PETROSIAN'S LEGACY

BY
TIGRAN PETROSIAN

Preface by
GARY KASPAROV
Foreword by Sam Sloan

Petrosian's Legacy

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Prior his untimely death in Moscow on 13 August 1984 at the age of only 55, Former World Chess Champion Tigran Vartanovich Petrosian had been going over his games and was preparing lectures and notes. He was giving lectures on TV and radio. He was planning to compile them all into a book. However, due to his premature death the book was never published.

His widow Rona E. Petrosian went to work with Edward Shektman recovering tapes and transcripts of these radio and TV broadcasts. With great difficulty, they were able to recover 14 of them. They are published here.

In her acknowledgments page, Rona Petrosian credits US Grandmaster Arnold Denker with editing this work and Eduard Gufeld with writing an article that is used here.

This book was originally published in Russian as Тигран Вартанович Петросян Шахматные Лекции or Tigran Vartanovich Petrosian Chess Lectures. The publisher was Совет радио or Soviet Radio.

What is most surprising is this book is virtually unknown in the Western chess world. One would imagine that every chess enthusiast would have this important book in his chess library. One cannot find this book listed anywhere in the places where one would expect to find such books.

I think they should have kept the original title Petrosian's Lectures. This shows that Tigran Petrosian is the actual author. The title Petrosian's Legacy makes it seem like a book about Petrosian. The title change may have been because not all of the articles are from his lectures and because it was published six years after his death.
Foreword by Sam Sloan

Tigran Petrosian (1929-1984) was World Chess Champion from 1963 to 1969 and was one of the strongest players in the world throughout his lengthy career.

His style of play was the opposite of what others said it was. Others characterized his play as “dull” and “drawish”. However, statistics prove that while others considered his play to be dull by their standards, it was not drawish.

Petrosian had the lowest percentage of draws of any top grandmaster in the world. Whereas Tal is considered to have been the opposite of Petrosian, with daring sacrificial attacks, in reality Tal drew more games than Petrosian did. Similarly, Fischer whose play was characterized by direct assaults, nevertheless drew more games than Petrosian did.

Petrosian represented the USSR in the World Chess Olympiad ten times. His result was 78 wins, 50 draws and only one loss, for 79.8 per cent.

The most famous instance of this was at the 1966 Chess Olympiad in Havana, Cuba, where he won the gold medal on top board with 88.46 percent vs. Bobby Fischer’s 88.23 percent.

Petrosian was a Candidate for the World Championship on eight occasions (1953, 1956, 1959, 1962, 1971, 1974, 1977 and 1980). He won the world championship in 1963 by defeating Botvinnik, successfully defended it in 1966 against Spassky, and lost it in 1969 to Spassky. Thus, he was the defending World Champion or a World Champion Candidate in ten consecutive three-year cycles.

Foreword by Sam Sloan

In spite of these impressive results, he is perhaps best known for breaking Bobby Fischer's winning streak of 20 games by beating Bobby in game two of their 1971 match.

The importance of this accomplishment of breaking Fischer's Streak is shown by the fact that all of his games from that match against Fischer are included in this book. One would think that this book would emphasize his winning the World Championship by defeating Botvinnik in 1963 or his successful defense of the world championship by beating Spassky in 1966. But, No! His most noteworthy accomplishment was in breaking Fischer's streak in 1972, even though Petrosian lost the match to Fischer.

Why is it then that, in the face of these amazing results, Petrosian is considered to be a dull and drawish player?

It is because of the way that he achieved his results? He did not often launch a direct, immediate attack. Instead, he maneuvered, seeming endlessly. He waited for his opponent to make an error or to attack unsoundly. When the mistake finally occurred, Petrosian exploited it ruthlessly.

In many ways, Petrosian played the way that modern computers seem to play, sometimes making moves that seem pointless and yet winning the game in the end.

An example of this is the Petrosian System in the Queen's Indian Defense: 1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 b6 4. a3.

The purpose to a3 is obviously to stop Black from playing Bb4+. Yet, Bb4+ is not really a threat or even a very good move. Why waste a valuable move in the opening to stop a non-existent threat?

Petrosian felt that a3 would turn out to be a useful move later in the game and thus was not wasted. Moreover, a3 was in accordance with his policy of restricting his opponent, thereby causing his opponent to feel frustrated, leading to his opponent making a rash decision which Petrosian could exploit.
**Foreword by Sam Sloan**

Bobby Fischer said that Petrosian “will smell any kind of danger 20 moves before!”

Tigran Petrosian was born in Tbilisi, Georgia on 17 June 1929. He died of stomach cancer in Moscow on 13 August 1984. The poor quality of the Soviet Health Care System may have contributed to his early death at age only 55.

Petrosian lived in Moscow most of his life. In spite of neither being born nor living in Armenia, he has always been considered to be Armenian and he is a national hero of the Republic of Armenia.

Sam Sloan  
San Rafael California  
USA  
August 3, 2012
**Foreword by Sam Sloan**

**Back Cover Blurb**

“This book is a truly creative modern work . . . A treasure for those who want to study chess properly.”

Garry Kasparov

One of the great teachers of all times, former World Champion Tigran Petrosian, simply and honesty reveals many of his chess secrets in this book. It is a book that will benefit master and beginner alike, even as his teachings have influenced our present great champion, Garry Kasparov. By itself the chapter on his match with Fischer, with its many insights and behind the scenes maneuvering, is more than worth the price of this book. But there is much, much more. Far better than I could ever hope to tell it, it is told by a great and appreciative Garry Kasparov in a warm and honest introduction that expresses his true feelings for this great man. You must read it.

Arnold Denker
Grandmaster
Former US Chess Champion

**Introduction in Russian by Garry Kasparov**

Т. В. Петросян

шахматные лекции

Гарри Каспаров

Шахматный мир Петросяна

Творчество большого шахматиста, тем более чемпиона мира, всегда актуально. Это всегда новая страница шахматной истории, потому что все чемпионы на том или ином этапе привносили в шахматы что-то новое, прокладывали свой путь к шахматным вершинам. И перелистывая ее страницы, мы можем указать достаточно безошибочно, ориентируясь на наши познания шахматной классики, когда, где и, главное, кем была выдвинута та или иная плодотворная идея, определено то или иное направление развития шахмат и что конкретно это дало шахматам.
Foreword by Sam Sloan

Творчество Тиграна Вартановича Петросяна еще не изучено так досконально и всесторонне, как хотелось бы. Слишком мало времени прошло со дня его безвременной кончины. Ушел шахматист, который мог бы дать миру очень и очень много, преподнося миру прописные на первый взгляд истины, но которые составляют, по сути, основу шахматного творчества. И та простота изложения, с которой мы будем встречаться в этой книге, говорит в первую очередь о глубине подхода Тиграна Вартановича шахматам: она — следствие ясности мышления и редчайшего понимания не только глобальных шахматных проблем, но и всех тонкостей тактики и стратегии игры.

Немногие внесли в развитие шахмат значительный вклад, но еще меньше великих шахматистов сумели поведать о достигнутых ими шахматных тайнах своим потомкам. Петросян сделал в этом направлении многое. И хотя, может быть, объем написанного им не так велик, но на этих страницах излагаются основы и суть шахмат. Конечно, эта книга — не традиционный учебник и не пособие, которое может научить играть в шахматы, поднять квалификацию играющего. Она выполняет другую, гораздо более важную функцию — учит думать, а еще точнее, учит тому, как надо думать (Разр. ред.), так как шахматное мышление само по себе не всегда бывает эффективным. Поэтому, прочитав лекции и статьи и восприняв мысли Тиграна Вартановича по поводу самых разнообразных шахматных проблем, читатель сможет понять, почему этот шахматист выбирал то или иное продолжение, как, на основе каких законов, не всегда уловимых, делался тот или иной ход, какие внешне скрытые динамические силы взаимодействуют на шахматной доске в течение партии. Петросян владел искусством создавать на доске гармоничные, полные жизни позиции, в которых, может быть, отсутствие внешней динамики компенсировалось колоссальной внутренней энергией (где мельчайшее изменение тут же учитывалось в общей, не всегда понятной сопернику стратегии), и доступно объяснить, как ему удалось это сделать.
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I wish to express my deep gratitude:

to the World Champion Garry Kasparov who has kindly supplied this book with a lively and honest introduction;

to Grandmaster Eduard Gufeld whose article on my late husband is included in the book;

to Eduard Shektman who has worked a lot to collect the material and to prepare it for publishing.

I am especially grateful to Grandmaster Arnold Denker for his tremendous effort in editing an otherwise “Russian” English text to make it acceptable; without his great contribution this book would have no moral rights of being published in English.

RONA PETROSIAN
His Chess World
GARY KASPAROV

The creative work of a great chessplayer, and especially that of a World Champion, never loses its importance. It always represents a new page in chess history, because each world champion has made a particular contribution to the royal game, while on his way to the peak. Looking through these pages will make it possible for you to determine rather exactly, based upon our knowledge of the classics, when, where, and most importantly who has contributed the most fruitful ideas that have helped to determine a new direction in the development of our game. What these new facts have added to our understanding of the game only time will tell.

Tigran Petrosian’s creative work has not yet been investigated as thoroughly as one would wish. The amount of time that has passed since his early death is too limited. Gone is the chessmaster who had so much to give to the chess world, one who often brought us simple and even trivial facts that comprise the true fundamentals of chess creativity. The simplicity of explanations shown in this book demonstrates the depths of Petrosian’s approach to chess. It is a consequence of the clarity of his thought and unique comprehension of global chess problems, as well as the subtleties that go to make up chess tactics and strategy.

Few chessplayers have made a considerable contribution to the development of our game, and very few are able to explain these discovered secrets to posterity. Petrosian has done much in this field. Perhaps his written works are not so voluminous, but they shed a strong light on the very essence and fundamentals of chess. This book is not a traditional textbook or manual which teaches elementary rules. The function and role of this book is of much greater importance: it teaches chess thinking or more exactly how one should think, because chess thinking by itself is not necessarily effective.

Therefore when you read these articles and lectures and begin to absorb Petrosian’s ideas about various chess problems, you will understand why he has chosen a certain continuation. How, based upon which rules he sometimes chose a very subtle continuation. He also explains some of the hidden dynamic forces that operate
over the board during a game. Petrosian is a master of the art of creating harmonious, and vivid chess positions, which on occasion lacked an open-to-eye dynamics. But this fact was compensated for by an enormous inner energy. The slightest change was immediately taken into account by his general strategy, which was not always comprehended by his opponent. In addition he has that rare quality of being able to explain his methods to the reader.

When I read this manuscript I first turned my attention to the ideas which were considered most important by Petrosian himself. Although I have been playing chess for many years I found that there were some valuable ideas for my personal use. That is one of the great charms of chess: that you invariably will meet something unexpected even when you are intuitively acquainted with similar problems from previous practice. Sometimes the clear understanding for “what has happened” may come quite suddenly. Thus when you read these lectures you will discover something new every time.

Of course it is difficult for me to give a detailed survey of all the views and beliefs of the ninth world champion. Supposedly many of you are familiar with some of the new ideas introduced by him. His many positional exchange sacrifices, his virtuosity in defense, his foresight to positional danger, and his ability in exploiting subtle positional maneuvers which seem to have no important role, but suddenly become decisive. It is this harmony of seemingly incompatible elements of chess strategy that help us to understand Petrosian’s enormous practical strength, and his deep penetration into the secrets of chess.

Just as in nature there is also a great harmony in chess. No matter what we do, whether it is sacrificing material, creating weak points in our opponent’s camp, or just eliminating our own weak points, the main purpose is to achieve a harmony in our own position and a disharmony in our opponents. It is this feeling of positional harmony that Petrosian explains in detail in his instructive notes. These notes are not overloaded with tedious variations, but full of fresh ideas and their instructive explanations. Step by step, with only those variations that are absolutely necessary, he leads the reader to an understanding of his general views on chess.

Over the years we have come to associate quite a number of new opening systems with Petrosian, namely systems rather than mere innovations in well known lines. In this respect the book, especially the chapters, “Rely but Verify,” “Information and Objectivity,” “Judgments are Changing,” “An Opening for One’s Taste,”
or “Why I like to Play Bg5” will prove invaluable. He teaches us to approach chess more creatively, which is particularly important nowadays when it is so difficult to find one’s way in an ocean of theoretical novelties and opening ideas. His treatment of opening problems allows an experienced reader to find his way in the boundless flood of opening strategy, and to work out one’s own lines to be followed when seeking better practical results.

The harmony of Petrosian’s creativity in chess is represented by a fine alloy of the theoretical and the practical. The theoretical foundation was deeply connected with practice. He had a profound feeling for methods which would enable him to reach his purpose, and for additional resources which could serve up the perfect solution.

At the start of my chess career I was fortunate in coming under Petrosian’s protection. We met over the board for the first time in my first International tournament in Banjaluka 1949. Quite naturally we spoke a lot, analyzed together, and discussed our games. During these conversations, not always devoted to chess, I derived much which later proved very useful when playing at a higher level. His deep philosophical approach to life as well as chess has served me well both on and off the chessboard.

In all we played five games together, and in all of them I had White. The first in 1979 was a short draw that was quite rich in content. The remaining four games were wins for one side or another, and all of them were great events in my life. At first I lost twice, but later on I won twice thus evening the score. I think that without those first two losses I never would have been able to even the score. What’s more I never would have been able to achieve my later successes! His original decisions, his mastery of defense, where he found paradoxical possibilities forced me to reappraise my own thinking. When these losses occurred in 1981, I was already a strong grandmaster. During the post-mortem analysis I found that Petrosian’s positional judgment was considerably deeper than my own. In one of these games, after lengthy discussions I did manage to finally prove a point. However in the second game with Petrosian’s daring King maneuver in the center of the board (which amazed everyone and most of all me) which had such a deep motivation that I failed to find anything but drawing possibilities after days of study. Games of this kind are most instructive, and offer one invaluable practical experience. For those who will never enjoy the pleasure of meeting Petrosian at the chessboard, will never listen to his lectures or reminiscences I can only add I am truly sorry.
This book is a truly creative modern work. Some ideas herein, especially those about certain opening lines have become obsolete; however the common sense of these lectures is still a treasure for those who want to study chess properly.

This book will be especially useful for those who teach, because I feel that nothing can be more valuable than simple and unpretentious words told by a great master about specific features of chess positions. This Tigran Vartanovich Petrosian has accomplished masterfully in this book. My mind will not permit me to believe that this book is Petrosian’s testament. Memories of our meetings and talks are still quite fresh in my mind. I know how strongly he felt about communicating his knowledge to those who would follow him. That is why this first step is so important to all chess lovers. Like in all fields of human activity the preservation of accumulated knowledge is vital to those who come after. Petrosian understood this only too well, and I’m sure that nothing would please him more than to know that his legacy has been of help to our young players in their attempts to discover the secrets of chess.
Compiler’s Preface

The ninth world chess champion Tigran Vartanovich Petrosian died in the prime of his life. In his last years he worked long over his games, annotating them and arranging them in order. He lectured in the chess school for juniors run by his sport society “Spartacus,” as well as on TV. Because of his untimely death he failed to collect his works for a book.

All major articles written by him are represented in this book. Fourteen lessons dealing with all stages of the chess game. His unique comprehension of chess, his vivid thought and bright exposition of what might at first seem common, give us a fresh look at many well known situations. His early theoretical works were lectures on opening strategy, “Rely but Verify,” “Information and Objectivity,” “Judgments are Changing,” “An Opening for One’s Taste,” or “Why I Like to Play Bg5.” They appeared in “64,” the Soviet Chess Magazine. Later in an old issue of “Chess in the USSR,” his article “From the Past” was discovered. “Chessmaster goes to the Blackboard” was published by “Chess Moscow” bulletin. The semi-final candidates match in 1971 was the basis for the article called “In Home Analysis and at the Board.” Many players find it difficult playing against a particular opponent. In his article “Problem of the Uncomfortable Opponent” written for the USSR Central Chess Club he brilliantly handles this subject based on the two games played in 1978. In a TV lecture he talked about his views on strategy and tactics in a sharp line of the Nimzo-Indian. The article, “Ever Actual Ideas” came to light after his death. In 1982 he read the lecture, “Positional Exchange Sacrifice” to the Chess Culture University of Tiflis. After many years due to the efforts of his wife Rona, the tapes became available, so one of his best performances has escaped oblivion. The theoretical article, “Petrosian Variation” on an important line in the King’s Indian is rare too. It has never appeared in Russian, and has only recently turned up in the Champion’s notes.

The article is highly complicated and instructive. In many lectures, interviews, publications, one can find Petrosian’s opinions about beauty in chess. We have compiled them in the concluding article, “Fascination of Novelty.” In the beginning of 1987 with the help of TV sound and cameramen, I was able to restore the texts of two more lectures, “Chess Technique,” and “Teach and Learn” I hope these discoveries will not be our last.

EDWARD SHEKTMAN
Tigran Petrosian with wife Rona in 1967

Tigran Petrosian during a lecture, 1968
Piatgorsky Cup, Los Angeles, 1963.
Standing left to right, Gligoric, Olafsson, Najdorf, Petrosian, Reshevsky, Keres and Panno.

Opposite page:
Top: Petrosian and Robert Byrne, 1974
Bottom: Petrosian during a seance, 1980
Why have I become a chessplayer? This is a difficult question. One looks back after many years trying to realize which circumstances most influenced one’s choice of profession, and still one hesitates, to answer. I grew up in Tiflis in a family of laborers and attended an Armenian school. I remember being younger than my classmates, and that I could already read and write when I first came to school. Quite early I played table games like checkers and backgammon. However the atmosphere at home and at school did not evoke a liking for chess. Perhaps some inborn predisposition to this ancient game existed in me. I remember I wished to approach its secrets in any way possible, even just visually while the elders played. But it was all in vain. At last in the summer of 1940, I went to a pioneer campus and there a friend taught me the moves. After some months I attended the newly opened Tiflis Palace of Pioneers and became acquainted with the different sections. As a dreamy 11 year-old I decided to attend the first section I saw. It was the section for young railwaymen. That was my first and last visit to that section. Later on I saw an adult chessplayer playing simultaneously against many children. Very probably this unusual scene influenced my final decision. I began to study earnestly. My parents were totally against this choice, and my father especially. When he saw that I did not intend to abandon my chess he used to say, “Learn my boy, since chess will never earn you your daily bread.”

In time my chess connections became closer and closer, and at the same time I managed to please my father by getting excellent marks at school. During the war it became very hard for me, when both my parents died. Nevertheless by age 16 I was already strong enough to win the republican championship of Georgia for adults. In 1946 I moved to Armenia, it was the idea of a chess veteran named Andranik Akopian. I there took part in the republican championship and won. Later on, in the autumn of that year I won a match for the republican championship against one of the strongest masters, Henrik Kasparian. The next three years I spent in Erevan, Armenia where I made many good friends. However it soon became clear to me that I would have to move to a great chess centre if I were to progress further. Such a centre was undoubtedly Moscow. In 1949 I moved to Moscow after obtaining the right to play in my first USSR final. This was a big decision, for there are always many problems for any young man when moving to a strange city. Now after many years have gone by I want to take this opportunity to thank the managers of the “Spartacus” who helped me so much in adapting to my new environment. I will never forget their many kindnesses. In Moscow I made many new friends, and my life became even more firmly connected to chess. At first I did not notice any great progress in my play, however in 1951 I had a stormy take-off winning the Moscow championship. This was then followed by coming first in Sverdlovsk, in the semi-final of the USSR championship against an exceptionally strong field. Moreover I almost managed the same in the final, where the title finally went to Keres. However my tie for second place with Geller was very important for my future since it enabled me to participate in the Interzonal tournament. After that I traveled abroad
many times representing the Soviet Union and my people in Armenia, not only as a chessplayer, but also as a Soviet Citizen. I will never forget my first meeting with the Armenians of Argentina. It was in 1954 when we played a friendly match — USSR vs. Argentina. I was invited by the leaders of the Armenian community to visit my local brothers-in-tribe. It happened that this meeting was held during working hours so I was very surprised to see some 1500 in the audience. They were extremely eager not to miss a single word because I was the first Armenian to visit Argentina from the far off Soviet Union. Among my listeners were those, who, influenced by Western Media, believed that minor nations in our country do not have the right to their own language in schools or in their literature, as well as the right to their own national history and culture. I am glad that I represented my republic of Soviet Armenia. They asked me to read the messages in Armenian from the audience as well as to write something in Armenian. Some might think such questions were funny, but I did what they asked. One of my answers still seems very good. I was asked if we have school texts in Armenian. I could have simply said “Yes.” Instead I said, “Armenian is an official language in the Armenian Republic, it is a language of school books, and even laws.” They accepted my answer with much enthusiasm.

The Interzonal Tournament, the Grandmaster title, my first Candidates Tournament, all these looked insurmountable. No wonder I had no great hopes when taking part in all those powerful events. I could not even dream of becoming world champion. In addition there were quite a number of critical remarks about my chess style that affected me so strongly that I began to think of abandoning chess. It was during this low period in my life that a prominent journalist, Ashot Arzumanian, came to see me. He wanted to discuss his book about Russian-Armenian cultural relations. We became friends and I told him of my doubts, as well as my future plans. His answer was the following, “Abandoning chess proves nothing. You must play and win. This is the only possible proof.” Beside these words of an experienced man I had another great insight. I visited Armenia and met my old friends whom I had not seen for five years. They had followed my career, and simply insisted that I go on to new heights. Due to this encouragement and confidence I was aroused to work harder than ever to prove them right.

Years of hard work followed. There were many competitions, tournaments, many happy moments especially that one in 1963 when I defeated Botvinnik and became world champion. In those days I felt that all my Armenia lived for chess. This moral support was very, perhaps decisively important for victory over such a chess giant as Botvinnik. Besides these events directly connected with chess, another significant thing took place. I met Georph Brutian, the philosopher. Under his guidance, and due to his insistence I completed my post graduate studies and obtained my bachelor degree defending my thesis on the logic of chess thought.

Sooner or later one’s life comes to the unpleasant moment when one loses his title. Such a moment happened in my life too. When a world champion loses his title, this blow comes as a mighty stroke against his self respect as a man as well as a sportsman. Strange to tell I passed this moment rather quietly. Now when I recall all the details of that 1969 match, as well as my state of mind after that match, and when I
think of the possible reasons for that calm attitude to this enormous trial, I come to the conclusion that I never treated chess as an instrument for achieving great sporting success. For me the most important thing was the inner contents of the fight, the inner state of the two opponents at the board. That is why, when I was defeated by another chessplayer and chess intellectual, I realized it was impossible to fight against time. In chess as in life years pass, and the time comes when one must make way for one's younger, and perhaps more progressive opponent. And my consolation was the fact that, even in losing, I won several beautiful games.

Thus the title was lost. How does one now go on living? I think it is not a problem. One should simply play again and not dwell on the past, and that is what I did. Many years have passed since my defeat — namely ten, but I still take part in great chess events. In these years I won the Soviet Championship twice (this is the most coveted title for our players aside from the world championship). At least now on the eve of my fiftieth birthday, I can say surely that my chess career is not over. I shall go on playing and fighting.

What I find most important now is proof of my chess beliefs in contests against players of different generations and different creative views. Modern chess has entered a new stage of development, a stage which could possibly be called "Practical." This unfortunately has happened because the practical approach has been preached at every crossroad. Results play the leading role now. The creative side has become less important than winning, and most unfortunate of all the primary thing is "not to lose."

I have said repeatedly that the sporting result, has never been my primary factor in chess. Now although it has become more difficult for me to produce first class chess, I try to preach (particularly to the young upcoming players) the creative side in order to point out its primary role. The creative principle which has made chess a world game which has survived and blossomed through centuries. A game that enabled chessplayers to create masterpieces belonging to the treasury of human lore. I am an adept of this kind of chess, and I wish those young men who devote themselves to this game should first discover its creative side. I wish them to consider chess a creative activity which brings great pleasure to millions because of its aesthetic satisfaction. As for victories, they will follow of their own accord as night follows day.
My first serious chess book was "The Chess Practice" by A. Nimzowich. I enjoyed analyzing games and positions for a long time without the use of a chessboard. No wonder that I finally knew the book word for word. There are special exercises intended to develop one's calculation technique, but I did not realize it at the time. Not that I ever complained that I calculate badly, but I feel this technique of reading chess books without a board, and going from diagram to diagram has helped me greatly. You might want to try this when a problem or study has caught your attention. First to formulate your own opinion about the position, then think it over again, and if necessary, ask someone for advice.

Between ages 13-15 I played a lot of blindfold chess. My regular opponent was Victor Bravinsky, the permanent champion of the Pioneer's Palace. In the summer of 1941 his family was evacuated from Kharkov to Tiflis. When we became friends we were both in the 4th category, but later on he outstripped all his comrades and soon was literally the king of our chess section.

I have very few nice early memories, but among them is the friendly circle of the Tiflis Pioneer's Palace. Near the end of 1941, Master Ebralidze became its leader. He was an extremely kind man who was most sympathetic to children. Archil Silanovich Ebralidze was also the bearer of a rich chess culture. He was utterly devoted to chess, and worked hard and long to stimulate our interest in the hidden secrets of the game. Our friendly contacts with him in his "extra" times were especially useful. Our mentor lugged his enormous library to the Palace where he frequently analyzed with us. He not only permitted our presence, but insisted that we ask him about everything that caught our interest.

Ebralidze was adept at positional chess. He trusted the general strategic laws. When he thought a position did not allow "violence" he would sometimes work for hours to find a refutation of an attacking combination.

In his disputes with other masters, he fervently blamed those who acted against the principles of chess strategy. When he saw a failure to observe these principles his face became red and squeamish. However if weighty reasons for "violence" existed, and one was slow in forcing matters and thus lost, Achil was convinced that there must have been a tactical solution in the position. Perhaps it is worth adding that Ebralidze worshipped Nimzowich, Capablanca, and The Caro-Kann Defence. Page by page I read a lot of chess books. My favorite authors were Capablanca, Nimzowich and Lasker. I read their books and Reti's "Masters of the Chessboard" more often than other books. Then in November 1945, after four and a half years, I, an unknown boy, became a master candidate after winning many city and republic tournaments as well as the USSR Junior Championship. (A note from Petrosian's archives, "The participants of the Soviet Junior tournament ran over second hand book shops, and bragged about their findings no less than their point score." Compiler)

One day I dug into my old papers and scores of games from my youth. When you play against chess masters of reputation one's games become more or less widely known. But too little is known about the games of prominent players while they were growing up. These games allow us to trace one's creative development, and
study the way one’s chess personality develops during these formative years. In this respect I must say that youngsters of 16-18 should not be considered as a kind of raw material to be shaped to a particular mold. Experience has taught me that by then one already has a definite outlook and style, and those who go on to become world famous were already very strong.

Two games which follow were played by me when I was young. They show that even at this early age I acquired some fundamentals of chess strategy. Chess lessons taken in the Pioneers’ Palace proved to be very useful.

Petrosian – Sorokin
Slav Defence
Championship of Georgia
Tiflis, 1945

1. c2–c4
2. Nb1–c3
c7–c6
3. d2–d4
d7–d5
4. c4xd5

The exchange variations was favored by Ebralidze; no wonder that I followed his lines.

4. . . .
c6xd5
5. Ng1–f3
Nb8–c6
6. Bc1–f4
Bc8–f5
7. e2–e3
Qd8–b6

According to the best theoretical recommendations of 1945. Sorokin wished probably to test my knowledge of modern theoretical views.

8. a2–a3!

In Makogonov-Ravinsky (XIII USSR Championship, 1944) White introduced this novelty and won in a superb manner The game was awarded the brilliancy prize. I hold the following line in my memory:

8. . . .
Qxb2
9.
Na4
Qc2
10.
Qxc2
Bxc2
11.
Nc5
and
11.
b6 is bad
d7
because of 12. Bb5, so White has a strong pressure against the Q-side.

8. . . .
e7–e6
9. Bf1–d3

We learned quite well in our circle that the exchange of White-squared Bishops is favorable for Black in this pawn structure. A thesis about this fact was prepared by Buslaev, who later became a master, on commission by Ebralidze.

I hoped to make use of the black Queen’s position at b6, intending to play b2–b4 and Na4– with an initiative on the Q-side.

9. . . .
Bf5xd3
10. Qd1xd3
Ra8–c8
11. 0–0
Nc6–a5

Diagram 1

The plan with b2–b4 and Nc3–a4 is not so dangerous for Black now, because his Knight would, in his turn, go to c4. Nevertheless, Black’s idea has a serious flaw: he is “sitting on” with developing his K-side and castling.

I knew quite well already one of the important fundamentals of chess strategy: if one is back in his development his adversary should open the position in order to punish “the law breaker.”
12. e3–e4

I remember quite well that I was glad finding 12. . . . Qxb2 13. Bd2! with dangerous threats.

12. . . .
13. Nc3xe4
14. Bf4–g3
15. Qd3–d2

If Queens were exchanged the disadvantages of Black's position would no longer play any serious role and, at the same time, other considerations would gain much importance, namely: White squares would become good outposts and transit points for Black pieces.

15. . . .
16. Qd2–g5

The tension is rising. Black has obviously an upper hand on the Queenside; however, the war theater is much wider, and in the center, as well as on the Kingside, his affairs are not so bright.

Of course, there are no forced lines leading to White's win, but the summary evaluation of this position as favorable for White is without doubt. A brief account of tactical possibilities may prove this judgment. If 16. . . . Nxb2 17. Rbf1 is strong enough, and the pinned Knight brings Black an additional trouble.

If he tries to make an air-hole for his King: 16. . . . f6, White obtains a fixed target — the pawn e6 (17. Qg4, and 17. . . . Kf7 is bad because of 18. Ng5+).

16. . . .
17. Qg5–g4
18. Qg4–g5

Black has protected the square g6 and intends now f7–f6 followed by earnest actions on the Queenside.

19. Ra1–e1

This simple move, which adds another piece to the operating forces, demonstrates that Black's situation is not bright. The threat is 20. Qxd5 exd 21. Nf6+ Kd8 22. Re8 mate; or 19. . . . f6 20. Qxd5 exd 21. Nc5+ and 22. Nxb3.

19. . . .
20. Nf3–d2
21. f2–f4

This pawn works like a ram, devastating Black's feeble fortifications which stand in the way of White's major pieces.

21. . . .
22. Qg5xh5
23. Qh5–f3
24. Qf3–f2
25. f4–f5
26. Qf2xf5

Diagram 2

A picturesque position. White's centralized army develops an utmost energy.

26. . . .
27. Kg1–h1

The pawn f7 cannot be defended. If 27. . . . Qg7, the thematic blow 28. Qxd5 follows. It was a good time for dropping the curtain.

28. Qf5xf7+
29. Nd2–f3

— 6 —
30. Bg3–e5  Qh8–h7
31. Qf7xh7  Rh6xh7
32. Be5xb2  Rc8–c2
33. Bb2–d4  Be7xa3
34. Nf3–e5+  Kd7–d8
35. Ne4–g5  Rh7–h5
36. Ng5xe6+  Kd8–e7
37. Ne5–g6+  Ke7–d6
38. Ng6–f4  Nd5xf4

Dunaev – Petrosian
Sicilian Defence
The All-Union Junior Tournament
Leningrad, 1946

1. e2–e4  c7–c5
2. Ng1–f3  d7–d6
3. d2–d4  c5xd4
4. Nf3xd4  Ng8–f6
5. Nb1–c3  e7–e6
6. Bf1–e2  a7–a6
7. a2–a4  Bf8–e7

From the “theoretically correct” point of
view, the handling of the opening by both
opponents could certainly be criticized.
For example, the move of a2–a4 would
raise no applause as it weakens the b4
square, particularly when Black can de-
velop his Knight via c6. However this opi-
nion is everchanging.

Were this game played some 15 years
later, it would probably go the following way:
7. . . . Nc6  8. Nb3 (intending 9. a5)
8. . . . Na5.
8. Bc1–e3  Qd8–c7
9. Nc3–d4  b7–b6
10. f2–f4  Bc8–b7
11. Be2–f3  Nb8–d7
12. 0–0  Ra8–c8

Could Black foresee the events to come,
he would play 12. . . . Rb8. Without the
advance of the KN pawn White cannot

proceed, so Black should be ready to play
Nd7–c5 in order to give a place for his other
Knight. As the pawn e4 will be attacked and
d6–d5 is impossible, it is quite probable
that White will take the Knight, and this ex-
change will block the QB file.

This consideration could help Black’s
thinking of positioning the Rook on the QN
file where it really belongs.

13. g2–g4  Nd7–c5
14. Nb3xc5  b6xc5
15. g4–g5  Nf6–d7
16. a4–a5  . . .

White, quite probably, does not realize in
full how many attacking possibilities his K-
side pawn avalanche has given him. If he
did not like 16. f5 (because of 16. . . . Ne5),
he could consider the move 16. Bg4.

16. . . .  Rc8–b8
17. Qd1–d2  Bb7–c6
18. Nc3–a4  Rb8–b4

Both sides were obviously agreed about
Qc3, followed by 21. Qxg7, as favorable for
White.

19. b2–b3  Rb4xe4

20. c2–c4 . . .
White will give any price, but the King Bishop for the daring Rook.

20. . . . h7–h6
21. g5–g6? . . .
The correct continuation was 21. Nc3 Rxe3 22. Qxe3 hxg 23. fxg Ne5 24. Bxc6+ Qxc6 with complicated play.

21. . . . f7–f5
22. Na4–c3 Nd7–f6!
Obviously enough, the powerful Black center will smash White's position when being set into motion.

23. Bf3xe4 f5xe4
24. Ra1–d1 d6–d5
25. c4xd5 e6xd5
26. f4–f5 d5–d4
27. Be3–f4 Qc7–c8
28. Nc3–e2 Qc8xf5
29. Bf4–g3 Qf5xg6
30. Ne2–f4 Qg6–f5
31. Qd2–c2 g7–g5
32. Nf4–e2 d4–d3
White resigned.
Recently it has become fashionable to believe that communications between juniors and outstanding grandmasters is all that is needed to solve our current deficit of young talent. The growth of those who will one day take our place is lately considered impossible without a permanent guardianship of tutors. Nevertheless, I wish to state firmly that many of our best grandmasters, including me, have grown up in the war and post-war years, when everybody had to study on his own. Lately, I have begun to look back at those years, in an effort to understand how I penetrated the huge ambush of chess openings. Eventually blind belief in the printed word gave way to a critical approach. Slowly my opening creed was being formed, and soon I was able to foretell what other players were preparing for me. It is well known in master circles that the best, if not the only way of perfecting one’s play is by studying and appraising master games. The opening stages of a chess game is no exception.

How to open a chess game? What is opening theory and how do we learn it? These are not idle questions for those who aspire to success in chess. Long ago when a player came to the chessboard he did not hesitate regarding the handling of the opening, relying on his general skill to decide.

Now I should like to address myself to those readers who are more advanced in chess strategy and tactics. To them I wish to speak about many of my experiences both happy and sad. I have had plenty of both in my long chess career.

Do not be surprised when you see complete games here rather than just opening lines. Quite naturally to study opening lines without any connection to middle game ideas, is like separating the head from the body. Nowadays there are many books and periodicals devoted to chess openings. Some of them use common traditional language, some explain facts by means of symbols seemingly borrowed from evil magicians whose aim is drying up the vital living elements in chess. Yes, there is the notorious! etc., but they will never be a substitute for “a remarkable move” or “a truly wonderful idea.”

One who takes chess seriously should look systematically through lots of games from various competitions. It enables one to get a feeling of the pulse of chess thought, as well as a look at the world of chess ideas. It may also become a starting point for detailed analyses when necessary. In this way one develops a stock of ideas and variations for future use.

Here is what could be called one of the most striking examples: the game Averbach–Estrin, 1964.

