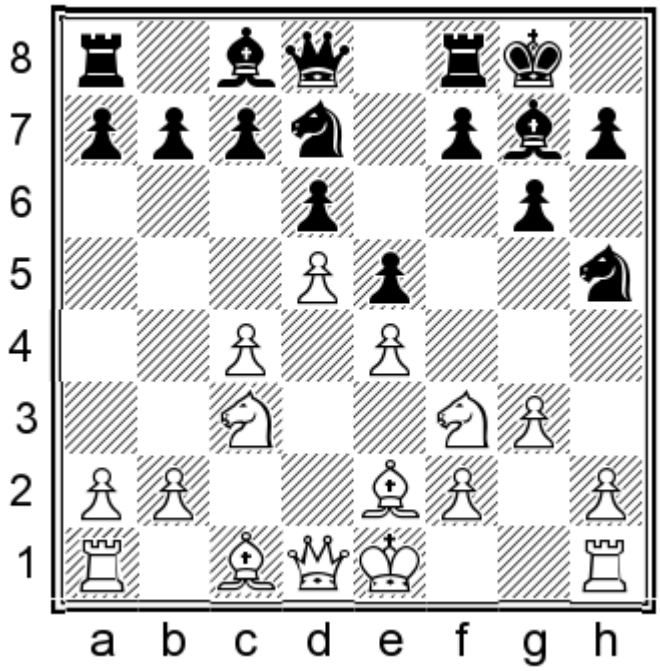
After the most difficult task, exchanging the rooks, has been solved, the rest is easy.

62.Nd1 Nc8 63.Be6 Nb6 64.Ne3 Kc7 65.Nxf5 Nxd5+ 66.Bxd5 Bxf5 67.Ka5 Bd3 68.b6+

Black resigned without waiting for the white king's triumphal march to the other flank.

(15) A3.3 **Petrosian – Olafsson**
Interzonal Tournament
Portorož 1958

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.d5 Nh5 8.g3 Nd7



9.Be3

It is hard to tell whether Petrosian thought that this move was stronger than 9.Bg5, which he previously played against Geller (game 13), or just wanted to diversify his play.

9...Nhf6 10.Nd2 c6

A flexible continuation. If White castles queenside and attacks on the kingside, Black prepares to open the c-file, and if White castles kingside, then, in addition to the usual plan with ...a5 and ...Nc5, ...c5 is also acceptable.

11.h4 Ne8

With the idea that, e.g., 12.h5 can be countered with 12...f5 to win a tempo with the threat ...f4, and to avoid opening the h-file. But Petrosian's very next move completely refutes this idea. Black should have continued playing on the queenside without wasting time. If Olafsson did not like 11...cxd5 12.cxd5 a6 13.a4, he could have tried 11...a6. Then, if 12.h5 or 12.g4 cxd5 13.cxd5 b5 with counterplay, and against 12.a4, 12...a5! is a good reply. To neutralize the idea of ...b5, White probably would have to play 12.0-0 c5 (12...cxd5 13.cxd5 b5 14.b4 followed by a2-a4 with advantage for Black), but then, as mentioned above, 12...c5 is possible and the a6-pawn is again on the right square.

12.g4! f5

Maybe Olafsson saw only one outcome of this move, that the f-file opens. However, in reality, two files are opened, one for Black, but the g-file, for White. An original player from Baku, Master Vladimir Makogonov, proved multiple times in his games that the latter is often more important. Petrosian was well aware of that and continues to play "à la Makogonov."

13.gxf5 gxf5 14.exf5 Ndf6 15.h5! h6 16.Qc2 cxd5 17.cxd5

White has everything ready to castle queenside, and Black has no choice but to try to confuse the opponent, which is exactly what he does by sacrificing another pawn.

17...b5

The beginning of interesting complications, where both sides are very resourceful.

18.Bxb5 Ng4 19.Nde4 Bxf5 20.Bd3 Kh8 21.Qe2 Qa5

The standard exchange ...Nxe3 is not too useful in this case because White has the strategic advantage in the center.

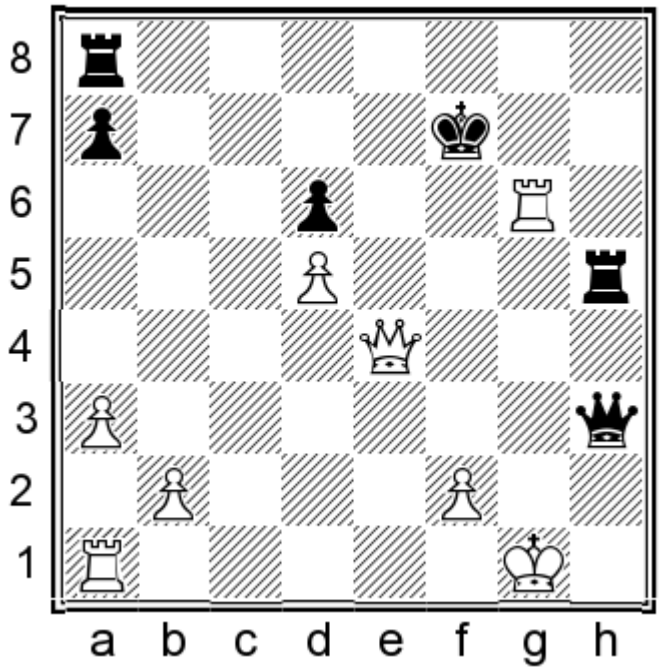
22.Bd2 Ngf6 23.Nxf6 Rxf6

Did Olafsson blunder an exchange (24.Ne4)? No, since after 24...Qxd5, White cannot take on f6 because the h1-rook is hanging.

24.Rg1 Qb6 25.Bxf5 Rxf5 26.Be3 Qb4 27.a3 Qb3 28.Rg6

Black's initiative gradually fizzles out, while White is already taking a closer look at the weaknesses on h6 and d6. Olafsson finds an opportunity to feed the dying fire.

28...e4!? 29.Kf1! Nf6 30.Bxh6 Bxh6 31.Rxh6+ Kg7 32.Rg6+ Kf7 33.Nxe4 Qh3+ 34.Kg1 Nxe4 35.Qxe4 Rxh5



36.Rg3

Olafsson's persistent attempts to complicate the game have borne fruit: Petrosian did not find the strongest move 36.Rc1, with the main variation 36...Qh2+ 37.Kf1 Qh3+ (the only move) 38.Rg2! Qh1+ 39.Ke2, and White checkmates. To avoid this, as in the game, Black would have had to exchange the queens: 36...Qh2+ 37.Kf1 Qh1+ and so on, ending up with roughly the same position, but with White's rook on c1, which, as we will soon see, was decisive.

36...Qh2+ 37.Kf1 Qh1+ 38.Qxh1 Rxh1+ 39.Rg1 Rh3

This way Black wins back one pawn and gets realistic chances for a draw. However, the problem is not the loss of the pawn, but the lack of coordination between the white rooks, which cannot accomplish anything in this time. With a rook on c1, White would have played 41.Rc7+ here and won easily, even giving up the pawn on d5.

40.Rd1 Rb8 41.Rd2 Rhb3

The structure of the position is such that, if the b-pawn is lost, White's material advantage will not matter much.

Petrosian does everything possible and does not let the doomed pawn perish for the next 10 moves.

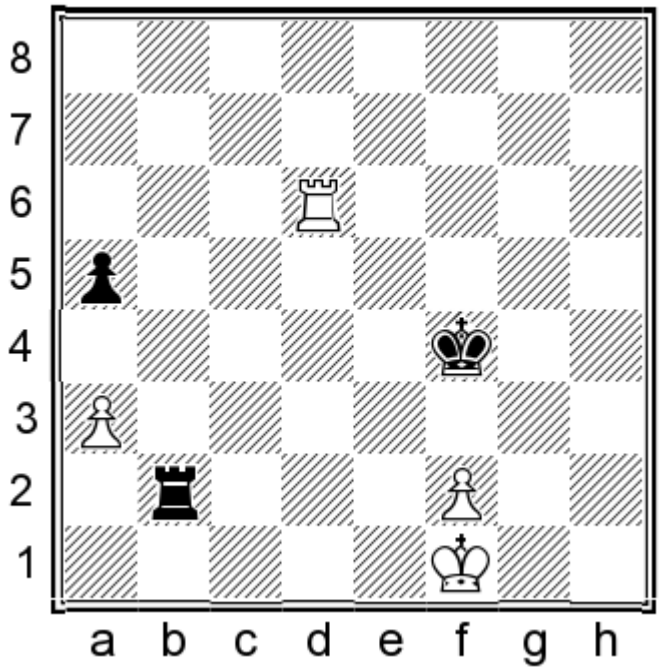
42.Rd4 Kf6 43.Re4 Rd3

It is easy to see that taking on b2 is not advantageous for Black.

44.Re6+ Kf5 45.Rg7

Bad is 45.Rxd6? because of 45...Rd1+ winning the rook. Interestingly, neither player captures pawns but only make such threats, first improving the positions of their pieces. Black is first to violate this “moratorium.”

45...Rxd5 46.Re2 a5 47.Rf7+ Kg5 48.Rf3 Rdb5 49.Rd2 R8b6 50.Rfd3 Kf4 51.Rxd6 Rxd6 52.Rxd6 Rxb2



The second and last phase of this instructive endgame, which, like the first, is a good example of the active power of pieces. Now White could restore the previous material difference of two pawns by playing 53.Rd5 Ra2 54.Rxa5, but after 54...Kf3! it is a draw!

53.Kg2 Rb3 54.Rd4+ Ke5 55.Ra4 Rb5 56.Kg3 Kf5 57.f3 Rc5 58.Rd4 Rb5 59.Rh4 Kg6 60.Rc4 Kf5 61.Rc6 Rd5 62.Kf2 Rb5

The position on the board is a clear draw: if Black just passively waits on the fifth rank, White cannot make any progress.

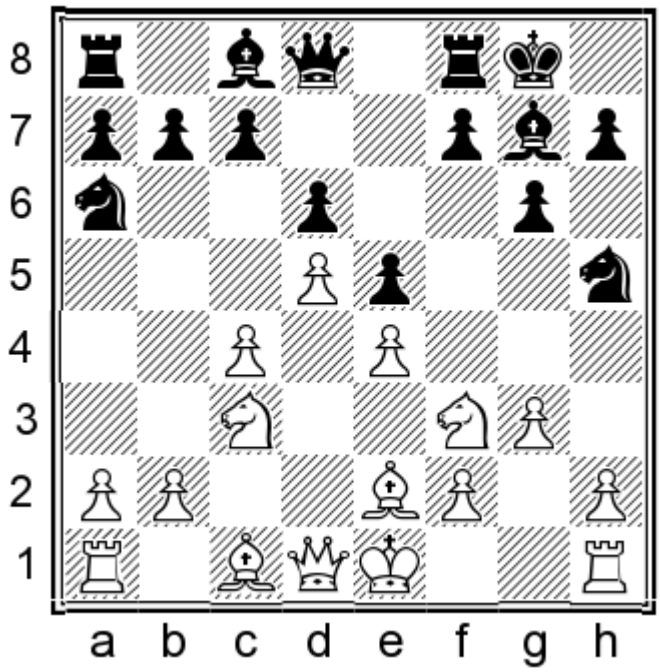
63.Kg3 Rd5 64.a4 Kg5 65.Rc4 Kf5 66.Kf2 Rd3

Olafsson gets bored with passive defense, and, taking the opportunity, activates his rook. The f-pawn gets a chance to advance, but this cannot change the result of the game.

67.Rh4 Kg6 68.Rg4+ Kf5 69.Kg3 Ra3 70.Rc4 Kg6 71.Kg4 Kf6 72.f4 Ra1 73.Kf3 Ke6 74.Ke4 Re1+ 75.Kd3 Rd1+ 76.Kc2 Rf1 77.Rd4 Rf3 Draw

(16) A3.4 **Petrosian – Gufeld**
27th USSR Championship
Leningrad 1960

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 0-0 5.Nf3 d6 6.Be2 e5 7.d5 Nh5 8.g3 Na6



The system selected by Gufeld is one of the discoveries of the 27th USSR Championship. A few days prior, in the game Nei-Liberzon, after 9.Bg5 f6 10.Be3 f5!? 11.exf5 gxf5 12.Nxe5? f4! Black created a rich attacking position and achieved a spectacular win. In his annotations, Vladimir Liberzon wrote that, after 10.Bd2, he was going to play 10...f5 11.exf5 Bxf5, and after 12.Nh4 Bh3 13.Bxh5 gxh5 14.Qxh5 Nc5 (14...Nb4) with initiative for the pawn. Isaak Boleslavsky made his contribution to the analysis, finding the clever variation 12.Ng5 Nc5 13.g4 Nf4!, which is also advantageous for Black. Therefore, for now, Petrosian refrains from developing the queen's bishop and decides to immediately move the knight back to f6.

9.Nd2 Nf6 10.h4!

An important element in White's plan. 10...Bh6, with the purpose of exchanging the darksquare bishops, will be countered with 11.h5, and Black is in trouble. In addition, the threat of further advance of the pawn causes Black to significantly postpone the move ...f5.

10...c6 11.Nb3 Nc7 12.Bg5 cxd5

Too direct. The exchange on d5 would be good in a sharper position, for example, with opposite-side castling. Now, however, after White responds with c4xd5 and castles kingside, it looks like Black himself carried out the attack of the "base," c4- c5xd6, for his opponent.

13.cxd5 h6 14.Bxf6

Regarding this move, experts' opinions differ. Petrosian's then-second grandmaster Boleslavsky approved it, believing that the subsequent exchange of the light-square bishops minimizes Black's chances for an attack. In the tournament bulletin, Geller, on the contrary, advocated keeping the bishop with 14.Be3. I think, in this case the choice is a matter of taste: both of these solutions are logical in their own way and good enough.

14...Qxf6 15.Bg4 h5

Forced, since with the exchange of the lightsquare bishops, the threat h4-h5 becomes very unpleasant.

16.Bxc8 Raxc8 17.Qe2 Bh6 18.Na5 Rb8 19.0-0 Rfc8

The beginning of an incorrect plan. Here all of the commentators were unanimous: Black has no reason to play on the queenside! Instead, Black should immediately prepare ...f5 by transferring the knight to g7.

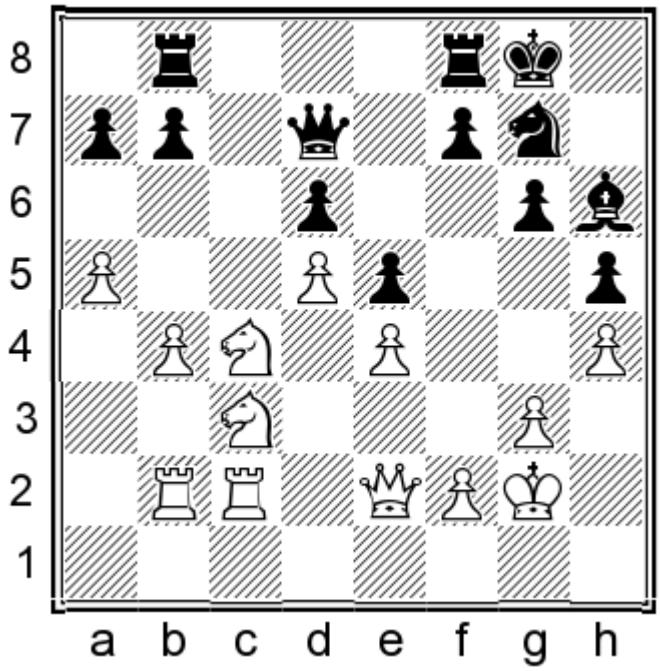
20.a4 Qd8 21.Nc4 Ne8 22.Ra2 Qc7 23.b3 Qd7 24.Kg2 Rc5

Gufeld still does not see the regrouping of the white pieces leading to a counterattack. 24...Ng7 is better here, too.

25.Rb1!

A typical Petrosian maneuver, captivating with its logic and wit. White's rooks bypass the c1-square via the second rank, establishing a strike force on the queenside, and after that the a- and b-pawns are set in motion. Black's bet on the strength of the h6- bishop has failed.

25...Rcc8 26.Rc2 Nc7 27.Rbb2 Rf8 28.b4 Ne8 29.a5 Ng7



30.a6! bxa6

No better was 30...b6 31.Na3 f5 32.Ncb5 f4 33.Rb3 (pointed out by Isaak Boleslavsky).

31.Na5 f5

Now, a dozen moves too late, this is incorrect and only leads to more weaknesses for Black.

32.Nc6 Rbe8 33.Nb1

Opening the third rank for the rook to defend the f3- and g3-squares in case of ...f4.

33...Kh7 34.Rb3 fxe4

Black's attempts to counterattack along the f-file are easily refuted.

35.Qxe4 Rf5 36.Ra3 Qb7 37.Nc3 Ref8 38.Qc4

Attacking the a6-pawn a second time and freeing the e4-square for the knight.

38...Rf3 39.Rxa6 Be3

In severe mutual time trouble, Black sacrificed a piece, which Petrosian could take without much risk. But he

finds a better move.

40.Ne4 Bh6

The bishop cannot retreat to b6 because of 41.Ng5+.

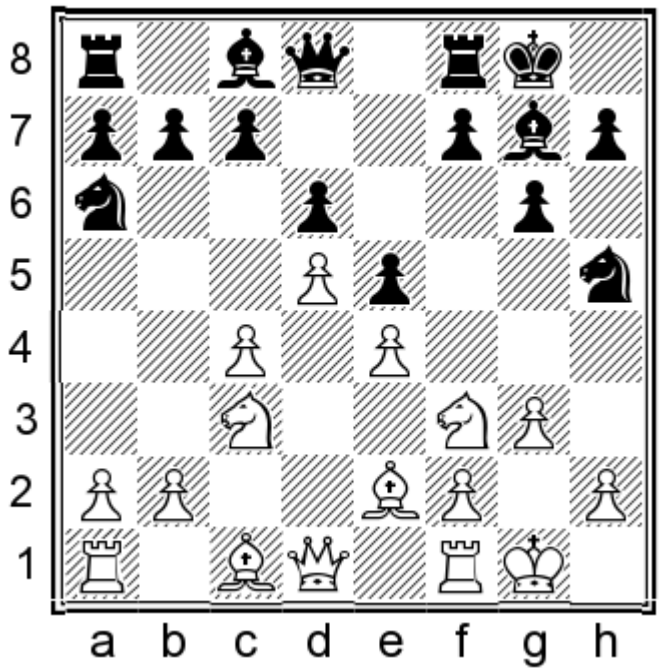
41.Rxa7

At this point, the game was adjourned, but, of course, Black chose not to continue the game.

(17) A3.5 **Petrosian – Vukcević**
XIV Olympiad
Leipzig 1960

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.c4 Bg7 4.Nc3 0-0 5.e4 d6 6.Be2 e5 7.d5 Nh5 8.g3 Na6 9.0-0

Petrosian avoids repeating the variation that brought him success in the previous game, probably to avoid home preparation, and tries to gain an advantage in another way. Still, I think 9.Nd2 is more promising.



9...f5

The attempt to strengthen this advance via ...Bh3 leads to the opposite effect, for example, 9...Bh3 10.Re1 f5 11.Ng5 or 10...h6 11.Kh1, and again bad is 11...f5 because of 12.Ng1.

10.exf5 Bxf5

Black believes that he has enough pieces to fight for the e4-square. To be fair, he did not have much of a choice, since 10...gxf5 11.Nxe5 Nxg3 12.fxg3 guaranteed a small but steady advantage for White.

11.Ng5 h6

A precise move. The obvious move 11...Nf6 was weaker because of 12.g4! Bd7 13.f3, and White takes firm control of the e4-square. Black is not afraid of 12.Bxh5, as after 12...gxh5 13.Nge4 Bh3 14.Re1 Bg4 he has great play on the light squares.

12.Nge4 Nf6 13.f3

Deserving of attention was 13.Nxf6+ Qxf6 14.g4, with the ideas mentioned previously.

13...Nxe4 14.fxe4 Bd7

Until now, Vukcević has played very well, but now he begins to overthink it. Why not play 14...Bh3? Most likely, he did not like the variation 15.Rxf8+ Qxf8 16.Bg4, where White exchanges his bad bishop for the Black's good one. Continuing just another couple of moves: 16...Bxg4 17.Qxg4 Kh7 and then ...h5, ...Bh6, it becomes clear that Black, performing the same operation, easily equalizes. Later, Black will always be one tempo short.

15.Rxf8+ Qxf8 16.Be3 h5 17.Qd2 Bh3 18.Nd1! Nc5 19.Nf2 Bc8

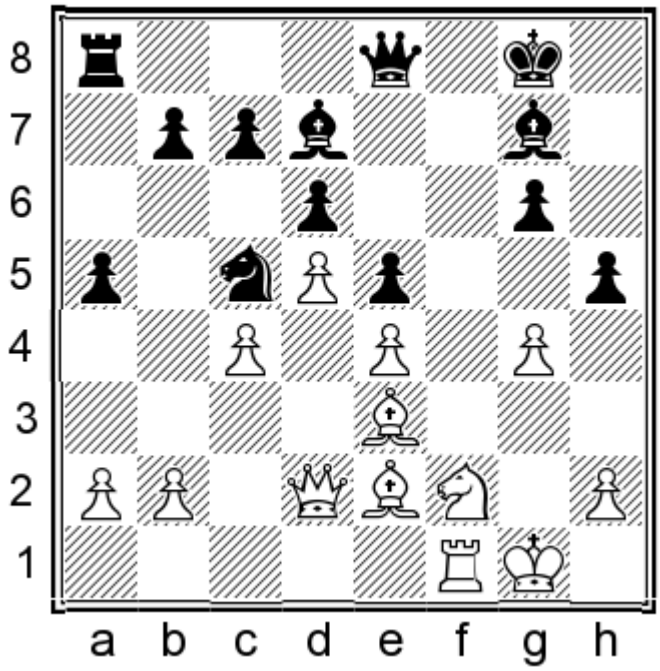
If the natural 19...Bd7, 20.b4 knocks the black knight out of the game for a long time. The need for moves like 19...Bc8 suggests some disarray in Black's position.

20.Rf1 Qe7 21.Bg5 Qe8 22.g4 a5

The only sensible response. After 22...hxg4 23.b4 Na6 24.Nxg4 or 22...Bxg4 23.Bxg4 hxg4 24.b4 g3 25.hxg3 Nd7 26.Ng4 White's initiative would grow to threatening proportions.

23.Be3 Bd7

Now, if 23...hxg4, White could have replied 24.Bxc5 dxc5 25.Bxg4, determining the position with advantage.



24.Bxc5

While it is hard to criticize this exchange, which wins an important pawn by force, it was apparently a good idea for White to continue the positional line, 24.Kh1, then Rg1, etc., maintaining strong pressure.

24...dxc5 25.gxh5 gxh5 26.Qg5 Qd8 27.Qxh5 Ra6

It seems that it is this impressive activation of the rook that escaped Petrosian's attention.

28.Ng4 Be8 29.Qh3 Rg6 30.Kh1 Qg5 31.Qe3

Essentially, the only constructive idea for White in this position is to exchange the queens. White missed such an

opportunity on the 27th move, which, however, was unlikely to upset Petrosian, because even in this favorable case, the win was quite problematic anyway.

31...Qh4 32.Qf3 Rg5 33.Kg2 Bg6 34.h3 Qh7 35.Bd3 Bh5 36.Kg3 Qg6 37.Be2

Since neither side can dissolve the stalemate, the opponents could have considered the aesthetic perspective. For instance, now or a bit later, Vukcević could have played ...Bxg4, forcing the pawn recapture and inviting White to occupy the g2- and g1-squares to create a tableau composition along the g-file.

37...Qb6 38.Qb3 Qg6 39.Bf3 b6 40.Qd1

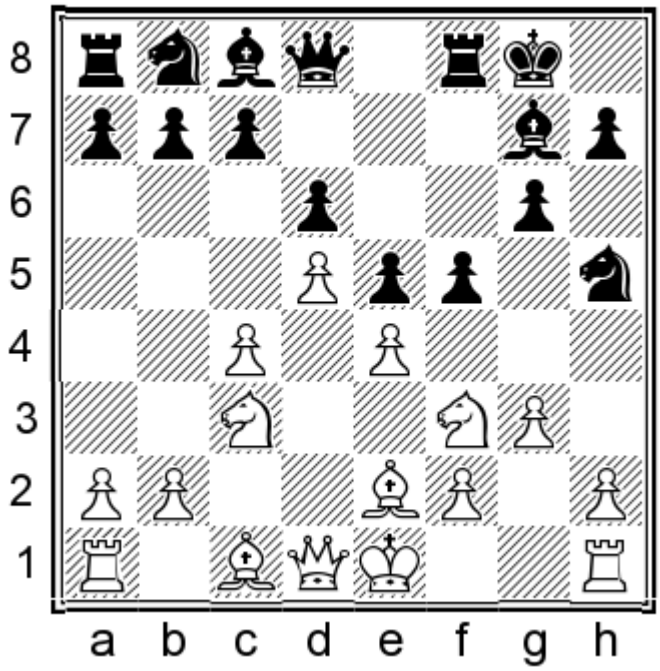
The last moves were made automatically by all appearances, and Black, completely forgetting that his opponent could create any threats, makes a terrible mistake.

40...Bf8?? 41.h4 As they say, no comment. Black resigned.

(18) A3.6 **Petrosian – Igor Zaitsev**
Moscow Spartakiad 1966

Objectivity is one of the most valuable and essential qualities for chess. Excessive enthusiasm for one's own plans leads to underestimating the opponent's plans. Zaitsev forgot about this fact and consequentially suffered defeat.

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.e4 d6 4.d4 Bg7 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 e5 7.d5 Nh5 8.g3 f5



9.exf5 Qf6

Of course, neither 9...gxf5 10.Nxe5 nor 9...Bxf5 10.Ng5 is good enough for Black. Zaitsev planned to sharpen the position, hoping for roughly the following variation: 10.fxg6 Bg4 11.gxh7+ Kh8 12.Ne4 Qxf3 13.Bxf3 Bxf3 14.Qd3 Bxh1 which White, however, does not have to play.

I must say that grandmaster Igor Zaitsev, the author of many original opening innovations, more than once refuted generally accepted evaluations, introducing interesting ideas in "refuted" variations. But in this game, he clearly went too far. White did not even have to invent anything; he gained an overwhelming advantage by playing simple, natural moves.

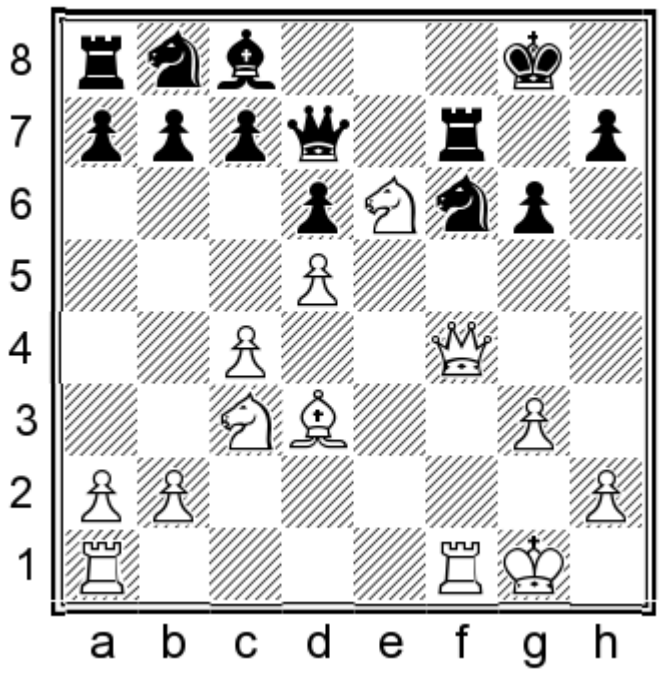
10.Ng5 Qxf5 11.0-0 Nf6 12.Bd3

The queen, which prematurely joined the midst of the struggle, begins to wander around the board, coming under attack from the White's pieces and pawns over and over again.

12...Qg4 13.Be2 Qf5 14.f3 Bh6 15.Bd3 Qd7 16.Ne6 Bxc1 17.Qxc1 Rf7

White has a huge advantage in development and starts a decisive attack with the next active move.

18.f4! exf4 19.Qxf4

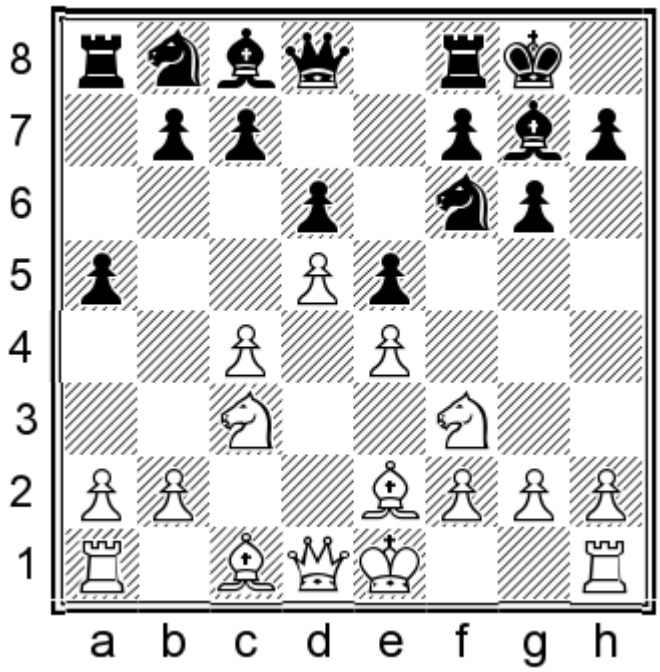


19...Nxd5

Savielly Tartakower called such moves "the suicide of the terminally ill patient."

20.Qxf7+ Qxf7 21.Rxf7 Bxe6 22.Nxd5! Bxd5 23.Rxc7 Na6 24.Rd7 Black resigned.

A4

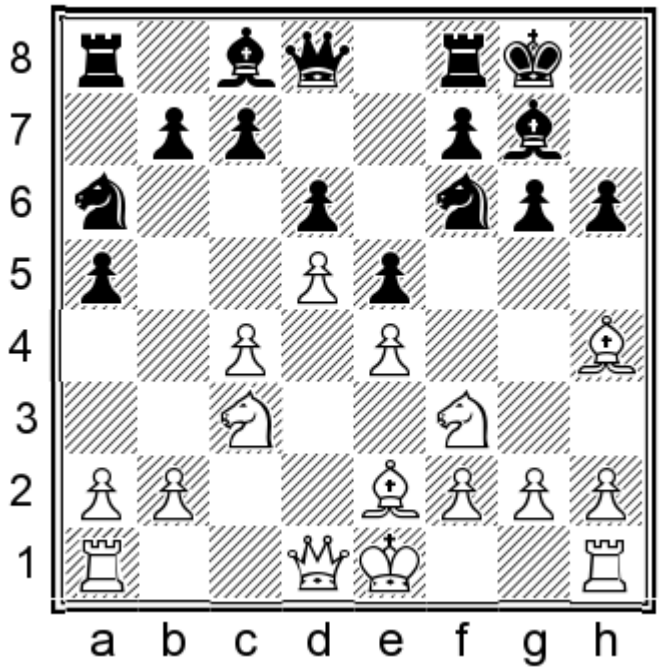


White to move

The starting position of the Petrosian System in its modern interpretation. White has two main options: to make the move Bg5, immediately or after castling (games 19, 20, 21, 22, 23), and 8.Be3 (games 24, 25, 26). The setup of the black pieces is universal: ...Na6, ...Bd7, ...Qe8, etc. The idea of such a setup was considered for a long time. However, it took many years of collective work for a popular and elegant defense concept to emerge from individual experiences and guesses. The significant contributions of grandmasters Geller and Stein cannot be ignored.

(19) A4.1 **Petrosian – Lutikov**
28th USSR Championship
Moscow 1961

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 e5 7.d5 a5 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 Na6



10.Nd2

Many believe that 10.0-0 is more accurate because it allows the maneuver Ne1-d3. However, Petrosian did not see a big difference, since he almost always routed the knight to d2 in this system. Petrosian used to say over and over again, “In the King’s Indian, the e4-square should be overprotected.” Those who are not sold on this idea should go over Petrosian’s game against De Greiff (game 7) once again.

10...Qd7

Today this awkward maneuver has completely disappeared from practical play. The queen’s place is on e8 (see games 21, 22, 23).

11.a3 Nh7 12.f3

A significant detail: the pawn goes to f3 only after the knight has left the f6-square.

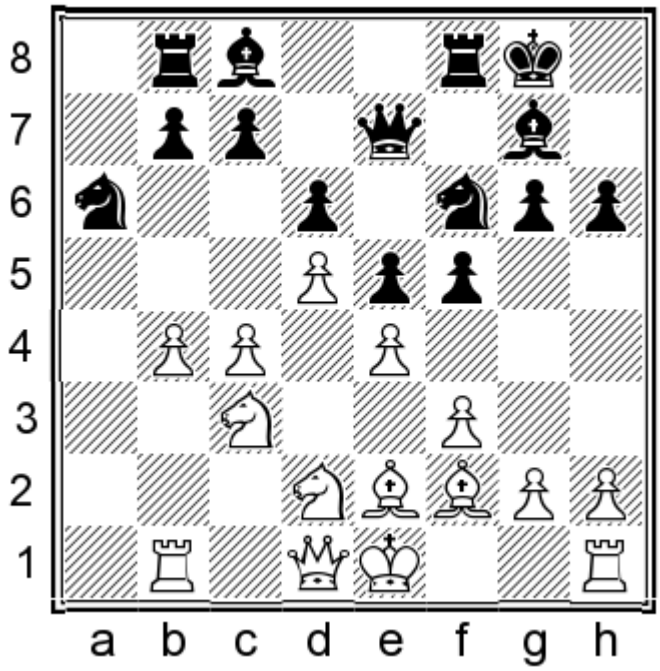
12...f5 13.b4

The standard advances of the f- and b-pawns signal the end of the opening and the transition in the middlegame, where White’s advantage is undeniable: his advance is clearly faster, which is a direct result of Black’s pretentious 10th move.

13...axb4 14.axb4 Rb8 15.Rb1

One after another, the rooks leave the open file. Why? Black defended against the threat b4-b5, and White did not have much of a choice if you think about it. After 15.Qb3, the confrontation between the queen and the b8-rook gives Black tactical chances (for example, with the idea of ...Kh8 and ...c5) and even though 18.b5 takes control of the a-file, it also releases the a6-knight and takes away the white pawns’ mobility. For the same reason, b5-b6 does not work a move later. The move c4-c5, rather than b4-b5, is the principled continuation for White.

15...Nf6 16.Bf2 Qe7



17.c5!

Despite the fact that Black has more attackers of the c5-square, Petrosian still carries out the planned breakthrough. White's tactical reasoning is in the following variation: 17...dxc5 18.Bxa6 cxb4 (or 18...bxa6 19.Bxc5) 19.Bc4! bxc3 20.d6+, and Black loses the queen.

17...Kh7 18.cxd6 cxd6 19.0-0 f4

Advancing the pawn to f4, Black relies on the strength of the standard attack ...g5-g4, but it is already clear that his distractions on the kingside are too late. Therefore, a gradual transition to defense, aiming for simplification via 19...Nc7 and so on, deserved attention, and then something like ...fxe4, ...Nxe4, ...Nc7-e8-f6. Black should not have relieved the tension from the e4-square; he could always do it later if he wanted.

20.Nc4 Nc7 21.Nb6 g5 22.Ra1 Rg8 23.Kh1 Bd7 24.Nxd7!

An important element of White's plan. All of his further success is the result of this foresighted exchange, providing dominance over the light squares. We will discuss the power of White's king's bishop without a rival in the second part of this book.

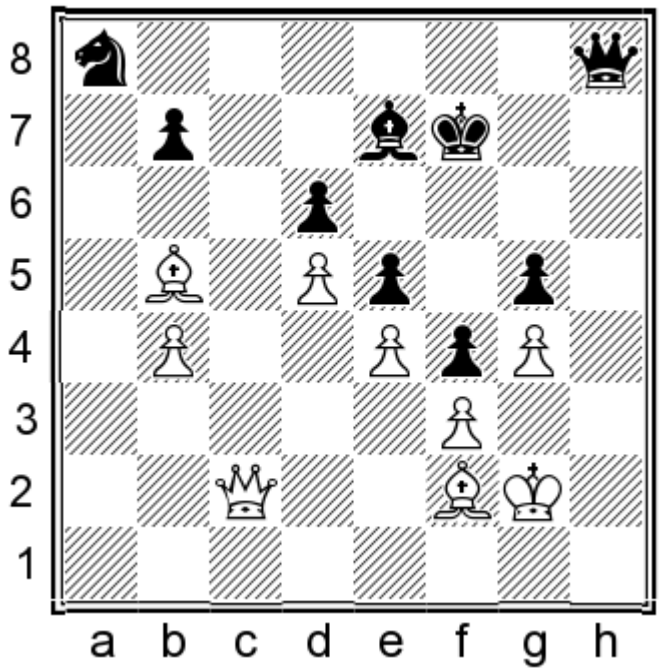
24...Qxd7 25.Na4 Bf8 26.Nb6 Qg7 27.g4 h5

As in game 10, Lutikov kept playing the wrong pawn moves. He should have captured *en passant*: 27...fxg3. Even though this would give the white knight the good route Nc4-e3-f5, and after 28.Bxg3 Black cannot play 28...g4 because of 29.fxg4 Nxg4 30.Bxg4 Qxg4 31.Rf7, the tries 28...Nh5 or 28...h5 give some hope. The same can be said about the continuation 28.hxg3 h5. Black did not notice this chance and ended up in the jaws of a positional squeeze.

28.h3 Rh8 29.Kg2 Kg8 30.Rh1 hxg4 31.hxg4 Rxh1 32.Qxh1 Nd7 33.Qc1 Nxb6 34.Bxb6 Na8 35.Ba7 Rd8

Lutikov believes his position to be strong enough to withstand the siege, but the strategic disadvantages of the King's Indian Defense begin to take their toll: if the minor pieces are not actively participating in the middlegame, in the endgame they are usually inactive. In this game, we can also say the same of Black's queen.

36.Bb5 Be7 37.Bf2 Kf7 38.Qc2 Rh8 39.Rh1 Rxh1 40.Kxh1 Qh8+ 41.Kg2



The adjourned position. In theory, White's advantage is significant, but in practice, it is still problematic, because the immobile pawn chains restrict the activity of the bishops. The dark-square bishop also has to protect the king. In other words, the question is: can White break through with just two pieces? After Petrosian analyzed this position, he gave an affirmative answer. As we will see, the bishop plays the main part, entering the enemy camp first via the narrow path Bd7-f5 and assisting the queen's intrusion. The interaction of the white pieces during the attack will be so effective that Black's surrender comes much sooner than one might expect.

41...Qb8

The only way to reactivate the knight.

42.Bd7 Nc7 43.Qc1 Na6 44.Qh1 Kg7

Of course, capturing on b4 would be suicide.

45.Bf5 Qh8 46.Qb1 Qe8 47.Qh1 Qh8 48.Qa1!

Having made sure he has a reliable barrier on the h-file, White tries to go around along the diagonal "trodden" by the bishop. Again the b-pawn is invincible: 48...Nxb4 49.Qb1, and Black loses a piece.

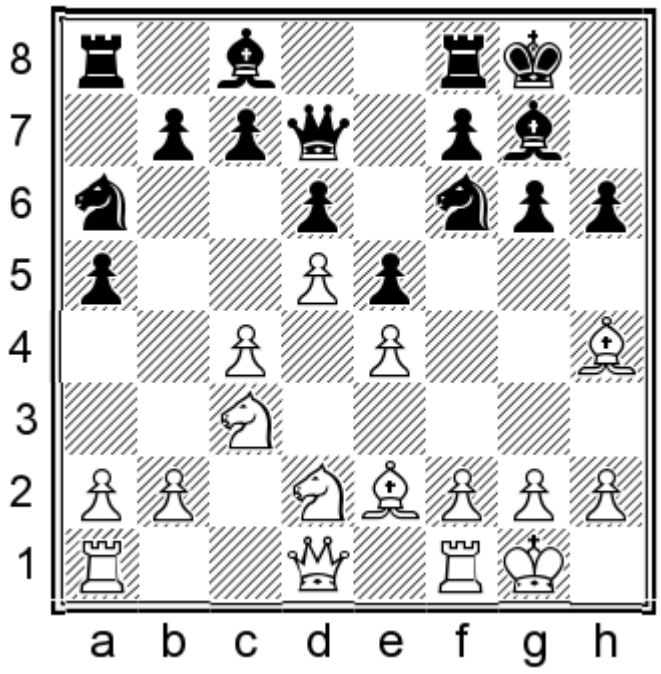
48...Qb8 49.Qa4 Kf8

If 49...Qd8, then 50.Qb5.

50.Qd7 Nxb4 51.Qe6 Qc7 52.Bh7! Ke8 53.Bg6+ Black resigned.

(20) A4.2 **Petrosian – Stein**
Moscow 1967

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 e5 7.d5 a5 8.0-0 Na6 9.Bg5 h6 10.Bh4 Qd7 11.Nd2



11...c5

As it was previously mentioned, this is not the best way to play this variation for Black.

Many players would not dare to make such a move, but grandmaster Leonid Stein was known for his fearless style. Undaunted by the terrible holes on the queenside, he eliminates the main danger, the rapid pawn offensive: a2-a3, b2-b4, c4-c5. Yet it must be said that moves like 11...c5 are never made when there are better options. Jumping ahead, I would like to add that, despite drawing this game, Stein was obviously dissatisfied with the results of the opening and a month later, playing against Petrosian again (see game 21), interpreted this variation very differently.

12.a3 Ne8 13.f3

White follows a well-known line. The retreat of the f6-knight strengthens the e4-square, the advance ...f5 is met with the move exf5 and the dark-square bishop is saved from exchange. However, because of changes in the position, now White has other good opportunities. Here are some noteworthy continuations:

(1) 13.Nb5, for example, 13...Bf6 14.Bg3 with a later f2-f4 and play in the spirit of the game Geller-Ljubojević (Petropolis, 1973); after ...Nac7 and the exchange on b5, another white knight would occupy the vacated c4-square;

(2) 13.Qa4 – Petrosian played this move later against Velimirović (see game 174); the endgame is favorable for White: 13...Qxa4 14.Nxa4 Bf6 15.Bxf6 Nxf6 16.Nb6 Rb8 17.f4!, etc.

13...Bf6 14.Bf2 Bg5 15.Nb3 Qd8 16.Nc1 Bd7 17.Nd3 Rc8 18.g3

The opponents' maneuvers are aimed at preparing breakthroughs: b2-b4 or f3-f4 for White and ...f5 for Black. They are also countermeasures against the opponent's possible plans.

18...f5

"It's time," Stein decided. Petrosian plays his trump card.

19.exf5 gxf5 20.f4

It is hard to resist such a nice push, but subsequently Petrosian came to the conclusion that 20.Kh1 was stronger, because it would have let him choose between f3-f4 or g3-g4 depending on the circumstances.

20...Bf6 21.Be3 Bg7 22.Qd2

The standard slowing technique with the f4- pawn in this case turned out to be not too effective for two reasons. Firstly, White achieves no benefit from reaching a hanging pawns position: fxe5 dxe5, since Black will have an excellent place for his knight on d6. Secondly, because of the position of the c5-pawn: after ...e4, as happened in the game, it narrows White's prospects in the center (the d4- square!) and somewhat on the queenside.

22...e4 23.Nf2 Nf6 24.h3 Qe8 25.Kh2 h5

Clearly, the breakthrough g3-g4 cannot happen yet, and Petrosian's last moves should be viewed as prophylaxis against Black's attacking aspirations connected with the advance of the h-pawn.

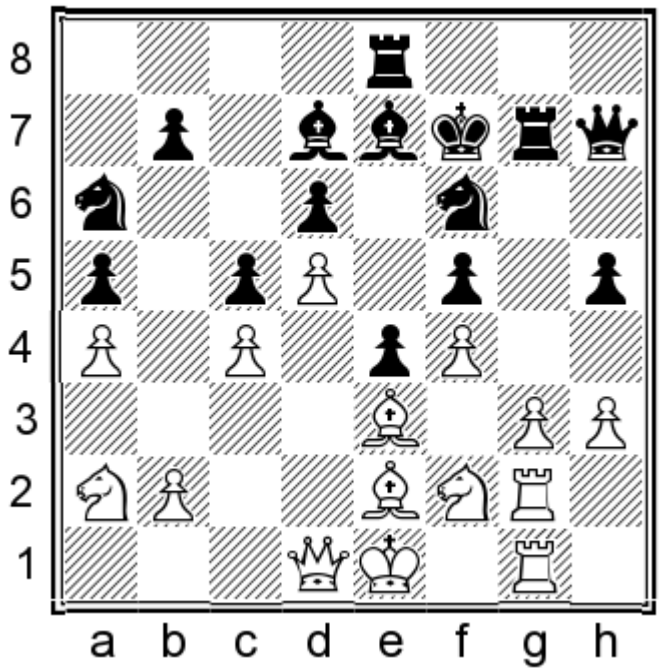
26.Rg1 Nc7

The threat of ...b5 causes White to close the position on the queenside.

27.a4 Qg6 28.Rg2 Rf7 29.Rh1

The opponents' further efforts boil down to finding the arguments "for" and "against" the pawn advance g3-g4.

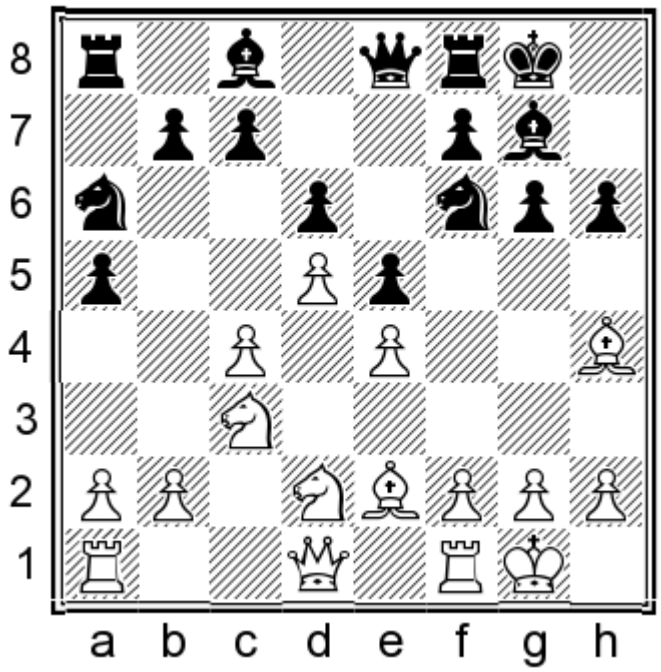
29...Bf8 30.Kg1 Rg7 31.Kf1 Re8 32.Rhg1 Qh7 33.Qd1 Na6 34.Na2 Kf7 35.Ke1 Be7 Draw.



Advancing the pawn to g4, White would have maximally sharpened the situation, but nothing more. In other words, if he planned to win, he should have done it earlier. When and how? I do not know. Perhaps on the 26th move, Rg1, he should have played Rab1. (26.Rab1) Then, if 26...Nc7, White turns out to have the good reply 27.b4!.

(21) A4.3 **Petrosian – Stein**
USSR Spartakiad
Moscow 1967

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 e5 7.d5 a5 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 Na6 10.Nd2 Qe8 11.0-0



One of the best known theoretical positions in this variation. Later Petrosian plays the old plan, and Black quickly gets comfortable play.

11...Bd7 12.b3

12.a3 is dubious because of 12...a4, for example, 13.b4 axb3 14.Nxb3 Ba4, and after stopping the advance of the a-pawn, Black is better.

Opening connoisseurs should pay attention to the far from harmless move 12.Kh1 made in game game 23.

12...Nh7 13.f3 h5

This is the first move of the Geller-Stein system, which is still considered the best way to fight against White's plan. Its distinctive elements include the change of diagonal for the g7-bishop (from the long diagonal to the next one, c1-h6) and the active role of the h-pawn, which creates tension on the kingside by threatening further advance that is beneficial for Black; usually, the move ...f5 is made later or not at all.

14.Bf2

As demonstrated by the further development of the system, the white bishop should be kept on h4, where it performs several important functions, in particular, limiting the black queen.

14...Bh6 15.a3 Qe7 16.Qc2

Gradually, Black has seized the initiative. He threatened 16...Qg5 with pressure on the d2- and g2-squares. Now White would reply 17.Rfd1 Bh3 18.Bf1. Stein renews the threat with his next move.

16...h4

Seizing space and, if, say, 17.Rab1, planning to continue the above variation with advantage: 17...Qg5 18.Rfd1 Bh3 19.Bf1 and then 19...Bxg2! 20.Bxg2 h3 and so on.

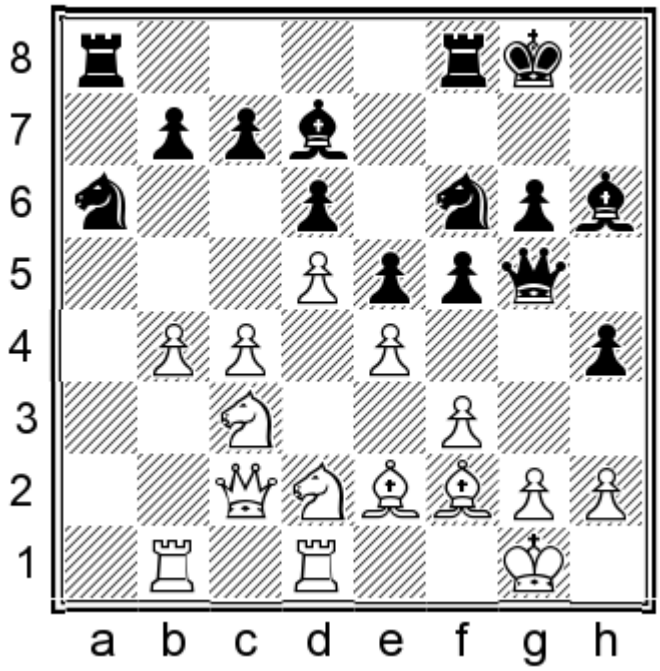
17.Rfd1 f5

Black's accumulated potential can be used for an attack with pieces: 17...Bf4 and then ...Qg5, ...Nf6-h5 with an active position and a number of attacking ideas. For example, one of them is to sacrifice a knight or a bishop on g3.

Black’s opportunities are clearly demonstrated in the following interesting game which, I think, is useful for anyone who wants to learn the King’s Indian Defense: 18.Rab1 Qg5 19.Bf1 Nf6 20.Ne2 Be3 21.b4 axb4 22.axb4 Ba4! 23.Qxa4 Bxd2 24.Bxh4? (better was 24.Rb2 – Elmar Magerramov) 24...Be3+ 25.Bf2 Nc5 26.Qc2 Ncxe4!! 27.fxe4 Ng4, and White resigned (Tukmakov-Magerramov, Moscow 1983).

Stein, of course, could not have known about these opportunities, which were discovered much later; his chosen plan is also quite good, but it gives White tactical chances.

18.Rab1 Qg5 19.b4 axb4 20.axb4 Nf6



In one more move, the knight will go to h5, and Black will start a direct attack. In this difficult situation, Petrosian finds a tactical trick and forces a draw by repetition.

21.f4! Qxf4

21...exf4 is dangerous because of 22.Nf3.

22.g3 hxg3 23.hxg3 Qg5 24.Nf3 Qh5 25.Nxe5 Qh3 26.Bf1

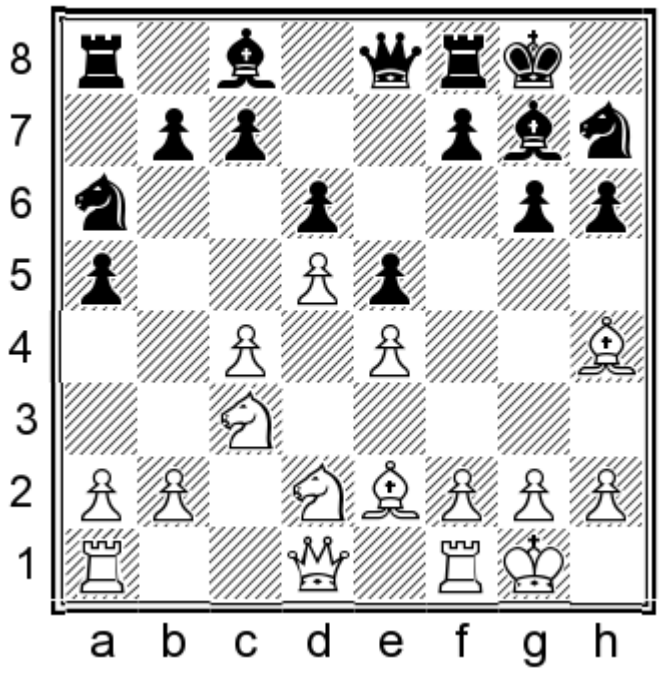
If 26.Nxg6 , then unpleasant is 26...Be3! (indicated by Mikhail Yudovich).

26...Qh5 27.Be2 Qh3 28.Bf1 Qh5

Black’s queen cannot escape the “perpetual” chase. Draw

(22) A4.4 **Petrosian – Kottnauer**
XVIII Olympiad
Lugano 1968

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.d4 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.d5 a5 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 Na6 10.0-0 Qe8 11.Nd2 Nh7



12.a3 h5

In view of the threat of ...g5, ...h4, the regrouping of the black pieces is accompanied by a win of a tempo. However, the forced move f2-f3 is useful for White.

13.f3 Bh6

An inaccuracy that undoes all of Black's previous efforts in the opening. Correct was 13...Bd7, connecting the rooks and threatening ...a4, and only then ...Bh6.

14.b4 Bd7 15.Rb1 Be3+ 16.Kh1

16.Bf2 was also possible, but Petrosian, having learned from the previous game, is in no hurry to move his bishop away from the active position.

16...f5 17.exf5

According to Petrosian, also good was 17.Qe1, with the approximate continuation 17...f4 18.Bf2 Bxf2 19.Qxf2 and then c4-c5.

17...gxf5 18.Qe1

Hinting that the bishop's position on e3 is not robust enough.

18...Qg6 19.Bf2 Qh6 20.Bxe3 Qxe3 21.Nb5 axb4 22.Rb3!

A necessary subtlety: 22.axb4 would be followed by 22...Nxb4! 23.Rxb4 Ra2, and Black regains the piece with an advantage.

22...Qh6

22...Qc5 was not good because of 23.f4 with a strong attack for White.

23.axb4 Rae8 24.Nc3 Nf6 25.c5!

The main purpose of this standard move is weakening the e5-pawn.

25...dxc5 26.Bxa6 bxa6

The other possibility, 26...cxb4 27.Bxb7 bxc3 28.Rxc3, is no better.

27.bxc5 Bb5 28.Nxb5 axb5 29.d6 cxd6 30.cxd6 Rb8

At first glance, Black's position does not look bad, but Petrosian reveals its main flaw: the king's insufficient protection.

31.Re3 Nd7 32.f4! e4

It is psychologically understandable why Black uses the opportunity to create a protected passed pawn, but this game never reaches the endgame. At the same time, 32...exf4 would give Black some chances to defend, for example, 33.Re6 Rf6, with the goal of exchanging a pair of rooks.

Now the white rook breaks through to g5, and Black's position immediately becomes critical.

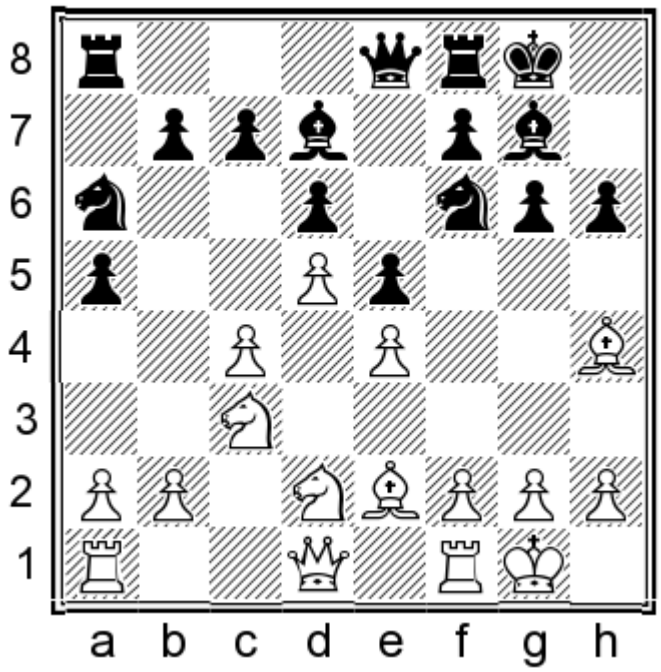
33.Rg3+ Kh8 34.Rg5

White's threats are overwhelming. After 34...Qh7, winning is 35.Qa1+ Nf6 (35...Rf6) 36.Rc1 and so on, so Black sacrifices a pawn, but his troubles do not end there.

34...Nf6 35.Rxf5 Qh7 36.Re5 Rfe8 37.Qa1 Rxe5 38.fxe5 Ng4 39.e6+ Qg7 40.Nxe4 b4 41.e7 Black resigned.

(23) A4.5 **Petrosian – Hort**
XVIII Olympiad
Lugano 1968

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.e4 d6 4.d4 Bg7 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 e5 7.d5 a5 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 Na6 10.0-0 Bd7 11.Nd2 Qe8



12.Kh1

A new move compared to the game 21, where Petrosian played 12.b3. Since Black does not rush ...f5, White is also not in a hurry and makes good moves. This method is not original, but its true power was discovered very recently.

12...Nh7 13.f3 h5

An attempt to take advantage of White's passivity by switching to the plan with ...f5, but it is not promising. For example, 13...f5 14.exf5 gxf5 15.f4 (threatening 16.Bh5) 15...Nf6 16.fxe5 dxe5 17.Bxf6 Rxf6 18.g4! e4!? 19.gxf5 Nc5 20.Nb3 Qe7 21.Rg1, and Black experienced difficulties in the game Yanvarjov-Korotylev (Korolyov 1999).

14.Nb3

Modern theory prefers 14.a3. Here are two examples on this topic:

(1) 14...a4 15.Nb5 Bh6 16.b4! axb3 17.Nxb3 f5 18.exf5 Bxf5 (18...gxf5?! 19.f4!) 19.Bd3 (Yanvarjov-Loskutov, Moscow, 1994);

(2) 14...Bh6 15.b3 Be3 16.Qc2 f5 17.exf5 gxf5 18.Bf2 Bxf2 19.Rxf2 Nf6 20.Rg1!? Kh8 (20...h4 21.g4!) 21.Qb2! Nc5 22.b4 axb4 23.axb4 Na4 24.Nxa4 Rxa4 25.Bd1 and 26.f4 (Kramnik-Gelfand, Linares 1994). In both cases, White has the advantage.

The text move is less ambitious, and overall in this game Petrosian was in a rather peaceful mood.

14...b6 15.Nc1 Bh6 16.Nd3

It took the knight not two but four moves to get from f3 to d3! Clearly, now White does not have much to hope for.

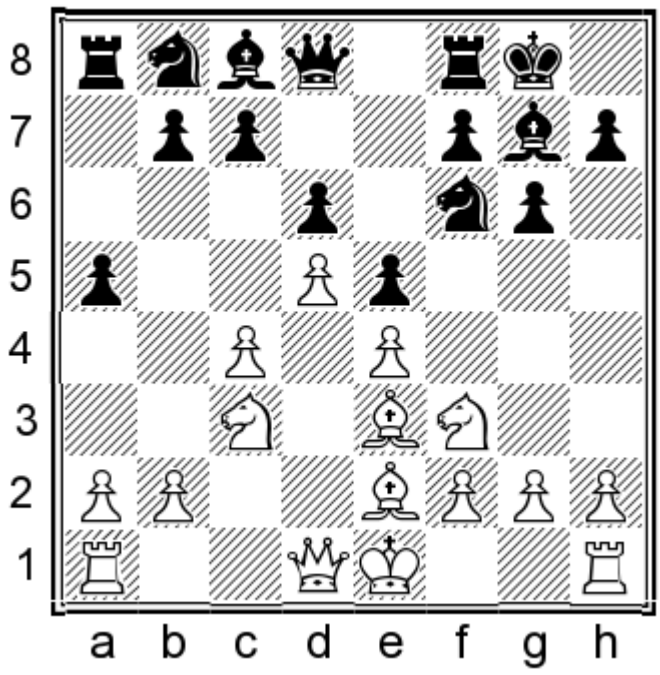
16...Be3 17.Re1 Nc5 18.Bf1

The opponents agreed to a draw. This is almost the only "grandmaster draw" that Petrosian allowed himself in his many years of playing the classic variation.

(24) A4.6 **Petrosian – Quinteros**
Vinkovci 1970

1.d4 d6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Nf3 Nf6 5.e4 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.d5 a5 8.Be3

Provoking the knight to go g4, White hopes to regain the lost tempi with advantage.



8...Ng4 9.Bg5 f6

9...Bf6 10.Bd2 is dubious, and Black has nothing better than to retreat the bishop to g7.

10.Bh4 Na6

Unlike the main variation, instead of the knight, the f6-pawn is pinned, but the essence is the same: Black has to waste time on ...f5.

11.h3 Nh6 12.Nd2 Bd7 13.f3 Qe8 14.b3 f5 15.Rb1 fxe4

It is time to be decisive because of the threat g2-g4, after which the move ...fxe4 (or ...f4) no longer makes sense, while the unpleasant threat of exchanging on f5, followed by an attack along the g-file would hang over Black's head.

16.Ndxe4

The capture with the pawn had its pros (and cons). Allowing the knight to come to d4, White believes that the lonely knight is not a threat.

16...Nf5 17.Bg5 h6 18.Bd2 Qe7 19.0-0 Nc5 20.Nxc5 dxc5 21.Bd3 b6 22.Ne4 Nd4

Of course, Black can be proud of his d4-knight, but there are many other pieces on the board. Also, White's pawns are clearly positioned better...

23.Nf2 Bf5 24.Be4 Qh4 25.Qe1 Rae8 26.Rb2 Bf6 27.Ng4

Starting a series of exchanges that provides White with a better endgame.

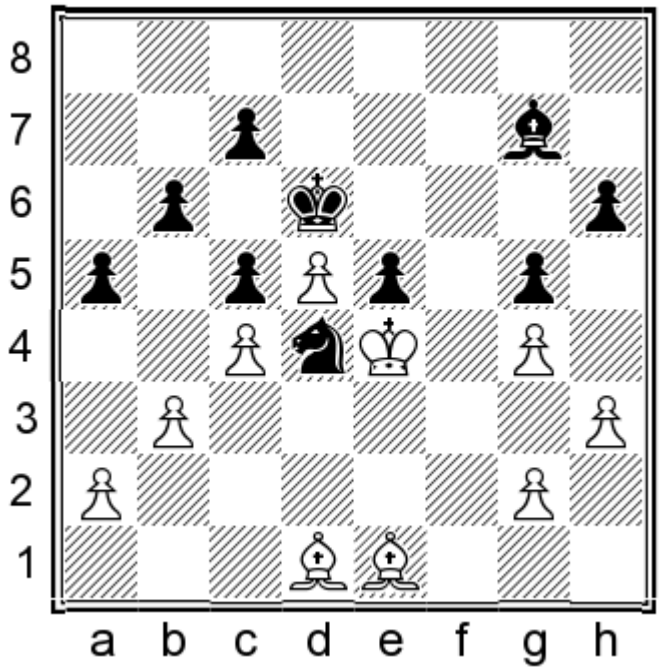
27...Bxg4 28.fxg4

White violates a general rule and takes away from the center with the pawn in order to open the f-file and exchange both rooks, which will increase the proportional value of the two bishops. Probably Petrosian hoped to win without much effort, but the Argentine grandmaster tenaciously defends and manages to build a solid position.

28...Qxe1 29.Bxe1 g5 30.Rbf2 Bg7 31.Rxf8+ Rxf8 32.Rxf8+ Bxf8

Now, the kings come into play.

33.Kf2 Kf7 34.Ke3 Be7 35.Kd3 Bf6 36.Bf3 Ke7 37.Bd1 Bg7 38.Ke4 Kd6

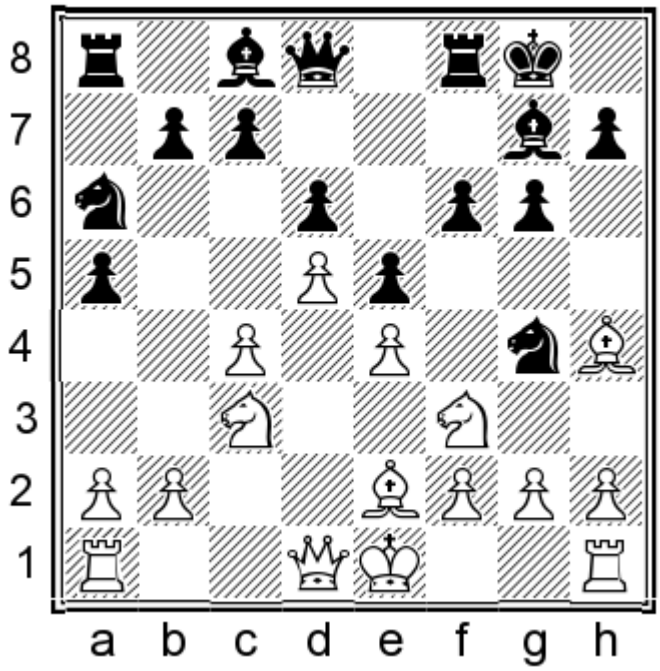


All of the black pawns are fixed on the color of the bishop, the d4-knight has no moves, but all of this is not enough to win; Black has an impregnable fortress on the board. Petrosian has one last chance, pushing the h-pawn.

39.h4 Bf6 40.g3 Bg7 41.a3 Ke7 42.Bd2 Bf6 43.Be3 Kd6 44.h5 Ke7 Draw

(25) A4.7 **Petrosian – Geller**
Chigorin Memorial
Sochi 1977

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 e5 7.d5 a5 8.Be3 Ng4 9.Bg5 f6 10.Bh4 Na6



Up to this point, this follows the previous game, where Petrosian tried 11.h3. Now he follows the theoretical recommendation.

11.Nd2 h5

Principled, even though it seems the old move 11...Nh6, as played by Geller himself against Gligorić in the Match of the Century (Belgrade 1970), has never been refuted.

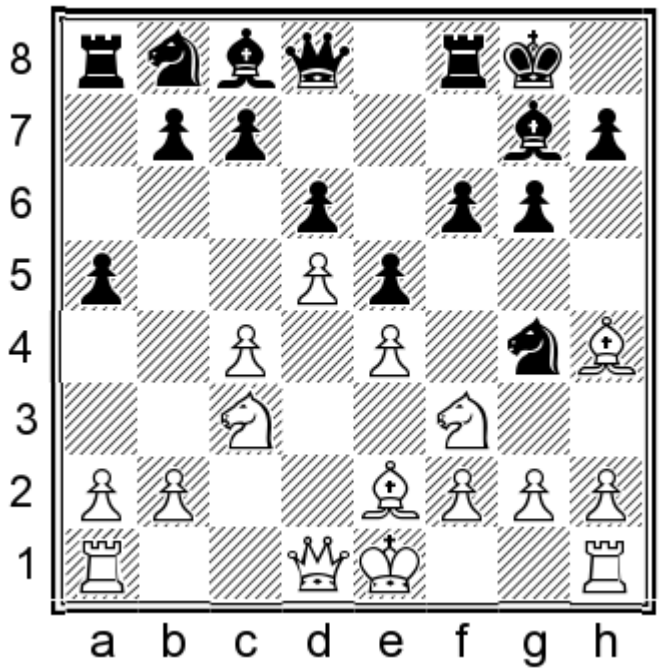
12.a3 Bd7 13.0-0 Qe8 14.h3 Nh6 15.b3 f5 16.f3 Kh8 17.Rb1 Rg8 18.g4 Nf7 Draw

Calm amid the storm. One of the features of the pawn pressure on the kingside is that Black can capture the g4-pawn at any moment, while White can almost never take on f5 and h5.

(26) A4.8 **Petrosian – Loginov**
USSR Spartakiad
Moscow 1983

This game was the last one in which Petrosian played his system. He was able to refute one of the then-fashionable theoretical lines.

1.c4 g6 2.e4 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.d5 a5 8.Be3 Ng4 9.Bg5 f6 10.Bh4



10...Qe8

A common continuation here is 10...Na6, as was played in the two games above. The purpose of the text move is to save a tempo, in order to set the f-pawn in motion as soon as possible.

11.Nd2 f5

This is the aforementioned recommendation from one of the theoretical articles of the early 1980s. At first glance, exchanging on g4 is not beneficial for White, but at the same time, now the knight can retreat to f6, where it will actively control the center...

12.Bxg4!

A simple but far from obvious decision. Like most of Petrosian's novelties, this exchange is connected not so much with opening subtleties but with a deep plan in the coming middlegame. Exchanging the bishop for the knight, White favorably alters the direction of the struggle. That is, nothing changes on the queenside, White carries out his usual plan. However, on the other flank Black, devoid of the active tool in the form of the f-pawn, can counter only with an attack with pieces against the king, which has very little chance of succeeding because Black's maneuvering

capabilities are severely limited.

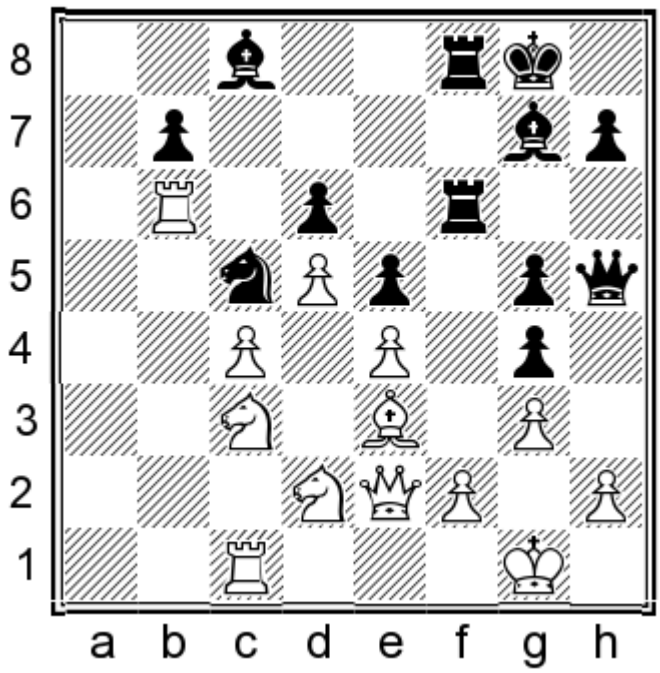
12...fxg4 13.Bg5

A necessary move. The bishop again comes into play and occupies a perfect place on e3.

13...Na6 14.Be3 Bd7 15.0-0 Rf7 16.Qe2 Qe7 17.b3 Raf8 18.a3 Qh4 19.Rab1 Rf6 20.b4 axb4 21.axb4 g5 22.g3 Qh5 23.Rfc1

Bringing to an end all of the opponent's attempts to create real threats. In reality, Black's attack ended before it started, because after the only threat ...Rh6 White always has the defense Nd2-f1.

23...c5 24.bxc5 Nxc5 25.Rb6 Bc8



26.Rxd6!

With regard to such positions, Reuben Fine once remarked that the combinations there are as natural as a baby's smile.

26...Rxd6 27.Bxc5 Rh6

For now Black is able to maintain approximate material balance, but this is little consolation.

28.Nf1 Rff6 29.Be3 b6 30.Ra1

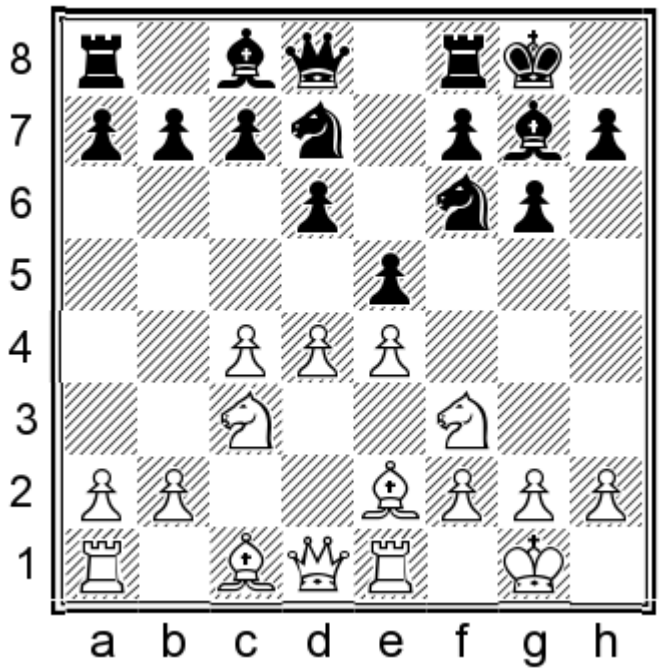
The white pieces penetrate the enemy camp through the resulting gap on the queenside.

30...Bf8 31.Ra8 Bd7 32.Qa2 Rf7 33.Rb8 Rff6 34.Qa7 Be8 35.Qa8 Bd7 36.c5 Black resigned.

This concludes our discussion of the Petrosian System. We will proceed to the main classical structures, where the pawn tension in the center is maintained for some time. Later (depending on the preferences and desires of the opponents), the game can take the following main directions: White can either push the pawn to d5, exchange it (dxe5), or, finally, leave the d4-pawn where it is. In the latter case, Black can either take it with the e5-pawn, or, following the opponent's example, play passively, leaving it up to White to choose from the three options mentioned above, maintaining the opportunity to exchange exd4. However, these three possibilities are characteristic not only

of this variation but also of the King’s Indian Defense in general. Perhaps, this is why it is called “classical.”

A5

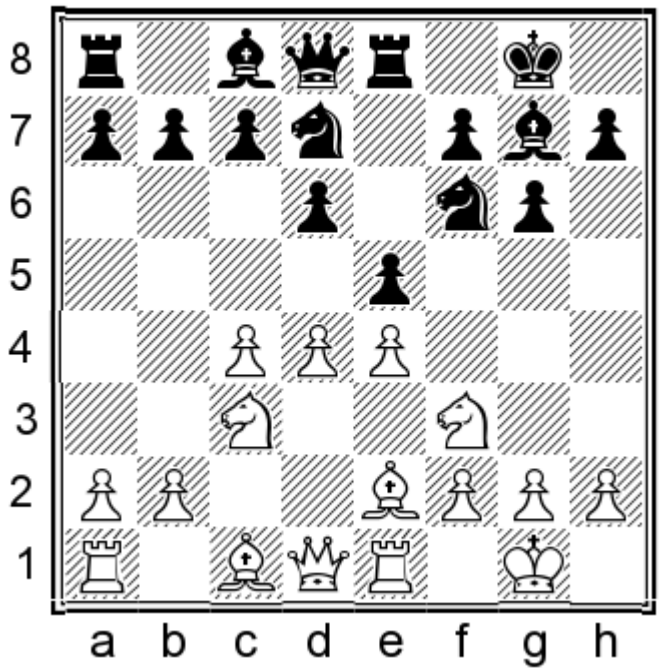


Black to move

Interestingly, in most games where this position took place (games 27, 28, 29,31, 33 34), Tigran Petrosian chose, and I must say, not without success, a defensive concept for Black; and only twice, against Boris Spassky (game 30) and Lubomir Ljubojević (game 32) did he have an opposite goal.

(27) A5.1 **Nei – Petrosian**
All-Union Youth Championship
Leningrad 1946

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 e5 3.Nf3 d6 4.d4 Nbd7 5.e4 g6 6.Be2 Bg7 7.0-0 0-0 8.Re1 Re8



Why does Black, whose only dream seems to be to open the long diagonal for the g7-bishop, delay the move

...exd4? Practical play shows that Black should not give up control of the d4-square too early. Unlike, say, in the Sicilian Defense, where a similar exchange offers Black a clear plan to attack the c2-pawn, in King's Indian positions, Black cannot count on fullfledged counterplay along the e-file, if he does not have some tactics. For example, Geller, in his book *The King's Indian Defense*, published in 1980, features the game Taimanov-Reshevsky (Zürich, 1953), which was played when the variation was in its infancy: 8...exd4 9.Nxd4 Nc5 10.Bf1 Re8 11.f3 Nfd7 12.Be3 c6, and now White, according to the author, can get a long-term initiative via 13.b4 (instead of 13.Qd2).

9.Bf1 a5 10.b3

Not a very good idea. With one move, White weakens all of the dark squares and takes away the support of the knight on c3.

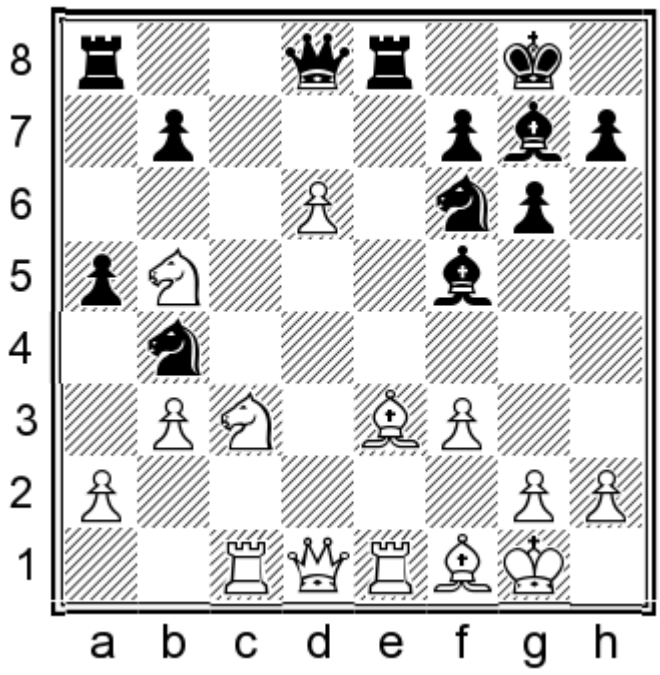
10...exd4 11.Nxd4 Nc5 12.f3 c6 13.Be3

After 13.Bb2, Black would have played 13...a4, and if 14.b4, then 14...Qb6!

13...d5

The enthusiasm of youth. In his mature years, Petrosian probably would have preferred the simple 13...Nfd7 and would have been right. White must accept the challenge, because after 14.Nxc6 bxc6 15.Bxc5 Nxe4!, Black has the advantage.

14.exd5 cxd5 15.Ndb5 Na6 16.cxd5 Nb4 17.d6 Bf5 18.Rc1



18...Rxe3!?

It is too late to retreat: 18...Rc8?! 19.Qd2, and White consolidates his position.

19.Rxe3 Bh6

The tempting 19...Qb6 is refuted with the cold-blooded 20.Qd4!.

20.Re1 Rc8 21.Nd4?!

Seeing that the planned 21.Bc4 does not work: 21...Rxc4 22.bxc4 Nd3, Nei got confused. Meanwhile, if he had

played 21.Qd4!, Black would have had a hard time.

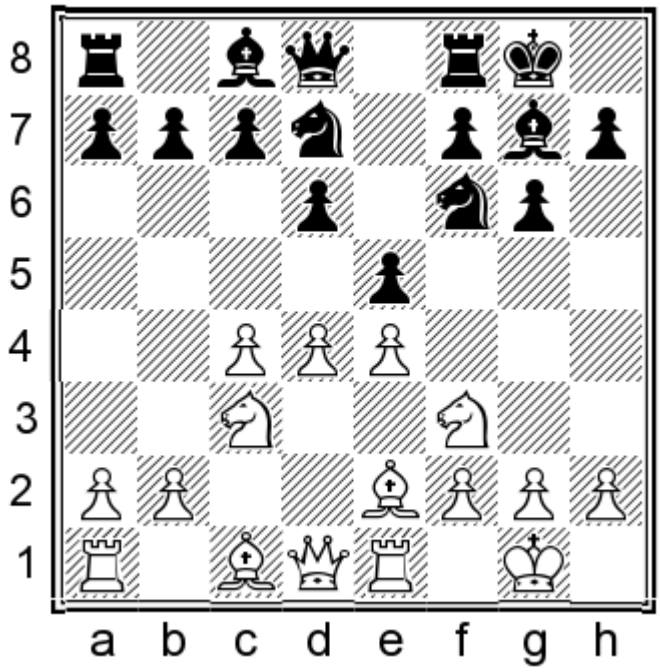
21...Bxc1 22.Bc4?

The decisive mistake. It was possible to continue the fight by playing 22.Qxc1 Nxa2 23.Qg5!? h6 24.Qxh6! Nxc3 25.Nxf5 gxf5 26.Qg5+ Kf8! (26...Kh8? 27.Re7!) 27.Qh6+ with perpetual check.

22...Bf4 23.Re7 Qxd6 24.Nxf5 Bxh2+ 25.Kh1 gxf5 26.Qe2 Bg3 27.Rxf7 Kh8 28.Nb5 Qf4 White resigned.

(28) A5.2 **Eliskases – Petrosian**
Interzonal Tournament
Stockholm 1952

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 Nbd7 8.Re1



8...c6 9.Bf1 Re8

In this system, Black makes the moves ...c6, ...Re8, ...a5 in any order. Petrosian performs twothirds of the "mandatory program," but in his plan, the a-pawn is given a different, more active part.

Taking advantage of this move order, now White could play 10.d5 with the threat of dxc6, which almost forces ...c5, given that 10...Nc5 is not possible because of b2-b4. Most likely, Petrosian himself would have used this opportunity if he were playing with the white pieces. As for Eliskases, he obviously did not want to do it now or later.

10.Rb1 Ng4

The looming exchange ...exd4 promises a livelier game. Although, in principle, White does not mind the exchange, it seems that he had hoped to keep the opponent at a safe distance. However, the rapid advance of the knight with the concrete threat 11...exd4 12.Nxd4 Qh4 makes Eliskases "get out of the trenches."

11.h3 exd4 12.Nxd4 Ngf6

It seems like the move 12...Qb6 is the logical conclusion of the tactical maneuver. I think the majority of players would have played it. However, Petrosian probably did not like the position after 13.hxg4, because the g4-pawn

would have enormous influence, putting pressure on Black's entire kingside. This pawn structure is not unfavorable for White, which was repeatedly proven later in practice. A classic example is the game Smyslov-Geller (Zürich, 1953), which White won brilliantly.

The modest knight retreat carries surprisingly deep ideas. One of them is to force the move f2-f3, causing further weakening of the squares around the white king. This explains White's following reply. Its goal is to stop the knight from moving to c5.

13.Nb3 Qe7 14.Bf4 Ne5 15.Nd4

The e4-pawn is now out of danger, and the knight returns to the center. However, time has been lost, and Black begins to wish for something more than mere equality.

15...a6!

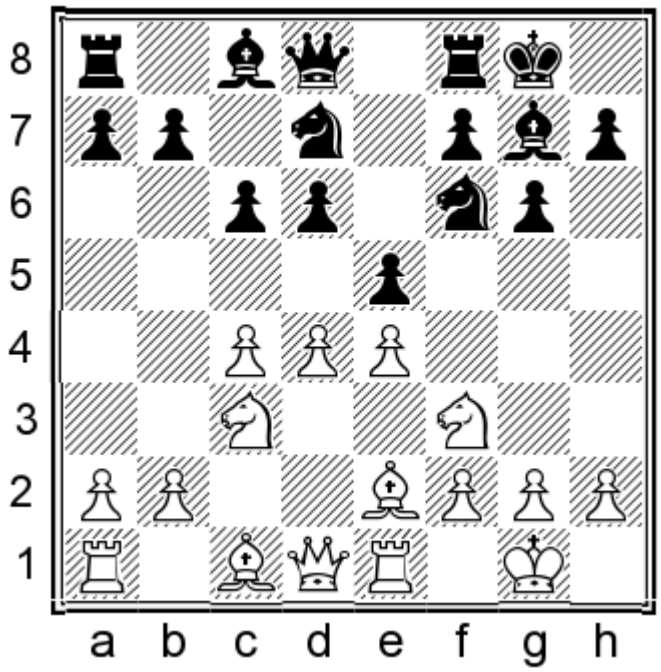
With two promising ideas: ...Bd7, ...b5, and ...c5, ...Be6.

16.Rc1 Rd8 17.Rc2 Bd7 18.Rd2 b5 19.cxb5 axb5 20.a3 Ne8 21.Be3 Rab8 22.Nc2 Qe6 23.Nd4 Qe7 24.Rc2 Nc7 Draw.

After forcing the exchange of White's bishop pawn for his rook pawn, Black has the advantage, of course. Petrosian's decision can probably be explained both by competitive reasons and the nerves of the debutante: it was Petrosian's first Interzonal tournament.

(29) A5.3 **Bronstein – Petrosian**
Candidates' Tournament
Amsterdam 1956

1.c4 g6 2.Nc3 Bg7 3.Nf3 d6 4.d4 Nf6 5.e4 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 Nbd7 8.Re1 c6



9.d5

At least solving the problem of the g7- bishop, which will not come back into play any time soon.

9...c5

Striving for solid positions in the spirit of the Benoni Defense. Another possible plan is 9...Nc5, which Spassky played against Petrosian in the next game.

10.a3 Ne8 11.Bg5

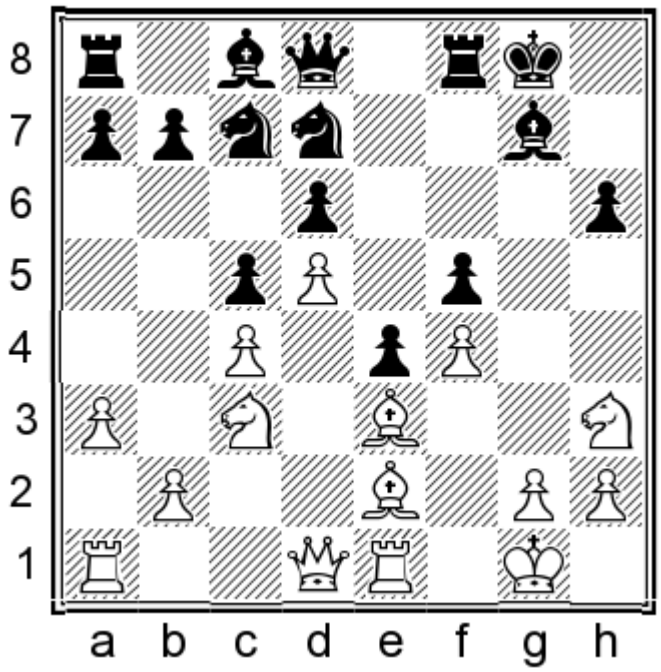
Ultimately, this active excursion does nothing for White. Thus, the tried and true 11.b4 was better. Incidentally, this move would have prevented 11.b4 f5 12.Ng5 Nc7 13.exf5 gxf5 14.Nb5! Nf6 15.bxc5 with advantage for White.

11...f6 12.Bd2 f5 13.Ng5

Compared with the aforementioned variation, White is missing an important tempo (the pawn is still on b2), and Black easily refutes the cavalry raid.

13...Nc7 14.exf5 gxf5 15.f4 e4 16.Be3 h6 17.Nh3

And here comes perhaps the most incredible move of the entire Amsterdam Candidates Tournament!



17...Bxc3!

According to Petrosian, finding this move was not difficult, from a pure chess perspective. A similar position often arises in the variations of the Nimzo- Indian with a closed center, where both of White's bishops are locked in a cage of his own and his opponent's pawns and are completely harmless. The main problem lies in psychology. It is always difficult to overcome the inertia of well-established evaluations and stereotypes.

18.bxc3 Nf6 19.a4 Kh8 20.Nf2 Rg8 21.Kh1 Qe8 22.Rg1 Qg6 23.Qd2 Bd7 24.g3

Now, and especially on the previous move, better was Rab1, making it difficult for Black to enter the queen's rook into play.

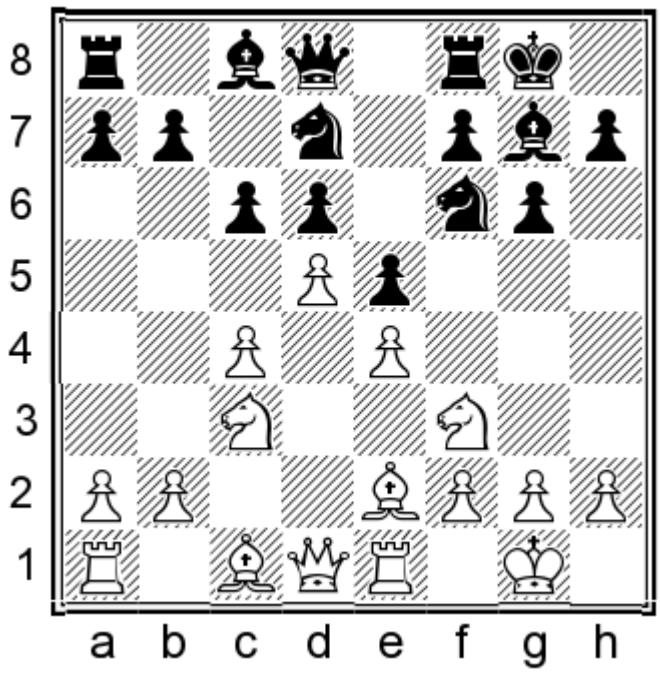
24...Rae8 25.a5 Re7 26.Rab1 Bc8 27.Rg2 Reg7 28.Rbg1 Nce8 29.h3 h5 Draw

Black's small chance is to try to create a passed pawn on the queenside, but it is unlikely to be realized. Overall, a draw is the logical result, because, except for a small inaccuracy on the 24th move, White did nothing wrong.

(30) A5.4 **Petrosian – Spassky**
27th USSR Championship

For a long time, the games of these two great masters ended in an even score. A draw, a draw, and again a draw, even though in almost all of the games, there was a real, uncompromising struggle. Thus, before yet another, the ninth, game, the score was 4-4.

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.c4 Bg7 4.Nc3 0-0 5.e4 d6 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 Nbd7 8.Re1 c6 9.d5



In the psychological duel that started from the very first moves, the opponents have already exchanged surprises. Of course, Spassky's choice of opening, the King's Indian, was unexpected. He played this opening very seldom. At the same time, as Spassky himself admitted, he was somewhat surprised by Petrosian's 7th move. Also, White's last move deviates from mainstream theory, which focuses on 9.Bf1.

9...Nc5

More in line with the dynamic spirit of the system than 9...c5 as in the previous game.

10.Bf1 a5 11.Bg5

Petrosian still returns to his trademark idea, but with the inclusion of Re1 and Bf1, it loses much of its force.

11...h6 12.Bh4 g5 13.Bg3 Bg4! 14.Re3

To get rid of the unpleasant pin, White has to resort to such unattractive moves. Without giving his opponent a break, Spassky begins to attack the e4-square with an energetic flank move.

14...b5! 15.dxc6

Practically the only move. If 15.cxb5, then 15...cxd5 16.Nxd5 (if 16.exd5, then 16...e4, etc.) 16...Nfxe4, then Black would have an overwhelming advantage.

15...b4 16.Nb5

Again, the only move. If 16.Nd5 Nfxe4 17.c7 Qe8, and after ...Be6xd5 the c-pawn's fate would be sealed.

16...Nfxe4 17.c7?!

Subsequent analysis discovered the best chance to defend: the continuation 17.Bd3!, with the idea of sacrificing the exchange after 17...f5 18.Bxe4 fxe4 19.Rxe4 Nxe4 20.Qd5+ and 21.Qxe4. White's position is not worse because of the strong c-pawn and the excellent position of the knight on b5.

17...Qe7?!

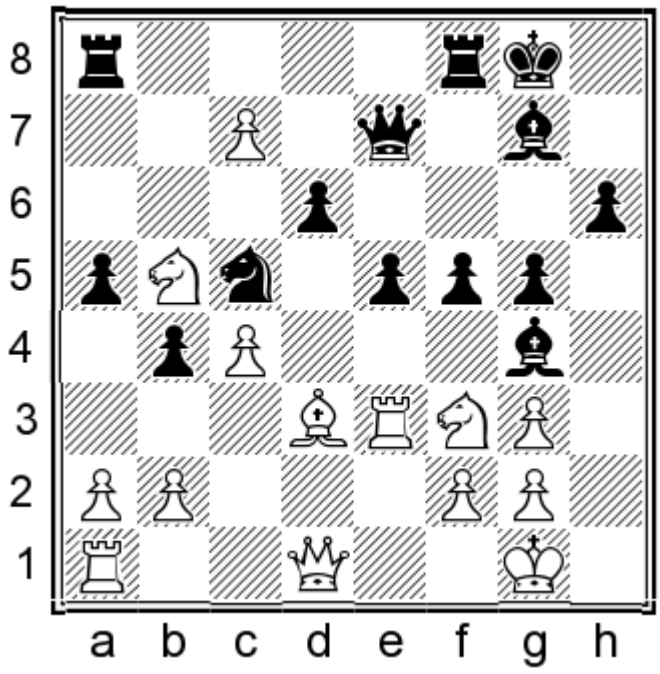
After that, Black's initiative evaporates, whereas the correct 17...Qd7! (Spassky) would have strengthened it. In this case, the exchange sacrifice is insufficient: 18.Bd3 f5 19.Bxe4 fxe4 20.Rxe4 Nxe4 21.Qd5+ Be6 22.Qxe4 d5!. If White does not sacrifice on e4 and plays 20.h3, then after 20...Be6 (20...Bh5? 21.Nxe5!) 21.Nd2 d5 his position will be bad as well. The difference between the two queen retreats is that from d7 the queen controls the b5-square, but from e7 it does not.

18.Bd3 Nxg3

Such a rapid change of scenery affected Spassky. He should not have exchanged such a handsome knight for the bishop, especially this particular bishop. By playing 18...f5, Black would have maintained approximate equality.

19.hxg3 f5

Immediately after the game ended, here Petrosian suggested 19...Rac8 and 20...Rxc7, after which Black would have a pawn and two active bishops for the exchange.



20.Bc2!

One of those "simple Petrosian moves" that are so unpleasant for the opponent. Deep plans and precise calculations lurk behind their false modesty. For example:

(1) 20...e4 21.Qd5+ Kh8 22.Nfd4, and because of the positional threat f2-f3, White is clearly better;

(2) 20...Ra6 21.Qd5+ Kh8 22.Nh2 f4 (22...Bh5 23.Bxf5!) 23.Nxg4 fxe3 24.Nxe3, with more than sufficient compensation for the exchange.

20...f4 21.gxf4 gxf4 22.Re1 Ra6 23.Be4 h5?!

The c7-pawn is Black's number one enemy, so more logical was 23...Bd7, with the idea of 24...Bxb5 25.cxb5 Rb6, etc.

24.Qc2 Qf6 25.Nd2 h4 26.f3 Bc8 27.Bd5+ Kh8 28.Ne4

White controls all of the important points and dominates the board. The result of the game is predetermined.

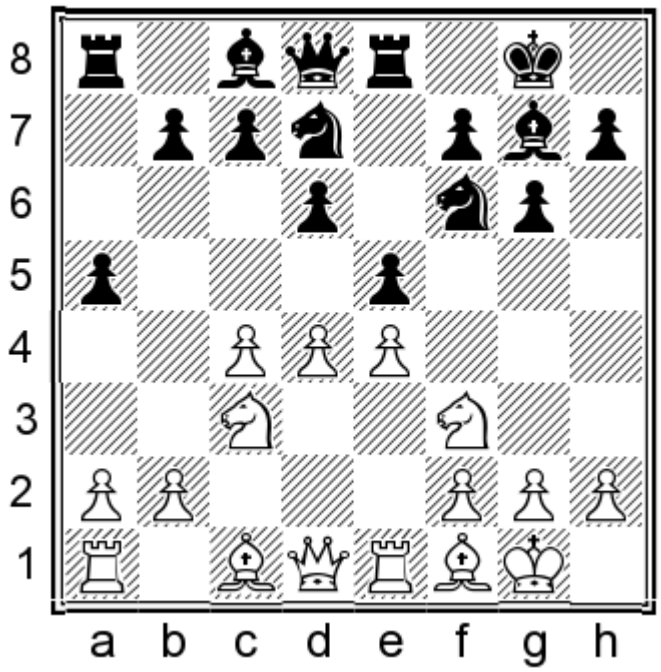
28...Qh6 29.Re2 h3 30.gxh3 Rf5 31.Rh2 a4 32.h4 b3? 33.axb3 axb3 34.Qd1 Rxa1 35.Qxa1 Black resigned.

White threatens 36.Nexd6 and 36.Ng5; if 35...Nxe4, then 36.Bxe4 Rf8 37.Qa3.

(31) A5.5 **Shashin – Petrosian**

Yerevan 1965

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 e5 7.0-0 Nbd7 8.Re1 Re8 9.Bf1 a5



Petrosian liked this starting position, although the theory deems it suspicious, considering the early rook move to e8 (before the move ...c6) premature because of d4-d5. Petrosian apparently had his own opinion about it, because he was always willing to play such a move order (see also games 27, 33, 34) and successfully solved the opening problems.

Botvinnik once said that every good player has to have his own opinion about the theoretical variation that he plays. Maybe this is why grandmasters so often shy away from the best theoretical moves and choose their own analysis?

10.d5 Nc5 11.g3 c6 12.b3 Qc7

In the case of the immediate 12...Bd7, it is necessary to take into account the response 13.dxc6.

13.Rb1 Bd7 14.h3 Rec8

Long gone are the days when, in the King's Indian Defense, Black inevitably perceived the move d4-d5 as a signal to prepare the stereotypical attack ...f5. As time passed, this "primitivism" was replaced by more sophisticated methods of play. Black's strategy in this opening became more flexible, his choice of plans more diverse.

In this game, Petrosian demonstrated one of the possible plans to neutralize White's initiative on the queenside. One of the ideas of Black's previous move is to prepare to control the space in this area via ...cxd5 and ...b5. This did not work immediately because of Nxb5, and after the exchanges on b5, Black does not have time to take on e4 because the e8-rook is under attack.

15.a4

A difficult but correct decision. An attempt to counterattack by preparing to move the b-pawn could lead to tragic consequences. For example, 15.a3 cxd5 16.cxd5 a4! or 15.Nd2 Rab8 16.a3 cxd5 17.cxd5 b5 18.b4 Nd3! 19.Bxd3 Qxc3 20.Rb3 Qc7 21.Kh2 Bh6!, and White has a very unpleasant position. All of this suggests that White's plan started on the 13th move was not the best.

15...Na6

Black, in turn, has to abandon ambitious plans connected with the c-file, because after the exchange on d5, the white pieces would be able to occupy the important squares c4 and b5.

Petrosian transfers the knight to b4, and, a move later, decides to permanently close the queenside.

16.Ba3 Nb4 17.Qd2 c5

The beginning of a new phase of the fight.

18.Nb5 Qb6 19.Nh4 Re8

The symmetrical position of the knights on b4 and b5 corresponds to the overall evaluation of the position, to a certain extent: the opponents have equal chances. The game has moved to the center and the kingside, where White has pinned his hopes on the advance f2-f4. By itself, this plan is not dangerous for Black if he takes preventive measures, which is what Petrosian does by doubling the rooks on the e-file.

20.Kh2 Re7! 21.Bb2 Rae8 22.Bg2

White got so carried away with the idea of an offensive against the king that he completely forgot about the other flank, which Petrosian immediately uses.

22...Bxb5!

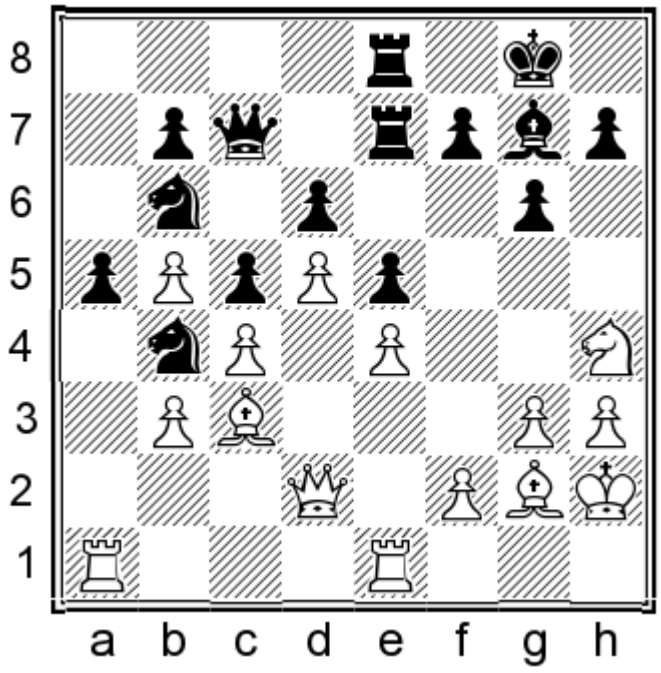
Usually, such an exchange is bad, because after taking with the c-pawn White gets the c4-square for permanent use, not to mention total control over the light squares. The fact that it does not happen in this case can be explained by the catastrophic distance of White's main "light-square" pieces, the knight and bishop, from the center of battle. Shashin never does get to play his dream move, f2-f4.

23.axb5 Qd8

Preparing to transfer the knight to b6 and keeping an eye on the opponent's knight on h4. White's subsequent moves indicate some confusion, but soon Shashin comes to his senses and puts up a fight.

24.Re2 Nd7 25.Ra1 Nb6! 26.Bc3 Qc7 27.Ree1

Of course, neither now nor on the previous move could Black take the pawn on a5, because of ...Nxc4.



27...a4!?

A nice idea. Petrosian forces a position where White, despite an extra pawn, has to carefully fight for a draw.

28.Bf1 axb3 29.Bxb4 cxb4 30.Qxb4 b2 31.Ra2 Bh6 32.Rxb2 Ra8

So much fun, and for just one pawn!

33.Rc2 Ra4 34.Qb3 Re8

The rook from the "reserve" hurries to the battlefield. White also brings in his forces, so that when Black's knight occupies the c5-square, White can move his knight to d3.

35.Rd1 Qc5 36.Qf3 Nd7 37.Ng2 Qb4 38.Ne1 Nc5 39.Nd3 Qb3 40.Qe2 Rxc4

Now the game quickly moves towards a draw. 40...Nxe4! (41.Nb2 Ra2) left Black with some advantage.

41.Rxc4 Qxc4 42.Nxc5 Qxc5 43.Ra1 Kg7 44.Ra4 Rc8 45.h4 Qb6 46.Ra2 Rc1 47.Rc2 Qd4 48.Rxc1 Bxc1 49.Qf3 Draw.

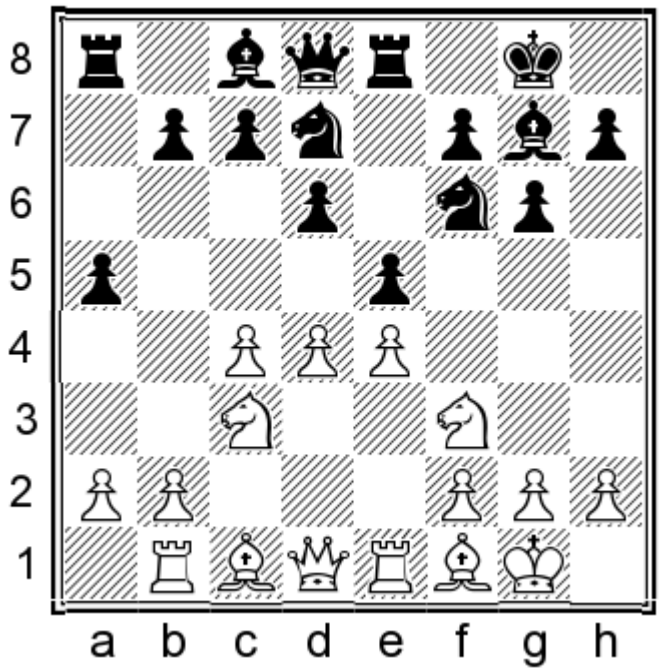
(32) A5.6 **Petrosian – Ljubojević**
Manila 1974

This entire game is an excellent example of Petrosian's positional artistry. His crystal-clear strategy, simple tools, and virtuosity of execution create a complete work of art.

1.d4 g6 2.c4 Bg7 3.Nc3 d6 4.e4 Nd7 5.Nf3 e5 6.Be2 a5 7.0-0 Ngf6

From this point until about the 14th move, an interesting theoretical duel of two connoisseurs of the classical system takes place.

8.Re1 0-0 9.Bf1 Re8 10.Rb1



Probably the most flexible response to Black's plans. Retreating the rook from the g7-bishop's "x-ray," White at the same time keeps in mind a future attack on the queenside.

10...c6 11.d5

Further attempts to keep the pawn on d4 do not give White any advantage. For example, after 11.b3, Black immediately equalizes, according to Boleslavsky's analysis: 11...exd4 12.Nxd4 Nc5 13.f3 d5 14.exd5 (14.e5 Nfd7 15.f4 dxc4) 14...Rxe1 15.Qxe1 Nxd5! 16.cxd5 Bxd4+ 17.Be3 Qf6.

11...Nc5 12.b3 Bd7 13.dxc6

Again, the most accurate response. The straightforward 13.a3 gives Black the opportunity to create complications via 13...b5 14.cxb5 cxb5. For example, 15.b4 axb4 16.Rxb4 Rb8 17.Bd2 Qa5 18.Qa1 (or 18.Nxb5 Bxb5 19.Rxb5 Qxa3 20.Bb4 Qxb4 21.Rxb4 Rxb4 with good compensation for the queen – Efim Geller) 18...Qa7 19.Be3 Rec8 20.Bxb5 Bxb5 21.Rxb5 Rxb5 22.Nxb5 Qa6, and in the game Schmidt-Knaak (Pula 1975) White suddenly encountered difficulties.

13...Bxc6

Black could set an interesting trap: 13...bxc6 14.Qxd6 Nfxe4 15.Nxe4?! Nxe4 16.Rxe4 Bf5 17.Qxd8 (17.Qd3 Qxd3 18.Bxd3 Red8!) 17...Rexd8 18.Nd2(g5) 18...Bxe4 19.Nxe4 f5 with a completely unclear endgame. But if, on the 15th move, White takes on e4 not with the knight, but with the rook, 15.Rxe4!, then this idea does not work, for example, 15...Nxe4 16.Nxe4 Bf5 17.Nfd2 Qxd6 18.Nxd6 Bxb1 19.Nxe8 Bxa2 20.Nxg7, and White's minor pieces are stronger than Black's rook (Farago-Vogt, Kecskemet 1977).

14.Qc2

After the opening, White has a small but steady advantage.

14...Nh5

The root cause of the further difficulties. Black's main concern is to prevent the white pieces from getting a foothold on the d5-square. At the same time, it would be good to put pressure on the e4-square and find a good place for the queen. The best way to solve these problems is 14...Rc8 (with the threat of 15...b5 16.cxb5 Bxe4) 15.Ba3 Qb6 and so on. Ljubojević's knight transfer to e6 via f4 contradicts the logic of the position.

15.Be3 Nf4 16.Rbd1 Nfe6 17.Rd2 Qe7 18.Nd5 Qf8 19.g3

Having built a strong position and made sure that there is no danger, Petrosian moves on to his favorite activity, positional maneuvering.

19...Red8 20.Red1 Kh8 21.Bh3 Rab8 22.Nc3 b6 23.Bg2 Rbc8 24.Kh1 Bb7 25.Qb1 Bc6 26.Kg1

This demonstration of power is not devoid of practical sense: prevention of time trouble, psychological influence on the opponent, and so forth.

26...Qe7 27.Nd5 Qb7 28.h4 h5

An unpleasant weakening. However, letting the white pawn come to h5 would have been even worse.

29.Bh3 Rf8 30.Ng5 Rcd8

The objects of attack in Black's camp have become clear. The next series of exchanges by White signals the transition into the technical stage.

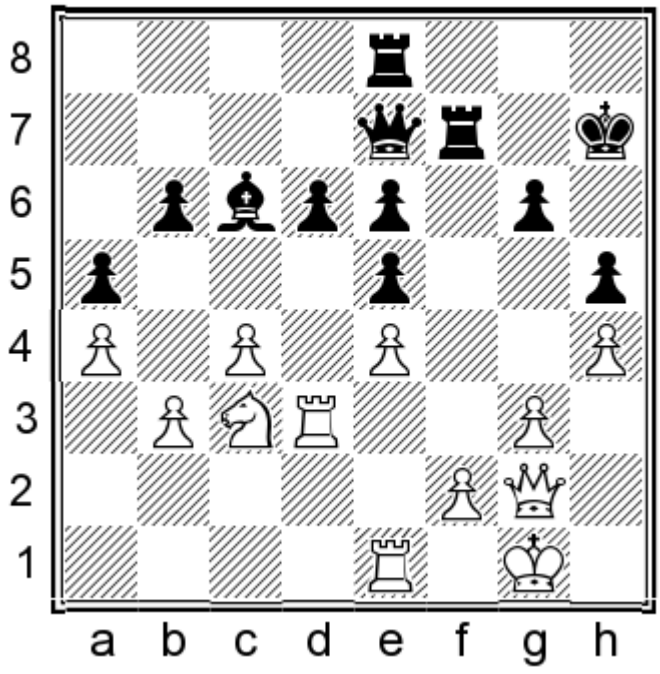
31.Bxe6! Nxe6 32.Nxe6 fxe6 33.Nc3 Qc7 34.Nb5 Qb7

The exchange on b5 did not help Black's position. On the other hand, in time trouble, it did not make sense for White to go for 35.Nxd6 Rxd6 36.Rxd6 Bxe4. The maneuvers continue.

35.Nc3 Qc7 36.Qd3 Kh7 37.Qe2 Rd7 38.Rd3 Rff7 39.Qf1 Bf8 40.a4 Qb7 41.Qg2 Rd8 42.Bg5 Re8 43.Re1 Be7?

Of course, a mistake. With the exchange of the dark-square bishops, the weakness of the d6-pawn and the position of Black's king become more apparent.

44.Bxe7 Qxe7



45.Red1

This move initiates a process of converting the advantage that is very instructive and flawless in execution. It

consists of several stages: the maximum concentration of major pieces along the d-file, the evacuation of the king to the queenside, and a queen raid on the dark squares on the kingside. Then the breakthrough g3-g4 decides the game.

45...Rd8 46.Qf1 Rd7 47.Qe2 Rf8 48.Qe3 Qd8 49.R1d2 Rff7 50.Kf1 Rf8 51.Ke1! Qc7 52.Kd1 Rf6 53.Kc2 Qd8 54.f3 Rff7 55.Qg1 Qc7 56.Kb2 Rd8 57.Qd1

It was possible to immediately transfer the queen to g5, but Petrosian does not hurry, feeling that he could play at his leisure.

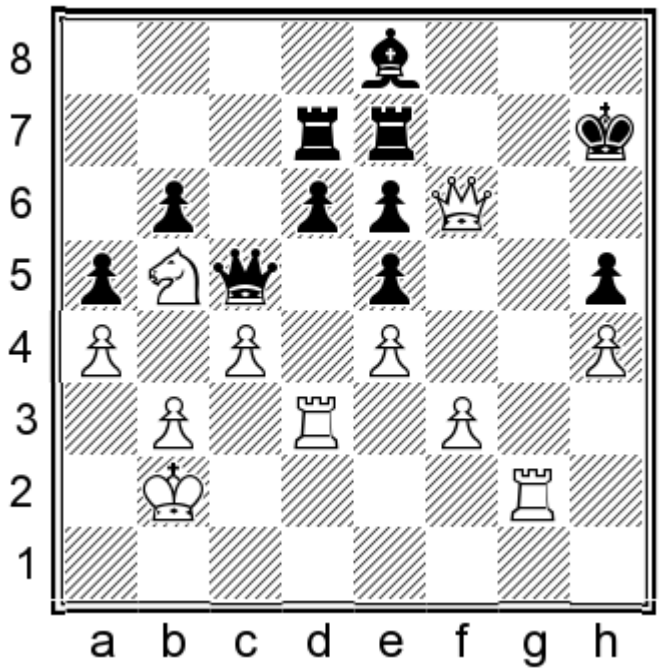
57...Rfd7 58.g4! Kh8 59.Qg1 Rg7 60.Qe3 Kh7

It is hard to think of another game where the creative Yugoslav grandmaster was outplayed to such an extent that he could do absolutely nothing.

61.Qg5 Be8 62.Qf6 Re7 63.gxh5 gxh5 64.Rg2 Rdd7

Black has secured all of the approaches to his king, but, as often happens, the trouble comes from the other side.

65.Nb5 Qc5



66.Rxd6!

With the fall of the d6-pawn, Black's entire defense collapses. The only thing that Ljubojević achieves is to adjourn the game again.

66...Qe3 67.Na3!

Creating the threat of winning the pawn on e6 (or e5), doing which was not clear immediately: 67.Rxd7 Rxd7 68.Qxe6? (68.Qxe5 Qxf3) 68...Rd2+ 69.Rxd2 Qxd2+ with perpetual check.

67...Qf4 68.Qxf4 exf4 69.Rxd7 Bxd7 70.c5!

The exchange of the queens marks a new stage of the struggle. White begins it with a skillful pawn breakthrough: returning the pawn, he greatly simplifies his task, as the broken black pawns are easy prey for the white pieces.

70...bxc5 71.Nc4 Bc8 72.Rg5

Petrosian has a purely technical task, to win as reliably as possible. Like an experienced gardener, he carefully tends to Black's weaknesses and then slowly begins to "harvest" them.

72...Kh6 73.Rxc5 Ba6 74.Ne5 Be2 75.Rc2 Bf1 76.Rc1 Be2

At this point, the game was adjourned again. Black's continuing resistance can be explained only by a stubborn unwillingness to resign.

77.Re1 Ba6 78.Rg1 Be2 79.Kc2 Kh7 80.Kd2 Ba6 81.Rg5 Kh6 82.Rg8 Bf1 83.Rg6+ Kh7 84.Rg5 Kh6 85.Rg1 Ba6 86.Nc4 Rc7 87.Kc3 Rd7 88.Rg5 Rd1 89.Rxa5 Bxc4 90.Kxc4 Rf1 91.Re5 Rxf3 92.Rxe6+ Kg7 93.Re5 Re3 94.Kb4

More convincing and easier than 94.Rxh5 Rxe4+ 95.Kb5 (95.Kd3 Re3+!) 95...Kf6, and the threats of ... f3 and ...Re5+ still sharpen the position somewhat.

94...f3 95.Rf5 Rxe4+ 96.Ka3 Re3

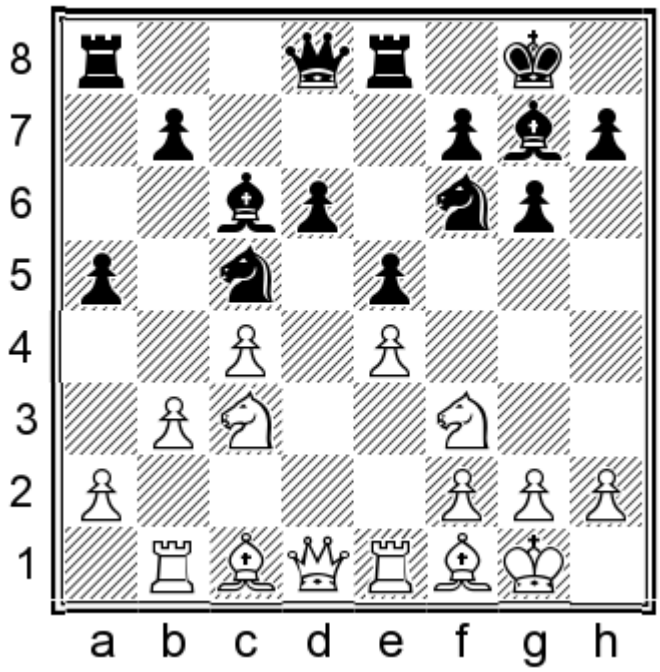
After 96...Rxh4 97.Rxf3, White wins simply by pushing the connected passed pawns and sacrificing, if need be, a rook for the h-pawn.

97.Rf4 Kg6 98.Kb4 Kg7 99.a5 Kg6 100.Ka4 Black resigned.

A great masterpiece by a great master! An excellent example of how to undermine, move by move, the foundations of a solid position.

(33) A5.7 **Averbakh-Petrosian**
Moscow Spartakiad 1978

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.d4 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 Nbd7 8.Re1 Re8 9.Bf1 a5 10.Rb1 c6 11.d5 Nc5 12.b3 Bd7 13.dxc6 Bxc6



The opponents exactly reproduce the variation from the previous game. Averbakh apparently believed that the d5-square and the weakness of the d6-pawn guarantee an opening advantage for White. However, Petrosian had learned the robustness of Black's structure from his own experience. He generally believed, like no other, in defensive

resources and repeatedly stated that if such positions are occasionally lost, it is not because of the opening but only because of weak play.

14.Bd3

Proposed by the German grandmaster Burkhard Malich, with the idea of transferring the bishop to c2 to defend the e4-pawn. Petrosian, as we know, looked to use it on another diagonal.

14...Bd7 15.h3 Qb8 16.Be3 Bc6

Having provoked the move h2-h3, Black switches back to the e4-square, stressing that the development of the bishop to e3 was not entirely successful.

17.Bc1

Realizing that defense via Qc2 and Nd2 offers no prospects, Averbakh makes the courageous decision to “take his move back.”

17...b6 18.Bc2 Qb7 19.Qe2 Nh5 20.Nd5 Nf4 21.Qd1

In such positions, Black usually has to make a lot of effort to force White to capture with the pawn during the exchange on d5 so that White cannot attack the d6-pawn. The fact that White himself seeks this exchange shows that he is not doing so well, and all he is thinking about is how to calm down the opponent’s very active pieces.

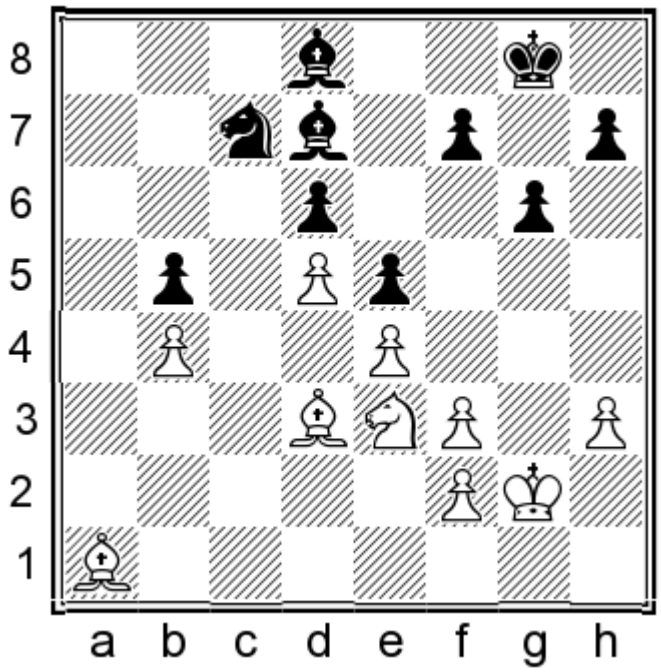
21...Nxd5 22.cxd5 Bd7 23.Nd2 b5 24.Nf1 Rec8 25.a3 Rc7 26.Ne3 Qc8 27.Bd2 Qd8

It is already clear that Black has equalized the game, the least ambitious goal. Moreover, because of the disharmony of White’s pieces, Black’s chances are even somewhat better, which Petrosian proves with a witty transfer of the queen to f4.

28.Qf3 Qh4 29.Rec1 Qf4!

It turns out that White cannot avoid doubling the pawns, since taking on f4 is the equivalent of positional suicide. Averbakh prepares new exchanges. Over the next ten moves, all of the heavy pieces will leave the board.

30.b4 Qxf3 31.gxf3 axb4 32.axb4 Na6 33.Bd3 Rca7 34.Ra1 Bf6 35.Kg2 Bd8 36.Bc3 Nc7 37.Rxa7 Rxa7 38.Ra1 Rxa1 39.Bxa1



In this game, we witness yet another 100-move marathon. Petrosian's persistent efforts to realize a minimal advantage meet Averbakh's well-planned defense.

39...Ne8 40.Bf1 Bb6 41.Nc2 f5 42.Na3 Nc7 43.Bd3 f4 44.Bc3 Kg7 45.Bf1 Kh6 46.Kg1 Kg5 47.Bb2 Kh4 48.Bc3 h5

The pawn exchange that is possible currently (and a move later) is not good for Black, because the white passed pawn on the b-file would be much more dangerous than the passed pawn on the h-file. The "dead weight" on b5 weighs down all of Black's actions.

49.Be1 Bd4 50.Kh2 Kg5 51.Nb1 Kf6 52.Kg2 Ke7 53.Bc3 Bb6 54.Na3 Kd8 55.Be2 Kc8

The purpose of the king's transfer to the queenside is to release the knight from its duty to defend the b-pawn.

56.Nc2 Kb7 57.Ne1 Ne8 58.Nd3 Bc7 59.Bd1 Kc8 60.Be2 Kd8

In any other game, Petrosian would have probably agreed to a draw a long time ago, but playing for his team (this was a match between two Moscow clubs, Zenit and Spartak), he considered himself morally obliged to fight to the end.

61.Ne1 Bb8 62.Nd3 Nc7 63.Ne1 Na8 64.Nc2 Kc7 65.Na3 Kb6 66.Nc2 Ka6 67.Ne1 Nb6 68.Nd3 Na4 69.Ba1

A precise defense. Otherwise, Black could hope to stop the white knight from moving to the c3- or a3-squares and to lift the siege of the b5-pawn by transferring the bishop to d4 (or even b2).

69...Kb7 70.Nc1 Bc7 71.Nb3 Be8 72.Bd3 Ka6 73.Be2 Nb6 74.Bc3 Nd7 75.Nc1 Nf6 76.Bd3 Nh7 77.Ne2 Ng5

With the faint hope of luring the white pawn to h4.

78.Ng1 Bb6 79.Ne2 Bd7 80.Ng1 Nh7 81.Ne2 g5 82.Ng1 Nf8 83.Be2 Ng6 84.Kf1 Bd4 85.Be1 Ne7 86.Bd3 Kb6 87.Kg2 Bb2 88.Bd2

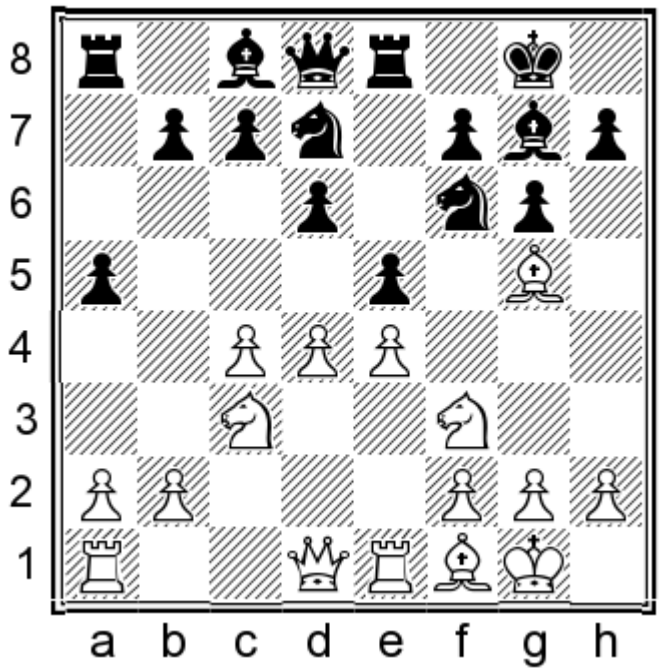
Obviously, further maneuvering cannot change the result of the game.

88...Bc8 89.Be2 Ng6 90.Bd1 Nf8 91.Ne2 Nd7 92.Bc1 Bxc1 93.Nxc1 Nf6 94.Na2 Bd7 95.Nc3 Ne8 96.Be2 Nc7 97.Na2 Na6 98.Bd1 h4 99.Bc2 Be8 100.Kf1 Bg6 Draw.

(34) A5.8 **Zilberstein – Petrosian**
Keres Memorial
Tallinn 1979

1.d4 g6 2.c4 Bg7 3.e4 d6 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 Nbd7 8.Re1 a5 9.Bf1 Re8 10.Bg5

Played in the manner of effortless development. As mentioned earlier, more common continuations for White are 10.Rb1 and 10.d5.



10...h6 11.Bh4 c6 12.d5

Fearing the exchange on d4 with the subsequent queen move to b6, and not without reason, White closes the play in the center. But now a variation of the Petrosian System that is favorable for Black is reached.

12...Nc5 13.Nd2

After any other move, Black could have continued with ...g5 and ...Bg4, with excellent play (following Spassky's example in game 30).

13...Qb6 14.Nb3 Bg4

Simplifying the game and freeing the c8-square for the rook with tempo.

15.Be2 Bxe2 16.Rxe2 g5

A very committing but correct move: White does not have time to use the weakening of the f5-square.

17.Bg3 cxd5 18.Nxc5 Qxc5 19.cxd5 Rac8?!

After exchanging a couple of minor pieces and pushing the bishop back to g3, Black has reached comfortable equity, but now he moves the wrong rook to c8. Probably, Petrosian thought that White should not allow the pawn on b5 and waited for 20.a4, when the rook would have been better placed on e8 than on a8.

20.Kh1 Qc4 21.f3 b5 22.a4! bxa4

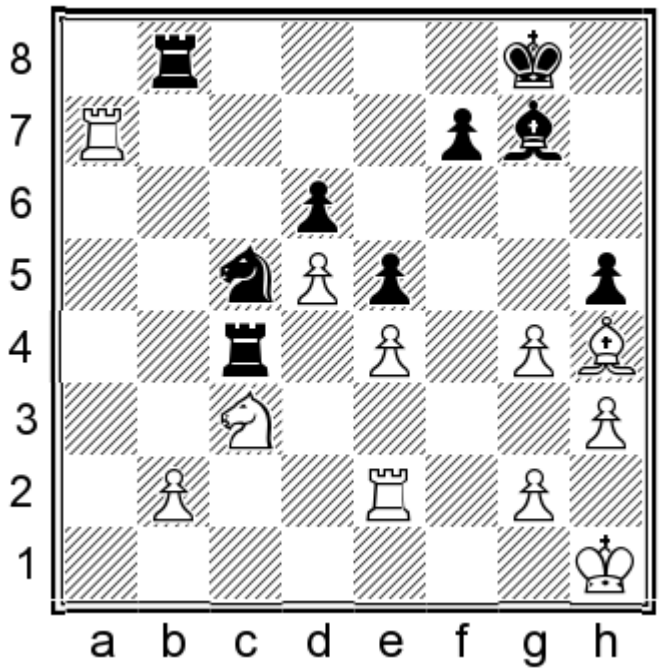
Forced, since 22...b4 23.Nb5 is evidently good for White. However, now the a-pawn is in trouble. That is why, on the 19th move, ...Rec8 was better. Petrosian decides not to cling to the material and, above all, strives for active play.

23.Qxa4 g4 24.Qxc4 Rxc4 25.Rxa5 h5 26.h3 Rb8 27.Bh4

After this impulsive move Black gets off easy. 27.Ra6 or 27.Ra7 would create more difficult problems, preventing the activation of the knight via ...Nd7-c5.

27...Nd7 28.Ra7 Nc5 29.fxg4

A seemingly innocuous move that hides an insidious trap: 29...hxg4? 30.Rf2, and to avoid the worst, Black has to exchange rooks: 30...Rb7. After that Black's pressure on the queenside would evaporate. But Petrosian is on point!



29...Nd3! 30.Re3

If 30.gxh5, then 30...Nxb2. Now 30...Nxb2 is bad because of 31.Rf3! , and White's rooks connect on the seventh rank.

30...Nf4 31.Ra2 Ng6 32.Bg5 hxg4 33.Rg3

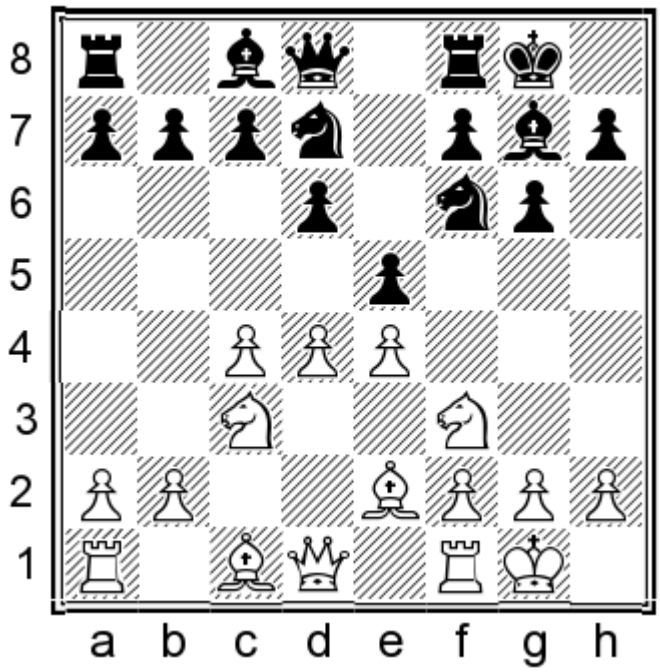
After 33.hxg4? f6!, White loses the stray bishop.

33...gxh3 34.Rxh3 Nf4 35.Rg3 Rd4 36.Bh6 Ng6 37.Bg5

Finding the right moment to repeat the position. Black, down a pawn, does not mind.

37...Nf4 38.Bh6 Ng6 39.Bg5 Draw.

A5*



White to move

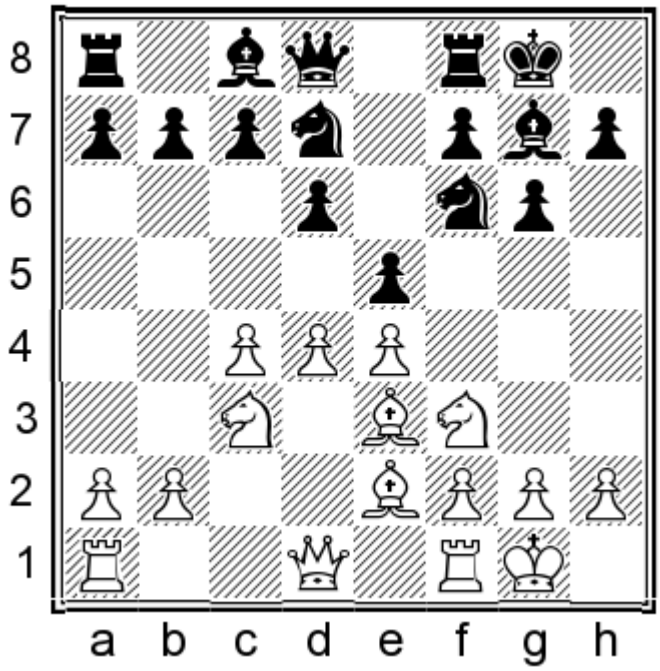
Below are a few games in which Petrosian’s opponents, playing with White, try to challenge him with various deviations from the main variation on the 8th move: 8.Be3

and 8.Qc2 (games 35, 37).

The game against Dieter Keller (game 36) tested the position after 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 c6.

(35) A5*.1 **Cherepkov – Petrosian**
Semi-final USSR Championship
Sverdlovsk 1951

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 Nbd7 8.Be3



From time to time White plays this “provocative” move, hoping after, e.g., 8...Ng4 9.Bg5 f6 10.Bh4 (Bc1), to compensate for the loss of the tempi by returning the bishop into the game on his terms. In the game, Petrosian plays the knight move ...Ng4 a move later, first forcing the pawn advance d4-d5.

8...Re8 9.d5 Ng4 10.Bg5 f6 11.Bd2 Nh6

Forced because of the unpleasant threat of Qc1 and h2-h3.

12.b4 a6

Since Black did not have enough time to establish the knight on c5, he organizes a line of defense on the sixth rank. The move played in the game is necessary to protect the b5-square from the assaults of the white pieces, the knight and bishop (after c4-c5).

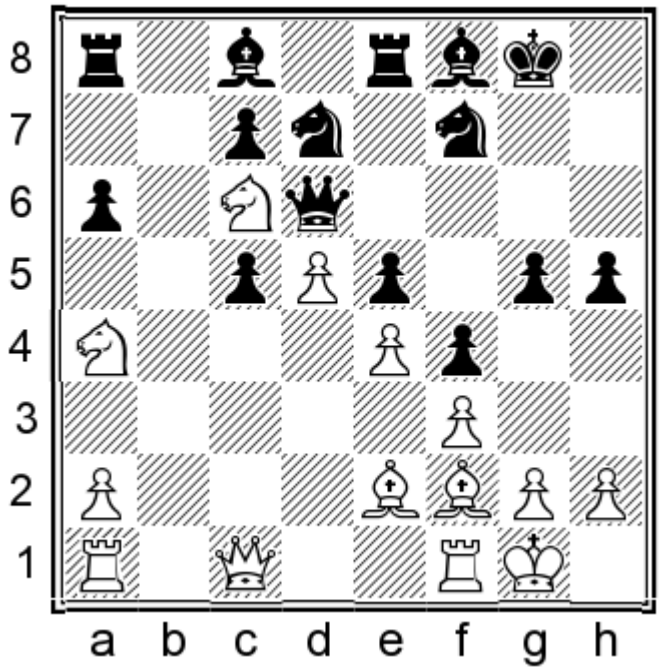
13.Qc1 Nf7 14.Ne1 f5 15.f3 f4 16.Nd3 h5!?

Even while attacking, Petrosian does not forget about prophylaxis! The standard 16...g5 was weaker because of 17.g4.

17.c5 Nf6 18.b5 g5 19.bxa6 bxa6 20.Nb4 dxc5 21.Nc6 Qd6

The opponents carry out the standard attacks on the flanks. While this concept is straightforward, its practical implementation is not easy. The main difficulty is, playing on one front, not to get carried away with a hasty attack and miss a critical moment on the other side. In other words, a harmonious blend of attack and defense is necessary. In this game, Cherepkov does not demonstrate that.

22.Na4 Nd7 23.Be1 Bf8 24.Bf2



24...Qg6 25.Qd1

At the crucial moment, White hesitates. As Peter Romanovsky pointed out, White should have played 25.Nxc5, and if 25...Nf6, then 26.Ne6! Bxe6 27.dxe6 Rxe6 28.Bc4, and despite being a pawn down, White has good prospects.

25...Nf6 26.Nxc5 g4 27.Qc1?

The second and probably decisive mistake. Black threatened to play 27...g3 28.hxg3 fxg3 29.Be3 Bxc5 30.Bxc5 Qg5 and 31...Qh4 with a strong attack. With the move in the game, White prevents this variation, but a complete focus on defense is not a good idea. Also, the pawn sacrifice 27.Ne6!, with counterplay, was still possible here.

27...gxf3 28.Bxf3 Ng5 29.Qc3 Bd6 30.Rfe1 Ng4! 31.Kf1

There is no satisfactory defense against the threat of 31...Ne3.

31...Nxh2+ 32.Ke2 Bg4 33.Rg1 Bxc5 34.Bxc5 Nxe4 White resigned.

(36) A5*.2 **Keller – Petrosian**
Zürich 1961

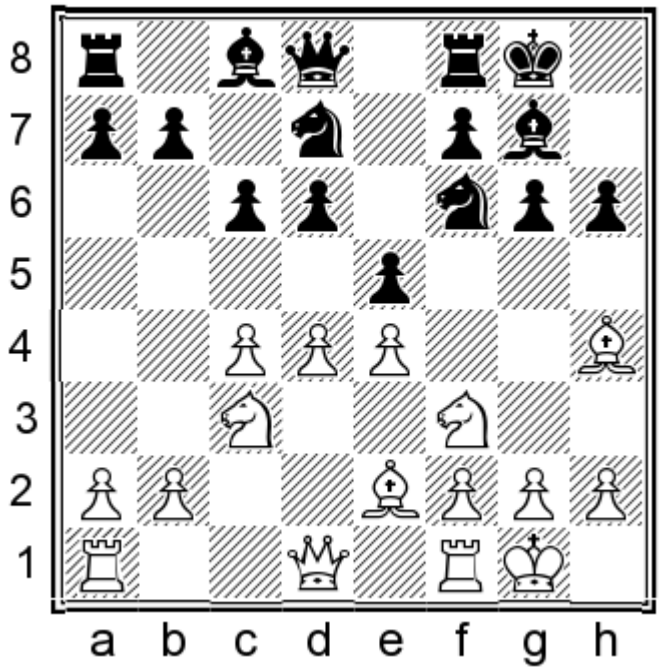
1.e4 c6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.d4 d6 5.Be2 Nd7 6.Nf3 e5 7.0-0 Ngf6

A rather unusual way to play the King’s Indian Defense.

8.Bg5

Interesting is 8.d5; see the second part of the game Petrosian – Pilnik (Buenos Aires 1964).

8...h6 9.Bh4 0-0



10.Rb1 a5 11.Qc2

We have already seen a similar pattern of development of the white pieces in games 30 and 34. There, White fairly quickly pushed the pawn to d5. Here Keller allows Black to open up the center, which leads to a more lively game.

11...exd4 12.Nxd4 Qb6 13.Rbd1 Re8 14.Kh1 Nc5 15.f3 a4

We can confirm that Black has successfully developed his pieces. The queen on b6, the knights, and the dark-square bishop have active, solid positions, while the weakness of the d6-pawn is absolutely unnoticeable.

16.Bf2 Nfd7 17.f4 Qa5 18.Bf3

The purpose of White's last two moves is to prevent the maneuver ...Ne5, ...Qb4 and to restructure his pieces for a frontal attack on the d6-pawn.

18...Nf8 19.Nde2 Be6

White's knight has left the center and lost control of the e6-square, where the black bishop immediately rushes. White has no choice but to accept the offer to exchange the c-pawn for the d-pawn, since 20.b3 axb3 21.axb3 Qb4 is not good for him.

20.Rxd6 Bxc4 21.e5 Red8

Petrosian suddenly sacrifices a pawn, for which White must pay with the dark-square bishop by exchanging it for the knight.

22.Bxc5 Qxc5 23.Nxa4 Qb4 24.a3 Bb3 25.axb4 Bxc2 26.Rxd8 Rxd8 27.Nc5 Rd2

Yet another sacrifice, now a forced one. However, despite the tumultuous action on the board, the game remains equal, as evidenced by 28.Nxb7 Bd3 29.Re1 Bxe2 30.Bxe2 Rxb2.

28.Nc3 Rd4 29.Rf2 Bf5 30.Nxb7 Rxf4 31.b5 cxb5 32.g3 Rd4

Weaker was 32...Rb4, because of 33.Nd5 followed by 34.Ne7+ and 35.Nxf5.

33.Nd6 Be6 34.Ndxb5 Rb4

This endgame is difficult for White despite his extra pawn. The b2-pawn is weak, the “extra” one on e5 is hopelessly frail and will soon be lost; neither white knight has any good moves. At the same time Black, with the bishop pair, can maneuver as long as he wants, gradually strengthening his position. In this kind of play, as we know, Petrosian was extremely strong.

35.Re2 Nd7 36.Kg2 Bc4 37.Rd2 Nxe5 38.Nd6 Nxf3 39.Kxf3 Be6 40.Nde4 Bd4 41.Nf2

White should not have let the black pawn come to g5 so easily. Better was 41.h4, seeking to reduce the number of pawns.

41...g5 42.Ke2 Kg7 43.Nfe4 Bg1 44.Kf3 g4+!

After this White loses by force.

45.Kg2 Be3 46.Re2 Bc1 47.Nc5 Bc4!

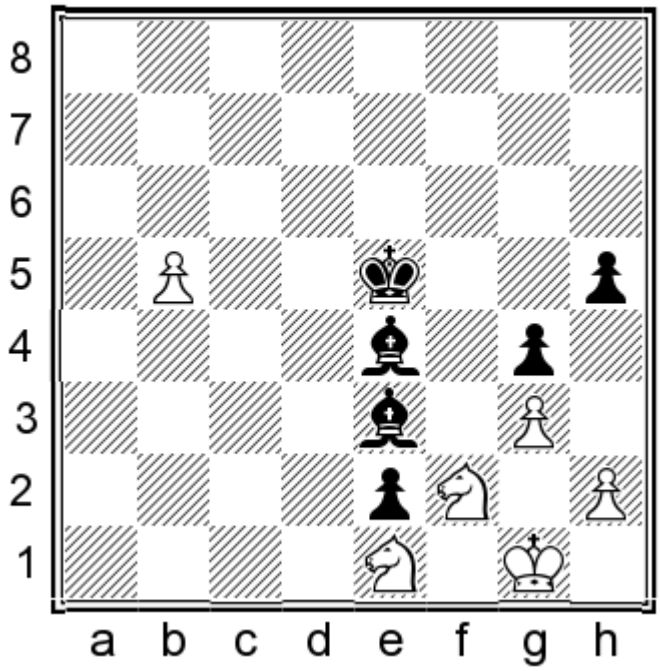
Of course, this is more convincing than 47...Rxb2 48.Nxe6+ fxe6, winning the pawn but not the game.

48.Re4 f5 49.Nd3

Saving the pawn, White falls into a tragi-comic situation.

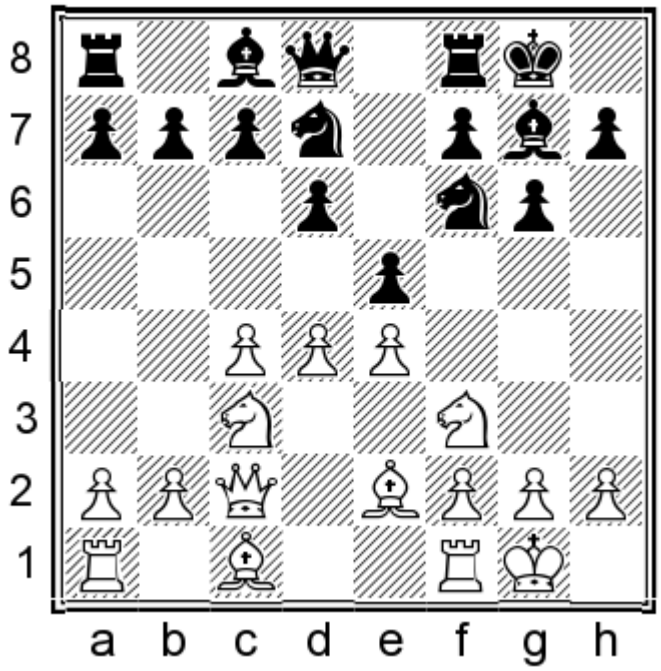
49...fxe4 50.Nxb4 e3 51.Nc2 Kf6 52.Nd1 e2 53.Nf2 Bd5+ 54.Kg1 Be3 55.b4 h5 56.Ne1 Ke5 57.Nc2 Bc6 58.Ne1 Be4 59.b5

White resigned without awaiting the opponent’s reply. The final position deserves a diagram.



(37) A5*.3 **Guillermo Garcia – Petrosian**
Banja Luka 1979

1.c4 g6 2.e4 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 Nbd7 8.Qc2



This early queen development, connected with putting the king's rook on d1 and creating pressure along the d-file, does not pose a serious threat to Black. However, it still requires that he solve a number of problems mostly associated with maneuvering.

8...c6 9.Rd1 Re8 10.dxe5 dxe5

White's plan includes establishing an outpost on the weakened d6-square via b2-b4, c4-c5. Subsequently, Garcia gets a hold there with his rook. Petrosian's counterplay is based on using a similar weakness of White's d4-square and the opportunity to open the a-file for the heavy pieces.

11.Na4 b6 12.b4 Qc7 13.Bb2 Nf8 14.c5 Bg4 15.Rd6 b5 16.Nc3 Bxf3 17.Bxf3 a5 18.a3 axb4 19.axb4 Rxa1+ 20.Bxa1 Ne6 21.Ne2 Ng5

White has managed to defend the d4-square, but Black's knight successfully changes its route and makes itself useful on the kingside.

22.Bc3

Avoiding the tactical hazard. On the natural 22.Qd3, Petrosian had prepared 22...Ra8! 23.Bxe5 Nfxe4! 24.Bxg7 Kxg7 25.Qd4+ Kg8, and White cannot take twice on e4 because of the back rank mate.

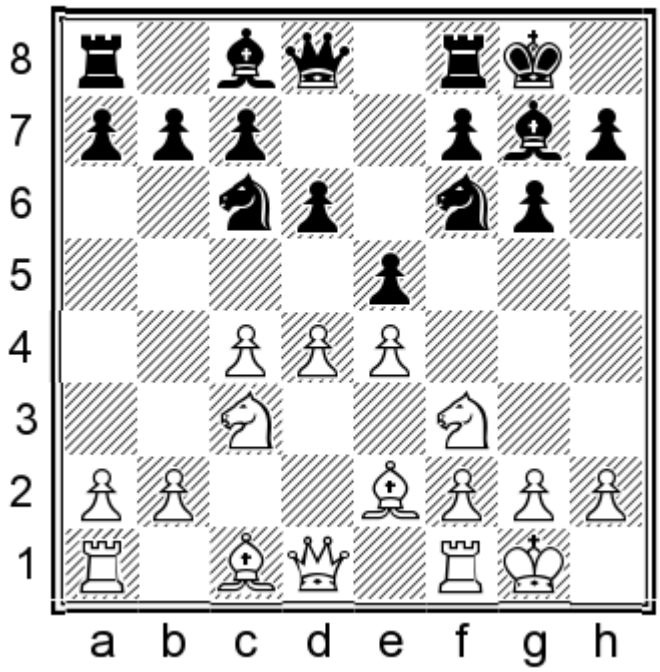
22...Nxf3+ 23.gxf3 Qc8 24.Qd3 Nh5

With the idea of transferring the knight to g5 via g7 and e6 after ...Bf8.

25.Rd7 Nf6 26.Rd6 Nh5 27.Rd7 Nf6 28.Rd6

Fearing his formidable opponent, Garcia repeats moves. According to Petrosian, White had an advantage after 28.Ra7 Rd8 29.Qc2, but, of course, a long struggle would have still awaited. Draw.

A6

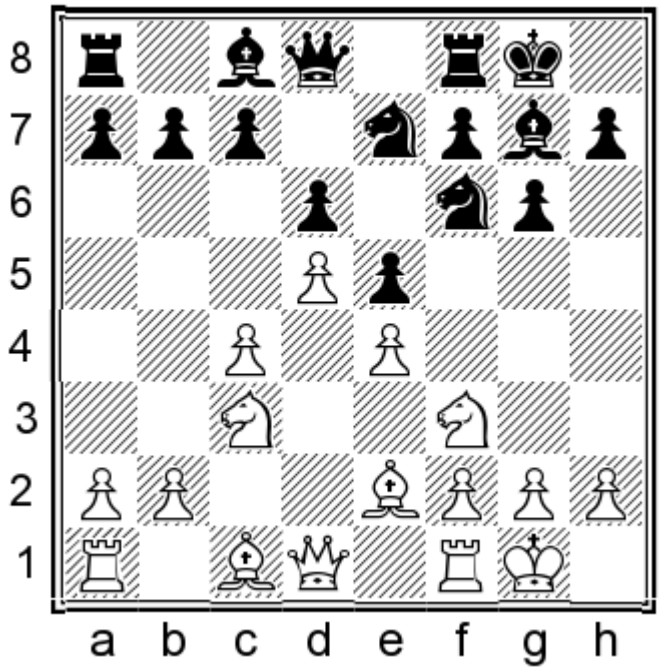


White to move

One of the most developed lines of the classical system, the Aronin-Taimanov variation. However, for Tigran Petrosian, it was always a source of disappointment. Whether it was his inherent dislike of long variations or some other reason, it did not work for him with either color. The first victory (game 38) was followed by a dreary string of draws (games 40, 41, 42) with occasional losses; the last two of those, as White against Gligorić and Rashkovsky (see game 43), convinced Petrosian to give up this variation.

(38) A6.1 **Lokvenc – Petrosian**
USSR-Austria Match
Vienna 1953

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 e5 7.0-0 Nc6 8.d5 Ne7



The starting position of many theoretical developments.

9.Ne1

The main variation in those years, along with 9.b4 (see games 42, 43). The continuations 9.Bd2 and 9.Nd2, which are fashionable today, were not yet known.

9...Nd7 10.Nc2

The idea of this somewhat strange move will become clear later. The usual place for the knight in this system is the d3-square, where it can be useful both in attack and defense.

10...f5 11.exf5 gxf5

After 11...Nxf5, the white knight on c2 would be well placed, defending the central square d4 from the raids of the enemy cavalry. Apparently, Lokvenc believed that after the pawn capture, White, having forced ...e4, would be able to move the knight to the blockading square e3, but it was this that White miscalculated.

12.f4 Ng6 13.g3 Nf6 14.Ne3 exf4!

Of course! Black does not advance the e-pawn and instead exchanges it. After that, the position opens, to his obvious advantage.

15.gxf4 Qe7 16.Ng2 Ne4 17.Nxe4 fxe4 18.Bg4 c5

A few energetic moves, and all of the black pieces are “in business.” With the last move, Petrosian provides his bishop with an observation post on d4.

19.Rb1 Bd4+ 20.Be3

Upset by the opening, which did not go well for him, Lokvenc sacrifices a pawn, but it is not quite clear what for. This is a pretty strange decision, considering that even the simple 20.Kh1 would be good. White would stop the black pawn from leaping to e3: 20...e3 21.Bxe3! Bxe3 22.Bxc8 Raxc8 23.Re1, winning back a piece with advantage.

20...Bxe3+ 21.Nxe3 Nxf4 22.Kh1 Kh8 23.Qd2 Qg7 24.Bxc8 Raxc8

The threat of the black knight's invasion on d3 causes White to exchange his "blockading" knight.

25.Nf5 Rxf5 26.Rxf4 Rcf8 27.Rxf5 Rxf5

Black has a healthy extra pawn and every chance to win, but... the time trouble "miracles" start.

28.Rg1 Qd4 29.Qh6 Qe5 30.Qh4 Rf8 31.Qh6 Re8 32.Rg5 Qe7 33.Rg6 Qf7 34.Rf6 Qg8

Apparently, White was in terrible time trouble, since even such a respectable master as Petrosian could not resist the temptation to play for time. That explains his strange maneuver ...Qg7-d4-e5 (the immediate 28...Qe5 was easier); on the 31st move, 31...Rg8 was more reliable, and on the last move, 34...Qg7. As a result, Black lost all of his advantage. Now, by playing 35.Re6!, White could immediately force a draw, for example, 35...Rf8 36.Rf6!.

35.Qf4 Qg7 36.Re6?

Missing his last chance: 36.Rf7! Qg6 37.Rf8+ Kg7 38.Rxe8 Qxe8 39.Qg5+ with perpetual check.

36...Rg8 37.Qf1

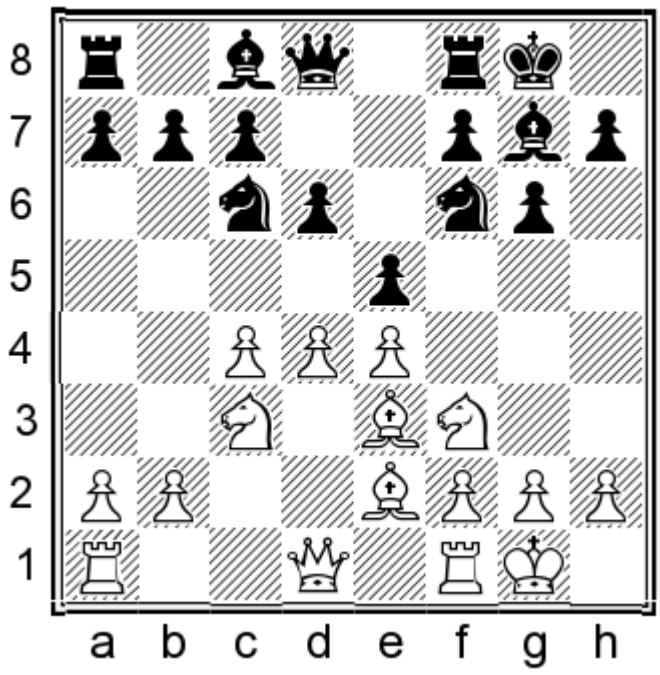
More stubborn was 37.Qf2, but White seems to have been at that stage of time pressure in which a move is made only to avoid flagging.

37...e3 38.Rxe3 Qxb2, and White ran out of time after all.

(39) A6.2 **Taimanov – Petrosian**
USSR Team Championship
Vilnius 1958

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 e5 7.0-0 Nc6 8.Be3

An alternative to the beaten path, 8.d5.



8...Ng4

Miguel Najdorf's recipe, 8...Re8!, is the best for equalizing, as it essentially forces a series of exchanges and fully solves the issue of defense: 9.d5 Nd4! or 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.Qxd8 Nxd8 (also good is 10...Rxd8 11.Bg5 Rf8 – Fischer)

11.Nb5 Ne6 12.Ng5 Re7.

By choosing the move in the game, Petrosian demonstrated his determination to fight.

9.Bg5 f6

Interesting here is David Bronstein's continuation 9...Bf6, aiming to increase the pressure on the dark squares.

10.Bc1 Nh6

A somewhat passive move. Probably, Black should have tried to benefit somehow from his temporary activity. To achieve this, modern theory suggests the subtle move 10...Kh8!, for example, 11.h3 exd4 12.Nxd4 Nxd4 13.Qxd4 f5! or 11.d5 Ne7 12.Ne1 f5!? 13.Bxg4 fxg4 14.Be3 c5 15.a3 Ng8, in both cases with good counterplay.

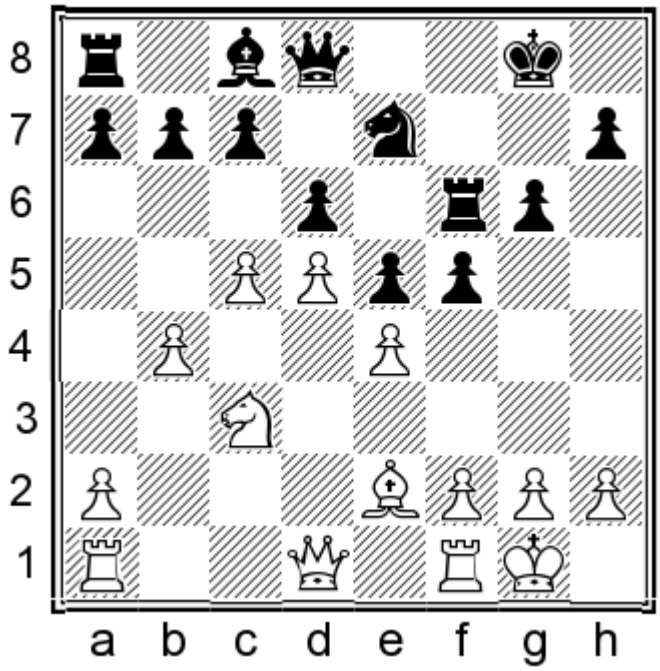
11.d5 Ne7 12.b4 Nf7

As soon becomes clear, Black's plan would have been stronger with the in-between move 12...a5, which was best to play now.

13.c5 f5 14.Ng5 Nxg5 15.Bxg5

The conflict on the flanks that is usual for this variation has started. Now 15...h6 suggested itself, or, at the very least, 15...f4. But Petrosian did not like something, and he decided to test the waters by offering to exchange the dark-square bishops, at the same time checking if White would agree to a draw. This, alas, turned out to be the fatal mistake.

15...Bf6? 16.Bxf6 Rxf6



17.f4!

The beginning of a beautiful breakthrough that, in a few moves, results in the destruction of Black's position.

17...exf4 18.Qd4

Perhaps, it was this strong maneuver, connected with a pawn sacrifice, that Petrosian overlooked.

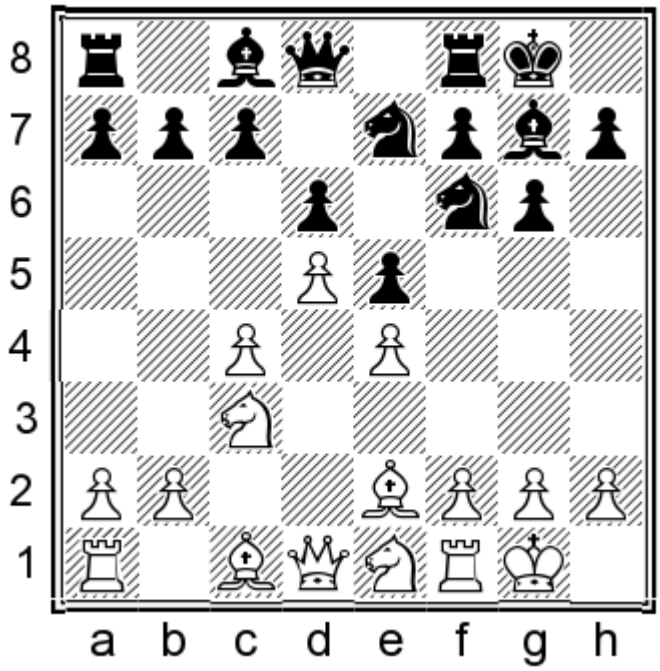
18...Rf7 19.e5 dxe5 20.Qxe5 g5

Just some five moves ago, Black had a decent position, but now it resembles ruins. Of course, one of the reasons for this rapid collapse was the “King’s Indian half-dead knight” on e7.

21.Bc4 Ng6 22.Qd4 Rg7 23.d6+ Kf8 24.Rfe1 cxd6 25.Nb5 d5 26.Nd6 Be6 27.Rxe6 dxc4 28.Rf6+ and White soon won.

(40) A6.3 **Petrosian – Tal**
Bled 1961

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.d4 Bg7 4.Nf3 0-0 5.e4 d6 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 Nc6 8.d5 Ne7 9.Ne1



9...Ne8

An inaccuracy that allows White to seize the initiative with an instructive maneuver. More logical was 9...Nd7, as in Petrosian’s games against Lokvenc (game 38) and Geller (game 41).

10.Nd3 f5 11.f4!

Highlighting the unfortunate position of the two black knights far from the e5-square.

11...exf4 12.Bxf4 fxe4

Black probably did not even consider winning a pawn via 12...Bxc3 13.bxc3 fxe4, because this would make the dark squares in his camp rather “drafty.”

13.Nxe4 Nf5 14.Bg5 Nf6 15.g4 Nd4 16.Ndf2

Black’s position is hanging by a thread. Bad is 16...Nxe2+ 17.Qxe2, threatening an exchange on f6 and Nf2-e4.

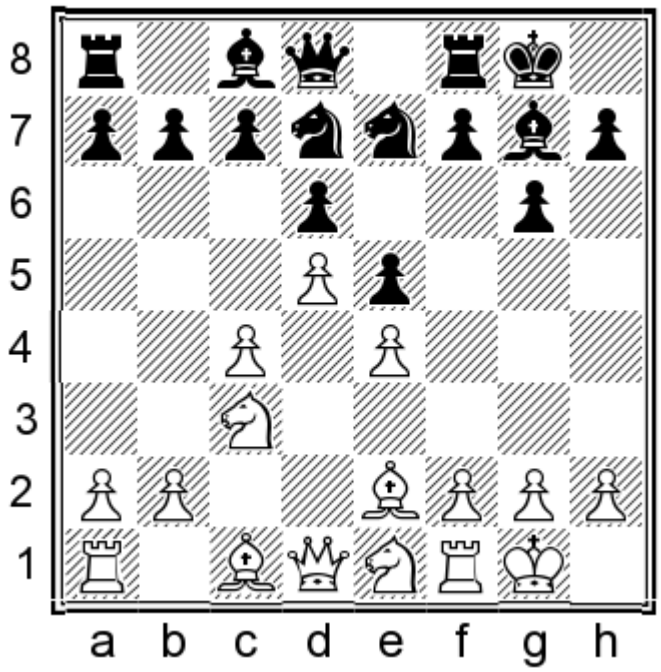
16...Qe7!!

Draw, because of the following variation: 17.Qxd4 Nxe4 18.Bxe7 Bxd4 19.Bxf8 Nxf2! (but not 19...Kxf8? 20.Rad1! Bxf2+ and 22.Bf3 or 20...Bb6 21.b4! Nxf2 22.c5) 20.Be7 Nxg4+ 21.Kh1 Nf2+ with repetition of moves

(indicated by Mikhail Tal).

(41) A6.4 **Petrosian – Geller**
Bled 1961

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 e5 7.0-0 Nc6 8.d5 Ne7 9.Ne1 Nd7



10.Nd3 f5 11.exf5

Petrosian avoids the sharp variation 11.f3 f4 and so on, which, as he claimed, had already been analyzed almost until checkmate.

11...Nxf5

11...gxf5 was more active. The move in the game has its own logic: Black has an opportunity to plant his knight on d4 and harass his opponent's center with the breakthroughs ...c6 and ...b5.

12.f3 Nd4 13.Nf2 Nf6 14.Nfe4 c5!?

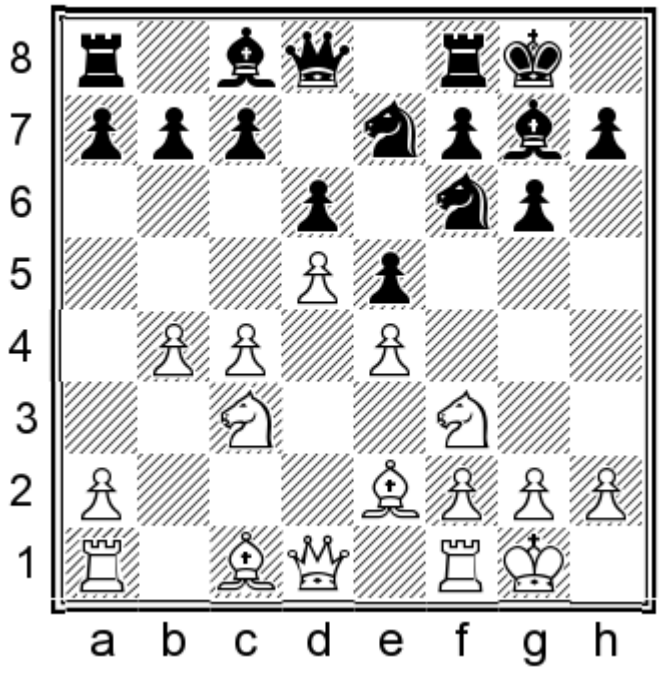
Geller's improvement over the other two games from the same tournament, where Black had difficulties after 14...Nh5 15.Bg5 Qd7 16.g3. The first of them, Gligorić-Fischer, continued as follows: 16...h6 17.Be3 c5 18.Bxd4 exd4 19.Nb5, and Fischer was able to save the game only by mobilizing all of his willpower and creativity. In the second game against Tal, Gligorić tried to strengthen Black's defense by 16...c5, but after 17.Nb5! Nxb5 18.cxb5 also got a worse game.

15.Bd3 a6 16.a4 Nh5 Draw.

(42) A6.5 **Petrosian – Stein**
37th USSR Championship
Moscow 1969

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 e5 7.0-0 Nc6 8.d5 Ne7 9.b4

The favorite continuation of the inventor of this system, grandmaster Mark Taimanov.



9...Nd7

Unlike in other variations, the standard reply to White's last move (...a5) is not very effective here. However, a move later, Stein still decided to return to this plan. Another continuation is 9...Nh5 (A6.6).

10.a4 a5

This way Black creates isolated a- and c-pawns for his opponent, but the unfortunate position of Black's pieces do not allow him to fix them and determine his success. The initiative on this flank still belongs to White who uses his rook pawn as a battering ram.

11.Ba3

Weaker was 11.bxa5 Rxa5 12.Nd2 because of 12...Bh6!, for example, 13.Nb3 Bxc1 14.Nxa5 Bb2 or 14.Qxc1 Ra8 15.a5 c5 16.Nb5 Ra6, and Black builds a solid defense.

11...axb4 12.Bxb4 Nc5 13.Nd2 Bd7 14.a5

A ccording to Efim Geller, 14.Bxc5 dxc5 15.Nb3 also deserved attention.

14...Nc8 15.Nb3 Qe7 16.Bf3 b6

Annotating this game in the *Informant*, Petrosian gives this position the evaluation (=), to which there is no objection. In any case, the exchange on c5 is not promising because of ...dxc5. Later, White tries to increase pressure on the queenside, transferring another rook there, but Stein skillfully prevents that.

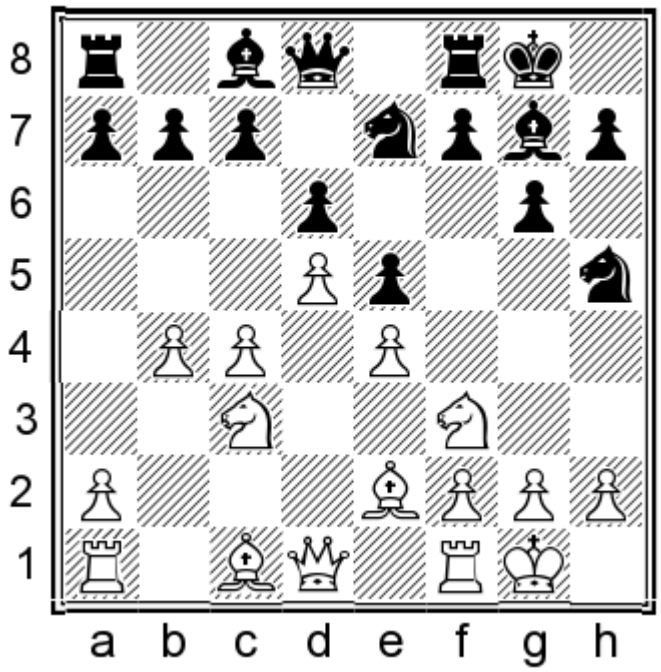
17.Re1 Na6 18.Ba3 bxa5 19.Nxa5 Nb6 20.Re2 Nb8 21.Bb4

After 21.Bb2, the bishop would have blocked the route for the rook on a2. Now Black uses the opportunity to repeat moves.

21...Na6 22.Ba3 Nb8 23.Bb4 Draw.

(43) A6.6 **Petrosian – Gligorić**
Bled 1970

1.c4 g6 2.Nf3 Bg7 3.d4 Nf6 4.Nc3 0-0 5.e4 d6 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 Nc6 8.d5 Ne7 9.b4 Nh5



Considered the main reply to White's plan. In this variation, Gligorić had a wealth of experience; for example, recall his game against Geller in the USSR-Yugoslavia match, played as early as 1957! But, as it turned out, Petrosian did not come to the game empty-handed.

10.Nd2!?

As we know, in such positions, it is good to restrict the knight with the move g2-g3. Of course, Petrosian knew that too. Then why did he let "the fox guard the henhouse?" Here is Gligorić's version:

"With the text move, White saves time to increase pressure on the queenside, giving an important role to his king's knight. Black is no longer able to block the queenside, as after 9.Nd2 c5. The knight on f4 is strong, but it cannot stay there forever. Petrosian's idea was that Black wastes tempi on maneuvering the knight, which will also be in the way of its own pawns. Petrosian employed the same exact idea in the Sämisch variation against Hort (Palma de Mallorca 1969)." (see game 73)

I should add that Petrosian had another game on this theme, against Smyslov (see Part 2), where Petrosian himself, playing with Black, ended up on the losing end.

10...Nf4 11.a4 f5!

Gligorić's intuition of the dynamics of the King's Indian Defense, which he had played his whole life, did not betray him. He instinctively shied away from exchanging the f4-knight for the lightsquare bishop, avoiding the mistake that Petrosian made in the aforementioned game against Smyslov. Now Black threatens to exchange on e2, followed by ...f4 with a strong attack.

12.Bf3

The climax of the entire game.

Below are Svetozar Gligorić's comments from his book *I Play Against Pieces* (abridged):

"Until now Black has been groping in the dark, not knowing White's real plans, and the text move came as a small psychological shock. What if I should have exchanged this bishop earlier? Now it is too late for 12...Nd3, because after 13.Ba3, White's queen's bishop is well-placed behind the pawns."

12...g5!

“Having overcome the initial confusion, Black spent twenty minutes searching for the best response at this critical moment of the battle. The move that he found is probably the only correct one. Even though this move weakens Black’s light squares, it also speeds up the activity on the kingside, which is necessary to maintain the balance in this dynamic position. That is why 12...fxe4 was not very good, because of 13.Ndxe4 Nf5 14.g3, and the knight on f4 is in a very unpleasant position. The position in the game, because of the threat 13...g4, is similar but with Black having a couple of extra tempi.”

13.exf5 Nxf5

“But not 13...Bxf5, because the primary task is to bring the passive knight into the game.”

14.g3

“White does not have time for 14.Nde4 because of the threat of 14...Nh4.”

14...Nd4!?

“During the game, this move seemed to me to be the only good reply. This is not a combinational piece sacrifice, but rather an active positional continuation, which was supposed to solve the problem of maintaining the balance by means of a sacrifice. After 14...Ng6, the black pieces would be pushed back and White would not only have a space advantage but also an overall advantage due to the weakness of the opponent’s light squares.”

“Only later, analysts found the continuation 14...Nh3+!? 15.Kg2 Qd7!. This far from obvious move solves the positional problems without sacrificing a piece, because it prevents White’s threat of 16.Bg4. For example, 16...Nxf2!, and 16.Nde4? also does not work because of 16...Nd4 17.Bh5 Nf4+! 18.gxf4 Qh3+ 19.Kh1, with a decisive attack.” (Later the continuation 14...Nh3+!? 15.Kg2 Qd7 was played in the game Petrosian-Rashkovsky, Moscow 1974, where an attempt by the ex-world champion to rehabilitate this idea unexpectedly failed: 16.Ba3 Nd4 17.Be4 Nxf2!, and White resigned because of the variation 18.Rxf2 Qh3+ 19.Kg1 Rxf2 20.Kxf2 Qxh2+, etc. – Igor Yanvarjov).

15.gxf4

“Accepting the challenge, because after 15.Bg4 Bxg4 16.Qxg4 h5 (stronger was 16...Nde2+! 17.Nxe2 h5 – Igor Yanvarjov) 17.Qd1 Nh3+ 18.Kg2 g4 Black is fine.”

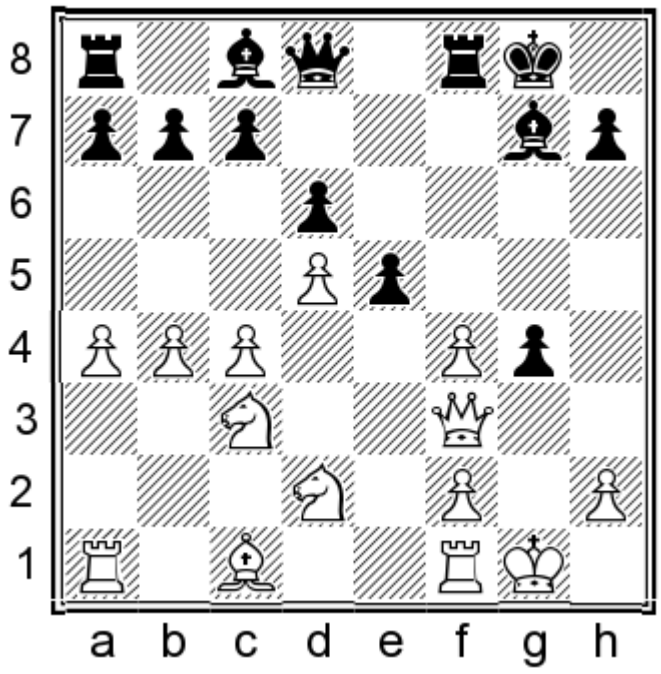
15...Nxf3+

“The move 15...exf4 deserved attention, but Black already opted for extreme measures and now eliminates one of the defenders of the enemy’s king.”

16.Qxf3

“More cautious was 16.Nxf3 exf4 (but not 16...e4? 17.Nxg5 Bxc3 18.Ra3 Bg7 19.Rg3, as pointed out by Garry Kasparov and Igor Yanvarjov), 17.Bb2 g4 18.Kh1, demonstrating a readiness to give back the piece to restore the balance.” (According to Kasparov, instead of 18.Kh1, White can play 18.Nd4!? to retain the piece. However, in our opinion, this recommendation is debatable, for example, 18...Qh4 19.Ne4 [19.f3 g3!] 19...f3 20.Kh1 Be5 21.Ng3 Rf6 22.Bc1 Bd7 23.Be3 Kh8 24.Qd2 Rg8, and because of the threats ...Rgg6 and ...Qh3, with the idea of ...h5-h4, White’s position becomes worrisome. As we will see later, Petrosian’s continuation was quite reliable, and only his next two moves turn out to be wrong – Igor Yanvarjov).

16...g4!



17.Qh1

“I did not expect such a passive reply. However, such maneuvers are typical for Petrosian’s original style: in one of his games (Zagreb 1965), with his king on hl and pawns on f2, g2 and h2 he unexpectedly played Qe1-g1, defending his h2- square and freeing his hands on the queenside, where he in fact decided the game in his favor.”

“However, here probably better was 17.Qd3 Bf5 18.Nde4 exf4 19.Bxf4 (according to Petrosian’s analysis, White draws after 19.f3 gxf3 20.Rxf3 Bxc3 21.Qxc3 Bxe4 22.Rxf4 Qg5+ 23.Qg3 Qxg3+ 24.hxg3 Rxf4 25.Bxf4 a5 26.bxa5 Rxa5 27.Re1 – Igor Yanvarjov) regaining the piece after 19...Bxe4 20.Qxe4 Bxc3 with unclear chances.”

17...exf4 18.Bb2(?)

Svetozar Gligorić neglects to mention this important episode of the game. In our opinion, it was correctly analyzed in Garry Kasparov’s thorough book *My Great Predecessors*. Here is the opinion of the thirteenth world champion: “Petrosian thought that 18.Ra3 was best, but after 18...Qh4 19.Nde4 Be5 20.Bd2 Bf5 21.Re1 Rae8 followed by ...Re7, ...Rfe8, ...f3! and a move by the bishop from e5 White would have had to find a way to avoid a catastrophe on the back rank (the fault lying with the Kg1 and Qh1 “sweethearts”). Therefore the immediate 18.Nde4! is correct, and if 18...Qh4 19.Bd2 Be5 even 20.f3 Bd4+ 21.Rf2 is possible, while if 18...Bf5 19.Bd2 Qe8 20.Rae1 Qg6 21.h4! gxh3+ 22.Kh2 f3 23.Rg1 Be5+ 24.Ng3 Bg4 25.Rxe5! and Nge4. Or 18...f3 19.Bd2 Qh4 and after 20.Ng3 Be5 21.Rfe1 Bf5 22.Ra3 Rae8 23.Nd1, White avoids the dangers by making use of the transit point e3.”

Thus, on the 18th move, White had a stronger defense – Igor Yanvarjov.

18...Bf5

“The immediate 18...f3 was also possible, excluding the queen from the game. Black hesitates making this move in the hope to prevent the white knights from getting a foothold on the e3- and g3-squares.”

19.Rfe1 f3 20.Nde4 Qh4 21.h3

“Threatening ...Qh3, shutting in White’s position.” (Tigran Petrosian had the same opinion; however, according to Garry Kasparov, White could defend after 21.Nd1 – Igor Yanvarjov.)

21...Be5 22.Re3 gxh3 23.Qxf3

“Counting on 23...Bxe4 24.Rxe4 Rxf3 25.Rxh4 Bxc3 26.Bxc3 Rxc3 and it is rather early to speak of Black’s winning. However, Black continues the attack, despite the sacrifices.”

23...Bg4! 24.Qh1 h2+ 25.Kg2

“After 25.Kf1, decisive was 25...Rf3!.”

25...Qh5!

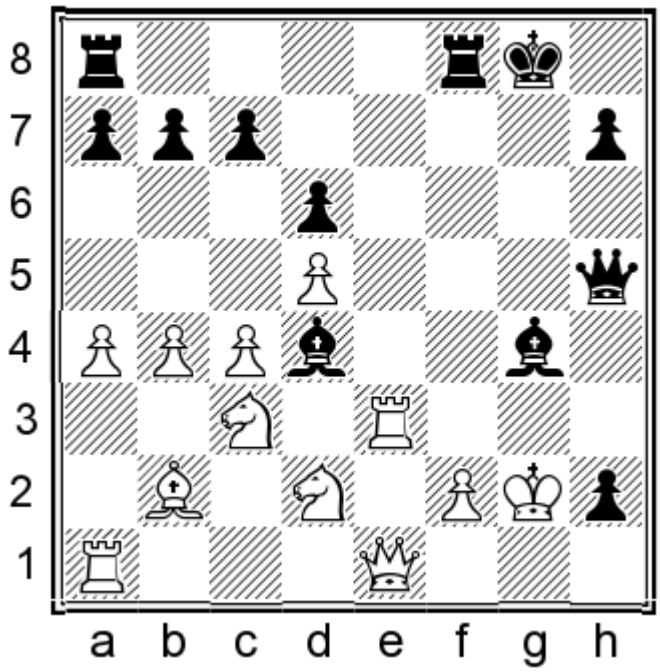
“After giving it some thought, Black finds a subtle maneuver successfully solving the problem of further development of the attack. The fight is for the f3- and h3-squares. White’s response is forced, he has to defend the f3-square.”

26.Nd2 Bd4

“Attacking the rook, the main defender of the critical third rank.”

27.Qe1

“And the reply is forced too, as the h1-square has to be vacated for the king. If 27.Rae1 then 27...Bh3+! 28.Rxh3 Qg4+ (easier is 28...Rxf2+ – Igor Yanvarjov) and 29...Rxf2+ with mate.”



27...Rae8!

“Entering the last reserve that decides the game. White gave back the piece to avoid the variation 28.Kh1 Rxe3! 29.fxe3 Bf3+ 30.Nxf3 Qxf3+ 31.Kxh2 Be5+.”

28.Nce4

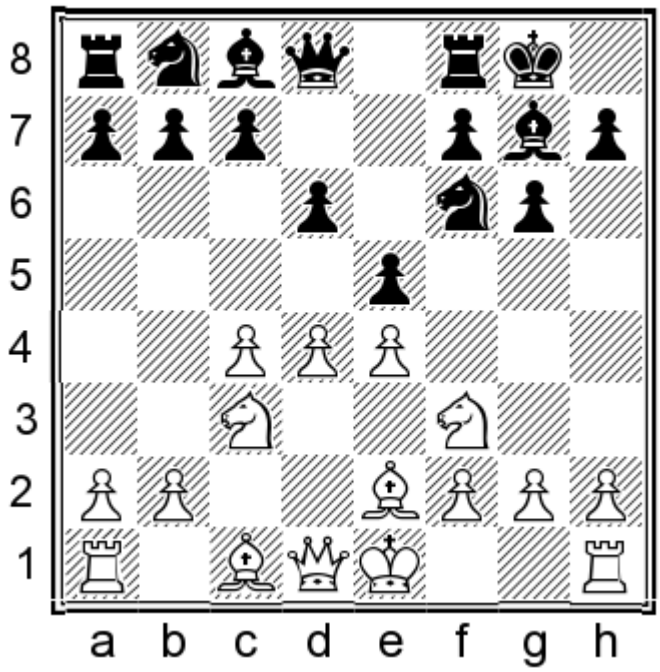
“The other knight has to protect the f3-square.”

28...Bxb2 29.Rg3 Be5 30.Raa3 Kh8 31.Kh1 Rg8 32.Qf1 Bxg3 33.Rxg3?

“A mistake in the a losing position.”

33...Rxe4 White resigned.

A7

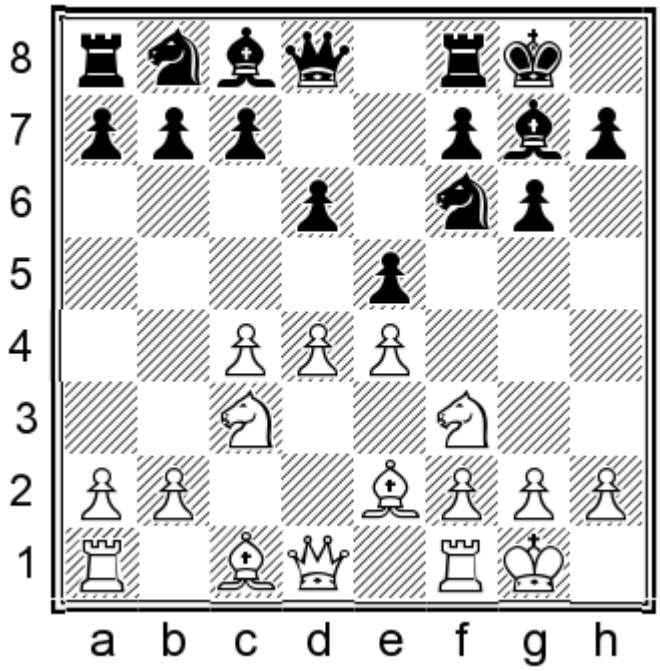


White to move

In conclusion, we present two interesting games, in which the opponents tried to avoid the hackneyed variations.

(44) A7.1 **Petrosian – Krogius**
Semifinal USSR Championship
Tbilisi 1956

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.c4 Bg7 4.Nc3 0-0 5.e4 d6 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0



7...c6

From a theoretical point of view, unlikely to be good, as after the next move, Black has nothing else to do but to move this pawn once again, transposing to a known variation of the Benoni Defense down a tempo.

8.d5 c5 9.a3

Curiously, in the “normal” version of this variation (where White has not castled yet – see Chapter 4), Petrosian always chose his trademark plan with the move Bg5. In this game, however, he apparently decided that the “gifted” tempo would be better used to start immediate pawn activity on the queenside.

9...Nbd7 10.Rb1 Ne8 11.b4 Qe7

Preparing ...f5, which would be incorrect right away: 11...f5 12.Ng5, and White’s knight intrudes on e6. Worse is 11...h6 with the same goal because of 12.g3!, for example, 12...f5 13.Nh4! Qf6 14.exf5 gxf5 15.Bb2 b6 16.Bd3!, and Black encountered serious problems in the game Kuzmin-Tal (Leningrad 1973).

12.Ne1 f5 13.Nd3 b6 14.f3 Bf6 15.Qa4

The white queen goes to c6, creating turmoil in Black’s camp.

15...Bg5 16.Bxg5 Qxg5 17.Qc6 Rb8 18.bxc5 Qe3+

Krogius’s creativity deserves special mention. After “paying it forward” in the opening, he was able to create full-fledged counterplay. The game enters a phase of tactical complications.

19.Kh1 Nxc5 20.Nxc5 Qxc3

Bad was 20...Qxc5? because of 21.Qxc5 dxc5 22.f4! with the inevitable creation of two connected white pawns.

21.Ne6 Bxe6 22.dxe6 Qe3

Stopping White’s major threat: 23.e7 Rf7 24.Qd7 Qxe2! 25.Qd8 Rb7!, and Black, having taken the e7-pawn, goes scot-free.

23.Rfe1 fxe4

In order to play Qc5 in response to 24.fxe4. Rushing 23...Qc5 could lead to the loss of the e5-pawn and a hopeless endgame after 24.Qxc5 dxc5 25.exf5! Rxf5 (25...gxf5) 26.Bd3!.

24.Qd7! Qc5 25.Qxa7 Nc7 26.e7 Rfe8 27.fxe4 Qc6 28.Bg4!

The point of the tactical operation planned by White. It turns out that White’s scattered pieces work together perfectly, and Black’s hope to trap the queen will never materialize. Note that there was another move, 28.Bd1!, with a similar idea: 28...Rb7 29.Ba4!.

28...Rb7 29.Bd7! Rxa7 30.Bxc6 Rxe7 31.a4 Ra6 32.Red1 Re6

White’s advantage in the endgame is based on the fact that his pawns are secure, while the b6- and d6-pawns require constant protection.

33.Rb3 Kg7 34.Rdb1 Rf6 35.h3 Na8 36.Kg1 h5 37.h4 Ra5?

The decisive mistake. According to the tournament bulletin, Krogius was in severe time trouble at that moment and had probably planned ahead a series of moves. The purpose of the move in the game was to indirectly protect the b-pawn in the possible variation 38.Ra3 (with the threat Bxa8, Rxb6) 38...Rf8. The correct defense was to move the king to f8, and immediately! For example, 37...Kf8 38.Ra3 Ke7 39.Bxa8 Rxa8 40.Rxb6 Rf4, with an equal rook endgame that would end in a draw. By the way, White’s plan that won the game would not work either: 38.Rf1

Rxf1+ 39.Kxf1 Ke7 40.Rf3 Nc7, and the bishop does not have time to support the rook from the d5-square.

38.Rf1!

An unpleasant surprise. Now 38...Rxf1+ is useless, since because of the threat Rd3, the black king still has to go to the f-file.

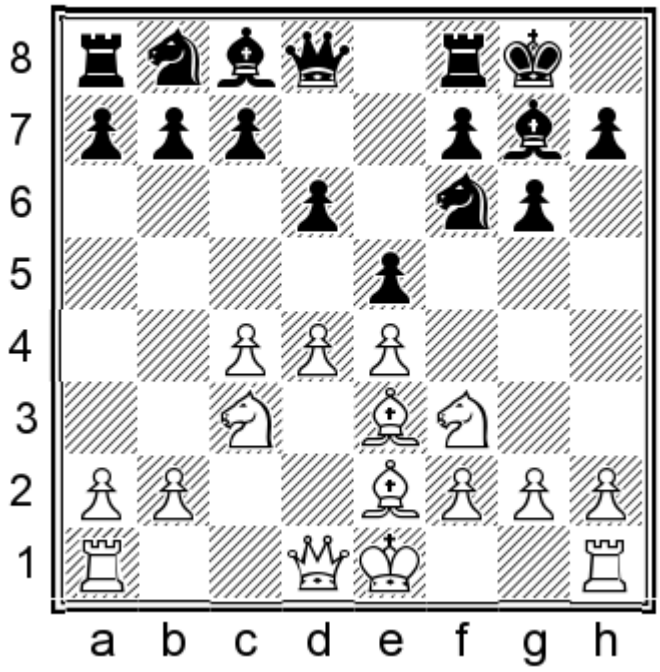
38...Ra6 39.Rxf6 Kxf6 40.Rf3+ Ke7

Maybe Black had hoped for 40...Kg7 but missed that after 41.Bd5 Ra7 42.Kh2!, he would be in *zugzwang*?

41.Bd5 (sealed move) Black resigned.

(45) A7.2 **Simagin – Petrosian**
Training Tournament
Moscow 1966

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.Be3



The move order proposed by Gligorić to avoid Najdorf's simplifying maneuver in the variation 7.0-0 Nc6 8.Be3 Re8!? 9.d5 Nd4!. Petrosian responds by immediately opening the center, seeking to take advantage of the logjam of white pieces on the e-file.

7...exd4 8.Nxd4 Re8 9.Qc2

True to his creative beliefs, Vladimir Simagin avoids the well-known theoretical plan 9.f3 c6 10.Qd2, etc.

9...Qe7 10.f3 c6 11.Bf2

Clearly not correct. As the game Kamsky-Tal (New York 1990) demonstrated years later, White could still fight for the initiative via 11.g4, preventing not only the move ...d5, but also the knight's intrusion on h5. So, perhaps on the ninth move Black should have played 9...c6, and after 10.0-0, responded with 10...Qe7 11.f3 d5 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.Bg5 Qe5 with equality (indicated by Gata Kamsky).

11...Nh5 12.g3 Nd7 13.0-0 Ne5 14.Rfe1 Nf6

Thus, White was unable to get any semblance of an advantage out the opening – rather, the opposite, because the activity of the e5-knight causes some problems for White.

15.Kg2 c5 16.Nb3 Be6 17.f4

Since Black seizes the advantage after 17.Nd5 Nxd5 18.cxd5 Bd7 (via ...b5 and ...f5), White makes the difficult decision to leave the central squares without the defense of his pawns.

17...Nc6

Prudently rejecting the "Greek gift": 17...Nxc4 18.f5 gxf5 19.exf5 Ne3+ 20.Bxe3 Bxb3 21.axb3 Qxe3 22.Bf3, and White's initiative more than compensates the material loss.

18.Rad1 b6 19.Nd5?

Deceived by Petrosian's seemingly calm maneuvers, Simagin picks a tactical fight and falls into a disguised trap.

19...Bxd5 20.exd5 Nb4 21.Qb1

Here comes the surprise that Petrosian prepared for his opponent.

21...Qe4+! 22.Qxe4 Nxe4 23.Bf3 Nxf2 24.Rxe8+ Rxe8 25.Kxf2 Bxb2

A rare case when, using only the bishop, Black has accomplished the "King's Indian dream" of creating pressure along the long diagonal.

26.a4 Nc2 27.Rd2 Bd4+

"The Moor has done his duty, the Moor is free to go." (From *Fiesco's Conspiracy at Genoa* by Friedrich Schiller – translator)

28.Nxd4 Nxd4 29.Rb2 Rb8 30.g4 Kg7 31.g5 h6 32.a5 b5 33.cxb5 Rxb5 34.Rxb5 Nxb5 35.Ke3 f6

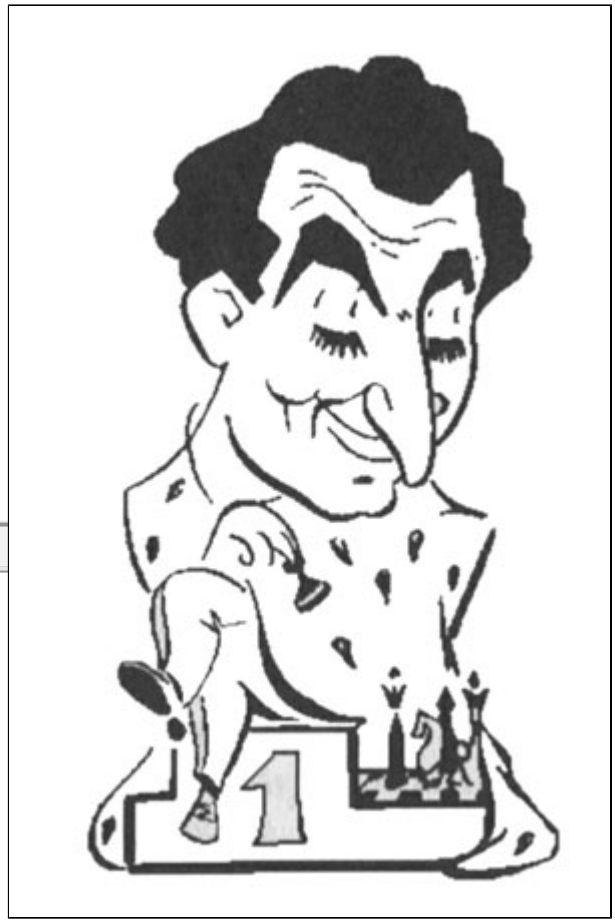
Refuting White's feeble attempts to build a fortress. If 36.h4, then 36...Nd4 and 37...Nf5(+).

36.gxh6+ Kxh6 37.Kd3 g5 38.f5 Nd4 39.Bg4 Kg7 40.Ke4 Nb3 41.a6 Kf8 42.Be2 Ke7 43.Bd3 Kd8 44.Kf3 c4!

A tactical shot, elegantly finishing the fight. White resigned.

This concludes the first chapter. We leave the reader to draw conclusions regarding the contribution of the ninth world champion to the theory and practice of the classical variation. Also, let us just note Petrosian's competitive performance. In this variation as White, he won 16 games, lost three, and drew 12; as Black, he scored 5 wins, 9 draws, and only one loss. This is 31½ points out of 46 possible, or almost 70%, an enviable performance.

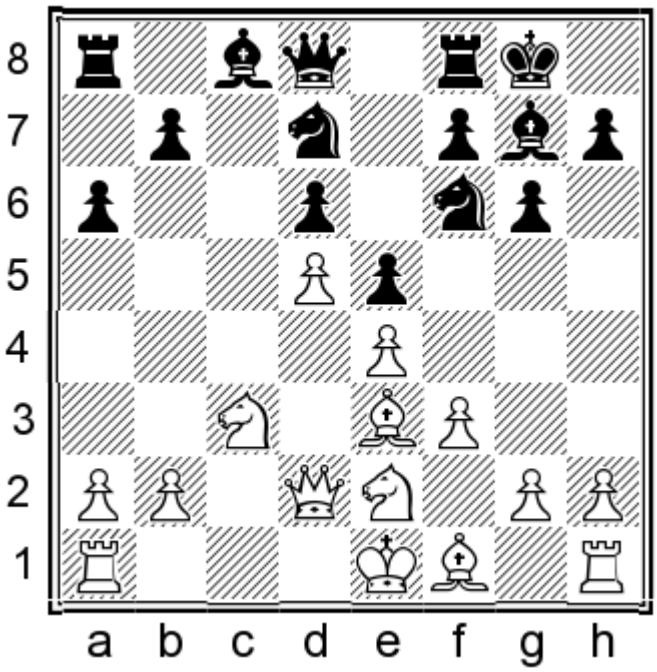
Chapter 2
The Sämisch Variation



When 70 years ago the talented German grandmaster Friedrich Sämisch came up with a new structure against the King's Indian Defense, he probably could not imagine that he had laid the cornerstone of the future strategic revolution of this very popular opening, and that it was his invention that would be the most famous and sought-after.

It should be noted that, despite its rich history, the Sämisch System is still just as relevant today: the complexity of the resulting positions and their amazing strategic diversity attract the attention of scholars and players. This system was Petrosian's "first and greatest love." He often returned to it, especially after his own system stopped paying dividends.

B1



White to move

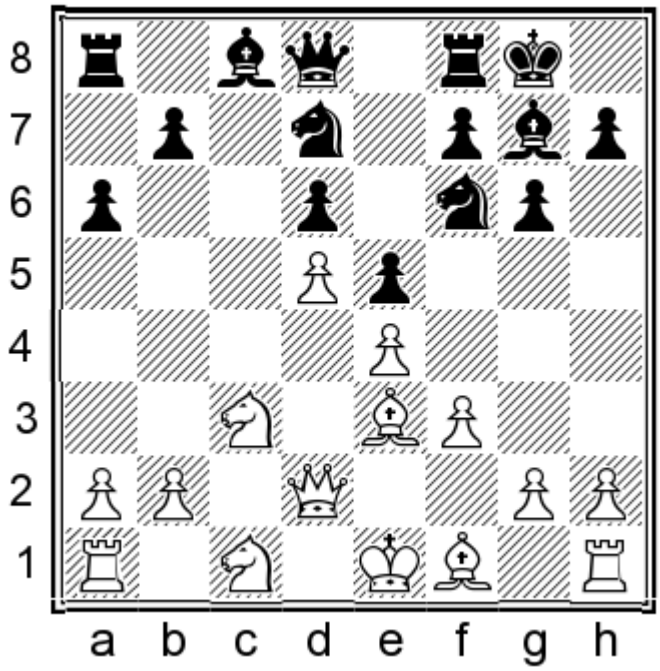
At the intersection of theoretical paths, this position has been the subject of active debate for a long time. Different continuations were tested, from the ambitious 11.g4 (games 47, 50)

to the overcautious 11.Nc1 (game 46)

and 11.Ng3 (game 49), but every time Black found sufficient counterchances.

(46) B1.1 **Szabo – Petrosian**
Candidates' Tournament
Amsterdam 1956

1.c4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 d6 4.e4 Nf6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 e5 7.Nge2 c6 8.d5 cxd5 9.cxd5 a6 10.Qd2 Nbd7 11.Nc1



In the Sämisch System, Black, fearing a direct attack, often opens the c-file, which is seemingly to the opponent's advantage. But it is not, and here is why. First, White cannot use his positional plus yet because of his lack of development. Second, and this is the fundamental difference between this system and most other King's Indian variations, instead of on the flanks, the battle takes place all over the board, and from this point of view, Black's actions are justified.

The obvious purpose of White's last move is to let out the light-square bishop, but there is also a hidden purpose: to transfer the knight to d3, overprotecting the f4-square and impeding ...b5 because of the unpleasant Nd3-b4-c6. All of this, however, takes a long time, and Black equalizes without difficulty.

11...Nh5 12.Nd3

12.Nb3 had also been played. The following variation supports the prophylactic move Laszlo Szabo chose: 12...f5 13.0-0-0 Ndf6 14.Bd3 Bd7 15.Kb1 b5 16.Rc1 b4 17.Ne2 a5 18.h3 fxe4 19.fxe4 a4 20.Na1 b3 21.axb3 axb3 22.Nxb3 Ra4, with a strong attack for Black (Bobotsov-Gligorić, Munich 1958).

12...f5 13.0-0-0 Nb6

Highlighting the main drawback of the knight's position on d3 and trying to force b2-b3, the move that White probably should have made.

14.Nb4 Bd7 15.Kb1 Rc8 16.Qf2

Overly optimistic. Presumably, Szabo expected only 16...Nc4 and did not see the more dangerous knight leap to a4. Finishing the planned regrouping with 16.Rc1, White would have a fairly secure position.

16...Na4! 17.Nxa4 Bxa4

With the exchange of the c3-knight, the e4- pawn's prognosis abruptly worsens. In addition, White is now forced to move the b-pawn, weakening the king's protection.

18.b3 Bd7 19.Bb6 Qe8 20.Qd2 fxe4 21.fxe4 Bb5 22.Nd3

The exchange on b5 would lead to the loss of the e4-pawn: 22.Bxb5? Qxb5 23.Bg1 (23.Be3 Nf6) 23...Rf4 24.Re1 Nf6.

22...Nf6 23.Qb4 Qe7

Black also has more active resources, for example, 23...a5!? 24.Bxa5 Nxd5!. If now 25.exd5 then 25...e4!, with a strong attack along the long diagonal. However, the cold-blooded 25.Qd2! probably leaves White chances for a successful defense.

The positional move in the game gives White a break that allows Szabo to prepare exchanges and gradually make an escape.

24.Nb2 Bh6 25.Bxb5 axb5 26.Rhe1 Qd7 27.h3 Ne8

Black's knight goes to c5. During this time, White manages to return the knight to d3 and the bishop to e3, predetermining the fate of minor pieces and the draw in the game.

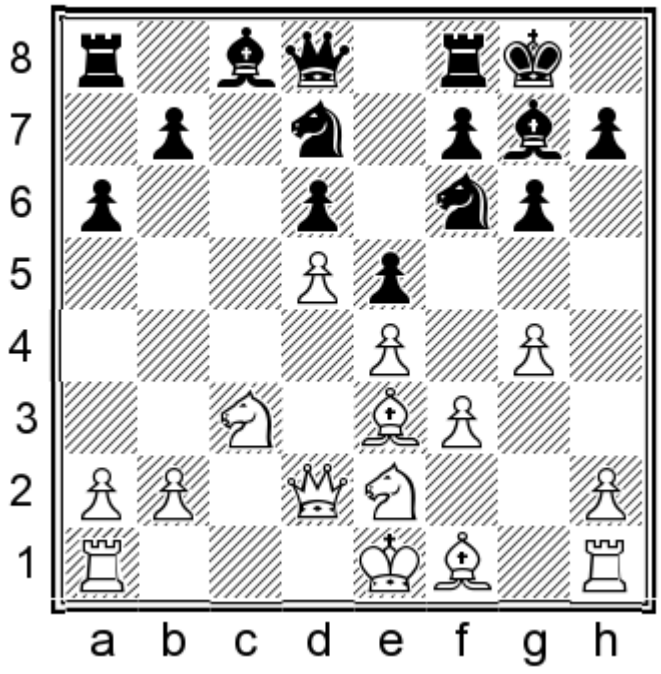
28.Nd3 Nc7 29.Be3 Bxe3 30.Rxe3 Na6 31.Qd2 Nc5 Draw.

(47) B1.2 **Petrosian – Lokvenc**
XIII Olympiad
Munich 1958

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 e5 6.Nge2 c6 7.Be3 0-0 8.d5 cxd5 9.cxd5 a6 10.Qd2 Nbd7 11.g4

Not so much an attacking continuation as a positional one. Playing experience shows that, by planting the knight on g3, White solves the issue of development perfectly and creates the prerequisites for squeezing the opponent's position on both flanks.

In this game, Black could not find an effective antidote to this logical plan.



11...Re8?

The first of a series of passive moves that led Lokvenc to disaster. The only correct response to White's early assault is the paradoxical move 11...h5! (see games 48, 50).

12.Ng3 Nf8 13.a4 N6d7 14.Ra3

As often happens in the Sämisch System, White's king stays in the center (the most quiet area!), while the rook

goes into battle via a detour.

14...Qa5 15.Nb1 Qxd2+

The decision to exchange the queens looks natural, but in fact only adds to Black's problems, because in the endgame Black has virtually no opportunities for active play.

16.Nxd2 Bf6 17.Nc4 Be7 18.a5 Kg7 19.g5 h5

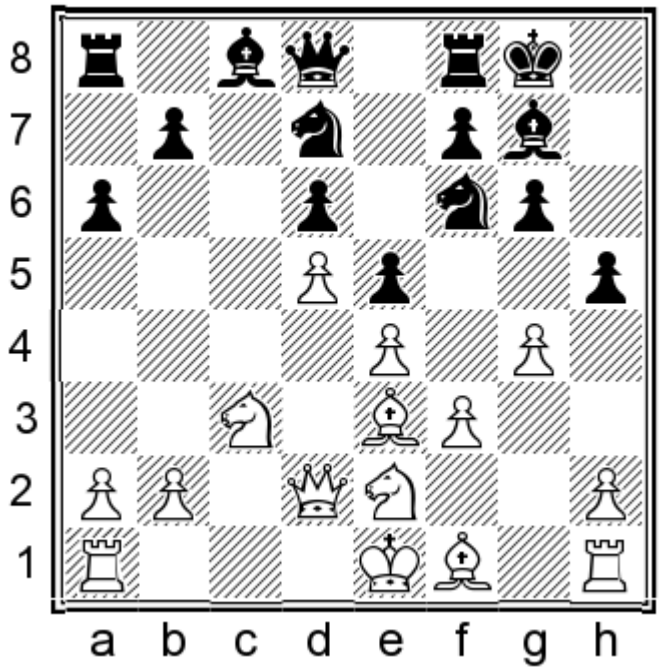
Desperation. Here it looks like the Austrian master was already in his habitual state, extreme time pressure (remember his time trouble from the first chapter).

20.gxh6+ Kh7 21.h4 Nf6 22.h5 Nxh5 23.Nxh5 gxh5 24.Rxh5 Nd7 25.Rb3 Rg8 26.Rh2 Rb8 27.Rg2 Rxg2 28.Bxg2 f5 29.Bh3 Bh4+

After one last check, Black's flag dropped, which spared him unnecessary anguish in a hopeless position.

(48) B1.3 **Polugaevsky – Petrosian**
26th USSR Championship
Tbilisi 1959

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 e5 7.d5 c6 8.Qd2 cxd5 9.cxd5 a6 10.g4 Nbd7 11.Nge2 h5



One of the original ideas of the King's Indian Defense. Refusing to acquiesce to the role of a passive observer, Black immediately starts a fight at the critical point of attack. But is it justified? After all, moving the pawns where the opponent is attacking is generally not recommended. To quote Mikhail Tal, who played this move in the 10th game of the match against Mikhail Botvinnik (Moscow 1960):

"...patented by Gligorić. Inasmuch as the gpawn is now under attack, White has to take some measures. Here, the following continuations have been encountered: 12.g5, 12.h3, and 12.gxh5. The last move seems to be rather new. It was used in the game Weber-Retsch, played in the 1959 East German Championship, in which, after 12...Nxh5 13.Ng3 Nf4 14.h4 (here and in similar positions, it is unfavorable for White to accept the pawn sacrifice – 14.Bxf4 exf4 15.Qxf4, since the activity of Black's king Bishop fully compensates for this minimal loss) White got a strong attack. It seems to me that this continuation is not dangerous for Black who, for example, can continue 14...Nf6, maintaining an excellent position.

"In the game with Gligorić in the Candidates Tournament, I played 12.h3, and on 12...Nh7 13.h4 (Herein lies

Black's idea – 13.gxh5 gives nothing in view of 13...Qh4+, and on 13.0-0-0 h4, he continues ...h4 followed by ...Bg5. Gligorić played the same way against Sherwin in Portoroz and got a better position in the opening.) Gligorić did not find the best counterstroke against this innovation and after 13...hxg4 14.fxg4 Nhf6 15.Bh3 Nb6 16.Bg5, White had the edge. Instead of 14...Nhf6?, Black can continue either 14...Nb6 with the threats of ...Bxg4 and ...Nc4, which would force White to go into a very unclear line of play with 15.Ng3 Bxg4 16.h5 with an attack for the pawn or, which seems to me to be even stronger, 14...Ndf6! 15.g5 Ng4 or 15...Nh5) strengthening the position on the kingside.

"And finally, in several games from the 26th USSR Championship, as in the game Szabo-Gligorić about which I have already spoken, White employed the continuation 12.g5 Nh7 13.h4. Gurgenidze playing against Spassky, and Petrosian against Polugaevsky, initiated play on the queenside, but here the knight's position, which is not very active, makes itself felt. Gligorić played more precisely against Szabo – 13...f6 14.gxf6 Rxf6 15.Ng1 – but then complicated maneuvers arose, the results of which were that White was able to favorably rearrange his forces and gradually seized the initiative.

"In this position, worth serious consideration is the stereotypical sacrifice of the exchange 15...Rf4!?. White probably should accept it (if he, for example, continues 16.0-0-0 Rxh4 17.Bg5 thinking that he will win the exchange under more favorable conditions, then there follows 17...Bh6! and Black even wins). Even after 16.Bxf4 exf4, Black's positional pluses are easily worth the exchange. Of course, there is no forced road to victory but there are many who would like to play Black in the position which has arisen."

It should be added that almost nothing has changed since Tal wrote these lines. The original idea of the Yugoslav grandmaster has successfully passed the test of time and expanded the arsenal of modern technical resources.

12.g5 Nh7 13.h4

Speaking of this variation in the present day, noteworthy is Karpov's idea from his game against Dolmatov (Dortmund 1993): 13.Rg1 f6 14.gxf6 Qxf6 15.0-0-0 Rf7 16.Kb1 b5 17.Nc1 Ndf8 18.Be2, with a slight advantage for White.

13...b5

Subsequent practice confirmed that Tal was correct and that 13...f6 is more promising!

14.Ng3 Nb6 15.Bd3

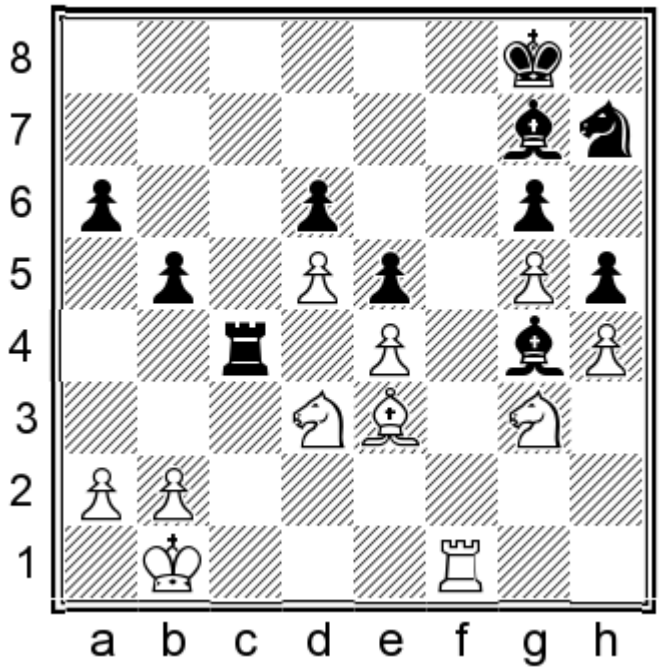
The aforementioned game Gurgenidze-Spassky, which by the way was played in the same round, developed similarly. Gurgenidze did not wait for Petrosian and played 15...Nc4 first, but after 16.Bxc4 bxc4 17.0-0-0 Rb8 18.Kb1 Bd7 19.Rc1, he found himself in an unpleasant position. On top of that, Black missed a tactical blow, 19...f6? 20.Nxh5!, and soon the outcome of this game did not leave any doubt.

Petrosian found a more reliable plan, but was nevertheless forced to solve difficult problems.

15...Bd7 16.0-0-0 Rc8 17.Kb1 Nc4 18.Bxc4 Rxc4

Unlike Gurgenidze, Petrosian gained the bishop pair without ruining his pawn structure, but the position is far from equal: the h7-knight and darksquare bishop are still "benched."

19.Nce2 Qe7 20.Rc1 Rfc8 21.Rxc4 Rxc4 22.Nc1 f5 23.Bb6 Qf7 24.Nd3 fxe4 25.fxe4 Qf3 26.Qe3 Bg4 27.Rf1 Qxe3 28.Bxe3



Black has managed to almost equalize, and now, playing 28...Rxe4!?, he could have reactivated his bishops. Probably, Petrosian had something like this in mind when he started to play on the f-file, but after closer examination he decided that the sacrifice of a whole rook was excessive. Of course, it was hardly possible to see all of the consequences of the variation 29.Nxe4 Be2 over the board. For example, 30.Ndc5!? Bxf1 (30...dxc5 31.d6! Nf8 32.Nf6+) 31.Nxd6, or even the simple 30.Kc2 Bxf1 31.Nxd6 Bg2 32.Nc8 would give advantage to White. As we can see, all of these variations are affected by the poor position of the knight on the edge of the board. Well, how can the dogmatist Siegbert Tarrasch not come to mind?!

28...Nf8 29.Rc1 Rxc1+ 30.Kxc1 Kf7 31.Kc2 Nd7 32.Kc3 a5 33.Nf2 Bf3 34.a4

Paving the way for the king to the opponent's defenseless pawns. Later, White wins a pawn and creates a passed pawn on the b-file, which, however, has limited mobility, so Flohr's suggestion, 34.b3!? and only then a2-a4, deserved serious consideration.

34...bxa4 35.Kc4 Ke7 36.Kb5 Kd8 37.Kxa4 Kc7 38.Kxa5 Kb7 39.Nd3 Bf8 40.Nb4 Nb8

White's goal, to promote the b2-pawn, is extremely difficult if at all feasible. It is opposed by the opponent's pieces, which are hard to chase away from the light squares.

41.Nc2 Be7 42.Na3 Bd8+ 43.Kb5 Na6 44.Nc4 Nc7+ 45.Ka4 Ne8 46.b4 Bd1+ 47.Ka3

Black has managed to push back the opponent's king, and now he starts working towards his ultimate goal: to gain a foothold on the b5-square and severely restrict the mobility of the b-pawn.

47...Ka6 48.Nf1 Kb5 49.Nfd2 Bc7 50.Bf2 Bd8 51.Ne3 Be2 52.Nb1 Bd3 53.Nc3+ Ka6 54.Kb3 Nc7 55.Nc4 Be7 56.Nb2 Bf1 57.Nb1 Nb5

Petrosian has executed his plan, and after the knight exchange on the 64th move, the position becomes a dead draw. Risking nothing, Polugaevsky drags on for nearly two dozen moves and only then resigns himself to the inevitable.

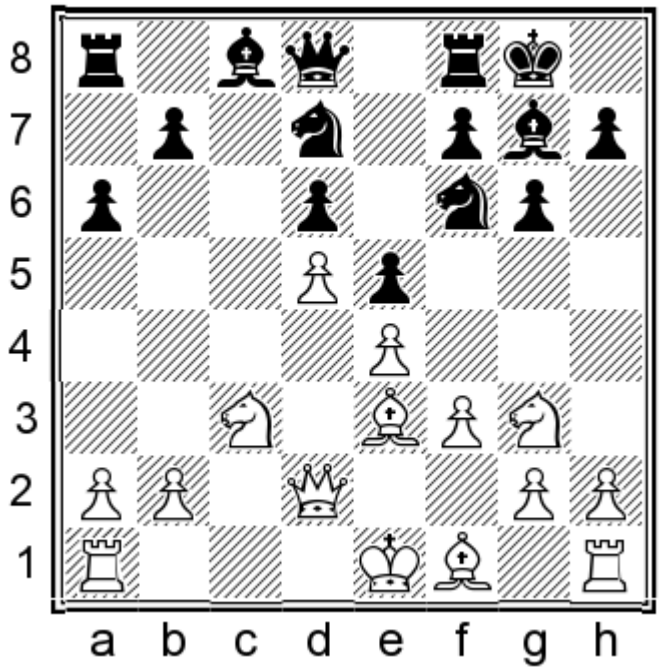
58.Nc4 Bd3 59.Nbd2 Bd8 60.Nb2 Be2 61.Bg1 Bc7 62.Be3 Bd8 63.Nbc4 Bd3 64.Na3 Nxa3 65.Kxa3 Bc7 66.Kb3 Kb5 67.Bf2 Be2 68.Nb1 Bd3 69.Nd2 Be2 70.Kc3 Bd8 71.Nb1 Bc7 72.Bg1 Bf1 73.Nd2 Be2 74.Bf2 Bd8 75.Nb1 Bc7 76.Na3+ Ka4 Draw.

(49) B1.4 **Petrosian – Geller**
41st USSR Championship
Moscow 1973

The meaningful part of this game is limited to the short middlegame. The opening was commonplace, and play never reached the endgame. However, the game was very instructive, and, oddly enough, especially from an ideological perspective. Geller countered White's strategy on the flank with a purposeful fight for the central squares. It started on the 16th move and ended with a beautiful breakthrough on the 27th move, when Black's queenside was already gone...

1.c4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 e5 7.Nge2 c6 8.Qd2 Nbd7 9.d5 cxd5 10.cxd5 a6 11.Ng3

A peculiar maneuver sometimes employed by Petrosian in the Sämisch System (see games 58, 60). The king's knight is on its way to the more promising d2- and e3-squares.



11...b5 12.Be2 h5

A typical technique that we have already seen in the first chapter. Black seeks to expand the front line on the kingside, for example, 13.0-0 h4 14.Nh1 Nh5 (also possible is 14...Nh7 with the idea ...Bf6- g5) 15.Nf2 Nb6, and if 16.b3, then 16...Nf4!.

13.Bg5 Qb6 14.Nf1 Nh7 15.Be7

Gaining time to regroup his pieces.

15...Re8 16.Bh4 f5 17.Bf2 Qd8 18.exf5 gxf5 19.Ne3 Qf6 20.0-0

Petrosian waited for a long time to castle queenside and only now revealed his true intentions.

20...Qg6 21.Kh1 Ndf6 22.a4!

The signal for attack. White begins the thorough destruction of the queenside. Geller, confident that his central strategy is correct, calmly brings in the reserves.

22...f4 23.Nc2 Bf5 24.Nb4 bxa4!?

A subtle decision in Geller's style, a deep strategist and clever tactician. Weaker is 24...a5?! because of 25.Nc6 bxa4 (25...b4) 26.Nb5!, with a significant advantage for White (indicated by Efim Geller).

25.Rxa4 Ng5 26.Rxa6

Not the strongest. Much more dangerous for Black was 26.h4!? (Geller), for example, 26...Nf7 27.Rxa6 Rxa6 28.Nxa6, and 28...e4 is bad because of 29.Qxf4 exf3 30.gxf3 Nxd5 31.Nxd5 Rxe2 32.Rg1!.

26...Rxa6 27.Nxa6 e4!?

The climax of the game. Black, using the potential accumulated in the center, carries out the long-planned surge. Further events unfold at a rapid pace, sharply contrasting with the unhurried maneuvers of the previous stage of the game.

28.Qxf4 exf3 29.gxf3

No better was 29.Bxf3 because of 29...Bd3 30.Ra1 Ra8! 31.Be2 (or 31.Qxd6 Nxf3 32.gxf3 Qf5) 31...Bxe2 32.Nxe2 Nge4 with counterplay.

29...Rxe2! 30.Nxe2 Bd3

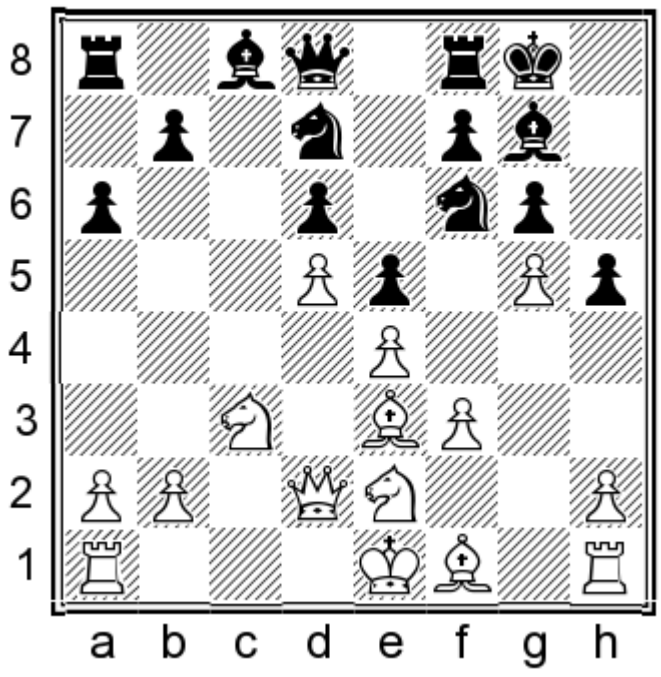
Draw, because of the possible variation: 30...Bd3 31.Rg1 Bxe2 32.Rxg5 Bxf3+ 33.Qxf3 Qxg5, etc.

(50) B1.5 **Petrosian – Geller**
44th USSR Championship
Moscow 1976

1.c4 g6 2.e4 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 e5 7.Nge2 c6 8.Qd2 Nbd7 9.d5 cxd5 10.cxd5 a6

The opponents continue the theoretical discussion that they had started three years earlier. In this game, Petrosian chooses the most principled path, pushing the pawn to g4 on the 11th move. Geller demonstrates one of his developments.

11.g4 h5 12.g5



12...Ne8

Geller avoids the standard 12...Nh7 (B1.3). On the one hand, the e8-knight has better prospects, but, on the other, now the white pawn on g5 is safe.

13.h4 b5 14.Rc1 Rb8

Planning to seize space by pushing the b-pawn if the opportunity arises.

15.Ng3 Nc5 16.Nce2 f6 17.Bg2 fxg5 18.hxg5 Bd7!

This is Black's idea! The knight on c5 occupies a magnificent position, ruining White's play on the c-file. Exchanging it for the bishop (even with a pawn to boot) is disadvantageous for White, as this would create "holes" on the dark squares in his camp, while the other black knight would rush to d6.

19.b3 Rc8 20.Rh4 b4

Threatening to harass the white king after ...Bb5 and providing the knight with the c5-square.

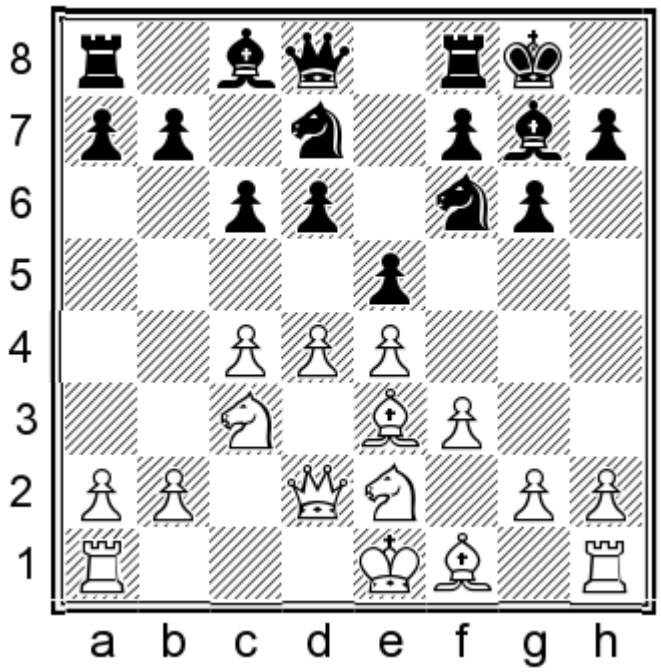
21.Kf2 a5 22.Kg1 Rc7 23.Rf1

The opponents maneuver, probing each other's weaknesses and improving the position of their pieces. In the next few moves, White exchanges his bad bishop for Black's good one, while Black doubles his rooks on the f-file and looks for a way to use his queen.

23...Bc8 24.Bh3 Bxh3 25.Rxh3 Qc8 26.Kg2 Rcf7 27.Rh4 Qa6

Black has thoroughly dug in on the kingside and has already started to hone in on the weak squares along the f1-a6 diagonal. In this situation, playing for a win would have been rather risky for both opponents. Draw.

B2



White to move

White is at a crossroads. All four games where this position arose had different continuations. In game 51, White chose 9.b3.

Stoltz made an attempt at a frontal attack via 9.0-0-0 in game 52.

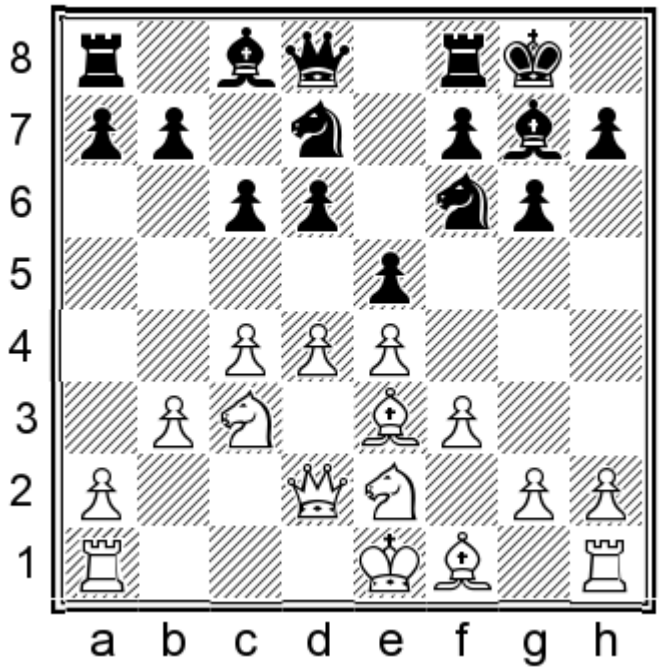
In the remaining two games, the continuations 9.Rd1

and 9.d5, which are the main theoretical lines, ended in draws after brief struggles.

(51) B2.1 **Platz – Petrosian**
Maróczy Memorial
Budapest 1952

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 e5 6.Nge2 Nbd7 7.Be3 0-0 8.Qd2 c6 9.b3

Before making this move in the King's Indian Defense, it is important, as the saying goes, to "measure twice..." Petrosian learned this the hard way in the memorable encounter with Borisenko (see. Game 89), where such a liberty almost cost him a point.



9...a6 10.g3

A dubious move. White wants to activate the immobile kingside, which by itself is a good idea. But this is the most difficult problem in the Sämisch System. No wonder that Platz's unpretentious structure collapses like a house of cards. If White really wanted to fianchetto his bishop, he should have played 10.Rd1, impeding 10...b5 in view of 11.d5.

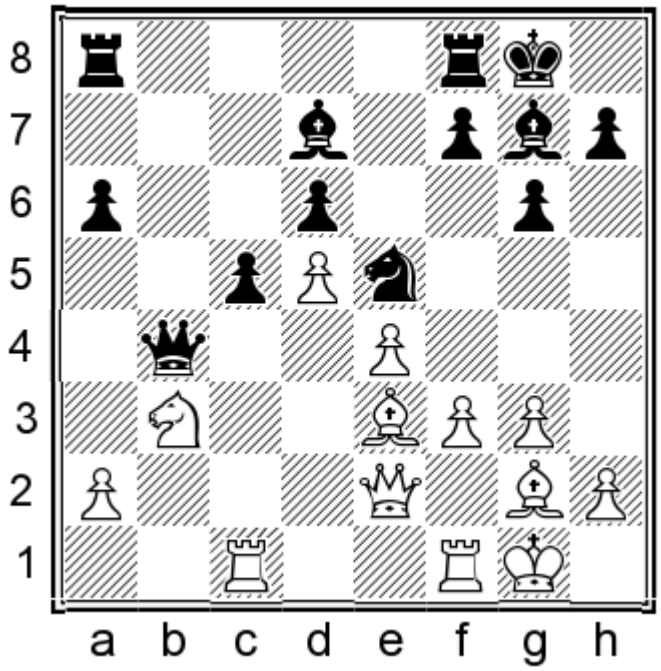
10...b5 11.Bg2 bxc4 12.bxc4 exd4

From this moment on, Petrosian plays concrete forcing moves, not allowing his opponent to make a single independent move.

13.Nxd4 Ne5 14.Qe2 Qa5 15.Rc1 c5 16.Nb3 Qb4 17.0-0

A little trick. Now, if Black takes the pawn, 17...Qxc4, then after 18.Rfd1 White's position will be more or less playable. But Petrosian is relentless.

17...Be6! 18.Nd5 Nxd5 19.cxd5 Bd7



An interesting position. Even though it is his move and the black pieces are far away, White is absolutely helpless and cannot avoid material losses.

20.Rfd1

If the rook retreats to other squares, the same move would be decisive, with a subsequent knight fork on d3.

20...Bb5 21.Qd2

If 21.Qc2, then 21...c4.

21...Qxd2 22.Rxd2

No better is 22.Nxd2 because of 22...Be2 23.Re1 Nd3. In case of 22.Bxd2, Black has a nice choice between 22...Be2 and 22...Nd3.

22...Nc4 23.Rxc4

White sacrifices the exchange to avoid the variation 23.Re2 Nxe3 24.Rxe3 c4 25.Nd2 Bd4.

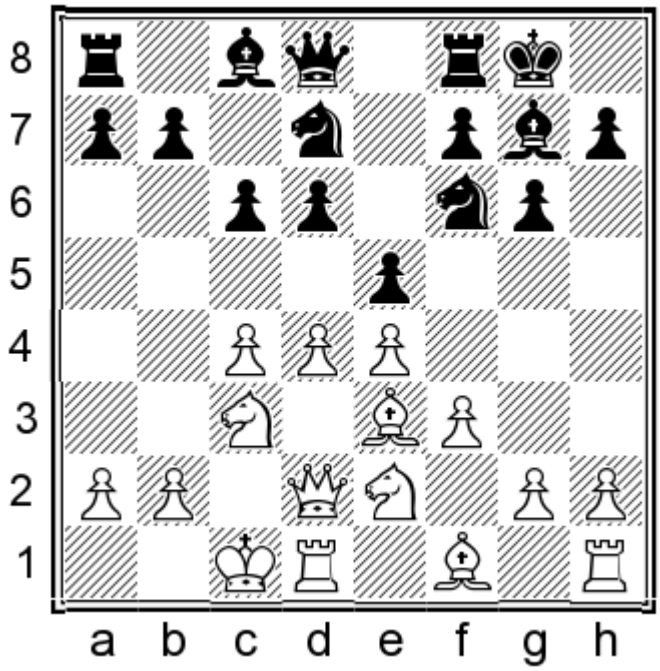
23...Bxc4 24.Na5 Bb5 25.Nb7

No more than a simple psychological distraction, which Black simply ignores, advancing the c-pawn towards the queening square.

25...c4 26.Nxd6 c3 27.Rc2 Ba4 28.Rc1 c2 29.f4 Bb2 30.Re1 Bc3 31.Rc1 Rab8 White resigned.

(52) B2.2 **Stoltz – Petrosian**
Bucharest 1953

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d6 3.Nc3 g6 4.e4 Bg7 5.f3 e5 6.Nge2 0-0 7.Be3 Nbd7 8.Qd2 c6 9.0-0-0



As already mentioned, in the Sämisch System, the choice of strategic plans for White is very diverse. The solid pawn structure allows White to easily develop his pieces and wage a battle on any front. In this game, Stoltz invites his opponent to play a sharp position with opposite-side castling. However, the still-undefined position of the d-pawn leaves White the opportunity to combine preparation for an attack on the king with operations in the center and on the queenside. Black has to play very carefully: the slightest inaccuracy can be fatal.

9...a6 10.Bh6

In preparation for the attack, White does not miss the opportunity to exchange one of the most important black pieces. Note that White is not required to burn any bridges. There are “centralized” methods, for example, 10.d5 cxd5!? (10...c5 is also possible) 11.Nxd5 Nxd5 12.Qxd5 Nb6 13.Bxb6 Qxb6 14.Qxd6 Qa5 15.Nc3 Be6, with a complex game (according to Geller, Black has good compensation for a pawn) or 10.Kb1 followed by Nc1, seeking above all a harmonious setup for his pieces. Nowadays, Vladimir Kramnik plays similar positions perfectly.

10...b5 11.Bxg7

From the point of view of playing for mate, more logical is 11.h4. In the early 1990s, grandmaster Beliavsky played several exciting games on this theme. In particular, in his games against Timman (Linares 1991) and Kasparov (Linares 1993), after 11...Qa5 12.h5 Bxh6 13.Qxh6 b4 14.Nb1 Qxa2 15.Ng3 Nb6 16.c5 Nc4 he tried a brave exchange sacrifice: 17.Rd2!. Timman accepted the gift: 17...Nxd2, but after 18.Nxd2 Qa1+ 19.Nb1 Be6 20.cxd6 Qa5 21.Qg5 Qd8 22.dxe5 Nd7 23.Qh6 g5 24.Nf5 Bxf5 25.exf5 f6 26.Bc4+ Kh8 27.e6 he not could withstand the avalanche of white pawns. Kasparov, on the other hand, did not get “greedy” and proved Black’s defense viable: 17...Na5! 18.cxd6 Nb3+ 19.Kc2 Na1+ 20.Kc1 Nb3+.

11...Kxg7 12.g4

And here, play in the center already looked good: 12.c5.

12...Qa5 13.Ng3

Offering Black the extra sharp variation 13...b4 14.Nb1 Qxa2 15.h4 and, perhaps, hoping to step aside in time: 15.dxe5 dxe5 16.Qxb4 Rb8 17.Qa3, with a slightly more pleasant endgame for White. Petrosian, of course, is not satisfied.

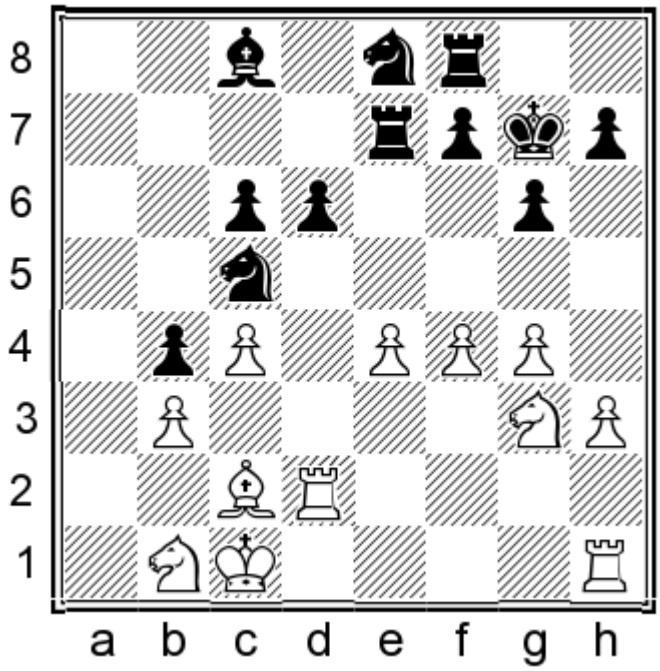
13...exd4 14.Qxd4 b4 15.Nb1 Qg5+ 16.Qd2

Now the downsides of the move of the g-pawn are clear: 16.Rd2 is unappealing because of 16...Ne5 17.Be2 Ne8, followed by ...c5 and ...Qf4.

16...Qxd2+ 17.Rxd2

With this queen trade, the fight is over before it started. Both sides are satisfied with the change of situation: in the endgame, White's center has strengthened and the prospect of winning the d6- pawn has become more real; Black got rid of the danger of a pawn storm and controls the dark squares.

17...Ne8 18.f4?! Nc5 19.Be2 a5 20.Bd1 Ra7 21.h3 Re7 22.Bc2 a4 23.b3 axb3 24.axb3



This is a standard position. The moves 24...f6 or 24...h6 suggest themselves, as was played in hundreds of such games. In any event, it seems that abrupt actions are inappropriate here, hence Black's next move is all the more surprising.

24...f5!

Bronstein once remarked that the strategy of playing on the squares of a certain color lies in arranging one's pieces on the squares of one color and then attack the opponent's pieces on the squares of the opposite color. This is what Petrosian does now. The tactical justification of Black's plan is in the variation 25.exf5 Re3! 26.Nf1 Rf3 (26...Rxb3 is also possible) 27.fxg6 R8xf4!.

25.gxf5 gxf5 26.Rg2

Clearly, White was not looking to create an extra doubled pawn in the variations 26.exf5 Re3 or 26.Nxf5+ Bxf5 27.exf5, so he decided to make an in-between move. However, here comes a new surprise.

26...fxe4!

The critical moment. Now, in case of 27.Nf5+ Kf6 28.Nxe7 Kxe7, Black will have a pawn for the exchange and the prospect of creating two connected passed pawns. Petrosian never missed such opportunities!

27.Nxe4+ Kh8 28.Nxc5 dxc5

One could say that White has gotten off easy after conceding two such sensitive blows. However, he still cannot save the game: the difference in the activity of the white and black pieces is too great.

29.Rg5 Rxf4 30.Rhg1

Hardly better is 30.Rxc5 Bd7 or 30...Rf2.

30...Rg7 31.Nd2 Bxh3 32.Bxh7

Clever, but insufficient.

32...Rxg5 33.Rxg5 Kxh7 34.Rh5+ Kg6 35.Rxh3 Nd6

By getting rid of unnecessary pieces, Petrosian brings the game to a victorious end.

36.Re3 Kf6 37.Rf3 Ke5 38.Re3+ Kf6 39.Rf3 Kf5 40.Rh3 Ke5

Somewhere around here, the game was adjourned. The resumed game was short-lived. The winning plan is to transfer the knight to the dominating d4-square, followed by the activation of the king and the rook.

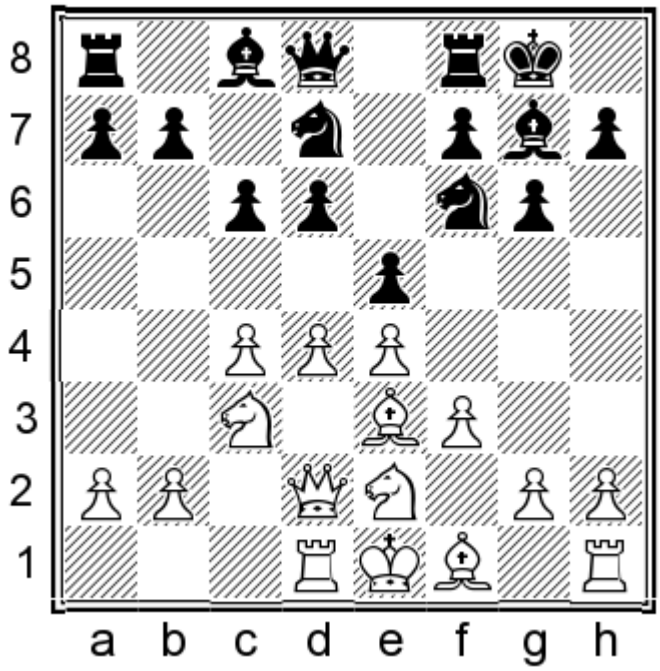
41.Kc2 Nf5 42.Kd3 Rg4 43.Rf3 Rd4+ 44.Ke2 Rd8 45.Rh3 Nd4+ 46.Ke3 Nf5+ 47.Ke2 Kf4

The space where the white pieces can operate shrinks like Honoré de Balzac's magic piece of shagreen.

48.Rf3+ Kg4 49.Rd3 Nd4+ 50.Kf2 Rf8+ 51.Ke1 Re8+ 52.Kf2 Kf4 53.Kf1 Re3 54.Rxe3 Kxe3 55.Ke1 Kd3 White resigned.

(53) B2.3 **Blagidze – Petrosian**
USSR Championship Semifinal
Kiev 1957

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Nge2 c6 7.Be3 e5 8.Qd2 Nbd7 9.Rd1



This game was emotionally charged, because Tigran Petrosian had known his opponent since he lived in Tbilisi, where they both began their chess careers. Alexander Blagidze, who was a candidate master at the time, chose a solid plan, demonstrating the respect with which he approached the game against his eminent fellow countryman.

9...a6 10.Nc1

Solving the problem of development. Practical play shows that it is too early for White to attack. For example, if 10.d5, then Black replies with 10...c5 with play on the kingside, 11.Nc1 Nh5!, or on the queenside, 11.g4 b5!.

Until recently, 10.dxe5 was played with the idea of gaining a small, safe advantage after 11.c5. But in the fantastic game Karpov-Kasparov (Linares 1993), this plan took a hit: 10...Nxe5! 11.b3 b5! 12.cxb5 axb5 13.Qxd6 Nfd7 14.f4 b4!, and Black won in incredible style.

10...exd4 11.Bxd4 b5 12.cxb5

Now and also the next few moves it is too risky for White to accept the pawn sacrifice: 12.Bxf6 Bxf6 13.Qxd6, at least because of 13...Qb6, and White's king gets stuck in the middle for a long time.

12...axb5 13.Be2 Re8 14.0-0 Bf8 15.Rfe1

As a result of the opening, White has a small advantage. After some preparation, Black carries out the typical maneuver ...b4, and ...d5, completely freeing himself in the center.

15...Qc7 16.Qc2 Qb8 17.b3 Bb7 18.a4 b4 19.Nb1 d5 20.exd5 c5!?

This is probably more accurate than the natural 20...Nxd5, since the d5-square is a good place for the bishop. The pawn sacrifice allows Black to gain time for the important move ...Bd6, weakening the protection of the white king, and to transfer the other bishop to the a2-g8 diagonal, where it attacks the b3-pawn.

21.Bf2 Bd6 22.g3 Bxd5 23.Nd2 Qb7 24.Nd3 Bf8 25.Bf1 Rec8 26.Nb2 Ra7 27.Qd3 Be6

In connection with the change of the position, the bishop gives way to the knight, which now rushes to c3.

28.Bg2 Qb8 29.Nbc4 Nb6

It is useful to exchange one knight, but White has a second one.

30.Nxb6 Qxb6 31.Nc4 Qa6 32.Bf1 Nd5 33.Qc2 Qb7 34.f4 Nc3

Having "sealed up" the game on the queenside, Petrosian is looking for chances on the kingside.

35.Rd2 Bf5 36.Bd3 Bh3 37.Bf1 Bf5 38.Bd3 Bh3

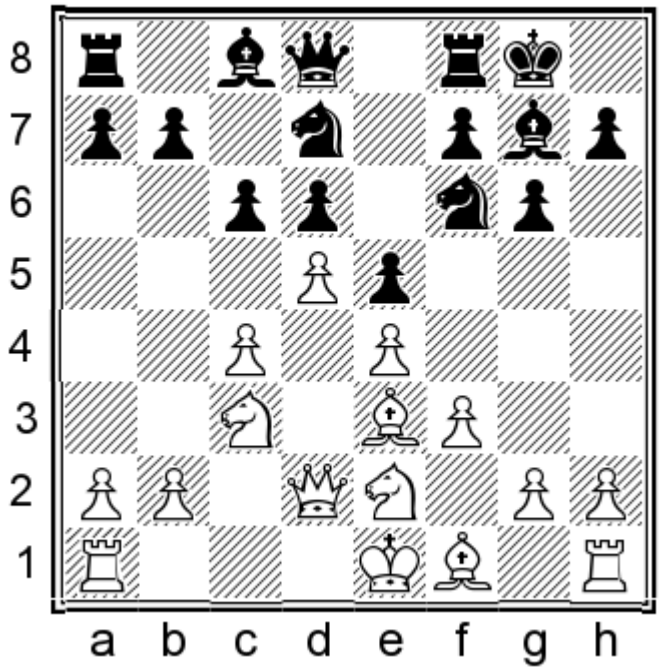
White does not want to retreat the queen from c2, and Black does not want to exchange the lightsquare bishops. Persisting, the opponents repeat moves. Draw.

(54) B2.4 **Petrosian – Uhlmann**
Rovinj/Zagreb 1970

1.c4 g6 2.e4 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.f3 0-0 6.Nge2 Nbd7

Undoubtedly, the most fundamental response to White's early knight move to e2 is 6...c5 (see tabiya B9).

7.Be3 e5 8.Qd2 c6 9.d5



9...cxd5 10.cxd5

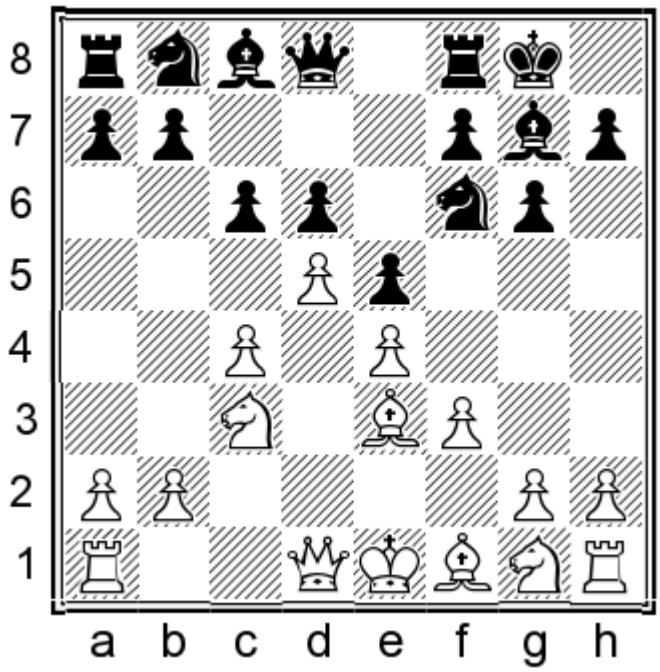
From time to time, attempts are made to take on d5 with a piece, which can lead to winning the d6-pawn, but at the cost of significant underdevelopment. Here are a few contemporary illustrations of the position arising after 10.Nxd5 Nxd5 11.Qxd5 Nb6:

(1) 12.Qb5 Bh6!? 13.Bf2 Bd7 14.Qb4 Na4 15.Nc3 Nxc3 16.Qxc3 b5 17.Rd1 (17.cxb5?! Rc8) 17...bxc4 18.Bxc4 Rc8 19.b3 – draw (Kramnik- Dolmatov, Dortmund 1993);

(2) 12.Qd3 Be6 13.b3 f5 14.0-0-0 fxe4 15.fxe4 d5! 16.Bxb6 (no better was 16.cxd5 Nxd5 17.exd5 Rc8+ 18.Nc3 e4 or 18.Kd2 Qa5+) 16...axb6 17.cxd5 Rxa2! 18.dxe6 Qa8! 19.Qc3 (19.Nc3 Qa3+) 19...Ra1+ 20.Kc2 Qa2+ 21.Qb2 Qxb2+ 22.Kxb2 Rxd1, and Black soon won (Dragomaretsky-Mikhail Ivanov, Moscow 1995).

10...Ne8 11.0-0-0 f5 12.Kb1 a6 A grandmaster draw.

B3

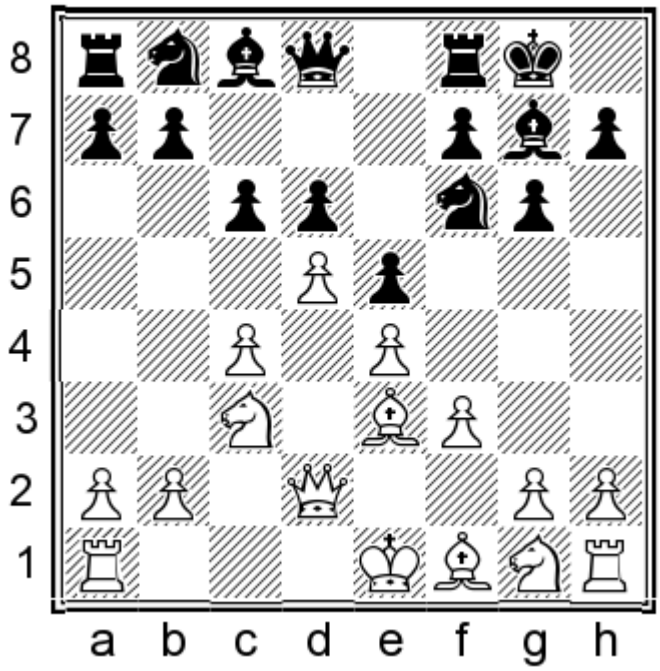


White to move

In the six games other than game 55, Petrosian played White, unconventionally treating his favorite plan with kingside castling. His multi-game duel with Gligorić is quite interesting (games 57, 59, 60, 61).

(55) B3.1 **Andersen – Petrosian**
Nimzovich Memorial
Copenhagen 1960

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 c6 6.Be3 e5 7.d5 0-0 8.Qd2



A standard move that is the beginning of a peculiar plan, introduced into practical play by Polugaevsky: White wants to start active play ahead of his opponent at the expense of delayed development of the king's knight. Later,

however, he plays inaccurately and comes under attack.

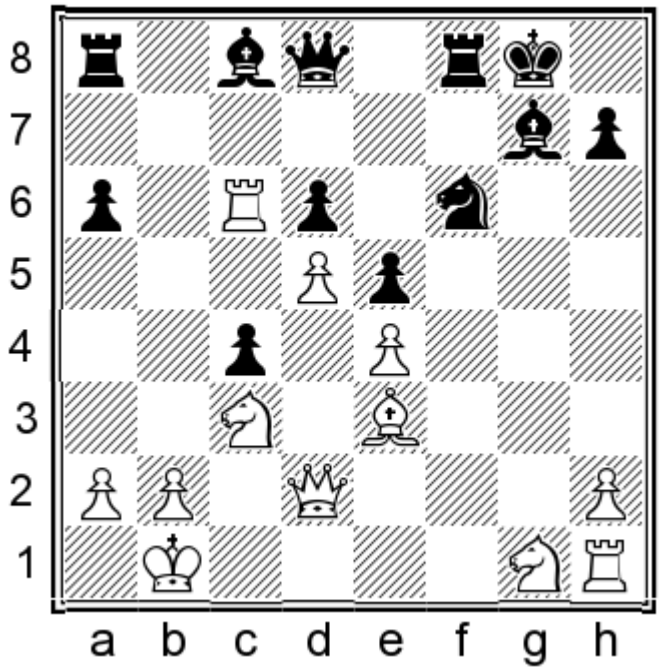
8...cxd5 9.cxd5 a6 10.0-0-0 b5 11.Kb1 Nbd7 12.Rc1 Nb6 13.Nd1

A slow move. The move 13.g4 was played in the game Polugaevsky-Gurgenidze (Tbilisi 1959), and Black played inaccurately right away: 13...Rb8, and White was able to take action against the breakthrough ...f5: 14.Bd3! Nfd7 15.Nce2. Out of desperation, Gurgenidze sacrificed a pawn, 15...Nc5. After 13.g4, Petrosian would have probably continued the same way he played in the game: 13...Nfd7, but then the sharp 14.h4 f5 15.gxf5 gxf5 16.h5! or 16.Nh3 would be possible, and White's counter-threats h5-h6 and Ng5 should not be underestimated.

13...Nfd7 14.g4 f5 15.gxf5 gxf5 16.Bd3 Nf6 17.Rc6

Holy simplicity: Andersen consistently carries out the planned "attack," not noticing the lethal danger hanging over his own king.

17...Nc4 18.Bxc4 bxc4 19.Nc3 fxe4 20.fxe4



Below is a short and instructive punishment for the "liberties" taken by White. The positional background of Black's counterattack is the strong light-square bishop, which does not have an opponent, as well as the complete isolation of the g1-knight and h1-rook.

20...Nxe4! 21.Nxe4 Rf1+ 22.Kc2 Bf5 23.Qg2 Qh4! 24.Rxc4 Qe1

Threatening to win a piece via 25...Qxe3, and so on. If 25.Bd2, then 25...Rf2! is decisive.

25.Kd3 Rb8 26.Qc2

No better is 26.Bh6 Bxe4+! 27.Rxe4 Qb1+ 28.Kc3 Rf7 and so on.

26...Qa5

Having circled the "magic rectangle" d8-h4-e1- a5, the queen decided the fate of the d5-pawn, and with it the entire game.

27.Bd2 Qxd5+ 28.Ke2 Rf8!

The fight is over. Out of desperation, White makes a move with the ill-fated knight, only to immediately surrender.

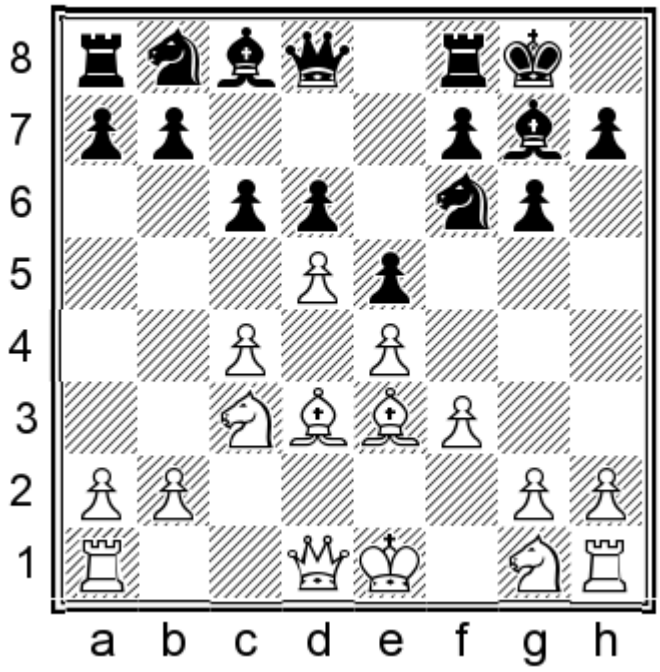
29.Nf3 White resigned.

(56) B3.2 **Petrosian – Reshevsky**
XVI Olympiad
Tel-Aviv, 1964

Time trouble was a real plague for the American grandmaster, and who knows how many important points he lost letting the clock run down to the last seconds?

Despite losing the opening duel, Reshevsky uses his practical resourcefulness to stay afloat, although at the cost of irrecoverable time. In the end, time trouble and Petrosian's perseverance do their job.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 c6 7.Bd3 e5 8.d5



8...cxd5 9.cxd5 Na6

Along with 9...Ne8, 9...Nh5 (B3.7), and 9...a6 (game 57), this is one of the main lines in this variation.

10.Nge2 Bd7 11.0-0

After 11.Qd2, Black, according to Geller's recommendation, can continue 11...Nc5 12.Bb5 Qa5 13.Bxd7 Nfxd7 14.Rb1 Qa6, trying to play on the light squares.

11...Nc5 12.Bc2

Later, in the game Olafsson-Liberzon (Reykjavik 1975), White routinely exchanged the light-square bishops, 12.Bb5 Bxb5 13.Nxb5, and after 13...a6 14.Nbc3 Ne8 15.a4 achieved an advantage. However, 13...Qb6 practically forced White to play 14.b4, with never-ending complications.

12...a5 13.a3 Qb6 14.Kh1 Rfc8

The b2-pawn is, of course, "poisoned": 14...Qxb2?? 15.Rb1 Qxa3 16.Bc1.

15.Rb1 Qa6

Refuting the move b2-b4 and in turn creating the positional threat ...a4.

16.a4 Qb6 17.Nc1 Qd8 18.Bd3

Black has reinforced the knight on c5, but this achievement pales against the backdrop of his obvious concessions. Black has weakened the b5- and c4-squares, and, apparently, had to agree to exchange the light-square bishops. Moreover, he made a commitment to ensure the stability of the outpost on c5, which is threatened by exchanges and the undermining b2-b4. All of this motivates the next phase of the battle.

18...Ne8 19.Bb5 Bxb5 20.Nxb5 Nc7 21.Na3 N7a6 22.Nd3 Bf6 23.Nxc5 Nxc5 24.Nb5 Ra6 25.Ra1

Bypassing the c1-square, White plans to transfer the rook to c3 via a3 and avoids the unwanted exchange of the bishops.

25...Bg5 26.Bg1! Qd7 27.Ra3 Raa8 28.Rc3 b6 29.Qc2 Rf8

In anticipation of the opponent's activity on the queenside, Black hurries to open a file near the white king.

30.Rb1 f5 31.exf5 Rxf5 32.Rc4

Clearing the way for the knight, which now moves to e4.

32...Rff8 33.Nc3 Rac8 34.Re1 Qb7 35.h3 Qd7 36.Ne4 Be7

Out of options, Black has to put up with the centralized knight, since exchanging it would have opened the c-file for the white pieces.

37.Rc1 Ra8 38.Kh2 Qb7 39.Qd1 Qd7 40.Be3 Ra7 41.Bh6 Re8 42.R1c3 Rb8 43.Qc2 Re8 44.Be3 Kg7 45.b4

White carries out a meticulously prepared breakthrough.

45...axb4 46.Rxb4 Bd8

46...Rxa4? 47.Bxc5 (Nxc5) or 46...Nxa4? 47.Rc6 Rea8 immediately lose, and Black can practically move only the king and pawns. Reshevsky is forced to retreat to the last line of defense.

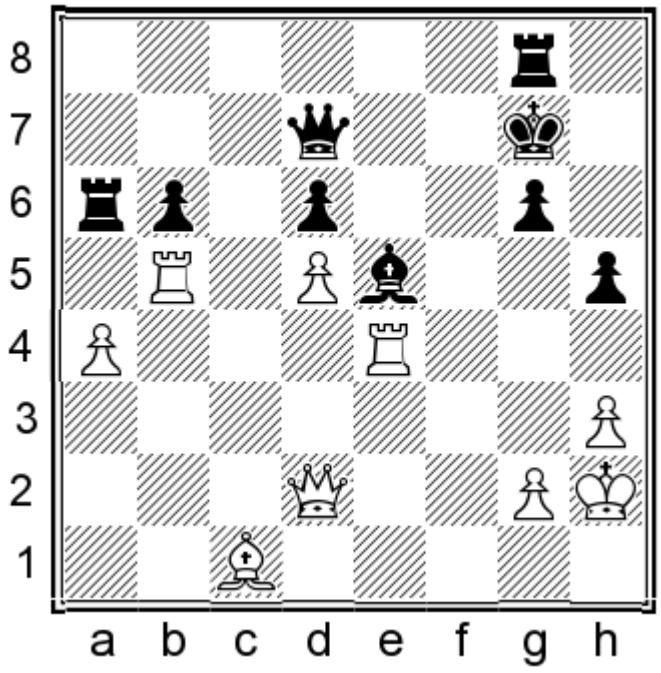
47.Rcc4 h5 48.Rb5 Rf8 49.Bc1!

The fact that the queen is well-positioned in front of the bishop on the long diagonal is wellknown. However, the fact that the same battery is also strong on the adjacent diagonal is often overlooked. Petrosian used this idea in practice several times; recall, for example, the game he won against Kaiszauri (Vilnius 1978); there the threat of the white queen coming to h6 proved fatal.

49...Ra6 50.Qd2 Rg8 51.f4 Nxe4 52.Rxe4 Bf6

White has many tempting continuations, for example, 53.Bb2 or 53.Qb4. Which one is stronger? Petrosian selects the most energetic, but not the simplest.

53.fxe5 Bxe5+



54.Rxe5!? dxe5 55.d6

It seems that Black is not doing well. White is threatening 56.Rxe5, and after 55...Re8 56.Qh6+, or if 55...Qe6, then 56.Qh6+ Kf7 57.Bb2 with a very strong attack.

55...Ra5!

Bravo! Now White's rook has to temporarily deviate from the main vector of attack; Black brings out the rook from a6 and eliminates the immediate danger.

56.Rxb6 Rxa4 57.Qd5 Ra7 58.Qxe5+ Kh7 59.Qg5 Rf8?

Exhausted by the previous struggle, Reshevsky makes a gross blunder and ruins the game, which could be saved after the correct 59...Qg7!.

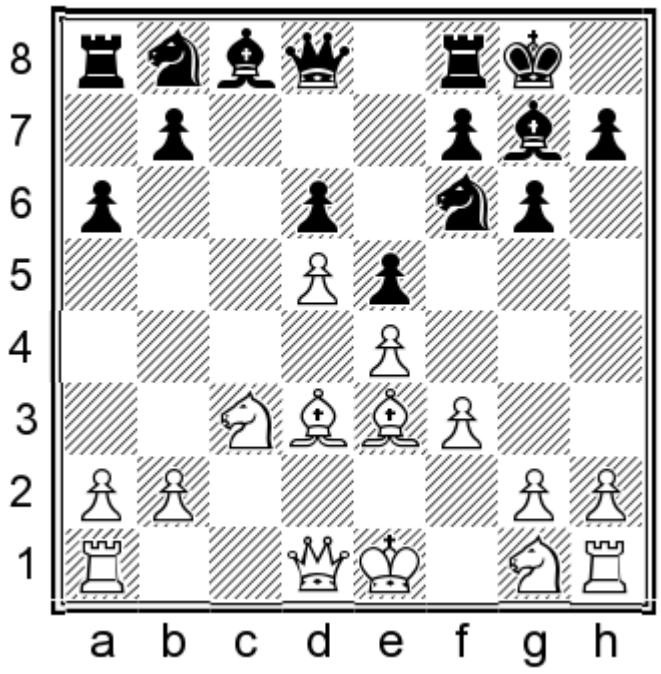
60.Qh6+ Kg8 61.Qxg6+ Qg7 62.Qxh5 Qd4 63.Qg6+ Rg7 64.Qe6+ Kh7 65.Qh6+ Kg8 66.Qe6+ Kh7 67.Be3 Qh4 68.Qe5 Re8 69.Qf5+

In some books, for example, *The Games of Tigran Petrosian* (Pergamon Chess, 1991), released in two volumes in Great Britain, this game is truncated, even though in reality the following moves were also played:

69...Kg8 70.Bf2 Qc4 71.Rb2 Qc6 72.Bc5 Rf7 73.Qg4+ Rg7 74.Qc4+, and only now Black resigned.

(57) B3.3 **Petrosian – Gligorić**
Palma de Mallorca 1968

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 c6 7.Bd3 e5 8.d5 cxd5 9.cxd5 a6



10.Nge2 Nbd7 11.0-0 Nh5

In this game, Gligorić is determined to realize the chances on the kingside inherent in the King's Indian Defense.

12.Kh1 f5 13.exf5 gxf5

Throwing the f-pawn into the fight, Black should have taken into account the pawn counterstrikes f3-f4 and g2-g4. Gligorić probably hoped to use the e5-square for the knight. For example, 14.f4 Nxf4 15.Nxf4 exf4 16.Bxf4 Ne5! or 14.g4 e4!? (worse is 14...fxg4 15.fxg4 Nf4 16.Bf5!) 15.gxh5 exd3 16.Nf4 Ne5. In the latter case, as we can see, Black is even ready to sacrifice a pawn. It seems that White has no alternatives and that Gligorić solved the psychological goal of the opening: to start a double-edged struggle. Petrosian dispels this illusion with a strong prophylactic maneuver.

14.Qb1! Nc5 15.Bc2 a5 16.f4!

Now that the black knight has been forced to change its planned course, this standard breakthrough is extremely strong.

16...exf4?!

After 16...Qh4, the move 17.Qe1! is unpleasant, but probably 16...e4 was best.

17.Nxf4 Nxf4 18.Bxf4

Now White has a clear advantage.

18...Ra6 19.Qe1 Rb6 20.Rb1

A temporary shift to defense with the goal of consolidating.

20...Qf6 21.a3 Bd7 22.Rf3 a4

In this situation, a very modest acquisition for Black.

23.Be3 Qe5 24.Qf2 Ra6 25.Rd1!

Resolutely refusing Black's insistent offers to exchange the positional advantage for "a mess of pottage" in the form of an extra pawn.

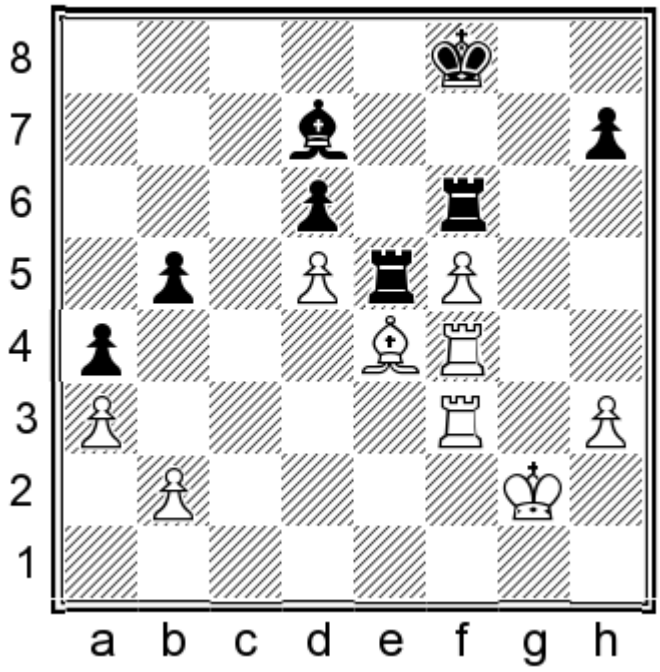
25...Qe7 26.Bd4 Bxd4 27.Qxd4

White's further plan is to transfer of the pieces to the right side of the board and to create the maximum concentration of attacks on the doomed f-pawn.

27...Qf6 28.Qb4 Raa8 29.Rdf1 Qe5 30.Qh4 Rae8 31.h3 b5 32.Rf4!

White wants to pick up the pawn at his convenience, so he does not agree to the variation 32.Qg5+ Qg7 33.Qxg7+ Kxg7 34.Bxf5 Bxf5 35.Rxf5 Rxf5 36.Rxf5 Rb8, because ...b4 (37.Rf4? Nd3!) gives Black counterplay. Now, for example, White threatens 33.Qf2 and g2-g4.

32...Re7 33.g4 Qf6 34.Qxf6 Rxf6 35.gxf5 Re3 36.Kg2 Kf8 37.R1f3 Re7 38.Ne4 Nxe4 39.Bxe4 Re5



As usual, Petrosian converts the advantage at a high conceptual and technical level.

40.Kf2 Be8 41.Ke3 Bh5 42.Rf1 Be8 43.Rc1 Bd7 44.Kd4! Ke7

If 44...Bxf5, then the pin 45.Rcf1 is decisive.

45.Rc7 Kd8 46.Ra7!

A beautiful finishing maneuver. Now, after 46...Bxf5, White wins using the same idea of the pin: 47.Bd3! h5 48.Rg7, for example, 48...Ke8 49.h4 and 50.Rg5 or 48...h4 49.Rg2! with the threat of 50.Rgf2.

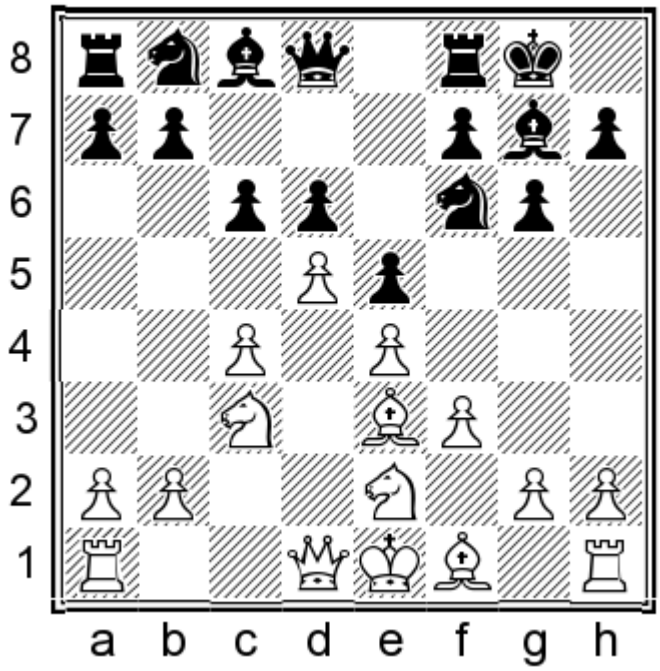
46...h5 47.Rf1! Rf7 48.Bd3 Be8 49.Ra8+ Kc7

If 49...Ke7, then 50.f6+! and so on.

50.f6 Rf8 51.f7 Black resigned.

(58) B3.4 **Petrosian – Penrose**
Palma de Mallorca 1969

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 e5 7.Nge2 c6 8.d5



8...cxd5 9.cxd5 Nbd7 10.Ng3

Petrosian followed a similar plan in games 49 and 60, but did not get any advantage after the opening. In this game, Black has even fewer problems, since, having saved time on the move ...a6, he quickly played ...f5 and achieved active play.

10...Ne8 11.Bd3

Apparently, in this system, it is better for White to develop the bishop to the less active but safer e2-square, as Petrosian played in the aforementioned games.

11...Nc5 12.Bc2 f5 13.Bf2 f4

Serious attention should be paid to 13...Bh6, seeking to capitalize on the activity in the center. Apparently, Penrose was not psychologically ready for such a turn of events, and he missed several opportunities and let his opponent seize the initiative again.

14.Nf1 a5

According to Petrosian, this position required more energetic play, for example, 14...Qg5 15.Rg1 (or 15.h4) 15...Qe7, at least depriving White of the possibility of castling kingside.

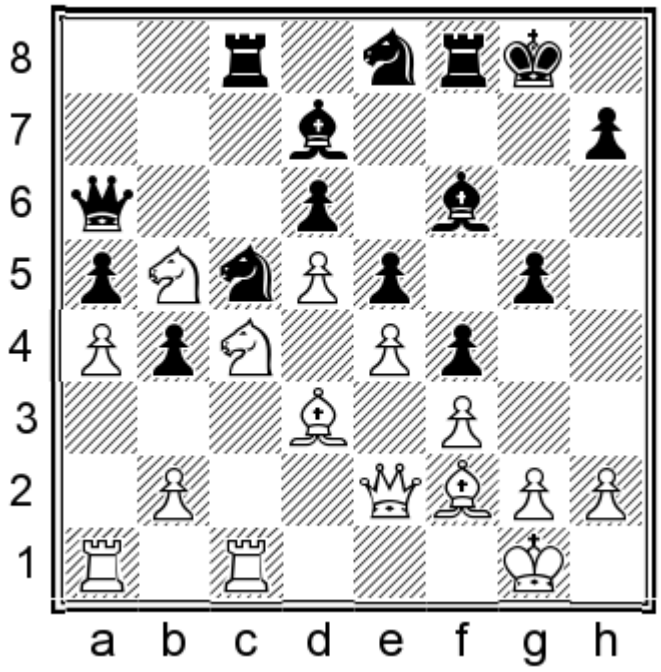
15.a3 Bd7 16.Nd2 b5 17.Qe2!

It turns out that the plan chosen by Black is a dead end. The rushed advance of the pawns on the queenside proved to be a waste of time, since further advances only create new weaknesses. Petrosian indicates that the variation 17...b4?! 18.axb4 axb4 19.Rxa8 Qxa8 20.Nd1 gives White a slight advantage.

17...Rb8 18.0-0 g5?!

Wrong again! Black suddenly remembered that there is no need to load the gun if you are not going to shoot. But even a simple calculation shows that Black falls hopelessly behind in development. He should have played 18...a4, preventing the opponent’s pawns from undermining the queenside.

19.a4! b4 20.Nb5 Qb6 21.Bd3 Rc8 22.Rfc1 Bf6 23.Nc4 Qa6



24.Ncxd6!

Blowing up Black's supporting structure.

24...Nxd3 25.Rxc8 Nxf2 26.Rxe8 Bxe8

The *zwischenzug* 26...Nh3+ only made matters worse, because after 27.gxh3 Bxe8 28.Nxe8 Rxe8 29.Rc1! White is in time to occupy the c-file.

27.Nxe8 Rxe8 28.Qxf2

The gust of combinational wind has subsided, having taken with it one extra black pawn. However, in return, he will receive some compensation, setting a watch on the c-file.

28...Bd8 29.Qe2 Bb6+ 30.Kh1 Rc8 31.Rd1 Be3 32.d6!

This is the play of a master: even though the pawn breaks away from the base, the threat of its further advance adds a necessary sharpness to the position and forces Black to solve difficult problems.

32...Qc6 33.b3 Kf7 34.g3 Qd7 35.g4 Kg6 36.Nc7 Bd4 37.Nd5!

The white knight's maneuvers are reminiscent of a tightrope walker's tricks. Now it prepares for the leap Nf5. Still denying what is happening, Penrose takes the pawn.

37...Qxd6? 38.Ne7+!

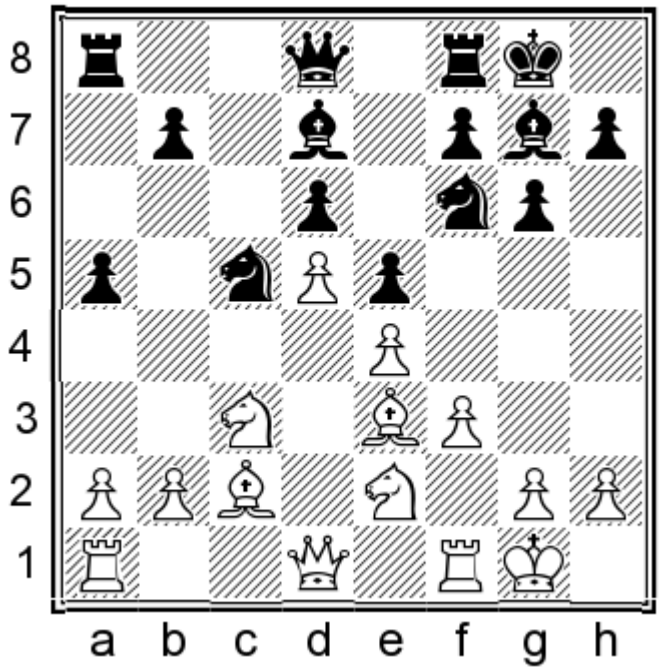
Out of the blue! Probably, the British master was very surprised when he realized that he loses an exchange: 38...Qxe7 39.Qa6+. Black resigned.

(59) B3.5 **Petrosian – Gligorić**
USSR-Yugoslavia Match
Tbilisi 1973

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 c6 7.Bd3 e5 8.d5 Nbd7

Having won the first game of this micro-match, Gligorić probably set a goal to not lose with Black in the second one and chose an unambitious plan connected with strengthening the defense on the queenside. However, as the game showed, this choice was hardly successful. Psychologically, the Yugoslav grandmaster was unprepared for meticulous defense. From the very beginning of this game, the constraining goal of Gligorić the competitor was weighing down the creative opening choice of Gligorić the artist. It is not easy to play for a draw!

9.Nge2 Nc5 10.Bc2 cxd5 11.cxd5 a5 12.0-0 Bd7



We already saw this position in the game B3.2. There, Petrosian continued 13.a3, after which the active move 13...b5 is not beneficial for Black because of 14.b4!. However, in this game, he probably had something in mind as he allows this pawn advance. But the experienced Gligorić, dreading any “surprises,” does not touch the b-pawn.

13.Kh1 Ne8 14.a3 Nc7 15.Rb1!

A natural move that hides a clever positional trap, which went unnoticed by Black.

15...Nb5

An obvious move. In principle, exchanges are good for the constrained side, but not in this particular position and not at this point.

16.Nxb5 Bxb5 17.a4!

Necessary preparation for the subsequent exchange.

17...Ba6 18.Bxc5!

Excellent! Earlier, this exchange was harmless for Black, but now capturing on c5 gives White a lasting initiative, since Black has no knights and a reliable blockade of the d5-pawn is not possible, while the queenside is locked. Petrosian once said:

“A good player should evaluate the position while taking into account seemingly minor nuances. A position on the board might seem quite ordinary. But something, somewhere is a bit off, and at times this something might prompt a decision that an average chess player would never consider. A deep understanding of the position is a sign of true

strength.”

18...dxc5 19.b3 b5

A natural desire to reactivate the queenside pawns at least a little.

20.axb5 Bxb5 21.Bd3

Using the fact that exchanging this bishop is not good for Black, White transfers it to c4, “cementing” the queenside.

21...Bd7 22.Nc3 Rb8

The immediate 22...f5 is better, since in the future Black will have to waste time defending the a5-pawn.

23.Bc4 Qb6 24.Ra1 f5 25.Rf2

The shortest route to transfer the second rook to the a-file.

25...Kh8 26.Rfa2 Ra8 27.Qd3

Here, it is difficult to say what Black should have done. Perhaps he should have tried to transfer the bishop to d6. After Gligorić’s exchange on e4, White’s advantage increases.

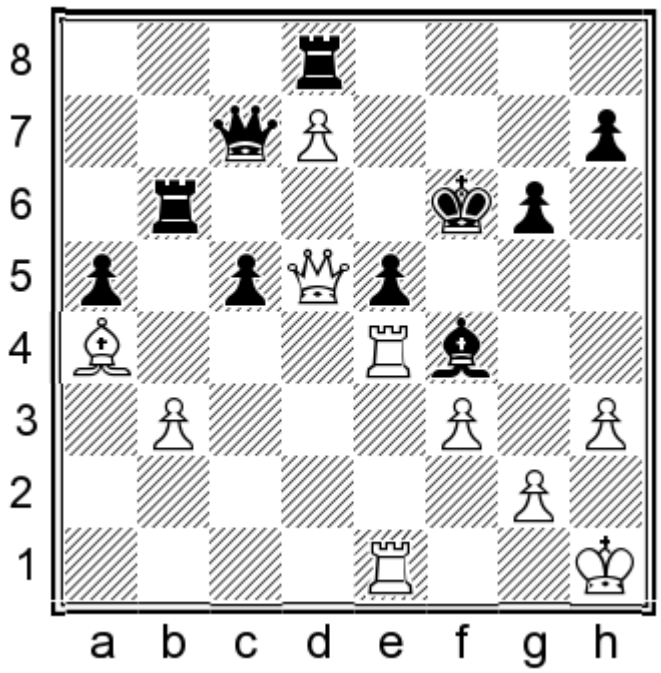
27...fxe4 28.Nxe4 Qb4 29.h3 Bh6 30.d6!

The passed pawn moves forward and Black’s position immediately deteriorates noticeably.

30...Bf5 31.Qd5 Bxe4

Trying to escape to an opposite-color bishop endgame does not bring relief. The h6-bishop aims down an empty diagonal, and no other piece can support its efforts: all of the black pieces are tied down to defense and have a negligible range of action.

32.Qxe4 Bf4 33.d7 Qb6 34.Rd1 Rad8 35.Qd5 Rf6 36.Re2 Qc7 37.Re4 Kg7 38.Bb5 Rb6 39.Ba4 Kf6 40.Rde1

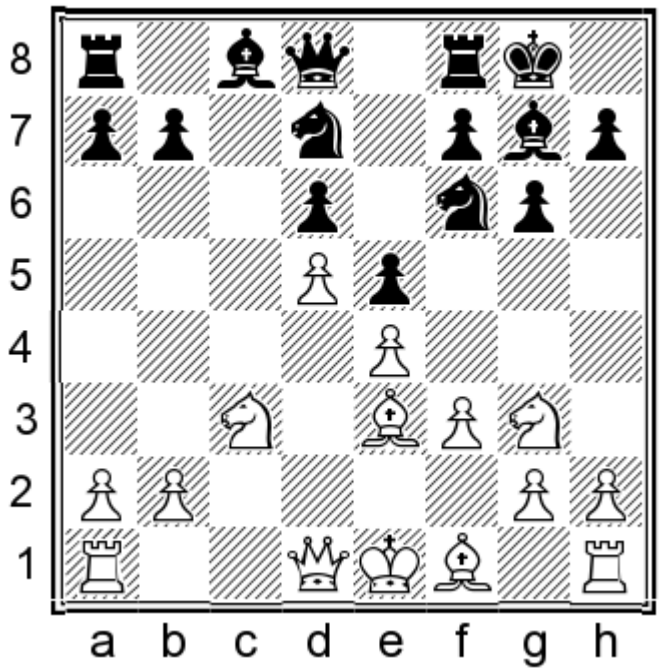


At this point, Gligorić’s flag dropped and he lost the game. 41.Rc4 looms. 40...Rd6? is bad because of 41.Rxf4+!.

Black has several possible replies: 40...Rb4, 40...Qd6, and 40...Bg3, but in any case, the powerful pawn on d7 defines White's decisive advantage.

(60) B3.6 **Petrosian – Gligorić**
Manila 1974

1.c4 g6 2.e4 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 e5 7.d5 c6 8.Nge2 cxd5 9.cxd5 Nbd7 10.Ng3



10...a6

More active is 10...Ne8 and ...f5, as Penrose played in game 58.

