

Petrosian Year by Year

Volume I (1942-1962)

Tibor Karolyi and Tigran Gyoalyan

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Front cover: Tigran Petrosian plays against Konstantin Klaman in the Soviet Championship Semi-Final, Tbilisi (round 9), 1949. Photo from the private archive of David Gurgenidze

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Foreword by Levon Aronian

As a chess player from a country where the name of Petrosian is held sacred, I am delighted at the opportunity to write about one of the most mystical chess players in the world.

When you think of post-war world champions and elements of nature, the following analogies come to mind: Botvinnik – Earth, Smyslov – Air, Tal – Fire, and Petrosian – Water.

Tigran Vartanovich's style was unhurried, even sometimes languid, with slow development in the opening. It was similar to a mountain brook, and often the pace of the game changed its course, just as the river and current accelerated. Most of his games follow this logic, which is elusive to nearly all other players.

Perhaps I began to study Petrosian's games too early. My relatives, like many chess lovers in Armenia, were proud and remembered the days when Tigran Vartanovich became the world champion, so it was natural that *Reliability Strategy* became one of my first books.

After the brilliant cavalry attacks by Alekhine in his *300 Games* I now had to figure out why I should exchange a good knight for a blunted bishop or give up space, and then try to build a blockade in positions with pawn chains. It was at the age of 13, when already playing at master level, that I read that book and began to understand my compatriot's wealth of ideas and depth of his plans. Now, many years later, having had the opportunity to study the games of players with a universal style, as well as the strongest computer programs, I am increasingly convinced that the chess style of the future will in many respects resemble Tigran Vartanovich's. You don't have to go far for examples: look at the games from the AlphaZero–Stockfish match or at openings that are coming into fashion: 1.e4 c6 2.♘f3 d5 3.d3 – elasticity, modest ambitions and a focus on manoeuvring; 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.g3 is another attempt to get away from the beaten track and focus on a slight advantage.

The names of the authors of this book – Tibor Karolyi and Tigran Gyozyalyan – are well-known to serious chess players. Having raised many grandmasters, they continue to coach and at the same time write books on interesting subjects. I am sure that the rare games analysed in this book will help chess fans to discover the fascinating world of one of the least studied world champions.

Levon Aronian

Introduction by Tibor Karolyi

All world champions contributed greatly to the development of chess, and they all brought something new to chess culture. Their play has been illuminated by many authors. I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to write a three-volume treatise on Tal and three books on each of Kasparov and Karpov, as well as books on several other all-time greats. I managed to discover elements to their chess that I had never heard before, like how often Kasparov played on the a- and h-files, how many times Karpov checkmated his opponents in endgames or how well Tal played endgames. Also, I was able to spot for example that among the great players Portisch was a master of bishop pairs, and Beliavsky was incredibly strong at using his queen in the endgame and won so many games due to this, as well as how brilliantly he handled positions with unbalanced material. These giants of chess were not even aware of all the features of their own play and they were surprised. Regarding Petrosian, he was famous for his exchange sacrifices, but never read about how masterfully he often exchanged a bishop for a knight, or about another speciality he often surprised and beat opponents with: taking an a- or h-pawn with a b- or g-pawn.

I think Tigran Vartanovich is one of the least understood champions. Tal appeared on the world stage and, in games with huge stakes, he dared to play risky chess like no one else before him and, probably, after as well. Petrosian qualified for the world championship match with an extremely rational attitude. He recorded a very special accomplishment: he did not lose a single game in the interzonal or Candidates Tournament in that world championship cycle until the final.

The three Soviet and post-Soviet republics in the Caucasus have made an incredible contribution to chess. Kasparov, who many consider the greatest player of all time, was raised in Baku. Woman world champions Gaprindashvili and Chiburdanidze came from Georgia, European champion Azmaiparashvili as well. Aronian had a realistic chance of becoming world champion. Armenia won the Chess Olympiad 3 times. The Azeri team have achieved a lot as well. Vaganian, Mamedyarov and Radjabov are great players. On top of that, these nations have produced genius composers such as Henrik Kasparian and David Gurgenidze, and I could keep mentioning their achievements.

But Tigran Petrosian was the first great chess player from the region. I guess no one has contributed to the chess boom in that part of the world as much as he did. Only a very few chess players have made accomplishments like his. They named a street in Yerevan after him and his picture is on an Armenian banknote.

My junior trainer, International Master Peter Szilagyi, who later became my friend, was a great fan of the Armenian world champion. He talked about

him so much that his tremendous respect for him definitely affected me. I visited Peter in hospital just a few days before he passed away and I was happy to tell him that I had the chance to write a treatise on Petrosian. He was weak and could hardly talk, but said what great news that was. He simultaneously smiled a bit, and that smile will remain in my mind for the rest of my life. It is such a pity that he will not read this book.

