

MURRAY CHANDLER

Monsieur Spassky

ONE FAMOUS NAME missing from the recent USSR v The Rest of the World challenge match, staged in London's docklands, was that of the Soviet former world champion Boris Spassky. He was strong enough to have represented either team, but the dilemma was: which side should he play for? For some years now Spassky has lived in France, but still represented his native country in official competition. Lately, however, this quite unique arrangement has become strained, causing Spassky to announce at the end of May that henceforth he will play under a French flag. Technically the 47-year-old grandmaster (whom Soviet defector Viktor Korchnoi calls "a one-legged dissident") could have played for the Rest of the World in London, but it was considered that the timing might be rather tactless. No such sentiments for Korchnoi, of course, who gleefully scored 2½/4 points on board three, though the Soviet Union still took the match 21-19.

The trickle of grandmaster talent coming out of the USSR, official or otherwise, has evidently had little effect on the Soviet Union's status in world chess. As the London match result implies, this single nation is at least as strong, over 10 boards, as the combined might of the remainder of this planet. On the latest half-yearly international rating list Garri Kasparov is top at 2715, Anatoly Karpov is 2705, and the next player down is Holland's Jan Timman at 2650. The Soviet Union will keep producing these superstars so long as the state-supported infrastructure of talent-spotting, training schemes and stipends for masters is maintained. In addition, strength breeds strength; an excellent example being the Moscow junior training sessions run by the former world champion Mikhail Botvinnik, now 72.

But the very concentration of many great talents within one country can cause problems, especially considering that unrepentant single-mindedness is almost obligatory for world champions. Botvinnik, in a quite remarkable interview with the New York Russian émigré magazine, *Seven Days* last year, rubbished almost all Soviet grandmasters except Kasparov. Come to that, he rubbished just about all modern grandmasters. Botvinnik on Karpov's playing style: "... about as fertile as a woman who has been sterilised." Botvinnik on Portisch and Polugayevsky: "They have no talent for real research." On Balashov: "... dull-witted... as defenceless as a kitten." According to Mikhail Moiseevich Botvinnik, "The young grandmasters of today aim their investigations only at a particular queen's move in order to rehabilitate a variation that was previously out of favour, after which another smart alec brings in a new move which discredits this queen's move. You will understand that this is not real research."

Botvinnik has some points to make, but his complete dismissal of the modern grandmaster is astonishing. Dutch GM Gennadi Sosonko, a Soviet émigré, comments, "It is typical of Botvinnik, that he wants to destroy chess, after giving up his own career as an active chess player. That is why he is so enthusiastic about chess computers; he wants to make the machine which will be able to beat man. He should be the last human chessplayer." On that note I introduce this week's brilliancy prize game from the

London Phillips and Drew Kings, starring the apparently talentless Lev Polugayevsky in a brilliant sacrificial attack.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED

L. POLUGAYEVSKY (USSR)	E. TORRE (Philippines)
1. d4	d5
2. c4	c6
3. Nf3	Nf6
4. Nc3	dxc4
5. a4	Bf5
6. e3	

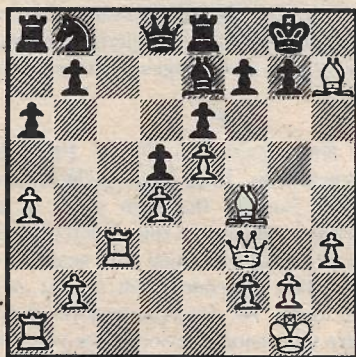
The sharp 6.Ne5 is a major alternative.

6. ...	e6
7. Bxc4	Bb4
8. 0-0	0-0
9. Qe2	Nbd7
10. e4	Bg6
11. Bd3	Bh5
12. Bf4	Re8
13. e5	Nd5
14. Nxd5	cxd5
15. h3	Be7?!

Perhaps 15...a6. Torre's bishop retreat lets White threaten to double rooks on the c-file (move 17) and there is a small hitch in the Filipino's deep plan re-routing his knight to c6.

16. Rfc1	a6
17. Rc3	Bxf3
18. Qxf3	Nb8
19. Bxh7 ch!	

TORRE



POLUGAYEVSKY

A thematic sacrifice, which Torre had probably calculated was only a draw.

19. ...	Kxh7
20. Qh5 ch	Kg8
21. Rg3!	g6

If 21...Bf8 then 22.Bg5 Qx6 (22...Be7 23.Bh6 Bf8 24.Rxg7 ch Bxg7 25.Qg4 wins) 23.Bf6 Nc6 24.Qh6! threatening Rxg7 ch mates.

22. Rxg6 ch	f×g6
23. Qxg6 ch	Kh8
24. Qh6 ch	Kg8
25. Qxe6 ch	Kh8
26. Qh6 ch	Kg8
27. Qg6 ch	Kh8
28. Qh5 ch	Kg8

It is obvious White has a draw if he wants it. But after an enormously long think Polugayevsky produced the brilliancy prize move.

29. Bh6!	Bf8
30. Qg6 ch	Kh8
31. Bxf8	Rxf8
32. Qh6 ch	Kg8
33. Ra3!	Resigns

A rook and knight ahead, black is helpless, eg 33...Kf7 34.Rf3 ch Ke7 (34...Kg8 35.Rg3 ch Kf7 36.Rg7 ch) 35.Qg7 ch is crushing. ■