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THE PLAYERS

Pal Charles Benko

born in Amiens, France

July 15th 1928

Benko became Hungarian champion for the first time at the age of twenty, but his subsequent development as a chess player was quite slow, and it took him ten years to qualify for the 1959 Candidates' Tournament. He certainly gave a good account of himself in this extremely tiring tournament, but recurring bouts of serious



time-trouble caused him eventually to finish last. This time-trouble problem would continue to dog him throughout his career.

In 1962 he qualified for the Candidates' Tournament again. In *Canadian Chess Chat* (May 1962) Euwe has this to say about it: 'By qualifying twice in succession for the Candidates', Benko surpassed all expectations. One good result may be accidental, but two successes are significant. Here they show that Benko's style contains facets which are not evident at first

glance, but which, after profound study of his games, become clearer and appear to be of eminent importance in productive play'.

Laudatory words indeed. But they could not disguise the fact that Benko was regarded as one of the underdogs going into the Curaçao Candidates' Tournament. One of the main reasons for this, however, was that the other players – with the exception of one – were regarded as even stronger. In 1959 Benko was still playing under the international flag due to the political trouble he had found himself in af-

ter the Soviet invasion of Hungary. Eventually he had taken refuge in the United States, and in Curaçao it was the American flag that stood by his board. Benko also gained fame with his phenomenal endgame studies and his use of an important opening variation, called the Benko gambit in his honour.

Miroslav Filip

born in Prague, Czechoslovakia

October 27th 1928

Filip was regarded as even more of an underdog than Benko, although it must be said that the Czech grandmaster also had an excellent record of service. He had played in the Candidates' Tournament as early as 1956, scoring 45 per cent. In the Argentinian Book on the tournament published by *Revista Ajedrez* his play is characterised as 'serious, solid and deep', adjectives that could certainly be said to apply. Filip's problem was that players like Petrosian possessed the same qualities but in greater measure than him. Unlike Benko, Filip had had no problem with the Soviet invasion that devastated his native country in 1968. He remained loyal to the authorities and managed to do very well under Communist rule. Furthermore, he shared nothing of Benko's fanatical enthusiasm for the game. In 2002 he was invited to attend the festivities surrounding the 40th anniversary of the tournament, but he declined the invitation saying that he had largely lost interest in chess.



Robert James Fischer

born in Chicago, USA

March 9th 1943

I already referred to this American genius in my introduction. Ever since his solid win in the Stockholm Interzonal in 1962 he, together with Tal, had been considered the main favourite for Curaçao.

In 1957 he had won the American championship for the first time. With unprecedented fanaticism he had thrown himself into the game at a very early age; he adored chess and had an enterprising style reminiscent of Morphy, but he lived in a different era with a whole arsenal of Soviet players that would obstruct his way to the highest honour. It is interesting to quote Euwe's highly objective comment on the Curaçao tournament: 'One may well ask: Will this be a quiet tournament governed by the motto "Safety First", a tournament with 60 to 70 per cent draws and with a winner who will score 60 to 65 per cent of his points? In that case, Petrosian will have very good chances, but so will Fischer, who in the recent Interzonal showed wonderful inventiveness, endurance and an outstanding command of end-



game technique.'

Euwe's admiration for Fischer's technique is remarkable. In *My 60 Memorable Games*, Fischer relates how he survived a rook ending against Gligoric in the 1959 Candidates' Tournament: both players have a pawn, but the Yugoslav grandmaster is calling the shots, as Fischer is bound to lose his last pawn. He continues to play fast, confident that he will be able to secure the draw. Afterwards Fridrik Olafsson, the Icelandic grandmaster, admonishes him to study the position more deeply. Had Gligoric played a certain move, Fischer would have been lost, maintained Olafsson. As a result, Fischer undertakes an exhausting study of rook endings. He also improves his game by playing a lot of chess, deepening not only his technique, but also his understanding of the opening through the years. But Curaçao was not to be his tournament; it would take him another 10 years to break through to the highest

level. His own expectations for the Candidates' Tournament were probably also exaggerated. His victory in the Interzonal Tournament was still fresh in his mind, but the fact that there had been only five weeks between the two qualification tournaments worked against him, giving him too little time for thorough preparation against the Soviet players. In Stockholm he had been merciless in finishing off slightly weaker opponents; in Curaçao he would be playing only heavyweights, which made consistent winning streaks much less likely. It wasn't until 1971 that he was able to sustain such winning streaks against even the strongest players.