11.Be2 h5 12.Bg5 Qe8 13.Qc2 Nh7 14.Bd2 Qd8 15.Nf1 b5 16.Be3 f5 17.exf5 gxf5 18.Bf2

Curiously, now, if we place the white queen on d2 and the black rook on e8, we will have the position from game 49. There, it was White's move, so Gligorić has gained an extra tempo. But let us not jump to conclusions.

18...Ndf6 19.Ne3 e4?!

Astonishing carelessness from such an experienced King's Indian player as Gligorić. Did he seriously count on his defended passed pawn or did he not see any other way to save the f5-pawn? Meanwhile, Black could have saved it by maintaining the dynamic pair e5, f5: 19...Qe8! , with the idea of transferring the queen to g6 and further centralization in the spirit of the aforementioned game Petrosian-Geller. Capturing the pawn is dangerous for White because of 20.Nxf5 Bxf5 21.Qxf5 b4 and 22...Nxd5 with counterplay.

20.f4 Bd7 21.Qd2 Rc8 22.a3

It is already clear that Black is in a positional bind, and from this moment, the game acquires an instructional nature. Almost all of the white pieces are on the best squares, and, after some preparation, they begin to destroy the opponent's queenside, which has been weakened by the advance of the pawns. The blockading knight on e3 combined with the dark-square bishop and the united pawn brigade f4, g2, and h2, form a powerful obstacle for the black pieces.

22...Qe8 23.0-0 Qg6 24.h3 Rf7 25.a4!

The beginning of the end.

25...Bh6 26.Bh4 b4 27.Na2 a5 28.Nc1 Rg7 29.Bb5!

Occupying the b5-square with the bishop, White applies a well-known technique that can be used with black pawns on b4 and a5. After the forced exchange of this bishop, the a-file opens up and the rook enters the enemy camp.

29...Bxb5 30.axb5 Rc5 31.Rxa5 Rb7 32.Nb3 Rcxb5 33.Rxb5 Rxb5 34.Nd4

The fate of the f5-pawn is decided.

34...Rc5 35.Ndxf5 Bf8 36.Rc1

Intentionally allowing the following counterattack, which only accelerates Black's demise.

36...Nxd5

If 36...Rxc1+ 37.Qxc1 Nxd5?, then 38.Qc4, winning a piece.

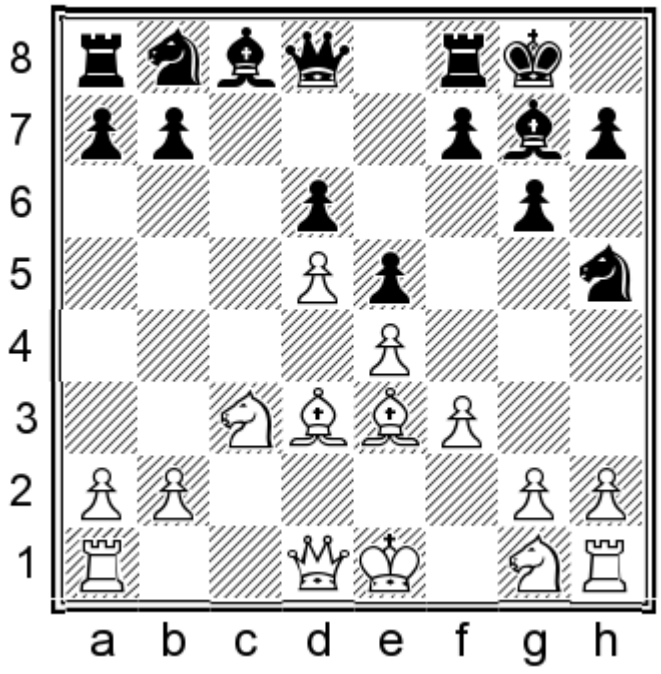
37.Rxc5 Nxe3 38.Rb5

Staying an exchange up (38...Nxf5 39.Qd5+).

38...Qe8 39.Qe2 Nxf5 40.Rxf5 Qe6 41.Rxh5 Bg7 42.Bf2 Qb3 43.Qd2 Nf6 44.Rg5 Qd3 45.Qc1 Kh7 46.Qc7 Black resigned.

(61) B3.7 **Petrosian – Gligorić**
Milan 1975

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 e5 7.d5 c6 8.Bd3 cxd5 9.cxd5 Nh5



In game 57, Gligorić continued 9...a6 and ...Nbd7, but later had trouble defending the f5- square and had to spend time on moving the a-pawn again. In this game, he followed theory and immediately leaped out with the knight. 9...Ne8 is often played, and for White, the best reply is 10.Qd2, preventing ...Bh6.

10.Nge2 f5 11.exf5 Bxf5

A dubious experiment. Apparently, Gligorić's decision was influenced by the heavy psychological burden of the previous games. The standard recapture with the pawn is best without a doubt.

12.0-0 Nd7 13.Ne4

The position after the opening is favorable for White: he gains a stable advantage after his pieces establish control of the e4-square.

13...Nf4 14.N2g3 Kh8 15.Bc2

Having a clear plan to strengthen his position, Petrosian, of course, wants to avoid complications. Even so, the aggressive variation suggested by Gligorić, 15.Nxf5 gxf5 16.Nxd6 Nxd5 17.Bf2, was advantageous for White.

15...Nb6

The weakness on d6, which Black had so far managed to defend by tactical means, now requires immediate defense.

16.Bb3 Rc8

Now and in the future, the plan of advancing the h-pawn deserves attention. Missing this opportunity, Black quickly perishes.

17.Qd2 Nc4 18.Bxc4 Rxc4 19.b3 Rc8 20.Rac1 Rxc1 21.Rxc1 Bh6

Looking for counterplay, Gligorić makes a superficial move and comes under a bothersome pin.

22.Kh1! a6 23.a4 Bg7 24.a5

Creating a "long" threat to win the pawn: 25.Bb6 Qd7 (or 25...Qb8 26.Bc7) 26.Rc7 Qb5 27.Nxd6 Qxd5 28.Qxd5 Nxd5 29.Rxb7. Black's position is so helpless that he could not find a way to avoid this variation.

24...Qd7 25.Bb6 Kg8

Since the rook invasion is impossible to prevent, Gligorić moves his king closer to the center, hoping that it might be useful in the endgame.

26.Rc7 Qb5 27.Nxd6 Qxd5 28.Qxd5+ Nxd5 29.Rxb7

Thus, White has an extra pawn; the rest is a simple matter of technique.

29...Bd3 30.h3 h5 31.Nge4 Bh6 32.h4 Bc1 33.Bc5 Nf6 34.Ng5

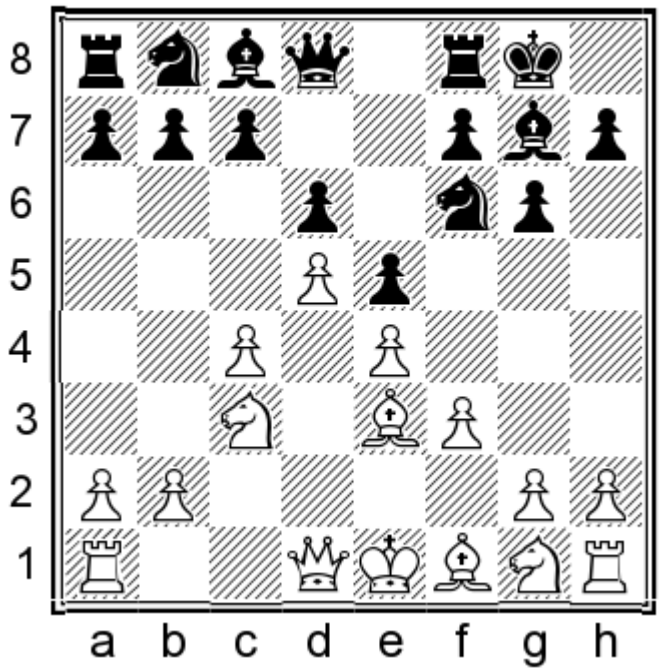
Using the threat of Ne6 to force the exchange of the dark-square bishop, which is the most valuable for the defense.

34...Bxg5 35.hxg5 Nd5 36.b4 Nc3 37.b5!

The final breakthrough. The a-pawn immediately decides the outcome of the game.

37...axb5 38.a6 Bc4 39.Nxc4 Black resigned.

B4



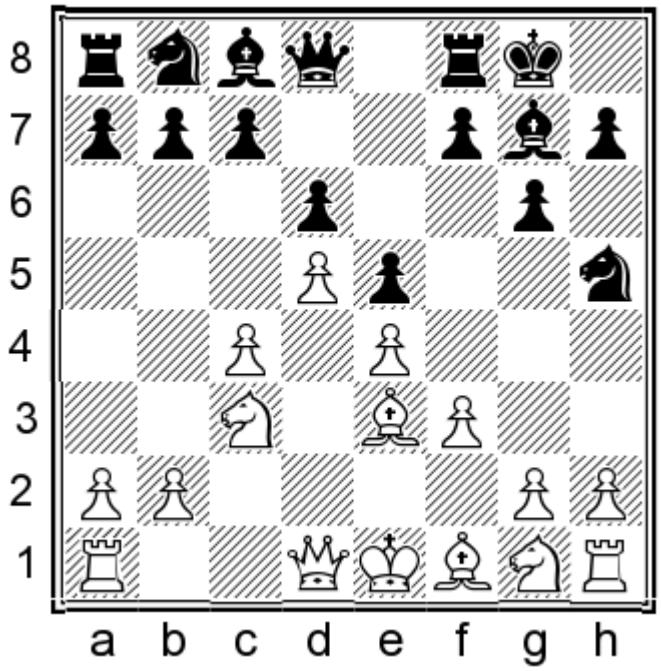
Black to move

In the early 1950s, Black usually played a fairly primitive version of the Sämisch System: he developed the queen's knight to c5, reinforced it with the a5-pawn, and already tried to seize the space on the kingside in the early stages via ...f5-f4. Below are several games in which Petrosian, playing as White, was able to demonstrate the inherent flaws of such a plan.

(62) B4.1 **Petrosian – Gligorić**
Candidates Tournament
Neuhausen/Zürich 1953

This game has been published so many times that the author, instead of annotating it himself, decided to use the winner's annotations as well as grandmaster Bronstein's, who was the eyewitness and, according to Petrosian, very clearly and accurately conveyed all of the intricacies of this complicated game. For the reader's convenience, the text belonging to David Bronstein is in italics, Petrosian's normal type.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 e5 7.d5 Nh5



This move is not obligatory either, but a lot of people seem to think that in the King's Indian the f-pawn must go to f5 as quickly as possible. I don't believe that's always true. The...f5 or...f5-f4 attack is good, provided it achieves some substantive end; if not, then it's better to postpone...f5 until it is most effective. For this reason, 7...Nbd7 and 7...a5 were not at all inferior to the text move.

8.Qd2 f5 9.0-0-0 f4

In this game, Black connects this move with the idea of transferring the bishop to h4 with the further advance of the g-pawn, neutralizing White's initiative on the kingside.

10.Bf2 Bf6 11.Nge2

Black threatened to exchange the bishops via 11...Bh4, which is beneficial for him because of the existing pawn structure.

11...Bh4 12.Bg1 g5

Black carries out his plan too directly, which gives White the opportunity to seize the initiative on the queenside. He should have prevented 13.c5 by playing 12...Na6 or 12...Nd7.

A new move: compare this with Geller-Gligorić, in which Black played 12...Nd7, and then pulled his bishop back to e7. Since Black had to endure a long and difficult defense in that game, Gligorić decides to waste no time opening the g-file for kingside counterplay. In reply, Petrosian exploits the knight's absence from d7 to break on the left flank.

13.c5 g4 14.Kb1 gxf3 15.gxf3 Na6

With part of the board blockaded, Black appears to be all set for the long haul after his...f5-f4. So there was no reason for haste here, either: the coolheaded 15...Kh8 would have forestalled White's next threat, and made possible the plan...Rg8,...Be7 ,...a5 etc.

16.c6

This energetic move secures White's advantage. If 16...b6, then 17.a3 followed by 18.b4 takes away all the black knight's squares, and the queen's bishop's as well; if 16...bxc6 17.dxc6, when the a2-g8 diagonal is opened, and White's pieces gain the d5-square, for example: 17...Qe8 18.Nc1 Qxc6? 19.Bb5 Qb7 20.Bxa6 Qxa6 21.Qd5+.

16...Nf6

A serious mistake leading to a decisive weakening of the queenside. Black should have played 16...bxc6 17.dxc6 Qe8, attacking the c6-pawn.

17.cxb7 Bxb7 18.Ng3

White decided on this move very quickly, easily establishing that after 18...fxg3 19.hxg3 Bxg3 20.Qg5+ Kh8 21.Qxg3 the black king's position becomes extremely unsafe.

Black does not want to let the knight come to f5. Therefore, 18...Bc8 suggests itself. Then, White hoped to win via 19.Bxa6 Bxa6 20.Nf5, with two threats, 21.Nxh4 and 21.Qg2+ (after 20...Nh5, decisive is 21.Qg2+ Kh8 22.Qg4).

A transparent sacrifice which only slows down the attack. White thinks that his threat of 19.Nf5 will force Black to enter the unfavorable line 18...fxg3 19.hxg3 Bxg3 20.Qg5+ Kh8 21.Qxg3. Gligorić's quiet reply, however, forces the knight to retreat and try a different route.

18...Bc8

If Black played 18...Bc8 anyway, White noticed that after 19.Bxa6 Bxa6 20.Nf5 Nh5, there is the simple reply 20...Ne8. After much thought, it was necessary to retreat the knight to e2 to begin activity on the queenside.

19.Nge2 Nc5

This allows White to dismember Black's pawn formation totally by trading his bishop for the knight, which leaves Black in a more or less lost position. Black might have exploited his opponent's loss of time with 19...Nd7, and only then ...Nc5 and ...a5.

20.Bxc5!

It is a pity to give away the important bishop. However, the calculation of concrete variations showed that Black cannot protect the c5-pawn.

20...dxc5 21.Nc1 Qe7 22.Nb3 Bd7

Directed against the threatened 23.Na4 and 24.Qc2. However, Petrosian now finds an original queen maneuver to win the c5-pawn.

23.Qg2+ Kh8 24.Qg1! Ne8

More stubborn is 24...Rab8, forcing 25.Qxc5 , as 25.Nxc5 is impossible because of 25...Rg8. After 25...Qxc5 26.Nxc5 Rb6, it would not be so easy for White to realize his material advantage.

25.Qxc5 Nd6 26.Rc1

Petrosian correctly declines the second pawn: after 26.Qxc7 Rfc8 27.Qa5 Bf2! Black would have some serious counter-chances.

26...Be8 27.Bh3 a5

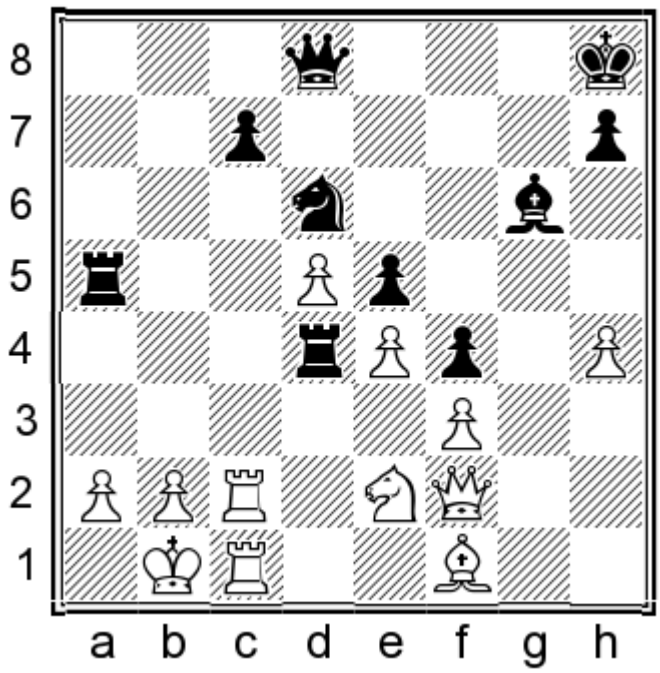
Black's only hope is an attack on White's king. So he gives up another pawn to open a line and remove one of the pieces covering the king.

28.Nxa5 Bf2 29.Qxf2 Rxa5 30.Rhg1 Bg6 31.Bf1 Rb8 32.Rc2 Nf7 33.h4 Nd6 34.Bd3 Rb4 35.Rgc1

White plays rather hesitantly in time-pressure (Rh1-g1-c1, Bh3-f1-d3-f1), which, while it does not let the win slip

away, still allows his opponent to improve the position of his pieces. The idea of transferring his rook to the fourth rank is very good, but it does not get carried through to its logical conclusion.

35...Rd4 36.Bf1 Qd8 37.Ne2?



White had a few minutes left until time control. In an effort to quickly make it to move 40, he makes a mistake that could have been costly.

37...Rda4?

It is surprising that such an experienced player as Svetozar Gligorić misses the possible blow 37...Rxe4. After all, even if the sacrifice is not sound, it still leads to complications where White would have to look for practical chances.

After 38.fxe4 Nxe4 39.Qe1 Qxd5, Black has a very strong attack. Over the board, both opponents missed the move 39...Qxd5.

During the past 15 moves Black has tried by every means available to complicate the game, but Petrosian's solid preventive measures have taken their toll: Gligorić loses faith, and just at the very moment when blind luck offers him an unexpected – I might even say unbelievable – opportunity to complicate, and mix things up. The idea of giving a rook for "only" two pawns with 37...Rxe4 seemed just too risky. But when one sacrifices, one does not count pawns, but rather accrued advantages and concrete variations.

Had Gligorić not lost heart, and found within himself the strength to sacrifice the rook, the continuation might have been very interesting; I am sure that Petrosian would have had reason to regret his carelessness.

First, some considerations of a general nature. After 38.fxe4 Nxe4, the only White reply that makes any sense is 39.Qe1, defending against the newly created threat of 39...Nd2+ 40.Ka1 Rxa2 41.Kxa2 Qa8 mate. Nor is this all: Black's queen now takes on d5 (39...Qxd5), and White's king is quite suddenly and quite obviously in a mating net.

For just one rook (of questionable usefulness), Black clears away all pawn obstructions in the center; along with the three pawns he gets as material compensation, he also obtains two diagonals, one file and a powerful knight in the very middle of the board. White's material advantage would probably have allowed him to save his king from direct threats, but finding the solution to this task would have presented him no small difficulties.

For those who enjoy complicated, pretty variations, we present a summary analysis, giving a good illustration of the possibilities for both sides in this head-breaking position. (In addition to the author's variations, we have made use here of those arising from the correspondence polemic between Soviet grandmaster Tigran Petrosian and the

Yugoslav master Vukovic, commentator for Sahovski Glasnik.

(1) 40.b3 Nd2+ 41.Kb2 Rxa2+ 42.Kxa2 Qxb3+ 43.Ka1 Qa3+, and mate next; or 41.Ka1 Nxb3+ 42.Kb2 Nxc1;

(2) 40.b4 Nd2+ 41.Ka1 Nb3+ 42.Kb1 Rxa2 43.Kxa2 (43.Nxf4 Nd2+ 44.Qxd2 Qb3 mate) 43...Nxc1 44.Ka1 Qa8+ 45.Kb1 Qa2+;

(3) 40.a3 Nd2+ 41.Ka1 Nb3+ 42.Kb1 Nxc1 43.Nxc1 (43.Kxc1 Bxc2 44.Kxc2 Qe4+ or 43.Qxc1 Qb3 44.Qd2 Rd5 45.Qc1 Qxc2+ 46.Qxc2 Rd1+) 43...Rc5 44.Bd3 Bxd3 45.Nxd3 Qxd3 46.Qe2 Qxe2 47.Rxe2 Kg7 48.b4 Rd5;

(4) 40.Qxa5 Qxa5 41.Ka1 f3 42.Nc3 Ng3 43.Rf2 e4.

Of course Gligorić could not calculate all of these variations through in time-pressure, and therefore was unable to bring himself to give up a rook on "spec." On the other hand, considering that Black ended up resigning the game four moves later, the rook doesn't appear to have been worth keeping.

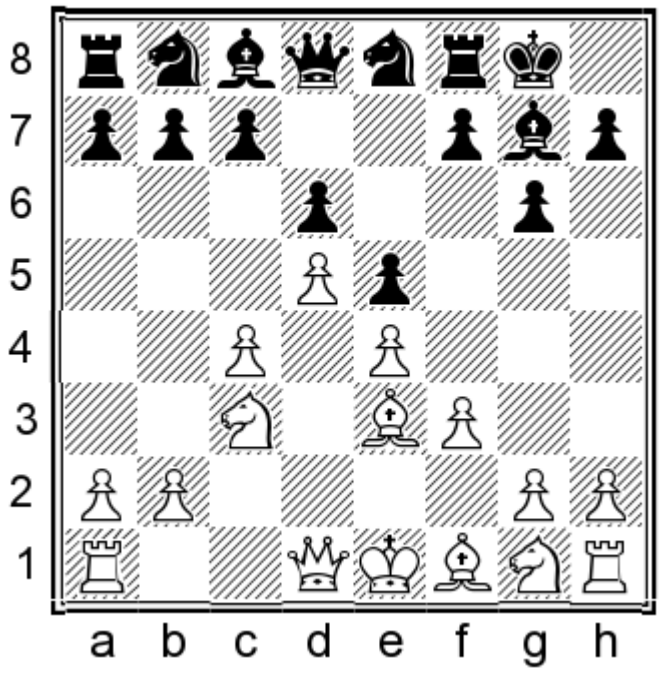
38.Nc3 Rd4 39.b3

Whether by intuition or by conscious choice, Petrosian is not about to allow Black to play something as tempting as...Rxe4 twice. In the game of chess as in life, opportunity knocks but once.

39...Qb8 40.h5 Bxh5 41.Qh4 Black resigned.

(63) B4.2 **Petrosian – Lokvenc**
Match USSR – Austria
Vienna 1953

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 e5 6.d5 0-0 7.Be3 Ne8



For 7...Nh5, see games 62 and 65.

8.Qd2 f5 9.0-0-0 f4

Crossing the middle of the board with the f-pawn, Black acquires the equivalent of the d5- pawn. At one point, Bronstein noted the features of this type of position. Here is what he wrote in his annotations to the game Kotov-Szabo in his book *Zürich International Chess Tournament, 1953*:

"Castling opposite sides generally presages pawn assaults against the opposing kings. An exception to this rule consists of the unusual positions arising out of the Sämisch King's Indian. Here both sides, after castling on opposite

wings, sometimes push the pawns in front of their own kings.”

Note that this time, unlike the previous game, the opponents are in no hurry to advance the pawns, waiting for a good opportunity and, if possible, impeding each other’s plans.

10.Bf2 Nd7 11.Kb1 Bf6 12.Nge2 Qe7 13.Nc1 Kg7 14.Nb3 b6

Preventing the unpleasant move 15.Na5, followed by b2-b4.

15.Nc1 Bh4 16.Bg1 a5 17.Bd3 Nc5 18.Bc2 Bd7 19.N1e2 Bg5 20.Nb5 h5

Deciding that the prophylactic stage of the game is over, Black makes a planned move and commits a serious inaccuracy. He should have immediately moved the queen from e7.

21.Bxc5!

Compromising the opponent’s queenside, White firmly seizes the initiative. Black is forced to take the bishop with the b-pawn (if 21...dxc5, then 22.Nxc7 Nxc7 23.d6), isolating the rook pawn. By the way, the same technique, exchanging the good bishop for a knight in order to weaken the opponent’s pawn structure, followed by transferring the other bishop to a4, was applied in the aforementioned game Kotov-Szabo in the Candidates Tournament in Zürich, which was attended by Petrosian.

21...bxc5 22.Ba4 Bh6 23.Nc1

Pulling the second knight closer to the a5-pawn.

23...Qd8 24.Nc3

24.Nb3 is useless because of 24...Qb8 (25.Nxa5? Qb6). But now Black can no longer avoid the exchange of his “good” bishop, since after 24...Bc8 25.Bc6 the fate of his queenside would be decided.

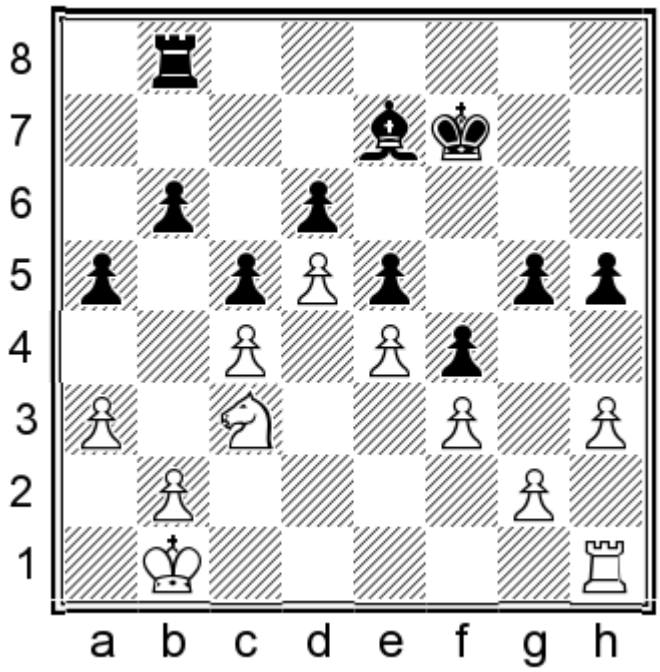
24...Bxa4 25.Nxa4 Nf6 26.Qc2 Nd7 27.Ne2 Bg5 28.Rd3 Rb8 29.a3 Nb6 30.Nxb6 Rxb6 31.Rb3

Petrosian does not see how to win outright, so he seeks to simplify the position, betting on the better endgame. At the same time, Lokvenc wants to exchange the rooks so that he can take on b6 with the pawn and support the a5-pawn, but White does not mind, because the group of the black pawns as a whole does not become stronger as a result.

31...Qd7 32.Nc3 Be7 33.Rxb6 cxb6 34.Qa4

Petrosian methodically exchanges all of the light-square pieces and now it is the queens’ turn.

34...Qxa4 35.Nxa4 Rb8 36.Nc3 g5 37.h3 Kf7



A standard endgame. White has two significant advantages: the knight dominates the bad bishop and the light squares are available to the king. However, it is not clear if all of this is enough to win because of the closed position and very limited opportunities to break through.

38.Kc2 Ke8 39.Kb3 Kd7 40.Ka4 Rg8 41.Kb5 Kc7 42.Na4 Bf6

With the help of the simple tactic 43.Nxb6? Rb8, Black manages to defend the b6-pawn while keeping the rook active, but fundamentally this does not change anything.

43.Rc1 Be7 44.Rc3 Bf6 45.Rb3 Rb8 46.Rd3 Be7 47.b3

A useful move in the event of the knight retreat from a4.

47...Rg8 48.Rd1 Ra8 49.Ra1 Bd8 50.Ra2 Kb7 51.Nc3

Concluding the final preparations for the breakthrough b3-b4.

51...Bc7 52.b4 axb4 53.axb4 Rg8

Logical. Having such a resource as ...g4, Black, of course, wants to keep the rook and place it behind the pawns. Meanwhile, after 53...Rxa2 54.Nxa2 cxb4! (the easiest) 55.Nxb4 Bd8, he could probably earn a draw. Suppose White is able to force ...h4 and transfer the knight to c6, forcing the bishop to move to f6. And what next? Black can simply ignore the clever sacrifice Na7!? by retreating the bishop to d8. The attempt to lose a tempo with the help of the “triangle” b4-a4-b5 is futile, because the black king has the triangle c7-c8-b7 which is just as good. It is unclear how White can break through.

It is unknown whether Petrosian knew about the possibility of a draw when he played b3-b4, but he had nothing better anyway.

54.Ka4 cxb4 55.Kxb4 Rg7 56.Ra1 Rg8 57.Kb5 Rg7 58.Na2 g4

Black moves the g-pawn when the knight is far away from the b5-square and cannot support the attacking rook after hxg4, Rh1, etc.

59.hxg4 hxg4 60.Nc3 gxf3 61.gxf3 Rg3

Despite some progress, Black is still not free of the danger of losing: his king and, especially, his bishop remain extremely passive.

62.Rf1 Rh3 63.Kb4 Rg3 64.Nb5 Bb8

The threat Rh1-h7 was looming.

65.Ka4 Rh3 66.Na3 Bc7 67.Nc2 Rg3 68.Nb4 Rh3 69.Kb5 Rh2

The rook is unanchored. Maybe Black worried about the possible activation of the knight: Nc6-e7-f5.

The double mistake that followed was apparently made by the opponents in time trouble.

70.Rg1 Rf2 71.Rg7 Rb2

“One good turn deserves another.” Both players did not see that White’s planned variation 71...Rxf3 72.Na6? Rb3+ 73.Ka4 can be refuted by the elegant retreat 73...Rg3!. After 71...Rxf3, Petrosian would sadly have to play 72.Rf7 and still prove that he has a draw.

72.Ka4 Rb1 73.Nc6

The Wheel of Fortune made a turn, and now White stands to win again.

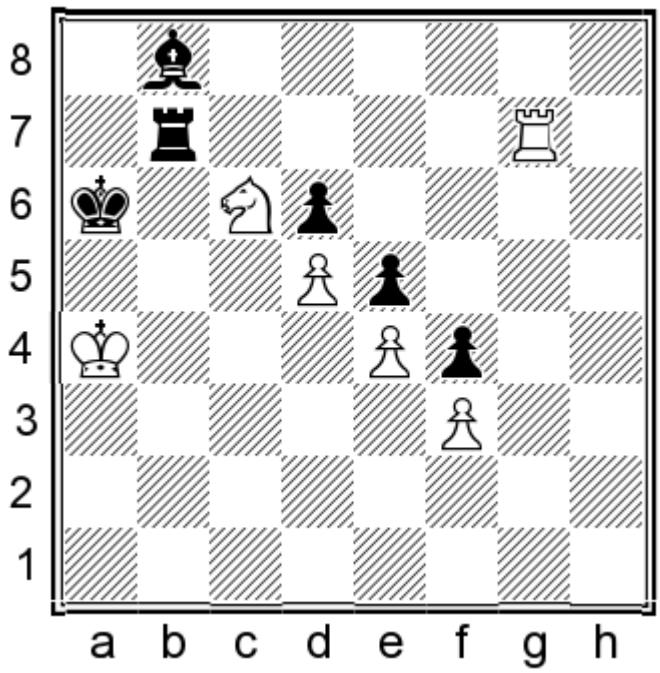
73...Ra1+ 74.Kb3 Rf1 75.Nd8+ Kc8 76.Ne6

The knight waves a club over the clumsy bishop. If 76...Rxf3+ 77.Kb4 Bb8, then 78.Kb5, with threats of 79.Kc6 and 79.Rg8+ Kb7 80.Nd8+.

76...Bb8 77.Ka4 Rb1 78.Rg8+ Kb7 79.Nd8+ Ka6 80.Rg7 b5+

The only way to save the bishop from the impending Nc6.

81.cxb5+ Rxb5 82.Nc6 Rb7



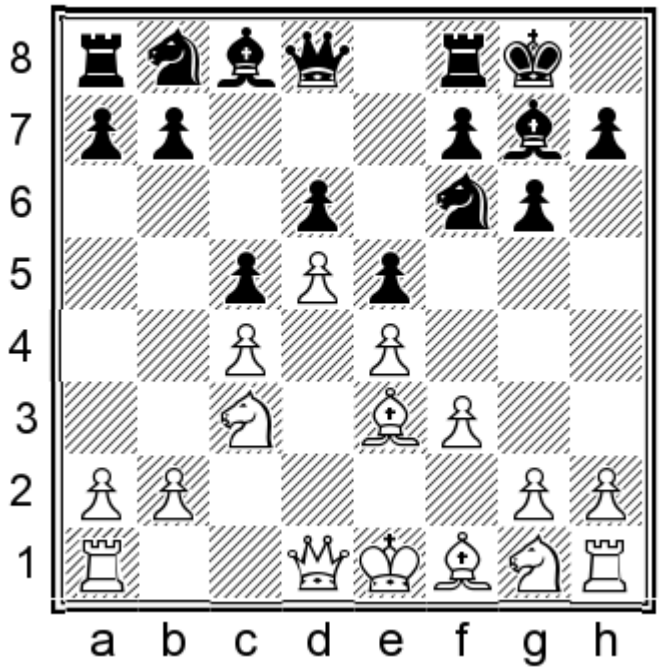
After 82...Rb1, easiest is 83.Rd7, transitioning to a rook endgame after Nxb8+ and Rxd6+.

In this position White was awarded a win. The continuation of the game could lead to a colorful finale: 83.Rg8 Bc7 84.Ra8+ Kb6 85.Kb4!, completely locking up the black pieces. After 83...Ba7, decisive is 84.Ra8, transitioning

into the pawn endgame.

(64) B4.3 **Petrosian – Belkadi**
Match USSR-France
Paris 1954

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 e5 7.d5 c5



Another round of confrontation of ideas in the Sämisch System, one which is worth elaborating on. Convinced of the deficiency of the concept of the early ...f5-f4, Black increasingly associated the advance of the f-pawn with activity in the center and on the queenside. The idea of the additional breakthroughs ...c6, ...b5 and aggressive setup of the knights on h5 and f6 appeared. For some time it helped Black achieve good positions until first and foremost as a result of Spassky's and Taimanov's efforts, White resurrected Alekhine's plan with exf5, g2-g4 and again tipped the scales in White's favor. It was then that Boleslavsky proposed the text continuation, which firmly controls the d4-square and prepares the sharp counter-strikes ...e4 and ...b5.

In one of the games of Petrosian's youth, Black tried to implement a similar idea by including the moves 7...Ne8 8.Qd2 f5 9.0-0-0 f4 10.Bf2 c5, but after 11.dxc6! bxc6 12.c5, he lost the d6-pawn. Here, however, capturing *en passan*t is dubious. For example, 8.dxc6 bxc6 9.Qd2 Qe7 10.c5?! d5! 11.exd5 Nxd5 12.Nxd5 cxd5 13.Qxd5 Bb7 14.Qd6 Qh4+ 15.g3 Qb4+ 16.Qd2 Nc6 17.Qxb4 Nxb4, and Black has a big advantage (Nei-Boleslavsky, Riga 1955).

8.g4

The most energetic response. Otherwise White is unlikely to get an opening advantage. For example:

(1) 8.Qd2 Nh5 9.0-0-0 f5 10.exf5 gxf5 11.Bd3 a6 12.Nge2 b5 13.Rdg1 bxc4 and, according to Boleslavsky's analysis, Black has sufficient counterplay;

(2) 8.Bd3 Nh5 9.Nge2 f5 10.exf5 gxf5 11.Qc2 e4!? 12.fxe4 f4! 13.Bf2 Nd7, and in the game Kotov-Gligorić (Zürich 1953) Black created a classic example of a blockading position in exchange for the sacrificed pawn.

8...Ne8

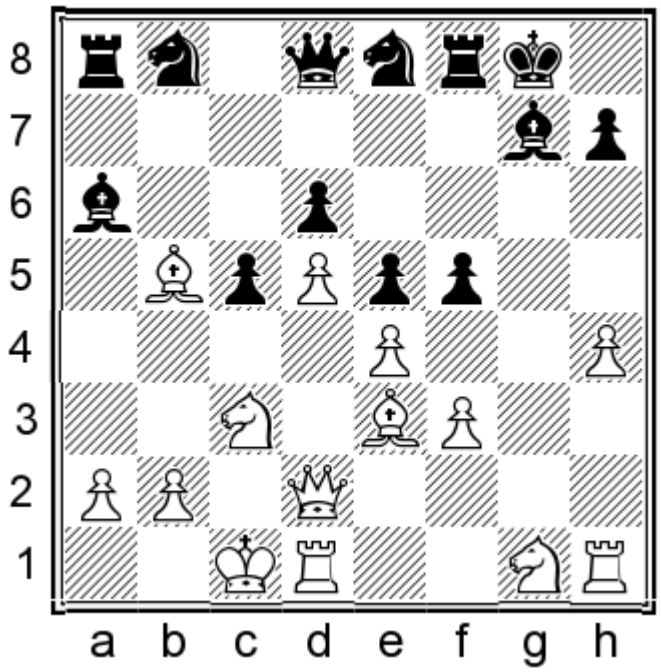
The attempt to provoke the obstructing move g4-g5 via 8...h5 is interesting but probably not enough here. In the old game Tal-Giorgadze (Tbilisi 1956), after 9.h3, Black unsuccessfully played 9...Na6 10.Qd2 Nh7 11.0-0-0 h4 12.f4! exf4 13.Bxf4 Nc7 14.Nf3, and White achieved a significant advantage. Among modern examples on this

theme, noteworthy is the game Chernin- Uhlmann (Dortmund 1991) where, after 8...h5 9.h3 Ne8 10.Qd2 Nd7 11.Bd3 a6 12.Nge2 Ndf6 13.Bg5 Qc7 14.Bh4 Kh7 15.0-0-0 Rh8 (better than 15...b5) 16.Rdf1 Kg8 17.Ng3, Black also failed to solve the defensive problems.

9.Qd2 f5 10.gxf5 gxf5 11.0-0-0 a6 12.h4 b5

Too reckless. 12...Bd7 or 12...f4 are more prudent.

13.cxb5 axb5 14.Bxb5 Ba6



15.Bxe8!

Well played! By eliminating the knight, which is important for defense, White quickly creates decisive threats. The a6-bishop has nothing left to do.

15...Qxe8 16.Bh6 Ra7 17.Nh3 Rf6 18.Rdg1 Bc8 19.Bg5 Rf8 20.h5 Kh8

After 20...Qxh5, the easiest win is 21.Nf4 Qe8 22.Qh2.

21.Nf2 Na6

More stubborn is 21...f4.

22.exf5 e4 23.f6! Bxf6 24.Bxf6+ Rxf6 25.Nfxe4 Black resigned.

(65) B4.4 **Petrosian – Milić**
Belgrade 1954

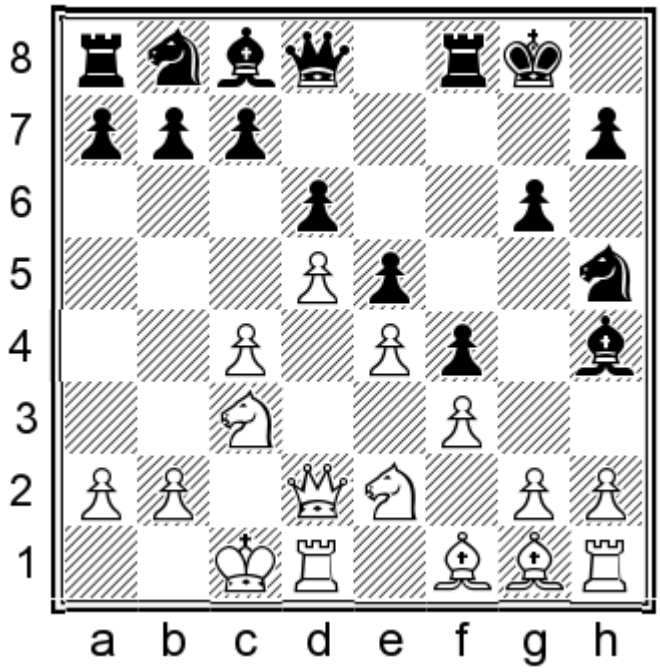
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 e5 7.d5 Nh5 8.Qd2 f5 9.0-0-0 f4

Milić takes the same thorny path as Gligorić did in game 62. For comparison, here is an example of the modern interpretation of this variation: 9...Nd7 10.Bd3 Nc5 11.Bc2 a6 12.Nge2 b5 13.b4 Nd7 with complications that are quite advantageous for Black (Timman-Kasparov, Linares 1992).

10.Bf2 Bf6 11.Nge2 Bh4

The possibility of this move is based on a tactical subtlety: 12.g3 fxg3 13.hxg3 Rxf3!.

12.Bg1



12...b6

Gligorić played 12...g5 and ran into difficulties after 13.c5. Therefore Milić starts to prepare fortifications on the queenside in advance.

13.Kb1 a5 14.Nc1 Na6 15.Bd3 Bd7 16.Rf1

Petrosian adds a bit of cunning to a good plan. Moving the rook from d1 to f1, he wants to convince the opponent that he plans to attack on the kingside. In reality, White is waiting for a chance to exchange on c5.

16...Qe7 17.Bc2

Threatening Ba4.

17...Nc5 18.Bxc5! bxc5

Probably, 18...dxc5 was not any better because the knight is far from the d6-square, and Black risked collapsing in the center.

Now the position is extremely similar to game 65, and Petrosian confidently follows the beaten track.

19.Ba4 Bxa4 20.Nxa4 Rfb8 21.a3 Nf6 22.Ne2 Nd7 23.Qc2 Nb6 24.Nxb6 Rxb6

Hoping to use the b-file, which never happens. Therefore better is 24...cxb6, as Lokvenc had defended a similar position.

25.Nc3 Qd7 26.Nb5 a4?

A mistake. Now White inevitably creates a passed a-pawn, which is difficult to deal with.

27.Ka2 Rbb8 28.Rb1 Ra6 29.Rhd1 Rba8 30.Rd3 Kg7 31.b4 axb3+ 32.Rdxb3 Ra4 33.Qe2

Starting with this move, with steely resolution, Petrosian paves the way for the passed pawn to the prized a8-square.

33...h5 34.Nc3 R4a5 35.Kb2

Moving the king out of the danger zone to avoid tactical chances such as 35.a4? Rxa4+!.

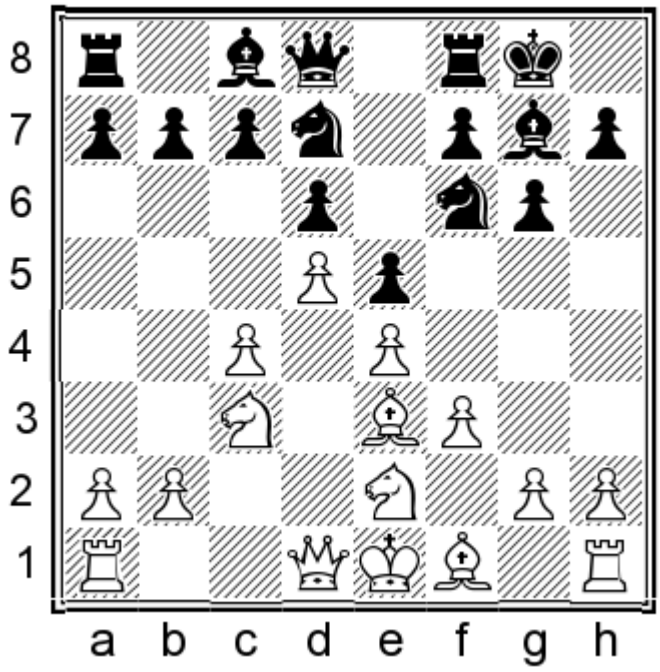
35...Qc8 36.Ra1 Qa6 37.Kc2 Bd8 38.Kd3 Qc8 39.Qb2 R5a6 40.Rb1 Rb6 41.Rb5 Qd7 42.a4 Qe7 43.Ra1 Rab8

43...Rba6 is a bit more stubborn.

44.a5 Rxb5 45.Nxb5! Kh6 46.a6 Qh4 47.a7 Ra8 48.Nc3 c6 49.Qb8 cxd5 50.Qxa8 d4 Black resigned.

(66) B4.5 **Petrosian – Kluger**
Match USSR – Hungary
Budapest 1955

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 e5 6.Be3 0-0 7.Nge2 Nbd7 8.d5



Now it is clear that Black's seventh move was inaccurate. White threatens to advance the pawn to g4, whereas Black has lost his two main tools for counterplay: the moves ...c6 and ...Nh5. This explains the Hungarian master's somewhat unusual reply.

8...Nb6 9.Ng3

After 9.b3, Black would certainly have played 9...Nh5 with the idea of meeting 10.g4?! with 10...Nf4!.

9...Ne8 10.Bd3 f5 11.Bf2 f4 12.Nge2 Qe7 13.b4 Nd7 14.a3

Preserving the stability of the pawn structure in the event of the breakthrough ...a5.

14...Ndf6 15.Kd2

Typical of Petrosian, who was always concerned with the safety and harmony of his positions. White's rooks are now connected, and the king is much more comfortable in the center of the board than on either of the flanks.

15...g5 16.h3 h5 17.Qg1

White's position is so good that he decides to play actively on the opponent's flank and, if possible, eliminate Black's main counterplay with...g4.

17...a6 18.g4 fxg3 19.Qxg3 Nh7 20.Be3 h4 21.Qg2 Kh8 22.Rhf1 Bh6 23.c5 Bd7 24.a4

Petrosian was almost right: Black's piece play on the kingside has nothing on White's broad pawn advance on the other side of the board. The reader will understand later why "almost."

24...Nef6 25.Ng1 Nh5 26.Rfb1 Nf4 27.Qh2 Nf6 28.Bf1 N6h5 29.Nd1

White does not immediately find the right plan. On the 26th move, he should have placed the rook on c1. Also, the last move was not quite successful, and soon the knight returns to its previous square.

29...Qe8 30.a5 Ng3

Black should have taken advantage of his opponent's hesitancy to sharpen the game: 30...c6!?.

31.Nc3 Qc8 32.Rc1 Qe8?!

Black does not discern the importance of the moment. For better or for worse, he should have taken the pawn: 32...Nxf1+ 33.Rxf1 Nxh3.

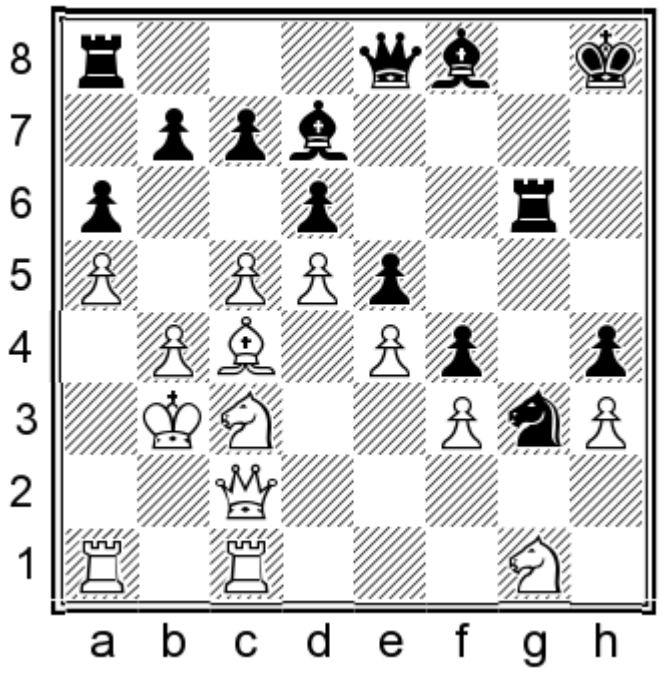
33.Bc4 Bg7 34.Kc2 Rf6 35.Kb3 Bf8 36.Qc2

Having left the kingside in the care of the knight, Petrosian throws the rest of his forces into preparing and executing a breakthrough.

36...Rg6

36...Nxh3 37.Nxh3 Bxh3 did not work because of 38.Bxg5 Rxf3 39.Bxh4.

37.Bxf4 gxf4



38.c6!

The beginning of the breakthrough. The pawn sacrifice allows White to exchange the light-square bishops and, having cleared the pawn barrier, invade the enemy's camp.

38...bxc6 39.dxc6 Bxc6 40.Bd5

Occupying the d5-square and keeping an eye on the c6-square, where the white queen will soon set up camp.

40...Rg7?!

40...Bxd5+ 41.Nxd5 c5 was stronger.

41.Bxc6 Qxc6 42.Nd5 Qb7 43.Qc6 Qb8

The losing move. 43...Qa7 is more stubborn, for example: 44.Nxc7 Rc8 45.Qxa6 Rcxc7 46.Qxa7 Rxa7 47.a6! (47.Rc8?! Kg8 48.a6 Rg6 49.b5 d5 50.Rb8 dxe4 51.b6 Rxb6+ 52.Rxb6 Bc5 53.Rb7 Bxg1 54.Rc1 Ra8 55.Rcc7 is weaker, because White has no more than a draw.) 47...d5 48.b5 Rg6 49.exd5 Nf5 50.Rc6! Nd4+ 51.Kc4 Nxc6 52.dxc6, and the powerful pawn trio gives White winning chances.

44.b5!

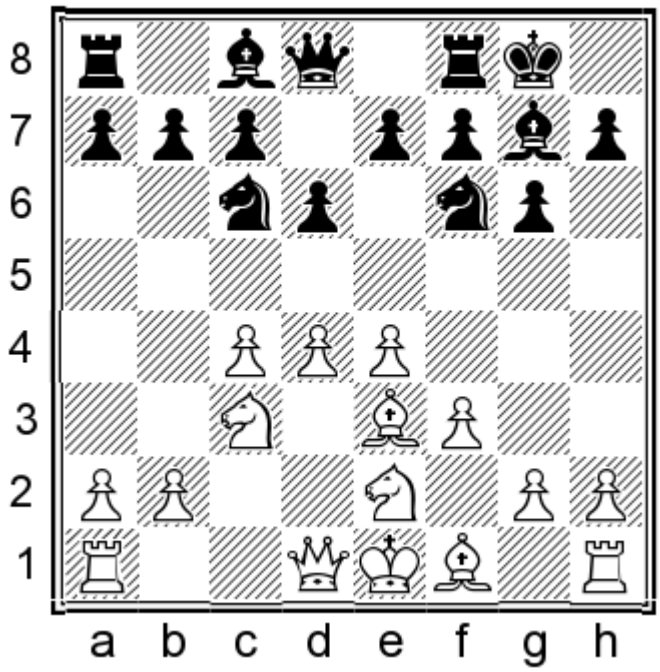
Creating a strong passed pawn on the a-file, which decides the outcome of the game.

44...axb5 45.Nxc7 Ra7 46.Nd5 Raf7 47.a6

Sooner or later, the a-pawn will become a queen. The black b-pawn shields the white king from frontal checks.

47...Nh5 48.Qb6 Qxb6 49.Nxb6 Ra7 50.Rc8 Kg8 51.Ne2 Nf6 52.Nc3 Rg3 53.Nxb5 Rxf3+ 54.Kc4 Black resigned.

B5

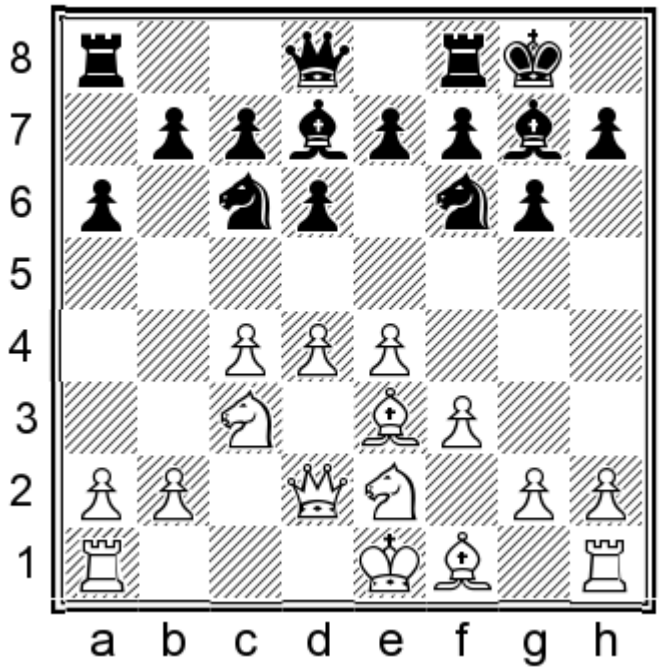


Black to move

The idea of the impact of piece play on the center has always attracted the attention of the supporters of King's Indian setups. In the Sämisch System, this method was truly studied after the *Black to move* second game of the match Botvinnik-Smyslov (Moscow, 1958), in which Black attempted to combine piece pressure on the d4-pawn with the preparation of the flank counterattack ...b5. Although sooner or later Black will still have to play ...e5, he wins a few tempi and significantly restricts White's choice of plans.

(67) B5.1 **Petrosian – Taimanov**
28th USSR Championship
Moscow 1961

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 Nc6 7.Qd2 Bd7 8.Nge2 a6



The preparation of ...b5 in this system is often only for show, while the real goal is to force White to play Nc1, weakening the defense of the d4-square. Usually ...a6 is combined with the move ...Rab8, as, say, in games 48, 50, and 52. Taimanov keeps the rook where it is, hoping that it might come in handy on the a-file. In case of 9.0-0-0, this hope could become a reality: 9...e5 10.g4 b5!, and it is not beneficial for White take twice on b5, as the a2-pawn is left hanging. At one time, Petrosian studied this position and pointed out that in the sharp variation 11.d5 Na5 12.Ng3, Black should capture on c4. The risky 12...b4 13.Nb1 Ba4, with the idea of countering 14.Re1 (14.b3?! Bxb3) with 14...Rb8, threatening ...Bb3, meets a positional rebuttal: 14.Qxb4! Bxd1 15.Kxd1 and Black is worse despite being up an exchange.

9.Nc1 e5 10.Nb3

After 10.d5 the black knight would, of course, go forward, not back: 10...Nd4!.

10...exd4 11.Nxd4 Qb8

An interesting plan, but not the best. 11...Nh5, with ideas in the spirit of the game Petrosian-Fischer (game 69), is noteworthy. For example, 12.Be2 Bxd4 13.Bxd4 Nf4, with simplifications that are desirable for Black; and if 12.Nxc6 bxc6 13.Be2, then 13...Rb8 with good counterplay.

12.Be2 b5 13.Nxc6 Bxc6 14.Nd5! Bd7

Later, playing against Simagin (Moscow 1964), Taimanov made an attempt to improve Black's play but did not achieve equality: 14...Re8 15.Bd4 Bxd5!? 16.cxd5 Nd7 17.Bf2! b4 18.0-0 Nc5 19.Rac1.

15.Bd4 Qd8

As if in recognition that Black's 11th move was inaccurate.

16.0-0 bxc4 17.Bxc4 Bb5

Striving to relieve White's pressure by trading pieces.

18.Rfc1 Bxc4 19.Bxf6!

An unpleasant surprise for Taimanov, who was probably hoping for 19.Rxc4 Nxd5 20.exd5 (if 20.Bxg7, then 20...Nb6) 20...Bxd4+ and 21...Re8, with chances on the e-file.

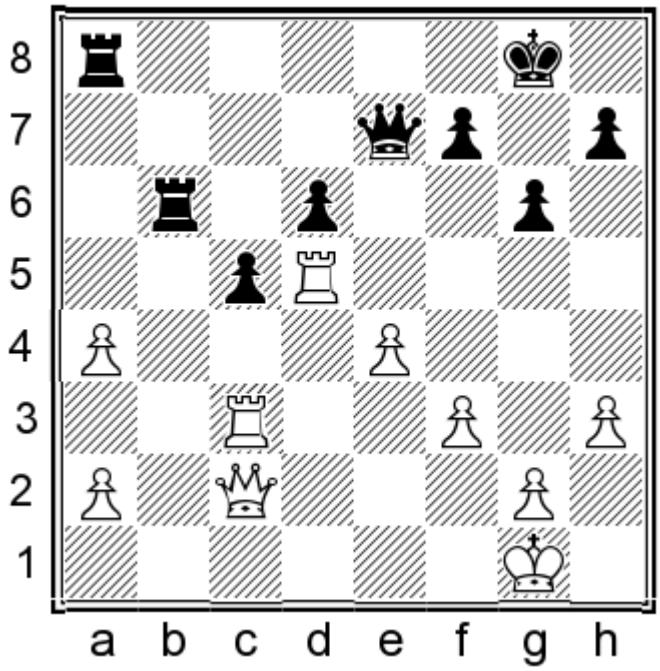
19...Bxf6 20.Rxc4 Rb8 21.Rb1 c5 22.Nxf6+ Qxf6

Given the well-known drawing tendencies associated with heavy pieces, starting with perpetual check and ending with endgames down a pawn on one flank, it is clear that winning such an endgame against a grandmaster is no easy task. How many such games ended in draws because of inaccurate play! But Petrosian conducts the endgame with a firm grip. He eliminates Black's counter-chances on the b-file, then transfers the rook to d5, combining pressure on the a- and d-pawns with the threat of the break e4-e5.

23.b3 Rb6 24.Rd1 Qe5 25.Rc3 Rc8 26.Qc2 a5 27.Rd5 Qe7 28.h3 a4

Taimanov, with his creative nature, always hated passive defense without counterplay and he decided to sacrifice a pawn for activity. It is difficult to say whether Black's position is still defensible, but 28...Rb4, as recommended by many commentators, led to the loss of a pawn without any compensation after 29.Qd2 Rc6 30.Rcd3. Relatively better was 28...f6.

29.bxa4 Ra8



Just like in checkers: having given up a pawn, White then captures two.

30.e5 dxe5 31.Rcxc5 Qh4?

More stubborn was 31...Re6. Instead Taimanov throws himself into a desperate counterattack. The several checks that Black can now give are not dangerous.

32.a5 Qe1+ 33.Kh2 Rb1 34.Rxe5 Qg1+ 35.Kg3 h5 36.h4 Rb4 37.Rc8+ Rxc8 38.Qxc8+ Kg7 39.Qc3 Qd4 40.Qxd4 Rxd4 41.Re4

The finishing touch: placing the rook behind the passed pawn, White wins automatically.

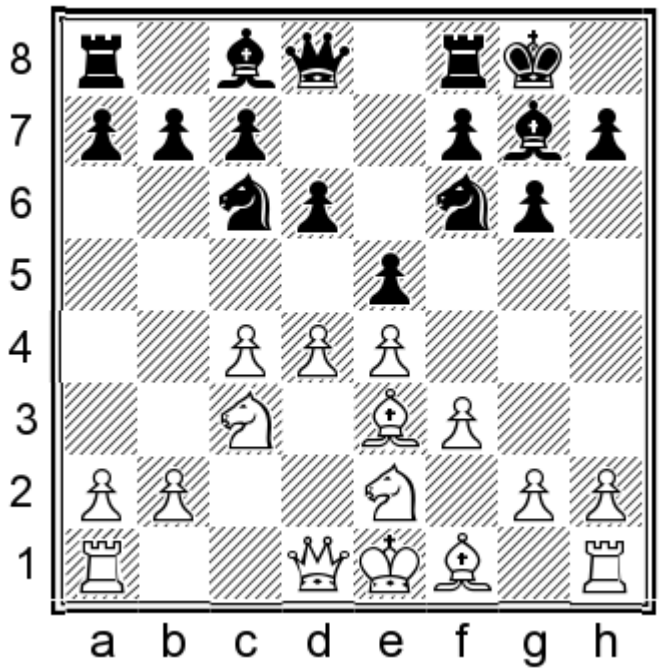
41...Rd6 42.Ra4 Ra6 43.Kf4 Kf8 44.g3 f6 45.Ke4 Ke7 46.Kd5 Kd7 47.Kc5 Kc7 48.Kb5 Re6 49.Rc4+ Kb7 50.a6+ Black resigned.

(68) B5.2 **Petrosian – Bertok**
Bled 1961

Having chosen a difficult opening variation, Mario Bertok subsequently demonstrated amazing resourcefulness, holding off White's alternating attacks on both flanks, but it was impossible for him to save the hopeless endgame.

The game is very instructive as an example of consistently using a space advantage and techniques of limiting the opponent's mobility in the King's Indian Defense.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d6 3.Nc3 g6 4.e4 Bg7 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 e5 7.Nge2 Nc6



With this move order, White cannot hold the pawn on d4 for long, but one can suppose that Petrosian advanced it with great pleasure, as there is no good retreat of the c6-knight.

8.d5 Ne7

If White keeps the central e4-pawn, the knight on e7 will be severely limited in its actions. The move f2-f3 happens to be very useful here. It is no wonder that the variation chosen by Black has a bad reputation. Perhaps Black should have moved the knight to a5, as Ozanić (game 95) and Szekely (see the second part) did in similar situations.

9.g4 c5 10.h4 Nd7 11.Ng3 Re8

Freeing the f8-square for the knight, Black prepares to erect a defensive perimeter. The "active" 11...f5 would have been insane in this situation in view of the reply 12.gxf5 gxf5 13.Nh5.

12.Bd3 a6 13.h5 Nf8 14.Qd2 Bd7 15.a4 Nc8 16.Kf2

White has a clear advantage. All of Black's pieces are huddled inside the cramped space behind the pawn chain, while White, who has full freedom to maneuver, can conduct operations on any of the wings. The choice of plan to convert the advantage is a matter of taste: for example, exchanging on g6 followed by a concentration of the heavy pieces on the h-file looks strong. White, however, would then have to seriously consider the move ...b5 for Black (by the way, this is why Black does not play ...a5). Unwilling to give the opponent even such putative chances, Petrosian prefers to close play around the king and break through on the opposite flank, while preventing ...f5 (which is also much easier to do).

16...f6 17.a5

Now the breakthrough b2-b4 is on the agenda.

17...Re7 18.Rhb1 Be8 19.h6

Forcing the bishop into the corner square, White then strikes down on the queenside with all of his forces, but Bertok proves that here, too, his line of defense is strong enough.

19...Bh8 20.Na4 Rc7 21.b4

Forcing the exchange of Black's most capable piece.

21...Bxa4 22.Rxa4 Nd7 23.b5

Taking on c5 is illogical, since after 23.bxc5 Nxc5 24.Bxc5 dxc5, Black's knight will occupy the blockading square d6 and at the same time protect the b7-pawn.

23...Nf8

The natural retreat to b8, in order to respond to 24.bxa6 by taking with the knight and, if possible, playing ...Nb4, would be refuted instructively. White would not immediately exchange on a6. Instead, he would leave the bishop in charge of defending the a5-pawn, triple the heavy pieces on the b-file, forcing Black to keep both rooks and the queen on the seventh rank. After that, White would transfer the bishop to h3 and the king to g2 and play g4-g5. The response ...f5 is not possible, the c8-knight has nowhere to go, and Black would have to return the queen to the eighth rank. It is at this point that bxa6 would follow, and then White would take on b7 (indicated by Lev Abramov).

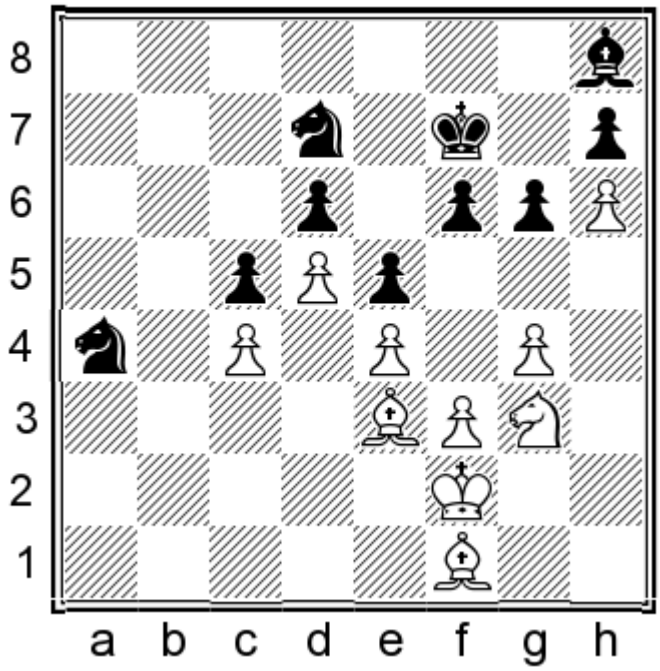
24.Ra2 Rf7 25.Rab2 axb5 26.Rxb5 b6!?

A clever resource, with the help of which Black manages to get rid of the unpleasant weakness on b7 and forces exchanges.

27.axb6 Rb7 28.Bf1 Rxb6 29.Rxb6 Nxb6 30.Qb2 Na4 31.Qc1 Nd7 32.Ra1 Nab6 33.Rxa8 Qxa8 34.Qc2 Kf7 35.Ne2 Qa4

Without waiting for White to transfer the knight to b5 and force a queen trade from a position of strength via Bd2, Qc3-a5, Black offers this exchange himself and gains the opportunity to temporarily activate his knights.

36.Qxa4 Nxa4 37.Ng3



The game has entered the final stage, which is perhaps the most interesting one. White's advantage has not decreased one bit: it has transformed and become, perhaps, even more stable. The exchanges have not eased Black's struggles, since with fewer pieces the absence of the trapped h8-bishop becomes more noticeable in the game. With his last move, White sends a "guard" for the h6-pawn in case of ...g5 and ...Kg6. Petrosian's subsequent plan is typical for such positions and consists of sending Black's knights back and preparing the decisive penetration of the king into the enemy camp.

37...Ndb6 38.Bc1

Deflecting the fleeting threat of ...Nb2.

38...Nc3 39.Ke1

The king begins its triumphal march to the queenside, at the same time expelling the intruders.

39...Ke7 40.Kd2 Nca4 41.Kc2 Nc8

Black could not allow the move 42.Kb3, paralyzing his knights. Then White would get the opportunity to gradually surround and win the a4-knight via Bd2, Bd3-c2, Nf1-e3, Kb3-a3.

42.Kb3 Nab6 43.Bh3 Kd7 44.Bd2 Ne7 45.g5+ Ke8

If 45...Kc7, then 46.Be6, after which the white knight can move either to g4 or to the king's aid.

46.Ba5 Nec8

White has a final task remaining: to carry out the exchange on c8 without losing the h6-pawn. At the moment, this exchange is still premature. For example, 47.Bxc8 Nxc8 48.Ka4 fxg5 49.Kb5 Kd7 50.Bd2 Bf6 51.Nh1 Ne7 52.Nf2 Ng8 and White is not in time to play 53.Nh3, while after 53.Ng4 Bd8 he cannot make progress. Therefore, Petrosian first transfers the knight to h3.

47.Nh1 fxg5 48.Nf2 Bf6

Finally, the bishop, which was locked up for 28 moves, walks free, but now White has everything prepared for decisive actions.

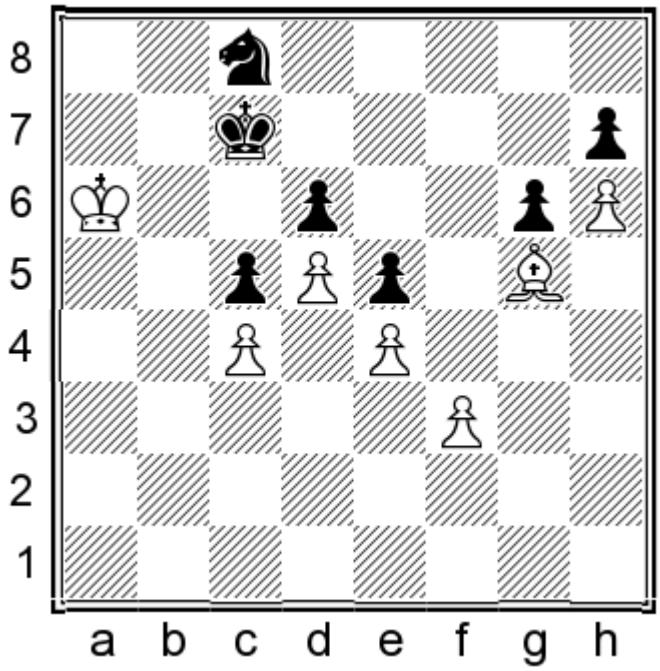
49.Bg4 Bd8

If 49...Be7, then 50.Bd2, preventing attacks on the h6-pawn.

50.Nh3 Bf6 51.Bd2 Ne7 52.Nxg5 Bxg5 53.Bxg5 Kf7 54.Bd2

Showing that Black's hopes for ...Kf6 and ...g5 are nothing more than an illusion, for example: 54...Kf6 55.Ba5 Nec8 56.Bxc8 Nxc8 57.Bd8+, and the king has to retreat.

54...Nec8 55.Bxc8 Nxc8 56.Bg5 Nb6 57.Bd8 Nc8 58.Ka4 Ke8 59.Bg5 Kd7 60.Kb5 Kc7 61.Ka6



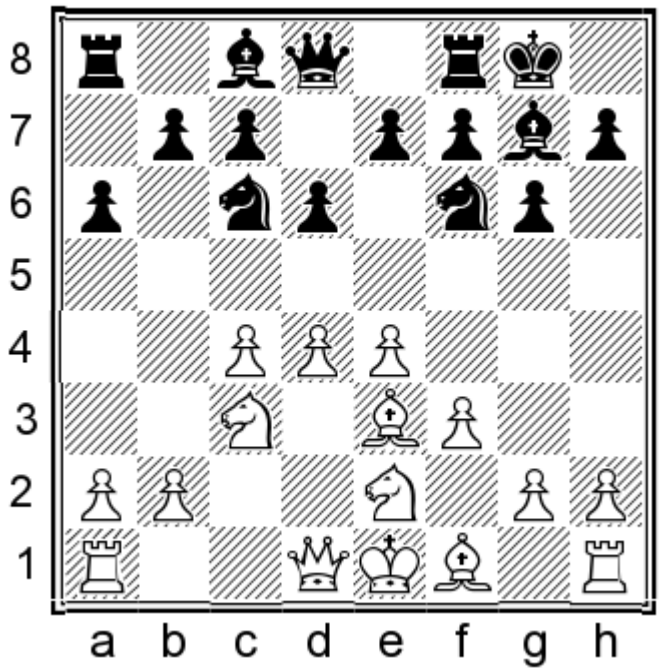
White's "constricting" strategy has ended in a thematic zugzwang position. If now 61...Kb8, then 62.Bd8 and 63.Bc7. It is noteworthy that the knight that remains on the board is the one that once retreated to e7.

61...Nb6 62.Bd8+!

Black resigned in view of 62...Kxd8 63.Kxb6 Kd7 64.Kb7 and so on.

(69) B5.3 **Petrosian – Fischer**
Candidates Tournament
Curaçao 1962

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Nge2 Nc6 7.Be3 a6



8.Qd2

The most common reply. For the continuations 8.a3 and 8.Nc1 see games 70 and 75.

8...Rb8 9.Nc1

In this specific position, Petrosian did not want the attacking continuation connected with the moves 9.h4 b5 or 9.Bh6 b5, considering such play to be unnecessarily cavalier and especially inappropriate against Fischer.

9...e5 10.Nb3 exd4 11.Nxd4 Bd7

A somewhat vague idea, given that Fischer is not going to advance ...b5 and will take with the pawn in case of an exchange on c6.

In the late 1970s, Black achieved good results with the continuation 11...Ne5 with the idea of using the classic mechanism of attacking the center via ...c5 and ...Be6. For example, in the famous game Beliavsky-Gufeld (Moscow 1979), after 12.Be2 c5 13.Nc2 Be6 14.b3? Qa5 15.0-0 b5, Black achieved everything that a King's Indian player can only dream of. Analyzing this game in class at his school, Petrosian pointed out the mistake that Beliavsky made, 14.b3?, and advised students to carefully study the move 14.Na3. That same year he tested this move in a clock simul: 14...Qc7 15.0-0 Rfd8 16.Bg5 Nc6 17.f4 Qc8 18.Bd3 h6 19.Bh4 Bd7 20.Nd5 Nxd5 21.cxd5 Nb4 22.Bxd8 Qxd8 23.Be2 b5 24.Nb1 a5 25.Nc3 c4 26.a4, and White won.

12.Be2 Nh5

With the threats ...Nf4 and ...Be5 and ...Qh4. If 13.Nc2, then 13...f5. Thanks to grandmaster Igor Glek, today this idea has a prominent place in the classical variation: 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 exd4 8.Nxd4 Re8 9.f3, and now both 9...Nc6 10.Be3 Nh5 and the immediate 9...Nh5 are possible.

13.Nxc6 bxc6 14.0-0 c5

This is necessary because of the threat c4-c5.

15.Rab1 Bc6 16.Nd5

White's advantage is defined by his somewhat better pawn structure. Later Petrosian wants to force an exchange on d5, take with the e-pawn, and, using the immobility of the black rooks, occupy the central file.

16...a5 17.b3 Ra8 18.Rfe1

Now and in the future, the move Bg5, hindering the knight's return into the game and the exchange maneuver ...Nf6xd5, deserved attention.

18...Re8 19.a4 Qd7 20.Bd3 Nf6 21.Bg5 Nxd5 22.exd5 Bb7 23.Rxe8+ Qxe8 24.Re1 Qf8

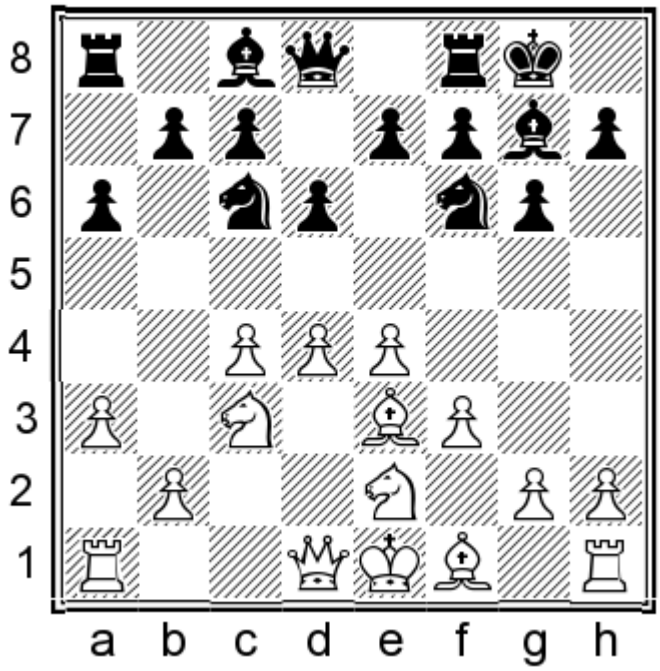
With precise maneuvering, Fischer managed to neutralize White's "small" initiative. Now 25.Re7 would be a mistake because of 25...f6.

25.h4 h6 Draw.

A skillful game, although without much excitement.

(70) B5.4 **Petrosian – Domnitz**
XVI Olympiad
Tel-Aviv,1964

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Nge2 a6 7.Be3 Nc6 8.a3



Playing against an inexperienced opponent, Petrosian chooses a rare continuation connected with an early pawn advance on the queenside.

8...Bd7 9.b4

The white pawns significantly restrict the black knights, and although Black's advantage in development is obvious, it is difficult to use because Black does not have direct ways to open the position.

9...b5

Unexpected and bold, but, it seems, not quite sound. This pawn sacrifice is not necessary, because the "normal" continuations recommended by theory, 9...Qb8 or 9...Re8, promise Black satisfactory play.

10.cxb5 axb5 11.d5 Ne5 12.Nd4 c6 13.dxc6 Nxc6 14.Ndxb5

Over the board, it is not easy to decide what the best way for White to capture the pawn is. Later Isaak Boleslavsky discovered that 14.Bxb5 was even more convincing, for example: 14...Ne5 15.0-0 Qb8 16.Qe2 Rc8 17.Rfc1, with a clear advantage for White.

14...Qb8 15.Be2 Rc8 16.Rc1 Ne5 17.0-0 Nc4 18.Bxc4 Rxc4

With the bishop pair, Black has real compensation for the pawn: it is hard to see how White can untangle his pieces on the queenside.

19.Qd3 Rc8 20.a4 Qb7 21.Bd4 Be6 22.Qb1 Rc4 23.Kh1 Rac8 24.Rfd1 h5 25.Ne2 Bd7 26.Rxc4 Rxc4 27.Nec3

Petrosian gradually exchanges pieces, reasoning that his extra pawn will play a role at some point. But his opponent shows rare energy and resourcefulness.

27...h4 28.h3 Qc8 29.Kh2 Nh5 30.Nd5 Qf8 31.Bxg7 Qxg7 32.Qa1

32.Nxe7+ Kf8 is not clear, for example, 33.Nd5 Qe5+ 34.Kg1 Bxh3!, and if 35.Qa1, then 35...Rc2!.

32...Qxa1 33.Rxa1 Bxb5 34.axb5 e6

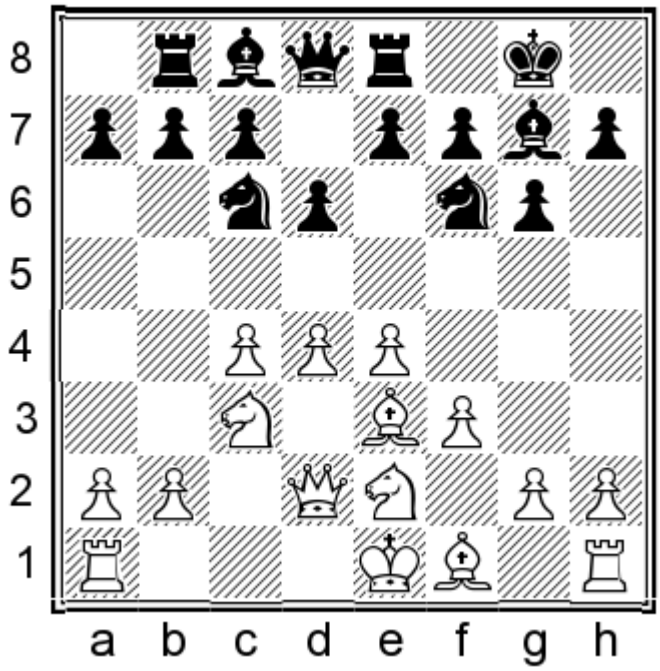
With the main variation: 35.b6 exd5 36.b7 (36.Ra4? Rc1!) 36...Rxb4 37.Ra8+ Kg7 38.b8=Q Rxb8 39.Rxb8 dxe4

40.fxe4 Ng3 with a draw. Petrosian avoids this continuation by playing Ne7+ and Nc6, which Black counters by transferring the knight to e5. The resulting rook endgame is drawish.

35.Ne7+ 35...Kg7 36.Nc6 Nf6 37.Kg1 Nd7 38.Rd1 Ne5 39.Nxe5 dxe5 40.Rb1 Kf8 41.b6 Rc6 42.Kf2 Ke7 43.Ke3 Rxb6 44.Kd3 Kd7 45.Kc4 Rd6 46.Kc3 Rc6+ 47.Kb3 Rd6 48.Rc1 Rd3+ 49.Rc3 Rd1 50.Rc2 f5 51.Re2 Kd6 52.Ka4 Kc6 53.b5+ Kb6 54.exf5 Rd4+ 55.Kb3 gxf5 56.Rxe5 Rd2 57.Rxe6+ Kxb5 58.Rg6 Kc5 59.Kc3 Ra2 60.Kd3 Ra3+ 61.Ke2 Kd5 62.Rb6 Ra2+ 63.Ke3 Rxg2 64.Rb4 Ra2 65.Rxh4 Ke5 66.Rc4 f4+ 67.Kd3 Rf2 68.Rc5+ Kd6 Draw.

(71) B5.5 **Petrosian – Westerinen**
Palma de Majorca 1968

1.c4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Nge2 Nc6 7.Be3 Rb8 8.Qd2 Re8



8...a6 is more common. The prophylactic move in the game aims to prevent the exchange of the g7-bishop (Bh6) and support the counter-attack ...e5, which is often necessary. For his part, Petrosian, using Black's delay in preparing ...b5, manages to transfer the rook to the center.

9.Rd1 a6 10.Nc1 e5 11.dxe5

In Petrosian's words, a "random" move, working towards the usual goal in such cases: to lead the game away from theoretical paths and make the opponent think for himself. Yet the proven 11.d5 seems stronger (see, for example, B5-7).

11...Nxe5

Principled. After 11...dxe5 12.Qxd8 Rxd8 13.Rxd8+ Nxd8 14.Nd5 Nxd5 15.cxd5, White has a small advantage in the ending.

12.Be2 Be6

Petrosian's calculations were correct: facing a new challenge, Black cannot find the best reply, 12...b5!. This move was made only a year later in the game Gheorghiu-Kavalek (Amsterdam 1969). The game continued as follows: 13.cxb5 axb5 14.Bxb5 Nxe4! 15.fxe4 Rxb5! 16.Nxb5 Nc4, and suddenly it turned out that, despite being down a whole rook, Black has real chances to succeed. After 17.Qf2 Rxe4 18.0-0 Nxe3 19.Qxf7+ Kh8 20.Qxc7

Qxc7 21.Nxc7 Nxd1 22.Rxd1 Bd4+ 23.Kf1 Bg4 24.Rd2 Be3 25.Rc2 Rd4, Kavalek won convincingly.

Could Gheorghiu defend better? Grandmaster Andor Lilienthal later addressed this question, and here are his conclusions:

(1) White's position before the 17th move is already very difficult, for example, 17.Qd3 Nxb2 18.Qc2 Nxd1 19.Kxd1 Qh4 with a strong attack for Black;

(2) instead of 14.Bxb5, stronger is capturing with the knight; then very beautiful variations could arise after 14.Nxb5 Nxf3+! (but not 14...Nxe4 15.fxe4 Qh4+ 16.Bf2 Qxe4 17.0-0 Bb7 18.Qg5 Bh6 19.Qg3 Bxc1 20.Nc3, and White wins) 15.gxf3 Nxe4! 16.fxe4 Qh4+ 17.Bf2 (17.Kf1? Bh3+ 18.Kg1 Qxe4 19.Bf1 Bxf1 20.Nc3 Bxc3 21.bxc3 Bh3 22.Bf4 Rb2! 23.Qxb2 Qxf4 is bad) 17...Qxe4 18.Qd5! (the best chance, as neither 18.0-0? Bb7 nor 18.Rg1 Rxb5 19.Nd3 Rxb2! 20.Nxb2 Bc3 works), and now repetition of moves is possible after 18...Qb4+ 19.Qd2 (19.Nc3? Bb7; 19.Kf1? Bh3+ 20.Kg1 Re5, etc. – Igor Yanvarjov) 19...Qe4;

(3) Thus, the rook sacrifice is absolutely sound, and it appears that White should have defused Black's tactical possibilities already on the 12th move by playing, for instance, 12.Ba7 Ra8 13.Bf2, and if 13...Rb8, then 14.Be2 b5 15.cxb5 axb5 16.Bxb5; in this case, the pawn sacrifice is highly questionable.

So neither player understood the tactical subtleties, which is not surprising: the position is extremely complex. Westerinen no doubt missed a good chance. But, as we already saw, Petrosian could have played more accurately earlier.

13.b3 b5?! 14.cxb5 axb5 15.Bxb5 c6 16.Be2 d5 17.exd5 Nxd5 18.Nxd5 Bxd5 19.0-0 Qe7 20.Bg5

So, let us sum up the opening stage of the game: the result has been disappointing for Black. White managed to complete his development, keeping an extra pawn, and now his plans are very clear. Gradually Petrosian transfers his pieces to the best positions and begins to convert the advantage.

20...Qa3

Illusory activity: the queen will stay idle on this square until the end of the game.

21.Qc2 Ra8 22.Kh1 Ra5 23.Qd2 Be6 24.f4 Nd7 25.Bf3 Ra6 26.Rfe1 Nf6 27.Re2 h6 28.f5!

The shortest route to victory.

28...hxg5

No better is 28...gxf5 29.Bxh6 or 28...Bxf5 29.Bxf6 Rxe2 30.Qd8+, and White keeps an extra piece.

29.fxe6 Rxe6 30.Rxe6 fxe6 31.Qxg5 Kf7 32.Nd3

Strictly speaking, at this point it is time to drop the curtain: White proceeds to a direct attack on the king and decides the game in a few moves.

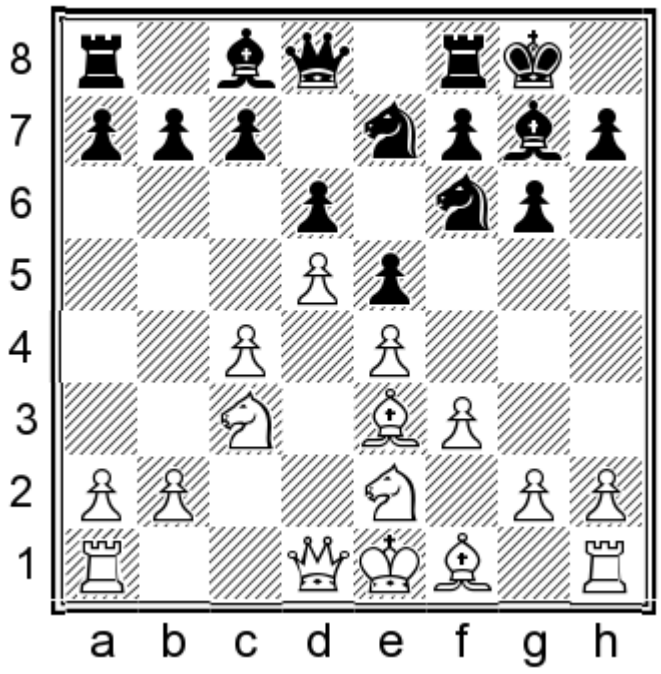
32...Nd7 33.Be4 Nf8 34.Bxg6+ Kg8

If 34...Nxg6 35.Rf1+ with decisive threats.

35.Rf1 Ra7 36.Ne5 Bxe5 37.Bf7+ Kh7 38.Qh5+ Kg7 39.Qxe5+ Kh7 40.Qh5+ Kg7 41.Qg5+ Black resigned.

(72) B5.6 **Petrosian – Díez del Corral**
Palma de Mallorca 1968

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.d4 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 e5 6.Nge2 Nc6 7.d5 Ne7 8.Be3 0-0



9.Qd2

More energetic is 9.g4, as Petrosian played against Bertok (B5.2).

9...Ne8 10.g3

At this point, 10.g4 looks consistent and strong. The modest text move was suggested by Mikhail Botvinnik. White's idea is, after ...f5, to prevent the pawn from reaching f4, smoothly finish developing, and continue playing to restrict Black's knights via h2-h3 and g3-g4. (For more on this plan, see the annotations to White's 10th move in the game 74.)

10...c5 11.Bg2 f5 12.Nc1

Now and in the future, h2-h3 deserves attention, as it prevents the black knight from coming to g4 or h5 (g3-g4).

12...fxe4 13.fxe4

As already mentioned, in such positions, it is important for White to have precisely the e4-pawn.

13...a6 14.Nd3 Bd7 15.Nd1 b5 16.b3 Nc8 17.N1f2 Nb6 18.Rc1 bxc4 19.bxc4 Nf6 20.0-0

20.Qe2 does not achieve its goal because of 20...Qc8 21.h3? Nh5.

20...Ng4 21.Nxg4 Rxf1+ 22.Bxf1 Bxg4 23.Nf2 Bd7 24.Rb1 Na4 25.Rb3 Rb8 26.Nh3 Rb6 27.Ng5 Bh6 28.h4 Qb8 29.Qf2

Obviously, White does not have much to hope for; Petrosian patiently maneuvers and carries out his plan without fear of simplifications.

So what is his plan? After the queen trade, which Black cannot avoid, Petrosian will exchange the rooks and light-square bishops, and gradually shift the game towards the endgame, where each of his remaining minor pieces will be stronger than his opponent's, if even just by a bit, and the king will seek a path via the light squares to the queenside. It is hard to say whether it will be possible to fully implement this plan, but having such a long and logical program is typical of the ninth world champion's style. In positions where the game can have only two results and one side has to fight for a draw for a long time, it is easy to slip up, even completely unnoticeably, and ruin the game. Tigran

Vartanovich once compared such play with a tennis match: move by move, the opponent has to return the ball, and if he does it accurately every time, well, then let it be a draw.

His deep faith in the logic of chess, his aversion to using brute force and trying to win at all costs, his avoidance of anything contrived and artificial, have always been Tigran Petrosian's hallmarks.

29...Qf8 30.Qxf8+ Bxf8 31.Bd2 h6 32.Bh3 Bxh3 33.Nxh3 Rxb3 34.axb3 Nb6 35.g4 Be7 36.h5

So, little by little, the outlines of the endgame intended by White are becoming clear. With his two previous moves, he fixes the kingside pawns so that almost all of the opponent's pawns are on same color squares as the bishop. If the white king can find a way into the enemy camp, Petrosian will have real winning chances.

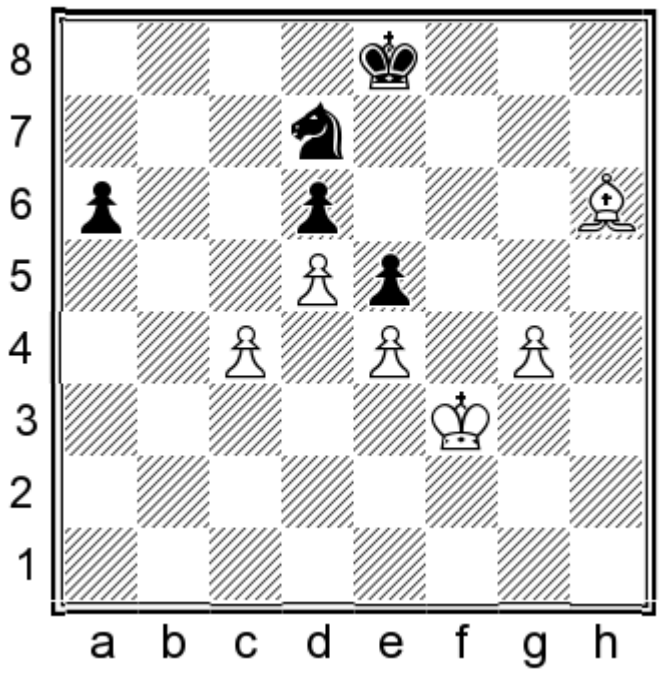
36...Kg7 37.hxg6 Kxg6 38.Kg2 Nd7 39.Nf2 Bg5 40.Ba5 Kf7 41.Kf3 Ke8 42.Nd3 Ke7 43.Be1 Kd8 44.Bc3 Kc7 45.Ba5+ Kc8 46.Nf2 Nf6 47.Nh3 Bc1 48.Be1 Kc7 49.Bh4 Nh7 50.Ke2 Bg5 51.Be1 Bc1 52.Ba5+ Kd7

Black's defense is based on building a fortress, and b3-b4 is the only way to try to destroy it.

53.b4 Ba3 54.bxc5 Bxc5 55.Bd2 Nf6 56.Kf3 Ng8 57.Nf2 Bxf2 58.Kxf2 Nf6 59.Kf3

Another feature of Petrosian's play is his preference for the bishop over the knight in the endgame (especially when he had a space advantage), just like the great Rubinstein. In just this chapter, there are three endgames with a similar set of pieces: in addition to this game, see his games against Bertok (game 68) and Camara (game 92).

59...Ke8 60.Bxh6 Nd7



61.Be3

White automatically prevents the threat ...Nb6, but Petrosian's natural move gives Black an inconspicuous way to earn a draw. I think that 61.Bd2 Nb6 62.c5 dxc5 63.g5 gives better chances. I would not say that White would necessary win, but Black's task would be more difficult. Judge for yourself: 63...Kf7 64.Ba5 Nd7 (or 64...Nc4 65.Bc7 and d5-d6!) 65.Kg4 Kg6 66.Bc3 c4 67.Kh4 Kf7 (67...Nc5 68.d6!) 68.Kh5 Nc5 69.g6+ Kg8 70.d6 Nxe4 71.Bxe5 Nc5 72.Kg4 a5 73.Kf5 a4 74.Bd4 Nd7 75.Ke6 Nf8+ 76.Kd5 a3 77.Kc6 a2 78.d7, and Black can resign. In this variation, when the play takes place on opposite flanks, the advantage of the long-range bishop over the asthmatic knight is clear.

61...a5 62.Bd2 a4 63.Bb4 Nb6 64.c5 dxc5 65.Bxc5

In contrast to the aforementioned variation, instead of losing the c4-pawn, White managed to exchange it, but Black has time to push his passed pawn from a4 to a2 to distract the bishop, so the white d- and g-pawns no longer pose any risk.

65...Nc4 66.Bb4 a3 67.Ke2 a2 68.Bc3 Nd6 69.Kd3 Nf7 70.g5

Otherwise, the white king would not be able to get away from the e4-pawn, which the knight can attack from both the d6- and g5-squares.

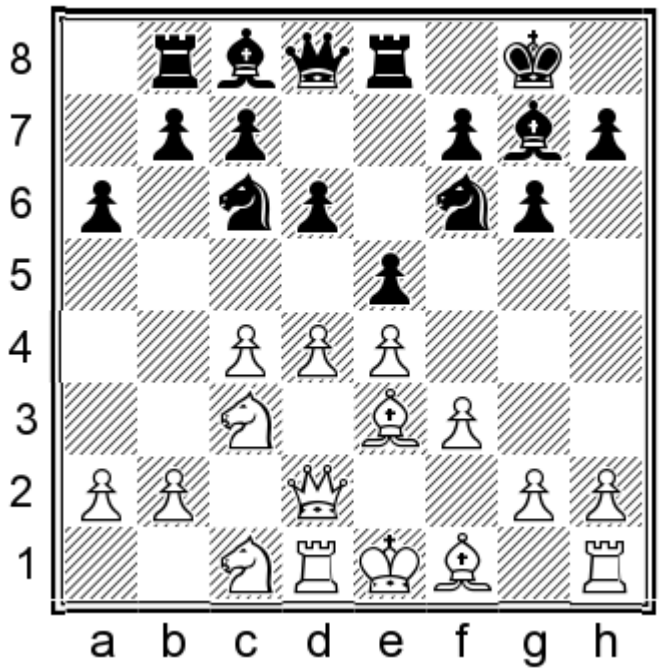
70...Nxg5 71.Bxe5 Kd7

Now Black brings the king to c5, and the connected passed pawns cannot move.

72.Ke3 Nf7 73.Ba1 Kd6 74.Kf4 Kc5 75.Kf5 Nd6+ 76.Ke5 Nf7+ 77.Ke6 Ng5+ 78.Kf5 and the opponents agreed to a draw.

(73) B5.7 **Petrosian – Hort**
Palma de Mallorca 1969

1.c4 g6 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.e4 d6 4.d4 Bg7 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 Nc6 7.Nge2 Re8 8.Qd2 Rb8 9.Rd1 a6 10.Nc1 e5



11.d5

As we remember, in his game against Westerinen, Petrosian exchanged on e5 and then won in a complicated battle. By the time this game was played, the position after 11.dxe5 Nxe5 12.Be2 had been analyzed and Kavalek's novelty 12...b5! was already known. So this time Petrosian decided not to stray from the theory.

11...Nd4

Black implements the basic idea of this variation: to invade d4 with the knight, forcing its exchange.

12.N1e2

Sometimes 12.Nb3 is played with the idea of using the capabilities of the doubled b-pawns in the attack on the queenside after the knight trade; 12.Bxd4 exd4 13.N3e2 cannot be recommended in view of 13...c5 14.dxc6 bxc6 15.Nxd4 Qb6 or 13...Nh5 14.Nxd4 f5 with strong initiative for the sacrificed pawn.

After the text move, the similar pawn sacrifice 12...c5 13.dxc6 bxc6 14.Nxd4 exd4 15.Bxd4 now looks dubious.

12...Nxe2 13.Bxe2 Nh5 14.0-0 f5 15.c5 Nf4?!

An instructive mistake. Its essence is that the f4-knight only appears to be active, and it actually hinders Black's initiative on the kingside. Correct is 15...f4 16.Bf2 Bf6 or 16...Qf6, striving for a traditional pawn attack on the king. Now White is the first to begin active play.

16.Bc4 b5 17.cxb6 cxb6 18.a4 Qd7

A bad move again. Petrosian believes that 18...Qc7, forcing 19.b3, is better, followed by 19...Qb7 with chances to defend.

19.Ra1!

Preventing the move 19...b5: 20.axb5 axb5 21.Ra7!.

19...Qb7 20.Rfe1 Bd7 21.Bf1 Nh5 22.Ra3 f4 23.Bf2 Bf6 24.Na2 Rec8 25.Nb4

Belatedly, Black returned to the correct idea with ...f4. But White has already completely set up on the queenside. Now, according to Korchnoi, the relatively best defense was 25...Ra8, although even then, after 26.a5 White's advantage is not in doubt. The next move is connected with a miscalculation by Hort.

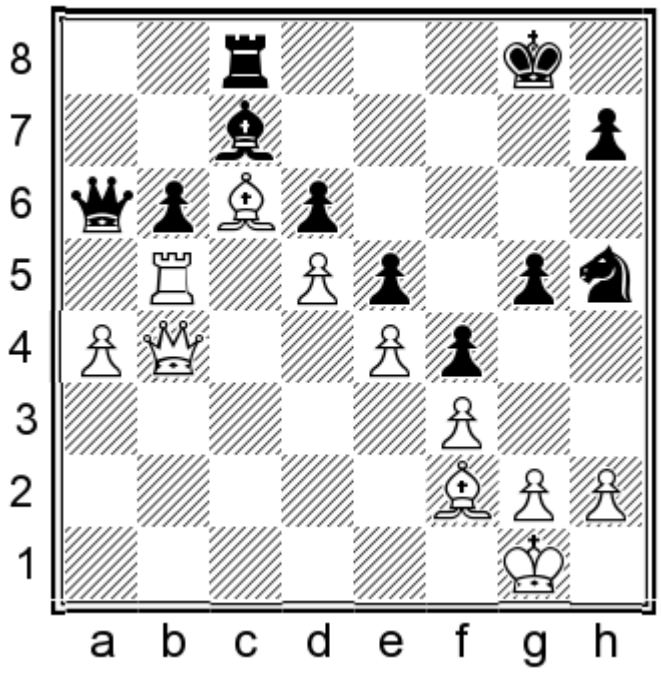
25...a5? 26.Ba6 Qa7 27.Bxc8 axb4 28.Bxd7 bxa3 29.Bc6

29.Be6+ Kh8 30.bxa3 Qxa4 31.Qb4 is equally good. Petrosian keeps the a4-pawn protected by the bishop, just in case, and blocks the c-file for the black pieces.

29...axb2 30.Qxb2 Bd8

As a result of a tactical exchange, the position has become strategically hopeless for Black. He has no bargaining chips that would offset the weaknesses on the queenside and the two powerful white bishops.

31.Rb1 Qa5 32.Qc2 Rc8 33.Rb5 Qa6 34.Qb3 g5 35.Qb4 Bc7



36.Qc4

The straightforward capture of the b6-pawn, 36.Bxb6 Bxb6+ 37.Rxb6 Qe2, is not good for White, of course. The trickier 36.a5 bxa5 37.Qb1, with the threat Bb7, is not on target either because of 37...Bd8, and 38.Bb7 is met by 38...Rc1+!.

Korchnoi suggested an interesting winning plan: Kf1-e1-d1, and there is no realistic defense from the threat of a4-a5 (in this variation, the goal of the king's maneuver is to prevent the rook check from c1). Petrosian did not find this opportunity, so he continues maneuvering the queen. That gives Black respite but does not change the final result.

36...Bd8 37.Qb4 Bc7 38.Qb3 Bd8 39.Qb1

Petrosian annotated this move with a question mark, which, in our opinion, is too harsh. The only thing for which White could be blamed is that he needlessly made a critical decision during his last seconds. He could have played a couple of neutral moves, passed time control, and then calmly considered his options. Also, 39.g4 was rather good, as recommended by Petrosian later, although this move might still be too committing to make in time trouble.

39...Qxa4 40.Rxb6 Qc4 41.Rb4 Qc3 42.Rb3 Qd2

As Petrosian noted, 42...Qa5 is better.

43.Rb2 Qc3 44.Kh1 Nf6

Losing the b6-pawn. 44...Ba5 is better.

45.Rb8! Rxb8 46.Qxb8 Qa5 47.Qxd6

Although Petrosian has somewhat prolonged the game, Black's position is still very poor: he is down a pawn and his king is exposed to attacks. The method of converting the advantage is similar to White's play in the game Petrosian-Lutikov (game 19) examined in the first chapter.

47...Bc7 48.Qe6+

Capturing the knight is, of course, bad: 48.Qxf6 Qa1+ 49.Bg1 Bb6, and White has to resort to perpetual check.

48...Kg7 49.Qe7+ Kg8 50.h4

50.Bg1 leads to the goal faster: if 50...Bb6, then 51.Be8!. Apparently, Petrosian had planned in advance to make *luft*, taking away Black's tactical chances on the first rank.

50...Qd2

Hoping for an opposite-color bishop endgame, Hort sacrifices another pawn.

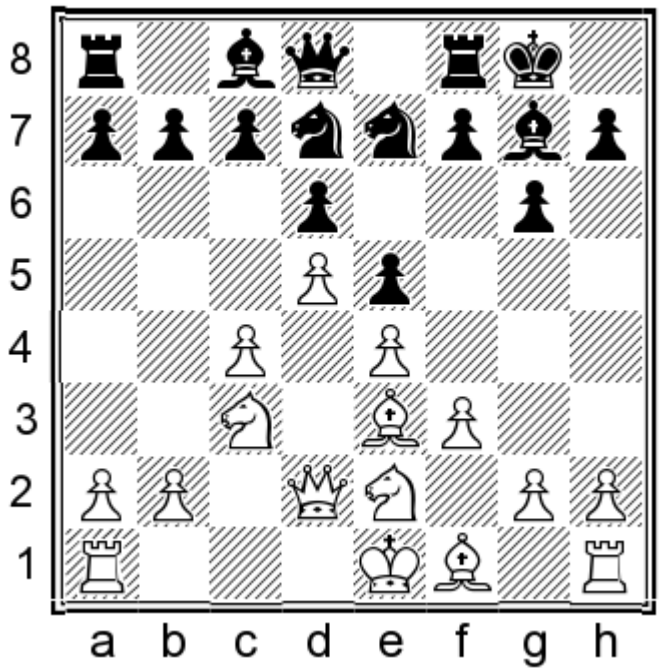
51.Qxf6 Qxf2 52.Qxg5+ Kf7 53.Qf5+ Kg7 54.Qd7+ Kf6 55.Qe6+ Kg7 56.Qe7+ Kg8 57.Qg5+ Kf7 58.Kh2

Here Black probably noticed that the planned 58...Bd8 does not work because of the intermediate reply 59.Qh5+. Then White takes the e5-pawn with check, and after that the f4-pawn as well, increasing his advantage to three pawns. Disheartened, Hort blunders, and the game is over.

58...h5? 59.Qxh5+ Ke7 60.Qe8+ Black resigned.

(74) B5.8 **Petrosian – Joaquin Diaz**
Interzonal Tournament
Biel 1976

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.e4 d6 4.d4 Bg7 5.f3 0-0 6.Nge2 Nc6 7.Be3 e5 8.Qd2 Nd7 9.d5 Ne7



10.g4

Logical. If this advance is a part of White's plan, then why not do it immediately? Another argument in favor of the text move is the competitive situation at the end of the tournament: only a victory in the final round would allow Petrosian to qualify for the candidates matches. It is clear that the dynamic pawn advance to g4 would bring him to this goal faster than Botvinnik's slow g2-g3. Incidentally, Botvinnik reached the position after 10.g3 twice: in 1931, at the USSR Championship, when he defeated Alatortsev, and in 1965, at the European Team Championship, when he lost to Szabo although, objectively speaking, the opening had nothing to do with it.

10...f5

According to Botvinnik, the best reply to White's last move. However, for some reason, Botvinnik believed that

White should trade on f5, giving Black more freedom. It turns out it is not so.

11.g5

Establishing control of the f6- and f5-squares with the pawns, White significantly restricts his opponent's minor pieces. Thus Petrosian managed to get an opening advantage logically and almost by force.

11...a6 12.h4 Rb8 13.Nc1 c6

Knowing Petrosian's iron grip in such positions, the Cuban master gradually begins to complicate the position.

14.Nb3

Rejecting the "Greek gift." After 14.dxc6 Nxc6 15.Qxd6 Nd4, White's extra pawn does not play a big role, but the position on the board has complicated significantly. White also has the tempting opportunity 14.c5 at his disposal. Black cannot take on c5 right away because he would lose the knight after d5-d6 at the end of the variation. As the game times testify, Petrosian spent 12 minutes here, but still decided not to veer from the planned course.

14...c5 15.Qh2 Rf7 16.h5 gxh5 17.Qxh5 Nf8 18.0-0-0

The reader has probably noticed that, in this game, unlike many others, White does not take precautions against ...b5. Moreover, by castling queenside, he provokes this advance. Maybe Petrosian did not like the blockading move ...a5 after a2-a4, because with just one line of attack, he might not have won. Provoking the advance of the pawn to b5, White carries out a complex and enterprising plan, hoping to use the advanced position of this pawn to open a "second front" in the future.

18...f4 19.Bf2 Bd7 20.Bh3 Bxh3 21.Qxh3 b5 22.Qf1

Having made a "ritual" exchange of the bad bishop for the good one, White begins a major regrouping.

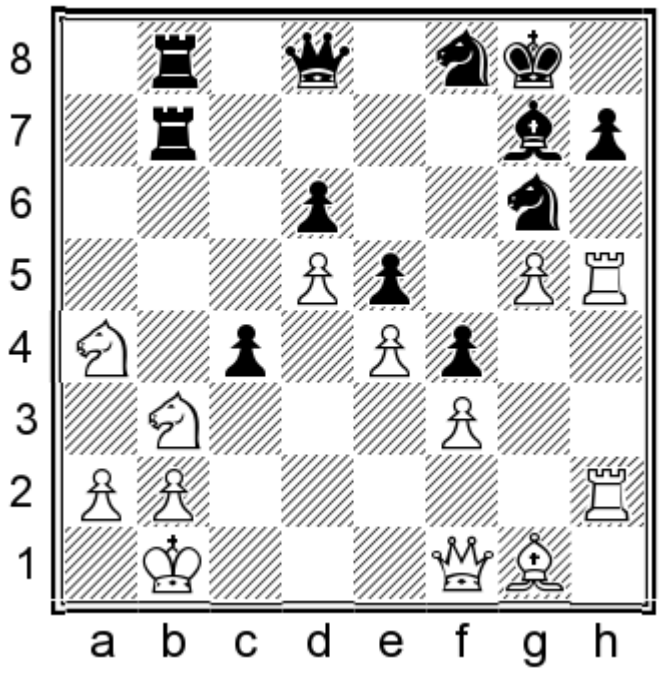
22...Qb6 23.Rd2 Neg6 24.Rc2 Rfb7 25.Rh5 Qd8 26.Bg1 Ne7 27.Rch2 Neg6 28.Kb1 bxc4

The maneuvers of the white rooks probably convinced Diaz that his opponent is preparing to storm the king. So, he decides that Black's plan is to counter-attack on the opposite flank. Black rushes to open his own file, and makes a major positional mistake. The thing is, as long as both sides are attacking without using minor pieces, the attack has little chance of succeeding. But while the black knights and bishop are hopelessly stuck on the kingside, their white counterparts on the other side of the board are just waiting for the chance to become active. The inaccurate exchange on c4 gives them that opportunity.

29.Qxc4 a5 30.Qf1 a4

Black ought to do something; otherwise the white knights will gradually occupy the c4- and b5-squares, and the game will be over.

31.Nxa4 c4



Probably the best chance. Sacrificing two pawns in a row, Black switches the game from maneuvering to specific variations and... psychology. However, the c4-pawn is poisoned for now: 32.Qxc4? Rb4 33.Qc6 Ne7 34.Qa6 Ra8; 32.Nc1 Qa5 also does not work, because the knight on a4 gets into trouble again. The Cuban is certainly very resourceful, but Petrosian finds a rather strong reply.

32.Nbc5!

Very good! “Counter-sacrificing” the knight, White finally seizes the strategic initiative. Actually, this can hardly be called a sacrifice, because Petrosian gets a sufficient equivalent of three pawns for the piece.

32...dxc5 33.Nxc5 Rb5

Bad is 33...Rb4 because of 34.Na6.

34.Qxc4 Qb6 35.b3 Rb4 36.Qa6 Qc7 37.Rc2 Qf7 38.Bf2 Ne7 39.Rh1 Nxd5?

Diaz cannot withstand the time pressure and returns the piece, ending up a pawn down as a result. Now the game is decided – White only needs to be a bit careful.

40.exd5 Qxd5 41.Qd3 Qf7 42.Kc1

Not giving Black even the slightest hint of a threat on the long diagonal.

42...e4

Desperation.

43.Nxe4 Kh8 44.Nd6 Qd7 45.Bc5 R4b7 46.Rd1 Ne6?

Black could do without this “offering.”

47.Nxb7 Qxb7 48.Qd5 Nxc5 49.Rxc5 Qa6 50.Kb1 Qa3 51.Rc2 Re8 52.Rh2 Black resigned.

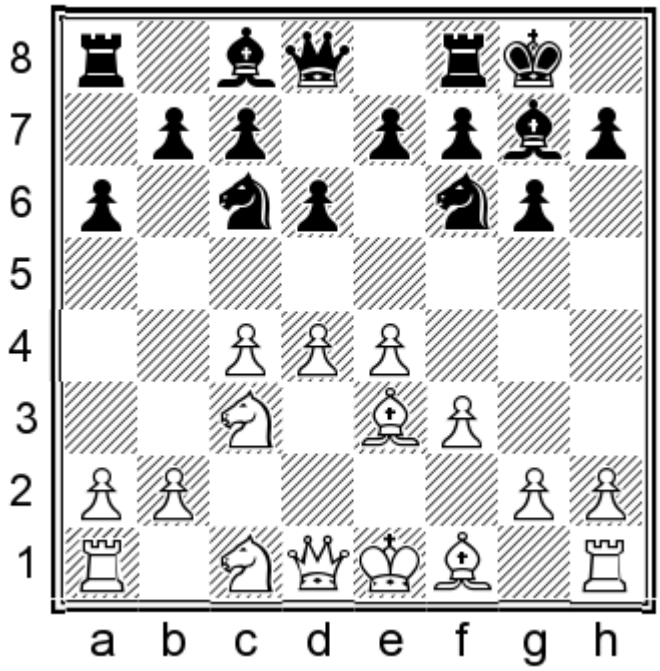
A complicated positional game that Petrosian played excellently from beginning to end.

(75) B5.9 **Petrosian –Vigh**

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.e4 d6 4.d4 Bg7 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 Nc6 7.Nge2 a6

One can agree with Igor Zaitsev, who believes that 7...Rb8 is more accurate. We saw this move order in game 71, where after 8.Qd2, etc. the game transposed to the common variations. The “mysterious” rook move is directed against a different plan for White (which was implemented in this game): 8.Nc1. In this case, after 8...e5 9.d5 Nd4 10.Nb3 Black has the reply 10...c5! 11.dxc6 bxc6, and White should not take on d4 because the b2- pawn will be under attack.

8.Nc1



8...Rb8

In this game, the difference in the opponents’ skill level is probably even more noticeable than in the previous one. Black could not see the threat lurking behind White’s last move. Otherwise he would have played 8...e5, and after 9.d5, then 9...Nd4, which is actually the main idea of this variation. Now Petrosian establishes stable control over the d4-square, largely making the entire setup of the black pieces worthless.

9.Nb3 e5 10.d5 Ne7 11.Qd2 Ne8 12.0-0-0

Black hit the ground right out of the opening. White’s position is so good that he does not have to rush activity: the advance of the f-pawn will be countered with c4-c5, and 12...b6 with the energetic 13.g4.

12...f5 13.c5 Nf6 14.Kb1 Bd7 15.h3 f4

Forced because of the positional threat g2-g4.

16.Bf2 g5 17.Bc4 Kh8 18.Ne2 Ne8 19.Rc1 h5

Here, this King’s Indian attack is absolutely harmless and is mostly a reminder of what could have been.

20.Qa5 Ng6 21.Bd3 Rf7 22.Qc3 Bc8 23.cxd6

White owns the position. As Petrosian put it, he is “marching like at the May Day parade.” The opening of the c-

file is followed by the establishment of a knight outpost on c5, and after the move ...c6, the second white knight will comfortably occupy b6.

23...Nxd6 24.Nc5 h4 25.Rhd1 Qe8 26.Qb3 Bd7 27.Rd2 Bf8 28.Nc3 c6 29.Rcd1 Rd8 30.N3a4 Bc8 31.Nb6 Kg7 32.Be2 Rf6 33.Nxc8 Rxc8 34.Nxb7

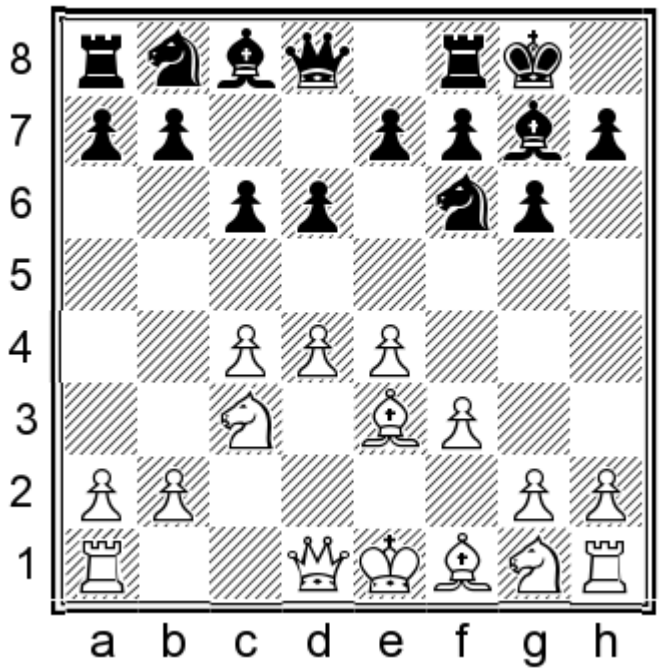
Finally, White's positional benefits have transformed into material, which means that the game is coming to an end.

34...Rb8 35.dxc6 Qxc6 36.Na5 Qe8 37.Qd5 Nf7 38.Bc5 Qa4 39.Nb3 Bd6 40.Bxd6 Rxd6 41.Qa5 Qxa5 42.Nxa5 Rdb6 43.Bc4 Kf6 44.b3 Rc8 45.Rd7 Ne7 46.Ka1 Rc5 47.Nb7 Rcc6?

A blunder in a lost position.

48.Bxf7 Black resigned.

B6

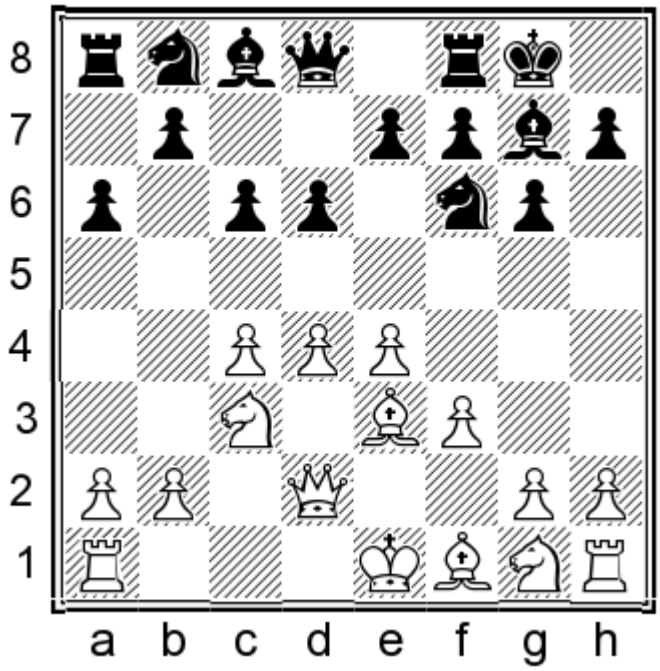


White to move

If Black does not plan to develop the knight to c6, this move order against the Sämisch Attack is the most flexible. With the opportunity to transpose to the main system via the move ...e5 at any moment, Black can at the same time prepare a center breakthrough that is very unpleasant for White by ...a6, ...b5, ...bxc4 and possibly ...d5. Note that Petrosian himself often preferred such a plan (games 77, 78, 79, 82, 83) when he played Black. To accomplish anything in this variation, White has to play aggressively and very accurately.

(76) B6.1 **Petrosian – Taimanov**
24th USSR Championship
Moscow 1957

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 c6 6.Be3 0-0 7.Qd2 a6



8.g4

A somewhat unusual introduction to play on the kingside. More common are 8.h4 or 8.Bh6 (the latter move was played twice by Yuri Averbakh in games 78, 79).

8...b5 9.g5

This move clarifies White's plan. After edging out the knight to h5, he wants to eliminate it by Ne2-g3, and then taking on g3 is dangerous for Black because it would open the h-file. However, as the game's development showed, this plan is not feasible if Black defends correctly. Therefore, better is 9.h4 h5 (otherwise h4-h5) 10.g5, and the black knight does not have the h5-square, while White would have the active resource f3-f4-f5. After 9...bxc4, White can play 10.h5, not wasting time taking the c-pawn; 9.Nge2 bxc4 10.Ng3 d5 11.h4 also leads to sharp play.

9...Nh5 10.Nge2 e5

An important link in Black's defensive plan. Now 11.Ng3 does not work because of 11...exd4 12.Bxd4 Bxd4 13.Qxd4 Qxg5.

11.0-0-0 Nd7

Calmness stemming from confidence in the superiority of his position. If 12.dxe5, then the unpleasant 12...Nxe5 will follow; after 12.d5 comes 12...c5; 12.Ng3 is still not good because of 12...exd4. Petrosian has virtually no choice: he has to "muddy the waters."

12.c5 dxc5 13.dxc5

Originally, White was probably going to take the pawn on e5 but then changed his mind. Taimanov suggests the following variation: 13.dxe5 Qa5 14.f4 b4 15.Nb1 Qxa2 16.Ng3 Nxf4! 17.Bxf4 Nxe5, with a strong attack for the sacrificed piece.

13...Qa5 14.Qc2

Preparing to counter 14...b4 with 15.Qa4. 14.Bh3 does not work because of 14...Nb6 15.cxb6 Bxh3 or 15.Bxc8 Nc4!.

14...Re8

Black offers a forced variation where he gets a dangerous attack for a sacrificed pawn. Petrosian accepts the challenge.

15.Bh3 Nf8 16.Bg4 Bxg4 17.fxg4 Nf4 18.Nxf4 exf4 19.Bxf4 Qb4

Taimanov plays this part of the game very well. Worse is 19...Ne6 because of 20...Be3.

20.Bd6 Ne6

Now the c5- and g5-pawns are under attack and one of them will be lost. 21.h4 is followed by 21...Nxc5, and if 22.Qf2, then 22...Nxe4! with an advantage for Black.

21.e5 Nxg5 22.Rde1

The continuation 22.h4 Nf3 is also to Black's advantage. For example: 23.h5 Nxe5 24.hxg6 fxg6 25.Qh2 h6 26.Bxe5 Bxe5 27.Qxh6? Bf4+ (suggested by Taimanov).

22...Bxe5 23.Rxe5 Qf4+ 24.Kb1

Bad is 24.Qd2 because of 24...Qxd2+ 25.Kxd2 Nf3+.

24...Rxe5 25.Qg2 Rae8

Black is not satisfied with the easily attained pawn-up endgame after 25...Qf3 26.Qxf3 Nxf3 27.Bxe5 Nxe5 28.g5, where White would have good drawing chances because of the threat Ne4. Taimanov wants more.

26.Bxe5 Rxe5 27.Qxc6 Qxg4

"Also good was 27...b4 28.Na4 Ne4, with rich attacking opportunities. However, in time pressure, Black is looking for a clear plan and first of all wants to destroy the dangerous c5-pawn. Now 28...Qf5+ is looming." (Taimanov)

28.a3 Qf5+ 29.Ka1 Rxc5 30.Qxa6 Ne6 31.Rd1 Qe5

With skillful play, Taimanov has gained a clear advantage but chose a wrong path in time trouble. After playing 31...Qc2 32.Qd6 Rf5 with the idea of ...Nc5 and ...Rf2, Black would quickly bring the game to victory.

32.Rd7

"People are people: when your opponent is pressuring you and wants to win certainly, you are forced to become brave and determined because you have to escape!" (Petrosian).

32...Qxh2

According to Taimanov, stronger was 32...Qf5, and the threat of check from f1 immobilizes White. But now the fight becomes more complicated: the wheel begins to spin!

33.Qa8+ Kg7 34.Qe8

Threatening not just 35.Qxf7+ but also 35.Qxe6.

34...Ng5 35.Rd8

So, White has managed to get to the black king.

35...Qg1+ 36.Ka2 Kh6 37.Nxb5

Jan van Reek pointed out an interesting opportunity: 37.Ne2! Qf2 38.Qf8+ Kh5 39.Nf4+! Qxf4 (the only move) 40.Qxc5 with a probable draw.

37...Ne6 38.Nd4!

An unexpected tactical blow: 38...Nxd8 or 38...Nxd4 are followed by 39.Qf8+ and 39.Qxc5+.

38...Rc1 39.Nxe6 Ra1+ 40.Kb3 Qb6+ 41.Kc2 Qxe6?

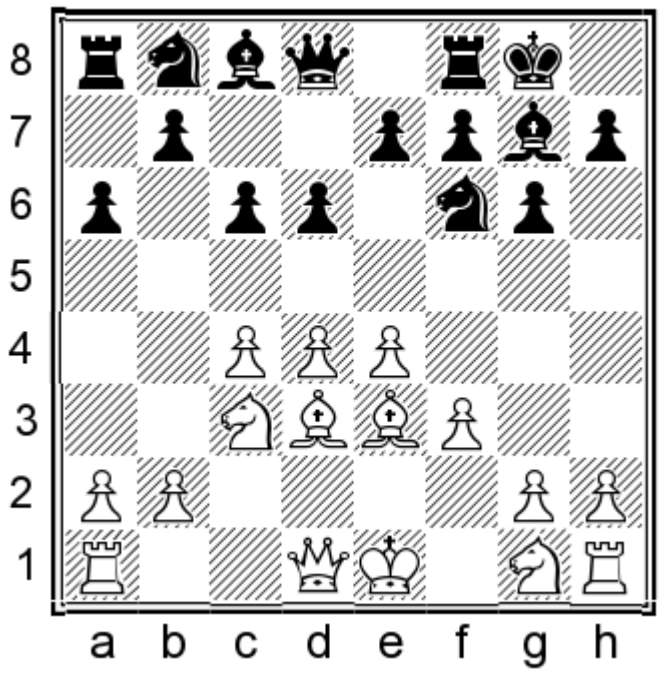
The last mistake, which suddenly leads to a loss. Stronger is 41...Qf2+! 42.Kb3 Qe3+ and 43...fxe6, although there is probably no more win.

42.Qxe6

Black resigned, because after 42...fxe6 43.Rd1!, White forces a transition to the winning pawn ending. What a dramatic battle!

(77) B6.2 **Sokolsky – Petrosian**
USSR Championship Semifinal
Kiev 1957

1.c4 g6 2.Nc3 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.e4 Nf6 5.f3 c6 6.Be3 a6 7.Bd3 0-0



8.Nge2

One of the quiet systems where White does not play overly ambitiously and naturally develops his pieces.

8...Nbd7 9.Qd2 b5 10.b3

The old move, directed primarily against the simplifying maneuver ...b5xc4 and ...d6-d5. If 10.0-0, then Black, according to the *Encyclopedia of Chess Openings*, has good chances for counterplay after 10...bxc4 (10...e5) 11.Bxc4 d5 12.Bb3 (12.exd5? Nb6!) 12...dxe4, for example: (a) 13.fxe4 Ng4 (Hort-Ciocaltea, Havana 1966); or (b) 13.Nxe4 Nxe4 (13...a5!? – Vassily Smyslov) 14.fxe4 Nf6 15.e5 Nd5 (Veltmander-Krogius, USSR 1956). However,

if Black continues 10...e5, as in this game, strengthening the c4-square does not give White much benefit. Therefore, from the standpoint of fighting for an opening advantage, better is 10.Rc1, which Petrosian tested against Gligorić in game 80 (there, this position occurred via a transposition of moves).

10...e5 11.d5

White is careful. The “automatic” 11.0-0 could lead to problems after 11...exd4 12.Nxd4 Ne5 13.Rad1 c5 14.Nde2 Be6! (variation by Isaak Boleslavky).

11...cxd5 12.cxd5 Nh5

It is easy to see that a position from the main variation (see tabiya B3) is on the board, except with an “extra” move, b2-b3. That means not only that White is down a tempo but also that his position is significantly weaker, which is clear from the variation 13.g4 Nf4! 14.Nxf4? exf4 15.Bxf4 b4, and White loses.

13.Rc1 f5 14.exf5 gxf5 15.Ng3!?

White’s clever attempt to turn a disadvantage of his position (his uncastled king) into a blessing (the open h-file) by trading on g3 is followed by an equally clever reply.

15...f4! 16.Nxh5 fxe3 17.Qc2

Of course, the pawn cannot be taken right away: 17.Qxe3 Qh4+ 18.Ng3 Bh6. However, the main difficulty of Petrosian’s combination consisted in determining the future viability of this pawn.

17...Qh4+ 18.Ng3 Nc5 19.Nce4 Nxe4 20.Bxe4 Ra7 21.Qc6 Qd8 22.Ke2 Bh6 23.Rc2 Rg7

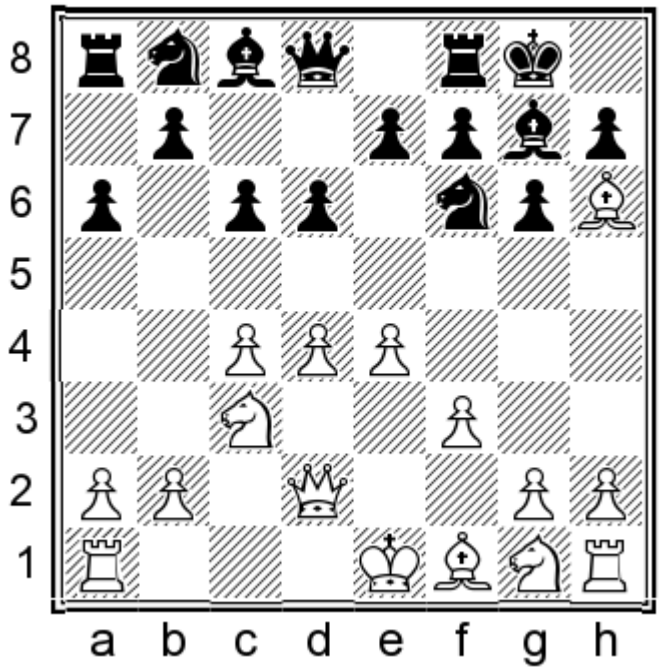
The doubled e3-pawn, surrounded by enemy pieces, turns out to be extremely enduring. Let us remind the reader that Petrosian successfully tested a similar method (except the pawn was on d4) in his game against Kotov (Zürich 1953). Apparently fearing the fate of his centralized king in the middlegame, Sokolsky takes the opportunity to force a draw by repetition.

24.Qa8 Qa5 25.Qc6 Qd8 26.Qa8 Qa5 27.Qc6 Draw.

(78) B6.3 **Averbakh – Petrosian**
28th USSR Championship
Moscow 1961

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 c6 7.Qd2 a6 8.Bh6

The simplest attacking strategy for White: deprive the opponent of the move ...h5 and push the h-pawn without further ado.



8...b5 9.h4 e5

The strategic outline of this entire game is very simple: Averbakh, using his space advantage, prepares a straightforward mate along the h-file; as prescribed, Petrosian counters the flank diversion with a pawn counterattack in the center.

10.d5 cxd5 11.cxd5 Nbd7 12.g4

White is all set for the breakthrough h4-h5, but then the tactical point of Black's defensive plan reveals itself.

12...Bxh6 13.Qxh6 Kh8!

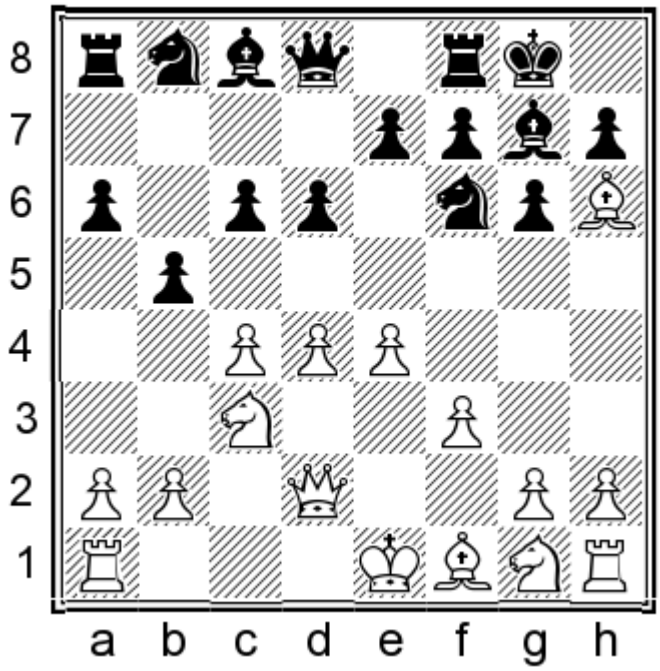
It turns out that White cannot open any lines. Averbakh advances the rook pawn by inertia, now not to attack but to defend against counterplay connected with the advance ...f5.

14.h5 Ng8 15.Qe3 g5 16.Nh3 h6 17.Be2 Ngf6 18.Nf2 Qa5 19.0-0 Nc5 20.Nb1

At this point White ran out of steam, and after making a solid knight move, he offered a draw, which was accepted.

(79) B6.4 **Averbakh – Petrosian**
Moscow Team Championship
Moscow 1961

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 c6 7.Qd2 a6 8.Bh6 b5



9.0-0-0

Having learned from his experience in the previous game, Averbakh prepared an improvement, rightly avoiding 9.h4 e5!. With 9.0-0-0, White not only moves his king away from the center but also stops the move ...e5.

9...Be6?!

In sharp, complicated positions where the cost of each move is very high, finding the right solution is absolutely necessary, but, at times, oh, so difficult. Positional indications are lost, calculations are unclear, and intuition is the only hope. Petrosian is in this exact situation, and, unfortunately, he does not “guess” correctly. However, he is not alone. Over the next few years, in this variation, Black kept losing like this: 9...Nbd7 10.Bxg7 Kxg7 11.e5! Ne8 (Ng8) 12.h4 h5 13.g4 or 9...bxc4 10.h4 d5 11.h5, etc. Only seven years later did the correct order of moves become public: 9...Qa5! 10.Bxg7 (10.e5 b4!; 10.Kb1 e5?) 10...Kxg7 11.e5 dxe5 12.dxe5 Ng8 13.a3 Be6, giving Black a reliable position (Portisch-Ivkov, Wijk aan Zee 1968).

10.h4 Bxc4 11.Bxc4 bxc4 12.h5!

Such moves are easy to find and fun to execute. If 12...Nxh5, then 13.Rxh5! gxh5 14.Qg5 with checkmate.

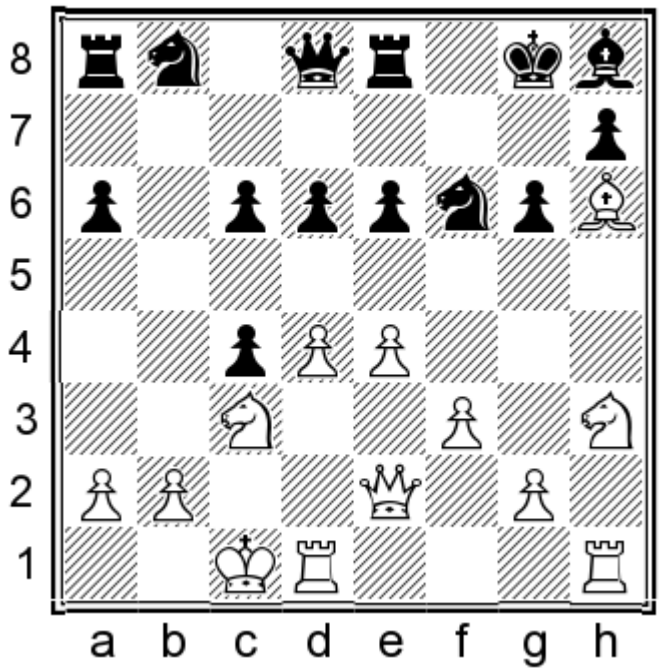
12...Bh8

Grandmaster Simagin used such a sacrifice multiple times in the Sicilian Defense, but here it can hardly help. However, Averbakh does not take the exchange.

13.hxg6 fxg6 14.Nh3 Re8

What if his opponent changes his mind?

15.Qe2 e6



“In this position, White could regain a pawn with the move 16.Qxc4, but he thought that it was more important to immediately begin the pawn storm” (Averbakh).

16.g4 Nbd7 17.f4 Qa5

Black relies on counterattacking with the pieces. Fritz draws attention to the counter-blow 17...c5!?.

18.f5! Rab8

According to Averbakh, Black should have continued 18...exf5 19.gxf5 Nxe4! 20.fxg6! Nxc3 21.gxh7+ Kf7 22.Qxc4+ (22.Qf3+? Nf6) 22...Nd5 23.Ng5+ Ke7, and now 24.Rhe1+ Kd8 25.Qxc6 Rxe1 26.Qxa8+ Ke7! 27.Qxh8 Qc7+ 28.Kd2 Qa5+ would lead to perpetual check. But the inconspicuous 24.Rde1+! (Fritz) wins by force: 24...Kd8 25.Rxe8+ Kxe8 26.Bg7! Bxg7 27.Qe2+! (but not 27.h8=Q+? Bxh8 28.Rxh8+ Nf8) 27...Ne7 28.Qh5+! Kd8 29.Ne6+.

19.fxg6 hxg6 20.e5 Rxb2?!

In an effort to turn around the situation, Petrosian causes an immediate crisis. Black’s last chance was 20...dxe5 21.Qc2! Kf7!?.

21.Kxb2

The only (but adequate) response. After 21.Qxb2 Rb8 22.Qc2? Qa3+ 23.Kd2 Rb2 White loses his queen, while 22.Qa1 would be followed by 22...dxe5, with unclear play.

21...Rb8+ 22.Kc2 Nd5 23.Qxc4 g5

Creating the threat ...Ne3+. Bad is 23...Nxc3? because of 24.Qxe6+.

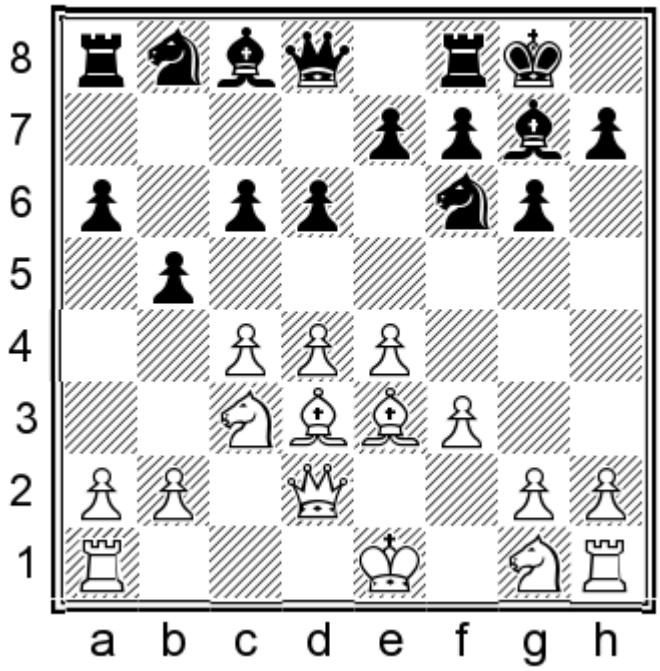
24.Rd3 Nb4+ 25.Kd1 d5 26.Qb3 c5

After 26...Nxd3, the move 27.Qc2, as pointed out by Averbakh, is decisive, for example: 27...N7xe5 28.dxe5 Bxe5 29.Qxd3 Qxc3 30.Qg6+ Bg7 (or 30...Kh8 31.Bg7+ Bxg7 32.Nxg5+ with checkmate) 31.Qxe6+ Kh8 32.Bxg7+ Kxg7 33.Qe7+ Kg8 34.Qxg5+ Kf8 35.Rf1+, and White wins.

27.Qb1 c4 28.Qc1 Black resigned.

(80) B6.5 **Petrosian – Gligorić**
San Antonio 1972

1.c4 g6 2.e4 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 c6 7.Qd2 a6 8.Bd3 b5



9.Rc1

"A mysterious rook move" in the style of Aron Nimzovich. Usually 9.Nge2 is played in this position, but then White should take into account the variation 9...bxc4 (9...Nbd7 10.0-0 e5 11.d5 bxc4 12.Bxc4 Nb6 13.Bxb6 Qxb6+) 10.Bxc4 d5 11.Bb3 dxe4 12.fxe4 Ng4. However, if Black plays something like that now, after 9...bxc4 10.Bxc4 d5 11.Be2! dxe4 12.fxe4, White's knight will occupy a more active position on f3.

9...Nbd7 10.Nge2 e5

And now 10...bxc4 11.Bxc4 d5 12.Bb3 dxe4 is dubious because of 13.Nxe4!, and since the c6-pawn is under attack, Black does not have time to complete the freeing maneuver 13...Nxe4 and ...Nf6-g4.

11.d5

Now the novelty prepared by Petrosian becomes clear. If, instead of the move Rc1, White had castled kingside, Black can continue 11...bxc4 12.Bxc4 Nb6, since after 13.Bxb6 the bishop would be captured with check. Now this cannot happen, and after 13...Qxb6 14.dxc6, White, taking control of the d5-square, gets a clear advantage. And if 11...cxd5 12.cxd5, then White's rook is also in the right place.

11...b4?!

Strategically, this is a very suspicious decision. Apparently, Gligorić understood that by locking the game on the queenside, he commits to a difficult defense. But he still hoped to survive.

Subsequently, Efim Geller pointed out a better defense: 11...bxc4 12.Bxc4 (after 12.dxc6 cxd3 13.cxd7 Qxd7 14.Qxd3 Bb7, the bishop pair and threat of ...d5 suggest that Black's position is at least equal) 12...c5, closing the c-file for White and keeping good chances for counterplay on the adjacent file.

12.Nd1 c5 13.g4

Firmly seizing the initiative. The standard attack 14.Ng3, followed by h4-h5, is a threat.

13...h5

In this situation, the Yugoslav grandmaster's trademark technique is ineffective.

14.Nf2

The most unpleasant for Black. After 14.g5 Nh7 or 14.h3 Nh7, his task would be much easier. Of course, 14...h4 is now bad in view of 15.Bg5.

14...hxg4 15.fxg4 Nh7 16.h4

The outlook for Black's king is gloomy. At the same time, White does not have to force the position and can instead systematically strengthen the attack on the king by Kd1-c2 and Rcg1 or Ng3. Probably, Black should have now continued 16...Ndf6. For example, 17.Rg1 Bd7, and if 18.h5, then 18...Qc8; or 18.g5 Nh5 19.Kd1 f5 20.gxf6 Qxf6 21.Kc2 Nf4. White could play 19.Ng4 Bxg4 20.Rxg4 f5 21.gxf6 Qxf6 22.Kd1 Rf7 23.Kc2, bringing the second rook into the battle; however, instead of 20...f5, probably stronger is 20...a5 21.Kd1 a4. Besides 18.g5, also deserving attention is 18.Bh6 (variations by Mikhail Yudovich Jr.).

Gligorić's attempted active expedition looks tempting, but it meets strong opposition.

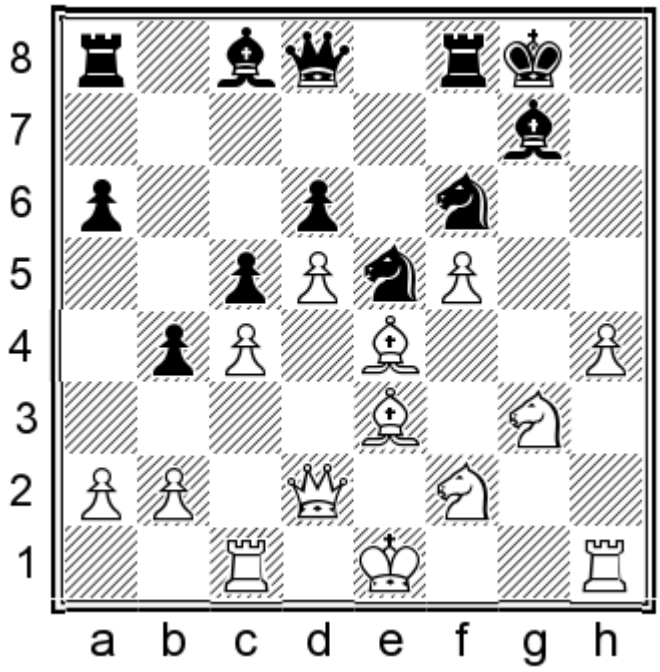
16...f5 17.gxf5

Simplest. He could probably also play 17.exf5 e4 18.Bxe4 gxf5 19.gxf5, resulting in the text position after the move transposition. In this case, 18.fxg6 Nhf6 19.Nxe4 Ne5 20.Nxf6+? Qxf6 would be a mistake, and the evaluation of the position suddenly turns around.

17...gxf5 18.exf5 e4

It is this second sacrifice that was Gligorić's main idea: all of Black's pieces come alive.

19.Bxe4 Ne5 20.Ng3 Nf6



Black's threats look impressive, but it turns out that Petrosian foresaw everything!

21.0-0!

With this original move, White manages to fend off all of the threats while keeping his material advantage. In case of 21...Nxe4 22.Nfxe4 Qxh4, White begins a counterattack by continuing 23.Bg5 Qg4 24.f6 Bh8 25.Qg2.

21...Ra7 22.Bg5 Qb6 23.b3

Freeing the rook from the duty of guarding the c4-pawn.

23...Raf7 24.Qe2 Qc7

No better is the continuation 24...Nxe4 25.Nfxe4 Bxf5 26.Nxf5 Rxf5 27.Rxf5 (27.Be7 is also possible) 27...Rxf5 28.Rf1.

25.Bb1 Nh7 26.Kg2 Nd7 27.Ng4 Ndf6 28.Rce1 Nxg4 29.Qxg4 Kh8 30.Re6!

It is a bit hard to give this move an exclamation point because the exchange sacrifice suggests itself.

30...Bxe6

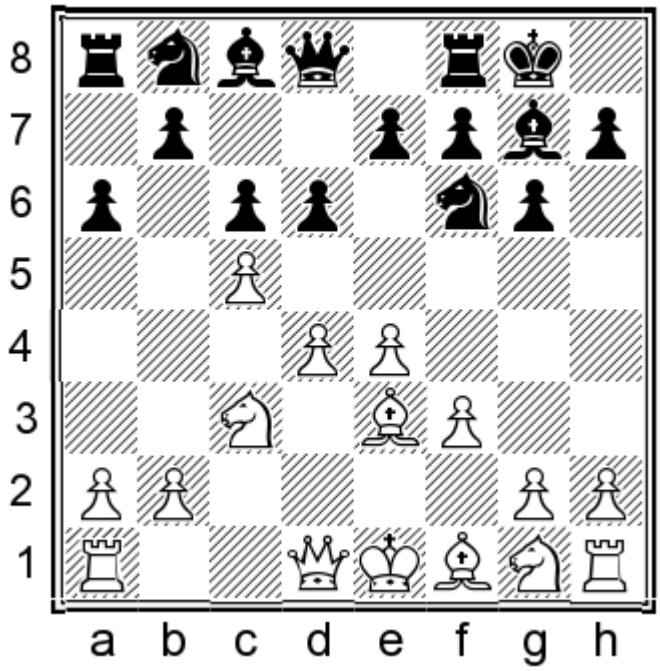
Gligorić decided to drink the bitter cup to the dregs.

31.dxe6 Nf6 32.Qf3 Re7 33.Nh5 Kg8 34.Nf4 Rb8 35.Nd5 Black resigned.

(81) B6.6 **Petrosian – Visier**
XXI Olympiad Nice 1974

The highest level in chess is distinguished by the ability to create a position on the board where a combination, like a ripe fruit, itself falls from the tree. In his game against Vizier, Petrosian demonstrated this quality to the fullest.

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.e4 d6 4.d4 Bg7 5.f3 c6 6.Be3 a6 7.c5 0-0



Having advanced the c5-pawn, Petrosian implemented a rare and fairly dangerous plan. This way, White achieves a beneficial exchange of the c-pawn for one of the central pawns, since the move d6xc5 would lead to the queenside being fixed, which would be even more unpleasant for Black.

8.Nge2 a5

As can be seen from the previous remark, this is a useless move. Better is 8...Nbd7 followed by ...b5.

9.cxd6 exd6 10.Ng3 Re8 11.Qd2 b5

Unsuccessful again. Black's psychological attack leads to the creation of new weaknesses. It was important to take care of developing the pieces.

12.Be2 d5 13.e5 Nfd7 14.Bh6 b4 15.Na4

Impeding Black's counterplay with ...c5.

15...Bxh6 16.Qxh6 Ba6

Too slow. Black should have played 16...c5.

17.h4!

The beginning of a victorious attack.

17...Bxe2 18.Kxe2!?

Petrosian leads the attack in the classical style, resolutely and without any distractions. After taking on e2 with the king, White achieves the perfect interaction of his pieces.

18...Na6 19.h5 Nf8 20.Rac1

White needs not so much the c6-pawn as control of the c5-square.

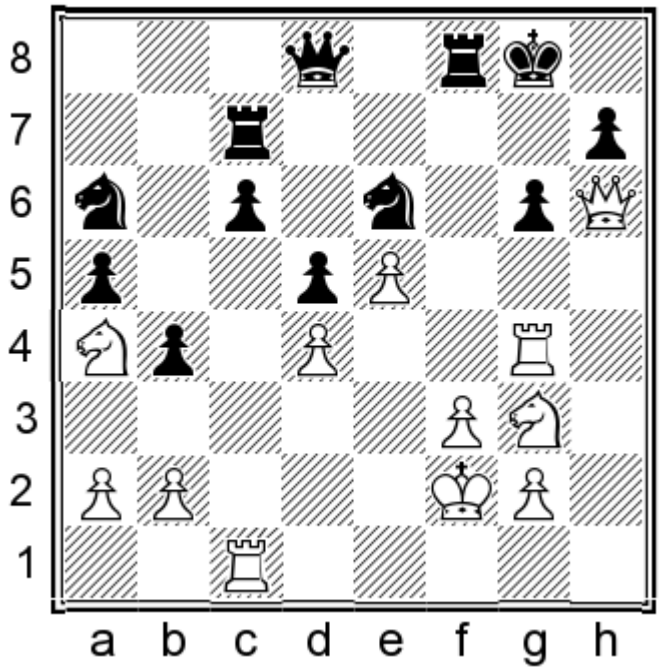
20...Ra7 21.Kf2

Taking the c6-pawn was dangerous, for example, 21.Rxc6 Qd7 22.hxg6 fxg6 23.Rhc1 Nb8 24.Nb6 Qd8, and the white pieces have become tangled (25.Rd6 Qxd6).

21...Ne6 22.hxg6 fxg6 23.Rh4 Rc7

Inviting White to make the "winning" move 24.Rxc6, which Black, of course, would counter not with 24...Rxc6? 25.Qxh7+ Kf8 26.Qh8+ Kf7 27.Rh7+ etc., but rather 24...Qxh4! 25.Qxh4 Rxc6, refuting the attack.

24.Rg4 Rf8



Allowing a spectacular finale.

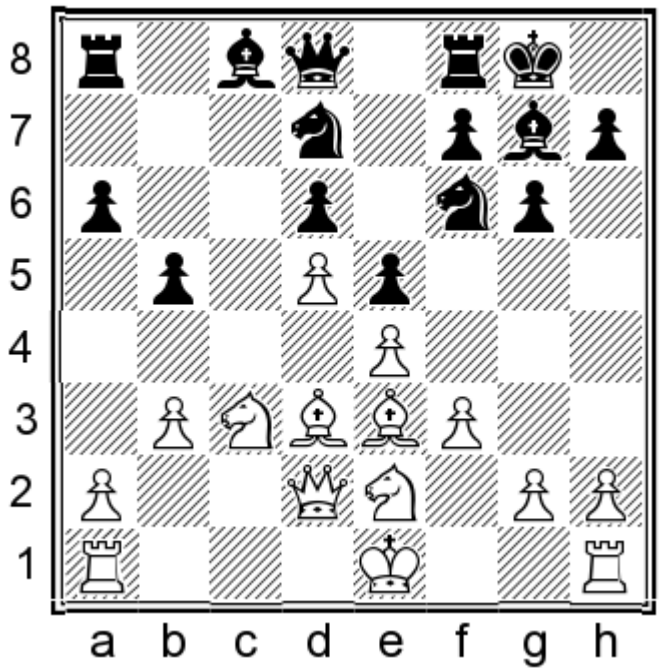
25.Rxg6+! hxg6 26.Qxg6+ Ng7 27.Rh1 Rf4

The position is full of beautiful variations. For example: 27...Qe7 28.Rh6 with an inevitable e5-e6 and Qh7, or 27...Qe8 28.Qh7+ Kf7 29.Nf5!.

28.Nh5 Rcf7 29.e6 Black resigned. An exciting “blowout” game!

(82) B6.7 **Timman – Petrosian**
Interzonal Tournament
Rio de Janeiro 1979

1.c4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 d6 4.e4 Nf6 5.f3 c6 6.Be3 0-0 7.Bd3 a6 8.Nge2 b5 9.Qd2 Nbd7 10.b3 e5 11.d5 cxd5 12.cxd5



Up until now, following the game Sokolsky- Petrosian (game 77). In that game, Petrosian continued 12...Nh5, followed by 13...f5, and the battle quickly ended in a draw. Now he carries out the same maneuver with the inclusion of the moves ...Nc5 and Bc2 and also easily achieves equality.

12...Nc5 13.Bc2 Nh5 14.0-0 f5 15.b4

Forced, because of the positional threat ...b4 with the idea ...fxe4 or ...Nf4.

15...Nd7 16.exf5 gxf5 17.Rac1

White would probably like to play 17.f4, but after 17...exf4 18.Nxf4 Nxf4 19.Bxf4 Ne5, Black has great play connected with his control of the e5- and c4-squares.

17...Nb6 18.Bb3 Nf6 19.Kh1 f4

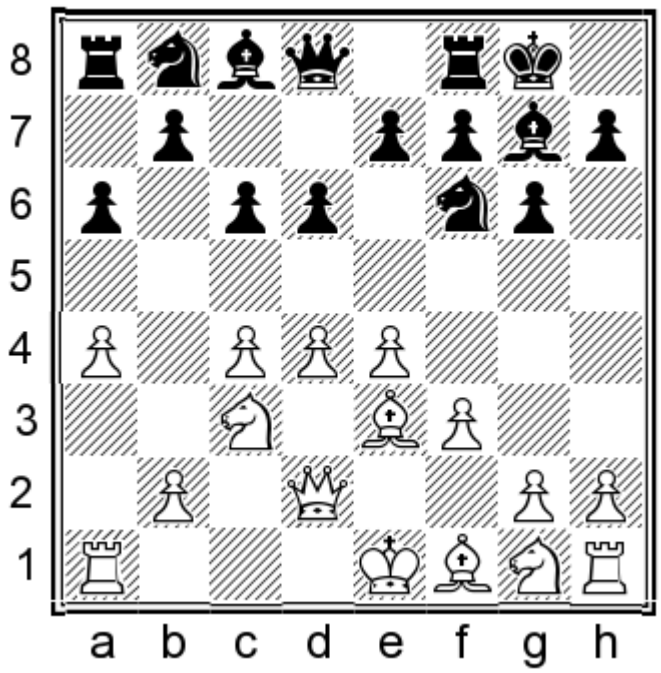
A somewhat unexpected but correct decision. The weakening of the e4-square is not important in this position.

20.Bxb6 Qxb6 21.Bc2 Qe3 22.Qxe3 fxe3 A draw was agreed.

(83) B6.8 **Ivkov – Petrosian**
Interzonal Tournament
Rio de Janeiro 1979

Interestingly, the circumstances of this game exactly mirrored those of the Interzonal tournament in Biel. Petrosian again needed a win in the last round to advance in the candidates cycle. Only now he had to play with Black, not White, and against Ivkov, who was rightly considered one of the hardest-to-beat grandmasters at the time.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 c6 7.Qd2 a6 8.a4



8...e5

The principled response to White's last move is, as we know, 8...a5, followed by the knight transfer along the route b8-a6-b4. However, Petrosian, no doubt, was guided not only by positional but also psychological considerations.

9.dxe5 dxe5 10.Qxd8 Rxd8

Not forcing the position. You want the endgame? Here you go! This decision fully reflects Petrosian's nature. Later he said, "I noticed a long time ago that, when you want to win, you should exchange the queens!"

11.a5 Be6 12.Na4 Nbd7 13.b4

In case of 13.Ra3 (with the idea of the rook transfer to b3), Black had the neutralizing maneuver 13...Ne8 and 14...Nd6.

13...Bf8 14.c5

After 14.Rb1, White feared the breakthrough ...c5, and not without reason. For example, 14...c5 15.bxc5 Rac8 16.Rxb7 Nxc5 17.Nxc5 Bxc5, and Black, recovering the sacrificed material, gets active play (variation by Borislav Ivkov).

14...Ne8 15.Nb6

To understand the further events, one should keep in mind that, by winning this game, Ivkov also retained a chance to advance in the candidates cycle. Maybe that is why he made the decision to fight for an advantage in an approximately equal position. Well, Petrosian was fine with that. For him, the banal continuation 15.Nb2 Nc7 16.0-0-0 Nb5 would have been much more unpleasant, because it would have made the position much harder to unbalance.

15...Nxb6 16.axb6 Nf6

Petrosian's experienced eye immediately noticed a weakness in White's camp: the rapidly advancing pawns have broken away from their support. The threat of ...Nd7 and ...a5 is unpleasant. 17.g3 Nd7 18.Ra5? does not help in view of the unexpected blow 18...Nxb6!.

17.Nh3 a5!

A grandmaster fight! With his last move, White gave his opponent a difficult task. Subsequent analysis showed that after the continuations (a) 17...Nd7 18.Ng5; (b) 17...Bxh3 18.gxh3 Nd7 19.Bg5 f6 20.Bc4+ Kg7 21.Bd2; and (c) 17...h6 18.Nf2 Nd7 19.Nd3, White, obtaining the bishop pair or transferring the knight to d3, had enough time to consolidate the position. Undoubtedly, Petrosian's move is the best. Annotating this game in the 28th volume of the *Informant*, an impressed Ivkov gave the move 17...a5 two exclamation points!

18.Rxa5 Rxa5 19.bxa5 Nd7 20.Ng5 Bb3

The tension of the last round nonetheless plays its role. Retreating the bishop to a2, Black would have secured the advantage. Now White manages to complicate the game with a bold king raid.

21.Kd2 h6 22.Kc3 Ba2 23.Kb2 Ra8 24.a6

Now it is White's turn to make a mistake. After the game, Ivkov discovered that, after 24.Bd2, he could have achieved the advantage.

We should also note that it was bad for Black to take the knight a move earlier: 23...hxg5 24.Kxa2 Bxc5 25.Bxc5 Nxc5 26.Bc4 Ra8 27.Ka3!, and 27...Rxa5+ does not work because of 28.Kb4.

24...hxg5 25.axb7 Rb8

Holding on to the piece was dangerous. The complications advantageous for White arise after 25...Ra4 26.Bb5!, and if 26...cxb5, then 27.Rd1. No better is 25...Ra5 in view of 26.Bc4! Bxc4 27.Rd1! or 26.Bd2.

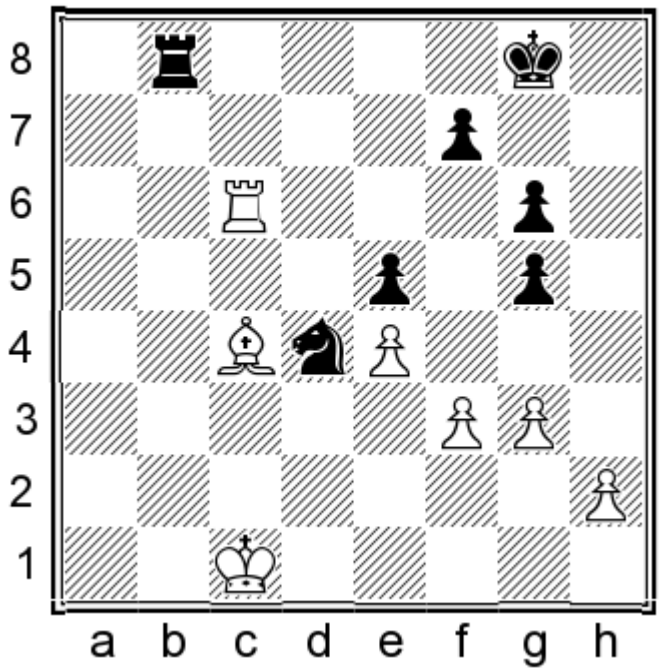
26.Kxa2 Bxc5 27.Bxc5 Nxc5 28.Be2 Rxb7 29.Rc1 Nd7 30.Rxc6 Nxb6 31.Ba6 Rb8 32.Kb1

In severe time trouble, the Yugoslavian grandmaster was able to see that after the natural 32.Kb3 Nd5+! the king would have to go back to the a-file: 33.Kc2 Nb4+ or 33.Kc4 Ne3+.

32...Nd5+ 33.Kc1 Nf4 34.g3

And now White is not up to par. The simple 34.Bc4, with the threat of 35.g3, would have allowed him to achieve a draw from a position of strength, 34...Nxg2 would have been followed by 35.Rxg6+ and 36.Rxg5, and 34...Kg7, by 35.g3 and 36.Rc7.

34...Ne6 35.Bc4 Nd4



36.Rc7?

A terrible grimace of time pressure. Immediately after the game, Ivkov said that 36.Rxg6+ did not work because of 36...Kf8 and ...Rc8. But then he clutched his head after someone suggested the continuation 37.Bxf7!. It is easy to see that this move leads to an immediate draw: 37...Kxf7 38.Rxg5, and after the inevitable f3-f4, Black's last pawn is exchanged.

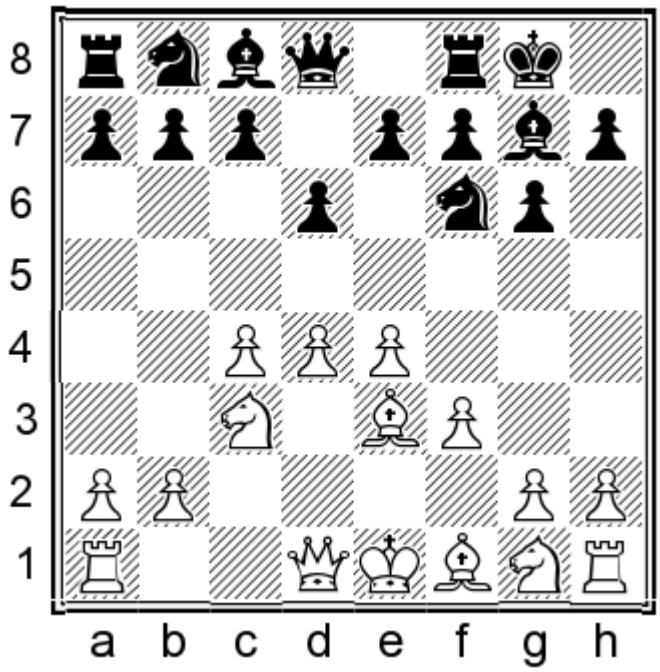
36...Rf8 37.f4 gxf4 38.gxf4 exf4 39.Kd2 Nf3+ 40.Ke2 Ne5

After the knight reaches e5, resistance is futile. Just in case, Ivkov adjourned the game, but he was so upset that he decided not to finish the game.

41.Rc5 Re8 42.Bb5 Re7 White resigned.

Petrosian's victory might seem somewhat undeserved to some. Note, however, that the last round has its own laws. Anyone who has gotten into such scrapes knows that in order to win on demand, you need a little luck. As the ancients said: "Luck helps the strong."

B7



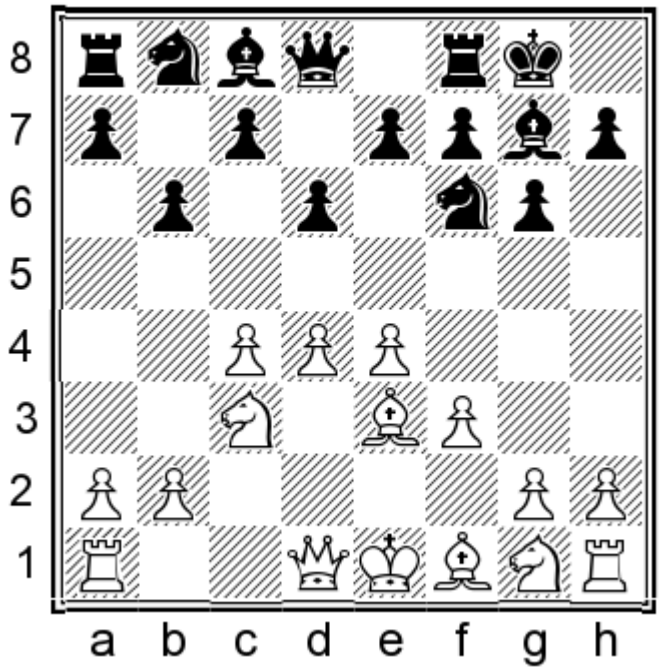
Black to move

As Tal put it, in the early 1960s, King's Indian players were infected with the modernist spirit. In the Sämisch system, Black increasingly began to abandon the classical plan with ...e5, preferring to ram White's center with the move ...c5. With this goal in mind, Black played 6...b6 (games 84, 86,87, 88)

or 6...Nbd7 (game 85).

(84) B7.1 **Chernikov – Petrosian**
Moscow Team Championship
Moscow 1966

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 b6



Nowadays, the idea of lengthening the King's Indian bishop's diagonal has been further developed in the interesting and still-problematic variation with a pawn sacrifice: 6...c5!? 7.dxc5 dxc5 8.Qxd8 Rxd8 9.Bxc5 Nc6, with play that is promising for Black.

7.Bd3

One of Bronstein's many tricks. Bronstein played the move 7.Bd3 for the first time against Lutikov in the 1959 USSR Championship. Suspecting nothing, Black responded 7...c5? and suffered material losses after 8.e5!. However, then the grandmaster "forgot" to win this game (but that, as they say, was an "accident"). Since then, the bishop development to d3 in this variation has stuck and become almost mandatory.

7...Bb7

Gufeld's move, 7...a6, is more common. This is how Black played in all of the games discussed below.

8.Nge2 c5 9.0-0

White rejects all of the opponent's invitations to advance the pawn to d5 and, in general, does not show the slightest aggression, as if to demonstrate that he can agree to a draw at any time.

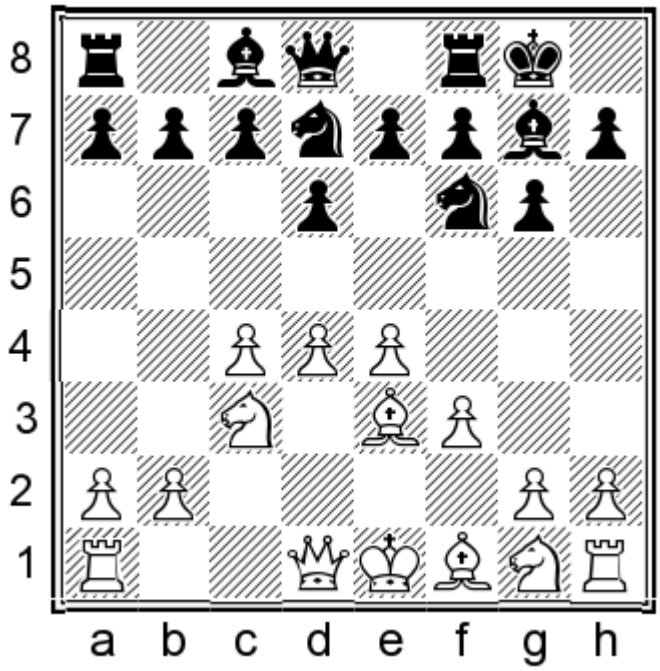
9...e5 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.Nd5

As a result of the opening, an almost symmetrical position has been reached. White has firmly established the knight on d5, and a little later Black will similarly establish his knight on d4. Then, the opponents maneuver for a long time in their own territories. The opening of the play on the 35th move livens up the position somewhat, but ultimately "friendship won."

11...Nc6 12.a3 Nd7 13.Qc2 Re8 14.Rab1 a5 15.Qd2 Re6 16.Bc2 Ba6 17.Bd3 Rc8 18.Rfc1 Bf8 19.Bg5 Qe8 20.Rc3 Nd4 21.a4 Kh8 22.Ng3 Bg7 23.b3 Bb7 24.Rcc1 Rd6 25.Rf1 Ne6 26.Be3 Qd8 27.Rbd1 Nb8 28.Ne2 Nc6 29.Nec3 Ncd4 30.Rb1 Qd7 31.Rfe1 Rf8 32.Bf2 Qd8 33.Kh1 Rd7 34.Kg1 Ng5 35.Qd1 f5 36.exf5 gxf5 37.Bg3 A draw was agreed.

(85) B7.2 **Petrosian – Uhlmann**
XVIII Olympiad
Lugano 1968

1.c4 g6 2.Nc3 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.e4 Nf6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 Nbd7



This move order for Black has never been very popular, but it is considered to be acceptable.

7.Bd3

Petrosian avoids the well-known sharp variations arising after 7.Qd2 c5 8.Nge2 a6 9.0-0-0 Qa5 10.Kb1 b5, and after 11.Nd5, Black can sacrifice the queen: 11...Nxd5!? 12.Qxa5 Nxe3 with wild complications (Bobotsov-Tal, Varna 1958).

7...c5 8.Nge2

Since the black knight has settled on d7 and does not pressure the center, White maintains the pawn tension, aiming for positions in the spirit of the Sicilian Defense, where the moves c2-c4 and f2-f3 are useful.

Here, according to Boleslavsky, deserving attention was 8...cxd4 9.Nxd4 (9.Bxd4 Ne5) 9...e6 with the idea of the liberating advance ...d5. This recommendation has since been confirmed by practical play. For example, in the match game Psakhis-Kasparov (La Manga 1990), after 10.0-0 d5 11.exd5 exd5 12.Bf2 (12.cxd5 Nb6) 12...Ne5 13.c5 Nfd7!, Black achieved an initiative.

8...a6 9.0-0 Ne8

This move shows that Black does not find a good plan. But there was one. Using the fact that d4-d5 is not yet beneficial for White because of ...Ne5, Black could have implemented the aforementioned idea: 9...b6 10.Qd2 Bb7 11.b3 cxd4 12.Nxd4 e6!, followed by ...d5 or transitioning to the setup known as the “hedgehog” (indicated by Zigurds Lanka).

10.Qe1

More subtle than the standard 10.Qd2. In anticipation of the maneuver ...Nc7-e6, White overprotects the d4-pawn (Qf2, Rad1). At the same time, an unpleasant tension on the d-file arises, and the white queen may jump to h4 if the opportunity presents itself.

10...Nc7 11.Rd1 cxd4

Uhlmann is tired of resisting, and he exchanges the central pawns, resigning himself to a worse position.

12.Nxd4 Ne5 13.Be2

The resulting position resembles the Maróczy Variation in the Sicilian Defense in a version which is advantageous for White.

13...Bd7 14.a3

Necessary prophylaxis against the move ...b5: the a-pawn avoids a possible attack by the rook.

14...Ne6 15.f4 Nxd4 16.Bxd4 Nc6 17.Bxg7 Kxg7 18.Qf2 f6

A passive move, but Black hardly has anything better.

19.Nd5 Rb8 20.Nb6 Be6 21.c5

The opposition of the heavy pieces on the central line has yielded results: a real weakness formed in Black's camp on d6.

21...Qc7 22.cxd6 exd6 23.Rd2 Rbd8 24.Rfd1 Qe7 25.Bf3 Na5

Black seeks counterplay on the queenside.

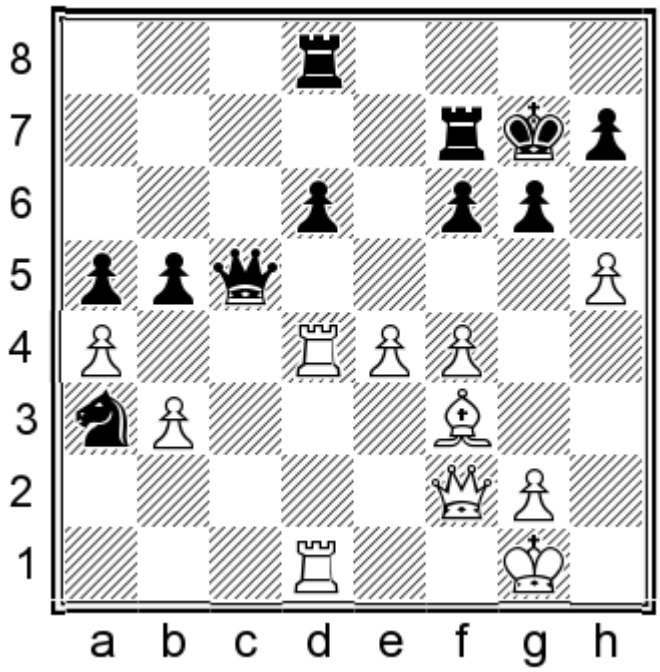
26.Nd5 Bxd5 27.Rxd5 Qc7 28.Qd4 Rf7 29.h4

The d6-pawn is indirectly protected: 29.Rxd6 Rxd6 30.Qxd6 Qxd6 31.Rxd6 Nc4 and 32...Nxb2. Petrosian begins to create a second weakness in the opponent's camp as prescribed by the rules of chess science.

29...b5 30.Qf2 Nc4 31.h5 Qa7 32.R5d4 a5

After this move, the c4-knight loses its stability. Better is 32...Re7.

33.a4! Qc5 34.b3 Na3



35.Rxd6!

The same tactical blow would also follow after 34...Nb6.

35...Qxf2+

After 35...Qxd6 36.Rxd6 Rxd6 37.Qc5 is decisive.

36.Kxf2 Rxd6 37.Rxd6 Rc7

Black's downfall is not so much the fact that he is a pawn down as the bad position of his knight.

38.h6+ Kxh6

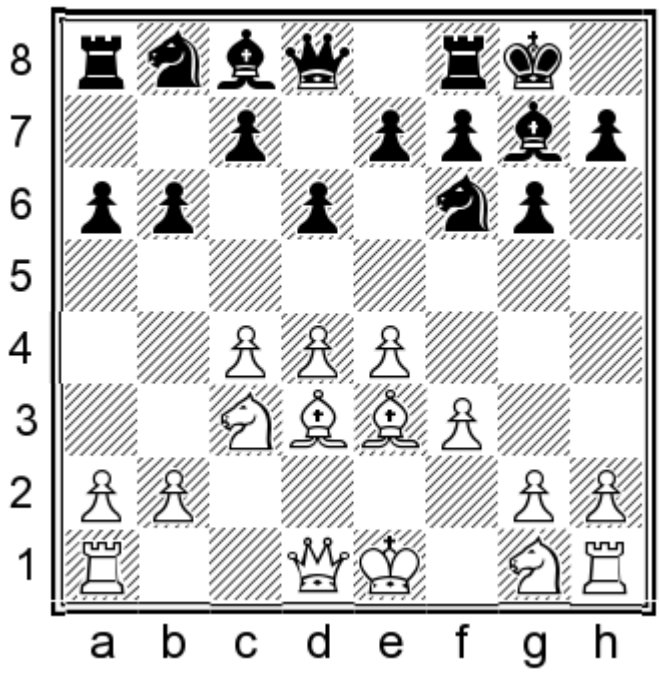
No better is 38...Kf7 39.e5, bringing the bishop into the game.

39.Rxf6 bxa4 40.bxa4 Rc4 41.e5

Black resigned, hardly prematurely, given that the e-pawn will cost him the knight. For example: 41...Rxa4 42.e6, 41...Kg7 or 42.Bd5 Rxa4 43.Rf7+ and so on.

(86) B7.3 **Belkadi – Petrosian**
XIX Olympiad
Siegen 1970

1.d4 g6 2.c4 Bg7 3.Nc3 d6 4.e4 Nf6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 b6 7.Bd3 a6



8.Nge2 c5 9.d5 Nbd7

Another plan is 9...e6 (see game 77). However, Petrosian decided to play in the spirit of the Benko Gambit.

10.Ng3 b5

In principle, the soundness of such a sacrifice is always doubtful, but in this case, the distance of the g3-knight from the main place of action is, of course, to Black's advantage.

11.cxb5 Ne5 12.Be2 axb5 13.Bxb5 Ba6 14.Bxa6 Rxa6 15.0-0 Qa5 16.Qe2 Rb8 17.f4 Ned7 18.Rad1 Ne8

Black has an initiative on the queenside that is typical of such positions, which he plans to increase by transferring the knight from e8 to b5. The experienced Ridha Belkadi skillfully creates counterplay.

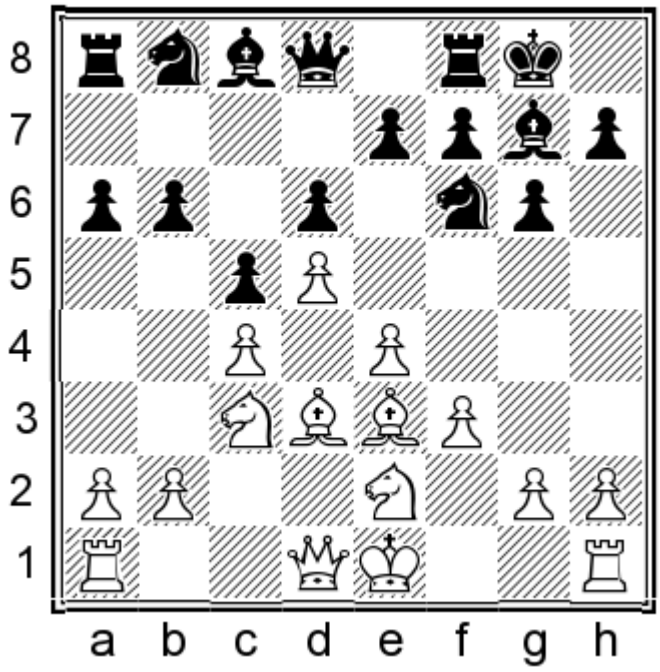
19.e5 dxe5 20.f5

By returning the pawn, White kills three birds with one stone: he blocks the g7-bishop, acquires the blockading square e4 for the knight, and destroys the integrity of Black's pawn structure.

20...Nd6 21.Nce4 Nf6 22.Nxc5 Raa8 23.a3 Qb5 24.fxg6 hxg6 25.Rf2 Nc4 26.Nge4 Draw.

(87) B7.4 **Petrosian – Ivanović**
Sarajevo 1972

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 b6 7.Bd3 a6 8.Nge2 c5 9.d5



9...e6 10.0-0 exd5 11.cxd5

This variation with a distinct "Indian" structure is sometimes called the "Semi-Sämisch."

I must say that White's last move, which looks simple and natural nowadays, was a revelation at the time. the strategy of these positions was once understood somewhat primitively: it was believed that by allowing the move ...b5, White risks getting a worse position. This conclusion was so ingrained in players' minds that even leading grandmasters tried to avoid such a structure. A typical example: 11.exd5 Nbd7 12.Bc2 (better is 12.Ng3) 12...Re8 13.Qd2 b5!, and Black indeed has an advantage (Polugaevsky-Gufeld, Vilnius 1960).

To tell the truth, Petrosian, too, did not immediately understand it. In 1950, in his game against Borisenko (game 89), he captured on e6 in a similar position, and then nine years later against Suetin (game 91), just like Polugaevsky, he took on d5 with the e-pawn and found himself in trouble.

11...Nbd7 12.b3 b5 13.h3

Here the advance ...b5 is not as attractive for Black as in other "Indian" variations. Black does not have the standard counterplay against the e4-pawn. Also, it is not immediately clear how to employ the b5- and c5-pawns, because advancing either of them has its drawbacks. At the same time, White's strategic objective on the queenside is obvious: make it more difficult for the opponent to play ...c4 and prepare the breakthrough a2-a4.

13...Re8 14.Qd2 Nb6

The first step in the wrong direction. One of Black's active ideas in such positions is a pawn sacrifice (typically in

response to a2-a4): ...c4, bxc4, ...b4. So Black should have kept the knight on d7 for as long as possible to control the c5-square.

15.Rac1 Bd7 16.Bf4

Petrosian plays in his favorite manner, alternating maneuvers in his own camp with pressure on the sensitive points in the enemy's camp.

16...Qe7 17.Nd1 Rab8 18.Re1 Rb7 19.Bg5 Rc8 20.Qa5

White is, of course, not going to take on a6. His goal is to get on his opponent's nerves.

20...Be8 21.Kh1 Qc7 22.Qd2

Black was threatening 22...Nbxd5.

22...Qb8 23.Bh6 Re7

The second misstep, after which Black's position suffers irreversible changes.

As Fischer put it, Petrosian liked to play a "cat and mouse" game, hoping that his opponents would make mistakes when there is no direct threat, and amazingly they really did!

24.Bxg7 Kxg7 25.Ng3 Bd7

With the exchange of the dark-square bishops, White's heavy pieces get an opportunity to strengthen the breakthrough a2-a4; besides, the f6-knight comes under an unpleasant pin.

26.Qb2 Rce8 27.Nc3 Bc8

After 27...b4, White had the only but sufficient reply 28.Nce2!, with an advantage.

28.Be2 h5 29.a4!

Forcing the b5-pawn to move (the exchange on a4 is no better), White achieves a strategic victory: his control of the c4-square

29...b4 30.Nd1 h4

Petrosian easily refutes this attempt at counterplay on the dark squares.

31.Nf1 a5 32.Bb5

A good technique, which is already familiar to the reader from the game B3.6.

32...Bd7 33.Nde3! Bxb5 34.axb5 Re5 35.Ra1

The beginning of the invasion.

35...Qd8 36.Nd2 Kh7 37.Ndc4 Nxc4 38.Nxc4 Rg5 39.Rxa5

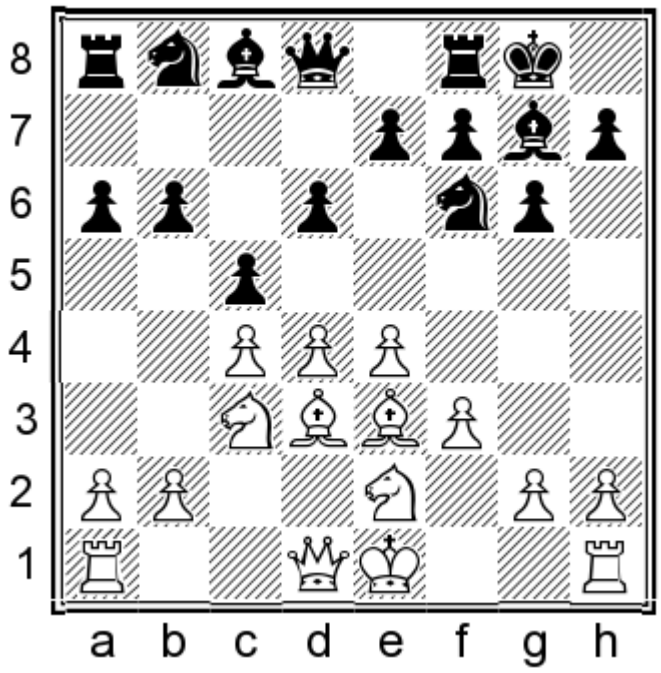
White's advantage is overwhelming. More than one path leads to the goal. Petrosian chooses the simplest one: he forces a transition into a technically winning rook endgame.

39...Nxd5 40.Qf2 Nf6 41.Qxh4+ Rh5 42.Qg3 d5 43.Rd1 Qb8 44.Qxb8 Rxb8 45.exd5 Rxd5 46.Rxd5 Nxd5 47.b6! Nxb6 48.Nxb6 Rxb6 49.Rxc5 f6 50.h4 Kh6 51.Kh2 Rd6 52.Rc4 Rb6 53.g4 Rb5 54.Kg3 g5 55.hxg5+ Kxg5 56.f4+ Kg6 57.Kh4 Rb8 58.f5+ Kh6 59.Rc6 Kg7 60.Rc7+ Kh6 61.Rf7

Black resigned in view of 61...Rb6 62.Rxf6+! and 63.g5+ with a transition into a winning pawn endgame.

(88) B7.5 **Croes – Petrosian**
XXI Olympiad
Nice 1974

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 b6 6.Be3 0-0 7.Bd3 a6 8.Nge2 c5



Up until this point, as in the two previous games, White continued 9.d5. In this game, Cruz prefers to keep the pawn on d4, which is a possible but not very dangerous plan.

9.0-0 Nc6 10.Rc1

An opening curiosity. Cruz misses a typical combination that is pointed out in every opening handbook. In all fairness, it should be noted that in other games, Black achieved equal play by carrying out ...e5. For example, in the game Botvinnik-Stein (Moscow, 1964), the opponents played 10.Bc2 e5 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.Bg5, and now, according to Botvinnik, easiest is 12...Nd4.

10...Ng4! 11.fxg4 cxd4

Regaining the piece, Black keeps the positional capital in the form of a better pawn structure.

12.Nxd4 Nxd4

Serious attention should be paid to 12...Bxd4. In the future, Black will never manage to achieve the advantageous exchange of the dark-square bishops, which would occur automatically in this case.

13.Bb1 Nc6

The knight is heading to e5.

14.h3 Rb8 15.Qd2 Bd7 16.Nd5 Rb7 17.Kh1 Ne5 18.b3 Bc6 19.Qf2 Bxd5

What else? The white knight is very active. Now White’s pawn structure becomes more or less decent. Thus, the only advantage that Black still has is the control of the central e5-square. But, as we shall see, this is not so

insignificant.

20.exd5 Nd7 21.Qd2 Qa8 22.Bh6 Ne5

Worse is 22...Bxh6 23.Qxh6, with the unpleasant threat of g4-g5, Rf4-h4.

23.Be3 Qb8 24.Bf4 Nd7

An unhurried tactic that was typical for the time, aiming for adjournment. It is also clear that Petrosian is counting that his less experienced opponent will accumulate positional inaccuracies in a “long” game.

25.Rf3 Rc7 26.Bg5 Ne5 27.Rff1 Rfc8 28.Bf4 Nd7 29.Qf2 Rf8 30.Qe2 Qd8 31.Bg5 Bf6 32.Bh6 Bg7

Black does not mind the exchange of the darksquare bishops, on condition that the queen does not make it to h6. White, on the other hand, wants to exchange the bishop for the knight.

33.Bg5 Ne5 34.Bf4 Rc8

Towards the end of the time control, Black comes to the conclusion that he cannot avoid an opposite-color bishop endgame.

35.Bxe5 Bxe5 36.Bd3 a5 37.Bb1 Qc7 38.Rc2

Defending against ...b5.

38...Qc5 39.Rd2

History repeats itself: lulled by the back and forth movement, Petrosian’s opponent loses his vigilance. Now and on the previous move, better was 39.a4, narrowing the possibility of a breakthrough.

39...a4! 40.bxa4?

The last move of the time control and, of course, a mistake! To get rid of the queens is very tempting, but as a result, White’s pawn structure is completely ruined.

40...Qxc4 41.Qxc4 Rxc4 42.Bc2 Rfc8 43.Bb3 Rc1 44.Rxc1 Rxc1+ 45.Rd1 Rc3

Of course. In the pure opposite-color bishop endgame, White would still have some chances because he could have ignored the move ...e6.

46.Kg1 Bg3 47.Kf1 Re3

Tying White’s rook to the first rank with the mating threat on e1.

48.Rb1 Kg7 49.Kg1 Re4

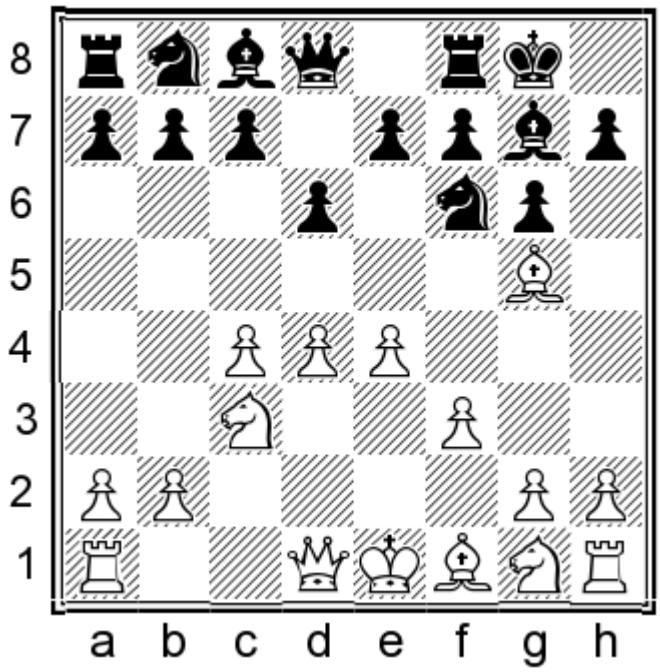
Preventing counterplay with the move Bc4.

50.Rf1 h5 51.gxh5 gxh5 52.Rd1 h4 53.Rf1 e5

Slow and steady, the e-pawn heads towards the queening square.

54.Rd1 Re2 55.Rf1 e4 56.Rd1 e3 57.Kf1 Rf2+ 58.Kg1 Rf4 59.Rf1 e2 60.Rxf4 e1=Q+ 61.Rf1 Bf2+ White resigned.

B8



Black to move

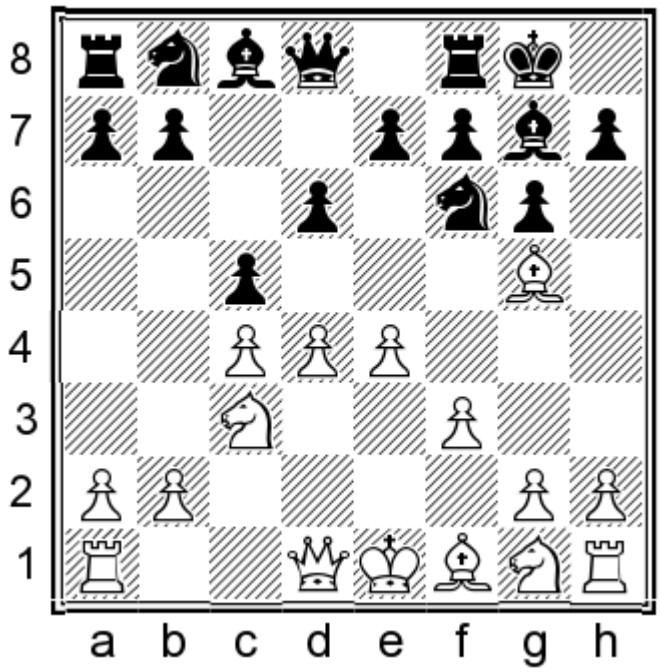
Petrosian's trademark. Such a bishop move is one of the favorite maneuvers of the ninth world Champion in a number of opening systems.

(89) B8.1 **Petrosian – Borisenko**
18th USSR Championship
Moscow 1950

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Bg5

In this case, the idea of the move Bg5 is simple. The classical plan with ...e5 is made more difficult: 6...e5? 7.dxe5 dxe5 8.Qxd8 Rxd8 9.Nd5, and after 6...h6 7.Be3!, the "default" move Qd2 will be played with tempo.

6...c5



Moving towards an “Indian” structure. The tactical subtlety of Black’s plan is that 7.dxc5 is followed not by 7...dxc5, in view of 8.Qxd8 Rxd8 9.e5!, but 7...Qa5!, with great play.

7.d5 h6 8.Be3 e6 9.dxe6

A bit too straightforward. More principled is 9.Qd2 exd5 10.cxd5, but, as already noted, at the time, Petrosian deliberately avoided such a structure in this variation.

9...Bxe6 10.Bd3

The tension in the center of the board is so high that there is no reason to worry about the weaknesses on d6 and h6. For example: 10.Qd2 Nc6! 11.Bxh6 Nxe4 12.Nxe4 Qh4+ 13.g3 Qxh6 14.Qxh6 Bxh6 15.Nxd6 Nb4 or 11.0-0-0 Kh7 12.Qxd6 Nd7, in both cases with more than sufficient compensation for the pawn. White needs to complete his development right away.

10...Nc6 11.Nge2 Ne5 12.b3?!

Imprudent and very much unlike Petrosian! He demonstrates a lack of experience, which, in the words of the famous Russian poet Pushkin, is “the son of painful mistakes.” It was necessary to play 12.Nd5.

12...b5!

Now White has to accept a tactical fight with the king in the center.

13.Nxb5!?

This is much more like Petrosian! In a difficult position, he does not cling to material and instead himself sacrifices an exchange! After 13.cxb5 d5!, Black’s threats would grow significantly, for example, 14.exd5 (14.Bxc5 dxe4!; 14.Bf4 Nxd3+ 15.Qxd3 dxe4) 14...Nxd5 15.Nxd5 Bxd5 16.Bc2 Re8 with an attack.

13...Nxd3+

Borisenko faltered and... did not take the exchange. He should have. According to Boleslavsky’s analysis, Black could achieve a clear advantage by continuing 13...Nfg4! 14.fxg4 Nxd3+ 15.Qxd3 Bxa1. For example: 16.0-0 Be5 17.Bxh6 Qh4 18.Bf4 Bxg4 or 16.Qxd6 Qh4+ 17.Qg3 Qxg3+ 18.Nxg3 Rfc8 19.Bxh6 a6 20.Na3 Bxg4 21.0-0 Bb2 22.Nc2 Rd8.

14.Qxd3 Nxe4 15.Rd1 Qa5+ 16.Bd2 Nxd2 17.Qxd2 Qb6?

Realizing that he has lost the advantage, Black plays carelessly and begins to “give away” the game, even though, objectively speaking, his position is not worse. Specifically, this evaluation is confirmed by the following variation: 17...Qxd2+ 18.Rxd2 d5! 19.cxd5 (19.Nc7 dxc4! 20.Nxa8 cxb3 21.axb3 Rxa8) 19...Bd7 20.Na3 (or 20.Nbc3 c4 21.bxc4 Rfc8) 20...a5 21.Nc4 Rfb8 and 22...a4 (pointed out by Isaak Boleslavsky).

18.Qxd6 Rfd8

Black has no other choice but to go into an endgame a pawn down.

19.Qxb6 Rxd1+ 20.Kxd1 axb6 21.Nec3 Be5 22.g3 g5 23.Re1 Rd8+ 24.Ke2

The king sets out to defend the kingside.

24...h5 25.Kf2 f6 26.Rd1 Ra8 27.a4 h4 28.Nd5 hxg3+ 29.hxg3 Bxd5

Forced, since the variation 29...Rb8 30.Ne7+ Kf7 31.Nc6 and 32.Nxe5+ led to even more unpleasant consequences for Black.

30.Rxd5 Kf7 31.Rd7+ Ke6 32.Rb7 Rb8 33.Rxb8

Since the black pawns are on the squares of the bishop’s color, White is happy to trade the rooks.

33...Bxb8 34.Nc3 Bc7 35.Nd5 Bd8 36.g4 f5 37.Ke2 Ke5 38.Kd3 Ke6 39.Ne3

Before the adjournment, Petrosian, of course, offers his opponent an opportunity to clarify his intentions for the f5-pawn.

39...f4

A basic mistake contradicting the general rule of the endgame according to which the weaker side should seek to reduce the number of pawns. Taking on g4 was necessary. It is easy to see that, in the position that arises after 39...fxg4 40.fxg4, White cannot play for *zugzwang*, and therefore, the way to victory lies in the advance b3-b4, i.e., is associated with another pawn exchange and the ensuing technical problems. That was Black’s real chance.

40.Nd5 Ke5 41.Kc3 Kd6 42.Kd3 Ke5 43.Nc3 Bf6 44.Ne4 Be7

White threatened not only to exchange on f6 but also to play 45.a5.

45.Kc3 Ke6 46.Nf2 Bf6+ 47.Kc2 Ke5 48.Kd3

Zugzwang.

48...Bd8 49.Kc3 Be7 50.Nd3+ Kd6 51.b4 Bf6+ 52.Kb3 Bd4 53.bxc5+ bxc5

Apparently, in his preliminary calculations, Black planned a transition into the pawn endgame: 53...Bxc5 54.Nxc5 Kxc5, relying on the potential strength of the f4-pawn. But now he noticed that after 55.Kc3 Kd6 56.Kd4 Kc6, White will play not 57.c5? , which indeed leads to a draw, but simply 57.Ke4 and 58.Kf5.

54.a5 Kc6 55.Ka4 Bf6 56.a6 Be7 57.a7 Kb7 58.Kb5 Kxa7 59.Nxc5 Black resigned.

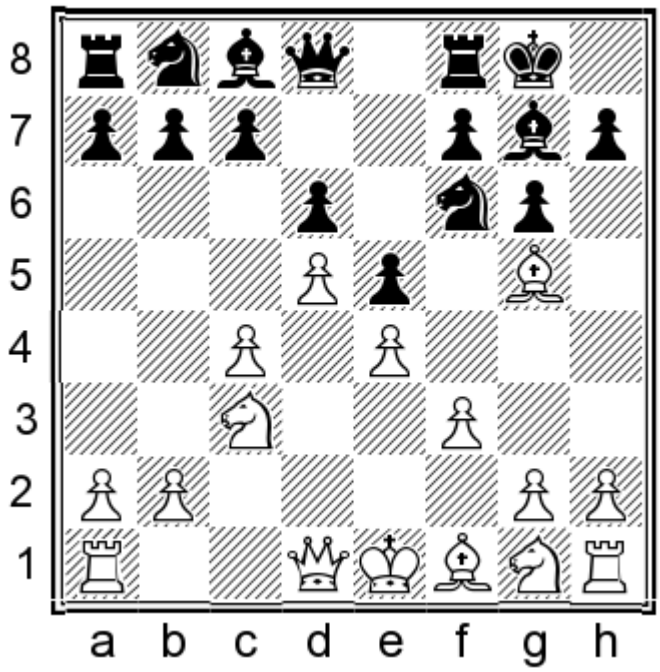
(90) B8.2 **Petrosian – Ciocaltea**
Bucharest 1953

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d6 3.Nc3 e5 4.d5 g6 5.e4 Bg7 6.f3 0-0

This is one of the rare cases in which castling is a significant inaccuracy. Modern theory indicates that 6...Nh5 is correct, clearing the way for the f7-pawn and at the same time creating the threat of ...Qh4+. Weaker is 6...Nfd7, with the idea of countering 7.Be3 with 7...Bh6 8.Bxh6 Qh4+ and 9...Qxh6, in view of the simple 7.Nh3 and then Nf2, emphasizing the lack of harmony in Black's camp.

Now, however, by pinning the knight, White seizes the strategic initiative for a long time.

7.Bg5



7...h6 8.Be3 c6 9.Qd2 Kh7 10.g4 Ne8 11.h4 a6 12.Nge2 b5 13.h5 g5 14.dxc6

Inconceivable! There is no doubt that Petrosian saw Black's threat to immobilize the pawn chains via ...b4 and ...c5. But the simple move 14.cxb5, stopping this effort and ensuring a tangible advantage for White, never even crossed his mind.

14...bxc4 15.Ng3 Nxc6 16.Bxc4 Nd4 17.0-0 Nc7 18.Rac1 Be6

Black's position is already better: his centralized knight on d4 is very strong, and its exchange will lengthen the diagonal for the King's Indian bishop. On the other hand, White's prospects in the center are not very clear. Both the exchange on e6 and the standard occupation of d5 with a piece do not give White any advantage. As usual, Petrosian's famous sense of danger does not fail him this time, and he decides to allow the move ...d5 to force simplifications.

19.Nce2 d5 20.exd5 Nxd5 21.Nxd4 Nxe3 22.Qxe3 Qxd4 23.Qxd4 exd4 24.Rfe1

The exchange on e6 would give the white knight an impregnable outpost on e4, but in this situation the blockading square d3 is much more appealing. Since the knight cannot get there anyway, White wants to force a bishop trade on the c4-square.

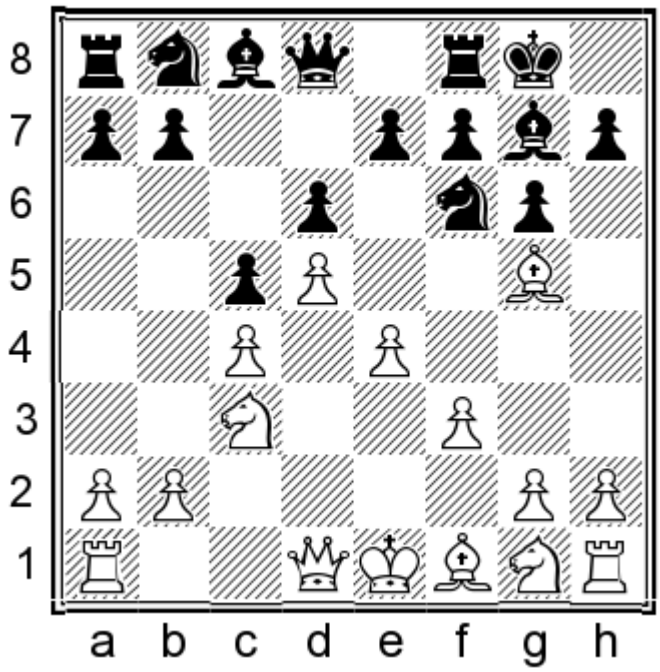
24...Bxc4 25.Rxc4 d3 26.b3 Rac8 27.Rd1 Rxc4 28.bxc4 Rd8

The exchange of the passed pawns, which will soon be inevitable, releases the remaining tension in the position. After a few moves, the opponents agree to a draw.

29.Kf1 Be5 30.Ne4 Bf4 31.c5 Kg7 32.c6 Draw.

(91) B8.3 **Petrosian – Suetin**
Match Moscow – Belarus
Moscow 1959

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 0-0 5.f3 d6 6.Bg5 c5 7.d5



7...e6

A theoretical expert, Suetin chooses the most principled and sharp continuation (7...h6 was game 89). The immediate counterattack of the center is one of the main modern ideas for Black in this variation.

8.Bd3

Later, the bishop will be attacked by the knight on this square. Therefore, better is 8.Nge2, as Petrosian played against Gligorić (94). In the future, the knight might go to g3, and the bishop will occupy the safe e2-square. Also possible is 8.Qd2, in order to develop the knight to h3 when the opportunity presents itself (for example, after 8...exd5 9.cxd5 Nbd7). However, all these opening tricks became known only later. When this game was played, such systems were considered pure improvisation where each player played at his own risk.

Overall, this time, White's creative quest proved fruitless. As far as I know, neither Petrosian nor any other grandmaster played like this ever again.

8...exd5 9.exd5

If White were able to establish his piece on the d5-square, it would make sense to continue 9.Nxd5. However, he cannot do it in view of the standard response 9...Be6, but not 9...Qa5+?! 10.b4! and Black's position is bad.

9...Nbd7 10.Nge2

A courageous decision. However, White did not have much of a choice. For example, 10.f4 (to prevent the knight leap to e5) 10...h6 11.Bh4 Re8+ 12.Nge2 g5! 13.fxg5 Ng4!, and White's position is probably already losing.

10...Ne5 11.0-0 h6 12.Bh4 Re8 13.b3 Nxd3 14.Qxd3 Bf5 15.Qd2 g5 16.Bf2 Qa5 17.Rad1 a6

Obviously, White has no advantage whatsoever. Moreover, the situation is taking an unpleasant turn for him. The bishop pair aimed at the queenside coupled with the breakthrough ...b5 can cause major trouble for White. Urgent action is needed!

18.h4 g4 19.Ng3 Bg6 20.f4 Nh5

Now Petrosian manages to start the basic defense mechanism, exchanging on a massive scale, and completely eliminates the danger.

21.Nce2 Qxd2 22.Rxd2 Nxg3 23.Nxg3 f5 24.Re1 Rxe1+ 25.Bxe1 Re8 26.Re2 Rxe2 27.Nxe2 Kf7 28.Bc3 Bxc3 29.Nxc3 Ke7

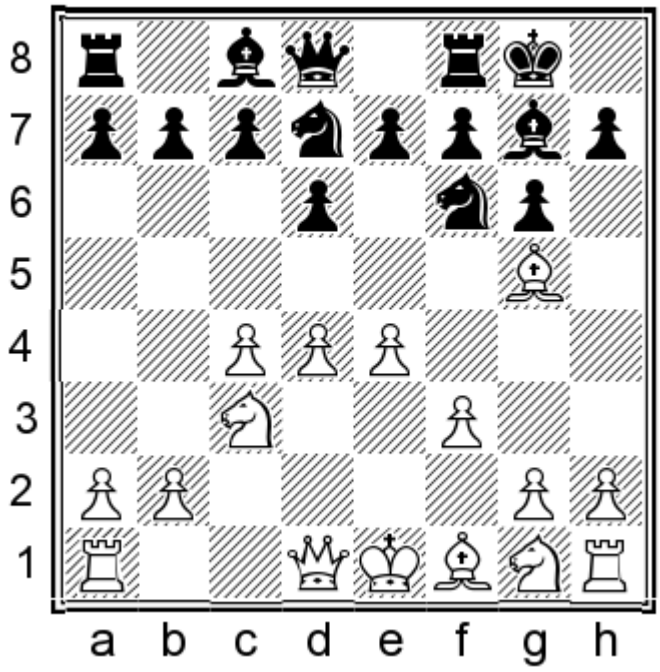
Salo Flohr once made a witty remark regarding such positions: “It is already a draw on the kingside.” Soon after, the truce extended to the entire board.

30.Kf2 Be8 31.Nd1 Bd7 32.Ke2 Kd8 33.Kd2 Kc7 34.Kc3 Kd8 35.Ne3 Ke7 36.a3 b6 37.b4 Kf8 38.Nf1 Ke7 39.Kb3 Kd8 40.Ng3 Ke7 41.a4 a5 Draw.

(92) B8.4 **Petrosian – Camara**
XXI Olympiad
Nice 1974

Even a mundane exchange can be the means to achieve a victory. Petrosian played a game that was typical in this respect at the preliminary stage of the XXI Olympiad. Knowing which pieces to exchange and which to keep, White went along with his opponent’s desire to trade pieces. The fight ended in the deep endgame, where Black had to resign despite material equality.

1.c4 g6 2.e4 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.f3 0-0 6.Bg5 Nbd7



7.Qd2 e5

Of course, tastes differ, but we still think that the knight development to d7 in this system goes better with the flank breakthrough ...c5. Nowadays, Black favors all kinds of Benko Gambit-like variations such as 7...a6 8.Nh3 c5 9.d5 b5 10.cxb5 axb5 11.Bxb5 Ba6 (Lutz-Kasparov, Horgen 1994) or 8.Nge2 c5 9.d5 b5 10.cxb5 Qa5 11.a4 Nb6

12.Nc1 axb5 13.Bxb5 Ba6 (Ivanchuk-Kasparov, Linares 1997).

8.d5 a6 9.Nge2 h6

Using the tactical nuance 10.Bxh6 Nxe4! or 10.Bh4 Nxe4, Black frees himself from an unpleasant pin.

10.Be3 Kh7

Black's play in the opening is similar to Petrosian's opponents' play in the games 66 and 90: the same carelessness and lack of a specific plan, the same painful search for counterplay in the transition to the middlegame. However, instead of this passive king move, better was 10...h5, avoiding g2-g4. Then, after 11.Bg5, for example, the placement of the a6-pawn would come in handy: 11...Qe8! followed by ...Nh7.

11.g4 Ng8

Also, worth considering was 11...Ne8, protecting the d6-pawn and preparing to play ...c5 when the opportunity presents itself, partly closing the queenside.

12.0-0-0 Ne7

Probably, Black planned 12...Bf6 with the idea of transferring the bishop to h4 or g5, but then noticed that this would be followed by 13.h4!, and the pawn is invincible: 13...Bxh4? 14.g5!.

13.Ng3 b6 14.Bd3 Nc5 15.Bc2 Bd7 16.h4 a5 17.h5 g5

The nature of the advance of the white pawns is not aggressive but preventive. Before breaking through on the queenside, Petrosian wants to secure his position on the kingside. Also, note the important feature of this pawn structure: while the f5-square is controlled by White, the similar f4-square is not available to the black knights.

18.b3 f6 19.Qe2 Nc8 20.a3 Qe7 21.Kd2

Just in case, the king leaves the zone of the future action.

21...Na7 22.Ra1 Rfb8 23.b4

The beginning of the breakthrough.

23...Nb7 24.Rhb1

In anticipation of the exchange of the rook pawns, the opponents resort to a well-known structure, setting up the heavy pieces on the a-file.

24...Bf8 25.Ke1 Qe8 26.Bd3 Nc8 27.Rc1 Ne7 28.Qd1 axb4

Strategically inevitable. The fate of the queens and rooks is now decided, and the importance of White's space advantage increases.

29.axb4 Rxa1 30.Rxa1 Ra8 31.Qc1 Qb8 32.Ra3 Nc8 33.Qa1

White's psychological victory: his queen is first to occupy the open line.

33...Rxa3 34.Qxa3 Kg7 35.Bc2 Kf7 36.Kd2 Ke8 37.Ba4

"Sentencing" Black to the exchange of his main white-square defender.

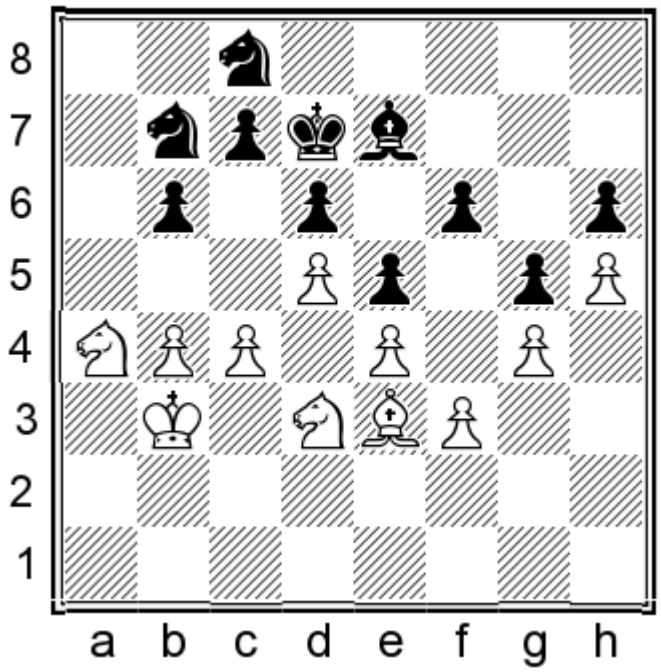
37...Qa7 38.Kc2

As if to show that White is in no hurry.

38...Kd8 39.Kb3 Bxa4+ 40.Qxa4 Qxa4+ 41.Kxa4 Na7

The adjourned position. Petrosian convincingly proves that White's advantage is sufficient to win.

42.Nb5 Nc8 43.Ne2 Kd7 44.Nc1 Be7 45.Nd3 Bf8 46.Nc3 Na7 47.Kb3 Nc8 48.Na4 Be7



So, all of the white pieces have occupied the perfect squares; the final and decisive phase of the breakthrough is starting.

49.c5! bxc5 50.bxc5 dxc5 51.Naxc5+ Nxc5+ 52.Nxc5+

The main subtlety of White's plan is that Black cannot get rid of the bad bishop, because the resulting pawn endgame is lost for Black. For example: 52...Bxc5 53.Bxc5 Nd6 54.Bxd6 Kxd6 (or 54...cxd6 55.Kb4 and 56.Ka5 and the white king invades) 55.Kb4 c6 56.Kc4 cxd5+ 57.exd5 Kd7 58.Kc5, etc.

52...Kd6 53.Na6 c6 54.Kc4 cxd5+ 55.exd5 Kd7 56.Nb8+ Kc7 57.Nc6 Bd6 58.Kd3 Kd7 59.Ke4 Ke8

To understand the further maneuvers, it is important to keep in mind that, from a technical point of view, White retains the best winning chances after any asymmetrical exchange; the bishop endgame is also acceptable, while both the knight and pawn endgames are still not clear enough.

60.Na5 Kf7 61.Nc4 Bb4 62.Bb6 Bf8 63.Bd8 Bc5 64.Kf5 Be7

A small illustration of what has been said above: 65.Bxe7 Nxe7+ 66.Ke4 Nc8 67.Ne3 Nd6+ 68.Kd3 Ke7 69.Nf5+ Nxf5 70.gxf5 Kd7 is a draw because the c4-square is inaccessible. For example: 71.Kc4? Kd6! or 71.Kc3 Ke7 72.Kb4? e4! 73.fxe4 g4.

65.Bc7! Na7!

This move deserves an exclamation point not because it can change the nearly predetermined outcome of the game but as an example of a fiendishly cunning trap. Should White hurry now, 66.d6?!, then after 66...Nb5! he can apparently no longer win! Of course, such tricks are memorable.

Petrosian did not want to make history and limited himself to the planned exchange.

66.Nd6+ Bxd6 67.Bxd6 Nb5 68.Bb4 Nd4+ 69.Ke4 Nb5 70.Be1

At the end there is a small instructive example of the battle of different minor pieces in the King's Indian endgame. As in the game against Bertok, Petrosian's bishop is stronger than the knight.

70...Ke7 71.Bd2 Nd4 72.Bb4+ Kf7 73.Bc5 Nb3 74.Bf2 Ke7

The activity of the black knight is temporary. The steed is chased back into its "stall" by the coordinated action of the white pieces.

75.Kf5 Kf7 76.Be3 Na1 77.Ke4 Nb3 78.Kd3 Na5 79.Bd2 Nb3

If 79...Nb7, then 80.Bb4 followed by Kc4-b5-c6.

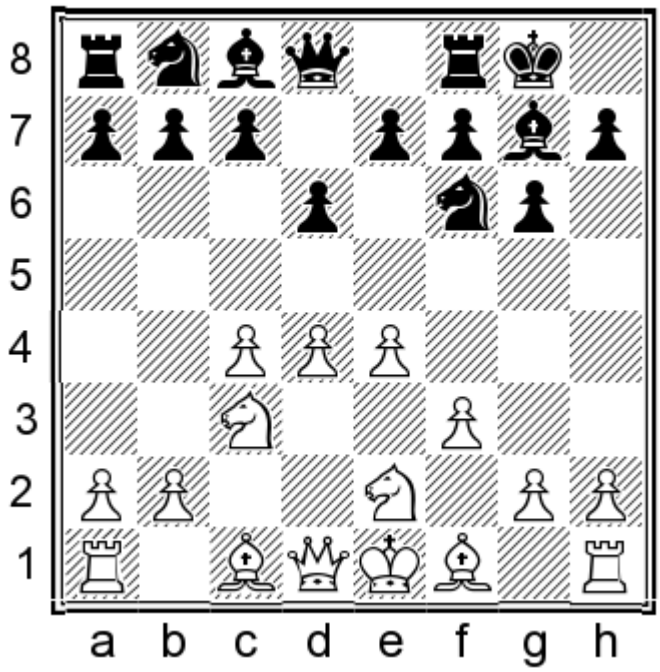
80.Be3 Na5 81.Bb6 Nb7

The noose tightens: 81...Nb3 82.Kc2.

82.Kc4 Ke7 83.Bc5+

Black resigned because of the possible variation 83...Kd7 84.Bf8 Nd6+ 85.Kc5 Nf7 86.Bg7 Ke7 87.Kc6 Nd8+ 88.Kc7 Nf7 89.Bxh6!, and so on.

B9

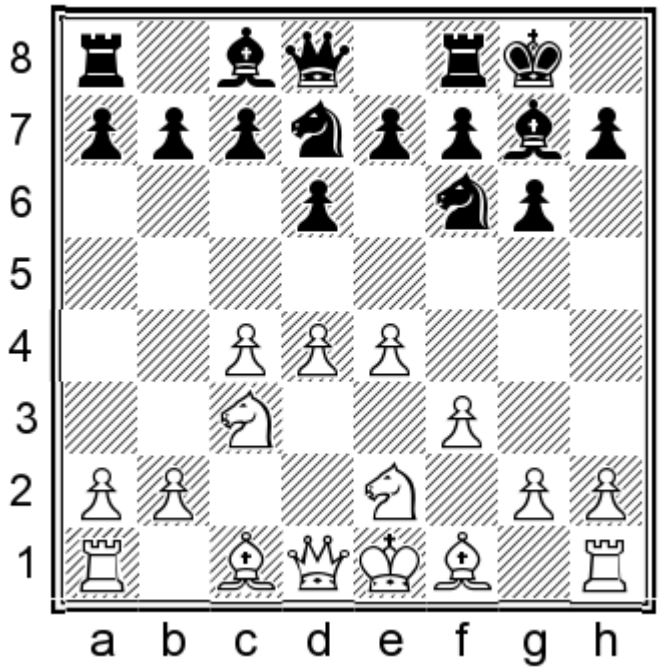


Black to move

The advantage of this move order over the conventional 6.Be3, which was especially popular for White in the late 1950s, is that it allows him to mask his opening intentions until due time.

(93) B9.1 **Petrosian – Reshevsky**
Los Angeles 1963

1.c4 Nf6 2.d4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Nge2 Nbd7



A fundamental question of the opening strategy is which pawn should attack White's center, the central or the flank pawn. The practical Reshevsky postpones the decision until the next move. 6...c5, as recommended by modern theory, was played in games 94, 96 and 97.

7.Bg5

For 7.Be3, see game 54.

7...c5 8.d5 Ne5

Another interesting attempt to lure White from the ultra-solid Sämisch setups and, after weakening his central pawns, transfer the game into the “Indian jungle.” In order to achieve this goal, Black is even willing to sacrifice several tempi. Later, this idea found many supporters. For example, here is the beginning of the game Beliavsky-Nunn (Wijk aan Zee 1985): 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 Nbd7 7.Qd2 c5 8.d5 Ne5!? 9.h3?! (9.Bg5) 9...Nh5 10.Bf2 f5 11.exf5 Rxf5 12.g4? Rxf3! 13.gxh5 Qf8 14.Ne4 Bh6 15.Qc2 Qf4! 16.Ne2 Rxf2!! 17.Nxf2 Nf3+. This inspired attack brought the English grandmaster a win on the 27th move.

9.Ng3 h6 10.Bd2 h5

A passive-aggressive move typical of such positions. By the way, the threat is 11...h4 12.Nge2 Nd3 checkmate! White can reply 11.h4, of course, but then he would have to say goodbye to the move f3-f4.

11.Be2 e6 12.f4 Neg4 13.h3 Nh6

It might seem that Black’s opening idea did not work out. After all, the knight expedition to h6 looks suspicious, at the very least. However, this evaluation is one-sided. It is important to remember that the knight on the edge of the board supports the move ...f5 and the attacking mechanism ...Nfg4(d7), ...Bd4+, ...Qh4, and therefore, it can easily turn into a combat-ready piece.

14.0-0 exd5 15.cxd5 Re8 16.Bf3

A change of the guard. The bishop comes to the e4-pawn’s defense, giving way to the knight, which will keep watch over the d4-square.

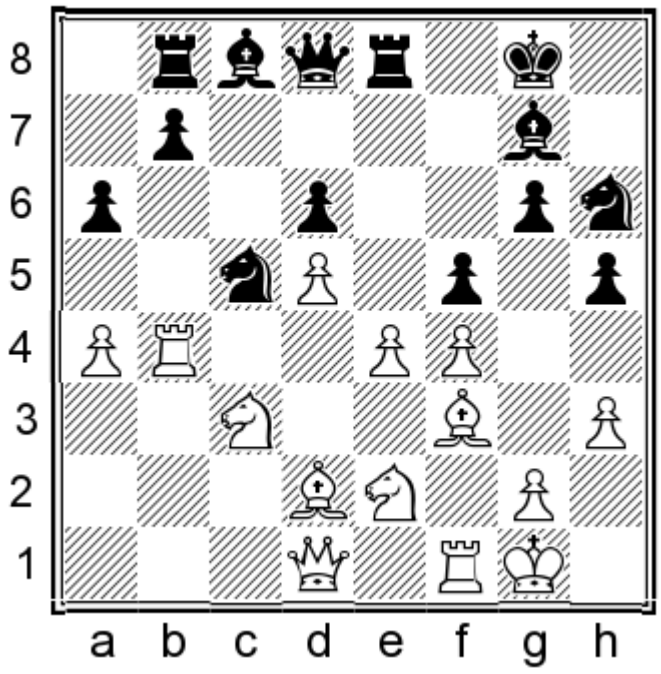
16...Nd7 17.Nge2 Rb8 18.a4 a6 19.Rb1

The continuation 19.g4 hxg4 20.hxg4 Qh4 would have been very risky.

19...f5 20.b4

A minority attack of sorts, in order to preempt possible activity by Black on the queenside.

20...cxb4 21.Rxb4 Nc5



22.e5! Nd3!

A short tactical rush, which, like a drop of water, reflects the opponents' creative individualities. The tempting variation 22...dxe5 23.fxe5 Nd3, which looks natural for Black, was in fact a cunning trap that Petrosian artfully wove into the strategic outline of the game: 24.Bxh6! Nxb4 25.Bxg7 Kxg7 26.e6, and the black king will inevitably perish, left alone with the white pieces (besides 27.Qd4+, White threatens 27.Nf4 or 27.Bxh5 followed by Nd4). At the same time, Reshevsky was also able to confirm his reputation as one of the best tacticians, refuting this idea with a counter-combination that he planned in advance, which is precise to a tempo.

23.Rd4 dxe5 24.Rxd3 e4 25.Re3 exf3 26.Rxe8+ Qxe8 27.Rxf3 b5

As a result, Black gave back the piece and greatly simplified the position. The game gradually equalizes and nears a draw.

28.axb5 axb5 29.Qb3 Nf7 30.Re3 Qf8 31.Na2 Nd6 32.Bb4 Qd8 33.Bc3 Nc4 34.Bxg7 Kxg7

Of course not 34...Nxe3? 35.Qxe3 Ra8 (35...Kxg7 36.Qe5+) 36.Bd4 Rxa2 37.Qe5, and White has an attack.

35.Qc3+ Kf7 36.Rd3 Qb6+ 37.Kh2 Bd7 38.Ng1 Qf6 The opponents agreed to a draw.

(94) B9.2 **Petrosian – Gligorić**
Los Angeles 1963

In his lifetime, Petrosian played a large number of intense, exciting, and memorable games, but this important game was especially unforgettable for him because it was the very first competition in which he played as the world champion. The annotations are by Tigran Petrosian

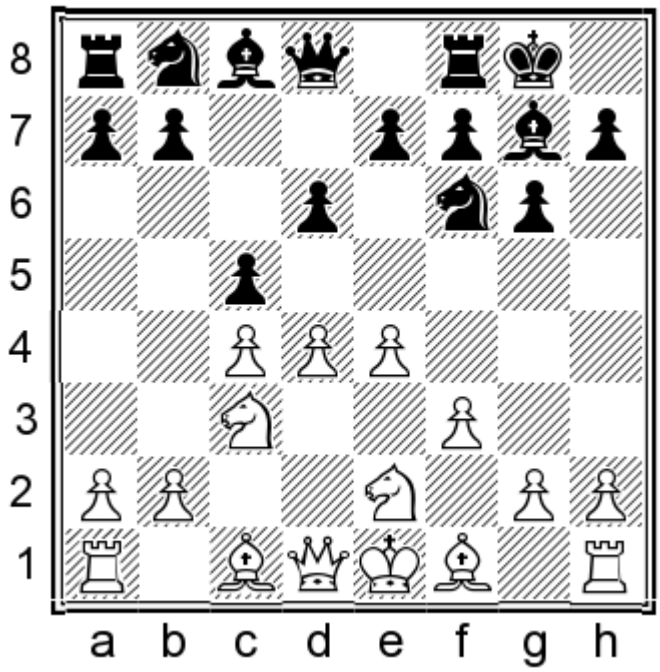
This game was played in the second round of the tournament of eight grandmasters (the official name of the tournament was the First Piatigorsky Cup – Igor Yanvarjov). My tournament situation at the time was far from great: I had 1 win, 1 loss, and 6 draws, or 4 points total, and was tied for 4th-5th place in the tournament standings. It was clear that I needed to play all of the remaining games for a win without being afraid to take risks.

I have played a lot of games against Gligorić, most of which ended decisively. It is worth noting that our game in the first round ended in failure for me.

1.c4 g6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 Bg7

While the Yugoslav grandmaster varies between the Ruy Lopez (in games against the stronger opponents) and the Sicilian Defense (playing for a win against less dangerous opponents) against 1.e4, I could be sure that in response to 1.c4, 1.d4 or 1.Nf3, he would inevitably play the King's Indian Defense.

4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Nge2 c5



Not only did Gligorić thoroughly learn his somewhat limited opening repertoire a long time ago, he also constantly monitors the development of different ideas in his favorite openings and their interpretation by his rivals, constantly making adjustments. This time too, knowing that I have lately had a weakness for developing the bishop to g5, he quickly, confidently, and correctly played the opening. It is safe to assume that this was the result of his home preparation.

7.d5 e6 8.Bg5

Anyway!

8...h6 9.Be3 exd5 10.cxd5 b6 11.g4

White is on a very dangerous path. The outline of the plan associated with the pawn advance on the kingside is not clear yet, while Black's counterplay on the queenside and the central e-file will come soon.

11...h5

If patents were given in chess, Gligorić would be the first candidate to receive the copyright certificate for "the move ...h5 that nips in the bud White's attempts to attack in the Sämisch System of the King's Indian Defense." Thanks to Gligorić, this seemingly unjustified attack on the flank, where the opponent's right for activity is almost traditionally recognized, became one of the methods to counter White's attacking ideas.

12.g5 Nfd7 13.f4

After 13.h4 Ne5, the knight's position would basically be impregnable. The only opportunity to chase it away, with the f-pawn, would allow the knight to gain a foothold on g4, in the immediate vicinity of White's kingside, which was opened up by the advance of the pawns.

13...Ba6!

A very interesting and unconventional plan. In such positions, the a-pawn usually supports the advance of its friend, the b-pawn. Now Black threatens the raid ...b5-b4, disturbing the c3-knight, the defender of the e4-pawn, White's footing in the center. At the same time, the bishop on a6 occupies a rather good square.

14.a4 Bc4!

Having escaped via the a6-square to freedom, the bishop gives way to the knight.

15.Bh3

The intensity of the battle increases with each move.

15...Re8

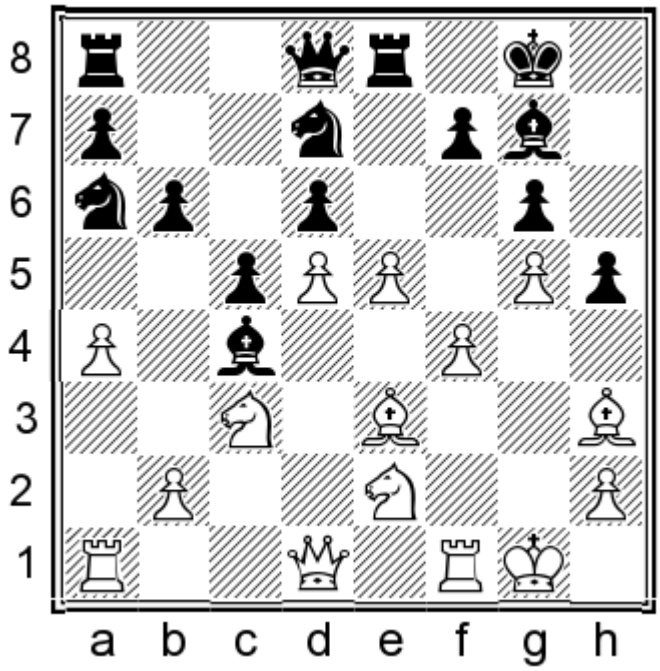
Black probably thought that this move condemns his opponent to passive defense because the e4-pawn is in danger.

16.0-0!

A defining moment. If White were to make any "natural" move like 16.Bg2 or 16.Ng3, trying to save the e-pawn, Black's pressure would quickly lead to success. Advancing my pawns so far, I thought that, despite requiring some care, they would provide excellent opportunities to complicate the game. For example, right now, it seems that after 16...Bxe2 17.Qxe2 Bxc3 18.bxc3 Rxe4, or 16...Bxc3 17.bxc3 Rxe4, which looks more appropriate, Black gains a material advantage. But it is not so simple. In the first variation, 19.f5 gives White sufficient counter-chances, and after 16...Bxc3, I was going to play 17.Nxc3 Bxf1 18.Qxf1 with real compensation for the exchange. I should also draw the reader's attention to the possibility of the move e4-e5, followed by Ne4.

After lengthy deliberation, Gligorić refused to accept gifts in favor of completing his development on the queenside. The correct solution!

16...Na6 17.e5!?



All paths to retreat have long been cut off. Black's reaction turned out to be somewhat unexpected for me. I cautiously awaited 17...Nc7, not quite clear on how to continue for the first time in this game. Had Black played this move, I think this game would have provided yet another illustration of how overly spirited play for a win leads to a

loss. 17...dxe5 18.f5 e4 19.fxg6 fxg6 20.Be6+ Rxe6 was also quite good.

17...Nxe5?

It will take quite some time before White will be able to create a situation in which each move will make his material advantage more tangible. Black's two pawns for the knight and the good position of his minor pieces, especially the bishops, create the illusion that Black is fine. However, after the piece sacrifice, White's chances are clearly better.

18.fxe5 Bxe5

I also considered the possibility 18...Rxe5 19.Bf4 Rxg5+, intending to reply 20.Kh1 because the rook has nowhere to go.

19.Rf3 Nc7?

Black's chances lie in piece play, so the active 19...Nb4 was stronger. The pawn advance started by Gligorić is not dangerous for White because it is very slow.

20.Qd2 Qe7 21.Bg2 a6 22.Rb1 b5 23.axb5

Better than 23.b3 Bxe2 24.Nxe2 Rab8.

23...axb5 24.b3 Bxe2 25.Nxe2 b4 26.Rbf1 Ra1 27.Nc1

The exchange of one pair of rooks would have been to Black's advantage because it would have freed him from having to take care of the f7-pawn.

27...Nb5

A curious moment. During the game, I took this move as a gesture of despair. After the game it became clear that, despite the loss of the f7-pawn, Gligorić expected to retain the initiative because White's pieces occupy inactive positions. While this is true, now White is basically up a piece, and it is not surprising that he is able to quickly consolidate his position. However, even the best reply, 27...Rf8 28.Bh3, with the threat of Rxf7 and Be6, locks the knight in place and promises Black little joy.

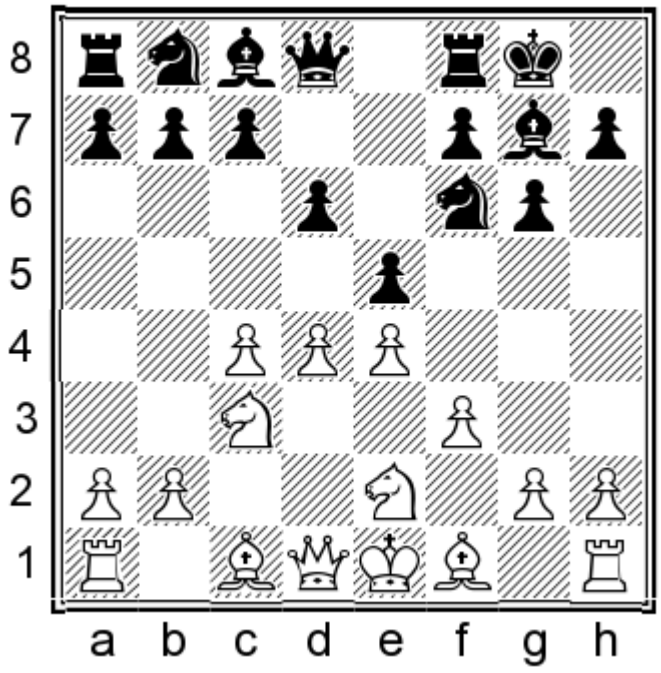
28.Rxf7 Qxf7 29.Rxf7 Kxf7 30.Bf1 Nd4 31.Kg2 Nf5 32.Bd3!

A small tactical trick allows White to simplify the position: 32...Bc3 33.Qf2 Rxe3 34.Bxf5 is hopeless for Black, as is, to be fair, the actual continuation of the game.

32...Kg7 33.Bxf5 gxf5 34.Qd3 Rf8 35.Bd2 f4 36.Kf3 Ra7 37.Qe4 Ra3 38.Qc4 Ra7 39.Qc2 Re7 40.Nd3 Bd4 41.Qc4 Be3 42.Bxe3 Rxe3+ 43.Kf2 Rh3 44.Kg1 Rf5 45.Qe4 Rxg5+ 46.Kf1 Rg6 47.Nxf4 Rf6 48.Kg2 Black resigned.

(95) B9.3 **Petrosian – Ozanić**
Vinkovci 1970

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Nge2 e5



7.Bg5 h6

On the one hand, the bishop's fate is determined right away, but on the other hand Black resigns the opening duel for the tempo Qd2.

The once-fashionable "surrender of the center" 7...exd4 nowadays is almost never played because Black takes on too many commitments. The positional pawn sacrifice 7...Nc6 8.d5 Nd4 became the subject of an interesting argument in game 98.

8.Be3 Nc6 9.d5 Na5

One of the possible approaches to "the problem of the knight" in the King's Indian Defense. Compared with the purely defensive position on e7, here it has more opportunities for activity. In the worst case, after ...c5 and ...b6, it can move to b7, where its position is also quite good because it supports the c5- and d6-pawns, which are the most important in this structure.

10.Ng3 c5 11.Qd2 Kh7 12.Bd3 a6 13.Rb1 b6

Black has passed the first hurdle. In case of 13...Bd7? 14.b4 cxb4 15.Rxb4, he would have to part with a pawn because of the threat 16.Bb6. Now, after 14.b4, he has the reply 14...Nb7.

14.0-0 Bd7 15.b3 Rb8 16.Rb2!

Play characteristic of the style of the ninth world champion. The reader probably expected the beginning of an energetic offensive after the move b2-b4, which was also very strong. However, White does not hurry. Ultimately, he seeks to achieve the same result, but he wants to further strengthen his position by doubling rooks on the b-file. Incidentally, in his famous game against Gufeld (Moscow 1961 – see the second part of the book), Petrosian acted similarly and succeeded.

Botvinnik was among the first to notice this feature of Petrosian's play: "Petrosian has a unique chess talent. Like Tal, he does not try to play the position the way his predecessors did. But while Tal tried to get dynamic positions, Petrosian created positions which unfolded as if in slow motion. It is difficult to attack his pieces: the attacking pieces advance slowly, getting stuck in the swamp that surrounds Petrosian's camp. If one finally manages to create an attack, it is either in time trouble or fatigue takes over." There is also another consequence of Petrosian's tactics not mentioned by Botvinnik. Petrosian's opponents often took his leisurely style for indecision, conducted reckless

raids, and perished ingloriously, as happens in this game.

16...b5

Petrosian has been eagerly awaiting this pseudoactive move, having prepared a strong positional response (see White's 18th move).

17.cxb5 axb5 18.b4! c4

Taking on b4 would mean certain death for the b5-pawn.

19.Bc2 Nb7

This position is reminiscent of some variations of the Ruy Lopez where the queen's knight on b7 disrupts normal "blood circulation" in his own camp. Even the fact that Black has a protected passed pawn and White has a backwards a-pawn does not help Black. On the very next move, White immediately plays a2-a4, taking away the support of the c4-pawn, and after that, winning it is only a matter of time.

20.a4 bxa4 21.Nxa4 Ne8 22.Nc3 Ra8 23.Rc1 h5 24.Nf1

The last two moves show that White seriously intends to take on the c4-pawn in the immediate future.

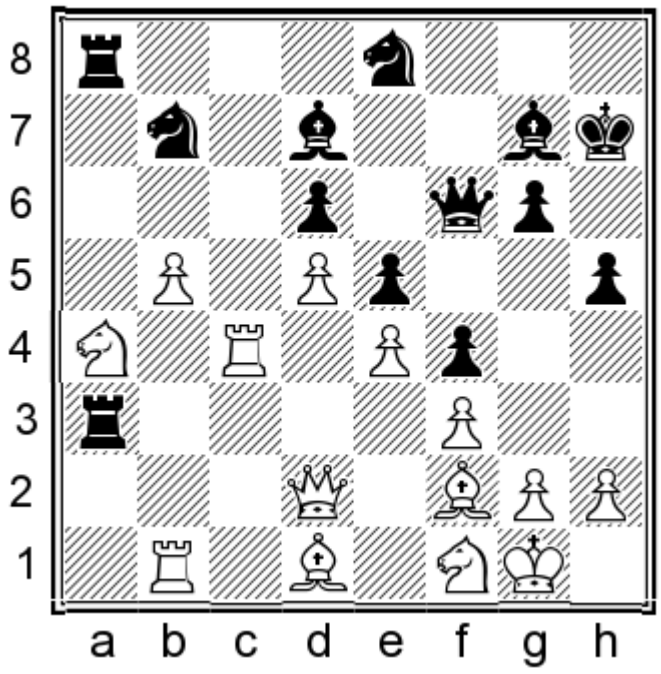
24...Nc7 25.b5

Of course, White should not allow the black pieces to gain a foothold on the b5-square.

25...Ra3 26.Rcb1 f5

Realizing that the battle is lost and that strategic and material losses are inevitable, black starts "scaring" the enemy.

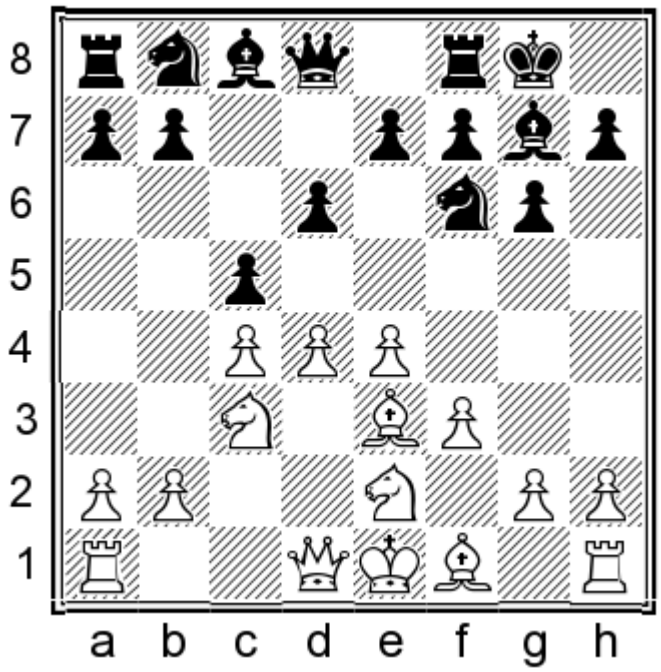
27.Bd1 f4 28.Bf2 Qf6 29.Rb4 Rfa8 30.Rxc4 Ne8 31.Na4!



Believe it or not, the rook occupying the open line is trapped. Unable to find a defense from the threat of 32.Qb2, Black resigned.

(96) B9.4 **Petrosian – Vukić**

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Nge2 c5 7.Be3



Temporarily maintaining the tension, White makes his opponent choose: relinquish the center (...cxd4) or play ...b6, taking away access to the a5-square, which is usually occupied by the black queen after the white pawn advances to d5.

7...b6 8.Qd2 Nc6 9.d5

Waiting any longer does not make sense, since Black has many useful moves at his disposal (for example, 9.Rd1 a6 or 9...e6).

9...Ne5 10.Ng3

White's perpetual problem in this variation is where to place the king's knight, the piece that until now has served a purely defensive function. In the game Evans-Petrosian (game 97), which was played six months later at a tournament in San Antonio, the American grandmaster chose an alternative route: 10.Nc1.

10...e6 11.Bg5 exd5 12.Nxd5

As soon becomes clear, this is an absolutely harmless attempt. Therefore the standard 12.cxd5 was better.

12...Be6 13.Be2

13.Bxf6 Bxf6 14.Nxf6+ Qxf6 did not help because of the weakness of the dark squares in White's camp, while recklessly going after the pawn could even result in the loss of the queen: 15.Qxd6 Rfd8 16.Qc7 Rd7.

13...Bxd5 14.cxd5

The move by White is associated with the interesting but risky plan of a kingside attack. Another noteworthy possibility, 14.exd5, gives the green light to an exchange of the heavy pieces, with the hope of exploiting the power of the bishop pair in the endgame.

14...a6

It becomes clear that White cannot stop the move ...b5. For example: 15.a4 b5! 16.axb5 axb5 17.Rxa8 Qxa8 18.Bxb5 Rb8, followed by ...Qa1+. After the natural 15.0-0 b5, White risks ending up in a worse position, given the bad placement of his knight on g3. This explains Petrosian's next aggressive move.

15.h4!? b5

Again, the correct response. After 15...h5 16.f4 Ned7 17.0-0 b5, White has excellent attacking chances associated with the idea of e4-e5, ...dxe5, f4-f5.

16.h5 Re8 17.Kf1 Qb6

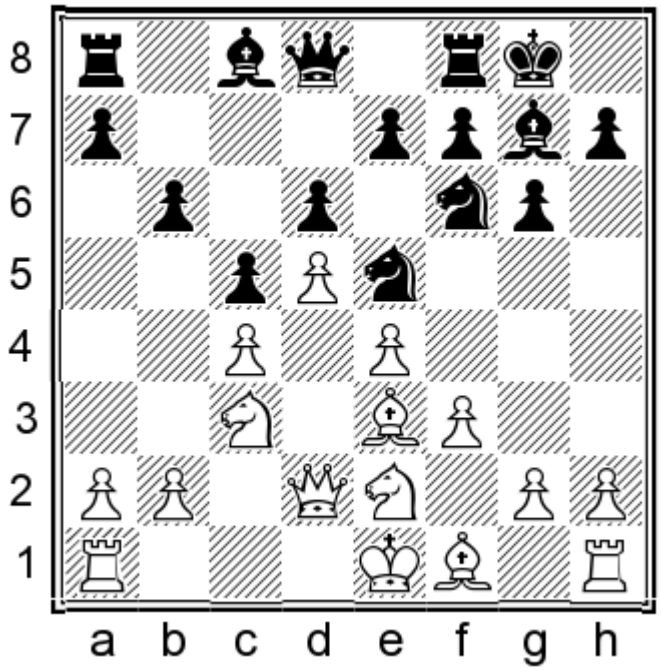
Black prepares to transfer the knight to f8. Meanwhile, just in case, White moves his king away from the unpleasant "X-ray" by the rook on the e-file.

18.Rc1 Nfd7 19.b3 Nf8 20.Bh6 Bxh6 21.Qxh6 Qd8 22.Rh3 Qf6 23.Nf5 Ned7

In this complex situation where each side has its own "trump cards," the opponents chose not to risk it. Draw.

(97) B9.5 **Evans – Petrosian**
San Antonio 1972

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.d4 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Nge2 c5 7.Be3 b6 8.Qd2 Nc6 9.d5 Ne5



10.Nc1

In the present game, Petrosian refuted this move, so White's further search for an advantage was connected with the continuations 10.Ng3 and 10.Nf4.

10...e6 11.Be2 Ba6!?

An important improvement of Black's play. For comparison, here is an example where Black does not energetically undermine the opponent's plans: 11...exd5 12.cxd5 a6 13.a4 Qc7 14.0-0 Rb8 15.N1a2 Ne8 16.Rac1 Qe7 17.b4! f5 18.Rfd1 Qf7 19.exf5 gxf5 20.a5 cxb4 21.Nxb4 bxa5 22.Nc6, and White has a strategically winning position (Minogina-Chiburdanidze, Tbilisi 1979).

12.b3 exd5 13.exd5

After 13.cxd5 Bxe2 14.N1xe2 a6, the bishop trade plays into Black's hands. Black soon carries out ...b5 and achieves comfortable play.

13...Nfd7!

A logical step of the maneuver that started on the 11th move. Giving way to the pawn, which will take control of the e4-square, the knight at the same time prepares to replace his friend in the center. White does not dare play 14.f4 because of the strong response 14...Qf6!, and the knight on c3 hangs. That is where the weakening move b2-b3 plays its role.

14.0-0 f5

Of course not 14...Qf6? 15.Bg5, and White wins.

15.Bg5 Qc7 16.Bh6

Having found himself in a slightly worse position, White takes the path of simplification, starting by exchanging the King's Indian bishop.

16...Bxh6 17.Qxh6 Rae8 18.Nd3 Nxd3 19.Bxd3 Ne5 20.Bc2 b5!

Excellent! Petrosian would not be Petrosian if he could not draw the maximum benefit from the bishop's position on a6. Accepting the sacrifice is dangerous. For example, 21.Nxb5 Bxb5 22.cxb5 Qa5 23.a4 Qc3, followed by Qd4+xd5, with a solid positional advantage for Black. For similar reasons, White also refuses to take the pawn on the next move.

21.cxb5 Qa5 22.Qd2 Bxb5

Black reached a nice position, but it is difficult to play it for a win. Evans exchanges another couple of rooks and regroups the kingside pawns, restricting his opponent's minor pieces.

23.Rfe1 Bd7 24.f4 Ng4 25.h3 Nf6 26.Bd3 Nh5 27.Rxe8 Rxe8 28.Rc1

Black threatened 28...Nxf4.

28...Qd8 29.Be2

Disarming the foray ...Qh4.

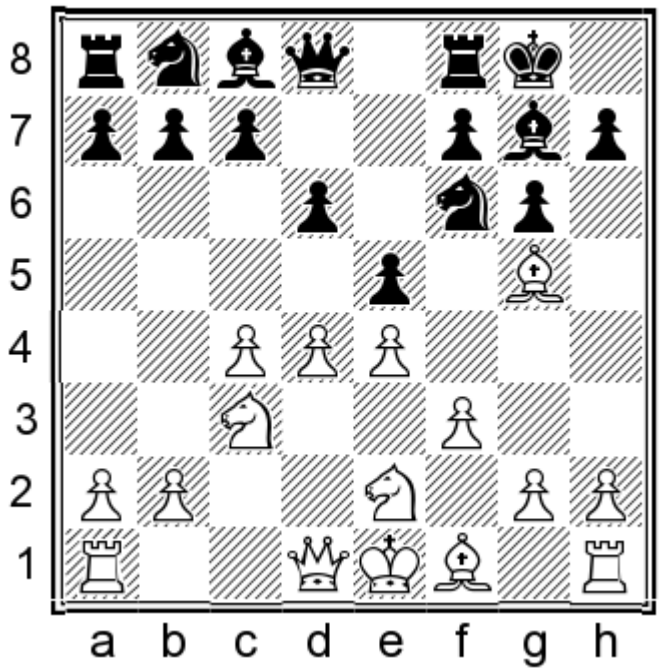
29...Nf6 30.Bf3 Qb6 31.Kh2 Qb4 32.Nb1 a5

Inviting the opponent into an endgame with a black pawn on b4, but Larry Evans is too experienced to give such chances.

33.Rc4 Qxd2 34.Nxd2 Bb5 The players agreed to a draw.

(98) B9.6 **Petrosian – Kochyev**
USSR Cup
Ordzhonikidze 1978

1.d4 g6 2.c4 Bg7 3.Nc3 d6 4.e4 e5 5.Nge2 Nf6 6.f3 0-0 7.Bg5



7...Nc6 8.d5 Nd4

A surprise. The Leningrad grandmaster, who was always known for his “pacifist” views, plays the role of troublemaker that is unusual for him, choosing a boisterous variation with a pawn sacrifice.

9.Nxd4 exd4 10.Qxd4

A principled albeit forced decision. In the first game in this variation, Furman-Gurgenidze (Moscow 1957), White did not dare to take the pawn right away: 10.Nb5?!, and after 10...h6 11.Bh4 (if 11.Bxf6 Bxf6 12.Nxd4, then 12...c5 13.dxc6 Qa5+ and 14...Qb6) 11...c5! 12.Bd3 (no better is 12.dxc6 bxc6 13.Nxd4 Qa5+ 14.Qd2 Qxd2+ 15.Kxd2 Nxe4+, with a clear advantage for Black) 12...a6 13.Na3 g5 14.Bf2 Nd7, he found himself in a difficult position.

10...h6 11.Bxf6 Bxf6 12.Qd2

A critical position. The correctness of the positional sacrifice offered by Black largely depends on its assessment. What is more important, the prospects of Black’s remaining dark-square bishop or White’s extra central pawn?

12...c6

The most principled continuation. After 12...c5, White could have chosen the less risky plan with kingside castling.

13.Bd3 Qb6 14.0-0-0 a5

A tricky move. If earlier White could not take on h6 for obvious reasons, now it seems possible. Black’s inconspicuous idea was to follow up 15.Qxh6 with 15...a4!, with a dangerous initiative. For example: 16.a3 Bxc3 17.bxc3 Qb3 or 16.Qd2 a3 17.b3 Qd4 18.Kc2 cxd5 19.exd5 (19.cxd5 Bd7) 19...b5!. But Petrosian is alert, as always.

15.Kb1 a4 16.a3 Bg7 17.h4 Qd4 18.Qc2 cxd5

More than one chess game has been lost as a result of a momentary overestimation of one’s own position and underestimation of the opponent’s position. Black wants to squeeze more out of this position than it can give. After 18...c5, followed by ...Bd7, he would have had some compensation for the pawn.

19.Bf1 Qc5 20.Rxd5!

A strong and far from obvious maneuver: the white rook moves to the b-file, and winning the a4-pawn becomes only a matter of time. In case of the standard 20.Nxd5 Be6, which Kochyev probably counted on, Black would have a decent position, retaining the possibility of the breakthroughs ...b5 and ...f5.

20...Qc6 21.Rb5 Bd7 22.h5 g5 23.Nd5 Kh8 24.Nb6!

The simplest way to convert the advantage. Transitioning the game into an opposite-color bishop endgame, White achieves a strategically winning position because Black cannot save his weak pawns.

24...Ra6 25.Nxd7 Qxd7 26.Be2 Qc7 27.Rd1 Rfa8 28.Rdd5 Be5 29.Rb4 R8a7 30.Qd2

Planning to increase the pressure by means of Rbb5, Qb4.

30...Kg7 31.Bd3 Rc6 32.Rbb5 Rc5 33.Qb4 Rxb5 34.Rxb5 Bd4 35.Rd5

The decisive move. If 35...Bc5, White will direct the attack at the black king: 35...Bc5 36.Qc3+ f6 37.Rf5 followed by g2-g3, f3-f4, etc. In case of the bishop retreat to e5, Black's queenside would become vulnerable.

35...Be5 36.Bc2 Qc6 37.Rb5

Petrosian's light-square strategy triumphed.

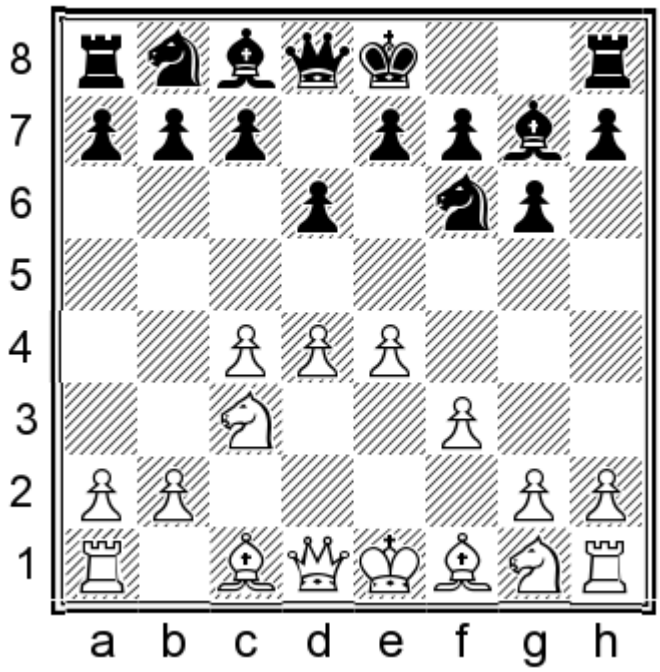
37...Bd4 38.Bxa4 Be5?

A blunder in a hopeless position.

39.Ra5 Black resigned.

One cannot help but feel that, in this game, the light squares turned out to be more important than the dark squares!

B10



Black to move

At the end of the second chapter, we will discuss cases in which Black chose to delay castling for one reason or another. The most popular reply is 5...e5 (games 99, 100, 101, 104).

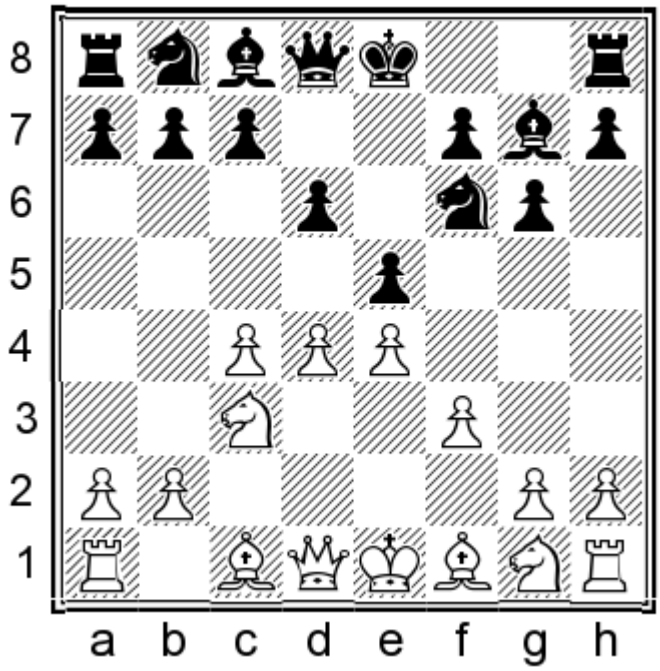
Other possibilities are 5...a6 (game 103),

5...c5 (game 105),

and 5...Nbd7 (game 102).

(99) B10.1 Olivera – Petrosian
USSR-Uruguay Match
Montevideo 1954

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 e5



6.dxe5 dxe5 7.Qxd8+ Kxd8

Bypassing the middlegame, the game immediately went from the opening stage into a complicated endgame. Modern openings allow such an interpretation, but in this case it does not look particularly dangerous for Black: his king finds reliable shelter on the c7-square, while White's initiative quickly evaporates. Did the Uruguayan player foresee this, or maybe he believed that it would be easier to draw without queens?

8.Bg5 c6 9.0-0-0+

This impulsive check only plays into the opponent's hands. From the point of view of achieving equality, more logical was 9.f4 Kc7 10.fxe5 Ng4 11.Nf3 Nxe5 12.Bf4 Re8 13.Be2 Nbd7 14.0-0 f6, as in the game Lutikov-Gufeld (Tbilisi 1959), for example.

9...Kc7 10.Bd3 Be6

So, what was supposed to happen did happen: the exchange operation undertaken by White, like any attempt to avoid a principled battle in the opening, led to the loss of the first-move advantage.

11.Nge2 Nbd7 12.Be3 Bf8 13.b3 Bc5 14.Bxc5 Nxc5 15.Bc2 a5 16.a4

Having lost the initiative, White becomes nervous. The threat of 16...a4 was not so serious. Now Petrosian trades rooks, making the weakness of the dark squares in the opponent's camp even more pronounced.

16...Rad8 17.Rxd8 Rxd8 18.Rd1 Rxd1+

In the minor piece endgame, Black has an obvious advantage.

19.Bxd1 Nfd7 20.Bc2 Kd6 21.Kb2 f6 22.Nd1 Na6 23.Kc3 Ndc5 24.Ne3 Bf7 25.g3 Nc7 26.Ng4 Ke7 27.f4

Inconsistent. After starting to build a defensive pawn wall, White suddenly changed his mind and began to play actively. This "mix of genres" never does any good, especially when defending. If White had chosen a wait-and-see approach, Black would still have difficulties converting his advantage.

27...h5 28.Ne3?

To add insult to injury, White makes a tactical mistake. His knight should have retreated to f2 to support the central pawn.

28...Ne8

Black threatens ...Nd6, winning the e4-pawn. 29.fxe5 fxe5 30.g4 is still followed by 30...Nd6, with the same result (31.Ng3 h4 or 31.gxh5 Ndxe4+, etc.).

29.b4

Casting caution to the wind.

29...axb4+ 30.Kxb4 Na6+ 31.Kc3

Again illogical. White should have continued the aggressive plan: 31.Ka5. For example, 31...Nd6 32.Kb6 Nxc4+ 33.Nxc4 Bxc4 34.Nc3 Nb4 35.Bd1, with well-known counter-chances due to the king's activity.

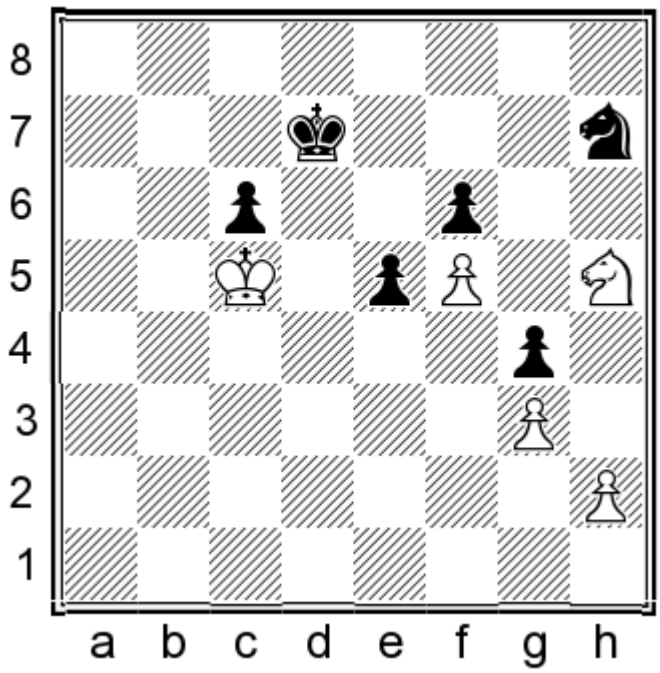
31...Nd6

Creating the same threat in a slightly different way, 32...Nc5, but now White is already defenseless.

32.f5 g5 33.Nc1 Nc5 34.Nb3 Ndxe4+ 35.Kb4 Kd6 36.Bxe4 Nxe4 37.c5+ Kc7 38.Nc4 Bxc4

Black wins a pawn; now it is time to trade pieces.

39.Kxc4 g4 40.Kd3 Ng5 41.Nd2 b5 42.cxb6+ Kxb6 43.Nc4+ Kc5 44.a5 Kb5 45.Nd6+ Kxa5 46.Ne8 Nh7 47.Kc4 Kb6 48.Ng7 Kc7 49.Kc5 Kd7 50.Nxh5



Mikhail Botvinnik suggested a simple method to evaluate knight endgames. for example. "a knight endgame is like a pawn endgame." According to this formula, Black should win easily: he has an extra protected passed pawn, not to mention the g4-pawn holds two of the opponent's pawns. But how exactly can Black win?

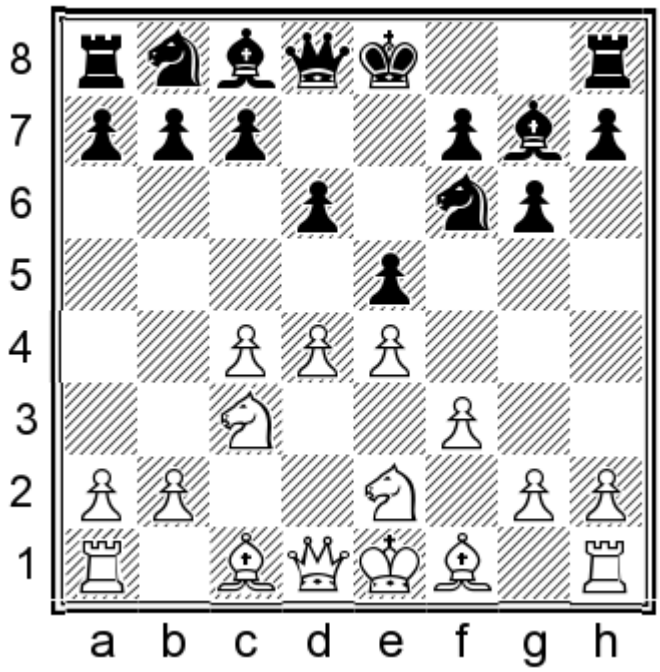
50...Ke7!

Here is how: Black's king goes to the f7-square, "arresting" the h5-knight, the knight moves from h7 to g7, capturing the h2-pawn *en route*, and this indeed becomes a pawn endgame!

51.Kxc6 Kf7 52.Kd5 Ng5 53.Kd6 Nf3 54.Kd5 Nxh2 55.Ke4 Nf3 56.Kd5 Nd4 57.Ke4 Nb5 58.Kd5 Nc7+ 59.Ke4 Ne8 60.Nf4? Nd6+! White resigned.

(100) B10.2 **Petrosian – Gurgenidze**
24th USSR Championship
Moscow 1957

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 e5 6.Nge2



6...Nc6

The reader has already had an opportunity to see that this road in the King's Indian Defense is not a bed of roses for Black: after White's move d4-d5, the queen's knight is pushed back to uncomfortable squares, oftentimes without any chances to ever become active again. Maybe Gurgenidze hoped to somehow use the tempo saved by not castling, but judging by the game, he did not have any concrete ideas.

Nowadays, the most commonly played move is 6...c6, as Najdorf (game 101) and Bronstein (game 104) played against Petrosian.

7.d5 Ne7 8.Be3 c5

Setting up a pawn barrier on the queenside because it is not to White's advantage to take en passant: 9.dxc6 bxc6, followed by ...d5.

9.Qd2 a6

Hinting to his opponent that queenside castling is unsafe: 10.0-0-0 b5!. If White wants to hinder ...b5 with 10.a4, then, by playing ...Bd7, ...Rb8, ...Qa5 and, if need be, ...Nc8-a7, Black can renew the threat. However, it was already known at the time that this is not very effective. After White's next obvious reply, Gurgenidze comes under Petrosian's "King's Indian steamroller."

I think, even if Black could benefit from not castling, it is only in connection with ...h5. For example, 9...h5 10.a3 (it does not look like there is another active plan for White) 10...b6 11.b4 Ba6 12.Nc1 Nd7 13.Be2 Ng8 14.0-0 (14.g3 h4!) 14...Bh6, and unlike in the game, Black's position is not so hopeless.

10.g4 Bd7 11.h4 h5 12.g5 Nh7 13.Nc1 f6 14.Be2 fxg5 15.hxg5 0-0 16.a4

Black has carried out Gligorić's counterattack and isolated the g5-pawn. However, he does not have the next important ingredient of the counterplay, connected with the exchange sacrifice on f4, because his own knight on e7 is in the way.

16...Qa5 17.Ra3

Thwarting all of Black's attempts associated with the move ...b5.

17...Rae8 18.Nb3 Qd8 19.a5 Rf7 20.Nc1 Nc8 21.Nd3 Bf8 22.Kd1 Be7 23.Rg1 Ref8 24.Kc2 Rxf3

Black's only remaining opportunity for counterplay.

25.Bxf3 Rxf3 26.Nf2

A rare situation: Petrosian misses his opponent's active reply. After the solid 26.b3!, White would have had every chance to convert the extra exchange.

26...b5 27.axb6 Nxb6 28.b3 a5!

Black strikes while the iron is hot. 29.Rxa5 does not work because of 29...Nxc4!.

29.Ncd1 a4 30.Nb2 axb3+ 31.Rxb3 Na4

Now the white king's residence has developed cracks that can make it drafty. Petrosian silently offers a draw by repeating moves.

32.Nbd3 Nb6 33.Nb2 Na4 34.Nbd3 Nb6 Draw.

(101) B10.3 **Petrosian – Najdorf**
Bled 1961

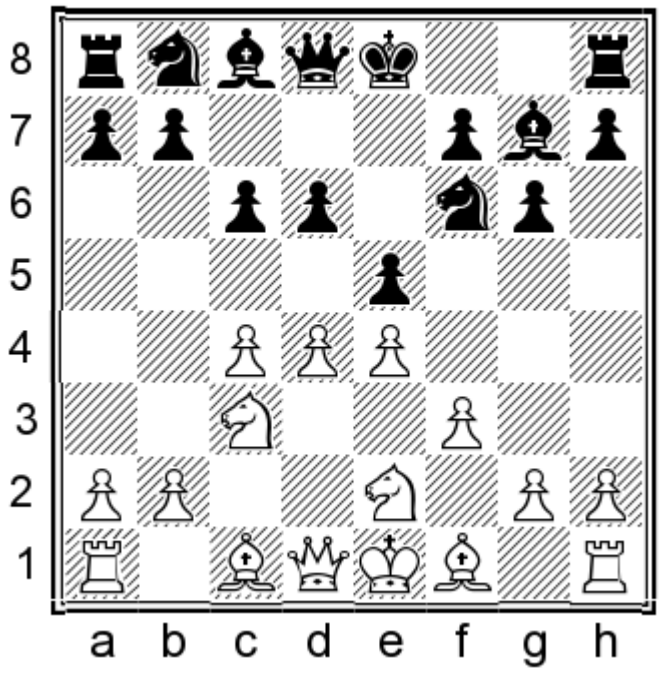
Petrosian seldom put pen to paper, but when he did, he wrote carefully and confidently.

Petrosian the annotator is as much a bright and unique phenomenon as Petrosian the chess player. He could explain the most difficult chess material so artfully, simply, and convincingly that even a novice could understand it. Petrosian's writing featured a respectful, positive attitude towards the reader, and exceptional objectivity in the assessment of his own games.

I have almost nothing to add to what Petrosian wrote about this game in 1961, (maybe except the opening, but in this case it is not essential). The rest is written very clearly and precisely; all the i's are dotted and t's are crossed.

Annotations by Tigran Petrosian

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 e5 6.Nge2 c6



7.Bg5

In recent years, the seemingly aimless knight pin Bg5 has become quite popular for White in various variations of the King's Indian Defense. By pinning the knight, White makes it more difficult to carry out the breakthrough ...f5, which is one of Black's "trump cards." Perhaps Black should have now played 7...exd4 followed by 8...Qa5 or 8...Qb6. However, Miguel Najdorf prefers a different route.

7...Nbd7 8.d5 Nb6

8...cxd5 would have been followed by 9.Nxd5, because now, when the black queen's knight has been developed to d7, Black cannot easily transfer the knight to d4, while the weakness of the d6-pawn is already a real factor. By the way, 9.cxd5 is also good for White. Choosing between these two continuations is a matter of taste.

9.Nc1 cxd5 10.cxd5 0-0 11.a4

White begins operations on the queenside. It would seem that it is too early for activity on the flanks; while he has not yet completed his development, his king is still in the center of the board. However, such a plan is dictated by the position, because Black cannot use the fact that White is behind in development. The position of the g5-bishop plays an important role, as it hinders the development of Black's initiative on the kingside.

11...a6 12.Nb3 Bd7 13.a5 Nc8 14.Bd3 b5

Najdorf aims to stabilize the pawn structure on the queenside, which makes it difficult for White to attack this part of the board. The moment has been chosen well, because in case of 15.axb6 Qxb6, with a subsequent 16...Nh5 and ...f5, Black has sufficient counter-chances.

15.Na2

White immediately regroups. When the pawn was on b7, the good squares for the white knights were c4 and a4. However, now the b4-square becomes a base for the knight, from which it targets the weaknesses of Black's position: the a6-pawn and the c6-square.

15...Ne7

Otherwise, it is difficult for the knight to leave the f6-square, and without that, Black cannot start activity on the

kingside.

16.Nb4

A logical move, but, as it often happens, far from the best. Correct was 16.g4, which greatly reduces Black's chances on the kingside.

16...Nh5!

This is the point!

17.g3

This was unnecessary. It was better to accept the knight's invasion on f4 and, after playing 17.Qd2, to castle queenside.

17...f6 18.Be3 f5 19.Rc1

And now this is playing with fire. White shows that his king is fine in the center. This optimism is more than excessive. To be fair, here it is already difficult to find the right move for White. Dangerous is 19.0-0 because of 19...f4; 19.Qd2 might be followed by 19...fxe4 20.fxe4 Bg4 21.Be2 Qd7 with dangerous threats. In particular, bad is 22.0-0-0 Rfc8+ 23.Kb1 Bxe2 24.Qxe2 Rc4! , and White's position is bursting at the seams.

19...Qe8 20.Rc7 Nf6 21.Qd2 fxe4 22.fxe4 Bh3

Black threatens 23...Ng4.

23.Bg5 Rf7 24.Bxf6

Of course, losing the dark-square bishop was unfortunate, but it was also necessary, as the f6- knight may become rather annoying.

24...Rxf6 25.Bf1 Bg4 26.Be2 Bh3 27.Bf1 Bg4

Najdorf does not object to the repetition of moves. He does not care that I had lost to Lajos Portisch the day before because of a bad blunder. And I... I had to improve my tournament situation. Even though White's position is not any better, I decided to continue fighting.

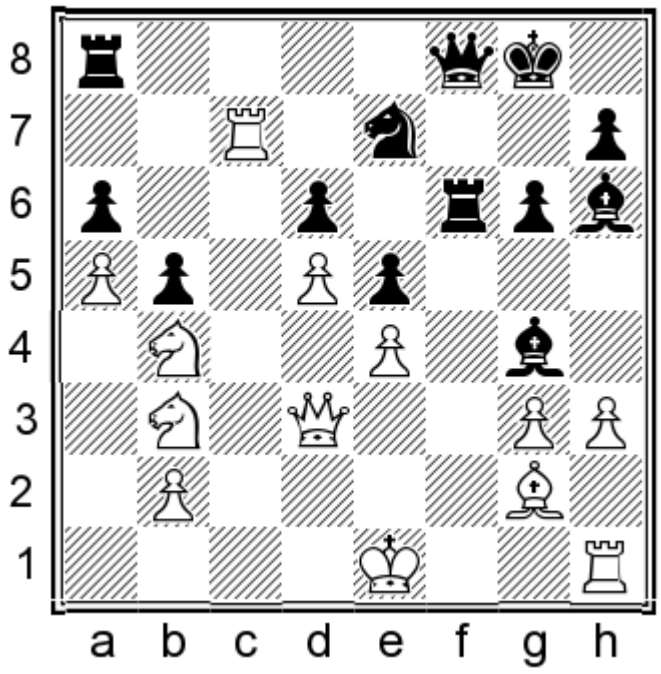
28.Bg2 Qf8 29.h3

If 29.Rf1 were possible now, all of White's earlier play would have been justified. However, the variation 29...Rxf1+ 30.Bxf1 Qf3 31.Qd3 (it seems that everything is all right: Black has to agree to exchange the queens, after which White's advantage on the queenside quickly decides the game, but...) 31...Qh1! 32.Rxe7 Rf8 33.Nd2 Qg1!, with the threat of checkmate on f2, clearly demonstrates the precariousness of White's position.

29...Bh6

29...Bf3? would have been a mistake because of 30.0-0!.

30.Qd3



30...Bc8

Black calls for retreat at the worst possible moment. The move 30...Rf2 is tempting. At first glance, this is a blank shot because of the response 31.Rf1. This is why Najdorf did not play 30...Rf2. How great was his surprise when, after the game, he realized that after 31...Rxg2! 32.Rxf8+ Rxf8 33.hxg4 Rg1+ 34.Ke2 Black, having an opportunity to draw by perpetual check, can continue the attack by 34...Rgf1 (however, after 35.Qc2, this will hardly yield anything more than perpetual check). After 30...Rf2, I was going to play 31.Rc2 (it is also interesting to check the continuation 31.Rf1 Rxg2 32.hxg4!? and 33.Rc2 – Igor Yanvarjov).

31.Rf1 Rxf1+ 32.Qxf1

White has finally managed to overcome his troubles, and he goes on the offensive.

32...Qd8

32...Be3 left better chances for defense.

33.Rc3 Bg7 34.Qf2

34.h4 and 35.Bh3, exchanging the light-square bishops, suggests itself. However, the plan chosen by White, attacking on the queenside, is more logical.

34...h5 35.Qb6!

The move that decides the game.

35...Qxb6 36.axb6 Rb8

36...a5 would have been met by 37.Nxa5 Rxa5 38.Rxc8+! Nxc8 39.b7, winning.

37.Rc7 Bf8 38.Na5 Rxb6

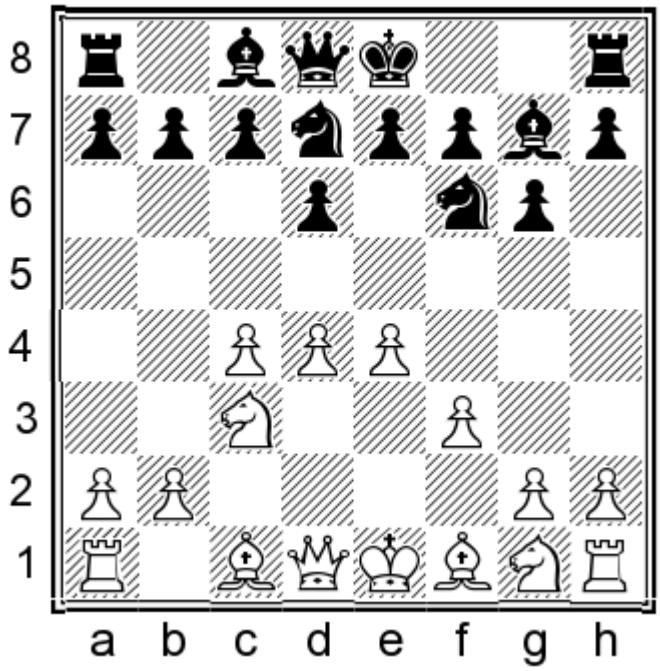
It would seem that Black has managed to escape all of the dangers.

39.Nbc6 Nxc6 40.Nxc6

Black resigned, because after 40...Bb7 41.Na5 Ba8 42.Rc8 Bb7 43.Rb8 he loses a piece.

(102) B10.4 **Petrosian – Albareda Creus**
European Team Championship
Oberhausen 1961

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 Nbd7



The main difficulty of this plan for Black is that his queen's knight is not sufficiently active, i.e., it does not have the opportunity to attack the d4- square, and blocks the c8-h3 diagonal for his own bishop.

6.Bg5 c5 7.d5 0-0 8.Nh3

Another result of the knight's position on d7 is that White solves the problem of the kingside development without interruptions. In the future, this knight will go to f2, where it will be very wellpositioned.

8...a6

In case of 8...Ne5 9.Nf2 h6, with the idea of playing ...e6, White would likely have responded with 10.Bd2!, and if 10...e6, then 11.f4 Ned7 12.dxe6 with an advantage. (Less accurate is 10.Be3 because of 10...e6 11.f4 Neg4! 12.Nxg4 Nxg4 13.Qxg4 exd5, followed by ...d4.)

9.Nf2

After 9.Qd2 b5, Black has good compensation for the sacrificed pawn, as modern practice demonstrates. And now, in my opinion, Black should have seriously considered the move 9...b5.

9...Qa5 10.a4 Re8 11.Be2 h6 12.Bd2 Nf8 13.0-0 Qc7 14.Ra3 Bd7 15.Qc2 e6 16.Bd3 exd5 17.exd5

So, one could say that Black's opening experiment has not panned out. He could not create any counterplay in the center or on the queenside and now he is forced to defend passively.

17...Re7 18.a5 Be8 19.Qc1 Kh7 20.f4

The beginning of active actions.

20...Bd7 21.f5!? Bxf5 22.Bxf5 gxf5 23.Qc2

White hurries to regain the pawn. 23.Ncd1 Ng6 24.Rf3 led to a practical advantage for White in a more complicated position.

23...Ng6 24.Qxf5 Qd7 25.Qxd7 Rxd7 26.Re1

While the queen exchange was more or less forced for White, now it becomes clear that Petrosian has decided to beat the opponent using his technique. White's last move, however, is not entirely accurate. To neutralize the e-file, he should have used the other rook: 26.Ncd1 Re8 27.Re3, maintaining a steady advantage.

26...Re8 27.Rxe8 Nxe8 28.Ncd1 Ne5 29.Ne3 f5

Now it is clear why it was necessary to move the rook from a3 as soon as possible: to protect the c4-pawn, White will inevitably have to play b2-b3, putting his most powerful piece out of play.

30.Nh3 Nf6 31.b3 Ne4 32.Ra2 Rf7 33.Nf4 Ng4 34.Nxg4 fxg4 35.Be3 g3 36.hxg3 Nxg3 37.Rf2 Bc3

All this was played excellently by Black. White does not have a shred of an advantage, and now it is Petrosian who has to resort to tactical tricks to avoid a difficult position.

38.Rf3 Ne4 39.Ne2! Rxf3 40.gxf3 Bd2! 41.Bxh6!

A short tactical scuffle leads to a roughly equal endgame.

41...Kxh6 42.fxe4 Kg5 43.Kf2 Kf6 44.Ng3 Bxa5 45.Nf5 Bc7

Black's play becomes somewhat strange again. Why not the simple 45...Ke5? However, the position is so drawish that it is difficult to lose, no matter how hard Black "tries."

46.Ke3 b5 47.Kd3 Bb8 48.Ne3 Bc7 49.cxb5 axb5 50.Nc2 Ke7 51.Na3 c4+

The correct decision. After 51...b4 52.Nc4, Black would have had to work long and hard for a draw.

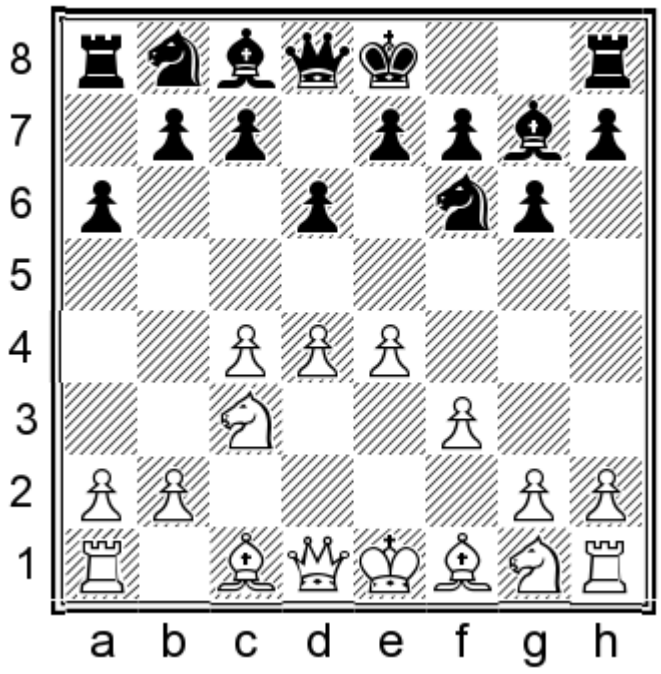
52.bxc4 bxc4+ 53.Kxc4 Kd7 54.Kb5 Bd8 55.Ka6 Bg5 56.Kb7 Bf4 57.Nc4 Bh2 58.Nb6+ Ke7 59.Kc6 Kf6 60.Nc4 Bf4

Of course not 60...Bg3? 61.Nxd6 Ke5 62.Nf5 Be1 63.d6 Kxe4 64.d7 Ba5 65.Nd6+ Kf4 66.Nb7, and White wins.

61.Kd7 Bh2 62.Kc8 Bf4 63.Kb7 Bg3 64.Kc6 Bf4 65.Nxd6 Ke5 66.Kc5 Draw.

(103) B10.5 **Petrosian – Robert Byrne**
Buenos Aires 1964

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 a6



6.Be3 c6 7.a4 Qa5

An overly creative move. Black wants to prepare ...c5, keeping the active possibility ...Nc6, but the position of his queen on a5 is not conducive to carrying out any other plans and ideas, and soon the queen will have to retreat. The standard response to White's pawn move to a4 is to fix it by 7...a5, with a subsequent knight transfer to b4.

8.Bd3 c5 9.d5 0-0

After 9...Nbd7, White would probably play 10.f4, not allowing the knight to come to e5.

10.Nge2 e6 11.Bd2 Qd8

From the point of view of developing, better is 11...Qc7.

12.dxe6

Trading his strong d5-pawn, White hopes to use his better control of the center and the activity of the pawn pair e4, f4 in the future.

12...fxe6

Again, the American grandmaster prefers complex to simple. Quite good was 12...Bxe6. For example: 13.0-0 Nc6 14.f4 Bg4, with the idea of occupying the d4-square.

13.0-0 Nc6 14.Bg5 Ne5

A convoluted maneuver. Byrne plays as if he has made a vow not to play any simple and logical moves in this game. I think Black should have used the main advantage of his position: his possession of the d4-square. Since the variation 14...Nd4 15.Nxd4 cxd4 16.Ne2 e5 is not to White's advantage, he would have had to put up with the centralized knight.

