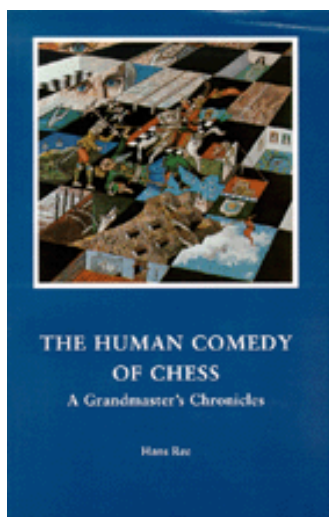




## COLUMNISTS

*Dutch Treat*

Hans Ree

*The Human Comedy  
of Chess*

by Hans Ree

## Chess in Amsterdam

After a year of privation Amsterdam had a big international open again, this time not sponsored by one generous company, but by a number of institutions, one of them being the University of Amsterdam.

During the tournament, to honor the connection between the university and chess, I gave a short lecture about its chess library, which is quite extensive, though not as big as that of the Royal Library in The Hague. As in The Hague, where Meindert Niemeijer in 1948 gave his collection of 7,000 chess books to the Royal Library, in Amsterdam a private collection was also the basis of the chess library. It was that of Alexander Rueb, one of the founders of FIDE and its first president from 1924 until 1949.

In a glass case I had eight books from the collection exhibited, chosen only because I had a story to tell about them. It hadn't really been my intention, but after choosing these eight books, I realised that three of them had something to do with Bobby Fischer.

One was *Bobby Fischer vs the Rest of the World* by Brad Darrach, an amusing report on Fischer's behaviour before and during his 1972 world championship match. Number two was *Master Prim*, a novel by James Ellison based on Fischer's life that had appeared in 1968. The title seems condescending, but when I read it recently I was pleasantly surprised. The book does not infringe on Fischer's dignity and it's also well-written.

Hermann von Gottschall's *Adolf Anderssen, der Altmeister deutscher Schachspielkunst* I had not chosen with Fischer in mind, but later I realised that there was a definite connection. The American grandmaster Peter Biyiasis once told me that during the 70s, when Fischer stayed a few weeks at his house, he had hoped to analyse modern openings with the great man, but all Fischer wanted to do was analyse games from Gottschall's book, which he had brought with him.

The choice of the books was made before the news came out that Fischer had been arrested at the Tokyo airport. Had I known that this unfortunate event would happen, I might have added another book with a Fischer connection, *The Reliable Past* by Genna Sosonko.

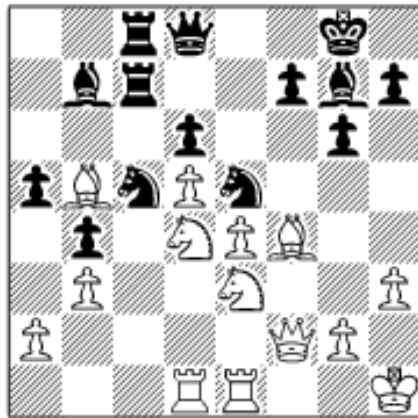
As we know, to avoid being deported from Japan to the U.S., Fischer has asked for asylum in a third country. Personally I would like the Netherlands to give shelter to the poor tormented soul, but chances are slim, as I see no legal basis at all for such

a decision. Maybe the only country where Fischer might receive not political asylum, but instant citizenship, is Israel. It may appear unlikely for Fischer to seek safety in Israel, but he has been there before and as I remember it, he liked it there.

And so what Sosonko predicted in a fantasy on the future of chess might actually happen: the legendary American Bobby Krisher remembers the old Jewish adage, "live among the Gentiles, die among the Jews" and settles in a religious kibbutz not far from the Lebanese border. The children of the kibbutz, to whom he gives chess lessons, call him Uncle Borukh and lovingly play with his long side-locks. Uncle Borukh always finds time for a kind word to photographers and journalists, at least in this fantasy. Well, we will see.

