Batsford Chess Library

Technique for the Tournament Player

Mark Dvoretsky and Artur Yusupov

With a contribution from Vladimir Vulfson

Translated by Steven Lovell

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Symbols

!!	Excellent move
!	Good move
!?	Interesting move
?!	Dubious move
?	Bad move
??	Blunder
+	Check
++	Double check
Win	White to play and win
Draw	White to play and draw
=/–	White to play draws; Black to play loses
–/=	White to play loses; Black to play draws
+/=	White to play wins; Black to play draws
W	White to play
B	Black to play
Ch	Championship
Wch	World Championship
(D)	Diagram follows

Preface

Mark Dvoretsky

You may already be acquainted with the first two books based on material from the Dvoretsky-Yusupov school for gifted young chess players (*Training for the Tournament Player* and *Opening Preparation*). In that case you will already know our guiding principles. We held in the school several sessions devoted to various areas of chess development. The aim of the sessions was not at all to impart concrete knowledge – we had too little time for that. It was much more important to point out weaknesses in our pupils' play and help them to get rid of them, to demonstrate the most effective ways of studying chess, to acquaint them with the general laws, ideas and methods which underpin the game.

You are now looking at our third book (there will be five in all). It is based on our work at the third session of the school, which was devoted to the problem of improving mastery of the endgame.

In the last few years the rules governing many tournaments and matches have been fundamentally changed – these days games are hardly ever adjourned. Before, when you entered an ending, it was possible to work out its complexities at home, but now you have to do this at the board. If you are not equipped with excellent knowledge and, even more importantly, an understanding of the principles of the endgame, it is far from easy to cope with this task, especially when you consider the fatigue that builds up during a game. But of course mistakes in the endgame are the last that occur in a game – there is no way of putting them right! Clearly, the importance of technical mastery of the endgame has sharply increased in our time.

I have on my bookshelves quite a few solid tomes on endgame theory. Is it realistic to take in and remember all the information contained in them? As it turns out, there is no need to do this. When you read the first part of the book, you will see that your own system of endgame knowledge can and should be extremely compact and simple to master and remember.

You will discover how to develop it, and you will come across some important sections of the theory of rook and minor-piece endgames.

The second part of the book is spent analysing complex endgames that have occurred in practice. This sort of analysis helps to deepen and strengthen knowledge of the endgame, and assists the development of aspects of character and thought which are essential to every chess player.

The technical conversion of an advantage is a stumbling-block for many chess players. To improve technical command, it is necessary to develop several important skills involving move selection and decision-taking; these skills are not purely to do with chess, but rather involve a combination of chess and psychology. The problem of improving technique is treated in the third part of the book. Here you will find both the theory of this question and its practical application – both in critical analysis of a game between young chess players and on the highest grandmaster level.

The concluding part of the book is, as is customary in this series, spent analysing the games of pupils of the school.

Practically all the chess players I have trained have had a high level of technique and an excellent grasp of the endgame. In other words, the methods described in this book have survived the test of time. I hope you too will find them useful.

1 How to Study the Endgame

Mark Dvoretsky

Many young chess players are all at sea in the endgame. They would like to improve their endgame play, but have no idea how to do so. Chess books have very little to say about methods of independent study of endgame theory. We will now try to fill in this gap.

Two basic areas of endgame study can be identified:

1. Theoretical study (i.e. book-learning, increase in knowledge of the endgame).

2. Improvement of general endgame technique.

Of course, these two areas are closely inter-related: progress in one area will inevitably lead to progress in the other. However, we will still look at them separately.

1. Theoretical Study

To expand your range of knowledge it is essential to study systematically many different types of endgame. Here the traditional division of the material is fully appropriate. If we take a thorough look at, for example, pawn, knight or queen endings we will master the specific problems of these varieties of endgame.

All endgame positions can provisionally be divided into 'exact' and 'problematic' ones. Positions that we know and can already evaluate, where we can find the correct plan of action, we shall call 'exact'. Note that these positions are known to *us*, and not to endgame theory in general. Different chess players have different reserves of exact positions.

All other positions belong to the problematic. In these cases we do not demonstrate our knowledge – we struggle, we search for the best moves, we calculate variations – in short, we play chess.

Many people naïvely believe that knowledge of the endgame consists of a knowledge of dozens of exact positions. But is a large store of concrete knowledge really so necessary? Exact positions (except the most basic ones) occur quite rarely in practice.

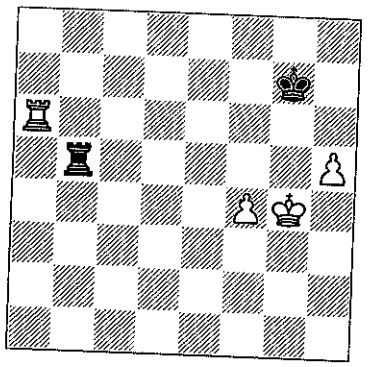
More often than not, the chess player is obliged to struggle in

problematic situations. He must apply in them the relevant general endgame laws along with the more specific rules, methods of play and typical evaluations. All this, together, of course, with the most important exact positions, will comprise an integrated system of endgame knowledge.

I must emphasize again: the number of positions which need to be known exactly is relatively small. It is only in rook endgames that it is essential to memorize thirty or forty concrete positions; in other types of endgame there are even fewer. When you study them, it is often unnecessary to enter into complicated analysis – it is sufficient just to remember the general conclusion.

Let us take for example rook endings with f- and h-pawns. They occur quite rarely, but nevertheless they do occur, so it would be useful to gain some understanding of them. However, it is hardly worthwhile to study all the theory of this type of ending – it is just too complicated. What aspect of this theory should the practical chess player include in his arsenal?

Above all, he should remember that these endgames are, as a rule, drawn. It is useful to look at a practical ending which illustrates the basic defensive ideas.



W

Gligorić – Smyslov
Moscow 1947

The black rook is excellently placed on the fifth rank, where it prevents the white king moving forward. 1 f5 is met by 1...♖b1, threatening a series of checks from the rear.

1 ♖g6+ ♔f7!

1...♔h7 does not lose either, but it makes the defence much harder.

2 ♖g5 ♖b1!

A typical retreat of the black rook in such situations – here it keeps the option of checking the enemy king along both ranks and files.

3 ♖c5

If 3 h6, then Black must avoid 3...♖g1+? 4 ♔f5 ♖h1 5 ♖g7+ since his king is forced onto the back rank and so White wins. The waiting move 3...♖a1! saves the day, for example 4 ♖h5 (4 ♔f5 ♖a5+; 4 h7 ♖g1+ 5 ♔f5 ♖h1) 4...♔g8 5 f5 ♔h7.

3 ... ♔f6
4 ♖c6+ ♔g7!

The main danger for Black is that his king might be forced onto his back rank. This would happen after 4...♔f7? 5 ♔g5 ♖g1+ 6 ♔f5 ♖h1 7 ♖c7+.

5 ♔g5 ♖g1+!
6 ♔f5 ♖a1
7 ♖c7+

7 ♖g6+ ♔f7.

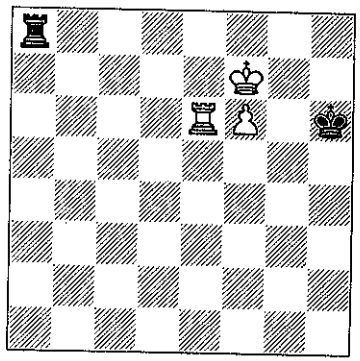
7 ... ♔h6
8 ♖e7 ♖b1
9 ♖e8 ♔g7
10 ♖e5 ♖a1
11 ♖d5 ♖f1

Not a bad move, although it was quite good enough to keep the rook in the corner.

12 ♖d4 ♖a1
13 ♖d6 ♖a5+
14 ♔g4 ♖a1

14...♖b5 is also quite possible, returning to our starting position.

15 ♖e6 ♖g1+
16 ♔f5 ♖a1
17 h6+ ♔h7!
18 ♖d6 ♖a2
19 ♔g5 ♖g2+
20 ♔f6 ♔xh6!
21 ♔e7+ ♔h7
22 f5 ♖e2+
23 ♖e6 ♖a2
24 f6 ♖a8!
25 ♔f7 ♔h6 *(D)*



W

An important theoretical position has arisen, which should have been included in our exact knowledge even earlier – when we studied endings of ♖+♙ v ♖.

26 ♖e1 ♖a7+
27 ♖e7 ♖a8

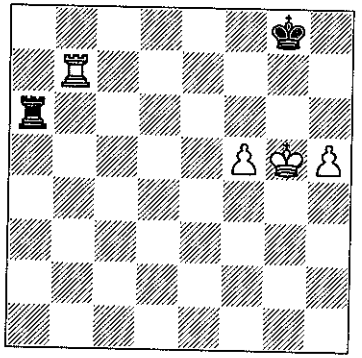
It is simplest to keep the rook on the eighth rank, keeping out the white king. Black may also play 27...♖a1 28 ♔f8 ♔g6 29 f7 ♔f6! 30 ♔g8 ♖g1+!, with a draw, but 27...♖a6? loses – in the given variation Black has no check along the g-file.

28 ♖d7 ♔h7
29 ♖d1 ♖a7+
30 ♔e6 ♖a6+
31 ♖d6 ♖a8
32 ♖d4 ♔g8
33 ♖g4+ ♔f8
Draw

After looking at an endgame of this kind we can draw certain

general conclusions. We now know where Black should put his rook. And, as Maizelis noted, it is best to keep the king on f7 until there is a danger that it will be forced onto the last rank. Then it can move to g7, and later even to h6, attacking the white pawn.

Of course, by no means all positions with f- and h-pawns are drawn. The most important exception has already been mentioned more than once: when the king is cut off on the last rank, Black usually loses.



W

1	**f6**	**♖a1**
2	**♖g7+**	**♔h8**

2...♔f8 is answered by 3 h6 with the inevitable advance of the h-pawn to follow.

3	**♔g6**	**♖g1+**
4	**♔f7**	**♖a1**
5	**♖g8+**	**♔h7**
6	**♖e8**	**♖a7+**
7	**♔f8**	

and **8 f7**.

It is sufficient to play through this variation on a board just once – there is no need to memorize it, particularly as White has other ways of winning.

That is really all that the practical chess player needs to remember about this type of ending. As you see, there isn't too much to remember and it's not as difficult as all that!

We can now take a look at another, rather more extensive section of our system of endgame knowledge – the theory of endgames where a rook is confronted by pawns. Any reference book on the endgame can serve as the basis for our study, for example the monograph by Maizelis *Rook against Pawns*, published in 1956 (endgame books, unlike opening manuals, hardly date). About 400 positions are examined there. Of course, we cannot absorb and memorize all the information. We need to select the most important basic positions for the practical player.

But how can we identify what is most important? This is the main problem. This is where the general intellect of the chess player, his

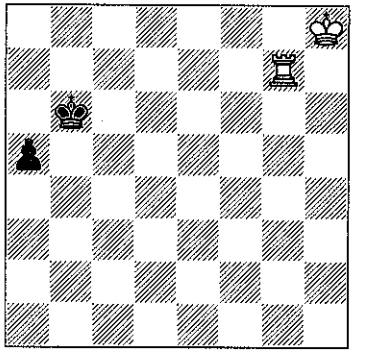
ability to work with a book, to generalize and to draw conclusions are revealed. Any prior knowledge (however unsystematic) and practical experience in the area of study will also be of assistance.

Positions in endgames with rook against pawns are very dynamic, and each tempo can have a decisive influence on the outcome of the game. Consequently, there is no great strategy, clash of plans or set of underlying laws (as, for example, in opposite-coloured bishops endgames). There are almost no exact positions which we can rely on to avoid precise calculation. The most important factor is a knowledge of typical motifs which help us to seek out quickly the correct move and to calculate variations more reliably.

These motifs can best be mastered by examining simple positions where they are applied, and where their use is not obscured by excessive analytical detail. Afterwards, the precise contours of the position may be forgotten, but a notion of the motif will remain. Sometimes such a position – one containing a motif of this kind – also happens to be an important exact position; in this case, of course, we must commit it to memory.

So let us look at some simple positions to see the fundamental motifs at work in an endgame of rook against pawns.

Cutting the king off



+/=

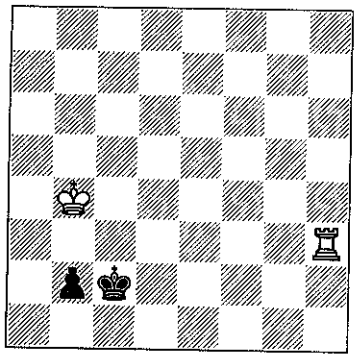
White wins by playing **1 ♖g5!**. When the pawn reaches a3, it can be eliminated by ♖g3 (or, if the pawn is on a2, by ♖g1 and ♖a1). If it is Black to move, then after **1...♔b5(c5)!** the position is drawn – it is not hard to see that cutting the king off along the fourth rank by 2 ♖g4 gives White nothing.

Promoting to a knight

See diagram on following page.

1	**♖h2+**	**♔c1**
2	**♔c3**	**b1♘+!**
3	**♔d3**	**♘a3**
4	**♖a2**	**♘b1!**

with a draw, but Black must not play 4...♘b5? (rook against knight endings, the knight should



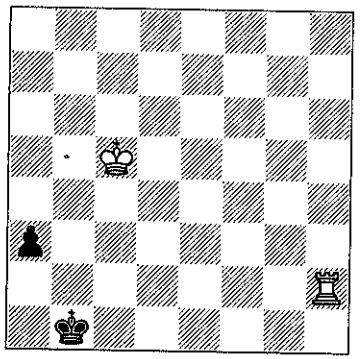
W

stay close to the king; once they are separated, the king and knight can only rarely draw).

A draw also results from 1...♔b1 2 ♔b3 ♔a1! 3 ♖xb2 stalemate.

However, if the pawn is on the c-, d-, e- or f-files, only promotion to a knight saves Black.

However, with a rook's pawn not even this method works.



W

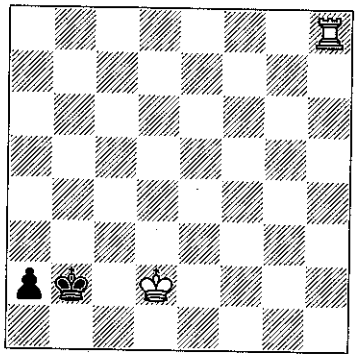
1 ♔b4 (c4) a2
2 ♔b3 a1♘+
3 ♔c3

and Black is in zugzwang.

It is useful to note that if Black had a pawn on b5 as well he would still lose: 3...b4+ 4 ♔xb4 ♘c2+ 5 ♔c3 ♘e3 6 ♔d3 ♘d5 7 ♖h4, and the knight, separated from its king, will soon perish.

Stalemate

We have already looked at one case of stalemate which is very useful in practice. Here is another example.



W

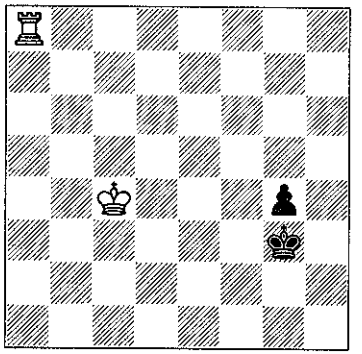
1 ♖b8+ ♔a1!

with a draw, but not 1...♔a3? 2 ♔c2! a1♘+ 3 ♔c3 ♔a2 4 ♖b7.

Zwischenschach to win a tempo

See diagram on following page.

1 ... ♔f2
2 ♖f8+!



B

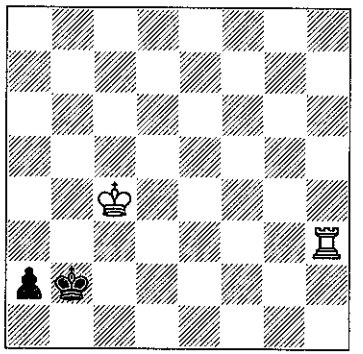
A draw results after 2 ♔d3? g3 3 ♖f8+ ♔e1!.

2 ... ♔e2
3 ♖g8! ♔f3

The zwischenschach ('in-between-check') has enabled White to force the black king back one square from f2 to f3.

4 ♔d3 g3
5 ♖f8+ ♔g2 6 ♔e2 and so on.

'Shouldering away'



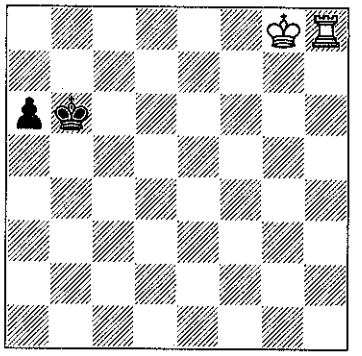
W

1 ♖h2+ ♔a3!

Black obtains a draw by keeping the white king away from the pawn.

1...♔b1? is a mistake: 2 ♔b3 a1♘+ 3 ♔c3. As you see, it is sometimes necessary to repeat material already covered as you study new motifs (in this case, promotion to a knight).

Let us look at a slightly more complex example.



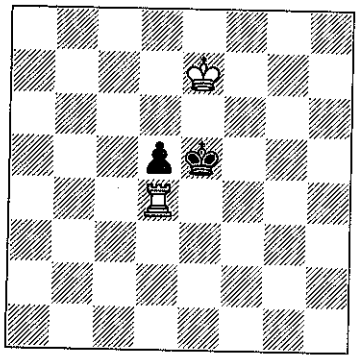
B

1...a5? does not work in view of 2 ♖h5! – this is a motif we have already met. However, **1...♔b5?** is also bad: 2 ♔f7 a5 3 ♔e6 a4 4 ♔d5. The only saving move is **1...♔c5!**, preventing the white king from approaching the pawn.

Taking the side route

The twin ideas of 'shouldering away' and 'taking the side route'

are brilliantly expressed in a famous 1928 study by Réti.



W

1 ♖d2 (d3)!! d4
2 ♖d1! ♔d5
3 ♔d7!

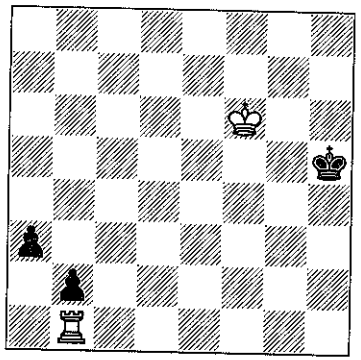
and Black is in zugzwang: on 3...♔c4, 4 ♔e6 is decisive, and if 3...♔e4, then 4 ♔c6.

Wrong is 1 ♖d1? d4 2 ♔d7 (2 ♔f7 ♔e4 3 ♔e6 d3) 2...♔d5! (Black prevents White taking the side route) 3 ♔c7 ♔c5! (3...♔c4? 4 ♔d6! d3 5 ♔e5), and now White is in zugzwang.

Let us now move on to positions where a rook is opposed by two connected passed pawns.

Mating threats to the opponent's king

If the pawns are far advanced (two black pawns on the sixth rank, or one on the fifth and one on the seventh), then the rook cannot stop them. However, it is sometimes possible to save the day by pursuing the opponent's king when it is stuck at the side of the board.



W

Horwitz, Kling
1851

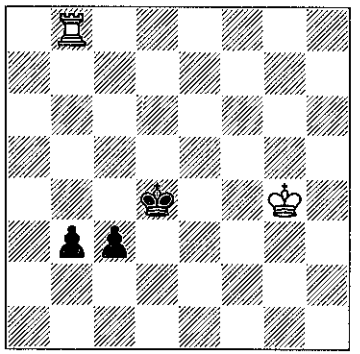
1 ♔f5 ♔h4
2 ♔f4 ♔h3
3 ♔f3 ♔h2
4 ♔e3! ♔g2

After 4...♔g3 5 ♖g1+ ♔h4 6 ♔f4 ♔h3 7 ♔f3, bad is 7...♔h2?? 8 ♖b1, and Black loses because of the zugzwang.

5 ♔d3 ♔f3
6 ♔c3 a2
7 ♔xb2

(or 7 ♖f1+) with a draw.

Zwischenschach before capture of a pawn



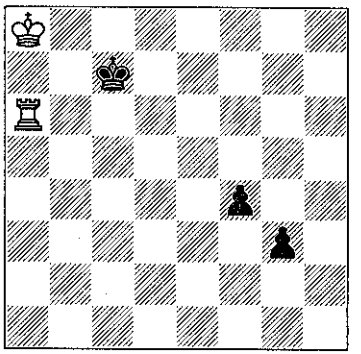
W

In this position Fridshtein resigned against Lutikov (Riga 1954). He examined the variation 1 ♖xb3 c2 2 ♖b4+ ♔d5 3 ♖b5+ ♔d6 4 ♖b6+ ♔c7, but failed to spot the saving zwischenschach 1 ♖b4+!.

I should note at this point that different players can focus on different motifs and rules, depending on their experience and knowledge. In the example above you should take note of the manoeuvre by which the black king escapes the checks (after 1 ♖xb3?), but you can pass over this if you already know the motif.

The best position for the rook is behind the most advanced pawn

1 ♖g6! ♔d7
2 ♖g4! g2!
3 ♖xg2 ♔e6
4 ♖g5!



W

White wins, due to the fact that the black king is cut off along the fifth rank.

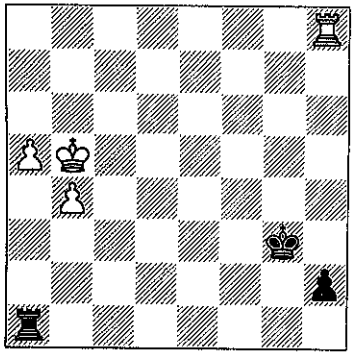
Maizelis' book gives a position by Sozin, which differs only in that the white king is on a7. In this case after 1 ♖g6! ♔d7 there is a second solution: 2 ♔b6 ♔e7 3 ♔c5 ♔f7 4 ♖g4 ♔f6 5 ♔d4! (5 ♖xf4+? ♔g5 6 ♖f8 ♔g4 7 ♔d4 g2) 5...♔f5 6 ♖g8 winning.

However, with the king on a8 the analogous variation no longer works: 1 ♖g6! ♔d7 2 ♔b7? ♔e7 3 ♔c6 ♔f7 4 ♖g4 ♔f6 5 ♔d5 ♔f5 6 ♖g8 f3! 7 ♔d4 (7 ♖xg3 ♔f4 8 ♖g8 f2; 7 ♖f8+ ♔g4 8 ♔e4 f2 9 ♔e3 ♔h3 with a draw) 7...f2 8 ♔e3 f1♘+!.

Which pawn to move?

See diagram on following page.
There is an easy win with:

1 ♖xh2 ♔xh2



W

Maroczy – Tarrasch

San Sebastian 1911

2 ♔a6!

The immediate 1 ♔a6! is also possible.

2	**...**	**♔g3**
3	**b5**	**♔f4**
4	**b6**	**♔e5**
5	**b7**	**♖b1**
6	**♔a7**	**♔d6**
7	**b8♕+**	

Note the move 2 ♔a6!. Firstly, White moves the pawn which the rook is not standing behind. Secondly, the remaining pawn is far away from the opponent's king, which does not have time to attack it.

2 a6? is wrong due to 2...♔g3 3 ♔b6 ♔f4 4 a7 ♔e5 5 ♔b7 ♔d5 6 b5 ♔c5, and the black king has managed to attach itself to the b-pawn. Or 4 b5 ♔e5 5 ♔a7 ♔d6 6 b6 ♖b1! 7 ♔b7 (7 b7 ♔c7) 7...♔c5.

The game in fact continued:

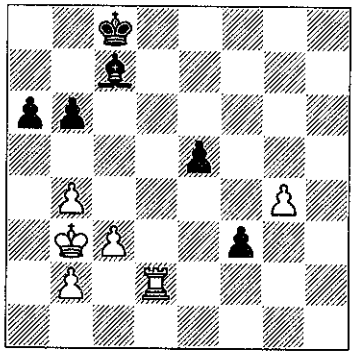
1	**♔c6?**	**♖c1+**
2	**♔b6**	**♖c4!**

Threatening 3...♖h4, covering the h-file and forcing the promotion of the h-pawn.

3	**♖xh2**	**♖xb4+**
4	**♔c5**	**♖a4**
5	**♔b5**	**♖xa5+**

with a draw.

This store of typical motifs could be extended further, but for the time being we shall restrict ourselves to these, the most common. Some of the ideas we have examined do not only occur in endgames of this type. For example, the rook should be placed behind the most advanced pawn in almost all cases when it is opposed by two connected passed pawns.



W

Alekhine – Tartakower

Vienna 1922

Alekhine analyses the natural continuations 36 ♔c2, 36 ♔c4, 36 g5 and 36 ♖h2 and shows that they offer no more than a draw. The only winning move is the fantastic

36 ♖d5!!

However, this move can be explained clearly in terms of the typical ideas in such endgames.

"*The variations justifying this at first sight strange move (the rook attacks a defended pawn and allows the other to advance), will seem simple if you understand the basic idea – the black pawns are harmless*:

1) *when they are on squares of the same colour as the bishop, as the white king can then easily block them*, for example:

36	**...**	**f2**
37	**♖d1**	**e4**
38	**♔c2**	**♗f4**
39	**♖f1**	

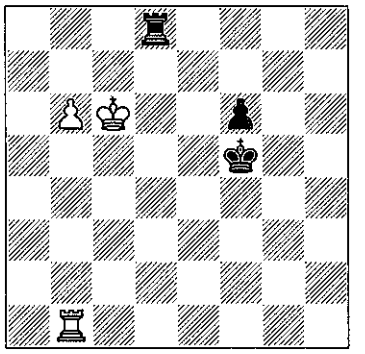
and 40 ♔d1.

2) *when the rook can attack them from behind, but without loss of time*, for example:

36	**...**	**e4**
37	**♖f5**	**♗g3**
38	**g5**	**e3**
39	**♖xf3**	**e2**
40	**♖e3"**	

(Alekhine).

It is also worthwhile to examine endgames closely connected to those above – sharp rook endgames which enter rook against pawns endgames. Here we will meet motifs which are already familiar.



B

Alekhine – Bogoljubow

Germany/Holland Wch (19) 1929

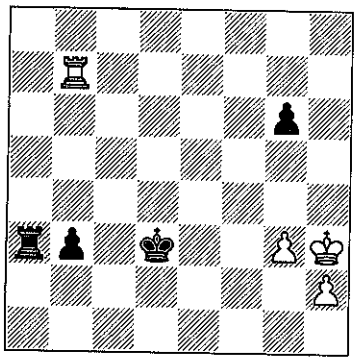
The game continued 70...♔g4? 71 b7 f5 72 b8♕ ♖xb8 73 ♖xb8 and White won easily by moving his king over to the pawn. However, Bogoljubow could have saved himself by 'shouldering away' the king. Necessary was:

70 ... ♔e4!

The point of this move is to put the black king in the path of its opposite number.

Of course, we shall meet other typical motifs which are applicable to sharp rook endings. The most important of them is *covering* a file. We have already met this

principle in the analysis of the endgame Maroczy-Tarrasch. Now we can look at a much more complex example.



B

This position could have occurred in the game Lapin-Utiatsky, Briansk 1965.

1 ... ♔c2
2 ♖c7+

The only path to victory is now the paradoxical move indicated by Utiatsky:

2 ... ♔b2!!

This is linked to the idea of covering the king. For example, on 3 ♔g4 decisive is 3...♖a5! 4 ♖c6 ♔a3! 5 ♖xg6 b2 6 ♖b6 ♖a4+ and 7...♖b4.

3 ♖c6 ♖a4!
4 ♖xg6 ♔a3

Also good is 4...♔c3 or 4...♔a2.

5 ♖b6

5 ♖f6 b2 6 ♖f1 ♖c4 7 ♖b1 ♖c1.

5 ... b2

Threatening the covering manoeuvre 6...♖b4.

6 ♖xb2 ♔xb2
7 g4 ♔c3
8 ♔h4 ♔d4
9 ♔g5 ♔e5
10 h4 ♔e6

and Black wins.

By threatening to cover up the king, Black has forced his opponent to give up the rook earlier than he would like. If the stereotyped

2 ... ♔b1

is played, then the covering idea no longer works and White can wait for the pawn to reach the square b1. In addition, from there it will take the king longer to make its way over to the opposite flank.

3 ♔g4 b2

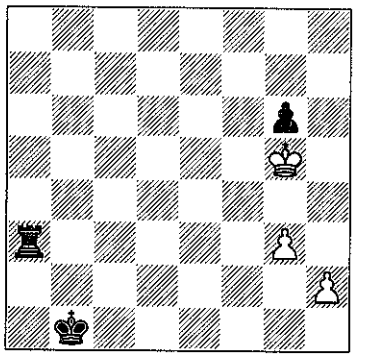
3...♖a5 4 ♖c6 b2 5 ♖xg6 ♔a2 6 ♖b6 with a draw.

4 ♔g5 ♔a1

4...♖b3 is met by 5 ♔xg6 or 5 g4.

5 ♖b7 b1♕
6 ♖xb1+ ♔xb1 *(D)*

White can now obtain a draw by various means. It is useful to examine the resulting variations, as this will enable us to repeat and consolidate our knowledge of rook against pawns endings. Moreover, it is necessary to concentrate especially hard during this analysis – in spite of its apparent simplicity, it does not take much to go wrong.



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a) After 7 ♔xg6 ♔c2 there may follow:

a1) 8 g4 ♔d3 9 h4 ♔e4 10 h5 ♔f4 11 h6 ♖a6+ 12 ♔h5! with a draw (shouldering away). It is amusing that Utiatsky suggests 12 ♔g7? ♔g5 13 h7 ♖a7+ 14 ♔g8 ♔g6 15 h8♘+ ♔f6 16 g5+ ♔xg5 17 ♘f7+, but we already know that after 17...♔f6 18 ♘d6 ♔e6 Black should, according to theory, win.

a2) 8 h4 (according to Utiatsky this move loses) 8...♖xg3+ 9 ♔f6 ♖h3 10 ♔g5 ♔d3 11 h5 ♔e4 12 h6 ♔e5 13 ♔g6 ♔e6 14 ♔g7! (but not 14 h7? ♖g3+ 15 ♔h6 ♔f7 16 h8♘+ ♔f6) 14...♔e7 (14...♖g3+ 15 ♔f8!) 15 h7 ♖g3+ 16 ♔h8!, saving the game due to the stalemate.

b) 7 g4 ♔c2 8 h4 ♖g3 9 ♔f4! ♖h3 10 ♔g5 ♔d3 11 h5 gh 12 gh ♔e4 13 h6 ♔e5 14 ♔g6 ♔e6 15 ♔g7! with a draw, as in the previous variation.

And so, we should try to build up our knowledge of endgame theory in the most economical way possible, by picking out the most common motifs and most important exact positions. How best to master and consolidate the material is another question. Here there is no substitute for studying additional examples, including complex practical examples (such as the one we have just looked at). It is useful to solve a number of practice problems on the theme of study. But, most important of all, I recommend that you analyse independently the endgames that you come across.

What benefit can we derive from the independent analysis of endgame positions?

1) We discover new ideas and motifs which expand our range of knowledge, and we refine the information we already have.

2) After analysing a large quantity of material, we understand better which points are typical and important and which are chance factors. As a result, we form our ideas on the endgame as concisely and economically as possible, without, however, omitting anything fundamental.

3) Our analytical abilities grow, in particular our ability to analyse adjourned games.

4) Sometimes chess players gain the impression that they basically understand the secrets of chess, and that finding the best move is not a problem for them in most cases. All that is required is not to lose concentration and to do a bit of study of the openings. Analysis helps you to rid yourself of such illusions; it shows what a wealth of ideas can sometimes be concealed in even the quietest-seeming position. It teaches you not to take a superficial view, and it also helps you to develop important qualities such as precision, painstakingness, hard work and so on.

5) Analysing your own games helps you to diagnose objectively your weaknesses.

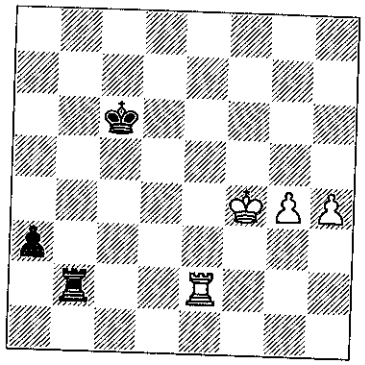
6) Sometimes analysis leads to interesting results which bring creative satisfaction.

Flicking through a copy of *Informator* a while ago, I took an interest in an ending annotated by my pupil Alexei Dreev *(D)*.

A draw results after 1 ♖e1? a2 2 ♖a1 ♔d7, or 1 ♖e3? ♖b4+ 2 ♔f5 ♖a4 3 ♖e1 a2 4 h5 (4 ♖a1 ♔d7) 4...a1♕ 5 ♖xa1 ♖xa1.

1 ♖e6+!

The black king is at a crossroads. In the game it moved to the kingside, but White won easily by



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Dreev – Moskalenko
USSR Championship of Young Masters, Lvov 1985

placing his rook behind the passed pawn:

1	**...**	**♔d7**
2	**♖a6**	**a2**
3	**g5**	**♔e7**
4	**♔g4**	**♔f7**
5	**♔h5**	**♖h2**
6	**♖a7+**	**♔e6**
7	**♔g6**	**♖b2**
8	**h5**	**♖b8**
9	**h6**	**♖g8+**
10	**♔h5**	**♔f5**
11	**♖a5+**	

Black resigned

Black has a more stubborn defence:

1 ... ♔b5

In *Informator* there is the following analysis:

2 ♖e5+!! ♔b6

2...♔b4 3 ♖e8 ♔b5 4 ♖b8+! and 5 ♖a8.

3 ♖e3!

The many exclamation marks are those of the annotator.

3	**...**	**♖b4+**
4	**♔f5**	**♖a4**
5	**h5**	**a2**
6	**♖e1**	**a1♕**
7	**♖xa1**	**♖xa1**
8	**h6**	**♔c7**
9	**g5!**	**♔d7**

Or 9...♖h1 10 g6! ♖xh6 11 g7 ♖h5+ 12 ♔f4 ♖h4+ 13 ♔f3 ♖h3+ 14 ♔g2.

10	**h7**	**♖h1**
11	**g6**	

and White wins.

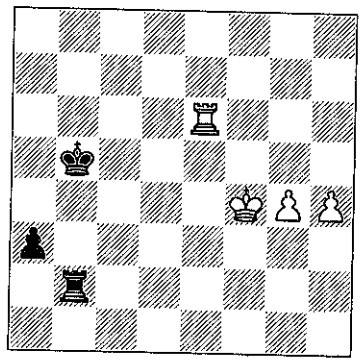
Unfortunately, this whole variation is a comedy of errors brought about by Dreev's natural, but in this case mistaken, desire to place his rook behind his opponent's passed pawn at all costs.

After 9 g5 Black saves himself by 9...♖h1! (the black rook really does belong behind White's most advanced pawn) 10 g6 ♖h5+! (remember the endgame Fridshtein-Lutikov), or 10 ♔g6 ♔d7 11 ♔h7 ♔e6 12 g6 ♖g1! (this we have already seen in the endgame Maroczy-Tarrasch).

White should not give up his rook. Instead of 5 h5?, 5 ♖e1! a2 6 ♖a1 ♔c7 7 h5 ♔d7 8 h6 wins.

However, Black went wrong before this: a draw could have been achieved by 4...a2! (instead of 4...♖a4?) 5 ♖a3 ♖b5+ 6 ♔g6 ♖a5 7 ♖xa2 ♖xa2 8 h5 ♔c6.

Nevertheless the endgame is won all the same – it is just that the rook must not be put on e3. If we return to the position after 1 ♖e6+ ♔b5 *(D)*:



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Correct is:

2	**♖e1!**	**a2**
3	**♖a1**	**♔c6**
4	**h5**	**♔d6**
5	**h6**	**♖h2**

5...♔e6 6 h7 ♖b8 7 ♖xa2 ♔f6 8 ♖h2 ♖h8 9 ♖h6+ ♔g7 10 ♔g5.

6 ♔g5 (f5)!

This win is simpler than 6 h7 ♖xh7 7 ♖xa2 ♖h8, when White must find either 8 ♖a6+ or 8 ♖a4.

6	**...**	**♔e7**
7	**♔g6**	

Also possible is 7 h7.

7 ... ♔f8

8 h7

and White wins.

All we now have left to deal with is the rook check on e5, which in actual fact deserves not two exclamation marks, but more like one question mark. Let us check

2 ♖e5+?! ♔b4!?

After 3 ♖e8? Black plays not 3...♔b5? but 3...a2!. An immediate draw results after 4 ♖a8 ♖c2! with the threat of 5...♖c4+, 6...♖c5(c3)+ and 7...♖a5(a3). If 4 ♖b8+, then 4...♔c4 (or 4...♔c3) 5 ♖a8 ♖b4! (threatening the covering manoeuvre ...♔b3+ and ...♖a4) 6 ♖xa2 ♔b3+ 7 ♔f5 ♔xa2 8 h5 ♖b5+! (it is essential to force the king onto the bad square h4 – this is not hard to achieve, using the far-reaching powers of the rook) 9 ♔g6 ♖b6+ 10 ♔g5 ♖b5+ 11 ♔h4 ♖b1! (now the rook gets in behind the pawns) 12 h6 (12 g5 ♔b3 13 g6 ♖g1!) 12...♖h1+ 13 ♔g5 ♔b3 14 ♔g6 ♔c4 15 g5 ♔d5 16 ♔h7 ♔e6 17 g6 ♖g1! with a draw.

After 2 ♖e5+?! ♔b4!?, the rook must all the same be returned to the first rank, but then it becomes apparent that the check was pointless – it is necessary to calculate an additional variation:

3	**♖e1**	**a2**
4	**♖a1**	**♔b3**
5	**h5**	**♖b1**
6	**♖xa2**	**♔xa2**

A mistake now is 7 h6? ♖h1 8 g5 ♔b3 with a draw. However, the win is still there:

7 g5! ♖h1

Or 7...♖f1+ 8 ♔g4! (8 ♔e5? ♖h1!) 8...♔b3 9 g6.

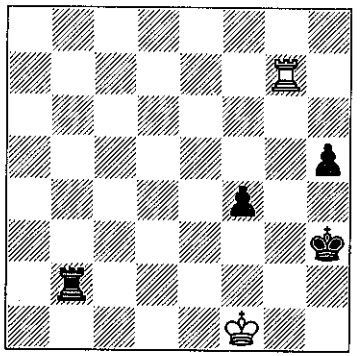
8 g6!

In 1976 the Soviet championships were being held in Moscow. In the very first round my friend Boris Gulko adjourned his game against GM Taimanov in a complex rook ending. Before the resumption of the game he asked me to help with the analysis.

In order to gain a firmer foothold in some highly intricate variations, we had to turn to the theory of rook endings with f- and h-pawns. The basic information provided above was not enough for us. However, the positions in question were nowhere to be found even in endgame literature, so we had to supplement official theory with our own analysis. Here is the crucial basic position that we found *(D)*:

The white king is cut off on the back rank. Does that mean that White should lose? As it turns out, no. After all, the black king is also hardly in the best position, cut off on the h-file.

1	**♔g1!**	**h4**
2	**♖g8**	**f3**



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3	**♖f8**	**♔g3**

Alternatively, 3...♖g2+ 4 ♔f1! ♔g3 5 ♖g8+! ♔h2 6 ♖f8.

4	**♖g8+**	**♔f4**
5	**♖f8+**	**♔e3**
6	**♖e8+**	**♔d3**
7	**♖d8+**	**♔e2**
8	**♖e8+**	**♔d1**
9	**♖f8 (e3)**	

with a draw.

However, if Black is to move, then he wins by taking away the important square g1 from the opponent's king.

1	**...**	**♔h2!**
2	**♖g8**	

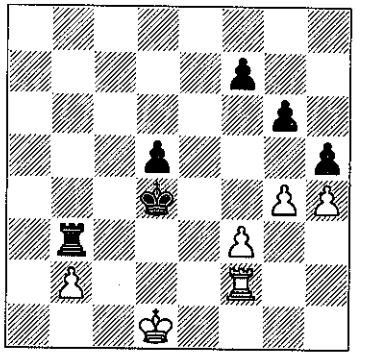
If 2 ♖f7 or 2 ♖h7, then 2...♔g3 is decisive.

2	**...**	**h4**
3	**♖g7**	

3 ♖g4 h3 4 ♖xf4 ♔g3 5 ♖f8 ♖b1+ 6 ♔e2 h2.

3	**...**	**h3**
4	**♖g8**	**f3**

(or 4...♖g2), winning.



B

Taimanov – Gulko

USSR Championships, First League, Moscow 1976

42	**...**	**♔e3**

This was the sealed move.

43	**♖e2+**	**♔xf3**
44	**gh**	**gh**
45	**♖e5**	**♔g4**

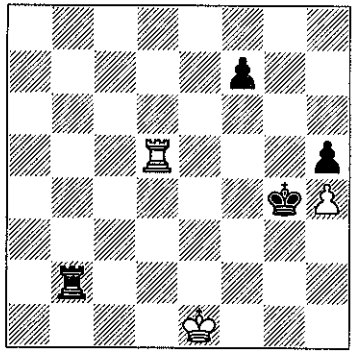
Worse is 45...♖xb2 46 ♖xh5! ♔e4 47 ♖h8, and White should draw.

46	**♖xd5**	**♖xb2**
47	**♔e1** *(D)*	

After 47 ♖d4+ ♔g3 48 ♔e1 f5 49 ♖d5 f4 50 ♖g5+ (or 50 ♖xh5 ♖b1+ 51 ♔d2 f3) Black plays not 50...♔f3? 51 ♖xh5, but 50...♔xh4 51 ♖g8 ♔h3 52 ♔f1 ♔h2!, reaching a winning position, since the black king makes it to h2.

And now we have come to the culmination of the whole ending.

The natural move 47...f5? is wrong. After 48 ♔f1 ♖h2 49 ♔g1



B

♖xh4 50 ♔g2 f4 51 ♖d3 we reach an 'ordinary' (and hence drawn) position with f- and h-pawns, and, what is more, with the black rook placed awkwardly. On 48...f4 there follows 49 ♖g5+ ♔xh4 50 ♖g8 ♔h3 51 ♔g1 with a drawn position as the white king has reached g1. If 49...♔f3 (instead of 49...♔xh4), then 50 ♔g1 ♖b1+ 51 ♔h2 ♔f2 52 ♖xh5 f3 53 ♖a5 ♔f1 54 ♔g3 f2 55 ♖a2 ♖b3+ 56 ♔g4, and White gives up his rook for the f-pawn.

47 ... ♔xh4!
48 ♖d7

Also hopeless is 48 ♖f5 ♖b7 49 ♔f1 (49 ♔f2 ♔g4 50 ♖f6 h4) 49...♔g4 50 ♖f2 ♖b1+! 51 ♔g2 f5. To prevent the king being forced back onto the first rank, the white rook must stand guard over the second rank, where it is placed too passively. Black wins easily by pushing his pawns.

48 ... f6!!

The only way to win! If 48...f5? 49 ♖g7 a draw results: 49...♔h3 50 ♔f1 ♔h2 (otherwise 51 ♔g1) 51 ♖g5.

49 ♔f1

Nor does 49 ♖g7 help in view of 49...♖b5! 50 ♔f2 ♖f5+ 51 ♔e3 (51 ♔g2 ♖g5+) 51...♔h3 with an easy win. Black simply advances his king and the h-pawn, and then covers the g-file with his rook, and the white king is too far away to stop the rook's pawn.

49 ... ♔g4

Black now has a won position without any real complications, as the white king is cut off on the first rank, and the black king has not been restricted to the h-file.

50 ♖g7+ ♔f5
51 ♖h7 ♔g6
52 ♖h8 f5
53 ♖g8+ ♔f6
54 ♔g1 f4
55 ♔f1 ♔f5
56 ♔g1 h4
57 ♖g7 ♔e4
58 ♖a7 ♔f3
59 ♖a3+ ♔g4

We have already met this position when we were discussing the basic ideas of endings with f- and h-pawns.

60 ♖a8 ♔g3
61 ♖g8+ ♔f3
62 ♖h8 ♖b1+
63 ♔h2 ♔f2
64 ♖xh4 f3
65 ♖a4 ♔f1
White resigned

On 66 ♔g3 f2 67 ♖a2 ♖b3+ 68 ♔h2 Gulko intended to play the quickest win – 68...♖f3!. Also good is the 'scientific' 68...♖e3 69 ♖b2 ♖e8 70 ♖b1+ ♔e2 71 ♖b2+ ♔f3 72 ♖b3+ ♖e3 73 ♖b1 ♖e1, but under no circumstances 69...♔e1?? (instead of 69...♖e8!), as Capablanca once played in this position. After 70 ♖b1+ ♔e2, his opponent Vera Menchik could have drawn by the obvious move 71 ♔g2!, but there followed 71 ♖b2+?? ♔f3, and Menchik resigned. The game was played at the Hastings tournament of 1926. This curious incident shows just how careful you have to be when playing even the simplest endings.

Gulko and I found another interesting and theoretically important position by analysing instead of 46 ♖d5:

46 ♔c2

We examined the following (albeit not totally forced) variation:

46 ... ♖b5
47 ♖g5+ ♔xh4
48 ♖f5 ♖b7

Also worthy of attention is 48...♔g4 49 ♖xf7 h4.

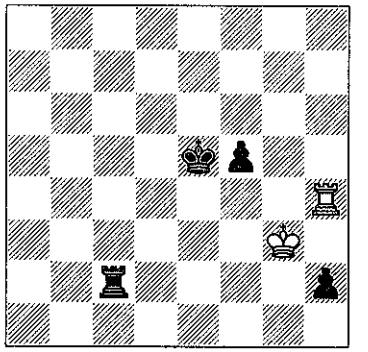
49 ♖xd5 ♔g4
50 ♖d4+ ♔g5
51 ♔d3

51 ♖d8 is clearly stronger.

51 ... ♖xb2
52 ♔e3 h4
53 ♔f3 h3
54 ♖g4+ ♔f5
55 ♖f4+ ♔e6
56 ♖h4 h2
57 ♖h6+ ♔e5
58 ♖h8 ♖c2
59 ♖h4

The threat was ...♔e5-d4-c3-b2-c1 and so on.

59 ... f5
60 ♔g3 *(D)*



B

The obvious 60...f4+? does not lead to victory: 61 ♔f3 ♖c3+ 62 ♔g2 ♔e4 63 ♔xh2 (63 ♖h8!) 63...♖c2+ 64 ♔h3! (64 ♔g1? ♔e3 65 ♖h8 ♖c1+ 66 ♔h2 f3 67 ♖e8+ ♔f2 68 ♖a8 ♔f1) 64...♔f3 65 ♖h8 ♖c7 66 ♖h6 (66 ♔h2? ♔f2) 66...♖e7 67 ♖h8 ♔f2 68 ♖a8! f3 69 ♖a2+ ♖e2 70 ♖a1 (or 70 ♖a8

♔f1 71 ♔g3 f2 72 ♔f3! ♔g1 73 ♖g8+) with a draw.

Let us imagine now that it is White to move. He has no choice but to play 61 ♖h8 (61 ♔f3 is impossible due to 61...♖c1! 62 ♖xh2 ♖c3+), and the black king can advance, moving round its rook along the first rank to the h-pawn. We should note that c2 is precisely the right square for the black rook. If it is on d2 or e2, the white rook is no longer forced to abandon the fourth rank (White has the move ♔f3!). If the rook is on b2, the route of the black king across the queenside past its own rook becomes too long.

In other words, we have here a zugzwang position. It is necessary to turn the move over to White. Thus:

60 ... ♖d2
61 ♔f3 ♖a2

61...♖d1? 62 ♖xh2 ♖d3+ 63 ♔e2.

62 ♔g3 ♖c2!!
63 ♖h8

63 ♔f3 ♖c1!.

63 ... ♔e4
64 ♖e8+ ♔d3
65 ♖d8+

After 65 ♖h8, Black replies with 65...♖e2! intending 66...♔d2.

65 ... ♔c3
66 ♖h8

66 ♖c8+ is met by 66...♔d2 or 66...♔b2.

66 ... ♖e2!

If 66...♔b2?, then 67 ♔f4 (or 67 ♖xh2) ♔c1 68 ♔xf5 ♔d1 69 ♔g4 and the black king is not in time.

67 ♔f4 ♔d2
68 ♔xf5 ♔e1
69 ♔g4 ♔f1
70 ♔g3 ♔g1

The black king has made it just in time!

2 Improving your Technique

Mark Dvoretsky

We shall now discuss how to raise the level of your technique. To do this it is necessary to study questions which are common to all (or many) endgames. These are issues such as the increased role of the king in the endgame, zugzwang (along with mutual zugzwang and the opposition), the effectiveness of exchanging pieces, and so on. It is especially important to gain a feel for the endgame, to develop the optimal cast of mind for it, to understand the underlying chess-related and psychological principles at work.

The best way of learning all this is to analyse practical endgames played by the great masters of the endgame. As an example we can take a look at a game by GM Ulf Andersson.

Andersson – Franco
Buenos Aires 1979
English Opening

1 ♘f3 ♘f6
2 c4 g6
3 ♘c3 d5
4 cd ♘xd5
5 e4 ♘xc3
6 dc

Andersson likes endgames and is a very strong endgame player, and so he is willing to exchange queens as early as the opening.

6 ... ♕xd1+
7 ♔xd1 f6
8 ♗e3 e5
9 ♘d2

9 ♗c4!?.

9 ... ♗e6
10 ♗c4 ♗xc4

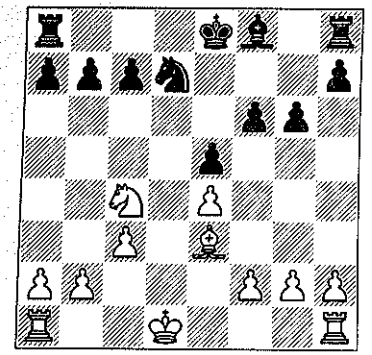
10...♔f7 looks more logical, but even then after 11 ♔c2 ♘d7 12 b4 Black has some difficulties: 12...♘b6 13 ♗b3 or 12...h5 13 g3, intending 14 f4.

11 ♘xc4 ♘d7 *(D)*
12 b4!

In the endgame it is essential to pay attention to your opponent's ideas, and if possible to frustrate his intentions. Here Black wanted to equalize completely by playing 12...♗c5.

12 ... ♘b6?!

An inaccuracy! The only real drawback of Black's position is



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that his bishop is more passive than his opponent's. He should have tried to exchange it by playing 12...h5! with ...♗h6 to follow. In the game Andersson-Mestel, Hastings 1978/79 there followed 13 f3 ♗h6 14 ♗f2 ♘b6 15 ♗xb6! (15 ♘a5? 0-0-0+) 15...ab 16 b5 ♔e7! (in the endgame the best place for the king is in the centre of the board – for this reason Black decides not to castle) 17 a4 ♖hd8+ 18 ♔c2 ♔e6, and Mestel managed to keep the balance.

12...f5!? also deserved attention.

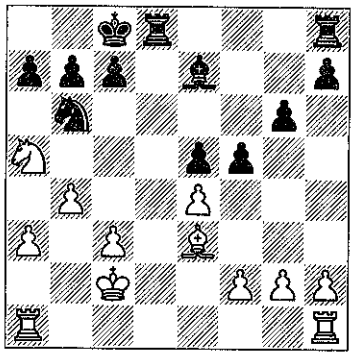
13 ♘a5! 0-0-0+
14 ♔c2 ♗e7

Now if 14...h5, White would reply with 15 ♖hd1 ♖xd1 (15...♗e7) 16 ♖xd1 ♗h6? 17 ♗xh6 ♖xh6 18 c4 ♖h7 19 c5 ♘d7 20 c6 with an advantage. Nevertheless the move 14...h5 is still useful – exchanging rooks would make Black's defensive task easier.

15 a3!

Andersson prepares a queenside attack by c3-c4-c5. This positional threat provokes his opponent into a dubious attempt to play actively.

15 ... f5?! *(D)*



W

16 ♗xb6!!

The 'automatic' 16 f3 would allow Black to develop counterplay by attacking the e4-pawn (...♘b6-d7-f6). Andersson changes plan just at the right moment. One move earlier the exchange of minor pieces offered nothing: 15 ♗xb6?! ab 16 ♘c4 b5, but now the e5-pawn is under attack.

16 ... ab
17 ♘c4 ♗f6?!

Black is defending too passively. It is true that no good would have come of 17...fe?! 18 ♖ae1 ♖hf8 19 ♖hf1, but Black should have considered 17...♖hf8!?. If 18 ♖ae1, then 18...b5! 19 ♘xe5 fe 20 ♖hf1 ♗g5. After 18 ef ♖xf5 19 f3 Black can choose between the piece sacrifice 19...e4 20 ♖he1 ef 21 ♖xe7 fg 22 ♖g1 ♖f2+ 23 ♔b3 b5 and the quieter continuation 19...♗g5!? (threatening 20...e4 or 20...b5) 20 ♖he1 b5 21 ♘e3 ♗xe3 with an inferior but defensible four-rook ending. The variation 19 ♖hf1 ♗g5 (weaker is 19...♖df8 20 f3 e4 21 ♖fe1) 20 ♖ae1 b5 is similar.

18 a4!

White not only strengthens the knight on c4 but also begins an attack on the queenside. 18 b5 is less precise due to 18...fe and 19...♖d5.

18 ... ♗g7
19 ♖he1 ♖he8
20 b5!

20 a5? is worse due to 20...b5. It is first necessary to fix the object of attack (the pawn on b6) and then to attack it.

20 ... f4
21 a5 ba
22 ♖xa5 b6
23 ♖a7

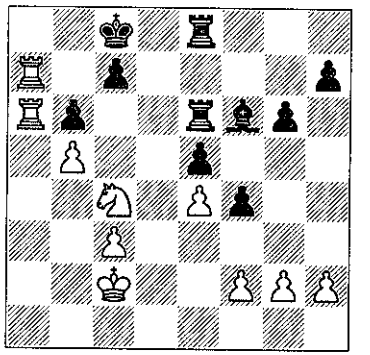
Threatening 24 ♘xb6+.

23 ... ♗f6
24 ♖ea1 ♖e6
25 ♖1a6!

White now has the strong threat of 26 ♘a5 and 27 ♘c6.

25 ... ♖de8 *(D)*

By means of his active play on the a-file White has tied up his



W

opponent, who has been forced to withdraw from the open d-file.

26 ♔b3!

It is characteristic of Andersson to take his time like this. He improves the position of his king at every opportunity and waits for a suitable moment to strengthen his position further. This is exactly how to exploit an advantage in the endgame – to reduce your opponent's options as much as possible, and then, without rushing, to search out new weaknesses in his defence. "The rule 'do not rush' may seem paradoxical to many people, but in fact it is illustrated by almost all the endings of the great endgame masters. Look at the endgames of Capablanca and Flohr and you will see how meticulously, sometimes even tediously, they exploit their advantage." (Belavenets).

26 ... ♗d8?!

This is exactly what Andersson was waiting for.

27 ♖a8+ ♔d7
28 ♖a2!

Here it is: a suitable moment to regroup. Taking advantage of the awkward position of the bishop on d8, White seizes the d-file.

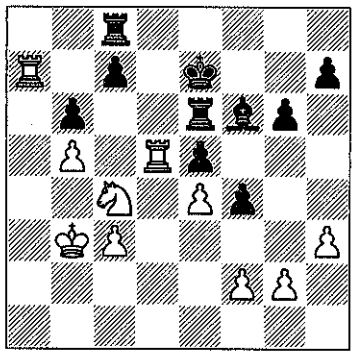
28 ... ♗f6
29 ♖d2+ ♔e7
30 ♖a7!

Of course, there is absolutely no sense in exchanging an active rook for Black's passive rook.

30 ... ♖c8
31 ♖d5 ♔e8
32 h3

In positions such as this Andersson likes making waiting moves.

32 ... ♔e7 *(D)*



W

33 ♘b2!

The knight has done splendidly at c4 – now it moves to d3, from where it will support the advance of the c-pawn, and can itself move forward via b4. Note that White did not play this a move earlier, as he feared the reply 32...c6 – he waited for the black king to reach e7.

33 ... ♔e8

More stubborn is 33...♖d6, to which the best reply is 34 ♖xd6! ♔xd6 35 c4, intending 36 ♘d3, 37 c5+ and 38 ♔c4.

34 ♘d3 ♗g7

34...c6 is answered by 35 ♖dd7! cb 36 ♘b4.

35 c4 ♗f6
36 c5 bc
37 ♘xc5 ♖e7

37...♖b6 38 ♘d7!.

38 ♖a6!

Excellent technique by White! He gains control of the sixth rank with tempo, he prevents the move ...c7-c6 and gains the square e6 for his knight.

38 ... ♗h8
39 ♔c4!

Again Andersson improves the position of his king at every opportunity.

39 ... ♗g7
40 f3 ♖b8
41 ♘e6 ♗f6
42 ♖c6

Black resigned, since 42...♖b7 43 ♖d8+ leads to mate, and on 42...♖c8, 43 b6 is decisive.

A classic example of an endgame virtuoso at work! Studying endgames like this will help to develop your feel for the endgame and your technique.

From the point of view of method it is instructive to see the same themes in a more negative form – to study examples of typical endgame mistakes.

The following game was played on the women's board at the Moscow University Championships in 1972/73.

1 e4 c5
2 ♘f3 ♘c6
3 d4 cd
4 ♘xd4 ♘f6
5 ♘c3 e6
6 ♘db5 ♗b4
7 ♘d6+?! ♔e7!
8 ♗f4?! e5!
9 ♘f5+ ♔f8
10 ♗g5 d5!
11 ♗xf6 gf?!

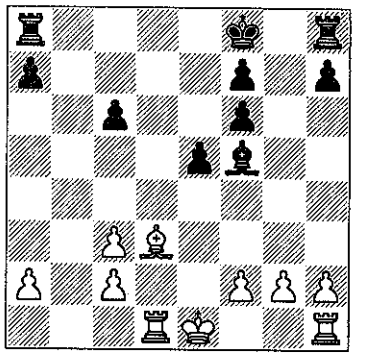
There is no need to weaken the kingside pawn structure. The obvious move was 11...♕xf6!.

12 ed ♗xf5
13 dc ♗xc3+
14 bc ♕xd1+
15 ♖xd1 bc
16 ♗d3 *(D)*

16 ♖d6!?.

16 ... e4?

Having gained the better endgame, Black immediately makes a



B

positional error – she puts a pawn on a square of the same colour as her bishop. 16...♗e6 17 ♗e4 ♔e7 18 ♗xc6 ♖ac8 19 ♗e4 ♖xc3 was asking to be played.

17 ♗c4 ♖g8?

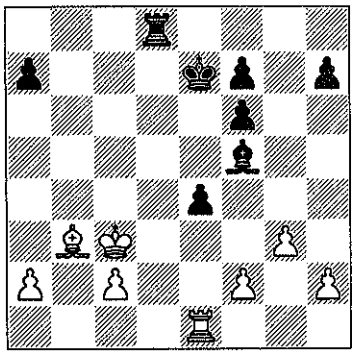
Another fundamental error – Black does not pay attention to her opponent's possibilities. Correct, of course, is 17...♔e7 followed by 18...♗e6.

