

VIRGINIA CHESS

Newsletter

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2021 - #6



Photo Susan Shibus

VIRGINIA CHESS

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2021 - Issue #6

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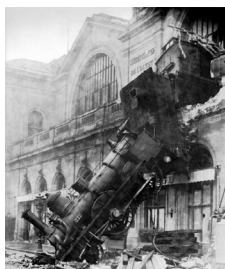


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From the Editor..



J'ADOUBE !

First things first. The Editor is clearly losing his grip. Bad enough that VIRGINIA CHESS #2021/3 shipped with every page mis-headed "2021/4".

But then, last issue, *I got the state champion's name wrong on the cover.*

This was a ?? level blunder and I can only offer my most heartfelt apologies to Jason Morefield and the entire Morefield family. No excuse or explanation here—although it's also true that a couple months ago I misidentified northern Virginia master Justin Paul as "Jason Paul" in something I wrote. So perhaps I suffer from a rare cognitive disorder that impairs my ability to keep straight names like Justin and Jason. If the next state champion happens to be named Jacob, my head may explode.

VOICE FROM THE PAST

I heard from Gary Robinson! For those of you not old enough to remember, "GTR" was an unfailing presence at Virginia chess events until he removed to Michigan sometime (I think) in the late 1980's. But he keeps an eye on us, and he offers a sort of chess detective challenge to VIRGINIA CHESS readers in the form of a riddle...





After White's third move in a 'book' opening (**Modern Chess Openings 14** calls it "entertaining") Black plays a forcing move after which, on his 4th turn, he then has the option to set an unsound trap. If he does so, White (already ahead in material) can reply by...

- 1) capturing a pawn;
- 2) capturing a piece;
- 3) capturing Black's queen; or
- 4) checking Black's king



Question: **Which one of White's 5th-move options is a blunder?**

Gary proposes to make a contest of it and even offered to fund a prize. However, we've already got a cache of book prizes here at VIRGINIA CHESS world headquarters. So, choice of books to anybody who can provide the correct answer. (And we'll give the solution next issue.)



Fredricksburg ♠ Open

Michigan expert Krishnan Sudharsan spooked the field at the Fredricksburg Open over Halloween weekend (October 30-31), scoring 4-1 (three wins, two draws) to take clear 1st place. Top-seeded Bobby Fischer headed a group of six runners-up half a point behind. The other 3 ½ s were class A players Thomas Lane, Isaac Spence, Christian Carrasco & Samuel He, and class B Lang Xiong. Top upset prizes were awarded to Neil Luo & Aaron Sloan. Mike Hoffpauir organized and directed.

Jadon Gary - Soham Pattraik

Evans Gambit

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 b4 Bb6 5 b5 Na5 6 Nxe5 Nxc4 7 Nxc4 Bxf2+ 8 Kxf2 Qf6+ 9 Qf3 Qd4+ 10 Ne3 Qxa1 11 Nc3 b6 12 g3 a6 13 Ba3 Qxh1 14 Qxh1 axb5 15 Nxb5 Ra5 16 Nxc7+ Kd8 17 Bd6 Bb7 18 Qb1 Nf6 19 d3 b5 20 Nxb5 Ne8 21 e5 f6 22 Na7 Rxa7 23 Qb6+ Kc8 24 Qxa7 Nxd6 25 exd6 Re8 26 Nc4 Re6 27 Nb6+ Kd8 28 Qb8+ Bc8 29 Qxc8 *mate* 1-0



Chess By the Fountain



The club “RVA Pieces” meets every Wednesday from 5pm until midnight at Gallery5, located in the historic arts district of Jackson Ward, at 200 W Marshall St, Richmond Va 23220. Weather permitting, they also stage “Chess by the Fountain” in Richmond’s storied Monroe Park on Saturday afternoons (“12ish til...”). Organizer Dave Murray can be reached at user.erred@gmail.com for more info. Weather was definately permitting when our photographer happened by on October 23...

Photos by Susan Shibut





Young Petrosian

by Macon Shibut

Apart from translating Vladimir Simagin (see VIRGINIA CHESS #2021/4, p 8) another of the Editor's pandemic chess projects has been to work through the games of the 9th world champion, Tigran Petrosian. And I took notes! This essay presents a few observations (with more to follow if readers seem interested).

THE EARLY CAREER OF TIGRAN PETROSIAN was not a story of spectacular breakthroughs. Petrosian's progress was less a matter of leaps forward than continuous, incremental growth. His first three attempts at qualifying for the main ("Premier") USSR Championship exemplify this.

The field for USSR Championships of those days was composed of seeded players (proven, accomplished stars like Botvinnik or Keres) combined with top finishers from semi-final events held throughout the USSR. Petrosian's debut at one of these semi-finals occurred in 1946 in his native Tiflis (later Tbilisi), Republic of Georgian. He was 17 years old and came to the tournament with a resume that already included two Soviet All-Union Junior Championship titles, as well as the adult championships of both Georgia and Armenia.

Nonetheless, he was not as proven as those accomplishments might imply. Examining the games, the quality of Petrosian's opposition struck me as surprisingly weak. The standard of play at all levels has progressed since the 1940s of course, but this seems especially true for players below the top tiers, and perhaps doubly so for competitions 'out in the provinces' far from the major chess centers Moscow and Leningrad.

In any case, at the USSR Ch semifinal in Tiflis 1946 Petrosian met a caliber of opponent that he had not faced before. There were no world class entrants, but the field contained a number of still-familiar names: Aronin, Makagonov, Mikenas, Sokolsky, et al. And in this company, Petrosian—there is no other way to put it—failed the test. He finished in 16th place out of 17.



Tigran Petrosian by Luis Couso

ONE YEAR LATER, another semi-final, this one in Moscow. Here again Petrosian did not qualify for the final. However, real progress was evident: he finished in 5th place (out of 16). He might have done even better were it not for some curious decisions in the final round—more on that below.

