

Chess

Blood sport

THE PANEL of judges for volume 22 of *Chess Informant*, which appeared in March, awarded top marks in their 10 best games selection to Vaganian's win over Reshevsky at Skopje, 1976. The game has a fine king chase but as I have already featured it in my column, here is the judges' second choice, also from Skopje and also featuring Vaganian. This time, however, he is on the receiving end of a kinghunt; slightly more refined, but nevertheless fatal, and conducted by the master himself, World Champion Anatoly Karpov.

FRENCH DEFENCE

A. Karpov (USSR) R. Vaganian (USSR)

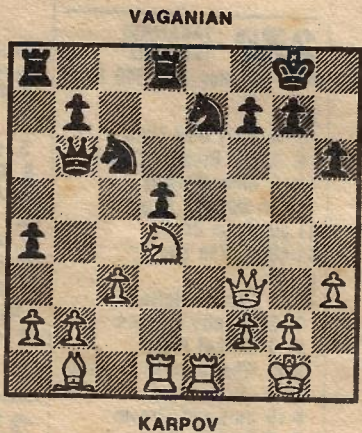
- | | |
|---------|------|
| 1. e4 | e6 |
| 2. d4 | d5 |
| 3. Nd2 | c5 |
| 4. exd5 | exd5 |
| 5. Ngf3 | a6 |
- 3...c5 is Black's most active continuation against the Tarrasch but normal here is 5...Nc6 instead of 5...a6.
- | | |
|----------|------|
| 6. dxc5 | Bxc5 |
| 7. Nb3 | Bb6 |
| 8. Bd3 | Ne7 |
| 9. 0-0 | Nbc6 |
| 10. Re1 | Bg4 |
| 11. c3 | h6 |
| 12. h3 | Bh5 |
| 13. Be3 | 0-0 |
| 14. Bxb6 | Qxb6 |
| 15. Qe2 | |

As is usual in such positions Black strives for an active piece formation at the expense of an isolated queen's pawn. White tries to neutralise this plan by blockading on d4 which Karpov is well on the way to doing.

- | | |
|-----------|------|
| 15. . . . | Rfd8 |
| 16. Rad1 | a5 |
| 17. Bb1! | |

White offers a pawn which Vaganian unwisely decides to accept.

- | | |
|-----------|------|
| 17. . . . | Bxf3 |
| 18. Qxf3 | a4 |
| 19. Nd4 | |



- | | |
|-----------|--------|
| 19. . . . | Qxb2?! |
|-----------|--------|

This game reminds me of a story about an uncle who decided to leave his nephew his inheritance on the sole condition that the nephew would never take a knight's pawn! I fancy he was more likely referring to the poison pawn

variation of the Sicilian than to this game, but perhaps if Vaganian had a rich uncle

- | | |
|----------|------|
| 20. Nxc6 | Nxc6 |
| 21. Qf5 | g6 |
| 22. Qf6 | |

Black has a difficult defensive task ahead. Karpov's immediate threat is to bust open the king position with 23.Bxg6.

- | | |
|-----------|-----|
| 22. . . . | Rd7 |
| 23. Bf5! | Re7 |

On 23...gxf5 24.Re3 f4 White has 25.Qxf4 with too many threats, while 23...Rc7 is too passive and simply 24.Rxd5 is good in reply.

- | | |
|----------|------|
| 24. Rxe7 | Nxe7 |
| 25. Bd3! | Nf5 |

After 25...Re8 26.Re1 Qd2 27.Re3 Black will never escape from the pin alive. The alternative 25...Nc6 loses to 26.Rb1 Qa3 27.Rxb7 Nd8 28.Bxg6 Qf8 29.Rd7!

- | | |
|----------|------|
| 26. Bxf5 | gxf5 |
| 27. Re1 | Qxa2 |
| 28. Qxh6 | a3 |

Vaganian reasons that if he must give up his queen to avoid mate he may be able to promote his "a" pawn.

- | | |
|------------|-----|
| 29. Qg5 ch | Kf8 |
| 30. Qf6 | Kg8 |
| 31. Qxf5 | Qd2 |
| 32. Re7 | Rf8 |

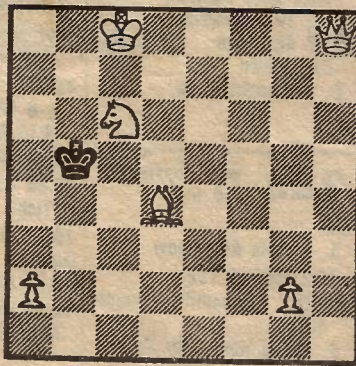
Now the rook has been decoyed from the "a" file Karpov can win the queen safely.

- | | |
|-------------|---------|
| 33. Qg4 ch | Kh7 |
| 34. Re5 | Qh6 |
| 35. Rh5 | Ra8 |
| 36. Qf5 ch | Kg7 |
| 37. Rxh6 | Kxh6 |
| 38. Qf6 ch | Kh7 |
| 39. Qxf7 ch | Kh8 |
| 40. Qxb7 | Resigns |

* * *

Problem

White mates in two moves against any defence. (N. Kosolapov).



SOLUTION: 1. Ah3!
Zugzwang!
1...Ka4 2.Qb3
1...Ka6 2.Qd3
1...Kxc6 2.Qd7
1...Kc4 2.Qb3

MURRAY CHANDLER