18 ♖d6! ♔e7
19 ♖xc6 ♖gc8
20 ♖xc8 ♖xc8
21 ♗b3 ♖xc3
22 ♔d2 ♖c8
23 ♖e1 ♖g8
24 g3 ♖d8+
25 ♔c3 *(D)*

White already has the advantage; she is threatening to play 26 f3.

25 ... ♔f8?

It is almost always a mistake to remove the king from the centre of



B

the board in the endgame. The solid 25...♗g6 26 f3 f5 was preferable.

26	**♖e2**	**♗g6**
27	**♖d2**	**♖xd2?**

An inaccurate evaluation of the position. The bishop ending is lost. More resistance was offered by 27...♖c8+.

28	**♔xd2**	**♔e7**
29	**♔e3**	**f5**
30	**♔d4**	**♔d6**
31	**c4**	**f6**
32	**c5+**	**♔c6**
33	**♗d5+**	**♔c7**
34	**♔c4**	**h6**
35	**♔d4**	**♗h5**
36	**♔e3**	**♔d7**
37	**h3**	**♔e7**
38	**♔f4**	**♗g6**
39	**g4**	

A small inaccuracy. In accordance with the principle 'do not rush', White should have strengthened her position before changing the contours of the game. This could have been achieved by moving the a2-pawn off a light square (a square of the same colour as the bishop). Perhaps, after 39 a3!, White was concerned by the reply 39...h5, but after this Black, whose pawns are almost all on squares of the same colour as her bishop, had to lose.

39	**...**	**fg**
40	**hg**	**h5!**

When defending a bad endgame it is useful to exchange as many pawns as possible.

41 gh

With the pawn on a3 White would play 41 ♗xe4 ♗f7 42 g5!, removing the f6-pawn which is obstructing the white king.

41	**...**	**♗xh5**
42	**♔xe4**	**♗g4**
43	**♔f4**	**♗h3**
44	**♗e4**	**♗e6**
45	**a3**	**♗d7?**

After 45...♗c8 it was still possible to conduct a stubborn defence. The move played loses instantly.

46	**c6!**	**♗e8**

Otherwise 47 ♗f5.

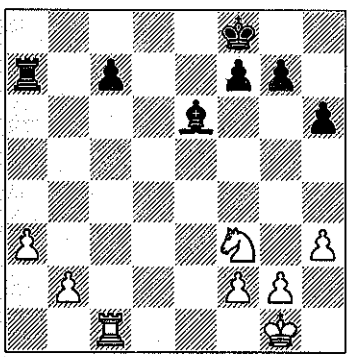
47	**c7**	**♔d7**
48	**♗c6+!**	

Black resigned

A chess player's endgame technique is based on a thorough understanding of the whole arsenal of ideas he has accumulated – from a feel for the endgame and an understanding of its basic laws, to the most specific manoeuvres he has come across while analysing his own or other people's games. To illustrate this I shall show you one of my own endgames broken down into its elementary component parts.

First we will look at four preparatory positions which are, in fact, quite instructive in their own right.

1. Everyone knows that in the endgame the role of logical thinking is increased. It is essential to be able to devise plans, to work out the arrangements of pieces and so on. The following endgame is a classic example of this.



W

Capablanca – Ragozin
Moscow 1936

Here is what Capablanca writes about this position:

"White's plan is to prevent the advance of the c-pawn (after which the b-pawn could prove to be weak) and to control the whole board to the fifth rank. This is achieved by moving the king to e3, the knight to d4 and pawns to b4 and f4. When this position has been reached White will manage to advance his queenside pawns."

The following moves are easy to understand – Capablanca methodically puts his plan into action.

33	**♘d4**	**♖b7**
34	**b4**	**♗d7**
35	**f4**	**♔e7**
36	**♔f2**	**♖a7**
37	**♖c3**	**♔d6**
38	**♖d3**	**♔e7**
39	**♔e3**	**♖a4**
40	**♖c3**	**♔d6**
41	**♖d3**	**♔e7**
42	**♖c3**	**♔d6**

The necessary arrangement of pieces has been achieved. Now Capablanca wants to regroup his forces by transferring his knight to c3 (or c5).

43	**♘e2**	**g6**
44	**♖d3+**	**♔e6**
45	**♔d4**	**♖a6**
46	**♖e3+**	**♔d6**
47	**♘c3**	

The queenside pawns are now ready to advance. At the same time

there is the threat of 48 ♘e4+.

47	**...**	**f5**
48	**b5**	**♖a8**

48...♖xa3 is met by 49 ♘e4+ fe 50 ♖xa3 ♗xb5 51 ♖g3.

49	**♔c4**	**♗e6+**
50	**♔b4**	**c5+**
51	**bc**	**♗g8**
52	**♘b5+**	**♔xc6**
53	**♖d3!**	

This should be noted: White does not push his passed pawn, but turns to attack his opponent's king-side pawns. This corresponds totally to an important principle of exploiting an advantage – 'the principle of two weaknesses'. The best technical way of converting an advantage is to create a second weakness in the enemy camp, to play against it, and then if necessary to transfer the attack back to the first weakness. Taking the word in a broad sense, a weakness is not just a vulnerable pawn or an awkwardly-placed piece, but the need to block a passed pawn or to guard an entry point.

53	**...**	**g5**
54	**♖d6+**	**♔b7**
55	**fg**	**hg**
56	**♖g6**	**♖f8**
57	**♖xg5**	**f4**
58	**♘d4**	**♖c8**
59	**♖g7+**	**♔b6**
60	**♖g6+**	**♔b7**
61	**♘b5**	**♖f8**
62	**♘d6+**	**♔b8**
63	**h4**	

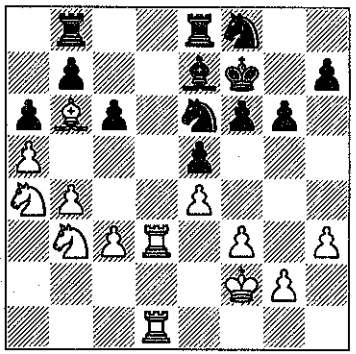
Black resigned

2. You have of course noted that Capablanca twice repeated moves during the course of the endgame. Here is what Sergei Belavenets has to say about this:

"Repetition of moves plays a significant role in the endgame. Quite apart from the fact that it saves thinking time, we can also note that by repeating moves the side that is pressing gains certain psychological advantages. The defender, whose position is worse, often fails to hold out, creates further weaknesses and makes the opponent's task easier. In addition, repetition of moves helps to clarify the position as much as possible. We know that certain devotees of the 'pure' art of chess will criticize us for this piece of advice, but we cannot help but advise chess players to repeat moves in the endgame. You have to take all the chances you get in a game, and there is nothing ugly or unethical in the repetition of moves."

3. Let us now look at an example from one of my own games.

White has a clear advantage, but the points of entry are securely defended for the time being.



B

Dvoretsky – Kikiani

Kiev 1970

35	**...**	**♗d8**

Now I didn't even begin to look at the move 36 ♘bc5, since I had found an opportunity to gain a tempo by a straightforward three-stage bishop manoeuvre.

36	**♗a7!**	**♖a8**
37	**♗e3**	

Threatening 38 ♘bc5.

37	**...**	**♗e7**
38	**♗b6**	

Now if 38...♗d8, 39 ♘bc5 gains in strength – the b7-pawn is undefended.

38	**...**	**♖ab8**

Our starting position has arisen again, but now it is White to move.

39 g3

This move takes away the square f4 from the knight, just in case. Here the principle 'do not rush' can be observed: while your opponent cannot do anything, you should play all the even slightly useful moves.

39	**...**	**♗d8**
40	**♗a7**	**♖a8**
41	**♗e3**	

White does not mind repeating his manoeuvre. While such unhurried manoeuvring is going on, your opponent does not know what he should fear most. Kikiani decided to prevent the advance f3-f4, which in fact is hardly a threat because it weakens the e4-pawn.

41	**...**	**g5?**
42	**♘bc5!**	

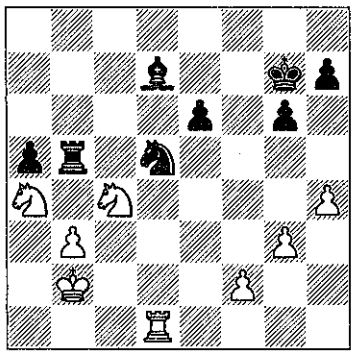
There will be no more suitable moment for the planned invasion on c5: the black rook is not defending the b7-pawn, and the bishop is stuck on d8.

42	**...**	**♖b8**
43	**♘d7**	**♘xd7**
44	**♖xd7+**	**♖e7**
45	**♘c5**	**♔e8**
46	**♖xe7+**	**♔xe7**
47	**♖d7+**	**♔e8**
48	**♖xh7**	**♘c7**
49	**h4**	**gh**
50	**gh**	

Black resigned

4. Let us look at one more endgame by Capablanca.

Note the fine circular knight manoeuvre which enabled White to win a pawn.



W

Capablanca – Yates
New York 1924

40	**♘c3**	**♖c5**
41	**♘e4**	**♖b5**
42	**♘ed6**	**♖c5**
43	**♘b7**	**♖c7**
44	**♘bxa5**	

The rest is a typically Capablancan precise conversion of an advantage. White's first task is to improve the position of his pieces.

44	**...**	**♗b5**
45	**♘d6**	**♗d7**
46	**♘ac4**	**♖a7**
47	**♘e4**	**h6**
48	**f4**	**♗e8**
49	**♘e5**	**♖a8**
50	**♖c1**	**♗f7**
51	**♖c6**	**♗g8**
52	**♘c5**	**♖e8**

Having strengthened his position as much as possible, White now begins to prepare the advance of his passed pawn.

53	**♖a6**	**♖e7**
54	**♔a3**	**♗f7**
55	**b4**	**♘c7**
56	**♖c6**	**♘b5+**
57	**♔b2**	**♘d4**
58	**♖a6**	**♗e8**
59	**g4!**	

Once again, just as in the game against Ragozin, Capablanca acts according to the principle of two weaknesses. He puts off the advance of his passed pawn for a while and begins an attack on the kingside.

59	**...**	**♔f6**
60	**♘e4+**	**♔g7**
61	**♘d6**	**♗b5**
62	**♖a5**	**♗f1**
63	**♖a8**	**g5**

The threat was 64 ♘e8+ ♔h7 65 ♘f6+ ♔g7 66 g5 with mate to follow.

64	**fg**	**hg**
65	**hg**	**♗g2**
66	**♖e8**	**♖c7**

66...♖xe8 67 ♘xe8+ ♔f8 68 g6!.

67	**♖d8**	**♘c6**
68	**♘e8+**	**♔f8**
69	**♘xc7+**	**♘xd8**
70	**♔c3**	

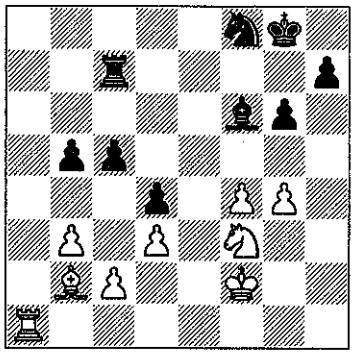
Centralization of the king.

70	**...**	**♗b7**
71	**♔d4**	**♗c8**
72	**g6**	**♘b7**
73	**♘e8!**	**♘d8**
74	**b5**	**♔g8**

75	**g5**	**♔f8**
76	**g7+**	**♔g8**
77	**g6**	

Black resigned

And now look how all this information helped me to win the following ending.



W

Dvoretsky – Privorotsky
Kiev 1970

29	**♖a5**	**b4**

No good was 29...c4 30 ♗xd4, but 29...♘e6 was worth a thought. After the move played in the game Black has no counterplay whatsoever.

Now White, along the lines of Capablanca-Ragozin, devised an arrangement for his pieces. The knight clearly needs to be transferred to e4, the king must come up to f3, the rook must be put on a6, and the bishop on the diagonal c1-h6, and finally White must make the advance f4-f5.

30	**♘d2**	**♗e7**
31	**♘e4**	**♘d7**
32	**♖a6**	**♔f7**
33	**♔f3**	**♘b8**
34	**♖a8**	**♘d7**
35	**♗c1**	**♘b6**
36	**♖a6**	**♘d5**
37	**f5**	**gf**
38	**gf**	

The plan indicated has been carried out.

38	**...**	**♖d7**

Here I saw that the three-stage manoeuvre to win a tempo which I had found two days earlier in the game with Kikiani could again prove useful. The only difference is that here the tempo is won not by a bishop, but by a rook.

39	**♖c6**	**♖c7**
40	**♖h6!**	**♔g7**
41	**♖a6**	**♔f7**

Now it is White to move.

42	**♗h6**	**♖c8**

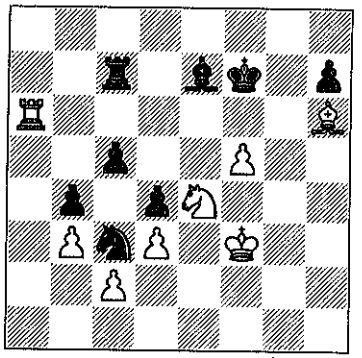
Now 42...♖d7 is bad because of 43 ♖a8 and 44 ♖h8, winning the pawn on h7.

43	**♖a7**	**♖c7**
44	**♖a6**	

To 44 ♖a8 there is the reply 44...♖c6.

44	**...**	**♘c3?** *(D)*

Belavenets was right – Black could not hold out and himself deviated from the repetition.



W

Now White carries out a curious circular knight manoeuvre reminiscent of the one that Capablanca used against Yates.

45 ♘d2! ♘d5
46 ♘c4 ♗f6

The threat was 47 ♘e5+.

47 ♘d6+ ♔e7
48 ♘e4

After four consecutive moves the knight has returned to where it started, but Black's defence is now completely disorganized. The threat is 49 ♘xf6 ♘xf6 50 ♗g5. On 48...♔f7, 49 ♖d6 is decisive.

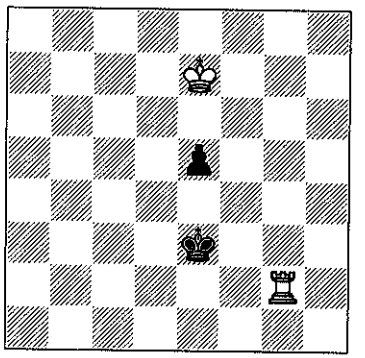
48 ... ♗h8
49 ♖e6+ ♔d8
50 ♗g5+

Black resigned

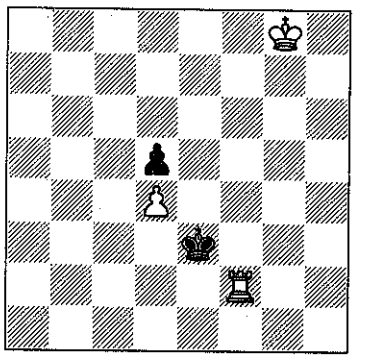
And so, by thinking over the games of great players and the recommendations they give in their commentaries, and by considering your own practical experience, you can bring about a sharp technical improvement in your play.

In conclusion I offer some exercises which feature a rook against the opponent's pawns. As you solve them you will gain some experience in the practical application of the theory of this type of endgame.

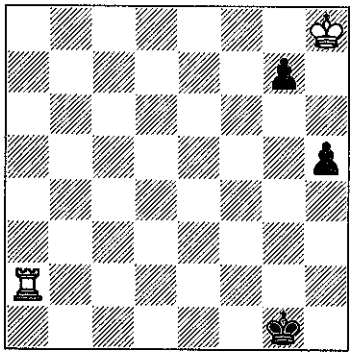
Exercises



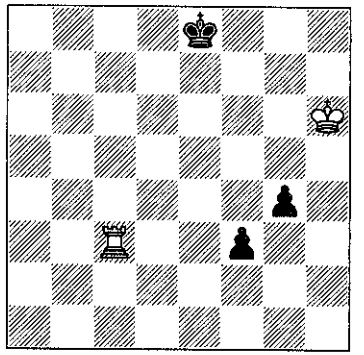
1 W Win



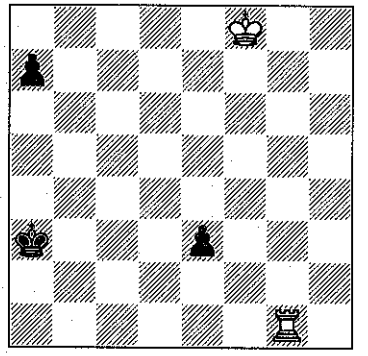
2 W Win



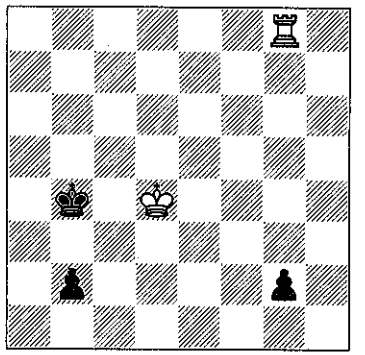
3 W Win



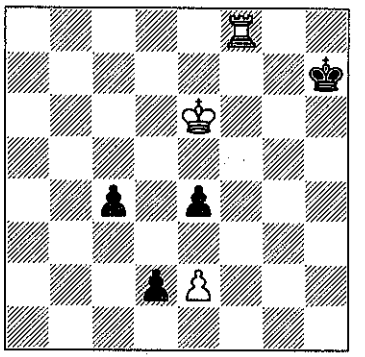
4 W Draw



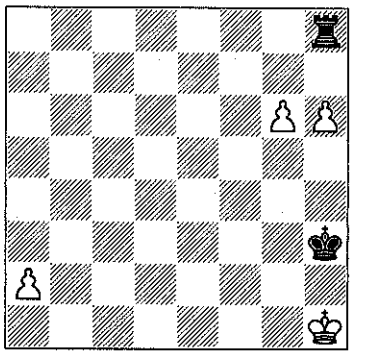
5 W Win



6 W Draw



7 W Draw



8 W Win

Answers to the Exercises

1. Averbakh, 1980

1 ♔e6! e4
2 ♖g5!!

The only winning move, the point of which is to place the rook behind the passed pawn with tempo, and then, having clarified the position of the black king, to send the white king round the other side of the pawn:

a) 2...♔d2(d3) 3 ♖d5+! ♔c2 4 ♖e5! ♔d3 5 ♔f5!.

b) 2...♔f2(f3) 3 ♖f5+! ♔g2 4 ♖e5! ♔f3 5 ♔d5!.

c) 2...♔e2 3 ♔e5 e3 4 ♔e4.

The hasty 1 ♖g5? leads to a draw in view of 1...♔f4! 2 ♔f6 e4. Also mistaken are 1 ♔d6? e4 2 ♖g5 ♔d3(d2)! and 1 ♔f6? e4 2 ♖g5 ♔f3(f2)!, because the white king cannot get round the pawn.

2. Kolesnikov, 1989

The tempting move is 1 ♔f7, but after 1...♔xd4! White cannot win: 2 ♔e6 ♔e3 3 ♖f5 d4 4 ♖e5+ ♔f2 5 ♖d5 ♔e3 (the move 6 ♔d5! is not available), or 2 ♖f6 ♔e3 3 ♖e6+ ♔f3 4 ♖d6 ♔e4 5 ♔e6 d4 (the move 6 ♔d6! is not available).

1 ♖f8! ♔xd4
2 ♔f7 ♔e4
3 ♖e8+ ♔f3
4 ♖d8! ♔e4
5 ♔e6 d4
6 ♔d6! d3
7 ♔c5 ♔e3
8 ♔c4 d2
9 ♔c3

The white king is in time to stop the pawn.

3. Moravec, 1913

The straightforward 1 ♔xg7 h4 2 ♔g6 h3 3 ♔g5 h2 4 ♔g4 h1♕ leads only to a draw, as 5 ♔g3?? ♕h8 is impossible. The g7-pawn has to be preserved.

1 ♔h7!! h4

Another attempt is 1...g5!? 2 ♔g6 g4 reckoning on 3 ♔xh5? g3 4 ♔g4 g2 5 ♔h3 ♔h1! with a draw. To avoid stalemate the h5-pawn must be spared: 3 ♔g5!!.

2 ♔g6 h3
3 ♔g5 h2
4 ♔g4 g5!?

After 4...h1♕ 5 ♔g3 Black has to give up his queen.

5 ♔g3 h1♘+
6 ♔f3 g4+
7 ♔xg4 ♘f2+
8 ♔f3 ♘d3
9 ♔e3 ♘e5
10 ♖a4 ♔g2
11 ♖e4

and, according to theory, the black knight will soon be rounded up.

4. Bron, 1929

1 ♖c8+! ♔e7!

1...♔d7 2 ♖f8; 1...♔f7 2 ♖c4.

2 ♖c7+ ♔e6
3 ♖c6+ ♔e5
4 ♖c5+ ♔e4!

If 4...♔d4, then 5 ♖f5 ♔e3 6 ♔g5 g3 7 ♔g4 g2 8 ♖xf3+.

5 ♖c4+ ♔e3

The checks come to an end – on 6 ♖c3+, 6...♔d2 is decisive.

6 ♖xg4! f2
7 ♖g3+ ♔e4
8 ♖g4+ ♔e5
9 ♖g5+ ♔e6
10 ♖g6+ ♔e7
11 ♖g7+ ♔f8
12 ♖g5! f1♕
13 ♖f5+ ♕xf5
stalemate

5. V. Sokolov, 1940

The stereotyped 1 ♔e7? lets go of the win in view of 1...♔b4! 2 ♖e1 (otherwise 2...♔c3) 2...a5 3 ♔d6 a4, and the black king 'shoulders away' the white king. The move ...♔b4! must be prevented.

1 ♖b1!! ♔a2
2 ♖e1! a5
3 ♔e7 ♔b3

Hopeless is 3...a4 4 ♔d6 a3 5 ♔c5 ♔b2 6 ♖e2+ (also good is 6 ♔b4 a2 7 ♖e2+: 7...♔b1 8 ♔b3 or 7...♔c1 8 ♖xa2 ♔d1 9 ♔c3) 6...♔b1 (6...♔b3 7 ♖xe3+) 7 ♔b4 a2 8 ♔b3.

4 ♔d6!

Not 4 ♖xe3+? ♔b4 5 ♔d6 a4 6 ♖e4+ ♔b5! with a draw (again 'shouldering away').

4 ... a4

4...♔b4 5 ♔d5 a4 6 ♔d4 a3 7 ♖b1+.

5 ♔c5 a3
6 ♖xe3+ ♔a4

6...♔b2 7 ♔b4 a2 8 ♖e2+ ♔b1 9 ♔b3.

7 ♔c4 a2
8 ♖e1 ♔a3
9 ♔c3

White wins.

6. Peckover, 1960

Two losing continuations are 1 ♖b8+? ♔a5 2 ♖g8 ♔a6 and 1 ♔e3? ♔c5 2 ♖c8+ ♔b6! 3 ♔f2 g1♕+ (or 3...♔b7).

1 ♔d5!! ♔b3
2 ♖g3+ ♔a4
3 ♖g4+ ♔a5
4 ♖g8 ♔b5
5 ♖g7! ♔b6
6 ♖g6+ ♔c7
7 ♖g7+ ♔d8
8 ♔d6 ♔c8

8...♔e8 9 ♖e7+ and 10 ♖e1.

9 ♔c6 ♔b8
10 ♖g8+ ♔a7
11 ♖g7+ ♔a6
12 ♖g8 ♔a5

13 ♔c5

and Black's king cannot escape.

7. V. Pachman, 1960/61

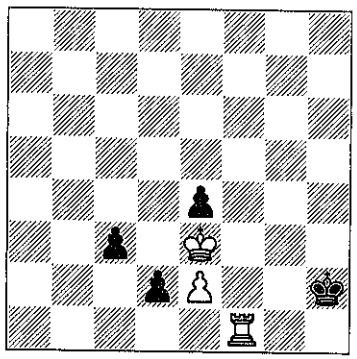
1 ♖f1! **c3**
2 ♖h1+!!

It is very important to transfer the rook to g1 with tempo. One way to lose is 2 ♔f7? ♔h6 3 ♔f6 ♔h5 4 ♔f5 ♔h4 5 ♔f4 ♔h3 6 ♔e3 ♔h2!, and White is in zugzwang: 7 ♖a1 ♔g2 or 7 ♖d1 c2 8 ♔xd2 cxd1♕+ 9 ♔xd1 e3 (9...♔g2) 10 ♔c2 ♔g2 11 ♔c3 ♔f1! 12 ♔d3 ♔f2.

2 ... **♔g6**

2...♔g7 3 ♖g1+ ♔f8 4 ♖f1+ ♔e8 5 ♖h1.

3 ♖g1+ **♔h5**
4 ♔f5 **♔h4**
5 ♔f4 **♔h3**
6 ♔e3 **♔h2**
7 ♖f1! *(D)*



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The same zugzwang position has arisen, but with Black to move.

7 ... **♔g2**
8 ♖a1! **♔g3**
9 ♖g1+ **♔h2**

9...♔h3 is met by 10 ♖h1+ and then 10...♔g2 11 ♖a1! or 10...♔g4 11 ♖g1+ ♔f5 12 ♖f1+ ♔e5 13 ♖d1.

10 ♖f1!

and so on.

8. Khortov, 1982

Which pawn should be moved? This question can only be resolved by a deep analysis of the variations.

1 g7!! **♖b8**
2 ♔g1 **♔g3**
3 ♔f1 **♔f3**
4 ♔e1 **♔e3**
5 ♔d1 **♔d3**
6 ♔c1 **♖c8+**
7 ♔b2 **♖b8+**
8 ♔a3

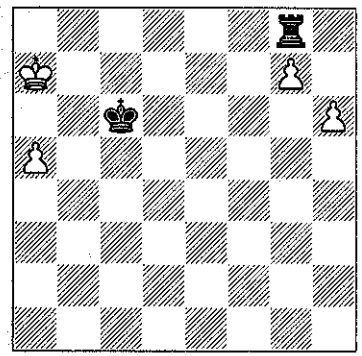
8 ♔a1? ♔c2.

8 ... **♔c3**
9 ♔a4 **♔c4**
10 ♔a5 **♔c5**
11 ♔a6 **♔c6**
12 ♔a7 **♖g8!**
13 a4 **♔d6**
14 ♔b6!

If 14 ♔b7?, then 14...♔e6 15 a5 (15 ♔b6 ♖b8+ 16 ♔c7 ♖g8; 15 ♔c6 ♖c8+) 15...♔f6 16 a6 ♔g6 17 a7 ♔xh6.

Also wrong would be 14 a5? counting on 14...♔e6? 15 ♔b6 ♖b8+ 16 ♔c7 ♖g8 17 ♔c6! ♖c8+ (or 17...♔f6 18 h7) 18 ♔b7 ♖g8 19 a6, since Black actually replies 14...♔c6! 15 a6 ♖e8(d8) 16 h7 ♖e7(d7)+ with perpetual check.

14 ... **♖b8+**
15 ♔a6! **♔c6**
16 ♔a7 **♖g8**
17 a5 *(D)*



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This position (which is mutual zugzwang) is the key to the whole study.

17 ... **♔d6**

17...♔c7 18 h7.

18 ♔b7! **♔e6**
19 a6 **♔f6**
20 a7 **♔g6**
21 a8♕

and the king is just too late.

With the pawns on g6 and h7 the king manages to attack them one move earlier:

1 h7? **♖b8**

Or 1...♔g3 2 ♔g1 ♖b8.

2 ♔g1 **♔g3**
3 ♔f1 **♔f3**
4 ♔e1 **♔e3**
5 ♔d1 **♔d3**
6 ♔c1 **♖c8+**
7 ♔b2 **♖b8+**
8 ♔a3 **♔c3**
9 ♔a4 **♔c4**
10 ♔a5 **♔c5**
11 ♔a6 **♔c6**
12 ♔a7 **♖h8!**
13 a4 **♔d6**
14 ♔b6 **♖b8+**
15 ♔a6 **♔c6**
16 ♔a7 **♖h8**
17 a5 **♔d6**

and now 18 ♔b7 ♔e6 19 a6 ♔f6 20 a7 ♔xg6, or 18 ♔b6 ♖b8+ 19 ♔a6 ♔c6 20 ♔a7 ♖h8 21 a6 ♖e8(d8)!.

3 Theory and Practice of Rook Endgames

Mark Dvoretsky

Of all the different types of endgame, rook endings require the most careful study. Why is that?

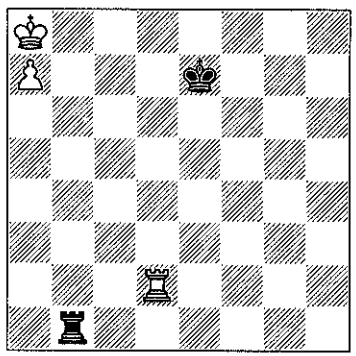
First of all, they occur more frequently than other types. A good half of the endgames that crop up in practice are rook endgames.

Secondly, this area has a well-developed theory of positions with little material (for example rook and pawn against rook) which may well come up in our games. This theory must be mastered.

In other types of endgame, positions with a minimal number of pawns are either fairly straightforward or else not too significant. In these cases there is almost no need to know exact positions – in all probability we will never have to use this knowledge. It is enough to master the typical ideas and techniques. But in rook endings it is impossible to get by without studying a significant number of exact positions.

I now offer for your attention one section of the theory on rook endings: those with a pawn on the a- or h-file. As always, we shall begin by analysing the simplest cases. In fact, we are not going to delve too deeply into theory – we shall just pick out the most important positions and their related ideas.

1. The stronger side's king stands in front of its pawn



W

The draw is inevitable. The only possible attempt to release the king from its confinement is to transfer the rook to b8, but then the black king will come to stand guard instead of the rook.

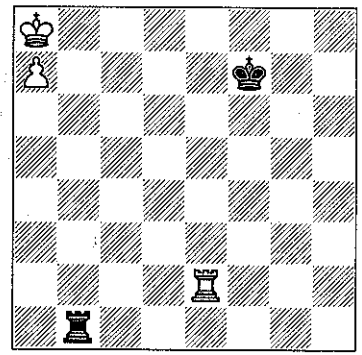
1 ♖h2 ♔d7
2 ♖h8 ♔c7
3 ♖b8 ♖c1

Also possible, of course, is 3...♖h1.

4 ♖b2 ♖c3

and White cannot strengthen his position.

Let us move the black king and the white rook one file to the right.



W

Now White wins, as the black king cannot reach c7 in time.

1 ♖h2 ♔e7
2 ♖h8 ♔d6

If 2...♔d7, then 3 ♖b8 ♖a1 4 ♔b7 ♖b1+ 5 ♔a6 ♖a1+ 6 ♔b6 ♖b1+ 7 ♔c5. With the black king on d6 it is no longer possible to escape via c5 and another route has to be sought.

3 ♖b8 ♖a1
4 ♔b7 ♖b1+
5 ♔c8 ♖c1+
6 ♔d8 ♖h1
7 ♖b6+ ♔c5
8 ♖c6+!

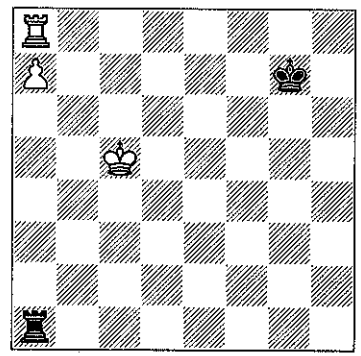
This is the only fine point. 8 ♖e6? is useless in view of 8...♖a1 whilst 8 ♖a6? ♖h8+ 9 ♔d7 ♖h7+ 10 ♔e8 ♖h8+ 11 ♔f7 ♖a8 is just a draw.

8 ... ♔b5

Or 8...♔d5 9 ♖a6 ♖h8+ 10 ♔c7 ♖h7+ 11 ♔b6.

9 ♖c8 ♖h8+
10 ♔c7 ♖h7+
11 ♔b8

2. The stronger side's rook is ahead of the pawn, which is on the seventh rank



W

A standard defensive set-up: the black rook is behind the enemy pawn, the king is on g7 (or h7). The white rook is tied to the pawn and

cannot leave the square a8. If 1 ♔b6, then 1...♖b1+. The king has no refuge from the vertical checks. When the rook has chased the king away, it returns to a1.

[I should note as an aside that there are other more complicated and less reliable defensive systems: the black king can hide 'in the shade' of its white counterpart (on c3, for example), or, if the black rook is on the seventh rank, in the shade of its own rook. I should just mention these ideas, but we won't be studying them. Sometimes they are sufficient for a draw, sometimes not.]

Let us add a white pawn on h5. Nothing changes. Black pays no attention to it. The position is still drawn – and also with a white pawn on g5 instead.

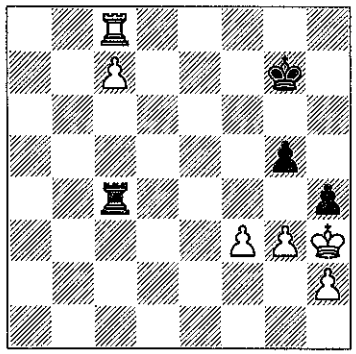
However, a pawn on f5 wins. After 1 f6+ ♔f7 (1...♔xf6 2 ♖f8+; 1...♔h7 2 f7) 2 ♖h8 Black loses his rook.

There is a reason that I have been dwelling on such elementary cases; we must keep a very clear idea of them, we must always remember them and use them when analysing more complicated positions.

1 ... hg

In the game there followed:

2 hg? g4+!



B

Khaunin – Fridman

Leningrad 1962

3 fg

and the draw is inevitable, as White is left with a knight's pawn (it is not particularly important whether it is one or two).

The winning continuation was:

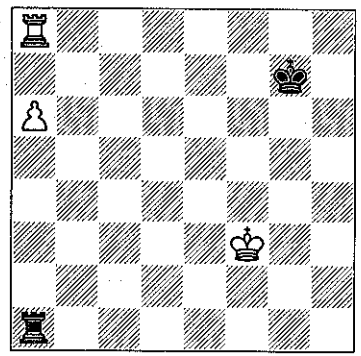
2 ♔xg3! ♔h7
3 h4! gh+
4 ♔h3 ♔g7
5 f4

and the f-pawn advances with decisive effect.

3. The stronger side's rook is ahead of the pawn, which is on the sixth rank

See diagram on following page.

The main feature distinguishing this position from the previous ones is that the white king now has a refuge from vertical checks – on



B

a7. It makes its way there to free the rook from the defence of the pawn.

The first point to note is that the black king does not have time to scuttle over to the queenside: 1...♔f7? 2 ♔e4 (2 a7? is premature in view of 2...♔g7) and now:

a) 2...♔e7 3 a7! ♔d7(f7) 4 ♖h8.

b) 2...♖a5 is also hopeless: 3 ♔d4 ♔g7 4 ♔c4 ♔f7 5 ♔b4 ♖a1 6 ♔b5 ♖b1+ 7 ♔c6 ♖a1 8 ♔b7 ♖b1+ 9 ♔a7 ♔e7 10 ♖b8 ♖c1 11 ♔b7 (not, however, 11 ♖b6 ♔d7) 11...♖b1+ 12 ♔a8 ♖a1 13 a7, and a situation arises that we have already seen: the black king cannot reach c7 in time.

Tarrasch considered the diagram position winning for White, basing his conclusion on this analysis. However, a saving plan was later found. It is based on the fact that the a6-pawn provides a refuge for the king from vertical checks, but not from horizontal checks. The black rook must be transferred to f6.

1 ... ♖f1+!
2 ♔e4 ♖f6!

It is important to attack the pawn so as not to release the rook from a8. What should White do now? On a6-a7 there always follows ...♖a6 (the black king, of course, will not leave the squares g7 and h7). If White defends the pawn with his king, a series of checks will follow, and then the rook will return to f6. For example:

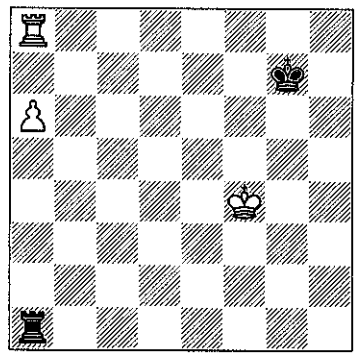
3 ♔d5 ♖b6
4 ♔c5 ♖f6!

This is the best square for the rook!

5 ♔b5 ♖f5+!

and so on.

Let us move the white king to f4 in the starting position .



B

Now 1...♖f1+? 2 ♔e5 ♖f6 is no longer good due to 3 ♖g8+!. Black's only plan of defence is to transfer his rook to his third rank. The simplest method of achieving this is by

1 ... ♖a5

1...♖c1 also draws, but is more complicated.

2 ♔e4 ♖b5

The threat is 3...♖b6; White uses his free move to try to disrupt Black's plan.

3 ♖a7+

Or 3 ♖c8 ♖a5 4 ♖c6 ♔f7 5 ♔d4 ♔e7 6 ♔c4 ♔d7 with an easy draw.

3 ... ♔g6!

4 ♖b7

Or 4 ♔d4 ♖b6 drawing.

4 ... ♖a5

5 a7 ♔f6

6 ♔d4 ♔e6

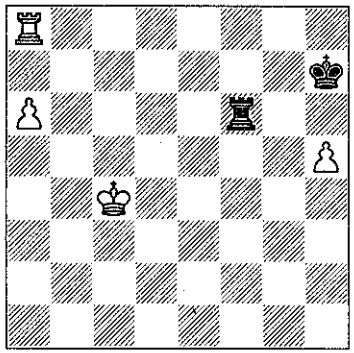
7 ♔c4 ♔d6

8 ♔b4 ♖a1

with a draw.

We should note that here the kings were engaged in a race to the queenside. If the white king were closer to the pawn, the black king might not make it in time. This means that the transfer of the rook to the sixth rank must not be delayed – this plan should be carried out as soon as possible.

The defensive system we have examined is very important. You should note particularly that the defensive system is exactly the same when your opponent has two extra pawns on the a- and h-files.



W

The h-pawn does not help White at all – the draw is just as elementary as in the previous example. On 1 ♔b5 there follows 1...♖f5+. Having chased away the king, the rook will continue to keep watch along the sixth rank. If the white pawn were moved back to a5, then the black rook would be placed on the fifth rank, and so on.

Now let us look at a position with a- and g-pawns *(D)*.

1 ... ♔h7!

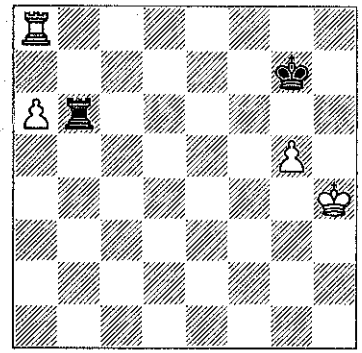
2 ♔h5

With the threat 3 ♖a7+ ♔g8 4 g6 and 5 ♔h6.

2 ... ♖h6+!

3 ♔g4

3 gh? is stalemate!



B

3 ... ♖b6

Strangely enough, the endgame textbooks fail to analyse this position. I have had to study it independently. White is winning. The main reason is that the black rook does not have the important square f6, and so the sixth rank becomes too short.

4 ♔f5

Renewing the threat of 5 ♖a7+.

4 ... ♖b5+

5 ♔f6 ♖b6+

6 ♔e5

6 ♔f7 achieves nothing after 6...♖b7+!.

6 ... ♖c6

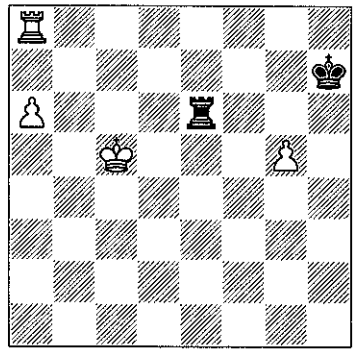
Black, of course, has no time to take the pawn on g5: 6...♖b5+ 7 ♔d6 (7 ♔d4) 7...♖xg5 8 ♖e8 ♖a5 9 ♖e7+ ♔g6 10 a7.

6...♔g7 also loses immediately owing to 7 ♔f5! ♖b5+ 8 ♔g4 ♖b6 9 ♔h5 and 10 ♖a7+.

7 ♔d5 ♖b6

8 ♔c5 ♖e6 *(D)*

8...♖g6 9 ♖a7+ ♔g8 10 ♔d4.



W

White now has two ways to win:

A. 9 ♖a7+ ♔g6

If 9...♔g8 then the white king returns to the kingside.

10 ♔b5 ♖e5+

11 ♔c6 ♖e6+

12 ♔c5!

Black is in a decisive zugzwang.

B. 9 ♔b5 ♖e5+

10 ♔c6 ♖e6+

11 ♔c5!

Certainly not 11 ♔c7?! ♖g6 12 a7? ♖g7+! with a draw.

Here too Black is in zugzwang! We have already seen the variation 11...♖e5+ 12 ♔d6 ♖xg5 13 ♖e8, and after

11 ... ♔g7

Black's king blocks g7, so the rook is deprived of an important

square from where it could give check. The white king is now able to march boldly forward:

12 ♔b5 ♖e5+
13 ♔c6 ♖e6+
14 ♔c7 ♔h7

The reply 14...♖g6 is no longer available.

15 a7! ♖a6

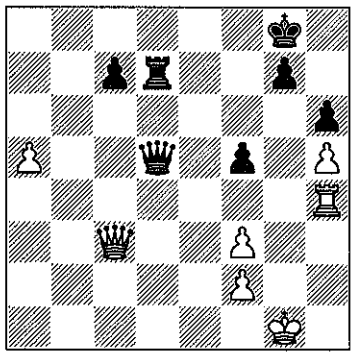
15...♖e7+ 16 ♔d6.

16 ♔b7

White wins.

Artur Yusupov

The practical chess player must be able to orientate himself securely in typical positions from rook endings. Look how, by making use of the ideas outlined above, I managed to save a difficult ending against the ex-world champion Anatoly Karpov.



W

Karpov – Yusupov
Linares 1991

In this position it is Karpov's move. What possibilities does he have?

The move ♕c3-c4 (either immediately or after the preparatory 41 a6) must be given serious consideration, but after exchanging queens, Black can give check on d1 and put his rook behind the passed pawn – this is a very important defensive resource which is typical for rook endings.

As a prophylactic manoeuvre there is some sense in removing the king from the first rank in advance: 41 ♔g2!?. Now, after the exchange of queens, the black rook does not get behind the passed pawn, but Black still gains sufficient counterplay by continuing 41...c5 42 ♕c4 ♕xc4 43 ♖xc4 ♖c7 with ...♔f7-e6-d5 to follow, or alternatively 42 a6 ♖a7 43 ♕a5 (43 ♖a4 f4) 43...♕c6(d6).

41 a6 ♕a2

The pawn must be held up. In this case the queen moves behind it instead of the rook. I though long and hard about the possibility of continuing the middlegame, but

was unable to find a convincing continuation, and decided not to steer clear of the exchange of queens.

42 ♕c4+

Karpov didn't spend much time on this move. He had to reckon with the threat of a counterattack by 42...♖d1+ and 43...♕b1.

42 ... ♕xc4
43 ♖xc4 ♖d1+

Of course, the rook transfers itself to a position behind the passed pawn. This crucial technique is only a particular instance of a more general law of rook endings, which says that the rook should always be active.

44 ♔g2 ♖a1
45 ♖c6

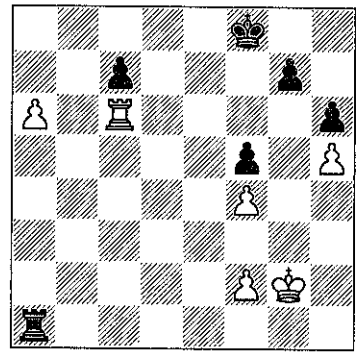
When a pawn is attacked from the rear, it is usually preferable to defend it from the side than to stand in front of it. The rook on c6 is extremely active – it controls the whole of the sixth rank and attacks the c7-pawn.

45 ... ♔f8

Sooner or later the white king will try to break through to the queenside. Black begins countermeasures – he transfers his king to d7 in order to activate the c7-pawn or force the exchange of a few pawns.

46 f4 *(D)*

If 46 ♔g3, then 46...♖a4.



B

46 ... ♖a3!

Later on every tempo could turn out to be decisive – the white king must therefore be obstructed as much as possible on its way to the queenside.

47 ♔f1 ♖a2
48 ♔e1 ♔e8
49 ♔d1 ♔d8!

An accurate move. The obvious move is 49...♔d7, but I was worried that after ♖g6 the g7-pawn would be taken with check. Of course, 49...♖xf2? is premature in view of 50 a7 ♖a2 51 ♖xc7, and, with his king cut off along the seventh rank, Black loses quickly. After the text the capture on f2 really is threatened.

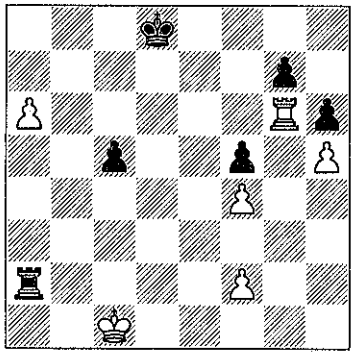
50 ♖g6 c5

50...♖xf2? is wrong due to 51 ♖xg7 ♖a2 52 ♖g6. Black therefore activates his passed pawn.

51 ♔c1 *(D)*

In positions such as this there

comes a point when you have to stop making your moves by common sense, and instead, after analysing a concrete path to a draw, you must force events. That moment arrived right here.



B

51	**...**	**♔c7!**
52	**♖xg7+**	**♔b6**
53	**♖g6+**	**♔a7**
54	**♖c6**	

Karpov is aiming to remove as many black pawns as possible. In the event of 54 ♖xh6 ♖xf2, with 55...♖xf4 to follow, the draw is obvious.

54	**...**	**♖xf2**
55	**♖xc5**	**♖xf4**

A fundamental position with a- and h-pawns has arisen. It would, of course, be possible to play 55...♔xa6, but it is technically better to force the draw 'by the book', especially as there was little time left to think.

56	**♖c6**	**♖g4**
57	**♔d2**	**♖g5**
58	**♖xh6**	**f4**
59	**♔e2**	**f3+**

Black has absolutely no need of this pawn. If you know for sure that a position is drawn, then try not to be distracted by non-essential details (like, for example, a 'non-theoretical' pawn).

60	**♔xf3**	**♖c5**
61	**♖h8**	

Here I adjourned the game just to be safe. To my surprise Karpov arrived at the resumption and made a few more moves.

61	**...**	**♖g5**
62	**♔e4**	**♖c5**
63	**♔f4**	**♖c4+**
64	**♔e5**	**♖c5+**
65	**♔e6**	**♖g5**
66	**♔f7**	**♖c5!**

In such positions the c-file is the best position for the rook. If now 67 h6 ♖c6 68 h7, then it is necessary to place the rook behind the pawn, but the immediate 68...♖h6 loses in view of 69 ♔g7. Black must therefore give check first: 68...♖c7+! 69 ♔f6(e6) ♖c6+ with a draw. Note that on the d-file the rook would be too close to the king, so 66...♖d5 67 h6 ♖d6 68 h7 ♖d7+ 69 ♔e6 would lose for Black.

67	**♖h7**	**♔xa6**

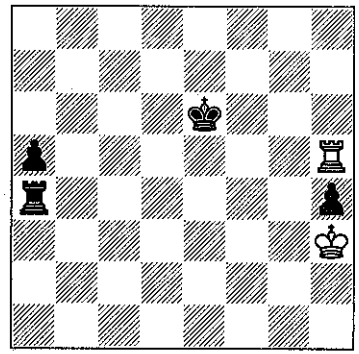
Only now, when the rook has reached h7, can the a6-pawn be taken. With the rook on h8 it should be ignored.

68	**h6**	**♖c7+**

Drawn

Mark Dvoretsky

The ideas we have covered may be elementary, but by no means all chess players are acquainted with them. Even grandmasters sometimes 'drift' in standard theoretical endings. Here is a tragi-comic example:



W

Szabo – Tukmakov
Buenos Aires 1970

All White needs to do is wait, keeping his aim on the a5-pawn, so as not to release the rook from the a-file. For example, 66 ♖b5 ♔d6 67 ♖f5 ♖a1 68 ♔h2! a4 69 ♖f4! a3 70 ♖f3! ♔c5 (70...a2 71 ♖a3) 71 ♖b3 ♔c4 72 ♖f3 ♔b4 73 ♖f4+!, and so on. When you know the plan of defence the moves can be made automatically – there is nothing elaborate about them.

However, the very experienced grandmaster Szabo had no idea of how to conduct an endgame of this type, and lost a totally drawn position. It seems that Tukmakov had no idea either, as in his notes to the game he made the following comment: "Theory considers this endgame drawn, but it seems that I managed to win it quite convincingly."

66	**♔g2?!**	**♔d6**
67	**♔f2?!**	**♖a2+**
68	**♔e1?**	

68 ♔g1! would still have led to a draw.

68	**...**	**♖a1+**
69	**♔e2**	

69 ♔d2 is refuted by 69...♖h1! 70 ♖xa5 h3 71 ♖h5 h2 and then 72...♖a1.

69	**...**	**a4**
70	**♖h6+**	

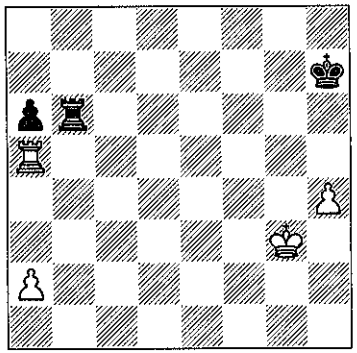
70 ♖xh4 a3 71 ♖a4 a2.

70	**...**	**♔e5**
71	**♖h5+**	**♔f6**
72	**♔f2**	**a3**

73	**♔g2**	**♖c1**
74	**♖a5**	**♖c3**

White resigned

I found another, analogous, example in the magazine *New in Chess*, in an article by Tony Miles on the 1989 US Championship. He analyses an ending from a game played by the winner of the tournament, Rachels, against grandmaster D.Gurevich. Apparently none of them, including the annotator, was acquainted with the ideas behind this ending.



B

Rachels – D.Gurevich

US Ch (Long Beach) 1989

Miles writes: 'The ending, of course, is drawn, but the defence is not at all easy.' No; it is very easy if Black, without staying tied to the a6-pawn, immediately adopts the system of defence already familiar to us: 48...♖b2!? 49 ♖xa6 ♖c2, and so on.

Of course, it is not obligatory to give up the pawn, but from the practical point of view that is the best path to take. You don't have to do any more thinking; you can just play according to theory. Remember: that is exactly what Yusupov did in his game with Karpov. Otherwise you have to play out a position which may be drawn, but is still unfamiliar, and at the board it doesn't take much to make a mistake.

48	**...**	**♔g6**
49	**h5+**	**♔f7**

A clear example of theoretical ignorance: Gurevich, like Szabo in the previous example, sends his king over to the opposite side of the board for no good reason.

50	**♔f4**	**♖c6**
51	**♔e5**	**♔e7**
52	**♔d5**	**♖h6**
53	**♔c4**	**♖h8**
54	**♖e5+**	**♔f6**
55	**♖c5**	**♔e7**
56	**♔b4**	**♖h6**
57	**♔a5**	**♔d6**
58	**♖g5**	**♔c7**
59	**a4**	**♔d7**
60	**♖g7+**	**♔c8**
61	**♖g5**	

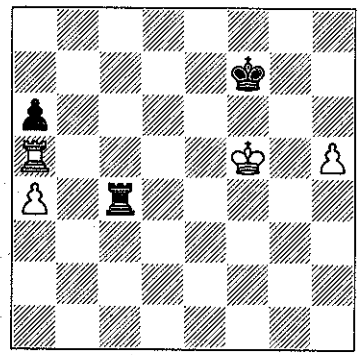
Here the game was adjourned. During home analysis it is important to consult a text-book and learn the theory of the endings that may occur later on – in this case, that means the theory of endgames with two extra pawns on the a- and h- files. However, Gurevich did not do this.

61	**...**	**♔d7**
62	**♖c5**	**♔d8**
63	**♖d5+**	**♔e7**

Black changes his plan of defence and sends his king back to the kingside. If 63...♔c7 he was doubtless concerned by 64 ♔b4 with the threat of supporting the passed h-pawn with the king.

64	**♔b4**	**♔e6**
65	**♔c5**	**♔e7**
66	**♖g5**	**♔f7**
67	**♔d5**	**♔f8**
68	**♖e5**	**♔f7**
69	**♔e4**	**♖c6**
70	**♔f5**	**♖c4**
71	**♖a5** *(D)*	

71 a5!?.



B

71	**...**	**♖c6**

Black could have forced a draw by 71...♔g7!. To delay this is already dangerous – Black has to reckon with the following plan: the white pawn moves to a5, the rook defends everything along the fifth rank, and the king heads for b7.

72	**♔g5**	**♔g7**
73	**♖d5**	**♖c4**
74	**a5**	**♖c6**
75	**♖d7+**	**♔g8**
76	**♖a7?!**	**♖d6?**

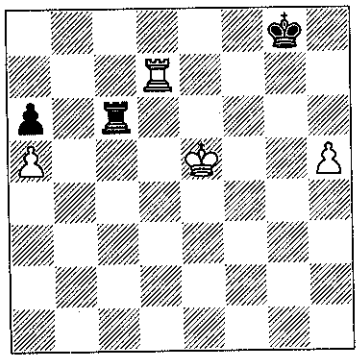
Now it was essential to take the opportunity to play 76...♖c5+ 77 ♔f6 ♖c6+ (both 77...♖xh5? and 77...♖xa5? are impossible in view of 78 ♔g6) 78 ♔e7 ♖c5 (or, as recommended by Miles, 78...♖h6) 79 ♖xa6 ♔h7.

77	**♔f5**	**♖d5+**
78	**♔f6**	**♖d6+**
79	**♔e5**	**♖c6**

Stronger is the continuation 79...♖h6! 80 ♔f5 ♔f8! (but not 80...♖c6? 81 ♖e7 ♔f8 82 ♖e6 ♖c5+ 83 ♔g6 ♖xa5 84 h6 ♖a1 85 ♖f6+!) 81 ♔g5 ♖c6.

80	**♖d7** *(D)*	
80	**...**	**♖h6!**

Miles makes an amusing comment here: 'If 80...♔f8, then 81 ♖d6 ♖c5+ 82 ♔f6 ♔g8 (82...♔e8 83 h6) 83 ♖xa6.' However, after his recommended move 83 ♖xa6??, 83...♔h7! leads to an immediate draw, whereas 83 ♔g6! wins.



B

80...♔h8, counting on 81 ♖d6 ♖c5+ 82 ♖d5 (82 ♔f6 ♔h7!) 82...♖c6 83 ♔f5 ♔g7 84 ♖e5 (with the threat 85 ♖e7+ and 86 ♖e6) 84...♔f7!, looks tempting, but the subtle move 81 ♖e7! enables White to achieve victory: after 81...♔g8 82 ♔f5! ♖c5+ (if 82...♔f8 or 82...♖h6, then 83 ♖e6! and 84 ♔g6) 83 ♖e5! (but not 83 ♔f6? ♖xh5 84 ♔g6 ♔f8!) White wins. This position arose later in the game, after White's 83rd move.

81 ♔f5

This was the sealed move; here the game was again adjourned. It seems that the game can still be saved by 81...♔f8! (not allowing 82 ♖e7) 82 ♔g5 ♖c6, but here again Black's analysis proved not to be up to the task.

81	**...**	**♖c6?**
82	**♖e7!**	**♖c5+**
83	**♖e5**	**♖c1**

If 83...♖c6 84 ♖e6 ♖c1 White has a pleasant choice between 85 ♔g6 and 85 ♖xa6 ♔f7 (unfortunately, 85...♔h7 is impossible because of 86 ♖e6) 86 ♖a7+ ♔f8 87 ♖a8+ ♔f7 88 a6 ♖c5+ 89 ♔e4 ♖c6 90 a7 ♖a6 91 ♖h8. The flank assault on the rook's pawn only succeeds if the king is on g7 or h7.

84 ♔e6!

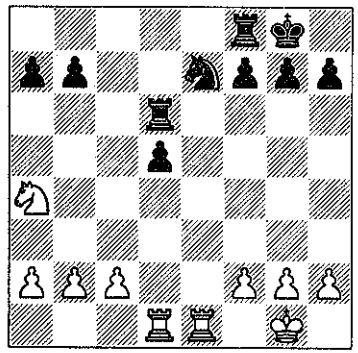
The king heads for the a6-pawn. Now there is no escape!

84	**...**	**♔g7**
85	**♔d6**	**♔h7**
86	**♖c5**	**♖b1**
87	**♔c6**	**♔h6**
88	**♖d5**	**♖b2**
89	**♖d7**	**♖b5**
90	**♖d6+**	**♔h7**
91	**♖d5**	**♖b1**
92	**♖d7+**	**♔h6**
93	**♖b7**	**♖a1**
94	**♔b6**	**♔xh5**
95	**♔xa6**	**♔g6**
96	**♖b5**	**♔f7**
97	**♔b7**	**♖e1**
98	**a6**	**♖e7+**
99	**♔b6**	**♖e6+**
100	**♔a5**	

Black resigned

In the last two examples both the moves and the annotations of grandmasters make a comic impression for one simple reason – they were not sufficiently familiar with the basics of the theory of rook endings.

Our next step should probably be to analyse positions closely connected with a type of endgame that we have already studied – namely, those where each side has two or three pawns on the kingside and one side has an extra passed pawn on the queenside (this is usually a rook's pawn). This sort of situation often occurs in practice. However, that is another subject – we shall only mention it here. I will restrict myself to just one example, where the same technique was used that we saw in Karpov-Yusupov, and that we should have seen in Rachels-Gurevich: a pawn sacrifice to move into a theoretically drawn position.



B

Bakulin – Dvoretsky

Moscow 1974

Given that on 18...♖e6, 19 ♘c5 is unpleasant, I wanted to play 18...♘c6. However, my sense of danger had its say, and I became suspicious of the position after 19 c4 d4 20 ♘c5 b6 21 ♘d3. White gains a pawn majority on the queenside, he securely blockades the pawn on d4 and controls the e-file. His advantage may not be too great, but it is enduring. When I showed the endgame to Vaganian, a specialist in the French Defence, he assessed the position as highly unfavourable for Black.

Black can probably avoid defeat by accurately parrying the threats, but that is a hard and thankless task. As an active player, I usually tried to avoid a passive defence of this kind; I tried to find a way to change radically the course of the game, to force events, either to clarify the situation or, on the other hand, to complicate the game as much as possible.

Returning to the move

18 ... ♖e6

I tried to think up something after

19	**♘c5**	**♖xe1+**
20	**♖xe1**	

Then 20...♘g6 21 ♘xb7 ♖b8 22 ♘c5 ♖xb2 23 ♖e8+ ♘f8 looks very dubious – the pin on the knight is very dangerous. For example, White might play 24 g3 f6 25 ♘d7 ♔f7 26 ♖xf8+ ♔e7 27 ♖b8.