A very sharp and interesting line of the Queen’s Gambit, so called “Vienna Variation,” arises after

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6
3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Nf3 Bb4
5. Bg5 dxc6 6. e4 c5

Avoiding wild complications which are in fact the heart of the whole line (7. e5 cxd5 8. Qa4+ Nc6 9. 0–0–0 Bd7), White discovered in course of time a more or less quiet way which promised a little but lasting advantage after

7. Bxc4 cxd5 8. Nxd4
In 1946 V. Ragozin invented the new move 8... Qc7 which passed testing in time; the main line considered to be 


Yuri Averbach, then a young master, found in the same year (1946) a remarkable idea which refutes Black’s plan. He kept his novelty secret for a good 18(!) years, until master Yakov Estrin was caught by it in the semi-final at the XXXII USSR Championship.

8... Qc7 9. Qb3! Bxc3+ 10. Qxc3

Black would still hold himself at the edge of an abyss. Nevertheless he played 10... Nxe4, and after 11. Nb5 Qc5 12. Qxg7! it became obvious that the check at f2, which seemed “Killing,” was in fact a pin prick whereas White’s threats were in fact irresistible! The final was very short:


and Black resigned.

Significantly enough, Estrin the loser in this story, is representative of a strong group of opening experts whose chief contribution to theory has been, as a rule, a detailed study and accumulation of novelties invented by others. This sin occurs often among young players. No wonder the temptation is so great for a less experienced player to blindly follow the testimony of a so-called expert, particularly when it usually helps his tournament scores. In addition most of these novelties are usually connected with famous names.
that young players try to emulate. Nevertheless such imitation may become a habit which not only hampers one's development, but serves as a red light on the road to real improvement.

I had great luck in 1944 when I was 15. In the Championship of Georgia I met V. Mikenas, a very experienced master. I was young with a tremendous memory, and absorbed chess books like a sponge. In Tiflis where I was born, grew up, and more or less formed as a player, my knowledge could not be thoroughly assessed.

And then — the game against Mikenas, one of the very few masters who adopted the Alekhine Defence. I was not confused: I owned a copy of the tournament book "The X USSR Championship," by G. Lissitsyn, and notes to the opening of the game Panov vs I. Rabinovich sounded like Requiem Aeternam to the Alekhine Defence:

1. e4 Nf6 2. e5 Nd5
3. d4 d6 4. Nf3 Bg4
5. h3! (Oh, these exclamation marks!) They are like a rust which corrodes the credulous soul of an amateur, depriving him of the critical approach to others' judgments.
5. . . . Bxf3 6. Qxf3 dxe
7. dxe e6 8. a3


8. . . . c6

Forced under the circumstances, if 8. . . . Nd7, then 9. c4 N5b6 10. Qxb7 Nxe5 11. Qe4 — Lissitsyn concluded.

Supplied by ammunition up to my teeth (so I thought), relying upon theoretical recommendations by the renowned master, I cheerfully performed all the moves from his analyses up to 8. a3 Nd7 9. c4. Mikenas replied, according to position rather than theory: 9. . . . Ne7, and I realized I had met something completely unknown to me.

Diagram 7

Now you may, of course, read — in "The Alekhine Defence" by Bagirov — that in a game, played in Moscow in 1943, 10. Qxb7 c6! 11. b4 a5 12. Bb2 Nc5! followed with advantage to Black. White pieces were led by Khachaturov, and Black . . . have you guessed by whom? . . . by Mikenas.

I did not know it by then. The effect of the unexpected was so devastating that I managed to proceed a little over the 20th move.

So far as I remember, I considered this episode as an accidental affair and, years later, playing White again — and with Mikenas again — entered another theoretical duel. That time, I blindly believed another theoretician — Master R. Romanovsky. In the Grunfeld Defence, the following Queen check was a matter of fashion then: (1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5 4. Nf3 Bg7) 5. Qa4+

Analyzing master games, Romanovsky said, that after 5. . . . Bd7 6. Qb3 dxc
7. Qxc4 0–0 8. e3 (8 . . . Be6 deserves attention, and if 9. Qa4, then may be the immediate c7–c5. However, White can play. 9. Qb4, attacking the pawn b7, and 9 . . . Nc6 can be daringly met by the capture 10. Qxb7).

Diagram 8

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I duly checked consequences of capture at b7 and came to the conclusion that it was really favorable for White. After exchanging opinions with my friends I came to the tournament room, ready for “daring capture at b7”.

But Mikenas outwitted me again. He played 9 . . . Qc8, depriving me of the capturing possibility. I shall remember my whole life how my poor Queen wandered over the board after Nb8–c6, again and again, threatened by Black pawns and pieces.

The last drop which overfilled the vessel of my blind belief in a printed word was the game Petrosian versus Averbach from the semi-final of the USSR Championship of 1947.

The Marshall Attack in the Ruy Lopez was then an accidental quest, and the more 11 . . . c6 (after 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6


But I, oh yes, I was a “connoisseur” in the field of opening theory. I remembered an analysis from a chess magazine of 1938 concerning a game Alexander versus Milner-Barry. After 11 . . . c6 12. d4 Bd6 13. Re1 Qh4 14. g3 Qh3 there was a recommendation 15. Re4 with a brief analysis to prove it was favorable for White.

Diagram 9

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No wonder, that I played 15. Re4, and, all of a sudden, 15 . . . g5 followed,—I lost!

The events resulted in the conclusion that recommendations of wise theoreticians are dangerous, therefore in the tournaments that followed I acted according to the Russian proverb, “Measure seven times before cutting once.”

Of course these stories are by no means an appeal to throw away your chess library. I simply suggest you be more prudent and cautious, and refrain from blind worship of wise books written by prominent players. And that also includes me!
The art of opening preparation is one of the components of high level chess masterpiece. One may well argue which factor is most important in building one's opening repertoire, but it is a certainty that two factors are of vital importance. These are an exhaustive information about the games you have played, and the necessary objectivity in critically analyzing them. Negation of either of these principles undermines the foundation upon which your chess success depends.

I have already told about disappointments which caught me when I had a childish belief in books and in myself. However experience, acquired in the course of time, does not always become a shield which protects you from opening disasters. Even the most renowned grandmasters had bitter disappointments in their careers, caused by ignorance and loss of common sense.

In 1941, a competition was held known as a "Match Tournament for the Absolute Championship of the USSR." The only (and probably the last) chess tournament, under a pretentious title borrowed from boxing, was played by six of the strongest Soviet players: Botvinnik, Keres, Smyslov, Boleslavsky, Bondarevsky, and Lilienthal.

Chess players were not Elo-rated then; however, the public had quite a clear understanding of the relative strengths of leading world players, those who had the moral right of challenging the world champion, Alekhine, for the title. Botvinnik and Keres were undoubtfully the most deserving challengers. No wonder that everybody expected a hard fight for the first place between these two grandmasters in the tournament of 1941. In fact they won the first two prizes, but the expected close race never took place, mainly because the following game was played in round 3:

**Keres – Botvinnik**

*The Nimzo-Indian Defence*

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6
3. Nc3 Bb4 4. Qc2 d5
5. cxd exd 6. Bg5 h6
7. Bh4 c5 8. 0–0–0 Bxc3
9. Qxc3 g5 10. Bg3 cxd
11. Qxd4 Nc6 12. Qa4 Bf5
13. e3 Rc8 14. Bd3 Qd7
15. Kb1 Bxd3+ 16. Rxd3 Qf5
17. e4 Nxe4 18. Kc1 0–0
19. Rd1 b5 20. Qxb5 Nd4
White resigned.

A terrible defeat (for White!) at the hands of the main rival at the beginning of a tournament can destroy one. Through whose fault? Maybe Mkenas? The Lithuanian master, old friend of Keres, playing White against Botvinnik a few months before the above game, in the USSR Championship, castled Queenside, too — and won. There happened 8. . . . 0–0 9. dxc Bxc3
10. Qxc3 g5 11. Bg3 Ne4 12. Qa3 Be6
13. f3 Nxf3 14. hxg Qf6, and after
15. e3 Rc8 16. Kb1 Nd7 17. Ne2 Rxc5
with a difficult position for Black.

It would be a naive though to admit that this game did not bother Botvinnik, because the Nimzo-Indian was then, perhaps, the central part of his opening repertoire.

Could it be that Keres unluckily missed the game Belavenets versus Simagin from the Moscow Championship 1941, where Black had groped for weak points in White's configuration, whereas Botvinnik, according to his own words, "saw the game
Belavenets-Simagin, where Sima gin made the first two moves of the proper plan.

The finesse of Black’s play, in the refined version by Botvinnik, consists of three moves: 1) 8. . . . Bxc3, eliminating the Knight which blocked the QB file and (in cooperation with Bh4 and Rd1) developed the pressure along the Q file; 2) 9. . . . g5, putting end to the pin of Nf6; 3) 10. . . . cxd, gaining an important tempo for development of the Q-side minor pieces.

Very likely not one of the outstanding grandmasters were aware of the evolution of chess thinking that was taking place. Only Botvinnik, who gave all his attention and analytical skill to this problem was handsomely rewarded by victories already in the opening phase, against some of the greatest players of modern times.

Another example. In the World Championship Match of 1954, Botvinnik played White against Smyslov in the Nimzo-Indian Defence:

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6
3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e3 b6
5. Ne2 Ba6 6. a3 Be7
7. Nf4 d5 8. cxd Bxf1
9. Kxf1 exd

Diagram 10

10. g4! c6 11. g5 Nfd7
12. h4 Bd6 13. e4 dxe
14. Nxe4 Bxf4 15. Bxf4 0–0
16. h5 Re8 17. Nd6

with a great advantage to White soon transformed into win.

Everybody praised Botvinnik’s idea loudly, but I, at the same time, tried to discover a predecessor — and did it without much effort. In 1951, in an international tournament (New York) a master played the same idea, but in a less lucky version, against R. Fine (he included the move 10. Qf3, “forcing” 10. . . . c6 which was in fact useful for Black).

A more sophisticated method seems to be, entering the laboratory of your opponents-to-be, trying to penetrate into his hidden thoughts to understand his motives for choosing one or another opening line. Often it remains an undiscovered secret: (why so-called theory does not connect with opening choices and estimations of the most renowned consumers,— the leading grandmasters).

When I prepared my opening strategy before my match against R. Fischer I made, quite naturally, a wide revision of my rather voluminous opening arsenal. I recalled I played time and again the Rubinstein Variation of the French Defence. Looking over Fischer’s games, I found that he, as White, met this rather solid system rarely. One of his few (and-chronologically-last) games on the subject was his encounter with master N. Minev (the Chess Olympiad at Habana, 1966). After

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5
3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Bg5 dxe
5. Nxe4 Be7 6. Bxf6 gxf

A reasonable question: why White plays 8. g3 rarely? Maybe it is a novelty? By no means! In the Match-Tournament, 1941, mentioned above, Smyslov adopted this continuation against Boleslavsky and won rather easily due to an advantage acquired namely in the opening.

Theoretical books duly confirmed that in 1932 (!), in Sliac, the correct way was demonstrated by S. Flohr (Black) against Opocensky:

7. g3 f5 8. Nc3 c6
11. Nf4 Qd6 12. Qe2 Nd7
13. 0–0–0 0–0–0 equalizing.

The evaluation of the final position is acceptable, but did Fischer choose this old continuation merely because he hoped his adversary was badly informed? Is it not too naive to rely upon Fischer's naivity?

Chessmen are set against, and slowly, move by move, I began replaying this, many times played through, line. Slowly,— as slowly as a pioneer-trooper with mine-finding devices crosses an area before writing a slogan "Booby-traps removed," following his inner feeling. And very soon I discovered.

Diagram 11

It took just a few seconds to make it clear that 10. d5! cxd 11. Nxd5 gives White a clear advantage. Later on I found that I had discovered nothing new. In 1957, the game Estrin versus Nikitin in the Moscow Championship went this way — and had been published in the Soviet chess yearbook.

In 1970, in the Interzonal Tournament at Palma-de-Mallorca a game was played which could raise a storm. It is hard to find another game where Fischer, with White, was in such a pitiful situation after just 12 moves:

Diagram 12

The Bishop d3 dissects White's position like a knife. And, as White's situation is very difficult, the natural question is: how could Fischer fall into such trouble?
The Sicilian Defence

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bb5 (Seems strange for Fischer, but he probably has something in mind)

3... g6 4. c3 Nf6
5. Qe2 Bg7 6. e5 Nd5
7. Qc4
This is a point: both Nd5 and pawn c5 are attacked.

7... Nc7 8. Bxc6
(8. Qxc5 can be met by 8... b6)
8... dxc 9. Qxc5 Qd3
10. Qe3 Bf5 11. Qxd3 Bxd3 and we have come to the diagrammed position.

Is it naivety that caused Fischer's hunting after the pawn? Or maybe he had found something "against books"? Let us have a look. What was the last word of theory then? Of course, it was the book "Caro-Kann bis Sizilianisch" by Boleslavsky, edited in Berlin in 1968. On page 451, the first 5 moves of this line are given, then 6. 0-0 follows, and after move 9 Boleslavsky says: "White has more space, but Black's position is solid." But what if White is not satisfied with such a course? Can he try other, more promising ways?

Yes, Boleslavsky gives 6. e5 Nd5 7. Qc4 but he says that White's aspirations of winning a pawn are not legal as he is not developed enough for such an action. He suggests, as a refutation, 7... Qb6 8. d4 d6 "With a good game," continuing the line as follows: 9. exd exd 10. Qxd5 Qxb5 11. Qxd6 cxd 12. cxd Be6 13. Nc3 Qd3 14. Be3 Bf8 15. Qc7 Bd4 16. Rc1 0-0 with Black's strong attack.

What is wrong? Where is the corpse buried? Or does it not exist at all?

We discussed this problem with Igor Zaitsev (now a grandmaster) who, happily, did not suffer from routine thinking so characteristic or many strong grandmasters. Really, it was not easy to discover, that in the main line, after the 9th move, White should not use his Queen as just a pawn-eater. Rather he should play the simple 10. Qe2+.

Diagram 13

At a glance, this move may seem absurd, too. The White Queen wanders here and there having no proper business. But if we turn back from abstract theories to reality ("White plays so — Black plays so") we can discover that this check is poisonous, and Black is faced with uneasy problems. Trying to establish a bar along the K file loses a piece: 10... Be6 11. c4 or 10... Ne7 11. d5. Thus Black must accept that he is deprived of castling — an unpleasant fact under the circumstances.
JUDGMENTS ARE CHANGING

When one builds one's opening repertoire one should, as a rule, proceed from a critical comprehension of well-founded judgments. We have already seen that sometimes (e.g. in the games by Fischer discussed above) the way to truth sometimes depends on tactical finesses. Often (based on the fundamental rules of chess strategy) one fails to discover a proper tactical refutation of an opponent's plans, even though they may give occasion to consider them strategically dubious.

In the middle of the sixties, East-German chessplayers discovered and adopted the following method for White in one of the most investigated lines of the Queen Gambit Declined — the Tartakover-Makagonov-Bondarevsky system. Here is an example, chosen because of the fame of the player who had Black:

Malich–Spassky
the XVIII Olympiad
Lugano, 1968

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6
3. Nf3 d5 4. Bg5 Be7
5. Nc3 h6 6. Bh4 0–0
7. Rc1 b6 8. cxd Nxd5
9. Bxe7 Qxe7 10. Nxd5 exd
11. g3

White's idea becomes clear after this particular move; 11. e3 could lead to a mere transposition. Finachetto of White's King Bishop seems promising. The pawn e2 is kept on its initial position as long as possible. This not only saves time, but allows White to ignore Black's Queen bishop which could go to a6 as soon as the Bishop f1 goes to g2, thus preventing White from developing his K side. We should also note that the exchange of Queens after Qb4+ is in White's favor.

11. . . . Be6 12.Bg2 c5
13. Ne5

White prevents the Knight b8 from moving: if 13. . . . Nd7, then 14. Nxd7 gaining a pawn without any real compensation for Black. Spassky played 13. . . . Na6, and after 14. 0–0 Rac8 15. f4 he had to enter tactical complications, as otherwise his situation would be hard and unpromising: 15. . . . Bf5 16. Bxd5 with advantage to White.

Diagram 14

Thinking over this position, one can find the good-looking move 11. . . . Re8. Black attacks the pawn e2 hoping to force it to move.

12. Bg2 Ba6

The last two moves by Black are so natural that their worth is beyond any doubt. An experienced master, invited to the diagrammed position for the first time, would invariably suggest them. White has an argument in form of 13. Ne5.
Now it is clear that White has fulfilled his general plan. Black's trouble is his inability to complete, more or less normally, the development of his Q-side. The line 13. . . . Nd7 14. Rxc7 Qb4+ 15. Qd2 Nxe5 16. Qxb4 Nxd3+ followed by 17. . . . Nxb4, is rather transparent and can be easily refuted by 16. dxe Qxd2+ 17. Kxd2 AxeS with an obvious advantage to White. For another preparation move, say 13. . . . Qd6, Black has no time because of the simple reply 14. Qa4, not to say that it is not connected with 11. . . . Re8 and 12. . . . Ba6 logically.

As a result, Black met new troubles in the Tartakover-Makagonov-Bondarevsky system...

The arisen situation gives food to some abstract consideration about the motives behind the chess strategy. Is it so, that one of the most refractory systems for Black in the Queen's Gambit Declined is finally refuted? But why not? After all, White has not committed any real sin against the fundamentals of strategy. He has been taking care of his development, his positional ideas do not contradict the hidden tactical possibilities of the position. . . The only fact which claims our attention is that White has not yet castled. But Black cannot make use of it, and when necessary the White King is ready to run away to a safe exile, although its present position at e1 is perfectly safe.

And what about Black? He followed natural, normal paths, not blindly but rather with good reason. He castled and his pieces are developed to squares where they fulfill certain necessary functions. Which way is the right one? Is it possible (as often happens in similar situations) that the whole line suffers a serious crisis and Black should seek ways to oppose White's whole method of development?

In 1970, Grandmaster Uhlmann of DDR met (with White) one of the oldest Soviet masters, G. Veressov. To Uhlmann's bad luck — and the good luck to chess — Veressov belongs to the old chess guard; its representatives, even when they become old, play chess for a win of truth rather than a win of points.

This is how this position was explained to us by Veressov:

Hats off to the master who has managed to base this move on facts — the move which at a glance seems to be a rough blunder. When such a move is found by someone it is always a wonder why the whole idea has not come into one’s head — so fine and clever it is.

White seems to have a wide choice, but it is reduced to zero right away when you notice that 15. Rxd7 Qb4+ 16. Qd2, fails because of mate in one, and 16. Kf1 (with the idea 16. ... Qxb2 17. Bxd5 Rc1 18. Qxc1 Qxc1+ 19. Kg2, winning) is met by 16. ... Qxd4!!

Diagram 17

Now 17. Qxd4 is impossible due to 17. ... Rc1+. As well, 17. Rxd5 brings no good, at least because of 17. ... Qxd1+ 18. Rxd1 Rxe5. Finally, 17. Nd3 allows Black to fulfill his old dream — capturing 17. ... Rxe2! And who knows, whether Black would agree to a draw after 18. Kxe2 Bxd3+? 19. Qxd3 Re8+ or would play to win.

We still do not know whether the course of this game was quite a surprise for Uhlmann or, whether, he already knew the refutation, but thought Veressov would miss it.

I would rather guess that Uhlmann was completely surprised and upset, because after

15. Rxc8 Rxc8 16. 0–0 Nxe5
17. dxe Qxe5 18. Re1 d4
19. Qd2 Re8

he failed to achieve a draw, although the position was quite even.

****

This interesting discussion on creative problems finds a desirable continuation. The following couple of games may serve as supplementary material to Petrosian’s article. In the first game, he acts as a opponent (it was a brave decision, as his situation was critical. The 13th game of his quarter-final candidate’s match against the Hungarian grandmaster Lajos Portisch, in 1974, was started when the score was even, two winning points each, after an unlucky adjournment of the previous game when Petrosian had missed a draw).

Petrosian–Portisch
The Queen Gambit
(Notes by I. Zaitsev)

1. Ng1–f3  d7–d5
2. d2–d4  e7–e6
3. c2–c4  Ng8–f6
4. Bc1–g5  ...

This order of moves aims to restrict Black’s choice, e.g. to avoid the line 4.Nc3 c5
4. ...  Bf8–e7
5. Nb1–c3  0–0
6. Ra1–c1  ...

From this moment, Portisch began to think over his moves for a long time. Petrosian explained this mainly by the fact that Portisch himself liked this method against the Tartakover-Bondarevsky-Makagonov system.
6. ... h7-h6
7. Bg5-h4 b7-b6
8. c4xd5 Nf6xd5
9. Nc3xd5 e6xd5
10. Bg5xe7 Qd8xe7
11. g2-g3 ...

This was intended when 6. Rc1 had been played.

11. ... Bc8-a8

In Uhlmann-Veressov (match DDR versus Bielorussia, 1971) Black made White’s plan dubious after 11. ... Re8 12. Bg2 Ba6 13. Ne5 Nd7 14. Rxc7 Rac8. But, of course, the opening theory has done a good step forward since then.

12. e2-e3 c7-c5
13. Bf1xa8 ...

After 13. dxc bxc 14. Qxd5 Bb7 15. Qd1 Qf6 16. Bg2 Rd8 Black stands better. If 15. Qh5 (instead of 15. Qd1), then 15. ... Qe4 and 16. ... Qb4+!, with Black’s initiative. Better is 15. Qf5, but even then 15. ... Qe6! 16. Qf4 Qxa2 17. Bg2 Qa5+ can hardly satisfy White. Another method of gaining pawn, 13. dxc bxc 14. Bxa6 Nxa6 15. Qxd5 is also dangerous because of 15. ... Qf6 or 15. ... Nb4. (Finally, 13. dxc bxc 14. Qa4 is met by 14. ... Nb4 15. 0-0 Nb3.)

13. ... Nb8xa6
14. 0-0 Na6-c7

More natural seems 14. ... c4. However, Portisch said he disliked the situation because of the reply 15. b3.

15. b2-b3 Ra8-c8
16. Rf1-e1 Rf8-d8
17. h2-h4 ...

Prevents the eventual maneuver Ne6-g5.

17. ... Nc7-e6

Portisch confessed that he felt uncomfortably after 16. Re1. In a friendly talk after the closing ceremony he said he expected Petrosian would play Re1-e2-c2.

During the game Petrosian considered 17. ... Ne8 and 18. ... Nf6 would lead to a slightly better position for Black, and he was right. However, Portisch began to act rather straightforward (perhaps because he dislikes such pawn structures).

18. Qd1-d3 Qe7-f6
19. Kg1-g2 c5xd4

After the game Petrosian said: “I noticed Portisch raised his hand to move, but then he began thinking again. To tell you frankly, I felt nervous and went away from the chessboard. Feeling my tension, Portisch pricked up his ears and thought a good deal, but finally decided to exchange pawns.”

20. e3xd4 ...

White could have had a slight edge after 20. Rxc8 Rxc8 21. exd followed by Re1-e5 or Qd3-a6; but now Petrosian pretends for more.

20. ... Rc8xc1
21. Re1xc1 Qf6-f4!?

Black intended to take possession of the QB file and thought this tactical lunge (not unexpected by White) would help a lot.

Diagram 18
Black threatened 22. . . . Qe4 (or 22. Re1 Qg4). After 22. Qe3 chances were even.

22. . . . Ne6xf4+
23. Kg2–g3 Nf4xd3
24. Rc1–c3 Nd3–b4

Black should hardly be criticized for his move, the more because he could hold the position later. However 24. . . . Nb2! 25. Rc2 Nd3 (25. . . . Nd1? 26. Rd2) 26. Rc3 Nb2 seems to lead to an immediate draw, as stated by Petrosian.

25. a2–a3 Nb4–a6
26. b3–b4 Na6–b8


27. Rc3–c7 a7–a5

Portisch wants to exchange as many pieces as possible. Weak was 27. . . . a6 28. Ne5 f6 29. Ng6, and 29. . . . Nd7 30. Ne7+ followed by 31. Nc6 or 29. . . . Kh7 30. h5 Nd7 31. Rxd7 would lead to Black’s immediate failure.

28. b4–b5!

The only correct move 28. bxa bxa 29. Ne5 f6 30. Ng6 seems good as well, but after 30. . . . Na6! 31. Ra7 Nb8 Black is in time with counter-play.

28. . . . Nb8–d7
29. Kg3–f4!

All White’s pieces take part in the offensive.

29. . . . h6–h5

30. Nf3–e5 Nd7–f8
31. Rc7–b7 f7–f6
32. Ne5–c6 . . .

Black is now hopeless anyway. Suddenly realizing that something irreparable has happened, Portisch lost his spirits.

32. . . . Ng6–g8+
33. Kf4–g3 Rd8–d6
33. . . . Re8 was probably better.

34. Rb7xb6 Rd6–e6
35. Rb6–b8+ Ng6–f8
36. Kb8–a8 Nc7

Or 35. . . . Kh7 36. Rd8
36. Nb8–a8 Re6–e1
37. Nc6–d8 . . .

Another way to win was 37. b6 Re1 38. Nb4 axb 39. a4 b3 40. b7 b2 41. Rxf8+ Kh7 42. Rh8+ Kg6 43. b8 (Q) Rg1+ 44. Kf2 b1 (Q) 45. Qe8+ Kf6 46. Qxh5+ g5 47. Qh7+ Ke6 48. Re8+ a.s.o., but Petrosian prefers the safer method.

37. . . . Kg8–h7
38. b5–b6 Re1–b1
39. b6–b7 Nf8–d7

40. Ra1xa5.

Black resigned.

Ten years later, at Tilburg, Black’s fortifications were once more tested by the former world champion Vassily Smyslov. Black was Portisch again.

Smyslov–Portisch

The Queen Gambit
(Notes by V. Smyslov)

1. d2–d4 d7–d5
2. c2–c4 e7–e6
3. Nb1–c3 Bf8–e7
4. Ng1–f3 . . .
4. cxd exd 5. Bf4 c6 6. e3 is not bad, too: it leads to a typical set-up of the orthodox defense.
4. \ldots Ng8-f6
5. Bc1-g5 0-0
6. Ra1-c1 h7-h6
7. Bg5-h4 b7-b6
This plan is often played. Later on, in the World Championship Match Karpov vs Kasparov (Moscow, 1985), Black achieved satisfactory play after 7. \ldots dxc.
8. c4xd5 Nf6xd5
9. Nc3xd5 e6xd5
10. Bh4xe7 Qd8xe7
11. g2-g3 \ldots
A good positional idea. The Bishop at g2 develops pressure upon Black's pawn center. The move 11. Qc2 is not dangerous for Black; he obtains good counterplay after 11. \ldots Na6
12. e3 c5.
11. \ldots Rf8-e8
12. Bf1-g2 Bc8-a6

Diagram 19

This position was a subject of a lively theoretical discussion for many years. The usual continuation was 13. Ne5, and after 13. \ldots Nd7 14. Rxc7 Rac8! 15. Rxc8 (15. Rxd7 Qb4+ 16. Kf1 Qxd4 17. Nd3 Rxes2 with a dangerous attack) 15. \ldots Rxc8 White cannot play 16. Nxd7 because of
16. \ldots Qb4+ 17. Kf1 Qxb2, threatening
18. \ldots Rc1. The line 14. f4 is hardly promising for White due to 14. \ldots Nxe5
15. dxe Bb7 16. 0-0 c6 17. e4 dxe
18. Bxe4 c5 with counterplay.
13. e2-e3 \ldots
Paradoxical but strong. This continuation may seem too risky at a glance, because the White King is stuck in the center. Nevertheless it will become clear soon that White will obtain strong pressure on the Q-side.
13. \ldots c7-c5
14. Qd1-a4! \ldots
This Queen maneuver demonstrates the point of White's idea. The Black Knight must now protect his Bishop, whereas White strengthens his position by raising the efficiency of his pieces.
14. \ldots Re8-c8
If 14. \ldots b5 then 15. Qa5; or 14. \ldots Rd8 15. Ne5 b5 16. Qd1.
15. Nf3-e5 Qe7-e6
16. Rc1-c3! Rc8-d8
16. \ldots cxd is met by 17. Qxd4 Rxc3 18. bxc with advantage to White.
Or 16. \ldots b5 17. Qa5 cxd 18. Rxc8 Qxc8 19. 0-0 Nc6 20. Nxc6 Qxc6 21. exd, and White has the upper hand.
17. h2-h4! \ldots
The whole board is a battlefield. White intends to put Black's side in ruins by means of h4-h5 and to bring the KR into play via Rh1-h4-f4.
17. \ldots Qe6-d6
18. a2-a3 \ldots
Steadily improving his position. If b6-b5, then Qa5 eventually, b2-b4 is possible.
18. \ldots Qd6-e7
19. h4-h5 Ba6-b7
Rh1-h4-f4 was threatening, hence Black must withdraw the Bishop in order to complete his development. The psychological battle has brought success to White. Now he can castle.
20. 0–0  Nb8–a8
   If 20. . . . a5, then 21. Qb3 Qd6  22. Qc2
   with additional pressure along the QB file
   and the threat Qf5.
21. Rf1–c1            Na6–c7

Diagram 20

22. b2 – b4!

   The Q-side breakthrough leads to sharp
   combinational play. If 22. . . . Ne6, then 23.

   bxc bxc  24. dxc Nxc5  25. Rxc5
   Qxe5  26. Rc7 Rac8  27. Qa5 Rxc7  28.
   Qxc7 Qxc7  29. Rxc7 Rb8  30. a4 with a
   tangible advantage in the endgame. On
   22. . . . b5 White has prepared the Queen
   Qe6  25. Rxb7 Rac8  26. Rc5 with
   a dreadful pin. E.g. 26. . . . Rxc5
   27. bxc f6  28. Ng6, or 26. . . . a5
   27. Nxf7 Rxc5  28. bxc Rd7  29. Rxd7
   Qxd7  30. Ne5 Qe6  31. Nd3, threatening
   Nd3–f4.

   22. . . .            c5–c4

   23. Rc3xc4!        . . .
   This winning blow was perfectly cal-
   culated.

   23. . . .            d5xc4
   24. Bg2xb7          Ra8–b8
   25. Ne5–c6          Qe7–e8
   If 25. . . . Qd7, then 26. Qxa7 Nb5
   27. Nxb8
   26. Qa4xa7          b6–b5
   27. Nc6xb8          Rd8xb8

   Black resigned. If 28. . . . Qd8,
   then 29. a4.
AN OPENING FOR ONE'S TASTE
OR WHY I LIKE TO PLAY Bg5

In the late forties, when I began to meet masters regularly, my main concern was how to build my opening repertoire. In a struggle with more experienced masters — those who not only knew the published theory, and its results in high-level practice — I was at a disadvantage.

What was I to do?

The answer came almost imperceptibly, from my knowledge of old books. While reflecting on how to avoid theoretical discussions in the main lines of the Nimzo-Indian Defence, I decided that the half-forgotten order of moves 1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 e6 3. Bg5 was possibly a good find. The Nimzo-Indian cannot be reached and the Queen's Indian Defence is also impossible. I have always believed that after 1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 b6 White can obtain no advantage at all ...

My first attempt at testing my "innovation" against a strong opponent was my game Liublinsky, a master, in the XVII USSR Championship (1949).

Petrosian–Liublinsky
Queen's Pawn
1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 e6
3. Bg5 c5 4. e3 Be7

Someone somewhere wrote that 4. . . . b6 is not bad here, which is what Averbach played against me in the Moscow Championship, 1960. I followed known paths by 5. Nbd2(?) Bb7 6. Bd3 Be7 7. c3 0–0 8. 0–0 Nc6 9. Qe2 which led only to an equal game and a rather quick draw. However, studying the position after 4. . . . b6, I was struck by an idea. But I had to wait ten years for an opponent who would readily fall into my outspread net. It happened in 1960, at the Olympiad in Leipzig. Czech master Kozma played Black, and I revealed my secret: 5. d5! The point is that after 5. . . . exd 6. Nc3 Bb7 7. Nxd5 Bxd5 8. Bxf6 Qxf6 9. Qxd5 — all this happened in the game — White has d5 safely under control due to a small tactical finesse: 9. . . . Qxb2 10. Rd1!

Diagram 21

Black’s Knight cannot move because of mate on d7, and 10. . . . Qc3+ is useless since after 11. Rd2 Black has a single check on a1, and after 12. Ke2 White wins a Rook. Instead of c3, the Black Queen can check
from b4. If White interposes his Rook, Black checks from b1 again. It seems that White can gain nothing: 12. Ke2 Qb5+ and 13. . . . Qc6, defending the Rook a8. But have we forgotten that Qc3+ loses a Rook for Black? Therefore 10. . . . Qb4+ 11. c3! Qxc3+ 12. Rd2.

Thus, 9. . . . Qxb2 is impossible, and the whole line is advantageous for White.

The following set up has been considered satisfactory for Black: 1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 e6 3. Bg5 c5 4. e3 Nc6 5. Nbd2 b6 6. c3 Be7 7. Bd3 0–0. In a similar position, Marshall, White against Capablanca (1927) unsuccessfully tried the idea of placing the Queen on e2, giving Black the opportunity of the unloading maneuver Nf6–d5. After the exchange of dark-squared Bishops it is clear that although the Black Knight on d5 is rather vulnerable — it can be attacked by White's pawns from either side — exploiting it is not so simple. After c3–c4 the Knight retreats to f6. Despite White's apparent advantage in the center, it is not clear how he should proceed. On the other hand, e3–e4 is met by jumping Nf4 (gaining a tempo), and the somewhat misplaced Queen speaks for itself.

While studying the Marshall-Capablanca game I noticed at once that the White Queen does nothing on e2. So when I entered this line in my game with Taimanov (the XXVII USSR Championship, 1960) I intended to omit Qe2. Fortunately, my opponent was very helpful to me in the opening. After 8. 0–0 he played 8. . . . cxd, and after 9. exd continued 9. . . . Nd5 10. Bxe7 Nxe7 (he noticed that if 10. . . . Qxe7 White's 11. Re1 prepares the retreat Bf1 and looks at the Black Queen not without interest). 11. Re1 Bb7 12. Bf1 f5 13. Ne5 Qc7 14. Rc1 Rae8 15. c4 Nf6 16. Qb3, and White stands better.

Let us return to my game with Liublinsky.

5. Nbd2 d5 6. c3 Nbd7 7. Bd3 0–0.

"An inaccuracy," I wrote in 1949, "giving White the chance to invade e5 with his Knight, obtaining an active game. Correct was 7. . . . Qc7."

8. Ne5!

Diagram 22

The key move. If White fails to post his Knight on e5, then the entire system of play has no sense. Now it is obvious why 7. . . . Qc7 was recommended. The White Knight would not go to e5 in this case, while the attempt to conquer this square with the help of the Bishop (8. Bf4) would be parried by 8. . . . Bd6. I have played this system many times, and every time that I have been able to establish the Knight outpost on e5, I could gain the advantage. But fortunately not all of my opponents in those years took the system with Bg5 seriously, evidently considering it a provincial invention not worth worrying about.

The exchange on e7 would be completely absurd. The pawn e5 cramps Black’s position, and each exchange would ease his situation by reducing the number of pieces. The fewer pieces, the less space is needed for maneuvering. Furthermore, after 10. Bxe7 Qxe7 11. f4 or 11. Nf3 Black would begin to attack White’s pawn wedge immediately (11. . . . f6).

But if now 10. . . . f6, then 11. Qh5 is very unpleasant for Black, forcing 11. . . . f5 since 11. . . . g6 allows the obvious sacrifice 12. Bxg6 hxg 13. Qxg6+ Kh8 14. h4, and White’s threats are practically irresistible, e.g. 14. . . . fxe 15. Qh5+ Kg8 16. Bh6 Rf6 17. Rh3. It is therefore natural that Black wants to suppress the possible threats along the b1–h7 at once.

10. . . . f5

A very good move in this situation. It seems that now White will have difficulty working up an attack. What other plan should White choose? If he prepares castling Q-side, Black would try a rapid pawn advance in this wing; then, if the Black pawn would appear on c4 it would be an equivalent of White’s pawn on e5. And should a Black pawn reach b4 Black’s attack clearly would develop more quickly than White’s.