Efim Petrovich Geller

born in Odessa, Ukraine

March 8th 1925

Geller was 18 years and one day older than Fischer. He had already played in the 1953 Candidates' Tournament and beaten Botvinnik in the Soviet Championship the year before. Yet Geller was a late developer. A stocky, broad-shouldered man, he might have been termed 'the chunk of the Soviet chess school'. He possessed an incredible instinct for initiative and had an excellent technique. In the 1980s, Karpov once told me how much he had learned from his co-operation with Geller. Geller was prepared to work hard and crystallize his ideas through thorough preparation. He had one weakness, however: he was bad at manoeuvring. The same thing



could be said about Kasparov. However, if you manage to organise your opening repertoire in such a way that the resulting middle game positions contain enough dynamism, this shortcoming can usually be largely compensated for in practice.

Geller was one of the 'dark horses' in Curaçao, and his friendship with Petrosian was an important factor. They were buddies who struck up a co-operation that would turn out to be extremely effective. I will return to this later. 'Geller will have his word as well,' Euwe writes, and this was putting it mildly. Looking back on the chess career of the 'chunk of concrete' one can't but notice that he was the only player in the world with a clearly positive score against both Botvinnik and Fischer. He definitely had the potential to become World Champion, but he was facing a lot of competition and in Curaçao he eventually finished trailing Petrosian by half a point. Three years later he was beaten by Spassky, whose style was similar to Geller's own but who, in some respects, was just that little bit stronger.

Paul Keres

born in Tallin, Estonia

January 7th 1916

Keres was by far the oldest player in Curaçao, with the greatest record of service. Each time he steadily fought his way to the top in the battle for the World Champi-

onship, only to fall just short each time. Keres had been a serious candidate for the world title ever since 1938, when he won the AVRO Tournament along with Fine without dropping a single game. During the war he found himself in an awkward predicament as Estonia was caught between two fires: the Nazis on one side, the Soviets on the other. Keres played tournaments in Nazi-occupied territories, which made for a hard life under the postwar Communist



regime. He was not allowed, for example, to play in the great tournament of Groningen 1946, and there is no doubt that these years of forced inactivity badly affected his career. During the World Championship tournament of The Hague and Moscow 1948 he lost his first four games against Botvinnik. For years after, a stubborn rumour had it that he had been commanded to lose these games. Keres nevertheless continued to play at the highest level. He had a crystal-clear style and in his game analyses he always found the most striking phrases to explain what strategic motifs had featured in the game.

As a young man he had played correspondence chess, which made him extremely proficient in analysing adjourned positions. Keres also wrote authoritative standard works on both opening theory and endgame technique. He enriched the opening theory of chess with important new ideas, such as the 'Keres variation' in the Sicilian. Curaçao was his last chance to become World Champion; he came very close to victory, having to give up his aspirations only in the very last round.

Viktor Lvovich Kortchnoi

born in Leningrad, Russia

March 23rd 1931

It is rare to see a top player managing to display such unstinting fanaticism and ambition for so many decades. This makes Kortchnoi unique. In 1953 he finished second in the Soviet Championship – an impressive result that did not, however, herald a breakthrough; it was another seven years before he won the Championship. In those days a winner of this title was usually regarded as a World Championship candidate. Kortchnoi's further development was anything

but smooth, however. He belonged to the Soviet elite and did very well in tournaments abroad, but the pinnacles of chess power remained firmly out of reach. He started Curaçao full of ambition, taking the lead after the first part of the tournament, but he did not have the energy to keep up the pace. Later it would become clear that it had not just been a matter of energy: in 1968 Spassky outstripped him in a Candidates' Tournament and three years later he came off worst against Petrosian. One could say that they had a better understanding of the game.

But Kortchnoi did manage to get his revenge – against Petrosian in 1974 and against Spassky three years later. Through tireless hard work and iron discipline he found success and began to play a leading role in the World Championship after the reaching the age of 40. In 1974 he was marginally beaten in his challenger's match against Karpov who, after Fischer's withdrawal, subsequently became World Champion.

Imprudent comments in the press got Kortchnoi embroiled in a conflict with the Soviet authorities, and in 1976 he decided to defect to the West, requesting political asylum in the Netherlands. Although this made life difficult for him, it only seemed to lend him strength. In 1978 he was once again narrowly beaten by Karpov.

He would never come this close to the world title again, but he continued to score great successes. Of the players of the Curaçao tournament still alive, he is the only one still active to this day.