Another intriguing idea immediately occurred to me:

20 ... ♖c8!
21 ♖xe7 ♔f8

An eye for combinations is sometimes essential even in 'boring' endgames! The subsequent course of events is forced:

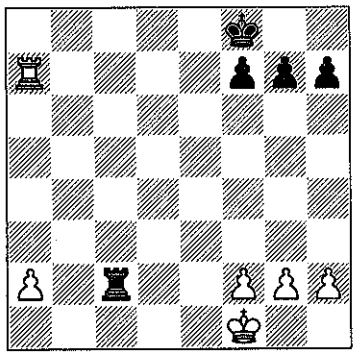
22 ♖xb7

After 22 ♖e2 ♖xc5 the position is approximately equal.

22 ... ♖xc5
23 c3 d4
24 ♔f1

Not 24 ♖b3?? d3 25 ♔f1 ♖e5!.

24 ... dc
25 bc ♖xc3
26 ♖xa7 ♖c2 *(D)*



W

I knew for certain that this was a draw, and a fairly simple one at that, and so went for my combination without hesitation. Of course, if I had not studied this type of ending before, I would have hardly have taken the decision to give up a pawn. Who knows how the game would have finished after 18...♘c6, but as played I drew easily.

27 g3 g6
28 ♔g2 ♔g7
29 ♔f3 h5
30 h4 ♔f6
31 ♔e3 ♖c3+
32 ♔e4 ♖c2
33 f3 ♖e2+
34 ♔f4 ♖b2
35 ♖a6+ ♔g7
36 ♖a3 ♔f6
37 ♖a6+ ♔g7
38 ♖a4 ♔f6

38...♖f2!?.

39 g4 hg
40 fg ♖f2+
41 ♔g3 ♖c2
42 ♖f4+

Also harmless is 42 g5+ ♔e5.

42 ... ♔e6
43 a4

43 ♖f2 ♖c3+ 44 ♔f4 f6.

43 ... f5
44 gf+ gf
45 ♖f2 ♖c4
46 ♖a2 ♖c3+
47 ♔f4 ♖c4+
48 ♔g3

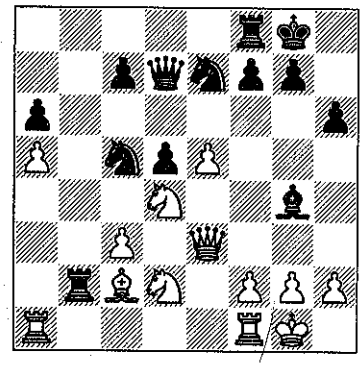
48 ♔g5 ♖g4+ 49 ♔h5 ♔f6 50 a5?? ♖g8.

48 ... ♖c3+
49 ♔g2 ♖c4
50 h5 ♖h4

Drawn

Artur Yusupov

I now want to show you a few fragments from my games where there arose not theoretical, but purely practical, rook endings. The first example, however, is not at all like an endgame to begin with.



B

Ljubojević – Yusupov
Linares 1991

20 ... ♗f5!

Black carries out exchanges by means of tactics, and makes a positional pawn sacrifice – a technique we have already mentioned more than once. In this case a pawn is given up to activate Black's pieces.

21 ♗xf5 ♘xf5
22 ♘xf5 ♕xf5
23 ♕xc5 ♖xd2
24 ♕xc7 ♖c8
25 ♕d6 ♖xc3
26 ♕xa6 ♖cc2

Of course, the extra passed pawn on a5 is very dangerous, but Black has correctly calculated that his pressure along the seventh rank enables him to maintain the equilibrium.

27 ♕b6

If 27 ♕a7, then 27...d4 28 ♕a8+ ♔h7 29 a6 (if 29 ♕f3 ♕xf3 30 gf ♖a2 we get approximately the same as in the game) 29...♖xf2 30 a7 ♖xg2+ 31 ♕xg2 ♖xg2+ 32 ♔xg2 ♕g4+ with perpetual check.

27 ... d4
28 ♕d8+ ♔h7
29 ♕h4 g5
30 ♕h3

Much weaker is 30 ♕g3 ♖d3 31 f3 ♖dd2 with dangerous threats (for example, 32...♕f4).

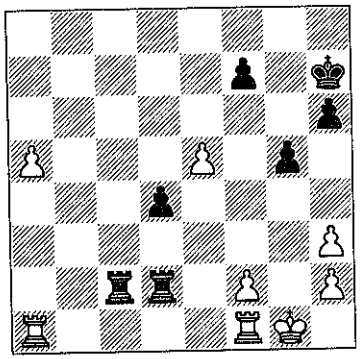
30 ... ♕xh3
31 gh *(D)*

It seems that things are bad – the white rook is placed behind the passed a-pawn. However, thanks to a tactical finesse, Black manages to hold up the pawn from the rear.

31 ... ♖a2
32 a6 ♖xf2!
33 ♖xa2

Forced.

33 ... ♖xa2



B

34 ♖xf7+ ♔g8
35 ♖d7

35 ♖f6 d3.

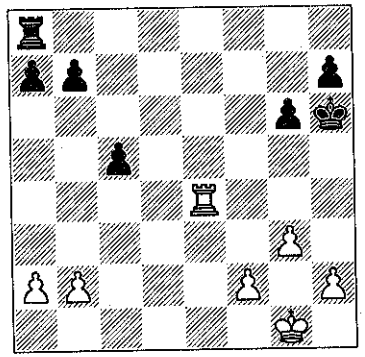
35 ... ♖xa6
36 ♖xd4 ♔f7
37 h4

Drawn

The following example also focuses on the activity of the rook. Generally speaking, the main principle of rook endings is that the rook should be active *(D)*.

White has a small advantage in view of the fact that his rook is more active, and also because of the slightly unusual position of the black king on h6.

Black's most natural continuation is apparently to try to activate his rook by 28...♖d8 29 ♖e7 b5 30 ♖xa7 ♖d2 31 b3 c4 32 bc bc. Were the king not on h6, a draw could be agreed immediately in view of the inevitable exchange of pawns on



B

Yusupov – Barbero
Mendoza 1985

the queenside. In this case, however, White can still play for a win by 33 h4! c3 34 ♔g2 c2 35 ♖c7 c1♕ (35...g5 is probably simpler, gaining a theoretically drawn endgame of h-pawn against white f- and g-pawns) 36 ♖xc1 ♖xa2 37 ♖c7 with the threat of 38 g4.

Barbero carried out an operation which also deserves attention. Taking advantage of the fact that the pawn ending is satisfactory for Black, he decided to secure his second (White's seventh) rank for his rook.

28 ... ♖g8
29 ♔f1 ♖g7
30 ♔e2 ♖d7
31 h4

The immediate 31 ♖e5 deserved consideration.

31 ... ♔g7

32 ♖e5! b6
33 ♖e6 ♔f7?!

It was necessary to take away the important square c6 from the white rook. Had Black continued 33...♖c7! 34 ♖d6 ♔f7 35 h5 ♔e7, the position would have remained approximately equal.

34 ♖c6

The white rook has taken up an extremely strong position. It cuts off the opponent's king along the sixth rank and hinders the advance of Black's queenside pawns.

34 ... ♔e7?!

It is better to initiate active operations to divert White from his planned attack on the kingside: 34...♖e7+ 35 ♔d3 ♖d7+ 36 ♔c3 ♖e7, intending ...♖e2.

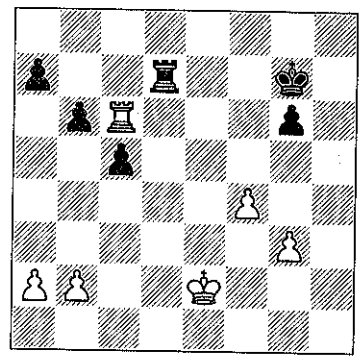
35 h5! ♔f7?

Another passive move. 35...gh! 36 ♖h6 ♔d8 was essential. Once the king has reached c7, Black can advance his b- and c-pawns.

36 hg+ hg
37 f4

Now White already has a serious advantage. The black king is tied to the g6-pawn, and the rook must defend his second rank – a pawn will be lost if it is activated. But, with Black defending passively, White can strengthen his position without hindrance.

37 ... ♔g7 *(D)*
38 ♔e3 ♔f7



W

39 b3 ♔g7
40 ♔e4 ♔f7
41 ♔f3

41 ♔e5 is also good.

41 ... ♖e7
42 ♔g4 ♖d7
43 ♔h4

The threat is 44 g4, 45 ♔g5, and on a rook check along the fifth rank there follows f4-f5 or ♔h6.

43 ... ♖d2

Black decides to become active, but it would have been better to do this several moves earlier.

44 ♖c7+ ♔f6
45 ♖xa7 b5?

45...♔f5 would have been more resilient.

46 ♖c7?!

After 46 ♖a5! ♔f5 47 ♔h3 a second pawn would be lost.

46 ... c4
47 ♖c6+! ♔f5?

More stubborn is 47...♔f7, but even this does not save Black: 48

bc bc 49 a4! ♖d4 50 ♔g5 ♖d5+ 51 ♔g4 ♖d4 52 ♖c5! ♔f6 (52...c3 53 a5 ♖a4 54 ♔g5) 53 a5, and Black is in zugzwang (53...♖e4 54 ♖c6+ ♔f7 55 ♔g5).

48	**♖c5+**	**♔e6**
49	**♖xb5**	**c3**
50	**♖c5**	**c2**
51	**b4**	**g5+**
52	**fg**	**♖d4+**
53	**♔h5**	**♖xb4**
54	**♖xc2**	

Black resigned

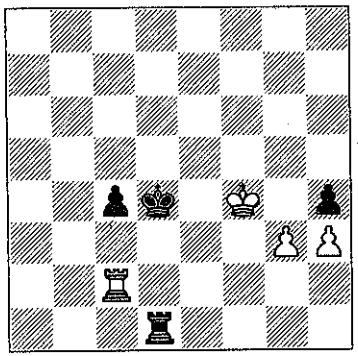
To begin with the endgame was almost equal. So why did Black lose? Firstly, because he defended too passively and activated his rook too late. Secondly, the excellent position of the white rook caused him huge problems. Note the zwischenzug 32 ♖e5!, which secured the ideal square c6 for the white rook. From c6 the rook tied up absolutely all of the opponent's pieces and pawns.

The following diagram shows a typical situation: I will soon have to give up my rook for the c-pawn, and an endgame of rook against pawn will arise. Each tempo could be decisive.

A straightforward approach allows White to save himself, viz.:

43	**...**	**hg?**

43...♔d3? 44 ♖f2! (or 44 ♖g2!) leads to the same thing.



B

Yusupov – Tseshkovsky

Moscow 1981

44	**♔xg3**	**♔d3**
45	**♖a2**	

The main variation is quite instructive:

45	**...**	**c3**
46	**h4**	**c2**
47	**♖xc2**	**♔xc2**
48	**♔f4!**	

Of course, 48 h5?? ♖d4! is bad, but the apparently similar 48 ♔g4? also loses: 48...♔d3 49 h5 ♔e4 50 ♔g5 ♔e5 51 ♔g6 ♔e6 52 h6 ♖g1+. From f4 the white king 'shoulders away' the black king and does not allow it to approach the pawn.

48	**...**	**♔d3**
49	**h5**	**♖h1**
50	**♔g5**	**♔e4**
51	**h6**	**♔e5**
52	**♔g6**	**♔e6**
53	**♔g7!**	

Not 53 h7? ♖g1+ 54 ♔h6 ♔f7 55 h8♘+ ♔f6 56 ♔h7 ♖g2, and Black wins.

White's accurate king move ensures that the position is drawn: 53...♖g1+ 54 ♔f8, or 53...♔e7 54 h7 ♖g1+ 55 ♔h8!.

However, my opponent discovered a much stronger possibility:

43	**...**	**♖f1+!**
44	**♔g4**	**hg**

Now after 45 ♔xg3 ♔d3 46 ♖a2 c3 47 h4 c2 48 ♖xc2 ♔xc2 White cannot save himself as the king is denied the square f4.

45	**♖d2+**	**♔e3**
46	**♖g2**	

46 ♖c2 does not help in view of 46...♖f8! 47 ♔xg3 ♖g8+, and the king is placed most awkwardly on the h-file. For example, 48 ♔h4 ♔d3 49 ♖a2 c3 50 ♔h5 c2 51 ♖a1 ♔d2 52 h4 c1♕ 53 ♖xc1 ♔xc1 54 ♔h6 ♔d2 55 h5 ♔e3 56 ♔h7 ♖g1 57 h6 ♔f4 58 ♔h8 ♔g5 59 h7 ♔g6, or 48 ♔h2 ♔d3 49 ♖a2 c3 50 h4 c2 51 ♖a1 ♔d2 52 ♔h3 c1♕ 53 ♖xc1 ♔xc1 54 h5 ♔d2 55 ♔h4 ♔e3 56 h6 ♔f4 57 ♔h5 ♖g5+ – in both cases White loses.

46	**...**	**♖f4+!**
47	**♔xg3**	**c3**
48	**h4**	**♖c4**
49	**♖c2**	**♔d3**

Now the fact that the white king is cut off along the fourth rank is decisive.

50	**♖c1**	**c2**
51	**h5**	**♔d2**
52	**♖h1**	**c1♕**
53	**♖xc1**	**♔xc1**

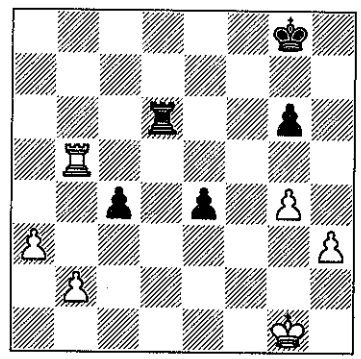
White resigned

Two ideas, typical for this kind of ending, are clearly revealed in the course of this game:

1) the cutting off of the king along the fourth rank – thanks to this Black was able to win the game.

2) 'shouldering away' – White hoped to save the game by using this technique, but Tseshkovsky destroyed my idea by giving a zwischenschach.

In the following, more complex, ending, similar motifs come into play.



W

Yusupov – Timman

Tilburg Ct (6) 1986

The assessment of the position is not in doubt – White has a large advantage. A logical move would now have been:

38 a4!

It is important to advance the passed a-pawn quickly. Black's passed pawn is not dangerous – on ...e4-e3 there is always the reply ♔f1.

How might the game have developed in this case?

38 ... ♖d3
39 a5 c3
40 bc e3

The threat is 41...♖d1+ 42 ♔g2 e2.

41 ♔f1 ♖xc3
42 a6 ♖a3
43 ♖b6 ♔f7

43...g5 is bad: 44 ♖g6+ ♔f7 45 ♖xg5 ♖xa6 46 ♖e5 ♖a3 47 ♔e2 ♖a2+ 48 ♔f3 ♖h2 49 ♔g3 ♖e2 50 ♔f4.

44 g5

If Black now acts passively, he will find himself in zugzwang (for example, 44...♖a2 45 h4).

There is no choice but to exchange pawns:

44 ... e2+
45 ♔xe2 ♖xh3

Now that White has slightly improved the position of his rook in typical fashion, there follows:

46 ♖f6+! ♔g7
47 ♖c6

The threat is 48 ♖c7+ ♔f8 49 a7.

47 ... ♔f7

Play may continue:

48 ♔d2 ♖g3

On 48...♖a3 there follows 49 ♔c2 ♖a5 50 ♔c3 ♖xg5 51 ♔b4 ♖g1 52 ♔c5 g5 53 a7 ♖a1 54 ♔b6 g4 55 ♔b7, winning (Black's king is cut off from its passed pawn).

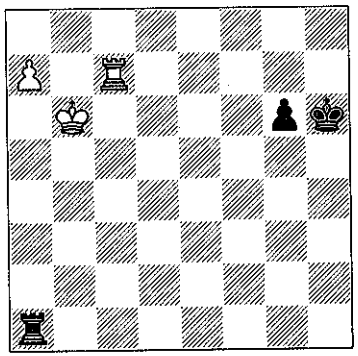
49 a7 ♖a3
50 ♖c7+ ♔e6
51 ♔c2 ♔f5
52 ♔b2 ♖a6
53 ♔b3 ♔xg5
54 ♔b4

The threat is 55 ♖c5+ and 56 ♖a5.

54 ... ♔h6

The only defence.

55 ♔b5 ♖a1
56 ♔b6 *(D)*



B

Take a look in *Secrets of Chess Training* by Mark Dvoretsky and

you will find in the section 'Rook against Pawns' (pp. 107-113) an almost identical position. The best defence is:

56 ... ♖b1+

On 56...g5, 57 ♖c8! is the most precise move.

57 ♔c6 ♖a1
58 ♔b7 ♖b1+
59 ♔c8 ♖a1

But even this does not help:

60 ♔b8 ♔g5

Or 60...g5 61 a8♕ ♖xa8+ 62 ♔xa8 ♔h5 (62...g4 63 ♖c5! – cutting off the king!) 63 ♔b7 ♔g4 64 ♔c6 ♔f3 65 ♖f7+! ♔e3 66 ♖g7! ♔f4 67 ♔d5, and so on.

61 a8♕ ♖xa8+
62 ♔xa8 ♔f4
63 ♖f7+!

A typical zwischenschach to gain a tempo; the hasty 63 ♔b7? g5 leads to a draw.

63 ... ♔e4
64 ♖g7! ♔f5
65 ♔b7 g5
66 ♔c6 g4
67 ♔d5 ♔f4
68 ♔d4 ♔f3
69 ♔d3 g3
70 ♖f7+

and 71 ♔e2.

You can now see why White transferred his rook to c6 on moves 46 and 47 – in order to free the square b6 for his king. 'Trivial' points such as this can sometimes have a decisive influence on the outcome of the game – they should never be overlooked.

Unfortunately, in mutual time trouble I let slip an important inaccuracy:

38 ♔f2? ♖d3

Of course, the king should not be allowed to e3.

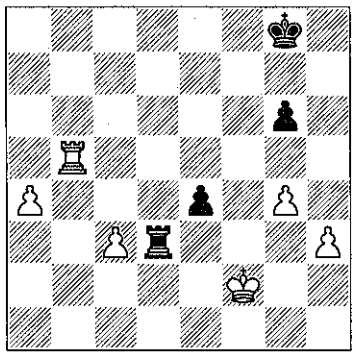
39 a4 c3

39...♖xh3? loses: 40 ♖c5 ♖b3 41 ♖xc4 ♖xb2+ 42 ♔e3. After the inevitable demise of the e4-pawn the ideal set-up for White arises – his rook defends both pawns along the fourth rank without allowing any counterplay. The king calmly heads towards the a-pawn.

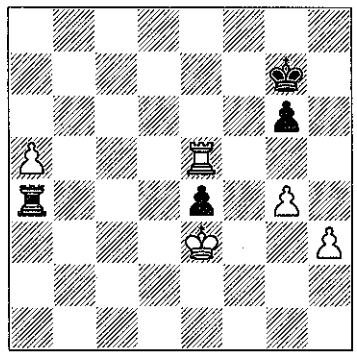
There was also the intriguing move 39...♔f7 with the idea, after 40 ♖c5?! ♔e6!, of supporting the passed e4-pawn with the king. Stronger is 40 a5 c3 41 b4! (but not 41 bc ♖xc3 with a draw). After 41...♖d4 42 ♔e3! ♖c4 43 ♖c5 ♖xb4 44 ♖xc3 ♖a4 45 ♖c5 there arises the same won position as later in the game.

40 bc *(D)*
40 ... ♖xc3?

Timman makes a decisive mistake on the last move before the time-control. He thought he could always advance the pawn to e3, but he failed to consider the strong delaying move 41 ♖e5!. If Timman had seen this, then he would, even



B



W

without going into detailed variations, but just by a simple method of comparison, have preferred to play 40...e3+! 41 ♔e2 ♖xc3. Here the black rook is a little more active, and the white king remains a little further from its kingside pawns than in the game. After 42 g5 ♖a3 43 a5 ♔f7 44 ♖e5 ♔f8 the position is clearly drawn. For example: 45 ♖e6 ♖xa5 46 ♖xg6 ♖e5 47 h4 ♔f7 48 ♖f6+ ♔g7 49 ♖f3 ♖e4 50 h5 ♖h4 51 h6+ ♔g6.

41 ♖e5!

Here the game was adjourned. Analysis showed that White wins without difficulty.

41 ... ♖c4

We have already discussed the position arising after 41...♖xh3 42 ♖xe4. If 42...♔f7 (with the idea of moving the king out to g5), the strongest move is 43 g5!.

42 a5 ♖a4
43 ♔e3 ♔g7 *(D)*
44 g5 ♔f7
45 h4 ♔g7
46 ♔f4

46 ♖e7+ ♔f8 47 ♖e6 ♖a3+ 48 ♔f4! is also good.

46 ... ♔f7
47 ♖b5

If now 47...♔e6, then 48 ♖b6+ ♔d5 49 ♖xg6 (or 49 a6), and on 47...♔g7 there follows 48 ♖b7+ ♔f8 49 ♖b6 ♖xa5 (49...♔f7 50 a6) 50 ♖xg6 with an easy win. In this last variation we clearly see the difference the position of the black pawn makes – with the pawn on e3 there would be no win.

47 ... e3+
48 ♔xe3 ♔e6

The only chance to become active – in reply to a rook check the king can now go to f5.

49 ♖b6+ ♔f5
50 a6 ♔g4

And what would have followed on 50...♖xh4? Of course, 51 ♖b5+ and 52 ♖a5 – how could White fail to use the opportunity to put his rook behind a passed pawn?!

51 ♖xg6

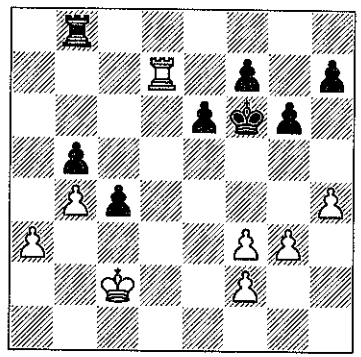
51 ♖d6? is worse in view of 51...♔h5 and 52...♖xh4.

51 ... ♔xh4
52 ♔d3 ♔h5
53 ♖c6 ♔xg5
54 ♔c3 ♔f5
55 ♔b3 ♖a1
56 ♔c4 ♔e5
57 ♔c5!

The finishing touch is 'shouldering away'.

57 ... ♖a2
58 ♔b6
Black resigned

In conclusion, I offer for your attention a highly complex, purely analytical endgame.



W

Yusupov – Mestel
Esbjerg 1980

This curious position with a unusual configuration of white pawns on the kingside arose immediately after adjournment. Only victory left me with chances of taking first place in the tournament and completing a GM norm, so I had to spend all my free day analysing the adjourned position.

42 a4! ba
43 ♔c3

White has an extra piece in play – his king. This circumstance will have its say if Black plays 'by the book' (or in actual fact stereotypically): 43...♖a8?, placing the rook behind the passed pawn. White then plays 44 ♖d2, followed by ♖a2 and ♔xc4, whereupon the a-pawn will be lost. This sort of defence is impossible – Black is clearly too late with his counterplay.

The best chance is:

43 ... e5!

Mestel did not play this move as he was afraid of 44 ♖d2 ♔e6 45 ♔xc4, but after 45...♖c8+ 46 ♔b5 ♖a8! (46...a3? loses to 47 ♔a4 ♖c3 48 b5) 47 ♔c6 (47 ♖a2 ♔d5! 48 ♖xa4? ♖b8+) 47...a3 48 ♖a2 ♖c8+ 49 ♔b7 ♖c3 50 b5 ♔d5 51 b6 ♔c4 Black saves himself: 52 ♔a8 ♔b3 53 ♖xa3+ ♔xa3 54 b7 ♖b3 leads to a draw, and if 52 ♔a6, then 52...♔b3 53 b7 ♔xa2 54 b8♕ ♖b3 55 ♕xe5 ♔b1 56 ♕e1+ ♔b2 57

♕e2+ ♔b1 58 ♔a5 a2 59 ♔a4 ♖xf3! 60 ♕d1+ ♔b2 61 ♕xf3 a1♕+ 62 ♔b4 ♕a7 with a drawn queen ending.

I was intending:

44 ♖a7!

However, Black now activates his rook:

44 ... ♖d8!

In this case play should continue:

45 b5!

45 ♔xc4 is weaker: 45...♖d2 46 b5 ♖c2+!.

45 ... ♔e6!

45...♖d3+? is bad in view of 46 ♔xc4 ♖xf3 47 b6 and now either 47...♖xf2 48 ♖xa4 or 47...♖b3 48 b7 ♔f5 49 ♔c5.

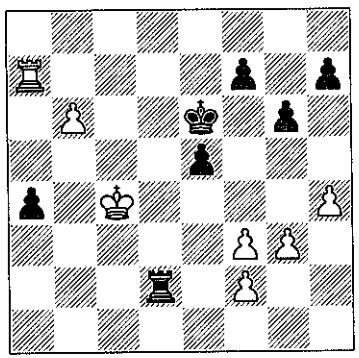
46 ♔xc4

46 b6? is met by 46...♖b8.

46 ... ♖d2

47 b6! *(D)*

47 ♖xa4 allows 47...♖c2+!.



B

After 47 b6! Black would have to make a difficult choice between 47...♖c2+ (A), 47...♖xf2 (B) and 47...♔d6 (C):

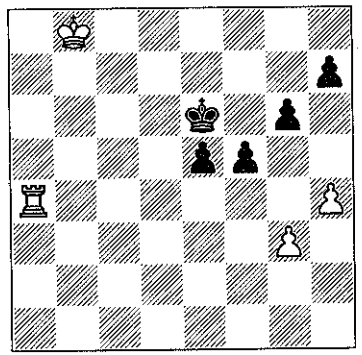
A. 47 ... ♖c2+
48 ♔b5 ♖b2+
49 ♔c6 ♖c2+
50 ♔b7 ♖xf2

Note this well: Black employs a typical technique – first he drives the king to the square in front of its own passed pawn, and then 'nibbles' at the pawns.

51 ♔a8 ♖xf3
52 b7 ♖b3
53 ♖xa4!

The pawn will have to be taken in any case, so it is better to do this straight away, in order to hold up the passed e-pawn for a moment.

53 ... f5
54 b8♕ ♖xb8+
55 ♔xb8 *(D)*



B

The resulting sharp position is, it would seem, won. Play might continue:

55 ... e4
56 ♖a5!

It is important to cut off the black king.

56 ... h6

Or 56...e3 57 ♖a3 f4 58 gf ♔f5 59 ♖xe3.

57 ♖a6+! ♔d5
58 ♖xg6 e3
59 ♖g8 ♔e4
60 ♔c7 ♔f3
61 ♔d6 e2
62 ♖e8 ♔xg3
63 ♖xe2 f4

White plays either 66 ♔e5 or 66 h5.

B. 47 ... ♖xf2
48 ♖xa4

48 b7 ♖b2 49 ♔c5 is no good in view of 49...a3!.

48 ... ♔d7?!
49 ♖a7+ ♔c6
50 ♖xf7 ♔xb6
51 ♔d5

and White ought to win, as the black king is too far away from the kingside pawns.

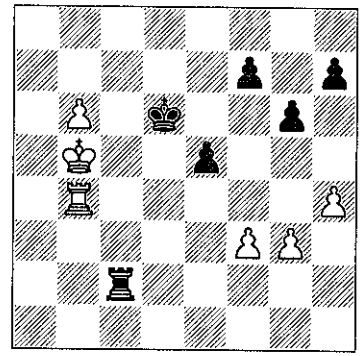
C. 47 ... ♔d6
48 ♖xa4

A draw results after 48 ♖xf7 a3 49 ♖xh7 a2 50 ♖a7 ♖xf2.

48 ... ♖xf2

48...♔c6? loses after 49 ♖a7 f5 50 ♖xh7 ♔xb6 51 ♖h6 ♖xf2 52 ♖xg6+ ♔c7 53 ♔d5 ♖xf3 54 ♔xe5.

49 ♖b4 ♖c2+
50 ♔b5 *(D)*



B

50 ... ♔d7!
51 b7 ♔c7
52 ♖c4+ ♖xc4
53 ♔xc4 ♔xb7
54 ♔d5

To begin with I thought that this pawn ending was won in view of 54...♔c7 55 ♔xe5 ♔d7 56 ♔f6 ♔e8 57 ♔g7 h5 58 g4.

But Black can defend better:

54 ... f6!

Now White can achieve nothing.

55 ♔e6

If 55 g4, then 55...h5! (neither 55...♔b6? 56 g5! nor 55...♔c7? 56 ♔e6 ♔c6 57 g5! is good enough for Black) 56 gh gh 57 ♔e6 ♔c6 58 ♔xf6 ♔d5 59 ♔g5 e4!, and a draw results.

55 ... ♔c6
56 ♔xf6 ♔d5
57 g4

Or 57 ♔g7 ♔d4 58 ♔xh7 ♔e3 59 ♔xg6 ♔xf3 60 h5 e4, again with a draw.

57 ... ♔d4
58 h5 gh

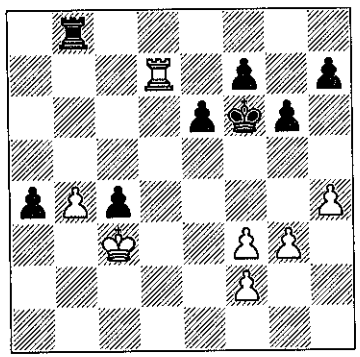
58...♔e3 is also possible.

59 gh e4!
60 fe ♔xe4
61 ♔g7 ♔f5
62 ♔xh7 ♔f6!

with a draw.

As you see, it is extremely difficult, even with the benefit of home analysis, to find the narrow path to keep Black above the precipice. In any case, Black was obliged to play 43...e5!.

The continuation chosen in the game lost without a struggle *(D)*:



B

43 ... ♖b5?
44 ♔xc4 ♖d5
45 ♖a7 ♖d2
46 b5

In effect Black has lost a tempo. In an analogous position, which we have already analysed, the pawn was on e5 and Black was able to introduce the king into play by ...♔e6. Now this resource does not exist, and so Black is defenceless. If, for example, 46...♖xf2, then 47 b6 ♖b2 48 b7 a3 49 ♔c5 a2 50 ♔c6.

46 ... ♖c2+
47 ♔b4 e5

47...♖xf2 48 ♖xa4 ♖xf3 49 b6.

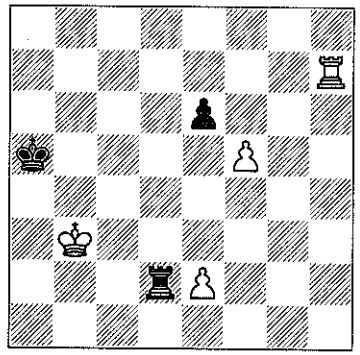
48 b6 ♖xf2
49 b7 ♔f5

49...♖b2+ is answered by 50 ♔c5, threatening 51 ♖a6+ and 52 ♖b6.

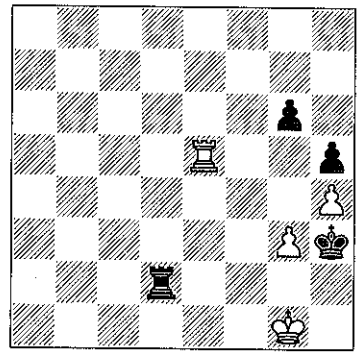
50 g4+! ♔f4
51 ♖xa4
Black resigned

This game gives us the opportunity to make some reflections on the technique of endgame play. Every tempo, even one that might seem insignificant (like ...e6-e5!), can have a fundamental, maybe even decisive, bearing on the outcome of the game. It is always necessary to select carefully the most precise form for the realization of your plans.

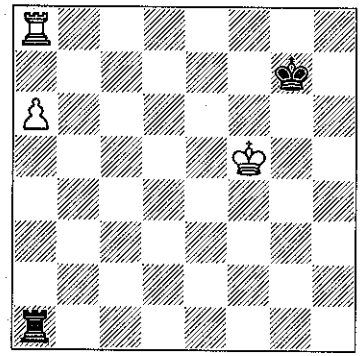
Exercises



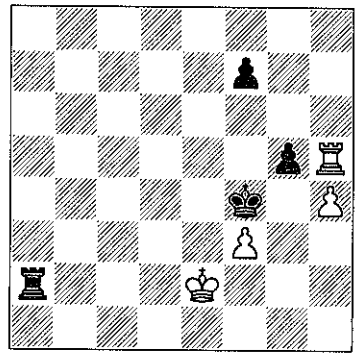
1 W Win



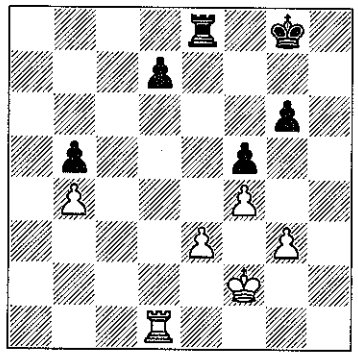
2 W Draw



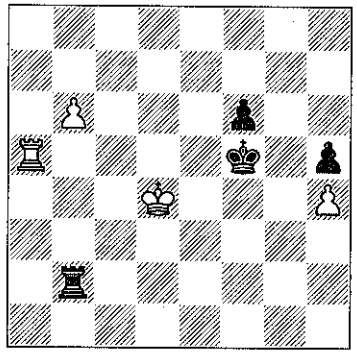
3 B Draw



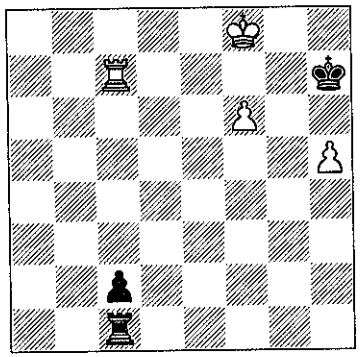
4 W Draw



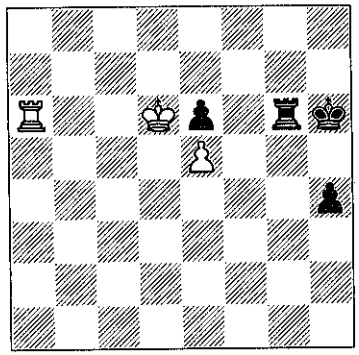
5 W ±



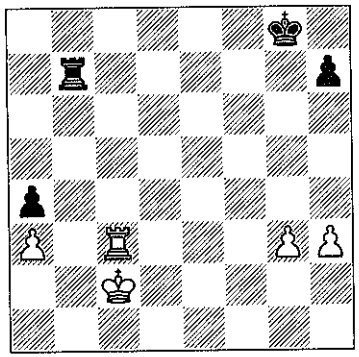
6 B Draw



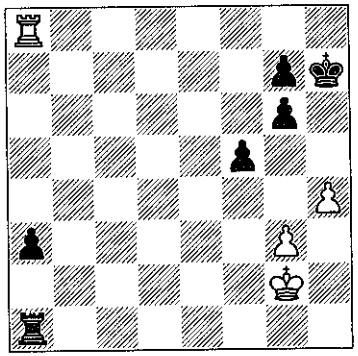
7 B Draw



8 W Draw



9 B Draw



10 B

How do you assess the position? Is 1...a2 a good move?

Answers to the Exercises

1. Rinck, 1906

1 f6 ♖xe2

1...♔b5 2 ♖h8 ♖d7 3 ♖e8, or 1...♖d4 2 ♖e7 ♖e4 3 ♖e8 winning for White.

2 ♖h5+!

2 ♖h8? ♖f2 3 ♖f8 ♔b6 4 f7 ♔b7 5 ♔c4 ♖f5.

2 ... ♔b6

3 ♖f5!!

2. Trabattoni-Barlov, La Valetta 1979

A draw could have been obtained by:

1 ♖e6! ♖g2+

2 ♔h1! ♖xg3

3 ♖xg6!

In the game there occurred:

1 ♖g5? ♖g2+

2 ♔h1 ♖f2!

2...♖xg3? 3 ♖xg6!.

3 ♔g1 ♖f6

White was in zugzwang and resigned after a few moves.

3. Romanovsky, 1950

It is essential for Black to transfer the rook to his third rank, but how is this to be achieved? 1...♖f1+? fails to 2 ♔e5 ♖f6 3 ♖g8+, whilst 1...♖b1? also loses: 2 ♖a7+ ♔h6 3 ♖b7 ♖a1 4 a7.

The correct approach is:

1 ... ♖a5+!

2 ♔e6

If 2 ♔e4, then 2...♖b5 3 ♖a7+ (3 ♖c8 ♖a5 4 ♖c6 ♔f7) 3...♔g6 4 ♖b7 ♖a5 5 a7 ♔f6 6 ♔d4 ♔e6 7 ♔c4 ♔d6 8 ♔b4 ♖a1 (or 8...♔c6) with a draw.

2 ... ♖h5!!

The only way! 2...♖b5? is bad in view of 3 ♖a7+ and 4 ♖b7. If 2...♖g5?, then 3 ♖a7+ ♔g8 4 ♔f6! ♖a5 5 ♔g6 ♔f8 6 ♖a8+ ♔e7 6 a7 and Black's king is out of the safe zone.

3 ♔d7

3 ♖a7+ ♔g8 4 ♖f7 ♖a5 5 ♖a7 ♖h5!.

3 ... ♖h6!

4 ♔c7 ♖f6!

and the draw becomes obvious, for example: 5 a7 ♖f7+! (5...♖a6? 6 ♔b7) 6 ♔d6 ♖f6+ 7 ♔e5 ♖a6.

4. Vaiser-Martinović, Vrnjačka Banja 1984

1 ♔d1!! gh

2 ♖xh4+ ♔xf3

3 ♖h5

3 ♖h3+ ♔g2 4 ♖h5! ♖f2 5 ♔e1 is also possible.

3 ... ♔g4

4 ♖b5 f5

5 ♔e1

and the game soon ended in a draw.

All other king moves lose:

1 ♔d3? gh 2 ♖xh4+ ♔xf3 3 ♖h5 ♔g4 and 4...f5. The white king is stuck on the 'long side'.

1 ♔e1? ♔e3! 2 ♔d1 gh 3 ♖xh4 f5! 4 f4 ♖a1+ 5 ♔c2 ♖f1 6 ♖h3+ ♖f3 7 ♖h8 ♖xf4.

More intricate is:

1 ♔f1? ♔xf3

2 ♔g1

2 ♔e1 ♖a1+ 3 ♔d2 gh 4 ♖f5+ ♔g3 5 ♖xf7 h3 6 ♖g7+ ♔f4 7 ♖f7+ ♔e5 8 ♖h7 h2.

2 ... ♖g2+!

Wrong is 2...gh? 3 ♖f5+! (3 ♖xh4? ♔g3) 3...♔g3 4 ♖xf7 or 2...g4? 3 ♖f5+ ♔g3 4 h5! ♖g2+ (or 4...♖a1+ 5 ♖f1) 5 ♔f1 ♖h2 6 ♔g1 with a draw.

3 ♔h1

3 ♔f1 ♖h2 4 ♖xg5 ♖h1+ 5 ♖g1 ♖xg1+ 6 ♔xg1 ♔g4.

3 ... g4
4 ♖f5+ ♔g3
5 h5

Or 5 ♖xf7.

5 ... ♖f2!

and White can resign.

5. Dorfman-Kholmov, Saratov 1981

White ought to have kept excellent winning chances by playing:

43 ♖d5! ♖e4

43...♖b8 44 ♖xd7.

44 ♖xb5

For example 44...d5 45 ♖b7!, cutting off the black king on the eighth rank, or 44...♔f7 45 ♔e2! and 46 ♔d3.

Instead, he played the obvious move:

43 ♖xd7?

However, this is wrong due to:

43 ... ♖e4!

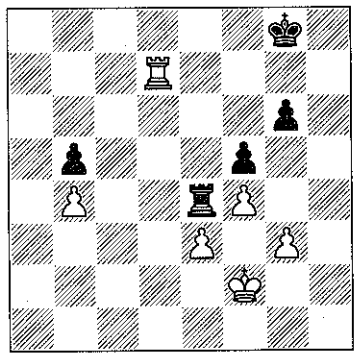
One possibility now is 44 ♖d4 ♖xd4! 45 ed ♔f7:

a) If 46 d5 ♔e7 47 ♔e3, then 47...♔d7! 48 d6 (48 ♔d4 ♔d6) 48...♔c6! 49 ♔d3 ♔d7! 50 ♔d4 ♔xd6.

b) The relatively best chance for White is to head for a queen ending by means of 46 ♔g2 ♔e6 47 ♔h3 ♔d5 48 ♔h4 ♔xd4 49 ♔g5 ♔c4 50 ♔xg6 ♔xb4 51 ♔xf5 ♔c4 52 ♔g5! (52 ♔e5 b4 53 f5 b3 54 f6 b2 55 f7 b1♕ 56 f8♕ ♕e1+) 52...b4 53 f5 ♔d5! 54 f6 ♔e6 55 ♔g6 b3 56 f7 b2 57 f8♕ b1♕+ 58 ♔g5 (58 ♔g7 ♕b2+ 59 ♔g8 ♕f6!), but here too a draw is the most likely outcome.

(*Typesetter's Note:* The database confirms that this is a draw)

In the game the following moves occurred *(D)*:



W

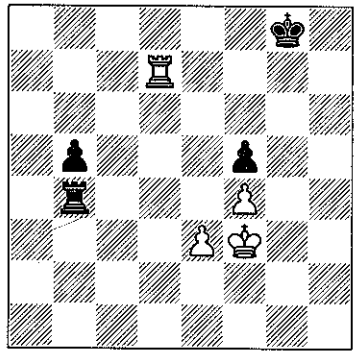
44 g4 fg
45 ♖d4 g3+!
46 ♔xg3

46 ♔f3 g2.

46 ... ♖xe3+
47 ♔g4 ♖b3
48 f5 ♔f7
49 ♔f4 gf
50 ♔xf5 ♔e7
51 ♔e5 ♖b1
52 ♔d5 ♖c1

Draw

Bologan suggested an interesting way to play for a win: 43 ♔f3?! ♖e4 44 g4! ♖xb4 (44...♔f7 45 ♖xd7+ ♔e6 46 ♖g7 ♔f6 47 ♖b7 ♖xb4 48 g5+ ♔e6 49 ♖g7) 45 gf gf 46 ♖xd7 *(D)*.



B

Black can, it would seem, count on saving the game after 46...♖c4 47 ♖d5 ♖c7 48 ♖xf5 (48 ♖xb5 ♖f7) 48...♖b7, for example: 49 ♖d5 b4 50 ♖d2 b3 51 ♖b2 ♔f7 52 ♔e4 ♔e6 53 ♔d4(d3) ♔f5, or 49 ♔e2 b4 50 ♔d2 b3 51 ♔c1 ♖e7 52 ♖g5+ ♔f7 53 ♖g3 ♔f6.

6. Portisch-Petrosian, Palma de Mallorca Ct (12) 1974

59 ... ♔e6?

Petrosian's move is too passive, and led to defeat:

60 ♔c5 ♖c2+

60...♔d7 is answered by 61 ♖a8!.

61 ♔b5 ♔d6
62 ♔a6 ♔c6
63 ♖a1 ♖c4
64 b7 ♖b4
65 ♖c1+ ♔d7
66 ♖c8

Black resigned

Essential was:

59 ... ♔g4!
60 ♖a4!

With the threat of 61 ♔c3+.

60 ... ♔h3!!

Hopeless is 60...♔g3? 61 ♔c5 f5 62 ♖b4 ♖c2+ 63 ♔d6 ♖c8 64 b7 ♖b8 65 ♔c7 ♖h8 66 b8♕ ♖xb8 67 ♖xb8 f4 (67...♔xh4 68 ♔d6 ♔g3 69 ♔e5 h4 70 ♖b3+ ♔g2 71 ♔f4 h3 72 ♖b2+) 68 ♔d6 f3 69 ♔e5 f2 70 ♖f8 ♔g2 71 ♔e4.

61 ♔c5 f5
62 ♖b4 ♖xb4!
63 ♔xb4 f4
64 b7 f3
65 b8♕ f2

and White cannot win.

7. Petrosian-Karpov, USSR Ch (Moscow) 1976

If 51...♔h6? 52 f7 ♔h7 (52...♖a1 53 ♔g8) 53 h6 ♔xh6 (53...♖a1 54 ♖xc2 does not help either) 54 ♔g8, there arises a position from a famous study by Lasker. White wins by gradually forcing away the opponent's king: 54...♖g1+ 55 ♔h8

♖f1 56 ♖c6+ ♔h5 57 ♔g7 ♖g1+ 58 ♔h7 ♖f1 59 ♖c5+ ♔h4 60 ♔g7 ♖g1+ 61 ♔h6 ♖f1 62 ♖c4+ ♔h3 63 ♔g6 ♖g1+ 64 ♔h5 ♖f1 65 ♖c3+ ♔h2 66 ♖xc2+.

The only saving move is:

51 ... ♔h8!
52 f7 ♖a1!

The main variation runs: 53 ♔e7 ♖e1+ 54 ♔f6 ♖f1+ 55 ♔g6 ♖g1+ 56 ♔h6 c1♕+! 57 ♖xc1 ♖g6+! with stalemate.

In the game there followed:

53 ♖xc2 ♖a8+
54 ♔e7 ♖a7+
55 ♔f6 ♖a6+
56 ♔g5 ♖a5+
57 ♔g4 ♖a4+
58 ♔g3 ♖a3+
59 ♔g2 ♔g7
60 ♖f2 ♔f8
61 ♖f5 ♖a6!

61...♖a7? 62 h6 ♖xf7 63 h7 or 62...♖a6 63 ♖h5.

62 ♔g3 ♖h6
63 ♔g4

Drawn in view of 63...♖h7.

8. Makarychev-Vasiukov, Vilnius 1980/81 (variation)

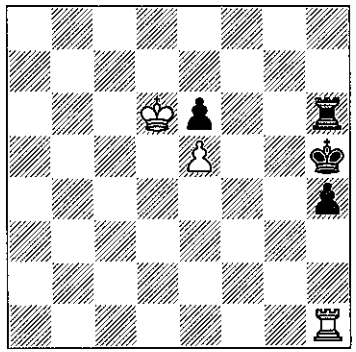
Black will win if he manages to advance his h-pawn just one square further. After the obvious 1 ♖a1? ♔h5 (threatening 2...h3) 2 ♖h1 ♖h6! White falls into zugzwang: 3 ♔e7 ♔g4 4 ♖g1+ ♔f4 with the threats 5...♔xe5 and 5...h3, or 3 ♖h2 ♔g4 4 ♖g2+ ♔f3 5 ♖h2 ♔g3 and 6...h3.

It is essential to reach the same position, but with Black to move.

1 ♖a2!! ♔h5

1...♔g5 is met by 2 ♖g2+!: 2...♔h5 3 ♖h2, or 2...♔f5 3 ♖f2+ ♔e4 4 ♖f6!.

2 ♖h2 ♖h6
3 ♖h1! *(D)*



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Now Black is in zugzwang. He cannot win.

3 ... ♔g4
4 ♖g1+ ♔f3
5 ♖f1+ ♔g2
6 ♖f6 ♖h8
7 ♖xe6 h3
8 ♖g6+ ♔f2
9 ♖f6+ ♔e2
10 ♖g6! h2
11 ♖g2+ ♔f3
12 ♖xh2 ♖xh2
13 e6 Draw

9. Larsen-Kavalek, Solingen (7) 1970

White wants to play ♖c4. If Black is forced to go on the defensive by ♖a7, then White's extra pawn with a passive black rook will guarantee a straightforward win.

That is exactly what happened in the game:

1 ... ♔g7?
2 ♖c4 ♖a7

Or 2...♖b3 3 ♖xa4 ♖xg3 4 ♖g4+.

3 ♔c3 h5
4 ♔b4 ♔g6
5 ♖c6+ ♔g7
6 ♖c5 ♔h6
7 ♔b5 ♖e7

Otherwise 8 ♖c4.

8 ♔xa4 ♖e3
9 g4 hg
10 hg ♖e4+
11 ♔b5 ♖xg4
12 a4 ♖g1
13 a5 ♖b1+
14 ♔c6 ♖a1
15 ♔b6 ♖b1+
16 ♖b5 ♖f1
17 a6 ♖f6+
18 ♔a5 ♖f7
19 ♖b6+ ♔g5
20 ♖b7 ♖f1
21 a7 ♔h6
22 ♖b6+ ♔g7
23 ♖a6
Black resigned

The obvious move was 1...♔f7, in order to meet 2 ♖c4 with the counter-attack 2...♖b3!. But White plays 2 g4!, intending 3 h4 and only then 4 ♖c4. After 2...♔e6 3 h4 ♔d5 White's threat is repulsed, but 4 g5! creates a new threat: 5 ♖g3 followed by 6 ♖g4 or 6 h5 (the rook behind the passed pawn). Black's position becomes critical.

The only saving move is:

1 ... h5!!

If 2 ♖c4 ♖b3! 3 ♖xa4 ♖xg3 there is no check on g4 – the position is drawn. If 2 h4, then simply 2...♖g7 and 3...♖g4 will do. The rook on g4 is very active – it attacks the white pawn, defends its own pawn and restricts the mobility of the white king. Finally, on 2 g4 there is the reply 2...h4!, fixing the white pawn on h3 as a target for a counter-attack along the third rank (in case the move ♖c4 is played).

10. Moiseev-Bagirov, Moscow 1956

Sooner or later Black will have to play ...a3-a2 (it is clearly unrealistic for the king to reach a2). The only question is whether he will be able to create a second passed pawn on the f-file at the same time.

An easy win would have resulted after:

1 ... g5!

2 hg ♔g6
3 ♖a7 a2!
4 ♔h2 ♔h5!
5 ♔g2 g6
6 ♖a4 ♔xg5

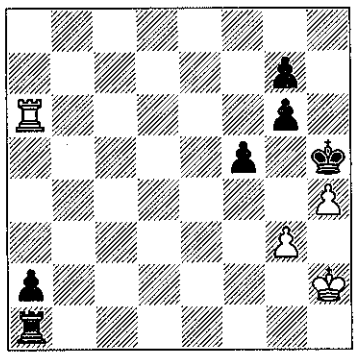
Then Black retreats his king, plays ...g6-g5 and ...f5-f4, and achieves his aim.

In the game he chose another, much less successful, sequence of moves.

1 ... a2?
2 ♖a6! ♔h6

After 2...g5 3 hg the king cannot reach the g5-pawn.

3 ♔h2 ♔h5 *(D)*



W

Is there anything that can be done against the threat of ...g6-g5?

4 ♖a4! ♔h6
5 ♖a6! ♔h5
6 ♖a4! g5
7 g4+!!

This is the cunning point of White's play – Black will not obtain a passed f-pawn.

The game ended as follows:

7 ... ♔xh4
8 gf+ g4
9 ♔g2 ♖b1
10 ♖xa2 ♖b4
11 ♖c2 g3
12 ♖a2 ♔g4
13 ♖c2 ♖f4
14 ♖c8

After 14 ♖c7 ♖f2+ 15 ♔g1 ♖a2 no good comes of 16 ♖xg7+? ♔f3. Black left the f5-pawn alone because of such variations.

14 ... ♖f2+
15 ♔g1 ♖e2
16 ♖a8 ♔f3
17 ♖a3+ ♖e3
18 ♖a1 g2

18...♔g4 19 ♖a8.

19 ♔h2!

19 ♖b1? ♔g3 20 ♖a1 ♖f3 21 ♖b1 ♖f1+.

19 ... ♔f2
20 ♖a2+ ♖e2
21 ♖xe2+ ♔xe2
22 ♔xg2

Drawn

4 From the Simple to the Complex: the theory of endgames with opposite-coloured bishops

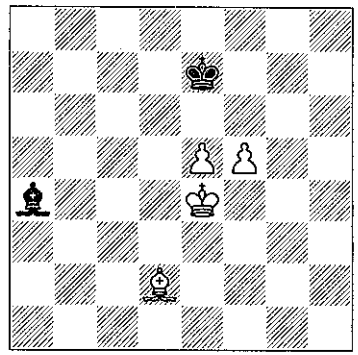
Mark Dvoretsky

Whatever the type of endgame that you are trying to master, the main thing is to create a solid base: to pick out the most important theoretical positions, ideas and techniques that lie at the foundation of our understanding of the endgame under analysis. As a rule, the essential basic knowledge consists of a few fairly simple positions, but you must understand these positions in all details and remember them well.

A well-constructed system of fundamental endgame knowledge will help you to orientate yourself in more complex situations and to analyse them successfully. I shall now show how that happens using the example of endings with opposite-coloured bishops.

Connected passed pawns

Let us examine in detail the following elementary ending.



B

White is threatening to play e5-e6 (perhaps after a bishop check), and then ♔e5 and f5-f6. To fight this plan it is essential to take control of the e6-square – but from where, d7 or b3? Let's examine both possibilities.

1 ... ♗b3?

After this move the position is lost. First of all White gives an exploratory check with the bishop in order to determine the position of the black king. At the same time *it is important that the bishop should*

prevent the king from wedging itself between the pawns after White plays e5-e6.

2 ♗g5+!

This is therefore is the right move. Then *the white king moves round to assist its e-pawn, taking the opposite side to the opponent's king*. For example:

2 ... ♔d7

Or 2...♔f7 3 ♔d4 ♗a2 4 ♔c5 ♗b3 (4...♗b1 is met by 5 e6+ and 6 f6) 5 ♔d6 and 6 e6+.

3 ♔f4 ♗a2
4 ♗h4 ♗f7
5 ♔g5 ♔e7
6 ♔h6+ ♔d7
7 ♔g7 ♗c4
8 ♔f6

and 9 e6+.

After the pawns reach e6 and f6, even if the threat of f6-f7+ is parried, White carries out the same procedure: the bishop gives an exploratory check and the king moves round.

Instead of 2 ♗g5+, 2 ♗b4+? is a mistake due to 2...♔f7! (Black's only hope is to provoke a premature e5-e6+ and wedge his king in between the pawns) 3 ♔d4? ♗c2! 4 e6+ ♔f6 5 e7 ♗a4 drawing. *As soon as the pawns are blockaded on squares of the same colour as their bishop, the draw is inevitable.*

So Black loses with the bishop on b3, but he draws easily after:

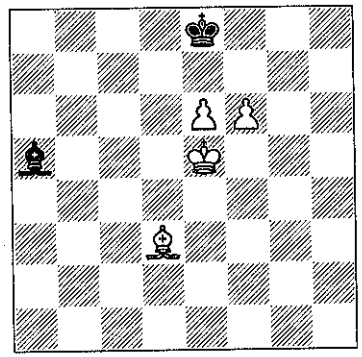
1 ... ♗d7!
2 ♗g5+ ♔f7

From now on Black plays a waiting game, moving his bishop between c8 and d7. To prepare e5-e6 White would need to send his king round the left side, but that is impossible, as the king is tied to the defence of the f5-pawn.

The rule becomes clear: *the bishop must be placed so that it hinders the advance of one pawn and at the same time attacks the other.*

We can now use the ideas of the basic position we have just examined to analyse other positions. To begin with we shall take relatively simple ones.

If we move all the pieces one rank further up *(D)*, what changes?



B

If 1...♗b4, there is no difference. White wins in exactly the same way (check and king march round), and here, as is not hard to see, both checks (from g6 and b5) are equally good.

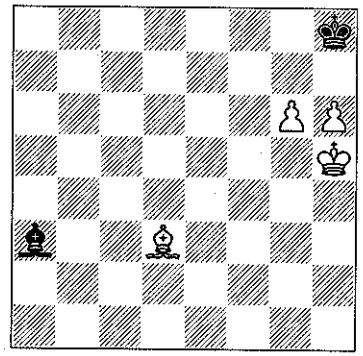
The other possibility is:

1 ... ♗d8
2 ♗g6+

Or 2 ♗b5+.

2 ... ♔f8
3 ♔f5

Now Black loses because of the zugzwang – the difference from the previous position is that because of lack of space he has no waiting move with the bishop.



B

Moving the pawns along to the edge of the board brings new factors into the assessment of the position. Let's first consider 1...♗b2. If Black had time to play 2...♔g8 and 3...♔f8 as well the draw would be obvious. The point is that with the king on f8 White's only plan – to send his king round the other side – is impossible: the edge of the board gets in the way.

However, if White is to play, he locks his opponent's king in the corner by 2 ♗c4! and then carries out the standard manoeuvre – the king comes round the left side: ♔h5-g4-f5-e6-f7.

Instead:

1 ... ♗f8!

Now White's standard manoeuvre is no longer possible, but what is to be done about the threat of zugzwang? To put Black in zugzwang it is essential to take the g8-square away from the king:

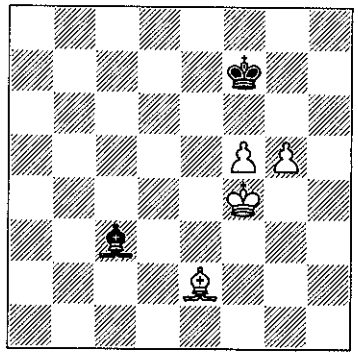
2 ♗c4

However, after

2 ... ♗xh6!
3 ♔xh6

the game ends in stalemate.

The following example is significantly harder.



W

The black bishop is not in the best position (it really belongs on e7 or d8). In the basic theoretical position where we began White won easily with the black bishop placed like this. If we think logically, there is only one factor distinguishing this position from the basic one which might obstruct the standard winning plan – the proximity of the edge of the board. Let's take a look!

'By the book' White should give check from h5, in order to control the g6-square. The black king should move away to e7, forcing the white king to move round the right side, where there is little room for manoeuvre.

1 ♗h5+ ♔e7!

If 1...♔g7? 2 ♔e4 there is nothing stopping the king advancing round the left side.

2 ♔g4 ♗b2
3 ♗g6

There is no other way of moving forward, but now the important square g6 is inaccessible to the king.

3 ... ♗c3
4 ♔h5

The threat is 5 ♔h6, 6 ♗h5 and so on.

4 ... ♗g7!
5 ♗h7 ♔f7!
6 ♗g6+ ♔e7

White has not managed to achieve his aim – to prepare f5-f6+.

The bishop check from the other side, as we know from the basic position, does not give anything either:

1 ♗c4+ ♔g7!
2 ♔f3 ♗b2
3 ♔e4 ♗c1!
4 f6+ ♔g6

But that still does not exhaust White's possible ways of playing for a win. He can first tempt the black king to g7 and only then transfer his bishop to the e8-h5 diagonal, preparing the king's march round the left side.

1 ♔g4 ♗b2
2 ♔h5 ♔g7!

The threat was 3 ♔h6; bad is 2...♗g7? 3 ♗c4+ and 4 ♔g6.

3 ♗b5 ♗c3
4 ♗e8 ♗d4

4...♔f8 5 ♗g6 ♔g7 is equally possible.

5 ♗g6

If 5 ♔g4 (with the threat 6 ♗h5, 7 ♔f3, 8 ♔e4 and so on) the black king has time to get to e7: 5...♔f8! 6 ♗h5 ♔e7, bringing us to the first variation we examined.

5 ... ♗c3
6 ♔g4

It seems that White's plan is about to triumph: 6...♔f8 is bad in view of 7 f6, but otherwise White plays 7 ♗h5. Nevertheless, at this very moment the black bishop manages to leap over to its rightful place.

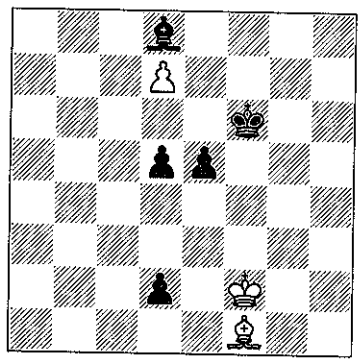
6 ... ♗a5 (b4)!!