Castling on the K-side is senseless and, moreover, not so simple: 11. 0–0 g5 12. Bg3 f4, and the Bishop is trapped. The K-side castling can be, of course, prepared, e.g. by withdrawing the Bishop to g3. Until White has actually castled on the K-side, Black has no reason for advancing his KN pawn.

But White’s first ten moves had other purpose than merely a dream of castling one or other side. . .

Diagram 23

11. h4!

An important blockading move! Now the safety of the Queen Bishop is guaranteed and another move is on the agenda: g2–g4. Note that 11. . . . Bxh4 would be fatal for Black because of the obvious 12. Qh5.

11. . . . c4 12. Bc2 b5

Better here is the immediate 12. . . . Nc5 so as to be able to close the diagonal (Ne4) when necessary.

13. Nf3

Probably 13. g4 would have been more enterprising. Today I would consider both
these moves about equally good; a well-known dilemma when one is faced with two pleasant alternatives.

With the text, White has created the concrete threat 14. Ng5 which makes Black's task difficult. Clearly, Black chose 12. . . b5 in order to start his Q-side pawn advance as quickly as possible, but now 13. . . b4 14. Ng5 sets serious problems before him. If 14. . . Nc5 then 15. Qh5 h6 16. Qg6. If 14. . . Bxg5 15. hxg Qe7, then follows the well-known sacrifice 16. Rxh7 with a very strong attack: 16. . . . Kxh7 17. Qh5+ Kg8 18. g6 Nf6 19. Qh2! (stronger than 19. exf gxf 20. Bd6 Qg7). The threat of Ke2 and Rh1 would force Black to attack the g6 pawn immediately — 19. . . . Qe8, but when White wins as follows: 20. exf Qxg6 21. fxg Kxg7 22. Be5+ Kf7 23. Bd1. 13. . . . Nc5 14. g4 b4 15. gxf Too hasty. It seemed to me at the time that Black's attack was developing faster than my own. I obviously did not like 15. cxb Nd3+ 16. Bxd3 Bxb4+ 17. Kf1 cxd 18. Qxd3 fxg, or 18. . . . a5, and there is no trace of White's attack.

Stronger was 15. Nd4. White's excellently posted Knight on d4 would give him a superior position. If White captures on f5 Black must recapture with his K pawn, which would weaken his d5 pawn. The text move leads to a forced variation which I thought would win for me.

15. . . . exf 16. Ng5 g6?

Black does not want to allow White's Qh5, but he overlooks a rather obvious threat. After 16. . . . h6 17. Qh5 Nd3+ 18. Bxd3 cxd 19. Qg6 hxg 20. hxg Qe8 21. Qh7+ Kf7 22. Rh6 Rg8 the outcome of the game would be unclear.

If 17. . . . Qe8 (instead of 17. . . . Nd3+), White would still have his positional advantage.

17. h5!

Now the KR file will be opened, since after 17. . . . Bxg5 18. Bxg5 Qxg5 19. Qxd5+ Be6 20. Qxc5 White's advantage would be indisputable since after all, he still has the option of castling either side!


In 1951, Master Bannik decided to follow the opening line of the previous game up to the 12th move, playing 12. . . . Nc5 recommended by me in my notes in 1949. The course of our game demonstrates that White's chances are not limited to attacking on the K-side.

Diagram 25

Now the KR file will be opened, since after 17. . . . Bxg5 18. Bxg5 Qxg5 19. Qxd5+ Be6 20. Qxc5 White's advantage would be indisputable since after all, he still has the option of castling either side!


In 1951, Master Bannik decided to follow the opening line of the previous game up to the 12th move, playing 12. . . . Nc5 recommended by me in my notes in 1949. The course of our game demonstrates that White's chances are not limited to attacking on the K-side.
establishing the White Knight where it works in all directions as befits a centralized Horse. Some other piece at d4 would be far less effective. The move 14. Bg5 would have lead to a protracted struggle of approximately the same character.

However, I was quite pleased with my memorable rapid victory over Liublinsky (who does not like to win quickly?), and therefore I failed to calculate all the variations here to any considerable depth. I relied upon the fact that if Black captured on g5 he would open the KR file. There are quite few who consider earnestly lines like 15. . . Bxg5 16. hxg Qxb2 in their young years, but Black should have played sol After 17. Rxe7 he would have a playable reply 17. . . Nd3+, and even in the line 17. . . Kxh7 18. Qh5+ Kg8 19. g6 Qxa1+ 20. Ke2 Rfc8 White has no more than a perpetual check. Evidently, the experienced Bannik did not want to accept a draw from the young Petrosian.

15. . . Rf7 16. Bxe7 Rxe7
17. Qb1! Ba4 18. b3
Of course, exchanging Bishops is bad due to Nd3+
18. . . cxb 19. axb Bd7

Diagram 26

20. f4!
White cannot omit this move in view of the potential attack on his pawn e5. Now the center pawn structure is completely frozen, and Black no longer has the possibility of f5-f4. Of course, White also will not be able to conduct any pawn operations here. Nevertheless, White’s position is better because of the difference in relative strength of his minor pieces. White’s Bishop and Knight are clearly stronger than Black’s.

White’s problem is how to conduct the struggle so as to make use of his advantage. He wants to open files for his Rooks; therefore Black should have played 20. . . h5, closing the K-side and forcing White to search for his good luck on the Q-side alone.

The King is in a safe position here, demonstrating that all Black’s hopes of exerting pressure on the c3 pawn are in vain.

21. . . a6
Missing the last chance to play 21. . . h5.

22. g4!
After this, Black’s position may be considered lost.

22. . . Ne4+ 23. Bxe4 fxe
White’s powerful Knight on d4 versus “bad Bishop” on d7, combined with mobile King side pawns, determine the future outcome. As soon as White’s major pieces will coordinate their activities with the Knight, Black’s positional weakness will kill him.

24. Qa2
The Queen looks where to get employed

24. . . Qc7 25. Rhc1 Bb5
26. Qa5 Qd7?
The exchange of Queens followed by . . . Bd3 would be relatively better. Of course, a single Bishop at d3 cannot fight the entire battle. But when lines are opened, they will be opened for Black’s
Rooks as well, and then they could bring some counterplay in case of White’s imprudence.

27. Qb4 Bd3 28. Rg1

If 28. f5? at once, then 28. ... exf 29. e6 Qe8 (29. ... Qc7) 30. gxh Qh5 31. Rg1 Qxh4 32. Rg2 Qf6, and it can be seen that White has rushed things a bit.

28. ... Qe8 29. Rac1

This move is not without purpose. White prevents any kind of counterplay (Re7-c7).

29. ... Kh8 30. h5 Qd7

31. Rh1 h6?

Putting his head into a loop. Now it is obvious that the advance of White’s KN pawn will lead to the opening of the file with a fine square g6 for White’s Rook.

32. Rh2 Ree8 33. Rg1 Qe7

34. Qd6!

After a series of unhurried moves, White proceeds energetically. The winning plan is no secret: the Knight on d4 and the Rook on g6 will produce a quick crash.

34. ... Qxd6 35. exd Rcd8
36. g5 e5 37. fxe Rxe5
38. gxh gxh 39. Rg6 Rg5
40. Rfxh Kg7 41. Re6

Black resigned on move 47.

During a tournament, many forms of subtle psychological warfare are practiced. For example, occasionally an opening is used against an opponent who is known to favor it himself. The idea is to force him against his own weapons, when he will have to face not only real dangers but, very often, imaginary ones as well. This trick is, of course, not quite safe for one who adopts it....

Spassky did it several times against me in our matches for the world championship. Naturally, he tried this method in the line we are discussing. In the 7th game of our match in 1966, he surprised me:

Spassky–Petrosian
Queen's Pawn

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 e6
3. Bg5

Someone remarked that Spassky “has invited Petrosian to play in the yard of the house, in which he grew up.”

Well said!

3. ... d5 4. Nbd2 Be7
5. e3 Nbd7 6. Bd3 c5
7. c3 b6

Do not think that this move contradicts my comments in the game against Liublinsky. Black has no objection to a Knight incursion to e5 as long as he still has not castled. Besides, the Q Bishop has no better square than b7. Therefore, with two good moves available, I decided to choose the one Spassky was probably least expecting.

8. 0–0 Bb7 9. Ne5 Nxe5
10. dxe Nd7 11. Bf4

White follows strictly the known lines. The Q pawn transferred to e5, the dark-squared Bishop has been preserved for future use, but — and it is a big “but” — Black still has not castled, hence White’s advanced pawn does not bring much hope for good use and could become an object of attack. No matter how fierce the future commentators will object, I would rather suggest the quieter method: 11. Bxe7 followed by f2–f4, refraining from ambitious plans.

11. ... Qc7

More resolute was 11. ... g5 12. Bg3 h5, forcing 13. h3 and Black has a very nice position.

12. Nf3 h6!

Letting him know that the advance of the KN and the KR pawns are still on the agenda.

13. b4!?
A good sign. By offering the pawn sacrifice White is in a sense confessing that the present course of the game does not suit him. Black, however, has no intention of accepting the sacrifice, which would let his opponent seize the initiative. After 13. ... cxb 14. cxb Bxb4 15. Nd4 Black’s extra pawn will not play any significant role for a long time while White’s attacking chances after Qg4 or Qh5, occupation of QB file with the Rooks and, possibly, advancing the KB pawn would be very good. Black might have taken the pawn trying to prove he has a tenable position; but he has another, more active plan.

13. ... g5 14. Bg3 h5

Diagram 27

15. h4

After the natural 15. h3, Black would advance his KN pawn sooner or later, and White could not maintain his pawn e5. Now Black should not be tempted by 15. ... g4 because of 16. Ng5 Nxe5 17. Bb5+.

15. ... gxh4! 16. Bf4

So White, for a moment, has secured the pawn e5.

16. ... 0–0–0!

A significant moment: the players have got the maximum from the pieces that are in play, but the Rooks still have to be brought into play. The first priority for both sides is to find the best positions for the Rooks. With this in mind, note that the capture on h4 has opened the KN file for Black’s Rooks.

Spassky seemed not to understand this particular feature of the position, otherwise he, for better or worse would have taken at c5 to open the QN file for his Rooks or, if Black were to recapture with a piece, to activate his QR.

17. a4?

Diagram 28

17. ... c4!

After the game I discovered that this move amazed the spectators. Its disadvantage is obvious as the square d4 is now at White’s perfect disposal,— but, I would rather add, only verbally. His Queen and Rooks can make no use of this square, and even his Knight, which normally would work best on such a square, cannot get there because it is tied to the defense of the pawn on e5. Thus, Black has free hands for operations along the KN file.
While analyzing the future course of the game one should forget that the idea of the maneuver Be7–f8–g7 was still in the air, gaining the pawn e5 which has now become White’s sorrow, not pride.

18. Be2?
White had the much better move, 18. Bf5!, setting a little trap. If then 18. ... exf 19. e6 Bd6 20. Bxd6 Qxd6 21. exd+ Rxd7, Black seems to be two pawns up, but now 22. Nd4! comes and White would stand at least no worse. There would be a great difference in the strength of the White Knight compared with that of the Black Bishop, and Black’s pawn weakness would be incurable. The most curious of all is that Spassky saw this move and demonstrated it immediately after the game, but he did not like the retreat of the Bishop to h3, should Black refrain from capturing it. Esthetically, it would look there just as a strange big pawn, but it would fulfill an important function as defender of the KN pawn.

18. ... a6!
Speaking generally, this modest-looking move is the essence of Black’s idea. Now White cannot open the Q-side no matter how he manipulates with his Q-side pawns, and this means that the play will be one-sided now — the K-sided.

19. Kh1 Rdg8 20. Rg1 Rg4
21. Qd2 Rhg8 22. a5 b5
23. Rad1 Bf8 24. Nh2 Nxe5
25. Nxe4 hxg 26. e4
The idea 26. ... dxe 27. Bxe5 Qxe5 28. Qd8 mate is too obvious to be called a trap. White’s last move should therefore be estimated as an attempt to open a file for his Rooks.

26. ... Bd6 27. Qe3 Nd7
28. Bxd6 Qxd6 29. Rd4
It seems that White has some achievements: Black’s KN pawn is under attack.

29. ... e5 30. Rd2 f5!

Diagram 29

31. exd
31. exf Nf6 32. Qh6 would have been slightly better, but after 32. ... Qd8 followed by 33. ... Rh8 Black would maintain an excellent attacking position. Note that the threatened advance of the Q pawn in conjunction with h4–h3 would hang over White like the Sword of Damocles. But now, at least Black’s Bishop on b7 is out of play.

31. ... f4 32. Qe4 Nf6
33. Qf5+ Kb8 34. f3
A piquant variation was 34. Qe6 Qxe6 35. dxe Ne4, threatening 36. ... Nxf2+ and 37. ... g3 mate!

34. ... Bc8 35. Qb1 g3
36. Re1 h3 37. Bf1 Rh8
38. gxh Bxh3 39. Kg1 Bxf1
40. Kxf1 e4 41. Qd1 Ng4
42. fxg f3 43. Kg2
Poor Rook! Having brought no use to its army, it desperately offers its own life but cannot save the day.

43. ... fxg+. White resigned.
It is usually assumed that the evolution of chess ideas comes only through the games of leading players. But the fact is
that wonderful ideas occur as well in the games of lesser known players that sometimes come under the scrutiny of theoreticians. Then they make the rounds of chess magazines, appear in chess books and finally in the games of famous players. Eventually there comes a time when it is difficult to discover the true source of Grandmaster A’s system or that of Grandmaster B.

If you look at a modern opening handbook you will discover that in the King’s Indian Defence there are two different systems which have the characteristic feature of White’s playing Bg5. The first line, 1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. Be2 0–0 6. Bg5, bears Averbach’s name. The other is 1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. Be2 0–0 6. Nf3 e5 7. d5, and if either 7. . . . Nbd7, which is the older method, or 7. . . . a5, which is modern, White plays 8. Bg5; I will not discuss the origins of the Averbach system, but I would like to discuss how I, and others, came upon the idea of the move 8. Bg5.

In 1946, I believe it was master Ratner who decided to pin the Nf6, and after the natural reaction, h7–h6, the Bishop retreated along the c1–h6 diagonal having achieved nothing. In the Zurich Candidates Tournament, 1953, Grandmaster Stahlberg, with White against me, played Bg5 and then exchanged the Bishop at f6, attempting to prove that White would have good prospects with a bad Bishop at g7 with the center locked. That game made little impression on me at the time, because I knew already it was important for Black to have his King Bishop when its White counterpart is missing.

The first game in which I managed to show that the Bishop on g5 contained its amount of poison was Petrosian–Suetin, in the 1954 USSR Team Championship.

Petrosian–Suetin
King’s Indian Defence

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

Diagram 30

| 10. Bg5 h6 | 11. Be3 |
| 12. Bxc5 dxc |
| 13. h3 Nf6 14. Nxe5 Nxd5 15. cxd Bxe5 |

Suetin continues rather unimaginatively:

13. exf xf 14. f4 exf |
15. Bxf4 Ne5

(See Diagram 31)

This kind of setup was then just becoming popular. Black’s pieces are harmoniously placed, and it is not easy for White to find a plan offering him any advantage in the middle-game.

After 16. Rae1 Bd7 17. Nf3 a significant point came to the surface: if Black’s KR pawn had not advanced, 17. . . . Ng6
would be a good move now, planning f5–f4 after White's Bishop's retreat. Actually 18. Be3 cannot be met by 18. . . . f5–f4 because of 19. Bxc5 and 20. Qxg6, gaining a piece. So there remains only the apparently quite normal text move.

17. . . . Qf6
18. Qd2 Rae8
19. Nxe5 dxe
20. Be3

Diagram 32

of strategy for several generations of chess players has been the question of "hanging pawns." Usually, hanging pawns arise (for either side) in the closed openings, particularly the Queen's Gambit. Those who like hanging pawns try to make use of their dynamic power. Others consider such pawns merely weaknesses. And, of course, there are those specialists, who have a precise feel for all the nuances of the positional struggle involving hanging pawns, and who can successfully play either side: with such pawns and against them.

This time, such a position has arisen from the King's Indian Defence.

The next part of the game is rather boring, consisting mainly of positional maneuvering. If you do not fall asleep, keep in mind the following when you play over moves 21–23. Hanging pawns are good when they control important central squares, or take an aggressive stance and threaten to advance and disrupt the opponent's army. It is therefore necessary to know that the main positional method of fighting against hanging pawns is by attacking them directly. Such attacks are often designed just to provoke one of the pawns to advance, leaving a hole where the attacker may comfortably lodge his pieces.

This game features a typical demonstration of play against hanging pawns.

20. . . . b6
21. Bh5 Re7
22. Bd1 Qd6
23. Bc2 Re7
24. Kh1 Ra8

He thinks he must prevent a2–a3 and b2–b4. Now if 25. a3 then 25. . . . a4 follows.

25. Re2 Qf8
26. Re2 Nb7

Black transfers the Knight to d6 where it will protect the pawn f5 if White's Queen goes to h5.

27. Qe2 Nd6
28. c5 bxc
29. Bxc5 Rb8
30. b3 Qc8
31. Qh5 Qa6
Black has clearly lost the strategic battle and now tries to save the pawn f5 by tactical means: 32. Bxd6 cxd 33. Bxf5 Bxf5 34. Rxf5 Qxf1+

32. g4! f4

Forced. But now the passed pawns, which seemed so powerful, are easily blockaded. White, assisted by Black’s time pressure, quickly concludes the game by creating threats against the pawns as well as against the King.

33. Re1 Qc8 34. Bxd6 cxd
35. Bg6 Rf8 36. Ne4 f3
37. g5 Rf4 38. Rg1 Bf5

Black resigned.

In spite of my success in this game, I still had the feeling that my invention was not very promising. But, except for the unnecessary 21. Bh5, no error could be found in White’s play, while Black’s can be improved.

Several years elapsed. In the XXV USSR Championship (1958) I again played White against Suetin.

This time I played 8. Bg5 at once, and after 8. . . . h6 retreated with the Bishop:


Diagram 33

Now it is not easy for Black to find an acceptable plan. His normal setup, with Nd7-c5, retreat of another Knight and advance of the KB pawn, is rather difficult to achieve. If 9. . . . Nc5, the very flexible 10. Nd2 follows, and Black would have to worry about the threat of b2-b4 driving his Knight back. It is not surprising, therefore, that after a long meditation Suetin takes a crucial decision.

9. . . . g5 10. Bg3 Nh5

Future practice demonstrated this plan to be quite playable for Black. However, in this game White maintained a small but lasting advantage:

11. 0-0 a5 12. Ne1 Nf4
15. Nxe4 Nxe2+ 16. Qxe2 f5
17. f3

If 17. . . . fx e 18. fxe now, the prospect of White’s Knight invasion to f5 would give him more advantage.

17. . . . f4 18. c5 fxe
19. Qxe3 Bf5 20. Rac1 Qd7
21. Rc4!

White intends to double — and even triple — his major pieces on the QB file, threatening cxd followed by a mighty invasion.

21. . . . dxc 22. Qxc5 b6
23. Qe3 Qxd5 24. Rxc7 Qd4
25. Bf2 Qxe3

Probably 25. . . . Qxb2 was better so as to have some material compensation for White’s attack. Now, in spite of simplification, the game is becoming more and more difficult for Black with each move.

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

The Bishop is on its way to c3 where it will secure the Q side and train its sights on the Black QR and KPawns. The first of two pawns can be easily moved out of fire, but Black will have to suffer with another weak pawn on e5.
28. ... Rfd8 29. Bc3 a4
30. Re1!
An instructive moment. If Black’s KR and KN pawns had stayed closer to their original positions, Black could try to save himself by the well-known method of abandoning one of his weaknesses for the sake of a greatly simplified position. But here White’s threat to bring his Knight, say, to h5 makes it clear that the Black King will himself come under attack.

30. ... Rac8 31. Rb7 Rd5
32. Rb6 Bf7 33. Nd6 Rd8
34. Nf5!
Now the weak Black pawns are at White’s mercy.

34. ... Kh7 35. Rb7 R8d7
36. Rxd7 Rxd7 37. Nxg7 Kxg7
38. Rxe5 Kg6 39. Rxb5 Rd1+
40. Kf2 Rc1
The rest of the game holds no further interest for us, though it continued until the 61st move.

Within a year I played another game (1959, Soviet Championship) in which the organic defects in Black’s position as a result of the advance of his K-side pawns were even more obvious.

Petrosian–Yukhtman
Tiflis, 1959

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6
3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6
5. Be2 0–0 6. Nf3 e5
7. d5 Na6
The Knight can go to c5 via a6, without interfering with the diagonal of the Queen Bishop.

8. Bg5 h6 9. Bh4 g5
10. Bg3 Nh5 11. Nd2 Ng4
12. 0–0 Nc5 13. Bg4 a5
This move indicates that Black is placing his hopes in the strong position of his Knight on f4. It really seems not to be con-
quered, for capturing at f4 by the Bishop opens up the wonderful long diagonal for the Bishop g7.

It was later shown that with 13. ... Bxg4 14. Qxg4 h5! 15. Qf5 h4 16. Bxf4 ef 17. Nf3 Qf6! (not 17. ... f6?? 17. ... Bf6 because of 18. g3 with advantage to White) Black had defensive possibilities.

14. f3!

Diagram 34

Now we can trace what White has in mind: he intends to replace the Bishop on g3 with a pawn. The Black Knight will be unable to remain on f4, and without it Black is doomed to passivity. White will proceed quite simply, bringing his Knight to f5 via e3.

As you continue playing over the game, you will notice that a White Knight never arrives at f5. Do not be surprised; in an actual game, unrealized intentions may play a greater role than those which occur in reality.

14. ... Ncd3 15. Qc2 c6
16. Kh1 h5 17. Bxc8 Rxc8
18. a3!
A modest but important move. White wants to exchange his Bishop for the Knight
without allowing Black's KP to recapture. Note that the immediate 18. Bxf4 would be met by intermediate 18. . . . Nb4, and after 19. Qb3 exf 20. a3 Na6 White is deprived of the pleasure of "taking refreshment" at b7: 21. Qxb7? Nc5 22. Qa7 Ra8, and the White Queen is imprisoned.

18. . . . cxd 19. cxd Nc5
20. Bf2 g4 21. g3 Ng6
22. fxg hxg 23. Be3

Diagram 35

23. . . . b5
Black's position is lost. Few masters would suffer through such a bad position hoping for a lucky chance, behaving passively.

24. Nxb5 Qb6 25. a4! Qa6
26. Nc4 f5 27. Rx5 Rx5
28. exf Qb7 29. Qg2 Nb3
Black resigned.

One should not gain the impression that this system leads to an almost forced win for White. However, it was a rather long time before Black was able to find a way to obtain sufficient counterplay against it.

At first glance, the most promising seems the plan employed by Fischer in 1959.

Tal–Fischer
Candidates Tournament, 1959

Diagram 36

Fischer played 9. . . . a6 here, introducing a cunning idea. Black plans to play f7–f5, which could pose problems for White. A Kingside pawn storm is often a powerful weapon for Black in the King's Indian Defence. The exposed position of the White Bishop on g5 helps Black to win important tempos. First he wants to unpin his Knight (Qd8–e8), and 9. . . . a6 is prophylaxis against Nc3–b5.

10. Nd2 Qe8 11. 0–0 Nh7
12. b4 Ng5

It becomes clear that it is still not easy for Black to advance his KB pawn: 12. . . . f5?? 13. exf gxf? 14. Bh5! and her Black Majesty is conquered. If 13. . . . Rf5, White occupies the square e4 with all the consequences. So f7–f5 will have to await further preparatory moves. This costs Black a lot of time, as he will later have to move his Knight again in order to allow his KN pawn to advance. Of course, time is
often not of critical importance in closed positions, but White has his own plan and can make use of the time given to him.

Fischer was not fully satisfied with the opening of this game and, playing Tal near the end of the tournament, chose another way:

12. . . . Bf6

Diagram 37

This is not as bad as some annotators claimed. In principle, the exchange of dark-squared Bishops is favorable for Black.

13. Bxf6 Nhx6
14. Nb3 Qe7
15. Qd2 Kh7
16. Qe3 Ng8

Trying to advance the KB pawn at any price. Another plan could be 16. . . . Rg8 followed by g6–g5 and Nh7–f8–g6.

17. c5 f5
18. exf gxf
19. f4 exf
20. Qxf4 dxc
21. Bd3 cxb
22. Rae1! Qf6
23. Re6!

In positions where his opponent’s pieces were uncoordinated and, in addition, the King’s position had been weakened Tal “of 1959” felt like a fish in water. He won this game.

By the end of the Candidates Tournament, the variation introduced by Fischer was accepted by all devotees of the King’s Indian (there were many in this tournament: Tal, Fischer, Gligoric, Petrosian, Olafsson) as rich in dynamic possibilities. Two rounds before the end, Gligoric, a confirmed King’s Indian devotee, played this line with Black against Olafsson. Although he lost the game he must have thought his middle-game chances were not worse than White’s; otherwise, why would he have played the same deadly thing against me in the final round?

12. . . . Ng5
13. 13 Qe7
14. Kh1 f5
15. Rc1 Nf6
16. c5 Nh5

Diagram 38

In this position Olafsson played 17. cxd, and after

17. . . . cxd
18. Na4 Nf4
19. Nb6 Rb8
20. b5 a5
21. Nxc8 Rxc8
22. Rxc8 Rxc8
23. Nc4 Bf6
24. exf gxf
25. Ne3 Qh7
26. Be1 Bd8
27. Qd2 Rc5

an unclear and complicated position was reached. I would prefer to play White here, but Gligoric seemed to like Black’s position.
When I studied this game I noticed a rather amusing positional trap, and within less than two days I had the chance of playing it against Gligoric.

17. c6!

True, Black can hardly afford to capture on c6 because the center would be opened for White's pieces. Having the square d5 at his disposal, White would then advance his Queenside pawns, eventually resulting in the creation of a far-advanced passed pawn. However Black can play b7–b6 and permanently lock the Queen-side. Then the action will take place only on the other half of the board, where Black is traditionally stronger in this line. So, Gligoric did not hesitate much . . .

17. . . . b6 18. exf gxf

Now Black has two apparently active pawns (K and KB) and a semi-open file (KN) which is more important than the semi-open K file opened for White . . .

19. g3!

This is the point. Black can parry White's threat to win a piece by 20. f4, but he will have to make positional concessions. The positions after 19. . . . f4 20. g4 Nf6, or 19. . . . Nf6 20. f4 exf 21. gxf Nge4, have the same point: in both cases Black's Queen Bishop has been placed under house arrest along with his Rook. For all practical purposes, White would have an advantage of two extra pieces.

Gligoric found another way:

19. . . . Bf6 20. f4 Ng7
21. Ne4

21. a4 would have been better, to guarantee the security of the Queenside. However, White's advantage is indisputable also in the actual course of the game:

21. . . . exf 22. gxf b5
25. Bf3 a5 26. a3 axb
27. axb Rg6 28. Nbd4 a.s.o.
In one of his TV lectures (1983) Petrosian told about his two games,— with Simagin (the Moscow Championship, 1950) and Bannik (the team championship of the “Spartacus” Sport Society, 1964). Although the games have been played long ago the strategical ideas which occurred in them are still interesting.

Both of these games were opened with 1. d4, and in both cases Black chose the Nimzo-Indian Defence. Such was the fashion some thirty years ago. Black usually played either that or the King’s Indian. Years have elapsed since then and the Queen’s Indian is back in fashion, although it too is becoming played out. Almost all the ideas which were fished out have become well known, and presently have become a bit boring. For a practicing chessplayer it is important to determine when the fashion is changing, so as to keep a step ahead of the crowd. In my opinion the fashion might now come back to the good old Nimzo-Indian, and therefore a revision of games played years ago would not be without interest.

The opening in question was born long ago. It is rich in strategical and positional ideas, and it leaves lots of room for one’s tactical abilities. That is why it has played such an important role in the careers of our greatest players. And incidentally it is worth mentioning that some played it very well with Black, while others enjoyed it equally for both sides. Botvinnik for example.

Hence:

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6
3. Nc3 Bb4

The initial moves demonstrate White’s intention to occupy the center with his pawns as well as Black’s efforts to prevent it. In the first years of this opening, White played 4. Qb3 very often, so as to bother the Bishop at b4 at once and, if Black captures at c3, to recapture with the Queen without spoiling his pawn structure. Later on, 4. Qc2 was often played. Again the well-reasoned move: the W Queen protects the Knight and takes the square e4 under control. However, the main role in chess theory belonged to 4. e3. White ignores the threat of Bxc3, he directs all his energy and all his thoughts to building a really mobile pawn center. However, White takes a certain positional risk allowing his opponent to capture on c3, because chess theory knows, a heap of methods against doubled pawns. Nevertheless if one who has principles plays White, it is always interesting to note why not 4. a3 and the whole complicated strategical situation after

4. . . . Bxc3 5. bxc

In fact, White’s QN pawn has come closer to the center, on c3 it supports the pawn skeleton, and the further plan could be f2–f3 followed by e2–e4, occupying the center and intending the Kingside attack. The strong Queen Bishop should not be ignored, as well.

This sharp system gained much popularity. A number of ideas had been elaborated to conquer White’s plans. In those years (more than 30 before now) I liked a defensive idea from grandmaster practice starting with 5. . . . b6. This move may seem rather dubious as it does not prevent White from playing 6. f3 followed by occupying the center, but now Black plays 6. . . . Ba6 rather than the usual Bb7. This immediately makes a target of the pawn c4, and I should add that it is not about the pawn solely. It is well-known that doubled pawns have a specific disadvantage: not only the front pawn is weak itself, but the square on
which it stands may become weak when the pawn is finally eliminated. White plays the natural move 7. e4 and Black’s reply is 7. . . . Nc6. Now we have come to the position which is the subject of this lecture.

Diagram 39

Instead of 7. . . . Nc6, Black played 7. . . . d5 quite often, trying to cut the gordian knot at once, so as to clear up the situation with the pawn c4.

A possible continuation was e.g. 8. cxd Bxf1 9. Kxf1 exd. Now White can dislodge the Black Knight — a very important piece by 10. e5, gaining more space. Black plays 10. . . . Ng8. Why does he go to this square? Because White’s strategical plan includes the advance f3–f4–f5. The Black Knight, after Ng8–e7, protects the square f5 from invasion of the White pawn.

Therefore this whole line had not been considered very promising for White until 1961, when Botvinnik, in his revenge-match against Tal, played 10. Bg5 instead of 10. e5. This move is well-grounded: White does not want to immobilize his K pawn and pins the Black Knight. Black, without his dark-squared Bishop, cannot eliminate the pin easily.

Tal played 10. . . . h6, Botvinnik answered with 11. Qa4+. This position turned to be favorable for White who won rather quickly.

Now, back to 7. . . . Nc6. This move has the right of survival as Black completes his development, prepares Q-side castling, and intends to play Nc6–a5 attacking White’s strategical weakness — the pawn c4. Speaking truly, 7. . . . Nc6 had a poor reputation then because of the continuation played in a remarkable game Kotov vs Keres (Candidates Tournament, 1950). Kotov chose 8. e5, obtained a very strong attack and won very nicely.

I then found an amusing idea connected with Qh4 for Black, but had no opportunity of adopting it in practice. E.g. 8. . . . Ng8 9. Nh3 Na5 10. Qa4 (White does not give the pawn up) and now 10. . . . Qh4+. What should White do? If 11. Nf2, then 11. . . . f6 12. g3 Qh5. Or 11. g3 Qh5, and 12. Nf4 is impossible because of 12. . . . Qxf3 attacking both Rh1 and pawn on c3. This is exactly upon what the whole line stands: Black has enough time for playing f7–f6 and Ng8–e7 with very good play.

Simagin played 8. Bg5 Na5 9. e5. All this is well-known.

The pin is apparently dangerous but Black gets rid of it quite easily:

9. . . . h6 10. Bh4 g5

It is obvious that the White Bishop must retreat again: if 11. exf, then 11. . . . gxf followed by Qxf6 with a practically winning position for Black, having well developed pieces, an extra pawn, attack against the pawn c4 and option to castle on either side.

So 11. Bf2 and Black must decide where to go with his Knight. I think 11. . . . Nh5 is best. Black has weakened his Kingside by playing g7–g5, so now he should post his Knight in a position where it would be active rather than merely a defender.
Let us stop for a while and form an opinion about this position. Black is well ahead in development, with three active minor pieces when White has none. Black's only defect is a certain weakening of his King-side. Plus the White pawn at e5 which can be a source of some danger if White could use it in a K-side attack. In this game, and in the next as well, my opponents failed to find any positive ideas for White. But that does not mean that the position is simple, clear and bad for White. It is a problem position. There are personal tastes in chess, there are individual opinions. I would readily play this position as Black again, but it is very probable that some players would prefer playing White here.

My game with Simagin followed:

12. h4

A quite natural move, White intends to make use of the opposition of the Rooks. After h4xg5 Black cannot recapture with his pawn as g2-g4 wins a piece for White. Therefore Black, before being preoccupied with his strategical advantage, would have to take some prophylaxis. The move 12. ... f5 is useful in this sense. Simagin's reply 13. exf (en passant) can be sharply criticized, in my opinion: after 13. ... Qxf6 White's position was difficult.

During the game I was afraid (maybe, without much reason) of 13. g4. E.g. 13. ... Nf4 14. hxg Qxg5 15. Bh4 with double-edged game. I would prefer Black — even then. But I refrain from taking the responsibility to assert that this position is fully in Black's favor.

14. c5

Practically a positional resignation. White's position is very dubious, but he should have tried to find some tactical chances anyway, e.g. through his Queen Bishop which could be very important.

14. ... Bxf1 15. Kxf1 g4!

It is possible that Simagin overlooked this move. Now 16. fxg fails to 16. ... Ng3+. And, since he cannot capture on g4, his white-squared weaknesses are the more tangible.

16. Qd3

Now the following line could happen: 16. ... 0–0–0 17. Qe4 Kb8 18. Qxg4. White would win a pawn and consolidate his position a while. However, Black has a much stronger alternative at his disposal:

16. ... 0–0

He has completed the development, protected his pawn (17. fxg?? Qxf2 mate), so it is simply not to be seen how White should proceed.

17. Re1 Nf4 18. Qc2 Nc4

This is a characteristic position which demonstrates the dangers White is faced with in this system. Let us pay some attention to it.

White squares are terribly weak. One Black Knight stands on a white square (c4), whereas another Knight, amusingly enough, stands on a dark square (f4) but keeps white squares under control.
White now attempts to close the position:

19. g3. The idea behind this move is (say, after Nd5) f3–f4. Of course, Black would still stand to win, but in a closed position the pace of playing is slowed for a while, which could be considered an achievement for White.

However, Black has calculated a rather nice play: 19. ... Qf5. Such beautiful mates (20. Qxf5 Nd2 mate) occur rather seldom in practical play. These pretty and unexpected situations, when just a few pieces can attack opponent's King successfully, may be considered proof of the strength of a position. If White refuses to take on f5, what should he do? E.g. 20. Re4 (trying to interpose the diagonal) 20. ... gxh, and Rxf4 is impossible because the Queen "hangs"; after 21. gxf Qxe4 22. Qe4 Nd2+ Black wins easily. The actual continuation of the game is perfectly hopeless for White as well.

20. Rc1 Qd3+
21. Qxd3 Nxd3
22. Rd1 Ndb2
23. Ra1 gxh

Speaking strictly, White should have resigned here. But every chessplayer happens to have moments when he does not like this idea. Therefore my opponent continued to play although there is not much sense in it.

24. Nh3 bxc
25. Kg1 Nd3
26. Kh2 Rab8
27. Ra2 Rb3
28. dxc e5
29. g4 e4

Chessplayers have their professional lexicon. It could have been said here that the Black pawns are like locusts—they are not to be stopped.