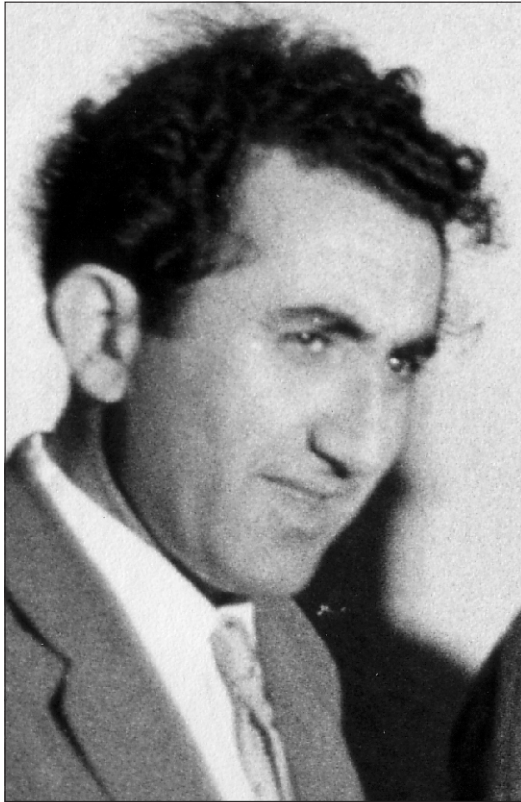


Tigran Vartanovich Petrosian

born in Yerevan, Armenia

June 17th 1929

'I sometimes have the feeling that Petrosian will win the tournament,' Euwe wrote in his preview, and the former World Champion knew what he was talking about: he was one of the authors of the Tournament Book of Amsterdam 1956,



which had been Petrosian's second Candidates' Tournament after Zurich 1953. How many superior positions had he let slip through his fingers there?

From a very early age, Petrosian clearly showed the potential of a World Champion. In 1946 he became champion of Armenia, and five years later he finished second in the Soviet Championship. Even then his style was based on strategic principles. He was a past master at out-foxing his opponents with positional play.

As he grew older, his play became more and more refined. In the early 1960s he really only had one problem – his lack of ambition; too often he was satisfied with short, colourless draws. It goes without saying that he dreaded losing, but it sometimes seemed that, strangely enough, he was just as afraid of winning. A typical example is what happened in the first

match game against Spassky in 1966. Spassky had blundered in a drawish position and Petrosian could have won a pawn fairly easily. For some reason, such situations make him extremely nervous – his heart speeds up and he spurns playing the winning move, with the result that the game peters out in a bloodless draw.

This mental shortcoming continued to haunt him. It was mainly thanks to his wife Rona that he eventually won Curaçao and beat Botvinnik; she always managed to give him courage. She was also a born schemer – an important quality in the heyday of Communism.

Petrosian remained World Champion for six years. In 1969 he was beaten by Spassky, who was at the pinnacle of his chess career at the time. He continued to harbour ambitions for a return to the top until 1971, when he was convincingly beaten by Fischer. Yet it was not a one-sided match, despite the fact that the American was at the height of his power after crushing Taimanov and Larsen 6-0. Fischer had won the first game as White after a complicated battle in which Black had long been superior. In the second game Petrosian had resolutely turned the tables on his opponent, and this win was followed by three draws. It seemed as if Fischer had hit a barrier that he was not able to negotiate. But then Petrosian suddenly collapsed, losing the last four games. His old problem, his nervous tension, had apparently got the better of him.

After this match Petrosian no longer played a significant role in the fight for the World Championship. A striking detail is that both in 1977 and three years later he lost a Candidates' match against Kortchnoi, who thus managed to revenge himself for his 1971 defeat no fewer than three times. We have seen little of the latter days of Petrosian's career. He died in 1984, just before the start of the second match between the Soviet Union and the rest of the world, laid low by a wasting disease.

Mikhail Tal

born in Riga, Latvia

November 9th 1936

Just as Euwe thought Petrosian was in with a chance to win Curaçao, so another former World Champion designated Tal as his favourite. When asked, Botvinnik observed that Tal had won every single tournament that he had needed to win. He had beaten Tal in a revenge match only a year earlier and it seemed that he was seriously considering the possibility of a third match in the near future.

And Botvinnik was by no means the only person who regarded Tal as the prime favourite – it was expected that the phenomenon from Riga would prove himself again. Tal's career had been lightning fast: at 17 years of age he first became champion of Latvia and three years later he finished third in the Soviet Championship. In 1957 he won the championship and another year later he ran away with the Interzonal Tournament in Portoroz. But his fame was based on more than his results; it was his perpetual willingness to work with each and every complication thrown at him, to make sacrifices without having been able to calculate the consequences, to play openings he had not prepared but which pleased him, that won him such acclaim.

Tal was indeed a phenomenon. When he played, he seemed to be in



a continuous trance. At the same time he could be very business-like in his play, building on tiny advantages step by minute step. He was irrepressibly optimistic about his own abilities. In 1960 he became World Champion, the first chess player to reach the summit at such an early age. One would have thought that he would hang on to his title for many years, just as Karpov and Kasparov managed to do later, but Tal was plagued by serious health problems. This became painfully clear in Curaçao, where his health was so bad that he was forced to cancel his participation in the last part of the tournament. Larsen once said that the reason Tal played such risky chess was that he assumed he was not going to reach 50, a rather spiteful remark which turned out to have no basis in truth, since like Petrosian – who had lived much more sparingly – Tal lived to be 56.

