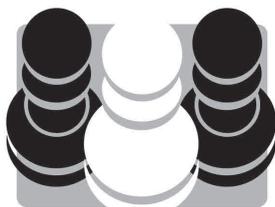


Advanced Chess Tactics

By

Lev Psakhis



Quality Chess
www.qualitychess.co.uk

Contents

Publisher's Foreword to the Second Edition	4
Key to symbols used	4
Preface	5
1 Attacking in the Benoni	7
2 Attacking with Hanging Pawns	47
3 IQP Positions: Attacking the King with Pieces	69
4 IQP Positions: Attacking with the h-pawn	105
5 IQP Positions: Versus the c-pawn	131
6 Attack in the Sicilian Labyrinths	153
7 Attack in the Catacombs of the Caro-Kann	215
8 Attacking in Rare and Non-Standard Openings	279
9 Attacking in the French Defence	321
10 56 Exercises	369
Solutions	380
Game Index	410
Player Index	412

Publisher's Foreword to the Second Edition

When the time came to reprint *Advanced Chess Tactics* we faced a decision – reprint exactly the same book again or add something new? The former is the easier option but instead we asked Lev Psakhis to write a new chapter: Attacking in the French Defence. It was a natural topic, as the French Defence is a lifelong favourite of Lev and its characteristic blocked centre can inspire spectacular attacking play, as the new chapter shows.

The first edition of this book was a favourite of many. To quote Dennis Monokroussos: “Psakhis writes with great enthusiasm, as someone who clearly loves the game and enjoys playing, analyzing and the people with whom he shares the profession. I found his enthusiasm infectious.” The book you hold in your hands is an updated and expanded version. We hope you enjoy reading it as much as we did.

John Shaw
Managing Director, Quality Chess
Glasgow, September 2019

Preface

Throughout most of my life I have been a chess professional. Spending six to eight months a year at tournaments, I fully satisfied my chess hunger. Later, somewhat to my surprise, I realized that I was playing the game less and less, and teaching it more and more. Then in 2006, I finally took my leave of the game as a player. I wiped away the odd few manly tears, “hung my skates on the wall” and started leading the far-from-easy life of a chess coach. This gave me the chance to look at the game from the other side of the fence.

I endeavoured to work only with talented players, and was quite astonished to find how even the very strong ones were lacking in classical chess education. There is a kind of blind faith in openings. A typical view is, “I’m going to learn a new line in the Najdorf, or maybe two, maybe five, and I’ll beat everybody.” This goes with an obvious neglect of other equally important aspects of the game. True, for grandmasters rated over 2650, good opening knowledge is essential – but then *they* aren’t reading these lines, are they?

What do you need for good results in tournaments? A sensible knowledge of the openings, making use of a fair dose of common sense; an understanding of basic strategic laws (how to handle positions with various pawn structures, how to play against weaknesses, and so forth – the study of games by Petrosian, Karpov and many others is a great help here!); improvement of your tactical skill, with good precise calculation of variations two to four moves long; a flair for the attack (in *this* department, games by Kasparov, Tal, Alekhine and Judit Polgar will not only give you great pleasure but afford invaluable help); and of course, good play in the endgame. Material on the level of Mark Dvoretsky’s *Endgame Manual* is in my view fully adequate for the vast majority of grandmasters, while players in a somewhat lower category can be quite content with less.

The object of analysis in this book is perhaps the most intriguing aspect of chess – that sovereign entity, *the attack!* We may take any amount of pleasure in playing against a weak pawn or, say, against a poorly placed knight in the enemy camp; but it’s only when we conduct an attack on the opponent’s king that the blood’s adrenalin content soars and our heart tries to leap out of our chest. Such a splendid feeling! Not that I have any wish whatever to isolate the business of attack as some kind of separate component of chess. I even devised this motto: Attack is the continuation of strategy by other means. I only hope General Carl von Clausewitz won’t take me to court for plagiarism!

A few words about the structure of the book: attack in chess has many facets, and several systems can be devised for classifying the examples. For instance a scheme would be possible with such headings as attacking with the two bishops, giving mate with your last remaining pawn, sacrificing a rook, and so forth. I decided to try a somewhat different scheme: attacking in various specific openings, and attacking in positions with certain typical pawn structures. How far I have succeeded in this, you must judge. As they say, you cannot get a quart into a pint pot. Naturally I am not hoping to teach you how to checkmate all your opponents in (let us say) the Sicilian Defence, within the confines of a single book. That would of course be impossible! I have simply tried to convey my views on positions that contain attacking chances – and to share my experience

