

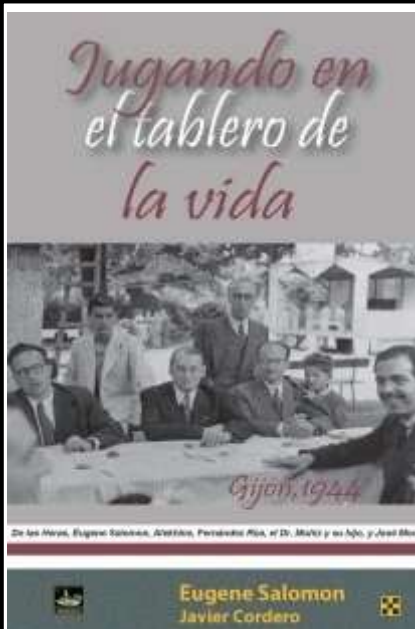
PLAYING BLINDFOLDED ON THE BOARD OF LIFE

(Excerpts from my book)

By Eugene Salomon with Javier Cordero, co-author

As translated and edited by Diane Dahl

My family's forthcoming book is dedicated to the memory of my father, Robert Salomon Schwarz (1895-1968) who inspired my life with his commitment to human solidarity. It is also dedicated to my forever friend, Miguel Angel Nepomuceno Salcedo (1947-2022), who inspired me to become a writer... at age 89!... so that I could describe in depth what he found to be an inspirational family story. The book "*Jugando en el tablero de la vida*" (published in Spain this past April), focused on my achievements as a nationally-ranked chess player in both Spain and Cuba, and highlighted my unforgettable interactions with world chess champion Alexander Alekhine.



Just three months after publishing my book in Spain, I was deeply saddened by the passing of dear Miguel, who had repeatedly told me that my family's story had to be shared. As memorable and satisfying as my accomplishments on the chessboard were, they pale in comparison to the intense love I feel for my family and friends, and the pride I feel about my business achievements. Miguel's passing compelled me to relate my family's saga as he had urged at our first memorable meeting in 2017, by refocusing the book from a "chess book" to a "family and life book." My chess life is still well-

represented in the English edition, but the emphasis is now on the adventures, challenges, strength, and resilience of my family in the face of multiple global conflicts. The significant chess events are still told within the narrative of my life, and all my chess writings and games (including selected games played by my friends) are included as Appendices.

When Miguel Angel initially contacted me in late 2016, interested in an interview for a series of articles in his chess column at the prestigious web magazine "Zenda/libros", I could not understand how a giant of journalism in Spain such as him could have an interest in someone who was a complete unknown in the firmament of chess stars around the world. After our first meeting in Madrid which lasted several hours, I had a clear understanding of his reasons: He had obviously read my book, *40 Years of Friendship 100 Games of Chess*, and my father's memoirs, and knew how Pablo Moran and I had witnessed the agony of Alekhine's final years. As a serious journalist and historian (of chess and music, but also keenly interested in Spanish Civil War history), Miguel thought that the story of my father and our family's survival during those tumultuous times had to be shared.

In his comments about Alekhine's advice to me, Miguel shared some corroborating historical evidence from an interview of Alekhine by Juan Fernandez Rua, noted author and chess player (and close family friend):

"Dear Eugenio, before leaving for the hospital, I didn't want to forget to thank you for your words, and add some other words by Alekhine that cor-

roborate what he told you that day on the Calle Corrida when you were a youngster. It is, from a human standpoint, the best interview that Alekhine has ever given, besides being written by my dear friend Fernandez Rua, who told me so many things about "The Colossus". Alekhine, in July of 1944, said:

'The best part of my life occurred between two world wars that devastated Europe. They both ruined me, but with one difference: at the end of the first, I was 26 years old, and had an unbridled enthusiasm that I no longer possess. If I someday write my memoirs (which is very possible), people will find out that chess was a secondary factor in my life. It allowed me to hold onto and pursue an ambition, while at the same time, convincing me of the futility of ambition. Nowadays, I continue to play chess because it keeps my mind occupied, and keeps me away from the obsessions and memories.'

While discussing my memories and what I told him about the Spanish Civil War in relation to Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset's assertion, "Man is himself plus his circumstances," Miguel replied to me: "Your memories are my circumstances—thanks to them, I have learned so much that I never knew."

Miguel then honored me with a series of 5 biographical articles which detailed my life in Spain and Cuba from 1928-1960 in his well-read blog, "*Ajedrez y literatura*" (Chess and Literature) on the Zenda website (<https://www.zendalibros.com/blogs/ajedrez-y-literatura/>), under the title, "*Eugenio Salomón Rugarcía: De Alekhine a Kasparov, o cómo jugar a la ciega en el tablero de la vida*" (Eugenio Salomon Rugarcía: From Alekhine to Kasparov, or How to Play Blindfolded on the Board of Life.) As Miguel's articles referred to me: "The protagonist of this story is not a Grand Master, although has defeated some of them... neither is he a professional player... Eugenio Salomon Rugarcía is an authentic self-made man." I am grateful and incredibly proud of those words.