15.f4 Nf7

Of course, it is dangerous for Black to take on d3 because this would strengthen the attack on the weak d6-pawn.

16.Bh4 Bd7 17.h3 Bc6 18.Qc2

The struggle moves into a prolonged maneuvering stage with some space advantage for White.

18...Qc7 19.Rad1 Rae8 20.Qb1 Nd7 21.Kh1 Kh8 22.Qc1 Bf6

A forced measure, as the bishop on h4 occupies a very strong position.

23.Bxf6+ Nxf6 24.b3 Qe7 25.Qe3 Rg8 26.Ng3 Nd7 27.Be2 Qh4

Perhaps Black planned 27...g5, with the idea of taking control of the e5-square, but now he realized that this is dubious because of the response 28.f5, followed by Bh5.

28.Kh2 Rg7 29.Nb5!

This active foray shows that White still has the initiative.

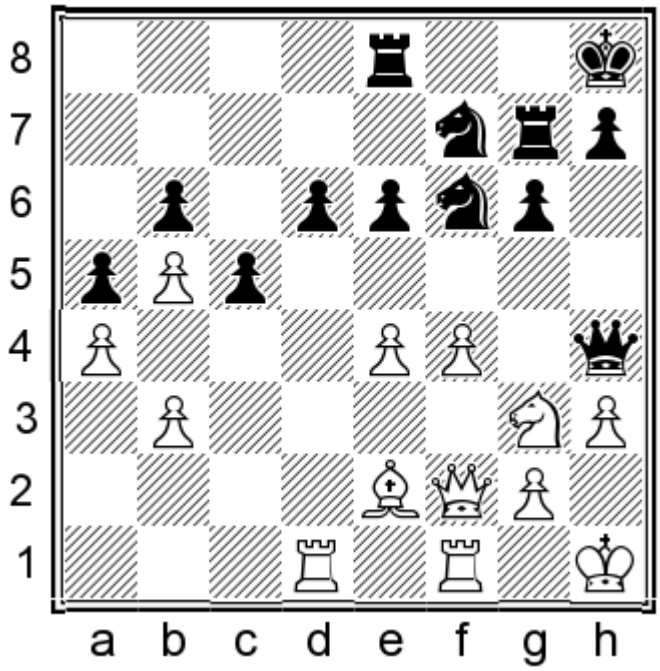
29...Bxb5

The attempt to transfer the knight to d4 does not work: 29...axb5 30.cxb5 Nb8 31.bxc6 Nxc6 32.Bb5!.

30.cxb5

It is still unclear what the benefits are of the pawn's position on b5, but, as we shall soon see, it is this pawn that is destined to play a decisive role.

30...a5 31.Qf2 b6 32.Kh1 Nf6



33.e5!

On the threshold of the time control, Petrosian goes into action.

33...dxe5 34.fxe5 Nd5

34...Nxe5 35.Qxf6 Qxg3 36.Rd8 Rxd8 37.Qxd8+ Rg8 38.Rf8 Qe1+ 39.Kh2 loses.

35.Bc4 Nxe5 36.Bxd5 exd5 37.Rxd5 Rge7 38.Qf6+

Opening the sixth rank for the rooks to attack the b6-pawn.

38...Qxf6 39.Rxf6 c4 40.bxc4 Nxc4 41.Rc6 Nb2?

The sudden difficulties put Byrne off his stride, and he recorded a bad move. Later, Keres found a way to draw: 41...Re1+ 42.Kh2 Ne3! 43.Rd7 Rd1 44.Rxd1 (44.Rb7 Rd2!) 44...Nxd1 45.Rxb6 Nc3 46.Ra6 Nxa4 47.Rxa5 Nc3! 48.b6 Rb8 49.Rc5 Na4, and so on.

42.Rd4 Re6 43.Rc2 Re3 44.Kh2 Rb3

Somewhat more stubborn is 44...Nd3.

45.Ne4

This is the key. The activation of the white knight decides the game within a few moves.

45...Re7 46.Nd6 Rd3 47.Rxd3 Nxd3 48.Rc6 Nb2

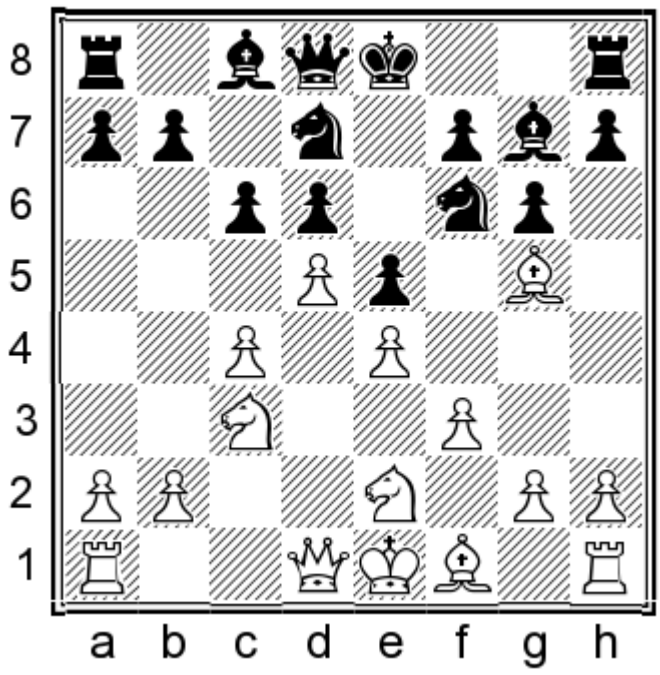
Or 48...Nc5 49.Rxc5! bxc5 50.b6.

49.Rxb6 Nxa4 50.Rc6

Ensuring the triumphal passage of the pawn to b8. Black resigned.

(104) B10.6 **Petrosian – Bronstein**
USSR Cup
Moscow 1974

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.e4 d6 4.d4 Bg7 5.f3 e5 6.Nge2 c6 7.Bg5 Nbd7 8.d5



8...0-0 9.Qd2

As “the chess wisdom” of the period goes, “When Bronstein plays, the question is not whether he will play a novelty but on which move.” As much as Petrosian wanted to know what his crafty opponent had in store for him

after 9.dxc6 bxc6 10.Qxd6 Qb6, Petrosian's prudent practicality still prevailed: why risk it?

9...Qb6 10.Be3 Qc7 11.g4 h5

Gligorić's counterblow is the magic wand of King's Indian players. Including 11...cxd5 12.cxd5 only plays into White's hands. For example, 12...h5 (otherwise Ng3) 13.g5 Ne8 14.Nb5 Qb8 15.Rc1 a6 16.Ba7!.

12.g5 Ne8 13.h4 a5 14.b3 Nc5

Black's typical setup (c5-knight plus a5-pawn) combined with the passive knight on e8 is untenable. Petrosian convincingly proves this with his next two strong moves.

15.Rd1

White threatens to take on c5, followed by d5-d6.

15...Na6 16.Na4

A new threat – the invasion of the bishop or knight on b6 – forces Black to make further positional concessions.

16...c5 17.Ng1!

Such moves show expertise! White wants to execute the planned bishop exchange (Bh3) with the maximum benefit for his position. The text move opens the second rank for queen and rook maneuvers, while, after moving to h3, the knight has several promising routes.

17...b6 18.Bh3

Now it is fine to trade.

18...Bxh3 19.Nxh3 Rb8 20.Nc3 Qd7 21.Qg2 Nec7

Black has no choice but to try to lock up the position, which he does, forcing White's next move using the threat ...b5.

22.a4

Now the fight moves to the other flank, where a breakthrough is still possible.

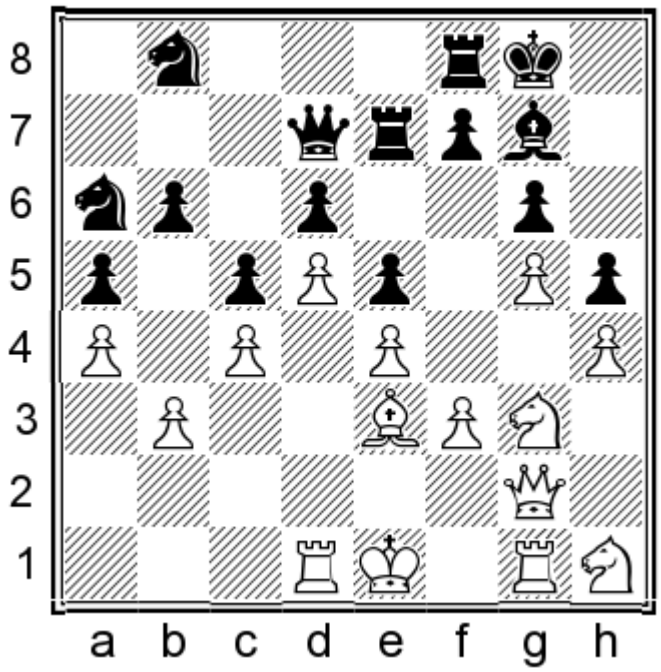
22...Rbe8 23.Ne2 Nb8 24.Ng3 Re7 25.Nf2 Rfe8 26.Rg1 Nca6

While White skillfully concentrates his forces for a decisive blow, Black lets his knights blithely roam around, hoping that his position is impregnable.

27.Nfh1!

This unusual maneuver is the essence of Petrosian's plan. White prepares the sacrifice on h5 and the inevitable raid of the second knight on the same route with an attack which Black, squeezed in a narrow space, cannot fend off for too long. Feeling that the risk of losing has become real, Bronstein rushes to begin counter-action.

27...Rf8



28.Nxh5!

A piece sacrifice that is typical for such positions. Soon, White will gain a second pawn for the knight and strong pressure on the kingside, which threatens to escalate into a direct attack on the black king. In such cases, a chess player typically relies on his intuition and overall evaluation of the position rather than concrete variations.

28...gxh5 29.Ng3 f5

Aside from the obvious 30.Nxh5, White threatened the even stronger positional move Nf5, with complete domination.

30.gxf6 Bxf6 31.Nxh5+ Rg7

Urgently dropping the ballast, since 31...Kh8 32.Nxf6 or 31...Bg7 32.Bh6 led to an immediate loss.

32.Nxg7 Bxg7 33.Bh6

On White's side are his material advantage and attack. It would have been appropriate to stop here, if it were not for one thing: both opponents were in extreme time pressure. I had the opportunity to demonstrate this game, and I remember very well how the grandmasters in turn thought over the last moves and exhausted almost all their time: they had about three minutes between the two of them, or maybe less.

Little by little, a crowd gathered around their table. Blitz, that legalized chess roulette, began. The grandmasters did not disappoint the audience. They had it all: pieces flying across the board at cosmic speed, "hypnosis" of the falling flags, jumping up in their chairs, and expressive punches of the clock.

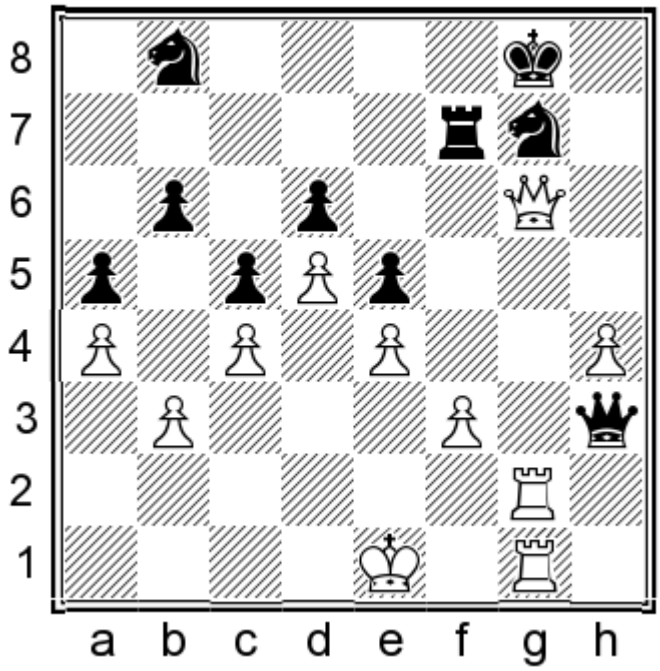
33...Rf7 34.Rd2

The rook rushes to the g2-square to strengthen the attack. After this move, many thought that White would mate nevertheless.

34...Nc7 35.Qg6 Ne8 36.Rdg2 Qh3

A "long" move that is especially unpleasant in time trouble, with two ideas: ...Qxh4+ and ...Nd7-f8.

37.Bxg7 Nxg7



37...Qxh4+ 38.Ke2 Nxg7 does not work because of 39.Qe6!, and White wins.

At this moment, the time pressure had reached its limit. The continuation 38.Qxd6 Qxf3 (38...Nd7? 39.Qh6) 39.Qxb8+ Kh7 has unclear consequences, and at the same time, Black threatens 38...Qxf3. Does White have a win after 38.Qxf7+? Petrosian slightly rose from his chair, took a worried look at the flag, which was ready to fall at any second, and... took the rook with his queen.

38.Qxf7+?

What a pity! If White had a little more time, he would undoubtedly have found the correct move 38.Qh6!, with the approximate continuation 38...Qd7 39.Rg5, leaving Black defenseless against the maneuver Rh5 and Qh8+.

38...Kxf7 39.Rxg7+ Kf8 40.Rg8+ Kf7 41.R1g7+

No better is 41.Rxb8 Qxh4+ 42.Kf1 Qf4, and Black begins to pursue the white king.

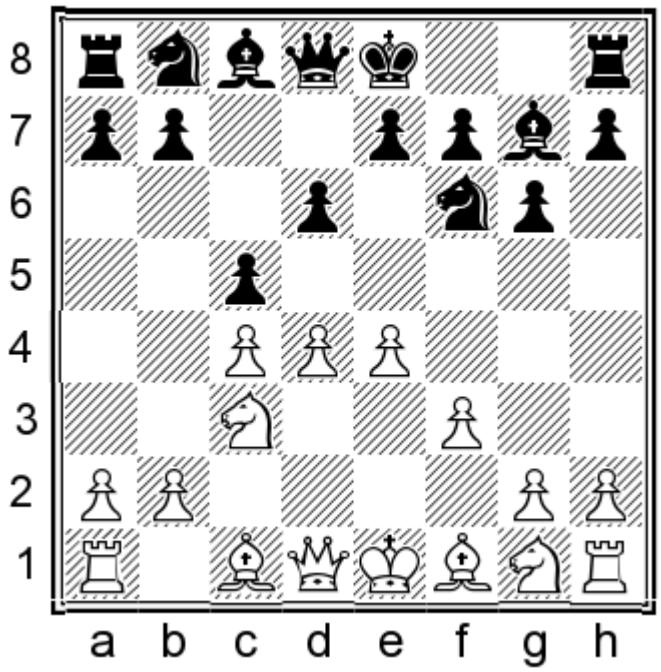
41...Kf6 42.Rg6+ Kf7 43.R6g7+ Kf6 44.Rh7

I think it is here that the opponents, having lost track of the number of moves, decided to finally take a breath. It turned out that White's threat, h4-h5, and Rg6+ is easily refuted, and after adjournment, the game ended in a draw.

44...Qh1+ 45.Kf2 Qh2+ 46.Rg2 Qf4 47.Ke2 Qc1 48.Rgg7 Qc2+ 49.Kf1 Qd1+ 50.Kf2 Qd2+ 51.Kf1 Qd1+ 52.Kf2 Qd2+ 53.Kg3 Qe1+ 54.Kg2 Qe2+ 55.Kg3 Qe1+ 56.Kg2 Qe2+ 57.Kg3 Qe1+ Draw.

(105) B10.7 **Petrosian – Kärner**
Keres Memorial
Tallinn 1983

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d6 3.Nc3 g6 4.e4 Bg7 5.f3 c5



Like 5...e5, the early advance of the bishop's pawn is played infrequently and has the reputation of a drawish continuation.

6.dxc5 dxc5 7.Qxd8+ Kxd8 8.Bg5

The prelude to an innovative plan. Usually in this variation, White is concerned with strengthening the d4-square: 8.Be3. But is it so necessary? I will not argue that the bishop on g5 is better-placed, but it is certainly more active there.

8...Nfd7 9.f4

Continuing in the same spirit. Later, Petrosian recommended the more restrained 9.Nge2, with a subsequent 0-0-0 and f3-f4.

9...Nc6

Unlike his opponent, Kärner plays exceedingly austerely, relying on taking control of the d4-square. This is neither an original nor the only plan. Now, and also on the 10th and 12th moves, Black ignores an interesting opportunity to transpose into the Nimzo-Indian Defense via ...Bxc3+, which, according to Petrosian, would yield good counterplay. For example: 9...Bxc3+ 10.bxc3 f6 11.Bh4 Nc6, then ...b6, ...Ba6, and ...Na5.

10.Nf3 Nd4 11.0-0-0

The improvisation continues. For no good reason, White doubles his pawns. Had any player from the past seen this game, he would have immediately called Petrosian a hypermodernist!

11...Nxf3 12.gxf3 f6 13.Bh4 Ke8 14.Bh3 Nb6

Having committed to a general plan involving a series of exchanges, Black pays no attention to the tactical nuances of the position. With the move 14...Bh6!, he could have equalized, forcing the capture on d7, because in case of 15.Ne2? Ne5! or 15.Nd5 Ne5!, White risks losing material (pointed out by Petrosian).

15.Bxc8 Rxc8 16.b3 Bh6 17.Ne2 Kf7 18.Kc2 Rhd8 19.Bf2

It becomes clear that, by doubling the pawns on the 11th move, White pursued a specific purpose. The modestly placed h-pawn is just awaiting the right moment to make an energetic raid on h5 in order to provide the main forces

with a steady initiative on the kingside. Now White threatens 20.Rxd8 and 21.Bxc5.

19...Rxd1 20.Rxd1 f5

Black does not yet realize that his position is worse. The planned transfer of the knight to e6 or h5 is a pipe dream. Therefore, he should have tried to consolidate by playing 20...e6.

21.Be3 Ke8 22.h4

This is not to Black's liking!

22...Nd7 23.h5! Bf8?!

Now this is panic. Black should not have given up the h-file so easily. The bishop on g7 would have been more useful for defense. Maybe Black feared that after 23...Nf6 24.hxg6 hxg6 25.Ng3 e6 26.Rh1 Bg7 27.e5, his minor pieces would become restricted, but this would still be a lesser evil.

24.Rh1 Rc6 25.Ng3 Re6 26.hxg6 hxg6 27.Bd2

Petrosian pointed out that 27.Bc1 Ra6 28.a3!, with a subsequent b3-b4, was also very strong.

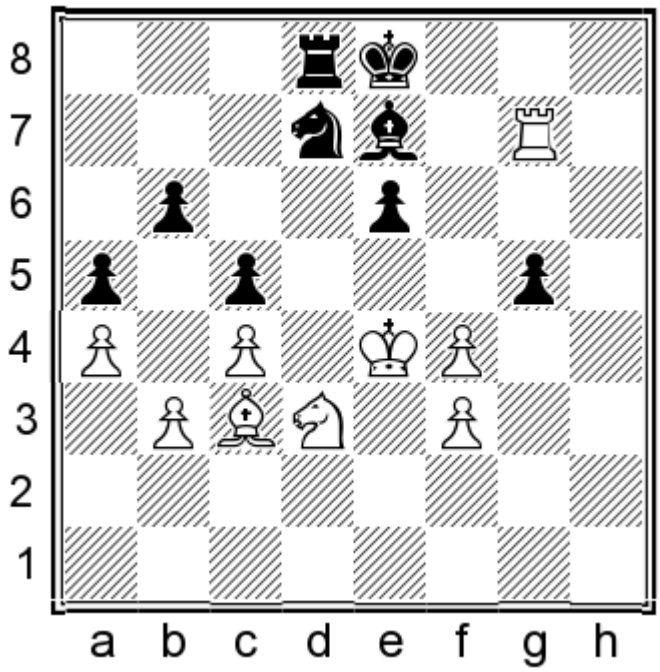
27...Ra6 28.a4 e6 29.Bc3 Rc6 30.Ne2

The knight rushes to the d3-square to tie its black counterpart to the defense of the e5-square.

30...Rc8 31.Nc1 b6 32.Nd3 Rd8 33.Rh7 a5 34.Kd2 Be7 35.Ke3

In a short time, White has managed to put together a solid position: the king has come to the center, the rook controls the seventh rank, and the bishop and knight have active positions. Now Black probably should have waited with 35...Bf8, hoping for the adjournment and relying on the inner strength of his position. However, in time trouble, he rushed, complicating the defense.

35...g5 36.Rg7 fxe4 37.Kxe4



Activating the king suggests itself, but capturing with the pawn also deserved attention. For example: 37.fxe4 gxf4+ 38.Nxf4 Nf8 39.Rg1, and it is not easy for Black to defend.

37...Bf6?

A blunder at the end. Meanwhile, 37...Nf6+ still allowed Black to hold on somehow. In any case, I could not find a clear win for White after 38.Bxf6 Bxf6 39.Rg8+ Ke7 40.Rxd8 Kxd8 41.f5 Ke7.

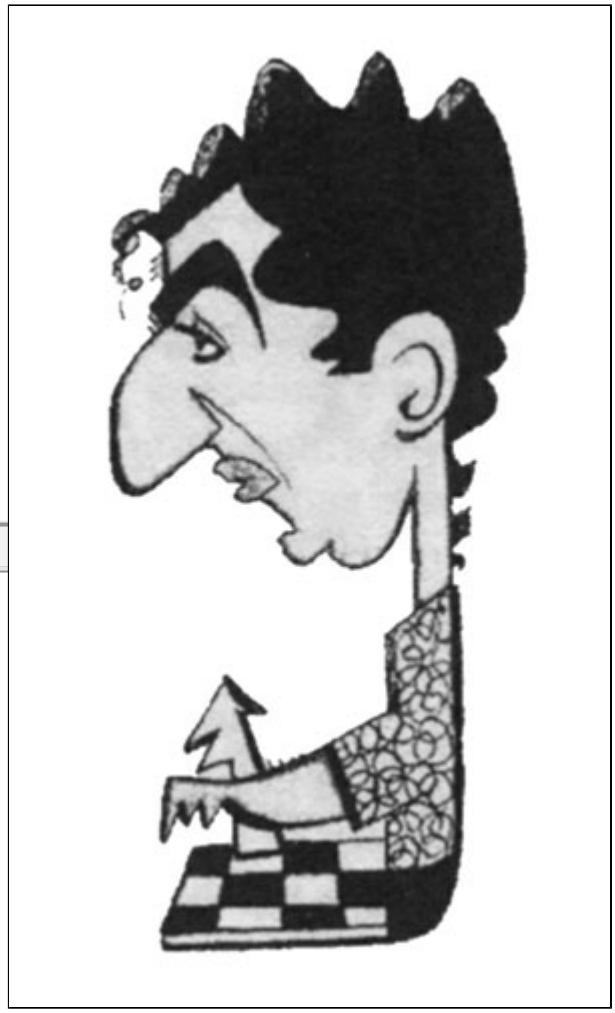
38.Rxd7! Bxc3

Also hopeless is 38...Rxd7 39.Bxf6.

39.Rxd8+ Kxd8 40.fxg5 Black resigned.

So, let us sum up some results of the second chapter. It should be noted that Petrosian's score in the Sämisch variation was even more impressive than in the classical system. His score as White surpasses the nearly inhuman 85% mark (+31, -0, =13). Of course, his result as black was more modest but still very good: +6, -1, =9 (or nearly 66%).

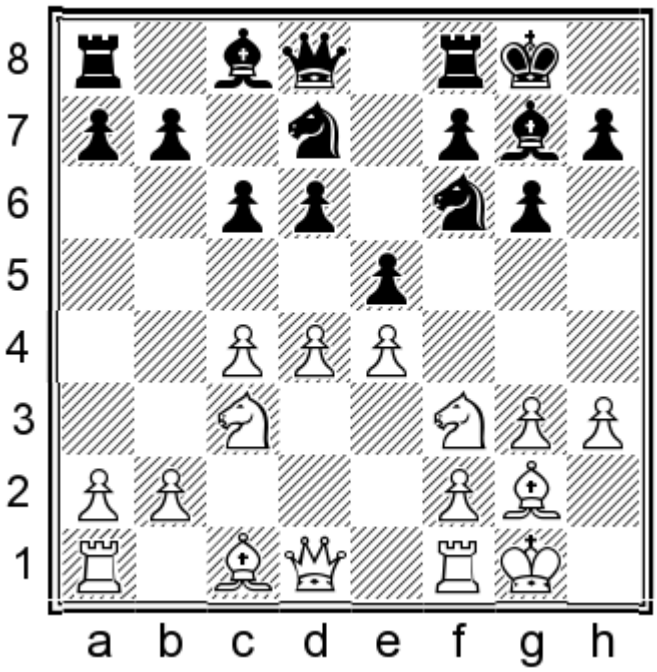
Chapter 3
The Fianchetto Variation



The last of the three pillars of the King's Indian Defense. Historically, the systems with g2-g3 emerged earlier than the alternatives and became the ideological locomotive of the opening's development. Mikhail Botvinnik, Semyon Furman, and later Lajos Portisch played a major role in the development of the variation. They were excellently opposed by Isaak Boleslavsky, David Bronstein, and Efim Geller.

Tigran Petrosian also made his contribution as a practical player. If his successes here were not as impressive as in the two previous systems, this can be explained by the fact that he had to play as Black in most of the games. After all, the King's Indian Defense is a dangerous opening.

C1



Black to move

The initial position of the so-called main line, which started the procession of King's Indian ideas in major tournaments. Black has a large selection of continuations to any character and taste. The main move 9...Re8 was played in games 107, 108, 109, 112 and 113.

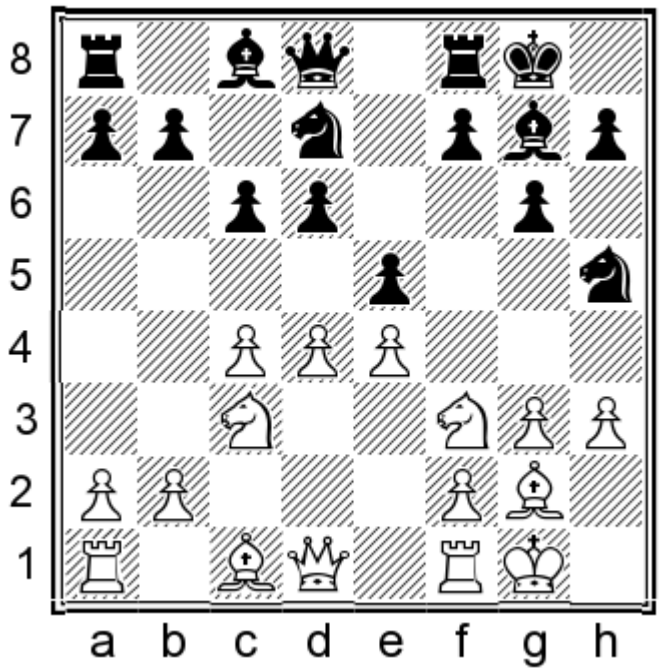
In the other games, Black chose less obvious routes: 9...Qb6 (game 111);

9...a6 (game 110);

and 9...Nh5 (game 106).

(106) C1.1 **Petrosian – Arutyunov**
Georgia Championship
Tbilisi 1945

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d6 3.c4 g6 4.Nc3 Bg7 5.g3 0-0 6.Bg2 Nbd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 c6 9.h3 Nh5



One of the moves that aim to confuse the opponent. The fact that six years later Bronstein played the extravagant 9...Nh5 in the 21st game of the world championship match against Botvinnik testifies to the advantages of this knight jump.

10.d5

Understanding the aggressive intentions of his opponent, Petrosian plays more solidly. This is how he reacted to opening innovations in his later years as well, although he sometimes overused the move d4-d5. However, in this case, this advance is completely justified, since Black cannot counter by opening the c-file and starting the queenside counterplay typical of such positions.

10...c5 11.Ne1 Re8 12.Nd3

An inaccuracy. Probably, no one thinks about prophylaxis at age sixteen. Meanwhile, by asking the question, “What does my opponent want?” White could have easily found the correct move 12.Bd2!, hindering ...f5. For example, 12...Nb6 13.b3 f5? 14.exf5, and Black has nothing to take with on f5.

12...Nb6 13.b3 f5 14.Rb1

Now 14.exf5 does not work because of 14...e4!.

14...Rf8

Black has equalized. Also good was 14...Nf6, with the idea of taking with the pawn after exf5.

15.exf5 Bxf5 16.Ne4 Qd7

As we shall soon see, while this natural win of a tempo is not an explicit mistake, it will have a very negative effect on Black’s play. The fact is that the logic of the game requires Black to make the maneuver ...Nf6xe4 (capturing on e4 with the bishop gives away the light squares), followed by simplification on the f-file and, if the opportunity presents itself, via ...h5, ...Kh7, ...Bh6. However, the queen on d7 cuts off the way to retreat for the f5-bishop, undermining even the first step of this plan.

17.Kh2 Nf6 18.f3 h6 19.Be3 Rf7 20.Rb2 g5

These are the tangible consequences of the impulsive 16th move. Creating an opening on g6 for the bishop, Black significantly weakens his position. For the sake of objectivity, let us note that it was not too late to rectify the situation by playing 20...Qe7.

21.Rbf2 Bg6 22.Qd2 Nxe4 23.fxe4 Rxf2 24.Nxf2 Rf8 25.Qe2 Nc8

And now, too, it was better for the queen to step to e7, this time in order to make room for the knight. As already noted, this piece, sensitive to a lack of space, causes its owner a lot of trouble when placed on the wrong squares.

26.Bf3 Qe8

Preventing the move Bh5.

27.a3 Ne7 28.b4

White begins the traditional attack on the queenside.

28...b6 29.Kg2 Bf6 30.Qd2 Qa4

A harmless foray. A move later, the queen leaves empty-handed.

31.Qc3 Qe8

White threatened 32.b5, followed by Bd1 and so on.

32.bxc5 bxc5 33.Qa5 Qb8 34.Qa6 Nc8 35.Bg4

A good maneuver: the previously idle white bishop actively joins the game.

35...h5 36.Bd7 Ne7 37.Qb5

White plays very consistently. Having a better pawn structure and space advantage, he strives to reach an endgame, where the importance of these factors increases and Black has minimal chances to complicate the game.

37...Qxb5 38.cxb5

Of course! The active white pawns are much more dangerous than the protected but immobile passed pawn on c5.

38...Rb8 39.a4 Kg7 40.Kf3 Rb7 41.Bc6 Rb8 42.Ke2 Nc8 43.Kd3 Bd8 44.g4

The desire for clarity that is characteristic of the young Petrosian. However, the immobilization of the kingside is probably necessary and does not cause particular objections.

44...h4 45.Ra1 Kf6 46.Bd7 Ba5 47.Bf5 Ne7 48.Kc4

48.Bxg6 was also quite possible, but White wants to exchange the bishop for the knight when the knight heads to f4.

48...Be8 49.Rb1 Ng6 50.Bxg6 Kxg6 51.Nd3 Rb7

Petrosian precisely neutralizes this new attempt to activate Black’s pieces.

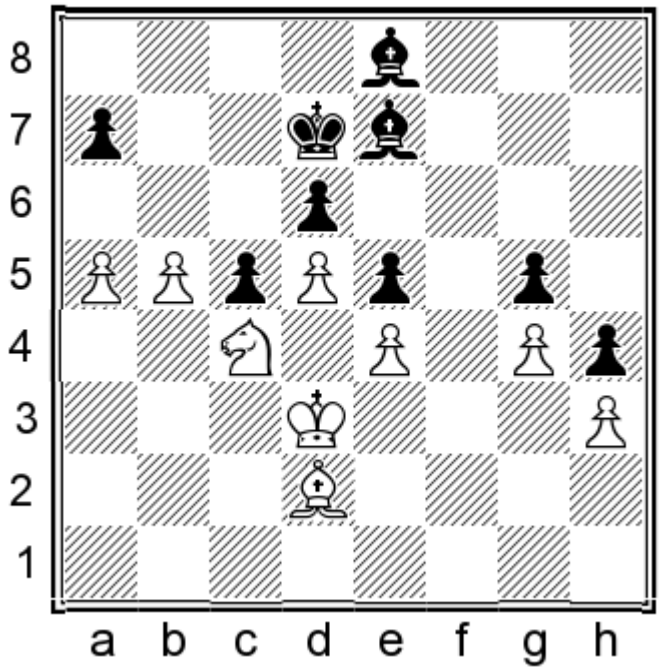
52.Rb2 Rf7 53.Rf2 Rxf2 54.Bxf2 Kf6 55.Be1 Bd8

It is clear that the exchange of dark-square bishops does not leave Black any hope.

56.Nb2 Ke7 57.Kd3 Kd7 58.Nc4 Bf6 59.Bd2 Bd8 60.a5

An excellent illustration of the knight's power in a blockading position. Out of the bishops' reach, the knight stops the c-pawn and at the same time controls a5, b6, and d6, while maintaining a constant pressure on the opponent's pieces. It should be noted that, luckily for White, he avoided the temptation to exploit the weakness of the g5-pawn by transferring the knight to f3. This would have destroyed the harmony of his position and Black would have obtained real drawing chances. For example: 60.Be3 Kc7 61.Nd2 a6! 62.bxa6 Bxa4 63.Nf3 Bb5+ 64.Kd2 Bxa6 65.Bxg5 Bxg5+ 66.Nxg5 Bf1 67.Ke1 Bg2 68.Kf2 c4!, and Black does not risk losing.

60...Be7



61.a6!

Great play by Petrosian! The move that he made is again the best, while the seductive 61.b6 only leads to a draw: 61...a6! (but not 61...axb6? 62.a6 Kc7 63.a7 Kb7 64.Nxb6!) 62.Be3! Kd8 63.Bxc5 Bb5! (63...dxc5 64.d6!) 64.Bb4 Kc8 65.Kc3 Bxc4 66.Kxc4 Kb7.

61...Kc8

A well-known fact: almost all of the world champions liked to play endgames and did so quite well even in their youth. This game is another proof.

After this, White wins easily. The essence of Petrosian's idea manifests itself in this inconspicuous and very beautiful variation: 61...Kc7 62.b6+ Kb8 (62...axb6 63.a7! and so on) 63.Na5! Bb5+ 64.Kc3 axb6 65.Nc6+ Bxc6 66.dxc6 b5 67.Kb3 Bd8 (if 67...b4, then 68.Kc4, and the white king goes to e6), and now either 68.c7+! or 68.Ka3! – zugzwang (68...Ka7 69.Bxg5!; 68...Bf6 69.Ba5!.

As we can see, winning this seemingly simple endgame is not easy and involves many tactical nuances. In this connection, we would like to discuss a broader concept of chess technique. When people say "the rest is a matter of technique," they usually imply that the chess player knows in advance how to win a particular position. However, in reality, it is much more complicated. The analysis of the highest technical achievements of the best chess players proves that the highest technical level includes not only the knowledge of the plan and "thinking with patterns," but, above all, intense calculations and a continuous search for all sorts of "tricks" in order to achieve the main goal.

Petrosian's technique in this endgame is impressive. Where and, above all, when did he learn all of this?!

62.Bxg5! Bf8

If 62...Bxg5, then 63.Nxd6+ Kd7 64.b6, and one of the white pawns promotes.

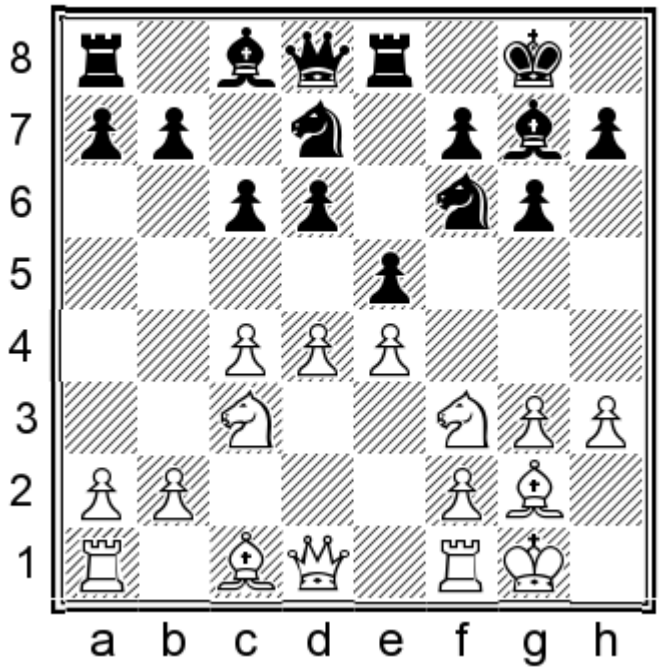
63.b6 Kb8 64.Bxh4 axb6 65.Nxb6 Ka7 66.Be7!

The bishop is like an annoying fly.

66...Bxe7 67.Nc8+ Kxa6 68.Nxe7 Kb5 69.Kc3 Kb6 70.g5 Kc7 71.g6 Black resigned.

(107) C1.2 **Petrosian – Kasparian**
Match, 3rd game
Yerevan 1946

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d6 3.Nc3 Nbd7 4.Nf3 e5 5.g3 g6 6.Bg2 Bg7 7.0-0 0-0 8.e4 c6 9.h3 Re8



10.Re1 Qc7

Kasparian does not give much thought to the opening subtleties and plays based on general considerations, hoping that he can somehow “trick” his young opponent in the complex maze of the middlegame. The continuations 10...a5 (game 108) and 10...a6 (game 112) are more in the spirit of the dynamic system chosen by Black.

11.Be3 Nf8

Wandering without a plan. If Black was going to hold on to the e5-pawn and transfer the knight to e6, then it would have been better to transfer the queen to a5 on the previous move. If the queen is on c7, playing against the e4-pawn after ...exd4 is more logical. Then it would make sense to play 11...a5, providing the knight with the c5-square.

12.Qd2 Be6

Black has difficulty finding moves. The natural 12...Ne6 is followed by the unpleasant 13.d5!. At the same time, White already threatened to play Rad1, increasing the pressure in the center. Forcing the advance d4-d5, Black temporarily stabilizes the position.

13.d5 cxd5 14.cxd5 Bd7 15.Rec1

Usually in such positions, Black's knight is supposed to occupy the c5-square, playing a supporting role during the preparation of counterplay. In this case there is no knight on c5, and White, using the c-file and the diagonal g1-a7, easily seizes the initiative on the queenside.

15...Qa5 16.Ne1 Rec8

"Activity" such as 16...b5 17.Nd3 b4 18.Nd1 leads to sad consequences for Black.

17.Nd3 Ne8 18.f3 Qd8 19.Qf2 a6 20.Bb6 Qe7 21.Re1 Bh6 22.f4 f6 23.a4 Rc4 24.fxe5

A baffling exchange. Essentially, White captures the f6-pawn rather than the central pawn, and the offensive breakthrough of the f-pawn becomes pointless. 24.f5 suggests itself, after which the black pieces become cramped in their own camp. If White wanted to open the f-file, he could have done it later.

24...fxe5 25.Rf1 Rac8

With the obvious idea of sacrificing the exchange on c3 when the opportunity presents itself.

26.Kh2 Bg5 27.Qf3 h5 28.a5 Nh7 29.Rf2 Nef6 30.Qe2

An acknowledgment that the plan of attacking on the kingside failed.

30...h4

Master Kasparian, the author of many clever studies, finds an unexpected idea associated with the exchange of the dark-square bishop.

31.g4 Bf4+ 32.Nxf4 exf4 33.Qd2

Of course, bad is 33.Rxf4? Qe5 and 34...g5.

33...g5 34.Bd4

34.e5!? also deserved attention.

34...Rf8

It is quite possible that Black's original idea was to play 34...Be8, followed by transferring the knight to e5. However, in this case, he has to sacrifice an exchange: 35.Bf1 R4c7 36.Bb6 Nd7!, with good compensation after 37.Bxc7 Rxc7 and ...Ne5. For some reason, Kasparian abruptly changes his plan and takes an uncertain path of complications.

35.Re1 Bxg4 36.e5!

Activity is more valuable than material! After 36.hxg4 Nxg4+ 37.Kg1 Nxf2 38.Qxf2 (38.Bxf2 Qe5) 38...Rxd4! 39.Qxd4 f3 Black obviously seizes the initiative.

36...dxe5 37.Bxe5

If the g4-bishop retreats now, by continuing Bxf4, White will regain a pawn with positional benefits. So Kasparian "adds fuel to the fire."

37...Qc5 38.hxg4?!

Courage bordering on insanity: Black gets three (!) passed pawns. Stronger is 38.b3, virtually forcing Black to sacrifice the exchange (38...Rb4 39.Na4).

38...Nxg4+ 39.Kg1 f3?

Black "returns the favor." After 39...Nxf2 40.Qxf2 f3!, the outcome of the fight would have been far from clear.

40.Bh3!

The refutation of the "study." Black does not have time to take on f2 with the knight because of the in-between move Be6+.

40...Rf5 41.Ne4 Qa7

Black plays the end of the game in the sharp sacrificial style of the unforgettable "grandmaster" Bender at the simul in Vasyuki (this is a reference to the novel *Twelve Chairs* by Ilya Ilf and Evgeny Petrov – translator).

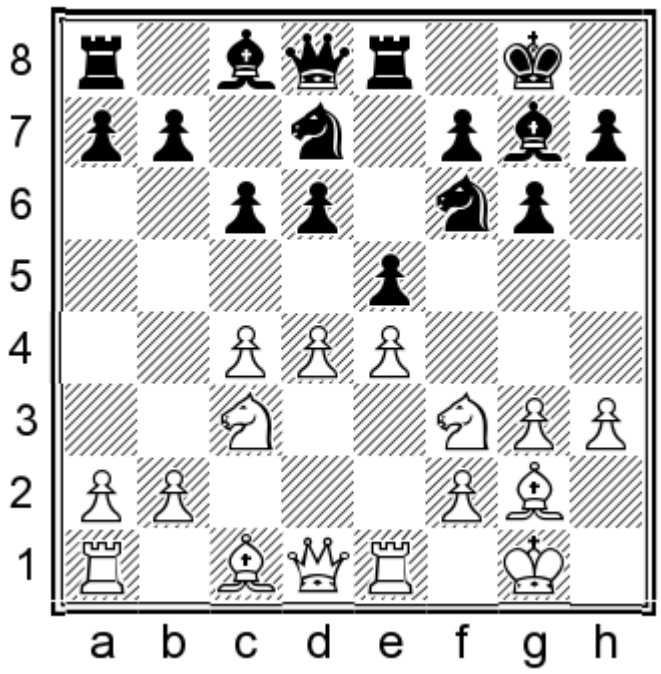
42.Bxg4 Rxe5 43.d6 Rd4 44.Qc2 Kg7 45.Bxf3 Nf6 46.Kf1 Nd5 47.d7 Ne3+

After 47...Nf6, simplest is 48.d8=Q Rxd8 49.Qc7+, winning a rook.

48.Rxe3 Rxd7 49.Rd3 Rde7 50.Qc3 Qb8 51.Nxg5 Kg6 52.Ne4 Black resigned.

(108) C1.3 **Fridstein – Petrosian**
Moscow Championship 1950

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Nf3 0-0 5.g3 d6 6.Bg2 Nbd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 c6 9.h3 Re8 10.Re1



10...a5 11.Be3 a4

One of the many versions of a popular plan: ...exd4 is delayed until the last moment. The advantage of this method is that White cannot attack the d6-pawn for some time. It also has one disadvantage: White can play the move d4-d5, which to some extent extinguishes Black's aggressive aspirations. Also note that the tactical operation 12.Nxa4 Nxe4 is not beneficial for White.

12.d5

Black is all set to trade on d4. Fridstein exercises his right to close the position, at the same time threatening the d6-pawn.

12...Bf8 13.Qc2

White rejects the tactical complications offered by his opponent and rightly so. After 13.dxc6 bxc6 14.Nxa4 Nxe4 and the probable continuation 15.Nd2 Nxd2 16.Bxc6 Ra6 17.Bd5 Nf6, Black would have the advantage.

13...Qa5 14.Bf1

Entering the middlegame, the opponents adjust their plans. White intends to chase away the opponent's pieces with the help of the b-pawn. Black's plan also involves playing on the queenside, in particular advancing ...b5. White could have prepared b2-b4 one move earlier, but this did not offer any real benefits. For example: 14.Nd2 Nc5 15.Rab1 Bd7 16.b4! axb3 17.Nxb3 (17.axb3 is no better because of 17...Na6 or 17...Qb4 18.Na2 Qa3) 17...Nxb3 18.Qxb3 cxd5 19.cxd5 b5, reaching a similar position to the one in the game.

14...Nc5 15.Rab1

Fridstein avoids the exchange 15.Bxc5 dxc5, rightly believing that the dark-square bishop is too valuable to trade for the knight in this position, even if he does get a protected passed pawn. After all, with the board full of pieces, this would be more of an ornamental decoration than a real force.

15...Bd7 16.Nd2 cxd5 17.cxd5 b5 18.b4 axb3 19.Nxb3 Nxb3 20.Qxb3 Reb8

A middlegame position characteristic of this variation. The mutual pawn weaknesses on the queenside more or less balance each other.

21.Qb4

Physically stopping the move ...b4.

21...Be7

Planning ...Ne8 and ...Bd8 so that the bishop could go to a5 when the opportunity presents itself.

22.Qxa5 Rxa5 23.Rb4 Ra3

The tension grows. Just in case, White forces the pawn trade and the draw becomes obvious.

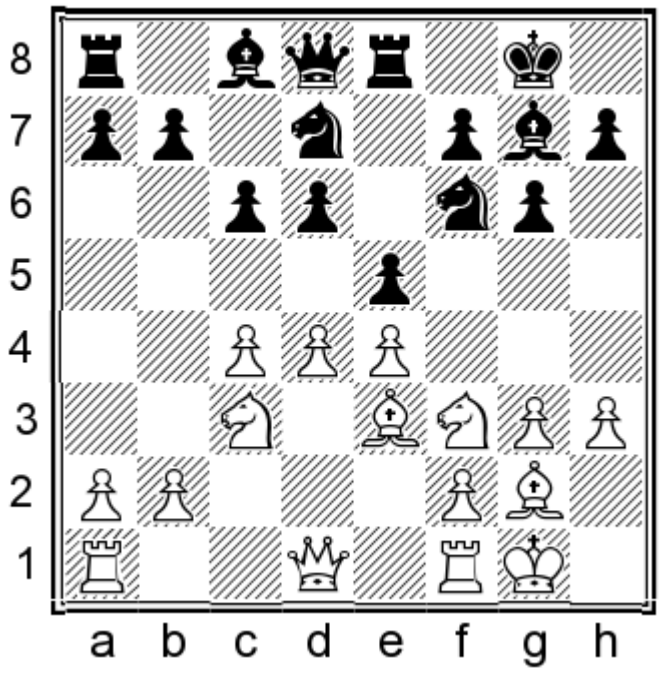
24.Nxb5 Rxa2 25.Reb1 Kg7 26.Kg2 Rc8 27.Bd3 Draw

(109) C1.4 **Averbakh – Petrosian**
USSR Team Championship
Riga 1954

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 e5 3.g3 g6 4.Bg2 Bg7 5.Nf3 d6 6.d4

A small transformation that is characteristic of the modern interpretation of this opening. The game smoothly transitions from the English Opening into a King's Indian structure.

6...Nbd7 7.0-0 0-0 8.e4 c6 9.h3 Re8 10.Be3



10...a5 11.Qc2 a4

A familiar trick. White cannot take because he will lose the e-pawn.

12.dxe5

Yet another way to avoid the main variation. Averbakh probably had unpleasant memories of it from the 1953 Candidates Tournament. But White did not need to worry about the move ...exd4. It was agreed later that this route is difficult for Black. The game in which Korchnoi beat Ivkov (Hastings, 1955/56) was one of the first, but even today, it is still impressive: 12.Rfd1 (for 12.Rab1 see C1.8) 12...Qa5 13.Rab1 exd4 14.Nxd4 Nc5 15.b4 axb3 16.axb3 Qb4 17.Bf4! Bf8? 18.Bd2 Qb6 19.Be3 Qb4? 20.Qd2! Qb6 21.b4! Ncxe4 22.Nxe4 Nxe4 23.Qd3!, with a decisive advantage.

The text move deserves another comment. Such exchanges in this opening are usually very bad. But here it is difficult for Black to use the d4-square, while White has a number of positional advantages: the d-file and the weakness of the b6- and d6- squares, not to mention his space advantage.

12...dxe5 13.b4 axb3 14.axb3 Rxa1 15.Rxa1 Bf8

Black’s immediate efforts are aimed at preventing the white pawn from moving to c5.

16.Na4 b6 17.Ne1 Bb7 18.Rd1 Qc7 19.Nd3 c5

Forced because of the unpleasant positional threat c4-c5.

20.Nc3 Bc6

Black’s position is worse and requires precise, meticulous defense. The variation 20...Rd8 21.Nd5 Qc6 22.Bg5, with unpleasant pressure, is an example of the dangers that Black might face.

21.Ra1

21.Nd5 also deserved attention.

21...Ra8 22.Rxa8 Bxa8 23.Qa2 Bc6 24.Nb2 Ne8 25.Nd5

In a nutshell, Averbakh's further plan is to exchange all of the "light-square" pieces and leave his opponent with a bad bishop.

25...Qb7 26.Nd1 Ng7

The black knight is heading to d4.

27.N1c3 Ne6 28.h4 Nd4 29.Bh3 h5 30.Bxd7 Bxd7 31.Nf6+ Kg7 32.Nxd7 Qxd7 33.Kg2 Be7 34.Bxd4

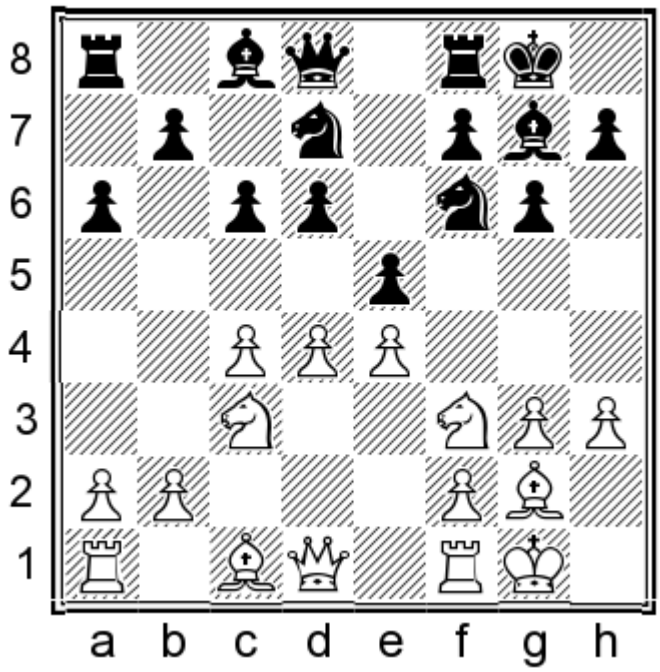
White rushes to eliminate the knight and misses a tactical blow. After the precise move 34.f3, he would have retained some advantage.

34...cxd4 35.Nd5 Bxh4!

After 36.gxh4, Black has perpetual check from g4, h4, and d1. Draw.

(110) C1.5 **Pachman – Petrosian**
Interzonal Tournament
Göteborg 1955

1.c4 g6 2.Nc3 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.Nf3 Nf6 5.g3 0-0 6.Bg2 Nbd7 7.0-0 c6 8.e4 e5 9.h3 a6



In this position, the idea of the flank breakthrough ...b5 (just to spite the g2-bishop!) looks risky, but, as practical play shows, it is acceptable and leads to complicated, unpredictable positions. In choosing this plan, Petrosian was likely guided by psychological considerations. As a major theoretician, Ludek Pachman would have been much more comfortable playing the main variations, of course.

10.Re1

10.b3, as recommended by Euwe, with the idea of organizing an attack on the d6-pawn via Ba3, is not dangerous for Black. Then Black can achieve a favorable version of the main variation via 10...Re8 11.Ba3 exd4 12.Nxd4 Qa5 13.Bb2 Nc5, because in such positions the white bishop is better on e3, while it is unprotected on b2, which creates themes for a variety of combinations. Ludek Pachman had already learned this from the experience, having suffered a painful defeat from David Bronstein (Moscow 1946).

10...b5 11.cxb5

Petrosian's small psychological success: White avoids the problematic variation 11.c5 dxc5 12.dxe5 (White has nothing after 12.Nxe5 Bb7 13.Nxd7 Nxd7 14.Be3 cxd4 15.Bxd4 Ne5 16.Bc5 Re8 17.Qe2 Qd3, with equal play, Sofrevsky-Gligorić, Skopje 1968) 12...Ne8 13.Bg5, in which Black has to sacrifice an exchange (13...Qb6 14.Be7) with completely unclear consequences.

11...axb5 12.d5 Qc7

Black does not have much choice. After 12...Bb7 13.dxc6, the d6-pawn comes under attack, and the forced 12...b4 13.dxc6 bxc3 14.cxd7 cxb2 15.Bxb2 yields White a potentially dangerous passed pawn.

13.dxc6 Qxc6

Somewhat unexpectedly, the position started resembling a Sicilian. Black has his play on the queenside, and it is not easy for White to use his space advantage. Besides, Black threatens the concrete ...b4.

14.Nd4!?

Here is what Pachman came up with! With this temporary knight sacrifice, White breaks apart the black pawns and opens up the h1-a8 diagonal, making a serious attempt to seize the initiative.

14...exd4 15.e5 d5 16.exf6 Nxf6 17.Ne2

White is, of course, more interested in the strong d4-square where he wants to place his knight than the pawn. Capturing with the queen on d4 suggests itself but is weaker. For example, 17.Qxd4 Be6 18.Qb4 Rfb8 19.Bf4 Rb7, and White's initiative begins to fizzle out.

17...d3! 18.Qxd3 Qc4

Actively opposing the opponent's plans.

19.Nf4 Qxd3 20.Nxd3 Ne4! 21.Nb4 Be6 22.Rd1

22.Nxd5 Bxd5 23.Bxe4 Rfe8 24.f3 Bxe4 25.Rxe4 Rxe4 26.fxe4 Ra4 does not yield anything.

22...f5 23.Nc6

Well played! Via a roundabout route, the knight still wants to get to d4! The straightforward 23.Nxd5 Rfd8 24.Ne3 Rxd1+ 25.Nxd1 Rxa2 26.Rxa2 Bxa2 27.Bxe4 fxe4 28.Nc3 Bxc3 29.bxc3 leads to a clear draw.

23...d4

Black is consistently worse after 23...Rfe8 24.Nd4.

23...Ra4 would have been the logical continuation of the fight for the d4-square. The move 24.Bf1 leads to a beautiful variation: 24...Rfa8 25.a3 (25.Bxb5 Rxa2 26.Rxa2 Rxa2 27.Nd8 Bxb2! and so on) 25...b4 26.Bb5 Rxa3!!. Instead of 26.Bb5, if White instead plays 26.Ne7+ Kf7 27.Nxd5, then 27...Rd8 28.Ne3 Rxd1 29.Nxd1 Nc5, followed by 30...Nb3. Black probably would be able to exchange the queenside pawns, resulting in a draw. Petrosian thought that it would be simpler to reach the goal with the text move, but, as often happens, it turned out to be more complicated.

24.Nxd4 Rfd8 25.Be3 Bxa2 26.g4

An unpleasant breakthrough, forcing Black to trade off his strong bishop.

26...Bxd4 27.Rxd4 Rxd4 28.Bxd4 Bd5 29.Rc1 Bc4 30.gxf5 gxf5 31.Re1 Kf7!

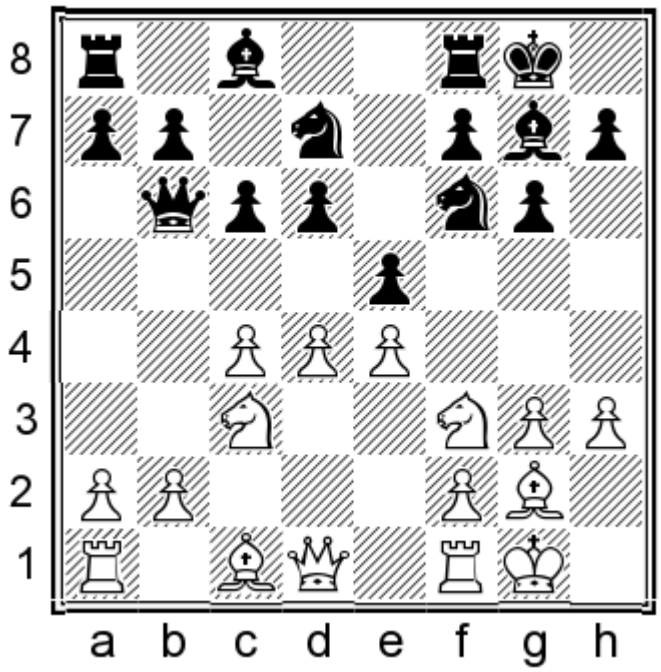
A saving pawn sacrifice.

32.Bxe4 Re8 33.f3 fxe4 34.fxe4 Bd3 35.e5 Bf5 36.Kh2 Rd8

The bishop cannot leave the d4-square in view of ...Rd3, while after 37.Rd1 White's pieces are tied up. Thus, it is a draw.

(111) C1.6 **Petrosian – Shyanovsky**
Semifinal USSR Championship
Kiev 1957

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d6 3.Nc3 g6 4.g3 Bg7 5.Bg2 0-0 6.Nf3 Nbd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 c6 9.h3 Qb6



A dynamic continuation. Black immediately begins activity in the center, threatening the combination 10...exd4 11.Nxd4 Nxe4!. At the same time, he targets the b2- and c4-pawns (via ...Qb4). So, if White wants to maintain the tension in the center, he has to consider Black's tactical ideas.

For example, after 10.Re1 exd4 11.Nxd4 Re8 (Smyslov's move 11...Ne8!? also deserves attention), the game becomes so complicated that even Botvinnik "lost control" once and suffered an opening "accident." Here is what happened: 12.Re2 Ng4 (certainly not 12...Ne5 13.b3 Bxh3? 14.Na4, and not 12...Nxe4 13.Nxe4 Bxd4 14.Bf4 or 13...Qxd4 14.Be3! Qxd1+ 15.Rxd1, with an overwhelming advantage for White) 13.Nc2 Nge5 14.Ne3 Nc5 15.b3? (better is 15.Rd2) 15...Bxh3!, and White lost a pawn (Botvinnik-Geller, Belgrade 1969).

Petrosian does not want to take on too much commitment and immediately closes the position.

10.d5 cxd5 11.cxd5 Nc5

Black wants to emphasize the downsides of the early d4-d5: his knight has occupied an active position and is already attacking the pawn.

12.Ne1

A novelty. Until this game, the moves 12.Re1 and 12.Nd2 were usually played so that the knight could be transferred to c4 with tempo. Practical play showed that Black has good counter-chances on both flanks in this case: on the kingside, in connection with ...f5, and on the queenside, by preparing ...b5 and ...Ba6. Petrosian's idea is to get rid of the active knight on c5 as quickly as possible. The c1-bishop is appointed to win a tempo.

12...a5

An unnecessary move. Why strengthen the knight that will soon leave the board? The maneuver Ne1-d3 takes time, and Black could have completed his development unhindered, something that Shyanovsky can later only dream about.

Three years later, in the sixth game of his match against Botvinnik (Moscow 1960), Tal demonstrated the correct plan: 12...Bd7 13.Nd3 Nxd3 14.Qxd3 Rfc8, and Black successfully solved the opening problems.

13.Nd3 Nxd3

It makes no sense to resist. After 13...Nfd7 14.Be3, the pin on the c5-knight is very unpleasant.

14.Qxd3 Qd8

Black is forced to sound the retreat. 14...Bd7 would still have been followed by 15.Be3!, because the threat to the b2-pawn is imaginary: 15...Qxb2 16.Rab1 Qa3 17.Rb3.

15.Bg5

Greatly favored by Petrosian, the pin on the f6-knight is very useful here.

15...h6 16.Be3 b6

With the obvious intention of disturbing the white pieces on the f1-a6 diagonal.

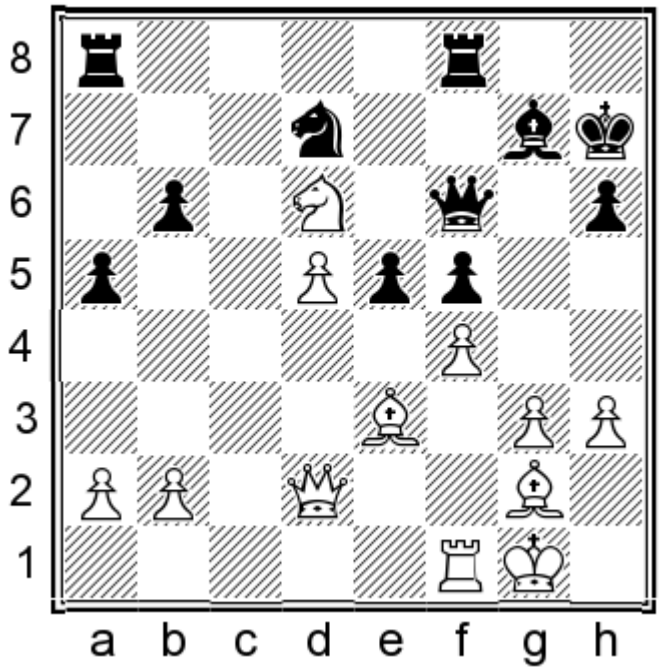
17.Qd2 Kh7 18.Rab1 Nd7 19.f4

White can attack in several different ways. Petrosian conceived a bold combinational plan involving sacrifices: first an exchange, then also a knight!

19...f5 20.exf5 gxf5 21.Nb5

The outline of White’s combination becomes discernible. The light-square bishop plays first fiddle: 21...Ba6 22.Nxd6 Bxf1 23.Rxf1, and 23...e4 will be followed by 24.Nxf5! Rxf5 25.Bxe4 with a decisive pin.

21...Ba6 22.Nxd6 Bxf1 23.Rxf1 Qf6



It looks like this does not help either.

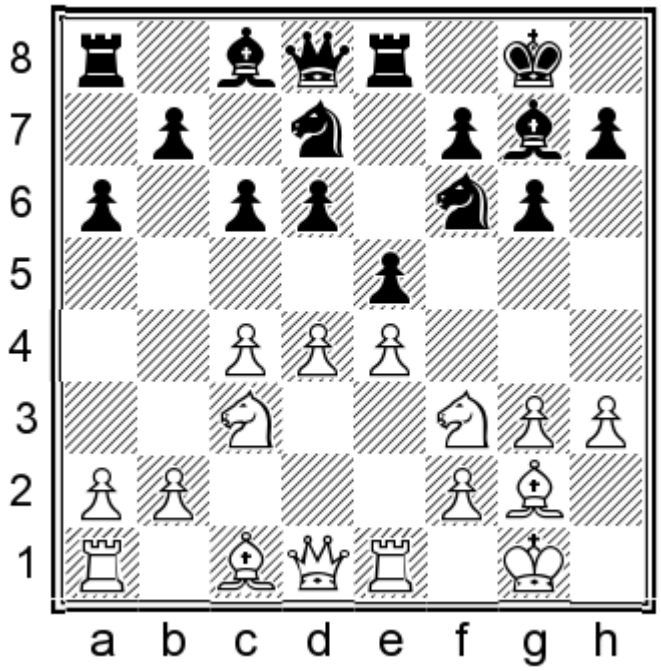
24.fxe5 Nxe5?

It turns out that it is this superficial move that completely ruins Black. He should have taken the e5-pawn with the queen. Busy with complicated calculations, both players overlooked a simple reply in the variation 24...Qxe5 25.Nxf5 Rxf5 26.Qd3. After 26...Re8!, Black surprisingly wins! Therefore, after 24...Qxe5, White would probably have had to transition into an endgame with a pawn for the exchange: 25.Bf4 Qd4+ 26.Rf2, etc., and a long struggle still awaits.

25.Nxf5 Nc4 26.Qc2! Black resigned

(112) C1.7 **Petrosian – Speelman**
Hastings 1977/78

1.d4 g6 2.c4 Bg7 3.g3 d6 4.Nc3 Nd7 5.Nf3 e5 6.Bg2 c6 7.0-0 Ngf6 8.e4 0-0 9.h3 Re8 10.Re1 a6



Now the position transforms into a structure that is familiar to the reader from the game Pachman- Petrosian (game 110).

11.d5

As usual, Petrosian avoids the complicated forced continuation that starts with the moves 11.Be3 b5 12.c5, in the depths of which White should strive for an opening advantage according to theoreticians.

11...cxd5 12.cxd5 b5 13.Bf1

Too passive. Apparently, Petrosian did not mind a draw. White could have played 13.b4 Nb6 14.a4 and then tried to prove that the weakness on a6 plays a more important role than the advanced position of the b4-pawn.

13...Nb6 14.a3 Bd7 15.Kh2 Qc7 16.Bd3 Rec8 17.Qe2 Qb7 18.Nd2 Rc7 19.Nf1 Qc8 20.g4 Be8 21.Be3 Nfd7 22.Nd2

White has no advantage whatsoever, and soon Petrosian starts exchanging pieces.

22...Nc5 23.Rec1 Rb8 24.b4 Nxd3 25.Qxd3 Na4 26.Ne2 Draw.

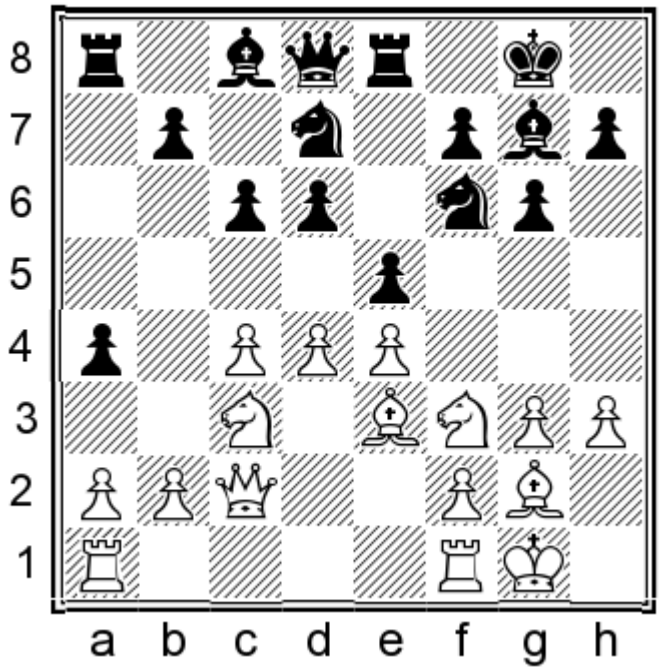
(113) C1.8 **Petrosian – Ciocaltea**
XXIII Olympiad Buenos Aires 1978

1.d4 g6 2.c4 Bg7 3.Nc3 d6 4.Nf3 Nf6 5.g3 0-0 6.Bg2 Nbd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 c6 9.h3

Is this prophylactic move, which is often made automatically, really necessary? At one point, Botvinnik and Furman were among the doubters. In many games, they tried to prove that the e3-bishop does not need to be protected by the pawn and made the principled choice 9.Be3. However, in the 14th game of the match Botvinnik-Smyslov (Moscow 1954), Black convincingly challenged this move order: 9...Ng4 10.Bg5 Qb6 11.h3 exd4! 12.Na4 Qa6 13.hxg4 b5! 14.Nxd4 bxa4 15.Nxc6 Qxc6 16.e5 Qxc4 17.Bxa8 Nxe5, and Smyslov won after a bitter struggle.

Petrosian never questioned the need for the move h2-h3 in this system, as he never skimped on prophylaxis.

9...Re8 10.Be3 a5 11.Qc2 a4



12.Rab1

This is the opening from game 109, but now Petrosian, playing White, introduces an improvement over Averbakh's move 12.dxe5, which does not provide anything tangible.

12...exd4

As mentioned in the annotations to the game Averbakh-Petrosian, this exchange is premature. Stronger is 12...Qa5, potentially planning to play ...b5, which White would probably have countered with 13.b4 or 13.Rfd1, with a slight advantage.

13.Nxd4 Nc5 14.Rfe1 Qe7

And now better is 14...Qa5, for example, 15.b4 axb3 16.axb3 Qb4! with counterplay. The queen's position on e7 has more disadvantages than advantages.

15.Rbd1

As always, Petrosian is extremely careful. After 15.b4 axb3 16.axb3 Bd7, the threat of 17...Ncxe4 would have forced White to play the ugly move 17.f3. But now the d4-knight is protected, and after 15...Bd7, White has the strong response 16.Bf4 targeting the d6-pawn; for example, 16...Nh5 17.Nxc6! and 18.Bxd6.

15...Nfd7

It is clear that the threat to the e4-pawn is fictitious: 15...Nfxe4? 16.Nxe4 Nxe4 17.Bxe4 Qxe4 18.Bd2, and White wins. At the same time, White threatened the unpleasant 16.Bf4.

16.Re2 Ne5 17.b3 axb3 18.axb3 f6

Preparing to retreat the knight to f7, Black thoroughly reinforces the d6-square but closes the g7-diagonal for the bishop, affecting the flexibility of his position. According to Petrosian, better was 18...h5, striving for active defense.

19.f4 Nf7 20.Bf2 Bd7 21.b4

White methodically pushes back his opponent's pieces, expanding his own space.

21...Na6 22.Rb1 Nc7 23.Qc1

White plans to transfer the knight to b6 and then play c4-c5. However, it was still too early for decisive action: 23.Na4? c5!.

23...Qf8 24.Rd2 Qe7 25.Qd1 Ne6 26.Nde2

A characteristic moment. Later Petrosian pointed out that White had an interesting tactical opportunity: 26.c5 dxc5? 27.Nf5! gxf5 28.Rxd7. I suspect that he saw the move 26.c5 during the game but deliberately avoided it so as not to provoke unnecessary complications. Indeed, in the variation 26...Rad8 27.cxd6 Nxd6 28.Nxe6 Bxe6 29.Bc5 Nc4!?, Black has some counter-chances. In a better position, one should strive for clarity!

26...Bc8 27.Na4! Nf8 28.Nb6

White is close to constructing his previously conceived ideal position.

28...Rb8 29.c5

White could not capture the “King’s Indian” d6-pawn, but he can exchange it with advantage!

29...dxc5 30.bxc5 Be6 31.Nd4 Rbd8 32.Qc2 Bh6 33.Rbd1 Bg7

Black cannot manage to loosen White’s strengthening grip. Petrosian considers the following variation: 33...g5 34.f5 Bc8 35.g4 Ne5 (or 35...Nd7 36.Nxc8 Rxc8 37.Nxc6 bxc6 38.Rxd7) 36.Bg3, with the idea of Nf3.

34.Bf1 h5

The last mistake. Petrosian pointed out that 34...Bc8 prolonged the struggle.

35.f5 gxf5 36.Nxe6

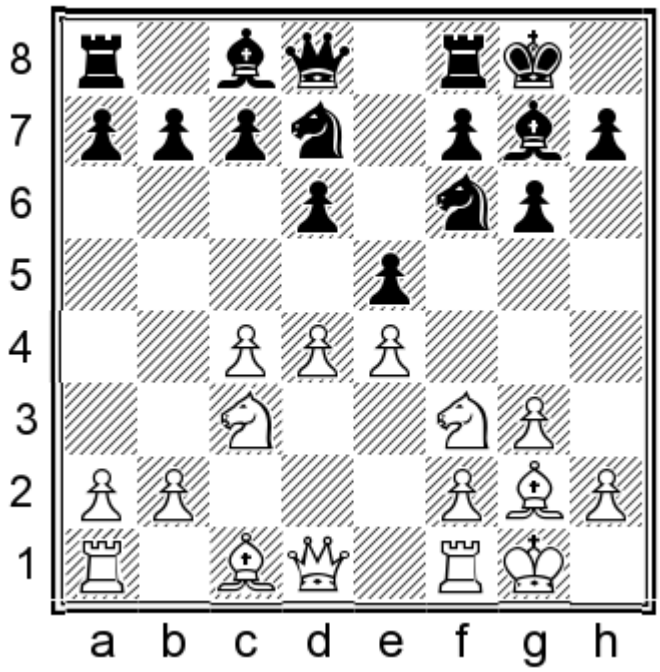
The knight has done a good job and is now ready to take a well-deserved break. The rest is simple.

36...Rxd2 37.Rxd2 Qxe6

If 37...Nxe6, then 38.Rd7 Qf8 39.exf5, winning.

38.exf5 Qe7 39.Bc4 Kh7 40.Qd1 Bh6 41.Qxh5 Ne5 42.Rd4 Black resigned.

C2



Black to move

Here we present the move transpositions that are characteristic of this variation. These moves precede the transition to the main line, starting from 8...exd4 (game 117)

and ending with 8...a5 (game 116)

and 8...Re8 (games 114, 115, 118, 119).

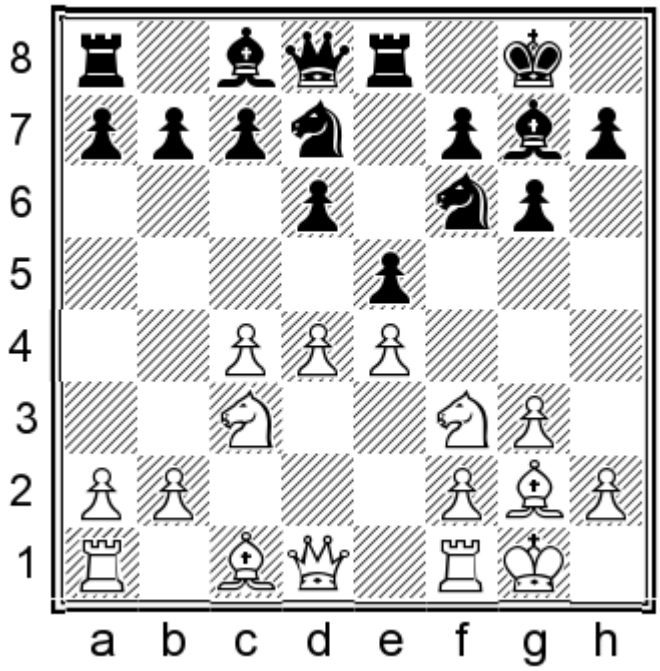
One exception is game 120, which featured the innovative continuation 8...a6.

(114) C2.1 **Levenfish – Petrosian**
17th USSR Championship
Moscow 1949

The yellowed pages of the tournament bulletin tell us a story about the distant events of the 12th round of the 17th National Championship:

“The oldest participant of the tournament, grandmaster Grigory Levenfish, played against the youngest one, Master Tigran Petrosian. In the King’s Indian Defense with the exchange ...exd4, after an inaccurate maneuver by the grandmaster (Nc3-b5- a3-b1), Black was able to equalize. The further progress of the game did not turn out well for White, and he had to sacrifice a pawn. Petrosian played well the whole time and won his third game.” (Simagin)

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.g3 0-0 5.Bg2 d6 6.Nf3 Nbd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 Re8



One of the oldest continuations. In addition to preparing the move ...e5xd4, Black provokes the early advance d4-d5.

9.Re1

Levenfish expresses his readiness to face off on the winding path of the main variation. The continuations 9.Be3 (game 115) and 9.d5 (games 118) lead to more low-key play.

9...a5 10.h3 exd4

By trading pawns in the center, Black accepts the challenge. He could have waited, too: 10...c6 (for example, see game 108).

11.Nxd4 Nc5 12.Qc2

A well-known maneuver, preparing the move Be3, which is associated with a positional trap: 12...Nfxe4 13.Nxe4 Bxd4 14.Bg5 Qd7 15.Nf6+ Bxf6 16.Bxf6. Black wins the central pawn, but loses control over all of the dark squares and, apparently, should lose the game. This theoretical variation migrated from one book to another for more than a half-century, but I think that it has still never been played in a practical game.

12...Ng4

One of Boleslavsky's original ideas, in a system that has been studied through and through. As we know, the tried and true continuations here are 12...c6, 12...Nfd7, and 12...a4. The last one was played in the game Petrosian-Kotov (game 117).

Levenfish's next "symmetrical response" is probably dictated by his desire to leave the theoretical lines.

13.Ncb5

Probably,only Levenfish could explain the true meaning of this mysterious maneuver. Eventually White's knight will reach e2 after completing the "victory lap" a3-b1-c3. The question is, wouldn't it be easier to transfer this knight to e2 right now? White also had other good opportunities at his disposal, for example, 13.Nb3, which could lead to major complications after 13...Ne5 (Lipnitsky- Boleslavsky, Moscow 1952) or 13.hxg4 Bxd4 14.g5.

13...Ne5 14.Rd1 c6 15.Na3 Qc7

Deserving attention is 15...Qe7, with the goal of forcing the weakening move f2-f3 by increasing the pressure on the e4-pawn.

16.Be3 Ned7 17.Nb1 a4 18.Nc3

Perhaps Black's maneuvers were not energetic enough, or maybe White's position was too solid, but the fact remains: Levenfish, despite losing several tempi, has managed to maintain equality without much trouble.

18...Ne5 19.Nce2 Qa5 20.Rac1 a3 21.b3 Na6 22.Rd2 Nb4 23.Qb1 d5

Finally, Black managed to carry out something tangible.

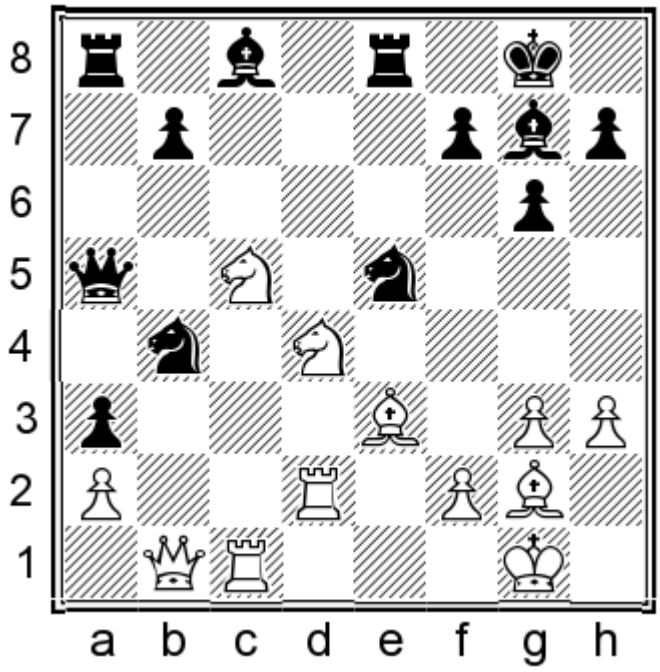
24.cxd5 cxd5 25.exd5 Nxd5 26.b4

A necessary move to save the e3-bishop from the exchange.

26...Nxb4 27.Nb3 Qb5 28.Ned4

28.Rc5?! would have been ill-advised because of 28...Qa6! (but not 28...Qa4? 29.Nc3) 29.Ra5 Bf5!, and Black seizes the initiative.

28...Qa4 29.Nc5 Qa5



Suddenly, in the midst of the fight, the specter of a draw has appeared on the board. After 30.Ncb3 or 30.Ndb3, the game could have ended by repetition of moves. Such an ending would have been logical, but not desirable for either of the opponents, because, frankly, neither of them was doing great in the tournament. However, I think that Levenfish wanted to avoid the draw even more, because of his older age, higher title, and white pieces.

30.Nxb7?

Passion is a bad adviser. Levenfish's last move, which can be described by the motto "I don't want a draw, I'd rather lose," does not hold water. If White decided to continue the fight, he should have at least calculated some variations. Just hoping for a win will not tip the scales.

30...Bxb7 31.Bxb7 Rab8 32.Nb3 Qb5 33.Bg2 Nc4!

Stronger and more dynamic than the greedy 33...Nxa2.

34.Rxc4

Levenfish sacrifices the exchange to avoid the variation 34.Re2 Nxe3 35.Rxe3 Rxe3 36.fxe3 Qe5, and Black wins easily. White's seemingly impregnable position has crumbled before our eyes.

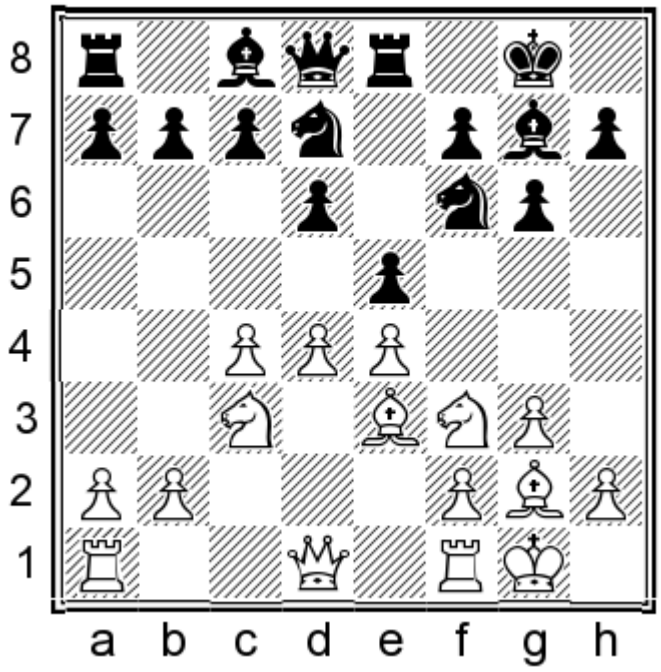
34...Qxc4 35.Bf1 Qc3 36.Bf4 Be5 37.Bxe5 Rxe5 38.Qd1 Nxa2 White resigned.

(115) C2.2 **Furman – Petrosian**
17th USSR Championship
Moscow 1949

In chess, youth is a wonderful time! A chess player is full of drive, energy, and hope, he is afraid of nothing and no one.

This game was played a day after the game against Levenfish. Petrosian, sure of his success, repeated the same opening variation, a luxury that he rarely allowed himself later.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nf3 Bg7 4.g3 0-0 5.Bg2 d6 6.0-0 Nbd7 7.Nc3 e5 8.e4 Re8 9.Be3



Furman was always willing to play this system as White and was presumably pleasantly surprised when Petrosian chose to play it again.

Remember that, at the time, Botvinnik strongly advocated developing the bishop to e3. In this position, this is probably more justified than after 8...c6, and it is quite dangerous.

9...Ng4

Ah, youth! Petrosian considers himself obligated to enter a theoretical dispute over the move h2-h3. Now White's main idea, to take the pressure off the e4-pawn, is successful, and he rids himself of many small concerns and can choose a convenient plan of development.

9...exd4 does not secure equality, for example: 10.Nxd4 Ne5 11.b3 Nfg4 12.Bf4 Nc6 13.Nde2 f5 14.h3 Nf6 15.exf5 Bxf5 16.Qd2 h5 17.Rae1 (Botvinnik-Lilienthal, USSR, 1941), or 10...Nc5 11.f3 Nfd7 12.Qd2 Ne5 13.b3 c6 14.Rad1 (Furman- Geller, Moscow 1949). However, I think the theoretical value of the continuation 9.Be3 is somewhat exaggerated: it seems that after 9...c6, White has nothing better than to switch to the main variation via

the move 10.h3.

10.Bg5

This is the point. Black has to play 10...f6 (10...Bf6?! 11.Bc1!), after which the g4-knight cannot return to f6 and resume attacking the e4-pawn.

10...f6 11.Bc1 Nh6

Retreating, Petrosian prepares to defend in a closed position. Here, the exchange on d4 would seem illogical. For example, 11...exd4 12.Nxd4 Nc5 13.b4 Ne6 14.Nf5!, and, as the later game Botvinnik- Boleslavsky (Moscow 1952) demonstrated, the arising complications benefit White.

12.h3 Nf7 13.Be3 Nf8 14.Qd2

As a result of the opening, White has achieved a very attractive position. Later, in the 13th game of his match against Boleslavsky (Moscow, 1950), Bronstein followed in Furman's footsteps and also achieved an opening advantage.

14...Ne6 15.d5 Neg5

After this move, Black's difficulties multiply. Probably better is 15...Nf8, which Boleslavsky chose in the aforementioned game. However, Black's position is quite unpleasant regardless.

16.Nxg5 Nxg5

Drawing fire upon himself. Hardly better is 16...fxg5. For example, after 17.g4 a5 18.b3 b6 19.a3 Bd7 20.b4 Black, not having the move ...f5, is virtually defenseless against the assault on the queenside (Bolbochán-Olafsson, Helsinki 1952).

17.f4 exf4 18.gxf4 Nf7 19.Rae1 c5

A necessary measure to avoid a gradual squeeze.

20.dxc6 bxc6 21.c5! Ba6

Taking on c5 (now and on the next move) leads to an endgame that is difficult for Black.

22.Rf2 Qc7 23.Qc2 dxc5 24.Na4 Bb5 25.Nxc5

More trouble for Black: the diagonal for the light-square bishop, which he fought so hard for, turned out to be too short.

25...Qa5 26.Ra1 Nd6 27.a4 Bc4

Black walks a tightrope: 27...Ba6? 28.Bd2 Qb6 29.a5.

28.Rd1 Bf7 29.Rxd6

Not the best way. After the simple 29.b3 and Rfd2, Black's position remains very difficult.

29...Qe1+ 30.Kh2 Qxe3 31.Rd1 Bf8 32.Nd7 Bb3?! 33.Rd3! Bxc2

On the 32nd move, Black probably should have played 32...Bg7, and now 33...Qxf4+ 34.Rxf4 Bxc2 35.Nxf6+ Kh8 36.Nxe8 Bh6 37.Rf7 Bxd3 38.Nf6 Bg7, with some chances.

34.Rxe3 Bxa4 35.Nxf6+ Kf7?

A mistake in time trouble, the very last one in this wretched game. After 35...Kh8 36.Nxe8 Bc5 37.Rfe2 Bxe3 38.Rxe3 Rxe8, Black would have been able to resist for quite some time.

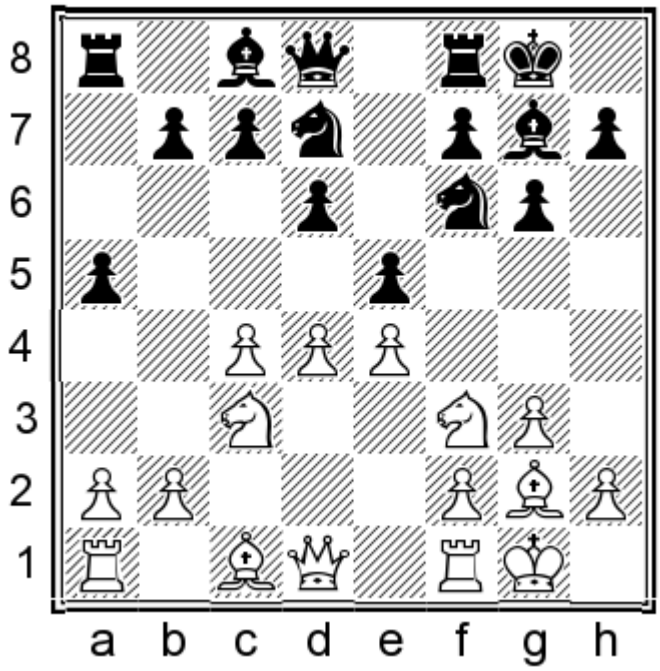
36.Nxe8 Bc5 37.Nd6+! Bxd6

No better is 37...Ke7 38.Nc4 Bb5 39.Rc2!, winning the exchange.

38.Rd3 Rd8 39.e5 Bc7 40.Rfd2 Rxd3 41.Rxd3 Bb6 Black resigned.

(116) C2.3 **Mikenas – Petrosian**
18th USSR Championship
Moscow 1950

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Nf3 d6 5.g3 0-0 6.Bg2 Nbd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 a5



A somewhat unusual move order associated with an interesting idea (see Black's 11th move).

9.h3 exd4 10.Nxd4 Nc5 11.Be3 Nfd7

This move was probably influenced by Geller, with whom Petrosian interacted a lot at the time. One of Black's ideas is to transfer the knight to d3 via e5, using the weakness of the c4-pawn to win a tempo in the event of the natural 12.Qc2 or 12.Re1. Mikenas disarms this threat.

12.Qe2 Re8 13.Rad1 a4 14.Rfe1 c6 15.f4 Qb6 16.Qc2

White prepares a frontal attack on the d6-pawn, which would not have worked earlier because of the unstable position of the c3-knight: 16.Nf3? a3!.

16...Qb4 17.a3

In Geller's words, a "self-blocking" move. White once and for all stops the advance ...a3, thereby stabilizing his pieces on the queenside, but at the same time he creates a "hole" on b3. The c4-pawn is obviously poisoned: 17...Qxc4 18.Bf1.

17...Qa5 18.Bf2

Via this winding route, the opponents reached the classical position of the main variation. By analogy with the "normal" Evans Gambit, it could be called the "normal" King's Indian Defense.

In this game, Petrosian probably faced the problem with the d6-pawn seriously for the first time. Later, at the Candidates Tournament in Zürich, the players came close to unraveling the secrets of such positions. David Bronstein: "This pawn, although backward on an open file, proves nevertheless a tough little nut to crack, because it is so hard to reach. It might seem that nothing could be simpler than dropping the knight back from d4, but the problem is that White needs his knight precisely on d4, where it observes the squares b5, c6, e6 and f5, and neutralizes the power of the g7-bishop. Only after White has taken precautions against all of Black's possible attacks (...a3, ...Be6, ...f5) can his knight allow itself to leave the center; but meanwhile Black has time to regroup." I would like to add that the leitmotif of Black's counterplay is counterattacking the c4-pawn, and the knight's departure from d4 serves as a signal for this.

Given these considerations, Black should now have played 18...Nb6 19.Bf1 Bd7, preparing the regrouping by ...Rad8, ...Bc8 and so on. In case of 20.Nf3, principled and strong is 20...Be6 21.Rxd6 Bxc4, and after 20.g4 (with the idea of 20...Rad8 21.Bh4!) he has the interesting reply 20...Ne6!?, with full-fledged counterplay in any case.

Today all of this is well known, but in 1950, no one had the exact recipe; they just had the firm belief that such positions can be actively and successfully defended.

18...Nf6?!

Trying to attack the e4-square fails and can be regarded as a loss of a tempo at best.

19.g4 Nfd7

"Whoops!"

20.Nde2 Bf8

This is already very alarming. As long as there is any chance for activity, King's Indian players move the bishop away from the main diagonal only if it is absolutely necessary. Did Petrosian have such a chance? In his annotations, Mikenas considers the possibility of the move 20...Nb6 and considers it insufficient based on the following variations: 21.Nb1 Be6 22.Rxd6 Bxc4 (or 22...Nxc4 23.Rxe6!) 23.Nd2, and White should win: 23...Bxe2 24.Qxc5 or 23...Qb5 24.Nd4 Bxd4 25.Rxd4, and so on. However, Black can improve his play: 22...Bf8! (instead of 22...Bxc4), for example, 23.Rd4 Nb3 24.Rdd1 Bxc4, and, in my opinion, White has nothing here.

Thus, 20...Nb6 was the correct continuation. Now the nature of the fight changes: White plays an eight-move solo and Black is forced to be the audience.

21.Ng3 Qc7 22.Be3 Rd8 23.Bf3 Be7 24.Nce2 Nb6 25.Nd4 Ne6 26.Kg2 Re8 27.g5 Ra5 28.Qc3 Rc5

In such positions, there is only one remedy: counterattack at any cost. Petrosian decided that the time had come, and offered his opponent an exchange as a start.

29.Be2

Mikenas does not take the exchange, explaining his decision with the following variation: 29.Nxe6 Bxe6 30.Bxc5 dxc5 , and the two white pawns on c4 and f4 are hanging. In my opinion, this is not convincing. First, this variation can be continued: 31.e5! and then Ne4. Second, instead of taking on c5, very strong is 30.Be2!, for example, 30...Rxc4 31.Bxb6!, and White wins. Thus, so far "all roads lead to Rome."

29...Nxg5

How about a piece?

30.fxg5 Bxg5 31.Ndf5!?

White could not resist the temptation to play for “beauty.” After the simple 31.Bxg5 Rxg5 32.Nf3 Rc5 33.e5! (also good is 33.Qd4), Black would have had to resign.

31...Bxf5 32.Bxc5?!

The position has suddenly become complicated. By playing 32.Nxf5 Rxf5 (32...gxf5? 33.Bxg5) 33.Bxb6 Qxb6 34.exf5, White could win the whole rook, but after 34...Bh4! the position is far from clear: Black threatens ...Qf2+ or, at least, ...Bxe1, and Black will be “only a piece down,” for which he might pick up a third pawn in the future.

For whatever reasons, Mikenas again rejected taking on g5, even though after 32.Bxg5! Bxh3+ 33.Kxh3 Rxg5 34.Qf6! Black’s resistance would have been broken, while now Black has real drawing chances.

32...dxc5 33.Nxf5

Curiously, 33.exf5 even loses: 33...Re3!.

33...gxf5 34.Kh1 h6

Deserving attention was 34...Qf4.

35.Rg1 Kh7 36.Rdf1

No better was 36.h4 Rxe4; for example: 37.hxg5 Rxe2 38.Qh3 Re6 39.Qxf5+ Rg6 40.gxh6 Qe7, etc.

36...f4?

A terrible mistake in a position where White already had only slim chances for success. One of them is in this cooperative variation indicated by Mikenas: 36...Rxe4 37.Bd3 Re3? 38.Bxf5+ Kg8 39.Qxe3, winning. But why play the move 37...Re3? Correct is 37...Rf4!, for example, 38.Bxf5+ Kg8 39.Qg3 Kf8, and the fight begins anew.

It is unknown whether the opponents were in time trouble. I would like to think that they were, because what else would explain this circus?!

37.h4 Rxe4 38.Bd3 f5 39.Bxe4 fxe4 40.hxg5 f3 41.gxh6 Black resigned.

A comedy of errors!

(117) C2.4 **Petrosian – Kotov**
19th USSR Championship
Moscow 1951

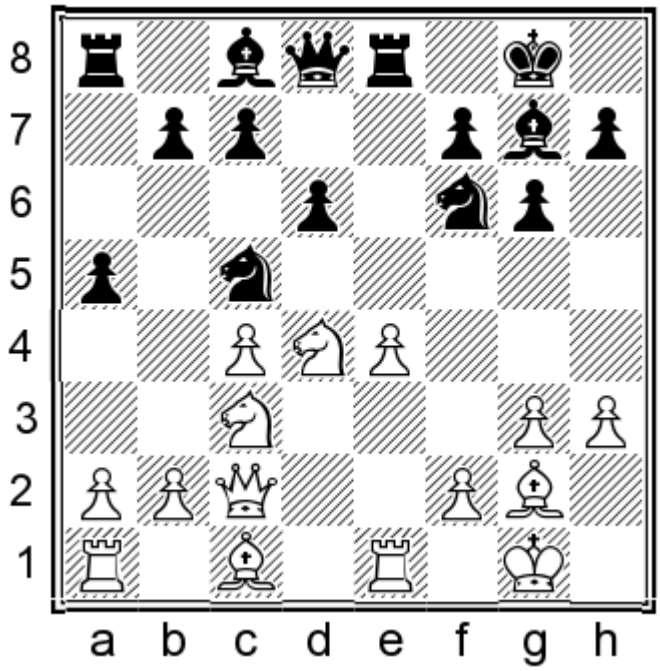
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d6 3.Nc3 e5

This move order allows Black to avoid the Sämisch System and the Four Pawns Attack. No matter which move White now plays, a Sämisch structure is not possible. 4.d5 can be met by 4...Bf5 and after 5.f3, 5...e4!. In case of 4.e4, Black can play 4...exd4 5.Qxd4 Nc6 and then ...Be7 or ...g6. The continuation 4.dxe5 dxe5 5.Qxd8+ Kxd8 is safe for Black because the black king finds shelter on c7.

4.Nf3 Nbd7 5.g3 g6 6.Bg2 Bg7 7.0-0 0-0 8.e4 exd4

With this exchange, Kotov starts a sophisticated plan that was developed by Geller. The essence of the plan is to play ...c6 after the c1-bishop has already taken its position on e3. Then, preparing pressure on the d6-pawn is a waste of time.

9.Nxd4 a5 10.h3 Nc5 11.Re1 Re8 12.Qc2



Regarding the modern continuation 12.Rb1, see game 119.

12...a4

A duel of nerves of sorts continues. White is waiting for the move ...c6, in order to bring the bishop to f4 with tempo, while Black postpones the advance of the c-pawn until the very last moment, starting a flank diversion that is typical of this position.

13.Be3

White has tired of fighting for the tempo and “submits.” 13.Rb1 was also possible.

13...c6 14.Rad1

A classical interpretation of the main variation.

14...Qa5

14...Nfd7 is played more often, but this does not matter because in many cases it leads to a transposition.

15.Bf4

Petrosian demonstrates enviable knowledge. One of the intricacies of Black’s last move is that after the standard move 15.f4, besides 15...Nfd7, he also has a promising plan to pressure the e4-pawn: 15...Bd7!, and then ...Re7 and ...Rae8. Later this was confirmed by the games Botvinnik-Geller (Budapest, 1952) and Robert Byrne-Kotov (New York, 1954).

Petrosian was able to resist the temptation to prematurely attack the d6-pawn: 15.Nde2 Nfd7 16.Rxd6. Two years later Ciocaltea tricked Smyslov in this variation (Bucharest 1953): 16...Ne5! 17.Rdd1 (even worse is 17.b3 axb3 18.axb3 Bxh3! 19.Bxh3 Nf3+ 20.Kf1 Nxe1 21.Kxe1 Nxe4, with a strong attack for Black) 17...Nxc4 18.Bd4 Qb4, and White lost his opening advantage.

The main advantage of the move made by Petrosian is its concreteness. If White is counting on seizing the initiative in the middlegame, he should create threats.

15...Bf8

Later, Geller's recommendation, associated with the sacrifice of the d6-pawn, was tested: 15...Ne6 16.Bxd6 Nxd4 17.Rxd4 Nd5 (17...Nd7). By the way, the consequences of this variation are not clear to this day.

Fearing home preparation, Kotov did not dare to play a sharp continuation and just protected the pawn, putting up with a worse position.

16.Bf1

A decision characteristic of Petrosian. He is in no hurry to force the issue and, after protecting the c4-pawn just in case, makes a waiting move. The continuations 16.Nf3 (Novotelnov-Lilienthal, Sochi 1952), 16.Rd2 (Evans-Browne, Lone Pine, 1975), and 16.Rb1, with the idea of b2-b4 (Portisch-Szabo, Budapest, 1961) lead to practical advantages for White with livelier play.

16...Nh5

Having received a chance to catch his breath, Kotov tests the ground for peace negotiations, hinting a repetition of moves to the opponent. It would be better to play fighting chess: 16...Nfd7.

17.Be3 Nf6 18.Bf4 Nh5 19.Bc1

No draws! Petrosian is determined to fight.

19...Ng7 20.Kh2 Bd7 21.a3

Such moves are usually very hard to make because you never really know what will happen. But White is apparently determined to put an end to the unpleasant threat ...a3.

21...Nge6 22.Be3 Nxd4

Maybe better is 22...Rad8, followed by ...Bc8 and ...Bg7 as recommended by Suetin.

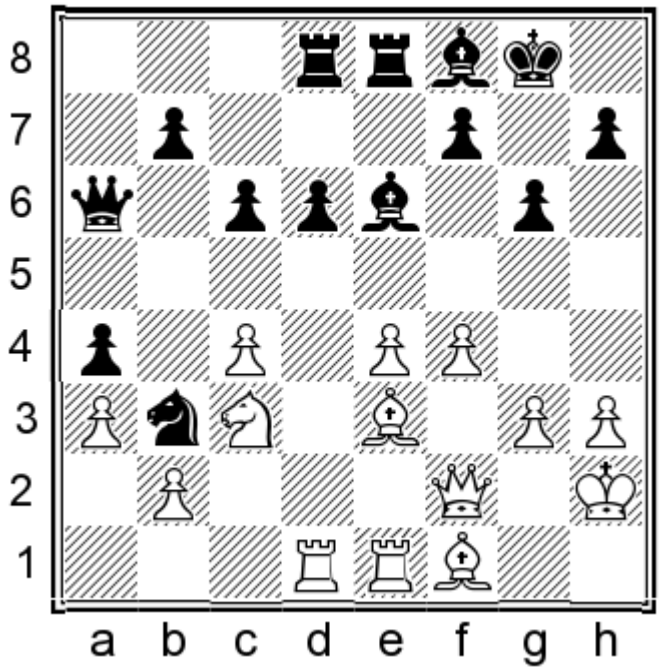
23.Bxd4 Nb3 24.Be3 Be6

A significant inaccuracy. 24...c5! would have been more in the spirit of the position, establishing reliable control over the critical point d4. The weakening of the d5-square would not have mattered much.

25.f4 Rad8

Now 25...c5 is too late. After 26.f5 Bd7 27.Nd5 Bg7 28.f6, White has strong threats on the kingside. But the text move is also unsatisfactory. 25...f5, aiming for counterplay in the center, was the lesser of the two evils. Petrosian played the rest of the game with great enthusiasm.

26.Qf2! Qa6



No better is 26...Rd7 27.f5! gxf5 28.Bb6! Qe5 29.exf5 with a win. More stubborn is 26...Nc5, but White's advantage would still be very significant. "It is instructive to see how White's initiative evolves into a powerful 'creeping' combination." (Alexey Suetin)

27.Bb6! Rd7

The rook cannot leave the d-file because Black would lose the most important d6-pawn after 28.c5.

28.c5

This is stronger than the obvious 28.Nd5 Bxd5 29.cxd5 Qa8.

28...Bc4

Also forced. After 28...Qa8, immediately decisive is 29.f5, trapping the bishop.

29.Bxc4 Qxc4 30.e5! d5 31.Ne4!

The spectacular conclusion of the tactical operation planned by White. White threatens knight forks from d6 and f6, and 31...Be7 is followed by the very effective 32.f5!. Unable to find any other resources to extinguish White's attack, Kotov sacrifices an exchange.

31...dxe4 32.Rxd7 Bxc5 33.Bxc5 Nxc5 34.Rd4 Qe6

It might seem that Black still has some hope, with a pawn for the exchange. However, Petrosian's precise maneuvering shatters these illusions.

35.Qc2 b6 36.Rd6 Qc8 37.Qc4

Thus, White achieved not only a material but also a positional advantage. Black's next mistake, made in time trouble, only brings closer the inevitable.

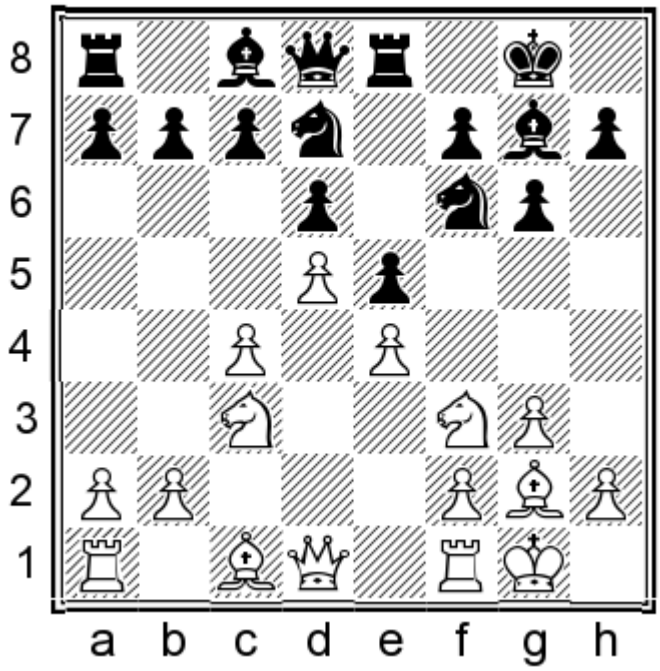
37...h5? 38.Rxg6+ Kf8 39.Rf6 Qd7 40.Rd6 Qf5 41.Rf6 Qd7

Continuing the game, Black apparently hopes for a miracle, but it does not materialize.

42.Rd1! Qc7 43.Qe2 h4 44.Qg4 Rd8 45.Rxd8+ Qxd8 46.Rd6 hxg3+ 47.Kxg3 Qc7 48.Qh4 Ke8 49.Qh8+ Ke7 50.Qf6+ Ke8 51.Rxc6 Qd7 52.Qd6 Black resigned

(118) C2.5 **Ståhlberg – Petrosian**
Candidates Tournament
Neuhausen/Zürich 1953

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.Nc3 d6 6.Nf3 Nbd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 Re8 9.d5

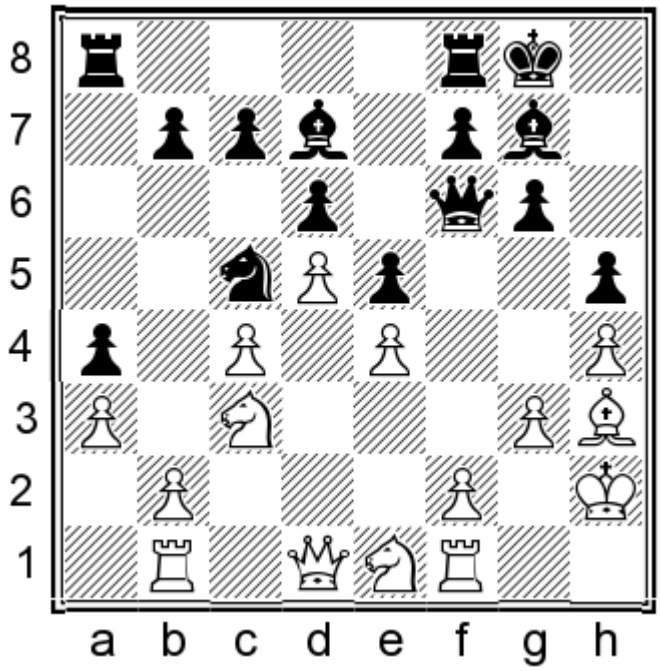


This is how Botvinnik played against Boleslavsky back in 1940. Since preparing ...f5 (or ...c6) will now require greater effort, the move 9.d5 is certainly logical. In this game, White associates the closing of the center with the creative but not very successful idea of exchanging the c1-bishop for the f6-knight. This attempt to leave Black with a bad bishop did not work out. Also, Stahlberg blundered a pawn on the 17th move.

9...a5 10.Ne1 Nc5 11.Bg5

Trying to come up with something new. Here the conventional continuations are 11.h3 and 11.Nd3.

11...h6 12.Bxf6 Qxf6 13.a3?! a4 14.Rb1 Bd7 15.h4 h5 16.Kh2 Rf8 17.Bh3?



“The second step, and the fatal one. Although the commentators called this an unbelievable oversight, it may be understood as the conclusion to the plan begun with his 11th move. In fact, were it not for the pawn White will lose after the exchange of bishops, he wouldn’t have all that bad a position – but that ‘were it not’ spoils everything.” (David Bronstein)

17...Bxh3 18.Kxh3 Nxe4 19.Nxe4 Qf5+ 20.Kh2 Qxe4

“With only the heavy pieces left, sometimes one pawn is not enough to win with. From here on, Ståhlberg offers his young opponent a stubborn but bootless resistance.” (David Bronstein)

21.Rc1 b6 22.Ng2 Qf5 23.Rc2 Qd7

A temporary retreat with the goal of consolidating the position.

24.Qd3 Rfe8 25.Re1 Rab8 26.Rce2 f5 27.f3 Kh7 28.Qc2 Ra8 29.Qd3 Bh6 30.Qc2 Qf7 31.Kh3 f4

Black can choose between different plans to convert his advantage. Petrosian selected the most simple and logical one: to play where he has an extra pawn. He opens the kingside and creates two isolated pawns, f- and h-, for his opponent. Bronstein proposed an alternative plan: ...Ra5-c5 and then ...b5, which probably also wins.

32.gxf4 Bxf4 33.Nxf4 Qxf4 34.Rg1 Rg8

As Bronstein pointed out, 34...Qxf3+ 35.Rg3 Qf5+ allows White counter-chances, for example, 35...Qf5+ 36.Qxf5 gxf5 37.Rg5 Kh6 38.Reg2 or 35...Qf7 36.Rf2 Qd7+ 37.Kh2 Rg8 38.Rf6. In all fairness, let us note that even in this case, Black has a decisive advantage: 35...Qh1+! 36.Rh2 Qf1+ 37.Rhg2 e4 (also sufficient is 37...Rg8 38.Rxg6 Qh1+ 39.Rh2 Qxh2+ 40.Kxh2 Rxg6 with a technical win) 38.Rxg6 Qh1+ 39.Rh2 Qf3+ 40.Rg3 Qf5+ 41.Kg2 Rg8 42.Rhh3 Raf8 43.Qe2 e3 with an unstoppable attack.

35.Qc3 Raf8 36.Rg3 Rf6 37.Re4 Qh6 38.c5 bxc5 39.Rxa4 Qg7

The move 39...g5 is met with an interesting rebuttal: 40.Qc2+ Kh8 41.hxg5 Rxg5 42.Rxg5 Qxg5 43.Ra8+! Kg7 44.Qg2, with counterplay (pointed out by Bronstein).

40.Rc4 Qf7 41.Qd3 Rh8 42.b4 cxb4 43.axb4 Rg8 44.Rc3 Rf4 45.Rg5 Rxh4+

Converting the advantage. More sophisticated is 45...Rxb4! 46.Rxh5+ Kg7 47.Rg5, and only now 47...Rxh4+

48.Kxh4 Qf4+, with a mating attack.

46.Kxh4 Qf4+ 47.Kh3 Qxg5 48.Rxc7+ Kh6 49.Rc2 Rf8 50.Rg2 Qf6 51.Qe3+ Qf4 52.Re2 g5 53.Qxf4 Rxf4 54.Rc2 Rxf3+ 55.Kg2

"Why does White play this endgame? The thing is that, in rook endgames, there are positions where it is possible to draw against two connected passed pawns... But this is not the right position." (David Bronstein).

55...Rb3 56.Rc6 g4 57.Rxd6+ Kg5 58.Re6 Rxb4 59.Rxe5+ Kh4 60.Kf2 g3+ 61.Kf3 Rb3+ 62.Ke2 Rb2+ 63.Kf1 Rf2+ 64.Kg1 Rd2 White resigned

(119) C2.6 **Petrosian – Quinteros**
Manila 1974

1.d4 g6 2.c4 Bg7 3.Nc3 d6 4.Nf3 Nd7 5.g3 e5

A small "trick." Black keeps the king's knight in reserve, keeping the possibility of developing it to e7, h6, or return to the usual variations after ...Nf6.

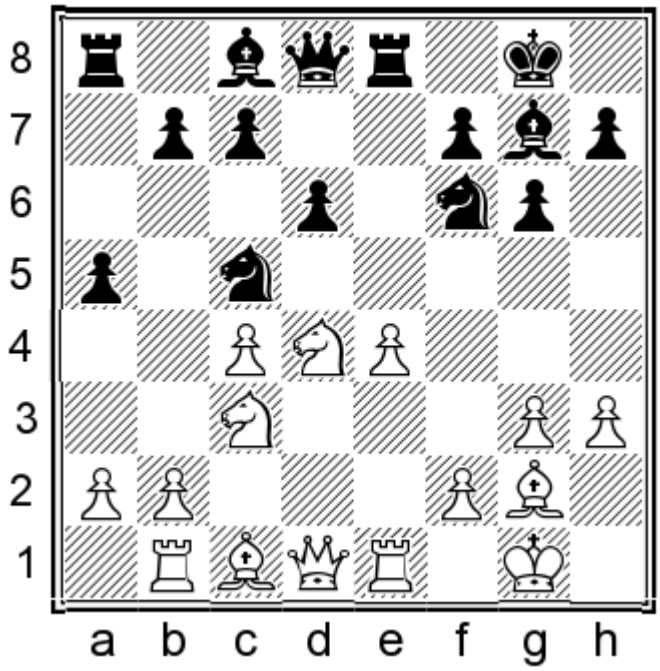
6.Bg2 Ngf6

As it turned out, Quinteros's previous play was just a smoke screen, and now the game resumes its normal course.

7.0-0 0-0 8.e4 Re8 9.h3

White does not pay attention to his opponent's opening tricks and carries out the usual plan.

9...exd4 10.Nxd4 Nc5 11.Re1 a5 12.Rb1



This is played most frequently, along with 12.Qc2 (games 114, 117). Awaiting the move ...c6, White begins preparing the offensive b2-b3, a2-a3, b3-b4 without delay. The task of watching the d6-pawn is assigned to the queen and the bishop, which will soon be transferred to f4.

12...c6 13.Bf4 a4

In this case, the standard space grab is necessary as a preventive measure against the threat Nb3.

14.b3

White firmly holds to his plan. Any deviations, such as an overly direct attack on the d6-pawn, 14.Nc2, were fraught with unpredictable consequences: 14...Nfd7! 15.Qxd6 a3 16.b4 Bxc3 17.bxc5 Qa5! (unclear is 17...Bxe1 18.Nxe1 Qf6 19.Nd3 – Efim Geller) 18.Re3 Nxc5 (Portisch- Planinc, Madrid 1973); no better is 15.Bxd6 a3 16.e5 (16.b4 Bxc3 17.bxc5 Bxe1 leads to great complications) 16...axb2 17.f4 Qa5 18.Qd4 Ne6 19.Qe3 f6 (Gaprindashvili-Kovalevskaya, Elista 1998). In both cases, Black's pieces are very active and he has at least equality.

14...axb3 15.axb3 h6

An interesting suggestion by the Yugoslav grandmaster Planinc. Black provides the knights with the g5-square to harass the h3-pawn, ...Nh7-g5 or ...Ne6-g5. In addition, now White has to take into account the move ...g5, for example, 16.Qd2? g5, and the e4-pawn is lost.

16.Qc2

16.b4 Ne6 17.Nxe6 Bxe6 gives White nothing, as the reliable defense of the c4-pawn levels the playing field (Ribli-Planinc, Amsterdam 1973).

The move 16.Qc2 was played for the first time in this game. It is based on the fact that the variation 16...Nfxe4 17.Nxe4 (but not 17.Nxc6 bxc6 18.Nxe4 Bf5! etc.) 17...Bxd4 18.Nxd6 is not advantageous for Black. However, he has other opportunities at his disposal.

16...Ne6?!

At least two continuations deserved attention. The first one is 16...Ng4 (Efim Geller) with the possible variations 17.hxg4 Bxd4 or 17.Red1 Ne5. Later, Petrosian suggested the interesting pawn sacrifice 17.Nf5, but it is not quite clear and has not yet been tested in practical play. In our opinion, the second continuation, 16...Nh7, is more principled. For example, 17.Red1 (or 17.Rbd1 Ng5! 18.Kh2 Qb6) 17...Ng5 18.b4 Nce6 19.Nxe6 Nxe6 20.Rxd6 (bad is 20.Bxd6 because of 20...Nd4) 20...Qe7 21.Rd3 Nxf4 22.gxf4 Be6, and in all cases Black has counterplay connected with the unstable position of the white pieces and his pressure on the advanced pawns.

17.Nxe6 Rxe6 18.Red1

Actively developing the initiative via the threats c4-c5 and e4-e5.

18...g5

It looks like Black "dropped the ball" again. This weakening move was not called for. Such moves are good only when they serve a specific purpose. As we will see later, Quinteros had not thought of anything and impulsively advanced the pawn with the sole goal of chasing away the annoying bishop. Such emotional play is an unaffordable luxury when defending! As Efim Geller correctly pointed out, the modest 18...Nh5 would have better met the defensive objectives.

19.Be3 Qe7 20.Ra1!

After gaining the advantage, White plays very concretely, even firmly. Using the fact that 20...Rxa1 21.Rxa1 Nxe4 does not work because of 22.Ra8!, he takes away his opponent's last hope for activity along the a-file.

20...Rxa1 21.Rxa1 Qc7 22.Rd1 Qa5 23.Ne2

The knight starts moving towards the f5-square. It is easy and pleasant to play such positions with White.

23...Qc7 24.b4 Re8 25.Qd3 Nd7 26.Nd4 Ne5 27.Qc2 Qe7 28.b5

The arrival of the first white pawn in the enemy territory means the beginning of the active phase of the game.

28...Bd7 29.Nf5 Bxf5 30.exf5

The process of accumulating and transforming chess advantages is clearly illustrated by this game. In the final stage, White gets the bishop pair and maximally strives to open the position: then this advantage will be more apparent.

30...Rc8 31.Qe4 Kf8

Stopping the threat f2-f4, Quinteros allows the pieces to pile up dangerously along the a3-f8 diagonal. White immediately reacts by transferring the bishop to a3. Maybe Black should have played 31...Bf6 or 31...Qf8 instead of the text move.

32.Kh1 Bf6 33.Bc1! Nd7 34.bxc6 bxc6 35.Qd3

White constantly tests his opponent’s defense by creating a variety of threats.

35...Be5 36.Ba3 Nc5 37.Qe3 Qf6?

Black, exhausted by the drawn-out defense, makes the decisive mistake. By playing 37...Rb8, threatening ...Rb3, he could have prolonged the resistance.

38.f4 gxf4 39.gxf4 Bb2 40.Rxd6!

A tough nut to crack, the d6-pawn has fallen after all!

40...Re8 41.Rxf6 Black resigned.

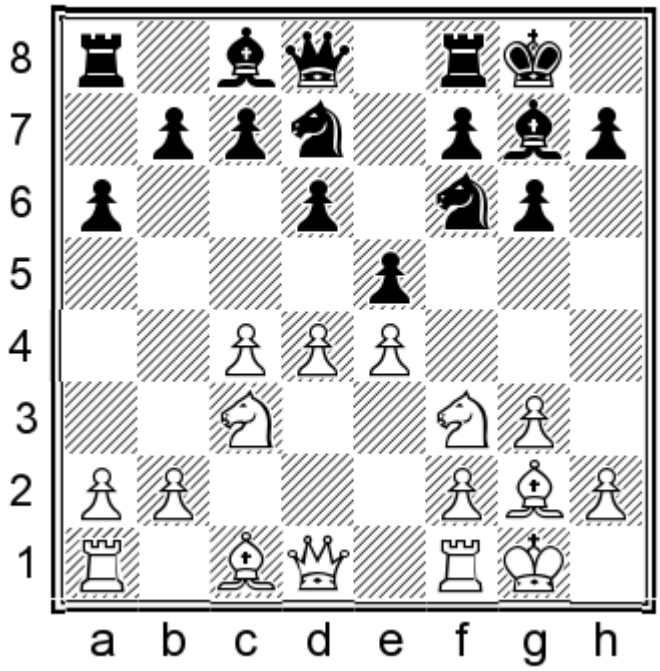
(120) C2.7 **Smejkal – Petrosian**

Vršac 1981

1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 d6 3.d4 g6 4.Nf3 Nd7 5.g3 Bg7 6.Bg2 Ngf6

A chain of opening transformations that is common in this variation.

7.0-0 0-0 8.e4 a6



A variation that has been explored relatively little with extensive possibilities for creativity. In some cases, such as after 9.h3, Black can play 9...b5!, without wasting time on the preparatory move ...c6.

9.Re1 Rb8

Preparing ...b5, Black moves the rook away from the dangerous diagonal of the g2-bishop. Nowadays, more and more players prefer the immediate transition to piece play via 9...exd4 10.Nxd4 Ng4!? (Alexander Kochyev's idea), which creates a number of concrete problems for White. For example, 11.f3 (11.h3 Qf6!) 11...Nge5 12.b3 c5 13.Nde2 b5! 14.cxb5 axb5, and Black has the initiative (Baburin-Robović, Liechtenstein 1993).

10.h3 b5

Later, Petrosian came to the conclusion that an alternative method of counterplay, 10...exd4 11.Nxd4 Ne5 12.b3 c5, followed by ...b5, is better. For example, 13.Nc2 b5 14.f4 Ned7, and 15.Qxd6 is risky because of 15...b4 16.Na4 Ne8.

11.c5 Bb7

This move is also ineffective, according to Petrosian. However, after the stronger 11...b4 12.Na4 Bb7 13.cxd6 cxd6 14.d5, White's advantage is undeniable.

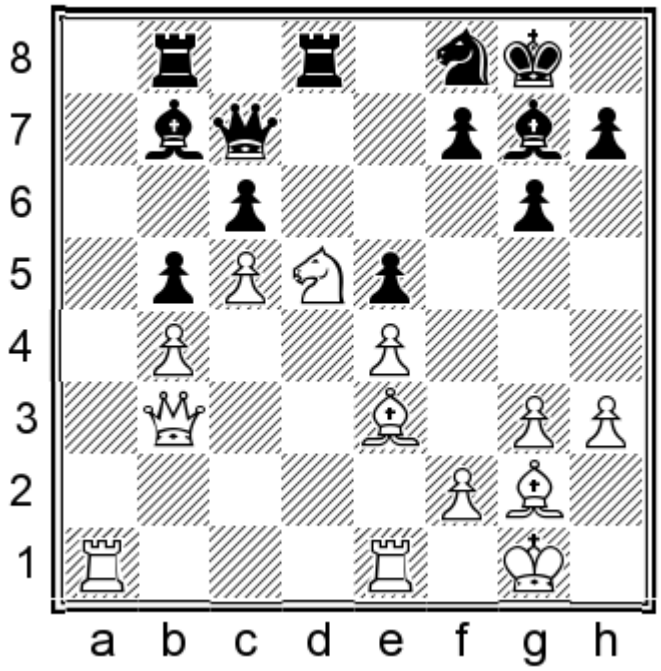
12.dxe5 Nxe5 13.Nxe5 dxe5 14.Qc2 c6

Keeping an eye on the d5-point, but at the cost of weakening the d6-square and temporarily inactivating the b7-bishop. Perhaps 14...Bc6 was worth trying.

15.b4 Qc7 16.a4 Rfd8 17.Be3 Nd7

The knight rushes to d4. The structure of the position is very similar to the game Garcia-Petrosian (game 37). The only difference is in the position of the light-square bishops, which ended up on the long diagonal. Even though it seems that both bishops are equally passive, as we will see later, this position is beneficial for White.

18.Qb3 Nf8 19.axb5 axb5 20.Nd5!



An excellent idea that demonstrates the tactical skill of the Czech grandmaster. In case of 20...cxd5 21.exd5, the dynamic duo c5 and d5 threatens to advance, supported by the pieces, sweeping away everything in its path. There have been games where two rooks and even a rook and a queen could not hold their own against such pawns. Therefore, Petrosian had to ignore the sacrifice.

20...Qd7 21.Red1 Qe6

An attempt to create counter-chances using the pin on the knight.

22.Bg5 Re8

Black follows a narrow corridor of forced moves. Bad is 22...f6 because of 23.Nxf6+!.

23.Qe3!

The highlight of White's combination! The suddenly arising threats (Nc7, and after 23...Rbc8 24.Nb6!; 25.Nxc8; and 25.Rd6) force Black to take the "kamikaze knight" after all, and in a more unfavorable situation than before.

23...cxd5 24.exd5 Qc8 25.c6 Ba8 26.Ra7

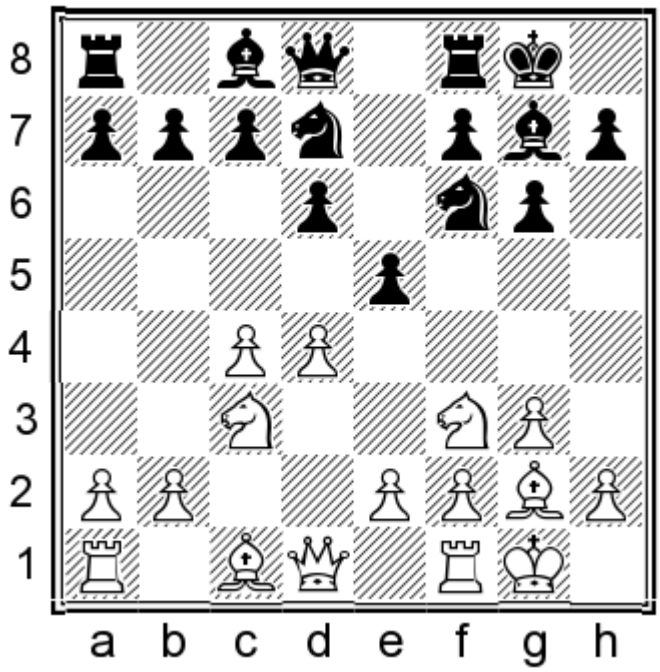
Paralyzing Black's forces. Curiously, instead of this natural and strong move, *Chess Informant*, and then some computer databases too, erroneously indicated 26.Ra3, perplexing chess players: why didn't Petrosian win the game after 26...h5 27.d6 Bxc6 28.Rc3 with the simple move 28...e4? Well, because this position did not happen in the game!

26...h5 27.d6 Bxc6 28.Rc7 Qf5 29.Bxc6 Ne6

White not only regains the piece he sacrificed but also wins the exchange, keeping the passed d-pawn. It is time to drop the curtain. The rest of the game can probably be explained by time trouble, which often happened to Smejkal.

30.Bxe8 Nxg5 31.Bd7 Qf6 32.Kg2 Bf8 33.h4 Ne6 34.Bxe6 Qxe6 35.d7 Rd8 36.Qe4 Kg7 37.Qd5 Bxb4 38.Rc8 Be7 39.Qxe6 fxe6 40.Rxd8 Bxd8 41.Rb1 Kf6 42.Rxb5 Black resigned.

C3



White to move

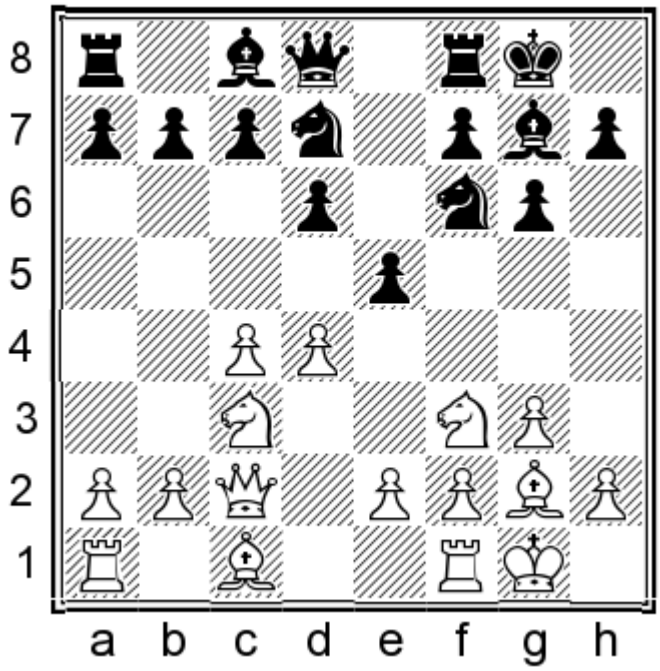
An important theoretical position. In addition to the main move 8.e4,

the continuations 8.Qc2 (games 121, 122, 124, 126)

and 8.b3 (games 123, 125) have also been played, with the idea of pressuring the center with the pieces.

(121) C3.1 **Vasiliev – Petrosian**
USSR Championship Semifinal
Tbilisi 1949

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.Nf3 d6 6.0-0 Nbd7 7.Nc3 e5 8.Qc2



A method of developing that was common at the time. White is in no hurry to advance the pawn to e4, and instead seeks to strengthen the queenside first of all and create pressure along the d-file. His plan is based on the assumption that the exchange on d4 is beneficial for him, while the advance ...e4 will provide him with targets to attack.

8...Re8

If Black aspires only to equalize, Réti's old recipe 8...exd4 9.Nxd4 Nb6 is best, focusing on the advance ...d5 (Alekhine-Réti, Pistyan 1922). However, Petrosian always preferred the text move, which leads to a difficult struggle in the spirit of the main variation (also see games 122, 124). The continuation 8...c6 was played in game 126.

9.b3 exd4

Simplest. In the game Lipnitsky-Lutikov (Minsk 1952), Black somewhat postponed the showdown in the center: 9...a5 10.Rd1 c6 11.e4 Qc7 12.Ba3 exd4, and after 13.Rxd4! Nc5 14.Rad1, he found himself in a difficult position.

10.Nxd4 Nc5 11.Bb2 c6 12.Rad1 Qb6 13.h3 a5

According to theory, Black has comfortable play after preparing the further advance of the a-pawn.

14.Ba3

It looks like theory "forgot" about this simple move. Now Black will not get a chance to play ...a4 any time soon.

14...h5

With a twofold idea: to prevent g3-g4 and to keep the move ...h4 ready.

15.e3 Bd7 16.Nde2 Bf8 17.Nf4 Rad8 18.e4 Bc8 19.Rfe1 Nfd7 20.Bc1

White cleverly maneuvers. The goal of the knight transfer from d4 to f4 was to create pressure on the d-file and at the same time stop the bishop from moving to e6. The bishop is transferred from a3 to e3 after the rook has already moved from a8 and the move ...a4 is connected with a pawn sacrifice. Yet Black should have bitten the bullet, because now his position begins to deteriorate.

20...Ne5 21.Be3 Qc7 22.a3

Preferring a clear plan of attack on the queenside over the tactical uncertainties of the variation 22.Ncd5 cxd5 23.Nxd5 Qb8 24.Nf6+ Kh8 25.Nxe8 Rxe8, etc.

22...Bg7 23.b4 axb4 24.axb4 Na6

After 24...Ncd7, with the idea of using the weakening of the c4-pawn, White has the strong reply 25.Nb1! (25...Nb6 26.Nd2).

25.Qb3 Be6

Obviously, such moves are made only out of necessity. Yet, I think Black's decision to exchange the light-square bishop is dubious. Stronger is 25...Qe7, planning to play ...h4 or even ...d5 if the opportunity presents itself. However, after 26.Bb6, Black would have had to play the "ugly" move 26...Rd7. "If you sell the cow, you sell her milk too."

26.Nxe6 fxe6

No better is 26...Rxe6 27.f4 Nd7 28.Ne2 (or 28.f5).

27.f4 Nf7 28.Na4 Qe7 29.b5 Nb8 30.Qd3 h4 31.Bb6 Rd7 32.Bf2 g5 33.fxg5

White misses the opportunity to cement his advantage via 33.Nb6!. For example: 33...Rdd8 34.fxg5 hxg3 35.Qxg3 Qxg5 (35...Be5? 36.Qg4 Qxg5 37.Bh4) 36.Qxg5 Nxg5 37.Re3 or 33...Rc7 34.e5!? dxe5 35.fxg5, with unpleasant pressure. The passive text move allows Black to coordinate his pieces.

33...hxg3 34.Qxg3 Be5 35.Qg4 Qxg5

Of course not 35...Nxg5?? 36.h4.

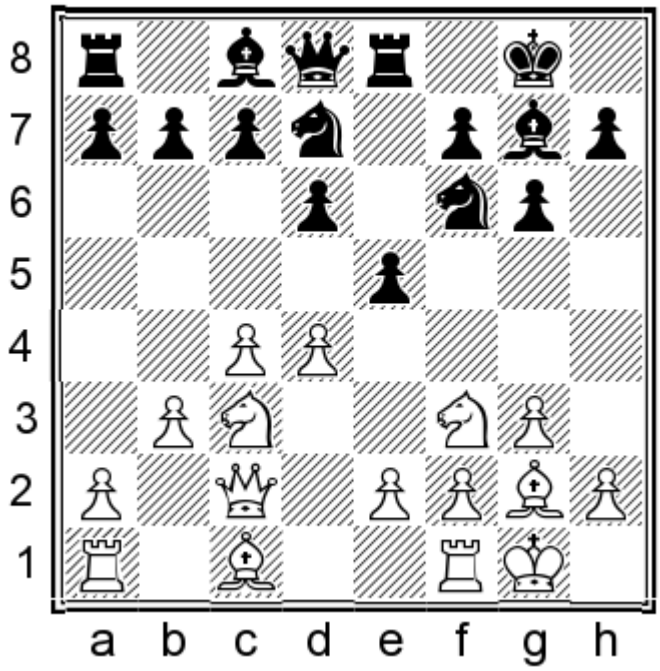
36.Bf3

Now 36.Nb6 does not do any good: 36...Qxg4 37.hxg4 Rc7.

36...Qxg4+ 37.Bxg4 Nh6 38.Bh5 Rg7+ 39.Kh1 Rf8 40.Be3 Draw.

(122) C3.2 **Ratner – Petrosian**
USSR Championship Semifinal
Gorky 1950

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d6 3.Nc3 e5 4.Nf3 Nbd7 5.g3 g6 6.Bg2 Bg7 7.0-0 0-0 8.Qc2 Re8 9.b3



9...c6 10.e3

The attempt to seize the d6-square does not reach the goal after 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.Ng5 – 11...Nc5 12.Rd1 Qb6 13.Nge4 Ncxe4 14.Nxe4 Bf5 (Alatortsev-Smyslov, Leningrad 1947).

The weakest link of the plan of developing the bishop to b2 is the lack of control of the e3-square. Thus, for example, 10.Bb2 might be followed by 10...e4 11.Ng5 e3! 12.f4 (or 12.fxe3 Bh6!) 12...Nf8, and although it is clear that the e3-pawn is doomed, the statistics inexorably assert Black's advantage.

With the text move, White defends himself against the possibility of ...e4-e3 in the simplest way. Also interesting is 10.Rd1, as played by Flohr in the next game.

10...Qa5 11.h3 Nf8

Black prepares ...e4, followed by ...d5 and a transfer of the knight to g5 via e6, which would give him counterplay on the kingside. Fearing the attack, White opens a central file.

12.dxe5 dxe5 13.Bb2 Bf5 14.Qe2 Ne4 15.Rac1?!

The root cause of White's future difficulties. Creating the threat Nh4, White believed that he had the initiative. However, in reality, chances are approximately equal, which is clearest after the continuation 15.Nxe4 Bxe4 16.Rfd1.

15...Nc5

Ratner did not consider this. Black threatens an unpleasant intrusion on d3, which 16.Rfd1 does not stop; for example, 16...Nd3 17.Rxd3 Bxd3 18.Qxd3 e4, and White loses material. So he has to advance the e-pawn, allowing an unhealthy weakness on d4.

16.e4 Bd7 17.Qc2 Qb6 18.Ne2 a5 19.Bc3

White has succeeded in defending the d4-square but decreased his attention to the e4-pawn, of which Petrosian reminds him with a timely counterattack.

19...f5! 20.Nd2 Nfe6 21.Nf3

The only reply. The continuation 21.exf5 Nd4! 22.Qd1 Bxf5 leads to immediate disaster.

21...Nf8

The most devious traps in chess are the ones that resemble blunders. With his last move, White accidentally or deliberately set such a trap. It was probably difficult for Black to refrain from vigorously pursuing the chaotically retreating opponent: 21...fxe4 22.Nxe5 Bxe5 23.Bxe5 Nd3 24.Bb2 Nxc1 25.Qxc1. In this case, although Black wins the exchange, the position would have become completely unclear. Petrosian critically assessed the situation and moved from isolated threats to systematic destruction of White's position.

22.Nd2 fxe4 23.Nxe4 Bf5 24.g4 Bxe4 25.Bxe4

Not without some luck, White has managed to avoid the imminent danger and steer the game towards positional play.

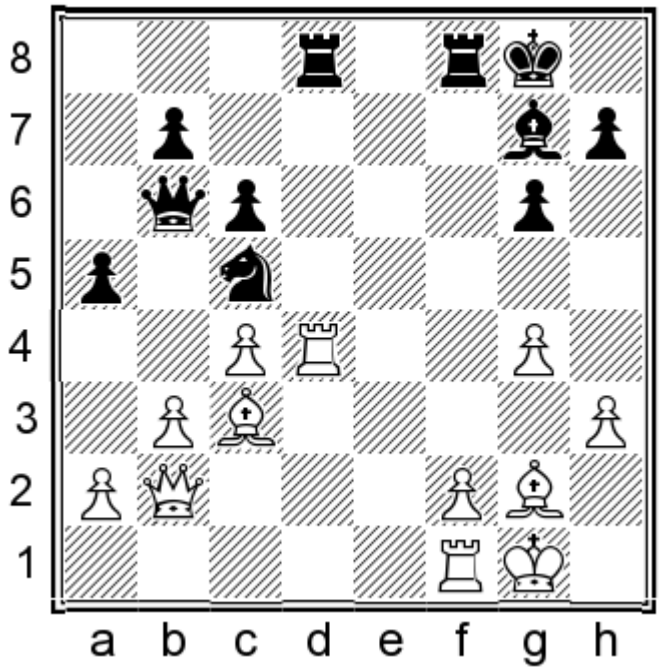
25...Nfe6 26.Rcd1 Rad8 27.Bg2 Nd4 28.Qb2 Rf8

Black refuses the better endgame that could transpire after 28...Na4 29.bxa4 Qxb2 30.Bxb2 Nxe2+ and continues to increase the pressure.

29.Nxd4

White cannot withstand the tension. He should have built a defense based on control of the e4-pawn: 29.Ng3, "going around" the black knight. White's position is quite viable, although the weakness of the dark squares is a source of constant trouble.

29...exd4 30.Rxd4



Counting on 30...Bxd4 31.Bxd4, with counterplay for the exchange. Very bad is 30.Bxd4 Rxd4 31.Rxd4 Nd3.

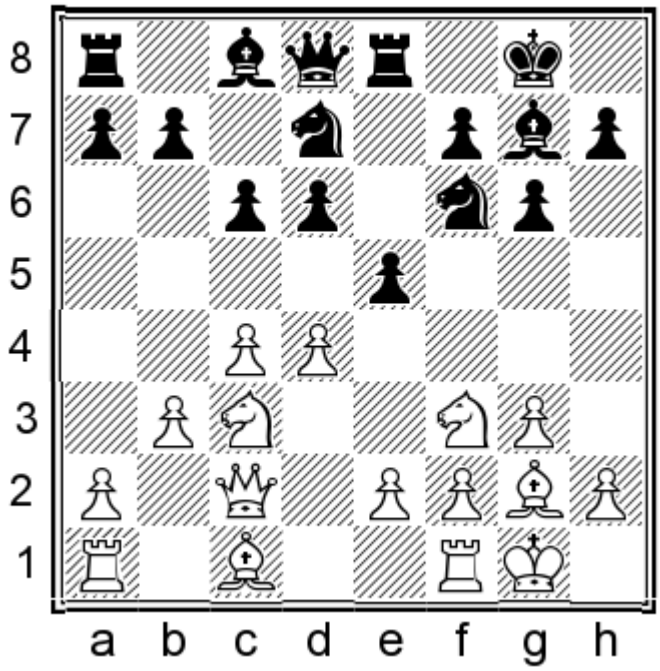
30...Na4!

A dagger blow that instantly decides the fight. Now Black takes the exchange, forcing a queen trade.

31.bxa4 Qxb2 32.Bxb2 Bxd4 33.Ba3 Rf4 34.Bc1 Rxf2 35.Rxf2 Rf8 36.Kh2 Rxf2 37.Kg3 Rxa2 38.Bg5 Ra3+ 39.Kh2 Rxa4 40.Bf1 Ra1 41.Bd3 a4 42.c5 a3 43.Bc4+ Kg7 White resigned

(123) C3.3 **Flohr – Petrosian**
19th USSR Championship Moscow 1951

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.Nc3 d6 6.Nf3 Nbd7 7.0-0 e5 8.b3 Re8 9.Qc2 c6



10.Rd1

This is one of the theoretical novelties of the 19th Championship. White did not close the diagonal a1-h6 with the move e2-e3, so that after ...e4 he could move his dark-square bishop to e3 or f4. If the black queen is developed to a5, as happened in this game, White transposes to the system with the move e2-e4, using the subpar placement of the queen, which makes it difficult for Black to achieve the usual structure for this variation: ...exd4, ...a5, and ...Nc5.

10...Qa5

Later Isaac Boleslavsky drew attention to the continuation 10...e4!?. After 11.Nd2, Black can safely reply 11...d5, since the attempt to use the fork motive, 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.Nb5, can be stopped by 13...Re6 14.Qc7 Qe8 (Stoltz-Kotov, Stockholm 1952). If the knight retreats to e1, as the old game Euwe-Boleslavsky (Zürich, 1953) demonstrated, Black is also fine: 11.Ne1 Qe7 12.h3 a6 13.a4 d5 14.cxd5 cxd5 15.a5 b5!.

11.Ng5 leads to very complicated play. Now the similar variation 11...d5 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.Nb5 favors White because the e6-square is unavailable to the black rook.

Therefore, after 11.Ng5, Black apparently has to sacrifice a pawn: 11...e3, and after 12.fxe3 (bad is 12.Bxe3? because of 12...Rxe3 13.fxe3 Ng4, attacking e3 and g5) the fate of this variation depends on the evaluation of this position. Does Black have compensation for the pawn and what is the best continuation for him? Bronstein recommended 12...Ng4 “with good piece play.” But practical play has not confirmed the grandmaster’s overly optimistic assessment. For example: 13.e4 Bh6 (13...c5 14.Nf3) 14.Bf3! Bxg5 (14...Nxh2 15.Nxf7 – Efim Geller) 15.Bxg4 with an advantage for White (Ribli-Tatai, Bucharest 1971). Probably more solid is 12...Nf8 13.e4 Qe7 14.e3 Bh6, and Black should eventually win back the pawn, evening the position. The reader can learn exactly how this happens from Efim Geller’s book *The King’s Indian Defense*.

11.e4 Nf8 12.d5

Forced, because Black threatened 12...Ne6 13.Be3 c5, and the black knight settles on d4.

12...c5 13.Ne1

13.a4 Nh5 14.Ne1 f5, with counterplay for Black, was played in the game Bronstein-Kotov from the same tournament.

13...Nh5 14.Bf3 Qd8 15.Qe2

In case of the trade on h5, the weakness of the black pawns is more than compensated by Black’s play on the light squares. Actually, the reason for the bishop move to f3 was not to double the black pawns, but to make the advance ...f5 more difficult.

15...Nf6 16.a3 h5

With his last move, Petrosian starts a complex plan that includes preparing to defend the perimeter and delaying the move ...f5 until better times. Note that while this method has its advantages, it is quite passive and requires a great deal of faith in one’s self and the internal resources of the position. Over the years, Petrosian tested this “firewall” in different systems (see games 159 and 173) with varying degrees of success.

17.b4 b6 18.Bg2 N8h7 19.Nf3 Rf8 20.Bd2 Ne8 21.b5 Bf6 22.a4

With the unambiguous threat of breaking through on the a-file with the rooks via the move a4-a5.

22...a5 23.bxa6 Rxa6 24.Nb5 Bg4 25.h3 Bd7 26.Ra3 Ng5 27.Nxg5 Bxg5 28.Be1

White relies on the breakthrough on the queenside. 28.f4 Bh6 leads to unclear play; for example: 29.fxe5 (otherwise ...h4) 29...Bxd2 30.Qxd2 dxe5 31.d6 Bxb5 32.cxb5 Ra7 33.Qd5 Rd7, and so on, with serious complications.

28...Qc8 29.Kh2 Bd8

I think that it was time for Black to play ...f5 now or on the previous move. Unmitigated defense only exacerbated his difficulties, as often happens in this opening.

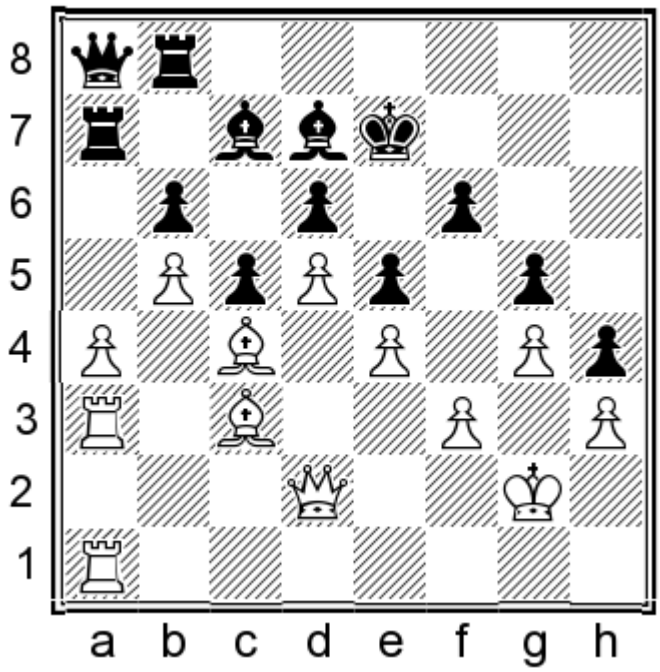
30.Rda1 h4 31.g4 f6 32.f3 g5 33.Bf1 Qa8 34.Qb2 Kf7 35.Bd3 Ke7 36.Bc3 Nc7 37.Be2

It is easy to see that the obvious 37.a5 puts Black in a very difficult position. However, Flohr plays indecisively, giving his opponent an opportunity to build up his defense by trading knights.

37...Nxb5 38.cxb5 Ra7 39.Bc4 Bc7 40.Qa2 Qb7 41.Kg2 Qa8

Demonstrating to the opponent that the good chance for the breakthrough is gone. For example: 42.a5 bxa5 43.Bxa5 Bxa5 44.Rxa5 Rxa5 45.Qxa5 Qxa5 46.Rxa5 Rb8 with an equal endgame. Black's position still has some drawbacks, but the worst is behind him.

42.Qd2 Rb8



A bit more precise is 42...Qb7, because the continuation 43.a5 is not dangerous for Black.

43.Qb2

Here, as the tournament bulletin indicates, White had an unexpected tactical blow: 43.Bxe5!? and 43...dxe5 would have been followed by 44.d6+ Bxd6 45.Rd1, with decisive threats. However, after the correct 43...fxe5 44.Qxg5+ Kf7 (but not 44...Kf8 or 44...Ke8? because of 45.f4!) 45.f4 Rg8, White's attack yields no more than a draw. This was probably a good opportunity and worth a try.

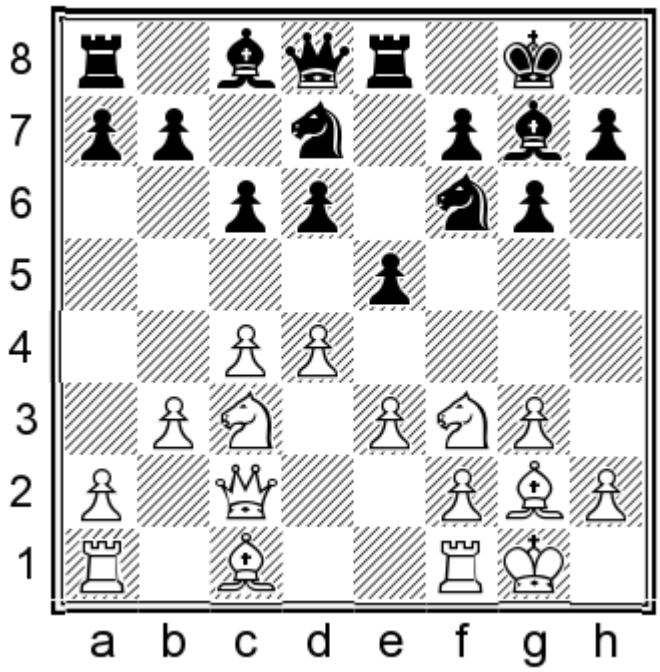
43...Kf7 44.R1a2 Rbb7 45.Kf1 Ra5!

Now all the doors and windows of Black's fortress are tightly boarded, so it is time to settle for a draw.

46.Ke2 Rba7 47.Qa1 Qh8 48.Kd2 Ke7 49.Kc2 Kd8 50.Kb3 Kc8 51.Qb2 Bd8 52.Qa1 Draw.

(124) C3.4 **O'Kelly – Petrosian**
Maróczy Memorial
Budapest 1952

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.Nc3 d6 6.Nf3 Nbd7 7.0-0 e5 8.Qc2 Re8 9.b3 c6 10.e3



10...Nf8

Petrosian continued 10...Qa5 against Ratner and Gereben (see games 122, 125). The latter game was also played in the Budapest tournament. Chronologically, Petrosian played against O'Kelly later, so, given the likelihood that the Belgian had home preparation, he decided not to repeat himself and tried a different opening.

11.dxe5

White takes measures against Black's most aggressive plan, associated with the moves ...e4 and ...d5. In the aforementioned game, Gereben did not do this and came under a strong attack.

11...dxe5 12.Nd2 Bf5 13.e4

Of course, this move is not pretty, but what to do? After 13.Nde4 Nxe4 14.Nxe4 (no better is 14.Bxe4 Bh3!) 14...Bxe4 15.Qxe4 f5, followed by ...e4, Black has comfortable play connected with the inactive g2-bishop and the possible invasion on d3.

13...Bg4 14.h3 Bd7 15.Bb2 Nh5 16.Ne2 Ne6 17.Nf3

O'Kelly should not have abandoned the planned move 17.f4, which would have been a logical continuation of his previous play. If White plays passively in the center, Black can even fight for the advantage.

17...f6 18.Ne1?!

This is clearly a weak move. To maintain equality, placing either rook on d1 would have been enough.

18...Ng5 19.Kh2 f5

Taking advantage of his opponent's hesitant play, Black seizes the initiative.

20.exf5 Bxf5 21.Qd1 Nf6 22.Ng1

The queen trade was worth considering seriously.

22...Qe7 23.Qe2 Rad8

We already saw a similar pattern in the game Ratner-Petrosian: White has a hard time finding safe positions for his pieces in the danger zone.

24.Rd1 Rxd1 25.Qxd1 e4 26.Nc2 Nf7 27.Ne3 Ne5 28.Bxe5

Of course, it is a pity that White has to trade the bishop, but he had no other way to stop the knight from moving to d3.

28...Qxe5 29.Qd2

More cautious is 29.Nxf5, although after 29...Qxf5 or 29...gxf5 White's position is definitely worse.

29...Nd7?!

The only inaccuracy that Black committed in this game. After 29...Bc8, Black retained a clear advantage with his bishop pair.

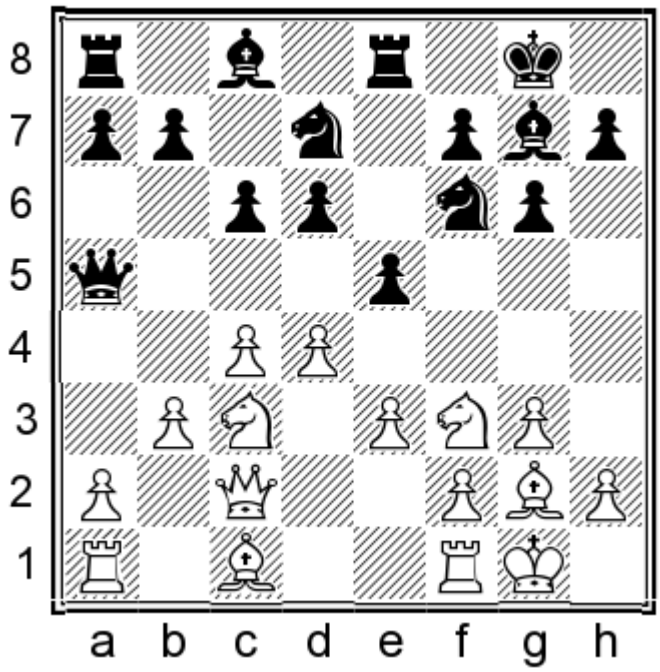
30.Nxf5 Qxf5 31.Re1

Now f2-f3 is inevitable and White moors in a safe harbor.

31...Nf6 32.f3 Draw.

(125) C3.5 **Gereben – Petrosian**
Maróczy Memorial
Budapest 1952

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.Nf3 d6 6.0-0 Nbd7 7.Nc3 e5 8.b3 Re8 9.Qc2 c6 10.e3 Qa5



We have covered the opening aspects of this variation in great detail in the annotations to the games 122 and 123.

11.Bb2 Nf8 12.Rfd1

Not foreseeing the opponent's obvious reply, after which the d-file remains closed. If White did not want to exchange on e5, he could have made a useful waiting move such as 12.a3.

12...e4

Wedging into the enemy camp, the e-pawn limits the range of the white pieces. Black's next task is to use this fact, as well as the weakening of the squares around the white king and the resource ...h5-h4, to create an attack. White has no choice but try to attack on the opposite flank. He has the prerequisites, but it is important to use them properly.

Later, Petrosian makes good use of the advantages of this position, while White does not fight for his plan energetically enough.

13.Nd2 d5 14.Rdc1

The consequences of the weak 12th move.

14...Ne6 15.Ne2

The difference in the opponents' speed of action is striking. White evidently got off to a late start: he lost a tempo on the 14th move, and now the transfer of the knight to f4 will cost him at least two more tempi. I think White's position would be much better if now or on the next move he played a2-a3 in order to carry out b3-b4-b5 as soon as possible.

15...Bd7 16.a4 h5 17.Qc3 Qd8 18.b4 h4 19.Qb3 hxg3 20.hxg3 Ng5 21.Nf4 Bg4

As a result of his opponent's slow play, Petrosian was able to develop a strong initiative, which soon turns into a direct attack on the king.

22.cxd5 Nxd5 23.b5 Rb8 24.Ba3?

The placidity with which Gereben watches his kingside crumbling, stubbornly continuing to try to undermine the c6-pawn, is just amazing. White has no control in this position and he has to look for chances on the c-file as soon as possible: 24.Nxd5 cxd5 25.Rc5, etc.

24...Nxf4 25.gxf4 Nh3+ 26.Bxh3

Another accomplishment by Black, caused by the threat of ...Qh4. "The king is naked!"

26...Bxh3 27.Nf1 Qh4 28.Nh2

Stopping the black queen from moving to g4 and f3. Weaker was 28.Ng3, because in this case the queen's mobility is restricted as it has to take care of all of the light squares.

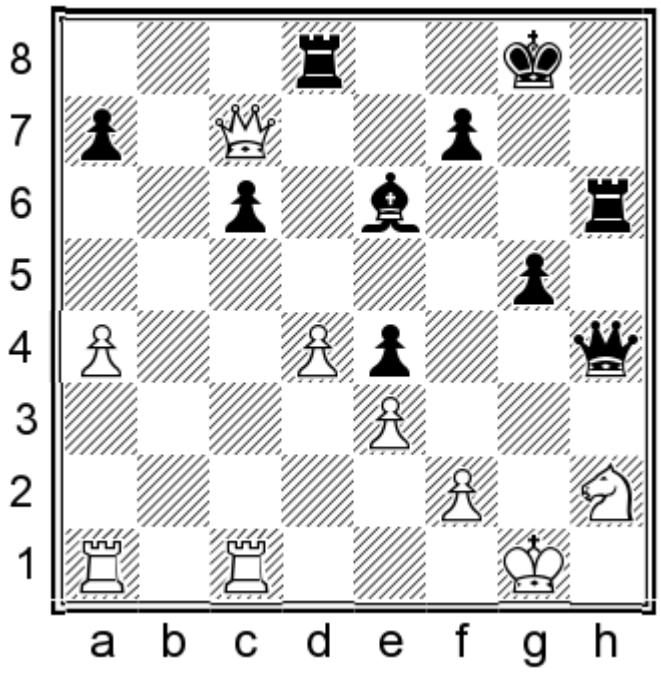
28...g5 29.Bd6 Rbd8

Black's attack enters the decisive phase. The rook hurries to the queen's aid. Clouds are gathering over the white king.

30.Be5 Bxe5 31.fxe5 Re6 32.bxc6 bxc6 33.Qb7 Rh6

Black's threats are becoming concrete, forcing White to sacrifice a pawn in order to bring the far-away queen to protect the king.

34.e6 Bxe6 35.Qc7



35...Kh7

The right idea but with an inaccurate tactical execution. Petrosian was probably in time trouble and moved his king to the light square instinctively to prevent the queen check from e5. Meanwhile, this check is completely harmless. After 35...Kg7, Black would have had an opportunity to increase the pressure on the h-file and win easily. For example: 36.Qe5+ f6 37.Qc7+ (or 37.Qxe6 Qxh2+ 38.Kf1 Qh1+ 39.Ke2 Qf3+ 40.Kd2 Qxf2+) 37...Kg6 38.Qg3 Rdh8! 39.Qxh4 Rxh4 40.Nf1 Rh1+ 41.Kg2 Bg4, and victory is just around the corner. Of course, neither in the aforementioned variation nor after the text move can White take the rook that is now unprotected: 36.Qxd8? Qxh2+ 37.Kf1 Qh1+ 38.Ke2 Qf3+ 39.Kd2 Qxf2+ 40.Kc3 Qxe3+ 41.Kb4 Bd5, etc.

Gereben tries to use the respite to transfer the queen's rook to b8 and to defuse the situation a little by exchanging rooks.

36.Rab1 Rh8

Tempting fate. Black could still finish the game by force: 36...Ba2!, threatening not only to win the exchange but also block the h2-b8 diagonal for the white pieces with the move ...Rdd6. However, Petrosian decided to go into a pawnup endgame.

37.Rb8 Rxb8 38.Qxb8 Rf6 39.Qg3 Qxg3+ 40.fxg3 Bb3

The fortieth move! After 40...Rf5! 41.Rxc6 Ra5, Black would transfer the game into a technically difficult but most likely winning endgame.

41.Rc5 Bxa4 42.Ra5 Bb3 43.Rxa7 Kg7 44.Kg2 Rf5

Unexpectedly becoming trapped.

45.Ra6 Bd5

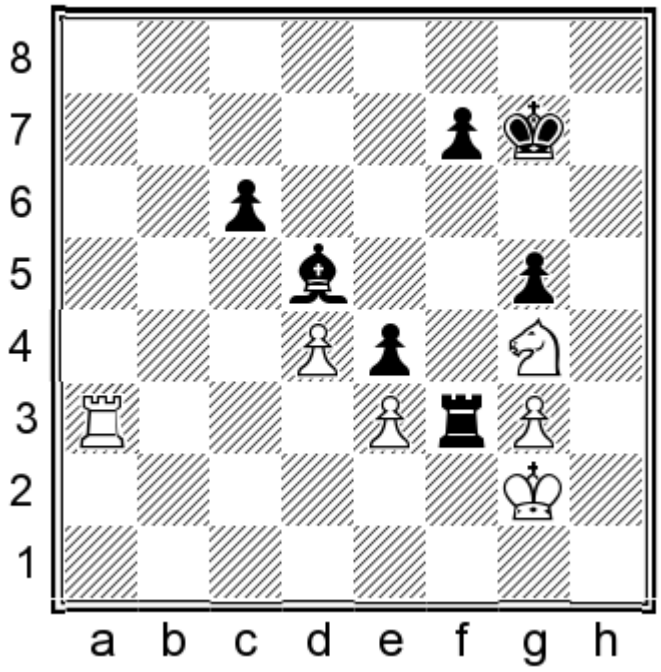
No good is 45...c5 because of 46.Ra5.

46.Ng4!

After a lackluster opening and middlegame, Master Gereben has surprised with an interesting plan, creating a

sophisticated combination that results in a draw.

46...Rf3 47.Ra3



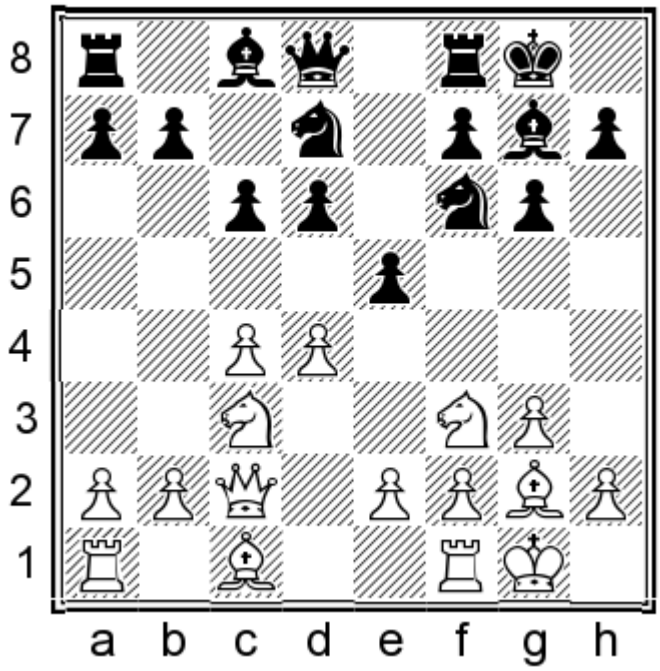
An astounding position! Despite his apparent success, Black's advantage is only illusory, because the bishop must watch the c6-pawn, while the rook and king cannot get out of the cage created by White: 47...Kg6 48.Ne5+; 47...Kf8 48.Ne5 Rf5 49.g4 Rf6 50.Nd7+; 47...f6 48.Nh2 Rf5 49.g4.

Seeing the miracles occurring on the board, Petrosian reconciles himself with the fact that he is no longer winning and begins to repeat moves.

47...Kh7 48.Rc3 Rf5 49.Rc5 Kg7 50.Rc3 Rf3 51.Ra3 Draw.

(126) C3.6 **Petrosian – Kotov**
Candidates Tournament
Neuhausen/Zürich 1953

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d6 3.Nf3 g6 4.Nc3 Bg7 5.g3 0-0 6.Bg2 Nbd7 7.0-0 e5 8.Qc2 c6



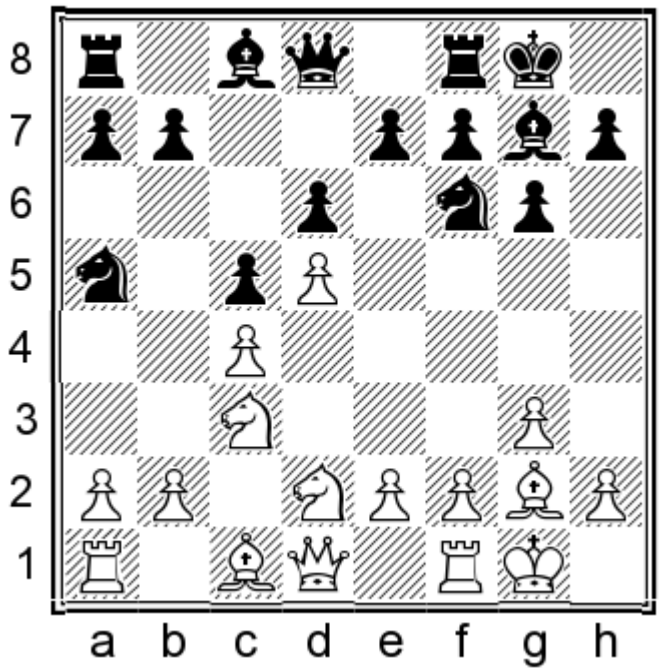
Slightly different from the games 121, 122, 124, where Petrosian played 8...Re8 as Black.

9.Rd1 Re8 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.Ng5 Qe7 12.Nge4 Nxe4

This game took place at the finish of the twomonth- long marathon that was the Candidates Tournament. The results were almost decided and the grandmasters chose to take it easy and resorted to the proven tactic of simplification. In the very next moves, the opponents achieved a significant reduction of “chess weaponry” and the spirit of a draw spread over the board.

13.Nxe4 Nc5 14.Nd6 Rd8 15.Nxc8 Rxd1+ 16.Qxd1 Rxc8 17.Be3 Rd8 18.Qc2 f5 19.Rd1 Draw.

C4



Black to move

One of the most interesting and informative tabiyas of the King's Indian Defense. It became a convenient testing ground for a variety of plans and ideas.

For many years, players have "locked horns" trying to determine the true evaluation of this variation, but all in vain: the balance alternately shifts from one direction to the other. The strategic essence of this position was summarized by Mikhail Tal: "The position of the knight at the edge of the board may be either active or ineffective. The outcome of the battle will depend largely on whether Black has enough time to transfer the a5-knight to the kingside via b7 and d8 or use it to put pressure on c4. If neither can be accomplished, Black's position usually becomes difficult."

Probably, in his heart Petrosian, who was brought up on classical chess and had an inborn subtle sense of harmony on the board, did not consider Black's setup entirely logical, but nevertheless he played this variation with both colors, including in the most important games. On this difficult path, he experienced both the joy of victory and the bitterness of defeat.

(127) C4.1 **Petrosian – Gligorić**
Match USSR – Yugoslavia
Belgrade 1956

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.Nc3 d6 6.Nf3 c5 7.0-0 Nc6

A trademark variation of Yugoslavian chess players. They made a great contribution to its development and implementation in international practice.

Now White has to decide which direction to give to the struggle. Should he try to use the factor of time in a symmetrical position after 8.dxc5 dxc5 (see tabiya C5) or seek to expand his space, pushing away the knight via 8.d5? Petrosian chose the latter.

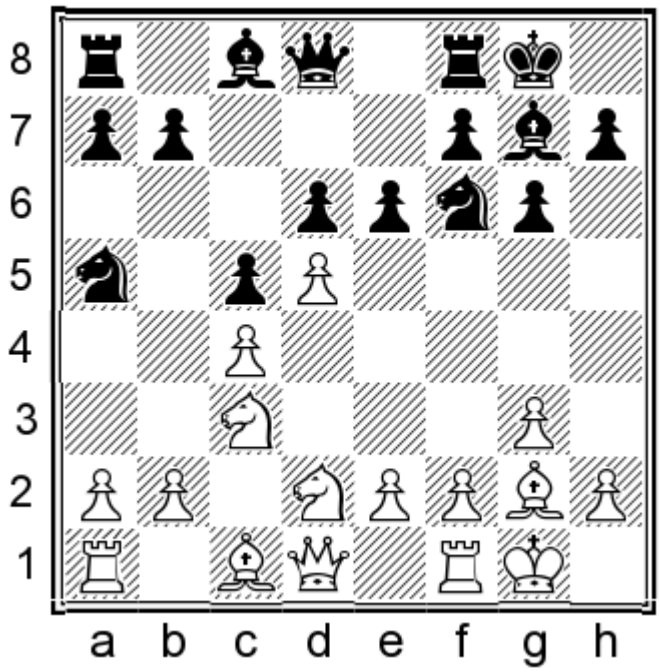
8.d5

While this move is appealing and principled, it has a number of drawbacks. Crossing the middle of the board, White recklessly opens the main "King's Indian diagonal" while limiting his light-square bishop, and he has to

ensure the stability of the central pawns, which are threatened by the breakthroughs ...e6 and ...b5.

The clash of these “pros” and “cons” usually makes the battle in this variation very intense and interesting.

8...Na5 9.Nd2 e6



Here, the standard continuation is 9...a6 10.Qc2, leading to the key position of this variation. Also acceptable is advancing the e-pawn two squares, thus shifting the epicenter of the fight to the kingside. Gligorić’s idea is to undermine the white pawns as soon as possible and play ...b5 without wasting any time on the move ...a6.

10.Qc2 exd5 11.cxd5 Rb8 12.b3 b5 13.Bb2 Re8 14.Rfe1 Bf5

A somewhat odd maneuver, since White had planned the move e2-e4 anyway.

15.e4 Bd7

Black prepares to reap the rewards of the bishop maneuver by transferring it to the f1-a6 diagonal after ...b4. For example: 16.h3 b4 17.Ne2 (bad is 17.Nd1 because of 17...Nxd5!) 17...Bb5, followed by ...Nd7, eyeing the d3-square. Petrosian prevents these plans with an energetic flank breakthrough.

16.a4 b4

A natural reply but not the strongest one. As the rest of the game demonstrated, the best move was 16...a6, which Gligorić apparently rejected for “ideological reasons.” If Black tries to set a trap with 16...c4, hoping for 17.b4? Nb3! 18.Nxb3 cxb3 19.Qxb3 bxa4 20.Nxa4 a5, this can be refuted by the simple 17.axb5, and there is no apparent compensation for the pawn.

17.Nb5!

An unpleasant invasion. Black must capture the uninvited guest, since after 17...Qb6 18.Nxd6! Qxd6 19.e5, White breaks through in the center. Curiously, many years later at a tournament in Manila, Petrosian also managed to invade the b5-square against the same opponent, but this time with the light-square bishop (see game 60).

17...Bxb5 18.axb5 Rxb5 19.Bf1 Rb8 20.Ra4 Nb7 21.Qb1

Of course, White did not plan to win back the pawn right away, since he really could not: 21.Rxa7 Nxd5!.

21...a5 22.Qa1

At the cost of a pawn, White managed to seize all communications on the board. The a1-h8 and f1-a6 diagonals, the a-file, and the point c4, all of these should bring him dividends in the near future. Probably, the best path for Black in this position is 22...Nh5, consolidating and planning for a lasting defense.

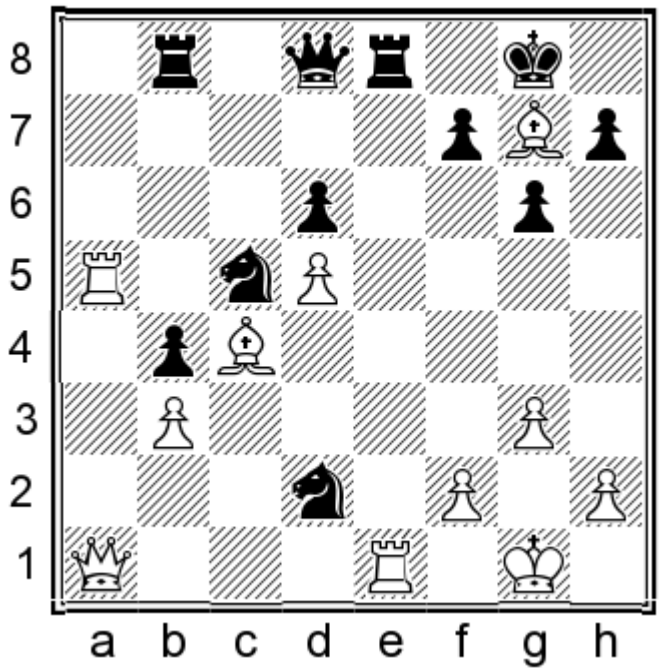
22...c4?

Black tries to escape from the positional squeeze but jumps from the frying pan into the fire.

23.Bxc4 Nc5 24.Rxa5 Nfxe4

Black counted on the fact that the white queen is overloaded and the white knight is unprotected, but...

25.Bxg7 Nxd2



Frankly, I do not even want to annotate the rest of the game. It is clear that Black is completely lost, and, probably, Gligorić dejectedly expected a speedy end after 26.Rxe8+ Qxe8 27.Bh6, etc. However, unexpectedly, Petrosian started the variation with the second move.

26.Bh6? Rxe1+ White resigned because he will lose his queen.

(128) C4.2 **Averbakh – Petrosian**
27th USSR Championship
Moscow, 1960

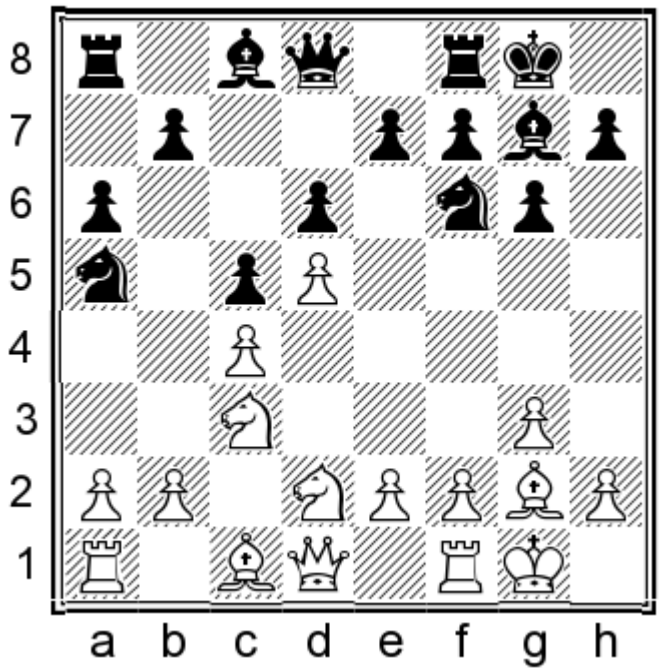
"Until the 14th round, grandmaster Petrosian was the sole leader of the tournament, and it seemed that he would repeat his success in Tbilisi. In the 14th round he lost to Polugaevsky. Petrosian rarely loses in the national championships, and this defeat demoralized him somewhat. In the 16th round in his game against Averbakh, he complicates the game. As it turned out, in this game a draw was enough for him, but he was still recovering from being sick during the 14th-16th rounds and his well-known tournament foresight had not been fully restored." (Vladimir Simagin)

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.Nf3 d6 6.0-0 a6 7.Nc3 Nc6 8.d5 Na5 9.Nd2

A possible but not necessary move. White could have continued 9.b3, not fearing any attempts like 9...Ne4

10.Nxe4 Bxa1 11.Bd2! or 9...Nxd5 10.Nxd5 Bxa1 11.Bd2 c6 12.Bxa5 Qxa5 13.Nxe7+ Kg7 14.Qxa1+ and Black bears material losses. After 9...c5 White again could play unconventionally: 10.dxc6, for example, 10...Ne4 11.c7! or 10...bxc6 11.Bd2 with interesting play.

9...c5



10.Qc2

Simagin's old recommendation 10.a3 looks too reckless, for example: 10...Bd7 11.Rb1 (if 11.b4, then 11...cxb4 12.axb4 Nxc4 13.Nxc4 Qc7 14.Qb3 Rfc8, etc.) 11...Rb8 12.Qc2 b5 13.cxb5 axb5 14.b4 cxb4 15.axb4 Qc7! 16.Qd3 Rfc8 with good play for Black (Arbakov-Morozevich, Moscow 1991).

10...e5

A popular way to undermine the c4-pawn: 10...Rb8 and ...b5 were played in games 130, 131, 132, 133, 134.

11.dxe6

This plan is considered a good reply to Black's move order. Botvinnik chose it in the third game of his match against Smyslov (Moscow 1957): 11.a3 b6 (after 11...Qc7 12.b4 cxb4 13.axb4 Nxc4 unpleasant is 14.Nb5) 12.b4 Nb7 13.Rb1. White is trying to use the weakness of b6 to develop an initiative on the queenside. See the next game regarding 11.b3.

The exchange in the center attempted by White significantly reduces the concentration of the position.

11...Bxe6 12.b3 Nc6 13.Bb2

White chooses a system that does not promise a significant advantage. This is already clear from the fact that on the previous move Black could have easily solved the opening problems by playing 12...d5, as, for example, in the game Flohr- Borisenko (Minsk, 1952). However, there is no doubt that Averbakh's choice is deliberate, and, in addition to the chess component, it has a psychological component. After all, for Black the way to equalize includes numerous exchanges in the center, which, as we know, Petrosian does not want because he is trying to win this game.

13...Nb4

Continuing aggressive play. For the second time Petrosian decided against the advance of the d-pawn, avoiding simplifications after 13...d5 14.Nxd5 Nxd5 15.cxd5 Bxd5 16.Bxg7 Kxg7 17.Qxc5 Bxg2 18.Qc3+ Qd4 19.Qxd4+ Nxd4 20.Kxg2 Nxe2, and virtually no material is left to continue fighting.

14.Qc1 Qe7

Also possible was 14...d5.

15.Nce4!

Tactics to seize the initiative are typical for such positions. After a series of exchanges White is able to consolidate his positional advantages by establishing control over the a1-h8 diagonal and the d5-square.

15...Nxe4 16.Nxe4 Rfd8 17.Rd1

White's advantage becomes very real. Now it is difficult for Black to play ...d5 because the c5-pawn hangs.

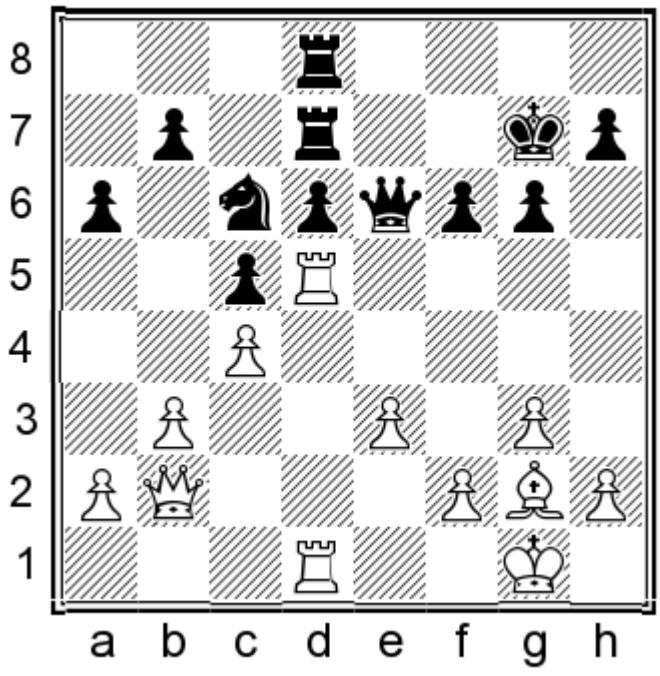
17...Rab8 18.Rd2 Rd7 19.Bxg7 Kxg7 20.Qb2+ f6 21.Rad1 Rbd8 22.Nc3 Nc6

Recognizing that the attempt to force the move a2-a3 was unsuccessful.

23.Nd5 Bxd5

A necessary exchange: 23...Qf7 loses a pawn after 24.Nb6.

24.Rxd5 Qe6 25.e3



White's advantage is obvious, and Black is trying to create counter-chances on the queenside.

25...b5 26.Qe2

Black threatened ...Ne7.

26...Ne7 27.R5d2 Rb8 28.Bd5

Again, this decision is not based solely on chess considerations. Clearly the bishop is stronger than the knight, but Averbakh agreed to lose some of his advantage, taking into account that it would not be easy for Black to agree to

this exchange because it would take away his last chance to complicate the game.

28...Qh3

Yet it was necessary to destroy the dangerous bishop: 28...Nxd5 29.Rxd5 Rb6, maintaining opportunities for persistent defense, for example: 30.Qd3 bxc4 31.bxc4 Rdb7!, and 32.Rxd6 Rxd6 33.Qxd6 Qxc4 does not do any good.

29.Qf3 bxc4 30.Bxc4 Rb6

Petrosian continues to stir up trouble, not knowing that his position is already lost.

31.Qa8!

It has long been known that, if a blunder occurs, such “long” moves are often to blame. White wants to transfer his queen to e8, and Black does not have a good defense against this simple threat.

31...Qf5 32.e4

The immediate 32.Qe8 is weaker because of 32...d5! with complications.

32...Qg4 33.Qe8

The beginning of the final attack.

33...d5 34.Bxd5 Nxd5 35.exd5 Rbd6 36.Re1 Kh6

If 36...Rxd5, then 37.Re7+.

37.Re4 Qf3 38.Rh4+ Kg5

38...Kg7 39.Re2 Rf7 40.Rxh7+! does not help, and White wins.

39.Qf8 f5 40.Rf4 Qc3 41.h4+ Kh5 42.Rxf5+! Kg4 43.f3+ Black resigned.

Every chessplayer is unique, but especially those who are so distinguished. A lot has been written about Petrosian’s style. Some love it, while some do not like it so much: not everyone feels that “any style is good if it leads to success.” Boris Spassky recalls: “As a chess player Petrosian enjoyed great respect among his colleagues, because they understood his strength, his chess genius. But the general public did not really appreciate him: many draws, too little ‘blood,’ so to speak. The audience loves it when blood is shed on the stage, no matter where from, what, or how, who cares.”

Much water has flowed under the bridge since then, the old passions subsided, but even today, in the minds of many, Petrosian is the personification of ultra-cautious, dry rationalism and who knows what else. In reality he simply understood and played chess very well.

Petrosian’s Style…

This paradoxical concept intricately intertwined a quick temperament and cold calculation; improvisation and technical skill; strong personality and logical thinking. It is difficult, very difficult, to describe Petrosian in a few words because his play was so distinctive and unusual. No wonder there were so many disputes about his style, and colleaguesgrandmasters gave him the nickname “Levsha” (“Lefty” – translator; this is an allusion to the well-known Russian story *The Tale of Cross-eyed Lefty from Tula and the Steel Flea* by Nikolai Leskov). Tigran Vartanovich modestly called himself a “positional player.” At the same time, however, he was far from a typical player and always recognized insight and style in chess. Yes, he did not like surprises and did not seek complications at all cost, but he also did not shy away from them. If he felt that the position requires it, he did not hesitate to use his razor-sharp tactics, to calculate, to take risks.

The next game was played in the first match for the world championship against Boris Spassky. It fully reveals the many facets of Petrosian's talent and the deep meaning of his words: "If strategy is a block of marble, then tactics is the tool that a master uses to create chess artwork."

(129) C4.3 **Petrosian – Spassky**
World Championship Match, 10th game
Moscow 1966

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.g3 g6 3.c4 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.0-0 Nc6 6.Nc3 d6 7.d4 a6

It is worth noting that this game was played at a tense moment of the match, when the candidate, after losing in the seventh round, tried to even the score at all costs, hence the choice of the aggressive opening variation. It was probably no surprise for Petrosian, since Spassky had already played it against Bronstein in the Candidates Tournament in Amsterdam.

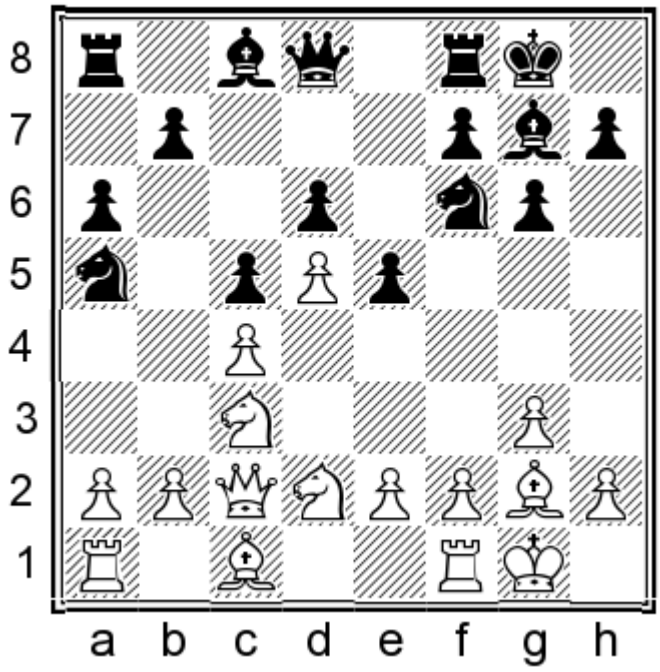
8.d5

There are other well-known continuations: 8.h3 (games 150, 151), 8.Qd3, and even 8.Be3, but the text move is without a doubt the most fundamental response to Black's plan.

8...Na5 9.Nd2 c5

Hindering the move 10.b4.

10.Qc2 e5



11.b3

As we have already mentioned, Botvinnik's plan 11.a3 and b2-b4 also deserves attention. The calm continuation in this game is unassuming and leads to a lengthy game.

11...Ng4 12.e4

Otherwise, with 12...f5, Black would achieve a space advantage, while now after 12...f5, Black assumes certain obligations. It is obvious that during the activity on the kingside which will soon follow, he will greatly miss the a5-

knight, which is “offside.”

12...f5 13.exf5 gxf5 14.Nd1

According to many annotators (grandmaster Suetin, *et al*) 14.Bb2 is, if not a better move, more cautious. But I think that Tal was the closest to the truth. He suggested that with his last move Petrosian deliberately “drew the fire upon himself.”

14...b5

The straightforward 14...f4 is also possible, but in this case Black would definitely have to finish the game with a direct attack because the weakening of the e4-square would have the most serious consequences.

Spassky does not want to burn bridges. After all, by the standards of the King’s Indian Defense, Black has a decent position after the two important conceptual advances ...b5 and ...f5. Here many expected that White would still play 15.Bb2, so that after something like 15...Rb8 16.f3 Nf6 17.Bc3 Bh6 18.Re1 he could somewhat stabilize the position (indicated by Isaac Boleslavsky). Instead, the “cautious” Petrosian suddenly significantly complicates the game.

15.f3!? e4

Almost all annotators put an exclamation point next to the move 15...e4. Oddly enough, Tal was the only one who did not, noting that after the simple knight retreat to h6, playing with White would be more unpleasant, because Black remained in control and can then cause a crisis in a moment even more favorable for him.

16.Bb2

Here riskier players suggested an exchange sacrifice: 16.fxg4 Bxa1 17.gxf5 Bxf5 (17...Bd4+!?) 18.Nxe4. But I think that White’s position is not bad enough to resort to extreme measures.

16...exf3 17.Bxf3 Bxb2

A controversial exchange. As Tal pointed out, Black could have saved the bishops: 17...Ne5. Then, after the inevitable opening of play (...f4), Black’s kingside would be better protected. However, according to Kasparov, it would not change the nature of the fight. For example, 18.Bg2 Qg5 19.Nf2 f4 20.gxf4! Qxf4 21.Nfe4 Qe3+ 22.Kh1 with advantage for White: 22...Bh3? 23.Bxh3 Qxh3 24.Rg1! or 22...Bf5 23.Rae1 Qh6 24.Nf3, and after the exchange of a couple of minor pieces, the remoteness of the a5-knight begins to be important.

18.Qxb2 Ne5 19.Be2 f4?!

In the same impassioned style! Of course, sooner or later Black would have to make this move, so one of the white knights would not gain a foothold on the f4-square. But it is still a long way from d2 or d1, so there was no rush. A plan to transfer the queen’s rook to g7, recommended by Mikhail Tal, looks rather good, for example: 19...Ra7 20.Ne3 Qf6! 21.Qc2 Rg7 22.Ng2 Ng6 23.Kh1 f4! 24.Nxf4 Nxf4 25.gxf4 Bh3, and now the exchange sacrifice, similar to the text one, is not so strong, because the a1-h8 diagonal is controlled by Black. Instead of 21.Qc2 stronger is 21.Kh1! Re7 (21...bxc4 22.bxc4!) 22.Rae1 followed by Ng2 (indicated by Garry Kasparov), and it is difficult for Black to play ...f4.

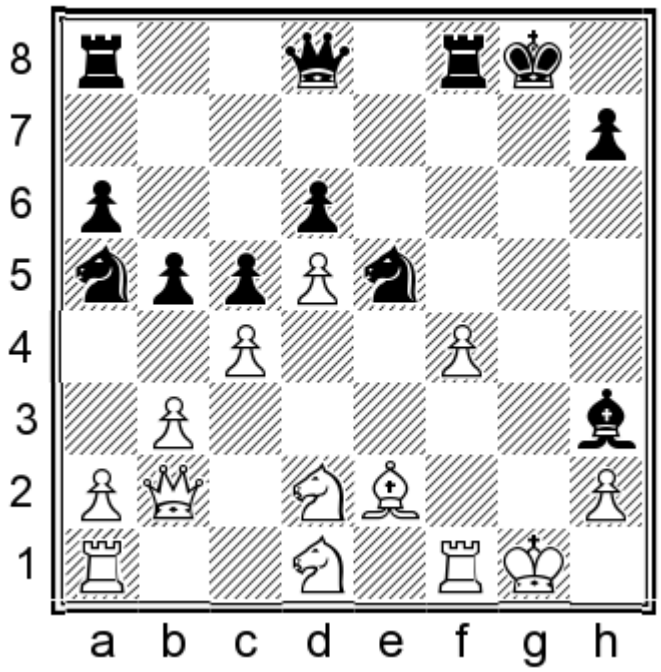
Spassky’s impatience can be explained mainly by Petrosian’s lead. Also, all the experts unanimously advised the candidate to “drag Petrosian into a whirlpool of complications.”

20.gxf4!?

A very bold idea for the world championship match. Probably 20.Rxf4 Rxf4 21.gxf4, etc. was objectively stronger. (Garry Kasparov tried to prove this later. The third volume of his book *My Great Predecessors* has a detailed analysis of this position.) However, Petrosian undoubtedly took into account the psychological state of his

opponent and decided to create a trap. Later Tigran Vartanovich admitted: “With this move I have paid tribute to Mikhail Tal, who made psychological tricks fashionable. At the time of the match I already had a clear understanding of my opponent’s approach to problem solving, and I could bet that Boris Spassky would respond with the dynamic and dramatic 20...Bh3, fully understanding that 20.Rxf4 was objectively stronger.”

20...Bh3?



Falling into the trap! Black should have given up his ambitions and secured the position of the e5-knight: 20...Rxf4 21.Rxf4 (or 21.Ne3 Qg5+ 22.Kh1 Rxf1+ 23.Ndxf1 Bh3, and Black’s chances are not worse – suggested by Alexey Suetin) 21...Qg5+ 22.Kh1 Qxf4 23.Nc3 with a complicated fight with mutual chances. However, if we take into account Spassky’s state of mind, this development seems highly unlikely.

21.Ne3!

A forced and yet correct sacrifice. After the h3-bishop disappears and the e5-outpost is eliminated all of the white pieces become actively involved in the game. The bishop gets access to the e6-square, which perfectly complements the queen’s activity along the long diagonal, the knights occupy threatening positions on e3 and e4, and now White has an attack. Incidentally, it is at this point that it becomes clear that the knight’s position on a5 is very unfortunate.

21...Bxf1?!

Black is gobbling up material, not yet knowing what to expect. According to Kasparov, 21...Rxf4 22.Rxf4 Qg5+ was the last real chance to save the game, although White had the excellent reply 23.Rg4!, forcing Black, after 23...Bxg4 24.Nxg4 Nxg4 25.Bxg4 Qxg4+ 26.Kh1, to go into an unpleasant endgame: 26...Qd4 27.Rg1+ Kh8 (27...Kf7? 28.Qc2) 28.Qxd4+ cxd4. Armed with a computer, Kasparov tried to shed light on the evaluation of this endgame. Here is his analysis:

(1) 29.Rg4 (Isaac Boleslavsky) 29...bxc4 30.bxc4 Re8! 31.Rxd4 Re1+ 32.Kg2 Rd1 33.Kf3 (or 33.Nb3 Rxd4 34.Nxd4 Nxc4, etc. – Igor Yanvarjov) 33...Nxc4 34.Rxc4 Rxd2, and Black draws without any hassle;

(2) 29.Ne4! Nb7 (but not 29...bxc4? 30.Nxd6! – Igor Yanvarjov) 30.cxb5 (30.Rd1 bxc4 31.bxc4 Rf8 32.Ng5 h6 33.Ne6 Rf2 34.a3 Rf3 35.Rxd4 Rxa3 36.Rh4 Kh7 37.Rg4 Rb3 gives more chances for a draw) 30...axb5 31.Rd1 (if 31.Rc1, then 31...d3 32.Rc7 d2! 33.Nxd2 Nc5! with sufficient counterplay – Igor Yanvarjov) 31...Rxa2 32.Rxd4 Nc5 33.Nxd6 Nxb3 34.Rd3 Nc5 35.Rc3 Na4 36.Rg3, with some chances for a win.

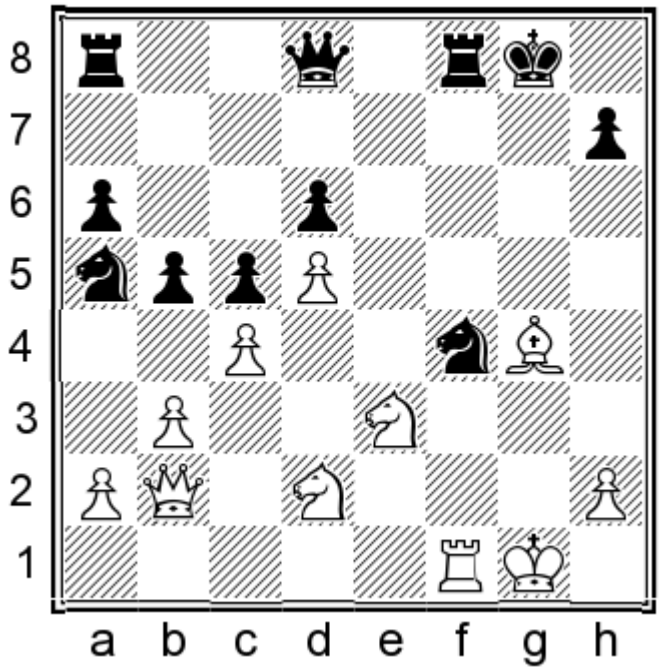
22.Rxf1 Ng6

The lesser of two evils was probably 22...Nd7, seeking to block the scary a1-h8 diagonal: 23.Bg4 Qf6!, as was pointed out by many annotators. But even then White retains a significant advantage via 23.Ne4 Qe7 24.Bd3.

23.Bg4!

After 23.Ng4 Black would have 23...h5, while now White decides the game in a few moves.

23...Nxf4



Desperation. However, there was no good defense anymore. 23...Rxf4? 24.Be6+ Kf8 25.Rxf4+ Nxf4 26.Qh8+ with mate on the next move. 23...h6 (Alexey Suetin) did not help either because of 24.Be6+ Kh7 25.Nf5 Ra7 26.Ne4! (Garry Kasparov). The most stubborn was 23...Qf6, which White could counter with 24.Be6+ Kh8 25.Qxf6+ Rxf6 26.f5 (Isaac Boleslavsky) 26...Ne5 27.Ne4! (Garry Kasparov) with a technically straightforward win.

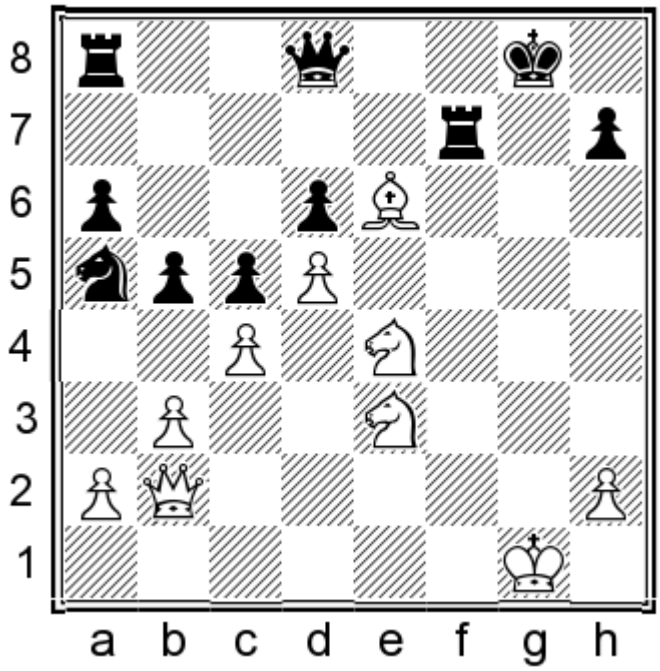
24.Rxf4!

Petrosian had to sacrifice a rook for a minor piece many times before. It is well-known that in this respect he was a great “connoisseur.” But two exchange sacrifices in the same game! This is definitely a rare event. If I am not mistaken, something like this happened in his games in only one other instance, against Troianescu (Bucharest, 1953).

24...Rxf4 25.Be6+ Rf7

Or 25...Kf8 26.Qh8+ Ke7 27.Qxh7+ Ke8 28.Qg6+ Ke7 29.Qg5+ Rf6 30.Nf5+ with a quick checkmate.

26.Ne4



“A picture perfect position. Black is helpless despite the fact that he is up two exchanges. The knight on a5 is a passive witness to the destruction of his army.” (Isaac Boleslavsky)

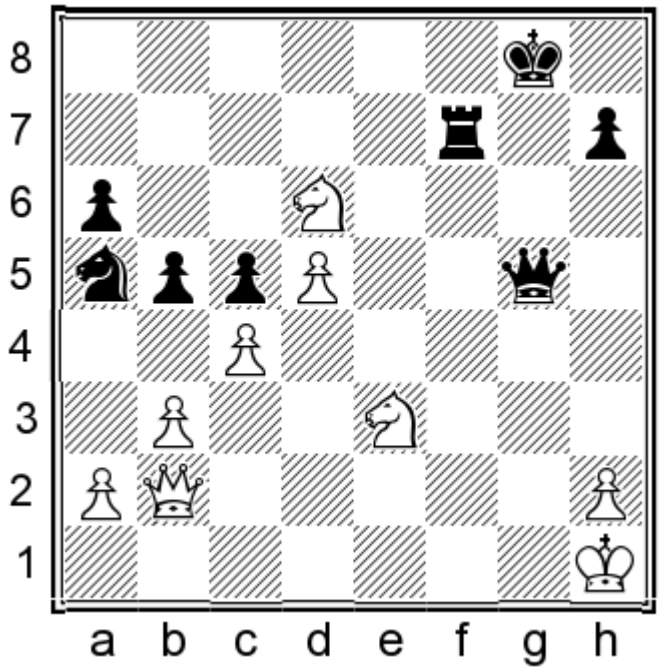
26...Qh4

After 26...Raa7 27.Nf5 Qf8, the easiest is 28.Qf6! (Isaac Boleslavsky).

27.Nxd6 Qg5+

Or 27...Qe1+ 28.Kg2 Qxe3 29.Bxf7+ Kf8 30.Qh8+ Ke7 31.Nf5+ Kxf7 32.Qg7+ and 33.Nxe3 (suggested by Isaac Boleslavsky).

28.Kh1 Raa7 29.Bxf7+ Rxf7



30.Qh8+!

A spectacular blow crowning the grand plan. 30...Kxh8 would be followed by 31.Nxf7+ and 32.Nxg5 Black resigned.

Petrosian's "Immortal Game," forever written in the annals of chess history.

(130) C4.4 **Portisch – Petrosian**
Piatigorsky Cup
Santa Monica 1966

What do grandmasters think about during the game? This is a very interesting question, but it is rather rhetorical, because, as a rule, grandmasters prefer to keep it to themselves, letting the reader speculate about it in the fog of complex variations and ambiguous phrases.

This is why Portisch's testimony in his annotations for this game is truly unique. Annotations by Lajos Portisch.

1.c4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nf3 d6 4.Nc3 Nf6

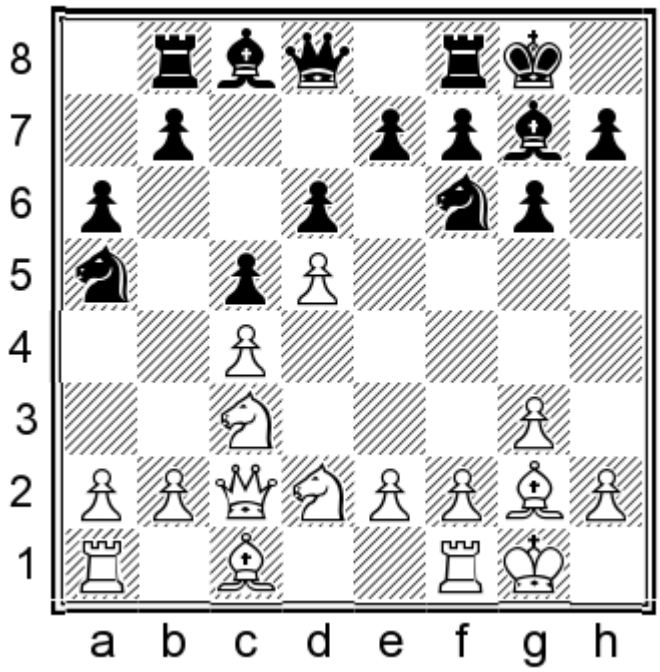
Petrosian rarely plays the King's Indian Defense with the black pieces, but he is the best specialist as White. Once Tigran told me: "If I cannot win the King's Indian game, it's bad."

Then why does he play the King's Indian? Probably he wants to win and assumes the "risk" of defense. Now I can play 5.e4 and after 5...0-0 6.Be2 e5 make the move 7.d5, which has become popular thanks to Petrosian, but then he knows this variation better than I do. Now this variation does not interest me at all, otherwise I would have played it to find out which continuation my opponent prefers for Black. So what does he play against the system with fianchettoed bishops? In the match against Spassky he won as White in memorable style. I am not a supporter of psychological warfare but still choose this setup because I know it well.

5.g3 0-0 6.Bg2 Nc6 7.0-0 a6

So Petrosian plays just like Spassky played against him in the match game. Probably, he found reinforcement for Black. That is fine because White can avoid this variation.

8.d5 Na5 9.Nd2 c5 10.Qc2 Rb8



So, not 10...e5 after all, as in the aforementioned 10th game of his match against Spassky.

11.b3 b5 12.Bb2 bxc4

Petrosian plays quickly. Maybe he has home preparation? I am still waiting for the move ...e5.

13.bxc4 Bh6

I would expect such a tactical move from Tal, but not Petrosian. It is not new and has questionable value. My opponent is either impatient and wants to trick me at some point so he could quickly win or this is indeed home preparation. Anyway, I have to look into both possibilities.

14.f4 e5

The move 14...Ng4 is not dangerous since the complications after 15.Nd1 Rxb2 16.Qxb2 Bg7 17.Qc1 Bxa1 18.Qxa1 Bd7 19.h3 Nf6 20.e4 Qb6 21.e5 are beneficial for White.

15.Rae1 exf4 16.gxf4 Nh5

In the first game that I know of in which this variation was used, Donner, as Black, had a worse position against Botvinnik (Wageningen 1958): 16...Re8 17.Nd1 Rb7 18.Bc3. However, later an improvement for Black was found: 17...Bg4 or 17...Nh5 18.e3 Bf5, but even now White's move 17.Nd1 is not the best. Instead, for example, 17.e3 is more appropriate, and if 17...Bf5, then 18.e4.

17.e3 Re8

(Stronger was 17...Bg7 – Igor Yanvarjov.)

18.Nce4

However, after that the knight will be pinned, but I still control the e4-square.

18...Bf5 19.Bc3

This means that Petrosian could not find an improvement and most likely his choice is explained by impatience. Black is clearly worse. Petrosian feels it, too; for the first time during the game he is thinking for a long time.

19...Nb7

A necessary retreat because of the threat of 20.Qa4.

After the game, going over my records, I saw that this position has a predecessor: Donner-De Rooy (Amsterdam 1963). I played in this tournament and saw the game but forgot about it. Now I unconsciously repeated Donner. In that game this position occurred after a move transposition, and then Black played differently: 19...Bxe4 20.Bxe4 f5 21.Bf3. He was looking for a way out of a difficult situation but made an incorrect sacrifice: 21...Nxf4 22.exf4 Rxe1 23.Rxe1 Bxf4, and, of course, quickly lost.

20.Qa4 a5 21.Rb1

White needs to increase his advantage via the proper placement of the rooks. Black cannot use the fact that the e3-square is left unprotected for a moment because 21...Bxe4 22.Nxe4 f5 would be followed by 23.Rxb7! Rxb7 24.Nxd6.

21...Qe7 22.Rfe1 Bd7 23.Qc2 Bf5 24.Qa4

Buying time. Of course, I do not want to draw, since my position is excellent. I need to find a good place for the queen, so I can attack along the b-file unimpeded. After the immediate 24.Rb3 Black could muddy the waters via 24...Qh4. 25.Nf3 Bxe4 does not work because, out of desperation, the opponent could sacrifice on f4. While this sacrifice is likely incorrect, why go into complications when it is possible to strengthen the position without them? If now 24...Bd7, then 25.Qa3 and then 26.Rb6, the queen can later move to b3 or b2.

24...Kf8

Defending the e8-rook against possible attacks. (According to Tigran Petrosian, 24...Kf8 is a crucial mistake; better is 24...Bd7 – Igor Yanvarjov.)

25.Rb6 Rbd8 26.Qb3 Bc8 27.Nf1 Rd7?

A blunder, but Black's position is hopeless anyway. He has no chances to equalize either in the middlegame or in the possible endgame. Here the only acceptable continuation is 27...f5, although White has two good responses. One of them is 28.Neg3. If now 28...Nxg3, then 29.hxg3 followed by the opening of the center via e3-e4. It is clear that 28...Ng7 is also not a good move. Black's only chance is in the variation 28...Nf6 29.Bxf6 Qxf6 30.Rxb7 Bxb7 31.Qxb7 Bxf4, but, of course, White can make a simpler move, for example, 29.Qb2. But 28.Nf2! is even stronger. On the next move, the knight moves from f1 to g3, and then at the right moment e3-e4 decides the game.

28.Nfg3 Nxg3 29.hxg3

Of course, not 29.Bf6? because after 29...Nxe4, Black would have sufficient compensation for the queen. Now, it is impossible to protect the f6-square.

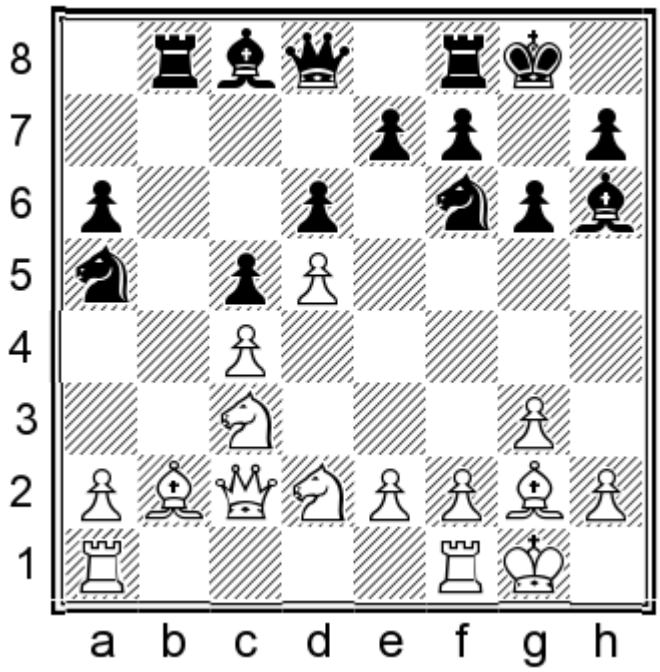
29...Bg7 30.Qb2 f5 31.Bxg7+ Qxg7 32.Nf6 Black resigned.

(131) C4.5 **Petrosian – Toran**
Bamberg 1968

1.c4 Nf6 2.d4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.Nf3 d6 6.0-0 a6 7.Nc3 Nc6 8.d5 Na5 9.Nd2 c5 10.Qc2 Rb8 11.b3 b5 12.Bb2 bxc4

The beginning of conflict over the c4-pawn. The other continuations are 12...e5 (game 134) and 12...Re8 (game 132).

13.bxc4 Bh6



14.Ncb1

An alternative to the straightforward 14.f4 (game 130). In addition to dealing with the threat of Bxd2, the idea of this strange-looking retreat is also to prepare the maneuver Bc3, Na3 to strengthen the c4-pawn and to seize the b-file. By the way, the position on the diagram presents another curiosity: in this position White blunders a pawn with amazing consistency: 14.e3? Bf5 15.Qc1 Bd3 or 15.Nce4 Nxe4 16.Bxe4 Bxe4 17.Nxe4 Nxc4!.

14...e5

As far as I know, the combination of the exchange on c4 with the move ...e5 does not enjoy a good reputation. Maybe it would be better to follow the theory, which considers 14...Bd7 15.Bc3 Qc7 to be the strongest, for example, 16.Na3 Rb4!? 17.Bxb4 cxb4 18.Nab1 Bg7 with play full of possibilities for the exchange.

15.Bc3 Bd7 16.Na3 Rb4

Bold, but probably not quite correct. A rare occasion when an exchange is sacrificed not by Petrosian, but against Petrosian!

17.Bxb4 cxb4 18.Nab1 Qb6?

A significant inaccuracy. Black should have first tied the white pieces to the defense of the c4-square: 18...Qc7, which was later played in the game Timman-Kasparov, Tilburg 1981. Then the breakthrough 19.a3 does not work because of 19...b3! 20.Nxb3? Ba4.

19.Nb3 Nb7

Another mistake, this time decisive. With 19...Ba4 followed by ...Nd7, Black could try to keep the position closed. Now White will inevitably advance a2-a3, and the rooks are let out into active play.

20.N1d2 Rc8 21.a3 a5 22.axb4 a4

No better is 22...Qxb4 23.e3.

23.Na5 Nxa5 24.bxa5 Qxa5 25.e3 Bg7 26.Ra2 Ne8 27.Rfa1 Ra8 28.e4 Qc5 29.Qc3 Rc8 30.Bf3 Bh6 31.Rb1 Bxd2 32.Qxd2 Qxc4

And a pawn for the exchange does not help Black because his minor pieces are pretty much inactive.

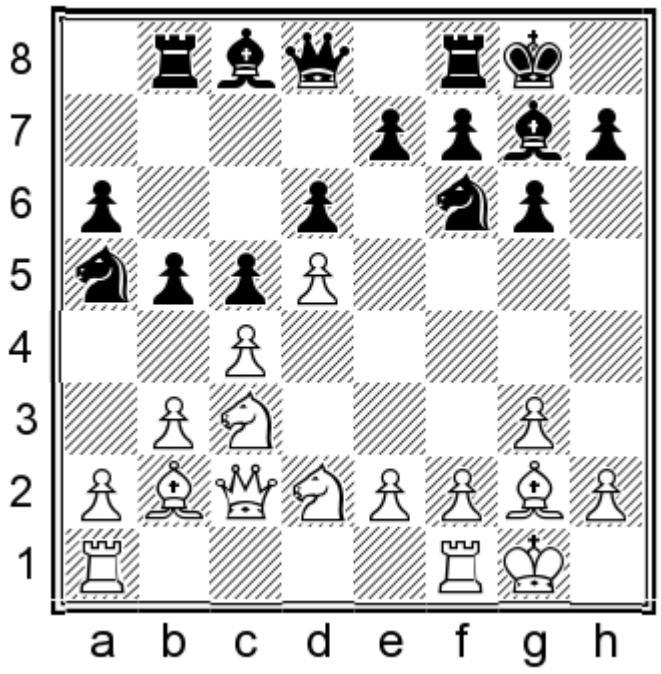
33.Rb4 Qc1+ 34.Qxc1 Rxc1+ 35.Kg2 Kg7 36.Be2 Nf6 37.f3 g5

Hoping for “moral compensation” in the form of the move ...g4.

38.g4 h5 39.h3 hxg4 40.hxg4 Ne8 41.Rb6 Black resigned.

(132) C4.6 **Saidy – Petrosian**
Las Palmas 1973

1.c4 g6 2.Nc3 Bg7 3.g3 Nf6 4.Bg2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.Nf3 Nc6 7.0-0 a6 8.d5 Na5 9.Nd2 c5 10.Qc2 Rb8 11.b3 b5 12.Bb2



12...Re8

A new non-canonical version of the well-known plan. Black reserves the right to break through via ...e6 to avoid the well-studied continuations. In case of 12...e6 he has to take into account the response 13.dxe6 (game 134).

13.Rae1

A move “just because,” so to speak, in a position that requires specific decisions. Not yet clear are the exact details of the plan involving the advance of the white e- and f-pawns (otherwise, why make the move Rae1?). At the same time, Black’s intentions related to the moves ...bxc4 and ...e6xd5 are apparent. As a result, the b2-bishop might end up in the cross hairs of the b8-rook and g7-bishop. Therefore, it was better to play 13.Rab1.

13...Bd7

It is difficult to annotate someone else’s game. Often we read that the grandmaster had this or that in mind. But what seems natural and logical during analysis oftentimes does not look this way over the board and vice versa.

Black’s last move is a total mystery to me. Why did Petrosian not play 13...e6, which suggests itself? After all, he thoroughly studied this variation when he was preparing for the match against Spassky and had to know the game Langeweg-Damjanovic (Reggio Emilia 1962), where, after 14.e4 bxc4 15.bxc4 exd5 16.cxd5 (16.exd5? Bf5) 16...Bd7 Black celebrated a quick victory: 17.f4? (better is 17.Rb1) 17...Ng4 18.e5 dxe5 19.h3 exf4!, and Langeweg threw in the towel.

14.h3 bxc4

And now 14...e6 was possible, albeit with somewhat different ideas: 15.e4 exd5 16.cxd5 (worse is 16.Nxd5 bxc4 17.Bxf6 Bxf6 18.Nxf6+ Qxf6 19.Nxc4 Nxc4 20.bxc4 Rb2) 16...b4! 17.Nd1 Bb5 18.Nc4 Bxc4 19.bxc4 Nd7; if 15.dxe6, then 15...Bxe6. In all cases, Black has counterplay.

15.bxc4 e6 16.Rb1 Qe7

Now after 16...exd5 17.cxd5 White would have a slight advantage.

17.e4 Rec8 18.Rfe1 e5 19.Nd1

Petrosian overthought the opening, and White seized the advantage. However, White's previous move was a bit passive. He could underscore the flaws of Black's position only via energetic actions in the center: 19.Ne2! and then f2-f4, for example, 19...Nh5 20.Bc3 Qd8 21.f4 or 20...Nb7 21.Rb6.

19...Bh6 20.Ne3 Nh5

Taking advantage of his opponent's indecision, Petrosian eliminates the threat of f2-f4.

21.Ndf1 Qd8 22.Bc3 Qc7 23.Rxb8 Rxb8 24.Rb1

As it turned out, for Saidy a draw was the summit of his ambition.

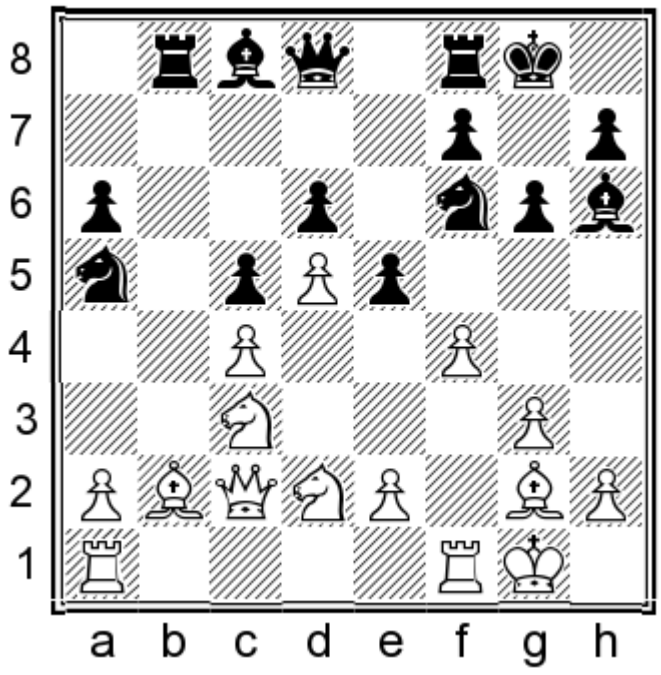
24...Rxb1 25.Qxb1 Nb7 26.Kh2 Draw.

(133) C4.7 **Petrosian – Chiburdanidze**
Vilnius 1978

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.Nf3 d6 6.0-0 Nc6 7.Nc3 a6 8.d5 Na5 9.Nd2 c5 10.Qc2 Rb8 11.b3 b5 12.Bb2 bxc4 13.bxc4 Bh6 14.Ncb1 Bg7

In a way, logical. Threatening the d2-knight is already ineffective, and Black returns the bishop to its rightful diagonal, planning after 15.Bc3 Bd7 16.Na3 to disrupt his opponent's plans with the exchange sacrifice 16...Rb4!. Petrosian apparently is not satisfied with this development, so after repeating the moves, he moves on to the tried-andtrue plan with f2-f4.

15.Nc3 Bh6 16.f4 e5



I wonder what Petrosian was thinking at this moment? Maybe he remembered how he himself defended this position against Portisch in 1966. At the time his current opponent was still playing with dolls!

17.dxe6

An interesting attempt of the Hungarian players, aimed at using the a1-h8 diagonal, which is temporarily weakened by the departure of the bishop to h6. Remember that in the game Portisch-Petrosian (game 130), where this position occurred after fourteen moves, White continued Rae1.

17...fxe6

Nowadays, capturing with the bishop is more fashionable.

18.Rab1

A novelty. The same year at the tournament in Wijk aan Zee, Portisch decisively defeated Van der Sterren after 18.Nce4 Ng4 19.Nb3 Nxb3 (if 19...Ne3, then 20.Qc3) 20.axb3 Bg7 21.Bxg7 Kxg7 22.Qc3+ Kg8 23.Rfd1, etc. However, it was soon established that the knight move to g4 was a serious mistake. Instead Black should have continued 18...Nxe4 19.Nxe4 (or 19.Bxe4 d5) 19...Rxb2! (worse is 19...Nxc4 20.Bf6!) 20.Qxb2 Nxc4 with serious complications (indicated by Efim Geller).

18...Bg7 19.Nce4 Rxb2

A sacrifice characteristic of this variation. It leads to the activation of the black pieces. However, White has not made any mistakes so far; therefore, Black's initiative is only temporary.

20.Rxb2 Ng4 21.Rbb1 Bd4+ 22.Kh1 Ne3 23.Qc1 Bb7

The future champion "bares her little teeth." Black is in no hurry to regain the exchange, striving to squeeze the most out of this position. After 24.Rf3, she has the strong reply 24...Bc6, and if 24.Re1 Nxg2 25.Kxg2 Qa8 26.Qc2 Nxc4! 27.Qxc4 Bxe4+ 28.Nf3 d5, then White has problems with the h1-a8 diagonal and the position of his king. Therefore, Petrosian's priority is to save his bishop, the main defender of the light squares.

24.Bf3! Nxf1 25.Qxf1 Bxe4

A tactical miscalculation that largely predetermined the outcome of the game. Black did not notice that with the departure of her e3-knight her temporary activity also disappeared. The reasonable 25...Qe7 leads to approximate equality.

26.Nxe4!

A surprise. Maia, apparently, was hoping for 26.Bxe4 d5!.

26...Qe7

It turns out that the weakness of the c4-pawn, which seemed about to be lost, is an illusion, and the planned 26...Nxc4 leads to immediate collapse, for example, 27.Qh3 Re8 28.Ng5, and the threats of 29.Nxe6, 29.Rb7, and 29.Qxh7+ decide the game. However, in this variation Black could set an interesting trap: 27...Qe7 (hoping for 28.Rb7 Qxb7! 29.Nf6+ Rxf6 30.Bxb7 Ne3 and ...c4-c3-c2), but after the correct 28.Nxc5! White undoubtedly wins.

27.Ng5 Kh8 28.Qh3 e5

If 28...Re8, then 29.Be4! with the threat of Bxg6. Now White's bishop moves to d5, immobilizing the a5-knight.

29.Ne6 Re8 30.Bd5 exf4 31.Nxf4 Qf6 32.Qd7 Qd8 33.Qxd8 Rxd8 34.Rb6 Bc3 35.Ne6 Black resigned.

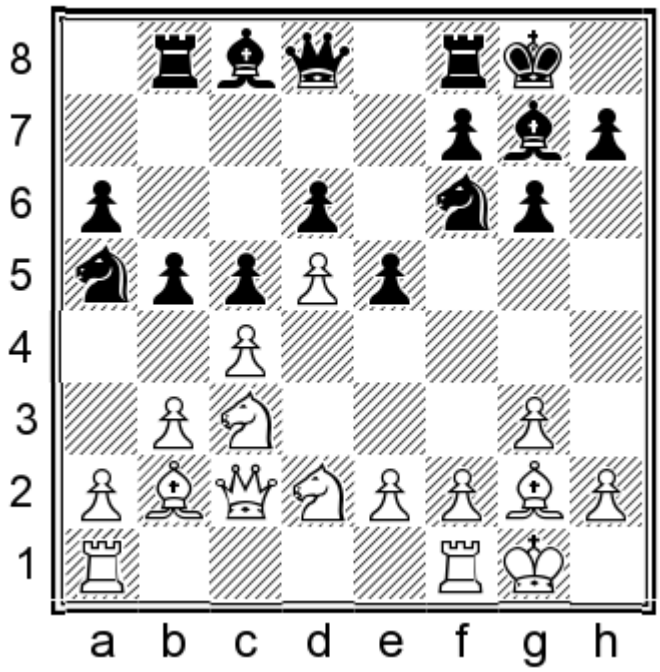
(134) C4.8 **Petrosian – Veingold**
Keres Memorial
Tallinn 1979

1.c4 Nf6 2.g3 g6 3.Bg2 Bg7 4.Nc3 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.Nf3 Nc6

In his time, world champion Alekhine harshly criticized this move made by the English Master Bird. Over time the evaluation fluctuated more than once, sometimes dramatically, from good to bad. Its viability was proved when

the system with ...Nc6-a5 was developed. By the way, today 7.d5, as recommended by Alekhine, is considered inaccurate because of 7...Na5 8.Nd2 c6!, for example: 9.b4? Nxd5! or 9.0-0 Qb6 10.Rb1 Qa6 11.b3 Bd7 and 12...Rac8 with good play for Black.

7.0-0 a6 8.d5 Na5 9.Nd2 c5 10.Qc2 Rb8 11.b3 b5 12.Bb2 e5



13.dxe6 fxe6 14.cxb5

Baltic chess players have always had good opening preparation. I think Petrosian had no doubt that his opponent, a young master from Estonia, despite having relatively little experience in this variation, had studied all of the well-known key games and, most likely, prepared some important improvements. Therefore Petrosian is looking for an opportunity to deviate from the beaten theoretical paths. He trades pawns in the center twice, as was first played in tournaments in the late 1950s. This continuation has many subtleties but is generally regarded as not very dangerous for Black. At this point the roles are reversed: the center is taken over by the black pawns and now White has to look for ways to apply pressure using the open lines.

14...axb5 15.Nce4

Both sides have to play the next few moves very precisely. The slightest inaccuracy would give the opponent a significant if not decisive advantage. Now, for example, after 15.Rad1 d5 the knight cannot attack the e4-pawn and the armada of Black's pawns in the center begins to move.

15...Bb7

Theory considers 15...Nxe4 16.Nxe4 to be the main continuation, as was first played in the game Taimanov-Furman (Moscow 1957): 16...Bxb2 17.Qxb2 Bb7, and after 18.b4 Nc4 19.Qc3 Bxe4 20.Bxe4 d5 21.Bg2 cxb4 22.Qxb4 Qd6 play simplified and soon ended in a draw. The pawn sacrifice recommended by Botvinnik leads to unclear play: 16.Bxg7 Nxd2 17.Bxf8 Nxf1 18.Bh6 Nxh2 19.Rd1.

16.Rad1

Petrosian did not like the continuation 16.Bxf6 Bxf6 17.Rad1, which was played in a number of games. In this case Black can save his strong dark-square bishop: 17...Bg7 (Bronstein-Spassky, Amsterdam, 1956) or 17...Be7 (Botvinnik-Ivkov, Belgrade, 1969).

16...Qe7

According to Botvinnik, Black should have played 16...Nxe4 17.Nxe4 Bxb2 18.Qxb2 Bxe4 19.Bxe4 b4 with comfortable equality. This variation needs some clarification: if 17.Bxg7, then the only correct reply is 17...Nxg3!, sacrificing the exchange, but, of course, not 17...Nxd2? 18.Bxf8 or 17...Kxg7? 18.Nxe4 Bxe4 19.Qxe4 with an advantage for White, for example, 19...Qe7 20.Qd3!, and Black loses material.

17.Bxf6 Bxf6 18.Nxf6+ Qxf6 19.Bxb7

In the game Stein-Robert Byrne (Moscow 1971) White played 19.Ne4, allowing the knight trade, which, in my opinion, is strategically wrong. The knight is more valuable than the bishop in the attack on the black pawns.

19...Nxb7 20.Qd3 b4 21.Ne4

A “small” initiative.

21...Qe7 22.h4 Ra8 23.Rd2

It is difficult for White to increase the pressure, as very few pieces are left on the board. Petrosian is waiting, believing that in this situation any pawn advance would be bad for Black. Probably, his opponent shared this view. On the next move Black moves the rook to the fifth rank to actively defend the pawns and exchange the rooks if the opportunity presents itself.

23...Rf5 24.Rc2 Rd5 25.Qe3 Na5 26.Ng5 Nc6

All of a sudden Black blunders a pawn. It must have been some sort of temporary blindness, because 26...Re8 as well as 26...Re5 easily maintain the balance.

27.Qxe6+ Qxe6 28.Nxe6 Nd4

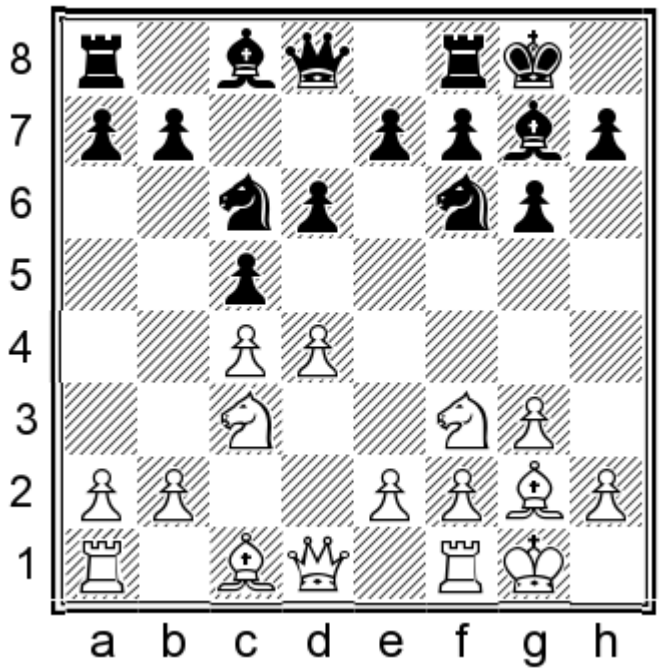
In principle this is correct because in the rook endgame Black has more chances to draw. I still think that he should have tested his opponent with 28...Re5 29.Nf4 Nd4, and now White has to find the only move 30.Rb2, while 30.Rd2 unexpectedly leads to the loss of the pawn: 30...Rae8!. It is a crime to miss such a chance. He could have traded the knights later.

29.Nxd4 Rxd4 30.e3 Rd5 31.Ra1 Kf7 32.Kf1 Ke6 33.Ke2 h6 34.g4 g5

Somewhat more stubborn is 34...h5. The text move allows White to transfer his rook to h5, and after undermining the black pawns via f2-f4, clears the path to the queenside for his king.

35.Rh1 Kf6 36.hxg5+ hxg5 37.Rh6+ Kg7 38.Rh5 Re5 39.f4! gxf4 40.Rxe5 dxe5 41.exf4 exf4 42.Kf3 Ra5 43.Kxf4 Kf6 44.Ke4 Kg5 45.Rg2 Black resigned. He truly defeated himself.

C5



White to move

The second most popular (after 8.d5)

plan for White in this position is the transition to symmetry: 8.dxc5 (games 135, 136, 138, 139).

A harmless attempt to hold on to the d4-pawn, 8.e3, occurred in game 137.

(135) C5.1 Petrosian – Bronstein
Candidates Tournament
Amsterdam 1956

There are “dark days” in every chess player’s career. Unfortunately, no one has yet found a cure for blunders. Even the greatest of the great sometimes suffer bitter disappointments because of gross, inexplicable blunders, for no genius can always play with full strength.

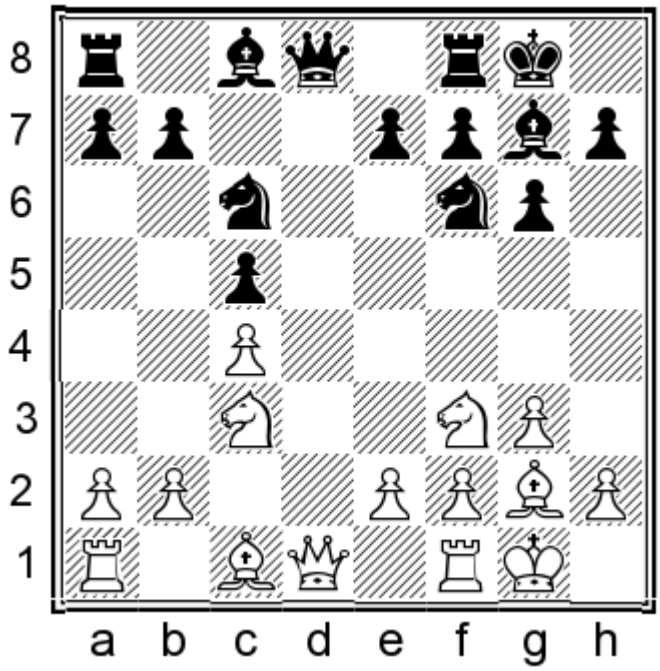
From the book *Petrosian’s Alter Ego* by Victor Vasiliev:

“In the words of Bronstein himself, Petrosian ‘played a terrific game.’ He exploited his opponent’s opening inaccuracies and with sophisticated play achieved an overwhelming advantage. After the 20th move the white pieces controlled all of the key points of the position, while Black had literally no moves. Bronstein made several moves with the same knight almost absentmindedly. With the last, eighth, move of the knight he attacked the queen, of course, expecting little to come of this threat. He could not believe his eyes when Petrosian ignored this attack. Here is the description of the scene by one of the eyewitnesses of this drama: ‘I will never forget the look of horror and amazement with which Petrosian watched his queen disappearing from the board. With a hopeless gesture of humility, without saying a word, he stopped the clock. The tragic end of what could have been the game of his life.’”

Despite this blow of fate, Petrosian found the strength to finish the tournament respectably (in the end, he tied for third to seventh places) and upon arrival in Moscow annotated the game for the central press.

Annotations by Tigran Petrosian.

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.Nf3 c5 6.0-0 Nc6 7.d4 d6 8.dxc5 dxc5



9.Be3 Nd7

This move has a bad reputation for a reason. Better is 9...Qa5.

10.Qc1 Nd4

After White's obvious response, Black is almost forced to play ...e5, which leads to weaknesses along the d-file.

11.Rd1 e5 12.Bh6

White's plan is simple: he wants to exchange the dark-square bishops, chase away the d4-knight, and then increase pressure on the opponent's position.

12...Qa5

Threatening 13...Qxc3.

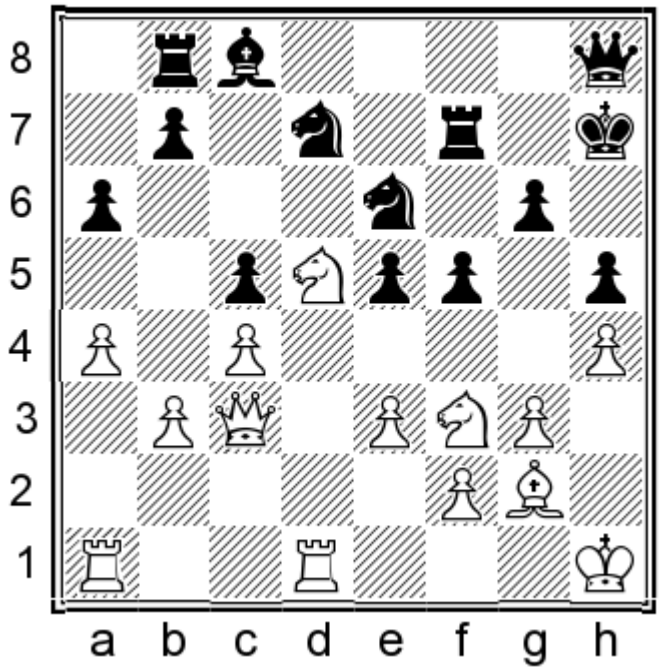
13.Bxg7 Kxg7 14.Kh1 Rb8

Black is in a difficult position, because it is not clear how to develop the queenside. After 14...Nxf3 White can play either 15.Bxf3 Nf6 16.Qg5 or 15.exf3 followed by f3-f4.

15.Nd2 a6 16.e3 Ne6 17.a4 h5 18.h4 f5 19.Nd5 Kh7 20.b3

20.b4 cxb4 21.Qb2 was also possible, but White did not want to give the opponent the c5- square.

20...Rf7 21.Nf3 Qd8 22.Qc3 Qh8



Black defends persistently. Poor was 22...e4 because of 23.Ne5.

After defending the e5-square, Black is ready to play ...e4, which would greatly improve his position.

23.e4!

Now the position opens up, and all the shortcomings of Black's position become obvious. It is not clear how to stop the threats of 24.exf5 or 24.Re1 and exf5. After 23...f4 White achieves a decisive advantage via 24.Ng5+ Nxg5 25.hxg5 fxg3 26.fxg3.

23...fxe4 24.Nd2 Qg7

Capturing on f2 gives White the opportunity to create direct threats after 25.Rf1.

25.Nxe4 Kh8 26.Rd2 Rf8 27.a5 Nd4 28.b4 cxb4 29.Qxb4 Nf5 30.Rad1 Nd4

Black has no good moves, and White deliberately chooses the object of the decisive blow.

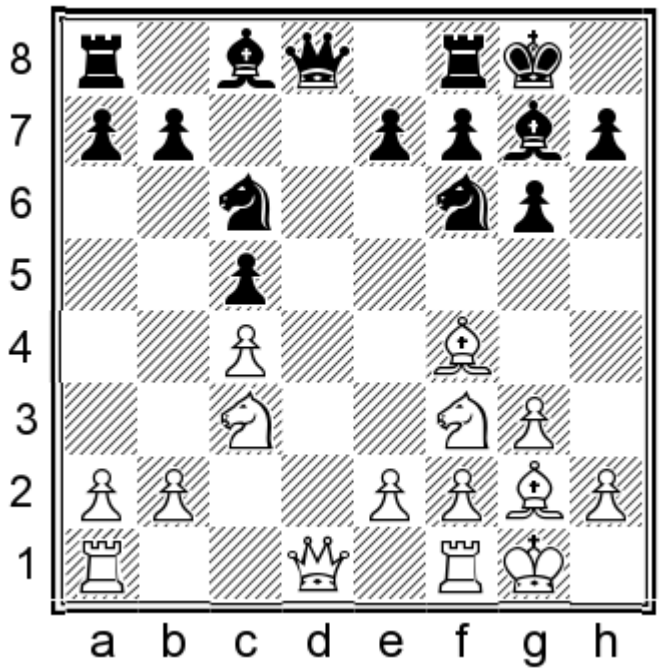
31.Re1 Nc6 32.Qa3 Nd4 33.Rb2 Nc6 34.Reb1 Nd4 35.Qd6 Nf5 36.Ng5??

This move does not require annotation. The irony of this blunder is that White left the queen under attack from the only active piece.

36...Nxd6 White resigned.

(136) C5.2 **Petrosian – Velimirovic**
Vinkovci 1970

1.Nf3 g6 2.g3 Bg7 3.Bg2 Nf6 4.0-0 0-0 5.c4 d6 6.d4 c5 7.Nc3 Nc6 8.dxc5 dxc5 9.Bf4



This symmetrical variation is not as harmless as it may seem. White's extra tempo still counts for something. In addition, bear in mind that Velimirovic is the ultimate "attacker," and he clearly does not like an early transition to "prosaic" play.

9...Nh5

Continuing to copy White's moves is dangerous: 9...Bf5 10.Ne5!, and Black's difficulties begin. Also, there is another way to play in this position: 9...Be6 10.Ne5 Na5, planning to disrupt the vanguard of the white pieces via ...Nh5(d7).

10.Bd2

Not very ambitious. In fact, White relinquishes any claim to an opening advantage. 10.Be3 (game 138) gives Black more trouble.

10...Bd7

In game 139 Smejkal continued 10...Be6, which is probably also pretty good.

11.Qc1 Re8 12.Rd1 Qc8 13.Bh6 Bh8 14.Qd2 Bh3 15.Rac1

The rook protects the knight in order to avoid doubling the pawns in the variation 15.Bxh3 Qxh3 16.Qd7 Qxd7 17.Rxd7 Bxc3. However, now it is Black's move, and he easily finds a way to keep the queen from coming to d7. Petrosian probably did not see or underestimated Black's 16th move. Otherwise, he would have thought of something else. He could play 15.Nd5 or follow his opponent's example: 15.Bh1!, retaining chances along the h1-a8 diagonal.

15...Bxg2 16.Kxg2 Nd4

The downside of the "symmetry": if one side does not make us of its active opportunities, then the other side almost always gains its own opportunities for activity. Black was first to seize control over the center and immediately White has problems: he, of course, does not want to exchange on d4, and chasing away the knight with the pawn is dangerous, for example, 17.e3? Nxf3 18.Kxf3 Qh3! with an attack.

17.Qd3 Qc6 18.b3 Nf6 19.h3 Rad8 20.e4 Nd7 21.Nd2?

Surreal! Bronstein's ghost continues to haunt Petrosian. After 21.Ne2 White's position would have been a bit worse, but still defendable.

21...Ne5 22.Qf1 Nf5 23.Bg5 h6

White's game rapidly goes downhill.

24.Bf4 Nd3 25.Nd5

A desperate attempt, suddenly crowned with success. However, White does not have good choices, since the continuation 25.Rc2 Nxf4+ 26.gxf4 Nh4+ 27.Kg3 (or 27.Kh2 Rxd2!) 27...Bxc3 28.Rxc3 Qf6 would not leave him any hope.

25...Nxf4+

Inconceivable. Just a step away from victory the Yugoslav grandmaster suddenly began seeing "ghosts" in the simple variation 25...Nxc1 26.exf5 e6, etc.

Unexpectedly "pardoned," Petrosian regained his spirits and confidently steered the game to a draw.

26.Nxf4 e6

As a result, Black has only a minimal advantage. Here drastic measures are hardly appropriate, which is indirectly confirmed by the variation with an exchange sacrifice that was indicated by Velimirovic: 26...Rxd2 27.Rxd2 Qxe4+ 28.Kh2 Nd4 29.Rd3, and only White might have some chances.

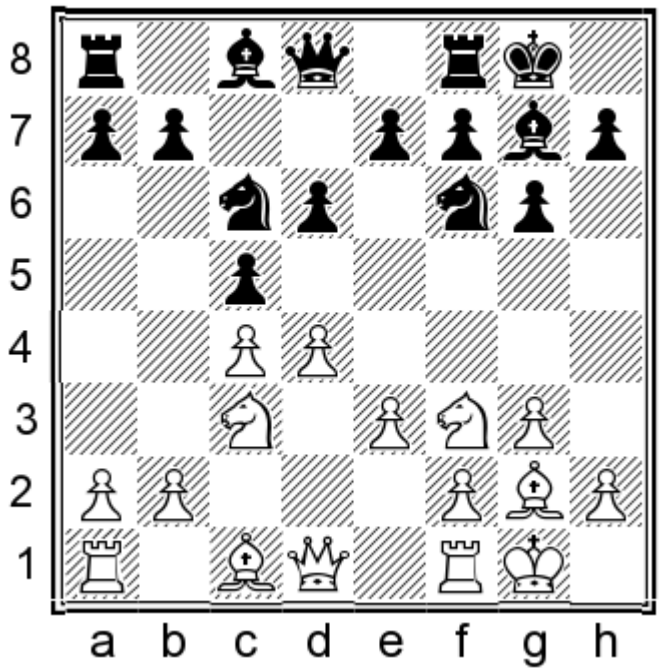
27.Qe2 Rd4 28.Kh2 Ne7 29.Re1 Red8 30.Nf3 R4d7 31.h4 Qc7 32.Red1 Nc6 33.Kg2 Rd6 34.Rxd6 Qxd6 35.Rc2 Nd4 36.Nxd4 Qxd4 37.Nh3!

White's knight goes to f3 to help the rook and the queen neutralize the d-file.

37...Qd1 38.Ng1 Kf8 39.Nf3 Ba1 40.Qxd1 Rxd1 41.Rd2 Rxd2 42.Nxd2 f5 43.exf5 gxf5 Draw.

(137) C5.3 **Panno – Petrosian**
Las Palmas 1973

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.Nc3 c5 7.d4 Nc6 8.e3



Maintaining the pawn pressure, White has more freedom for activity in the center but does not hinder his opponent's development, who can continue the attack on the d4-pawn. According to the *Opening Encyclopedia*, the most logical path for Black is 8...Bg4 followed by the exchange on f3 and ...Nd7. Petrosian wants to implement this idea slightly differently.

8...Bf5 9.b3 Ne4

A principled maneuver reinforcing the black bishops. The other continuations are weaker. For example, in the game Botvinnik-Najdorf (Amsterdam 1954) Black wasted time on the useless move 9...Qc8, and after 10.Bb2 Ne4 11.Rc1 Nxc3 12.Bxc3 Be4 13.d5 had a worse position. In his annotations, Botvinnik points out that after 12...cxd4 White has better chances as well, because of the pressure along the a8-h1 diagonal. He also considers the interesting move 9...d5, but he thinks that this attempt to create complications is not quite solid because of 10.cxd5 Nxd5 11.Nxd5 Qxd5 12.Ba3.

10.Bb2 Nxc3 11.Bxc3 Be4

Unlike the aforementioned game, Black traded a move earlier and now has time to fend off the threat of d4-d5, neutralizing the g2-bishop.

12.Rc1 cxd4

The simplest solution to the problem. Now capturing with the pawn is bad for White because after 13...d5! the pawn is immobilized and can turn into a real weakness.

13.Nxd4 Bxg2 14.Kxg2 Qd7

After achieving equality, Petrosian does not choose to finish the fight quickly: 14...Nxd4 15.Bxd4 Bxd4 16.Qxd4 Qa5. Instead, he just wants to play chess.

15.Ne2 Ne5

After 15...Bxc3 16.Nxc3 White would have a slightly better position. A reader familiar with chess classics, of course, recalls a textbook example: in the game Botvinnik-Lilienthal (Moscow 1936) White brilliantly used the advantages of his position with the same material available to him.

Black does not mind trading bishops but only after White weakens his position with the move f2-f4.

16.e4 Rfd8

16...b5 is premature in view of 17.Qd4! Bf6 18.cxb5 Qxb5 19.Nf4, with an advantage for White.

17.f4 Ng4 18.Qd3 Nf6 19.Bd4 Qc6 20.Bxf6

Panno avoids any complications. 20.Nc3 could be followed by 20...Nxe4! 21.Nxe4 (21.Nd5? Nc5!) 21...d5!? 22.Bxg7 dxe4 23.Qc3 Rd3 24.Qe5 e3+! 25.Kh3 Qd7+ 26.f5 f6, etc.

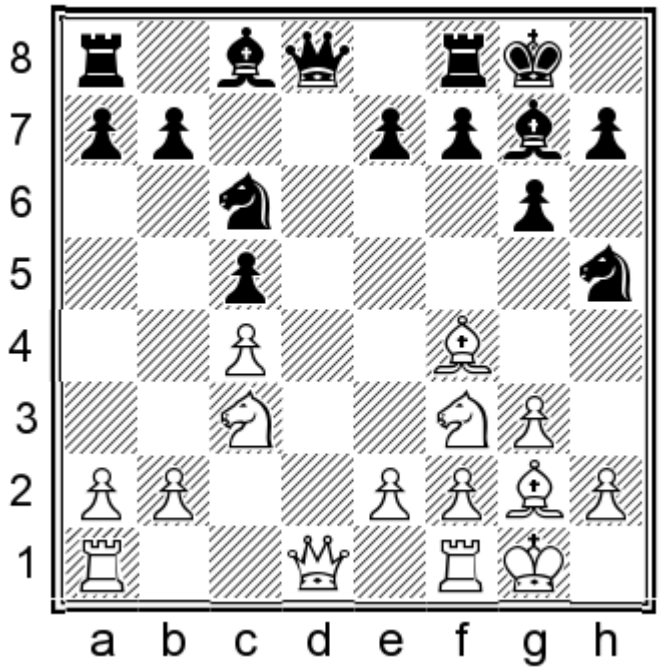
20...Bxf6 21.Rfd1 b6 22.Nd4 Qb7 23.Nf3 Draw.

(138) C5.4 **Cherepkov – Petrosian**
Spartak Team Championship
Moscow 1974

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.g3 0-0 5.Bg2 d6

Again Petrosian plays the King's Indian against Cherepkov. However, nearly a quarter-century has passed since their first game (35), and White decided to choose a simpler continuation.

6.Nf3 c5 7.0-0 Nc6 8.dxc5 dxc5 9.Bf4 Nh5



10.Be3

By all accounts, it is the bishop retreat that creates the most difficult challenges for Black. Now he has to choose between 10...Qa5 and 10...Nd4. Petrosian prefers the latter, as the centralized knight is more consistent with his style.

10...Nd4 11.Qd2 e5!?

A risky, but not at all bad, move. This move has specific reasons, namely: the "perpetual" weakness on d5 loses a good deal of its value if Black can save the d4-knight or seize space via ...e4. It is not easy for White to prepare e2-e3 because his queen and dark-square bishop occupy unreliable positions.

Probably, it will be easier to understand Petrosian's decision if we remember how many dangers await Black after

the standard 11...Bg4:

(1) 12.Rad1 Bxf3 13.exf3 e6 14.Ne4 b6 15.b4 Qc7 16.bxc5 (Larsen-Ribli, Riga 1979), and Black is forced to sacrifice a pawn because the continuation 16...bxc5 17.Nxc5 Qxc5 18.Bxd4 Qxc4 19.Be3! is hopeless for him;

(2) 12.Rfd1 Bxf3 13.exf3 e5 14.Nd5 f5 15.b4 b6 (or 15...cxb4 16.Qxb4 Rf7 17.Bxd4 exd4 18.f4) 16.bxc5 bxc5 17.Rab1, also with a small but clear advantage for White (Draško-Velimirovic, Belgrade 1994).

12.Nd5

The following variation illustrates Black's counter-chances: 12.Bh6 Be6 13.b3 (if 13.e3? or 13.Bxg7, then 13...Nxf3+?!) 13...Nf4! with favorable complications. As we can see, the subpar position of the white queen affects many variations. Therefore, it is probably better to move it to c1 on the 11th move. However, in this case, Petrosian most likely would not have played ...e5.

12...Rb8

Preparing a "warm welcome" for the d5-knight via ...Be6 and ...b5. Up to this point the opponents followed the game Krogius-Sakharov (Leningrad 1960), where Black persistently tried to implement only one of these ideas, the move ...e4, and was punished for his stubbornness: 12...Re8 13.Rfe1 Bd7 14.Bh6 Bh8 15.Nxd4 cxd4 16.e3 dxe3 17.Bxe3 Bc6 18.Rad1. The d5-knight finally made its presence felt.

Petrosian's move, in our opinion, completely exonerates this variation.

13.Bg5

White needs to hurry, as in the case of, for example, 13.Rfe1 Be6 14.Ng5 Bxd5 15.Bxd5 Nf6 16.Bg2 Ng4 he does not have time to play Bh6, and his opponent would seize the advantage.

13...f6 14.Nxd4

Getting rid of the perpetual threat to the e2-pawn.

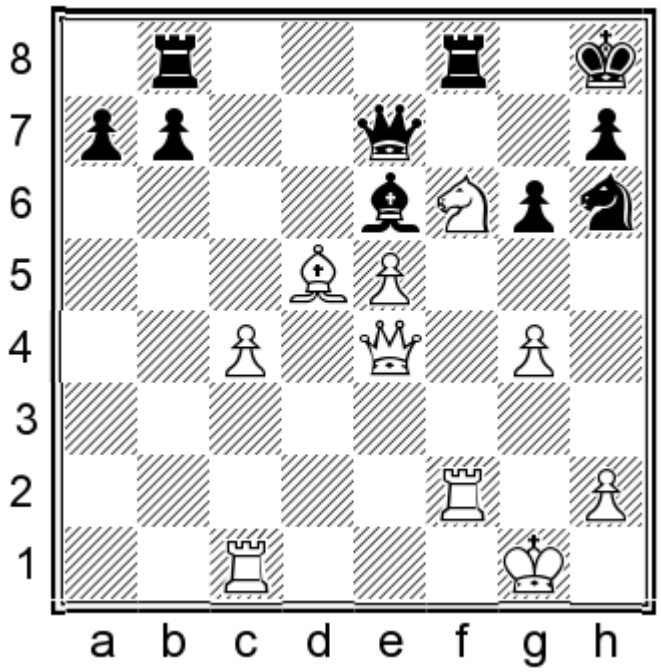
14...cxd4 15.Bh6 Bxh6 16.Qxh6 Ng7 17.Rac1 Be6 18.e4

Black threatened ...b5, but now White has the good reply 19.c5.

18...dxe3 19.Qxe3 Qa5 20.f4 Nf5 21.Qe1 Qxa2 22.fxe5 Qxb2 23.Nxf6+ Kh8 24.Rf2 Qa3

The situation escalates. I cannot help but remember another game played by the same opponents in the 28th USSR Championship (Moscow 1961), which followed a similar scenario in the middlegame. Cherepkov energetically stormed the black king's fortress, while Petrosian's queen dispassionately eliminated the pawns on the opposite flank. As far as I remember, in that game White had nothing resembling a mate.

25.Bd5 Qe7 26.g4 Nh6 27.Qe4



A reckless move. The c1-rook is unprotected, which creates the conditions for tactics. White should have first exchanged on e6 or just protected the g4-pawn with the move 27.h3.

27...Nxg4!

This seemingly unpretentious variation with a double attack motif is complicated by a number of various transpositions and in-between moves. I have offered the chance to numerous chess players, including grandmasters, to solve this position, and most often heard the following response: “The knight capture on g4 is an inaccuracy and the correct 27...Bxg4 gives Black a slight advantage in the variation 28.Nxg4 Rxf2 29.Kxf2 (weaker is 29.Nxf2 Rf8 threatening 30...Qg5+ and 30...Qc5) 29...Qh4+ 30.Kg1 Nxg4.”

However, the opposite is true. The tempting move 27...Bxg4 is a well-camouflaged red herring: 28.Qe3! Kg7 (if 28...Nf5, then 29.Qc3) 29.Rcf1, and Black’s position is dubious, for example, 29...Bf5 30.Qg5 Qc5 (30...Qxe5? 31.Nd7!) 31.Kh1!, etc. Petrosian’s move is the strongest!

28.Nxg4 Rxf2 29.Bxe6?

Cherepkov’s sloppiness on the 27th move caused psychological shock, and White offers no resistance. Of course, capturing the rook with the knight is bad, but 29.Kxf2 is possible. It would lead to the main variation of Petrosian’s combination: 29...Qh4+ 30.Ke3 Bxg4 31.Rg1 Rf8! with a good attacking position and a secured draw.

29...Rff8 30.Bd5 Qg5 31.Rf1 h5 32.Rxf8+

More stubborn is 32.Bf7 Qxg4+ 33.Qxg4 hxg4 34.e6. With the rooks on the board White still had some hope.

32...Rxf8 33.e6 Qxg4+ 34.Qxg4 hxg4 35.Bxb7 Kg7

Brute force has triumphed.

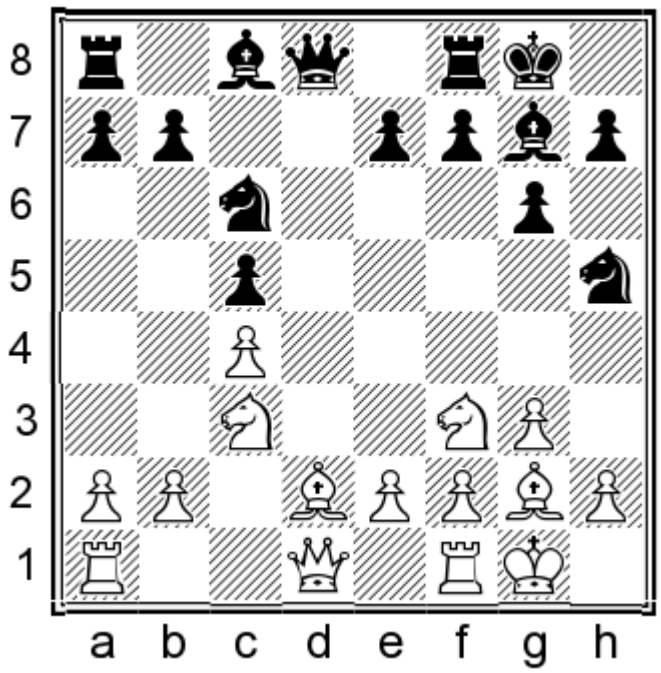
36.c5 Kf6 37.c6 Kxe6 White resigned.

(139) C5.5 **Petrosian – Smejkal**
Biel 1976

1.c4 c5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nc3 (2)

(The numbers in parentheses indicate how many minutes were spent on the given move.)

3...Nc6 (2) 4.g3 g6 (10) 5.Bg2 (1) 5...Bg7 (1) 6.0-0 (1) 6...0-0 (5) 7.d4 (1) 7...d6 8.dxc5 (5) 8...dxc5 9.Bf4 (1) 9...Nh5 (8) 10.Bd2 (13)



As shown earlier, White has better chances to maintain his advantage in this drawish variation if the bishop retreats to e3. Perhaps Petrosian considered 10.Bg5? Compared to the usual position, after 10...h6 11.Be3 Nd4 12.Qd2 White is up a tempo. But Black, of course, does not have to drive the bishop back right away.

10...Be6 (44)

An excellent maneuver, but with the meager ration of 3¾ minutes per move Black spent way too much time to find this move. At this rate time trouble is not far away. However, Jan Smejkal is used to it: if necessary, he can play fast. Nowadays, chess players are able to play fast and like it, but rigid tournament regulations significantly changed the players' attitude towards the chess clock. I would say it became much more zealous, even anxious.

11.b3 (3) 11...Qc8 (2) 12.Qc1 (2) 12...Bh3 (9) 13.Bh6 (6)

At this point White probably tried to resist a strong temptation to complicate the position.

13...Bxg2 (2) 14.Kxg2 Qe6 (9)

In the game Geller-Ivkov (Tbilisi 1973) after 14...Rd8 15.Bxg7 Kxg7 16.Qe3 b6 17.Rad1 Qb7 18.Kg1 Nf6 19.Qg5, the opponents agreed to a draw.

15.Bxg7 (5) 15...Kxg7 16.Rd1 (21)

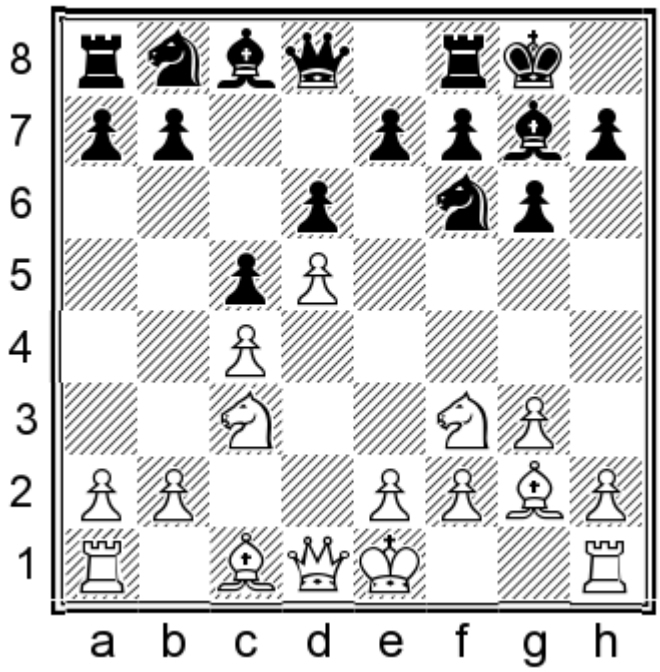
All players can be described as either "fast" or "slow." It is very important for both the former and the latter to learn how to use their time. Here is an excerpt from Botvinnik's book *The Eleventh All- Union Chess Championship*: "I tried to get rid of my time troubles as much as possible. But, generally speaking, it is impossible to get rid of them completely. Moreover, it would be even counterproductive. During the game there are times when it is necessary to carefully study the position, spend an extra 20-30 minutes, and then play faster until time control. This is 'normal' time pressure, and there is no need to give it up."

As study of the game time shows, Petrosian is exactly on schedule, even taking into account that he spent 21 minutes on the last move. It is very, very difficult to learn this art of time management!

16...Rad8 (7) 17.Rd5 (2) 17...b6 18.Qb2 (13) 18...Nf6 (9) 19.Rad1 (1) 19...Kg8 (2) 20.Qc1 (1) 20...Kg7 (10) 21.e4 (29) 21...Qc8 (5) 22.Rxd8 (3) 22...Rxd8 23.e5 (1) 23...Ne8 (1) 24.Rxd8 (4)

Now the position is equal, and at this moment White offered a draw, which was accepted.

C6



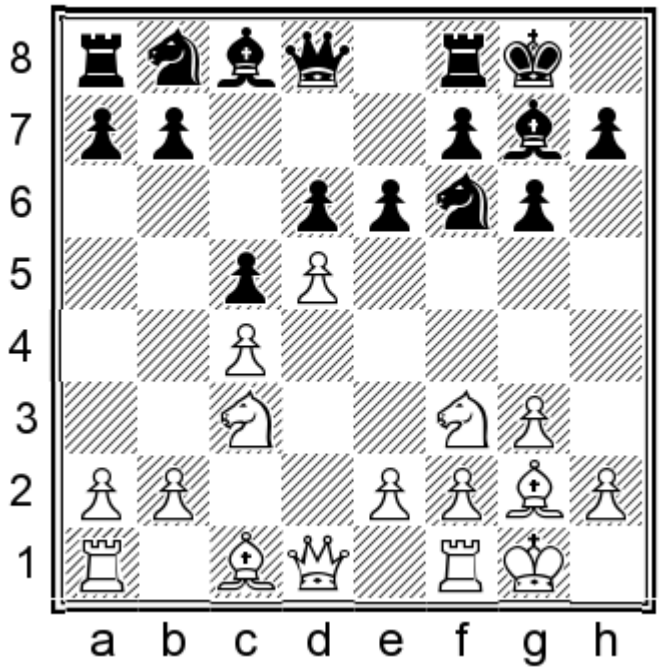
Black to move

This branch of the Yugoslav Variation is at the intersection of several Indian structures, the main feature of which is the position of the queen's knight. In most cases, the knight takes another route: ...Na6-c7 (see games 141, 142, 143, 145). If desired, Black goes into Benoni structures, after first pushing the e-pawn either one square (game 140) or two (game 144).

(140) C6.1 **Petrosian – Chistiakov**
Moscow Championship
Moscow 1950

The incredible ease with which Petrosian outplayed this very experienced master in a harmless variation suggests that even in his youth he had a deep understanding of King's Indian structures. Only by mobilizing all his skill and exploiting time pressure did Chistiakov manage to escape defeat.

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.c4 Bg7 4.g3 0-0 5.Bg2 c5 6.d5 d6 7.0-0 e6 8.Nc3



Petrosian avoids the double-edged continuation 8.dxe6 Bxe6 9.Ng5 and goes into one of the calm variations of the Benoni.

8...exd5 9.cxd5 Re8

The system with g2-g3 against the Indian Defense was all the rage in 1950s.

The position on the board has been known since the famous New York 1927 tournament. The official history of this variation began with the game Capablanca-Marshall. Capablanca's move 10.Nd2, with the idea of an early knight transfer to c4, is still relevant and is considered the most accurate.

Further into the game, Petrosian tries to introduce new touches into the interpretation of the opening. Rather than abandon the idea outright, he hopes to use it at a more opportune moment, and in the meantime makes useful, generally solid moves.

10.a4

Given that White cannot do without this move, this is a very sensible idea. Along the way, he sets a positional trap. The seemingly attractive knight transfer to b4 actually creates trouble for Black, for example: 10...Na6 11.Nd2 Nb4 12.Nc4 with the threat of Bf4, or 11...Nd7 12.Nb5 Ne5 13.Ne4, and the d6-pawn cannot be saved (13...Bf8 14.Bg5!). The undoubted advantage of the text continuation is determined by the fact that it is less rigid than the usual 10.Nd2, i.e., it gives White the opportunity to vary his plans.

Oddly, the move that offers so many good ideas never made it into opening manuals.

10...Nbd7

A positional master who understands maneuvering would likely have preferred the flexible 10...b6. Mikhail Tal would probably not have been able to restrain himself from the sharp 10...Ne4, keeping in mind that in the case of 11.Nxe4 Rxe4 12.Nd2 he could counter it with his favorite 12...Rb4! , with active counterplay.

The experienced Chistiakov, without giving it a second thought, prefers the standard structures.

11.a5

A comment in the spirit of that time: "Moving rook pawns is an important trump card in the play of Soviet masters!" But seriously speaking, the text move is the consistent continuation of White's creative plan.

11...a6 12.Bf4

A slight improvement on the well-known variation: the bishop, which usually languishes on c1 for a long time, moves to the f4-square. This opportunity is, in fact, the essence of Petrosian's innovation, whereas the standard 12.Nd2 leads to a simple move transposition.

12...Qc7 13.Nd2

Curiously, all of this, except for White's last move, was repeated in the game Nikolic-Marin (Thessaloniki 1988) many years later. Nikolic played 13.Na4 and then, after refusing to transfer the knight to c4, achieved nothing.

The move 13.Nd2 is better. It turns out that it is not easy to stop the knight from going to c4. In any case, the standard methods to deal with this threat do not work here. For example: 13...b5 14.axb6 Nxb6 15.Nde4! Nxe4 16.Nxe4 and 16...Nc4 is followed by the double attack 17.Qa4, and after 16...Rd8 17.b4!, etc. Black's position is not enviable. In case of 13...Ne5 it is important to take into account the simple exchange on e5.

Thus, Black only has the game reply.

13...Nh5 14.Bg5

To lure the black pawn to h6. These little things should not be neglected, but at the same time they should not be overestimated.

14...Ne5

Now quite possible was 14...b5, getting rid of the unpleasant a5-pawn. But, apparently, regarding his opponent's play as "reinventing of the wheel," Chistiakov just wanted to catch the impudent bishop.

15.Nde4!

Characteristic of Petrosian. He is not afraid of "ghosts," and hides his insidious plan under the guise of forced play.

15...f5

Deserving attention is 15...h6, after which it would be difficult for White to decide to exchange the bishop.

16.Nd2 Bd7 17.Qb3 h6

In the heat of battle, Black did not sense the danger and took the bait. Meanwhile, it was still not too late to go back to the idea of opening the queenside: 17...Rab8 and ...b5!.

18.Bf4!

This great move is a credit to the young master's insight.

18...Nxf4 19.gxf4 Nf7

Black finally achieved what he was trying to accomplish: the proverbial two bishops. However, in this case the price that he paid, having lost the strategic battle on the queenside, is too high. The resulting white doubled pawns, compact and close to the center, are a strength rather than a weakness.

20.e3 Kh7 21.Nc4 Re7

The lack of a sense of danger betrays Chistiakov again; otherwise, now or on the previous move he would have played 21...g5, creating at least some counterplay.

22.Bh3!

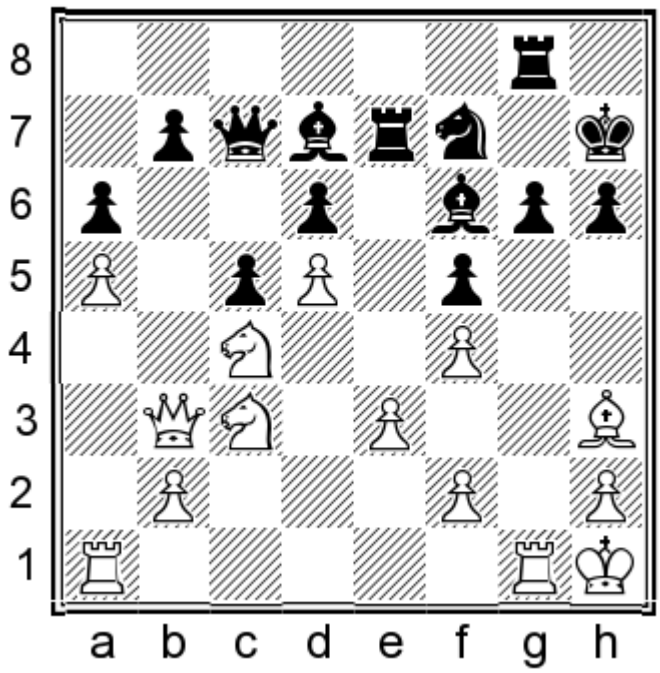
An inconspicuous but lethal move. The fact is that neither now nor in the foreseeable future can Black even think about advancing the g-pawn because of the inevitable (after Qc2) disaster on the f5-square. In other words, Black cannot open the lines on the kingside, which means that this will be a one-sided game.

By inertia, Black makes a couple of preparatory moves, but, as they say, “that ship has sailed.”

22...Rg8 23.Kh1

Breaking the pin in the variation 23...g5 24.Qc2 g4 25.Bxg4, etc.

23...Bf6 24.Rg1



The outlines of White’s plan now become apparent. Gradually White will start advancing the central pawns, which, in combination with the pressure along the g-file, could result in a direct attack, as well as a further positional squeeze.

It is not easy to give Black good advice. This position illustrates Siegbert Tarrasch’s well-known principle: “If one piece is bad, the whole position is bad.” Here such a piece is the “hobbled” knight on f7. If it could get to d7 or at least to c8, maybe Black could trade the bishops for knights and try to advance ...b6. But, alas, no matter how hard it jumps, the knight cannot get there. Therefore, Black has no active plan, and without one, all King’s Indian structures lose their purpose because they are completely unsuited to passive defense.

This raises the question: was it not better for Black’s knight to retreat to g4 rather than f7 on the 19th move? I suppose not. Then he would have faced other problems: above all the d6-pawn would lose a reliable defender.

24...Bh4

The start of an unparalleled defense. If anything, Alexander Chistiakov knew how to defend. He was an old-school master, a real fighter who spared neither himself nor his opponents at the board and always fought to the end. His rare tenacity and creativity along with fantastic luck sometimes helped him work wonders and earn points when many would have lost heart and resigned to defeat a long time ago.

Jumping ahead, let me say that in this game, too, his efforts were not in vain, and luck was again on his side.

25.Qc2

Not succumbing to the opponent's tricks: the hasty 25.Rg2 would turn the h3-bishop into a "big pawn."

25...h5

A heroic attempt to activate the ill-fated knight. In anticipation of the maneuver ...Nh6-g4 White's bishop also changes its position.

26.Bf1 Nh6 27.Bd3 Ng4 28.Rg2 Be8 29.Rag1

A natural move that required precise calculation, since Black now has the active 29...Bb5. For this, Petrosian had prepared 30.h3! after which both 30...Bxc4 31.hxg4 Bxd3 32.Qxd3 fxg4 33.Rh2 Bf6 34.Rxh5+ and 30...Nf6 31.Nxb5 axb5 32.Nd2 (with the threats of 33.Nf3 and 33.Bxf5) led to an immediate win for White.

29...Reg7

Convinced that without pressure White can easily find the right moves, Chistiakov invites his opponent to advance his pawns and play an open position. This is the correct decision, especially considering that Petrosian was about to get into time trouble.

30.f3 Nh6 31.e4 fxe4 32.fxe4

Still, it looks like Black got carried away and will be swept off the board at any moment. However, study-like ideas, time pressure, and the human factor come into play.

32...Bb5 33.e5 Bxc4 34.Bxc4 Qf7 35.Qe4

A typical solid time trouble move. Better is 35.Qd2, not only protecting the f4-pawn, but also watching over the a5-pawn, and, most importantly, leaving the central square free for the knight's maneuvering, which would be the last missing link in the winning setup.

35...Nf5 36.Bd3 Kh6 37.Ne2

The second mistake, relinquishing the victory. I do not see how Black could save the game after 37.Na4! with the idea of Nb6-c4 (the variation 37...Bd8 38.Nb6 Bxb6 39.axb6, of course, would also satisfy White). But who would play 37.Na4 in time trouble?

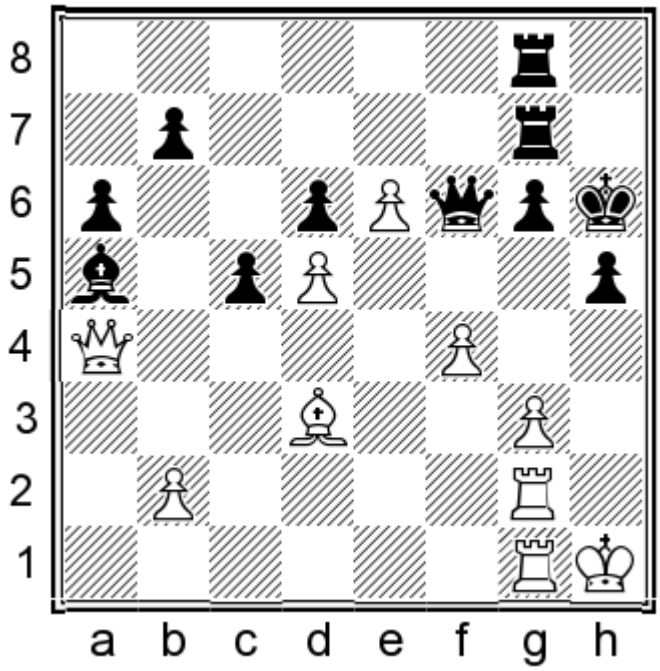
37...Bd8

Now White essentially has to outplay his opponent again. However, despite the obvious costs, he still has another large trump card, the oppositecolor bishops, which, as you know, are to the advantage of the attacking side. Petrosian decides to use this chance, even at the cost of a pawn.

38.Ng3 Bxa5 39.e6 Qf6 40.Qa4 Nxg3+

Forced. Otherwise White himself takes the knight with the bishop and regains the pawn via Qa4-c2, and Ng3xf5, creating connected passed pawns.

41.hxg3



White probably had high hopes for this position, expecting to start a dangerous attack with the move g3-g4 after the bishop retreat.

In particular it might look something like this: 41...Bd8 42.g4! and then:

(1) 42...Qd4 43.g5+ Kh7 44.Qxd4 cxd4 45.Rh2 Kh8 (because of the threat Rxh5) 46.Bxg6! Rxg6 47.Rxh5+ Kg7 48.f5 with a win;

(2) 42...g5 43.Rh2 h4 44.Qe4!, and after 44...gxf4, the check 45.g5+ decides the game, while against other replies, the sacrifice on h4 is decisive.

Certainly very impressive. But it turns out Black does not have to retreat with the bishop!

41...c4!

An unexpected pawn move, confirming the old truth that in an opposite-color bishop position, a positional advantage is more important than a material one.

42.Qxc4

After 42.Qxa5 cxd3 or 42.Bxc4 Bb6 Black has good counterplay based on ...g5.

42...Rc7 43.Qe4 Kg7

The position has suddenly changed: Black's bishop and rooks "come to life," and his king quickly leaves the danger zone.

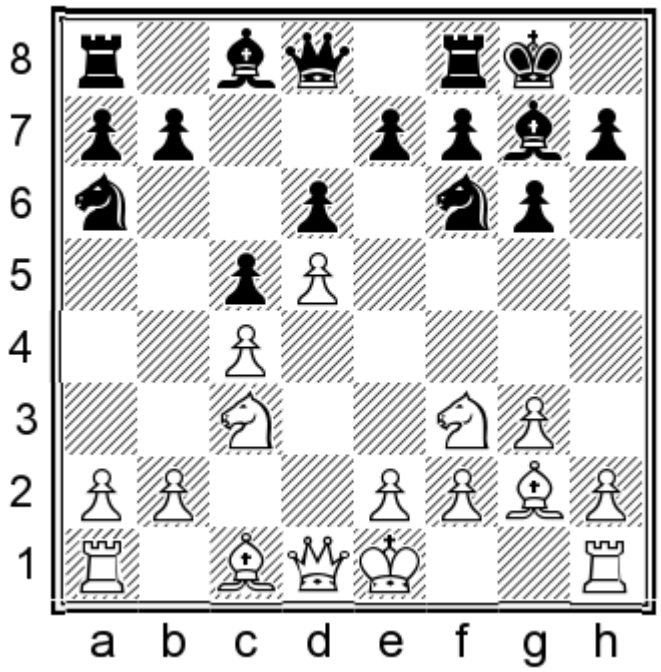
There is no reason for White to play 44.g4, because after 44...hxg4 45.Rxg4 Kf8 it is not clear who is attacking whom, for example, 46.Rxg6? Rh7+ 47.Kg2 Rxg6+ and 48...Rg7. Therefore, Petrosian transfers his rooks to the other flank.

44.Re2 Kf8 45.Rgg2 Bb6 46.Rc2 Bc5 47.Rc1 a5 48.Rgc2 b6

White still has a small advantage, but it is hardly possible to convert it and now it is also unsafe. Petrosian, as usual, did not tempt fate and offered a draw. Draw.

(141) C6.2 **Petrosian – Filip**
Zagreb 1965

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.d5 Bg7 4.Nc3 0-0 5.g3 d6 6.Bg2 c5 7.Nf3 Na6



8.0-0 Nc7 9.a4

It is better to make this move in advance. For example: 9.Bf4 b5! 10.cxb5 Rb8 11.a4 a6 12.bxa6 Rxb2 with approximate equality (Averbakh- Borisenko, USSR 1955).

9...Rb8 10.Bf4

The most common move, hampering the advance of the e7-pawn. Other continuations are 10.h3 (game 142) and 10.Ne1 (game 143).

10...b6

A sensible approach. Black avoids the pawn weaknesses that could form as the result of 10...a6 11.a5 b5 12.axb6, etc. Petrosian liked the move 10...b6 so much that after this game, he became an ardent fan of this variation for Black!

11.b3 a6 12.Qc1 Bg4

Not seeing real advantages after 12...b5 13.axb5 axb5 14.Bh6, Black develops the bishop in order to play ...e6 if the opportunity presents itself, and if dxe6, then ...Nxe6 and ...Bxf3, taking control of the d4-square with the knight.

13.Nd2

For unknown reasons, White stops halfway. He should have carried out his plan, 13.Bh6!, without giving it a second thought.

13...e5 14.dxe6 Nxe6 15.Be3 Nd4 16.Qd1 Qd7 17.Nf3 Nxf3+ 18.Bxf3 Bxf3 19.exf3 Rfd8?!

With energetic play, Filip achieved a clear advantage but made a mistake in all the excitement. The correct move order was as follows: 19...d5! 20.cxd5 and only now 20...Rfd8.

20.Bg5 Qf5

Here Filip found a “hole” in his preliminary calculations: 20...h6 21.Bxf6 Bxf6 would be followed by 22.Nd5! Bxa1 23.Qxa1, and White’s threats along the long diagonal combined with the move Re1 are very dangerous.

21.Bxf6 Qxf6 22.Rc1 Qd4 23.Nd5 Qxd1 24.Rfxd1 Rb7 25.b4

Taking away his opponent’s last hope for an advantage, which was based on the undermining move ...b5.

25...cxb4 26.Nxb4 Bf8 Draw.

(142) C6.3 **Najdorf – Petrosian**
Second Piatigorsky Cup
Santa Monica 1966

The most interesting thing about this game (at least to me) is that it was annotated by both grandmasters, who were antipodes not only in chess but also as people.

Miguel Najdorf’s notes are in italics.

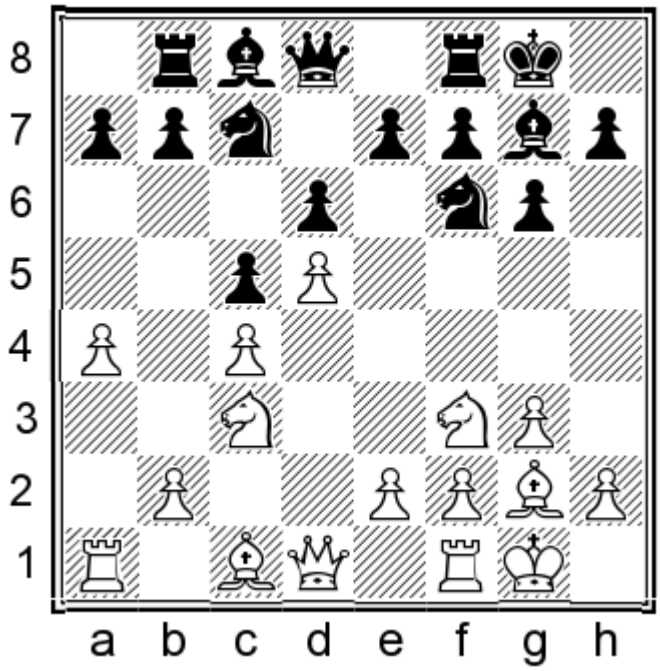
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 c5 4.d5 d6 5.Nc3 Bg7 6.Bg2 0-0 7.Nf3

We finally enter a normal position of the Yugoslav variation of the King’s Indian. I prefer the development of my knight at f3 rather than h3 (Benko) because I have more flexibility for maneuvers such as Ne1-c2 or d3, as well as Nd2.

7...Na6 8.0-0 Nc7 9.a4

Necessary because practice has shown the strength of the break with ...b5 , even with the sacrifice of a pawn.

9...Rb8



10.h3

Premature. Better is Ne1-c2, followed by Rb1, to try to effect b2-b4. My plan is wrong because the break in the center without preparation favors Black.

10...b6

“This move looks like a loss of time, but if 10...a6, 11.a5 follows. After the Petrosian-Filip game, played at the international tournament in Zagreb, 1965, in which the Czech grandmaster had excellent play, I was much taken with the text move.”