When I worked in Singapore, I was part of a team that included two fellow trainers who were Armenians in the Singapore Chess Academy. I took long walks and chats with my friends Tigran Gyzalyan and Ashot Nadanian. Tigran's devotion to the ninth world champion shined through when he talked about his fellow Armenian. He shared his personal memories on the occasions he was welcomed to Petrosian's home in Moscow with charming affection.

Ashot and Tigran influenced me and I started to investigate his play. I discovered a few things about it I had not read earlier. He was able to use his rooks and king originally. Tigran told me that Petrosian had once said that his strategy against weaker players was to hold and to spot holes in his opponent's calculations. I found quite a few marvellous examples of this. Portisch faced him many times; he spoke of him with special respect and liking. Ribli and Sherwin told stories as well.

Back in 2004 to 2005, Tigran and I were already thinking about writing a book on Petrosian. When I got an offer to write my books about Tal, there was also a discussion about writing on Petrosian as well. Looking back, I think it was lucky they stuck with Tal, as it was a magical experience writing about the great Misha. Ever since Singapore, I had a strong desire to write in detail about the ninth world champion. As a chess author, I did not and do not have the luxury to choose the subject I write on. But given the choice about whom I would write a book on, I would have selected Petrosian.

So I was excited when the chance came up and contacted Tigran. It was clear to me that his devotion to Petrosian would add a lot to my work. I can speak Russian and have access to some chess literature in Russian, but his Russian is close to native and his ability to reach out to many Armenian people and access more chess literature in Russian raised the level of this book. In addition, Tigran is an extremely well-educated chess player. I am looking forward very much to seeing our joint effort in print.

We hoped to find lesser known masterpieces of the maestro, and while we agree with the subtitle of Keene and Simpole's book on Petrosian "Master of Manoeuvre", we also wanted to discover less obvious features. We hoped to show all his masterpieces. I felt in my Tal book I was able to include all his good games. We hoped that feeling would come after the Petrosian book as well, and now after finishing the book we believe these hopes have been fulfilled. Most

authors in the past were not able to investigate his games with a computer; yet scrutinising his games with modern tools would surely add a lot to his gems and uncover hidden beauty in them. The 9th world champion left so much to chess in his career that devoting a book to just part of it is another justified approach. There are examples of this: Yanvarjov covered only his play in the King's Indian, while Keene and Simpole wrote about his games versus the Elite.

Once on an airplane from Sydney to Singapore an Armenian lady was sitting next to me. We had a nice chat and when their world champion's name popped up she asked me if he was so successful because his opponents did not understand his thinking. And indeed, Botvinnik said to Spassky that he was unable to anticipate Petrosian's moves.

Vladimir Goldin, who was Armenian champion in 1952, told Tigran Gyoalyan that he had once held a conversation with Petrosian and told him "Tigran you must be a happy man, because your whole nation loved you!"

It is a bit unique in chess, but three nations can be proud of him. Regarding Armenians, the reasons are obvious as he was an Armenian, and their huge support contributed to his success. But he learned chess in Georgia, the country of his physical birth and his birth as a chess player, and he became great in Russia. The chess environments of these three countries were important elements of his accomplishments.

We cite Mikhail Tal: "Petrosian made an indelible impression on me because he always tried to play correct chess, he believed in the logic of the game. Amazingly, in any situation he believed in the formula: chess is a logical game. Petrosian is an absolutely phenomenal chess talent. Sometimes, he found ideas for rivals that they had never thought of. For me, he was perfect."

In this 2-volume treatise we cover his exceptionally successful career in chronological order. Actually, Petrosian planned to build his own book like that, but he passed away before he could write it and so the book *Reliability Strategy* was compiled posthumously under the editorship of the late Eduard Shekhtman for the Soviet state publishing house *Fizkultura i sport* in 1985. That book was updated in Russian by Russian Chess House in 2015, who renamed it *My Best Games*, edited by Oleg Stetsko, and it was then translated into English with some editorial and game selection differences and published by Quality Chess that same year with the title *Python Strategy*. However, the current treatise is very different. Very few games are covered in both works, and of those that are, we have considerably revised the analysis.

A careful reading of the sources suggests that Shekhtman originally cooperated with Petrosian on what was intended to be Petrosian's book.

In the 1985 book *Reliability Strategy*, Shekhtman wrote in his introduction “The world champion himself knew it was high time [to publish his games collection]. By that time *we* [my emphasis] had already managed to collect and systematise practically all the games that he had played.” Interestingly, the 2015 Russian version completely dropped Shekhtman’s introduction (one can speculate that it was for copyright reasons) while although his introduction was restored in *Python Strategy*, the latter reworded the introduction to “the Champion already understood perfectly well that the moment had come: he had already collected and classified practically all the games he had ever played,” which removes the reference to Shekhtman’s involvement. Whether this removal of the important fact of Shekhtman’s collaboration with Petrosian was deliberate or accidental we don’t know, but we prefer to think that Shekhtman did indeed initially collaborate with Petrosian. (His ongoing collaboration with Petrosian’s widow Rona over two further works on Petrosian mentioned below suggests this, as one would not have expected her to collaborate with somebody who had misrepresented his relationship with her husband in the 1985 book.)