At the age of 42 he played scintillating chess in the great tournament of Montreal 1979, which he won together with Karpov; six months later he won the Interzonal Tournament in Latvia in superior fashion. It looked as if he was striving for new heights, but six months later he was beaten in a Candidates' match against Lev Polugaevsky, who had prepared better.

In the wake of this defeat he no longer played a significant part in the fight for the world title. He did assist Karpov as a second, however, and in this capacity he continued to be able to go abroad to play in foreign tournaments; this meant all the world to him, right up to his last days – playing games, preferably against strong players but equally against amateurs in coffee shops if no strong players could be found. Tal was also a gifted piano player, but his true passion was chess, not so much the analysis as the game itself.



Arrival of the US team: second from the left GM Arthur Bisguier with his wife Carol, second from the right Pal Benko. Also, the Curaçao organizers Sloima Zonenschain (far left), Jan Tiepen (behind Bisguier) and on the far right Tournament Director and President of the Organizing Committee Gé Schöttelndreier. Fischer is absent on this picture because he had missed his plane; eventually, he arrived only just before the start of the first round.

Paul Keres and wife.

Tiepen (left) welcomes Mr Van Steenis (president of the Dutch Chess Federation KNSB) and his wife. Schöttelndreier is standing next to Tiepen, second from the right Soeterboek, far right Assistant Press Officer John Bink.



Mr and Mrs Jarmila Filip are welcomed by the board members of the Organizing Committee and Federation President Henk Soeterboek (left).

Arbiter De Graaf (far right) and, next to him, Press Officer Withuis arrive on the airport.



A view of the playing hall.





Organizers and participants together. From left to right: Stanley de Castro, Tal, Averbakh, Petrosian, Benko, Jan Tiepen, Jaap de Vries, Fischer, Kortchnoi, Filip, Keres, Geller. Front row, from the left: Chief Arbiter Manuel Acosta Silva, Arbiter Harry de Graaf and Tournament Director Gé Schöttelndreier.



The press room. On the left, in line, the typewriters. The phone booths are in the background.

THE COURSE OF THE TOURNAMENT

Part I

May 2-12



On May 1st, the tournament was opened by the Prime Minister of the Netherlands Antilles, E.Jonckheer. The opening ceremony took place at the 'Hotel Curaçao Intercontinental' – the present 'Curaçao Plaza', which would also serve as the playing venue. Local newspapers had this to say about the players: 'They all seemed friendly and likeable. The most appealing participant must have been Petrosian, with his ready smile and his wild crop of black hair.' It seems that he already had reasons to smile even then.

The following day the marathon tournament started. The first two rounds yielded some surprises: Fischer and Tal, the principal favourites in many people's minds, lost four games in all. The other Russian players took things easy, although this is certainly not to say that there were no fights. Kortchnoi's draws in the first four rounds tended to be the result of hard and dogged battles. After that he caught fire and won three games in a row, a hat trick that yielded him a clear lead. This must have cost him an enormous amount of energy – his win against Filip took no fewer than 101 moves.

The combine trio did not overly exert itself. Petrosian and Geller won just one game each. Keres struck twice, but was himself defeated by Fischer in a beautiful game. It is worth mentioning that it was in this phase that Petrosian was in danger of losing for the first – and virtually last – time in the tournament. In his game against Benko, Petrosian – as Black – got an active position but lost the thread when Benko got into time-trouble. As a result, his position was probably losing at some stage in the game. Benko generally played well, while Fischer just about managed to recover from his bad start. Tal, on the other hand, continued to prop up the table and even finished the first part half a point shy of Filip. Although it was impossible to tell by looking at him, he was still suffering from the effects of the kidney operation he had undergone shortly before the tournament.

There is a sharp contrast between the standings after the first part of the tournament and the results of a poll amongst the readers of the Soviet-Russian newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. The question they were asked was who would win the tournament in Curaçao?

Kortchnoi, the leader, got more than 500 votes, which put him in sixth place (above Benko and Filip, who didn't get a single vote). Tal, who was bringing up the rear in Curaçao, got more than 1200 votes, slightly more than twice Fischer's number (over 500). Petrosian got in excess of 900 votes, closely followed by Geller and Keres.

ROUND 1

May 2

Kortchnoi - Geller	1/2-1/2
Petrosian - Tal	1-0
Keres - Filip	1/2-1/2
Benko - Fischer	1-0

King's Indian Defence

Viktor Kortchnoi
Efim Geller

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 c6 4.d5

With this advance, White prevents the symmetrical Grünfeld that would arise after 4...♗g2 d5. In the mid 1960s Petrosian introduced a similar advance: after 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 he played 3.d5 in order to avoid the Grünfeld Indian.