11.e4 a6 12.e5

With the psychological pressure of an imminent break on the queenside by Black, I take the wrong way. There was still time to play 12.Nd2 to take care of the queen’s wing without compromising the situation in the center.

12...Nd7 13.exd6 exd6 14.Bg5

“After the normal move 14...Nf6, the position of the bishop on g5 holds no promise of advantage for White. After long consideration I decided on a plan leading to a more complicated struggle.”

14...f6

“The only defect of this move visible to the naked eye is the weakening of the e6 square – it is important that White’s minor pieces cannot reach that point.”

15.Bf4 Ne8

This is a typical position for the world champion to show his ability as a strategist. Though he was apparently obliged to move ...f6 , which might appear disagreeable, he derives an advantage from it by gaining a strong position on e5.

“This is a necessary link in Black’s plan. He is preparing to move a knight to a superior position on f7. The transitional e5-square is “mined” and it is possible to go to it only if the necessary precautions are taken. After 15...Ne5, the exchange by 16.Nxe5 dxe5 did not appeal to me (possible was 16...fxe5, leaving the e4-square to my opponent). The continuation after 16...dxe5 might be 17.Be3 a5 18.f4, and White dictates the movement of events.”

16.h4

... to avoid or slow down Black’s expansion by ...g5 I weaken my own king side. The error is actually a natural result of the wrong plan selected. Black has a positive advantage.

16...Ne5 17.Nd2 Nf7 18.Re1

“The present game is extremely instructive in that White, while not making one visible error and going along simply with good moves, soon found himself in a situation without prospects.”

18...g5 19.hxg5 fxg5 20.Be3 Ne5 21.Nce4 h6 22.Ra3 Ng4

“As a rule in the King’s Indian if Black succeeds in ‘exchanging’ the white dark-square bishop for his knight it is a gain for him. This game is no exception.”

23.Qc1 Rb7

Black continues to increase his pressure and does not make decisions until all his forces are in action. Unfortunately, White can only wait to see what happens.

24.Bf3 Rbf7

“Black does not seem completely consistent in his plans; he gives the opponent the option of exchanging the light-square bishop for the knight. In spite of everything, White has a fairly good position. After all, safe control of e4 means something.”

25.Bxg4 Bxg4

"The pair of bishops increases Black's advantage."

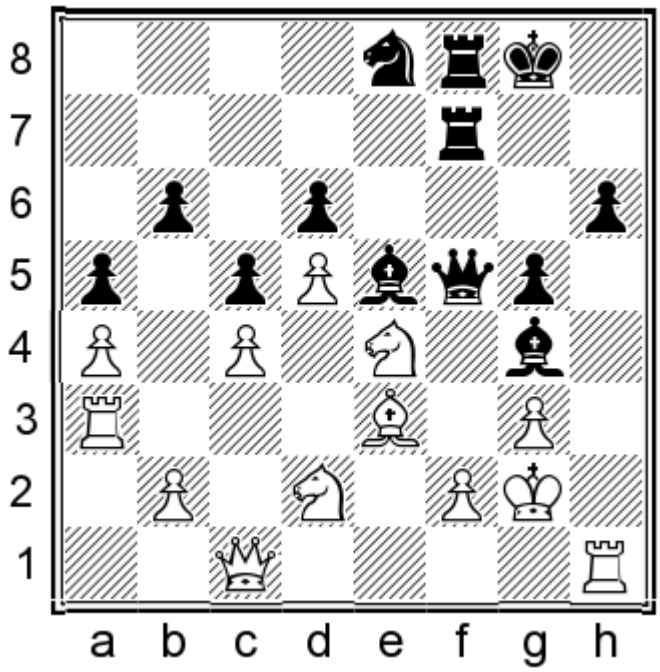
26.Qb1 a5

"Using fine judgment Black avoids the opening of a new front on the queen's wing. His firm advantage on the other side should be sufficient to break through."

27.Qc1 Be5

"After this White, by curious play, consolidates his position and hardly anything remains of Black's initiative. 27...Nf6 28.Nxf6+ Qxf6 29.Rb3 Qg6 30.Rxb6 Qh5 promised more as the strongest attack. True, White does not have to agree to this line and can play 30.Kg2 instead of capturing the pawn."

28.Kg2 Qd7 29.Rh1 Qf5



An obvious move, which turns out to be an error. The complexity of the situation concealed from the Soviet master the liberating blow that I had prepared.

"Everything seems to be correct. 30.Rxh6 loses a piece because of 30...Bf3+. One can think calmly of continuing with 29...Nf6, or moving the knight from e8 to f5 or h5 via g7."

30.Bxg5!

"That's all there is to it. The f3-square, which played such an important role in my calculations, turns out to be under the safe control of my opponent."

30...hxg5 31.f3 Nf6 32.fxg4 Qxg4 33.Qd1 Qxd1 34.Rxd1 Nxe4

Black has a slight initiative but he cannot easily penetrate into my field. But it is natural that Black, having had so favorable a game, would still make every effort to try to win.

35.Nxe4 g4 36.Rd2 Bd4

"Black's position is in no way superior, but there are still many possibilities, and the struggle continues in time pressure."

37.Ra1 Re7 38.Nf2

"The preoccupation for my surrounded king induced me to search for his liberation. Nevertheless, better was 38.Nxd6, followed by 39.Nb5, with adequate defense."

38...Re3 39.Nxg4 Rb3 40.Nh2 Rb4

White must activate his game to balance Black's action on the queenside. The error on the 38th move again compromised my position, requiring exact play.

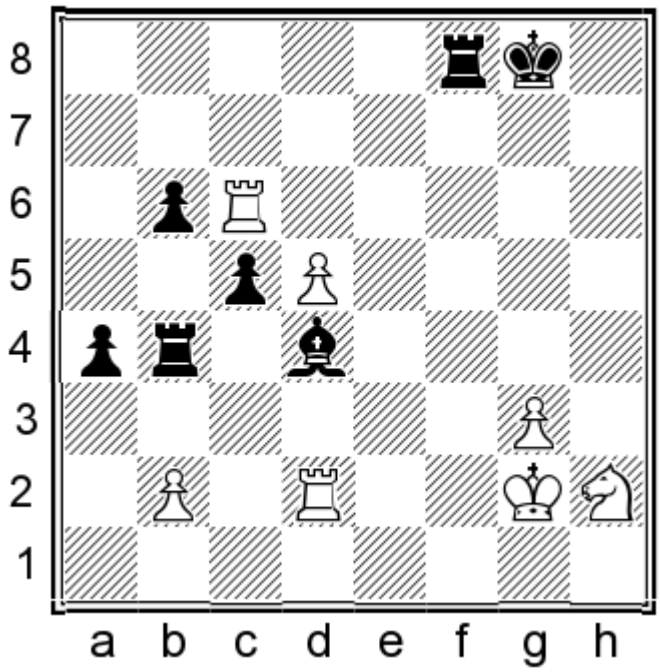
41.Re1

"I recorded my move. Of the three possible pawn captures, the choice fell to the c-pawn."

41...Rxc4 42.Re6 Rxa4

"When the game was resumed after several hours, the opponents returned with at least some time of additional analysis. It showed me that the game must end in a draw. I had counted primarily on 42.Re4 Rxa4, and the black king cannot cross to the queenside."

43.Rxd6 Rb4 44.Rc6 a4



"After 44...Bxb2 45.d6 Rd8 Black would have every chance to win."

45.d6

Very tempting in this situation was to continue with 45.Nf3 Rxb2 46.Rxb2 Bxb2 47.Rxb6 a3 48.Ra6 c4 49.Ne1 with a good defense. But after 45...Bxb2 the variations are favorable to Black, as for example,46.d6 a3 47.d7 Rd8 48.Ng5 Bc3 49.Rc8 Bf6 50.Ne6 Rb2 51.Rxb2 axb2 52.Rxd8+ Bxd8 53.Nxd8 b1=Q 54.Ne6 Qc2+ and wins.

45...Kf7 46.Nf3 Ke6 47.Nxd4+ cxd4 48.d7+

"The d-pawn cannot be saved and he therefore gives it up at the highest possible price for Black, leaving the king adrift on the seventh rank."

48...Kxd7

By the method selected White activated his pieces at the price of a pawn, nevertheless it is an ending difficult to play in which Black has many practical chances.

49.Rh6 Rf5 50.g4

"This pawn will try to distract Black's forces and neutralize his advantage."

50...Rd5 51.Kf3 d3 52.Rf6

"Black has a good extra pawn. True, no direct path for its utilization is to be seen, but then White has no easy task in defending. The complexity of the problems facing the players can be seen in the fact that whenever the time control approaches both would experience a lack of time for careful consideration."

52...b5 53.Rf4 Rc4 54.Re4 Kc6 55.Ke3

During the period of maneuvering I have regrouped my forces, and no clear progress has been visible for Black.

55...Rc2 56.g5 Rc1

To exchange the d-pawn for the g-pawn means reconciling oneself to a draw. As we know, an endgame with an a- and b-pawn against a pawn at b2 leaves no chance for success.

57.Rg4

"A tempting move, for the rook occupies an ideal position behind the pawn, simultaneously holding the black king from the fourth rank. Yet 57.Rd4 would be better, to get rid of the d-pawn."

57...Re1+ 58.Kf2 Re8 59.g6 Kc5 60.g7 Rdd8 61.Kf1

A bit more precise is 61.Kf3, retaining the possibility of supporting the g7-pawn with the king.

61...b4 62.Kf2 Kb5 63.Kf3 a3 64.bxa3?

"The text is the path to destruction while 64.b3 preserves White's chances for a draw. In this case the possibility of checks on the g-file would play an important role, holding back Black's king.

It is not without interest to note that this game was played on Saturday and that on Sunday at 1 p.m. the final round was to begin, and this game had to be played to conclusion as soon as possible."

A mistake caused by fatigue... Correct was 64.b3, when no direct progress for Black can be seen.

64...bxa3 65.Kf2 Rg8 66.Ke3 Rd7 67.Rxd3

"If 67.Ra2, then 67...d2 68.Rxd2 Rxd2 69.Kxd2 a2 70.Rg1 Rxg7 71.Ra1 Rg2+ 72.Kc3 Ka4 could follow." Black wins.

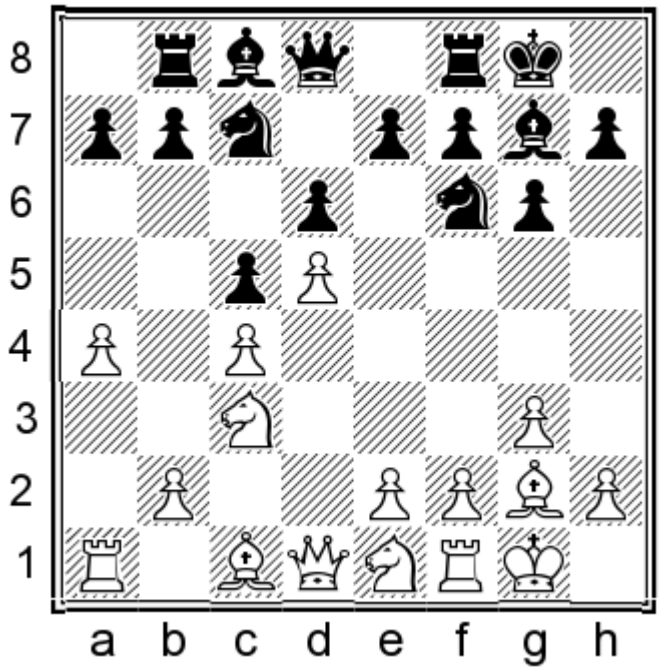
67...Rxd3+ 68.Kxd3 a2 69.Rg1 Rxg7 70.Ra1 Rg2 71.Kc3 Ka4

"Black's king managed to bar the path of his opponent in time."

72.Rh1 Ka3 73.Rf1 Rg8 74.Rh1 Rc8+ White resigned.

(143) C6.4 **Petrosian – Gligorić**
Moscow 1967

1.c4 g6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.g3 c5 5.d5 d6 6.Bg2 0-0 7.Nf3 Na6 8.0-0 Nc7 9.a4 Rb8 10.Ne1



In preparation for this game, Petrosian probably noticed that, over the course of several years, Gligorić lost to Korchnoi regularly in this variation. The clever knight maneuver appeared in one of their games in the match USSR-Yugoslavia (Rijeka 1963). One of its main ideas is to hinder ...e6, which is demonstrated by the further development of the game: 10...e6 11.dxe6 Bxe6 12.Bf4! Nfe8 13.Qb3 Bd7 14.Nd3 Ne6 15.Bd2 Nf6 16.Nf4 Nd4 17.Qd1 Bc6 18.Nfd5, and the knight worked very hard to secure White's advantage.

Black's next moves show that Gligorić thoroughly worked through these games and learned from his past mistakes.

10...b6 11.Rb1

White moves the rook away from the long diagonal in order to counter the pawn advance ...b5 by moving the b-pawn one or two squares. 11.Nc2 a6 12.Na3 does not do any good because of 12...Bd7 13.Bd2 b5! (Averbakh-Vasiukov, USSR, 1978).

11...a6 12.Nc2

The knight is rushing to defend the queenside, but maybe it should have waited. White would have much fewer problems if he could play b2-b4. But at what point? Petrosian probably thought that the immediate 12.b4 was dangerous because of 12...Nd7 13.Bd2 cxb4 14.Rxb4 Ne5 with the very unpleasant threat of ...a5. However, as grandmaster Sergey Dolmatov later pointed out, the hidden tactical resource 15.Nd3! rescues White, for example 15...a5 16.Nxe5 axb4 17.Nc6 with unclear play. Also deserving attention is 12.b3 b5 13.Qd3.

12...b5 13.axb5 axb5 14.Ne3

This attempt to move the knight to c4 is easily refuted. But did White have anything better? To answer this question we have to analyze the position a little deeper.

First, it is clear that Black has the initiative and that the root of evil for White is the c4-pawn. Defending it with the move b2-b3 as well exchanging it for the b5-pawn create long-term weaknesses that are convenient targets for attack. For this reason, the natural continuations do not work, including 14.b3 e6 or 14.cxb5 Nxb5 15.Nxb5 Rxb5 16.Na3 Rb8 as well as the text move. Second, let us note that White did not make any serious, fundamental positional mistakes, thus he still had a way out of the situation. Black's main trump cards are his solid pawn structure and his clear plan. White can destroy this idyll at the cost of a pawn: 14.b4! bxc4 15.bxc5 Rxb1 16.Nxb1

dxc5 17.e4 with counterplay.

14...Ng4! 15.Nxg4 Bxg4 16.Qd3 bxc4 17.Qxc4 Rb4 18.Qd3 Qd7

It does not make sense for Black to force the play, for example, 18...Bxc3 19.Qxc3 Nb5 (19...Bxe2? 20.Bh6) 20.Qd3, and there are no concrete benefits. Feeling that his opponent got thoroughly stuck, the Yugoslav grandmaster slowly increases the pressure.

19.Ra1 Rfb8 20.Ra7 Qd8 21.h3

White's position is strategically losing. He can only try to find a lucky chance. That is what Petrosian is doing by moving his rook to the seventh rank.

21...Bd7 22.Ra2 Nb5

Move after move Black paves the way for his pieces to advance into the enemy camp.

23.Re1 Rb3 24.Bd2 Nd4 25.e3 Bf5 26.e4

Y et another forced concession, since neither 26.Be4? Nf3+ nor 26.Qf1 Nc2, threatening the e1-rook and ...Nb4 work.

26...Bd7 27.Bc1 Bb5 28.Qd1 Bc4 29.Ra1

After 29.Ra4, decisive is the "small" combination: 29...Rxc3! 30.bxc3 Bb3 31.Qd2 Bxa4 32.cxd4 Bxd4.

29...R3b4 30.Ra3 Bb3 31.Qd2 Qb6

Gligorić purposefully carries out his plan of attack on the queenside, ignoring the possibility of winning an exchange in the variation 31...Nc2 32.Rxb3 Nxe1 33.Rxb4 cxb4.

32.Bh1 Rc4

Quickly decisive, while the greedy 32...Nc2? could lose the advantage after 33.Rxb3 Nxe1 34.Rxb4 cxb4 35.Ne2, etc.

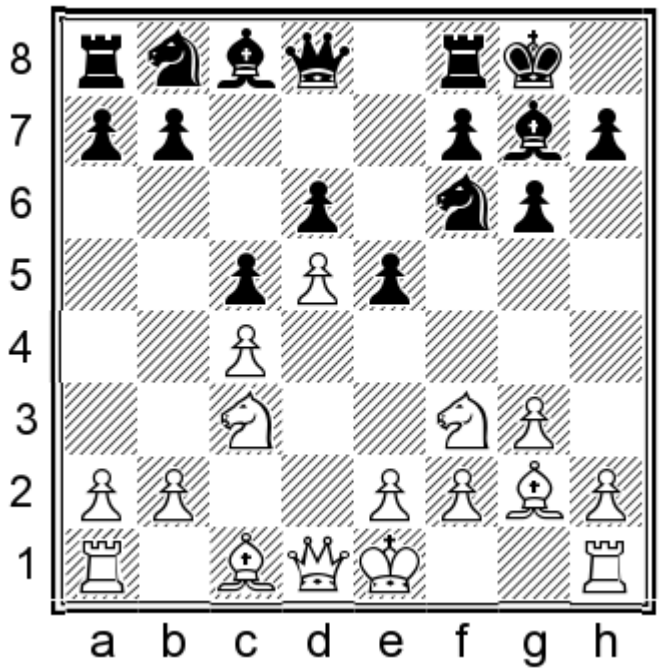
33.e5 dxe5 34.d6 Qxd6 35.Ra7 Nc2 36.Nd5 Rd4 37.Nxe7+ Kh8 38.Qa5 Nxe1 White resigned.

(144) C6.5 **Petrosian – Hort**
Wijk aan Zee 1971

1.c4 g6 2.d4 Nf6 3.d5 Bg7

We already saw this move order in game 141. White avoids the Grünfeld Defense. Just like Filip in the aforementioned game, grandmaster Hort does not want any opening disputes and allows the pieces to develop naturally. Black could capitalize on White's unusual third move by playing ...c6 now or on the next move.

4.Nc3 d6 5.g3 e5 6.Bg2 0-0 7.Nf3 c5



The opponents reached this well-known position in an original way. This position is often reached by a different move order: 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Nf3 0-0 5.g3 d6 6.Bg2 c5 7.d5 e5.

8.0-0 Nbd7

The alternative plan is 8...Na6, seeking activity on the queenside. Theory also considers 8...Ne8, but the advance ...f5 does not look very solid when the pieces are undeveloped, for example: 9.e4 f5 10.exf5 gxf5 11.Ng5 Nc7 12.f4! e4 13.g4 h6 14.Nh3 Bxc3 (or 14...fxg4 15.Nf2) 15.bxc3 Nd7 16.Nf2 Nf6 17.h3 and, according to Boleslavsky, White has a stable initiative.

9.e4 h6

Black prepares operations on the kingside, so that 9...Ne8 10.Bd2 f5 11.exf5 gxf5 could not be followed by 12.Ng5!, for example: 12...Nc7 13.Nb5 Nb6 14.Nxc7 Qxc7 15.Qc2 h6 16.Ne6!?. However, the text move has a significant flaw: the weakening of the g6-pawn, which White cleverly uses later. So, better is 9...a6, keeping in mind the advance ...b5 if the opportunity presents itself and not allowing the move Nb5 in the aforementioned variation. If 10.a4, then it is possible to play 10...Ne8 and ...f5 with counterplay.

10.Bd2 Ne8

Now Black is not going to be able to advance the pawn to f5 until the end of the game. Also, not good is 10...Nh7 because of 11.Qc1. Deserving attention is 10...Kh7 with the idea of 11...Ng8 and ...f5 (indicated by Boris Zlotnik).

11.Qe2 Kh7

Imperceptibly White wove a prophylactic web. Now 11...f5 would be dangerous because of 12.Nh4 Qf6 13.exf5 gxf5 14.f4! or, probably even stronger, 14.Bh3 Nb6 15.a4 Bd7 (15...a5 16.Nb5) 16.a5 Nc8 17.f4 e4 18.Nxe4!, and Black loses material.

12.a4 b6 13.a5!

Nipping in the bud Black’s counterplay on the queenside. 13...bxa5 is followed by 14.Nd1, winning back the pawn with interest.

According to Hort, he should have locked the queenside: 12...a5. Although Black’s situation is far from great, because he had to constantly worry about the threat of Nb5, I think he was probably right.

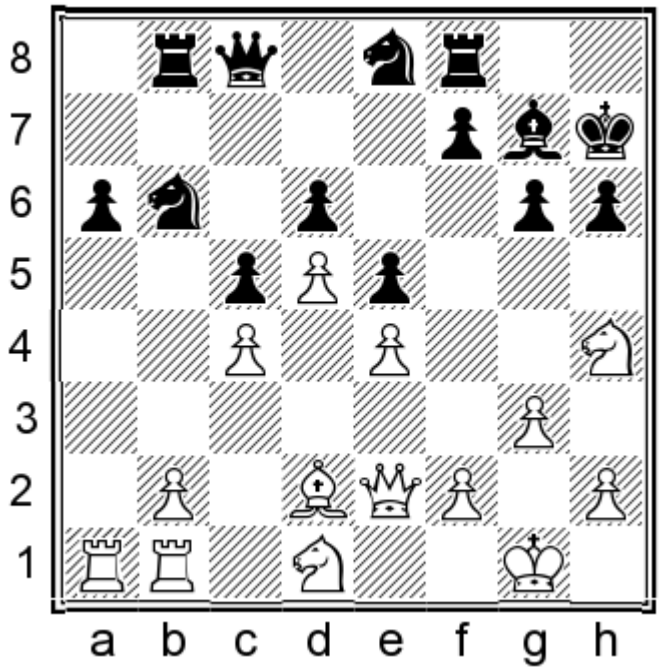
13...Rb8 14.axb6 Qxb6 15.Rfb1 a6 16.Bh3 Qb7

16...f5 would be followed by the thematic response 17.exf5 gxf5 18.Nh4!.

17.Nd1 Nb6

Now 17...f5 is no good because of the same maneuver 18.exf5 gxf5 19.Nh4, and Black has to give up the f5-pawn, for example: 19...Nb6 20.Ne3 f4 21.Qd3+ Kg8 22.Bxc8 Rxc8 23.Nef5.

18.Bxc8 Qxc8 19.Nh4



Completing the prophylaxis. To finish the picture White has to play Ne3 and b2-b4, and then nothing can save Black. Curiously, this game is conceptually similar to game 167 discussed below.

Just as Borisenko played against him in game 167, Petrosian successfully hinders Black's activity on both flanks, using a slightly altered sequence of the same methods: the preemptive counter-strike a4-a5, knight maneuvers Nh4, Nd1-e3, and the exchange of the light-square bishops. Note that the move 19...f5 still does not work, this time because of 20.exf5 gxf5 21.Ne3 with the threat of 22.Nexf5 Rxf5 23.Qd3, and 21...Kg8 will be followed by 22.Qh5!, accumulating as many attacks on the f5-pawn as possible.

But it is still hard to believe that Black's position is hopeless. In my opinion, only Black's next move is a crucial error. He should have taken aim at the active white knight without delay: 19...Bf6.

19...Nc7?! 20.Ne3 Qh3

Black does not have any good continuations, so he instigates a psychological distraction, which Petrosian simply ignores.

21.b4!

The signal for the assault. In such positions, if White is able to undermine the c5-pawn, he usually has a great advantage. This game is no exception.

21...Nd7

The only move. In case of 21...cxb4 22.Bxb4 Black's queenside quickly collapses under the onslaught of the united white pieces, for example: 22...Rfd8 23.c5 (also good is 23.Ba5) 23...dxc5 24.Bxc5, etc.

22.b5! axb5 23.Ra7 Rfc8

The attempt to block the passed pawn by transferring the c7-knight to b6 does not work, for example: 23...Na8 24.cxb5 Nab6 25.Rba1 followed by R1a6 and Ba5 (indicated by Andrey Kharitonov).

24.Ba5 Nb6

Now after 24...Na8 25.cxb5 Nab6 White could play 26.Bxb6 Rxb6 (26...Nxb6 27.Rxf7) 27.Nc4, and the white pawn rushes forward.

25.cxb5 Qd7 26.Kg2!

A prophylactic move with tactics in mind (see White's 29th move).

26...c4 27.Bxb6 Rxb6 28.Nxc4 Rxb5 29.Nb6!

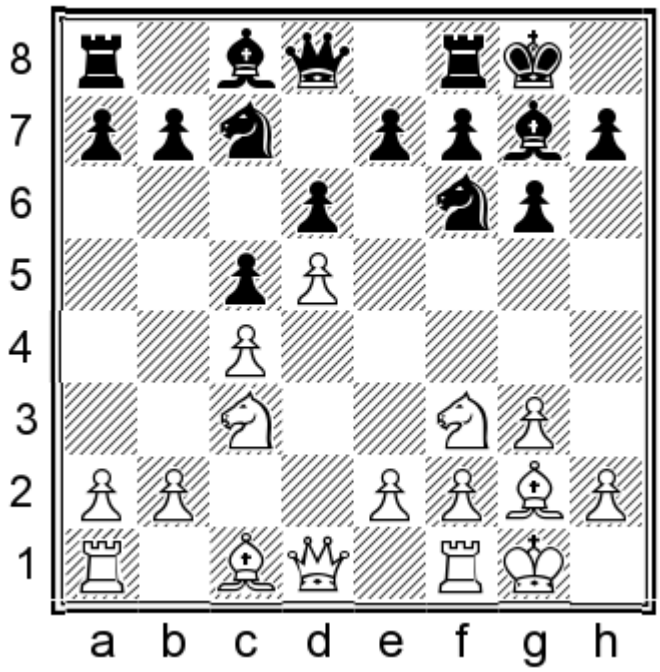
With the king on g1, this blow would have been impossible, because the b1-rook would have been taken with check.

29...Rxb6 30.Rxb6 Bf6 31.Nf3 Be7 32.Rc6 Bd8 33.Nd2 Qe8 34.Nc4 Black resigned.

A sophisticated game. One of Petrosian's best achievements in chess prophylaxis.

(145) C6.6 **Pfleger – Petrosian**
Manila 1974

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.Nf3 Bg7 4.d4 0-0 5.g3 d6 6.Bg2 c5 7.d5 Na6 8.0-0 Nc7



9.e4

A natural continuation, but still somewhat inferior in flexibility to the usual 9.a4 (games 141, 142, 143).

9...Rb8

The theoretical recipe is 9...Bg4 10.h3 Bxf3 11.Qxf3 Rb8 12.a4 a6 13.Qe2 e6 14.Be3 exd5 15.exd5 Qd7, based on

the game Korchnoi- Matanović (Belgrade 1961). It does not provide complete equality, because White keeps a pair of bishops, which can make a difference in the endgame.

One of the nuances of this variation is the fact that Black wants to play ...b5 without ...a6. This is necessary in order to attack the c4-pawn from the a6-square with the bishop.

10.a4 b6 11.Re1

The German grandmaster, following the classical principles, replies to the flank diversion with a counterattack in the center. Compared with game 140 White is able to strengthen the original structure, replacing the move h2-h3 with Re1, which is more fitting for this plan.

11...a6 12.e5 Ng4 13.exd6

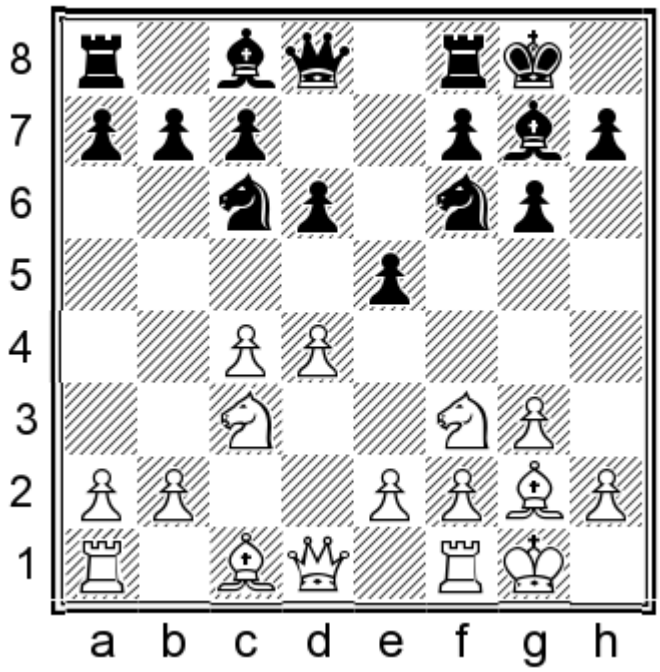
The direct attack on the d6-pawn 13.Bf4 b5 14.axb5 axb5 15.exd6 exd6 16.Ne4 is met by the excellent response 16...Rb6! (Euwe-Schmid, Zürich 1954), and White begins to have difficulty defending the c4- and b2-pawns.

13...exd6 14.Bg5 f6 15.Bd2 a5

A good move that could be useful for Black after, for example, 16.Qc1 Na6 17.h3 Ne5 18.Nxe5 fxe5 19.Ne4 Nb4, offsetting the weakness of the e4-square with the active position of the knight. After the first opening altercations, the fight gradually fizzles out and goes into the stage of quiet maneuvering. The game took place in the penultimate round, and, apparently, the opponents did not have anything against a draw.

16.h3 Nh6 17.Ne4 Nf7 18.Bc3 f5 19.Bxg7 Kxg7 20.Nc3 Qf6 21.Qd2 Bd7 22.Re2 Rbe8 23.Rae1 Rxe2 24.Rxe2 Draw.

C7

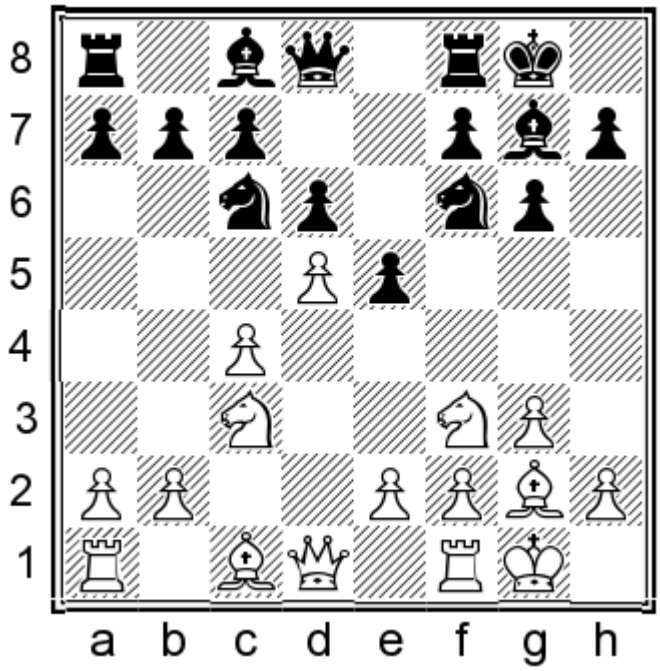


White to move

This is a popular branch of the modern variation. In his games Petrosian tested the position arising after 8.d5 Ne7 9.e4, and now 9...b6 (game 146), 9...c5 (game 149), 9...Bg4 (game 148), 9...Ne8 (game 150).

(146) C7.1 **Petrosian – Panov**
Moscow Championship
Moscow 1950

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d6 3.Nf3 g6 4.g3 Bg7 5.Bg2 0-0 6.0-0 Nc6 7.Nc3 e5 8.d5



White's main argument. It is clear that neither the pawn exchange on e5 nor the cautious 8.e3 can promise any real advantage.

8...Ne7 9.e4 b6 10.Rb1 a5

The opponents play the opening modestly. In particular, on the ninth move White had the interesting opportunity 9.c5!?. The tactics behind this move are in the variation 9...dxc5 10.Nxe5 Nfxd5 11.Nxd5 Bxe5 (11...Nxd5 12.Nxf7!) 12.Bg5 f6 (12...Bd6 13.Qd2) 13.Nxf6+ (13.Bxf6!?) 13...Bxf6 14.Qxd8 Rxd8 15.Bxf6 with an advantage. As for Black, the efficiency of the pawn "slingshot" that he built on the queenside is highly questionable in this case. Instead, he could immediately begin preparing ...f5 via 9...Nd7 or 9...Ne8 (game 150). Panov was able to carry out this advance only 10 moves later.

Vassily Panov, who co-authored the book *Comprehensive Chess Openings*, was not an expert on the opening theory yet at the time.

11.a3 Bd7 12.b4 axb4 13.axb4 Qc8 14.c5

Now it becomes obvious that White managed to get ahead of the opponent in developing the initiative.

14...bxc5 15.bxc5 Bh3 16.c6 h6 17.Rb7 Ne8 18.Nd2 Bxg2 19.Kxg2 f5

Black spent a lot of time preparing for this advance, and Petrosian decides to play to limit the black pieces as much as possible without fearing an attack.

20.f3 Qd8 21.Nc4 Nc8 22.Be3 f4 23.Bf2 fxg3 24.hxg3 h5 25.Be3 Qf6 26.Qd2 Qf7 27.Nb5 Ra4

A vigilance check.

28.Qc2 Ra8 29.Bb6!

The c7-pawn is doomed, and Black has no choice but to try to "throw the puck into the opponent's zone."

29...h4 30.Bxc7 Qf6 31.Ba5 hxg3 32.Qe2 g5 33.Bd2?!

Careless. The helpless appearance of the opponent's pieces crammed on the last two lines lulls White's vigilance. The easiest way to counter the threat of ...Ne7-g6-h4+(f4+) associated with Black's last move, is 33.Be1. 33.Qe1 is also pretty good.

33...Ne7 34.Nb6 Ra2

Just like Chekhov's gun: "If in the first act you have hung a pistol on the wall, then in the following one it should be fired." The rook that was trying to be useful on the a-file for the whole game finally invades the enemy's camp and at the cost of its life decides the fate of the battle.

35.Nc3?

How much a position can change in just two moves! Black's seemingly ephemeral attack suddenly becomes very dangerous. Chess problems are compounded by psychological problems: while Black has almost no choices and cobbles up any active move, White has to carefully readjust from playing for a win to fighting for a draw. No wonder Petrosian makes another mistake.

White's position was difficult but not hopeless. However, to prove it, he had to make a few hard-tofind only moves. He should have played 35.Nd7 Qf4! 36.Bxf4 (weaker is 36.Rd1 Ng6 37.Nxf8? Qh4! with the threat of 38...Qh2+ and 38...Nf4+) 36...Rxe2+ 37.Kxg3 Rxf4 (37...exf4+ 38.Kh3!) 38.Rb8 Kf7 39.Rxe8! (but not 39.c7? Rc2!) 39...Kxe8 40.Nxd6+ Kd8 41.Nb7+, and it is risky for Black to avoid the perpetual check.

35...Rxd2! 36.Qxd2 g4 37.Rxe7

The battle is lost. White has nothing to counter the growing threats. There was a practical chance in the variation

37.f4 exf4 38.Rxf4, and since Black cannot take on f4, he has to find the non-obvious continuation 38...Qh4! 39.Rxf8+ Bxf8 40.Kg1 Bh6 41.Qe2 Be3+!. Or maybe he should have mustered up the courage to play 37.Kxg3!? (Fritz). Strangely enough, Black has nothing forced, for example: 37...Ng6 38.Qh2! (the only move) 38...Qf4+ 39.Kg2 Qd2+ 40.Kh1 Qxc3 41.Qg3!, and White is holding on for now.

37...Qh4! 38.Kg1 Bh6

Of course, not 38...gxf3? 39.Rxf3! Rxf3 40.Rxe8+ and so on.

39.f4 Qxe7 40.Nd7 Bxf4 41.Rxf4

Agony. In case of 41.Qe2 decisive is 41...Qh4! 42.Nxf8 Be3+!, and Black checkmates.

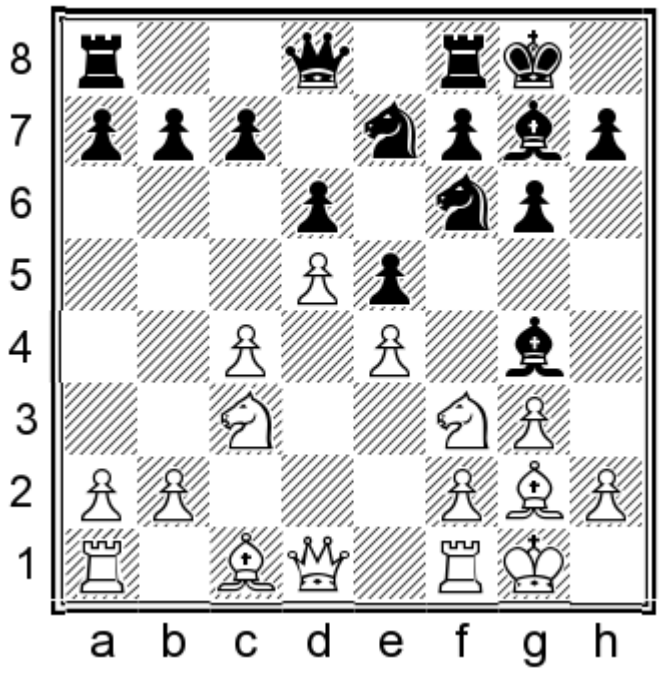
41...Rxf4 42.Qg2 Rf3 43.Ne2 Qg5 44.Nb6 Qe3+ White resigned

(147) C7.2 **Petrosian – Bannik**
USSR Championship Semifinal
Kiev 1957

1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.g3 d6 5.Bg2

In a later game against Bannik (Riga 1958), Petrosian was able to improve this variation: 5.d4!? g6 6.dxe5 Nxe5 (6...dxe5?! 7.Qxd8+ Kxd8 8.Bg5 Be7 9.0-0-0+) 7.Nxe5 dxe5 8.Qxd8+ Kxd8 9.Bg5 Be7 10.0-0-0+ with a long-term initiative for White in the endgame (see Part II).

5...g6 6.d4 Bg7 7.0-0 Bg4 8.d5 Ne7 9.e4 0-0



10.Qb3

Well played! Attacking the b7-pawn, White wins time for the maneuver Ne1-d3. It is also important that the bishop stays on g4, which is actually not a good position, as we will soon find out, because it is hindering ...f5. However, the simple 10.h3 is also pretty good, because it gives White a stable advantage after either 10...Bxf3 11.Qxf3 (and then h3-h4 and Bh3) or 10...Bd7 11.Ne1, for example, 11...Ne8 12.Nd3 f5 13.f4! or 11...Qc8!? 12.Kh2 Nh5 (hindering f2-f4) 13.Bg5!? (weaker is 13.Nd3 f5 14.exf5 Nxf5 and, chasing after material, White is asking for trouble: 15.g4?! Nh4! 16.gxh5 Nxg2 17.Kxg2 Bxh3+, etc.) 13...f6 14.Bd2 and now the move 14...f5 does not work

because of 15.exf5!.

10...b6

10...Qc8 with the idea of weakening the position of the castled king by the bishop trade looks logical, for example, 11.Ne1 Bh3 12.Nd3 (but not 12.Bxh3 Qxh3 13.Qxb7?? Ng4 14.Nf3 f5!) 12...Bxg2 13.Kxg2 with satisfactory play for Black (Illescas- Judit Polgar, Moscow 1994)

11.Ne1 a5

It is still difficult to effect ...f5, because the bishop on g4 keeps getting in the way. For example: 11...Nd7?! 12.f3 Nc5 13.Qc2 Bc8 14.b4 Nd7 15.Nd3 or 11...Ne8 12.Nd3 f5?! 13.h3 Bh5? 14.f3 fxe4 15.Nxe4, and White wins. Instead of 13...Bh5, better is 13...fxe4 14.Nxe4 Bd7 15.f4, but White has a tangible advantage in this case as well.

12.Nd3 Qc8 13.Qc2

Deserving attention was f2-f4 on this or subsequent moves. Probably Petrosian did not like the possible activation of the e7-knight via f5, and he entered a setup with a pawn on f3.

13...Bd7 14.f3 Ne8 15.Kh1 f5

Black's position is gradually improving.

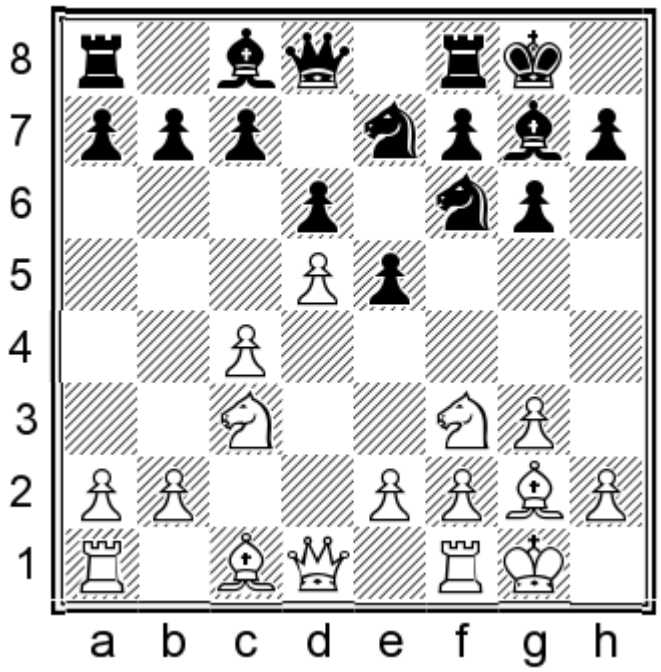
16.Bg5 Nf6 17.Rae1 fxe4 18.fxe4 h6 19.Bc1 Qa6 20.b3 Rf7 21.Rf2 Raf8 22.Ref1 Qc8

Planning a general exchange of the rooks on the f-file, followed by the exchange of the other pieces. While the dark-square bishops are on the board, White has a reason to continue to fight because he would be better in any endgame, even if just by a hair.

In such cases, much depends on one's mood. Apparently, that evening Petrosian did not have a burning desire to fight to bare kings, and he accepted a draw.

(148) C7.3 **Panno – Petrosian**
Portorož 1958

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.g3 g6 3.Bg2 Bg7 4.0-0 0-0 5.c4 d6 6.d4 Nc6 7.Nc3 e5 8.d5 Ne7



9.Ne1 c5

Petrosian had a weakness for such a pawn structure in the King's Indian Defense, even though he acknowledged that Black pays with a certain passivity for the additional stability that the pawn trio c5-d6-e5 gives the position.

10.e4 Nd7

This "unaesthetic" retreat is dictated by the desire to strengthen the e5-pawn in case of the move f2-f4. After 10...Ne8 11.Nd3 f5 12.f4! Black is almost forced to surrender to the center: 12...exf4 13.Bxf4, and the difference in the positions of the knights determines White's advantage.

11.Nd3 f5 12.f3

Now, after 12.f4, Black could have maintained the pressure in the center indefinitely; for example, 12...a6 13.Bd2 Rb8 14.a4 b6, and so on.

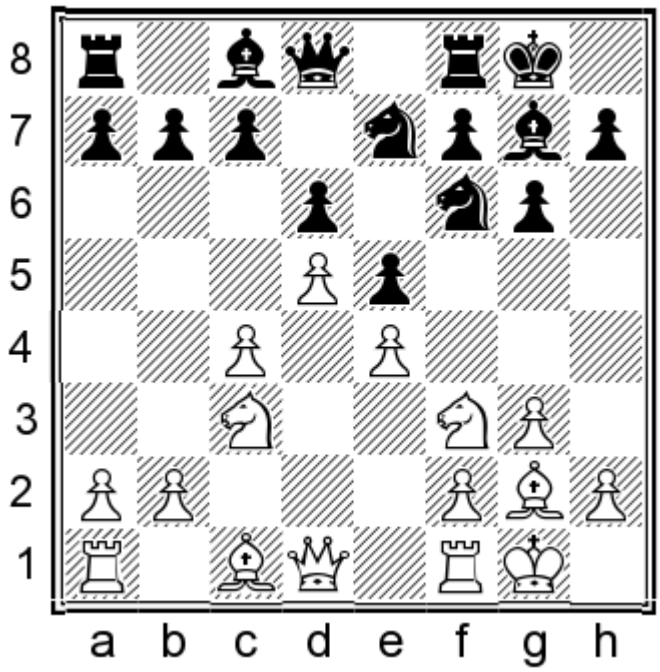
12...Kh8

Having in mind the maneuver ...Ng8 with two ideas: ...Ngf6 and ...Bh6.

13.Bg5! h6 14.Bd2 a6 15.a4 a5 16.Nb5 Nf6 and the opponents agreed to a draw.

(149) C7.4 **Petrosian – Benko**
Candidates Tournament
Yugoslavia 1959

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.Nc3 d6 6.Nf3 Nc6 7.0-0 e5 8.d5 Ne7 9.e4



9...Ne8

A straightforward but correct plan. The attempt to disturb White's center and play 9...c6 fails: 10.Ne1 cxd5 11.cxd5 Nd7 12.Nd3 f5 13.Qb3!, and in the game Geller-Lombardy (Monte Carlo 1967) Black found himself in a difficult position. In addition to the text move, Black has two other ways to open the path for the f-pawn: 9...Nd7 or 9...Nh5.

10.Ne1 f5 11.Nd3 Nf6 12.f3

Unlike in the position with the black pawn on c5, the undermining move 12.f4 does not give White anything. For example, 12...Nxe4 13.Nxe4 fxe4 14.Bxe4 exf4 15.Bxf4, and the d6-pawn is securely protected.

12...h6

The easiest way to solve the problem of the e7-knight that arises after the next move. Wolfgang Uhlmann came up with the curious move 12...h5, but in this case Black has to take into serious consideration the move f2-f4.

13.Be3 g5

Now White has a dilemma: either allow ...f4 or release the black knight.

14.exf5 Nxf5 15.Qd2 Nxe3

Suggesting itself but also deserving attention is 15...Nd4, because it would not be easy for White to tolerate this knight.

16.Qxe3 Bf5 17.Nf2

Ensuring close control over the e4-square.

17...Qd7 18.Nce4

Only with this knight! If Black now exchanges on e4, White would take with the pawn, planning to support the attack on the queenside via a knight transfer to d3.

18...b6 19.Rfe1

White plans to transfer his bishop from f1 to d3 to gain a foothold on the e4-square in case of the exchange of the minor pieces. 19.b4 is premature because of 19...a5 20.a3 axb4 21.axb4 Ra4!, and Black takes control of the a-file.

19...Bxe4

Black rushes to simplify the position. Probably, it would be more accurate to play 19...a5 and then only after 20.Bf1 to exchange on e4.

20.fxe4 Ng4 21.Nxg4 Qxg4

Here Pal Benko, believing that this is a done deal, offered a draw, but received an unexpected refusal.

22.b4!

In this seemingly barren wasteland, Petrosian finds an interesting opportunity to fight for the advantage!

22...Rf7 23.a4

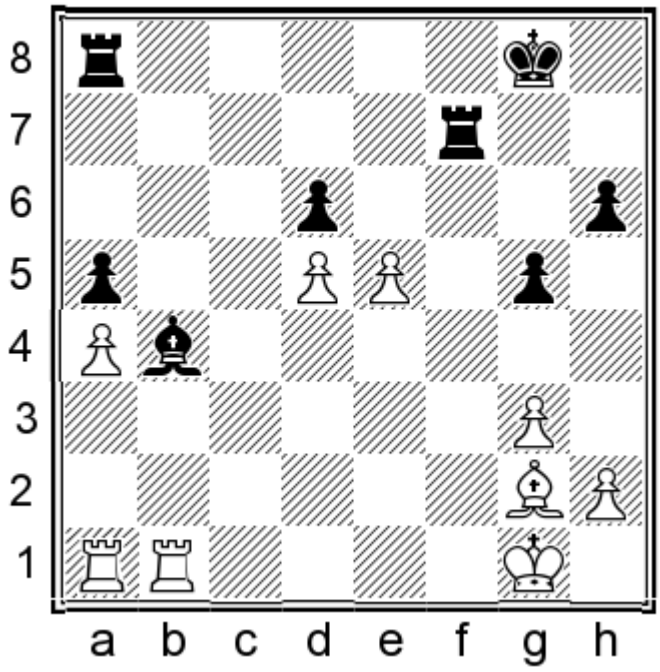
Forcing the response ...a5 with the threat of further advancing this pawn, after which the breakthrough c4-c5 is stronger. In case of 23...Bf8 (hindering c4-c5) 24.a5 Rd8 White could successfully switch to the kingside: 25.Rf1! with pressure on the light squares.

23...a5 24.c5 dxc5 25.bxc5 bxc5 26.Qxc5 Qd7 27.Reb1 Bf8

Black is already experiencing problems: the a8-rook is tied to the protection of the pawns, while the queen has to guard the diagonal h3-c8 from the raids of the white bishop. Therefore, Benko’s decision to activate his pieces at the

cost of the e5-pawn is correct.

28.Qc3 Bb4!? 29.Qxe5 Qd6 30.Qxd6 cxd6 31.e5!



31...dxe5

A forced exchange sacrifice, since Black cannot let the pawn come to e6.

32.d6 Rd8 33.Bd5 Rxd6 34.Rd1

An important move. After 34.Bxf7+ Kxf7 35.Rd1 Bd2!, with the idea of ...e4-e3, Black draws without any problem.

34...Bc5+ 35.Kg2 Bd4 36.Bxf7+ Kxf7 37.Rab1!

Black has a pawn for the exchange, but his main resource is the active rook. The idea of White's previous move is to play Rb1-b5 and drive the rook to a6. Viacheslav Ragozin's recommendation 37.g4 is weaker. Black could reply 37...Rf6! 38.Ra2 Rb6 with the idea of ...Ke6-d5 and ...Rb4.

37...g4 38.Rb5 Ra6 39.Kf1?!

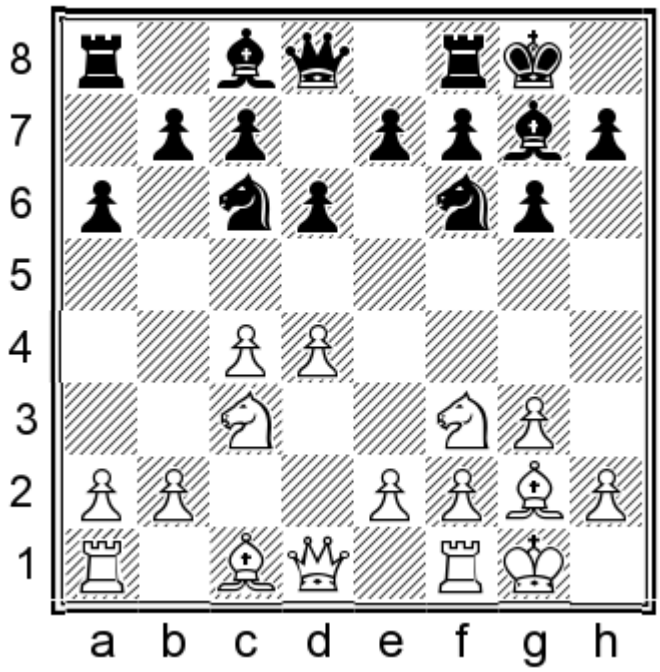
A technical error in time trouble. 39.h3 retained winning chances, for example, 39...gxh3+ 40.Kxh3 or 39...h5 40.hxg4 hxg4 41.Re1.

39...Rf6+ 40.Ke1 Rf3 41.Rc1

Bad is 41.Rxa5 because of 41...Bc3+.

41...Ke6 42.Rc4 Ra3 Draw.

C7*



White to move

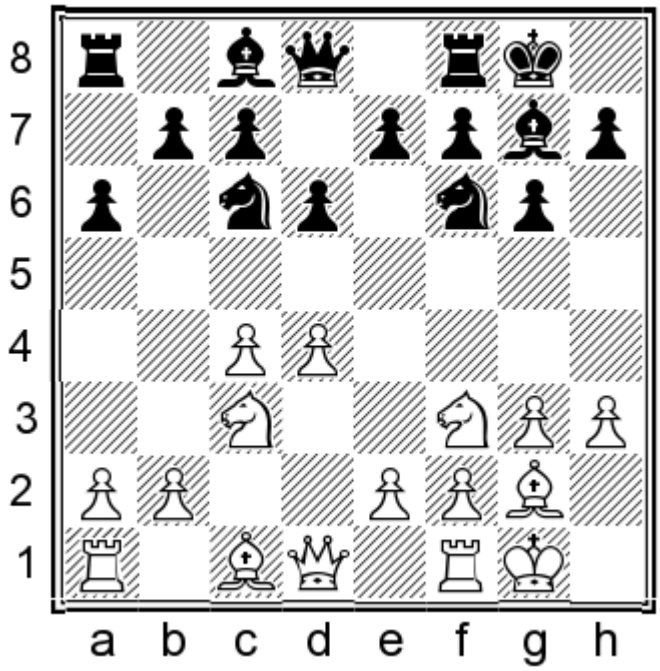
The complex strategic plan starting with the move 8.h3 (games 150, 151)

is a popular alternative to the move 8.d5 with a transition to the Yugoslav variation (see tabiya C4).

Theory does not favor the rare continuation 8.e4 that was played in game 152.

(150) C7*.1 **Smyslov – Petrosian**
Candidates Tournament
Amsterdam 1956

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.d4 Bg7 4.g3 0-0 5.Bg2 d6 6.Nf3 Nc6 7.0-0 a6 8.h3



As in the other variations of the King's Indian Defense, this move prevents the attacks of Black's minor pieces on g4 and also indirectly strengthens the center.

8...Rb8 9.Be3

9.a4 is also possible. Lev Polugaevsky often played it (game 151).

9...b5 10.cxb5 axb5

Handing over the c4-square this early, White hoped to immobilize Black's compromised queenside with the next two pawn moves, but underestimated something.

11.d5 Na5 12.b4 Nc4 13.Ba7

Carrying out the plan: the black rook is lured onto the same line as the light-square bishop. Later Master Leonid Abramov pointed out the interesting opportunity 13.Nd4 Nxe3 14.fxe3 and, despite the doubled pawns, White's position is good.

13...Rb7 14.Bd4 e5!

Sudden and very strong.

15.dxe6 fxe6 16.Bxf6

Belated enlightenment. Only now did Smyslov realize that the planned knight move does not work because Black does not have to play ...d5, and instead can sacrifice the exchange, initiating a dangerous attack. For example:

(1) 16.Ne1 e5! 17.Bxb7 Bxb7 18.Be3 Nxe3 19.fxe3 Qd7 20.g4 (if 20.Kh2, then 20...Ng4+!) 20...h5!; and

(2) 16.Nd2 e5! 17.Bxb7 Bxb7 18.Nxc4 (or 18.Be3 Qd7 19.Kh2 Qc6 20.Nf3 Nxe3 21.fxe3 Qxc3) 18...exd4 19.Na5 (no better is 19.Nxb5 Qd7!) 19...dxc3 20.Nxb7 Qc8 21.Na5 Qxh3, and White cannot hold on.

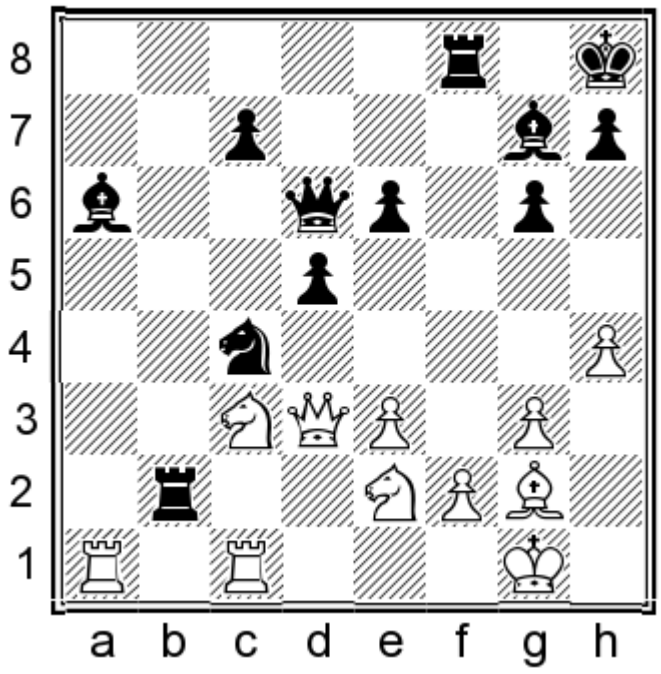
16...Qxf6 17.Rc1 d5

The future winner of the Amsterdam Candidates Tournament was outplayed on all counts! Black's two bishops and powerful pawns in the center will soon be transformed into an extra pawn.

18.e3 Qe7! 19.Nd4 Qxb4 20.Qd3 Qc5 21.Nb3 Qe7 22.Nd4 Qc5 23.a4

Using the fact that 23...b4 is bad in view of 24.Nxd5! exd5 25.Nb3, Smyslov gets rid of the weak pawn.

23...bxa4 24.Nxa4 Qd6 25.h4 Kh8 26.Ne2 Rb4 27.Nac3 Ba6 28.Ra1 Rb2 29.Rfc1



29...Rfb8?!

A wake-up call for Black. Of course, there is more than one way to victory, but 29...Rd2! would end the fight at once, for example, 30.Qb1 Bxc3 31.Nxc3 Rfxf2.

Feeling his opponent's hesitation, Smyslov radically sharpens the play.

30.Rxa6!? Qxa6 31.Nxd5 exd5

The second call. The situation becomes more complicated. Neither 31...Rd2? 32.Nxc7! nor 31...Qa3 32.Qxc4 Rxe2 33.Nf4 worked, but the cold-blooded 31...Qd6 would still let Black achieve a "clear" victory: 32.Qxc4 exd5 or 32.Ndf4 Qxd3 33.Nxd3 Rb1 and so on.

And yet, how could a grandmaster of Petrosian's caliber miss a pretty simple win twice? I do not believe in the hyped myth about his tactical weakness ("If Petrosian should begin to combine a little, he will be impossible to play against." – Max Euwe). Then there could be only psychological reasons. If we recall that the day before that there was that fateful blunder of the queen in the game against Bronstein (game 135), then all Black's mistakes in this game no longer look so inconceivable.

32.Bxd5 Rd2

The third and last call. Petrosian takes the game into a favorable endgame, but unfortunately for him White has a study-like draw. Black still had some chance of success after 32...Rd8 33.Qxc4 (but not 33.Bxc4? Qa8!, and White loses a piece: 34.Nd4 c5) 33...Qd6(f6) or 33...Qxc4 34.Bxc4 Rdd2 in an effort to keep more pieces on the board.

33.Bxc4 Rxd3 34.Bxa6 Ra3 35.Bc4 Ra1 36.Rxa1 Bxa1 37.Kg2 c5

In order to queen, the c-pawn has to cross two light squares, which turns out to be rather difficult.

38.Kf3 Rb4 39.Bd5 Kg7 40.Nf4 c4

The passed pawn makes a decisive step, presenting the opponent with one last problem.

41.Ng2!

Smyslov recorded this excellent move. An endgame master, he, of course, immediately understood what was

happening. The knight goes to c2 via e1 to organize a blockade of the light squares with the bishop's support from e4. A stone's throw from queening, the pawn is firmly anchored. Also note that after 41.Ke4? Bf6 42.Ne2 c3+ 43.Kd3 Rb5 44.Bc4 (44.Nxc3 Bxc3 45.Bc4 Rb2 46.Kxc3 Rxf2) 44...Rb2 White is lost (variations by Petrosian).

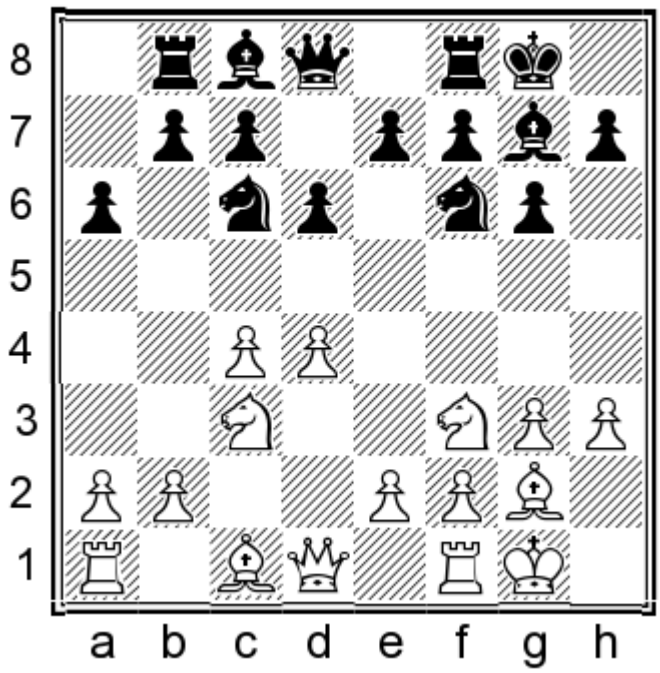
41...Bc3 42.g4 Be5 43.Be4 Rb2 44.Ne1 Rd2 45.g5 c3 46.Kg2 Bd6 47.Nc2

A draw is inevitable. Black is unsuccessfully quarreling with fate.

47...h6 48.Nd4 hxg5 49.hxg5 Be7 50.Kg3 Bd6+ 51.f4 Kf7 52.Kf3 Bc5 53.Nc2 Draw.

(151) C7*.2 **Polugaevsky – Petrosian**
USSR Championship Semifinal
Tbilisi 1956

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.c4 Bg7 4.g3 0-0 5.Bg2 d6 6.0-0 a6 7.Nc3 Nc6 8.h3 Rb8



9.a4 a5

The most natural reaction to White's last move. According to Boleslavsky's research, 9...Na5!? is also possible, which, after something like 10.b3 c5, could lead to complications favorable for Black; for example: 11.Bb2 cxd4 12.Nxd4 Qb6 or 11.dxc5 Nd7! 12.Bb2 Nxc5!, and 13.b4? does not work because of 13...Nxc4 14.bxc5 Nxb2 15.Qb3 b5.

10.e4 e5 11.Be3 Nd7

Black's knights are probing the b4- and c5- squares.

12.Nd5 Re8 13.dxe5

A bad exchange. As a result, White does not have any advantage. After 13.Bg5 f6 14.Be3, as recommended by Geller, he would have a slightly better position.

13...dxe5 14.Ra3

Polugaevsky's idea was to play 15.Rd3, which would deprive the black pieces of a number of maneuvering

opportunities. However, Petrosian's next move shows that Black can easily prevent it.

14...Nb4! 15.Qd2

"After 15.Nxb4 axb4 16.Rd3 Qe7 Black has a good position. Now it is not so easy to find the right move for Black: 15...Nxd5 16.cxd5 leads to a clear advantage for White." (Tigran Petrosian).

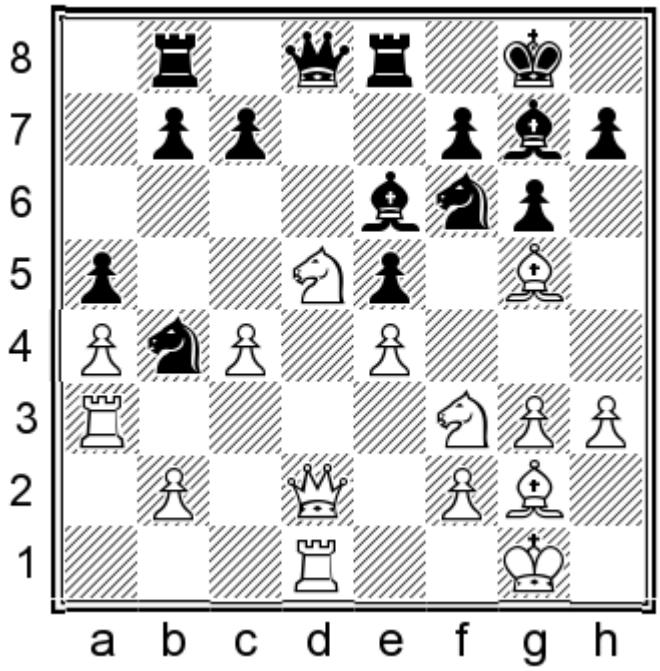
15...Nf6

According to Petrosian, the most difficult move of the game.

16.Bg5 Be6

Both opponents are unanimous in their assessment of the continuation 16...Nxe4 as dubious for Black. We do not know what Polugaevsky thought, but Petrosian considered the following variation: 17.Bxd8 Nxd2 18.Bxc7 Nxc4 19.Bxb8 Be6 20.Nc7. However, Petrosian's calculations had an error. Instead of 19...Be6? much stronger is 19...Nxd5!? with sufficient compensation for the exchange. It would be interesting to check 19...Nxa3!? 20.Nxb4 e4! as well. However, in these cases the play would have become unpredictable, which Petrosian hardly welcomed, as he usually tried to avoid uncertainties.

17.Rd1?



Out of the blue, Polugaevsky, overly trusting his previous calculations, commits a gross error, which costs him the game. After the correct 17.Qc3 (Petrosian), the opponents' chances would be equal.

17...Nxe4! 18.Bxd8 Nxd2 19.Bxc7 Nxc4 20.Bxb8 Bxd5

At the cost of the exchange, Black has rid himself of the "unwanted" pieces and achieved almost perfect coordination. Soon Polugaevsky will be forced to return the material, but it will not help. As a result of this tactical operation Black has an overwhelming advantage.

21.Ba7 e4 22.Ng5

A desperate move. After 22.Ne1 strong is 22...Bc6.

22...h6 23.Rb3 Bc6

This is more convincing than 23...hxg5 24.Rxb4 axb4 25.Rxd5.

24.Nxe4 Bxa4

The shortest way to victory. Black wins back the exchange and takes the b2-pawn.

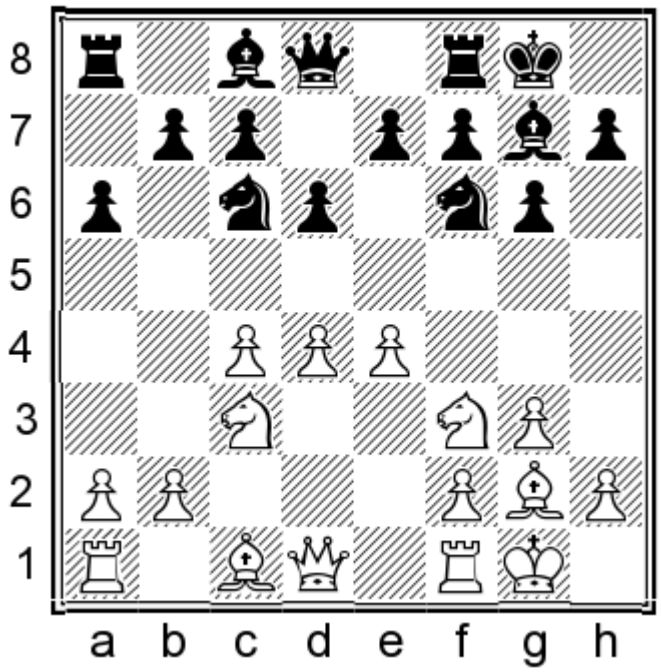
25.Rxb4 axb4 26.b3 Bxb3 27.Rb1 Nb2 28.Nd6 Re7 29.Bc5 Bc2 30.Ra1 Na4

Resistance is futile.

31.Rxa4 Bxa4 32.Bxb4 Bc6 33.Bf1 Rd7 34.Nc4 Bb5 35.Nb6 Rd1 White resigned.

(152) C7*.3 **Philippe – Petrosian**
XX Olympiad
Skopje 1972

1.c4 g6 2.g3 Bg7 3.Bg2 Nf6 4.Nc3 0-0 5.Nf3 d6 6.d4 Nc6 7.0-0 a6 8.e4



In a situation when h2-h3 has not been played, theory advises against advancing the pawn to e4. And not without a reason, because, by allowing the pin of the f3-knight, White puts himself at risk of losing control over the d4-square and finding himself on the defending side.

8...Bg4 9.h3

Also not a mistake. But it hardly made sense to force Black to play what he wants to do anyway. 9.Be3 is more solid, and if 9...Nd7, then 10.Ne2!, reliably reinforcing the critical d4-square. By the way, in this case we can see the fruitful idea implicit in White's eighth move: to exchange the g4-bishop for the knight for free.

9...Bxf3 10.Bxf3 Nd7 11.Be3 e5

The opening battle has ended with Black's obvious advantage: White has to surrender the d4-square, for example, 12.Ne2 Qf6, dealing a double attack to the d4- and f3-squares.

12.d5 Nd4 13.Bg2 c5 14.Rb1

Continuing to play without a plan. Now White misses the opportunity to challenge Black's conquests in the center

with 14.dxc6 bxc6 15.f4 or 15.b4, which yields an acceptable position.

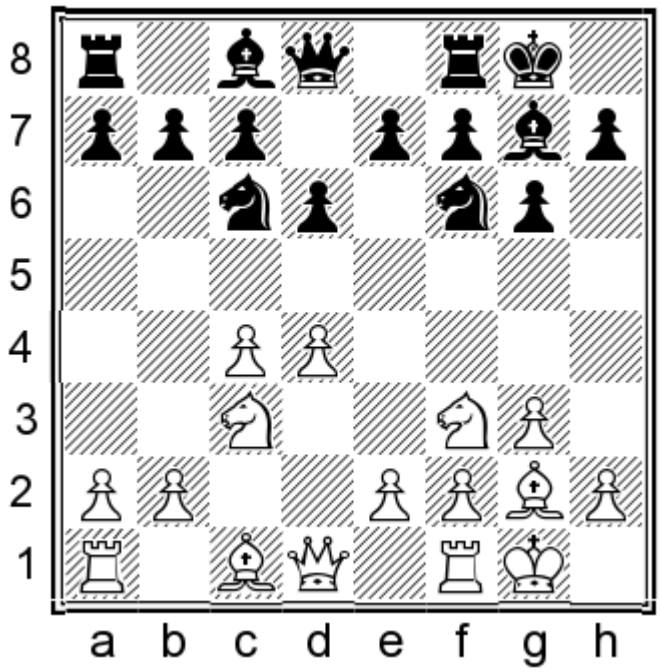
14...Qa5

On the agenda are the undermining moves ...f5 and ...b5. By moving the queen to a5, Black wants to hinder the defense of the c4-pawn with the move b2-b3, for example, 15.Qd2 b5 16.b3? Qxc3! with an immediate win.

15.Bd2 Qc7 16.b4 Nb6 17.bxc5 dxc5

“No man is wise at all times.” The c4-pawn is impossible to defend. Taking into account the exworld champion’s technical skills, White decides that further resistance is futile.

C8



Black to move

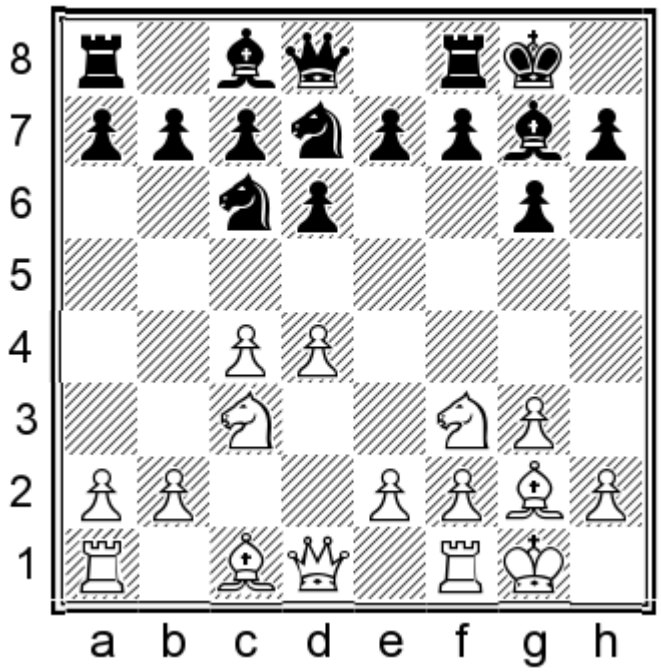
In this section we will discuss Black's transition to the rare systems with the following continuations on the 7th move: 7...Bg4 (games 154, 155, 156, 157),

7...Nd7 (game 153), and

7...Bf5 (game 158).

(153) C8.1 **Petrosian – Zagorovsky**
Moscow Championship
Moscow 1951

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.Nf3 Nc6 7.0-0 Nd7



This extravagant continuation is justified only if White closes the position, advancing the attacked pawn. Therefore, first of all, Petrosian protects the d4-pawn.

8.Be3 e5 9.Qd2 a5 10.Rad1 a4

White's advantage is obvious, and Black has nothing else to do but to look for some kind of "swindle." He is trying to grab onto the c4-pawn in the next few moves.

11.Nd5 Na5 12.Qd3 c6

The knight could not be tolerated any longer, but now White skillfully exploits the weakening of the d6-pawn.

13.Nc3 Qc7 14.d5 Nb6?!

This is the situation in which the player lacks the tactical skill necessary to implement his plan. Black had to find the move 14...c5!. At first glance, it looks like a pawn blunder: 15.Nxa4, but after 15...Qb8!, the threat of ...Nxc4, which cannot not be stopped with 16.b3 (16...Nxc4! 17.Qxc4 b5), forces White to reply 16.Nc3, and then 16...f5, with the even stronger threat of ...e4, allows Black to get to the c4-pawn after all!

Thus, Black had a real opportunity to avoid opening the position, which in this situation would be a great achievement.

15.dxc6 bxc6 16.c5!

From a young age Petrosian loved this kind of operation aimed at the destruction of the pawn structure.

16...dxc5 17.Bxc5 Re8 18.Ng5

Black could not figure out the idea behind this clever move.

18...Nb7 19.Bxb6 Qxb6 20.Qf3

And here is the fork that Petrosian planned. However, Zagorovsky could stubbornly defend by protecting both of the squares attacked by the knight: 20...Nd8, for example, 21.Rxd8 Rxd8 22.Qxf7+ Kh8 23.Qc4 Ra7 24.Nf7+ Rxf7 25.Qxf7 Qxb2. Therefore, more accurate was 20.Qc4, which would have led to the text position by force, because the aforementioned 20...Nd8 does not work anymore: 21.Rxd8 Rxd8 22.Nxf7! or 21...Qxd8 22.Qxf7+ Kh8 23.Rd1,

and White wins.

20...Rf8 21.Qxc6 Qxc6

After 21...Qxb2 the easiest is 22.Bd5 with numerous threats.

22.Bxc6 Ra6 23.Nd5!

Indirectly protecting the bishop, White centralizes the knight and then the other pieces and gradually begins to control the entire board. This is definitely stronger than winning a second pawn at the cost of a temporary loss of the initiative after 23.Bxa4 h6, etc. We see the primacy of positional considerations over material in Petrosian's games yet again.

23...a3 24.b4 Kh8 25.b5 Ra7 26.Nb6 Bf5 27.e4 Bg4 28.f3 Bh6 29.fxg4 Bxg5 30.Nd7 Rc8 31.Nxe5

Black is powerless; his pawns are falling like ripe fruit. Also good was 31.Rxf7.

31...Nd8 32.h4 Re7?

Relatively better is 32...Be3+ 33.Kg2 Re7 or 33...Kg7. The wrong text move gives White another opportunity to shine and, with the help of a "small combination," to bring his lead to an advantage of three pawns.

33.Rxd8+! Rxd8 34.Nxf7+ Rxf7 35.Rxf7 Be3+ 36.Kf1 Kg8 37.Rf3 Rf8

Black's last faint hope is the magic power of the opposite-color bishop endgame.

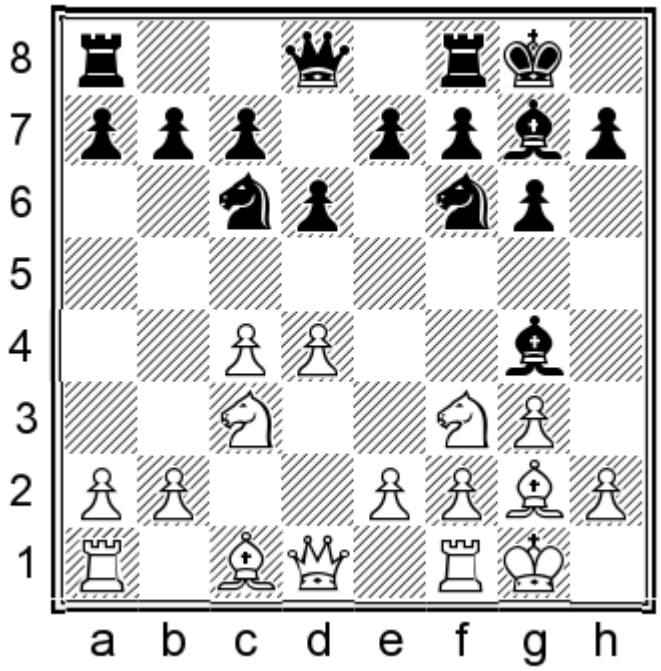
38.Bd5+ Kg7 39.Rxf8 Kxf8 40.Ke2 Bd4 41.g5 Ke7 42.Bg8 Kf8

Now White cleverly gets rid of the main draw factor, the opposite-color bishops, and obtains five (!) passed pawns, which will playfully run to queen.

43.Bxh7! Kg7 44.Bxg6 Kxg6 45.Kf3 Bb6 46.Kg4 Black resigned.

(154) C8.2 **Najdorf – Petrosian**
Candidates Tournament
Neuhausen/Zürich 1953

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d6 3.Nf3 g6 4.g3 Bg7 5.Bg2 0-0 6.0-0 Nc6 7.Nc3 Bg4



Not nearly as attractive as with the pawn on e4, but not bad because Black makes a solid developing move.

8.h3

According to modern theory, the best continuation for White is 8.d5 (game 156).

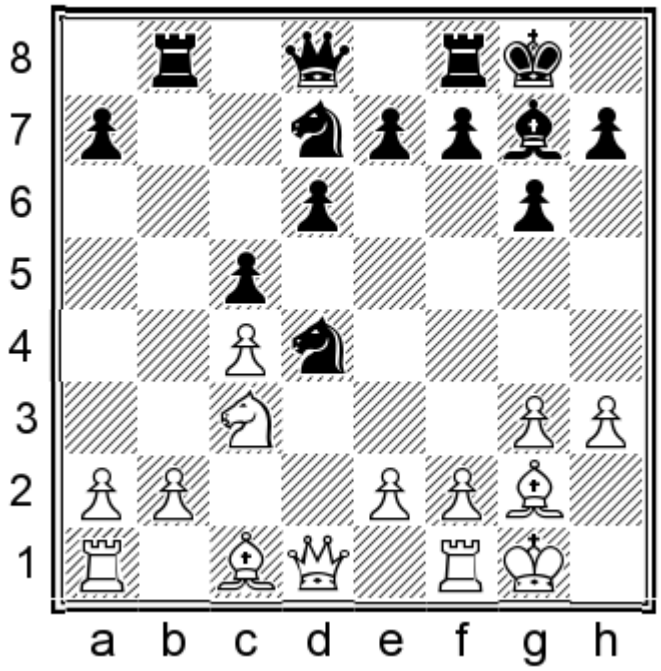
8...Bxf3 9.Bxf3 Nd7

An insistent invitation to advance the d5-pawn. 10.e3 is followed by 10...e5, and if 11.d5, then 11...Ne7 or 11...Ncb8 and then ...f5. If White continues to fight for the d4-pawn via 11.Ne2, Black might play 11...exd4 12.Nxd4 (worse is 12.exd4 Qf6!) 12...Nde5 with equality (Forintos-Furman, Budapest, 1959).

10.Bg2

The temperamental Najdorf, hoping for future bishop activity, agrees to trade the d4-pawn for the b7-pawn. Let us note that this exchange is controversial because, from the strategic point of view, the value of these pawns is incomparable.

10...Nxd4 11.Bxb7 Rb8 12.Bg2 c5



A subtle but serious positional mistake, which Bronstein explained very well:

“Black controls an open queenside file, and can easily force White to play b2-b3. After that, his plan will be to advance his a-pawn to attack the pawn at b3. This plan can only succeed if Black can support his pawn to a4, but with what? He no longer has his light-square bishop, and his last move deprived his knight of its proper square. Also, his knight cannot be maintained on d4 for long, and the light squares on the queenside are under the control of White’s fianchettoed bishop – thus, Black’s knights have no good squares. As a matter of fact, Black’s knights end up in pitiable positions.

“Thus, Black has no plan with a future to it. He can make moves – some of them, no doubt, will be fairly good; he still need not lose the game, but he has already lost the guiding thread, so his position is consequently inferior. We recommend that the reader study this game in conjunction with the Najdorf- Geller game from Round 28. There Black played 12...Rb4!, and followed this up with ...Ne5, inducing both f2-f4 and b2-b3; then he re-positioned his knight on c5, and, despite Najdorf s resourceful counterplay on the queenside, carried out the required attack on the pawn at b3.”

13.e3 Ne6 14.Qc2 a5 15.Bd2 Ne5 16.b3 Qd7 17.Kh2 Nc6 18.Rad1 Ned8 19.Be1 Kh8

Once again, I turn it over to David Bronstein. He continues his thought:

“Black has done all one could ask: he has induced 16.b3 and advanced his pawn to a5 – what he can do further, however, is a mystery. Nor can one find any advice to offer him, other than to avoid weaknesses and not to leave pieces *en prise* (which was the principle behind such moves as 18...Nd8 and 19...Kh8). Meanwhile, White is all set for many moves’ worth of straightforward, logical strengthening of his position: for example, Na4, Bc3 and the exchange of bishops, followed by f2-f4, Bf3, Kg2, h3-h4-h5, Rh1, etc. This is only a sketch, of course; in actual play, Black would not likely stand still, but there can be no denying that all the chances in this fight would be with White, the more so in that any attempt to bring the pawn at e7 into the fight would result in an irreparable weakening of the pawn at d6.”

20.Na4 Qc8 21.Bc3 Bxc3 22.Nxc3 Qf5?

Unfortunately, Black is not able to take good advice and not hang pieces. Maybe Petrosian saw that after the queen exchange he would lose a pawn, but hoped to use tactical opportunities to hunt for the rook.

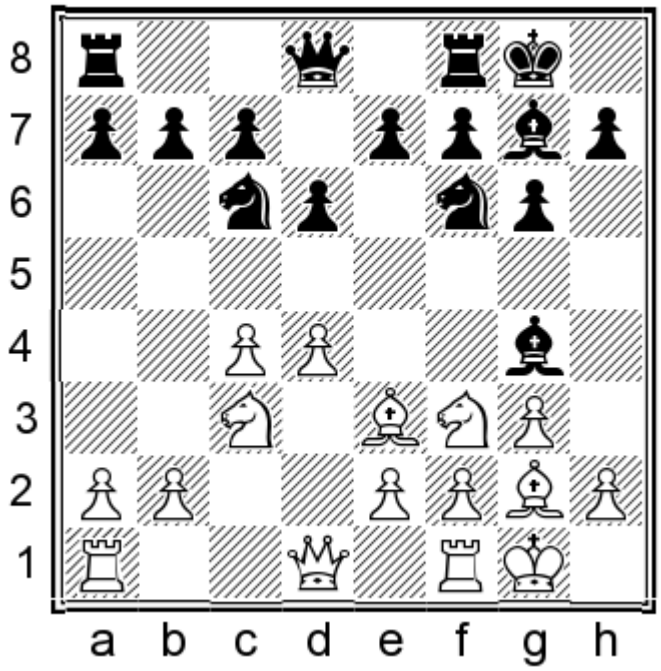
23.Qxf5 gxf5 24.Rd5 Ne6 25.Rxf5 Nb4 26.Rh5 Ng7 27.Rh4 Nf5 28.Rf4 e6 29.Rd1 Rb6 30.Na4 Rbb8 31.Be4

The last hopes are shattered.

31...Ng7 32.Rxd6 Nxa2 33.Nxc5 Black resigned

(155) C8.3 **Taimanov – Petrosian**
USSR Team Championship
Riga 1954

1.c4 g6 2.Nc3 Bg7 3.g3 Nf6 4.Bg2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.Nf3 Nc6 7.0-0 Bg4 8.Be3



This unpretentious developing move does not create any specific problems for Black.

8...Nd7

Increasing pressure on the d4-pawn. Let us mention that Taimanov, who also played this system numerous times as Black, preferred 8...Qd7 with the idea of exchanging the light-square bishops. Here are two examples from his games: (1) 9.Qc2 Bh3 10.Rad1 Bxg2 11.Kxg2 a6 12.b3 b5! (Olafsson- Taimanov, Reykjavik 1956); (2) 9.d5 Na5 10.Nd2 c5 11.f3 Bh3 (Cherepkov-Taimanov, Leningrad 1957). Black had an excellent position after the opening in both games, which is another proof that White's eighth move is innocuous.

9.Qd2 Bxf3 10.exf3

The only decent response. By doubling the pawns, White prepares to exchange in the center after ...e5. After 10.Bxf3 e5 he will not have this opportunity: 11.dxe5?! Ncxe5!, while after 11.d5 Ne7! the bishops, which ended up in front of their pawns, are poorly positioned.

10...Nb6!?

This is an interesting moment that remained behind the scenes. How exactly was White going to continue after 10...e5 and why did Petrosian not make this logical move? We found some of the answers to these questions in the game Filip-Tal (Curaçao 1962) that was played later. In that game after 11.dxe5 Ndxe5 12.b3 Qf6 13.f4 Nxc4 14.bxc4 Qxc3 15.Qxc3 Bxc3 16.Rab1, White had more than adequate compensation for the sacrificed pawn. Tal had to work really hard to draw in the endgame. Since then, no one has wanted to play this position as Black.

As for the text move, the idea is to fight for the light squares, switching from the advance ...e5 to ...d5. I think this idea is quite good and timely. Black used the fact that 11.d5 does not work because of 11...Nxc4! 12.Qe2 Nxe3, and White loses material. After the black pawn advances to d5, neither white bishop has a future and the d4-pawn turns

into a potential, while not obvious, weakness.

11.b3 d5 12.c5 Nc8 13.b4!?

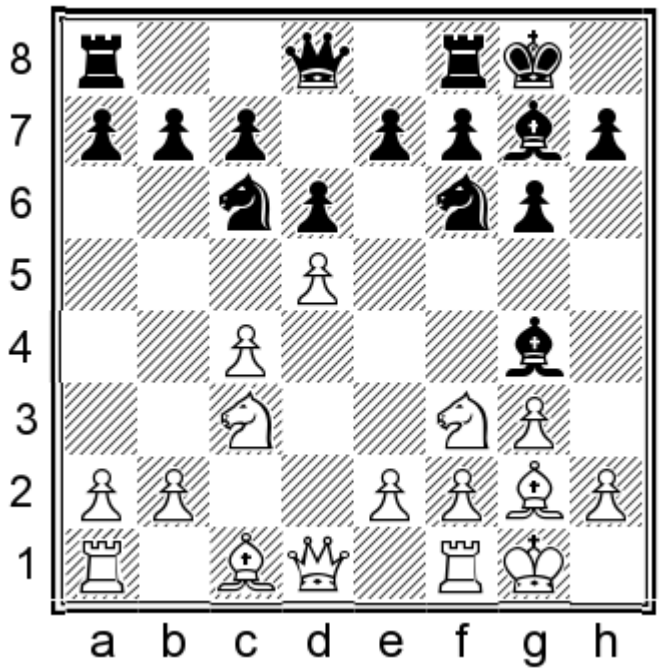
Now Taimanov demonstrates a keen understanding. With the threat of b4-b5 he forces the advance of the e-pawn, the position opens up, and White safely escapes. Also, White's 18th move was very good.

13...e5 14.Ne2 N8e7 15.Rad1 Qd7 16.dxe5 Nxe5 17.Bd4 a5 18.b5! Qxb5 19.Nc3 Qb4 20.Nxd5

Here, in view of the variation 20.Nxd5 Nxd5 21.Bxe5 Bxe5 22.Qxd5, the opponents signed a peace agreement. A well-fought draw.

(156) C8.4 **Petrosian – Gurgenidze**
USSR Championship Semifinal
Tbilisi 1956

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.Nc3 d6 6.Nf3 Nc6 7.0-0 Bg4 8.d5



A dynamic response, posing the most opening problems for Black. In case of the capture on f3, (8...Bxf3) White is going to take with the pawn since 9.Bxf3 is weak because of 9...Ne5.

8...Bxf3

Black takes up the gauntlet. Giving the opponent the two bishops advantage, in return he gets a solid pawn structure and a long-term prospective to take foothold on the d4-square at some point. Black could also play 8...Na5 going into the Yugoslav variation with the somewhat unnatural but in principle useful move ...Bg4.

9.exf3 Na5

If the knight retreats to e5 or b8, the move 10.Qb3 is quite unpleasant for Black. White also played this in the game Capablanca-Taylor (Nottingham 1936).

The essence of Gurgenidze's plan is to play ...c5, ...e6, and ...exd5, after which White will have to either release the a5-knight or give Black a pawn advantage on the queenside.

10.Qe2 c5 11.Bd2 a6 12.f4 Rb8 13.Rab1 Re8 14.b3 e6 15.Qd3 exd5 16.Nxd5!

It turns out that Petrosian's evaluation of the position was deeper. Black did not notice that, controlling d4, he had to leave his opponent the identical d5-square, while the d6-pawn becomes backward and weak, not to mention the fact that White gets an opportunity to get rid of the doubled pawns and to weaken the position of the black king.

16...Nc6 17.f5

Combining business with pleasure.

17...Nxd5 18.Bxd5

Threatening to take twice on g6.

18...Qf6 19.fxg6 hxg6 20.Rbe1 Kf8

Of course, with the rooks and queens and the weakened king, the transition into the opposite-color bishop position does not make Black's position better. For example: 20...Rxe1 21.Rxe1 Nb4 22.Bxb4 cxb4 23.Re3! with strong pressure on the f7- and b7- pawns. Instead of the text move Black probably should have chosen a more nuanced route for his knight: 20...Ne7 (and ...Nf5-d4 if the opportunity presents itself), disturbing the white pieces.

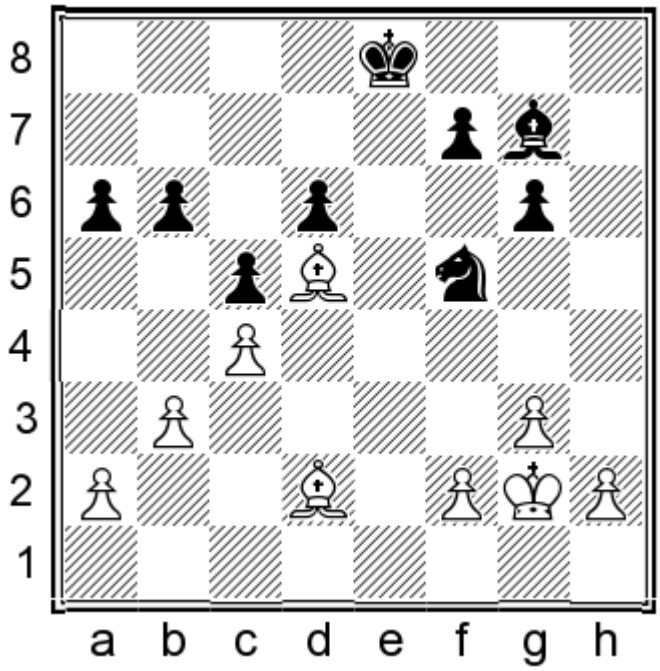
21.Re3 Nd4 22.Rfe1

Demonstrating that without the support of the rest of the pieces the centralized black knight is only a "paper tiger," and the initiative is entirely in White's hands.

22...b6 23.Kg2 Qf5

As often happens, in a difficult position, Black loses his nerve. He has better chances with the queens on the board. Now Petrosian, trading the heavy pieces, transfers the game into a technical stage where the white bishops have to make a substantial contribution.

24.Qxf5 Nxf5 25.Rxe8+ Rxe8 26.Rxe8+ Kxe8



An instructive endgame that illustrates the typical methods of converting the two bishops advantage.

27.g4 Nd4 28.h4 Ke7 29.Bb7! a5 30.Bd5 Be5 31.Be4 Ne6 32.Kf3

Because of the two bishops, the white king quickly becomes active, while his black counterpart cannot go beyond the sixth rank. By the way, White's next move will be g4-g5, which in a different position would, of course, be very dubious. But, having a pair of bishops that controls the squares of any color, White can afford such a pawn advance, which is the quickest way to create a passed pawn.

32...Bf6 33.g5 Be5 34.Kg4 Bd4 35.f4 f5+ 36.gxf6+ Kxf6 37.f5 gxf5+ 38.Bxf5 Ng7 39.Bg5+ Kf7 40.Bd7 Ne6 41.Bxe6+

That's right: the advantage of the two bishops also lies in the possibility of advantageously exchanging one of them at the right moment! In this case it leads to the win of the b6-pawn and an easily winning bishop endgame.

41...Kxe6 42.Bd8 a4 43.Bxb6 d5 44.cxd5+ Kxd5 45.Kf5 axb3 46.axb3 Be3 47.h5 Black resigned.

A sophisticated positional game à la Rubinstein.

(157) C8.5 **Wexler – Petrosian**
Buenos Aires 1964

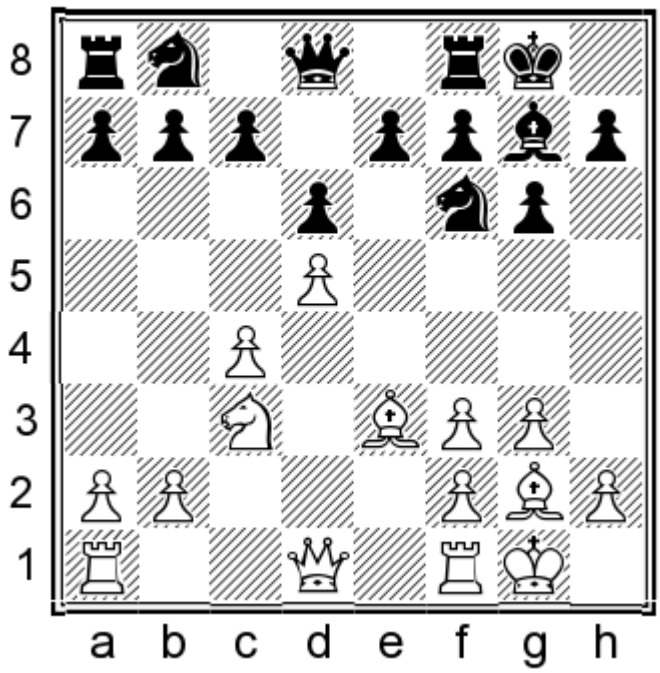
1.c4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 d6 4.g3 Nc6 5.Nf3 Bg4

This leads to an insignificant move transposition.

6.Bg2 Nf6 7.d5 Bxf3 8.exf3 Nb8

A slight improvement over the previous game. Black plans to play ...c5 and then transfer the knight to c7 via a6, where it will support both of the undermining pawn moves ...b5 and ...e6.

9.Be3 0-0 10.0-0



10...c5 11.dxc6

After this Black has a relatively simple solution to his opening problems: neutralize both bishops by moving his knights to c6 and c5. Thus, the plan of leaving the pawn on d5 and striving to put pressure on the e-file and to advance f3-f4-f5 looks more promising for White.

11...Nxc6 12.f4 Nd7 13.Rc1 Qa5 14.Qd2 Nc5 15.Rfd1

Objectively speaking, this position is roughly equal, but subjectively it is easier to play for Black as he has a clear plan. The increasing concentration of black pieces on the queenside forces White to seek simplifications.

15...Rfe8 16.b3 Rac8 17.Nd5 Qxd2 18.Rxd2

And now we cannot say that the bishop pair gives White any advantage, mainly because there are no targets for attack in Black's camp.

18...Kf8 19.Nc3 b6 20.Nb5 a6 21.Nc3 Nb8 22.b4

A reckless move. Now, by exchanging on c3, Black soon doubles the rooks on the c-file, creating unpleasant pressure on the c4-pawn.

22...Bxc3! 23.Rxc3 Ncd7 24.Kf1 Rc7 25.Ke2 Rec8 26.Kd3 a5 27.a3

Surprisingly this leads to the loss of the pawn. White should have played 27.bxa5 bxa5 28.Ra3, forcing the exchange of the c4-pawn for the a-pawn, and he should be able to draw.

27...axb4 28.axb4 b5 29.Rdc2 Na6

Energetically deploying the reserve cavalry decides the fate of the tactical confrontation on the queenside.

30.Kd2 bxc4 31.b5 Nac5 32.Rxc4

White still cannot fathom the depth of Petrosian's plan, otherwise he would have preferred 32.Bc6 Nb6 33.Bxc5 dxc5 with compensation for the pawn.

32...Nb6 33.R4c3 Nba4 34.b6

Avoiding the trap in the main variation: 34.Rc4? Nb3+ 35.Kd3 Rxc4 36.Rxc4 Nb2+ with a fork.

34...Nxb6 35.Ke2 Nbd7 36.Ra3

So, White is a pawn down. As we can see, to lose the game one does not have to make serious mistakes; sometimes a few superficial moves are enough. But from this moment on, Wexler defends remarkably resourcefully.

36...Ne6 37.Rxc7 Rxc7 38.f5!?

Breaking the monolith of the black pawns. Unable to save both pawns, Black repays in kind.

38...gxf5 39.Bh3 f4! 40.gxf4 Kg7 41.f5 Nec5 42.Ra1 Nf6 43.Rg1+ Kf8 44.Bh6+ Ke8 45.Ra1 Kd7

Finally Black's king found a quiet refuge, but now the white rook rushes to f8 to attack the defenseless pawn.

46.Ra8 Nce4 47.Be3 Nc3+ 48.Kf3 Ncd5 49.Bf1

The continuation 49.Rf8 Rc2 could result in a move transposition.

49...Rc3 50.Rf8 Nxe3 51.Bb5+

This strange check can probably be explained by White's desire to avoid the variation 51.fxe3 d5! (Black is threatening ...d4) 52.Kf4 Rb3, and the f7-pawn is untouchable: 53.Rxf7? Ke8!.

51...Kc7 52.fxe3 Rc5 53.Bd3 Nd7 54.Rh8?

The irony of fate. Once again in this game White falls prey to deceptive, natural-looking moves. This “deception” lies in the fact that he does not have to retreat with the rook that is under attack and could just play 54.f6!!, using a motif of pawn promotion that is rare in practical play: 54...Nxf8?? 55.fxe7!. After the best move 54...Nxf6 55.Rxf7, the game would have ended in a draw because of the limited remaining material.

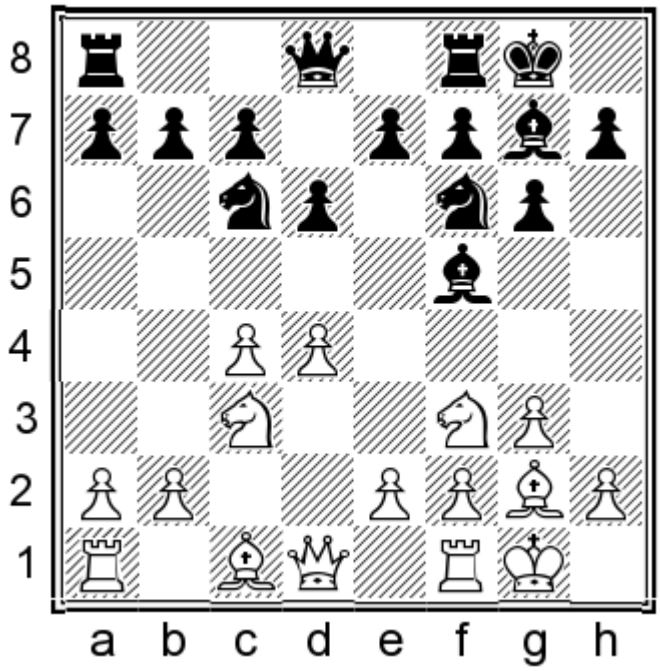
54...Ne5+ 55.Ke2 Nxd3 56.Kxd3 Rxf5 57.Rxh7 Kd7

An easily winning rook endgame. With the resulting pawn structure, sooner or later Black will create connected passed pawns, which, as we know, are a huge advantage.

58.Ke2 Ke6 59.Rh4 Kf6 60.Rg4 Rg5 61.Rf4+ Kg6 62.Re4 e6 63.h4 Rf5 64.Rd4 d5 65.Rg4+ Kh5 66.Ra4 Re5 67.Kf3 f5 68.Kf4 Re4+ 69.Rxe4 dxe4 White resigned.

(158) C8.6 **Petrosian – Fischer**
Second Piatigorsky Cup
Santa Monica 1966

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.c4 Nc6 7.Nc3 Bf5



Master Georgy Borisenko’s move. It was played by Boris Spassky, Robert Fischer, Leonid Stein, and others. Black does not worry about a possible loss of a tempo in variations such as 8.Nh4 Bd7 or 8.d5 Na5 9.Nd4 Bd7 (but not 9...Nxc4? 10.Nxf5 gxf5 11.Qd3), as the position of the white pieces is unstable, for example, 10.Qd3 c5! 11.Nb3 Ng4 (11...b5!?) 12.f4 b5!? 13.Nxa5 Qxa5 14.Nxb5 Bxb5 15.cxb5 Rfb8 16.Bf3 Nf6 17.a4 a6 18.bxa6 Qxa6 with rich compensation for the pawn (Cuellar- Fischer, Stockholm 1962).

Instead of 9.Nd4 White can play 9.Nd2 with the idea of getting a favorable version of the Yugoslav variation in case of 9...c5, but then Black has the reply 9...c6!, and the bishop’s position on f5 becomes helpful: 10.b4? Nxd5! 11.cxd5 Bxc3 – White does not have the move 12.Rb1. Also, 10.e4 Bg4 11.f3 Bd7 is not dangerous for Black.

And if with 8.Ne1 White hinders the maneuver ...Ne4 (as you might guess, this is the main idea of Black’s last move), then possible is 8...Qc8 and then ...Bh3 with acceptable play.

8.h3 e5

An impulsive response, leading to the stabilization of the center, which no doubt is beneficial only for White. Better is 8...Ne4.

9.d5 Ne7 10.Ne1 Bc8!?

A unique case in grandmaster games. The bishop went from the c8-square to the c8-square, having spent two moves! Meanwhile, as the rest of the game shows, this seeming ridiculous return of the bishop to its original position is well-founded. It is the first link of a deep defensive plan. But how did Fischer come up with it? Let's try to understand the grandmaster's logic.

It is obvious that in the next few moves, White will play e2-e4, Nd3, and begin the standard attack, which, given Black's retarded development, looks threatening. Black has to prepare ...f5 as quickly as possible. 10...Bd7 11.e4 Ne8 12.Nd3 f5 suggests itself, but in this case White, using the position of the e7-knight, can successfully switch to an operation in the center: 13.f4!. Instead of 11...Ne8 Black can play the more cunning 11...Qc8 12.Kh2 Nh5, taking control of the f4-square, but even then White achieves a tangible advantage playing 13.Bg5! (for more details see the annotation to White's 10th move in game 147.

Thus, we come to the conclusion that it is necessary to reinforce the defense of the strategically important c5- and e5-pawns with the knight from d7. This is why Fischer moved his bishop to c8. By the way, there is one more reason why this square is better for the bishop, but we will talk about it later.

11.e4 Nd7 12.Nd3 f5 13.Bd2

13.f4!?, recommended by Efim Geller, is more dynamic.

13...Nf6 14.Kh2 c6

Active defense. Attacking White's center from both sides, Black makes it difficult to advance c4-c5 and f2-f4.

15.f3 Kh8

Petrosian admitted that he did not immediately understand the true meaning of this subtle move.

16.Rc1 b5!

Bringing to conclusion the plan started on the 10th move. White cannot save his central pawns, because in the variation 17.b3 bxc4 18.bxc4 cxd5 19.cxd5 Ba6! he comes under a nasty pin. It is this tactical opportunity that is the second reason that I previously mentioned for the "strange" retreat of the bishop to c8.

At this point White most likely has nothing. His position before the 11th move was so good that it begs the question, was it possible to play better?

17.cxb5 cxd5 18.exd5 Nfxd5 19.Nxd5 Nxd5 20.Nb4

Using the fact that the continuation 20...Nb6 21.Nc6 is not good for Black, Petrosian hurries to neutralize the strong d5-knight and the potentially dangerous central pawns.

20...Be6 21.Nxd5 Bxd5

The idea of the move ...Kh8 becomes clear: in the variations 22.Ba5?! Qxa5 23.Qxd5 a6 or 22.Bg5?! Qxg5 23.Qxd5 f4 (23...e4) the d5-bishop is captured without check, and Black seizes the initiative (indicated by Tigran Petrosian).

22.Bb4 Bxa2 23.Rc6

23.b3 Qb6! yields nothing, and the bishop on a2 cannot be trapped.

23...Bg8 24.Bxd6 Re8 25.Re1 Rc8 26.Bb4 Rb8

Of course, there is no reason for Black to take a risk trading on c6. Tigran Petrosian suggests the following

variations: 26...Rxc6?! 27.bxc6 Qb6 (27...Qc7 28.Qd7 Qxd7 29.cxd7 Rd8 30.Rd1 Be6 31.Rd6 Bxd7 32.Ba5) 28.Qd7 Rd8 29.Be7! or 28...Qxb4 29.Qxe8 Qxe1 30.c7 with a win (in the latter variation Black can still get a draw: 30...f4 31.gxf4 Bh6 – Igor Yanvarjov).

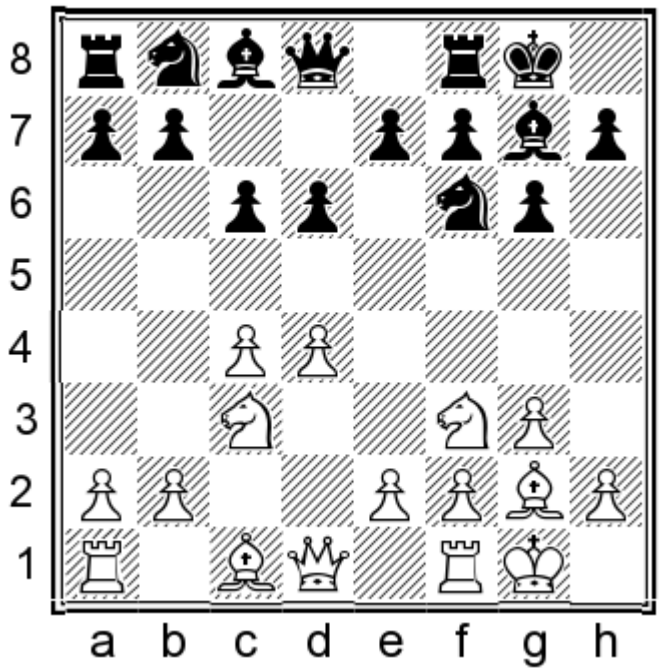
27.Qxd8

Petrosian could still try to fight for the advantage, keeping the queens, 27.Qe2, but Fischer's brilliant defense had its effect, so Petrosian decided to play for a draw.

27...Rexd8 28.Bc3 e4

Draw, because after 28...e4 29.Bxg7+ Kxg7 30.Rc7+ Kh8 31.fxe4 fxe4 there are very few pieces left on the board.

C9

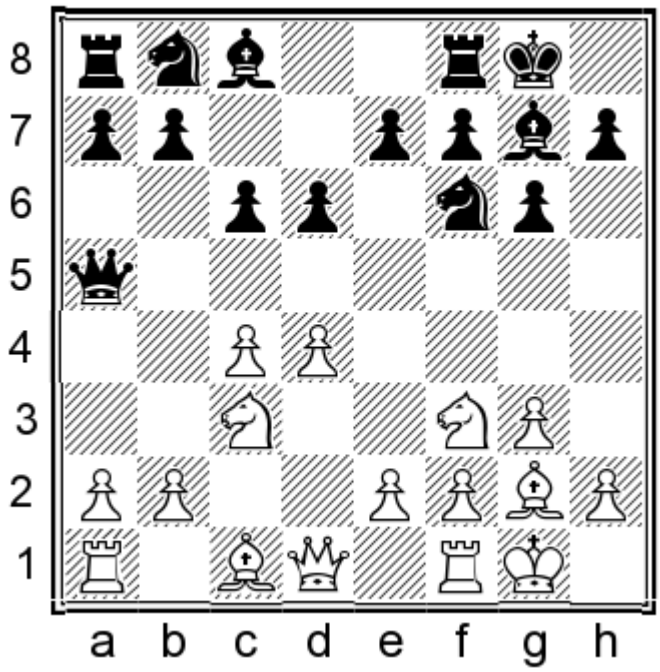


Black to move

The move 6...c6 (in connection with the queen move to a5) is another brainchild of Bronstein. It was first played in the early 1960s and later took an honorable place in the gallery of the most fashionable ideas in the King's Indian Defense. In this branch Black's strategic range is very wide: from challenging modifications of the main variation to primitive play based on the principle "take whatever you can and fight back."

(159) C9.1 **Naranja – Petrosian**
XVII Olympiad
Havana 1966

1.c4 g6 2.Nc3 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.g3 Nf6 5.Bg2 0-0 6.Nf3 c6 7.0-0 Qa5



So, Black has moved the queen in front of the pawn fence and is waiting to see what the opponent is going to do. According to theory, now White can choose between 8.e4 (in response to which he, however, has to take into account the immediate redeployment of the queen to the kingside, 8...Qh5), 8.d5, turning the light red for the queen but setting it to green for the King's Indian bishop, and with the prophylactic move 8.h3 (game 160).

The Philippine master apparently felt that he was insufficiently versed in the intricacies of this fashionable variation (after all, his opponent was the world champion), and decided to play a rare continuation that, as the development of the game shows, is not worse than the theoretical ones.

8.a3 Qh5

With an unequivocal threat to immediately take aim at the white king by ...Bh3 and ...Ng4.

9.h4 Qa5

Rushing home! Otherwise White would have played b2-b4, and Black's queen would have been in danger.

10.e4 Ng4

Again, played in the spirit of the variation, concretely and contrary to general principles. Undeterred by the loss of one more tempo, Black hinders the possible opening of the position by the move e4-e5 and simultaneously emphasizes the disadvantages of the rook pawn's advance.

11.b4 Qc7 12.Bb2 Nd7 13.Qe2 e5 14.Rad1 Re8

White has more space, but the position is complicated and much of the game still lies ahead.

Apparently, Naranja was planning a breakthrough in the center, but after arriving at this position, realized that nothing good for White will come out of either 15.c5 exd4 16.cxd6 Qxd6 17.Nxd4 Bxd4 18.Qxg4 Qe5 or the exchange 15.dxe5, because in response, Black will capture with the knight, occupying a virtually invincible position on e5.

Therefore, White changes his plan and advances the pawn to d5, hoping to take advantage of the tempi spent on the queenside in the future. Petrosian occupies the second line of defense similarly to his game against Flohr (game 123).

15.d5 c5 16.Rb1 b6 17.Nb5 Qb8 18.Nd2 Ngf6 19.Bc1

It is impossible to break the c5-pawn, and White plans to transfer the knight to b3 and the bishop on e3. A good maneuver, but it would probably have been more precise to play 19.Nb3 first.

19...Bh6! 20.Nb3 Bxc1 21.Rfxc1 Ba6 22.bxc5

If the exchange on the 20th move is somewhat justified, the hasty capture on c5 is clearly contrary to the spirit of the position and deserves reproach. After the correct 22.Bh3, White maintains pressure on the d7- and c5-squares and retains some advantage. But now Black solves all his problems.

22...Bxb5 23.cxb5 Nxc5 24.Nxc5 dxc5 25.Qf3 Qd6 26.Bf1 Qe7

Black's next few moves are easy to understand: the e8-rook frees up space for the knight, which will block the d5-pawn, and then, well, then we will see if ...c4 or ...f5 follows, depending on the setup of the rooks. Could White have countered this plan? I think so. Now he could play 27.a4 followed by Ra1 and a4-a5 to meet the arrival of the knight on d6 with counterplay along the a-file. But, alas, nothing like that crossed the Filipino's mind.

27.Bc4

What's the point? It is clear that, because of the scarcity of his remaining resources, sacrificing the d-pawn will be

futile.

27...Rf8 28.Rc3 Ne8 29.h5

This leads to the opening of the h-file for the black rooks! Generally, starting from the 27th move, White's moves demonstrated a lack of any plan.

29...Nd6 30.hxg6 hxg6 31.Qg4 Kg7 32.Bf1 Rh8 33.a4 Rh5 34.Bg2

After wandering, the bishop ingloriously returns home.

34...Rah8 35.Re1 Rh2 36.Rcc1 R8h6 37.f4 c4 38.Qf3 g5

Playing on the dark squares.

39.Qg4 R6h5 40.Re3?

The last mistake. After 40.Re2 White could still hold on, for example, 40...exf4 41.e5! or 40...Kf8 41.Bf3! R2h3 42.Bg2.

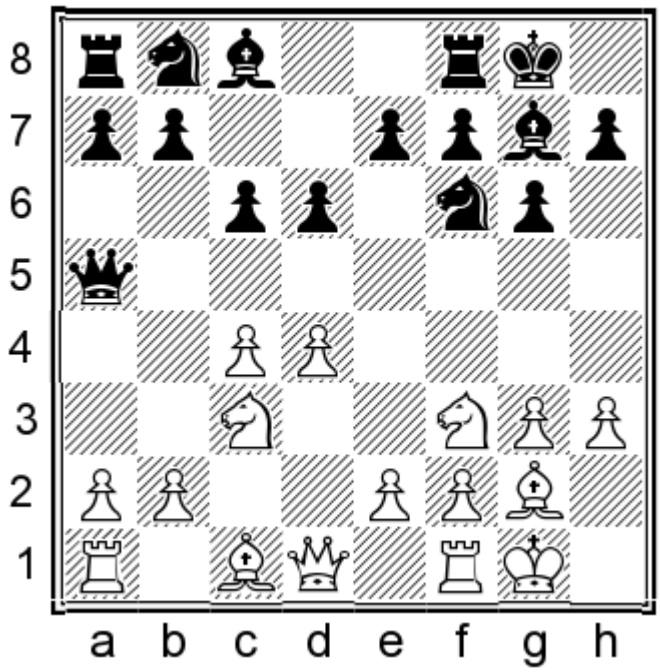
40...exf4 41.Re2

That's the point: there is no move e4-e5; 41.gxf4 R2h4 is also bad for White.

41...Qe5 42.Rce1 Kf8 43.Rf1 and White resigned without waiting for the opponent's reply.

(160) C9.2 **Marovic – Petrosian**
Amsterdam 1973

1.c4 g6 2.Nf3 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.g3 0-0 6.Bg2 c6 7.0-0 Qa5 8.h3



A solid continuation, intended primarily to prevent the aggressive 8...Qh5, which would be followed by 9.Ng5! with the extremely unpleasant threat Bf3.

8...Bf5

This is hardly the best move, but good enough to pose new, non-standard problems for the opponent. 8...Be6 or 8...e5 is more common. Theory suggests, for example, this variation: 8...e5 9.e4 exd4 10.Nxd4 Qc5!? and the defense of the c4-pawn is associated with certain disadvantages: 11.b3?! Nxe4! or 11.Qd3 Nbd7 (but not 11...Nxe4? 12.Nb3) with the threat of ...Ne5. The best reply for White is 11.Nb3, and then 11...Qxc4 12.Qxd6 with interesting play. But this does not suit Petrosian: the structure of the position erodes and it is too forced.

9.Nd2 e5 10.d5

After this Petrosian switches to a passive but sturdy structure, known to the reader from games 123 and 159.

10...c5 11.a3 Na6 12.e4 Bd7 13.Nb3 Qd8 14.Bg5 Qe8 15.Kh2 h5

With the idea of fighting for control over the dark squares via ...Nh7, ...Qd8, and ...h4 or ...Bf6, which is characteristic for this setup.

16.Re1 Nh7 17.Be3 Qd8 18.Nd2 b6

Deserving attention is 18...h4!?, for example, 19.gxh4 Qxh4 or 19.g4 Bf6 followed by ...B(N)g5. Perhaps Petrosian did not like 19.Nf3 hxg3+ 20.fxg3 f5 21.Qd2.

19.f4 h4 20.gxh4 Qxh4 21.Nf3

Strengthening the siege of the e5-pawn.

21...Qe7 22.Qd2 Rad8 23.fxe5 dxe5 24.Re2 Bc8 25.Nb5

As a result of his coherent strategy, White achieved an attractive position with a mobile central pawn. Black has to find a way to make the game sharper.

Below we quote Petrosian's annotations from the article *IBM and Its Companions* dedicated to the results of the Amsterdam tournament (it ended with the victory of Tigran Petrosian and the idiosyncratic Yugoslav grandmaster Albin Planinc).

25...f5 26.exf5 gxf5 27.d6 Qf6

"At the time, I recall, I was almost happy with the state of affairs. In particular, my opponent had very little time left. I will not say how much, although I would think that White had about two minutes left on his clock, or perhaps three..."

28.Bf2 e4 29.Bh4 Qg6

"29...Qh6 was perhaps better."

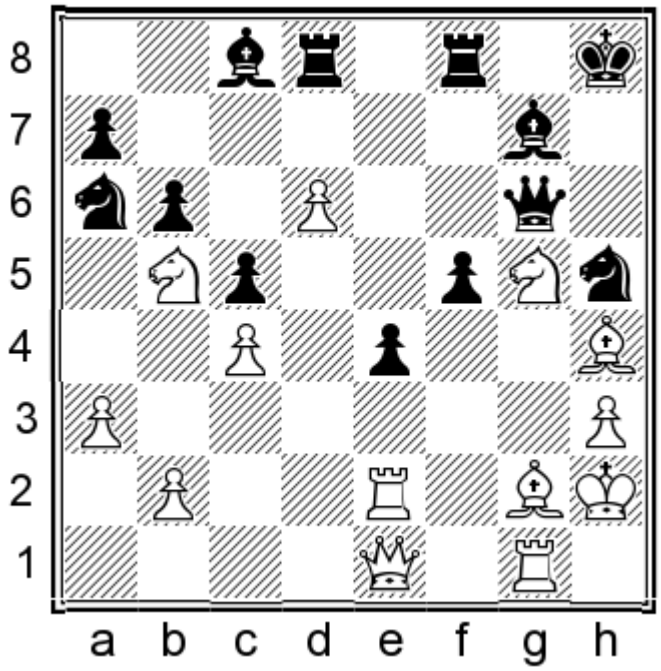
30.Ng5

30.Bxd8 would have been a mistake because of 30...Rxd8! (but not 30...exf3? 31.Bxf3 Rxd8 32.Rg1, etc.) 31.Ne1 Be5+ 32.Kh1 Qg3 33.Bf1 Bb7 with unclear play.

30...Nf6 31.Rg1!

"White brings up his last reserves to the part of the board where the crisis is imminent."

31...Kh8 32.Qe1 Nh5?



“Relying on the ‘terrible’ check at e5.” (Better was 32...Rde8 – Igor Yanvarjov).

33.Nxe4!

“An excellent blow! My forces are badly deployed, and White sacrifices a piece in order to disclose the tactical weaknesses in Black’s position. At the time I took this to be an act of desperation in time trouble, but after

33...fxe4 34.Bxe4 Qe6 35.Re3

I was surprised to find that things were so bad for me.”

35...Rde8 36.Be7 Rf5

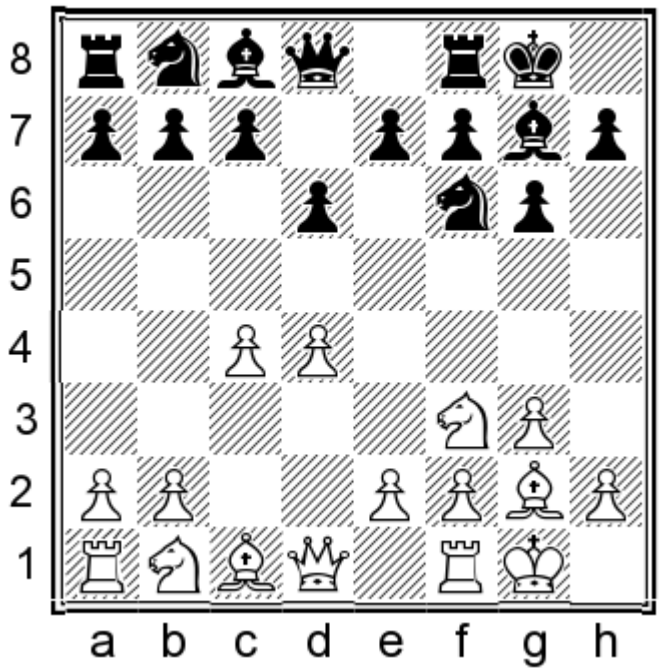
The following variation illustrates White’s tactical opportunities that could result if Black now played 36...Rg8. Then 37.Bg5! Qxc4 (37...Be5+ 38.Kh1 Qxc4 leads to the same position) 38.d7! Bxd7 (if 38...Qxb5, then 39.Qh4!) 39.Qh4 Qf7 40.Nd6! and White wins, for example, 40...Be5+ 41.Kh1 Bxd6 42.Bf6+!.

37.Bxf5 Qxf5 38.Rg5 Qf7 39.Qh4

“...and here I could have resigned, but, as happens in such cases, I looked closely at my opponent’s flag, felt angry that it had let me down, made the further moves [...] and only then recorded my zero in the tournament table.”

39...Kg8 40.Rxh5 Bxh3 41.Kxh3 Black resigned.

C10

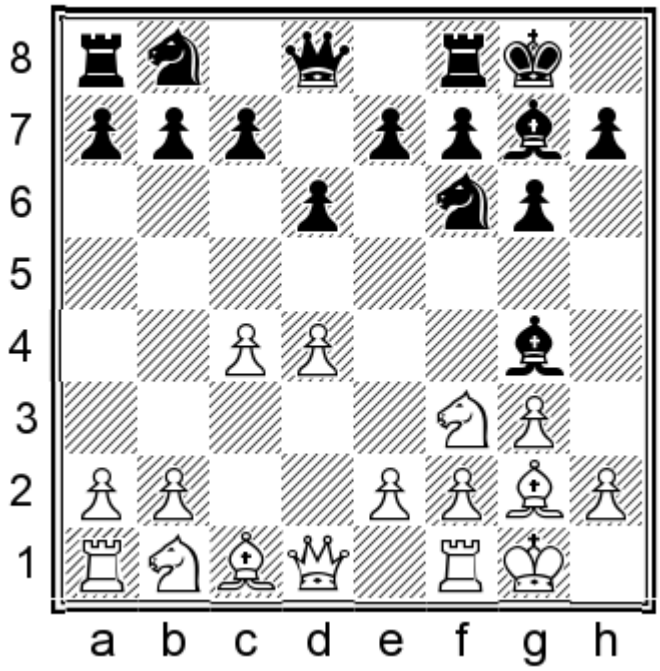


Black to move

Next we will look at several games with a late development of the white queen's knight. In some games the knight moved to d2 in order to strengthen the c4-pawn (game 162) or even to a3 (game 161).

(161) C10.1 **Szabo – Petrosian**
Bucharest 1953

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.c4 Bg4



Improvisation, so to speak. 7.Nbd2 mighthave been followed by 7...Qc8 with the ideas of ...Bh3 and ...c5.

7.h3 Bxf3 8.Bxf3 Nc6

Playing Nc3 now or on the next move, White could return to the currents of advantageous theoretical variations (for example, see game 154), but Szabo is also in a creative mood.

9.Bg2 Nd7 10.Be3

Since the white bishop left the f3-square, White could play 10.d5, striving to limit the mobility of the black knights. Szabo does not want to close the position and is waiting for Black to play ...e5 in order to open the diagonals for his bishops after exchanging on e5.

10...Nb6 11.Na3 e5 12.dxe5 Bxe5 13.Rb1 Re8 14.Qd2

White's plan includes the move b2-b3, but he cannot play it right away: 14.b3? Bxg3! 15.Bxb6 axb6, and the a3-knight falls under attack.

14...Qe7 15.Rfc1 Qe6

An inconspicuous but very important move. Holding the h3- and c4-pawns in its sights, the queen participates in the preparation of the advance ...d5. The tactical attempt 16.Nb5?! does not work because of 16...Nxc4!.

16.b3 Rad8 17.Nb5 d5!

Taking advantage of the tactical opportunity, 18.Bxb6 dxc4!, Black frees up the center and completely equalizes. Evidently, White should have played 17.Rd1 on the previous move.

18.c5 Nc8 19.Bf4 Rd7 20.Rd1 Red8 21.Bxe5 Qxe5 22.Nd4 N8e7

The last interesting moment of this short game. Could Black play for a win after accepting the sacrifice of the e2-pawn? I doubt it. After 22...Nxd4 23.Qxd4 Qxe2 24.Re1!, White's compensation is so significant that Black needs to think about saving the game, for example: 24...Qxa2 25.Rb2 Qa5 26.Rbe2 Rf8 (the only move) 27.b4 Qb5 28.Re8 Rd8 29.Rxd8 Rxd8 30.Bxd5 Qd7 31.Rd1 Re8 32.Qf4(f6), and so on.

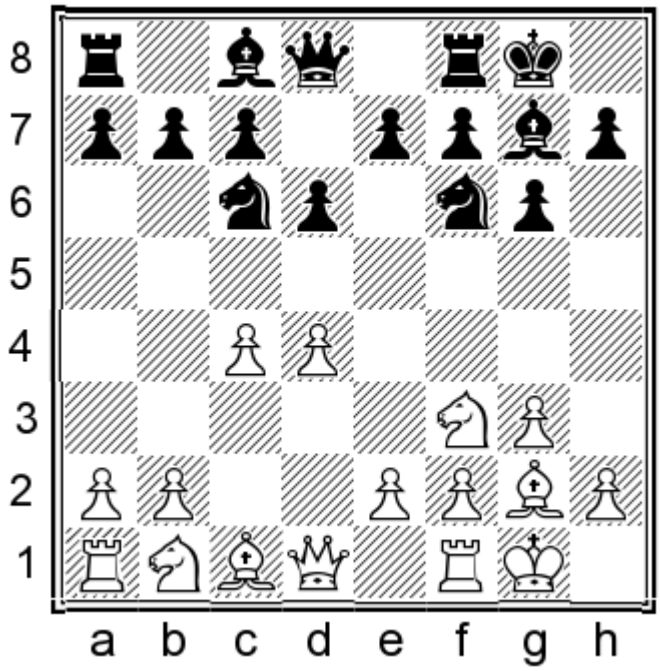
23.e3 Nxd4 24.Qxd4 Qe6 and the players agreed to a draw.

(162) C10.2 **Korchnoi – Petrosian**
21st USSR Championship
Kiev 1954

This is the first game between these two eminent players (excluding the very first one, at the All- Union Youth Tournament in 1946, which Petrosian won).

The choice of opening undoubtedly testifies to Petrosian's fighting mood. Korchnoi "guessed" the variation correctly and gained the advantage as a reward for his insight. Having exhausted all the resources after an exciting but not flawless fight, the opponents signed a peace treaty.

1.c4 Nf6 2.g3 g6 3.Bg2 Bg7 4.d4 0-0 5.Nf3 d6 6.0-0 Nc6



7.d5 Na5 8.Nbd2

If he wanted to, White could have transposed into the theoretical straits of the Yugoslav variation via 8.Nfd2 c5 9.Nc3 a6 (see tabiya C4). But Korchnoi had something else in mind. He chose the structure with the queen's knight on d2, which is quite dangerous and has many supporters, even though it is believed that it does not give White anything substantial. Of course, the knight is more active on the c3-square, but there it can be attacked by the g7-bishop. Also, now White has no problems defending the c4-pawn.

8...c5 9.e4 a6

Petrosian loved well-prepared undermining moves. More impatient players would have probably preferred 9...Rb8 with the idea of ...b5 or even the immediate 9...b5, and if 10.cxb5, then 10...Rb8, sacrificing a pawn in the spirit of the Benko Gambit for a long-term initiative. By the way, note that nowadays this is how Black most often plays; however, this is explained not by temperament but rather by considerable preparatory work and deep analytical knowledge.

10.Rb1 b5 11.b3 Rb8

Threatening the move ...bxc4. The immediate exchange on c4, which would be quite useful and even desirable when the knight is on c3, is clearly weaker here. For example, 11...bxc4 12.bxc4 Bd7 13.Bb2, and the advantages of the knight's position on d2 begin to take effect: while the c4-pawn is well-protected and it is difficult for Black to create active play, White has a clear plan for many moves to improve his position: Qc2, Ne1-d3, and so on.

12.cxb5 axb5 13.b4 cxb4

Again a decision typical of Petrosian. He avoids the unsteady pawn structures, or in this case hanging pawns, that could be the result of the variation 13...Nc4 14.bxc5 Nxd2 15.Nxd2 dxc5 16.Qc2. Black preferred to agree to an isolated b-pawn in order to keep the main pawn frame and a strategically clear position.

14.Rxb4 e5

This is necessary in order to stop the white knight from accidentally-on-purpose moving to c6.

15.Re1 Bd7 16.Bf1 Ne8 17.Nb3 Nxb3 18.Rxb3 Qe7

A barely noticeable inaccuracy, allowing White to seize the initiative – an instructive example. 18...Nc7 is more prudent.

19.a4! Nc7 20.axb5 Nxb5 21.Bg5 f6 22.Be3 Nc7 23.Qb1 Rxb3 24.Qxb3 f5 25.Ra1

A middlegame position typical for this opening. Petrosian begins activity directly in the vicinity of the opponent's king, and Korchnoi, after eliminating the pawns on the queenside, planned a workaround: to break in on the seventh rank with his pieces and head towards the king.

25...f4 26.Bb6 Rb8 27.Ra7 Na8

The best move. 27...Ne8 losses because of 28.gxf4 exf4 29.e5! (indicated by Alexander Konstantinopolsky)

28.Bh3 Nxb6 29.Bxd7 Kh8

The short tactical skirmish resulted in a very interesting position with mutual pins of the b6-knight and the d7-bishop. Black's attempt to cut this knot immediately would have been a serious mistake: 29...Nxd7? 30.Qxb8+!.

30.Qb5

After this, Black, exploiting a momentary lack of protection of the knight, has counterplay along the f-file. The prudent 30.Kg2 would have preserved some of White's initiative.

30...fxg3 31.hxg3 Qf6 32.Kg2 Rf8

Petrosian is too old a fox to be easily snared. After 32...Nxd7 33.Qxd7 Rf8 34.Kh3! White regains the advantage.

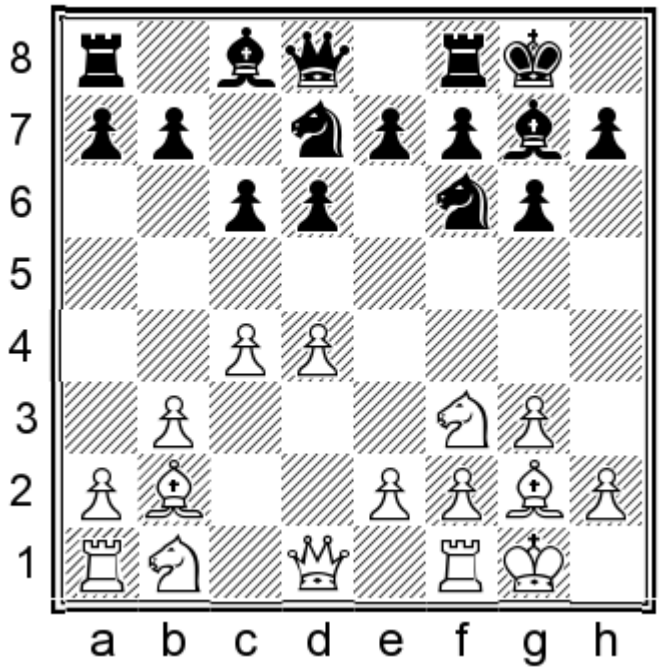
33.Bg4 Nc8 34.Ra8 Ne7 35.Rxf8+ Bxf8 36.Be6 Ng8

Black has protected everything; it is time to accept a draw.

37.Qb8 Kg7 38.Nd2 Qe7 39.Nc4 Nf6 40.Kf3 h5 Draw.

(163) C10.3 **Füster – Petrosian**
Interzonal Tournament
Portorož 1958

1.d4 d6 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.b3 g6 4.g3 Bg7 5.Bb2 0-0 6.Bg2 c6 7.0-0 Nbd7 8.c4



Regarding the peculiar opening of this game, it should be noted that the g3, b3-systems have always been a part of the King's Indian, but they have never been particularly popular because of their passivity and slow pace. Also, the bishop opposition on the long diagonal probably poses a greater risk for White than for Black.

8...Re8

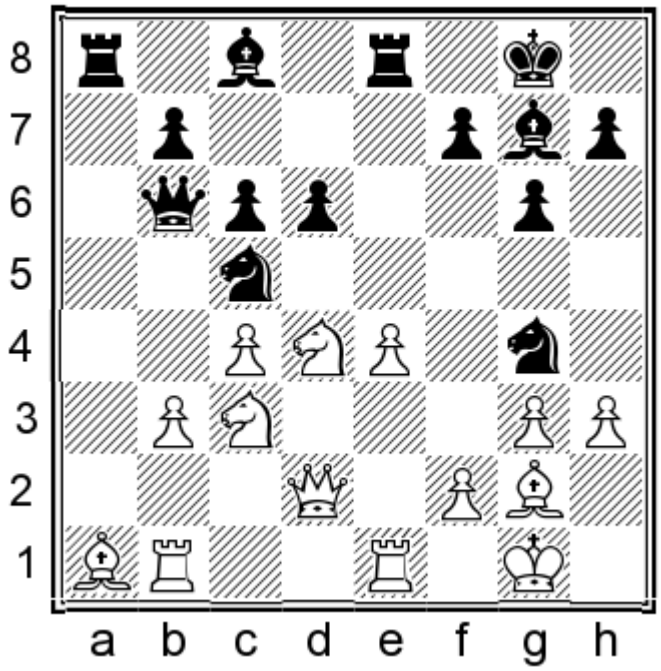
The move ...e5 does not work yet because White would take twice on e5 with the pawn and the knight and win a pawn. However, it is unclear which move to make. After 9.Na3, the continuation 9...e5 (10.dxe5 dxe5 11.Nxe5 Ng4 12.Nd3 Bxb2 13.Nxb2 Qe7) is already possible. 9.d5 looks dubious because of 9...cxd5 10.cxd5 Qa5!. And surely not 9.a3?!.

9.Nc3 e5 10.e4

Black threatened the stereotypical invasion ...e4-e3. The easiest way to refute this threat is 10.e3. But White, advancing the e-pawn two squares, dares after all to send his ship into the turbulent waters of the main variation.

10...exd4 11.Nxd4 Qb6

Following the classical games. The reader might have already guessed that we are talking about the famous game Zita-Bronstein (Prague 1946), in which exactly the same position occurred. That game continued 12.Qd2 Nc5 13.Rfe1 a5 14.Rab1 a4 15.Ba1 axb3 16.axb3 Ng4 17.h3



And now a stunning cascade of sacrifices followed: 17...Rxa1! 18.Rxa1 Nxf2!! (“As in billiards, where a blow to the top of the pyramid often puts two balls into the corner pockets at the same time, so here the pressure of the g7-bishop on the d4-knight allows for a variety of blows on the f2- and a1-squares, and, of course, against the king on g1,” David Bronstein) 19.Re3 (also bad is 19.Kxf2 Nxb3; 19.Qxf2 Nd3) 19...Nxh3+ 20.Kh2 Nf2! 21.Rf3 Ncxe4 22.Qf4 Ng4+ 23.Kh1 f5 24.Nxe4 Rxe4 25.Qxd6 Rxd4, and Black soon won.

I would like to add that 1946 was an unusually “fruitful” year for both Bronstein and for the development of the ideas of the King’s Indian Defense. Remember that in the same Prague- Moscow match David Ionovich Bronstein was able to defeat Ludek Pachman with just as spectacular and original a combination. Both games were published around the world in the chess publications and attracted attention to and interest in this stillexotic opening. Then there was another, littleknown, game against Baturinsky in the Moscow Championship, which, incidentally, matches the game against Zita through the 12th move. There White, instead of 13.Rfe1, moved 13.Rae1, but after 13...a5 14.Nc2 Be6 15.Ba1 a4 16.b4 Ncd7 17.Ne3 Ne5 18.Rb1 Nxc4 19.Nxc4 Bxc4 20.Rfc1 Bronstein was able to demonstrate that Black’s chances were not only to attack the king: 20...a3! 21.Qxd6 Red8 22.Qc5 Qxc5 23.bxc5 Nd7, and Black converted his advantage in the endgame.

The reader may ask, what does all this have to do with the game Füster-Petrosian? It is directly related. Without a doubt, the associations connected with these, and probably not only with these, games influenced the opponents one way or another. I do not know whether they helped Petrosian, but I am sure Füster was not very pleased, because he quickly changed his tune.

12.Na4

Many of White’s troubles in these games are explained by the unfortunate position of the queen. Füster planned to move it to the c2-square, which is more common for such positions, so he first protects the d4-knight. But this is not necessary. As Efim Geller later pointed out, it was possible (and necessary!) to play 12.Qc2 right away, and the knight is invincible: 12...Qxd4? 13.Na4!.

12...Qa5 13.Re1 a6 14.Qc2 c5

With a large number of pieces, Black is not afraid to weaken the d5- and d6-squares. Instead, he gains active opportunities associated with the undermining move ...b5 and the maneuver ...Ne5-c6.

15.Ne2 Ra7

At the moment, it was not easy to decide where Black might need the rook in the future. I think that it would be

better positioned on the b-file.

16.Nac3 b5 17.cxb5 axb5 18.a4!?

Probably Petrosian was counting on 18.Nf4 b4 19.Ncd5 g5 20.Nxf6+ Nxf6 21.Nd5 Nxd5 22.exd5 Rae7! (this is one of the ideas of his 15th move), and Black, controlling the e-file, is slightly better. By advancing the rook pawn, Füster takes away several of Black's trump cards. Since 18...b4 is not good because of 19.Nb5 Ra6 20.Rad1, Black is forced to agree to the exchange of the b-pawn, as well as the rook, which had an important role in the attack on the queenside.

18...bxa4 19.Rxa4 Qb6 20.Rxa7 Qxa7 21.Rd1

Who has the advantage? There are pros and cons to both White and Black's positions. The wellknown formula of dynamic equilibrium is the most suitable for such positions.

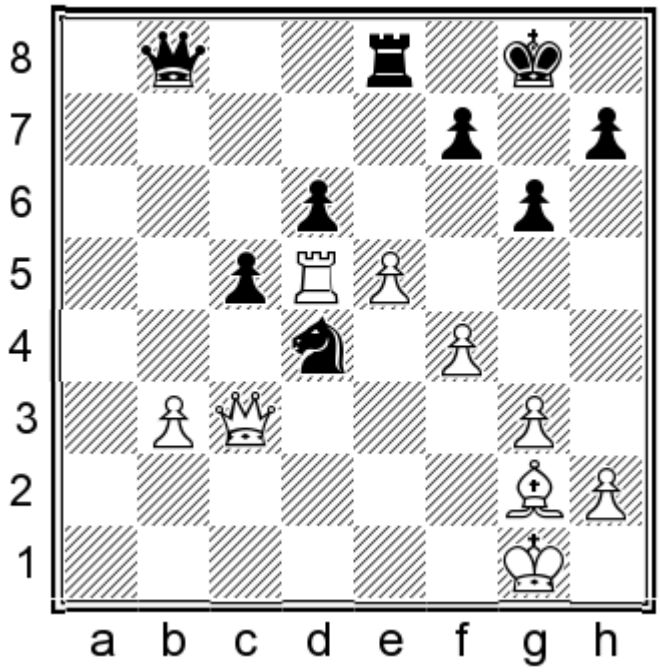
21...Qb8 22.Nf4 Ne5 23.Ncd5

Taking control of the d5-square is advantageous for White in two cases: if a knight is able to take foothold there or if an exchange on this square will give White a specific advantage. In this position White has neither, and the operation instigated by White leads to further simplification of the play.

23...Bg4 24.Nxf6+ Bxf6 25.Nd5 Bg7 26.Rd2 Be6 27.f4 Bxd5

Gradually, the struggle intensifies and both opponents must make only moves.

28.Rxd5 Nc6 29.Bxg7 Kxg7 30.Qc3+ Kg8 31.e5 Nd4



32.Kh1?!

The appearance of the knight on d4 with the threat of the fork ...Ne2+ (most likely this was all going on in time trouble) makes Füster panic, and he makes several mistakes in a row. The cold-blooded 32.Bf1 dxe5 33.Rxc5 maintained the balance.

32...dxe5 33.Rxc5 exf4! 34.Qxd4 Re1+ 35.Bf1 Rxf1+ 36.Kg2 Re1 37.Rd5?!

Misplaced activity. Also not good is 37.Qxf4 because of 37...Qa8+! (but not 37...Qxb3 38.Rc8+ Kg7 39.Qd4+ Kh6 with a draw) 38.Kh3 Re2 with a growing attack. Correct was 37.gxf4!.

37...Re2+ 38.Kf3

Desperation. More stubborn is 38.Kh3 Re8 39.Qxf4, striving for theoretically drawn positions with pawns on one flank.

38...Re8 39.b4 fxg3 40.hxg3 Qb7 41.Kf2 Qe7 42.Qd2 Qf6+ 43.Kg2 Re4 44.b5 h5 45.Rd6 Qe5 46.Rd5

Defending against the checkmating attack and the threats 47...Re2+ and 47...Qxb5, White allows a transition into a hopeless rook endgame.

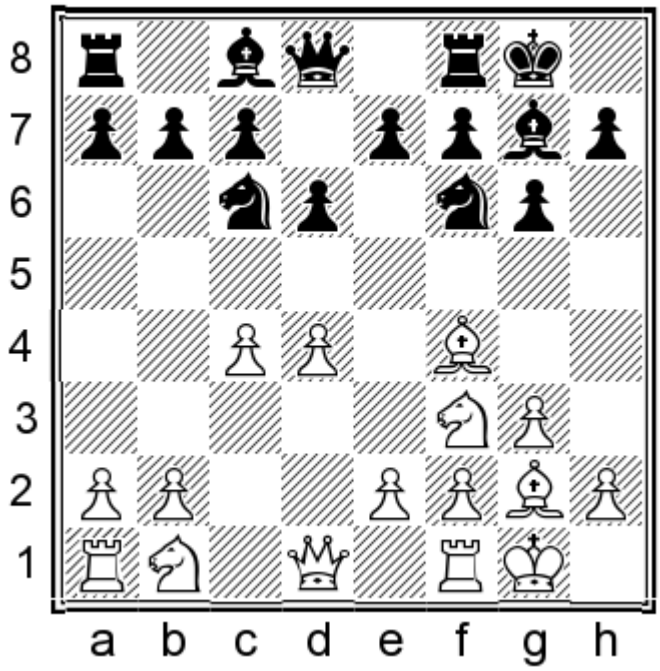
46...Re2+ 47.Kf1 Rxd2 48.Rxe5 Rd3 49.b6?

The last mistake, resulting in the loss of a second pawn. 49.Kf2 prolongs resistance.

49...Rb3 50.Re8+ Kg7 51.Rb8 Rxg3 White resigned.

(164) C10.4 **Romanishin – Petrosian**
44th USSR Championship
Moscow 1976

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.Nf3 d6 6.0-0 Nc6 7.Bf4



The Ukrainian grandmaster is known for his original research of openings. In this game, he remained true to himself, surprising the opponent (and, probably, many of the spectators) with a novel move. In this case, however, Romanishin's novelty was unsuccessful, as the position of the bishop on f4 does not make it difficult to play ...e5, but only contributes to Black's helpful advance.

7...Ng4!

A dynamic maneuver that we often see in Isaac Boleslavsky's early games that is characteristic of many King's Indian variations. By the way, Black threatens (for example, in case of 8.Nc3) 8...Nxd4! 9.Nxd4 e5!.

8.h3 e5 9.Bg5 Nf6 10.Nc3 Nxd4 11.Nxd4 exd4 12.Qxd4 h6 13.Bd2

Probably the only acceptable reply.

13...Bf5

With the threat of ...Ne4. Obviously, Black has achieved at least equality.

14.Qf4 c6 15.Rad1

White dreams of an advantage that he cannot possibly have. The careless text move gives Black the decisive initiative. Better is 15.e4 with equal chances.

Now with a subtle maneuver Petrosian finds the main defect of White's setup: a lack of coordination and the exposed position of the queen.

15...Bc2! 16.Rc1 g5 17.Qf3 Bg6 18.Rfd1

Apparently, here White should have played 18.e4. After Black's next response White no longer has time to reinforce the central squares, and his position begins to rapidly deteriorate.

18...Re8 19.g4

A natural desire to loosen the tightening noose at least a little.

19...Ne4 20.Be1 Re6 21.e3 Nc5 22.Bf1 a5 23.b3 Qe7 24.Qg2 f5

Black achieved a strategic victory. His wellcoordinated bishops on neighboring diagonals, in conjunction with the active c5-knight and the pressure from the major pieces along the e-file, cuts through White's position like a ripe watermelon. In addition, with his last move Petrosian proceeds to attack on the kingside. To his credit, Romanishin does not lose his hope in this difficult moment, and finds pretty much the only opportunity to continue the fight: the exchange sacrifice.

25.Ne2 fxg4 26.hxg4 Bb2 27.Rb1 Bxb1 28.Rxb1 Be5

Restricting the possible routes of the white knight.

29.Rd1 Rf8 30.Nd4

The knight makes for the f5-square and has to be eliminated.

30...Bxd4 31.Rxd4 Re5 32.Qh3 Rf6 33.Rd1 Qf8

Black is up a full exchange. However, the conversion of the advantage is associated with certain difficulties caused by the semi-closed nature of this position and White's bishop pair. Petrosian begins a complicated maneuver with the goal of making White advance his central pawns and obtaining outposts for the knight.

34.Bg2 Ne4 35.f3 Nc5 36.e4 Ne6 37.Qg3

Planning Bc3. It does not work right now because of the *zwischenzug* ...Nf4, with an attack on the queen and the threat ...Ne2+.

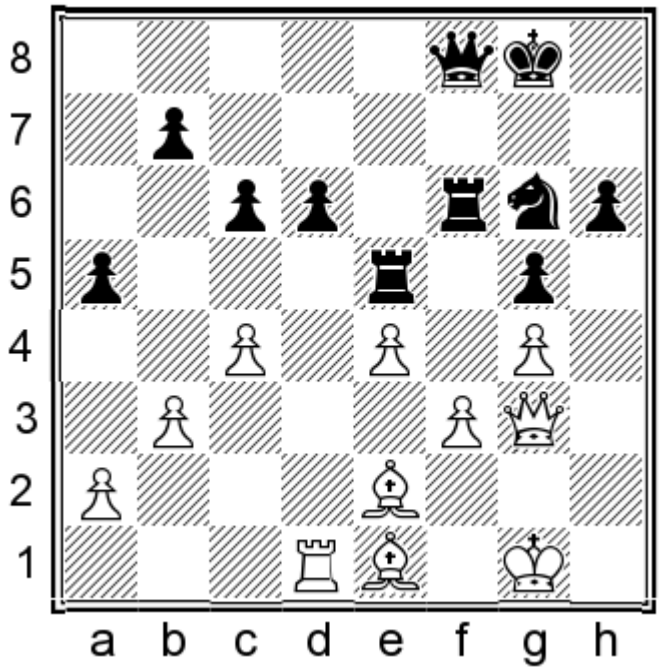
37...Nf4 38.Bf1 Ng6

Before the time control, Black of course does not want to make committing decisions and sticks with cautious play but later gives his opponent an opportunity to create counterplay. So a natural question arises: Would not it have been better to work on opening the lines immediately? In the press center of the tournament there was a lively discussion about the continuation 38...h5 with a curious idea: in case of, for example, 39.Bc3 h4 40.Qe1 Ng6

41.Be2, make a double exchange sacrifice: 41...Rxf3!! 42.Bxf3 Qxf3 43.Bxe5 Nxe5 and so on. In the end, the consensus ruled that White would lose here. But firstly, this variation is far from obvious, and secondly, the position is not limited to just this variation. For example, instead of 39.Bc3, possible is 39.gxh5 Nxh5 40.Qg4, and the situation remains tense: after 40...Rh6 or 40...Nf4, quite unpleasant for Black is 41.Bc3, and 40...Qf7 might have been followed by 41.c5 with the idea of Bc4.

In short, up to a certain point, Petrosian played quite well, and made a mistake later.

39.Be2



39...Re7

An inaccuracy which began a series of misadventures that pursued Black almost for the rest of the game. As soon became clear, Petrosian did not guess the correct rook setup. Correct is 39...Rf7! 40.Bc3 Nf4 41.Bf1 Re6, planning to counter 42.Bxa5 with 42...Qa8!, and the queen invades the enemy's camp with devastating effect.

40.Bc3 Nf4

Probably Petrosian had planned 40...Ne5, but now he noticed that it can be followed by 41.c5 (41...Nxf3+?! 42.Kh1!), and switched to the backup plan with the move ...Nf4.

41.Bf1 b6

Now it is obvious that the rook's position on f6 is poor because it is overloaded by the defense of the d6- and f4-squares. For example, 41...Rfe6 42.Bxa5 Qa8, and White has the reply 43.Bd2 Qxa2 44.Bxf4 gxf4 45.Qxf4 with unclear play. Black makes the wise decision to return the exchange and to continue fighting with some positional advantage. In fact, at this point, it s like a new game begins, which each of the opponents starts with new hopes.

42.c5!?

A clever resource that Petrosian apparently missed in his home analysis.

42...bxc5 43.Bxf6 Qxf6 44.Qe1 Qe5 45.Qd2 d5 46.Qxa5 Ne6 47.Bg2 d4 48.Qa8+

Passionate disregard! Romanishin takes the poisoned pawn and again finds himself in a lost position. It looks like

when he was choosing this move, the time on the clock was his only consideration. Apparently Petrosian had very little time left because what happened next, he could not possibly have imagined even in his worst nightmare.

48...Kg7 49.Qxc6 Qg3 50.Qb5 Nf4 51.Qf1 h5!?

After 51...Nh3+ 52.Kh1 Nf2+ and 53...Nxd1 Black would have won the exchange for the second time in this game, but the text move is also very good.

52.gxh5 g4 53.Rd2

No better is 53.fxg4 because of 53...Rf7.

53...Rf7

Why not 53...gxf3 54.Qxf3 Qe1+ and 55...Qxd2?

54.Kh1 Nxh5

The “wonders” continue. After 54...Qh4+ 55.Kg1 gxf3 56.Bxf3 (or 56.Qxf3 Qe1+) 56...Nh3+ 57.Kg2 Ng5 Black wins a piece.

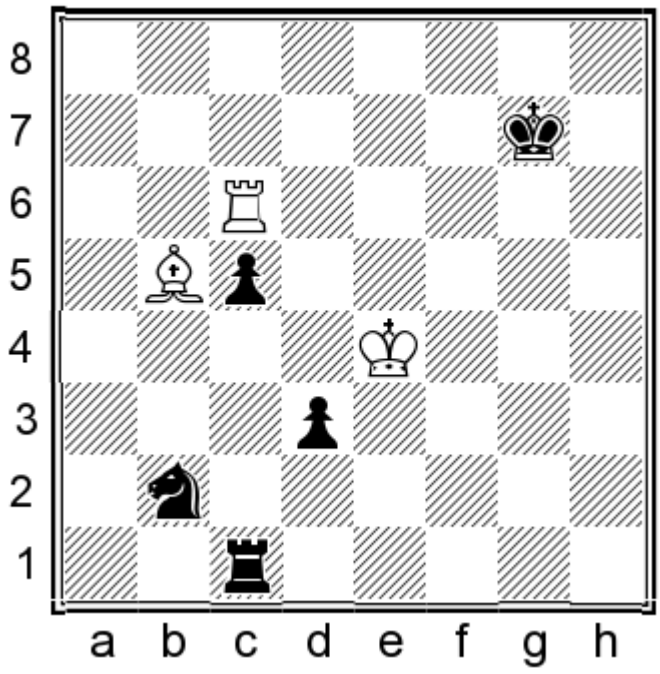
55.Qf2 gxf3 56.Bf1 Qxf2?

With this move Black passed the time control. If Petrosian had kept the queens on the board, White could have just resigned with a clear conscience.

57.Rxf2 Ng3+ 58.Kh2 Nxe4 59.Rc2 Nc3 60.Kg3 f2 61.a4 Rb7 62.Kf4 Rxb3 63.Rxf2

Even after missing so many opportunities, Black retains a considerable advantage. In a last-ditch effort, Romanishin trades the pawns and activates his king.

63...Kf6 64.Rh2 Nxa4 65.Rh6+ Kg7 66.Rc6 Rc3 67.Ke4 Rc1 68.Bd3 Nb2 69.Bb5 d3



70.Rd6

Both opponents grow tired. Romanishin misses an interesting opportunity to complicate his opponent’s task:

70.Bxd3!?. To win the position resulting from the virtually forced variation 70...Re1+ 71.Kd5 Nxd3 72.Rc7+ Kf6 73.Kc4 Re3 (or 73...Rd1) 74.Rh7, Black would have to find some study-like way.

70...c4 71.Ke3 c3!

The blockade has finally been broken, and the pawns are rushing to become queens.

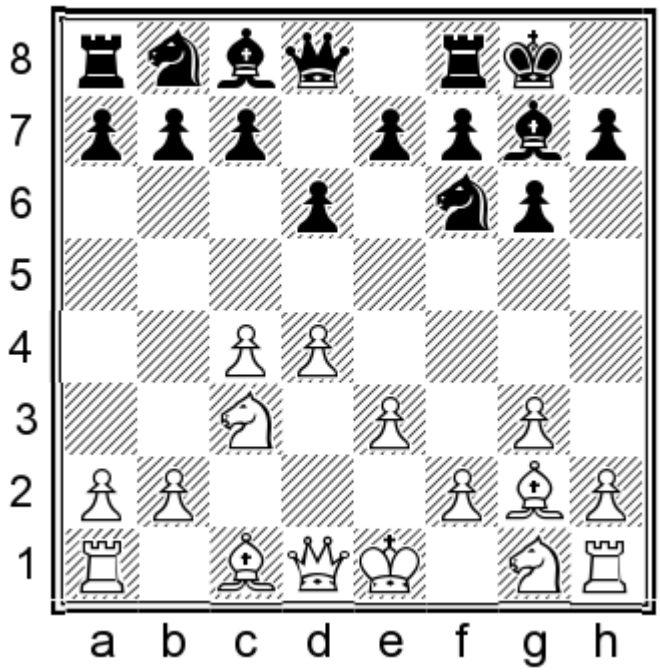
72.Rd7+

Hopeless is 72.Bxd3 Nxd3 73.Rxd3 (73.Kxd3 Rd1+) 73...Re1+ followed by c2-c1=Q.

72...Kf6 73.Bxd3 Nxd3 74.Kd4 White resigned. A thriller with a happy end.

In conclusion, we will discuss another rare system in which White combines the fianchetto with the move e2-e3 and the development of the knight to e2. Its idea is to defend the d4-pawn and not block the diagonal for the g2-bishop. According to Botvinnik, who played this variation in his match against Smyslov (Moscow 1954), with precise play Black does not experience any problems.

C10*

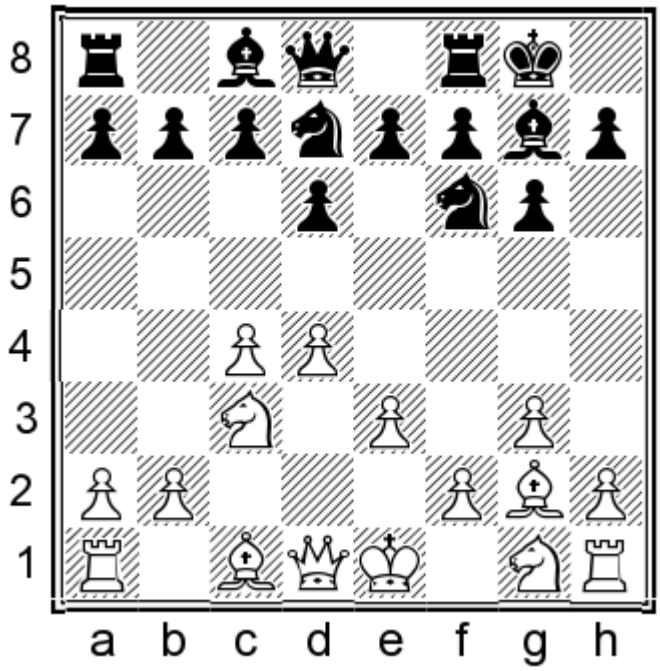


Black to move

(165) C10*.1 **Petrosian – Spassky**
World Championship Match, 24th game
Moscow 1966

This was a game of honor. Trailing by a point, Spassky could not possibly win the chess crown, but he had a chance to draw the match, which would be a certain personal success.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.Nc3 d6 6.e3 Nbd7



7.Nge2

As we have already mentioned, such a modest development is not intended to gain an opening advantage, and the epicenter of the battle moves to the middlegame.

7...a6

7...e5 is more solid, but Spassky is in no hurry to make this move, hoping to start active play on the queenside first. 7...c6 is also not bad (see the next game).

8.b3 Rb8 9.a4

A good move: the weakening of the b4-square is not so significant, but the advance ...b5 is now impossible, and Black is forced to look for other opportunities.

9...a5

Better is 9...e5, as Smyslov played against Botvinnik in the 18th game of the 1954 match. After 10.Ba3 b6 11.0-0 Bb7 12.d5 a5 13.e4 Nc5 14.Qc2 h5 the opponents had equal chances.

10.Ba3 c6 11.0-0 Qc7 12.Qd2 Re8 13.Rac1 Ra8 14.Rfd1

Petrosian is playing in his usual unhurried manner. As Yuri Averbakh pointed out, he could have prepared for activity on the kingside by immediately playing 14.h3 and then Kh2 and f2-f4. Petrosian returned to this plan a bit too late.

14...Nb8

And the knight gears up. Black is planning to transfer it to b4.

15.h3 Na6 16.Kh2 h5 17.f4 Nb4

The knight arrived on schedule to the intended square, but what can Black do next?

18.Rf1

Trying to create pressure along the f-file. According to grandmaster Salo Flohr, who loved this type of position, here it would be great to play 18.d5 and then e3-e4.

18...e5 19.fxe5 dxe5 20.d5 Rd8

20...h4 21.g4 Bxg4 22.hxg4 Nxg4+ 23.Kh1 Bh6, as suggested by Vladimir Simagin, leads to significant complications. But, as Yuri Averbakh correctly pointed out, White does not have to go for these complications and, by playing 21.Rcd1, can retain a steady advantage.

21.e4 Nd7

Spassky again refrains from the cavalry attack, 21...h4 22.g4 Bxg4, and continues to coolly maneuver, apparently believing that there is no reason to resort to extreme measures.

22.Rb1 Nc5 23.Na2 Nba6

Black has to retreat. White clearly has the advantage.

24.Qe3 Qb6

Of course, Black saw that he could also protect the knight with the pawn: 24...b6, but he was afraid to lose control of the d5-square, where the white knight would have immediately rushed: 25.Nec3! .

25.Nec1!

A very strong albeit forced move, stopping any aggression by Black. White seems to sacrifice a pawn...

During the match, Mikhail Tal wrote that “Tigran Petrosian never sacrifices anything to anyone for free.” Indeed, capturing the a4-pawn now was fraught with great danger for Black. For example, 25...Nxa4 26.Qf3!, possibly followed by 26...Rd7 27.Nd3 N4c5 28.Qf2 Bf8 29.Nxe5 or 26...f6 27.Nd3 N4c5 28.Nxe5! fxe5 29.Qf7+ Kh7 30.Rf6! with an extremely strong attack. (These variations were suggested by Averbakh.)

25...Qa7 26.Nd3 Nxd3 27.Qxd3 Re8 28.Rb2

White has a strong passed d-pawn and good perspectives for an attack. Therefore, Petrosian tries to avoid trading queens in the future.

28...Nc5 29.Qe3 Nd7 30.Qc1

White retained the advantage in all cases, but the most energetic and decisive continuation was certainly the one recommended by Flohr: 30.Qg5 followed by Rbf2.

30...Qb6 31.Rbf2 f6

“It is clear that 31...Qxb3? is not a good move. It can be refuted by 32.Rf3 Qxa4 (32...Qxa2 33.R1f2 – Igor Yanvarjov) 33.Rxf7 or even by the immediate 32.Rxf7.” (Salo Flohr)

32.Rf3 Qd8 33.Nc3 Nf8 34.Qc2

Also deserving attention is 34.Rd1!?, as indicated by Flohr: the opposition of the rook and the queen is extremely unpleasant for Black. 34.Rd3, with the same idea, is also pretty good. Contrary to the opinion of many commentators, in this case weak is 34...Ne6? 35.dxe6! Qxd3 36.Rd1!, and the queen is trapped.

34...Nh7 35.Rd3 Qc7 36.Qe2 Bh6 37.h4 Bf8 38.d6

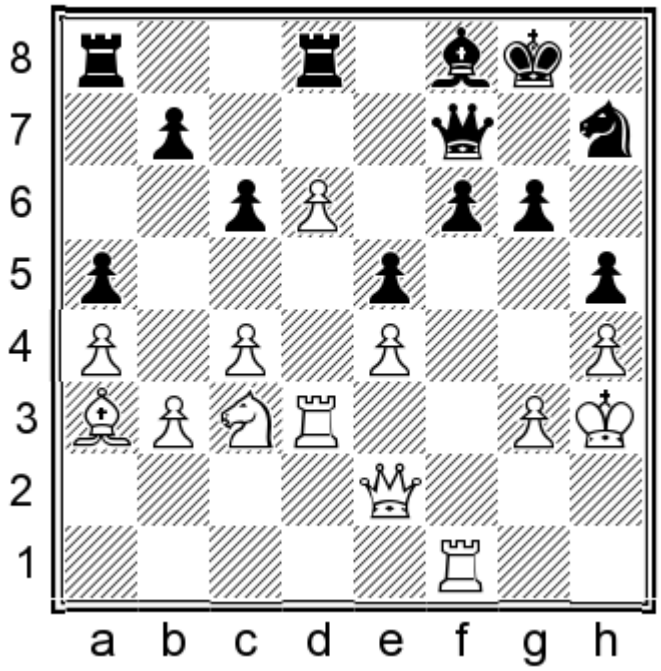
A committing move. All commentators agreed that the simple 38.Bxf8 was stronger.

White still has an advantage, but now Black gets a break and the e6-square for maneuvering, which is quite important. Thus, there is at least some play. Petrosian could have advanced his pawn to d6 a long time ago, and made up his mind to do it when he had very little time left on the clock.

38...Qf7 39.Bh3

“The audience saw for the last time that the red indicator lit up on Petrosian’s clock. That meant: beware, only 60 seconds remain!” (Salo Flohr)

39...Bxh3 40.Kxh3 Red8



In this position the game was adjourned. Judging by Black's last move (according to Flohr, 40...b6 also deserved attention), Spassky was not afraid of 41.c5, which was the move that Petrosian actually recorded.

The adjourned position is very complicated, and it is difficult to accurately evaluate it. Averbakh, for example, believed that White retained some advantage, while Flohr thought the advantage had been lost and chances were about equal. As it turned out later, Petrosian and Boleslavsky's evaluation of the adjourned position was closer to Averbakh's, while Spassky and Bondarevsky thought that Black's position was better but a draw was most likely.

41.c5 Qe6+

Bad is 41...Qxb3 because of 42.Nd5!.

42.Kg2 Bh6 43.Nd1 Nf8 44.Nb2 Nd7 45.Rdf3 Qg4

I share the opinion of Averbakh, who believed that this active maneuver only worsens Black's position. More solid is 45...Rf8, and if 46.Qc4, then 46...Kf7.

46.Qc4+ Kg7 47.Nd3

"Spassky probably thought that Petrosian was going to transfer the knight to the strong c4-square. But this knight is more secure on d3. The world champion has an excellent command of the art of placing the pieces on the most convenient squares!" (Salo Flohr).

47...Re8 48.Rb1

"In the midst of the battle, both grandmasters did not see the extremely powerful move 48.Bb2!. If, for example, 48...Qe6, then 49.Nxe5! Nxe5 50.Qxe6 Rxe6 51.Rxf6!. Because of the threat of 49.Nxe5 Black had no other defense than the undesirable continuation 48...g5."

Flohr's comment is generally correct, but needs a little explanation. After 48...Rf8, White, of course, should not take on e5 with the knight: the modest 49.Nf2! wins. In case of 48...Kh7, the exchange sacrifice 49.Rxf6! Nxf6 50.Rxf6 leads to a position with an overwhelming advantage for White.

It's hard to tell how Spassky would react to 48.Bb2!. But after the world champion did not use this great opportunity, capricious Caissa almost played a trick on him.

48...Qe6

White’s queen occupies a very good position, so Black agrees to exchange queens.

49.Qxe6 Rxe6

According to eyewitnesses, here Spassky declined a draw proposal, to the world champion’s surprise. Petrosian thought that after the queen exchange only White could have an advantage. This rattled Petrosian so much that he started playing poorly. Spassky, on the other hand, played the next part of the game very inventively and had real winning chances.

50.b4

It is hard to do without this advance. If White “stood still,” Black would have prepared the breakthrough ...f5 or ...g5.

50...axb4 51.Rxb4 Ra7 52.Rb2

Not the best move: apparently, the result of a recent emotional upheaval. 52.Rf1 or 52.Rf2, followed by doubling the rooks on the b-file, suggests itself.

52...Re8 53.Rf1 Kf7

As chess players say, played automatically. After the game, Petrosian showed the interesting move 53...Kg8!, which would have been more unpleasant for White. It is important that the d7- knight is not pinned in case of 54.a5 Rxa5 55.Rxb7.

54.a5 Ke6

After 54...Rxa5 55.Rxb7 Rxa3 56.Rxd7+ Ke6 57.Rh7, Black can only lose. Therefore, Spassky does not take the pawn yet, and uses this opportunity to improve the position of his pieces.

55.Bb4 Be3

A good sign for Black: the King’s Indian bishop, which up until now played a supporting role, actively joins the fight.

56.Re2 Bd4 57.Kh3 Rf8 58.Rc1 Raa8 59.Kg2 Rg8

“Now White’s position is worse. Opening the game by 59...g5 is unpleasant for him. After this, the best reply for White would have probably been 60.hxg5 and then 61.Rh1 or immediately 60.Rh1.” (Salo Flohr)

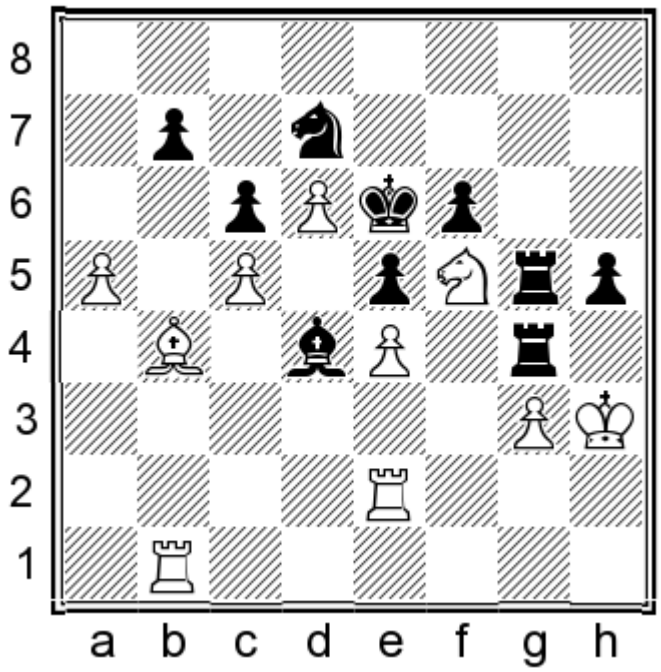
60.Ne1 g5 61.Nf3 gxh4 62.Nxh4 Rg4 63.Nf5 Rag8 64.Kh3

64.Kf3 is a mistake because of 64...h4! (indicated by Yuri Averbakh).

64...R8g5

Black is planning an exchange sacrifice. It looks tempting but does not reach the goal. Later, the pawn sacrifice 64...h4 65.gxh4 Rf4 was suggested. Many commentators considered it promising. However, I think that during the game it is not easy to make the decision to play this move. For example, consider the position arising after 66.Bd2 Rf3+ 67.Kh2 Bxc5 68.h5 Bxd6 69.Be3. White has his trump cards: the dangerous passed pawn on the h-file and the threat of the undermining move a5-a6. In this position, Black has an equal probability of winning and losing.

65.Rb1



The only chance. Salvation is in the counterattack on the queenside!

65...Rxe4! 66.Rxe4 Rxf5

With a masterful defense, Petrosian is able to successfully overcome the difficulties.

67.Re2 Rf3 68.Kg2 Rd3 69.Rd2 Re3 70.Ra2!

A very sophisticated move. Now, on 70...Bxc5 71.Bxc5 Nxc5, if White found the study-like move 72.Rxb7!!, then it would be Black who would need to save himself.

70...f5 71.Be1 Nxc5 72.Bf2 Rb3

Fearing the sacrifice on b7, Black trades the rooks. After 72...Rd3 73.Bxd4 Rxd4 74.Rxb7! Nxb7 75.a6 Rg4 76.a7, etc., it is also a draw.

73.Rxb3 Nxb3 74.Ra3 Nc5 75.Bxd4 exd4 76.Rf3 d3

After 76...Ne4 White would have replied 77.Rxf5! (indicated by Yuri Averbakh)

77.Kf2

At Spassky's suggestion, a draw. "After two months of intense struggle, Petrosian and Spassky fought this last game with such ferocity and such energy as if the match had just begun." (Salo Flohr)

(166) C10*.2 **Petrosian – Larsen**
Second Piatigorsky Cup
Santa Monica 1966

Soon after the difficult world championship match, Spassky and Petrosian took part in the major international tournament in Santa Monica (the Second Piatigorsky Cup – translator). All the leading players of the time, including Portisch, Larsen, and young Fischer, played there.

Spassky quickly recovered from the match and played with great ease in this tournament. He confidently won it, beating Fischer in the race for first place. Petrosian, on the other hand, obviously struggled. The world champion looked tired and played weaker than usual. As a result, he ended up in the middle of the tournament crosstable with an even score. Yes, the title can be a burden. "Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown."

Now let's see the game. I think that Petrosian played below his capacity, even though he did not make blunders. However, this does not detract from the excellent play of the Danish grandmaster, who rightfully included this victory in his selected games collection.

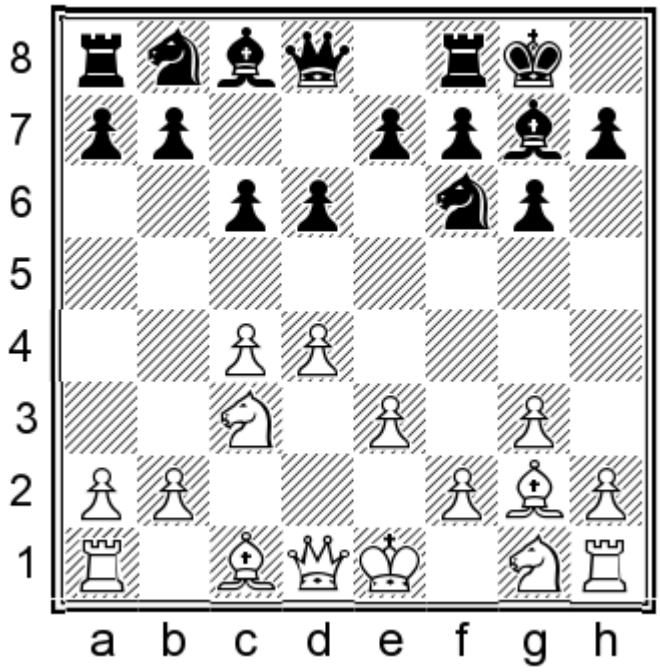
Annotations by Bent Larsen (from his book *Bent Larsen's Best Games of Chess* – translator).

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.g3 Bg7

"In fact I have always had a feeling that the King's Indian is an incorrect opening! Because I also believe that all the leading Soviet masters know more about it than I do, I feel I am embarking upon something very dangerous every time I play it against one of them. On the other hand, this may make me more watchful."

"At this point in the tournament I had only scored half a point during the last five rounds! I had not been feeling well, and I had played without energy and concentration. So now I am playing an opening in which I am convinced that flabby routine play leads to disaster."

4.Bg2 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.e3 c6



"A solid continuation, also sometimes played by Botvinnik. Though Petrosian had played it in the last game of his match against Spassky I had not expected it. When White plays with such restraint in the center Black is permitted a wide choice of plans.

My next three moves were an inspiration over the board. Developing the queen's knight to a6 has its advantages and drawbacks. At least the knight does not get in the way of the other pieces. I do not know if this system had been played before, but after this game it became 'theory.'"

7.Nge2 a5!? 8.b3 Na6 9.0-0 e5 10.Bb2 Re8 11.a3

"Later Petrosian was not very satisfied with this move. It looks natural, depriving the black knight of the possibility of jumping to b4, but the weakness of the white b3-pawn plays an important role subsequently.

White's problem is how to prevent Black obtaining a fine position by ...e4. 11.e4 exd4 gives Black a well-known variation with a move extra; White has lost a tempo with his king's pawn. Also 11.d5 e4 is excellent for Black. The black queen's knight gets easily into play in these lines. This would also be the case after 11.dxe5, when White would have a weak point on d3.

Even after the text move, 11...e4 was possible, but I preferred to prevent b3-b4."

11...Rb8 12.h3 h5 13.Qc2 Be6 14.Kh2

"Almost a waiting move, as there is no guarantee that Black plays ...Qc8. The real importance of this is minimal, but I decided to play ...Qc7 as kind of a demonstration that the text move could not be the best – for psychological reasons.

Against 14.Rac1 or 14.Rfd1 I would have played 14...Qc8 15.Kh2 b5. The same or maybe 14...b5 at once would have been the reply to 14.e4."

14...Qc7 15.Rac1 b5!

"After this, Black has at least an even game. White's sharpest reply is 16.c5, but after 16...dxc5 17.dxe5 Nd7 18.f4 b4! Black gets the better game. The weak white b-pawn is very important here. Petrosian thought for half an hour, which might indicate that he was not satisfied with the position. His notes in the tournament book give the same impression: already at move 18 he begins to talk about White's difficulties! After 16.d5 cxd5 17.Nxd5 Nxd5 18.cxd5 Qxc2 19.Rxc2 Bd7, White cannot use the open file for anything special, and the black knight will later go to c5. After Black's ...b4 the white knight will be rather out of place. But even so it is not clear if Black has a tangible plus."

16.cxb5 cxb5 17.Qd1

"This passive move came as a surprise to me. I was expecting 17.Ne4 Qxc2 18.Nxf6+ Bxf6 19.Rxc2 Rb6 and considered this position about equal. Now I believe that Black has the better of it, for instance, 20.dxe5 dxe5 21.Nc1 Rd6 or 20.d5 Bd7 followed by ...b4 and ...Nc5."

17...Qe7 18.Nb1

"Again passive, but absolutely understandable. Black is prevented from opening the b-file with ...b4, and the white b-pawn gets solid protection. After 18.d5 Bd7 Black would have fine prospects on both wings: On one hand by ...b4, answering a3-a4 with ...Nc5; on the other hand by ...Nh7 followed by ...h4 or ...f5."

(Apparently 18.Bc6!? was the strongest for White. – Igor Yanvarjov)

18...Bd7 19.Nd2 e4

"An important step forward. My only worry was the white sacrifice 20.d5 Nc5 21.Rxc5 dxc5 22.Bxf6, with a center pawn for the exchange. But Black keeps the better position."

20.Nf4 d5

"Black now has a clear advantage in space. Of the white pieces only the knight on f4 is well placed. That the text weakens c5 is unimportant: White cannot make use of this square. It should be noted that the white knights cannot get there."

21.Qe2 Qd6 22.Rc2

"Worth considering was 22.Kh1, but Black's ...h4 would become a threat again later, after ...Bh6."

22...Rec8 23.Rfc1 Rxc2 24.Rxc2 h4 25.Nf1 hxg3+ 26.fxg3

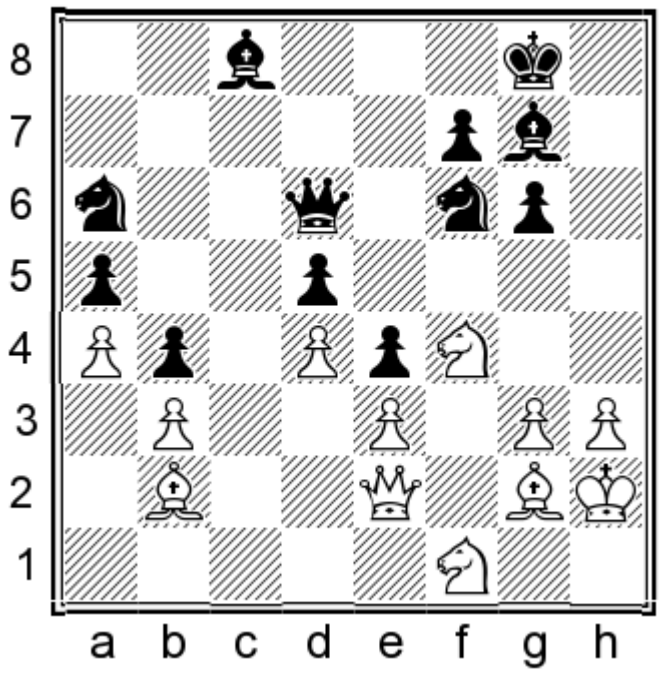
(In my opinion, this is a mistake. Much better is 26.Nxg3, for example, 26...b4 27.a4 Rc8 28.Rxc8+ Bxc8 29.Qb5 g5 30.Nfe2, planning the undermining move f2-f3 with counterplay. – Igor Yanvarjov)

26...b4!

"An important move. The diagonal a6-f1 will now play a role in Black's plans. If the bishop moves to a6 it will

threaten the white knight and share in the attack against the weak white g3-pawn. I considered this a winning position – and told Donner that if I did not win it I would really go and see a doctor."

27.a4 Rc8 28.Rxc8+ Bxc8



"Black's superiority may be described in many ways: more space, better pawn structure, more active pieces. Very importantly, the white queen's bishop is bad, and not just temporarily; as a matter of fact, it is doomed to passivity for the rest of the game. In relation to the fixed center pawns the black queen's bishop is also 'bad,' but if you look at its possibilities, above all on the diagonal a6-f1, it is difficult to term it a bad bishop.

On the contrary, it is so strong that the world champion makes up his mind to exchange it! Not a very attractive resort but, as already hinted, White might find it difficult to hold the g3 pawn when Black played the bishop to a6 and was ready to chase the white knight away with ...g5.

Very bad would be 29.Qb5? g5 30.Ne2 Qc7. The white queen cannot achieve anything unsupported, of course."

29.h4 Nc7 30.Bh3 Bxh3

"When one of the opponent's bishops is very bad, it is as a rule sound policy to trade off the other one. After 30...Ba6 White might get a little play on the kingside with g3-g4."

31.Nxh3 Bf8 32.Kg2 Qc6 33.Qd1 Bd6 34.Nf2

"If this knight returned to f4, it would probably sooner or later be taken by the black bishop, and we would be approaching an ending with knight against bad bishop. Also White would get an isolated rook's pawn or an isolated queen's pawn, depending on whether he recaptured with e-pawn or g-pawn."

34...Ne6 35.Bc1 Ng7

"The black queen is also unable to carry through an attack alone. 35...Qc3 36.Bd2 Qb2 would be a blind alley."

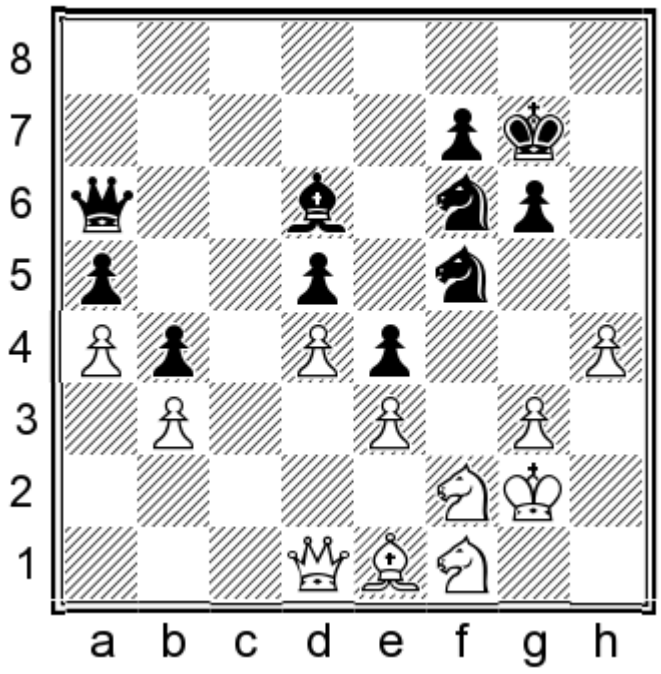
36.Bd2 Nf5 37.Kh3 Qc8 38.Kg2

"White refrains from 38.g4, the only move in the position that could give him a little air. But after 38...Nh6 39.Be1 Nh7 Black stages a direct attack, beginning with ...f5 or ...g5."

38...Kg7 39.Nh1 Nh6 40.Be1 Qa6

“During this tournament I had been in time trouble a little too often, but here everything could be played in quiet and order. I had several minutes left for the last move before the control, and the move is excellent.”

41.Nf2 Nf5



“The sealed move. Then I analyzed the position until seven o’clock in the morning. There were only two hours left for sleep but I became absolutely confident that I could win.

The threat is Qxf1+. White must defend with 42.Bd2 or 42.Qd2. Not surprisingly, Petrosian chooses the queen move. Now that the bishop has finally reached the kingside it would be sad to move it back.

After 42.Bd2 Black may play something similar to the game continuation, but I intended a more direct attack: 42...Nh5!. Then 43.g4 Nxh4+ 44.Kh3 Nf3 45.gxh5 Qc8+ 46.Kg2 Qf5 gives a ‘decisive’ attack, and after 43.Nh1 Bb8 44.Qe1 Black also wins with a knight sacrifice: 44...Nhxg3! 45.Nhxg3 Nxh4+ 46.Kh1 Bxg3 47.Nxg3 Nf3 48.Qf2 Qd3 or 48.Qd1 Qd3 49.Nf1 Nxd2 50.Nxd2 Qxe3 51.Nf1 Qf2 and wins easily.”

42.Qd2 Bb8 43.Nd1 Ng4 44.Kg1 f6!

“The clearest winning procedure on which I had only concentrated after rejecting another idea: the exchange of one pair of knights, ...f5, the knight to be posted on f6 or g4, and then ...Qd3. It gives many chances, but not a clear win. Advancing the g-pawn is logical. Black wins still more space, and there are possibilities of breaking into the white position via the f- or h-file.”

45.Kg2 g5 46.Nf2 Ngh6 47.hxg5

“If White lets the exchange take place on h4 he gets a vulnerable king’s position and an untenable h4-pawn. To 47.h5 the reply would be 47...g4. White still cannot play 48.Qd1? because of 48...Qxf1+ so that Black can quietly play ...Ne7 and ...f5. If he likes he may then take the h-pawn before the killing knight maneuver to f3.”

47...fxg5 48.Nd1 Kg6 49.Nh2 g4 50.Qc2 Bd6 51.Nf1 Ng8

“It is possible to imagine two different winning maneuvers, knight to f3 and queen to h3. The former, however, is difficult to carry out because of the threats against the black g-pawn. But against the latter there is no defense. I had already made up my mind to use this queen maneuver, but for safety sake I wanted to pass the time control at move 56 before I did anything irrevocable. I was very sleepy! This explains moves 53 and 56.”

52.Nh2 Nf6 53.Nf1 Kh5 54.Nh2 Kg5 55.Nf1 Nh5 56.Bf2 Nf6 57.Be1 Nh5 58.Bf2 Qa8! 59.Be1 Qh8

“White cannot do a thing.”

60.Qc6 Bxg3 61.Bxg3 Nhxg3 White resigned.

“I did not get the opportunity to offer my queen this time! There might have followed 61...Nhxg3 62.Nxg3 Qh3+ 63.Kf2 Qxg3+ 64.Ke2 Qxe3+!”

Here are some traditional statistics at the end of the chapter. The total number of games is 61. Moreover, in 33 of them, Petrosian played as Black and achieved a small positive balance: +11, -7, =15. The result for White is +13, -5, =10 (or about 64% of the total points), which is, of course, not outstanding, but very honorable even for a world champion.

Chapter 4
The Benoni Defense

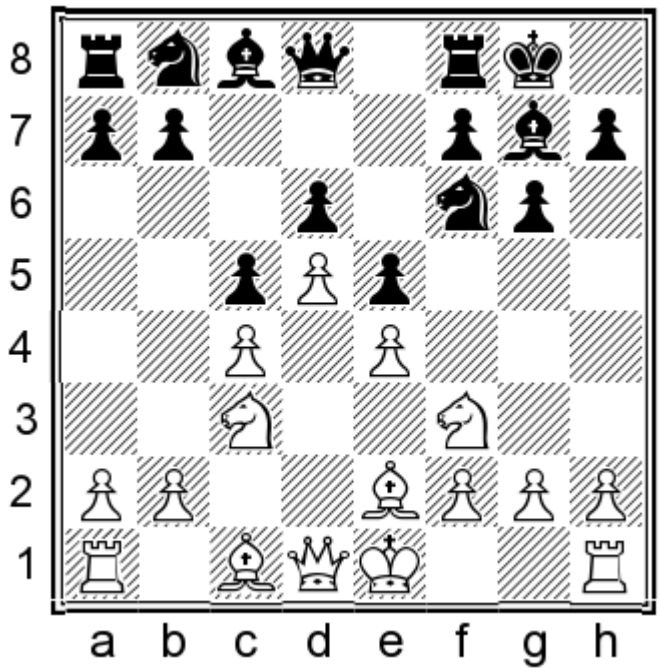


This variation has an unusual and difficult history. For a long time it wandered on the outskirts of the theory, not even having an official name. It was called the Hromadka System, the Indian Defense, and even the Queen's Pawn opening, until theorists finally recognized it as a distant relative of the King's Indian.

Strictly speaking, there are two main variations of this opening: the classical variation with the characteristic pawn triangle c5-d6-e5 in the center and the so-called Modern Benoni, in which the e7-pawn moves only one square and then is exchanged for the white c-pawn. While these systems look similar, they are very different in spirit and grandmasters' attitudes towards them are also different. For example, Tal, Fischer, and Kasparov (in his youth) preferred the risky but very dynamic Modern Benoni, while Geller and Stein, on the contrary, liked the indestructible classics, and the King's Indian trendsetters Bronstein and Gligorić passed it over altogether.

Petrosian always loved to diversify his openings. His motto was "play everything, but in moderation." Although once, in 1961, after losing to Iivo Nei (see game 178), Petrosian was "offended" by the Benoni: "This variation is nothing special. I used to play it once every three years, and now I will play it once every five years...." But, as White, Petrosian was a natural. It is in this variation that he played a number of solid games, introducing valuable novelties and interesting ideas.

D1



White to move

Petrosian had many pleasant memories associated with this position. As White, he played exclusively 8.Bg5 in all of his games (169, 172, 173, 174),

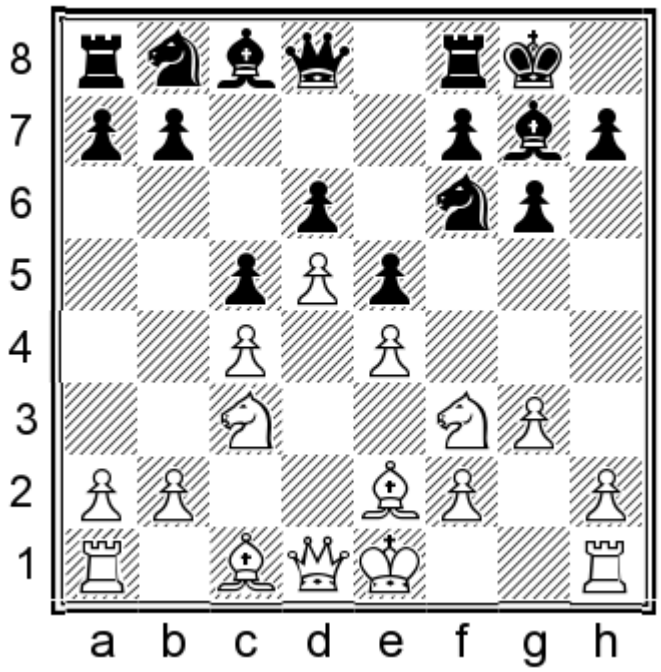
which speaks volumes about his evaluation of the continuation. 8.0-0 has also been played (games 168, 170, 171).

Borisenko played a very interesting move, or rather, plan, in game 167: 8.g3!?.

(167) D1.1 **Borisenko – Petrosian**
21st USSR Championship
Kiev 1954

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Nf3 0-0 5.e4 d6 6.Be2 c5 7.d5 e5 8.g3

A sly waiting move, the true meaning of which escaped even such an ace of prophylaxis as Petrosian.



8...Nbd7

Weaker is 8...Nh5 because of 9.Nd2, while after 8...Ne8 White would have played 9.h4! f5 10.h5 with the initiative. But, as we will soon see, the natural text move also has its drawbacks. Deserving attention is 8...Na6.

Later Borisenko demonstrates a number of important methods to counter Black's active counterplay in such structures. By the way, this experience was very useful for Petrosian. He won his game against Hort (144) playing "à la Borisenko."

9.Nh4! Ne8 10.Qc2

While White's setup might seem artificial, this method of dealing with the move ...f5 is very effective.

10...a6 11.a4

Borisenko plays this part of the game confidently. Another standard method of stopping the undermining move ...b5, 11.a3 and b2-b4, is weaker here as White plans first to transfer the bishop to the h3-c8 diagonal and then to start pawn operations on the kingside, for example, 11.a3 Bf6 12.Ng2 Be7 13.Bh6 Ng7 14.h4!, followed by f2-f4, h4-h5. In this case, with the pawn on a3, he would have to take into account the sacrifice ...b5, because his position on the flanks becomes unstable.

11...Ndf6

Temporarily stopping the white bishop from moving to g4.

12.Bd2 b6 13.a5!?

Again a prophylactic move, but this time of a somewhat different nature. Up to that moment White had played the waiting game, but now he starts activity, immobilizing the queenside just in time to eliminate the threat of ...b5.

13...bxa5 14.Nd1

White plays like clockwork: opening the access for the bishop to the a5-pawn, the knight goes to e3 to increase control of the f5-square.

14...Rb8 15.Bxa5 Qe7 16.Bd2 Ng4 17.h3 Ngf6

Having ended up in the opponent's comfort zone, Black defends skillfully, looking for chances to create counterplay.

18.Kf1 h6 19.Ne3 Nh7 20.Bg4

Successfully hindering Black's activity on both flanks, White gradually improves his position, planning to exchange the light-square bishops in order to weaken the a6-pawn.

20...Qb7 21.Bxc8 Qxc8 22.Kg2 Ng5 23.Nd1

The knight transfers to f2 to free the rook from its duty of guarding the h3-pawn.

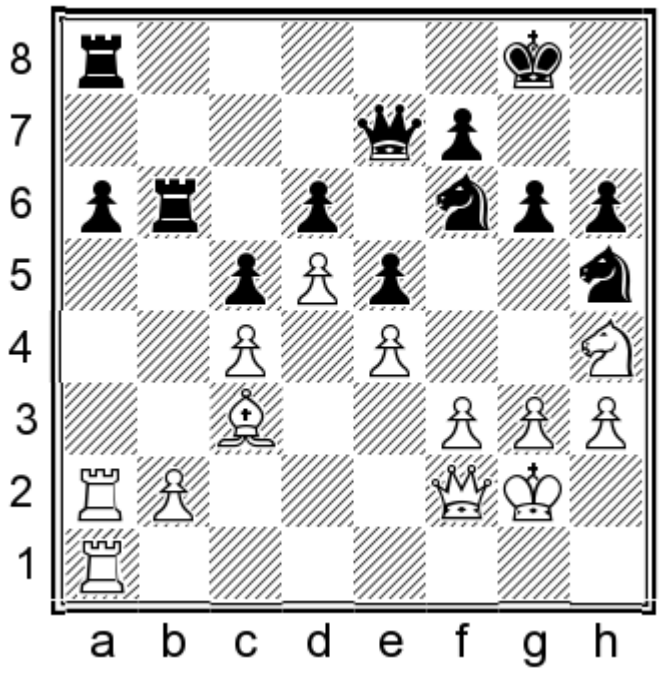
23...Nf6 24.f3 Qb7 25.Bc3 Nh5 26.Nf2 Nh7 27.Ng4 Bf6

Petrosian defends creatively. Now, for example, it is not advantageous for White to play 28.Nxh6+ Kg7 29.Ng4 Bxh4 30.gxh4 Nf4+ followed by ...f5, but strategically Black's position remains difficult.

28.Nxf6+ N7xf6 29.Ra2 Qe7 30.Qf2

Black threatens 30...Nxg3 31.Kxg3 Nh5+.

30...Rb6 31.Rha1 Ra8



32.Kh2

To this point, White had played very consistently, but now Borisenko's constant companion in his tournament games, time trouble, came into play. Instead of the irresolute king move, by playing b2-b4!, White could have posed challenging problems for his opponent. However, the most principled continuation was probably not 32.b4, but 32.Bd2, and only then b2-b4, for example: 32.Bd2 Kh7 33.b4 Nd7 34.b5 Nb8 35.Qe3 Qf8 36.f4, etc.

32...Nd7 33.Ng2

Destroying the results of all of his previous precise work. White should have maintained control of the f5-square at all costs, playing 33.Ra3 followed by Ra2 and Ba5-d2, constantly threatening the opponent's a6- and h6-pawns (indicated by Boris Zlotnik).

33...f5

The merciless logic of the fight: the pawn that was biding its time moves forward, causing numerous troubles for White.

34.g4?!

In time trouble Borisenko miscalculated a variation and found himself on the verge of losing.

34...fxg4 35.fxg4 Nf4 36.Nxf4 Rf8!

An unpleasant surprise.

37.Rxa6 Rxa6 38.Rxa6 Rxf4 39.Qg2 Nf6 40.g5?

This conclusively ruins the game. Continuing 40.Bd2 Rxe4 41.g5 hxg5 42.Bxg5, White could still stubbornly resist.

40...Nxe4 41.Be1 hxg5 42.Ra3 Qf6 43.Re3 Qf5 44.b3 g4 45.Bg3 Nxg3

Black's attack is unstoppable.

46.Qxg3 gxh3 47.Qxh3 Rg4 48.Rf3 Qc2+ 49.Kh1 Qe4 White resigned.

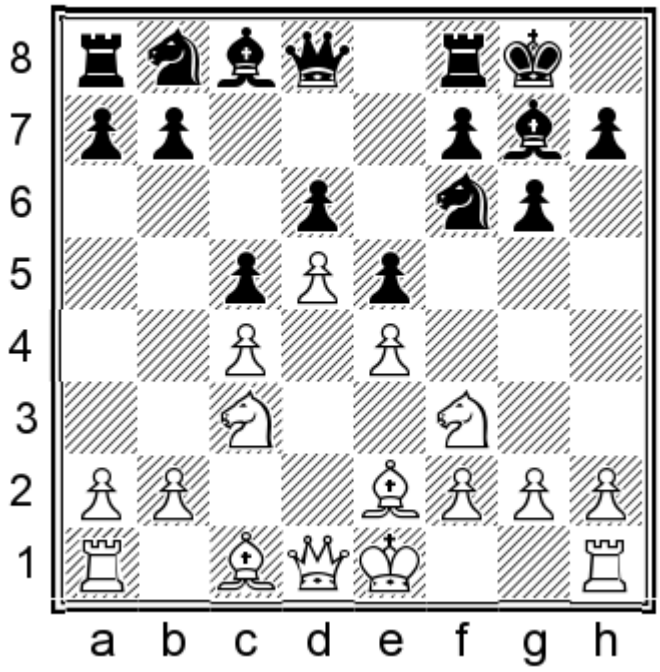
(168) D1.2 **Kotov – Petrosian**
22nd USSR Championship
Moscow 1955

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5 4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 g6

Another popular setup, sometimes referred to as the Panov Defense or Czech Benoni, begins with the move 5...Be7, followed by ...0-0, ...Ne8, ...g6, ...Ng7 and, finally, ...f5. If White tries to hinder this advance by h2-h3, g2-g4, Bh6, Black counters with ...Kh8, and the queen's knight, heading to g8, drives away the white bishop. Black's maneuvers look a bit clumsy, but his solid position allows for it, and after ...f5, complex positions with chances for both sides arise.

However, Petrosian almost always preferred this setup with the bishop on g7. The text continuation ensures Black the speediest execution of ...f7-f5, which is a rather strong argument in its favor.

6.Nf3 Bg7 7.Be2 0-0



8.0-0

Kotov interprets the opening in the classic manner, seeking to develop his pieces as quickly as possible. Meanwhile, since the central pawns are frozen, White could have postponed castling.

8...Ne8

A good, straightforward move. Petrosian also played it in subsequent games against Donner (game 170) and Kestler (game 171). Practical play shows that delaying activity is not in Black's interests. For example: 8...Nbd7 9.a3 h6 10.Ne1 a6 11.Rb1 Ne8 12.Nd3 f5 13.b4 b6 14.a4! a5 15.bxa5 Rxa5 16.Bd2, and White's prospects are clearly better (Tal-Spassky, Tbilisi 1959).

9.a3

Kotov rushes to start active play on the queenside, but underestimates the opponent's counterarguments. More prudent is 9.Ne1, as was played, for example, in games 170, 171.

9...f5 10.b4

The beginning of the middlegame conflict.

10...Na6

This is the case when the knight on the edge of the board, despite the well-known rule, is positioned well (see the annotation to Black's ninth move in game 10). Now, White has to make some effort to open the b-file. After 10...b6 11.bxc5 bxc5 12.Rb1 he could do this automatically, which would make it easier for him to go for a direct confrontation because he would have every chance to get ahead of his opponent in developing his attack. 10...Nd7 also is not good for Black because of 11.Ng5!.

11.Rb1 Nf6 12.Bg5 Qe8 13.Bxf6 Bxf6 14.Ne1

Usually, in these positions White tries to prevent the pawn attack on the kingside, so he exchanges on f5 and then plays f2-f4 or f2-f3. Kotov did not have time to do this and came up with a different idea. For now, it is not advantageous for Black to advance the pawn to f4 because of Bg4. That is why White needs to trade on f6. However, in the long run, the absence of the dark-square bishop should take effect.

14...b6 15.Nd3 Nc7 16.Bf3

To ensure the stability of the center, it is necessary to resort to such unaesthetic moves; f2-f3 would have prevented the bishop from coming to g4 and led to the further weakening of the dark squares.

16...Ba6

Let's take a closer look at the change of the guard in Black's camp. The a6-knight has fulfilled its mission and goes to f6, giving his place to the bishop, which begins to make trouble for White by attacking the c4-pawn. The last maneuver is typical and was often employed by Petrosian (see games 159 and 173).

17.Qb3 Qd7 18.a4 Bd8

Again, well-played. Freeing the square for the knight, Black at the same time stops the move bxc5, which would have been followed by ...bxc5 and then ...Ba5, activating the bishop and increasing pressure on the e4-square. White is forced to switch to passive defense.

19.Ra1 Ne8 20.Nb2 Nf6 21.h3

Draw.

In our opinion, Black's advantage is undeniable in the final position. Now playing 21...f4 (with the idea of preparing ...h5, ...g5-g4, etc.), Petrosian could fight for a win without much risk. But, as they say, grandmasters know best. After all, the result of the game depends on many factors, and, of course, the opponents' moods, their tournament standings, and their states of mind all play an important role.

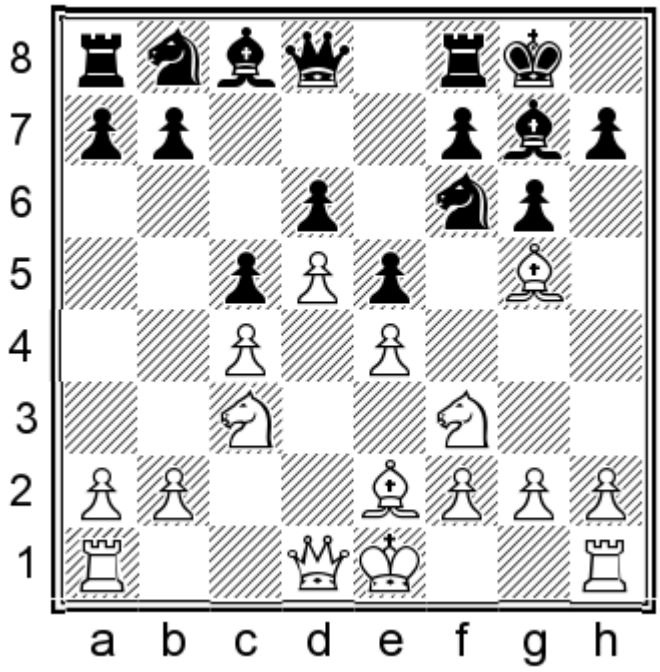
(169) D1.3 **Petrosian – Nikolaevsky**
USSR Championship Semifinal
Kiev 1957

1.c4 g6 2.Nc3 Bg7 3.d4 Nf6 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.d5 c5

The eternal King's Indian question: what is better, to completely block up the c5-square with a pawn or to leave it for the knight? Probably, this is a matter of taste. Each method has its advantages and disadvantages. In the first case, for example, the c5-pawn is a good buffer against White's pawn storm on the queenside, while in the second, Black's knight, finding a more or less safe place with the help of the a5-pawn becomes an important factor in the

middlegame together with the g7-bishop.

8.Bg5



8...h6

It is useful to figure out the bishop's intentions right away. In game 176 Black forgot to do this and after 8...Na6 9.Nd2! the bishop was able to take an excellent position on e3.

9.Bd2

The reader probably expected the move 9.Bh4 (games 177, 178) by analogy with the classical variation. The text move, introduced by Petrosian in this game, while seemingly a bit inconsistent (White gives the opponent a tempo), is not devoid of a positional basis and pursues the same goal: to prevent Black's counterplay on the kingside.

9...Ne8

After 9...Nbd7, switching to Borisenko's plan looks rather good: 10.g3 followed by Nh4, etc. Therefore, Black wants to advance ...f5 as soon as possible. In general, this idea is logical, but the text move fails as it gives White the opportunity to destroy Black's pawn structure via the dynamic advance h4-h5. For the same reason, the knight retreat to h7 did not work. However, 9...Nh5 was a possibility, and if, for example, 10.Qc1, then 10...Nf4!? 11.Bxf4 exf4 12.Qxf4 f5 with some compensation for the pawn.

10.h4

Later, in the game Soos-Minić (Bucharest 1966), White found an interesting opportunity to strengthen this idea by including 10.Qc1, and after 10...Kh7 11.h4 f5 12.h5 gxh5 (if 12...g5, then 13.exf5 Bxf5 14.g4!) 13.Rxh5 f4 14.g3! he achieved a significant advantage.

10...f5

After 10...h5, unpleasant is 11.Ng5.

11.h5 g5 12.exf5 Bxf5 13.Be3 a6?!

Incomprehensible complacency. After voluntarily giving White the e4-square, Black has a very difficult, maybe even lost position. He should have played 13...Nf6 14.Nd2 e4 with decent play.

14.Nd2 Kh8 15.Nde4 Nf6

Provocation or a blunder? Black allows the combinational blow 16.Nxg5! hxg5 17.h6, probably hoping to somehow fight off the attack after 17...Nh7 18.hxg7+ Kxg7.

16.Bd3

Petrosian refuses any kind of complications in favor of the small but clear advantage that he usually earns by controlling the e4-square. Black does not want to tempt fate anymore and forces exchanges.

16...Nxe4 17.Bxe4 Bxe4 18.Nxe4 b5 19.b3 Qe7 20.Qg4 Re8 21.Rd1 Nd7 22.Qe6!

A clever and instructive way to organize an invasion of the enemy's camp. Now 22...Qxe6 is bad for Black because of 23.dxe6 Rxe6 24.Nxd6, and White storms in.

22...Bf8 23.Qg6 Qh7 24.Rh3

And now Black cannot play 24...Qxg6 because of 25.hxg6 Kg7 26.Bxg5! or 25...Kg8 26.Rf3 with the threat of Rf7.

24...Be7 25.Qxh7+ Kxh7 26.Rf3

A moment characteristic of Petrosian's style. Before centralizing the king, (in order to avoid any tactical surprises) he trades a pair of rooks.

26...Rf8 27.Rxf8 Bxf8 28.Ke2 Kg7 29.Bd2 Nf6 30.Ng3

Of course. The presence of the knights on the board complicates Black's defense.

30...Kf7 31.Ba5

Thwarting attempts like ...a4. White maneuvered so as to always be able to respond to ...b4 with a3.

31...Ke7 32.Kd3 Kd7 33.Rh1

Freeing the knight from guarding the h5-pawn and preparing an invasion on f5 if the opportunity presents itself. In principle, White's position is so good that it allows Petrosian to choose whether to break through on the kingside or the queenside. On the other hand, all Black has left to do is see how things will develop and annoy the opponent with various insignificant threats.

33...Rb8 34.Bc3

Preventing 34...bxc4+ 35.bxc4 Rb2.

34...Ng8 35.Ne4 Be7 36.f3 Ra8 37.Ra1 Bf8 38.cxb5

Determining the direction of the breakthrough: the queenside.

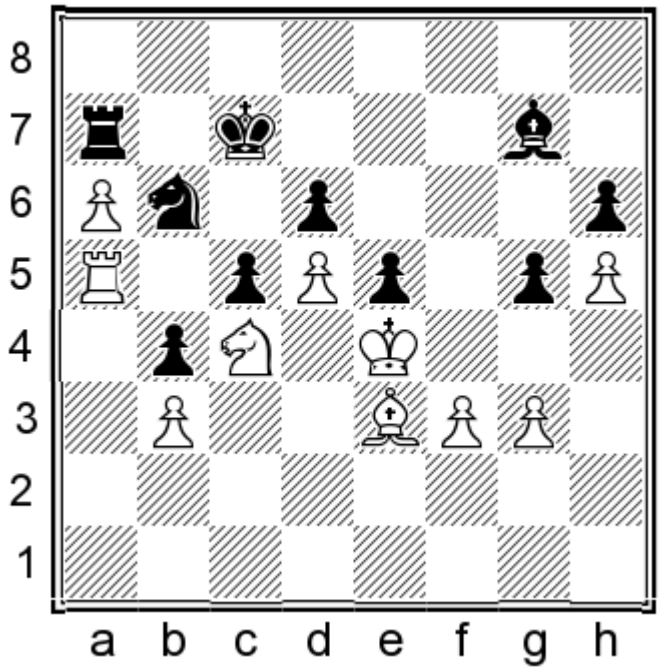
38...axb5 39.a4 b4 40.Bd2 Ne7 41.Nf6+ Kd8 42.Ke4 Bg7 43.Ng4 Kc7 44.Ne3 Rf8

Defending becomes increasingly difficult. Now and on the next move, deserving attention is 44...Ng8 with the idea of ...Nf6+.

45.g3 Rf7 46.Rc1

Chasing the black king away from the a-pawn with the threat of Bxb4, since, after 47.Bxb4, 46...Kb7 47.Nc4 Rf6 48.f4! is quite unpleasant.

46...Kd7 47.a5 Rf8 48.a6 Ra8 49.Ra1 Ra7 50.Ra5 Kc7 51.Nc4 Nc8 52.Be3 Nb6



53.Nxd6!

The powerful charge that White carefully planted under the walls of the enemy's fortress explodes! Such sacrifices are always in the air if there are fixed pawn chains. Now the white pieces and pawns come alive and become very active.

53...Kxd6 54.Rxc5 Rc7 55.Rxc7 Kxc7 56.d6+! Kc6 57.Bxb6 Kxb6 58.Kf5 Bf8 59.Kxe5 Kxa6 60.Ke6

Black resigned because he would have to give up his bishop for the d-pawn: 60...Kb7 61.d7 Kc7 62.Kf7!.

(170) D1.4 **Donner – Petrosian**
Santa Monica 1966

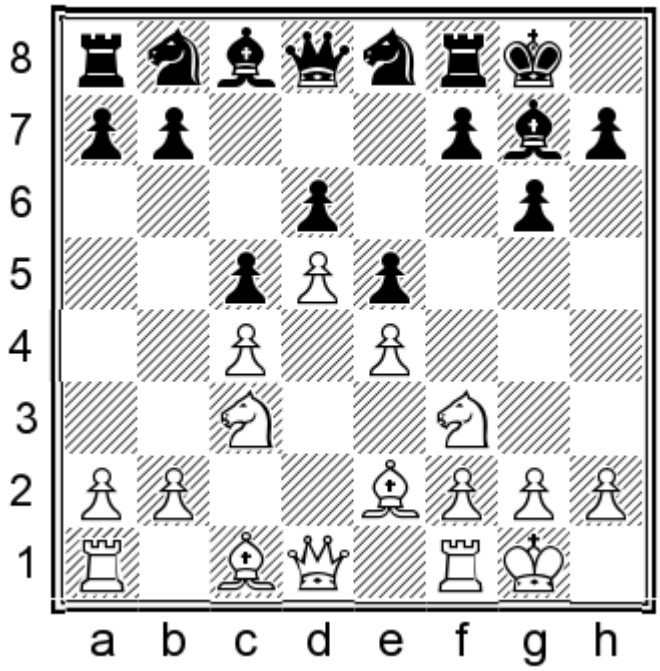
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 g6 4.Nc3 Bg7 5.e4 d6 6.Nf3 0-0 7.Be2 e5

In this move order, White has the opportunity to take en passant: 8.dxe6, so that after 8...fxe6 he can continue 9.e5!?; But Black can reply 8...Bxe6, keeping every chance to compensate for the weaknesses on the d-file with active piece play around the d4-square.

8.0-0

As already noted, 8.Bg5 gives White a better chance for an opening advantage.

8...Ne8



9.Ne1

The most common reply. The symmetric retreats of the black and white knights serve as a prologue to the active phase of the fight.

9...f5 10.Nd3

Everyone is playing this move, but no one has proved that this is the best option. I would say the following knight route makes sense: from e1 to c2 and then to the blockading e3-square, which Kestler chose in the next game.

10...Nd7 11.exf5

The theoretical 11.f4 could result in a transposition of moves after 11...Qe7 and so on.

11...gxf5 12.f4 Qe7 13.g4

According to Petrosian, too blunt and lacking sufficient justification. Donner's idea can be improved by 13.fxe5 dxe5 14.g4!?, but I think 13.Qc2 is more solid.

13...e4 14.Nf2 Bxc3!

An unconventional exchange, which Petrosian successfully tested in his game against Bronstein (Amsterdam, 1956, game 29). The limited mobility of White's dark-square bishop can become a serious burden. I think that the reader will benefit from seeing another example regarding this topic, the game Timman-Tal (Tallinn 1973). There, instead of playing 13.g4, White played 13.Kh1, and after 13...e4 14.Nf2 Bxc3! 15.bxc3 Ndf6 Tal convincingly exploited the advantages of his position by organizing an attack on the white king.

15.bxc3 fxg4 16.Nxg4 Kh8 17.Kh1

Having started a risky plan, White stops halfway. 17.f5!?, aiming to give his pieces some breathing space at the cost of a pawn, would have been in the spirit of this position.

17...Ng7 18.Ne3 Nf6 19.Bd2

And now, in our opinion, White should have chosen 19.f5, for example: 19...Qe5 20.Rb1 b6 (or 20...Nxf5 21.Nxf5

Bxf5 22.Bf4) 21.Bg4, and now both 21...Nxg4 22.Nxg4 Qxc3 23.Bb2 and 21...Qxc3 22.Rb3 with the idea of Bb2 give White dangerous counterplay.

Now Black in turn could easily cancel out these efforts, playing 19...Nf5, but seeing that the opponent is not considering anything like that, he moves the other knight closer to the f5-square.

19...Ng8 20.Qe1 Nh6 21.Qg3 Ngf5 22.Qg5 Bd7

Petrosian does not object to the queen trade, believing that in the endgame his advantage will be just as significant. 22...Rf6 was also good.

23.Rae1 Rf6 24.Nxf5 Nxf5?!

An upsetting mistake. However, it is easy to understand: by moving the knight to f5, Black completed the plan that he started with the 19th move. After 24...Bxf5, the numerous threats associated with the moves ...e3, ...Be4+, ...Rg8, coupled with the invasion of the bishop or knight on g4, put White in a difficult position.

25.Rg1 Qf8 26.Bh5!

Cutting off “the infantry from the tanks” so to speak. On the previous move 25...e3 was probably a little better, but after 26.Bf3 the e-pawn would still have been lost.

26...Ng7 27.Rxe4 Nxh5 28.Qxh5 Re8 29.Rxe8

White is not able to take control of all communications. For example, after 29.Rge1 Rxe4 30.Rxe4 Rg6, Black would have counter-chances along the g-file.

29...Bxe8 30.Qe2 Bg6 31.Rg3 Qc8 32.Kg2

After 32.Qe7, the same reply would follow. Black’s idea is universal: the maneuver ...Qf5-c2 will inevitably lead to a queen trade, and then White will have nothing with which to protect the c4-pawn.

32...Qf5 33.Re3 Rf8 34.h3 Qc2

More principled than 34...Qxf4 35.Re8, and Black would have to work hard for a draw.

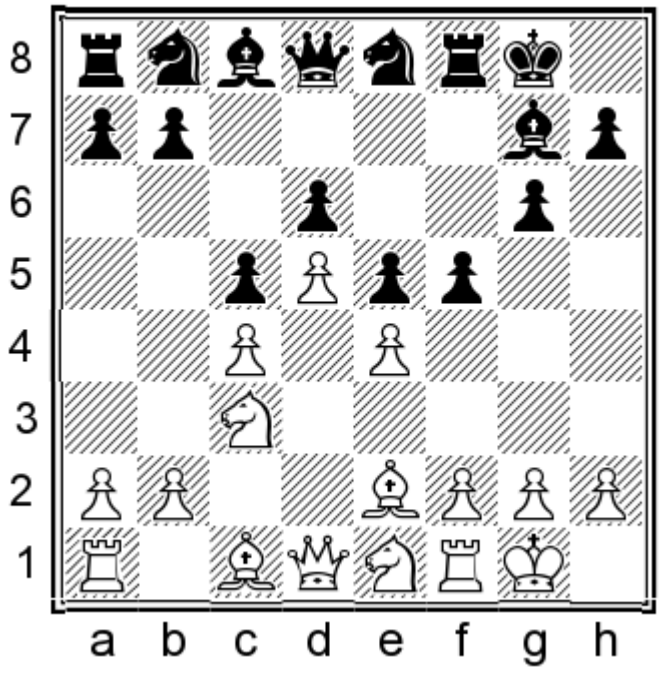
35.Be1

Draw, in view of the following variation: 35...Qxe2+ 36.Rxe2 Bd3 37.Re7 Bxc4 38.Kg3 Bxd5 39.c4!. (indicated by Donner).

(171) D1.5 **Kestler – Petrosian**
Bamberg 1968

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 g6 4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 Bg7 6.Nf3 0-0 7.Be2 e5 8.0-0 Ne8 9.Ne1 f5

The same as before; see the previous game.



10.exf5

Nipping in the bud Black's hopes for an attack associated with the advance ...f4. Obviously, the reply 10...Bxf5 is not advantageous for Black, because after 11.g4! White controls the e4-square.

10...gxf5 11.f4 Nd7 12.Be3 Qe7 13.Qd2 Nef6 14.Nc2 e4

A slight detour: instead of moving to the usual d3-square, the knight occupies c2. However, as we shall see, White is otherwise going to adhere to the standard line. His immediate plan is to provoke ...e4 by putting pressure on the f5-pawn, transfer the knight to e3, and begin operations on the queenside: a2-a3, Rab1, b2-b4, etc.

As for Black, he does not have much of a choice: either play into his opponent's hands and agree to a slightly worse position, or, using the fact that White's knight does not control the f4-square, come up with some specific play with the move ...exf4.

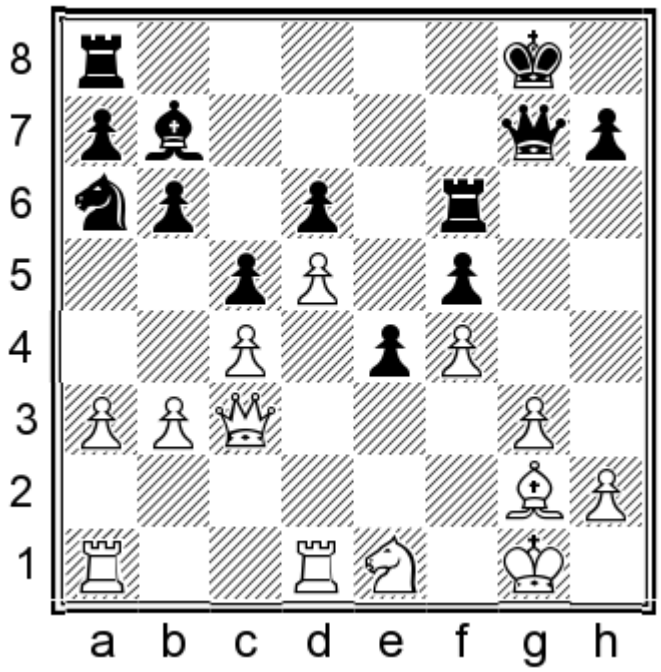
If we take into account that Black is playing for a win (why else would one play the King's Indian?), we can assume that he should have chosen the second path. Probably Ivkov's recommendation, 14...exf4!? 15.Bxf4 Ne4! 16.Qe3 Ne5! was dictated by these considerations (Ivkov's exclamation points). It is clear that White cannot take twice on e4, but what to do after 17.Nxe4 fxe4 18.Bg5? I would like to add that in this variation, Black can win a piece: 16...Bd4 17.Nxd4 cxd4 18.Qxd4 Nxc3 19.Qxc3 Qxe2, but after 20.Rf3! (with the threats 21.Rg3+ and 21.Re1) the result will be the same. If any other player were playing Black, this is probably how the game would have ended.

But Petrosian, soberly assessing the situation, decides to submit to the circumstances and moves the central pawn; thankfully, after the move ...c5, this is acceptable for Black.

15.Bf2 Rf7 16.Rab1 Nf8 17.a3 Ng6 18.b4 b6 19.bxc5 bxc5 20.Rb3 Bh6 21.Be3 Ba6

Defending, Petrosian hopes that maybe the opponent will want to exchange the dark-square bishops. In this case, Black would have the necessary space to maneuver his major pieces and the ability to harmoniously combine the defense of the queenside with preparation for counterplay on the kingside.

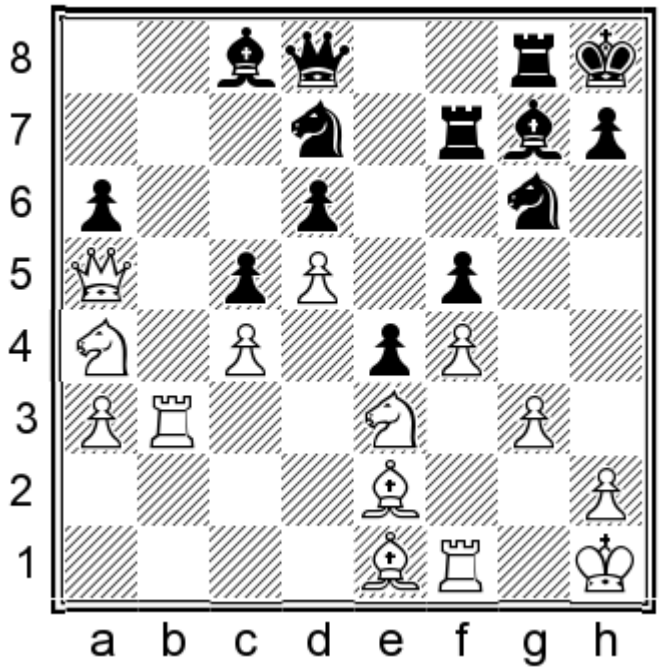
The following games are examples of a successful implementation of this strategic idea: Smejkal-Hübner (Leningrad 1973) and Vaganian- Karpov (Moscow 1976). Interestingly, in the latter case, a similar position arose from the Queen's Indian Defense:



Here Black played 24...h5! 25.Nc2 Kf7 26.Kf2 h4 27.Rg1 Rg8 28.Bh3 Qh7 29.Rh1 Rh6 30.Bg2 Nc7 31.b4 Ne8 32.bxc5 bxc5 33.Rhb1 Kf8 34.Ne3 Rg7 35.Rb2 Qg6 36.Nf1 hxg3+ 37.hxg3 Rhh7! 38.Rab1 Re7 39.Rb3 Rhg7 40.Qb2 Nf6, and in a bitter struggle, Karpov was first to manage to get to the opponent's king.

Unfortunately, in this game, Black's hopes were disappointed. Kestler moved his bishop to e1, not with the goal of exchanging it, but to prepare a queen move to a5. Petrosian was forced to weaken the queenside (...a6) and switch to passive defense.

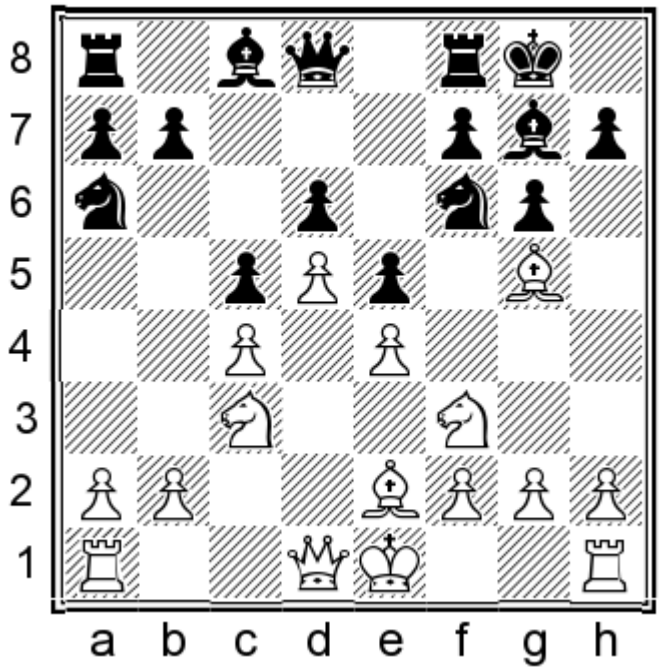
22.Nb5 Raf8 23.g3 Qd8 24.Bf2 Kh8 25.Kh1 Rg8 26.Be1 Bc8 27.Ne3 a6 28.Nc3 Bg7 29.Na4 Nd7 30.Qa5



In this position, which is somewhat better for White, the opponents agreed to a draw.

(172) D1.6 **Petrosian – Medina**
Palma de Mallorca 1968

1.c4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 c5 4.d5 d6 5.e4 Nf6 6.Nf3 0-0 7.Be2 e5 8.Bg5 Na6



An inaccuracy that is inexcusable for the experienced master. Of course, he should have first played 8...h6 and only then done the rest.

9.Nd2 Nc7?

The question mark is not so much for this move as for Black's whole plan. It is not even that it is not possible to carry out ...b5, but that he lost precious time that he needed in order to take measures against the threatening squeeze on the kingside. Black could have played, for example, 9...h6 10.Be3 h5 (threatening ...Ng4). If now 11.h3 Nh7 12.g4, then 12...h4! and ...Bg5. After 11.Bg5 he could have played 11...Qd7 12.f3 (or 12.h4 Ng4!?) 12...Nh7 13.Be3 h4 with similar ideas. White retains his advantage after 11.f3 Nh7 12.h4, but in any case, Black's position would not have been so helpless.

10.h4 h6 11.Be3 a6

William Hartston's observations from his book *The Benoni Defense* are of interest in the general discussion of the usefulness of the move ...a6 in similar positions:

"This move has a number of advantages for defense, such as the possibility of the maneuver ...Ra7 and the prevention of the knight invasion on b5, while Black can play ...b5 if the opportunity presents itself.

Its main drawback becomes clear after the moves b2-b4 and ...b6, when White has the natural plan of continuing the offensive by the advance of the a-pawn to a5.

If the black pawn stays on a7, he can maintain the pawn structure on the queenside, but after ...a6 the advance of the white pawn to a5 causes a devastating effect. Therefore, in case of ...a6, Black usually counters a2-a4 with the move ...a5, maintaining control of the c5-square, which can balance the weaknesses forming along the b-file. In the latter case, it is advantageous to keep the knight on d7, where it defends the b6-square and is ready to move to c5."

In this position, the downsides of the move ...a6 are fully exposed. So, the strategic situation is clear. White has only to clarify the tactical details and connect all the dots and compose a unified plan. He accomplishes this task excellently.

12.h5 g5 13.a3 Rb8

Attempts to complicate the play such as 13...Nxe4 14.Ndxe4 f5 can be convincingly refuted by 15.Nd2!? f4 16.Bxc5 dxc5 17.Nde4 followed by Bg4.

14.b4 b6 15.Nf1

Also possible was g2-g4, but Petrosian does not want to unnecessarily take away the diagonal from his light-square bishop.

15...Re8 16.Ng3

Having ensured adequate protection of the h5- pawn, White finally has the opportunity to properly complete his development.

16...Bf8 17.Rb1 Bd7 18.0-0 Qc8 19.Rb2 Rd8

In Black's camp, we see the huddle typical for such positions. On the d8-square, it would be better to have a bishop, but then it would be impossible to stop the threat Qd2, Rfb1 and bxc5.

20.Qd2 Nce8 21.Rfb1 Qc7 22.a4 Kh7 23.Rb3 a5

Almost necessary because of the threat of a4-a5, which hangs over Black's position like the sword of Damocles.

24.bxa5 bxa5 25.Nb5 Qb6 26.Qe1 Qa6

That is exactly what Hartston mentioned above: the b6-square is not controlled by the knight, and Black has to abandon the a5-pawn because 26...Ra8 would obviously be followed by 27.Nc3, with a decisive invasion along the b-file.

27.Nc7 Qa7 28.Rxb8 Rxb8 29.Rxb8 Qxb8 30.Nb5 Qa8 31.Bd2

It happened: the a5-pawn is lost. The black bishop did not manage to get to d8 in time.

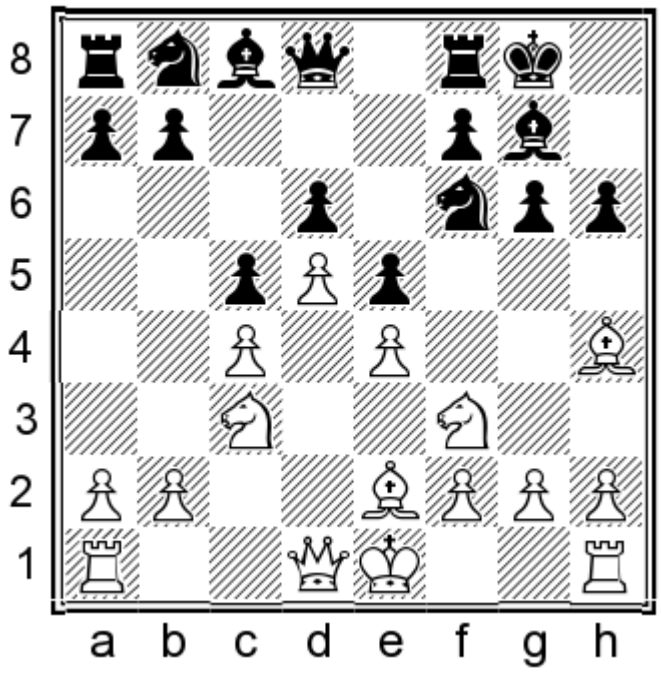
31...Be7 32.Bxa5 Bg4 33.Bxg4 Nxg4 34.Nf5 Bf8 35.f3 Ngf6 36.g4 Qa6 37.Kf2

The king joins the game by going to the queenside to personally defend the a4-pawn. The rest is simple: after the a-pawn advances, the game will be over.

37...Ng8 38.Ke2 Ne7 39.Nxe7 Bxe7 40.Kd3 Kg8 41.Kc2 Kf8 42.Kb3 Qb7 43.Qa1 f6 44.Kc2 Qa6 45.Bc3 Bd8 46.a5 Ke7 47.Qa4 Bc7 48.Kb2 Kd8 49.Na3 Bb8 50.Qb5 Qc8 51.a6 Black resigned.

(173) D1.7 **Moiseev – Petrosian**
Moscow Championship 1968

1.c4 g6 2.Nc3 Bg7 3.d4 c5 4.d5 d6 5.e4 Nf6 6.Nf3 0-0 7.Be2 e5 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4



9...Nbd7

Compared to the knight development to a6 (games 10, 172) this move undoubtedly has a healthier positional basis, as the knight on d7 is in continuous strategic contact with the important e5- pawn.

10.0-0

In terms of general principles, there is nothing wrong with this move. However, as far as practical play goes, White loses some important advantages associated with having a wider range of choices. Therefore, in our opinion, the more flexible 10.Nd2, as recommended by theory, is more precise. After the text move Black solves many problems.

10...Re8

Petrosian often employed this distinctive plan in such positions (also see games 123 and 159). Black deliberately delays the undermining move ...f5, as if he is holding his highest trump card in reserve, and instead maneuvers on the flank to weaken White's kingside, to create the conditions there for play on the dark squares.

In this game Petrosian was able to implement this plan fairly easily, although not without the opponent's help.

11.Ne1 h5

Providing room to maneuver and threatening to leap out to h6 with the bishop.

12.Bg5 Nf8 13.h3

A cookie-cutter move. White plans to retreat with the bishop to e3 and prevents the possible raid ...Ng4. But there is no need for this weakening, not to mention that White lost a tempo that could have been used to prepare "his play" on the queenside, for example, 13.Nd3 N8h7 14.Bd2 etc. The bishop would probably have an even better position on d2.

13...N8h7 14.Be3 Nd7

A strategic retreat in Nimzowitsch's style. Black threatens the unpleasant ...h4.

After all, chess is an amazing game! If we compare this position to the position before the 12th move, we can see

that in this time Black actually made only one move, and a funny one (he retreated the knight from f6 to h7) and, nevertheless, his position improved significantly. Does Black have an advantage? It is hard to say. However, White definitely does not.

15.a3

Moiseev gave up on controlling the dark squares, but he could still fight for them; for example, 15.g3 h4 16.Nf3 Bf6 17.Qd2, hindering the move ...Ng5.

15...h4 16.Qc2 Rf8 17.b4 b6 18.Bg4

Just in case, White does not allow ...f5, but now it becomes obvious that the whole idea of the knight transfer to d3 was unsuccessful.

18...Ba6!

A good approach that we have already seen (for example, see game 168). Since b4-b5 would have significantly reduced the rate of White's onslaught, he has pretty much only one move.

19.Nb5 Ndf6 20.Be2 Ne8

Strengthening the d6-pawn.

21.Bg4 Ng5

White is fine with a draw, and Black is not!

22.Rd1

This odd move can probably be explained by the fact that, in response to the planned 22.bxc5, White did not like the variation 22...Bxb5 23.cxb5 dxc5, and the black knight occupies a good position on d6. Now White has the reply f2-f4 in this case. However, the b1-square was a better place for the rook. White comes to this conclusion himself soon.

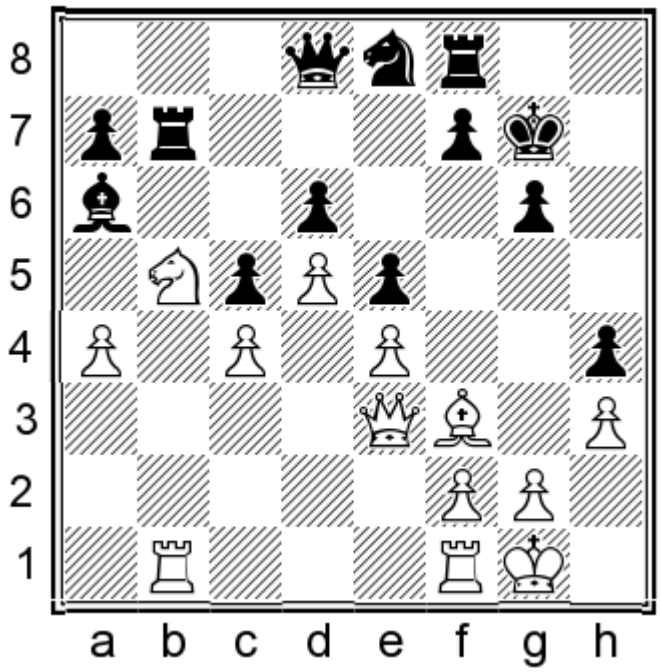
22...Bf6 23.bxc5 bxc5 24.Rb1 Rb8 25.a4 Rb7 26.Nf3

Petrosian's strategy was successful. It is not that he achieved some tangible advantage, but the course of the game clearly shows that White does not see any long-term plan and resigns to being on the defending side.

26...Nxf3+ 27.Bxf3 Bg5

A logical conclusion of the plan that Black began on the 10th move.

28.Qd2 Bxe3 29.Qxe3 Kg7



Black's advantage is obvious: almost all of the white pawns are on the squares of the color of the bishop, which in this case can be considered, if not a hopelessly terrible piece, at least a bad one. This also explains the weakness of the opposite color squares. However, all of this might not be enough for an ultimate victory. The position is closed and does not contain any weaknesses that could be easy targets, so White can hope for a favorable outcome. With this in mind, Moiseev continues trading. Petrosian does not mind, believing that the situation will not change significantly.

30.Rb3 Nf6 31.Be2

The attempt to harass the h4-pawn would not do any good: 31.Qg5 Nh7, and in order to avoid the exchange (which is obviously advantageous for Black) the white queen has to retreat.

31...Qe7 32.Rfb1 Rfb8 33.Bf3 Rb6 34.Qc3 Bc8 35.Na3 Rxb3 36.Rxb3 Rxb3 37.Qxb3 Qc7 38.Qc3

Wite is forced to give up the b-file, because after 38.Qb5? a6 the black queen would storm in on a5 with great effect.

38...Qb8 39.Kf1 Bd7 40.a5 Ba4 41.Ke2 Qb4 42.Kd2 a6 43.Kd3

Around this point the game was adjourned and scrutinized by both sides.

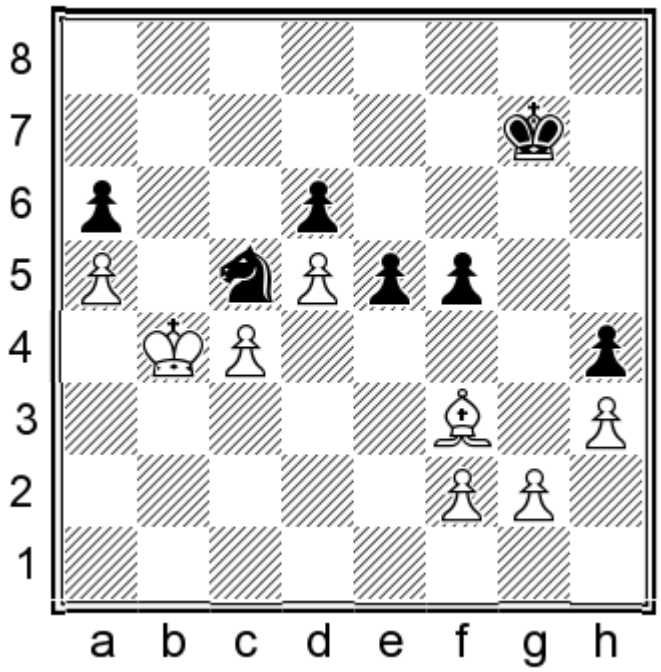
43...Bb3!?

At first glance, this is a strange decision. It is clear that Black should aim for the move ...f5. However, he cannot play it yet, for example: 43...Nd7 44.Bg4 or 43...Ng8?! 44.Qxb4 cxb4 45.Nc2 (45.Nb5!?) 45...b3 46.Na3, and the b-pawn is doomed because the knight is far from the c5- square. In principle, Black had two choices: either to move the queen from b4 and prepare a breakthrough with the queens on the board or come up with something unusual that the opponent most likely would not have analyzed during his home preparation. Petrosian chose the latter.

44.Qxb4 cxb4 45.Nc2 Bxc2+ 46.Kxc2 Nd7 47.Kb3 Nc5+ 48.Kxb4 f5

This powerful "King's Indian move" is usually played a little bit earlier, but in the endgame it is also very good!

49.exf5 gxf5



The reader may ask why Black gave up the pawn. First, the position's evaluation is almost unchanged: the compensation is so significant that Black's position is still better, even though, of course, he does not have much in the way of winning chances. Second and most importantly, the game becomes a psychological battle. Now, in Petrosian's words, "White has to sit there and think, did the opponent blunder that pawn or sacrifice it?"

50.g3?

Unbelievable. Moiseev was not in time trouble, but neither could he possibly have thought that the world champion suddenly decided to let him win this game. So White should have paid more attention to the changes on the board. Instead, he apparently decided that his opponent blundered, roughly evaluated the variation 50...Nd3+ 51.Kc3 Nxf2 52.gxh4, after which, thanks to the threat of c4-c5, he had better chances, and automatically made an aggressive move to play for a win. But Petrosian prepared a beautiful refutation. After 50.Kc3, the game should have ended in a draw.

50...e4! 51.Be2 e3!

A dramatic breakthrough. As a result, one of the black pawns queens, forcing White to give up his bishop.

52.gxh4

Bad is 52.fxe3 hxg3 53.Bf1 Nd3+ 54.Kc3 Ne1 and 55...g2.

52...exf2 53.Kc3 Ne4+ 54.Kd3 Ng3 55.Ke3

Black threatened ...f4-f3.

55...f1=Q 56.Bxf1 Nxf1+ 57.Kf4

The fight is far from over. White has an active king and the opportunity to create passed pawns on the flanks, which, as we know, would be hard to fight off with the knight.

57...Kf6 58.h5 Nd2 59.c5 dxc5?

Everyone makes mistakes! Black blunders away the win, which could have been achieved by 59...Ne4! 60.cxd6 (60.c6 Nc3!) 60...Nxd6 61.h6 Nf7 62.h7 Nh8! and then Ng6 (indicated by Alexey Suetin).

60.d6 Ne4 61.d7 Ke7 62.h6 Nd6 63.h7 Nf7 64.Kxf5 Kxd7 65.h4?

White returns the favor, missing the chance that Black gave him. However, it is not obvious how to achieve a draw. White should have played 65.Kf6!. After 65...Ke8, the study-like 66.Kf5! would have saved the game, for example: 66...c4 67.Ke4 Ng5+ 68.Kd4 Nxh7 69.Kxc4 Kd7 70.Kd5, and Black cannot improve his position. And in the variation 65...Nh8 66.Kg7 Ke7 67.Kxh8 Kf7, he is one tempo short of winning.

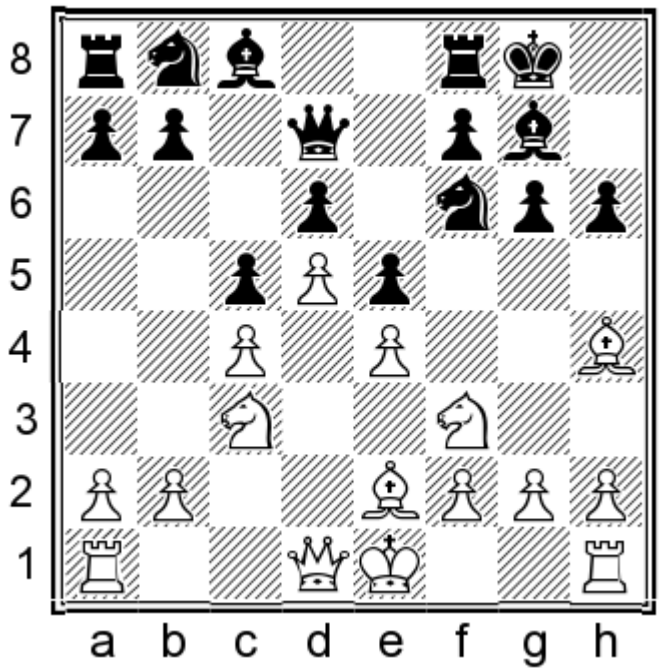
65...c4 66.Ke4 Kc6

This is why White needed to push the black king back to e8. Now White does not have the tempo he required to draw.

67.Kf5 c3 68.Kf6 Nh8 69.Kg7 c2 70.Kxh8 c1=Q 71.Kg7 Qc3+ White resigned.

(174) D1.8 **Petrosian – Velimirović**
Vrbas 1980

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 g6 4.Nc3 Bg7 5.e4 0-0 6.Nf3 d6 7.Be2 e5 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 Qd7



Black chooses one of the simplest interpretations of this variation. By getting rid of the pin, he plans to transfer the knight from f6 as soon as he can, and, depending on the circumstances, to continue either ...f5 or ...Bf6. The move 9...Qc7 is often played with the same ideas.

10.Nd2 Ne8

10...Nh7 is also sometimes played.

11.Qa4

11.g4 is probably stronger and leads to a more complex struggle. However, playing against a big fan of double-edged combinational play, Petrosian is happy to trade the queens, of course, especially since it leaves him some advantage.

11...Bf6 12.Qxd7 Nxd7 13.Bxf6

Petrosian's decision might surprise some readers. Does the grandmaster not know that in this pawn structure such

an exchange is not advantageous for White? After all, his dark-square bishop is “good” and Black’s bishop is “bad!” However, Petrosian eschewed such a simplistic, mechanistic understanding of positional problems. And now, by avoiding the standard 13.Bg3, he probably wanted to prove that even in such a seemingly pleasant endgame, Black has enough troubles.

13...Ndxf6 14.Rb1 Nd7

This and Black’s following moves look somewhat abstract to me. The position has changed and he should have re-evaluated it and adjusted his plan. In particular, given that without the queens the move ...f5 has largely lost its sting, it would have made sense to postpone it. If Velimirović could not wait to play this move, it would have been better to first retreat with the knight to h7, so that after exf5 he could take with a minor piece, while developing and expanding the base for maneuvering. In this case the weakness of the e4-square would not have mattered much (see the annotation to Black’s 16th move in game 2).

15.f3 f5 16.exf5 gxf5 17.g3 Ndf6 18.0-0 h5 19.f4 e4 20.Nd1

White has a small advantage in the resulting endgame because he has two active resources: the undermining moves b2-b4 and g3-g4.

20...Bd7 21.Ne3 b6 22.a3 h4

Fearing the knight transfer to h4, Black is looking for counter-chances with a pawn sacrifice. But Petrosian neutralizes the g-file by the clever maneuvers Rc1-c3, Nf1-g3 and maintains a material advantage.

23.gxh4 Kf7 24.Rfc1 Rh8 25.Ng2 Ng7 26.Nf1 Rag8

26...b5 does not work because of 27.b4!, but 26...a5 deserved attention.

27.Rc3! Ngh5 28.Ng3 Rg6 29.Nxh5 Nxh5 30.Bxh5 Rxh5 31.Rg3

The pieces are gradually traded, but the pawns are not.

31...Rh8 32.b4 Rc8 33.b5 Rxg3

Unpleasant but necessary. Otherwise, after 33...Ra8 34.Rbb3 a6 35.bxa6 Rxa6 36.h5 Rxg3 37.Rxg3! the h-pawn becomes very dangerous.

34.hxg3 Ra8 35.Ne3 a6 36.bxa6 Rxa6 37.Kf2!?

A somewhat unexpected offer to exchange the a3- and b6-pawns, which Black should have refused.

37...Rxa3 38.Rxb6 Ra2+ 39.Ke1 Ra1+ 40.Kd2 Ra2+ 41.Kc1 Ra3

In case of 41...Ke7 42.Rb2 Ra1+ 43.Kd2 Rg1 White could have played 44.Rb3, indirectly protecting the pawn (44...Rxg3? 45.Nxf5+!), or transferred the rook to g8 via 44.Rb7 Kd8 45.Rb8+ Ke7 46.Rg8, with a winning position.

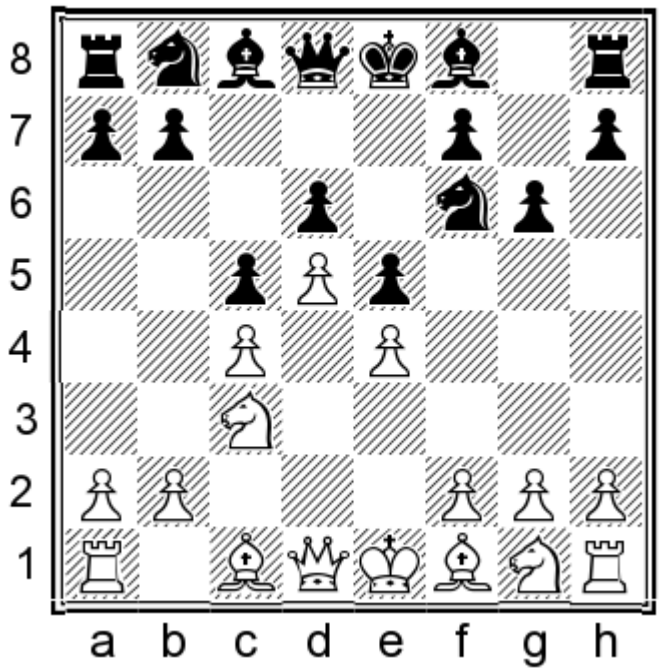
42.Rxd6 Rxe3

42...Ke7 43.Rxd7+ Kxd7 44.Nxf5 also would not save Black because White has too many pawns for the exchange.

43.Rxd7+ Black resigned.

After 43...Kg6 the most technically sound way to win is to create connected passed pawns: 44.Kc2 Rxg3 45.Rc7, and White easily wins; for example, 45...Rf3 46.Rxc5 Rxf4 47.d6 Kf7 48.Rd5.

D2



White to move

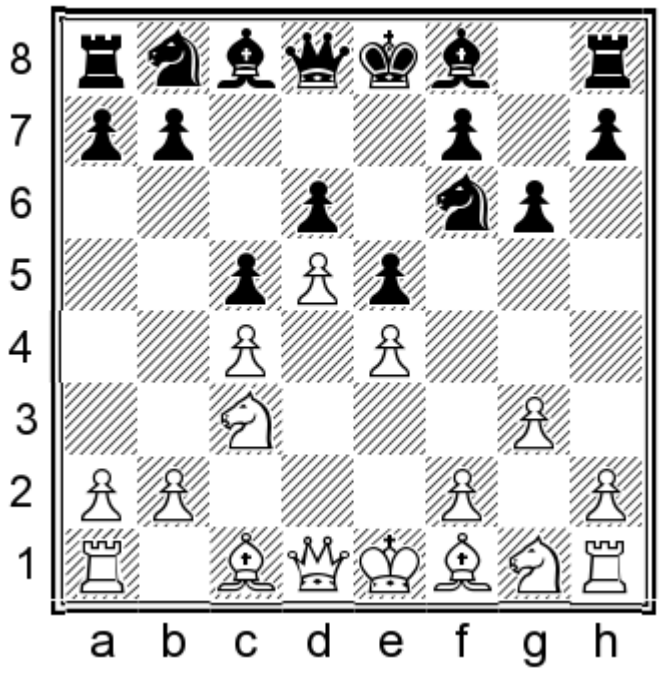
Bent Larsen wrote: “Isn’t Black playing the regular King’s Indian Defense with a flaw because he defined the configuration of the central pawns too early? This is true, but in his defense, he can argue that this configuration is not bad at all.” The ninth world champion could have subscribed to Larsen’s every word. In all of the games discussed below, Petrosian was Black. Most often he had to deal with the setup 6.Bd3 (games 177, 179, 180),

twice with the Sämisch System, 6.f3 (games 176, 178),

and one time he had to fight against the fianchetto: 6.g3 (game 175).

(175) D2.1 **Horowitz – Petrosian**
USSR-USA Match
Moscow 1955

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5 4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 g6 6.g3



6...Bg7 7.Bg2

7.Bh3!? is also sometimes played. In principle, White wants to exchange the light-square bishops, but as practical play shows, Black's active play on the kingside can reveal the drawback of this trade: the g2-bishop is necessary for the king's defense.

7...0-0 8.Nge2 Nh5

Despite its seemingly calm development, the opening phase is not without some nuances. Here is what Petrosian says about it (from *The Games of Tigran Petrosian* by Shekhtman *et al*.):

"White intends to answer ...f5 with f2-f4, after which it will be difficult for Black to maintain the tension in the center, and in the event of the pawn exchange on f4 the white knight will attack the weak e6 square. Therefore Black places his knight at h5, thus restricting the actions of the knight at e2."

9.0-0 Nd7

Petrosian preferred this move to ...f5 because he did not like the continuation 9...f5 10.f4 exf4 11.Nxf4 Nxf4 12.Bxf4, and Black does not have the move 12...Nd7.

10.Be3

According to Petrosian, after 10.g4 Nf4 11.Nxf4 exf4 12.Bxf4 Ne5 Black would have had ample compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

10...f5 11.f4

"Both sides purposefully carry out their plans. It should be mentioned that 11.Qd2 would have allowed 11...f4! 12.gxf4 Nb6!, with advantage to Black." (Petrosian)

11...exf4 12.Nxf4 Nxf4 13.Bxf4

Forced, because after 13.gxf4 Black would break up the white pawns and seize the initiative.

13...Ne5 14.Qe2 a6 15.Bh3 Bd7 16.exf5

“White was pinning great hopes on this move, hoping after 16...Bxf5 17.Bxf5 Rxf5 to play 18.Ne4 with the threat of 19.g4.” (Petrosian)

16...gxf5!

“White had probably not reckoned seriously on the recapture with the pawn. But in fact the pawn at f5, which deprives the white pieces of the e4 square, is easily defended.” (Petrosian).

17.Rae1 Qe8

“The immediate 17...b5 was not particularly promising for Black after 18.cxb5 axb5 19.Nxb5 Rxa2 20.Nxd6 or 20.Nc3...” (Tigran Petrosian)

18.Nd1 Qg6

Now after 18...b5 White had the good reply 19.b3.

19.Ne3 Rae8 20.Qc2 Qh5

“By forcing the retreat of the bishop to g2 Black eliminates the pressure on his f5-pawn, and this frees his hands for play in the center and on the kingside.” (Tigran Petrosian)

21.Bg2 Re7 22.b4 b6

“After 22...cxb4 23.c5, with the threat of 24.cxd6 or 24.c6, the white pieces would have become very active.” (Petrosian)

23.bxc5 bxc5 24.Qb3 Rfe8 25.Nc2

“In the first instance ,White had to defend against the threat of 25...Ng4, and for this he should have played 25.h3. Possibly White did not see that after 25.h3 Ng6 26.Bf3 Qxh3 27.Bg2, the black queen would be unable to avoid perpetual attack. At c2 the knight is badly placed.” (Petrosian)

25...a5!

“The continuation 25...Ng4 26.h3 Rxe1 27.Rxe1 Bd4+ 28.Kh1 Nf2+ would have led only to a draw. Now it is difficult for White to defend his c4 pawn.” (Petrosian)

26.h3

“Although 26.a4 would have created a fresh weakness in White’s position (the pawn at a4), nevertheless he should have decided on this move.” (Petrosian)

26...a4 27.Qb6 Qg6

“27...Nxc4 was more accurate. Black avoided capturing the pawn so as not to allow the opponent counterplay in the variation 28.Qa6 Rxe1 29.Nxe1 Qe2 30.Nf3, but overlooked that after 30...Qxa2 the opponent’s tactical threats would have been easily parried.” (Petrosian)

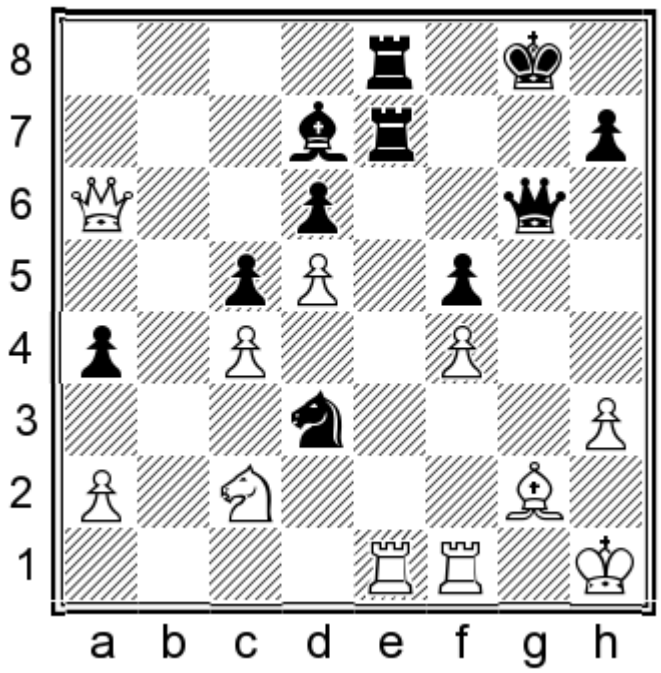
28.Qa6

“After this the queen takes no part at all in the play, but there is no other way of defending the c4 pawn, since 28.Bxe5 Bxe5 is completely hopeless.” (Petrosian)

28...Bh6! 29.Kh1?

“The final mistake. 29.Kh2 would have offered better chances, since 29...Rg7 would allow the exchange of queens by 30.Bxe5.” (Petrosian)

29...Bxf4 30.gxf4 Nd3



“Now the decisive invasion of the second rank by a black rook is unavoidable.” (Petrosian)

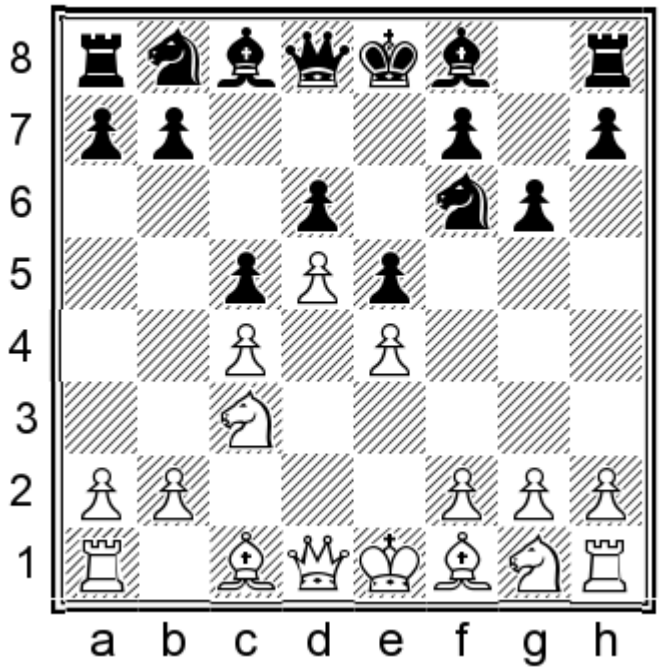
31.Rxe7 Rxe7 32.Qa5 Re2 33.Qd8+ Be8 34.Bf3 Rxc2 35.Bh5

“Things are so bad for White that he even allows a mate in one move – 35...Qg2, but Black ‘finds’ another way to win.” (Petrosian)

35...Nf2+ White resigned.

(176) D2.2 **Ilivitsky – Petrosian**
Interzonal Tournament
Göteborg 1955

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5 4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 g6



In this position, switching to a Sämisch structure looks quite tempting for White.

6.f3 Nh5

An interesting idea by Boleslavsky. 7.Be3 would have been followed by the unexpected 7...Be7! 8.Qd2 h6, and since 9.Bxh6? g5 does not work, in order to avoid the unwanted exchange of the dark-square bishops, White should take a chance on the sharp continuation 9.g3 Bg5 10.f4 exf4 11.gxf4 Bh4+ (but not 11...Bxf4? 12.Bxf4 Qh4+ 13.Bg3 Nxg3 14.Qf2!) 12.Kd1, and so on.

7.g3

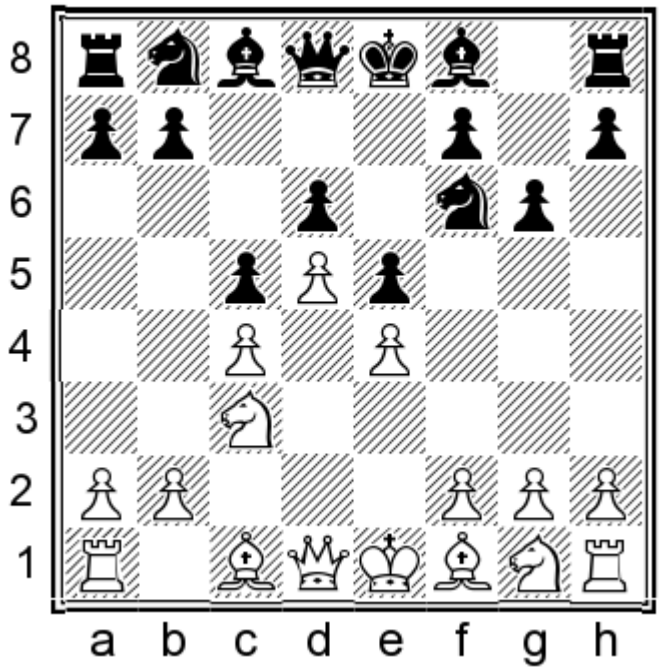
Directed against Black's aforementioned maneuver. If now 7...Be7, then 8.Bh3!, planning after 8...Nd7 9.Nge2 Bg5 to use the tactical resource 10.Nb5!. Once it becomes clear that the Sämisch will not happen in its true form, Petrosian moves the bishop to g7.

7...Bg7 8.Bh3 0-0 9.Bxc8 Qxc8 10.g4 Nf4 11.Nge2 Nh3 12.Ng1 Nf4 13.Nge2 Nh3 14.Ng1 Nf4

The opening conflict has been settled, and the opponents decide to acknowledge this fact with a threefold repetition. Draw.

(177) D2.3 **Ståhlberg – Petrosian**
Göteborg 1955

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5 4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 g6



A rather popular setup that gives White a number of plans to choose from.

6.Bd3 Bg7 7.Nge2 0-0

In his subsequent games against Portisch and Spassky (see games 177, 178), Petrosian was in no hurry to castle, which in our opinion is strategically better.

8.a3 b6 9.Ng3

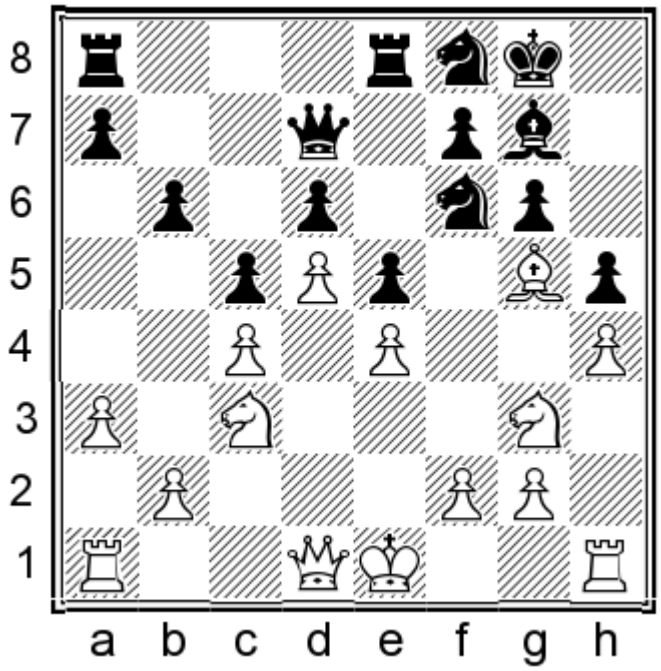
From this square, the knight can support the advance of the h-pawn and also hinder the traditional move ...f5. If Black can still somehow advance this pawn, after the exchange on f5, White will have the opportunity to play Ng3-h5, attacking the g7-bishop.

Deserving attention is 9.h3. Black would probably have to reply 9...h5, avoiding the standard squeeze g2-g4 and Ne2-g3.

9...Nbd7 10.h4 h5

Of course, Black has to stop the further advance of the white pawn. The reader knows the arising structure from game 179. Black will not be able to make the move ...f5 for a long time, but White also has a problem: the g3-knight is doing nothing.

11.Bg5 Re8 12.Bc2 Nf8 13.Ba4 Bd7 14.Bxd7 Qxd7



Skillfully maneuvering, White was able to exchange the bishops with advantage. Black, on the other hand, hopes to exchange the other pair of bishops on h6 in the future. It may seem that the middlegame scenario is already defined: a long maneuvering struggle with some advantage for White lies ahead. 15.f3 followed by Nd2, etc., suggests itself. However, as it turned out, this is not what Stahlberg had in mind. I think he decided to continue the creative discussion the opponents had started in Zürich (game 118), so he again exchanges the bishop for the f6-knight.

15.Bxf6 Bxf6 16.Nxh5?!

Courage bordering on passion. Black's position is worse, but not so much so that it would be possible to defeat him by sacrificing a piece out of the blue.

As a result, White obtains two pawns for the knight, a long-term initiative, and questionable drawing chances.

Today it is hard to understand what caused such a dramatic and unusual decision. Maybe White lost patience. In this tournament Ståhlberg's play was very uneven, and at the finish he tried to win in all of his games and burned out.

16...gxh5 17.Qxh5 Ng6

Black should not underestimate White's ideas. If his knight moved to f5 and the g- and h-pawns reached the fifth rank, Black would be in trouble. The last threat is the most unpleasant, and it is this threat that Petrosian's 17th move aimed to prevent.

18.g3

Now the g-pawn is guarding the f4-square and can move to g4 only after h4-h5, but then White's attack fizzles out because Black puts a "block" on g5. The next part of Black's plan is the evacuating the king from the danger zone.

18...Kf8 19.Qf3 Ke7 20.Nd1 Bh8 21.h5 Nf8 22.Ne3 Nh7

Not losing sight of the f6- and g5-squares, the knight moves to d7 in order to strengthen the king's position and to create the conditions for a counterattack (see Black's 35th move).

23.Nf5+ Kd8 24.0-0 Nf6 25.b4 Kc7

White fails to create anything serious on the kingside and looks to the opposite flank.

26.Rfb1 Reb8 27.Rb3 Qe8 28.Rab1 Nd7 29.Nh6 Bg7 30.Nf5

White's last moves are doomed to fail. His initiative has petered out and he is down a piece. He was able to create only one threat, but it did not work: 30.Nxf7 Qe7 31.Qf5 Rf8 32.Rf3 Bf6 33.Nh6 Bg5 34.Nf7 Bf4, and Black wins.

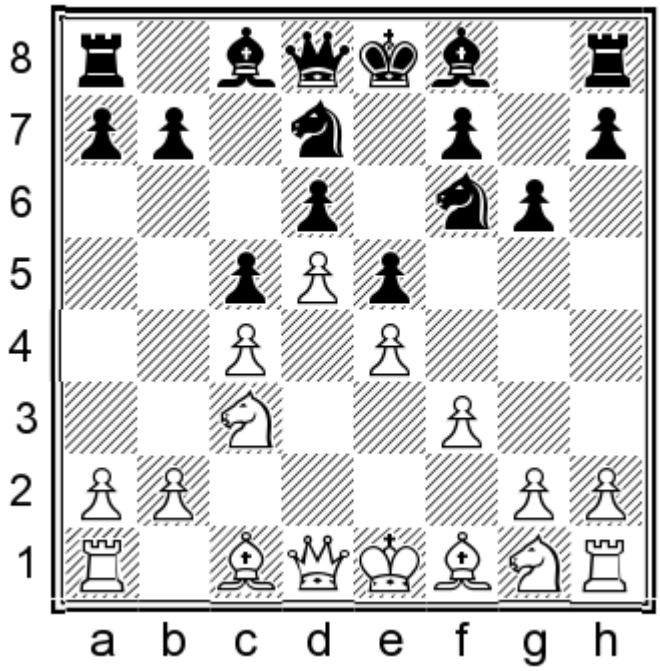
30...Bh8 31.Kg2 Rb7 32.h6 Qg8 33.Qd1 Qe8 34.Qh5 Rbb8 35.Rh1 cxb4! 36.axb4 a5

The beginning of the counterattack.

37.Rf3 axb4 38.Ng7? Bxg7 39.hxg7 f6 40.Qg4 Qf7 41.Rh7 White resigned.

(178) D2.4 **Nei – Petrosian**
USSR Team Championship
Moscow 1960

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5 4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 g6 6.f3 Nbd7



Petrosian refuses to use Boleslavsky's simplifying maneuver 6...Nh5!? and chooses complicated play by allowing the Sämisch attack. He probably took into account that his opponent did not have much experience in this variation. Also, note an important detail: for now, Black leaves his king in the center to gain time to prepare counterplay and to avoid the sharpest plans where White castles queenside.

7.Be3 a6 8.Nh3 Rb8 9.a4 Bg7 10.Qd2 Qa5 11.Nf2

Petrosian's psychological assessment was correct: White commits an inaccuracy and loses the opening initiative. As Iivo Nei correctly pointed out, the immediate 11.g4 did not yield anything because of 11...h5, but the better move 11.Ra3! resulted in a kind of *zugzwang* for Black. Thus, after 11...0-0 White can continue 12.g4!, while the attempt to grab the c4-pawn, 11...Nb6 12.Nf2 Qb4?, can be refuted by 13.a5! Nxc4 14.Bxc4 Qxc4 15.Nd3, and the black queen perishes.

11...Nh5 12.Ra3

After 12.g4 Black would have played 12...Nf4!, of course, with an excellent position.

12...0-0 13.Nd3 Bf6

An overdone and, most importantly, illogical maneuver. Why did Black abandon the natural advance of the f-pawn? Subsequently, Iivo Nei considered the interesting pawn sacrifice 13...f5!? 14.exf5 gxf5 15.g4 fxg4 16.fxg4 Nf4 and came to the conclusion that it is better than the text continuation but still insufficient to achieve complete equality because of 17.Ne4! (in case of 17.Nxf4 exf4 18.Bxf4 Ne5, Black is all right) 17...Qc7 18.Nxf4 exf4 19.Bxf4 Ne5 20.Be2, etc. Meanwhile, there was a simple solution: 13...Nb6!, attacking the c4-pawn with tempo, and ...f5. Surprisingly, neither player noticed this.

14.Be2 Be7 15.0-0 f5

Now, after Black has lost a lot of time, this move does not have the same power and only creates weaknesses for Black. Therefore, it would have been better to make the waiting move 15...Ng7 or 15...Qd8. The saying “better late than never” usually does not apply to chess.

16.exf5 gxf5 17.f4! Ng7

Black’s position becomes worrisome. For example, the following does not work: 17...exf4?! 18.Nxf4 Nxf4 19.Bxf4 Ne5? 20.Bxe5 dxe5 21.d6, and White wins. No better is 17...Nhf6 18.fxe5 Nxe5 19.Nxe5 dxe5 20.d6 Rd8? 21.Nd5! (variations by Nei).

18.fxe5 dxe5 19.Bh6 Qc7 20.g4!

A standard technique. Using a temporary pawn sacrifice, White seizes the key e4-square, after which his attack grows rapidly.

20...fxg4 21.Rxf8+ Nxf8 22.Ne4 Bf5?

Perhaps the decisive mistake. In any case, I do not see where Black could have later played stronger.

White’s advantage is based on two factors: his ability to create threats on the kingside and the strong passed pawn on the d-file. Therefore, Black should have tried to cut off the pawn from its rear support by transferring the knight to d4: 22...Ng6 23.Ndf2 Nf5! 24.Bxg4 Nd4 25.Bxc8 Rxc8, with counterplay. If White stops this idea via 23.Bxg7 Kxg7 24.Ndf2, then after 24...Bh4 Black will also have counterchances. For example, 25.Nxg4 Nf4!, holding on to the dark squares and not letting the rook come to g3, or 25.Bxg4 Bxf2+ 26.Nxf2 Bxg4 27.Nxg4 Rf8 with potential play along the f-file.

23.Ndf2 Ne8 24.Bxg4 Bg6 25.Rg3 Kh8 26.Bg5

26.Qc3, as indicated by Nei, was also very strong.

26...Nd6 27.Nxd6 Qxd6 28.Bxe7 Qxe7 29.d6 Qf6 30.Qd5 b6

30...e4 31.Nxe4 Qxb2 32.Nxc5 etc. was more stubborn but would not save the game.

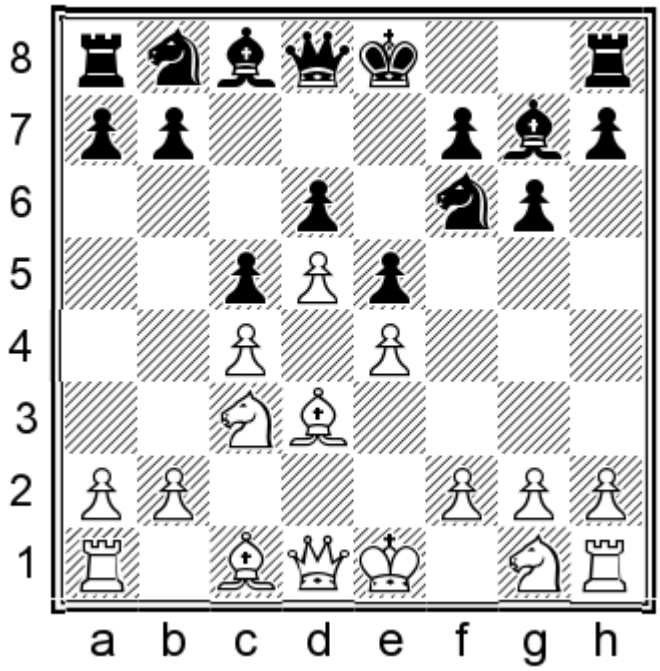
31.Nd3 Rd8 32.d7 Bxd3?

Giving his opponent the opportunity to finish the game with a dramatic queen sacrifice. But in any case, Black’s position is hopeless. After 32...e4 33.Ne5, significant material losses are inevitable, and after 32...h5, besides 33.Bh3, White can probably play 33.Bxh5 Rxd7 34.Rxg6! Qxg6+ 35.Bxg6 Rxd5 36.cxd5 Nxg6 37.d6, with a winning endgame.

33.Qg8+! Black resigned in view of the mate in two.

(179) D2.5 **Portisch – Petrosian**
Bled 1961

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5 4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 g6 6.Bd3 Bg7



7.h3 a6 8.Nge2 Nbd7 9.Bg5

The Hungarian grandmaster is well-known for his opening erudition. And this time, despite the rare variation, his opening play was perfect. For comparison, here is an example of a game where White plays intuitively: 9.Be3 Nh5! 10.Qd2 0-0 11.g4 (11.0-0 f5!; 11.0-0-0 b5!?) 11...Nf4 12.Nxf4 exf4 13.Bxf4 Ne5, and after both the exchange on e5 and 14.Be2 b5! 15.cxb5 axb5 16.Nxb5 Ra4!, Black's active play far outweighs his material losses (Flohr-Larsen, Copenhagen 1966).

Now it is clear that the bishop move to g5 is directed primarily against the plan with ...Nh5. For example, 9...h6 10.Be3! Nh5 11.Qd2, and since the h6-pawn is attacked twice, Black cannot move the king out of the center and the pawn sacrifice ...Nf4 loses all meaning.

9...Rb8 10.a4 h6 11.Be3 h5

Having made sure that there are no other active opportunities (11...Qa5 12.Ra3! would have only aggravated Black's situation), Petrosian switches to the backup plan associated with the exchange of the dark-square bishops.

12.Qd2 Ng8 13.0-0

I think that Portisch somewhat overestimated his chances here. White wants to punish his opponent for being slow by preparing harsh measures in the center: f2-f4. Otherwise, he would have stayed with the standard 13.h4, restructuring the pawns and preventing the expansion of Black's base for maneuvering via the move ...h4.

13...Bh6 14.Bxh6 Nxh6 15.a5

A necessary move if White wants to advance b2-b4 in the future. In addition, his bishop gets an open diagonal.

15...b6 16.axb6 Rxb6 17.Nd1

Preparing to transfer the bishop to a4 and opening the third rank for a rook maneuver.

17...Kf8

Forced, but decent. The rook is well-placed on its starting square, supporting the advance ...h4.

18.Bc2 Kg7 19.Ra3 Qe7 20.Ba4

Intending to exchange the light-square bishop for the “dark-square” knight when the opportunity presents itself. Of course, Petrosian does not give his opponent such a chance.

20...Nf6 21.Re3 h4

The positional threat of ...Nh5 (with the idea ...g5 and ...Nf4) makes White hurry with the advance of the f-pawn.

22.f4 Nh5

22...exf4 23.Nxf4 Nxe4? would have been a mistake because of 24.Qe1 f5 25.Nc3 Nf7 26.Nxe4 fxe4 27.Rxe4 Ne5 28.Nd3 Rh5 29.Qc3 followed by Rfe1, and White breaks through.

23.fxe5 Qxe5

White’s ambitious plans never materialized. Black has a solid position: he dominates on the dark squares, and the e4-pawn is rather weak. Petrosian probably does not have any chess advantage, but the psychological initiative is certainly on his side. Therefore, the struggle continues.

24.b3 f6 25.Nf2 Qg5 26.Qc1 Nf7 27.Nd3 Ne5 28.Ndf4

White is concerned with the fate of the e4-pawn, so he trades the knight on the edge that could have leaped to g3. The a4-bishop controls the e8-square, preventing the black rooks from doubling in the e-file.

28...Nxf4 29.Nxf4 Rh7 30.Qd1 Kh6 31.Re2 Re7 32.Ref2

Continuing to maneuver, both sides gradually get into time trouble, as is evidenced by the nervous moves of the white queen and the black king.

32...Rbb7 33.Kh1 Kh7 34.Qe1 f5 35.Re2 fxe4

And this exchange cannot be explained by anything other than a desire to clarify the situation in time pressure. In reality Black was in no danger, or maybe just a little bit, from the foray Qa5, which could have been stopped by the “ultra-solid” move 35...Rb4.

36.Rxe4

The rook assumed a strike position, checking out the h4-pawn: 36...Bf5 37.Ne6! Bxe6 38.Rxh4+.

36...Kg7 37.Qa5

A very unpleasant move, especially in time trouble: the a6-pawn is hanging, the queen threatens to invade d8.

37...Bf5 38.Ree1 Nd3?

A tragic blunder. The cold-blooded 38...Ra7 allowed Black to hold his position. For example: 39.Qb6 Nd3! 40.Rxe7+ (or 40.Nxd3 Bxd3) 40...Rxe7 41.Qxd6 Nf2+ 42.Kg1 Nxh3+ 43.Nxh3 Bxh3, and so on.

39.Nxd3 Bxd3 40.Qc3+ Black resigned.

(180) D2.6 **Spassky – Petrosian**
World Championship Match, 9th game
Moscow 1969

This game (as well as the other games from this match) was the subject of an interesting correspondence debate between the opponents' seconds, grandmasters Isaac Boleslavsky and Igor Bondarevsky (the latter's notes in italics), which we cite from the original sources (a magazine *Chess in USSR*, #9, 1969) and the materials from a book that was published in 1970.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5

This move came as a surprise not only to Spassky and the audience but also to those who had worked with Petrosian during the match. The world champion made this decision alone without discussing it with his assistants.

The world champion has never liked this defense. If he happens to use it occasionally, it is only at those critical moments when the tournament standings force him to play for a win at any cost. Moreover, Petrosian plays it only against less dangerous opponents and never against his direct competition.

But, as White, Petrosian has won many games, and usually outplays his opponents in the opening. He owes these victories not only to his strategic talent but also to his many years of in-depth development of positional plans in positions with a locked center. Of course, while studying the Benoni Defense to find its weaknesses, Petrosian unwittingly learned its strengths.

However, if the space advantage is on his side, Spassky likes to play positions with a closed center probably just as much as his opponent. For example, he often locks the center with d4-d5 in the Ruy Lopez. Therefore, this choice of opening is, of course, debatable.

Petrosian's choice can undoubtedly be explained by his desire for a complex double-edged fight. His defeat in the previous game and the threatening score in the match (minus two) had to affect the state of mind of even such a cold-blooded fighter as Petrosian. In such cases, nervous anxiety creates a desire to immediately fight back, to involve the opponent in close combat. This tactic is associated with great risk because the nervous tension caused by unpleasant emotions can impact clarity of thought, which is necessary for complex play.