Pergamon Press also published a two-volume collection of Petrosian’s games back in 1991 called *The Games of Tigran Petrosian*, also edited by Shekhtman, and it seems that this work was produced directly for Pergamon as there is no known Russian language equivalent. More recently, it has been republished by Ishi Press. However, that work is also very different, containing about 2,000 games, very few of which are annotated, but which are perhaps the origin of many Petrosian games found in today’s database (in this book, by ‘database’ we refer to the ChessBase database). Pergamon’s intention had been to include all the games of Petrosian which were known at the time. Those games were of course not subject to modern computer analysis, but this immense work was of great importance and serves as a point of reference for games and dates. References to “Shekhtman” in this book in terms of where and when games were played are generally taken from *The Games of Tigran Petrosian*.

In between those dates, in 1989, Shekhtman published another, much smaller set of works by Petrosian in Russian, also with *Fizkultura i sport*, called *Chess Lectures* (and published in English by Ishi Press in 2012 as *Petrosian’s Legacy*). It contains a small amount of information that was of use in our treatise.

Finally, a much older and hence less important work of reference for historical facts about Petrosian’s career was *Tigran Petrosian His Life and Games* written by Viktor Vasiliev and translated into English into 1974 by Batsford. It too has been reissued by Ishi Press. The original Russian version dates to 1969, authored by Vasiliev and Alexei Suetin. A different Russian version was published in 1973. Vasiliev’s book makes pleasant reading and

isn't only interesting for chess improvers. However, it is written in Soviet propaganda style and much of the information given is questionable.

Generally speaking, we deeply analyse 3-8 of his best games every year of his career. We do of course look at the most important games that he played, but we mainly search for his deepest and most interesting masterpieces. Our priority is quality of the games. In this first volume, we deliver 61 deeply analysed full games, fragments from 48 games, 12 positions in the Petrosian's Remarkable Exchanges chapter, 25 positions in the It's Your Move chapter, two studies, and 7 full games and 17 fragments in the commentaries. We introduce his trainers and seconds, who contributed a lot to his success. We do so through their games – we analyse a few of their greatest gems as well.

Petrosian's intention in his planned book was to show what went on in his and his opponents' minds, and he just wanted to keep the analysis that he made right after his games, adding little or nothing. We try to incorporate this element, but we are both trainers of juniors and want to help players learn from the maestro.

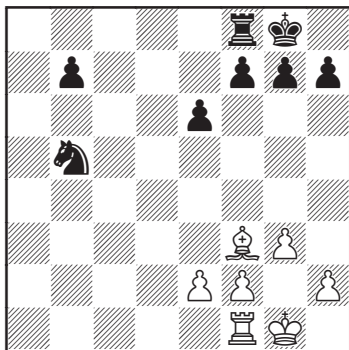
Interestingly, he very rarely placed a question-mark against his opponents' moves. It would be interesting to know whether he was being tactful towards them or actually did not want to help them. Timman once wrote that Karpov never showed the key highlights of his games in his analysis. Smyslov said something like "I want to make 40 good moves and if my opponent does the same we draw". Yet when I investigated Smyslov's play for my book *Kasparov: How His Predecessors Misled Him About Chess* I surprisingly noticed how much he risked and how much he played for a win. Portisch told me for my interview-based book with him that he had played so many games versus Karpov and never realised just how much he calculated. When he was Karpov's second he was shocked at how much he calculated in his games. Soviet sources often said about the twelfth world champion that he just feels where to put his pieces. I do not know whether Smyslov misjudged his own play or whether Karpov was aware of the above-mentioned feature of his own games, but I suspect that they both knew and just wanted to mislead their rivals. Professional players can't speak openly for as long as they have ambitions.

Petrosian very sadly never enjoyed being retired as he died so early, and amazingly he was ranked 19th in the world even when he passed away. Quite possibly, he was the strongest ever world champion when he breathed his last: Alekhine was still the champion, but his play had already deteriorated. So this is another reason why it is worth investigating Petrosian's play: as he was never retired he was unable to speak entirely sincerely.

Also, we think he did not care too much when selecting which of his early

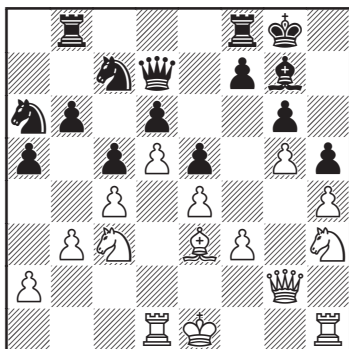
games to analyse. For example, he once analysed one of his games against Bondarevsky where virtually nothing happened, nobody even gave a check in the game, and in addition it was not played in a vital moment of his career.

