

Ponomariov, R. (ed) et al. 2022. **From Ukraine with Love for Chess**. Alkmaar: New In Chess.

With the rather dishonourable exception of GM Sergey Karjakin, the chess world has been fairly united in its condemnation of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The political and humanitarian problems created by the invasion are, of course, ones which need to be dealt with by European governments. Yet the chess world can play a small role and this book is part of that response.

Dutch publisher New In Chess are to be congratulated for bringing out this book with such speed. Further, they are donating all proceeds from its sale to Ukrainian charities undertaking humanitarian work.

Perhaps even more impressive is the quality of the book as a chess book. To have put together quality games and annotations at short notice is no mean feat and all involved deserve credit.

So, if you are interested in making a small contribution to help the people of Ukraine by buying this book, what will you get? This column is, after all, a book review column.

It would be fair, I think, to say that the book is a putting together of shorter pieces to create a book rather than a project which started out to be a book from the off. Yet, I think this does not detract from the quality of the writing. After all, what is a 'best games' book if not, in essence, a collection of shorter pieces?

We begin with games by the 'Pioneers' more commonly thought of as Soviet players. Here you find games by Leonard Stein and Alexander Beliavsky among others. Then we get a chapter about the training matches between Oleg Romashin and Tal in 1976. I was unaware of these matches and this chapter is both well written and informative.

Then we move on to a chapter featuring games by current Ukrainian players. Of these, former world champion Ruslan Ponomariov, and ever popular player Vasyl Ivanchuk are perhaps the most well known. The games are excellent and the annotations very good.

Ukrainian success in team tournaments is the next theme with chapters on Ukraine's success in the men's Olympiads in 2004 and 2010 and the women's Olympiad in 2006. The book ends with a series of games by other Ukrainian players. You will have heard of the Muzychuk sisters, Anna and Mariya no doubt, but some of the others in this chapter were certainly new to me.

There are, inevitably with a book produced at such speed, some very minor gripes, and in order to keep costs down, New In Chess have used paper of rather lower quality than usually found in their books. However, I bought this book simply to make a small contribution to humanitarian assistance for Ukraine. What I got is a book that I have spent a long time with reading the chapter and playing through some lovely games. It is an absolute joy and a little joy can shed some light in dark times for Ukraine.

Adam Spencer