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Chess

MASTERFUL TECHNIQUE!

White: Robert Fischer. Black: Tigran Petrosian.
 Buenos Aires, October 19, 1971, 7th Match Game.
 Sicilian Defense

1 P-K4	P-QB4(a)	18 P-QN4!	K-B1
2 N-KB3	P-K3	19 N-B5	B-B1
3 P-Q4	PxP	20 P-B3	R/2-R2(k)
4 NxP	P-QR3(b)	21 R-K5	B-Q2
5 B-Q3	N-QB3	22 NxBch(1)	RxN
6 NxN	NPxN	23 R-QB1	R-Q3(m)
7 0-0	P-Q4	24 R-B7	N-Q2
8 P-QB4(c)	N-B3	25 R-K2	P-N3(n)
9 BPxP	BPxP	26 K-B2	P-KR4
10 PxP	PxP(d)	27 P-B4	P-R5(o)
11 N-B3!(e)	B-K2	28 K-B3	P-B4(p)
12 Q-R4ch!(f)	Q-Q2(g)	29 K-K3	P-Q5ch(q)
13 R-K1(h)	QxQ	30 K-Q2	N-N3
14 NxQ	B-K3	31 R/2-K7	N-Q4
15 B-K3(i)	0-0(j)	32 R-B7ch	K-K1
16 B-QB5	KR-K1	33 R-QN7	NxBP
17 BxB	RxB	34 B-B4	Resigns

(Annotations by international grandmaster Lev Polugaevsky, translated from "64," No. 43, Oct. 22-28, 1971).

Petrosian's play in the first five games merited high praise, not only because of his deep and varied opening preparation but also because of his steadiness and confidence. Even though the match was tied, one felt that the Soviet grandmaster held the lead. In the sixth match game many thought that Petrosian, playing White, would put pressure on Fischer. But, as fate would have it, just the opposite actually occurred.

The exhausting battle, particularly the analysis and second session of play, undoubtedly cost Petrosian much energy and had an effect on his next game. Once again Petrosian lost after getting the worst of the opening.

(a) The uncompromising Sicilian.

(b) Petrosian tried 4 . . . N-QB3 in the first match game.

(c) More frequently met lately is 8 N-Q2, which underwent serious trials in the second Spassky-Petrosian match for the world championship in 1969. The textmove, although not unknown, was probably prepared by Fischer especially for this contest.

(d) Theory considers 10 . . . NxP strongest. After 11 B-K4 Black can choose between 11 . . . R-R2 and 11 . . . B-K2 12 N-B3 B-N2 13 Q-R4ch Q-Q2 14 QxQch KxQ 15 R-Q1, as in Averbakh — Taimanov, XXVII USSR Championship. Perhaps Fischer discovered a more forceful continuation in this line. At any rate, Petrosian elected to travel a different path and, as the game shows, failed to equalize.

(e) White pondered for 20 minutes over this move, which proves to be far more effective than 11 B-K3 B-K2 12 B-Q4 0-0.

(f) This harmless looking check in fact contains surprising amounts of venom. Suddenly Black is confronted again with complex problems. Petrosian slipped deep into thought.

(g) Black probably disliked 12 . . . B-Q2 13 Q-B2! 0-0 14 B-KN5, but it was still best under the circumstances. In the first place, the preceding variation is not pat, e.g., Black responds 14 . . . P-Q5. In the second place, 13 Q-B2 can be answered by 13 . . . B-K3 14 B-KN5 P-R3 15 BxN BxB 16 Q-R4ch K-B1 (16 . . . Q-Q2? 17 B-N5), and while White stands better, Black can organize stiff resistance. Besides 13 . . . B-K3 Black might even risk 13 . . . P-Q5! 14 N-K4 (weaker than 14 N-K2) NxN 15 BxN R-QN1, followed by B-Q2-N4.

(h) Accepting the sacrifice of the exchange permits Black to seize the initiative: 13 B-QN5 PxP 14 QxR 0-0.

(i) The endgame is very bad for Black, as White possesses a Q-side pawn majority and, at the same time, has blockaded the enemy QP. In addition, Fischer manages to trade off the black-squared bishops and occupy the important square, QB5.

(j) Attempting to interfere with White's plan by 15 . . . N-Q2 does not provide much relief in view of 16 P-B4 P-N3 17 B-Q4 0-0 18 QR-B1, with great positional advantage.

(k) There is nothing better. On 20 . . . RxRch 21 RxR Black's pieces are tied down to the defense of his QRP.

(l) Highly characteristic of today's Fischer, who often transforms one kind of advantage into another. Here he gladly parts with his powerful knight, exchanging it for Black's comparatively bad bishop. In return he obtains a qualitatively superior ending of bishop versus knight. Had White played the natural 22 P-QR4, to stop 22 . . . B-N4, Black would reply 22 . . . B-K3, preparing 23 . . . N-Q2.

(m) Preventing 24 R-B6 and freeing Q2 for his knight.

(n) Black finds himself in a peculiar Zugzwang position. If 25 . . . P-QR4, then 26 P-N5 hurts, while 25 . . . N-N3 allows White to double rooks on the seventh rank.

(o) Of course Black's game is grave, but Petrosian still ought to have settled on 27 . . . N-N3 in order to complicate matters after 28 R/2-K7 R-KB3.

(p) Further exposing his second rank and depriving himself of counterplay.

(q) Also hopeless is 29 . . . N-B3 30 K-Q4 N-K5 31 R/2-QB2.