Petrosian, T – Bondarevsky, I
Armenian Championship,
Yerevan, 1947



White to play and the game was drawn here. Instead of this, we show games from his career in where his genius shined. For instance, in the next masterpiece, he outplayed Bronstein with a stunning idea, though we have not come across any analysis of this game by Petrosian.

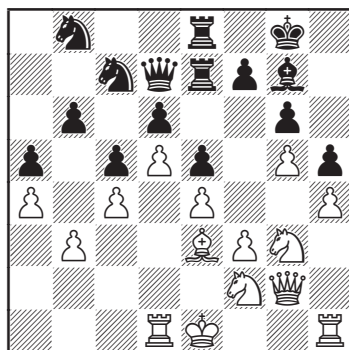
Petrosian, T – Bronstein, D
Soviet Club Championship
Moscow, 1974



22.a4

A move which closes the queenside is not outwardly special, yet after this in just four remarkably purposeful moves he was winning.

22...♖be8 23.♘e2 ♘b8 24.♘g3
♖e7 25.♘f2 ♖fe8



26.♖g1!

It is so hard to read Petrosian's thinking. He continued his stunning plan: 27.♘fh1!!, then 28.♘xh5!! and 29.♘g3, and he obtained a winning position by taking the h5-pawn. Petrosian closed the queenside four moves ago, and from then on he wasted no time and played this sacrifice in the most purposefulness way. Earlier, the great David could have tried Petrosian's speciality of evacuating his king, but would you believe he no longer could do anything about the winning knight sacrifice? Dear Reader, do you agreed that this idea is very much

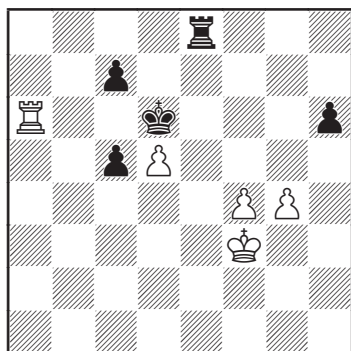
worth analysing? You will find it covered in detail in Volume II of this treatise.

We found improvements in several of his well-known games, for example, we think that Botvinnik could have saved a game in their match when commentators thought the game was already beyond salvation. We also found study-like ideas in famous endgame thrillers against Fischer and Geller.

Petrosian and Fischer produced one of the most exciting endgames in chess history, if not the most exciting. Fischer analysed it in his legendary book *My 60 Memorable Games* and Petrosian also analysed it in detail. We managed to find an idea that neither player considered.

Petrosian, T – Fischer, R

Portoroz Interzonal (13), 1958



55...c6!! Black gives up the pawn, as without the second c-pawn the black rook can support the remaining c-pawn. With this stunning move Black can draw with far less effort than after the game continuation. This ending is analysed in detail in this first Volume, game 86.

Just like with Karpov, who in his youth was unable to play without inaccuracies, but who had already found some truly grand ideas, many of these Petrosian games were in the database but had never been analysed. We managed to shed light on quite a few deep concepts like the one against Bronstein.

There are two authors of this book. We selected the games together. I was responsible for the analysis, but we discussed the games and I made a lot of changes based on what Tigran suggested. We also finalised the book together.

Tigran Petrosian is one of the most mysterious chess champions, if not the most. Please join us in exploring his art!

We had so much pleasure writing this book together, and we believe that reading our work will bring you a lot of joy, too.

**International Master
Tibor Karolyi**

Introduction by Tigran Gyozalyan

My first encounter with Petrosian took place in Yerevan in 1972, when I played in the Higher League of the Armenian Championship. I had just turned 15 and, naturally, we did not engage in any conversation. Then I saw him at the Soviet championships and other competitions. But we personally got to know each other in 1978 outside Moscow at his dacha.

My friend International Master Igor Yanvarjov, who was already well acquainted with him, recommended me to call Tigran Vartanovich and kindly provided me with his telephone number. By the way, Tigran Vartanovich personally attended the viva of Yanvarjov's thesis at the University of Physical Education and Sports, where the latter wrote about the ninth world champion. I, like all Armenians, idolized Tigran Petrosian, and I had to pretty much overcome my excitement to call him, although Igor told me that I should not worry, because Petrosian was a very nice person in every way.