Another few moves were played; Black played e4—e3, won a piece and later on—the game. It is an interesting example of purposeful play by Black against the line starting with 4. a3.

Bannik–Petrosian

In this game, played 11 years later, White understood the many troubles, the weakness on c4 would bring him. Before starting active operations in the Kingside, Bannik protected the c4 pawn: 12. Qa4. Black's weakness on the K-side are to be taken earnestly, hence the prophylaxis: 12. ... f5. Simagin took "en passant" which led to an easy and comfortable development for Black. Bannik did not repeat the same error; he maintained his K pawn and played 13. h4 immediately.

At a glance it would seem senseless, as Black replies with 13. ... g4, driving another pawn to the battle for the White squares, and his position looks very mighty. However Bannik had a certain idea in mind.

14. fxg fxg
15. Qc2
White threatens with Qg6+ as well as Qe4. The threat of Queen's check can be parried easily:

15. ... Qe7
Intending 16. Qg6+ Qf7
16. Qe4
Black cannot castle on the Queenside automatically: 16. ... 0–0–0?? 17. Qa8 mate.

Therefore:

16. ... Bb7
17. Qxg4 Qf7
(See Diagram 41.)

White seems to be coming out favorably: he has won a pawn, forced the White Bishop from a6 to b7 (no longer attacking the pawn c4) and is now planning to complete development without much trouble.

On the other hand, Black's pieces are formidable developed which is still not true of White's. And, as the pawns f5 and g5 have disappeared from the board, there are open lines. It is well-known that the one who is better developed should open lines to exploit the advantage. Hence
Diagram 41

Black has opened two files at a price of one pawn.

18. Nh3 Rg8 19. Qe2 0–0–0

When experienced players look at a position they often notice the following factor: one side has a material advantage, but it seems that other side may have more pieces on the board,— so strong is the positional compensation. This is exactly what we have now.

20. Qe3

Black has no problems how to proceed. He exploits white-squared weaknesses in the opponent’s camp by direct actions upon these squares.

20. . . . Rg4
(The threat is Rg4–e4).

21. Be2 Re4

Black has a formidable position: the Rook is completely safe here and threatens a lot.

22. Qd3 Rg8 23. Rg1 Qf5

It might seem that at least one side is playing something other than chess. Black’s pieces move upon light squares all the time, which reminds one of queer checker’s play.

24. Be3 Ng3

A piece which protects weak points in the opponent’s camp can be usefully exchanged.

25. Bf3 Rxe5

Black regained the pawn maintaining a tremendous position. It becomes clear soon that the pawn c4 cannot be protected.

The final of the game was:

26. o–o–o Bxf3 27. dxe Qxd3
28. Rxd3 Ne2+ 29. Kd2 Nxg1
30. Nxe1

And now, the last move to the light square — 30. . . . Be4. White’s Rook is doomed (31. Rd4 Nb3+), hence Bannik resigned.

I do not want to create the impression that Black’s play is so simple in this line, and by following the above-discussed plan, he may win easily. Such a conclusion would be absolutely wrong. I merely wish to point out some of Black’s possibilities. My next two examples demonstrate which advantages and factors are favorable for White.

Kotov–Keres
Candidates Tournament
Budapest, 1950

Diagram 42
This position has arisen after 15 moves. The situation reminds one of my games versus Bannik and Simagin, but one considerable difference exists: the position of the Black King. As you remember in those games Black had no troubles with his King. Here, on the contrary, Black has castled on the Kingside and White has already prepared the battery: Queen ahead of Bishop on the diagonal b1-h7. Such a battery is especially dangerous when the square h7 has not sufficient protection, and White has his pawn on e5. Moreover, Black’s Kingside is weakened by g7-g5. On the other hand, White’s Bishop is attacked as well as his pawn c4; if the Bishop retreats and Black captures on c4, it would be rather difficult for White to start active operations because Black’s position is then firm and solid.

However, in chess it often happens that the most important strategical defects are especially vulnerable if they are connected with the King’s position. Experienced players know very well that when events occur on both sides of the Board, the side, where the King stands, offers more. A win of a pawn on the Queenside is little compared to an attack against a weakened castled position on the Kingside.

Kotov made a nice move: 16. Nf4! It is always a pleasure to see such a move. Black is faced with a choice: he cannot take on f4, and if he takes at c4, Nxf6 follows. Hence 16... gxh, and White’s reply is obvious: 17. Nxf6. Now 17... Qg5 fails to 18. Ne7+ and 19. Qh7 mate. Keres has found the cold-blooded continuation 17... Re8; he still has strong cards and the situation remains very tense. Black intends Qg5, his King wants to escape via e7. However chess has its inner logic, and according to it, White should have a good continuation here.

Kotov performed the brilliant move: 18. Nh8! This jump prevents the Black King from escaping. Keres replied 18... Kf8, as he still hoped to do so, but after 19. Qh7, he had to occupy the square e7: 19... Re7. Now it is hot on the Kingside, but White’s attacking forces are not strong enough to reach a goal, so he must open files: 20. f4. This move is simple but most effective: after f4–f5 and Rf1, White’s Rook joins the team of Queen, Knight and Bishop in the mating assault.

20... Nxc4 21. f5 (threatening 22. f6) 21... exf 22. Qxg5
It becomes clear that the Black King cannot escape (22... Ke8 23. Bxf5 threatening Qg8 mate).

22... Bc8 (or 22... Ne3 23. Rf3) 23. Bxf5
Looking at a position of this kind one cannot avoid comparing it with a boxing match: one is almost knocked-down, and while another is finishing him off with heavy blows.

23... Bxf5 24. Rxh7
It seems that Black can save his King from a fire via e8 and d7. This will cost his Kingside pawns (f7, h6, h4) so White could win easily in an end game, but real chess fighters like finishing their opponents without making extra moves.

24... Ke8 25. Kf7 Ne5 26. Qxh7 Kd5 27. Qh5+ Kc4 28. Qe8 mate)


29. Kxe7 Qxh8
Kotov finds the shortest path: 30. Rxh7. The Black King finds no rest: 30... Kxh7 31. Qe7+ Kc6 32. Qd7 mate, or Kb8 31. Rf1.

30... Kb5 31. Qe7 a5 32. Qd7+ Ka6 33. Rb1.
Black resigned
Another game, in which White obtained a good position, was played in the XVII USSR Championship (young master Geller-White, renowned grandmaster Smyslov-Black). Geller, who prepared his opening repertoire very thoroughly while still in his youth, did not hurry with e4–e5.

**Geller–Smyslov**

1. d4 Nf6
2. c4 e6
3. Nc3 Bb4
4. a3 Bxc3 +
5. bxc Nc6
6. f3 b6
7. e4 Ba6
8. Bg5 h6
9. Bh4 Na5
10. Qa4

White protects his pawn c4 and maintains the threats along the diagonal h4–d8, being aware of the old chess rule the ”threat is more dangerous than its execution.”

10. . . . Qc8

A typical method. It becomes clear that the Queen on a4, protecting the pawn c4, stands too passively. It is well-known that the stronger a piece is the less it belongs performing such a modest function. Black intends to play Qc8–b7–c6, either exchanging the White Queen or forcing it to go away, thus the pawn c4 would lose its protection.

11. Nh3 Nh7

Why does Black retreat with his Knight when White has not driven it away? Smyslov’s idea is that if 11. . . . Qb7, White plays 12. Bxf6 followed by Nh3–f4–h5.

12. Bd3 0–0
13. e5

Finally this move, a kind of hint about the eventual attack by means of the battery Bb1 and Qc2. I think Smyslov makes an important error now. He should have played d7–d6 in order to open the game as soon as possible, depriving White of the opportunity to prepare the attack quietly. E. g. 13. . . . d6 14. exd cxd 15. Be7 Re8 16. Bxd6 Bxc4 with a fine position.

13. . . . Re8
14. 0–0 Nf8

Here we may possibly finish our analysis. White could play 15. f4 followed by f4–f5, obtaining a very strong attack. Nevertheless, Geller chose 15. Nf4, planning 15. . . . g5 16. Nh5. This structure resembles that of Kotov-Keres game; White intends to play Nh5–f6 followed by f3–f4 with a fierce attack on the Kingside.

But Smyslov realized what threatened and played 15. . . . d5. After 16. cxd Bxd3 17. Nxd3 exd Black obtained a good game, because White’s mobile pawns could be blockaded easily on White squares.

However all this was only possible due to White’s error on the 15th move — he missed the correct continuation f3–f4 . . .

**Games Played by 10 Grandmasters**

(from the note-book of the International Arbiter Lev Abramov)

Year 1952. Our team was preparing its first Olympic start. This game was played during a training meeting. White pieces were conducted by Averbakh, Geller, Petrosian and Taimanov, Black by Keres, Kotov, Tolush, Boleslavsky joined the Black team later on. Botvinnik and Smyslov came into the “White” room when the situation was already tough there. A game played by 10 grandmasters (outstanding ones!) is of course a unique matter.

I served as a mediator, communicating moves, switching the clock, making records of the moves and the time used. Waiting for a move, I made my personal notes of conducted talks. These notes are given below as annotations to the game.

I start my job in the White room. ”They have Keres, they will play the Nimzo-Indian Defence.”

1. d2–d4 . . .

Nevertheless Keres suggests (maybe in jest) the Albin counter-Gambit, Tolush — the Knight’s Indian Defence. After all, Kotov’s suggestion is accepted.

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1. . . . Ng8-f6
2. c2-c4 e7-e6
3. Nb1-c3 Bf8-b4
4. a2-a3 Bb4:c3+
5. b2:c3 . . .
Let us examine the specialist of the opening — Taimanov. Not long ago he played 5. . . . 0-0 against Szabo; he wrote also that 5. . . . c5 could be good. We shall play something else.
5. . . . Nb8-c6
And really, Taimanov was first with his remark: “Not accurately played.” Averbakh and Geller suggested 6. e3 followed by 7. Bd3 and 8. Ne2.
However Petrosian and Taimanov insisted on playing another way.
6. f2-f3 . . .
Having discussed — and rejected — 6. . . . d6 followed by e6-e5, Black agreed to play a line in fashion.
6. . . . b7-b6
7. e2-e4 . . .
Let us play so, what matters?
Is the right of castling so important?
7. . . . Bc8-a6
8. Bc1-g5 h7-h6
9. Bg5-h4 . . .
Black rejected 9. . . . e5 10. dxe Nxe5 because of 11. f4 as well as 9. . . . Na5 10. e5 g5 in favor of the more original plan:
9. . . . Qd8-c8
Geller insists upon 10. e5, but the majority prefers 10. Bd3 Na5 11. Qe2.
Let the White Queen stand on e2,— the decision is immediate.
10. . . . Nc6-a5
White’s team considers that Black has no motivation for playing on both sides. Averbakh says that after 11. Qe2 Qb7 12. Rb1 Qc6 13. Rb4 White safely prevents Black’s Queenside activity.
11. Qd1-e2 . . .
11. . . . Qb7 is in focus. Kotov suggests 12. Rb1 Qc6 13. Rb4 and then “to hold.” Tolush says “We shall play 13. . . . 0-0-0.”
11. . . . Qc8-b7
Diagram 43

12. f3–f4


12. . . . Qb7–c6
13. d4–d5 Qc6–a4
14. e4–e5 . . .


Diagram 44

14. . . . Qa4–b3

White rejects 15. exf on the same ground. In addition to the lines given above, the team finds the line 15. . . . Qxc3+ 16. Kh2 g5 17. Nf3 gxh 18. dxe dxe 19. Ne5 and now 19. . . . 0–0–0.

15. Ke1–f2 . . .


15. . . . Qb3xc3


Black's team analyzed 16. . . . Nxd5 17. Rhc1 Qb3 18. g3 g5 19. fxg 0–0–0 20. gxh Rd8 21. cxd Bxd3 22. Qe3; it was decided that 18. . . . Ne7 would be sufficient.
16. . . . Nf6:d5  
17. Rh1-c1 Qc3-b3  
18. Kf2–g3 . . .  
18. . . . g5 19. fxg 0–0–0 gives nothing because of 20. Nd2 or 20. Nd4. Thus we should play 18. . . . Nxf4 19. Kxf4 g5+ 20. Nxg5 hxg+ 21. Bxg5; "with such a King, we shall beat them anyway."  
18. . . . Nd5xf4  
19. Kg3xf4 g7–g5+  

"Maybe you might save yourself this way: 20. Kg4 gxh 21. Rc1 Qa4 22. Nd4 c5 23. Qf3 d5 24. Rb4!", Botvinnik intervened in the discussion, he cannot endure it any more. Alas! they had no more time to beauties like 24. . . . cxb 25. cxd Bxd3 26. dxe. In this critical situation, aggravated by time-trouble, the fate of the game was handed to Petrosian, whereas Black’s team trusted the realization to Keres. The final stage went as follows:

20. Kf4–g4 g5xh4  
21. Nf3–d4 Qb3–a4  
22. Qe2–f3 Na5–c6  
23. Nd4xc6 d7xc6  
24. Qf3–f6 Ke8–d7  
25. Qf6xh7+ Kd7–c8  
26. Qf7–e7 Qa4–a5  

27. Qe7–e6+ Kc8–b7  
28. Bd3–g6 Rh8–g8  
29. Kg4xh4 Qa5–d2  
30. Qe6–g4 Ra8–d8  
31. Rc1–d1 Qd2–f2+  
32. Kh4–h3 h6–h5  
33. Qg4–f5 Qf2–e3+  
34. g2–g3 Rd8–f8  
35. Qf5–e4 Qe3–g5  
36. Bg6–h7 Rg8–g7  
37. Ra1–c1 Rf8–f2  

38. Qe4xc6! Kb7–b8!  
and White lost on time.  

A fascinating full-blooded fight! Note at least the phenomenal victorious role of the Black Queen: d8–c8–b7–c6–a4–b3:c3 and, later on in the decisive part of the game, b3–a4–a5–d2–f2–e3–g5!  

Most of Black’s moves were those by the Queen, and not a single one was unnecessary! Or walks by the Kings: the White, e1–f2–g3–f4–g4xh4–h3, and the Black, e6–d7–c8–b7–b8, in an open board full of fighting pieces! Even with hanging flags White attempted — not to save himself — but to win by means of the Queen sacrifice, which was cold-bloodedly rejected. . . .
In the spring of 1964, in the USSR Central Chess Club, participants of the Moscow Young Masters tournament had a talk with World Champion Tigran Petrosian.

— I have looked through dozens of games played in the tournament — said Petrosian. I would like to discuss some typical errors committed in all stages of the games. However, it would be interesting, both for me and for you, if the players themselves explain their motives when choosing a move or a general plan.

In Yurkov–Sokolov the following position occurred:

Diagram 47

In Petrosian's opinion, White is strategically winning: his two fine Bishops and the passed pawn give him a decisive advantage.

— Yes, but the position is closed — exclaimed someone — how could White exploit his Bishops?

— You are quite right — answered Petrosian. But this position is one of those which can become open quite soon. White should have played c2–c4 and proceed preparing b2–b4. Then his Bishops would have been very powerful.

The game continued:

15. h4 Kc7 16. d6+?
(with this pawn, White has abandoned a good deal of his advantage)

16. . . . Rxd6 17. Rxd6 Kxd6
18. Bxf7 Ne6 19. Rd1+ Ke7
20. Bg6 Rd8 21. Rxd8 Nxd8
22. Kc1 Ke6 23. Kd2 Nb7
24. Ke2 Nd6 25. Bh7 Kf7?
(25. . . . e4! led to equality)

26. b3 Be7 (26. . . . e4! was better again)
27. Kf3 Bf6 28. Bd3 Ke6

Here Yurkov offered a draw and Sokolov accepted.

— I am very much grieved by this game — said Petrosian. Look at the final position.

Diagram 48

In spite of the material balance White has good winning chances again. He should post his Bishop on e4 and play c2–c4 followed by advancing his Q-side pawns.
— But Black could exchange his Knight for the Bishop — noticed a master.

— However, it does not mean that White would have no more winning chances — was the answer. It would be a book end-game, with the White King on e4 and Black’s pawns standing on dark squares: an additional plus for White.

Hereafter another master was “invited to the classboard” — Lepeshkin. Petrosian suggested to the audience to have a look at the game Lepeshkin versus Bebchuk.

1. e4 c5  2. Nf3 a6  
3. Nc3 e6  4. d4 cxd  
5. Nxd4 Qc7  6. Bd3 Nc6  
7. Be3 Nf6  8. 0–0 b5  
9. a3 Bb7  10. Kh1 Nxd4  
13. f4 d6  14. Qe1 0–0  
15. Qh4 Rfe8  16. f5?

Diagram 49

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16. . . . e5 17. Rf3 h6!

— Tell us frankly, did you foresee this move? — asked Petrosian. I guess you did not. Otherwise you would not have played 16. f5. You thought your attack would be developing mechanically. But one should take into consideration the opponent’s moves as well...  
18. Rg1 d5!

— Retribution comes — says Petrosian. The typical blow in the center is well-timed and quite logical.

19. exd Bxd5  20. Rg3 Kf8

— Simple and good — continues Petrosian. The last move by Black parries all the threats.

21. Nxd5 Qxd5  22. c4 bxc  
23. Bxc4 Qe4!  24. Rh3 a5

— A characteristic position. A few years ago it was a kind of strategical trap: it arises in many lines of the Sicilian Defence. Black’s Knight is obviously stronger than White’s Bishop. The passed pawn e5 is actively supported by the Rooks. The win is still not simple, to tell you the truth, but it is a matter of time.

The simplicity and accuracy which have been demonstrated by Bebchuk make a good impression.

25. Rf1 Rac8  26. Bb5 Red8  
27. Qxe4 Nxe4  28. Re3 Rd4  
29. Kg1 f6  30. Rd3 Rc5  
31. Rxd4 exd  32. Bd3 Nd2  
33. Rd1 Nb3  34. Kf2 Ke7  
35. Kf3 Kd6  36. g4 Re5  
37. Be4 Kc5  38. Kf4 a4!  
39. h4 Kc4  40. Bd3+ Kd5  
41. g5 hxg+  42. hxg Nc5  
43. Bf1 Re4+  44. Kg3 Ke5  
45. gxh gxf  46. Rc1 Re3+  
47. Kg2 Ne4  48. Bb5 d3!  

— Here is it, that passed pawn which has made a “Knight jump” from e5 to d3. Now the win is near.

49. Bxa4 Re2+  50. Kf3 Kd4  
51. Rc8 Rf2+  52. Kg4 Rxb2

and Black won.
After five hours of play, the 4th game of the semi-final Candidates Match (Moscow, 1971) was adjourned and White sealed his 41st move. Commentators had a unanimous opinion: Korchnoy (White) has a positional advantage, the only problem is would it suffice for a win. Here is the adjourned position:

Diagram 50

According to a common rule, analysis of an adjourned game the same night, directly after the game, is not to be recommended — it causes bad sleep. However, in a match when one must continue the adjourned game the following day, it often becomes necessary to analyze in the evening, sometimes even through the whole night. Otherwise the allotted time may not suffice. Therefore, no wonder that after returning from the tournament hall and having had a slapdash supper, we (myself and Yuri Averbakh) sat at the board for analysis.

White’s advantage is certainly without doubt. What does it consist of?

First: Black is terribly cramped. In fact, he has only one active piece: the Rook. His Knight is very limited in action, the same could be said about his King. White’s pieces are more active, they have more freedom. One who has the more active pieces should seek to make use of this activity: bursting into the enemy camp, and attacking weak points. In our case, such a weak point existed in the pawn c7. But, while the Rook protects the pawn and its approaches, the White King hardly can come near, so the first thought in our analysis was, whether Black could “build a fortress” so as not to allow the White King to penetrate? In other words, we first analyzed what could happen if Black behaved passively.

41. Rg4+ Kf8

First we should have tried this move. The King retreats to the fortress. Nevertheless a new weakness in Black’s camp appears — the pawn h7.

42. h4 Ra7 43. Kb2 Rb7
44. Kb3 Ra7 45. Rg1
Preventing the invasion of Black’s Rook.
45. . . . Ra8 46. h5
With the dreadful threat h5–h6, so Black’s reply is forced.
46. . . . h6 47. b5 Ra5
48. Kb4 Ra2 49. Rc1 Ra7
50. Rc3 Ke8 51. Rg3! Kf8
If 51. . . . Ra1, then 52. Rg7! threatening 53. Rh7 and 54. Rh8+.
52. Ra3! Rxa3 53. Kxa3 Ke8
54. Kb4 Kd8 55. Ka5 Nc8
56. Bxc8 Kxc8 57. b6 and Black has nothing else but to resign.

Thus we have cleared up one of the most dangerous threats. White forces a favorable pawn endgame.

Of course, the line given above was not found at once, but all our efforts to defend Black’s position failed.

The passive behavior is unpromising. Black must find active means. Instead of 41. . . . Kf8 we tried 41. . . . Kh6, maintaining the possibility of attacking the pawn f5. What happens?

41. Rg4+ Kh6 42. Kc4 Rb8
43. Rh4+ Kg7

The retreat is forced: 43. . . . Kg5 44. Rxhr7 Nxf5 45. Rxc7 and the passed QB pawn is too dangerous.

44. b5 Ra8 45. Kb3 Ra1

Any delay may be fatal: 45. . . . Ra7 46. Ra4! Rxal 47. Kxa4.

Diagram 51

King’s race starts.

47. . . . Kh6 48. Ka5 Kg5 49. Ka6 Nxf5 50. Bxf5 Kxf5 51. Kb7 Ke5 52. Kxc7 f5 53. b6 f4 54. b7 f3 55. b8 (Q) and wins.

And what if Black avoids the exchange?

46. . . . Rb7 47. Kc4 Kh6 48. h4! Kh5 49. Ra8 Kg4 50. Rf8 with decisive gain of material.

Now back to the main line:

46. Rc4 Rb1+ 47. Kc3
Or 47. Ka4 Ra1+ 48. Kb4 Rb1+ 49. Ka5 Ra1+ 50. Ra4 Rc1 51. Ka6 Rc5 and White cannot win.
47. . . . Rc1+

Worse would be 47. . . . Rxb5 48. Rxc7 Kf8 49. Kc4 Rb1 (49. . . . Rb6 50. Ra7 threatening 51. Ra8+) 50. Rd7 Rf1 51. Rd6 Nxf5 52. Rd8+ and Black should have overcome many difficulties.

48. Kd3 Rxc4 49. Kxc4

Diagram 52

The White King stands one move farther from the pawn c7, and this difference is sufficient for Black to save the game.

49. . . . Kh6 50. Kb4 Kg5 51. Ka5 Nxf5 52. Ka6

The exchange of the minor pieces would lead to an easy draw: 52. Bxf5 Nxf5 53. Ka6 Ke5 54. Kb7 f5 55. Kxc7 f4 56. b6 f3 57. b7 f2 58. b8 (Q) f1 (Q) a.s.o.

56. Bxb5 Kxd5

— 52 —
Another interesting endgame. White’s task is to maintain his KR pawn and to prevent the Black King from coming to h8. But Black has two passed pawns. The eventual continuation is 57. Kd7 f5 58. Ke7 Ke5 59. Kf7 d5 60. Kg7 Ke4 61. Kxh7 d4 62. Kg6 f4 63. Kg5 f3 64. Kg4 f2 65. Kg3 Kf5! and draw.

At the 50th move, instead of Kb4, White could have played 50. h4, e.g. 50. . . . Kh5 51. Kb4 Kxh4 52. Ka5 Kg5 53. Ka6 h5 54. Kb7 h4 55. Kxc7 h3 56. b6 h2 57. b7 h1 (Q) 58. b8 (Q) Nxd5, and Black is not on the losing side anymore.

Another important conclusion is that the border between a draw and a loss is very narrow, the result may depend on a single tempo.

Could White try to gain the wanted tempo? Let us try (go back to diagram 50): 41. Rg4+ Kh6 42. Kc4 Rb8 43. Re4!, and the careless 43. . . . Rb7 loses after 44. Bd7 Ng8 45. Re8 Kg7 46. Be6 Nh6 (when the White Rook has penetrated into Black’s camp the rest is simple) 47. h3 Ra7 48. Kb3 Rb7 49. Re7+ Kh8 50. Rd7 Ra7 51. b5 Rb7 52. Kc4 Ra7 53. b6 a.s.o.

The active 43. . . . Kg5 also leads to no good: 44. h3! e.g. 44. . . . Nxf5 45. Rg4+ or 44. . . . Rb7 45. Bd7. Finally, after 44. . . . Kh6 45. Bd7 Ng8 46. Re3 Ra8 47. Kb5 the King reaches the pawn c7, or 46. . . . Kg5 47. Rg3+ Kh6 48. Ra3, and the Rook penetrates again.

The best seems to be 43. . . . Kg7, but then the continuation would be 44. Bd7 Kf8 45. Rg4! (Black cannot wait any more: the threat is h2–h4–h5) 46. Be6 Ra1 47. Kb5 Rc1 48. Rb4! Rxc4 (or 48. . . . Rd1 49. Rxc7 Nxd5 50. Rxb7 and Black is lost) 49. Kxc4 Kg7 50. Kb5 Kh6 51. Ka6 Kg5 52. Kb7 Nxf5 53. Kxc7 and the rest raises no questions.

If 43. Re4! makes it so difficult for Black, one should try anything better than 42. . . . Rb8. May be 42. . . . Ra7 is preferable, intending an immediate counter-attack along the QR file.

Another bundle of variations: 41. Rg4+ Kh6 42. Kc4 Ra7 43. Re4! Kg7 44. Bd7 Kf8 45. Rg4 Ra2! White cannot advance his pawn to h6 as Black’s Rook is active, e.g. 46. h4 Rc2+ 47. Kb3 Rd2 48. Be6 h5! 49. Rc4 Nxd5 50. Bxd5 Rxd5 51. Rxc7 Ke8! 52. Kc4 Rxf5.

Diagram 54
Black has even a pawn plus, but the remote passed pawn b4 is very dangerous.

53. b5 Kd8 54. b6 (threatening 55. Rc6 and 56. b7, but the salvation exists) 54. ... Rc5+ 55. Rxc5 dxc and 56. Kxc5 Kc8 57. Kd6 Kb7 58. Ke6 Kxb6 59. Kxf6 Kc6 60. Kg5 Kd6 61. Kxh5 Ke7 62. Kg6 Kf8, with a draw.

We could not find a win for White, but had no full guarantee of a draw as well. Black’s whole position hangs by a thread. Finally we came to the conclusion that, instead of 43. ... Kg7 43. ... Ra1 is best so as to have the possibility of 44. Bd7 Rc1+.

What we still should have analyzed was White King’s route to b5: 41. Rg4+ Kh6 42. Kc4 Ra7 43. Kb5.

Diagram 55

It would be too dangerous to let the King go farther: 43. ... Rb7+ 44. Ka6 Rb6+ 45. Ka5 Rb7 46. Rc4 Kg5 47. h4+ Kh6 48. Ka6 Rb6+ 49. Ka7 Rb5 50. Bd7 Rxd5 51. Rxc7 Nxf5 52. b5 a.s.o. The immediate counter-attack is best: 43. ... Ra1! 44. h4 (improving his pawn structure before taking active means) 44. ... Ra3 45. Re4! Ra7! 46. Bd7! (if 46. Kc4, then 46. ... Ra1! 47. Bd7 Rc1+ as we have already seen. Now White brings a pawn sacrifice but threatens to move his King to c6) 46. ... Nxd5 47. Kc6 Nb6! (Having analyzed all the moves by the Knight we came finally to the conclusion that this one would be best). 48. Be6 d5 49. Bxd5 (He must take the pawn; otherwise the Black Knight goes to c4 and then to e5 drawing the White King back) 49. ... Nxd5 50. Kxd5.

Diagram 56

The Rook-and-pawn endgame looks to be difficult for Black, as White’s pieces are very active. Nevertheless it is a draw.

50. ... Ra4!! 51. Kc6 If 51. Ke6, then 51. ... c5. 51. ... Kh5 52. Kxc7.

Black seems losing, but the unexpected move 52. ... h6!! clears everything: there is no defense against 53. ... Rxb4.

When you find such a nice variation your mood, quite naturally, improves, no matter that it is 5 a.m. on the clock. Thus, our analysis tells us that White does not win. But is there a guarantee that all is correct? In addition there always exists a possibility of error, or even a small inaccuracy.

Therefore all morning was spent on
review. We tried to and fro, here and there — no win for White. It is true, however, that this endgame is by no means easy for Black. White can try various plans, while Black must always be on the alert and well-timed with his counter-actions.

Now we had to learn what Korchnoy had found in this position, how deep had he managed to penetrate into its secrets. Which plan would he choose and, finally, which move was sealed? The answer to all these questions could be delivered after the resumption of play.

One may ask: is it necessary to work so hard, to analyze so much? Was it not better to look at the position briefly, to design an approximate plan, saving energy for the actual play over the board where all the problems would have to be solved? In a usual tournament, with a hard schedule, it really could be so. But in such a short match where a single point could be decisive — by no means. This position, apparently so simple, was — as you have seen — rich in various possibilities.

When I came to resume the game I learned that my opponent spent 37 minutes for sealing, and his remaining time was some 30 minutes with 15 moves to go. It was highly probable that he had worked a lot over the adjourned position as well.

41. Rh4 (37 minutes)

Speaking objectively, 41. Rg4+ is more accurate as it gains a tempo but, all in all, the difference is insignificant.

41. . . . Ra7(3) 42. Kb3(1) Ra1(5)
43. Rc4(0) Ra7(0) 44. b5(1)

Hence he has chosen the plan with b4–b5. The threat is 45. Ra4.

44. . . . Rb7(6) 45. Ka4(4) Ra7(8)

You have probably noticed that Black has spent 14 minutes for his last two moves: twice as much as he should have in average. This can be explained by the fact that I have discovered a threat missed in our analysis: b5–b6, e.g. 46. Kb4 Rb7 47. b6! Rxb6+ (47. . . . cxb 48. Kb5) 48. Ka5 Rb7 49. Ka6 Rb6+ 50. Ka7, and White wins the pawn c7 obtaining good winning chances. For example, 50. . . . Rb5 51. Rxc7 Kf8 52. Ka6 Rb2 53. Rd8+ Kg7 55. Re8 with a gain of the Knight. Therefore I had to find some other antidote over the board.

46. Kb4(0) Kh6(1)

Mutual cunnings. If 47. b6 cxb 48. Kb5, then 48. . . . Ra2 49. Rc7 (seems frightening, does it not?) 49. . . . Ra5+ 50. Kxb6 Nxd5+!! and Black gets out of it.

47. h3(16) Rb7(6)


48. Rh4+(0) Kg5(6) 49. Rg4+(0)

In time-trouble, Korchnoy avoids the hidden trap 49. Rhx7 Nxd5+! 50. Bxd5 c5+!; by the way, we have found it at home.

49. . . . Kh6 (0) 50. Kc4(0) Ra7(2)
51. Rh4+(1) Kg7(0) 52. Kb3(5) Ra1(17)

I decided to force matters, as I did not like 52. . . . Rb7 53. Rb4 Kh6 54. h4, threatening 55. Kc4 and 56. Ra4 with control over the QR file. However, the simplest way was 52. . . . Ra5! 53. Kb4 Ra1.

53. Rc4(0) Rb1+(0) 54. Ka3(2)


54. . . . Ra1+(0) 55. Kb4(0) Rb1+(0)
56. Ka3(1) Ra1+(2) 57. Kb3(10) Rb1(10)

The time-trouble is over, so there is no more need to hurry. The line 58. Kc3 Rc1+ 59. Kd4 Rxc4+ 60. Kxc4 Kh6 leads to the situations discussed above, therefore White must choose the next move:

58. Kc2(0) Rxb5(0) 59. Rxc7(0) Kf8(0) 60. Kd3(1) Rb3+(2)

This leads to the immediate draw. But 62. Kc3 Rf4  63. Rd7 Nxf5  64. Rf7+ Ke8 65. Rxf6 Nd4 gives no winning chances, and the attempt at avoiding checks by means of Kings' route to h5 is also senseless as after Rf4 the King would be trapped.

62. . . . Rxc4+(1)  63. Kxc4(0) Kg7(0)  64. Kb5(1) Kh6(2)  65. Kb6(1)
THE PROBLEM OF UNCOMFORTABLE OPPONENT

This is not a new problem. Sometimes a dislike of an opponent occurs rather sud-
denly, and disappears quite as mysteriously as well. How does one explain such an in-
compatibility of two persons who meet at the chessboard? It seems to be a fabulous
secret hidden behind seven veils. Almost every chessplayer has faced this dilemma,
and attempted to solve it within the limits of reasonable thought.

How? Maybe, this story, based on two
games played by me in 1978, will help you
to answer this question. The first game —
with L. Portisch who "used to be" uncom-
fortable for me, the second one — with B.
Gulko, for whom, I hope I am not quite
comfortable also.

During many years of my chess career
Lajos Portisch was — and remains — my
most difficult opponent. Years flew, we
played in tournaments which were suc-
cessful for one of us and less lucky for the
other. But one thing was permanent: every
game with Portisch was a tough experience
for me. Numerous draws mingled with
losses. It is true that there were not too
many losses, "only" four within 13 years,
but I was not far from losing several times
and never managed to win a single game.

So, when I won my first game against
Portisch in our Candidates Match, 1974, the
whole course of the game seemed colored
in rose paint for me. I thought I had played
very finely, adopted an important novelty,
and Portisch defended himself very per-
sistently and inventively. Later on, having
become cooler, I came to the conclusion,
that the game was as ordinary as it could
be, and there was practically no fight in it.
And, very probably, I have solved my old
problem of "uncomfortable opponent"
concerning Portisch. Now when I look
through our previous games I wonder if our
names are not confused in the scores.

But who knows, if the same problem will
disappear so easily for those who consider
me "uncomfortable"?

Portisch–Petrosian
The Nimzo-Indian Defence
Lone-Pine, 1978

1. d2–d4 Ng8–f6
2. c2–c4 e7–e6
3. Nb1–c3 Bf8–b4
4. e2–e3 0–0
5. Bf1–d3 d7–d5
6. Ng1–f3 b7–b6
7. 0–0 Bc8–b7

Playing against Portisch, especially with
Black, I feel discomfort in the opening every
time. When he sits at the chessboard his
whole appearance radiates a perfect
knowledge. While my decisions are born in
torments, his — at least judging from his
face — are all prepared "at home." I seem
to have no opening loop-hole he has not
duly discovered, and supplied with a
padlock. Every time I must keep pace with
him, often against my will.

It is true, however, that sometimes Por-
tisch must decide at the board in com-
paratively less investigated situations. My
opening choice in this game was evoked
by Spassky's successful novelty in the 14th
game of his match with Portisch (1977).
Spassky embarrassed Portisch, obtained
a fine position and won.

The system, I chose for this game, oc-
curred rarely in my games. I could have
expected it would be a kind of surprise
for Portisch. However the course of the
game shows that I was not quite right....
8. a2–a3 Bb4–d6

After 8... Be7 9. cxd exd 10. b4 Black should spend a tempo to play Bd6, as the Bishop belongs on this square. Yes, in this situation a tempo does not mean much, but strong players, unlike weak ones (to mention at least one different feature), do not like losing tempos — moreover, they like gaining tempos, even when such gain does not offer an immediate profit.

9. b2–b4

Diagram 57

9. d5xc4

"The only correct move," — exclaims Taimanov in his book “Nimzowitsch-Indisch bis Katalanisch,” edited in Berlin; he says White has an advantage in case of the natural reaction 9... a5 10. c5! (the exclamation mark is from his book) 10... axb 11. Na4 Be7 12. axb. He gives a single example, rather old (1958), from a semi-final of the USSR Championship. However, after 11. bxc 12. dxc Be7 13. axb c6 followed by 14... Nbd7 Black has a solid center and a playable position.

