

MURRAY CHANDLER

# Viva España

**W**OULD he come? This was the big question being asked about World Champion Anatoly Karpov shortly before the Linares tournament in Spain. The Soviet titleholder had accepted the invitation to play many months previously, when there had been no indication that his draining world championship match with Garri Kasparov would drag on so long. Then had come the unprecedented decision of Fide (World Chess Federation) president Florencio Campomanes to call off the match "without result" — a decision many commentators saw as pro-Karpov. In spite of a 5-3 lead in the contest, the frail-looking champion had appeared to be nearing a breakdown — though he later vehemently denied he had tried prematurely to halt the match.

If playing in Linares soon after the match's abrupt end was one way Karpov would redeem his "blasted sports and public reputation" (as he phrased it), the 34-year-old Moscow grandmaster did not take it. His withdrawal came only one day before Linares was due to begin, serving only to reinforce the impression that he was still exhausted.

Without Karpov's high world rating, Linares narrowly failed to become on paper one of the great events. Nevertheless it remained, of course, an enormously interesting super-tournament. Final scores were: Ljubojevic (Yugoslavia) and Hubner (West Germany) 7 points; Portisch (Hungary) and Korchnoi (Switzerland) 6½; Spassky (France) 6; Timman (Holland), Miles (England) and Polugayevsky (USSR) 5½; Rivas (Spain) 5; Vaganian (USSR) and Christiansen (USA) 4; Adorjan (Hungary) 3½. Robert Hubner's first equal is particularly significant; although very highly ranked, the talented West German often has varied results in such strong competitions. This victory makes it all the more regrettable that he and English GM John Nunn have dropped out of the Mexico Interzonal World Championship qualifying tournament after Fide refused their requests for a transfer.

One novel feature of Linares was the distribution of point money, whereby the organisers paid the players more for a loss than a draw. The intention was to encourage risk-taking and exciting games but this bait was evidently ignored by Boris Spassky and Lev Polugayevsky. After the fifth round each received a letter from tournament officials asking them to try harder! Their previous three games had ended in draws with an average of only 16 moves each. Officials went on to praise Adorjan, busy collecting a lot of cash at the bottom of the tournament. As fate would have it, the very next round Spassky and Polugayevsky crushed Vaganian and Hubner respectively.

Here is an incisive Hubner win over the great Viktor Korchnoi who, rather unwisely as it turns out, decides to

experiment in a Sicilian Defence.

**R HUBNER**                      **V KORCHNOI**

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|---------|------|
| 1. e4   | c5   |
| 2. Nf3  | d6   |
| 3. d4   | cxd4 |
| 4. Nxd4 | Nf6  |
| 5. Nc3  | Nc6  |
| 6. Bc4  | Qb6  |
| 7. Nb3  | e6   |
| 8. Be3  | Qc7  |
| 9. Bd3  | Bd7? |

*The trouble with this move is that it takes away the retreat square d7 from Black's knight, which would later be needed should White advance his kingside pawns with a g4-g5. Best is 9...Be7 and castling.*

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|-----------|---------|
| 10. f4    | Rd8     |
| 11. Qf3   | a6      |
| 12. 0-0-0 | Nb4     |
| 13. g4    | Nxd3 ch |
| 14. Rxd3  | Bc6     |
| 15. Bd4   | Rc8     |
| 16. Bxf6  | gxf6    |
| 17. f5    |         |

*Thematic and strong. 17...e5 would be positional suicide for Black, and 17...Bh6 ch 18.Kb1 0-0 19.h4 would give White an overwhelming attack.*

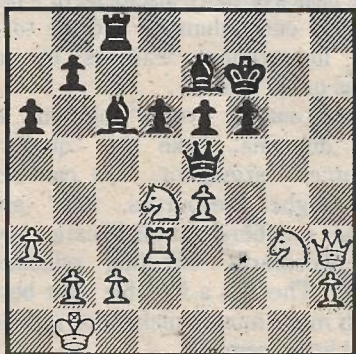
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|----------|------|
| 17. ...  | Be7  |
| 18. fxe6 | fxe6 |
| 19. Nd4  | Bd7  |
| 20. Kb1  | Qa5  |
| 21. Nce2 |      |

*Heading for the f4 square, and strong pressure on the Black central pawns.*

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| 21. ...  | h5   |
| 22. gxh5 | Qxh5 |
| 23. Qg2  | Kf7  |
| 24. Ng3  | Qg4  |
| 25. a3   | Rh3  |
| 26. Rf1  | Bc6  |
| 27. Rf4  |      |

*A novel rook exchange to penetrate with the Queen.*

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| 27. ...  | Qxf4 |
| 28. Qxh3 | Qe5  |



29. Nf3

*White is winning now, but did he miss an even stronger move? After 29.Ng5! White threatens Qh7ch, so it seems Black must accept the knight sacrifice with 29...exf5. But then follows 30.Qh5 ch Kf8 (or 30...Kg8 31.Rg3 ch) 31.Qh8 ch Kf7 32.Qxc8 Bxe4 33.Rg3! and the looming checkmate with 34.Qg8 decides immediately.*

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|-------------|---------|
| 29. ...     | Qa5     |
| 30. Qh7 ch  | Ke8     |
| 31. Nh5     | Ba4     |
| 32. Rd2     | Qb5     |
| 33. Nd4     | Qg5     |
| 34. Rd1     | e5      |
| 35. Ng7 ch  | Kd7     |
| 36. Qh3 ch  | Kc7     |
| 37. Nge6 ch | Resigns |