Still, Petrosian's decision is understandable. In chess, one's frame of mind plays a huge role. Sometimes the opening chosen by the player himself brings more success than one that is imposed, even with the best intentions. When one's confidence is shaken by a blunder in the previous game, a tedious struggle for a draw in a calm variation of the Queen's Gambit is a thankless task.

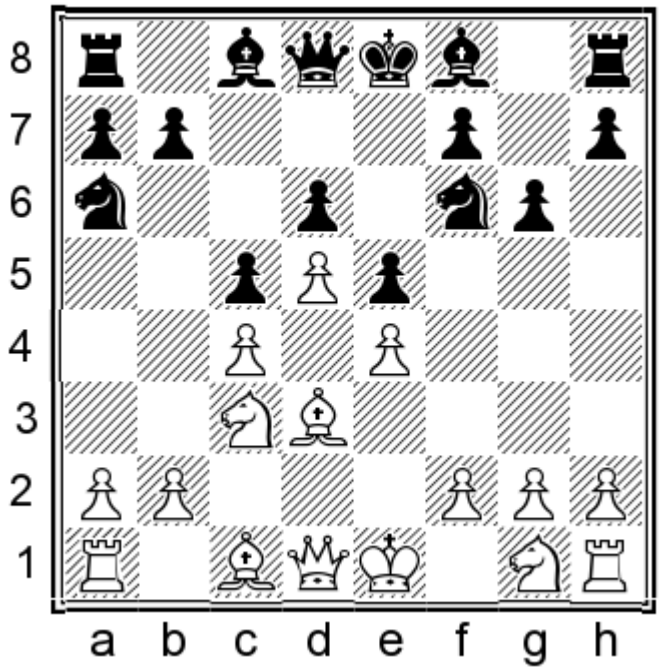
Petrosian decides to switch from classical defensive systems to structures that would take the game into the "Indian Jungle." In fact, he has a lot of experience in such structures. Therefore, to some extent his choice of the Benoni Defense is justified, even though Petrosian had not played it before in its "pure" form. (Well, here Igor Zakharovich [Bondarevsky – translator] is wrong; after all, who played the previous five games? – Igor Yanvarjov). *It should also be noted that at this moment Spassky was already two points ahead. It is a quite natural desire to win back the points. Whether it is right is another question.*

Also, I can tell from our conversation before the game that 2...c5 was no surprise for Spassky.

3.d5 e5 4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 g6 6.Bd3

In the King's Indian Defense, Spassky prefers the Sämisch System to the other continuations. Therefore, faced with an opening that he did not anticipate, he chooses a setup similar to the Sämisch System.

6...Na6



In the Benoni system White has a space advantage, which is determined by the pawn structure in the center. Black plans to prepare the breakthroughs ...b5 and ...f5, so the knight is often transferred to c7.

Petrosian never felt comfortable with the knight's position on c7, and in this case it is as if he is playing against himself. Indeed, the passive position of the knight could have later cost Black dearly. After 6...Bg7, White would have had an opportunity to switch to an advantageous variation of the Sämisch System by replying 7.f3. However, 6...Be7 also deserved attention: after castling, Black can transfer the f6-knight to g7 and carry out the breakthrough ...f5. This plan is less studied and, had Petrosian not chosen the well-known setup, Spassky would have needed to have more specific knowledge of the opening.

7.Nge2 Nb4

Petrosian knows all too well the drawbacks of this setup to be satisfied with the standard 7...Nc7. Even though the knight can be ousted from the b4-square easily, in order to achieve this, White would have had to move the pawn to a3, which would have made castling queenside more risky; also, the weakening of the b3-square may play a role later. However, White gains a tempo for his attack on the queenside, but this attack is much less dangerous for Black than the plan with queenside castling.

In addition, the knight move also has a psychological effect. Spassky, seeing that his opponent is provoking the move a2-a3, wants to avoid it, which leads to a delay in the mobilization of his forces.

8.Bb1

The white bishop's mobility is significantly limited by its own pawns, and so it does not look like there is any reason to protect it from exchange. However, first, Black's knight is also a "bad" piece. Second, if we evaluate the position in terms of future plans, the bishop will become a good piece when Black starts counterplay with ...b5 or ...f5.

8...Bg7 9.h3

After 9.f3 in order to transpose to the Sämisch System, Black could have played 9...Nh5 followed by ...f5. But now White can counter 9...Nh5 with 10.g4, and since Black does not have a check on h4, he has to return the knight to its previous position.

White's plan becomes clear: he prepares the standard development of the bishop to e3 followed by Qd2. However, 9.Ng3 is more energetic in view of the rapid advance h4-h5.

9...Bd7 10.Be3 0-0 11.Qd2

White does not want to determine his plan yet. The text move was made out of general considerations, without taking into account the specific characteristics of the position. The immediate 11.g4 deserved attention.

The position on the board would have begun to resemble the Makogonov Variation in the King's Indian Defense. The position of the black pawn on c5 is better for White, as Black is unable to open the c-file.

How can Black counter the move 11.g4? I cannot see any other plan for counterplay but Gligorić's undermining move 11...h5 (which was later played in the game). In this case White needs the queen on d1 to protect the f3-pawn. For example: 12.f3 Nh7 (otherwise 13.Bg5) 13.gxh5 Qh4+ 14.Bf2 Qxh5 15.Ng3 Qg5 16.h4 Qe7 (16...Qf4 17.a3 Na6 18.Nb5 is no better) 17.a3 Na6 18.Nb5!, and White's position is significantly better. The exchange on b5 is not advantageous for Black; his play on the queenside is paralyzed, and White gradually develops an attack on the other flank.

After 11.Qd2, White would have had to postpone the advance g2-g4 for some time because of the undermining move ...h5.

11...Na6

Black retreats his knight in order to finally transfer it to c7 and to begin operations on the queenside.

The attempt to carry out ...f5 is not promising, for example: 11...Ne8 12.g4 f5 13.gxf5 gxf5 14.exf5 Bxf5 15.Bxf5 Rxf5 16.Ng3, and White takes possession of the e4-square. The newly open g-file could bring benefits only for White.

12.Bd3 Nb4

No matter how determined Petrosian is, he understands that it is too early to burn his bridges. He would be happy with the psychological advantage that he would have if his opponent had chosen to repeat the position with the white pieces.

But Spassky, who had seized the initiative in the match, is not willing to give his opponent a psychological advantage.

13.Bb1 Na6 14.a3 Nc7 15.Bd3 Rb8

This is too slow and allows White to seize the initiative on the queenside without abandoning the attack on the kingside (since he has not castled yet).

In such positions it is very important for Black to start activity before his opponent does. Therefore, 15...b5 16.cxb5 Qb8 17.a4 a6 18.bxa6 Nxa6 deserves attention. In the resulting position the pressure on the open files completely offsets the missing pawn, so Black most likely would not have risked losing (in my opinion, this is a very controversial assessment – Igor Yanvarjov).

Black prepared ...b5 , but with his next move, Spassky, attacking the c5-pawn, thwarts Black's attempts to take the initiative. In case of 15...b5 16.cxb5 Qb8 17.a4 a6 18.bxa6 Nxa6 19.0-0 Black most likely does not have sufficient compensation for the pawn.

16.b4 b6 17.g4

White allows a counter-blow on the kingside, after which the game becomes complicated.

Calmer was 17.Bg5, pinning the f6-knight first, and only then 18.g4.

In the case of kingside castling, after the necessary preparation, Black could carry out a counterattacking plan by ...f5 . With the text move, Spassky is trying to completely squeeze the opponent on both flanks.

17...h5

Otherwise, after Ng3, White would have a great position.

18.g5

18.f3 was not promising for White in view of 18...Nh7, with the idea 19.gxh5 Qh4+.

In my opinion, another plan associated with the opening of lines for the white pieces deserved serious consideration: 18.Bg5, with the positional threat 19.gxh5. After 18...hxg4 19.hxg4 Bxg4 20.0-0-0, the opened rook file would give White good attacking chances. Of course, the position would turn into a "gambit," with all its advantages and disadvantages.

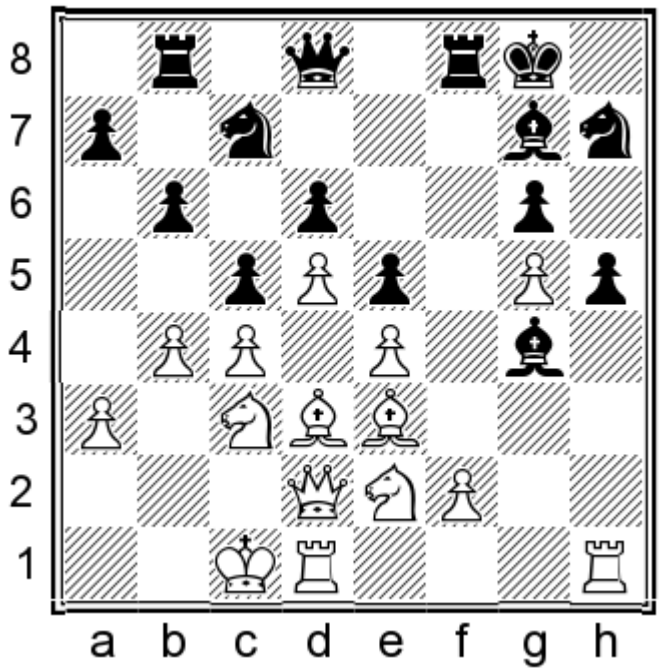
18...Nh7 19.h4

Now White's goal is to keep the pawn on g5, restricting the black pieces. However, the opening of the f-file is inevitable, and this is advantageous for Black.

19...f6 20.0-0-0

Queenside castling is quite logical: White needs to connect the rooks and transfer the king to a safer place. The attempt to complicate play in the center by 20.f4 [suggested by Mikhail Tal – Igor Yanvarjov] is risky with an uncastled king. For example: 20...exf4 21.Nxf4 Qe8 but not 21...fxg5? 22.Nxg6 Rf3 23.e5! – variation by Mikhail Tal – Igor Yanvarjov] 22.e5 fxe5 23.Ng6 (if 23.Bxg6, then 23...exf4!) 23...Rf5, and the white knight is in "captivity."

20...fxg5 21.hxg5 Bg4!



Now Black has obtained pressure along the opened f-file. The text move was meant to serve as a prelude to an exchange sacrifice that is rather unpleasant for White.

A very complicated position has risen that is difficult to evaluate accurately. I think Black's position is better. There was an opinion that now Black should have traded pawns on b4 to preserve opportunities for play on the queenside. It is hard to argue with that, but the plan of playing on the kingside is also quite good.

22.Rdg1 Qe8

This position required more energetic play. Black wastes time and ceases the attack on the g5-pawn. Meanwhile, he had two good continuations. The first one, the one in Petrosian's style, is 22...Rf3 23.Ng3 Rxe3! 24.Qxe3 Qxg5. White will have to fight for a draw because the bishop and the passed pawn are stronger than the rook.

The other continuation was indicated by Efim Geller in the newspaper *Chess Moscow*. After 22...cxb4 23.axb4

Qd7, it is difficult for White to avoid the opening of the lines on the queenside, after which the black pieces fiercely attack White's king.

At the time the game was played, I thought that at this moment Petrosian decided to use the f-file to inflict some damage, sacrificing an exchange on f4 at some point in order to win the g5-pawn and open the diagonal for the bishop. This method is quite common in Petrosian's play and brought him many successes in the past.

Deserving attention was the simple 22...Rf7, with the idea of transferring the bishop to e7 to attack the g5-pawn. Black could have improved this plan by trading pawns on b4, as was already mentioned.

23.b5

Exploiting his opponent's passive play, White locks the queenside and eliminates the danger of the attack.

23...Ra8

With the idea of opening the a-file. But Black's pieces do not have sufficient mobility and Petrosian fails to create threats.

24.Kc2 Rf3 25.Ng3 a6

Now the exchange sacrifice on e3 is not good for Black anymore. For example: 25...Rxe3 26.Qxe3 Qd8 27.Be2! Bd7 28.Bxh5!, and White has a virtually unstoppable attack.

26.a4 axb5 27.cxb5!

Enviable composure! By agreeing to a weak a4-pawn, White pins his hopes on a breakthrough on the queenside, and, most importantly, on the c4- square, where the knight will have an ideal position. But right now, White has to think about defense, and it is absolutely unclear how the knight can get to c4. One must have great confidence in himself and his position in order not to play the natural 27.axb5.

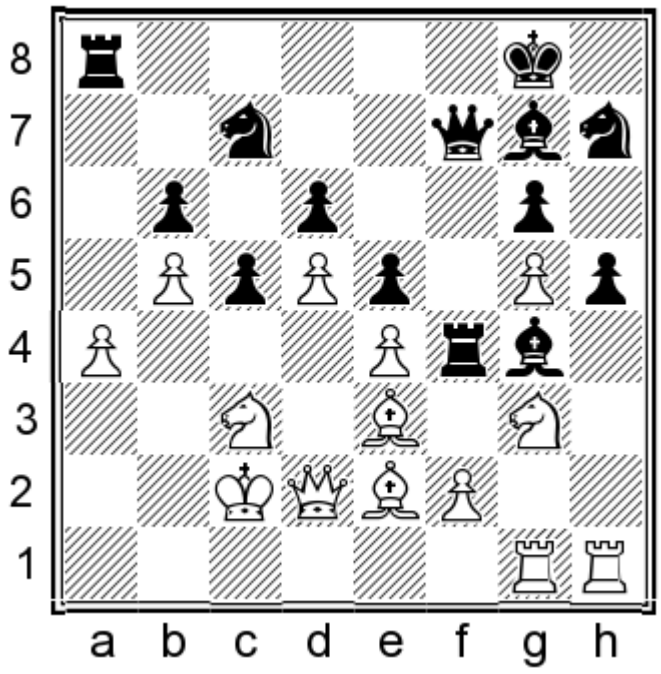
Exactly! There is no danger for White on the a-file, and in the future the c4-square might be good for the knight.

27...Qf7?

A tactical mistake! Petrosian does not account for the possibility of a combinational attack, which thwarts all of his plans. Correct was 27...Qf8! 28.Be2 Rf4. Now, after 29.f3, Black can play either the simple 29...Bd7 or 29...Bxf3 30.Bxf4 exf4 31.Bxf3 fxg3 32.Rxg3 Be5 with sufficient compensation for the exchange.

Therefore White should have played 29.Bxg4, and then Black's attempts to create complications via 29...hxg4 are apparently insufficient: 30.Bxf4 exf4 31.Nge2 f3 32.Nc1, and Black does not have a good continuation. However, after 29...Rxg4, Black probably maintained equality. For example: 30.Qe2 Qe7 (freeing the f8-square for the knight) 31.Nf1 Rf4 32.Nd2 (opening the diagonal by taking the rook is extremely risky) 32...Nf8 33.Nc4 Nd7, and the mutual weaknesses balance each other.

28.Be2 Rf4



29.f3!

This excellent move fully clarifies the situation: now White has the advantage! Petrosian still sacrifices the exchange for a pawn, probably believing that it is the best solution in the current position. However, it is hard to agree with this decision.

That's the point! 29...Bxf3 will be followed by 30.Bxf3 Rxf3 31.Nxh5!. Black loses a most important pawn and his position falls apart. If 29...Bd7, then also 30.Nxh5. Spassky carried out such an attack more than ten years before in his game against Gurgenidze at the 26th USSR Championship (see the annotation to the 15th move in game 48 – Igor Yanvarjov).

Petrosian thought for a long time and decided to sacrifice the exchange on f3, but the arising position is different from the one resulting after the capture on f4, and it is much less favorable for Black: the g7-bishop stays trapped, White saves the important dark-square bishop, and the g5-pawn is invincible.

29...Rxf3 30.Bxf3 Qxf3 31.Rh2

Now that Black's initiative has petered out, it is clear how bad the positions of his minor pieces are. The exchange on b5 is also bad for Black, as White gains the c4-square. All of the above indicates the position is winning for White.

31...Qf8 32.Rf2 Qc8

Black is doomed to passive waiting. His only hope is the closed nature of the position.

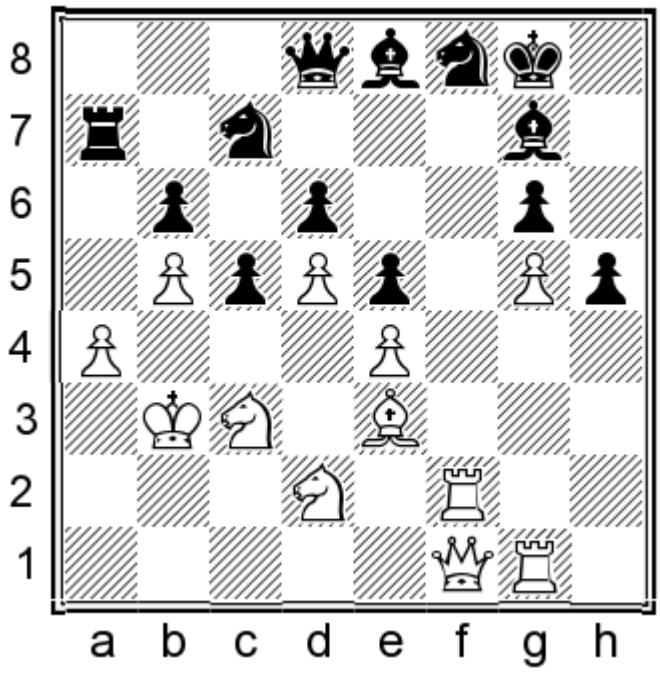
33.Nf1 Ra7 34.Qd3 Qa8 35.Qc4

More accurate is 35.Kb3, not occupying the c4-square designated for the knight. However, it is important to remember that both opponents were in time trouble at this point. In addition, the position is such that White can afford to lose a couple of tempi.

35...Qd8 36.Nh2 Bd7 37.Nf3 Bg4 38.Qf1! Bd7 39.Kb3 Be8 40.Nd2 Nf8

The last move before the time control. It would seem that 40...Bf8 is a pretty good move because it activates the bishop, which had not been doing much for the whole game. But when you have a few seconds left, it is very difficult to muster the nerve to play the continuation 41.Rxf8+ Nxf8 42.Qf6. I think Petrosian's intuition regarding

this position did not fail him. After 42...Qxf6 43.gxf6 Na8 44.Nc4 Rd7 45.Bg5 (the computer indicated a shorter path: 45.a5! bxa5 46.Ra1 Nh7 47.Rxa5 Rd8 48.Ra7 h4 49.Bh6! followed by Rg7+ – Igor Yanvarjov) 45...Nh7 46.Bh4 Kf7 47.Ne2 g5 (otherwise the transfer of the knight to f3 and the sacrifice on e5 decide the game) 48.Bxg5 Nxg5 49.Rxg5 Kxf6 50.Rg8, Black's position is completely hopeless, despite his extra pawn.



The game was adjourned. Boris Spassky did not spend much time on his last move, and there was every reason to think that he recorded the most natural move, 41.Nc4. A short analysis showed that Black's position is impossible to hold, and we did not consider other continuations.

Later I learned that Mikhail Botvinnik thought that the move 41.Nc4 was superficial and recommended tripling the major pieces on the f-file in order to stop the black g7-bishop from entering the game. It was probably the most solid way to win, but it was not necessary because even the "superficial" Nc4 was quite sufficient.

The analysis of the adjourned position showed that after the necessary preparation the breakthrough a4-a5 should lead to White's decisive invasion into the enemy camp.

41.Nc4 Nh7

Not only to bring the g7-bishop into the game but also to stop the threat 42.Rf6. The move 42.Nxb6 is not dangerous because of 42...Nxb5.

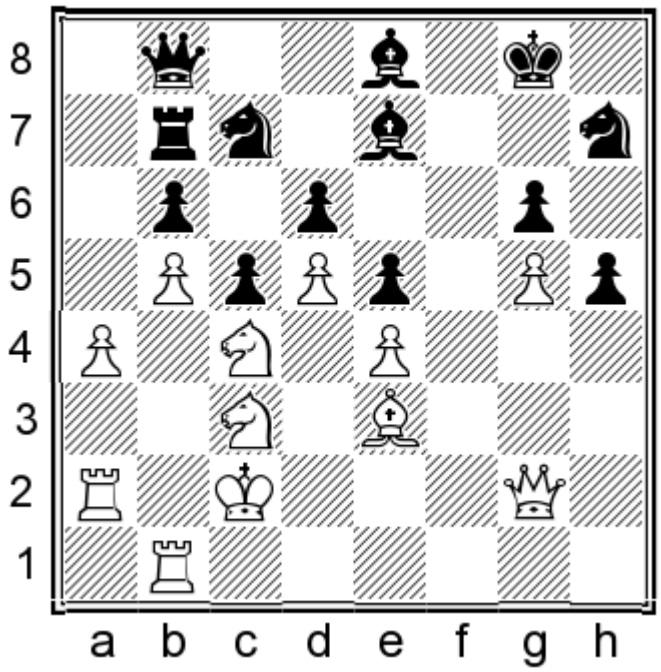
Petrosian did not want to finish the game and agreed to make a few moves only on the advice of one of his friends, who was more of an optimist.

42.Qg2 Bf8 43.Ra2 Rb7

After 43...Na8, as recommended by Lev Abramov, White could have replied 44.Rga1, and it is not clear how Black could stop the decisive breakthrough. If, for example, 44...Be7, then 45.a5! Qb8 46.axb6 Rxa2 47.Rxa2 Nxb6 48.Nxb6 Qxb6 49.Kc4 and then 50.Ra6.

Bad was 43...Na8 because of 44.a5, and if 44...bxa5, then 45.Rga1.

44.Kc2 Be7 45.Rb1 Qb8



Black is doing everything in his power, but the end is nearing.

46.Rab2?

This is a strange move, which simply cannot be explained from the point of view of chess. From the analysis of the adjourned position, Spassky knew that 46.a5 led to victory; for example, 46...bxa5 47.Nxa5 and 48.Nc6.

Suddenly Petrosian gets a respite. He is not out of danger yet, but White is stalling for some reason.

After 46.a5 bxa5 47.b6 Na8 (47...Na6 48.Rxa5 Nb4+ 49.Kd2 is also hopeless) 48.Rxa5 Bd8 (48...Nxb6 49.Rxb6 Rxb6 50.Nxb6 Qxb6 51.Ra8 Bd8 52.Qh3 is even worse – indicated by Efim Geller) 49.Nxd6! Rxb6 50.Qh3 Nf8 51.Rxb6 Bxb6 52.Ra2 Bd7 53.Qf3 White would win in a few moves.

46...Na8 47.Ra2?!

It may seem that Spassky did not analyze the adjourned position, but such wonders could never happen in a World championship match.

Probably, Spassky did not like something when over the board he checked the breakthrough 46.a5 which he had prepared at home. Most likely, it was some sort of hallucination caused by nervous tension, as Black has no real chances to save the game. The same breakthrough on the 47th move leads to more complicated variations, and most importantly, it was not a part of the home analysis (the advance of the a-pawn was supposed to take place when the rook was on a2). Spassky temporarily abandons active play, but this indecisiveness allows Petrosian to save an important half-point.

47.a5 would still have posed difficult problems for Black. In *Chess Moscow*, Efim Geller suggested the following variation: 47...Bd8 (this and Black's subsequent moves are the best opportunity to prolong the resistance) 48.axb6 Nxb6 49.Na5 Nxd5 50.Nxd5 Bxa5 51.b6. The strong passed pawn gives White good winning chances. For example: 51...Ba4+ 52.Kc1 Bc6 53.Qh3 Nf8 54.Nf6+ Kg7 55.Qf1 with the threats 56.Qa6 and 56.Qc4.

(These variations do not look convincing. In the final position, Black already has two pawns for the exchange, while it is questionable whether the indicated threats are indeed threats. For example: 55...Nd7 56.Qc4 [weak is 56.Qa6? Bb4! with an advantage for Black] 56...Nxb6 [dangerous is 56...Nxf6 57.gxf6+ Kxf6? 58.Bh6!] 57.Qe6 Rf7 [but not 57...Qd8? 58.Bd2! Bxd2+ 59.Rxd2 or 58...Bb4 59.Bxb4 cxb4 60.Rxb4 Re7 61.Nxh5+ with an attack for White] 58.Bxc5 [or 58.Rf2 Qc7!] 58...dxc5 59.Qxc6 Bb4 60.Rxb4 cxb4 61.Rxb4 Re7 62.Nxh5+, still with unclear play. In addition, Black's play in the main line can be improved in various ways; for example, instead of 51...Ba4+ or 53...Nf8 the moves 51...Bc6!? or 53...Kg7!? are worth considering. And how can White's play be improved? The

computer keeps insisting on 48.a6, not understanding that this will result in a fortress. Probably, the natural 49.Nxb6 Bxb6 50.Ra2, with the idea of transferring the rooks to a7 or a8, still deserves attention. However, here too Black can defend: 50...Qd8! 51.Rba1 Rb8. So, while after 47.a5 White's position is better, it is a fighting position nevertheless, so I can understand Spassky – Igor Yanvarjov).

47...Bd8

Of course, Black will not repeat the position. Now, if 48.a5 bxa5 49.Nxa5, he will be able to defend by trading his bad bishop for White's good knight.

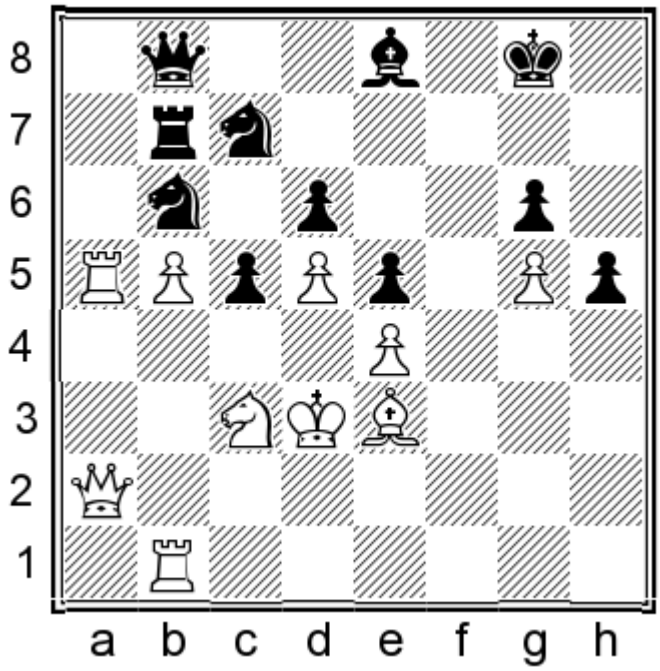
So, as a result of an inexplicable loss of two tempi, the logical course of the fight is seriously disrupted. Even though White still has better chances, now it is clear why the game ended in a draw.

Black improved his position, and the opponents begin to maneuver until Spassky is not convinced that the only way to play for a win is to breakthrough on the queenside.

48.Kd3 Bd7 49.Rba1 Nf8 50.Kc2 Be8 51.Qe2 Bc7 52.Rf1 Bd8 53.Raa1 Nh7 54.Rg1 Nf8 55.Bd2 Nh7 56.Ra3 Nf8 57.Rga1 Nh7 58.a5

Now Black is well prepared for this breakthrough.

58...bxa5 59.Nxa5 Bxa5 60.Rxa5 Nc7 61.Rb1 Nf8 62.Be3 Nd7 63.Qf2 Kg7 64.Kd3 Kg8 65.Qa2 Nb6



Here Spassky offered a draw, which was immediately accepted. According to Petrosian, even the final position is winning for White.

There are too many pieces on the board to check this statement with analysis. But even if it is correct, winning this position is very difficult.

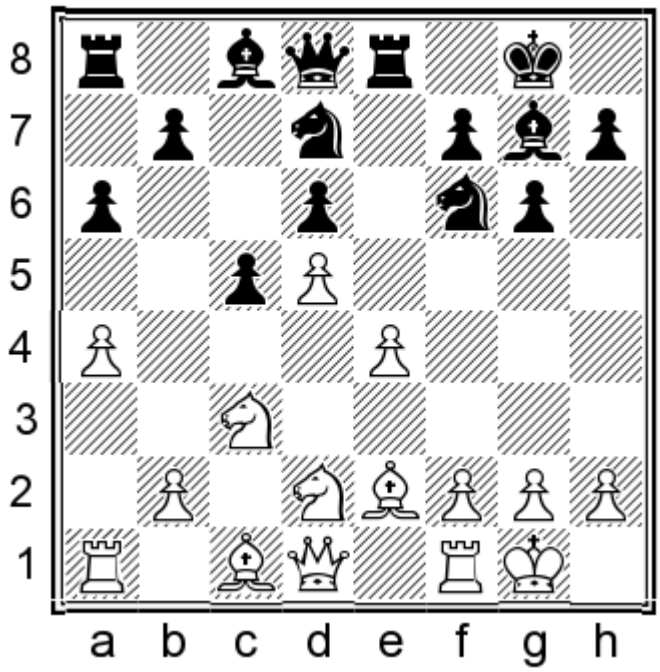
There was an opinion that even in the final position White had better chances and he could have continued to fight for victory. While one can agree with the evaluation of this position is in White's favor, it is clear to everyone familiar with the chess psychology that Spassky could not to play at full strength that evening. Moreover, the course of the game after the adjournment affected the rest of the match. Petrosian dominated in the subsequent games as if he got a second wind. Only in the last third of the match did Spassky find his footing again.

Now we move from the monumental constructions of the classical Benoni to the dynamic and insidious setups of the Modern Benoni.

I think Petrosian especially liked these types of positions; they were in his style and spirit. No wonder that Tal and

Fischer, who were big fans of this defense, never dared to play it against Petrosian: the risk was too great. Not only were Petrosian's results in this opening impressive but so was the style of his victories: he convincingly decided most games in the opening, leaving no chance for his opponent.

D3



White to move

The Gligorić System was Petrosian's favorite weapon against the Benoni. In this well-known theoretical position Petrosian preferred two continuations: "overprotection" 12.Qc2 (games 181, 184)

and "prophylaxis" 12.Ra3 (games 182, 183).

(181) D3.1 **Petrosian – Tolush**
Training Tournament
Gagra 1953

"On thin ice" – that is how one could title this enthralling game. Neither a young Petrosian nor the experienced Tolush were able to avoid problems, but they could not complain about the outcome. A fighting draw was the natural result of this intense and far from error-free struggle.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.Nd2

A typical move that was first played by Nimzowitsch in his well-known game against Marshall (New York 1927), which laid the foundation for many modern systems.

Undeterred by the loss of time, White immediately begins to address the pressing strategic challenges by:

(1) bringing the knight closer to its optimal position on c4;

(2) facilitating the advance of the e- and f-pawns to reinforce the center;

(3) stopping the exchanging maneuver ...Bc8-g4xf3.

7...Nbd7

With the idea of countering 8.Nc4 with the move 8...Nb6. See game 197 regarding 7...Bg7.

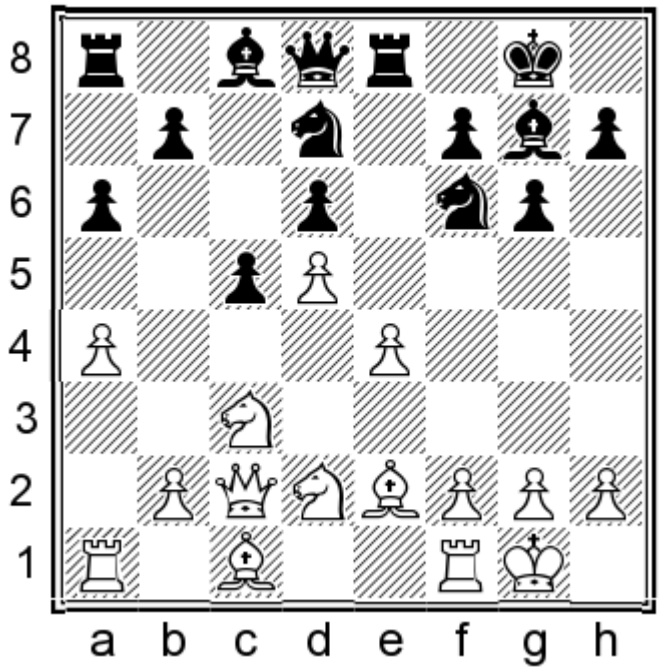
8.e4

Also possible is the transition to a fianchetto via 8.g3, as was played in games 192, 193.

8...a6 9.a4 Bg7 10.Be2 0-0 11.0-0 Re8

The resulting situation is typical of many modern openings. White secured considerable space, but the position is complex, full of tactics, and White cannot conquer Black's fortress without advancing. It takes great skill to deploy all this mass of pieces and pawns to attack while at the same time hindering the opponent's plans. White's next goal is to find places for his major pieces and to activate the central pawns as well as the blocked dark-square bishop. Black has to closely watch the activity in the enemy camp and counterattack the pawn center, which will become weaker after the pawn moves to f4.

12.Qc2



Overprotection of the e4-square. Later Petrosian thoroughly analyzed this system and proposed an original plan that starts with the move 12.Ra3!? (see the next two games). Granted, in this case as well White has to play Qc2, but the order of the moves is important.

12...b6

This is probably the least sound continuation that had been played in this position, because the pawn takes away an important square from the queen and the knight, and the idea of transferring the rook from e7 to a7 looks almost unreal.

12...Ne5!?, provoking 13.f4 Neg4, would have been more in the spirit of this position. The resulting attacking structure, which is typical for this variation, can is explored by the following continuations:

(1) 14.Nf3 Nxe4! 15.Nxe4 Bf5 16.Nfg5 (if 16.Bd3, then 16...c4! 17.Qxc4 Bxe4 18.Bxe4 Qb6+ 19.Kh1 Rac8 20.Qe2 Nf6 or 20.Qd3 Nf2+ 21.Rxf2 Qxf2 and Black's has a winning position) 16...Bd4+ 17.Kh1 Rxe4!! 18.Nxe4 Nxh2! with a strong attack, for example, 19.Rd1 Qh4 20.g3 Qh3 21.Ng5 Qh6;

(2) 14.Nc4 Nxe4! 15.Nxe4 (no better is 15.Bxg4 Nxc3 16.Bxc8 Ne2+!) 15...Bd4+ 16.Nf2 (16.Kh1 Nxh2!) 16...Bf5 17.Qd2 Rxe2! 18.Qxe2 Qh4 19.h3 Nxf2 20.Be3 (20.Rxf2 Bd3!) 20...Nxh3+ 21.gxh3 Qg3+ 22.Qg2 Bxe3+ 23.Nxe3 Qxe3+ 24.Kh2 Qd4 with a decisive advantage for Black.

If White does not chase away the knight and instead plays, for example, 13.h3, then good is 13...g5, temporarily stabilizing the situation in the center and intending to use the h3-pawn as a hook for counterplay (...g4!).

13.Re1

At this point, one of the most difficult tasks for White is to find a good moment to advance f2-f4. In my opinion, it was now; for example: 13.f4!? Rb8 14.Kh1! Qc7 15.Bc4! (emphasizing the disadvantages of Black's 12th move), then Nf3, Bd2, and so on.

The standard text move did not improve White's position. On the contrary, the unattended rook gives Black an extra justification for tactics.

13...Ne5 14.f4

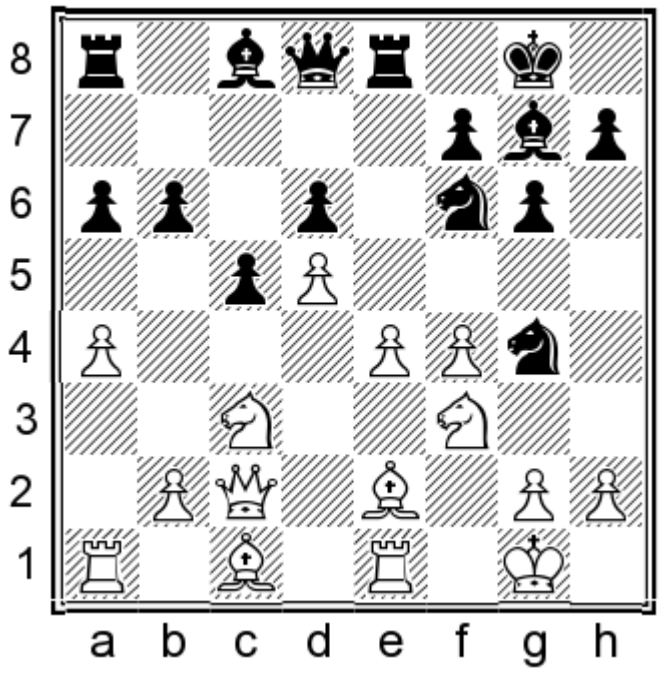
But now was not a good moment. It would have been better to continue to play calmly 14.Nf1 or 14.h3.

14...Neg4

Just two moves, and the position has become considerably sharper; there is danger in the air. The fact that the e1-rook is unprotected affects the position in the variations 15.Nc4 Nxe4! 16.Bxg4 Nxc3! and 16.Nxe4 Bd4+ 17.Kh1 Qh4!, because the rook is subject to double attacks. Hence White's knight changes its route.

15.Nf3

Defending the rook and the critical squares d4



This is the moment when the fate of the entire game is decided; it is familiar to every chess player. Black needs to maintain the initiative at any cost; otherwise his pieces will be pushed back and the flywheel of his counterplay will start spinning backwards. At this point Tolush most likely regretted his recent carelessness: with the pawn on b7 it would have been simple: 15...c4!?, and the black queen inevitably moves to the g1-a7 diagonal.

15...b5?

Not finding anything worthwhile, Black takes a gamble that cannot even be called a trap because the idea, 16.axb5 c4, is too obvious.

Was there a better solution? Yes, there was, a very beautiful and, I would say, a logical one. The key to this position is the dynamic move 15...Nh5!, which includes several black pieces in the attack. And now 16.h3 is followed by a major swindle: 16...Qh4!!, using the numerous holes in White's camp that are a direct result of his reckless pawn attack. The variations:

(1) 17.Nxh4 Bd4+ with the inevitable checkmate;

(2) 17.hxg4 Bd4+ 18.Nxd4 Qxe1+, etc., winning the exchange;

(3) 17.Rf1 Bd4+ 18.Nxd4 cxd4 19.hxg4 (19.Bxg4 Bxg4 20.hxg4 Ng3 yields approximately the same result) 19...Ng3 20.Nd1 Qh1+ 21.Kf2 Nxe4+! with an unstoppable attack: 22.Qxe4 Qh4+ 23.g3 Qh2+ 24.Qg2 Rxe2+! or 22.Ke1 Qh4+ 23.Nf2 Nxf2 24.Rxf2 Bxg4, and Black wins.

In order to avoid the imminent danger, White probably would have had to counter 15...Nh5 with 16.g3, but then Black would have carried out one of his main strategic ideas in this system, undermining the foundation of White's pawn center with the f-pawn: 16...f5!, with excellent play.

16.h3 b4 17.Nd1 Nh6

Everyone retreats!

18.Bc4 Ra7 19.Nf2

Winning the knight for two pawns, 19.g4 Rae7 20.g5 (not 20.Nf2 Nd7 21.g5 Nf5!) 20...Nxe4 21.gxh6 Bxh6, would have given Black good opportunities to muddy the water. Even in a training game, playing against Tolush, the legendary master of attack, Petrosian does not take this risk and prefers extended positional pressure to material gains.

19...Rae7 20.Bd2 Kh8

Freeing up space for the knight in case of g2-g4.

21.Rad1 Bb7 22.Bc1 Nd7 23.b3 f6 24.Bb2 Nf7 25.Qc1

The right idea, but an inaccurate execution. Petrosian sensed that Black is preparing ...f5, and rushes to create a diagonal battery by transferring the queen to a1. However, White overlooked another possible undermining move of the g-pawn. He should have first increased the pressure on the right flank, 25.h4!, and Black, pushed back to the last two ranks, would be devastated.

Now, however, the fight flares up with renewed intensity.

25...g5 26.g3

More or less forced. If 26.f5 Nde5 or 26.fxg5 Nxg5, Black, controlling the e5-square, can look to the future with confidence.

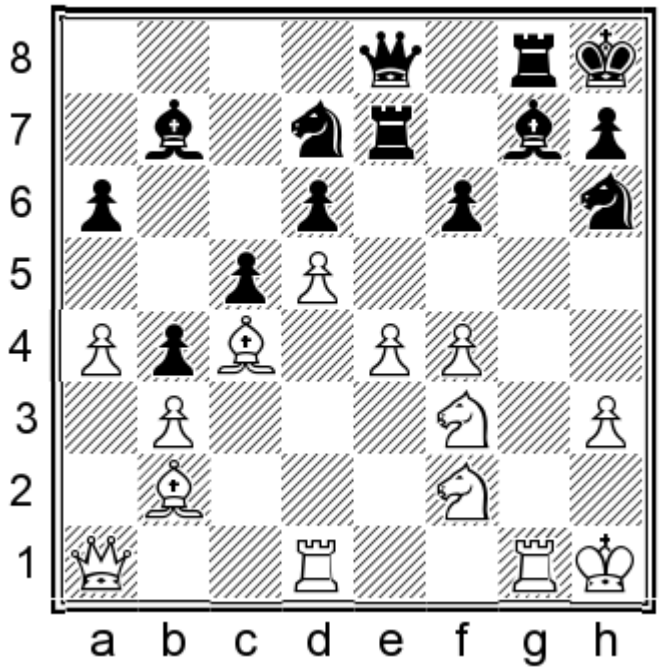
26...Rg8 27.Kh1 Qe8 28.Qa1

Prophylaxis against the undermining move ...f5, which had become topical again. It could follow after, for instance, 28.Rd2 gxf4 29.gxf4 f5! 30.exf5 Nh6. Now this variation does not work because of 31.f6.

28...gxf4 29.gxf4 Nh6

While White's queen is stuck in the corner, his black counterpart plans to become active by leaping to h5 with tempo.

30.Rg1



An inaccuracy. White should have made one more precise move, 30.Rd3, and moved the rook to g1 only after 30...Qh5.

30...Rxe4!

A heavy blow that abruptly changes the pattern of the battle. Black gets a pawn and a number of active possibilities for the exchange.

31.Nxe4 Qxe4 32.Rdf1

Petrosian is not discouraged and begins to defend with his usual tenacity. At the cost of a second pawn, White activates his pieces and pushes the black queen out of the center. Weaker was 32.Rd3 Qxf4 or 32.Rgf1 Nf5.

32...Bxd5

Of course not 32...Qxf4? 33.Ng5! Qh4 34.Bxf6, and White wins.

33.Bxd5 Qxd5 34.Qd1

Petrosian skillfully uses the fact that the queen exchange is unfavorable for Black.

34...Qe6 35.Kh2 d5 36.Qd3 Nf8 37.Re1 Qd6 38.Bc1 Ng6 39.Qe3 c4 40.Qe6!

White made it just in time.

40...Qb8 41.Qxd5 Nxf4 42.Bxf4 Qxf4+ 43.Kh1 cxb3 44.Qxb3 Draw.

(182) D3.2 **Petrosian – Quinteros**
Lone Pine 1976

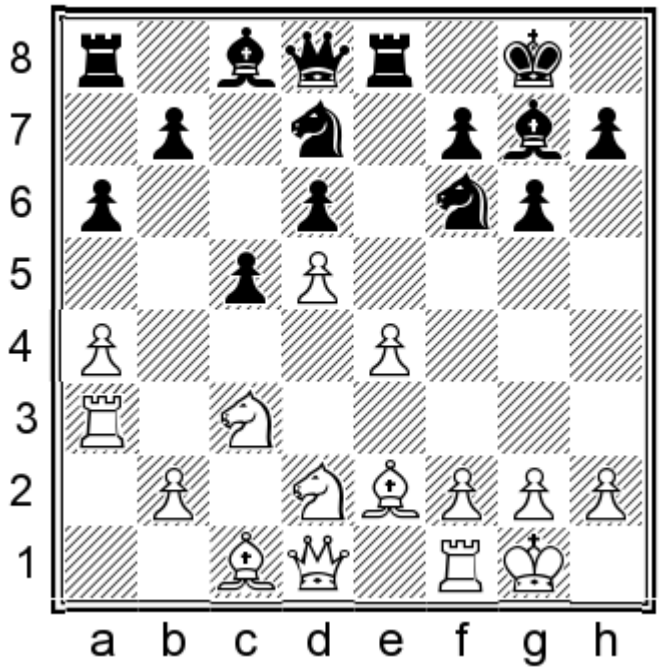
1.d4 g6 2.c4 Bg7 3.Nc3 c5 4.d5 d6 5.e4 e6 6.Nf3 Nf6 7.Be2 0-0 8.0-0 Re8

A popular way to play this variation. It stands on its own merit if Black plans to develop the knight to a6 (see tabiya D4).

9.Nd2 exd5

Now the game follows a well-trodden path. After 9...Na6, Petrosian would probably have played 10.dxe6, using the fact that Black's knight moved away from the d4-square. In the game Petrosian- Garcia (Rio de Janeiro 1979) was followed by 10...Bxe6 11.Nb3 Qb6 12.Bg5 with some pressure for White.

10.cxd5 Nbd7 11.a4 a6 12.Ra3



Patented by Petrosian. While the idea of using the queen's rook on the third rank is not new (although it was used with a different move order before), Petrosian enriched the idea with interesting strategic content and invented a logical plan that organically flows out of the position and is based on original prophylactic mechanisms.

12...Rb8 13.a5!

A small victory for White. As is known, in this variation, Black's main line is the centralizing maneuver ...Ne5 and ...g5 (when there will be a threat of f2-f4). However, quite often, like in this game, Black does not rush this committing maneuver and makes the preparatory moves ...Rb8, ...Qc7 (or e7) to use additional springboards for counterplay via ...c4 or ...b5 if the opportunity presents itself. It is easy to see that the text move hampers this idea. Now bad is 13...b5 because of 14.axb6 Nxb6 15.Bxa6 or 14...Qxb6 15.Nc4 Qc7 16.Bf4.

Now imagine if in the position on the diagram White's rook were on a1. It is not protected on this square, and the variation discussed above now becomes possible: 13...b5 14.axb6 Nxb6!. The a6-pawn is invincible because of the response ...Ra8.

13...Qc7 14.h3

Another interesting point. Ideally, White strives to the following setup: pawns on b3, f4, h3, the queen on c2, and the bishop on b2. But where should he start? The text move hinders ...Ne5, which would be followed by f2-f4. However, then Black can open the b-file, and Quinteros would definitely take advantage of this opportunity.

Later, after thorough analysis, Petrosian was inclined to think that 14.Qc2 is perhaps more accurate (see the next game). However, in his opinion, objectively, both moves maintain White's advantage, but it is impossible to take away all of Black's active resources.

14...b5 15.axb6 Rxb6

Thus, Black has created a bit of activity. With the queen on c2, White of course would have continued 16.Nc4 Rb4 17.Bf4, with the initiative. Now this variation does not work because the e4-pawn is under attack: 17...Nxe4

18.Nxe4 Rxe4 19.Bxd6 Qd8, and the white pieces begin to “hang.”

16.Qc2 Ne5

Annotating this game in the *Informant*, Robert Byrne and Edmar Mednis criticized this move, but offered no alternative. I believe that Quinteros’s decision was forced. Realizing that losses are inevitable after b2-b3, Bb2, Rfa1, in order to create the conditions for counterplay, he has to cause the white pawns to advance at any cost.

17.f4 Ned7 18.Kh1

According to Petrosian, the immediate 18.b3 deserved attention.

18...Rb4 19.b3

Principled. White has to finish his development first of all, so Petrosian rejects the Greek gift. After 19.Bxa6 Bxa6 20.Rxa6 Nb6 Black has real counterplay based on the active ideas ...c4 and ...Nh5; for example, 21.b3 Nh5 22.Kh2 f5!.

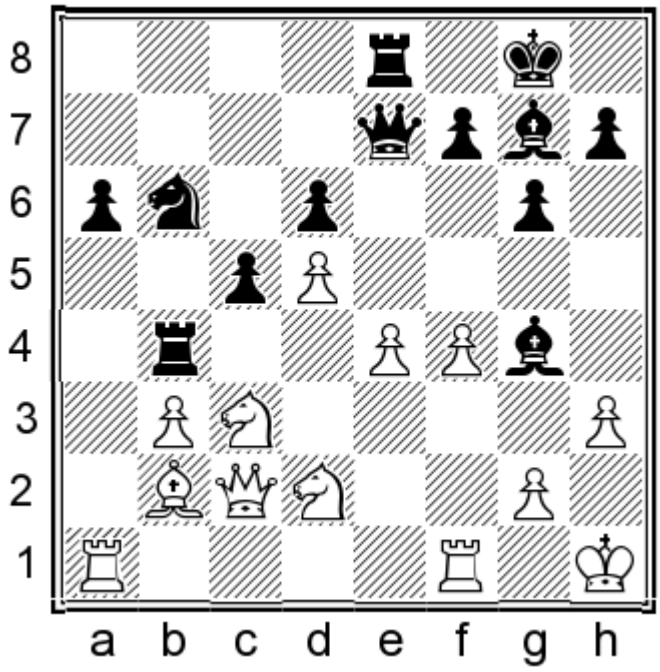
19...Nb6 20.Bb2 Qe7 21.Raa1

After 21.Rfa1, Black would have the good response 21...Bh6!. White plans to transfer the queen’s rook to e1 and then advance e4-e5.

21...Ng4?

Until now Quinteros has defended very well, but now he makes a serious mistake. As Petrosian pointed out, Quinteros should have sacrificed the exchange: 21...Nxe4! 22.Ndxe4 Rxe4 23.Nxe4 Qxe4, and Black can hope for a draw.

22.Bxg4 Bxg4



Black based his plan on the invulnerability of the bishop on g4 (23.hxg4? Qh4+ 24.Kg1 Bd4+ with checkmate), while after 23.Rae1 he starts active operations before his opponent, ramming the queenside: 23...c4!?. But an unexpected counterattack upsets his plans.

23.Na2!

A “double attack” of sorts: White threatens hxg4 and Nxb4.

23...Be2 24.Bxg7?!

The time control at this tournament was quite unusual, 2½ hours for 45 moves. So by now, both opponents were feeling the lack of time. Apparently, this is why Petrosian preferred the reliable text move, which guaranteed him a pawn in a simple position (which ultimately proved to be enough for victory), and did not calculate other possibilities such as 24.Rfe1 and 24.Nxb4 that were more promising but led to complications.

Let me divert my attention from the events on the board and recall an episode from the already distant past. It is related to the game, to Petrosian’s chess school and, I believe, clearly demonstrates how seriously and critically Tigran Vartanovich judged his play.

For one of the first sessions I had prepared some material from several of Petrosian’s King’s Indian games, including this one. I liked this game very much and was, frankly, surprised when, having gone to the master for approval, I heard: “No, the game against Quinteros is no good. Look how I messed up, Igor.” He quickly set up the position after the 23rd move and showed me two convincing ways to win:

(1) 24.Rfe1 Bd3 25.Qxd3 Bxb2 26.Nxb4 Bxa1 27.Nc6 Qf6 28.e5 dxe5 29.Ne4! followed by Rxa1;

(2) 24.Nxb4 Bxf1 (if 24...cxb4, then 25.Bxg7 Bxf1 26.Bd4!) 25.Nc6 Bxg2+ 26.Kxg2 Qh4 27.Nf3! (but not 27.Bxg7? Nxd5!).

In the end, only with great difficulty did I manage to get Petrosian’s permission to include this game in the lecture. Such professional dissatisfaction is certainly the key to sustained success and creative longevity. By the way, nowadays I am inclined to ascribe Petrosian’s numerous short draws, for which he was often criticized, not to his peaceful disposition or “tournament arithmetic” but to exceptional exactingness and responsible approach to the game. If, when he started to play the game, he felt that for some reason he was not able to play at his full strength, he would achieve a draw. And that he knew how to do well.

Now let’s return to the game. We already know Petrosian’s opinion regarding the move 24.Bxg7. However, since Byrne and Mednis awarded it an exclamation point, I decided to compromise and chose “?!”.

24...Bxf1 25.Nxb4 Bb5 26.Nc6 Bxc6 27.dxc6 Kxg7 28.Rxa6

A forced operation that yielded an extra pawn as expected. The fact that it is the a6-pawn is symbolic and logical: Black had already condemned it to death on the 14th move.

28...Nc8 29.Qc3+ Kg8 30.Qd3 Qh4 31.Qf1 Ne7

Somewhat more stubborn was 31...Qg3, as indicated by Robert Byrne and Edmar Mednis, but it is unlikely that this could significantly change the evaluation.

32.c7!

A precise move that turns a position with an extra pawn into a technically winning one.

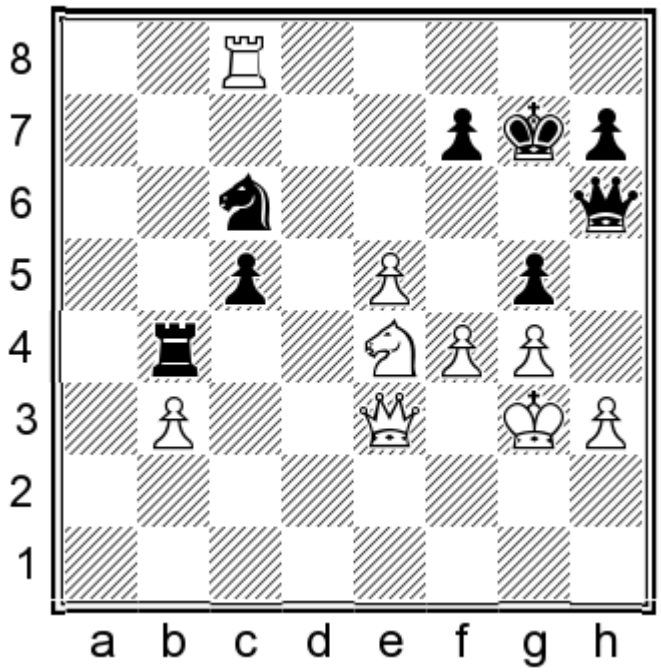
32...Rc8 33.Rxd6 Rxc7 34.Kh2

A rare case in which the king restricts the queen’s mobility in the middlegame.

34...Rc8 35.g3 Qh5 36.g4 Qh6 37.e5 Rb8 38.Qf2 Rb4 39.Kg3 Kg7 40.Qe3

Preparing the winning knight assault Ne4 and so on.

40...Kh8 41.Rd8+ Kg7 42.Ne4 Nc6 43.Rc8 g5



At this point Black ran out of time. If the game had continued, the finale could have been as follows: 44.f5 (but not 44.fxg5? Qe6!) 44...Qh4+ 45.Kg2 Nxe5 46.Qxc5 Rxe4 47.Qf8+ Kf6 48.Qh8+, and the next move is checkmate (this variation was suggested by Robert Byrne and Edmar Mednis).

(183) D3.3 **Petrosian – Lutikov**
USSR Team Championship
Moscow 1981

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 c5 3.d5 d6 4.c4 e6 5.Nc3 exd5 6.cxd5 a6

This way Lutikov tries to avoid the insidious variation with Bf4 and Qa4+ (see game 201), which requires of Black theoretical preparation and extremely accurate play in the opening.

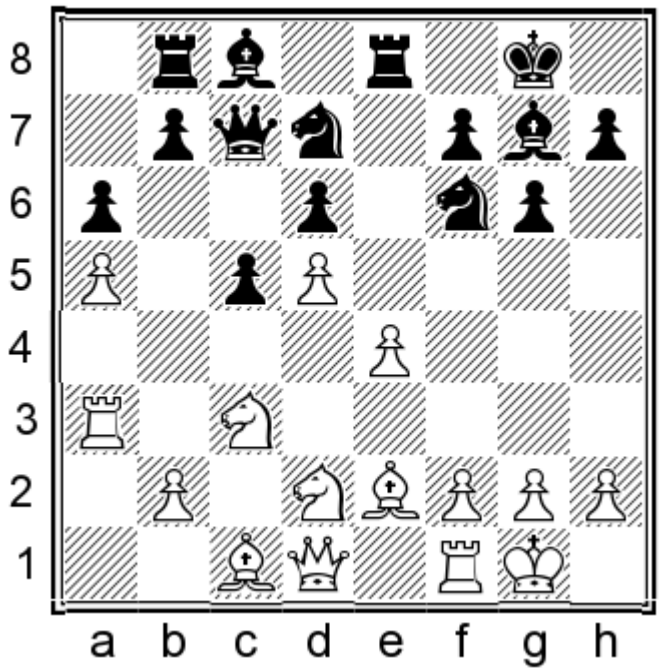
7.a4 g6 8.Nd2 Nbd7 9.e4 Bg7 10.Be2 0-0 11.0-0 Re8 12.Ra3

Starting to weave a “prophylactic web.”

Speaking of the ninth World champion’s taste in openings, I should note that he never played the popular variation 12.f4. I believe that the main reason is the sharp response 12...c4!? (Robert Fischer), which takes the game into an “automatic mode”: like it or not, White will be forced to exchange blows. After 13.Bxc4 (stronger is 13.Kh1) 13...Nc5 14.Qc2 typical is the hidden combination 14...Nfxe4! 15.Ncxe4 Bf5 16.Bd3 Nxd3 17.Qxd3 Qb6+ 18.Kh1 Qb4 19.Re1 Bxe4 20.Rxe4 Rxe4 21.Qxe4 Qxe4 22.Nxe4 Re8, and Black, regaining the piece, has a better endgame.

Black can also counter 12.f4 with 12...Rb8. Let me tell you a curious story associated with this position. One day (I think it was in 1978) during a class at the Petrosian Chess School, the students and I analyzed the tricky move 13.Kh1 (it was all the rage at the time). One of White’s ideas is to wait for the black queen to appear on c7 and then to play e4-e5; for example, 13...Qc7 14.e5! dxe5 15.Nc4 e4 16.f5!, threatening the unpleasant move Bf4. Petrosian entered, looked at the position, and literally a minute later suggested a solution: 13...h6!, which pretty much nips the idea in the bud, because after f4-f5 Black can always reply ...g5, taking away the f4-square from the white bishop. I would like to add that so far (and this variation has been played for a quarter of a century) the move 13...h6! has never been played. Such decisions were natural for Petrosian; they were born effortlessly because this is simply how he thought, how he played.

12...Rb8 13.a5 Qc7



14.Qc2

White counters with the precise move order. For example, after 14...b5 15.axb6 Rxb6, besides the mechanism 16.Nc4 Rb4 17.Bf4! that we already know, very strong is 16.b3! (indicated by Petrosian). Dubious is 14...g5 (preparing ...Ne5) in view of 15.Nc4 h6 16.f4 with a clear advantage for White.

14...Ra8

Black's perseverance is worthy of a better cause. The advance ...b5 costs him dearly and provides no dynamic counter-chances, only baring his queenside, where he now has a weak pawn on the a-file subject to a frontal attack.

While White has not taken the e5- and g4- squares under control with his pawns, Black should have quickly activated the d7-knight: 14...Ne5. For example: 15.h3 g5 or 15.f4 Neg4 16.Nc4 Nh5, and Black has some counterplay in connection with the threats ...Bd4+, ...f5. In the latter variation, it is dangerous for White to initiate complications via 17.e5 dxe5 18.h3 because of 18...exf4! 19.hxg4 Bd4+ 20.Rf2 f3! (indicated by John Nunn).

15.b3 b5 16.axb6 Nxb6 17.Bb2

It seems that Black's position is not bad, but this impression is deceptive.

Going over such games builds the understanding that the factor of time is no less important in closed positions than in open ones. Usually, in this opening variation Black threatens ...Nfxd5 after taking on b6 with the knight, generating (depending on the opponent's reaction) additional force for his counterplay. However here, after White's pieces are fully mobilized, such a combination is a straight path to losing the game: 17...Nfxd5? 18.exd5 Bxc3 19.Qxc3 with mate on g7. It looks like Black has missed his train: no matter what he plays, he will always be missing the tempi that he wasted by moving his rook back and forth.

17...Nh5

Compared to Black's previous heavy-handed strategy, this extravagant Fischeresque maneuver appears delightfully out of place. Even 17...Ng4 would have been better. For example, 18.h3 Nh6 19.Rfa1 f5 20.Bxa6 Bxa6 21.Rxa6 Rxa6 22.Rxa6 Qb7, with obvious compensation for the pawn.

18.Bxh5 gxh5 19.Nd1 f6

Had the bishops been traded, Black would have felt very uncomfortable, but now White gets the opportunity to

shatter the queenside, achieving domination across the board.

20.b4! Ra7 21.bxc5 Qxc5 22.Rc3 Qa5 23.Ne3 Bd7 24.Ra1

To save the queen, Black has to give up two pieces for a rook. After that, the fight is basically over.

24...Na4 25.Rc4 Rb7 26.Bc3

The immediate 26.Raxa4 was also possible.

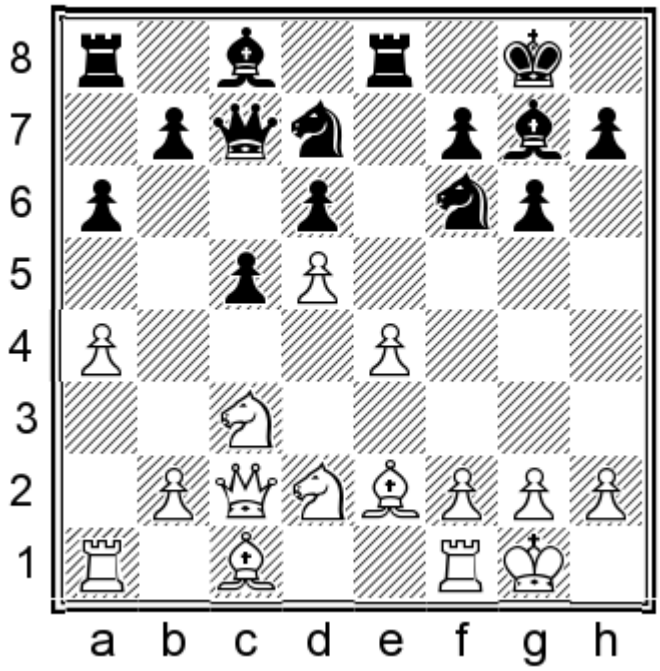
26...Qb6 27.Raxa4 Bxa4 28.Qxa4 Qb5 29.Qa1 Reb8 30.g3 h4 31.Kg2

White is in no hurry. Petrosian's advantage is so great that it would be enough to win several games.

31...hxg3 32.hxg3 Bh6 33.Ndf1! Re8 34.Bxf6 Rf7 35.e5 dxe5 36.Rg4+ Bg7 37.Bxe5 Ree7 38.Rxg7+ Rxg7 39.Bxg7 Rxg7 40.Qe5 Black resigned.

(184) D3.4 **Petrosian – Boensch**
Paul Keres Memorial
Tallinn 1983

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.Nd2 Nbd7 8.e4 Bg7 9.Be2 0-0 10.0-0 Re8 11.a4 a6 12.Qc2 Qc7



13.a5

I foresee a tricky question: "But what about the author's prior reasoning regarding the super-precise move order?" Or maybe White is playing a different plan? No, the plan is the same, and everything said above remains valid. What happened was a so-called *lapsus manus*. As Petrosian himself explained, for a moment he thought that Ra3, Rb8 (!??) had already been played, and he touched the pawn. It turns out this can happen even to the greatest players.

13...b5! 14.axb6 Nxb6

White clearly does not have time to play b2-b3, and Black has simple play.

15.Ra3

Now White even agrees to an unclear pawn sacrifice in the double-edged variation 15...Nfxd5 16.exd5 Bxc3 17.bxc3 Rxe2 18.c4 etc. If Petrosian went for this, it would mean that “something is rotten in the state of Denmark.” However, the young German Master chose not to take the offering and rather maintain the initiative, a wise decision that reflects the spirit of the “King’s Indian doctrine.”

15...c4!? 16.Ndb1 Nfd7

A move showing that, in the debate between the romantic and the pragmatist, emotions dominated. A dispassionate chess mind would try to first reinforce the c4-pawn; for example, 16...Bd7 17.Be3 Bb5 18.Nd2 Nfd7 and so on, aiming for long-term pressure.

17.Be3 Nc5 18.Nd2 f5 19.f3 fxe4 20.fxe4 Bd7 21.Bxc4

There are various tactics in defense: some players try to accumulate “material” in return for taking a few extra blows, while others, on the contrary, not only do not try to capture material but would rather sacrifice in order to counterattack or at least to scare the opponent.

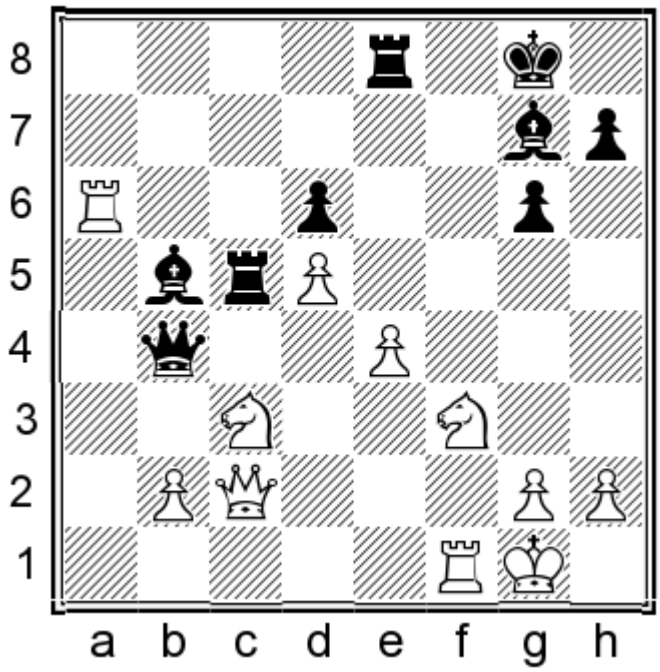
Petrosian courageously chooses the first path. Why did he capture the pawn with the bishop? Because, after 21.Nxc4 Nxc4 22.Bxc4 Rab8, White would have had a hard time defending the e4- and b2-pawns. Now in a similar variation he has the reliable reply 23.Nd2.

21...Nxc4 22.Nxc4 Rac8 23.Nd2 Qb8 24.Bxc5 Rxc5

Black’s initiative becomes threatening. It is dangerous for White to play 25.Rxa6, because after something like 25...Bb5 26.Raa1 Bxf1 and 27...Qb4, Black wins back the pawn in a technical position where he is up an exchange.

But it is not easy to confuse Petrosian. Remember that “Iron Tigran” had seen everything over his chess career and withstood the pressure of such virtuosos of attack as Mikhail Tal, Boris Spassky and Garry Kasparov.

25.Nf3 Qb4 26.Rxa6 Bb5



27.Rb6 Bd4+ 28.Kh1!

In the heat of the battle, White could have fallen into a cleverly disguised trap: 28.Nxd4? Qxd4+ 29.Qf2 (29.Rf2

Rxc3!) 29...Rf8!!, and White loses the queen or gets checkmated.

28...Bxc3 29.bxc3 Qa5 30.Rxb5

A forced sacrifice. The position is almost the same as on the 24th move, but there is one significant difference: the white knight becomes active.

30...Qxb5 31.Rg1 Qc4 32.Ng5!

Rushing to e6 to immobilize the black rooks!

32...Qxc3 33.Qa4

An important tempo that allows White to complete the regrouping and quickly achieve a draw by the joint efforts of the queen, the rook, and the knight.

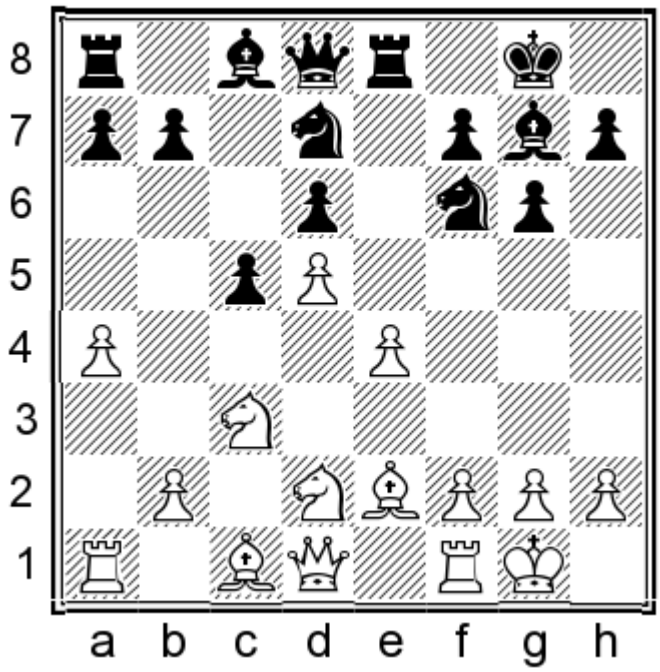
33...Rcc8 34.Ne6

“A knight in the center of the board that is protected by a pawn and guaranteed safety from attack by the opponent’s pawn is stronger than a bishop and is almost as strong as a rook.” (Siegbert Tarrasch).

34...Qf6 35.h3 Qe7 36.Rf1 Ra8 37.Qd4 Qd7 38.Qf6 Qe7 39.Qd4 Qd7 40.Qf6 Qe7 Draw.

An excellent example of active defense. The impartial computer stated that Petrosian was not worse at any moment of the game!

D4



Black to move

The refrain of the strategy in the next several games is the well-known typical position with the “Indian” knight on e5: 11...Ne5 (games 185, 186, 188, 189);

11...g5 (game 187).

(185) D4.1 **Petrosian – Ljubojević**
Match for Third Place, Game 1
Milan 1975

Literally from the first moves, the Yugoslav grandmaster tried to “sow the wind,” true to his aggressive style, but he underestimated the ex-world champion’s tenacious play. The blitzkrieg failed, and after Black crossed the line of reasonable risk, he “reaped the whirlwind” that he had so insistently called for, as it turned out, onto himself. As they say: “He that mischief hatches, mischief catches.”

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 g6

The beginning of tactics of “tempting,” in hope of the principled 6.d6 Qb6 7.Bg5 Bg7 8.Qd2 0-0, with serious complications. But Petrosian never believed that it is possible to refute anything on the fifth move.

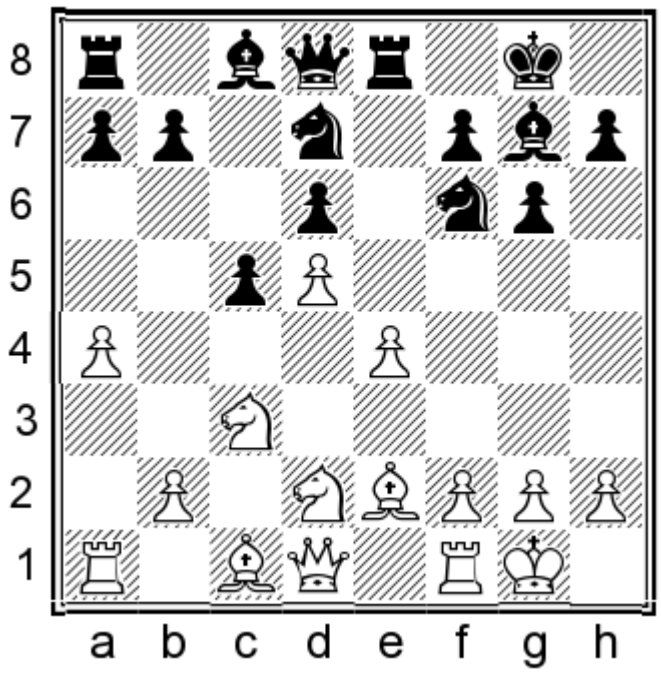
6.Nf3 Bg7 7.e4

The idea of the move order chosen by Ljubomir Ljubojević can also be seen in some other variations. In particular, if White immediately transfers the knight to c4, for example, 7.Nd2 0-0 8.Nc4, then 8...b6!, and after 9.Bg5 h6 10.Bh4 Ba6 11.Qa4 g5 12.Bg3 b5! 13.Nxb5 Nxd5 Black achieved an excellent position in the game Szilagyi-Kholmov (Moscow 1960). Also, after 7.Bf4, Black does not have to rush the move ...d6 but instead can continue, say, 7...Na6, and White’s strike is again in vain: 8.e4 0-0 9.Nd2 Re8 10.Be2 d6 11.0-0 Nc7 (Bernat-Ljubojević, Buenos Aires 1979).

If White sticks to conventional setups, Black will soon play ...d6, and then this is a simple transposition of moves.

7...d6 8.Be2 0-0 9.0-0 Nbd7 10.Nd2 Re8 11.a4

This move is useful in many ways. White limits his opponent's opportunities on the queenside, provides the knight with a future place on c4, extends the rook's range, and finally makes Black declare his intentions first.



11...Ne5

This is Fischer's continuation (Gligorić-Fischer, Palma de Mallorca 1970), sharpening the game early on. The knight's bold leap is based on the combinational ideas of the variation 12.f4?! Neg4 13.Nc4 Nxe4, and Black wins a least a pawn: 14.Bxg4 (or 14.Nxe4 Rxe4!) 14...Bd4+ 15.Be3 (15.Kh1? Bxg4 16.Qxg4 Nf2+) 15...Bxg4 16.Qxg4 Bxe3+ 17.Nxe3 Nxc3 and so on.

After 11...a6 the position is the same as the previously discussed tabiya D3. Subsequently, Ljubojević keeps the pawn on a7 in order to avoid weakening the b6-square, which is important for the setup that he has in mind.

12.Ra3!?

It was in this game that Petrosian first used this original rook maneuver, forcing his opponent to solve new problems. Actually, the real game started at this moment. Black's next move is a sort of novelty, too.

12...Bd7

Deviating from the classical model. In the aforementioned game (there, instead of 12.Ra3, White played 12.Qc2) Fischer continued 12...g5, temporarily stabilizing the position of the knight, and after 13.Nf3 Nxf3+ 14.Bxf3 h6 15.Bd2 a6 16.Be2 Qe7 17.Rae1 Qe5 Black has counterplay.

The text move looks provocative and, without a doubt, was played for its psychological effect, as if Ljubojević is telling his opponent, "Come on, come on, attack me!"

13.Qc2

The evaluation of the continuation f2-f4, which has been already made possible by the sweeping action of the rook along the third rank, is of fundamental importance. The critical position occurs after 13.f4 Neg4 14.Nc4 Nxe4 15.Bxg4 Bd4+. White has two reasonable ways to defend against the check: 16.Be3 or 16.Ne3. Let's discuss them one by one.

(1) After 16.Be3, Ljubojević planned to continue 16...Nxc3 17.Rxc3 Bxg4 18.Qxg4 Bxc3 19.bxc3 Re4, forcing 20.Qe2. Who is better here? Theoretically White should be, as it is believed that, in the middlegame, it is easier to create an attack with the two minor pieces. In practice, however, after winning the two pieces for a rook and a pawn,

the “stronger” side just ends up losing or achieving a draw with great difficulty. The initiative is the main criterion for evaluating such positions. In this case Black obviously seizes the initiative, and therefore his chances are not worse, at the least.

(2) 16.Ne3. According to the majority of commentators it is this move (presumably unnoticed by Petrosian) that refutes B lack’s plan. The following variation is supposed to be the proof: 16...Nf6 17.Bxd7 Rxe3 18.Bxe3 Bxe3+ 19.Kh1 Qxd7 20.Nb5 with an advantage for White. It is correct, but Black can simply play 16...Nxc3 17.Rxc3 Bxg4 18.Qxg4 Bxc3 19.bxc3. I do not understand what kind of refutation there could be here: the position is only slightly better for White than in the first variation. For example, possible is 19...Qa5, and if 20.c4, then 20...Qc3 with a complicated struggle.

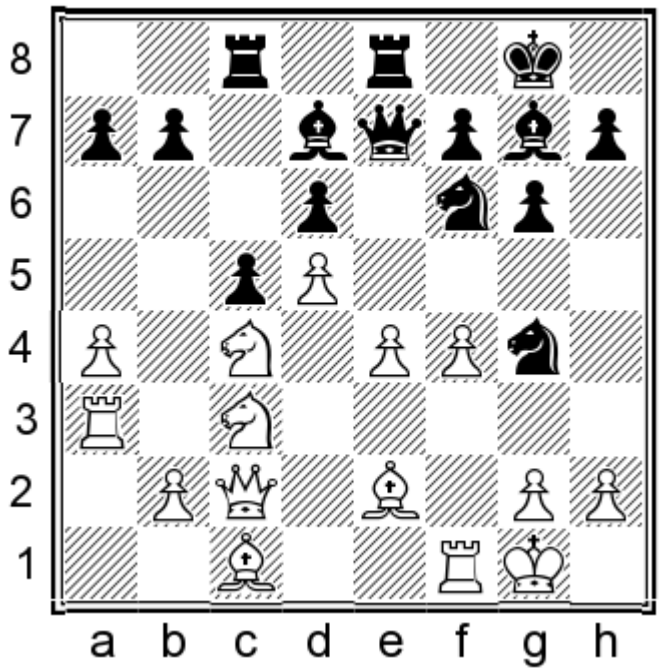
In a nutshell, Petrosian was criticized for no reason. He was absolutely right in avoiding a direct confrontation. Why look for trouble when White already has a good position? Now White threatens f2-f4, and ...g5 will be met effectively by Bb5.

13...Rc8?!

What is this, a bluff or simple stubbornness? Only impassioned obstinacy can explain such foolhardy play. “Burning bridges,” Black relies on just a single variation, and not an entirely correct one.

Hardly better was the variation subsequently recommended by Ljubojević: 13...c4 14.Nxc4 (but not 14.f4 Qb6+ 15.Kh1 Neg4) 14...Nxc4 15.Bxc4 Rc8 because after 16.Bd3 Ng4 17.h3 Ne5 18.Bb5 it would be difficult for Black to prove that his counterplay is worth a pawn (indicated by Pavel Kondratiev). Maybe 13...Qe7 is the lesser of the two evils (another of Ljubojević’s recommendations); however, in this case, too, after 14.h3 g5 15.Bb5! White has an advantage.

14.f4 Neg4 15.Nc4 Qe7



I suppose that it is to this position that Black tailored all of his previous moves. His secret hope was that White, continuing to avoid complications, would play the most simple and natural move, 16.Bf3. This is when the “mine” prepared by the Yugoslav grandmaster was supposed to explode: 16...Nxe4 17.Nxe4 Bd4+, presenting White with an unpleasant choice: either to become the subject of a severe attack in the principled variation 18.Kh1 Nxh2!?, or to avoid taking big risks and accept a slightly worse position after 18.Ne3 Nxe3 19.Bxe3 f5, etc.

However, stirring up trouble, Ljubojević anticipated far from everything.

16.h3!

A “cold shower.” It is silly to suggest that a grandmaster, and especially a world-class one, could blunder such a simple move. Most likely, Ljubojević did not see something after that, but it is hard to say what exactly. Maybe it was that in the main variation after 16...Nxe4 17.Nxe4 Qxe4 18.Qxe4 Rxe4 19.Bxg4 Bxg4 20.Nxd6 Bd4+ 21.Kh1 Be2 22.Re1 Bf2, the white rook, which had been lurking on the sidelines, enters center stage: 23.Nxe4 Bxe1 24.Re3!. However, there is more than one path to victory. Besides 21.Kh1, also good is 21.Kh2! with the idea of 21...Be2 22.Re1 Bf2 23.Rxe2!.

16...b5

Trying to “grasp at straws” by preparing ...Nh5, which he could not play right away, for example, 16...Nh5 17.Bxg4 Bxg4 18.Nb5. Hopeless is 16...Nh6 because of 17.e5!.

17.axb5

This move is more convincing than 17.Nxb5 Nxe4 18.Bxg4 Bxg4 19.hxg4 a6, and Black is still holding on somehow (variation by Igor Zaitsev).

17...Nh5 18.Bxg4 Bxg4 19.Qf2

19.hxg4 also wins, but White has no reason to get “greedy” in an already decided position.

19...Bd7 20.e5! dxe5 21.fxe5 Bxe5 22.Nxe5 Qxe5 23.Rxa7

That’s basically it; no further annotating is necessary.

23...Rcd8 24.Qxf7+ Kh8 25.Qf2 Qb8 26.Qxc5! Bxh3 27.Qd4+ Kg8 28.Bh6 Bd7 29.d6 Re6 30.Rc7 Black resigned.

Some felt that Ljubojević played this game poorly. However, I cannot agree with this assessment.

One of the secrets of success at the highest level is the ability to find such a method of development in the initial stage of the game that would help fully realize the creative individuality of the chess player. It is in this component that Petrosian proved to be more skillful than his opponent. As a result, White managed to impose his play pretty quickly. The Yugoslav grandmaster felt ill at ease, lost his inner peace, became nervous, and began to bluff. After all, by and large, Black made a single mistake. It is just that, with the system that he chose, a chess player is like the minesweeper who does not get a second chance.

(186) D4.2 **Petrosian – Rashkovsky**
44th USSR Championship
Moscow 1976

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.c4 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nc3 g6 7.e4 Bg7 8.Be2 0-0 9.0-0 Re8

Given that Black has less space, 9...Bg4 or 9...a6 10.a4 Bg4 looks logical: trading the bishop facilitates the development of the other pieces. The reader will see this plan in game 211.

10.Nd2 Nbd7 11.a4

A few words about the history of this game. It began with the sensational (third) game of the match Spassky-Fischer (Reykjavik 1972), in which, after 11.Qc2 the candidate employed a method of counterplay that was quite unusual at the time, 11...Nh5!?. It was countered by 12.Bxh5 gxh5 13.Nc4 Ne5 14.Ne3 Qh4 15.Bd2 Ng4 16.Nxg4 hxg4 17.Bf4 Qf6, and Black, with a bishop pair and the opportunity to systematically pressure the e4- pawn, achieved excellent prospects.

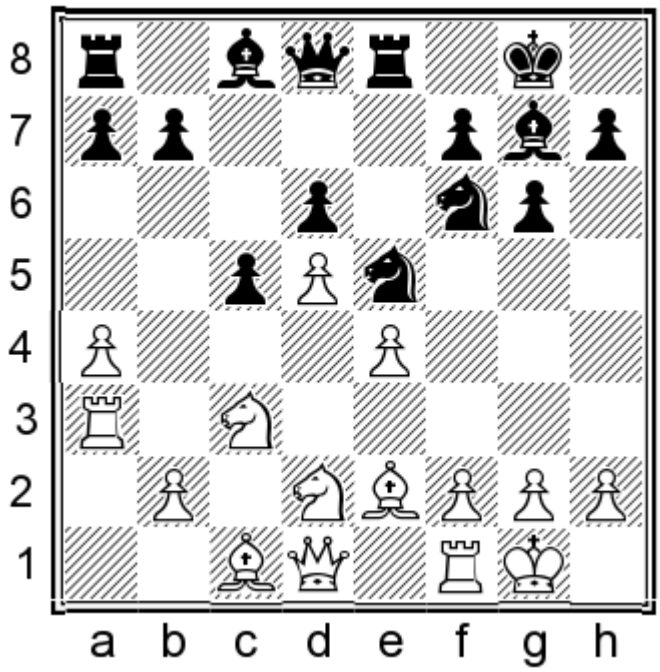
Of course, the new idea attracted everyone’s attention. It was thoroughly analyzed and verified in tournament play. First of all, it became clear that Spassky’s play in this game was not flawless. In particular, the maneuver Ne3

was inferior. Much better would have been to transfer the passive c3-knight to e3, which ensures White control of the c4-square. Also, there were found other attractive possibilities for White. Among them was transferring the rook to a3-g3, or neutralizing the g7-bishop by moving the bishop to b2 (c3), etc. Later all of this brought White success in Gligorić's games against Kavalek (Skopje 1972) and Browne (San Antonio, 1972).

Of course, Black's proponents were also not sitting idly by. They came up with the new idea (after the exchange on h5) to tactically use the weakness of the light squares in the enemy camp, combining the development of the bishop to a6 with the move ...f5 (see below).

So, in spite of the solid factual material accumulated by the time of this game, the final evaluation of this variation still raised some questions, and Master Rashkovsky decided to pose them to grandmaster Petrosian.

11...Ne5 12.Ra3



Here we would like to draw the reader's attention to the inconspicuous but very useful prophylactic mechanism "Qd1 + Be2" (yes, this exists too). Unlike Gligorić, who invariably continued 12.Qc2 in the aforementioned games, Petrosian prevents the move ...Nh5 if possible, which would have now been followed by (12...Nh5)13.f4!, but not 13.Bxh5 gxh5 14.Qxh5?? Bg4.

12...b6

A necessary link of Black's aggressive plan. Along the way he solves another problem: in the thematic variation 13.f4 Neg4 14.Nc4, instead of steering towards unclear complications with 14...Nxe4, he can now reply 14...Ba6!, e.g. 15.h3? Nxe4! and so on. See games 187, 189 regarding the continuation 12...g5.

13.Qc2

White has nothing more to hide, and he moves the queen from d1, renewing the threat of f2-f4.

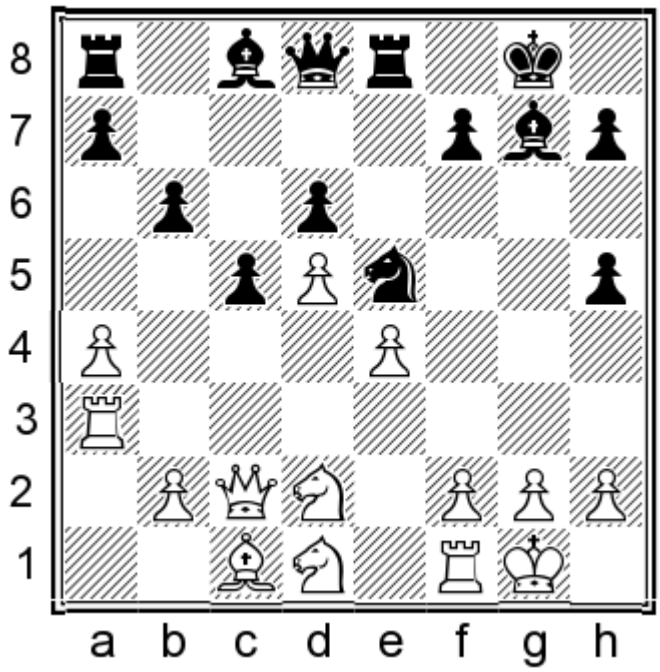
13...Nh5 14.Bxh5 gxh5

In this position Black's hopes are based on three active possibilities: 15...Qh4 followed by ...Ng4, 15...Ba6, and 15...f5.

15.Nd1

A characteristic maneuver in this type of position. The moment when Black's pressure in the center decreases, the

knight will come to e3 to get closer to the f5-square. At the same time the third rank is cleared to transfer the rook to the kingside. Also note that Fischer's exchanging maneuver 15...Qh4 16.Ne3 Ng4 does not work because of 17.h3, and the black pawn does not reach g4.



15...Ba6

The essence of Black's plan. Now, in the case of the natural 16.Re1 f5! 17.exf5?, Black plays 17...Nc4!, White suddenly finds himself in an unpleasant position.

In the Leningrad Interzonal (1973), Taimanov, the author of this idea, tried to implement it playing against Gligorić by transposing the first moves: 15...f5 16.exf5 Ba6. But after 17.Ne4! Bxf1 18.Kxf1 Nf7 19.Rg3!, it turned out that the forced exchange sacrifice is actually favorable for White. The path chosen by Rashkovsky is also not new. The move 15...Ba6 was played for the first time in the game Plachetka-Sikora (Czechoslovakia 1974). By the way, in that game, too, after an exchange sacrifice (but in a slightly different form: 16.Ne3 Bxf1 17.Ndxf1 Kh8 18.Nf5, etc.), White was able to prove that his opponent's positional shortcomings outweigh the material advantage.

Both opponents knew all of this very well, and Rashkovsky, of course, had reason to go for the ill-reputed variation.

16.Rh3!

Once, answering the question of whether he had a favorite chess piece, Petrosian said: "Probably the rook, because at the right time it can be sacrificed for a minor piece." In this case, this was obviously necessary: in this position, the exchange sacrifice is White's main trump card. Something else is interesting: Petrosian did not play according to Plachetka's aforementioned recipe: 16.Ne3 Bxf1 17.Ndxf1, which overall looks convincing. Who knows what kind of trick Rashkovsky prepared, but Petrosian believed that it was the variation 17...c4!? 18.Nf5 Nd3!, and White would probably have to play f2-f3, saying goodbye to the idea of the promising rook transfer. The following short analysis confirms this:

(1) 19.Qxc4 Nxc1 20.Rg3 (20.Qxc1 Rxe4) 20...Rc8 21.Rxg7+ Kh8!;

(2) 19.Bh6!? Rxe4! 20.Nxg7 (or 20.Bxg7 Qg5) 20...Qf6 21.Qd2 h4 with unclear play in all cases. Thus, with the text move White solves the main problem: he transfers the rook to the kingside.

16...Bxf1 17.Nxf1 b5

The element of surprise worked: Rashkovsky thought for 80 minutes! Black frantically rushes to open files for his

rooks to counterattack on the queenside. Subsequently, all commentators agreed that this decision was a strategic mistake, because White's attack on the other flank develops faster. An alternative defensive plan was indicated by Aleksander Nikitin in the tournament bulletin: 17...f5 18.exf5 h4, to (I quote): "... eliminate the base for the white pieces (the f5-square) by placing there... a white pawn." However this is easier said than done: it is always more fun to sacrifice someone else's pawn. If the game had really taken such turn, and Rashkovsky had lost, everyone would have considered the move 17...f5 a mistake.

I think, the problem was something else. In any case, whether Black sacrifices a pawn or not, White has substantial compensation for the exchange and a clear plan; therefore the practical advantage is on his side.

18.Nde3!

Consistently executing the plan to take control of the central squares. 18.axb5 is dubious at least because of 18...a6.

18...bxa4 19.Nf5 Ng6

Freeing the e5-square in order to save the bishop from exchange because it is the main defender of the royal fortress.

20.Rxh5

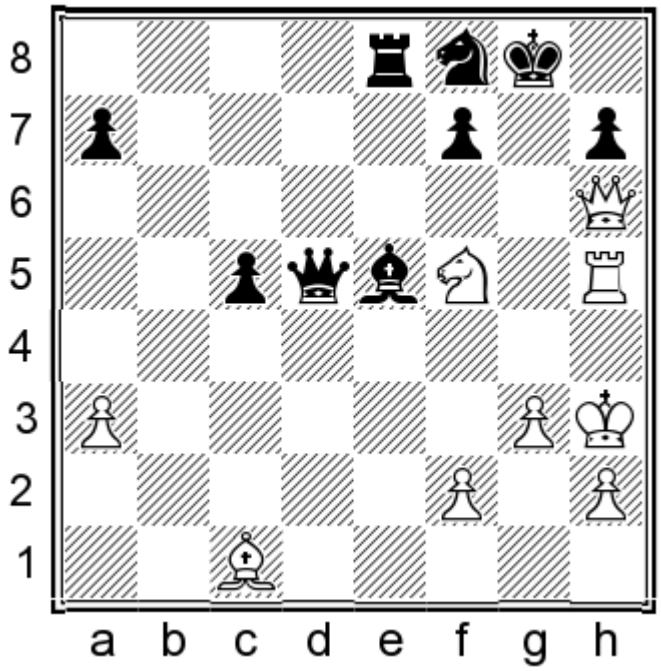
According to Petrosian himself, he did not make this move without hesitation: 20.Nxg7 looks very tempting, but in the end he decided to "leave well enough alone."

20...Be5 21.g3 Rb8 22.N1e3 a3 23.bxa3 Qb6 24.Qd2!

The familiar motifs of the queen and bishop battery (see game 56).

24...Qb3

"24...Qb1 repelled the attack": this was the conclusion of a thorough analysis by Ratmir Kholmov. As the grandmaster correctly noted, the text move 25.Ng4 does not work because of the killer response 25...Bb2!. In the main variation after 25.Nc4! (this is the move that Rashkovsky intended to hinder) 25...Qxe4 26.Ncxd6! (weaker is 26.Qh6 Rb1! 27.Qxh7+ Kf8 28.Qh6+ Kg8 29.Ncxd6, as recommended by Mikhail Yudovich, in view of 29...Qxd5 30.Nxe8 Qd1+! 31.Kg2 Rxc1 32.Ne3 Qh1+ 33.Kh3 Nf4+! 34.gxf4 Qf3+ 35.Kh4 Qxf2+ 36.Kg4 Rg1+ 37.Kf5 Qxe3 38.Rg5+ Rxg5+ 39.Qxg5+ Kf8 40.fxe5 Qd3+ with a draw – Garry Kasparov, *My Great Predecessors*) 26...Qf3 (worse is 26...Bxd6 27.Qh6!) 27.Qh6 Qd1+ 28.Kg2 Qxd5+ 29.Kh3 Nf8 30.Nxe8 Rxe8 the following critical position results:



Here Kholmov indicates 31.f4 Qd1!, with perpetual check after 32.fxe5 Qf1+. However, such a finale is clearly unconvincing. White is attacking, he has a better pawn structure, and his pieces are more active.

I recall that when Petrosian saw all of these variations he discontentedly shook his head: "'The central defender' messed something up here. Such a position cannot be a draw!" Now, if the readers want to train their combinational skills, they can cover the text with a piece of paper and try to find the right solution themselves. Petrosian indicated the remarkable decisive move 31.Bb2!! with a kaleidoscope of extremely beautiful variations:

(1) 31...Bxb2 32.Ne7+, winning the queen;

(2) 31...Kh8 32.Qf6+! Bxf6 33.Bxf6+ Kg8 34.Nh6#;

(3) 31...Re6 32.Bxe5! Qxe5 (or 32...Rxh6 33.Nxh6#) 33.Ne7+!;

(4) 31...Qe6 32.Qxe6 Rxe6 33.Bxe5 Rxe5 34.Nh6+, and White is up an exchange;

(5) 31...Qe4!? The relatively best chance, discovered recently by the computer program Fritz:

32.Qd2! Another "inhuman" move. 32.Nd6 is not quite clear because of 32...Qe2!. For example, 33.Nxe8 Bxb2, threatening 34...Qxe8, 34...Qf1+ and 34...Bc1!; 33.Qg5+ Ng6 34.Bxe5 Qf1+! 35.Kg4 Qxf2! 36.Nxe8 Qe2+ 37.Kf5 (37.Kh3 Qf1+ and so on) 37...Qxe5+ with a draw.

32...f6 Other replies are no better: 32...Bxb2 33.Qxb2 Ne6 34.Qf6! with a win; or 32...Ng6 33.Bxe5 Rxe5 (33...Nxe5 34.Qg5+ Ng6 35.Qf6) 34.Qd8+ Re8 35.Qf6.

33.Qh6! with an irrefutable attack, for example, 33...Qb7 34.Bxe5 fxe5 35.Rg5+ (35.Qf6 is also good) 35...Ng6 36.Rxg6+ hxg6 37.Qxg6+ Kf8 38.Qxe8+! Kxe8 39.Nd6+.

So Black could complicate the opponent's task by playing 24...Qb1, but he could not save the game as Ratmir Kholmov erroneously believed.

25.Ng4 Rb7

Kholmov also considers this move a mistake and recommends 25...Qc3 with the idea of 26.Qh6 Rb1!, and White's attack comes to a standstill. Including the queen in the defense is, of course, stronger than the text move, but once again it was just a chance. After 25...Qc3 White has a more effective attacking mechanism: 26.Nfh6+!. For example:

(1) 26...Kg7 27.Rxe5! Qxd2 28.Nf5+ Kf8 29.Rxe8+ Rxe8 30.Bxd2, and 30...Rxe4? is bad because of 31.Bh6+ and 32.Nf6+;

(2) 26...Kf8 27.Rf5! (not that good anymore is 27.Rxe5 Qxd2 28.Rxe8+ Rxe8 29.Bxd2 Rxe4, with counterplay) 27...Re7 (or 27...f6 28.Nxe5! Qxd2 29.Rxf6+) 28.Nxf7! Qxd2 (if 28...Rxf7, then 29.Nxe5 Qxd2 30.Rxf7+ Kg8

31.Bxd2 Nxe5 32.Rf5 and so on) 29.Nfxe5+! Kg8 30.Bxd2 Nxe5 31.Bg5!, and White should win.

One can only sympathize with Rashkovsky. It is extremely difficult to defend such a position: dangers are everywhere, time is running out.

26.Kg2 Qc4

This leads to material losses, but in any case, Black's position is lost. In case of 26...f6 (the most stubborn defense) 27.Nxd6! Bxd6 28.Nxf6+ Kf8 29.Qh6+ Ke7 30.Qxh7+ Kd8 31.Qxg6, and so on, decides the game (indicated by Ratmir Kholmov).

27.Nxe5 Qxe4+

"The beggar may sing before the thief."

28.f3 Qxe5 29.Nh6+ Kf8 30.Rxe5 Rxe5 31.Ng4 Ree7 Black resigned.

This is one of Petrosian's best creative achievements in his entire chess career.

(187) D4.3 **Petrosian – Lukin**
USSR Cup
Ordzhonikidze 1978

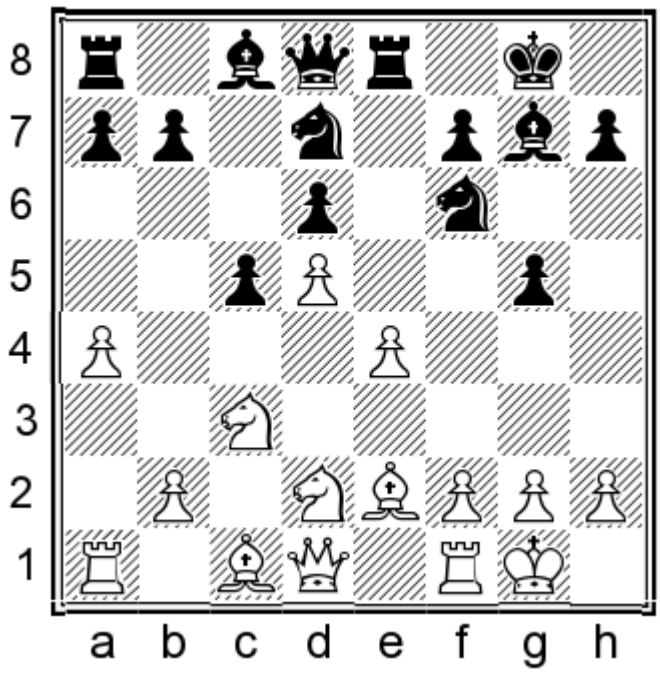
1.c4 g6 2.e4 Bg7 3.d4 c5 4.d5 d6 5.Nc3 Nf6 6.Nf3 0-0 7.Be2 e6 8.0-0 Re8

The intricacies of this move order are discussed in detail in the annotations to game 182.

9.Nd2 exd5 10.cxd5 Nbd7

The creative boldness of the young master is commendable: he was not afraid to play the trademark opening of his eminent opponent. However, they say that after the game, a disappointed Andrei Lukin lamented that... he messed up the variation. "No, no! The King's Indian feeds my family!" – Tigran Petrosian reassured his colleague.

11.a4 g5



Usually ...Ne5 is played first. A similar theoretical variation includes ...a6 and h2-h3. Here, however the move ...g5 is not forced and looks more like an unobtrusive attempt to provoke complications after 12.Nc4 Nxe4 13.Nxe4

Rxe4 14.Bd3 (14.Nxd6 Rd4) 14...Rh4 15.g3 Rd4 16.Be3 Rxc4 17.Bxc4 Bxb2 and so on. As we know, Petrosian rejected such variations on principle.

12.Ra3 Ne5 13.Qc2 a6

Another possible continuation here is 13...Nfd7 (game 189).

14.a5

A typical move, which is loaded with ideas in this case. In addition to everything else, White wants to hinder the flexible pawn construction a6, b6, which carries two promising ideas: ...Ra7-e7, and (given that the knight will have to move away from c3) ...Rb8, ...b5. Note that ...b6 would have yielded nothing on the previous moves, since Black does not have time to reinforce the knight on e5 (see the annotation to White's 13th move in game 181), and after 13...b6 White would have of course responded 14.a5!.

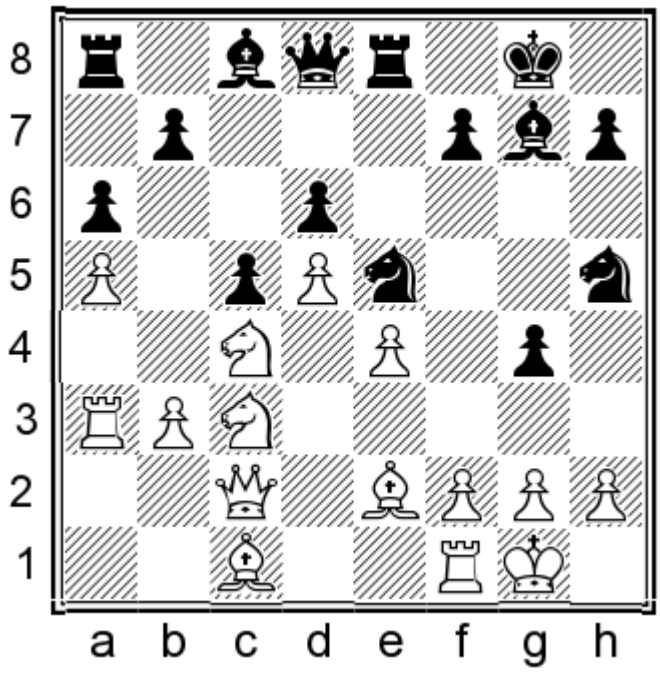
14...g4

So far the game is developing in line with the known plans. In the near future, Black plans to move the knight to h5, in order to provoke the move g2-g3 with the threat of ...Nf4, and then again start attacking the e4-pawn.

15.b3!?

Very original! White prepares the move Nc4 and has taken it upon himself to prove that the a3-rook is inactive only temporarily because Black will have to exchange the c4-knight. This is a bold and interesting idea! Nevertheless, most experts were skeptical about it. However, Nimzowitsch also said that "the aesthetic perception of a chess game should be based on its internal contents, not on its form." His book *Chess Praxis* even has a chapter "Excursions Through Old and New Territory of Hypermodern Chess." I believe that this game would fit perfectly in this chapter. Interestingly, eight years later Karen Grigorian, who never suffered from lack of originality, did not dare, playing against Psakhis (Yerevan 1986), to take this path laid by his countryman. Here is how that game developed: 15.Nd1 Nh5 16.g3 Nf6! 17.Ne3 Qe7 18.Rb3 h5 19.Rb6 Bh6 20.Ndc4 Bxe3!? 21.Bxe3?! Nxc4 22.Bxc4 Nd7! with an advantage for Black.

15...Nh5 16.Nc4



16...Nxc4

It is this exchange for which Lukin was criticized. The move 16...Qf6 “with good play” was suggested instead (by Albert Kapengut, Pavel Kondratiev, and others). Let’s see if this is correct. As far as I know, here Petrosian planned to continue 17.Na4!. And what can Black do? 17...Nf4? is not good because of 18.Bxf4 Qxf4 19.g3 Qf6 20.Nab6 Rb8 21.Nxc8 Rbxc8 22.Nxe5 Qxe5 23.Bxg4 and White is a pawn up. There is also an opportunity to attack 17...Nf3+!? 18.gxf3 gxf3, and now White should reply not 19.e5?, which leads to checkmate – 19...fxe2! 20.exf6 exf1=Q+ 21.Kxf1 Bh3+ 22.Kg1 Re1# – but 19.Bxf3! Qxf3 20.b4!, with a substantial advantage. For example: (1) 20...Qxe4 21.Qxe4 Rxe4 22.Nab6 cxb4 23.Rb3 Rb8 24.Nxd6 Rg4+ 25.Kh1, and the c8-bishop is trapped (25...Bd7 26.Nxd7 Rd8 27.Re3 Rxd7 28.Re8+ and 29.Nf5!); or (2) 20...Qg4+ 21.Kh1 Rxe4 (21...cxb4 22.Re3 is no better) 22.Nxd6 cxb4 23.Qxe4 Qxe4+ 24.Nxe4 bxa3 25.Bxa3 and so on.

These variations are complicated but, overall, quite compelling.

Thus, after 16...Qf6 17.Na4! Black apparently has nothing better than 17...Nxc4. QED.

17.bxc4 Be5 18.g3

Usually in this opening, trading minor pieces is favorable for Black. However, in this game, this small achievement is outweighed by two other positional factors: the white pawn, which has moved closer to the center, and the h5-knight, which is on the rim. White needs the text move to stop the transfer ...Nf4-g6, which would allow the knight to make contact with the e5-square.

18...Ng7

Now the black knight will never get to e5, but 18...Nf6 19.Bg5! is no better.

19.Nd1 f5?!

A natural desire to escape from the looming positional squeeze. But Lukin did not take into account (or underestimated) the opponent’s strong response. 19...h5 or 19...b6 was better.

20.Ne3!

That’s right: Black cannot simultaneously defend the f5- and g4-squares and has to worsen the pawn structure, which was already very dubious.

20...fxe4 21.Nxg4

The knight threatens the e5-bishop and a check from h6, forcing Black to give up the light-square bishop, which is important for the defense.

21...Bxg4 22.Bxg4 Bd4 23.Bh6!

Intending to occupy the e6-square with the bishop in an opposite-color bishop position, for example, 23...Qf6 24.Bxg7 Kxg7 25.Be6 Qg6 26.Rb3 and so on. After that, the fate of the b7- and e4-pawns would be decided.

23...b5

A vicious circle. Instead of the weakness on b7, Black now has a new weakness on the a-file.

24.axb6 Qxb6 25.Rb1 Qc7 26.Be3 Ra7 27.Re1 Qe7 28.Qa2

“He works best who knows his trade.” With a sophisticated queen maneuver White begins maneuvering against the weak a- and e-pawns.

28...Rea8

In our opinion, more stubborn is 28...Qf6 29.Rxa6 Rxa6 30.Qxa6 Rf8, to somewhat reduce the duration of the defense at the cost of a pawn.

29.Bxd4 cxd4 30.Qd2 Qe5 31.Bf3

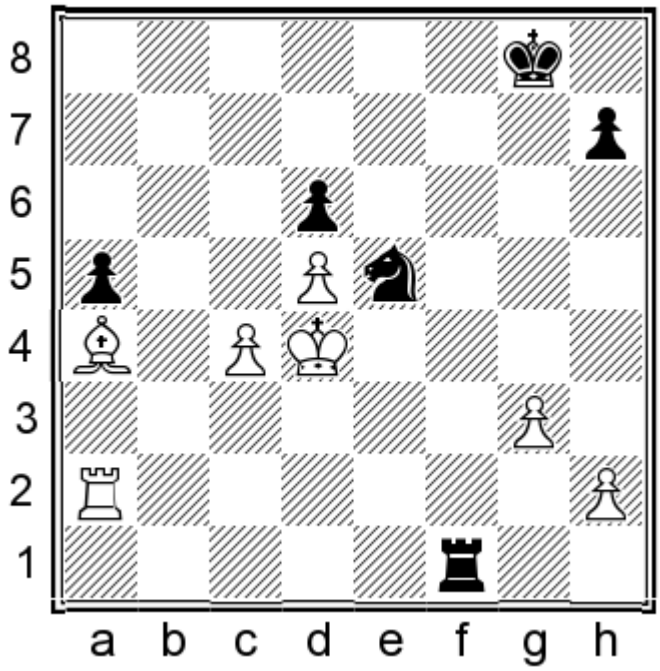
Winning a pawn.

31...e3 32.fxe3 Nf5 33.exd4 Qxd4+ 34.Qxd4 Nxd4 35.Bd1 a5

White has an extra pawn and the classic advantage of the bishop over the knight. Petrosian realizes the advantage with clockwork precision.

36.Re4 Nf5 37.Ba4 Re7 38.Rxe7 Nxe7 39.Kf2 Ng6 40.Ke3 Ne5 41.Kd4 Rf8 42.Ra2! Rf1

Also useless was 42...Nf3+ 43.Ke4! Ng5+ 44.Ke3 because of the looming *zugzwang*.



43.c5!

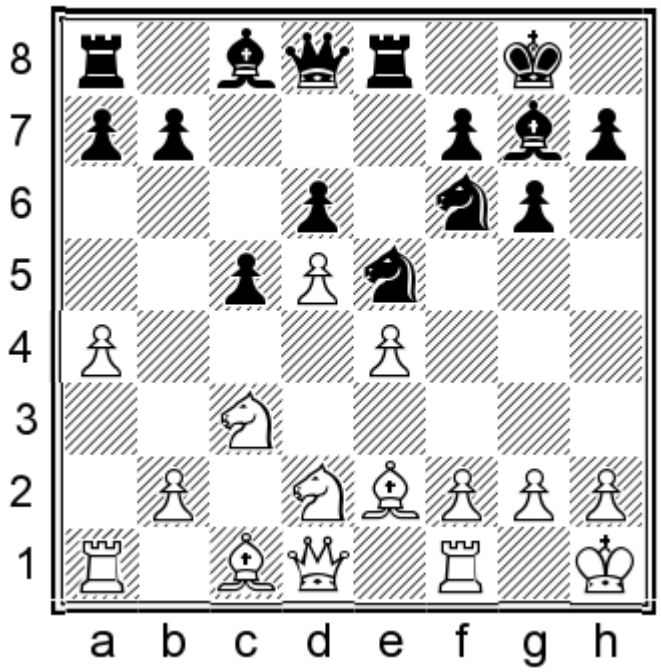
The decisive breakthrough!

43...Nf3+ 44.Ke3 dxc5 45.d6 Ng5 46.d7 Rf8 47.Kd3 Rd8 Black resigned.

After 48.Re2 and 49.Re8 he gradually succumbs to *zugzwang*.

(188) D4.4 **Piesina – Petrosian**
Vilnius 1978

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 g6 4.Nc3 d6 5.Nf3 Bg7 6.e4 0-0 7.Be2 e6 8.0-0 exd5 9.cxd5 Re8 10.Nd2 Nbd7 11.a4 Ne5 12.Kh1



Too tricky. I remember that Petrosian once said about such a king retreat (I think, in the Sicilian Defense) that it was not prophylaxis but an unnecessary waste of a tempo. I am not sure if this is the case in this game, but the text move does not threaten anything and prevents nothing. Now, for example, Black could have made any move except ...g5 since 13.f4 is not a threat: 12...Neg4 13.Nc4 Nxe4! 14.Bxg4 Bxg4 15.Qxg4 Nxf2+!.

12...g5 13.Ra3 a6 14.Qc2

To play this system against the person who invented it and knows all of its subtleties was hardly a smart decision by White. Apparently, the Lithuanian Master did not expect Black's next move.

14...b6!?

This is why White should have played 14.a5 on the previous move. With the advanced g5-pawn, it would have been very risky for Black to open the b-file. It seems Piesina did not know this nuance.

15.f4?

Now, this is a more serious mistake. Such a sharp move clearly does not fit the solid system that White chose. Most of his pieces are in the process of relocating and are not quite ready for the game to open.

15...gxf4 16.Rxf4 Rb8

Black is probably already better. The rest of the game is a modern addendum to Nimzowitsch's immortal book *Chess Praxis*. It has everything: prophylaxis, centralization, maneuvering. Tigran Petrosian absorbed these concepts when he was a child: "I analyzed the games and positions from this book countless times, and I very much enjoyed reading it without a chess board, so no wonder that eventually I memorized it."

17.Nd1 Ng6 18.Rf2

Forced, since, in addition to attacking the rook, Black threatened ...Nxd5.

18...Qe7

A sophisticated maneuver. By attacking the e4-pawn, Black wants to force the move Bf3 with a dual goal: to weaken White's control of the b5- square and to stop the rook from moving to g3.

19.Bf3 b5 20.axb5 axb5 21.b3 Bd7 22.Qa2

White demonstrates his superiority on the a-file, which Black never intended to challenge. White should have thought about improving the d1-knight's position as soon as possible, as it is the least active white piece: 22.Ne3 Bh6 and now, of course, not 23.Nf5? Bxf5 24.exf5 Qe1+, but 23.Nef1! followed by Ng3, reinforcing the e4-pawn and taking a closer look at the f5-square.

22...Ne5 23.Be2 Bh6 24.Rf1

Offering a knight and a pawn in exchange for the dark-square bishop: 24...Bxd2 25.Qxd2 Nxe4 26.Qh6, with some compensation. But Petrosian, of course, aims for more.

24...Rb7 25.Qb1

Again, missing the target. The move b3-b4 never was played, while the opposition of the queen and the rook on the same line is very risky and will soon become important. 25.Nf2 would have been safer and more in the spirit of the position.

25...Ng6

What is the purpose of this whimsical dance of the black pieces? What is this, after all? "Maneuvering"?

Nimzowitsch defines maneuvering as a targeted strategic operation, the essence of which is to attack a weakness "in at least two different ways... compelling the enemy pieces to take up uncomfortable defensive positions. In consequence of this, an obstruction to the defending pieces or something of the sort will intervene and the 'weakness' will prove to be untenable."

Moving the knight from e5 to g6 yet another time, Petrosian initiates a new wave of attacks on the e4-pawn, and not just that: the queenside, where Black has a pawn majority, can also be considered a weakness of White's.

26.Bd3

Protecting the pawn from another diagonal was weaker: 26.Bf3 Bxd2 27.Bxd2 b4, and White does not have the counterattacking move 28.Ra6? because of 28...Bb5!. Now Black gains nothing in the analogous variation, as well as after 26...Bxd2 27.Bxd2 Nxe4 28.Bxe4 Qxe4 29.Qxe4 Rxe4 30.Ra6, and he cannot play 30...Rd4? because of 31.Ra8+! Kg7 32.Bc3.

26...Bg4

Black threatens ...c4. For example, 27.Nf2? c4!, and the pawn, having passed between Scylla and Charybdis, comes to c3.

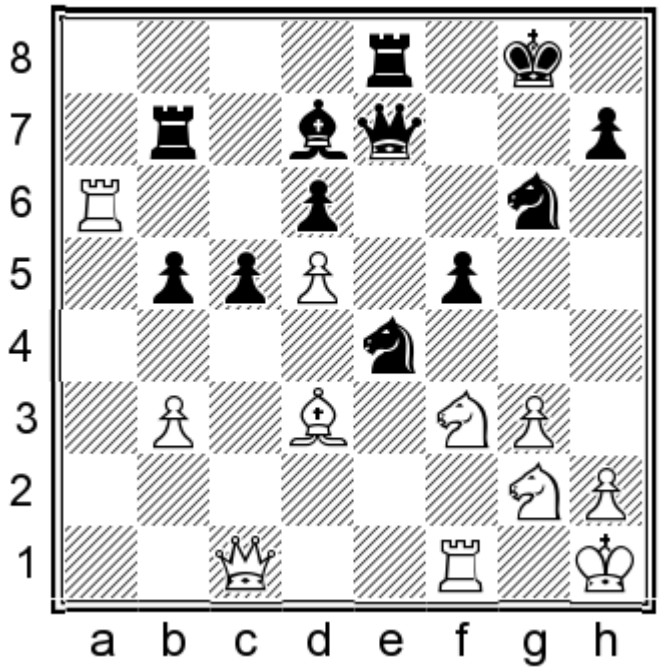
27.Nf3?

Composure is a quality that is extremely rare at a young age. If until now Piesina's defense was not flawless but passable overall, here he commits an obvious error that will ultimately cost him the game. Better is 27.Bb2; for example, 27...Ne5 28.Bxe5 Qxe5 29.Nf3 Qh5 with a small advantage for Black. Oddly enough, 27.Qc2 also does not lose by force.

27...Bxc1 28.Qxc1 Nxe4 29.Ra2

After 29.Bxe4 Qxe4 30.Nf2, Black had the forced but sufficient response 30...Qf5!.

29...Qd8 30.Ne3 Bd7 31.Ra6 f5 32.g3 Qe7 33.Ng2



33...c4!

A breakthrough using the motif of the knight fork: 34.bxc4? Nc5 35.Ra3 b4, and Black wins.

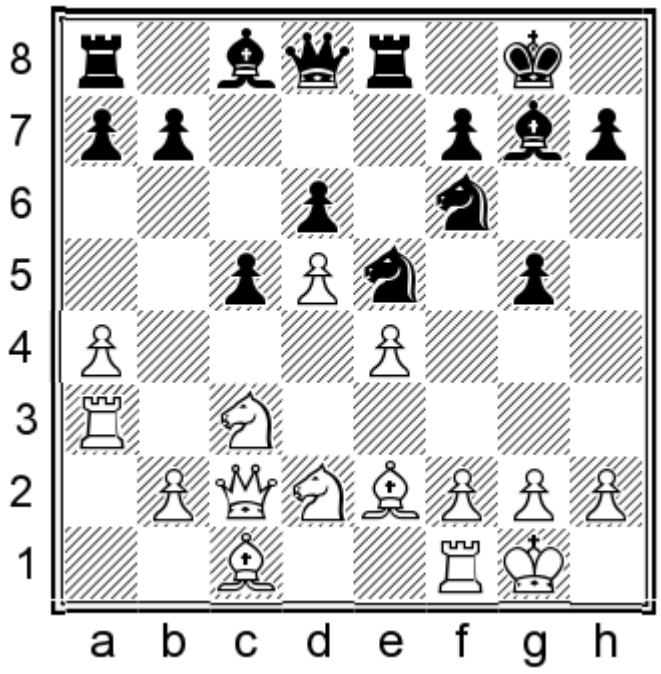
34.Bxe4 fxe4 35.Nd4 Qe5 36.Qe3 Bh3 37.Rc1 Bxg2+ 38.Kxg2 cxb3 39.Nxb3 Ne7

39...Qxd5 would have also been enough, but Black wants to take the pawn with the knight as centralization comes first!

40.Rf1 Nxd5 41.Qh6 e3 42.Rxd6 e2 43.Re1 White resigned.

(189) D4.5 **Petrosian – Rajkovic**
Vrsac 1981

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.Nd2 Nbd7 8.e4 Bg7 9.Be2 0-0 10.0-0 Re8 11.a4 Ne5 12.Ra3 g5 13.Qc2



13...Nfd7

This is one of the possible routes for the black knight; subsequently it goes to f8 and g6. Thus Black manages to somewhat reinforce his central grouping. The difficulty of this setup is that it provides White substantial freedom. It is not easy for White to play g2-g3, f2-f4, but if this ever happens, Black's whole setup may collapse. Also, another downside of the text move is that Black relieves the pressure from the e4- and d5-pawn too early. Therefore another move, 13...Qe7, is played more often nowadays. The idea is to play ...Ng6 if the opportunity presents itself, keeping the opportunity of the same setup: ...Nfd7(g4)-e5.

Theory has not yet given a clear answer to whether the continuation ...a6 is necessary, now (see game 187) or later. In any case, grandmaster Rajkovic decided that the a-pawn should stay where it is.

14.Nd1 Nf8 15.f3

Stopping the idea ...g4 in any of its forms. In the annotations, Petrosian also indicates another possibility, 15.Bb5!?, and Black has to reply 15...Re7.

15...Nfg6 16.g3 Bh3

A natural decision, but perhaps not the best. The bishop is vulnerable on the h3-square, thus Black does not really win a tempo.

We see a fundamentally different interpretation of this position, something out of the field of contemporary hypermodernism, in the next game: 16...Kh8 17.Ne3 h5!? 18.Nf5 h4 19.Nxg7 Kxg7 20.Rf2 hxg3 21.hxg3 Rh8, and Black developed a dangerous initiative along the h-file (Sygulski-Suba, Bela Crkva 1986). I do not think this game proves anything because the strengths of the opponents are so disparate, but Mihai Suba's idea certainly deserves attention.

17.Re1 Rc8

Black underestimates the opponent's plan. Stronger is 17...Rf8, practically forcing 18.Ne3 and neutralizing the text maneuver Nf2, etc. For example, 18.Nf2 Bd7 with the idea ...f5.

18.Nf2 Bd7 19.Nf1

Now the terrible threat of f2-f4 hangs over Black.

19...c4 20.Be3!

It is most important not to rush! “The threat is stronger than the execution.” Premature is 20.f4?! gxf4 21.gxf4 Nd3!, for example: (1) 22.Nxd3? cxd3 23.Qxd3 Rxc1! 24.Rxc1 Nxf4 25.Qd2 Nxe2+ 26.Qxe2 Qg5+, and White wins; (2) 22.Bxd3 cxd3 23.Qxd3 Rxc1! 24.Rxc1 Nxf4 25.Qd2 Qg5+ 26.Rg3 Ne2+ 27.Qxe2 Qxc1 with unclear play.

At first glance, White still does not threaten to advance the f-pawn, but Petrosian planned Qd2! and then f2-f4!. Fearing that the white queen will leave the c2-square (and then the move ...Nd3 would completely lose any point) Rajkovic immediately invades d3.

The opponent’s pieces come into contact, and the game turns into a fascinating tactical duel.

20...Nd3 21.Nxd3

Weaker is 21.Bxd3 cxd3 22.Qxd3, which could have been followed by 22...Ne5!? 23.Qe2 f5! with counterplay for Black.

21...cxd3 22.Qxd3 Bxb2 23.Rb3 Bf6 24.Rxb7 Bxa4 25.Qa6 Bc2

White’s task is not as simple as it seems. For example: 26.Qxa7 Ra8 27.Qb6 g4! or 26.Rxa7 Bc3!, and White loses a significant part of his advantage (indicated by Petrosian).

26.Bb5 Ne5!

As far as tactical skill is concerned, the opponents are worthily matched. With his last move White attacked the rook on e8, threatening to win the exchange, but Black does not consider moving it away. Exploiting the fact that the f3-pawn is unprotected for a moment, the black knight leaped into the center with tempo, creating the counterthreat of a fork. Now it is Petrosian’s turn and he faces an almost Hamlet-like question: “To take, or not to take?”

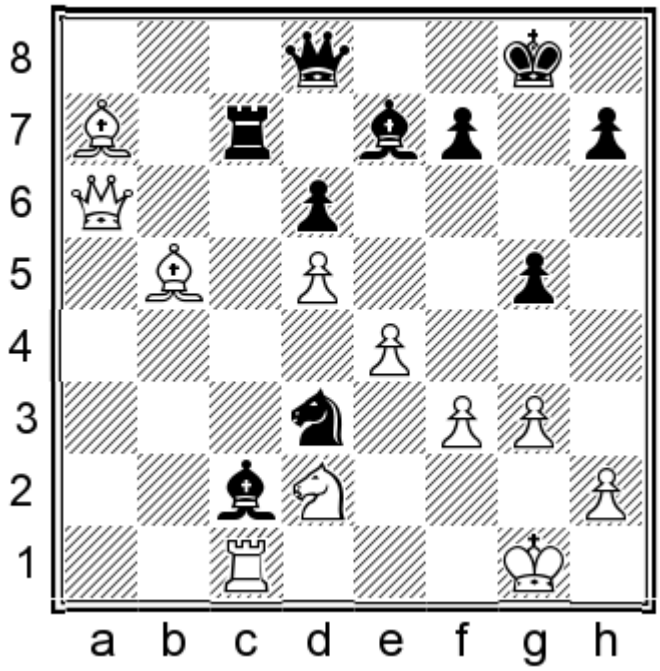
27.Nd2!

Correct! The alterative would have led only to a draw: 27.Bxe8 Nxf3+ 28.Kf2 Qxe8 29.Kxf3 Qxe4+ 30.Kf2 (certainly not 30.Ke2? Qg2+ 31.Bf2 Re8+, and Black wins) 30...Bd3 31.Qxd6 Bxf1 32.Kxf1 Qh1+, etc. with perpetual check (variations by Tigran Petrosian).

27...Re7 28.Rxe7 Bxe7 29.Rc1!

Not missing the opportunity to immobilize his opponent’s pieces by mutual defense.

29...Rc7 30.Bxa7 Nd3!



The climax of the game. At the cost of a pawn Black has activated his pieces; at the same time, it is clear that 31.Bxd3 Bxd3 32.Qa3 Rxc1+ 33.Qxc1 f5 does not promise much. Can White maintain his advantage?

31.Rf1?!

An inaccuracy. Later Petrosian suggested the stunning continuation 31.Bb6! Nxc1 32.Qa5!!. White wins back the rook, keeping a healthy extra pawn.

31...Nb4 32.Qa5 Rb7!

Gaining the bishop pair. After that, White's material advantage does not play a significant role.

33.Qxb4 Rxa7 34.Bc6 Qa5

With the queen trade, the activity of the black pieces increases.

35.Qxa5 Rxa5 36.Nc4 Ra2 37.Ne3 Bf6 38.Nxc2 Rxc2

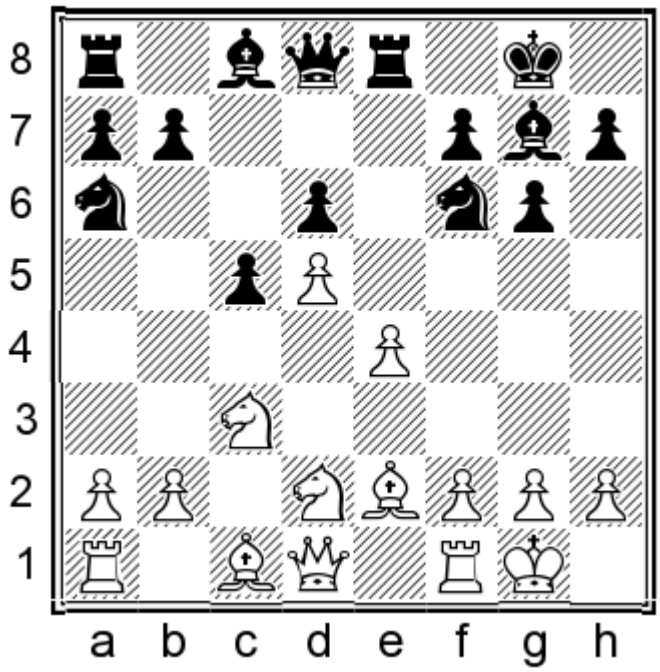
With opposite-color bishops and a passive king, White's extra pawn is a mere formality. He never got a chance to use it.

39.Rd1 Be5 40.Bd7 h5 41.Rf1 h4 42.f4 Bd4+ 43.Kh1 hxg3 44.hxg3 Rf2 45.Rd1 Be3

A draw is inevitable.

46.fxg5 Bxg5 47.Rd3 Re2 Draw agreed.

D4*



White to move

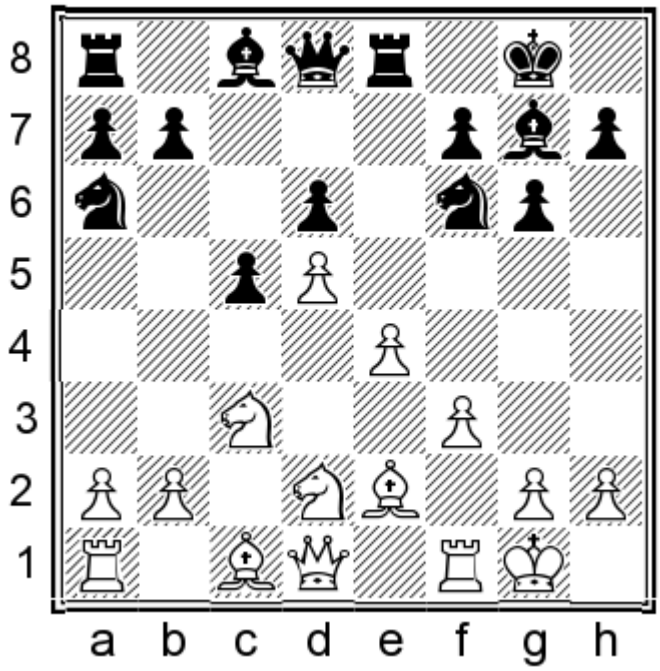
A once fashionable but now almost forgotten variation of the King's Indian Defense. For Petrosian's opponents, it was a difficult challenge. Boleslavsky's experienced hand is evident in the monolithic setup of the game against Schmid (game 192). Boleslavsky, with whom Petrosian had already started working at the time, was a brilliant theorist and expert in these positions. In game 193 Black was instructively punished for his superficial strategy.

(190) D4*.1 **Petrosian – Schmid**
Zürich 1961

1.d4 c5 2.d5 d6 3.c4 g6 4.Nc3 Bg7 5.e4 Nf6 6.Be2 0-0 7.Nf3 e6 8.0-0 exd5 9.cxd5 Re8 10.Nd2

Suggesting that Black decide how to develop the queen's knight.

10...Na6 11.f3



The main plan. Using the fact that the black knight has distanced itself from the e5-square and the move Nh5 is not dangerous, White plans the maneuver Nc4, Bf4 with the goal of putting pressure on the d6-pawn and then carrying out the preemptive b2-b4. 11.Kh1 is sometimes played with the same ideas (see the next game).

11...Nc7 12.a4 b6

With obvious intentions of countering White's plan by developing the bishop to a6. The alternative method is 12...Nd7 and then (when the white knight moves to c4) ...Ne5.

13.Nc4 Ba6 14.Bg5

Petrosian, of course, could not resist his favorite maneuver, especially since it is very helpful here. If 14...h6 is now played, the bishop will go back to e3 with the typical idea Qd2.

The simplistic 14.Bf4 could lead to serious problems for White: 14...Nh5! 15.Be3 (bad is 15.Bxd6? Bxc4! and so on; or 15.Bd2? Bxc4 16.Bxc4 Bd4+ 17.Kh1 Ng3+! 18.hxg3 Re5!) 15...f5, and Black seizes the initiative.

14...Bxc4

Schmid rushes to destroy the strong knight so he won't forget to do it later. For comparison, let's look at the game Gligorić-Planinc (Ljubljana 1969), in which Black fell into a positional trap that is typical in this variation: 14...Qd7 15.Qd2 Rab8 (now 15...Bxc4 is already necessary) 16.b3, and Black's development is gridlocked because Bxc4 will obviously be followed by ...bxc4!. It is very likely that the German grandmaster was afraid of home preparation and made it a point to avoid the most common continuations 14...Rab8, 14...Qd7, and 14...h6.

15.Bxc4 a6

So, after making the compulsory moves, Black waits to see what his opponent is going to do.

16.Kh1!

Brilliant! I believe that by this point White had exhausted his home preparation, and this decision was made right there at the board.

"In difficult positions there often comes a moment when, because of the uncertainty of the further development of the struggle, you ought to, and sometimes even must, make such a move that would be useful for all occasions. To sense such moment and to find the right move is a certain art, although no one writes epics about this." (Petrosian).

I think White was able to find just such a move. Waiting, he improves his position and once again presents the opponent with a choice. It may seem that Petrosian moved his king for no specific reason, just in case. However, if we were to carefully analyze this position, we would see that this move was made at the ideal time and has a very specific purpose. Consider, for example, the variation 16.Rb1 h6 17.Be3 Rb8 18.Qd3 b5! 19.axb5 axb5 with the following possibilities:

(1) 20.Bxb5 Nxb5 21.Nxb5 Nxd5! 22.exd5 (better is 22.Qxd5 Rxb5 with equal play) 22...Qb6!, and the knight cannot move back because of 23...Rxe3!;

(2) 20.Nxb5 Nxb5 21.Bxb5 Nxd5! 22.Bd2 (or 22.Bxe8 Nxe3, etc.) 22...Nb4 23.Bxb4 Qb6! threatening 24...c4+, 24...cxb4+, and 24...Qxb5.

That is why White's king is better on h1. Incidentally, the development of the game demonstrated that the move 16.Kh1 has more than just prophylactic value.

16...Rb8

Not the best choice, as it leads to difficult play for Black. Probably, the German grandmaster did not foresee White's strong 18th move.

In this variation Black must play ...b5 at all costs; otherwise, the knight transfer to c7 is unjustified, and Black's position will gradually deteriorate. In order for the pawn to get to b5 it would be good for Black to support it with two other pieces: the rook and the queen. But considering that, after moving the queen to e2 or d3, White will not only have one more way to control the b5-square but will also attack the a6-pawn, it is clear that Black cannot solve the problem by simple means (such as the moves ...Rab8, ...Qd7). Therefore, he needs to actively include the f6-knight. This could be achieved by 16...h6!?. For example:

(1) 17.Bd2 Nd7! 18.Rb1 Rb8 19.Qe2 Qc8 20.b4 b5!? (and possibly 20...cxb4 21.Rxb4 Bxc3 22.Bxc3 Nxd5 23.Bxd5 Qxc3) 21.axb5 cxb4 22.Rxb4 Bxc3! 23.Bxc3 axb5 with full-fledged play for Black (Gligorić-Matulović, Belgrade 1969);

(2) 17.Be3 Nd7! 18.Qd2 Kh7 19.Rab1 Rb8 20.Qe2 Qc8 followed by ...Ne5xc4 and ...b5;

(3) 17.Bh4 Qd7 18.Qd3 Nh5! (with the idea to use the f4-square for the knight) 19.Rfe1 Nf4 20.Qf1 Bd4!?, and although White can hinder ...b5 for now, he has no advantage whatsoever.

Thus, Black had a real opportunity to overcome the opening problems. By the way, now it is clear why the move 16...Qd7 is bad: the queen takes away an important square from the knight. White would have replied 17.Qd3, and if 17...h6, then 18.Bd2!.

17.Qe2

Deserving attention was 17.Qd3, reinforcing the c3- and d5-squares (see the annotation below).

17...Qc8 18.Bf4!

An important improvement that changes the evaluation of the entire variation. Opening manuals cite the game Browne-Torre (Manila 1976) that has the same position but with the queen on d3. (17.Qd3 Qc8 18.Bf4) It was followed by 18...Bf8 19.Rab1 Nd7 20.b4!, and White achieved a significant advantage.

Theoreticians were quick to announce the maneuver Bf4 as a novelty and credited it to the American grandmaster, while, as we can see, this idea had been known before. Well, fine, that is all in the past: at the time information was not easy to come by. The main thing is that this plan is very effective, and today Black avoids such positions.

One of the greats admitted that he made many of his discoveries leafing through old books and magazines! I fully agree with him. My advice: go over the games of past years more often, and you will learn many interesting things. In chess, as elsewhere, often what is old is new again.

18...Bf8

Removing the potential attack from the c3- knight, Black gives his opponent free rein on the queenside. But it is unlikely that he had anything better. A tactical attempt to defend the d6-pawn using the “x-ray” theme along the e-file did not work: 18...Qd7? 19.Bxa6 Nfxd5 20.Nxd5 Nxd5 21.Bb5 Nxf4 22.Qd2, and White ends up ahead in material.

19.Rab1 Nh5

In conjunction with Black’s next move, this is the decisive mistake. Black feels that his chances are on the e-file, but his planned attack on the e4-pawn by the f-pawn is completely out of place and leads to the destruction of his own position. If he had counterplay, it was in connection with attacking the d5-pawn. However, 19...b5?! 20.axb5 axb5 21.Nxb5 Nfxd5 22.Bxd5 Nxd5 (22...Nxb5 is not better) 23.Bxd6! is no good (indicated by Albert Kapengut). On the other hand, Black could try his luck by continuing 19...Qb7!?. For example: 20.b4 Nfxd5 21.Nxd5 Nxd5 22.Bxd5 Qxd5 23.exd5 (23.bxc5 Qxc5 24.Qxa6 is also possible) 23...Rxe2 24.bxc5, although here, too, White has an advantage. But it was night and day compared with the text.

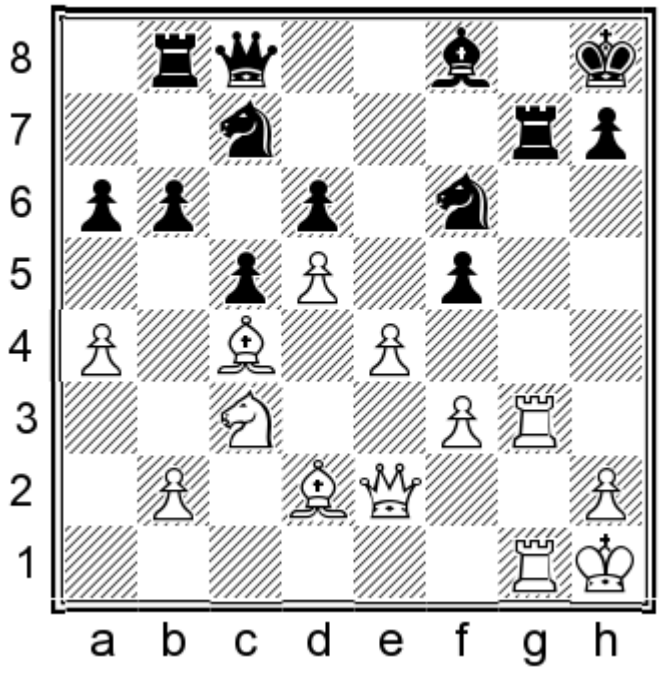
20.Bd2 f5?! 21.g4! Nf6

Since the continuation 21...fxg4 22.fxg4 Ng7 would mean positional capitulation, Schmid allows the opening of the g-file, along which White begins a dangerous attack.

22.gxf5 gxf5 23.Rg1+ Kh8

Oh, how wise White was when he played Kh1!.

24.Rg3 Re7 25.Rbg1 Rg7



This allows a breakthrough in the center, after which White quickly reaches the enemy king.

26.e5! dxe5 27.Qxe5 Nce8 28.Rxg7 Bxg7 29.Rxg7!

Sweeping away the last obstacles.

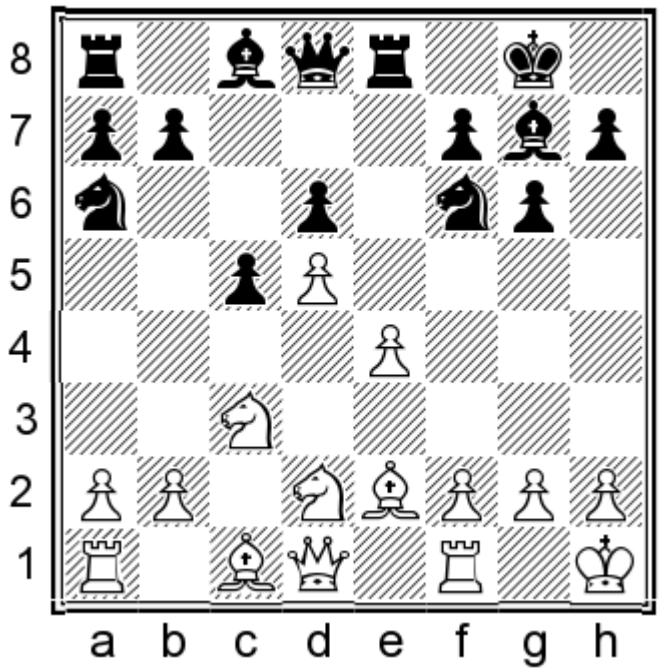
29...Kxg7 30.Qe7+ Kg6 31.d6

Black resigned in view of 31...Rb7 32.Qe3 with inevitable mate.

(191) D4*.2 **Petrosian – Hernandez**
Banja Luka 1979

Theoretician Eugene Znosko-Borovsky once said that it is not necessary to increase a space advantage; it is enough just to maintain it. Of course, it is impossible to prove this in practical play (as, however, it is impossible to prove the opposite), but in this particular game this strategy was successful. Perhaps the old maestro was not far from the truth?

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.Nd2 Bg7 8.e4 0-0 9.Be2 Re8 10.0-0 Na6 11.Kh1



It is difficult to say whether this move is necessary in this position, but I would not call it useless. Sometimes White can save time, as, for example, in the variation 11...Nc7 12.a4 Nd7 13.Nc4 Ne5 14.Ne3 f5 15.f4, and the pawn gets to f4 in one go.

11...Nc7 12.a4 b6

A cookie-cutter move. Deserving attention is the energetic attempt made by Ljubojević against Polugaevsky (Manila 1976): 12...Qe7!?, hindering the planned move f2-f3. For example, 13.f3 Nfxd5!? 14.Nxd5 Nxd5, and Nxd5 15.Bb5? does not work due to 15...Ne3!, while after 15.Nc4 Nb4 Black has no problems. When Polugaevsky played 13.f3 anyway, Ljubojević decided not to execute the threat, probably fearing the difficulties in the principled variation 13...Nfxd5 14.exd5 Bxc3 15.bxc3 Qxe2 16.Ne4! Rxe4! (not 16...Qxd1 17.Rxd1!) 17.fxe4 Qxe4 (although, in my opinion, here Black has full compensation for the exchange), and instead replied 13...Nd7, and easily equalized after 14.Nc4 f5 15.Bf4 Ne5.

13.f3 Ba6?

There are many objections to this exchange. The main one is that after the bishops disappear the key c4-square becomes the domain of the white knight. One can only wonder how a grandmaster could forget about this. If, on the previous move, Black had decided to play “by the book” after all, he should have continued in the same vein: 13...Nd7 or 13...Rb8.

14.Bxa6 Nxa6 15.Nc4!

A dream more than a knight.

15...Nc7

Defending against Nb5. But the danger comes from the other side.

16.Bf4 Bf8 17.Bg5! h6 18.Bh4!

Yes, right here! The pinned knight is very unpleasant for Black.

18...g5

And what is this? No, it is not a mistake, but the consequence of a mistake. Here Hernandez made a forced move. It turns out that White threatened the very unpleasant f3-f4, completely squeezing Black's position. For example, after 18...Bg7 19.f4! Black just needed to choose his method of execution: (1) 19...Qd7 20.Nxd6! (20.Qf3 is also good) 20...Qxd6 21.e5 Qd8 22.d6 Ne6 23.Nd5, winning; or (2) 19...g5 20.fxg5 Nxe4 21.Qf3 with a decisive attack. 18...Be7 would not help in view of 19.e5!.

19.Bf2 Qd7 20.Ne3 a6 21.Ne2

White's knights move to a promising area where long-term weaknesses for his opponent are emerging. Black tries to take advantage of this and plays ...b5, but Petrosian, of course, keeps the queenside secure.

After that Hernandez defended stubbornly, but it looks like it was already too late. In Banja Luka the Cuban grandmaster lost three games: to Kasparov, who took first place, to Smejkal, and this one.

21...b5 22.a5 Rec8 23.Ng3 Nce8 24.Be1 Ng7 25.Bc3 Ngh5 26.Ngf5

The f5-square is the key to the gates of Black's fortress.

26...Re8 27.b3

There are many paths to the goal. For example, quite good is 27.g4 b4 28.Bd2, seizing the c4-square.

27...Qd8 28.Ra2 Kh7 29.Qb1 Nf4

Black's position is so bad that the variation 30.e5 dxe5 31.Nd6+ Kg8 32.Nxe8 Qxe8 would have been a relief for him: after all, he would have a pawn for the exchange.

30.Qa1!

An exceptional situation: the white pieces dominate the long King's Indian diagonal!

30...Nd7 31.Ng4 Ng6 32.Bg7!

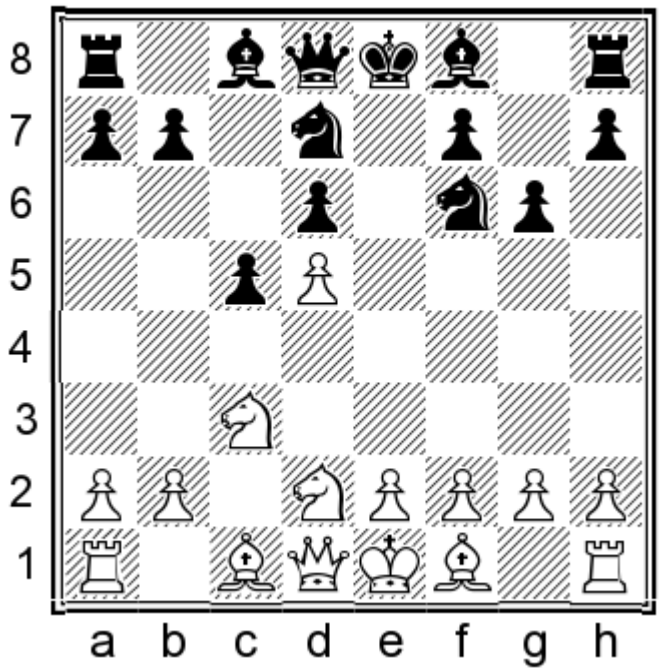
This wins an important pawn. The rest, as they say, is a matter of technique, which Petrosian certainly did not lack.

32...Nge5 33.Bxf8 Nxf8 34.Nfxh6 Nfg6 35.Nxe5 Nxe5 36.Nf5 Rg8 37.g3 Rg6

Probably, Black could slightly prolong the agony via 37...c4. On the next move White advances f3-f4 and gets an attack against the king.

38.f4 gxf4 39.gxf4 Ng4 40.Rg2 Nf6 41.Qe1 Rxg2 42.Qh4+ Black resigned.

D5



White to move

In this position, White has many good and diverse paths. Twice Petrosian had to play against the fianchetto: 8.g3 (games 192, 193).

He himself preferred a setup in the spirit of the Gligorić System: 8.e4 (games 194, 195).

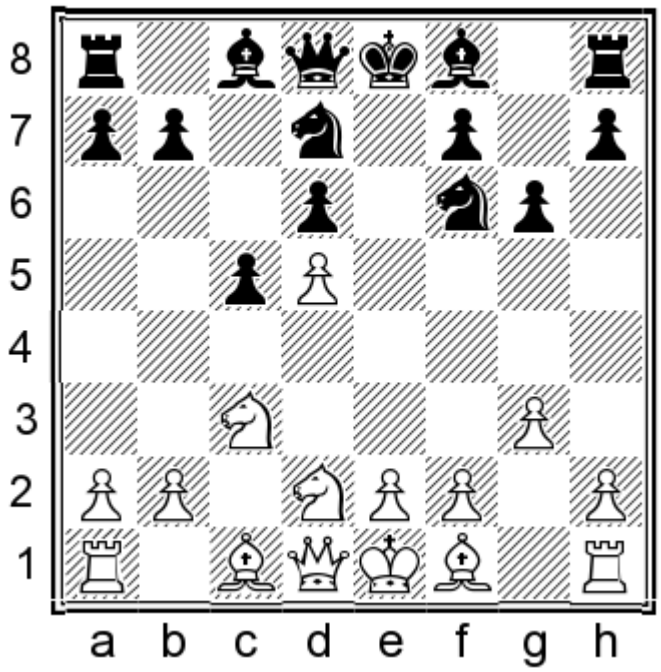
(192) D5.1 **Gligorić – Petrosian**
Candidates Tournament
Neuhausen/Zürich 1953

A chess player's mastery is determined not only by the quality of his moves but also by his ability to control the flow of a chess bout. The higher this skill is, the stronger the player, the more confident his play, the smaller the element of chance.

From a professional point of view, the game Gligorić-Petrosian deserves the highest praise, even though this game seems somewhat boring. Indeed, there was no bloodshed but rather a maneuvering battle from "a little better" to equalization, then exchanges and a draw. However, no one can accuse the grandmasters of being too peaceable. Clearly they did not try to draw this game: White was "pushing" all the time, while Black competently defended and waited for his chance.

Thus, this game, despite its seemingly calm flow, had inner tension.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.Nd2 Nbd7 8.g3



White brings the game into a calm positional setup, where the main events unfold in the middlegame.

8...Bg7 9.Bg2 0-0 10.0-0 Qe7

The reader has probably noticed that Petrosian liked to “muddy the waters” in the opening and therefore often chose poorly studied, flexible continuations that could give him vast opportunities for creativity.

The last queen move is one such continuation. Compared with the commonly played 10...Re8, Black reserves the possibility of the maneuver ...Ne8-c7 (for example, see in the next game). As for the king’s rook, it can also be useful on the f8-square (say, in case of ...f5).

11.Nc4

Unlike his opponent’s play, Gligorić’s is very straightforward: it was by choice that he brought the knight to c4.

11...Ne5

Almost forcing the exchange of a pair of knights, which can be considered at least a moral success for Black.

12.Nxe5

12.Qb3 Nxc4 13.Qxc4 a6 is not good, as after any reply from White, including 14.a4, Black plays ...b5!.

12...Qxe5 13.a4 a6 14.a5

A well-known technique: the one pawn on a5 holds two of the opponent’s pawns. Now, if we remove all of the pieces from the board, White will likely win the pawn endgame. However, in a complex middlegame it is premature to talk about White’s success. The nearest plans for both sides include opening the b-file. Experience has shown that whoever can push forward the knight’s pawn first wins the “local battle” as a rule.

14...Re8

Based on the previous remarks, 14...Rb8 was, of course, more principled. After 15.Bf4 Qe7, Black intends to advance the b-pawn as soon as possible. If, for example, 16.Na4, then 16...Bd7 17.Nb6 Bb5 18.Re1 Nd7, and Black, chasing away the knight from b6, achieves his goal. Maybe Petrosian did not like the continuation 16.Qb3 Nd7 17.Ne4 Ne5 18.Qb6, and 18...Nc4 does not work because of 19.Bxd6!. However, instead of 16...Nd7, Black has a

tactical solution: 16...b5! 17.axb6 Nd7 18.Na4 Nxb6! 19.Nxb6 Qd8! (not 19...Qc7 20.Bxd6 Qxd6 21.Nxc8), winning back a piece and getting rid of all of his worries.

However, the natural continuation chosen by Black in the text also seems to be sufficient to equalize.

15.Bf4 Qe7 16.Qb3

"It is hard to win games without moving any pawns at all," – wrote David Bronstein after this move in his book *Zürich International Chess Tournament* and suggests 16.Na4, promising a significant advantage for White after 16...Nd7 17.Rb1 and b2-b4. This is, of course, an interesting idea, but it raises a number of questions. Why would Black make the move 16...Nd7 in this position, and what should White do after 16...Bd7? Should he play 17.Nb6 Rad8? All right, but then what? The exchange on d7 yields nothing, and I do not see another reasonable way to fend off Black's threats (for example, 18...Nh5 and 18...Bb5). Anyway, there is no complete clarity.

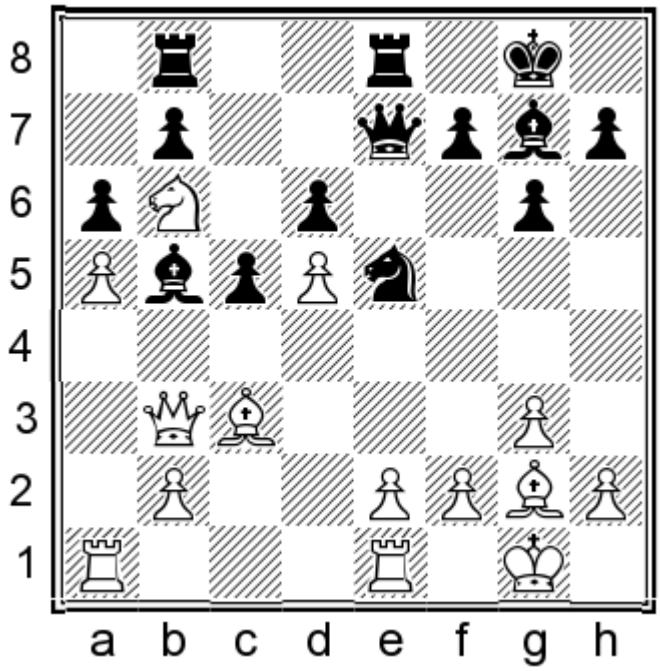
Gligorić's move is logical in its own way: the queen hampers the development of the c8-bishop and threatens to invade the b6-square if the opportunity presents itself.

16...Nd7 17.Rfe1

In contrast to the variations discussed earlier, the black rooks are better placed, and the raid 17.Ne4 Ne5 18.Qb6 now can be refuted by the move 18...Nc4!, for example: 19.Bxd6 Qxe4! 20.Bxe4 Nxb6, and White finds himself down a piece.

Note that now Black also had a tactical opportunity that was discussed in the annotation to the 14th move: 17...b5 18.axb6 Rb8 19.Na4 Nxb6 20.Nxb6 Qd8! and so on. Therefore, the regrouping planned by White probably should have started with the move 17.Na4 (17...Qxe2 18.Bxd6 would be to his advantage).

17...Ne5 18.Na4 Bd7 19.Nb6 Rab8 20.Bd2 Bb5 21.Bc3



In the last part of the game the opponents competed in the art of maneuvering, and both of them were able to achieve some success. White took hold of the b6-square; Black activated his light-color bishop. What are the future plans and the chances of each opponent?

"White still has the advantage. He intends to smoke the knight out of e5 and weaken Black's king position by the exchange of bishops, and then play e4-e5. Sensing real danger, Petrosian tries some tactics; his next two moves, ...c4 and ...f5, complicate his position, but do not improve it."

This is David Bronstein's opinion. In general, this is true; however, the last statement of this respected

grandmaster is debatable.

21...c4 22.Qc2 f5

Why doesn’t Black improve his position? Oh, but he does!

23.h3

And again Gligorić was not flexible enough. Taking away the g4-square from the black pieces, he continues to prepare an offensive in the center, but he should have abandoned this plan once the situation changed; especially, because the move 23.b3 provided White the small but certain advantage that he strived to achieve throughout the whole game. Black’s next precise reply thwarts this possibility.

23...Qc7 24.f4

Consistent, but probably a forced decision at this point. After Black has thoroughly prepared for this advance, it does not bring anything but simplifications.

24...Nd7 25.Nxd7 Bxd7 26.Bxg7 Kxg7 27.Qc3+ Kg8 28.Kh2

The forcing operation has ended, and, taking advantage of the respite, Black opens the b-file.

28...Qc5 29.e3 b5 30.axb6 Rxb6 31.Ra5 Qb4

Probably in his preliminary calculations Gligorić considered this move to be impossible, but when it was made on the board, he noticed that in the variation 32.Qxb4 Rxb4 33.Rxa6 Rxb2 34.Rxd6 Bb5! the a-pawn becomes too dangerous.

32.Re2 Qxc3 33.bxc3

Thus, the struggle transitioned into a complex endgame, where the mutual weaknesses of the pawns on a6, c4 and d6 and c3, d5 and e3 roughly balance the chances of the sides.

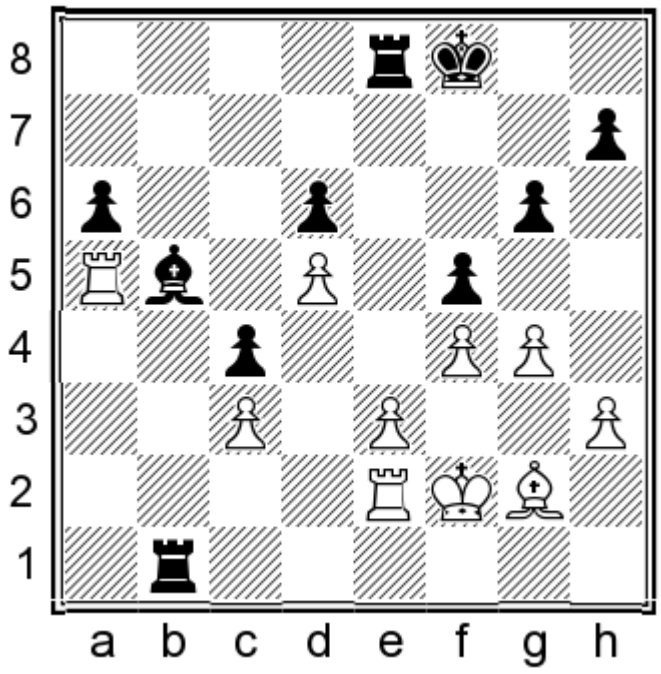
The subsequent moves were played in time trouble, which both players manage extremely well.

33...Kf8 34.Kg1

This gives Black an opportunity to activate the rook, but apparently Gligorić had nothing better anymore. For example, after 34.Bf3, Black could have played 34...Rb3 35.Rxa6 Rxc3 36.Rxd6 Ba4, and, despite being a pawn up, White would have to think about saving the game.

34...Rb1+ 35.Kf2 Bb5 36.g4

White’s last attempt to achieve an advantage.



36...Rc1

Here I also do not agree with David Bronstein. He believes that Black could afford the continuation 36...Rb3 with the idea of sending the king to the queenside to aid the passed pawn. Even if there were no time trouble, in my opinion, this is nothing but playing to lose. Let's take, for example, this variation: 37.Rc2 Ke7 38.Ra1 Kd7 39.e4! fxe4 40.Ke3 Kc7 41.Bxe4 Kb6 42.Kd4. The b3-rook is inactive, and the a-pawn is not dangerous, while the white pawns are being set in motion, threatening to tear the kingside to pieces. If Black has a draw here, it is very, very difficult to achieve.

Petrosian plays minding an old rule for time trouble: first, try not to worsen your position, and second, which is even more important, do not try to improve it. After several waiting moves he transfers the rook to d3, which leads to an "iron-clad" draw.

37.Ra3 Kf7

Bronstein's commentary: "Here too, 37...Rb1, intending 38...Rb3, was better: Black would not have had to display so much ingenuity to get a draw." Why, grandmaster, where is the proof?

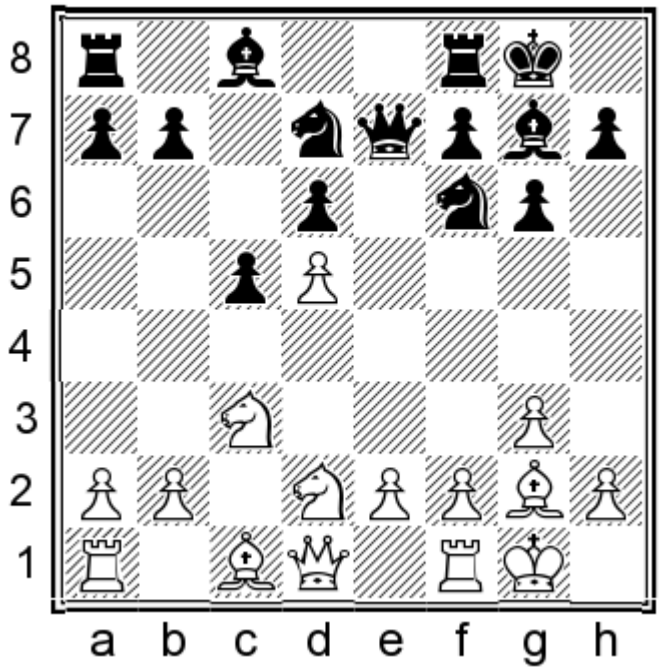
38.Bf3 Re7 39.h4 Rd1 40.g5 Rd3 41.h5

Using the fact that the game is going to be adjourned at this point and Black has to record his move, Gligorić tries one last chance. But Petrosian, of course, did not let the pawn reach h6.

41...gxh5 Draw.

(193) D5.2 **Donner – Petrosian**
Interzonal Tournament
Gothenburg 1955

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.Nd2 Nbd7 8.g3 Bg7 9.Bg2 0-0 10.0-0 Qe7



Until now this has been a repeat of the previous game where Gligorić continued 11.Nc4 and did not gain any real advantage in the opening. Therefore, Donner decides to employ a different plan.

Next we reproduce Petrosian's comments from the tournament bulletin, published in *The Games of Tigran Petrosian*.

11.h3 b6 12.a4 Ba6 13.Re1 Ne8

"In his games, Donner has frequently adhered to the path chosen by him here. White makes the moves 11.h3, 12.a4 and 12.Re1, which are basically prophylactic, and waits for the opponent to declare his intentions. After developing his bishop at a6 and playing 13...Ne8, Black intends to transfer his knight to c7 and then gradually prepare the essential advance ...b5, which is his main trump in this opening."

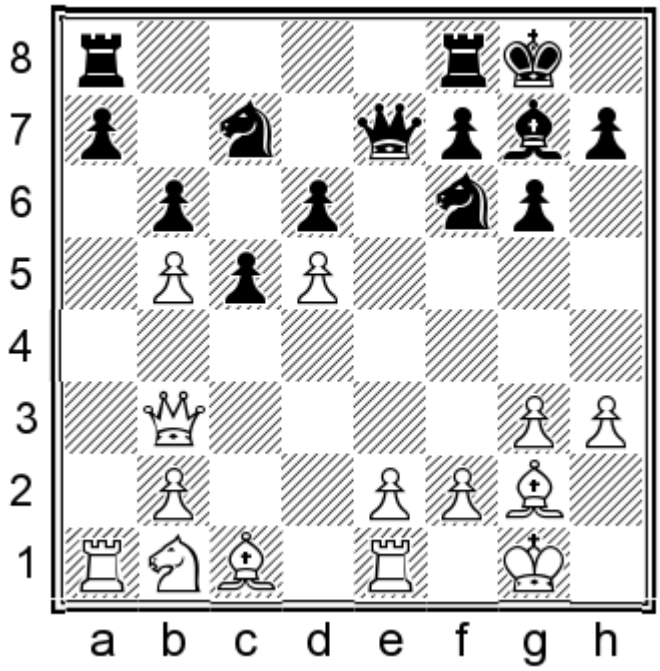
14.Nb5

"14.Nde4 came into consideration. After the possible 14...Nc7 15.Bg5 f6 16.Bf4 Ne5 White has the better chances in a complicated game."

14...Bxb5 15.axb5 Nc7 16.Qb3 Nf6

"Black was pinning great hopes on this move. The b5-pawn is in danger, since 17...Qd7 is threatened, and it cannot be defended by the bishop from fl, since on 17.e4 there follows 17...Nfxd5."

17.Nb1!



“Well played! By transferring his knight to c3, White securely defends his only real weakness - his b5 pawn.

“Now Black is faced with the difficult problem of choosing a prospective plan. In the center the advantage is with White, who will gradually set in motion his e- and f-pawns, to prepare the e4-e5 breakthrough. On the kingside Black has no grounds for commencing operations, and therefore only one possibility remains – play on the queenside.”

17...Rfb8

“The immediate 17...a6 18.bxa6 Rxa6 19.Rxa6 Nxa6 20.Qxb6 Nb4 21.Bf4 or 18...Nxa6 19.Qxb6 Nb4 (19...Rfb8 20.Qc6 Nb4 21.Qxa8) 20.Rxa8 Rxa8 21.Bf4 would have led to an advantage for White.

“17...a6 18.bxa6 b5 looks better, but then White plays 19.a7, and it is not apparent how Black can comfortably win back the a-pawn. If 19...b4, with the idea of 20...Nb5, then White replies 20.Ra5.

“After 17...a6 18.bxa6 the correct move is 18...Rfb8!, by which Black ensures both the regaining of the a-pawn and the advance b5. “If after 17...a6 White plays 18.Nc3, then 18...c4 does not achieve anything: White replies 19.Qb4 (19.Qxc4? axb5), thus increasing Black’s difficulties. Therefore on 18.Nc3 Black does best to continue 18...axb5 19.Rxa8 Rxa8 20.Nxb5 Ra5 21.Nxc7 Qxc7 22.Bd2 c4!, with much better prospects than in the game.”

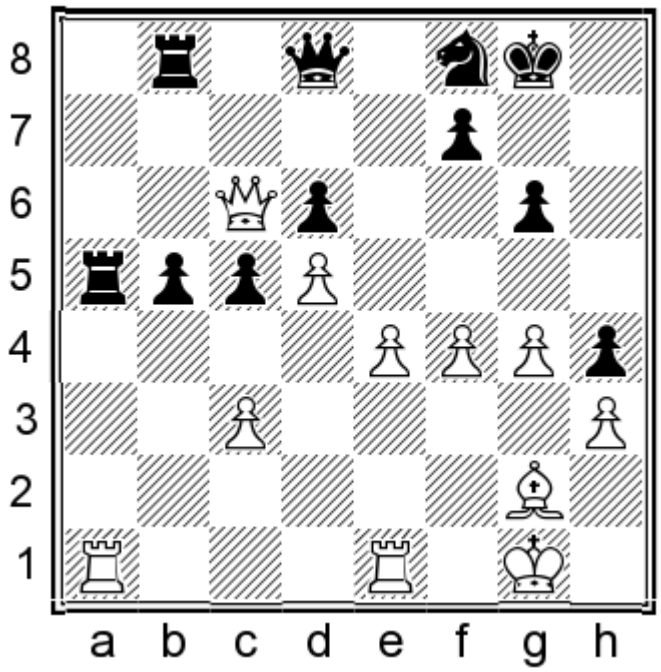
18.Nc3 a6 19.Be3 axb5 20.Nxb5

“Now White’s rooks are connected, and, of course, he does not concede the open a-file. On 20...Ra5 he has the unpleasant 21.Na7.”

20...Nxb5 21.Qxb5 Nd7 22.Bd2

“White transfers his bishop to c3, to exchange the opponent’s strong bishop. In passing he prevents 22...Ra5.”

22...h5 23.Bc3 Qd8 24.f4 h4 25.g4 Bxc3 26.bxc3 Ra5 27.Qc6 Nf8 28.e4 Rc8 29.Qb7 Rb8 30.Qc6 b5



“Black avoids the repetition of moves.”

31.Rxa5?

“When Black was weighing the consequences of his 30th move, he did not like the fact that after 31.e5! Rb6 32.Rxa5! Rxc6 33.dxc6 Qxa5 34.exd6 Qxc3 White would obtain a pair of strong pawns at d6 and c6. After the game I shared my thoughts with Donner. At first he was skeptical about the queen sacrifice, but after a brief analysis he began fervently demonstrating a win for White in this variation. At the board I saw that 35.Re4 could be refuted by 35...f5 36.d7 fxe4 37.d8=Q Qe1+ 38.Bf1 e3 39.Qd3 c4. 35.Rd1 is stronger, but even then Black escapes all danger after 35...Qb3 36.Rd5, 36...Qe3+. White can force a draw by 36.Re1 (instead of 36.Rd5), and that would have been the logical conclusion of this tense struggle.”

31...Qxa5 32.Re3?

“32.Qxd6 was comparatively best.”

32...b4 33.Qxd6

“If 33.cxb4, then 33...cxb4 34.Qxd6 Qa7 35.Kh2 b3 36.Re1 b2 37.Rb1 Rb3 followed by 38...Qf2, or 35.Kh1 b3 36.Re1 b2 37.Rb1 Rc8. The outcome is decided by the weakening of the white king’s position and the passed b-pawn.”

33...Rb6 34.Qc7 bxc3 35.Re1 c2 36.Rf1 Qb4

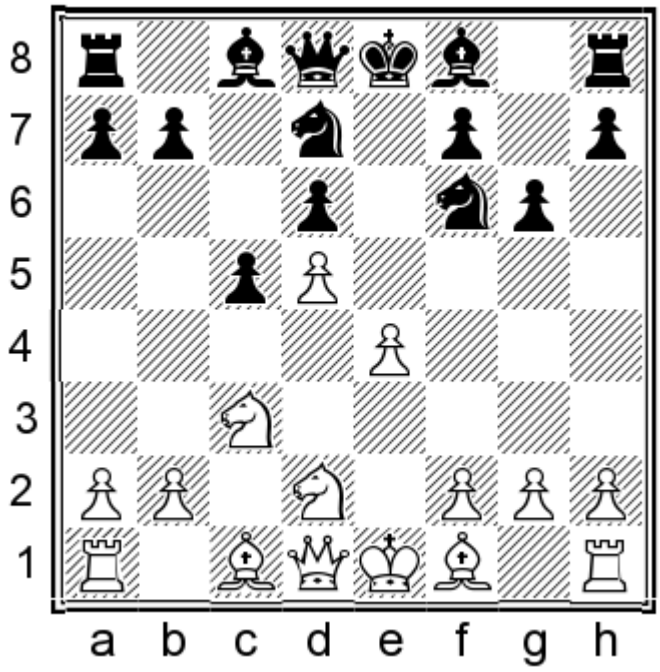
“36...Qb5 with the threat of 37...Qxf1+ would also have won quickly.”

37.Kh2 Rb7 38.Qc8 Rd7 39.Qa8 Qd2 40.Qa3 c4 41.Qa1 Rb7 White resigned.

(194) D5.3 **Petrosian – Kapengut**
Spartakiad of Peoples of the USSR
Moscow 1972

This was a principled matchup between experience and youth. Albert Kapengut is known as a big devotee and expert of the Modern Benoni. He would go on to publish a comprehensive study of this opening.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.Nd2 Nbd7 8.e4



8...Bg7 9.Be2

On 9.Nc4 Nb6 10.Ne3 this game could have transposed to the aforementioned classic game Nimzowitsch-Marshall (New York, 1927), in which White achieved a memorable victory. Of course, much water has passed under the bridge since then, and new, improved methods of counterplay have been found for Black.

9...0-0 10.0-0 Qe7

Kapengut avoids the main continuation 10...Re8 and directs the struggle towards a much less studied path. Yet, compared with the previous two games, where Black chose a similar queen development, I think this plan is less justified because, with the white bishop on the f1-a6 diagonal, it is difficult for Black to organize counterplay on the queenside.

11.a4 b6 12.Re1

The position of the queen on e7 causes White the natural desire to quickly carry out the breakthrough f2-f4, e4-e5, for which he needs the rook move. Another promising plan was to use the weakening of the a5-d8 diagonal and the advanced position of the b6-pawn to begin active operations on the queenside via a4-a5.

12...Rb8

Black’s interpretation of the position is very sophisticated. The move ...a6 will be made at the last moment, but for now, this square is left unoccupied for the bishop in the event that the knight will appear on c4.

13.f4 a6 14.Bf3

I prefer 14.Bc4 followed by Nf3, Qd3, etc. In this case, White could have combined both of his ideas: preparing e4-e5 and hindering the move ...b5. The path that Petrosian chose looks solid but still gives Black a hidden chance to equalize.

14...b5 15.axb5 axb5 16.Ra5

This is the energetic activation that White counted on, making his 14th move. Suddenly, Black experiences difficulties: the b5-pawn is under attack and its advance leads to serious positional concessions.

16...b4?

Missing an interesting opportunity. During the joint analysis after the game, Kapengut correctly indicated 16...Qd8! with the idea, in case of 17.Rxb5, of exploiting the tactical flaws in White's position by a temporary sacrifice of a knight: 17...Nxd5. For example: 18.exd5 Bxc3 19.Rxb8 Bd4+! and 20...Nxb8 or 18.Rxb8 Nxc3 19.bxc3 (but not 19.Rxc8? Bd4+ 20.Kf1 Qh4) 19...Nxb8, in both cases with approximate equality.

17.Na4!

This excellent response guarantees White the opportunity to invade c4, which comes as a surprise for Black, who mainly expected 17.Nb5 Ne8 with complications, for example, 18.Nc4 Rxb5! 19.Rxb5 Ba6 20.Qa4 (20.Ra5? Bxc4 21.b3 Qd8!) 20...Nc7 (variations by Albert Kapengut).

17...h5

A bold, I would even say brash, move, but, in fact, absolutely correct. It is clear that any of Black's attempts to resist, such as 17...Ne8 18.Nc4 f6, are doomed to failure. Therefore, counterattacking is the only remaining path! There are some conditions for it: the a5-rook and the a4-knight are stuck on the queenside. After ...h5 is played, Black prepares a knight leap to g4; 18.h3 would still be followed by 18...Ng4!.

18.Nc4 Ng4 19.e5

White is forced to speed up his offensive to avoid the unpleasant bishop check on d4. Chasing after a pawn in the variation 19.Bxg4 hxg4 20.Qxg4? could have resulted in losing the game: 20...Ne5 21.Qe2 Nxc4 22.Qxc4 Qc7!.

19...dxe5 20.Bxg4 hxg4 21.fxe5 b3

It looks like Kapengut decided to hinder the move b2-b3. Amazing composure! On the other hand, Black did not have much of a choice, since 21...Nxe5 22.Bf4 f6 23.Nxc5 is absolutely hopeless for him.

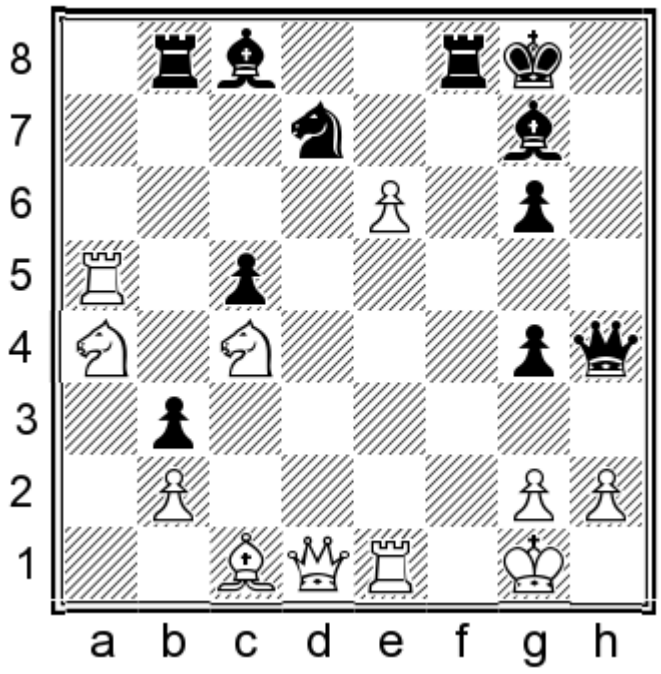
22.e6 fxe6 23.dxe6

The white pawn has broken through, and the d7-knight has nowhere to retreat: 23...Nf6 24.Bf4 or 23...Bd4+ 24.Be3! (but not 24.Kh1? g3!) 24...Qxe6 25.Bxd4 Qxc4 26.Nxc5, etc.

23...Qh4

At least Black has this move.

The young master's resourcefulness is commendable: in seven moves he managed to significantly complicate the position. Over these seven moves, Black obtained good diagonals for both bishops, an open file close to the white king, and a strong g4-pawn. With his last move he activated his queen, creating two threats, ...g3 and ...Qf2+. However, the main question remains unclear: is the piece sacrifice sound? Now it is Petrosian's turn to think.



24.Ra7?

What a pity! He could have taken the knight. Later, in the Yugoslav *Informant*, Petrosian published the winning variation: 24.exd7! Qf2+ 25.Kh1 Bb7 26.Ne3 Bd4 27.Nxc5!, and the attack is deflected: 27...Bxe3 28.Nxb7! or 27...Bf3 28.Nd3!. I would add that 27...Bxc5 28.Rxc5 Bxg2+ 29.Nxg2 Qxc5 30.Qxg4, etc. does not save Black. I think that the main problem here is White's 27th move. Over the board, while calculating many different variations and watching the clock, finding such a move is not easy and, without it, nothing works. For example, 27.Rg1 g3!? is not quite clear, while the obvious continuations 27.Qe2 and 27.Re2 (f1) lead to mate... of White after 27...Bxg2+!.

Among other ideas for the 24th move, attempts to win the knight with the intermezzo 24.g3 Qh3 do not work: 25.exd7 Bd4+ 26.Be3 (Ne3) 26...Bb7 27.Qe2 Rf3! with the threat ...Rxg3+, and now it is White's turn to seek safety.

We don't know what caused Petrosian to miscalculate, but in any case he missed the win.

24...g3 25.hxg3

It makes no sense for White to play 25.h3 because of, for example, 25...Qxc4 26.exd7 Ba6 (variation by Petrosian).

25...Qxg3 26.exd7

Played without illusions. The pursuit of the mirage of victory, 26.Be3?, could end badly for White: 26...Ne5! 27.Rxg7+ Kxg7 28.Nxe5 Bb7 29.Re2 (29.Qe2) 29...Bxg2! (indicated by Tigran Petrosian).

26...Qf2+

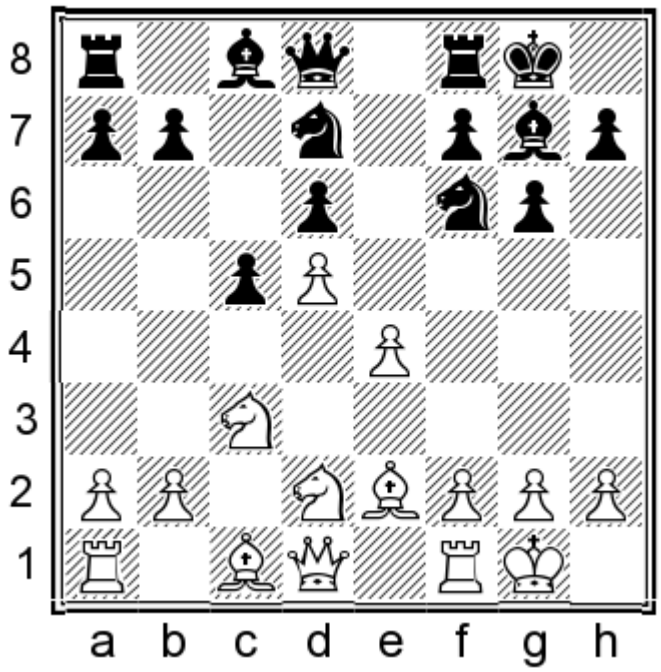
A draw by perpetual check.

Needless to say, this is an upsetting draw, but, oddly enough, it played a positive role in Petrosian's chess career. After his long collaboration with Boleslavsky ended in 1969, Petrosian, as an active grandmaster, needed to update his opening repertoire with fresh ideas. It was this game against Kapengut (Petrosian did not say it directly, but mentioned it in 1972) that gave impetus to such renewal. An objective analysis of the game (not the result) clearly showed that the old opening repertoire would not get him very far. The timing was just right since it was the off-season for chess: the previous candidates cycle had ended, and the new one had just begun, so Petrosian immersed himself in work. He polished new ideas and revised old ones. The new notes appeared in his opening rolodex, such

as try this move or plan, check that, etc. Much of what Petrosian came up with then, the reader has already seen or will see on the pages of this book.

(195) D5.4 **Petrosian – Martinović**
Oberwart 1981

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.Nd2 Nbd7 8.e4 Bg7 9.Be2 0-0 10.0-0



10...Ne8

This looks a little strange but is probably playable. Another question is whether it is necessary. Retreating the knight to a passive position for no reason, Black voluntarily gives up some good opportunities. More active is 10...Re8 (games 184, 185, 189) or 10...Qe7 (game 194).

11.Kh1

A useful maneuver that contains certain concrete ideas. For example, 11...Nc7 can be followed by 12.Nc4 Ne5 13.Nxe5 Bxe5 14.f4, and since Black has no check on d4, White wins time for the move f4-f5!, with the initiative.

For comparison, here are two examples in which White played differently on the 11th move:

(1) 11.Nc4 Ne5 12.Ne3 f5 13.f4 Nf7 14.exf5 gxf5 15.Bd3 Nh6 16.Qc2 Bd7, with complicated play (Vranesić-Reshevsky, Amsterdam 1964);

(2) 11.f4 f5 12.exf5 gxf5 13.Bd3 Nc7 14.Nc4 Nb6 15.Ne3 Qf6 16.Kh1 Bd7, and Black has solved his opening problems (Anikaev-Romanishin, Kislovodsk 1982).

11...f5

Some sort of excessive and irrational obsession with an idea. This undermining move does not do much when one’s pieces are underdeveloped. What was the hurry? After all, Black has a number of useful moves, e.g., 11...Rb8, 11...b6, or 11...Qe7.

12.exf5 gxf5 13.a4 Ne5

Deserving attention is 13...f4!?, seizing space on the kingside; for example, 14.Bg4 Ne5 15.Bxc8 Qxc8 16.Nf3, with a minimal advantage for White (indicated by Tigran Petrosian).

14.f4 Ng4 15.Nf3 Qe7

Inconsistent. After Black isolated the d5-pawn, he should have attacked it. According to Petrosian, stronger is 15...Nc7 followed by ...b6, ...Bb7. Furthermore, in this case the weakened e6-square would be better defended.

16.Qe1!

Threatening the unpleasant maneuver Bc4 if the opportunity presents itself.

16...Bxc3

Again played without reservations. Black should have thought hard before mustering up the courage to make such a move. Grandmaster Martinović planned to occupy the e4-square with the knight, but this is hardly a good reason. We will return to the topic of the exchange of the “Indian” bishop in game 197.

17.bxc3 Nef6 18.Ra2 Re8

White’s task would have been somewhat more difficult after 18...Ne3. Here Petrosian was going to play 19.Bc4, but this is a blunder: 19...Qe4!. On the other hand, with two strong bishops, White does not have to cling to material, and after 18...Ne3 he could reply sharply: 19.Bd3!? Nexd5 20.Re2, with a strong initiative in exchange for the pawn.

19.c4

In the *Informant* Petrosian marks this move with the “+–” symbol, which translates from chess language as “White has a winning position.” “Really, already?!” the reader may ask. But why not? The winning plan is clear: to advance g2-g4!.

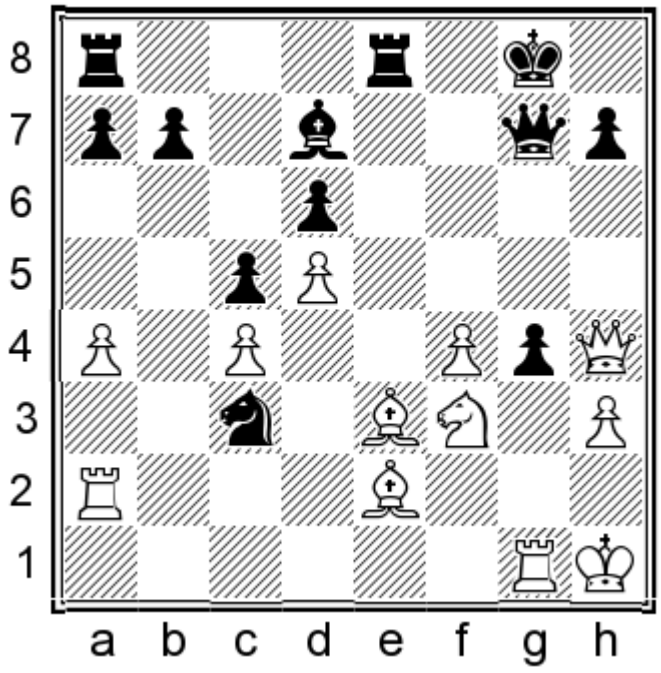
19...Bd7 20.h3 Ne3 21.Rg1 Qg7 22.Qh4 Ne4

Anticipating his imminent downfall, Black decides to try his luck in complications.

23.g4

Slightly more precise than 23.Bxe3 Nc3, which could lead to a move transposition after 24.g4 fxg4, etc.

23...fxg4 24.Bxe3 Nc3



25.Nh2!

The flashy 25.Ne5! (Fritz), with the same ideas, would have won faster.

It is easy to see that the rest of Black's moves are forced.

25...Qe7 26.Qxe7 Rxe7 27.Bxg4 Bxg4

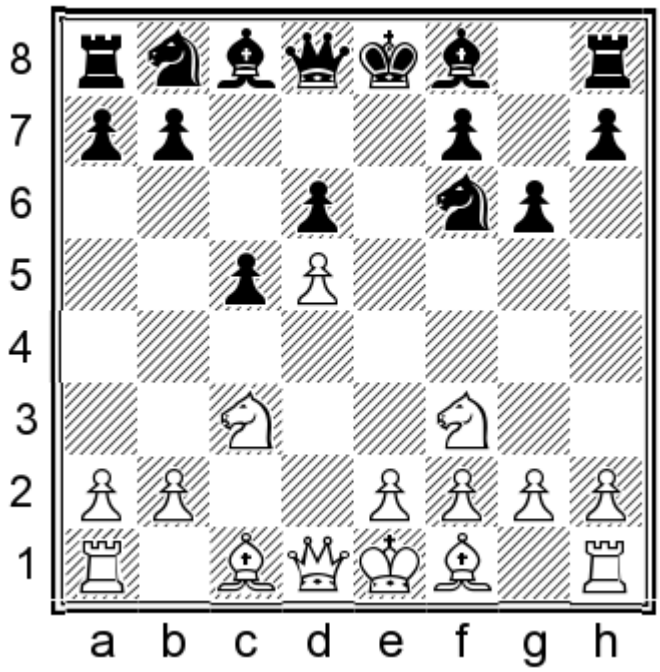
The same position with the white knight on e5 could happen in the aforementioned computer variation. Then the immediate 28.Ra3! would have decided the game.

28.Rb2! Rxe3 29.Nxg4 Rxh3+ 30.Kg2 Rd3 31.Rxb7

The immediate 31.Kh2 is also not bad.

31...Rf8 32.Kh2 Rd2+ 33.Kh1 Kh8 34.Nf6! Black resigned.

D6



White to move

Here we discuss the systems with an early development of White's queen's bishop: 7.Bg5 (game 196),

7.Bf4 (game 198).

In game 197, the bishop move to g5 was implemented after 7.Nd2 Bg7 8.Nc4 0-0.

(196) D6.1 **Kholmov – Petrosian**
21st USSR Championship
Kiev 1954

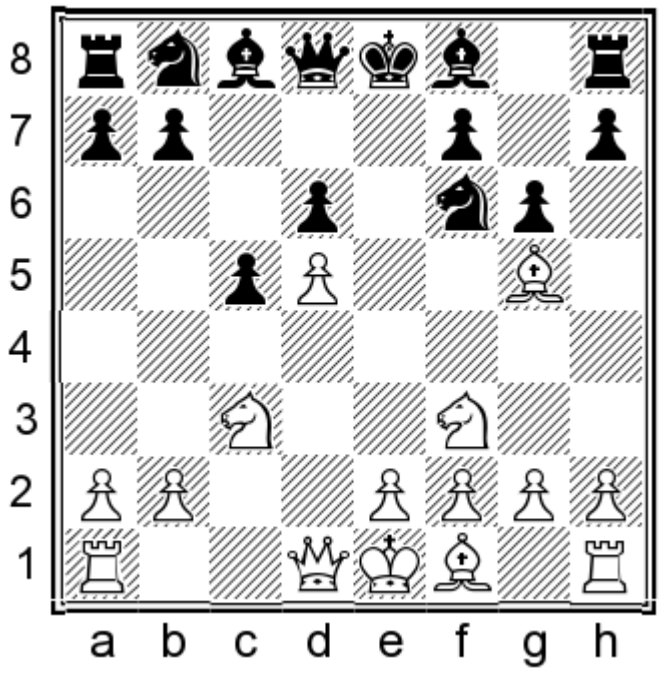
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 c5

Petrosian's choice of opening has a psychological subtext: it is no secret that Kholmov never liked King's Indian setups and tried to avoid them in pure form.

4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6

Why did Black not play 5...b5 when, after all, in this system his main hopes are tied to this advance? The answer is in two of Petrosian's later games, in which he played as White a very strong reply recommended by the talented Ukrainian Master Isaak Lipnitsky: 6.Bg5!. Curiously, the first of these games took place three years later with the same opponent (the 24th USSR championship) and continued as follows: 6...h6 7.Bxf6 Qxf6 8.Qc2 d6 9.e4 a6 10.a4 b4 11.Nbd2 Nd7 12.Bd3 Be7 13.Nc4. In the second game, Petrosian-Sax (Nikšić 1983), instead of 6...h6 Black played 6...Qa5+, but after 7.Nc3 Ne4 8.Bd2 Nxd2 9.Nxd2 b4 10.Ncb1 Ba6 11.e4 g6 12.Bxa6 Qxa6 13.Qc2 d6 14.Nc4 the result was almost the same: the early activity brought him nothing but the loss of the c4-square.

6.Nc3 g6 7.Bg5



A tricky move, which gained acceptance after Botvinnik successfully employed it in his match against Mikhail Tal (Moscow 1960).

The similarity of the ideas of this variation to the Petrosian System is obvious. White's queen's bishop takes an active part in the fight and significantly limits Black's opportunities for activity. However, Black can push back and exchange it via 7...h6 8.Bh4 g5 9.Bg3 Nh5, since the complications after 10.Qa4+ Nd7! 11.Qe4+ Qe7 12.Bxd6 Qxe4 13.Nxe4 f5 14.Bxf8 fxe4 15.Bxh6 Rxh6 16.Nxg5 e3! are in Black's favor (Shadursky-Suetin, USSR 1962). But even in this seemingly favorable situation for Black, it is not so simple. "Pawns cannot move backwards," and such a rapid advance of the pawn to g5 defines the structure of this area prematurely, which helps White put together a concrete plan.

7...Bg7 8.Nd2

This is probably Black's last chance to get rid of the unpleasant bishop, albeit at a cost: 8...h6 9.Bh4 g5 10.Bg3 Nh5 11.Qa4+, and he loses an opportunity to castle because of the threat of losing a pawn. But apparently Petrosian had decided to avoid committing continuations until his development is finished.

8...0-0 9.e4

A natural move. Botvinnik preferred to keep the pawn on e3 for the time being, which is also reasonable. But we will talk about this a little later. Also note that, by playing 9.Nc4, White could have transposed the game into the Nimzowitsch variation in the modern interpretation (see the next game).

9...Nbd7 10.Be2 Qe7

Like in the game against Gligorić (game 192), Petrosian avoids the standard move ...Re8 in favor of a more flexible continuation.

11.0-0

11.f4 suggests itself, but in that case Black could have used a typical tactical technique to get out of the pin: 11...h6 12.Bh4 g5! 13.fxg5 Nh7, and White cannot take on h6 because the h4-bishop is captured with check. After castling, White already threatens f2-f4, and Black has to take some action.

11...h6 12.Bh4 g5 13.Bg3 Ne5

Black had to weaken the pawns after all, but Petrosian is hoping for a defensive stance typical for this variation with the main stronghold on e5. Even though, strictly speaking, the knight's position there is not completely secure, it is not easy to counter the knight: it makes little sense for White to exchange it, and it is almost impossible to chase it away by preparing to advance the pawns.

I think that the reader can now appreciate Botvinnik's idea: with the pawn on e3, here White would have had a simple and effective plan: h2-h3 and then f2-f4, immediately or after Qc2 and Rae1, which pretty much calls into question Black's whole system of development.

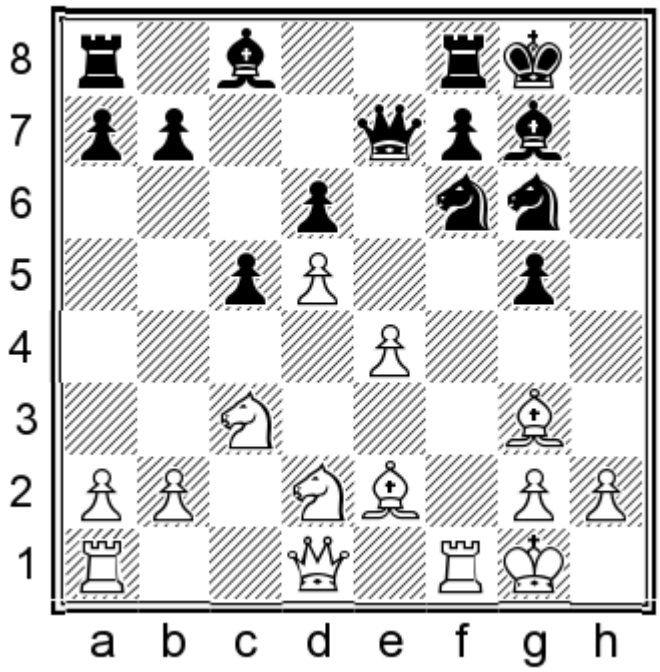
14.f4

Not hoping to dislodge the black pieces from the e5-square, Kholmov tries to disrupt the static balance and liven up play, believing that after the exchange on f4 the f-file and the vulnerability of the h6-pawn promise him good prospects on the kingside.

14...Ng6!

Petrosian's correction. Since neither the exchange of the dark-square bishop nor the advance f4-f5 quite fits into White's plans. All he has left is to exchange his f-pawn, not for the knight pawn but for the rook pawn, and that is a big difference.

15.fxg5 hxg5



16.Kh1!?

The author of the monograph *The Indian Defense*, Albert Kapengut, criticizes this move, and recommends 16.Nc4 as the best continuation. But, in my opinion, the opposite is true. It is clear that in any case White has no advantage and that Petrosian would have never captured on e4; hence, the knight's move would have only led him to the correct reply 16...Rd8.

The text move is stronger not only from a positional but also from a psychological standpoint. White moves his king into the corner, as if demonstrating that he is ready for total defense, inviting the enemy to firmly take hold of the center, that is, play 16...Nd7 or 16...Ne5. In the first case, White would have played 17.Bg4 Nde5 18.Bf5!, and in the second (16...Ne5) 17.Bxe5! Qxe5 18.Nc4 Qe7 19.e5!, and White again has the advantage.

The insightful Petrosian saw the trap and made the right move.

16...Rd8! 17.a4

Necessary prophylaxis; for example: 17.Nc4 b5! 18.Nxb5 Nxe4 or 18.Na5 b4 19.Nc6 Qd7 20.Nxd8 bxc3, and White is in trouble.

17...g4 18.Nc4

White has fully consolidated and is already thinking about seizing the initiative by threatening e4-e5 and Ne3. Therefore, Petrosian forces the issue.

18...Nh5 19.Bxg4

An attempt to set a trap, 19.Be1, counting on 19...Bxc3? 20.Bxc3 Qxe4 21.Bd3 with an attack, could be convincingly refuted: 19...Nhf4! 20.Bxg4 Bxc3 21.Bxc3 Qxe4, and White loses a piece or gets checkmated.

19...Nxg3+ 20.hxg3 Bxc3

Black's attempts to attack in turn are also easy to fend off, for example: 20...Qg5 21.Bxc8 Raxc8 22.Rf5 Qxg3 23.Rf3.

21.bxc3 Qxe4 22.Qf3!

An important resource that allows White to eliminate the last threat. If now 22...Qxg4, then 23.Qxf7+ Kh8 24.Qf6+ Kh7 25.Qxd8 Qxc4 26.Rf7+ Kh6 27.Qg8 with an attack for White.

22...Qxf3 23.gxf3 Bxg4 24.fxg4

The position has become equal: the defects of White's pawn structure are compensated by the active positions of his pieces. The game quickly winds down to a draw.

24...Kg7 25.Rae1 Rd7 26.Kg2 Rad8 27.Ne3 Re8 Draw.

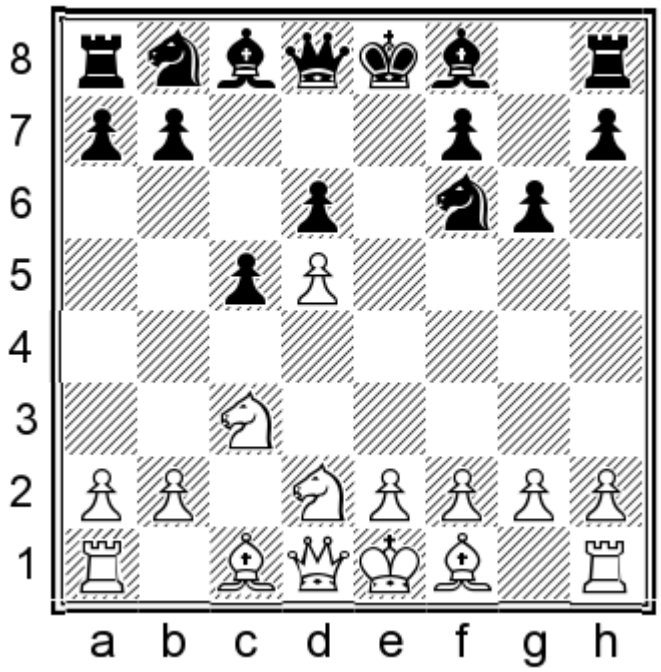
(197) D6.2 **Petrosian – Nunn**
Hastings 1977/78

We would like to preface this game with a somewhat unexpected confession from Tarrasch, which he made in his later years: "As Rousseau could not do anything without his cat purring beside him, so I cannot play chess without the king's bishop. In its absence, I perceive the game as lifeless and empty; it has no vitality, and I cannot create any plan of attack."

Tarrasch's contemporaries attributed this statement to his "dogmatism," but I think it is interesting and deeply meaningful. I think that nowadays there are many players who share this opinion to varying degrees. Why the king's bishop? The reader has to agree that after all there is something special about this piece. There is a reason it has so many different names, for example, "the Spanish bishop" or the proverbial "Gufeld's bishop"...

The central theme of this game is the fate of the "Indian" bishop. In a way, the game consists of two parts: (1) until the 16th move, the g7-bishop is on the board, and Black's position radiates energy and is full of meaning; (2) after the 16th move the g7-bishop is gone, the guiding thread is lost, and Black's play is "lifeless and empty."

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.Nd2



The so-called “Nimzowitsch Pirouette” (Steffen Zuethen). In all of the previous games Black played 7...Nbd7 here, hindering the setup Nc4, Bf4. Nunn is more determined.

7...Bg7 8.Nc4 0-0 9.Bg5

An important detail of the opening: White wants to force the move ...h6, which can be useful to him in the future. 9.Bf4 is also often played immediately.

9...h6 10.Bf4 b6

Black should have defended the d6-pawn, 10...Ne8, but Nunn prefers to play aggressively and sacrifices a pawn for the initiative. This modern gambit, invented by grandmaster Albin Planinc (Donner-Planinc, Wijk aan Zee 1973), is based on the fact that White’s kingside pieces are not developed. Black seeks to open the diagonal for the g7-bishop, transfer the rook to b4, and threaten the king.

Other gambit continuations are 10...Re8 (Igor Zaitsev), 10...Nbd7, and 10...Na6 (Albert Kapengut).

11.Bxd6

If White decided to take the pawn, then this is the best opportunity. 11.Nxd6 yields nothing because of 11...Nh5 12.Nxc8 Nxf4 13.g3 Nxe2 (13...Nh5 14.Bh3 is unclear) 14.Bxe2 Qxc8, and Black’s chances are not worse. We cannot recommend 11.Qd2 because of 11...Ba6! 12.Nxd6 Nh5 13.Nde4 f5 14.Ng3 (14.Bxb8?! fxe4 15.Bg3 Nxg3 16.hxg3 Rxf2! 17.Kxf2!? e3+!) 14...Nxf4 15.Qxf4 b5! with more than sufficient compensation for the pawn.

11...Re8 12.Bg3

12.e3 Ne4 13.Nxe4 Rxe4 14.Bg3, etc., could have led to the same position.

12...Ne4 13.Nxe4 Rxe4 14.e3 b5 15.Nd2

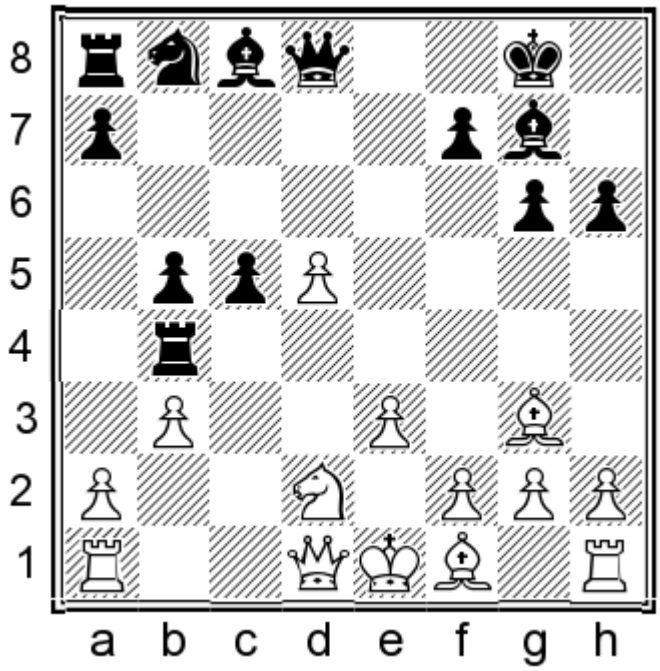
In a similar position (with the pawn on h7) in the aforementioned game Donner-Planinc, White chose the active 15.Nd6 and made a few mistakes after 15...Rb4 and lost: 16.Bxb5? (16.Be2 is better) 16...Bf8 17.Bc6 Ba6! 18.Bxa8? (White has to play 18.Qd2) 18...Rxb2 19.Qa4 Qf6! with a decisive attack for Black.

The knight retreat to d2 is more reliable, and, as we shall see, necessary in order to “blow up the bomb” on the next move.

15...Rb4

Black's idea is clear: after the loss of the b2-pawn, an avalanche of black pawns will rush forward, supported by the g7-bishop.

16.b3!



An excellent find! Petrosian grasped the essence of the position. Since the rook is the most powerful in the tandem of the black pieces, White chained it to the fourth rank. The exchange does not matter!

16...Bxa1?

An instructive mistake. For objectivity's sake, note that at the moment Nunn was probably in a state of psychological distress, which made it difficult to find the right solution to the unexpected problems. Black has two rooks, but there is just one "trump" King's Indian bishop! Therefore, instead of taking the exchange he should have sacrificed it! As established later, the strongest way to counter Petrosian's idea was the subtle 16...c4!, with such variations as:

(1) 17.a3?! Rxb3! 18.Nxb3 cxb3 19.Rb1 Qa5+ with an attack for Black;

(2) 17.bxc4 bxc4 18.Bxc4 Bxa1 19.Qxa1 Rxc4!? 20.Nxc4 Qxd5, (deserving attention is 21.Qd4 Be6! with equal play, by Raymond Keene);

(3) 17.Rc1 c3! 18.Nb1 Qa5 19.a3 c2! 20.Rxc2 Rxb3+ or 19.Nxc3 Bxc3+ 20.Rxc3 Rc4 21.bxc4 Qxc3+ 22.Qd2 Qa1+ 23.Ke2 bxc4, with an initiative that compensates for the pawn.

Stocking up on material, Nunn apparently counted on returning the exchange at a convenient moment. Such a solution could have been possible if in the future Black could sacrifice his rook for the dark-square bishop, but, alas, this turned out to be impossible.

17.Qxa1 Qxd5 18.a3 Rg4

18...Rxb3 is no better. The variations 19.Nxb3 Qxb3 20.Be2 or 19.Be2!? Rd3 20.Bf3, as indicated by Srdjan Vukovic in the *Informant,* demonstrate White's clear positional advantage.

19.Be2 Nc6

The problem is that 19...Rxg3 20.hxg3 does not work, and White's double threat of 21.Rxh6 and 21.Bf3 is

impossible to refute. Curiously, in this variation the position of the h-pawn that White achieved on the ninth move turns out to be fatal for Black. With the pawn on h7 he would have been completely safe!

20.Bf3!

An important in-between move.

20...Qe6 21.Bxg4 Qxg4 22.0-0 Bb7 23.f3 Qe6 24.Ne4

Even though the sides have equal material, Black's position is lost because of the catastrophic weakness of the dark squares. Sooner or later it will lead to an attack on the black king, and the presence of opposite-color bishops on the board only reinforces it. Petrosian uses the main diagonal to set up a classic attack mechanism: the battery "queen + knight." In the case of, for example, 24...Qxb3, the game could have ended in a thematic finale: 25.Nf6+ Kf8 26.Bd6+ Ne7 27.Nd5! Qxd5 28.Qh8# – check and checkmate!

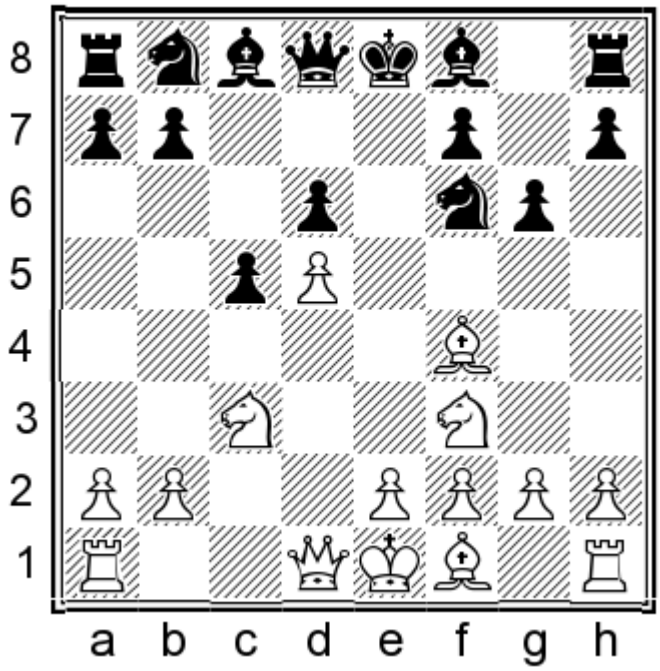
24...Rd8 25.Nxc5 Qxe3+ 26.Bf2 Qe7 27.Re1 Qc7 28.h4 h5

At least Black has this. He cannot hinder the move Ne4, since if 28...Ne7, then 29.Nxb7 Qxb7 30.Qf6 Nc6 31.Bd4! immediately decides the game.

29.Ne4 Ne7 30.Nf6+ Kf8 31.b4! Bc8 32.Nxh5! gxh5 33.Qh8+ Ng8 34.Bc5+ Rd6 35.Qe5 Black resigned.

(198) D6.3 **Schüssler – Petrosian**
Paul Keres Memorial
Tallinn 1983

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nc3 g6 7.Bf4



7...a6

Aimed against the unpleasant move Qa4+ (see game 201 for more on this system). Whatever decision White makes now – whether to allow ...b5 or to hamper this advance by a2-a4 – he loses the opportunity to develop the queen to a4. Sometimes Black plays ...a6 on the previous move with the same ideas as, for example, in the game Petrosian-Lutikov (game 183).

8.e4 b5

In for a penny, in for a pound, because after 8...Bg7 White can play 9.Qa4+! after all (for example, 9...Bd7 10.Qb3 Qc7 11.e5 with a strong initiative for White).

So, what do we see? Seven pawn moves in a row. Strictly speaking, this is no way to play an opening, but here it is an acceptable way to avoid complications in a risky theoretical system.

Judging by the fact that this variation still exists and is regularly played by grandmasters, it is probably better than its reputation.

9.e5

White chooses the direct path, which promises some initiative thanks to the passed d-pawn. Modern theory considers the continuation 9.Qe2!? most unpleasant for Black, because it hinders normal development; for example, 9...Bg7? 10.Bxd6! Qxd6 11.e5 Qe7 12.d6 Qe6 13.Ng5 Qg4 14.f3! Qxg5 15.exf6+ Kf8 16.Qe7+ Kg8 17.Qe8+ Bf8 18.Qxc8, and White wins (Simen Agdestein). 9...b4 is also no good because of 10.e5! bxc3 11.exd6+!, forcing 11...Be7 with a significant advantage for White. It was established empirically that after 9.Qe2 Black has to choose between 9...Be7 and 9...Nh5, even though both moves have certain disadvantages.

9...dxe5 10.Nxe5 Bd6

A blockading plan after Nimzowitsch. But maybe it was better to capture this pawn instead of blocking it? I do not think so. The variations 10...b4 11.Qe2! Be7 12.d6 and 10...Bg7 11.Be2 b4 12.Na4 Nxd5 13.Bg3 0-0 14.0-0 (threatening Nxc5, Bf3) are not in favor of this decision.

11.Be2 0-0 12.0-0 b4

Black could have completely equalized by continuing 12...Re8 13.Nc6 Nxc6 14.Bxd6 Nd4! (his position would have been slightly worse after 14...Qxd6 15.dxc6 Qxd1 16.Bxd1, as in Yusupov- Sax, Linares 1983) 15.Bxc5 Nxe2+ 16.Nxe2 Qxd5 (indicated by Albert Kapengut). But, apparently, Petrosian wanted to get more complicated play.

13.Nc6

This tactical opportunity is the essence of White’s previous play. After 13...Nxc6 14.Bxd6 Qxd6 15.dxc6, he has an advantage regardless of whether or not the queens are exchanged.

13...Qc7 14.Bxd6 Qxd6 15.Na4 Nbd7

The d5-pawn is indirectly protected: 15...Nxd5?? 16.Qxd5!.

16.Rc1 Kg7

Despite the formidable position of the white pieces, we believe that Black’s position is better. The c6-knight is beautiful in appearance only, as in fact it is not actively involved in play; the d-pawn is rather weak and needs to be protected. On the other hand, the black pieces possess potential energy that can manifest itself at the opportune moment. Consider the variation 17.Bf3 a5! (with the idea of the maneuver ...Ba6-b5) 18.Qc2 Ba6 19.Rfd1 c4!, and Black seizes the initiative, for example: 20.Nxa5 Ne5! 21.Be2 c3 or 20.Be2 Bb5 21.Bxc4 Bxc6 22.dxc6 Qxc6, and White still has to struggle, because the a4-knight is offside.

I think the Swedish master, too, was not happy with his position, because on the next move the knight vacates the c6-square.

17.Na5 Rb8

White threatened Nc4. It does not make sense for Petrosian to go for the variation 17...Qxd5 18.Qxd5 Nxd5 19.Bf3 N7f6 20.Rfd1 Be6 21.Nxc5 because he would have to defend a somewhat worse endgame with no prospects.

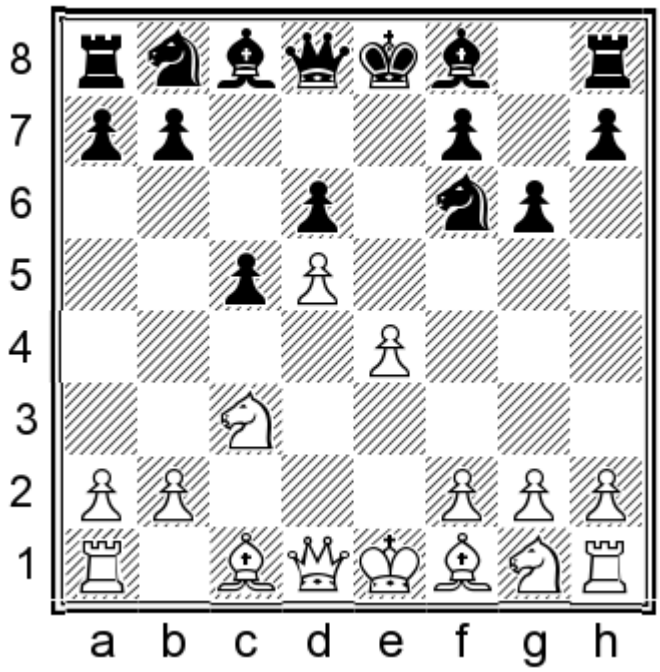
18.Nb3

18.Bf3 Ne5! 19.Rxc5 Bd7 20.Nc6 Rbc8, and White cannot hold on to the extra pawn because of the bad positions of his pieces.

18...Qxd5 19.Qxd5 Nxd5 20.Naxc5 Nf4 21.Rfe1 Nxc5 22.Nxc5 Nxe2+ 23.Rxe2 Rd8 24.f3

The opponents agreed to a draw.

D7

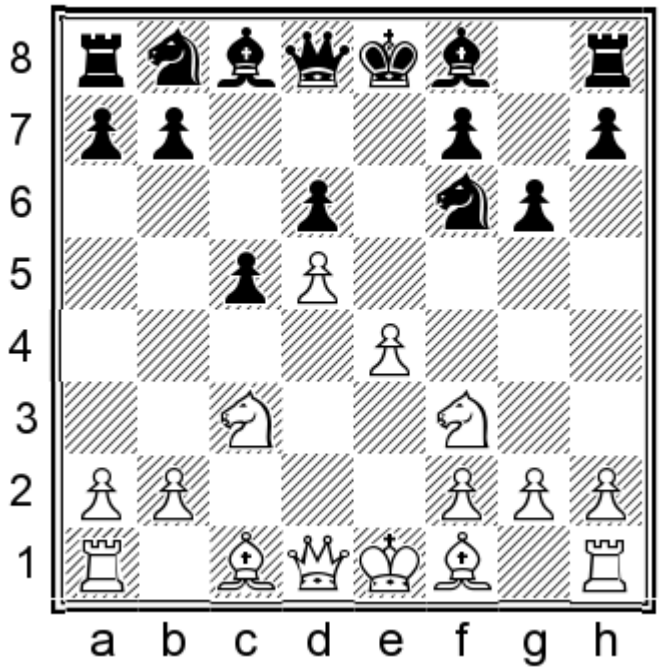


White to move

(199) D7.1 **Taimanov – Petrosian**
Training Tournament
Gagra 1953

This game is modern in spirit: a current opening variation, a tough fight from the first move to the last, a wide variety of techniques, including positional and intuitive sacrifices. For a long time, neither side had a real advantage, and the cause of White's loss lies in psychology: he wanted too much to win. But things did not work out for Taimanov in this game, and, as often happens, he fell victim to his own enthusiasm, losing first his opening initiative and then his drawing chances.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 g6 7.Nf3



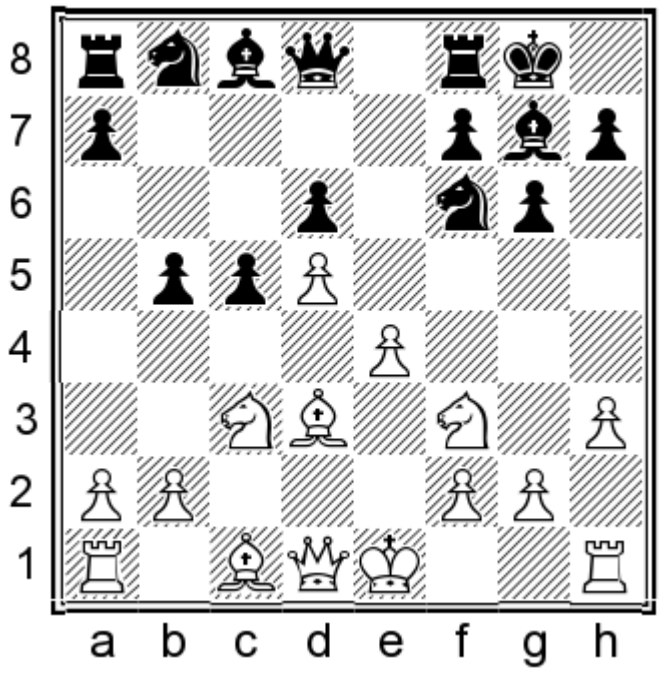
7...Bg7 8.Bd3 0-0 9.h3

Experiencing a revival today, this system is simple at first glance but not harmless. White's last two moves are steps of a single plan. In an effort to take control of the central squares, White stops the pin and possible exchange of the f3-knight, and at the same time prepares a refuge for the bishop, which should soon appear on f4. Also note the futility of the move ...Bg4 before castling because of the queen check from a4.

9...b5!?

Principled at least! White has to immediately decide whether he agrees to give away the initiative for an extra pawn.

Speaking of the risk to which Black exposes himself, it is quite possible that playing "normally" does not decrease this risk. For example take the sixth game from the match Karpov-Timman (Kuala Lumpur 1990), in which, after 9...a6 10.a4 Nbd7 11.0-0 Qc7 12.Bf4 Re8 13.Re1 Rb8 14.Bc4 Nb6 15.Bf1 Nfd7 16.a5 Na8 17.Nd2, the Dutch grandmaster came under significant positional pressure.



10.0-0

Taimanov trusted his opponent. I do not think that Mark Evgenievich (Taimanov – translator) tried to be cautious: this would not have been like him at all. However, he was never an ardent fighter for the opponent's pieces and pawns like was Steinitz or, say, Korchnoi.

And yet, what will happen if White captures the pawn? This is an interesting story that we will try to tell in short.

Long ago, it was established that 10.Bxb5 Nxe4 11.Nxe4 Qa5+ 12.Nc3 Bxc3+ 13.bxc3 Qxb5 is definitely in Black's favor, and winning a pawn after 12.Nfd2 Qxb5 13.Nxd6 Qa6 14.N2c4 yields nothing for White. In the late 1980s, the whole system was subjected to extensive examination over the board, and it turned out that in the latter variation it is not so easy for Black to defend, but a number of reliable plans for Black were found in the end. The simplest of them is the exchange of the white knights followed by the encircling of the d5-pawn via ...Bd4. The game Salov-Tal (Skelleftea 1989) can serve as an example: 14...Nd7 15.0-0 Nb6 16.Nxb6 Qxb6 17.Nxc8 (or 17.Nc4 Qa6 and ...Bd7-b5) 17...Raxc8 18.Qc2 Rfd8 19.Rd1 Bd4 20.Qc4 Qb7 21.Be3 Qxd5 22.Qxd5 Rxd5 23.Rd2 Rd6 24.Kf1 Rb6! 25.Bxd4 cxd4, and Black easily drew the rook endgame.

As for the capture 10.Nxb5, here, too, the opportunity for a similar attack, 10...Nxe4 11.Bxe4 Re8, alarmed White for a long time. Indeed, there are hardly any fans of tempting fate in convoluted variations such as 12.Nd2 Ba6 13.a4 Qa5 14.Nxd6 Nd7 15.Nxe8 Rxe8. What is it: a win, draw, or loss?

That is why the whole system was not considered to be particularly favorable for White, until in 1990, when grandmasters Lev Alburt and Alexander Chernin proposed a stunning novelty, 12.Ng5!, instead of the timid 12.Nd2. It seems that such a move cannot be good, but concrete analysis proves the opposite:

(1) 12...Bf5 13.0-0 Bxe4 14.Re1;

(2) 12...Bf6 13.0-0 Bxg5 14.Bxg5 Qxg5 15.Nxd6;

(3) 12...Bxb2 13.Bxb2 Qxg5 14.0-0 Rxe4 15.Nxd6 Bxh3? 16.Qf3, in all cases with a clear advantage for White.

The main strategic discovery of White's plan is the opportunity to sacrifice the knight on e6 in many variations (for example, after 12...h6), obtaining a very favorable position.

The discussion was closed for the time being but soon resumed in a different direction: 10.Nxb5 Re8!?. The last word has not yet been said. The search for White's advantage continues, alas, without much success so far.

This is a brief history of the issue. I must say that the path chosen by Taimanov is by no means bad and also occurs in tournament practice.

10...a6

Achieving the ideal pawn configuration on the queenside. The only question is whether Black would be able to keep it until the main forces come. At this point the undermining move a2-a4 does not work: Black replies ...c4 and then ...b4-b3, forcing the bishop to b1 and excluding it from play along with the a1-rook.

11.Re1 Re8 12.Qc2

A bit pretentious. The idea Bf4, Qd2 suggested itself, and I think it would not hurt to include the move a2-a3 somewhere. For example: 12.a3 Nbd7 13.Bf4 c4 14.Bc2 Nc5 15.Qd2, with a very harmonious setup of the white pieces, as in the game Browne-De Firmian, 1994 US Championship.

12...Nbd7 13.a4

The b5-pawn is clearly getting on White's nerves. Otherwise it is impossible to explain why he has not developed the dark-square bishop and, in general, forgotten all opening principles.

We recommend that the reader compare this game to the games Minev-Petrosian and Petrosian- Larsen that are discussed in the second part of this book. In the former, White made a similar mistake, and in the latter, Petrosian did not succumb to the temptation and, playing consistently in the center, demonstrated the shortcomings of the position of the b5-pawn.

13...c4 14.Bf1 b4 15.Nb1 Nc5!

With the last moves, White moved his pieces back to their original positions, which gave Petrosian courage – he again sacrificed a pawn.

16.Qxc4

After 16.Nbd2, the dagger blow 16...c3! would have immediately decided the game.

16...Nfxe4 17.Nbd2

Taking the pawn, White would have quickly ended up in a critical situation, for example after 17.Qxb4 a5 18.Qc4 Rb8 and so on.

17...Nf6 18.Rxe8+ Qxe8 19.Nb3 Bb7 20.Nxc5 dxc5

With a series of precise moves, White managed to fight off the first attack but is still far from complete equalization.

21.d6

Say what you like, but a chess player's nature manifests itself in every aspect of his play, including defense. Taimanov is a born optimist, and he does not like passive defense. You can bet that he did not even consider the variation 21.Qxc5 Nxd5 22.Qc4 Rc8 23.Qb3, although White's task would probably have been easier in this case: he would not have had chronic weaknesses, and it is not immediately clear where Black could break through. However, it is also possible that Taimanov did not even think about defense and simply decided to promote the pawn.

21...Bxf3

The beginning of an operation resulting in Black's advantage.

22.gxf3 Qc6 23.Bf4 Nd5

Petrosian said that something curious happened to him at this point. He was not really sure that it was necessary to

exchange the light-square bishop, and went for it only after he calculated the concrete variation that, he thought, would at least ensure a draw. And after he quickly made the planned moves, at the last moment he saw that White had an opportunity for an unusual combination that involves the light squares: 24.Qe4 Re8 25.Bb5!? (such a move is easy to miss from afar). He saw it and was stunned: after 25...axb5 26.axb5 Qxb5 27.Qxd5 or 26...Rxe4 27.bxc6 Re8 28.d7 Rd8 29.Bg5 f6 30.Rd1! Black can resign! Fortunately, after more careful consideration he realized that this was just “an optical illusion” and after the dispassionate 25...Rxe4! 26.Bxc6 Rxf4, Black keeps at least an extra pawn.

Even in a good position, it is important to be ready for any surprises!

24.Re1?!

Again, but this time completely unfoundedly, White seeks to complicate play. Instead, with the precise move 24.Rd1 he could have forced a position with opposite-color bishops, in which, thanks to his active pieces, he was in almost no danger of losing, if any. For example: 24...Nxf4 (after 24...Nb6 25.Qc2 it is Black who needs to think about saving the game) 25.Qxf4 Bxb2 (25...Qxa4 26.Re1 with the ideas of Re7 and Bc4) 26.Bc4 Ra7 27.Re1 Kg7 28.Re7 Rxe7 29.dxe7 Bf6 30.Qd6! (30.Qe3!) 30...Qe8! 31.Qxc5 with a probable draw.

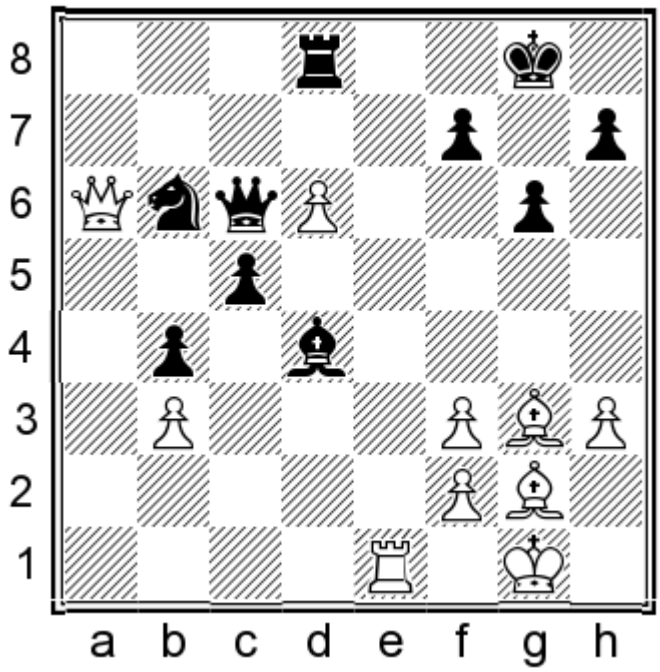
24...Bd4

Now the difference between the positions of the rook is obvious: if it were on d1, this strong move, which breaks the communication between White’s flanks, would have been impossible.

25.Bg3 Nb6 26.Qd3 Nxa4 27.b3 Nb6 28.Bg2

Black’s advantage is not so much as a result of his extra pawn as to the better position of his pieces. While this fact is obvious, it is difficult to convert it into real form: after all, the two white bishops and passed d6-pawn count for something. Petrosian found a method that is elegant and simple, like everything that is brilliant. At any rate, I cannot think another player who would have made the next two moves as Black.

28...Rd8! 29.Qxa6



29...Rxd6!

Petrosian’s trademark, the positional exchange sacrifice. He employed it in so many games that a whole book

could be written about it.

30.Bxd6 Qxd6

Formally, the material advantage is on White's side, but essentially it is the other way around: completely controlling the dark squares, Petrosian will play as if he has two minor pieces for a rook because it is extremely difficult to find a way to use the light-square bishop.

31.Re4 Kg7

The calm of confidence.

32.f4

Losing by force. Most stubborn would be to use the queen in the defense: 32.Qe2 Nd5 33.Qd2, but even then, combining threats on both flanks, Black would gradually stretch thin the enemy's defense. For example: 33...Nc3 34.Re1 Qd5 35.Qc2 Qg5, with the inevitable Nd5-f4.

32...c4!

An accurately calculated final breakthrough. After 33.bxc4, the energetic advance of the b-pawn decides the game: 33...b3 34.Qb5 b2 35.c5 Qxc5 36.Qxc5 b1=Q+.

33.Bf1 Qd5 34.Re5 Qf3!

Not leaving White the slightest chance.

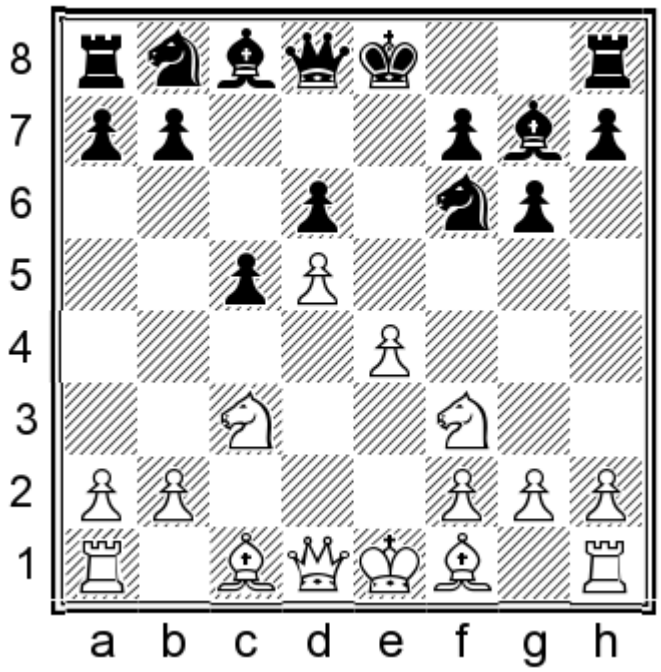
35.Qa2 Bxe5 36.fxe5 c3 37.Qa7 c2 38.Qc7 Qc3 White resigned.

(200) D7.2 **Petrosian – Contedini**
XIII Olympiad
Munich 1958

A well-known aphorism by Emil Krotky could be the motto for this curious game: "When a tram driver starts looking for new paths, the tram derails." Creativity in chess is certainly useful and even necessary, but not at the expense of common sense.

In this case, Black treated opening principles too freely and was punished for that.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 g6 7.Nf3 Bg7



8.Bg5

This move order is directed primarily against the maneuver 8...h6 9.Bh4 g5 10.Bg3 Nh5. Then the timely check 11.Bb5+ poses an unpleasant choice for Black: either lose the right to castle and risk falling under attack in case of 11...Kf8 12.e5!? (Albéric O'Kelly) 12...Nxg3 13.fxg3!, or have to defend in the variation 11...Bd7 12.Bxd7+ Qxd7 (12...Nxd7 13.Bxd6 Qb6 14.e5! is also advantageous for White) 13.Ne5!, etc.

8...Qa5?

Contedini clearly mixed something up: this is the wrong context for such a move. If in the standard King's Indian (with the white pawn on c4 and a black e-pawn) such an attack is somewhat justified, now it is simply bad.

9.Nd2 0-0 10.Nc4 Qd8

Black's queen has returned and brought the white knight with it. As a result Black is down two tempi compared to the conventional position. No wonder that Black already experiences serious difficulties.

11.Bd3 b6

This and Black's next moves are virtually the only way to develop the queenside.

12.0-0 Ba6 13.a4 Bxc4 14.Bxc4 a6

But this is already too much. Now Black should have taken care of the other flank: 14...h6 15.Bh4 g5 16.Bg3 Qe7, creating some semblance of defense on the dark squares. With such underdevelopment, Black could not allow the pawn on f4.

15.f4 Qc7

Probably a blunder, but the breakthrough in the center was still inevitable; for example: 15...Nbd7 16.Qe2, threatening 17.Bxa6 and 17.e5, or 15...Re8 16.Qd3 and then Re1, e4-e5.

16.e5

An instructional breakthrough. Capturing on e5 leads to a hopeless position for Black: 16...dxe5 17.d6 and

18.fxe5.

16...Ne8 17.e6 f5 18.h3

At this point Black could have put his arms down with a clear conscience, but apparently he did not want to upset his team so soon.

18...Bd4+ 19.Kh1 Qg7 20.Qb3 h6 21.Bd8

Now this too – Black loses a pawn. Such games resemble a boxing match in which one of the participants is already in a deep knockdown and cannot fight back.

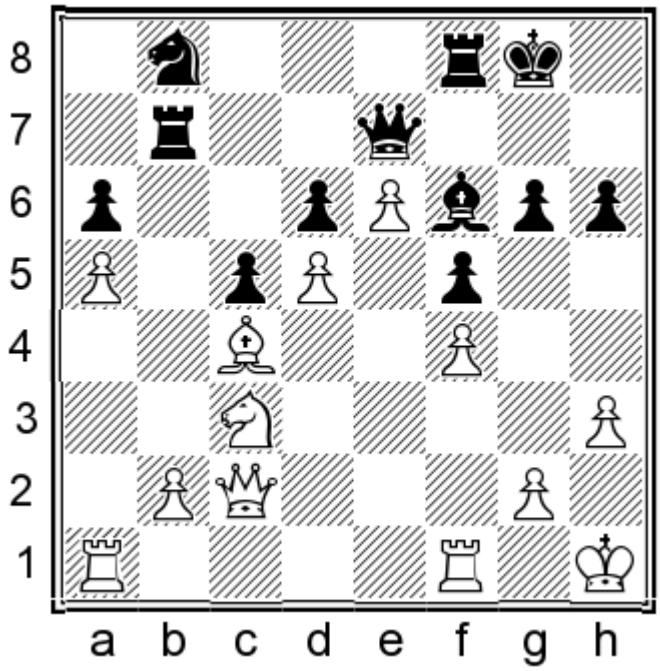
21...Nf6 22.Bxf6 Bxf6 23.Qxb6 Qe7

If 23...Bxc3 24.bxc3 Qxc3, then 25.Rfc1 and 26.Qxd6.

24.a5 Ra7

Creating a threat of trapping the queen, just in case.

25.Qb3 Rb7 26.Qc2



26...Rb4

Black misses another convenient moment to resign: giving such a handicap, especially against a grandmaster, is too much. Petrosian pays in kind and acts in the spirit of the English proverb: “No hurry,” said the wolf, catching the hare by its hind leg.

27.b3 h5 28.Ra2 h4

White’s victory is just a matter of time and elementary technique. Once he opens the position, Black, playing virtually a piece down, cannot muster even the appearance of a struggle.

29.Ne2 Kg7 30.Ng1 Rh8 31.Qd3 Kf8 32.Nf3 Rh5 33.Rg1 Rb7 34.Rb1 Rb4 35.Ne1 Qa7 36.Nc2 Rb7 37.Qe3 Rhh7

Pressing here and there for the sake of playing, Petrosian awaits the time control to adjourn the game and, at his leisure, clarify in detail his plan to break through.

38.Ra4 Rhe7 39.Qd3 Kg7 40.Rg1 Kf8 41.Ne1 Rh7 42.Nf3 Rbe7 43.Ng5!

It is time for decisive actions.

43...Bxg5 44.fxg5 Reg7 45.Qc3 Kg8 46.Qf6 Qe7 47.b4 and Black finally resigned. Curiously, his queen's knight never made a single move.

(201) D7.3 **Petrosian – Nievergelt**
XIII Olympiad
Munich 1958

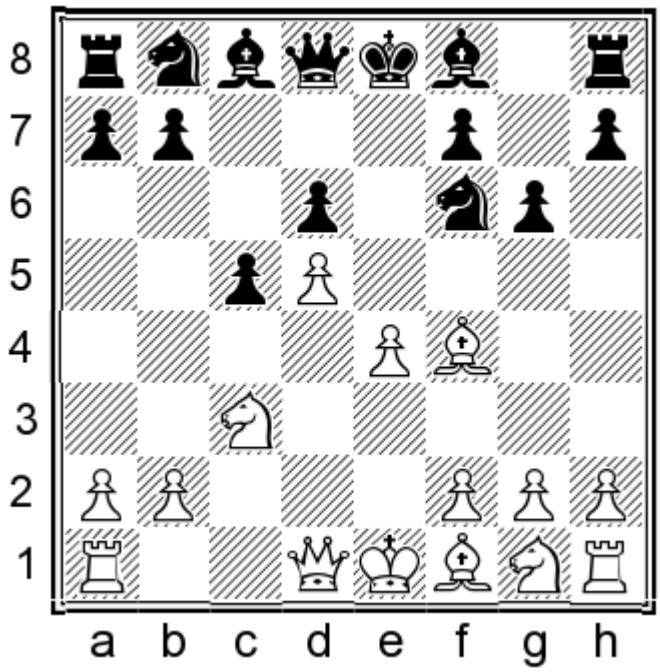
In the Indian Defenses, all of the opening structures for White can be divided into three groups.

The first group consists of the solid systems where White works on the gradual preparation of a breakthrough, primarily aiming to preserve his territorial conquests and limit the opponent's opportunities. This group includes, for example, the Fianchetto System and the main variations of the Gligorić System.

The second group consists of "ramming" systems, aimed at an early breakthrough in the center via f2-f4 and e4-e5 (in different variations), as, say, in the Mikėnas Attack or the Four Pawns Attack.

And finally, the third group includes the elastic structures that are most popular at the moment, combining the tendencies of the first two to allow White to vary the nature of play, posing the most difficult tasks for his opponent. In this game we will see one of these tricky variations.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 g6 7.Bf4



7...Bg7

The struggle becomes less intense after 7...a6 8.a4 (or 8.Nf3 b5 – see game 198) 8...Bg7 9.Nf3 0-0. Black made an instructive mistake in the following short game: 10.Nd2 Nh5 11.Be3 f5? (better was 11...Nd7) 12.exf5 gxf5 13.Qxh5 f4 14.Bd3 h6 15.Qg6 Rf6 16.Qh7+ Kf8 17.0-0 Bg4 18.Nc4 fxe3 19.fxe3 Nd7 20.Ne4, and White won (Petrosian-Tal, Moscow 1975, blitz).

8.Qa4+

Trying to gain a concrete advantage from the weakness on d6. Another execution of the same idea was 8.Bb5+ Bd7 9.Be2.

8...Bd7

Forced if Black does not want to lose the right to castle. The tricky continuation 8...Nbd7 9.Bxd6 Qb6 10.Nb5 a6, which counts on 11.Bc7? axb5! or 11.Nc7+?! Kd8 12.Nxa8 Qxd6, can be refuted by 11.Nf3!, and, oddly enough, Black is almost in *zugzwang* with all of the pieces on the board: 11...axb5 12.Qxa8 Kd8 (12...Qxd6 13.Qxc8+) 13.Ng5!.

9.Qb3 Qc7 10.Nf3 0-0 11.Be2

Thus, White's early activity was only a means to create a slightly better starting position for the coming middlegame. While the queens' positions are about equivalent, the bishop on d7 is clearly out of place, and now, in addition to the standard plan (Nd2-c4), Black has to take into account the possibility of the imminent opening of the center. By the way, did the immediate e4-e5 work? I do not think so: 11.e5 dxe5 12.Bxe5 Re8!, and if 13.Be2, then 13...Qb6 or even 13...c4!? (Tom Wedberg) and White has nothing.

As far as I know, theory does not consider Black's next move seriously, focusing instead on the continuations 11...Nh5, 11...a6, and 11...b5.

11...Bg4

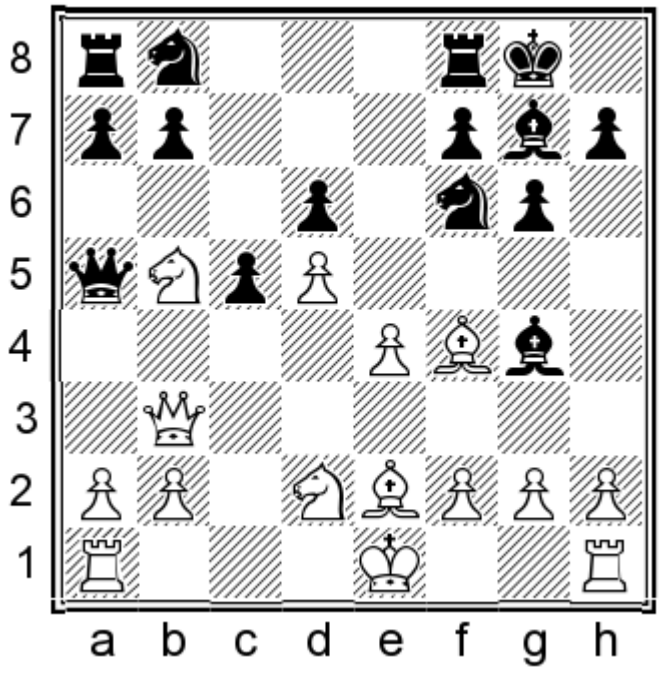
This move looks unusual, even though after 11...a6 12.a4 or 11...Nh5 12.Be3 such a move was already well known at the time. Later, however, it was determined that in the first case, instead of 12.a4, the continuation (11...a6)12.e5! dxe5 13.Bxe5 is more unpleasant for Black (Portisch-Fischer, Palma de Mallorca 1970), and in the second case (12...Bg4), 13.h3 Bxf3 14.Bxf3, and Black has to settle for double pawns, 14...Nd7 15.Bxh5 gxh5, in order to avoid the worst after 14...Nf6 15.e5! dxe5 16.d6.

Thus, the text continuation has at least two advantages: Black solves the problem of the bishop a move sooner and avoids the aforementioned dangerous variations. And what are the disadvantages? Maybe just one: he might lose the "main" pawn on d6. But is this really so important?

12.Nb5

Petrosian does not quite trust the opponent and decides to pick up the pawn. Black counters with a sharp counterattack against the white king, which is stuck in the center, and an interesting tactical battle begins.

12...Qa5+ 13.Nd2



13...c4!

A beautiful and bold idea that characterizes the Swiss chess player as a true artist. I do not know whether he found this move over the board or in home preparation, but in any case, it is excellent. Here many would have been tempted to try to trap the knight: 13...Bxe2 14.Kxe2 a6 15.Nxd6 b5 (this is what Petrosian most likely expected), but after 16.Rac1! Nh5 17.Be3 c4 18.Qa3! Black's position would have been left in shambles.

14.Qxc4

After 14.Bxc4 Nxe4 15.f3 (15.Nxd6? Nxd6 16.Bxd6 Re8+ is really bad) 15...Nc5 16.Qd1 Bf5, Black's initiative grows.

14...Rc8 15.Qd3 Bxe2 16.Qxe2

Having taken on e2 with the king, White could have also won the d6-pawn; however, it is difficult to foresee all of the consequences of this move. Let's make a couple of natural moves: 16.Kxe2 Nh5 17.Bxd6 Nd7, and White's king's position is not secure and his pieces are scattered; Black has many different ways to ride the "tactical wave"; for example: 18.a4 a6 19.Nc4 (19.Nc3 Qb6!) 19...Qd8 20.Nba3 Nb6!, and White begins to experience difficulties. This variation is not forced, of course, but it clearly shows Black's opportunities in this position.

The text move demonstrates that Petrosian does not want to risk any more: better an egg today than a hen tomorrow, i.e., a minimal advantage in a calm position. For the time being, the material equality is restored and the struggle erupts with new intensity.

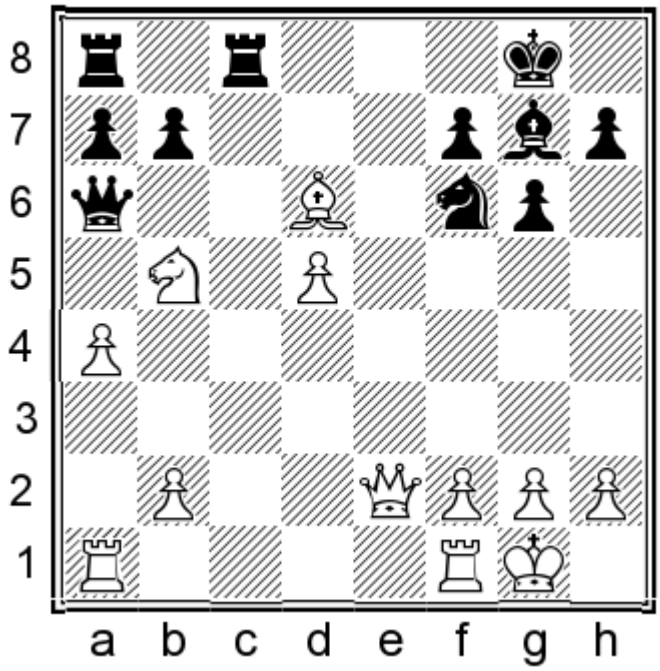
16...Nxe4! 17.0-0!

"It's time to run away!"

17...Nxd2 18.Bxd2 Qa6 19.Bb4

Thus, White was able to develop his pieces and it seems that he is ready to deal with the d6-pawn. However, his position now has a significant tactical flaw: his pieces are restricted by mutual defense. The queen cannot go far from the pinned knight, which, in turn, will have to protect the bishop when it moves to d6. Black notices this and plays another gambit.

19...Nd7 20.Bxd6 Nf6 21.a4



Since the d5-pawn will be lost anyway, 21.Rfd1 Rd8, etc., White defends the knight, freeing the queen from its unpleasant duty.

21...Re8?

Wow! With one impulsive move, Black ruins a great game. That happens in life, too: having overcome many difficult obstacles, a person stumbles at the last moment all of a sudden. It is clear that Nievergelt could not possibly have missed the obvious move 21...Rd8 followed by N(R)xd5. Most likely he wanted to reinforce this idea by rearranging his rooks, but forgot that, when leaving the e2- square, the queen unpins the knight.

Black also had the following opportunity: 21...Nxd5 22.Qd2 Nf6! (but not 22...Qc6? 23.Rac1) with equality, because 23.Nc7 does not work in view of 23...Ne4!.

22.Qf3 Rad8 23.Bc7!

White's back-and-forth maneuver is very beautiful and study-like. Moving forward, the bishop forces the rook to the "mined" d5-square, and Black's major pieces come under a family fork. Then the bishop retreats to f4, making way for the knight and preventing the rook from escaping to f5 with tempo.

Not as convincing is 23.Bg3 Nxd5 24.Rad1 Nb6 25.Nc7 Qxa4 26.Nxe8 Rxe8 27.Qxb7 Bxb2, and White still has to overcome technical difficulties.

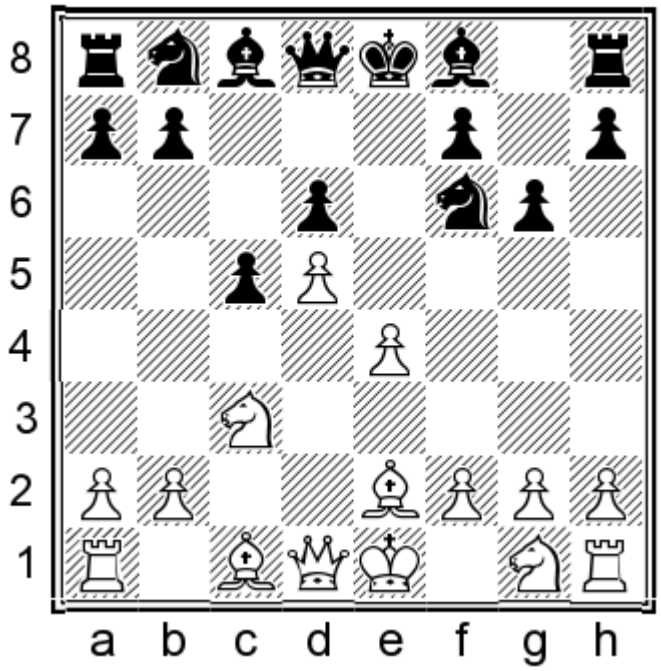
23...Rxd5 24.Bf4! Re4 25.Nc7

The knight's solo.

25...Rd3 26.Qxe4! Black resigned.

(202) D7.4 **Toran – Petrosian**
Palma de Mallorca 1968

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 g6 7.Be2



After an insignificant transposition of moves, this leads to the usual positions (in this case, it was the system with an early Bg5), since White will still have to develop the knight to f3.

7...Bg7 8.Bg5

We have already seen a similar method of development in games 196 and 200.

8...h6 9.Bh4 0-0 10.Nf3

Another “King’s Indian crossroads.” This position often arises from the Averbakh System: 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Bg5 c5 7.d5 e6 8.Nf3 h6 9.Bh4 exd5 10.cxd5.

10...g5

Taking the bull by the horns. Recall that in the game against Kholmov (game 196) Petrosian tried to avoid this committing continuation for a long time and experienced some difficulties in the opening.

11.Bg3 Nh5 12.Nd2 Nxg3 13.hxg3 Nd7 14.Nc4

Stopping 14...Ne5 (15.Nxe5!) and planning Ne3, g3-g4. In this situation White of course wants to use the weakened squares in the enemy’s camp. However, standard techniques such as 14.Bg4 are not appropriate here; for example, 14...Ne5 15.Bxc8 Qxc8! and Black inevitably advances ...f5, “unfettering” the kingside.

14...Qe7 15.Qc2

One of the important nuances of this system: White does not hurry with castling, hoping to capitalize on his control of the h-file.

Black has significant dynamic resources in this position, based on his bishop pair and the traditional pawn majority on the queenside. Experience has shown that White might have an advantage if he can make the opponent exchange the light-square bishop, but not for sure even then. The following continuations are characteristic of this position:

(1) 15.Nb5 Nf6!? 16.f3 Bd7 17.a4 (17.Nbxd6 b5!?) 17...a6 18.Nc3 b5 19.Nb6 Rab8 20.Nxd7 Qxd7 21.axb5 axb5 22.Qd2 (Ferenc Portisch- Nichevsky, Vilnius 1969), and now, according to Kapengut, 22...c4!? gives Black excellent play;

(2) 15.g4 Ne5 16.Ne3 a6 17.a4 Bd7 18.a5 b5!? 19.axb6 Rfb8 20.Na4 (20.Rxa6?! is weaker because of 20...Rxa6 21.Bxa6 Rxb6 22.Qe2 Nxg4! with an advantage for Black) 20...Bxa4 21.Rxa4 Rxb6 22.Nf5 Qf6, and, as the game Portisch-Gligorić (Moscow 1967) demonstrated, the strong position of the knight on f5 is neutralized by Black's pressure on the b-file.

15...Nf6

The idea of this move, which was recommended by Boleslavsky, is to be able to reply ...g4 after f2-f4, stopping White from improving his pawn structure; for example: 16.Ne3 Re8 17.f3 g4!, etc.

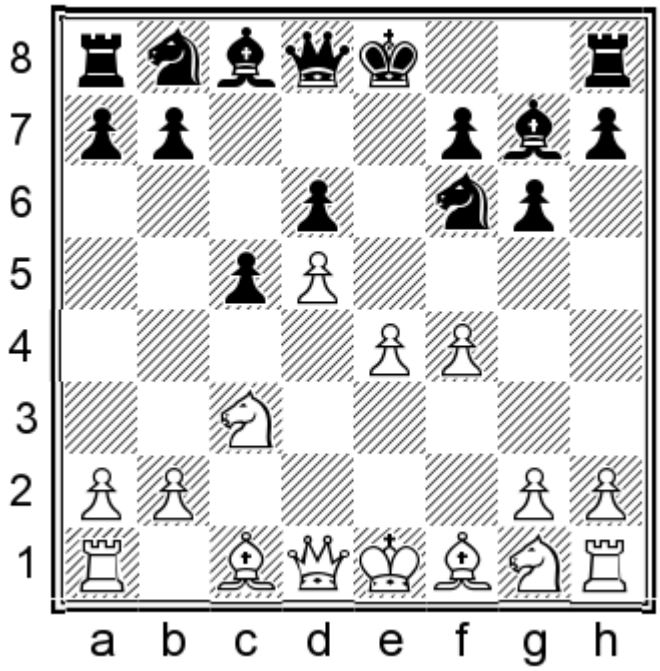
Here, after some thought, the sides agreed to a draw. Of course, this position is full of life and could be played for quite some time, but in principle this decision is easy to understand: this is the last, 17th, round, and a draw suits both of them.

(203) D7.5 **Petrosian – Rodriguez**
Las Palmas 1975

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 g6

A repeat of the past. The Peruvian grandmaster chose Ljubojević's path from game 185 (also see that game for more on the intricacies of this move order). In response to the opening "intrigues" of his opponent, Petrosian chooses a sharp system with an early f2-f4, which, according to many experts, is one of the most unpleasant for Black.

6.e4 d6 7.f4 Bg7



8.Bb5+

This is Vladimir Alatortsev's move (Alatortsev- Aronin, Moscow 1950). The idea of the check is to force the clumsy move ...Nfd7, because the obvious moves 8...Bd7 and 8...Nbd7 lead to complications favorable for White after 9.e5, etc. Black's sporadic attempts to challenge these findings (one of the later ones was in the game Sokolov-Topalov, Wijk aan Zee 1996) did not have much success.

8...Nfd7 9.Bd3

Some believe that 9.a4 is more accurate as the white bishop maintains the ability to retreat to any square on the f1-a6 diagonal, while the advance of the rook pawn is a part of White's plan anyway.

9...0-0

9...Qh4+ has not been studied well enough. In the game Lukacs-Psakhis (Sarajevo 1981), after 10.g3 Qe7 11.Nf3 0-0 12.0-0 Nb6 13.Kg2 (Psakhis recommends 13.f5, stopping the development of the light-square bishop) 13...Bg4 14.h3 Bxf3+ 15.Qxf3 N8d7 (followed by ...c4, ...Nc5, ...Nd7, ...a6, ...b5 – Lev Psakhis) Black successfully solved his opening problems. According to Petrosian, after 9...Qh4+, the principled reply is the move 10.Kf1!?, analogously to a variation of the King's Gambit.

10.Nf3 Na6 11.0-0 Nc7 12.a4

White better hurry to make this move, as the following approximate variation shows: 12.Be3?! Nf6 13.h3 (stopping 13...Bg4 or 13...Ng4) 13...b5! with excellent play for Black, since taking on b5 is not good because of the vulnerability of the e4-pawn and 14.e5 Nfxd5 15.Nxd5 Nxd5 does not work because the e3-bishop comes under attack.

The story of the game Taimanov-Trifunović (Leningrad 1957) can be filed under opening curiosities. In this game White, employing the plan with the knight transfer to c4 that was fashionable at the time (12.Nd2 Nf6 13.h3 Re8 14.Qf3 Rb8 15.a4 Na6 16.Nc4, etc.), achieved a quick victory. The game went around the chess world, as it suddenly turned out that Taimanov had blundered a pawn twice! Instead of 14...Rb8, Trifunović should have played 14...Nfxd5!, gaining a significant advantage; for example: 15.exd5 Bd4+ 16.Kh1 Re3 or 15.Nxd5 Nxd5 16.Bb5 Bd4+ 17.Kh1 Ne3 18.Bxe8 Qxe8 19.Rf2(g1) 19...Nc2. It is easy to see that a similar blow was also possible on the 15th move.

12...Na6

Not a good maneuver. Black's plan to transfer the knight to b4 wastes time and does not coordinate well with the advance ...b5, which is the main mechanism of his counterplay. The other standard mechanism, the undermining move ...f5, which Rodriguez probably counted on, is very difficult to implement, as Black soon realized. 12...a6 was better.

13.Re1 Re8

Forced, since White was already threatening the move e4-e5.

14.h3

Prophylaxis. The next sophisticated bishop move is also very good.

14...Nb4 15.Bc4! a6 16.Be3

Petrosian's prophylactic measures bear fruit, significantly limiting the choice of continuations for his opponent. For example, after 16...Nf6, the overprotection of the d5-pawn allows White to implement the thematic breakthrough 17.e5!, achieving an overwhelming advantage. 16...Nb6 is also not good because of the simple 17.Bf1, and the g4-square is not accessible to the black bishop; at the same time White threatens e4-e5. To avoid the worst, Black has to return the knight to d7, as an attempt to establish counterplay in the center, 17...f5?!, leads to disaster: 18.a5! Nd7 19.Ng5 Nf8 20.e5!, etc.

16...Rb8 17.Bf2 b5

Black has no other opportunities for active play.

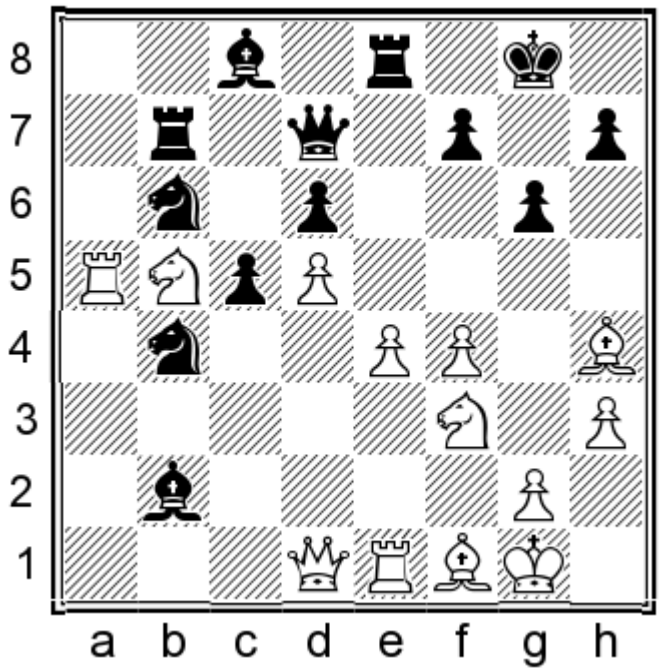
18.axb5 axb5 19.Nxb5!?

The variation 19.Bxb5 Bxc3 20.bxc3 Rxb5 21.cxb4 Rxb4 would have given White some advantage, but Petrosian wants more, betting on his 21st move.

19...Nb6 20.Bf1 Bxb2 21.Bh4!

Otherwise, White has nothing tangible. Black's following reply is forced since, after 21...Bf6 22.Bxf6 Qxf6, the move 23.e5! is extremely unpleasant.

21...Qd7 22.Ra7 Rb7 23.Ra5!



Black has managed to avoid material losses, but his situation remains difficult. The almost complete paralysis of the black pieces catches the eye: the queen, light-square bishop, and both knights do not have any moves, and the opportunities for his pieces and pawns are very limited. Other flaws might play a role, too, such as the unprotected b2-bishop or the vulnerable position of the rooks.

23...Bg7?

The decisive mistake leading to a loss. Now White opens the position and the flaws of Black's position will inevitably take effect. The only chance to defend was the unattractive move 23...Rb8.

24.e5 dxe5 25.Nxe5!

Rodriguez had probably overlooked this strong move, counting on 25.fxe5 N4xd5 26.Nd6 Rxe5!, with opportunities for a tenacious defense.

In the main variations (25...Qxd5 26.Nd6 or 25...Bxe5 26.fxe5) Petrosian's plan is surprisingly reminiscent of the "geometric combination" in game 201. Just as in that game, the b5-knight plays first violin, this time aiming to create a fork from the d6-square. Out of desperation, Black sacrifices the exchange, but this does not help since most of his pieces are badly placed.

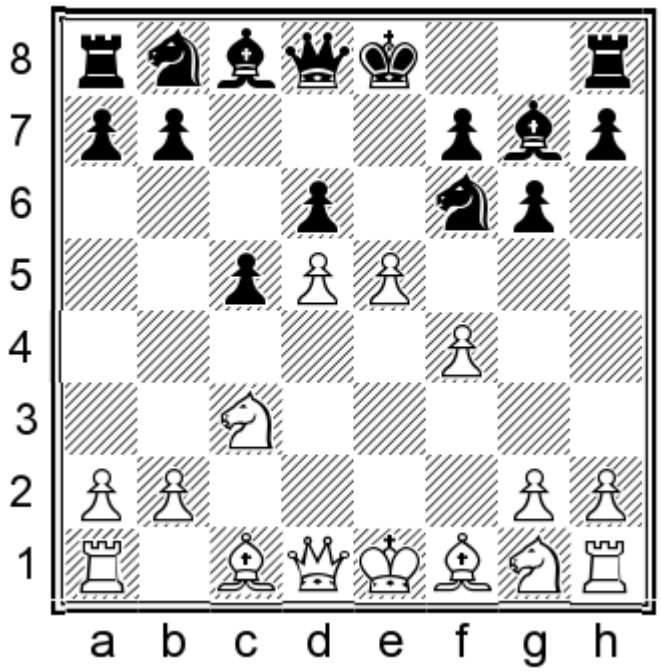
25...Rxe5 26.fxe5 N6xd5 27.Nd6 Rc7 28.Bb5 Qe6 29.Ne8

29.Bd8 Nc3 30.Bc4! is also good, but the text move is simpler. Now Rodriguez starts to play "giveaway" instead of resigning.

29...Bxe5 30.Nxc7 Nxc7 31.Bg3 Bxg3 32.Rxe6 Nxe6 33.Qf3 Bc7 34.Be8 Black resigned.

(204) D7.6 **Milan Vuković – Petrosian**
Bar 1980

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 g6 7.f4 Bg7 8.e5



This move, suggested by the Lithuanian master Vladas Mikėnas, is the starting point of one of the sharpest and most complicated systems in the Indian Defense. The Yugoslav player chose this line probably not so much because he wanted to scare his formidable opponent but in hopes to cruise to a safe haven in one of many drawish continuations.

In this book we have mentioned a number of times Petrosian's attitude towards such opening variations. Still, it would probably not be quite right to talk here about his likes and dislikes. Rather, Petrosian had a set of rules, principles, which he developed over years of play and tried to follow consistently. Here are some of his provisions (almost verbatim):

(1) "To know" means to thoroughly study a problem independently.

(2) If variations are analyzed in great detail, they end in draws.

(3) Repeating a variation, you are always at a disadvantage.

8...Nfd7

The most solid reply. In another continuation, 8...dxe5 9.fxe5 Nfd7 (worse is 9...Nh5 10.Bb5+) 10.e6 fxe6 11.dxe6, White has such strong piece play that Black can at best draw the game even after trading queens and possibly winning the e6-pawn. The consequences of the variation in the game are still not clear, but in practice White wins much more often.

9.Nb5 dxe5 10.Nd6+ Ke7

Again the best defense. Attacking the knight, Black gains time to consolidate his position via ...Re8, ...Kf8 and so on.

11.Nxc8+ Qxc8 12.Nf3

White could have interfered with his opponent's plans by continuing 12.d6+ Kf8 13.Nf3, but then Black would have gotten an opportunity to develop the knight to c6, and such a change of the position is most likely to his

advantage.

12...Re8 13.fxe5 Kf8!?

Petrosian had “spied” this clever move in the game Sobek-Hardicsay (Ostrava 1979) and immediately took note of this novelty. This way Black can successfully avoid the well-studied continuations of the main variation: 13...Nxe5 14.Bb5 Nbd7, etc. So, Black solved his main problem: his opponent lost his “theoretical wisdom” and was forced to use his brain.

14.e6

A rather good move in this situation. The e5-pawn is doomed anyway, so it makes sense to use it to destroy the black king’s shelter. 14.Bb5 would have been weaker in view of the obvious 14...a6.

14...fxe6 15.d6?

It is so: Vuković is not in the know and his previous correct move was associated with an incorrect idea. It is clear that White, with his bishop pair, should try to open the position. In our opinion, the move 15.Be2 solves this problem best of all. Incidentally, Sobek made this move in the aforementioned game. Then, after 15...exd5 16.0-0 Nf6 (or 16...Nb6 17.Ng5+ Kg8 18.Bg4 Qc6 19.Qf3) 17.Ng5 Qc6 18.a4 c4 19.Nxh7+ White had just enough activity to equalize.

I do not know how Petrosian planned to react to 15.Be2. Perhaps, having “thoroughly studied the problem independently,” he would have found this fighting variation: 15...Nb6 16.dxe6 (16.d6?! Nc6) 16...Qxe6 17.0-0 Kg8 with complicated play.

What is wrong with the text move? Very simple: with the help of the bishop and the knight, which will soon move to c6, Black will seize the d4-square and surround the insolent d6-pawn. And the rest, as they say, is a matter of technique.

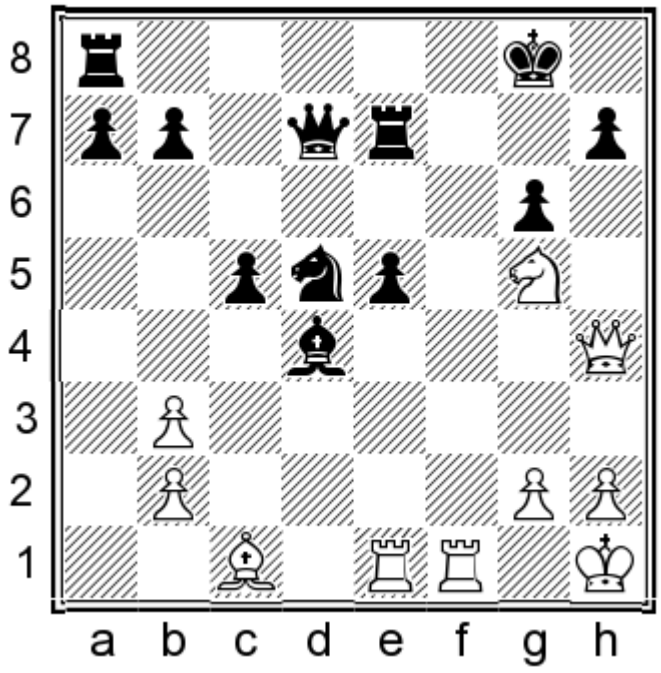
15...Kg8 16.Bc4

I think 16.Rb1 was a little bit better, because in this case White could counter 16...Nc6 with 17.Be3, at least somehow hampering the opponent’s plan.

16...Nc6 17.0-0 Nb6 18.Bb3 Nd4 19.Ng5 Qc6 20.Qg4 Nxb3 21.axb3 Qxd6

The board has, as chess players say, “turned black.” Realizing that the game is lost in any case, White begins to “buck,” but with two extra pawns Petrosian is not afraid of anyone.

22.Bf4 Qd7 23.Be3 Bd4 24.Rae1 Re7 25.Kh1 e5 26.Qh4 Nd5 27.Bc1



27...e4!?

A well-known technique: returning part of the advantage, Black forces the exchanges of the major pieces, which greatly facilitates the stage of conversion. Along the way, he eliminates some of White's attacking chances associated with the moves Ne4, Bh6.

28.Nxe4 Rae8 29.Ng5 Rxe1 30.Rxe1 Rxe1+ 31.Qxe1 Qe7

Black has not only a material but also a solid positional advantage. White's days are numbered.

32.Qf1 b6 33.Nf3 Bf6 34.Qc4 Qe6 35.h4 Kf8 36.Bh6+ Ke8

In the endgame Black brings the king closer to the center.

37.Bc1 Be7 38.Bg5 a5 39.Bxe7 Kxe7 40.Ng5 Qe1+ 41.Kh2 Qe5+ 42.g3 h6

42...Qxb2+ also wins, although not as quickly.

43.Nf3 Qxb2+ 44.Kh3 Kd6 45.Qg4 Qf6 46.h5 g5 White resigned.

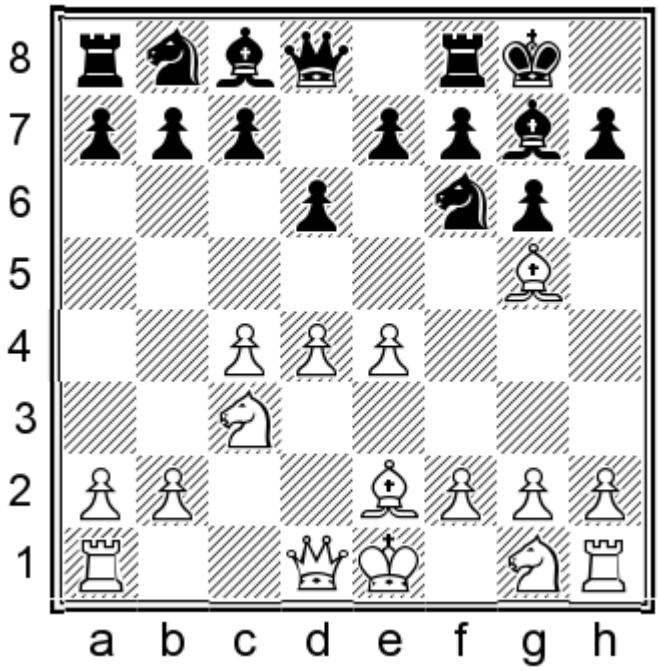
And now a little bit of math. Winning 15 games as White with 4 draws, Petrosian set a personal record: a 89% (!) winning percentage. No wonder we said that this variation was very special for him. His result as Black was solid: +8, -2, =9 (or 66%, the same as in the Sämisch System).

Chapter 5
Other Systems

We will conclude the parade of King's Indian tabiyas with the Averbakh System, the Four Pawns Attack, and a few others. Petrosian did not play them often, and usually with Black.



E1



Black to move

An interesting King's Indian system that emerged more than half a century ago thanks to grandmaster Yuri Averbakh. In the beginning White wants to hamper the move ...e5 (6...e5? 7.dxe5 dxe5 8.Qxd8 Rxd8 9.Nd5!).

According to the "old" theory, Black has to choose between 6...c5 (games 205, 206, 207, 209);

6...h6 (game 208);

and 6...Nbd7 (games 210, 211).

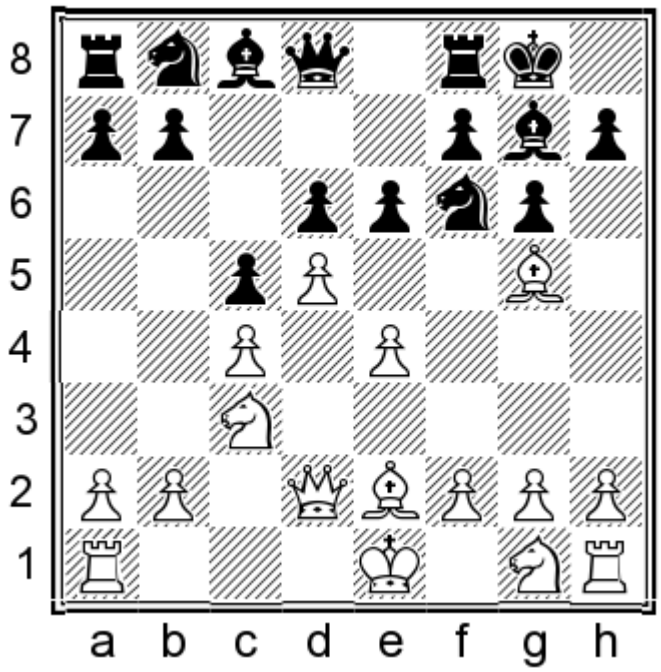
The now popular 6...Na6!? was not yet known in Petrosian's time.

(205) E1.1 **Antoshin − Petrosian**
USSR Championship Semi-final
Tbilisi 1956

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 0-0 5.Bg5 d6 6.Qd2

A slight deviation from the theme; a move later,

6...c5 7.d5 e6 8.Be2



8...exd5 9.exd5

In the Averbakh System, White often takes with this particular pawn, which significantly limits Black's active opportunities. There is not much promise in either 9.Nxd5 Be6 (with the idea of ...Bxd5 or 9.cxd5 Re8 (9...a6) with a comfortable version of the Benoni for Black.

9...Re8

9...Qb6 is a roughly equivalent alternative (game 207). The difference between these two continuations can be summarized as follows: the first is more solid, while the second is more active.

10.Nf3 Bg4

A lack of space forces Black to seek to exchange the minor pieces. He can play the more elaborate 10...Bf5 with the same goal. For example: 11.0-0 a6 12.Nh4 Qc8 (Polugaevsky-Roos, Le Havre 1966).

11.0-0 Nbd7 12.Rfe1

Nowadays, 12.h3 is preferred, with the goal of getting the bishop pair as soon as possible.

12...a6 13.a4 Qe7

The queen can also be used on another diagonal: 13...Qc7 or, slightly more active, 13...Qa5!?, threatening ...Qb4 if the opportunity presents itself.

14.h3 Bxf3 15.Bxf3 Qf8

With two ideas: to play ...h6 and to launch a series of trades on the e-file.

16.Bf4 Rxe1+ 17.Rxe1 Re8 Draw.

Isn't it too early? Just in time for Black – his position is worse, while White probably should have made a few more moves to see how his opponent would defend.

If Black planned to exchange the major pieces (and this is where things were going) a very boring endgame awaited him. White has a bishop pair, more space, and real prospects to improve his position. While we will not

make the unqualified claim that Black's position is lost, it is not easy to defend. The reader can confirm this by going over two classic endgames, from the games Polugaevsky-Uhlmann (Amsterdam 1970) and Uhlmann-Gligorić (Palma de Mallorca 1970). They show the best plan for White. A detailed analysis of this interesting endgame is beyond the scope of this book, so we are going to mention only the main points:

(1) the transfer of the bishop to the b1-h7 diagonal;

(2) the advance of the pawns on the kingside; and

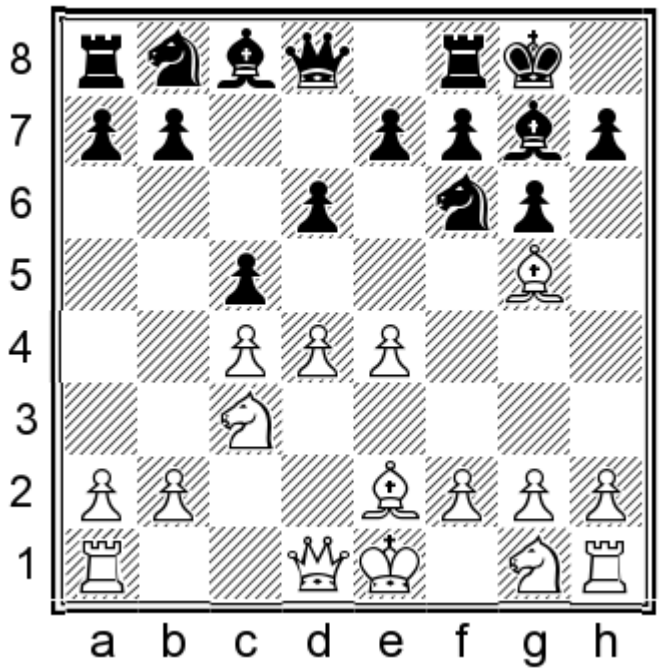
(3) the "anti-blockade" move a4-a5.

By the way, more recently the final position (after 17...Re8) occurred in the game Chernin-Mohr (Portorož 1997). It was followed by 18.Bd1! Rxe1+ 19.Qxe1 Qe8 20.Bd2 Kf8 21.Qxe8+ Nxe8, etc., and White won on the 42nd move.

(206) E1.2 **Chukaev – Petrosian**
USSR Championship Semi-final
Tbilisi 1956

1.c4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 d6 4.e4 Nf6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Bg5 c5

In various arrangements (with ...h6, ...Nbd7, etc.), this undermining move is one of the main themes of Black's counterplay in this opening system.



7.d5

Now the position takes "Indian" forms. After 7.dxc5, Black regains the pawn with the well-known maneuver 7...Qa5, forcing White to lose time on stopping the threat of ...Nxe4.

7...Qa5

Of course, Petrosian does not count on a blunder. Rather he wants to find out how his opponent is going to protect the e4-pawn so that he can deal with White's center (...e6 or ...a6, ...b5) accordingly. The queen maneuver can also be played as follows: 7...a6 8.a4 Qa5 (game 209).

A couple of decades ago, Black often entertained the idea of a pawn sacrifice, 7...b5 8.cxb5 a6, which is justified in case of 9.bxa6 Qa5. After the strong move 9.a4! was discovered, not many still wanted to play this gambit.

8.Bd2

Nowadays, this seemingly illogical retreat is considered the best for White. At the same time the natural move 8.Qd2, which is very effective after ...e6 has already been played, would, on the contrary, be unsuccessful in this situation. Black can use the queen's position on d2 in various ways. I do not know which way Petrosian would have chosen, but I prefer modern Benko-like themes: 8...a6!?. We will discuss this position in detail, because it demonstrates some important King's Indian mechanisms. Thus:

(1) 9.Nf3 b5! 10.cxb5 axb5, and now either capture of the b5-pawn is met by a standard combination: 11.Bxb5 Nxe4! 12.Nxe4 Qxb5 (13.Bxe7? Re8) or 11.Nxb5 Nxe4! 12.Qxa5 Rxa5 13.Bxe7 Re8 14.Bxd6 Bd7 with a strong initiative for Black;

(2) 9.a4 (White's main counter-argument) 9...b5! 10.cxb5 Nbd7!?:

(2a) 11.Nf3 axb5! 12.Nxb5 (in case of 12.Bxb5, the fact that the a1-rook is not protected takes its toll: 12...Nxe4 13.Nxe4 Qxb5) 12...Nxe4 13.Qxa5 Rxa5 14.Bxe7 Re8, and White cannot play 15.Bxd6? because of 15...Rxb5!;

(2b) 11.f3 Nb6 12.Ra3 axb5 13.Bxb5 (or 13.axb5 Qb4) 13...Ba6 with very promising play in the spirit of the Benko Gambit;

(2c) 11.Ra3 Qb4! 12.f3 axb5 13.Bxb5 Ba6 14.Bxf6 Nxf6 15.Bxa6 Rxa6 16.Nge2 Rb8 17.Ra2 Nd7, and Black created unpleasant pressure in the game Anastasian-Mittelman (Saint-Vincent 2000). In the interesting variation 14.Bxd7 (instead of 14.Bxf6) 14...Nxd7 15.Bxe7 Rfe8 16.Bxd6 Nb6 White has a losing position in spite of his three(!) extra pawns.

8...e6 9.Nf3 exd5 10.exd5

White adheres to the major strategic outline of the Averbakh system: "harsh pressure," aiming for a better endgame. As mentioned, Black has fewer problems in case of 10.cxd5 Bg4 or 10.Nxd5 Qd8 11.Bg5 Be6.

10...a6 11.0-0 Qc7 12.h3

Another "systematic" move.

12...Nbd7 13.Qc2

Up until now Chukaev (then a candidate master) played very knowledgeably, but here he blundered, forgetting to make the move 13.a4, which is mandatory in such positions. Now the King's Indian genie is let out of the bottle!

13...b5!

This pawn sacrifice gives Black rich chances.

14.cxb5 Nb6 15.bxa6 Bxa6 16.Bxa6 Rxa6 17.Rac1 Qb7

Black has a strong initiative. Moreover, note that Petrosian is in no hurry to regain the pawn (now, for example, 17...Nfxd5 18.Nxd5 Nxd5 19.b4 does not do any good), and instead he calmly improves the position of his pieces, aiming for long-term pressure.

18.Rfd1 Rb8! 19.Bg5 Nbxd5 20.Nxd5 Nxd5 21.Qe4

Now the opponents have the same number of pawns, and White's difficulties persist. Entering an endgame as he planned looks reasonable; it is easier to defend without the queens.

21...Nc7 22.Qxb7 Rxb7 23.b3 h6 24.Bf4

The passivity of White's minor pieces is the main disadvantage of his position (this becomes obvious if you remove the bishops and knights from the board). On the other hand, White's chances to save the game are associated

with the exchange of the a- and b-pawns for Black's central pawns. Taking into account all these circumstances, Chukaev found what seems to be an almost perfect solution: the attacked bishop moves back with tempo, attacking the pawn. And yet, oddly enough, this natural move is a mistake and probably even the decisive one! The passive 24.Be3 is correct; for example, 24...Nb5 25.Rc2 Nc3 26.Rdd2, etc. with a defendable position, since Black is not able to quickly activate the kingside pawns, unlike after the text continuation.

Chess is not a simple game after all!

24...Nb5

White probably underestimated the power of this simple move. Now Black threatens 25...Rxa2 26.Bxd6 Nc3, winning the exchange.

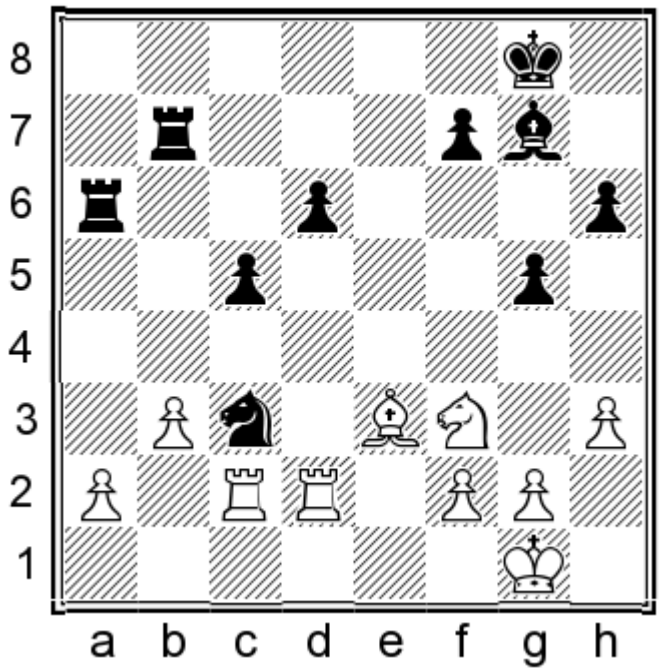
25.Rc2 g5!

Here it is, the tempo!