I think there is not much sense in protracted discussions about benefits of 9... a5, — at least because after 10. b5 Black cannot avoid capturing at c4 which transposes to usual lines.

10. Bd3xc4 a7–a5

The important link of Black’s plan of preparing the advance e6–e5. Either 11. Rb1 or 11. bxa offers nothing to White, so he gladly moves his pawn to b5 where it would blockade two Black pawns (QN and QB). If Black tries to eliminate the pawn b5 by means of c7–c6, White would capture at c6 and play a3–a4, so as to pass the blockading mission to the pawn a4 which would hold two pawns (QR and QN).

In addition we observe that White has an extra pawn in the center; thus, according to general considerations, his opening advantage should be significant.

Several years ago I analyzed this position a lot, wondering why White was not successful with it. I did not believe in conformity of this phenomenon to natural laws and tried to improve White’s play. . . . Strangely enough, always White stood so attractively and his positional pluses were so obvious, but when concrete play started (“White to move — Black to move”), it became clear that Black, developing his forces successfully, brought all White’s bright hopes to naught by good piece play.

11. b4–b5 Nb8–d7

12. Bc1–b2 e6–e5

In the game Spassky–Tal (the Alekhine Memorial Tournament, Moscow, 1975), White played 13. a4. Tal followed quite a different method of play, stubbornly refusing the natural advance e6–e5. After 13... Qe7 14. h3 Rad8 15. Qe2 Rfe8 16. Rad1 exd?! 17. Nxd4 he saw that the threat 17... Qe5 is imaginary because of 18. f4 Qxe3+ 19. Qxe3 Rxe3 20. Nf5; thus he played, coldbloodedly but forcedly, 17... g6 and managed to hold the position without much trouble.

13. Rf1–e1

Portisch played this without hesitating
much, and from his face I realized that he was not taken unawares.

13. . . . e5–e4
14. Nf3–d2 Qd8–e7

Diagram 58

15. Bc4–e2!

This move clarifies Portisch's idea.

Naturally enough, undermining the pawn outpost (e4) cannot be a strategical revelation for an experienced player, but how to do it? The straight-forward 15. f3 leads nowhere, as after 15. . . . exf 16. Nxf3 Ne4, no matter how White proceeds, Black holds the square e4 tooth and nails, being afraid of nobody and nothing! Recapturing on f3 with the pawn, White would sharpen the situation to the utmost, but nothing else. His seemingly elastic pawns would be almost immobile due to Black's active pieces. Before advancing pawns White must calculate every step very carefully, e.g. f3–f4 strengthens the Bishop on b7, while e3–e4 — that on d6, plus prospects of Nf6–h5–f4 and Qh4. . . . There are but few players who could take risks of playing g2xf3.

Portisch's idea is rather poisonous. He intends to play f2–f3 and after e4xf3 to recapture with the Bishop. White would permanently keep e4 under control, obtaining a guarantee of the safe advance of his K pawn. In this case, it would become clear that Black's Knights and Bishop are posted very unluckily. Therefore Black must raise his objections now so as to meet f2–f3 without heavy positional loss. The simplest way could be 15. . . . Ne8 in order to protect the pawn e4 by help from his neighbor. Unfortunately, this is merely a blunder: 16. Nxe4 Bxe4 17. Nxe4 Qxe4 18. Bf3; although 17. . . . Bxh2+ saves material, the continuation 18. Kxh2 Qxe4 19. Bf3 Qh4+ 20. Kg1 demonstrates a clear positional gain for White.

Black's minor pieces occupy, so to say, optimal places; the problem is how to post Rooks. I do not like having them on e8 and f8. So the choice is minimal — I must have them on d8 and e8. In which order should I move them? I gave my preference to 15. . . . Rad8 basing upon the following considerations:

1. I still could play Nf6–e8 followed by f7–f5;


The funniest of all is that I, by no means, thought I had produced the winning move.

15. . . . Ra8–d8
16. Qd1–c2 . . .

In the post-mortem analysis I learned that Portisch did not go into details of all those tactical complications, considering that
after 16. f3 Rf8 17. fxe Nxe4 18. Nxe4 Bxe4 19. Nxe4 Qxe4 20. Bf3 Qh4 21. g3 Qg5 he would have no hope for an advantage.

He was right!

16. . . . Rf8-e8
17. f2-f3 e4xf3
18. Be2xf3 Bb7xf3
19. Nd2xf3 Nf6-e4
20. Nc3xe4 Qe7xe4
21. Qc2xe4 Re8xe4
22. Nf3-d2 Re4-e6
23. e3-e4 . . .

Diagram 59

The whole successive series of moves was performed quickly, which fact should tell us something about polar opinions the opponents had of the final position.

It might seem that White, with his mighty and mobile central pawns and apparently steady pieces, would have a lasting initiative. However such an experienced player as Portisch should have been on the alert at least because Black went to this position so lightheartedly. Should have been, but wasn't perhaps because of playing against "comfortable" opponent.

23. . . . Nd7-c5

Some trick: 24. dxc fails to 24. . . . Bxc5+ followed by 25. . . . Rxd2, winning a pawn in an overwhelming position. White's situation is critical because of the threats Nc5-a4, Nc5-d3, Bd6-f4. Not only must he switch over to the defense, but he must do it in a particularly unpleasant atmosphere of a sudden surprise which forces him to search for drawing chances whereas until now he has been thinking of a win.


So or not so, in all these lines Black would have been faced with one of the most difficult problems in chess — the problem of choosing the best continuation. On the other hand, after the next move he had no choice. All he could do was capture the offered pawn, no matter what could happen after it.
24. Nd2-c4 Nc5xe4

The fate of the game is decided. Black has captured an important pawn making no concessions. The rest is, as often said, the matter of technique.

25. Ra1-c1 Bd6-f8!

A necessary move! White must be deprived of the possibility to make use of QB file after the exchange on d6.

26. Nc4-e5 Ne4-d6

27. a3-a4 f7-f6

28. Ne5-f3 . . .

28. Nc6 would be no better, the Knight’s position would be seemingly pretty, that is all.

28. . . . Re6xe1+

29. Nf3xe1 Rd8-d7

30. Ne1-f3 Nd6-f5

Step by step, Black achieves an ideal placing for his pieces. When the Bishop comes to d6 it not only relieves the Rook from defending the QB file, but also operates against the Kingside where Black has an extra pawn. The Knight is nicely placed on f5; after a while, it will be moved to another nice position, d5. Advancing his Kingside pawns, Black cramps his opponent to the utmost, in order to penetrate into the enemy camp with pieces when circumstances allow, and to attack his defenseless pawns. In the game, this honored duty was executed by the Black King.

31. Kg1-f2 h7-h5

32. Rc1-c2 g7-g5

33. Rc2-c4 Bf8-d6

34. g2-g3 Kg8-f7

35. Nf3-g1 Nf5-e7

36. Ng1-e2 Ne7-d5

37. Bb2-c1 Kf7-e6

38. Rc4-c2 Ke6-f5

39. Kf2-f3 g5-g4+

40. Kf3-f2 Rd7-h7

41. Rc2-d2 h5-h4

42. Kf2-g2 Kg5-e4

43. Rd2-d1 Nd5-e3+

44. Bc1xe3 Ke4xe3

45. Ne2-c3 h4-h3+

White resigned. After 46. . . . Rh5 he will be completely paralyzed.

Petrosian – Gulko

The Gruenfeld Defence

Vilnius, 1978

1. d2-d4 Ng8-f6

2. c2-c4 g7-g6

3. Nb1-c3 d7-d5

4. Ng1-f3 Bf8-g7

5. Qd1-b3 d5xc4

In general opinion, this giving up the center is almost necessary, although 5. . . . c6, protecting the pawn d5, also has sound foundation.

6. Qb3xc4 0-0

7. e2-e4 . . .

This is really necessary! Otherwise the early development of the White Queen would be of little sense.

7. . . . a7-a6

The fate of this move is amusing. It happened once in a Leningrad tournament but failed to be noticed by our theoreticians and players. A double fianchetto, “aggravated” by giving up the center . . . It really seems that Black is going too far. Such ideas are usually refuted at once.

In this case too.

Hungarian players — those who, in fact, introduced the whole idea 7. . . . a6 into wide practice — have experimented with the line 8. Qb3 b5 9. e5 Nfd7 or 9. . . . Ng4 leading to sharp play with chances for both sides. The most important idea which gave the right of living to the whole line was the proof that after 8. Bf4 Black, in spite of the attack on c7, could follow the general course: 8. . . . b5. After 9. Qxc7 Qxc7 10. Bxc7 Bb7 Black would have enough for the pawn; this has been proved in a few practical examples.
There are not many fighters in modern chess who like seeking for truth in sharp lines; in this case, White has given preference to a slight but safe advantage, rather than attempt refutation of Black's policy.

8. Bf1-e2 b7-b5
9. Qc4-b3 Bc8-b7
This is more quiet than 9... c5.
10. e4-e5 Nf6-d5
11. 0-0

Oleg Moisseev recommended 11. Bd2. However, after 11... Nxc3 12. Bxc3 (otherwise 11. Bd2 would be of no sense) 11... Bd5 followed by Nb8-d7 (intending to play c7-c5) Black, by simple means, obtains good play.

11. Nxc3
12. Qb3xc3

Diagram 60

This position has already occurred more than once, where Black continued 12... Bd5, and White responded 13. a4, bothering Black's Queenside and achieving some advantage.
12. Nb8-d7
13. Bc1-f4
I could hardly explain (first of all to myself!) why I rejected the natural continuation 13. e6 fxe 14. Ng5 Rf6 15. Qh3 Nh8 16. Be3, and the resulting position fits me very well. Probably it is an effect of the unexpected move 12... Nd7 whereas my mood was contented with a small but "safe" advantage. I have said already that, playing 8. Be2, White expected a quiet play whereas 13. e6 would sharpen it considerably.

About the next move: White expects f7-f6 and strengthens his pawn e5. Besides, he "invites" Black to play Nb6, as the eventual Nb6-d5 would gain a tempo. Often it is a pity that one cannot post more than one piece at a strong point! The Knight, coming to d5, would interpose the Bishop b7, and the advance c7-c5 would no longer be a bother.

13. Bf4-g3 f6xe5
14. Rf1-c1 Bd5-c6
15. Nf3-d2 f7-f6

Attacking the opponent’s outpost — pawn e5 — Black follows a complicated and ambitious plan. He thinks that White would hold the pawn trying, first of all, to maintain it at any price. The Bishop d5, protected by the pawn c6, is a nice sight. If it would be exchanged against White's Bishop the strategical situation might happen to be favorable for Black. White's central pawns would stand on the squares of their remaining Bishop's color; usually such a Bishop has the tendency of becoming if not hopelessly, bad, then at least not good. And one who owns such a Bishop often happens to feel weaknesses on the opposite-colored squares.

16. Bf4-g3 f6xe5
17. d4xe5 Qd8-b6
Black seems to have a lot of play, 18... Nxe5, is the threat. Therefore White's
response (practically forced) fully dulls his vigilance, and he fails to understand White's intentions. Instead of 16...fxe, he should have played 16...Nb6 with a playable position.

18. Bf2-f3 Ra8-d8

In fact, this is the losing move. I supposed that the natural course would be 18...e6 19. Bxd5 exd1 — namely by this pawn, while 19...cxd 20. Nf3 or 20. Qc7 would give White the upper hand. The point of recapturing by the central pawn consists in the fact that the pawn c6 interposes the square c7, and 20. Nf3 gives nothing because of 20...c5. If White captures on c6, he seems to have an advantage: 20. Qxc6 Qxc6 21. Rxc6 Nxe5 22. Bxe5 Bxe5 23. Rc2; however, 23...Rac8 24. Rac1 Rxc2 25. Rxc2 d4! 26. Nf3 d3 27. Rd2 Rc8 28. g3 Rc2 29. Rxd3 Bxb2 30. Rd8+ Kg7 31. Rd7+ Kg8 leads to a draw.

20. Nd2-f3 ...

Diagam 61

Now White's great positional advantage is obvious. He has grouped his major pieces on the QB file which has been opened. When these pieces penetrate to c6 or c7 they would find some food around.

20. ...

Rf8-f5

Any good advice would be dear for Black. Nevertheless 20... Bh6 21. Rc2 e6 was better than the text.

Now the natural 21. Nd4 would practically force the exchange sacrifice 21...Rxe5. In this case, the attempt at gaining a tremendous advantage fails: 22. Nc6 Rf5 23. Qd2 (or 23. Nxe7+ Kf7) 23... Re8 24. Bc7 Qb7 25. g4 Rf7. If 22. Bxe5, then 22...Nxe5 (rather than 22...Bxe5 23. Rd1) and White's advantage is still problematic.

21. Rc1-e1 ...

There is no need of being in a hurry. Having moved a Rook from the 8th rank Black has given his opponent the opportunity of re-grouping the Rooks, as Rc8 is no longer possible.

21. ...

b5-b4
22. Qc3-d2 Nd7-b8

Intending Nb8-c6 and Black's position would be decent, but ...

23. Nf3-d4 Bg7-h6

Realizing that any retreat of the Rook would be met by an adequate response (23...Rf8 24. Bh4 or 23...Rf7 24. Rac1), Black tries a tactical trick in order to divert his opponent from the strategical mainstream.

24. Qd2-d1!

The feeble Bishop is not a good equivalent for the powerful Knight.

24. ...

Rf5-f7
25. Qd1-g4 ...

It is obvious now that the square e6, vitally important, has become White's property.

25. ...

Bh6-d2
26. Re1-e2 h7-h5
27. Qg4-e6! ...
Diagram 62

One should not be an outstanding combinative player for discovering this piece "sacrifice." The only thing which has required some effort is foreseeing the method of transforming the resulting position, with an extra pawn, into a clearly won endgame.

After 32... h4  33. Re2xd2  Rg4-c4
Black is hopeless.

33. Re2xd2  Rg4-c4
The attempt of exploiting the limited mobility of White's Bishop 33... h4 failed because of 34. f3 Rc4  35. b3.

34. b2-b3  Rc4-c3
35. e5-e6!
An indifferent move (e.g. 35. h3) would be met by 35... e6. Later on Black would move his Rook to the QB file and play Nc6 (or Nd7); thereafter White would have to win the game for the second time...

35...  Nb8-c6
36. Bg3-c7  Rd8-c8
37. Bc7-b6  Rc8-b8
38. Bb6-e3!
This Bishop maneuver, in connection with 35. e6, is exactly what I have meant in my notes to White's 27th move. Now the game is over.

38...  Nc6-d8
39. Rd2xd5  Nd8xe6
40. Rd5xh5
Black resigned.

In the issue No. 13 of the Match-Bulletin Kasparov-Karpov (Moscow, 1987) grandmaster Gufeld tells what he thinks about the same problem.
Is there anybody who did not collect something in his youth? One collects postal stamps, another — coins, or emblems, or toy locomotives.

I have my own collection, which consists of my wins against grandmasters, and I am very eager about new items. But unfortunately, this collection has its disappointing gaps. For example, the score of my games with Petrosian is an overwhelming disaster for me: six losses plus three draws.

A possibility of playing a game against an outstanding grandmaster is not an everyday matter, so one should value every possibility.

In the Soviet Championship of 1969 I had a successful start. After it, I met Petrosian. I had White and thought that it would be a good opportunity to make our score less monotonous.

We (myself and Petrosian) were good friends in our everyday life. He came to our game, looking concentrated and purposeful. He realized my first wish of having a partial revenge, and prepared himself for a tough fight.

Gufeld – Petrosian
Three Knights

1. e2–e4 e7–e5
2. Ng1–f3 Nb8–c6

I felt that something trembled inside me: no, I will never be able to beat the “iron” Tigran! My hand reached out for the Knight and performed a timid move.

3. Nb1–c3...

Chessplayers know very well that this is a silent proposal of peace: 3. . . . Nf6 4. Bb5 Nd4 5. Nxd4 exd 6. e5 a.s.o.

However Petrosian played his next move with great confidence.

From the psychological point of view White is already lost. White is being terribly crashed.

4. d2–d4 e5xd4
5. Nc3–d5 Bf8–g7
6. Bc1–g5 Nc6–e7
7. Nf3xd4 c7–c6
8. Nd5–c3 h7–h6
9.Bg5–e3 Ng8–f6
10. Bf1–c4 0–0
11. Qd1–f3?...

Right was 11. e5 Ne8 12. Qd2, but I was already on my way downstream. . . .

11. . . . d7–d5!
12. e4xd5 . . .

Diagram 63
20. f2–f3  
21. Qd3×g6

Agony.

21. . . .  
White resigned.

After three years, I met Petrosian again in the Soviet Team Championship, in the match Georgia versus Moscow.

**Gufeld–Petrosian**

*The Sicilian Defence*

1. e2–e4  
2. Ng1–f3  
3. Nb1–c3  
4. g2–g3  
5. Bf1–g2  
6. c7–c5  
7. e7–e6  
8. a7–a6  
9. d7–d6  

An arithmetic approach — the number of mobilized pieces — does not work in this position which is closed enough.

5. . . .  
6. 0–0  
7. d2–d4  
8. Ng8–f6  
9. 5f3×d4  
10. Bc8–d7


9. Nd4–e2  
10. a2–a3  
11. h2–h3  
12. g3–g4  

In my later game against A. Zakharov Black played 12. . . b4, and after 13. axb

\[\text{Nxb4} \quad 14. \text{Ng3 Bc6} \quad 15. \text{g5 Ne8} \quad 16. \text{f4} \quad \text{Nc7} \quad 17. \text{Nh5! White seized the initiative.}\]

13. f2–f4  
14. Ne2–g3  
15. Kg1–h2

Diagram 64

It is always a torment to decide which square is safer for the King — h2 or h1 . . .

15. . . .  
16. Nc3–e2

Rather than 16. axb?, as opening files on the Queenside only helps Black.

16. . . . Ne8–c7

After 16. . . bxa? 17. Rxa3 the White Rook could come to the Kingside at a cosmic speed.

17. g4–g5  
18. Ng3–h5!

The Knight is at the edge, yes, but the Black King feels his hot breathing.

18. . . . Be7–f8

19. Qd1–e1  

Formal “All back.” He drives all his forces to the Kingside to oppose White’s aggression. The standardized counterblow 19. . . . d5 is bad here; after 20. e5 the threat Nh5–f6+ hangs over Black’s King.

20. f4–f5

“Major forces are obliged to attack” (W. Steinitz). Of course, White makes a positional concession here — the square e5.

20. . . .  
21. Ne2–f4  

-- 66 --
It is a difficult matter to criticize the former World Champion, especially in such a difficult situation; however, I think he should have maintained the tension in the center: 21. . . . Rac8 22. Be3 Qb5.

22. e4xf5 Bd7–c6
23. g5–g6?

A hazardous attempt which enables Black to get counter-chances. With 23. Nd5! Qb7 24. Nh4 Nc7 25. Qd1. White would capture the central height d5 obtaining an obvious advantage. However, I, in the heat of battle, lost my temper hoping to reach the enemy King.

23. . . . Bc6xg2
24. g6xf5+ Kg8xf7
25. Nf4xg2 Ra8–c8

Diagram 65

The haste brought “fruits”: Black’s counter-play on the QB file, as it “should” be in the Sicilian Defence.

26. a3xb4 a5xb4
27. Bc1–e3 Qb6–b5
28. Ra1–a7+?

This is a grave error already. White could have maintained a slight advantage by playing 28. c3 bxc 29. bxc Rd7 30. Bd4. Now he must content himself with the role of defender.

28. . . . Rc8–c7
29. Nh5–f4 Rc7xa7
30. Be3xa7 Rd8–c8

How to protect the pawn c2? If 31. Rf2, then 31. . . . Rxc2!

31. c2–c3!
Relatively the best chance.

31. . . . b4xc3
32. b2xc3 Rc8xc3
33. Qe1xc3 Qb5xf1
34. Qc3–c8 . . .

As you see I am not embarrassed, I am threatening a checkmate!

34. . . . Qf1–c4
35. Qc8–b7+ Kf7–g8
35. . . . Qc7 is worse: 36. Qd5+.

36. Nf4–e6 Qc4–c6
37. Qb7–b3 d6–d5
38. Ne6xf8 Kg8xf8

Actively placed pieces compensate a small material loss for White.

39. . . . Ne5–c4
40. Qb3–f3 Ne8–f6

In spite of minus pawn, the position is drawish; Petrosian’s offer to make peace was gladly accepted. This was my last game with the great chessplayer.
THE POSITIONAL EXCHANGE SACRIFICE

My intention is to give you some idea of a chessplayer's laboratory, — how tournament wins and losses are born. The topic, the positional exchange sacrifice, is both interesting and difficult. The exchange sacrifice (provided it is a real sacrifice) belongs to complicated weapons. It occurs in games by players of various strength. My opinion is that the main problem, when one makes such a decision, it is first of all of a psychological character. Our knowledge of relative strength of chess pieces is acquired at our very first steps in chess. A beginner is taught during his very first lessons that the strength of pieces is measured by pawns. A minor piece is equal to three pawns; in other words, if you have three pawns as compensation for a Knight or a Bishop you have a sufficient equivalent. A Rook is equal to four pawns or to a minor piece plus a pawn; a piece plus two pawns are, as a rule, good enough. When a player makes his choice this involuntary knowledge reduces his vision; he mechanically rejects moves which put a stronger piece under attack of a weaker one. (This is why he never thinks about moving his Queen to a square controlled by a pawn,— or a Rook to a square controlled by a Bishop, so as the capture can be performed without any immediate penalty.) This is the greatest psychological difficulty in the course of a chess game. (See Diagram 66.)

This position occurred in my perhaps most famous game with an exchange sacrifice; it has become a teaching aid, a reader item. I played Black against S. Reshevsky (Candidates Tournament, 1953). The situation is very tense and complicated, materially balanced. So-called dynamic balance exists, with even chances for both sides in attack and defense. White has a strong pawn center which would smash Black's position if put into motion. On the other hand, it is not easy to advance White's central pawn; no use of e5—e6 and no sense of d4—d5 (the square d5 is protected). Therefore I was satisfied with this position until I reached it. But when it stood on the board I realized that Black's situation is rather difficult. You may ask, why. Because Black's pieces are posted passively, limited strictly to defense. White can prepare the advance of his Q pawn till d6, throwing Black's pieces back and achieving a winning position. On the other hand, White has the possibility of advancing his KR pawn: h2—h4, threatening h4—h5—h6. If Black will react by means of h7—h5 or h7—h6 he would create weaknesses on his K-side giving White a good
attacking opportunity; the Bishop b2 will go
to c1 and join the main forces. I realized that
moving my Knight to d5 I would change the
situation completely so as to make it very
favorable instead of difficult. White's pawns
would be blockaded; his Bishop on b2
would be very poor; after eventual b5–b4
Black could obtain a passed, very power­
ful pawn supported by Nd5 and Bg6.
However, it is very difficult to bring the
Knight to d5. This could be done via b6, c7,
e7. But a Knight maneuver to b6 or c7 would
take a lot of time; White plays Bg4–f3 and
d4–d5, obtaining a winning position. Of
course the idea of moving the Knight to e7
is highly welcomed, but how to do it? First
I should go away with the Rook, but where?
Supposing so: 25. . . . Rb7 26. Bf3
(threatening d4–d5), or even 26. e6
Ne7 27. Bf3 Nd5 28. Bxd5 Rxd5
29. Qf3, and the Rook d5 cannot go away
because another Rook hangs, whereas
29. . . . fxe loses to 30. Qxd5.

I spent a good deal of time thinking over
this position, and when I found the right
move I felt kind of amused. The move was
so simple, that there was no doubt about
its correctness. I overcame the psycho­
logical barrier mentioned above and put my
Rook under a fire of White's Bishop.

25. . . . Re6

"Ingenious play by Reshevsky and iron
logic by Petrosian make this game one of
the real gems of the tournament." (D. Bronstein).

If White plays 26. Bxe6, he could not pre­
vent Nc6–e7–d5 (after 27. . . . fxe). His
extra exchange plays perfectly no role.
All files are closed, White's pawns are im­
mobilized, Black's threat is the above­
mentioned Knight rout followed by advance
of the Q-side pawns.

26. a4 Ne7

Black ignores White's trick of provoking
26. . . . b4? The idea was 27. d5 Rxd5
28. Bxe6 fxe 29. Qxc4 and Black is in
a precarious situation; the position is
opened and all White's pieces have a lot
of play.

27. Bxe6 fxe 28. Qf1 Nd5
29. Rf3 Bd3

If White does not give the exchange
back on d3 and plays e.g. 30. Qf2, Black
has a fine play after b5–b4. The most
important is that White's material plus
has no practical sense.

Reshevsky played 30. Rxd3. The game
went 30. . . . cxd 31. Qxd3 b4 32.
cxb. Here White could have played 32. c4
obtaining a pawn phalanx in the center.
Reshevsky preferred a safe continuation;
32. c4 could be met by 32. . . . Nb6
followed with Nxa4, and Black would have
two passed pawns. All this would lead to
an extremely sharp play; Reshevsky throws
the idea away and the game ends in a draw.

32. . . . axb 33. a5 Ra8
34. Ra1 Qc6 35. Bc1 Qc7
36. a6 Qb6 37. Bd2 b3
38. Qc4 h6 39. h3 b2
40. Rb1 Kh8 41. Be1.

Draw agreed.

Before we pass to the second position I
would like to repeat that the first and main
difficulty with positional exchange
sacrifices is the psychological prejudice
when one has to give up a Rook for a minor
piece. Another difficulty is that you give up
something not being forced to do so. What
made me play 25. . . . Re6 in that game
with Reshevsky? I could prepare an air-hole
for my King (h7–h6) plus make some other
useful move, landing in a perfectly hopeless
situation. Therefore I had to foresee the
eventual course of the game and take
necessary means beforehand.
This position occurred in my game with Gligoric (Olympiad, 1962). I played White. An experienced player would tell at once that White's situation is rather difficult. Black's pieces are very active, he has mobile pawns (K and KB); if he advances his K pawn (e.g. after Rf6 and Raf8) White would be in great danger. Usually if one's opponent has hanging pawns one should try to provoke an advance of a pawn in order to blockade them occupying the weak square before the back pawn (in our case — e4, as Black has already advanced the KB pawn). But now, the square e4 is beyond White's disposition because of the very favorable combination of Black's pieces (Nc5, Bg6).

25. . . . Ra6
He could play 25. . . . Rf6 followed by 26. . . . Raf8. The text move is more inventive: Gligoric moves his Rook to f6 via the 6th rank and avoids any need of calculating consequences of d5–d6.

26. Bf3
White might seem to be making a mistake as now 26. . . . e4 could follow with a gain of tempo. However White's response would be 27. Qd4, and 27. . . . Nd3 would be met by the same exchange sacrifices as in the actual game but the pawn e4 would hang. Or 27. . . . Qe7 28. Re2 with a very sharp play.

Gligoric has made a quiet move.

26. . . . Raf6
White's position seems completely hopeless. Black intends to play e5–e4 (possibly preceded with b7–b6). White seems to have no way of taking the square e4 under control because his Rooks are misplaced and cannot be moved to the K file: 27. Re2 Bd3, or 27. Re1 Nd3, apparently with dark prospects for White.

But nevertheless I have played 27. Re1! A purely positional exchange sacrifice. And again White does not wait to make a decision. He takes it because he has foreseen eventual consequences and realizes what could happen.

27. . . . Nd3 28. Rfe Nxe1
29. Qxe1
The pawn e5 hangs. If Black gives it up White could have a pawn as compensation for the quality.

29. . . . Re8 30. c5
Yes, Black has the exchange extra, but if you have time to consider this position attentively, trying some lines, you should feel that the material plus means nothing. Anyway, Gligoric failed to find something better than 30. . . . Rff8. I responded with 31. Ne4, and he offered a draw. There is no sense for White to reject this offer, he has no reasons to play for a win. Draw agreed.

Another example.
This position is very interesting from a psychological aspect. White has an obvious positional advantage. He makes his move, but after my response he thinks some 10 minutes looking at me all the time. He cannot decide whether I have sacrificed an exchange or blundered it away. Finally, after the game, Portisch said he had decided that it was a blunder; therefore he took the exchange and got a bad position.

In an objective chess sense the situation was typical. Black had a backward pawn e7, White — the strong Knight on c6. The usual method for White is pressure (by Rooks) along the K file which forces e7-e6; after the exchange on e6 Black has new troubles. Without hurry, through positional transformations, White increases his positional plus. The natural order of moves could be Re1 followed by Bf4 or Bg5, depending on Black's reaction, so as to exercise a lasting pressure which could grow step by step.

Instead of it, Portisch played 24. Bg5, attacking the pawn e7. Now Black could have played 24. . . . Bf6, or 24. . . . Nf6, or even 24. . . . Nb8, protecting the attacked pawn. The move Black cannot dream about is, naturally, f7-f6. But after White's inaccuracy (24. Bg5) the idea of e7-e5 fascinated me. If White takes en passant: 25. dxe, Black can hold this position; he recaptures by the Rook, he has the strong Bishop g7, another Rook goes to e8, the Knights are good etc. A playable position.

After 24. . . . e5 Portisch came finally to the conclusion that I had blundered the exchange away. He played 25. Be7, the game continued 25. . . . f5 26. Bxf8 Nxf8.

The position has been changed radically within two moves. White has a Rook for a minor piece but no active play: all the files are closed, while Rooks are valuable only when they operate on open files. The Black pawn stands on e5, not on e7, so the White Knight c6 is very beautiful, but nothing else. Situations might arise where Black could have an extra piece in action. Unfortunately I failed to win this game, although Black had undoubtedly the edge.

27. Be2 Bh6
Not the best. Black should have played 27. . . . h5 first

28. Rc2 Bc8
The Bishop is moved to an active diagonal.

29. Nc3 Nfd7 30. Re1 Nf6
31. Bf1
(See Diagram 69.)

Here I was a bit hasty. Of course, I should have taken some prophylaxis like 31. . . . Kh8. But I played 31. . . . f4.

Such moves require great caution. The pawn pair e5-f5 has become less mobile, and the pawn e5 can be blockaded.
Naturally, I had taken into consideration that my pieces (Nc5, Nf6, eventually Bf5) kept the square e4 under control, so I hoped to play e5–e4 safely.

32. Rce2 Rf8  33. Na4
White seeks for exchanges so as to weaken the pressure.

33. . . . Nxa4  34. Qxa4 Nd7
35. Ne7+
I have overlooked this simple move.

35. . . . Kh8  36. Nxc8 Qxc8
37. Qa3 Nc5  38. Qf3 Qf5

Every chess player has memorable games which are especially precious for him. My game with Mikhail Tal (the XXV USSR Championship, 1958) is memorable for me as a creative achievement rather than a sporting success. Some chess players are proud of almost every game they have played; some have enough self-criticism. I must say that, as a rule, I am seldom satisfied with my own play. The game with Tal is one of those which have brought me pleasure, due to a successfully performed idea.

White has a great positional advantage. He practically has an extra passed pawn d5. Right now, it is not so important because it can be blockaded at d6, d7, even d8, therefore it is not directly dangerous. But when the game will be transposed into endgame (quite a natural perspective) the passed, well-protected pawn can be decisive. How should Black defend his position? At the moment he is threatened by nothing. He can play Bd6, Nd7, f6, Rf7, another Rook to f8. But such a passive behavior, against White’s good play, will inevitably lead Black to a difficult situation.

Experienced players know that, in a cramped position, the main trouble often happens to be the poorer activity of Rooks. E.g. White advances his K-side pawns, supported by the Rooks from f1 and g2; the Black Rooks are limited to the 7th and 8th rank, waiting till the game will be opened.

Here I managed to elaborate a rather interesting plan of defense. I liked the plan, I like it now. I hope it is instructive for everybody.
Tal played 25. Qf3, my response was 25... Rd6.

This move seems queer. According to strategical principles, the stronger the blockading piece the less it fits this role. E.g. if it is a Queen, in case of being attacked by any piece you must move it away. A Rook feels discomfort being attacked by a minor piece. But my idea was somewhat different.

26. Nb3 Nd7 27. Raa1 Rg6

This is the idea invented and beloved by me. Black foresees that his Rook, being left "at home," would be too motionless, and "drags out" one of them in order to supply it with active functions. Of course, Tal could choose another plan — not the one he followed in the game — e.g. Nd2-f1-g3-f5, but it would then be some other game. Anyway, I think the Rook stands on g6 well enough. Our actual game was very interesting, as you will see.

28. Rf1 Bd6 29. h4

Of course, I could have played 29... Rf6, exchanging the Rook, but I repeat this was not my idea.

29... Qd8 30. h5 Rf6 31. Qg4

What springs to mind first of all? In 1958, I played a move which would possibly skip my mind were it today. I would take on f1, and the result would be either draw, or loss. But then my mind worked some other way, so 31... Rf4.

The same method: a Rook, by no means forced, goes to a square attacked by a minor piece. Of course, if Tal realized all the consequences he would be satisfied with a gain of a pawn: 32. Rxf4 exf 33. Bxf4 Bxf4 34. Qxf4 Qe7. Black would be a pawn down, but the position quite unclear. His Knight would be able to go to e5, the pawn d5 would be stopped. I thought this situation would be better than a cramped position with a material balance.

32. Bxf4 exf 33. Nd2

This Knight is the only White piece which can fight for the square e5, so Tal wants to move it to f3. Perhaps Nc1-d3, with the same idea, would be better.

33... Na5 34. Qxf4

White is not forced to capture this pawn. He could play e.g. 34. Qe2. Then Black would have quite a number of possibilities: 34... g5, 34... Qh4. It is hard to say that White's extra exchange would be tangible. Tal realized that the events were taking a bad turn for him, so he tried to complicate the matters.

34... Nxc4 35. e5 Nxe5 36. Ne4

By means of counter-sacrifices White has opened files for his Rooks. However Black has plenty of counter-chances.

36... h6 37. Rae1 Bb8 38. Rd1 c4.

White is already faced with great difficulties: the threat is 39... Ba7+ followed by Ne5-d3 with attack against his

Diagram 71
King. Moreover, when the Knight comes to d3 the White Rook is interposed and the pawn d5 is in danger. Tal seeks defending resources.

39. d6 Nd3 40. Qg4 Ba7+
41. Kh1 f5 (the sealed move).

The line 42. Rxf5 Rxf5 43. Qxf5 Qh4+ 44. Qh3 Qxe4 is rather unpleasant for White, but he finds 42. Nf6+.

The Knight is taboo in view of the check from c4. What followed is a tactical outburst.

42. . . . Kh8 43. Qxc4 Nxb2
44. Qxa6 Nxd1 45. Qxa7 Qxd6
46. Qd7 Qxf6 47. Qxd1 Rb8

Black has good winning chances, but I failed to exploit them, and the game ended in a draw.

48. Rf3 Ra8 49. Qe1 Rxa5
50. Qxb4 Re5 51. Qf4 Kh7
52. Kh2 Rd5 53. Rf1 Qg5
54. Qf3 Re5 55. Kg1 Rc5
56. Qf2 Re5 57. Qf3 Ra5
58. Kh2 Kh8 59. Kg1 Ra2
60. Qd5 Rc2 61. Qa8+ Kh7
62. Qf3 Rc1 63. Rxcl Qxc1+
64. Kh2 Qc7+
66. g4 fxg4 67. Kg4 Qg5
68. Kh3 Qf6 69. Qe4+ Kg8
70. Qe8+ Qf8 71. Qxf8+ Kxf8
72. Kg4 Kf7 73. Kf5.

Draw agreed.

Those who want to take some exercises in calculation technique (especially young players will profit from it) are advised to study this game, starting from the 38th or 39th move. A lot of interesting variations; try to find them without looking at the chessboard.

The sacrifices we have seen were for defense. However this tactical weapon can be used for attack as well.

Playing the Sicilian Defence by Black, I sacrificed my Rook on e4 several times — a typical operation. Three examples follow.

Diagram 72

My game with Vladimir Dunaiev (the USSR School Championship, 1946) is the first example. My opponent is well known to many: he is political commentator of Moscow TV.