At last in 1949, in his third crack at one of these qualifying semifinals, Petrosian finished in 2nd

place and qualified for the USSR Championship. And upon reaching the Premier level, Petrosian would repeat the cycle, performing modestly in his debut but improving in each succeeding try.

So... 16th place to 5th to 2nd—steady, incremental progress. Here we will look more carefully at Petrosian's games from the middle of these three events. That Moscow semifinal included players like Panov, Kholmov, Kan, Averbakh, and Simagin. To finish 5th place in this field was no small accomplishment. However, it should be borne in mind that many of these 'name' players were as yet still young themselves in 1947. For Yuri Averbakh, who won the tournament, it was a genuine breakthrough on the road to becoming a grandmaster.

In my notes I have aimed to highlight moments that reveal something about the tendencies, or the standard of play, of Tigran Petrosian at that time.



Tigran Petrosian - Alexander Konstantinopolsky

Queen's Pawn Game

1 d4 d5 2 Nf3 e6 3 Bg5 [Hard as it may be for today's Chessable-drilled players to imagine, Petrosian lacked a real opening repertoire at this point. His choice here was at-the-board improvisation—as early as move three of the first round of the biggest event of his career thus far!] **3...Be7 4 Bxe7 Qxe7 5 Nbd2 Nf6 6 e3 Nbd7 7 c4 O-O 8 cxd5 exd5 9 Bd3 Re8 10 O-O c6 11 Nb1!? Nf8 12 Qc2 Bg4 13 Ne5 Bh5 14 Nc3 Ng4 15 Nxg4 Bxg4 16 Rae1** [hinting at the Botvinnik plan f3-e4] **16...Rad8** [discouraging the same, as then d4 would be vulnerable] **17 Ne2 Bxe2 18 Rxe2 g6 19 Rb1** [so Petrosian switches to the Minority Attack] **19...Ne6 20 b4 a6 21 a4 Rcs 22 Qb3 Qg5 23 Rc2** [For the moment 23 b5 runs into the annoying reply 23...axb5 24 axb5 c5—after 25 dxc5 Nxc5 26 Qd1 Red8 intending d4, Black would be fine. The dynamics of this position work in Black's favor because his queen is excellently placed and White's pieces are scattered. Thus, for instance, 27 Bc2 would not prevent d4: 27...d4 28 exd4 Ne6 29 Rd2 Nxg4 30 Rxd4 Rxd4 31 Qxd4 Rxc2] **23...f5 24 f4!?** [Now if 24 b5 axb5 25 axb5 f4 with good counterplay, Petrosian radically stops Black's kingside action at the cost of a poor central construction, banking all on his queenside plan.] **24...Qd8 25 Be2** [Getting out of the way of 25 b5 axb5 26 axb5 c5 which would be even more awkward than before due to the e3 weakness.] **25...Qd6 26 Rd2**

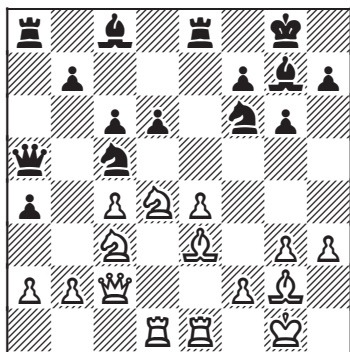
Petrosian would often make a plan, conduct extensive preparations, and then... delay before pulling the trigger. Here 26 b5 was possible owing to the tactical circumstance of Black's undefended queen: 26...axb5 27 axb5 c5 28 Qa3 I am confident Petrosian saw this. However, his characteristic tendency was to wait a bit more. *The commitment is not yet forced and perhaps in the meantime the opponent will make some mistake...*

26...Ra8 27 Rd3? [Instead Petrosian himself blundered, and not a particularly 'impressive' mistake at that.] **27...Nxf4 28 exf4 Rxe2 29 Re3 Re8 30 Re5** [He makes the best of it, but a pawn is a pawn.] **30...Qc7** [Black needs a plan. I think a good start would be to put his own rook on the outpost square, 30...Re4, securing everything and touching White's weaknesses d4 and f4. However, for the moment there's nothing wrong with how Konstantinopolsky played.] **31 b5** [Having lost material, there is no longer any point in not going for it.] **31...axb5 32 axb5 Qb6 33 Qd3 R2xe5 34 fxe5 c5** [of course not 34...Rxe5? 35 bxc6] **35 Qf3 cxd4 36 Qxd5+ Qe6?** [Needlessly giving White a dangerous passed pawn. 36...Kf8 was correct. There are still practical difficulties as Black's king looks exposed, but White has no queen checks for the moment and Black would have the plan Rd8, d3] **37 Qxb7 Qxe5 38 Qf3 Qe4 39 Qxe4!** [In making his 36th move Black probably underestimated this. The b-pawn is strong enough to neutralize even connected center pawns.] **39...fxe4 40 b6 e3 41 b7 Rb8 ½-½** The game was adjourned. Had it continued, the finish might have been 42 Kf1 d3 43 Ke1 Kf7 44 Rb3 d2+ 45 Ke2 Kf6 46 Rxe3 Rxb7 47 Rd3!—simplest—a draw.



Tigran Petrosian - Ratmir Kholmov Queen's Indian

'Every Russian schoolboy' understands that White must spend the extra tempo with the b-pawn since the direct a3 Δ b4 meets witha4 and White's pawns are crippled. However, I observe in numerous games from the 1940s and early 50s players happily accepting and even inviting this sort of crippling. Lest you think this was just poor chess by weak players, consider this position:



But back to Petrosian-Knolmov... **22 a3?!** [It must be said that in this instance Petrosian had a very concrete idea in mind: Black's pawn will be lured to a4 where he intends to try to win it.] **22...a4 23 Ne6 Nxe6 24 dxe6**

24 Rxe6 would give Black the tempo gain 24...Bc8 to get his bishop to d7 defending a4. In other words, this would be contrary to the idea behind 22 a3. However, White could nonetheless play 24 Rxe6 with the idea of sacrificing the exchange: 25 Qxa4 Bxe6 26 dxe6 The light square bishop should be a worthy rival for a rook. In maturity Petrosian would become associated with just such exchange sacrifice themes.