The move 7 f6+ is not available.

7 ♗h5 ♗d8 (e7)

with a draw.

At one training session Sergei Dolmatov and Vadim Zviagintsev were trying to solve a study by Timman, composed in 1989.



W

1 ♔e2

1 ♗e2? is bad in view of 1...e4 or 1...d4.

1 ... e4
2 ♔d1!?

According to Timman, White loses in the event of 2 ♔xd2 ♔e5 3 ♗b5 d4, as his bishop does not have time to get to c2: 4 ♗a4? ♗g5+ 5 ♔e2 d3+. White therefore leaves the d2-pawn alone and plays for stalemate! He lets the black pawn through to d3 and prepares to meet the move ...e4-e3 with the bishop sacrifice ♗xd3!.

2 ... ♔e5
3 ♗e2!

The attempt to keep the bishop on the queenside is wrong: 3 ♗a6? d4 4 ♗b5 d3 5 ♗a6 ♔d4 6 ♗b5 ♔d5! 7 ♗a6 ♔c5! is zugzwang: 8 ♗b7 e3 or 8 ♔xd2 ♔d4 winning.

3 ... d4
4 ♗h5 ♔f6

After 4...d3 5 ♗g6 ♔d4 6 ♗h7 the draw is clear (6...e3 7 ♗xd3).

5 ♗e2 ♔f5

Nothing is given by 5...♔g5 6 ♗c4 (intending ♗g8-h7) 6...d3 7 ♗xd3 ed 8 ♔xd2.

6 ♗c4!

Not 6 ♗h5? d3.

6 ... d3
7 ♗g8

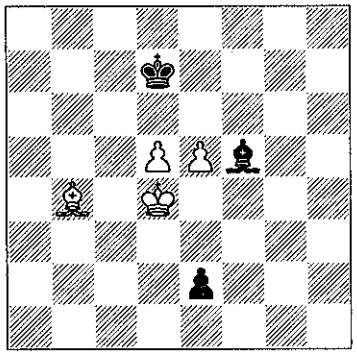
Unfortunately, the crude move 7 ♔xd2, with the irresistible threat of ♗xd3, also leads to a draw.

7 ... ♔f4
8 ♗h7 ♔e5
9 ♗g6 ♔d4
10 ♗h7 e3
11 ♗xd3 ♔xd3

Stalemate!

The stalemate defence is pretty, of course, but how necessary is it? Dolmatov and Zviagintsev immediately began to doubt the assessment of the position resulting after

the capture of the d2-pawn. Let's swap the colours round to make it easier to draw parallels with already familiar ideas.



W

The white bishop is in an ideal position, but the black bishop is not on the best of diagonals. Without the e2-pawn the win would not be in doubt, but here White always has to reckon with the possibility of a diversion sacrifice ...e2-e1♕, after which his bishop momentarily loses control over the crucial squares in front of its pawns. The question is whether Black will be able to make use of this resource.

1 ♔e3

Threatening both to capture the e2-pawn and to march the king up to f6. After 1...♗g4 (1...♗h3? 2 ♔xe2) 2 ♔f4 no good is 2...e1♕ 3 ♗xe1 ♗h5 (with the threat of 4...♗f7) 4 e6+ ♔d6 5 ♔e4, and if 2...♗h3 3 ♔g5 e1♕ 4 ♗xe1 ♗g2, then 5 e6+ ♔d6 6 ♗b4+ ♔xd5 7 e7, and the pawn is queened. What else can be tried?

1 ... ♔c7!!

Black's key defensive idea! It is important that the pawn should not go to e6 with check (for example, after 2 ♔xe2 ♗e4). Without the e2-pawn White would reply 2 e6, but here this leads to a rapid draw: 2 e6 ♗xe6 3 de e1♕ 4 ♗xe1 ♔d6 (Black's moves can even be played in a different order).

If 2 ♔f4 the simplest is 2...♗d3 (2...♗h3 does not lose either): 3 ♔g5 ♗c4 or 3 e6 e1♕ 4 ♗xe1 ♔d6. Finally, after 2 ♗a5+ ♔d7 3 ♔f4 Black uses the basic defensive idea in such positions – the transfer of the bishop to f7: 3...♗g6! and 4...♗f7 (4 e6+ ♔d6).

After moving the pieces around a bit we decided that this endgame is drawn and, consequently, that Timman's study is incorrect, as there is a second solution.

Later on, when I was alone, I set up the pieces again and found yet another winning try based on zugzwang.

2 ♗e1 ♔d7

3 ♗a5!

Now 3...♔e7? is bad: 4 ♗b4+ ♔f7 (4...♔d7 5 ♔xe2) 5 ♔d4, and there is no defence against the king-march to d6 (the active counterplay comes too late: 5...♗c8 6 ♔c5 ♔g6 7 e6 ♔f5 8 ♔d6 ♗a6 9 ♔c6! ♔f6 10 ♗c3+ ♔e7 11 ♗e1!, or immediately 10 ♗e1).

3 ... ♗g4

The identical result occurs after 3...♗h3 4 ♔f4 (4 ♗b4 ♔c7!!; 4 ♔xe2 ♗g2 5 e6+ ♔e7! 6 ♗b4+ ♔f6) 4...♔e7! 5 ♗b4+ ♔f7.

4 ♔f4 ♗h3

It is no longer possible to transfer the bishop to f7: 4...♗h5? 5 e6+ ♔d6 6 ♔e4.

5 ♔g5 ♔e7!

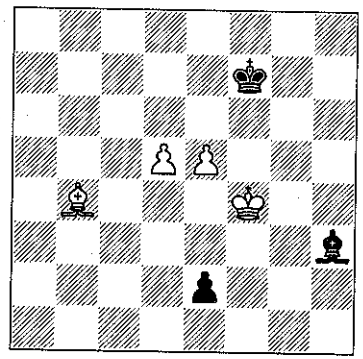
Otherwise there is no other way of preventing the move ♔f6 (as we already know, 5...♗g2? 6 e6+ ♔d6 7 ♗b4+ ♔xd5 8 e7 is bad).

6 ♗b4+ ♔f7

Not 5...♔d7? 6 ♔f6.

7 ♔f4 *(D)*

White has managed to tempt the black king to f7 and now his king sets off in the opposite direction – around the left side.



B

I rang Zviagintsev and showed him the plan I had found. Half an hour later Vadim rang me back and told me that the position was drawn all the same!

7 ... ♔g6!!

Black's only chance of saving the game is to transfer the king to f5. After 7...♗c8? 8 ♔e4! Black unexpectedly falls into zugzwang and loses: 8...♔g6 9 e6 or 8...♗h3 9 ♔d4. It is curious that the zugzwang here is mutual: if White is to move he cannot win – after 9 ♔d4 ♔g6! we reach the main variation examined below, and after 9 ♗e1 ♗h3 10 ♔d4 the black king returns to the queenside: 10...♔e7 11 ♗b4+ ♔d7 12 ♔e3 ♔c7!!, and so on.

8 ♔e4

Threatening 9 e6.

8 ... ♗f5+!

9 ♔d4 ♗c8!

10 ♔c5 ♔f5

11 ♔d6 ♗a6

12 e6 ♗c4

(or 12...♗b5), and White cannot win.

As you see, this analysis turned out to be fairly difficult and full of extremely unexpected manoeuvres from both sides. Nevertheless the basis of the analysis was still provided by ideas derived from the basic theoretical position.

Separated pawns

In general it is clear that the further apart the pawns are, the harder it is to defend. As a child I learnt a light-hearted rule for assessing positions like this: if you can reach both pawns simultaneously with the fingers of one hand, then the position is drawn; if you cannot (the distance between the pawns being too great), then the position is won!

Unfortunately, a guideline like this is too imprecise to be trusted. There really are many situations here which by no means have to be studied and memorized. The outcome of the game usually depends on the ability of the stronger side's king to break through to the pawn which is being held up by the bishop, in order to turn it into a queen.

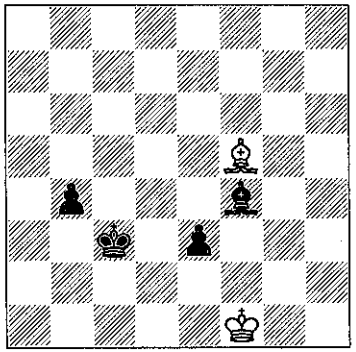
But the following ending absolutely must form part of our basic scheme of knowledge *(D)*.

1 ♔e2 b3
2 ♔d1 ♔b4
3 ♗h7 ♔a3
4 ♗g6

If now 4...b2 (with the threat of 5...♔a2), then White plays 5 ♗b1! ♔b3 6 ♔e2.

4 ... ♔b2
5 ♗f7!

The threat was 5...♔a1 and then 6...b2. By attacking the b3-pawn,



W
Berger – Kotlerman
Arkhangelsk 1948

White hinders his opponent's plan.

5 ... ♔a2
6 ♗e6 ♔a3

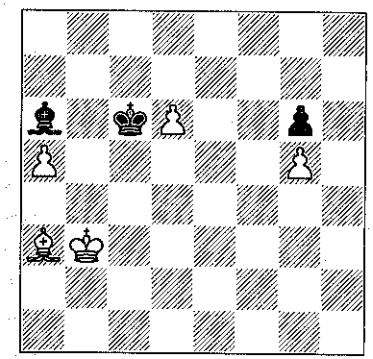
With the threat 7...b2 8 ♗f5 ♔a2.

7 ♗f5!
Draw

Let's examine a more complex ending *(D)*.

In the first edition of the *Contemporary Chess Endings* series of monographs (under the editorship of Averbakh) the analysis of this endgame contained a serious error – it was discovered by Yusupov when I gave him this position to solve. Averbakh himself corrected the mistake in the new edition.

1 ♔c3 ♗f1
2 ♔d4 ♗e2
3 ♔e5 ♔d7



W
Averbakh
1954

Now wrong is 4 ♔f6 ♗d3 5 a6? ♗xa6 6 ♔xg6 ♔e8, and we reach the already familiar endgame Berger-Kotlerman (with colours reversed).

The correct plan is to play for zugzwang. From d3 the bishop defends the g6-pawn along one diagonal and holds up the advance of the a-pawn along the other; consequently, it has no moves. The white king must not be allowed to e7 – therefore, apart from d7, the black king has only two other squares: e8 and d8. The first can be taken away by putting the king on f7, the second by transferring the bishop to c7.

4 ♗c5 ♗f1
5 ♗b6 ♗e2
6 ♗c7 ♗d3
7 ♔f6 ♔e8
8 ♔g7 ♔d7
9 ♔f7

and Black is in zugzwang.

But with Black to move he saves the game – he has time to block the white king's path on the kingside and to construct a solid defence on the queenside.

1 ... ♔d7!
2 ♔c3 ♔e6
3 ♔d4 ♗b7!
4 ♔c5 ♔d7
5 ♔b6 ♗f3
6 a6 ♔c8!

The threat was 7 ♔a7 ♔c8 8 d7+! ♔xd7 9 ♔b8.

7 ♔a7

Now the threat of 8 d7+ must be parried by the bishop, but from which square, c6 or g4?

7 ... ♗g4!

After 7...♗c6? 8 ♗b4 Black falls into zugzwang: 8...♗d7 9 ♔b6 ♗f5 10 d7+!: 10...♔xd7 11 ♔b7 or 10...♗xd7 11 a7.

8 ♔b6 ♗f3!

Not 8...♔d7? 9 ♔b7.

9 ♔c5 ♔d7
10 ♔d4 ♔e6!

and White cannot win.

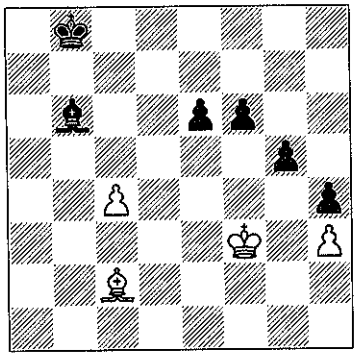
Endgames with several pawns

Many years ago, when I studied the theory of opposite-coloured bishops endings, I noted a few general

laws which, as it turned out, operate in almost all endgames of this type and help greatly in finding your bearings.

Before expounding my theory of endgames with opposite-coloured bishops, I'll show you an example which, in spite of its apparent simplicity, still exhibits almost all the laws which will be discussed.

Study example



W

If White is to move he saves the game thus:

1 c5! **♗xc5**
2 ♗b3 **e5**

Black has no choice but to put all his pawns on dark squares.

3 ♗e6 **♔c7**
4 ♔e4

He continues just by shuffling his bishop along the h3-c8 diagonal.

1. Drawing tendencies

This is probably the best-known feature of endings with opposite-coloured bishops. Here it is sometimes possible to save the game even when two or three pawns down (as, for example, in the position just given). And remember the endings with two connected passed pawns – in what other kind of endgame can such an enormous material and positional advantage prove insufficient for victory?

The consequences of this law are clear: *the stronger side should be extremely vigilant, both when heading for an opposite-coloured bishop ending and when playing it out – it does not take much to allow a drawing counter-chance. For the weaker side the transition into an opposite-coloured bishops ending can sometimes be a lifeline – his drawing chances usually increase sharply.*

2. Fortress

A fortress is a system of passive defence which involves constructing an impregnable position where waiting tactics are sufficient, since everything is securely blockaded and defended.

The main theme of endings with opposite-coloured bishops is that of the fortress. The weaker side aims to construct a fortress, the stronger side to prevent this or (if it has already been built), to find a way of breaking it down.

In the study example the final position is a fortress. White does not look for any active counterplay, and his opponent cannot achieve anything.

In endgames your ability to analyse the position logically and to think in terms of plans and structures is very important. The role of logical thinking increases particularly in endings with opposite-coloured bishops. In most cases they should be 'built' not 'played' – first you need to search for the arrangement of pieces and pawns which makes your position invulnerable, and only then calculate variations to check whether you will manage to achieve the desired formation, and whether it is in fact invulnerable.

The following laws are either important general principles for building and destroying fortresses or else describe the most typical, frequently occurring kinds of fortresses.

3. Arrangement of pawns

There is a well-known principle which advises you to put your pawns on squares of the opposite colour to those on which your bishop moves. In endings with opposite-coloured bishops this principle remains true only for the stronger side (it is especially important with regard to connected passed pawns).

But *the weaker side should, contrary to the general rule, keep its pawns on the same coloured squares as its bishop* – in this case it is usually possible to defend them securely. A pawn defended by the bishop can only be attacked by the opponent's king, which means it is safe. In other kinds of ending a pawn like this can be attacked not only by the king but also by another piece (a knight or bishop).

In the study example the weaker side's pawn was placed on a light square – the same colour as the bishop, and this factor helps to make a secure white fortress. The stronger side with the dark-squared bishop in the starting position has only one pawn (on e6) correctly positioned on a light square. If the king came near it Black would then play ...f6-f5 and easily exploit his material advantage. The only way of saving the game was to force the e-pawn to advance to a square of the same colour as its bishop.

4. Specific features of a position are more important than material

In opposite-coloured bishop endings the number of pawns on the board often has less importance than even apparently insignificant changes in the arrangement of pieces and pawns . So *in opposite-coloured bishop endings positional pawn sacrifices are always occurring*. Thus in the study example White is willing to part with a third (!) pawn in order to achieve a 'trifle' – to move the black e-pawn one square forward.

5. The one-diagonal principle

Both for the stronger and the weaker sides it is extremely important for the bishop to defend its own pawns and hold up the opponent's along the same diagonal, without being torn in two directions. In the final position of the study example the bishop defends the h3-pawn and holds up two of the opponent's pawns on f6 and g5 along the h3-c8 diagonal.

But in the Averbakh position analysed above, the bishop defends the g6-pawn along one diagonal and holds up the passed a5-pawn along the other. This is an unpleasant situation for Black. In the solution and the consequences of faulty play you saw *two typical techniques for exploiting the minuses of a bishop torn in two directions: zugzwang and diversion.*

6. 'Taking aim' at pawns

A typical defensive technique is to attack the opponent's pawns with your bishop. This either forces them to advance to the less favourable squares of the same colour as their bishop or else ties down the king to the defence of the pawns (as in the basic position with two connected passed pawns or in the ending Berger-Kotlerman).

Endgames where the stronger side has a passed pawn are very common. It must be blockaded by the king (first system of defence) or by the bishop (second system of defence). Here are the main characteristics of the two defensive systems:

7. First defensive method:

The weaker side's king blockades the opponent's passed pawn, and the bishop defends its pawns. This is the basic and usually most reliable method of defence.

Attempts to break down the first defensive system always involve creating a second passed pawn, often by making a pawn break.

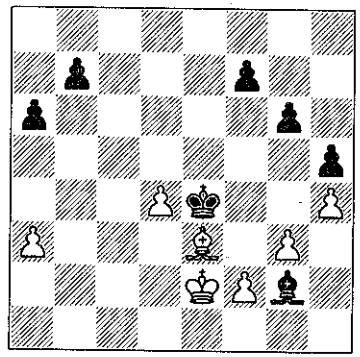
8. Second defensive method:

The bishop blocks the passed pawn (sometimes two pawns along the same diagonal), while the king, to borrow a term from ice-hockey, keeps to its zone – it defends its pawns and reduces the activity of its opposite number.

Attempts to break down the second defensive system always involve the king breaking through to its passed pawn (sometimes after a preparatory diversionary attack on the other flank).

We can now use this theoretical base to analyse some concrete situations. Let's try to take a logical approach to them: we can determine which defensive system the weaker side has used or should use, in what way this fortress might be broken down, whether the pawns are arranged correctly, whether it is possible to 'take aim' at the opponent's pawns, whether it is worth sacrificing a pawn or two to carry out a particular idea, and so on.

In this position *(D)*, Black will probably obtain a passed pawn on the queenside, but it will be blockaded by the opponent's king (the first defensive system). The only winning chance is to create a second passed pawn. To do this, Black needs to play ...f7-f6, ...♔f5, ...g6-g5, then exchange on h4 and win the h-pawn. In the game Kholmov successfully carried out the plan indicated and notched up the full point.



B

Fuchs – Kholmov

Dresden 1956

In Krogius's book *Laws of the Endgame* this outcome is considered to be totally logical. In actual fact the position is drawn – it is not so difficult to see, provided you bear in mind the drawing tendencies of opposite-coloured bishops.

1 ... f6!

2 ♔d2

White's task is to defend the kingside with the bishop and not to allow his opponent to create a second passed pawn there. The move in the game does not spoil anything, but simpler was 2 d5! ♔xd5 3 ♔d3(d2) followed by ♗e3-b6-d8 ('taking aim' at the f6-pawn). The draw would then become obvious – after transferring his king to f5 and playing ...g6-g5, Black would not be able to make any further progress.

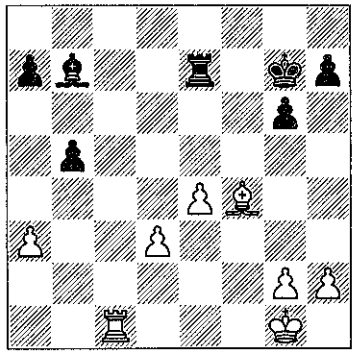
2 ... ♔f5
3 ♗f4?

Now his opponent can force a passed pawn on the kingside. In fact the technique of 'taking aim' at pawns would have worked well again here: 3 ♗h6! g5 (on 3...♔g4 4 ♗g7 f5 White plays either 5 ♗h6 or 5 d5) 4 ♗g7!, preventing the move 4...♔g4. Also good is 3 d5! ♗xd5 (3...g5 4 d6 ♗c6 5 ♗d4) 4 ♗d4 or 4 ♗b6 g5 5 ♗d8. Obviously, endgame techniques like sacrificing your own pawns or attacking your opponent's were unfamiliar to Fuchs.

3 ... g5
4 ♗c7 ♔g4
5 ♗d8 gh
6 gh ♔xh4
7 ♗xf6+ ♔g4
8 ♔e3 ♗d5
9 ♗e7 b5

White now **resigned** – according to Krogius, because of the variation 10 ♗d8 h4 11 f3+ ♗xf3 12 ♔f2 h3 followed by the transfer of the king to the queenside (the black bishop will defend its pawn and hold up the white d-pawn along the h3-c8 diagonal). In fact the move 11...♗xf3? is wrong in view of 12 ♗xh4!; it is necessary to play 11...♔g3!.

I must admit that I suspect that even after 3 ♗f4? the position was not lost (check this hypothesis on your own), but in any case White's third move is a fundamental error: instead of finding and building a secure fortress, he sharpened the game to his opponent's advantage.



W

Bogoljubow – Ed. Lasker
New York 1924

White should win due to his menacing pair of passed pawns. The simplest was to bring the king to the centre: 1 ♔f2. Clearly Bogoljubow was trying to play as safely as possible – he wanted to hinder the move ...a7-a5 and with this aim decided to exchange rooks. In the game his idea was justified.

1 ♖c7 ♔f7
2 ♖xe7+ ♔xe7
3 ♗d2!

Holding back Black's counterplay on the queenside.

3 ... ♔e6
4 ♔f2 ♔d6
5 ♔e3 ♔c5
6 ♗a5

and White won easily.

Remember how essential it is to be careful when entering an opposite-coloured bishops ending, given their inherent drawing tendencies. As Alekhine indicated, Black could have saved himself after 1 ♖c7?:

1 ... ♖xc7
2 ♗xc7 b4!

Pawn sacrifices are a normal occurrence in these endings.

3 ab ♗a6!
4 d4 ♗d3!

Also a standard defensive technique – attacking the opponent's pawns. They are forced to move to a square of the same colour as their bishop, where they completely lose their strength, as they can easily be blockaded.

5 e5 ♗c4
6 ♔f2 a6

When defending an ending of this type, you must keep the pawn on squares of the same colour as the bishop.

7 ♔e3 ♔f7
8 ♔f4 h5

with an obvious draw.

Bearing in mind the principle 'specific features of a position are more important than material', we should also investigate:

3 ♔f2!?

White's aim with this move (instead of 3 ab), is not to allow the blockade of the central pawns.

3 ... ba

After this reply, however, there is no win for White – the a-pawn diverts the bishop from controlling the squares in front of the connected passed pawns. Here is a sample variation suggested by Bondarev:

4 ♔e3 a2
5 ♗e5+ ♔f7
6 ♗b2 ♔e6
7 d4

7 ♔f4 h6.

7 ... ♔d6
8 d5 h6
9 ♔d4 ♗a8
10 e5+ ♔d7
11 ♔c5

11 e6+ ♔d6.

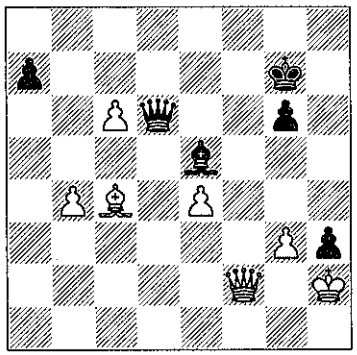
11 ... ♗b7
12 e6+ ♔e7

and White cannot strengthen his position.

The next example is taken from the game Kharlov-Khenkin, Copenhagen 1993 (see diagram on following page).

This is how the game ended:

1 ... a6?
2 ♕a7+ ♔h6
3 ♕e3+ ♔g7
4 ♕g5!



B

Black had underestimated the strength of this move.

4 ... ♕d4
5 c7! ♗xg3+
6 ♔xg3
Black resigned

I do not intend a detailed analysis of this endgame. I'll just show you one way (I'm not saying the only way, but in my opinion the simplest way) of gaining a draw.

Why not eliminate immediately the main enemy – the c6-pawn?

1 ... ♕xc6!
2 ♕xa7+

White gains nothing by 2 ♕f7+ ♔h6, so there is no real choice, but Black has a good retort:

2 ... ♕c7!

The c4-bishop and the g3-pawn are under attack, and so the exchange of queens is practically forced:

3 ♕xc7+ ♗xc7

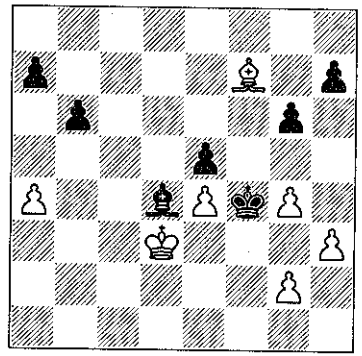
Liquidating into an endgame with opposite-coloured bishops is an important defensive technique which sometimes helps to save a difficult position, and so the plan indicated deserved serious attention. Grandmaster Khenkin was afraid that the endgame was lost – White does after all have two extra pawns. However, it is in fact a simple draw, and, besides general considerations ('drawing tendencies') there is a very concrete pointer that can help us. If White gives up the g3-pawn there results a drawn situation which we know well from the game Berger-Kotlerman. If it is advanced to g4, Black replies ...g6-g5, and then barricades all the enemy king's possible entry points into the upper half of the board. Here is a sample variation:

4 ♔xh3 ♔f6
5 ♔g4 ♗d6

While there is time it is useful to force the opponent's pawn onto a square of the same colour as his bishop.

6 b5 ♗c7
7 ♗d5 ♔e7
8 ♗c6 ♔f6
9 ♔f3 ♔e7
10 g4 g5
11 ♔e3 ♗b6+
12 ♔d3 ♔d6
13 ♔c4 ♔e5

The draw is obvious.



W

Vakhidov – Timoshchenko
Tashkent 1982

Black is not yet threatening to play 1...♔g3 in view of 2 g5! and 3 ♗g8 – he is planning 1...g5! and only then 2...♔g3. White now has to decide how he is going to defend his kingside pawns and which piece is going to hold back the passed pawn on the queenside.

In the game he chose the first system of defence: White transferred his bishop to defend the pawns, and left the king on the queenside.

1 ♗b3 g5!
2 ♗d1

2 h4 gh 3 g5 is no good. Black replies 3...♔g3! (but not 3...♔xg5? 4 ♗e6 ♔f4 5 ♗f5 ♔g3 6 ♗h3 with a draw) 4 ♗g8 ♔xg2 5 ♗xh7 ♗c5!, and wins.

2 ... a6
3 ♗f3 b5
4 ab ab

It seems that White is out of danger – the bishop has securely defended the pawns, the king will blockade the passed pawn. However, the bishop is terribly passive – soon it won't have a single waiting move. If the king too is deprived of mobility, zugzwang may result. This goal, strangely enough, is quite attainable: the white king is gradually forced away to b3, the black king occupies the d3-square, from where it continues to tie down the opponent's bishop and at the same time threatens to support its passed pawn. Then both white pieces have no moves. If the pawn were any further away – on the a-file – the draw would be obvious.

5 ♗d1 ♔g3
6 ♗f3 ♔f2
7 ♔c2 b4
8 ♔b3 ♗c3
9 ♔c4 h6
10 ♔d3 ♗e1
11 ♔c4 ♗d2
12 ♔d3 ♗c3

Zugzwang!

13 ♔c4 ♔e3

A second zugzwang! If 14 ♔b3, then 14...♔d3 (the decisive zugzwang!) 15 ♔a2(a4) ♔c2, winning.

In the game there followed

14 ♔d5 b3

and **White resigned**.

Let us now try to construct the second system of defence – leaving the king to defend the kingside. This plan is not totally reliable either – the bishop will have a double workload: it will not only have to hold back the enemy passed pawn but also defend its own e4-pawn, along another diagonal to boot. That means that zugzwang is quite probable here too.

1 ♗d5 g5!
2 ♔e2 h6
3 ♗b7 ♗c5
4 ♗d5 a6
5 ♗c4

No better is 5 ♗b7 b5 6 a5 b4 7 ♗xa6 ♔xe4.

5 ... b5!
6 ab a5

Black willingly sacrifices a pawn in order to create a passed pawn.

7 ♗d5 a4
8 ♗c6 a3
9 ♗d5 ♗b6

Zugzwang! The white bishop has no moves, as it is 'torn between' two diagonals. After 10 ♔f1(e1) ♔e3 the black king breaks through to its passed pawn, and if

10 ♔d3

then

10 ... ♔g3
11 ♔e2

It is not hard to see that 11 ♔c3 ♔xg2 12 ♔b3 ♔xh3 13 ♗e6 does not help either.

11 ... ♔xg2
12 ♗e6 ♔xh3
13 ♔f3 ♔h4
14 ♗f7 ♗c7

Again zugzwang caused by the bishop being 'torn in two'.

15 ♗e6 h5
16 gh ♔xh5
17 ♔g3 ♔g6
18 ♔g4 ♔f6
19 ♗d5 ♔e7!
20 ♔xg5 ♔d6

and Black finally executes the main idea to destroy the second defensive plan – the king breaks through to support the passed pawn.

Was White's position truly lost? Let's try using our knowledge of opposite-coloured bishop endings to guess where salvation might lie hidden.

You should usually check first of all the basic (first) system of defence – but how can White defend his kingside securely with the bishop and prevent the creation of a second passed pawn there? The transfer of the bishop to f3 does solve this problem, but it leads inevitably to zugzwang. Is there no other way? Remember the technique of 'taking aim' at pawns, and don't hesitate to sacrifice a pawn to bring it about!

1 g5!! ♔xg5
2 ♗g8! h5

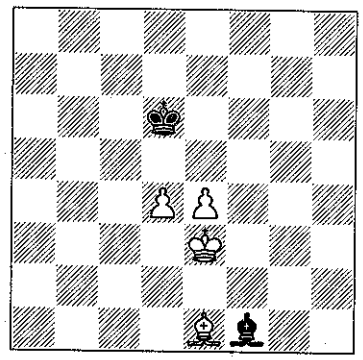
The same thing happens after 2...h6. Black achieves nothing by 2...♔f6 3 ♔c4 either.

3 ♗f7! h4
4 ♔c4

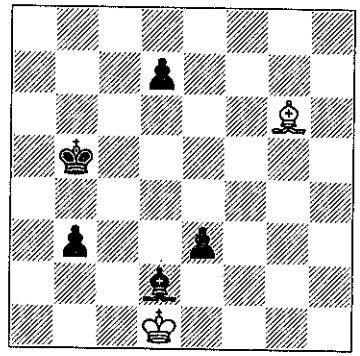
The draw is obvious, since the bishop can now defend the kingside without difficulty. White's moves can be played in a different order: 1 ♗g8 h6 2 g5!! ♔xg5 3 ♗f7.

In conclusion I offer a few exercises. While solving them you will practise applying your theoretical knowledge. I also recommend that you acquaint yourself with the opposite-coloured bishop endings which are analysed in my book *Secrets of Chess Training*.

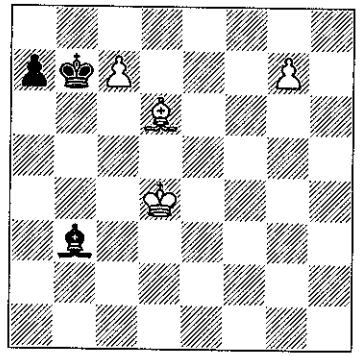
Exercises



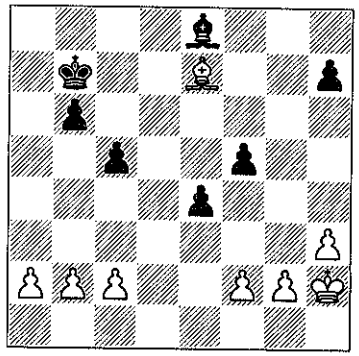
1 B Draw



2 W Draw



3 W Win



4 B Draw

Answers to the Exercises

1. Tarrasch, 1921

It is impossible to prevent the advance of the pawns onto the fifth rank (for that you need time to transfer the bishop to c6). But how should the black pieces be arranged with the pawns on the fifth rank? Obviously, by putting the bishop on f7(g8), and the king on d7. This is the set-up that must be prepared.

Achieving it requires accurate play by Black.

1 ... ♗c4!

Wrong is 1...♗b5? 2 ♗b4+! (but not 2 ♗g3+ ♔e7! 3 d5 ♗e8 4 e5 ♗f7) 2...♔c7 3 d5 ♗e8 4 e5 ♗f7 5 e6 – Black is one tempo short. Or 2...♔e6 3 d5+ ♔e5 4 ♗c3+ ♔d6 5 ♔d4 ♗e8 6 e5+, and the bishop has not had time to reach f7.

2 ♗g3+ ♔c6!

Of course not 2...♔e6? 3 ♔d2 and 4 ♔c3.

3 ♔f4 ♗g8
4 ♔e5 ♔d7
5 d5 ♗h7!

'Taking aim' at the pawns – Black does not allow his opponent's king to f6. However, the less precise 5...♗f7 6 ♔f6 ♔e8! 7 ♗f4 ♗g8 is also enough for a draw.

6 ♔f4 ♗g6
7 e5 ♗f7!

and we have reached the basic drawn position.

2. Chekhover, 1950

If White manages to win the d7-pawn the familiar drawn position from Berger-Kotlerman results. And if he doesn't manage this? Then he must at least force the b-pawn to take a step forward onto a square of the same colour as its bishop, so that the black king cannot break through via b2.

1 ♗e8!

'Taking aim' at a pawn.

1 ... ♔c6
2 ♔e2!

Not 2 ♗f7? d5.

2 ... ♗c1

While White is tied up, the black bishop makes its way to a better position.

3 ♔d1 ♗b2
4 ♔e2 ♗d4
5 ♔d1 ♔d6

Or 5...♔c7.

6 ♗f7!

Again attacking a pawn!

6 ... b2
7 ♗g6 ♔c5
8 ♔e2 d5
9 ♗f5 ♔b4
10 ♗g6 ♔a3
11 ♗b1! ♔b3
12 ♔d1 ♔c3
13 ♔e2 ♗c5
14 ♔d1 d4
15 ♔e2 ♔b3

The last hope: bad is 16 ♔d1? d3!.

16 ♔d3

and Black cannot make progress.

3. Norlin, 1922

The typical plan is to march the king to the pawn held up by the bishop, in other words to the f8-square, but then Black will advance his a-pawn, diverting the bishop from the defence of the c7-pawn.

The only winning chance is to transfer the bishop to a5, from where it will defend its own pawn and hold back the opponent's along one and the same diagonal. However, the c7-pawn must first be defended by the king, at the same time not allowing ...a7-a5-a4. If the black pawn advances to a4, the position will become drawn, for example: 1 ♔c5? a5! 2 ♔b5 a4 3 ♔b4 ♔c8.

1 ♔c3! ♗f7
2 ♔b4 ♗e6
3 ♗e5!

It is important to free the d6-square for the king in advance. 3 ♔c5?! is imprecise in view of 3...♗b3! with the threat 4...a5.

3 ... ♔c8!?

If 3...♗f7, then 4 ♔c5 ♗b3 (4...a5 5 ♔b5) 5 ♔d6 (threatening 6 ♔d7) 5...♔c8 6 ♗c3!, or 4...♔c8 5 ♔c6! (with the threat of 6 ♗c3) 5...♗e8+ (5...a5 6 ♔b5) 6 ♔d6 ♗f7 7 ♗c3! and 8 ♗a5.

4 ♔b5!

The game is prolonged a little by the variation indicated by the author: 4 ♔c5 ♗b3! 5 ♔b5! ♔b7 6 ♔b4! and 7 ♔c5.

4 ... ♔b7

The threat was 5 ♔a6.

5 ♔c5 ♗b3
6 ♔d6 ♔c8
7 ♗c3

and 8 ♗a5, after which the king finally heads off to win the bishop for the g-pawn.

4. Nimzowitsch-Tarrasch, Bad Kissingen 1928

Black must decide how he is going to fight against the threatened attack by the king on his kingside pawns. The 'active' 1...f4? is hopeless: 2 ♗g5 e3 (2...f3 3 g4), and White has a pleasant choice between 3 fe and 3 f3 e2 4 ♗h4 followed by ♔g1-f2. First let us see what happened in the game.

1 ... c4?

The transfer of pawns to a square of the same colour as their bishop is, generally speaking, a sensible positional idea (imagine

that White played c2-c4, b2-b3, a2-a4 – then the b6-pawn would turn into a serious weakness). The move made by Black is bad, not in itself, but because it does not help to solve the main problem in the position – the defence of the kingside pawns.

2	**♔g3**	**♔c8**
3	**♔f4**	**♔d7**
4	**♗b4**	**♔e6**
5	**♗c3**	**♗d7**

If the bishop is kept on g6 and the king holds back the future passed pawn on the queenside (the first defensive system), White will attack the bishop at a suitable moment by h3-h4-h5 and will obtain a second passed pawn. For example, 5...♗g6 6 ♔g5 ♔d5 7 g3 b5 8 h4 ♔c6 9 b3 cb 10 cb ♔b6 11 a4 ba 12 ba ♔a6 13 a5 ♔b5 14 h5 ♗e8 15 ♔xf5 ♗xh5 16 ♔xe4 with an easy win. Black therefore leaves his bishop on the queenside. Unfortunately for him, the king is unable to defend the h7- and f5-pawns simultaneously, and so the bishop will be torn between the defence of the f5-pawn and the battle with the passed pawn.

6	**g3**	**b5**
7	**♔g5**	**♔f7**
8	**h4**	**♗c8**
9	**♔h6**	**♔g8**
10	**b3**	**cb**
11	**cb**	**f4**

This is already desperation in a hopeless position. On 11...♗d7 Nimzowitsch gave the following variation: 12 ♗b2 ♗c8 (12...♗e8 13 ♔g5 ♗d7 14 ♔f6, and the white king breaks through to the queenside) 13 a4 ba 14 ba ♗d7 15 a5 ♗c8 16 ♗a1, and Black is in zugzwang (16...♗a6 17 ♔g5 ♗c8 18 ♔f6).

12	**gf**	**♗d7**
13	**♔g5**	**♔f7**
14	**f5**	**♗c6**
15	**♔f4**	

The standard plan: the king heads for the passed pawn which the bishop is holding up.

15	**...**	**♔e7**
16	**♔e5**	**♗e8**
17	**♔xe4**	**♗c6+**
18	**♔e5**	**♗e8**
19	**♔d5**	**♗f7+**
20	**♔c5**	**♗e8**
21	**♗e5**	**♗d7**
22	**♔b6**	**♔f7**
23	**f6**	**♗e8**
24	**f4**	**♔e6**
25	**♔a6!**	**♔f7**
26	**b4**	**♔e6**
27	**a4**	**ba**
28	**b5**	

Black resigned

As usual, we ought first to examine the possibility of constructing the first defensive system – leaving the king on the kingside and defending the pawns using the bishop. If you remember the principle of 'taking aim' at pawns, then the solution (indicated by Averbakh) will seem quite simple.

1	**...**	**♗b5!**
2	**♔g3**	

2 g4 fg 3 hg ♗e2 4 ♔g3 ♗f3.

2	**...**	**♗f1!**
3	**h4**	**h5!**
4	**♔f4**	

Otherwise White's position cannot be strengthened.

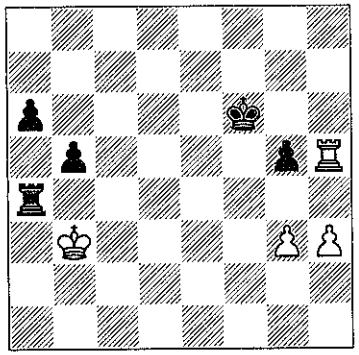
4	**...**	**♗xg2**

The black bishop easily manages to defend the kingside pawns.

5 Typical positions with Rooks and connected passed pawns

Vladimir Vulfson

I would like to show you a fairly complex analysis of an ending from one of my games. Once you have got to grips with it you will find it easier to orientate yourself in the theory of rook endings with connected passed pawns.



B

Zlotnik – Vulfson

Moscow 1983

This is the adjourned position, and it is my move. Master Donchenko suggested an excellent idea for Black. Usually the side with the advantage is recommended to avoid pawn exchanges, but here is an exception to this rule.

1 ... g4!

Black wants to tie his opponent's rook to the defence of the g3-pawn. Clearly 2 ♖h4 is hopeless, so I focused mainly on 2 hg ♖xg4. White's position is difficult: 3 ♖h6+ ♖g6 gives nothing, so he is forced to play ♖h3, but the rook is exceptionally passive here.

Now Zlotnik played a move which I had examined during my analysis:

2 ♔b2

The idea is clear – to avoid the capture of the g3-pawn with check.

This is an interesting move, and during the game I thought it was very strong, but after careful analysis I began to doubt this. The point is that when Black removes the g-pawn and a position with connected passed pawns results, the basic method of defence is to try to wedge the king in between the

pawns and blockade them. But here the king, by solving a separate problem (connected with the g3-pawn), voluntarily moves away from the queenside pawns.

2 ... gh
3 ♖xh3 ♖g4
4 ♖h8

Of course, White cannot expect to achieve anything with the rook on h3, and so he activates his rook. Black's reply is forced, because 4...♖xg3 is met by 5 ♖a8 with an immediate draw.

4 ... a5

'Passed pawns must be pushed.'

5 ♖c8

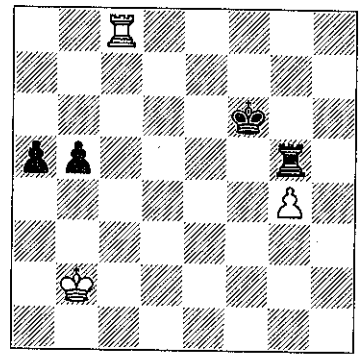
Once again it is not possible to take on g3 because of 6 ♖c6+ with 7 ♖c5 to follow. I also reckoned with the move 5 ♖a8, which forces one of the pawns to move forward and the king to wedge in between them very quickly. However, I think this would also have failed to save the game for White.

5 ... ♖g5

The rook defends the pawn from the side. In positions of this kind, this is the best place to put the rook. The black king is now free and can go anywhere.

6 g4!? *(D)*

If the pawn is taken, there results a typical drawn position with connected passed pawns – it occurs quite frequently: 6...♖xg4? 7 ♖c6+



B

♔e7 8 ♖c5 ♖b4+ 9 ♔a3 ♔d6 10 ♖h5. On 10...♖b1 there follows 11 ♔a2. Black cannot strengthen his position since his king cannot escape the horizontal checks.

6 ... ♔e6?

The obvious move was 6...♔e5!. Why did I reject this move? The reason is psychological. My opponent was the Master Zlotnik, a chess teacher in the sports institute. I had great respect for him; he was for me an authority. When you are facing an opponent like this you develop a certain complex, you begin to be afraid of everything and then it becomes difficult to make active moves.

Besides, I didn't realize that this was a position where every tempo counted; I thought that the king could always go and take the g4-pawn, and in the meantime it wouldn't be a bad idea to help out the queenside pawns.

After 6...♔e5 what would have happened? Let us try to provoke one of the pawns into advancing: 7 ♖a8. Black replies 7...a4, and if 8 ♔a3(c3), then simply 8...♖xg4. The king has not had time to reach b4, and after 9 ♖b8 ♖g3+ 10 ♔a2 ♖b3 Black wins.

If 8 ♖b8 (instead of 8 ♔a3), then 8...♔d4 9 ♔a3 ♔c5 10 ♖c8+ ♔b6 11 ♖b8+ ♔c6 12 ♖c8+ ♔b7 and 13...♖xg4 wins. Black is not afraid of the king being cut off along the sixth rank – the rook will free the king by ...♖c4-c6.

And so, the move 6...♔e5 was very good, but in the game I played differently.

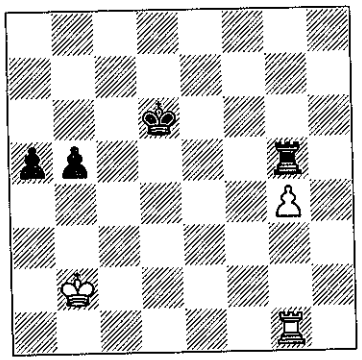
7 ♖c1

White wants to put his rook behind his passed pawn.

7 ... ♔d6?

7...♔d5 is much stronger.

8 ♖g1 *(D)*



B

I would like to discuss this position in more detail.

White has managed to activate his rook to a significant extent. If the pawn were on g5 he would probably draw the game, but with the pawn on g4 his rook has rather less room for manoeuvre. Black now has two winning plans:

1) to move the king over to help the queenside pawns;

2) first to take the g4-pawn with the king, and only then to return to the queenside.

Let us first look at a simpler plan:

8 ... ♔c5

Obviously, if Black can put his pawns on a4 and b4, he wins easily. White's task is therefore to hinder the advance of the pawns, to lure the rook away from g5, and to begin pushing his own passed pawn forward.

First let us look at:

9 ♔b3

On 9...b4 (with the threat of 10...♔b5) there follows 10 ♔a4 ♔b6 11 ♖f1 ♖xg4 12 ♖f5! (simpler than 12 ♖f6+ ♔c5 13 ♔xa5) with an immediate draw.

Now let us investigate:

9 ... a4+
10 ♔a3 ♔b6!
11 ♔b4

Hindering 11...♔a5.

11 ... ♖e5!

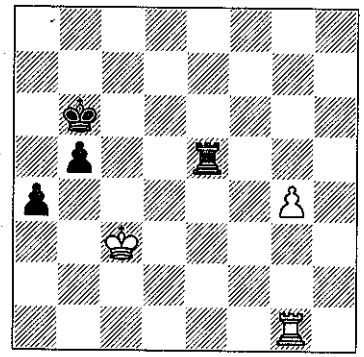
White has two defences against the threat of 12...♖e3: 12 ♖g3 and 12 ♔c3 (no good is 12 ♔a3? ♖e2, since the king is in a mating net).

After 12 ♖g3 ♖e4+ 13 ♔a3 ♔a5 (with the threat of 14...♖e2) 14 ♔b2(a2) b4 the black pawns queen earlier than the g-pawn. 13 ♔c3 is no better in view of 13...b4+ 14 ♔d3 a3! 15 ♔c2 ♖e2+, and so on.

Let us examine:

12 ♔c3 *(D)*

Here Black's win is not at all obvious.



B

In training sessions on the technique of realizing an advantage an important principle had been mentioned: you should use any opportunity for even the slightest strengthening of your own position and weakening of your opponent's position. Here Black can move his king forward, but in response the white pawn will advance and there will be no win. The only route to the win is a *zwischenschach*:

12 ... ♖c5+!

If 13 ♔b2, then 13...♖g5, and the b-pawn gallops forward to the fourth rank. If 13 ♔d4 Black can either move his pawns forward immediately or play 13...♖g5 first. There remains only:

13 ♔b4 ♖c4+
14 ♔a3

Now the straightforward advance 14...♔a5? gives nothing: 15 ♔a2 b4 16 g5 b3+ 17 ♔a1! a3 18 g6 b2+ (there is just one tempo too few for 18...a2 and ...♔b4-a3) 19 ♔b1 ♔b4 20 g7 ♔b3 21 ♖g3+ ♔b4 22 ♖g1.

Correct is:

14 ... ♖c2!

The threat is 15...♔a5.

15 ♔b4 ♖b2+!

Nothing is achieved by 15...♖f2 16 ♔c3; it is first necessary to clarify the position of the white king.

Now 16 ♔a3 ♖f2 17 ♔b4 ♖f3 is bad.

16 ♔c3 a3
17 g5 b4+
18 ♔c4 a2
19 ♖a1

If 19 g6, then 19...♖b1.

19 ... b3
20 g6 ♖b1
21 g7

Note by John Nunn and Graham Burgess: The original manuscript

continued 21...♖xa1 22 g8♕ ♖c1+ 23 ♔xb3 a1♕, with the comment that Black's king can escape from the perpetual check. However, the database gives this ♕+♖ v ♕ position as a draw; Black cannot evade the checks after 24 ♕b8+. If he tries to put the king on, say, h7, then White replies ♕e4+, continuing with diagonal checks except when the king is on the long diagonal, but then a lateral check serves just as well (for example, with the king on g7 White can play ♕e7+ and here Black cannot interpose his queen). If, on the other hand, Black's king heads back to the queenside then, with the black king on c8, for example, White plays ♕g4+, meeting ...♔b8/b7 with ♕b4+. Black is never able to interpose his rook.

However, more detailed analysis showed that Vulfson's assessment was correct, but Black has to adopt a different strategy. The rest of this variation is our analysis.

21 ... b2!

22 g8♕

After 22 ♖xa2 ♖c1+ 23 ♔d4 b1♕ 24 g8♕ the normal rule for such positions applies: whoever gives the first check wins. After 24...♕b4+ Black either mates or wins White's queen within a few moves.

22 ... ♖c1+!

23 ♔d5

There is no perpetual check after 23 ♖xc1 bxc1♕+ 24 ♔b3 a1♕. Other king moves allow Black to promote with check.

23 ... ♖c5+

Black must improve his rook position as much as possible before he promotes, or else White will again give perpetual check.

24 ♔d6 ♖c6+!

Now 24...bxa1♕ is tempting, but surprisingly there is no clear-cut escape from the barrage of checks after 24 ♕b8+ ♔a6 25 ♕a8+ ♔b5 26 ♕b7+ ♔c4 27 ♕f7+ ♔b4 28 ♕b7+ ♖b5 29 ♕e4+ ♔b3 30 ♕e6+!.

25 ♔d7

Or 25 ♔d5 bxa1♕ 26 ♕b8+ ♖b6 27 ♕e8+ ♔a5 28 ♕a8+ ♔b4 29 ♕f8+ ♔b3 and the checks run out.

25 ... bxa1♕

26 ♕b3+

26 ♕b8+ ♔a5 27 ♕a8+ (27 ♕a7+ ♔b4 leads to the same thing) ♔b4 28 ♕b7+ ♔a3 29 ♕a7+ ♔b3 30 ♕b7+ ♔c2! 31 ♕xc6+ ♕c3 32 ♕a4+ ♔b2 33 ♕b5+ ♔c1 34 ♕f1+ ♔c2 and the triangulation has left White without any further checks.

26 ... ♔c5

Now the king can escape: 27 ♕a3+ (27 ♕c2+ ♔b4 28 ♕e4+ ♔a3 29 ♕e7+ ♔b3 30 ♕f7+ ♖c4) ♔d4! 28 ♕b4+ ♔e3 29 ♕e7+ ♔f3 and Black can interpose his queen next move.

As you can see, the win is very complicated. In addition, White's defence can be strengthened at the very start of the variation. Instead of 9 ♔b3?!, he can play a more cunning move:

9 ♔a3!

The point is that the pawn will not reach a4 with check.

9 ... a4

9...♔b6 is no better due to 10 ♖g3!.

10 ♖g3!

Now if 10...♔b6 11 ♔b4 a position of mutual zugzwang arises, with Black to move. Black gains nothing from 11...♖e5, since there is no threat of 12...♖e3, and White simply moves his pawn forward. After 11...♔a6(c6) 12 ♖g1 ♖e5 the move 13...♖e3 is no longer fatal and again 13 g5 can be played.

Let us try

10 ... ♔c6!?

11 ♔b4 ♔b6 *(D)*

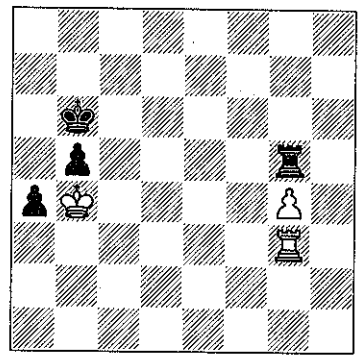
Now it is White who is in zugzwang. We already know that 12 ♖g1 loses to 12...♖e5, so let us try:

12 ♖g2 ♖e5

13 ♔a3!

The difference compared to the position of the rook on g1 is immediately apparent.

13 ... ♔a5



W

14 g5

Here the black rook cannot intervene on e2. Black has to push the pawn:

14 ... b4+

Where should the king retreat? The outcome of the game depends on this.

15 ♔a2!

Naturally, this is the right move, with the point that the a-pawn does not advance with check.

15 ... a3

Black nevertheless plays this, but without gaining a tempo!

16 g6 ♔a4

The threat is 17...b3+ with mate. White loses after 17 ♖g1 b3+ 18 ♔a1 a2, but he can defend by:

17 ♖g4! ♖e2+

18 ♔a1!

Now the following line is dangerous only for Black:

18 ... a2

19 g7 ♔a3

20 ♖g3+ b3
21 ♖xb3+! ♔xb3
22 g8♕+

and White even wins.

So we have discovered that after 8...♔c5 White manages to draw.

In the game I chose:

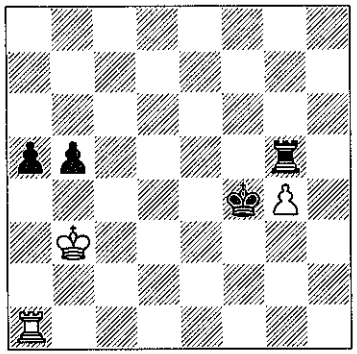
8 ... ♔e5

As you see, the king has ended up on e5 all the same, but instead of doing this immediately it has lost tempi by wandering between the squares e6 and d6.

9 ♔b3

White intends, by playing ♖a1, to force the advance of one of the pawns and then to slide his king in between them.

9 ... ♔f4
10 ♖a1 *(D)*



B

Here I didn't stop to think which pawn to push, and that was very unwise, as one pawn move leads to a win, the other to a draw. First let us see what happened in the game itself.

10 ... a4+?
11 ♔b4 ♔xg4
12 ♖a3?!

My opponent starts on the path to defeat. He probably thought that he could keep out my king along the third rank, but in fact this is a bad place for the rook.

12 ... ♔f4
13 ♖c3??

Any rook move along the third rank loses – it was essential to move away.

13 ... ♖g3

My rook is being transferred to b3, after which the pawns will queen on their own. Black won easily.

How should White have defended? Suppose we do not know the theory of endgames with this arrangement of pawns – let's try to proceed purely by common sense.

It is useful to consider the question 'What does Black want to achieve?'. He probably wants to bring his king to b2, after which it will be possible to give up the b5-pawn and queen the a-pawn. Let us try to obstruct the advance of the king by cutting it off vertically.

12 ♖f1 ♖f5
13 ♖e1 ♔f4
14 ♖e2 ♖e5

15 ♖d2 ♔e3
16 ♖d1 ♖g5
17 ♖d8 ♔e4
18 ♖d1 ♖f5

It is important not to put the rook on e5 – otherwise the king will be driven away by a check from e1. 18...♖d5 is premature owing to 19 ♖e1+. White needs to play for zugzwang. His king is ideally placed on b4, so he must improve the position of his rook.

19 ♖d2 ♖d5
20 ♖c2

Now 20 ♖e2+ ♔d3 is useless for White.

20 ... ♔d3
21 ♖c8

21 ♖h2 is also good.

21 ... ♔d2
22 ♖c7 ♔d1

Up until this moment White has not been taking any particular risks and could have defended in various different ways. However, he now has to make a precise move (23 ♖c3 or 23 ♖h8), as Black has created the concrete threat of playing 23...♖d2. For example:

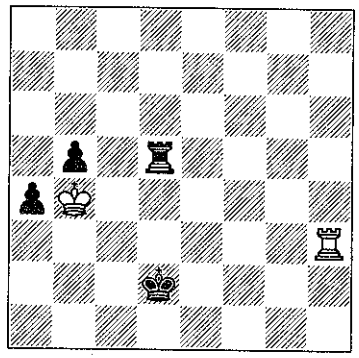
23 ♖c8? ♖d2
24 ♖c3

Or 24 ♔xb5 a3 25 ♔b4 a2 26 ♖a7 ♔c1.

24 ... ♖b2+
25 ♔a3 ♖b1

Now on 26 ♖h3 there follows 26...♔c2, threatening 27...♖b3+, and if 26 ♖c8, then 26...♔d2, and the king approaches the pawns. It now has an excellent refuge on a5 from horizontal checks. This is one of the important won positions.

Here is the basic drawn position, which it is also essential to know:



B

G. Kasparian, 1946

Could a position like this have arisen in our game? Of course it could. White could always have put his rook on the third rank. The only plan to fight for a win is:

1 ... ♔c2
2 ♖h2+ ♖d2
3 ♖h3!

It is important to control the square a3.

3 ... ♔b2

At first glance it seems that White is doing badly – Black intends 4...♖d4+ and 5...a3, but let us check this:

4 ♖g3 ♖d4+
5 ♔c5!

Not 5 ♔xb5? a3 6 ♖g2+ ♔c3 7 ♖g3+ ♖d3.

If the rook moves away to e4, then there is nothing to stop White taking the b5-pawn and after 6...a3 beginning horizontal checks. The king is forced to move away to the d-file, then the rook attacks the a-pawn and the game is drawn. That was the conclusion reached by Kasparian.

I discovered in this position yet another interesting nuance: Black can try:

5 ... ♖d1!

Once again, the b5-pawn cannot be taken.

6 ♔b4

This is essential.

6 ... ♖b1

Now, however, the pawn really does have to be captured:

7 ♔xb5! a3
8 ♔a4 a2
9 ♖g2+

The crucial square b1 has been taken away from the king, so the position in drawn!

Let us return to the position after White's tenth move. We have seen that 10...a4+? leads to a draw. Now we shall analyse

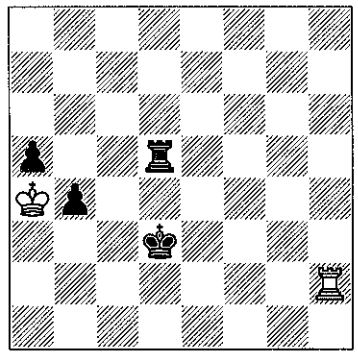
10 ... b4!
11 ♔a4

11 ♖g1 is hopeless: 11...♖xg4.

11 ... ♔xg4

This pawn configuration is clearly stronger than a4-b5, since after the sacrifice of the a5-pawn the remaining b-pawn is more dangerous than the a-pawn and offers more winning chances. The black king approaches the queenside without obstacle (12 ♖f1 ♖f5, and so on). Let us see what defensive methods White can use with the pawns on b4 and a5.

Firstly: playing for stalemate

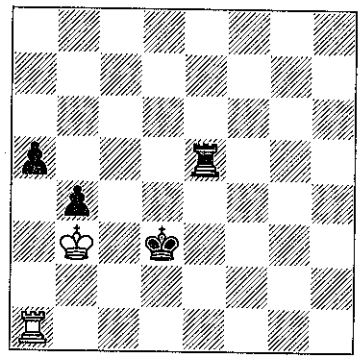


B

If the black king goes to c3, there follows ♖c2+!. However, this mechanism can easily be disrupted – the transfer of the black rook to the second rank is decisive.

Secondly: the attempt to put his king in the way

(see diagram on following page)



B

The problem with the king's position on b3 is that it can be checked along the third rank.

1 ... ♔d4
2 ♖a4

Or 2 ♖a2 ♖e3+ 3 ♔a4 (forced) 3...♔c3.

2 ... ♖e3+
3 ♔b2 ♔c4!
4 ♖xa5 ♖e2+

and a well-known theoretically won position results.

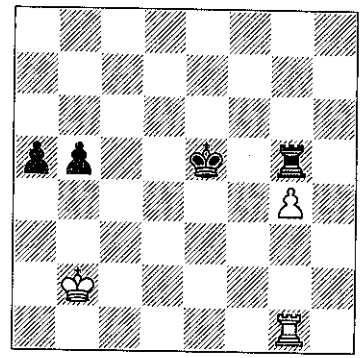
Black wins in almost the same way if the opponent's rook is on a8 (instead of a1): 1...♔d4 with the idea of ...♖e3+.