Unfortunately, in 2018, Miguel started having health problems, but still wanted to finish the sixth and final installment in the series, about my 60 years in the U.S., and asked me to help him. In one of our many, many emails about our lives, memories, and the final article for Zenda, he had asked me to provide more details about certain eras of my life, and we were working on the 1960s and early 70s. I wrote about the first few years in Brooklyn, my work promotion, the family's move to New Jersey, my

return to chess in the New Jersey Open after 16 years' hiatus and joining the Westfield NJ Chess Club.

I also told him about having been one of the founding members of the club at "Windows on the World" in the early 70s, a restaurant open to the public at night but a private club during the day. It was located on the 107th floor of the World Trade Center. I had witnessed the construction of the Twin Towers for years during my daily commute to Wall Street. and, on my way to a business meeting the morning of 9/11/2001, I watched those same towers fall. Aside from the horrific tragedy of 9/11, he thought my stories were "magnificent," and told me, "I will put (these anecdotes) in order and adjust them, and it will be stupendous ... your daily life. Yes, there is stupendous chess, but there are not always anecdotes like your story of the World Trade Center- even though it is (more than) 30 years old, it still belongs here." It was a rare privilege to have shared with Miguel the writing of the last chapter and I still hope to complete and publish it in his honor, for all that he has honored me.

Today, because my life and my chess have both had the blessing of wonderful friends, I will finish this article with my selection of six friends' games which represent remarkable moments of my 80-year chess passion. There is one game from Pablo Moran (a friend for life since the early 1940's), and another from Miguel (a forever friend since 2017). There is also one game each from both co-authors of our book "40 Years of Friendship—100 Games of Chess"—U.S players Steve Pozarek (past New Jersey Open Champion), and Wayne Conover (past member of a U.S Olympic Team in Correspondence Chess). Finally, I have included one game each from two friends from my days in the early 1970s at the Westfield Club- Dr. Richard Lewis (chess teacher and retired dentist), and FIDE Master Mark Pinto (who used to attend my seminars as a youngster). They both volunteered to be my teammates when, at age 90, I decided to play the U.S Amateur Team Tournament. I was the captain of "The Oldest Team in Town," (median age of the team—71), sponsored by the Toms River Chess Club.

Since Miguel was the one who inspired me to begin writing, in his memory, here is the link to the articles written after I met him in 2017. (English translation is available on the page)

<http://www.historiadelaedrecespanol.es/articulos/salomon.htm>

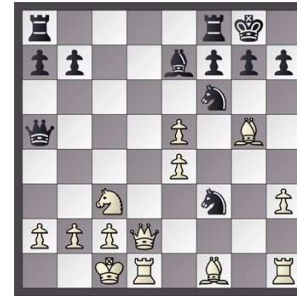
I hope that my readers enjoy the stories, and that my articles may be the first step towards more cooperation in chess journalism between Spain and the U.S. I know that my co-author, Javier Cordero, a great chess historian, would be happy to cooperate with me.

Finally, in another of the many coincidences of my life, I am finishing this article on the birthday Miguel and I shared, September 29, 2022—today I celebrate 94 years on the planet, and Miguel would have been 75. I am certain that his spirit, wherever it may be, is smiling.

Morán, Pablo - Franco, Eduardo

International Tournament Gijón (11) 11.08.1955

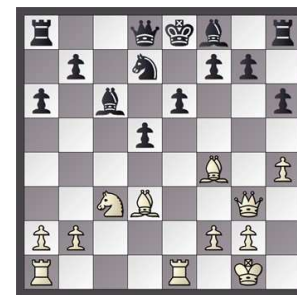
1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4 ♘f6 5. ♘c3 d6 6. ♘g5 e6 7. ♗d2 ♘e7 8. 0-0 0-0 9. f4 e5 10. ♘f3 ♘g4 11. h3 ♘xf3 12. gx3 ♘d4 13. fx5 dx5 14. f4! ♗a5 15. fx5 ♘f3



16. exf6 ♘xd2 17. fx7 ♘xf1? 18. exf8 ♗+ ♗xf8 19. ♘f4! ♘g3 20. ♖hg1 ♘xe4 21. ♘xe4 ♗xa2?? 22. ♘d6+ ♗g8 23. ♖xg7+!! ♗h8 24. ♖g8+!! 1-0