24...Bxf3 25 Rxf3 Qh5 26 Rfe3 Ra8 27 Qg2 [Black covered his pawn but that seems an meager role for a rook, and White's queen is crawling all over the light squares.] **27...h6 28 Qc6 Ra7** [A grim sort of efficiency: the rook is passive and misplaced but at least it simultaneously defends two weaknesses.] **29 Qd5** [29 Qd7!?] **29...Qg6 30 R1e2 Kh7 31 h3 h5 32 Rh2 Bf6** [Giving up the blockade looks like desperation. Apparently Kholmov concluded that the break g4 was going to kill him eventually with his Ra7 so out of play. It would have been very "eventually" as I have no doubt Petrosian would shift his rooks and king around for a long while before actually committing to g4.] **33 Bxf6 Rxf6 34 e7 Qe8 35 Qb5?** [Straightforward pressure against e8 - "*the queen is a poor blockader*" - but for once Petrosian's play was actually too direct. He should build and maneuver starting with 35 Rhe2. Black's next move seems obvious but it would appear Petrosian just overlooked it.] **35...c6!** [The monster passed pawn disappears and the misplaced rook rejoins the action.] **36 Qxb6 Rxe7 37 Rhe2 Rfe6 38 Kf2** [White might still hope for an endgame advantage. If all the pieces are traded, he may win a pawn ending by Kd3 and b3! creating an unstoppable a-pawn.] **38...c5 39 Rxe6 Rxe6 40 Rxe6 Qxe6 41 Qb5 Qe4 42 Qxa4** [In retaining the queens Black lost a4 outright. It would seem the only question now is whether White can cover his king from checks. However, the position actually has more content than just that.] **42...Qd4+ 43 Kf1 Qd3+ 44 Kf2 Qd2+ 45 Kf3 Qc1!** [45...Qxb2 was possible but Kholmov detected a

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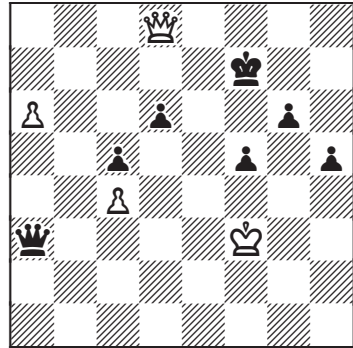
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kingside vulnerability and plays to win(!) **46 Qb3** [if 46 h4?! Qf1+ 47 Ke3 Qg2 and gathers in the kingside pawns] **46...Qf1+ 47 Ke3 Qxh3 48 Qd1?** [The unexpected turn of events unravels Petrosian. 48 Kf2 was a better try, not fearing 48...h4 49 Qd3 although Black is better here as well.] **48...Qxg3+ 49 Qf3 Qg1+ 50 Ke2 Kh6 51 Qf2 Qb1 52 Qh4** [Now it is White's turn to search for escape by perpetual check.] **52...Qxb2+ 53 Ke1 Qc1+ 54 Kf2** [The motif of these next moves is that White doesn't want to let a3 or c4 fall with check, which limits how he maneuvers his king, and Black is thus able to get his queen with tempo to where she covers the square e7] **54...Qd2+ 55 Kg1 Qd1+ 56 Kg2 Qe2+ 57 Kg1 g6** [so now there is no Qe7+ for White] **58 a4** [Petrosian hopes that his pawn will divert Black's queen to the extent that he can give perpetual check] **58...Kg7 59 a5 Kf7 60 Qd8 Qg4+ 61 Kh1 Qxf4 62 a6 Qc1+ 63 Kg2 Qb2+ 64 Kf3 Qb3+ 65 Kf2 Qa2+ 66 Kf3 Qa3+**

67 Kf4

{diagram}



If he goes back, 67 Kf2, Black can take the pawn and then thread his king through to safety: 67...Qxa6 68 Qd7+ Kf6 69 Qd8+ Kg7 70 Qe7+ Kh6 71 Qf8+ Kg5 72 Qe7+ Kg4 73 Qe2+ Kh4. No checks, and if then something like 74 Qe3 Qa2+ 75 Kf3 Qxc4 the king returns 76 Qe1+ Kg5 77 Qe7+ Kh6 78 Qf8+ Kh7 79 Qe7+ Kg8 80 Qd8+ Kg7 and the queen will cover on f7. So, Petrosian advances his own king to block the Black king's passage through the kingside.

67...g5+! [revealing a different problem!] **68 Qxg5** [or 68 Kxf5 Qf3+ 69 Kxg5 Qg4+ 70 Kh6 Qg6#; or again, 68 Kxg5 Qg3+ 69 Kxh5 Qg4+ 70 Kh6 Qg6#] **68...Qc1+ 69 Kxf5 Qc2+ 70 Kf4 Qxc4+ 71 Kf5 Qd3+! 72 Kf4 Qxa6 0-1** After 73 Qxh5+ Ke7 the king runs, perhaps all the way to a7, hides among its queen & pawns, and the connected pawns must eventually win. Given the exposed White king, probably Black would quickly find a way to trade queens, losing one pawn but reaching a winning K+P ending with the other.