of playing them, using typical or sometimes *not* so typical devices. Many splendid openings had to be left out, and this is not down to my opinion of them but merely to the shortage of space. Now, about the games: selecting them was not a simple task, considering that so many works on tactics and aggression were on the chess book market and that I was categorically opposed to repeating other people's analyses. It is for this latter reason, and not at all out of unbridled narcissism, that I have included many games of my own. But that is not all. For several years now, inspired by Garry Kasparov's immensely interesting work *My Great Predecessors*, I have been diligently studying the games of the great former generation that included Mikhail Tal, Boris Spassky, Leonid Stein, Viktor Korchnoi, Tigran Petrosian and many another illustrious names. It frankly amazed me to ascertain how many games from that era, which is not so very distant, had remained practically uninvestigated. It seemed to me quite a senseless idea to analyse the brilliant victories of Kasparov, Anand or Topalov for the thousandth time; in a country like India, for instance, where I have spent a fair amount of time coaching with delight and gratitude, these games are known in every nursery school! It therefore seemed entirely reasonable to focus primarily on games played by the giants of that earlier generation. Many of the games, naturally, are wins by Mikhail Tal, and this of course is not surprising. Few players have conducted as many brilliant attacks as the Hussar from Riga. Some games will strike you as familiar – this was impossible to avoid – but all of them are supplied with some *fundamentally* new analysis, allowing you to look at them from an entirely new angle.

Who is this book intended for? I think (hope) that chess players ranging from 2000 to 2600 will find something useful and interesting in it. While writing it, I visualized a typical reader as a young International Master who doesn't want to rest content with what he has already achieved. But of course, players in a considerably weaker class can also benefit from the book. There is just one proviso. I have tried to write in a lively, individual manner, but the study of the material demands quite serious work. And to this end, it is highly desirable to use that antiquated device, a *chessboard*. Don't forget that improvement (and not just in chess) can result only from independent work. The best coach in the world can only help you with useful advice and a selection of important material – it is still up to you to assimilate it!

A few practical hints:

(1) Don't go out of your way to calculate long variations. A capacity for *precise* calculation to a depth of 2-4 moves is usually quite enough.

(2) An attack may be prepared over quite a long stretch of time, but when carrying it out, do so at top speed without letting your opponent get his bearings.

(3) Don't relax too soon, even if it seems to you that the goal is already attained – your opponent may take a completely different view.

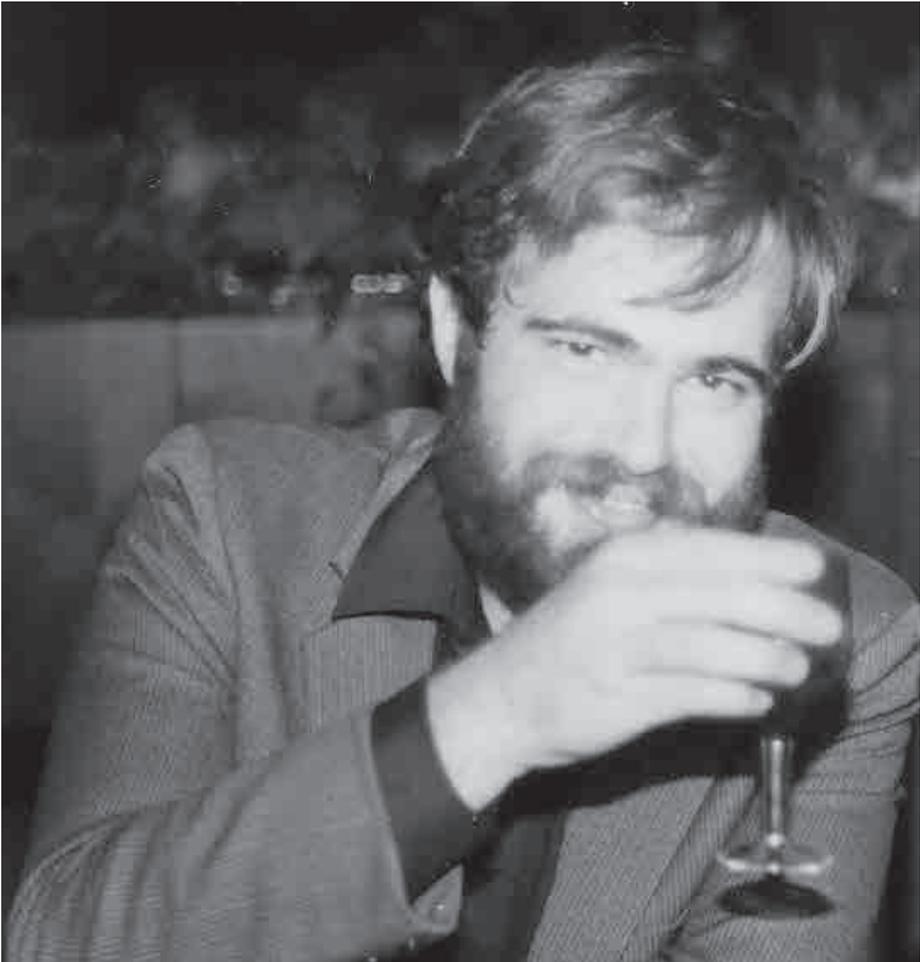
(4) Most importantly: constant time-scrambles are the worst sign of a poor chess education!

In conclusion I would like to say that writing this book was hard work for me, but very interesting too. I hope you will enjoy it.