26.Be3

The other bishop retreats are no better: for example, 26.Bd2 Na3! or 26.Bh2 f5!.

26...Nc3 27.Rdd2



27...f5!

The solution is quite simple. Black threatens 28...f4. Defending, White did not notice that his bishop got into trouble. Now it can be saved only at the cost of material losses.

28.g3 Rf7!?

An instructive moment for those who want to learn the secrets of chess technique. Petrosian decides against winning the piece, fearing technical difficulties in the variation 28...f4 29.gxf4 gxf4 30.Bxf4 Rf7 31.Rxd6 Rxd6 (31...Rxa2? is worse because of 32.Rxa2 Nxa2 33.Rd8+ Kh7 34.Be5! with a draw) 32.Bxd6 Rxf3 33.Bxc5 Rxh3, in which Black retains only the rook pawn with a dark-square bishop – it is the wrong corner! It sounds paradoxical, but sometimes it is much easier to convert a pawn than a piece.

29.Rd3 Nxa2 30.Bd2 Rb7 31.Rc4 Kf7 32.h4

The last mistake, though it is made in an already difficult position. White has more chances after 32.g4 f4 33.h4 Bf6 34.hxg5 hxg5 35.Kg2 with the idea of grabbing onto the g5-pawn in the future.

32...g4 33.Ne1

All of the white pieces are passive. Black's next move forces simplifications.

33...Nb4 34.Bxb4 Rxb4 35.Rxb4 cxb4 36.Nc2 Bc3

The winning plan is simple: the rook attacks the defenseless b3-pawn, and then the b1-square is in his sights.

37.Ne3 Ke6 38.Rd5 Ra3 39.Rxf5 Rxb3 40.Rh5 Rb1+ 41.Kg2 b3

"The armor is strong and... our pawns fast!" (After the Russian song "The armor is strong and... our *tanks* fast!" – translator)

42.Rxh6+

The adjourned position. As candidate master Blagidze "diplomatically" noted in the tournament bulletin: "... the far advanced pawn gives Petrosian great winning chances." After the game was resumed, it lasted for four and a half moves.

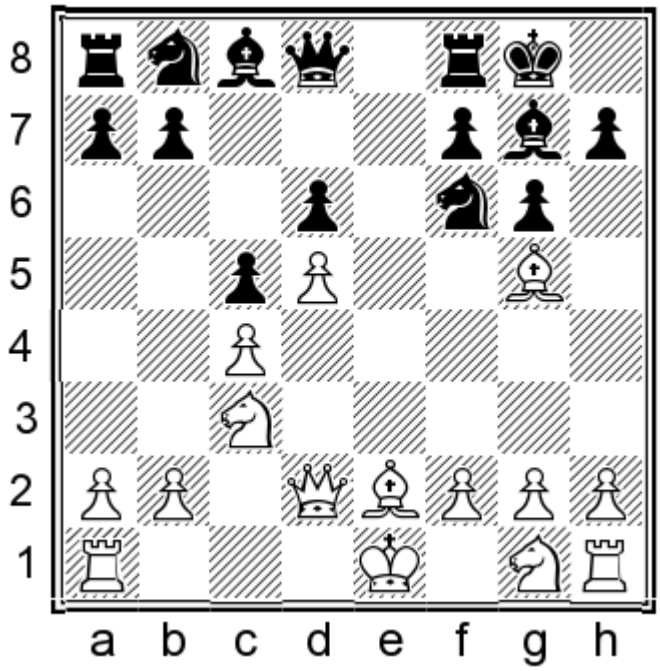
42...Kd7 43.Nc4 Rd1 44.Rg6 Rd4 45.Na3 Ra4 46.Nb1 Be5 White resigned.

(207) E1.3 **Khasin – Petrosian**
24th USSR Championship
Moscow 1957

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Bg5 c5 7.d5 e6

Playing against Moscow master Khasin, who was known at the time for his uncompromising, unapologetic play, Petrosian decides to return to the classical plan with the early opening of the center (he was fine with a draw in this game).

8.Qd2 exd5 9.exd5



9...Qb6

The queen gets out of the pin and takes aim at the b2-pawn. Black prepares to carry out the exchanging maneuver ...Ne4 in the near future.

10.0-0-0

Moving the king away from the center, White at the same time plans Bh6. Nowadays, the main continuation is 10.Nf3 Bf5, etc.

10...Re8 11.Bh6

There is little theory in this variation but quite some interesting things to find. For instance, some manuals use the game Borisenko-Boleslavsky (Kharkov 1956) as an example of Black's play: 11.Bd3 a6 12.h3 Qa5 13.Nf3 b5 14.Rde1 Nbd7, etc. However, none of these textbooks mention that by playing 14.Ne4!, Borisenko could have obtained a decisive advantage. By the way, a similar idea brought success to Khasin in his game against Vasiukov (Kiev 1957). In that game White played it a bit differently: 11.f3 Nbd7 12.Nh3 a6 13.Nf2 Qa5 14.Rhe1 Nb6, and after 15.Nce4! Qxd2+ 16.Rxd2 Nxe4 17.Nxe4 Be5 18.Bd3 Bf5 19.Rde2 White won the game in a prolonged endgame.

Did Petrosian know these games? I think he did, at least the latter one, since he also participated in the USSR semifinal in Kiev. Judging by the move 11.Bh6, Khasin was of the same opinion.

11...Bh8 12.f3

Preventing the knight move to e4.

12...Nbd7 13.g4 Ne5 14.h4

White quietly pushes his pawns forward, demonstrating a clear intention to finish the game with a mating attack. Looking for counterchances, Petrosian begins to grab onto the c4-pawn.

14...Qb4 15.a3

In computer terms, "the program crashed." Continuing 15.Nb5! now, White could have executed a transition into

a favorable endgame, which is, in general, one of White's main ideas in this system. Maybe Khasin planned to sacrifice a pawn but then changed his mind? Either way, he lost the initiative.

15...Qb3 16.Qc2 Qxc2+ 17.Kxc2 a6

Petrosian decided against the variation 17...Bxg4 18.fxg4 Nfxg4 19.Bf4 Nf2, in which he would have a rook and two pawns against a knight and bishop. The material balance is in Black's favor, but he does not have open files and the d6-pawn is weak. Therefore, the evaluation of the endgame is still unclear.

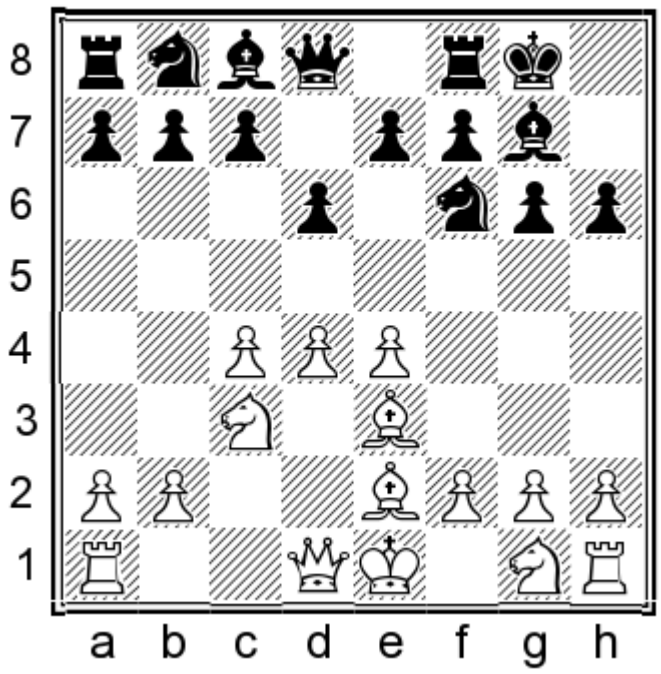
18.Nh3 Bd7 19.a4 Bg7 20.Bxg7 Kxg7 21.Nf2 The opponents agreed to a draw.

(208) E1.4 **Petrosian – Schweber**
Interzonal Tournament
Stockholm 1962

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Bg5 h6

Determining the position of the bishop right away. Nowadays, this move has become a kind of opening "test." If, for example, 7.Bh4 then the "Indian" plan 7...c5!? 8.d5 Qa5 is stronger because the white bishop cannot return to d2 (see notes to White's 8th move in the game 206). Probably even less promising for White is the retreat 7.Bf4 because of 7...Nc6 8.d5 e5! , and if 9.Be3, then Black can easily sacrifice a pawn: 9...Nd4!? (Eduard Gufeld) 10.Bxd4 exd4 11.Qxd4 Re8 with good counterplay.

7.Be3



7...e5

Played in the good old style. However, at the time, only the classical line of the King's Indian was recognized. In addition, after 7...c5, Black has to reckon not only with the standard 8.d5 (if 8.dxc5, then 8...Qa5 saves Black), but also with the "voluntary" compulsory transition into the endgame after 8.e5!? dxe5 9.dxe5 Qxd1+ 10.Rxd1 Ng4 11.Bxc5 Nxe5, and so on, which is not to everyone's taste. Also, the endgame itself is not all that great for Black.

8.d5 c6

Given that White intends to push forward the kingside pawns, Black's idea to use the c-file looks logical.

However, 8...Nbd7 (8...Na6) is more solid, aiming to hinder the opponent's plan by transferring the knight to c5. For example: 9.h4 Nc5 10.Qc2 c6 11.h5, and it is possible to play 11...g5 12.f3 a5 13.g4 Bd7 14.Nh3 a4!? followed by ...Qa5, ...cxd5, ...Rfc8, ...b5 (Bareev-Kasparov, Linares 1992), as well as 11...cxd5 12.cxd5 Bd7!? (Mikhail Shereshevsky) 13.hxg6 fxg6 14.b4 (after 14.Bxh6 Bxh6 15.Rxh6 Kg7 16.Rh1 Rh8 17.Rxh8 Qxh8, Black has sufficient counterplay according to Boris Gelfand) 14...Na6 15.a3 h5 with mutual chances (Bareev-Gelfand, Biel 1993).

Why does Black rarely advance ...f5 in this opening variation? Because White's whole setup is directed against this plan. A typical example: 8...Ne8?! 9.Qc1! Kh7 10.h4 f5 11.h5 g5 12.exf5 Bxf5 13.g4! Bc8 14.Nf3 Nf6? 15.Qc2+ Kg8 16.Nxg5! hxg5 17.h6 with a decisive attack for White (Lputian-Hartikainen Helsinki 1992).

9.h4 cxd5 10.cxd5 Nbd7

In my opinion, an inaccuracy. After killing three-quarters of his chances on the queenside with the (unnecessary in my opinion) exchange on d5, Black should persistently fight against "freezing" the position on the opposite side of the board. The easiest way to achieve that is via 10...h5, and after something like 11.f3 Na6 12.Nh3 Bd7, Black has enough active resources, as demonstrated in the later game Alburt-Balashov (Vilnius 1975).

The strategic nature of this position can be summarized as follows: as soon as White can focus on any one of the flanks, things are bad for Black; however, as long as play proceeds all over the board, Black can live.

It may seem that Petrosian could carry out his plan more precisely, starting to push the pawns with g2-g4 on the ninth move to prevent ...h5. However, this is not so: 9.g4 cxd5 10.cxd5 Na6 11.h4 Nc5 12.f3 h5, with a complex position similar to a variation of the Sämisch System (Moskalenko- Yermolinsky, Sverdlovsk 1987).

11.h5 g5

Yet another micro-inaccuracy, the third in a row, which is equivalent to one large mistake. Previously, we explained why it is not beneficial for Black to close the position, not to mention the glaring f5- square. This could have been avoided only by 11...Nc5!, using the fact that White has no f2-f3 reply. 12.hxg6 Ncxe4 is fine for Black, and in case of 12.Qc2 he can choose between 12...Qa5, the aforementioned 12...g5, or even 12...Bd7!?.

12.f3

Typical of Petrosian. He could have played 12.g4, which would likely be met by 12...Nc5 13.f3 a5. While in this case, too, White retains the advantage, why give the opponent any hints? Now, in order to achieve the same, Schweber had to make the rather strange move 12...a5.

12...a6 13.g4

White is close to constructing his ideal position. The fate of the game will be decided on the queenside!

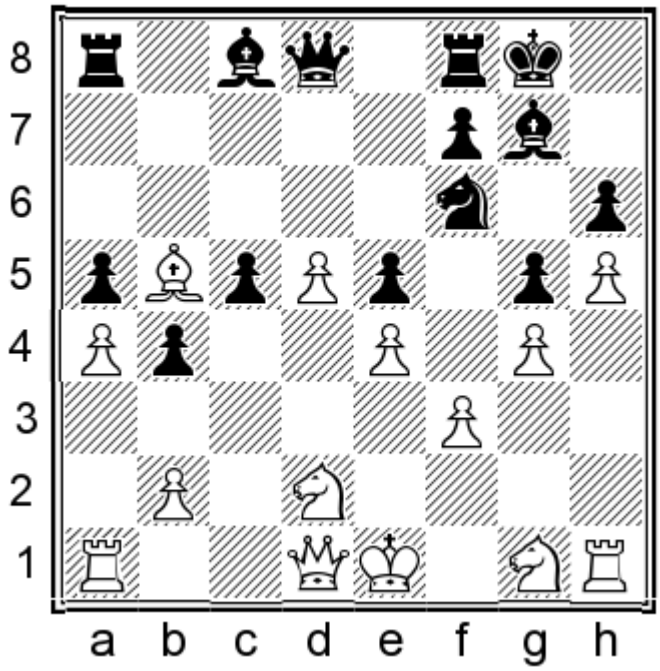
13...b5 14.a4!

A typical undermining move, creating new holes in Black's camp.

14...b4 15.Nb1 a5 16.Nd2 Nc5 17.Bxc5!

In conjunction with the next move, this is the deciding maneuver. Let me remind the reader that Petrosian employed a similar exchange against Gligorić in game 59.

17...dxc5 18.Bb5!



“This is the perfect place for the bishop. White is ready to exchange it for the other knight; then eventually it will be one of the white knights on the c4- or f5-square against the opponent’s dark-square bishop. This is Petrosian’s clear strategy.” (Grigory Goldberg)

18...Bb7 19.Ne2

Of course, White is not so naive as to immediately chase after the pawn: 19.Rc1 Rc8 20.Nb3 Qb6 21.Qc2 and lose the lion’s share of his advantage after 21...c4! (indicated by Grigory Goldberg). As Tigran Petrosian used to say: “We are playing chess, not pawns!”

19...Ne8 20.Bxe8! Rxe8 21.Nc4 Ba6 22.Qb3 Qf6

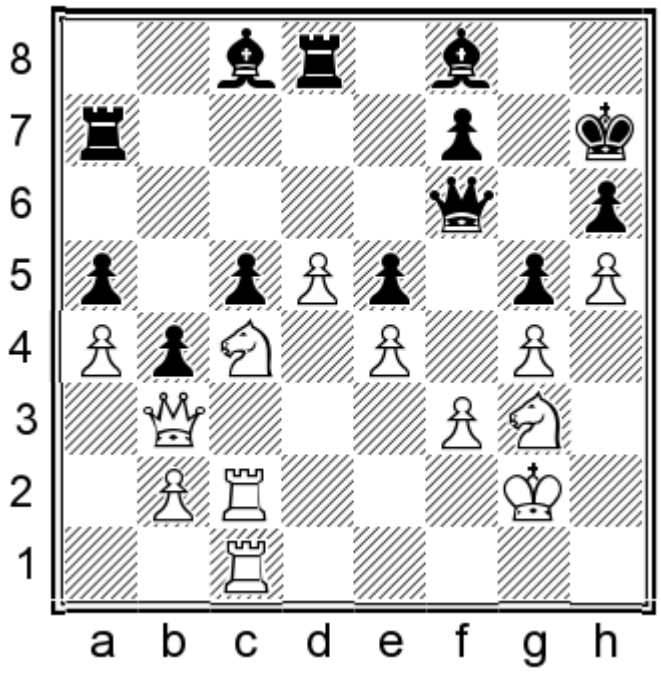
As indicated by Goldberg, ...Bf8, ...f6 seems better. However, generally speaking, there is no cure: in no setup can Black defend all the weaknesses of his position.

23.Rc1 Bf8 24.Ng3 Bc8

Black moves the bishop back and forth, undecided as to which knight to fend off first. The excursion 24...Qf4 accomplishes nothing; for example, 25.Kf2 Bxc4 26.Rxc4, and Black cannot play 26...Qd2+? because of 27.Ne2, threatening to trap the queen (variation by Grigory Goldberg).

25.0-0 Rd8 26.Kg2 Ra7 27.Rf2 Kh7 28.Rfc2

A professional approach. No hurry, all is according to plan... Back in the day, Nimzowitsch said that for a constrained opponent subjected to all sorts of threats, such tactics are sometimes more powerful than the strongest attack.



28...Qa6?

Clearly, Black's position is bad, but why give away pawns? Better is 28...Bd7, continuing to defend.

29.Nxe5 Rc7 30.Nc4 Bg7 31.Qd3 Kg8 32.Rd2 Re7 33.e5!

Petrosian enters an easily winning endgame by force.

33...Bxe5 34.Nxe5 Rxe5 35.Qxa6 Bxa6 36.Rxc5 Bc8 37.Rxa5 f5

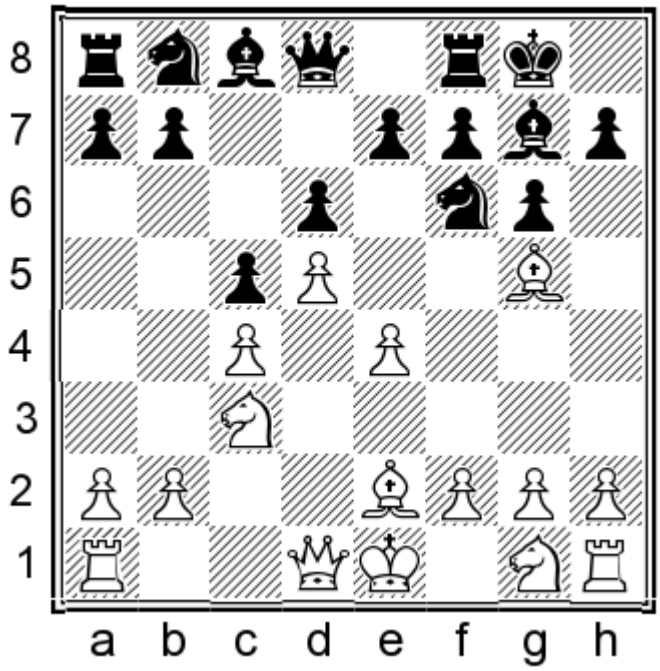
Too late.

38.gxf5 Bxf5 39.Nxf5 Rxf5 40.Rb5 Rdf8 41.d6 Rxb5 42.axb5 Kf7 43.d7 Black resigned. After 43...Rd8 44.b6, White's pawns are unstoppable.

This was an instructive game on the themes "strategy in closed positions" and "the problem of the exchange."

(209) E1.5 **Petrosian – Ivkov**
Santa Monica 1966

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Bg5 c5 7.d5



7...a6

A useful and, at the same time, testing move. If White is careless, Black can play ...b5; for example, 8.Nf3 b5!, and if 9.cxb5 axb5 10.Bxb5, then 10...Nxe4!. Regarding 7...e6, see games 205, 207.

8.a4 Qa5 9.Bd2

The bishop prepares a discovery. The notes to game 206 explain why 9.Qd2 is weaker.

9...e6

In one of the early games in this variation, Averbakh-Panno (Buenos Aires 1954), Black made a strategic mistake by closing the center: 9...e5?. This allowed White to create an attack on the king: 10.g4! Ne8 11.h4 f5 12.h5 f4 13.g5 Rf7 14.Bg4 Qd8 15.Bxc8 Qxc8 16.Nf3 Bf8 17.Ke2! Rg7 18.Rh4 Nd7 19.hxg6 hxg6 20.Qh1 Be7 21.Rh8+, and Panno capitulated ten moves later.

10.Nf3 exd5 11.cxd5

As I have already mentioned, the main line for White in such positions is 11.exd5. I suppose Petrosian decided to avoid symmetry because he sought a complex struggle.

11...Re8 12.0-0 Qc7

Threatening the e4-pawn.

13.Qc2 Bg4

This is a transition from one opening system to another that is characteristic of our time. Now it is a well-known variation of the Modern Benoni.

14.b3

Without waiting for Black to develop the knight to d7, Petrosian takes action against the typical maneuver ...c4, ...Nd7-c5.

14...Nbd7 15.h3 Bxf3 16.Bxf3 c4 17.b4

This opportunity is the idea behind White's 14th move. By isolating the c4-pawn, he hopes to gradually surround and capture it.

17...Re7

The beginning of a skillful defensive plan. By doubling the rooks, Black plans not only to counterattack the e4-pawn but also to use an "x-ray" motif on the e-file.

After the game Petrosian suggested a variation for Black connected with a pawn sacrifice: 17...Ne5 18.Be2 Nfd7 19.f4 Nd3 20.Bxd3 cxd3 21.Qxd3 Qb6+ 22.Kh2 Qd4 with good compensation. However, this might have been a certain craftiness on his part, because after 19.a5! or 19.Rac1 (instead of the hasty 19.f4) White creates difficult problems for his opponent.

18.Rfe1 Rae8 19.Rac1 h6 20.a5 Qb8!?

This is an essential part of the plan; it is important that in the future White cannot take the c-pawn and attack the queen. The reader will soon understand why the queen has to be on b8 and not any other square.

21.Qb1 Kh8

Having placed his pieces on the best squares, Ivkov awaits further developments.

22.Na4 Ne5 23.Be2 Ned7

This unexpected retreat leaving the c4-pawn undefended is strongest and allows Black to hold his position. Now, in case of 24.f3, Ivkov would have the opportunity to demonstrate his interesting idea to the very end: 24...Qa7+! (not 24...Nxd5? 25.Bxc4!) 25.Kf1 Rxe4!, and White cannot take the rook because of 26.fxe4 Nxe4, with numerous threats. If the white king retreats to the corner on the 25th move, Black plays 25...Qf2 and then 26...Nh5, with a dangerous attack.

24.Bf3 Ne5 25.Be2

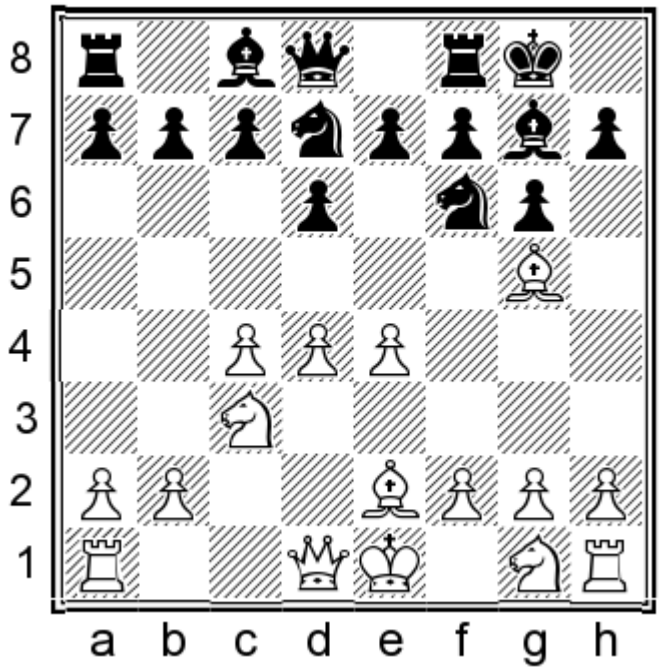
As Ivkov correctly points out, 25.Nb2 does not yield anything for White because of 25...Nxf3+ 26.gxf3 Qc8 27.Kh2 Rc7, etc.

The opponents did not see any other opportunities to prolong the struggle and agreed to a draw.

25...Ned7 Draw.

(210) E1.6 **Donner – Petrosian**
Wijk aan Zee 1971

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Bg5 Nbd7



Here the idea of the move ...Nbd7 is pretty much the same as in other King's Indian variations. Depending on the opponent's plan, Black prepares to play either ...e5 or ...c5. For example: 7.f4 (one of the oldest theoretical recommendations) 7...c5 8.e5 (or 8.d5 Qa5 9.Qd2 b5 10.cxb5 a6) 8...cxd4 9.Qxd4 (9.exf6 exf6?!) 9...Ne8 10.Nf3 f6, with good counterplay.

7.Qd2 c6

Again, this is a matter of taste. Some theorists believe that this order of moves is the most accurate, because after the immediate 7...e5 8.d5 (see the next game) Black does not have the undermining move 8...c6. But this is of course very subjective, since it is not the move that matters, but how much knowledge, calculation, and energy the player puts into it.

8.Nf3 e5 9.0-0 Re8

The alternative method, 9...exd4 10.Nxd4 Nc5, is associated with a curious trap devised by Geller: 11.f3? (correct is 11.Qf4) 11...Nfxe4! with an advantage for Black. Petrosian did not want to immediately give up the center and apparently considered it undignified to play for a trap after Geller caught three (!) opponents with it in 1968.

10.d5 c5

Clearly, Petrosian did not find the continuation 10...cxd5 11.cxd5 quite satisfactory.

11.Ne1 Qe7 12.Nd3 Qf8

With the goal of exchanging the dark-square bishops: ...h5 (or ...h6 first), ...Kh7, ...Bh6.

13.f3 a6 A draw was agreed. After the natural 14.a3, followed by b2-b4, White's chances are better.

(211) E1.7 **Olafsson – Petrosian**
Alekhine Memorial
Moscow 1971

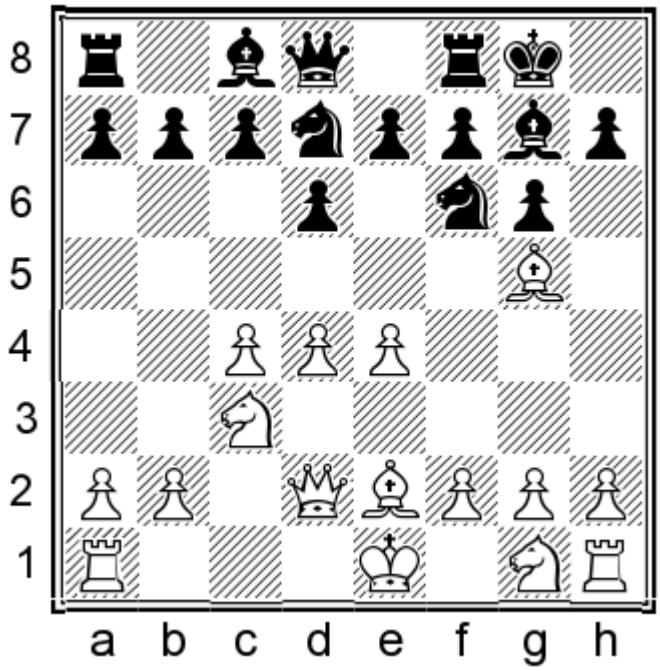
1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.e4 d6 4.d4 Bg7 5.Be2 0-0 6.Bg5 Nbd7

According to most experts, the main drawback of this method is that White has the opportunity to seize the c1-h6

diagonal and further support the position of the bishop on g5.

7.Qd2

Theory. As the subsequent development of this game illustrates, with the queen on d2, Black obtains tactical chances connected with the counter-blow ...Nxe4.



Speaking of this, grandmaster Lev Alburt's original idea 7.Qc1 deserves attention. For example, after 7...e5 8.d5, the move 8...Nc5 does not make sense because of 9.b4, while if Black provides a place for the knight via 8...a5, White, after 9.Nf3 Nc5, favorably places his knight on d2.

7...e5

After 7...c5 the simple 8.Nf3 is good as well as 8.d5, not fearing 8...b5 9.cxb5 a6 10.Nf3 Qa5 11.0-0 axb5 12.Bxb5 since the typical blow 12...Nxe4 favors White: 13.Nxe4 Qxb5 14.Bxe7 (Polugaevsky-Geller, Skopje 1968).

8.d5 Nc5

Forcing White to spend time to protect the e4-pawn, since the direct 9.b4 leads to complications that are beneficial for Black: 9...Ncxe4! 10.Nxe4 Nxe4 11.Bxd8 Nxd2 12.Bxc7 e4 (12...Ne4 is worse because of 13.f3) 13.Rc1 e3 (Lukacs-Toth, Budapest 1971).

9.Bf3

A super-reliable move. Olafsson does not want to allow the opponent's knight on h5 and prepares to develop his knight to e2. However, the artificiality of this whole concept is obvious. The only way to fight for the advantage was to play 9.f3. While White still needs to solve the problem of the g1-knight and ...h6 becomes possible, he would maintain good prospects to play on both flanks, which is White's main strategic asset in such positions. In this case, it would go approximately like this: 9...h6 10.Be3 (not 10.Bxh6? Nfxe4!) 10...a5 11.Bd1 (premature is 11.g4 because of 11...h5!) 11...Nh5 12.Nge2 with the idea of Bc2, 0-0-0, and so on, according to Sämisch.

9...a5 10.Nge2 c6 11.Ng3

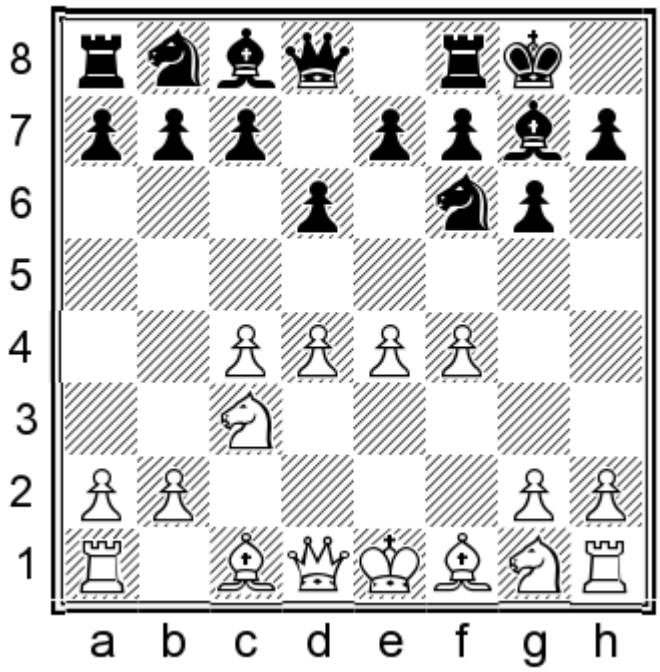
Again, played very cautiously. Reinforcing the e4-pawn, White will take on d5 with a minor piece in case of cxd5. An attempt to pressure the d6-pawn, 11.dxc6 bxc6 12.0-0-0, yields nothing, at the very least because of 12...Nb7.

11...cxd5 12.Nxd5 Ne6 13.Nxf6+ Bxf6 14.Bxf6 Qxf6 15.0-0

It would have been too risky to take on d6, for example, 15.Qxd6 Rd8 16.Qb6 (16.Qa3 Nf4!) 16...Qe7 with a strong initiative for Black: 17.0-0? Nd4!; 17.Qe3 Qb4+ 18.Qc3 Qxc3+ 19.bxc3 Nc5; 17.Qb3 Nc5 18.Qc2 Nd3+ 19.Kf1 Be6.

15...Nd4 16.Bd1 Draw.

E2

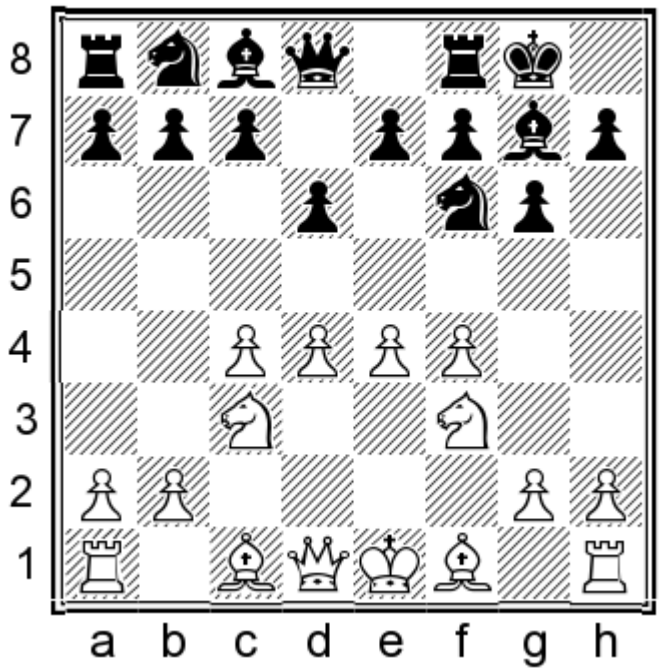


White to move

The old Four Pawns Attack. This onceformidable weapon, conceived almost as a refutation of the King's Indian Defense, has lost much of its devastating tendencies over time, and today it is increasingly becoming a tool to achieve draws (see games 214, 216).

(212) E2.1 **Bisguier – Petrosian**
USSR-USA Match
New York 1954

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f4 0-0 6.Nf3



6...c5 7.dxc5

One of White's possible reactions to the attack on the pawn center (a passive one, according to David Bronstein). The reader will meet the other two moves, 7.d5 (active) and 7.Be2 (neutral), in games 213 and 214, respectively.

7...Qa5

A universal maneuver that has been known since the nineteenth century. 7...dxc5 is not good for Black because of 8.Qxd8 Rxd8 9.e5 and 10.Nd5.

8.Bd3

It is well known that 8.cxd6 Nxe4 is to Black's advantage.

Speaking of the drawish nature of this variation, note that already here White could repeat moves if he wanted: 8.Bd2 Qxc5 9.b4 Qxb4 10.Na4 Qa3 11.Bc1, etc.

8...Qxc5 9.Qe2 Nc6

Gradually, the position acquires a Sicilian flavor.

10.Be3 Qa5

This is considered the best since the game Geller-Gligorić (Stockholm 1952).

The move 10...Qh5, recommended at the time by Alexander Alekhine, does not meet expectations. In this case, White should not rush to castle: 11.0-0 Ng4, and the bishop cannot retreat to d2 because of 12...Nd4!. Black also has good play in case of 11.0-0-0 Qa5!. Keres simply played 11.h3 against Bronstein (Zürich 1953) and had better play after 11...Ng4 12.Bd2, as White can counter 12...Nd4 with the strong 13.Qf1!.

11.0-0 Bg4

In the aforementioned game Gligorić played 11...Ng4 and, while he had good chances after the opening, he later had to admit that Black's cavalry attack was not quite justified.

12.Rac1 Nd7

This variation is still played in this manner. White has more space, while Black's chances lie in piece play. We can say that the position is roughly equal.

13.Qf2

In his annotations to this game, grandmaster Igor Bondarevsky suggested that 13.Qd2 should be good here. Today, this possibility is being tested thoroughly.

13...Bxf3

Black takes the opportunity to weaken the opponent's pawns, as 14.Qxf3 can followed by 14...Bxc3 and Black takes the a2-pawn.

14.gxf3 a6

This and Black's following moves are not entirely successful. 14...Nc5 15.Bb1 Na4 suggested itself, trading the active c3-knight, as, for example, in the game Topalov-Kasparov (Linares 1994).

15.Kh1 e6 16.Bb1

According to Bondarevsky, the bishop is not active enough here, so better is 16.Rfd1 and then 17.Bf1.

16...Qc7 17.Rfd1 Nf6 18.Nd5

Bisguier forces the issue but achieves little. The calm 18.Rd2, with the goal of increasing the pressure in the center by doubling rooks, is more unpleasant for Black.

18...exd5 19.cxd5 Nh5 20.Bb6 Qe7!?

Petrosian sacrifices a pawn in order to activate his pieces. In case of 20...Qd7, White could reply 21.dxc6 bxc6 22.Bc5.

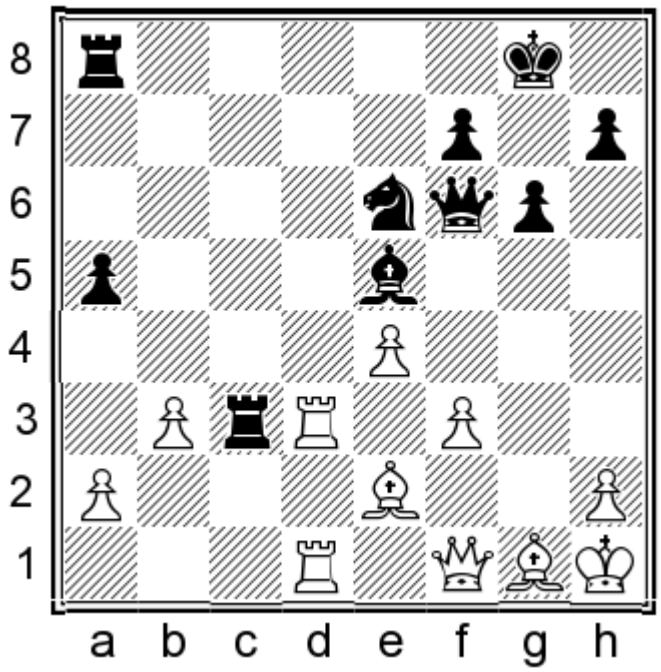
21.dxc6 bxc6 22.Rxc6 Nxf4 23.Rcxd6 Be5 24.R6d2 Rfb8 25.Bc5 Qf6 26.b3

With his last moves, Black constantly created threats and forced his opponent to go on the defensive. White's extra pawn does not matter much anymore. After 26.b4, Black could play 26...a5 to activate his a8-rook.

26...Rc8 27.Be3 Rc3

The black rook is very well placed on this square, controlling a number of important squares along the c-line and the third rank.

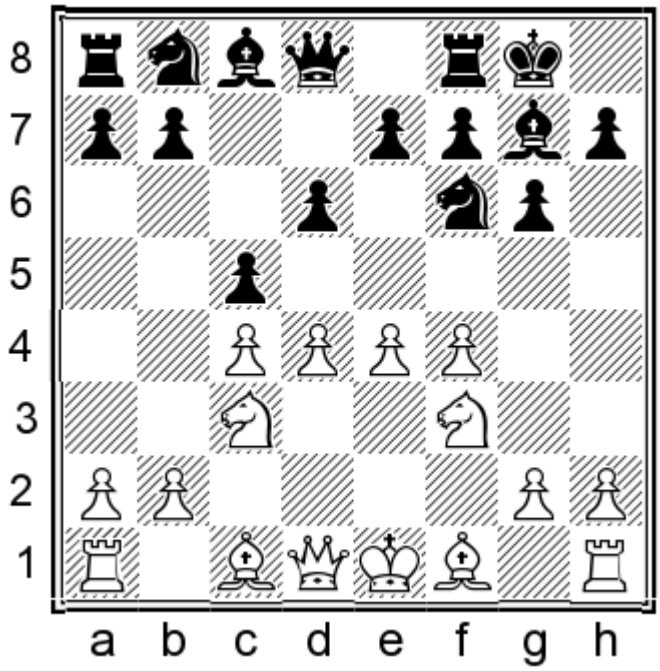
28.Bd3 Nh3 29.Qf1 Nf4 30.Bg1 Ne6 31.Be2 a5 32.Rd3



In this position, the opponents have approximately equal chances. White's extra pawn is compensated by Black's positional advantage; for example, 32...Rc2 33.R1d2 Rac8, and so on. Thus a draw was agreed.

(213) E2.2 **Wade – Petrosian**
Belgrade 1954

1.c4 g6 2.Nc3 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.e4 Nf6 5.f4 0-0 6.Nf3 c5



7.d5 e6

The main direction. The “Benko” version of this variation (7...b5) is just as sound. For those who are interested in concrete analysis, we can recommend Eduard Gufeld’s bestseller *A Lifetime of the King’s Indian*.

8.Be2 exd5 9.exd5

The continuations 9.cxd5 and 9.e5 lead to a more complex struggle; a detailed analysis of each of them would make for a voluminous book.

For a number of years, Master Boris Vladimirov from Leningrad had success taking on d5 with the e-pawn. This way White avoids problems with defending the center and, after 0-0 and Bd3, plans to implement f4-f5, starting active operations on the kingside. In our opinion, Black’s following reply is one of the most reliable responses to this plan.

9...Bf5 10.0-0 Ne4

Now and on the previous move, possible was ...Re8, as recommended by theory. Petrosian’s exchanging maneuver is also in the spirit of the position.

11.Nxe4 Bxe4 12.Ng5

This is a waste of time. Not satisfied with the results of the opening in this game, Wade later switched to the continuation 12.Bd3 with the idea of exchanging the passive light-square bishop, which looks more correct from a positional point of view. Here is how two of his games continued:

(1) 12...Bxd3 13.Qxd3 Nd7 14.Rb1 a6 15.a3 Re8 16.Bd2 b5 17.b3 Rb8 18.a4 (Wade-Schmidt, Varna 1962) and

(2) 12...Re8 13.Bxe4 Rxe4 14.Qc2 Qe7 15.f5 Nd7 16.Bg5 Nf6 17.fxg6 fxg6 18.Rae1 (Wade- Robatsch, Havana 1963).

12...Re8

Black does not need to cling to his bishop pair; moreover, this would not be safe; for example, 12...Bf5 13.g4 Bc8 14.f5 Nd7 15.fxg6 hxg6 16.Qe1! Nf6 17.Qh4 with a strong attack for White (Vladimirov-Bobotsov, Sochi 1966).

13.Nxe4 Rxe4 14.Bd3 Re8

It seems that the position is completely equal and soon the players will agree to a draw, but in reality, White has inconspicuously planted the seeds of future defeat. What are the disadvantages of his position?

The exchanges of the minor pieces largely discounted the role of the d5-pawn, the e-file is bare, and the e4- and e3-squares have been weakened by the advance f2-f4 and require constant protection. At the same time, a further advance of the f-pawn does not bring White any additional attacking chances, since it also gives Black the e5-square. Of course, White does not have to lose, but defending such positions is extremely difficult. The reader can confirm that by analyzing another eye-opening game, Szabo-Fischer (Leipzig 1960).

The bishop pair is probably White's only real hope, but it looks like Wade did not understand this.

15.Rb1 Nd7 16.a3

A careless move. White allows the bishop to come to e3, and, as a result, immediately loses the bishop pair and the opportunity to defend the dark squares. Much better is 16.Qf3 or 16.Bd2.

16...Bd4+ 17.Kh1 Be3 18.Re1 Bxc1 19.Rxe8+ Qxe8 20.Rxc1

Wade was a natural when it came to tactical complications; however, he felt insecure in positions with a small number of pieces, particularly ones that required meticulous defense. Knowing this, Petrosian plays especially carefully, winning by point decisions, as they say in boxing.

Preferable to the text move is 20.Qxc1, aiming to trade the queens: after something like 20...Qe7 21.Qe1 Re8 22.Qxe7 Rxe7 23.Kg1 (23.Rd1) White's position is only a little bit worse.

20...Qe3 21.g3 Re8 22.Kg2 Kf8

The first signs of the endgame: the kings enter the game.

23.Rc2 Re7 24.Re2 Qd4 25.Qe1

White hopes not to allow the opponent's king beyond the e-file, but this does not work. Therefore it is better to simply play 25.Rxe7 Kxe7 26.Qe2+ Kd8 27.Kf3.

25...Rxe2+

Black does not let himself be enticed by the beautiful move 25...Qxb2?, since after 26.Rxb2 Rxe1 27.Rxb7, White seizes the advantage.

26.Qxe2 Nb6 27.b3 Nd7 28.a4

Little by little, new weaknesses appear in White's camp.

Practical play shows that in an endgame duel between the knight and the bishop, the latter tends to be stronger. However, if the queens are still on the board, often the opposite is true. This game confirms the simple logic behind that fact: the knight complements the linear power of the queen, while the bishop only duplicates one of the queen's functions.

28...Nf6 29.Bc2 Qc3 30.Bd1 h5 31.Qc2 Qd4 32.Bf3 Ke7

Black's king finally gets out of confinement. Petrosian's next maneuvers are designed to further undermine White's position by provoking the advance of the kingside pawns.

33.Qc1 Ke8 34.Qc2 Kd7 35.Qc1 Ng8

The knight is the ideal piece to make the opponent's head spin. Now Petrosian pretends that he plans to transfer the knight to f5.

36.h3 Nf6 37.g4

White should have refrained from the last two moves. If he did decide to move the rook pawn, then it would have been better to place it on h4, maintaining the stability of the pawn structure, as the bishop could well have watched the nimble knight.

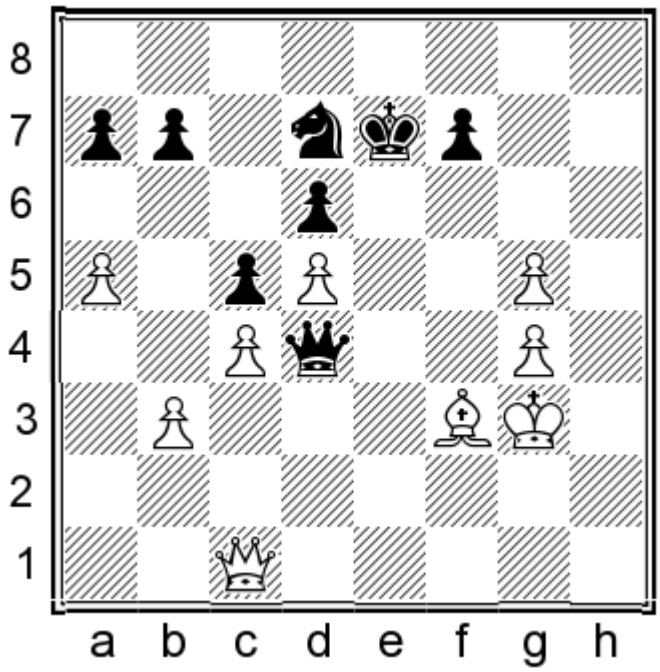
37...hxg4 38.hxg4 Kd8 39.a5

The eyes of fear see danger everywhere. Fearing the appearance of the black king near the queenside, Wade (apparently in time trouble) makes a prophylactic move, moving his pawn away from the base and thus complicating his defense.

39...Nd7 40.Kg3 g5!

Seizing the e5-square.

41.fxg5 Ke7



Probably more solid is the immediate 41...Ne5 (see notes to the next move).

42.Be2?

After this inaccuracy by Black, White needs to play 42.g6! fxg6 43.Qg5+. For example, 43...Kf7 44.Qd8, activating the queen, or 43...Qf6 44.Qxf6+ Kxf6 45.Kf4 g5+ 46.Ke4 and so on.

42...Ne5 43.g6?!

Why? Now this move has no need or purpose.

43...Nxg6 44.g5 Kf8

Now White's position is lost: Black brings the king to g7 and threatens to enter a pawn endgame.

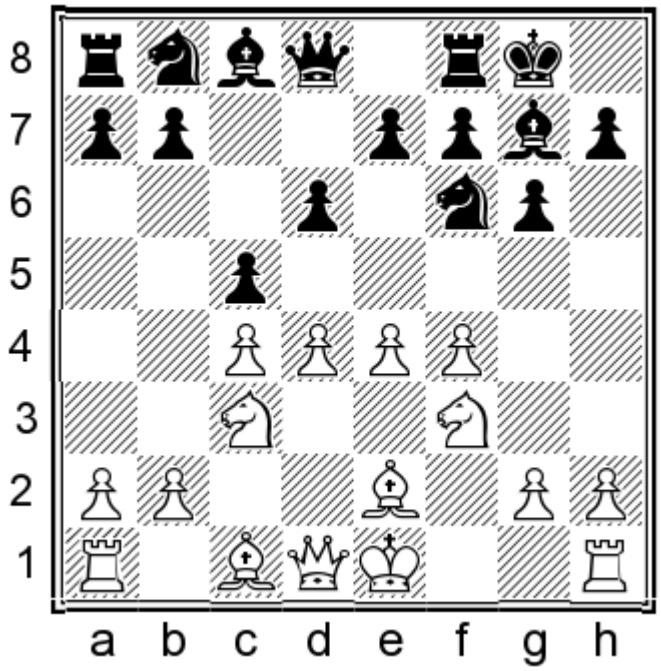
45.Kg2 Nh4+ 46.Kf1 Kg7 47.Bd1 Nf5 48.Ke2 Qg4+ 49.Kd3

Or 49.Kf2 Qg3+ 50.Kf1 Ne3+ 51.Ke2 Nxd1 52.Qxd1 Qg4+, exchanging the queens.

49...Qg1 50.Qb2+ Kh7 51.Bh5 Qg3+ 52.Ke4 Nd4! 53.Qd2 Qh4+ 54.Qf4 Qxh5 55.Qxd6 Qf3+ White resigned.

(214) E2.3 **Tal – Petrosian**
Interzonal Tournament
Portorož 1958

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.f4 c5 7.Nf3



An opening twist. The game goes into the Maróczy Bind in the Sicilian Defense, in which White usually tries to avoid such an early f2-f4 advance.

7...cxd4 8.Nxd4 Nc6 9.Be3

The opponents had reached all of their tournament goals on the previous day, so they had little incentive to fight in the last round. The variation chosen by Tal is rather harmless and justly enjoys a drawish reputation. And so, now Black can play 9...Ng4 or even 9...Bg4, forcing simplifications and completely equalizing the game. However, Petrosian decided to employ a different continuation connected with a pawn sacrifice, one that was new at the time. But Tal does not take the pawn and trades queens, demonstrating his peaceful intentions.

9...Nxd4 10.Bxd4 e5!? 11.fxe5 dxe5 12.Bc5

If 12.Bxe5, then 12...Qa5, with an initiative for the pawn.

12...Re8 13.Qxd8 Rxd8 14.Rd1

Exchanging the active black rook. The endgame looks more pleasant for White because of his centralized king and pawn majority on the queenside. However, Petrosian confidently proves that Black has enough resources to maintain the balance.

In the subsequent game Tarasov-Geller (Moscow 1961), White played 14.0-0 and after 14...Rd2 15.Rad1 Rxd1 16.Rxd1 Be6 17.h3 Bf8 18.Be3 Rc8 the position became equal. According to Efim Geller, 14.Rf1 poses more problems for Black; for example, 14...Re8 15.0-0-0.

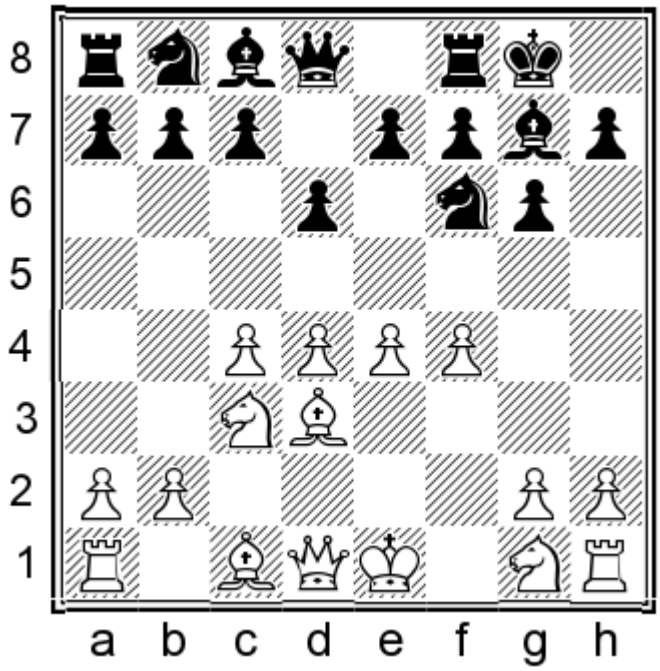
14...Rxd1+ 15.Kxd1 Be6 16.b3 Nd7 17.Be3 Nb8

The knight goes to d4, and after that there is no reason to continue the fight.

18.Nb5 Nc6 19.Kc2 Nd4+ 20.Bxd4 exd4 21.Nc7 Rd8 22.Nxe6 fxe6 Draw.

(215) E2.4 **Arafat – Petrosian**
XXI Olympiad
Nice 1974

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f4 0-0 6.Bd3



Before the center has been fixed, such a development of the bishop does not look right: White has difficulties protecting the d4-pawn.

6...Nc6! 7.Nf3 Bg4 8.Be3

White must come to terms with losing the opening initiative, as attempts to play actively leads to even more unpleasant consequences. For example, 8.e5?! Bxf3! 9.gxf3 Nh5 or 9.Qxf3 Nxd4 10.Qxb7 dxe5 11.fxe5 Ng4.

8...e5 9.d5?

The Jordanian player demonstrates a clear ignorance of positional basics. He should first exchange on e5, preventing Black from extending the range of his g7-bishop; for example: 9.fxe5 dxe5 10.d5 Nd4 11.Be2 with satisfactory play.

9...exf4 10.Bxf4

The continuation 10.dxc6 fxe3 11.cxb7 Rb8 is obviously to Black's advantage.

10...Nd4 11.h3

Baffling... for the commentator! Arafat must have wanted to disarm the opponent with his weak play. Could he not come up with something better?

11...Bxf3 12.gxf3 Nh5 13.Be3 c5

A characteristic moment. Despite his big advantage and the difference in class, Petrosian tries to play very solidly,

not lured by cheap “beauty” such as 13...Nf4 14.Bf1!, and Black achieves nothing significant.

14.h4 Bf6 15.Bh6?

White has lost his footing and makes random moves. However, even after what he has done to his position, 15.Kd2 Bxh4 16.f4 would have allowed him to continue a far from hopeless resistance.

15...Bxh4+ 16.Kd2 Bg5+

Surprisingly (for White) it turns out that after 17.Bxg5 Qxg5+ 18.Ke1 Qe3+ he loses.

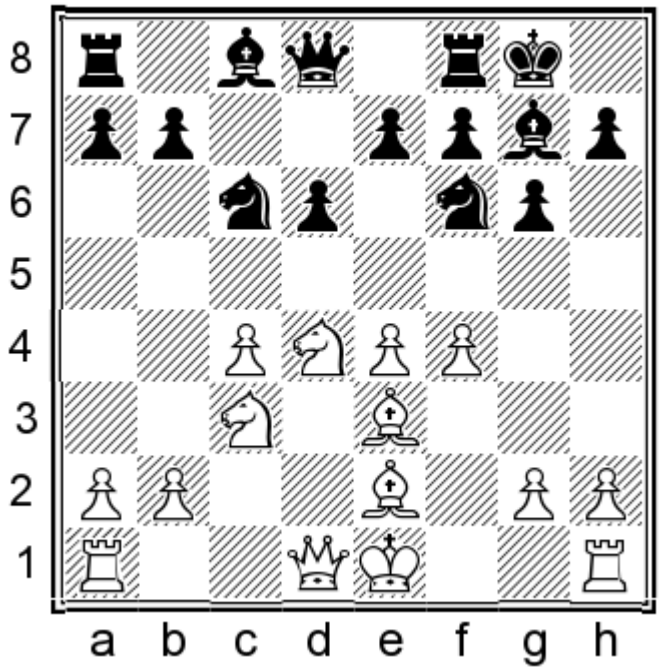
17.f4 Bxh6

Is it all over? No, the “struggle” continues, down a piece; there is nothing interesting left.

18.Ne2 Nxe2 19.Bxe2 Bxf4+ 20.Kc2 Ng3 21.Rh3 f5 22.exf5 Nxf5 23.Qd3 Nd4+ 24.Kc3 Qa5+ with mate next move. A typical “simul” game.

(216) E2.5 **Martz – Petrosian**
Lone Pine 1976

1.c4 g6 2.e4 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.Be2 0-0 6.f4 c5 7.Nf3 cxd4 8.Nxd4 Nc6 9.Be3



9...Bd7

This is a new move compared to the game examined earlier, Tal-Petrosian (game 214), where Black played 9...Nxd4. As practical play shows, neither the exchange on d4, nor the passive text move nor the simplifying continuations 9...Ng4 and 9...Bg4 pose any serious problems for White in this variation, which today has been thoroughly analyzed and become a convenient platform to achieve bloodless draws.

Thus, instead of the standard 8...Nc6, deserving attention is 8...Na6, an interesting idea that Ukrainian grandmaster Leonid Stein successfully tested against Ståhlberg (Yerevan 1965).

10.0-0 Nxd4 11.Bxd4 Bc6

This “Sicilian” maneuver has been known since Capablanca’s time. While there is no direct threat to the e4-pawn

(12...Bxe4? 13.Bxf6;

12...Nxe4? 13.Nxe4 Bxe4 14.Bxg7 and 15.Qd4+),

there is an indirect one: 12...e5! and 13...Nxe4.

12.Bf3 a5

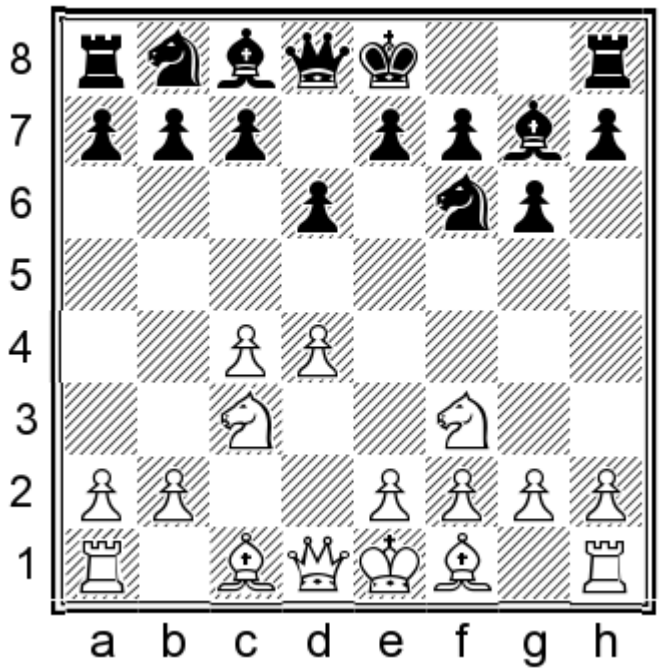
A careful move, hindering the possible increase of White's space advantage on the queenside; for example, 12...Nd7 13.Bxg7 Kxg7 14.Qd4+ Kg8 15.b4. After 12...Qa5, which is often played in the Maróczy System, unpleasant is 13.a3 followed by 14.b4.

13.c5

White exchanges the c4-pawn for the d-pawn, renouncing any claim to an advantage. As the American master admitted, in the game against the famous former champion, he wanted from the very beginning to achieve an honorable draw.

13...dxc5 A draw was agreed.

E3



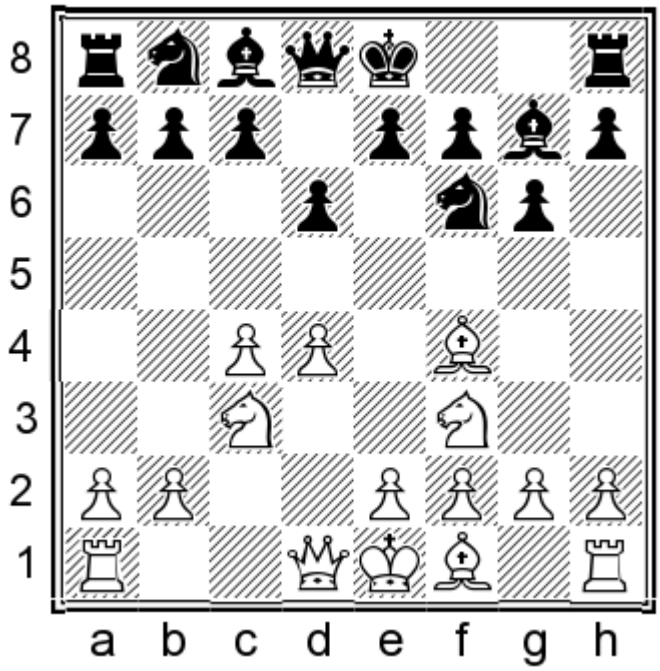
White to move

Grandmasters Paul Keres and Vassily Smyslov often played this move order in their time. In the future White develops according to a Queen's Gambit setup, moving the bishop to f4 (games 217, 218 and 222), or g5 (games 220, 221).

(217) E3.1 **Keres – Petrosian**
17th USSR Championship
Moscow 1949

Annotations by Paul Keres

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.c4 Bg7 4.Nc3 d6 5.Bf4



The usual continuations are 5.e4 and 5.g3. White aims for calm development, but Black is not inclined to oblige and immediately starts tactical complications (*I think the reason is Petrosian's psychological state, caused by a very bad start in this tournament – Igor Yanvarjov*).

5...Nh5

A premature move. More promising is 5...0-0 (*see the next game – Igor Yanvarjov*), preparing ...c6 and ...Nbd7 or ...e5.

6.Bg5 h6 7.Be3

White has not allowed the bishop to be traded off (7.Bh4 g5) and has deliberately provoked the response ...h6. Now, in case of 7...0-0 8.Qd2 Kh7 9.h3 followed by g2-g4, he could start a dangerous attack.

7...c6 8.g3

The immediate 8.h3, followed by g2-g4, also deserves attention. The move 8.Qd2, hindering castling, has certain advantages as well.

8...Nd7 9.Bg2 Nhf6

A tacit admission that the knight raid turned out to be useless. At the same time, White continues his development and achieved a good position. With the text move Black plans the advance ...e5, which would be bad right away because of 10.Ne4.

10.h3 0-0 11.0-0 Kh7

This move could have waited. Deserving attention is the immediate 11...e5.

12.g4

A good move, limiting the range of the black pieces and threatening g4-g5 if the opportunity presents itself.

12...e5 13.Qb3

Later it will become clear that this is not a very good square for the queen. Better is 13.Qc2.

13...exd4!

Petrosian immediately takes the opportunity to seize the e5-square for the knight and to tie the queen to the defense of the c4-pawn. Maybe now it is better to take on d4 with the bishop and buy time for the queen to retreat to c2.

14.Nxd4 Ne5

Now it is not very easy for White to find the right response to the threat ...Nfd7-c5 (or b6). If 15.f4, then 15...Nexg4! 16.hxg4 Nxg4 with a strong attack.

15.Rad1 Qe7

If 15...Nfd7 immediately, then 16.Ne4 is strong.

16.Bf4

Deserving attention is 16.g5, even though this weakens the kingside.

16...h5?

Before implementing his plan, Petrosian wants to weaken the position of the white king. However, it turns out that this maneuver is to White's advantage. Correct is the immediate 16...Nfd7. If White does not want any major complications, he could continue 17.Na4, with approximately equal play.

17.g5 Nfd7 18.Ne4 Nb6?

Surprisingly, this natural move turns out to be the decisive mistake. Correct was 18...Nc5 19.Qc2 Bd7, and White's position is only slightly better.

19.Qg3!

An incredibly strong move, threatening not only 20.b3 with a large positional advantage,

but also 20.c5! dxc5 21.Nf6+ Bxf6 22.gxf6 and so on. Therefore, Black is forced to take on c4.

19...Nexc4

19...Nbxc4 leads to the same outcome.

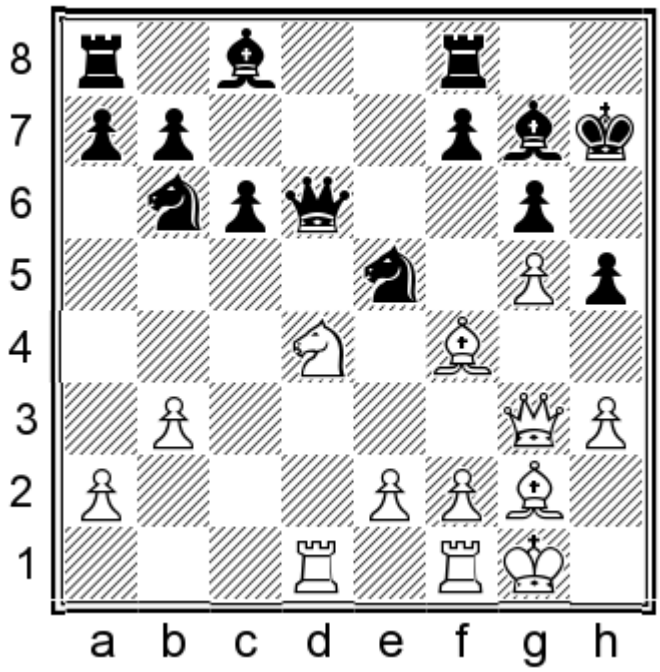
20.b3

Petrosian probably considered only 20.Nxd6, planning to continue 20...Nxb2 with good play.

20...Ne5 21.Nxd6!

The point of the combination started on the 19th move. In any case, White wins back the pawn with a better position, while Black is not able to use the position of the white knight on g7, cut off from the main forces (after Nd4-f5xg7), which becomes very active.

21...Qxd6



Almost forced, as after 21...Nd5 22.Nxc8 Raxc8 23.Bc1 White has a clear advantage.

22.Nf5 Qa3

Black has at his disposal a wide variety of defensive possibilities, but none is satisfactory. Let's consider some options:

(1) 22...Qxd1 23.Rxd1 Bxf5 24.Bxe5, and Black has insufficient compensation for the queen;

(2) 22...Qc7 23.Nxg7 Nbd7 24.Rxd7! Qxd7 25.Bxe5, and White has two pieces for a rook;

(3) 22...Qc5 (relatively best) 23.Nxg7 Nbd7 (or 23...h4 24.Qxh4+ Kxg7 25.Rd5! Nxd5 26.Qh6+ Kg8 27.Bxe5) 24.Be3 (also possible is 24.Rxd7 Nxd7 25.Bd6 Qa5 26.Bxf8 Nxf8 27.Ne8) 24...Qe7 25.f4 Kxg7 26.fxe5 with a significant advantage for White, as after 26...Nc5 27.e6! is very strong.

Now White not only regains the piece but also ends up an exchange ahead.

23.Nxg7 Ned7 24.Bd6 Qa5

Black cannot play 24...Qxa2 because after 25.Bxf8 Nxf8 26.Ne8 there is no defense against the three threats 27.Qe5, 27.Qe3, and 27.Nc7. 24...Qb2 is somewhat better; now White could include the strong move 25.b4! before capturing on f8.

25.Bxf8 Nxf8 26.Ne8!

The knight has broken loose, and the outcome of the struggle is clear: White is not only up an exchange but also has a strong attack.

26...Be6 27.Nf6+ Kh8 28.Qf4 Nh7 29.Qd4 Nxf6 30.Qxf6+ Kh7 31.e4

31.Rd6 wins easily, and if 31...Nd5, then 32.Bxd5 Bxd5 33.e4 or 32...cxd5 33.Rxe6 fxe6 34.Qf7+ Kh8 35.Rc1 and so on.

With the text move, White sacrifices a pawn on the queenside to win with a direct attack.

31...Qxa2 32.f4 Bxb3 33.Rd6 Rg8 34.f5 Rg7

White threatened 35.Rd8 Rxd8 36.fxg6+ fxg6 37.Qe7+, as well as e5-e6.

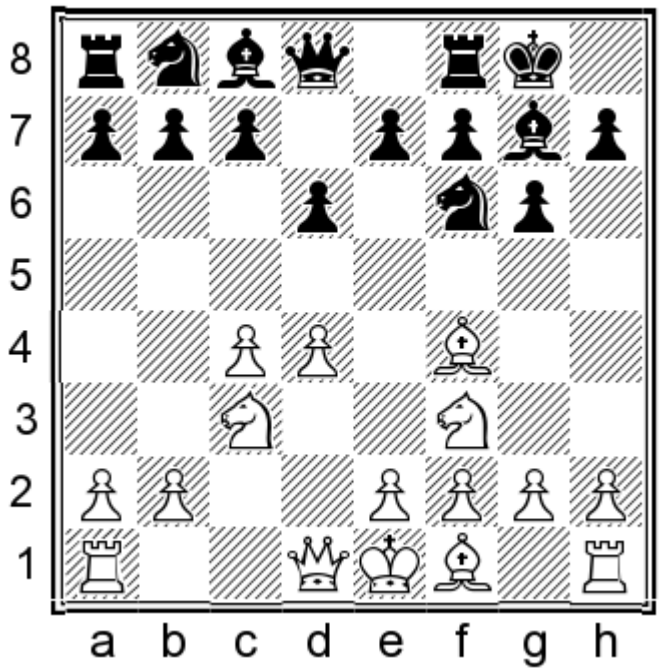
35.Rd8 Qa5 36.Qd6 f6 37.Qf8 gxf5 38.Qh8+ Kg6 39.Qh6+ Black resigned.

(218) E3.2 **Chistyakov – Petrosian**
Moscow 1951

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.d4 Bg7 4.Nc3 d6 5.Bf4

Not so much to prevent the advance ...e5 but rather in order to be able to pressure the e5-pawn when this advance is carried out. According to the authoritative opinion of Isaac Boleslavsky, in this system Black should abandon the idea of preparing the advance ...e5 and should instead seek counterplay on the queenside, combining it with the threat of exchanging the f4-bishop. It is this strategic outline that Petrosian tries to follow in this game, but his implementation is not the best.

5...0-0



According to Boleslavsky, the most precise move order is as follows: 5...c6, and 6.e3 is followed by 6...Qa5, threatening ...Ne4. Now, in case of 7.Bd3, Black exchanges the f4-bishop: 7...Nh5 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 g5. 7.Nd2 Nh5 8.Nb3 does not help White because of 8...Qf5! 9.Bd3 Qg4 10.Qxg4 Bxg4 11.Bg5 h6, and so on, with the same result. So, what does Black do if his opponent figures out his plan and instead of 6.e3 replies, say, 6.h3? Then Black can switch to his backup plan: 6...0-0 7.e3 a6, or immediately 6...a6, with the idea of advancing ...b5. This plan, developed by Yugoslav chess players, was quite successful in practical play (see game 222).

6.Qd2

This is how this position was played before our time. Petrosian never believed that an attack could be carried out this way, but he still decided to hinder the exchange of the g7-bishop, just in case.

Regarding the continuation 6.e3, see game 222.

6...Re8 7.h3 c6

A somewhat vague idea. If Black had planned the undermining move ...c5, why did he not play it right away? If he was focused on ...e5, then the move ...c6, weakening the d6-square, is also not particularly useful: simpler is 7...Nc6 8.Rd1 Bf5, as, for example, Euwe had played against Bernstein (Zürich 1934). That game developed as follows: 9.d5 e5 10.Bg5 Ne7 11.Nh4 Ne4 12.Nxe4 Bxe4 with promising play for Black.

8.g4

Not for the attack but for prophylaxis. White wants to develop the bishop to g2, hindering the counterplay with ...b5, and he also reserves room for the other bishop to retreat in case of ...e5.

8...Qa5 9.Bg2 Nbd7 10.0-0 c5

After making sure that 10...e5 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.Bg3 is not promising for Black (12...e4? 13.Nxe4!), Petrosian switches to breaking with the c-pawn.

11.d5 a6 12.a4 Nf8

Black's position is worse. With the text move he begins a defensive maneuver aimed against White's threat to break through in the center via e4-e5. Weaker is 12...Nb6?! 13.Qd3 Qb4 14.Nd2, and Black's play comes to a standstill.

13.e4 N6d7 14.Qd3 Rb8 15.Rfe1 Qc7 16.Re2 f6

In nine out of ten situations, such a move is bad because it “kills” the g7-bishop and leads to chronic weaknesses. However, Petrosian, with his perfect chess “pitch,” keenly sensed that the specifics of this position (in particular, the extended position of the g4-pawn) give Black reason for such an exceptional decision.

17.g5 Ne5

Forcing the exchange of the knight pair and placing the pawn on e5, Black manages to somewhat stabilize the situation.

18.Nxe5 fxe5 19.Bd2 e6 20.Rf1

White does not find the best plan. In our opinion, he should have first stripped Black of active chances on the queenside by playing, for example, 20.a5 or 20.Ree1 and Bf1, and then calmly prepared the assault on the kingside, using the fact that trading on d5 is not advantageous for Black.

20...Kh8 21.Qg3 Qd8 22.h4 b5!?

Petrosian uses this chance and sacrifices a pawn for the initiative.

23.axb5 axb5 24.Nxb5 Ba6 25.Ra1

True to his active style, Chistyakov does not try to hold onto the extra pawn, but he should have. After 25.Na3, White has an advantage; in particular, 25...Rxb2? does not work because of 26.Ba5 Qb8 27.Bc7!.

25...Bxb5 26.cxb5 Rxb5

Probably at this point Black drew an easy breath for the first time in the game: all of his troubles are behind him; the position is equal.

27.Bc3 Kg8 28.Qd3 Rb6 29.Bh3 Kh8 30.Ree1

The rook, which had been idle for a long time, is finally starting to show signs of life.

30...Qe7 31.Red1 h6

Starting active operations across the whole board. Petrosian begins to harass the opponent’s picket on the kingside.

32.Qg3 exd5

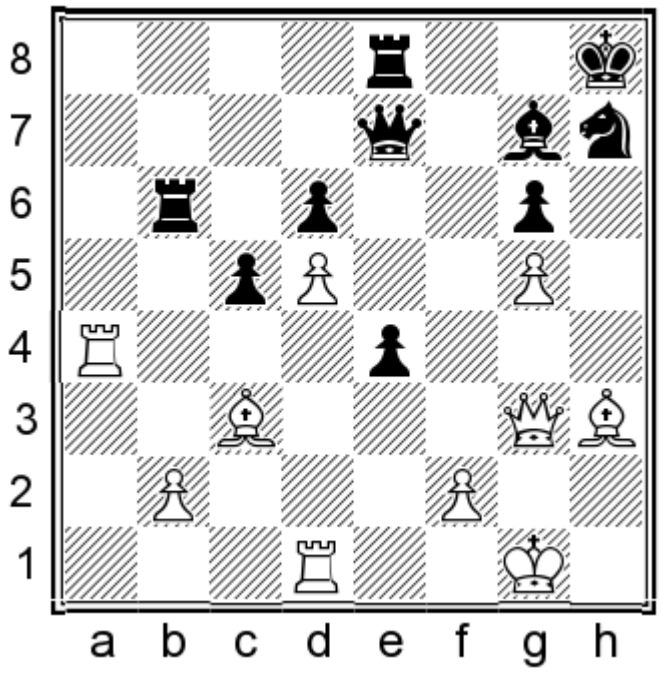
Now that White does not have a knight, this exchange is quite appropriate.

33.exd5 hxg5 34.hxg5 Nh7 35.Ra4

Simpler is 35.Be6, for example, 35...Qxg5 36.Bf7 with equal play. 35...Nxg5? is a mistake in this variation because of 36.Qh4+ Nh7 37.Qxe7 Rxe7 38.Ra8+ Nf8 39.Kg2, followed by Rh1.

35...e4

In case of 35...Nxg5 36.Rg4 Bf6 37.Bg2, White has sufficient compensation for the pawn.



36.f4

Chistyakov cannot help but set a trap, after which the advantage goes to Black. White should use his lines of communications, the a- and h-files, as well as the opportunity to anchor his bishop on e6 to create counterplay: 36.Be6!, with the rough variation 36...Bxc3 37.Qxc3+ Qg7 38.Qxg7+ Kxg7 39.Ra7+ Kh8 40.Kg2! Reb8 41.Rd7 R6b7 42.Rxd6 Nxg5 and so on.

36...exf3 37.Re1 Be5 38.Rh4

Hoping for 38...Rf8? 39.Rxe5! dxe5 40.d6! Rxd6 41.Qxe5+, and White wins. But Black does not fall into the trap, of course.

38...Qg7 39.Qxf3 Bd4+ 40.Kh1 Rxe1+ 41.Bxe1 Rxb2 42.Bf1 Kg8 43.Qg4

Here, for some reason, Petrosian stopped trying to realize the advantage. After 43...Qf7, White faces a difficult defense. Draw.

(219) E3.3 **Keres – Petrosian**
Candidates' Tournament
Zürich 1953

At the time, this game attracted the attention of two esteemed grandmasters, Isaac Boleslavsky and David Bronstein, who were brilliant analysts and masterful chess writers. Bronstein's annotations are in italics (from Bronstein's book *Zürich 1953*).

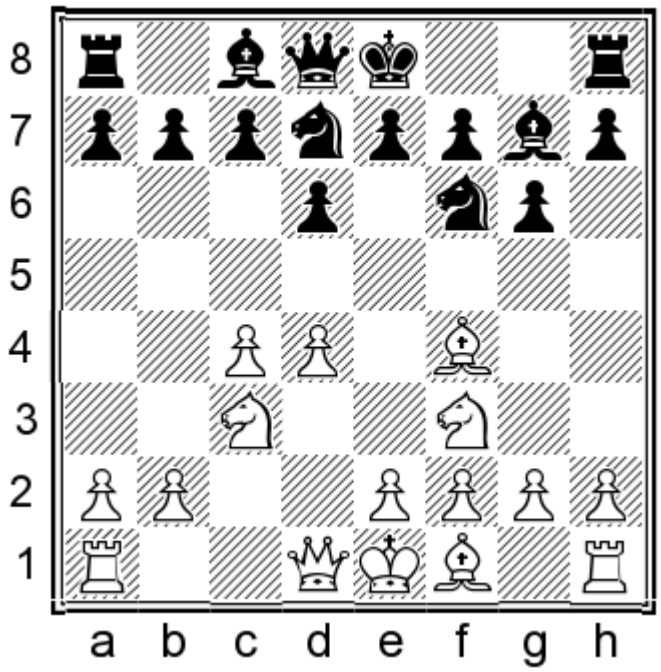
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Nf3 d6 5.Bf4

A peaceful system, especially unpleasant to those players who essay the King's Indian in search of double-edged combinative play.

Theoreticians tell us that ...e5 is difficult to get in against this line, so Black generally plays for ...c5 instead, following up with a gradual advance of his queenside pawns. Petrosian carries out only the first part of this plan, and then both sides spend a lot of time in slow maneuvering, trying to induce weaknesses.

It still seems to me that Black has no reason not to try for ...e5. But even with the plan he uses in this game, his 5...Nbd7 is a poor choice: 5...0-0 is better, in order to continue, after 6.e3, with 6...c5, followed by ...Nc6!.

5...Nbd7



6.h3

A concrete approach to solving the opening problems. White deduces his opponent's intentions. The natural 6.e3 is followed by 6...Nh5 7.Bg5 h6 8.Bh4 g5 9.Nd2 Ndf6, and, after the exchange of the h4-bishop, Black has comfortable play. Now he has to change his original plan.

6...c5

This move does not help solve the main problem of this opening: the restoration of balance in the center. Better is 6...0-0 7.e3 e6 followed by 8...Qe7 and 9...e5.

7.e3 0-0 8.Be2 b6 9.0-0 Bb7 10.d5

This position is characteristic of the Benoni (*or, in modern terminology, the Indian Defense – Igor Yanvarjov*), but it is an unfavorable version for Black. The bishop on b7 and the knight on d7 are poorly placed, and it is almost impossible to prepare the breakthrough on the queenside (...b5).

10...a6 11.a4

After some small opening inaccuracies, Black has drifted into a positional squeeze.

11...Ne8 12.Qd2

Here and later on, White sticks to a wait-and-see approach. 12.Nd2 poses more difficult problems for Black. After 12...e5 13.dxe6 fxe6 14.Bf3! Bxf3 15.Nxf3, Black has a hard time defending his central pawns. If 12...Ne5, then 13.a5 bxa5 14.Nb3 and then Nxa5, with strong pressure on the queenside.

12...Ne5 13.Nh2 e6 14.Rad1

It is better to move the other rook to d1 in order to keep a rook on the a-file for the possible a4-a5.

14...Qe7 15.Qc2 Rd8 16.Qb3

An interesting psychological motif is becoming apparent here. By making only "natural" and "necessary" moves, Keres is trying to deceive his opponent into thinking that he plans nothing more than the steady improvement of his position. In fact, he has something completely different in mind: Keres wants (it is hard to believe this) to whip up an attack on the h-file! To that end, he keeps the knight at h2 for a long time, waiting for the moment when its appearance at g4 will force Black to take it off. Meanwhile, for form's sake, he "presses" on b6, d6, etc.

16...Qc7 17.Rd2 exd5

With this exchange, Black cedes the bishop pair and the d5-square but gains the opportunity to improve the position of his pieces and create a defendable position.

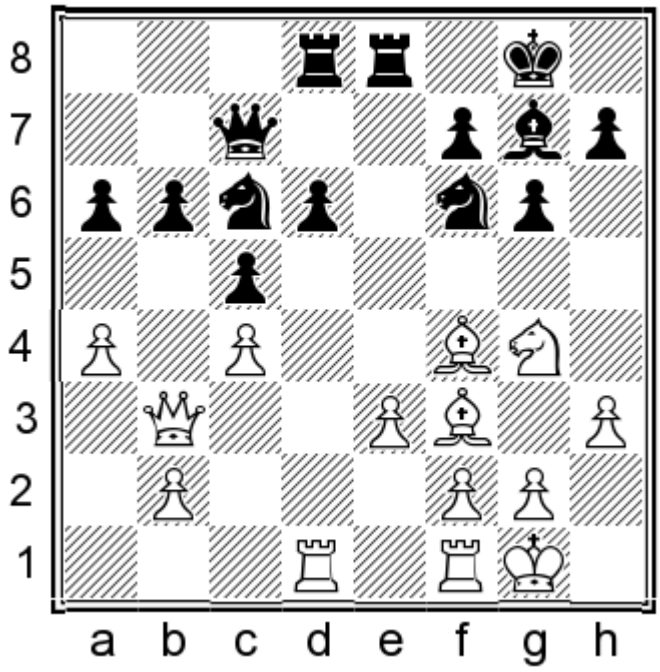
18.Nxd5 Bxd5 19.Rxd5 Nf6 20.Rdd1 Nc6

Petrosian transfers the knight to b4 in order to cover the b6-pawn and to protect the d5-square.

21.Bf3 Rfe8

An inconspicuous but significant inaccuracy after which Black has problems. Correct is 21...Nb4 in order to play 22...h5 if 22.Ng4. If White plays 22.Rd2, then 22...Rfe8 23.Rfd1 Re6 24.Ng4 Ne8, and Black's position is solid.

22.Ng4



Now 22...h5 23.Nxf6+ Bxf6 24.Bxc6 Qxc6 25.Rd5 is bad for Black; that leaves him small choice between 22...Nb4 23.Bg5 and 22...Nxg4. Petrosian chooses the latter line, as it leaves him with a relatively sounder position.

22...Nxg4 23.hxg4 Nb4 24.Rd2 Qe7 25.Rfd1 Be5 26.g5 a5

This and the subsequent moves by Petrosian (up to move 30) can be explained only by the fact that he did not see how White could improve his position and believed that a wait-and-see approach would most likely lead to a draw. Black, however, does not notice that White can develop an attack along the h-file.

Black should immediately play 26...f6. In this case, with precise play, Black can count on a draw. For example: 27.gxf6 Qxf6 28.Bxe5 Rxe5 29.Bd5+ Nxd5 30.Rxd5 Rf8! 31.f3 (in case of 31.R5d2 Rh5!) 31...Rxd5 32.Rxd5 Qh4, and so on.

27.g3 Qe6 28.Kg2 Qe7 29.Rh1 Qe6

Petrosian has no great choice: he must shuffle back and forth, waiting for the next wave of Keres' attack.

30.Rh4 Rf8 31.Qd1 Bxf4

In case of 31...f6 32.gxf6 Qxf6 33.Rg4 Bxf4 34.gxf4 the position is also difficult for Black.

32.exf4 f6 33.Re2 Qf7 34.gxf6 Qxf6

In order to defend the h-pawn, Black has had to loosen his king position somewhat.

35.Qe1 Rd7 36.Re6

White gives up the b2-pawn for the d6-pawn but also trades off his active rook, and now Black has a chance to save the game. Stronger is 36.Bg4 Rg7 37.Re6 Qd8 (37...Qxb2 38.Rxd6 is no better) 38.Qe4, and White has an overwhelming advantage. If 38...d5, then 39.cxd5 Qxd5 40.Qxd5 Nxd5 41.Rd6 Nf6 42.Be6+ followed by 43.Rxb6.

36...Qxb2 37.Re7 Rxe7 38.Qxe7 Qg7 39.Qxd6 Qf6 40.Qd7 Qf7 41.Qd6 Qf6 42.Qc7 Rf7 43.Qc8+ Rf8 44.Qd7 Qf7

This position already occurred after Black's 40th move.

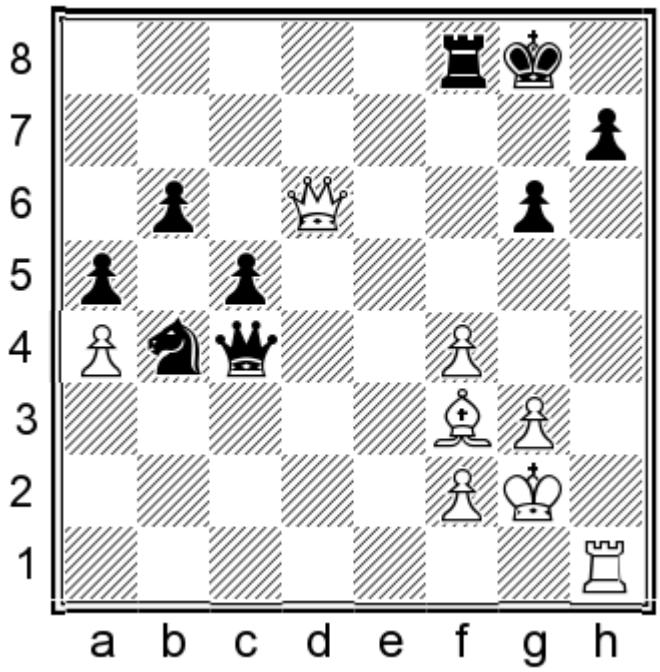
45.Qd2

Black managed to avoid material losses, but he has difficulty defending because of the bad position of his king.

45...Qe6

The immediate 45...Qxc4 leads to practically the same position as the text move.

46.Rh1 Qxc4 47.Qd6



47...Qd4 48.Qe6+ Kh8?

There is no escape after this move. The continuation 48...Kg7? 49.Qe7+ Rf7 50.Rxh7+ Kxh7 51.Qxf7+ Qg7 52.Qe6 also loses because there is no defense after 53.Be4 followed by f4-f5. However, continuing 48...Rf7! 49.Rxh7 Qf6!, Black forces a queen trade, with a roughly equal endgame.

Boleslavsky pointed out an amusing move here: 48...Rf7! 49.Rxh7 Qf6!: Black forces the exchange of queens and draws, against all logic! A rare case indeed! However, after the problem move 48...Rf7 White has the no less original reply 49.Be2. This chance should still be explored, however, since the "more solid" 48...Kh8 leads to the immediate loss of his extra pawn, and he never does manage to trade queens.

(At this point we dare to intrude into the debate of these two chess luminaries. I think that Boleslavsky is closer to the truth. Confident that he is right, Bronstein only looks at White's moves, but in chess the players take turns! After 48...Rf7 49.Be2, Black can continue 49...Nd3!, and if 50.Rxh7 Kxh7, then 51.Qxf7+, 51...Kh6. Earlier, Black did not have this reply because of g3-g4 with the threat of g4-g5+. Now White apparently has to take on d3, and after that the draw is obvious – Igor Yanvarjov)

49.Qxg6 Qg7 50.Qe4 Na2 51.Qc4 Nb4

If 51...Nc3, then 52.Rc1.

52.Be4 Rxf4

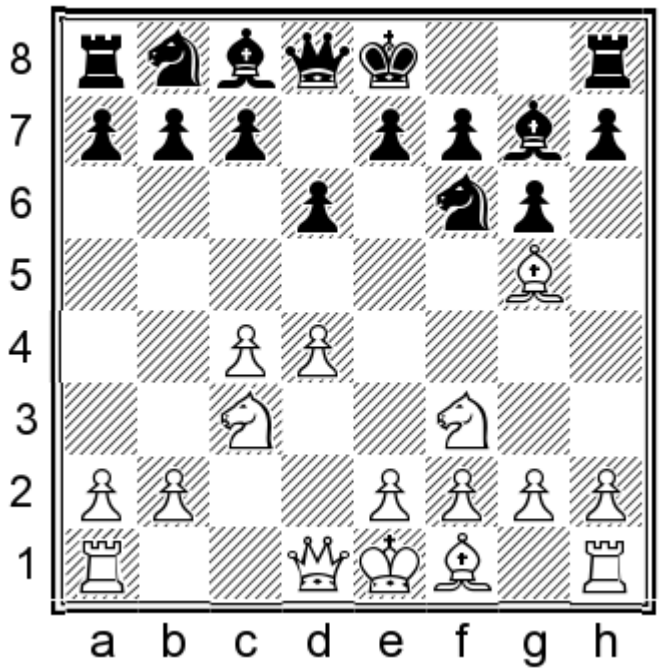
In case of 52...h6, decisive is 53.Qe6 Rf6 54.Qe5 and 55.Rd1.

53.Qe6! Rxe4 54.Qxe4 Qd7 55.Qe5+ Kg8 56.Rh5 Black resigned.

(220) E3.4 **Smyslov – Petrosian**
Candidates Tournament
Yugoslavia 1959

1.c4 g6 2.Nf3 Bg7 3.Nc3 d6 4.d4 Nf6 5.Bg5

Smyslov regularly employed this method of development, varying the order of moves from time to time: 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Bg5, then 5.e2-e3, Nf3 , etc. According to Smyslov, here it is not easy for Black to develop the activity typical for the conventional King's Indian variations.



5...h6

Since ...e5 only strengthens the g5-bishop, Black is more or less forced to counterattack the center by ...c5. With the text move he strives to immediately push back the bishop and exchange it for the knight, hoping to later use the

power of the bishop pair.

6.Bh4 g5 7.Bg3 Nh5 8.e3 c5

Petrosian plays his home preparation, in which White has the opportunity to exchange queens and strip Black of the right to castle. The game has a less forced nature after 8...e6; for example, 9.Nd2 Nxg3 10.hxg3 Nd7 11.Be2 Qe7 12.Qc2 a6 13.b4 c5, with a complex struggle (Zaitsev-Petrosian, Moscow 1971, blitz).

9.dxc5 Nxg3 10.hxg3 dxc5

With weakened kingside pawns, the maneuver 10...Qa5 is not advantageous for Black because of 11.cxd6 Bxc3+ 12.bxc3 Qxc3+ 13.Nd2.

11.Qxd8+ Kxd8 12.0-0-0+ Bd7

A new move compared to the previously played game Benko-Fischer from the same tournament, where, after 12...Nd7 13.Be2 e6 14.Ne4 Ke7 15.Rd2 b6 16.Nd6 a6 17.Rhd1, the young American ran into difficulties. Blocking the check with the bishop, Black achieves faster and more natural development on the queenside. Subsequently, Petrosian defended in the same manner against Kramer (see the next game).

13.Be2 Nc6 14.Nd2 b6

A prophylactic move directed against the maneuver Nde4, which would have now been met by 15...f5.

15.Ndb1 e6 16.Bf3 Rc8

Petrosian is attentive. 16...Ke7? is a blunder because of 17.Rxd7+! Kxd7 18.Rd1+ Kc7 19.Nb5+ Kb7 20.Rd7+, and White wins (indicated by Gligorić).

17.Nb5 Ke7 18.N1c3

Pointless is 18.Bxc6 Rxc6 19.Nxa7 Rc7 20.Nb5 Bxb5 21.cxb5 Ra7, as Black wins back the pawn. For example, 22.a3 Ra5 or 22.Na3 c4 and 23...c3 (indicated by Gligorić).

18...a6 19.Nd6 Rc7 20.Bh5 Rf8 21.Rd2

White’s initiative fizzles out, and soon the opponents agree to a draw. After 21.Na4, Black has the very strong response 21...Nb4! (Gligorić). For example, 22.Nxb6 Nxa2+ 23.Kb1 Rb8! 24.Kxa2 Rxb6 with a decisive advantage for Black.

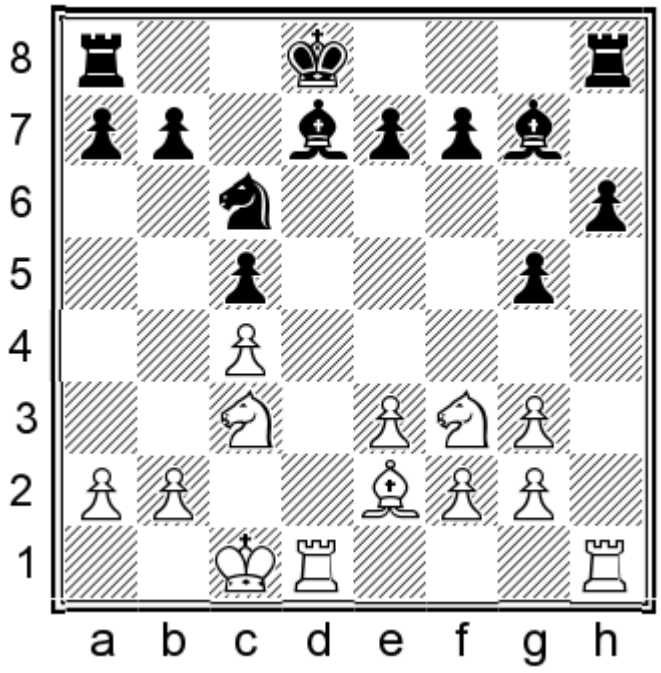
21...Nb8 22.f4 Bc6 23.Bf3 Draw.

(221) E3.5 **Kramer – Petrosian**
XIV Olympiad
Leipzig 1960

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Bg5 c5 5.e3 d6 6.Nf3 h6 7.Bh4 g5 8.Bg3 Nh5 9.dxc5 Nxg3 10.hxg3 dxc5 11.Qxd8+ Kxd8 12.0-0-0+ Bd7

The opponents repeat the game Smyslov- Petrosian (game 220), as if testing each other: who will deviate first?

13.Be2 Nc6



14.Rd3

The Dutch master avoids 14.Nd2, which did not bring success to Smyslov in the aforementioned game, and attempts to improve the variation by doubling the rooks on the d-file. It looks like Petrosian was not caught by surprise.

14...Ke8 15.Rhd1 Be6 16.Nd5

Although this move somewhat devalues the white rooks, it is difficult to do without.

16...Rc8 17.Nh2

A waste of time, as the advance of the h- and g-pawns is part of Black's plan. Better is 17.Rb3 b6 18.Nd2 (or 18.Ne1, transferring the knight to c2).

17...h5 18.Nf3 g4 19.Ne1

Now Black gets the opportunity to break through with ...h4, but 19.Nh4 is hardly better as it kills the knight's prospects.

19...Be5

Preparing the liberating move ...Nb4, which did not work earlier because of 20.Nc7+!.

Gradually, Black has managed to neutralize his opponent's opening initiative and now he can look to the future with hope because, according to Tarrasch, "the future belongs to he who has the bishops."

20.R3d2 Nb4 21.a3

Deserving attention is 21.Nxb4 cxb4 22.Nc2, keeping the open file in the center completely open and planning to use the d4-square for the knight if the opportunity presents itself.

21...Nxd5 22.cxd5 Bd7

Black's advantage is indisputable; the only question is how significant it is.

23.Kb1 c4 24.Rc1 Bf5+ 25.Ka2 h4

It is hard to object it such a decision. Possessing the bishop pair, Black wants to open the position. However, in our opinion, the unhurried 25...b5 is better.

26.gxh4 c3 27.bxc3 Rxc3 28.Rdd1

Stronger than the obvious 28.Rxc3 Bxc3 29.Rd1 Rxh4. Now the white rook inevitably occupies the c-file.

28...Rxc1 29.Rxc1 Rxh4 30.f3

Defending, White tries to exchange as many pawns as possible. Of course, he would not mind removing a couple of the minor pieces from the board too, ideally the knight and his opponent's light-square bishop. But how can he accomplish this?

30...Bg3

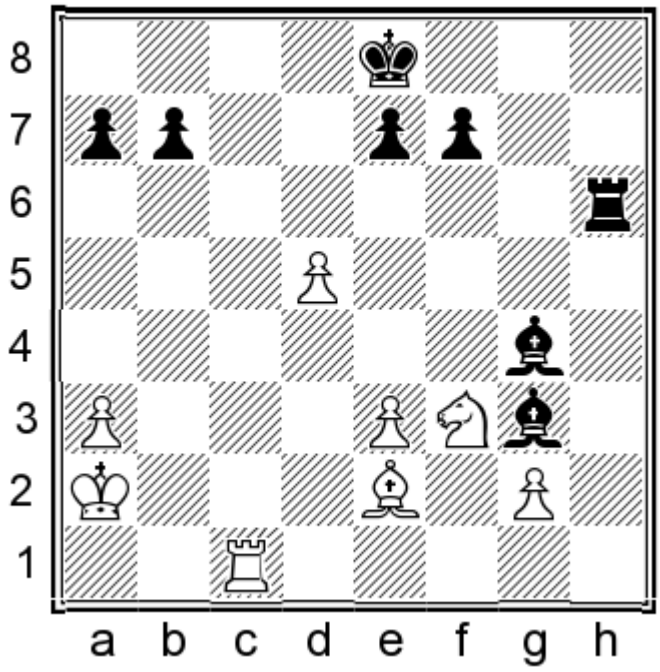
Probing a new weakness in the opponent's camp, the g2-pawn. Also interesting is 30...Rh2; for example, 31.fxg4 Be4 32.Rd1 Rh1, and it is not easy for White to defend despite his extra pawn.

31.fxg4 Bxg4 32.Nf3

In case of 32.Bxg4 Rxg4, Black's advantage becomes permanent. It is a result of not only his better pawn structure (two pawn islands against White's three), but also to the much greater activity of the pieces. For example, 33.Nf3 Bd6 34.Rc2 Ra4 35.Rc3 b5 36.Kb2 Kd7, etc.

At first glance, the text move does not change anything, and Petrosian probably was not able to see immediately the unexpected combinational idea hidden within.

32...Rh6



I suppose at this moment Petrosian figured it all out, but he could no longer do anything. Now, via the stunning 33.Ne5!, using the theme of overloading (33...Bxe2?? 34.Rc8#) and the undefended g4- bishop, White can solve the important problem of transitioning into an opposite-color bishop endgame: 33...Bxe5 34.Bxg4 or 33...Bf5 34.Bd3, with excellent chances for a draw. Perhaps, for the first time in the game, Black anxiously and curiously awaited his opponent's response: was this deliberate or did the Dutchman just get lucky?

33.Rc4?

It is so: Kramer made the strong move 32.Nf3 by accident and did not find the counterblow. Now, in the logic of things, White should lose.

33...Bd7 34.Rb4 Bc8

Petrosian has not yet decided how exactly he will use the queenside pawns, so he repeats moves.

35.Ra4

More logical is 35.Rc4, forcing Black to commit, since 35...Kd8 is bad because of 36.Ng5!.

35...a6 36.Rc4 Bd7 37.Rb4 b5 38.Nd4 Bf2

Closing in on the e3-pawn, which is White's most vulnerable weakness.

39.Rb3 Rh4 40.Nf3

The last move of the time control and... a mistake! More tenacious is 40.Nc6 Re4 41.Nb4, looking for counter-chances lying in piece activity.

40...Re4 41.Rc3 Bxe3

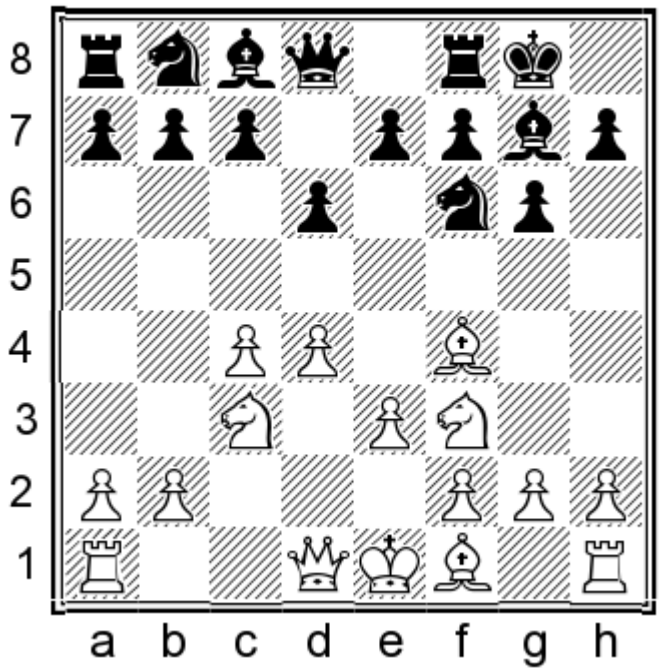
Having won a pawn, Petrosian does not ease up and continues to "bulldoze" the opponent's position with his bishops and rook. The end is near.

42.Bd3 Rg4 43.Kb3 Bf4 44.Rc2 Bd6 45.Re2 Ra4

At this point White resigned, seeing that after 46.Ra2 e6! (also good is 46...e5) he loses a second pawn.

(222) E3.6 **Petrosian – Vukić**
Banja Luka 1979

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Bf4 d6 5.e3 0-0 6.Nf3



6...c6

A multi-purpose move, which Vukić in this case links to early activity on the queenside.

Among Black's other opportunities, Euwe's dynamic setup, which we mentioned in the notes to game game 218, deserves attention: 6...Nc6!? 7.h3 Bf5, with the idea of still carrying out ...e5. Here are a few examples:

(1) 8.Be2 Ne4! 9.Nxe4 Bxe4 10.0-0 e5 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.Bh2 Qe7 with equality (Kiselev- Zaitsev, Podolsk 1992);

(2) 8.g4 Be4 9.Nxe4 Nxe4 10.Qc2 (10.Bd3 e5!) 10...e5 11.dxe5 (11.Qxe4 exf4 12.Qxf4 is dangerous for White in view of 12...Nb4!) 11...dxe5 12.Nxe5 Bxe5 13.Qxe4 (13.Bxe5 Nxf2?!) 13...Bxb2 14.Rd1 Bc3+ 15.Ke2 Qf6, with mutual chances (Moskalenko-Yanvarjov, Moscow 1994).

7.h3 a6 8.a4

A radical remedy against Black's plan. Petrosian employed such a pawn setup numerous times, as in the last game of his match against Spassky in 1966 (game 165) or later against Espig (Vilnius 1978). It is difficult for Black to obtain any tangible benefit from the weakening of the b4-square alone. After all, White can simply exchange the knight that gains a foothold there (which is exactly what happened in this game). Also, note the role of the pawn pair d4 and e3 in stabilizing White's center. This stops Black from expanding his limited success (for example, by trying to seize the c5-square).

8...a5 9.Bd3 Na6 10.Rc1

Planning a bishop retreat deep into the home front. White does not want to lock up the rook, of course.

10...Nb4 11.Bb1 b6

A bad move. It is difficult to understand what benefits GM Vukić saw to developing the bishop to a6.

12.0-0 Ba6

Why force a move that White wants to play anyway?

13.Na2! Nxa2 14.Bxa2 Nd7

Black's play in this part of the game seems strange. He should have at least some plan by the 14th move. If he wants to move the pawn to c5, he should do so on move 13 or even now, taking advantage of the fact that after 14...c5, White cannot reply 15.d5 because of 15...Nh5.

15.Bg5

Very unpleasant for Black. Petrosian has managed to create the initiative literally from nothing, and he later skillfully builds it up.

15...Re8 16.Qd2 Qc7 17.Rfd1 Ra7 18.Bh4 h6 19.Qc2

Creating the threat of c4-c5 and Qxg6. 19...Kh7 is not a defense, because after 20.c5! the f7-pawn comes under attack. Oddly enough, White's bishop, taken by fate to a2, interacts seamlessly with the rest of the pieces, which cannot be said of its black counterpart on a6.

In the face of direct threats the Yugoslav grandmaster makes the courageous decision to go on the defensive.

19...c5 20.d5 e5

Strategically inevitable. Sooner or later, Black still has to make this weakening move.

21.dxe6 Rxe6 22.Rd2 Bb7 23.Qd1 Nf6 24.Bxf6!?

Characteristic for Petrosian, who loved clear and effective plans. This will be followed by the transfer of the bishop to f3 and the exchange of the lightsquare bishops, and the game will gradually shift into the technical stage.

24...Bxf6 25.Bb1 Bc6 26.Bd3

Employing tactics: now 26...d5 does not work because of 27.Bf5! (worse is 27.Bxg6? d4), and the white bishop slips to e2.

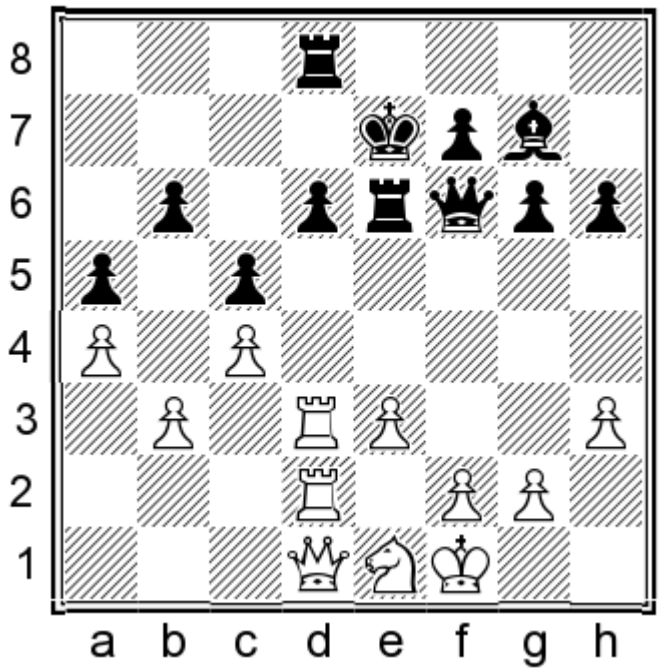
26...Qd7 27.b3 Qe7 28.Be2 Rd7 29.Ne1 Bg5 30.Bf3

Move by move, White adamantly carries out his plan. In his best years, say, from 1959 to 1963, Petrosian would have won this position effortlessly. But in 1979 he turned fifty, a critical age in chess.

30...Bxf3 31.Nxf3 Bf6 32.Rd3 Bg7 33.Rc2 Rd8 34.Rcd2 Kf8

Worrying in time trouble about the fate of the d6-pawn, Black brings the king to its defense.

35.Kf1 Qf6 36.Ne1 Ke7



37.Rd5?

With age, chess players run into various types of problems: it is increasingly difficult to fight fatigue and maintain concentration during the game. The brain falters more and more, and incomprehensible errors occur.

The former champion took this in stride... and with humor. I remember Petrosian told me what happened in his game against the German grandmaster Knaak that same year at the Paul Keres Memorial. After finding a beautiful combination involving a queen sacrifice, he (unexpectedly for himself) made a different move and blundered the bishop that was the main mating force. Of course, his opponent immediately grabbed onto it with both hands. Petrosian recalled: “It hurt so much that I wanted to shout: ‘Give me back my bishop!’” By the way, the game still ended in a draw!

It seems that the blunder against Vukić was similar. It is unclear why Petrosian did not play 37.Nc2. Whether he moved without thinking it through or something else, it is a pity that the logical flow of the game was broken. But chess is a struggle, and a struggle does not allow for any sentimentality.

37...Rxe3 38.Nf3 Re6

From this moment on, it is as if a new game has started in which Black is trying to convert his minimal material advantage.

39.g3 Kf8 40.Kg2 Qe7 41.h4 h5 42.Kf1 Bh6 43.Re2 Rxe2 44.Qxe2 Qxe2+ 45.Kxe2

Ideally, Petrosian would like to exchange all of the major pieces, which would allow him to create an impregnable "light-square" fortress in the endgame with a knight against a bishop.

45...Ke7 46.Ne1

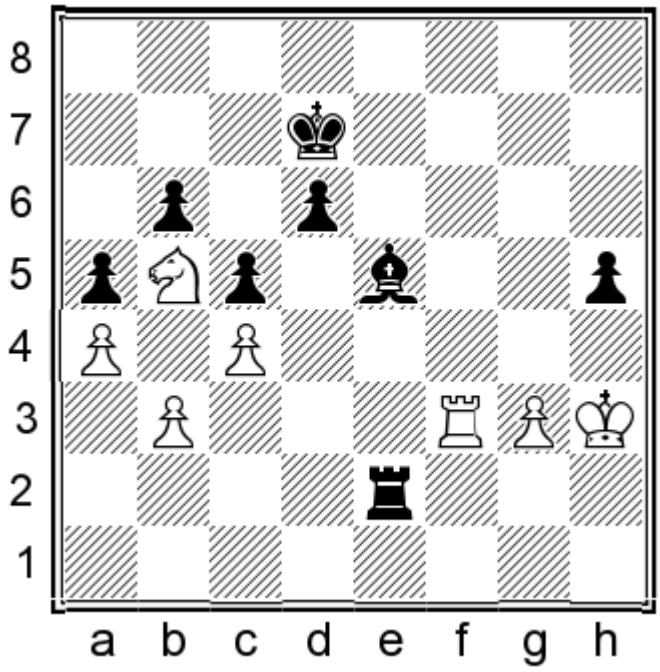
The knight heads to b5, so that later, in collaboration with the rook, it can immobilize the opponent's pieces by attacking the d6-pawn.

46...Kd7 47.Nc2 Re8+ 48.Kf1 f5 49.Na3 f4

Black is looking for an opportunity to penetrate the opponent's camp with his rook, so he clears the pawn obstacles on the kingside.

50.Nb5 Re6 51.Rd3 fxg3 52.fxg3 Bg7 53.Kf2 Be5 54.Kg2 Re7 55.Rd4 Rg7 56.Kh3 g5 57.hxg5 Rxg5 58.Rd3 Rg7 59.Re3 Rg4 60.Rd3 Re4 61.Rf3 Re2

61...Bd4, as indicated by Petrosian, was apparently better, although even then White has real drawing chances. For example: 62.Rf7+ Ke6 63.Rf8! Re3 (63...Ke7? 64.Re8+!) 64.Re8+ Kd7 65.Rxe3 Bxe3 66.Kh4 Bf2 67.Nc3 Ke6 68.Nd5 Ke5 69.Kxh5 Bxg3 70.Kg4, and White has time to put up his defenses.



62.Kh4!

An unexpected resource. The activation of the king saves the game.

62...Rh2+ 63.Kg5 Rh3 64.Kg6! Bxg3

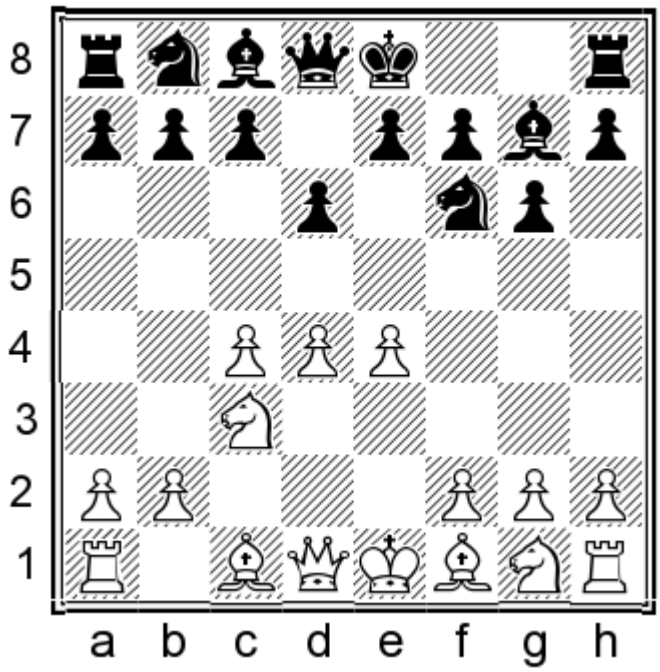
64...h4 yields nothing because of the intermediate check 65.Rf7+, and if of 64...Rxg3+ 65.Rxg3 Bxg3 66.Kxh5, etc., the game would have ended in a thematic draw.

65.Kf7! h4

Black could lose in pursuit of “beautiful” play: 65...Rh4? 66.Rxg3 Rf4+ 67.Kg6 Rg4+ 68.Rxg4 hxg4 69.Nc3 g3 70.Ne2 g2 71.Kf5 (indicated by Petrosian).

66.Re3 Rh2 67.Re7+ A draw by perpetual check.

E4

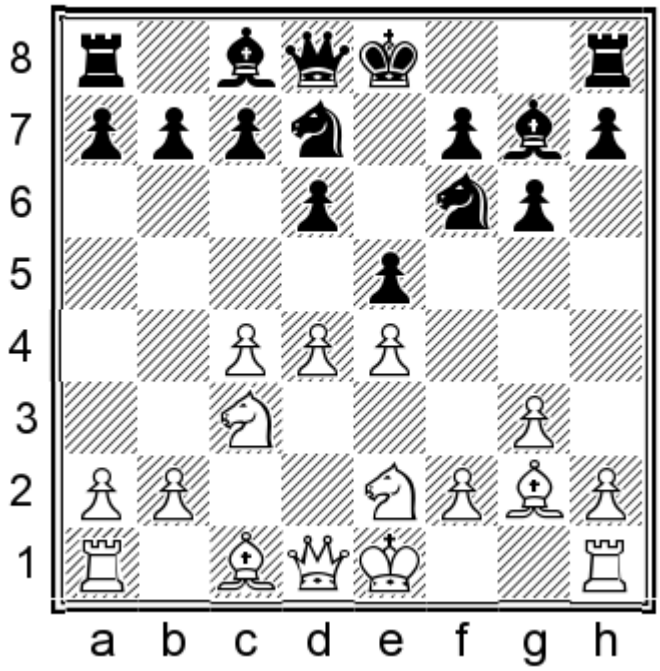


White to move

And now the last tabiya. We will look at rare continuations for White on the fifth move: 5.Bd3 (game 229), 5.g3 in combination with Nge2 (games 223, 224, 225, 227, 228, 229)
and 5.h3 (game 226).

(223) E4.1 **Petrosian – Kasparian**
Match, 9th game
Yerevan 1946

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d6 3.Nc3 Nbd7 4.e4 e5 5.Nge2 g6 6.g3 Bg7 7.Bg2



As we know, fighting in a match has its own specifics and is different from the dynamics of a tournament. Petrosian always played matches more successfully; he seemed to have been born for battling in matches. Take, for example, his amazing ability to detect danger in advance, which allowed him to lose so seldom. An extra draw in a tournament can throw the chess player far back, while in a match it has absolutely no significance.

Of course, in 1946 Petrosian was only a budding great match fighter, but even in his very first competition of this kind, the match for the Armenian championship, he demonstrated what he was capable of. At the beginning of the match Petrosian did not have much success: he lost the first game with White and was behind until the ninth game. But then he managed to collect himself and, with a powerful surge at the finish line, achieve a difficult victory with a total score of 8:6.

In our opinion, the turning points of the match were the two principled King's Indian games won by Petrosian. The reader has already seen one of them in the chapter "The Fianchetto Variation" (game 107). This time, however, Petrosian decided to slightly change his setup by developing the knight to e2, which has its own subtleties. Such a method of development was known at the dawn of the King's Indian Defense and was once used by Rubinstein and Capablanca.

7...0-0 8.0-0 Re8

Black tries to force d4-d5. If he wants, he could transpose to the main variation: 8...exd4 9.Nxd4 (see Chapter 3). Modern theory recommends 8...c6, in order to be able to open the c-file after d4-d5, for instance.

9.d5 a5 10.Rb1 Nc5 11.b3 Bd7 12.f3 Qc8

As in the third game, Kasparian begins to improvise starting in the very opening. The exchange of light-square bishops he planned yields nothing for Black and leads to a loss of time. 12...Nh5, with a subsequent two-square advance of the f-pawn, suggests itself.

13.Be3 Bh3 14.a3 Bxg2 15.Kxg2 Qd7 16.b4 axb4 17.axb4 Na4 18.Ra1 Nxc3 19.Nxc3

Black's position is clearly worse, the result of an erroneous plan. Nevertheless, Kasparian has some counterplay if he now plays ...Nh5 and ...f5. Instead, he starts to play on the opposite flank and is completely squeezed positionally.

19...Rec8 20.Qb3 Qe8

Black prepares to exchange the major pieces, but he carries out this plan inaccurately. Better is 20...Qd8, additionally defending the c7-pawn. I believe that objectively 20...Nh5 is stronger: even now, so many moves later, it gives him some chances.

21.Nb5! Qd7 22.Qd3

Hindering the move ...c6 and overprotecting the knight on b5.

22...Ne8 23.c5

A transition to the active phase of White's plan. The next two moves by Black are equivalent to positional surrender. However, in this position it is difficult to give him good advice.

23...dxc5 24.bxc5 c6 25.Nc3 Bf6 26.Qc4 Nc7 27.Rab1 Ra7 28.Rfd1 Qe8 29.Rd2

Forcing the opponent to guess where the white rooks will double: on the d-file or the b-file? Perhaps the continuation 29.d6 Qe6, which is also good for White, brings Black some relief.

29...Rca8 30.Rdb2 Qc8 31.Rb6 Nb5

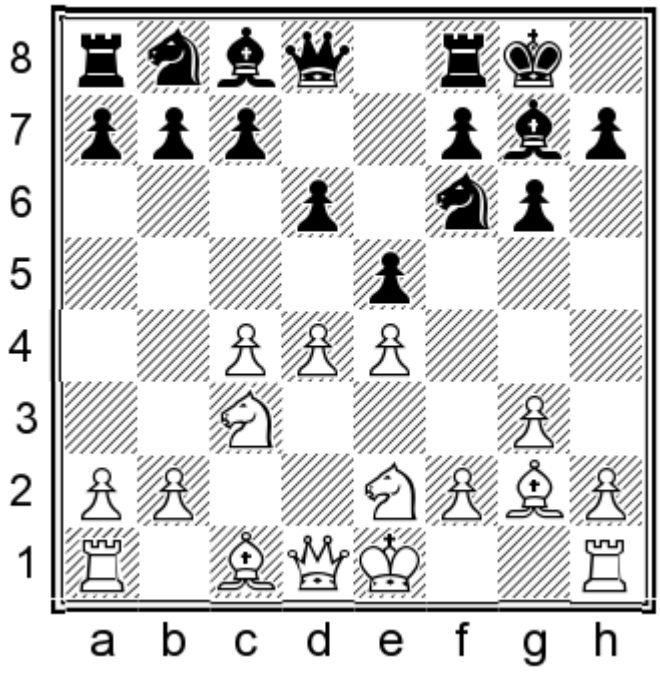
Unable to withstand the powerful pressure, Black parts with a pawn, and after that the game quickly comes to an

end.

32.Nxb5 Ra2+ 33.Bf2 cxb5 34.R6xb5 Bg5 35.R1b2 R8a4 36.Qxa2 Rxa2 37.Rxa2 Bd8 38.Rab2 b6 39.cxb6 Qb7 40.Ra5 Kg7 41.Ra7 Qb8 42.b7 Black resigned.

(224) E4.2 **Avetisian – Petrosian**
Armenian Championship
Yerevan 1948

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 0-0 5.Nge2 d6 6.g3 e5 7.Bg2



7...exd4

Unlike in the main variation, Black can transfer the knight to c6, putting pressure on the center. He can do this immediately or after the exchange on d4. Petrosian prefers the latter. The continuation 7...Nc6 8.d5 Nd4 9.Nxd4, associated with a possible pawn sacrifice after 9...exd4 10.Ne2 etc. (but not 10.Qxd4? because of 10...Nxe4!), leads to a more lively struggle.

8.Nxd4 Nc6 9.Nxc6

The threat of ...Nxe4 (which is possible after 9.0-0, for instance) forces White to decide what to do with the d4-knight. Besides the text move, there is also 9.Nc2. As practice shows, in this case, Black, continuing his active play with 9...Ne5!? 10.b3 Nfd7, achieves a promising position in the spirit of the main system. For example: 11.Nd4 Nc5 12.0-0 c6 13.h3 a5 14.Be3 Re8 15.Qc2 a4 (Steiner-Geller, Stockholm 1952). Curiously, in the game Gereben-Kluger (Hungary 1952) after 11.Bb2? (instead of 11.Nd4), 11...Nc5! White could not find a defense against ...Ned3!.

9...bxc6 10.0-0

Planning e4-e5 if the opportunity presents itself. It is too early to start active play with the king in the center: 10.e5?! Qe8!.

10...Be6

Taking advantage of the absence of the d4- knight, Black tries to seize the initiative. Now 11.Qd3 or 11.Qa4 is met by 11...Nd7! .

11.b3

At the time, this move was the last word in theory. Through tactics, White is able to consolidate his position in the center. The thing is that the blow 11...Nxe4 is not beneficial for Black in view of the variation 12.Nxe4 Bxa1 13.Bg5 f6 14.Bh6 Be5 (14...Bb2 15.Qd2 leads to approximately the same position, Alatortsev-Aronin, Moscow 1945) 15.f4 Bb2 16.Qd2 Ba3 17.Bxf8 Qxf8 18.Qc3, with an attack for White.

11...Nd7 12.Bb2 a5

Now White has to reckon with the possible ...a4. In this opening variation Black must play energetically; otherwise, he might get into trouble.

13.Na4

White rushes to defuse the situation, but perhaps he should not. The theoretical 13.Qd2 deserves attention, since the variation 13...a4 14.Nxa4 Bxc4 15.Bxg7 Bxf1 16.Bxf8 Bxg2 17.Bxd6, etc. is not dangerous for White.

13...Bxb2 14.Nxb2 Qf6 15.Qc2 Nc5 16.Nd3

Having failed to achieve an opening advantage, Avetisian aims for simplifications.

16...Nxd3 17.Qxd3 a4 18.e5

In an effort to more quickly reach a draw, White plays too directly without taking into account the dynamics of the position. 18.Rae1 is more solid and stronger.

18...dxe5 19.Bxc6 Rad8 20.Qf3

White’s difficulties would still not be too immense if the game continues with the queens on the board. For example, 20.Qe3 axb3 (20...Bxc4 21.Rfc1) 21.axb3 Bxc4 22.bxc4 Qxc6 23.Qxe5. The transition into the endgame that Avetisian planned only complicates his task.

20...Qxf3 21.Bxf3 axb3 22.axb3 Rd3 23.Bd1?!

White is unable to break the vicious circle of natural moves. Here I think that an experienced chess player would already seriously consider ways to survive. For example, thus: 23.Bd5 Bxd5 24.cxd5 Rxd5 25.Rfc1, with the subsequent exchange of the b-pawns for the c-pawns and a transition into a theoretically drawn endgame with the pawns on one side, where White has to remember to make the educated move h2-h4.

23...Rfd8 24.Kg2

More stubborn is 24.Bc2 Rd2 25.Rfd1, trying to drive the black rook from the 2nd rank via Kf1-e1.

24...f5 25.Re1 Kf7 26.Rb1 Rd2 27.Be2 Ra2 28.Ra1 Rdd2 29.Rxa2 Rxa2 30.Kf3 Kf6 31.Ke3

And now White probably no longer has a draw. Nevertheless, 31.h4 is better, with the idea of reducing the number of pawns.

31...g5! 32.Kd3 c5 33.Ke3 f4+ 34.gxf4 exf4+ 35.Kf3 h5 36.Kg2 g4 37.Bd1 Ra1

Planning the transition into a winning bishop endgame.

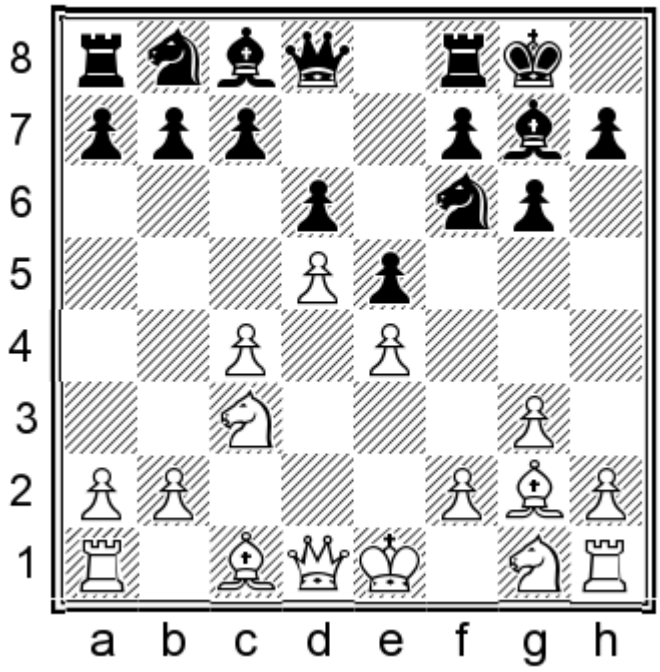
38.Kf1 h4 39.Bc2 Rxe1+ 40.Kxe1 Ke5 41.Ke2 Bf5 42.Bd1 Kd4

Black improves his position as much as possible, followed by the decisive pawn breakthrough.

43.Kd2 g3 44.fxg3 fxg3 45.hxg3 h3! 46.Bf3 h2 White resigned.

(225) E4.3 **Petrosian – Golovko**
Moscow 1950

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 0-0 5.g3 d6 6.Bg2 e5 7.d5



7...Nbd7

One of the most common and solid plans.

8.Nge2 a5

More active is 8...Nh5 and ...f5, hindering White's main setup: Be3, Qd2. For example, 9.Be3 f5 10.Qd2 (10.f3 is better) can be followed by 10...Nb6 (with the idea of ...f4) or, immediately, 10...f4!? 11.gxf4 exf4 12.Nxf4 Nxf4 13.Bxf4 Ne5, with a dangerous initiative for Black.

9.0-0 Nc5 10.f3 Ne8

Opening the way for the f-pawn. In this situation, the active move ...Nh5 is less justified as the other black knight has already taken its place on c5.

11.Be3 f5 12.Qd2

One of the advantages of this setup is that it practically prevents the "King's Indian" attack with ...f4. Thus White manages to keep the enemy at a distance.

12...Bd7

It is better for Black to play ...Nf6 now or the next moves, following Geller's example in game 227 below.

13.Rab1 b6

Nowadays, Black tries to avoid this committing move; as a result, Black's pawn structure on the queenside loses its elasticity. In this case, this almost cost Golovko the game.

14.b3 Qc8 15.a3 fxe4

Black must hurry with this exchange; otherwise b3-b4 is very unpleasant. Also note that the typical maneuver 15...a4 16.b4 Nb3 is ineffective here, since White firmly controls the d4-square.

16.Nxe4 Nxe4 17.fxe4 Nf6 18.Bg5 Bg4 19.Nc3

Black maneuvered inaccurately and White has seized the strategic initiative.

19...Qd7 20.Rf2 Nh5 21.Rbf1 Rxf2 22.Rxf2 Rf8 23.Nb5

Occupying an observation post near the c7- pawn, which is the most sensitive point in Black's camp.

23...Bf6 24.Be3 Be7 25.Rxf8+ Bxf8 26.Qf2 Qc8?!

As the well-known sports commentator Nikolai Ozerov liked to say: "not a bad idea, but..." Black prepares the exchanging maneuver ...Bxb5; the "but" in this case means that the black queen retreated to the wrong square. The correct move is 26...Qd8. The reader will soon see what difference this makes. Perhaps Black worried about 27.h3 Bd7 28.g4, which was actually not dangerous because of the excellent reply 28...Nf4!, and White can win a pawn but not the game.

27.Bf3 Bd7

Now White's advantage reaches frightening proportions. It was still possible to defend via 27...Nf6 28.Bg5 Ne8.

28.Bxh5 gxh5 29.Qf6!

This is why the move ...Qc8 was bad. White seizes the important diagonal h4-d8, along which his pieces threaten to penetrate the enemy camp.

29...Bxb5 30.Qg5+

An important intermediate check, directed against the activation of the black queen via the g4-square.

30...Kh8 31.cxb5 Qe8 32.Qf6+

Petrosian's tireless queen is everywhere. The natural 32.a4 is worse because of 32...Be7.

32...Bg7 33.Qe6 Qf8

It becomes increasingly difficult for Black to defend his position. After 33...Qxe6 34.dxe6 Bf6 35.Bh6!, his king is "boxed in," while 33...Qd8 is followed by 34.Bg5! Qxg5 35.Qe8(c8)+, and with a series of checks, White captures the bishop and then the c7-pawn, too.

34.Kg2 h4

After 34...Bf6, the reply 35.Qf5! is very unpleasant.

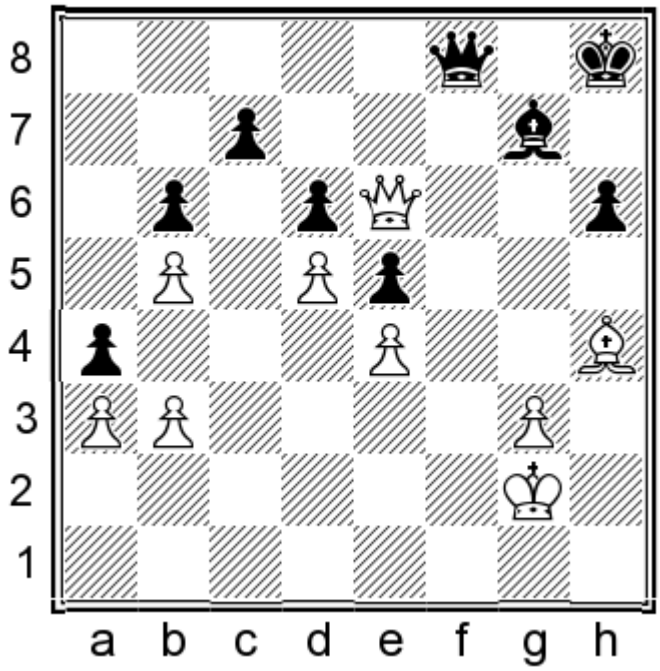
35.Bg5!

More convincing than the obvious 35.gxh4, although that was also good enough.

35...hxg3 36.hxg3 h6 37.Bh4

Time trouble. More precise is 37.Be7, winning a tempo for the consolidating move 38.a4.

37...a4!?



The last chance.

38.bxa4

In time trouble everyone takes pawns. Of course, with not enough time, Petrosian did not dare to make the committing move b3-b4 that would have given his opponent a potential counter-chance: the weak a3-pawn. However, as analysis shows, things would never get to that. After 38.b4!, Black would be on the verge of zugzwang; for example, 38...Kh7 39.Qd7, threatening Bd8, or 38...h5 39.Qg6 (also good is 39.Bg5 Kh7 40.Qd7).

It is hard to believe that Black now escapes with a draw. It happens. “Sometimes, when it seems that in a difficult struggle a chess player manages to achieve a decisive advantage, Caissa suddenly grins from ear to ear and turns from him, casually muttering: ‘And here’s the draw!’” (Petrosian).

38...Qa8 39.Bf6 Qxa4 40.Qc8+ Kh7 41.Qf5+ Kh8 42.Qg6

The threat to the e4-pawn does not allow White to build on his success.

42...Bxf6 43.Qxf6+ Kh7 44.Qf7+ Kh8 45.Qg6 Qxb5 46.Kh3

After 46.Qxh6+ Kg8 47.Qg6+ Kf8, Black’s king escapes from the dangerous corner, and it is easier to achieve a draw. For example, 48.Kh3 Qd3, etc. Petrosian brings the last piece into the attack: his king!

46...Qd7+ 47.Kh4 c5!

Golovko does not take the bait: 47...Qg7? 48.Kh5!, and White wins. After all, Black has an extra pawn!

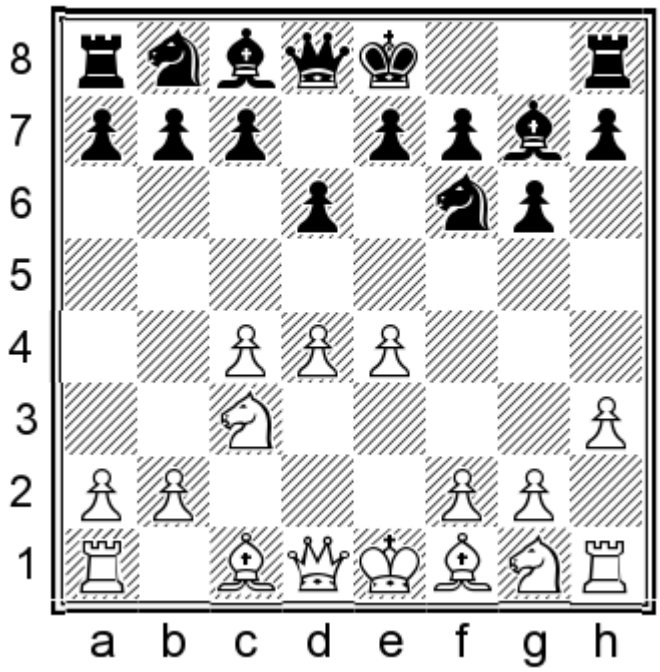
48.dxc6 Qxc6 49.Kh5 Qd7 50.Qxh6+ Kg8 51.Kg5 d5! 52.Qg6+ Kf8 53.Qf6+ Kg8 54.Qxe5 d4

The strong passed pawn assures Black a draw.

55.Kf4 d3 56.Qg5+ Kf8

(226) E4.4 **Bondarevsky – Petrosian**
19th USSR Championship
Moscow 1951

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d6 3.Nc3 g6 4.e4 Bg7 5.h3



Prophylaxis with a long-term goal in mind. Practical play shows that the pawn on h3 can be very useful for White.

5...0-0 6.Be3 c5

After 6...e5 7.d5, the resulting position would look like a version of the Sämisch Attack that was popular in the 1950s, except with the move h2-h3 instead of f2-f3. Then, White advances the pawn to g4 and, depending on the circumstances, develops the knight to f3 (the Makogonov System) or to e2 (from where it later moves to g3).

Bondarevsky knew this method of developing the pieces from his game against Suetin (Moscow 1950), in which, incidentally, White won. So, Petrosian decided to give the game an “Indian” flavor.

7.d5

7.dxc5 Qa5 8.Bd3 dxc5 9.e5 Nfd7 10.f4 Rd8 clearly looks wrong, as Black has good counterchances along the d-file. For instance, 11.Nf3 Nxe5! 12.Nxe5 Bxe5 13.fxe5 Bf5 with a double-edged game (Reicher-Ardeleanu, Romania 1984) or 11.Qe2 Nc6 12.Nf3 Nd4 13.Nxd4 Nxe5!, with equality after 14.fxe5 cxd4 15.Bd2 dxc3 16.Bxc3 Qb6, etc.

7...e6 8.Bd3 exd5 9.exd5

According to modern theory, after 9...Re8, White can choose between the solid 10.Nge2 and the sharper 10.Nf3. In the latter case he does not fear 10...Bh6, which leads to complications advantageous for White after 11.0-0 (Botvinnik- Kavalek, Beverwijk 1969). Wasting no time, Petrosian carries out an “Indian” knight maneuver.

9...Na6 10.Nf3 Nc7 11.0-0

A typical mistake, similar to the one we saw in game 206. White should play 11.a4, not allowing the pawn to come to b5. In this case, the weakening of the b4-square does not matter much, since the black knight headed there (...Na6-b4) is isolated from play after Rc1, Bb1.

11...b5!

Of course! Now Black isolates the d5-pawn and has excellent play. As often happens in chess, the strategic

operation is based on tactical subtleties. In the variation 12.cxb5 Ncxd5 13.Nxd5 Nxd5, the move 14.Be4 yields nothing since the black knight is untied and takes the bishop on e3; maybe this is what Bondarevsky did not see in advance.

12.Qd2 bxc4 13.Bxc4 Qd7

White has prepared the move Bh6, but Petrosian does not think that he needs to prevent the exchange of the g7-bishop as it allows him to seize the dark squares in the center of the board and increase the pressure on the d5-pawn.

14.Bh6 Bb7 15.Bxg7 Kxg7 16.Rad1 Rfe8 17.Qf4

More solid is 17.Qd3.

17...h6 18.Rfe1 Rxe1+ 19.Nxe1

The weakness of the d5-pawn tells: White is forced to concede the e-file to his opponent.

19...Re8 20.Nc2 Re5 21.Ne3

The d5-pawn is attacked four times and protected as many times. What's next? With his next moves, Black prepares the move ...Ne4. White looks for counterplay on the queenside.

21...Qe7 22.a3 a5

Not allowing b2-b4.

23.Ba2 h5 24.Kh2?!

The critical moment in the game. 24.b4 looks dubious in view of 24...cxb4 25.axb4 Ne4 26.Nxe4 Rxe4 27.Qg3 h4! (this is why the move ...h5 was necessary), but White had another active opportunity: 24.Qa4!?. What should Black do? The exchange sacrifice (which Bondarevsky was probably worried about) 24...Rxe3 25.fxe3 Qxe3+ 26.Kh1 does not promise more than a draw. And after the essentially forced 24...g5, White probably has to endure a formidable assault on his king's position. However, this is the beginning of the complications that White wants, where the chances are mutual. For example, 25.Qxa5 g4 26.Re1, etc.

The text move looks strange to say the least. It is unclear what Bondarevsky saw in it. Now the white queen no longer has time to get to the queenside, and Black follows through with his plan without any obstacles.

24...Ne4

The knight paves the way to the e4- and d4- squares for the rook.

25.Nxe4 Rxe4 26.Qf3 Ba6 27.g3 Qe5 28.Rd2 Ne8 29.Bb1 Rd4

Successfully completing the plan to surround the d5-pawn.

30.Rxd4 Qxd4

Hardly better is 30...cxd4 31.Ng2 Nf6 32.Nf4 Bc4, as recommended by Peter Clarke. After 33.Bd3 Bxd5 34.Nxd5 Qxd5 35.Qxd5 Nxd5 36.Kg2 Black wins a pawn, as in the game, but he also reduces the quality of his position: White has a prospective outside passed pawn, and the bishop is stronger than the knight in such positions.

31.Qe4 Nf6 32.Qxd4 cxd4 33.Ng2 Nxd5

And so, Black's positional advantage has transformed into a material one. However, his doubled pawns somewhat complicate the conversion. Petrosian tries to avoid exchanges before the 40th move (the time control) and centralizes

the king.

34.Ne1 Kf6 35.Kg2 Nb6 36.Bd3 Bc8 37.h4 a4

A small but important step on Black's way to victory: the opponent's pawn majority on the queenside is paralyzed.

38.Kf1 Ke5 39.Ke2 Kd5 40.Kd2 Kc5 41.Bc2

In the future (until about the 61st move), Black adheres to the usual tactics typical for adjourned games. He slowly maneuvers, probing possible points of future breakthrough. He is mainly careful to avoid three-fold repetition. Let me remind the reader that according to the regulations of tournaments at the time, the two following time controls were on the 56th and 72nd moves.

41...Nc4+ 42.Kc1 Bd7 43.Nd3+ Kb6 44.Nf4 Bc6 45.Bb1 Ne5

Gradually forcing the white pieces away from the blockading d3-square.

46.Kd2 Bb5 47.Bc2 Kc5

Of course, White would gladly exchange the b2-pawn for the a4-pawn, but he cannot. After 48.b3, Black replies 48...d3!, achieving a technically winning position. For example:

(1) 49.Nxd3+ Bxd3! 50.Bxd3 axb3 51.Be2 Kd4 52.a4 Nc4+;

(2) 49.bxa4 dxc2 50.axb5 Nc4+ 51.Kxc2 Nxa3+ 52.Kd3 Nxb5;

(3) 49.Bd1 axb3 50.Bxb3 Kd4.

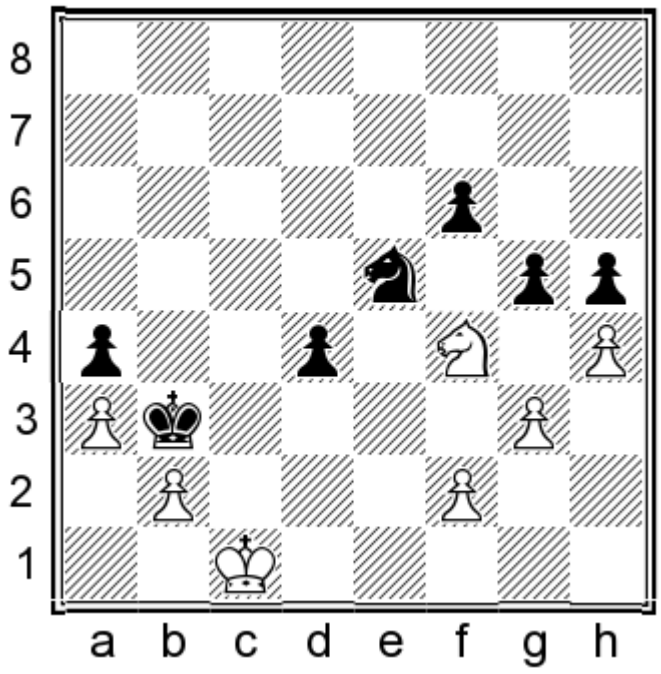
48.Be4 Bc4 49.Bc2 Kb5 50.Be4 Bb3 51.Bb1 Ng4 52.Ke1 Kb6 53.Be4 Bc4 54.Bc2 Ka5 55.Be4 Kb5 56.Bc2 Ne5 57.Kd2 Ka5 58.Be4 Kb6 59.Bb1 Bb5 60.Bc2 Kc5 61.Be4 Ng4 62.Ke1 d3!

Evidently, Black cannot break through White's fortress in any other way. Again, the struggle enters the active phase, where the material advantage transforms back into a positional advantage. The pawn sacrifice opens the way for the black king to the queenside.

63.Bxd3

Bad is 63.Nxd3+? because of 63...Kd4!.

63...Bxd3 64.Nxd3+ Kc4 65.Nc1 d5 66.Ke2 d4 67.Nd3 f6 68.Kd2 Ne5 69.Nf4 Kb3 70.Kc1 g5?



A frustrating technical mistake. 70...d3 wins easily.

71.hxg5?

A curious case of collective hallucination. Both players missed the simple move 71.Nxh5. Then, unlike in the text continuation, not only does White capture the pawn, but he also creates a passed h-pawn, which begins a rapid run towards queening. Here is a possible variation: 71...Nd3+ 72.Kb1! (72.Kd2 Nxb2 73.Nxf6 gxh4 74.gxh4 Kxa3 75.h5 Kb3 76.h6 Nc4+ is not so clear) 72...Nxb2 73.Nxf6 gxh4 74.gxh4 Nc4 75.Ne4 Nxa3+ 76.Ka1! with a draw.

71...fxg5 72.Nxh5

For now White even has an extra pawn, but it does not help: his pieces are scattered and cannot withstand the onslaught of the black pieces.

72...Nd3+ 73.Kb1 Nxb2 74.Nf6 Nc4 75.Ne4 g4

Many moves later, Black carries out the same operation on the kingside as on the queenside, stopping two of the opponent's pawns with his one. Victory is not far off.

76.Nc5+ Kxa3 77.Kc2 Ne5 78.Na6 d3+ 79.Kc3 Ka2 80.Nc5 a3 81.Ne4 Kb1 82.Kb3 Kc1 White resigned.

(227) E4.5 **Petrosian – Geller**
Interzonal Tournament
Stockholm 1952

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.e4

Why not 5.Nc3 or 5.Nf3, as is usually played? Against Geller, who at that time was already known as a master of the King's Indian Defense, Petrosian naturally wants to quickly veer off the beaten track of the main variation and play the game in "neutral territory."

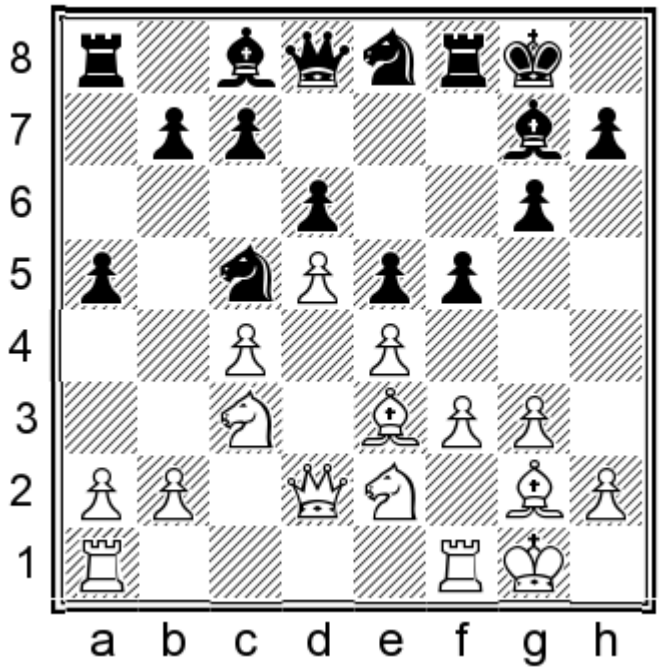
5...d6 6.Ne2

This makes more sense than it seems at first glance.

6...e5 7.0-0 Nbd7 8.d5

One of subtleties of the order of moves chosen by Petrosian is that the c3-square can be useful for the king's knight. For example, after 8...Nh5 9.Nec3! and then Nd2, immediately or after Be3.

8...a5 9.Nbc3 Nc5 10.f3 Ne8 11.Be3 f5 12.Qd2



12...Nf6

A new move compared to the previously discussed game Petrosian-Golovko (game 225), in which Black played 12...Bd7 and 13...b6.

13.Kh1

Deserving attention is 13.h3, preventing the future knight move to g4, as Averbakh played in a later game against Langeweg (Beverwijk 1963).

13...Bd7 14.Rad1

Creating the possible threat of the breakthrough Bxc5 and d5-d6 in the center. However, Black carries out a long-planned exchange operation and fully equalizes the chances.

14...fxe4 15.Nxe4 Ncxe4 16.fxe4 Ng4 17.Bg5

After 17.Bg1, unpleasant is 17...Bh6, activating the bishop.

17...Bf6 18.Bxf6 Rxf6 19.Rxf6 Qxf6 20.Rf1 Qg7 A draw was agreed.

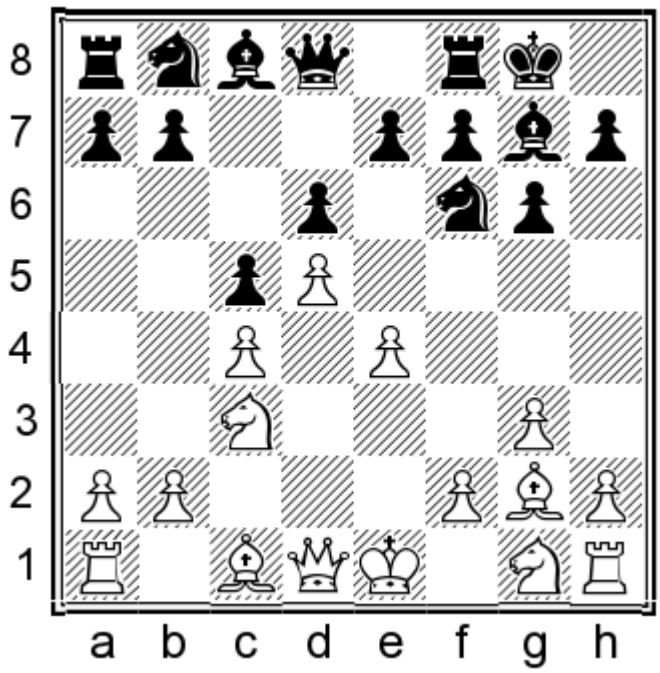
(228) E4.6 **Goode – Petrosian**
The USSR – Sweden Match
Stockholm 1954

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 0-0 5.g3 c5 6.d5

After this advance, which determines the situation in the center, Black usually chooses one of two main ways to play. The first is systematic preparation of the breakthrough ...b5 by ...Na6-c7, ...a6, and ...Rb8, while the other,

more energetic and therefore more risky, is based on the rapid undermining of the center via the move ...e6, only then starting operations on the queenside. Petrosian chooses the latter.

6...d6 7.Bg2



7...e6 8.Nge2

8.Nf3 exd5 is worse for White, since 9.exd5 is no good because of 9...Re8+ 10.Ne2 Qe7 or 10...b5, and after 9.cxd5 Black immediately plays 9...b5.

8...exd5 9.exd5

Transposition to Modern Benoni setups via 9.cxd5 leads to a more intense struggle, where each side seeks to use its pawn majority: White in the center and Black on the queenside. Practical play shows that Black has better chances in this case (see, for example, the game Milev-Petrosian in the second part).

9...Na6 10.0-0 Nc7

The opening stage is basically over. What are the opponents' chances in the forthcoming middlegame?

Black's plan is clear: to prepare the move ...b5 and gain an initiative on the queenside. White does not have such a clear plan. Of course, we cannot say that his position is worse, but from a practical point of view, it is more difficult to play with White. What should he do? First of all, he should give up the idea that he has any advantage. As for the purely chessrelated aspect, in our opinion, an old recommendation made by grandmaster Igor Bondarevsky is interesting: 11.a3, with the idea of advancing b2-b4 at some point.

11.h3 Rb8 12.a4 b6

In the case of 12...a6, White could reply 13.a5, preventing the advance of the black pawn chain.

13.Be3 a6 14.Ra2

Superficially played, but it should be noted that the text move is, to a certain extent, the result of the lack of a clear plan for White.

14...Re8

Since the rook on a2 is poorly placed, Black is in no hurry to advance the b-pawn and first improves the positions of his pieces.

15.Qd2 h5

A typical move with two promising ideas: (1) to prepare the retreat of the knight to h7, after which the role of the g7-bishop grows, and (2) to threaten ...h4 when the opportunity presents itself in order to weaken White's castled position.

16.Bg5 Qe7 17.Raa1

White is forced to admit that his 14th move was not the best.

17...Qf8 18.Nf4?

A mistake after which Black gains a positional advantage.

18...Nh7

Goode probably "forgot" that White had this move. Now, with the bishop pair, Black's play develops easily and effortlessly.

19.Nfe2 Nxg5 20.Qxg5 Bf5 21.Qd2 Bh6 22.f4

This weakens White's position. However, Black's advantage is just as certain after other replies.

22...Re7 23.Rfe1

White does not find a good defensive plan. In Bondarevsky's opinion, it is better to place the other rook on e1 or play 23.Kh2 followed by 24.Ng1.

23...Rbe8 24.Kh2 Qg7 25.h4

Forced, because now Black has the threat ...g5.

25...Re3

Apparently, the immediate 25...Qf6 is somewhat more accurate, since White cannot play 26.Ng1 because of the unexpected blow 26...Bxf4! (indicated by Igor Bondarevsky).

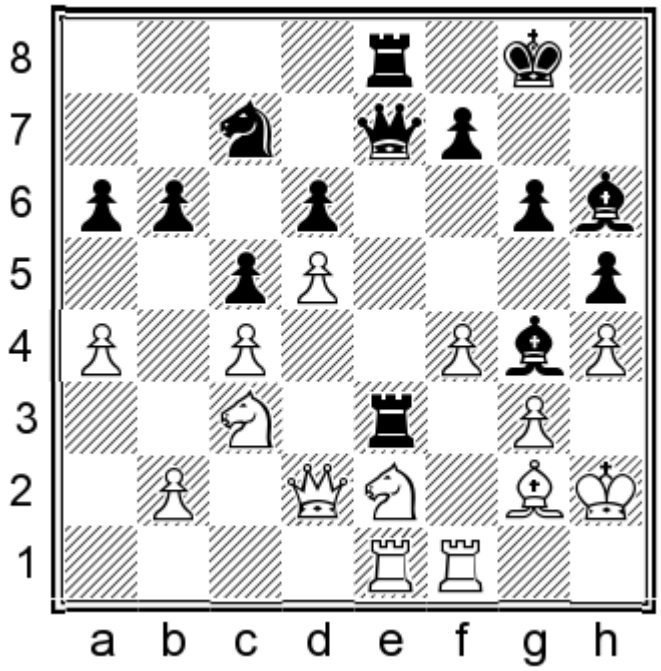
26.Rad1

Missing an opportunity to ease the pressure at least a little bit: 26.Ng1.

26...Qf6 27.Rf1

Now it is too late to play 27.Ng1 because of the same 27...Bxf4!.

27...Bg4 28.Rde1 Qe7



The white pieces are fatally pinned.

29.Rf2 Bg7 30.Bf1 Bxc3

The beginning of an operation leading to material gains.

31.bxc3 b5 32.cxb5 axb5 33.a5

After 33.axb5 Nxb5, Black's knight inevitably comes to c3, from where it delivers the last and decisive attack on the pinned e2-knight.

33...Na6 34.Qa2 c4

Creating the unstoppable threat of transferring the knight to d3.

35.Qb2 Nc5 36.Qxb5

The end is imminent. With the next moves, Petrosian reaps the fruits of his strategy: one by one, the white pieces disappear from the board.

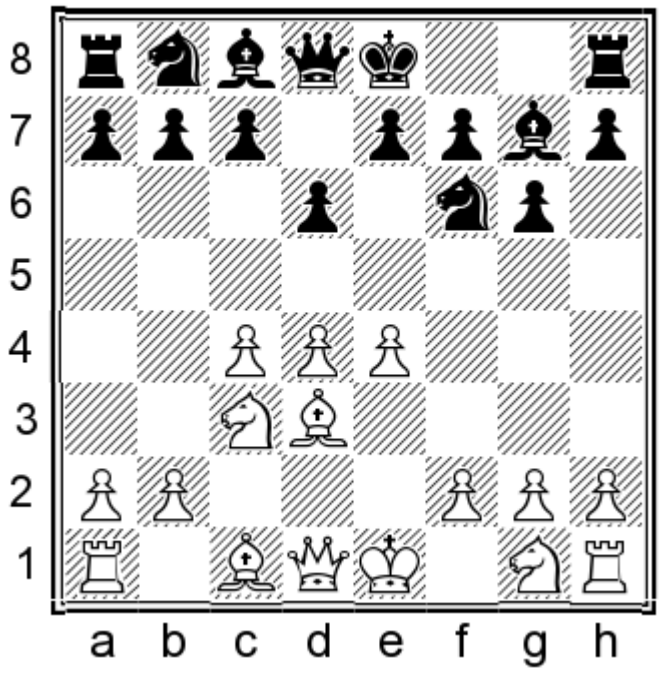
36...Nd3 37.Ra1 Bxe2 38.a6

"Who cares!"

38...Nxf2 39.a7 Ng4+ 40.Kh1 Rxg3 41.Qxe8+ Qxe8 42.a8=Q Bf3+ White resigned.

(229) E4.7 **Stein – Petrosian**
USSR Team Championship
Moscow 1964

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Bd3



5...e5

Bringing the game to the usual variations. Another path is to use White's weak control of the d4-square to organize piece pressure: 5...Nc6 6.Nge2 Nd7 or 6...e5 .

6.d5 Nbd7

When choosing this opening variation, Petrosian of course took into account that his opponent often plays the King's Indian Defense himself. In such cases, the main hope is that the chess player, playing against his favorite setup, will fight not so much against real dangers as against imaginary ones. Indeed, it seems that in the opening the Ukrainian grandmaster was not quite confident.

7.Nge2

White strives for a Sämisch System setup (see the annotation to Black's 6th move in game 226).

7...c6

The best defense. If Black plays passively, White conducts his attacking plan successfully, continuing h2-h3 (or f2-f3), g2-g4, Ng3, Qd2 and castling queenside. Now, however, this plan is risky because with an open c-file the white king will not be safe.

8.h3 0-0 9.Be3 cxd5 10.cxd5 Nc5 11.Bc2 Bd7

Again, the strongest continuation. Completing his development, Black retains active opportunities on both flanks.

If Black advances ...f5 before g2-g4, Ng3, White takes on f5 with the e-pawn, and then increases the pressure on f5 via g2-g4, using the fact that either advancing ...f4 or, especially, capturing on g4, is bad for Black.

12.g4

After 12.b4 Na6 13.Rb1, Petrosian planned to continue 13...Nh5 with the ideas ...Nf4 and ...f5.

12...a5 13.a4 Ne8

Here Gligorić's counterattack 13...h5 looks good; for example, 14.f3 Nh7 15.gxh5 Qh4+ 16.Bf2 Qxh5, etc.

However, the solid move that Petrosian made is also very good and typical for such positions. The knight goes to the queenside, along the way controlling the d6-square (in case of Bxc5). Among other things, Black plans the invasion 14...Qh4 or 14...Bf6, blockading the kingside.

White's next response is precisely directed against the latter two ideas in connection with the counter-threats 15.Bg5 and 15.g5.

14.Qd2 Qb6 15.Kf1 Nc7 16.Kg2 Qb4

It does not look like White has active play on the kingside, whereas on the opposite side of the board the black pieces occupy secure positions.

Here Stein offered a draw, but the world champion rejected it and decided to continue the fight. It is unlikely that Black has any advantage, but why not face off in an approximately equal position?

17.Ng3 f6 18.Rhc1 Rac8

Black is attentive and moves the "right" rook. The natural 18...Rfc8 is followed by 19.g5, with counterplay.

19.Na2

Not seeing an active plan, White forces simplifications.

19...Qxd2 20.Bxd2 Bxa4 21.Bxa4 Nxa4 22.Bxa5 Na6 23.Nc3

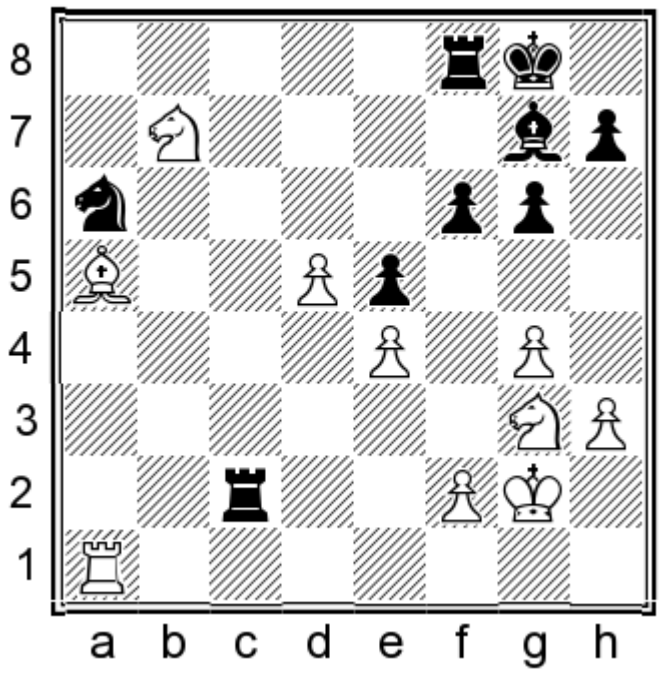
After 23.Nb4, unpleasant is 23...N6c5 with the threat of ...b6.

23...Nxb2 24.Nb5?!

Too good to be true. White chooses a wrong path, deciding to sacrifice an exchange for a pawn. Probably, Stein's well-known dislike for the endgame and defending worse positions also played a role.

After the "normal" 24.Rcb1 Nc4 25.Rxb7 Nc5 26.Rbb1 Nd3, Black's knight ends up on f4, of course, but Black has no real advantage. This is probably what White should play.

24...Nc4 25.Rxc4? Rxc4 26.Nxd6 Rc2 27.Nxb7



At this moment many thought that White had good compensation for the sacrificed exchange. Petrosian proves the

opposite.

27...Rb8 28.Nd8 Nc5 29.Rd1

No better is 29.Ra3 Rbb2 30.Be1 Ra2, etc.

29...Bh6! 30.Nc6 Rbb2 31.Be1 Be3!

The “stinger” of the King’s Indian bishop.

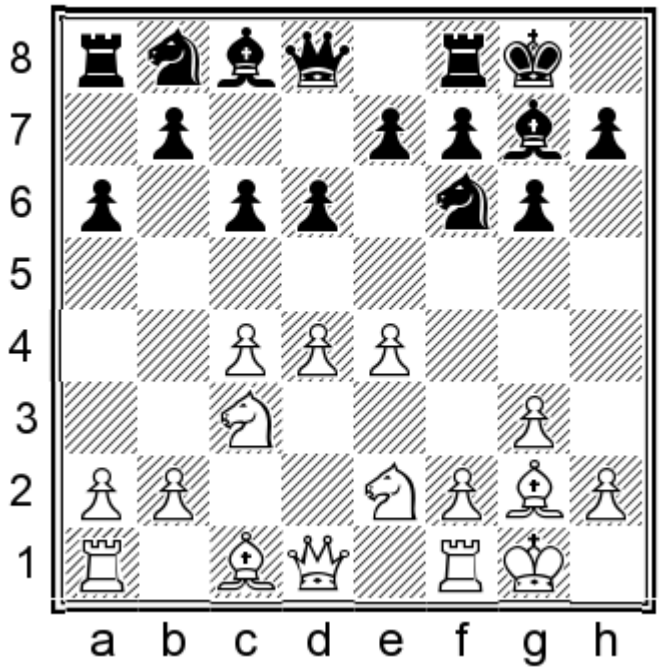
32.Nb4 Rc1! 33.Rxc1 Bxc1

After the rook trade the d-pawn loses all its power and White’s position becomes absolutely hopeless.

34.Kf1 Rb1 35.Ke2 Bf4 36.d6 Kf7 37.Nd5 Bxg3 38.fxg3 Ke6 39.Bb4 Nxe4 40.Nc7+ Kd7 41.Nd5 White resigned.

(230) E4.8 **Donald Byrne – Petrosian**
Palma de Mallorca 1968

1.c4 g6 2.Nc3 Bg7 3.g3 Nf6 4.Bg2 0-0 5.e4 d6 6.Nge2 c6 7.0-0 a6 8.d4



It took White a long time to decide whether to move the d-pawn one or two squares, and finally he decided to transpose the game from an English setup into a rare variation of the King’s Indian Defense.

8...Nbd7 9.h3 Rb8

A dubious move, as White’s next energetic response shows.

Here, the standard continuation is 9...e5: the same position except with the knight on f3 occurs in the main variation (see game 110). White can choose the bland 10.dxe5 of course, after which Black’s move ...a6 is not particularly useful, but I think Black should not worry about that.

10.d5!

Creating pressure on the c6-pawn and practically forcing Black’s response.

10...c5

In case of 10...cxd5 11.cxd5, White has a clear advantage as a result of his space advantage and control of the d4-square. So, it has taken two moves for the bishop pawn to get to c5. But this is not the worst of it.

11.a4 Ne8 12.f4 Nc7 13.Qd3 Nf6 14.Bd2 Bd7

The reader probably noticed that the king's knight ended up on the c7-square and its queenside counterpart on the f6-square, which cost Black at least a couple of tempi. This is clear evidence that something did not work out for Black in the opening. And yet I would not say that White has such a big advantage here as did Aleksandar Matanović when annotating this game in the *Informant*. This is mainly because, as a rule, in such positions the e2-knight is poorly placed.

Aleksandar Matanović considers the variation 14...b5 15.axb5 axb5 16.cxb5 Bd7 17.Ra5!, with the evaluation ±. However, this evaluation seems exaggerated to me. In fact, let's look at the position carefully. White's extra pawn does not play a significant role, as he is not ready to play e4-e5, and his pieces are rather passive. Using these factors, Black can try to win back the b5-pawn. For example: 17...Qc8 18.Kh2 (18.e5 Nfe8 just makes matters worse for White) 18...Qb7, and now 19.Rfa1 Bxb5 20.Nxb5 Nxb5 leads to some advantage for White, and the "active" 19.e5 Bf5 20.Qf3 Nd7 to very unclear and double-edged play. I believe that, in Petrosian's place, many chess players would have chosen exactly such a path.

Now, generally speaking, the text continuation seems playable; by opening the b-file, Black obtains some freedom on the queenside. To be fair, this is only temporary, so Black's main problem, creating full long-term counterplay, still remains unsolved. Perhaps the optimal solution for Black is 14...b6, with the standard idea ...Bd7, ...b5. Taking into account all of the time Black wasted previously, this idea seems rather brazen, but it is not so easy to refute.

15.a5

As they say, forced but strong.

15...b6 16.axb6 Rxb6 17.Qc2 Qb8 18.Nd1

Not so much to win a pawn (Ba5) as to carry out the useful regrouping Bc3, Ne3.

18...Nfe8 19.Bc3 Bxc3

Deserving attention is 19...e6. In this case, after the bishop trade, the knight comes to g7; after ...exd5 exd5, it could continue on to f5 and then e3 or d4. If White instead takes on d5 with the c-pawn, then ...f6, with a passive but solid position for Black.

20.Nexc3 Rb4 21.Qe2

Black extracted all the benefits he could from the b-file: there are no other means to increase the pressure on the b2- and c4-pawns. Now the threat of e4-e5 becomes real again. Urgent measures are necessary in the center. If 21...e6, White would not take on e6, of course, and would instead reply, for instance, 22.Ra2 or 22.Rf2, preparing Ne3. Whether Black exchanges on d5 or not, his position is worse in any case because of the very passive placement of his knights. If only ...e5 worked, it would be a different story.

21...e5

Extremely risky but absolutely understandable: the temptation to solve all problems with one move is too great.

22.f5?

A standard move, after which White loses almost all of his advantage. The further advance of his pawns on the kingside is met with serious difficulties. At the same time, by removing the pawn tension in the center, Byrne allows

his opponent to rebuild his line of defense and thoroughly entrench himself on the dark squares.

In our opinion, the continuation 22.fxe5 dxe5 23.Na2!, with the idea of a rapid attack on the c5- and e5-pawns (Qf2, Nc1-d3, etc.) is the most principled continuation and the most unpleasant for Black. It is easy to see that Black cannot save both pawns by normal means (for example, clearly bad is 23...Ra4 because of 24.Ndc3, isolating the rook from play). Apparently, he has to resort to various tricks like 23...Rb3 24.Qf2 Rd3, after which White has a pleasant choice between 25.Qxc5 Rxg3 and 25.Kh2 Rd4, with better chances in both cases.

If for some reason the American master did not like these variations, he could play more solidly: 22.Rf2, followed by Ne3 and Raf1, which also guarantees a slight advantage for White (recommended by Aleksandar Matanović).

22...Nf6 23.Rf2 Kh8 24.Kh2 g5

Petrosian at his best. His last moves are prophylaxis directed against White's future pawn offensive on the kingside. Soon, for the same reason, the black king moves to a safer position on f8.

25.Ne3 Rg8 26.Bf3 Rb6

The fight enters a new phase: now the chances are equal, but the psychological advantage is undoubtedly on Petrosian's side.

27.Kh1 Kg7 28.h4

It does not look like White has another active plan.

28...h6 29.Rg1 Kf8 30.Ng4

White could just "stay put" and play 30.Rh2, but Byrne, apparently under the impression that he still had the advantage, continues to "attack" by inertia. But, alas, the advantage is already gone. From a positional point of view, the text move is a fundamental mistake. Black's camp is still cramped, and by exchanging a pair of knights, White revives what is probably Black's worst-placed piece, the c7-knight, only compounding White's problems.

30...Nxg4 31.Bxg4 Ne8 32.f6

An idea tied to the maneuver on the 30th move: White does not allow the knight on the blockaded f6-square and forces the exchange of his "bad" bishop. On the other hand, White's f-pawn breaks away from the main mass of pawns and might be lost.

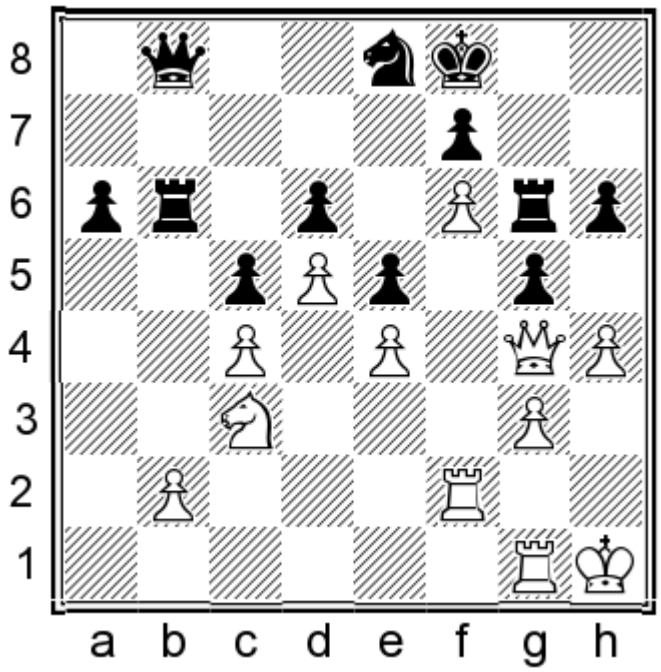
The final act of a fascinating chess play begins: tactical complications.

32...Bxg4 33.Qxg4

A tricky trap for time pressure is 33...Rxb2? 34.Rxb2 Qxb2 35.Rb1 Qxc3 36.Rb8, and Black can only lose in spite of his extra piece. The following variation is quite clever: 36...Qa1+ 37.Kg2 Qa4?! (stronger is 37...Qa5 38.Qd7 Qd2+ with perpetual) 38.h5 Rh8? 39.Kh3 Kg8 40.Qf5! , and Black eventually loses because of *zugzwang*.

33...Rg6!

Bypassing the trap and in return posing the following problem for the opponent: how to save the b2- and f6-pawns?



34.Rgf1?

A mistake. Maybe White did not have time to understand all the intricacies of the position and find the right move 34.hxg5!.

Now 34...hxg5 35.Rgf1 is very dangerous for Black. For example, 35...Rxb2? 36.Qh5!, threatening 37.Qh8+ and 38.Qh6+, and 36...Kg8 would be followed by the spectacular 37.Qxg6+!; 35...Rh6+ 36.Rh2, etc., does not help.

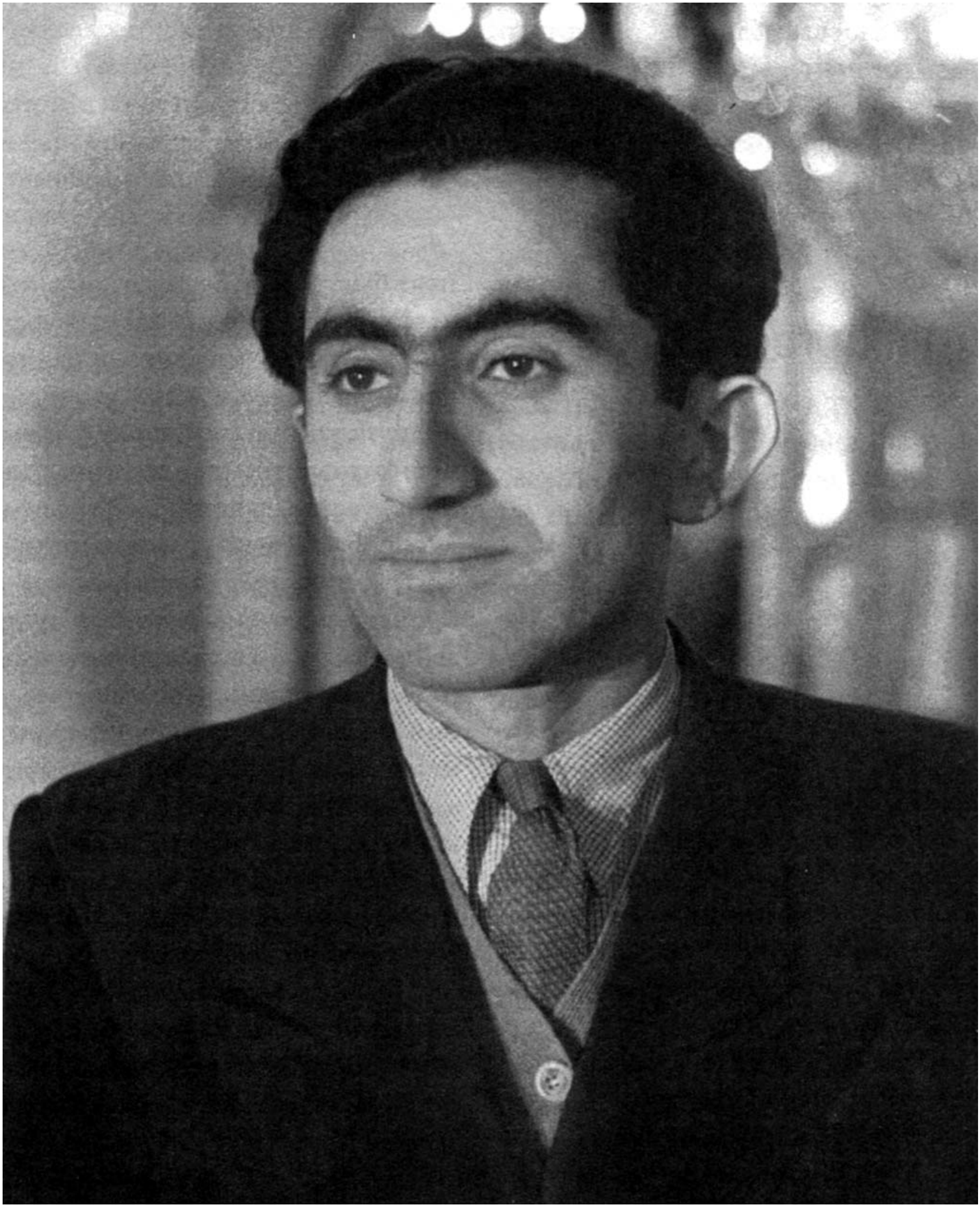
Thus, only 34...Rxg5 35.Qh4! Rg6 36.Nd1 remains, and because of the threat of g4-g5, White's position is not worse. The logical finish would be as follows: 36...Rb4 37.g4 Rxc4 38.g5 Rc1! 39.gxh6 Rxg1+ 40.Kxg1 Qb3! 41.h7 Qxd1+ 42.Kg2 Qg1+, with a draw by perpetual.

34...gxh4! 35.Qxh4 Rxb2 36.g4

Now this counterplay is too slow, and White simply loses material.

36...Rxf2 37.Rxf2 Qb3 38.Rf3 Kg8 39.g5 hxg5 40.Qg4 Nxf6 White resigned.

And now the fifth chapter in numbers. In six games with White, Petrosian scored four points (+2, -0, =4). His result with Black was "plus seven" (+9, –2, =9). A little statistical paradox: in terms of percentages, these indicators are approximately equivalent, 67% and 68% respectively.

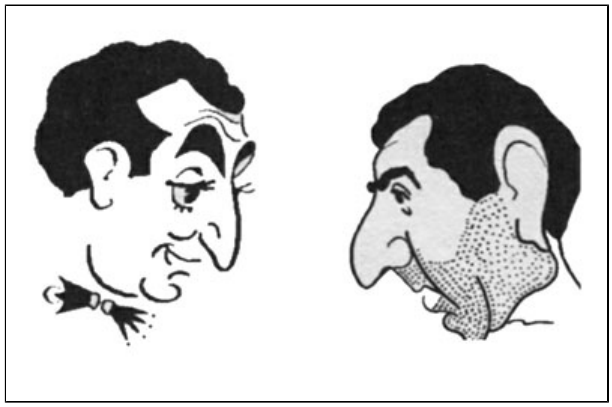


Part Two
Elements of Success

— Prudence is the true virtue.

Euripides

Chapter 6
Portrait of a Chessplayer



It is said that “style is the person.” A chess player’s style, like a mirror, reflects every facet of his personality: his habits, affections, and contradictions.

When you compare the characteristics of Petrosian’s style over the years, the first thing that catches the eye is a vast diversity of opinions. Some pay attention to the amazing speed and ease of his play, the elegance of his decisions; others note his originality and extraordinary technique in the endgame, while some talk about an extremely developed sense of danger and understanding of the art of defense. “Iron Tigran,” “Tiger,” “Python,” as well as “Impenetrable,” “Cautious,” and “Master of Defense” – this is an incomplete list of the epithets and nicknames given to Petrosian by colleagues and journalists. I believe that they all were right. A chess player is constantly evolving, which means that his views, tastes, and style change. On the other hand, universalism in chess is not a luxury but a necessity. Nowadays, it is impossible to achieve serious success in chess at the highest level without mastering the entire arsenal of techniques. This does not preclude a vibrant creative personality, of course. Was Petrosian a “universal” player? Without a doubt, even though he always remained faithful to the principles of the classical positional school.

Generally speaking, trying to exactly define the style of this or that chess player is a very difficult and ungrateful task. Every grandmaster, especially a world-class player, has a complex, often multifaceted and contradictory personality. Of course, no one can deny that Petrosian was cautious and circumspect, but at times his game was permeated with passionate explosions of temperament, sometimes to such a degree that even Petrosian himself, looking through some of his games, doubted that he had really played them.

And yet, how can we explain Petrosian’s exceptionally good results in the King’s Indian Defense? On average, his score was 8-10% higher than in other openings, regardless of the color that he had. Clearly, this was not because of some opening tricks, or rather, not just because of them. No matter how perfect the opening, the outcome of the battle is determined in the middlegame and endgame, and in these decisive stages of the game Petrosian’s play was always convincing. However, it would not be entirely correct to say that he was just stronger than his rivals. I think there are two main reasons. First, Petrosian considered the King’s Indian Defense to be “his” opening and he felt obligated to win his games in it, so he would throw his usual caution to the wind and play for a win. This explains the high percentage of decisive games. The peculiarities of his style are the other reason. We will talk about those in the first chapter.

Generator of Ideas

In his book *Positional Play*, Mark Dvoretsky remembers observing Tigran Petrosian and Eduard Gufeld when they were analyzing together. The former world champion was outplaying his opponent time and time again. Gufeld exclaimed perplexedly: “How could that happen? My position is better!” Petrosian joked: “But my brain is better!”

Petrosian’s gifted and creative nature made him abhor the standard ways; he felt restricted within the mundane

framework of theory. Not that he disregarded it, but he liked to come up with something special, to take a slightly different path in order to get a new, nonstandard position, where his “good brain” would come in handy. Certainly, King’s Indian setups were very fertile soil for improvisation, with their internal dynamics and rich strategic palette.

The source of creativity in chess is closely associated with understanding or, if you like, a sense of beauty. Each chess player has his own perception of beauty, because this ability largely depends on one’s strength of play, the depth of his chess knowledge, and his chess culture. For Petrosian, it is primarily something extraordinary, a mind game, a triumph of the spirit, a victory of the individual over the mundane and trivial. And moreover, as he said more than once, true beauty in chess never loses it charming novelty; it is always capable of surprising.

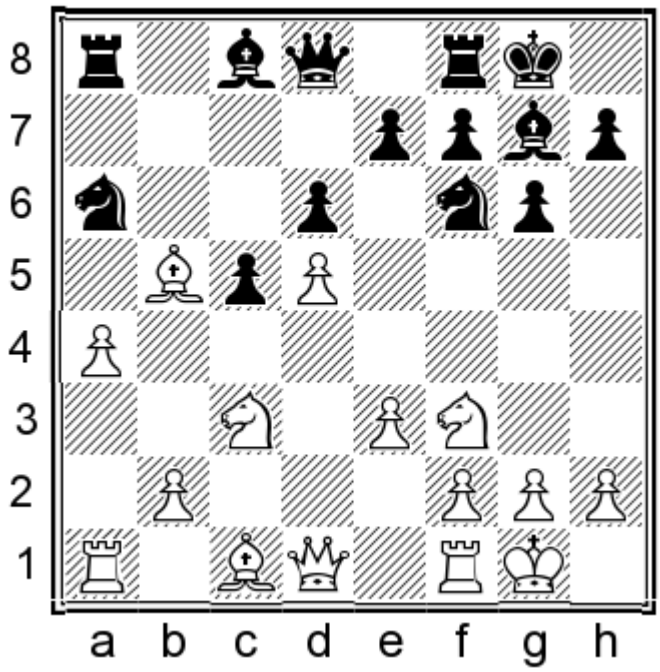
Positional strategy always prevailed in Petrosian’s play. He never aimed for flashy or perplexing moves. More often we see original ideas, plans, or complete strategic concepts, as we can see in the system with Bg5 bearing his name. Going back to the first part of this book, where such innovations abounded, we invite the reader to once again turn to games 9, 16, 26, 59, 76, 105, 138, 140, 175, 187, 197.

I think that our story of this side of Petrosian’s creative output would be incomplete without the following two examples.

(231) Petrosian – Alburt
45th USSR Championship
Leningrad 1977

In this annotated game, which, in our opinion, was one of the jewels of the 45th USSR Championship, Petrosian creatively interpreted the Benko Gambit. Usually, accepting the gambit, White tries to build defensive fortifications on the queenside, not even considering activity for a long time. Petrosian, contrary to the long-held assumption, began to challenge Black’s dominance on the queenside, which was apparently a complete surprise for his opponent: the outcome of the battle was already decided in the middlegame by White’s passed a-pawn.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.Nf3 g6 5.cxb5 a6 6.e3 Bg7 7.Nc3 0-0 8.a4 axb5 9.Bxb5 d6 10.0-0 Na6



In this case, we are not particularly interested in the opening; however, note that even today this position can hardly be found on the “map” of theory. Here Petrosian made a “mysterious” rook move, probably inspired by the Modern Benoni variation.

11.Ra3!

White launches the queen’s rook into an active “orbit”, at the same time eliminating Black’s threats along the a1-

h8 diagonal. Not seeing a direct danger, Alburt continues to maneuver with his knights.

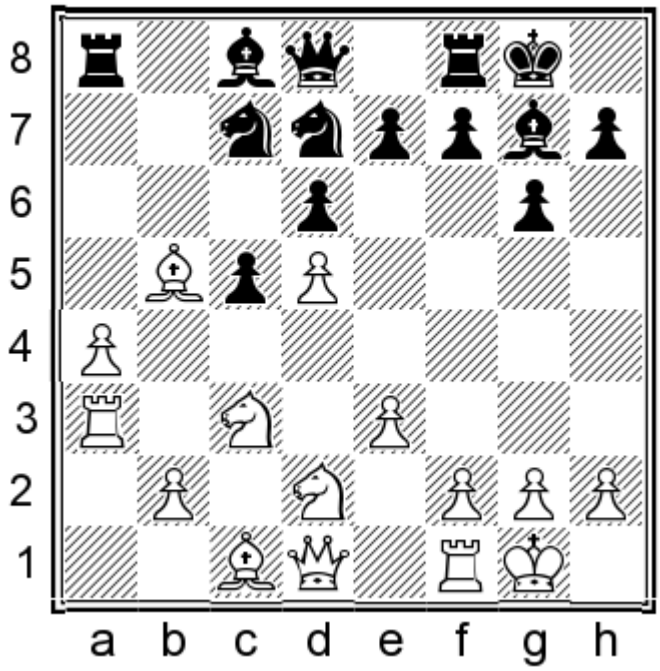
11...Nc7 12.Nd2

This is the concrete benefit of the move Ra3: White immediately sends his knight to c4, taking advantage of the fact that his rook is protected in the variation 12...Nxb5 13.axb5

12...Nd7

Back then, Lev Alburt, at the time a promising young master, was an ardent fan of the Benko Gambit. Curiously, as Black, he played only two openings: against 1.e4, he played Alekhine's Defense, and against 1.d4, whenever possible, he almost always sacrificed a pawn via ...b5 and, I must add, had good results.

But in this game such consistency in the opening did not serve him well. This standard maneuver (Black prepares to meet Nc4 with ...Nde5) turned out to be a serious mistake that led to significant difficulties. After the game Petrosian suggested the exchange sacrifice 12...Nfxd5!? 13.Nxd5 Nxd5 14.Bc6 Be6 15.Bxa8 Qxa8, which activates the black pieces.



13.Bxd7!

An absolutely unexpected solution. It is much more difficult to find such a move than to sacrifice a couple dozen bishops on h7. At first glance, this move is not at all remarkable: White, who is a pawn up, simplifies the position. But this is an amateurish point of view. An experienced chess player will immediately notice that White parts with a very important bishop (which, by the way, could have been easily saved by 13.Bc6). So, what does he get in return? The thing is that Petrosian saw a real opportunity to weaken the opponent's initiative on the queenside and to create the prerequisites for active play there, using the strong c4-knight and the vulnerability of the b6-square. For Alburt, this turn of events was apparently a total revelation.

13...Bxd7 14.Nc4 Ra6 15.e4

It is helpful to reinforce the grouping of the central pawns in the event of the possible ...e6. It is clear that the weakening of the d4-square has no practical implications.

15...Qb8

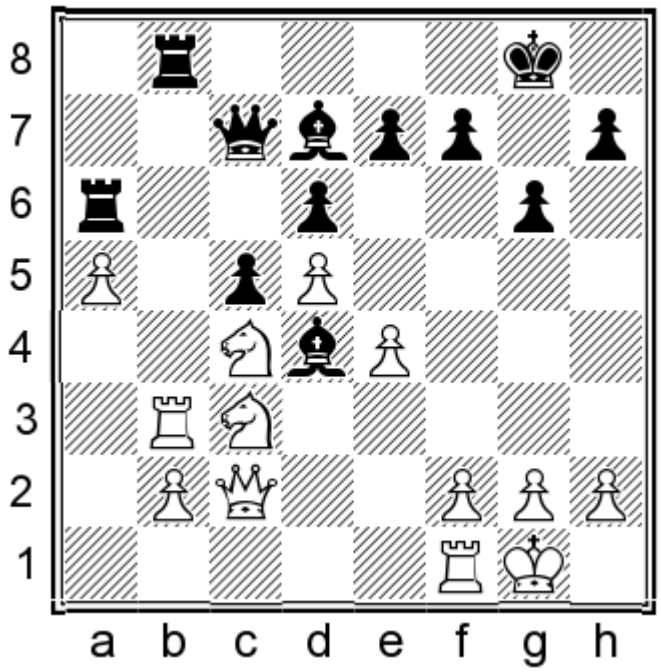
Subsequently, Mikhail Yudovich, Sr. suggested 15...Qa8, which is perhaps somewhat stronger than the text

continuation but does not really make a difference.

16.Qc2 Qb4 17.Na2 Qb7 18.Bd2 Rfa8?

The continuation of the wrong plan. Black wants to force the advance a4-a5 and then transfer his knight to d4 by way of b5. However, Petrosian simply exchanges this knight for the bishop, obtaining a position where the knights dominate the bishops. Black should play 18...e6 or 18...f5 (recommended by Mikhail Tal), renouncing his claims to the queenside and moving the game to the center.

19.a5 Nb5 20.Rb3 Qc7 21.Bc3 Nd4 22.Bxd4 Bxd4 23.Nc3 Rb8



Strategically, the game is already decided. In such structures, Black has to keep both of his rooks; otherwise he risks ending up in a technical position down a pawn (as happens here). 23...Bxc3 24.Qxc3 Ba4 25.Ra3 Bb5 26.Nb6! does not help (indicated by Mikhail Yudovich).

24.Rb6!

The decisive invasion. The weakness of the b6-square becomes the leitmotif of White's activity.

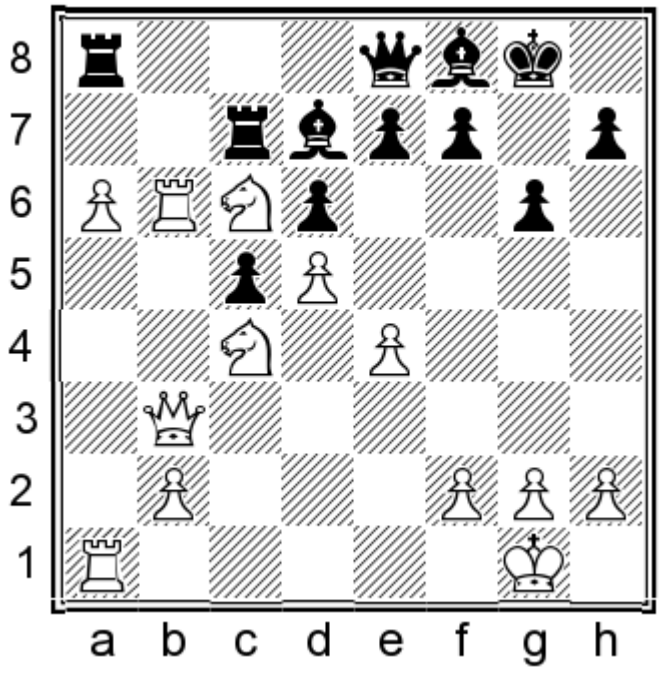
24...Raa8 25.Qb3 Qd8 26.Nb5 Bg7 27.Na7!

The final detail. After the long raid b1-c3-a2-c3- b5-a7, the knight comes to c6, securing the advance of the passed pawn to a7. Petrosian's artful knight play is very aesthetically pleasing.

27...Qe8 28.Ra1 Bf8 29.Nc6

The white knights feel at home in the opponent's camp.

29...Rc8 30.a6 Rc7



31.Rb7 Rxc6 32.dxc6 Bxc6 33.a7

This puts an end to any resistance. If now 33...Bxb7, then 34.Qxb7, and the threat of Nb6 decides the game.

33...Bxe4 34.Rb8 Qd7 35.Rxa8 Bxa8 36.Nb6 Qb7 37.Qf3 Black resigned

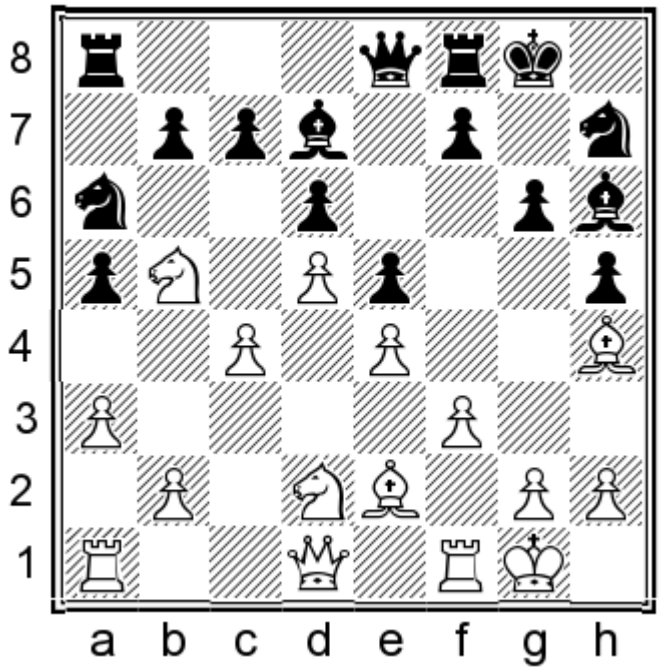
Now let’s go over this game once again and trace the milestones of White’s plan: 11.Ra3!, 13.Bxd7!, 24.Rb6!, 27.Na7!. Leaving aside the opening subtleties, we can say that Petrosian was able to find a very original, novel way to play against the Benko Gambit and pose for the opponent a number of complex problems, which Alburt could not solve despite all of his experience in this variation.

One of Petrosian’s strengths was his excellent play in the transition from the opening into the middlegame. It was at this moment that the greatest number of various surprises awaited his opponents.

I remember one interesting idea that Petrosian suggested in 1982 at the Spartak (Petrosian’s team) training session for the USSR team championship in Kislovodsk.

Here is the position that arises from the wellknown variation of the classical system after

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Nf3 0-0 5.e4 d6 6.Be2 e5 7.d5 a5 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 Na6 10.Nd2 Qe8 11.0-0 Nh7 12.a3 h5 13.f3 Bd7 14.Nb5 Bh6:



I remember that the Spartak players were not doing too well in that tournament, despite their rather impressive line-up (Tigran Petrosian, a young Garry Kasparov, and a number of other grandmasters). The author of this book was responsible for the women's half of the team, which was playing especially badly. So, when going into the next round I knew that the King's Indian Defense was a possibility on one of the women's boards, I decided to turn to Petrosian for help, and he recommended this variation.

At that time, the knight move to b5 was not popular: it is a decentralizing move, and, in general, the supporters of this variation for White were more concerned with not allowing the fixing advance ...a4, against which b2-b3 was often played as early as on move 13.

So, with the position from the diagram on the board, Tigran Vartanovich moved the white king to h1 and asked us to look for a good reply for Black. However, surprisingly, this turned out to be no easy task. The position suddenly turned into a minefield where we were constantly besieged, now and then falling into disguised traps artfully placed by the former world champion.

Unfortunately, no one kept records, and the variations that we had considered then did not survive, but I remember the ideas well. Here are the two most natural replies after the move 15.Kh1:

(1) 15...f5 (an attempt to take advantage of the decentralization of the b5-knight) 16.exf5 Bxf5 (after 16...gxf5, 17.f4! is unpleasant) 17.c5! dxc5 (17...Bd7 18.a4!) 18.d6!, with more than sufficient compensation for the pawn;

(2) 15...a4 ("irresistible") 16.Be1 (immediately threatening the a4-pawn) 16...Bxb5 17.cxb5 Nc5 18.Bf2 Bxd2 (regarding 18...b6, see below) 19.Bxc5 dxc5 20.Qxd2, with an obvious advantage for White, thanks to Black's poorly placed knight and the weakness on a4.

In the end, we decided that after 15.Kh1, a wait-and-see approach would be best for Black (something like 15...Qb8 or 15...Kh8), roughly outlined the continuations for White in these cases, and the preparation was completed. However, in Kislovodsk the novelty did not come to be played. Petrosian himself never got to test it either.

Since 1984, I have tried this idea in several games. Here is how one of them unfolded (Rashid Ziatdinov as Black, Tashkent, 1986):

15.Kh1 Be3

Black suspected something and was not in a hurry to commit. Still, 15...Qb8 is better, as Valery Loginov played against me (Uzhgorod 1988).

16.Qc2 a4?!

After all! In case of 16...f5 17.exf5 gxf5, White was going to use the unstable position of the bishop on e3 via 18.Rae1 or even more energetically, 18.Qc3!?, not fearing 18...Bd4 because of 19.Nxd4! exd4 20.Qxd4 Qxe2 21.Rae1, and Black's queen is trapped.

17.Rad1

Creating the threat of taking on a4.

17...Bxb5

In the later game Yanvarjov-Gavrilov (Moscow 1988) Black first played 17...g5, but after 18.Be1 Bxb5 19.cxb5 Nc5 20.Nc4 Bd4 21.b6 Qd8 22.f4! the weakening of his kingside played a decisive role: 22...gxf4 23.Bxh5 Nb3 24.Bg4 Bc5 25.g3 Nd4 26.Qg2, with an attack.

18.cxb5 Nc5 19.Nc4 Bg5 20.Bf2 b6 21.Bxc5!

The essence of White's idea lies in this unconventional exchange (the idea of which was also invented by Petrosian). With the pawn on a4, the opening of the queenside is inevitable after b2-b3.

21...bxc5 22.b6

Also possible is 22.Rb1, followed by b2-b3. Note also that in this case 22...f5 is bad for Black because of 23.exf5 gxf5 24.Bd3; with opposite-color bishops, the f5-square becomes weak.

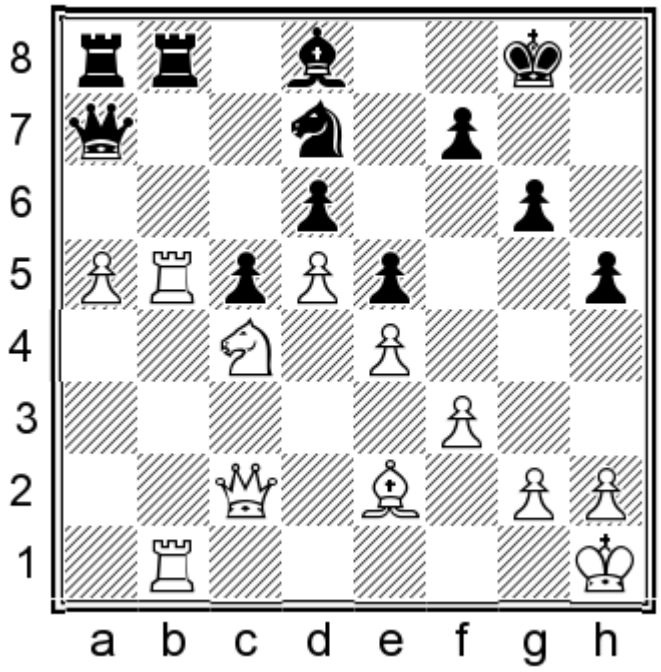
22...Qb8 23.bxc7 Qxc7 24.Rb1 Rfb8 25.b3 axb3 26.Rxb3 Nf8

This attempt to transfer the knight to b6 is Black's only counter-chance.

27.Rfb1 Nd7 28.Rb5 Bd8

More stubborn is 28...Rxb5 29.Rxb5 Rb8, but even in this case after 30.Qb3 Rxb5 31.Qxb5 Bd8 32.Qc6! White has a significant advantage.

29.a4 Qa7 30.a5!



White has a strategically winning position, which he successfully converted on move 58. After the game, my opponent could not understand where he had made a mistake.

A Great Master of Prophylaxis

The term “prophylaxis,” borrowed by chess players from medical science, describes an interesting method of play that is based on thinking from the opponent’s point of view.

Aron Nimzowitsch was one of the first to realize that it is possible (and sometimes necessary) to play this way. In his books, especially in his foundational work *My System*, he constantly returns to the idea of prophylaxis and formulates a number of its constituent elements, such as overprotection, blockading to prevent freeing pawn moves, and others.

For Tigran Petrosian, who grew up with Nimzowitsch’s books and had a natural ability to see the game from the opponent’s point of view, prophylaxis was “his native tongue” from childhood. He knew how to avert danger long before it appeared, and he did so, as Mikhail Botvinnik put it, “artistically, without any effort, simply intuitively.” Interestingly, Petrosian often analyzed and even played blitz in such a manner.



The Moscow master Avraam Pismenny used to tell a story about this. Once (sometime in the mid-1960s) he was in the Central Chess Club (now Botvinnik’s House of the Chessplayer) analyzing his adjourned game. The game followed the wellknown King’s Indian scenario and was adjourned in a position where he as Black was missing most of his queenside pieces but still had chances for an attack on the other flank. At the time, the club on Gogol Boulevard was truly a home for chess players; it was always teeming with chess life. The high and mighty of the chess world, grandmasters, often dropped in at the headquarters for business, to give a simul, or just to see and be seen. That day, Pismenny got lucky. Evgeny Vasiukov, Mikhail Tal, and Tigran Petrosian stopped by. All three took an interest in his position and took part in the analysis. Evgeny Andreyevich, who assessed the position as unclear, found an interesting piece sacrifice in one variation, and it seemed that White’s fate was sealed. The wizard of chess combinations, Mikhail Nekhemievich was not so optimistic, but he said something like “White is probably better, but I would rather play as Black since Black is attacking!” Then Tigran Vartanovich delivered the final “diagnosis.” He explained that, after a timely march of the white king to the queenside, Black had no attack and his position was hopeless.

The reader is probably curious how that game ended. Of course, Avraam Pismenny won. His opponent could never have fathomed that his king could walk across a board full of pieces.

In the area of prophylaxis, Petrosian surpassed many of his opponents. Of course, this played its role in the King’s Indian systems, in which, as we know, it is extremely important to carry out one’s own plans while stifling the opponent’s plans. However, some believe that Petrosian quite often overestimated the danger facing him and overused prophylaxis. It seems to me that criticism is not entirely appropriate in such matters. After all, this is like criticizing, say, Rubinstein for overusing technique or Tal for taking excessive risks. That’s nonsense! Everyone plays as his nature dictates, and as for the shortcomings... as the old saying goes, they are an extension of our strengths. If Rubinstein played aggressively, Tal was more cautious, and Petrosian took more risks, they would have been totally different chess players, and we would never have seen so many remarkable works of chess art. Including this...

(232) Petrosian – Gufeld
28th USSR Championship

Annotations by Tigran Petrosian

(from *The Games of Tigran Petrosian*, Volume 1)

1.c4 g6

This move order in the King's Indian Defense has occurred quite often in tournaments of recent years. By delaying the development of his knight at f6, Black reserves the possibility of playing it to e7 or even h6.

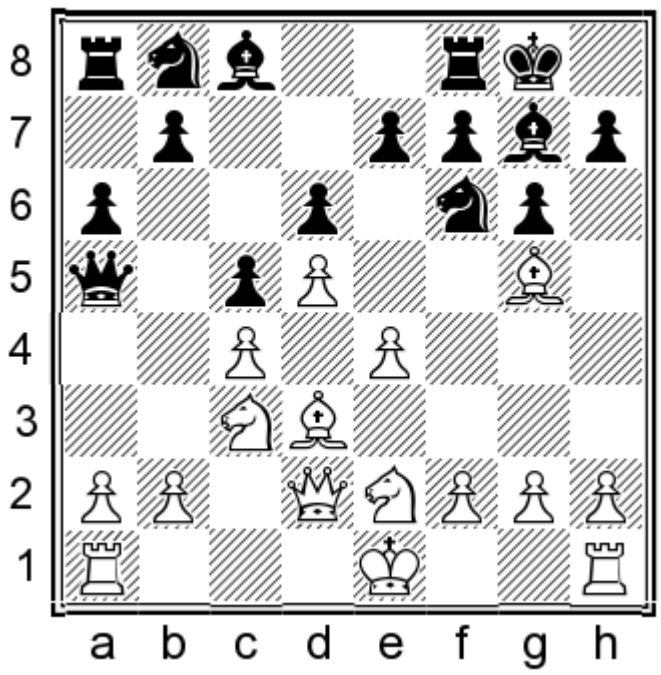
2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 Nf6

On this occasion it all reduces to a transposition of moves.

4.e4 0-0 5.Bg5 d6 6.Qd2 c5 7.d5 Qa5

In the event of 7...e6 8.dxe6 Bxe6 or 8...fxe6 White obtains good chances on the kingside after Bd3, Nge2, and 0-0.

8.Bd3 a6 9.Nge2



Can Black get away with playing ...b5? It is on this that the assessment of the opening stage depends. Let us see: 9...b5 10.cxb5 axb5 11.Bxb5 Nxe4 12.Nxe4 Qxb5 13.Bxe7 Re8 14.Nxd6 Qxb2 15.Qxb2 Bxb2, and now both 16.Nxe8 Bxa1 17.Nc1 and 16.Rb1 Rxe7 17.Nxc8 Rb7 18.Nd6 Rb4 19.Nc4 lead to positions with good drawing chances for Black. But few are attracted by the prospect, after 30 minutes' play, of seeking salvation in an endgame, with no chance at all of complicating the play. More in the spirit of the position is not to try regaining the pawn, but after 9...b5 10.cxb5 to continue 10...Nbd7, which leads to a sharp struggle. Experience has shown that the opening of the a- and b-files, even at the cost of a pawn, gives Black good possibilities.

Gufeld's next move is a serious mistake.

9...e5?

Outwardly the position appears highly promising for Black. By blocking the pawn chain in the center he has transferred the weight of the struggle to the flanks, and the possibility of the undermining moves ...b5 and ...f5 would seem to give him the better chances. But if Black, reasoning this way, had attached greatest importance to the

mobility of his pawn structure on the flanks, he should not have forgotten that it is the job of the pawns to clear the way for the pieces. Then he would not have overlooked the fact that White's forces are much better placed in the event of the position being opened.

10.0-0 Nbd7 11.a3 Nh5 12.f3!

A good prophylactic move, directed in particular against ...f5. It transpires that 12...f5 is bad in view of 13.exf5 gxf5 14.Qc2!, when there is no convenient way of defending the f5 pawn. Of course, 12.Be7 Re8 13.Bxd6? is a mistake – 13...Qb6.

After 12.g4, as Mark Dvoretsky pointed out, Black has good play after a typical pawn sacrifice:12...Nf4 13.Nxf4 exf4 14.Bxf4 Ne5 15.Be2 f5 or 15...Bd7 followed by b5 – Igor Yanvarjov.

12...Bf6

Black's position is very difficult. He has to reckon with the positional threat of g2-g4 followed by Ng3, and if the attacked knight goes to f4, he loses a pawn without sufficient compensation.

13.Bh6 Ng7

From here the knight supports the advance of the f-pawn, but it is precisely this that White wants. (*I think* 13...Bg7 *is better – Igor Yanvarjov*).

14.g3

White's position is so good that he can vary between different plans. The advance of the g-pawn two squares is for the moment replaced by the more modest g2-g3, but now Black has to reckon with the possible f3-f4. In situations where one side has no possibility of active counterplay, whereas the other, with a significant spatial advantage, has several ways of strengthening his position, such a method of play is sometimes more unpleasant and dangerous than direct action. After all, it is hard for the defender to guess from which direction danger will strike.

14...Rb8 15.Kh1 Qc7

After 15...b5 16.cxb5 axb5 17.b4! it is not hard to see that Black loses a pawn: 17...Qa6 18.Nxb5, or 17...cxb4 18.axb4, and 18...Qxb4 fails to 19.Be3 with the threat of 20.Rfb1.

16.b3

A continuation of the same unhurried strategy. Before playing his pawn to b4 White prepares to double rooks on the b-file, which sooner or later will be opened (*it is interesting to compare this maneuver with the similar one in the game B9.3; see White's 15th and 16th moves – Igor Yanvarjov*). At the same time another problem is also solved: he no longer has to watch for ...b5.

16...Be7 17.Rab1 Kh8 18.Rb2 Nf6

Black embarks on a new regrouping, which in the end enables him to advance his pawn to f5. Had he tried to do this now or a move earlier, then after the exchange on f5 White would have created unpleasant pressure on the b1-h7 diagonal by Qc2, and in combination with g3-g4 and the opening (after b3-b4) of a second front on the queenside, this would have led to a difficult situation for Black. It would have been most sensible for him to stick to passive tactics, and to wait for White to clarify his intentions. Moves such as 18...b6 followed by 19...Rb7 would to some extent have improved his defensive resources.

19.b4 Ng8 20.Be3

The withdrawal of the knight from d7 has significantly denuded Black's queenside, and now White achieves real positional gains without difficulty.

20...f5

After 20...b6 21.bxc5 bxc5 22.Rxb8 Qxb8 23.Rb1 followed by 24.Qb2 White takes control of the open b-file, but this is comparatively the lesser evil for Black.

21.bxc5 dxc5 22.Rfb1

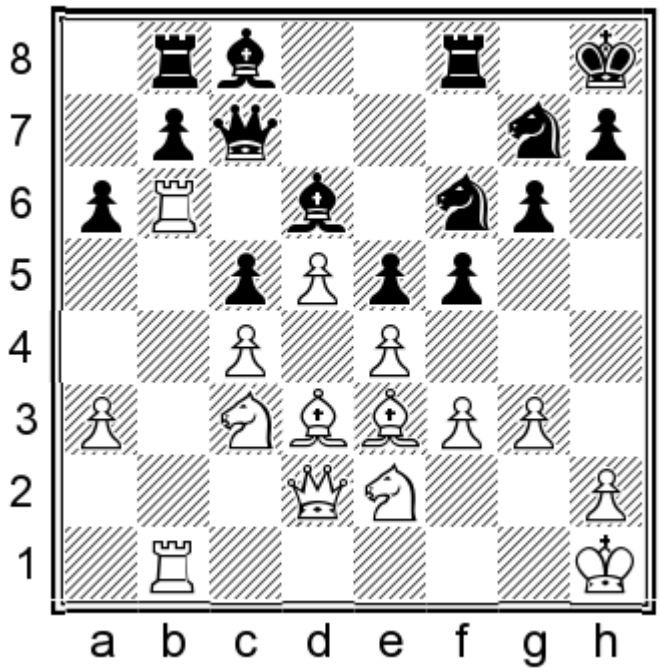
Black's position is irreparably compromised. On the queenside, White exerts strong pressure on the b-file, while on the kingside, having "achieved" ...f5, Black himself has created additional breaches in his defenses.

22...Nf6

The white rook should not be allowed to go to b6. Of course, 22...b6 opens new possibilities for White, involving the advance of his a-pawn, but nevertheless it should be played.

23.Rb6 Bd6

The attempt to drive out the rook by 23...Nd7 loses material after 24.d6 and 25.Nd5. (*Mark Dvoretsky indicated that* 23...fxe4 *is more stubborn – Igor Yanvarjov*)



24.Bh6

Despite the strong pressure, Black still has hopes of obtaining counter-chances by exchanging on e4, when after the recapture with the pawn he can eliminate the dark-square bishop by ...Ng4, while after Nxe4 or Bxe4 he has ...Nf5. With his overwhelming positional superiority, White retains an obvious advantage even if the "threats" mentioned above were to be carried out, but there is no reason for him to part without need with even a portion of his positional gains.

24...Rf7

On 24...fxe4 I intended to continue 25.Nxe4 Nxe4 26.Bxe4 Rf7 27.g4!, when, as before, Black is under fire from two sides: the pressure on the queenside is combined with play on the kingside involving the advance of the h-pawn.

25.Ng1 f4?

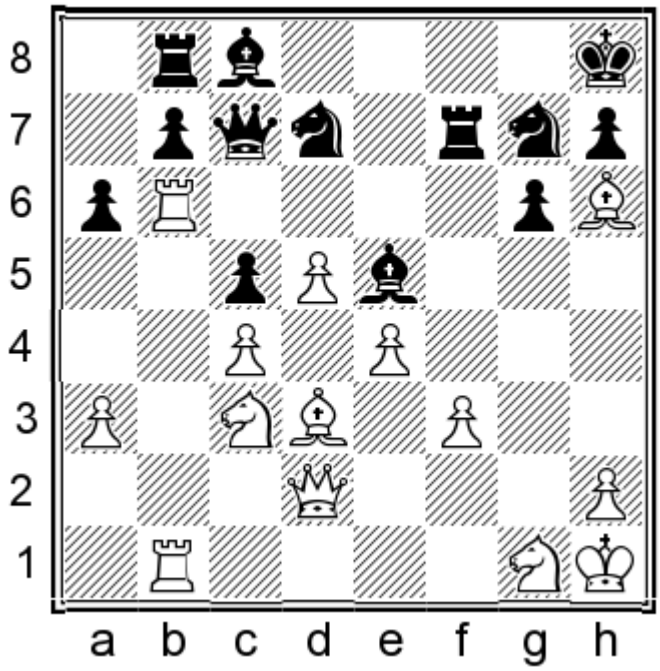
After this Black's position collapses. The coolness displayed by Gufeld, calmly gazing at the rook at b6, leads one to suppose that all the time he considered his position to be not at all bad. At the given moment 25...Nd7 is now essential. Even 25...fxe4 retains the chance of a struggle. In this case the tempting 26.Nxe4 Nf5 27.Nxd6 Nxd6 28.g4 Nd7 29.R6b2 b5 or 28.Qb2(g5) 28...Bf5 leads to the sharpening of the play desired by Black, and to chances for both sides. But White would retain a positional advantage in a calm situation after 26.Bxg7+ Kxg7 27.Nxe4 Nxe4 28.Bxe4.

26.gxf4 Nd7

Of course, not 26...exf4? 27.Rxd6, when White wins.

27.fxe5 Bxe5

This is what Black was counting on, since clearly bad is 27...Nxb6? 28.exd6 Qxd6 29.e5, with an overwhelming position for White. But now on the retreat of the rook there follows ...Nh5!, when the black pieces obtain convenient posts at d6, e5 and f4. But if Black's plan could be realized, this naturally calls into question White's play in the middlegame. After all, from the opening Black stood badly.



28.Re6!

All is in order! Black is prevented from playing 28...Nh5 by the threat of 29.Re8+. Simultaneously an attack is made on the bishop at e5 – the sole barrier in the path of the passed pawns in the center. By eliminating this obstacle after 28...Nf8 29.Rxe5!, White wins without difficulty.

The conclusion of the game, which my young opponent conducted in time trouble, resembles "give-away" chess.

28...b5 29.cxb5 c4 30.Rc6 Qd8 31.Bxc4 Qh4 32.Rc1 Nh5 33.Bg5 Ng3+ 34.Kg2 Nxe4 35.Nxe4 Qxh2+ 36.Kf1 Rxf3+ 37.Nxf3 Qh1+ 38.Kf2

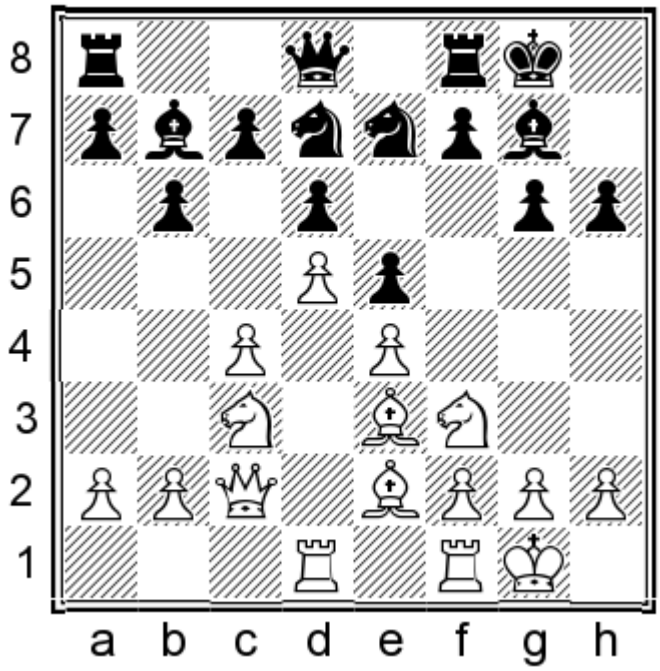
Here Black finally remembered that, apart from mate, in chess there is also the simple resignation of a game, and this he belatedly offered.

Along with the game against Hort (game 144), which we discussed in the first part, this is one of Petrosian's best King's Indian games on the topic of prophylaxis.

Spassky also experienced the power of Petrosian's prophylaxis in the 1966 match, during which he tried to lure the world champion into the King's Indian "jungle." Curious events unfolded in the 12th game.

(233) Petrosian – Spassky
World Championship Match, 12th game
Moscow 1966

1.Nf3 g6 2.c4 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.Nc3 Nd7 5.e4 e6 6.Be2 b6 7.0-0 Bb7 8.Be3 Ne7 9.Qc2 h6 10.Rad1 0-0 11.d5 e5



After a little opening improvisation in the Ujtelky System, the opponents reverted to King's Indian roots. As the majority of the annotators noted, the standard plan in such situations is 12.Nd2 f5 13.f3, then b2-b4 and (after proper preparation) c4-c5. Given that the b7-bishop is poorly positioned, this plan afforded White good prospects in the upcoming middlegame. However, Petrosian decided to prove that the undermining move ...f5 has more flaws than merits in this position.

12.Qc1

White's goal is to lure the enemy king to h7, where he will come under the unpleasant "x-ray" along the diagonal. It is obvious that 12...h5 13.Ng5! is not good for Black.

12...Kh7 13.g3

Preparing the knight move to h4. The reader is familiar with this method from games 144 and 167.

13...f5

"Now or never!" In the case of 13...a5 14.Nh4 Nc5 (Leonid Shamkovich), White has time to complete his prophylaxis on the kingside, and carrying out ...f5 is. For example: 15.Qc2 Bc8 16.Kh1 f5 17.exf5, and after 17...gxf5, unpleasant is 18.f4; in the case of 17...Nxf5, Black has to face 18.Nxg6! Kxg6 19.g4 (indicated by Isaac Boleslavsky).

14.exf5 Nxf5

Now White has an excellent base on e4 for his pieces, which, in combination with the chronic weakness of the g6-pawn, determines his positional advantage. However, taking on f5 with the pawn is hardly better. After 14...gxf5 15.Nh4! Nf6, White has a nice choice between 16.f4 (Isaac Boleslavsky) and 16.Bd3, followed by Qc2, trying to cause the advance of ...e4, after which the undermining move f2-f3 is possible (Mikhail Tal).

15.Bd3 Bc8 16.Kg2 Nf6 17.Ne4 Nh5

Spassky aims to complicate the game. The knights on h5 and f5 occupy dangerous positions and sooner or later will come under attack by the g-pawn, but Black maintains the tension, which is exactly his strategy for this game.

In our opinion, the clever move 17...Qd7!? (aiming at h3 with the queen) deserves attention. However, playing for simplification 17...Nxe4 18.Bxe4 Nxe3+, as recommended by Leonid Shamkovich in the match bulletin, is hardly good for Black. According to Isaac Boleslavsky, White could counter this with 19.Qxe3 Bf5 20.Nh4! Qf6 21.Rd3 Rae8 22.Qe2, and the threat of Rf3 forces Black to exchange the light-square bishops. 19.fxe3, followed by Qc2 and Nh4, is also quite unpleasant for Black.

18.Bd2 Bd7 19.Kh1

Threatening g3-g4, which could not be played immediately: 19.g4 Nh4+! 20.Nxh4 Qxh4 21.gxh5 Qh3+ 22.Kg1 and 22...Qxd3.

19...Ne7 20.Nh4 Bh3

Spassky chases away the rook, but later it becomes clear that its position on g1 will be very good.

A clever but apparently inadequate attempt was suggested by Mikhail Tal: 20...c6. After 21.Bb4! (but not 21.Nxd6? Bh3 and not 21.dxc6 Bxc6) Black ends up having to protect the d6-pawn. Then, Mikhail Tal considers 21...cxd5 (21...c5 is better) 22.cxd5 Rc8 23.Qd2 with complicated play, but, instead of the indifferent retreat to d2, White has the much stronger move 23.Qb1!, and it is hard to recommend something for Black.

21.Rg1 Bd7

The bishop has to retreat, since the threat of g3-g4, cutting off the bishop, is unpleasant in a number of variations. For example: 21...Qd7? 22.f3! Bf5 23.Nxf5 gxf5 24.g4! (indicated by Garry Kasparov). “The last two black moves show that Spassky still has not decided what exactly to do, and he maneuvers, hoping that the opponent will make a mistake.” (Garry Kasparov).

22.Be3 Qe8

Of course, 22...Nf5 is met by 23.Nxg6! Kxg6 24.g4, with a dangerous attack.

23.Rde1 Qf7 24.Qc2

24.Qd1 (Mikhail Tal) is pointless because of 24...Nf6!.

24...Kh8 25.Nd2

White defends the weakened f3-square and resumes the assault on the g6-pawn. Black’s position becomes dangerous.

25...Nf5

25...Kh7 is bad in view of 26.g4 Nf6 27.g5, with a strong attack (variation by Isaac Boleslavsky).

26.Nxf5!

This move deserves an exclamation mark. It seems that White has a tempting opportunity to sacrifice the knight, 26.Nxg6+ Qxg6 27.g4, blowing up the position of the enemy king, but using tactics – 27...Nhg3+! 28.fxg3 Qxg4– Black avoids opening the position.

26...gxf5

Probably, taking with the bishop is relatively better. This leads to simplifications. After 26...Bxf5 27.Bxf5 Qxf5 (27...gxf5 28.g4 is even more unpleasant for Black) 28.Qxf5 gxf5 29.g4 fxg4 (if 29...Nf4, then 30.Bxf4 exf4 31.gxf5 Rxf5 32.Re6!) 30.Rxg4, Black would have to fight for a draw (indicated by Isaac Boleslavsky). Perhaps, the endgame is not so bad for Black, but this opportunity is contradictory to Spassky's general plan, which is to cause complications at any cost. In addition, it is not easy to foresee Petrosian's spectacular combination.

27.g4!

So, the prophylaxis paid off, and now a wellprepared attack follows. From this moment on, the game enters a phase of turbulent combinational complications.

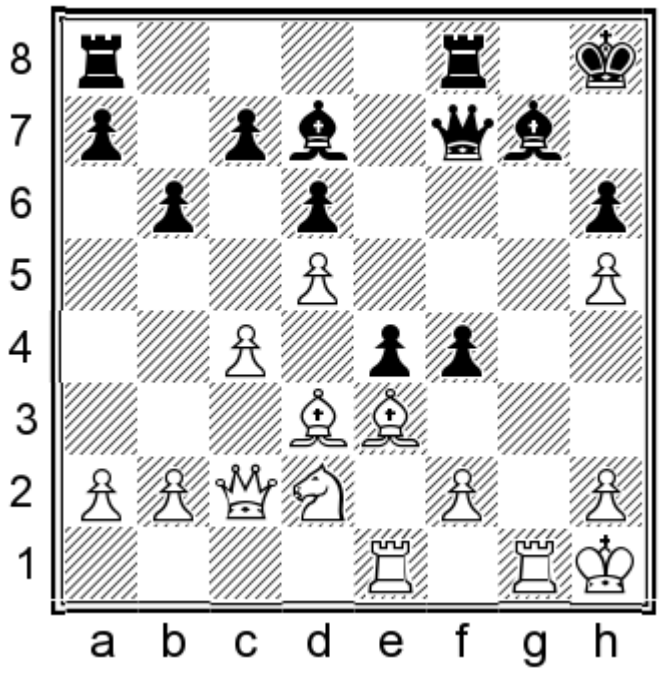
27...e4!?

The beginning of bold counterplay, which, objectively speaking, should lead to a loss. But what other choice does Black have?

27...Nf4 yields nothing, at the very least because of 28.Bxf4 exf4 29.Bxf5, transposing to the variation from the annotation to the 26th move. 27...f4 is followed by 28.Bg6 Qf6 (28...Qe7 29.Bd4 Nf6 30.f3 is very bleak for Black) 29.Bxh5 fxe3 30.fxe3, and the resulting position holds little hope for Black. For example: 30...e4 31.b3 Qc3 32.Qd1 Qe5 33.Rg2 Be8 34.g5 (variations by Isaac Boleslavsky).

Thus, the text continuation is the best practical chance.

28.gxh5 f4!



A sharp move, pouring oil onto the fire. Now not only Black but also White has to solve exceptionally difficult problems. The onset of mutual time trouble makes matters even more intense.

Of course, bad is 28...exd3 29.Qxd3 Qxh5 30.Bd4!, and White wins (Isaac Boleslavsky). Later, instead of 29...Qxh5, the move 29...Rae8 was suggested, but it hardly helps. For example: 30.Nf3 Qxh5 (after 30...c5, both 31.Nh4 Rg8 32.Ng6+ Kh7 33.b3 and 31.Bf4!? [Kasparov] is good for White) 31.Bd4, and Black encounters great difficulties. A beautiful variation is 31...Rg8 32.Rxg7! Rxg7 33.Rg1 Reg8 34.Qc3 Qf7 35.Ng5! Qg6 36.Qh3!, with the unstoppable threat of Nf7+!.

Now, both white bishops are under attack. The dark-square bishop has nowhere to go, so taking on e4 with the knight or the bishop seems natural. In both cases, the g7-bishop comes to life, and Black has counter-chances in the resulting complicated position, which is exactly what Spassky wanted. Were these hopes justified?

Let’s look at the position that arises after 29.Nxe4 fxe3 30.Rxe3. Here, Isaac Boleslavsky suggests 30...Qxh5, believing that the exchange sacrifice on g7 is not dangerous for Black. However, White gets a decisive attack after 31.Rxg7! Kxg7 32.Be2!. For example, 32...Qe5 33.Ng3, or 32...Qf5 33.Rg3+, followed by 34.Bg4. Still, I think that Boleslavsky was generally correct. Mikhail Tal indicated that 30...Be5 allows Black to save the game (31.Rg6 Qf4).

Petrosian shows that White is well prepared for direct battle and unpleasantly surprises his opponent.

29.Rxg7!

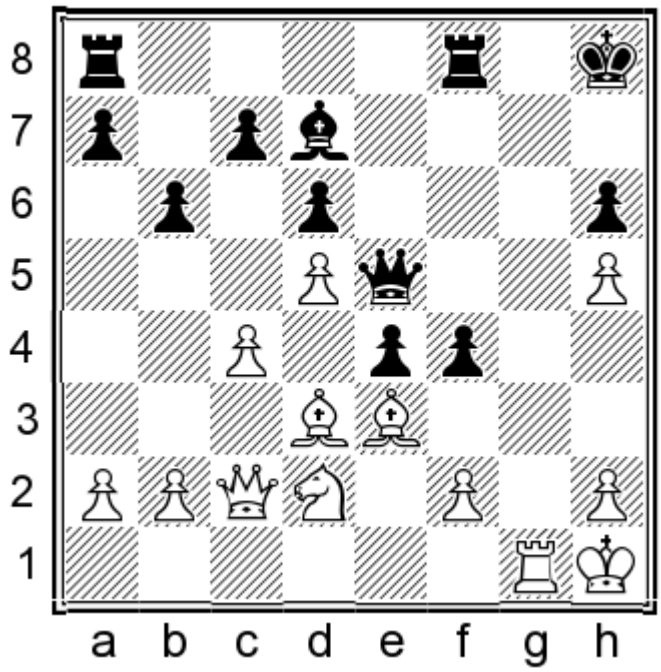
“In this game, the attack and counterattack are both excellent! Petrosian starts an interesting combination by sacrificing the exchange in return.” (Leonid Shamkovich).

29...Qxg7 30.Rg1 Qe5

The black queen can retreat only along the diagonal. The following analysis by Boleslavsky proves that other replies do not save the game:

(1) 30...exd3 31.Qxd3 Qxg1+ (or 31...Bf5 32.Rxg7 Bxd3 33.Bd4!, and Black is helpless) 32.Kxg1 Rg8+ 33.Kh1 fxe3 34.Qxe3 Kh7 (*or* 34...Rg5 35.Ne4! Re8 36.h4 Rxh5 37.Qd4+ Ree5 38.Nf6! – *Igor Yanvarjov*) 35.Ne4 Raf8 36.Nf6+!;

(2) 30...Bg4 31.Rxg4 (31.Be2 *is also not bad – Igor Yanvarjov*) 31...Qxg4 32.Bd4+ Kg8 33.Bxe4 with a material advantage and an attack for White.



31.Nf3!!

The point! Three white pieces are under attack, but the dark-square bishop, which is destined to play a major role in the attack, survives.

“Petrosian rightly considered that, first, the bishops had nowhere to go, and second, Spassky would not be able to capture three pieces in one move with two arbiters watching. The audience was most delighted. The playing hall buzzed like a beehive.” (David Bronstein).

31...exd3

The only move. If 31...exf3?, then 32.Bd2.

32.Nxe5?

At this point, many in the audience noticed the winning move 32.Qxd3!. Black's forced response is 32...Bf5, and then after 33.Nxe5! Bxd3 34.Bd4! dxe5, White could get the secret dream of every chess player – a "windmill": 35.Bxe5+ Kh7 36.Rg7+ Kh8 37.Rxc7+ Kg8 38.Rg7+ Kh8 39.Rxa7+ Kg8 40.Rg7+ Kh8 41.Rg3+ Kh7 42.Rxd3 Rxa2 43.Kg2, and three pawns for the exchange ensure a simple victory for White. Petrosian said after the game that he saw this variation, but he was worried about the intermediate check on 34th move: 34...Be4+. Exhausted after the previous difficult fight, the world champion did not see that in this case he does not have to choose the unclear continuation 35.f3 Kh7, etc., but can block the check with a check: 35.Nf3+!.

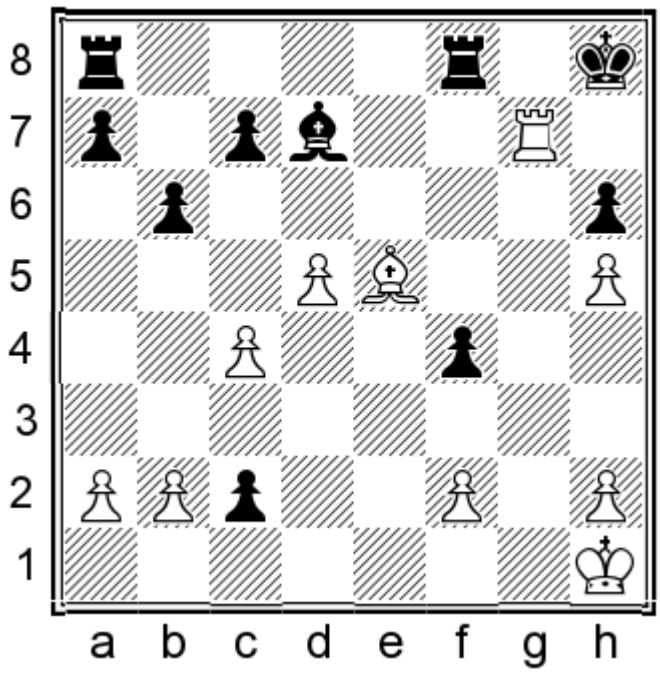
In his book *Petrosian's Alter Ego*, Viktor Vasiliev remembers that at this tense moment he quietly sat down next to Boleslavsky, who was in the playing hall. Usually unflappable, Isaac Efremovich, leaning low over his pocket chess, was feverishly checking the variations. No, there was no mistake, the windmill was very robust, and it seemed that its millstones would now come into motion. When – oh horror! – the move 32.Nxe5 appeared on the demo board, Boleslavsky let out a barely audible groan.

In his fundamental work *My Great Predecessors*, Garry Kasparov made an unexpected discovery: it turns out that, besides the flashy variation with the "windmill" (33.Nxe5!, etc.), there was another solution. In his words, it is "a coldblooded computer solution": 33.Qe2!? fxe3 (33...Be4 34.Bd2!) 34.Nxe5 exf2 35.Rg2 Rae8 36.Qxf2 Rxe5 37.h3. However, it is not at all clear whether White can break Black's fortress after 37...a5 38.Qg3 Re7. And the soul of an admirer of chess cannot accept such a substitution. The Mexican grandmaster Torre forever left his name in chess history by winning his famous game against Emanuel Lasker in 1925. Such combinations, even left unrealized, cannot be forgotten.

32...dxc2 33.Bd4 dxe5 34.Bxe5+ Kh7 35.Rg7+ Kh8 36.Rf7+

36.Rxd7+- Garry Kasparov.

36...Kg8 37.Rg7+ Kh8



38.Rg6+?!

In time trouble, just before the time control, the world champion allows a threefold repetition. In the meantime, at this point and before, he could have turned on the grindstones of the windmill. After 38.Rxd7+ Kg8 39.Rg7+ Kh8 40.Rxc7+ Kg8 41.Rg7+ Kh8 42.Rxa7+ Kg8 43.Rg7+ Kh8 44.Rg1+ Kh7 45.Rc1, according to Boleslavsky, White still had practical chances for success. Subsequently, Kasparov agreed with him but pointed out that the possible

variation 45...Rxa2 46.Rxc2 Rf5 47.Bc7 f3 48.h4 b5 49.Kh2 bxc4 50.d6 Rf7 51.Rxc4 Rxb2 52.Kg3 Rd2 still reaches a draw.

38...Kh7 39.Rg7+ Draw. Tal said about this game that, although "unfinished," it is still indisputably a jewel in the treasury of chess art.

Petrosian Attacks!



"Attack!.. How much there is in that sound..." The aggressive principle inherent in the game of chess is most vividly expressed in the attack and, most of all, in the attack on the king. Who among us has not succumbed to the attack's enchanting charm, has not experienced the creative joy of a successful finale or beautiful combination, has not admired the brilliant creations of the great masters of the past and the present?

It is difficult to play in an attacking style all the time at the highest level – the opponents are too knowledgeable, the risks too great. As we know, Petrosian tried to avoid excessive risk. Moreover, for him, the attack was not an end in and of itself; he only played tactically and attacked when he saw the need for it. Perhaps, this is why many denied his combinational skills. Before the match of 1966, for example, Tal noted that "the world champion himself does not start the fight, but he always retaliates." Panov said this even more resolutely. He had no doubt that Spassky "would drag the resisting Petrosian into the deep end of the pool of incalculable complications." A change in public opinion occurred after the 10th and 12th games. Here are some statements:

"We know Petrosian well as a deep strategist, an excellent defender, an expert of the endgame. But in this match we see a new Petrosian. He sacrifices, attacks, counterattacks. In other words, we see a very dangerous tactician." (Max Euwe).

"Petrosian's play in the games, which I had an opportunity to witness together with a group of English chess fans who visited Moscow, invariably increased our respect for his talent. I think that the same shift in opinion will occur throughout the world..." (B. H. Wood, the editor of *CHESS*).

It is not surprising that, in Petrosian's games in the King's Indian Defense, the attacking genre is so widely represented: after all, this is an asymmetrical, aggressive opening. Note the most remarkable examples that we discussed in the first part, games 35, 55, 64, 81, 111, 129 and 186.

With rare exceptions, Petrosian's attacks have a solid strategic basis; they stem from the demands of the position, but at the same time they are energetic, clever, and idiosyncratic. This resembles Capablanca's style, with his famous "little combinations." Euwe is right: to so skillfully combine strategy and tactics, a player must first of all be a good tactician.

In our opinion, Petrosian built his play "from defense," so he mostly counterattacked, even though, if he had an opportunity, he could energetically and beautifully attack with great skill.

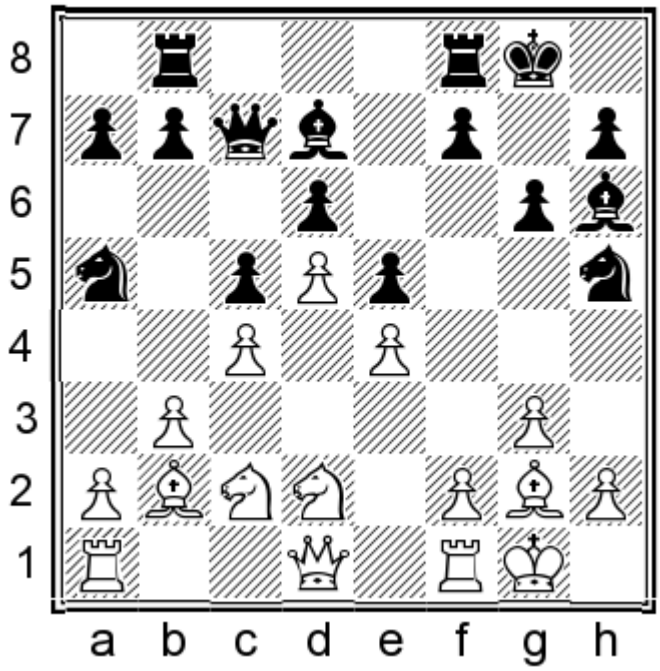
(234) Filip – Petrosian
Yerevan 1965

Annotations by Tigran Petrosian

(from *The Games of Tigran Petrosian*, Volume 1)

A somewhat unusually played opening: **1.d4 g6 2.g3 Bg7 3.Bg2 c5 4.c3 Qc7 5.Nf3 Nf6 6.0-0 0-0 7.b3 d6 8.Bb2**

Nc6 9.c4 e5 10.d5 Na5 11.Ne1 Rb8 12.Nc2 Bd7 13.Nd2 Nh5 14.e4 Bh6



“The struggle revolves mainly around the advance of the two f-pawns. For the moment both the white pawn and the black one are unable to move. For White the move f2-f4 loses material, while for Black ...f5 is positionally unfavorable, since after the exchange on f5 he is forced to allow White control of the e4-square.”

15.Re1 Rbe8 16.Ne3 b6 17.Bc3 Ng7 18.Qe2

Very passive. 18.Ng4 is better, practically forcing the exchange of the light-square bishops, since 18...Bg5 is answered by the extremely unpleasant 19.f4!.

18...f5 19.exf5 gxf5

Black has outraced his opponent and seized the strategic initiative. Petrosian noted: “True, for the moment the resulting e5, f5 pawn pair is immobilized, but he has a possibility of improving his prospects by transferring his knight from a5 to the kingside via the route b7-d8-f7.”

20.Ndf1 Nb7 21.g4?

A poor move. If White wants to advance this pawn, it is been advisable to play 21.h3 beforehand. (Petrosian)

21...Bxe3 22.Nxe3 fxg4 23.Nxg4 Qd8!

“The strongest continuation. By switching his queen to the kingside Black firmly seizes the initiative.”

24.f3 Nh5 25.Bd2 Nf4 26.Bxf4 Rxf4

“White’s position is strategically lost. Black can combine an attack on the kingside with the threat of taking play into an endgame: after all, White has a bad bishop.” (*This is a very typical remark by Petrosian! – Igor Yanvarjov*)

27.Nf2 Qh4 28.Ne4 Kh8

A move with a distant aim in view. The art of attack is not only in finding flashy moves but also in foreseeing the direction of the main strike and preparing for it (see the annotation to the 36th move).

29.Ng3 Nd8

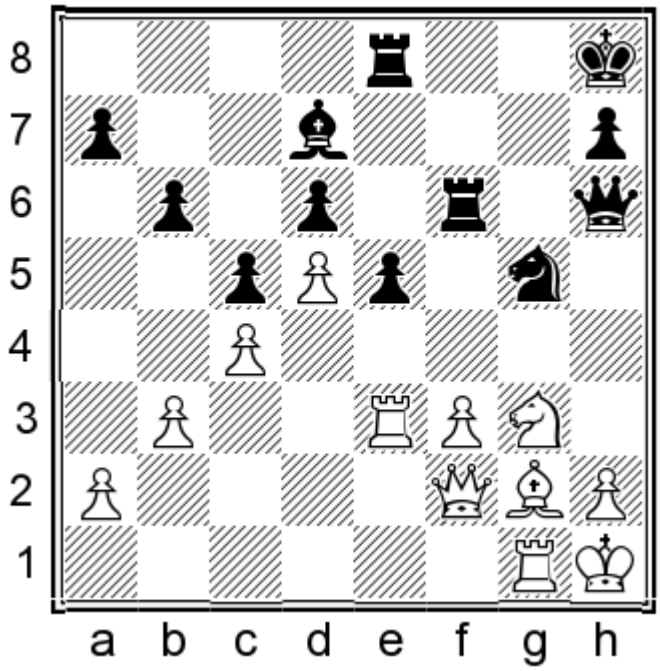
“It is time for the knight maneuver that was planned a long time ago. It is characteristic of the world champion that, even in the heat of a tactical battle, he does not forget about the implementation of the main strategic plan.” (Alexey Suetin)

30.Qf2 Qh6 31.Re4 Nf7 32.Kh1 Rf6 33.Rg1

33.Rae1 is more stubborn (Alexey Suetin).

33...Ng5 34.Re3

“White’s last few defensive moves, made largely “just in case,” have completely immobilized his king, thus creating for Black a curious tactical possibility.” (Petrosian)



34...Qxh2+!

Not very difficult, but flashy! Such sacrifices are very rare in grandmasters’ games. One of the eyewitnesses of this game remembered that a funny episode occurred at that moment.

People in Armenia love chess, and many people, even those who did not know how to play at all, came to cheer for their famous countryman. So, when the black queen unexpectedly captured a protected pawn, the audience began to buzz and loudly whisper: “is it a blunder?” The exclamations were audible: “What is he doing? Take the move back; do not disgrace the nation!” The arbiter stepped forward and raised his hand, calling for silence, but in vain. Filip replied, and Petrosian sank into thought. Meanwhile, the atmosphere in the audience became more and more heated. Some fans even jumped from their seats and clapped their hands in frustration: “Figures! No luck here either. That’s Armenian destiny...” Finally, their indignation reached Petrosian, even though he was hard of hearing. He furiously glanced at the audience and made some angry gesture, which caused a new emotional outburst from the audience: “He is blind; he sees nothing!” The arbiter could do nothing more than ask the opponents to continue the game in the back room. Ten minutes later, an announcement of Petrosian’s victory appeared on the demo board.

Half of the audience – either with shame or with unexpected joy – had left their seats.

35.Kxh2 Rh6+ 36.Bh3

A pretty position arises after 36.Nh5 Rxh5+ 37.Kg3 Rg8!!. After this quiet move a deadly knight check at e4 is threatened. (Petrosian)

36...Nxh3 37.Nf5

Filip decided to “die standing up.” The desperate knight jump leads to a quick finish. 37.Kg2 Nxf2 38.Kxf2 prolongs the resistance, although even here Black has a winning endgame.

37...Bxf5 38.Qf1 Nf4+ 39.Kg3 Rg8+ 40.Kf2 Nh3+

“White resigns, since after either possible king move 41...Rxg1 ‘checkmates’ his queen.” (Petrosian)

Oftentimes you hear about one’s so-called “tactical vision” or “sense of attack.” Would it be right to talk about intuition where it seems like calculation should decide? Of course. After all, oftentimes, beginning the attack, a chess player sees only the general outline and cannot, for certain reasons, calculate everything to the very end. It is in such moments that intuition comes to the rescue. It allows the chess player to better feel the “rhythm” of the position, and tells him whether he should start decisive actions or perhaps bring in the reserves. It prompts him to look for the only move when he knows it must exist, and so on. Thus, intuition not only helps in finding the right solution but also saves energy, which is important from a practical point of view.

The following miniature is an excellent illustration of all of the above.

(235) Petrosian – De Castro
XVIII Olympiad
Lugano 1968

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 c6?!

The Mexican master commits an inaccuracy as early as move five, so this game is interesting only from an instructive viewpoint.

So, the first question is about logic in the opening: what is the main drawback of Black’s move, and which system should White choose now?

6.f4

Logical. White proceeds from the assumption that after the theoretical 5...0-0, he would have to reveal his opening plans, but now he can switch to the Four Pawn Variation, where the move ...c6 is unnecessary for Black, as we know.

6...h5?

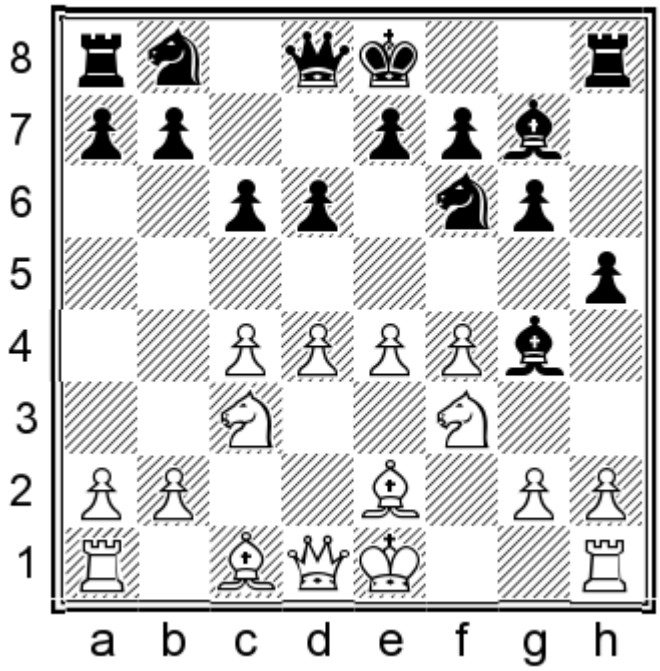
Worrying about e4-e5, Black significantly weakens the kingside. Castling or 6...e5 is the relatively lesser evil, although after 7.dxe5 dxe5 8.Qxd8+ Kxd8 9.Nf3 White has the initiative (indicated by Isaac Boleslavsky and Alexander Konstantinopolsky).

The second question is more specific: is 7.e5 worth playing?

7.Nf3

Probably not. 7.e5 gives White no real benefits. For example, 7...Ng4 8.h3 Nh6 9.g4?! dxe5 10.fxe5 c5! with counterplay.

7...Bg4



An important moment. Does White have any grounds to immediately “punish” the enemy for his opening “liberties,” or would it be better for White to just complete his development, maintaining a clear advantage? This choice is committal and difficult – it cannot be made without intuition!

8.Ng5!

Actively using the weak points of the opponent’s position. Petrosian perceptively noticed that, without the light-square bishops (the exchange of which is almost inevitable), the threat of e4-e5-e6 becomes extremely unpleasant. Of course, this decision is based on feeling rather than calculation.

No matter how White continues, he will have the advantage. In such cases the main thing is not to play superficially, losing some of the advantage. The standard 8.e5 is weaker in view of 8...Nh7!?. The same can be said of the continuation 8.0-0 d5. For example: 9.e5 Ne4 or 9.exd5 cxd5 10.Qb3 Nc6 11.Qxb7 Na5 12.Qb5+ Bd7 13.Qc5 dxc4, and Black still has a flicker of hope.

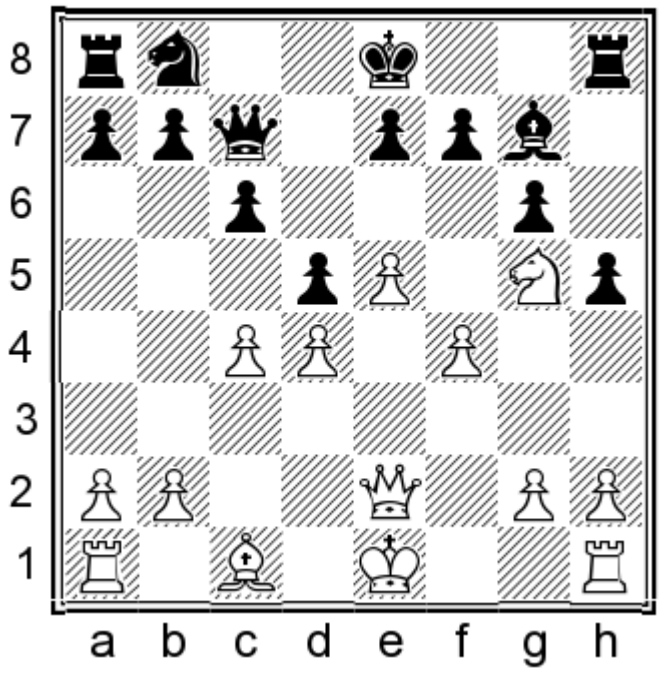
8...Qc7

As the development of the game shows, the queen on c7 is poorly positioned. However, it is not clear whether Black had any reasonable defense here at all. 8...0-0 9.e5 Bxe2 10.Qxe2 Ng4 is hardly better; after something like 11.e6 f5 12.h3 Nf6 13.Be3, the attack on the kingside will be decisive sooner or later. If 8...e6, then 9.e5 followed by Nc(g)e4, seizing the weakened d6-square.

9.e5 Bxe2 10.Qxe2 Nh7 11.Nxh7 Rxh7 12.Ne4!

The other knight rushes to g5 while threatening 13.Nxd6+.

12...d5 13.Ng5 Rh8



14.f5!

In combination with the next move, this is the winning maneuver. Black's pawn chain is broken in several places at once.

14...gxf5 15.e6! f6 16.Nf7 Rh7 17.0-0

The outcome of the battle has been decided. The black king is surrounded and there is no defense against the terrible threat of Rxf5xh5, not mentioning such a "little thing" as the inactive g7-bishop.

17...dxc4 18.Rxf5 Qb6 19.Be3 c5 20.d5 Nd7

Agony.

21.Rxh5 Rxh5 22.Qxh5 Qxb2 23.Nd6+ Kd8 24.Qe8+ Black resigned.

And finally, one more exceptional example of the ninth world champion's combinational skill.

(236) Petrosian – Gurgenidze
USSR Spartakiad
Riga 1975

Starting literally from the first moves, the battle for the initiative turns into an interesting tactical shootout, ending in a flashy attack with oppositecolor bishops.

1.d4 g6 2.c4 d6 3.Nc3 e5 4.Nf3 Nc6 5.g3 Bg4

As usual, the Georgian grandmaster, who significantly contributed to the popularization of the rare system with 1...g6 and 2...d6, by the way, interprets this opening in a rather peculiar way, seeking a complicated struggle first and foremost. Nevertheless, in our opinion, the bishop move to g4 seems unnecessarily artificial; 5...exd4 6.Nxd4 Bg7 7.Nxc6 bxc6 8.Bg2 Ne7 is more reliable, with good chances for equalization (Petrosian-Ivkov, Ohrid 1972).

6.Bg2 Bg7

Clearly, the continuation 6...Bxf3 7.Bxf3 is advantageous for White. For example, 7...Nxd4 8.Bxb7 Rb8 9.Bg2 or

7...exd4 8.Bxc6+ bxc6 9.Qxd4, etc.

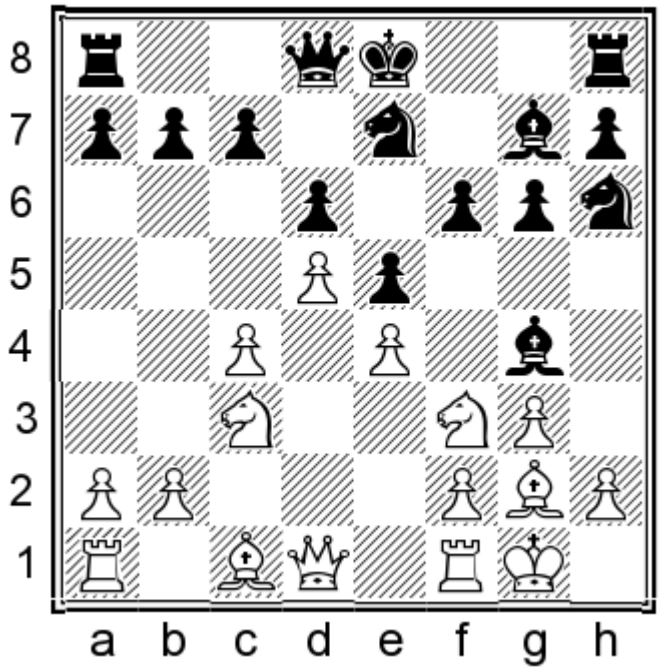
7.d5

Black's pressure becomes unpleasant, and Petrosian transposes to the setup with a closed center.

7...Nce7 8.e4 f6

An original idea, characteristic of Gurgenidze's ingenious play. Later, the king's knight will be transferred to f7 via h6, where it supports the d6-pawn and watches the g5-square, which will be important after Black plays ...f5.

9.0-0 Nh6



10.b4

The most active plan. It is interesting to compare White's play with game 147, which was discussed in the first part (from the chapter "Fianchetto"). There, in a similar position, Petrosian immediately played Qb3. In this case, White does not worry about the standard undermining move 10...a5, since he retains the initiative after 11.Ba3 axb4 12.Bxb4 b6 13.a4, followed by a4-a5. However, I think Black should still opt for this variation.

10...Nf7 11.Qb3

A well-known idea in the classical variation (see, for example, the third game of the match Taimanov-Fischer, Vancouver 1971). The position of the white queen on the same diagonal as the black king may play an important role.

11...0-0 12.c5 f5

Black underestimates his opponent's chances. 12...Kh8 is more careful, and 12...a5 also deserved attention. After White's next move, the g4-bishop is in danger, and with energetic play Petrosian seizes the initiative.

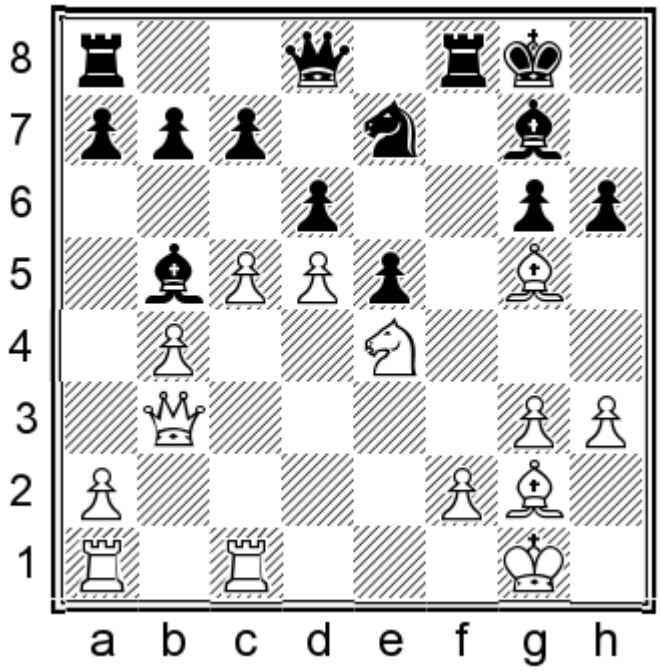
13.Ng5! Nxg5 14.Bxg5 fxe4 15.h3

This is better than 15.Nxe4 h6, where White must either trade on e7, giving the opponent the bishop pair, or allow Black to activate the knight via the f5-square.

15...Bd7

Obviously, the Georgian grandmaster was not looking forward to defending the clearly worse position resulting after 15...Bf3 16.Nxe4 Bxe4 (16...Bxg2 17.Kxg2 is totally hopeless) 17.Bxe4 Bf6 18.Bd2 Nf5 19.Qd3, but now Black dies in a tactical battle. The white queen which lurked in the wings now enters the scene.

16.Nxe4 Bb5 17.Rfc1 h6



18.cxd6! cxd6

Forced. 18...hxg5 is bad because of 19.dxe7 Qxe7 20.d6+ Qf7 21.Qxf7+ Rxf7 22.dxc7.

19.Nxd6!

A spectacular blow! The knight is untouchable: 19...Qxd6? 20.Bxe7 Qxe7 21.d6+ Qf7 22.Bd5, winning the queen.

19...hxg5 20.Nxb5 Nf5 21.Nc7

Typical for Petrosian. Also strong is 21.d6+, which also wins, it seems. However, White first wants to neutralize the black knight, which aims to move to d4, so he transfers his knight to e6.

21...Nd4 22.Qe3 Rc8 23.Ne6! Nxe6 24.dxe6 e4 25.Rxc8 Qxc8

The a1-rook and the e6-pawn are under attack. It seems that now Black has some hope. However, Petrosian's calculation once again turns out to be deeper and more precise

26.Qxe4!

Very beautiful again! The rook sacrifice is the shortest path to victory.

26...Bxa1 27.Qxg6+ Bg7 28.e7

Now 28...Re8 is met by 29.Bd5+ Kh8 30.Qh5+ with mate.

28...Qc1+ 29.Kh2 Qd2

If 29...Qc4, then 30.Qxg5 is simplest, with an easy win.

30.Qe6+ Kh7 31.exf8=Q

Black resigned in view of the inevitable mate after 31.exf8=Q Bxf8 32.Qf7+ Bg7 33.Be4+.

The Art of Defense



Perhaps some doubted the ninth world champion's attacking talent, but the opinion regarding his ability to defend was unanimous – defense was Petrosian's forte. It is no wonder that Petrosian's reliable and stable play became proverbial, and his rare defeats were real sensations. His manner of play, his way of thinking, his very view of chess, spoke volumes of Petrosian's obvious devotion to the doctrine of defense. Here is what Tigran Vartanovich said in a passionate monologue in honor of his ability to defend:

"Yes, maybe I like defending more than attacking, but who said that defense is a less dangerous and risky task than attack? A defender, like a mine clearer, makes only one mistake. When a chess player defends his fortifications from attack, does he not walk a tight rope? Does it not take courage to play in such a manner? And have not many games become a part of the treasury of chess art because of virtuoso defense?"

The reader can find various methods of defense in the first part of this book. Note games 5, 21, 48, 76, 110, 129, 142, 184, 192, 212, 230 and, of course, especially as a striking example of counterattack, 129.

We would like to note one more important point. It seems that while most chess players do not like the psychological reliance of the defender on his opponent's play, this did not bother Petrosian. Moreover, it seems that he liked the role of the miner walking the tight rope, because it forced him to rise to the task, and gave him strength and determination. As one journalist said, in such moments, "Petrosian gained unerring strength and the powerful leap of the tiger." And then, his work persevering in defense, retreating a millimeter at a time, and diminishing the opponent's initiative could transform into the most unexpected counterattack. Perhaps that is why Petrosian was never afraid to experiment, at times rather boldly (we will talk more about how this aligns with his cautious style in the third chapter, "Experiments"). Quite often, he deliberately provoked his opponent to take action, as happened, for example, in the next game.

(237) Pomar – Petrosian
XIX Olympiad
Siegen 1970

Annotations by Tigran Petrosian

(from *The Games of Tigran Petrosian*, Volume 2)

The Spanish grandmaster Arturo Pomar is one of those players who for many long years, if not his entire life, has remained true to certain systems of development. Having accumulated great experience in playing them, he tries to lead his opponent into well studied middlegame positions. For a long time the Four Pawns Attack was an effective weapon in Pomar's hands against the King's Indian Defense. At one time he also had quite good results with the fianchetto of his bishop at g2 in combination with the development of his knight at e2. With all this in mind, I decided on a variation outwardly similar to the King's Indian Defense, a characteristic feature of which is the delay in developing the king's knight: the possibility is retained of bringing it out to e7 (which is what most often

happens), to h6 (although there is not much for the knight to do there), or else to f6.

1.d4 g6 2.c4 Bg7 3.Nc3 d6 4.Nf3

I considered this last move to be already something of a success for me, since Pomar was now unable to play one of his well studied middlegame positions. But it is well known that one's appetite grows during a game. What about trying to lead the opponent off into the wilds?

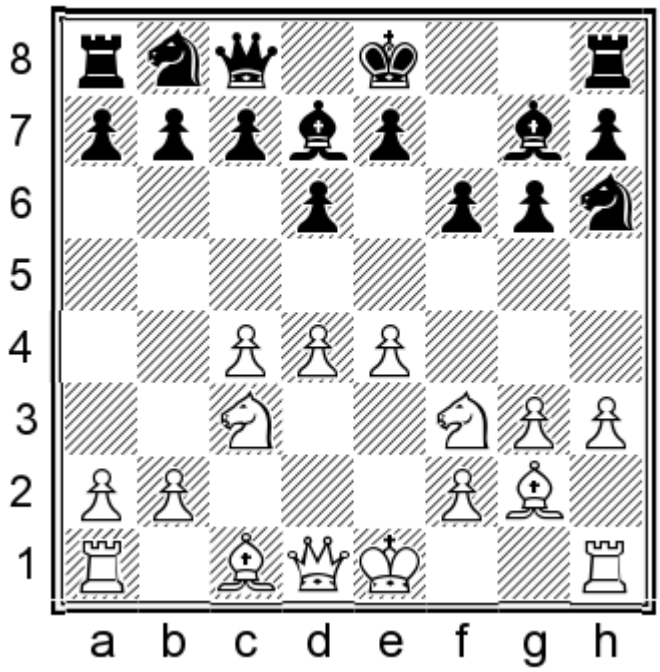
4...Bg4 5.g3 Qc8

This type of maneuver was fashionable in former times, but today many strong players, if not all, are skeptical about such an idea. Never in my life did I believe in the possibility of exchanging the g2-bishop in this way, but the urge to be original had seized me.

6.Bg2 Nh6

Not 6...Bh3, if the opponent is demonstrating his obvious disregard for this threat! As for the knight going to h6, see what was said above.

7.h3 Bd7 8.e4 f6



Only eight moves have been made, but some conclusions can already be drawn. Black stands badly. White has without trouble occupied the center with his pawns, has developed his forces better, and can without the least hindrance take active measures. His only difficulty is that his overwhelming position may make him equably inclined, and may inspire the hope that, by continuing to make obvious moves, he can wait for the ripe fruit itself to fall at his feet.

9.Be3 Nf7 10.Qd2

This was most probably the time for 10.d5, further aggravating the defects of Black's position.

10...c5 11.dxc5

Here too 11.d5 is possible. White plays very consistently. Having a lead in development, he tries to open up the game, hoping to make use of his better mobilized forces.

From the viewpoint of chess rules this all appears very sensible, but in Black's position there are no obviously

vulnerable points, and at the same time its durability is noticeable. In such cases the successful approach lies in close contact between strategy and tactics. In short, one requires great tactical vision, a quality which Pomar fails to demonstrate in this game.

11...dxc5 12.0-0-0 Nc6

Castling seems more natural, in order to bring at least one rook into play and to remove the king to a safe place. But after this it is not easy to play ...Nc6. The natural knight advance to d5 (with gain of tempo!) gains in strength, whereas, by remaining in the center, for the moment the king defends both the e7-pawn, and the bishop at d7. The main problem which concerned me during the game was the possibility of White taking the c5-pawn. It is true that, after moving his knight from c6 Black will attack the c4-pawn, but the whole question is where to move the knight.

In the event of 13.Bxc5 Na5 a possible continuation is 14.b3 Qxc5 15.Qxd7+ Kf8 with compensation for the pawn (*after* 16.Nd4, *Fritz shows a significant advantage for White – Igor Yanvarjov*). But at the board I mainly examined 13...Nce5 14.Nxe5 Nxe5 15.Qd4! (the only way; things are much easier for Black after the withdrawal of the bishop) 15...b6 16.Bxe7! Kxe7 17.Qd6+ Ke8 18.Nd5, or 17...Kf7 18.f4 Bf8 19.Qd4 (19.Qd2? Bh6!) 19...Bc5 20.Qd2, with obvious advantage to White. After 16.Bxe7 the interposition of 16...Nc6 is unjustified in view of 17.Qxd7+, transposing into an ending in which, with two pawns for the exchange and a good position, White clearly has the better chances.

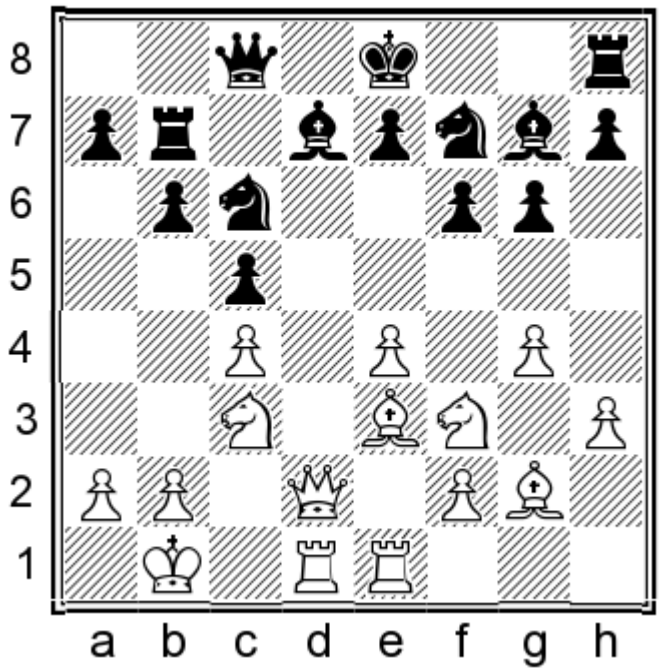
13.Kb1

A loss of time. True, White has plenty of it, and so he does not especially value it.

13...b6 14.g4 Rb8 15.Rhe1

White goes on preparing and preparing.

15...Rb7



Comparing the positions in the two diagrams, we see that in a comparatively short space of time Black has made considerable progress. White has not managed to achieve anything tangible, and each of his last three moves causes perplexity, to say the least. It is hard to find direct fault with them, not because they are good, but because any move which is not a mistake in such a situation is not bad.

16.e5

White remembers that there is no point in loading your gun unless you are intending to fire it.

16...fxe5 17.Ng5 0-0 18.Nd5?

I would have played 18.Bd5 e6 19.Nxf7 Rxf7 20.Be4 followed by the advance of the h-pawn and the threat of Nb5-d6.

18...Nxg5 19.Bxg5 Be8 20.Bh6 e6!

Black could probably defend after 20...Bxh6 21.Qxh6 Rxf2 22.Rf1 Rf7, but the move played signals the start of the counterattack.

21.Bxg7 Rxg7 22.Nc3 Nd4!

With one move Black securely covers both central files, on which White has so hopefully placed his heavy pieces. The reestablishment of material equality is no great consolation for White.

23.Rxe5 Rgf7 24.Ne4?

White appears to have forgotten that the opponent can create dangerous threats. To be fair, it should be said that Black also retains a positional advantage after 24.Rf1.

24...Qc7!

The white rook has fallen into a trap, and this decides the game.

25.Rg5 Rf4

Against the threat of ...h6 there is no defense. White's final few moves are a typical example of time trouble agony.

26.Qd3 h6 27.Nd6 hxg5 28.Nxe8 Rxe8 29.Qxg6+ Kf8 30.Qxg5 Qh7+ White resigned.

In his later years, Petrosian employed this tactic of "luring" increasingly seldom, because this method requires tremendous strain and a high expenditure of nervous energy, but he still sometimes resorted to his favorite weapon when necessary, and used it with the same great skill as before. A good example is his game against Portisch, played in Tilburg in 1982.

(238) Portisch – Petrosian
Tilburg 1982

1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.g3 g6 4.Bg2 Bg7 5.e3 d6 6.Nge2 h5!?

Note that Petrosian had employed this tactic against Portisch before. Here is the beginning of their game at the tournament in Manila, 1974 (Petrosian as Black): 1.c4, 1...g6 2.e4 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.Nc3 e5 5.Nge2 Nc6 6.d5 Nce7 7.Ng3 a5 8.Be2 b6 9.Be3 h5 10.h4 Nh6 11.Qd2 Ng4 12.Bxg4 Bxg4 13.f3 Bd7 14.0-0-0 Ng8 15.Nge2 Nh6 16.Nb5 Kf8 17.Nec3 Kg8 18.b3 f5. As is easy to see, despite the more than extravagant opening, Black has good counter chances. After a tense struggle, this game ended in a draw.

Petrosian once confessed: "Playing against Portisch, especially as Black, I feel very uncomfortable in the opening every time. At the board, he radiates knowledge. The decisions that are the fruit of labor over the board for me are undoubtedly home preparation for him – at least that is how it seems, judging by his appearance. It seems that I do not have an opening loophole that Portisch did not foresee and did not prevent in advance. I have to walk in step with him, and often against my will."

Petrosian had never played this system (especially with an early ...h5), so it was something of a surprise for the

Hungarian grandmaster.

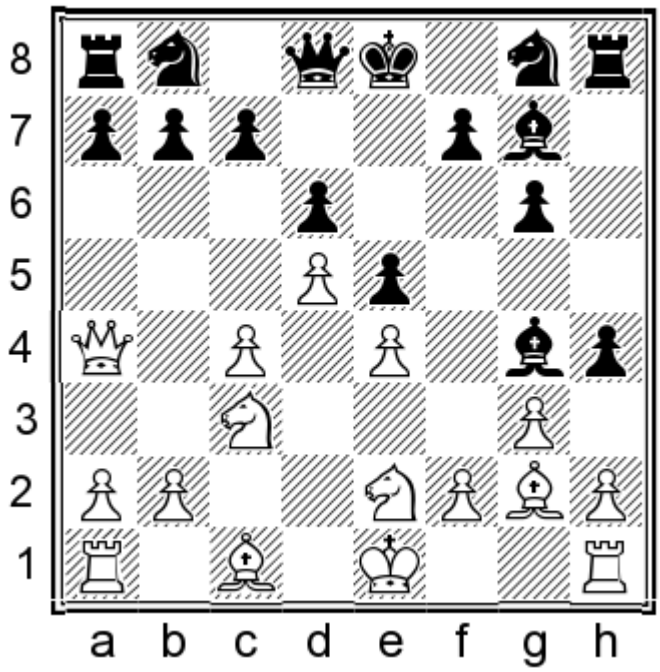
7.d4

Portisch counters the flank attack with an attack in the center, as prescribed by classical canon. According to Petrosian, in case of 7.h3, 7...h4 is dubious, so he planned to continue 7...f5, and after 8.d4, 8...h4 with complicated play.

7...h4 8.d5 Nb8

The disadvantages of the knight's position on e7 in such structures are obvious, at least for Petrosian. In his opinion, after 8...Nce7 9.e4 f5 10.Be3 White has a clear advantage. Retreating the knight to the starting position, Black retains the opportunity to fight for the c5-square and is thus willing even to experience some inconveniences.

9.e4 Bg4 10.Qa4+!



A clever check. Now Black can play neither 10...Nd7 11.Ng1! nor 10...Qd7 11.Qb3! (not 11.Qxd7+ Nxd7 12.f3 h3!), and the g4-bishop is in danger. Thus, Black must retreat his king, losing the right to castle. Weaker is 10.Qb3 in view of 10...Nd7! and the b7-pawn is invulnerable (variations by Petrosian).

10...Kf8! 11.Ng1 Na6 12.f3 Bd7 13.Qc2

An inaccuracy, as demonstrated by Black's energetic response.

13...Nb4!

A very strong "beginner's move"! Black gains time to play ...a5, after which his position on the queenside starts to look good.

14.Qe2 a5 15.Be3 Nf6 16.0-0-0 Bh6 17.Bh3 Kg7 18.Bxd7 Nxd7

We can say that Black has successfully overcome the opening problems.

19.Nh3

Planning Nf2-d3, followed by f3-f4.

19...Bxe3+ 20.Qxe3 Nb6 21.c5?

Every chess player is very familiar with the feeling one gets when his initiative begins to slip away, especially as White. In such moments, it is very difficult to maintain self-control and avoid making excessively aggressive moves. The “active” text move is of that sort. The impulsive advance of the c-pawn only leads to the premature opening of the file on which the white king is located. Meanwhile, as Petrosian pointed out, the modest 21.Qe2!, with the idea of Nf2 and f3-f4, gives White a slight advantage.

21...Nd7 22.cxd6

Curiously, White cannot find a good moment to drive away the b4-knight, which is in dangerous proximity to his king. Now, for example, 22.a3 would be followed by 22...Nxc5! 23.axb4 axb4 24.Nb1 Ra2, with a strong attack for Black (indicated by Petrosian).

22...cxd6 23.Kb1

Portisch gets nervous and makes a few more inaccuracies. Petrosian recommended the more active 23.Ng5!, trying to open the f-file in the future.

23...Rc8 24.Nf2 Nb6 25.b3?

Now Black opens the a-file and starts attacking. According to Petrosian, after the correct 25.Qe1 or 25.Nd3, White has a fully defensible position.

25...a4 26.Rc1 axb3 27.axb3 Nd7

A strong attacking maneuver, opening the way for the queen to a5 and preparing the move ...Nc5.

28.Nd3 Qa5 29.Nxb4 Qxb4

The queen replaces the knight. Portisch tries to weaken the attack by exchanging the rooks, but the effort is fruitless.

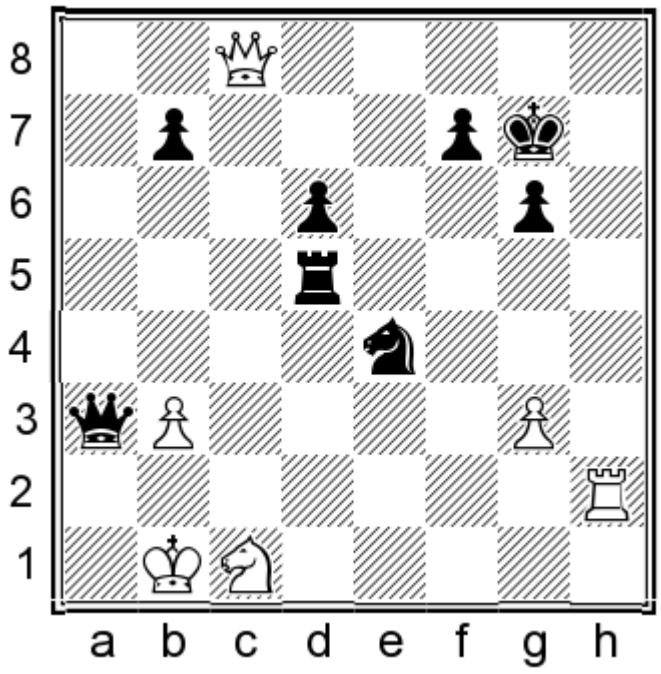
30.Na2 Qa3 31.Rxc8 Rxc8 32.Rc1 Ra8! 33.Rc2 hxg3 34.hxg3 Nc5 35.f4

White is already happy to play a pawn-down endgame, but Petrosian, with good reason, wants more.

35...Ra4!

A beautiful activation of the rook. With the loss of the important e4-pawn, the battle is basically over.

36.fxe5 Rxe4 37.Qc3 Rxe5 38.Nc1 Ne4 39.Qc8 Rxd5 40.Rh2



40...Rh5

In time trouble, Petrosian misses the winning blow and somewhat prolongs the game. 40...Nd2+ 41.Rxd2 Rc5! is immediately decisive, attacking the queen and threatening mate. However, Black plays the endgame with good technique.

41.Rxh5 gxh5 42.Qxb7 d5 43.Qc7 Qb4 44.Qe5+ Kg6 45.Qe8 Nf6!

Black's knight is a busy bee! If now 46.Qe2, then 46...Ne4!.

46.Qc6 Qe4+ 47.Qc2 Kg5 48.Nd3 Qe3 49.b4 Ne4!

Resuming the attack with minimal forces.

50.b5 Nd2+ 51.Ka2 Qa7+ 52.Kb2 Nc4+ 53.Kc3 Qa1+ 54.Nb2 Qe1+ 55.Kb3 Qxg3+ White resigned. Two extra pawns are a good enough reason.

Endgame Technique

We saved the best for last! One cannot discuss Petrosian without mentioning the ninth world champion's famed technique. If it were not for his refined technique, Petrosian would never have become the player he was, and he would not have had as much success as he did (including in the King's Indian).

Experts consider one of the main features of Petrosian's style to be his ability to create crystal clear plans and, as a result, his perfect technique in converting the advantage. In fact, I cannot think of any game in which Petrosian, having an endgame advantage, would lose it and fail to win the game. Note that the technical component played an important part in games 32, 68, 88 92, 106, 142, 187, 206, 224. By the way, all these endgames are typical in such structures and are very instructive from the point of view of general endgame methods.

Transitioning into a complicated endgame is a fairly common technique in Petrosian's practice. He considered the following game one of his best technical achievements.

(239) Petrosian – Bannik
25th USSR Championship
Riga 1958

Annotations by Tigran Petrosian

(from *The Games of Tigran Petrosian*, Volume 1)

1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.g3 d6 5.d4 g6 6.dxe5 Nxe5

Black's system of development cannot be described as a happy choice, since White can gain a superior ending by force. It would have been still worse for Black to play 6...dxe5 7.Qxd8+ Kxd8 8.Bg5 Be7 9.0-0-0+, when he experiences even more difficulties compared with the game continuation, since his knight at c6 is badly placed.

7.Nxe5 dxe5 8.Qxd8+ Kxd8 9.Bg5 Be7 10.0-0-0+ Nd7

There is nothing better. 10...Bd7 is met by 11.Bh3, and 10...Ke8 by 11.Nb5.

11.h4

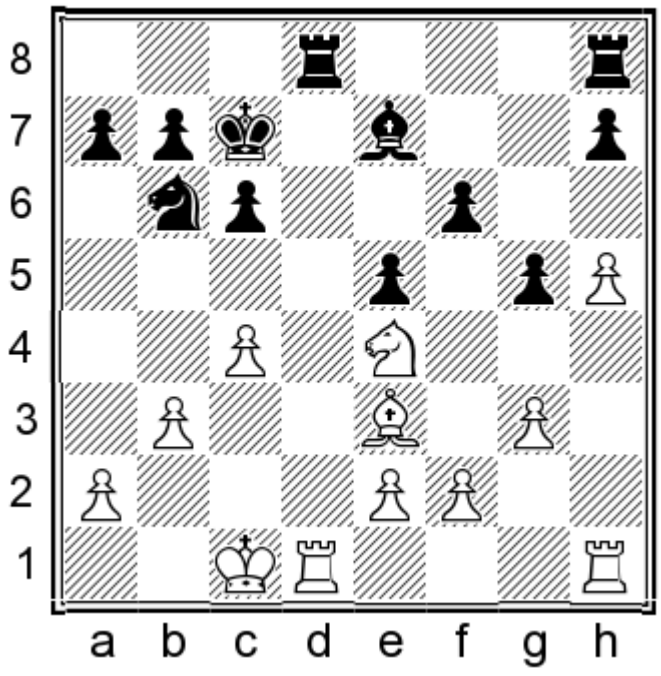
The strongest continuation. 11.Bxe7+ Kxe7 12.Nd5+ Kd8 13.Bh3 looks tempting, but after 13...f5 (parrying the threat of 14.Nf6) 14.e4 c6 15.Ne3 f4 16.Bxd7 Bxd7 17.Ng4 Re8 18.Nf6 Re7 White's advantage begins to evaporate.

11...f6

Forced. On the natural 11...c6 there follows 12.Ne4 h6 13.Nd6! Rh7 14.Bxe7+ Kxe7 15.Bh3 f5 16.e4, when Black stands badly.

12.Be3 c6 13.h5 g5 14.Bh3 Kc7 15.Ne4 Nb6 16.Bxc8 Raxc8 17.b3 Rcd8

17...g4 was rather better, and if 18.Rh4 Rhg8. After 17...g4 I was intending to reply 18.h6 followed by Rh5.

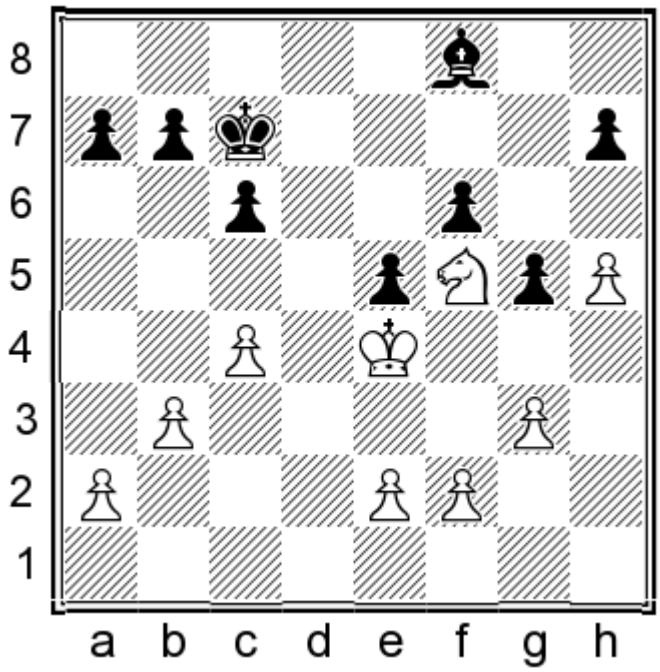


In the diagrammed position, White has a clear positional advantage. We need to find a plan to convert it – to show technique.

