

# Minsk meet

AS A CHESS PLAYER, I felt that sitting on Aeroflot flight SU242 to Moscow had something of a Muslim-going-to-Mecca air to it. More than any other country the Soviet Union has the right to be known as the home of modern chess. Their top grandmasters are revered worldwide, and the Soviet tournaments invariably produce a feast of outstanding games, savoured by all in the West who can obtain the notoriously elusive bulletins.

Fortunately "shakhmaty" information exchanges between the USSR and the West are improving, though not, alas, to the extent that I knew who my fellow participants might be in Minsk, the Byelorussian capital, when I accepted my first Soviet tournament invitation. But it was no great surprise when the line-up proved to be extremely formidable, featuring such names as Psakhis (current joint national champion), Yusupov (1982 Zonal winner), Dolmatov, Tseshkovsky, Balashov and local star Viktor Kupreichik.

Even to the non-playing public here in Minsk these brilliant masters are familiar figures from the pages of the local sports paper. Chess players have the status of athletes or football heroes, and are treated accordingly. Certainly the hospitality so far has left little to be desired, though the pocket-money distribution is somewhat amusing. Participants from communist countries receive three roubles per day, capitalists (such as myself and the Spanish player Manuel Rivas) only two! Evidently we'll have to keep to the red caviar instead of that expensive black...

Not that this seems to have affected Rivas unduly, for after four rounds — provided he wins one promising adjourned game — he is a surprise leader on 3½ points, along with Kupreichik and Tseshkovsky. He demolished Lev Psakhis in the following incisive fashion.

## QUEEN'S INDIAN DEFENCE

<b>M. RIVAS</b>	<b>L. PSAKHIS</b>
1. d4	Nf6
2. Nf3	e6
3. c4	c5

Offering to transpose into the double-edged Benoni defence, should White now play 4.d5. Probably quite wisely, Rivas declines and a position soon arises akin to certain variations of the Queen's Indian.

4. e3	b6
5. Nc3	cxd4
6. exd4	Bb7
7. a3	

Preparing the cramping 8.d5, which, if played immediately, would be met by 7...Bb4.

7. ...	d5
8. cxd5	Nxd5
9. Bb5 ch	Bc6

On 9...Nc6 10.Ne5 is strong, and instead 9...Nd7? 10.Nxd5. exd5 (10...Bxd5 11.Ne5 wins a piece) 11.Ne5 Bc8 12.Qf3 is crushing.

10. Bd3	Nd7
11. 0-0	Be7

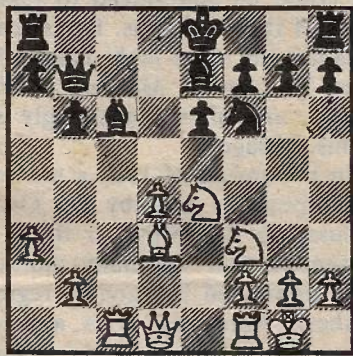
12. Ne4 Qc7?

Grandmasters not infrequently flout the general opening principles drummed into beginners, but this is one instance where the rule about castling early should have been adhered to!

13. Bg5 N(5)f6?  
14. Rc1 Qb7

No time for 14...0-0 now — 15.Bb5 was threatened.

15. Bxf6 Nxf6



16. Rxc6!

This powerful rook-for-bishop sacrifice strands Black's king in the centre at the mercy of White's minor pieces.

16. ... Qxc6  
17. Ne5 Qc8  
18. Bb5 ch Kf8  
19. Ng5 a6  
20. Ba4 Rg8

Anticipating a knight capturing on f7, but Rivas finds an even stronger continuation.

21. Qf3! g6  
22. Bd7! Qb8

Not of course 22...Nxd7 23.Qxf7 mate.

23. Bxe6 Rg7

The Black position is caving in — 23...fxe6 24.Nxe6 ch Ke8 25.Qc6 ch Nd7 26.Qxd7 checkmate or 23...Resigns are valid alternatives.

24. Bxf7

With a pretty smothered mate threat (25.Ne6!). Black is compelled to return the exchange — leaving him hopelessly placed two pawns behind.

24. ... Rxf7  
25. Ngxf7 Kg7  
26. Ng5 Qc8  
27. Re1 h6  
28. Ne6 ch Kh7

Not 28...Qxe6 29.Qxa8.

29. Nf4 Resigns

## MURRAY CHANDLER

a8	b8	c8	d8	e8	f8	g8	h8
a7	b7	c7	d7	e7	f7	g7	h7
a6	b6	c6	d6	e6	f6	g6	h6
a5	b5	c5	d5	e5	f5	g5	h5
a4	b4	c4	d4	e4	f4	g4	h4
a3	b3	c3	d3	e3	f3	g3	h3
a2	b2	c2	d2	e2	f2	g2	h2
a1	b1	c1	d1	e1	f1	g1	h1

## ALGEBRAIC NOTATION

The algebraic notation in this chess column is that used almost exclusively in Europe and in many countries elsewhere. Each square has one designation only. The vertical files are labelled a to h from White's left. In horizontal rank the squares are labelled 1 to 8 from White's end. Normal symbols are used, except that pawns as such are not mentioned; just the arrival square is given for a non-capturing pawn move.