Nepomuceno, Miguel Ángel - Raupp, Thomas Badalona Open, 1980

This attacking symphony got the attention of Mikhail Tal himself, who sent it to Sylvian Zinser, director of the magazine *Europe Echecs*. The game was published with Miguel Angel's comments, and some commentary that Tal added. The ex-World Champion commented that he had decided to send it because he marveled at the energy with which it was played, reminding him of some of his own games. 1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 c5 4. c3 ♘c6 5. ♘f3 ♗b6 6. ♘d3 cxd4 7. cxd4 ♘d7 8. 0-0 ♘xd4 9. ♘xd4 ♗xd4 10. ♘c3 a6 11. ♗f3 ♗xe5 12. ♘f4 ♗f6 13. ♗g3 ♗d8 14. ♖fe1 ♘c6 15. h4 ♘f6 16. ♘e5 ♘d7 17. ♘f4 h6



18. ♖xe6+ fx6 19. ♘g6+ ♗e7 20. ♘d6+ ♗f6 21. ♘h5 ♘xd6 22. ♗g6+ ♗e5 23. ♗g3+ ♗f6 24. ♗g6+ ♗e5 25. ♖e1+ ♗d4 26. ♗c2 ♘b4 27. ♖xe6 ♗c5 28. ♘a4+ ♗b5 29. ♘e2+ ♗a5 30. a3 ♗xh4 31. g4 ♘e1 32. b4+ ♘xb4 33. axb4+ ♗xb4 34. ♖e3 ♗h1+ 35. ♗xh1 d4+ 36. ♖f3 ♖hf8 37. ♗b3+ ♗a5 38. ♘b2 b5 39. ♗g1 ♘xf3 40. ♘xf3 ♖ad8 41. ♗a3+ ♗b6 42. ♗d6+ ♗a5 43. ♗c7+ ♘b6 44. ♘c4+ 1-0

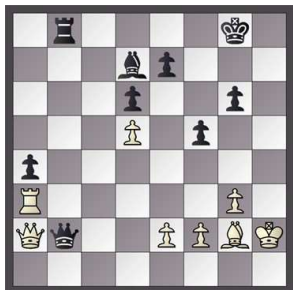
Denker, Arnold Sheldon - Conover, Wayne (by Wayne)

US Open, Somerset 08.1986

My first win against a GM! After 20...Na2, the road to victory was straightforward.

1. d4 f5 Fifty-seven years before this game was played, Denker won a brilliancy as a 15 year-old against the Dutch Defense. Of course, at that time the Leningrad Dutch was unknown! 2. ♘f3 ♘f6 3. g3 g6 4. ♘g2 ♘g7 5. 0-0 0-0 6. c4 d6 7. ♘c3 c6 8. ♗c2 ♗c7 9. d5 cxd5 10. cxd5 ♘e4 11. ♘d2 ♘a6 12. ♖ac1 ♘xd2 13. ♗xd2 ♗a5 14. ♗e3 ♖e8 15. ♘d4 ♗b6 16. ♖fd1 ♘d7 Bet-

ter than grabbing the pawn with 16...♖xb2. 17. ♖d2 ♖ac8 18. ♖c2 A classical player like Denker must have thought that he had the better of this position, but in reality Black's chances are equal. 18. ...♖c4 19. ♖b3? White's 18th move wasn't that good, but the 19th is a blunder, as Black quickly demonstrates. 19. ...♖b4 20. ♖cc1 ♖xa2 21. ♖xa2 ♖xb3 22. ♖xc4 ♖xc4 23. ♖c3 ♖xc3 24. bxc3 a5 25. ♖a1 a4 26. ♖a3 b5 27. h4 ♖c5 28. ♖a2 ♖b8 29. h5 b4 30. cxb4 ♖xb4 31. ♖h2 ♖b2 32. hxg6 hxg6



33.f4 ♖xa2 This wins simply and clearly, so there is no need to look for something better. But the following variation featuring a beautiful queen maneuver by Black and a futile "echo" queen maneuver by White would have provided a spectacular finish: (33...♖h8+ 34. ♖g1 ♖d4+ 35. ♖h2 [35. ♖f1 ♖b2 36. ♖a1 ♖b6 is crushing] 35. ...♖f7 36. e3 ♖d1 37. ♖a1 ♖b1 38. ♖h8 [38. ♖d4 ♖h5+ 39. ♖h3 ♖e2+ 40. ♖g2 ♖b2 wins the queen and soon the rook] 38. ...♖g1+ 39. ♖h3 ♖h1+ 40. ♖xh1 ♖xh1+ 41. ♖g2 ♖xh8+) 34. ♖xa2 ♖b3 35. ♖f3 a3 36. ♖g2 ♖b5 37. ♖f2 ♖c4 threatening 38. ...♖xf3+ 38. ♖e1 Not really a blunder because 38. ♖a1 a2 39. ♖xa2 ♖xf3+ wins a piece. And if White doesn't play 39. ♖xa2, then 39. ...♖b1 wins immediately. Note the helplessness of White's light-squared bishop throughout. 38. ...♖b1+ 0-1

Pozarek, Steve - Dubeck, Leroy (by Steve)

US Amateur Chess Team Tournament, New Jersey 02.1985

This game was played in the first round of the event. I had my dad and my uncle playing on the team – the first time the three of us had ever played together!

