

Bashing the USSR

AS EXPECTED the Soviet Union won the European team championship final held in Skara, Sweden. But even here, in a game they have dominated for decades, they did not escape the currently fashionable sport of Russian-bashing.

In his first match of 1980 Soviet World Champion Anatoly Karpov was beaten by English Grandmaster Tony Miles, who used a bizarre, and at this level virtually unprecedented opening system. Miles's pawn move of 1...a6 in response to Karpov's 1.e4 could be likened to one of our opening batsman turning up with a baseball bat in a cricket test.

The USSR were held to a 4-4 draw by England in that match, and did not take the lead in the eight-country competition until round five — curiously because England had just knocked the Yugoslavs out of contention. England's total score was in fact the finest yet for a non-Eastern European country in this competition, and Miles, John Nunn and Raymond Keene all took board prizes. Indeed if the event had been an Olympiad, played over four boards, they would have ended an astonishing three points clear of the Russians.

Results: USSR, 36½ points, 1; Hungary, 29, 2; England, 28½, 3; Yugoslavia, 28, 4; Bulgaria, 27½, 5; Czechoslovakia, 26, 6; Israel, 25, 7;

Sweden, 23½, 8.

"BIRMINGHAM" DEFENCE

A. KARPOV A. J. MILES

1. e4 a6

It is known that Karpov feels less happy in old or irregular openings but this is carrying things to the extreme! However the system does have a considerable similarity to the defence 1...b6, pioneered by a number of the young English masters over the past few years.

2. d4 b5
3. Nf3 Bb7

In fact I have reached this position in one of my own games while in England (after 1.d4 b5 2.e4 a6 3.Nf3 Bb7), against Julian Hodgson. Based on my experience with the 1...b6 line, I then proceeded 4.e5!? e6 5.c4! bxc4 6.Bxc4 with a good game — the point being that if Black wishes to fight for the d5 square he must occupy e7 with his knight, the square normally reserved for his bishop. Instead, typically, Karpov concentrates on unpretentious development but it is soon clear he is walking into a prepared line.

4. Bd3 Nf6
5. Qe2 e6
6. a4 c5!
7. dxc5?!

More consistent would be to accept the pawn sacrifice with 7.e5 c4 8.exf6 cxd3 9.fxg7 Bxg7 10.Qxd3, when perhaps Black should continue slowly

with 10...0-0, relying on the bishop pair as compensation.

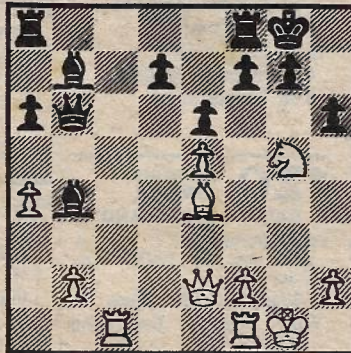
7. . . . Bxc5
8. Nbd2 b4
9. e5 Nd5
10. Ne4 Be7
11. 0-0 Nc6
12. Bd2 Qc7!

Miles refuses to castle into the attack, instead forcing Karpov to protect his e-pawn. Already Black stands better.

13. c4 bxc3
14. Nxc3 Nxc3
15. Bxc3 Nb4
16. Bxb4

Relinquishing the two bishops, but the Black knight was headed for its optimum square on d5.

16. . . . Bxb4
17. Rac1 Qb6
18. Be4 0-0
19. Ng5 h6



20. Bh7 ch?!

Tricky, but White should prefer 20. Bxb7 swapping one of the bishops.

20. . . . Kh8
21. Bb1 Be7

Of course not 21 . . . hxg5 ?? 22. Qh5 and mate follows.

22. Ne4 Rac8
23. Qd3?

A bad error, losing material. Miles's unsettling opening seemed to affect not only Karpov's play in this game, but his whole tournament — the World Champion didn't win one of the five games he played.

23. . . . Rxc1
24. Rxc1 Qxb2!
25. Re1?! Qxe5

Now the knight, pinned against the rook, cannot move to threaten Qh7 mate. Miles seizes his first opportunity to exchange Queens.

26. Qxd7 Bb4
27. Re3 Qd5!
28. Qxd5 Bxd5
29. Nc3 Rc8
30. Ne2 g5
31. h4 Kg7
32. hxg5 hxg5
33. Bd3 a5
34. Rg3 Kf8

34 . . . f6 is also good — White cannot play 35.Nf4 ? because of 35 . . . Rcl ch 36.Kh2 Bd6.

35. Rg4 Bd6
36. Kf1 Be5
37. Ke1 Rh8
38. f4 gxf4
39. Nxf4 Bc6
40. Ne2 Rh1 ch
41. Kd2 Rh2
42. g3 Bf3

The power of the bishop pair! Now Black wins another pawn.

43. Rg8 Rg2
44. Ke1 Bxe2
45. Bxe2 Rxc3
46. Ra8 Bc7
47. Resigns.

Karpov sealed his move but resigned without resuming play. An historic game.

MURRAY CHANDLER