When my generation appeared at the top level of chess, there were still many senior chess players who had played the legendary Cuban José Raúl Capablanca. He entered history not only as a great player but also as a great chess technician. In 1935, he was a participant in an international tournament in Moscow. During dinner, two experienced Soviet masters approached him, and asked for advice in an adjourned position. "Capa," who was allegedly reading a newspaper, turned, instantly evaluated the situation, and said: "This piece must be exchanged, this one should be put there, and this one, here." And it all became clear to the masters.

Imagine that you are a kind of “Capablanca.” Here is the position, you have been approached you and asked what White should do – how to get the ideal balance of forces and convert the advantage. Probably, the reasoning will be such: exchange the rooks and keep the knight against the bishop. To do this, you need to take on d8 and play Rd1, and don’t forget to take on b6, as otherwise Black can move away the knight with ...Nc8.

Imagine that we have managed to exchange all of the “unnecessary” pieces. The best position that White can get with the knight on f5 and the king on e4 (see the next diagram). But will it be winning? An experienced chess player with a good technique, having calculated up to an endgame with a knight versus a bishop, always thinks: can he break through the opponent’s defenses? After all, the black king has enough opportunities to control the weaknesses from the e6- and f7-squares. Thus, even having a clear advantage, there is a chance that one will not be able to convert it.



On what do we base our assessment of this position? White’s superiority is primarily because of the fact that the pawns on e5, f6, and g5 are fixed on dark squares, and the bishop tends to be “bad.” However, notice that the remaining black pawns are on light squares (the a7-pawn can move to a6 if necessary) and can thus successfully “work together” with the bishop, creating a defensive wall. I can say with full confidence that it is very, very difficult to win such a position, maybe even impossible.

In other words, using conventional methods, the usual “mechanical” technique, we are unlikely to succeed. We need to look much deeper, play in a more sophisticated and subtle fashion.

18.Bc5!

Before deciding on this move, it was essential to thoroughly weigh everything “for” and “against.” It looks illogical, since White voluntarily exchanges his “good” bishop for the opponent’s “bad” bishop, instead of exchanging it for the knight (18.Bxb6+) and consolidating his advantage. But on a deeper investigation of the position it becomes clear that after the possible exchange of rooks on the d-file and the transfer of his king to e6, Black covers his vulnerable points and sets up an impregnable position. In this case his “bad” bishop would play an important role.

18...Rxd1+

Deserving attention is the pawn sacrifice suggested by Petrosian as a way to change the overall picture of the position, which is unfavorable for Black: 18...Bxc5 19.Nxc5 Rhe8 20.Rxd8 Kxd8 21.Nxb7+ Kc7 22.Nc5 e4, with the idea of 23...a5 and 24...Re5. However, as Mark Dvoretsky pointed out, after the strongest 23.Na6+! Kb7 24.Nb4 and 25.Nc2, White’s advantage is indisputable – Igor Yanvarjov.

19.Rxd1 Bxc5

Apparently forced, because otherwise the f6- pawn will “hang.” If the bishop retreats to d8, (19...Bd8)White will improve his position by playing 20.g4.

20.Nxc5 Re8

It turns out that the white rook and knight coordinate very well.

21.Ne4

White exchanged the bad black bishop, but in exchange he got the opportunity to create immediate threats. In our case, the knight on b6 is not much better than the bishop would have been.

21...Re6

The rook occupies a somewhat awkward position here. However, no better is 21...Rf8 22.g4 Rf7 23.Rd6 or 22...Nc8 23.Nc5 Rf7 24.Ne6+. The white pieces easily invade the enemy camp.

22.g4 a5

One always has to be careful with such moves. A rule of defense: in a difficult position, one should not create new weaknesses, as usually occurs with each pawn move. But here Black takes preventive measures against the advance of white pawns on the queenside, which would lead to a large space advantage for White.

23.Rd3 Nd7 24.Kc2 b6

Hindering the possible c4-c5 (*and hoping to ease the defense with a knight trade after* ...N*c5– Igor Yanvarjov*.)

25.Rf3! Kd8 26.a3

White plans to play b3-b4, and then, depending on the circumstances, c4-c5 or b4-b5. Also, if the pawns are exchanged (axb4 axb4), the rook will seize the a-file.

26...c5

Losing control of the important d5-square, but White’s threat of 27.b4 followed by c4-c5 was highly unpleasant.

27.Kc3 Ke7 28.Rd3 Rc6 29.Rd5 Nf8

Black has been deprived of any counterplay. In such cases, it is necessary to maximally improve the placement of the pieces.

30.Ng3 Ne6 31.Nf5+ Ke8 32.e3

A simple but effective move that takes the d4- and f4-squares from the black knight.

32...Nc7

Taking into account that Black has many weaknesses along the d-file, it is better to transfer the knight to f7 (...Nd8-f7) and try to create the most solid defense possible.

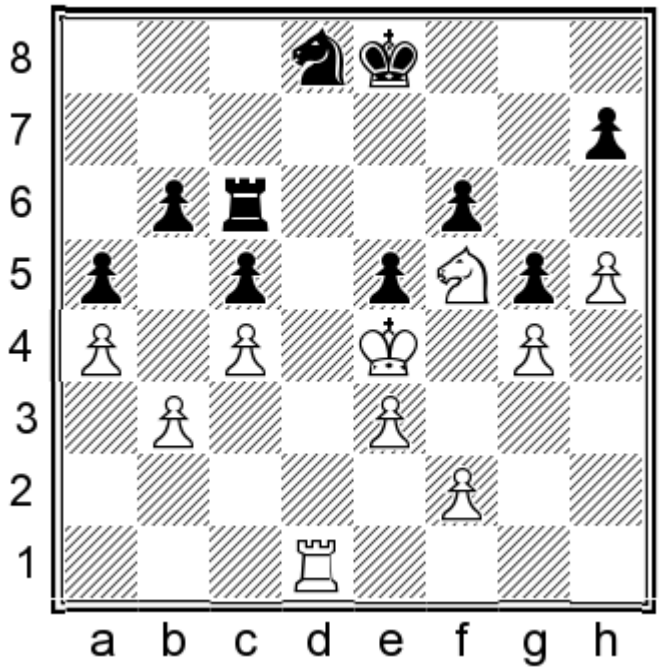
33.Rd1 Ne6 34.Kd3 Rc7 35.Ke4 Rc6

It seems it is still not easy to win. Black barricaded himself so severely that it is not clear how to approach him. There was no sense in taking risks, and, in slight time trouble, I repeated moves.

36.Nd6+ Ke7 37.Nf5+ Ke8 38.Nd6+ Ke7 39.Nf5+ Ke8

Years later, the only flaw in this masterpiece was discovered. Now, according to the rules, before making his last move, Bannik could demand a draw, because of the three-fold repetition after 39...Ke8, as the same position occurred after the 35th and 37th moves. This strange case of collective "chess blindness" can probably be explained by the fact that the first repetition occurred after a rook move while the other two were after a king move or it was just time pressure – Igor Yanvarjov.

40.a4 Nd8



In this position the game was adjourned. Had it now been Black's move, he would have played ...Nf7, and it would have been very difficult for White to win. But...

41.Nh6

The sealed move. Now on 41...Re6 there follows 42.Kf5 Rc6 43.Ng8, while on 41...Ke7 42.Ng8+ Ke8 43.Kf5, winning the f6-pawn. Black's position is also hopeless after 41...Nb7 42.Ng8 Kf8 43.Rd7, and therefore his reply is forced.

41...Ne6 42.Ng8 Nf8

After 42...Kf7 White wins by 43.Rd7+! Kxg8 44.Kd5. Curiously enough, now the plausible 43.Kf5? does not work because of 43...Kf7 44.Nh6+ Kg7 45.Rd8 Ne6 46.Re8 Nc7, when White unexpectedly loses his knight.

43.Rd2!

This puts Black in *zugzwang*. Now on 43...Re6 there follows 44.Kf5 Kf7 45.Rd8 Rc6 46.Nh6+ Kg7 47.Ke4! (threatening 48.Nf5+) 47...Ne6 48.Rd7+! Kxh6 49.Kd5.

43...Kf7

In the event of 43...Nd7 White wins easily by 44.Kf5 Kd8 45.e4 Ke8 46.f3 Kd8 47.Rxd7+! Kxd7 48.Nxf6+. (Note that prior to the exchange sacrifice, according to the principle "Do not rush!" it makes sense to play two preparatory pawn moves in order to maximally strengthen the position – Mark Dvoretsky.)

44.Nh6+ Ke8 45.Nf5 Ne6

Now all the variations are built on zugzwang. After 45...Nd7 the simplest way to win is by 46.Kd5 Nb8 47.Nh6 (Black's rook is stuck on the sixth rank for defense) 47...Kf8 (47...Ke7 48.Ng8+ Kf7 49.Ke4!) 48.Ke4! Ke8 49.Kf5 Nd7 50.Ng8, transposing into the variation given in the previous note.

46.Rd6

Forcing the transition into a knight ending, which is easily won, since the invasion of the white king at d5 or f5 is decisive.

46...Rxd6 47.Nxd6+ Kd7 48.Nb5 Ng7

After 48...Nf8 White wins by 49.Kf5 Ke7 50.Nc3 Nd7 51.Nd5+ Kf7 52.e4 h6 53.f3!, when Black is in *zugzwang*.

49.h6 Ne8 50.Kd5

Again *zugzwang*! The remainder does not require any explanation.

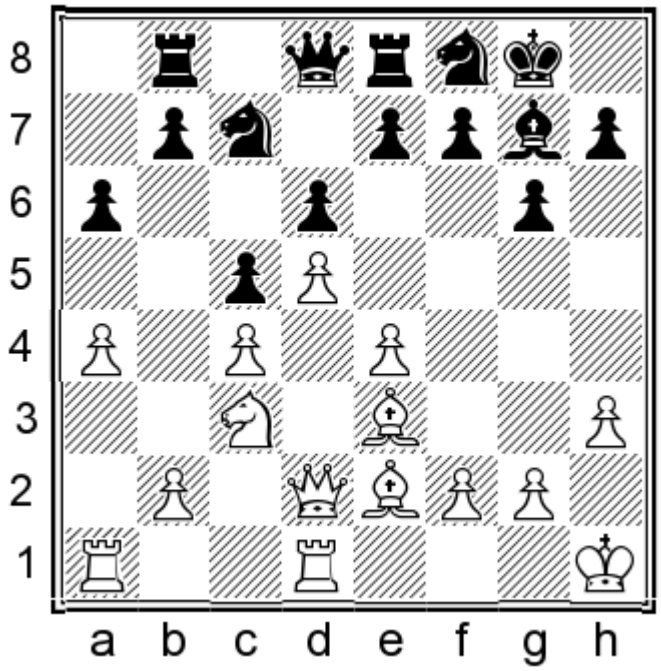
50...f5 51.Kxe5 fxg4 52.Nc3 Ke7 53.Ne4 Kf7 54.Kf5 g3 55.fxg3 g4 56.Ng5+ Kg8 57.Ke6 Nc7+ 58.Kd7 Na6 59.e4 Nb4 60.e5 Nd3 61.e6 Black resigned.

"So, let's summarize. It often happens that in technical positions one must make some unusual, original decision that is the only correct one. The ending analyzed is rather characteristic, and, of course, useful to know. In the position after the 17th move, White had two plans: the first, 'standard technical,' path is to exchange all of the pieces, leaving the knight against the 'bad' bishop, and the second is the one played in the game." (Petrosian)

Often, a chess player is faced with a choice between an advantageous endgame and playing for more. In such cases, with his natural and rational approach, Petrosian tried to play according to the position, as they say, and if the circumstances demanded it, he never avoided going into the endgame. "He who is content with the small arrives at the great." This ancient saying was Petrosian's motto. I think this was a manifestation of his philosophy of "self-control." He was used to staying content with having just a bit, but he was ready to play on even "a hundred moves." It is funny that there were times when Petrosian was criticized for that, too. The so-called "Fine-Flohr style" – grinding out points, playing with technique alone – was viewed as the degeneration of the domestic creative chess traditions!?

Let the advantage be completely insignificant, let there be a risk of losing a half-point, but if the opponent does not have counterplay, then why not try one's luck in a simplified position?

(240) Petrosian – Hamann
Nimzowitsch Memorial
Copenhagen 1960



The position in the diagram appeared in a rare variation of the Classical System:

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d6 3.Nc3 g6 4.e4 Bg7 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 Bg4 7.0-0 Nfd7 8.Be3 c5 9.d5 Na6 10.Qd2 Re8 11.h3 Bxf3 12.Bxf3 Nc7 13.Be2 a6 14.a4 Rb8 15.Kh1 Nf8 16.Rfd1

Undeniably, White has an opening advantage. By the basic "King's Indian standards," Black's position is not easy, because the active undermining moves ...e6 and ...b5 are very difficult to make (the absence of the light-square bishop plays a role). Hamann looks for salvation in a pawn-down endgame.

16...e5 17.dxe6

Accepting the invitation, although White also retained a stable advantage with the queens on the board after 17.a5 or 17.Bd3.

17...Nfxe6

It was on this move that Black pinned his hopes, combined with ...Nd4 and ...b5. Taking with the rook on e6 is a basic blunder: 18.Bxc5!.

18.Qxd6 Qxd6 19.Rxd6 Nd4 20.Bd3

The best reply. Of course, White cannot play 20.Bxd4 because of 20...cxd4, and the e4-pawn is lost.

20...b5 21.axb5 axb5 22.cxb5

Black's idea is cleverer than it seems. At first glance, the transition to the opposite-color bishop endgame promises great winning chances for White: 22.Bxd4 Bxd4 23.Nxb5, and after the natural 23...Nxb5 24.cxb5 Bxb2 (24...Bxf2 25.Rf1) 25.Ra7 the passed b-pawn, in conjunction with the pressure on the f7-pawn, would decide the outcome of the fight. In fact, the two in-between moves 23...Bxb2! 24.Ra2 Be5! make this variation acceptable for Black.

22...Ncxb5 23.Nxb5 Nxb5 24.Rd7 Bxb2 25.Ra5

Another accurate move, providing White with a healthy extra pawn. The thing is that 25...Nc3 is by 26.Raa7 and then Bc4, with strong threats along the seventh rank.

25...Nd4 26.Rxc5 Ne6 27.Rcd5 Rbc8 28.g3 Bc1 29.Ba7

Typical for Petrosian. He tries to place his pieces on solid, protected positions. 29.Bb6 deserved serious attention, as it would have hindered Black's next maneuver.

29...Rcd8 30.Rb7 Ba3

Thus, a technically complicated endgame has arisen in which an extra pawn does not guarantee success for White. There are two factors in favor of the defending side: the limited number of pawns and their positioning on one flank only.

31.Bc4 Rc8 32.Bb3 Re7

In the near future, the main task for both sides is to correctly determine how to exchange the pieces. Obviously, White would not mind having the bishop pair in "pure form," when the bishops could show their full power. Black, on the other hand, would like to play a rook endgame or at least get rid of a couple minor pieces, which Petrosian would fight in every way. Now 32...Bc5 does not work in view of 33.Bxc5 Nxc5 34.Rxc5! Rxc5 35.Bxf7+.

33.Rdd7 Rxd7 34.Rxd7 Re8

In the case of 34...Bc5 35.Bxe6 fxe6 36.Bxc5 Rxc5 37.Kg2, Black would have achieved his goal, but at too high a price: the rook endgame is lost, as his king is cut off along the seventh rank.

35.Kg2 Re7 36.Rxe7 Bxe7

Is this endgame winning for White? Theory does not yet know the precise answer to this question. Objectively, the chances are about six to four in White's favor. Practically, as chess players say, it is harder to draw with Black than to win with White.

37.f4 Bc5 38.Bb8 Bd4 39.Bd5 Nc5 40.Bd6

The bishops are working together to limit the mobility of the opponent's pieces. This method was developed and applied by Wilhelm Steinitz (see also game 156).

40...Nd7 41.Bb4 Nc5

Creating a barrier in the way of the white king.

42.Kf3 Kg7 43.e5 h5

This move is apparently also necessary.

44.Ba5 Nd7?!

A wasted move. There is no actual threat yet, so Black should not voluntarily move his knight away. It is better to wait, giving White the opportunity to demonstrate his winning plan.

45.Ke4 Bf2 46.Bc3!

A concrete solution to the problem. White seizes an important diagonal, taking advantage of the fact that in the variation 46...Bxg3 47.Kf3! (Not 47.e6+? Nf6+ 48.Kf3 fxe6 with a draw) 47...Bh4 48.e6+ Nf6 49.e7 his pawn promotes.

46...Kf8 47.Kf3 Bc5 48.Be4 Nb6 49.Bc6

49.f5 looks very nice, but as usual, Petrosian does not hurry.

49...Nc8 50.Ke4 Bf2

Forced, because at this moment the threat of f4-f5 is already extremely unpleasant.

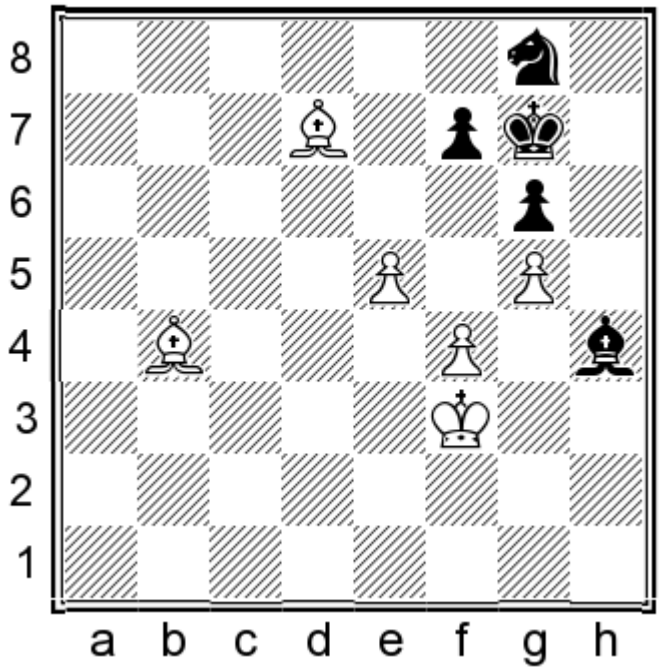
51.Bb4+ Kg7 52.g4 hxg4 53.hxg4 Bh4 54.Bd7 Ne7?

This leads to an entertaining finale. The move 54...Nb6 is the only possible way to resist.

55.g5 Ng8

55...Kf8 does not change anything.

56.Kf3!



A picture-perfect position. All at once, the black pieces are in a “mousetrap!”

56...Kh7 57.Bf8

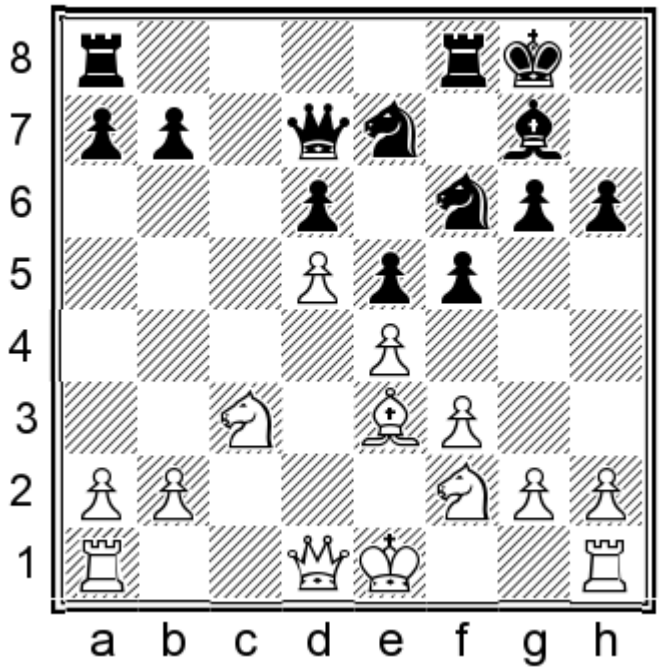
Threatening 58.Kg4 and 59.Be8. Black suffers material losses.

57...f6 58.Kg4! fxg5 59.fxg5 Be1 60.e6 Bc3 61.e7 Nxe7 62.Bxe7 Kg7 63.Be6 Be5 64.Kf3 Black resigned.

Now we present one more classical endgame, in which the main theme is the exchange of pieces.

(241) Petrosian – Ivkov
Bugoino 1982

1.c4 g6 2.e4 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.Nc3 Nc6 5.Be3 e5 6.d5 Nce7 7.c5 f5 8.cxd6 cxd6 9.Bb5+ Bd7 10.Bxd7+ Qxd7 11.f3 Nf6 12.Nh3 h6 13.Nf2 0-0



A variation of the Sämisch (according to Petrosian, not the best for Black). In addition, Ivkov did not play the opening in the best way. In particular, on the 12th move, Petrosian suggested the stronger 12...fxe4 13.fxe4 Ng4 14.Qf3 (14.Bd2 0-0) 14...Rf8 15.Qg3 Nxe3 16.Qxe3 Ng8, with acceptable play for Black.

Here, in addition to the usual space advantage, White was also able to exchange the light-square bishops and weaken the opponent's queenside, which contributed to his advantage. With the next move, Petrosian enters a good endgame.

14.Qa4! Qxa4

Black cannot avoid the queen trade, but 14...a6 still is better.

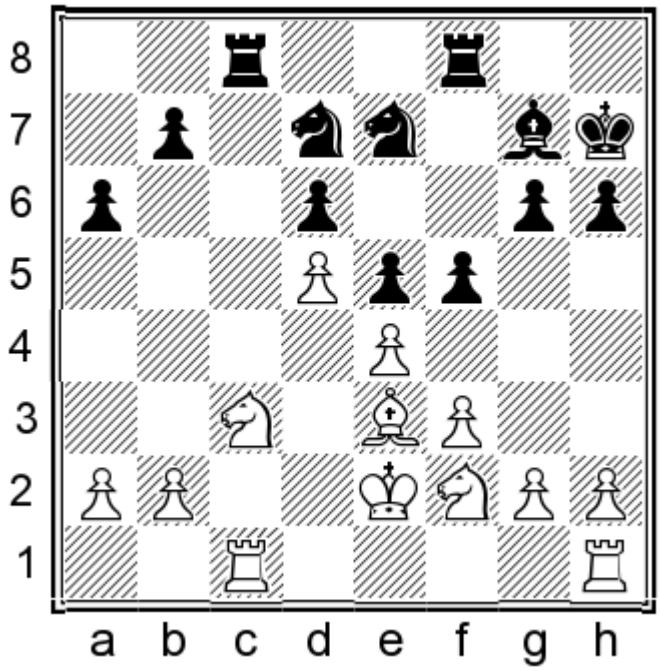
15.Nxa4 Rac8 16.Nc3

Creating the threat of taking on a7, which was not immediately possible because of 16...Ra8.

16...a6 17.Ke2 Kh7

According to Petrosian, a significant inaccuracy. 17...Kf7 is better. Ivkov plans to exchange the "bad" bishop via ...h5 and ...Bh6. However, firstly, Black, as we will see, has enough problems in the knight endgame, and, secondly, his king is moving away from the center. The Yugoslav grandmaster did not take this into account.

18.Rac1 Nd7



Black is inconsistent. As Capablanca used to say, it is better to have a bad plan than no plan at all. He should continue with the initial plan of 18...h5.

19.Nb1!

In the article “A few words delivered on a birthday,” published in the summer of 1979, Petrosian, in discussing future chess development and comparing the games of chess players of the past and present, noted the enormous progress in the area of technique today:

“...The modern master perceives chess differently. He sees and takes into account everything; he plays with the whole board. And if, say, he leads an attack on the kingside, then he still keeps one eye on the other side of the board. For example, I attack the king, but suddenly I start to doubt: will the attack succeed? Isn’t it better to calmly advance this little pawn from a3 to a4 and seize the b5-square? Perhaps, in some 30 moves the king will get there with a winning endgame...Our predecessors did not have such doubts. They simply did not notice that little pawn. They did not know that they could play that way too.”

This game is an instructional example of modern technique in action. I am almost sure that at this moment Petrosian could already clearly see the entire winning plan, culminating in *zugzwang* in the knight endgame! In his book *Endgame Strategy*, Mikhail Shereshevsky marks the move 19.Nb1 with two exclamation points and describes it as follows: “Everything of genius is simple. After this move, everything becomes clear. But only a chess player with perfect endgame technique like Tigran Petrosian can find the plan to transfer the knight from c3 to c4 (*and then to a5 – Igor Yanvarjov*), at the same time exchanging two pairs of rooks.”

19...Rxc1 20.Rxc1 Rc8 21.Na3 Rxc1 22.Bxc1

After the major pieces have disappeared from the board, the difference in the placement of the kings becomes evident. Now, White has only to ensure the passage of his king into the enemy camp, which Petrosian does by soon forcing the advance of the black b- and a-pawns. By the way, it has been known for a while that with knights on the board, the probability of *zugzwang* increases many times over.

22...h5 23.Nc4 Nc8 24.Bd2 Bf6

The attempt to exchange bishops clearly comes too late. After 24...Bh6, White plays, of course, 25.Bb4.

25.Na5

Seizing the c6-square, the key to Black’s fortress.

25...b6 26.Nc6 Kg7 27.Be3 Kf7 28.Nd3 Ke8 29.a4

Stabilizing beneficial changes in the pawn structure at the right time.

29...Bd8 30.Ndb4 a5 31.Na2

So, the path for the white king is ready. According to Petrosian, White already has a decisive advantage.

31...f4 32.Bf2 g5 33.Kd3 Nf8 34.h3 Ng6 35.Nc3 Bf6 36.Kc4 Kd7 37.Kb5 Kc7 38.Ka6

Threatening 39.Nb5+. Black rushes into a desperate counterattack.

38...g4 39.hxg4 hxg4 40.fxg4 Bh4 41.Nd1

Not giving the opponent the slightest counterchance. After 41...Bg3, White wins after 42.Bxg3 fxg3 43.Ne3.

41...Bxf2 42.Nxf2 Nce7

In case of 42...Nh4, the move 43.g5 followed by the knight transfer from f2 to f3 decides the game.

43.Nxe7 Nxe7 44.g5 Ng6 45.Ng4 Nh4 46.Ka7 Ng6 47.Nh2

Zugzwang nears.

47...Nh4 48.Nf3 Ng6 49.b3 Nf8 Black resigned, not waiting for the obvious 50.Nh4

Chapter 7
Lessons from Petrosian



In this section, which can be called educational and aesthetic, we will discuss the typical King's Indian positions and the related problems – how Petrosian solved them and what his favorite methods, ideas, and strategic plans were. We have already touched on some of these topics earlier, but for a full and objective picture I would like to include some new examples and draw some conclusions.

I believe in "correct" play.

Why are Petrosian's games so appealing? First of all, it is because of their amazing harmony and logical completeness. Once, Petrosian was asked, "What do you most appreciate in chess?" He replied, "Logic! I am convinced that, even though chess is a game, nothing is left to chance – this is my credo. I like only those games that I played according to the positional requirements... I believe only in logical, 'correct' play..."

This belief in the logical order, in the objective laws of everything that happens on the chessboard, is deeply rooted in Petrosian's childhood and youth. The ninth world champion received his first chess training at the Tbilisi Pioneer Palace under the guidance of the master Archil Ebralidze, who was a man of great chess knowledge and a wonderful and enthusiastic teacher, devoted to chess and his students. He instilled in young Tigran self-criticism and diligence, taught him to feel the beauty of logic, and introduced him to the legacy of classical chess.

"Look for the idea where the idea is," Ebralidze taught. "The only good game is the one in which everything is logical, in which each side every time finds and makes the best move, and in which the one who sees and calculates the best wins." We see all of this in Petrosian's later games. After defeating Botvinnik, Petrosian said, "I am grateful to have had Ebralidze as my first teacher. I don't know, maybe I'm wrong, but it seems to me that if my teacher had been, for example, Master Koblencs, Tal's trainer, and Tal's trainer had been Ebralidze, both of us, Tal and I, would have remained ordinary masters..."

Let me add that Petrosian defended and promoted his views not only at the chessboard, but also in numerous articles, public appearances and the scientific world. The topic of his PhD thesis was "Problems of logic of chess thinking.

" If in chess as in some other sports (for example, figure skating), there were "compulsory elements," then Petrosian would certainly be one of the leaders. On the one hand, he was always opposed to the mundane and against standard play; on the other hand, he believed that everything in chess can be taught, and he played the standard positions perfectly.

Personally, I was always impressed by Petrosian's ability to reduce different positions to a common denominator and to find clear guidelines and a logical foundation in even the most confusing situation. In his arsenal, Petrosian had a great number of typical techniques. When he was playing and analyzing, he seemed as if he were solving a Rubik's cube. One turn, two turns, and the position becomes clear and predictable.

(242) Sliwa – Petrosian
Gothenburg 1955

Annotations by Tigran Petrosian

(from *The Games of Tigran Petrosian*, Volume 1)

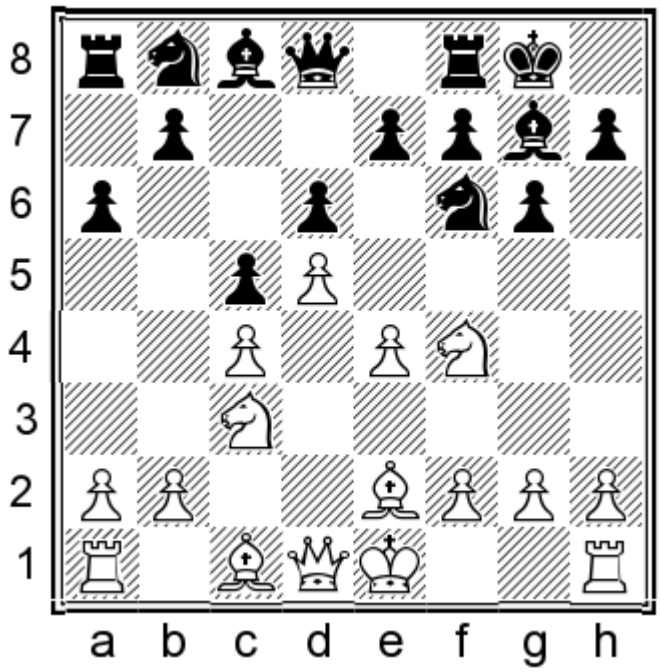
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 d6 4.Nc3 g6 5.e4 Bg7 6.Nge2 0-0 7.Nf4

The knight is badly placed here. It is better and more natural to revert to normal development patterns by 7.g3. *(7.Ng3 is also acceptable, as, for example, Szabo played against Petrosian in the tournament in Sarajevo in 1972:7...e6 8.Be2 exd5 9.cxd5 a6 10.a4 Re8 11.Bf4 Qc7 12.Qd2 Nbd7 13.0-0 b6 14.Bh6 Bh8 15.h3. Draw agreed. – Igor Yanvarjov.)*

7...a6

The pawn sacrifice 7...b5 deserves serious consideration.

8.Be2?



8.a4 was essential. Now Black is free to make the important advance ...b5 and he firmly seizes the initiative.

8...b5!

Of course, White cannot take on b5: 9.cxb5 axb5 10.Bxb5 Nxe4 11.Nxe4 Qa5+ with advantage to Black. In view of the threat of ...b4, White defends his e-pawn.

9.f3 bxc4 10.Bxc4 Nbd7 11.0-0 Ne5 12.Be2 Bd7 13.Qc2

The result of the opening is dismal for White. Black has a well placed knight at e5, and he has available the half-open b-file, which in combination with the strong bishop at g7 enables him to create pressure on the queenside.

13...Qa5 14.Bd2 Rfb8 15.Nd1 Qb6 16.Kh1 Ne8!

Black directs his knight along the route c7-b5 to the d4-square. Now White does best to forestall Black's plan by 17.Bc3 (for example, 17...Nc7 18.a4).

17.Rb1 Nc7 18.Ne3 Nb5

Now the knight is threatening to invade at d4, where it will occupy a dominating post, and White's situation is not eased by 19.Bxb5 axb5.

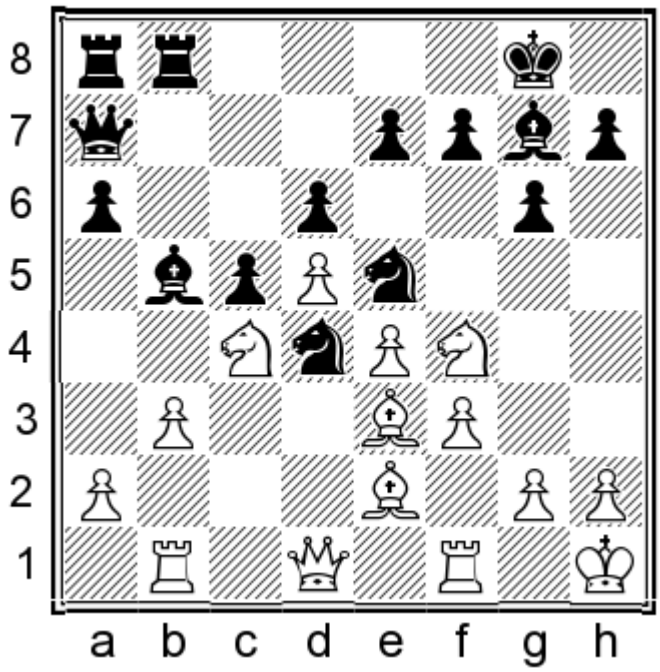
19.Nc4 Qa7

19...Nxc4 20.Bxc4 Nd4 comes into consideration.

20.Qd1

White does not sense the impending disaster. He should play 20.Be3, to answer 20...Nd4 with 21.Bxd4, blocking the a1-h8 diagonal. Had Black preferred 20...Nxc4 21.Bxc4 Nd4, then 22.Qd3 gives a defensible position.

20...Nd4 21.b3 Bb5 22.Be3?



22.Nxe5 should be played, although Black would have a pleasant choice between 22...dxe5 23.Nd3 a5 and 22...Bxe5 23.Bc4 a5, with advantage.

22...Nxe2!

Black voluntarily exchanges his strong knight, since he has in mind a forcing variation, leading to the win of a pawn.

23.Qxe2 a5!

Against the threat of 24...Qa6 there is no satisfactory defense.

24.Rfc1 Qa6 25.Qc2 Bxc4 26.bxc4 Rxb1

26...Rb4 is also strong.

27.Rxb1 Nxc4

As a result, Black has won a pawn with a good position. The rest is the matter of technique.

28.Bc1 a4 29.h3 a3 30.Nd3 h5

On the immediate 30...Nb2 there follows 31.Nxb2 axb2 32.Bxb2, when 32...Qxa2 is not possible due to 33.Ra1.

31.Rb3 Nb2 32.Nxb2 Qf1+ 33.Kh2 axb2 34.Bxb2 Rxa2 35.Rb8+ Kh7 36.e5

The last chance. On 36...Bxe5+ there follows 37.Bxe5, and White wins.

36...Rxb2 White resigned. Petrosian managed to refute his opponent's pretentious play fairly easily.

Sometimes – and in the King's Indian Defense more often than on average – the logic of events requires sacrifices, as happened in the next game. By the way, this game also features the setup with the white knight on e2.

(243) Milev – Petrosian
Bucharest 1953

As we know, fashion exists in chess. Suddenly everyone is fond of some opening variation, plan, or even move, and then it goes out of fashion just as suddenly. And oftentimes this has nothing to go with its chess virtues.

A primitive system that White chose in this game used to be very popular but today we cannot help but wonder how one could play that way at all. However, who knows, maybe in fifty years it will again become fashionable, while the clever setups of the modern masters will look ridiculous.

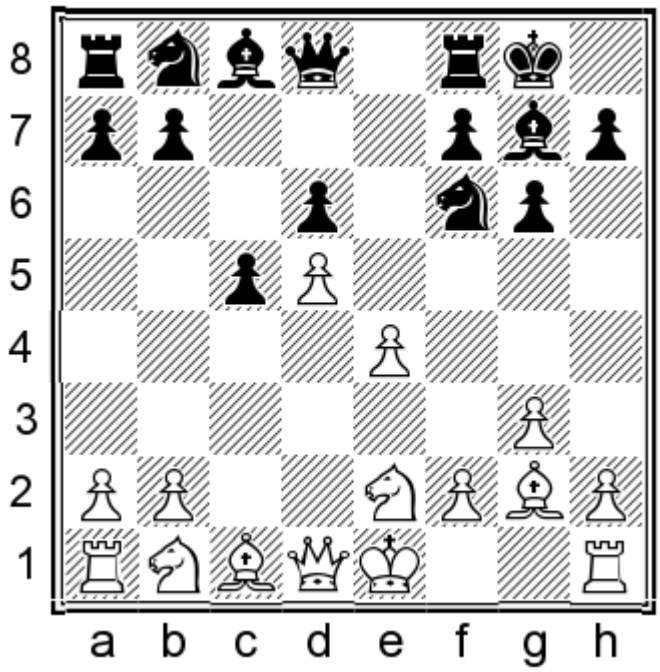
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Bg2 g6

Already here, using the slightly unusual move order, Black advance 6...b5, which often serves as the basis for his counterplay in this opening. However, such hasty actions, especially with insufficient development, are not in Petrosian's style.

7.e4

From a modern point of view, this is not the best path – a tempo is lost, the f1-a6 diagonal and the d3-square are weakened – in a word, this move does not fit well with the fianchetto. But at the time, as I already mentioned, it was a popular plan. The king's knight does not follow the traditional route f3-d2-c4, but develops to e2, and from this square, supporting the other knight on c3, it contributes to the minority attack b2-b4. On occasion, even a bolder idea is possible: to advance the pawns to h3 and g4, place the knight on g3, and then advance f2-f4, setting the stage for storming the kingside. These plans are tempting but too cumbersome. In addition, at the very beginning the Bulgarian master messed up and was forced to defend before he had an opportunity to carry out any of these plans.

7...Bg7 8.Ne2 0-0



9.0-0

An inaccurate move order. Here it is better to play 9.Nbc3 first, so that after 9...Re8 White can reply 10.Qc2 or 10.a4, hindering the move ...b5.

9...Re8 10.f3

Here too 10.Nbc3 is more advisable. Although after 10...b5, White has to trade his central pawn for his opponent's b-pawn, this is still the lesser evil. For example: 11.Nxb5 Nxe4 12.Bxe4 Rxe4 13.Nec3 Re8 14.Bf4 Bf8 15.Qd2 a6 16.Na3 Nd7 17.Nc4 Nb6 with some advantage for Black (Murey- Quinteros, New York 1983).

10...b5 11.a4?

Another inaccuracy, as a result of which Black seizes the advantage completely. Here is Petrosian's opinion:

This move is usually made in order to secure the c4-square for a knight. In the given position it not only fails to achieve this aim, but even assists the development of Black's initiative: his bishop can go to a6, from where it will exert strong pressure, and after ...Nbd7-e5 the appearance of a black knight at d3 will be inevitable. White should play 11.Qc2.

11...b4 12.Re1 Nbd7 13.Nf4

The attempt to transfer the knight to c4 is easily parried, for example 13.Nd2 Ba6 14.Qc2 Ne5 with a clear advantage for Black.

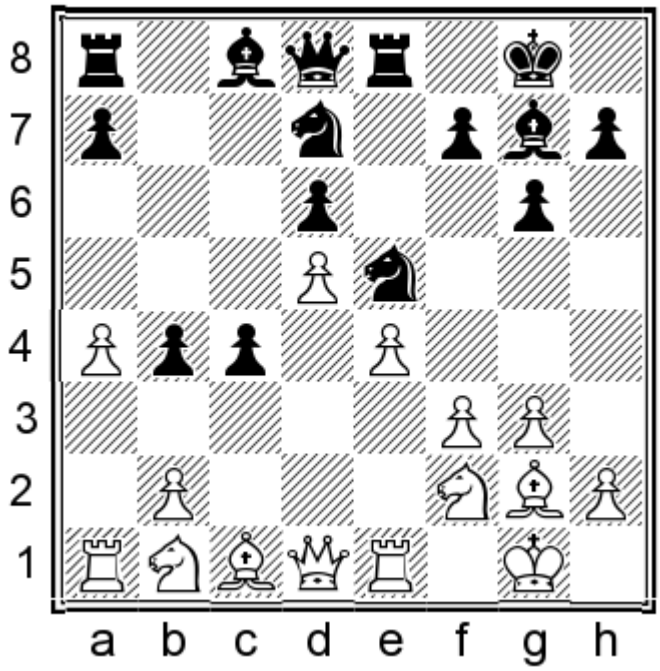
13...Ne5 14.Nd3

It is difficult for White to complete his development. On 14.b3, Petrosian suggested a curious variation: 14...g5 15.Ne2 g4 16.f4 Nf3+, and Black wins.

14...Nfd7

According to Petrosian, 14...Nxd3 15.Qxd3 Nd7 is stronger.

15.Nf2 c4



The critical point of the game. Let's allow Petrosian to explain:

“White is behind in development. To exploit this factor Black sacrifices a pawn, after which the c-file is opened and the c5-square freed for his knight, which in combination with pressure on the al-h8 and fl-a6 diagonals puts White in a difficult position. He does better to decline the sacrifice by 16.Be3.”

16.f4? Nd3 17.Nxd3 cxd3 18.Qxd3 Nc5 19.Qd1 Ba6

The d3-square attracts the black knights like a magnet. Useless is 20.Re3 Rc8, and Black renews the threat of ...Nd3. White finds a way to prevent the invasion but loses his extra pawn.

20.Bf1 Nxe4! 21.Bxa6 Qb6+ 22.Be3 Qxa6

So, with material equality, Black has the decisive positional advantage. White’s next move only accelerates the inevitable.

23.Bd4 Bxd4+ 24.Qxd4 Nxg3!

A little combination to finish up the game: if 25.Rxe8+ Rxe8 26.hxg3, then 26...Re1+ with checkmate.

25.Nc3

The first and last move of the queen’s knight.

25...bxc3 26.hxg3 c2 27.Kf2 Rac8 28.Re3 Rxe3 29.Qxe3 Qc4 White resigned.

Typical Strategic Methods

We have repeatedly mentioned how Nimzowitsch’s ideas influenced Petrosian’s play. This inspiration is very noticeable in his positional play, especially in positions with pawn chains. Petrosian advanced some of Nimzowitsch’s ideas at a higher level of chess technique, so to speak.

Along with the blockade and prophylaxis, playing on the squares of a certain color is one of the central themes of *My System*. We constantly see various combinations of this motif in Petrosian’s games. Petrosian attached great importance to this issue and considered it extremely important for understanding not only the King’s Indian Defense but also chess strategy in general. After all, many positional problems, such as, for example, “good and bad” bishops, the blockade (in a broad sense), and the struggle in positions with opposite-color bishops, are, in the end, just special cases of the weakness of a complex of squares. I remember how, evaluating the play of one young talented grandmaster who many had predicted would have a great future in chess, Petrosian skeptically remarked that this grandmaster might be a decent player, but he, alas, would never become world champion, because he did not understand the significance of weak and strong squares.

Numerous textbooks mention the following game as the gold standard for strategy on the light squares.

(244) Petrosian – Pilnik
Candidates’ Tournament
Amsterdam 1956

Annotations by Tigran Petrosian

(from *The Games of Tigran Petrosian*, Volume 1)

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5 4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 g6 6.Nf3 Bg7 7.Bg5 Na6

7...h6 is more subtle. At such an early stage White would hardly give up his dark-square bishop.

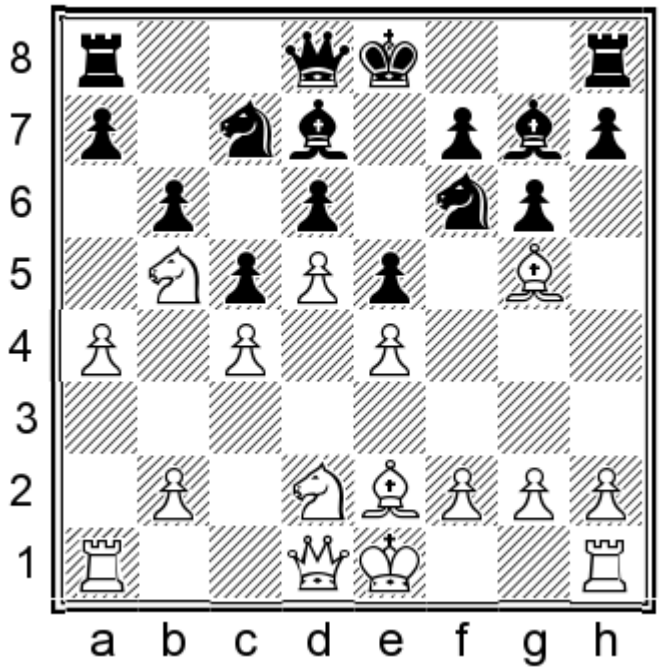
8.Be2 Nc7 9.Nd2 Bd7

Deserving attention is 9...a6, and if 10.a4, then 10...b6 – Igor Yanvarjov.

10.a4 b6

Now after 10...a6, already unpleasant is 11.a5 – Igor Yanvarjov.

11.Nb5



We saw a similar technique in the game A2.1 – Igor Yanvarjov.*

11...Bxb5?

The speed with which Pilnik made this move was a clear indication that he did not yet fully appreciate the importance of the light-square bishop in the coming struggle. 11...Nxb5 or even 11...Bc8 is correct.

12.cxb5 0-0 13.b4!

This reveals the defects in Black's position. What is he to do with his c-pawn? The capture on b4 opens the c-file, on which White has an outpost at c6. Black will not even be able to oppose rooks, since the c8-square can be controlled by the white bishop.

On the other hand, ...bxc5 is also pretty unpleasant for Black, after which recapturing with the b-pawn is clearly bad: White easily creates a strong passed pawn on the queenside. But after the recapture with the d-pawn White places his knight at c4, and combines the threat of a4-a5 with the advance of his d-pawn.

Also note that, as master Sergey Grabuzov indicated, the standard 13.0-0 allows Black to significantly improve his position on the queenside: 13...a5 14.bxa6 Nxa6. For example, 15.Bxa6 Rxa6 16.b4 cxb4 17.Qb3 Qd7, and 18.Bxf6 Bxf6 19.Qxb4 yields nothing in view of 19...Rfa8 – Igor Yanvarjov.

13...h6 14.Bxf6

14.Be3 is weaker in view of 14...Nd7, followed by 15...cxb4 and ...Nc5.

14...Qxf6 15.0-0

So, a position has arisen with opposite-color bishops. Remember that such positions with queens on the board were the main topic of games 27, 59, 93, 98, 140, 149 and 170 – Igor Yanvarjov.

15...Rfd8 16.Nc4 Bf8 17.g3

Planning to transfer the bishop to h3 and threatening f2-f4 if the opportunity presents itself – Igor Yanvarjov.

17...cxb4

White can strengthen his position unhindered and so Black, after defending his d-pawn, takes on b4.

18.Qb3 Kg7 19.Rfc1

After 19.Qxb4, White has to reckon with 19...Ne6, and if 20.dxe6, 20...d5.

19...h5 20.Ne3

20.Nxb6 Nxb5! could have led to unnecessary complications – Igor Yanvarjov.

20...Ne8 21.Qxb4 Rdc8 22.Rc6 Qd8

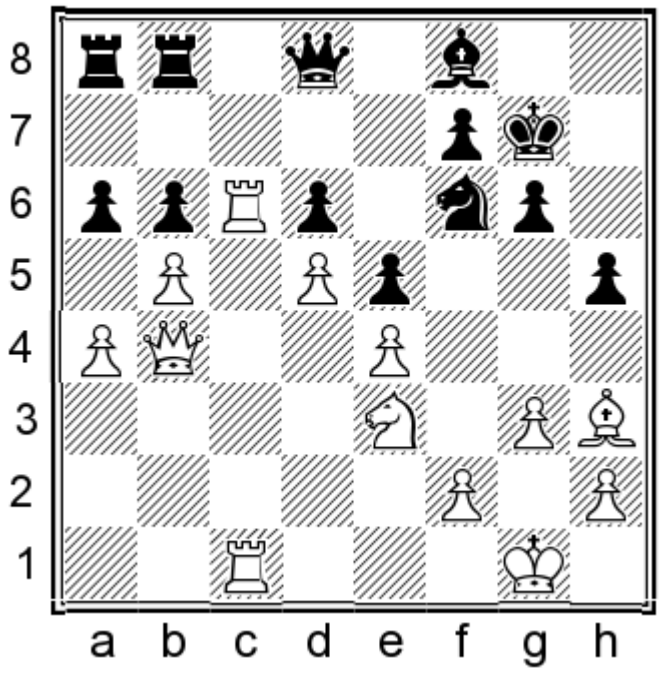
If 22...Rxc6, White gains a significant advantage after 23.bxc6 followed by Ba6-b7 and a4-a5 – Igor Yanvarjov.

23.Rac1 Nf6 24.Bf1

The transfer of Black's knight to c5 significantly eases his position. White prevents 24...Nd7 in view of 25.Bh3 and 26.Bxd7, leaving his opponent with a "bad" bishop against a knight (if 25...Rxc6, then 26.dxc6 and 27.Nd5, with a decisive advantage for White.)

24...Rcb8 25.Bh3 a6

Comparatively the best chance for Black, who is suffering from a catastrophic shortage of moves.



26.Re1!

At first sight, an incomprehensible move, dictated by the following considerations. Black has weakened his b6 pawn, and to attack it White must place his knight at c4, which cannot be done immediately because of 26...Nxe4. Despite there being so many pieces, it proves not so simple for White to defend his e-pawn. The obvious 26.f3 has the significant drawback of weakening the dark squares and the second rank, and by continuing 26...axb5 27.axb5 h4 Black gains serious counterplay. On the h3-c8 diagonal the bishop occupies too strong a position for it to be switched to the modest role of guarding the e4 pawn.

Thus this only leaves the move in the game.

26...axb5 27.axb5 Nh7 28.Nc4 Ra2 29.Bg2

Pilnik's last two moves show that he intends to launch a desperate counterattack on the kingside. It should be mentioned that such tactics, timed to coincide with the approach of time trouble, had twice enabled him to save games against me in Interzonal Tournaments.

In anticipation of ...Ng5, White withdraws his bishop in good time.

29...Qf6 30.Rf1 Ng5 31.Qb3 Rba8 32.h4 Nh7 33.Rxb6 Ra1 34.Rc6 R8a2 35.Qe3

Defending against the threat of 35...Qxf2+.

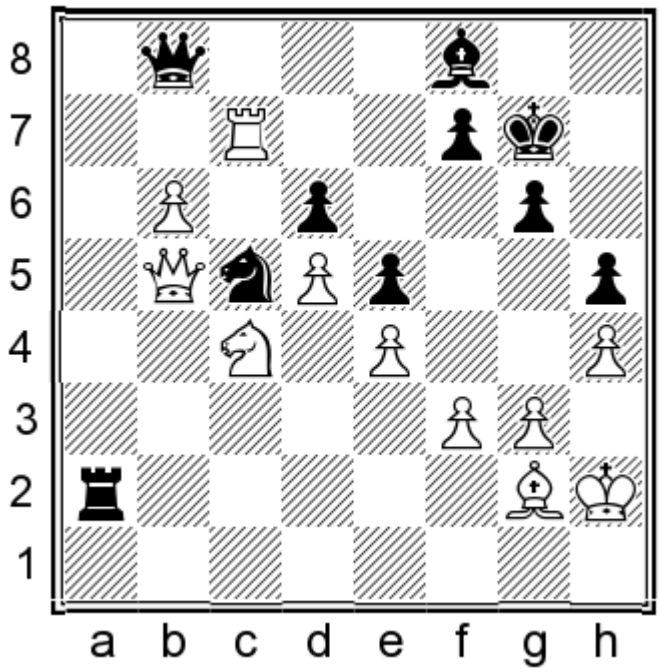
35...Qd8

Black's threats have been parried, and he sounds the retreat.

36.Rxa1

The immediate 36.b6 wins more quickly.

36...Rxa1+ 37.Kh2 Nf6 38.f3 Qb8 39.Qb3 Nd7 40.b6 Nc5 41.Qb2 Ra4 42.Qb5 Ra2 43.Rc7



Threatening the decisive maneuver 44.Na5, 45.Nc6, and 46.b7. Black's next move is the last attempt to muddy the water – Igor Yanvarjov.

43...g5 44.Ne3

The simplest. The knight goes to f5, and the black king comes under a mating attack.

44...gxh4 45.Nf5+ Kg8 46.gxh4 Ra6 47.b7! Ra7 48.Rc8

Attacking the black king with full force. This transfer of the attack from one flank to another is characteristic of King's Indian positions – Igor Yanvarjov.

48...Qxb7 49.Qe8 Nd7 50.Nxd6 Black resigned.

A weakened square complex and the battle of a knight against a bad bishop – this is the strategic essence of the next game.

(245) Petrosian – Sanguineti
Interzonal Tournament
Portorož 1958

1.c4 c5 2.Nf3 g6 3.d4 Bg7 4.d5 e5 5.Nc3 d6 6.e4 f5

Not quite solid strategically. This move does not give Black any real benefits, while White now has the opportunity for active play on the kingside. By the way, the fact that White's light-square bishop is not yet developed and is still on f1 helps White.

7.g3

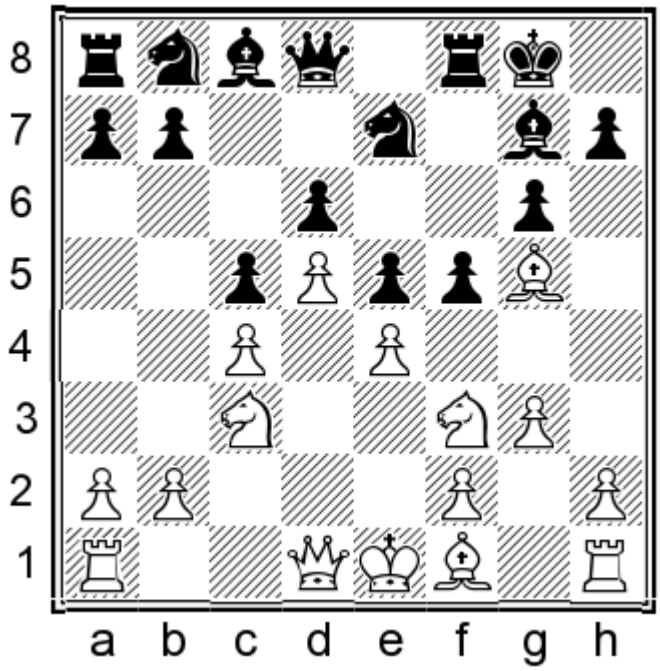
Not allowing the pawn to come to f4 and preparing to transfer the bishop to h3.

7...Ne7

7...Nf6 is better.

8.Bg5 0-0

8...h6 is met by 9.Bxe7 Qxe7 10.Nh4! with unpleasant pressure.



9.h4!

Threatening to advance the pawn further.

9...h6 10.Bxe7

Decreasing the number of defenders of the f5-pawn. Note that this exchange is good only because Black's pawn chain has lost its elasticity after the move ...h6.

10...Qxe7 11.Bh3

With the idea of increasing the pressure via h4-h5.

11...f4

This decision is basically forced. On 11...h5 12.Ng5 or 11...Qf6 12.Nd2, Black is not able to maintain control over the f5-, h5-, and e4-squares for much longer.

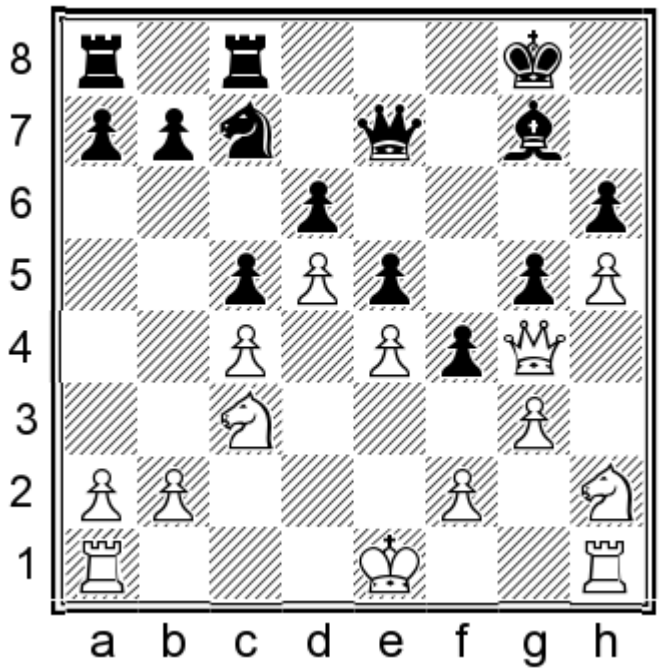
12.Bxc8 Rxc8 13.h5

Continuing with the general plan aimed at controlling the light squares. The outline of this game is similar to that of the game Petrosian- Nikolaevsky (game 169).

13...g5 14.Nh2 Na6 15.Qg4

Played by analogy with the aforementioned game. However, in this case the position is not as advantageous for White, in particular because he cannot set up invasion of the queen on e6. In this regard, a setup aimed towards the move gxf4 deserves attention: 15.Ng4 Nc7 16.Qe2, and now Sanguinetti's plan does not work. For example, 16...Rcb8 17.0-0-0 a6 18.gxf4 exf4 19.e5! or 17...fxg3 18.fxg3 a6 19.Ne3 followed by Nf5.

15...Nc7



16.0-0

In our opinion, White has better chances after 16.Nf3 Rcb8 17.Nd2, and now 17...b5 is clearly dubious because of 18.cxb5 Nxb5 19.Nxb5 Rxb5 20.Nc4. If 17...a6, then 18.Nb3, with the idea of countering 18...b5 with 19.Na5!, occupying c6 with the knight.

16...Rcb8 17.a4

Was it necessary to prevent the move ...b5? Since the knight is far from the c4-square and White does not have time to reinforce the queenside, Petrosian decided to play cautiously, and that is understandable. After 17.Nf3 b5 18.Nxb5 Nxb5 19.cxb5 Rxb5 20.b3 a5 or 17.Rfc1 b5 18.Nxb5 Nxb5 19.cxb5 Rxb5 20.Rc2 Rb4, White does not have any tangible advantage.

17...a5

Principled! White has a beautiful position, but how to win it, where to break through?

Thus, Black's previous play was just a clever show. Insisting on advancing ...b5 would have been a logical mistake on his part. Here is a rough variation: 17...a6 18.Nf3 b5 19.axb5 axb5 20.Rxa8 Rxa8 21.Nxb5 Nxb5 22.cxb5 Rb8 23.Ra1, and White's position is close to winning.

18.Ra3 b6 19.Nb5

Completely "freezing" the play on the queenside. Probably Petrosian wanted to avoid the possible activation of the black knight after ...Ne8- f6. Now, after 19...Ne8 White could play 20.Rd3 Nf6 21.Qe6+ with advantage for White.

19...Nxb5 20.cxb5 Re8 21.Nf3

A new phase of maneuvering: White transfers the knight to the blockading c4-square while Black prepares to exchange the queens.

21...Rad8 22.Nd2 Qd7 23.Qxd7 Rxd7 24.Nc4 Rb8

Theoretically, White hasonly one opportunity to break through: the move g3xf4.

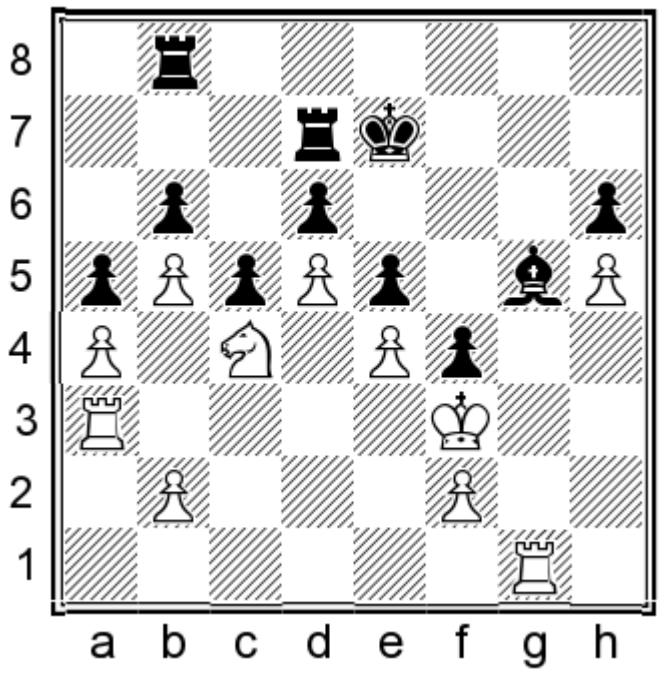
25.Kg2 Kf7 26.Re1 Ke7

Bringing the king to defend the weak b6- and d6-pawns.

27.Kf3 Bf6 28.gxf4 gxf4

28...exf4 is also possible since 29.e5 is not dangerous for Black, but the text continuation is more solid. On the next move, Black moves his bishop to g5, blocking the g-file.

29.Rg1 Bg5



30.Rxg5!?

A small practical chance. Sacrificing the exchange, White creates a strong passed pawn.

30...hxg5 31.Kg4 Kd8

Black transfers the king to c7 in order to free up the rooks.

32.Rh3 Kc7 33.Nd2

33.h6 looks interesting. For example, 33...Rh7 34.Rh5 Rg8 35.Rxg5 Rgh8 36.Rg6 Rxh6 37.Rg7+ and 38.Nxb6 with chances for White, although this variation is not forced, of course.

33...Rh7 34.f3

It turns out that the formidable h-pawn does not pose a threat to Black: 34.h6? Rg8 (threatening ...Rg6) or 34.Nf3 Rg8, and it is not clear how White can improve his position. The text move is basically a draw offer.

34...Rg8 35.Nc4 Rhh8 36.Na3 Kd7 37.Rh1 Rh7 38.Rh2 Rhh8

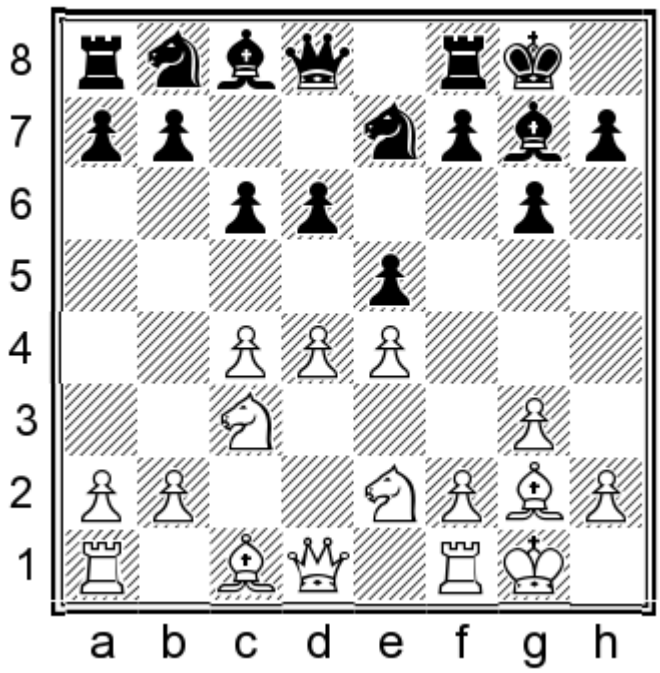
A peaceful result is inevitable.

39.Nc4 Kc7 40.Rh1 Rh7 41.Nd2 Rhh8 42.Nb1 Rh7 43.Nc3 Draw.

We will conclude our discussion on the topic of the strategy of strong and weak squares with a blockade-themed game.

(246) Petrosian – Cardoso
Manila 1974

1.g3 g6 2.Bg2 Bg7 3.c4 c6 4.Nc3 e5 5.e4 Ne7 6.Nge2 d6 7.d4 0-0 8.0-0



8...Nd7

After wandering through various opening trails, the opponents came to a position reminiscent of the main variation of the King’s Indian Defense.

Earlier in the same tournament, the Filipino Master had already tested this system against Larsen, but after 8...Be6 9.d5 cxd5 10.cxd5 Bd7 11.Be3 b5 12.a4 b4 13.Nb5! he faced serious difficulties. The text move is an attempt to improve this variation.

9.b3 f5

It does not look like Black has another active plan.

10.exf5 gxf5

In our opinion, taking with the knight is more in the spirit of Black's structure. Now White gains a solid advantage after exchanging the central pawns.

11.Kh1

A useful waiting move.

11...Ng6 12.dxe5 dxe5 13.Ba3 Re8 14.Qc2

So, now hanging pawns have appeared on the board, which is not uncommon in the King's Indian Defense (see games 3, 4, 5, 160, 178).

14...Nf6 15.Rad1 Qc7 16.Bh3

Starting to besiege the e5- and f5-pawns. If now 16...Ng4, then 17.Bc1, threatening f2-f3.

16...f4

After 16...e4, White would successfully switch to playing on the dark squares: 17.Bd6, planning f2-f3 in the future.

17.Bxc8 Qxc8 18.Ne4

Now classical blockading play begins. Later we will see how many diverse advantages one can obtain by controlling just one strong point. White's queen and both knights will take turns on the e4-square.

Let us remind the reader that playing on squares of a certain color in combination with a blockade significantly influenced the flow of games 3, 4, 159, 173, 174 and 208.

18...Qh3 19.Ng1 Qh5 20.Nxf6+ Bxf6 21.Qe4

Changing of the guard. Usually a queen is not very comfortable in the role of a blocker, but there are no rules without exceptions. In this case, as we will see, the strongest piece does an excellent job.

21...Rad8 22.Nf3 Qh3 23.Bb2 Rxd1 24.Rxd1 Kf7 25.Re1!

A tricky moment. The d-file is not so important for White. But, by tying the opponent's pieces to the defense of the e5-pawn, White gets the opportunity to further improve his position.

25...Re7 26.Bc3

Another interesting move. To avoid future tactical complications, Petrosian overprotects the rook and the d2-square (in case Black decides to use the d-file).

26...fxg3 27.fxg3 h5 28.Ng1 Qe6

A critical mistake. Black should urgently offer a queen trade: 28...Qg4. Cardoso's advance of the rook pawn leads to the opening of a file, of which White's more mobile pieces naturally take advantage.

29.Kg2 h4 30.Nh3

The knight starts moving toward the e4-square

30...hxg3 31.hxg3 Kg7 32.Nf2 Rd7 33.Rh1 Rd8

Missing White's next move. Correct is 33...b6.

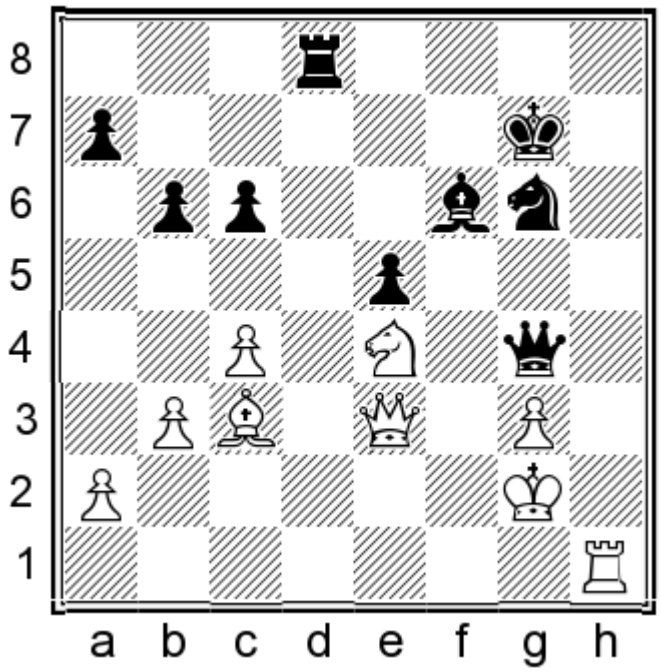
34.Qe3! b6 35.Ne4

The cornerstone of the structure that White conceived on the 30th move. The knight, which is the ideal piece for blockading, occupies the e4- square.

Also note that 35.Qh6+ Kf7 36.Qh7+ Bg7 37.Rf1 would give White a strong attack.

35...Qg4

The decisive tactical error, but Black could not save the game anyway. For example, 35...Rh8 36.Rxh8 Nxh8 37.Nxf6 Kxf6 38.Qf4+ and so on.



36.Rh7+!

A move like the sting of a scorpion. Black resigned.

Now let's talk about an important topic in the strategy of closed positions, the making of a breakthrough.

As you know, the breakthrough is the main and, often, only way to convert a space advantage. Sometimes the breakthrough into the enemy's camp happens in the endgame, as, for example, in games 44, 63, 68, 106 and 169, or in positions where the defender's possibilities are very limited; then it is relatively easy to achieve the goal. The most difficult are the positions with many pieces still on the board, when the opponent has thoroughly "dug in" and does not have any obvious weaknesses.

A space advantage is, first and foremost, the freedom to maneuver and improved lines of communication. In other words, the pieces of the stronger side are more mobile and can be transferred quickly from one part of the board to another.

Petrosian brilliantly executed the classic idea of transferring the attack in the next two games.

(247) Petrosian – Horowitz
Match USSR-USA

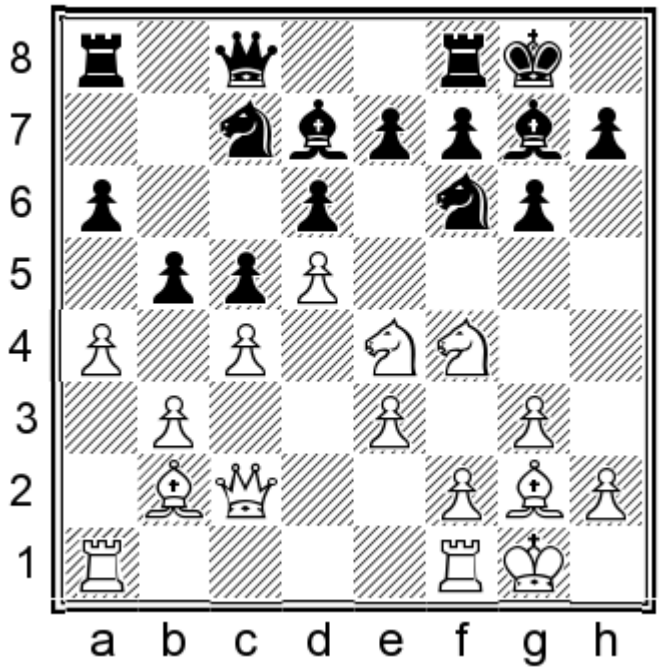
1.c4 c5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.g3 g6 4.Bg2 Bg7 5.e3 0-0 6.Nge2 Nc6 7.0-0 d6 8.d4

Transposing the game from the bland structures of the English Opening to the setups of the King's Indian.

8...Bd7 9.b3 Qc8 10.d5 Nb8

The active 10...Na5 is more common.

11.Nf4 Na6 12.Bb2 Nc7 13.a4 b6 14.Qc2 a6 15.Ne4 b5



Black has advanced the b-pawn and it seems that he has a good position. Petrosian finds an interesting opportunity to take over the initiative.

16.Bxf6!

Not only doubling the pawns but also forcing the exchange of the g7-bishop. 16.Nxf6+ is weaker because of 16...exf6.

16...Bxf6 17.Nxf6+ exf6 18.Qc3 bxc4

Of course, Black did not want this exchange, but what can he do? After 18...Kg7 White would have delivered an unpleasant blow on the queenside: 19.b4!.

19.bxc4 Kg7 20.Rfb1 a5

Hoping to transfer the knight to b4 if the opportunity presents itself.

21.Rb6 Ra6 22.Qb2 Rd8

The rook is better placed on e8. Black realizes this one move later.

23.Rb7 Re8 24.Ne2

The knight has no future on f4; White transfers it to the queenside.

24...Bf5 25.Nc3 h5 26.e4 Bd7 27.f4 Qd8 28.Rf1

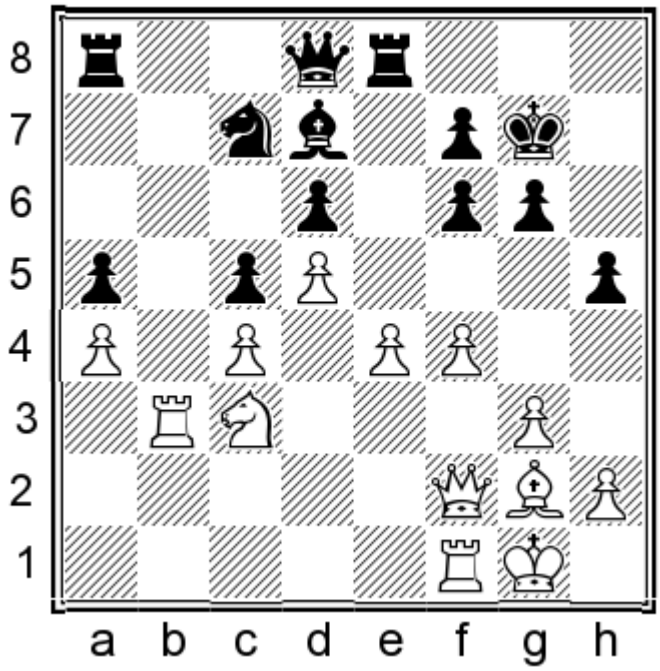
So far, White has made logical moves, but further straightforward play along the b-file now yields nothing. For example: 28.Rb1 Na8 29.Rb8? Qxb8 30.Qxb8 Rxb8 31.Rxb8 Nb6!. The meaning of the text move is not yet clear. Petrosian's 30th move clarifies the situation.

28...Bc8 29.Rb3 Bd7 30.Qf2!

This move deserves an exclamation point, not only independently but also as the finale of a whole strategic plan. White switches to attacking the c5- and f7-pawns, intending to carry out the advance e4-e5! (see White's 19th move in game 185). The American player obviously did not expect this.

30...Ra8?

An error caused by confusion and time pressure. In addition to everything, the rook gets "x-rayed" by the g2-bishop. However, as analysis shows, even if Black finds the objectively strongest defense, 30...Qe7, he still cannot save the game. For example: 31.e5! dxe5 32.fxe5 Qxe5 (32...fxe5 33.Ne4) 33.Ne4 Bxa4 34.Rb7 or 31...fxe5 32.fxe5 Bf5 33.exd6 Qxd6 34.Be4!, and if 34...Bxe4, then 35.Qxf7+ Kh6 36.Nb5! Nxb5 37.Qxe8, with a decisive attack.



31.e5!

"Through the center into the enemy's camp." (Aron Nimzowitsch).

31...dxe5

After 31...fxe5, a possible continuation is 32.fxe5 Bf5 33.exd6 Qxd6 34.Nb5 Nxb5 35.Rxb5 Rec8 36.Bh3!, and White should win.

32.d6 Ne6 33.fxe5 f5 34.Bxa8 Qxa8 35.Rb6 Nd4 36.Qf4 In this hopeless position, Black ran out of time.

(248) Petrosian – Simagin
Match, 5th game
Moscow 1956

Annotations by Tigran Petrosian

(from *The Games of Tigran Petrosian*, Volume 1)

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 d6 4.d4 g6 5.e4 Bg7 6.Be2 0-0 7.0-0

Let me remind the reader that this was the Moscow Championship match and the winner was determined after six games. Before this penultimate game, the situation was quite tense: Petrosian led by just one point, 2½-1½. In addition, on the previous day Simagin had won and, naturally, wanted to build on his success – Igor Yanvarjov.

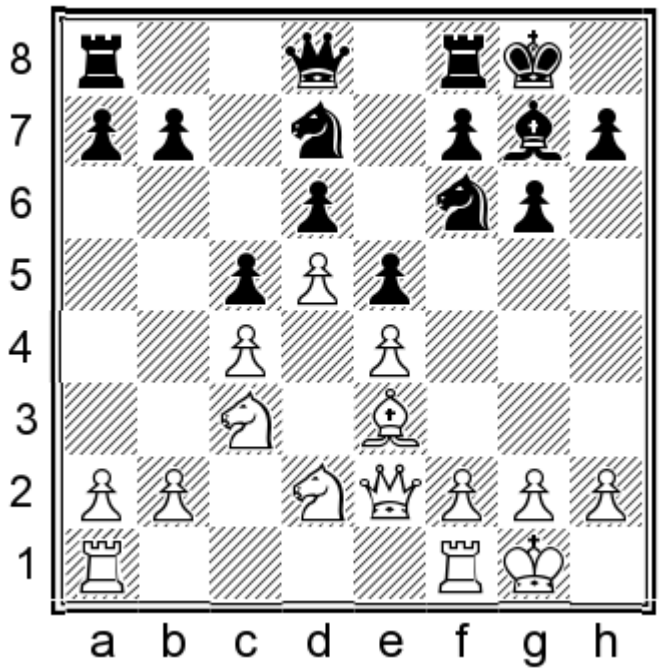
7...Bg4 8.Be3 Nbd7

Simagin chose roughly the same method of development in his game with Geller from the 20th USSR Championship, 1952. *(In that game, the black c-pawn remained on its starting square, and the move ...Bg4 was associated with the idea of attacking the center with the pieces via ...Nd7 – Igor Yanvarjov.)*

9.Nd2 Bxe2 10.Qxe2 e5

On the possible 10...e6, with the aim after ...d5 of placing the pawns on light squares, I was intending 11.f4 d5 12.e5, with a large advantage in space.

11.d5 c5



12.Rab1

As the course of the game shows, this plan is inferior to the usual a2-a3 followed by b2-b4.

12...Ne8 13.f3 f5 14.b4 cxb4 15.Rxb4 b6 16.a4 Bf6!

The correct way of handling the position! After the routine 16...f4 followed by the advance of the g-pawn, White has good play on the queenside. Black does not hurry with ...f4 but brings out his bishop, which in the event of the immediate 16...f4 could easily become “bad.” At g5 it will occupy a strong position. White is obliged to avoid the exchange of dark-square bishops, in order not to allow Black undisputed control of c5.

17.Kh1 Bg5 18.Bg1 Nc7

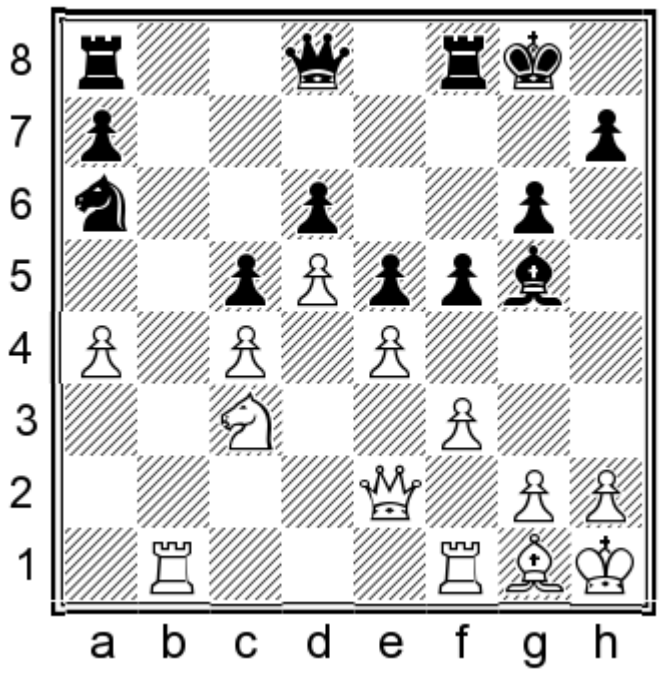
Black gains a very attractive position after 18...Nef6, when White has to concern himself over his e4-pawn, since

in the given situation the exchange on f5 was not part of his plans.

19.Rbb1 Na6 20.Nb3 Ndc5

Not fearing 21.a5 in view of 21...Nb4, with counterplay – Igor Yanvarjov.

21.Nxc5 bxc5?



Black has carried through his plan, begun on move 18. If he succeeds in playing ...Nb4, White will find himself in a poor position.

22.exf5! gxf5

Black cannot prevent White from seizing the e4-square, and therefore 22...Rxf5 is probably better, restraining the development of White's initiative.

23.g4! fxg4 24.Ne4 Bf4

After 24...gxf3 25.Rxf3 White's attack more than compensates for the sacrificed pawn.

25.Rb7 Nc7

By urgently switching his knight to e8, Black covers the most vulnerable points in his position: the d6-pawn and the f6-square. *(Now 25...gxf3 would have met by 26.Qxf3 with the unpleasant threat of Qh5 – Igor Yanvarjov.)*

26.fxg4 Ne8 27.g5

27.Be3 suggests itself, to eliminate the bishop at f4. Then Black defends by 27...Qc8, when 28.Re7 is not possible in view of 28...Bxe3.

27...Qc8 28.Re7 Qh3

The activation of his queen is Black's best chance.

29.Rf3

If in the previous example we see a change in the direction of the main attack, then in this game White's offensive

is carried out in several parts of the board at once. I call it "surrounding from the flanks." Also deserving attention was 29.Rb1!? with the idea of Rb7 – Igor Yanvarjov.

29...Qg4 30.Qd3

Here White has the interesting tactical blow 30.Nf6+. If 30...Nxf6, then 31.gxf6 Rxf6 (31...Kh8 32.Qd3) 32.Rg3 , and White wins. Perhaps Petrosian did not like the exchange sacrifice 30...Rxf6 31.gxf6 Nxf6, with some counterplay for Black. Anyway, his path is convincing enough – Igor Yanvarjov.

30...Bxh2

Against the threats of 31.Nxd6 and 31.Rh3 there is no satisfactory defense.

31.Rxf8+ Kxf8 32.Rxe8+ Rxe8 33.Bxh2 Re7 34.Nxd6 Qxg5 35.Qf1+ Kg8 36.Ne4

When he made his 35th move, White first intended to trade queens via 36.Qg1 (*the strongest continuation – Igor Yanvarjov*), but then he decided to place his knight at e4 with gain of tempo.

36...Qh4 37.Qe2 Rg7 38.d6 Qh6 39.Qd1?

39.Qf1 is correct.

39...Qh4?

39...Qh3 gives quite good chances of saving the game.

40.Qe2 Qh6 41.Qf1

The sealed move.

41...Rf7

Adjournment analysis showed that Black loses quickly after 41...Qe3 because of 42.Nf6+ Kh8 43.d7 Qd4 44.Bxe5 Qh4+ 45.Bh2 Qd4 46.Qe1.

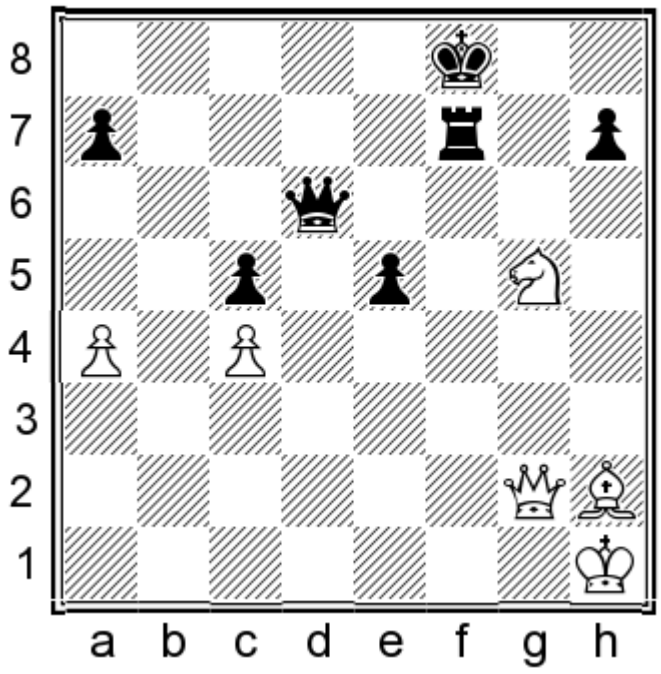
42.Qg2+ Kf8

The only move. White wins by force after 42...Rg7 43.d7 Qc1+ (43...Qb6 44.Nf6+) 44.Bg1 Qh6+ 45.Qh2 Qb6 46.Qh4.

43.Ng5 Qxd6?

This leads to an amusing finish. The best move is 43...Rd7.

Then a possible continuation is 44.Qf3+ Kg7 45.Qf5 Rxd6 46.Qxe5+ Rf6 47.Ne4 Qc1+ 48.Bg1 Qh6+ 49.Kg2 Qg6+ 50.Ng3, and White should win, though not without some technical difficulties – Igor Yanvarjov.



44.Qa8+

Avoiding the trap 44.Nxf7 Qd1 45.Qg1 Qf3+ or 45.Bg1 Qh5+, with a draw by perpetual check – Igor Yanvarjov.

44...Kg7 45.Bxe5+!

But not 45.Qh8+? Kg6!– Igor Yanvarjov.

45...Qxe5 46.Qh8+!

A spectacular shot based on an attractive motif – Igor Yanvarjov.

46...Kxh8 47.Nxf7+ Black resigned.

This is one of Petrosian's most famous combinations, which became the prototype for the enchanting finale of the 10th game in his match against Spassky.

In the discussed examples, the breakthrough into the enemy camp was accompanied by an attack on the king. The other way is to gradually "strangle" the opponent's position and restrict the mobility of his pieces until he is forced to bear material losses. As we have already mentioned, this more often happens in the endgame.

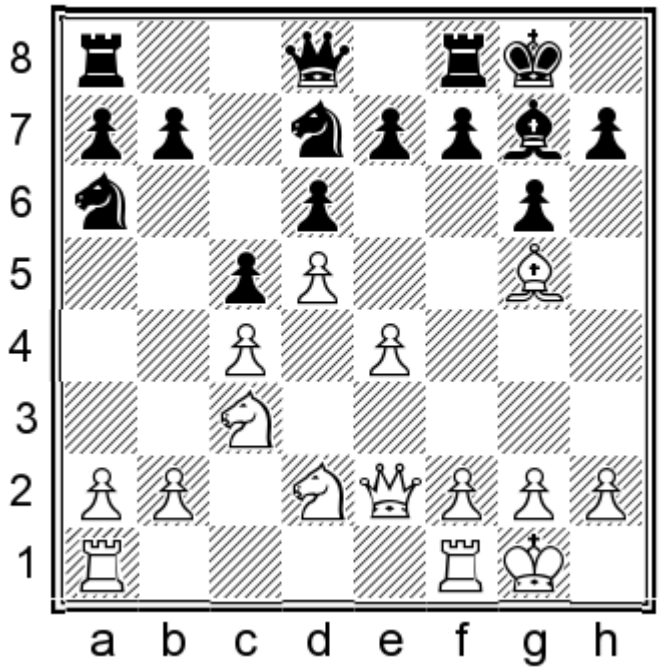
Of course, the opportunity to apply a certain method depends on the nature of the position, as well as on the tastes and preferences of the player. For Petrosian, the ideal play is "...limiting the opponent's capabilities, the strategy of playing across the entire board, surrounding and gradually squeezing the ring around the enemy king."

(249) Petrosian – Taimanov
Leningrad-Moscow
Match 1959

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.c4 Bg7 4.Nc3 c5 5.e4 0-0 6.Be2 d6 7.0-0 Bg4 8.d5 Nfd7 9.Bg5

After 9.Be3, a position from the game Petrosian-Hamann arise, which was discussed in the chapter *Endgame Technique*. There, the bishop came to the e3-square earlier. In this case, White naturally uses the opportunity to develop his bishop to a more active square.

9...Na6 10.Nd2 Bxe2 11.Qxe2



11...Nc7?

A serious strategic mistake. Taimanov overlooked White's advance in the center. According to Petrosian, Black should continue 11...Re8, followed by a queen move to b6 or a5, with ...e6 in mind.

12.f4 Qe8 13.Rac1

Cautiously played. White is in no rush to move the knight from d2, where it controls the important c4-square. Weaker is 13.Nf3, since the move e4-e5 is not a threat; for example, 13...a6 14.e5 f6!, and White has nothing.

13...a6

"Black seeks to implement the advance ...b5, which does not give him any benefits because of the unfortunate placement of the pieces." (Petrosian).

14.Qd3

White does not care much about the move ...b5; his main goal is to hinder ...e6.

14...b5 15.b3 e5 16.f5

Petrosian noted that 16.dxe6 is also not bad. The text move somewhat slows down the pace of White's offensive, but it also deprives Black of any hope of creating counterplay.

16...f6 17.Be3 g5?

"After the game, Taimanov explained that he simply forgot to first advance the pawn to b4. It should be noted that in this case, too, White retains every chance for success in view of his space advantage and possibility of opening lines on both flanks." (Petrosian).

18.cxb5 axb5 19.Nxb5 Nxb5 20.Qxb5 Rxa2 21.Ra1

Exchanging Black's only active piece.

The irony of fate: White invades the enemy camp precisely through the flank on which Black pinned his hopes!

21...Rxa1 22.Rxa1 Nb8 23.Qb7

On 23.Qb6 Black had the reply 23...Qd8. Forcing the rook to f7, White deprives the opponent of this opportunity.

23...Rf7

After 23...Qc8, unpleasant is 24.Qe7!.

24.Qb6 Rd7 25.Ra8

The rook invades Black's camp right after the queen. White's following moves are aimed towards immobilizing the passive opponent's pieces by tying them to the defense of the weaknesses and each other.

25...Rd8 26.Ra7 Bf8 27.Rb7!

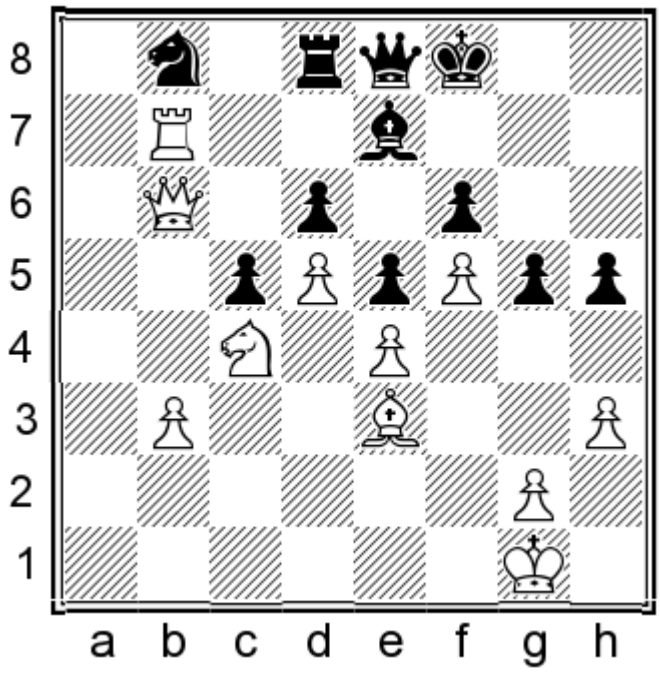
Not allowing Black even so little as the move ...Rd7. A grip of steel!

27...Be7 28.h3

A calm move emphasizing the utter helplessness of Black's position.

28...Kf8 29.Nc4 h5

The black pieces are cramped. They seem to be stepping on each other's toes. A "little" combination follows.



30.Bxg5!

The elegant conclusion to a well-played game.

30...fxg5 31.f6 Bxf6 32.Nxd6

This was Petrosian's idea: the queen has to vacate the e8-square, leaving the poor knight defenseless. White wins back the piece, adding a material advantage to his positional one.

32...Qg6

32...Rxd6 is not possible because of 33.Qxd6+.

33.Rxb8 Rxb8 34.Qxb8+ Kg7 35.Nf5+ Kh7 36.Qc7+ Kh8 37.Qxc5

Winning the second pawn. This is it – the game is over.

37...g4

Agony in time trouble.

38.hxg4 hxg4 39.g3 Qf7 40.Nd6 Qg7 41.Ne8 Qf7 42.Nxf6 Qa7

A little joke: 43.Qxa7? is stalemate.

43.b4 Black resigned.

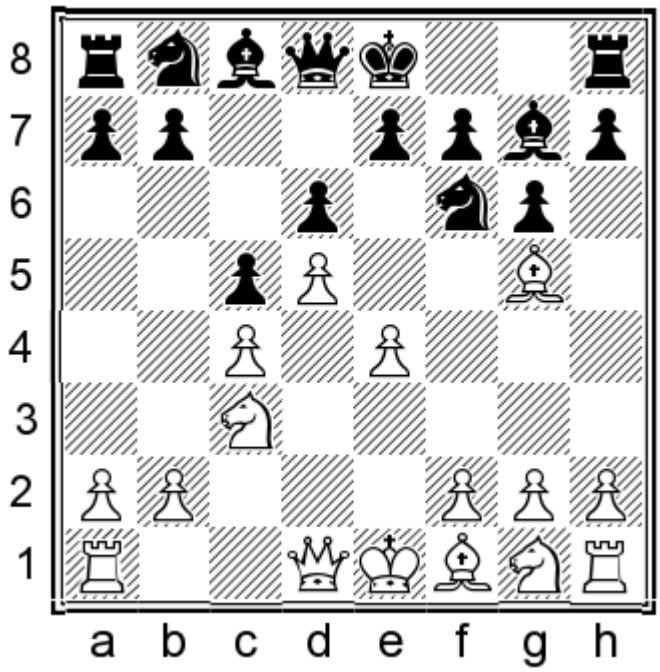
The peculiar strategic outline of the next game grabs one's attention.

(250) Petrosian – Schmid
Yerevan 1965

Annotations by Tigran Petrosian

(from T*he Games of Tigran Petrosian*, Volume 1)

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 d6 4.Nc3 g6 5.e4 Bg7 6.Bg5



6...h6

The main line in this variation is based on the continuation 6...0-0. 7.Qd2 e6. For example:

(1) 8.Bd3 exd5 9.Nxd5 Be6 10.Ne2 Bxd5 11.exd5 Nbd7 12.0-0 Ne5, and Black had equal play in Szabo-Fischer, Leipzig 1960;

8.dxe6 Bxe6 9.Nf3 Nc6 10.Be2 Bg4 11.0-0 Re8 12.Qf4 Bxf3 13.Bxf3 Nd4 14.Rad1 Re5, equalizing (Evans-Gligorić, Dallas 1957).

The immediate 6...e6 is also possible, as Petrosian played against Pietzsch at the Nimzowitsch Memorial in 1960. After 7.dxe6 Bxe6 8.f4 Qb6 9.Qd2 0-0 10.Nf3 Qb4 11.a3 Qb3, Black achieved a comfortable position. The rest of the

game went as follows: 12.Qc1 Nc6 13.Bd3 Nd4 14.Nd2 Qb6 15.0-0 Nb3 16.Qd1 Nxa1 17.Qxa1 Rae8 18.f5 Bd7 19.Kh1 Bc6 20.Qc1 Qc7 21.Nd5 Bxd5 22.exd5 Nd7 23.f6 Bh8 24.h4 Qd8 25.Ne4 Rxe4 26.Bxe4 Bxf6, and White ceased his resistance – Igor Yanvarjov.

7.Bf4

Hindering ...e6 – Igor Yanvarjov.

7...Qa5 8.Bd2

White appears to have lost two tempi on his bishop wanderings. But Black still has to demonstrate that 6...h6 and 7...Qa5 are useful moves.

8...e5

Of course, such a move cannot be called a mistake, but apparently here as well 8...0-0 with the idea of ...e6 is even more promising, by analogy with a variation of the Averbakh System (see games 206, 209). In any case, many eminent players, in particular, Robert Fischer, believe that in this opening variation Black must play sharply. Wise advice, which the German player should not have ignored – Igor Yanvarjov.

9.Bd3 Nh5

Soon this knight will be obliged to return, but the closed nature of the position forgives the opponent for "loitering" with his pieces.

10.Nge2 Nd7 11.g3

The plan begun by this move is too slow. It is stronger for White to complete his development (11.0-0 -- *Igor Yanvarjov*), and then act in accordance with Black's play.

11...Nhf6 12.h4 h5 13.Qc1

For the moment White forestalls the opponent's intention of exchanging the dark-square bishops, which in the given situation would most probably favor Black.

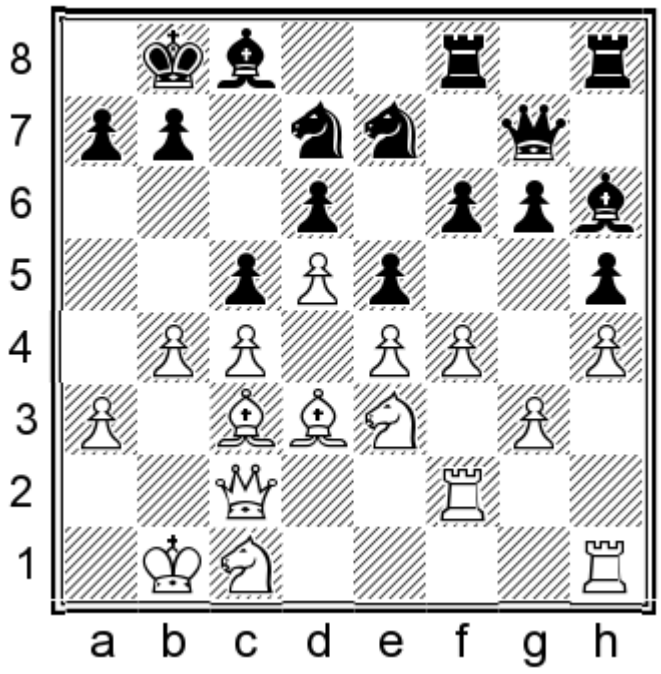
13...Ng8 14.Nd1 Qd8 15.Qc2 Bh6 16.Ne3

Here we can draw some initial conclusions. Black's travelers – his queen and king's knight – have returned home, where, strangely enough, they are no worse placed than when they were nominally developed. Now it is the turn of the pawns. Whichever player succeeds in organizing and carrying out an undermining pawn advance can count on taking the initiative. White's chances are more favorable: he can operate with either his f-pawn or his b-pawn, whereas for the time being Black has no active possibilities. In a difficult situation Schmid finds an interesting defensive idea.

16...Qf6 17.Rf1 Nb6 18.f3 Bh3 19.Rf2 0-0-0 20.0-0-0 Kb8

Black has somehow managed to develop his queenside and to remove his king to a safe place. With his last move he vacates a square for his light-square bishop, which will have to return home in order to allow his knight to go to d7, reinforcing the e5-pawn, around which the battle revolves.

21.Rh1 Bc8 22.Kb1 Ne7 23.f4 Nd7 24.Bc3 Qg7 25.a3 f6 26.b4 Rdf8 27.Nc1



27...g5?

Black is tired of defending patiently and he tries to display some activity, even being prepared to sacrifice a pawn: 28.hxg5 fxg5 29.fxe5, followed by picking up the h5 pawn *(and probably hoping for 30...g4 – Igor Yanvarjov).* Had he played 27...f5, White would have had to demonstrate that he had not taken too much of a risk in embarking on pawn operations over the entire board at a not altogether appropriate moment.

Later international master Max Notkin presented a small analysis confirming this point of view:27...f5 28.exf5 gxf5 29.Nxf5 Nxf5 30.Bxf5 Qxg3 or 28.Rhf1 fxe4 29.Bxe4 Nf6 30.fxe5 Nxe4 31.Qxe4 Nf5, with unclear play in both cases. I think that in the latter variation, White can fight for an advantage, instead continuing 30.Bd3 or even 30.bxc5 – Igor Yanvarjov.

28.hxg5 fxg5 29.f5

White safely avoids the pitfall, preferring prolonged positional pressure to the win of a pawn.

29...g4 30.Ng2 Bg5 31.Nb3 b6 32.Ka2 Bb7 33.bxc5 Nxc5?

After this move, Black ends up in a lost position by force. White would also retain an obvious advantage after 33...bxc5 34.Na5, but events would not develop so rapidly.

34.Nxc5 bxc5 35.Nf4! Bxf4

This move is forced, but now the e5-pawn comes under siege.

36.gxf4 g3 37.Rg2 Nc8

37...h4 38.fxe5 h3 39.exd6 hxg2 40.Rg1 is equally bad.

38.fxe5 dxe5 39.Qb2 Re8 40.f6

The black queen is overloaded by having to defend the e5- and g3-pawns, each of which is playing an important role, and is now forced to leave one of them undefended.

40...Qg5

40...Qxf6 is slightly better. Now comes a rapid finish.

41.f7 Re7 42.Rh3 h4 43.Rgxg3 Black resigned.

A possible finish is 43.Rgxg3 hxg3 44.Rxh8 Rxf7 45.Bxe5+ Ka8 46.Rxc8+ Bxc8 47.Qb8#.

Chapter 8
The Problem of the Exchange

The Problem of the Exchange



We have already discussed this issue extensively in the previous chapters. We mostly considered ordinary exchanges and the fate of the minor pieces, mostly the bishops: the “main” bishop g7 (game 29, 157, 170, 195, 195) and its white counterpart (games 1, 16, 59, 101, 118, 168, 177). The reader is probably quite tired of the constant discussion of “good” and “bad” bishops. So, below we will discuss less ordinary exchanges or, as they are sometimes called, “uneven” exchanges, which lead to an uneven material balance on the board, as well as related positional sacrifices.

The topic is as interesting as it is difficult. In addition to the purely chess-related considerations associated with the objective difficulties of evaluating such sacrifices, the psychological factor also plays an important role. We can find some interesting considerations on this matter in one of Petrosian’s lectures:

“Gradually I came to the conclusion that, when a chess player has to make such a decision, the greatest difficulty is of a psychological nature. When we grasp the basics of the game of chess, we first of all learn the relationship between the chess pieces. At his first lessons, the beginner is told that the unit of measurement of the strength of chess pieces is the pawn. A minor piece is three pawns, so if you have three pawns for a knight or a bishop, you have approximate material equality on the board. A rook is four pawns or a minor piece plus a pawn, but if you have not one but two pawns, then, as a rule, that is good. So, when a chess player chooses a move, the knowledge of such a material equation in his mind causes him to involuntarily eliminate those moves that expose more powerful pieces to attack. That is why a chess player never thinks how to put the queen under attack by a pawn or a rook under attack by a bishop, where they can be easily captured. This is the greatest psychological difficulty that a chess player experiences during a game.”

Also, an important subjective feature of the positional sacrifice is the fact it almost always contains an element of risk. After all, usually such a sacrifice does not decide and even does not determine the outcome of the game, but only changes the flow of the battle, giving it a new impulse.

So, let us start with the smallest fighting unit, the pawn. Tarrasch once noted that pawn sacrifices are usually more subtle than piece sacrifices, as the resulting positional advantages are too small and much more difficult to assess.

(251) Petrosian – Szmetan
XXI Olympiad
Nice 1974

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 a6 5.bxa6 Bxa6 6.Nc3 g6

Compared to other gambit ideas for Black, the Benko Gambit has two undeniable advantages: a universal plan and the absence of pawn weaknesses, which allows Black to be unafraid to enter an endgame (in some cases, it is even desirable). Probably, this is the main secret of the extraordinary popularity of the Benko Gambit pawn sacrifice.

As for Petrosian, he never played this gambit in its pure form, although I think he liked the idea itself. In any case, the main continuation (4.cxb5 and 5.bxa6) was played in only one of his games. Here it is: 7.e4 Bxf1 8.Kxf1 d6 9.g3 Bg7 10.Kg2 0-0 11.Nf3 Nbd7 12.Re1 Qb6 13.Qe2 Rfb8 14.e5 dxe5 15.Nxe5 Nxe5 16.Qxe5 Rd8 17.Qf4 Qb7 – draw (Petrosian-Bukal, Oberwart 1981).

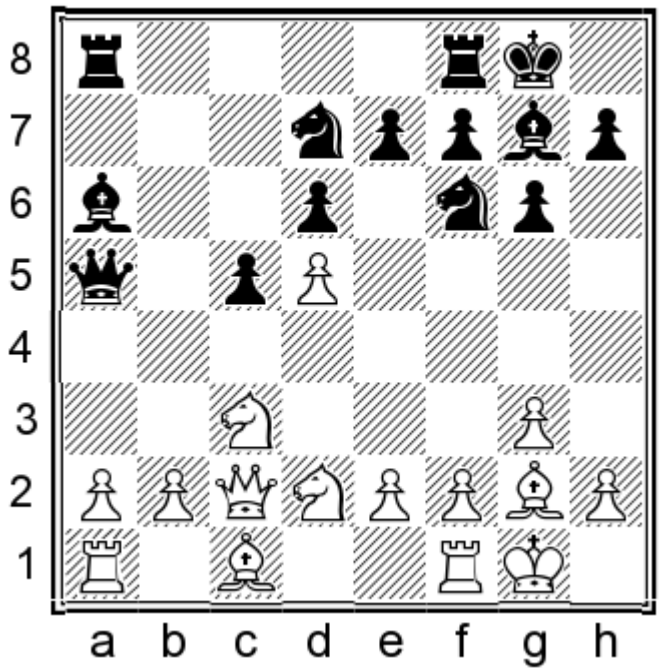
7.Nf3 d6 8.Nd2 Qa5 9.g3

White has a large selection of plans in this opening system, and Petrosian chooses one of the most solid ones. By the way, the move g2-g3 does not at all mean that the white bishop will necessarily move to g2: sometimes White can advantageously continue Bh3.

9...Bg7 10.Bg2 0-0 11.0-0 Nbd7

“As a rule, in King’s Indian structures, each of the black knights has its own destiny. And so it is here: the knight on d7 has to watch the e5-square, while the other knight rushes to b5.” (Igor Zaitsev).

12.Qc2



12...Ne8

According to the rules of the Benko Gambit, Black has to first transfer the rook to the queenside, 12...Rfb8, and only then transfer the knight to b5. As it often does, trying to save time leads to the opposite result.

13.Nb3! Qc7

It turns out that 13...Qb6(b4) is met by the very unpleasant 14.Bg5, and in order to avoid the worst, Black has to move the knight back. Now the bishop move to g5 is not as strong because of the reply 14...Ne5.

14.Rb1 Nef6 15.Nd2 Qa5 16.b3

As you can easily see, in comparison with the position after White’s 12th move, Black has lost two tempi. “We tried our best, but it ended the usual way.” (Viktor Chernomyrdin [former Russian Prime Minister – translator]).

16...Rfb8 17.a3

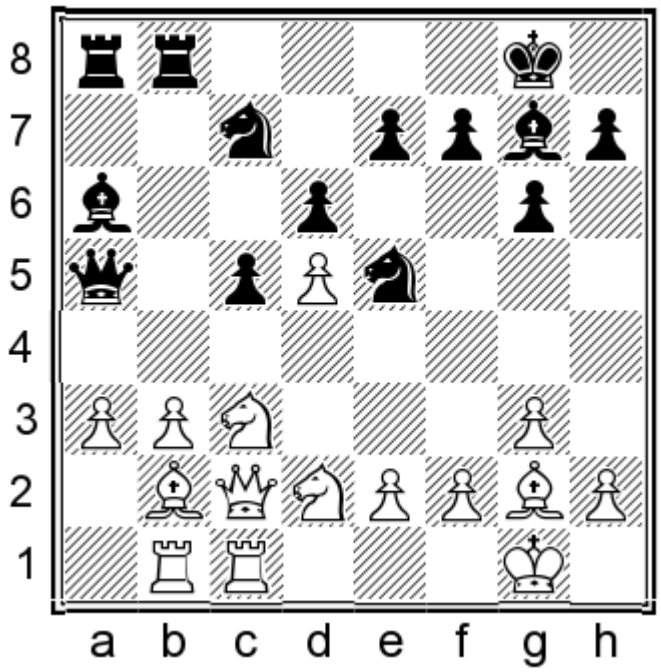
After 17.Bb2 Ne8, Black threatens the active advance ...c4. Petrosian’s last move hinders this possibility and not just that...

17...Ne8 18.Bb2 Nc7

A dubious decision. The situation has changed but Black still sticks to the old plan. Grandmaster Alexander Kotov was apparently right when he recommended 18...Rb7 with the idea of ...Rab8, trying to immobilize the White pieces by forcing them to defend the b3-pawn.

19.Rfc1 Ne5?!

Apparently, Black did not like the immediate 19...Nb5 because of 20.Nc4. However, as Petrosian's brilliant reply shows, the text move is a serious inaccuracy.



20.b4!

A counterattack characteristic of such positions. With this pawn sacrifice, White reveals the tactical flaws of the opponent's position. Of course, there is no forced win but Black teeters on the edge of the abyss.

20...cxb4

A difficult endgame awaited Black after 20...Qb6 21.Na4 Qb5 22.Bxe5 Bxe5 23.bxc5 Qxe2 24.Bf3 Qd3, etc. (indicated by Alexander Kotov).

21.axb4 Qxb4

In case of 21...Rxb4, decisive is 22.Ra1 Qb6 23.Na4 with material gains. Alexander Kotov made an amusing blunder here. He believed that in this case White wins by 22.Nb3 Qb6 23.Ba3 Rc4(?) 24.Nd2. However, the dramatic counterattack 23...Bd3! hands over the advantage to Black.

22.Nce4

Not the best path. Leading to victory was the difficult move 22.Nd1! (Fritz). For example, 22...Qc5 23.Qe4 Qa5 (or 23...Qa7 24.Bd4! Rxb1 25.Rxb1 f5 26.Qe3!) 24.Bc3 Rxb1 25.Qxb1, and Black is losing a piece.

22...Nf3+

The only move.

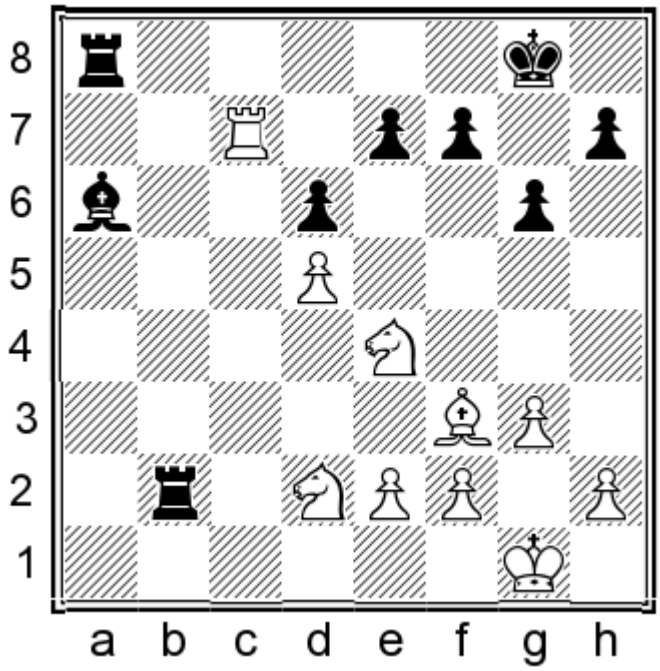
23.Bxf3 Bxb2 24.Rxb2

This guarantees White a slight advantage in a relatively calm position. 24.Qxc7 Rc8 leads to boundless complications.

24...Qxb2 25.Qxb2

Of course not 25.Qxc7? Rc8.

25...Rxb2 26.Rxc7



Draw agreed.

As they say, when the real fun was about to begin! Most likely, Petrosian agreed to a draw because of competitive considerations.

Black had two possibilities: either to win a piece, in exchange for which White will however have many pawns, or try to defend with a rook against the minor pieces. Let’s consider these possibilities:

(1) 26...f5 27.Rxe7 fxe4 (27...Rf8 28.Kg2, etc. transposes) 28.Nxe4 Rf8 29.Kg2! (also possible is 29.h4, but not 29.Nxd6? Rxf3!), and the threat Nxd6 practically forces Black to go into a rook endgame down a pawn: 29...Bxe2 30.Bxe2 Rxe2 31.Nf6+ Rxf6 32.Rxe2;

(2) 26...Kf8 (the strongest defense) 27.Nf1 (if 27.Nc4, then 27...Rc2) 27...Bxe2 28.Bxe2 Rxe2 29.Ne3, and after 29...Ra1+ 30.Kg2 Raa2 it is very difficult (if at all possible) to win because of the colossal technical difficulties.

(252) Zilberman – Petrosian
Spartak Team Championship
Moscow 1974

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Bg5 0-0

Just a developing move. Black’s standard reaction to the early bishop move is 5...c5 or 5...h6.

6.Qd2 Nbd7

Continuing to develop naturally and offering White the choice between the Sämisch System with 7.f3 or the Averbakh System with 7.Be2. But White has something else in mind.

7.f4

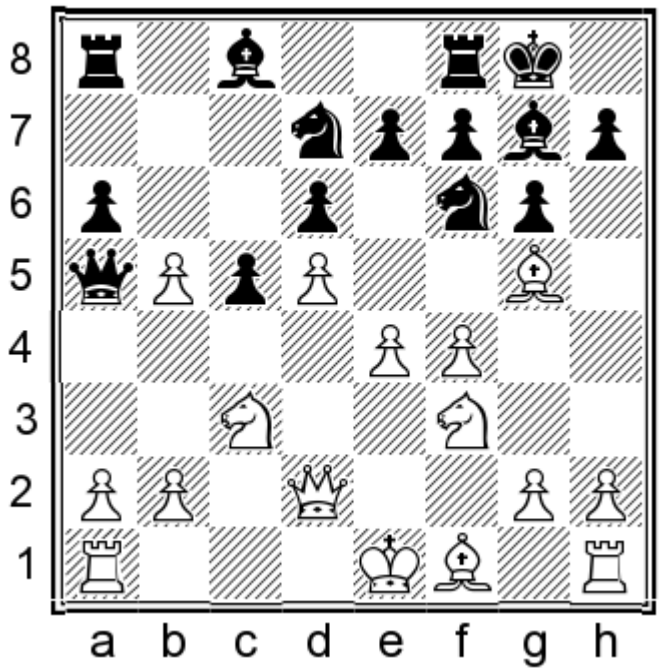
An aggressive continuation associated with the idea of attacking on the kingside. White threatens e4-e5. Black must play very purposefully so as not to get into a dangerous position. Nevertheless, in our opinion, the juxtaposition of the moves Bg5, Qd2, and f2-f4 looks a bit strange.

7...c5 8.d5 b5!?

Again, the familiar Benko motifs! There are two factors in favor of the pawn sacrifice: White's unstable position in the center and the fact that the rook on a1 is unprotected, which makes the attempt to save the pawn via a2-a4 dubious.

Note also that Petrosian resorted to analogous pawn sacrifices in games 86 and 206.

9.cxb5 a6 10.Nf3 Qa5



This position is now well-known in the Sämisch variation, except there it emerges after twelve moves: 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 Nbd7 7.Qd2 c5 8.d5 Ne5 9.Bg5 a6 10.f4 Ned7 11.Nf3 b5 12.cxb5 Qa5. As shown by the games that have been played, White can challenge the initiative only by implementing the immediate breakthrough e4-e5. The natural move chosen by Zilberman does not cause Black any inconvenience.

11.bxa6 Bxa6

"Fighting for a tempo" (in order to take on a6 after the f1-bishop makes a move) could cause problems for Black; for example, 11...Re8 12.e5!.

12.Bxa6 Qxa6 13.Kf2

In the face of impending danger, White looks for a way to coordinate his rooks. Going into the endgame after 13.Qe2 Rfb8 did not reduce the intensity of the struggle at all, as can be seen from this variation: 14.Qxa6 Rxa6 15.0-0-0 Nxe4! 16.Nxe4 Rxa2, with a very strong attack for Black.

13...c4

With the idea of ...Nc5-d3. As a rule, the possibility of implementing this maneuver in the Benko Gambit is a veritable sign of the strength of Black's position.

14.Rhe1 Nc5 15.Kf1

The white king cannot find shelter. Of course, it is uncomfortable on the same diagonal as the black queen, but 15.Kg1 would have been even worse. For example, 15...Nd3 16.Re2 Ng4 17.h3 Rfb8!, and the attacks on c3 and b2, in conjunction with the threats along the g1-a7 diagonal, make White's position indefensible.

15...e6!

Carrying out the classical undermining of the center from two sides.

16.e5

There is no other suitable way to avoid the immediate opening of the position.

16...dxe5 17.Bxf6

A necessary exchange. In case of 17.fxe5 Nxd5 18.Nxd5 exd5 19.Qxd5 c3+ (19...Nd3 20.Re2 Rfe8 also looks good) 20.Kg1 cxb2 21.Rab1 Na4, Black gets a powerful passed pawn.

17...Bxf6 18.fxe5 Bg7 19.d6 f6

Petrosian is relentless.

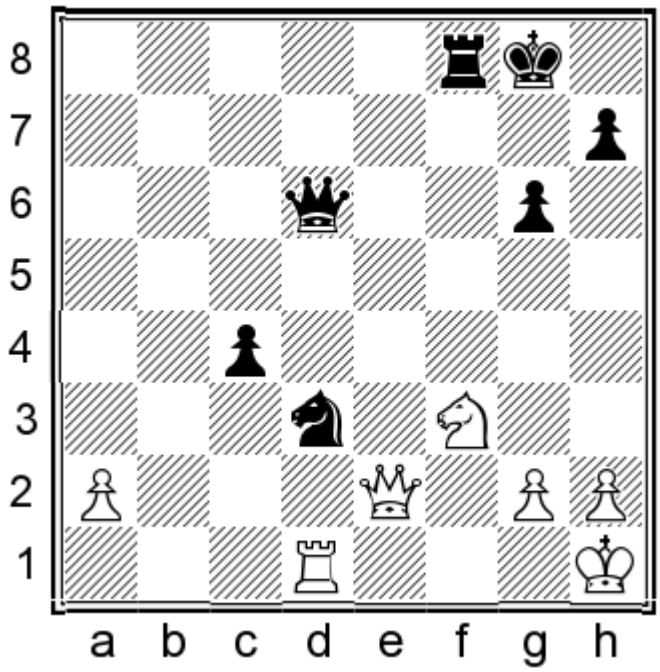
20.exf6 Bxf6 21.Kg1 Rad8 22.Rad1 Nd3

Introducing a "Trojan knight" into the enemy camp. Despite the measures he has taken, White's position continues to deteriorate, and he makes the decision to force exchanges at the cost of his extra pawn.

23.Rxe6 Rxd6 24.Rxd6 Qxd6 25.Ne4 Qb6+ 26.Kh1 Qxb2 27.Nxf6+ Qxf6 28.Qc2 Qf4

A curious fact: pieces are traded but Black's pressure does not subside.

29.Qe2 Qd6



30.Rd2?

"The mistakes are all there, waiting to be made." (Savielly Tartakower). Now, the weak last rank joins the list of

White’s troubles.

30...Rb8

Threatening a terrible check from b1.

31.Qe4

This attempt at perpetual turns out to be fruitless. However it seems White already has no satisfactory defense. The rook could not return to d1 because of Nf2+, and in case of 31.g3 Qc6 32.Kg2 Re8, White loses because of the pinned f3-knight. 31.Qf1 was the only way to prolong the resistance.

31...Rb1+ 32.Ng1 Qc5 33.Qe6+ Kg7 34.Qd7+ Kh6 35.Qh3+ Kg5!

White resigned here because after 36.Qg3+ Kf6 37.Qh4(f3)+ 37...Kg7 he runs out of checks.

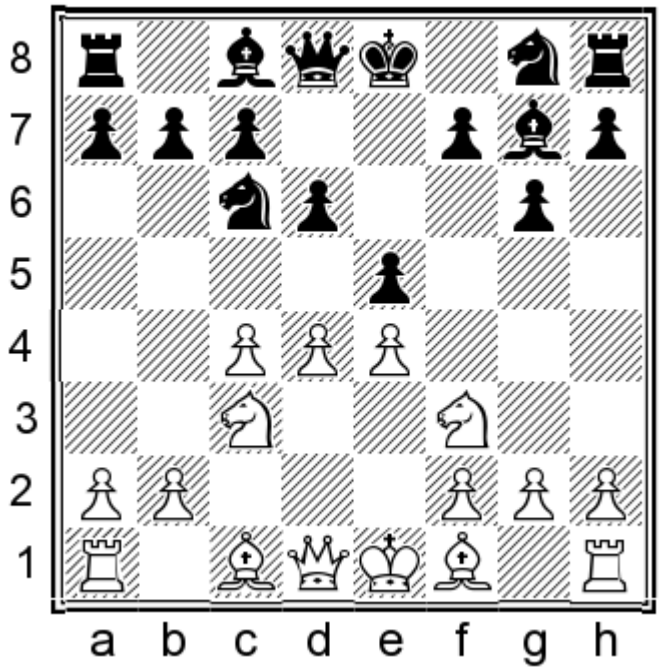
Of course, Petrosian did not limit himself to gambits. His vast arsenal included a pawn sacrifice for initiative, the intuitive pawn sacrifice, etc. We will not list all the examples that were discussed in this book as this would be too tedious, but there are enough of them to refute the conventional wisdom that Petrosian “liked only to take pawns.” He sacrificed enough of them, at least when it came to the Kings Indian Defense.

Next we will discuss other types of positional sacrifice. The number of piece sacrifices by Petrosian is relatively small: see games 55, 74, 104. Petrosian’s opponents tried harder: see games 43, 94, 120, 160, 177. However, the predilection of the ninth world champion towards the exchange sacrifice is well known. This is the reason why he is considered a classic specialist of this genre. Now we will add one more game to those that the reader has already seen (games 5, 26, 56, 113, 129, 151, 180, 184, 186, 197).

(253) Polugaevsky – Petrosian
50th USSR Championship
Moscow 1983

1.Nf3 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.c4 d6 4.Nc3 e5 5.e4 Nc6

At the time when this game was played, this order of moves was still coming into fashion.



6.dxe5

According to Petrosian, if 6.d5 Nd4 7.Nxd4 exd4 8.Nb5, Black hardly has any compensation for the pawn after 8...Nf6 9.f3 c6 10.Nxd4 Qb6 11.Nc2. But, as was established later, Black has the opportunity to restore material equality by playing 8...a6! 9.Nxd4 Qh4 10.Qd3 Nf6.

6...Nxe5

Avoiding misery in a worse endgame after 6...dxe5 7.Qxd8+ Kxd8 (7...Nxd8? 8.Nb5 Ne6 9.Ng5 is even worse) 8.Bg5+, etc.

7.Nd4 a6 8.Be2 c5 9.Nc2 Be6 10.Nd5

Too standard. Black sensibly feared the decisive reply 10.f4!, and after 10...Nxc4? 11.f5 gxf5 12.exf5 Bxf5 13.0-0 White has a serious initiative (variation by Petrosian).

10...Bxd5 11.exd5 Ne7

The same reply follows 11.cxd5. Now, Black has good play in connection with the maneuver ...Nf5-d4.

12.0-0 0-0 13.Rb1 Nf5 14.b4

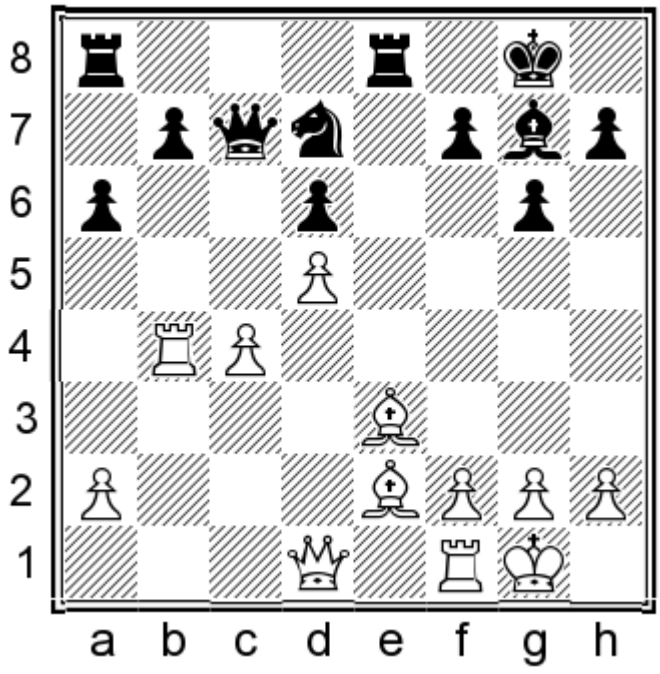
In pursuit of an illusory opening advantage, White allows a significant weakening of the position. Petrosian offered the more reliable 14.b3 with approximate equality.

14...cxb4 15.Rxb4 Qc7 16.Bb2 Rfe8 17.Nd4

Out of place activity, allowing Black to advantageously determine the nature of the position. Better is 17.g3, as indicated by Petrosian.

17...Nxd4 18.Bxd4 Nd7 19.Be3

Polugaevsky knows his opponent too well to give Black clear play “on the outposts” for free after 19.Bxg7 Kxg7 followed by ...Nc5, etc. But what if it is not for free?



19...Rxe3!

There it is, a pure exchange sacrifice! I do not think that White’s position is now hopeless, but the compensation is

obvious and the psychological turnaround is very significant. It seems Polugaevsky was very disheartened because he loses in a few moves.

20.fxe3 Nc5 21.Qc2 Re8 22.Rf3

White's material advantage plays no role here. Therefore, it hardly made sense to cling to the doomed e-pawn. According to Petrosian, after 22.Rbb1 and then Re1, White has a defendable position.

22...Bh6 23.Qc3 Qe7 24.Rb6?

A bad blunder, but, objectively speaking, White's position is already rather unpleasant.

24...Na4

White resigned.

An instructive game. In one of his lectures, the former world champion spoke highly of a similar exchange sacrifice (incidentally, on the same e3- square), which Ulf Andersson made against Garry Kasparov in the Moscow International Tournament in 1981. The reader might recall that this game ended in a draw after an interesting and long struggle, and the Swedish grandmaster's dark-square bishop played first fiddle during the whole game.

In the next game we see a balance of forces that is relatively rare in practical play: two rooks against three minor pieces.

(254) Ravn – Petrosian
XIII Olympiad
Munich 1958

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d6 3.Nc3 e5 4.Nf3 Nbd7 5.e4 g6 6.d5 a5

The delay with developing the bishop to g7 looks somewhat unusual, but Petrosian probably had something in mind.

7.h3

A structure that was successfully employed by Master Vladimir Makogonov. White's plan includes the advance g2-g4 and castling queenside.

7...Nc5

The order of moves chosen by Petrosian is aimed at preventing the development of the white bishop to d3 and preparing ...c6, which is Black's main counter-argument in this system.

8.Qc2 Bg7 9.g4 c6

Reminding White that his king will also not be safe on the c-file.

10.Be3 cxd5 11.cxd5 0-0 12.Nd2 b6 13.0-0-0

The author of the system usually did not hurry to castle. Therefore, the continuation 13.Be2 looks more principled, and if 13...Ne8, then 14.h4 with active play on the kingside. Now, taking advantage of the situation, Petrosian immobilizes the h3-pawn.

13...Ne8 14.Kb1 Bf6!

A good maneuver, and not only with the purpose of blockading. In the future, Black can consider exchanging his "bad" bishop via the g5-square. Note that in this position the standard advance ...f5 would be to White's advantage.

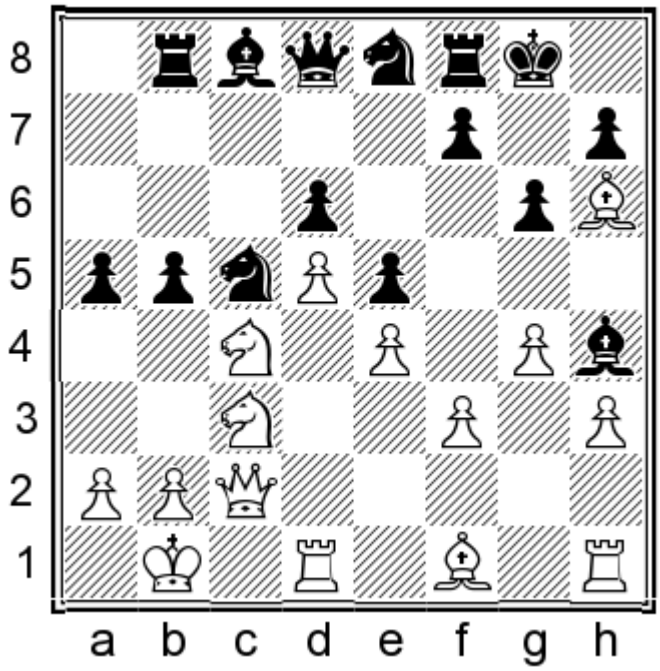
For instance, 14...f5 15.gxf5 gxf5 16.Rg1 (or 16.f3), and the open g-file becomes a source of worry for Black.

15.Nc4 Rb8 16.f3 Bh4 17.Bh6

Correct. If Black manages to play ...Nc7 or even ...f6, his position will be clearly better. Since the continuation 17...Ng7 18.Nb5 is not good for Black, he is forced to escalate the struggle.

17...b5

Full speed ahead!



18.Nxb5!

This reply is a credit to the Danish grandmaster. After 18.Bxf8 bxc4 19.Bh6 g5, White would have had to give up his bishop for the g5-pawn. Then, with the queens on the board, even with two extra pawns his rook would be certainly weaker than Black's minor pieces.

18...Rxb5 19.Nxd6 Rxb2+!

A move, after which, as master Boris Verlinsky used to say, "both opponents felt sick." The Danish grandmaster had apparently counted on the obvious variation 19...Nxd6 20.Bxb5 Ncxe4 21.Bxf8 Qxf8 22.fxe4 Nxb5, after which, in comparison with the text continuation, White has better chances because of the active opportunity Qc6 and the secure position of the king. Now the white king, almost devoid of pawn cover, is vulnerable and can be the object of an attack. Petrosian, in turn, also has cause to feel distressed, because he understands that even now his chances for an attack are negligible, because soon he has to exchange the queens, meaning that most likely he would not be able to win.

20.Qxb2 Nxd6 21.Bxf8 Kxf8

Capturing with the queen is weaker, at least because of 22.Qxe5.

22.Rc1

After this simple and strong move that creates threats along the c-file, a transition into the endgame becomes almost inevitable.

Taking the e5-pawn is, of course, suicidal: 22.Qxe5? Bf6 23.Qh2 Qb6+, and it is only a matter of a few moves until the white king is checkmated.

22...Na4

The unpleasant Rc6 would have met any other retreat of the knight.

23.Qb8 Bb7

White threatened 24.Rc6 and 25.Bb5.

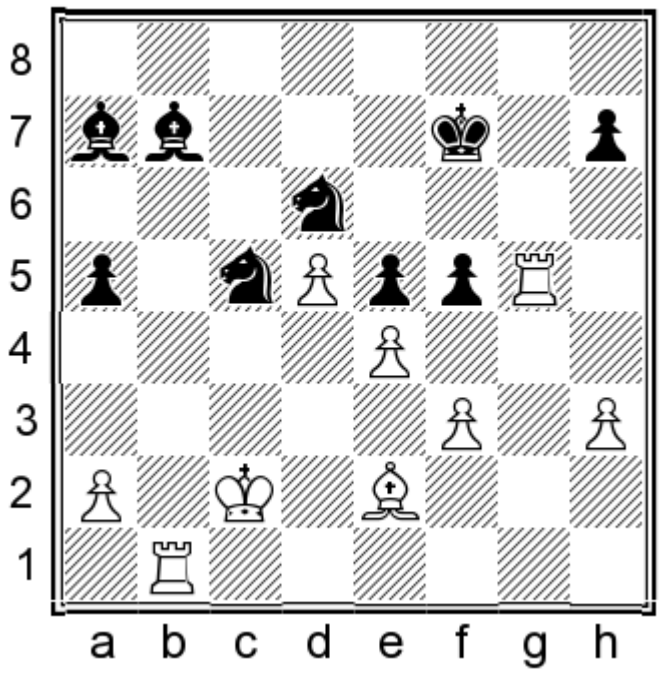
24.Qxd8+ Bxd8 25.Be2 Bb6 26.Kc2 Ke7 27.Kb3 Nc5+ 28.Kc2

Black has reliably blocked the passed d5-pawn and all the approaches to his camp, but there is no win, as there are no good targets for Black to attack and demonstrate his material advantage. Petrosian makes an attempt to get to the e4- and f3-pawns.

28...f5

Better late than never.

29.Rb1 Ba7 30.gxf5 gxf5 31.Rhg1 Kf7 32.Rg5



Draw. This is the natural result if we take into account the basically forced variation: 32.Rg5 h6 33.Rh5 Kg6 34.f4 exf4! (but not 34...Ndxe4? 35.Rg1+ Kh7 36.Rxf5) 35.Rg1+ (worse is 35.e5 because of 35...Nde4!) 35...Kh7 36.e5 Nf7 37.Rd1 Kg6 38.Rg1+ (38.d6? f3!) 38...Kh7 with repetition.

The main theme of the next rather unusual game is the positional queen sacrifice that Petrosian carried out as early as the opening. As we know, chess players have a special regard for the queen. It is the most powerful piece on the board, so because of its mobility and tactical capabilities the compensation received in return must be carefully weighed and evaluated.

(255) Pachman – Petrosian
Interzonal Tournament
Portorož 1958

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 Bg4

A good way to bring the game away from the beaten path. Petrosian's choice of this rare continuation against Pachman, a major theorist and author of numerous opening analyses, turned out to be very successful psychologically.

"To lure the opponent into an unfamiliar position, to surprise him with preparation, to impose the tactic that is most unpleasant for him – this is already hardly chess psychology but rather has become the normal, reasonable practical approach to chess play." (Petrosian)

4.Nc3 g6 5.e4

Now Black's experiment in the opening is fully justified. 5.e3 followed by h2-h3 is more reliable, as it forces the exchange of the black bishop without weakening the d4-square. For example, 5...Bg7 6.Be2 0-0 7.0-0 c6 8.h3 Bxf3 9.Bxf3; in the game Reshevsky-Petrosian (Vilnius 1978), after 9...Re8 10.e4 e5 11.d5 c5 12.Bg5 Black was able to gradually eliminate his opponent's advantage: 12...Nbd7 13.Qd2 a6 14.Be2 Rb8 15.a3 Qc7 16.a4 Nf8! 17.g3 h5!? (Petrosian's favorite King's Indian "wall"; see games 123, 159, 160, 173) 18.Bd3 N8h7 19.Be3 Qe7 20.Rab1 Nd7 21.h4 – draw.

5...Bxf3 6.Qxf3

In the case of 6.gxf3 c6 7.Be3, Black successfully switched to playing against the doubled pawns. Here are two examples from Petrosian's games:

(1) 7...e6 8.f4 Nbd7 9.Bg2 Qc7 10.0-0 Be7 11.Rc1 0-0 12.Kh1 Nh5 13.f5 exf5 14.exf5 Ndf6, Kluger-Petrosian (Leipzig 1960);

(2) 7...Nbd7 8.b4 e6 9.Rb1 Nh5 10.Be2 Qh4 11.h3 Be7 12.Qc1 0-0 13.c5 d5 14.e5 f6!, Kovačević-Petrosian (Rovinj/Zagreb 1970).

6...Nfd7

Intending to put pressure on the d4-pawn by ...Nc6 and ...Bg7.

7.e5?!

White wants to punish his opponent for his "wrong" play, but there are no objective grounds for that, only emotions. Of course, Pachman could not really hope for 7...dxe5? 8.Qxb7.

7...Nc6 8.exd6 Nxd4 9.Qe4

9.Qxb7 c6 leads to complications favorable for Black.

9...e5

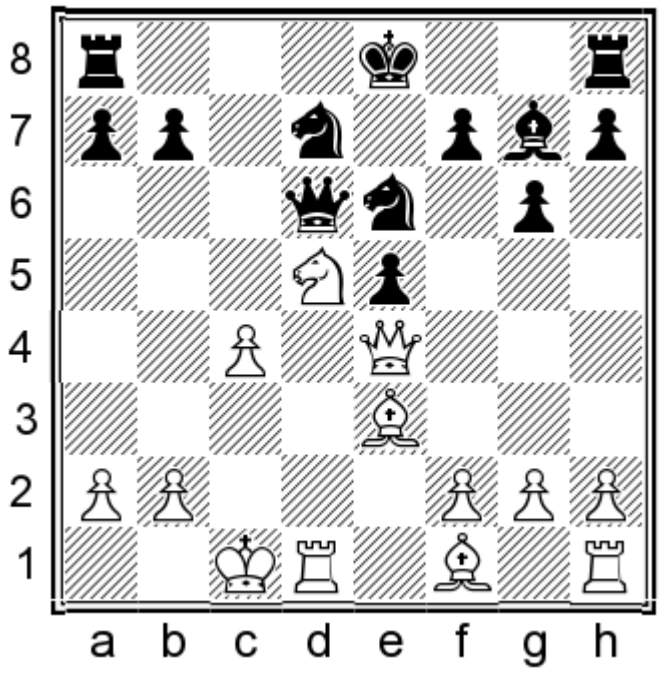
Providing pawn support for the outpost occupied by the knight. Later, grandmasters Svetozar Gligorić and Aleksandar Matanović pointed out an alternative path, 9...Bg7!?, associated with a promising pawn sacrifice: 10.dxc7 Qxc7 11.Nd5 Qe5 or 10.dxe7 Qxe7 11.Bd3 Qxe4+ 12.Bxe4 0-0-0.

10.dxc7 Qxc7 11.Nd5 Qd6 12.Bf4

White threatens Qxd4.

12...Ne6 13.Be3 Bg7 14.0-0-0

White pinned his hopes on this move, which creates the threat of Nb6, counting on regaining the lost initiative. But, he probably did not take into account that Black can simply ignore the threat.



14...0-0!

“Here you go!”

15.Nb6?!

White also had other possibilities (for example, 15.Nc3 or 15.g4), but in the heat of the battle White boldly challenges his opponent. Probably, Pachman regarded Petrosian’s decision to sacrifice the queen (to some extent forced) as a sign of arising difficulties for Black. “Sow the wind, reap the whirlwind.” Soon, Pachman will experience the truth of this wise saying.

15...Qxd1+!

There is no turning back: 15...Ndc5? 16.Rxd6 Nxe4 17.Rxe6! leads to a clear advantage for White.

16.Kxd1 axb6!

Played freshly and fully in the spirit of the position. By attacking the a2-pawn, Black wins an important tempo to develop the attack.

17.a3

After 17.Qxb7, as a number of commentators indicated, 17...Rxa2 is good enough, but even more decisive is 17...Ndc5! 18.Qxb6 (if 18.Bxc5, then 18...bxc5 with the threats of 19...Rxa2 and 19...Rab8) 18...Na4 19.Qc6 Nxb2+ 20.Kc1 Rxa2 21.Kb1 Rfa8 with an extremely strong attack.

Thus, Black has a rook and a minor piece for the sacrificed queen, so, according to the chess “Table of Ranks” [a formal list of ranks and positions in Imperial Russia – translator], he is down just a pawn, which is in this case compensated by the initiative. Now the question is whether Black can create serious threats before his opponent’s kingside pieces enter the game and the material factor inevitably takes effect.

17...Ndc5 18.Qc2 e4! 19.f3

After so many moves the f1-bishop still cannot move. Now after 19.Be2, Black relies 19...Na4!; for example, 20.Bc1 Nd4 or 20.b3 Nc3+, and White’s position is bad.

19...Rad8+ 20.Ke1

20.Kc1 is met by the same move.

20...Nd4 21.Bxd4 Bxd4 22.fxe4

White could not play 22.b4 exf3!, for example: 23.bxc5 Rfe8+ 24.Kd2 (24.Kd1 Bf6+ 25.Bd3 Re3 26.Kd2 leads to the same position) 24...Bf6+ 25.Bd3 Re2+!, regaining the queen, or 23.gxf3 Rfe8+ 24.Be2 Ne6, with the threat of ...Nf4.

Gligorić and Matanović indicated the more stubborn 22.f4.

22...Nxe4 23.Be2?

The bishop's development turns out to be untimely.

We can only guess why White rejected the variation 23.Qxe4 Rfe8 24.Qxe8+, etc. with good drawing chances. Was he in time trouble? Unlikely. A chess player's sense of danger is enhanced in time trouble. It seems to me that, even at this moment, deep down Pachman still hoped to win. I do not see any other explanation.

Now Black's attack grows with every move.

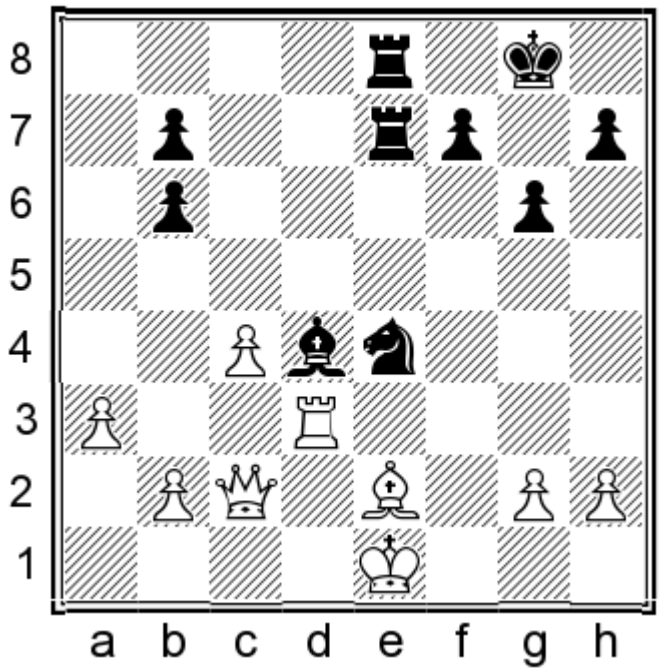
23...Rfe8 24.Rf1

White's rook and bishop are finally free, but it is too late.

24...Re7!

Defending, the white pieces have huddled around their king. This allows Black to regroup his forces methodically for the final blow.

25.Rf3 Rde8 26.Rd3



26...Bg1!

A beautiful maneuver that clarifies the situation: White has to suffer material losses.

27.h3 Bh2

It seems Petrosian had planned this move in advance. Black reaches his goal more quickly after 27...Bf2+! 28.Kd1 (or 28.Kf1) 28...Ng3, etc.

28.Bf3 Bg3+ 29.Kd1

In case of 29.Kf1 Nd2+!, the game ends in mate.

29...Nf2+ 30.Kd2 Bf4+ 31.Kc3 Nxd3 32.Kxd3

A joyful occasion for Black: from this moment on, his attack continues with relative material equality.

32...Re3+ 33.Kd4 Bh6

Threatening mate in two: 34...Bg7+ and 35...Rd8#.

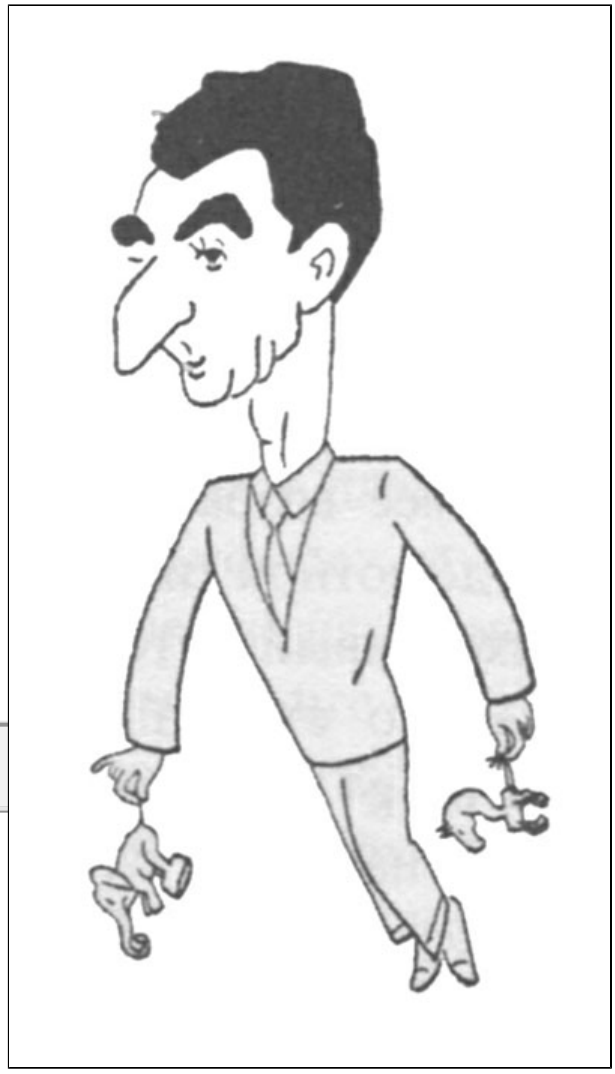
34.c5 b5 35.Bxb7?

The final mistake. 35.c6 prolongs the resistance, but White is still doomed. For example, 35...bxc6 36.Kc5 (or 36.Bxc6 Bg7+ 37.Kc5 Rc8 and 38...Re6) 36...R3e5+ 37.Kb4 (37.Kb6 Be3+ 38.Ka5 Rc5 39.Qd3 Rc4 does not help) 37...Bf8+ 38.Kb3 Re3+ 39.Ka2 b4, and Black wins.

35...Bg7+ 36.Kd5 R8e6

White resigned in view of the inevitable loss of the queen (after 37...R3e5+).

Chapter 9
“Furman’s Bishop”



I first heard this term from Tigran Vartanovich at a session of his chess school. This piece is what he called White’s king’s bishop when it does not have a counterpart. Of course, there is a reason why he named it after Semyon Abramovich Furman, the outstanding theoretician and trainer. According to Petrosian, this grandmaster, who was very fond of the fianchetto, by the way, played a number of sophisticated King’s Indian games where he used the light-square bishop, including his wins against Nowak (Warsaw 1963) and Lomaya (Moscow 1967).

So, there are a large number of King’s Indian positions that it is important to understand and play correctly. From a methodological point of view, it would probably be more appropriate to place this material in the previous section of this book. After all, we are essentially discussing the consequences of an exchange (of the c8-bishop for a knight). But taking into account that Petrosian considered this to be among the most important topics, we will discuss it separately.

(256) Petrosian – Nicevski
Rovinj/Zagreb 1970

1.c4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 Bg4

Nowadays, when chessplayers are burdened with an ever-increasing amount of opening information, this unpretentious way of developing has many supporters. By placing the bishop on g4, Black indirectly pressures the d4-pawn, which White must defend.

7.Be3 Nfd7 8.Rc1

The opponent’s last moves, made contrary to the classical principle of development, may seem strange to an onlooker, but they are completely logical. Let us explain.

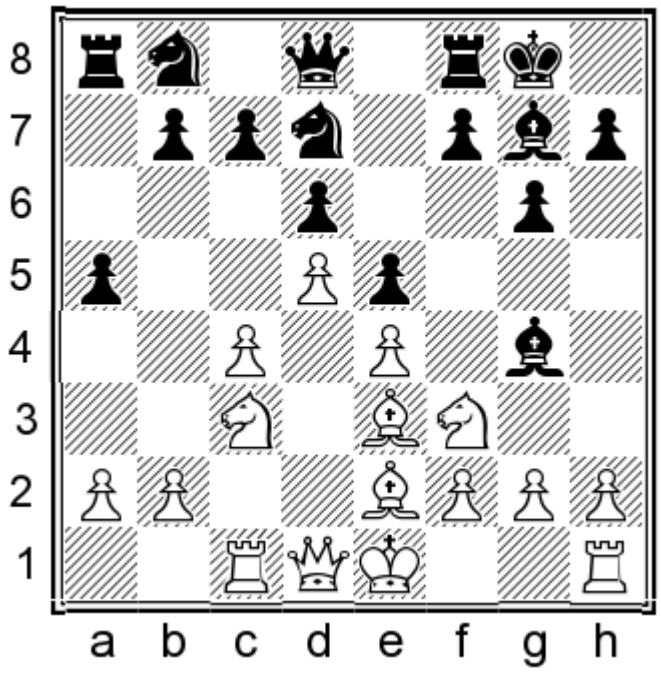
Black wants to continue his opening plan with the moves ...Nc6 and ...e5, which the knight on f6 only hinders. Hence, it retreats to d7.

Black’s strategic dream in this system is illustrated by the variation 8.0-0 Nc6 9.h3 Bxf3 10.Bxf3 e5 11.d5 Nd4 12.Bxd4 exd4 13.Nb5 a6 14.Nxd4 Qf6, winning back the sacrificed pawn with excellent play. The struggle takes on a different nature if White plays 9.d5: 9...Bxf3 10.Bxf3 Na5 11.Be2 (or 11.Qa4 Bxc3 and 12...b6) 11...Bxc3 12.bxc3 e5. Here, as tournament play shows, Black’s knights can successfully fight off the two white bishops.

Petrosian’s move (which, by the way, is his invention) is primarily aimed against the doubling of the white pawns in the latter variation.

8...e5 9.d5 a5

Black goes into the usual structure, preparing a place for the knight on c5.



10.0-0

Here 10.h3 Bxf3 11.Bxf3 Na6 12.h4!? f5 13.h5 looks very tempting. White is trying to use the attacking potential of the h1-rook: for example, 13...f4 14.Bd2 Qg5 15.Kf1 Nf6 16.Qe2 Rf7 17.Na4 b6 18.Rh3, and, as the game Korchnoi-F. Portisch (Liechtenstein 1983) demonstrated, White's light square bishop gains immense power. However, Black can play more energetically: 13...Nb4! 14.hxg6 hxg6 15.Rb1 (15.a3 f4!) 15...Nc5 16.a3 Nbd3+ 17.Kf1 a4 18.Be2 f4 19.Bd2 f3! with double-edged play (Kavalek-Westerinen, Netanya 1969).

10...Na6 11.b3

A novelty. Theory recommends 11.a3 f5 12.Rb1 (12.Ng5 yields nothing in view of 12...f4 13.Bxg4 Qxg5 14.Bd2 Nac5, with counterplay thanks to the threat of ...a4, for example, 15.b3 Nf6 16.Bf3 a4!) based on Petrosian's game against Bednarski (Tel-Aviv 1964). In this game, White gained a slight advantage after 12...Nac5 13.b4 axb4 14.axb4 Nxe4 15.Nxe4 Bxf3 16.Bxf3 fxe4 17.Bg4 b6 18.Be6+ Kh8 19.Qc2 Nf6 20.Rfd1 Ng8 21.Qxe4. In spite of the advantage, however, Petrosian could not win that game: maybe the advantage really was too insignificant or perhaps he committed an inaccuracy at some point. Maybe that is why Petrosian now chooses a different path.

By the way, the modest text move is not harmless. After 11...f5, unlike in the aforementioned variation White could have already advantageously continued 12.Ng5 f4 13.Bxg4 Qxg5, and then either just 14.Bd2 (since there is no counterplay with ...a4), or 14.Bxd7 fxe3 15.f3 Nc5 16.Bh3, followed by Qe2, Rce1, and Nd1, trying to capture the brazen pawn.

11...Bxf3

Avoiding the trap.

12.Bxf3 f5

In this case this is by no means a manifestation of aggression (without the light-square bishop, the standard King's Indian attack on the kingside seems improbable) but rather necessary preparation for the simplifying maneuver ...Bf6-g5. The immediate 12...Bf6 did not achieve this goal in view of 13.Qd2.

13.a3 Bf6 14.Rb1 Bg5 15.Bxg5 Qxg5 16.b4 Nf6 17.Qe2

While Black was exchanging the bishops, his queenside knight got stuck on the side of the board. White's position

is better and, of course, he has no need for the a5-pawn: 17.bxa5? Nc5.

17...axb4 18.axb4 Rf7 19.Qe3!

Completely unexpectedly, offering Black to advance the pawn to f4 with tempo. This is why we love Petrosian's play, because of such interesting, sophisticated positional choices! The thing is that after 19...f4 20.Qe2, the black queen, having ended up in the vanguard of its army, would have only halted the attack. For example, 20...Qh4 21.h3 g5 22.Kh2! , and Black cannot play 22...h5 because of 23.g3. Therefore, he has to agree to the queen trade.

19...Qxe3 20.fxe3

In the endgame, White's advantages become more pronounced; not fearing attack, he can slowly prepare a breakthrough on the queenside (or think about further territorial conquests on the kingside), while Black has a hard time finding a good use for his cavalry.

20...fxe4 21.Bxe4

Taking advantage of the fact that the continuation 21...Nxe4 22.Nxe4 is clearly disadvantageous for Black, White keeps the minor pieces on the board.

21...Raf8 22.Bd3 Ng4

This move can easily be refuted. In addition, the trade of one pair of rooks plays into White's hands.

23.Rxf7 Rxf7

In the light of the events that followed, deserving attention is 23...Kxf7, bringing the king closer to the center.

24.Nd1 Rf8?!

Black cannot find the right defensive plan. It was necessary to stop the white pawn from coming to g4 by preparing ...h5; for example: 24...Kg7 25.h3 Nf6 26.Nc3 h5.

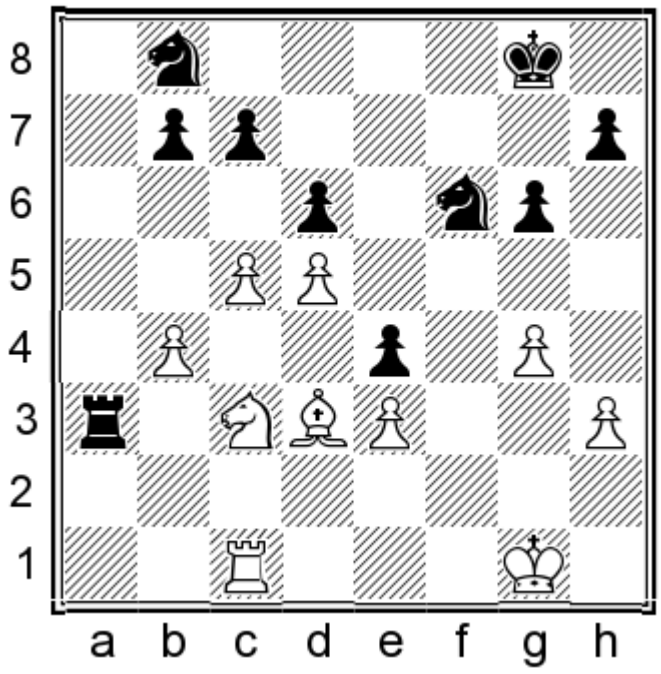
25.h3 Nf6 26.Nc3 Ra8 27.g4!

If White manages to advance the pawn to g5 and play Ne4, Black will find himself in an unenviable position. Now it seems he should have mustered the courage to play 27...g5. Nicevski's attempt to counterattack on the a-file fails.

27...Nb8

27...Nd7 (with the idea of ...Nb6) was recommended by Vladimir Sokolov in the 10th volume of the Yugoslav *Chess Informant*, but this recommendation does not stand up to closer examination. For example, 28.Ne4 Nb6 29.c5, with an overwhelming position for White.

28.c5 Ra3 29.Rc1 e4



30.cxd6!

An important in-between move that opens the c-file for the white rook. Clearly, the loss of the pawn after 30.Nxe4 Nxe4 31.Bxe4 Na6! would have been a relief for Black.

30...cxd6 31.Be2 Nbd7?

The decisive mistake. 31...Na6 is the only chance to continue the resistance.

32.g5 Ne8 33.Bb5!

A cute shot. The white bishop runs its sword through both of the black knights at once!

33...Ne5 34.Bxe8 Nd3 35.Nb5!

Taking away Black's last hopes for something like 35.Rc2 Ne1.

35...Ra8 36.Rc4 Rxe8 37.Nxd6 Ne5

Useless is 37...Rd8 38.Nxe4, and the d5-pawn is indirectly defended.

38.Rxe4 Black resigned.

White's king's bishop, which is traditionally deemed "bad," turned out to be an extremely useful piece in this game. Thanks to this bishop, Black failed to develop an attack. It actively participated in reinforcing the center and limiting the mobility of the black pieces and, finally, dealt the decisive tactical blow.

Hurray for Furman's bishop!

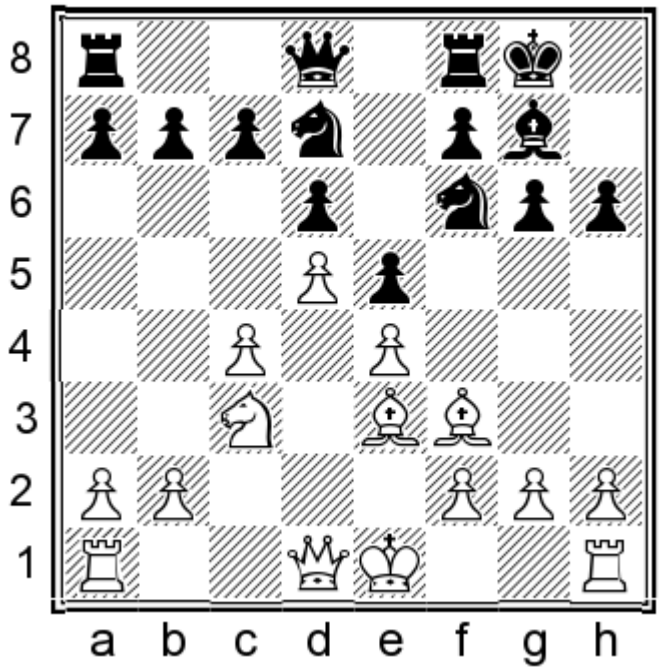
(257) Petrosian – Frevre
XXI Olympiad
Nice 1974

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 e5 7.d5 Bg4 8.Bg5 Bxf3

This move is based on the principle "the fewer the pieces, the easier it is to play." Of course, Black could (and

should) wait with this exchange, at least until White castles.

9.Bxf3 h6 10.Be3 Nbd7



11.h4!

Black's eighth move is questionable exactly because of this option.

11...a6

Amazing naiveté! Did the Puerto Rican chessplayer really think that he could scare Petrosian with the move ...b5? For better or worse, he should play 11...h5, halting the further advance of the white pawn.

12.h5 gxh5?

This move is as good as resignation. After 12...g5, Black's position is no fun, of course, but that is nothing compared with the game continuation.

13.Bxh5 Nc5 14.Bf3 Nh7

In a few moves, Black has managed to ruin his position to the point when even the most "rock-solid" defense along the lines of 14...Kh7 15.Qd2 Ng8 could no longer help him.

15.b4

In connection with the next move, this is the winning maneuver. Without a doubt, this is more convincing than the prosaic 15.Bxh6. Curiously, even the computer, known for its excessive chess "appetite," prefers the positional text continuation.

15...Nd7 16.Bg4!

The game is over. The bishop transfer to the key f5-square makes the rest a "fight" in name only. And, mind you, Furman's bishop plays a decisive role again.

16...Ng5 17.Bxg5 hxg5 18.Bf5

Opening the path for the queen to h5.

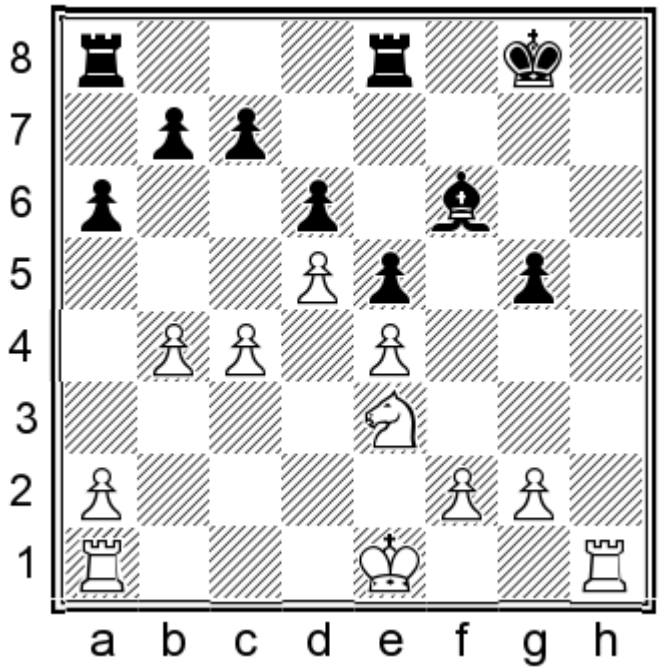
18...Re8 19.Qh5 Nf8 20.Nd1

Planning Ne3-g4. Black's kingside resembles a sieve. Petrosian played similar games at the Tbilisi Pioneer Palace when he was a first category player, already then mercilessly crushing his peers for their anti-positional play: "Let's see where the opponent's weak square is and occupy it as soon as possible."

20...Ng6

Fearing a direct attack, Black wants to buy his way out with a pawn.

21.Bxg6 fxg6 22.Qxg6 Qf6 23.Qxf6 Bxf6 24.Ne3

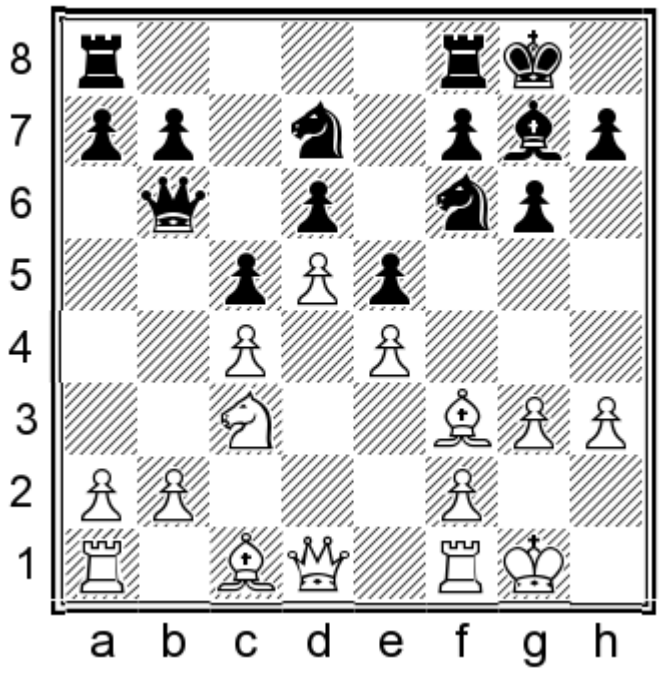


Here, the Puerto Rican's enthusiasm dried up, and he surrendered.

(258) Petrosian – Kagan
Hastings 1977/78

1.d4 g6 2.c4 Bg7 3.Nf3 d6 4.g3 c6 5.Bg2 Bg4 6.Nc3 Qb6 7.e3 Nf6 8.0-0 0-0 9.h3 Bxf3 10.Bxf3 e5 11.d5 c5 12.e4 Nbd7

Having started the game unconventionally, Black then transitioned to the classical Benoni structure but without the light-square bishop. Note that Petrosian himself defended similarly a half-year later against Reshevsky (Vilnius, 1978) and reached a draw by agreement (see the annotation to White's fifth move in the game Pachman-Petrosian in the Chapter 8, *The Problem of the Exchange*).



13.h4 a6 14.a4

This move demonstrates that the advance b2-b4 will not take place any time soon, and in the near future White will focus his attention on the kingside.

14...Qd8 15.Bg5 h6 16.Bd2

In such positions the bishop is better placed on this square, where it defends the pawn on a5 (where it will be two moves later) and can support b2-b4 if needed.

16...Rb8 17.Kg2

Petrosian is still deciding whether to play h4-h5 or not (without the rook on the h-file, this is not as effective) and makes a preparatory move.

17...h5

Depriving White of this opportunity. Petrosian in response establishes a pawn patrol on the other flank.

The rest of the game develops according to the well-known King's Indian canons. Black's immediate task is to facilitate the exchange of the dark-square bishops. White, as usual, tries to prevent this and, taking advantage of his space advantage, improves the position of his pieces.

18.a5! Kh7 19.Bg5 Qc8 20.Rh1

Now Black has to take into account the threat of g3-g4.

20...Rh8 21.Qd2 b5

It turns out that it is not that easy for Black to exchange the bishops (21...Ng8?! 22.g4!), and Kagan embarks on a distracting maneuver on the queenside.

22.axb6 Rxb6 23.Bd1

Inconspicuous until now, the light-square bishop threatens to become active: Ba4!. Of course, Black prevents this by forcing the white pawn to come to b3.

23...Qb7 24.b3

The bishop has a modest but very important role on the d1-square (and subsequently on c2), reliably defending the b3-pawn. Thus, the eternal question in such positions, which pawn is weaker, the a-pawn or the b-pawn, is here unequivocally decided in favor of White.

24...Rb8 25.Ra3 Qc8 26.Re1

The beginning of a new regrouping. Overprotecting the e4-pawn, White prepares a knight maneuver to the d3-square, where it can come in handy for both f2-f4 and b3-b4. Black, seizing the moment, moves the knight to g8 to finally play ...Bh6.

26...Ng8 27.Na4 Rb4 28.Nb2 Bh6 29.Nd3 R4b6 30.Rh1

A skillful move! Since now it is dangerous for Black to take on g5, he is forced to weaken the white squares with the move ...f6.

30...f6 31.Be3 Bxe3 32.Qxe3

The bishop exchange marks a new stage in the struggle. Though small, the advantage is still on White's side.

32...Nh6 33.f3 f5

Without preparation, this move looks suspicious, but Kagan apparently feared that at some point White might play g3-g4 or f3-f4.

34.Nf2 Nf6 35.Nh3 fxe4 36.Ng5+ Kh8 37.Nxe4 Nfg8 38.Qg5

Forcing an endgame that is slightly better for White. Meanwhile, taking into account that Black's forces are scattered, 38.f4!? suggests itself; for example, 38...Nf5 39.Qc3 Nd4 40.fxe5 dxe5 41.Rf1 with an obvious advantage. The only explanation for why Petrosian rejected this logical continuation is probable time pressure.

38...Qf5 39.Bc2 Qxg5 40.Nxg5 Nf5 41.Kf2!

Played with confidence in the light-square bishop. After 41.Bxf5 gxf5 42.Rha1 Ra8 (42...Rxb3 is worse because of 43.Rxb3 Rxb3 44.Rxa6) 43.Ne6 Ra7, White's advantage gradually comes to naught.

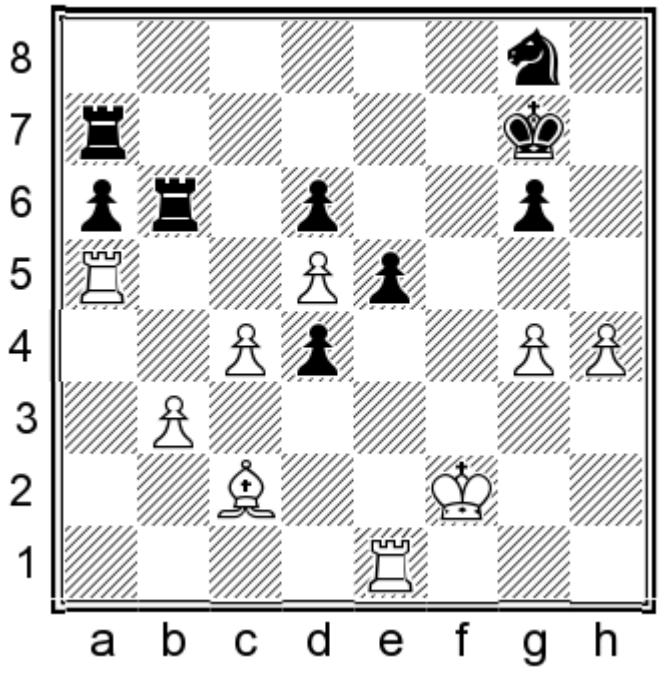
41...Nge7 42.Ne6 R8b7

Black wants to play ...Nd4 in response to g3-g4.

43.g4 hxg4 44.fxg4 Nd4 45.Nxd4 cxd4 46.Rha1 Ra7 47.Ra5

The connected black pawns are harmless so far, again thanks to the omnipresent bishop. Petrosian plans the undermining move c4-c5, which has to be carried out before the knight moves to d7.

47...Kg7 48.Re1 Ng8



49.Kg3

A tactical mistake. 49.c5 was premature in view of 49...dxc5 50.Rxe5(c5) 50...Nf6, and Black achieves counterplay by attacking the g4-pawn. However, after the correct 49.g5! followed by c4-c5, White would have retained chances for success; for example: 49...Rc7 50.c5 dxc5 (or 50...Rxc5 51.Rxc5 dxc5 52.Rxe5) 51.Rxe5 Ne7 52.Bd3!.

49...Nf6 50.c5 dxc5 51.Rxe5 d3!

Now it becomes clear why the king on g3 is misplaced: 52.Bxd3? Rxb3 loses a piece.

52.Bd1 Rb4

Taking advantage of the fact that the c5-pawn is invulnerable (53.Rxc5? Ne4+), the black rook occupies an active position, and after that it is White who has to play for the draw.

53.d6! Ne4+ 54.Kg2 Nxd6 55.Raxc5 Ne4 56.Rc6 Rf7 57.h5 g5 Draw agreed.

So, as we have seen, in the King's Indian Defense, White's king's bishop is by no means bad if skillfully handled. Oftentimes it is a very important and necessary piece.

I think that it will now be of interest to the reader to return to some of the games that we have already discussed (for example, games 44 and 128) and look at them in the light of Furman's bishop.

Chapter 10
“Pawns are the soul of chess”



Yuri Averbakh asked me one day, “Are you writing about Tigran Petrosian? Make sure to mention how skillful he was with pawns.” And the grandmaster named Petrosian’s two most famous “pawn” games, which made a splash in the chess world at the time, against Bisguier in the third round of the USSR-USA match (New York 1954) and the seventh match game of the world championship against Spassky (Moscow 1966). Unfortunately, these games have nothing to do with the King’s Indian Defense, but those who have not seen them definitely should.

Now back to the topic. I have to say that the systematization of this material proved to be an impossible task for the author because of its overwhelming complexity, even though it was only for a single opening and one chessplayer. There are interesting and instructive moments related to pawns in almost every game. Still, I would note Petrosian’s battles against Lutikov (games 10, 19), as well as his games against Gufeld discussed in the Part II of this book.

The following examples continues the theme of pawns.

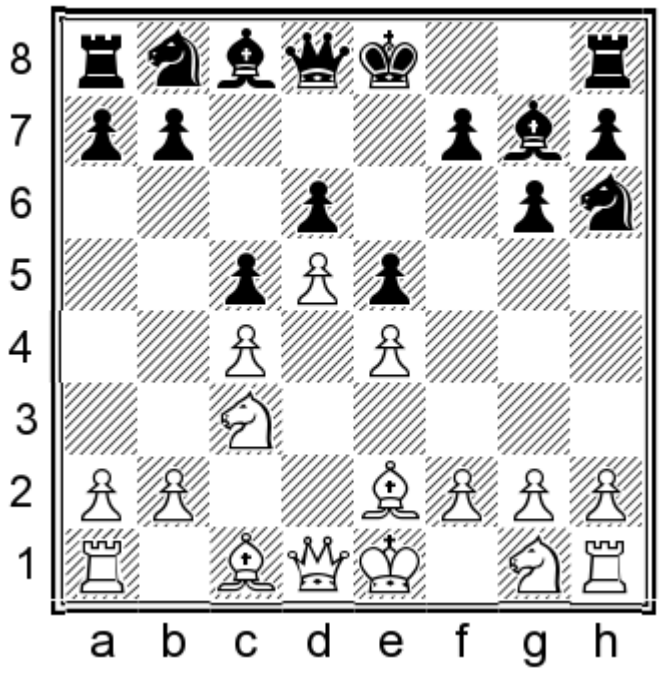
(259) Petrosian – Barendregt
Beverwijk 1960

1.c4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 d6 4.e4 c5 5.d5 e5 6.Be2

An interesting move order. At the first convenient opportunity, White is ready to give the go-ahead to the h-pawn, which will provide White with the opening initiative by rushing to h5. The immediate 6.h4 is also possible. Here is how Petrosian played a game in a 1979 clock simul: 6...Ne7 7.h5! 0-0 8.hxg6 fxg6 (because of the threat of attack, Black cannot play 8...hxg6 and is forced to worsen his pawn structure) 9.Bg5 a6 10.Qd2 Nd7 11.Bd3 Nf6 12.Nge2 Bd7 13.f3 Qc7 14.a4 b5 15.b3!? bxa4 (according to Petrosian, 15...b4 is better) 16.Nxa4 Rab8 17.Bc2 Rb4 18.Nb2 (18.Nxc5!?) 18...Bc8 19.Nd3 Rb8 20.Qa5! Qb7 21.Rb1 h6? 22.Bxh6 Bxh6 23.Rxh6 Kg7 24.Qd2 Nh5 25.Qg5 Nf6 26.Rh2 Bd7 27.Ng3 Rh8 28.Nh5+!, and White won.

6...Nh6

The same answer follows 6...Ne7– see the game Petrosian-Sanguineti (*Typical Methods of Strategy*). There, instead of Be2, Petrosian played Nf3. Finally, in the case of 6...Nf6, White can play 7.h4; for example, 7...h5 8.Bg5 a6 9.Qd2 Nbd7 10.f3 Nf8 11.Nh3 (A.Zaitsev-Shiyanovsky, Yerevan 1962).



7.h4!

The reader probably noticed that Petrosian especially liked this pawn move in the King's Indian Defense. He employed this technique in the early opening in games 14, 15, 16, 169, 172 and 208.

7...f5 8.Bg5 Qb6

Soon it will be clear that the queen is badly placed on b6. Therefore, it is better to play 8...Qd7, so that after 9...Nf7 10.Bd2 the queen can come to the e7-square, closer to the kingside.

9.Rb1 Nf7 10.Bd2 a5

A reckless move that creates chronic weaknesses on the queenside. However, perhaps Black did not have any other way to resist the standard attack with a2-a3 and b2-b4, which looks even more unpleasant with the queen on b6.

11.Nf3 h6 12.g3

Not allowing the black pawn to come to f4. At the same time, White plans to increase the pressure on the f5-pawn in the next few moves.

12...Na6 13.a3 Qd8 14.Qc2 h5

White threatened 15.h5.

15.exf5 gxf5

Another weakness is created in Black's camp, the h5-pawn.

16.Ng5 Qf6

In order to counter 17.Qd1 with 17...Qg6.

17.Na4!

The number of Black's weaknesses has reached a critical mass, and his position begins to crumble. First, White

surrounds the a5-pawn.

17...f4 18.Nb6 Bf5 19.Bd3 Bxd3 20.Qxd3 Rb8 21.Ne4 Qd8 22.Bxa5

One pawn is eliminated. The weakness on h5 is next. To delay its demise, Black plays ...f3, but the f-pawn suffers the same fate.

22...0-0 23.Qd1 f3 24.b4 Nh6 25.Rb3 Ng4 26.0-0

Demonstrating the futility of Black's efforts.

26...Bf6 27.Qxf3

Now White is two pawns up. The game is decided.

27...Qe7 28.Qf5 Rf7 29.Qxh5 Rg7 30.f3 Bxh4

Instead of resigning.

31.fxg4 Rh7 32.Qf5 Black resigned.

(260) Petrosian – Minić
Sarajevo 1972

1.c4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 c5 4.d5 d6 5.e4 Nf6 6.Bd3 0-0 7.Bg5 h6

With this move, Black take a little-explored path. The tried and true 7...e6 is a reliable enough continuation.

8.Bd2 e6 9.h3

A useful in-between move, as one can see after 9.Nge2 exd5 10.exd5 Ng4 – Black has active play.

9...exd5 10.exd5

Taking with this pawn is key! This leads to a peculiar hybrid of the Averbakh and Botvinnik Systems (see game 226), where White's main idea is to limit the possibilities of the opponent's minor pieces.

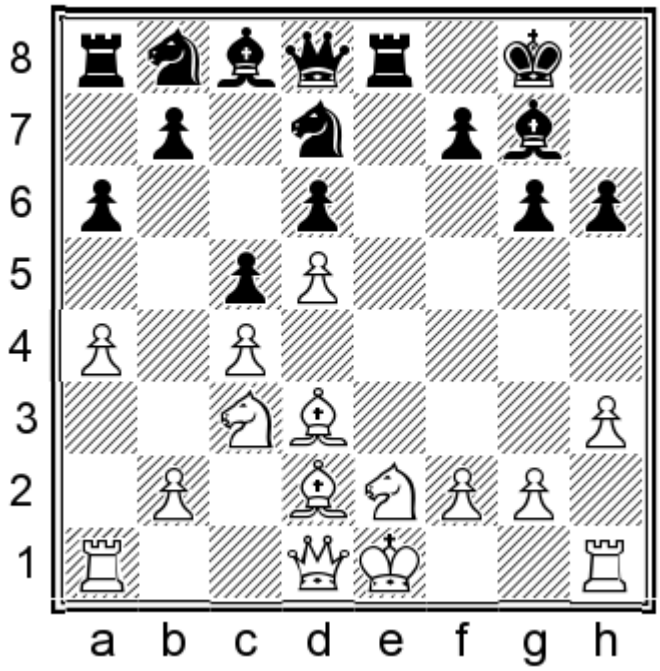
10...Re8+

A standard but useless check. Stronger was the immediate 10...Nbd7 with the idea of ... Ne5. Then White would not dare play 11.f4, a move made later in the game, because of 11...Nh5, and the threat of ...Qh4+ is quite unpleasant. In case of 10...Nbd7, Petrosian would likely have responded 11.Nf3, allowing the simplifying continuation 11...Re8+ 12.Be3 Ne5.

11.Nge2

In such positions, the knight has more flexibility on e2 than on f3. In addition, this gives the white pawns on the kingside greater mobility.

11...a6 12.a4 Nfd7



An artificial move. Probably, Black did not like the continuation 12...Nbd7 13.f4. However, I think this is exactly what Black should have played. In this case, Black at least have avoids an immediate squeeze on the kingside; for example, 13...Nh7 14.g4 Ndf8 and ...h5 gives him counterplay. Presumably, Minić relied on the “terrible check” from h4, but White ignores the “threat.” Petrosian was never afraid of such checks.

13.f4!

In the style of Philidor: positional plusses are more important than castling!

13...Qh4+ 14.Kf1

Annotating this game in the 13th volume of the *Informant*, Petrosian indicates ± here – White’s position is close to winning – and this does not seem like a big overstatement to me.

14...b6 15.Qe1 Qd8

Black faces a difficult endgame after 15...Qxe1+ 16.Rxe1, but at least it is an endgame. Now the struggle ends very quickly.

16.g4!

Pushing pawns in front of the king is usually risky business, but there are no rules without exceptions. In this case, given the inactivity of the black pieces, the pawns’ advance on the kingside is the most effective and relatively safe method to convert White’s advantage.

16...a5 17.Qg3 Nf6 18.f5!

By advancing, White’s pawns infiltrate the opponent’s structure and create weaknesses in the black king’s camp. Since the continuation 18...g5 19.h4! or 18...gxf5 19.gxf5 leads to imminent defeat, Black decides to give up a pawn.

18...Nbd7 19.fxg6 fxg6 20.Bxg6 Rf8 21.Kg2 Ne5 22.Bd3

The only thing left for White is to consolidate the position, after which his advantage should be decisive.

22...Ra7?

The decisive mistake. The only opportunity to complicate White's task was 22...h5!? (23.g5? h4!), as noted by Petrosian.

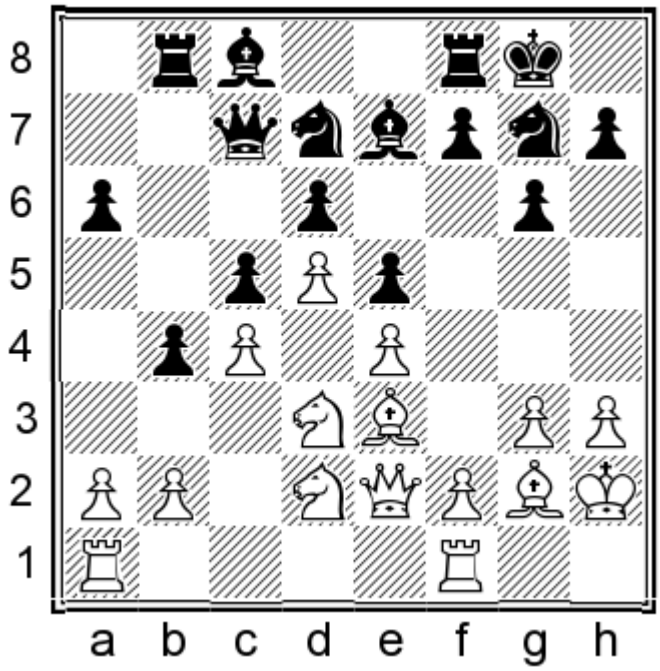
23.Nf4 Raf7 24.Be2

It is over. White wins.

24...Nh7 25.Rhf1 Nf6 26.Rae1 Re7 27.b3 Rfe8 28.Bd1 Nf7 29.Rxe7 Rxe7 30.Bc2 Black resigned.

And in conclusion, for fans of pawn subtleties, here is an illustration demonstrating that not all activity is beneficial.

(261) Petrosian – Vukić
Oberwart 1981



Black to move

White's position is better because he has undermining moves on both flanks: a2-a3 and f2-f4. Probably, grandmaster Vukić decided, "Now it is time for active play," and he played

17...f5?!

It is hard to imagine that this natural move could lead to severe, possibly even irreparable, consequences.

18.f4! Bf6 19.Rae1 exf4

Opening the e-file, Black counted on the tactical possibilities associated with the opposition of the e8-rook and the white queen. However, it might be better to maintain the pressure with 19...Rb7. The Yugoslav grandmaster was able to make a few active moves, but they do not cause White any harm.

20.Bxf4 Re8 21.Qf2!

Petrosian's favorite place for the white queen in such structures – see the annotation to White's 30th move in the game Petrosian-Horowitz (*Typical Methods of Strategy*).

21...Bd4 22.Be3 Ne5 23.Nxe5!

With this move, presumably spotted in advance, White tips the scales in his favor.

23...Bxe5

It turns out that c5 and e5 are weak for Black; for example: 23...dxe5 24.Bxd4 exd4 (not better is 24...cxd4 25.Rc1 with an inevitable c4-c5) 25.e5 Rxe5 26.Qf4, and White wins (variations by Petrosian).

24.Nf3 Bf6 25.Bg5! fxe4

This leads to a losing position. As Petrosian pointed out, also unsatisfactory is 25...Qf7 in view of 26.Bxf6 Qxf6 27.e5! dxe5 28.Qxc5, and White should win, as he has two powerful passed pawns in the center.

It seems the strongest defense is 25...Bxg5 26.Nxg5 h6. In this case, the battle could have continued as follows: 27.Nf3 Bd7 (27...fxe4 28.Nd2, etc. yields nothing good for Black) 28.Nh4 Kh7 29.exf5 Bxf5 (or 29...Nxf5 30.Be4! with an attack) 30.Nxf5 Nxf5 31.g4 Nd4 32.Qf6 with a significant advantage for White.

26.Bxf6 exf3 27.Rxe8+!

This looks more convincing than 27.Qxf3 Bf5 28.g4 Bc2.

27...Nxe8 28.Bg5 h6

The g2-bishop is untouchable because of mate: 28...fxg2 29.Qf8#.

29.Qxf3

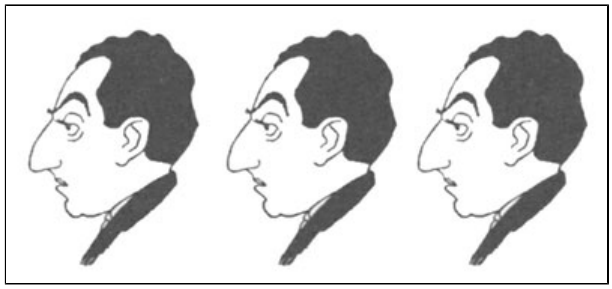
Now there is more than one path to the goal. 29.Bxh6 Kh7 30.Qxf3 Kxh6 31.Qf8+, etc. also wins easily (indicated by Petrosian).

29...Bf5

Taking on g5 leads to the loss of the queen after 30.Qf8+ and 31.Rf7+.

30.Bxh6 Kh7 31.Bg5 b3 32.axb3 Ng7 33.g4 Black resigned.

Chapter 11
Playing by Analogy



In this case, we have in mind not so much the way of thinking itself as the deeper trend characteristic of modern chess. Universalism, convergence, standardization are all signs of our time. All this surrounds us in everyday life and has become inevitable, ordinary and even banal. Chess has not escaped these phenomena.

The level of knowledge in all stages of the game has grown so much today that a chess player, however talented and original he is, cannot do without technical tools, without analogies and, alas, without a template. Sometimes grandmasters do not invent as much as reproduce (sometimes unconsciously) already known methods, something they saw once or their experience, and if you look at things soberly, there is nothing shameful in this. The concept of a "good template" exists, too. In the end, without knowledge and technology, there is no skill.

In the following games, we see examples of this kind of combat. In each case, the opponents acted by analogy with the King's Indian Defense (although formally other openings were played) and, naturally, tried to do it creatively, with a spark.

(262) Tolush – Petrosian
24th USSR Championship
Moscow 1957

Annotations by Tigran Petrosian

(from *The Games of Tigran Petrosian*, Volume 1)

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.c3 Nf6 4.d4 d6

This ancient opening occurs so rarely in modern tournaments that it is difficult to say which of the plans is the most effective (theory mostly considers 3...d5 and 4...Nxe4 – Igor Yanvarjov). The continuation chosen by Black aims to take play along the lines of the Ruy Lopez or the King's Indian Defence. The first of these arises after 5.Bb5 Bd7, while the second set-up occurs in the present game.

It should be mentioned that White does not achieve anything by 5.dxe5 Nxe5 6.Nxe5 dxe5 7.Qxd8+ Kxd8 8.Bc4 Nxe4! 9.Bxf7 Bc5! 10.0-0 Rf8.

5.d5

A committal decision. 5.Bb5 is preferable.

5...Nb8 6.Bd3 g6 7.h3 Nbd7 8.Be3 Bg7 9.Nbd2

More natural is 9.c4 followed by Nc3, after which a normal King's Indian set-up arises. (Let us clarify: Black is down a tempo, since the white pawn arrived on the c4-square in two moves, while the knight on d7, in three – Igor Yanvarjov).

9...Nh5 10.g3 0-0 11.Qe2

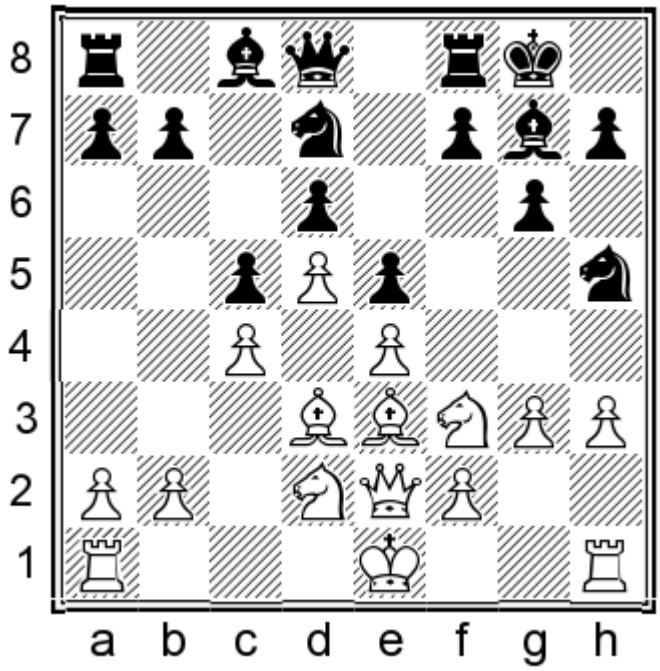
The cause of White's later difficulties: the queen is badly placed on this square. 11.Qc2 followed by c3-c4 was better, although then Black has a comfortable game after ...c6.

11...c6 12.c4

It stands to reason that 12.dxc6 bxc6 is unfavorable for White, and so the move played is essentially forced.

12...c5!

After the routine 12...cxd5? 13.cxd5 the possibility of Nc4 would have given White excellent prospects on the queenside.



13.0-0-0?

This allows Black to carry out a favorable tactical operation. White should have played 13.Nf1 and only then 0-0-0.

(Alexander Tolush, the famous “Kazimirovich” [his full name was Alexander Kazimirovich Tolush, where Kazimirovich is a patronym – translator] was a battering ram of a chess player, always aiming to win. He interprets this position as a Sicilian, castling queenside and preparing a frontal attack on the kingside. However, here this plan is hardly appropriate - Igor Yanvarjov.)

13...a6

Black misses the chance to play 13...Nf4! (exploiting the tactical flaws of the position of the e3-bishop and the d2-knight – Igor Yanvarjov) with the possible continuation 14.gxf4 exf4 15.Bxf4 Qf6 16.e5 Qxf4 17.exd6 Nf6 18.Qe5 Nh5 with an obvious advantage. White, in turn, fails to exploit his opponent’s mistake.

14.h4?

14.Rdg1! is much stronger, retaining good hopes of counterplay, since for the moment 14...b5 does not bring Black anything real.

14...Nf4!

Now Black’s position is strategically won.

15.gxf4 exf4 16.Bxf4

16.Rdg1 fxe3 17.Qxe3 is perhaps slightly better, covering the dark squares in the center.

16...Qf6 17.Rdg1 Qxf4 18.h5 b5 19.hxg6

White does not achieve anything by 19.Rh4 Qf6 20.Ng5 h6!.

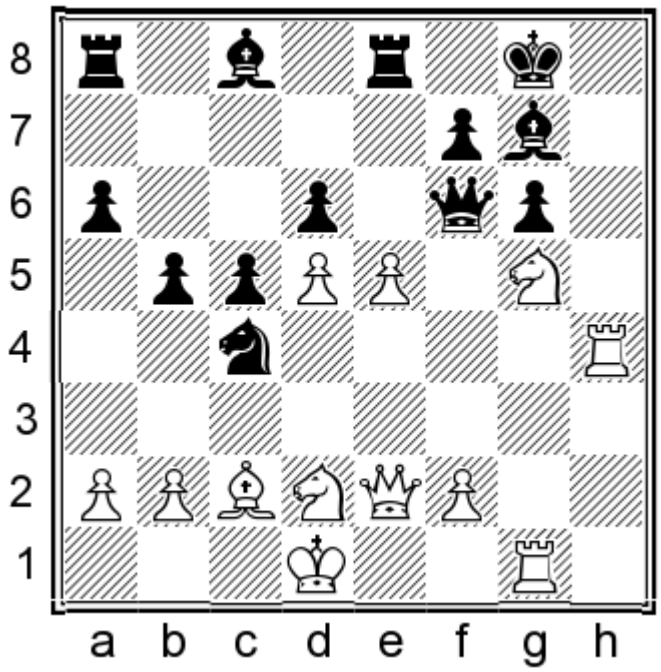
19...hxg6 20.Kd1

All the same the king has to be moved from c1. For example, on 20.Ng5 there follows 20...bxc4 21.Bxc4 Ne5!, with a crushing attack.

20...Qf6 21.Ng5 Re8 22.Rh4 Nb6 23.Bc2

(White is not able to hold on to the c4-pawn. As grandmaster Sergei Shipov pointed out, 23.b3 is followed by 23...bxc4 24.bxc4 Nxc4!, and either capture on c4 leads to the loss of the g1-rook – Igor Yanvarjov.)

23...Nxc4 24.e5!?



An interesting attempt to confuse matters. Realizing that in any case the position is lost, White initiates great complications.

24...Rxe5 25.Nde4 Qe7

The tempting 25...Rxd5+ 26.Ke1 Qxb2 is refuted by 27.Nf6+ Qxf6 28.Qe8+ Bf8 29.Rh8+! and mate next move.

26.f4 Rxd5+ 27.Ke1 Bf5

27...f6 would also have won.

28.Rgh1

Threatening 29.Rh8+ Bxh8 30.Rxh8+ Kxh8 31.Qh2+, etc., mating.

28.Rgh1 Rd2

28...f6 is also good enough to win. Now 29.Nxd2 Qxe2+ 30.Kxe2 is bad in view of 30...Re8+!. White tries his last chance.

29.Qf3 f6

If 29...Rxc2 then 30.Rh8+ Bxh8 31.Rxh8+ Kxh8 32.Qh1+ and Black is mated! (In fact, after 31...Kg7 this variation would have led to only a draw, but in any case this is not the result Petrosian was aiming for – Igor Yanvarjov)

30.Kf1 fxg5 31.Nf6+ Qxf6 32.Qxa8+ Kf7 33.Rh8 Bd3+ Now mate is inevitable. White resigned.

(263) Petrosian – Larsen

Palma de Mallorca 1968

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.a3 c5 5.d5 exd5 6.cxd5 g6

The calm Queen's Indian Defense quickly turned into a sharp variation of the Modern Benoni. The only difference between the resulting position and the theoretical is the addition of the moves a2-a3 and ...b6. Now the outcome of the opening will largely depend on how effectively each player uses the "extra" move given to him.

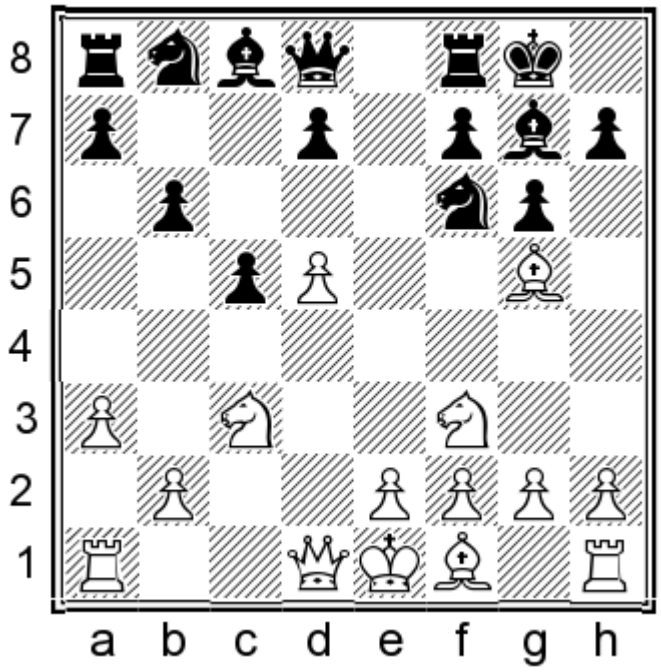
7.Nc3 Bg7

Larsen kindly allows the opponent to advance the pawn to d6, which leads to a double-edged struggle. But Petrosian refuses the offer.

8.Bg5!?

A good response to the move order chosen by Black. Now the plan connected with pushing back the bishop to g3 and exchanging it seems dubious: 8...h6?! 9.Bh4 g5 10.Bg3 d6 (10...Nh5? 11.Bd6!) 11.e4 Nh5 12.Bb5+ etc. (see the note to White's 8th move in game 200).

8...0-0



9.e3!

According to Petrosian, the advance of the e-pawn by two squares would involve a certain risk. In particular, the following variations were possible after 9.e4 Re8!?:

(1) 10.Nd2? Nxe4!, and Black wins a pawn;

(2) 10.e5? d6!; with complications that are advantageous for Black;

(3) 10.Bd3 h6 11.Bh4 d6, and now either 12.0-0 g5 13.Bg3 Nh5, or 12.h3 g5 13.Bg3 Nxe4! 14.Nxe4 f5 15.Nfd2 fxe4 16.Nxe4 Bf5, and Black's chances are at least as good as White's.

The idea of the text move belongs to Mikhail Botvinnik (for more details, see game 196). I should mention that Tigran Vartanovich always had great respect for the patriarch of Soviet chess, so if Botvinnik played this move, then for Petrosian it was a mark of quality.

9...d6 10.Nd2 h6 11.Bh4 Na6

Subsequently, Larsen came to the conclusion that he should have placed his bishop on this square, 11...Ba6. There is a rationale behind this: it would be helpful for Black to remove a couple of minor pieces from the board. But even then his position would not have been all that great, as the reader had the opportunity to see in the game Petrosian – Hernandez (game 191).

12.Be2 Nc7 13.e4

"Now this is stronger, since the standard advance of the b-pawn does not bring Black any real gain." (Petrosian).

13...b5

A typical "King's Indian" pawn sacrifice, which White should not accept. For example, 14.Nxb5 Nxb5 15.Bxb5 g5 16.Bg3 Nxe4 17.Nxe4 Qa5+, and Black wins back the material and more, or 14.Bxb5 Nxb5 15.Nxb5 Qd7 16.a4 (bad is 16.Nc3 Ba6 17.Qa4 Qxa4 18.Nxa4 Nxe4!) 16...Re8, with more than enough compensation for the pawn.

14.0-0 Qd7 15.Qc2

Beginning preparation of an offensive in the center. Petrosian could set a trap by playing 15.f4, counting on 15...Re8? 16.Bxf6! Bxf6 17.e5 dxe5 18.Nde4 Bg7 19.d6!, and White wins. However, if on the 15th move Black responds otherwise, for example 15...Rb8, the early advance of the f-pawn would bring nothing but problems for White.

15...Re8

Creating the threat of ...Nfxd5.

16.Rfe1 Bb7

Now and in the future, it is not advantageous for Black to play 16...a5 (the most natural continuation of the plan) in view of the counterattack 17.a4!. Meeting an unexpected obstacle, Black was at a loss and got stuck. Meanwhile, he had the opportunity to start activity on the queenside via 16...Rb8!? 17.h3 a6 18.f4 b4 19.axb4 Rxb4, and so on.

17.h3

Finishing preparations for the move f2-f4, which would have been premature now because of 17.f4 Ng4!.

17...a6

Black does not realize that the Sword of Damocles already hangs over him and continues to reinforce the queenside as if nothing has happened. The last opportunity to resist White's offensive was indicated by Larsen: 17...g5 18.Bg3 Re7, with the idea of ...Rae8.

18.f4 c4

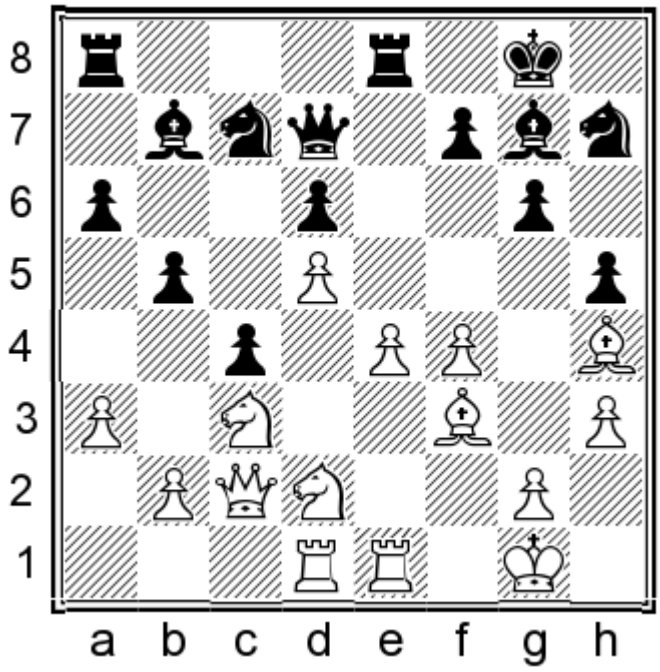
Apparently, even here Black could have tried to create some semblance of counterplay: 18...Rab8; for example, 19.Bf3 Ba8 20.Rad1 b4 21.axb4 Rxb4.

I think that Larsen's extremely unsuccessful play in the last part of the game can be explained by the fact that he played Indian structures relatively infrequently.

"As a rule, in the play of chess players with a high level of understanding, the one with a broader chess horizon has better chances of success. What does this mean? It is easier for the player who has played more different positions in his life, and, of course, a wider variety of opening structures associated with them." (Petrosian).

19.Bf3 h5 20.Rad1 Nh7

The idea of Black's previous move was to ensure the retreat of the knight (preventing the bishop from coming to g4). Now Larsen is ready to play ...Bh6 but is not in time.



21.e5!

A thematic breakthrough in the center, after which Black's position becomes critical.

21...dxe5 22.Nde4 Qf5

This move meets a simple refutation. But there is no good way to preempt the threat Nc5. Larsen subsequently recommended the exchange sacrifice 22...Bf8 23.fxe5 Rxe5 24.Nf6+, etc., but this is only an attempt to prolong the resistance.

23.Qf2!

Threatening the fork Nd6 and the invasion of the queen on b6. In the next few moves, Black loses almost all of his material.

23...Rad8 24.Bxd8 Rxd8 25.Qb6 Qc8 26.Nc5

26.Nd6 also wins.

26...e4 27.Qxb7

Simplest.

27...exf3 28.Qxc8 Rxc8 29.d6 Bf8 30.Nb7 Ne6 31.d7 Rb8 32.Rxe6 Black resigned.

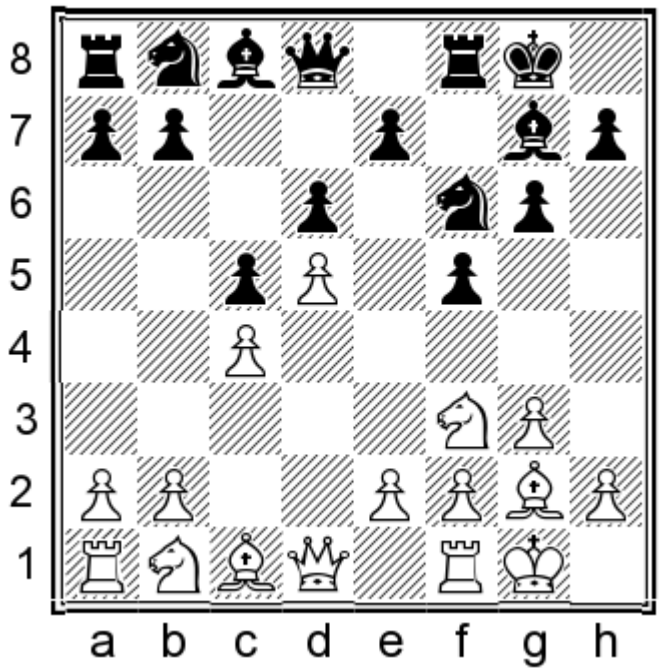
(264) Petrosian – Matulović
Sarajevo 1972

1.c4 g6 2.Nf3 Bg7 3.d4 f5

A typical example of modern opening convergence. The variation chosen by Black organically combines the ideas of the Dutch and King's Indian Defenses.

4.g3 Nf6 5.Bg2 0-0 6.0-0 d6 7.d5 c5

Currently, the more flexible 7...c6 is preferred. Now it comes down to the well-known King's Indian structure (see "Fianchetto" – Tabiya C6) with the somewhat premature move ...f5.



8.Nc3 Na6 9.Rb1!

In this case, the exclamation mark (which, incidentally, belongs to Petrosian) does not refer to the move but rather to White's bold plan, aimed at actively hindering the advance ...b5.

9...Bd7 10.b3 Nc7 11.a4

Until now, the opponents have followed the game Keene-Matulović (Siegen, 1970), where after 11.Bb2 a6 12.e3 b5 Black satisfactorily solved his opening problems.

11...a6?

The Yugoslav grandmaster shows amazing carelessness. Could he possibly think that Petrosian might not know his game against Keene? "Repeating a variation, you always give your opponent the advantage." Remember? Better, or at least more cautious, was 11...b6.

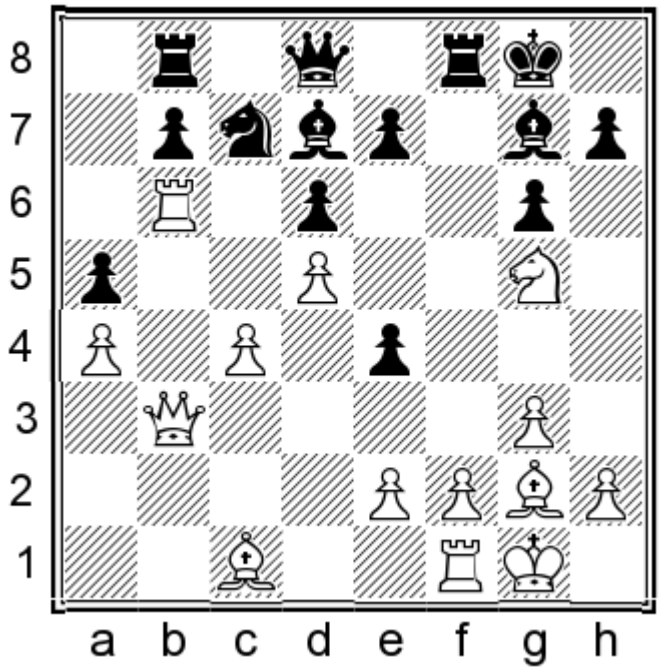
12.b4!

And here is the surprise that Petrosian prepared. With an energetic advance of the knight's pawn, White takes the initiative.

12...cxb4 13.Rxb4 Rb8 14.Qb3 Ne4?

An active move that only worsens Black's situation. According to Petrosian, the lesser evil was 14...Bc8, seeking to organize a defense by transferring the knight to c5.

15.Nxe4 fxe4 16.Ng5 a5 17.Rb6!



17...Na6?

An error that ultimately costs Black the game. Hardly better was 17...Bd4 18.Be3! Bxb6 19.Bxb6, with an overwhelming position for the exchange. The paradoxical 17...Na8!? would have yielded chances to defend successfully. After this move, White planned to offer another promising version of the exchange sacrifice: 18.Rb5! (18.Rxb7 is weaker in view of 18...Bxa4!) 18...Bxb5 19.cxb5 with an advantage (indicated by Petrosian).

18.Be3 Nc5 19.Bxc5!

Transformation of the position. White transfers the game into an opposite-color bishop position with an extra pawn, which White can win without much difficulty.

19...dxc5 20.Ne6 Bxe6 21.Rxe6 Rf6 22.Bxe4 Qc7 23.f4 Qd7 24.Bf3 Rxe6 25.dxe6 Qd4+ 26.Kg2 Qc3 27.Qxc3 Bxc3 28.Rd1 Kf8 29.Rd7 b6 30.Bd5 Ke8 31.e4 h6 32.Kf3 Kf8 33.e5 g5 34.Ke4 gxf4 35.gxf4 Ke8 36.f5 Rc8 37.Rb7 Rd8 38.f6 exf6 39.Bc6+ Kf8 40.e7+ Black resigned.

Chapter 12
Maneuvering Battle



Maneuvering – Petrosian was certainly in his element. He knew how to stay still, how to stir up a position, and how to find interesting ways to improve his pieces. For many chess players, even very strong ones, positional maneuvering is a boring task, an unavoidable evil that one has to live with from time to time. In Petrosian's hands, it was a formidable weapon.

In his book *Petrosian's Alter Ego*, Viktor Vasiliev wrote: "In chess vocabulary, the word 'maneuvering' means "a more or less lengthy series of maneuvers of various pieces, which do not always have a clear, specific goal. This last property characterizes both the complexity and the power of maneuvering.

"Probably, almost every chess player would prefer a clear position with an exact, concrete plan to an unclear one, because an unclear position has to be clarified somehow. However, Petrosian likes unclear positions. In such positions his opponents are uncomfortable; they do not know from where to expect an ambush, from where the raid will follow. On the contrary, Petrosian, as if he has a perfect predictor, feels the danger ahead of time and takes precautionary measures. Both opponents play as if in a dense milky fog, but one of them can see through the fog.

"Maneuvering is a formidable force. Petrosian forms shock troops in his rear, then he disassembles them, he accumulates them in one place of the board, then in another, and when his opponent weakens his vigilance or simply misunderstands the newly emerged position, Petrosian suddenly starts an unexpected offensive. The maneuvering is over. The situation was clear."

Petrosian's natural talent and the best features of his peculiar style are fully revealed in these subtle, intricate dances of the pieces on the board. The reader has already had ample opportunity to see this.

Here are a few more examples of the games where Petrosian demonstrates his art of maneuvering in three manifestations: in somewhat better, worse, and approximately equal positions.

(265) Petrosian – Fischer
Interzonal Tournament
Portorož 1958

This first official meeting of two outstanding chess players not only had great competitive significance but was also very important for both in the psychological sense. This, I believe, explains some of the errors and inaccuracies made by the rivals.

We present this interesting game with Robert Fischer's annotations from his excellent book *My 60 Memorable Games*. The preface to this game belongs to his friend and co-author, grandmaster Larry Evans.

A Tough Struggle

In what appear to be perfectly equal positions, Petrosian consistently finds seemingly innocuous moves which gradually overwhelm his opponent. He accomplishes his objective simply by exchanging pieces and maneuvering for victory without taking unnecessary risks. This essentially defensive technique has the virtue, when it doesn't utterly succeed, of producing a draw. Fischer, by contrast, generally chooses the sharpest course, however precipitous it may become. Occasionally he overreaches himself, but it makes for interesting chess.

In this game, replete with errors on both sides, Petrosian succeeds in pinning his opponent for a time to a static endgame. But Fischer manages to burst his bonds, only to blunder on the very next move (51...Kd6). Petrosian, however, by blundering in his turn, restores the balance. The ensuing rook and pawn ending produces a thrilling draw.

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.Nf3 d6 6.0-0 Nc6 7.d3

On 7.d4 I intended 7...e5 (see *Fianchetto,* tabiya C7 – Igor Yanvarjov). Petrosian is striving for an English Opening formation, a slow system for which he is temperamentally suited.

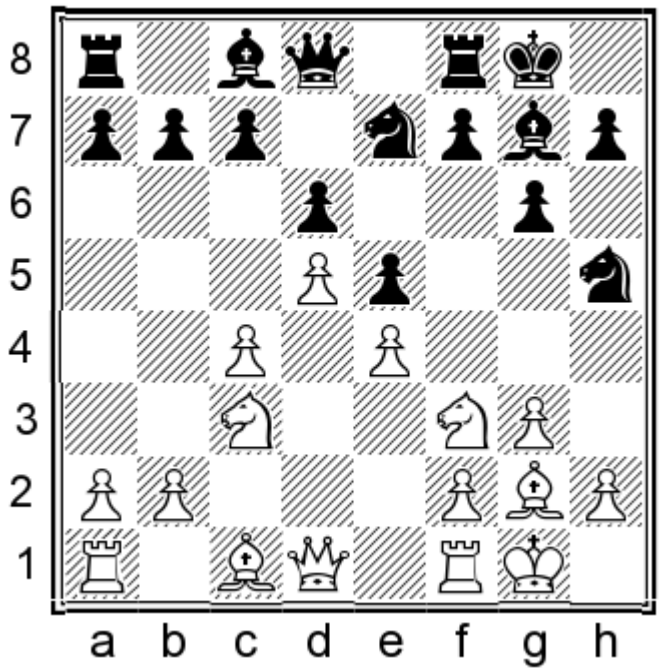
7...Nh5 8.d4

Reckoning he can afford this loss of time in view of Black's misplaced knight on h5. On 8.Rb1 f5 9.Qc2 a5 10.a3 f4 (Petrosian-Vasiukov, Moscow, 1956) Black obtains an excellent aggressive setup. I was as impressed by that game as Petrosian must have been, since he got crushed.

8...e5 9.d5

The exchange 9.dxe5 would have led to simplifications that are beneficial for Black: 9...dxe5 10.Qxd8 Rxd8 11.Nd5 Rd7 12.Bh3 f5 13.g4 Nf6! 14.gxf5 (14.Nxf6+ Bxf6 15.gxf5 gxf5 16.Bxf5?? Rg7+) 14...Nxd5 15.cxd5 Rxd5.

9...Ne7 10.e4



10...f5

This is the right time to get in 10...c5!. Petrosian- Boleslavsky, USSR Championship prelims 1957, continued: 11.Ne1 Kh8 12.Nd3 f5 13.Rb1 Nf6 (and after 14.f3 Neg8 15.b3 fxe4 16.fxe4 Bh6 17.Bxh6 Nxh6 18.Qd2 Kg7 the opponents agreed to a draw – Igor Yanvarjov).

11.exf5 gxf5

Tempting but unsound is 11...Nxf5 12.g4 Nd4 13.gxh5 Bg4 14.Nxd4! Bxd1 15.Ne6, etc. And on 11...Bxf5 12.Ng5 Qd7 13.Ne6! Bxe6 14.dxe6 Qxe6 15.Bxb7 Rab8 16.Bg2 Qxc4 17.Nd5! White comes out on top.

12.Nxe5! Nxg3

A "desperado" combination: this knight (which is doomed anyway) sells its life as dearly as possible.

13.hxg3

Simple and good. I had expected 13.fxg3, but Petrosian eschews the kingside attack and plays for control of the center squares instead. His judgment turns out to be right.

13...Bxe5?

13...dxe5, keeping a fluid pawn center, offers more play. I was unduly worried about White's passed pawn after 14.c5.

14.f4 Bg7 15.Be3 Bd7 16.Bd4

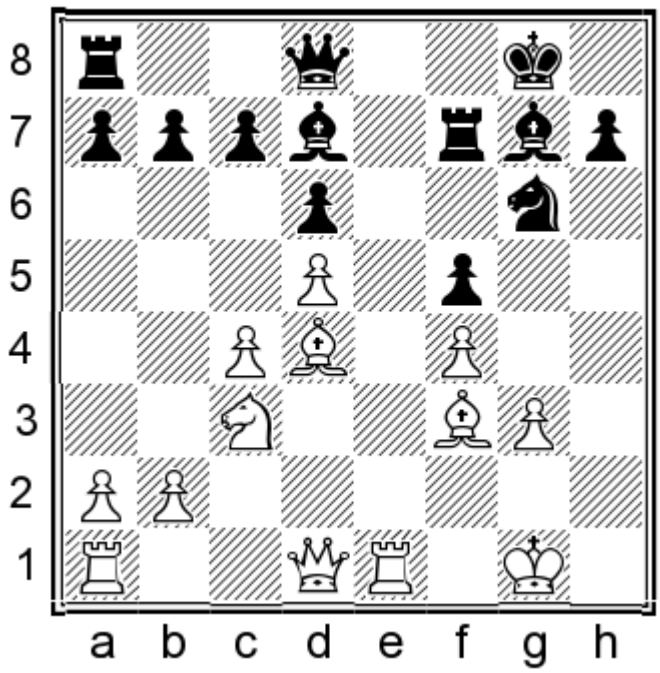
Forcing the trade of Black's most active piece. White soon obtains a firm grip on the position.

16...Ng6 17.Re1?

A careless transposition. Now by 17...Bxd4+ 18.Qxd4 h5! followed by ...h4, Black could exchange his isolated h-pawn for White's g-pawn and the game would be dead equal. Correct was 17.Bf3.

17...Rf7? 18.Bf3!

Black does not get a second chance.



18...Qf8 19.Kf2 Re8 20.Rxe8 Qxe8 21.Bxg7 Rxg7 22.Qd4 b6 23.Rh1

White has effortlessly achieved a plus and now he wants to improve his position before embarking on a committal course. 23.b4! , threatening c4-c5, is much sharper, and poses more immediate problems.

23...a5

My first free breath!

24.Nd1 Qf8 25.Ne3

Petrosian keeps building without getting sidetracked – even by good moves. I was more afraid of 25.Bh5! tying me up completely. Then the rook cannot move because of Bxg6.

25...Rf7! 26.b3 Qg7

The exchange of queens eases the cramp. White cannot afford to retreat and cede this important diagonal.

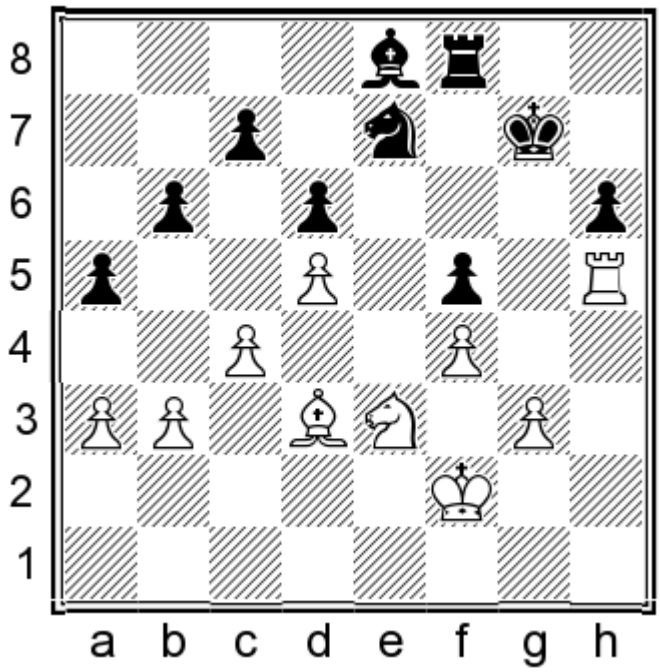
27.Qxg7+ Kxg7 28.a3 Rf8 29.Be2

White constantly finds ways to improve his position. Not 29.b4 axb4 30.axb4 Ra8 and Black seizes the open file.

29...Ne7 30.Bd3

(Planning to immobilize Black with the defense of the pawn after Rh5 – Igor Yanvarjov).

30...h6 31.Rh5 Be8



32.Rh2

Avoiding a little trap: 32.Nxf5+? (or 32.Rxf5? Rh8) 32...Nxf5 33.Rxf5 Rh8! followed by 34...Bg6 winning the exchange.

32...Bd7 33.Rh1 Rh8 34.Nc2!

The knight is headed to an even stronger post on d4. I was amazed during the game. Each time Petrosian achieved a good position, he managed to maneuver into a better one.

34...Kf6 35.Nd4 Kg7 36.Be2

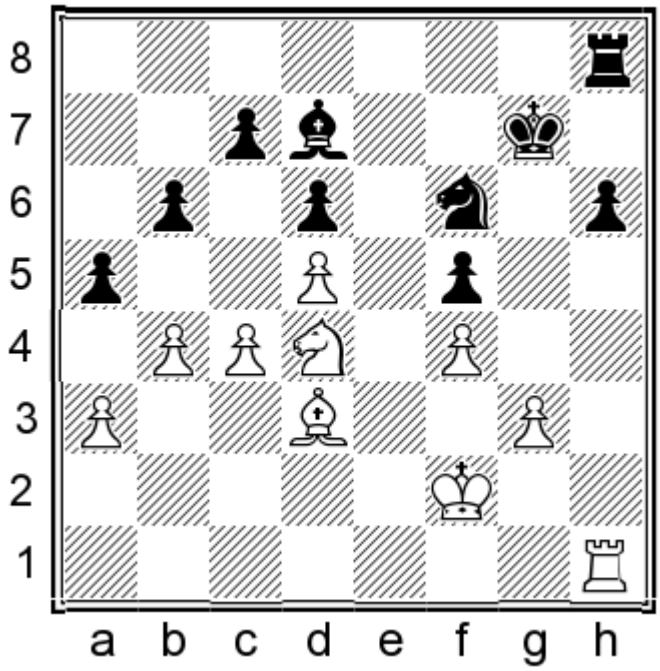
Feigning an invasion with Bh5 and Re1 and Ne6. White has two wings to operate on: Black must be flexed to react appropriately, and this requires alertness.

36...Ng8?

Panicking and giving him the opportunity he's been waiting for to sneak b3-b4 in at a moment when Black can't counter with ...axb4 and ...Ra8. Petrosian likes to play cat-and-mouse, hoping that his opponent will go wrong in the absence of a direct threat. The amazing thing is – they usually do! Witness a case in point. I should just have ignored his "threat" with, say, 36...Ra8 37.Bh5 Rc8 38.Re1 Kf6; and if 39.Ne6 c6.

37.b4! Nf6 38.Bd3?

38.bxa5 Ne4+ 39.Kg2 bxa5 40.Rb1 Nc5 holds.



38...axb4

38...Ne4+? 39.Bxe4 fxe4 40.bxa5 bxa5 (if 40...Ra8, then 41.axb6 cxb6 42.Rb1) 41.Rb1 followed by Rb7 wins easily. White also invades after 38...Kg6 39.bxa5 bxa5 40.Rb1, which is clear from the following rough variation: 40...Re8 41.Rb7! Ng4+ 42.Kg2 Re3 43.Bb1 Rxa3 44.Rxc7 Ne3+ 45.Kf2 Ng4+ 46.Ke2! – Igor Yanvarjov.

39.axb4 Kg6 40.Ra1!

White has finally achieved his ideal setup, but Black's is still tenable.

40...Ng4+ 41.Ke2 Re8+ 42.Kd2 Nf6 43.Ra6

(The continuation 43.Ra7 Rc8 led to the position in the game – see the next move – Igor Yanvarjov).

43...Rb8 44.Ra7 Rc8 45.c5!

This pawn sac caught me completely by surprise. It's the only line that gives Black any trouble.

45...bxc5

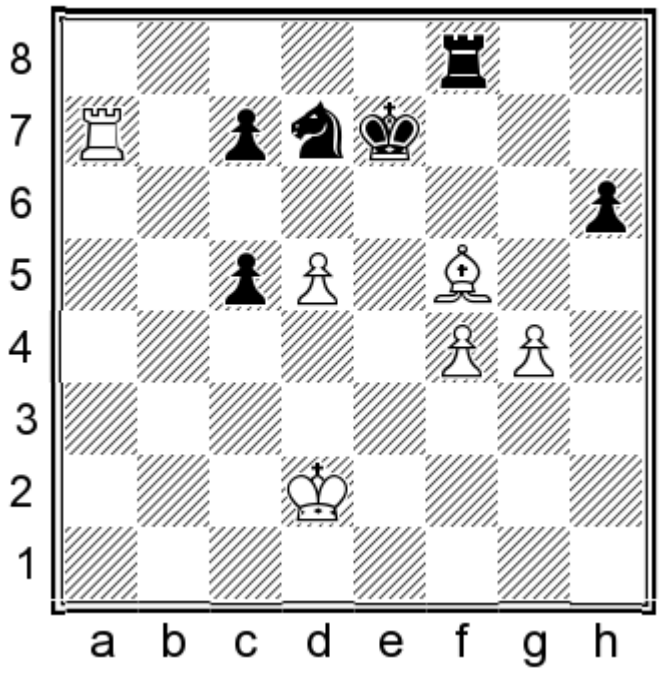
Not 45...Nxd5? 46.c6.

46.bxc5 dxc5 47.Nf3! Kf7!

47...Nxd5 loses to 48.Ne5+.

48.Ne5+ Ke7 49.Nxd7 Nxd7 50.Bxf5 Rf8! 51.g4

51.Bxd7 Kxd7 52.Ke3 (52.Ra6 Rg8) 52...Kd6 53.Ra6+ Kxd5 54.Rxh6 Re8+ 55.Kf3 c4 should draw.



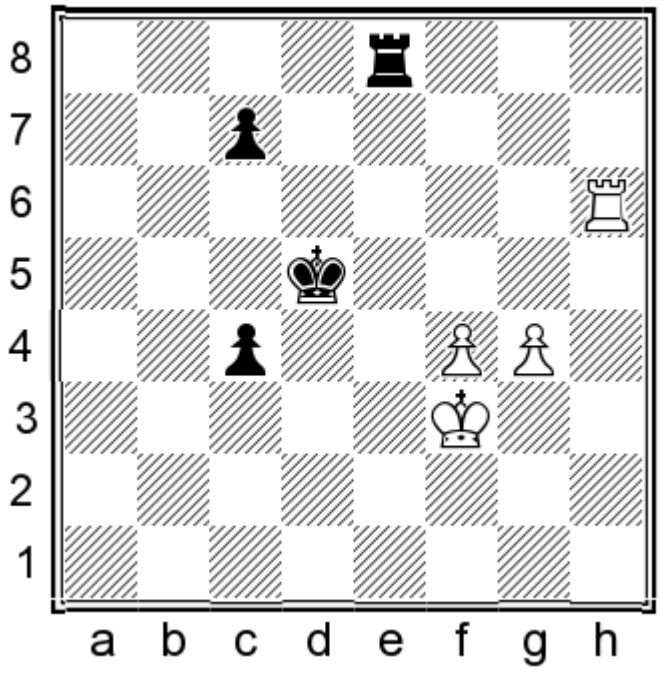
51...Kd6(?)

This should be the losing move! Correct is 51...Nf6! 52.Be6 Nxd5! 53.Bxd5 Rxf4 (53...Rd8 also draws) winning the last pawn and forcing a draw.

52.Bxd7! Kxd7 53.Ke3 Re8+

On 53...c4, 54.Ra6 wins. The idea is to force his king to the kingside, away from the passed c5-pawn, since 54.Kd3 is not good because of 54...Rg8.

54.Kf3 Kd6 55.Ra6+ Kxd5 56.Rxh6 c4



57.Rh1(?)

As Petrosian points out in the Russian bulletins of the tournament, White can win in the following line: “57.Rh7!

c6 58.Rd7+ Kc5 59.Rd1 c3 60.g5 Kc4 61.g6 c2 62.Rc1 Kc3 63.f5 Rg8 64.Kf4 Kd2 65.Rxc2+ Kxc2 66.Kg5 c5 67.f6 c4 68.f7 Rxg6+ 69.Kxg6 c3 70.f8=Q." White is a tempo ahead of the game, where Black's pawn succeeds in reaching c2, instead of c3 (as here).

(In 2009, an interesting analysis by Karsten Müller appeared on the ChessCafé website, which makes it necessary to take a fresh look at this endgame. In particular, according to the opinion of the German analyst, in the above version, Black can count on a draw if he plays 60...Kb4 instead 60...Kc4?. For instance, 61.f5 c5 62.g6 Rg8 63.Kf4 c4! [This is why the black king went to b4; it is easy to confirm that the advance ...c2 – here and in the following moves – leads to the losing position from Petrosian's variation] 64.Kg5 Rd8!! [a brilliant resource that allows Black to win the drawing tempo!] 65.Rc1 [or 65.Rxd8 c2 66.Rb8+ Kc3 67.g7 c1=Q+ 68.Kf6 Qh6+ 69.Kf7 Qh5+] 65...Kb3 66.f6 Kb2! [but not 66...c2? 67.f7] 67.Rh1 c2 68.f7 c1=Q+ 69.Rxc1 Kxc1 70.g7 c3 71.g8=Q [equivalent is 71.f8=Q] 71...Rxg8+ 72.fxg8=Q c2 73.Qa2 Kd1, and Black achieves a theoretically drawn position – Igor Yanvarjov).

57.Rh7! c5 58.Rd7+ Ke6 59.Rd1 Rb8

What if Black tries to improve?

1) 60.g5? c3 61.Kg4 (if 61.Rc1 Kf5 62.Rxc3 c4 63.Rxc4 Rb3+ with a draw by blockade although two pawns down) 61...Rb4 62.Re1+ Kf7 63.Kf5 c2 64.Rc1 Rc4 65.g6+ Kg7 66.Kg5 Rc3 draws;

2) 60.f5+! Ke5 61.Re1+ Kd4 (after 61...Kf6 62.Kf4 c3 63.g5+ Kg7 64.g6 c2 65.Kg5 Rb1 66.f6+ White wins) 62.g5 c3 63.f6 c2 64.Rc1! (64.f7? Rb1!) 64...Ke5 65.Kg4! snuffs out Black's resistance.

(The indefatigable Karsten Müller also corrected this variation – it seems that there is also a draw here if Black meets 60.f5+ with 60...Kf6!?; For example, 61.Kf4 c3 62.g5+ Kg7 63.Rc1 Rb3 64.Ke5 Kf7 65.Kd5 Rb2! 66.Rxc3 Rg2 67.g6+ Kf6 68.Ke4 c4 69.Rxc4 Rg4+ 70.Kd5 Rg5 71.Rf4 Rg2 72.Rf3 Rg5, and Black holds his station – doubters can check with the Nalimov tablebases – Igor Yanvarjov).

57...c3 58.g5 c5 59.Rd1+

It's tough right down the line. After 59.g6 Rg8 60.f5 Ke5! 61.Kg4 Kf6 62.Rc1 c4 63.Rxc3 Rc8! White can make no headway. Or on 59.Kg4 Re2! 60.g6 Ke4 61.Kg5 Rg2+ 62.Kf6 Kxf4, etc., as the Russian bulletins also point out.

59...Kc4 60.g6 c2 61.Rc1

On 61.Rg1 Rd8, the threat of ...Rd1 forces 62.Rc1 (not 62.g7? Rg8! followed by ...Rxg7 and wins).

61...Kd3 62.f5 Rg8 63.Kf4 Kd2 64.Rxc2+ Kxc2 65.Kg5 c4 66.f6 c3 67.f7 Draw

I offered the draw, not realizing it was bad etiquette. It was Petrosian's to extend the offer after 67...Rxg6+ (if Black wants to get melodramatic 67...Rc8 68.g7 Kb1 69.f8=Q Rxf8 70.gxf8=Q c2 reaches the same position) 68.Kxg6 Kb1 69.f8=Q c2 with a book draw.

(266) Bielicki – Petrosian
Buenos Aires 1964

1.c4 g6 2.Nc3 Bg7 3.g3 e5 4.Bg2 d6 5.e3 Nf6 6.Nge2

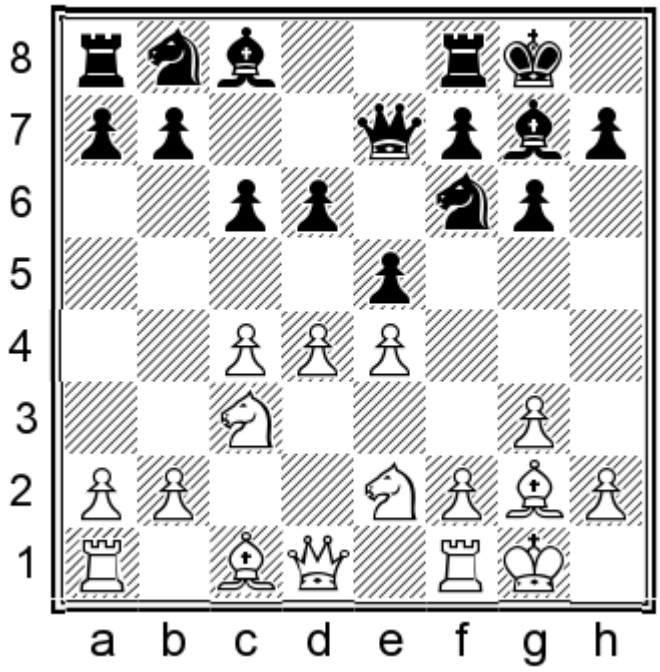
We saw a similar scheme of development for White in games 165 and 166.

6...0-0 7.0-0 Qe7 8.d4 c6

Until now, Petrosian has followed his game against Catozzi (Munich 1958). In that game he chose 8...e4 and after 9.b3 c6 10.Ba3 Bf5 11.h3 h5 12.Qd2 Nbd7 13.Rab1 Rfe8 14.Na4 b6 15.Rfd1 Nh7 16.Kh2 Ng5 17.Nf4 Nf3+! 18.Bxf3 exf3 19.Nd3 Nf6 Black won by a direct attack on the king. However, in such positions the advance ...e4 looks somewhat premature, and, probably, this is why Petrosian decided to avoid it now. After the text move Black is ready to play ...e4 and consolidate his achievements in the center via ...d5. In turn, the Argentine chessplayer occupies the e4-square with his pawn to avoid a squeeze.

9.e4

So, the opponents enter the King's Indian path. On balance, Black should be satisfied with the outcome of the opening: after all, he has an extra tempo.



9...Na6

A versatile maneuver. The c5-square is available for the knight, and at the same time, the diagonal h3-c8 remains open. If the position is closed via d4-d5, ...c5, the a6-knight is also well-placed. Note that even today this method of development in the King's Indian Defense is very popular.

10.Rb1 Nc7

Petrosian drags the opponent into a position with a blocked center, counting on his own knowledge and experience in such positions.

Deserving attention was 10...exd4 11.Nxd4 Nc5 12.Re1 Ng4!? (or 12...a5) with play in the spirit of the main variation, even though this would have led to less stable positions.

11.Re1 Rd8

Persistently pushing the opponent to move the pawn to d5.

12.d5

After 12.h3 White would have to reckon with 12...d5!?, while 12.Qc2 would have been followed by 12...Ne6!, and White would risk losing control over the d4-square.

12...c5 13.a3 Rf8

After completing the task, the rook returns to its place.

14.f3 Nh5 15.Be3

Not falling victim to provocation. After 15.g4 Nf6, Black has good play associated with the undermining move ...h5.

15...b6 16.b4 Na6

The knight has returned, too, to take care of defending the queenside.

17.Qd2

Direct pressure via 17.Na4 would have yielded nothing; for example, 17...f5 18.bxc5 Nxc5 19.Nxc5 bxc5, and Black is ready to play on the next move ...f4 or ...fxe4, with counterplay. However, White should have considered 17.Qa4.

17...Bd7 18.Rb3 f5 19.Bf2

Avoiding the possible pawn jab ...f4, which would now have been met by g3-g4.

19...Rf7 20.Nc1

With the positional threat of Nd3 and b4xc5.

20...Rc8

A typical maneuver. Threatening the c4-pawn, Black forces the advance b4-b5, avoiding the undesirable opening of the b-file.

21.b5 Nb8

The tireless knight goes to the kingside.

22.a4 Nf6 23.Nd3

In the middlegame Bielicki plays extremely accurately and competently, suppressing all of Black's attempts at activity. Objectively speaking, Black's position is slightly worse, and perhaps at this point Petrosian already began to seriously consider a draw.

23...fxe4

Probably, this was played out of fear that at some point White can exchange pawns on f5. For example: 23...Rcf8 24.exf5 gxf5 (or 24...Bxf5 25.Be3 with the idea of Nf2-e4) 25.a5! with an initiative for White.

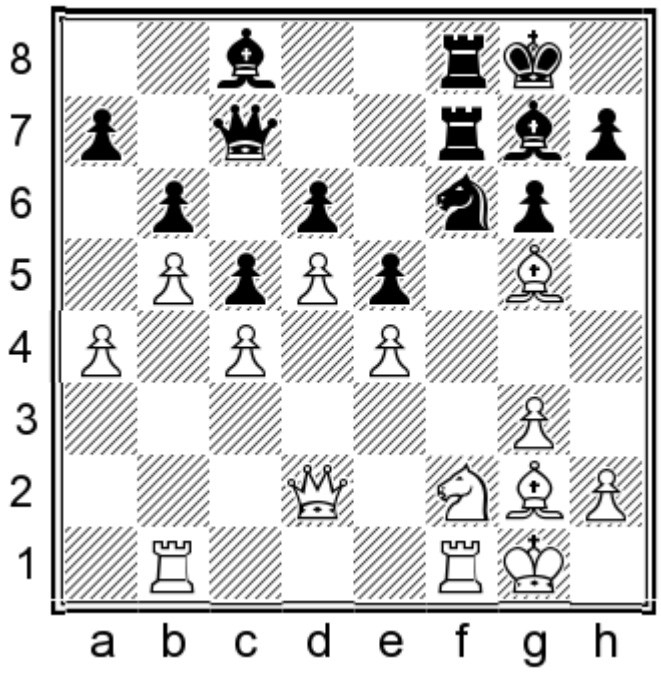
24.Nxe4 Nxe4 25.fxe4 Rcf8 26.Be3 Bc8 27.Rbb1 Nd7 28.Rf1 Nf6 29.Nf2 Nh5

Petrosian does not want to exchange the rooks yet as he needs them to prevent the exchange of the light-square bishops (30.Bh3? Rxf2!).

30.Bg5 Bf6 31.Bh6 Bg7 32.Bg5 Qc7

In case of 32...Bf6, the game would have most likely ended by repetition of moves. Petrosian is still pondering whether to agree to a draw or not.

33.Nh3 Nf6 34.Nf2



34...a5

Characteristic of Petrosian's way of thinking. He eliminates the last active opportunity available to his opponent: the move a4-a5. He chose a good moment for this, as 35.bxa6 Qa7! (not 35...Bxa6 36.Bh3!) is not advantageous for White – Black wins back the pawn, retaining some advantage. Also, 35.Bh3 is bad in view of 35...Nxe4!.

35.Rbe1 Kh8 36.Qe2 Ng8 37.Nh3 Bf6 38.Be3 h6 39.Nf2 Bd8

The bishop is placed better here than on g7. It seems that Black is preparing for a long endgame.

40.Nh3 Kg7

No, it is a draw after all.

41.Rxf7+ Rxf7 42.Rf1 Rxf1+ 43.Qxf1 Qe7 44.Nf2 Qf7 45.Qe2 Nf6 46.Bd2 Nh7 A draw was agreed.

(267) Petrosian – Pilnik

Buenos Aires 1964

This game looks almost like a continuation of the previous one. By the way, it was played the next day after the game against Bielicki. The opening is similar, just with the opposite colors, the pawn structure is the same, and the same maneuvering mode is there...

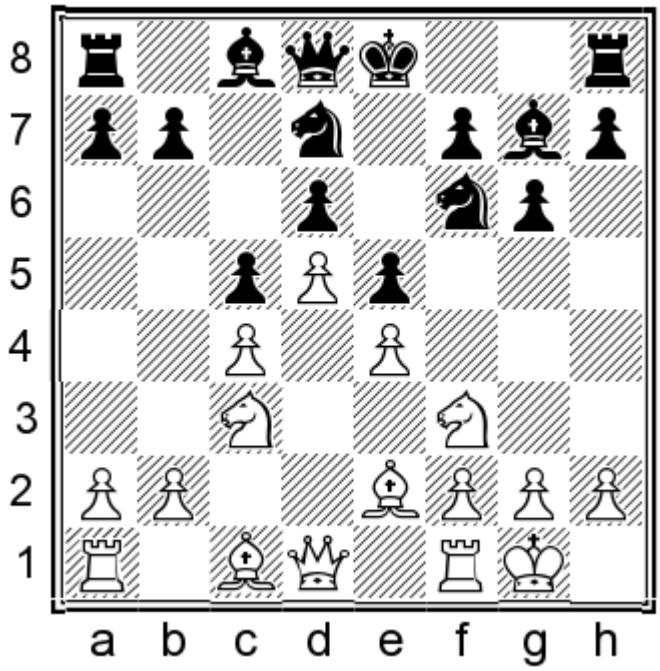
1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 d6 3.Nf3 g6 4.d4 Nd7

There are many roads that lead to the King's Indian Defense. This is one of them (see also game 120).

5.e4 c6 6.Be2 Bg7 7.0-0 Ngf6 8.d5

The continuation 8.Bg5 was played in game 36.

8...c5



9.Bg5

Naturally, Petrosian does not miss the chance to play his system, especially such a good version.

9...a6

Pilnik interprets the opening in an original manner; he is in no hurry to castle. He played a similar game against Petrosian in Amsterdam (see *Typical Methods of Strategy*). However, here this is more of a forced decision as the standard 9...h6 10.Bh4 0-0 would have led to a well-known theoretical position down a tempo for Black.

10.a3 Qc7 11.Nd2 h5

Revealing his cards. Black wants to exchange the dark-square bishops, and then do his best to resist and hope for chances. A simple strategy! I must say that this “method” can work only against players of moderate strength – one cannot get away with such things when playing against the best.

12.Qa4! Kf8

So to speak, a forced link of the plan, because the continuation 12...Bh6 13.Bxf6! 0-0 14.Be7 Re8 15.Bxd6 does not work for Black. Note that now Petrosian obstruct his opponent’s intentions with 13.Nf3 Bh6 14.Bh4 or more sharply, 13.f4, but he preferred to continue to play positionally.

13.b4! Bh6 14.Bxh6+ Rxh6 15.Rab1 Kg7 16.Rb2 Rh8 17.Rfb1

So, White has the advantage coming out of the opening, but of course, he is still very far from winning. Petrosian begins the painstaking work of destabilizing his opponent’s position.

17...Ne8 18.Qc2 Qd8 19.Nb3 b6 20.Bd3

Before moving the queen to d2, White takes measures against ...f5, just in case. Black in response seizes space on the kingside, pushing forward the h-pawn.

20...h4 21.Qd2 Qf6 22.Qe3 Qf4

Well played. Now in case of 23.Qxf4 exf4, by getting the e5-square and the possibility of a frontal attack on the

e4-pawn, Black almost equalizes.

23.bxc5 dxc5

The endgame after 23...Qxe3 24.fxe3 Nxc5 (24...bxc5 25.Na5) 25.Nxc5 bxc5 is favorable for White.

24.Nd2!

Continuing the “war of nerves.” Probably, after 24...Qxe3 25.fxe3 Nd6, White planned an exchange sacrifice: 26.Rxb6!? Nxb6 27.Rxb6.

24...Nd6 25.Qe2 Qg5 26.h3

Seriously fearing for the fate of the b6-pawn (White threatens 27.Na4), Pilnik decides to move the queen back to d8.

26...Qd8 27.Qe3!

A small maneuvering victory. The black queen has left and the white queen stays, so the valuable c1-h6 diagonal belongs to White!

27...Rb8 28.Bc2

The next round of maneuvering, now against the weak b6-pawn. As we know, it is possible to maneuver against even a single weakness; in that case, it is necessary to have a sufficient variety of ways to attack. White has the maneuvers Ba4-c6 and Nc3-a4, and the possibility of further concentration of the “heavy artillery” along the b-file. When possible, the “infantry” might join, too: a3-a4-a5. Of course, White should not forget about possible counterplay by the opponent on the kingside.

28...Nf6 29.Na4

Avoiding deviation from the previous plan. 29.f4 Re8 30.Ba4 exf4 31.Qxf4 Nh5 is not too promising for White.

29...Nd7 30.Bd3

Petrosian begins a new regrouping of forces aiming to hinder Black’s active opportunities associated with the moves ...f5 and ...Nf6-h5.

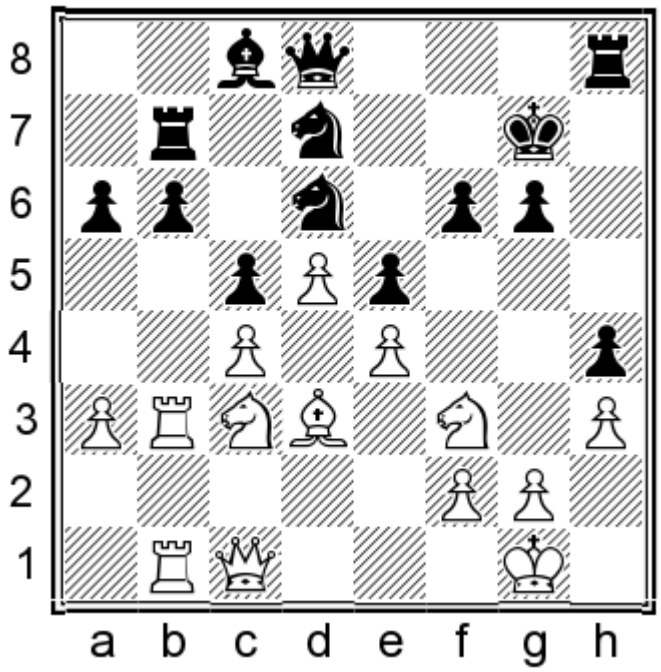
30...Rb7 31.Nc3 Re8

Intending to play ...f5.

32.Nf3 Rh8

After 32...f5, unpleasant is 33.Qg5!.

33.Qc1 f6 34.Rb3



34...b5?

Black cannot withstand the tension of the struggle and makes a mistake. The attempt to create counterplay is refuted by a beautiful maneuver connected with the retreat of the pieces.

35.Nd2!

“Combinations slumbering under a thin veil!” (Adolf Anderssen).

35...Qc7 36.R3b2!

Resuming the threat of cxb5.

36...b4

No better is 36...bxc4 37.Nxc4.

37.axb4 cxb4 38.Na4!

Black’s hopes were pinned on the continuation 38.Rxb4 Rxb4 39.Rxb4 Nc5 40.Be2 Bd7, and the white pawns are blocked. But Petrosian read Nimzowitsch’s books too well to give Black such a chance.

38...Nc5 39.Nxc5 Qxc5 40.Nb3 Qa7 41.c5

Breaking the blockade! White’s pawns move forward and Black has no way to stop them. Borisenko used to say in such positions, “Connected pawns are more powerful than the Council of People’s Commissars!” [The Council of People’s Commissars was the highest government authority in the Soviet Union 1946, when it was transformed into the Council of Ministers – translator].

41...Nb5 42.c6 Rb8 43.Qc5 Qc7

Or 43...Qxc5 44.Nxc5 a5 45.Ra1, etc. With the loss of the b4-pawn, resistance becomes futile.

44.Qxb4 Nd6 45.Qc5 f5 46.Nd2 Rxb2 47.Rxb2 fxe4 48.Nxe4 Rd8 49.Nxd6 Rxd6 50.Be4 Kf6 51.Rb3 Black resigned.

Part III
Experiments

Chess is no doubt not only sport but also full-fledged creative work, and in any creative work, progress is impossible without experimentation, exploration, and influx of fresh ideas. When a chess player experiments, he learns and realizes his creative potential. Sometimes it happens spontaneously and the solution is born at the board, but usually this is a well thought out and prepared step, the result of analytical research or tournament tactics.

Little is known about Petrosian as an experimenter. His most active and fruitful period was the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, when Petrosian modernized his style, gradually gaining that unique combination of harmony and power that subsequently made it possible for him to climb to the top of the chess Olympus.

Chapter 13
Realist or Romantic?

Every outstanding master has a unique vision and approach to the solution of chess problems, when, of course, there is an element of choice. This is why a chess player's experimentation presents extremely valuable material, providing plenty of food for thought as well as a way to evaluate his creativity.

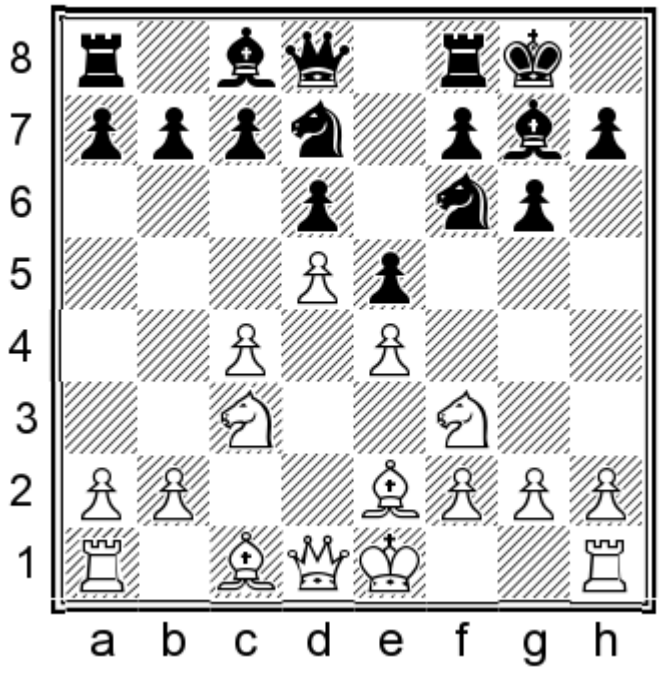


Petrosian mainly experimented in three areas: (1) opening novelties; (2) development of original strategic ideas; and (3) searching for optimal methods of handling a specific opponent. And, of course, the very choice of the King's Indian Defense in those early years can be considered an experiment, since this opening was absolutely unexplored and Petrosian was literally creating it from scratch.

Petrosian chose the classical system and similar structures as the main testing ground for his ideas.

(268) Petrosian – Uhlmann
Moscow 1967

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.d4 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 e5 7.d5 Nbd7



8.Qc2

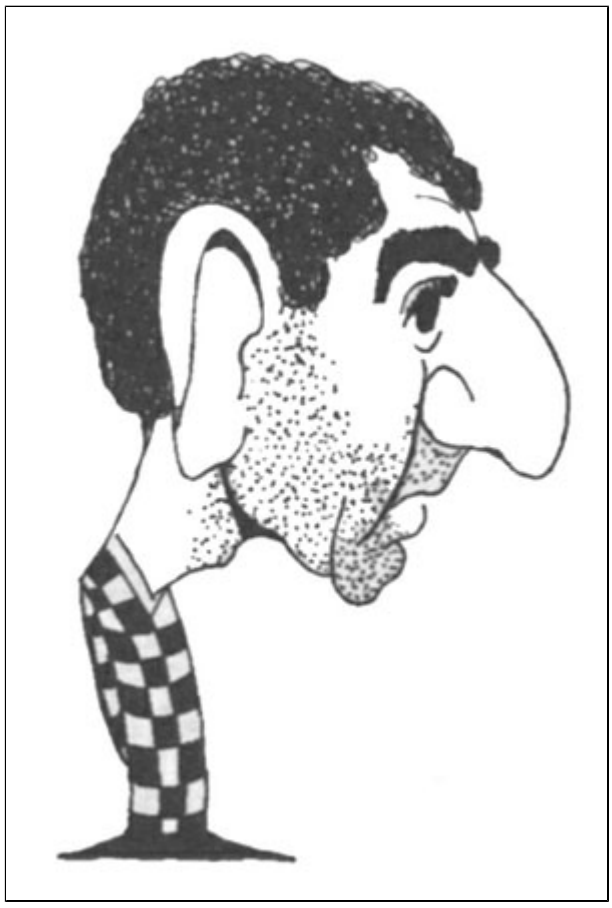
Usually this move is played a little later. The theoretical continuations are 8.0-0 and 8.Bg5.

8...a5 9.0-0

Now the game transposes to the main variations. The order of moves chosen by Petrosian has a unique significance if White chooses the plan with queenside castling (see the next game).

9...Ne8 10.g3

Planning Nh4. Petrosian definitely liked this prophylactic technique. He used it both in the Classical Benoni structures (game 144) and in the regular King's Indian Defense (when the black c-pawn is at the starting position). Petrosian tested it for the first time in the 12th game of the match against Spassky (Moscow 1966) (see "Great Master of Prophylaxis" in the chapter *Portrait of a Chess Player*).



10...Nc5

Dubious is 10...f5 because of 11.exf5 gxf5 12.Nh4 and then f2-f4, with an initiative for White.

11.Nh4 Bh3

Again bad is 11...f5 12.exf5 gxf5 13.f4, and Black is forced to play the disadvantageous move ...e4.

12.Re1 Bf6

Uhlmann intends to chase the knight away from h4 and then advance ...f5. As grandmaster Sergey Dolmatov pointed out, also possible is 12...f5 13.exf5 g5!? (13...gxf5 14.f4 is weaker) and 14...Bxf5 with counterplay.

13.Nf3

On 13.Ng2, Black could have continued 13...Bg5, not fearing f2-f4.

13...Be7

Controlling the g5- and h4-squares.

14.Be3 b6 15.a3

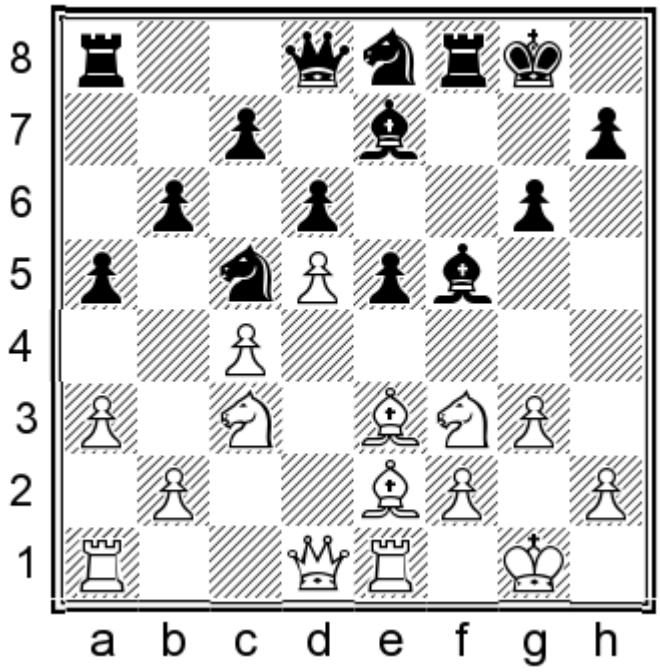
The threat of b2-b4 forces Black to advance the f-pawn without sufficient preparation and engage in a tactical battle in the center. Deserving attention was 15.Kh1!?, hindering the advance of the f-pawn: 15...f5? 16.Ng1.

15...f5 16.exf5 Bxf5

Of course not 16...gxf5 17.b4, with an advantage for White.

17.Qd1

As a result of the opponents' joint efforts, the position has become tense and full of tactical possibilities. Later, the opponents exchange clever attempts to seize the initiative, and the game resembles a duel between two skilled fencers.



17...Bf6!

The "active" 17...Ne4 would have led to a clear advantage for white after 18.Nxe4 Bxe4 19.Nd2 Bf5 20.Bh6 Ng7 (20...Rf7) 21.g4 Bd7 22.Ne4. By returning the bishop to the long diagonal, Black consolidates the position and at the same time stops White's threat of seizing the e4-square.

18.b4

Petrosian decides to make a very committal move, because both 18.Bxc5 bxc5 19.Nd2 e4!? 20.Ndxe4 (20.Bf1 Bxc3 21.bxc3 Nf6) 20...Bxe4 21.Nxe4 Bxb2 22.Ra2 Bd4 and 18.Nd2 Bg5 19.Bxc5 Bxd2 20.Qxd2 bxc5 would have yielded nothing (indicated by Sergey Dolmatov).

18...axb4 19.axb4 Rxa1 20.Qxa1 Nd3!

Of course, 20...Nb3 would have been a gross mistake in view of 21.Qd1.

21.Rb1

Practically forced, as in case of 21.Bxd3 Bxd3 Black could play to undermine the d5-pawn; for example, 22.Nd2 Qd7 23.Nce4 b5.

21...Ng7 22.Nb5

White hurries to make a series of exchanges on the potentially dangerous diagonal and practically declines to fight for the key e4-square. No good is 22.Nd2? because of 22...Nf4! 23.gxf4 exf4 24.Bxf4 Bxb1. However, as the analysis shows, the coldblooded 22.Rb3 would have still allowed White to hope for an advantage.

22...Bg4 23.Qa2

Bad is 23.Qa7 Bxf3 24.Bxf3 Bg5, and Black begins a counterattack.

23...Nf5 Draw.

The opponents have equal chances, which is evident from the rough variation 24.Ne1 Bxe2 25.Qxe2 Nxe1 26.Rxe1 Bg5 27.Bxg5 Qxg5 28.Rf1 (but not 28.Nxc7? Nd4) 28...Rf7, etc.

(269) Petrosian – Gligorić
European Team Championship
Kapfenberg 1970

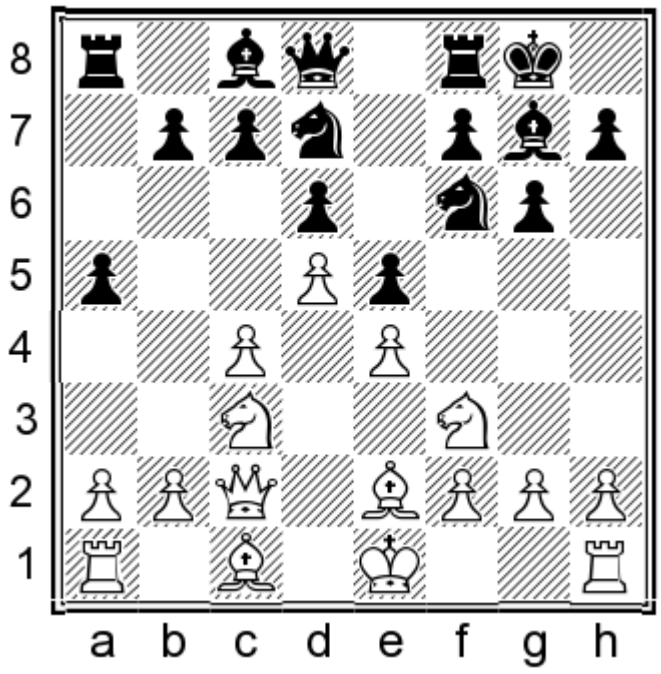
1.c4 g6 2.e4 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 e5

Subsequently Gligorić recalled: “...Petrosian confessed to me that he has a notebook with new ideas in different openings and that he began to use it only after he lost the championship title. At the European Championship in Kapfenberg, he tried to catch me by surprise with the variation 7.d5 Nbd7 8.Qc2!.”

It looks like Petrosian succeeded at first.

7.d5 Nbd7 8.Qc2 a5

Having forced the advance of the a-pawn, White plans to hide his king on the queenside, where it will be relatively safe. This is the point of Petrosian’s idea. Now he follows with a clever maneuver of the white bishop.



9.Bg5! h6 10.Be3 Ng4 11.Bd2

As it often happens, here the strategic plan is associated with a tactical twist: 11...f5 is bad (if this move were to work, then White's whole idea would have obviously been questionable) in view of 12.h3 fxe4 (or 12...Ngf6 13.exf5 gxf5 14.Qxf5!) 13.hxg4 exf3 14.Bxf3.

11...Nc5 12.h3 Nf6 13.Be3

Gligorić was worried about 13.g4!?, which, perhaps, would have been a more consistent continuation.

13...Nh7 14.Nd2

14.g4 was still deserved attention. If 14...f5, then 15.gxf5 gxf5 16.Rg1 with the initiative.

Having gotten some respite, Black has time to take prophylactic measures and secure the kingside.

14...h5!

A typical technique. Now White should not play g2-g4: 15.g4?! h4, followed by ...Bf6-g5. According to Gligorić, 14...f5 was very risky because of 15.exf5 gxf5 16.g4!.

15.0-0-0 Bd7 16.h4!

On the previous move, Black did not dare advance the pawn to h4, which could have led to a very sharp fight. Petrosian eliminates this possibility just in case.

16...Qe7 17.Kb1 b6

On the immediate 17...f5 White can play 18.Bxc5 dxc5 19.exf5.

18.f3 f5 19.Rde1 Nf6 20.Bd3

To hold on to the e4-pawn, White has to allow the exchange of the king's bishop for the knight, after which Black has counterplay on the white squares.

20...Nxd3 21.Qxd3 Rae8 22.a3

Offering that the opponent play 22...a4, after which the a4-pawn, although occupying a strong position, would have required constant care and distracted the black pieces from carrying out the main plan. Gligorić weighed all the pros and cons and rejected this move.

22...Rf7 23.b4

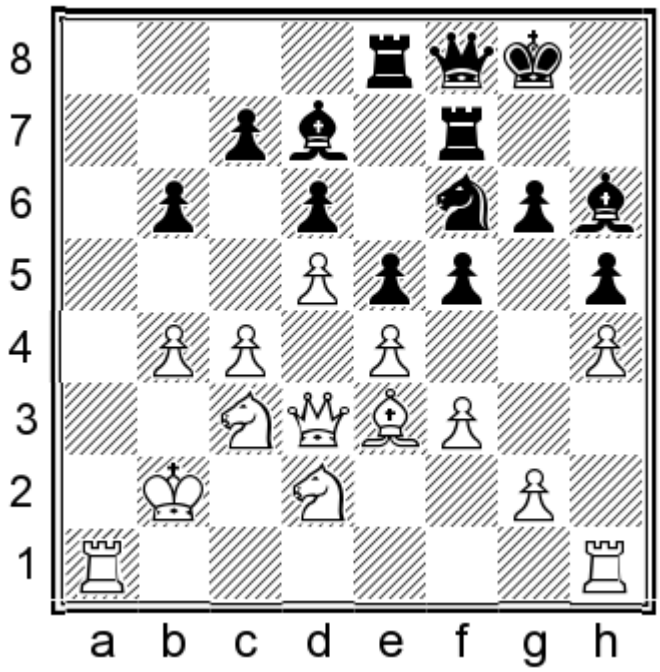
White advances his pawns in front of his king: he does not have any other active play.

23...axb4 24.axb4 Qf8

Of course, in such a position the advance ...f4 would have been a mistake, since it is difficult for Black to get to the h4- and g2- pawns. Gligorić came up with an excellent plan: keeping e4 under pressure, he prepares the exchange of the dark-square bishops.

25.Kb2 Bh6 26.Ra1

Threatening an invasion on a7.



26...fxe4

The beginning of the active phase of counterplay. Black forces simplifications and conducts a breakthrough in the center.

27.Ndxe4 Bf5

According to Gligorić, 27...Nxe4 was even simpler.

28.Bxh6 Qxh6 29.Qd2!

Otherwise, Black trades on e4 and invades on the f-file.

29...Qxd2+ 30.Nxd2 e4!

Just in time. Now it becomes clear that Black's counterplay balances Whites initiative on the queenside.

31.fxe4 Nxe4 32.Rhe1 Rfe7 33.Ndxe4 Bxe4 34.Ra7

Weaker is 34.Nxe4?! Rxe4 35.Rxe4 Rxe4 36.Kb3 Rxh4 37.Ra7 Rg4, and it is White that has to think about drawing (indicated by Svetozar Gligorić).

34...Bxg2 35.Rg1 Bh3 36.Rxg6+ Kh7

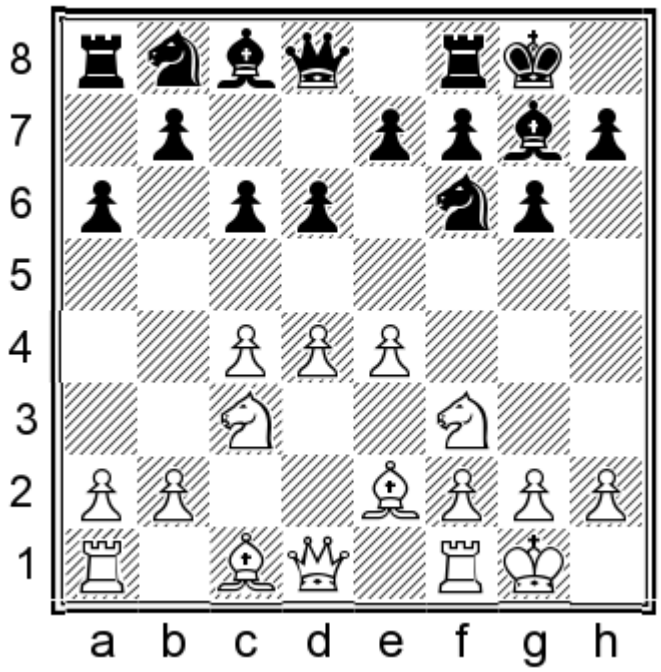
Draw, in view of the continuation indicated by Gligorić: 37.Rg3 Bf1 38.Kb3 Rf8 with the idea of ...Rf4, and so on.

As we know, chessplayers have different attitudes regarding the color of the pieces. Most traditionally prefer the white pieces, and Petrosian was no exception. Curiously, playing White, he tried to play precise, classical chess even when he was experimenting, while he often took liberties with Black. In the next two games he chose a system that is very strategically risky and obviously provocative.

(270) Rashkovsky – Petrosian
41st USSR Championship
Moscow 1973

1.d4 g6 2.c4 Bg7 3.e4 d6 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 c6 7.0-0 a6

The plan with an early ...b5 is very rarely played in the classical variation, because unlike, say, the Sämisch system, here White is perfectly mobilized and can quickly prepare e4-e5. Granted, if Black survives until the endgame, then the exchange of his knight's pawn for the white c-pawn promises decent prospects. The question is, will Black survive?



8.Re1 b5 9.e5

Chasing away the opponent's knight and freeing the e4-square for his own knight in case Black advances the pawn to b4.

9...Ne8 10.Bg5 Ra7 11.h3

11.Bh4 is a good alternative, as Cooper played against Petrosian (see the next game).

11...Rb7

Threatening to take on c4, Black wishes to provoke the exchange cxb5. The straightforward 11...bxc4 12.Bxc4 would have led to a substantial advantage for White.

12.cxb5 axb5 13.Rc1 Qa5

In an effort to intercept the initiative, Petrosian makes a rather risky move, distancing the queen from the kingside. After a long thought, Rashkovsky responds with an energetic tactical breakthrough, leading to an unusual balance of forces on the board.

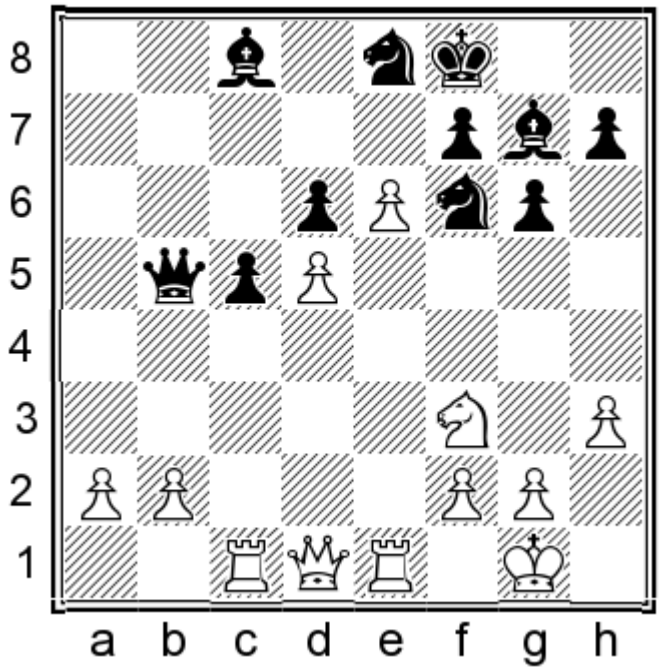
14.d5! c5

Headlong! Petrosian thirsts for battle and forgets about caution! 14...b4 was more careful (Jan van Reek); for example, 15.exd6 Nxd6 16.dxc6 Nxc6 17.Nd5 Be6! with counterplay.

15.Bxb5! Rxb5?!

Not leaving his opponent a choice. Apparently, Petrosian failed to take something into account or misjudged the final position in this variation. 15...f6 16.exf6 exf6 17.Rxe8 Rxe8 18.Bxe8 fxg5 would have been better (indicated by van Reek).

16.Nxb5 Qxb5 17.Bxe7 Nd7 18.e6 Ndf6 19.Bxf8 Kxf8



Two rooks and two pawns against three minor pieces – which is better? In this case, the position favors Whites: he has the e-file, an initiative on the kingside, but... only a half-hour to think about his remaining moves. It was this last factor plus the amazing defensive mastery of Petrosian that determined the result of the game.

20.Ng5 fxe6

Where did the time go? Black spent about a half-hour choosing between this capture and 20...Bh6. Later in the game, the factor of time becomes more and more important and gradually comes to the forefront.

21.Nxe6+ Kg8 22.Qf3

Deserving of attention was Nxg7 (immediately or after an initial 22.a4). Probably, White was worried about the fate of the d5-pawn and wanted to exchange one of the black knights capable of attacking it.

22...Bh6 23.Nc7

At this point, hardly anyone in the tournament hall could believe that Petrosian could save the game.

23...Nxc7 24.Qxf6 Bf8 25.Rcd1

Rashkovsky spent seven minutes on this move. If White has to defend his pawns, it means that his initiative will fade.

25...Qd7 26.Re3

Another eight minutes.

26...Bb7

White had less than five minutes left on his clock, and Black had a little more. The position is now unclear, and the opponents decided not to defer the decision to the flag and declared a truce. Draw. Less than a year later, in a match against the Welsh team at the Olympiad in Nice, Petrosian decided to repeat this risky experiment.

(271) Cooper – Petrosian
XXI Olympiad
Nice 1974

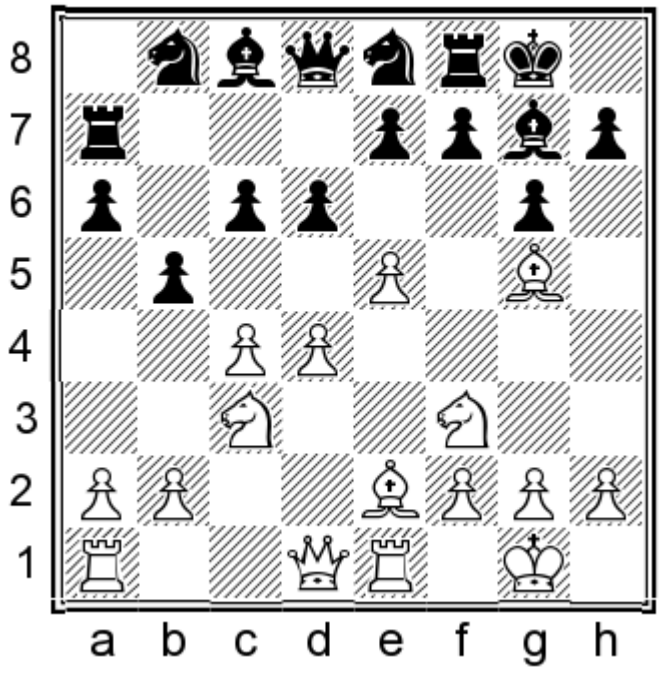
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 c6 7.0-0 a6 8.Re1 b5 9.e5 Ne8 10.Bg5

A natural move that provides White with a long-term initiative. However, the same can be said of almost any continuation. For example, quite good is 10.Bf4. The game Ralf Akesson-Smyslov (London 1988) continued: 10...bxc4?! 11.Bxc4 d5 12.Bb3 Bg4 13.h3 Bxf3 14.Qxf3 Nc7 15.Rac1 Ne6 16.Be3 Nd7 17.Qd1 Kh8 18.f4 Bh6 19.Qd2, with a significant advantage for White. Instead of 10...bxc4?! Black could have played the stronger 10...Nd7 11.Rc1 Bb7 12.Bf1 dxe5 – draw (Spasov- Petrosian, Sochi 1977).

So, the question arises: why does Black plays such variations? Of course, not to suffer for a half-point. As strange as it may seem, while defending, Black nurtures ambitious plans. Black counts on the complexity and novelty of the position, on the fact that his opponent will play unnecessarily forthrightly without delving into the details or will waste energy in search of a non-existent refutation and over-press at some point. Often, psychological reasons are added to the mix.

But I think that in this case this has nothing to do with psychology. It seems Petrosian did not really count on the effect of surprise, since Cooper could very well have seen his game against Rashkovsky. Rather, Petrosian relied on his experience and on his ability to defend. And, of course, the youth and lack of experience of his opponent played into his hands.

10...Ra7



11.Bh4

And here is the prepared novelty. White turns off the path beaten by Rashkovsky. The idea of this move is to deprive Black of the possible tactical resource ...f6.

11...Rb7 12.cxb5 axb5 13.d5

The decision to force events looks premature. Although White retains the initiative, his setup in the center loses stability and becomes more vulnerable. 13.b4 or 13.a3 would have been more solid.

13...b4 14.dxc6 Nxc6 15.Nd5 Qa5

Bad is 15...Nxe5? in view of 16.Nxe5 Bxe5 (16...dxe5 17.Nxe7+) 17.Ba6!, and Black suffers material losses (indicated by Alexander Kotov). The e5-pawn is still invincible, but for how long?

16.Rc1

An ineffective attack. At the same time, White misses the opportunity to improve his position on the queenside: 16.a4!, taking advantage of the fact that 16...bxa3? 17.Rxa3 or 16...dxe5? 17.Bb5! is not advantageous for Black.

16...Be6! 17.Nf4!?

A mutual exchange of blows. It is clear that the continuation 17.Rxc6 Qxd5 is not promising for White. At the same time, Black is not yet ready to take on e5; for example, 17...Nxe5 18.Nxe5 Bxe5 19.Nxe6 fxe6 20.Qb3 Ng7 21.Bc4, and White wins back the pawn.

17...Bd7 18.Qd5 Qb6 19.Qb3 e6 20.Nd3 Ra7 21.Red1?

A silent panic. White's decision to sacrifice the central pawn for a couple of active moves is in no way justified, especially since he had the solid continuation 21.Bg3. For example, 21...dxe5 22.Ndxe5 Nxe5 23.Nxe5 Nd6 (23...Ba4) with equal chances.

21...dxe5 22.Nc5 Bc8 23.Na4 Qb7 24.Qc2

If 24.Nc5, then 24...Qa8.

24...Nf6! 25.Nc5

25.Qxc6 Qxc6 26.Rxc6 Rxa4 is bad for White.

25...Qa8 26.Bxf6

The only way to support a dwindling initiative.

26...Bxf6 27.Ne4 Bg7 28.Nd6

And again the black knight is invulnerable: 28.Qxc6? Bb7.

28...Ne7

In a few moves the situation on the board has changed significantly. Black has an extra pawn, while White's activity is fading and he might very well encounter problems on the queenside.

29.Qc5

Cooper looks for an opportunity to exchange the b4- and a2-pawns.

29...Ba6 30.Bxa6 Rxa6 31.Qxb4 Nd5 32.Qc5 Ra5 33.Qc6

There is nothing better. The potential threat of ...Nf4 forces White to offer a queen trade.

33...Rxa2 34.Qxa8 Rfxa8 35.Ng5 Rf8

Coolly refuting the moves of the opponent's cavalry. Next Black will advance ...h6, and then the black rook will return to the queenside.

36.Rb1 h6 37.Nge4 Rb8

Black's immediate task is to prevent the exchange of the strong d5-knight by way of Nc3.

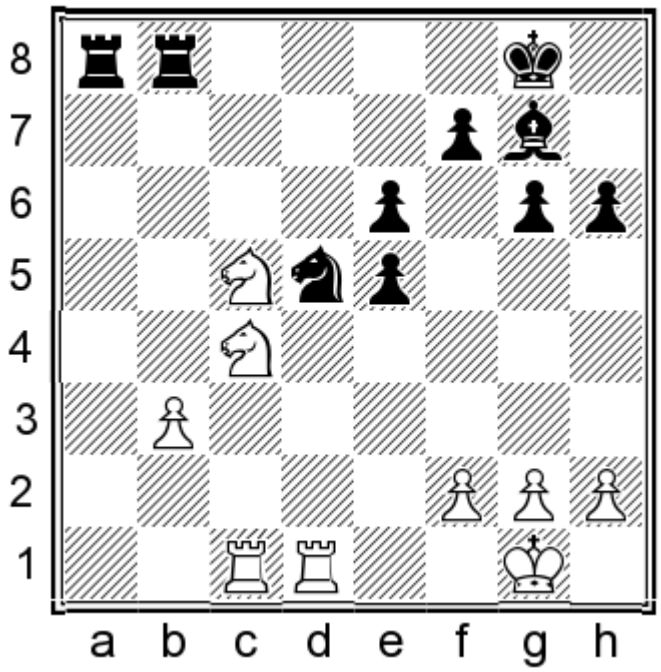
38.Nc4 Rb4 39.Rbc1

White has temporarily reinforced his position. Petrosian begins to "juggle" his rooks, loosening his opponent's defense.

39...Raa4 40.b3

Not really hoping for 40...Rxb3?? 41.Nc5. White has no choice but to continue his tactic of small traps and one-move threats.

40...Ra8! 41.Nc5 Rb5 42.Nd6 Rbb8 43.Nc4



43...e4!

A move that shows technique and pleases the eye of the connoisseur. The “trump” bishop effectively enters the game. Petrosian is not intimidated by the drawish specter of the ending with pawns on one flank. With four rooks and active black pieces, White’s hopes to save the game are futile.

44.Nxe4 Rxb3 45.g3

Kotov suggested the more persistent 45.h4.

45...g5 46.h3 Kh7 47.Nc5 Rbb8 48.Nd7 Rb7 49.Nc5 Rc7

Near the end of the game, the white knights lost their outposts and came under the crossfire.

Cooper gave in to despair, decided not to drag on the useless resistance, and resigned. A possible continuation would have been as follows: 49...Rc7 50.Ne4 f5 51.Ned6 (51.Ned2 Rac8) 51...Ra4 52.Kg2 Rc6, and Black wins in a few moves.

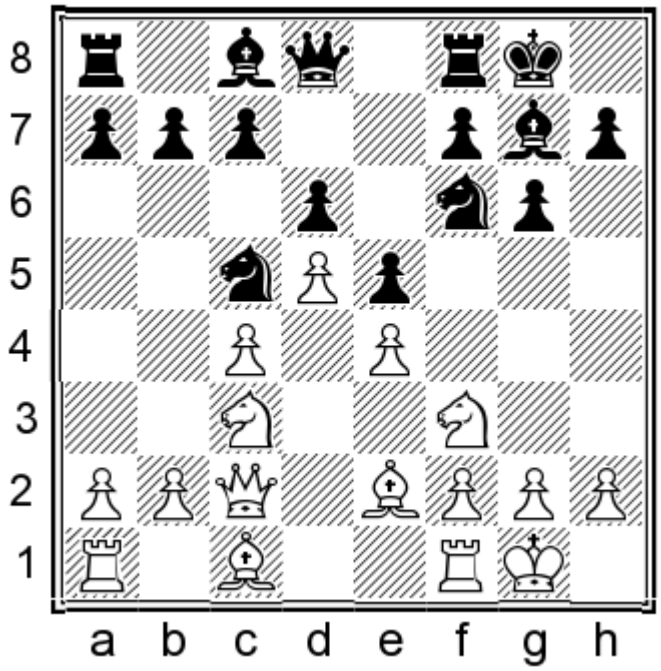
“He is a real romanticist, whose creativity is mainly determined by fantasy and emotion... His games are full of strength. His impeccable opening knowledge creates a solid foundation for his games. However, his meaning and goal remains a boundless, mysterious, ‘adventurous’ middlegame.” This is how, quite unconventionally, a commentator for a German chess publications described Petrosian’s play at the Candidates Tournament in Amsterdam (1956). Meanwhile, in my opinion, this is a precise portrait of Petrosian the experimenter. I would only add that Petrosian’s romanticism should be called “a new strategic romanticism.” By the way, it was from the Amsterdam tournament on that Petrosian began to change his style.