But back to the Amsterdam chess tournament. As a commentator, I found that the public would follow the games with great interest until the first time control after 40 moves, which occurred at 5 p.m. After that they had had enough. The excitement of time trouble was over and the cozy bar and the sunny terrace were enticing. Out of politeness there were still a few people who joined me in the commentator's room, but they were relieved and thankful when I would call it day.

With such impatience one misses a lot, for instance, the sensational developments in the game between Maarten Solleveld, a young Dutch player, and Ivan Sokolov, the Dutch-Bosnian grandmaster. They happened two hours later, near the second time control.



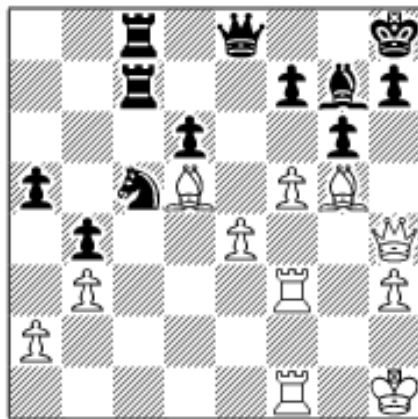
This was the position in Solleveld - Sokolov, from the third round, after Black's 40th move. A few moves earlier Black had avoided a repetition of moves, which was unwise as White is clearly better here, with good squares for his Knights on c4 and c6. In fact Black is suffering under a classical Spanish torture. For the rest of the game the players had one hour each.

**41. Ne3-f1 Qd8-f8 42. Qf2-g3 Rc8-b8 43. Nf1-h2 Bb7-c8 44. Nh2-f3 Rc7-e7 45. Bb5-c4 Bc8-**

**d7 46. Nd4-c6 Bd7xc6 47. d5xc6 Rb8-c8 48. Bc4-d5** White has made good progress. His pawn on c6, supported by the excellently placed Bishop, will force Black to give up the Exchange.

**48...Qf8-e8 49. Nf3-d4 Rc8-b8 50. Nd4-f3 Rb8-c8 51. Qg3-h4 Ne5xf3 52. g2xf3 Bg7-e5 53. Bf4-g5 Re7-c7 54. f3-f4 Be5-c3 55. Re1-e3 Rc7xc6** Now that White has weakened his e-pawn, Black would have good counterplay after 56. Bxc6 Qxc6. But White isn't interested anymore in the Exchange; he plays for an attack.

**56. f4-f5 Bc3-g7 57. Rd1-f1 Rc6-c7 58. Re3-f3 Kg8-h8**



**59. f5xg6** This is too early. White could win with 59. Bf6 Qf8 60. fxg6 fxg6. Then winning the Queen with 61. Bb2 isn't quite clear, but much stronger would be 61. e5, intending 61...dxe5 62. Bxg7+ Qxg7 63. Rf7 and White wins.

**59...f7xg6 60. Rf3-f7 Rc7xf7** And here Black makes a big mistake. 60...Ne6 would be an adequate defense. White would still have reasonable compensation for his pawn, but with two minutes for the rest of the game, against

nine minutes for Sokolov, White's chances to survive would be slim.

**61. Rf1xf7** White is winning again, as Black has no defense against the threat 62. Bf6.

**61...Nc5-e6 62. Bd5xe6 Qe8xe6 63. Rf7-e7 Qe6-g8 64. Bg5-f6** Game over, one would think. Black can resign or give a few senseless checks.

**64...Rc8-c1+ 65. Kh1-g2 Rc1-c2+ 66. Kg2-g3 Rc2-c3+ 67. Kg3-g2 Rc3-c2+ 68. Kg2-g3 Rc2-c3+** Now after 69. Kf4 Black would indeed have resigned, but in terrible time pressure White played **69. Kg3-g2** and Black could claim a draw by repetition.