4...♗g2 5.♗g2 d6 6.♘c3 0-0

7.♘f3 e5

This is how Black creates a proper counterbalance in the centre.

8.0-0

Via transposition a variation of the King's Indian has arisen. Black has no opening problems to speak of, as White would be well advised not to advance the d-pawn prematurely in this line.

8...cxd5 9.cxd5 ♘bd7 10.♘d2

A standard move in the Ben-Oni. White takes his knight to c4 in order to put pressure on d6.

10...a5

Black wants to take his knight to c5 without having to worry about the advancing b-pawn. The course of the game will show that this is a rather dubious plan, but this was very hard to foresee here. 10...♘e8 seems to be a good move to

cover the d-pawn and make f7-f5 possible.

11.♘c4 ♘c5 12.♘b5 ♘e8 13.f4!

Very energetically played. Now Black has to go through all kinds of hoops to prevent himself coming to an inglorious end.

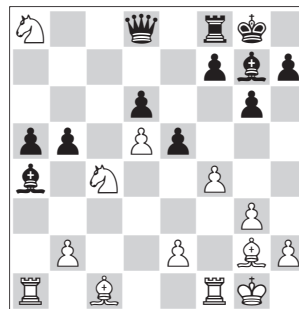
13...♗d7 14.a4 ♘xa4!

This is what Geller must have relied on when he decided to go for 10...a5. Now the play becomes very sharp.

15.♙xa4 ♘c7 16.♘xc7

White is forced to give up his queen, but he gets plenty of material in return.

16...♗xa4 17.♘xa8 b5



With this advance Black covers his queen's bishop and attacks the second knight. White is forced to put his knights in rather curious positions.

18.♘cb6

Forced, as after 18.♘ab6 ♗b3 one of the knights would be lost.

18...exf4 19.♖xf4 ♗e8 20.e3 ♗e7

Some people maintain that knights that cover each other are automatically badly placed, but in the present circumstances Black will find it extremely difficult to eliminate the bizarrely positioned knight duo. After the text-move Black is threatening both 21...♖b7 and 21...♖a7.

21.♖a3

White introduces a counter-threat, viz. 22.b3.

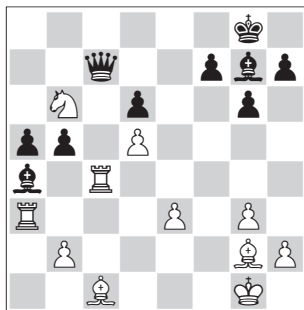
21...♖c7

The battle remains razor-sharp. There was no other way to parry White's threat.

22.♗xc7 ♖xc7

The tournament bulletin reports that the experts in the press room assessed the position at this point as favouring Black. But now Kortchnoi uncorks a magnificent resource.

23.♖c4!!



An unexpected problem move that yields White a clear advantage. Black is forced to take the rook, as 23...♖xb6 24.♖c8+ ♗f8 25.b3 would leave him with a hopeless position.

23...bxc4 24.♗xa4

Now White is still ahead in material and he has also consolidated his position. His only problem is looming time-trouble.

24...h5

The only way to create complications.

25.♗c3 h4 26.gxh4

The correct reply. White could not afford to allow Black to take on g3, as this would seriously weaken his kingside.

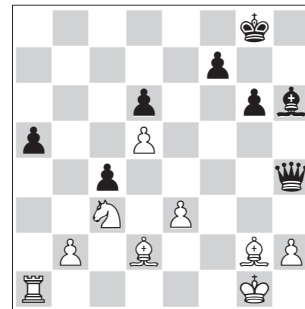
26...♖d8 27.♖a4

This rook move costs White a crucial tempo, allowing Black to restore the balance. Correct was 27.♗d2 ♖xh4 28.♖a1, and White retains good winning chances.

27...♖xh4 28.♗d2 ♗h6

Threatening to take on e3.

29.♖a1



29...f5!

Intending to push the f-pawn further.

30.♗e2

30.♖f1 would also have been met by 30...♖e7.

30...♖e7 31.♗f2 ♖h4+ 32.♗f1

White avoids the draw, but very soon he will have no other choice but to accept it.

32...♖xh2 33.♖xa5 ♖e5

With a double attack on the b- and e-pawns. Now White has nothing better than perpetual check.

34.♖a8+ ♗f7 35.♖a7+ ♗e8

36.♖a8+ ♗f7 37.♖a7+ ♗e8

38.♖a8+

Draw.

Réti Opening

Tigran Petrosian Mikhail Tal

1.c4 ♘f6 2.g3 c6 3.♗f3 d5 4.b3
♙f5

The prelude to the New Yorker variation.

