Taking the Iron Curtain

PLAYING IN THE THIRD Zala Cup tournament in Keszthethy, Hungary, was not quite the experience one comes to expect when playing events in deepest darkest Eastern Europe—generally best described as "educational ordeals". Rather than pack the event full of grandmasters, the Hungarians decided to give their up-and-coming players a chance in a category seven event, with Soviet Grandmaster Yuri Razuvaev starting clear favourite.

There were also two Westerners participating (Adolf Herzog from Austria and myself), which is still comparatively rare in tournaments behind the Iron Curtain. This is due to financial differences — in the West it is usual for tournament organisers to pay a competitor's travelling expenses, whereas in Eastern Europe it is standard procedure for each player's own federation to sponsor him. My sponsorship from the National Bank of New Zealand enabled me to participate.

With his 70 Elo rating points advantage over anyone else, Razuvaev perhaps started somewhat complacently, losing to me in the first round. We then spent the rest of the event in a tussle for first. He overtook me after my 10th-round loss to Mestrovic but could only draw in the last round while I eked out a win over Banaz to tie.

Apart from 21-year-old Attila Groszpeter's third equal, the Hungarians considered their overall performance only mediocre. This perhaps confirms a local complaint that they have yet to find the prospective replacements for Portisch, Riblia Adorjan and Sax. It is interesting to note, however, that with the exception of Szeles all the Hungarian participants were effectively full-time chess professionals.

Final placings in the 1981 III Zala Cup were: 1-2, IM M. Chandler (New Zealand), GM Y. Razuvaev (USSR) 9 points; 3-4, IM A. Groszpeter (Hungary), GM J. Plachetka (Czechoslovakia) 8; 5-8, GM M. Knezevic (Yugoslavia), GM L. Barczay, IM L. Hazai (both Hungary), A. Herzog (Austria) 6½; 9-10,IM U. Bonsch (East Germany), G. Horvath (Hungary) 6; 11-12, IM T. Horvath (Hungary), IM Z. Mestrovic (Yugoslavia) 5½; 13, IM J. Banaz (Czechoslovakia) 5; 14, K. Szeles (Hungary) 3.

The GM norm was 10 points, the IM norm 7½.

One of the tournament's most attractive games features Razuvaev weaving a pretty mating net with a knight and major pieces.

SLAV DEFENCE

Y. Razuvaev USSR

J. Plachetka Czechoslovakia

. d4 d

Perhaps an incautious choice — Razuvaev had just been telling me how weil prepared he had to be against this opening, a favourite of the younger Soviet players

DUV	iei players.	
3.	Nc3	Nf6
4.	Nf3	D×c4
5.	a4	Na6
6.	e4	Bg4
7.	B×c4	e6
8.	0-0	Nb4
9.	Be3	Be7
10.	Be2	0-0
11.	h3	Bh5
12.	Ne5	B×e2
13.	Q×e2	Nd7
14.	Nc4	Qc7
15.	Rac1	Rad8

Here 15...a5 could be tried. In the game White demonstrates his superior central control by penetrating to the d6 square.

10	Rfd1	Qb8
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	g3!	b6
18.	Bf4	Qb7
19.	Bd6	B×d6
20.	N×d6	Qa6
21.	Qe3	c5
22.	d5	e×d5
23.	e×d5	Nf6
	Nf5	h6

White was threatening 25.Qg5 (25...g6 26.Q×f6; 25...Ne& 26.Q×d8).

25. Qf3 Kh7 26. d6 Rfe8 27. Ne7 Kh8 28. g4!

An unexpected attacking twist. Razuvaev intends to invest a pawn to halfopen the h-file, reasoning that with his knight on e7 preventing the Black king's flight via g8, any checks down this file will be murderous.

28. ... c4 29. g5 h×g5 30. Ne4 Qb7

Pinning the knight against the queen — White threatened 31.N×f6, and 30...N×e4 allows 31.Qh5 checkmate.

31. R×c4 a5

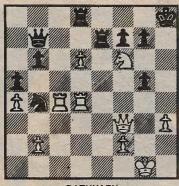
If $31...R\times d6$ White has the beautiful variation $32.N\times d6!$ $Q\times f3$ $33.N\times f7$ ch Kh7 $34.N\times g5$ ch followed by $35.N\times f3$:

32: Rdd4! $R\times e7$

Hoping to cling on after 33. $d\times e^7$ $Q\times e^7$.

33. N×161

PLACHETKA



RAZUVAEV

A devastating queen offer; on 33...O×f3 White mates by 34.Rh4 ch! etc. Seeing that his only chance, 33...Rel ch, fails to 34.Kh2! Rh1 ch 35.Q×h1 Q×h1 ch 36.K×h1 g×f6 37.d7 and Black's case is hopeless because of the threatened 38.Rc8, Plachetka conceded.

MURRAY CHANDLER