Ilya Kan - Tigran Petrosian Slav

1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 d5 3 c4 c6 4 e3 e6 5 Nc3 Ne4 [The same comment could be applied to move 4 or 5 in 75% of Petrosian's games at this phase of his career; but I will make it here: *this variation had not previously appeared in Petrosian's games.* I really do believe his idea of preparation at this stage was to read the latest issue of *Shakmatny Bulletin* and simply try out things he'd seen there.] **6 Nxe4 dxe4 7 Nd2 f5 8 c5 Nd7 9 Bc4 Nf6 10 O-O e5 11 dxe5 Ng4 12 b4 Nxe5 13 Bb2 Qc7 14 Bb3** [Now Black should establish an Octopus—14...Nd3] **14...Bd7? 15 Qh5+ Ng6** [Not caring for 15...g6 16 Qg5 Bg7 17 Nc4; nor 16...Be7 17 Qf4, both of which win for White.] **16 f3! O-O-O** [16...exf3 17 Nxf3 O-O-O 18 Rad1 Black



cannot finish his development] 17 fxe4 Ne5 [17...fxe4 18 Nxe4 is no better] 18 exf5 Be7 19 Ne4 Bf6 20 Nd6+ Kb8 21 Qe2 h5 22 h3 Be8 23 Rad1 h4 24 Nxe8 Rhxe8 25 Be6 Rxd1 26 Rxd1 Nf3+ 27 gxf3 Qg3+ 28 Qg2 Qxg2+ 29 Kxg2 Bxb2 30 Rd3 Bf6 31 f4 a5 32 bxa5 Rd8 33 Bc4 Rxd3 34 Bxd3 [Petrosian survived to an opposite color bishop ending and he might even win his pawns back, but there is no stopping White on the kingside.] 34...Be7 35 a4 Bxc5 36 Kf3 Ka7 37 e4 Bb4 38 Kg4 Bxa5 [or 38...Be1 39 Kg5 Δ Kg6, e5, Kxg7] 39 Kg5 Bc3 40 Kg6 Kb8 41 e5 Kc7 42 Kxg7 1-0

Tigran Petrosian - German Fridstein Nimzoindian

1 c4 Nf6 2 Nc3 e6 3 d4 Bb4 4 e3 d5 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 bxc3 c5 7 cxd5 exd5 8 Bd3 O-O 9 Ne2 b6 10 O-O [channeling Botvinnik this time] 10...Ba6 11 Ng3 Bxd3 12 Qxd3 Re8 13 f3 Nc6 14 Bb2 h5 15 Rae1 cxd4 16 cxd4 h4 17 Nf5 h3 18 g4 [He abandoned the thematic e4 plan for the sake of collecting the h3 pawn] 18...Ne7 19 Ng3 Qd7 20 Rf2 Rac8 21 Qf1 Ng6 22 Qxh3 Qb5 23 g5 Nh7? [Both players evidently overlooked the tactic 23...Nf4! threatening the queen and also Nd3. For instance, 24 Qf5 Nd3 25 gxf6 Nxf2 26 fxg7 (26 Qg5? Nh3+; 26 Kxf2 Qxb2+ 27 Re2 Qxa3) 26...Qxb2 27 Qh5 Kxg7 28 Qg5+ White forces a draw since if 28...Kf8 29 Qh6+ Ke7? 30 Nf5+ Kd7 31 Qd6#] 24 Qg4 Qb3 25 h4 [now Petrosian steamrolls through] 25...Rc2 26 Rxc2 Qxc2 27 Re2 Qd3 28 Kf2 Re6 29 Qf5 Qb3 [pawn-down endings would be bleak] 30 Qc2 Rxe3 [desperate try that doesn't work] 31 Qc8+ Nh8 32 Rxe3 Qxb2+ 33 Ne2 Nxh4 34 Qg4 Nhg6 35 f4 Qb5 36 Qc8 Qb1 37 Qg4 [Perhaps Petrosian feared counterplay after 37 Re8 Qh1 but a little calculation would show that White wins: 38 f5 Qh4+ 39 Kf1 Qh1+ 40 Ng1] 37...Qb5 38 f5 Qd7 39 Ng3 Ne7 40 Qf4 [better 40 f6! Qxg4 41 fxe7] 40...Nc6 41 Nh5 1-0
Probably adjourned and Black resigned without continuing

Grigory Podolny - Tigran Petrosian Old Indian?

1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 d6 3 Nc3 Bg4 4 e4 c6 [again improvisation from the very start] 5 Bg5 Nbd7 6 Qd2 e5 7 O-O-O Qa5 8 Be3 Be7 9 h3 exd4 10 Qxd4 Be6 11 Bd2 b5 12 Nxb5! [unafraid] 12...Qxa2 13 Nc7+ Kd8 14 Nxe6+ fxe6 15 Bc3 [White is somewhat better mainly due to the bishop pair. However, he never does anything with it.] 15...e5 16 Qb4 Kc8 17 Re1 Nc5 18 Bc4 Qa4 19 Be6+ Kc7 20 Qxa4 Nxa4 21 Ba5+ Kb7 22 Nd2 Nc5 23 Ba2 Bd8 24 Bb4 Bb6 25 f3 Kc7 26 Nc4 Rad8 27 Rd1 h5 28 h4 Rd7 29 Rhe1 Rhd8 30 Re2 Nh7 31 Bd2 Nb7 32 Bc3 Nc5 33 Bd2 Nb7 34 Kb1 Nf6 35 Bc3 Nc5 36 Bb4 Na6 37 Bd2 Nc5 38 b4 Nb7 39 Bb3 Re7 40 Bc3 Rde8 41 Red2 Rd8 42 Re2 Rde8 43 Kb2 Rd8 44 Ne3 Rde8 45 Nf5 Rd7 46 Bd2 a5 47 Ra1 axb4 48 Bxb4 Nc5 49 Bc4 ½-½ A fairly tedious game in my view, although Vik Vasiliev, in his book *Tigran Petrosian His Life and Games*, cited it as evidence for a new-found boldness in Petrosian because of how he played the middlegame with his king in the center.