“... At the Candidates’ Tournament I decided to simply ‘play chess,’” he wrote later, “which is a natural desire for a grandmaster: to play every game without regard for the opponent’s strength, to play without worrying how the result of the game will affect the result of the tournament.”

An experiment always carries risk. Therefore, deciding to take such a step, the chessplayer must carefully weigh all the pros and cons. The success of the endeavor depends on many circumstances. Is it the right moment? What is the opponent’s state of mind? Is this idea well thought through, is the quality of the chess analysis good? What is the probability of a refutation? Is the experimenter himself emotionally ready and can he handle it if the game follows an unintended scenario? And so on. Of course, it is impossible to calculate everything and be prepared for everything.

(272) Smyslov – Petrosian
Training Tournament
Voronovo 1952

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 Nbd7 8.d5 Nc5 9.Qc2



A well-known position in which Black usually continues 9...a5 (see games 4, 5). But is b2-b4 really a threat?

9...Nh5!?

An invitation to a creative dialogue. Now of course Smyslov could have responded with the standard 10.g3, after which it seems Black would have still had to advance the rook pawn, but White was in a principled mood.

10.b4! Na6

Black's idea lies in this retreat with tempo: the b4-pawn is under attack and Black threatens the unpleasant invasion of the knight on the f4-square. Also deserving of attention was 10...Nd7, replacing the direct threat to the b4-pawn with the indirect ...a5. At the same time, the queen's knight would have occupied a more centralized position.

11.a3

White understands the position deeply. Given that Black plans to play ...f5 and White will take on f5, 11.Rb1 seems more natural, but as we will see, this could have in fact led to a significant loss of time.

11...Nf4 12.Re1 Nxe2+?!

A foolish exchange – see the annotation to the 11th move in the game Petrosian-Gligorić (game 43). Black is in a hurry to get the proverbial bishop pair, which is of little use in this situation, but he actually loses his only active piece and allows his opponent to arrange his forces harmoniously. Then, what could he have played instead? Maybe 12...f5 13.Bf1 g5, having in mind the continuation 14.g3 g4! with double-edged play in the spirit of the aforementioned game, or the even sharper 12...Bg4 13.h3 Bh5!? . If we are experimenting, let's experiment!

13.Qxe2 f5

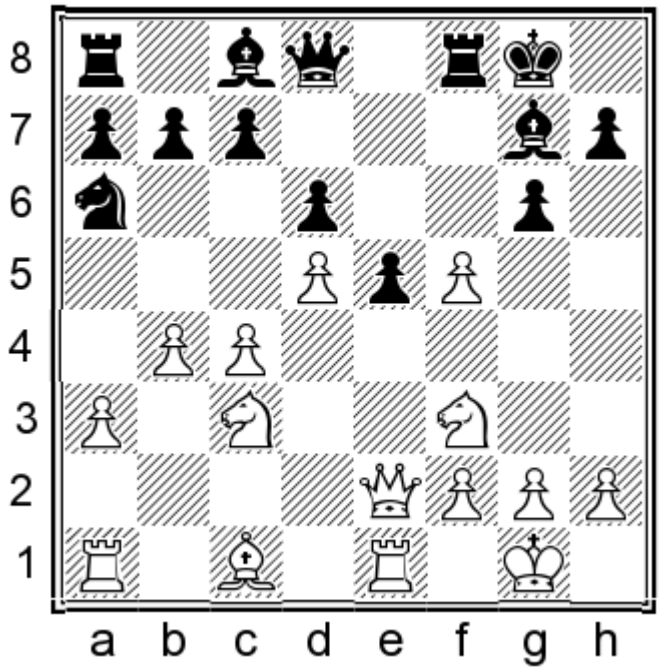
Petrosian probably pinned his hopes on this advance. Taking on f5 seems dangerous for White. If that is true,

Black will obtain serious counterchances.

14.exf5!

An intense struggle! Note that the training tournament in the summer of 1952 was not ordinary. The strongest Soviet chess players of the time (Botvinnik, Keres, Kotov, and Smyslov on the one side and Bronstein, Boleslavsky, Geller, and Petrosian on the other) fought for their place on the USSR Olympic team. So the grandmasters tried with might and main, and the competition was fierce. It suffices to say that the world champion Mikhail Botvinnik did not make the team!

Grandmaster Vasily Smyslov, who was on the rise at that time, demonstrated his best qualities in this game.



14...gxf5

In case of 14...e4, White could win by sacrificing a rook in the main variation: 15.Nxe4! Bxa1 (no better is 15...gxf5 16.Bg5 Qd7 17.Ng3 Bxa1 18.Rxa1, and White has an extremely strong attack despite rough material equality with a pawn for the exchange) 16.Bg5 Bf6 (otherwise White could simply play 17.Rxa1, etc.) 17.Nxf6+ Rxf6 18.Qb2 Kf7 19.fxg6+ hxg6 (19...Kxg6 20.Re8!) 20.h4, with the unstoppable threat 21.Bxf6 Qxf6 22.Ng5+ Kg7 23.Re7+.

Thus, by using hidden tactical nuances, White managed to seize the initiative. And the opponent's last move gives White the opportunity to play in the center: Bb2, Rad1, and c4-c5. It is clear that the awkward placing of Black's knight and light-square bishop only aggravate his difficult situation. So, I think that a relatively better continuation for Black was 14...Bxf5 (finishing, at least formally, the development of his pieces), and White's initiative would not have developed so rapidly.

15.Bb2 Bd7 16.Rad1

Completing the last preparations for the ramming move c4-c5.

16...Re8 17.c5!

Smyslov continues the offensive with inspiration. He threatens c5-c6.

17...Nb8

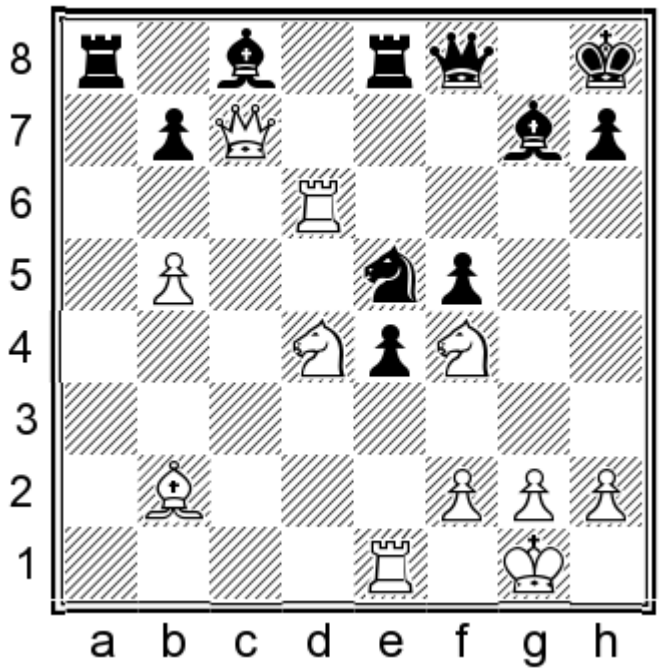
It is sad to make such moves, but to accept the pawn sacrifice would have been even worse. For example, 17...dxc5 18.b5 Nb8 19.Qc4 e4 20.d6+ Be6 21.dxc7 Qxc7 22.Nd5 Qd7 (if 22...Bxb2, then 23.Nxc7 Bxc4 24.Nxe8) 23.Ne5 Qd6 24.Nf6+ Bxf6 25.Rxd6 Bxc4 26.Rxf6, and White should win.

With the next moves Petrosian makes an attempt to build a last-ditch defense, opening the a-file and transferring the bishop to c8 and the knight to d7.

18.Qc4 Kh8 19.b5 a6 20.a4 axb5 21.axb5 dxc5 22.Qxc5 Bc8 23.d6 cxd6 24.Rxd6 Nd7 25.Qc4 Qe7

Another, more active possibility, was 25...e4 26.Nd4 Qg5.

26.Qc7 e4 27.Nd5 Qf8 28.Nd4 Ne5 29.Nf4



29...Nc4?

An unfortunate mistake at the moment when the situation on the board has already begun to improve. But, as you know, in a difficult situation, good moves are rare. 29...Re7 would have held the position.

30.Nde6! Black resigned.

A negative experience is still an experience. Without this failure, there would not be the next game. Nine years later at the tournament in Zürich, Petrosian made another attempt to prove that his idea is viable.

(273) Larsen – Petrosian
Zürich 1961

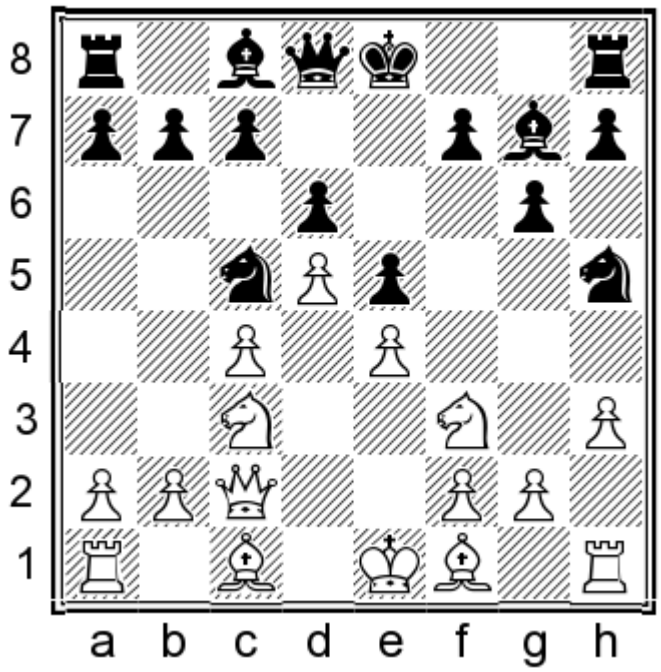
1.c4 g6 2.Nc3 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.e4 e5 5.d5 Nd7 6.Nf3 Ngf6 7.h3 Nc5

In the classical interpretation of the Makogonov variation, the white-square bishop is often developed to d3. Another popular scheme of development is associated with the moves Be3, Nd2 and g2-g4. The energetic continuation chosen by Black in the game is directed against both white setups.

8.Qc2 Nh5!?

A provocative move. If we compare this game to the previous one, then the idea of provoking the advance b2-b4 looks more attractive here, since White has played the “extra” move h2-h3. Note that after the standard 8...a5

Black's knight would not have been able to get to h5: 9.g4!?, as was played, for example, in the game Ravn-Petrosian that we discussed previously (see *The Problem of the Exchange*).



9.b4 Na6 10.a3 0-0

10...Nf4 would have been pointless because of 11.g3. Bearing in mind his experience in his game against Smyslov, Petrosian is in no hurry to move his knight to f4 – the threat is stronger than its execution!

11.g3

So, the threat has had its effect. I suppose that in case of 11.Be2, Petrosian would not have immediately played ...Nf4 (11...Nf4 12.0-0; 11...f5 12.exf5 [12.0-0 Nf6!] 12...Bxf5 13.Ne4 Nf4!, with the initiative for Black.)

11...f5 12.Be2 Nf6 13.Nd2 c6

Black can be satisfied with the outcome of the opening: having attacked the center according to all of the rules of chess science, on two sides with the pawns, he has already started active operations and is clearly ahead of his opponent, who has yet to complete the mobilization of his forces.

14.Bd3 Nc7 15.Bb2 cxd5 16.cxd5 Kh8!

An insidious move, the true meaning of which Larsen realized too late.

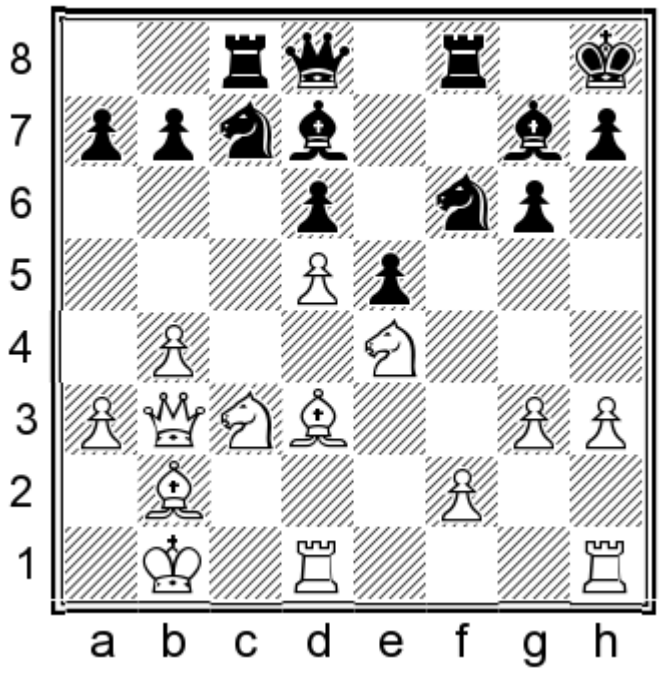
17.0-0-0

17.f3 is more solid, so that in case of ...fxe4 White can take with a pawn, maintaining the pawn center. Probably, Larsen believed that his opponent was planning to besiege the d5-pawn and realized that it was invulnerable, but in fact Black's idea turned out to be much deeper.

17...Bd7 18.Kb1 Rc8

Simple and strong. 18...a5 was also quite good.

19.Qb3 fxe4 20.Ndxe4



20...Nb5!

A tactical operation with strategic purposes. The result is a mass exchange of the minor pieces, after which White begins to experience difficulties.

21.Nxb5

In case of 21.Bxb5 Bxb5 22.Nxf6 (without check – that is where ...Kh8 came in handy), Black has the important *zwischenzug* 22...Bc4!. Other possibilities on the 22nd move do not help White either; for example: 22.Nxb5 Nxe4 or 22.Nxd6 Rxc3! with a significant advantage for Black.

21...Bxb5

Exactly right! After 21...Nxe4 22.Bxe4 Bxb5 23.h4 White has counterchances.

22.Nxf6

After 22.Ng5, Black probably planned 22...Qd7 (threatening 23...Ba4), and if 23.Bxb5, then 23...Qf5+!.

22...Bxd3+

“Everything is taken into account by the mighty hurricane!” [from the novel *The Golden Calf* (1931) by the Soviet writers Ilya Ilf and Evgeny Petrov. This means a carefully calculated combination behind which there is a strong mind – translator] and the bishop manages to be exchanged and leave the board with check.

23.Qxd3 Rxf6 24.f3

After 24.f4, Black would respond 24...exf4! with great pleasure, and, as is easy to see, taking on f6 loses.

So, let us sum up the results of Black’s operation. The exchanges of the minor pieces fundamentally changed the situation on the board. The space factor no longer plays a significant role: now the open files and the presence of pawn weaknesses become more important, and Black’s position is clearly better in that regard. In addition, Black has the initiative. Another important factor in assessing this position is the fact that the bishops remain on the board. For now, their main function is to protect the kings. However, while the black bishop is still able to defend its pawns, White’s bishop (technically “good”) is completely useless in that role.

24...a5!

This move is extremely unpleasant for White. After 25.b5 a4!, he risks losing the b-pawn, while exchanging it in any way would lead to a substantial weakening of the position of the white king.

25.Rc1 axb4 26.axb4

26.Rxc8 first would have probably been better.

26...Ra8!

And now Black does not want to trade anymore: the rook is useful for attack along the a- or f-file.

27.h4 h5 28.Rc3 Qb6 29.Rhc1

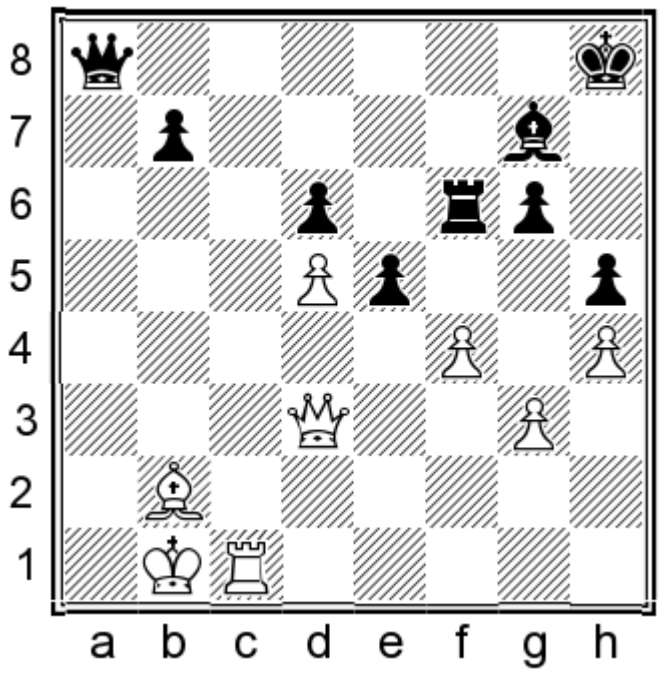
Larsen decides to sacrifice a pawn for activity.

29...Qxb4 30.Rb3 Qa4 31.Ra3

In the case of 31.Rxb7 Qa2+, White's king would have to embark on a long and unsafe voyage: 32.Kc2 Rc8+ 33.Kd1 Rxc1+ 34.Kxc1 (34.Bxc1 Qg2) 34...Qa5.

31...Qe8 32.Rxa8 Qxa8 33.f4

White managed to exchange a pair of rooks and somewhat activate his forces, but he does not have full compensation for the pawn. Having made a series of precise consolidating moves, Black resumes the attack.



33...Qd8! 34.Rc4

34.Qb5 deserved attention, not allowing the black queen on b6 and a5.

34...Kh7 35.Rb4 Rf7 36.fxe5 dxe5 37.Qb3 Rf1+ 38.Ka2 Qa5+ 39.Ra4 Qe1

Combining threats to the white king with attacks on the weak pawns.

40.Qc2 Rf2 41.Qc7 Qd1!

The decisive move. After 42.Qc4 Black wins after 42...Rxb2+! 43.Kxb2 e4+ 44.Ka2 b5! 45.Qxb5 Qa1+ 46.Kb3 Qb2+ 47.Kc4 Qc3#. Larsen gives back the d5-pawn, which is equivalent to capitulation.

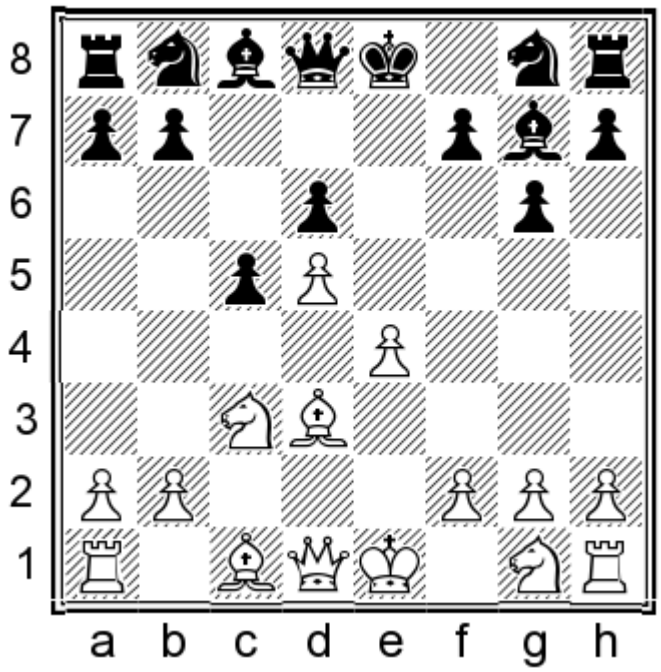
42.Rb4 Qxd5+

The end is near.

43.Rb3 Rf7 44.Qb6 e4 White resigned.

(274) Bertok – Petrosian
European Team Championship
Oberhausen 1961

1.d4 e6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 exd5 4.cxd5 d6 5.Nc3 g6 6.e4 Bg7 7.Bd3



7...Ne7

Petrosian shies away from the standard 7...Nf6. At that time, many still had fresh memories of the catastrophe that befell Black in the games Penrose-Tal (Leipzig 1960) and Ojanen-Keres (Helsinki 1960). In both cases, White played according to the same pattern: Ne2-g3, f2-f4, Qf3, and e4-e5, and after ...dxe5 continued f4-f5, sacrificing a pawn and proceeding to attack the king. Now this plan is not dangerous to Black, because at the right moment he can play ...f5.

8.Nge2

White firmly stays the course, but maybe he should have veered off and played 8.Nf3.

8...Nd7 9.0-0 0-0 10.f4 f5

The main objection to White's plan.

11.Ng3 Nf6 12.exf5

White refuses to play the principled continuation 12.e5 dxe5 13.fxe5 associated with a pawn sacrifice. In this case, Black would have to answer 13...Ng4 with unclear play, since the natural 13...Nfxd5? leads to the loss of a piece

after 14.Bc4 Be6 15.Bg5.

12...Nxf5 13.Nxf5 Bxf5 14.h3

Another sluggish move, after which the advantage goes to Black. Better was 14.Bxf5 gxf5 15.Qd3 with approximate equality.

14...Re8 15.g4

Of course, such moves are made only out of desperation, but otherwise White would have had a hard time completing the development of the queenside. Nevertheless, in our opinion, 15.Qf3 followed by Bd2 would have been more solid.

15...Bxd3 16.Qxd3 Qb6

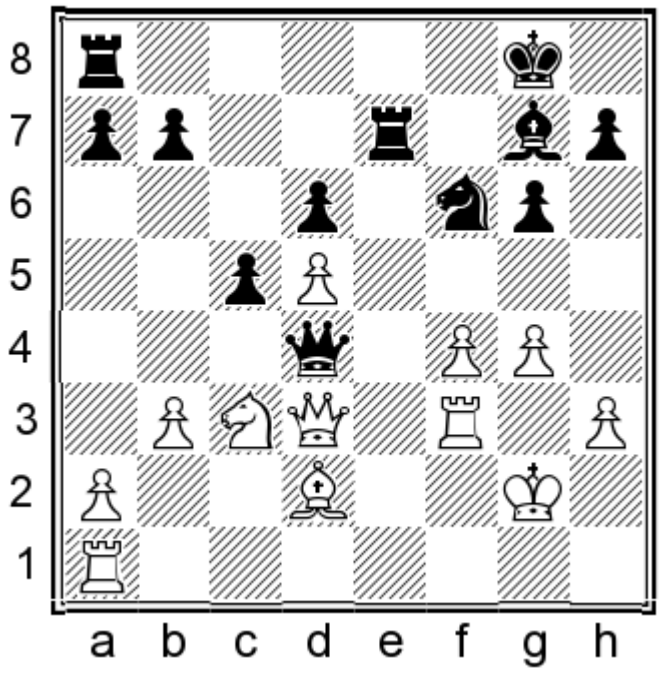
Strategically this game echoes the previous one: Black wants to exchange as many minor pieces as possible. However, there is a slight difference. To deprive his opponent of counterplay, Petrosian decides to also remove the queens from the board, so he directs the most important piece along the route b6-b4-d4.

17.Kg2 Re7 18.b3 Qb4

Black is not tempted by the enticing variation 18...Ne4 19.Nxe4!? (but not 19.Bb2 c4!) 19...Bxa1 20.Ng5, where White would have had a chance to complicate the game at the cost of the exchange.

19.Bd2 Qd4 20.Rf3

No better is 20.Qxd4 cxd4 21.Nb5 Nxd5 22.Nxd6 Rd8.



20...Ne4!

The simplest solution. Taking advantage of the opportunity, Black forces the transition to a winning rook endgame.

21.Rd1

21.Qxd4 Bxd4 22.Rd1 Nxc3, etc. would have transposed.

21...Qxd3 22.Rxd3 Nxc3 23.Bxc3 Bxc3 24.Rxc3 Re2+ 25.Kg3 Rae8!

Black's control of the open e-file and the pawn majority on the queenside guarantees him a fairly simple win. Weaker was 25...Rxa2 because of 26.Re1 with counterplay.

26.f5 gxf5 27.gxf5 Kf7 28.Rf3 Kf6 29.b4?

An error in time trouble, speeding up the process of converting the advantage.

29...Rg8+ 30.Kf4 cxb4 31.Rd4 a5 32.a3 Re5 33.axb4 Rxf5+ 34.Ke3 Rxf3+ 35.Kxf3 a4 36.b5 Ra8

The rook goes behind the passed pawn. The rest is elementary.

37.Ke4 a3 38.Rd1 Ra4+ 39.Kd3 a2 40.Ra1 Ke5 41.Kc3 Kxd5 42.Kb3 Ra5 43.Kb2 Rxb5+ 44.Kc2 White resigned.

A chess player's professional path is a bumpy road. Grandmaster Geller was traditionally a difficult opponent for Petrosian in the King's Indian Defense.

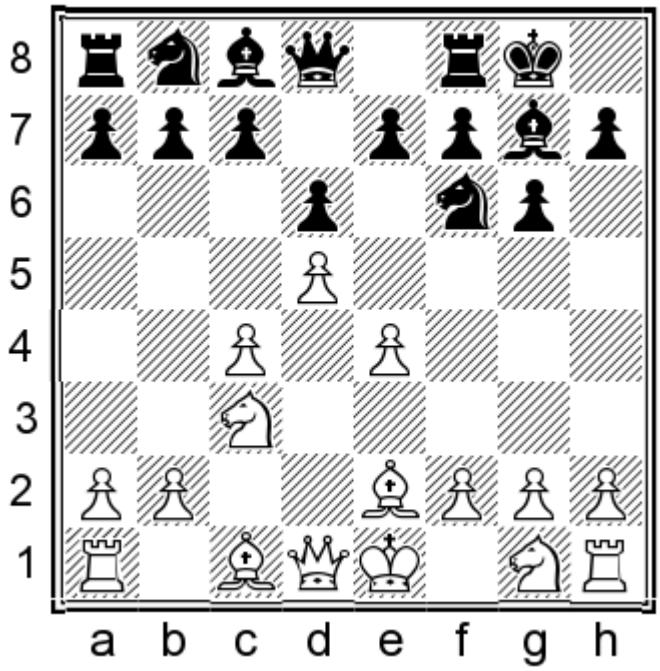
(275) Petrosian – Geller
USSR Team Championship
Moscow 1961

Annotations by Efim Geller.

No one is immune to opening surprises. Of course, any chess player tries to minimize their likelihood, but occasionally one faces rather unexpected problems that have to be solved over the board. I always try to find the hidden sides of a new continuation, when, of course, my understanding of the position and experience tell me that such variations might exist. While I admit that doing so is not always prudent from a purely practical point of view, as such a search requires a lot of effort and almost guarantees time trouble, I cannot help it.

In this game I was able to find weak points of White's sixth move, which, I confess, was absolutely unexpected and I had never analyzed before.

1.c4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.d5!?



At first glance, a rather strange move. Instead of developing a piece, White advances the central pawn, which was

not under attack at all, giving the opponent a number of choices. Had it not been a chessplayer of Petrosian's caliber, he would have surely been reproached for ignoring the basic laws of opening play.

Only Petrosian himself could explain which considerations he was guided by at that moment. I think there are several reasons that prompted such an early advance d4-d5. First, this move is not so bad by itself: White forms a pawn wedge, which hinders Black's play in the usual King's Indian structures. Second, under this cover, White will set up his pieces conveniently, since the standard attack of the pawn center by ...c6 and ...e6 will take Black a lot of time. Third, Black has to solve new problems over the board, and in such a case the variety of choices often becomes detrimental: it is not easy to find the strongest continuation within a limited time.

After some consideration, Black managed to find what is apparently the most convincing plan, associated with a rejection of the idea of the undermining move ...e6 and activity on the queenside. The pressure on White's pawn center is achieved by a diversion on the right, using the military jargon.

(Note that later Petrosian also used the idea of the early advance d4-d5, but in a slightly different situation: see games 141, 144 – Igor Yanvarjov.)

6...Na6! 7.Bg5

It turns out that the natural 7.Nf3 creates opening problems not for Black but rather for White. In the later game Uhlmann-Geller, Moscow 1967, (here such a position could have occurred after 7...Nc5 8.Qc2 c6 9.Bg5) there followed 9...cxd5 10.cxd5 (10.exd5 would also have given Black another tempo: 10...Bf5) 10...Bd7 11.Rc1 Rc8, and White has to lose time for the retreat 12.Qb1, after which Black has excellent play. But here Black sacrificed the piece at the wrong time: 12...Nfxe4?! 13.Nxe4 Bf5 14.Nfd2 Qb6 15.0-0 Bxb2 16.Nc4 Bxc1 17.Nxb6 Bxg5 18.Nxc8 Bxe4 19.Nxe7+, which resulted in a rather rare material imbalance. After White committed an inaccuracy in the endgame, the game ended in a draw.

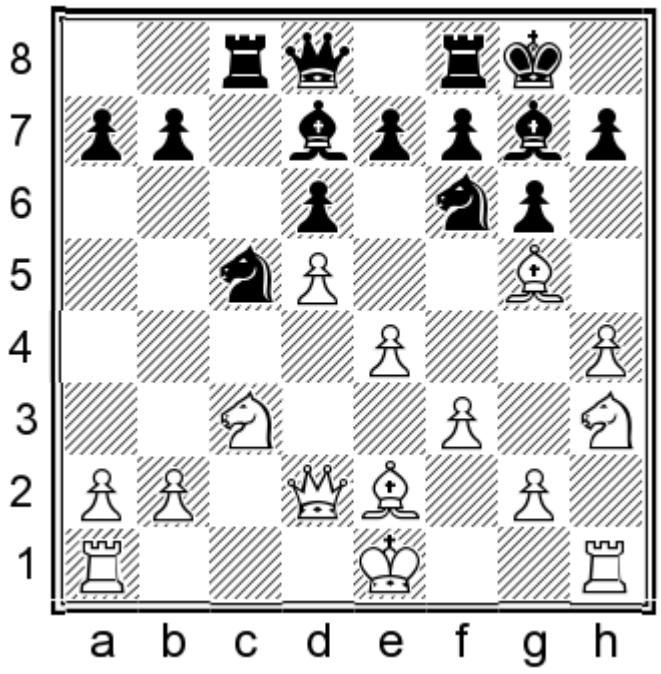
7...Nc5 8.f3 c6 9.Qd2

Additional weaknesses would have formed in White's camp after the "active" 9.b4 Na6 10.Rb1 (10.a3 Nxd5) 10...cxd5 11.cxd5 Bd7, and Black seizes the c-file.

9...cxd5 10.cxd5 Bd7 11.h4

Not for the sake of attack, but just to develop the king's knight. Isn't this the best evidence that White's opening strategy was subpar?

11...Rc8 12.Nh3



12...b5! 13.Nd1

It turns out that White's center is not that solid, and he is forced to defend his position passively. 13.Nxb5 would have been followed by 13...Bxb5 14.Bxb5 Nfxe4! 15.fxe4 Nxe4 16.Qb4 (otherwise 16...Qa5+) 16...Ng3, and White's scattered forces look pitiful despite the extra piece.

13...Nh5 14.g4

White cannot castle because of the bishop capture on h3.

14...Ng3 15.Rg1 Nxe2

In such a structure, the absence of the lightsquare bishop should soon play its role.

16.Kxe2 b4!

Immediately preparing an invasion on the weakened light squares. To accept the pawn sacrifice would have meant only to additionally open the b-file for the attack. White tries first of all to somehow protect the king and keep the material balance.

17.Kf2 Qa5 18.Ne3

The threat 18...Nb3 is parried, the c2-square is protected against possible invasion, but White has nothing to defend the d3-square...

18...Qa6 19.Kg2 h6

An important in-between move. If Black had played 18...Bb5, then White could have replied (19.Kg2 h6) 20.Bxe7, and after 20...Rfe8, 21.Bxd6. But now the d6-pawn is protected and the threat of taking on e7 is liquidated: the bishop has nowhere to retreat from e7.

20.Bf4 Nd3 21.Rgb1 h5

Pulling away White's major pieces to protect the queenside, Black begins to look for weaknesses in the immediate vicinity of the white king.

22.Bg5 hxg4 23.fxg4 Rc7 24.Nf2 Bb5 25.Nh3

White's position is strategically hopeless, so he should have tried to somehow complicate the game by 25.a4 with the probable continuation 25...Nxf2 26.Kxf2 (26.axb5 Nxe4, etc.) 26...Bd3 27.Rd1 Bxe4 28.Qxb4. (Perhaps here Geller exaggerated a bit; also, the variation indicated in parentheses has a "hole": after 27.Qxb4 White wins a piece. However, in general, the grandmaster is right: 25.a4 is the best chance for White, although after the correct move 25...Bc4 White's position is still not easy – Igor Yanvarjov.)

25...Rfc8

The "diversion on the right" is complete; all that is left is to carry out the invasion.

26.h5 Qb6 27.hxg6 fxg6 28.Kh2

Taking measures to protect the e4-pawn. Curiously, White maintains material equality for almost the whole game, and it even ends with equal material on the board.

28...Qd4 29.Qg2 Rf8 30.b3 Nc5 31.Rd1 Qxe4 32.Rac1 Bd3 33.Rd2 Bc3

Strictly speaking, the game is already over.

34.Rf2 Qxg2+ 35.Kxg2 Be4+

The bishop replaces the queen, freeing a square for the secondary invasion of the knight.

36.Kg3 Nd3 37.Rxf8+ Kxf8 38.Rf1+ Kg7 39.Nf4 Be5

"Luring" the white bishop to f4 and depriving White of the opportunity to kick the e4-bishop from its excellent position (39...Nxf4 40.Kxf4).

40.Nc4 Nxf4 41.Bxf4 Bc3 42.Rd1 Rc5 43.Be3

An attempt to hold on to the d5-pawn, 43.Ne3, resulted in the loss of the a-pawn after 43...Ra5.

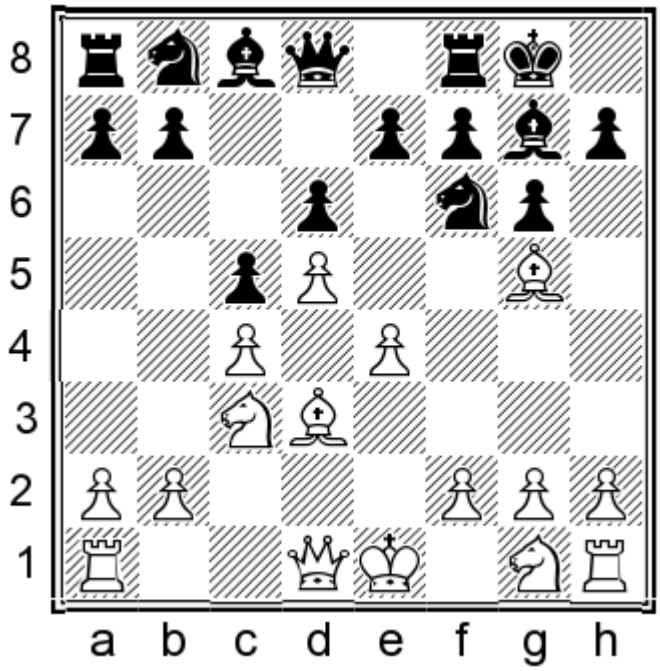
43...Rxd5 44.Rxd5 Bxd5 45.Bxa7 Be4 46.Bb6 d5 47.Na5 Kf6 48.Nc6 e5 49.Bc5 d4 50.Nxb4

White restored the material balance, only to resign after **50...d3**

In his final years, Petrosian was interested in the opening problems associated with the early bishop development to g5, both in the King's Indian Defense and in other Indian setups. Here are a few games on this topic.

(276) Petrosian – Veličković
Vršac 1981

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 g6 4.Nc3 Bg7 5.e4 0-0 6.Bd3 d6 7.Bg5



7...e6

If 7...h6, Petrosian could have countered with 8.Bd2!? as in his game against Minić (see Chapter 10 *"Pawns are the soul of chess"*).

8.dxe6

Considered to be the main continuation is 8.Qd2 exd5 9.exd5 followed by Ne2, 0-0, and f2-f4-f5. Petrosian's plan is relatively uncommon, since the exchange on e6 opens a path to the d4-square for the black knight. However, as we shall see, this plan is quite dangerous.

8...Bxe6

After 8...fxe6 the play takes on a different nature (Gligorić-Stein, Lviv 1962).

9.f4

This leads to a sharp struggle right out of the opening. If the opportunity presents itself, White aims to advance f4-f5, combining this with the development of the knight to f3. Still, according to Petrosian, 9.Nge2 is more solid.

9...Nc6 10.Nf3 Qb6 11.Qc1

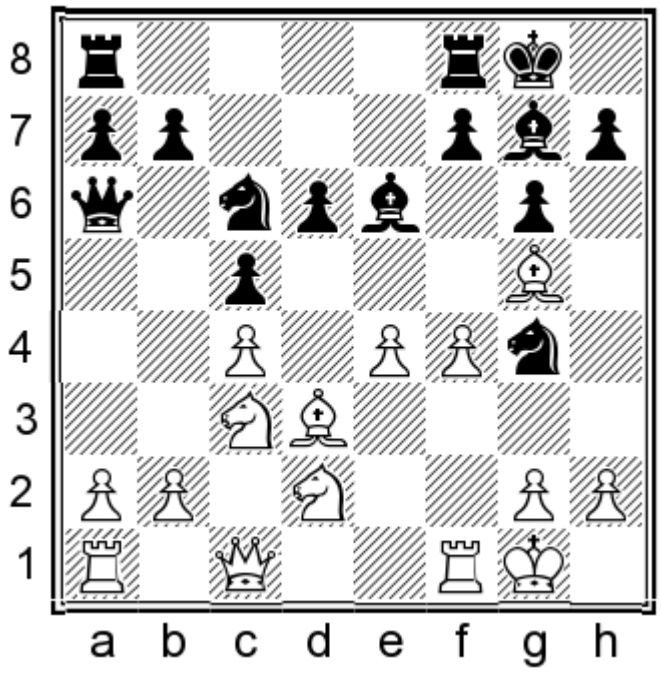
Exactly right. In the future White will need the d2-square for the knight. After 11.Qd2 Black could have played 11...Qb4 12.a3 Qb3, and, in order to protect the c4-pawn, White would have to lose a tempo: 13.Qc1 (see the annotation to the sixth move of the game Petrosian-Schmid (game 250).

If White can successfully complete his development without problems, he will definitely have an initiative on the kingside. So, Black has to look for active paths.

11...Qa6 12.Nd2

In such cases, the move b2-b3 is not advised: 12.b3 h6 13.Bh4 Nh5, and the weakening of the long diagonal is rather unpleasant (indicated by Tigran Petrosian).

12...Ng4 13.0-0!



13...f6

In the ensuing tactical struggle, the opponents compete in wit and ingenuity. With the last move Black avoids a well-disguised trap. Dangerous is 13...Bd4+ 14.Kh1 Nf2+ 15.Rxf2 Bxf2 in view of 16.f5 Bd7 (if 16...Ne5, then 17.fxe6 Nxd3 18.Qf1) 17.Nd5, and for the exchange, White obtains a likely unstoppable attack (analysis by Tigran Petrosian).

14.Bh4 g5!

A flank counter-blow, allowing Black to seize the central e5-square. 15.fxg5 fxg5 does not work, and the threat of a bishop check from d4 is extremely unpleasant.

It may seem that Black has managed to seize the initiative. However, the energetic move of the white knight on the other flank puts everything in its place.

15.Nb5!

The strong position of the b5-knight, which creates the threat of the fork 16.Nc7 and (given the opportunity) attacks the d6-square, allows White to reduce the pressure on the c4-pawn and win some time to rearrange his pieces.

15...Qb6 16.Bg3 gxf4 17.Bxf4 a6 18.Nc3

Of course, the pawn d6 is “poisoned”: 18.Nxd6? Nce5, and White loses a piece.

18...Nge5 19.Bxe5 Nxe5

So, the opening clash did not bring an advantage to either side, although the struggle is still quite tense. According to Petrosian, instead of the text move, Black could have simply played 19...fxe5, opening the f-file and preserving the possibility of moving the knight to d4 in order to further simplify the position.

20.Qc2 Bh6 21.Nd5!?

An interesting pawn sacrifice.

21...Bxd5 22.exd5 Nxd3 23.Qxd3 Qxb2 24.Nf3

Ironically, it is easier to play for White without the pawn: he threatens Rab1xb7 and the knight rushes to the f5-square, so White has more than sufficient compensation. At the same time, Black might have a false impression that the advantage is on his side. Veličković manages to temporarily hold on to the extra pawn, but not for long.

24...f5 25.Rab1 Qg7

Dubious is 25...Qxa2 26.Rxb7, and invading the seventh rank with the rook gives White excellent attacking chances.

26.Nh4 f4 27.Nf5

After 27.Rb6 Qf6 28.Rxb7 Bg7, White's knight could no longer move to the f5-square, and the black bishop would become dangerous. Therefore, Petrosian makes the decision to get rid of the minor pieces. At the same, White wins back the pawn.

27...Qf6 28.Nxh6+

The continuation 28.g4 had questionable value. For example, 28...fxg3 29.Qxg3+ (or 29.Rxb7 gxh2+) 29...Kh8 30.Kh1 b5 with unclear play.

28...Qxh6 29.Rxb7 Rae8

After the turbulent events of the opening and middlegame, the game has transitioned into a calm major piece endgame that is slightly more pleasant for White.

30.Qf3 Qg5 31.Rb3 Qg7 32.Rd3 Kh8?!

A move made "just in case" that significantly complicates the task of drawing. 32...Qb2 would have been much better.

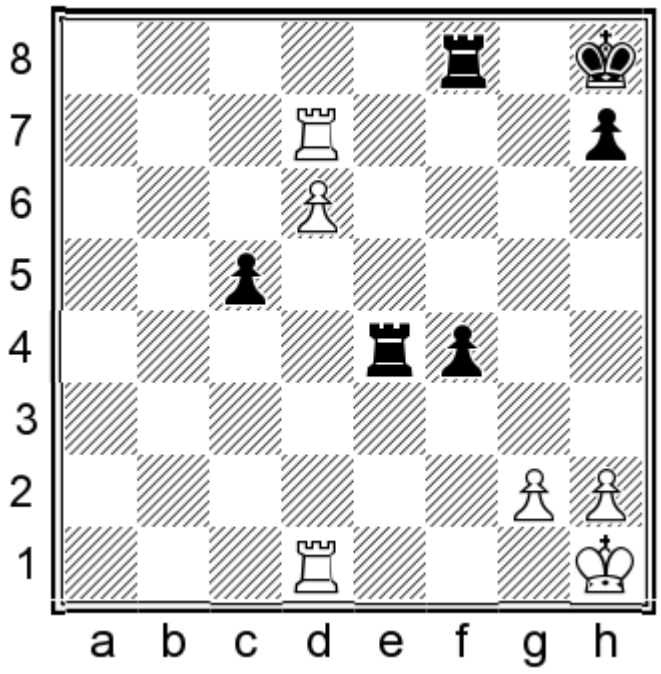
33.Kh1 Qe5 34.Ra3 Qd4

After 34...Ra8 unpleasant is 35.Qf2 with the idea of Ra3-f3.

35.Rxa6 Re4 36.Qd1 Qxc4 37.Rxd6 Qxa2 38.Rd7 Qe2

Black pins his hopes on the queen trade, since it is well-known that "rook endgames are always drawn."

39.d6 Qxd1 40.Rxd1



40...c4?

The fateful last move of the time control. The Yugoslav player probably thought that the variation 40...Rd4 41.Rxd4 cxd4 42.Kg1 d3 43.Kf2 would have been disastrous, but the excellent reply 43...Rf5!! allowed Black to earn a draw, as the rook occupies an ideal position behind both his own passed pawn and his opponent's (44.Ke1 Rd5; 44.Rc7 d2.

41.Kg1 c3

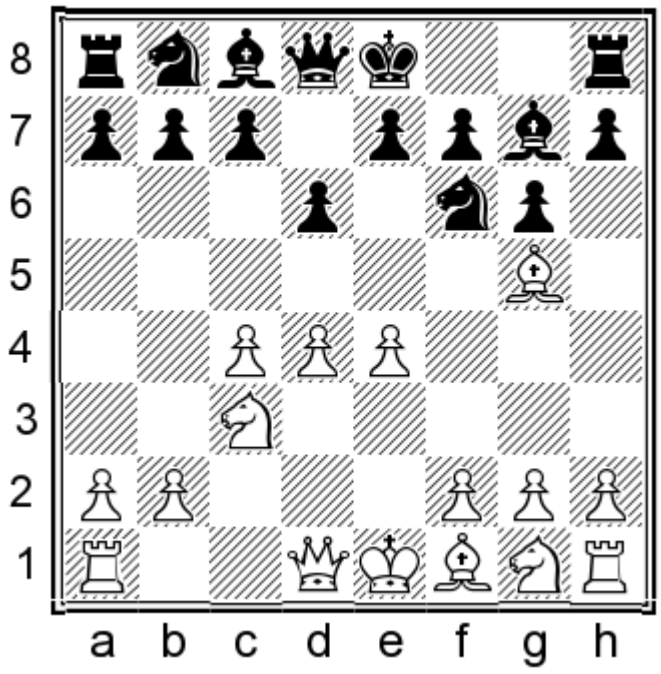
41...Kg8! was stronger (Tigran Petrosian). Now White just takes this pawn and wins easily.

42.Rc7! Ree8 43.Rxc3 Kg7 44.Kf2 Rd8 45.Kf3 Rf6 46.d7 Rf7 47.Rcd3 Kg8 48.Rd4 Kg7 49.R1d3 Kg8 50.Ke4 Kg7 51.Rd5 Kg8 52.R3d4 Kg7 53.Ke5 h6 54.Ke6 Kg6 55.g3 Black resigned.

In the next two games, the move Bg5 was played as early as the fifth move.

(277) Petrosian – Torre
Tilburg 1982

1.c4 g6 2.e4 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.Bg5



5...h6

A principled response. It is helpful to determine the location of the white bishop before starting activity in the center. On the other hand, in case of, for example, 5...0-0 6.Qd2, Black would have been unable to advance ...h6 for a long time. The reader already saw such a development of events in the games Antoshin-Petrosian (game 205), Petrosian- Gufeld (game 16) and Zilberman-Petrosian (game 252). For the continuation 5...c5 6.d5, see the game Petrosian-Schmid in *Typical methods of strategy*.

6.Be3!?

Theory considers this retreat, as well as 6.Bf4, unsuitable and mainly considers 6.Bh4 c5 7.d5. However, in this case, besides the theoretical 7...0-0, Black could choose the convoluted variation that starts with 7...Qa5!? (Stein-Geller, Moscow 1966).

6...Ng4 7.Bc1 e5 8.d5

Apparently, a forced decision. After 8.Nf3 exd4!, Black has great play. In his annotations to this game (volume 34 of the *Informant*) Petrosian examines the move 8.dxe5. Black's best reply is 8...Nxe5!, avoiding the unpleasant endgame after 8...dxe5?! 9.Qxd8+ Kxd8 10.h3.

8...f5

Back in the day, Aron Nimzowitsch said that in such positions the undermining move ...f5 has to be timely and effective. In this case, Black played it on the eighth move. But we shall see whether it is good.

9.Be2 Nf6 10.exf5 gxf5 11.f4?

Petrosian's question mark. In his opinion, 11.Nf3 is simpler. The continuation 11.Bh5+ Kf8 would have led to unclear play, where Black loses the right to castle and White loses time moving the light-square bishop. But perhaps it is in this variation that White had real chances to fight for the advantage.

11...0-0 12.Nf3 Ne4!

Now Black has no problems, while White might end up with some. Petrosian now switches to active defense.

13.fxe5 Nxc3 14.bxc3 dxe5 15.0-0

Once again, the hanging King's Indian pawns appear on the board.

15...Qd6?

The search for original opening structures (and the text position is not common) requires finding the corresponding solutions. Petrosian indicated such a solution: 15...c5!, threatening ...e4. With the text move, Black begins a cookie-cutter plan aimed at blockading the c3-, c4-, and d5-pawns and gradually loses the initiative.

16.Kh1 Na6 17.Nh4

Highlighting the drawbacks of Black's 15th move.

17...Nc5 18.Bh5!

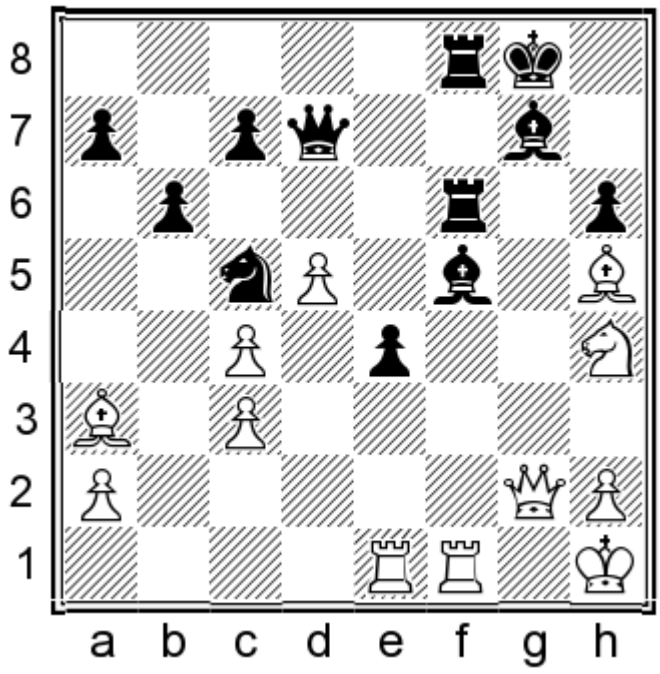
A curious method of besieging the hanging pawns. White wants to attack the f5-pawn from the rear with the bishop: Bg6!.

18...Rf6 19.Ba3 Bd7 20.Qe2 b6 21.Rae1 e4

Little by little, Petrosian managed to create pressure on the hanging pawns and to cause the advance of one of them. Now the conditions have arisen for more decisive actions, and a typical undermining move follows.

The advantage is on White's side again.

22.g4! Raf8 23.gxf5 Bxf5 24.Qg2! Qd7



25.Nxf5?

The critical moment. As Petrosian's analysis showed, 25.Rg1! would have led to a significant, most likely decisive, advantage. For example:

(1) 25...Bh7 26.Bg6! with a strong attack;

(2) 25...Nd3 26.Bxf8 Rxf8 27.Nxf5 Rxf5 28.Bg4, and White wins;

(3) 25...Bh3 26.Qg3 Rf1 (if 26...Nd3, then 27.Bxf8 Rxf8 28.Re2 Nf4 29.Re3!, keeping the extra material)

27.Rexf1 Rxf1 28.Rxf1 Bxf1 29.Bxc5 bxc5 30.Bg4! Qd8 31.Be6+ Kh8 (or 31...Kh7 32.Qg6+ Kh8 33.Bf5) 32.Ng6+ Kh7 33.Qf4! , and Black is defenseless against the threats 34.Qxf1, 34.Qxe4, and 34.Qf5.

After the unfortunate text move, Black gets away with a slap on the wrist and a temporary pawn sacrifice.

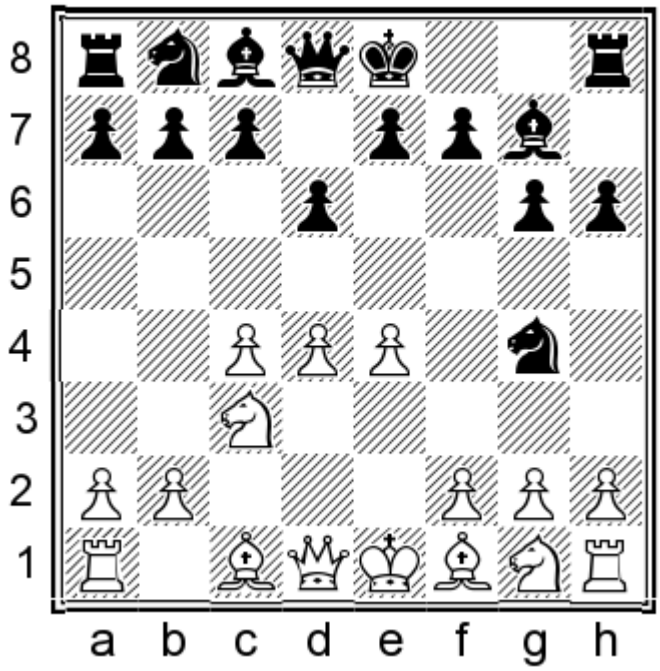
25...Rxf5 26.Rxf5 Qxf5 27.Bxc5 bxc5 28.Bg6 Qf3

Forcing a drawn endgame with opposite-color bishops.

29.Bxe4 Qxg2+ 30.Bxg2 Bxc3 31.Re3 Bb2 32.Rg3+ Kh8 Draw.

(278) Petrosian-Szekely
Paul Keres Memorial
Tallinn 1983

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Bg5 h6 6.Be3 Ng4 7.Bc1



A gambit of sorts. Unlike ordinary gambits, here White uses not material, but tempi as bait. The goal is to provoke early activity from the opponent.

7...Nf6

A somewhat unexpected but rather practical solution. Black wants to play a normal King's Indian but with the pawn on h6. Petrosian decided that the response is the Sämisch System, where White has the ability to regain the "sacrificed" tempo via Be3, Qd2. In turn, Black rejects the plan with ...e5 in favor of the early advance of the c-pawn.

8.f3 c5 9.Nge2 Nc6 10.d5 Na5

A popular view of the "problem of the knight." 10...Ne5 would have led to a sharper struggle.

11.Ng3 e5

A new twist in the opening plot. Black switches to the ideas of the Classic Benoni.

12.Be2

Another good plan is 12.Be3 0-0 13.Qd2 Kh7 14.Bd3 (see game 95).

12...b6 13.h4

White aims to provoke the move ...h5, which will make it more difficult for the opponent to carry out ...f5 in the future.

13...h5 14.Nf1

The knight begins to approach the d2-square, a maneuver familiar to the reader from games 49 and 58.

14...a6 15.Bg5 Qc7 16.g3

Useful prophylaxis.

16...Bd7 17.Nd2 Ng8 18.0-0 Nb7

Now and on the next move, Black forgoes the standard ...Bh6 and, probably, rightly so. The exchange of the dark-square bishops would not have solved every problem. At the same time, it becomes obvious that after White reinforced the c4-pawn, the knight's placement on a5 does not make any sense anymore.

19.Qe1 Nh6 20.a3 0-0 21.Qf2

The queen moves to the kingside in small steps.

21...Rae8

The immediate 21...f5 would have been met by the same response.

22.Qg2 Qc8 23.Kh2

Black threatened 24...Bh3.

23...Nd8 24.Rab1 f6 25.Be3 f5 26.b4

Having thoroughly prepared, the opponents begin to carry out their main plans.

26...Qc7 27.Rb3

White is not ready to open the b-file yet; for example, 27.bxc5 bxc5 28.Rb3 fxe4! 29.Ndxe4 Nf5 followed by ...Nd4 and Black has substantial counterplay.

27...Nb7 28.Rfb1 Rb8 29.Bd3 Kh8

On the thirtieth move, all of the pieces and pawns are still on the board; it is no wonder that both opponents now began to experience time pressure. In this situation, the Hungarian chessplayer decided to stick to wait-and-see tactics and not take any specific action. Meanwhile, 29...fxe4!? deserved serious attention. For instance, 30.Ndxe4 Nf5 31.Bf2 Nd4 32.Bxd4 cxd4 33.Ne2 Bf5 with unclear play.

30.Ne2

Now the aforementioned variation would have led to an advantage for White, as he could take on d4 with the knight.

30...Ba4 31.R3b2 Bd7

Continuing to wait for further developments. White follows suit.

32.Kh1!?

A move that is far from aimless, considering that after 32...fxe4 33.Nxe4 Nf5 34.Bf2 Nd4 White gets the opportunity to play 35.bxc5!.

32...a5?!

Strangely enough, the younger Szekeli was the first who could not stand the heat.

33.bxa5 Nxa5 34.Nc3 f4

This attempt to clarify the situation on the other flank is also unsuccessful.

35.Bf2 fxg3 36.Qxg3 Be8 37.Be3 Kh7 38.Nb5

A solid move in time trouble. White should have considered 38.Bc2!? with the idea of Ba4, but apparently he had no time.

38...Qe7

After 38...Bxb5 39.Rxb5, Furman's bishop would have entered the game.

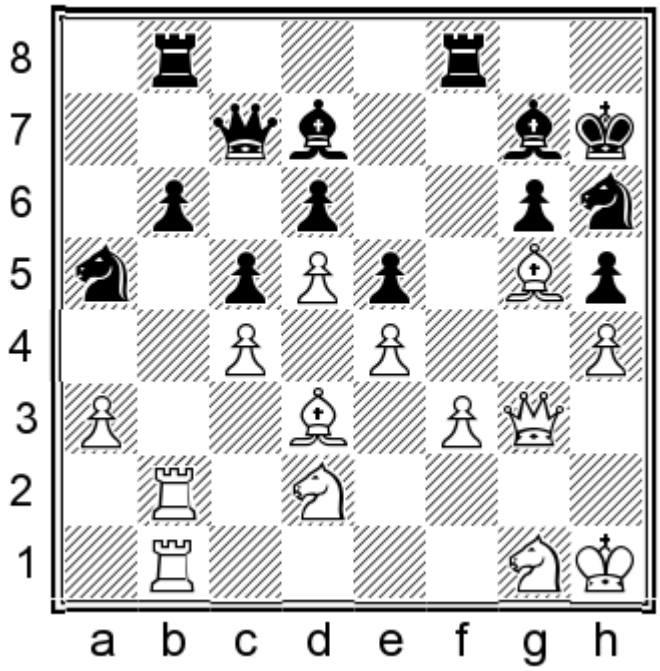
39.Bg5

In the time pressure, 39.Qg5 would have been very unpleasant. Then Black's only reply would be 39...Rf6 (39...Qd7 is worse because of 40.Bf1!).

39...Bf6 40.Nc3 Qc7

In case of 40...Bxg5 41.Qxg5 Qc7 42.Ne2 (followed by Rg1, f3-f4), Black risked coming under attack.

41.Ne2 Bg7 42.Ng1 Bd7

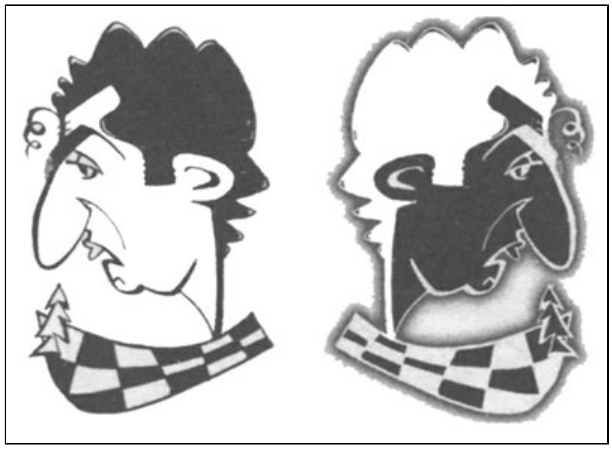


At this point, the game was adjourned.

From a purely chesspoint of view, White has an obvious advantage, but in practice winning such a position is far from easy. In this case, Petrosian would still have to overcome the stubborn resistance of a young and inventive opponent.

In this tournament, Petrosian did not play at his full capacity, i.e., he tried to avoid adjourning games if possible. Nineteen rounds would have been a difficult test for any chessplayer, and especially for someone who was over 50 years old and not in the best physical shape. In order to go the whole distance smoothly, without failures, it was necessary to ration energy. Draw.

Chapter 14
The King's Indian with Colors – and Flanks – Reversed

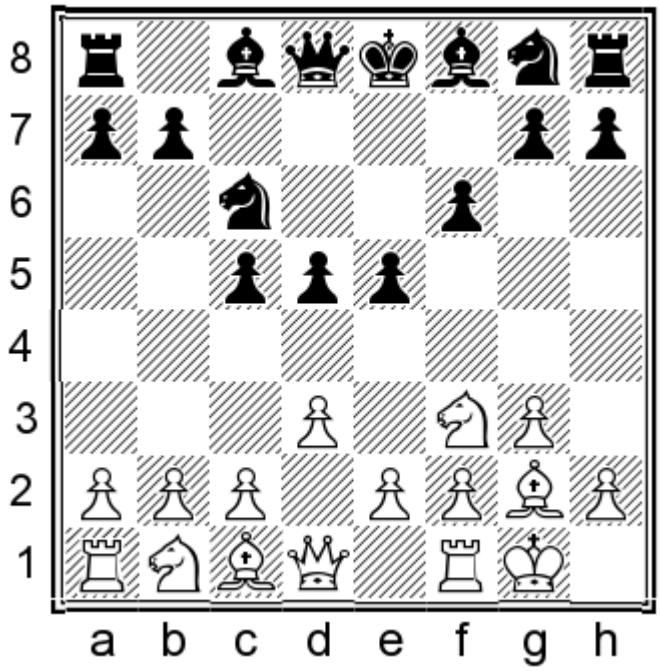


We do not know who first played this opening with colors reversed and when, but since then the door opened for chess players to play their favorite structures with either color. Evidently, the idea of playing active systems for Black as White was very attractive and fruitful. In the 1950s, this interpretation became very trendy. The growing popularity of the King's Indian Defense, which was played by almost all of the leading grandmasters of that time, gave a powerful momentum to the development of "reversed" systems in other openings (the English, Réti, 1.g3, etc.) and the development of opening theory as a whole.

In Petrosian's tournament practice, such setups were common. Moreover, he played them equally successfully with either color. Probably, he was attracted to the complex strategic struggle characteristic of such structures, in which the opponents do not immediately reveal their plans, in which there is room for improvisation and many problems have to be solved directly at the board.

(279) Petrosian – Spassky
24th USSR Championship
Moscow 1957

1.Nf3 c5 2.g3 d5 3.Bg2 Nc6 4.0-0 e5 5.d3 f6



It is easy to see that we have reached a position from the Sämisch variation of the King's Indian Defense with colors reversed, consequently, with an extra tempo for White.

6.e4 d4 7.Nh4

Seeking to use the f-pawn's potential more quickly, a well-known method of playing against the Sämisch structure borrowed from Black. However, White reveals his plan very early, which makes it somewhat contentious. Nowadays, it is common to undermine the center only after first opening the c-file: 7.c3 and cxd4. Deserving

attention is 7.c4 Bd6 8.Nh4 Nge7 9.Nd2 Be6 10.f4 with promising play for White (Botvinnik-Pomar, Varna 1962).

7...Be6 8.f4 Qd7 9.Nd2 0-0-0 10.f5

A mystery. Of course, Petrosian was well aware of the disadvantages of such an advance (see games 46 and 49 against Gligorić and Milić in Part I), but perhaps he believed that this is acceptable with an extra tempo.

Savon made an instructive mistake in a later game against Spassky (Baku 1961): 10.a4 Bd6 11.Nc4 Bc7 12.Bd2 Nge7 13.f5?, and after 13...Bxc4! 14.dxc4 Ba5 White encountered difficulties.

10...Bf7 11.Bf3 Nge7

Directed against White's next maneuver.

12.Bh5 Bg8

Avoiding the exchange of the light-square bishops. 12...g6 does not work because of 13.fxg6 hxg6 14.Rxf6!.

All of this is well known and has been repeatedly played both in the regular King's Indian and with reversed colors. By the way, Petrosian himself played similarly in the aforementioned games and had an advantage after the opening.

In the future, White builds a defensive wall on the queenside and prepares an offensive on the kingside, while Black does the opposite.

13.b3 Kb8 14.a4 Nb4 15.Rf2

Planning to transfer the rook to g2 followed by g3-g4-g5. Probably this was the idea that Petrosian had in mind when he advanced the pawn to f5.

15...Nec6 16.Rg2 Bd6 17.Nc4 Bc7 18.g4 h6!?

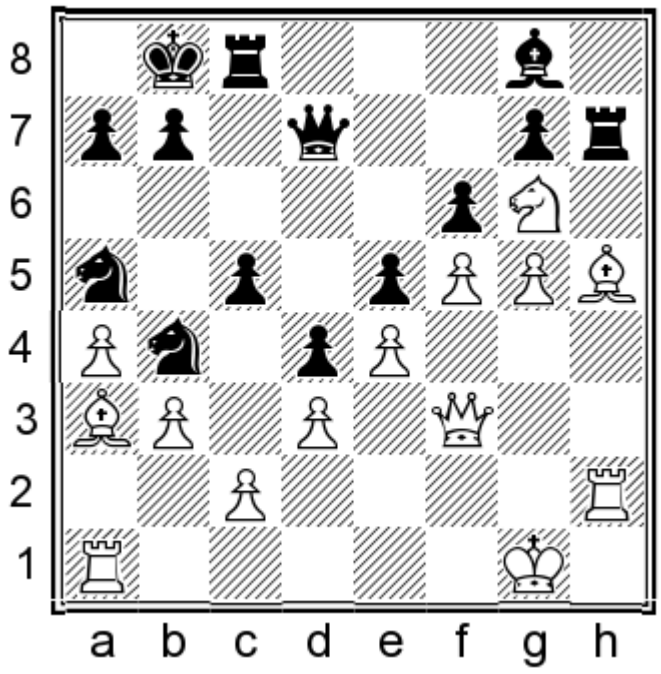
A surprise. Such a move can be made either by a very strong chess player or a weak one who does not anticipate that after Ng6 the black rook will be out of play for a long time. But this is a static estimate that does not take into account the factor of time. Spassky saw further. If we consider the position dynamically, then Black's inventive plan is justified: White cannot do without h2-h4 and g4-g5 (after all, he has no other active game), after which the h-file will open and the rook on h7 will be in the right place.

19.Ng6 Rh7 20.h4 Ba5 21.Rh2 Na6 22.Nxa5

Of course, White should not have allowed the bishop on c3.

22...Nxa5 23.g5 hxg5 24.hxg5 Nb4 25.Qf3 Rc8 26.Ba3

With the obvious intention of exchanging on b4, after which White's queenside will be safe.



26...Nxc2?!

Apparently, Spassky imagined something, and he makes a dubious piece sacrifice in search of complications. After the calm response 26...Nac6, Black's position would have been somewhat preferable.

27.Rxc2 Nxb3 28.Raa2?!

An unfortunate move that loses the advantage. Black's risky play could have been punished by 28.Rb1, for example, 28...Qxa4 29.Ne7!. It is hardly possible to fully evaluate this position with variations alone, but in this case only White would have had winning chances.

28...b6 29.Bg4 Na5 30.Bc1

On 30.Rh2 Rxh2 31.Rxh2 Qxa4 32.Bc1 Black would have already had three pawns for the piece, and the situation on the board would have sharpened extremely. Petrosian does not want to take excessive risk, and, in turn, expresses a readiness to sacrifice material, trying to stifle his opponent's initiative.

30...Bxa2 31.Rxa2 Nb3 32.Qd1 Nxc1 33.Qxc1 c4

By temporarily sacrificing a pawn, Spassky clears operating space for his major pieces. Soon the opponents exchange queens and transition into a sharp endgame, in which White maintains equality by building up counterplay against the weakness of the f6- and g7-pawns.

34.dxc4 Qc6 35.Bf3 Qxc4 36.Qxc4 Rxc4 37.Nf8 Rc1+ 38.Kg2 Rhh1

Black hurries to break into the enemy's camp with the rooks, ignoring the loss of the important f6-pawn. But even after the objectively strongest 38...Rh8, White would have had sufficient counterplay. Here is an approximate variation: 38...Rh8 39.Ne6 fxg5 40.Kg3 (not 40.Nxg7?! Kc7!) 40...Rg1+ 41.Bg2 d3 42.Nxg7 Rc8 43.f6 Rc2 44.Rxc2 dxc2 45.f7 c1=Q 46.f8=Q+, and Black's king cannot escape perpetual check.

39.gxf6 gxf6 40.Nd7+ Kc7 41.Nxf6 Kd6

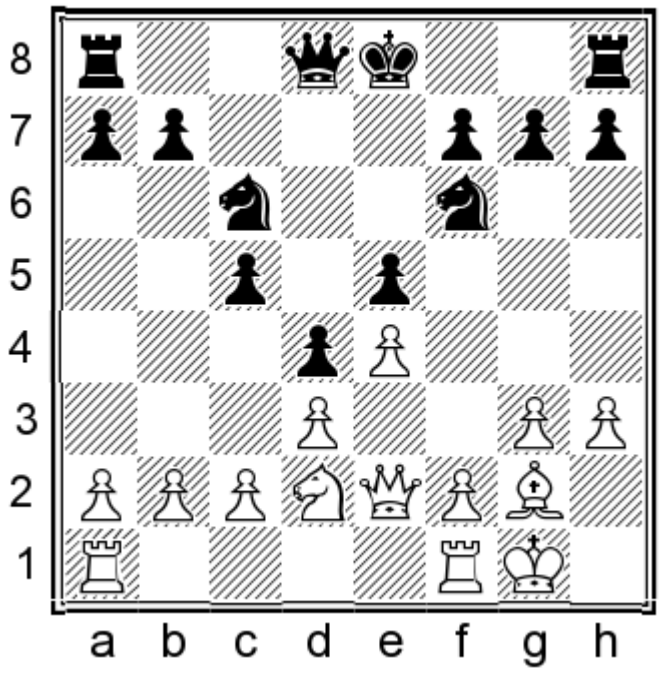
It is not too late to lose: 41...Rcg1+? 42.Kf2 Rh2+ 43.Kxg1 Rxa2 44.Nd5+ Kd6 45.f6! , and the white pawn cannot be stopped.

42.Be2 Rh8

White's strong passed pawn forces Spassky to return the rook to the eighth rank. The chances have equalized, and here the rivals signed a peace agreement. A fighting draw!

The two games between Petrosian and Fischer in the 1959 Candidates' Tournament were both principled. The following curious position became the subject of the creative discussion.

Fischer – Petrosian
Candidates' Tournament
Yugoslavia 1959

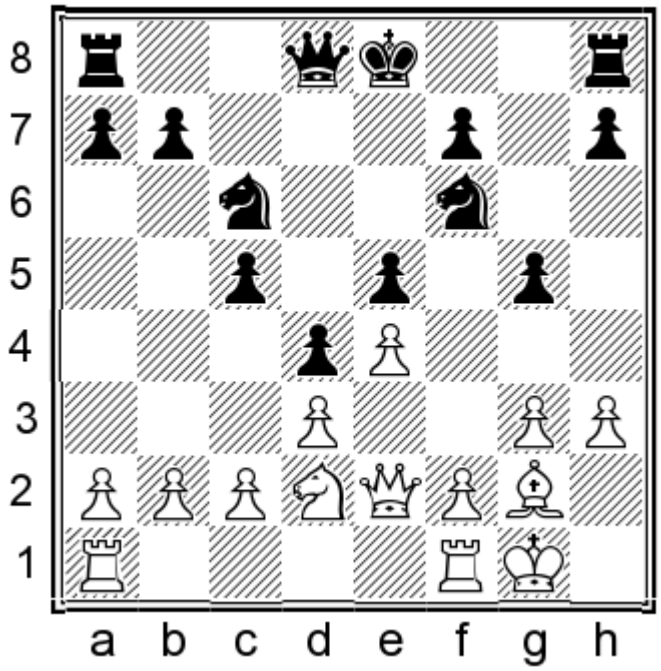


The first moves: **1.e4 c6 2.Nc3 d5 3.Nf3 Bg4 4.h3 Bxf3 5.Qxf3 Nf6 6.d3 e6 7.g3 Bb4 8.Bd2 d4 9.Nb1 Bxd2+ 10.Nxd2 e5 11.Bg2 c5 12.0-0 Nc6 13.Qe2.**

So, as we can see, it is possible to get a King's Indian even against the Caro-Kann!

Who has better chances here? Many commentators preferred Black's position, based on the fact that the white bishop is supposedly "bad." However, this is a clear misunderstanding. If the colors were reversed, anyone who plays the King's Indian Defense would say that White has an excellent position and would be happy to play it. Both sides have pros and cons. White, for example, has potentially weak dark squares, while Black does not have the important light-square bishop. In short, this is a complex, sharp position, where the result depends on the opponents' skills, on how well and purposefully they implement their plans.

(280) 2nd round: **13...g5!?**



An interesting but rather risky idea. Black is not afraid to weaken his position, planning to hinder the advance f2-f4 in the future and shelter his king on the queenside (the absence of the dark-square bishops plays into his hands). At the same time, of course Petrosian took into account that this position could have been part of Fischer's home preparation, and therefore decided to make the move that his opponent least expected.

Also note that after the natural 13...0-0 (Vladimir Simagin) 14.f4 exf4 (14...Nd7 15.Nf3) 15.gxf4 Re8 16.Qf3! White would have completely seized the initiative.

14.Nf3?!

According to Fischer, a significant inaccuracy. Later in his book *My 60 Memorable Games*, he pointed out a better path: 14.c3! Qe7 15.Nf3 h6 16.cxd4!, and no matter how Black takes on d4, White gets an advantage. For example:

(1) 16...Nxd4 17.Nxd4 cxd4 18.Rac1;

(2) 16...exd4 17.e5 0-0-0 18.Rfe1;

(3) 16...cxd4 17.h4 Rg8 18.hxg5 hxg5 19.Rfc1 0-0-0 (stronger is 19...Qe6! – Igor Yanvarjov) 20.b4! Kb8 21.b5 Na5 22.Qd2, winning a pawn (variations by Fischer).

Simagin suggested a weaker continuation, 14.f4 gxf4 15.gxf4 Qe7 16.Nc4 Nd7 17.Qg4 "with some initiative" for White, since after 17...0-0-0 18.fxe5 Kb8 (Vasily Panov) Black has no time to firmly establish his knight on e5.

14...h6 15.h4

A standard technique. Since the continuation 15...g4 16.Nh2 h5 17.f3! is advantageous for White, Black gets a temporary weakness in the form of the g5-pawn (indicated by Vladimir Simagin).

15...Rg8 16.a3

Starting to prepare to open a "second front." 16.c3 Qe7 17.cxd4 does not work anymore in view of 17...g4 18.Nxe5? Nxd4.

16...Qe7 17.hxg5 hxg5 18.Qd2

Threatening the g5-pawn.

18...Nd7 19.c3

White cannot create counterplay on the light squares by 19.Nh2 (with the idea of Bh3-f5, Ng4) in view of 19...g4!. In this case, the possible opening of the kingside after f2-f3 would have probably been to Black's advantage.

19...0-0-0 20.cxd4 exd4!?

Here the commentators disagree. In the tournament bulletin, Viacheslav Ragozin criticizes Black's decision and instead suggests a more restrained 20...Nxd4 or 20...cxd4 with an equal position. Meanwhile Vasily Panov, Vladimir Simagin, and Edmar Mednis approved of Petrosian's aspiration to play for a win. Petrosian himself thought that it would have been better to take on d4 with the knight and take with the e-pawn only after the knight trade. It is difficult to object, as further on, Black had to exchange the knights anyway under less favorable conditions.

21.b4! Kb8 22.Rfc1

"The position has become very tense! In Black's favor are the fact that the white bishop is out of play, the d3-pawn may become very weak, and the e5- square can be occupied by a knight. But for the moment the initiative is with White, and his attack on the c- and b-files may become dangerous. In addition, after the exchange bxc5 the black d-pawn will also require constant defense. Therefore Petrosian decides to exchange a pair of minor pieces."

"Of course, 22...cxb4? 23.axb4 Qxb4 was bad in view of of 24.Qa2" (Simagin).

22...Nce5 23.Nxe5 Qxe5 24.Rc4 Rc8 25.Rac1

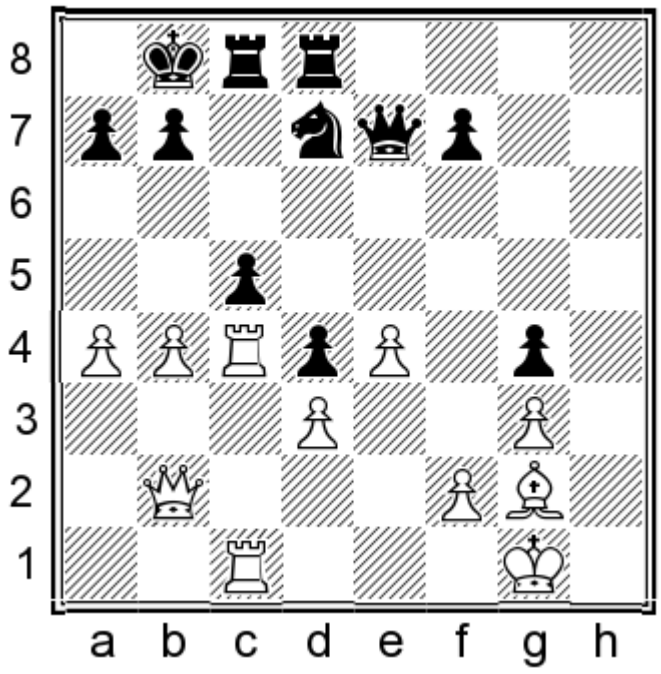
A useless move. As most experts rightly point out, direct pressure along the c-file yields nothing. Stronger is 25.Rb1, combining pressure on the c5- and d4-pawns with threats along the b-file. For example, 25...Rgd8?! 26.Bh3 or 25...g4?! 26.bxc5 Nxc5 27.Qb4; with an advantage for White. After 25.Rb1 the correct reply was 25...Rc7 as suggested by Simagin. This recommendation needs further explanation, since White has the strong reply 26.Qb2. This can be countered with 26...Rd8, and if 27.Bh3 (otherwise ...g4), then 27...Nb6! 28.Rxc5 Qh8! 29.Rxc7 Qxh3!, and Black wins. In this variation, White can sacrifice the exchange via 29.Bg4, but it is obvious that after 29...Na4 and 30...Nxc5 only Black has winning chances.

25...g4

Taking advantage of this respite, Black "seals" the bishop.

26.Qb2 Rgd8 27.a4 Qe7!

It's time! By creating the strong threat ...Ne5, Petrosian starts a counterattack.



28.Rb1?

Fischer faltered. His move is probably the decisive mistake. However, it is not easy to find a satisfactory path. The following continuations are clearly unacceptable:

(1) 28.bxc5 Ne5! 29.Rxd4 Nxd3 with material losses for White;

(2) 28.Bf1 Ne5 29.Rxc5 Rxc5 30.Rxc5 Nf3+ 31.Kg2 Rh8, and the game ends in checkmate (variation by Panov); and

(3) 28.Rd1 Ne5 29.Rxc5 Rxc5 30.bxc5 Qxc5 would have led to a significant positional advantage for Black (Simagin).

The best defense was indicated by Viacheslav Ragozin:

4) 28.Qc2. Unfortunately, the grandmaster “forgot” to list the variations. Subsequently, Edmar Mednis decided to check what happens after 28...Ne5 29.Rxc5 Rxc5 30.bxc5 Rc8, and came to the conclusion that in the final position “Black has a slight advantage.” Why so modest? In fact, Black practically has an extra piece, a much better endgame, and, if the queens are still on the board, the threat of attacking along the h-file. Quite possibly, Fischer would not have survived here, but he had to play 28.Qc2, of course.

The text continuation leads to the loss of the white d-pawn and the creation of a passed d-pawn for Black. The rest, as they say, is a matter of technique.

28...Ne5 29.Rxc5 Rxc5 30.bxc5 Nxd3

This is the whole point: the knight manages to both pick up the pawn and protect the king!

31.Qd2 Nxc5 32.Qf4+

After 32.a5 the simplest was 32...Qe5, stopping all of White’s attempts (indicated by Mednis).

32...Qc7!

Worse is 32...Ka8 because of 33.a5.

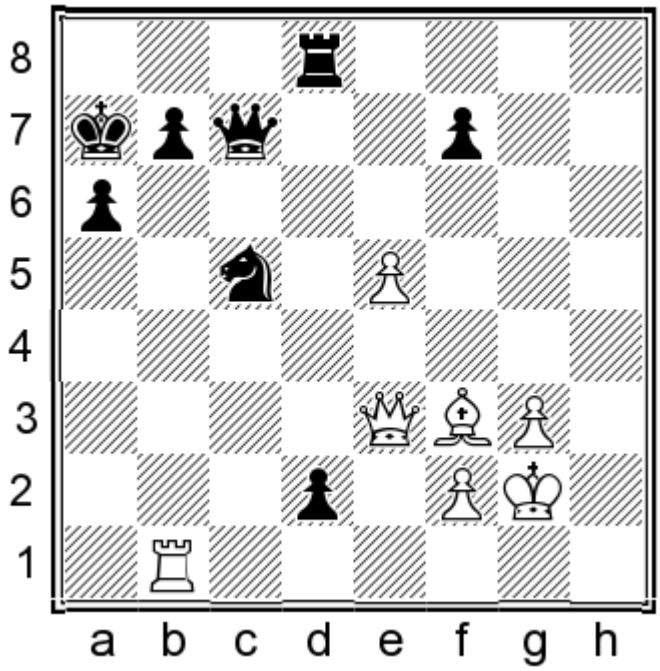
33.Qxg4 Nxa4

“Black ended up with an extra pawn and essentially has three passed pawns. However, now the white bishop comes into play, and Black’s queenside pawns are needed to protect the king and cannot move. Petrosian’s strategy, which consists of pinning the white pieces to the d-pawn and then advancing the a- and b-pawns with the support of the king, deserves the highest praise.” (Mednis).

34.e5 Nc5 35.Qf3 d3! 36.Qe3 d2 37.Bf3 Na4 38.Qe4 Nc5

In slight time pressure, Petrosian repeats the moves, avoiding the temptation to finish the game with one blow. For example, here 38...Qc1+? would have been a gross mistake in view of 39.Kg2, and White wins. 38...Nb2 39.Bd1 Qc1? also would not have worked because of 40.e6!.

39.Qe2 a6 40.Kg2 Ka7 41.Qe3



41...Rd3!

The sealed move. The home analysis showed that while White is not able to do anything, Black still has to play precisely.

42.Qf4

Or 42.Rxb7+ Qxb7 43.Qxc5+ Qb6 44.Qe7+ Kb8 with a win.

42...Qd7 43.Qc4

An important moment that the commentators missed.

White makes a natural move, allowing the enemy to support the knight with the b-pawn. Meanwhile, he had the opportunity to defend actively, 43.Qb4, as Boleslavsky indicated in his article “View of an Eyewitness” (*Chess Moscow* 24/1959). Boleslavsky writes: “During the home analysis, Petrosian and I spent more than two hours searching for a win after 43.Qb4 and we found a paradoxical solution: 43...Qd4 44.Qb6+ Kb8 45.Bxb7 Rb3! 46.Rxb3 Nxb3 47.Qxa6! d1=Q 48.Bf3 Qxf3+ 49.Kxf3 Nd2+, and Black should win. When after the game Petrosian asked Fischer why he did not play 43.Qb4, it turned out that Fischer and his second Larsen found an easier path: 43...Qb5! 44.Qxb5 axb5 45.Be2 b4! 46.Bxd3 Nxd3 47.Rd1 b3 48.Rxd2 b2, and Black wins.”

Let me add that the last variation is not only the simplest but also the most convincing, since the path suggested by Boleslavsky has a “hole”: instead of 45.Bxb7, White has the fantastic reply of 45.Qc6!! (Fritz), leading to a

completely unclear position.

43...b6 44.Rd1

Now attacking along the b-file via 44.Qb4 yields nothing at all. Besides 44...Qb5 transposing to the aforementioned Larsen-Fischer variation, Black could have countered with the simple 44...Qd8, protecting the b6-pawn and consolidating his position.

44...a5 45.Qf4 Rd4 46.Qh6

“Black has deployed all his pieces as well as possible, and it would appear that the remainder is a matter of technique. However, often such ‘technical’ positions demand great intensity of creative effort on the part of a player.”

“Black cannot force the exchange of queens, and he is obliged to advance his pawns in the face of an active white queen, which means that the struggle retains its sharpness to the end.” (Simagin).

46...b5 47.Qe3

47.Qf8 would have followed by 47...Qc7 48.Qa8+ Kb6, and there are no more checks. (indicated by Simagin).

47...Kb6 48.Qh6+ Ne6 49.Qe3

White hopes for random chances such as 50.Rxd2. But Petrosian plays the rest of the game with unrelenting consistency.

49...Ka6 50.Be2

“White cannot create any serious threats in view of the passive position of his rook, which is paralyzed by the black passed pawn.” (Simagin).

50...a4 51.Qc3 Kb6 52.Qe3 Nc5 53.Bf3 b4 54.Qh6+ Ne6 55.Qh8 Qd8 56.Qh7 Qd7 57.Qh8 b3!

“The simplest solution. The black king finds a shelter on White’s queenside, where it is better defended than on its home territory.” (Vladimir Simagin).

“The second time control passed, and Black gained time to make sure that the king’s forthcoming trip is safe.” (Edmar Mednis).

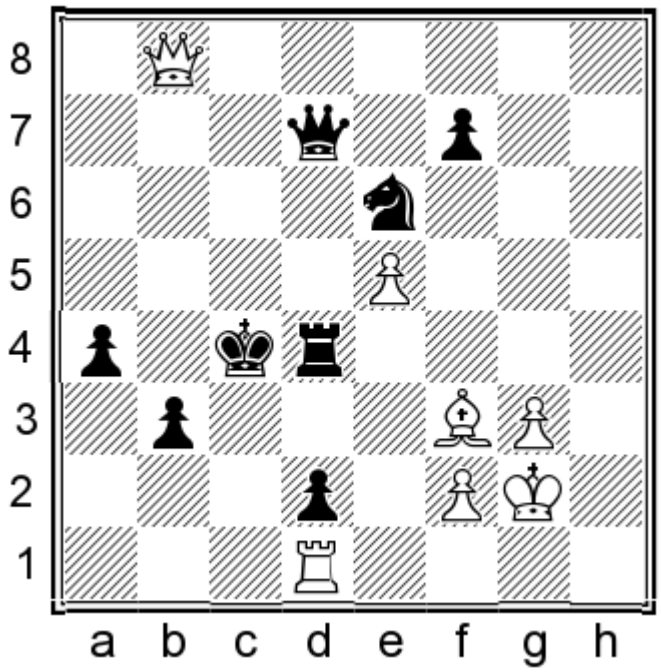
58.Qb8+ Ka5 59.Qa8+ Kb5

But not 59...Kb4? 60.Bc6!.

60.Qb8+

Or 60.Be2+ Kb4, etc.

60...Kc4!



“Only a person with the strongest nerves can willingly choose such a king walk.” (Mednis).

61.Qg8 Kc3 62.Bh5 Nd8

The moves 62...a3, 62...b2, and 62...Qd5+ would also have won, but Petrosian does not want to give anything away.

63.Bf3 a3 64.Qf8 Kb2 65.Qh8 Ne6

It seems that “all roads lead to Rome.” The other possible variations are 65...a2 66.Rxd2+ Rxd2 67.e6+ Qd4! (Mednis) or 65...Qe6, and the a-pawn is unstoppable. (Panov)

66.Qa8 a2 67.Qa5

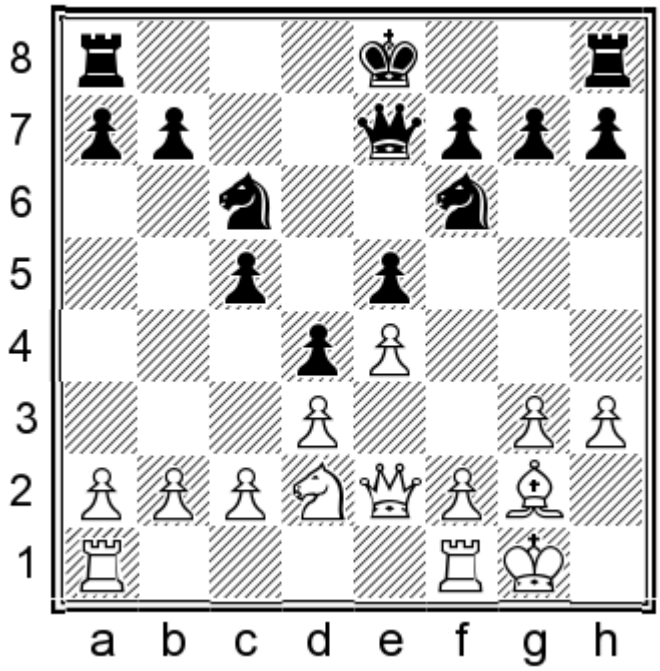
This leads to an elegant finale.

67...Qa4! 68.Rxd2+

Taking the opportunity to give a “spite” check.

68...Ka3 White resigned.

(281) 16th round: **13...Qe7**



Realizing that this time Fischer is perfectly ready for 13...g5, Petrosian avoids that continuation. However, as in the last game, Black does not try to avoid a double-edged struggle and again plans to castle queenside.

14.f4 0-0-0 15.a3

With this move, Fischer declares his intention to play “all-out” regardless of material costs.

15...Ne8

Better than the standard 15...Nd7. It seems that White underestimated this clever retreat.

16.b4!? cxb4

“Wide open! Safer is 16...f6 17.b5 (17.bxc5 Qxc5 18.fxe5 Nxe5) 17...Na5 18.Nb3 Nxb3 19.cxb3 Kb8 20.a4.” (Fischer).

17.Nc4?

Fischer’s annotation. In his book *My 60 Memorable Games* he follows with a lengthy analysis, proving White’s advantage after 17.fxe5. Among other variations, there is 17...bxa3 18.Nc4 Rf8(?) 19.Rxa3, and if 19...b5, then 20.Qg4+!. However, this variation is not quite convincing. In particular, it is not very clear why Black has to hold onto the f7-pawn. Instead of 18...Rf8, stronger is 18...Nxe5!; for example, 19.Nxe5 Qxe5 20.Rxf7 Kb8 21.Rxa3 (or 21.Qg4 g6 22.Rxa3 Nd6) 21...Nd6 22.Rf3 Rhf8, and I think that Black’s position is not any worse. Perhaps, Fischer is right about one thing: White should have played 17.fxe5 after all to stop Black from consolidating and to avoid the clear positional direction he has now.

17...f6!

An unpleasant surprise for White, as he counted on 17...bxa3 18.fxe5, transposing to the aforementioned variation.

18.fxe5 fxe5 19.axb4 Nc7

Black intends to reinforce his queenside and then go after the breakaway b-pawn.

20.Na5 Nb5!

“I already knew I’d been outplayed. Petrosian didn’t even consider 20...Nxb4, opening up the lines.” (Fischer). Petrosian made the right choice, as the variation indicated by Viacheslav Ragozin, confirmed: 20...Nxb4 21.Rfb1 Nba6 22.Qd2 b6 23.Nc4, and Black has to begin passive defense.

21.Nxc6 bxc6 22.Rf2 g6

If 22...Qxb4?, then 23.Qg4+ Rd7 24.Rf7 Rhd8 25.Qxg7 (indicated by Fischer).

23.h4 Kb7

Petrosian is in a fighting mood! Most commentators did not understand why here (and later) he did not occupy the f-file: 23...Rhf8. But in this case Black would not have time to take the b4-pawn: for example, 24.Rxf8 Rxf8 25.Qd2 Nc3 26.Ra5! Re8 27.Rc5.

The fact is White’s position is not as bad as it looks, and to play for a win Black must take risks.

24.h5 Qxb4!?

A move similar to 20...exd4 in the previous game. I think Fischer did not expect that his opponent had such a desire to fight, such drive to win. Fischer’s annotations indirectly confirm this: “Very risky! I was amazed he was allowing so much counterplay. 24...Rhf8! is still right. On 24...gxh5; 25.Qxh5 Rhf8 26.Rf5!).”

To be fair, note that in case of 24...Rhf8 25.Rxf8 Rxf8 26.hxg6 hxg6 27.Qg4 Qxb4 28.Qxg6 White would also obtain good counter-chances.

25.Rf7+ Kb6

Black’s plan is now obvious: put the knight on c3 and push the a-pawn towards promotion while letting White play for mate (if he can), since he is unlikely to get to the h7-, e5-, and c6-pawns.

“On 25...Kb8 26.Qf2 Rhf8 27.c4! Nc7 (27...dxc3? 28.Raxa7 Rxf7 29.Qb6+) 28.Qf6.” (Fischer).

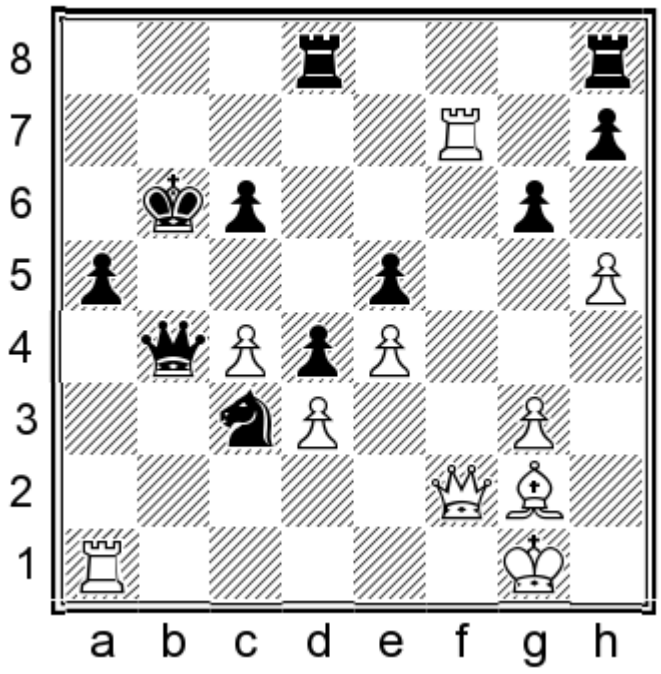
26.Qf2!

In a difficult situation Fischer finds an excellent resource! Using tactical ideas, White manages to push his pawn to c4.

26...a5

Bad is 26...Rhf8 because of 27.c4! Nc3 28.Raxa7 (Fischer) or 26...Qc5? 27.c4 dxc3 28.Ra6+! (Ragozin), and White wins. The attempt to prevent c2-c4 by playing 26...Qc3 failed in view of 27.Ra4!, as indicated by Ragozin.

27.c4 Nc3



28.Rf1?

Here, White missed a good opportunity: 28.Qf6! (threatening 29.Qg7 and 29.Rxh7). Fischer even believes that this was almost winning, but the analysis (again a very detailed one) he refers to suffers from inaccuracies. Here is one of the variations: 28...Rdf8 (but not 28...Rhf8? 29.Rf1! Rxf7 30.Qxd8+ Rc7 31.Rf7 with a win – Fischer) 29.Qxe5 Rxf7 30.Qxh8 Qc5(?)31.e5(?) “is difficult for Black.” First, on the 30th move, he should have retreated his queen to d6, and second, in the final position after 31...Qf8! it is actually difficult for White, who has to exchange the queens and transition into a bleak endgame. Instead of 31.e5, correct is 31.Qd8+; for instance, 31...Rc7 32.Qb8+ (or 32.e5 Qxe5 33.Qb8+ Ka6) 32...Rb7 33.Qd8+ with a perpetual check.

This was the logical finale of this interesting game, which, oddly enough has not strayed beyond the limits of equilibrium so far despite its stormy course. And only now does Black get real winning chances.

28...a4

The move recommended by Fischer, 28...Qd6 (preventing the white queen’s invasion of f6), is nothing more than a disguised draw offer: 29.Qb2+ Qb4 30.Qf2.

29.Qf6 Qc5?

An error in time pressure. Automatically protecting the a7-pawn (in case of 30.Qg7 Rdg8 31.Rb7+ Ka6) turns out to be a gross blunder losing a pawn. The cool reply 29...Qd6! would have maintained the advantage. By the way, Fischer does not mention this for some reason. After another possible variation, 30.Qg7 Rdg8 31.Rb7+ Kc5 32.Qf7? (better is 32.Qh6 – Igor Yanvarjov) 32...Rf8 33.Qg7 Rhg8 34.Qxh7 Rh8 35.Qxg6 Qxg6 36.hxg6, an unpleasant surprise awaited White: 36...Ne2 – checkmate! (indicated by Ragozin)

30.Rxh7!

Using the fact that the d8-rook is attacked by the white queen. At this point, it was Bobby who decided to play for a win.

30...Rdf8 31.Qxg6 Rxh7

At this point there are discrepancies in the text of the game. Your author decided to use the text from the tournament bulletin and the publications of those years. In his book Fischer lists a different move order: 31...Rxf1+

32.Bxf1 Rxh7, etc.

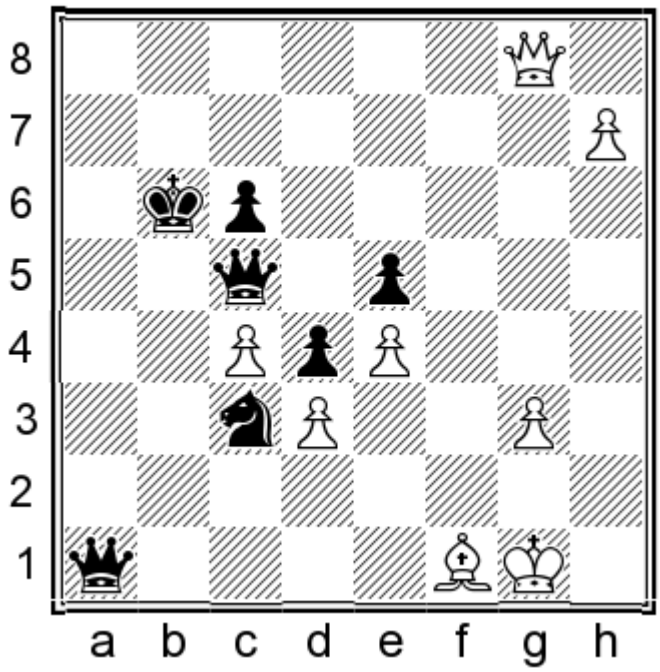
32.Qxh7 Rxf1+ 33.Bxf1 a3

“Petrosian had been banking on the speed of this pawn.” (Fischer)

34.h6 a2 35.Qg8 a1=Q 36.h7

A sweet revenge for all the trouble that White had in the opening and middlegame. Just think about it! Black already has two queens, while Fischer continues to look for chances and refuses a sure draw by perpetual check: 36.Qd8+ Ka6 37.Qc8+, etc.

Remember, that at that time, the American chess player was only sixteen years old. And look at him! No wonder that many already regarded him as a future world champion.



36...Qd6?

“In time-pressure, Petrosian overlooked 36...Ne2+ 37.Kf2 Nxg3!, and White has nothing better than to take a perpetual check with 38.Qb8+.” (indicated by Fischer)

However, there is no need to regret this oversight, because the art of chess ended up winning out: now we will see a unique endgame with four queens.

37.h8=Q Qa7 38.g4 Kc5

In such endgames, the positions of the kings are usually of great importance. The white king, guarded by the bishop, is quite secure, which cannot be said of his counterpart yet. And the black king seeks to find shelter in the white camp, hiding behind the pawn chain.

39.Qf8?

“Right is 39.Qh2! immediately, preventing Black’s king from reaching safety behind the lines. If then 39...Qf6; 40.g5. Or 39...Qa1 (39...Qa2? 40.Qxa2 Nxa2 41.Qa8 wins a piece) 40.Qg7 wins the e-pawn. Finally on 39...Qae7 40.Qa8 renews the attack.” (Fischer).

39...Qae7

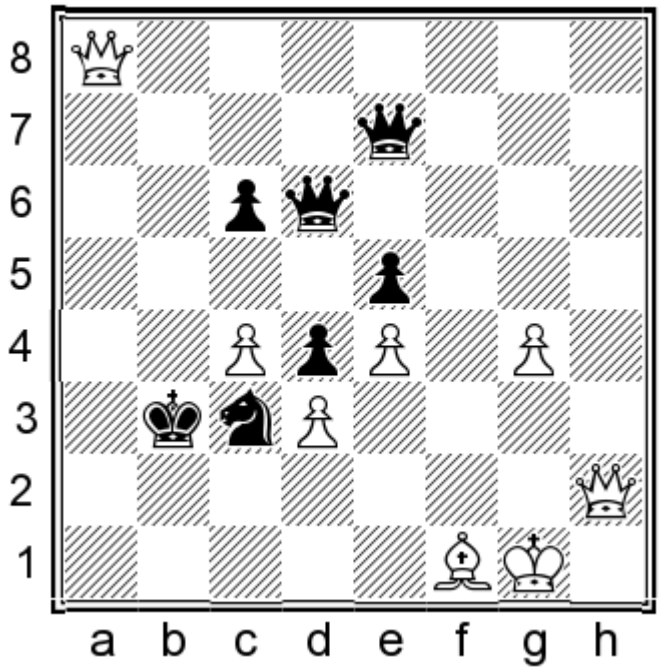
Forced because of the threat of 40.Qxe5+. 39...Qxf8 did not work because of 40.Qxf8+ Kb6 41.Qb4+ Ka6 42.Qa3+ Kb7 43.Qxa7+ Kxa7 44.g5 (variations by Fischer)

40.Qa8

“I thought this was it! The two queens are closing in for the kill.” (Fischer)

40...Kb4! 41.Qh2 Kb3!

“Slippery as an eel!” (Fischer)



“Now White sealed. It’s fantastically complicated!”

“The tournament bulletins suggest 42.c5 Qxc5 (if 42...Qg6? 43.Be2! Qgg5 44.Bd1+!) 43.Qg8+ Ka3 44.Qc2 Qb4 (bad is 44...Qb5 in view of 45.Qc1+ Ka4 46.Qa8+ Kb3 47.Qaa1! – Igor Yanvarjov) 45.Qa8+ Qa4 (not 45...Na4? 46.Qc1+ Ka2 47.Qg8+ Qb3 48.Qc2+! wins) 46.Qcxa4+! Nxa4 47.Qxc6 ‘with good winning chances,’ but after 47...Nc3 (Fritz shows that 47...Qg5! is even simpler – Igor Yanvarjov) it’s likely Black can draw.” (Fischer)

42.Qa1

“After the game a kibitzer asked Petrosian if he thought 42.c5 would have won for White. Petrosian, who must have analyzed it for many hours (not knowing, of course, what my sealed move was), simply replied: ‘I do not know.’” (Fischer)

42...Qa3

White threatened checkmate on b2.

43.Qxa3+ Kxa3 44.Qh6

White wants to advance the g-pawn.

44...Qf7! 45.Kg2

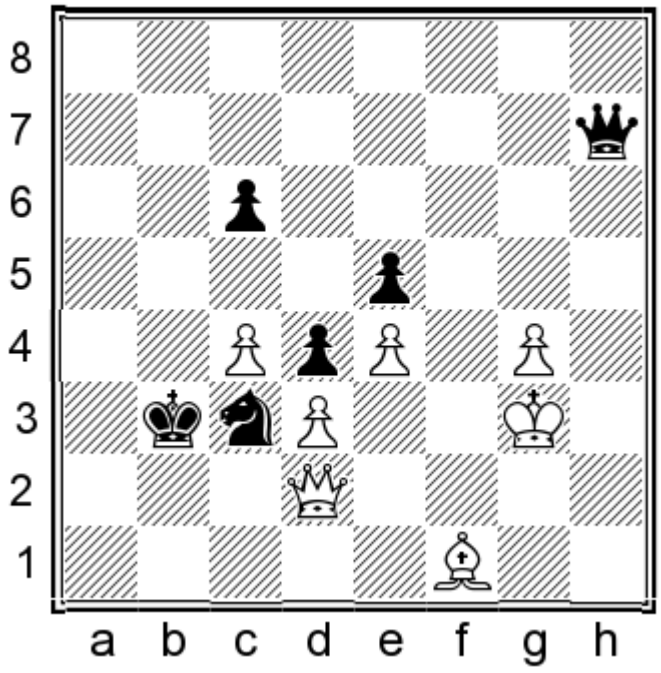
After 45.Qxc6, a draw could have been reached by 45...Qf4!. Weaker is 45...Nd1, as suggested by Fischer, in view of 46.Qc5+! Kb3 47.Qb5+ Kc2 48.Qa4+ Kc1 49.Qa2.

45...Kb3

“Not 45...Nd1 46.Qc1+ Nb2, and the knight is stranded out of play. The text renews the threat of ...Nd1.” (Fischer)

46.Qd2 Qh7 47.Kg3?

“A gross blunder, but probably best anyway! White can’t win anymore. If 47.g5, 47...Qh4, etc.” (Fischer)



47...Qxe4! 48.Qf2

“Having overlooked Petrosian’s last move, I was somewhat shaken! Not 48.dxe4? Nxe4+ 49.Kh4 Nxd2 50.g5 Nxf1 51.g6 d3 wins. Also on 48.Qd1+ (48.Qxc3+? dxc3 49.dxe4 c2) 48.Qd1+ Nxd1 49.dxe4 Ne3 50.Be2 Nxc4 51.g5 Nd6 52.g6 Ne8 and Black again wins.”

“The right retort, however, is 48.g5! and it’s still a hard fight.” (Fischer)

48...Qh1

“I offered a draw, afraid that he wouldn’t accept. Black certainly has the edge now.”

After having fought so hard for the draw, however, Petrosian was obviously unprepared to readjust his frame of mind and start playing for a win. So... drawn.” (Fischer)

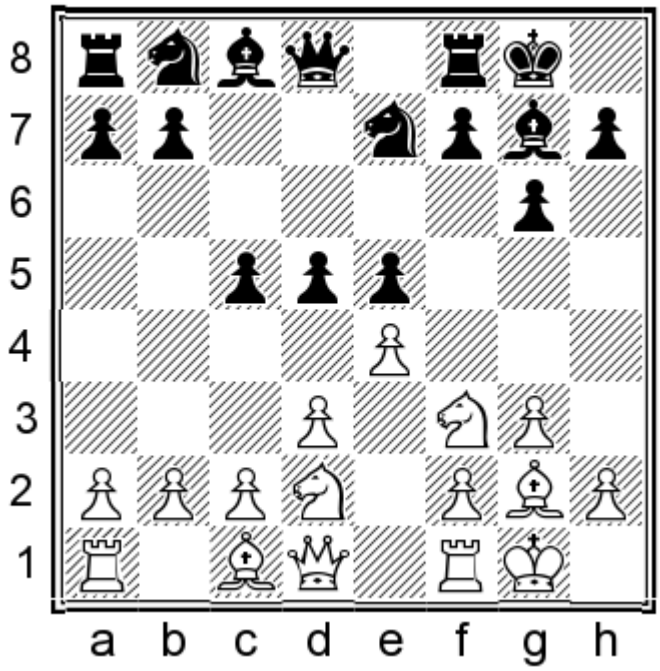
Playing with reversed colors does not imply simply a mechanical transposition of opening moves and ideas; it is a much more creative process that has its own peculiarities, and not only chess-related ones. Efim Geller once lamented that the same variation turns out differently for him depending on the color of his pieces: “When I play the King’s Indian with Black, everything is all right. When I try the same system with White (with an extra tempo!), it does not work!” By the way, the grandmaster voiced a problem important for many chess players. Fortunately, Tigran Petrosian did not suffer from this kind of chess “color blindness.”

(282) Petrosian – Donner
Santa Monica 1966

1.Nf3 d5 2.g3 g6 3.Bg2 Bg7 4.0-0 e5 5.d3 Ne7 6.Nbd2 0-0 7.e4 c5

The opening has been determined: the main Fianchetto Variation is being played with reversed colors (see tabiyas

C1 and C2).



8.exd5

White wants to avoid positions with a closed center. In case of 8.c3, 8...d4 promises decent play for Black; for example: 9.cxd4 cxd4 10.Nc4 Nbc6 11.a4 Be6 (Petrosian-Pachman, Varna 1962).

8...Nxd5 9.Nb3

Avoiding “plagiarism” (9.Nc4 or 9.Re1) and giving the game an unusual flavor. Petrosian decided to use the extra tempo to capture the initiative immediately. In the next moves, White prevents the normal development of the enemy’s queenside.

9...Nd7

Of interest is the “lateral” defense of the pawn via 9...Na6, which was later encountered in the games Krojanski-Galliamova (Dortmund 1992) and Hole-Rychagov (Gausdal 2000).

10.Re1 Rb8

A natural move (the rook leaves the dangerous diagonal) that in fact contributes only to the development of White’s initiative. Now and on the next move ...Ne7 deserved attention.

11.Nfd2 Nc7

Black prepares to play ...b6 and ...Bb7, solving the problem of the development of the queen’s bishop, but...

12.Na5! Ne6 13.Nac4 Qc7

The white knights demonstrate extraordinary speed! 13...b6 would have been followed by 14.Nd6! Ba6 15.a4 Qc7(e7) 16.Nb5 with an advantage (indicated by Petrosian).

14.Ne4 Nb6

Black cannot stand the pressure and abandons his original plan. As Petrosian pointed out, in case of 14...b6, White intended to continue the bold knight raid: 15.Ned6 Ba6 16.a4, with the idea of Nb5. However, 14...b5 15.Ncd6 Ba6

16.a4 b4 was quite possible (but not 16...f5? 17.axb5 fxe4 18.Rxa6!, and the d6-knight is protected).

15.Nc3

From this square, the knight threatens to jump to b5 and controls the d5-square.

15...Bd7 16.a4 Bc6?

According to Donner, this is the root of Black's defeat. He should have played 16...Rfd8 with an acceptable position.

17.Nb5 Bxb5

The result of the unfortunate previous move. Black is forced to exchange the light-square bishop, after which the freshly made King's Indian g2-bishop begins to dominate the long diagonal.

18.axb5 Nxc4

Another dubious exchange, after which White's advantage becomes significant. Here, too, 18...Rfd8 would have been better.

19.dxc4 b6 20.c3

So, let's summarize the opening stage. White has an outstanding position. He has the bishop pair and in the long run "free" pressure along the a-file. The unusual pawn structure that formed on the queenside is also advantageous for White, since the doubled pawns have a useful function, fixing the weakness on a7 and controlling the central squares. According to Donner, at that moment he already considered his position lost.

20...Rfe8 21.Ra6

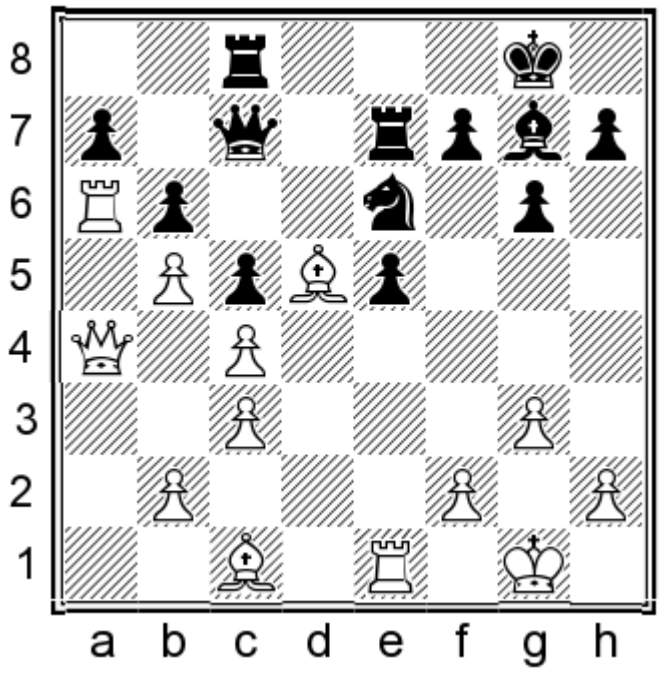
"Let's go!" [this phrase, in Russian, was made famous by Yuri Gagarin, a Soviet pilot and cosmonaut, the first human to journey into space – translator.]

21...Re7 22.Qa4 Rc8

A regrouping to ensure the protection of the a7-pawn: ...Qb8, ...Rcc7.

23.Bd5!

The move that essentially won the game. Black cannot prevent the exchange on e6, which decisively compromises his position. If the knight were to retreat, White would reply 24.Bg5 and 25.Ra1,



23...Qb8 24.Bxe6 fxe6

Perhaps, Black would have had better chances after a pawn sacrifice, 24...Rxe6.

25.Qd1! Rd8 26.Qg4

White's play is now simple: to destroy the kingside by advancing the rook pawn and exchange the bishops at the right moment, after which Black's king and weak pawns will become easy prey for the white pieces.

26...Ree8 27.h4 Rd7 28.h5 gxh5 29.Qxh5 Rf8 30.Qg4 Rf6

More stubborn was 30...Rf5 followed by ...h5 (Petrosian).

31.Be3 Rg6 32.Qe4 Bf8 33.Raa1 Bd6 34.Red1 Rgg7 35.Rd2 Bf8

After 35...Bc7, White would have continued as in the game.

36.Rxd7 Rxd7 37.Qg4+ Kf7 38.Qh3 Kf6 39.Rf1

At this tournament, Petrosian was not always precise in finishing off his opponent. More immediately decisive was 39.Qh5! with a further 40.Bg5+ and 41.Bh6+.

39...Qe8 40.Qh4+ Kg7 41.Bh6+ Kg8 42.Bxf8 Kxf8

42...Qxf8 43.Qg4+ Kf7 44.Qh5+ Kf6 45.Re1 does not help (Petrosian).

43.Re1 Qf7

43...Qg6 44.Rxe5 Qb1+ 45.Kg2 is also hopeless.

44.Rxe5 Qg6 45.Kg2 Qf7 46.Re4 Ke8 47.Rf4

White wins a pawn, and most importantly, continues the attack.

47...Qe7 48.Qh5+ Kd8

The black king, caught in the crossfire of White's major pieces, cannot find shelter anywhere. Defending such positions is an ungrateful task.

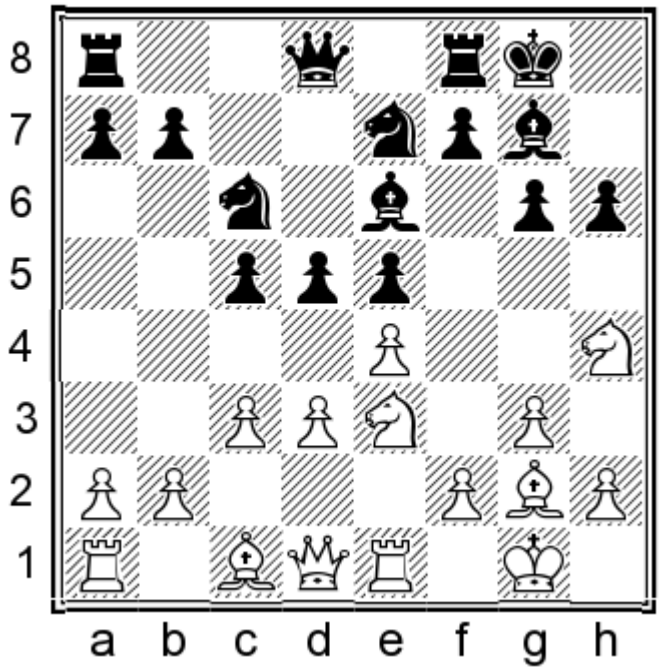
49.Qe5 Kc8 50.Qe4 Kb8 51.Rh4 Qf7 52.Rf4

52.Rh6 would have been enough; for example, 52...Rd2 53.Qe5+ Kb7 54.Rf6.

52...Qe7 53.Qf3 Qd6 54.Rf8+ Rd8 55.Rf6

Black resigned because of his inevitable demise in the variation 55.Rf6 Rd7 56.Qe4 Re7 57.Rf8+ Kc7 58.Qa8 (indicated by Tigran Petrosian).

(283) Udovčić – Petrosian
Rovinj/Zagreb 1970



White to move

Both opponents aimed for this position but evaluated it differently. White probably pinned his hopes on his next move.

13.Qf3

No matter how Black responds now, the white knight will make its way to d5.

"A knight in the center of the board, protected by a pawn..." Such generic statements are valuable and useful when they are based on a concrete positional evaluation, but they are useless and even harmful if they are turned into dogmas.

Maybe the Yugoslav player believed that even if the standard confiscation of the d5-square would not give him an advantage, then at least save it would save White from troubles? But this turned out to be a delusion.

13...d4 14.Nd5

Why did the knight centralization not have the desired effect in this case? First, the d5-knight does not support the rest of the pieces, and White does not have the opportunity to open the game in the near future. And, second, White's other knight is badly placed. It is a good time to cite Siegbert Tarrasch: "Der Springer am Rande ist immer die Schande." ["A knight on the rim is grim" – translator.] All of this allows Black to prepare and carry out a pawn

offensive on the kingside.

14...dxc3!

A necessary exchange, so that if White plays c3-c4 Black can have the d4-square for the knight.

15.bxc3 Nc8

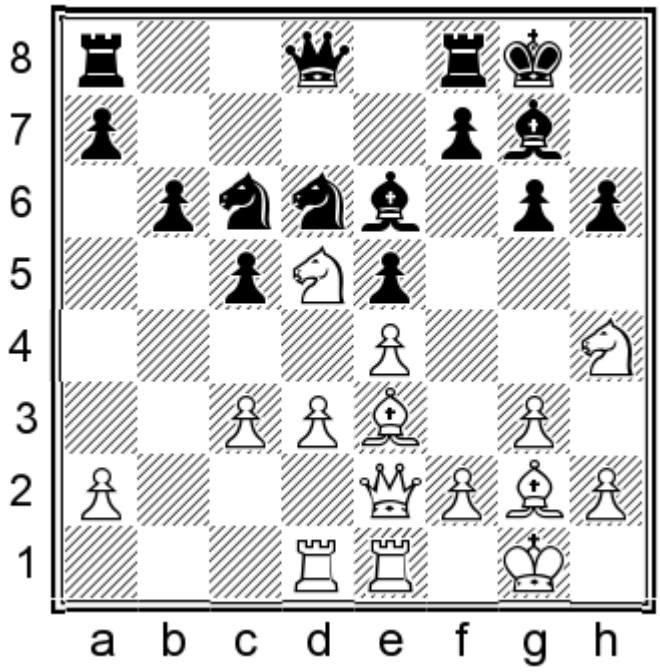
A well-known strategic technique. Black goes around the d5-knight, carrying out the maneuver ...Nc8-d6.

16.Be3

Again a boilerplate move. As the further development of the game shows, the bishop would have been better placed on b2.

16...b6 17.Qe2 Nd6 18.Rad1?

Missing the opportunity to consolidate the position of the centralized knight via 18.c4.



18...g5! 19.Nf3 f5! 20.Bc1

The result of the oversight on the 18th move: White cannot play exf5 and has to allow the pawn on f4.

20...f4 21.Nd2 Qd7

The initiative is entirely in Black's hands. Later he doubles the rooks on the f-file, transfers the knight from c6 to g6 and starts decisive actions via ...fxg3, ...h6-h5-h4. Probably White could have defended a little better, but it would not change much.

22.f3 Rf7 23.Nb3 Raf8 24.Rf1 Ne7 25.c4 Ng6! 26.Bd2 h5 27.Rf2 fxg3 28.hxg3 h4 29.Bxg5 hxg3 30.Rff1 Nf4 31.Bxf4 exf4 32.e5 Nf5 33.d4 Qd8 34.Nxf4 Qh4 35.Nh3 Nxd4 36.Nxd4 cxd4 37.Qe4 Rf4!

The decisive blow. Now is a good time to resign. But, apparently, the time pressure was severe and White was not able to stop, hence the "horror act" in time trouble.

38.Rxd4

Not 38.Nxf4 because of checkmate with the queen on h2.

38...Rxe4 39.Rxe4 Qh6 40.Nf2?? Qh2#

(284) Petrosian – Van den Berg

Wijk aan Zee 1971

1.Nf3 d5 2.g3 g6 3.Bg2 Bg7 4.0-0 e5 5.d3 Ne7 6.Nbd2 0-0 7.e4 c6

The Dutch chess player's uncertainty in playing the opening is visible. With his last move, Black had decided to maintain the tension, but then he changed his mind and advanced the pawns to d4 and c5.

8.Re1 d4 9.a4 a5

Again, played vaguely, without forecasted future developments. More logical is 9...c5.

10.Bf1

Preparing the move c2-c3 to "drag out" the black pawn to c5 and to get the opportunity to move the queen to b3.

10...c5

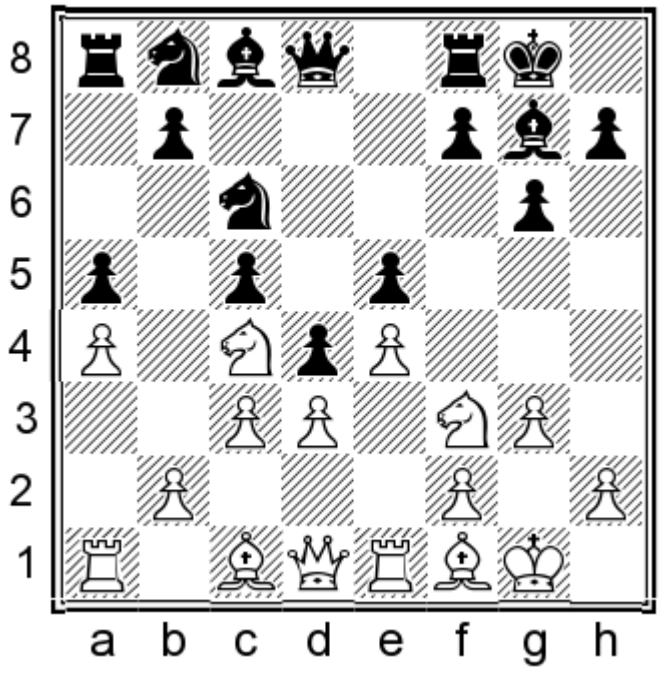
The placement of the pawns on c5 and a5 in such positions does not look aesthetically pleasing, but it is quite solid (see games 31, 165 and 222 for a similar pawn structure with colors reversed).

11.c3 Nec6

The standard setup of the knights could be reached by 11...Nbc6. Van den Berg interprets this position in his own way and, I think, quite well.

12.Nc4

Little by little, the position takes on King's Indian features.



12...Na6!?

Probably, Black had this possibility in mind when he made his 11th move. The knight would have been much worse on d7. Now, in case of cxd4, ...cxd4, the a6-knight gains excellent outposts on b4 or c5, and if White returns to the plan with f2-f4, then after ...exf4, g3xf4, ...f5, e4-e5 Black can bring the knight to c7, from where it controls the important d5- and e6-squares.

Taking this into account, Petrosian chose a third path associated with playing on the light squares, and it looks like he guessed it right.

13.h4!? h6

More principled is 13...h5. In this case, the game could have developed roughly as follows: 14.Kh2 Bg4 15.Bh3 Rb8 (15...Qd7? 16.Nb6) 16.Kg2 Qd7 17.Bxg4 hxg4 18.Nh2 f5 19.Qe2 with complicated play; a similar plan brought Petrosian success in his game against Pachman at the Olympiad in Varna (1962).

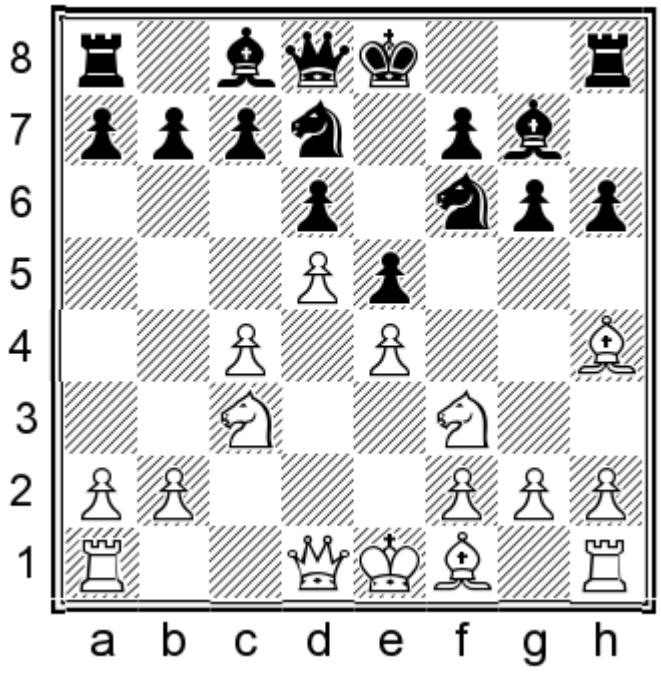
14.h5 g5?!

An impulsive move. Now White definitely has the advantage. Correct was 14...Bg4; for example, 15.hxg6 fxg6 16.Be2, and the position remains double-edged.

15.Be2

Eyeing the g4-square. Curiously, this bishop's movements coincide with changes in White's plan. At first, when the center was under tension, the bishop tried to exploit the long diagonal; after the black pawn advanced to d4, the bishop focused on preparing the move c2-c3; when the situation on the kingside changed, the bishop gained new tasks on a new stage.

Nowadays, many chess players have a taste for playing on the "last rank." Sometime truly creative ideas are arise. Here is one of them: the same maneuver, but in the regular King's Indian and with slightly different ideas.



Kharitonov-Komliakov
Zhavoronki 1995

Black to move

Here Black unexpectedly played 8...Bf8! 9.Nd2 Be7!, and in view of the threat ...Nxd5, White had to exchange the valuable dark-square bishop: 10.Bg3 Nh5 11.Be2 Nxg3 12.hxg3, with excellent play for Black (Kharitonov-Komliakov, Zhavoronki 1995). The King's Indian bishop works in mysterious ways!

15...Be6 16.Nfd2 Nc7 17.Bg4!

Apparently, the Dutch master considered this move impossible, because the d3-pawn remains under attack. But the light squares are more important than the pawn!

17...dxc3 18.bxc3 Qxd3 19.Bxe6 Nxe6 20.Re3 Qd8 21.Rb1

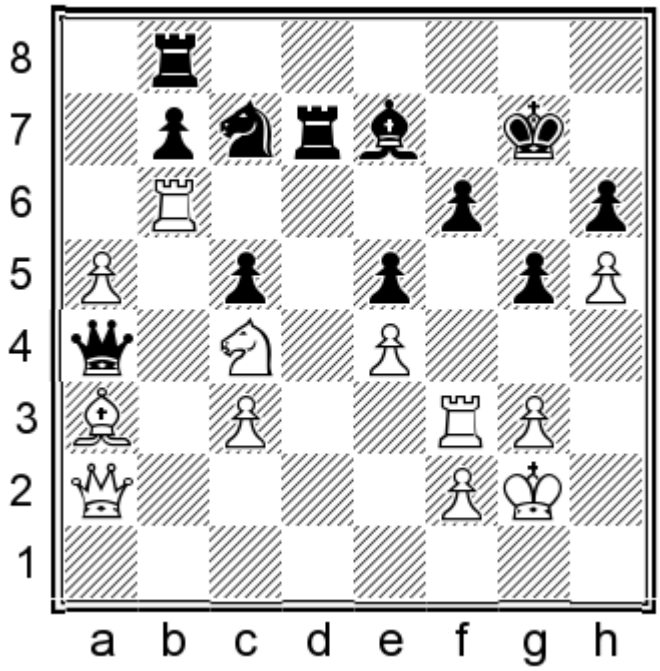
The compensation is so significant that the sacrificed pawn is recouped within a few moves.

21...Rb8 22.Qe2 Ne7 23.Nb6 Qc7 24.Ndc4 Rfd8 25.Nxa5 Nc8?

Too passive. It was time to start complications: 25...f5 26.exf5 Nxf5, etc.

26.Nac4 Nxb6 27.Nxb6 Qc6 28.a5 Nc7 29.Ba3 Bf8 30.Kg2 Be7 31.Nc4 f6 32.Rb6 Qa4 33.Qa2 Kg7 34.Rf3 Rd7?

More stubborn is 34...g4 35.Rf5! Rd3, but not 36.Nxe5? in view of 36...Qxe4+; correct is 36.Kh2!.



35.Nxe5!

Focusing the lines of force of the heavy pieces on the region of the black king: 35...fxe5 36.Qf7+ Kh8 37.Rxh6#. Black resigned.

Systems with reversed colors were one of the main themes of the 1971 candidates match between Tigran Petrosian and Viktor Korchnoi.

(285) Petrosian – Korchnoi
Candidates' Match (Semifinal) (3)
Moscow 1971

1.Nf3 d5 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d4

A rare variation. The move ...d4 is usually played after 1.Nf3 d5 2.c4, since in this case Black will have the move ...e5. Probably, Korchnoi did not like 3.b4!?, because then it is hard for Black to advance ...c5.

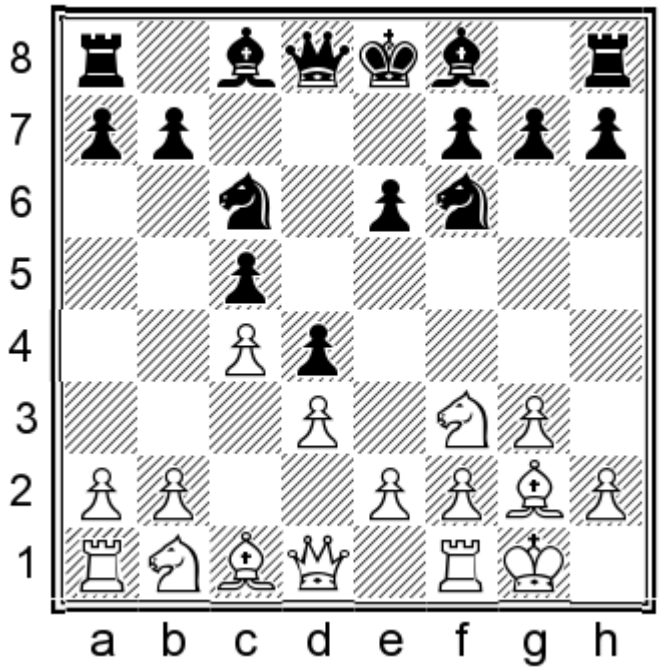
Korchnoi values the space advantage and likes to limit the maneuverability of the opponent's pieces even when

playing Black, which, of course, was no secret to Petrosian. They had already played one similar game three years earlier. Here it is (annotations in parentheses by Viktor Korchnoi): 1...Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.g3 d5 4.Bg2!? (4.cxd5) 4...d4 5.0-0 Nc6 6.d3 e5 7.e3 Be7 (7...Nd7 8.exd4 cxd4 9.Ng5!) 8.exd4 exd4 9.Bf4 0-0 10.Ne5 Nxe5 11.Bxe5 Nd7 12.Re1 a6?! (12...Nxe5) 13.Nd2 Nxe5 14.Rxe5 Bd6 15.Re1 g6 16.Bd5 Ra7 17.Qf3 b6 18.Ne4 Kg7 Draw (Petrosian-Korchnoi, Palma de Mallorca 1968). Perhaps, Petrosian had the impression his opponent did not play confidently enough in the opening. In matches such details are of great importance.

4.Bg2 c5 5.0-0

Petrosian spent 13 minutes on this natural move! On the sidelines, it was assumed that the former world champion was thinking about the consequences of the sharp 5.b4.

5...Nc6 6.d3 Nf6



7.e3

The most promising plan. By undermining the d4-pawn, White transitions to an Indian structure.

7...Be7

After 7...e5 8.exd4 exd4 Black would reach a position from the above game but down a tempo.

8.exd4 cxd4 9.Re1

By Benoni standards, White’s position is clearly better; the only question is how great his advantage is.

In the future, the opponents carry out the standard regrouping for such positions: Black transfers the f6-knight to the strong c5-square, and White moves the queen’s knight to c2 in order to activate the pawn majority on the queenside.

9...Nd7 10.Na3 Nc5 11.Nc2 a5 12.b3 0-0 13.Bb2

Distracting the black bishop from the a3-f8 diagonal to underscore the effort of the exchanging maneuver Bxc5.

13...Bf6 14.Ba3 Qb6

The queen takes on the job of defending the knight, since 14...b6? is bad in view of 15.Ne5! Nxe5 16.Bxc5! bxc5 17.Bxa8, and White wins.

15.Bxc5

As Petrosian pointed out, this exchange could have waited until after 15.Nd2!?, because the threat to the d3-pawn is imaginary: 15...Nxd3?! 16.Ne4 Nxe1? 17.Nxf6+ gxf6 18.Qg4+ Kh8 19.Bxf8 with a win. In addition to this variation, note that in case of 16...Ncb4 17.Nxf6+ gxf6 18.Bxb4 Nxb4 19.Qg4+ Kh8 20.Qxd4 Qxd4 21.Nxd4 White's advantage is obvious.

15...Qxc5 16.Nd2

"I think Petrosian achieved his favorite position. White has a clear plan that consists of preparing an offensive on the queenside, while for Black it is not so easy to advance his e- and f-pawns.

"Grandmaster Kotov proposed an interesting plan that starts with the move 16...Qf5!?, with the approximate continuation 17.Ne4 Be7, then ...Qg6 and ...f5. Of course, this plan deserved serious attention. However, at this point Black is concerned only with neutralizing the opponent's pressure on the queenside.

"Most of the grandmasters present at the match leaned toward the conclusion that White's strategy had come out victorious. It looks like Black has nothing to offset White's pawn offensive on the queenside." (Kholmov)

16...Qb6!

Here Korchnoi thought for about an hour and found a wonderful plan.

17.a3 Qc7

Fighting the advance b3-b4 is futile. For example: 17...Be7 18.Rb1 Bd7 19.b4! (Tigran Petrosian) 19...axb4 20.axb4 Nxb4? 21.c5! Bxc5 22.Nc4 Qb5 23.Nxb4 Bxb4 24.Re5 Qa4 25.Qxa4 Rxa4 26.Nb6 Bd6 27.Re4, and Black suffers material losses. Korchnoi tries to find the best setup for his pieces in order to meet the arrival of the white pawns fully armed.

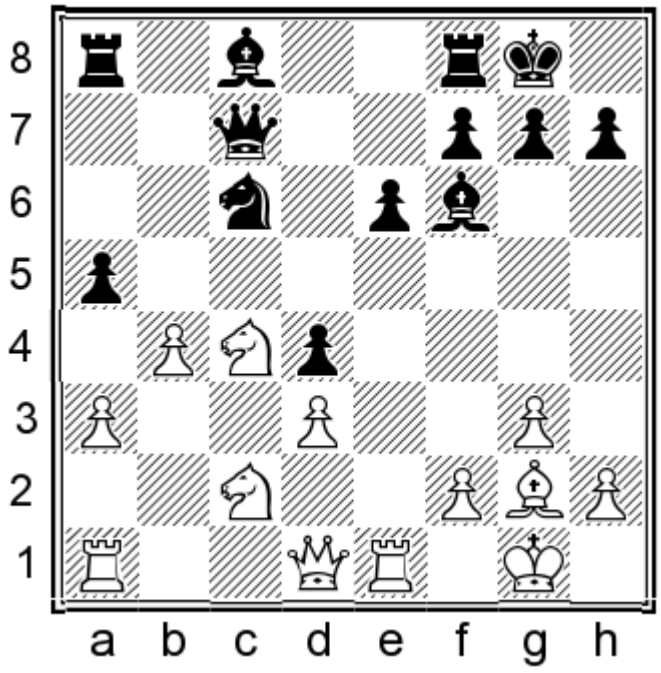
18.c5

Planning Nc4. 18.b4 could have been followed by 18...axb4 19.axb4 Rxa1 20.Qxa1 b5! 21.cxb5 Ne5! with counterplay (Petrosian)

18...b5!

An excellent resource! White is practically forced to take en passant, which destroys his pawn monolith on the queenside. Despite the apparent risk associated with the continuation Black has chosen, he manages to keep balance.

19.cxb6 Qxb6 20.Nc4 Qc7 21.b4



21...Rb8!?

Offering a pawn sacrifice. After 21...Bb7 22.b5 Ne7 23.Bxb7 Qxb7 24.a4 (Petrosian) or 21...axb4 22.axb4 Rb8 23.Qd2 Bd7 (23...Be7? 24.b5!) 24.Reb1 (Kholmov) White would have kept his advantage.

In this game, Korchnoi confirms his reputation as a skilled master of active defense.

22.Nxa5

The resulting simplifications lead to a quick draw. However, the attempt to fight for the advantage by 22.Bxc6 Qxc6 23.Nxa5 would have been risky. In this case, after 23...Qc3 (Petrosian) or 23...Qd5 (Kholmov), Petrosian would have always had to reckon with Black's counterplay on the weakened light squares and along the c-file. It is clear that Korchnoi would have had ample compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

22...Nxa5 23.bxa5 Qxa5 24.Nb4 Bb7 25.Nc6 Bxc6

Dubious was 25...Qa8 26.Nxb8 Bxg2 27.Nd7, as White always has the reply f2-f3, protecting the king from threats along the diagonal.

26.Bxc6 Rfc8 27.Be4 g6 Draw.

(286) Petrosian – Korchnoi
Candidates' Match (Semifinal) (9)
Moscow 1971

Annotations by Alexey Suetin.

1.c4 e5 2.g3 c6 3.b3!?

With this move, White gives a twist to the opening . The usual continuation is 3.Nf3 e4 4.Nd4 d5, and so on.

3...d5 4.Bb2 d4

Typical for Korchnoi, who likes such a pawn wedge on the fifth rank (regardless of the color of his pieces). Now the game takes on the character of the Réti opening, however, the strategic metamorphoses are not over yet.

5.Nf3 Bd6 6.d3

Deserving of attention was 6.b4, trying to seize space on the queenside.

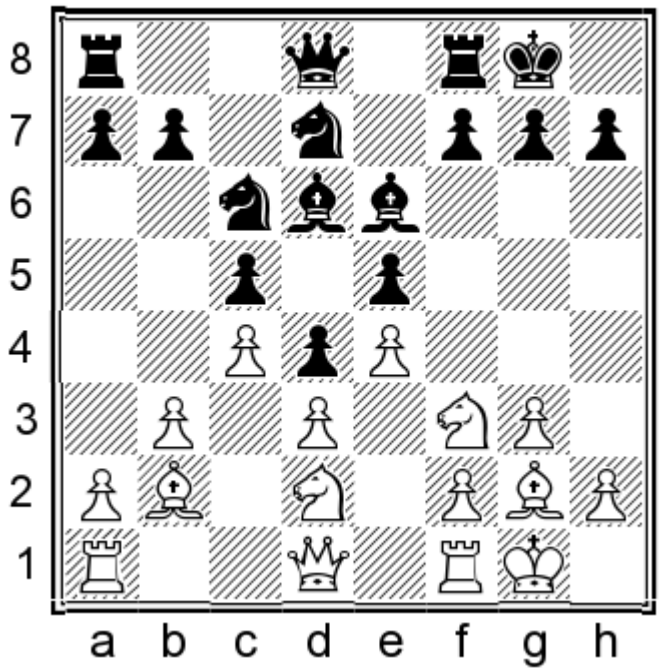
6...c5 7.Bg2 Ne7 8.0-0 Nec6

In turn, Black mobilizes his forces, transferring the king's knight to c6 and the queen's knight to f6.

9.e3 0-0 10.Nbd2 Be6 11.e4

White thought for a long time before making this move. Now that the opening stage is coming to an end, it is obvious that the game has reached a Benoni structure with reversed colors. Of course, comparing to the analogous theoretical variations, White has two extra tempi (b2-b3 and Bb2), but that is hardly significant in this position. Moreover, in a similar situation the dark-square bishop would have been better placed on the c1-h6 diagonal.

11...Nd7



12.Nh4 g6 13.Bf3

White's regrouping is easy to understand: he intends to exchange the light-square bishops by Bg4, and in case of 13...Bh3 to play 14.Ng2, preparing the undermining move f2-f4 in the future.

13...Bc7

This maneuver determines consequent sharpening of the play. Its tactical meaning can be seen in the variation 14.Bg4 Bxg4 15.Qxg4 Ba5 16.Rad1 Bc3! 17.Bc1 Nb4!, and Black has a won position. At the same time, the dark-square bishop takes control of the important diagonal a5-e1 and intends to take root on the c3-square.

And yet this seemingly promising plan has its downsides, the main one being distancing the bishop from controlling the central squares and from the kingside. White's following moves are probably the only effective way to hinder Black's plan. Deserving attention was 13...Re8 followed by ...Nf8.

14.a3 Ba5

Here again 14...Re8 and 15...Nf8 is not bad.

15.Bc1 Qe7 16.Bg4 f5

A natural, but, as it becomes clear later, overly committing decision. 16...Bc3 17.Ra2 a6, trying to advance ...b5-b4 as soon as possible, looks better.

17.exf5 gxf5 18.Bf3

18.Bh3 seems to be more consistent, but Black had prepared the sharp counterblow 18...e4!. By the way, White must be mindful of this counterattack throughout the rest of the game.

18...Nf6 19.Bg2

A maneuver that is typical of Tigran Petrosian, and one that is not devoid of tactical flavor (the bishop moves away from the attack in case of ...e5- e4 – Igor Yanvarjov). And meanwhile, if you delve into the position, White's idea, associated with the undermining move b3-b4 and active play in the center and on the queenside, becomes obvious.

19...Rad8

From the point of view of some, even very sophisticated spectators and masters, this maneuver is makes little sense. I think this move clearly reflected Korchnoi's uncompromising mood. Keeping in mind the breakthrough ...e5-e4, Black intends to combine it with the subsequent attack ...d4-d3 and places the rook on d8 with this idea.

20.Ra2!

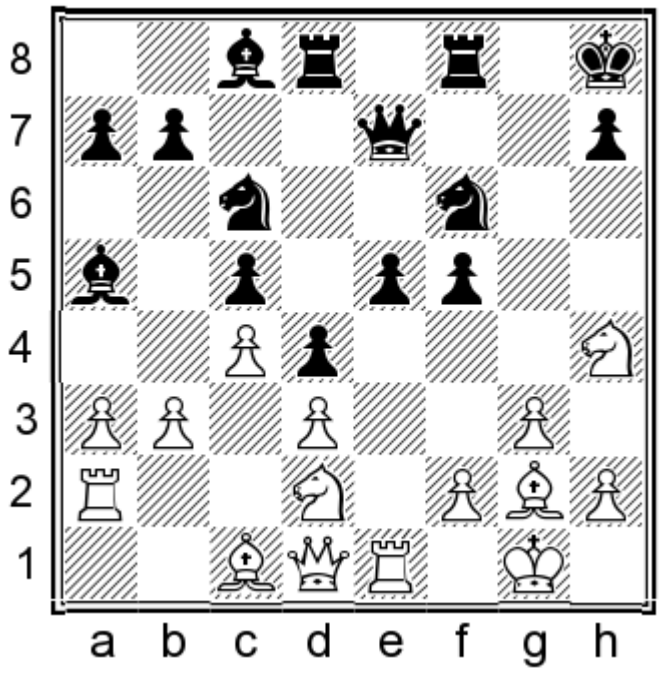
All in the same seemingly modest manner! Watching the center, White gradually prepares a decisive offensive on the queenside.

20...Bc8 21.Re1

One of the most difficult moves of the game. White moves the rook into the pin along the a5-e1 diagonal, but in connection with the next operation this move is deeply justified.

21...Kh8

Here it is not easy to indicate a good answer for Black. Criticizing Korchnoi's play, many believed that the root of Black's problems lies in his 19th move – it would have been more prudent to place the rook on e8 (even now 21...Rde8 was probably stronger – Igor Yanvarjov) Then he would have had the opportunity to play the maneuver 21...Qg7. But it is difficult to consider this an obvious mistake. The reason for Black's troubles is an overly optimistic assessment of his chances. To be fair, it was very difficult even for the specialists who could move the pieces in the press room to correctly diagnose the position before White's next move, which reveals his plans



22.b4!

From this moment on White begins a decisive offensive across the whole front. The play becomes forcing.

22...cxb4 23.Nb3 Bb6

Hardly better was 23...Bc7 24.Bxc6 bxc6 25.axb4. Black has nothing to counter White's onslaught on the critical pawns e5 and d4.

24.Bxc6!

It seems Black underestimated this unconventional exchange. The weakening of the position of the white king, however, is inconsequential. In this position, the knight on h4 plays the very important role of "watchdog" (this was the disadvantage of the bishop transfer to a5, as it eventually cemented the initially shaky position of this knight). By exchanging this bishop, White deprives his opponent of the c6-knight, the main defender of the e5- and d4-squares.

24...bxc6 25.axb4 a6

Korchnoi spent his last precious minutes on this move. Indeed, Black's position is very difficult. The threat c4-c5 is unmistakable. At the same time, an attempt to create a counterattack on the kingside fails. For example, 25...Ng4?! (after 25...Rg8, simplest is 26.Nf3!, indicated by Alexander Kotov – Igor Yanvarjov) 25...Ng4?! 26.c5 (26.h3 is also good) 26...Bc7 27.Rxa7 f4 28.Nf3 with a significant advantage for White.

26.Nf3 e4

A forced sacrifice. It is not clear how Black can otherwise ward off White's threats to the e5- and d4-pawns.

27.c5 Bc7 28.Nfxd4 Qf7

Now in severe time trouble, Korchnoi defends rather ingeniously. Black threatens 29...Rxd4 30.Nxd4 Qxa2, winning a piece.

29.Rd2

This is the easiest way to fend off Black's temporary threats. At the same time, by returning his bishop to the long

diagonal, White prepares a decisive attack.

29...Bd7

Black has nothing better. The loss of the c6- pawn would have already been fatal.

30.Bb2 Kg8 31.Na5!

A precise solution. Forcing the exchange of the opponent's dark-square bishop, White exposes new weaknesses in his camp.

31...Bxa5 32.bxa5 Rb8 33.Ba1!

Simple and convincing. At this unobtrusive post, the bishop is very strong.

33...Rfe8 34.Rde2 Qh5 35.Qd2

The queen rushes to f4, and at the same time White parries the threat 35...Ng4 36.f3!, and if 36...e3 37.Qa2+.

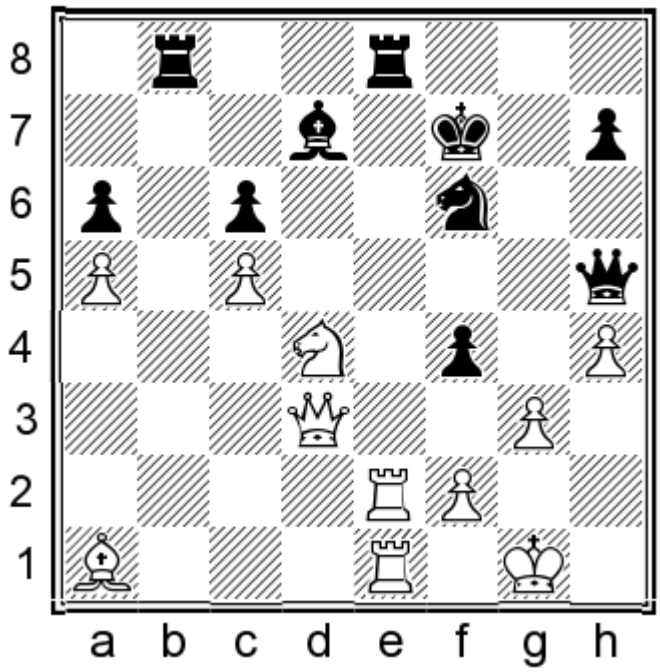
35...Kf7 36.h4

Also good is 36.dxe4 Nxe4 37.Qa2+ with a strong attack for White.

36...exd3

Otherwise, dxe4 followed by Qf4 was decisive.

37.Qxd3 f4



38.Nf3

The decisive move. It is easy to see that there is no defense against White's numerous threats: Ng5(e5)+, Bxf6, etc.

38...Rxe2 39.Qxe2 Qxc5

39...Re8 40.Ne5+ Kg8 was more stubborn, but White should still win after 41.Qc4+ or 41.Qxa6. At this point Black was in extreme time trouble.

40.Ne5+ Kf8 41.Nxd7+ Nxd7

And, not waiting for White's response, Black resigned. Indeed, after 42.Qe6 or 42.Qg4, the game is over.

It so happened that this was the only decisive game of the match. The specialists were somewhat skeptical of and criticized both opponents' play in the ninth game, as well as the whole match. Many thought that such a victory by Petrosian was unconvincing, especially comparing to the resounding success of Fischer, whose rivals Taimanov and Larsen both suffered shutout losses. Petrosian's post-match interview, published in *64*, was his response to all of the criticism. Here are some excerpts:

– *The seemingly pacifist play in the Moscow semifinal match elicited certain criticism...*

– There are different kinds of criticism. Friendly criticism should be heeded, while biased criticism can hinder one's play. However, I learned to ignore it. In such cases, I recall Shota Rustaveli's calming line: "Watching the fight from the sidelines, everyone believes himself a strategist," – and the resentment passes. [Shota Rustaveli was a famous Georgian poet; the meaning of this line is "The backseat driver knows best." – translator]

– *The commentators clearly had a hard time explaining the long series of draws...*

– The explanation lies in the matched forces and the tension of the struggle. Only two games ended in "grandmaster" draws, the fifth and the seventh. But first recall the fourth game. Had Viktor Korchnoi won it, perhaps the outcome of the match (and certainly its course) would have been different. Luckily, I survived a losing position, but I spent a sleepless night and half of the next day analyzing the adjourned position...

– Personally, I was physically unable to play the fifth game at full strength. Apparently, Korchnoi was in the same situation. You must admit, it is easier to write about this and criticize than play.

The seventh game is a different story. I still do not understand what happened. I walked into the Writers' House [where the match was played – translator] in a fighting mood, but then something went amiss – most likely I lost the thread, as the game did not go the way I had prepared at home. As they say, I was off my game.

– *And still you won the match. What was your strategy?*

– I did not try to get too much out of the opening. I only aimed for a complicated struggle. This is exactly how Korchnoi himself played in the quarterfinal match against Efim Geller. And yet my opponent's hesitant play in complex situations came unexpectedly for me. Perhaps Korchnoi was not in the best form? Take, for example, the decisive ninth game. My opponent apparently did not reckon with the standard exchange Bxc6, but after all I was preparing this seemingly innocuous exchange for several moves and got the opportunity to carry it out in the most favorable situation.

– *Why did you agree to a draw in the final tenth game? After all, didn't you have a significant advantage in the final position?*

– Yes, Boris Spassky had a similar advantage against me in the 23rd game of our match for the world championship. Then I called the arbiter Albéric O'Kelly with the intention of resigning, but he surprised me with the message that my opponent had already offered a draw. That draw ensured the title of world champion for Spassky and a ticket to the Candidates' Final for me. When so much is at stake, you want to avoid the slightest risk. In addition, I was only ahead by one point, not five.

Also, in chess, so much depends not only on skill but also on character. How many times have I experienced dissatisfaction with myself due to draws agreed in better positions? One more, one less – who cares. True dissatisfaction comes from something else: I always want to play a more interesting game from a creative perspective. And, in the end, I cannot call the ninth game that I won the "game of my life." I find consolation in the thought that in general artists, and of course chessplayers are artists too, do not often have big days. And despite my long life in chess, I always believe that my most interesting games still lie ahead. Without such faith, a chess player has no purpose.

(287) Petrosian – Fischer
Candidates Match (Final) (6)
Buenos Aires 1971

This game was certainly the turning point of the match. In the first five games Petrosian's play was marked by enviable energy and confidence; in fact, despite the equal score, the former world champion had a certain practical advantage in his play and managed to steer the fight in a direction beneficial for himself. Many thought that in the sixth game Petrosian, playing White, would put pressure on Fischer. But, strangely enough, it was in this game that Petrosian had inexplicable difficulties... It seemed as if the final part of the match was played by a completely different player.

This game attracted much press attention and generated different, sometimes conflicting evaluations. Below are the opinions of grandmasters Viktor Korchnoi (italics) and Leonid Shamkovich. Naturally, some variations are clarified and enriched.

1.Nf3

Judging from Petrosian's very first move, I can tell that, as in the fourth game, the ex-world champion is not inclined to fight. In my opinion, this is a completely wrong decision taking into account the deep depression that struck Fischer after his defeat in the second game. I am confident that neither Botvinnik nor Spassky would have missed the opportunity to build on their success in a fight against a demoralized opponent!

1...c5 2.b3 d5 3.Bb2?

In an article published in 64 *before the match I wrote about Petrosian's shortcomings and, in particular, about his weak, inexact knowledge of opening theory. The editor of* 64 *reacted skeptically to my criticism. But, obviously, we rarely see a grandmaster game where White is at a disadvantage after the third move! Grandmaster Aron Nimzowitsch, who often played this opening, here continued 3.e3, after which Black cannot create a pawn center (3...f6? 4.d4!).*

In my opinion, this natural move did not deserve the question mark and severe reproach given in his annotations to the game by Viktor Korchnoi, who considers 3.e3 to be the only correct move. And it is not just that the author of this system, Aron Nimzowitsch, in addition to 3.e3 also played 3.Bb2 (Nimzowitsch-Spielmann, New York 1927, etc.) The thing is that 3.e3 and 3.Bb2 with the reply 3...f6 are two completely different opening systems. The second, as we shall soon see, could lead to one of the variations of the King's Indian Defense with colors reversed and, consequently, an extra tempo for the "weaker" side. Is that really so bad?

And also, incidentally, I do not think that Petrosian should be criticized for "weak, inexact knowledge of opening theory."

3...f6!

Now White cannot stop his opponent from creating a powerful pawn center, and Black has a clear advantage.

4.c4 d4 5.d3 e5 6.e3

6.g3 Nc6 7.Bg2 would have been more in the spirit of this system, followed up by e2-e3 and exd4, e2-e4 and Nh4, or Nd2-e4, depending on the situation. All of these methods are well known from the Sämisch system (the variation with the development of the bishop to b7). A typical King's Indian struggle with a half-closed center and mutual chances would have ensued.

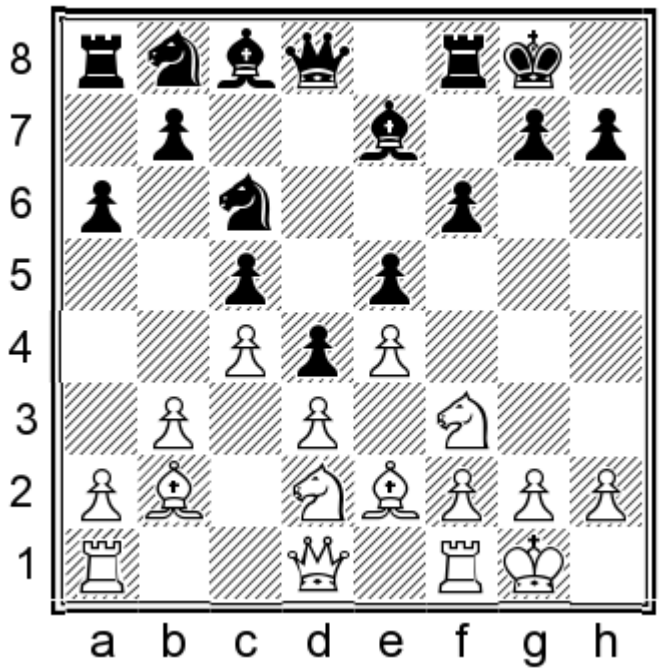
However, Petrosian chooses a somewhat passive plan. By the way, it is not entirely clear why the former world champion did not play 6.e4 immediately but rather chose to do this in two moves. Curiously, he also employed this method in the ninth game against Korchnoi.

6...Ne7 7.Be2 Nec6 8.Nbd2 Be7 9.0-0 0-0 10.e4

The way the opponents played the opening is very similar to the opening in the ninth game of the match Petrosian-Korchnoi. We see the same maneuver of the king's knight, g8-e7-c6, which I had played then, and Petrosian's same agonizing doubts in choosing a protective stance – first e2-e3, and then e3-e4. Let's try to follow Petrosian's train of thought. He considers the position after 10.exd4 cxd4 unsatisfactory for White, even though in this position White has many opportunities for counterplay. The closed Benoni structure (after 10.e4) has fewer opportunities for White, but is more solid according to Petrosian...

10...a6

Instead of 10...a6, the move 10...Na6 deserved serious attention in connection with the idea of transferring the knight along the route c7-e6, only later preparing an offensive by the queenside pawns.



It is enough to take a cursory look at the position to see that White's powerful fortifications on the queenside cannot be crushed. But Fischer must undertake something in this almost closed position, and the counterattack on the other flank (...g6 and ...f5) is anti-positional: White is stronger there. So for now the American grandmaster begins a seemingly innocent demonstration, as if inviting his opponent to double-edged play on both flanks. But this offer was not accepted...

Instead of 10...a6, Korchnoi recommends the preliminary maneuver ...Na6-c7-e6, but in this case I think White's counter-attack on the kingside (g2-g3 and f2-f4) becomes more effective.

11.Ne1 b5 12.Bg4

Petrosian's favorite technique: trading the light-color bishops in a position with a dark-square pawn center.

12...Bxg4 13.Qxg4 Qc8!

Offering to exchange queens, after which Black would have a reliable position with some initiative on the queenside. This willingness to simplify the position for future benefits in the endgame is characteristic of Fischer. This "inclination" of Fischer's, based on his great skill in simple positions will manifest itself more than once in the most intense moments of the match.

14.Qe2

It is clear that in case of the queen trade as well, White's position would have contained no prospects: Black, having the space advantage, would firmly hold the initiative. Just in case (maybe it will be possible to create play on

the kingside), Petrosian keeps the queens on. Unfortunately, in the future he would never make an active attempt to move toward the black king.

14...Nd7 15.Nc2

It is unclear why Petrosian rejected the natural active plan on the kingside: 15.g3, etc. Alas, in this match, the former world champion more than once chose a passive but more "reliable" continuation instead of an active, let alone risky, one. In some cases, such tactics can work, but systematically playing this way against Fischer is clearly hopeless.

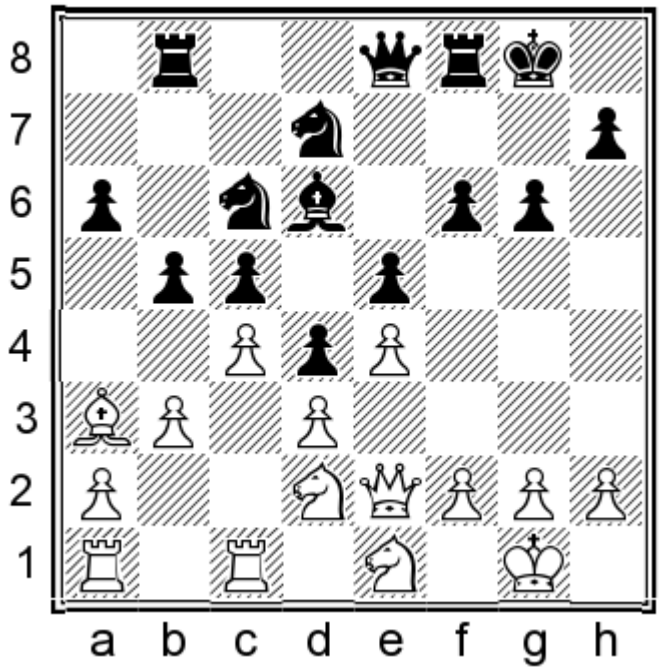
However, the move played does not ruin the game yet, although it lets go of the initiative.

Why not 15.g3 with a further Ng2? The advance of the white pawn to f4 would divert Black's attention from the queenside, forcing him to fight across the board. Now that Petrosian's play is completely defensive, Black has complete freedom to act.

15...Rb8 16.Rfc1 Qe8 17.Ba3

Attacking the c5-pawn, White slows the development of Black's initiative: as of yet, Black can play neither 17...Nb6 with the idea of exchanging on c4 nor 17...Bd8 with the idea of placing the bishop on a5.

17...Bd6 18.Ne1 g6



White missed a good opportunity to divert Black's forces from the active operations on the queenside, but his position is still quite solid. He should have made the quiet move 19.Rc2 with the idea of doubling the rooks – after all, restraining Black is the point! For example:

(1) 19...Nb4 20.Bxb4 and 21.Rac1;

(2) 19...Qe7 20.Rac1 Rfc8 21.g3; and

(3) 19...Qd8 (with the idea of 20...Qa5) 20.Qg4!, reminding Black that he too has weaknesses in his camp.

White's position is difficult. He has no way to show activity, while Black, slowly improving his position, prepares to start an advance across the entire board. Petrosian's next move was criticized by many commentators; probably, they believed that White had to patiently await his fate.

19.cxb5?!

A risky move that was probably based on a miscalculation. The exchange on b5 can be justified only in case of an immediate active struggle for the critical c4-square. But Petrosian does not follow through any time soon and does so in a worse position.

White's intention is to turn the queenside into the theater of major military operations and dissipate the dark clouds gathering everywhere. Of course, fighting against the perfectly mobilized black pieces appears far from safe, but Petrosian hoped that, taking advantage of Fischer's unreliable play, he could manage to make it out in one piece...

19...axb5 20.Bb2 Nb6 21.Nef3

Apparently, the former world champion planned 21.a4 when he made his 19th move, but then he saw that the continuation 21...bxa4 22.bxa4 Nxa4 23.Nc4 Nxb2 24.Nxb2 Rf7 25.Nc4 Bf8 gives Black an extra pawn and some winning chances (but not guaranteed, as the blockading c4-knight is very strong).

21...Ra8 22.a3

This pawn move can be forced easily; it is enough to transfer the rook along the route f8-f7-a7. Petrosian is unwilling to give his opponent the right idea and immediately moves the a-pawn.

Removing the a2-pawn from attack and creating a new potential threat of b3-b4. However, this move weakened the b3-pawn, and Black immediately puts it in his crosshairs.

22...Na5 23.Qd1 Qf7 24.a4

White cannot stay still any longer, and Petrosian decides to carry out this long-planned breakthrough. But Black managed to conclusively prepare for this by taking control of the critical c4-square.

24...bxa4 25.bxa4 c4

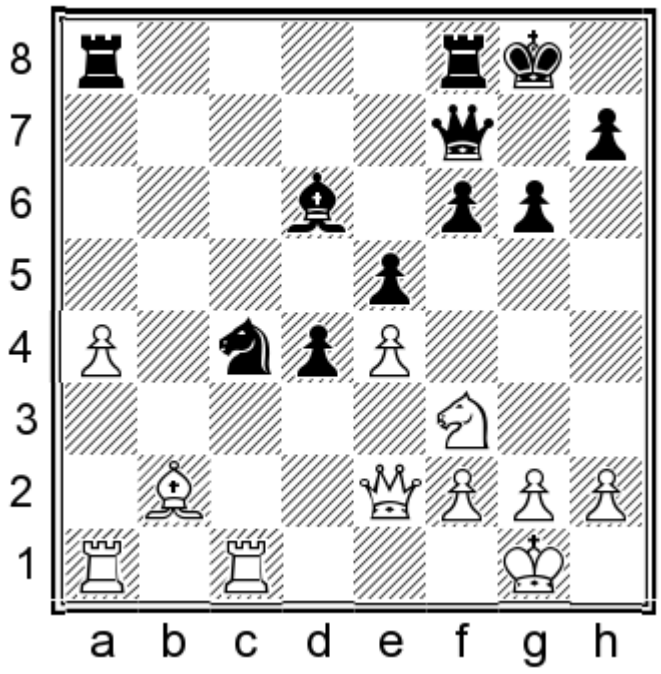
This is the whole point: Black manages to carry out this important counter-breakthrough.

At this moment, when Black's advantage on the queenside has already been determined and the move ...c4 is unstoppable, when the white a-pawn has turned out to be weak and will soon be lost, Fischer rushes and gives up most of his advantage. Stronger was 25...Rfc8. By the way, Petrosian could have defended stubbornly via 26.Rab1! (with the threat of 27.Bxd4; worse is 26.Ba3 because of 26...Qd7) 26...Rc6 27.Ba3 .

26.dxc4 Nbxc4

(Here some publications indicate 26...Naxc4 and then the text continuation. We adhere to the generally accepted version from volume 12 of the *Chess Informant* – Igor Yanvarjov.)

27.Nxc4 Nxc4 28.Qe2



28...Nxb2!?

Another questionable point. Exchanging the knight for the bishop, Fischer enters an endgame that is hardly winning for Black. In case of 28...Rfc8, he was probably worried about the move 29.a5, and White's pawn becomes dangerous

(Actually, continuing this variation with 29...Bb4 30.a6 d3!, Black wins. But after 28...Rfc8 29.Rc2 it is unclear whether he has anything better than trading on b2 – Igor Yanvarjov). *Instead of trading on b2, Black could have played 28...*N*a5. After 29.*B*a3, White holds on, but his position is clearly worse.*

An unexpected exchange of the active knight for the inactive bishop. We can all agree with Viktor Korchnoi that 28...Na5 29.Ba3 Bxa3 30.Rxa3 Rfc8 appears more logical and maintains a solid advantage. But Fischer has a special predilection for this material imbalance of the rook and the bishop against the rook and the knight. And, I must admit, he has a good command of it. In addition, no one has yet been able to find salvation for White in the endgame that ensued.

29.Qxb2 Rfb8 30.Qa2 Bb4!

The black bishop gains a foothold on c3, where it is perfectly placed, controlling the most important squares.

31.Qxf7+ Kxf7 32.Rc7+ Ke6 33.g4!

Obstructing the black pawns (otherwise White would have to reckon with the undermining move ...f5) and opening an exit for the king. Bad is 33.Rxh7 Bc3 34.Rd1 Rxa4, threatening to advance the d-pawn and double the rooks on the second rank.

33...Bc3 34.Ra2

(Also interesting is 34.Rd1, as suggested by Aleksandar Matanović; e.g., 34...Rxa4 35.Rc6+ Kf7 36.Rc7+ Kg8 37.g5 – Igor Yanvarjov)

34...Rc8 35.Rxc8

35.Rxh7 did not lead to a clear draw. Black has two ways to play for a win. For example, 35...d3 36.Rb7 Ba5! (weaker is 36...Rc4 37.Rb3, and White holds) 37.Rb5! (defending against the threats ...Rc2 and ...Rc4) 37...Rc1+ 38.Kg2 Bc3! 39.Rb3 Rc8! , and there is no satisfactory defense against the threat 40...Rc2. There is a more prosaic

path: 35...Rc4 36.Rb7 Rcxa4 37.Rxa4 Rxa4 38.Rb6+ Kd7!, and White has to return the rook to b1 and search for salvation in a difficult endgame, because White cannot play 39.g5 d3 40.gxf6 Ra1+ 41.Kg2 d2 42.f7 Ke7 43.Rb7+ Kf8 44.Ng5 Rg1+, and Black wins.

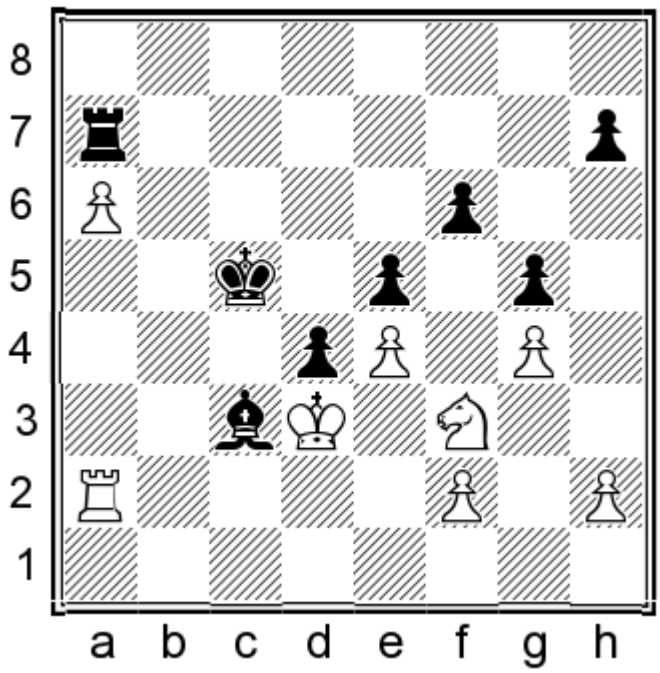
35...Rxc8 36.a5

By advancing this pawn, White makes his opponent's task as difficult as possible.

36...Ra8 37.a6 Ra7 38.Kf1 g5

An important move. Otherwise, if the king moves away towards the queenside, White can play g4-g5.

39.Ke2 Kd6 40.Kd3 Kc5

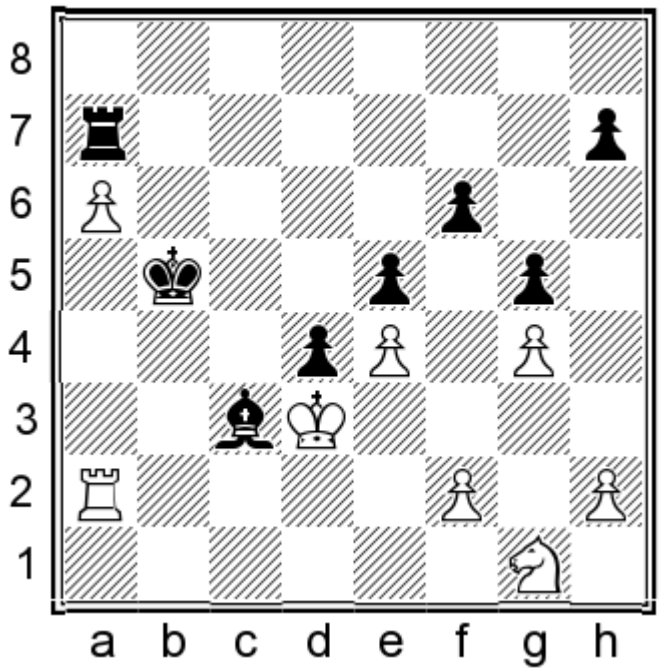


41.Ng1

Parrying the threat of transferring the black king to b3 (41...Kb4 42.Ne2 Kb3 43.Nc1+), as well as planning to bother the thus far unapproachable black bishop.

The best practical chance was probably 41.h4!?, forcing Black to deal with difficult problems before the adjournment. For example, Black has nothing after: (1) 41...gxh4 42.Nxh4 Kb4 (with the threat of 43...Kb3) in view of 43.f4! Kb3 (or 43...exf4 44.Nf3!) 44.Rh2! (not 44.Rf2 Be1!) 44...Rxa6 45.fxe5 fxe5 46.Nf3 Ra1 47.Rxh7; and if (2) 41...h6, then 42.h5, creating a weakness to counterattack: the h6-pawn. Now if (2a) 42...Kb4, then 43.Nd2!, and Black cannot win the rook endgame after 43...Bxd2 44.Kxd2 Kb5 45.Rb2+ Kxa6 46.Rb8. Stronger is (2b) 42...Kb5!?, practically forcing White into *zugzwang*; 43.Nd2 no longer helps, and the counterplay associated with the knight maneuver to f5 comes in too late. (Apparently, here too White can hold; for example, 43.Ng1 Ba5 44.Rb2+! Kxa6 45.Ne2 or 44...Bb4 45.Ra2 with a draw – Garry Kasparov, *My Great Predecessors* – Igor Yanvarjov)

41...Kb5



The game was adjourned in this position. Black has a clear advantage since the a6-pawn is doomed. But it is disadvantageous for Black to take it immediately because the rook trade leads to a draw, and preparatory measures (...Ba5) could give White time for counterplay. Such is the first impression, and it is not surprising that at the time Spassky, Korchnoi, and Tal thought that the game should end in a draw.

42.Ne2

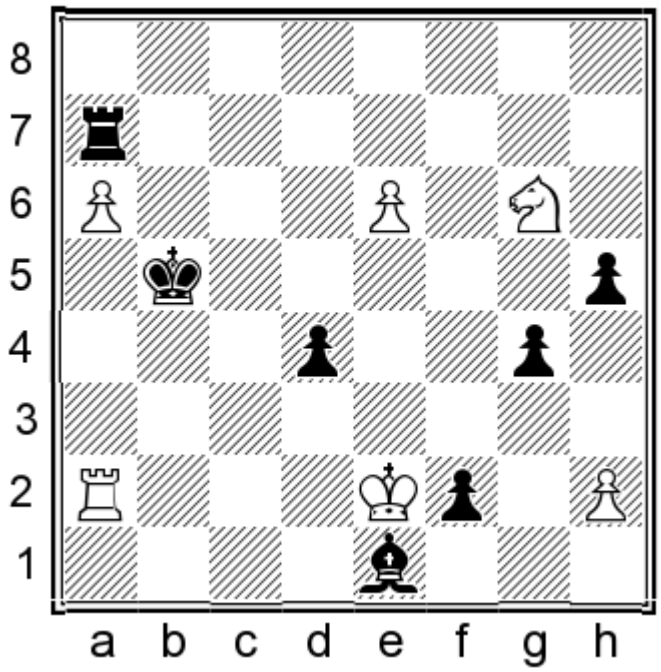
No one particularly doubted this sealed move. What else? Only after the game ended, in search of drawing variations, many noticed the interesting opportunity 42.f4. Of course, such desperate moves are not sealed in grandmaster matches, but let us still perform a little analysis.

Here is the main variation: 42...gxf4 (in case of 42...exf4, a continuation that Leonid Shamkovich did not consider, a draw can be achieved fairly easily: 43.Nf3 Rxa6 44.Rxa6 Kxa6 45.e5 fxe5 46.Nxe5 [46.Nxg5 is also sufficient – Karsten Müller] 46...Kb5 47.Nf3 h6 48.h4 gxh4 49.Nxh4 Kc5 50.Ke4 Kc4 [50...Bd2 51.Nf3 Be3 52.Nxd4!=] 51.Nf5 d3 52.Nd6+ Kc5 53.Nb7+! – Igor Yanvarjov) 43.Nf3 (threatening 44.g5) 43...h6! 44.h4 Rxa6 45.Rxa6 Kxa6 46.g5 fxg5 47.hxg5 hxg5 48.Nxg5 (and 48.Nxe5 does not save White) 48...Ba5 49.Nf3 Bc7, and then, using zugzwang, the black king gradually penetrates towards the c1-square, and from there to f2.

Obviously, even the bold move 42.f4 would not have saved the game (later Shamkovich again returned to analyze this interesting position – see below – Igor Yanvarjov).

However, the aforementioned variations do not nearly exhaust the mutual opportunities that arise after 42.f4 gxf4. Boris Spassky, speaking on television, suggested a paradoxical sacrifice of a second pawn, 43.g5!?, posing new problems for Black.

The forced 43...fxg5 is followed by 44.Nf3 g4 (the draw is obvious after 44...Rxa6 45.Rxa6 Kxa6 46.Nxg5 because of the threats 47.Nxh7 and 47.Nf7 – Igor Yanvarjov. The same result is reached after grandmaster Igor Zaitsev's idea 44...h5 45.Nxg5 Kb4 46.Nf3 Kb3 47.Rf2! Rxa6 48.Nxe5 Ra1 49.Nc4 Rd1+ 50.Ke2 Rh1 51.Kd3 Kb4 52.e5 Kc5 53.Rxf4 Rxh2 54.Re4 Rh3+ 55.Ne3! – Igor Yanvarjov) 45.Nxe5 h5 (but not 45...g3 46.hxg3 fxg3 47.Rg2!) 46.Ng6 (Aleksandar Matanović finished this variation with "=" in the *Informant*, while Shamkovich continued his investigation – Igor Yanvarjov) 46...f3 47.e5 Be1! (47...Rxa6 48.Rxa6 Kxa6 49.e6 Bb4 50.e7 Bxe7 51.Nxe7 leads to a draw, as the knight manages to stop the black pawns) 48.e6 f2 49.Ke2 – an interesting position arises in which Black wins in a study-like way (? – Igor Yanvarjov).



49...h4!! (An important nuance: White cannot take the h4-pawn because of 50...f1=Q+ and 51...Bxh4. In this way, Black forms another passed pawn. Worse is 49...d3+? 50.Kf1 d2 in view of 51.e7!, and it is now the white pawn that threatens to queen with check, and after 51...Rxe7 52.Rxd2! Black cannot win. [Let me add that 49...Rxa6 also yields nothing: 50.Rxa6 d3+ 51.Kf1 Kxa6 52.e7 d2 53.e8=Q d1=Q 54.Qe2+ Qxe2+ 55.Kxe2, with the idea of ...Nf4-d3 – Igor Yanvarjov]) 50.e7 Ra8 51.Kf1 (The best chance. After 51.a7?, decisive is 51...g3 52.hxg3 h3!) 51...g3 52.h3 Bb4! The bishop has fulfilled its role on the e1-square and now attacks the e7-pawn which has become very dangerous.

53.Nxh4! (Alas, Shamkovich missed this extremely strong defense and concluded that this position is lost for White based on the variation 53.a7? d3 54.Nxh4 d2 55.Ra1 Bxe7 56.Nf5 Rxa7!, etc. It is a shame to ruin such good analysis and a harmonious tree of logical reasoning, but, as they say, the truth is more important...)

53...d3 (or 53...Bxe7 54.Nf5 Rg8 55.Nxd4+ Kb6 56.Kg2, etc. – White should hold) 54.Nf5 d2 55.Rxd2! A draw after all!

Therefore, the unapparent continuation 42.f4!? gxf4 43.g5! would have probably allowed White to escape. But was it possible to commit oneself to this at the moment of the adjournment?! – Igor Yanvarjov

42...Ba5 43.Rb2+

White also had another defensive plan, starting with the move 43.Ng3, followed by N*f5, thereafter transferring the knight to either d5 or c4. Possible variations: 43...Rxa6 44.Nf5 Kb4 45.Ne7 or 44...Rc6? 45.Rc2 Rc3+ 46.Rxc3 dxc3 47.Ne7, and White achieves a draw. His task is more complicated after 43...Kxa6. For example, 44.Nf5 Rc7 (but not 44...Rb7 45.Nd6 Rb3+ 46.Kc4) 45.Rc2 Rb7 46.Rc6+ Ka7 47.Rc5* (47.Rxf6!? – Igor Yanvarjov) *47...Be1 48.Ke2 Bc3, and Black can count on success. Dubious is the other defensive plan, 43.Nc1 . After 43...Rxa6 44.Nb3 Kb4 45.Rb2* (The clever retreat 45.Na1 was also studied in Petrosian's camp; for example, 45...Ra7 46.Nc2+ Kb3 47.Ra3+ Kb2 48.Ra4 Ra8 49.Na1!, and it is difficult for Black to break the pin. In the end this variation was rejected in view of 45...Rc6 46.Nc2+ Kb5 47.Na3+ Kc5 48.Rc2+ Bc3 49.Nb1 Kb4; in my opinion, after 48.Nc4!?, the outcome of the struggle is far from clear – Igor Yanvarjov). *Also good is either 45...Bb6 46.Nxd4+?* (as Mihail Marin pointed out, stronger here is 46.Nd2+! Kc5 47.Rc2+ Kd6 48.Nc4+, and a whole struggle still lies ahead – Igor Yanvarjov) *46...Ka3! or 45...Ka3 46.Nc5 Rc6 47.Rb3+ Ka2 48.Rb5 Bb4 49.Rxb4 Rxc5 50.Rb6 Rc3+ 51.Ke2 Rc2+ with a significant advantage.*

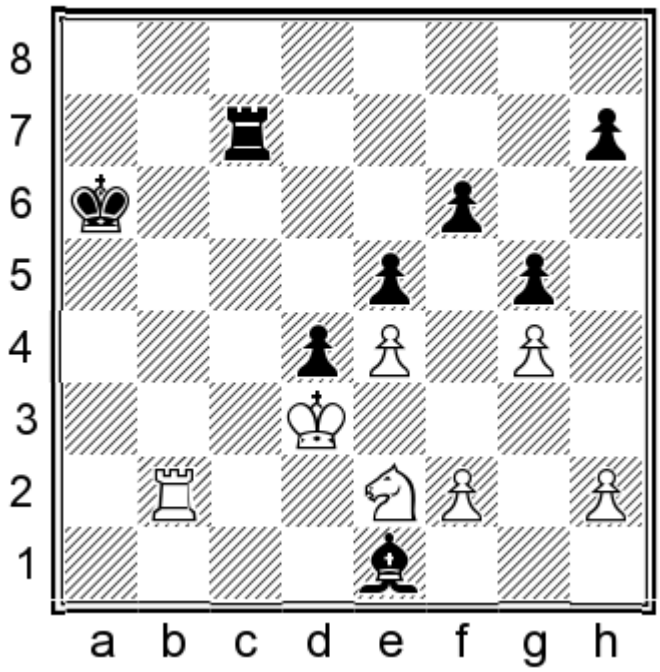
(The last variation is also not entirely convincing. Instead of 51.Ke2?, Mihail Marin suggested the unexpected 51.Kd2!, after which there is no win. Also, Marin made an attempt to improve Black's play: 46...Rb6!? 47.Rxb6 Bxb6 48.Nd7 Bd8, convincingly proving the win after 49.Nc5[?] 49...Be7! 50.Nd7 Kb2, etc. However, in case of the

more stubborn 49.Kc2!?, there is no clear way to win, e.g., 49...Kb4 50.Kd3 Be7 51.Nb6 Kb3 52.Nd5 Bd8 53.f3 Kb2 54.Kd2 Ba5+ 55.Kd1! h6 [55...d3 56.Nxf6 Kc3 57.Nxh7 Bd8 58.Nf8= is no better] 56.Nxf6 Kc3 57.Nd7 Bc7 58.Nc5 d3 [if 58...Bd6, then 59.Na4+ Kd3 60.Nb2+!] 59.Ne6 Bd6 60.Ng7 d2 61.Nf5 Bf8 62.h4 Kd3 [or 62...gxh4 63.Nxh4 Be7 64.Ng6 Bd6 65.Nh8! Kd3 66.Nf7=] 63.h5 with a draw – Igor Yanvarjov).

The further struggle revolves around Black's desire to break through to the first ranks with the rook. White has several methods of counterplay but none that is entirely satisfactory. 43.Nc1 is followed by 43...Rxa6 44.Nb3 Ra7! 45.Ra1 Kb4, and Black wins (this recommendation seems dubious, since White has the very strong reply 46.Rb1! – Igor Yanvarjov). After 43.Ng3, Korchnoi prefers 43...Kxa6 44.Nf5 Rc7, etc., but it seems that the simple rook trade is also possible: 43...Rxa6 44.Nf5 Rc6 45.Rc2 Rxc2 46.Kxc2 Bb4 47.Kd3 Bf8 – the white knight does not have enough time to take control of the critical d3-square, and the black king can go around via the flank. By the way, note that only the structure Ke2-Nd3 gives White the most reliable fortress in the knight vs. bishop endgame.

(Unfortunately, in the variation suggested by Shamkovich, the speedy white knight manages to reach d3 anyway: 48.f3! Kb4 49.Ng3 Kb3 50.Nh1!, followed by Ke2, Nf2-d3 – indicated by Yuri Balashov. Nor does Black win after 47...Ka4 [instead of 47...Bf8]; for example, 48.Kc2! Bf8 49.Ng3! Kb4 [after 49...Kb5, both 50.Kd3 and 50.Kb3 are good] 50.Ne2!, with the idea of Nc1-d3. In fact, after 43.Ng3 Rxa6 44.Nf5, the subtle move 44...Re6! wins, as indicated by the Romanian grandmaster Mihail Marin – for more details, check his excellent book *Learn from the Legends: Chess Champions At Their Best* – Igor Yanvarjov)

43...Kxa6 44.Rb1 Rc7 45.Rb2 Be1



46.f3

A very important moment 46.Rb1. looks much stronger. If now 46...Bxf2, then 47.Rf1 Be3 48.Rxf6+ Kb5 (48...Ka5 49.Re6 Rc5 50.Rd6! Rb5 51.Rd5 Ka4 52.Rxb5 Kxb5) The position seems to be drawn. It is hardly possible to checkmate the white king, and the h-pawn cannot help Black win. Thus, Black must return the bishop to a5 and plan a different setup of the pieces. It seems that he had such a setup. Avoiding the rook trade, he could have transferred the king to c6, forced White to occupy the a-file, and then invaded with the king along the b-file. Of course, this plan is complicated, and it would not have been easy for Black to prove whether his position is winning. If his position is winning, then the exchange on the 28th move should be viewed as especially impressive.

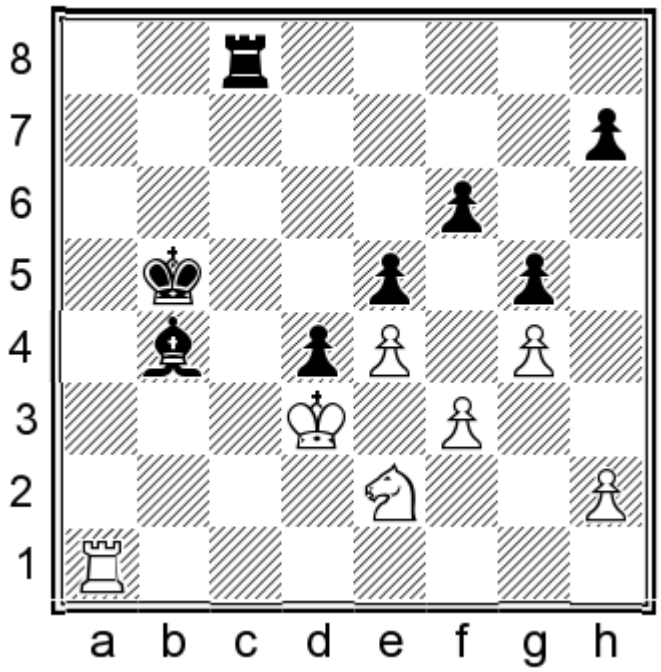
This point in the game was the subject of the most heated debates. Many commentators expressed the opinion that 46.Rb1 Bxf2 47.Rf1 Be3 48.Rxf6+ would have yielded the best drawing chances. Viktor Korchnoi even suggested that Black would have to return the bishop to a5 and search for chances in other variations. Indeed, (48...Kb5) after

49.Re6 Ra7 50.Rxe5+ Kb4 51.Nxd4 Ra3+ 52.Ke2 Bxd4 53.Rxg5, as indicated by Korchnoi, the draw is obvious. Black also does not win after 48...Ka5 49.Re6 Rc5 50.Rd6! Rb5 51.Rd5 Ka4 52.Rxb5 Kxb5, even though this endgame is not so simple. Previously, I mistakenly recommended 48...Ka7 49.Re6 Rc5 50.Re7+ Kb6 51.Re6+ Kc7 52.Ra6 Rb5 (with the threats 53...Rb3+ or 53...Rb2) because I missed the obvious reply 53.Kc2!, and Black cannot improve his position (53...Kb7 54.Ra3 Rb6 55.Ra5!). It is possible that a study-like win will be found in this variation as well, but Viktor Korchnoi is right in considering the return of the bishop to a5 with further beneficial maneuvering to be stronger. For example, 46...Ba5! 47.Rb2 Rc8 48.Rb1 Rc6 49.Rb2 Be1!, forcing 50.f3 (since the f6-pawn is already protected, and there is no move 50.Rb1), after which Black carries out the plan that was implemented in the game. Thus, the possibility 46.Rb1 (which Petrosian should probably have taken advantage of) changes nothing, strictly speaking.

46...Ka5 47.Rc2 Rb7 48.Ra2+ Kb5 49.Rb2+ Bb4 50.Ra2

(White must control the a-file, preventing the activation of the opponent's rook – Igor Yanvarjov.)

50...Rc7 51.Ra1 Rc8



So far White has successfully fended off Black's main threat: infiltrating with the rook. But what to do next? After 52.Ra2, Black can break through on the other flank: 52...h5 53.gxh5 Rh8 54.Ng3 Be1 (threatening to enter a winning rook endgame: 55...Bxg3 and 56...Rxh5) 55.Nf5 Rxh5, and White does not have time to create serious counterplay. (This variation is not convincing, as instead of 55.Nf5? White can play 55.Rb2+, beginning to check the black king with the idea of penetrating the sixth rank with the rook – Igor Yanvarjov). Therefore, Petrosian's desire to break free with his rook is understandable.

52.Ra7?

Now the white rook is cut off from its camp. More stubborn was 52.Ra2. In this case, Black could have continued either 52...Be7 or 52..h5 .

(It seems that White was doomed even after 52.Ra2. Taking advantage of the opponent's passivity, Black could slowly improve his position by 52...Rc7 53.Ra1 Be7 54.Ra2 Kb4 [Marin] 55.Rb2+ Ka3, and now the possibilities are: (1) 56.Rb8 Bb4! followed by Kb3, reaching approximately the same position as in the game; (2) 56.Rb6 Ka4! [*zugzwang*] 57.Rb1 Bb4 58.Ra1+ Kb3 59.Rb1+ Ka3 60.Ra1+ [60.Rc1 Rxc1 61.Nxc1 Kb2 62.Ne2 Be1! is bad] 60...Kb2 61.Ra6 Kb3 62.Ra1 [62.Rxf6 Rc2!] 62...Ba3! , etc.; (3) 56.Rc2 Rb7 57.Nc1 Ka4!, with the idea of ... Rb1, and Black retains good winning chances as he invades the opponent's camp with the rook. For example, 58.Ke2 Rb1

59.Rc7 Rb2+ 60.Kd3 Bb4 61.Rc2 Ka3! 62.Re2 Ba5 63.Rc2 Be1 64.Re2 [64.h3 Bb4 65.Re2 Bc3 66.Rc2 Be1 is also hopeless] 64...Bf2! 65.Rc2 Be3 66.Rxb2 Kxb2 67.Ne2 Bf4! 68.h3 Kb1 – variation by Karsten Müller – Igor Yanvarjov).

52...Ba5! 53.Rd7

White still cannot take the "bewitched" h7- pawn: 53.Rxh7 Bb6, followed by ...Ra8-a3+.

53...Bb6 54.Rd5+ Bc5

The orbit of the bishop-satellite around his king is very striking. Now White cannot prevent the invasion of the black rook.

55.Nc1 Ka4 56.Rd7 Bb4 57.Ne2 Kb3 58.Rb7

In addition to 58...Ra8, Black also threatened 58...Rc2.

58...Ra8 59.Rxh7

Entering a rook endgame would also not have saved White: 59.Nc1+ Kb2 60.Rxb4+ (or 60.Ne2 Ra3+ 61.Kc4 d3! 62.Rxb4+ Kc2, and Black wins – Igor Yanvarjov) 60...Kxc1.

59...Ra1 60.Nxd4+

Despair...

60...exd4 61.Kxd4 Rd1+ 62.Ke3 Bc5+ 63.Ke2 Rh1 64.h4

(The last trap: 64...Rxh4? 65.Rxh4 gxh4 66.f4, and, exchanging the f6-pawn, White reaches a draw, since this is the wrong corner – Igor Yanvarjov).

64...Kc4! 65.h5 Rh2+ 66.Ke1 Kd3 White resigned.

Tigran Petrosian on the game (from the article *My Match against Fischer*):

"The day of the sixth game came. I decided to play the English Opening again. My reasoning was simple: if [Fischer] chooses a big fight – the Grünfeld or the King's Indian Defense – no problem. But the thing is, Fischer always stays true to himself. This means we will have the English again and there will be a repeat of the fourth, drawn, game. Or... or, if he decides to take risks, he will give me some chances for success. But either I was nervous or something else. A thought kept crossing my mind: let them say, let them write, if I have another draw – let it be. I still cannot explain why I made the move 2.b3. During Tal's ascent it was customary to explain such decisions by his opponents as hypnosis. Very soon I reach a bad position, but Fischer starts to play quickly, and I seemingly escape. Before the time control, I suddenly realize that I am losing a pawn after all. But the resulting position is blocked, and I still have a knight against his bishop.

Move	*White*	*Black*
3	0.01	0.05
4	0.04	0.05
5	0.07	0.07
6	0.09	0.15
7	0.20	0.18
8	0.24	0.20
9	0.31	0.21
10	0.37	0.29
11	0.45	0.31
12	0.50	0.42
13	0.50	0.42
14	0.55	0.43
15	1.02	0.50
16	1.10	0.56

"I come to the hotel a pawn down. My seconds (Yuri Averbakh and Alexey Suetin – Igor Yanvarjov) and I analyze the position; it looks like I have a fortress. 'Well, since there is a fortress,' – I say to my assistants, – 'I'll go to bed, and you can check again, if you want.' But I could not sleep. Literally an hour later I get up, I sit

down at the board, and I do not see the fortress. I analyze until the very morning; some positions I can hold, some cannot. After all, a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. I cannot see a clear draw, but I also cannot see a direct win. When the seconds arrived, they also saw that there was no fortress. (In one of our conversations, Petrosian described this epic story more colorfully. In the morning, his chipper helpers peeked into his room and found him, after a sleepless night, unshaven, at the chessboard and with a silent question in his eyes: "And where is the draw?!" – Igor Yanvarjov). Before leaving for the game, I agreed that I would play f2-f3, even though during the night's analysis I had firmly established that it was this move that I should not play. I blame only myself. I betrayed my usual principle: to have a fresh head and a good general idea of the position. It is better than playing tired even after the most careful analysis of all possible continuations. I played badly, I lost practically without a fight.

"A couple more words about this game. The possible sealed move f2-f4 never crossed my mind. I think it was found later, after unsuccessful attempts to find other ways to draw. But after all, when adjourning the game, I did not know that these attempts would be unsuccessful."

And here is one more interesting addition to the sixth game: a quick analysis of the time, *What the clock says*, from the special bulletin dedicated to the 1971 candidate matches. (See Time Chart on the right)

"In this game, Fischer completely pulled himself together for the first time. Not a single hasty move! Not a single overly long think! Petrosian's graph is very similar. But the delay on the seventh move shows that the former world champion was considering a more active continuation. The further time allocation allows us to assume that White, maneuvering, did not feel the danger. There was no moment at which Petrosian thought for a long time in search of some highly effective measures. It is possible that at the time of adjournment White counted on a good outcome, and only the home analysis showed how significant were the difficulties that he had to overcome."

And now one more original kind of opening modeling, which someone jokingly called "the King's Indian with reversed flanks." This is a certain recipe (not for everyone!) for playing the French Defense, in which Black (in some order or another) develops according to the scheme ...Qd7, ...b6, ...Bb7 (or ...Ba6) and ...Nc6, having in mind queenside castling and postponing the move ...c5 for later. In a word, the French in a King's Indian fashion. Sometimes such a turn of events was unexpected for Petrosian's opponents, and when they realized what was happening, it was already too late.

17	1.19	1.00
18	1.20	1.05
19	1.29	1.06
20	1.29	1.09
21	1.34	1.11
22	1.34	1.15
23	1.36	1.19
24	1.40	1.28
27	1.43	1.29
28	1.52	1.35
29	1.55	1.36
30	2.00	1.44
31	2.06	1.44
32	2.07	1.47
33	2.10	1.48
34	2.10	1.59
35	2.10	1.59
36	2.18	1.59
37	2.18	2.02
38	2.20	2.06
40	2.26	2.06
41	2.26	2.17
42	2.47	2.17
44	2.47	2.20
45	2.47	2.22
46	2.52	2.29
47	2.52	2.37
48	3.05	2.40
49	3.09	2.47
51	3.10	3.05
52	3.10	3.08
53	3.23	3.08
54	3.24	3.17
55	3.25	3.20
56	3.27	3.25
57		3.30
58		3.33
61		3.40
62	3.51	3.50
64	3.57	3.50

(288) Olafsson – Petrosian
Bled 1961

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 Qd7

A prophylactic measure against the possible Qg4. 4...b6 is another variation of the same system (see the next game).

5.Qg4

As we will see, with this typical “French” move, White adds fuel to the “King’s Indian” fire.

5...f5 6.Qg3

This is equivalent to placing the white queen on b3 in the regular King’s Indian (such an analogy clearly suggests itself).

6...b6 7.h4

Another “belligerent” move. In our opinion, 7.Bd2 or 7.a3 would have been more solid.

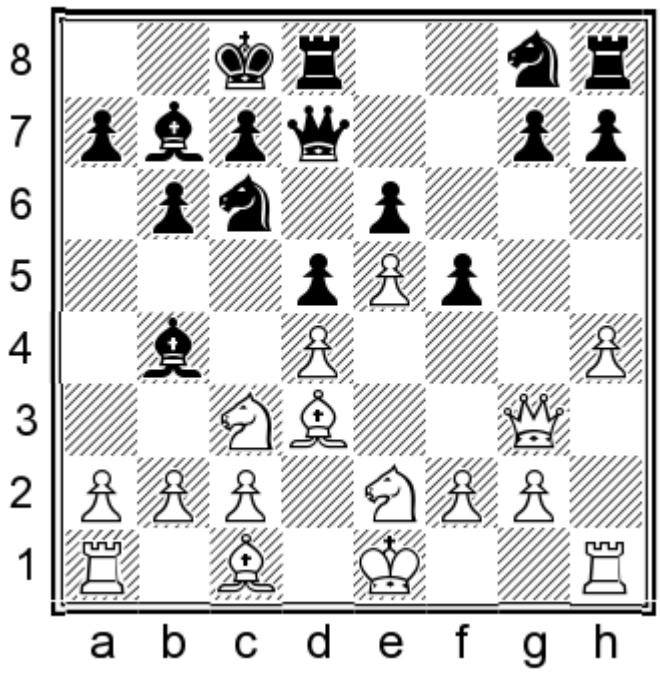
7...Bb7

That’s right (starting a fight!), and not 7...Ba6, as was played before this game.

8.Bd3 Nc6 9.Nge2

I would agree with Paul Keres, who thought that this move was somewhat strange. He (and later Peter Clarke in *Petrosian’s Best Games of Chess 1946- 1963*) recommended 9.Nf3, with the idea of Bd2 and Ne2-f4, but this also does not solve every problem, since White’s queen has nothing to do on g3.

9...0-0-0



Doesn’t this look like a King’s Indian? Later Black carries out the mirror maneuver ...Nh6-f7 (similar to the knight transfer from b8 to c7), and places the queen’s rook on g8, demonstrating his intention to advance ...g5.

10.Bd2 Nh6 11.a3

According to Keres, deserving of attention was 11.0-0-0 or 11.Bxh6 gxh6 12.Qe3, followed by g2-g3, Nf4. I think Black cannot complain about the opening in either case.

11...Be7! 12.Bb5

After 12.Qxg7?! Ng4 13.Bg5 h6 14.Bxe7 Nxe7, the white queen would have found itself in an unsafe neighborhood and at risk of getting lost. Now the capture on g7 is a threat; for example, 12...a6? 13.Bxc6 Bxc6 14.Qxg7 Ng4 15.Bg5.

12...Rdg8 13.Qd3

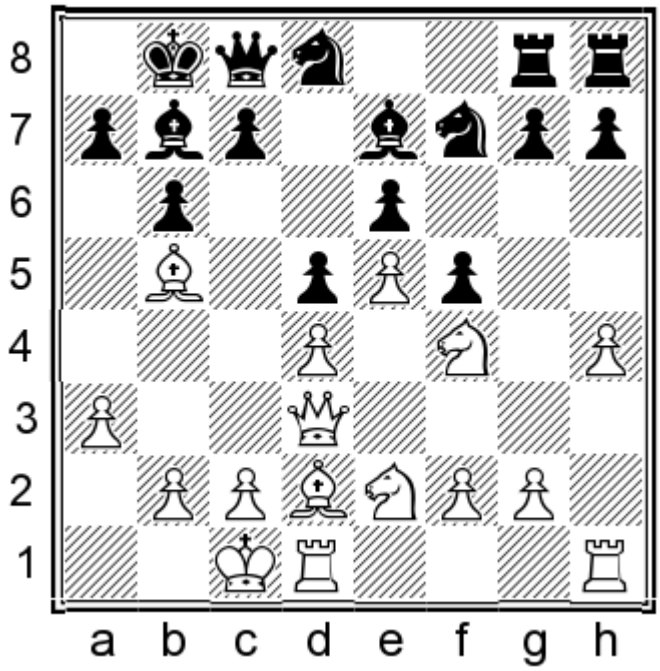
Preventing the bishop from being pushed back by ...a6.

13...Nf7 14.0-0-0 Kb8!

The beginning of a hidden strategic maneuver, which White did not figure out in time.

15.Nf4 Qc8! 16.Nce2 Ncd8!

It turns out that Black gradually prepared the advance of the c-pawn. Suddenly, significant flaws have appeared in White's camp.



17.Qb3?

Confusion. The radical change of pace had its effect on Olafsson, who apparently believed that the advantage was on his side. It was crucial to keep the pawn framework on d4: 17.c3 c5 18.Kb1(Peter Clarke), although in this case too Black would have had the initiative.

17...c6 18.Bd3 c5!

This typical "French-King's Indian" breakthrough is very effective here. The threat of ...c4 forces White to take on c5 (this is where both the move Ne2 and the absence of a white pawn on f4 took their toll).

19.dxc5 Bxc5

Stronger than 19...bxc5 20.Ba6!?, and White gets counterplay. Now the two pawns e5 and f2 are under attack, and one of them is inevitably lost.

20.Nh3 Nxe5 21.Bf4

The knight pin is a weak counter-chance for White, but it is still better that nothing.

21...Ndf7 22.Bb5

After 22.Ng5 the reply would have been the same, while 22.Qc3 would been followed by 22...Bd6 (indicated by Paul Keres).

22...Ka8 23.Nd4 Ng6 24.Qa4

Olafsson does not see any other way to stop the advance of the black pawns and sacrifices a piece in desperation.

24...Bxd4 25.Bd7 Qf8 26.Rxd4

Now the game ends quickly. Black's task would have been more difficult after 26.Bxe6 (Peter Clarke) 26...Be5! 27.Bxd5 (27.Rxd5 Nxf4!) 27...Bxd5 28.Rxd5 Bxf4+! (this is simpler than 28...Qb8 as suggested by Clarke) 29.Nxf4 Nge5 30.Re1 Qe7, followed by ...Rd8, and Black wins.

26...e5 27.Rb4

Or 27.Bc6 Qc8 (Paul Keres).

27...exf4 28.Rxb6 Nfe5 29.Rxb7

Out of spite.

29...Kxb7 30.h5

If 30.Qb5+, then 30...Kc7.

30...Qd6 31.hxg6 Qxd7 32.Qxf4 Nxg6 White resigned.

"Nimzowitsch would have most appreciated the postponed ...c5 and the effect of this move on White's position." (Raymond Keene)

(289) Kupper – Petrosian

Venice 1967

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 b6

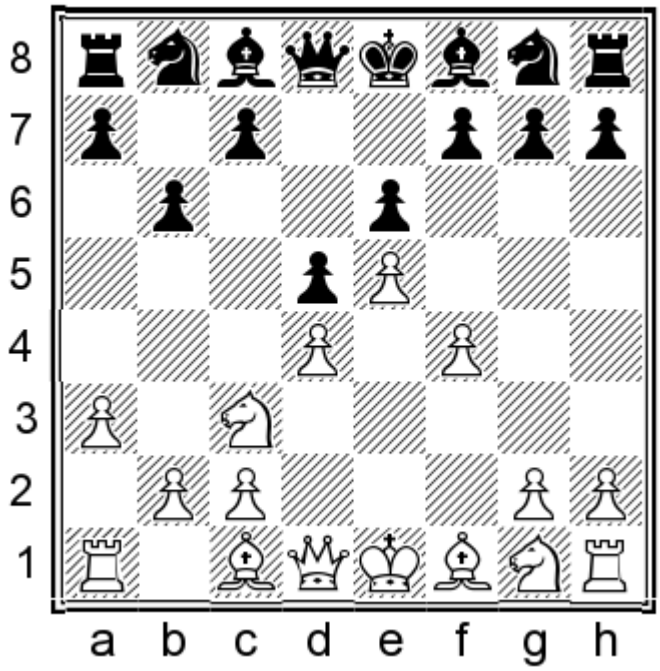
This move is more common than 4...Qd7.

5.a3 Bf8!?

5.Qg4 would have been followed by the same reply. Also possible is 5...Bxc3+, keeping purely with the "French" theme, but Petrosian usually preferred the more flexible text move.

6.f4

Now the similarity to the King's Indian Defense is even more pronounced.



6...Ne7

The knight rushes to the f5-square. Petrosian tested the continuation 6...h5 7.Nf3 Nh6 in his subsequent game against Dominguez (Las Palmas, 1980). The game continued: 8.Be3 c5 9.Bb5+?! Bd7 10.Bxd7+ Qxd7 11.Ne2 Be7 12.c3 a5 13.h3 Nf5 14.Bf2 a4! 15.g3 Nc6 16.Kf1? Na5 17.Kg2 Nc4 18.Qc1 Qb5! 19.Re1 (19.Rb1 Nxe5) 19...Qxb2 20.Qxb2 Nxb2 21.g4 Nh6 22.Rh1 Nc4 23.Ng3 hxg4 24.hxg4 Kd7 25.Nh2 cxd4 26.Bxd4 Bxa3 27.g5 Ng8 28.Bxb6 Ne7 29.Bd4 Bb2 30.Ra2 a3, and Black won.

7.Nf3

In our opinion, the more principled 7.Be3 reinforces the key d4-pawn.

7...Nf5

Using the fact that the continuation 8.g4 Nh4! does not yield any benefits for White. In the game Kavalek-Bronstein, played a year later (Amsterdam, 1968), Black tried to follow the “French-Indian” theme, developing the bishop to b7, and here is what happened: 7...Qd7 8.Be3 Nbc6 9.Bf2 Bb7 10.Bd3 0-0-0 11.b4! (playing in Makogonov’s style), and White’s advantage is undeniable. Although later Bronstein was able to muddy the water and even win, he was dissatisfied with the outcome of the opening: “In my opinion, the positional method of attack chosen by Kavalek almost refutes the passive system with 4...b6. Why did I play like this? All systems for Black have some disadvantages, but if you want to get winning chances, you have to take risks and suffer a lot in the opening.”

As we will see, Petrosian planned to exchange the light-square bishops via ...Ba6, which was a very wise decision, given that Black’s development lags behind. I must add that Petrosian generally sensed the boundary of acceptable risk surprisingly well, and this helped him avoid major problems in the opening even when he played offbeat systems.

8.Bd3

Of course, White wants to avoid exchanging the light-square bishop, but doing so by 8.Bb5+ c6 9.Ba4 Ba6 does not seem to be worthwhile.

8...h5

In case of the immediate 8...Ba6, Petrosian probably did not like the simplifying continuation 9.Bxa6 Nxa6 10.Qd3 Nb8 11.g4 Nh4 12.Nxh4 Qxh4+ 13.Qg3, etc.

9.0-0 Ba6 10.Bxa6

It does not look like there is anything better.

10...Nxa6 11.Qd3 Nb8 12.Nd1

A strategic mistake. According to Petrosian, correct is 12.Ne2, maintaining control of the d4- square. Now Black has very simple play.

12...c5 13.Ne3

In our opinion, 13.c3 was preferable, planning to take with the pawn in case of the trade on d4 and bracing oneself for a lengthy defense.

13...Nxd4! 14.Nxd4 cxd4 15.Qxd4 Bc5 16.Qd3 Nc6

So, Black emerged out of the opening with a very nice position. I am not sure that he has a real advantage, but the play here is easy and pleasant for Black. Even if he simply exchanges the minor pieces, he will definitely have some advantage in the endgame (a rook endgame or with the queens) (recall the classic game Nimzowitsch-Capablanca, New York, 1927). Petrosian decided to leave more pieces on the board for now, which, of course, did not help White.

17.Kh1 Ne7 18.Nd1 a5 19.Be3 Kf8!

A sophisticated solution. Black does not need to castle. The rook on h8 is well-placed, and not only for defensive purposes!

20.Rb1 h4!?

The threat of the further advance of this pawn keeps White’s kingside under pressure.

21.b4 axb4 22.axb4 Bxe3 23.Nxe3 g6 24.Ra1?!

White did not remember the a-file in time. Probably stronger was 24.c3, reinforcing the center.

24...h3!

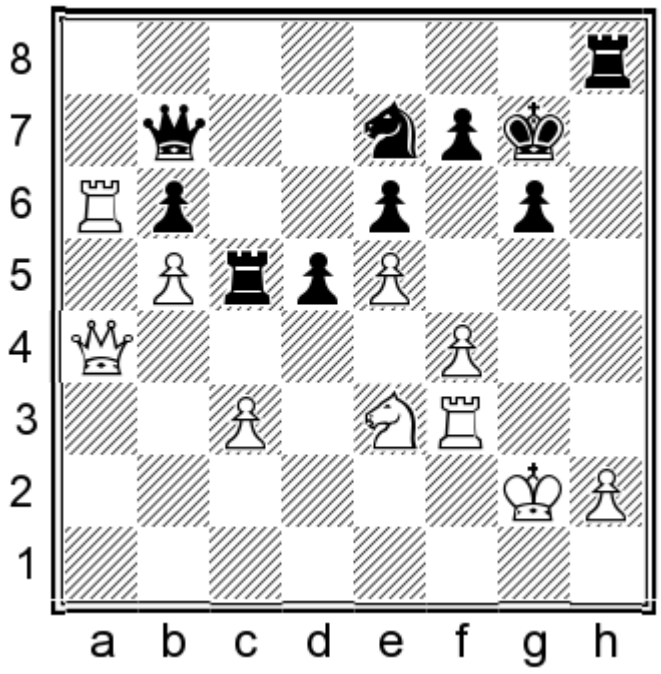
“Dropping the puck.” “Face-off.”

25.c3

The variation 25.g3 d4! 26.Rad1 Qc8 27.Qxd4? Qb7+ 28.Kg1 Nf5! clearly shows that White should have made this move earlier. Now the position of the white king falls apart. Maybe it was worth taking a chance with 25.g4!?.

25...hxg2+ 26.Kxg2 Kg7 27.b5 Qc7 28.Ra6 Rac8 29.Rf3 Qb7 30.Qd4 Rc5 31.Qa4?

A tactical mistake in a difficult situation. More stubborn is 31.Qd3 Rhc8 32.Ra3, etc.



31...d4!

The beginning of the final attack. In the end, the move of the d-pawn blows up White's position.

32.Ra7

If 32.cxd4, then 32...Rc3 with the threats 33...Rxe3 and 33...Rxh2+.

32...Rxh2+ 33.Kxh2 Qxf3

Black's threats are unstoppable.

34.Qxd4 Nd5! 35.f5 Nxe3

Of course not 35...Qxe3? 36.f6+!, and White

36.Rxf7+!

Clever, but not enough.

36...Kh6!

Not 36...Kxf7? because of 37.Qd7+ Kf8 38.Qd8+ Kg7 39.Qf6+ Kg8 40.Qxg6+ Kf8 41.Qf6+ Ke8 42.Qxe6+ Kd8 43.Qxb6+! with perpetual check.

37.Qh4+ Qh5 38.Qxh5+ gxh5 39.Rf6+ Kg5 40.Rxe6 Rxb5 41.f6 Ng4+ 42.Kg3 Nxe5 43.Kh2 Ng4+ White resigned.

In Lieu of a Postscript



So, what is the main secret of Petrosian's success in the King's Indian? At first, perhaps, it was a lucky combination of his way of thinking and his chess education (Nimzowitsch!) that favorably complimented the fabric of this complicated opening. But then, as Petrosian perfected his play, these ties grew stronger and deeper. And at that point his outstanding strategic talent came out on top even over his famous prophylaxis and maneuvering, though Petrosian has always been recognized for his abilities in these areas.

According to Kasparov, "...Petrosian perfectly mastered the art of creating harmonious lively positions, where behind a seeming lack of dynamics there was a colossal internal energy (and the smallest changes were immediately taken into account in a strategy that the opponent could not always understand)." One gets the impression that the strongest facet of Petrosian's King's Indian method (and, perhaps, his play in general) was strategy. Yes, it is strategy, but a special kind, Petrosian's, where in some fascinating way the abstract was combined with the concrete, the simple with the complex, the standard with the creative.

In the King's Indian Defense, Petrosian often followed original paths, he had his preferred methods and structures and his favorite ideas, many of which he developed himself. And when Petrosian achieved his kind of position, his opponents fought an uphill battle: even the strongest grandmasters sometimes did not understand what was happening on the board. Spassky, who played more than 70 games and two world championship matches against Petrosian, and who probably knew him better than anyone, once confessed:

"Sometimes it seems that a game against Petrosian is developing peacefully, calmly, but then suddenly he 'leaps' and you know that you are in trouble." One of the few players who had a plus score against Petrosian in the King's Indian was grandmaster Geller, who was also an excellent strategist and is considered a father of this opening for a reason. ("We really did not understand the King's Indian Defense before Geller." – Mikhail Botvinnik) They played nine games, and the score was plus two in Geller's favor, who also managed not to lose a single game. But against other seasoned King's Indian experts, grandmasters Stein and Gligorić (let's look at just these two examples), Petrosian was ruthless: (+2, -0, =3) and (+8, -3, =2), respectively. He once even defeated Stein with Black, and the Yugoslav grandmaster was lucky, so to speak, as the score gap could have been even wider...

And finally, an indispensable condition for any success in chess is what is usually called by the short but comprehensive word "class." It includes practical strength, a sense of danger, reliable play, and much, much more. Petrosian made his way into the chess elite in 1953 and stayed there until his very last days. Petrosian's highest achievements and the peak of his practical strength came in 1957-1964. The statistics of his King's Indian games during this period show that, as White he lost only one game.

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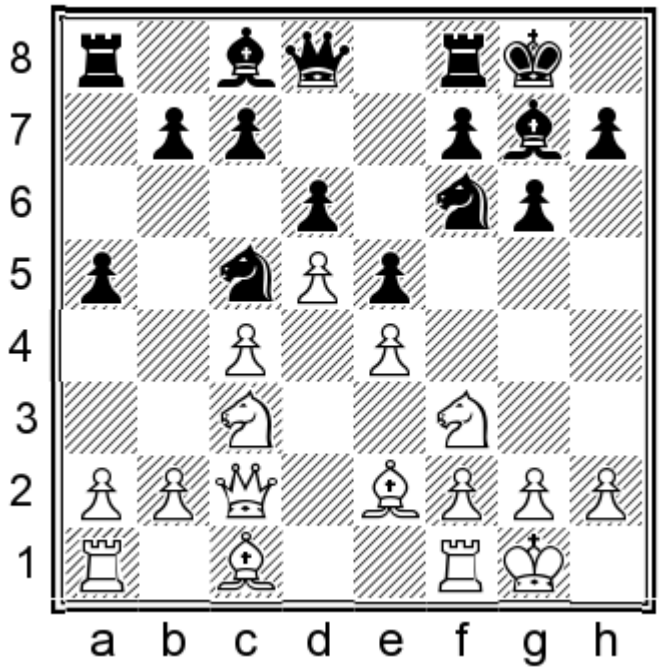
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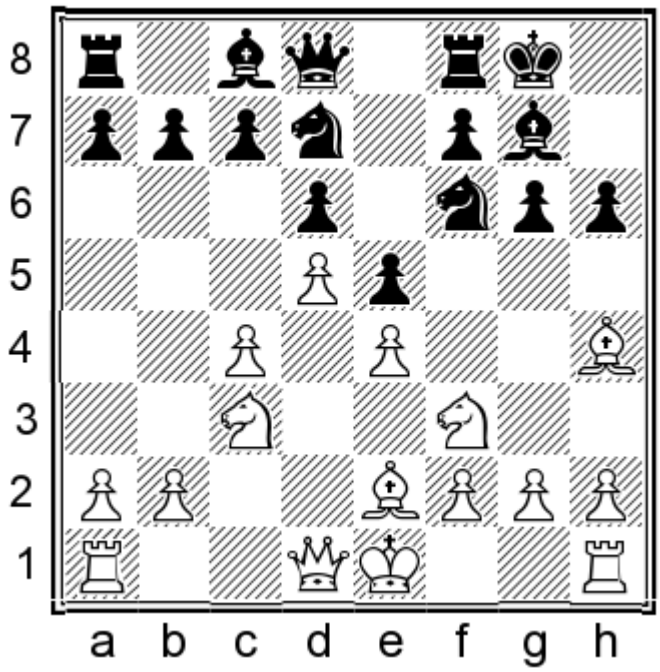
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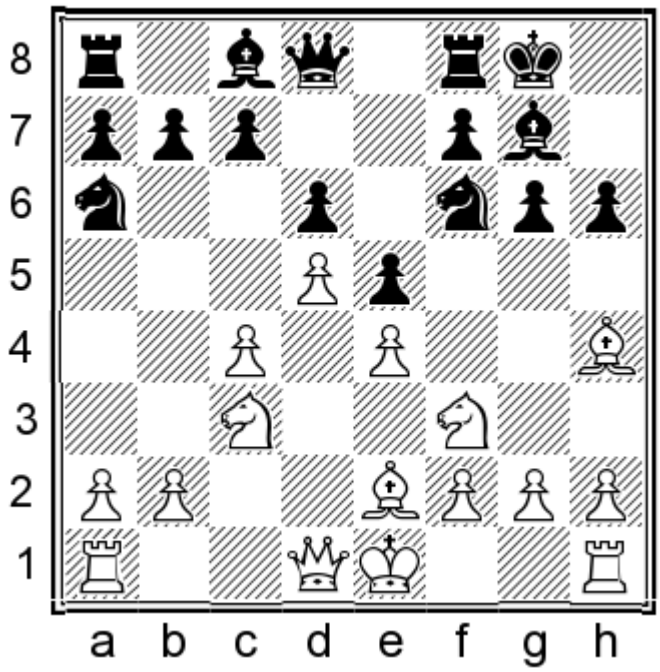
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1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.d5 Nbd7 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4



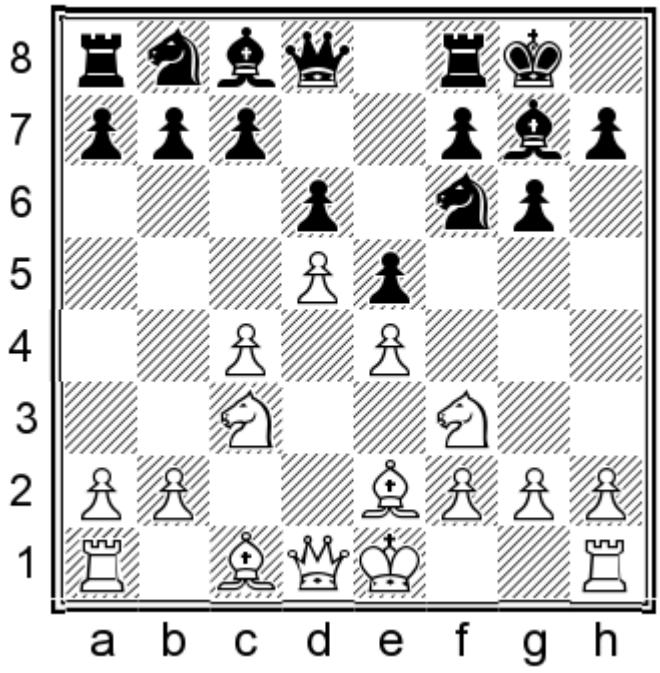
A2* Games 10-12 [E92]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.d5 Na6 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4



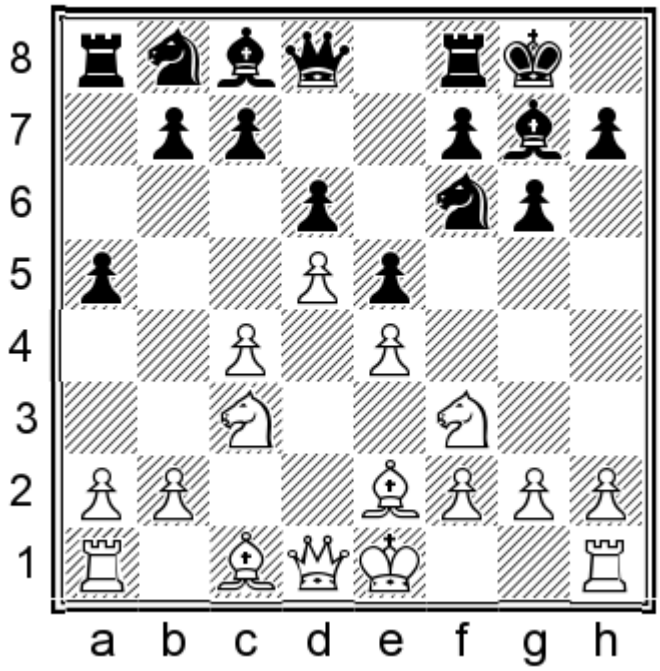
A3 Games 13-18 [E92]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.d5



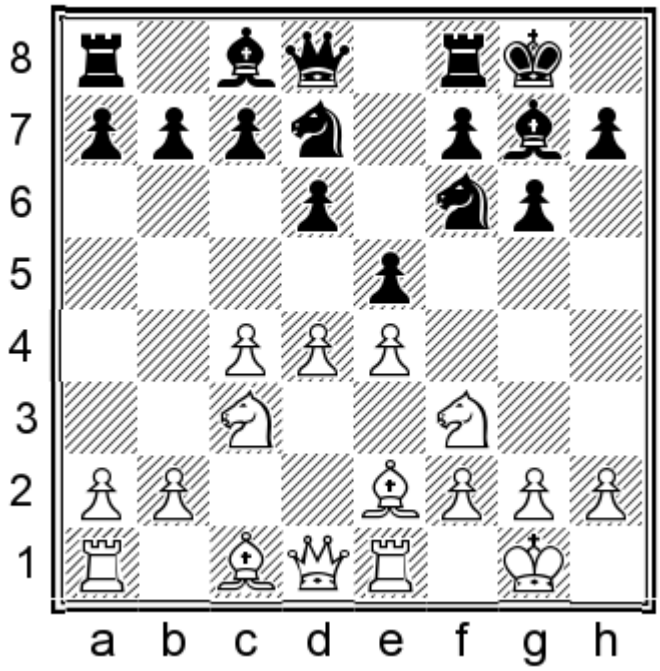
A4 Games 19-26 [E92]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.d5 a5



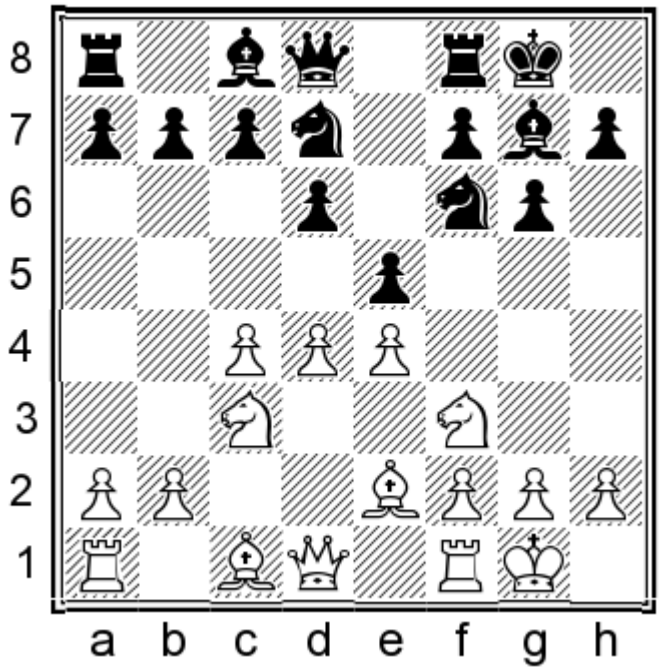
A5 Games 27-34 [E95]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 Nbd7 8.Re1



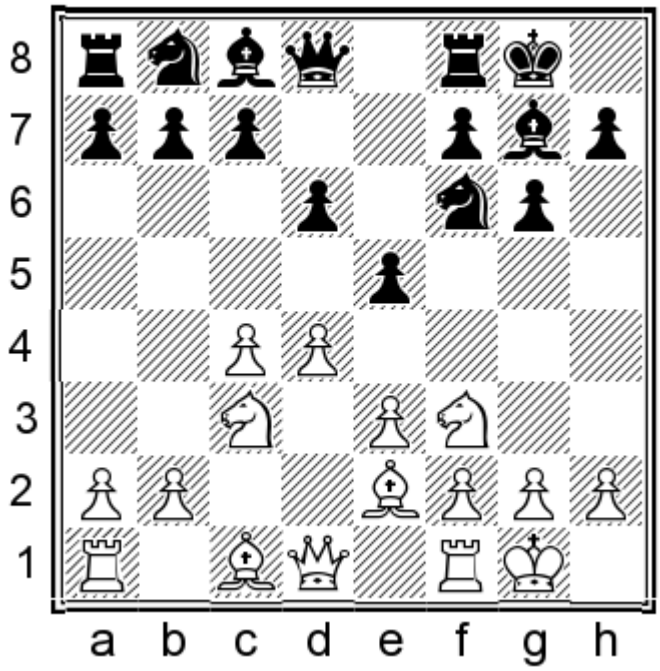
A5* Games 35-37 [E94]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 Nbd7



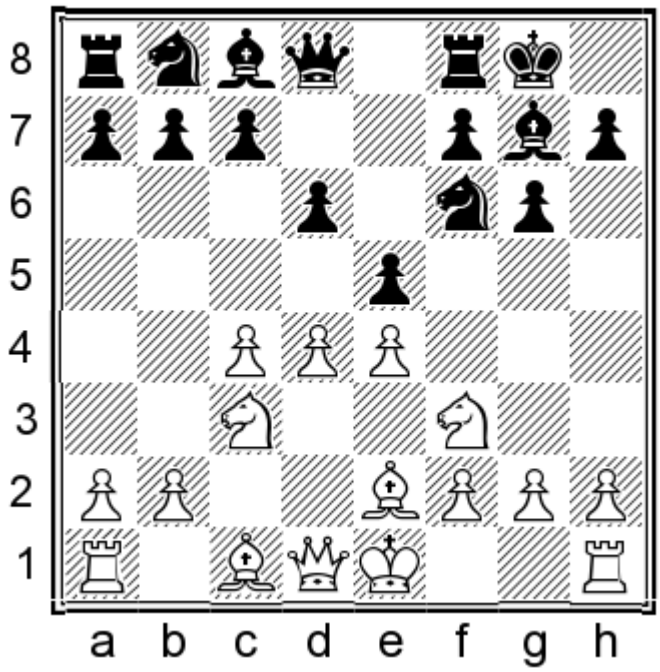
A6 Games 38-43 [E61]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e3 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0



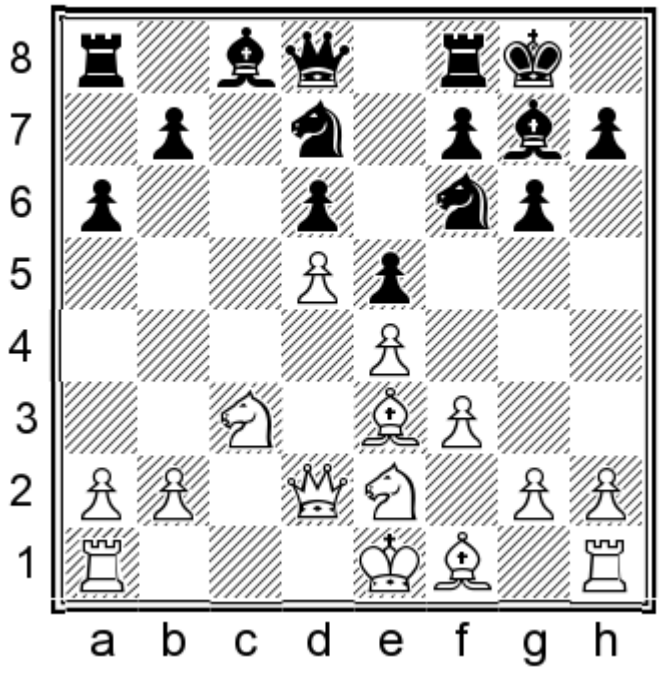
A7 Games 44-45 [E92]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5



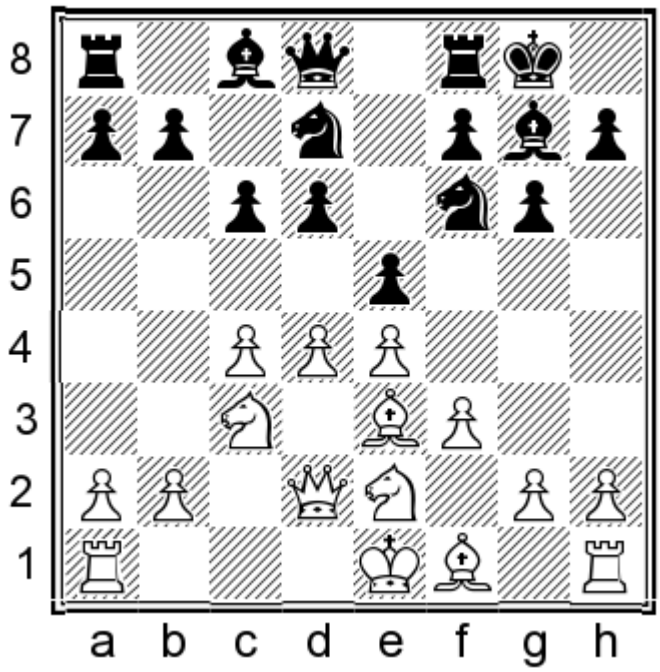
B1 Games 46-50 [E89]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 e5 7.Nge2 c6 8.Qd2 Nbd7 9.d5 cxd5 10.cxd5 a6



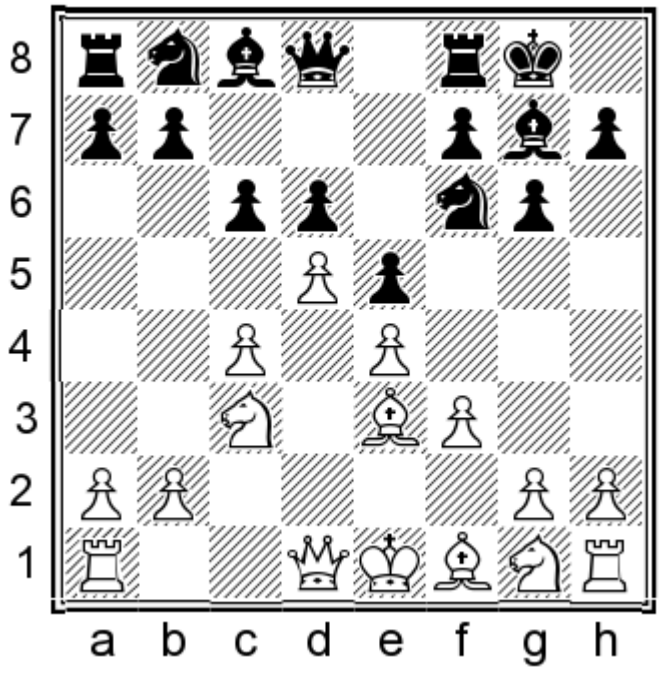
B2 Games 51-54 [E86]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 e5 7.Nge2 c6 8.Qd2 Nbd7



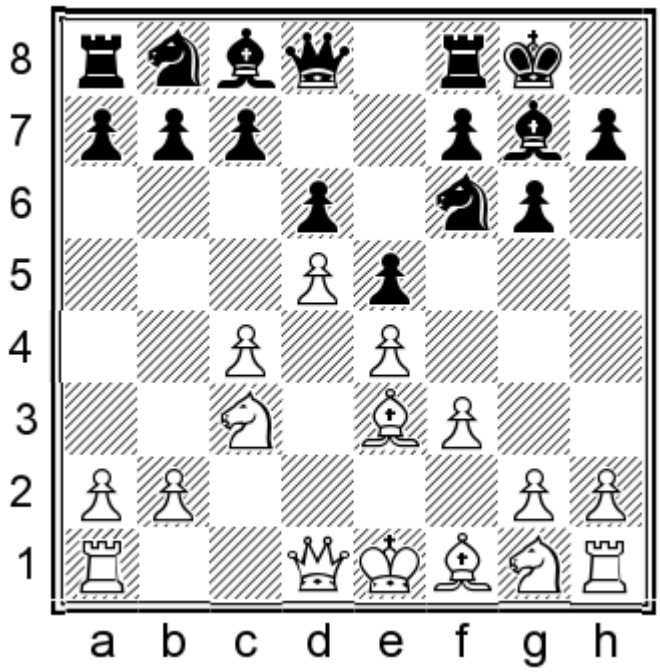
B3 Games 55-61 [E88]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 e5 7.d5 c6



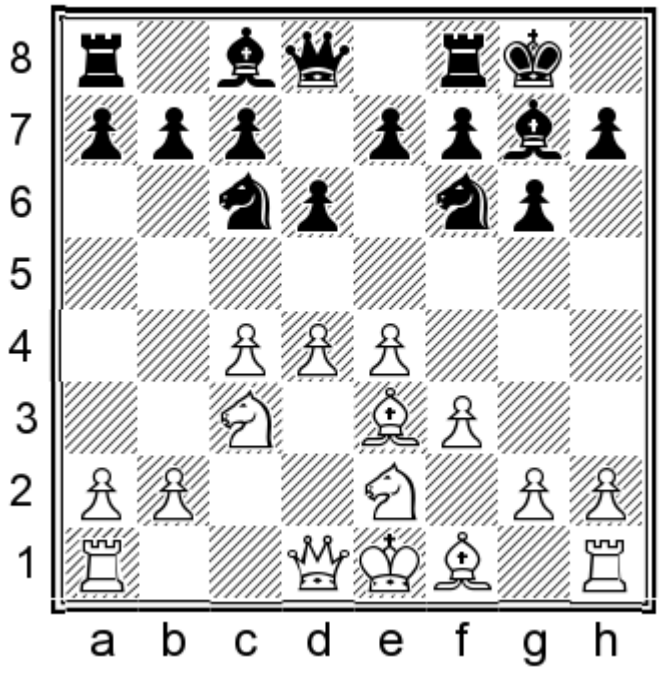
B4 Games 62-66 [E87]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 e5 7.d5



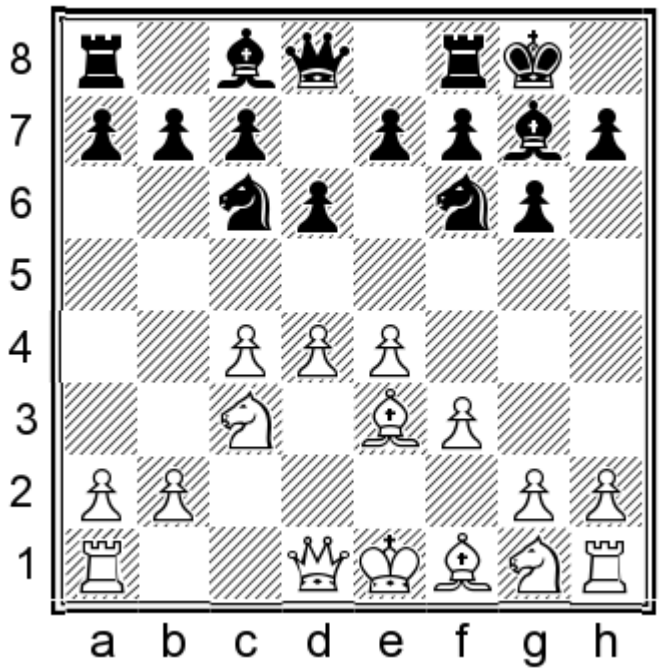
B5 Games 67-75 [E83]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 Nc6 7.Nge2



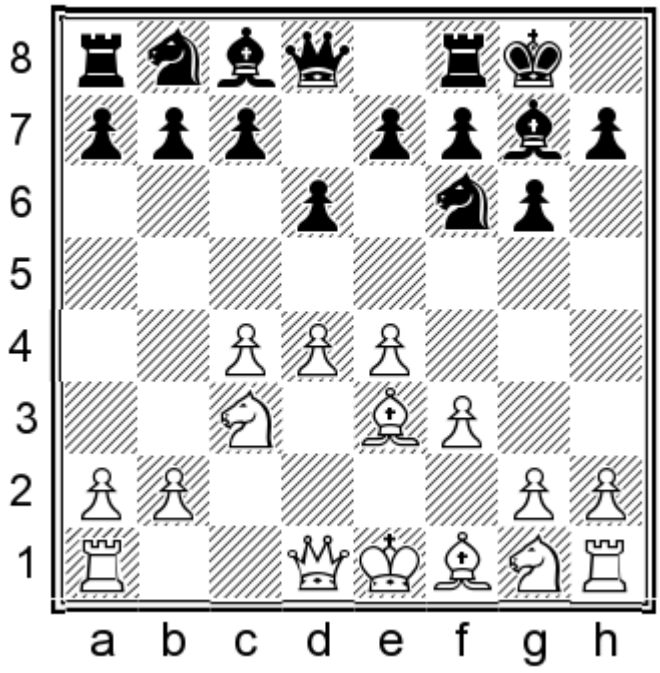
B6 Games 76-83 [E83]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 Nc6



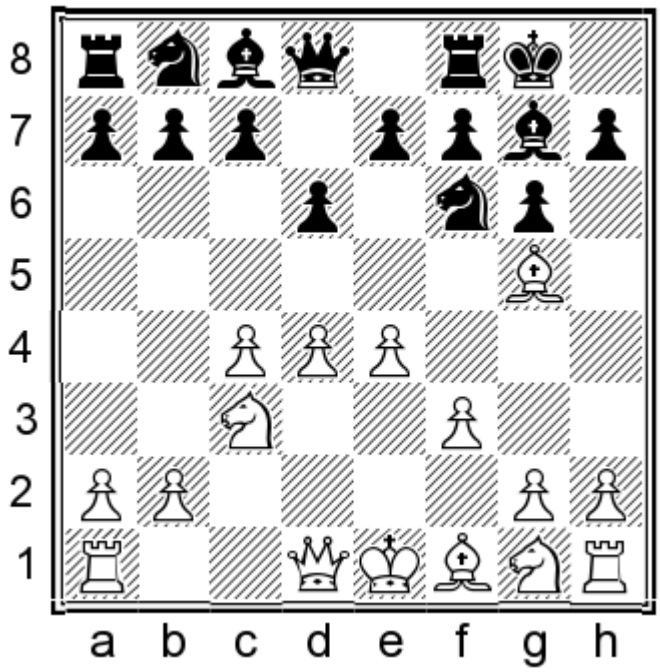
B7 Games 84-88 [E81]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3



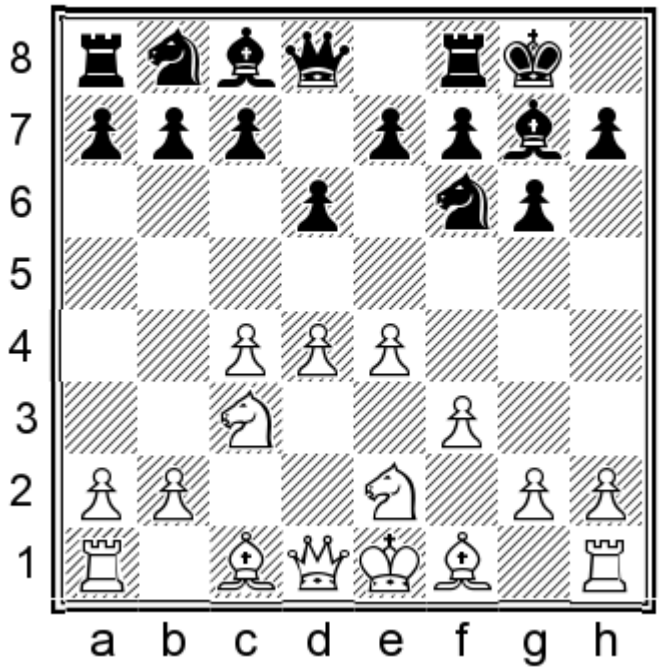
B8 Games 89-92 [E81]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Bg5



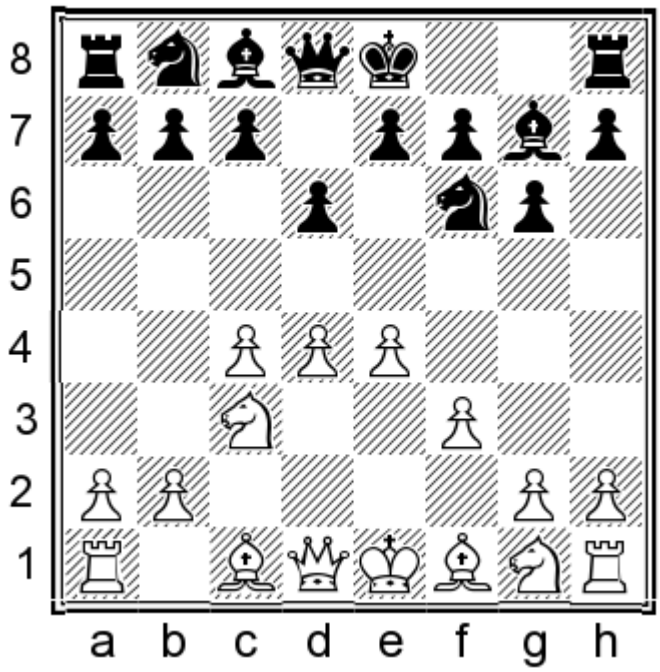
B9 Games 93-98 [E81]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Nge2



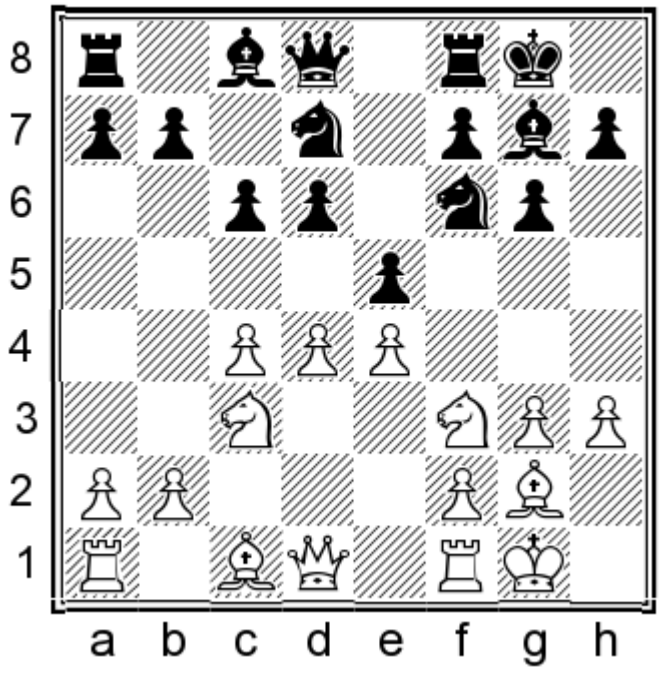
B10 Games 99-105 [E80]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3



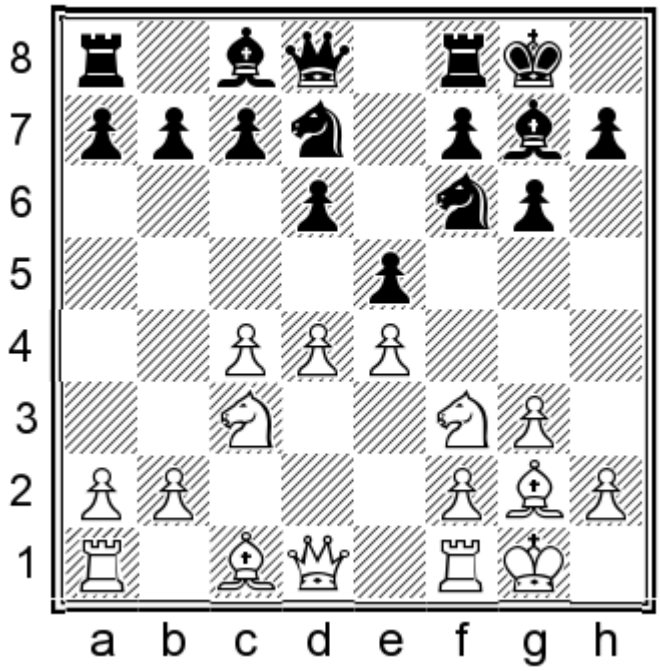
C1 Games 106-113 [E69]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Nf3 d6 5.g3 0-0 6.Bg2 Nbd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 c6 9.h3



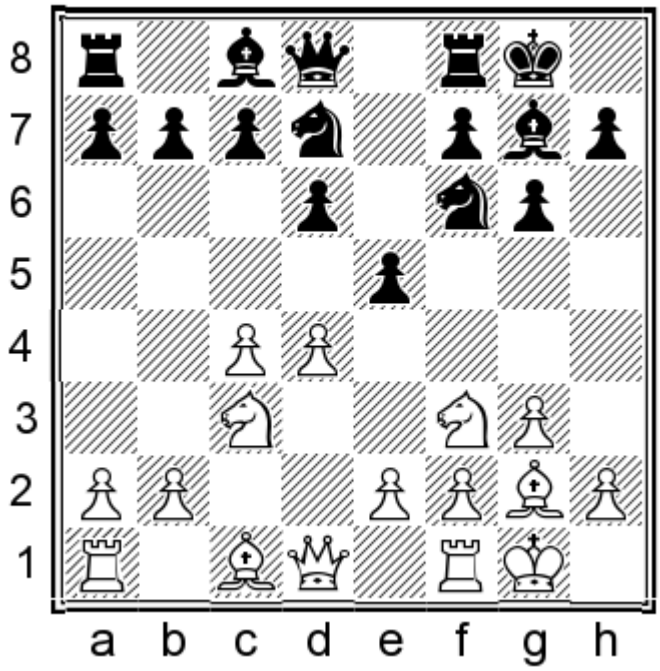
C2 Games 114-120 [E68]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Nf3 0-0 5.g3 d6 6.Bg2 Nbd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4



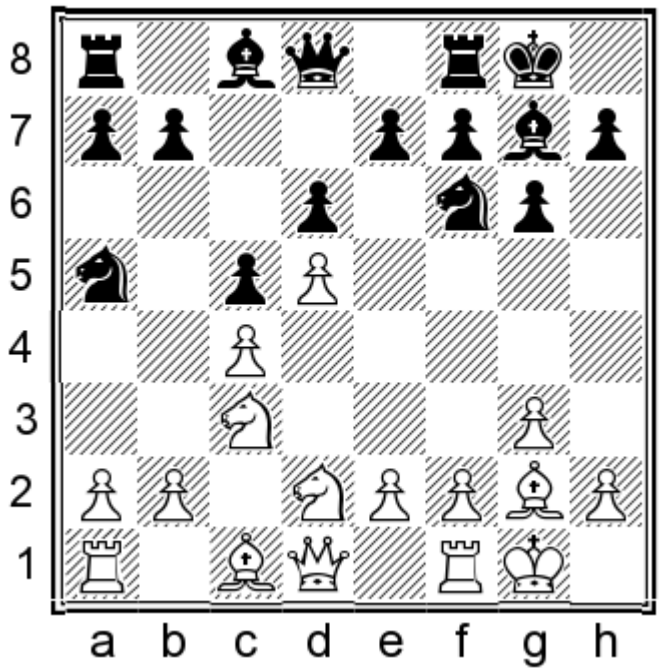
C3 Games 121-126 [E67]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Nf3 0-0 5.g3 d6 6.Bg2 Nbd7 7.0-0 e5



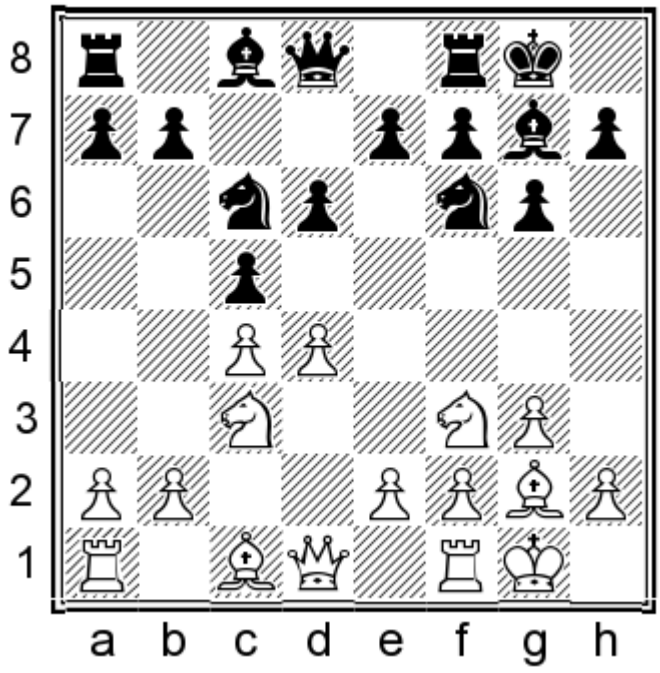
C4 Games 127-134 [E66]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Nf3 d6 5.g3 0-0 6.Bg2 c5 7.0-0 Nc6 8.d5 Na5 9.Nd2



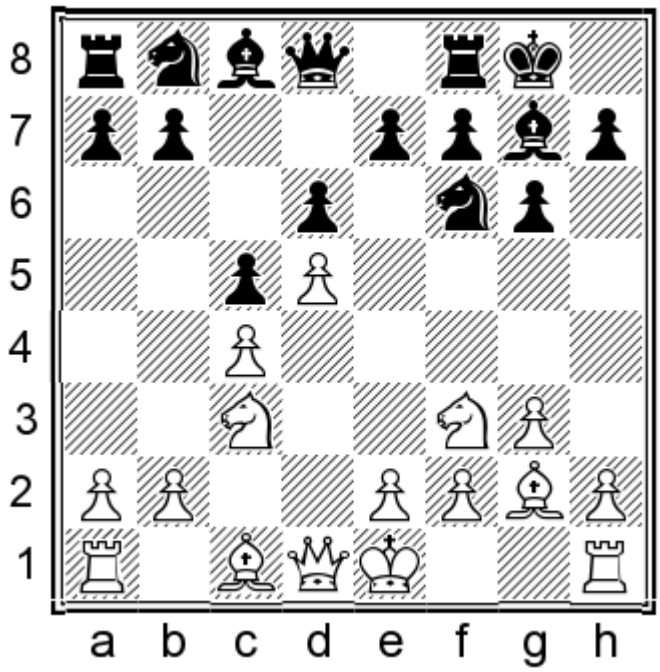
C5 Games 135-139 [E65]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Nf3 0-0 5.g3 d6 6.Bg2 c5 7.0-0 Nc6



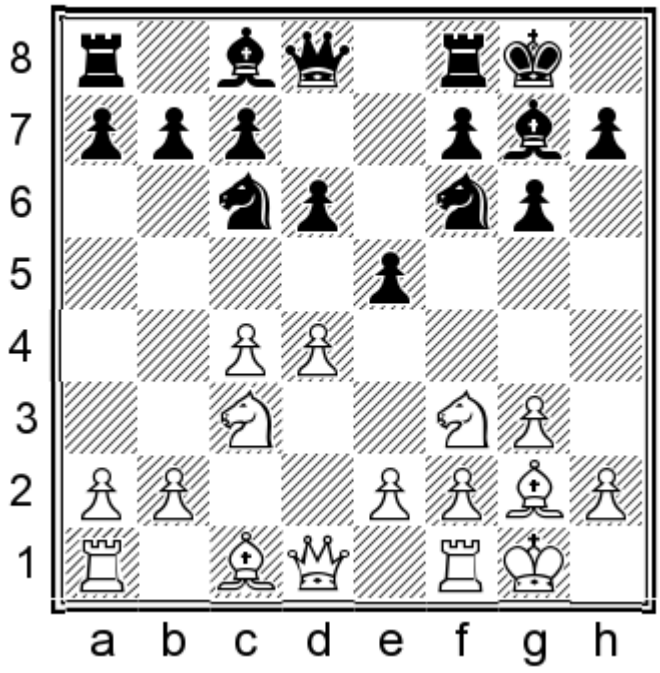
C6 Games 140-145 [E64]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nf3 Bg7 4.g3 0-0 5.Bg2 c5 6.d5 d6 7.Nc3



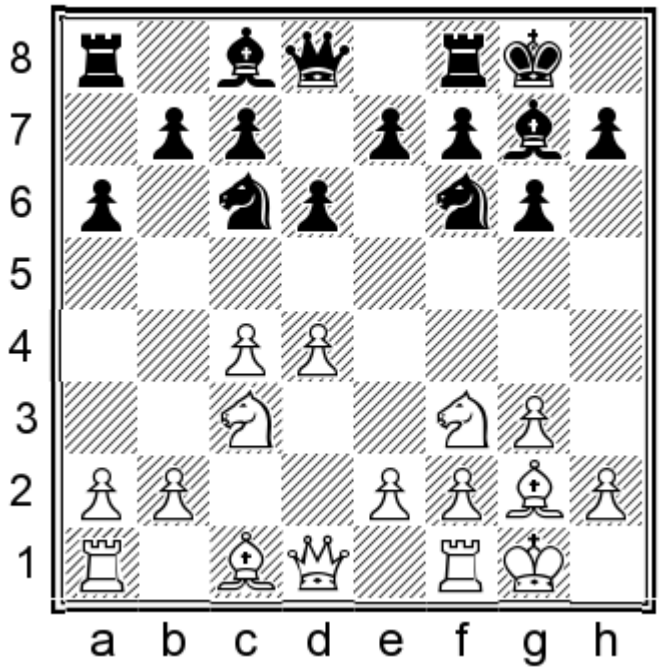
C7 Games 146-149 [E62]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Nf3 d6 5.g3 0-0 6.Bg2 Nc6 7.0-0 e5



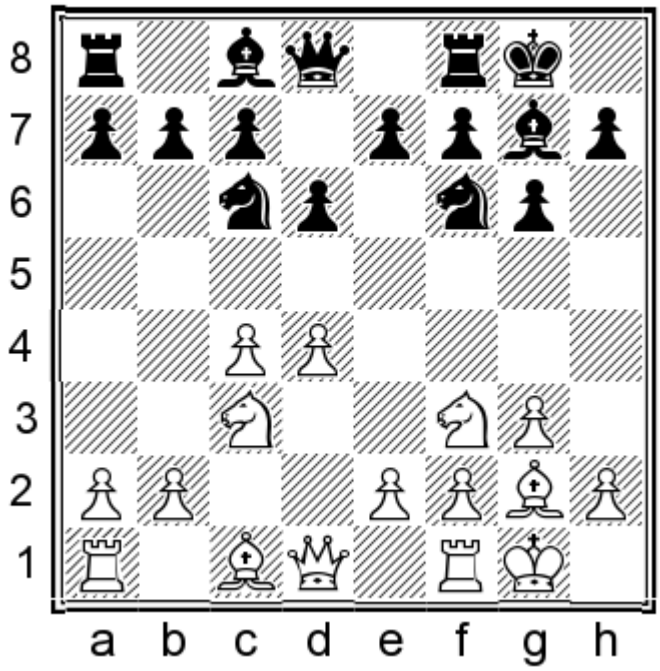
C7* Games 150-152 [E63]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Nf3 0-0 5.g3 d6 6.Bg2 Nc6 7.0-0 a6



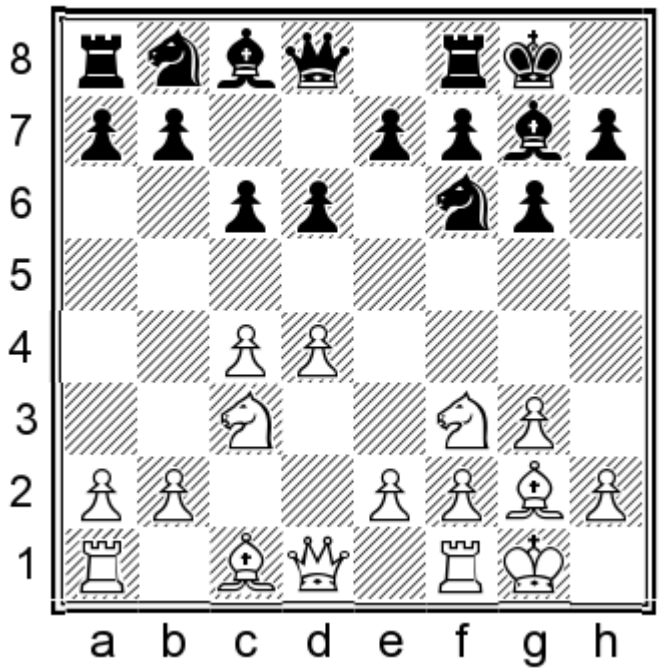
C8 Games 153-158 [E62]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Nf3 d6 5.g3 0-0 6.Bg2 Nc6 7.0-0



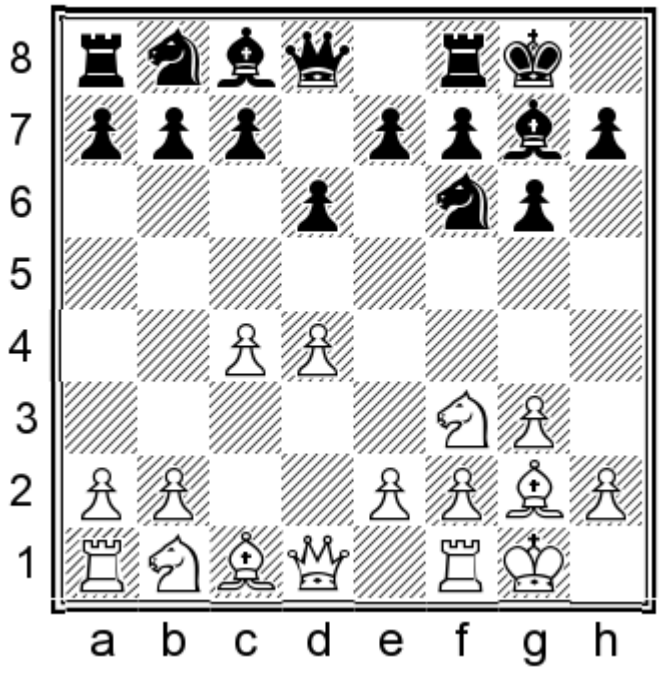
C9 Games 159-160 [E62]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nf3 Bg7 4.g3 d6 5.Bg2 0-0 6.Nc3 c6 7.0-0



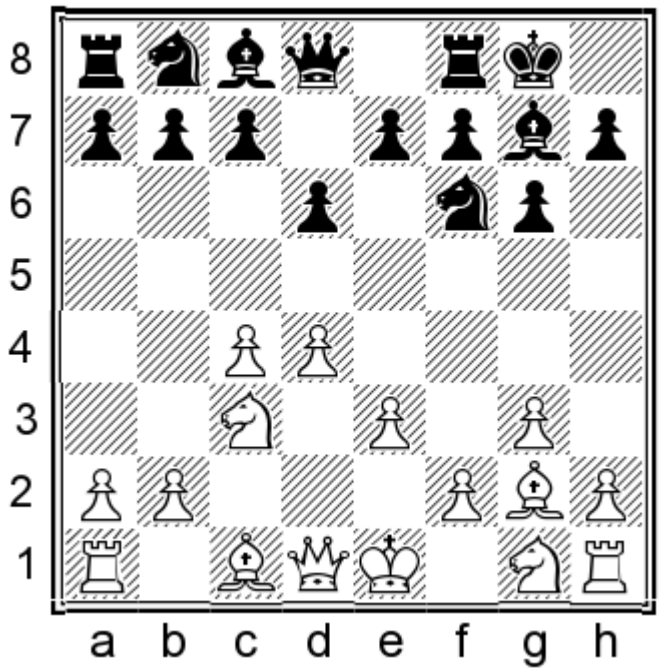
C10 Games 161-164 [E60]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nf3 Bg7 4.g3 0-0 5.Bg2 d6 6.0-0



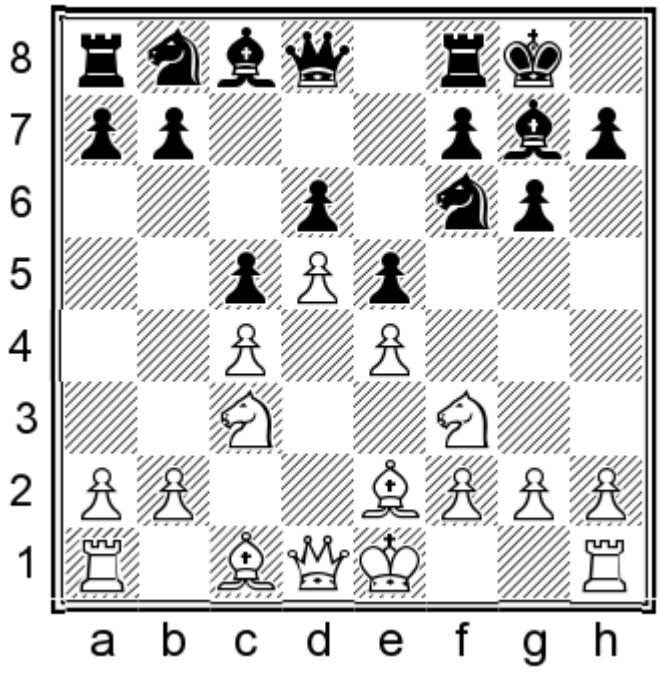
C10* Games 165-166 [E61]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.g3 0-0 5.Bg2 d6 6.e3



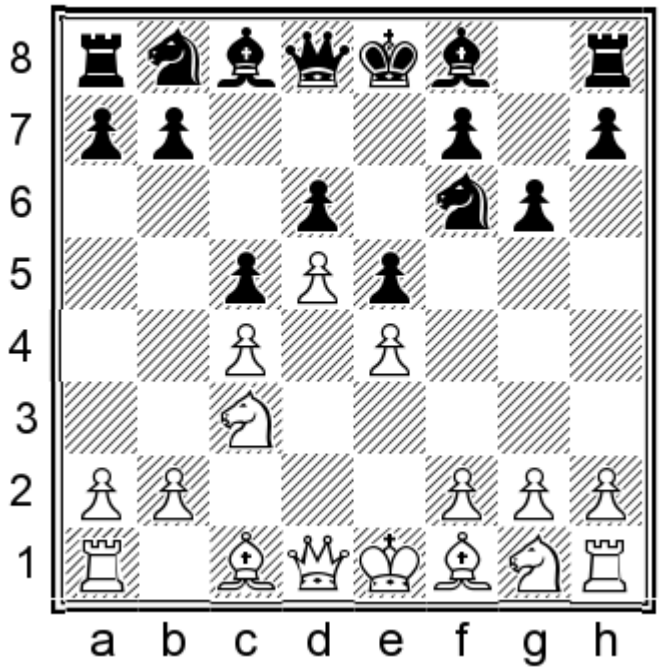
D1 Games 167-174 [E92]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5 4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 g6 6.Nf3 Bg7 7.Be2 0-0



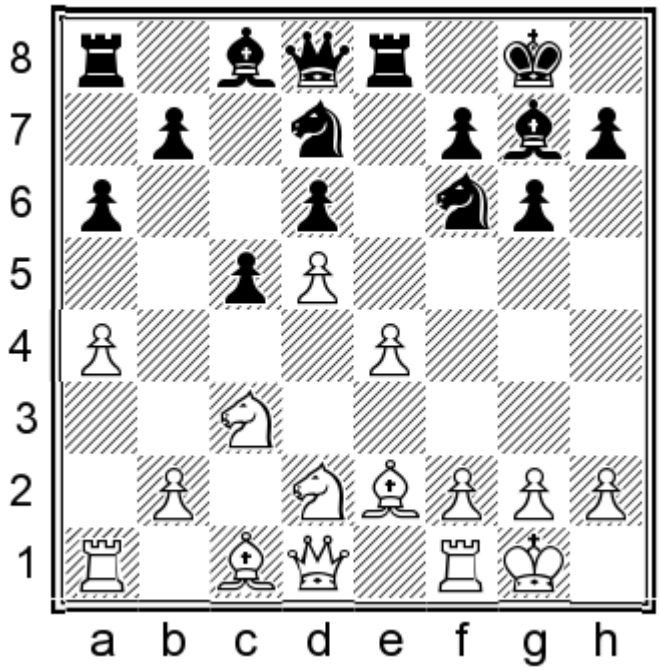
D2 Games 175-180 [A56]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5 4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 g6



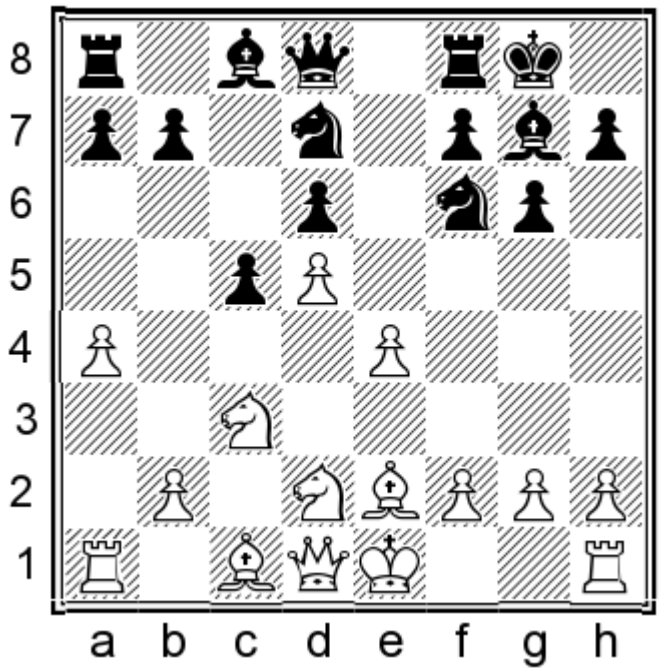
D3 Games 181-184 [A77]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.e4 Bg7 8.Be2 0-0 9.0-0 Re8 10.Nd2 Nbd7 11.a4 a6



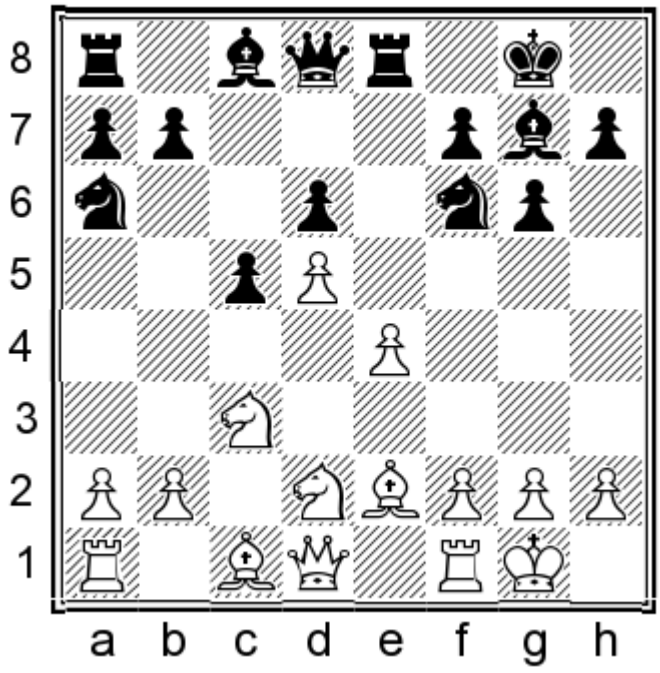
D4 Games 185-189 [A72]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 g6 7.Nf3 Bg7 8.Be2 0-0 9.Nd2 Nbd7 10.a4



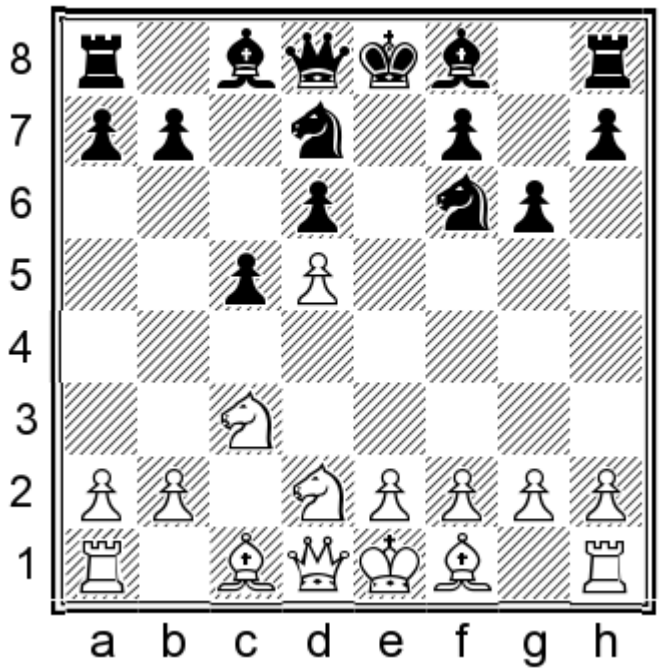
D4* Games 190-191 [A78]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 g6 7.Nf3 Bg7 8.Be2 0-0 9.0-0 Re8 10.Nd2 Na6



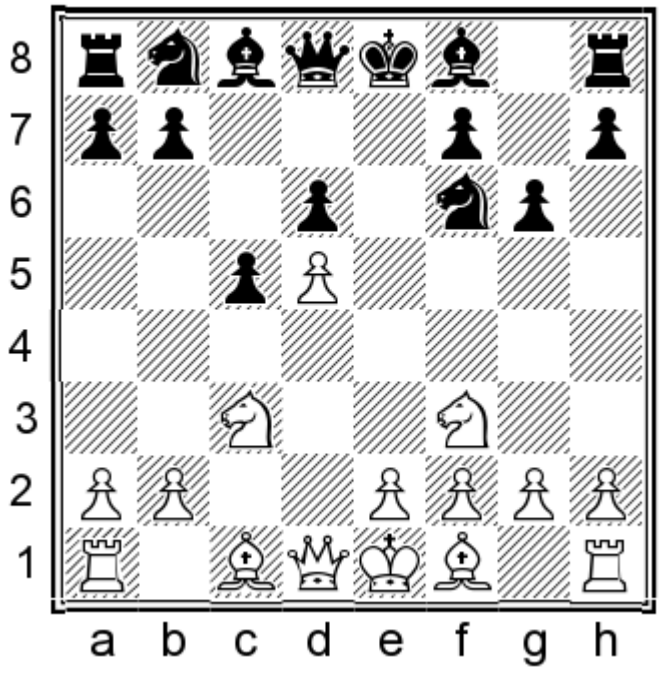
D5 Games 192-195 [A61]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.Nd2 Nbd7



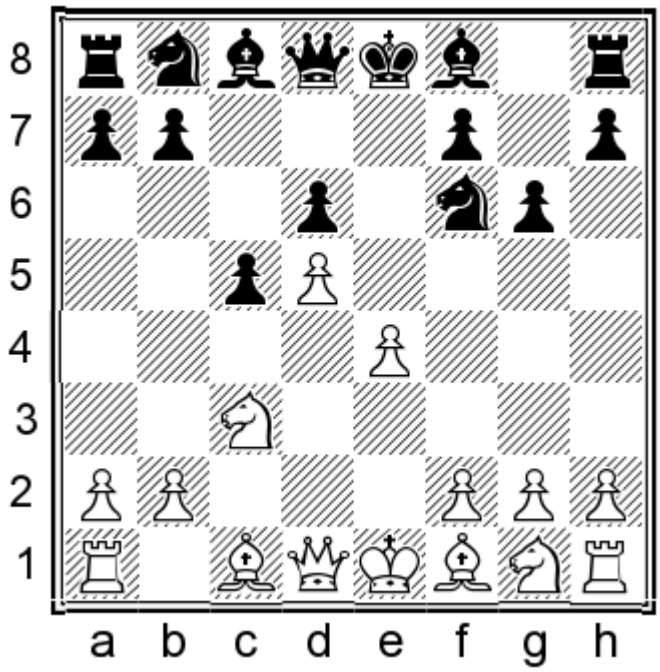
D6 Games 196-198 [A61]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6



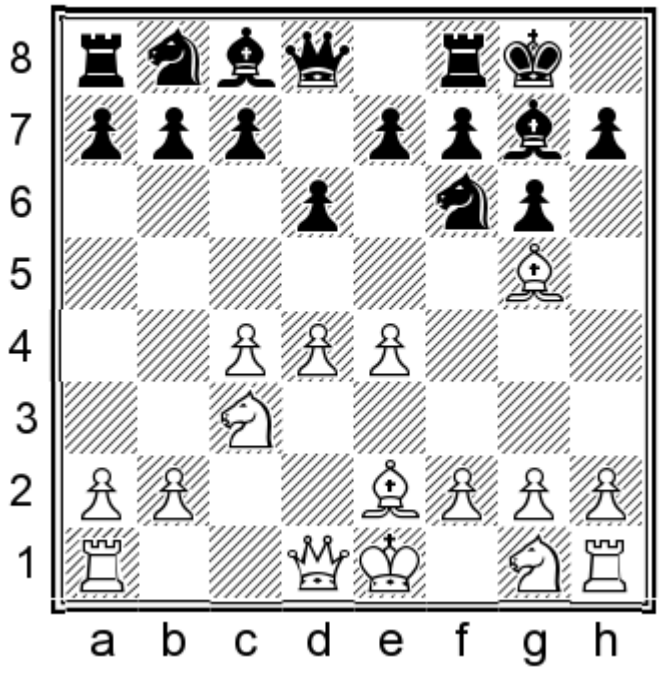
D7 Games 199-205 [A65]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 g6



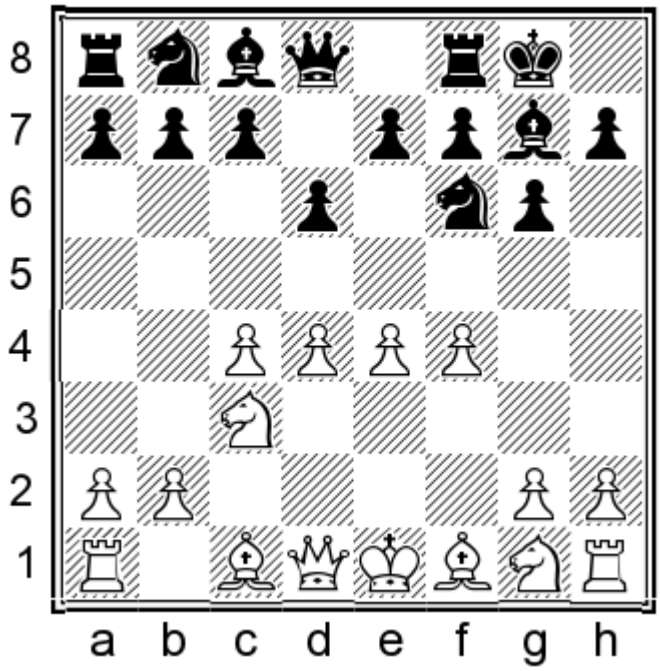
E1 Games 206-211 [E73]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Bg5



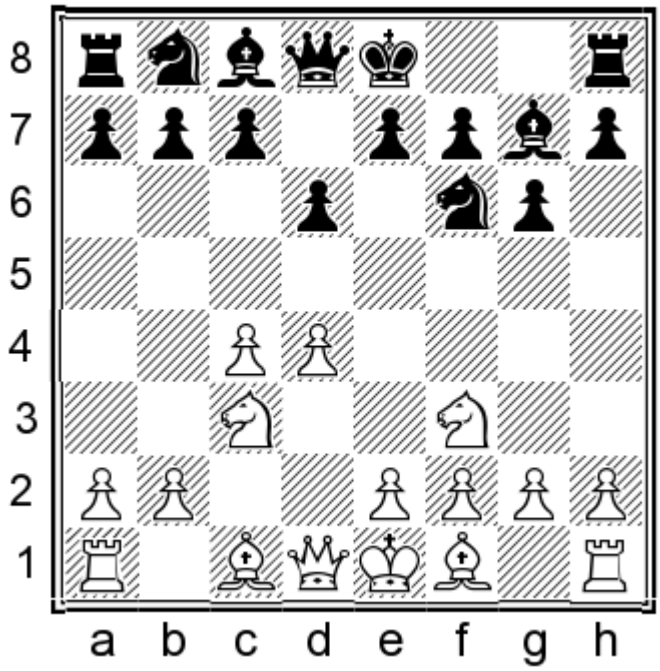
E2 Games 212-216 [E76]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f4 0-0



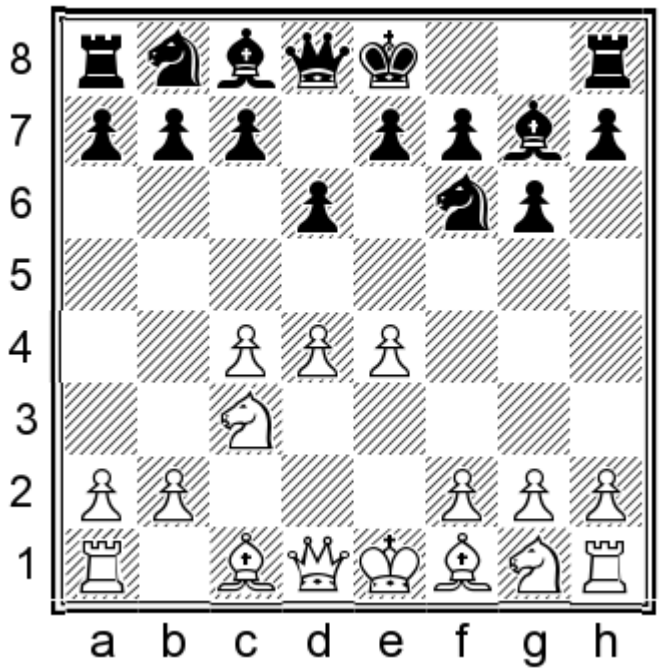
E3 Games 217-222 [E61]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Nf3 d6



E4 Games 223-230 [E70]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6


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