

# MEANDERING THROUGH MY BOOKS

by *Bernard Cafferty*, who has been looking through older books in his library

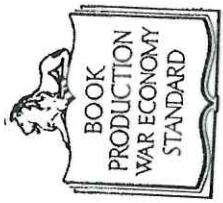
THE PRESENT generation of aspiring players is to be envied for the mass of instructional material available to those who wish to improve their game. Things were different before the Fischer boom years, when the number of significant and helpful works could be counted on the fingers of the hands - I shall be generous and say on both hands, not just one. Or, to adopt the well-known joke: "Did advanced chess instruction exist before *Informator*?"

As a beginner in the mid-1940s, I had access via the Blackburn public library to the classic works of Tarrasch, Lasker, Nimzowitsch and Capablanca, though the Cuban was less helpful in his *Chess Fundamentals* than the trio who wrote originally in German. There was also the Alekhine collection, two volumes of annotated games. Not that Alekhine's style of play is a model in the early stages of learning.

Other works came under my scrutiny at that time, but I fear that some of them were more likely to put off the keen student than to fill him with enthusiasm to continue.

Two examples might be mentioned. There was that masterpiece of compression by E. G. R. Cordingley, *The Next Move is*, which in just 88 pages of a slim volume printed in accordance with 'Book Production War Economy Standard' (see *opposite*) carried five positions to a page to be solved at leisure with the solutions at the back, over pp 59-83.

The sources EGRC used were mainly German tournament books from the period 1870s-1939, as well as other Continental sources. This meant many of the examples were fresh to the UK reader. Unfortunately, the author followed the original material too closely - they were of variable quality, and he often quoted positions which had solutions ten moves long or so. He gave the impression

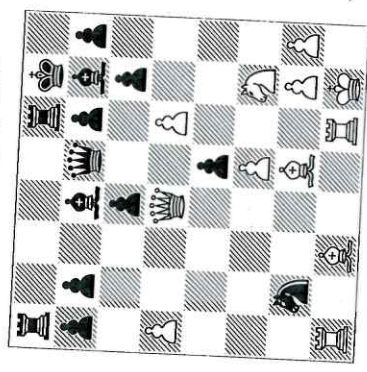


THE PAPER AND BINDING OF THIS BOOK CONFORM TO THE AUTHORIZED ECONOMY STANDARDS

that he was not seeking from the reader the next move, but a whole long series of them.

Here are two examples which show what I mean.

Warsaw Club Event 1909  
Rotlewi - Bogoljubow



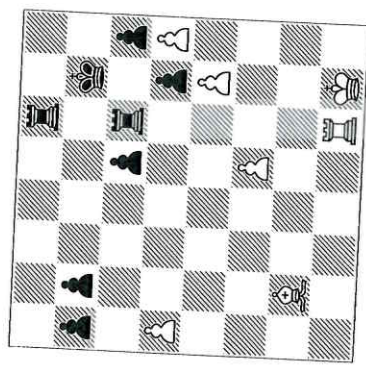
White is two pawns down, and could recover one by 1 ♖xb7. However, Rotlewi went for the grand attack, 1 f6! ♙xf6 2 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 3 ♙xe4, seeking to gain control of the long black diagonal, and so pick off the ♘b2 that has strayed far from home. Then comes 3... ♗g7 4 ♗xd6 ♙e6?! 5 ♗e7! ♙e5 6 ♙f6+ ♙g7? 7 ♙g4 ♙ae8 8 ♙xf8+ ♙xf8 9 ♙xe5 winning the stranded knight.

Cordingley does not consider alternatives for Black at moves 4 and 6. Why not, the diligent student might ask, prevent the knight check at f6 by guarding the ♙d7 with 4...f5, and why not play 6...♙h8, in order to meet 7 ♙g4 by 7... ♗g7, still occupying the key diagonal?

After 4...f5, White has 5 ♖b1 ♙a4 6 ♙c4+ ♙h8 7 ♙c5 with an attack on the diagonals c4-g8 and b2-h8. After 4...♙e6 5 ♗e7 ♗e5 6 ♙f6+ ♙h8, Black's ♖f8 seems to be inadequately defended, so play could proceed 7 ♙d7 ♗c3 8 ♙xf8. However, 8... ♙d1! 9 ♗h4 (to stop ... ♗e1+, ♙f1 ♗f2+ and Black mates) 9... ♙xf8 10 ♗d4+ ♗xd4 11 exd4 ♙c3 12 ♙f3 and Black has a slight advantage, but an opposite-coloured bishop ending looms.

But White could also have improved on move 6. Examine the paradoxical offer to exchange queens by 6 ♗f6! e.g. 6... ♙c4 (6... ♗xe4 obviously loses to 7 ♙xb2) 7 ♙xc4 ♗xf6 8 ♙xf6+ ♙g7 9 ♙xe6 fxe6 (9... ♙xf6 10 ♙d5 wins) whereupon computer engines assume that the knight on f6 has to move, and White has only a minimal advantage.

The horizon effect is seen here: the naked human eye spots 10 ♙b2! ♙xf6 11 ♖f1 ♙af8 12 g4! g5 13 h4 h6 14 h5! and Black is paralysed.