Lev Psakhis
Rishon le Zion, Israel
October 2011

Chapter 9

Attacking in the French Defence



Moscow 1983

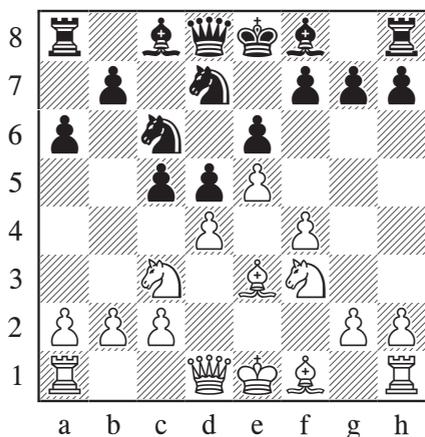
Evgeny Alekseev – Marcin Sieciechowicz

Katowice (rapid) 2017

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5

Perhaps the most popular variation of the French Defence these days. Bobby Fischer's favourite move 4.♙g5 is now employed much more rarely in the tournaments of high-ranking players. With 4.e5 White is striving to erect and fortify a powerful pawn centre and to commence aggressive operations under its cover.

4...♘fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♙e3 a6



A logical and good choice. Black makes advance preparation for working up counterplay on the queenside. The b-pawn is ready for a rapid forward march, which will not only drive away the enemy knight but also create extra possibilities for the light-squared bishop, enabling it to settle on a6 in comfort and neutralize its white counterpart. As the game goes, however, the play takes on a wholly different character.

8.♘e2

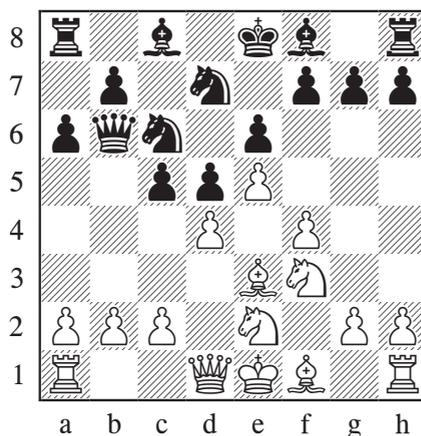
A rare move which is nonetheless appearing more and more regularly in top-level tournaments. The proud knight doesn't

intend to wait until forced to move away; it starts relocating to the kingside of its own accord. Most players play 8.♙d2!? more or less automatically, but Evgeny Alekseev has his own views on the theory of this variation.

8...♙b6!?

Flexibility in the implementation of a plan is absolutely necessary to achieve success in present-day chess.

If Black persists with his original idea of 8...b5 9.c3 b4, then after 10.cxb4! cxd4 11.♘exd4 ♙xb4† 12.♙f2 ♘xd4 13.♙xd4 White undoubtedly holds a slight initiative; he is more active on both flanks, while his king on f2 feels perfectly safe.



9.♙b1

The most solid.

Another move to have been seen, quite frequently in fact, is 9.♙c1!?. It then seems that White can be fully satisfied with the results of the opening after 9...g5!? 10.fxg5 cxd4 11.♘exd4 ♘cxe5 12.♘xe5 ♘xe5 13.c3 ♘g4 14.♙e2 ♘xe3 15.♙xe3 ♙g7± as in Vachier-Lagrave – Blohberger, Gibraltar 2018; Black's bishop pair can't entirely compensate for the weakness of his f7-pawn and the insecure position of his monarch.

Also after 9...f6 10.c3 ♕e7, White would be guaranteed a pleasant game by 11.g3.

9...♖a5†

Sieciechowicz is rightly afraid of coming under persistent pressure after 9...cxd4 10.♗xd4! ♗xd4 11.♙xd4±, when the pawn on a2 is poisoned: 11...♖a5† 12.c3 ♖xa2? 13.b4! And the queen can only be saved at the cost of sacrifices. He does decide to eliminate this same pawn, but without a preliminary exchange on d4. A bold but wholly plausible decision!

10.♙d2 ♖xa2!?

A new and interesting move. Black hopes his queen will manage to escape a premature demise in the enemy's rear and will return home bearing trophies.

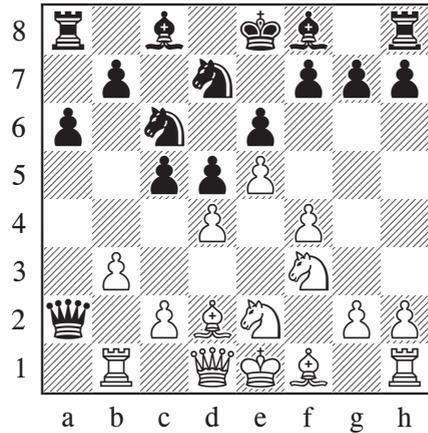
Earlier, 10...♖c7 11.c3 b5 had been seen. Then in my view 12.g3! again deserves attention, with chances of a small plus thanks to that almost-hallowed pawn centre.

Alexei Shirov, true to his usual style, sacrificed a pawn instead with 12.f5!?. After 12...exf5 13.♗f4 ♗b6 14.♙d3 c4 15.♙c2 he did acquire some compensation for it, but he lost in the end in Shirov – Andreikin, Plovdiv 2010.

11.b3

Beginning the queen hunt.

The calm continuation 11.dxc5! ♗xc5 12.♗c3 ♖a5 13.♗xd5 ♖d8 would leave White with a pleasant game but no great chance of a serious advantage. The move he plays is much more ambitious.



