

The heartland

I FOUND Minsk, my first Soviet tournament, simply fascinating. The USSR really is chess country. Each day we were able to buy a different tournament bulletin or chess magazine at the ordinary newspaper kiosk outside our hotel. The newspaper *Sovietsky Sport* carried daily news from a concurrent international going on in Moscow (won by Vaganian and Tal). And at 3.30 each afternoon, while we waited in the players' bus to go to the tournament hall, the results of Bugojno would come over the radio. Not surprisingly this annual Yugoslav super-class event was won by a Soviet grandmaster, Garri Kasparov (see last week's column).

The final scores at Minsk were: Tseshkovsky (USSR) 10½ points; Dolmatov (USSR) 10; Yudashin (USSR) 9½; Chandler (New Zealand/England), Kupreichik and Psakhis (both USSR) 8½; Kuzmin (USSR) 8; Didishko and Yusupov (both USSR) 7½; Balashov (USSR), Grozpeter (Hungary) and Inkirov (Bulgaria) all 7; A. Rodriguez (Cuba) 6½; Rivas (Spain) 5; Marjanovic (Yugoslavia) and Mochalov (USSR) 4½. Vitaly Tseshkovsky, a 37-year-old grandmaster from Krasnoyarsk, was a deserved winner. After six rounds he had streaked ahead with 5½ points, and two subsequent losses in a row still left him in first equal position.

The games themselves were challenging. I lost in the first round to Tseshkovsky, but was subsequently able to adapt quite well to the cut-and-thrust style characteristic of the young Russians. After round 11 I even had the euphoric sensation of being sole leader. Unfortunately I had a strong field left to play and could not sustain the pace. Meanwhile Tseshkovsky won the following critical last-round encounter in devastating style.

SICILIAN DEFENCE

V. KUPREICHIK V. TSESHKOVSKY

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| 1. e4 | c5 |
| 2. Nf3 | Nc6 |
| 3. d4 | cxd4 |
| 4. Nxd4 | e6 |
| 5. Nc3 | d6 |
| 6. Be3 | Nf6 |
| 7. f4 | e5 |

Both players have co-operated to



Minsk winner Vitaly Tseshkovsky.

reach this rather unusual byway of the Sicilian defence. Here 8.Nxc6 bxc6 9.fxe5 Ng4 is perfectly satisfactory for Black.

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| 8. Nf3 | Ng4 |
| 9. Qd2 | Nxe3 |
| 10. Qxe3 | exf4 |
| 11. Qxf4 | Be7 |
| 12. 0-0-0 | 0-0 |

White has the d5 square for his knight and pressure on Black's backward d6 pawn; Black has potential play down the c-file (typical of the Sicilian defence) and may one day be able to post his knight on e5.

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| 13. Nd5 | Be6! |
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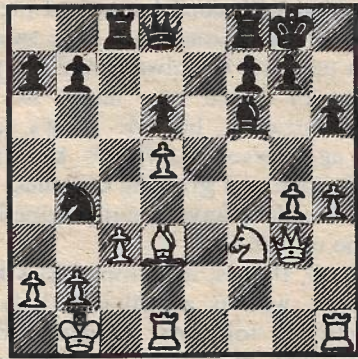
Ignoring White's threat to win the d-pawn, for after 14.Nxe7 ch Qxe7 15.Qxd6 Qf6 16.e5 Qf4 ch 17.Qd2 Qa4! 18.a3 Rac8 Black has good compensation for his pawn, with ideas of Na5 or b5 followed by b4.

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| 14. Kb1 | Rc8 |
| 15. Bd3 | h6 |
| 16. g4 | Bg5 |
| 17. Qg3? | |

At first sight this looks strong — Kupreichik's plan is to follow up with h4 and g5, prising open the Black king-side. With hindsight, however, the bishop should have been eliminated by 17.Nxg5.

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| 17. ... | Bxd5 |
| 18. exd5 | Nb4 |
| 19. h4 | Bf6! |
| 20. c3 | |

Perhaps Kupreichik had earlier missed 20.g5 Bxb2! 21.Kxb2 Qb6! with a decisive attack. For example 22.Ka1 (to escape the threatened discovered check) 22...Rxc2! 23.Bxc2 Nxc2 mate or 22.Kc1 Nxa2 ch 23.Kd2 Rfe8 planning checks and mates on e3, b4 and a5.



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| 20. ... | Bxc3!! |
| 21. Rh2 | |

An admission of defeat, but can Kupreichik take the bishop and survive? 21.bxc3 Rxc3 22.Nd4 gives defensive chances, but better for Black is 21...Nxa2! totally denuding the opposition queenside of pawns. Then comes 22.Kxa2 Qa5 ch 23.Kb1 Rxc3 24.Rh2 Ra3! (24...Rfc8 is also strong) and the naked White king perishes.

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| 21. ... | Nxd3 |
| 22. Rxd3 | Qb6 |
| 23. a3 | Qb5 |
| 24. Re3 | Rfe8 |
| 25. Rxe8 ch | Rxe8 |
| 26. Rc2 | Bxb2! |

Typically ruthless Soviet technique.

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| 27. Rxb2 | Qd3 ch |
| 28. Ka2 | Qxd5 ch |
| 29. Ka1 | Re3 |
| 30. Resigns | |

The only move to save the knight is 30.Rf2, when the quickest mate runs 30...Qd1 ch 31.Ka2 Qb3 ch 32.Ka1 Qxa3 ch 33.Kb1 Rb3 ch 34.Kc2 Qa2 ch and 35...Rb1.

MURRAY CHANDLER