5.♙a3

An unusual bishop sortie with a clear purpose: White wants to prevent his opponent from developing along the usual lines.

5...g6

A good solution to the positional problem. Black is going to fianchetto his king's bishop, after which the white bishop sortie loses its effectiveness. In Benko-Addison, U.S. Championship 1966/67, Black went for another plan. Play continued 5...a5 6.♙g2 ♗a6 7.0-0 ♗b4 8.d3 h6 9.♙b2 e6 10.a3 ♗a6 11.♗bd2, and although Black has managed to develop in the usual way, White has gained a tempo compared to other examples.

6.d3 ♙g7 7.♗bd2 ♖b6

The start of a time-consuming plan that will fail to yield Black sufficient counterplay. After the normal 7...0-0 White would have found it difficult to get an opening advantage.

8.♙g2 ♗g4

The aim of the previous move. Tal wants to create complications from the word go. For white players such adventures usually turn out fairly well, but Black has less leeway.

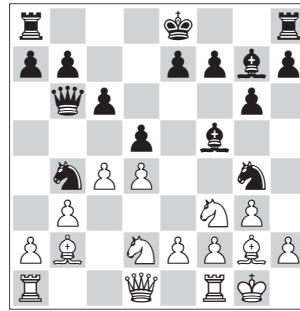
9.d4

A forced but strong pawn sacrifice. After 9...♙xd4 10.♗xd4 ♖xd4 11.0-0 Black would be in serious jeopardy.

9...♗a6 10.0-0 ♗b4

The second knight is deployed in a threatening position as well, but the only result is that both knights will have to retreat quite soon. But now at least Black is ready to castle.

11.♙b2



11...0-0

Averbakh has indicated 11...a5, to prevent White's expansion on the queenside, as better. In the tournament bulletin he indicates that White will then play 12.a3 ♗a6 13.♗h4, with advantage (remarkably enough, this variation has not been included in Averbakh's comments for *The Games of Petrosian*, Volume 1). After the knight sortie Black has the following possibilities:

A) 13...♙xd4? 14.c5! ♖xc5 15.♗e4!, and wins; an instructive turn of events.

B) 13...♖d8 14.♗xf5 gxf5 15.e3, and White is better.

C) 13...♙e6!. After this laconic bishop move I fail to see any advantage for White. Black maintains an iron grip on the centre.

Instead of 13.♗h4 I think 13.♙c3 0-0 14.e3 is the best way to approach the position. White can boast a solid advantage.

12.a3 ♗a6

The first knight is withdrawn. The only result of Black's action of five moves ago

is that the character of the position has changed. Instead of an early middle game arising from the 'Réti system', the present position is one from the symmetrical Grünfeld, with the one difference that White has gained a lot of time. Tal must be feeling very uncomfortable, as he would know from his own experience how White can fight his way to an advantage in the symmetrical Grünfeld. A good example is Tal-Botvinnik, 11th match game, Moscow 1960, which continued 1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.g3 g6 3.♙g2 ♙g7 4.0-0 0-0 5.c4 c6 6.b3 ♘e4 7.d4 d5 8.♙b2 ♙e6 9.♘bd2 ♘xd2 10.♚xd2! (with the point that 10...dxc4 is met by 11.♘g5) 10...♘a6 11.♚ac1 ♚d6 12.♘e5 ♚fd8 13.♚fd1 ♚ac8 14.♚a5!, and White was better.

13.♚c1 ♚ad8 14.b4 ♘b8

An awkward retreat. Yet this is Black's best defence. White has a space advantage, but the black position remains solid.

15.♚b3 ♘f6 16.a4

Further expansion on the queenside.

16...♘e4 17.♚fd1 ♘d7 18.cxd5

True to style, Petrosian goes for clarity. Vasiliev indicates that, objectively speaking, the alternative 18.a5 was stronger, as this forces Black to swap on c4 before going on. After 18.a5 dxc4 19.♚xc4 ♚c7 White has the breaking move 20.b5, with the point 20...♚xa5 21.bxc6 ♚c8 22.♘xe4 ♙xe4 23.♙c3, followed by 24.d5, and White maintains the pawn on c6, according to Vasiliev. And it is true that this looks bad for Black, as the passed pawn on c6 becomes very strong. This is why 21...♘b6 seems to me to be a better defence. After 22.♚b3 ♙e6 23.♚c2 ♘xd2, followed by 24...bxc6, Black can limit the damage.

18...cxd5 19.a5 ♚d6

The swap on d5 has made this square available to the queen.

20.b5 ♘xd2 21.♚xd2 ♚c8

Black is trying to ease the pressure on his position by exchanging pieces.