1. e4 c5 2. ♖f3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♖xd4 ♖f6 5. ♖c3 a6 6. ♖e2 e5 7. ♖b3 ♖e7 8. 0-0 0-0 9. a4 ♖e6 10. f4 ♖c7 11. f5 ♖c4 12. ♖e3 ♖bd7 13. a5 b5 14. axb6 ♖xb6 15. ♖h1 ♖fc8 16. ♖xb6 ♖xb6 17. ♖xc4 ♖xc4 18. ♖e2 ♖b4 Dubeck has always been consistent with his openings, and the Najdorf Sicilian is one of his favorites. Of course Fischer played this line. 19. ♖a2 ♖d8 Geller—Fischer (Curacao 1962) reached this position with a slightly different move order and continued 19. ...♖b7 20. ♖a5 ♖c7 21. ♖d5 ♖xd5 22. exd5 ♖b5, with an eventual draw. An analyst named Porreca had published some improvements for White in this line that Jim West had refuted in an article in the local NJ chess magazine. At the time of this game, I knew all that analysis but have long since forgotten it. Anyway, Dubeck varied here. It makes sense to activate the dark-squared bishop on the g1-a7 diagonal...but will it be missed on the kingside? 20. ♖d2 (20. ♖fa1±) 20. ...♖c6 *por supuesto que no* 20. ...♖xb2 21. ♖c4+ 21. ♖f3 a5 22. b3 ♖c7 23. ♖d3 ♖f8?! (23. ...a4!? 24. bxa4 ♖b6) 24. ♖d5! ♖xd5 25. exd5 ♖b7 26. ♖h3 ♖xd5 I believe both players were in time trouble here. With this move Dubeck offered a draw. On at least two prior occasions, I had accepted draws with him after having good positions. I probably surprised him by refusing here. 27. c4 ♖d4 28. ♖xh7 ♖ab8?



The decisive error. With 28...♖b6 is at least equal for Black. 29. f6!! Perhaps the prettiest, most powerful move I have ever played. Black is immediately lost. 29. ...♖e8 (29. ♖ gxf6 30. ♖h5! and immediate mate can only be stopped by 30. ♖ ♖g1+ 31. ♖xg1 ♖b6+ and then ♖b7) 30. fxg7 ♖e7 31. ♖h8 ♖b6 32. ♖f1 Of course not. 32. .g8=♖?? ♖g1++ 32. ...♖g4 33. ♖xb8 ♖xg7 34. ♖b7+ ♖e6 35. ♖f3 ♖c5 36. ♖h3+ f5 37. ♖xg7 After this good start, I ended up going 6-0 in the tournament. 1-0

Dlugy, Maxim - Lewis, Richard

Simultaneous, Kenilworth 1990

1. d4 ♖f6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 e5 4. ♖c3 d6 5. e4 ♖e7 6. ♖d3 0-0 7. ♖ge2 ♖bd7 8. f3 ♖e8 9. ♖e3 ♖f8 10. ♖d2 ♖g6 11. g3 a6 12. h4 ♖h5 13. 0-0-0 b5 14. cxb5 axb5 15. ♖xb5 ♖d7 16. ♖xd7 ♖xd7 17. g4 ♖hf4 18. h5 ♖xe2+ 19. ♖xe2 ♖f4 20. ♖d2 ♖g5 21. ♖b1 ♖eb8 22. ♖h2 c4 23. ♖a1 h6 24. ♖b1 ♖b7 25. ♖hh1 ♖a6 26. ♖xf4



26. ...♖xa2+ 0-1

Anderson, Renard - Pinto, Mark

Palo Alto 1991

1. e4 c5 2. ♖f3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♖xd4 a6 5. ♖d3 ♖c7 6. 0-0 b6 7. ♖h1 ♖b7 8. c4 ♖f6 9. ♖c3 ♖c6 10. ♖xc6 dxc6 11. f4 h5 12. e5 ♖g4 13. ♖e1 ♖d8 14. ♖e2 ♖b4 15. ♖g3 ♖xc3 16. ♖xc3 c5 17. ♖g3 g6 18. ♖xg4 hxg4 19. ♖e3



19. ... ♖h3 20. ♖e1 g3 21. ♖g1 ♖e7 22. ♖f3 ♖xf3 23. gxf3 ♖h4 24. ♖e2 ♖xf4 25. ♖g2 ♖h5 26. ♖e1 ♖d2 27. ♖e4 ♖xg2 28. ♖xf4 ♖xb2 0-1