Tigran Petrosian - Mikhail Kamishov

Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 c6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Qc2 Ne7 6 Bg5 f6 7 Bf4 Bf5 8 Qd2 Nd7 9 Nf3 g5 10 Bg3 b5 11 e3 Nb6 12 b3 a5 13 Bd3 h5 [Black is playing a lot of crazy aggressive moves. I suspect Petrosian liked this; it allows him to be totally reactive without worry about the game drying up.] 14 h4 g4 15 Ng1 a4 16 Rc1 axb3 17 axb3 Ra3? [A tactical oversight. Petrosian noticed the opportunity but misplayed the refutation.] 18 Bxb5? [Ra3 and Nb6 are both undefended. The correct exploitation was to start with 18 Bc7 Qxc7 19 Nxb5. Rather than meekly submit like this, Black would probably have muddied the waters by 18...Nc4 instead of Qxc7, but then the forcing sequence 19 Bxd8 Nxd2 20 Bxe7 Bxe7 21 Kxd2 Bxd3 22 Kxd3 Rxb3 23 Kd2 would not leave him enough compensation for



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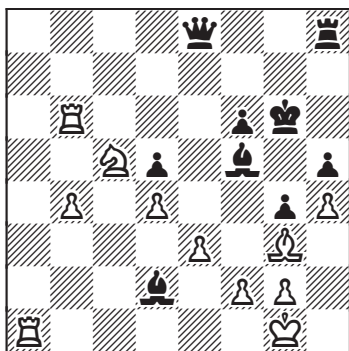
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120 Grand Prix points—Enhanced Grand Prix, Junior Grand Prix

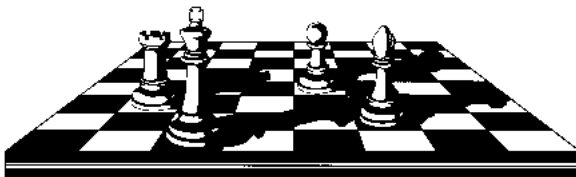


the piece.] **18...cxb5 19 Nxb5 Nec8!** [Evidently overlooked by Petrosian. Black manages to defend both hanging pieces. Rather than recovering his sacrificed piece, Petrosian winds up with rook+pawn and vague chances against Black's loose position (all those early pawn moves!) in exchange for two pieces.] **20 Nxa3 Bxa3 21 Ra1 Qe7! 22 Ne2?** [Automatic and careless. Now White loses more material, prompting Petrosian to sacrifice his queen just to further scramble the situation. 22 Kd1 is not an easy move to love but it's not too difficult a calculation to determine it (or Kf1) is simply necessary—one only has to notice Black's 23rd move.] **22...Bb4 23 Nc3 Na7! 24 O-O Nb5 -+ 25 Nxb5!? Bxd2 26 Nd6+ Kf8 27 Ra6!?** [27 Nxf5 Qd7 28 Ra6 Qxf5 29 Rxb6 Kg7 30 Ra1 Rf8 would not have posed enough questions.] **27...Qd8?** [27...Bd3 was correct. 28 Rxb6 Qa7! 29 Nc8 Qa2 30 Rxf6+ Ke8 31 Nd6+ Kd7 White's other rook never lives to participate in the attack and Black must win.] **28 Nb7 Qd7 29 Rxb6 Kg7 30 Ra1 Kg6 [30...Rf8] 31 Nc5 Qe8 32 b4**



I don't know if White has enough—he is down a queen for a rook, after all—but in practical terms he's come back a long way and subjectively it feels like chances are nearly equal. Petrosian's pieces coordinate well, there is the basic plan of advancing the b-pawn, and along the way he can take shots at Black's king. Black can only make moves and hope his material advantage will cause things to turn out all right. That is an uncomfortable way to play, especially for the sort of player who would choose those assertive pawn thrusts early on.

32...Qd8 33 Raa6 Rf8 34 b5 Bc8? [inviting White's reply due to some miscalculation] **35 Rb8 Bxa6 36 Rxd8 Rxd8 37 Nxa6 Ba5 38 Bc7!** [not clinging to the b-pawn but navigating towards a clear, superior N vs R ending.] **38...Bxc7 39 Nxc7 Rd6 40 b6! Rxb6 41 Nxd5 Rb1+ 42 Kh2 Rf1 43 Kg3 f5 44 Nf4+ [I don't know if Black can hold this or not but defending it is a brutal chore. In the end Petrosian won, at several points demonstrating the knight's tactical dexterity.] 44...Kh6 45 Nd5 Rg1 46 f3! gxf3 47 Kxf3 Rh1 48 Ne7! f4 49 Kxf4 Rxh4+ 50 Ke5 Rg4 51 g3! Kg7 52 e4 Kf7 53 Nf5 Rg6 54 Kf4 Rg4+ 55 Kf3 Ke6 56 Ne3 Rg7 57 Kf4 Rf7+ 58 Nf5 Kf6 59 d5 Rf8 60 Nd4 Ke7+ 61 Ke5 Rf1 62 Nf5+ Kf7 63 Nd4 Rd1 64 Nc6 Rc1 65 Nd8+ Ke7 66 Ne6 Rg1 67 Ng7! Kf7 [67...Rh1 68 Nf5+ Kf7 (or 68...Kd7 69 Kf6) 69 d6] 68 Nxh5 Kg6 69 Nf6 Rxc3 70 Ke6 Rd3 71 d6 Kg5 72 d7 Kf4 73 Nd5+ 1-0**





Evgeny Zagoriansky - Tigran Petrosian Queen's Indian

This game was not without interest but ultimately not much happened. 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 g3 Bb7 5 Bg2 Be7 6 O-O O-O 7 Nc3 Ne4 8 Qc2 Nxc3 9 Qxc3 f5 10 Rd1 Bf6 11 Qb3 a5 12 d5 Na6 13 Be3 Qe7 14 Nd4 Nc5 15 Qc2 Bxd4 16 Bxd4 d6 17 Bxc5 bxc5 18 dxe6 Bxg2 19 Kxg2 Qxe6 20 e3 Qe4+ 21 Qxe4 fxe4 22 Rac1 Rab8 23 Rd2 Rb4 24 h4 Kf7 25 Kh3 Ke6 26 Kg4 Rb7 27 Rc3 Rfb8 28 Rcc2 Rf8 29 Rd1 a4 30 Rd5 c6 31 Rd1 Ke5 32 Rcd2 Rf6 33 Kh3 Rbf7 34 Kg2 h5 35 Rc1 Rb7 36 Kf1 g6 37 Ke1 Rf8 38 Kd1 Rfb8 39 Rcc2 Rf7 40 Rc3 Rc7 41 Rcc2 ½-½ When contented with his place in a tournament, Petrosian often declined to press as could have done here by 41...d5!