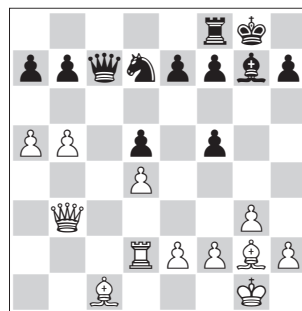
22.♘h4

This yields White the bishop pair, as the black queen's bishop has nowhere to go. After 22...♙e6 23.♚xc8 ♚xc8 24.♙a3 ♚c7 25.♙xd5 ♙xd5 26.♚xd5 e6 27.♚d6 Black will never see his pawn back again.

22...♚xc1+ 23.♙xc1 ♚c7

24.♘xf5 gxf5

Black has to recapture, since 24...♚xc1+ would fail to 25.♚d1.



25.♙a3

Several commentators have indicated the alternative 25.♚c2 ♚xa5 26.♚xd5 here, and it's true that this looks fantastic for White, especially because the queen check on e1 won't yield Black anything. Petrosian probably wasn't entirely sure of 26...♚a4, which Black can play to confuse things. But even then White's advantage looks considerable after 27.♚c7. With the text, White also maintains his advantage, but Black's chances of a successful defence have increased.

25...♚xa5 26.♚b4

The point of the previous move. If Black goes for the queen swap, White wins back his pawn in very favourable circumstances.

**26...♖b6 27.♙xd5 e6 28.♙f3
♜c8 29.♗a4 ♜c7 30.♞g2**

With the last few moves both players have reinforced their position. White has two modest strategic pluses: the bishop pair and a majority in the centre that outweighs the black queenside majority.

30...a6

Tal is aiming for further simplification in the hope that this will make defending easier. Averbakh indicates the alternative 30...♙f8 as more tenacious, but in that case it seems to me that Black will be hard pressed after 31.♙xf8, followed by 32.♞a2. The endgame of rook + bishop v rook + knight with an extra white central pawn seems to offer White good winning chances.

31.bxa6 ♗xa6

Black has to go for the queen swap, since 31...bxa6 32.♞b2 would land him in very hot water indeed.

32.♗xa6 bxa6 33.e3

Covering the d-pawn and giving the rook free play.

33...a5

Not a very useful move, as the a-pawn will eventually be lost anyway. But there are no active alternatives available.

**34.♞a2 ♞a7 35.♙b4 a4 36.♙c6
♙f8**

In order to win the a-pawn White must now give up his bishop pair.

37.♙xf8 ♞xf8 38.♞xa4 ♜c7

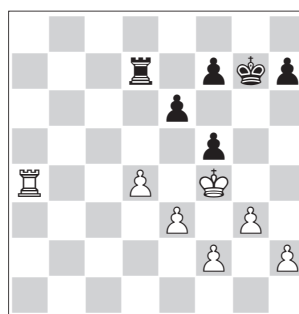
A difficult choice for Tal. It is hard to say how good White's winning chances would have been if Black had swapped rooks. Even Averbakh, endgame specialist

par excellence, is not sure whether the text is better than swapping the rooks.

39.♙xd7

This swap is at any rate justified. If White had withdrawn the bishop, the second rank would have become available to the black rook.

39...♞xd7 40.♞f3 ♞g7 41.♞f4



41...♞f6

Just before the adjournment Tal plays this king move, and it is quite possible that it is the decisive error.

The white king was not yet threatening to penetrate via the fifth rank, which gave Black time to give his rook a more active position. Correct was 41...♞b7!, when the black rook threatens to penetrate on b2, with the result that the game plan (viz. 42.h3) would fail to yield a clear result after 42...♞b2 43.f3 h5 44.♞g5 ♞f2. This means that White has to withdraw his rook with 42.♞a2, but this is countered, as in the game, by 42...♞f6, intending to meet 43.h3 with 43...h5.

This leaves White some practical chances, but frankly speaking I have the feeling that, objectively, the position is a draw.

42.h3

The sealed move.

42...h5

All commentators rejected this advance. This is correct in itself, as the rest of the game will show that the h-pawn is lost by force. But it has to be said that Black would also have lost if he had taken a more passive approach.

Tal must have realised this while analysing the adjourned position. The white plan is simple: he will play 43.g4, forcing Black to swap pawns. Then he takes his rook to d7 and aims for e3-e4, followed by d4-d5. If Black puts his rook on the fourth rank in order to prevent the second advance, White first takes his king to h3 and possibly to h4.

There seems to be no antidote to this plan.

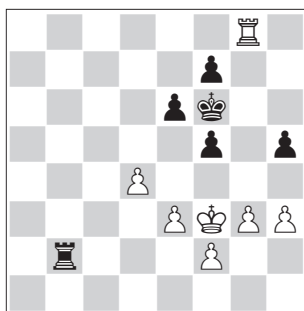
43.♖a8 ♜b7

Too little too late.