I asked Tigran Vartanovich for a meeting to look at my games and give me some advice. I was immensely happy when he agreed. I was struck by his kindness during our friendly conversation. I travelled by train to his place. I saw the face of the ninth world champion from the train window. I knew his face well, so it was easy to spot him at the station. I saw his familiar expressive head, and for a moment I was struck with nerves. My pulse was probably 120-150 beats per minute. But I was able to relax at the meeting, as the world champion treated me in our conversation as though we were old friends. He lived in Armenia for only three years, but remembered the chess players from my hometown Kirovakan (now Vanadzor): Artsrun and Lazar Sarkisian, the latter being my coach. I could feel his genuine interest in the state of chess in Armenia.

He introduced me to his wife Rona Yakovlevna and his sister. "Do you know what his name is !?" And he answered with a prompt: "Tigran!"

I have studied Petrosian's games a lot, and I used them so many times as a coach. Still, I did not even think of writing a book on my chess hero for many years. Then the idea came up during the time Tibor and I spent together in Singapore. The idea slept for long, and when in 2019 Tibor mentioned the idea again, I got very excited.

I thought I knew Petrosian's games well; still, I was surprised that he produced so many unknown masterpieces. On a good day he was a very deep young player as well. I was also surprised to spot so many new elements even in his most legendary games.

For me, Tigran Petrosian was not only a phenomenal champion. He is one of the best known Armenians of all time. I admire him not only for what he accomplished in chess, and I am grateful for his kindness to me.

It was a special joy working on Petrosian's career and fully worthwhile investigating it in such detail. I hope our work will bring pleasure to many players, and that juniors and improvers will significantly deepen their chess understanding from the games of the phenomenal player Tigran Petrosian.

FIDE Master
Tigran Gyoalyan



Tigran Gyoalyan with Tigran Petrosian

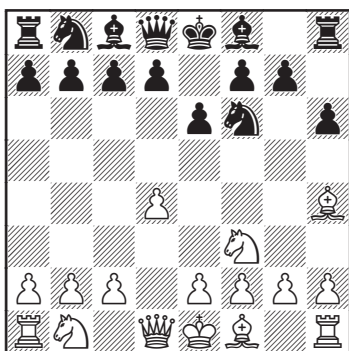
Game 39

Petrosian, Tigran – Botvinnik, Mikhail

Soviet Championship Final, Moscow
(9), 1951

Queen's Pawn Game

1.d4 ♞f6 2.♞f3 e6 3.♙g5 h6!
4.♙h4



4...g5!?

According to the database, Botvinnik introduces a novelty. He was known for his very good opening preparation and superb squeezing in endings. In this game, Petrosian gets a taste of it.

5.♙g3 ♞e4 6.♞bd2 ♞xg3

Exchanging the bishop results in a complex fight. White gets play on the h-file and some development advantage.

7.hxg3 ♙g7 8.c3

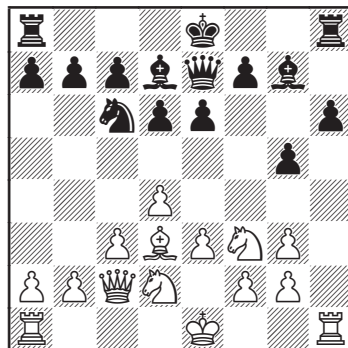
It is reasonable to restrict the g7-bishop.

8...d6 9.e3

White will score better with 9.e4.

9...♞c6 10.♙d3 ♙d7 11.♞c2
♞e7

Botvinnik cleverly hides where he wants to castle.



12.0-0-0

Petrosian could hold back his castling by 12.b4!? or 12.g4.

12...a5?!

Mikhail Moiseevich optimistically wants to exert pressure on White's king. Acting in the centre looks preferable: 12...f5 13.e4 (13.♞b1 0-0-0 and the position would be complex and balanced) 13...♞f6 14.exf5 exf5 would be unclear.

13.e4

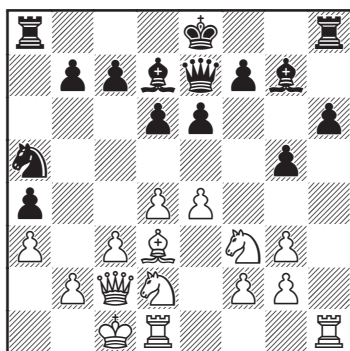
13.g4! was better, as White should manoeuvre the knight to h5. If 13...a4 (13...0-0-0 14.♞e4 or 14.♞f1) 14.♞e4 a3 15.b3 White would transfer the knight to h5 and would be somewhat better.

13...a4 14.a3

Stopping the a-pawn is a practical decision, as the position will be sharper without it. However, Black equalises thanks to the hole on b3. 14.♞f1 a3

could lead to extremely complex positions. It would be hard to handle the complications even for these great players. 15.b3 (15.b4 is unclear) 15...g4 (15...h5 16.♘e3 is unclear) 16.♘h4 b5 17.f4 (17.♙xb5?? ♔g5+) 17...gxf3 (17...b4 18.d5) 18.gxf3 b4 19.d5 with a highly complicated game.

14...♘a5!