White continues 15 ♙e5 and 16 ♖f3 followed by a king march, aiming to reach d6, while Black runs on the spot with a few pawn moves on the b-file and ♖f7-f8.

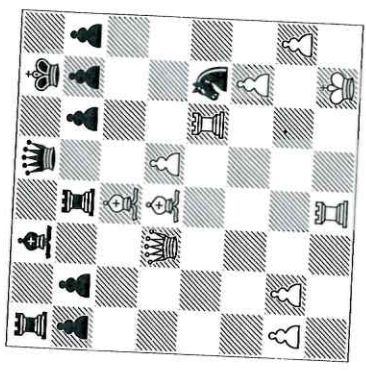
There are other variations too, but the author leaves the student somewhat in the dark. Authors should always be careful not to create doubts and so undermine the learner's motivation to proceed.

Cordingley, in only a handful of cases, attributed the solutions analysis to a source (six out of 250, I make it) which implies he examined and refined the analysis of prime sources in well over 200 cases.

In this connection, I recall the view of Ken Whyld who thought that newspaper chess columns had been responsible for turning more people off the game than enthusing them.

A more clear-cut Cordingley example is from a CC game in which White has overwhelming pressure.

Correspondence 1925  
Scheidler - Fischer



Black, to play, is faced with the threat-e5-e6, so he tried 1... ♙xe5 2 ♙xe5 b6, which leaves White with three winning lines, of which the author mentions only two: 3 ♖xf7 and 3 ♗e2, as in the game, when the brilliancy 3... ♗xe5 4 ♙xf7+ ♙h8 5 ♗xh7+ followed. Peter Oakley pointed out to me in the 1950s that 3 ♗a3 is also thematic, as 3... ♗xe5 4 ♙xf7+ ♙h8 5 ♗f8 mate, or 4... ♗xf7 5 ♖d8+.

Another book from the 1940s which the reader has to view with a quizzical eye is P. Wenman's *100 Chess Gems* in which the

former Scottish Champion hardly covered himself in glory. Although the book went through five editions 1939-1948, it was not favoured by reviews in *BCM* after 1940. Wenman was in bad odour with the chess community for plagiarism in passing off earlier problems as his own new composition.

His notes are sparse and illogical, as he generally misses the crucial turning points in the contests he reproduces. He even covers himself in negative glory by quoting a famous game, Janowski-Maroczy, Munich 1900, in which Wenman gives the wrong final moves and the wrong result, claiming that White won, when in fact Black did so.

It is such a fine cut-and-thrust encounter, with neither king managing to castle, that it is worth giving the whole game, a fine example of the new Albin Counter Gambit which even the staid Maroczy and Tarrasch tried in those early years of the century.

#### Munich 1900

□ Dawid Janowski

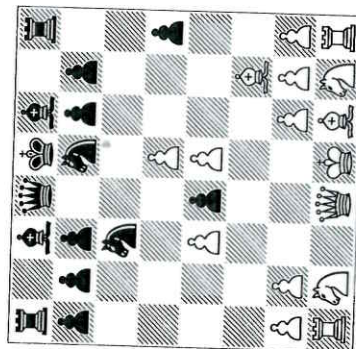
■ Geza Maroczy

*Albin Counter Gambit D08*

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5 d4 4 e4 c6 5 f4 g7 6 g5

Janowski seemed to have a rooted objection to the now-standard formation of 4 c3 c6 5 g3.

6...h5

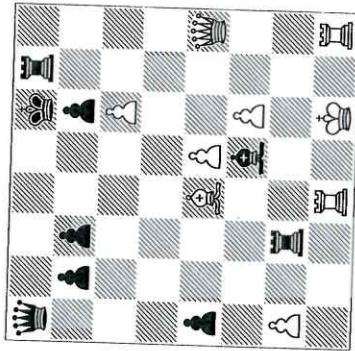


7 h3? g5! 8 h4 g4 9 b2d2 g6 10 f4 e7 11 d3 exh4 12 e2 g6 13 e6!

h4! 14 xg4 xe6 15 f5 c8! 16 h2 ge5 17 e2 exd3+ 18 xd3 b4 19 b3 a5 20 h3

White develops the piece very late, but 20 a3 was better. Black now gets a giant minor piece on e3.

20...a4 21 d1 d3+ 22 ef1 exb2 23 g4 a6 24 f4 f8 25 d5 c6 26 e5 g8 27 h5 g5 28 f3 ex4! 29 f6 ex3+ 30 ex3 ex3 31 d1 g4 32 xh4 exf3 33 gxf3 c2 34 exd4 xa8!



Here comes Wenman's bloomer. He claims that Janowski won here by the sequence 35 a7, to open the d-file and prevent ...a6+, 35... xa7 36 wh6+ e8 37 g7 f8 38 xf8+ and 39 h8 mate.

Not so, and, in fact, a caustic note by Maroczy pointed out, in his 1921 book of 100 selected games, that the "Herren Glossatoren" (respected annotators) were in need of enlightenment from him. After 35 a7 he would win by 35...b6! though the analysis of the resulting position is complex).

The game actually ended, not with a bang, but with a whimper: 35 d3? a6 and White resigns.

I wonder if such awful errors are still being perpetrated in modern books. I doubt it, but could be proved wrong. Have readers found anything in books of the computer age to emulate Wenman?



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