44.♖g8

Cutting off the black king from the g-file.

44...♜b2 45.♔f3



The king has done its job on f4 and goes back.

45...♞d2 46.h4 ♔e7 47.♞g5

The rest is simple.

47...♔f8 48.♞xh5 ♔g7 49.♞g5+ ♔h7
50.h5 ♞a2 51.g4 ♔h6 52.♞g8 ♔h7
53.♞e8 fxc4+ 54.♔g3 ♔h6 55.♞e7
♔g7 56.♞c7 ♞b2 57.♞c5 ♔f6 58.d5

♔g5 59.h6 exd5 60.♞xd5+ ♔g6
61.♞d6+ ♔g5 62.h7 ♞b8 63.♞d1 ♞h8
64.♞h1

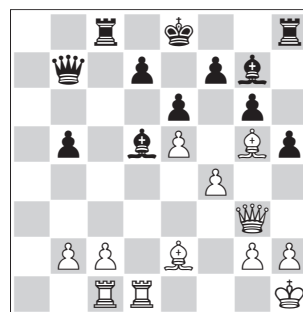
And Black exceeded his time.

Sicilian Defence

Paul Keres Miroslav Filip

A Taimanov with an early swap on d4 by Black. White has put pressure on the enemy position, but failed to capitalise on it. The people in the press room were of the opinion that 22.c3 (rather than 22.h3) would have been stronger. The eventual result was a major piece ending.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4
e6 5.♘c3 ♜c7 6.♙e3 a6 7.♙e2 ♘xd4
8.♜xd4 b5 9.0-0 ♙b7 10.♞ad1 ♘f6
11.e5 ♘d5 12.♘xd5 ♙xd5 13.♞c1 ♞c8
14.a4 ♜b7 15.axb5 axb5 16.♜g4 g6
17.♙g5 h5 18.♜g3 ♙g7 19.♞fd1 ♜b8
20.f4 ♜b6+ 21.♔h1 ♜b7



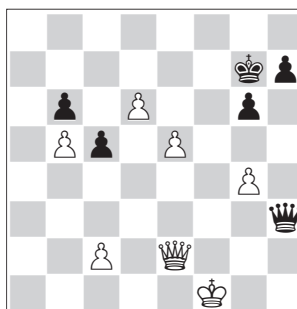
22.h3 ♙e4 23.c3 0-0 24.♞d6 ♞c7
25.♙f6 ♙xf6 26.exf6 ♞c5 27.♞cd1 ♞d8
28.♔h2 ♔h7 29.♞1d4 ♞f5 30.♙d3
♙xd3 31.♜xd3 ♞xf6 32.♞xd7 ♞xd7
33.♞xd7 ♜b8 34.g3 h4 35.♜d4 ♔g7
36.♞d6 ♜a8 37.♜e3 1/2-1/2

Pirc Defence

Pal Benko
Robert Fischer

Benko opens the game with a move rarely played at top level, either then or now. He would do this every time until Round 23 in this lengthy tournament. Botvinnik, incidentally, successfully used 1.g3 a few times as well. Fischer appears to find it hard to handle and ends up in a Pirc defence. White creates a space advantage and manages, despite raging time-trouble, to convert it to a winning advantage. After 40 moves the game is initially adjourned, but Fischer eventually resigns without resuming play. This result surprised many people, who took it as a sign that Benko was going to do more than play the role of outsider in this event. Forty years later I met Benko in Curaçao. He gave me his card, and to my surprise the full details of this victory were printed on it, showing the pride he justifiably took in it.

1.g3 ♘f6 2.♗g2 g6 3.e4 d6 4.d4 ♗g7
5.♘e2 0-0 6.0-0 e5 7.♘bc3 c6 8.a4
♘bd7 9.a5 exd4 10.♘xd4 ♘c5 11.h3
♙e8 12.♙e1 ♘fd7 13.♗e3 ♚c7 14.f4
♙b8 15.♚d2 b5 16.axb6 axb6 17.b4
♘e6 18.b5 ♘xd4 19.♗xd4 ♗xd4+
20.♚xd4 c5 21.♚d2 ♗b7 22.♙ad1 ♙e6
23.e5 ♗xg2 24.♘xg2 ♚b7+ 25.♘f2
♙d8 26.exd6 ♘f6 27.♙xe6 fxe6
28.♚e3 ♘f7 29.♚f3 ♚b8 30.♘e4
♘xe4+ 31.♚xe4 ♙d7 32.♚c6 ♚d8
33.♘f3 ♘g7 34.g4 e5 35.fxe5 ♙f7+
36.♘g2 ♚h4 37.♙f1 ♙xf1 38.♘xf1
♚xh3+ 39.♚g2 ♚e3 40.♚e2 ♚h3+



1-0