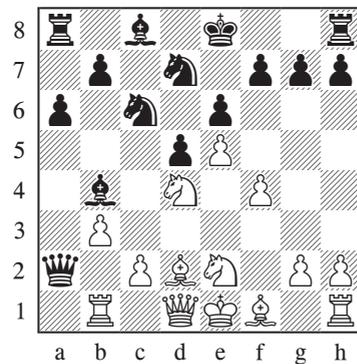
11...♗b4?

White's plan has worked splendidly! Clearly the Polish player has not fully grasped the level of danger menacing his lady.

To help her, a proper rescue expedition was already required:

11...cxd4! 12.♗fxd4

Or 12.♗exd4 ♖a3 13.♗xc6 bxc6 14.b4 a5∞. 12...♙b4



13.c3

In the event of 13.♙b4 ♗xb4 14.♖a1 ♖b2 15.g3 it is essential for Black to exert pressure against d4; he can do this by 15...♗c6 with the possible continuation 16.♗xc6 bxc6 17.♙g2 a5 18.0-0 ♗c5, or he can even think about the rather more refined 15...♗b8!? 6.♙g2 ♗8c6 – in either case I can see no immediate problems for the black queen.

13...♙e7 14.b4!?

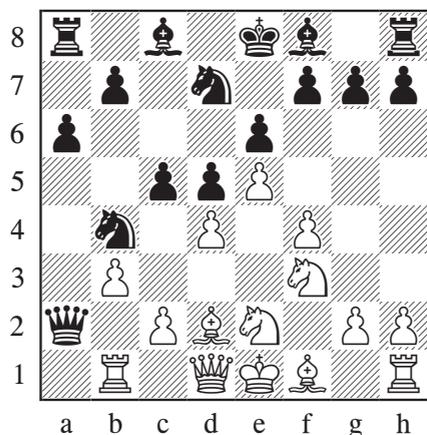
Or 14.♞a1 ♖c5! 15.♜g3 ♜b2 and White can always repeat moves; his prospects of obtaining something more are uncertain.

14...♜dx5!?

A move like this can hardly even be called a sacrifice – Black obtains a fully adequate material equivalent for the piece.

15.fxe5 ♜xe5 16.♜g3 ♜c4 17.♙xc4 ♜xc4

With fairly unclear play. In the middlegame a piece often proves stronger than three pawns, but at any rate a complex and interesting game would lie ahead.



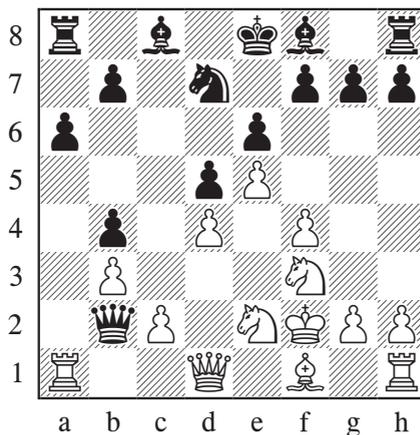
12.♙xb4!

In the event of 12.♞c1 the queen can make a dignified return to its own camp with 12...♜a5 or go in for a little hooliganism with 12...♜xb3!?. I'm not wholly sure which of these moves is objectively stronger, given that the latter simply compels White to burn his boats: 13.f5! exf5 14.♜f4 And the queen's safety is still not guaranteed.

12...cxb4 13.♞a1 ♜b2 14.♙f2!

An excellent move, which Black must have left out of his calculations. The white knight aims to use the vacated e1-square to come and attack the queen, whose fate now arouses increasingly justified anxiety.

Incidentally there was also quite a good alternative at White's disposal: 14.♙d2! And after the practically forced sequence 14...♜b6 15.♜e1 ♜c4† 16.bxc4 dxc4 17.♙e3± Black is not to be envied; his queen is in danger as before, while his material situation also leaves something to be desired.



14...f6

Marcin's nerves of steel can only be admired!

I myself probably couldn't have resisted an impatient move like 14...♜c5!?. Then after 15.dxc5 ♙xc5† 16.♙g3, or 16.♜ed4!?, White indubitably has a big (even decisive) advantage and will go on to win. Playing in a rapid chess tournament, Black may simply not have had the time to experience genuine fear. And in such grave situations, fear very rarely plays a salutary role.

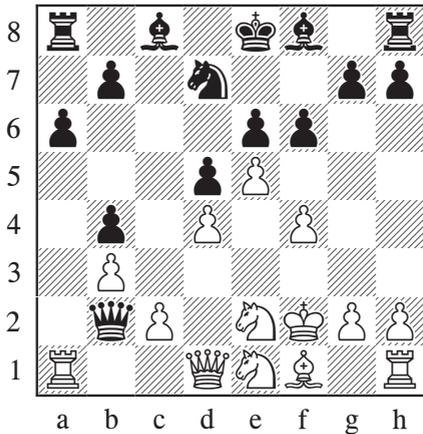
15.♜e1!?