Thirdly: cutting off the black king vertically

What is the simplest way of winning here? Let's improve the position of the rook:

1 ... ♖e5

The threat is 2...♖e3+, removing the blockade of the pawns. 2 ♔a4



W

♖e3 and 2 ♖d1+ ♔c5 3 ♔a4 ♖e3 are both hopeless. You can see that the key square for the king in endgames of this type is d4; it is very important to occupy it! The further course of events depends on circumstances: if the white king is on a4, then the way is clear for ...♔d4-c3-b2(c2). If the king is on b3, it can be checked and the black king can aim for c5 and b5.

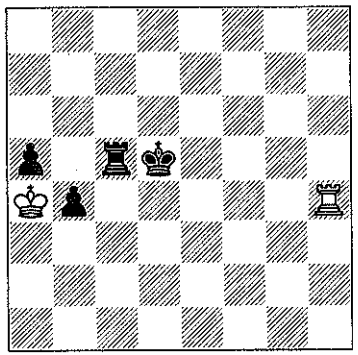
It would seem that everything is straightforward, but take a look at the following exceptional position *(D)*:

What is the assessment? Draw! The king has no way through.

We are arriving at a general rule for endgames of this type:

If the black king is cut off in its own side of the board, the position is drawn.

But *if it breaks through to the opponent's half, the position becomes won.*

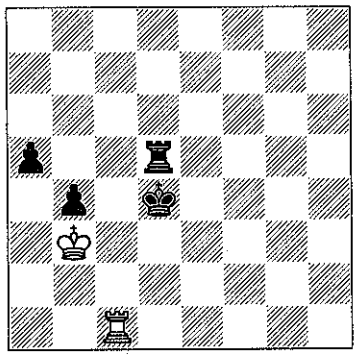


B

A general conclusion also needs to be made about this endgame:

Black's plan of taking the pawn with the king wins, but the plan of moving the king over to help out the queenside pawns only draws.

However, the following analysis forces some serious corrections to these seemingly fixed conclusions. I once took a closer look at the position after the move 8...♔e5.



B

Why did White continue 9 ♔b3 here? It is much more logical to move the rook immediately:

9 ♖a1!

Now Black cannot reply ...b5-b4. There might follow:

9 ... a4
10 ♔a3

Not 10 ♔c3 owing to 10...♖xg4 11 ♖b1 ♖c4+.

10 ... ♔d5

White had no reason to fear 10...♖xg4 since he has the reply 11 ♖b1, resulting in an immediate draw.

11 ♔b4 ♔c6
12 ♖g1

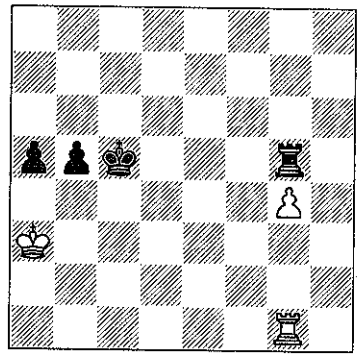
We have reached an already familiar drawn position.

What a lot of mistakes the two players made in this endgame! The reason was inadequate knowledge of the theory of rook endings; they had no 'lighthouses' to help orientate them.

And so, in the game moving the king to the kingside (this was unfortunately delayed) should still have led to a draw. Then I returned again to the position after 8...♔c5 9 ♔a3 *(D)*.

The only move we analysed seriously was 9...a4, but there is one other idea:

9 ... b4+!
10 ♔a4 ♖d5!



B

The threat is 11...♖d3. There is no sense in the king returning: 11 ♔b3 ♔b5 (threatening 12...♖d2), and White loses. If 11 ♖c1+ ♔b6 12 ♖f1 ♖d3 13 ♖f6+ ♔c5 14 ♖f5+ ♔c4 15 ♔xa5 b3 Black wins, since his passed pawn queens sooner than his opponent's, and in addition it is supported by the king.

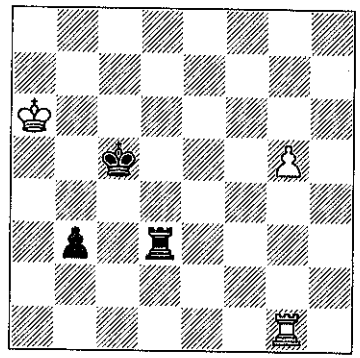
Let us investigate the following line:

11 ♔xa5 ♖d3
12 ♔a6

Otherwise mate; 12 ♖c1+ is bad in view of 12...♖c3.

12 ... b3
13 g5 *(D)*

The direct 13...b2? (intending 14...♖a3+ and 15...♖a1) only leads to a draw in view of 14 ♖b1 ♖a3+ (or 14...♖d2 15 g6) 15 ♔b7 ♖b3+ 16 ♔c7 ♔b4 17 ♔d7! ♔a3 18 ♔e6(e7), and the white king paradoxically manages to join its own pawn.



B

Hopeless is 13...♔b4? 14 g6 b2 15 g7 ♖d8 16 g8♕ ♖xg8 17 ♖xg8, when 17...b1♕? fails to 18 ♖b8+. On 13...♔c4? both 14 g6 b2 15 g7 ♖d8 16 ♖g4+ and 14 ♔a5 b2 15 g6 ♔c3 16 ♔a4 are possible.

However, a very subtle solution can be found:

13 ... ♖d7!!
14 g6 ♖g7

This way White's king is completely paralyzed and he cannot prevent ...♔b4-a3.

Black wins after **15 ♖g5+ ♔b4 16 ♔b6** (or 16 ♖g4+ ♔a3 17 ♔b5 b2) **16...b2 17 ♖b5+ ♔c3 18 ♖c5+** (White is hoping to force the king to b1 and return to g5, but Black replies...) **18...♔d4! 19 ♖b5 ♖xg6+.**

So our initial conclusion has been exchanged for the opposite one: the plan of moving over to help the pawns turns out to be stronger than that of marching the king to the g4-pawn.

6 Adventures on Resumption Day

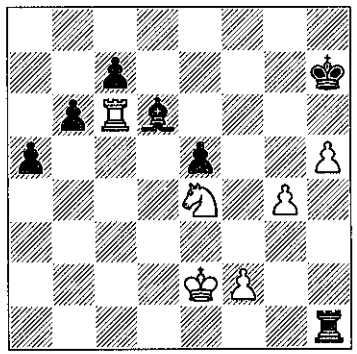
Mark Dvoretsky

There is the saying 'You're as lucky as a first prize-winner'. From the examples given below you will see that at the 1976 USSR Cup (the national club competition) in Tbilisi our team 'Burevestnik' really did have some luck. But luck on its own is not enough for a team which on paper was by no means the strongest to win by such a huge margin (before the final round we were 7 points ahead of our nearest rivals). The friendly atmosphere in the team, goodwill and cooperation made a large contribution to our victory. Also important was our superiority in analysing adjourned positions (although you might not believe this from the examples below) – a good dozen adjourned games had outcomes that were pleasantly unexpected for us.

The day before the resumption day our top board Smyslov adjourned his game against Tal in a critical position. At the team meeting he said he would need assistance analysing for the next day.

'Of course, of course, let's look at the position together', said Mark Taimanov, offering his services. 'Thanks, Mark Evgenievich, but I'd like to work with Mark Izrailevich', replied Smyslov.

Of course, it is flattering to enjoy the reputation of a good analyst, even if it can sometimes be something of a burden – I had my own adjourned game as well. The following morning Smyslov and I sat down to look at his position. After three hours of exceptionally intensive work my head was splitting, but we did think we had found a way of saving the game.



W

Tal – Smyslov

Tbilisi 1976

Of course, playing 42 g5? ♖xh5 43 ♘f6+ ♔g6 is not a good idea, so Tal's sealed move was obvious:

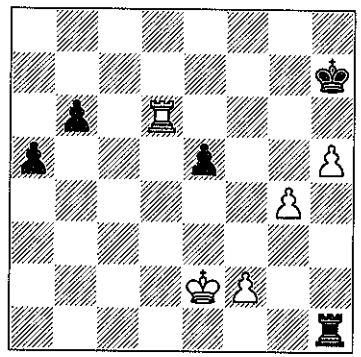
42 ♘xd6

Black replies:

42 ... cd

Now taking the b6-pawn enables Black to activate his king: 43 ♖xb6 ♔h6! 44 ♖xd6+ (44 f4!? ef 45 ♖xd6+ also does not win for White) 44...♔g5 45 f3 e4! and now Black has enough counterplay for a draw, for example 46 ♖g6+ ♔f4 47 fe a4. White should choose the sharper:

43 ♖xd6! *(D)*



B

We now have a choice between 43...♖b1 (A) and 43...b5 44 ♖a6 a4 (B). In both cases White replies by pushing his king forward. The queenside pawns are not advancing too quickly – in the meantime the black king will come under threat. The following variation is instructive, as it illustrates typical ideas in this position and difficulties that Black faces.

A. 43 ... ♖b1

44 ♔f3!

44 g5? is premature because of 44...♖g1.

44 ... a4

44...♖b4? is met by 45 ♔g3 and 46 g5.

45 ♔e4 a3

46 ♖d7+ ♔h6

46...♔g8 47 ♖a7 ♖b3 is really bad; White continues 48 ♔f5 or 48 h6.

47 ♔f5!

Threatening 48 g5+ ♔xh5 49 ♖h7 mate.

47 ... ♖g1

48 ♖a7 ♖g2

49 f4! ef

50 ♖xa3 ♖g3

51 ♖a1! f3

Black cannot play 51...♖c3 52 g5+.

52 ♔f4 ♖g2

52...♖h3 53 ♖b1 f2 54 ♖xb6+ ♔h7 55 ♖b1 ♖b3 56 ♖f1 ♔h6 57 ♖xf2.

53 ♔xf3 ♖c2

54 ♖b1

and Black fails by one tempo to blockade the pawn securely by establishing the familiar drawn position with the king on g5 and the rook on c5.

Even in such complicated endgames, where every tempo is critical, it is not always worth diving straight into the whirlpool of variations. First it is necessary to give the position logical consideration and to look for a further plan, a general idea to carry out. What do you think this idea is?

It turns out that Black should transfer his rook to the eighth rank. Firstly, from there it will cover the king; to mate the king, White will have to advance the king and both pawns, and that will take time. Secondly, it will be possible to place the rook behind a pawn and start pushing it, giving up the second pawn.

So we have found the correct plan. Now it just needs to be carried out as precisely as possible.

B. 43 ... b5

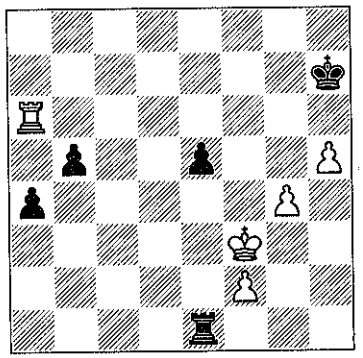
This is the move Smyslov actually played.

As Tal noted after the game, the move 43...♖b1 was still possible, but only as part of the plan given above: after 44 ♔f3 a4 45 ♔e4 it is necessary to play 45...♖b4+! 46 ♔f5 ♖f4+ 47 ♔g5 ♖f8.

44 ♖a6 a4
45 ♔e3

We considered 45 ♔f3 to be more precise. Tal was worried by the reply 45...a3, but Black loses after this move: 46 ♔g2 ♖a1 47 g5 b4 48 g6+! (not 48 ♖a7+? ♔g8 49 g6 ♖c1 50 h6 ♖c8) 48...♔h6 49 ♖a7 with the decisive threats 50 ♖h7+ and 50 g7 ♔h7 51 h6 followed by 52 ♖a8. Smyslov would therefore have followed the main line of analysis – 45...♖c1!. After the move in the game Black has one additional possibility.

45 ... ♖e1+
46 ♔f3 *(D)*



B

46 ... ♖c1

46...e4+ 47 ♔f4 ♖e2 was also quite possible. We analysed sharp variations such as 48 ♔g5 ♖xf2 49 ♖a7+ ♔g8 50 h6 e3 51 ♔g6 ♖f8 and could not see a win for White. But on the other hand our basic defensive plan seemed to be enough for a draw, so it was not easy for Smyslov to make a choice. He knew perfectly well that, given the shortage of time for analysis, there could be a mistake lurking in any variation. The only question was where it was most likely to be.

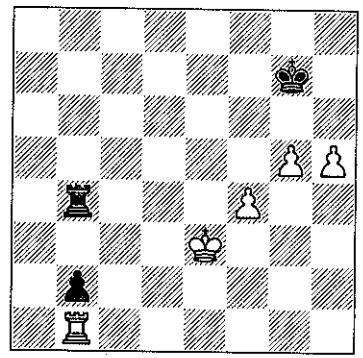
47 ♔e4 ♖c4+?!

This is how we intended to transfer the rook to the eighth rank. It's true that the position of the white king improves, but the e5-pawn remains untouched. We rejected 47...♖c8!, since we regarded as lost the position arising after 48 ♔xe5 ♖b8 49 g5 b4 50 ♖a7+ ♔g8 51 ♖xa4 b3 52 ♖a1 b2 53 ♖b1.

Not long before resumption Vasily Vasilievich came up to me.

'You know', he said, 'it seems that the three white pawns don't win.'

'It can't be!' I replied, amazed, and tried to refute his conclusion, but couldn't. Here is the basic position:



B

1 ... ♖b3+
2 ♔d4

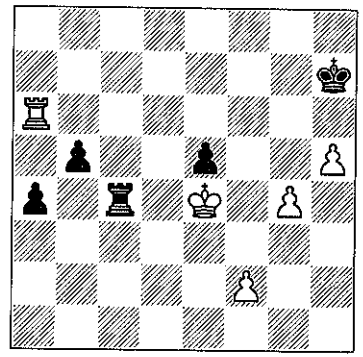
2 ♔d2 ♖b4 3 f5 ♖b5.

2 ... ♖b4+
3 ♔c3 ♖xf4
4 ♖xb2 ♖h4!

with a draw.

Smyslov's discovery is instructive and pretty, and I think it has quite some significance for the theory of rook endings; however we had no time to check it through thoroughly. When Smyslov asked me which defensive plan he should choose, I could only shrug my shoulders in reply. Not receiving any advice, he said he would think about it again over the board. He finally opted for the main variation which we had intended from the very beginning. Unfortunately, that was where an error had crept in.

Play continued *(D)*:



W

48 ♔f5 ♖f4+
49 ♔g5 ♖f8
50 h6!

Now the penny dropped. During analysis we gave check at some stage on a7, after which the win disappears. In such sharp endings every tempo is precious – White leaves the king on h7 in order to advance the pawn to g6 with check.

50 ... b4
51 ♖xa4?

An unexpected amnesty at the very last moment. The winning continuation was 51 ♔h5! b3 52 g5 ♖b8 53 g6+ ♔h8 54 h7 ♔g7 (or 54...b2 55 ♔h6) 55 ♖a7+ ♔f6 56 g7.

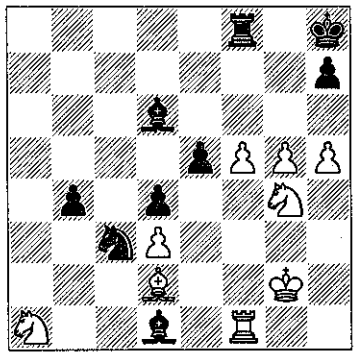
51 ... ♖b8
52 ♖a7+

Now 52 ♔h5 b3 53 g5 b2 54 g6+ ♔h8! no longer works.

52 ... ♔h8
53 ♖a2 b3
54 ♖b2 e4
55 ♔f6 ♔h7
Draw

On the very same day I too was resuming an adjourned game (and it was also a sharp endgame with passed pawns on both sides). It had been adjourned earlier than Smyslov's game, and so I had had time to examine it, but, for obvious reasons, there had been no time left to check through the variations *(D)*.

Analysis showed that, amazing though it may seem, there was a forced draw from this position.



W

V. Kozlov – Dvoretsky
Tbilisi 1986

41 ♖xd1!

This was the sealed move.

41 ... ♘xd1
42 f6 ♖a8

After 42...♘e3+ 43 ♗xe3 de 44 ♔f3 ♖a8 45 ♘b3 ♖a3 46 ♘c1 b3 47 ♘xb3 ♖xb3 48 g6 ♗f8 49 ♘xe5 Black cannot make his extra rook count.

43 ♘b3

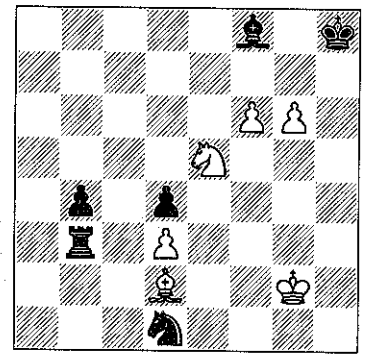
43 g6? is weaker in view of the reply 43...hg 44 hg ♖xa1 45 ♗h6 ♖a7! 46 f7 ♖xf7 47 gf b3.

43 ... ♖a3
44 g6 hg
45 hg ♗f8
46 ♘xe5!

The simplest path to the draw. 46 ♘c1 b3 47 ♘xb3 ♖xb3 48 ♗h6 ♘e3+ 49 ♗xe3 de 50 ♔f3 was also quite possible. I just wanted to check whether my opponent would

muddle up his move order by playing 46 ♗h6?. In this case, after 46...♘e3+ 47 ♗xe3 (47 ♘xe3 ♗xh6 48 ♘f5 ♗f8 49 g7+ ♗xg7 50 fg+ ♔h7 51 ♘c5 b3) 47...de 48 ♘c1, Black plays not 48...b3?, but 48...♖c3!.

46 ... ♖xb3 *(D)*



W

47 ♘f7+

I was expecting 47 ♗h6 ♖b2+ 48 ♔g3 ♖f2 49 ♗xf8 ♖xf6 50 ♗xb4 with a drawn endgame. The move chosen by White in the game had not even been considered in analysis, as I thought that after 47...♔g8 48 ♘h6+, exchanging on h6 followed by transferring the rook to f2 would keep an extra pawn for Black. And when my opponent entered this variation all the same, I made a typical mistake by instantly making the moves I had intended earlier.

You must always be alive to the possibility of a hole in prepared analysis – not all details can have been worked out with equal care. Maybe there was no sense in checking through again the variations I had prepared earlier, but I should still have taken a fresh look at the position to avoid some crude oversight.

47 ... ♔g8
48 ♘h6+ ♗xh6??

48...♔h8 was essential, with a draw. The move in the game should have led to defeat after the zwischenzug 49 f7+!.

49 ♗xh6?? ♖b2+
50 ♔g3 ♖f2

Now it is Black who wuns.

51 f7+ ♖xf7
52 gf+ ♔xf7
53 ♗c1 ♔e6!
54 ♔f3 ♘c3!
55 ♔f2 b3
White resigned

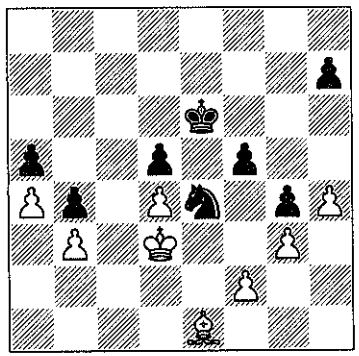
As you see, luck really was on our side in this tournament!

7 Knight Solo (or what pure horsepower is capable of)

Artur Yusupov

'There are horses which are trained to help their masters to attack anyone who appears before them with a naked blade...'
Michel Montaigne

At the end of the 16th century people probably took the French philosopher's word for it. I have been fortunate enough to find out from my own experience the unusual qualities of the horse.



B
Gheorghiu – Yusupov
Lucerne 1985

The Romanian player went for this position in the mistaken belief that he could build an impregnable fortress.

45 ... f4!
46 ♔e2

If 46 gf, then 46...♘d6! 47 f3 (or 47 ♗d2 ♘f5 48 h5 ♔f6 49 ♗e1 ♔g7) 47...gf 48 ♔e3 ♘f5+ 49 ♔xf3 ♘xd4+ 50 ♔g4 ♘xb3, and Black wins.

46 ... ♘d6!

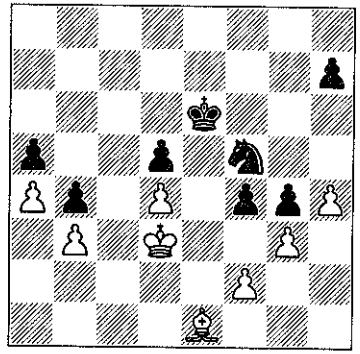
After the game Gheorghiu mentioned that he had looked at this knight move during his home analysis. Nothing would come of 46...♔f5 because of 47 ♔d3, and on 46...♘f6 there would follow 47 f3!.

47 ♔d3

Black would face a sterner task after 47 f3. Clearly, 47...gf+ 48 ♔xf3 ♘f5 49 ♔xf4 ♘xd4 lets the win slip, as White can activate his bishop: 50 ♗f2 ♘xb3 51 ♗b6, for example 51...♘c1 52 ♔e3! ♘a2 53 ♗xa5 b3 54 ♔d2 h5 55 ♗c7 b2 56 ♔c2 ♘c3 57 ♔xb2 ♘xa4+ 58 ♔c2, or 51...♘d2 52 ♗xa5 b3 53 ♗c3 ♘c4 54 g4 b2 55 ♗xb2 ♘xb2 56 a5.

The correct continuation runs 47...♘f5! 48 fg ♘xd4+ 49 ♔d3 ♘f3 50 ♗f2 ♘e5+ 51 ♔e2 (on 51 ♔d2 there follows 51...♘xg4 52 ♗b6 fg) 51...f3+ 52 ♔f1 (analogous variations result after 52 ♔d2 ♘xg4 53 ♗b6 ♔e5 54 ♗xa5 ♔e4 55 ♗xb4 f2 56 ♔e2 d4) 52...♘xg4 53 ♗b6 ♔e5 54 ♗xa5 ♔e4 55 ♗b6 (or 55 ♗xb4 ♔e3 56 ♗e1 f2 57 ♗xf2+ ♘xf2 58 a5 d4 59 a6 d3 60 a7 d2 61 a8♕ d1♕+ 62 ♔g2 ♕h1 mate) 55...d4 56 a5 f2! 57 ♔g2 (57 a6 ♔f3 58 ♗xd4 ♘h2 mate) 57...d3 58 a6 d2 59 a7 f1♕+, and White loses.

47 ... ♘f5 *(D)*



W

Now White is in zugzwang and is forced to destroy his own fortress.

48 h5

White would also fail to save the game after 48 ♗d2 because of 48...fg 49 fg ♘xg3 50 ♗f4 ♘f5! 51 ♗c7 g3.

48 ... fg
49 fg ♔f6
50 h6

White's last hope is the vulnerable position of the black pawns on the queenside. The careless 50...♘xh6?? is met by 51 ♗xb4!.

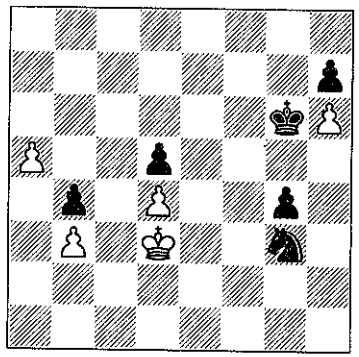
50 ... ♔g6!

Less convincing is 50...♔e6 51 ♗f2 ♘xh6 52 ♗e3 with drawing chances. In making his move, Black had to calculate the variation which occurred in the game.

51 ♗d2 ♘xg3
52 ♗xb4 ab

Not 52...♘e4? 53 ♗xa5 g3 54 ♗c7.

53 a5 *(D)*



B

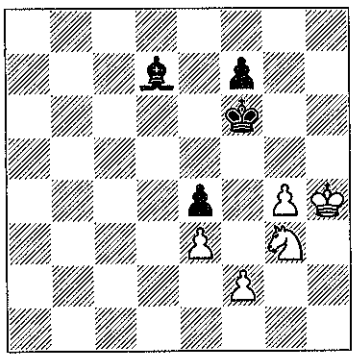
In this race the white a-pawn has a significant head-start: to become

a queen it has to make only three moves, while the black knight can only reach a8 in four. An unpleasant surprise awaits Black if he tries to queen his own pawn: 53...♘f5? 54 a6 g3 55 a7 g2 56 a8♕ g1♕ 57 ♕g8+. However, as we know, a well-trained horse is capable of extraordinary deeds...

53 ... ♘h5!!
54 ♔e3

Black also wins after the continuation 54 a6 ♘f4+ 55 ♔e3 ♘e6 56 a7 ♘c7.

54 ... ♘f6
55 ♔f4 ♔xh6
56 a6 ♘d7
57 a7 ♘b6
58 ♔xg4 ♔g6
59 ♔f4 ♔f6
60 ♔g4 ♘a8
White resigned



B
Yusupov – Li Zunian
Lucerne 1985

In this position the game was adjourned for the second time. After the first adjournment I managed to win a pawn thanks to the strenuous efforts of the white knight, which carried out a heroic raid from the rear by ♘g4-f6-g8xh6-g8-e7-c6-d4-e2-g3. Nevertheless, I still believed a draw was the most likely outcome. After a relatively brief analysis it emerged that there was no real winning plan other than the exchange of the g-pawn. After this White is left with only one object of attack – the e4-pawn. It seemed that Black could quite easily solve the problem of how to defend it. However, serious work on the position brought me some hope, as I began to realize that the piece on g3 was truly a 'Montaigne' knight.

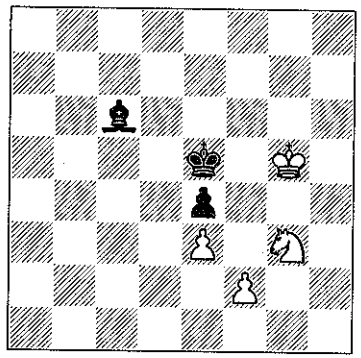
59 ... ♔e5
60 ♔h5 f6
61 g5 fg
62 ♔xg5

Black is at a crossroads, as the bishop can defend the pawn from different sides. The plan chosen by the Chinese player for a long time also seemed to me to be the strongest.

62 ... ♗c6 *(D)*

Black keeps his bishop on the squares b7 and a8, while the king, when it is forced away from e5, will head for d3.

63 ♘f5 ♗a8



1 W

Of course not 63...♔d5 because of 64 ♘e7+.

64 ♘e7!

White must hinder the transfer of the black king to d3. Thus 64 ♘h6? only draws after 64...♔d5 65 ♔f4 ♔c4 66 ♘f5 ♔d3.

64 ... ♔d6

More precise is 64...♗b7, which will be examined below.

65 ♘g6 ♔d5
66 ♔f4

White's idea becomes clear. His winning plan involves occupying the key square e5 with the knight. From there the knight not only covers the squares d3 and c4, but also aims at d7 or f7.

66 ... ♔c5

If Black plays the natural 66...♔c4 White wins by 67 ♘e5+! ♔c3 68 ♘d7!. The threat is 69 ♘c5, on 68...♔c4 there follows the fork 69 ♘b6+, and if 68...♔b4, then simply 69 ♘f6.

67 ♘e5! ♗b7

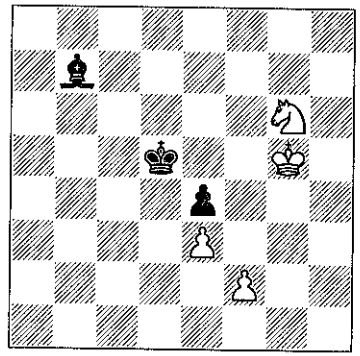
Or 67...♔b4 68 ♘d7, and Black loses.

68 ♘f7!

Black resigned, as there is no satisfactory defence to the threat of 69 ♘g5 (for instance 68...♔c4 is met by 69 ♘d6+).

Let us return to the position after 64 ♘e7. Instead of 64...♔d6, there is a more cunning move:

64 ... ♗b7
65 ♘g6+ ♔d5 *(D)*

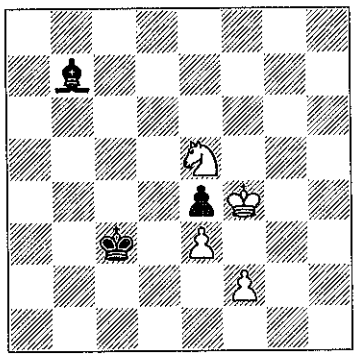


2 W

Now White must choose a square for his king with great care: 66 ♔f4 (A) or 66 ♔f5 (B).

A. 66 ♔f4 ♔c4
67 ♘e5+ ♔c3 *(D)*

This is a position of mutual zugzwang. Black loses if it is his move: 68...♔d2 69 ♘d7; 68...♗a8 69 ♘d7 ♔c4 70 ♘b6+; 68...♔b4



3 =/–

69 ♘f7 ♔c3 70 ♘d6. However, it is White's move, and no win is apparent: 68 ♘f7 ♔d3 or 68 ♘d7 ♔c4 69 ♔e5 ♗c6.

The natural 66 ♔f4? is a mistake.

B. 66 ♔f5!!

This is the winning move.

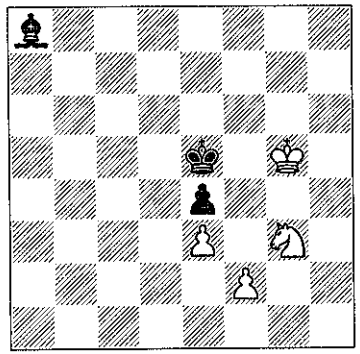
66 ... ♔c4

After 66...♗c8+ 67 ♔f4 ♗b7 68 ♘e5 ♗a8 69 ♘d7 Black is defenceless.

67 ♘e5+ ♔c3
68 ♔f4

and the position we looked at arises again, but this time with Black to move.

We still have to decide what would happen if Black carried out his plan more accurately, in other words if he obtained the position in diagram 1 with his bishop on a8 *(D)* (if the bishop is on b7, then 1



4 W

♘f5 wins, and if 1...♔d5, then 2 ♔f4 with the irresistible threat of 3 ♘g3). In this case the winning move is:

1 ♘f1! ♗b7

On 1...♔d5 there follows 2 ♘d2 ♔e5 (3 ♔f4 was threatened) 3 ♘c4+ ♔e6 (3...♔d5 4 ♘b6+) 4 ♔f4 and 5 ♘d2.

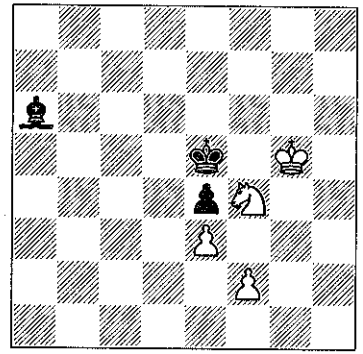
2 ♘h2 ♔d5
3 ♘g4 ♔c4
4 ♘e5+ ♔c3
5 ♔f4

and the familiar situation from position 3 occurs again.

So the defensive system with the bishop on b7-a8 has met a tricky refutation.

Black could have tried another defensive method with the bishop on g2-h1. Let's examine the following important positions.

In this position *(D)* White wins irrespective of who is to move.



5 W

1 ♘g6+ ♔d5
2 ♔f4 ♗f1

If 2...♗e2, then 3 ♘f8! ♗f3 4 ♘h7 ♔c4 (5 ♘f6+ was threatened) 5 ♘g5.

3 ♘e7+ ♔e6

Black loses immediately after 3...♔d6 in view of 4 ♘g8! ♗g2 5 ♘f6.

4 ♘c8!!

This move seems silly at first glance, until you notice the goal of the knight's unusual route – the c3-square.

4 ... ♗d3

Other continuations also fail to save Black:

a) 4...♗g2 5 ♘b6 ♔d6 6 ♘a4 ♔d5 7 ♘c3+.

b) 4...♔d7 5 ♘b6+ ♔c6 6 ♘a4 and 7 ♘c3.

c) 4...♗b5 5 ♔xe4 ♔d7 6 ♘b6+ ♔c6 7 ♘d5.

d) 4...♔d5 5 ♘b6+ ♔c5 6 ♘d7+ ♔d6 7 ♘f6.

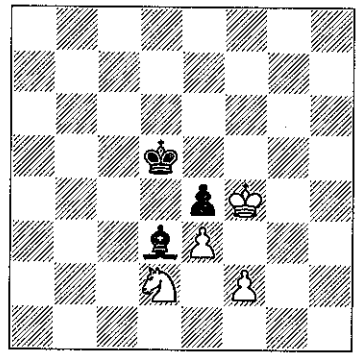
5 ♘b6 ♗c2

Otherwise White plays ♘b6-a4-c3.

6 ♘c4

Although White has not managed to transfer the knight to c3, he has made some substantial gains: the black bishop has been forced to move to the b1-h7 diagonal, where it is less well placed.

6 ... ♔d5
7 ♘d2 ♗d3 *(D)*



6 W

8 ♔f5

Black is in zugzwang and has to let the knight through to f1 (8...♗e2 9 ♘xe4 ♗d3 10 f3).

8 ... ♗c2
9 ♘f1 ♗d1

Or 9...♔c4 10 ♘g3 ♔d5 11 ♘h5 with a win.

10 ♘h2 ♗c2
11 ♘g4 ♔c4
12 ♘f6 ♔d3
13 ♘xe4 ♔e2

14 ♔f4

and White wins.

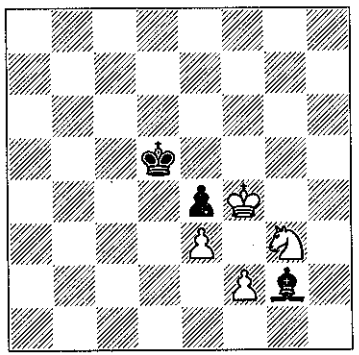
Here I ought to make a short digression and refer the reader back to the beginning of this interesting endgame, where I gave the 'white knight's strenuous efforts' their due. In order to destroy the last bastion of Black's defence – the e4 pawn – the white knight has had to make a truly epic journey (f4-g6-e7-c8-b6-c4-d2-f1-h2-g4-f6-e4).

In the position from position 5 it could also be Black to move.

1 ... ♗f1
2 ♘g6+ ♔d5
3 ♔f4 ♗g2
4 ♘h4! ♗f1

If 4...♗h1, then 5 ♔g3! ♔c4 6 ♔h2, forcing the exchange of the bishop for the knight.

5 ♘f5 ♗g2
6 ♘g3 *(D)*



7 =/–

A crucial position of mutual zugzwang. If Black is to move, he is forced to occupy the square f3 with his bishop, thus allowing the knight to reach f1.

6 ... ♗f3
7 ♘f1 ♗d1

7...♗g2 is bad owing to 8 ♘d2! ♗h1 9 ♔g3.

8 ♘h2 ♗c2
9 ♔f5

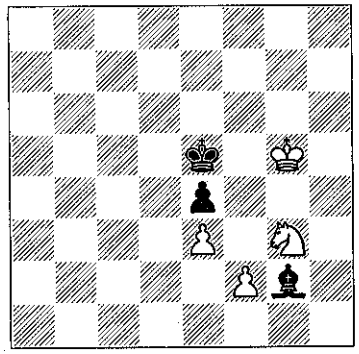
If 9 ♘g4, then 9...♔e6.

9 ... ♔c4
10 ♘f1! ♔d5

After 10...♔d3 White plays 11 ♘g3.

11 ♘g3

12 ♘h5 follows, and White wins as in position 6.



8 W

Although the black bishop is on g2 White can still win.

1 ♘f5!

Nothing is achieved by 1 ♘h5 ♗f3! (but not 1...♗h1 2 ♘f4 ♗f3 because of 3 ♘g6+ ♔d5 4 ♔f4 ♗h1 5 ♘h4 ♔c4 6 ♔g3 ♔d3 7 ♔h2 ♔e2 8 ♔xh1 ♔xf2 9 ♘f5) 2 ♘f4 ♗h1!.

1 ... ♔d5

Or 1...♗f3 2 ♘h4 ♗d1 3 ♘g6+ ♔d5 4 ♔f5 ♗f3 5 ♔f4 – this is analogous to the main variation. 1...♗h1 is bad due to 2 ♘h4!.

2 ♘h4! ♗f1
3 ♔f5! ♗e2
4 ♘g6 ♗f3
5 ♔f4 ♗g2

5...♗e2 6 ♘e7+ ♔e6 7 ♘f5 ♔d5 8 ♘g3 ♗f3 is also hopeless because of 9 ♘f1 (see position 7).

6 ♘h4 ♗f1
7 ♘f5 ♗g2
8 ♘g3

We now have before us the zugzwang familiar from position 7. White wins.

The win is even harder if Black makes the first move:

1 ... ♗h3! *(D)*

Obstructing the important manoeuvre ♘g3-f5-h4.

2 ♔h4!

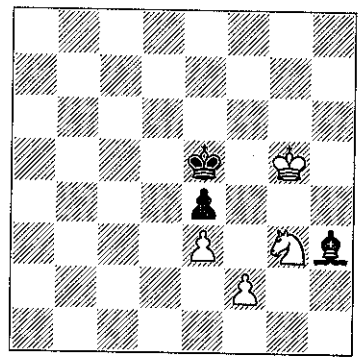
White tries to forfeit his move.

2 ... ♗c8

Or 2...♗g2 3 ♔g4 ♗f3+ 4 ♔g5 ♗g2, and position 8 has resulted, with White to move.

3 ♔h5! ♗d7

If 3...♗h3, then 4 ♔g5, and White has managed to hand over



9 W

the move to his opponent. After 4...♗c8 5 ♘h5 ♗h3 6 ♘f4 position 5 results.

4 ♔g6! ♗g4

Or 4...♗c8 5 ♘h5 ♔d5 6 ♘f6+ and wins.

5 ♘h5 ♗f3

On 5...♗h3, 6 ♘f4 is possible.

6 ♘f4 ♗h1
7 ♔g5 ♗f3

We have already met this position in the notes. I'll remind you of the winning method:

8 ♘g6+ ♔d5
9 ♔f4 ♗h1
10 ♘h4 ♔c4
11 ♔g3 ♔d3
12 ♔h2 ♔e2
13 ♔xh1 ♔xf2
14 ♘f5

Here the author ends his analysis of this intriguing ending. I would be very grateful to readers for any corrections, refinements or refutations.

8 Exploiting an Advantage

Mark Dvoretsky

Chess players suffer from many diseases. One of the most common and most serious is poor technique for exploiting an advantage. Even champions sometimes suffer from this disease – think back for example to the 1990 World Championship match between Kasparov and Karpov.

How often, after a game which has ended badly for us, we turn with annoyance to our opponent, trainer or any spectator and complain, 'I had a totally won position!' However, there's no use complaining about fate – a better idea is to sit down and think about the reasons for your mistakes, to try to understand what defects in your play or your personality lie behind these failures. I now stop to consider the basic factors which prevent the normal conversion of an advantage.

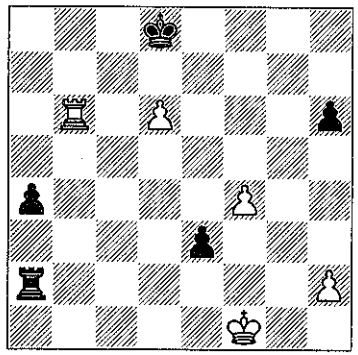
1. Exhaustion towards the end of a game

It is obvious that a player is going to get tired after several hours of intense concentration. But some people tire more, others less. It is often in the very last minutes that the outcome of a game is decided, so a player who keeps enough energy in reserve for the end of the session can pick up a fair number of extra points.

Grandmaster Yusupov always plays with deep, intense concentration and spends a lot of time and energy on solving problems which arise in the first half of the game, but in the last part of the game he often lacks the necessary energy and makes serious blunders. For example, this is the only reason he failed to win his 1989 Candidates Match with Anatoly Karpov. Yusupov continually outplayed his renowned opponent, but was not able to turn this into wins due to his extreme fatigue towards the end of the game. Take a look at one of the most painful examples *(D)*.

38	**...**	**a3?**
39	**♖a6**	**♖f2+**
40	**♔e1**	**a2**
41	**f5**	

Yusupov had seen that he would not have time to take the rook:



B

Karpov – Yusupov
London Ct (6) 1989

41...♖xh2 42 f6 ♖h1+? 43 ♔e2 a1♕ 44 ♖xa1 ♖xa1 45 f7. He therefore played:

41	**...**	**♔d7**

There followed:

42	**f6**	**♔e6**
43	**♖a8!**	**♔xd6**
44	**f7**	**♖xf7**
45	**♖xa2**	**♔e5**
46	**♖a6**	

and here a **draw** was agreed.

Instead Black could simply have taken the pawn:

38	**...**	**♖xh2!**
39	**♖a6**	

39 f5 is met by 39...♖f2+ followed by 40...♖xf5.

39	**...**	**♖f2+**
40	**♔e1**	**♖xf4**
41	**♔e2**	**♖e4**

Black is winning easily, e.g.:

42	**♖a5**	

Otherwise Black plays ...h6-h5-h4.

42	**...**	**♔d7**
43	**♖d5**	**h5!**
44	**♖xh5**	**♔xd6**

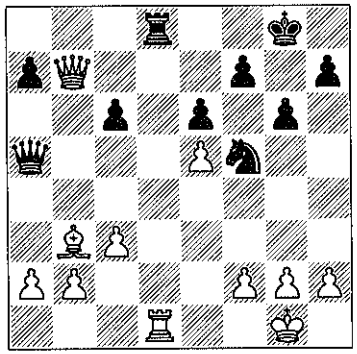
Why did Artur not play this move (38...♖xh2)? He himself admitted that by this moment his brain had simply switched off; he couldn't see any possibilities other than 38...a3?.

If you are often let down by fatigue, then it may be that there is something wrong with your physical preparation. The prescription in such cases is clear – you need to take more exercise, spend more time on sport, especially endurance exercises (for example, slow but long-distance running). On tournament days make sure that you maintain a sensible routine allowing you time to rest and accumulate energy before the game. Finally, you can *save energy* during the game by taking short mental breathers while it is your opponent's move. These are all fairly serious questions which require special attention, not just a quick mention.

2. Failure to keep your nerve

It is very important to maintain full concentration throughout the game and be unswervingly attentive to

everything that is happening on the board. However, not everyone's nervous system is equipped to stand up to this extended strain. Often a chess player really concentrates only at the crucial moments of the game, and when he thinks his main problems are behind him, he loses vigilance and starts to be careless. This is usually where mistakes creep in.



W

Mestel – L.Popov
Malta Olympiad 1980

White has a healthy extra pawn, but he now has to resolve a tricky question: which of the positions he can go for leaves the least counterplay for his opponent? The following possibilities instantly come to mind:

a) 25 ♖e1 ♕c5 (or 25...♖d2).

b) 25 ♕xc6 ♖xd1+ 26 ♗xd1 ♕xa2 (stronger than 26...♕xe5).

c) 25 ♖xd8+ ♕xd8 and now:

c1) 26 ♕xc6 ♕d2.

c2) 26 ♕xa7 ♕d2.

In all cases Black keeps counterplay and the outcome of the game remains unclear.

Mestel found an excellent solution:

25 ♖xd8+ ♕xd8
26 ♗c4!!

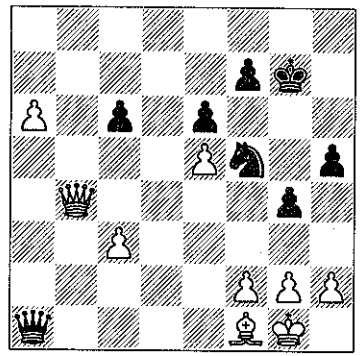
The bishop will provide a solid defence for the king on f1. The queen for the time being remains on b7, from where it defends the b2-pawn. The a7- and c6-pawns are weak, and White will soon create a passed pawn on the queenside.

26 ... ♕d2
27 ♗f1 ♔g7
28 a4! a5
29 ♕b6 h5

Black's last faint hope is to weaken the defences of the white king by advancing his g- and h-pawns. He has no other chance.

30 ♕xa5 ♕xb2
31 ♕b4 ♕a1
32 a5 g5
33 a6 g4 *(D)*

It is clear that Black's position is completely hopeless. However, it is very dangerous, once you believe this, to let down your guard and stop checking variations. For example, if 34 ♕b8 ♕c1 35 a7? (35 ♕b6! is the correct move), then



W

after 35...♘e3! 36 fe ♕xe3+ 37 ♔h1 ♕c1(e1) a draw results. Now 34 ♕b7! is strong, securing the advance of the pawn to queen and keeping the option if necessary of defending the bishop from a6. Another idea deserving attention was 34 g3!, after which Black has not a single sensible move.

34 ♕b6 h4
35 a7??

Here it is – White relaxes a step away from victory. He should not have allowed ...g4-g3. White wins easily after 35 g3!.

35 ... g3!
36 ♕a6 gf+
37 ♔xf2

If 37 ♔h1 ♕c1 38 a8♕, White, paradoxically enough, is actually losing – after 38...♘g3+! 39 hg hg there is no defence against mate by the queen on h6.

37 ... ♕xc3

Again mate is threatened.

38 ♗d3 ♕d2+
39 ♗e2 ♕d4+
40 ♔e1 ♕c3+
41 ♔f2

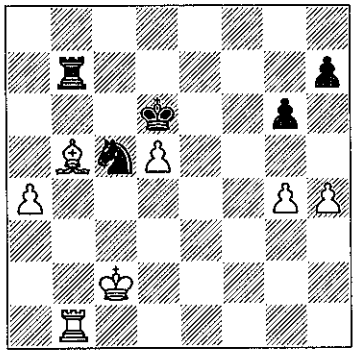
Draw

How can we train the nervous system to withstand extended periods of effort? Here too physical preparation is probably essential (*'mens sana in corpore sano'*); some degree of self-training, even yoga, is probably useful. Also possible is specifically chess-orientated preparation. You can practise playing through specially selected exercises where you have to find a long series of only moves. You can also try to play isolated games or even whole tournaments insisting on maximum concentration for the whole game.

3. Time trouble

Almost every chess player can recall disastrous cases of time-trouble adventures where the fruits of all the preceding hard work are lost. However, I'll still show you yet another example accompanied by an instructive self-assessment given by an ex-World Champion.

Black's position is, of course, absolutely hopeless. On 46...♔xd5 there follows 47 ♖d1+ ♔e6 (or 47...♔e5 48 ♗c6) 48 ♔c3. Tylor tries his last chance in time trouble:



B

Alekhine – Tylor

Nottingham 1936

46 ... ♘xa4

47 ♔d3??

Alekhine has the following to say about this in the tournament book:

'An awful move, and the fact that White was in serious time trouble in my view can just as little serve as a justification as, for example, a criminal's excuse that he was drunk at the moment he committed the crime. The inability of an experienced master to handle his clock should be considered just as great a sin as a blunder.'

White would have won by 47 ♗xa4 ♖xb1 48 ♔xb1 ♔xd5, and now the simplest is 49 ♗e8! ♔e5 50 h5 ♔f4 (50...gh 51 ♗xh5) 51 hg hg 52 ♗d7.

47 ... ♔xd5

48 ♗c4+ ♔d6

49 ♖xb7 ♘c5+

50 ♔e3 ♘xb7

and the players soon agreed to a **draw**.

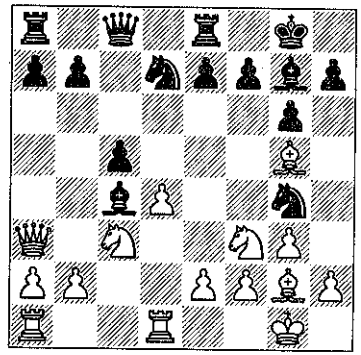
Once again, I won't go into detail about how to fight against time trouble. I'll just mention the two basic methods:

1) 'anti-time trouble games'.

2) writing down clock times with the aim of later analysing the causes of time trouble.

Points are lost not only in your own time trouble but also in your opponent's. This happens because chess players often neglect basic principles in such situations. *If you have the better position, never try to exploit time trouble. Act and play in exactly the same way as usual, without even thinking about your opponent's shortage of time.* Why? By playing quickly and not giving your opponent time to think about his moves, you are in effect forcing yourself into the same time trouble. Your opponent is completely focused and determined in a difficult situation, whereas you on the other hand, lulled by your advantage in time and position, are waiting for the flag to fall and cannot function at full intensity.

Some players consciously fall into time trouble in difficult positions, relying on this psychological effect, and quite often they manage to turn round an unfavourable position.



W

Mark Tseitlin – Makarychev

Krasnoiarsk 1981

Only 14 moves have been made, but Black's position is extremely difficult, and in addition he had already used up almost all his time – he had only 6(!) minutes left for 26 moves.

White must clearly develop a rook on c1 as soon as possible so as to create pressure down the c-file. However, the immediate 15 ♖ac1 is met by 15...h6. It is best to play 15 h3! and, after the knight retreats, 16 ♖ac1. If 15...h6, then 16 ♗f4 e5 17 de ♘gxe5 18 ♖ac1. *Against an opponent in time trouble it is best to take an unhurried approach, just strengthening your position and trying not to give any counterplay.*

15 dc ♘xc5

16 h3

If 16 ♖ac1, then 16...♕f5, and Black has tactical ideas based on the weakness of the f2-square. Therefore Tseitlin first wants to drive away the knight.

16 ... ♘xf2!?

This piece sacrifice is Black's best practical chance.

17 ♔xf2 ♗xc3

18 bc ♘e4+

19 ♔g1?

Here I hand over to Sergei Makarychev:

'Such a cavalier attitude to your own material can only be explained by the opponent's time trouble. After 19 ♔e1 ♘xg3 (the line 19...♕c7 20 ♗f4 e5 21 ♘xe5! ♖xe5 22 ♗xe4 is in White's favour) White would have certain problems consolidating his position, but Black would not have full compensation for the piece. Maybe Tseitlin preferred – at any price – attack to defence, believing that the only significant factor was the difference on the clock faces?!'

19 ... ♗xe2

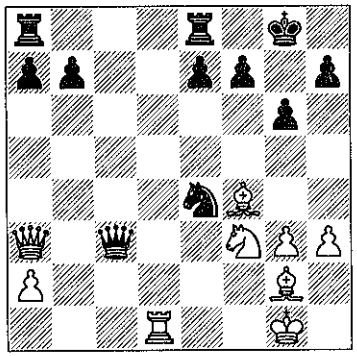
20 ♗f4

If 20 ♖d5, then Black continues 20...e6 21 ♖e5 ♗xf3 22 ♗xf3 ♘xg5 23 ♖xg5 f5, and the white rook is out of play.

20 ... ♗xd1

21 ♖xd1 ♕xc3 *(D)*

21...♕c5+!? 22 ♕xc5 ♘xc5 was probably more reliable, intending ...♖ac8 followed by ...f7-f6 and ...e6-e5 with an excellent endgame for Black.



W

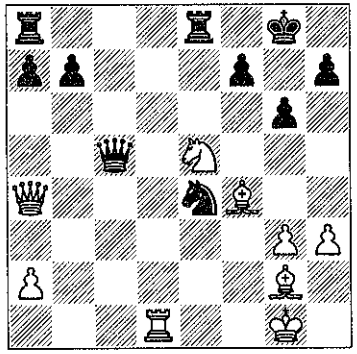
22 ♕a4 e5!?

'On 22...♕c5+ 23 ♔h2 ♘c3 24 ♕c2 a sharp middlegame arises where Black's chances are not worse, but where White has the opportunity to organize an attack on the king, which I thought would be unpleasant in time trouble. The move played forces exchanges, and at the same time the strong position of the knight on e4 is preserved for a time' (Makarychev). As you see, an experienced player can sometimes calculate variations and make a fair assessment of the position even in time trouble.

23 ♘xe5

23 ♗xe5? is bad because of 23...♕e3+!, and after 23 ♕xe4 ef 24 ♕xf4 ♕e3+ 25 ♕xe3 ♖xe3 26 ♖d7 ♖c8 27 ♖xb7 ♖c1+ 28 ♔f2 ♖a3 the game enters an unclear endgame.

23 ... ♕c5+ *(D)*



W

24 ♕d4??

This is symptomatic: in spite of his opponent's time trouble (or, to be precise, because of it) it is White who makes the decisive error. Essential was 24 ♔h2 ♘c3 25 ♕d4 (otherwise 25...♖xe5) 25...♕xd4 26 ♖xd4, when Makarychev gives the following variation: 26...g5! 27 ♗xg5! (27 ♘g4 gf 28 ♘f6+ ♔f8 29 ♘xe8 fg+ 30 ♔xg3? ♘e2+) 27...♖xe5 28 ♗f6 ♖c5 29 ♖d7! and here White has reasonable drawing chances. However, 27 ♗d2! is stronger, when White's position is preferable.

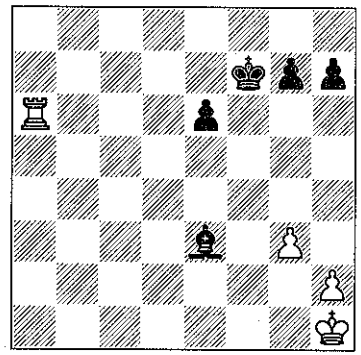
24 ... ♖ad8!
25 ♗e3 ♖xd4
26 ♗xd4 ♕c2

27 ♖a1 ♖xe5!
White resigned

It is interesting that Makarychev spent only three minutes on the moves given here – half of the time he had left at the point where we joined the game.

4. Inadequate knowledge of endgame theory

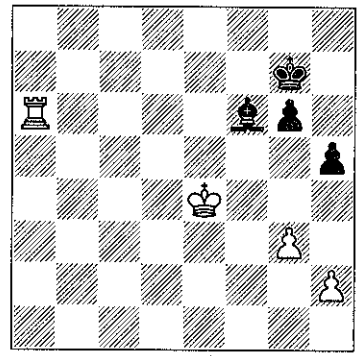
In most cases conversion of an advantage takes place in the endgame. Obviously, if you do not know your way around the theory, then the probability of mistakes sharply increases.



W

Wolff – Browne
USA Ch (Durango) 1992

It is quite possible (although it does not have to happen) that Black will lose the e-pawn, and so it is helpful to know something about endings with two pawns against two on the same flank. The main conclusion is: by putting his pawns on h5 and g6 Black creates an invulnerable fortress – the enemy king cannot get to Black's pawns *(D)*.



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Obviously, White must prevent Black constructing this defensive system by playing g3-g4!. If it is Black to move, then he should play ...h7-h5!.

Unfortunately, neither player knew this position. Wolff-Browne continued:

50 ♔g2? ♗d4?
51 ♔f3? g6??

Now Black loses the e-pawn (which could have been avoided by putting the king on f6), and his h-pawn remains backward.

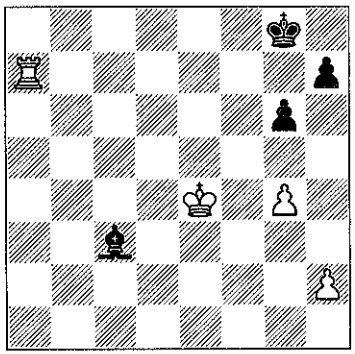
52 ♔e4 ♗f6
53 ♖a7+ ♔g8
54 g4!

At last!

54 ... ♗c3
55 ♖e7 ♗f6
56 ♖xe6 ♔f7
57 ♖a6 ♗c3?

The bishop should have been placed on h4 and ...h7-h6 should have been played. If the white pawn stood on h3, then White really could achieve nothing (I discovered this fortress some time ago when analysing with Boris Gulko one of his adjourned positions). With the pawn on h2 the king can march to h3, with ♔g3 and h2-h4 to follow. However, it is not easy to carry out this plan, and in addition White must reckon with the strong reply ...h7-h5! in response to h2-h4.

58 ♖a7+ ♔g8 *(D)*



W

59 ♖d7?

If Patrick Wolff had known during the game about the system of defence with the bishop on h4, then he would undoubtedly have played 59 h4! followed by 60 h5.

59 ... ♗f6
60 ♔f4 ♗b2?

60...h6!.

61 ♖c7?!

61 h4!.

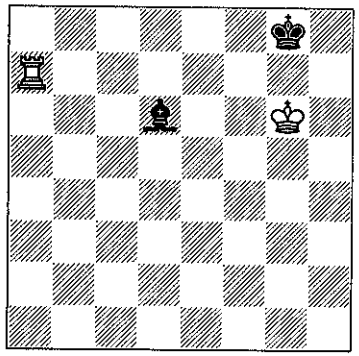
61 ... ♗f6
62 g5 ♗d4
63 h4 ♗b2
64 ♔g4 ♗e5?!

64...♗a3! 65 h5 gh+ 66 ♔xh5 ♗b4 is more stubborn. For many years this kind of position was considered drawn, but recently the problem composer Noam Elkies found a winning plan.

65 ♖c6! ♗b2
66 ♖a6 ♗c3
67 ♖a4! ♗e5
68 h5! ♗c3

No better is 68...gh+ 69 ♔xh5 ♗d6 (the threat was 70 ♖a8+ ♔g7 71 ♖a7+ ♔g8 72 ♔h6) 70 ♖a8+ ♔g7 (70...♗f8 71 g6) 71 ♖a7+ ♔g8 72 g6 hg+ 73 ♔xg6 *(D)*.

Yet another important theoretical position! Black loses if his king is locked away in the corner (with a light-squared bishop, on the other hand, that would be a draw). As is not hard to see, fleeing the dangerous corner does not work due to the unfortunate position of the bishop: 73...♔f8 74 ♔f6 ♔g8 (74...♔e8 75 ♔e6) 75 ♖g7+ ♔h8 (75...♔f8 76 ♖d7) 76 ♔g6 with a win.

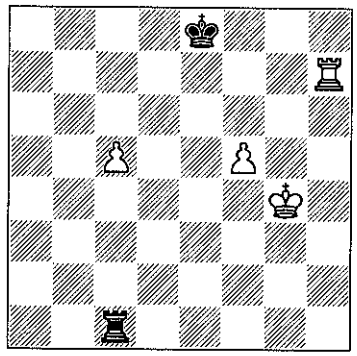


B

69 h6 ♔f7
70 ♖c4 ♗e5
71 ♔f3 ♗d6
72 ♖c8 ♔e6
73 ♖h8! ♔f5
74 ♖xh7 ♔xg5
75 ♖d7
Black resigned

In the second number of the *American Chess Journal* Grandmaster Wolff gave an excellent commentary on this endgame. By studying his analysis you will, for example, discover how White wins if he remains with a pawn on h5 or g5 against the black pawn on h7. All this is very interesting and useful, but still not essential. But the fortress in the last but one diagram absolutely must enter your arsenal of endgame knowledge. Why this fortress in particular? First of all, here it is sufficient to take in the assessment of the position and the basic idea of defence (not allowing the king to get to your pawns) – you do not have to memorize any complicated variations. Secondly, this assessment (draw!) automatically becomes applicable to positions with a white g- or h-pawn against a pawn on g6 (White can advance g3-g4 and take on g4 with a pawn or a piece). But the main thing is that the given position is the most universal and informative one. It very often happens that neither player's pawns have advanced beyond the second or third rank – and then it is clear that Black must strive to play ...h7(h6)-h5!, and White to play g2(g3)-g4!.

One method of converting an advantage is to reach familiar theoretically won endgame positions.



