

Obituary

Alberto Foguelman (13x1923 – 9xii2013)

BY JOSÉ A. COPIÉ

Alberto Foguelman, IM (FIDE), has passed away recently. We will undoubtedly miss this noble person with his love for chess, his sporty chivalry and notable human qualities. His commitment (perhaps we should say his loyalty) to the *Círculo de Ajedrez de Villa del Parque* (Chess Club of Villa del Parque in Buenos Aires) was notable. He once confessed that “... *in the fifties and sixties I was often invited to join a variety of chess clubs. But I never wanted to stop being a Villa del Parque chess player, because I just didn't want to switch allegiances*” I reflected this in the Second Volume of my *Historia del ajedrez argentino (History of Argentine Chess)*. This attitude characterized him, because he always made it a personal priority to promote the development of neighbourhood chess clubs. He did so by selflessly playing simultaneous chess matches or speaking to amateurs. Along with other pioneers back in the fifties and sixties, when he reached his top performance in high competition, he sought to democratize chess playing. His valour and intellectual honesty led to a lack of recognition among local decision makers. Despite that, he continued to struggle to heighten the art of Caissa, in favour of a democratic practice that would not only extol the achievements of this country in its golden age, but also see to it that the opportunities were available to all, even for those in the furthest reaches of the country. And that's why he earned the respect and love of those who could interpret the dreams and utopias of this gentleman who fought for us at the chessboard and throughout his life.

This notable chess player reached extraordinary heights in the national chess arena, becoming one of our most outstanding chess players. Not without a touch of irony, he would say: “... *I was certainly not a child prodigy* (Let

us not forget he was born in 1923); *from 1958 to 1965 I made significant progress and was entitled to consider myself among the best ten chess players in the country. But I should mention a particular circumstance: I was a contemporary of an exceptional group of players: Panno, Najdorf, Julio Bolbochán, Rossetto, Guimard, Raúl Sanguinetti, Pilnik, Eliskases... it was hard to stand out ...*”

Although I've known Foguelman for more than fifty years, our friendship began to flourish when we would meet at the International Friends Day celebrations organized year after year by the great composer and engineer Oscar J. Carlsson (1924-2011). Others at these encounters were Prof. Zoilo R. Caputto, Luis M. Parenti (1904-2000) and Gaspar D. Soria (1917-2006). We began exchanging points of view regarding my magazine *Finales... y Temas*, and even composed jointly some Studies. I believe our last chess activities took place last year when we sent a pair of Studies to compete in the 5th international tourney *Zhigulovskie Zori*, that took place in Russia, and in *Sinfonie Scacchistiche* 2013-2014, organized in Italy by local composers. These activities led him to correspond frequently with me. I actually have his last letter dated August 25, 2013 where among other things he shared his views on a new Study we were composing together.

I personally met maestro *Alberto Foguelman* during a simultaneous chess match he played along Eduardo Scanavino in Buenos Aires. This was on May 26, 1962; that same year, and for the second time in his career, my friend earned second place in the Argentine chess championship, whereby he represented the country at the Varna Olympics that took place in that Bulgarian city between September and October of that year, with a spectacular 83.3%



score, without losing a single game; Argentina thus earned third place among 37 countries, after the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. He was the only Argentine not to lose a single game at these Olympics. I learned to appreciate the power of his game and his sporty gentlemanliness on more than one occasion. I followed his career quite closely, which shined from 1955 to 1965.

Foguelman was born in the city of Buenos Aires, but was raised in the city of Mercedes till he reached his 20th birthday. His older brother taught him to play chess when he was 6 years old and when he turned 13 he played at an open tournament there. He was a self-taught chess player, having never taken classes with a teacher. As a top chess player he participated in 13 Argentine championships where he twice earned second place. He also participated in two FIDE Olympics and in various significant master tournaments.

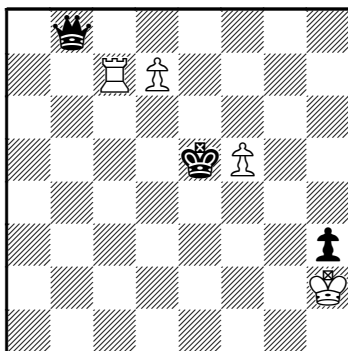
Alberto Foguelman authored three chess books edited by himself: *"Ajedrez de lujo,"* Buenos Aires, 1978, *"Damas Cazadas,"* Buenos Aires, 1988 and in 2007 his third and last book, a brief treatise entitled *"Selección de sus finales artísticos (período 1984-2007),"* a work containing a selection of 42 studies of his own.