White's first questionable move. I believe that if Evgeny Alekseev had been facing a more prestigious opponent, he would have been more worried about the safety of his own king.

After the prophylactic move 15.g3!, securing the white monarch a natural haven on g2, the result of the game would have been in little doubt. For example after: 15...fxe5 16.fxe5 ♜c5

(or 16...♙e7 17.♙h3 0-0 18.♙g2) 17.dxc5 ♙xc5† 18.♙g2+– White simply keeps an extra piece, for which there is not the slightest compensation. His knight will soon head for f4 and his bishop for d3, with an elementary win.

The move in the game doesn't at all forfeit the advantage, but it gives Black some extra chances which he does not fail to utilize!



15...♙c5?!

The threat of ♖d3 is already impossible to avert by “normal” methods, and the forced sacrifice of a piece was entirely predictable.

However, it was probably worth going to c5 with the *other* piece. After 15...♖c5!?, play could continue (say) with: 16.♙f3?!

Or 16.♙g1!? ♙d7.

16...fxe5 17.fxe5 ♙d7

White could then employ an idea familiar to us: 18.g3! With the possible follow-up: 18...♙b5 19.dxc5 ♙xe5 20.♙g2±

Or he could play 18.♞b1!? ♙a3 19.dxc5 ♙a5 20.♖d3.

Either line guarantees him a clear and lasting advantage, but I would be wary of calling his position won; and that is already quite an achievement on Black's part.

16.♙g3

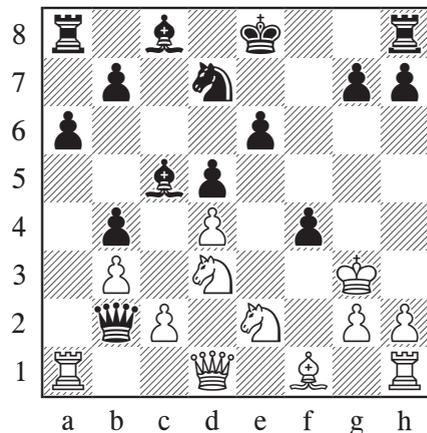
An excellent move – the king often strolls to g3 in similar French variations.

Nevertheless, from a practical point of view, it was worth calling off the hunt for the enemy queen and being content with “merely” a won position for White after: 16.dxc5! ♖xc5 17.♙d4!? ♙xd4† 18.♖xd4+– With an extra piece in the ending, victory would be easy. I suspect Alekseev simply got carried away and was only interested in winning the game with a knockout!

16...fxe5 17.♖d3

Tying the final knot in the rope around the black queen's neck. White didn't send his king on its travels just to settle for: 17.fxe5! ♖xe5 (I don't like so much 17...♙xd4 18.♙xd4 ♙xd4 19.♖xd4 ♖xe5) 18.dxc5 He would have an obvious plus, but he would still have to struggle for victory against a desperately resisting opponent.

17...exf4†



18.♙f3

The choice facing White was a wide one, and far from simple. He had two different ways of destroying the pawn, or he could try to hide his king in a safe place. But where *is* there a safe

place in these tempestuous times? Let's take a calm look at all the reasonable continuations.

a) The worst choice appears to be 18. ♖exf4??. After 18... ♗xd4 19. ♘xc5 ♗xc5 White simply finds himself three pawns down.

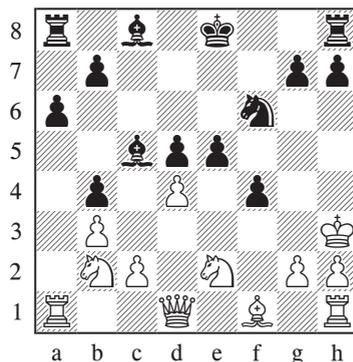
b) The other capture also looks unconvincing: 18. ♖xf4 0–0† And now after the relatively cautious 19. ♖e3 ♙d4† 20. ♘xd4 ♗c3 Black's chances are obviously superior but the game still continues; whereas after the optimistic 19. ♖g3? ♙d6† White can encounter awkward consequences such as 20. ♖h3 e5! 21. ♘xb2 ♘f6† 22. g4 ♘g4!. In this position both players have achieved their aims: White has won the queen (for three pawns!) while Black has created threats that are difficult to parry!

c) If White plays the rash 18. ♖h4?? then 18... g5† immediately draws his king into a mating net. After 19. ♖xg5 ♗g8† 20. ♖xf4 e5†! 21. dxe5 ♗f8† Black just needs to exercise a certain amount of care, for example: 22. ♖g5 (or 22. ♖g3 ♙f2† 23. ♘xf2 ♗xe5†–+) 22... ♘xe5! 23. ♘xb2 ♗f5† 24. ♖h4 ♘g6† 25. ♖g3 ♙f2† 26. ♖g4 ♘e5† 27. ♖h3 ♗h5#! The amazing energy and co-ordination of Black's pieces makes a striking impression.

d) 18. ♖h3

Together with the move in the actual game, this is the most interesting reply. Black cannot save his queen of course, but you get the impression that he has long since washed his hands of that piece, and learnt to create mating threats even without its help:

18... e5! 19. ♘xb2 ♘f6†



The bishop on c8 suddenly coming to life is extremely unpleasant for White:

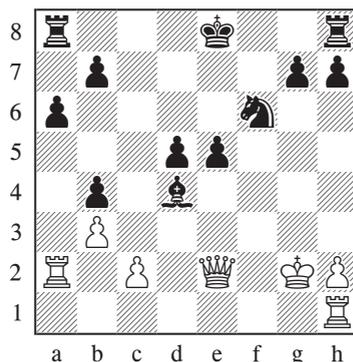
20. g4

The only decent reply, as the king move 20. ♖h4? would lead to an immediate fiasco after: 24... g5† 21. ♖xg5 ♗g8† 22. ♖xf6 In fairness we should add that Black would now need to find the sole continuation, though this does win at once: 22... ♙d6!–+ With a view to: 23. ♘xf4 ♙e7† 24. ♖xe5 ♗g5# A high-class mate in the middle of the board.

20... ♙xg4† 21. ♖g2 f3† 22. ♖g1

The variation 22. ♖g3 fxe2 23. ♙xe2 ♘e4† 24. ♖g2 is noteworthy; at the end of it, Black has the saving idea 24... ♙h3†! 25. ♖xh3 ♘f2† 26. ♖g2 ♘xd1 27. ♗axd1 ♙xd4 28. ♘d3 with approximate equality in a complex ending.

22... fxe2 23. ♙xe2 ♙xe2 24. ♗xe2 ♙xd4† 25. ♖g2 ♙xb2 26. ♗a2 ♙d4



At this point, to avoid ending up in the worse position in spite of his extra queen,

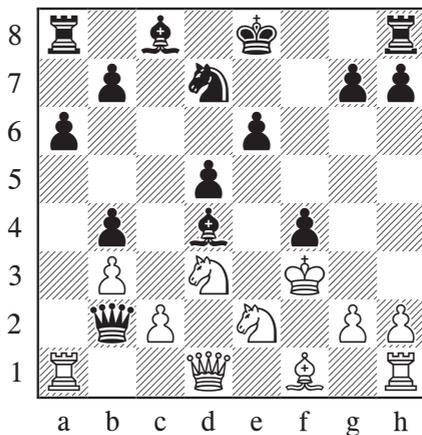
White should exercise his own right to play tactically:

27. ♖b5†! axb5 28. ♞xa8† ♔d7 29. ♞xh8 e4±/=

With a smooth transition from the strange middlegame to an equally strange ending. Given this interesting material balance – four pawns for two exchanges – I cannot evaluate the mutual chances precisely, but at least White shouldn't now be all that worried about the prospect of losing.

18... ♕xd4!

A splendid move! Making no attempt to sell his queen's life a little more dearly, Black fixes his attention more and more firmly on the enemy king. Literally in the course of a mere few moves, the situation on the board has been thoroughly revalued; the player who seemed the likely victim is now endeavouring to act the role of persecutor – and not without success. Alekseev doesn't want to acknowledge these changes, and commits a serious error.



19. ♖xb2?!

White's wholly excusable cupidity is the chief cause of his future defeat.

It still wasn't too late to stop and play 19. ♞b1!, trying to split the queen from the bishop. There could follow 19... ♗xb1 20. ♗xb1 ♕b6, giving a situation where in spite of his huge material

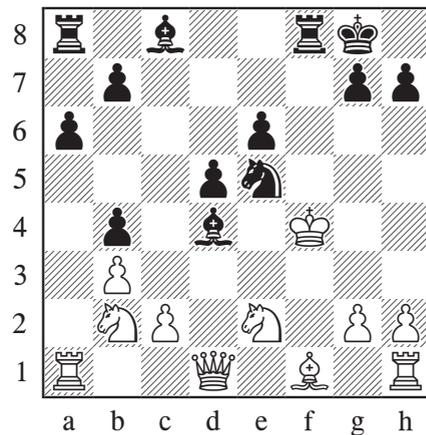
plus (queen for rook) White will still have to solve the problem of his frozen kingside, the advanced position of his king, and the activity of the black pieces. For example: 21. ♗e1 0–0 22. ♖xf4 With a view to: 22...e5 23. ♖xe5 ♞e8 24. ♖xd7 ♞xe1 25. ♖xb6 ♞b8∞ This leads to an unclear ending.

19... ♖e5†!

A most unpleasant check which White may have underestimated, expecting the automatic capture of the knight.

After 19... ♕xb2? 20. ♞b1 ♕e5 21.g3 his king acquires the right to a safe shelter.