19. . . . Rxe4!

If 20. Bxe4 Bxe4, White’s position would be obviously bad: Black retreats with this Bishop along the great diagonal and plays Qc6. In addition to it, Black’s King is still not castled, so h7–h6 is possible (the KR file will be opened). Therefore White plays 20. c4 first, in order to take the Rook by his Knight (after Na4–c3).

20. . . . h6! 21. g6?

This move is bad, — my opponent was then young and inexperienced. He should have played 21. Nc3 Rxe3 22. Qxe3 hxg2 23. fxg2 Ne5 24. Bxc6+ Qxc6, although Black would be more than compensated for the exchange.

21. . . . f5 22. Nc3 Nf6
23. Bxe4 fxe 24. Rad1

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One who has some experience would have played 24. f5, fighting for the square d5.

24. ... d5 25. cxd exd
26. f5 d4 27. Bf4 Qc8
28. Ne2 Qxf5t 29. Bg3 Qxg6
30. Nf4 Qf7 31. Qc2 g5
32. Ne2 d3. White resigned.

The next example is from my game against the experienced Rumanian master Troianescu (Bucarest, 1953).

Diagram 73

25. ... Rxe4 26. Bxe4 Bxe4

Why Black sacrificed the exchange, in this and in the previous example, so “light-heartedly”? Because he got for his Rook, in addition to a minor piece, a pawn. And, “ceteris paribus” a minor piece plus a pawn are a good compensation for a Rook.

Black has two Bishops now. His light-squared Bishop is particularly strong, while the White Rooks have no operational freedom. It is quite clear that Black will strengthen his position and increase the pressure. The further course of the game is rather interesting.

27. Nc2 d5 28. Nd4 b4
29. cxb axb 30. a4

Diagram 74

Estimating this position from afar one could be afraid of sacrificing an exchange. White has a passed pawn, a strong Knight on d4, the QB file is opened, a Rook will protect the passed pawn from a1. However White’s King stands badly, this is what counts. Black should have foreseen the Bishop maneuver to c5; after it all White’s pluses are obviously unimportant, whereas the heaven over his King is growing dark.

The most stubborn method is 30. h4 so as to play Kh2, where the King would be more safe. It is true, however, that Black, with his positional advantage and sufficient compensation for the exchange, can find some new possibilities, e.g. e6–e5 fxe Bxe5, and the Bishop works against White’s King again.

30. ... Qa7 31. Qf2

A little trap: the threat is 32. Nxe6.

31. ... Rc8 32. b3 Bf8!

Bishop’s arrival to c5 will cause great troubles for White.

33. Nb5 Qa6 34. Qe2 Qb6+
35. Kf1
A nice position Black has, but how to win it? By means of breaking through the QB file? All the squares are under fire. Direct play for mate? Then we should try to move our pieces nearer. But if 35...Bc5, then 36. Rc1: after all, White has an extra exchange. The Knight on b5, is protected and safe.

Happily enough, here is a possibility of another exchange sacrifice which maintains Black’s advantage.

35...Rc3!
The threat is Rf3+; in addition, the pawn b3 hangs.

36. Nx3 bxc3 37. Rc2
Or 37. Rd3 Bf5 38. g4 Bxd3 39. Qxd3 Qxb3 with a winning position.

37...Qxb3 38. Rec1 Bb4

My advice is to consider this position more attentively. Many players are terribly afraid of giving up an exchange, but what use is it if the White Rooks have no decent moves? They must stand and wait until Black will take them, while Black has plenty of ways to strengthen his position.

39. g4 Bxc2 40. Rxc2 Qxa4

Now the situation is obvious enough, and only elementary accuracy is required.

41. f5 exf 42. gxf g5
43. h4 Bc5 44. hxg Qf4+
45. Ke1 Qg3+ 46. Kd1 Qg1+
47. Qe1 Qxe1+ 48. Kxe1 hxg
49. Ke2 Bd4 50. Ra2 Kg7
51. Kd3 Be5 52. Ra5 Kf6
53. Rxd5 Kxf5 54. Ke3 f6
55. Rc5 Kg4 56. Rc4+ Kg3

Finally, another position from my most beloved ones: the game with Bruno Parma (Moscow, 1971).

Diagram 75

In this Sicilian Defence, an attack on the pawn e4 along the 4th rank from the squares b4, c4 even d4 is quite a usual matter. But the idea, which I managed to discover in this game, is interesting mainly due to its paradoxical character.

21...Rh5

This move seems to be absurd. The Rook will be surrounded by White’s pieces, when the Queen goes away, g2–g4 threatens, and what should Black do with his Rook at all?

22. Qf3 e5!

This move is necessary. Black intends to attack the pawn e4, in one form or another. An object of attack should be first fixed and deprived of mobility; then follows the attack itself.

23. f5

The Rook is posted queerly, to say the least.

23...d5

Attacking the pawn e4 White cannot capture on d5 in view of 24...e4.

24. Nd2
The general exchange on e4 (24. . . . 
27. dxe4) leads to the position which tells 
clearly that Black's idea has been wrong. 
The Knight b5 is wonderful, the pawn e5 
is attacked and the Rook h5 is out of play. 
However the idea of the Rook maneuver 
was quite different from this.

24. . . . Rh4! 25. g3 dxe

After 27. Bxe4 Nxe4, similarly to my 
game with Trojanescu, the diagonal h1–a8 
would be weak, another Bishop goes to c5, 
Black develops a strong pressure and the 
missing exchange means nothing. 

27. Rxe4 Qd8 28. Rfe1 Rc8
No need of being hasty.

29. Rfe2 Qd5

We have fallen into mutual time-trouble. 
Everything seems easy, simple, understand-
able when a game is being demonstrated, 
while when it is being played it takes a lot 
of effort, nerves, time. No wonder that prac-
tically in all the games, we have seen, 
there was time-trouble.

30. b3 h6 31. Kg2 Qd7
32. h3 Bc5 33. h4 h5
34. Kh3 Bb6

While in the game with Portisch White's 
Knight was out of play on c6, here we have 
such a Knight on b5.

On the decisive field of battle Back has 
an overwhelming advantage.

35. Kh2 (an error in time-trouble) 
35. . . . g6 36. fxg Ng4+
38. Kg2 f5. White resigned.

Summing up, I would like to repeat that 
the positional exchange sacrifice is very 
effective and strong. But it requires suffi-
cient experience. Do not be hypnotized by 
the relative force of a Rook. The decision 
comes from an actual evaluation of forces 
and positional factors.

SUPPLEMENT

The preceding scores of the games from 
this article up to the diagrammed positions.

Reshevsky – Petrosian
The Nimzo-Indian Defence
1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6
3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e3 0–0
5. Bb3 a6 6. Nf3 c5
7. 0–0 Nc6 8. a3 Bxc3
9. bxc b6 10. cxd exd
11. Bb2 c4 12. Bc2 Bg4
15. Qxd2 Bh5 16. f3 Bg6
17. e4 Qd7 18. Rae1 dxe
19. fxe Rfe8 20. Qf4 b5
21. Bd1 Re7 22. Bg4 Qe8
23. e5 a5 24. Re3 Rd8

Petrosian – Gligoric
The King's Indian Defence
1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6
3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6
5. Be2 0–0 6. Nf3 e5
7. d5 Nb8 8. 0–0 Nc5
9. Qc2 a5 10. Bb5 h6
13. exf gxf 14. f4 exf
15. Bxf4 Ne5 16. Nf3 Ng6
17. Be3 Qe7 18. Qd2 f4
21. Bd4 Bf5 22. Rf2 Bg6
23. Raf1 Qg5 24. Bxe5 dxe

Portisch – Petrosian
The English Opening
1. c4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Nc3 g6 4. e3 Bg7
5. d4 d6 6. Be2 cxd
7. exd Nf6 8. d5 Nb8

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9. 0–0 0–0
10. Be3 Na6

11. Nb5 b6
12. Nfd4 Bb7

13. Bf3 Nd7
14. Qd2 Ne5

15. Be2 Qc8
16. Rac1 Nc5

17. b4 Ne4
18. Qd1 a6

19. Na3 a5
20. b5 Qc7

21. Ne3 Ra8
22. Nb1 Nd7

23. Bf3 Nc5.

Tal – Petrosian
The Ruy Lopez

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6

3. Bb5 a6
4. Ba4 Nf6

5. 0–0 Be7
6. Re1 0–0

7. Bb3 0–0
8. c3 d6

9. h3 Na5
10. Bc2 c5

11. d4 Qc7
12. Nbd2 Bd7

13. Nf1 Nc4
14. Ne3 Nxe3

15. Bxe3 Be6
16. Nd2 Rfe8

17. f4 Rad8
18. fxe dxe

19. d5 Bd7
20. c4 Rb8

21. a4 b4
22. a5 Rf8

23. Ba4 Bxa4

Dunaev – Petrovian
The Sicilian Defence

1. e4 c5
2. Nf3 d6

3. d4 cxd
4. Nxd4 Nf6

5. Nc3 e6
6. Be2 a6

7. a4 Be7
8. Be3 Qc7

9. Nb3 b6
10. f4 Bb7

11. Bf3 Nbd7
12. 0–0 Rc8

13. g4 Nc5
14. Nxc5 bxc

15. g5 Nd7
16. a5 Rb8

17. Qd2 Bc6
18. Na4 Rb4

19. b3.

Trolanscu – Petrosian
The Sicilian Defence

1. e4 c5
2. Nf3 d6

3. d3 Nc6
4. Nbd2 g6

5. g3 Bg7
6. Bg2 e6

7. 0–0 Nge7
8. Re1 0–0

9. c3 b6
10. Nf1 Ba6

11. d4 cxd
12. Nxd4 Ne5

13. Bg5 h6
14. Qa4 Bb7

15. Bxe7 Qxe7
16. Rad1 Rfc8

17. Ne3 Rc5
18. f4 Nc6

19. Nxc6 Bxc6
20. Qc2 Rd8

21. Qe2 Qb7
22. Qc2 b5

23. Rd2 Rc4
24. a3 a5

25. Ne3.

Parma – Petrovian
The Sicilian Defence

1. e4 c5
2. Nf3 Nc6

3. d4 cxd
4. Nxd4 Qc7

5. Nc3 e6
6. Be3 a6

7. f4 b5
8. Nb3 d6

9. Bd3 Nf6
10. 0–0 Be7

11. Qf3 Bb7
12. a4 b4

13. Nb1 a5
14. N1d2 0–0

15. Kh1 Nb8
16. Nd4 Nbd7

17. Nb5 Qb8
18. Rae1 Rc8

19. Qh3 Nc5
20. Bxc5 Rxc5


If my lecture will help you play chess a little bit better, I shall consider my task fulfilled.
THE PETROSIAN VARIATION

One of the most important methods of playing White in the King's Indian Defence has become, in the last two decades, development of QB to g5.

This pin may not seem dangerous for Black, at least because White cannot strengthen the pressure produced by his Bishop. In addition, Black's Queen can easily escape from the pin by means of Qb6 or Qa5 initiating Q-side actions; or can stay on more modest squares inside his own camp, such as c7 or e8.

On the other hand, attacking White's Bishop by the move h7-h6, creates a problem for his opponent: in which direction should he retreat? To h4? Then the Bishop will very probably appear on g3 where it should be posted rather strangely and not quite luckily. Or should he find himself a place on the diagonal c1-h6? But what was the reason for Bg5 in that case?

Diagram 76

The main difference between these two positions consists in the fact that the square c5 is caulked securely in the case #1 (Diagram 76) and free in the case #2 (Diagram 77).

It is a great difference.

We know from the practice with the King's Indian Defence that in case 1 the black pawn on c5 is a buffer which softens White's pawn assault on the Queenside and helps Black's counterplay on the Kingside.

In case 2 the Black Knight has a more or less safe outpost at c5 (after a7-a5) and becomes, beside Bg7, the most important character of the whole action.

Diagram 77

Geller –Ljubojevic
The Interzonal Tournament
Petropolis, 1973

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 c5
3. d5 g6 4. Nc3 Bg7
5. e4 d6 6. Nf3 0–0
7. Be2 e5 8. Bg5 h6!
Diagram 78

If Black does not want to tolerate the Bishop on g5 it is best to attack it immediately, as soon as it has appeared there. The reason is that if Black makes an indifferent move (e.g. 8 . . . a6) White can respond with 9. Nd2 so as to have, in case of 9. . . . h6, the possibility 10. Be3. Here the Bishop stands ideally in the King’s Indian.

9. Bh4

Here Black disposes of the probably best opportunity of playing g6–g5 followed by Nf6–h5–f4.

This plan occurred in many games.

A) 9 . . . g5 10. Bg3 Nh5

A1) Gilgoric – Langeweg, Hamburg 1965:

11. Nd2 Nf4 12. 0–0.

In spite of the loss of time, I would rather suggest the postponement of castling: 12. Bf1 or 12. Bf3; both alternatives are equally good. Unfortunately, the most ambitious continuation 12. Bg4 fails because of 12. . . . Nd3+ (12 . . . Nxg2+, on the contrary, gives White a lot of good possibilities) 13. Kf1 Nxb2 14. Qf3 Bxg4 15. Qxg4 Qa5, and White has no adequate compensation for a pawn. 12. . . . Nxe2+

Black gives up the strong Knight position f4, hoping to obtain a tenable position. However, this method can be hardly recommended, as Black will be limited to a passive defense: 13. Qxe2 Nd7 14. f3 f4 15. exf Nf6 16. Bf2 Bx5 17. Nde4 Qe7 18. Be3 Rad8 19. Rae1. White has a slight but lasting advantage.

A2) Buklc – Westerinen, Skopje, 1971:


B) Another Black’s possibility is a7–a6 followed by Nb8–d7 or vice versa. White’s Nc3–b5 is prevented and Black tries to obtain a counterplay on the Kingside. This method, however, is unoriginal, it gives White an easy plan and good initiative on Queenside.


B2) 9 . . . a6 10. Nd2 Qe8 11. a3 Nbd7 12. b4 Nh7 13. Rb1 Ng5. It takes some time to prepare the advance f7–f5 so as it would be painless. The immediate 13 . . . f5 fails to 14. exf gxf 15. Bh5!

14. f3 f5 15. Bf2 b6 16. bxc bx c 17. Qa4!

White’s Queen is directed to c6 where it will produce confusion in Black’s camp. Driving it will take a lot of Black effort

Black's Queenside is safe now, so he is ready for a K-side pawn advance. White has no time to linger. 25. Nb3 g5 27. Na5 Ne8? (Correct was 26. . . g4 with counter-chances after 27. Nc6 Qe8) 27. Nc6 Qf6 28. Na4 g4 29. Nb6! White exchanges Black's Q Bishop which is important both for attack and defense, he has the edge. Pachman – Talmanov, Har rachov, 1966.

C) 9. . . Qc7.


10. Nd2 Nh7 11. 0–0 Bf6. According to a traditional opinion that the exchange of the dark-squared Bishops, provided that the pawn structure is fixed, is favorable for Black. The remaining Bishops are seemingly of different value. White's Bishop has the tendency of becoming bad as his central pawns are fixed on light squares. This opinion has become a prejudice which rules chessplayers' minds to such an extent that even Geller avoided the exchange of Bishops in the cited game: 12. Bg3(?)..

We know that this idea is not perfectly new: it occurred e.g. in the famous game Tal – Fischer, Candidates Tournament, 1959. Tal was not overloaded by the burden of formal judgements. He exchanged the Bishops and proved in the course of the game that Black's Kingside without the Bishop was weak. This is the main disadvantage of this exchange for Black.

9. . . . Na6

As a rule, the square a6 is only a transit point for this Knight, it does not stay long on this square, hurrying up to c7 in order to support the advance b7–b5. At the same time, it stands very well here, as a protector of the Queenside. The typical advance of White's QN and QB pawns is supposedly connected with the positional threat of capturing b4xc5; if Black recaptures d6xc5, White obtains a strong protected passed pawn d5.

Of course, White should know and avoid such situations when Black can bring his Knight to d6 under favorable circumstances.

The radical method of protecting the pawn c5 with b7–b6 is not without disadvantage. We have already seen that after b4xc5, b6xc5 the diagonal a4–e8 becomes weak and White invades to c6, causing Black much trouble.

Therefore Black, if he wishes, can hold the Knight on a6 for a while, burdening it with a lion's share of problems connected with defense of the Q-side. The capture b4xc5 would be dangerous no more as Black could take at c5 with the Knight.

10. Nd2 Qe8 11. 0–0 Nh7

Diagram 79
Black has safeguarded his Queenside with the least possible expense (Na6) and intends now to proceed with the advance f7–f5 without any harm for himself. Later on, he will act in accordance with the situation: either he will maintain the tension caused by the pawn duo e4–f5, or he will play f5–f4 and advance his K-side pawns.

Naturally, White can follow the well-known and promising plan of actions on the Queenside. However, Geller gives a new proof that White, when he wishes, may be active on the Kingside as well.

12. Nb5!

A subtle move! The defense of the pawn d6 is not too difficult for Black, but his Queen will be rather misplaced in the way of his Bishop.

12. . . . Qd7 13. Bg3

White intends to play f2–f4. After that, Black will have no choice: positional threats (f4–f5, f4xe5) will practically force him to exchange the pawn (e5xf4), and the sense of Nc3–b5 will be obvious, as the pawn d6 cannot be protected so easily.

Why does it happen so many times that White does not make use of this method (f2–f4)?

The explanation is that in this pawn structure, if White has played f2–f4, Black has nothing to be afraid of if only he can keep the square e5 under his control after having played e5xf4. In the King’s Indian Defence, it happens usually that Black’s Knight can reach the square e5 immediately or, at least, quite soon. In this case, on the other hand, Black’s Knights are situated so that they may do nothing but dream about the square e5.

13. . . . Nc7 14. f4!

White has nothing against the exchange on b5,— the square c4 would be available for his second Knight, with disastrous consequences for Black. After 14. . . . Nxb5 15. cxb exf 16. Bxf4 Bxb2 17. Nc4! White commands the situation, no matter whether Black takes on a1 or prefers to keep the Bishop. White gains the pawn d6 and obtains such a good position that even an amateur would feel himself to be a grandmaster.


With his two last moves Black has protected the pawn d6; now he tries to take the square e5 under control.

17. Qd2 g5 18. Bg3 Nh6


It is obvious that the pawn e4 cannot be captured: 19. . . . Nxe4(?) 20. Bxe4 Qxe4 21. Nxd6 Nxd6 22. Bxd6 Rd8 23. Bc7 Rd7 24. d6 followed with 25. Rae1, and Black’s pieces have no moves. On the other hand, the immediate 19. e5(?) Ne4 20. exd N(8)xd6 gives him fine play.


Black does his best to build a “decent” position. His last move even contains a threat: g5–g4, gaining a Knight. Therefore White loses a tempo before he lures his Bishop to the fight for the square e5.

23. h3 Kh8?

In complicated positions often a moment comes when, due to uncertainty of the situation and its further development, one should (even must) play a move which would be useful, no matter how the struggle will proceed. To feel such moments, and to find such a move is a kind of art, although this art is not hymned by poets.

In this case, after a long and difficult defense, having improved his position, Ljubojevic comes to the conclusion that he has time and an opportunity for making such a move.

The further course of the game demonstrates that 23. . . . Kh8 is not only
useless — it is harmful. He should have played either the natural 23. . . . Ne5 or the less trivial 23. . . . Be5 followed with 24. . . . Ng7.

24. Bg3 Qc7 25. h4!

At this moment, when Black seems to be OK, White attacks not only the pawn g5 which can stand up for itself:

25. . . . g4

but also . . . the square e5 in the person of one of its supporters — Ng6.

26. h5! gxg6

After 26. . . . Ne5 27. Nxe5 Black's position is entirely compromised.

27. hgxg6 28. e5!

Diagram 80

Finally White carries out his idea. After the explosive e4—e5 his pieces have gained new possibilities. The diagonal of the Bishop d3 has become longer, as well as the file for the Rook e1. The square e4 is available for the Knight now, and take into account, please — all this has become possible only because the Bishop, visiting the square g5, "persuaded" the pawn h7 to make a step forward. If it stood still on its initial position, Black would be perfectly safe now.

28. . . . Bf5 29. Rxf3 dxe

30. Bxf5 Rx f5 31. Rx f5 gx f

32. Bxe5!

This is the retribution for the King's position on h8. White recovers his material loss, maintaining dangerous threats. If 32. . . . Bxe5, then 33. Qxh6+ Kg8 34. Qe6+ obviously wins.

32. . . . Qb6

And again the King on h8; instead of protecting the weaknesses from nearby, the Queen must go away, as Qxh6+ threatens.

33. d6


A time for capitulation.

The final was

33. . . . Kh7 34. Nd5 Qd8

35. d7! Qh4 36. Qf2 Qxf2+

37. Kxf2 Bxe5 38. Rxe5 Nd6


Black resigned.

Diagram 81

Now we shall consider the situation when the square c5 is not occupied.
The modern practice with the King’s Indian Defence demonstrates that the Black Knight, standing safely on c5 (after the advance a7–a5) turns out to be the most important instrument, beside Bg7, in the active operations.

This line is not an exception.

7. . . Nbd7 8. Bg5

Diagram 82

8. . . h6 9. Bh4 g5

The most enterprising and the most consequent plan. Black drives the Bishop back to g3, where it would be posted rather unusually for the King’s Indian Defence.

10. Bg3 Nh5!

An obligatory move. Otherwise White will play Nd2, starting with his usual plan of the Queenside pawn attack.

In the beginning of the history of this line, White played either 11. Nd2 or castled, inviting the Black Knight to go to f4 (11. Nd2 N×g3 12. h×g is bad for Black).

No matter which decision would be taken by Black: either to permit Be2–g4 or allow White’s g3–g4, his position is disastrous. He has no counterplay and must wait until White opens the Queenside with the eternal threat of exchange of Bc8 for this Knight at f5 which would then permit White’s second Knight to occupy the square e4. Black’s position would still be very bad in either case.

The first game in this line was Petrosian – Yukhtman, Tbilisi, 1959.

It went 11. Nd2 Nf4 12. 0–0 Nc5 13. Bg4 a5 14. f3!

This is a key move.

Black has played unoriginally, and White’s idea is carried out perfectly. The light-squared Bishops disappear, when Black’s weaknesses on the Kingside are still here.

14. . . Ncd3 15. Qc2 c6
16. Kh1 h5 17. Bxc8 Rxc8
18. a3 cxd 19. cxd Nc5
20. Bf2 g4 21. g3 Ng6
22. fxg hxg 23. Be3!

and the fight is practically over — White’s positional advantage is decisive.

This mournful lesson forced Black to find new ways.

It was discovered that, at the move 13, Black could force his opponent to capture the Knight f4: 13. . . B×g4 14. Q×g4 h5 15. Qf5! h4 16. Bxf4 exf, although after 17. Nf3 White still has the edge.
Bronstein – Timman, (Teeside, 1975) went

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 d6
3. Nc3 e5 4. Nf3 Nbd7
5. e4 g6 6. Be2Bg7
7. 0–0 0–0 8. d5 a5
9. Qc2 b6 10. Bg5 h6
11. Bh4 g5 12. Bg3 Nh5
15. Bf5 h4 16. Bxf4 exf

Here, in comparison with the above mentioned line, the White Queen stands more modestly, but even here Bronstein manages to obtain a slight advantage:

17. Nf3 Nc5 18. h3 Qf6
19. Rad1 Ba6 20. Qe2 Rfe8
(Refer to Diagram 82.)

Another interesting idea for Black was found: 11. Nd2 Nf4 12. 0–0 Nc5 13. Bg4 Nxe4 14. Ndx4 f5. After 15. Bxf5 Bxf5 Black brings his Queen to g6 and has a good play. Therefore 14. . . . f5 should be met by 15. f3, although White cannot obtain a considerable advantage in this case, too.

White did not twiddle thumbs, too. In Najdorf – R. Byrne (Buenos Aires, 1964) he tried at any rate to save his K Bishop. After 11. Nd2 Nf4 he, in spite of loss of time — it does not mean much in a closed position — played 12. Bf1. This move, which seems so strange, is connected with the idea of driving the Black Knight away by means of f3, Bf2, g3.

Byrne’s response was natural and strong:

12. . . . Nc5 13. Qc2 f5!

In this case, White’s control over e4 is not dangerous for Black, e.g. 14. exf Bxf5 15. Nde4 Nxe4 16. Nxe4, and now the Queen maneuver Qd8–e8–g6, of which we are informed already, with a good game for Black

14 f3 c6 15 Bf2

White follows his plan, he has yet prepared the move g2–g3.

15. . . . fxe 16. fxe?


A great animation was caused by the move 11. h4 introduced by Paul Keres.

11. . . . Nxd2 12. fxg6 hxg6

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14 f3 c6 15 Bf2

This decision is doubtful from a positional point of view; it is based upon Black’s wish to obtain play for his pieces forcibly.

A) Damjanovic – Hort, Sarajevo, 1964

Damjanovic was not familiar with the ideas of this system, he played 13. Rxh4?

We know already why it is bad, White must keep f5 under control, so he should have recaptured by the Knight.


Here 15. . . . f4 is not bad, too; after 16. g4 Nxd3+ 17. Qxd3 he threatens with 18. . . . Qg6.

16. 0–0–0 Qg6 17. Rdh1 Qxg3 18. Kb1 Nxd3 19. Qxd3 Qxg2, and Hort was
praised for his bad innovation (12. .. gxh), obtaining a winning position.

B) 13. N hx d 4 Q g 5

B1) 14. 0–0 N c 5 (If Black plays naively he loses: 14. .. Q x g 3 15. N f 5 Q g 5 16. R f 3). 15. K h 2 f 5 16. e x f B x f 5 17. N x f 5 R x f 5
18. R x f 5 Q x f 5 19. Q d 2 e 4!
With superb position, Johansson–Penrose, Lugano 1968.

B2) 14. N f 5 brings nothing in view of 14. .. N f 6 (E.g. 15. 0–0 B x f 5 16. R x f 5 Q e 3+ 17. K h 2 N x e 4, and Black has the edge, Karaklajic–Hindle, Bognor Regis 1965 — Note by Editor of the German version).

B3) 14. B g 4! This move which involves a pawn sacrifice, is the proper solution of the problem.

B3a) 14. .. Q e 3+ 15. Q e 2. White can also play 15. K f 1 and after 15. .. Q x g 3 16. R h 3 Q f 4+ 17. K g 1 he is more than sufficiently compensated for a pawn.

No matter, how Black proceeds, White obtains an advantage following his general plan: exchange of light-squared Bishops and Knight’s invasion of f5. The same goal was reached by Ivkov in another way: 15. .. Q x g 3 16. K d 1. Black immediately gave a pawn back: 16. .. f 5, and after 17. N x f 5 (17. B x f 5 is maybe even better) 17. .. N f 6 18. N x g 3

White readily accepted the opportunity of transposing into a favorable endgame: 18. .. B x g 4 19. R h 4 B x e 2+ 20. K x e 2.


Instead of 11. .. N x g 3, let us consider 11. .. N f 4!? Now

Diagram 85

Black tries, not without reason, to prove that he can be not only a defender on the Kingside.

The Knight f4 is for a certain time practically invulnerable. We could accept as an axiom for this position that Black, when his Knight is taken, recaptures with the K pawn, and his pieces obtain new lines of action immediately. The Bishop g7 will have the diagonal a1–h8, the Queen and the Rooks — the K file; in the meantime the Queen might also work at the diagonal a1–h8 from f6, and the Knight, in addition to c5, would have a chance of going to e5. You could hardly expect more from a single move e5xf4.

Another axiom is that after B x f 4, g x f 4 White can play N h 2 and take immediate actions in order to take the square f5 under his control. He only needs to play B g 4 to exchange light-squared Bishops, and the Knight would control this square.

So g x f 4 is dubious and ex f 4 is perfectly correct.

12. h x g  h x g
However, there is a problem:
What to do with the pawn g2?
Should it be protected by Bf1, or Rh2, or even Kf1? Or bravely play something else?
There are many possibilities, we shall consider only three of them.


Therefore the decisive opinion on this position is connected with the problem of the proper choice from two possibilities 13. Kd2 or 13. Qc2, trying to make use of the KR file for an attack.

13. Kd2 is too ambitious, mainly being a trap: 13 . . . Nxg2 14. Qg1 Nf4 15. Bxf4 gxf 16. Qh2 followed with 17. Rag1 with decisive threats. However, the capture on g2, is not obligatory; instead Black can prove that White’s King, standing in the center, is a good object for an attack. Therefore 13 . . . f5 speaks for itself: 14. Bxf4 (or 14. exf Nc5) 14. . . . exf 15. exf Nc5 16. Rh5!? (Otherwise the capture on f4 was senseless). Such move as 16 . . . Bxc3+ (Wade–Myant, England, 1965) may be performed only when it brings an obvious and immediate profit. The gain of tempo for protecting the pawn g5 is by no means a considerable factor: 17. Kxc3 Ne4+ 18. Kb3 c5, and the obvious 19. Qh1 should have led to win. Instead of 16 . . . Bxc3+, White should have played either 16 . . . Bxf5 17. Rxg5 Ne4+ 18. Nxe4 Bxe4 (Kottnauer) or 16 . . . Bxf5 17. Rxg5 Qf6 with a rich play. There is no trace of White’s attack, his extra pawn is unimportant, whereas Black’s pieces stand finely

The correct move is 13. Qc2!

Diagram 86

13. . . . Nxe4+

After 16. Kg2 Black should not try to obtain an immediate counter-attack; he can play 16 . . . Bf6 17. Rag1 Re8 followed with Kg8–f8. Of course, White has a lasting initiative, but Black disposes of considerable defensive possibilities.


In this system, Black sometimes avoids well-known lines and introduces one or another new idea.

e.g. Hort–Bilek:
9. Bh4 Nc5!?
White can, of course, play 10. Nd2 so as to transpose to the usual plan of driving the Black Knight back from c5 by means of b2–b4, only when Black will have played a7–a5. This plan was adopted by Mukhin against Bilek: 10. Nd2 a5 11. 0–0 (or it would be better to wait with castling?) After 11. b3 Qe8 12. a3 Black can play 12. . . . Nxe4 13. Nxe4 Nxe4 14. Nxe4 f5, and White has not even a moral consolation in the form of control over the square e4, as 15. Bd3 fxe 16. Bxe4 fails to the double attack. 16. . . . Rf4! Otherwise Black simply regains the piece: 15. Nd2 g5 – (15. . . . e4 16. f4!) – 16. Bg3 f4 with good prospects) 11. . . . Qe8 12. b3 Nh7 (Playable is also 12. . . . Nxe4 13. Nxe4 Nxe4 14. Nxe4 f5 15. Nd2 g5 16. Bg3 f4 17. Ne4 Qg6 18. Bd3 Bf5 19. f3 fxg 20. hxg h5, and Black’s position is quite tenable) 13. f3 h5 14. Bf2 Bh6 15. Rb1 Qe7 with even chances.

Hort accepted the challenge:
10. b4 g5 (forced) 11. bxc gxh
12. cxd cxd 13. Nd2?! Black’s plan consisted in that White would never be able to take at h4 because of Nf6xe4.

However White needs the square h4 for his Knight rather than the pawn which is standing on this square!
Therefore 13. g3! was correct. No matter how Black proceeds White secures himself the square h4.

Hort–Bilek went:
13. . . . b6 14. 0–0 Kh8
15. Re1 Rg8 16. Nf1 Bf8
17. Ne3 Be7 18. Rf1 Ne8

Black allows his opponent to exchange the light-squared Bishops but, with some tricky efforts, prevents the invasion of the White Knight to f5 in the further course of the game.

21. Qf3 Qd7 22. Nd1

It is rather obvious that Black will give up his Bishop for a Knight as soon as White would play Ne3. Therefore White takes some maneuvers in order to be able to recapture by another Knight.

22. . . . Rg6 23. Nge3 Rc8!
24. Rc1

White wants to force the decision on the single side (the Kingside) but Black has enough defensive resources here. Hence 24. a4 would be stronger, so as to bring Black additional troubles by the further advance of this Pawn.

24. . . . Ng7 25. Rc3 Bf4
26. g3 Rg8 27. Ng2

Finally White follows the idea which has seemed natural on the 13th move, but now this idea is rather of defensive sense.

27. . . . Bg5

No reason for taking on g3 — it would open the KB file for White’s major pieces.

28. Nde3 h3 29. Ne1 Bxe3!
30. fxe Rf8!

A subtle move! Black not only protects the pawn f7 but prepares the advance f7–f5.

31. Rc2 f5
In this complicated position draw was agreed.

In a number of games, the idea of the late grandmaster Stein occurred: 


Diagram 88

This move inevitably reminds of the old story about a proposition made in the last century: one insisted on modifying the initial position so as the Black pawn would stand on a6 rather than a7, then White could not play the Ruy Lopez...

The idea of this move is perfectly clear: Black "forbids" Bg5. At the same time his Knight f6 obtains a wider choice of squares in order to go away and let the pawn f7 go (the new square h7).

After 8. 0–0 Nh7 9. g3! Black should not blindly follow his previous plan, as after 9... f5 10. Nh4 Qe8 (or Qf6) 11. exf gxg 12. f4! White obtains an advantage.

Another method was employed by Donner (White) against Kavalek (Skopje, 1972): 8. Nd2!? so as to be able to play g2–g4. 8... a5. Better was 8... Nh7 9. g4 Bf6! Stopping White’s Kingside initiative.

If 8... Nh7 9. h4, then 9... h5. 9. Nh1 Na6 9... Nh7 still would be better.

10. g4 Nh7 11. h4! Black pours water upon White’s mill.

11... Re8 deserved attention, followed with 12... Bf6; either 12. Be3 Bf6 13. Bxh6 Bxh4 followed with Bg5 or 12. h5 Ng5 would be hardly so dangerous for Black.

12. gxf gxf 13. exf Bxf5
14. Ng3 Qd7 15. Be3
White has made considerable progress; now he calmly completes his development, preparing 0–0–0.

15... Nb4 16. Rc1 e4
17. Rg1 Nd3+?
17... Kh8 was necessary. 18. Bxd exd 19. Nh5 Rf7 20. Kd2. The safest; White avoids the unnecessary complications after 20. Bxh6 Bg6.

20... Re8 21. Nxg Rgx
22. Qh5. The simplest was 22. Bxh6, although the move in the text is good enough. 22... Bg4 23. Qxh6 Qf5
24. f3 with a winning position.
Keres – Walther

Strategically this is a very sound decision. Every pawn advance, especially that from one’s King, weakens one’s position. To exploit them, one must open ways of approaching these weaknesses for one’s pieces. This is the purpose of the move 11. h4: White intends to open the KR file.

This idea was introduced in Keres – Matanovic (Moscow, 1963) which followed:


12. . . . Nxg3 13. fxg h5 14. 0–0 Bh6

The most natural move which, however, does not prevent White’s following his plan.


One of White’s intentions is to move his Knight to e3, from where it can easily land at f5. If Black will take on e3 it would be difficult for him to look after White’s queen excursions along the diagonal c1–h6. In any case, when Black gives up his King Bishop he is doomed to a passive defense, although his position is still solid enough.

Therefore Walther tries to move his Knight to g7 in order to dispute the square f5.

19. Qe2 Ng7 20. Rf2 f5?!

Either Black overestimates his position or he has lost patience. He should have played 20. . . . f6, parrying beforehand the move Rf6 which can follow doubling of White’s Rooks. We must also notice that the tactical possibility 20. . . . Bb4 fails to 21. gxg3 22. Nf3 gxf 23. f5!
With an excellent compensation for the sacrificed exchange.

21. exf Nxf5
22. Bxf5 Bxf5
23. Raf1 Bg6
24. Nxg4!
The retribution for pawn moves away from the King.

24. ... hxg
25. Qxg4 Kh7
26. h5 Bd3
27. Rxf8 Bxf8
28. Rf3!
It comes to light that the Bishop f8 has no good squares for retreat.