W

Larsen – Torre
Leningrad IZ 1973

The simplest route to victory is to sacrifice the c5-pawn. After 78 ♔g5! ♖xc5 79 ♔g6 with 80 ♖h8+ to follow an elementary theoretical position arises which is completely hopeless for Black, as his king is on the 'long' side.

78 ♖c7?!

Larsen decides to hold on to both pawns, which, of course, is also good enough for victory. Why then should this decision be criticized? The reason is that after 78 ♔g5! the game would effectively have been over – Larsen would have entered theory that he knew well. There would have been no chance of a mistake. However, after the move chosen he continues to play an unfamiliar position and the likelihood of a mistake remains.

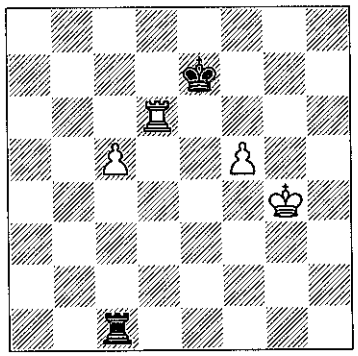
78	**...**	**♔d8**
79	**♖c6**	**♔d7**
80	**♖d6+**	**♔e7** *(D)*
81	**f6+?**	

And here is the decisive mistake, which leads to a draw. White had to play either 81 ♖e6+ ♔f7 82 c6 or 81 ♖d5.

81	**...**	**♔f7**
82	**c6**	**♔g6**
83	**♔f3**	**♖e1!**

This is the point – the king cannot get through to either of its pawns.

84	**♔f4**	**♖e2**



W

85	**♖d5**	**♖c2**
86	**♖d6**	**♖e2**
87	**f7+**	**♔xf7**
88	**♔f5**	**♔e7**
89	**♖d7+**	**♔e8**
90	**♔f6**	**♖e1**
91	**♖d5**	**♖c1**
92	**♖d6**	**♖f1+**
93	**♔e6**	**♖e1+**
94	**♔d5**	**♖d1+**
95	**♔c5**	**♖xd6**
96	**♔xd6**	**♔d8**

Draw

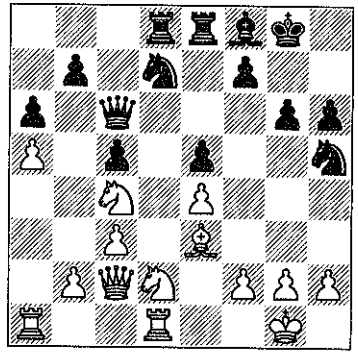
5. Poor technique for converting an advantage

We shall examine this problem in a little more detail. Grandmaster Igor Zaitsev once pronounced the profoundly true thought, 'Technique is the art of the past'. If that is the case, then a reliable method of improving technique is to study classic examples, and especially examples from the games of top players renowned for their mastery in that particular area. That means people such as Rubinstein, Capablanca, Alekhine, Petrosian, Andersson, etc. By analysing their games, by thinking about why they so simply and effortlessly exploit even what seems a very slight advantage, you gradually begin to pick up their approach to these positions, the principles that they consciously or unconsciously follow to convert their advantages, and the techniques they use. We shall now examine the most general of these principles and techniques.

Minimizing the opponent's counter-chances

It is very important for every chess player to master 'prophylactic thought' – the ability to ask yourself constantly: 'What does my opponent want to do; what would he do if it were his move now?'. Prophylactic thinking becomes especially important when you are converting an advantage. Here the principle of reducing your opponent's possibilities to a minimum, of not allowing him to generate the slightest counterplay or carry out any useful operations to improve his position, becomes almost fundamental.

I will show you two examples from my own games.



W

Dvoretsky – Butnoris
Kiev 1976

White stands better, of course. His opponent has a bad dark-squared bishop and as a consequence weaknesses on the dark squares. How am I to improve my position? The obvious plan is to transfer the knight from d2 to d5: f2-f3, ♗e3-f2, ♘d2-f1-e3. It looks as if I could start with either 22 f3 or 22 ♘f1. 22 g3 is also sensible, taking away the square f4 from the black knight. So which of the three moves is the most precise?

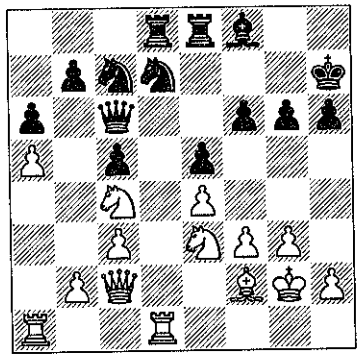
You must look carefully to see what active resources your opponent has, and what he may be intending to do. The move 22...♘f4 shouldn't worry us too much – after 23 g3 ♘e6 the knight threatens

nothing from e6 and does not control the d5-square which White is aiming for. The attempt to organize counterplay on the kingside by means of 22...♕e6! followed by 23...f5 looks more serious. For example, 22 ♘f1 ♕e6 (with tempo!) and 23...f5. Or 22 g3 ♕e6 23 ♕b3 f5!, and there is no time for 24 ♕xb7? in view of 24...f4. However, after 22 f3 ♕e6 23 ♕b3 the capture on b7 is already a serious threat and Black is forced to move across either his rook or his queen to defend the pawn. So this is the order of moves which enables White to face his opponent's counterplay fully armed.

22	**f3!**	**♘f4**
23	**g3**	**♘e6**
24	**♘f1**	**f6?!**
25	**♔g2!**	

Another accurate move. 25 ♗f2? is premature in view of 25...♘g5 followed by ...♕e6.

25	**...**	**♔h7**
26	**♗f2**	**♘c7**
27	**♘fe3** *(D)*	



B

White has carried out the plan he intended and has increased his advantage. When we analyse games, we tend not to focus on modest moves like 22 f3! and 25 ♔g2!, but yet these were the moves that made sure events developed in the calm manner White wanted, without his opponent having the slightest chance to become active and complicate the game. Few people enjoy passive defence without counterchances, and in such situations the likelihood increases of further blunders or imprecise moves, all of which make it easier for the stronger side to realize his advantage.

27	**...**	**♘b8**
28	**♘b6**	**♕e6**
29	**♕a4!**	**♘b5**
30	**♖d5**	**♖xd5**
31	**♘exd5**	

The threat is 32 c4 ♘d4 33 ♘xf6+ (or 33 ♕xe8).

31	**...**	**♖d8**
32	**♕c4**	**♕c6?**

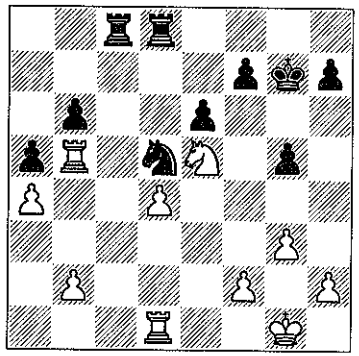
32...♕d6 is more resilient. Now White lands the decisive blow.

33	**♘e7!**	**♗xe7**
34	**♕f7+**	**♔h8**
35	**♕xe7**	**♕d6**
36	**♕f7**	**g5**
37	**♗xc5!**	**♕d2+**
38	**♔h3**	**♘d7**
39	**♗e7**	**♖g8**
40	**♘d5!**	**♖g7**

Or 40...g4+ 41 fg ♕g5 42 ♘xf6.

41	**♕e8+**	

Black resigned



B

Zakharov – Dvoretsky
Ordzhonikidze 1978

Black has an undoubted positional advantage. When I ask what Black should play in this position, people usually suggest either 29...♖c2 or 29...f6 and 30...♖c4. And why not? – White doesn't seem to have any counterplay.

However, try to think seriously about what you would play as White if you were to move. Then you will find an idea which offers reasonable chances of a successful defence – the manoeuvre ♘e5-g4-e3 with the aim of exchanging the powerful knight on d5. This knight rules over the position, cements the queenside and makes the b5-rook passive and out of play. Clearly, if the knights are exchanged, the rook is transformed instantly – it attacks the pawns on b6 and g5.

The best move becomes clear:

29	**...**	**h5!**

Black keeps all the benefits of his position and prevents his opponent's one promising idea.

This is how the game ended:

30	**♖d2**	**f6**
31	**♘f3**	**♖c4**
32	**b3**	**♖c6**

The white rook has fallen into a trap.

33	**h4**	**g4**
34	**♘e1**	**♘c7**
35	**♖xh5**	**♔g6**

White resigned

'Do not rush!'

The mind of a chess player who is trying to convert an advantage should not at all be focused on trying to win as quickly as possible. No-one has yet offered prizes for the minimum number of moves. *Your attitude to the game must be as reliable as possible; you must use all the resources of your position, while limiting totally your opponent's active possibilities.* It doesn't matter if you have to make a dozen extra moves, as long as

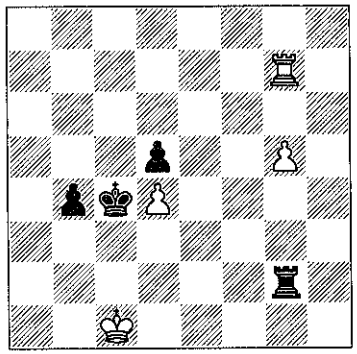
these moves make your task easier and bring you closer to victory. If in a sharp middlegame you may be tempted by the image of a tiger throwing itself on its prey and tearing it apart, in the endgame you should try to imitate a python, slowly strangling the life out of its victim.

The rule 'do not rush!' was first formulated (although still not adequately explored) in study materials on the endgame prepared by Master Belavenets. In fact, this brief formula contains within it various aspects of endgame technique; we shall examine some of them from the following examples.

'Do not rush!' by no means gives you a licence to squander tempi. On the contrary, every opportunity to win a tempo must be taken into account and exploited.

"You need to have considerable presence of mind not to seize your prey immediately, but to do so only after several strong preparatory moves. Anticipating victory, you often find it difficult to make an objective assessment of the position.

"I believe it was due to this factor that I dropped half a point in one of my most important games – the most annoying such incident in my career. It was at the end of the San Sebastian tournament of 1912, when I had excellent chances of taking the first prize. All I had to do was beat Leonhardt ..." (Spielmann).



B

Leonhardt – Spielmann

San Sebastian 1912

There followed:

1 ... ♔xd4?

2 g6

It now became apparent that Black had fallen into zugzwang. (I should note that this particular zugzwang is mutual – any move by White would worsen his position and lead to defeat.)

2 ... ♔d3

3 ♖d7 d4

4 g7

Having advanced his pawn to the seventh rank, White easily parries all his opponent's attempts. For example: 4...♔c3 5 ♖c7+ ♔b3 6 ♖d7 or 4...♖g1+ 5 ♔b2 ♔e3 6 ♖e7+ ♔d2 7 ♖d7 d3 8 ♖e7 ♔d1 9 ♖d7 d2 10 ♖e7 followed by ♔b1-b2-b1.

4 ... ♖g6

5 ♔b2 ♖g1

6 ♔b3

Draw

Of course, Black had to play:

1 ... ♔c3!

2 ♖c7+

On 2 ♔d1, the simplest win is 2...b3, although 2...♔xd4 is also possible.

2 ... ♔xd4

Now Black picks up a pawn with tempo due to the attack on g5.

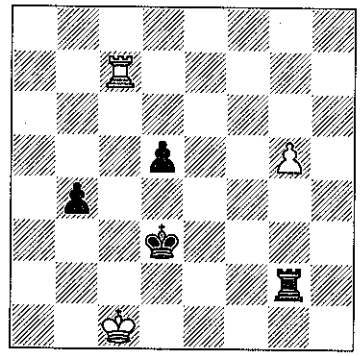
3 ♖g7

Forced since 3 ♖b7 ♖xg5 4 ♖xb4+ ♔c3 is bad.

Now Black wins yet another tempo:

3 ... ♔c3!

4 ♖c7+ ♔d3 *(D)*



W

5 ♖g7

Look at this position. White has still not done anything useful, while Black has captured a pawn, put his king on d3, and he now wins easily:

5 ... d4

6 g6 ♖c2+!

7 ♔b1

7 ♔d1 ♖c6 8 ♖g8 ♔c3 9 g7 ♖c7.

7 ... ♖c6

8 ♖b7

Or 8 ♖g8 ♔c3 9 g7 ♖c7.

8 ... ♖xg6

9 ♖xb4 ♔c3

10 ♖b8 ♖g1+

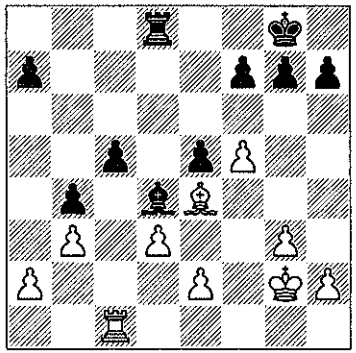
11 ♔a2 d3

If your opponent has no counterplay, then before changing the pattern of the game and starting decisive action, you should make all the even slightly useful moves that you can.

See diagram on following page.

28 ♖c4!

White plans ♔f3 and e2-e3. It is very important that the c5-pawn should come under attack after the bishop moves away. The pawn will have to be defended by the rook, and then the white bishop will take up an active position on d5, the king will gain the excellent square e4, and the rook can be transferred



W

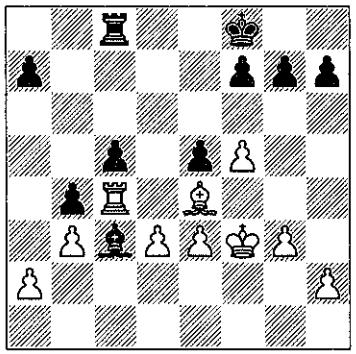
Réti – Romanovsky

Moscow 1925

to the kingside along the fourth rank.

28	**...**	**♔f8**
29	**♔f3**	**♖c8**
30	**e3**	**♗c3** *(D)*

It was better to play ...♗b2.



W

31 a4!

Excellent technique! This move does not form an essential part of White's plan, but it is useful in itself – clearly the pawn stands better on a4 than on a2. Now Black will not obtain any counterplay by transferring his rook to a6, and if White somehow manages to get to the a7-pawn he will have a passed a-pawn. We do not know whether any of the points mentioned will prove significant, but that is not important. You should take any opportunity to improve your position even slightly.

31	**...**	**♔e7**
32	**♗d5**	**♖c7**
33	**♖h4!**	

The black king is ready to go to d6, defending the c5-pawn, so there is no longer any point in keeping the rook on c4. It is transferred to the kingside to support a pawn offensive in this part of the board.

33	**...**	**h6**
34	**♔e4**	**♔f6**
35	**♖h5**	

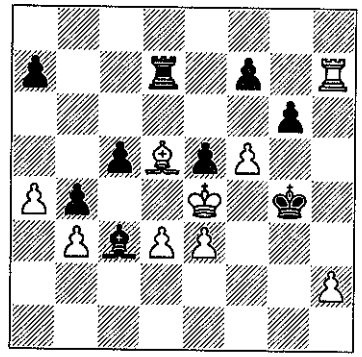
Black now has to do something, as the threat is g3-g4, h2-h4 and g4-g5+. He should probably have played 35...g6! 36 fg (36 ♖xh6? ♔g5) 36...♔xg6 37 ♖f5 a5 (preventing a4-a5-a6 followed by ♖f5-f2-a2-a5-b5). White could develop an initiative by h2-h4-h5+ and ♖f5-f1-h1-h4-g4, but the outcome of the game would have remained unclear.

Romanovsky tried to find a tactical solution to the problem, but the combination he prepared met an effective refutation.

35	**...**	**♖d7?!**
36	**g4**	

Not, of course, 36 h4? g6, and the white rook is trapped.

36	**...**	**g6**
37	**♖xh6!**	**♔g5**
38	**♖h7**	**♔xg4** *(D)*



W

Now it is clear what Romanovsky's idea was. If 39 fg?? f5 or 39 ♗e6 fe 40 ♖xd7?? gf White is unexpectedly mated. On 39 f6 Black intended 39...♔g5. However, after 40 ♗xf7! ♔xf6 41 ♗xg6 ♖xh7 42 ♗xh7 he probably would not be able to save himself in the opposite-coloured bishops ending. White will attack and win the a7-pawn (perhaps transferring his bishop to c4 in preparation), after which one of the passed a- and h-pawns should prove decisive. But with the pawn on a2 this endgame would almost certainly be drawn.

Réti found a more convincing and aesthetic solution.

39	**♗e6!**	**fe**

Or 39...♖e7 40 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 41 fg+.

40	**fg!**	**♖d8**
41	**♖xa7**	**♔g5**
42	**g7**	**♔h6**
43	**a5**	

The passed a-pawn makes a decisive entry. Now we can see the true value of the move 31 a4!. If the pawn were still on a2, White would not be able to win.

43	**...**	**♔h7**
44	**a6**	**♖d6**

The threat was 45 ♖b7 and 46 a7.

45 h4

White brings his last reserves into battle.

45	**...**	**♗e1**
46	**h5**	**♗h4**
47	**h6**	

Black resigned

In cases where your advantage is insufficient for a straightforward win, it is worth manoeuvring a little, without changing the basic pattern of the position, in order to confront your opponent with varied, even if not especially difficult,

problems. Only when he can no longer endure this extended pressure, overlooks something and makes an error is it time to start decisive action.

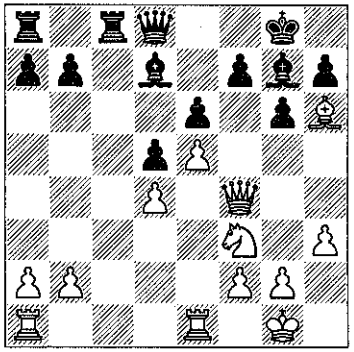
This tactic of testing out your opponent's endurance is sometimes worthwhile even in positions where you have a large advantage. By provoking him into an error you can make it much easier for yourself to convert the advantage.

As Mikhail Botvinnik remembers:

"In Moscow in 1936 during the 3rd International Tournament I witnessed the resumption of the game Capablanca-Ragozin. The ex-World Champion had an extra pawn and what looked like a won position. However, I was surprised to see that Capablanca did not initiate any active manoeuvres and instead adopted a waiting game. In the end, his opponent made an imprecise move, the Cuban won a second pawn and soon the game.

'Why didn't you try to convert your material advantage straight away?' I ventured to ask the great chess virtuoso. He smiled indulgently: 'It was more practical to wait'."

In the following position, there is no doubt that White has a tangible positional advantage. He finds a convincing plan to exploit it by means of threats on the kingside dark squares.



W

Dvoretsky – Cooper
Philadelphia 1990

18 ♗xg7

18 ♗g5 is also quite good, but 18 ♘h2? would have been a definite mistake in view of the strong reply 18...f5!.

18 ... ♔xg7
19 ♘h2 h5

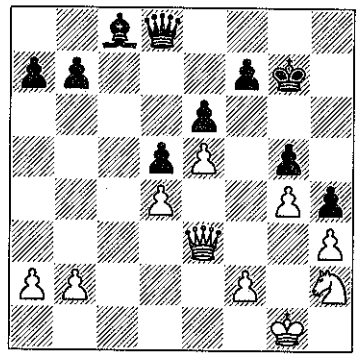
Counterplay along the c-file also had to be considered. In reply to 19...♖c2 White has the strong sequence 20 ♘g4 ♕h4 21 ♖ac1! ♖ac8 22 ♖xc2 ♖xc2 23 g3 (23 ♖c1 ♖xc1+ 24 ♕xc1 is also quite good; the white queen infiltrates into the enemy camp along the c-file) 23...♕xh3 24 ♕f6+ ♔g8 25 ♕d8+ ♔g7 26 ♘f6.

20 ♖ac1 ♖xc1
21 ♖xc1 ♖c8

22 ♖xc8 ♗xc8
23 g4!

This is the whole point! 23...hg 24 ♘xg4 is really bad for Black, and 24...♕h4 can simply be met by 25 ♕f6+ (of course, White does not have to give this check immediately) 25...♕xf6 26 ef+. Black does not want to allow a pawn exchange on h5, and 23...♕h4 is met simply by 24 ♔g2 and 25 ♘f3.

23 ... g5
24 ♕e3 h4 *(D)*



W

After 25 f4!? the h4-pawn is of course doomed, but this would expose the white king a little, which could give Black some counterchances.

I preferred not to change the pattern of the position for the time being and tried to achieve success through positional manoeuvring, by tying the black pieces to the defence of the weak g5-pawn. Besides, the move f2-f4 always remains as an option.

25 ♘f3 ♔g6
26 ♕d3+ ♔h6

Here I noticed that I could win a pawn by 27 ♕d2 (with the threat of 28 ♘xh4) 27...♔g6 28 ♕c2+ ♔h6 29 ♕c1 ♔g6 30 ♘xg5 ♕xg5 31 ♕xc8. The queen endgame is certainly won, but again I did not want to force events and tried to extract the maximum benefit from the cramped arrangement of my opponent's forces.

27 ♕a3 a5
28 ♕c5 ♔g6
29 ♔g2

A useful prophylactic move which in some variations avoids a queen check on c1.

29 ... b6
30 ♕c2+

30 ♕d6? is no good in view of 30...♕xd6 31 ed f6!. And if Black sends his bishop out to a6, then White can win quickly by putting his queen on d6. It is worth checking whether your opponent will make a mistake.

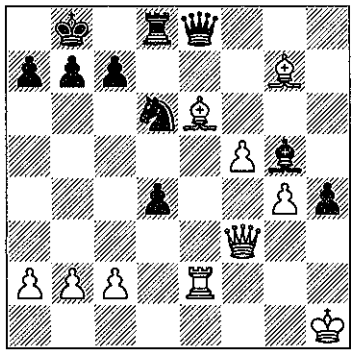
30 ... ♔h6
31 ♕c6 ♗a6?

A mistake! The correct move, of course, was 31...♔g6. In that case I would probably have settled for winning a pawn by 32 ♕c2+ ♔h6 33 ♕c1 ♔g6 34 ♘xg5 ♕xg5 35 ♕xc8, although I would certainly

have made sure first whether I had extracted the maximum from the type of position currently on the board.

32 ♕d6! ♕c8
33 ♕e7 ♕g8
34 ♕f6+
Black resigned

It was much easier (not quicker, but easier) for White to win because he did not rush to force events.



W
Dvoretsky – Baikov
Moscow Ch 1972

White has a decisive advantage, but which of the two plausible moves, 38 ♗xd4 and 38 f6, is his best?

If you have a choice between favourable positions with different material balances, if all else is equal, choose the position where the material balance is most familiar and standard. This is where you will have more experience, and so you are less likely to make a mistake in your assessment of the position or in the subsequent play.

In the event of 38 f6?! ♗e3 39 f7 ♕xe6 40 f8♕ ♖xf8 Black gains a pawn for the exchange and can still hope to confuse the issue. The simple capture on d4 is much more sensible. The game should then come to a rapid conclusion.

38 ♗xd4 ♕a4
39 ♗e5 ♘c4

Now the simple move 40 ♕e4 forces an absolutely won endgame – all Black can do is resign. I saw this, of course, but started to look for something even better.

Noticing that 40 b3 is refuted by 40...♘xe5, for some reason I completely forgot about the same move as a reply to 40 ♖e4 and analysed only 40...♕xc2. After discovering the blow 41 ♗xc7+! and calculating the consequences, I played the fatal move.

40 ♖e4?? ♘xe5
41 ♖xe5 ♕xc2
42 ♖d5 ♕c1+
43 ♔h2 ♕xb2+
44 ♔h3 ♖xd5
45 ♗xd5 c6

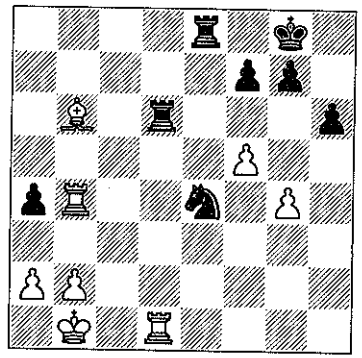
Here the game was adjourned. The situation has turned around completely – White's position is now entirely hopeless, due not only to Black's extra pawn but also to the dangerous position of the white king. Admittedly, I managed to confuse matters on resumption and save the game.

I assessed my gross blunder on the 40th move as simply an inexplicable brainstorm, but when I showed the game to ex-World Champion Tigran Petrosian, he was of a very different opinion.

'Explain to me why you decided not to go in for the endgame. You were in no doubt that it was easily won. And if you see a simple solution, why bother calculating other variations; why go looking for some sharp sequence?'

An obvious moral emerges from this sad story: *always choose the simplest means of converting your advantage where the chances of you making a mistake are minimal. Avoid unnecessary complications, and never play for aesthetic effect.*

You should always consider any 'trifles' which might help you to convert your advantage. If, for example, you don't have much time left before the time control, take every opportunity to repeat moves. And when you have reached the time control, always adjourn the game if you have a won position. If you don't do this, you might make a mistake because of fatigue and ruin the position.



W
Karpov – Korchnoi
Baguio City Wch (22) 1978

White's position is totally won. Karpov should have sealed his next move, in which case his opponent would almost certainly have resigned without resumption. However, for some reason the World Champion made some more moves at the board and in the end let slip all his advantage.

41 ♖xd6 ♘xd6
42 ♗c7?!

White rejects the obvious 42 ♖xa4 because of the reply 42...h5, which, however, does not change the assessment of the position. In theory the desire to find the most precise way of exploiting your advantage is commendable, but you have to check through the variations

accurately, which Karpov failed to do. As it so happens, Mikhail Tal made an analogous error in his annotations when he recommended 42 ♖d4 ♘c8 43 ♗c5. Instead of 42...♘c8? Black plays 42...♖e1+ 43 ♔c2 ♖e2+ 44 ♔c1 (44 ♔d3 ♖xb2 45 ♖xd6 ♖xa2) 44...a3! 45 ♖xd6 ♖xb2, making White's win doubtful. So the straightforward capture of the a4-pawn is the most reliable path to victory.

42 ... ♖e1+
43 ♔c2 ♘e8

Karpov simply overlooked this simple reply. Now, to avoid further errors, it was absolutely essential to ask the arbiter for the envelope and seal a move. However, the World Champion carried on in the same way.

44 ♗a5 a3
45 ♖b8 ♖e7

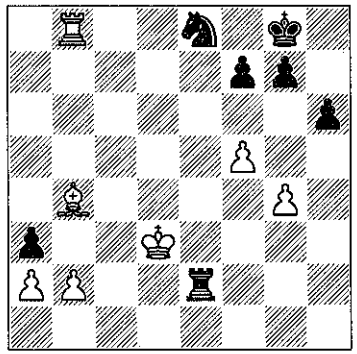
Of course, 45...♖e2+ 46 ♔d3 ♖xb2 is insufficient in view of 47 ♖xe8+ ♔h7 48 ♖e2.

46 ♗b4??

Karpov decides out of inertia that the check on e2 is still harmless. Of course, 46 ba (or 46 b4) wins easily.

46 ... ♖e2+
47 ♔d3? *(D)*

Inertia again. 47 ♗d2! ab 48 a4 was essential, still keeping excellent winning chances. It is hard to understand what exactly it was that Karpov missed, as now both captures on b2 enable Black to save the game. Sensing this, Korchnoi decided to adjourn the game just here, so that his opponent wouldn't know which option he had taken.



B

47 ... ab

In the variation 47...♖xb2 48 ♖xe8+ ♔h7 49 ♗xa3 (49 ♗c3 ♖xa2 50 ♖f8 f6 or 50 ♖e7 ♔g8) 49...♖xa2 Black then plays ...f7-f6, ...h6-h5, obtaining a drawn position – too few pawns remain on the board.

48 ♗d2

If 48 ♗c3, then 48...b1♕+! 49 ♖xb1 ♖xa2 50 ♖b8 ♖g2 51 ♖xe8+ ♔h7, and we reach approximately the same drawn position as in the variation 47...♖xb2. There might then follow 48 ♖e4 h5 49 gh ♖h2 50 ♖g4 f6 51 ♔e4 ♖xh5, and to avoid ...g7-g6 the white rook will have to guard the g-file.

48 ... ♖e7
49 a4 ♖d7+
50 ♔c2 ♔h7
51 ♖xb2 h5!
52 gh ♘d6
53 ♖a2 ♘xf5
54 a5 ♘d4+
55 ♔c3

55 ♔b1 is met by 55...♘b3, then giving up the knight for the a-pawn.

55 ... ♘c6
56 a6 ♖d5
57 ♗f4 ♖f5

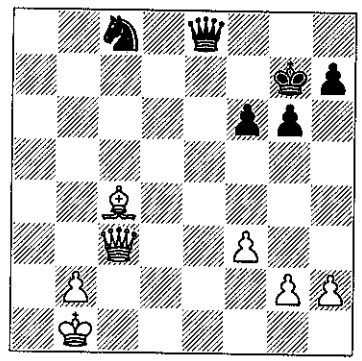
Not 57...♖xh5? 58 ♖h2!.

58 ♗d6 ♖d5
59 ♗g3 ♖g5
60 ♗f2 ♖xh5
61 ♔c4 ♘a5+
62 ♔c3 ♘c6
63 ♖a4 ♔g8
64 ♔c4 ♘a5+

Draw

The principle of two weaknesses

In essence, this principle is one consequence of the more general law we have just been discussing – 'do not rush!'. *If your opponent is condemned to passivity, don't try to achieve victory on one point of the board – there may be adequate resources to defend it. Take a broader view, exploit weaknesses (and if possible create new ones) in different areas of the board – that will make it much harder for your opponent to defend.*



W

Alekhine – Sämisch
Baden-Baden 1925

How should White convert his extra pawn? Should he try to queen it? In this case it will be blockaded on b6, and at the same time the white king will become exposed and there will be the risk of perpetual check. I should remind you that queen and knight can be fairly dangerous in tandem if they come near the enemy king. Only if the queens are exchanged can the white king move up confidently to support its pawn.

34 ♕d4!

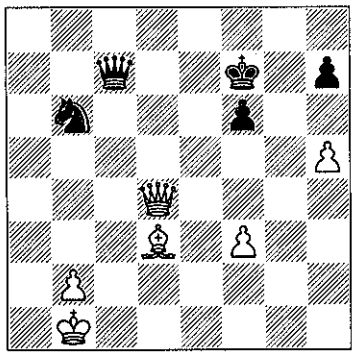
'With this and the next move White marks out the correct winning plan, which involves advancing the kingside pawns. The passed

b-pawn should only be advanced later, when the danger of perpetual check disappears after the exchange of queens.' This concrete and incisive assessment of the position is characteristic of Alekhine – in his commentaries there are many such instructive points.

34 ... ♕e7
35 ♗d3!

'Perhaps the most difficult move of the game – it prepares an attack on h7. Black is now powerless to do anything.' (Alekhine).

35 ... ♕c7
36 g4! ♔f7
37 h4 ♘b6
38 h5 gh
39 gh *(D)*



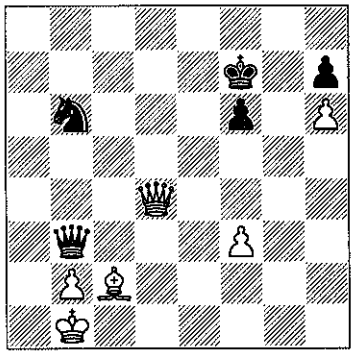
B

White has managed to create a second black weakness on the kingside, and a very serious one (to recap: the first 'weakness' is the passed pawn – the possibility of its advance is a constant threat). If now 39...♔g7, then 40 h6+!.

39 ... ♕c6
40 ♗e4!

Of course not 40 ♗xh7? ♕xf3 41 ♕xb6? ♕d1+ with perpetual check. If he wanted, White could now exchange queens and after 40 ♕e4 ♕xe4 41 ♗xe4 h6 42 ♔c2 gradually win the minor-piece endgame. However, the move in the game is much stronger as it allows White to fix the weakness on h7.

40 ... ♕b5
41 h6 ♕b3
42 ♗c2! *(D)*



B

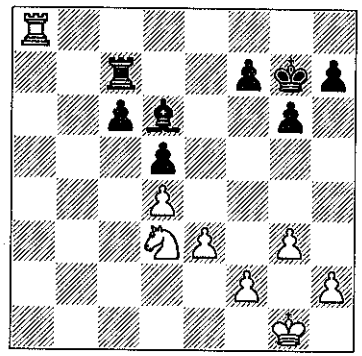
'After the h7-pawn is blockaded, the most important thing is to achieve the exchange of queens' (Alekhine).

42 ... ♕b5

Or 42...♕e6 43 ♕e4.

43 ♕d3 ♕xd3
44 ♗xd3 ♘c8

45 ♗xh7
Black resigned



B

Kotov – Pachman
Venice 1950

White has a positional advantage due to his better pawn structure and the weakness of Black's c6-pawn. However, these factors alone are not enough for a win.

42 ... ♔f6?
43 g4!

A typical move. White fixes a second weakness in the enemy camp – the h7-pawn. For this reason Black should have played 42...h5!. Note that 42...f5? is much weaker after 43 h3 followed by g3-g4, and if Black replies 43...h5, then after 44 h4 he still acquires a second weakness – this time on g6.

43 ... ♔e6

Or 43...♔g5 44 h3 h5 45 f4+ ♔h4 46 ♔g2.

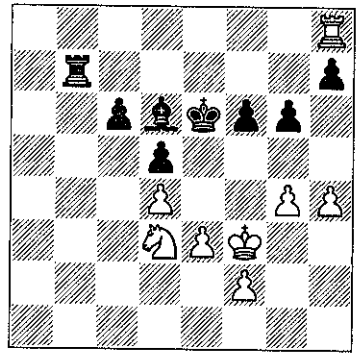
44 ♔g2

In the endgame you should never forget about improving the position of your king.

44 ... ♖b7
45 ♖e8+

Before attacking the h-pawn it is useful to lure the black rook away to a more passive position.

45 ... ♖e7
46 ♖h8 f6
47 h4 ♖b7
48 ♔f3 *(D)*



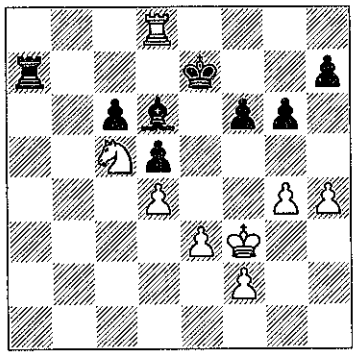
B

48 ... ♖f7
49 ♖e8+ ♖e7
50 ♖d8!

White wants to put his knight on c5. It is important that after the exchange of minor pieces the black rook should remain tied to the defence of the c6-pawn. *A passive rook is a very serious liability in a rook ending.*

50 ... ♖a7

51 ♘c5+ ♔e7 *(D)*



W

52 ♖c8!

Good technique. 52 ♖h8 is bad in view of 52...♗xc5 53 dc ♖a5! 54 ♖xh7+ ♔f8. Now the c6-pawn is under attack and Black has no time to activate his rook. 52...♖c7 can be met by 53 ♖h8. Can you see how awkward it is to defend two weaknesses – c6 and h7 – at the same time, and how much easier it would be just to defend the weak c6-pawn?

52 ... ♗xc5
53 dc ♔d7
54 ♖h8 ♔e6

54...♖a5 55 ♖xh7+ ♔e6 (the king cannot retreat to f8) 56 ♖g7 is no longer good. 'Trifles' of this kind play a very important part in converting an advantage.

55 ♖d8 ♔e7?!

Speelman gives 55...♖c7 as a better defence.

56 ♖d6 ♖a6
57 g5!

White clears the way into the enemy camp for his king.

The game continued: **57...fg 58 hg ♔f7 59 ♔g3** (not immediately 59 ♔f4 ♖a4+ 60 ♔e5?? ♖e4 mate) **59...♔e7 60 f3 ♖a3 61 ♔f4 ♖a4+ 62 ♔e5 ♖a3 63 ♖xc6 ♖xe3+ 64 ♔xd5 ♖d3+** (64...♖xf3 65 ♖c7+ and 66 ♖xh7 wins for White) **65 ♔e4 ♖c3 66 f4 ♖c1**

67 ♖c7 ♔d8?

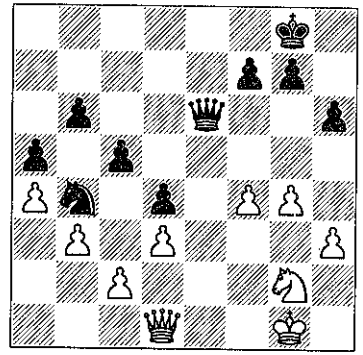
The fatal error. Speelman points out that Black could still have drawn by 67...♔e6 68 ♖xh7 ♖c4+ 69 ♔f3 ♖xc5 70 ♖g7 ♖c6!, setting up a stalemate defence. Spotting such ideas after a long and arduous defence is never easy.

68 ♖xh7 ♖xc5
69 ♖f7
Black resigned

Here I hand over to Viktor Korchnoi:

(see diagram on following page)

'In spite of isolated imprecise moves, I consider my play in the middle of this game to be my best achievement in the match. Nevertheless, I was unable to round off my subtle strategy – at the decisive moment I did not have the know-how. What was Black's task? I will permit myself to quote Bondarevsky: "The weakness on c2 restricts



B

Spassky – Korchnoi
Kiev Ct (5) 1968

White's forces, but he can still defend one weakness. Korchnoi's task was to generate play on the kingside so as to create a second weakness in his opponent's camp."

'I could see that moving the h-pawn looked too routine to be best, but I rejected the continuation 29...g5 because of the concrete variation 30 ♕d2 f6 31 ♕e1!, and White neutralizes his opponent's advantage. But the best move – 29...f5 (as given by Flohr) – I overlooked! The point of this move is not only that after the exchange on g4 the f- and g-pawns become even weaker; also significant is the fact that after the exchange of queens Black could, by playing ...g7-g6 and ...h6-h5, create a distant passed pawn.'

29 ... h5?

30 ♔h2 hg
31 hg g6?!
32 g5!

'Now a draw becomes the most likely outcome: the pawn position is dead both on the kingside and the queenside.' (Korchnoi). The game ended in a draw on the 51st move.

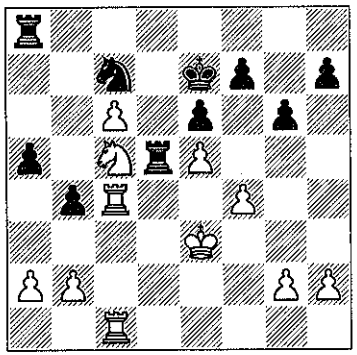
Exchanges

Grandmaster Kotov long remembered the advice given to him and Smyslov by the experienced master Makogonov at the international tournament in Venice in 1950.

'Don't complicate the game – why bother? Exchange queens, leave on the board a rook and two or three minor pieces each. Then you'll win easily. Which piece should you retain, which should you exchange off? Not too many modern chess players can make a correct decision here. They understand tactics, but you are superior to them in this area.'

When you are trying to convert an advantage, you constantly have to think about how appropriate it is to exchange one piece or another. The following rule is one of the most general indicators.

If there is a material advantage, the stronger side should aim to exchange pieces, while the weaker side should try to exchange pawns.



W

Vidmar – Thomas
Nottingham 1936

White has a decisive advantage. He should now move his knight off c5 and then play ♖c5, aiming to exchange the active black rook. One possibility is 32 ♘e4 ♖ad8 33 ♖c5 (the prophylactic move 33 g3!? is also strong) 33...♖d3+ 34 ♔e2 ♖3d4 35 ♖1c4. Even simpler, clearly, is 32 ♘d7 (with the threat of 33 ♘b6) and 33 ♖c5.

Vidmar attempted to carry out the same idea, but did so very inaccurately, overlooking counterplay connected with the exchange of pawns.

32 ♘b7? g5!
33 g3 gf+
34 gf ♖g8

The first unpleasant upshot of White's mistake – the passive rook on a8 enters the game.

35 ♖4c2 f6!

Another pawn exchange, and this time the strong white e5-pawn disappears.

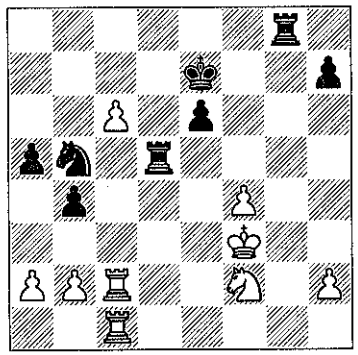
36 ef+ ♔xf6

Alekhine wrote: 'It goes without saying that these exchanges have significantly increased Black's chances of a draw.'

37 ♘c5 ♖g4
38 ♘e4+ ♔e7
39 ♘f2 ♖g8!
40 ♔f3

If 40 ♘d3, then 40...♖f5!, preventing the move 41 ♘e5.

40 ... ♘b5 *(D)*



W

41 ♖c5 ♖c8

After the exchange of the e5-pawn the passed pawn on c6 is significantly weakened, as Black can attack it by playing his king to the d6-square.

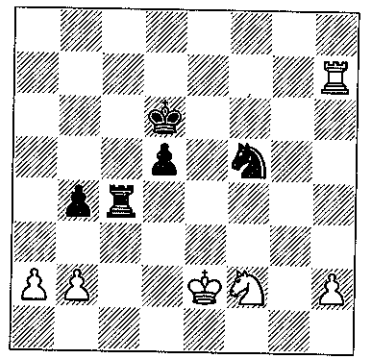
42 ♖xd5 ed
43 ♖c5 ♘d4+
44 ♔e3 ♘f5+!

Much worse is 44...♘xc6? 45 ♖xd5 with a significant advantage to White.

45 ♔d3 ♔d6
46 ♖xa5 ♖xc6
47 ♖a7 ♖c4
48 ♖xh7 ♖xf4

Black has managed to exchange another two pairs of pawns, and all his remaining pieces and pawns are excellently placed. A draw is now the most probable outcome.

49 ♔e2 ♖c4
50 ♔d2 ♖d4+
51 ♔e2 ♖c4 *(D)*



W

52 ♔d1 d4

Simpler was 52...♖d4+ 53 ♔c2 ♖c4+, given that 54 ♔b3? ♘d4+ 55 ♔a4 b3+ 56 ♔a3 ♖a4+! 57 ♔xa4 ba is no good.

53 ♔d2 b3!

Thomas forces the exchange of yet another pair of pawns.

54 ab ♖b4
55 ♘d3 ♖xb3
56 ♖d7+?!

Stronger is 56 h4, but even then Black could defend himself successfully by activating his rook: 56...♖b8 followed by ...♖g8.

56 ... ♔xd7
57 ♘c5+ ♔d6
58 ♘xb3 ♘e3!

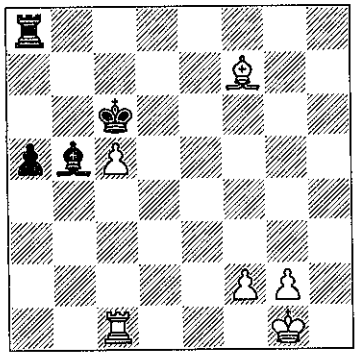
There are too few pawns left on the board for White to expect victory in the knight ending.

59 h4 ♘c4+
60 ♔c2 ♔e5
61 ♘xd4 ♔xd4
62 b4 ♔e4
63 ♔c3 ♘b6
64 b5 ♔f5
65 ♔d4 ♔g4
66 ♔c5 ♘a4+
Draw

You should however remember that the rule just formulated is too general to be trusted unconditionally – there are no such universal laws in chess. It is just a guideline; the particular features of a position often require a quite different approach.

In the following diagram, the passed a-pawn promises Black some counter-chances, but White's material advantage should still be enough for victory. Not, however, by the plan chosen by Ehlvest.

36 ♗g6? ♔c7!



W

Ehlvest – Andrianov
Tallinn 1981

37	**♗e4**	**♗c6**
38	**♗xc6**	**♔xc6**

The exchange of bishops is unsuccessful, as the white rook is forced to take up a passive position in front of the opponent's pawn.

39	**♔f1**	**a4**
40	**♔e2**	**a3**
41	**♔d3**	**a2**
42	**♖a1**	**♔xc5**

and the draw becomes clear.

White should either have used his passed pawns more actively by playing 36 g4!? (threatening g5-g6-g7), or else centralized his king in preparation: 36 f3!? a4 ♔f2.

6. Unfocused activity at the decisive moment

Let us suppose that your opponent is deprived of any real counterplay and you, in accordance with the principle 'Do not rush!', are patiently manoeuvring, building up your advantage little by little. If your opponent puts up a determined defence, technique will almost certainly not be enough for you to carry the game through to victory – at some point you will be forced to abandon positional manoeuvring and start calculating variations accurately and searching out a concrete path to victory. This is where many chess players stumble, a phenomenon which has various contributing factors. There is the carelessness caused by over-eager anticipation of victory which we have already discussed. And there is the understandable desire to act 'in comfort', not straining too hard, not exposing yourself to the risk of going wrong in a forced sequence. It can indeed be difficult to get past the critical moment when you have extracted all you can from the principle 'Do not rush!', and it is now time to find a concrete variation to exploit the advantage you have achieved and beneficially change the character of the game.

I have noticed that superb positional players like Flohr and Karpov are exceptionally successful at converting advantages against players of a slightly lower calibre.

They manoeuvre, prevent any active possibilities for their opponents, who cannot withstand the pressure, make mistakes and destroy their position themselves. However, against opponents of equal stature they often fail to convert even very large advantages. The reason is that if you are facing stiff resistance, you must not pass over the right moment for concrete and precise action, and this is by no means the strong point of positional players such as these.

Flohr – Keres
USSR Ch (Moscow) 1950
Queen's Indian Defence

1	**♘f3**	**c5**
2	**c4**	**♘f6**
3	**g3**	**b6**
4	**♗g2**	**♗b7**
5	**0-0**	**e6**
6	**♘c3**	**♗e7**
7	**d4**	**♘e4?!**

7...cd.

8	**♕c2**	

8 d5.

8	**...**	**♘xc3**
9	**♕xc3**	**♗f6**
10	**♗e3**	**♘c6?!**

10...d6.

11	**♖ad1**	**♖c8?**

A serious mistake, after which Black lags behind considerably in development and so falls into a difficult position. He should have castled.

12	**♕a3!**	**♘a5**

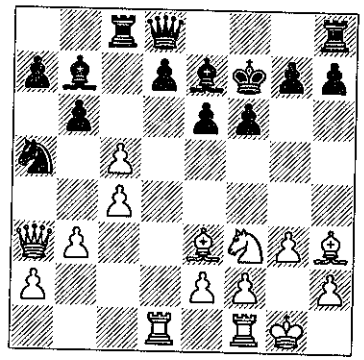
12...cd is better.

13	**b3**	**♗e7**
14	**dc**	**f6**

It is always a bad sign if you have to make moves like this, but on 14...bc there follows 15 ♘e5 ♗xg2 16 ♔xg2 d6 17 ♕a4+ ♔f8 18 ♘d7+ ♔g8 19 ♘xc5.

15	**♗h3**	**♔f7** *(D)*

The threat was 16 ♗xe6, and if 15...♕c7, then 16 cb.



W

White's advantage is beyond question. He has an extra pawn, the black king is stuck in the centre, and the points d7 and e6 are clearly weak. Note, however, that all the factors I have mentioned are not permanent but temporary. Imagine that Black plays ...bc and ...d7-d6, then he consolidates his position. In other words, it is time

for White to act quickly and decisively.

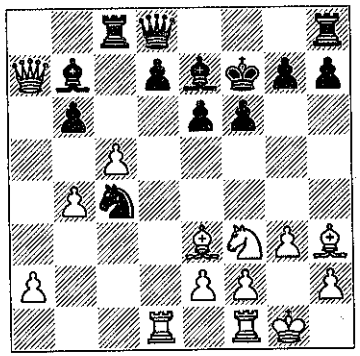
16 ♖d2?

Boleslavsky's commentary on the Flohr's move is instructive.

'Was White really unable to come up with anything other than this over-positional doubling of rooks? If he wanted to play positionally, then he should have played 16 ♘d4 ♗xc5 17 ♕a4 (17 ♕c1!? – Dvoretsky), and Black has to exchange on d4 to avoid a worse fate. However, the position called for different measures to be taken and after the energetic blow 16 b4! White would have obtained an irresistible attack. Here are some sample variations:

1) 16...♘c6 17 cb (17 ♖d2 is also strong – Dvoretsky) 17...ab 18 ♕b3 ♘xb4 (18...♗xb4 19 c5 – Dvoretsky) 19 ♗xe6+ ♔xe6 20 ♗xb6 ♕xb6 (20...♕e8 21 c5+ ♘d5 22 e4) 21 c5+ ♗d5 22 ♖xd5 (22 ♕e3+ – Dvoretsky) 22...♗xc5 23 ♖fd1! (of course, 23 ♖xc5+ is also enough for victory; on the whole you should not carry on analysing variations if the assessment of the continuation you are currently analysing is clear – Dvoretsky) 23...♗xf2+ 24 ♔g2 ♘xd5 25 ♕xd5+ ♔e7 26 ♕xd7+ ♔f8 27 ♕xc8+, and White wins.

2) 16...♘xc4 17 ♕xa7 *(D)* and now:



B

2a) 17...♘xe3? 18 fe ♗xf3 19 ♖xd7.

2b) 17...♗c6 18 ♗xe6+! ♔xe6 19 ♘d4+ ♔f7 20 ♘xc6 ♖xc6 21 ♖xd7 ♕e8 22 cb ♘xe3 23 fe, and White, with four pawns for a piece and a crushing position, wins without difficulty.

2c) 17...♗d5 18 ♖xd5 ed 19 ♕b7 ♔e8 20 ♕xd5 ♘xe3 21 fe ♕c7 22 ♖d1 ♖d8 23 cb ♕c6 24 b7 ♕xd5 25 ♖xd5 ♔f7 26 b5, and the powerful white pawns decide the game.

'After the move made by White the situation changes with amazing rapidity.'

I should add that after 16 b4! ♘xc4 the move 17 ♕xa7 really is extremely strong. On the other hand, 17 ♕b3 (intending 17...b5? 18 ♗xe6+! ♔xe6 19 ♘d4+ and 20 ♘xb5) is much worse in view of 17...♘xe3 18 fe ♗xf3, but even after 17...♗d5 18 ♖xd5 ed 19 ♕d3 ♘xe3 21 fe then, compared to the analogous variation with 17 ♕xa7, the a7-pawn remains on the board.

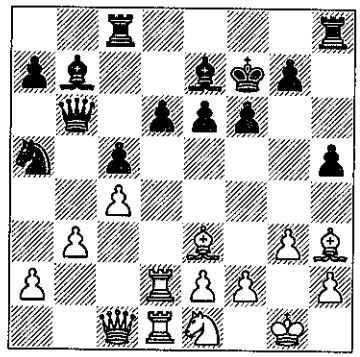
16 ... bc
17 ♖fd1 d6
18 ♘e1

Another passive move. 18 ♗f4 was obvious, forcing the awkward reply 18...♖c6 (if 18...♗xf3 19 ef ♘c6, then 20 ♗xd6 ♘d4 21 ♖xd4 cd 22 ♗xe6+! ♔xe6 23 ♖e1+).

18 ... ♕b6

The d6-square is easy to defend and there is nothing that can add to the pressure on e6 – the f4-square will be taken away from the white knight by ...g7-g5.

19 ♕c1 h5! *(D)*



W

Black has already seized the initiative. If 20 ♘d3, then 20...g5 21 b4 ♕c6.

20 f3 h4
21 g4 ♘c6
22 ♘g2?

22 ♘c2 is better.

22 ... ♘d4
23 ♖xd4

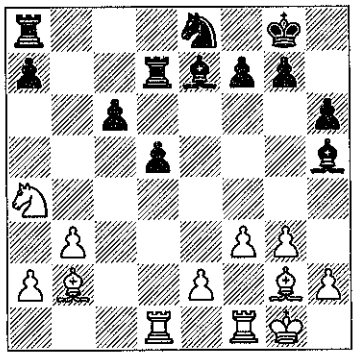
A combination needed to be found earlier. Now Black confidently makes his extra exchange count.

23 ... cd
24 ♗xd4 ♕a6
25 g5 fg
26 f4 g4!
27 ♗xg4 h3
28 ♕e3 ♖h6
29 ♘e1 ♖g6
30 ♕xh3 ♕c6
31 ♘f3 ♕e4
32 ♕g3 ♔g8
33 ♖d3 ♖f8
34 ♗e3 e5!
35 ♕g2 ef
36 ♗d2 ♗d8
37 h3 ♖e8
38 ♔f1 d5!
39 ♖d4 ♕b1+
40 ♗e1 dc
41 ♖xc4

and **White resigned** in view of 41...♗a6.

This whole game convincingly illustrates one of the postulates of Steinitz's theory – *the player with the advantage should attack when in danger of losing this initiative.* In this pithy formula the word 'attack' should be understood in a broad sense: it is often essential to find some clear variation, a forced

combination – in other words a precise and energetic way of exploiting the advantage.



W

Petrosian – Spassky
Moscow Wch (12) 1969

23 ♖c1

A natural move which maintains a serious positional advantage for White. The c6-pawn really is weak, the knight has the excellent square c5 and the h5-bishop is out of play.

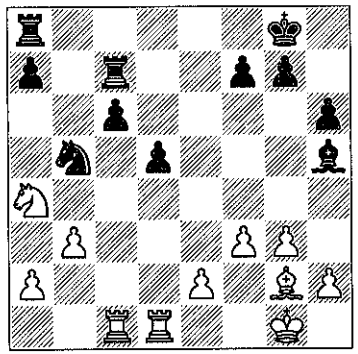
Could White not play more accurately by 23 ♗h3 instead? After 23...♖b7 24 ♖c1 ♖c7 White wins a tempo compared to the game – he has moved his bishop out to a more active position. If 23...♖c7, then 24 ♗e5 ♗d6 25 ♗xd6 ♘xd6 26 e4, exploiting the fact that the rook has stayed on d1.

However, this fact can also be exploited by Black! By giving up two minor pieces for a rook with 26...♘xe4! 27 fe (not 27 g4 ♘g5) 27...♗xd1 28 ♖xd1 de, he keeps excellent chances of saving the game. Clearly there is no point in White going in for this exchange and so the move played by Petrosian should be considered the strongest.

23	**...**	**♖c7**
24	**♗e5**	**♗d6**
25	**♗xd6**	**♘xd6**
26	**♖fd1**	

White now threatens both 27 ♖xd5 and 27 e4 ♘xe4 28 g4.

26 ... ♘b5 *(D)*



W

White's advantage has crystallized. He now has many tempting continuations, but it is not so easy to select the strongest of them. For instance:

1) If 27 ♘c5 (with the threat of 28 ♘a6), then 27...a5 28 ♘d3 (the threat is 29 ♘f4, then 30 a4 and 31 ♘xd5) 28...a4 29 ♘f4 ♗g6, and no straightforward win is apparent.

2) On 27 ♖c5 Black can reply 27...f5 (defending against 28 e4) 28 ♖dc1 ♖e7!? (28...♘d4 29 ♔f2 ♖ac8) 29 ♔f2 ♗e8 or 29 ♖xc6 ♖xe2 30 ♗f1 ♘d4!.

3) The strongest line is 27 g4! ♗g6 28 f4, which depends on a tactical finesse: 28...f6 (or 28...f5) is impossible because of 29 ♖xc6!. If 28...♗e4 then 29 ♗xe4 de 30 ♔f2 and Black's position is hopeless in view of the weakness of the c6- and e4-pawns. However, Black fares no better with 28...♗h7 29 f5 (29 ♘c3!?) 29...g6 30 e4 de 31 ♗xe4 ♖e8 32 ♘c5 when White has a crushing advantage due to the tragi-comic position of the black bishop and the terrible threat of 33 a4.

4) White had one other promising possibility: 27 ♘c3!?, underlining the vulnerability of Black's central pawns. The idea of g3-g4 and f3-f4 could be set in motion a move later.

Instead ...

27 ♔f2?!

Petrosian continues to improve his position, by bringing his king towards the centre, but his advantage now decreases somewhat as Black's bishop manages to defend the queenside pawns.

27 ... f6!

28 e3

28 ♗f1!?.

28	**...**	**♗f7**
29	**♗f1**	**♘d6**
30	**♖c3**	

30 ♗a6!?.

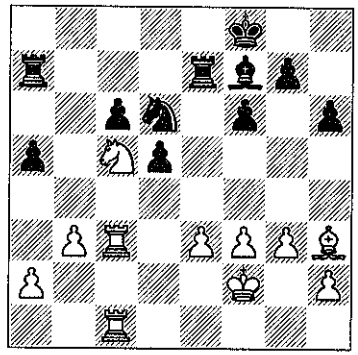
30 ... ♔f8?

Not an obvious mistake. Black should have seized control of the important square f4 by playing 30...g5!. After 31 ♘c5 a5 32 ♖dc1 ♖e7 followed by ...♗e8 White would have difficulty increasing the pressure.

31	**♘c5**	**a5**
32	**♖dc1**	**♖e7**
33	**♗h3**	

Threatening 34 ♘d7+ and not allowing 33...♗e8, on which there would follow 34 ♘e6+ and 35 ♘d4.

33 ... ♖aa7 *(D)*



W

Black is only just holding on. You sense that it is time for White

to find a decisive way to break through his opponent's defences. There is such a possibility, and it is not even too difficult to find. After 34 ♘d3! ♗e8 35 ♘f4 there are the twin threats of 36 ♘e6+ ♔f7 37 ♘d4 and 36 ♖xc6 ♗xc6 37 ♘g6+. The only defence is 35...♔f7, but then White can win by 36 ♖xc6! ♗xc6 37 ♖xc6 ♘b5 38 ♗e6+ ♖xe6 (forced) 39 ♘xe6, and it is not too difficult to make the extra pawn count (on 39...a4 there follows 40 b4).

34 a4?

It is possible to tidy up your position at your leisure if your opponent is unable to use the time to strengthen his defences. Here this is not the case. The principle 'Do not rush!' is useful, but it must not be abused.

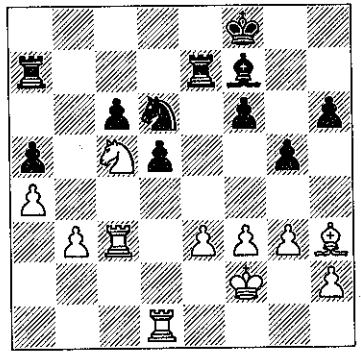
Petrosian clearly intended 35 ♘d3 ♗e8 36 ♘f4 ♔f7 37 ♘e2 followed by ♘d4 and wanted to deprive his opponent of the possible reply 37...♘b5. In general terms it is useful to fix the black pawn on a5 and take the b5-square away from the knight. But if White is going to play this, he should do so after he has transferred his knight to f4, because Spassky now prevents the main danger.

34 ... g5!

Now the f4-square is under control.

35 ♖d1 *(D)*

The exchange sacrifice 35 ♘d3 ♗e8 36 ♖xc6 ♗xc6 37 ♖xc6 ♘e8 38 ♘c5 deserved attention. Petrosian wants to transfer his knight to d4 by a long route – via d3-c1-e2, but during this time Spassky manages to activate his forces.



B

35 ... ♔g7
36 ♘d3 ♗e8
37 ♘c1 f5
38 ♘e2?!

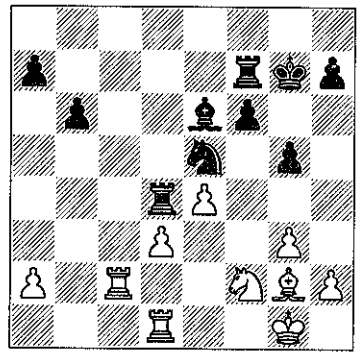
38 ♗g2 g4 39 f4 is better, with a probable draw.