15.♖de1

Petrosian doesn't simply wait, but prepares e5; he is looking for a fight.

15...0-0-0 16.♙b1

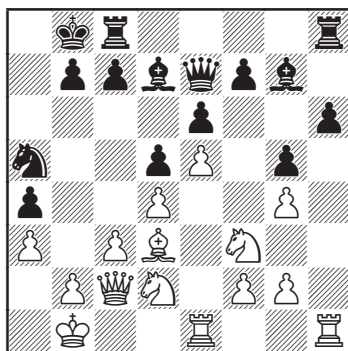
16.e5 at once was reasonable as well.

16...♙b8 17.e5 d5

Botvinnik keeps the position closed. After 17...h5 18.exd6 cxd6 19.d5 the position would be unclear.

18.g4 ♖c8?!

Preparing c5 like this is an inaccuracy. Doing it with the b-pawn would be more precise. 18...♔e8 19.♔d1 b6 or 18...b6!? 19.♔d1 c5 20.dxc5 bxc5 would be equal.



19.♔d1!!

This is a very subtle idea, he starts exerting pressure on the a4-pawn out of the blue.

19...c5 20.♙c2! ♔e8

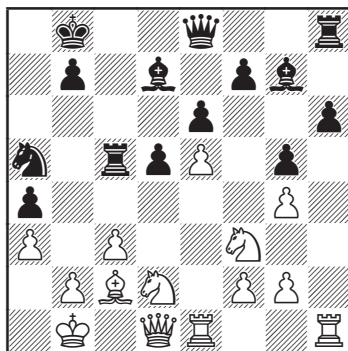
If 20...b5 21.dxc5 ♖xc5 22.♖e3 White would have a small edge.

21.dxc5!

Petrosian vacates the d4-square for the knight.

21...♖xc5

If 21...♙f8 22.♘d4! (22.♘xg5?! ♙xc5 23.♘h3 ♖g8 and Black has compensation for the pawn) 22...♙xc5 23.♘2f3 White's knights are strong.



22.g3?!

This is a somewhat mysterious move, and maybe Petrosian wants to hide his intentions. After 22.♘d4! ♘c6 (22...♖f8 23.♖e3) 23.♘xc6+ ♙xc6 24.♘f3 White would be somewhat better planning ♘d4 and ♖e3 followed by g3 and f4.

22...♘c6!

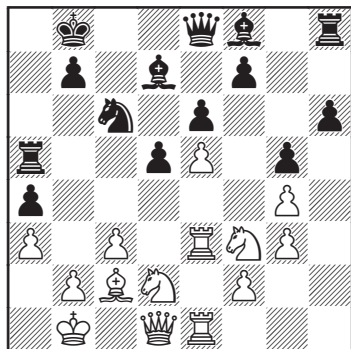
This commits White's knight to defending the e5–pawn, so it can't occupy the d4–square.

23.♖e3

Or 23.♙xa4 ♘xe5 24.♙xd7 ♘xd7.

23...♖a5 24.♖he1 ♙f8?

Botvinnik commits a tactical error. Instead, the position would be equal after 24...♖d8 25.♙xa4 (25.♙a1 ♖c7) 25...♘xe5 26.♘xe5 ♙xa4 27.♖e2.



25.c4?

Petrosian misses a golden chance. Opening up the position helps Black's bishop. After 25.♖3e2 ♙c5 26.♖h1 the position would be even, but White has something even better: 25.♙xa4! Taking the pawn

would favour White. 25...♘xe5 (25...♙c5 26.♙xc6 bxc6 [26...♙xc6 27.♘d4] 27.♘b3 ♙xe3 28.♖xe3 and Black would struggle despite the extra exchange) 26.♙xd7 ♘xd7 27.♘b3! and White would win a pawn for nothing after 27...♖a6 (27...♖b5 28.a4) 28.♖xd5.

25...♙c5 26.♖3e2 ♘e7 27.♙a1 ♖d8

27...♖c8!? would be more precise.

28.♖h1?!

Petrosian is not tuned in to deliver a punch. 28.cxd5! exd5 (28...♘xd5 29.♘e4) 29.e6! This sacrifices a pawn to change the structure. After 29...fxe6 (29...♙xe6 30.♙xa4) 30.♘e5 ♙b5 31.♙d3 ♙e8 (31...♘c6 32.♘df3) 32.f4 White has compensation for the pawn.

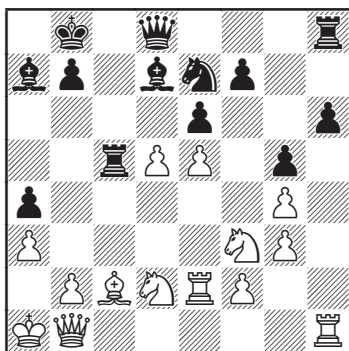
28...♙a7!?