28. ... Bc2
29. Ne4!
White wins after 29. ... Bxe4 30. Qxe4+, e.g. 30. ... Kh8 31. Rf7 Bg7
32. h6 or 30. ... Kg8 31. Qg6+Bg7
32. Rf7.

29. ... Kh8

30. ... Qe8
31. Nxd6 Qa4
32. Qg5 Qa6
33. Qxe5+ Kg8
34. Rf6 Qd3
35. Kh2 Qh7
36. Qe6+.
Black resigned.

In this game, the following continuation was tested:

12. Nd2 f5
13. exf Ndf6
14. Bd3
(See Diagram 90.)
White tries to maintain both the extra pawn and the control over the square e4. But he has not castled yet, and this fact enables Black to challenge him in the seemingly strongest point of his position.

14. ... e4!
15. Nxe4 Nxe4
16. Nxe4 Bxf5

After the exchange on g3 White's Kingside pawns would be depreciated. The evaluation of a position, the fate of a game depend on dynamics of pieces, and Black has considerable success in this. His King's Indian Bishop g7 is especially powerful.

17. Qc2
White plans Q-side castling. Tarnai gives the following line which should demonstrate that K-side castling is bad.
17. 0–0 Qe8 18. Qc2 Bd4 19. Kh1 Bxe4
23. Kh2 Rae8 24. Bg6 Rf3, and Black wins. But White's play in this line is rather strange. First, why could he not play more naturally with his King on move 19. Kh2? Also dubious is 22. Qd3, why should he allow Bf2? 22. Kh2, intending to play Bf5, is still better. White's position is by no means losing.

17. ... Bxe4
18. Bxe4 Nxc3
19. fxg Qf6
20. 0–0–0 Qe5!

Chances are approximately even. White's extra pawn is of no practical value; his hopes are based on weak light squares in Black's camp, generally, and the diagonal b1–h7 leading to Black's King, in particular.

As for Black, his Q+B battery is ready to shoot, and this gives him an easy game. From e5 the Queen attacks almost all the board.

21  ...  Qxg3  22. h5 Qe3+
Black is forcing matters. 22  ...  Kh8 is worth attention, escaping from possible checks by Bishop or Queen on light squares.

23. Kb1 Rf4  24. Rxf4 Qxf4
25. Bh7+ Kh8  26. Bg6 Rf8
27. a3 Qe3  28. Rd2 Be5
29. Ka2 a6  30. Re2 Qc5

Black maintains the initiative, but White manages to defend this position.

31. Qb3 Qb6  32. Qa4 Qd4
33. Rc2 b5  34. Qa5
Tarnai wrongly writes that Black stands better after 34. Qxa6 Rb8  35. cxb Qxd5+ 36. Kb1 Qxb5. In fact, the endgame after 37. Qxb5 Rxb5  38. b4 c5 39. Bd3 is double-edged.

34.  ...  Rf2  35. Qxc7 Qxb2 +
36. Rxb2 Rxb2+  37. Ka1 Rb3 +
Draw by perpetual check-natural result of this game.
This article is no generalized definition of beauty in chess, because one's ability to feel chess beauty depends enormously on one's strength, chess outlook, and chess culture. For a beginner, a double attack, even a primitive Knight fork is beautiful, whereas an advanced player would pay no attention to them.

The sense of beauty which brings aesthetic pleasure is contained in the feeling which pierces through when one meets all kinds of original concepts; a chess game, or study, or problem must have some unexpected turn as an obligatory element. Anything trivial, common and plain cannot be surprising; I think that feeling of beauty in chess always has a shade of astonishment. And finally, the real beauty in chess always has a fascination which all novelties convey.

In chess, one can be amazed by both tactical finds and strategical actions. In this connection, a natural question is whether chess compositions are not embodiments of chess beauty. Every study, as well as problem, is a sort of demonstration of paradoxical moves, ideas, positions. Chess composition is inconceivable without a clever and colorful play crowned by seemingly impossible tactical ideas and overwhelming finals. But let us abstain from such a categorical judgement about composition. We should not forget that chess composers work only with pieces, having practically no limits produced by time, by opponents' will and mastership.

I consider the 7th game of my match with Spassky for the World Championship (1966) as one of my best. In this game, my plan of the utmost restriction of my opponent's possibilities succeeded.

* This article is based upon Petrosian's various statements taken from a number of sources

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**Spassky – Petrosian**

1. d4 Nf6  
2. Nf3 e6  
3. Bg5 d5  
4. Nbd2 Be7  
5. e3 Nbd7  
6. Bd3 c5  
7. c3 b6  
8. 0–0 Bb7  
9. Ne5 Nxe5  
10. dxe Nd7  
11. Bf4 Qc7  
12. Nf3 h6  
13. b4 g5  
14. Bg3 h5  
15. h4 gxh  
16. Bf4 0–0–0

**Diagram 91**

17. a4 c4  
18. Be2 a6  
19. Kh1 Rdg8  
20. Rg1 Rg4  
21. Qd2 Rhg8  
22. a5 b5  
23. Rad1 Bf8  
24. Nh2 Nxe5  
25. Nxd4 hxd  
26. e4 Bd6  
27. Qe3 Nd7  
28. Bxd6 Qxd6  
29. Rd4 e5  
30. Rd2 f5  
31. exd4 f4  
32. Qe4 Nf6  
33. Qf5+ Kb8  
34. f3 Bc8  
35. Qb1 g3  
36. Re1 h3  
37. Bh1 Rh8  
38. gxh Bxh3  
39. Kg1 Bxf1  
40. Kxf1 e4  
41. Qd1 Ng4  
42. fxg3  
43. Rg2 fxg+.  
White resigned.
I would like to mention here my game with Taimanov from the USSR Championship, 1955. It is remarkable by the fact that my opponent resigned in view of irresistible threats when the board was full of pieces.

Petroslan – Talmánov

1. d4 Nf6
2. c4 e6
3. Nf3 d5
4. Nc3 c6
5. e3 Nbd7
6. Bd3 Bd6
7. 0–0 0–0
8. Qc2 Bd6
9. b3 dxc
10. bxc e5
11. Bb2 Re8
12. Ne4 Nxe4
13. Bxe4 h6
14. Rad1 exd
15. Bh7+ Kh8
16. Rxd4 Bc5
17. Rf4 Qe7
18. Re4 Qf8
19. Rh4 f6
20. Bg6 Re7
21. Rh5 Bd6
22. Rd1 Be5
23. Ba3 c5

Black resigned.

I was doing my first steps in chess when, in the 1937 yearbook, I saw the following ending:

Ortueta – Sanz


Even now, when I look at the position after the 4th or 5th move, it seems unbelievable that White’s two extra pieces cannot gain the upper hand against doubled isolated pawns. This ending is unforgettable for my whole life.

There are many items in the treasury of chess lore which have impressed and are still impressive for me. Among them, I can mention the game Liliental–Botvinnik, the XII Soviet Championship, 1940. Especially remarkable are the move 14. Qd2 and the Rook journey c1–c3–e3–e6.

Liliental – Botvinnik

1. d4 Nf6
2. c4 e6
3. Nf3 b6
4. g3 Bb7
5. Bg2 Be7
6. 0–0 0–0
7. Nc3 Ne4
8. Qc2 Nxc3
9. Qxc3 d6
10. Qc2 f5
11. Ne1 Nc6 12. d5 exd
13. cxd Nb4

Diagram 94

14. Qd2! a5 15. a3 Na6
16. b4 Bf6 17. Bb2 Qd7
18. Bxf6 Rxf6 19. Nd3 a4
20. Rac1 Qf7 21. Nf4 Bc8
22. Rc3 Bd7 23. Rfc1 h6
24. h4 Ra7 25. h5 Ra8

26. Re3 Kh7 27. Rcc3 Rb8
28. Qd3 Ra8 29. Ng6 Rxg6
30. hxg+ Kxg6 31. Re6+ Kh7
32. g4 c5 33. b5 Nc7
34. gxh Nxb5 35. f6+ Kg8
36. Rc4 Re8 37. Rg4 g5
38. Rxe8+ Bxe8 39. Re4 Kf8
40. Re7 Qg6 41. Be4 Qh5
42. Bf3 Qg6 43. Rxe8+.
Black resigned.

I also like the game won by Spassky in the “Match of the Century.” Its remarkable feature is the impetuous pawn advance and the break-through on the KR file.

Larsen – Spassky

1. b3 e5 2. Bb2 Nc6
3. c4 Nf6 4. Nf3 e4
5. Nd4 Bc5 6. Nxc6 dxc
7. e3 Bf5 8. Qc2 Qe7
9. Be2 0–0–0 10. f4 Ng4!

Diagram 96

11. g3 h5 12. h3 h4!
13. hxg hxg 14. Rg1
Every chessplayer has played some remarkable games, their estimation is completely a matter of taste. I do not think one could call me an exclusionist among those practical players who are attracted by chess studies with initial positions, taken from actual games. However, there is a special feature in the composition of these studies which impresses most practical players. I mean the paradox of final positions, when the seemingly natural course of play is suddenly broken. The beautiful study of Korolkov is of this kind.

Diagram 97

14. . . Rh1! 15. Rhx1 g2
16. Rf1 Qh4+ 17. Kd1 gx1 (Q)+
White resigned.

You may easily imagine how much effort has been required from Black in order to obtain some counterchances with the pawns e3 and f2. White cannot stop them. The only piece which could do it is Bc8, but it is completely cut off the diagonal a6-f1 where it is so desirable. The White passed pawn, on the contrary, could easily be stopped by Black's King.

However, even practical players know what an ambush is, so the initial moves by White can be easily guessed.

1. d7 Ke7
This is necessary, of course. After 1. . . f1(Q) 2. d8(Q)+ the Black King would be mated very soon by White's mighty pieces.

2. Rb8
The ambush! The Bishop noiselessly joins the struggle against the pawns. If 2. . . f1(Q) now, then 3. d8(Q)+ Kxd8 4. Ba6+ Kc7 5. Bxf1 Kxb8 6. gxh and wins.
2. . . Bxg3

The importance of White's KN pawn was demonstrated in the previous note. Therefore it must be eliminated.

3. Ra8!


3. . . f1(Q) 4. d8(Q)+ Kxd8

5. Ba6 Bb8!!

Inviting the Rook to go nearer to the King. The drawish position after 6. Rxb8+ Kc7 is known to us already, but another way exists.

6. Bxf1 Kc7!

The Rook is being immured. It will be lost if the King comes to b7.

7. Ba6 e2

This seems to be saving, as White must distract his Bishop from the square b7, then the Black King comes and attacks the Rook, crowing about his inventive defense. But now comes that mysterious instant of triumph of the artistic conception — object of admiration of true chess lovers. First, the obvious

8. Bxe2 Kb7

and now, like an illumination, 9. Bf3!

That is all:


Also if 9. . . a6; 10. Bxc6+ wins.

V. Korolkov

"Shakhmaty v SSR" 1938-I

2nd. prize
White to win

Diagram 99

The introduction is rather simple.

1. Qg1 b1(Q) 2. Qxb1 g1(Q) 3. Qxg1 Rg3!!


Similarly, after 3. . . Rg4 the solution is shorter, and 3. . . Rg6 is met by the immediate 4. Ke7.

4. Qg2!


4. . . Rg4! 5. Qg3! Rg5!

The unprotected Queen follows the unprotected Rook step by step, forcing Black to capture.
6. Qg4! Rxg4 7. Ke7(e8) Re4+
8. Kxd7 Rd4
The last try.
9. f8(Q) Rxh6+ 10. Ke7 Rd7+
11. Ke6 Re7+

Korolkov's inventiveness is admirable.
(These studies with Petrosian's notes are taken from the book by Gh. Nadareyshvili "Chess studies as they are seen by grandmasters." In Petrosian's archives, we have found notes to another study, and it is interesting to see the original version of his comments — comp.)
The initial position of this study corresponds to the criterion of nature to the utmost — it seems to be taken from an actual game.

V. Korolkov
"Shakhmaty v SSSR," 1947
1st prize
Draw

Diagram 100

Passions have begun to settle down. Black has gained a piece at the cost of separation of his own pieces. White's hopes in this position consist of exchanging the last pawn. His plan is simple — King to c3 and then d2–d4.
1. Kb2 Ba4
Anticipating White's plan, Black retreats with his Bishop to the only square where he believes it would be able to cooperate with the Knight. Quite naturally the latter will be in a hurry to join the fray.
In case of 1. . . . Bf5, 2. Kc3 Nd6 3. d4 Nb5+ 4. Kc4 Black's pieces are still separated and it is a simple and obvious draw.
2. Kc3 Nd6
Due to the check from b5, Black seems to have control over the square d4.
3. d4 Nb5+ 4. Kc4 cxd
Is White lost? Black's pieces, so distant just a few moves ago, have come near and cooperate well. However you should notice that they are grouped near the edge of the board, so their movements are limited. And they have the additional burden of the pawn d4 which requires protection.
5. Kb4
In a practical game, Black realizing White's plan of defense with some delay, would consider the problem of choice: to try the main line or to offer White "fishing in troubled waters" after 5. . . . d3, hoping for 6. Bc4? d2 7. Be2 Nd4 8. Bg4 Kg5 and wins. However, when he sees that 6. Kxa4 Nd4 7. Bb3 is a simple draw he must go along the main line:

5. . . . Nc3 6. Kc4 Nb5
Still trying to keep the pawn.
7. Kb4 Nc3 8. Kc4 Ne2
Now it is a clear draw.
10. . . . Nc3 11. Kd3 Ne2
a.s.o. to infinity.
It is rather obvious that the solution could be based either on a mating attack or on the gain of the Queen. The idea of mate should be rejected, first of all, due to the fact that White's Rooks are too near the Black King. The opposition of the White Rook e8 and the Black Queen gives us the idea of a discovered check with a gain of the Queen.

Thus, our plan is clear: we sacrifice a Rook for the sake of a decisive stroke with another Rook. And we realize now that the light squares are taboo for the Black King.

1. Rd7+! Kb6 2. Rb7+ Kc5
3. Rb5+ Kd4 4. Rd5+ Kc3

It seems that White's hopes are in vain: it is a draw after 5. Rd3+ Kxd3 6. Bf5+ Kd2. However...

5. Rc8+! Kb4 6. Rc4+ Ka3
7. Rd3+ Kb2 8. Rb3+! Kxb3
9. Re4+ and wins

This study can be used as an exercise. Very often, in the course of a game, we find an interesting idea and try to accomplish it, but we fail, because we have not enough flexibility of thinking, and cannot switch from one idea to another. In this study, White wins because he switches the initial idea of vertical battery to a new idea of diagonal battery, and by so doing enriches the initial idea.

This study belongs to the kind which is very useful for practical players. The Black Queen stands quite freely, its owner seemingly can be perfectly calm. However, it is the geometry of the board which finally decides.

1. Ra8! Qa2

Other retreats are met by linear attacks:
1. Qxa8 2. Bf3+; 1. Qe6 2. Ra6+; 1. Qd5 2. Bf3; 1. Qc4 2. Rc8+. As for 1. Qh7, White intends to drive the Queen exactly to this square.
2. Rxa4 Qg8
            3. Ra8!
            The mobility of the Black Queen on an almost free board is becoming an illusion. All the squares along the diagonal a2–g8 are mined.
            3. . . . Qh7  4. Bg6! Qxg6  5. Ra6+ and wins.

H. Rinck
"Noticiero," 1929
1st prize
White to win

Obviously White must operate with mating threats.
1. Bd7+ Kb4  2. Be7+ Kc4
3. Be6+ Kd4  4. Bf6+ Ke4
5. Ke2
Escaping checks and threatening 6. Rh4 mate.
5. . . . Kf4  6. Rh4+ Kg3
7. Rg4+ Kh2  8. Kf2!
A sacrifice and a mating threat again!
8. . . . Qb6+  9. Bd4 Qxe6
10. Rh4+ Qh3  11. Be5+
and mate on the next move.

Diagram 103
When preparing my lectures for the TV chess school, I considered very seriously the question: What is technique? I mean, chess technique. This terminology occurs very often in books, reviews, tournament reports etc. It is said rather often that a chessplayer has a good technique, or, on the other hand, that one's technique is one's weak point. I have looked in the "Chess Dictionary," the book which "knows everything," and this is what it says: "Technique: mastering fighting methods in typical positions, in particular, the ability of exploiting one's advantage in the most economical way. Quite a number of chess positions are treated by players, who have mastered the technique, as a more or less mechanical procedure. The chess technique appears in its clearest form in endgames, where such typical, investigated positions occur most frequently."

Of course, a definition of chess technique as somewhat mechanical may cause protests, e.g. if one would say that Petrosian is a good technical player. But it is doubtful that one can become a good chessplayer without mastering the chess technique in its various forms. It can be, e.g., about exploiting a positional advantage, about treating some typical situations, about exploiting a material plus. I repeat again,— one who does not have a good technical mastery will not play well. However the "Chess Dictionary" gives the definition of chess technique as a standard, and, in a way, mechanical phenomenon, and this definition is only partly correct when it concerns the higher professional levels.

**Diagram 104**

White has a considerable positional plus. He must find the correct plan for its exploitation, applying some fighting methods. In other words, he must demonstrate his technique. But, before we start our analysis of the diagrammed position, here is a reminiscence from the history of chess.

When my generation entered the scene of great chess, there were still many chessplayers alive who had the pleasure of meeting the legendary Cuban, Jose Raoul Capablanca. He has maintained himself in chess history not only as a great player, but also as a great master of chess technique. In 1935 he took part in the Moscow International Tournament. Then, during supper, two experienced Soviet masters asked his advice concerning an adjourned game. Capa, still holding a newspaper in his hands, gripped the position at a glance and said: "This piece
should be exchanged, this piece belongs on this square, and that — to that square.' And both masters were wide-eyed.

Imagine yourself being "a kind of Capablanca." Here is the position, and someone has asked you what should White do: how to arrange the pieces in order to exploit the advantage? Our probable considerations are like this: to exchange Rooks, still having the Knight versus the Bishop. For this purpose, we should take the Black Rook at d8 and play with another Rook to d1, not forgetting to take the Knight at b6 (otherwise Black would retreat: Nc8).

Now imagine that all the "unnecessary" pieces have been exchanged. The optimal position for White will be Nf5—Ke4. But is it won? An experienced and technically "equipped" player, at this point of consideration, should elaborate his decision. Will he be able to destroy Black’s fortress? In this position, the Black King has good possibilities of defending the weak points in his camp from the squares e6 and f7. Hence, having gained an obvious advantage, White should consider the probability of not scoring a win from it.

What is our starting point when we evaluate the position? White’s advantage is, first of all, based upon the fact that the three Black pawns (e5, f6, g5) are fixed upon the dark squares. If an endgame Knight versus Bishop would occur, it is for this reason that the Black Bishop has the tendency of becoming "bad." However, we should turn our attention to the pawns which are not posted upon the dark squares. And, as we can see, there are three such pawns, plus the pawn a7 which can eventually go to a6. These pawns can co-operate with the Bishop in creating defensive boundaries. It is my strong belief, that this position can but very hardly, if possibly at all, be won.

In other words, we can scarcely achieve a success adopting ordinary methods and ordinary "mechanical" technique. We must have much deeper vision and play more sophisticatedly and keenly.

18. Bc5

This decision requires a subtle weighing of all "pros" and "cons." It seems illogical, as White voluntarily exchanges his "good" Bishop against Black’s "bad" one. But you should take into consideration what has been said above.

18. . . . Rxd1+ 19. Rxd1 Bxc5

Evidently, this is forced, as otherwise the pawn f6 will "hang." And, if the Bishop retreats to d8, White strengthens his position by playing 20. g4.

20. Nxc5 Re6

It becomes clear that White’s Rook and Knight co-operate finely.

21. Ne4

White has exchanged Black’s "bad" Bishop; however, he got the opportunity to create immediate threats. In our case, the Knight at b6 is not much better than the exchanged Bishop.

21. . . . Re6

Diagram 105
A rather awkward position for the Rook. However, 21. . . . Rf8 22. g4 Rf7 23. Rd6 Nd7 24. Re6 is not stronger than the text; White's pieces penetrate easily into the opponent's camp, and it is just a problem of finding a proper method of gaining a decisive advantage.

22. g4 a5

Such moves should always be treated with a critical attitude. It is a principle for a defender not to create new weak points (which appear usually after each pawn move). However, Black takes a prophylaxis against the threatening pawn assault on the Queenside which would increase White's advantage in space.

23. Rd3 Nd7 24. Kc2 b6

Under favorable circumstances White could play c4–c5.

25. Rf3 26. a3

White intends to play b3–b4 and then, according to circumstances, c4–c5, or b4–b5. Or, finally, to play with his Rook to a file, after pawns have been exchanged (axb; axb).

26. . . . c5 27. Kc3 Ke7

28. Rd3 Rc6 29. Rd5 Nf8

Black has no sign of counterplay. In such situations, one is supposed to locate one's pieces to the best squares, improving one's position to the utmost.

30. Ng3 Ne6 31. Nf5+ Ke8

32. e3

Simple but effective. Black is deprived of the squares d4 and f4.

32. . . . Nc7

This is probably that very move after which the fate of the game leaves no doubts. Taking into account the weakness along the Queen's file (particularly, d6), Black should have transposed his Knight to f7 (via d8) trying to organize a defense still within his powers.

33. Rd1 Ne6 34. Kd3 Rc7

35. Ke4 Rc6

It seems that winning this position is still not a simple matter. Black has barricaded himself well enough; how should White proceed with his actions? There was no need of taking risks, so I repeated moves in the time-trouble:

36. Nd6+ Ke7 37. Nf5+ Ke8

38. Nd6+ Ke7 39. Nf5+ Ke8

40. a4 Nd8

In this position the game was adjourned; Black, if he were to move, had the chance of playing Nf7. However . . .

41. Nh6

The sealed move. If now 41. . . . Re6, then 42. Kf5 (threatening 43. Rd8) Rc6 43. Ng8; or 41. . . . Ke7 42. Ng8+ Ke8 43. Kf5, gaining the pawn f6, After 41. . . . Nb7 42. Ng8 Kf8 43. Rd7 Black is also hopeless, so his reply is forced.

41. . . . Ne6 42. Ng8 Nf8

If 42. . . . Kf7, White wins after 43. Rd7+ Kxg8 44. Kd5. Amusing is the line 43. Kf5 Kf7 44. Nh6+ Kg7 45. Rd8 Ne6 46. Re8 Nc7 and White unexpectedly loses his Knight!

43. Rd2

A complete "Zugzwang."

43. . . . Kf7

If 43. . . . Nd7 (a passive behold), White wins quite easily: 44. Kf5 Kd8 45. e4 Ke8 46. f3 Kd8 47. Rxd7+ Kxd7 48. Nxf6+

44. Nh6+ Ke8 45. Nf5 Ne6

From now on, all lines are based upon "Zugzwang." If 45. . . . Nd7, then 46. Kd5 (the most simple) Nb8 47. Nh6 (the Black Rook must stay on the 6th rank) Kf8 (47. . . . Ke7 48. Ng8+ Ke7 49. Ke4!) 48. Ke4! Ke8 49. Kf5 Nd7 50. Ng8, transposing into the previous note.

46. Rd6
Forcing the Knight versus Knight ending which is won easily due to the penetration of the White King via d5 or f5.

48. ... Rxd6 47. Nxd6+ Kd7
48. Nb5 Ng7
Or 48. ... Nf8 49. Kf5 Ke7 50. Nc3 Nd7 51. Nd5+ Kf7 52. e4 h6 53. f3!, and Black is in zugzwang.

49. h6 Ne8 50. Kd5
Zugzwang again. The rest requires no comments.

50. ... f5 51. Ke5 fxg
52. Nc3 Ke7 53. Ne4 Kf7
54. Kf5 g3 55. fxg g4
56. Ng5+ Kg8 57. Ke6 Nc7+
58. Kd7 Na6 59. e4 Nb4
60. e5 Nd3 61. e6.
Black resigned.

Summing up:

It happens quite often that, even in technical positions, a specific original solution is required which is the only correct one. The analyzed ending is characteristic enough, and is instructive in this respect.

We had a choice between two methods in the initial position: one was purely "technical" (exchange of all pieces except the Knight versus Bishop), another was played in the actual game.
TEACH AND LEARN
This referral was prepared during Petrosian’s lecture on TV, 1984.

T. Petrosian: Good day, boys! According to our tradition, we start our lecture with a discussion of games played by you. They will be our main visual aids. You will demonstrate your games with your analyses prepared at home, and we all shall teach and learn discussing them.

(A. Nikitin, Petrosian’s assistant, tells Melik Hachiyan, a candidate master from Baku, to go to the classboard.)

Rozenthal – Hachiyan
Baku, 1983

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6
3. d4 cxd 4. Nxd4 Nf6
5. Nc3 Nc6 6. Be2 e5

M.H. It is Boleslavsky variation of the Sicilian Defence. I could have played 6. . . e6, but I like 6. . . e5.

T.P. Why do you like it?

M.H. Because White is forced to decide with his centralized Knight at once.

T.P. And what are the strategical disadvantages of this move?

M.H. The main disadvantage is perhaps the weakness on d5.

T.P. What is Black’s compensation for it?

M.H. He is compensated with the active play of pieces; eventually this can give him an initiative.

7. Nb3

A.N. Tell us please whether you have a selection of games played by this line? Who gave you the advice to play it?

M.H. I have many texts of games played by this line, but I can hardly say I play it.— Simply I like it

A.N. What does “many” mean? Tell more definitely.

M.H. Some twenty.

A.N. Could you show us a well-known game in which Black succeeded in accomplishing his strategical ideas? Such games are published in books.

M.H. This line is well elucidated by Isaac Boleslavsky in his book of selected games. For example, in his detailed notes to Vinogradov–Boleslavsky*, Sverdlovsk, 1943.

T.P. What could you say about Unzicker–Taimanov*, played in the Interzonal tournament Stockholm, 1952?

M.H. I have it in my selection, too, Unzicker played 7. Nf3, and Taimanov elaborated a very good plan. First he played 7. . . . h6, preventing Bg5, and then he built the battery Bb7–Qa8, tying White with the problems of the pawn e4.

I remember the game quite well.

T.P. You have said you have scores of some twenty games played with this line. Let the game Botvinnik versus Boleslavsky,

* Unzicker – Taimanov
Stockholm, 1952

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd
7. Nf3 h6 8. 0–0 Be7 9. Re1 0–0
10. h3 a6 11. Bf1 b5 12. a3 Bb7
13. b3 Rc8 14. Bb2 Rc7! 15. Nb1 Qa8
25. exd Nxd3 26. cxd Rxc1 27. Bxc1 Bxd5
White resigned.

— 105 —
Sverdlovsk, 1943**, be the 21st in your collection. It is classic, regarding White’s play. Botvinnik demonstrated strategical flaws in Black’s position,—how to handle arising problems. Let this game stand at the first place in your collection, the remaining twenty games—behind it.

7. ... Be7 8. 0-0 0-0
9. Be3 (9. Kh1!? ) 9. ... Be6

Diagram 106

T.P. Let us look at this position a bit more attentively. Recently Black often plays 9. ... a5. One who wants to realize light and dark sides of such moves should find games played by Anatoly Karpov. He has played a number of very remarkable games. For example, he castled on the Queenside and played a2–a4 to stop the Black pawns, demonstrating that Black had weakened his position globally, eternally. I mean all Sicilian structures. Karpov’s games are easy to find, they are played in the last decade.

10. f4 exf 11. Rxf4

M.H. 11. Bxf4 d5 12. e5, with more complicated play, would be better.

11. ... d5! 12. exd Nxd5
13. Nxd5 Bxd5 14. Nc5?


14. ... Bg5 15. Nxb7 Bxf4

T.P. The game is practically decided. Show us how you have exploited your advantage.

16. Nxd8 Bxe3+ 17. Kh1 Raxd8
18. Qf1?!

M.H. 18. Bf3 would be better.

18. ... Rf8 19. Rad1 Be4
22. Qxd3 (if 22. cxd, then 22. ... Bd2 with a decisive advantage)

22. ... Rd8 23. Qf1 Ne5 24. g3

M.H. Speeding the end. He should have played 24. h3. In addition to all his troubles, White was short of time at this moment.

24. ... Ng4 25. Qc4 Rd1+
26. Kg2 Rd2+ 27. Kh3


27. ... h5! 28. Qc8+ Kh7

Aleksandr Nikitin invites master-candidate Volodya Chuchelov to the classboard. The young boy from the Moscow Palace of Pioneers is told to demonstrate his game from a clock simultaneous display against Grandmaster Yuri Razuvayev.

** Botvinnik –Boleslavsky
Sverdlovsk, 1943

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd
7. Nb3 Be7 8. 0-0 0-0 9. f4 exf
13. Qe2 Nxd4 14. cxd Bxb3 15. Be3! Qb4
16. axb Qxb3 17. Ra5 Qf6 18. Bd4 Bb8
19. Ra5 Nd7 20. Qg4 Ne5 21. Qg3 f6
22. Nd5 a6 23. Qh3 Re8 24. g4 h5
25. Qg3 Rc8 26. Bc3 a5 27. h4 a5
31. Rx6 Qd7 32. Rx6 Qx7 33. Rx7 Kx7
34. g5 hxg 35. Qf5+ Kg7 36. Qxg5+ Kh7
37. Qxb5 Rf8!! 38. Qd7+ Kg8 39. Qe6+ Kg7
40. Qf7+ Kg8 41. Kg2 Rc2+ 42. Kc3 Rc7
43. Qxd6 Rf2–f7 44. Qd5 Kh8 45. e5 Rg7+
46. Kh3 Rg6 47. d4 Rf1 48. Qe4 Rg1
49. d5 Rh1+ 50. Kg4 Rhg1+ 51. Kh5 Rf7
52. e6! Black resigned
Chuchelov – Razuvaev
Moscow, 1983

1. d4 Nf6  
2. c4 e6  
3. Nf3 c5  
4. d5 exd  
5. cxd d6  
6. Nc3 g6  
7. e4 Bg7  
8. Be2 0–0  
9. 0–0

T.P. Till now, White’s moves — as well as Black’s — require no notes. Do you play similar schemes?

V.C. Yes, they are in my repertoire.

T.P. They are risky! Have you good results with them?

V.C. More or less, although I have troubles sometimes.

T.P. Well. But I must say that this opening is dangerous. Although if you want to win in chess you must make dangerous moves and play dangerous openings. It is a sound risk.

9. . . . Bg4  
10. Nd2 Bxe2  
11. Qxe2 Nbd7  
12. a4 Re8

V.C. The immediate 12. . . . a6 would be better. For example 13. a5 Qe7  14. Re1 Rae8  15. Nc4 Ne5  17. Nb6 Ned7.

13. a5 a6  
14. Nc4

Diagram 107

V.C. Still it was not late to play 14. . . . b5!


15. Nb6 Rb8  
16. f4 Ned7  
17. Nc4 Qc7  
18. Qd3 Ng4  
19. Kh1 b5

V.C. White must pay attention to Black’s threat of Bd4. However, White’s position is strong enough to stop this activity as follows: 19. . . . Bd4  20. Qf3 Ng6  21. e5 dxe  22. fxe Nxe5  23. Nxe5 Bxe5  24. Bg5 Nh5  25. g4 Ng7  26. Ne4 followed with Rd1 and d5–d6.

20. axb Nxb6  
21. Na5!

V.C. The Knight goes to c6.

T.P. Volodya! You should never forget a piece must be posted not only nicely, but also highly usefully!

21. . . . c4  
22. Qf3 f5  
23. h3! Nf6  
24. e5 Nfd7

25. e6 Nc5  
26. Nc6 Ra8  
27. g4!

V.C. Black’s pieces have difficulties when trying to help the King.

27. . . . Kh8  
28. Be3

V.C. Intending to exchange the dark-squared Bishops.

28. . . . Nb3  
29. Rad1 Rac8

V.C. Threatening 30. . . . Nxd5 and 31. . . . Qxc6

30. Nd4 Rf8
Diagram 108

31. Qf2 Nc5 32. gxf gxf
33. Rg1 Nd3
V.C. Black’s position is very cramped, his defense is very difficult.
34. Qf3 Nxb2 35. Rd2 Nd3
36. Rdg2
T.P. You have missed the opportunity of eliminating the "central block" 36. Rxg7 Qxg7 37. Rg2, threatening Nde2 and Bd4.
36. . . . Bf6 37. Qh5 Nxf4
38. Bxf4 Bxd4 39. Bh6! Bxg1
V.C. He could resist a little bit longer after 39. . . . Re8 40. Ne2 Be5 (or 40. . . . Bxg1 41. Qf7 with a great advantage)
41. Nf4 with the threat 42. Bg7+ Bxg7 43. Rxg7 Qxg7 44. Rxg7 Kxg7 45. Qf7+ Kh8 46. Nh5 Rg8 47. Qf6+.
40. Qg5 Bd4 41. e7.
Black resigned.
T.P. Well done! You have played this game convincingly enough. The final attack was especially good.

Aleksandr Nikitin tells Katya Borulya to show a game played by her. By the way, her sister, also a master candidate, is sitting here too. The two girls are wonderfully similar looking, but they can be easily recognized by their games, because their style of play is highly individual.

K. Borulya – Zasekina
Kiev, 1983

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6
3. Nc3 Nf6 4. cxd exd
K.B. I like the exchange variation of the Queen’s Gambit because in this line the play is more concrete.
5. Bg5 Be7 6. e3 0–0
7. Bd3 c6 8. Nge2
K.B. This plan (the advance e3–e4) is more suitable when the Black Bishop stands on d6. In our case 8. Nf3 would be better.
8. . . . h6
K.B. The usual plan (Re8 and Nf8) is considered to be much better.
9. Bf4 Be6?
K.B. 9. . . . Nbd7 was correct, postponing the decision about the Queen Bishop.
T.P. The move 9. . . . Be6 is played very seldom in such positions, but one should not consider it an error.
10. f3
K.B. This way is slightly wrong.
T.P. Slightly?
K.B. Yes, I decided to attack on the Kingside when it would be better to play for the “minority attack”: 10. 0–0, followed with a2–a3 and b2–b4.
T.P. Tell us, Katya, have you analyzed this game with your trainer?
K.B. Yes, I have.
T.P. Of course, any experienced player thinks about the counterblow c6–c5 immediately after f2–f3 is played. The Knight on c6 will exercise additional pressure on d4. If White takes on c5 the Black Bishop would come to the diagonal a7–g1 and attack the pawn e3 which is no longer pro-
ected by f2. I want to say that c6–c5 is the most natural reaction. But it is not the whole strategy of this structure. Mikhail Botvinnik has demonstrated many important ideas in it. There are also many recent games. If this plan has been used by Botvinnik it is undoubtedly well-founded strategically. Thus, you should not blame yourself for playing 10. f3. Correct play afterwards, this is most important.

10. . . . B d6?

K.B. Black loses an important tempo, so White has a free hand with his initiative.

11. g4

K.B. This move stands in the agenda. The pawn assault on the Kingside is decisive.

13. h4 Re8 14. Q c2 Nf8
15. 0–0–0 B c8 16. g5 Qd6
17. Rde1 b6 18. Rhg1 Ba6
19. gxh Q xh6 20. Rg5 Bxd3
21. Qxd3 Qh7 22. Qd2 Qh4
23. Rh5 Qg3 24. Rh3 Qg5
25. Qh2 f5 26. R g1

K.B. Black has no trace of counterplay, so the game is near the end.

26. . . . Qd8 27. Rh8+ Kf7
28. Qh5+ Ke7 29. Rg7+ Kd6
30. Rg6+ Ne6

K.B. Here are the lines I have calculated.


Black resigned.