Tigran Petrosian - Victor Liublinsky King's Indian Attack

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 g3 g6 3 Bg2 Bg7 4 O-O O-O 5 d3 d5 6 Nbd2 c5 7 e4 [As usual, an opening he had never used before. True, Petrosian did play numerous King's Indians as Black.] 7...Nc6 8 c3 h6? 9 e5 Ng4 10 d4 h5 11 h3 Nh6 12 Nb3?! [12 dxc5 would have been good. If 12...Nxe5 13 Nxe5 Bxe5 14 Nb3 it appears White wins a pawn.] 12...cxd4 13 cxd4 Qb6 14 Bf4 a5 15 Qd2 a4 16 Nc1 Nf5 17 Ne2 Qb4 18 Rac1 a3 19 b3 Qxd2 20 Bxd2 Bh6 21 Bxh6 Nxh6 22 Nc3 Nb4 23 Ne1 Nf5 24 Nc2 Nxc2 25 Rxc2 e6 26 Rd1 Bd7 27 Bf1 Rfc8 28 g4 hxg4 29 hxg4 Ne7 30 Rdc1 Nc6 31 Nb5 Nb4 32 Rxc8+ Rxc8 33 Rxc8+ Bxc8 34 Nxa3 Bd7 35 f4 Nxa2 36 Kf2 Nc1 37 b4 g5 38 fxg5 Kg7 39 Ke3 Ba4?! [Black gets his pieces tangled. 39...Na2 40 b5 Nc3 looks more correct] 40 Kd2 Na2 41 b5 Nb4 42 Kc3 Na2+ 43 Kb2 Nb4 44 Nb1 Kg6 [44...Bc2 was necessary although he's still not out of the woods after 45 Nc3] 45 Nc3 Bxb5 [The problem is that if 45...Bc2 46 Ka3 Nd3 47 b6! Black is paralyzed. If the knight ever moves there will be Ba6 and meanwhile N-a4-c5 is coming.] 46 Bxb5 Kxg5 47 Kb3 Na6 [and the knight is still 'trapped'] 48 Bxa6 bxa6 49 Na4 Kxg4 50 Nc5 a5 [50...Kf5 51 Nxa6 f6 52 exf6 Kxf6 53 Nb8! wins] 51 Nb7 Kg5 52 Nxa5 f5 53 exf6 Kxf6 54 Nc6 Kf5 55 Kb4 Ke4 56 Kc5 Kf5 57 Kd6 Kf6 58 Nd8 1-0

Lev Abramov - Tigran Petrosian French

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2 Nf6 4 e5 Nfd7 5 Ngf3 c5 6 c3 Nc6 7 Bd3 Qb6 8 O-O?! [The narrative of this game is simple: White offered a center pawn, Petrosian took it, the attack never materialized, Black won.] 8...cxd4 9 cxd4 Nxd4 10 Nxd4 Qxd4 11 Nf3 Qb6 12 Be3 Qd8 [One pawn was enough, although there is no certain refutation of 12...Qxb2] 13 Qa4 Be7 14 Qg4 Kf8 15 Rac1 b6 16 b4 h5 17 Qd4 a5 18 bxa5 Rxa5 19 Qf4 Kg8 20 Nd4? [probably not anticipating the 'bold' reply] 20...g5! 21 Qg3 h4 22 Qh3 Nxe5 23 Bd2 Ra3 24 Rc3 Rxa2 25 Qe3 Bf6 26 Rfc1 Bd7 27 Be2 Kg7 28 h3 b5 29 Rc5 Ng6 [29...Nc4] 30 Bxb5 Bxb5



31 Rxb5 Nf4 32 Bc3 Qd7 [32...e5 was possible, and if 33 Nc6 d4] 33 Rb2 Rxb2
 34 Bxb2 e5 35 Nf3 d4 36 Qe4 Qd5 37 Qxd5 Nxd5 38 Re1 Rb8 39 Ba3 d3
 40 Bd6 Rd8 41 Bxe5 Nc3 42 Bxf6+ Kxf6 43 Nd2 Kg6 44 g3 f5 45 Kg2 Ne4
 46 Rd1 hxg3 47 fxg3 Kf6 48 Kf3 Ke5 49 Ke3 Nxg3 50 Nf3+ Kf6 51 Nd4 [if
 51 Rxd3 f4+ 52 Kd2 Ne4+ 53 Ke2 Rxd3 54 Kxd3 Nf2+ 55 Kd4 Nxh3] 51...d2
 52 Nf3 Ne4 53 Nd4 Rh8 54 Rf1 Rxh3+ 0-1