Botvinnik opens the rank for the rook. He has another promising continuation as well: 28...b5! 29.cxd5 (29.cxb5 ♙xb5) 29...exd5 30.e6 ♙xe6 31.♘e5 ♖c7 32.♘df3 f6 33.♘g6 ♙xg4 34.♘xh8 ♙xf3 35.♖xe7 ♙xe7 36.♖xf3 ♖xc2 37.♖xd5 and Black would be somewhat better.

29.♖b1?

Petrosian finds a worse square than d1 for the queen. 29.♖h2 or 29.♙d3 would not equalise, but would still not be as unfortunate as the game continuation.

29...♖c5 30.cxd5

**30...exd5!**

Suddenly, Black's bishops are too strong.

31. ♖f5?

Giving up the two bishops worsens the position. White should just give up a pawn and try to survive.

a) 31.e6 ♖xe6 32.♖he1 ♖c7 33.♗e5 White would be a pawn down, but Black still has to convert it, which would require good play.

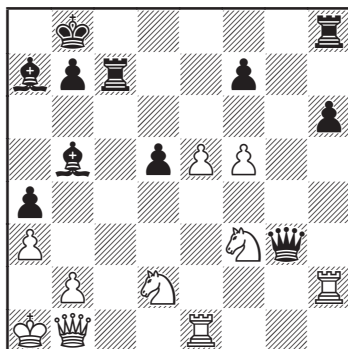
b) 31.♗d4 ♖xg4 32.f3 ♖d7 33.e6 White gets rid of Black's bishop pair. 33...fxe6 34.♗xe6 ♖xe6 35.♖xe6 ♖c8! 36.♖f5 ♗xf5 37.♖xf5 and Black is a pawn up, yet it would not be over.

31...♗xf5 32.gxf5 ♖b5! 33.♖ee1 ♖c7

Suddenly, the bishop pair are working with immense power.

34.♖h2 g4 35.♗h4 ♖g5!

Botvinnik wins a pawn, though going after White's king with 35... ♖c8! and getting the rook to c2 wins quickly. 36.f4 ♖d4 (36...♖c2 wins as well) 37.♗f1 ♖c3! would win beautifully.

36.f4 gxf3 37.♗hxf3 ♖xg3**38.e6!?**

Petrosian doesn't want to go down without a fight. He is lost; nevertheless, he creates some problems for Botvinnik. Reducing the number of pawns reduces the number of weaknesses.

38...fxe6?!

Perhaps Botvinnik was short of time and wanted to get closer to the 40th move, but this exchange increases White's chances of surviving. It vacates the f5-square for the white queen, and if she gets there, then White will gain some activity. 38... ♖f2! 39.♖e5 (Black wins after 39.♖eh1 ♖e3) 39...♖hc8 40.♖h1 f6 (40...♖f4 wins as well.) 41.♖xd5 ♖c6 42.♖d3 ♖f4 and Black would win as White would be tied up.

39.fxe6 ♖hc8

39...♖f2 would not be as strong as it was one move earlier. 40.♖e5 (40. ♖eh1 ♖e3) 40...♖hc8 and now after 41.♖h1 or 41.♖f5 Black would be better, but both moves would give White chances to survive.

40. ♖xh6!

Reducing the number of pawns increases White's drawing chances.

40... ♗f2

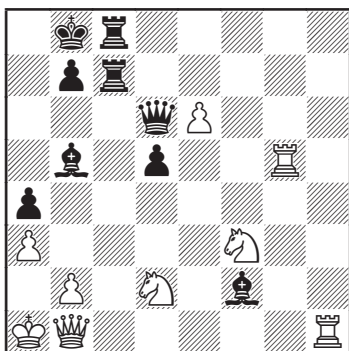
After 40... ♗e3 41. ♖h5 ♗xd2 42. ♘xd2 ♖c5 43. e7 White would have chances to survive.

41. ♖eh1 ♖g4 42. ♖g6 ♖f4 43. ♖g5

Petrosian rightly wants to take the d5-pawn.

43... ♖d6?

The queen defends the pawn, but this move gives away the win. It is possible they were in time trouble and when the reigning world champion made this move he was not aware of having reached time control. Hence, he defended the pawn in a hurry. Black would win after 43... ♗e2! 44. ♖f5 ♖d6 45. ♖f6 ♖c3 or 45... ♗e3.

**44. ♖f5!**

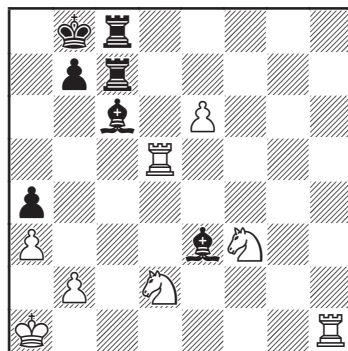
White gets back into the game.