20. ♖xf4 0–0†

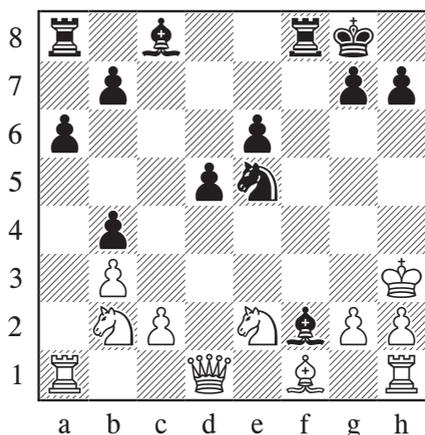


21. ♖g3

An attempt to throw the king forward with 21. ♖g5? would end in utter disaster. There is a forced mate after: 21...h6† 22. ♖h4 ♖g6† 23. ♖h5 (the sole privilege left to the white king is that of deciding which black piece will be allowed to administer the *coup de grâce*; in the event of 23. ♖h3 it will be a pawn: 23...e5† 24.g4 ♞f3† 25. ♖g3 ♖f4† 26. ♖h4 g5#) 23...♞f5† 24. ♖g4 ♞g5† 25. ♖h3 e5† 26.g4 ♕xg4† 27. ♖g2 ♕c8† 28. ♖g3 ♖h4# When the king can only be congratulated on the end of its torments.

21...♙f2† 22.♖h3

Wow! White is a queen up for nothing except a few pawns. Surely the fate of the game is settled, notwithstanding all Black's exertions and ingenuity? Fortunately for Black, he succeeds in finding an absolutely brilliant move. Can you do the same?

**22...♞g4!!**

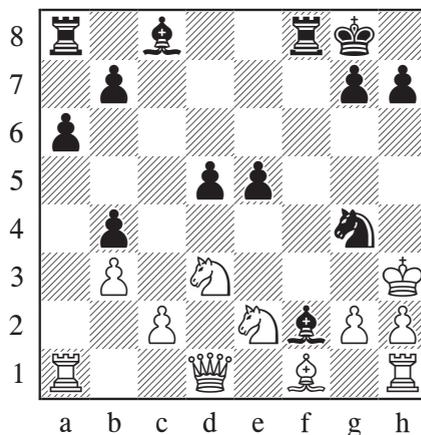
A fantastic idea! Throwing his last resources into the fray, Siciechowicz gives a demonstration of that very ascendancy of mind over matter in which we all yearn to believe! Black threatens to bring his bishop into play with ...e6-e5, and his knight will be constantly threatening a fork on f2. I should think the Russian grandmaster was reluctant to believe his eyes!

A weaker move – *much* weaker! – was 22...♞f6?, against which White wins with either the banal 23.♞d2!? (to meet 23...♞h6† with 24.♞xh6 gxh6 25.g3) or 23.♞f4! ♞xf4 24.g3+ – bringing Black's initiative to a dead end.

23.♞d3

After 23.♞xg4? e5† 24.♞h5 ♞f5† 25.♞g4 h5† 26.♞h3 ♞f3# Black's rook and bishop can engage in quite a difficult dispute as to which one of them has actually checkmated the unfortunate white monarch.

The play is more interesting after 23.♞f4!? ♞xf4 24.♞xg4 ♞xg4 25.♞xg4 e5† 26.♞f3 ♞d4, when several pieces have disappeared from the board and White's material advantage is still large – yet *he* is the one who needs to think about equalizing. For example: 27.♞d1!? (or 27.♞b1 ♞f5! 28.♞d3 e4† 29.♞f4 ♞f8+ and the combined force of rook and two mighty bishops spells extreme danger to the white king) 27...♞xb2 28.♞xd5 ♞f7 With advantage to Black, though White is not at all without chances of a successful defence.

23...e5**24.♞xf2!?**

I think this is the most practical decision.

It's possible that White would not lose – not instantly, at any rate – after 24.♞ef4, but in that case he would have to confront a new wave of the attack. Black would have more than one perfectly good choice.

In the first place he could well consider 24...♞f6!?. After the strictly forced 25.♞h5 ♞h6 26.♞xf2 ♞xf2† 27.♞h4 g5†!? 28.♞g3 ♞xd1 29.♞xd1 ♞e6 30.♞e2 ♞f7† the ending is obviously better for Black.

Another line is slightly crazy (just like the whole of this game, of course) – 24...♞e3†!? 25.g4 ♞xf4!? 26.♞xf4 exf4 – but this too looks

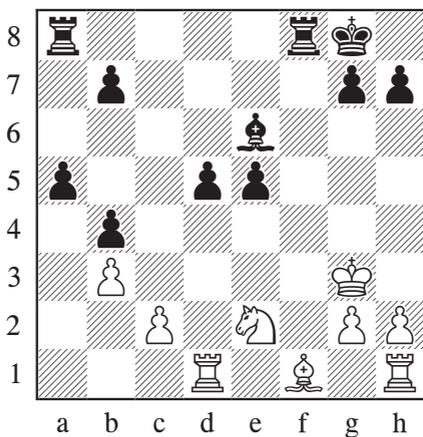
quite good. Again the white king is in trouble. In the event of 27.♔g2!? ♕e6, threatening ...h7-h5, White could still hope for a favourable outcome. On the other hand the slightest mistake could be severely punished; thus the natural 27.♖e2? (for instance) loses at once: 27...g5! 28.♔g2 h5 29.♔xd5† ♕g7→ With deadly threats.

24...♖xf2† 25.♕h4 ♖xd1 26.♖xd1 ♕e6

The tension in the game has palpably slackened. The queens have disappeared from the board, and the time has now come to take stock: White's immense material plus has somehow unobtrusively evaporated, and Black can look to the future with full confidence in the ending that has come about. And by the way, we must not forget that White still has some pieces that he hasn't managed to bring into the battle.