Tigran Petrosian - Gavriil Veresov Nimzoindian

Another Carlsbad formation game. This is one of the earliest games for which we have Petrosian's own contemporaneous notes. 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Qc2 d5 5 cxd5 exd5 6 Bg5 h6 7 Bxf6 Qxf6 8 a3 Ba5?! 9 b4 Bb6 10 e3 Bf5 11 Bd3 Bxd3 [Petrosian's eye for combinations appears to have been largely grounded on a sensitivity to undefended targets. The bishop exchange looks routine but *wait! g2 is undefended*, so Petrosian in his annotations thought it worth mentioning the odd variation 11...Qg6 12 Bxf5 Qxg2 13 f4! Qxh1 14 O-O-O h5 (to stop B-g4-f3) 15 Qf2 Black loses his queen.] 12 Qxd3 c6 13 Nf3 O-O 14 O-O Nd7 15 a4 Rfe8 16 Rfc1 Qd6 17 b5 Bc7 18 Ra2 Re6 19 Rac2 [It was more accurate to use the move order 19 bxc6 bxc6 20 Rac2 potentially reaching the same position as the game. Petrosian had not anticipated Black's next move.] 19...Qa3! 20 bxc6 bxc6? [Here Veresov could have disrupted things with 20...Rxc6, one point being that after 21 Qb5 Nb6 22 a5 a6! 23 Qb1 Qxa5! 24 Ra2 Qxc3 25 Rxc3 Rxc3 Black gets bounteous return for the queen] 21 Qa6 Nb6 22 a5 [Now Black has to squirm to defend all of his pieces in view of Qb7] 22...Re7 23 g3 [A move anticipating Anatoly Karpov, relieving the back rank and also renewing Qb7 by taking Bxh2+ out of the equation] 23...Rb8 24 Nd2! [the threat N2b1 forces Black to liquidate] 24...Nc4 25 Qxc6? [Some sort of miscalculation. 25 Nxc4 dxc4 26 Qxc6 Bxa5 27 Nd5 would have been a simple material gain.] 25...Nxd2 26 Nxd5 Bxa5 [now it's not so clear] 27 Nxe7+ Qxe7 28 Qd5 Bb4 29 Rc7 Qf6 30 Rxa7 Nf3+ 31 Kh1 Ng5 32 f4 Ne6 33 Ra8 Rxa8 34 Qxa8+ Kh7? [34...Bf8 could have put up great resistance. Instead we get a forced win.] 35 Qe4+ g6 [if 35...Kg8 36 d5 (hitting both pieces) Bd2 37 dxe6! Bxc1 38 e7] 36 d5 Bd2 37 Rd1 [Here 37 dxe6? doesn't work because of 37...Bxc1 38 e7 Qa6 39 Kg2 Qe2+ 40 Kh3 Qh5+ with a draw, but on the other hand now Black's queen is undefended so that after...] 37...Nc5 38 Qd4 1-0 ...everything hangs and after 38...Qxd4 39 exd4 Ne4 40 Rxd2! Nxd2 41 d6 the pawn promotes.

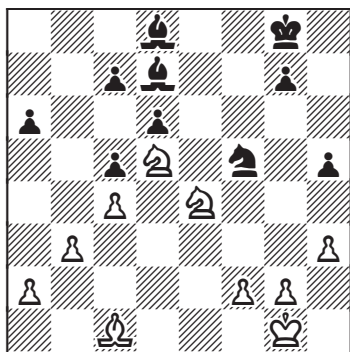




Grigory Ravinsky - Tigran Petrosian

Ruy Lopez

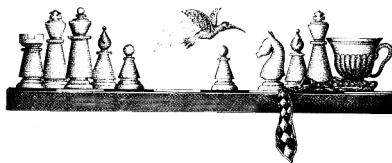
This game is very interesting for me, not least because I often take on pawn structures similar to what Petrosian plays here (usually from Kings Indians) and I've experienced the same resulting dynamic. At first everything seems to go smoothly. Black gets excellent piece activity and White is under pressure. But the White position is basically weakness-free and the breakthrough is not forthcoming. Gradually pieces get exchanged and the emphasis switches—the defects of Black's structure begin to matter. At some point we cross a strategic threshold where Black's vague 'pressure' no longer causes much concern. It feels as though Petrosian was better for most of the game but couldn't achieve anything, and when the pendulum swung the other way, his position fell apart in just a few moves. **1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 d6 5 O-O Bd7 6 c3 Nge7 7 d4 Ng6 8 c4** [This 'Maroczy Lopez' was popular in those days. Petrosian played it a few times as White too.] **8...Be7 9 Nc3 O-O 10 Be3 Bg4 11 Bxc6 bxc6 12 h3 exd4 13 Bxd4 Be6 14 Qa4 c5 15 Be3 f5 16 exf5 Rxf5 17 Nh2 Qb8 18 Qc2 Qb7 19 b3 Raf8 20 Rae1 Bd7 21 Nd5 Bh4 22 Re2 Kh8 23 Rd1 Bc6 24 Red2 Qc8 25 Ng4 Qd7 26 Qb2 h5 27 Nh2 Qf7 28 Qc2 Bd8 29 Nf1 Bh4** [I wonder if Petrosian was 'offering' a draw or had second thoughts about whatever he was planning.] **30 Ng3 Re5 31 Ne4 Rfe8 32 Nec3 Bd8 33 Re2 Nh4 34 Rde1 Bd7 35 Bc1 Rxe2 36 Rxe2 Nf5 37 Rxe8+ Qxe8 38 Qe4 Qxe4 39 Nxe4 Kg8**



Down we go. It may not be too much to suggest this innocent looking move is the losing moment.

40 Bg5! [As soon as the dark square bishops leave the board, the queenside weaknesses become untenable] **40...Bxg5 41 Nxg5 a5** [if **41...c6 42 Nb6 Be8 43 Ne4 Δ Nc8**] **42 Nxc7 Kf8 43 Nd5 Ne7 44 Nc3 h4 45 Kf1 Nf5 46 Ke2 Bc6 47 Nge4 Ke7 48 Kf3 Ke6 49 Kf4 Nd4** [The knight finally achieves its ideal square and does nothing. Meanwhile the kingside pawns are abandoned to their fate.]

50 Kg5 Ke5 51 f4+ Ke6 52 Kxh4 Kf5 53 Nxd6+ Kxf4 54 Nd5+ Bxd5 55 cxd5 g6 56 g3+ Ke5 57 Nc4+ Kf5 [threatening mate!] **58 Ne3+** [Rats, he saw it] **58...Ke5** [if **58...Kf6 59 Kg4; 58...Ke4** was better but **59 Nf1 Kxd5 60 Kg5** still wins, eg **60...a4 61 Nd2 Ne2 62 g4 Nc3**] **59 Kg5 a4 60 bxa4 Ke4 61 a5 1-0**