T.P. Finally, I repeat once again that analyzing your games is a necessary component of your chess work. You should make time for it. This time will repay you many times over.
THE LAST YEAR'S LEGACY
Drawing lots and candidates matches

Many polemic spears have been, so to say, broken before the recent match system of competition for the World Championship was introduced three cycles ago. In my opinion it was the triumph of a more objective system. The principle of playing “one against one” is after all, the essence of our game. In addition up to 1965 the challenger passed all steps by playing only in tournaments, whereas the summit match was for 24 games against a single opponent. Not too logical. After lengthy discussions they reached the conclusion that there should be candidates matches rather than tournaments, but the fact that these matches should be preceded by a drawing procedure was completely overlooked. Moreover we still do not have a firm procedure for drawing in spite of the fact that we are now in our third cycle! There is no official regulation how it should be performed, by whom, in whose presence etc. All this causes misunderstandings which are totally unnecessary. For example in the recent cycle my personal opinion was that the draw, which is assumed to be blind by its nature, was endowed with vision this time. Why else would there have been two subgroups, one to be won by a Soviet player and the other by a non-Soviet?

Oh yes, speaking about the drawing of lots after the Interzonal Tournament when I brought up this problem to then FIDE President Euwe in a memo dated Feb. 1971, in it I complained that I could not understand why the drawing of lots for the Soccer World Championship was a crowned ceremony where reporters, TV, and film cameramen were present, while similar “events in chess” were completely passed over and neglected. Unfortunately I got nothing from Dr. Euwe, only the reply that everything was OK.

The quarter finals produced no real sensation except the unexpected score in the Fischer-Taimanov match. For Fischer to win six consecutive games in a candidates match, something had to be amiss. I say this not in disparagement of Fischer, but in recognition of Taimanov’s excellent record. There was the last minute problem of playing this match in Canada which was not to his liking. The normal procedure to determine the venue of a match is as follows: national federations bid openly and then the players or their representatives get together and agree on a place. This did not happen in this case, Taimanov had no choice. Why wasn’t he given a vote? Doesn’t that tend to add psychological pressure?

That summer I received a copy of a chess article by Bozidar Kazic, written for a Yugoslavian Chess magazine. He is a member of the FIDE Bureau and a prominent chess functionary, who also acted as chief arbiter of the Vancouver match. He tells how “Bobby” was playing tennis with the secretary of the Canadian Federation on one of his free days, when he began complaining that his match with Taimanov was badly organized. The Canadian’s reply was, “Why do you complain we did not invite you.” Kazic further adds that the expense for this match was paid by Americans who wanted it held in the Americas. The next match was Larsen-Fischer and again 0–6. Everyone knows that Fischer beat me 6½–2½ so it is not easy for me to write and explain things. By the same token it is also not easy for
Taimanov or Larsen to explain their disasters. Nevertheless I liked Larsen's courage as both grandmaster and reporter, when he explained his reasons for failure in the Danish Chess magazine "Shak-bladet." Early negotiations had fixed only the country where the match should be played USA, while the venues, the cities were changing all the time. Just imagine that we invited a grandmaster to play in Tiflis, then we changed our mind and said it would be Novosibirsk, and finally we arrange the match in Murmansk. Different time zones, weather conditions etc. The same can be said about the USA - New York, Colorado, Denver... In Denver there is high altitude that the Dane is not accustomed to. He is a man of the North. He played while perfectly sick suffering from high blood pressure, and lost. I always considered that Fischer was stronger than Larsen, but not by such a great margin. In the second subgroup I progressed to the Candidates Final. While I had lost the title to Spassky in 1969, I had serious doubts regarding once again taking part in the title competitions. Whether one agrees or not, when you think of all you have to go through in order to achieve what you have already had, it is difficult to decide. Moreover, in my chess career I did not experience that ambitious desire of being nothing else than the World Champion. Nevertheless it is true that in the last twenty years my life has consisted of three-year cycles.

After the Interzonals, when I saw the team of candidates, I thought it would be a pity to stand aside, while Geller, Korchnoy and Taimanov, who are as "weak and old" as I play. No I have no moral right to refuse — for myself or for my fans. But once I made my decision I had to make good preparations, because I believed I could reach the final and do well in it. I worked for six to eight months, only chess and nothing else. My whole life, even private affairs, was subordinated to this purpose in order to have something put aside for each candidate match.

I cannot say I was glad to have Huebner as my first opponent. He was one of the most unpleasant rivals for the first round. A young and very strong player. When our players came back to Moscow after the Interzonal I started asking what they thought of the Huebner of today. It happens that young players change very considerably even within a year. One of the Soviet seconds said he was only a good tactician, but distinctly weak as a positional player. Another said he is a good positional player, but he often miscalculates in tactics. Only Keres told me what I already suspected. He said that Huebner was a typical German player, with a very sound approach. He always tries to make good and sound moves rather than opt for the most flashy or brilliant ones. This description proved to be right in Seville, and the match was extremely difficult. Especially when I got what was probably a lost position in the very first game and narrowly escaped. I was in a stupid situation as a favorite. Can you just imagine what a tumult a loss to Huebner would have raised in the chess world? Not even had Fischer lost to Taimanov would there have been such thunder from the blue. After all Taimanov is a well known and experienced grandmaster with many great victories under his belt. While my loss to Huebner, you must agree, would be incomprehensible.

Thus "terrorized" by the first game, I became overcautious. But if you are overcautious you can hardly beat a German grandmaster. Nevertheless a real fight occurred in the seventh game. After the opening I was "under pressure." In this respect all humans are similar and when one is
pressed and the danger of losing looms, one cannot remain cautious. One must take strong measures, and as luck would have it the wheel began to rotate and I won. Much has been written about what happened after that. My opponent got nervous, tore up his scoresheet, and gave up the match. Thus I was unexpectedly an early winner. Regarding my personal opinion, I think if Huebner continues his serious work he will go on to become an outstanding player.

Next came my match with Korchnoy. It is not easy to play against one whom you have met regularly for 25 years. This summer will be the anniversary of our first game twenty-five years ago, in the USSR Junior Championship. All this time we have played against one another with varied success, and my advantage for all time was "plus one" as chessplayers like to say. No wonder no one could have a clear edge. It was a tense fight, and to some extent a fight of principle. We are players of the same class, the same generation, and one of us had to lose. I think Korchnoy had some good opportunities in the first half of the match, but when he failed to win the fourth game his chances went down sharply, and finally he made way for me.

Now it was my turn to play Fischer. I realized quite well with whom I have to play. Not only his outstanding practical strength made me strain every nerve, but also there were some "details" that had to be taken into account. The problem of the match venue was of the utmost importance. Let us go back a bit to my match with Huebner. Even this 22 year old had complaints about the unusual weather in Seville. When he returned home he complained that I as a southerner had distinct advantages in Seville. What he failed to add was that the weather was cool and cloudy during our match. I mention this only to point out the practical importance of venue to all chessplayers.

Long ago while reading reports on world championships in soccer and other sports, I wondered why Italians took their mineral water with them. Others took native vegetables as well as their cooks. I had thoughts which seem funny now: Oh those capitalists, they have swell heads because of their wealth. I did not realize that soccer championships played in a light drizzle, or with a stomach ache can be decisive. Nowadays in all sports the contest takes place on such a high level that the smallest detail can be enormously important. Suppose everyone around you speaks a language which is perfectly strange to you for a solid month and you become depressed. Wouldn't this condition even in its mildest form adversely affect one's play? Nowadays we speak a lot about psychology in chess, or more precisely what is referred to as psychology. Is it psychology to drive your opponent into an unfamiliar position, or to prepare a novelty in his favorite line, or to pursue tactics which make him uncomfortable? I think all this is simply a sound and practical approach to a good chess fight. The real psychology in chess is on a much higher level and has become much more complicated. For years now this complexity has benefited Fischer. Just look at the way in which he has been able to impose his will on the authorities, and get all his conditions. At the same time his opponents do not achieve the same results. It makes one uncomfortable to know beforehand that the town, the hall, the lighting, even the furniture is designated by your opponent. He also has the extra fee for participation, although it is not the extra fee itself which counts. What counts is that you have a feeling of discrimination, offense and even almost humiliation. All this cannot but cause a complex, similar
to that which troupes have sitting in the trenches after heavy shelling waiting for the final attack. In this regard all our discussions before the match were very interesting and instructive.

Now we come to the final match. As usual we exchanged many cables. Dr. Euwe came to Moscow for negotiations, and the situation became a bit clearer when we learned that the match could not be played in either the US or the USSR. The remaining bids were from Yugoslavia and Argentina.

**My Match with Fischer**

I like very much to play in Yugoslavia. I was there many times (in 1954 Bronstein and I were the first two players to go there after a very long interval). However I never was very successful in Yugoslavia, neither in my youth, nor in my blossoming years when I was World Champion. For many years I was never able to win a higher prize than third place.

Naturally I was afraid that everything would remind me of my failures, so I had to reject Yugoslavia. This left nothing else but Argentina. But I did not want to go there for such an important match. It was the southern half of the Western Hemisphere and I had heard about the heat and humidity in springtime. On the other hand I had no choice. There had been rumors of French and Greek bids, but nothing came of them.

Thus our negotiations came to the critical point, and the FIDE Congress had to make the final decision. Then quite unexpectedly we received a cable from Greece to "64" weekly. They invited us to play our match in Greece under very tempting conditions. Precisely at that time the Yugoslav Grandmaster Gligoric called me from Belgrade.

He asked if I would like to speak with Fischer. I asked him, "How could we manage? I am not a good English speaker, and his Russian is hardly good enough for a serious talk." "No problem," responded Gligoric, "I shall be your mediator and interpreter. We shall arrange a kind of radio bridge Moscow-Belgrade-New York, with me in the center." So we did.

I wish to reproduce some shorthand notes from this memorable talk.

**Gligoric (to Fischer).** Where would you like to play?

**Fischer.** The highest prize money is in Argentina, besides this country is not too far from the USA.

**Gligoric (to Fischer).** You do not think the match could be played in Europe?

**Fischer.** I am sure the Russians will say no to Argentina. I consider that Yugoslavia or Greece is all the same to them. The most important thing for them is to stay in Europe. Their results are generally mediocre in the Western Hemisphere. They had trouble playing the US team in 1954 in New York, whereas they won the return match in Russia very easily. They have a good memory for such facts, so you can expect a fight over the venue of this match.

**Petrosian.** Tell him that I shall not go to Buenos Aires. Why should I go to him, to his hemisphere? He is a young man, he has played two matches in America already. Let us meet one another somewhere halfway . . .

**Gligoric.** Fischer says that Argentina offers the best financial conditions.

**Petrosian.** I see, I am not against good conditions, but money is not all.

**Gligoric.** (to Fischer). Tell me, Bobby, may be some other place?

**Fischer.** Buenos Aires is best. The city is fine, and steaks are marvelous there.
Petrosian. For me, the weather and playing conditions are the most important, rather than money.

Fischer. Money is not so important for him because his state supports him.

Petrosian. Fischer also has his state, let it help him. I am not so young yet, so when I think where to play I have some other considerations, not only financial.

Fischer. The highest bid and experience say for Argentina. I believe that FIDE will prefer Argentina.

When we were speaking, Gligoric translated this phrase a bit abridged and modified: "Fischer says that FIDE will decide for Argentina anyway." It sounds more than categorically, and even when it is a written text it is still convincing enough.

Petrosian (with some indignation). FIDE has no right to compel me. If they try, Fischer would play somebody else, not me.

Later on I learned from South American sources that "the bid of Athens was indisputable for all reasons, but Argentinian delegates managed to arrange drawing lots."

A lot is already said about these "draws." Boys, or girls decorated with bows, pull the lots from rotating wheels — this is the common picture. But a few years ago someone introduced a damn clever thing — first to pull who will pull first . . . A human comedy. One who had pulled it can pull the "main" lot.

It was the wife of the Danish delegate who pulled. She took the parcel with the text "United States of America" inside it. Then Mr. Edmondson, representative for the US federation, told her: "You have done it so well, please, take again."

She took another parcel, this time with "Argentina" in it.

Thus, draw or not draw, mystery or not, I had to play against Fischer who had crushed both Taimanov and Larsen with a clear score. Since years, I have my own opinion concerning Fischer's play,— as you know I met him many times. Yet in 1958 I was called to the Moscow Central Chess Club to "pacify" him, then a young boy, beating Moscow masters in 5-minute games. Since then we have played many games, everything went normally, but a year ago, I "had a pleasure" of losing to him in the Match of the Century . . . Fischer has an enormous capacity for work. I think it would not be a great exaggeration to say that the amount of time he spends working at chess, can be compared with that of all our chess olympic team members together.

As a rule, when two high-class players meet, the one has better chances whose approach is more broad-minded. What does it mean? One who has played more various kinds of positions in his life has it easier. And, of course, the variety of opening systems connected with it. Recently (it happens with all players, who have reached a certain age) my opening repertoire has become more narrow. From this point of view, I must say, Fischer is a unique phenomenon. Say, he plays the single opening line with Black through all his life. Not even an opening — the Sicilian Defence, but the line: with a7-a6 and d7-d6, and if Bg5, then Qb6 and very seldom something else.

However, in his lines he feels like a fish in water. It is his great knowledge of certain structures, the fact which is, generally, my explanation of his quick and self-determined play.

As for me, I always preferred schemes which are played rather seldom. For example, the Saemisch attack in the King's Indian Defence was considered rather unpromising for White when I was young. nevertheless, I played it often I played
the Caro-Kann Defence which is considered (quite justifiably) to be a difficult opening, also I played some "trivial" French lines.

This is the approach exercised during many years, which seemed to me to be a good weapon against Fischer. If you look attentively to the games played in the first half of our match, you will see that in almost all of them, except the first game, he was driven into the schemes which had occurred but very seldom in his games.

In addition, I must say that in those situations, which Fischer has studied a lot and played many times, he makes errors really very seldom. The more amusing was the first game of our match. By the way, no information about the birth of the move 11... d5 has been given in our press, I think I must tell about it.

Everybody likes the feeling of authorship. However I must refuse the honour, ascribed to me (and my seconds), of refuting the opening idea by R. Fischer.

Annotating the first game in the "Sovetsky Sport" daily newspaper, Grandmaster S. Flohr wrote that the move 11... d5 was prepared by the team Petrosian–Suetin–Averbakh during our work before my match with Fischer. Later on, it was discovered that this move had been mentioned in an opening book published in 1966. And finally, an author pretending to be unknown said that he knew about this move a decade before.

After the match Korchnoy–Petrosian, in the Central chess club, a parcel was handed to me, with the inscription "to the winner of the match." Vladimir Chebanenko, chess instructor of the Kishinev chess club, and master candidate, analyzing the opening of the first game Fischer–Taimanov, found a very strong move after 11... d5 12. exd Bxa3 13. bxa Qa5 14. Qd2 0–0–0 15. Bc4, namely 15. Rg8!

The main value of the whole line is in this move, and the whole tribute should be paid to Chebanenko, because all the preceding moves of Black are quite natural and do not promise much joy to him.

After 15... Rg8, Chebanenko proved by detailed analysis that Black's position is favorable. The same concerns the position after 11... d5 12. Nxd5 Bxa3 13. bxa f5. So the whole line may be considered as his patent. A detailed proof demonstrated that the master candidate found an important opening improvement in a line played by many grandmasters. Of course, it happens that one manages to refute an opponent's innovation at the board, but in our case I must add, that the move 16. Rd1, made by Fischer, I analyzed at home, and intended to play 16... Rxg2. However, I cannot explain so simply why I have not played 16... Rxg2.

Let us go back again, to the moment when we decided to "chase" him from one opening to another, when we were preparing our "plan of campaign" and I, without much pleasure, flew across the ocean. We were handsomely welcomed, but accommodated not very well. Later on, after numerous complaints, we were moved to the beautiful hotel "President" where Fischer was settled at once. Then we were invited by the President of the Republic of Argentina. Everything in accordance with such a solemn occasion. After it, an excursion to the tournament hall. Hundreds of lamps, costing thousands of dollars. No passing here, no staying there. Well, all right with it.

The initial moves of the first game were played quickly. After 11... d5 Fischer captured on d5 at once. He began to think only after 0–0–0, and he was getting nervous, red spots appeared on his face. In this moment, the light went out. In the hall, only the emergency lights were on,— at side
doors and far in the rear. The board is visible, of course, but not for playing. I get up. The arbiter stops my opponent's clock; Fischer is sitting, peering into the position. Five minutes passed, ten . . . I call the translator, the translator speaks to the chief arbiter. I say to them that Fischer should be driven off the chessboard. But my opponent — Fischer! One who always has so much trouble with the light! — agrees for his clock to be set into motion and sits at the board in half-darkness. If one tried to tell me such a story I would say he is suspicious.

If, in addition, the story-teller said I had played 16 . . . Bf5, the move I had never been analyzing before, instead of the planned 16 . . . Rxg2, I would have sincere doubts about his truthfulness. Finally, if this "eyewitness" confirmed that the light failed during the eighth game, too, and exactly when his opponent was "trapped" into an opening line again, I would consider the story-teller more or less the same person that some of the readers think now about me. I want to also define more precisely that, despite information given by some newspapers, I did not offer a draw in the first game.

The second game was lost by Fischer, in a crashing style. Never and nowhere had I such applause as after this game.

Someone has written that Fischer's pawn sacrifice in the third game was clever. An experienced player can easily tell during a game whether his opponent has lost a pawn or just sacrificed it. Fischer lost his Q pawn, and his position was lost. But it is the first occasion in my whole life when I allowed repetition of position (three times). I am cautious by nature, and in chess I was always afraid of two things: to seal an illegal move and to permit 3-time repetition in a better position. When Fischer insisted on fixing a draw I hardly could understand what he was speaking about . . . .

Many could not understand why Petrosian, playing White, makes a short draw in the fourth game. It is quite simple. After Fischer's claims about Petrosian and Korchnoy, making ridiculous short draws, I wanted to put a kind of psychological problem — to prove to him that if I only want to make a short draw with the White pieces against him, I can do it, and without much trouble. I did.

The fifth game was very complicated. I knew that Fischer used to play an ancient line in the Petroff Defence rather than the line in fashion. I played a very modest continuation; he did not analyze it at home, so he felt uncertainty and got an inferior position again.

Before the sixth game, I decided to play the English opening again. The plan was simple: if he wants a real fight, he would play Gruenfeld, or King's Indian,— I had nothing against it. But Fischer never plays against his own belief. Therefore it should be the English opening again, a repetition of the drawish fourth game. Or . . . he would take risks and give me chances. However, either I was nervous, or something else . . . I had strange thoughts,— let them speak, let them write, a draw again— let it be a draw. Till now, I cannot explain why I have played 2. b3. When Tal dominated, such things were explained in terms of hypnosis. My position was becoming worse and worse, but Fischer started to play quickly and I seemed to be coming out of it. By the control move, suddenly I saw I should give up a pawn. However the position was blockaded and I had a Knight against the Bishop.

With a minus pawn, we start our hotel analysis. The first impression — there should be a "fortress." I told my seconds "I go to bed, you may look again if you
want." But what sort of sleeping! Literally in an hour I got up again, tried it — no fortress. I was analyzing up to the morning, I could keep the position in some lines, could not in others . . . All hung on a hair, no certain draw, no direct win. Then my seconds joined me, and we came to the common conclusion — no fortress. Before leaving the room I agreed I should play f2–f3, although during the night analysis I stated firmly that namely this move should not be played. It was my fault, nobody else's: I betrayed my usual principle — to have a fresh head and a good common idea of the adjourned position. It is better than to come tired to the resumption, even after a most detailed analysis of all possible continuations. At the second session, I played awfully and lost practically without showing any resistance. (Few more words about this game. The possibility of sealing f2–f4 did not come to my head at all. Maybe this move was found by commentators only when they had abandoned their attempts to find other ways to draw. But, when sealing my move, how could I know that these attempts would fail.)

After the sixth game Fischer really became a genius, while I was either broken, or tired, or something else,— anyway, in the remaining three games, there was no play at all.

What can I say about my opponent's play in the candidates final? Of course, Fischer is very strong, he can beat everybody. And there is an additional danger: nowadays Fischer is a sort of banner for Western players and their chess public. Our domination in chess is disliked by many foreign organizers. Many countries, with old and great chess traditions, spend much effort organizing tournaments, publishing chess books etc., but cannot prevent us from obtaining the most honorable chess titles. But now, finally, Fischer has come, and all their sympathies are for him.

I should add several words about Ed Edmondson. He deserves it. This man is running all organization work in the U.S. Chess Federation.

Due to his activities, American players get financial support when they go to play in Europe. It never happened before. To demonstrate his influence, I bring another example. Once I invited Fischer to play in Erevan, telling him that all his conditions will be accepted, except maybe a fabulous extra fee. Fischer said "Speak to Edmondson, he wants me to play a tournament in USSR. He pays, and I come." Fischer of today is, to some extent, a result of Edmondson's activities.

The course and the results of the Match had wide publicity. The "64" weekly published "hot" opinions by Botvinnik from his lecture for the Leningrad public. He said "It is difficult to talk about matches played by Fischer. Since he appeared, mysteries began. His match with Taimanov was amusing, his match with Larsen was astonishing, his match with Petrosian was perfectly striking. The first two matches are clear enough for the public, but what has happened in Buenos Aires is still mysterious. Petrosian dominated in five initial games, but then "degraded" down to the level of Taimanov and Larsen. However what Petrosian has managed to do in the games 1 and 5 is a great achievement. He has demonstrated that it is possible to compete with Fischer. These games demonstrated Petrosian's good preparation for the match; he changed opening lines from one game to another, but failed to achieve more in view of his uncertainty.

When Petrosian was playing like Petrosian, Fischer was playing like a very strong grandmaster.

But when Petrosian began to make er
rors Fischer transformed into a genius.

I hope that my notes to the fifth and seventh game of the match will illustrate well enough what I mean about the two periods of the match.''

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**Fischer – Petrosian**

**Game 1**

1. e4 c5
2. Nf3 e6
3. d4 cxd
4. Nxd4 Nc6
5. Nb5 d6
6. Bf4 e5
7. Be3 Nf6
8. Bg5 Be6
9. Nf3 a6
10. Bxf6 gxf
11. Na3 d5!
12. exd Bxa3
13. bxa Qa5
14. Qd2 0–0–0
15. Bc4 Rhg8
16. Rd1 Bf5
17. Bd3 Bxd3
18. Qxd3 Nd4
19. O–O Kb8
20. Kh1 Qxa3
21. f4 Rc8
22. Ne4 Qxd3
23. cxd Rc2
24. Rd2 Rxd2
25. Nxd2 f5
26. fxe Re8
27. Re1 Nc2
28. Re2 Nd4
29. Re3 Nc2
30. Rh3 Rxe5
31. Nf3 Rxd5
32. Rxhr7 Rxd3
33. h4 Ne3
34. Rxf7 Rd1+
35. Kh2 Ra1
36. h5 f4
37. Rxf4 Rxa2
38. Re4 Nxc2
39. Kg3 Ra5
40. Ne5.
Black resigned.

**Fischer – Petrosian**

**Game 3**

1. e4 e6
2. d4 d5
3. Nc3 Nf6
4. Bg5 dxe
5. Nxe4 Be7
6. Bxf6 gxf
7. g3 f5!
8. Nc3 Bf6
9. Nge2 Nc6!
10. d5 exd
11. Nxd5 Bxb2
12. Bg2 0–0
13. 0–0 Bh8
14. Nef4 Ne5
15. Qh5 Ng6
16. Rad1 c6
17. Ne3 Qf6
18. Kh1 Bg7
19. Bh3 Ne7
20. Rd3 Be6
21. Rfd1 Bh6
22. Rd4 Bxf4
23. Rx14 Rad8
24. Rx1 Rad8
25. Bxf5 Nxf5
26. Nxf5 Rd5
27. g4 Bxf5
28. gxf h6
29. h3 Kh7
30. Qe2 Qe5
31. Qh5 Qf6
32. Qe2 Re5
33. Qd3 Rd5.
Draw.

**Petrosian – Fischer**

**Game 2**

1. d4 Nf6
2. c4 g6
3. Nc3 d5
4. Bf4 Bg7
5. e3 c5
6. dxc Qa5
7. Rc1 Ne4
8. cxd Nxc3
9. Qd2 Qxa2
10. bxc Qa5
11. Bc4 Nd7
12. Ne2 Ne5
13. Ba2 Bf5
14. Bxe5! Bxe5
15. Nd4 Qxc5
16. Nxf5 gxf
17. 0–0 Qa5
18. Qc2 f4
19. c4 fxe
20. c5 Qd2
21. Qa4+ Kf8
22. Rcd1 Qe2
23. d6 Qh5
24. f4 e2
25. fxe exd (Q)
26. Rxd1 Qxe5
27. Rf1 f6
28. Qb3 Kg7
29. Qf7+ Kh6
30. dxe f5
31. Rx f5 Qd4+
32. Kh1.
Black resigned.

**Petrosian – Fischer**

**Game 4**

1. c4 c5
2. Nf3 g6
3. d4 cxd
4. Nxd4 Nc6
5. e4 Nf6
6. Nc3 d6
7. f3 Nxd4
8. Qxd4 Bg7
9. Be3 0–0
10. Qd2 Qa5
11. Rc1 Be6
12. b3 Rfc8
13. Be2 a6
14. Nd5 Qxd2+
15. Kxd2 Bxd5
16. cxd Nd7
17. Rxc8+ Rxc8
18. Rc1 Rxc1
19. Kxc1 Kf8
20. Kc2 e6

Draw.
Fischer – Petrosian

Game 5

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nf6
3. Nxe5

The tournament practice proves that 3. d4 brings Black maximum of difficulties.
3. . . . d6 4. Nf3 Nxe4 5. d4
Hoping for 5. . . . d5 which would transpose to the main line. However Black’s d6–d5 is not obligatory.

As a result, we have something similar to the Alekhine Defence, but Black’s Knight stands on f6 rather than b6. This fact seems to be in Black’s favour.

5. . . . Nf6 6. Bd3 Be7 7. h3
If White intends to play c2–c4 it is highly useful to prevent . . . Bg4. On the other hand, the square h2 is prepared for Bishop’s retreat after Bf4.

7. . . . 0–0 8. 0–0 c6
A useful move. However he could make it later
9. Re1 Nbd7 10. Bf4
Fischer, like Smyslov, always moves his pieces to good safe squares.

10. . . . Re8 11. c4 Nf8
12. Nc3 a6 13. Qb3

Diagram 109

It is too much — one cannot fight against modern semi-closed structures with such light horse jumps.

13. a4 was the proper move, as Black’s Knight could hardly come to b4!

14. Be3 seems to be more cautious.

14. . . . Bf8
Black is going on with his maneuvers, but b7–b5 would be well-timed now. White, on the other hand, should have played a2–a4 here. Maybe Fischer thought his position was better and tried to avoid sharp decisions.

15. Re2 b5 16. Rae1
Intending to play d4–d5 but Black prevents it easily.

16. . . . Bb7

17. Qc2
Korchnoy is quite right saying that 17. a4 would be met by 17. . . . Rb8.

17. . . . g6
White is completely mobilized, but Black’s position is invulnerable like a hedgehog — how can White approach it? In early thirties, such positions were masterly built and treated by S. Flohr.

18. b4

20. Bb3
Korchnoy is right again. He says that White should have played 20. Rxe8 first, driving one of the Knights from the central square d5.

A piece of art. The idea is not new: the pawns d6 and d5 will safely restrict White’s pieces while pawns a2 and b4 will be
attacked — but its execution is performed masterly. Fischer should have realized here how much he had lost not playing a2–a4, and this fact influenced his further play . . .

22. a3 a5 23. Nxd5
23. Bxd5 was hardly better.
23. . . . cxd 24. b5
24. bxa Qxa5 25. a4 would be more cautious,— no winning chances, but at least no danger of losing.

24. . . . a4 25. Ba2
This is really dangerous! He should have played 25. Bxa4 (25 . . . . Qa5 26. Bb3), maintaining drawish chances.

25. . . . Qb6!
25. . . . Qa5 26. Qb2 Rc8 27. Bf4
Qc3 was also possible, but Petrosian’s plan is more well-shaped!

26. Qb1 Ra5 27. Rb2 Ne4

Diagram 110

What a pity! He hastily wants to obtain a material plus, but Fischer manages to hold the balance with the help of tactics. However, after 27. . . . . Bh6 (If 27. . . . . Bc8 28. Bf4 Bf5 29. Qf1 Bd7 30. Bg5 Rxb5 31. Rxb5 Bxb5 32. Qb1, White would regain a pawn). 28. Qe1 Ne4 29. Qb4 Qc7 30. Rb1 Ra8 Black’s pieces would dominate all over the board, and nothing could help White . . . Now the Bishop h2 comes to play, and White is saved.

28. Bf4 Nc3 29. Qc2 Rxb5

30. Rxb5 Nxb5 31. Qxa4 Qa6
This way, Black exchanges the passed pawn (QR), but nothing else.

32. Qxa6 Bxa6 33. Be3
First of all he eliminates the threat Nb5–c3–e2+.

33. . . . Nxa3 34. Bxd5 Bc4
The draw is inevitable now.

35. Bc6 Nc2 36. Bd2 Be2
37. Be4 Bxf3 38. Bxc2 Bd5
Draw.

Petrosian – Fischer
Game 6

1. Nf3 c5 2. b3 d5
3. Bb2 f6 4. c4 d4
5. d3 e5 6. e3 Ne7
7. Be2 Nec6 8. Nbd2 Be7
9. 0–0 0–0 10. e4 a6
11. Ne1 b5 12. Bg4 Bxg4
13. Qxg4 Qc8 14. Qe2 Nd7
15. Nc2 Rb8 16. Rfc1 Qe8
17. Ba3 Bd6 18. Ne1 g6
19. cxb axb 20. Bb2 Nb6
21. Nef3 Ra8 22. a3 Na5
23. Qd1 Qf7 24. a4 bxa
25. bxa c4 26. dxc Nxc4
27. Nxc4 Nxc4 28. Qe2 Nxb2
29. Qxb2 Rfb8 30. Qa2 Bb4
31. Qxf7+ Kxf7 32. Rc7+ Ke6
33. g4 Bc3 34. Ra2 Rc8
35. Rxc8 Rxc8 36. a5 Ra8
37. a6 Ra7 38. Kf1 g5
39. Ke2 Kd6 40. Kd3 Kc5
41. Ng1 Kb5 42. Ne2
(the sealed move) 42. . . . Ba5

— 120 —
Fischer – Petrosian

Game 7

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

This ancient line has become popular recently. Following Spassky’s lucky hand, White tries to oppose the Paulsen system with a free and easy development, so as to prove that a7–a6 is a waste of time.

5. Bd3 Nc6 6. Nxc6 bxc

No matter how Black recaptures, a7–a6 is of no use.

7. 0–0 d5 8. c4

This already differs with Spassky, who has fianchettoed his Q Bishop.

Fischer’s move seems logical:
White should open the game as soon as possible because Black has lost time in the opening.

8. . . . Nf6

In Flohr’s style of thirties, Black could play 8. . . . dxc4 9. Bxc4 Qxd1 10. Rxd1 Nf6 11. Nc3 Bc5 12. Bg5 e5, and the weak pawn c6 is useful — it protects the central square d5!

9. cxd5 cxd5 10. exd6 exd6

An unexpected obedience. The position is opened now, and White’s better development may tell. 10. . . . Nxd5 was relatively better, as L. Polugaevsky noticed.— But why not 10. . . . Qxd5 11. Nc3 Qd7, maintaining both the control over e4 and the semi-closed structure? Maybe 10. . . . Qxd5 will force White to seek new ways in this old line.

11. Nc3 Be7 12. Qa4+

Well done! After 12. . . . Bd7 13. Qd4 White favorably moves his Queen to a central square. Petrosian offers an exchange sacrifice, but Fischer prefers to transpose into a favorable endgame.

12. . . . Qd7 13. Re1!

After 13. Bb5 axb 14. Qxa8 0–0 Black would obtain a dangerous initiative, while now the game goes into a prosaic endgame where Black has difficulties.

13. . . . Qxa4

Nothing else can be seen.

14. Nxa4 Be6 15. Be3 0–0

16. Bc5

Typical of Fischer’s play. Of course, he calculated easily the line 16. Nb6 Rab8
17. Bxa6 Bd8 18. Na4 d4 with Black’s initiative. Then he had to choose between Bc5 and Nc5, and his choice was Bc5. Why? Because it is more dynamic. After 16. Nc5 a5! 17. Bd4 Bxc5 18. Bxc5 White has two Bishops, but Black has already played a6—a5 because White had lost a tempo. After the text move, White has enough time to play b2—b4, so the weak pawn on a6 will be fixed.

16. . . . Rfe8 17. Bxe7 Rxe7
18. b4 Kf8 19. Nc5 Bc8
20. f3

Again without wasting time: as Black can exchange Rooks, Fischer keeps his Q Rook on its initial position. 20. . . . Rea7

Diagram 112

He still could organize some counterplay, e.g. 26. . . . Rb8 27. a3 a5 28. b5 a4. Black’s unplanned play enables White, through the threat of King’s activation, to force the continuous degrading of Black’s position. 27. f4

Restricting the eventual Knight’s activity
27. . . . h4 28. Kf3 f5

Saving the pawn h4, but weakening the 7th rank more and more . . . 29. Ke3 d4+ Driving the King away, but opening the diagonal a2—g8 for the Bishop . . .

30. Kd2 Nb6 It is capitulation, but there are too many weaknesses in Black’s position
31. Ree7 Nd5 32. Rf7+ Ke8
33. Rb7 Nxb4 34. Bc4

Black resigned. He can parry mating threats only at cost of great loss of material. Petrosian is hardly recognizable in this game.
Petroslan – Fischer
Game 8

1. d4 Nf6
2. c4 e6
3. Nf3 d5
4. Nc3 c5
5. e3 Nc6
6. a3 Ne4
7. Qc2 Nxc3
8. bxc Be7
9. Bb2 0–0
10. Bd3 h6
11. 0–0 Na5
12. Nd2 dxe
13. Nxc4 Nxc4
14. Bxc4 b6
15. e4 Bb7
16. Qe2 Rc8
17. Bb3 b5
18. f4 Qb6
19. Kh1 cxd
20. cxd b4
21. axb Bxb4
22. d5 Bc3
23. Bxc3 Rxc3
24. Bc2 exd
25. e5 Re3
26. Qd2 d4
27. Rab1 Qa6
28. Rf2 Rd8
29. Kg1 Be4
30. Bxe4 Rxe4
31. h3 d3
32. Rb3 Qc4
33. Rb2 Rdd4
34. g3 Rd5
35. Kh2 Rb5
36. Ra2 Rb1
37. g4 Re2
38. Rxe2 dxe
39. Qxe2 Qxf4+

White resigned.

Fischer – Petrosian
Game 9

1. e4 e6
2. d4 d5
3. Nf3 Nf6
4. Nf3 Nc6
5. exd exd
6. Bb5 Bg4
7. h3 Bxf3
8. Qxf3 Be7
9. Bg5 a6
10. Bxc6+ bxc
11. 0–0 0–0
12. Rfe1 h6
13. Bb4 Qd7
14. Re2 a5
15. Rae1 Bd8
16. b3 Rb8
17. Na4 Ne4
18. Bxd8 Rbxd8
19. Qf4 Qd6
20. Qxd6 cxd
21. c4 Nf6
22. Rc1 Rb8
23. cxd cxd
24. f3 Nh5
25. Qf4 Qd6
26. Rd2 Rfe8
27. Rxd6 Re1+
28. Kg3 Nh5+
29. Kg3 Nh5+
30. Kh4 g6
31. Rxd5 Re8
32. Rxa5 Ree1
33. Kg4 Nf6
34. Kg4 Ne6
35. Kg4 f5+
36. Kg4 f5+
37. Kh4 Kh7
38. Kg4 Ng7
39. Kg4 Ng7
40. Kg4 Ng7
41. Rxe1 Rxe1
42. Kf5 Re2
43. Ke5 Nxe2
44. Rxe2 Nxd4+
45. Ke5 Nxe2
Black resigned.
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