38 ... g4!
39 ♗g2 gf
40 ♗xf3 ♘e4+
41 ♗xe4 fe

Now it is Black who holds some initiative due to the strategic threat of transferring his king to d6 after the exchange of one pair of rooks. On resumption the game ended in a **draw**.

Transformation of an advantage

The best way of exploiting an advantage sometimes involves favourably changing the character of the position, rejecting some advantages which already exist in favour of new ones. This technique is called 'transformation of advantage'.



W

Taimanov – Stein
USSR Ch (Tbilisi) 1966/7

Black has a large positional advantage. He has securely blockaded his opponent's central pawns, the g2-bishop is bad and the white knight also lacks all mobility. The most natural plan, which Stein almost certainly had in mind, is based on the advance of the queenside pawns.

26 ♔f1

White intends to strengthen his central pawns by transferring his king to e3 and, if necessary, putting his bishop on f1. His rook will then be free to oppose the advance of Black's queenside pawns. At this moment Stein probably thought that it would not be too easy to convert his advantage by normal means.

If your opponent makes an unexpected move which makes it more difficult for you to carry out your plans, it is useful to ask yourself: 'What is the drawback of my opponent's move?'. Even after asking this question, it is not easy to reach the decision made by Stein – it does not correspond to the unhurried character of the previous play or to the plan intended by Black.

26 ... f5!?

By opening the f-file, where the white king happens to be for a moment, Black threatens the d3-pawn. Of course, only a dynamic and unstereotyped player could make a move like this, which frees the white bishop and knight.

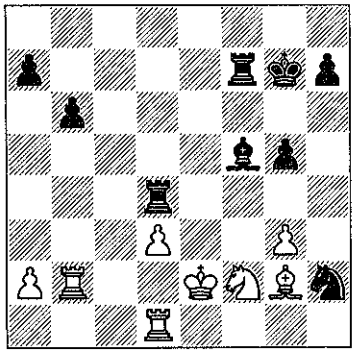
27 ef ♗xf5
28 ♔e2

I would prefer to part with the pawn immediately by moving the king back to g1.

28 ... ♘g4!

Black now threatens 29...♘xf2 30 ♔xf2 ♗g4+ 31 ♔e3 ♗xd1.

29 ♖b2 ♘xh2 *(D)*



W

Converting the extra pawn is not difficult.

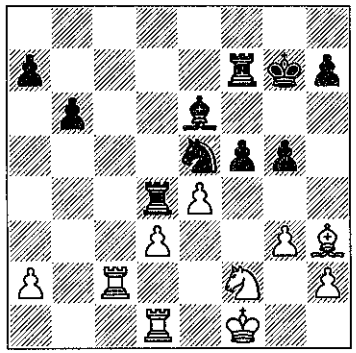
30 ♔e3 ♖a4
31 ♗e4 ♗xe4
32 ♘xe4 ♘g4+
33 ♔d2 ♘f2

Remember: if you have a material advantage it is advantageous to exchange pieces.

34 ♘xf2 ♖xf2+
35 ♔c3 ♖a3+
36 ♖b3 ♖axa2
37 ♖b5 ♔g6
38 ♖d5 ♖f5
39 ♖d6+ ♖f6
40 ♖d7 ♖g2
41 d4 ♖xg3+
White resigned

Stein acted energetically and was rewarded by complete success. However, I think that what needs to be stressed here is the psychological effect of Black's unexpected operation – its objective strength is still open to doubt:

27 ♗h3!? *(D)*



B

This reply, suggested by Kaidanov, deserves serious attention. After 27...g4 28 ♗g2 no good is 28...♘xd3? 29 ♖xd3 ♖xd3 30 ♘xd3 fe+ 31 ♘f4; nothing much is offered by 28...fe 29 ♗xe4 or 28...f4 29 gf ♖xf4 30 ♔e2. Instead of 27...g4 the combination involving a capture on d3 looks tempting. However, on 27...♖xd3 there follows 28 ♘xd3 fe+ 29 ♘f2 ♗xh3+ 30 ♔e2.

Stronger is:

27 ... ♘xd3

Black anticipates the variation 28 ♗xf5?! ♘b4!! 29 ♖xd4 ♘xc2 30 ♗xe6 ♖xf2+ 31 ♔xf2 ♘xd4 with a won minor-piece ending (32 ♗f5 ♘xf5 33 ef g4! 34 ♔e3 is bad due to 34...♔f6 35 ♔f4 h5).

White defends by:

28 ef! ♘xf2

Or 28...♗xf5 29 ♗xf5 and now 29...♖xf5 30 ♔g2 or 28...♘b4 29 ♖xd4 ♘xc2 30 fe ♖xf2+ 31 ♔xf2 ♘xd4 32 ♔e3.

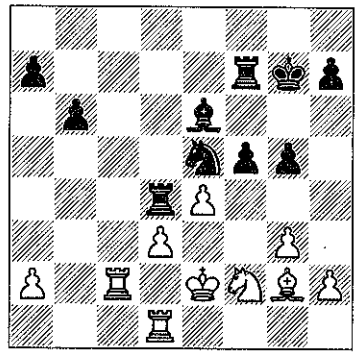
29 ♖xd4 ♘xh3
30 g4

with an unclear ending.

I think that in reply to 27 ♗h3 Black should retreat the bishop by 27...♗d7!, but even here White keeps some drawing chances in a position an exchange down after 28 ♗xf5 ♗a4 29 ♖dd2 ♗xc2 30 ♖xc2 or a pawn down after the continuation 30...♘xd3 31 ♖d2 ♘xf2 32 ♖xd4 ♘xe4 33 g4.

But the strongest reply to Stein's 26...f5, it would seem, is a calm move:

27 ♔e2! *(D)*



B

27 ... fe

If 27...f4 28 gf gf, White has the good move 29 ♗h3!.

28 ♗xe4 ♘g4

Now F.Schlosser points out that White has the simple move:

29 ♖f1!

For example 29...♘xh2 30 ♖h1.

The transformation of an advantage – the abandoning of advantages already accrued in favour of other advantages – is a fairly complex technique which is accessible only to players with a subtle understanding of the game. You have to assess the situation correctly, weigh up the pluses and minuses of the decision you are considering, so as not to swap good for bad. Moreover, it is not easy psychologically to take radical decisions in a favourable position and to give up advantages acquired earlier.

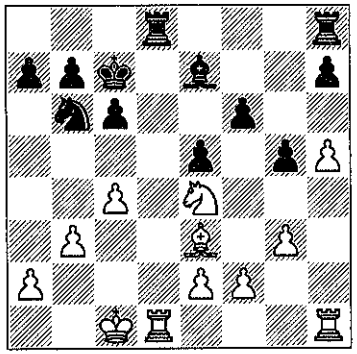
In the following position, from Petrosian – Bannik, USSR Ch (Riga) 1958, White played an unexpected move :

(see diagram on following page)

18 ♗c5!

Why? Here is Petrosian's explanation:

"When I was considering this move it was essential to weigh up carefully all the factors for and against. It looks illogical, as White voluntarily exchanges his 'good' bishop for his opponent's 'bad' one



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instead of exchanging bishop for knight (18 ♗xb6+) and securing his advantage. However, if you look deeper into the position it becomes apparent that after a possible exchange of rooks on the d-file and the transfer of his king to e6 Black will cover all his weak points and create an impregnable position. His 'bad' bishop will play a significant part in this."

I can myself add that on 18 g4 ♖xd1+ 19 ♖xd1 ♖d8 20 ♖xd8 ♔xd8 21 ♗xb6+ ab 22 ♔c2 White also retains excellent winning chances. He transfers his king to e4 and his knight to d3 with the idea of a pawn assault on the queenside or, if appropriate, even e2-e3 and f2-f4.

18 ... ♖xd1+

The pawn sacrifice recommended by Petrosian, 18...♗xc5 19 ♘xc5 ♖he8 20 ♖xd8 ♔xd8 21 ♘xb7+ ♔c7 22 ♘c5 e4 (with the threat of 23...a5 and 24...♖e5), is wrong in view of 23 ♘a6+ ♔b7 24 ♘b4 followed by ♘c2.

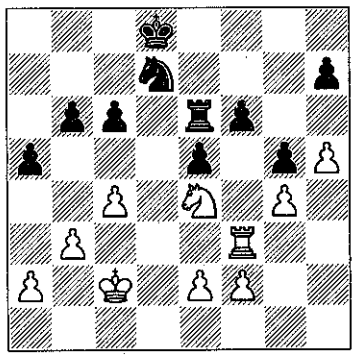
19 ♖xd1 ♗xc5
20 ♘xc5 ♖e8
21 ♘e4 ♖e6

No better is 21...♖f8 22 g4 ♖f7 (22...♘c8 23 ♘c5 ♖f7 24 ♘e6+) 23 ♖d6.

22 g4 a5
23 ♖d3 ♘d7
24 ♔c2

24 ♔d2!?.

24 ... b6
25 ♖f3 ♔d8 *(D)*



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26 a3 c5

By threatening to tie his opponent down completely by means of b3-b4 and c4-c5 White has provoked a weakening of the important d5-square.

27 ♔c3 ♔e7
28 ♖d3 ♖c6
29 ♖d5 ♘f8

30 ♘g3 ♘e6
31 ♘f5+ ♔e8
32 e3 ♘c7

32...♘d8 followed by 33...♘f7 is more resilient.

33 ♖d1 ♘e6
34 ♔d3!

The time has come to activate the white king.

34 ... ♖c7
35 ♔e4 ♖c6
36 ♘d6+ ♔e7
37 ♘f5+ ♔e8
38 ♘d6+ ♔e7
39 ♘f5+ ♔e8

When converting an advantage experienced players often resort to repetition of moves, not only to gain time on the clock but also in the hope that the opponent will try to change an unfavourable position and, in the course of rejecting the repetition, will make his own position worse.

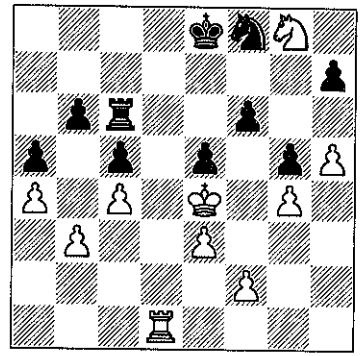
40 a4 ♘d8
41 ♘h6!

Not allowing 41...♘f7.

41 ... ♘e6
42 ♘g8 ♘f8 *(D)*

There is a nice variation after 42...♔f7 43 ♖d7+!♔xg8 44 ♔d5.

After 42...♘f8, 43 ♔d5 ♔d7 is useless, and on 43 ♔f5 there follows 43...♔f7 44 ♘h6+ ♔g7 45 ♖d8 ♘e6 46 ♖e8 ♘c7, and White loses his knight. How is he to break through his opponent's defence?



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When your opponent is condemned to passivity, you can often find assistance from an extremely important endgame technique – zugzwang.

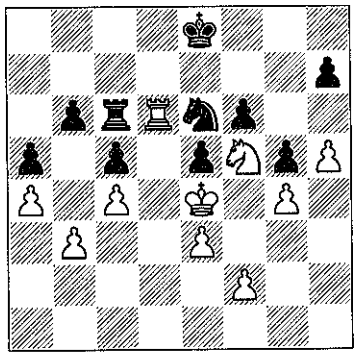
43 ♖d2! ♔f7

If 43...♘d7 decisive is 44 ♔f5 ♔d8 45 e4 ♔e8 46 f3 ♔d8 47 ♖xd7+! ♔xd7 48 ♘xf6+. Note carefully: before sacrificing the exchange it is sensible, according to the principle 'Do not rush!', to make two preparatory pawn moves, thereby strengthening the position to the maximum.

On 43...♖e6 there also follows 44 ♔f5 ♔f7 45 ♖d8 ♖c6 46 ♘h6+ ♔g7 47 ♔e4! ♘e6 48 ♖d7+! ♔xh6 49 ♔d5.

44 ♘h6+ ♔e8
45 ♘f5 ♘e6
46 ♖d6! *(D)*

The exchange of rooks intensifies the threat of infiltration by the white king.



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46	**...**	**♖xd6**
47	**♘xd6+**	**♔d7**
48	**♘b5**	**♘g7**

This leads in one move to zugzwang, but that was also the result of the variation 48...♘f8 49 ♔f5 ♔e7 50 ♘c3 ♘d7 51 ♘d5+ ♔f7 52 e4 h6 53 f3.

49	**h6**	**♘e8**
50	**♔d5**	**f5**
51	**♔xe5**	**fg**
52	**♘c3**	**♔e7**
53	**♘e4**	**♔f7**
54	**♔f5**	**g3**
55	**fg**	**g4**
56	**♘g5+**	**♔g8**
57	**♔e6**	**♘c7+**
58	**♔d7**	**♘a6**
59	**e4**	**♘b4**
60	**e5**	**♘d3**
61	**e6**	

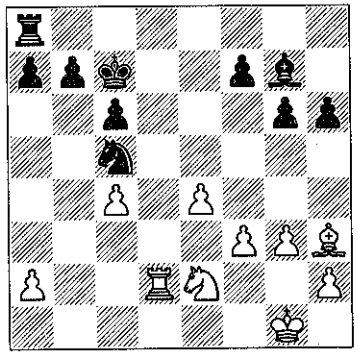
Black resigned

An excellent endgame – it demonstrates many of the techniques we have discussed for converting an advantage.

In conclusion I offer you a few exercises, in each of which the player who is to move has winning chances with accurate play.

Your task is to choose the technically best method of play.

Exercises



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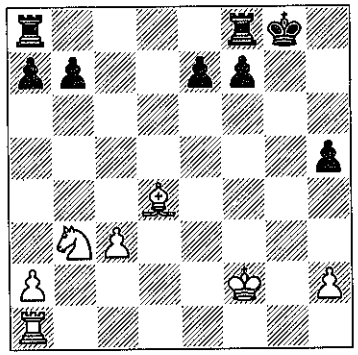

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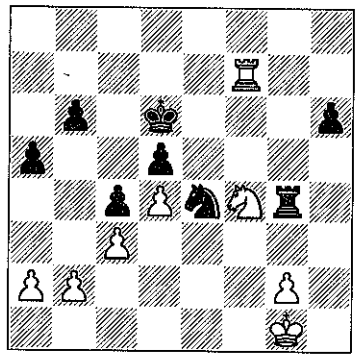

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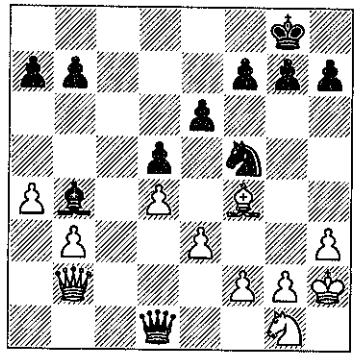

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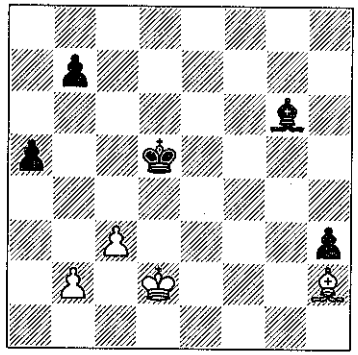

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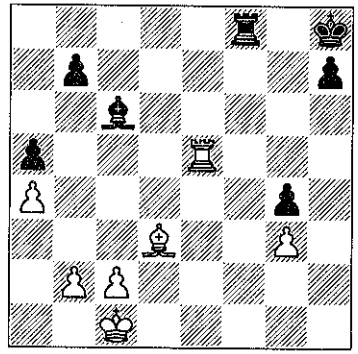

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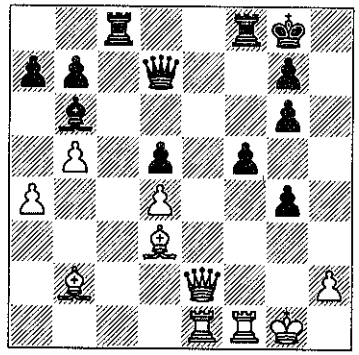

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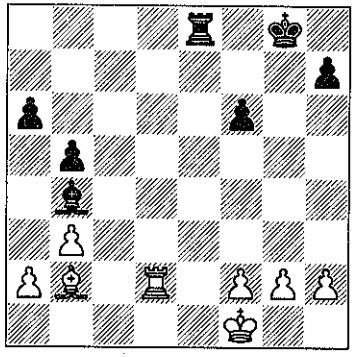

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Answers to the Exercises

1. Keberl-Szabo, Budapest 1951

23 ... a5!
24 ♘c1 a4!

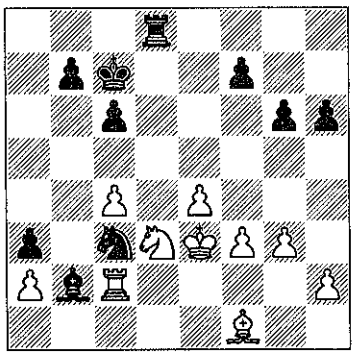
By advancing his a-pawn Black has prevented the equalizing manoeuvre ♘e2-c1-b3, has prepared the development of his rook by ♖a8-a6-b6 or a4-a3 followed by ♖a4, and, finally, has created the conditions for an attack against his opponent's queenside. If now 25 ♘d3, then 25...♖d8 26 ♗f1 ♖d4.

Here is how the game ended:

25 ♔f2 a3
26 ♔e2 ♗b2!
27 ♖c2

27 ♘d3 ♘a4!.

27 ... ♖d8
28 ♗f1 ♘a4
29 ♘d3 ♘c3+
30 ♔e3 *(D)*



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30 ... ♘xa2!
31 ♘xb2 ♘b4
32 ♖c1 ab
33 ♖b1 ♘c2+!
34 ♔f4

34 ♔e2 ♘a3 35 ♖xb2 ♘xc4.

34 ... g5+
35 ♔e5 ♖d6
36 c5 ♖e6+
37 ♔f5 ♘e3 mate

2. Bastrikov-Kiselev, Sverdlovsk 1946

Nothing comes of 22 ♖g1+ ♔h7 23 ♖g7+ ♔h6 or 23 ♖g5 f6 (if 23...♔h6?, then 24 ♗e3) 24 ♖xh5+ ♔g6. It is essential for White to prevent the important defensive move ...f7-f6.

22 ♖e1! ♖fe8

On 22...e6 or 22...♖ae8 strong is 23 ♘c5.

23 ♖g1+!

Now 23...♔h7 24 ♖g7+ ♔h6 25 ♖xf7 is bad.

There then followed:

23 ... ♔f8
24 ♘c5 ♖ed8
25 ♖g5! b6
26 ♖xh5 e5
27 ♗xe5! bc
28 ♗f6 ♔e8
29 ♖h8+ ♔d7
30 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8
31 ♗xd8 ♔xd8
32 ♔f3

White's distant passed pawn guarantees him an easy win.

32 ... ♔e7
33 ♔e4 ♔e6
34 ♔f4 f5
35 h4 ♔f6
36 h5 ♔e6
37 ♔g5
Black resigned

3. Miles-Nikolac, Wijk aan Zee 1979

Nothing is achieved by 48 ♖f5 ♖g5. An unhurried move prevents Black's only sensible plan of ...b6-b5-b4 and puts him in zugzwang:

48 a4!

On any knight move away from e4, 49 ♖f6+ is decisive. Bad is 48...♖g5 49 ♖h7, and if 48...♖h4, then 49 ♘g6! and 50 ♘e5, but not 49 ♖f5? because of the pretty reply 49...♖h1+!.

48 ... ♔c6
49 ♖f5!

It becomes clear that 49...♖g5 no longer defends the pawn owing to 50 ♘xd5! ♖xf5 51 ♘e7+ and 52 ♘xf5.

49 ... ♘d6

This move gives White the chance to strengthen his position:

50 ♖f6 ♖h4
51 g3 ♖g4
52 ♔g2

Black is still tied up.

Miles soon exploited his advantage:

52 ... h5
53 ♘xh5 ♔d7
54 ♔f3 ♖g8
55 ♘f4! ♖xg3+

Or 55...♘e4 56 ♘xd5!.

56 ♔xg3 ♘e4+
57 ♔g4 ♘xf6+
58 ♔f5 ♘e4
59 ♘xd5 ♘d6+
60 ♔e5 ♘f7+
61 ♔f6
Black resigned

4. Skembris-Torre, Lucerne Olympiad 1982

The white pieces are almost devoid of active possibilities, but he still has one chance to become active: ♕e2!, having in mind the sally ♕b5!. For example, 30...h6? (a pseudo-prophylactic move which is useful in general terms but which does not meet any concrete threat by the opponent) 31 ♕e2! ♕xb3 (in the endgame White will easily achieve a draw) 32 ♕b5 b6 33 ♘f3, and the weakness of the f7-point guarantees White sufficient counterplay.

30 ... a6!

Black parries his opponent's only active idea, and he will soon create threats on the queenside by sending his knight over there.

31 g4 ♘e7
32 ♘e2 ♗d2
33 ♘g1 ♘c6

Threatening 34...♘a5.

34 ♗c7 ♘b4
35 ♗a5 ♘c2
36 ♗xd2 ♕xd2
37 ♔g3 ♘xe3!
38 ♕a3 ♘d1
39 ♘f3 ♕xf2+
40 ♔f4 g5+
White resigned

5. Gragger-Barcza, Varna Olympiad 1962 (variation)

If the passed pawn is blocked by a bishop, then the winning plan usually involves the king breaking through to support its passed pawn. However, this does not work immediately:

1 ... ♔e4?
2 ♔e2 ♗h5+
3 ♔f2 ♔d3
4 ♗c7! a4
5 ♗d6 ♔c2
6 ♗a3

with a draw.

First the white king must be tied down to the defence of its queenside pawns, and then the king can break through on the opposite flank.

1 ... ♔c4!
2 ♗c7 a4
3 ♗e5 ♔b3
4 ♔c1 ♗c2!

4...♗h5 is also good enough to win.

5 ♗d6

Or 5 c4 b6.

5 ... a3
6 ba ♔xc3

then ....♗a4, ...b7-b5 and ...♔a3-e2-f3-g2.

6. Smirin-Vogt, Saltsjöbaden Rilton Cup 1988/9

If 33 ♖xa5? then 33...♖f3 34 ♖h5 ♖xg3 35 ♖xh7+ ♔g8 and the passed g-pawn guarantees Black counterchances which are quite sufficient for a draw.

In order to eliminate Black's counterplay, the bishops must be exchanged. The winning move is:

33 ♗e4! ♗xa4

The alternatives are as follows:

a) 33...♗xe4 34 ♖xe4 ♖g8 (or 34...h5 35 ♖e5) 35 ♔d2!?, intending ♔e3-f4.

b) 33...♖e8 34 ♖xe8+ ♗xe8 35 ♗xb7 ♗xa4 36 c4, and Black will have to give up his bishop for a pawn.

c) 33...♖f1+ 34 ♔d2 ♖g1 35 ♗xc6 bc 36 ♖xa5, and the a-pawn is much stronger than the enemy passed pawns, e.g. 36...♖g2+ 37 ♔d3 ♖xg3+ 38 ♔e4 ♖g1 39 ♖c5 g3 40 ♔f3 g2 41 b3!.

34 ♖xa5 ♗e8

Or 34...♗c6 35 ♗xc6 bc 36 ♖g5 and White wins.

35 ♗xb7

Black's position is hopeless. In the game there followed:

35 ... ♖f1+
36 ♔d2 ♗g6
37 c4 ♖f2+
38 ♔c3 ♔g7
39 ♖g5!

and Black overstepped the time limit.

Grandmaster Bologan found another, also very promising plan for White to exploit his advantage:

33 ♖g5!? ♗xa4
34 ♖xa5

34 ♖xg4 ♗c6 is weaker.

34 ... ♗c6
35 ♖g5! ♗f3

Or 35...♖g8 36 ♖h5.

36 ♖h5 ♖f7
37 ♔d2

The black pieces are completely tied up. Having centralized his king, White will begin to advance his queenside pawns.

7. Smyslov-Botvinnik, Moscow Wch (3) 1954

Although Black has three pawns for the piece, his position is difficult. Smyslov could have finished the game in the middlegame by h2-h3, destroying his opponent's pawn chain and opening lines for his pieces. The winning move was **27 ♕g2!** (with the threat 28 ♖e5) **27...♖fe8 28 h3!**.

In the game there followed

27 ♕e6+? ♕xe6
28 ♖xe6

Usually piece exchanges are the simplest means of exploiting a material plus. But here, firstly, there is a formal material balance on the board, and secondly (and even more importantly) the fewer pieces remain on the board, the more significant becomes the role of pawns.

28 ... ♔f7
29 ♖fe1

If 29 ♖e5, then 29...♖fe8, and after 30 ♖fe1 we reach approximately the same position that resulted in the game. And on 30 ♖xd5 there follows 30...♖e3 31 ♗b1 (31 ♖d1 ♔e6) 31...♖e2 with sufficient counterplay for Black.

29 ... ♖fe8
30 ♖xe8 ♖xe8
31 ♖xe8

31 ♖d1 ♖e3 32 ♔f2 ♖h3.

31 ... ♔xe8

White is not able to exploit his extra piece, as his king has nowhere to penetrate – the black pawns are in the way. And what an excellent target for attack they were in the middlegame!

32 ♗c3 ♔d7
33 a5 ♗d8

34	**♗b4**	**b6**
35	**a6**	**♗f6**
36	**♗c3**	**♔e6**
37	**♔g2**	**g5**
38	**♗e2**	**g6**
39	**♗d1**	**♗e7**
40	**♗d2**	**♗d8**
41	**♗e3**	

Here the game was adjourned. The players agreed to a **draw** without resuming.

8. Dvoretsky-Zilbershtein, Ordzhonikidze 1978

Where should the rook retreat, to e2 or d1? You may be tempted to think 'Does it really matter – surely White keeps his extra pawn in both cases?'. But it is by no means advisable to go about exploiting an advantage so casually – if you do, you will very often be disappointed. You need to try to clarify the difference between the two moves and choose the one that is in some way better and more precise than the other.

On 26 ♖e2 Black continues with 26...♖c8, when 27 ♖e6 ♖c2 is no good. When you have a clear advantage, you do not feel inclined to complicate the game and weaken the queenside pawns by 27 a3 ♗f8. The normal continuation is 27 g3 ♔f7. Note that the black king prevents our rook becoming active on the e-file, whereas the black rook on the c-file, a long way from the white king, is extremely active and ties down the white pieces.

I wanted to seize the c-file myself. I therefore began to examine:

26	**♖d1!**	**♔f7**
27	**♖c1!**	

Now 27...♗d2 is hopeless in view of 28 ♖c7+ and 29 g3. White can quietly strengthen his position by g2-g3, ♖c2, ♔g2-f3, while his rook constantly threatens to penetrate the enemy camp along the c-file. The resulting position is more comfortable for White than after 26 ♖e2.

Black can hardly sacrifice a second pawn by 26...♖c8 27 ♗xf6 ♖c2 28 a4 ba 29 ba (29...♗c5 30 ♗d4; 29...♖a2 30 ♖a1). I also had in reserve the idea of entering a bishop ending: 27 ♖c1 ♖xc1+ 28 ♗xc1 f5 (28...♔f7 29 ♔e2 ♔e6 30 ♔d3 ♔d5 31 g4) 29 ♔e2 ♔f7 30 ♔d3 ♔e6 31 ♔d4, and White should probably win gradually.

The further course of the game confirmed that my assessment was correct – it turned out to be very easy to exploit the advantage.

27	**...**	**♖d8**
28	**♖c2**	**♖d1+**
29	**♔e2**	**♖e1+**
30	**♔f3**	**♖b1**
31	**♗d4!**	**♖d1**

32	**♔e4**	**a5**
33	**g4**	**♗d6**
34	**♖c6**	**♗e5**
35	**♗xe5**	

35 ♗e3 followed by f2-f4 is also strong.

35	**...**	**♖e1+**
36	**♔d3**	**♖xe5**
37	**f4**	**♖d5+**
38	**♔e4**	**♖d2**
39	**h4**	**♖xa2**

Or 39...h5 40 g5 fg 41 hg.

40	**♔f5**	**♖f2**
41	**♖xf6+**	**♔g8**
42	**♖a6**	

Black resigned

9 Techniques of Grandmaster Play

Artur Yusupov

The game I want to show you was played at one of the famous grandmaster tournaments in the Spanish town of Linares. In the first stage of the game the players conducted a tough manoeuvring struggle in an approximately equal position. There then arose an ending which was somewhat better for Black. It is instructive to follow through the typical endgame techniques which enabled me first to increase my advantage and then convert it into a win.

Salov – Yusupov
Linares 1991
Réti Opening

1	**♘f3**	**♘f6**
2	**g3**	**d5**
3	**♗g2**	**c6**
4	**0-0**	**♗g4**
5	**c4**	

We have reached a typical position from the Réti Opening. In my opinion, 5 ♘e5!? ♗f5 6 c4 is interesting, as in the game this active knight move is impossible after Black's reply.

5	**...**	**♘bd7**
6	**d3**	**e6**
7	**b3**	**♗d6**
8	**♘a3**	

A non-standard plan. Now if Black plays ...e6-e5 the manoeuvre ♘a3-c2-e3 will reveal a certain weakness in Black's central pawns. However, if Black declines to occupy the centre White's idea presents no danger.

8	**...**	**0-0**
9	**♘c2**	**♖e8**

Black is in no rush to reveal his plans.

10	**♗b2**	**a5**

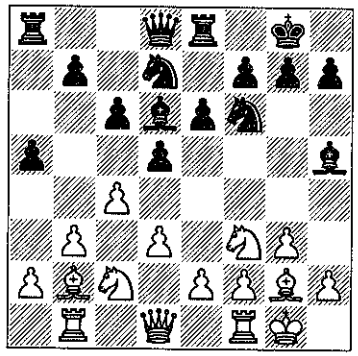
Having decided that the advance ...e6-e5 is unprofitable for the time being, Black carries out another idea typical for these positions – he tries to 'chain up' his opponent's queenside. If now 11 a3, then 11...♕b6, and White suddenly has problems defending his b3-pawn.

11 ♖b1!

A deep prophylactic move. In reply to 11...a4, besides 12 b4, Black must reckon with 12 ba!? ♖xa4 13 ♗xf6 and 14 ♖xb7.

11 ... ♗h5 *(D)*

11...e5 is premature in view of 12 cd cd 13 ♘e3 (attacking the bishop) 13...♗h5 14 ♘h4. So why not retreat in good time?



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12 ♘e3

White again puts the breaks on ...e6-e5. Now it is difficult for both sides to start active operations. As usual in such situations, the players begin to manoeuvre without any clearly defined plan. They operate only by short-term positional or tactical ideas.

12	**...**	**♗c5**
13	**♕d2**	

In the event of 13 d4 ♗f8 the e4-square would be weakened.

13	**...**	**♕b6**
14	**a3!?**	**♕a7**

Black prepares to play ...a5-a4 when possible. For example, on 15 ♖fd1 Black has at his disposal 15...a4 16 b4 ♗xe3 17 fe dc.

15 ♘c2 ♗f8

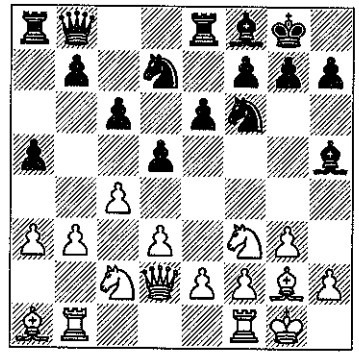
To avoid losing a tempo after b3-b4.

16 ♗d4

16 ♘e5, with equality, deserved attention.

16	**...**	**♕b8**
17	**♗a1** *(D)*	

White believed that he had slightly improved the position of his bishop and worsened the position of his opponent's queen.



B

17 ... e5!?

After all the convoluted manoeuvring I decided the time had come to become active in the centre, as the move ♘c2-e3 does not need to be feared – the a3-pawn needs constant attention. Nevertheless this advance still has certain drawbacks – it weakens the d5-pawn and the f5-square.

18 ♘h4 ♕d8!?

It is favourable for Black for the queens to be facing each other – the

fact that the white queen is undefended may prove significant.

19 ♘f5

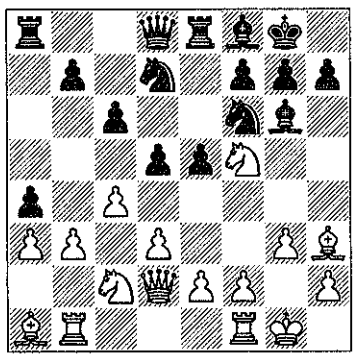
The position is approximately equal. The slight pressure exerted by the white pieces is cancelled out by Black's better pawn structure.

19 ... ♗g6
20 ♘h4 ♗h5
21 ♘f5 ♗g6
22 ♗h3?!

A 'grandmaster draw' would be the logical outcome after 22 ♘h4. Wanting to keep the game alive, Salov lets slip a fundamental inaccuracy – he loses control of the e4-square. I was able to take advantage of the 'hanging' position of the white pieces.

22 ... a4! *(D)*

The long-awaited advance!



W

23 cd

I had reckoned with this possibility and had prepared a simple intermediate operation. However, White had no real choice at this point: 23 ba? is bad in view of the line 23...dc 24 dc ♘e4 (threatening 25...♘g5) 25 ♕xd7 ♕xd7 26 ♘h6+ gh 27 ♗xd7 ♖ed8 28 ♖xb7 ♘c5, whilst 23 b4? fails to 23...dc 24 dc ♘e4 25 ♕xd7 (25 ♕e3 ♘g5) 25...♕xd7 26 ♘h6+ gh 27 ♗xd7 ♖e7 28 ♗h3 (or 28 ♖bd1 ♘f6) 28...♘d2.

23 ... ab!
24 ♖xb3

No good was 24 dc bc2 25 ♖xb7 in view of 25...♘c5 26 c7 ♕d5.

24 ... ♘c5
25 ♖bb1 ♘xd5

Black's position is now preferable – his opponent has a weak pawn on a3.

26 ♘fe3

On 26 ♖fd1 Salov was clearly concerned by 26...e4!? 27 d4 e3!.

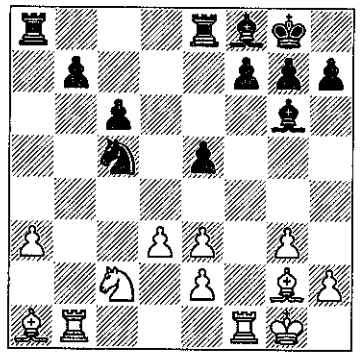
26 ... ♕g5

Black carries on playing to exploit his small advantage in pawn structure. 26...♘c7!? 27 ♘c4 f6 is also possible, maintaining the tension.

27 ♗g2 ♘xe3
28 ♕xe3

28 h4!? deserved attention. For instance, after 28...♕h6 29 ♘xe3! ♖xa3 the pawn deficit would be compensated for by the bad position of the black queen. If it retreats to another square White captures on e3 with his queen, thus avoiding the subsequent damage to his pawn structure.

28 ... ♕xe3
29 fe *(D)*



B

The endgame is, of course, more pleasant for Black, but it is not easy for him to increase his advantage.

29 ... f6

Preparing ...♗f7.

30 ♗c3! ♖a7
31 ♗b4 ♗f7!
32 ♔f2

Salov defends according to the laws of the endgame – he covers up his weaknesses and brings his king to the centre.

32 ... ♘b3
33 ♗xf8 ♔xf8
34 ♖b2 ♖e7

Being short of time, it is useful to over-defend the important b7-pawn.

35 ♖fb1 ♘d2!

I decided to gaining some time on the clock by repeating moves.

36 ♖d1 ♘b3
37 ♔e1 ♘c5

The knight cannot be kept on b3 in any case, and Black transfers it to a4, intending to advance his queenside pawns.

38 ♖b4 ♘a4
39 ♔d2?!

A natural move, but not the best, since it does not prevent Black carrying out his plan. 39 ♖db1! ♗a2 40 ♖a1 ♗e6 41 ♖ab1 is stronger; then the pressure on b7 does not allow ...c6-c5 to be played.

39 ... c5
40 ♖bb1?

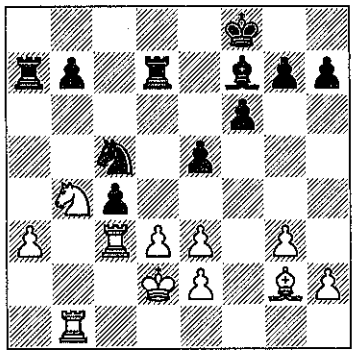
An error in time-trouble. By playing 40 ♖b5! ♗e8 41 ♖bb1 b5 White could have brought his bishop into the defence: 42 ♗d5!.

40 ... ♖d7!
41 ♖dc1 c4

Here Salov spent a lot of time, clearly assessing which was the lesser evil – the loss of a pawn or passivity – and he chose the second option. In the variation 42 ♖b5 cd 43 ♘b4 (or 43 ed ♗c4 44 ♖xb7 ♖xd3+) 43...de+ 44 ♔xe2 White does not seem to have full compensation for the pawn.

42 ♘b4 ♘c5
43 ♖c3 *(D)*

Now 43...♘b3+ 44 ♔e1 ♖xa3 is not convincing because of 45 dc.



B

43 ... e4!

This move is officially against the 'rules' (pawns are supposed to be on squares of the opposite colour to their bishop), but in fact it is extremely strong, as it locks in the g2-bishop.

44 d4

Forced.

44 ... h5!

44...♘b3+ 45 ♔e1 ♖xa3 46 ♗xe4 ♖a4, plunging forward with the knight and then advancing the pawns, also looks good. However, since in this case the white pieces are activated, I preferred to play against a second weakness in my opponent's camp – the bishop which is locked out of the game (the first weakness is the a3-pawn).

45 ♔e1

Better is 45 h3, so as to have the reply 46 g4 to 45...f5.

45 ... ♘a4
46 ♖c2 f5

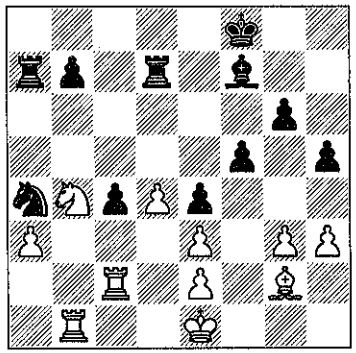
The bishop is trapped in a cage, and it cannot get out. After the game Salov said with feeling that it would be better if it didn't exist at all – then he could at least try to create some kind of counterplay on the kingside.

47 h3

Trying to bring the bishop to life.

47 ... g6! *(D)*

The last black pawn occupies a square of the same colour as its bishop. Rules are all very well, but concrete considerations come first! It is important to have ...h5-h4! in reply to g3-g4.



W

48 ♘a2 ♖a5
49 g4 h4

The cage has slammed shut!

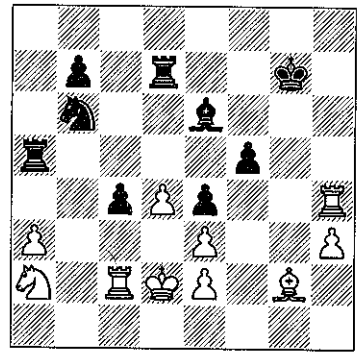
50 ♔d2

Probably the only move. White intends to play against the h4-pawn by 51 gf gf 52 ♖f1 followed by ♖f4. If White opts for 50 ♘c3 ♘xc3 51 ♖xc3 b5 (and ...♖da7) then Black effectively has an extra piece.

50 ... ♔g7
51 ♖f1 ♗e6

I didn't want to defend the h4-pawn with the king, as I was concerned that after 51...♔h6 52 ♖f4 ♔g5 53 gf gf 54 ♖c1 it would be attacked by the rook from g1. Instead of that, Black exploits the absence of the white rook from the queenside and starts the decisive action there. This is all in accordance with the principle of two weaknesses.

52 ♖f4 ♘b6
53 gf gf
54 ♖xh4 *(D)*



B

54 ... c3+!

The quickest way of exploiting the advantage. The pawn is attacked three times, but nothing can take it. For example, in reply to 55 ♘xc3 Black has the decisive 55...♘c4+ 56 ♔c1 ♘xe3.

55 ♔c1 ♗b3
56 ♘xc3 ♗xc2
57 ♔xc2 ♖xa3

I expected my opponent to resign here, but he unexpectedly sacrificed a knight.

58 ♘xe4 fe
59 ♗xe4 ♖xe3
60 ♗d3 ♖g3
61 ♔d2

The time control had passed, and I immediately sealed a move, to avoid any extraordinary occurrences at the board. I could, of course, have continued with an extra rook, but my belief is that you should not do that in a won position. Fatigue after six hours of play sometimes leads to mistakes, such as 61...♘d5?? 62 ♖h7+.

61 ... ♔g8

I should note that, in spite of the extra rook, I analysed the adjourned position fairly precisely to make life easier for myself on resumption. There were, after all, one or two stumbling blocks left to negotiate.

62 ♔c3

Not the most stubborn. Now Black forces the exchange of minor pieces.

62 ... ♘d5+
63 ♔c4 ♘e3+
64 ♔c5 ♖g5+

65 ♔b4 ♘f5
66 ♗xf5 ♖xf5
67 e4!?

In such situations it is often useful to ask the question: why is my opponent not resigning? If 67...♖xd4+?? White's last trap would have come into effect: 68 ♔c3 ♖a4 (or 68...♖fd5) 69 ♖g4+!.

67 ... ♖f1
68 d5 ♖c7
White resigned

In my opinion, the way Black exploited his advantage in this position is quite instructive. He made use of several important techniques for this kind of endgame:

1) When short of time he repeated moves, and then he did not rush to force events, but slowly strengthened his position.

2) Rather than limiting myself to a straightforward attack against one weakness (the a3-pawn), I tried to operate on a broad front, striking at my opponent's defences from various sides. I played against the d3-pawn and restricted the light-squared bishop – the point is that during the game it is very difficult to switch from the defence of one point to another (especially in time-trouble).

3) Having achieved a won position, Black did not rush to chalk up mentally his point on the tournament chart, but carried on playing carefully, maintaining his vigilance to the very end.

10 The Lessons of one Endgame

Mark Dvoretsky

I won't get to the promised endgame for a while yet, because I first want to reflect on some general aspects of studying chess.

At the board we operate by moves and variations, but these are based on our understanding of the game, the development of which depends to a significant degree on the study and training that has been carried out earlier. For this work to be productive, it is not enough just to remember concrete information – it is important that chess images should be formed in your mind on the basis of this material. The most vivid images, which stay in our memory for the longest time, are original and deep general ideas manifested in incisive, convincing variations.

In the game commentaries of great players there are many thoughts scattered about which are valuable for our chess-playing development. When studying commentaries like this I often look at the words even more than the moves. As soon as an idea flashes before me which seems original and interesting and in some way new to me, I immediately try to fix it in my mind along with the position where it occurred. I also write down examples which demonstrate effectively rules and assessments that I have known for a long time – they too ought to be practised from time to time, if possible in a vivid and memorable form. As a result I have managed to accumulate a fairly wide collection of the most varied chess ideas, illustrated by excellent examples.

As a matter of fact, young chess players, when they read books or listen to a lecture, pay most attention to variations, and fail to take in the judgements of the author. I am sure they lose a lot here – often the most valuable information is concentrated in the actual words. It is sometimes worth dwelling even on the simple, apparently banal things – by repeating them and discovering new limits to them, you can strengthen and deepen your knowledge of chess.

Of course, everything is much more complicated in practice than

on paper. Most commentaries in chess magazines and books are superficial, and sometimes just awful. Once a certain experienced master explained to me how he worked. You put two fingers to the page with the text on it and see that there are only moves under them – in other words, it is time to make a comment. You write something like "The Ruy Lopez always leads to a tense, complicated struggle" – and your fee goes up by a rouble.

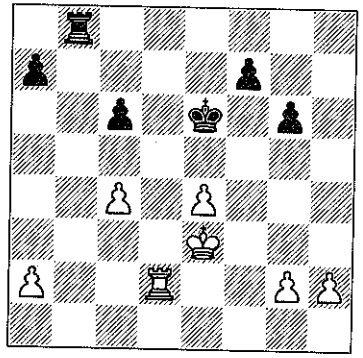
The ability to distinguish between real feelings and thoughts and this kind of verbal facade will be of use to you, and not just in chess.

Often you find the opposite situation. The author seems to have interesting ideas, but he is not able to illustrate them with decent examples. If a grandmaster is commenting on one of his own games, then there is not usually any problem: his general thoughts are closely tied up with what is happening on the board. But as soon as he starts writing an article or book on a different theme the difficulties begin, as he may not have suitable material to hand.

I remember that I was once flicking through one book in particular. The titles of many chapters seemed very interesting to me, for example: 'Playing by analogy', 'On prospectless positions', 'Failure to think logically', 'Problems of managing your time when selecting a move', and so on. Genuinely important questions about chess were posed here. The book would be excellent if it actually managed to answer them. However, the author unfortunately went into almost none of the problems he had identified. Most of the examples were either poor or superficially analysed, and in addition they had only a very weak link to the theme under examination. Without adequate analytical material it is impossible to come to serious conclusions. The author had simply inserted in his chapters the first episodes that came to mind which corresponded to the title even slightly. You look at the title and you are interested to see how the author understands the problem under discussion. You read on, and you see that he displays no understanding; he gets away with just general phrases.

The correct order of work must be not from theme to example, but, on the contrary, from an interesting, well-analysed example to the general conclusions that follow from it. This is the way we shall study the classical endgame which I now offer you – as a matter of fact, it is one of my favourites.

The legacy of the famous masters of the past is a priceless source for improving your game. One point I would like to make is that it is important not to be satisfied just with quickly playing through the variations from the book on a board – you must instead check them through and understand them. Then you will be able to extract a great deal of interesting and extremely valuable information even from a relatively small quantity of material.



W

Capablanca – Alekhine
New York 1924

White is to move. He has an extra pawn, but exploiting this advantage is not easy (remember the half-joking, half-serious aphorism by Tarrasch, 'Rook endings are always drawn'). Let's decide what possible moves (or, to be more precise, possible plans) we have at our disposal. It is useful to generate plenty of ideas straight away – otherwise, if you plunge into calculations too early, it won't be long before you overlook something really important.

One obvious move is 39 c5. White threatens 40 ♖d6+, winning the c6-pawn.

The second suggestion is 39 ♔d4, hoping to transfer the king to c5.

Yet another plan is 39 h4 with the idea of 40 g4, 41 ♖h2 and so on – the white rook will occupy the ideal position behind the passed h-pawn.

As you see, White has a multitude of tempting possibilities. In order to make the correct choice, it will be essential to take into account our opponent's chances of counterplay.

Let's take the moves in order. We'll begin with:

39 c5

On 39...♔e5?! there follows 40 ♖d7. If 39...♖b4?! nothing is given by 40 ♖d6+ ♔e5 41 ♖xc6 ♖xe4+ and 42...♖a4, but 40 ♔f4!, with 41 ♖d6+ to follow, is much more dangerous. The best defence was indicated by Alekhine:

39 ... ♖b5!
40 ♖d6+ ♔e5
41 ♖xc6

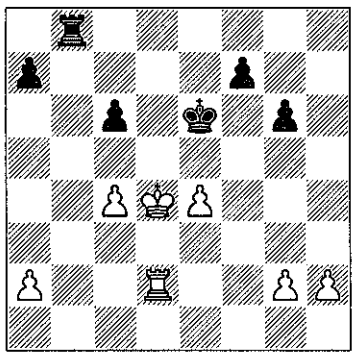
41 ♖d7 can be met by 41...♖a5 or 41...♖xc5.

41 ... ♖a5

Black intends to play 42...♖a3+ followed by 43...♖xa2+. Now that the activity of his pieces has increased so much, it is clear that Black will not lose.

Let us examine:

39 ♔d4 *(D)*



B

The king must clearly not be allowed to c5. 39...♔d6? 40 e5+ is no use, so the reply is forced:

39 ... ♖d8+
40 ♔c3

Now the threat c4-c5 becomes more serious, since the c5-pawn can now be defended by the king. However, White's idea is not hard to prevent:

40 ... ♖h8!
41 h3 ♖h5

(41...♖h4 is also noteworthy.) The rook is extremely well-placed on the fifth rank – it controls c5 (if 42 ♔b4, then 42...a5+) and is able to attack any of the white pawns. White has achieved nothing.

It remains only to check:

39 h4

The obvious reply is:

39 ... ♖h8!

39...f5? is bad due to 40 ef+.

40 g3

Now White is preparing 41 ♖h2 and 42 g4. How should this plan be opposed? The same rook manoeuvre saves Black again:

40 ... ♖h5!
41 ♖h2 ♖a5!

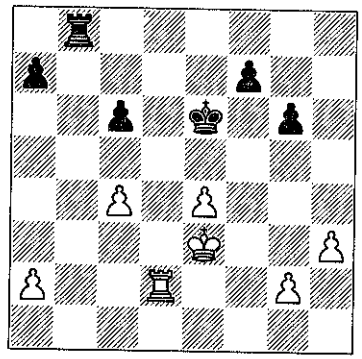
Now 42 g4? brings nothing in view of 42...♔e5 43 h5 ♖a3+ and 44...♖xa2+. On 42 ♔f4 there follows 42...f6, preparing, in case of g3-g4, to exchange the most dangerous enemy pawn by means of ...g6-g5+!.

We have established that White gets nowhere by straightforwardly carrying out any of the plans we thought up. How then should he continue playing for a win?

Note that Black always saved himself by transferring the rook to the fifth rank. Let us remember about prophylaxis – let's try to prevent our opponent's main defensive idea.

Alekhine suggests an amazing move:

39 h3!! *(D)*



B

Now on 39...♖h8 the h-pawn is not hanging and White replies 40 c5. After 40...♖h4 the continuation 41 ♖d6+ is unconvincing due to 41...♔e5 42 ♖xc6 ♖xe4+ and then 43...♖a4, but 41 ♖d8! is strong. At the same time Black should now reckon seriously with 40 ♔d4, e.g. 39...♖b1(b4) 40 ♔d4 ♔d6 41 e5+, or 39...f6 40 ♔d4 ♖d8+ (40...♔d6 41 c5+ ♔e6 42 ♔c4) 41 ♔c3 ♖b8 42 c5 ♔e5 43 ♖d6 with a clear plus for White. 39...♔e5 is dangerous because of 40 ♖d7. There remains:

39 ... c5
40 ♖d5

If 40 h4, then 40...♖b4!, but not 40...♖h8 41 g3 ♖h5 42 ♖h2, and now the fifth rank has become too short.

40 ... ♖b2
41 g4

41 ♖xc5 ♖xg2 42 ♖a5 is also good.

41 ... ♖xa2
42 ♖xc5 ♖a3+
43 ♔d4 ♖xh3
44 ♖a5

and White has excellent winning chances.

It is characteristic that Capablanca – a chess player with fantastic intuition – was not able to make the correct decision indicated by Alekhine – a chess player of a quite different turn of mind. A move such as 39 h3!! cannot be made intuitively, based on 'general considerations' – it could only be found after deep and concrete penetration into the secrets of the position.

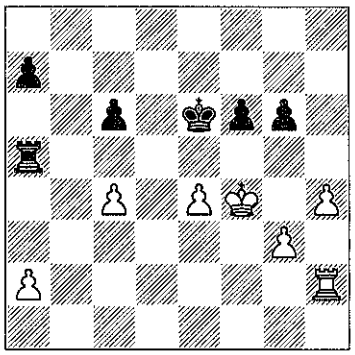
Many years ago I helped Mikhail Botvinnik to hold classes in his school. Once, on Botvinnik's request, I prepared a big endgame exercise for the young Garry Kasparov, which actually included independent analysis of the endgame Capablanca-Alekhine. Garry found another way of preventing the transfer of the black rook to the fifth rank – the move 39 g3!!. I like this move perhaps even more than Alekhine's recommendation, as it contains in addition the active idea 40 h4!. Furthermore I can see no drawbacks: for example, on 39...g5 White has the pleasant choice between 40 h4 and 40 ♖f2 with the threats 41 ♖f5 or 41 ♔d4.

Let us now examine how the game actually continued.

39 h4?! ♖h8
40 g3 ♖h5!
41 ♖h2 ♖a5
42 ♔f4

42 g4? ♔e5; 42 ♔d4? c5+.

42 ... f6! *(D)*



W

The main danger has been liquidated – on 43 g4 there is the reply 43...g5+!. The game now acquires a manoeuvring character. Capablanca skilfully places one problem after another before Alekhine, so that Alekhine has to conduct an extremely alert defence.

43 ♖c2 ♖e5

Otherwise after 44 c5 the rook would be cut off from the kingside and would no longer prevent White playing g3-g4 and h4-h5.

44 c5

A double-edged move, but otherwise White's position cannot be strengthened. White restricts the mobility of the enemy rook, but this also means that his rook will be tied to the defence of the c5 pawn.

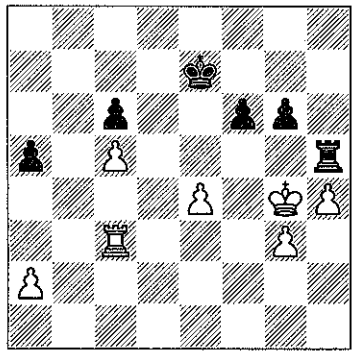
44 ... ♖h5
45 ♖c3

Threatening an exchange of pawns that is advantageous for White: 46 ♖a3 ♖xc5 47 ♖xa7.

45 ... a5!
46 ♖c2 ♖e5
47 ♖c3 ♖h5
48 ♔f3! ♔e7!

Both 48...♔e5? 49 ♖a3 and 48...♖e5? 49 g4 are wrong.

49 ♔g4! *(D)*



B

White wants to strengthen his position by ♔h3 and g3-g4. How can this plan be opposed?

49 ... ♔f7!
50 ♖c4!

In reply to 50 ♔h3 Alekhine had prepared 50...g5! 51 ♔g4 ♔g6. He then exchanges pawns on h4 and moves the rook back and forth between e5 and h5.

50 ... ♔g7!

White's subtle manoeuvres have forced the black king (which has to control the g6-square) to move away from the centre. Capablanca sees that the most suitable moment for transforming his advantage has arrived. He gives up his extra pawn, but in return he activates his rook to the maximum and chases the enemy king back to the last rank.

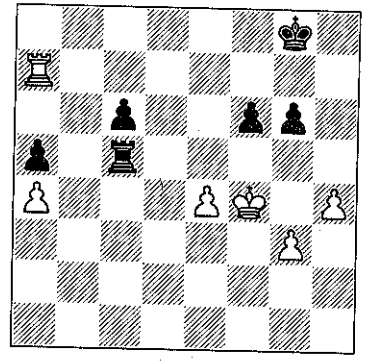
51 ♖d4! ♖xc5
52 ♖d7+ ♔f8

52...♔h6? is no good: 53 ♖f7.

53 ♔f4

53 ♖a7 is more precise, since now Black can play 53...♖c2!?.

53 ... ♔g8
54 ♖a7 ♔f8
55 a4! ♔g8 *(D)*



W

White has strengthened his position to the maximum and now it is time to start decisive operations.

The logical consequence of all his previous strategy would be the variation 56 ♔e3! ♖c3+ 57 ♔d4 ♖xg3 58 ♖xa5 ♔f7! (extremely dangerous is 58...♖g4 59 ♖a7! ♖xh4 60 a5, and with the king cut off along the seventh file the passed a-pawn should decide the outcome) 59 ♖a8 (or 59 h5). In Alekhine's opinion, Black can hold on, but he would at least be forced to conduct an extremely precise defence.

Unfortunately, Capablanca did not want to sharpen the game and chose another plan which led to a draw by force.

56 g4?! g5+!
57 hg ♖xg5!

Of course not 57...fg+ 58 ♔e3 – there is no reason to give White a passed pawn.

58 ♖a6 ♖c5
59 ♔e3 ♔f7
60 ♔d4 ♖g5
61 ♖xc6 ♖xg4
62 ♖c5 ♖g5!

In this position the players agreed to a **draw** in view of the variation 63 ♖xg5 fg 64 ♔e5 ♔g6! 65 ♔d6 ♔f7! (on 65...g4 66 e5 Black would still have to defend the queen ending) 66 ♔e5 (66 e5? ♔e8; 66 ♔d7 ♔f6) 66...♔g6!.

What theme should we link to the above Capablanca-Alekhine endgame? If you stop to think, you

will see that there is no simple answer to this question – as we study this endgame various areas, all equally important for the practical chess player, are revealed to us. Let us recall what we have seen:

1) An excellent example of a rook endgame in practice.
Amongst the multitude of typical endgame assessments and techniques which the players used I want to single out one of the relatively less trivial ideas, which is here expressed extremely clearly. An open line which a rook strives to occupy can be not only a file, as is usually the case, but also, as here, a rank.

2) A model of precise defence.
It is instructive to follow how Alekhine, not losing his presence of mind in a difficult position, move by move patiently solved all the problems that arose before him.

3) Different aspects of the problem of exploiting an advantage.
Here there are several points to be made: the importance of searching for and then frustrating your opponent's counterplay (at the very beginning of the endgame); maximum strengthening of White's position before changing the pattern of the game; timely transformation of an advantage (move 51); finally, the crucial importance of, at some moment or other (move 56), rejecting further positional manoeuvres and selecting a concrete variation based on precise calculation.

4) A demonstration of the importance of prophylactic thinking.
Without this, of course, it would be impossible to find the brilliant solution on move 39. Even after that Alekhine's defence was based on consideration of all his opponent's active plans and rigorous opposition to them.

5) Food for thought on chess players of an intuitive mode of thought.
We saw what decisions for them are difficult or simply impossible. The conclusion is clear: even if you have fine intuition, you should still develop your ability to immerse yourself in the concrete details of a position and, if necessary, to calculate variations precisely.

For a chess player it is very important to assess objectively the strengths and weaknesses of the opponent he is about to play. This assessment can be made after analysing his previous games. Some of them can be especially informative.

In the 1920s Alekhine was preparing for his match for the world title against Capablanca. This is what he noted at the end of the New York tournament in 1924.

"At this tournament I made one very reassuring observation, a real discovery for me. The point is that, although in our first game Capablanca outplayed me in the opening, achieved a winning position in the middlegame and preserved a significant part of his advantage in the rook endgame, in the end he still let slip the win and had to settle for a draw. That gave me food for thought, if you consider that Capablanca really wanted to win this game, as he was trying to catch up Lasker, who was leading the tournament and who just the previous day had won against me. I was convinced that, had I been in Capablanca's place, I would have won the game without fail. In other words, I noted in my opponent a small weakness: he becomes less certain when he is faced by stiff resistance! I had already discovered earlier that Capablanca sometimes let slip minor inaccuracies, but I did not suspect that he could not rid himself of this failing even when all his forces were concentrated on the task at hand. That was an extremely important discovery for the future!"

Later on, in his famous article *The New York tournament of 1927 as a prologue to the world championship match in Buenos Aires*, Alekhine again emphasized the significance of his game against Capablanca. "This game, in fact, was the starting point for my understanding of the chess-playing individuality of Capablanca."