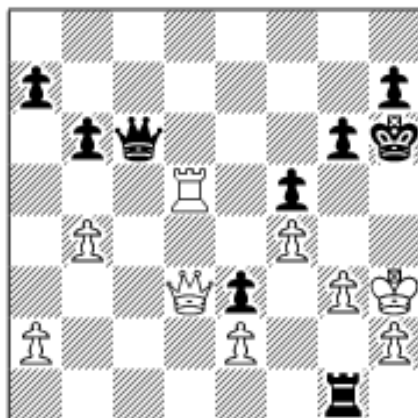
How cruel this time schedule - 40 in 2 and 1 hour for the rest, without increment - can be, was shown in Nijboer-Nikolic from round 6. At move 57 Nijboer had reached an ending of K+R+N+P vs K+B+N+P, a very difficult technical win. They played to move 116, when Nikolic resigned because he had lost a piece. Nijboer had 16 seconds left, Nikolic 15 seconds. If Nikolic had held out a bit longer, Nijboer might well have lost on time.

What risks he had taken with his time management! "Well, I could always offer a draw during my last seconds," Nijboer said unruffled.

Really? Nikolic, who is a gentleman, would probably have accepted, but if not, would Nijboer be able to claim the draw in this ending with an Exchange more? Even our **ChessCafe** sage Geurt Gijssen didn't dare to give a definite answer to this question.

All in all it was Friso Nijboer's tournament. He started with a splendid 5½ out of 6 and when finally he won the event with 7 out of 9, a half-point ahead of the field, he could claim that he had been winning in all his games. Here is one game where he let his opponent escape.

"It is hard to imagine how either player can save the game," an annotator once wrote, and this seems an apt comment on the spectacular and amusing part of this game when it seemed that both Kings were to be mated.



*Sandipan - Nijboer*, 4th round, after Black's 32nd move.

**33. Qd3-d4** After 33. Qxe3 Black might have a small advantage, but now an interesting tactical battle develops in which both players are playing for mate.

**33...Qc6-c1** With the threat of 34...Rxc3+ and mate.

**34. Rd5xf5** Because of Black's mating threat, White has no time to threaten mate himself with 34. Rd7

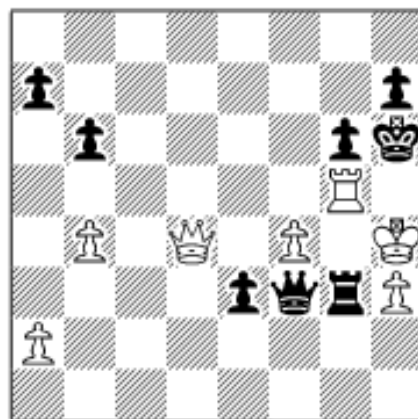
**34...Qc1-f1+** Had he taken White's Rook, he would have been mated.

**35. Kh3-h4** Threatening 36. Rh5+ and mate.

**35...Qf1xe2** Now it's Black again who is threatening mate.

**36. h2-h3 Qe2-f3** Renewing his mating threat. He has to keep an eye on h5, so as not to be mated himself, so 36...Qg2 was not possible.

**37. Rf5-g5 Rg1xg3**



Hoping for 38. Rxc3 Qh5 mate, but White has a final resource.

**38. Rg5-h5+ Qf3xh5+** Because after 38...gxh5 White would have a perpetual.

**39. Kh4xg3 Qh5-e2 40. Qd4-f6 Qe2-e1+ 41. Kg3-f3 Qe1-f1+ 42. Kf3-g4 Qf1-g1+ 43. Kg4-h4 Qg1-e1+ 44. Kh4-g4 Qe1xb4 45. Qf6-g5+ Kh6-g7 46. Qg5-e5+ Kg7-f7 47. Qe5xe3 Qb4-d6** The queen ending should be winning for Black, but about twenty moves later he allowed

a perpetual after all.

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