Tigran Petrosian - Yuri Averbakh Ruy Lopez

The most 'theoretical' game of Petrosian's entire career to date! We stay in "book" to at least move 18—and Petrosian was lost after move 21. Which may explain something about his aversion to heavy theory. 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 O-O Be7 6 Re1 b5 7 Bb3 O-O 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 Nxd5 10 Nxe5 Nxe5 11 Rxe5 c6 12 d4 Bd6 13 Re1 Qh4 14 g3 Qh3 15 Re4 g5 16 Nd2 Bf5 17 Qe2 Nf6 18 Re5 [Right idea (exchange sacrifice), wrong execution (18 f3!)] 18...Bxe5 19 dxe5 Ng4 20 Nf3 Rae8? [Giving back the entire advantage. He should simply defend the g-pawn, 20...h6] 21 Qf1? [And he should have taken it! Passing up 21 Bxg5 seems inexplicable.] 21...Qxf1+ 22 Kxf1 h6 [Black is winning and never lets go] 23 h4 Be4 24 Ne1 Rxe5 25 f4 gxh4 26 gxh4 [if 26 fxe5 h3!—although in practice this might have been White's best try, as the conclusion is not as straightforward as both players probably believed. 27 Bc2! Bg2+ 28 Kg1 Bd5 29 Ng2! White cuts his losses. Still, Black remains on top after 29...Bxg2 30 Bf5 h5] 26...Re7 27 Bd1 Bf5 28 Nf3 Rd8 29 Be2 Rde8 30 Bd1 Bd3+ 31 Kg2 Be2 32 Bxe2 Rxe2+ 33 Kg3 h5 34 f5 Rf2 35 a4 Rf1 36 axb5 cxb5 37 b3 f6 38 Nd4 Ree1 39 Rxa6 Rxc1 40 Nxb5 Rxf5? 40...Rf2 would have forced mate (Rg1+, Rh2/f3). But still... 0-1

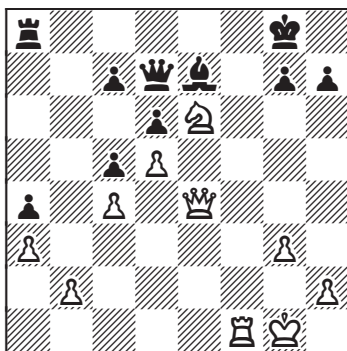
Genrikh Kasparian - Tigran Petrosian French

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2 c5 4 exd5 exd5 5 Ngf3 Nc6 6 dxc5 Bxc5 7 Nb3 Bd6 8 Bg5 Nge7 9 Qd2 O-O 10 Be2 Bf5 11 c3 Be4 12 Rd1 Qc7 13 Bd3? [Kasparian enjoyed a reputation as an endgame analyst and study composer, but based on his numerous games against young Petrosian (they played a bunch, including a match for Armenian Champion title) I don't think much of him as a player. The decision to wreck his kingside pawns and leave his king with no hope of secure shelter, all for the sake of 'chances on the g-file', is not atypical of him.] 13...Bxf3 14 gxf3 Rae8 15 Kf1 Ne5 16 Nd4 N7c6 17 Be2 Bc5 18 Rg1 Qd7 19 Rg3 f6 20 Be3 Nc4 21 Bxc4 dxc4 22 Qe2 Nxd4 23 cxd4 Bd6 24 Qxc4+ Kh8 25 Qd5 Qa4 [again, tactics stemming from things left undefended] 26 Rc1 Bxg3 27 hxg3 Re7 28 Kg2 Rd7 [Petrosian may have felt the fight was over and just a mop-up remained. He starts making routine moves.] 29 Qf5 g6? 30 Qe6 [And just like that he is in trouble due to the weakness f6. Obviously Bh6 is the immediate threat.] 30...Rdf7 31 Bh6? [Kasparian misses his chance. 31 Rc8! is surprisingly strong, the point being 31...Kg7 32 Rxf8 Rxf8 (or 32...Kxf8 33 Bh6+) 33 Qe7+ Rf7 34 Bh6+ In view of this Black would have nothing better than 31...Rxc8 but then 32 Qxf7 hits f6 and b7, besides Bh6—White would be winning.] 31...Qe8 32 Qc4 Rg8 [There is some near term inconvenience but the danger has passed and Petrosian gets back to the technical task of trying to exploit the exchange.] 33 Be3 Rd7 34 d5 a6 35 Bb6 Qe5 36 Rd1 Qd6 37 Be3 Rgd8 38 a4 g5 39 a5 Rc7 0-1 White lost on time



Tigran Petrosian - Vladimir Simagin Dutch

The final round. Vasiliev: *A lot depended on this game. If he drew [Petrosian] would achieve the long awaited title of master, and if he won he would be able to take part in the final of the championship. Petrosian achieved an almost won position and... proposed a draw. As it turned out, Simagin didn't have much faith in the strength of his opponent and declined the proposal. Any other might have been spurred on by such a refusal, but Petrosian's patience did not give way to emotion. To him a bird in the hand was always better than two in the bush. The young chess player, realizing that without undue risk he could play for the win, once again proposed a draw and... once again received a rebuff! At last Petrosian became irritated. But nonetheless, after a few more moves he once again offered a draw. And only then Simagin agreed.* 1 d4 f5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 g3 e6 4 Bg2 Be7 5 O-O O-O 6 c4 d6 7 Nc3 a5 8 Qc2 Nc6 9 a3 e5 10 d5 Nb8 11 Ne1 Na6 12 e4 fxe4 13 Nxe4 Bf5 14 Be3 b6 15 Nxf6+ Rxf6 16 Be4 Bxe4 17 Qxe4 a4 18 Nd3 Nc5 19 Bxc5 [By 'reverse engineering' the players' thought processes and working backwards from the final position (ie, the concluding draw offer) I deduce that Petrosian's first draw offer occurred around here.] 19...bxc5 20 Rae1 Bf8 21 f4 exf4 22 Nxf4 [The players having had a look at the situation following the committal move f4, the second draw offer was probably hereabouts.] 22...Qd7 23 Ne6 Rxf1+ 24 Rxf1 Be7



White indeed has an enormous advantage. 25 Qg4 in conjunction with advancing the h-pawn would be a good and risk-free way to proceed. However... ½-½



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In This Issue:

Tournaments	
Fredricksburg Open	2
Features	
Chess By The Fountain	3
Young Petrosian	4
Odds & Ends	
From the Editor	1
Upcoming Events	8, 11
VCF Info	<i>inside front cover</i>