44... ♗e3

44... ♗c6 45. ♖d1.

45. ♖xd5?!

Petrosian plays for a fortress idea and gets the draw, but the subtle 45. ♖e5! would even stop any squeezing. 45... ♖xe5 (45... ♖c5 46. ♖g7) 46. ♖xe5 ♗xd2 (46... ♗f4 47. ♖f5) 47. ♘xd2 ♖c1+ (47... ♖c2 48. ♘b1) 48. ♖xc1 ♖xc1+ 49. ♖a2 and White would be safe.

45... ♖xd5 46. ♖xd5 ♗c6**47. ♖hh5**

The only move to save the piece. White loses the exchange, but so few pawns remain on the board that he can hold.

47... ♗xd5 48. ♖xd5 ♖e7 49. ♖e5!

The rook chases away the well placed bishop.

49... ♗h6

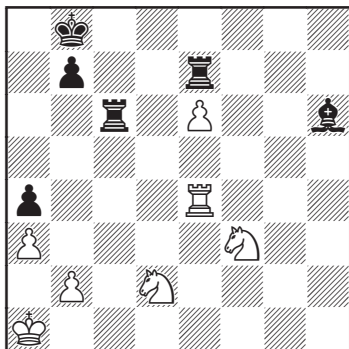
Exchanging the bishop still gives Black slight hopes of winning. 49... ♗xd2 50. ♘xd2 ♖c6

a) 51. ♖a5 ♖exe6 52. ♖xa4 ♖e1+ 53. ♖a2 ♖e2 54. ♘b1 ♖b6 55. ♖b4 ♖xb4 56. axb4 when the Lomonosov tablebase proves it is a draw.

b) 51. ♖e4 ♖a6 52. ♖b4 ♖exe6 53. ♘e4 ♖e5 54. ♘c3 ♖ea5 when Black is very much tied to defending

his a-pawn, and I don't think he can win.

50. ♖e4 ♗c6



51. ♖xa4

After this capture, Botvinnik squeezes for long, but Petrosian was always safe. Petrosian would probably hold by just doing nothing, though at one point he started to push his pawns. The game ended after an 11-hour fight.

51... ♖exe6 52. ♖e4 ♗f6 53. ♖a2 ♖c7 54. ♖e7+ ♖c8 55. ♖e2 ♗c2 56. ♖b1 ♗cc6 57. ♗d4 ♗cd6 58. ♗2b3 ♗g7 59. ♖a2 ♗f1 60. ♗c2 ♗f5 61. ♗g2 ♗f6 62. ♗b4 ♖d7 63. ♗h2 ♖c7 64. ♗c2 ♗g5 65. ♗d2 ♗e6 66. ♗b4 ♗g7 67. ♖b3 ♗e3+ 68. ♖a2 ♗e6 69. ♖b3 ♗e3+ 70. ♖a2 ♗e8 71. ♖b3 ♖b8 72. ♗b1 ♗e3+ 73. ♗c3 ♗eg3 74. ♗d2 ♗g2 75. ♗xg2 ♗xg2 76. ♗d3 ♗h2 77. ♖c4 ♗d2 78. a4 ♖a7 79. ♗b5+ ♖b6 80. b4 ♗c2+ 81. ♖b3 ♗g2 82. ♗c3 ♗g3 83. ♖c4 ♗g4+ 84. ♖b3 ♗g3 85. ♖c4 ♗xc3 86. a5+ ♖c7 87. ♖xc3 ♖c6 88. ♖c4 ♗g4+ 89. ♖c3 ♖b5 90. ♗c5 ♗c4+ 91. ♖d3 ♗xb4 92. ♗xb7 ♖c6

93. a6 ♖d5 94. ♗d8 ♗d4+ 95. ♖e3 ♗e4+ 96. ♖d3 ♗f4 97. a7 ♗a4 98. ♗f7 ♗xa7 99. ♗g5 ♗a3+ 100. ♖e2 1/2

Holding one's own against the reigning world champion increases one's self confidence. Maybe after this game Petrosian thought that he would have the chance to obtain the chess crown. He finished the event amazingly.

In round 10, Petrosian was Black against Lipnitsky. He risked the Hungarian Defence in the Italian, and he still equalised. The position sharpened up in the middlegame. Petrosian managed to outplay Lipnitsky and won the game at time control. In round 11, he was White against Bronstein. The position was balanced for a long time, then Bronstein sacrificed two pawns close to time control. But he went too far, though Petrosian missed a few winning chances. Bronstein survived to time control when Petrosian found a brilliant move, which can be seen in the It's Your Move chapter. Tigran obtained some advantage; he pressed until move 59, but had to settle for a draw. In round 12, Petrosian was Black against Novotelnov. White played the 6. ♗e2 line against the Najdorf but his setup was harmless. After the opening, Petrosian made a nice breakthrough and won the game convincingly.