

## The drift West

SOMEWHERE in the USSR, a Russian grandmaster sits gazing at his chessboard in desperation. He is trapped. But it is not his king that can't escape. For Boris Gulko, champion of the Soviet Union in 1977, has been reduced to hunger-striking to draw attention to his plight after applying nearly two years ago to emigrate.

According to a written plea distributed during the Malta Olympiad, both Gulko and his wife Anna Akhsharumova — herself women's champion of the USSR in 1976 — are now in dire straits. Since their application they have been sacked from their coaching jobs, deprived of their income and excluded from tournaments. At the time they wrote the plea they had been on hunger strike for seven days, and in the letter they appealed to the participants at Malta to refuse to play the Soviet team.

They must have realised that such a boycott was, and is, unlikely to materialise, but the Gulko situation emphasises the serious problem the Soviet government and chess federation now has regarding migration. In the 50s and 60s, a regular pension of roubles for a top player may have seemed a favourable comparison to the insecure life of a professional outside the Iron Curtain. But over the past decade all that has changed, and several defections are witness to the free and affluent lifestyle the West now has to offer to top chess players.

One of the federation's biggest headaches must be to ensure that the top players do not abscond while competing overseas. Viktor Korchnoi, of course, is the most celebrated "traitor", while two others, Lev Alburt and Ivan Ivanov, defected upon first setting foot in the West.

The list of emigres who end up competing against their former homeland at world-class level is growing as well — Vladimir Liberzon, Anatoly Lein, Roman Dzhindzhishvili and Leonid Shāmkovich to name but a few.

Not all of the top grandmasters are desperate to leave. Soviet world champion and national hero Anatoly Karpov, with a lifestyle resembling that of a member of the Politburo, certainly has no reason. But deposed world champion Boris Spassky evidently did not find the high life in Moscow so rosy, and extracted a rare concession; he now lives in exile with his French wife but still plays for the USSR. Others have not been so fortunate.

Without the head-and-shoulders supremacy they once maintained, the USSR is understandably concerned about the drift of talent. But that is no excuse for the violation of human rights, such as in the Gulko case, or for the treatment of Korchnoi's wife and son, left in Russia.

This week's game, from the Malta Olympiad, features an interesting psychological tussle.

### ALEKHINE'S DEFENCE

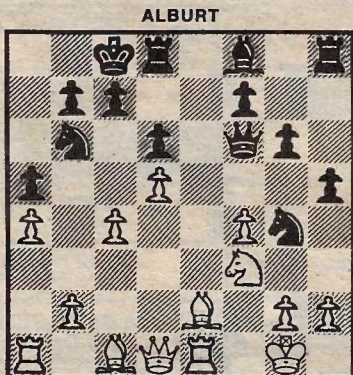
A. KARPOV (USSR)	L. ALBURT (USA)
1. e4	Nf6
2. e5	Nd5
3. d4	d6
4. Nf3	Bg4
5. Be2	Nc6!

Alburt is a well-known devotee of Alekhine's defence. Here (in deference to Karpov's reputation?) he discards the main line of 5...e6 6.0-0 Be7 for a less trodden path.

6. c4	Nb6
7. e×d6	e×d6
8. d5	B×f3
9. B×f3	Ne5
10. Be2	Qh4!

A new wrinkle, with the idea of queenside castling.

11. 0-0	h5
12. Nd2	g6
13. f4	Ng4
14. Nf3	Qf6
15. Re1	0-0-0
16. a4	a5?



KARPOV

Curiously, although Karpov must have been under the greater strain (one shouldn't lose to a defector), it is Alburt who cracks and makes this ghastly response. After dealing with one or two tactical tricks Karpov simply picks off his pawn on a5. Much better was 16...a6, or the aggressive 16...Bh6 with dynamic counter-chances.

17. Qd2	Bg7
---------	-----

Hoping for 18.Q×a5 Qd4 ch! 19.N×d4 B×d4 ch 20.Kh1 (not 20.Kf1 N×h2 mate) Nf2 ch 21.Kg1 Ng4 discovered check, drawing by repetition.

18. h3!	Rde8
19. Bf1!	

A couple of circumspect defensive moves, and Black's game now collapses.

19. ...	Nh6
20. Q×a5	Nf5
21. Rd1	Kb8

On 21...Ne3 22.B×e3 R×e3 23.Qb5 Q×f4 24.a5 White's attack breaks through first.

22. Ra3	Re4
23. Qb5	Nc8
24. Rb3	b6
25. a5	Qe7
26. Qa6	Rhe8
27. c5!	d×c5
28. Bb5	c6
29. B×c6	Bd4 ch
30. N×d4	N×d4
31. a×b6	Nf3 ch

Of course 31...N×b3 allows mate in one by 32.Qa8. Alburt could have resigned some moves back.

32. R×f3	Re1 ch
33. R×e1	Resigns

MURRAY CHANDLER