27.♕g3 a5

I would have preferred 27...♖ac8!? 28.♖d2 ♕f7↑ with the idea of repositioning His Majesty on d6, securely protecting the centre pawns and only afterwards seeking the possibility of queenside activity.



28.h3

It was worth considering 28.♖g1!? ♖ac8 29.♖f3 with reasonable chances of defence

after 29...♖xc2 30.♖xe5 ♖c3† 31.♖f3 ♖xb3 32.♕b5. But I don't think Evgeny Alekseev was very keen on exposing his king to additional risk in the case of: 29...e4 30.♖d4 ♖c3† 31.♕h4 ♖f4† 32.♕g5 ♖g4† 33.♕h5† Especially since – as we must not forget – the game was played with a fast time control, and time was clearly short for both players.

28...a4?

Continuing his faulty strategy. White's pieces lack strong points in the centre, but this move merely helps him to create some.

A better choice was the simple 28...♖ac8 29.♖d2 h6† with an obvious plus.

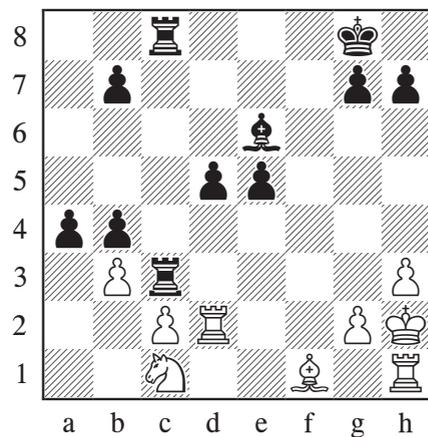
29.♖c1!?

Or 29.bxa4!? ♖xa4 30.♖c1.

29...♖fc8 30.♖d2?

Missing an excellent chance to turn the game right around! After 30.bxa4! ♖xc2 31.♖d3 b3 32.♖xe5 the initiative would suddenly pass to White.

30...♖c3† 31.♕h2 ♖ac8!



32.♕b5?

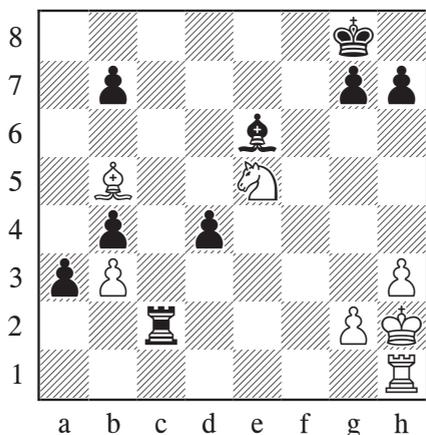
The decisive mistake in a position that was already far from easy.

With the cool-headed 32.bxa4! ♖xc2 33.♖xc2 ♖xc2 34.♗b5† White would retain some defensive chances, although of course his opponent's pawns look menacing.

32...a3+ 33.♗d3 ♖xc2 34.♖xc2 ♖xc2 35.♗xe5

Or 35.♗xb4 ♖b2 and both White's minor pieces are under threat, while how he is to stop the passed a-pawn is a complete mystery.

35...d4!?



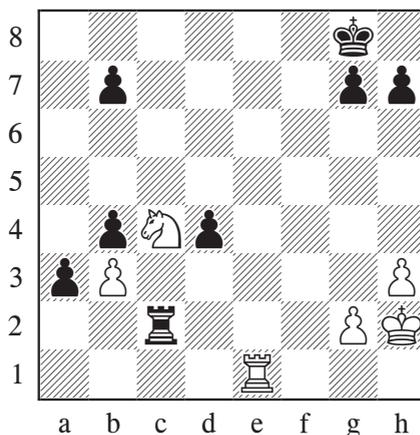
36.♖e1

Perhaps 36.♗d3 would have been a little more tenacious, but the result of the game was no longer to be altered. With the aid of an uncomplicated combination – 36...♗d5 37.♖g1 ♖xg2†! 38.♖xg2 ♗xg2 – White's resistance would be broken. For example: 39.♗c4† (39.♗xb4 ♗d5) 39...♗f8 40.♗xb4 ♗c4 And the bishop arrives at b1 with an easily won endgame.

36...♗d5 37.♗c4

Nothing would be changed by: 37.♗g3 ♖xg2† 38.♗f4 ♖f2† 39.♗g3 ♖b2+–

37...♗xc4 38.♗xc4



38...♖xc4! 39.bxc4

A number of black pawns are aspiring to be queened and there is no possibility of stopping them, so Evgeny Alekseev acknowledged defeat.

0–1

A game not free from errors (putting it mildly!) but nonetheless a fantastically interesting one. Black played the opening in risky style, underrated his opponent's possibilities, and found himself in what seemed to be an utterly hopeless situation. I am simply filled with wonder and admiration by the energy and inventiveness that Marcin Sieciechowicz displayed. Again and again, struggling with a wish to stop the clock, he found the only available resources allowing him to continue the fight, and won through to success.