He slowly left active practice, mainly for health reasons, and began to compose end-game studies in the early 1980s, his first composition being dated 1984. He displays a high concept of beauty in chess; he differentiates the spectacular, which is often understood as brilliance, from subtlety, which he prefers as being essentially pure. He values a mistake insofar as it enables materializing beauty in a chess match. This implicit or underlying praise towards an error is motivated and justified if it breaks the absolute balance of forces in dispute, thus unleashing the harmonic process of "putting together" a work of art. Here, he definitely

privileges, above all, an elaborate positional web where manoeuvres are subordinated to a global plan and not to a combination of isolated manoeuvres regardless of how spectacular they may be. Undoubtedly, beauty will be proportional to the mistake, to its quality. These ideas certainly come to the surface in Foguelman when he composes, insofar as he endows his works not only with his broad experience as an active chess player, but also with the finesse he brings to the art of chess playing”.

Following, we present a brief selection of Foguelman’s studies, composed in his later years, but we will not bid him farewell because he will always be with us, through his games, his studies, his works and, above all, through the most dignifying example of a life conveyed to peers and to future generations.

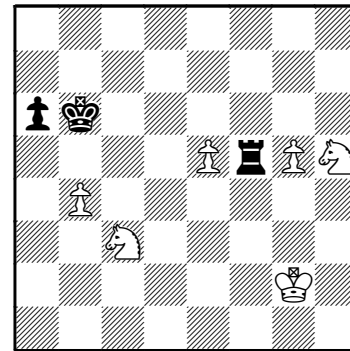
C.1. A. Foguelman
Phénix 1991



h2e5 3100.21 4/3 Draw

1.**Rc8** (Rc5+? Kd4+;) 1...**Qb7** 2.**Rc5+** (Re8+? Kf4;) 2...**Kf4** 3.**Rc4+** Kxf5 4.**Rc5+** Kg6 (Ke6; d8S+) 5.**Rg5+** Kxg5 6.**d8Q+** draws.

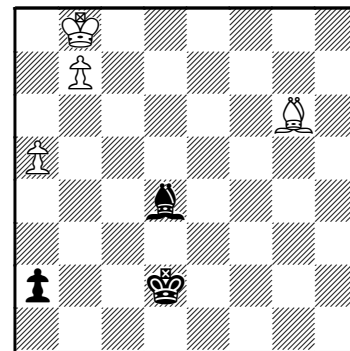
C.2. A. Foguelman
Finales y Temas 2007



g2b6 0302.31 6/3 Win

1.**Se4** **Rxe5** 2.**g6** (2.Kf3? Rxc5 3.Sxc5 a5 draws) 2...**Re7** (Rxe4 3.Sf6 Re2+ 4.Kg3 Rd2 5.g7 Rd8 6.Sd7+ Kb5 7.Sf8 Rd3+ 8.Kf2 Rd2+ 9.Kf3 wins) 3.**Sc3** (3.Sd6? Re6 4.g7 Rg6+ 5.Kf3 Kc6 draws) 3...**Rd7** (Re6; Sf6) 4.**g7** **Rxc7**+ 5.**Sxc7** a5 6.**b5** wins.

C.3. A. Foguelman
3rd hon. ment. Moscow Ty 2005



b8d2 0040.21 4/3 Draw

1.**Ka8** **Be5** 2.**a6** **a1Q** 3.**a7** **Qa5** (Kc3 4.Bd3 Kd4 5.b8Q Bxb8 6.Kxb8 draws) 4.**Bd3** (Thematic try: 4.Bf5? Kc3 5.Bc8 Kd4 6.b8Q Bxb8 7.Kxb8 Qb6+ 8.Bb7 Qd8+ 9.Bc8 Kc5 10.a8Q Qd6+ 11.Kb7 Qb6 mate) 4...**Kc3** (Bb8 5.Ba6 Qxa6 6.Kxb8 Qd6+ 7.Kc8 draws, but not 7.Ka8? Qd5 8.Kb8 Qd8 mate) 5.**Ba6** (5.Be4? Bb8 6.Kxb8 Qd8 mate; 5.Bf5? Kd4 6.b8Q Bxb8 7.Kxb8 Qb6+ 8.Ka8 Qc7 wins) 5...**Qd5** (Qxa6 6.b8Q Bxb8 7.Kxb8 draws) 6.**Bc4** (6.Bf1? Bd4 7.Bh3 Kb4 8.Be6 Qh1 9.Kb8 Qh8+ 10.Bc8 Kb5 11.a8Q Qh2 (Qe5) mate) 6...**Qh1** 7.**Bd5** **Qxd5** stalemate.