I now give you a few more of Alekhine's assessments of the style of his historical opponent, all of which are confirmed by the endgame we examined. They may seem excessively severe, which to some extent is explained by the extremely strained personal relations between the two champions. Nevertheless, objectively these assessments seem to me to be true (of course, only on a large scale, taking into account the extremely high level of the chess that is at issue).

"... Capablanca is by no means an exceptional master of the endgame; his skills in this stage of the game are above all technical in nature, and other masters in some areas of the endgame are clearly overtaking him or have overtaken him (for example, Rubinstein in rook endings)."

"... In Capablanca's games over the years you can observe ever-decreasing penetration into the details of the position, and the reason

for this is an unshakeable (I am still talking about the period up to Buenos Aires) belief in the infallibility of his intuition. The saddest thing for Capablanca is that this system of his almost without exception proved sufficient to find 'good' moves, as in positional terms it was faced by more or less feeble opposition. As a result of getting away with moves which were not the best, he on the one hand grew unaccustomed to the concentration during play which is the only guarantee against elementary oversights, and on the other hand his self-assurance grew infinitely and became almost self-deification..."

11 Analysis of a Game

Mark Dvoretsky

At the 1990 world under-14 championship Vasia Emelin took second place, trailing behind only the renowned Judit Polgar. He annotated in detail one of his games, against the Romanian player Gabriel Schwartzman. Today we will analyse this game together.

Why this game? Well, first of all it is always interesting to come into contact with really honest analysis. You know, when you read phrases like 'such-and-such a move deserved attention', there is nothing to talk about. Yes, it probably did deserve attention. It's quite another matter when the commentator tries to decide what really was correct and what was wrong. You may agree or disagree with Emelin's assertions, but there is at least something to think about here.

Secondly, this game fits in nicely with the basic theme of our session. From the opening the game immediately entered an endgame favourable for White. Throughout the game Emelin was faced by the problem of the technical exploitation of an advantage.

Emelin – Schwartzman
Fond du Lac Wch U-14 1990
French Defence

1	**e4**	**e6**
2	**d4**	**d5**
3	**♘d2**	**♘f6**
4	**e5**	**♘fd7**
5	**c3**	**c5**
6	**♗d3**	**♘c6**
7	**♘e2**	**cd**
8	**cd**	**f6**
9	**ef**	**♘xf6**
10	**♘f3**	**♗d6**
11	**0-0**	**♕c7**
12	**♗g5**	**0-0**
13	**♗h4**	

Dvoretsky. Note the opening variation. White has chosen one of the most insidious plans against the system played by his opponent. This is the point: White does not insert the moves 12 ♘c3 a6. I first saw this line in the game Zapata-Chernin, Subotica IZ 1987.

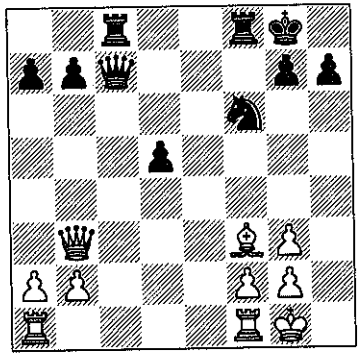
White threatens the exchange of dark-squared bishops by 14 ♗g3, which is favourable for him, for example: 13...♘g4 14 ♗g3 (but not 14 h3? ♖xf3!). The standard

reaction 13...♘h5 is dubious in view of 14 ♕c2, when 14...g6 is bad: 15 ♗xg6! hg 16 ♕xg6+ ♘g7 17 ♘g5. There remains only the freeing central advance ...e6-e5, but then there appears in the black camp an isolated pawn on d5, which in the coming endgame will be a weakness.

13	**...**	**e5**
14	**de**	**♘xe5**
15	**♘xe5**	**♗xe5**
16	**♗g3**	**♗xg3**

Emelin. In one of the earlier rounds of the World Championship I reached the same position. My opponent Zifroni played **16...♗g4**. He exchanged on e2 and I quickly managed to attack the d5-pawn.

17 ♕b3 (**D.**: 17 ♖c1 ♕d6 18 f3 ♗d7 19 ♕d2 is strong, with the threat 20 f4) **17...♗xe2 18 ♗xe2 ♗xg3 19 hg ♖ac8** (**D.**: 19...♕b6!?) **20 ♗f3** *(D)*



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Zifroni sacrificed a pawn, but did not receive sufficient compensation.

20...♕c4 21 ♕xb7 ♖f7 22 ♕b3 ♕xb3 23 ab ♖c2 24 ♖ab1 ♖b7 25 ♖fe1!. Now I am intending 26 ♖e3; Black cannot take on b3 because of ♗d1.

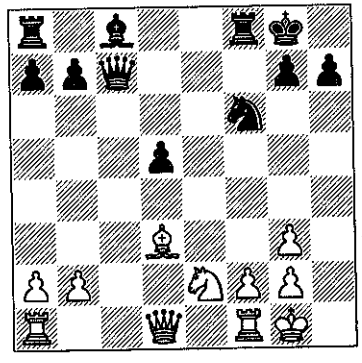
25...♖d2 26 ♖ed1 ♖xd1+ 27 ♗xd1 ♘e4.

At this point I made a mistake: **28 ♗g4?**. It was necessary to play 28 ♖c1 ♘d2 29 ♖c3 ♖e7 30 ♗g4 ♖e1+ 31 ♔h2 ♘f1+ 32 ♔h3 ♔f7 33 ♗f5 g6 34 ♖c7+ ♔f6 35 ♗d3 with a clear advantage.

Yusupov. And why did you play a different move in the game; what caused the error?

E. I thought the move I played was better; I just didn't notice some elementary detail in my calculations.

17 hg! *(D)*



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D. Strange as it may seem, it appears that this natural recapture is a novelty! In the game Zapata-Chernin already mentioned, and in the two earlier games that I managed to discover, played by Radulov and Smyslov against Vaganian (Leningrad 1977), White took on g3 with the knight, which is a little weaker. It was precisely the move 17 hg! that Yusupov and I once analysed together and, as I remember, we failed to come up with a clear path to equality for Black.

Y. Maybe Black should steer clear of the subsequent exchanges and play the middlegame. Say, 17...♗d7, then ...♕d6, hoping in the future to organize an attack by ...♘g4 if the opportunity presents itself. Here too White's position is preferable, but in the endgame, clearly, his advantage is greater, and in addition his opponent has no chance of creating counterplay.

17	**...**	**♕b6**
18	**♕b3**	**♕xb3**
19	**ab**	**♗d7**

E. 19...a5 20 b4 results in the loss of a pawn after, for example, 20...b6 21 ba ba (21...♖xa5 22 ♖xa5 ba 23 ♖a1 ♘g4 24 f4) 22 b4 a4 23 ♘c3 ♗d7 24 b5 ♖fb8 25 ♖xa4 ♖xa4 26 ♘xa4, and 26...♗xb5? is impossible because of the reply 27 ♖b1.

20 b4!

I am preventing the move ...a5.

Y. This is an important point. If Black could put a pawn on a5 without being punished he would solve his problems.

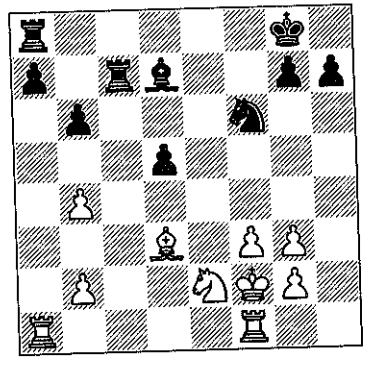
20 ... a6

E. My opponent is afraid that I will fix the a7-pawn by playing b4-b5. He intends to exchange bishops on b5 if he gets the chance.

He could defend in a different way: 20...♖fc8, then ...♖c7 and ...b7-b6, but this still would not change the assessment of the position.

Y. Do not rush. In the endgame it is always very important how you arrange your pawns. Show us the variations that you analysed at home.

E. 20...♖fc8 21 f3 ♖c7 22 ♔f2 b6 *(D)*



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23 ♖a6 ♗c8 24 ♖a3 a5 25 ♖fa1 ♖ca7 (after 25...♖b8 26 ba ba 27

♖1a2 ♖a7 28 ♖xa5 ♖xa5 29 ♖xa5 ♖xb2 30 ♖a8 White wins) 26 ♔e3 ♗d7 27 ♔d4 ♔f7 28 ♘c3 ♔e6 29 ♗b5! – after the exchange of bishops it is not clear how the pawn weaknesses can be defended.

D. In the variation found by Emelin there are several instructive points relating to the technique of exploiting an advantage. For example, the timely centralization of the king, the transformation of an advantage at the end (the exchange of the opponent's passive bishop in order to 'work over' his pawns). The move 23 ♖a6! is characteristic. You could move the rook to a3 immediately, but it is useful to lure the black bishop to a worse square first.

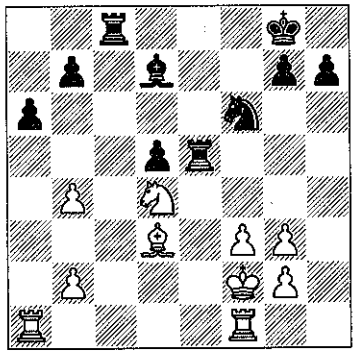
Y. It is not essential to play 29 ♗b5. It is tempting first to improve your position on the kingside: 29 g4. However, your selection here is a matter of taste.

Let's go back a little, to the position after 23 ♖a6. Black has one other idea – 23...♖f8!? (instead of 23...♗c8). It is desirable to defend the a7-pawn with the rooks from the side. Of course, problems remain for Black here as well: 24 ♖fa1 ♘g4+ 25 ♔g1 ♘e5 26 ♖xa7 ♖xa7 27 ♖xa7 ♘xd3 28 ♖xd7 ♘xb4. White still stands better – his rook is more active, and Black has more pawn weaknesses. But even so, perhaps this is how Black should have defended.

21 ♘d4

D. White blockades the isolated pawn. But, as Larsen noted in his time, you should always examine the more direct plan as well – the attempt to take the pawn. In this case that means 21 ♖a5!? followed by ♖d1 and ♘f4.

21	**...**	**♖ac8**
22	**f3**	**♖fe8**
23	**♔f2**	**♖e5** *(D)*



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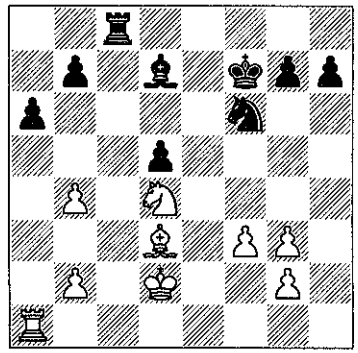
24 ♖fe1?

E. I wanted to transfer the king to the centre, but this move is not the best; 24 ♖fc1! is stronger. If 24...♖ee8, then simply 25 ♖c5 with the advantage. The attempt at counterplay by 24...♖f8 does not work, since White replies 25 ♖c7. The check on g4 clearly gives nothing; 25...♗b5 also bad is due to 26 ♘xb5 ab 27 ♖xb7 ♘e4+ 28 ♔g1 ♘xg3 29 ♖aa7 ♖g5 30 ♗xb5. After 25...♗c8 there follows 26 ♖ac1, then the king moves away to g1, and it is not clear why Black has allowed the rook to the seventh rank.

Y. Here a simple principle operates: in the endgame, the open file further away from the king is more important (but in the middlegame this principle is reversed). White should therefore fight for the c-file and not exchange the rook on e5, which is placed rather senselessly.

24	**...**	**♖xe1**
25	**♔xe1**	**♔f7**
26	**♔d2** *(D)*	



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26 ... g6?!

D. It is amusing – Black has put all his pawns on squares of the same colour as his own bishop. If you remember, at the previous session we analysed the game Polugaevsky-Mecking from Mar del Plata 1971. There Mecking defended in a similar way and it led to no good for him.

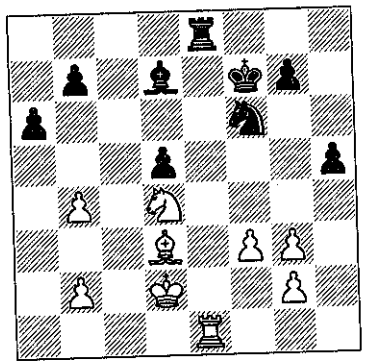
Y. The position is worth pausing over more carefully. We now meet an extremely important problem in the endgame – how to arrange your pawns. The fate of the game may depend on how Black decides to arrange his pawns.

If we are guided by purely structural considerations, then the move 26...h5!? deserves serious attention. For White it would be useful to stretch his opponent's defence by creating objects for attack on the kingside. From this point of view, White's advance g3-g4 is extremely unpleasant. The move ...h7-h5 prevents it. On ...h7-h6 Black has more problems in the knight endgame – after the exchange of bishops it will be hard to chase the knight away from the f5-square.

It was probably worthwhile for White to advance the pawn to g4 even on the previous move, instead of 26 ♔d2.

E. If 26...h5 I just strengthen my position by playing 27 ♖e1 with the threat 28 ♖e5.

Y. Yes, you're suggesting the most natural plan. Let's have a look. Black is probably right to offer the exchange of rooks by 27...♖e8 *(D)*.



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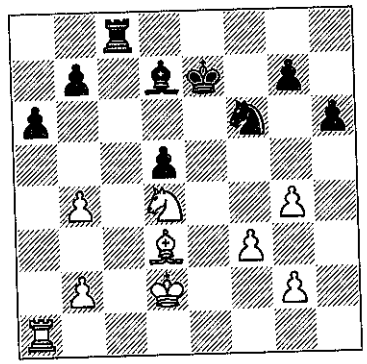
E. Then I play 28 ♖c1, and if 28...♖c8, then 29 ♖xc8 ♗xc8 30 ♗f5.

D. That is not dangerous in view of 30...♗xf5 31 ♘xf5 ♘e8, then 32...♔e6. White should probably not exchange on c8 – 29 ♖c5! is stronger. If 29...♔e7, then 30 ♗f5 is extremely unpleasant. Black needs to think about the move 29...g5!?, removing the g7-pawn from attack.

Y. Vasia analysed the move ...h7-h6. Let's check his analysis.

E. If you play 26...h6, then after 27 g4 ♔e7 *(D)* I exchange bishops on the f5-square. The knight will reach f5, and it cannot be chased away from there. Sooner or later White will get to the weak pawns g7 or b7. My opponent therefore decided to cover up the f5-square immediately.

D. Is it all so clear? In your annotations to the game you give the



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variation 28 ♗f5 ♗xf5 29 ♘xf5+ ♔f8 30 ♔d3. Let's continue it: 30...♖c4 31 b5 ♘d7! – Black obtains counterplay.

Y. The exchange of bishops on f5, although it creates dangerous threats, does not win the game on its own. It has minuses as well – vulnerable points appear in the white camp, for example the c4-square is weakened.

E. White should probably operate more precisely. I suggest 28 ♖e1+ ♔d6 29 b3. The threat of 30 ♗f5 is renewed.

D. Black would have to reply 29...♖e8 30 ♖c1 (30 ♖xe8 ♘xe8) 30...♖c8.

E. But then 31 ♖xc8 ♗xc8 32 ♗f5.

D. No matter, there is a defence for the time being: 32...♗d7 33 ♗xd7 ♔xd7 34 ♘f5 ♘e8.

E. After 35 ♔d3 White has a clear advantage.

D. Black's position is certainly unpleasant, but he retains some counterplay. The obvious move is 35...♔c6, intending to attack the white pawns on the b-file.

Y. It turns out that the move b2-b3 did not only have advantages!

D. The exchange of bishops on f5 is a double-edged decision, as the 'bad' black bishop is being exchanged. Of course, White receives important squares in return and attacks the enemy pawns, but if Black manages to parry the immediate threats, his position could improve.

E. One more try. I won't give check on e1, I'll play 28 ♘b3.

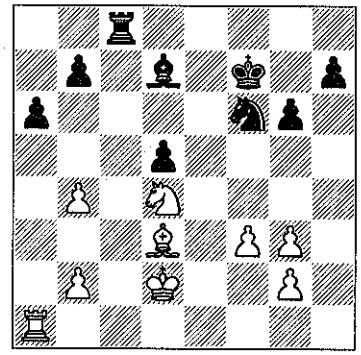
Y. It seems that we've already talked you out of the exchange of bishops. Alright then, let's check this one. The action Black takes is obvious to begin with: 28...♔d6 29 ♘c5 ♗c6, and if 30 ♖e1, then Black plays 30...♖e8. On 30 ♗g6 I play 30...♖c7, in order to have the move ...♖e7.

All the same, the exchange of bishops on f5 is a good idea; it just needs to be put into practice more precisely – let's say, 28 b3 ♔d6 29 ♗f5. Black should move his knight from f6 (it is not doing anything there), but where to?

Let's draw our conclusions. On both 26...h6 and 26...h5 White keeps the better chances, but Black can defend. It seems to me that, of all the pawn moves on the king-side, he chose the worst one.

Note that in many variations the defensive plan is linked to the transfer of the king to the centre, to d6, or to exploiting the open c-file. All these resources became available because White exchanged the wrong rook on the 24th move.

Let's now return to the game *(D)*.



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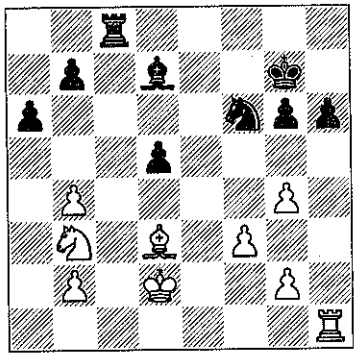
27 g4 ♘e8

Y. The knight has no prospects on f6 – it needs to be moved from there. The only question is whether to do this immediately, or whether to prevent the move g4-g5 first.

E. It was better for Black to choose 27...h6. On h7 the pawn is weaker than on h6. Then I intended to play 28 ♖h1 ♔g7 29 ♘b3 *(D)*.

On 29...♖e8 there follows 30 ♘c5 ♗c8 (30...♗c6 is bad in view



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of 31 ♖c1 ♖c8 32 ♘xa6 ba 33 ♗xa6 ♖c7 34 b5) 31 ♔c3 ♘d7 32 ♔d4. If 32...♘xc5 33 bc ♗e6 34 ♖e1 then the position is totally won (b2-b4, ♖e5, ♗d3-c2-b3), and if 32...♘f6, then 33 ♖c1 followed by ♘a4, and the rook penetrates along the c-file.

Y. Even to a casual observer it is obvious that White's advantage has increased sharply. However, we still need to examine the active defence: 32...♘e5 with the threat 33...♘c6+.

E. The check can be prevented by the move 33 b5!.

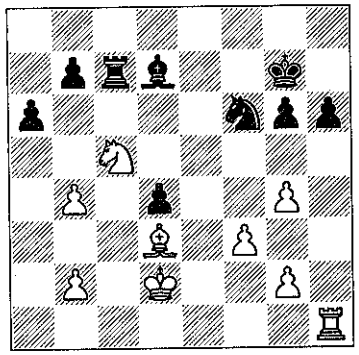
Y. Yes, after 33...♘xd3 34 ♘xd3 ab 35 ♖e1 White has a decisive advantage. What else can we think up? Let's try 33...b6!? 34 ♘xa6 ♘xd3 35 ♔xd3 ♗d7. Then 36 ♔d2 ♗xb5 37 ♘c7 ♖e2+ is no use. If 36 ♔d4 the pawn cannot be taken, but the move 36...♖e2 has appeared. Black has unexpectedly obtained counterplay. This kind of active possibility must always be reckoned with.

D. White still preserves a large advantage by 36 ♘c7 ♖c8 37 ♖c1 ♗xb5+ 38 ♔d4 or 38 ♔d2. Check on e6 is threatened, and the d5-pawn is under attack. Moreover, if White doesn't want to enter complications, he can play 32 ♘xd7 (instead of 32 ♔d4) 32...♗xd7 33 ♔d4.

E. Another arrangement is no better for Black: 29...♖c7 30 ♘c5 ♗c8 31 ♔e3 b6 32 ♘a4...

D. Wait a minute, you're overlooking 31...a5!.

Y. In addition White should reckon with 30...d4!? *(D)* (instead of 30...♗c8). The threat 31...♘d5 appears.



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D. Remember: earlier, when analysing the move 26...h6, Vasia underestimated the rook move to c4 which actually gave Black excellent counter-chances. When you have the better endgame, you must all the time check to make sure your opponent doesn't wriggle out and become active. It seems to me that it is a characteristic of Vasia's to underestimate his opponent's possibilities. This is dangerous, and it is bound to lose him many points, especially when he is exploiting an advantage. If you miss something, counterplay can flare up instantly, and there is nothing left of your former advantage.

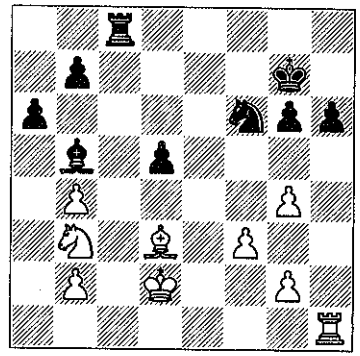
E. After 30...d4 White can play 31 ♖e1 ♘d5 32 ♖e4.

Y. Then I would have to reply 32...♘xb4 33 ♖xd4 ♘xd3. I have exchanged pawns – that is an achievement for Black. 33 ♖e7+! ♔f6 34 ♖xd7 ♖xc5 is more dangerous. The rook ending after 35 ♖xb7 ♘xd3 36 ♔xd3 is worse, of course, but it by no means has to be lost.

D. One more defensive plan should be examined: 29...♗b5!? *(D)*. For example, 30 ♘c5 ♗xd3 31 ♔xd3 a5.

E. Then 32 ♘e6+ ♔f7 33 ♘d4.

D. Of course, after 33...ab 34 ♖xh6 the position is in White's favour, but Black retains some counterplay: 34...♖c1 or 34...♔g7 followed by ...♘d7. In difficult situations it is often worth defending in



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this way – changing the pattern of the game sharply, allowing some material or positional concessions in order to activate your forces.

White can double his opponent's pawns: 30 ♗xb5 ab 31 ♘c5. I had in mind 31...b6 32 ♘e6+ ♔f7 33 ♘d4 ♖c4 34 ♔d3 h5.

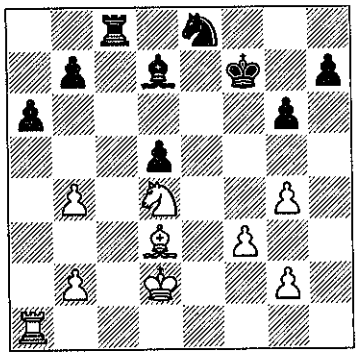
Y. Unfortunately, after 35 b3! White has a large advantage.

D. Yes, that's true. It seems that the best defensive plan is still 29...♖c7!.

I have some doubts about 29 ♘b3. Is it right for the knight to leave the excellent square d4? In my opinion, 29 ♖e1 ♔f7 30 ♖e5 ♖e8 (the threat was 31 g5) 31 ♖xe8 and 32 ♔e3 deserves attention.

Y. Whatever difficulties await Black later on, it is clear that the move 27...h6 should have been played. The prospect of the kingside squeeze by g4-g5 is just too unpleasant.

Now we return to the game *(D)*.



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28 ♖a5?

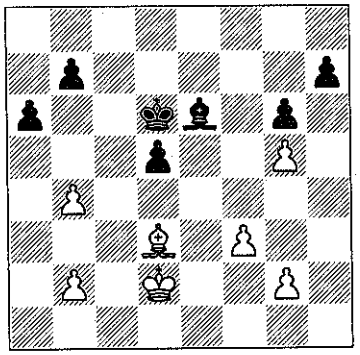
E. It was necessary to play 28 g5! first, fixing the h7-pawn, and only then to think where to put the rook: to transfer it to c5 or to put it on h1.

28 ... ♗e6

Another possibility is 28...♘c7. Then after 29 g5 ♔e7, it is best to withdraw the rook to a1 with the threat of 31 ♖h1. If White plays the imprecise 30 ♖c5?!, then after 30...♔d6 31 ♖c1 ♘e6 (White can meet 31...♔e5 32 ♔e3 ♘e6 by 33 f4+!, when 33...♘xf4? is impossible due to 34 ♘f3+) 32 ♖xc8 ♗xc8 33 ♘xe6 ♗xe6 *(D)* we reach a won bishop ending.

Y. Here you have done some very deep and interesting analysis; please show it to us.

D. It's a good thing this analysis has been done! The simplest is just



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to stop and say: 'White has an advantage'. Yes, he does have some advantage, but is it enough for victory? In game situations there is no particular reason to search for an answer to this question – it is enough to realize whether your position has improved or deteriorated, whether you have extracted from it the maximum possible. But when a position arises that can be evaluated precisely, try to establish the truth in your analysis.

34 ♔e3 ♗f5 35 ♗e2 ♔e5 36 f4+ ♔d6 37 ♗f3 b6.

E. Black needs to take his pawns off light squares.

38 ♔d4 ♗e6 39 g3 a5 40 ba ba. Now I want to seize the h3-c8 diagonal with the bishop and set my kingside pawns rolling.

41 ♗g2 (zugzwang) **41...♗f7 42 ♗h3 ♗e8 43 ♗c8.**

Y. Black would like to force the bishop away from the c8-square by

43...♔c7, but there then follows 44 ♗e6. Now if he could reach the same position with the bishop on f7 ... but I can't see how that can be achieved.

D. If 42...♗g8 (instead of the move 42...♗e8), then 43 f5!.

43...♗f7.

E. My opponent must reckon with the move f4-f5. For example, on 43...♗a4 I have the decisive 44 f5 ♗c2 45 f6 ♗b3 46 f7 ♔e7 47 ♗e6 and 48 ♗xd5.

44 g4 ♗e8 45 ♗b7 ♗f7. After 45...♗d7 46 ♗xd5 ♗xg4 47 ♗g8 Black loses the h7-pawn.

46 f5 ♗g8 47 ♗a6 ♗f7 48 ♗d3 ♗e8 49 ♗b1 ♗f7. Instead 49...a4 is bad due to 50 ♗c2 with zugzwang.

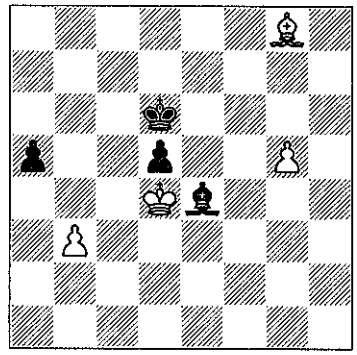
50 ♗a2 ♗g8 51 ♗b3 ♗f7 52 ♗a4.

Again zugzwang.

52...♗g8 53 fg (53 ♗e8 ♔e7) **53...hg 54 ♗e8 ♗e6** (54...♗h7 55 ♗f7) **55 ♗xg6 ♗xg4 56 ♗f7 ♗f3.** Now playing 57 g6? is premature: 57...♗h5 58 ♗e8 ♗g4 59 g7 ♗e6 60 ♗g6 ♗g8 61 ♗f5 ♔e7 62 ♔e5 d4! with a draw.

57 ♗g8! ♗e4 58 b3 *(D)*

58...♗c2 (58...♗f3 59 g6, or 58...♔c6 59 ♔e5 with the threat ♗g8-e6-f5) **59 ♗xd5 a4 60 ba ♗xa4 61 g6 ♗c2 62 g7 ♗h7 63 ♗a2 ♔e7 64 ♔e5 ♔e8 65 ♔f6,** and White wins.



B

D. A great piece of analysis. The white bishop wanders all over the board. The main variation is more than 30 moves long!

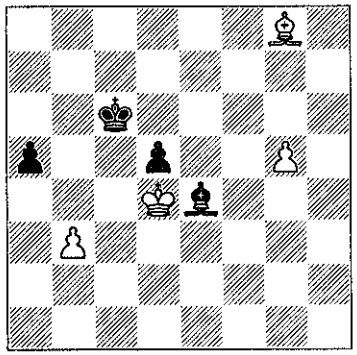
But is it all correct? In one of his articles Bent Larsen asserted that long variations are never error-free; when he sees them a murderous instinct awakens within him and he wants to bury the whole analysis immediately.

Y. Let's return to the position after 58 b3. The white b-pawn is vulnerable – that is suspicious. Given that everything else loses, let's try allowing the white king to reach e5.

58...♔c6! *(D)* 59 ♔e5 ♔c5 60 ♗e6 ♔b4!. Black's task is to give up the bishop for the g-pawn. White has two possible moves: 61 ♗f5 and 61 ♗xd5.

a) 61 ♗f5 ♗xf5 (61...♔xb3 62 g6) 62 ♔xf5 d4. The pawns queen at the same time.

b) 61 ♗xd5 ♗c2 (or 61...♗g6 62 ♔f6 ♗c2), and how can White strengthen his position?



W

D. Perhaps White should, instead of 59 ♔e5, employ the plan of 59 ♗f7 followed by 60 g6. Now the black bishop doesn't have time to get to h5 via f3. If 59...♔b5 I was intending 60 ♗xd5 ♗g6 61 ♔c3 threatening 62 ♗c4+ and 63 ♗d3.

E. Even simpler is 60 g6 ♗xg6 61 ♗xg6 ♔b4 (61...a4 62 ♗e8+) 62 ♗c2. Absolutely hopeless is 60...♔b4 61 g7 ♗h7 62 ♗xd5 – the white king goes to h6.

Y. Yes, that is true, but I can change my plan of defence too. On 59 ♗f7 I play 59...♔d6! 60 g6 ♔e7 61 ♔e5 ♗c2 with a draw.

It seems that here mutual zugzwangs begin. White can try out 59 ♗e6 (given that on 59...♔b5 60 ♗xd5 we found a win) 59...♔d6 60 ♗f7.

D. Black replies 60...♗f3. We have arrived at the position that we had after the 56th move, only the white pawn has moved to b3.

Y. So, we can't yet see a win. We need to search to find out if White's play can be strengthened. Vasia, look into this at home, and bring your analysis to a conclusion.

We now continue the analysis of the game.

29 b5?!

E. Here I rushed. It was again necessary to fix my opponent's pawn by 29 g5!.

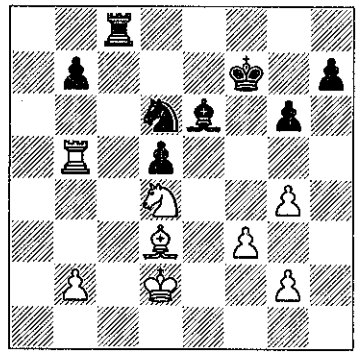
Y. You began activities on the queenside, not having finished matters on the kingside.

E. I miscalculated: I examined 29...ab 30 ♖xb5 ♘d6 31 ♖b6 ♔e7 and thought that I could win a pawn by 32 ♘b5. I missed the reply 32...♖c6.

Y. Even after 32...♘xb5 Black does not lose a pawn (33 ♖xb7+ ♘c7).

29	**...**	**ab**
30	**♖xb5**	**♘d6** *(D)*
31	**♖b6?**	

D. I was observing this game while it was being played. From the side, of course, you don't pick up all the details, but I was still left with some general impressions. I thought that the white rook had wandered somewhere it didn't belong, that it was short of space



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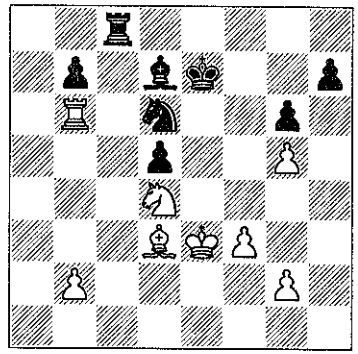


B

amongst the black pieces and pawns, and because of that Black later had excellent chances of saving the game. If Black did not have a knight, the rook would be excellently placed on b6 – it would tie the enemy rook to the defence of the b7-pawn. But the knight on d6 severely restricts the activity of the white rook.

31 ♖a5! is much stronger. The rook goes either to a7 or to h1 via a1. First, of course, it will be necessary to cover the c4-square by playing b2-b3. Useless is 31...♖c4 32 ♘c2, and if 31...♘c4+ 32 ♗xc4 ♖xc4 33 ♔d3 (intending 34 ♖b5) White's advantage is not in doubt.

31	**...**	**♔e7**
32	**g5**	**♗d7**
33	**♔e3** *(D)*	
33	**...**	**♗c6**

D. Schwartzman plays the entire game very passively. I would have preferred 33...♖c1!?. The rook should pester the opponent, not giving him the opportunity to strengthen his position at leisure. Rook activity is one of the important principles of endgame play.

E. White would reply 34 ♘e2, preparing ♔d4 and ♘f4. The reply 34...♖d1 is not available in view of 35 ♘c3.

D. But there is the possibility 34...♖h1! 35 ♔d4 ♗c6 36 ♘c3 ♖h4+ or 36 ♘f4 ♖d1. Your pieces look nice, but it is not easy to make progress – the black rook gets in the way.

E. The move 36 f4 prevents the check from h4.

D. Then, say, 36...♖d1, and 37 ♘c3? ♘f5+ is impossible.

Y. The actual moves are not the point here. It is clear that White has departed from the correct path. His rook on b6 is inactive; it is only attacking the b7-pawn, which is securely defended by minor pieces.

If it stood on a1 all this counterplay would not have arisen, on the contrary, the white rook would itself have generated threats from h1 or e1.

An advantage is usually accumulated thanks to trifles, but it can also be lost due to trifles. So it is here: White has lost a significant portion of his advantage due to the 'trifle' of the unfortunate position of his rook. In the endgame that has arisen, the rooks are the strongest pieces, and their activity has enormous significance. Both players underestimated the importance of this factor.

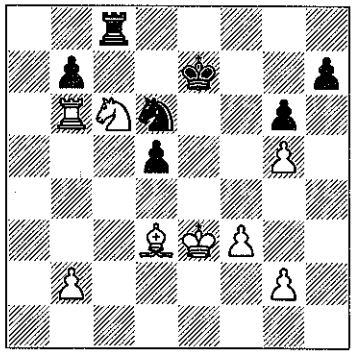
E. It is not essential to play 35 ♔d4 – the rook can be extracted via b4.

D. But then you have to lose time. In addition, the move ♔d4 forces the black bishop to take up a passive position on c6. And if 35 ♖b4 you must always consider the exchange of minor pieces on f5.

34 ♘xc6+? *(D)*

E. I probably should have moved the rook away. I was just sick of playing against this bishop and decided to exchange it.

D. You see, with your rook on the a-file the bishop wouldn't have troubled you in the slightest. Here, however, the bishop restricts the rook, but it still wasn't worth exchanging.



B

34 ... ♖xc6?

E. Good drawing chances were offered by 34...bc!. After 35 ♔d4 the most precise reply is 35...♖c7!.

Weaker is 35...♔d7 36 ♔c5 (36 ♔e5 ♖e8+ 37 ♔f6?? ♖e7 and the king is in a mating net) 36...♖c7 37 ♖b8.

D. Still, the king move looks natural – it frees the rook from the defence of the c6-pawn. I suggest we check 35...♔d7 36 ♔c5 ♘f7!. The enemy king is too strong on c5 – we must try to drive it away. If 37 ♖b7+, then 37...♖c7, and on 37 f4 I reply 37...♘d8 38 f5 ♔c7!. White keeps the better chances, but the game is not one-sided, and the situation becomes fairly tense.

Y. Maybe White should exchange rooks all the same: 37 ♖b7+ ♖c7 38 ♖xc7+ ♔xc7 39 f4.

D. I ought to move the knight to b7, but not necessarily via d8 – I'll try 39...♘d6, holding up f4-f5.

Y. Then 40 g4 ♘b7+ 41 ♔d4 ♔d6 42 f5.

D. The g-pawn will have to be given up, but in exchange Black can become active in the centre: 42...c5+ 43 ♔e3 c4 44 fg hg 45 ♗xg6 ♔e5 followed by ...d5-d4+. If Black can exchange off the queenside, the draw is not too far away.

E. I examined one other defensive idea in the minor-piece ending: when f4-f5 is played, playing ...♘f7, taking on g5 and blockading the remaining white pawn with the knight.

Y. A good plan. It seems that Black really does have good drawing chances.

E. I don't see how White can win even after 35...♖c7. For example: 36 ♖b8 ♖c8 37 ♖xc8 ♘xc8 38 ♔c5 ♔d7 39 f4 ♘d6 40 b4 ♔c7 41 ♗b1 ♔d7 (worse is 41...♘f7 42 b5 cb 43 ♗a2) 42 g4 ♔c7 43 ♔d4 (43 f5 ♘f7) 43...♔d7 44 ♔e5 ♔e7.

Y. Of course, you shouldn't have taken on c6 and allowed Black to connect his pawns – after that it seems that the game should have ended in a draw.

E. Schwartzman didn't have much time left and I wanted to change the position in some way in his time-trouble.

Y. That approach pays off by no means all the time. As a rule, you should aim to make the strongest moves even in your opponent's time-trouble. That is still the most effective strategy.

Show us what happened in the game.

35 ♖b4 ♖c7
36 ♔d4 ♔e6
37 ♖b6 ♖c1 *(D)*

E. My opponent clearly believed me that after 37...♖c6 the position is lost. He should in fact have played this move, but he was in serious time trouble.

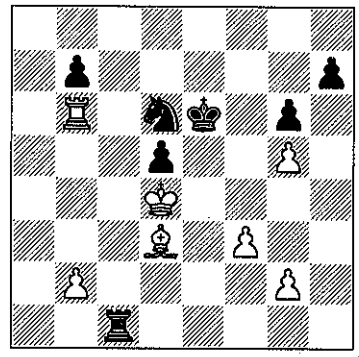
Y. Was the time trouble mutual?

E. No, I still had time left.

Y. And what move was the time control, the fortieth?

E. The fiftieth.

Y. Well, in that case he's in a bad way. It is almost impossible to hold a position like this in time trouble.



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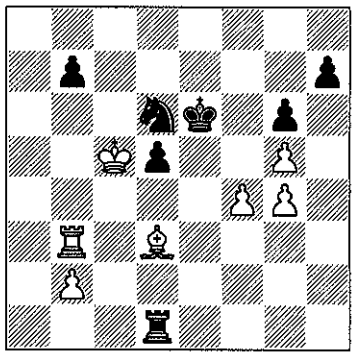
38 f4 ♖d1
39 g4 ♔e7

40 ♖b3

Threatening 41 ♔xd5.

40 ... ♔e6

41 ♔c5 *(D)*



B

41 ... ♖g1

E. The rook ending is hopeless: 41...♘e4+ 42 ♗xe4 de 43 ♖b6+ ♔f7 44 ♖xb7+ ♔e6 (44...♔g8 45 ♖e7) 45 ♖b4 ♖e1 46 ♔d4 e3 47 ♖b3 e2 48 ♖e3+ ♔d6 49 ♔e4 ♖g1 50 ♖xe2 ♖xg4 51 ♖h2.

D. The black king should have moved over to its kingside pawns: 48...♔f7 (instead of 48...♔d6?). For example, 49 ♔e4 ♔f8 50 ♔f3 (if 50 b4, then 50... ♖b1 51 ♖xe2 ♖xb4+) 50...♖f1+ 51 ♔xe2 ♖xf4 with a draw. After 49 ♔e5 ♔g7 50 b4! (50 ♔e6? ♖f1; 50 f5 is met by 50...♔f7! or 50...♖g1) 50...♖b1 51 ♖xe2 ♖xb4 52 ♖d2 ♖b7 (or 52...♖b5+ 53 ♖d5) 53 ♔e6 White probably wins, but this whole variation is rather complicated.

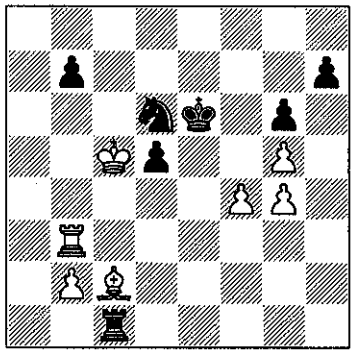
He probably achieves his objective more simply by 47 ♔e4 (instead of 47 ♖b3), and if 47...e2, then 48 ♔f3.

42 ♗c2 ♖c1 *(D)*

Y. 42...♖xg4 loses because of 43 ♖b6. But isn't it possible, by playing 42...♖g2, to give White a bit of trouble? If 43 ♖e3+ ♔d7 44 ♗a4+, then 44...b5. If 43 ♗d3 the rook will return to g1. The assessment of the position is still unclear to me; it was possible to defend in this way.

E. White should still be better.

Y. Yes, but the question now stands on another plane: is there a forced win or can Black defend successfully? His rook has become active and is attacking your pawns. You can't say any more that White has a clear advantage – you need to check in concrete variations whether you can break through your opponent's defence.



W

43 ♖c3 ♖e1

44 ♖h3 ♖e2?

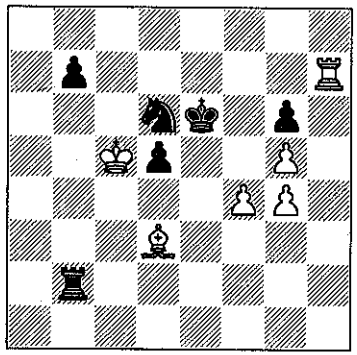
Y. What for? He should have gone back to c1. What would you have done then?

E. I'd have defended the bishop by 45 ♖h2.

Y. Black has the reply 45...♘c4. True, after 46 ♖e2+, 46...♔d7 is bad because of 47 ♗a4+, but you can retreat by 46...♔f7 when 47 ♔xd5? is impossible in view of 47...♖xc2!. The result of the game becomes unclear. By the move 44...♖e2? your opponent played into your hands; he let you activate your bishop. If he hadn't been in time trouble it is likely that you would have had to pay for your earlier positional blunders 28 ♖a5?, 31 ♖b6? and 34 ♘xc6+?.

45 ♗d3 ♖xb2

46 ♖xh7 *(D)*



B

46 ... b6+

E. He could also have tried 46...♘e4+ 47 ♗xe4 de, but I have time to take the g6-pawn and stop the passed e-pawn. For example: 48 ♖g7 e3 49 ♖xg6+ ♔f7 50 ♖f6+ ♔e7 51 f5 ♖g2 52 ♖e6+ ♔f7 53 g6+ ♔g7 54 ♖xe3 ♖xg4 55 ♖e7+ ♔f6 56 ♖f7+ ♔e5 57 g7.

D. White advanced his pawns with tempo, exploiting the position of the enemy king. We need to check 49...♔d7 50 f5 ♖g2. Maybe this is lost too, but maybe not.

Y. That was probably Black's last chance.

47 ♔c6 ♘c8

48 f5+ ♔e5

49 fg ♖b3

50 ♗f5 ♖c3+

51 ♔d7 b5

52 g7 ♘b6+

53 ♔e8 ♖a3

54 g8♕

Black resigned

D. Well, what do you think?

Y. The endgame turned out to be fairly instructive. It contained several interesting points.

The first problem that confronted both players was how to arrange their pawns. First there was a clash on the queenside. With the move b3-b4 White threatened to squeeze his opponent, who found nothing better than to reply ...a7-a6. In theory, with light-squared

bishops it is better to keep your pawns on dark squares.

Then an analogous problem arose with the kingside pawns. It was probably worth playing ...h7-h5 in order to hold up the activation of the white pawns by g3-g4. Black clearly chose the worst set-up and allowed himself to be squeezed.

The point connected with the exchange of rooks is interesting. It is important to remember that in the endgame you must aim to seize with the rook the file further away from the enemy king so that it cannot prevent rook penetration along this file.

The game could have provided a clear demonstration of the principle of two weaknesses, but Vasia did not play g4-g5 in time to fix the second weakness on the kingside (the first weakness was the isolated pawn in the centre). If he had played this move before making the advance b4-b5, then he would surely have broken down his opponent's defence in more convincing fashion. At the same time he broke the rule 'Do not rush', which requires you to strengthen your position as much as possible before starting active operations which irreversibly change the character of the game.

The basic theme of the subsequent stage of the game is rook activity, which is extremely important even outside rook endings. White put his rook on b6 where it did almost nothing. Black in his turn also delayed the activation of his rook.

As usual in endgames, the players more than once had to evaluate the effectiveness of the possible piece exchanges. And by no means all the time were they up to this task.

I was very impressed by the analysis of the bishop ending. No matter that we found a weak point in it. When solving complex problems such blemishes are practically inevitable.

The commentary is on the whole very substantial, but I have the impression that Vasia got a bit tired towards the end and stopped paying attention to his opponent's resources.

By the way, in positions like this, where you have a small advantage and your opponent is deprived of counterplay, it is very important to keep an eye on his potential activity and not allow him to initiate double-edged skirmishes. Excellent examples of this can be found in Karpov's games. There is no way he would have allowed Black to get the rook out to c1.

D. In this case, underestimating the opponent's possibilities was reflected more in the variations and less in the game itself, perhaps because Black played passively. However, in other games from the same tournament this same shortcoming hindered Emelin a great deal. Just recall his game against Zifroni, the first half of which we saw. He even managed to lose a clearly better endgame with an extra pawn! In the last round, after outplaying his opponent in excellent style, Vasia made a gross blunder, let the win slip, and as a result trailed Judit Polgar by half a point.

When I was watching the game I sensed that White's technique for exploiting his advantage was poor, but this impression could have been wrong – it was very interesting for me to check it by seeing the analysis. Now we know that White really did make a few positional blunders. Exploitation of an advantage is, in my opinion, one of Emelin's weakest sides, which is usually the case with players who tend to underestimate their opponent's resources. He must tackle this problem seriously.

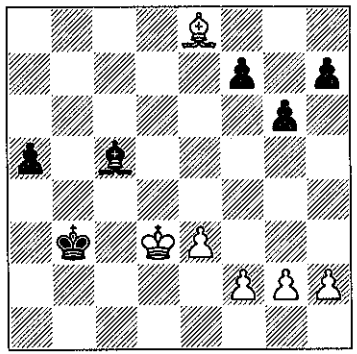
12 Examples from Games by Pupils of the School

Artur Yusupov

As we have already remarked in our previous books, one of the most important resources a chess player has at his disposal for self-improvement is serious analysis of his own games. The examples given below were annotated by our pupils and became the subject of discussion during group or individual lessons. The young players' analysis was subjected to critical evaluation. The results of these discussions make up the basic material of this chapter. I hope that readers will also find it useful to get to know the endings given below, among which you will find both successful solutions and typical mistakes.

Opposite-coloured bishops

Two examples from the games of Vadim Zviagintsev provide a good supplement to the chapter on the theory of endings with opposite-coloured bishops.



W

Baikov – Zviagintsev (14)
Moscow 1990

After the natural

49 ♗xf7+

Black had to defend passively, since 49...♔b2? loses in view of 50 f4 a4 51 e4 a3 52 e5 a2 53 ♗xa2 ♔xa2 54 ♔c4 ♗a3 55 g4 ♔b2 56 f5 gf 57 gf ♔c2 58 f6 ♗b2 59 f7 ♗a3 60 e6, and Black is defenceless against the transfer of the king to d7 followed by e7.

The correct

49 ... ♔b4

led to an interesting situation. It is hard to give a straightforward assessment. White is expecting to make two connected passed pawns quickly. On the other hand, we already know about the strong *drawing tendencies* of endgames like this: a minimal material advantage can prove to be insufficient for victory.

Let us try to note the particular features of this position. Two details will help Black to defend himself:

1) The passed a-pawn can divert or restrict the mobility of the white bishop – at the same time it indirectly defends the kingside pawns, which are on light squares.

2) The corner square h8 is inaccessible to the opponent's bishop. This last factor may enable Black to save the game with a lone king against king, bishop and h-pawn – an important defensive resource in many endgames.

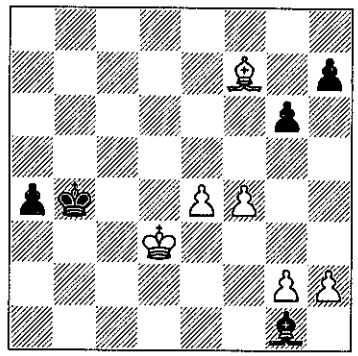
In theory, it is already possible to predict the future course of events. White will push his f- and e-pawns, if necessary strengthening them by advancing the g-pawn. Black must try to slow down this assault and ideally achieve a blockade on the dark squares. However, the black king is poorly placed and cannot for the moment take part in the defence.

50 f4 a4
51 e4

White intends e5 followed by ♔e4, g2-g4, f4-f5. Nothing was achieved by 51 ♗g8 in view of 51...a3.

51 ... ♗g1! *(D)*

The already familiar technique of 'taking aim' at pawns (see the chapter on opposite-coloured bishops).



W

52 h3

52 e5 looks more logical, but after **52...a3**, Black still holds the position, according to analysis by Zviagintsev. Let's examine his variations: **53 h3** (53 h4 is no improvement in view of 53...h5!? 54 ♔e4 ♗f2 55 f5 gf+ 56 ♔xf5 ♗xh4 with a draw) **53...♔c5 54 ♔e4 ♗f2! 55 ♗a2 ♗h4 56 g4** (56 ♔f3? ♔d4!).

Now 56...♗e1? is bad due to 57 f5 ♗h4 58 f6 ♗g5 59 ♗b3 ♗h4 60

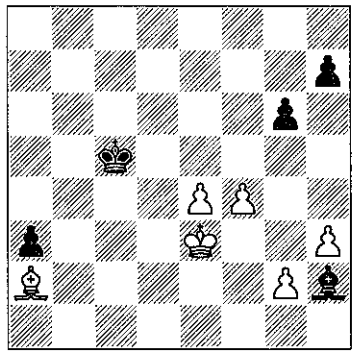
♔f4 h6 61 f7 ♗e7 62 h4, followed by 63 h5, and the white king breaks through to the g8-square. It is essential to play **56...♔c6!**, bringing Black's king closer to the passed pawns. It turns out that even two connected passed pawns are insufficient for victory: **57 f5 ♔d7 58 ♔f4 ♔d8 59 f6 h6! 60 ♔e4 ♔e8 61 ♗b3 ♔d8 62 ♔d5** (or 62 ♔d3 ♗g5 63 ♔c2 a2!! 64 ♗xa2 ♗f4 65 e6 ♗e5) **62...♗g5 63 ♔e6 ♔e8 64 ♗a2 ♗h4 65 ♗b1!? ♔f8 66 ♔d7 ♗g5 67 ♔c6 ♔f7 68 ♗a2+ ♔e8 69 ♗b3 ♔d8 70 ♔c5 ♗h4** (not 70...♔c7?, which is met by 71 f7 ♗e7+ 72 ♔d5 and 73 ♔e6) **71 ♔b4 a2!! 72 ♗xa2 ♗g3 73 e6 ♗e5 74 f7** (74 e7+ ♔e8) **74...♔e7** with a clear draw.

It is worth taking note of the diversion sacrifice of a pawn, which enabled Black to construct an impregnable *fortress*. This typical technique, which occurred during the analysis of the study by Timman, illustrates well the principle that *the specific nuances of a position are more important than material.*

52 ... ♗h2?!

In the game this move paid off totally, but Black should also have reckoned with 53 f5!. Then after 53...g5 or 53...a3 White has the unpleasant 54 ♔d4. After 53...gf 54 ef ♔c5 (54...♗e5 55 ♔e4 ♗f6 56 ♔d5 a3 57 ♔d6) 55 ♔e4 ♔d6 there follows 56 f6. Instead of the text, 52...a3 53 e5 ♔c5 was more solid, bringing the game to one of the variations examined above.

53 ♔e3?! ♔c5
54 ♗a2 a3 *(D)*



W

55 g4

Greater practical chances were offered by 55 ♔f3 followed by 56 g3.

55 ... ♔c6!
56 e5

Both 56 h4 h6! and 56 g5!? are insufficient for victory. The move in the game allows Black to simplify the position immediately.

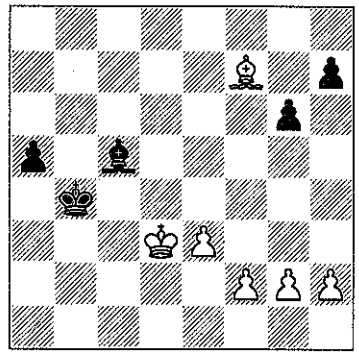
56 ... g5!
57 fg ♗xe5
58 ♔e4 ♔d6
59 ♔f5 ♗g7
60 h4 ♔e7
61 h5 ♗c3
62 g6

62 h6 is answered by 62...♗d2!.

62 ... h6
63 g5 hg
64 h6 ♔f8

and here the players agreed to a **draw.**

You should note here the generally skilful play of Zviagintsev, who managed to coordinate his forces quickly and spoil White's plan by attacking his pawns at the most appropriate moment. But did White use all his resources? Let's return to the position after Black's 49th move.



W

In the chapter 'Exploiting an advantage' Mark Dvoretsky, when talking about the technique of exploiting an advantage, emphasized the important principle 'Do not rush!'. One aspect of this principle is paying attention to details. *You should not spurn even the slightest opportunity to strengthen your position or weaken your opponent's.*

In the diagram position White had the opportunity to weaken his opponent's pawn chain by:

50 ♗g8!

Two remarks need to be made here:

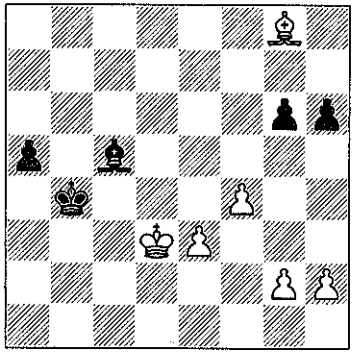
First of all, this threat must be made quickly, since, with the pawn on a4, the threat to the h7-pawn is easily parried by the move ...a3. However, that does not contradict the principle given above, as the words 'do not rush' should not be understood as an invitation to tread water. The essence of the principle is that, before making decisive changes in the position, you should try to squeeze the maximum out of the already existing structure.

The second remark relates to endgames with opposite-coloured bishops. We know that, as a rule, it is *advantageous for the defending side to place its pawns on squares of the same colour as its bishop.* The present example is interesting precisely because it shows that *you must not blindly follow rules by the letter without taking into account the particular features of the position before you.* White's plan involves the advance of his kingside pawns. The fact that the g6-pawn will be undefended forces Black to advance it or exchange it, thus

handing over the key square f5 to his opponent. That was probably the one little detail that was missing in White's winning mechanism.

50 ... h6
51 f4 *(D)*

The hurried 51 ♗f7 g5 52 ♔e4? is weaker in view of the reply 52...♔c3!.



B

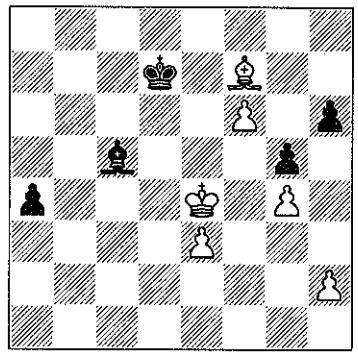
After the text, however, if Black tries to defend as in the game itself, he will not manage to build a fortress: 51...a4 52 e4! ♗g1 53 e5 a3 54 h3 ♔c5 55 g4 ♔c6 56 f5 gf 57 gf ♔d7 58 ♔e4 ♗c5 59 f6 ♔e8 60 ♔f5 ♔f8 61 ♗c4 ♗b4 62 e6 h5 63 ♔g5, and so on.

No relief is brought by 51...♗d6 52 g3 (with the threat e3-e4-e5) 52...g5, when White can play 53 f5 ♔c5 54 ♔e4 ♔c6 55 ♗b3! ♗c5 56 ♔e5! ♗xe3 57 ♔e6 followed by 58 f6.

Nevertheless Black's defensive resources are still not exhausted (we should again recall the drawing tendencies of endings with opposite-coloured bishops). Let us try:

51 ... ♔b5!

Now after 52 ♗f7 g5 53 f5 ♔c6 the black king enters the battle against the passed pawns in time. For example: 54 f6 a4 55 ♔e4 ♔d7 55 g4 *(D)*.



B

Now the stereotyped 55...a3 is no good in view of 56 ♗a2! ♔e8 (56...♗b6 57 ♔f5! ♗xe3 58 ♔g6 and now 58...♗d4 59 f7 ♔e7 60 ♔xh6 or 58...♔e8 59 ♔xh6 ♔f8 60 ♔h5 ♗d2 61 h4 gh 62 ♔xh4) 57 ♔d3!! ♔d7 58 e4 ♔d6 59 ♔c4, and there is no defence against 60 e5+. Incidentally, after 56 ♗b3? (instead of 56 ♗a2!) a defence could be found: 59...a2! 60 ♗xa2 ♗a3.

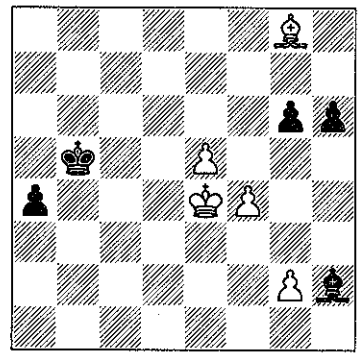
It is essential to play 55...♗b6!! 56 ♗c4 ♔e8!, when both 57 ♔d3 ♗d8 and 57 ♔f5 ♗xe3 58 ♔g6 ♗d4 are useless.

52 e4! ♗g1!
53 e5!

Not 53 h3? ♗h2.

53 ... ♗xh2
54 ♔e4 a4! *(D)*

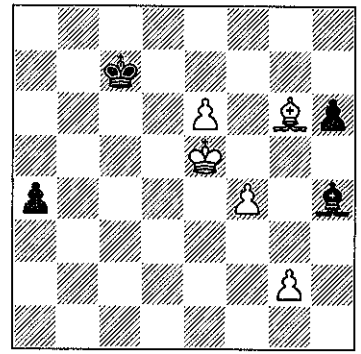
Otherwise 55 ♗f7 g5 56 f5 wins easily.



W

The primitive 55 g4? ♔c6 56 f5 gf+ 57 gf ♔d7 58 f6 ♔e8 59 ♗c4 a3 60 ♔f5 (60 ♔d5 ♔f7!) 60...♔f8 61 e6 ♗d6 62 ♔g6 ♗b4 63 ♔xh6 ♗c5 leads to a draw. The white bishop cannot gain control of the important e8-square, and so the black king easily obstructs any attempt by the enemy king to help its pawns.

Study-like finesses arise in the variation 55 e6?! ♔c6 56 ♔e5 ♗g3! (otherwise 57 e7 ♔d7 58 ♔f6) 57 ♗f7 ♗h4 58 ♗xg6 (58 g3 a3!) 58...♔c7! (but not 58...a3? 59 ♗b1 ♔c7 60 f5) *(D)*:



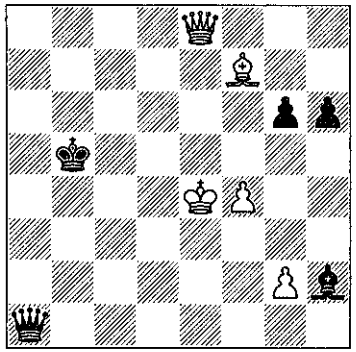
W

a) Now on 59 ♗c2 the obvious 59...a3 60 ♗b3 ♔d8 loses in view of 61 ♔f5! ♗g3 (or 61...♔e7 62 ♔g6) 62 ♔f6. It is not advisable to hang on to the pawn – the blockade is more important: 59...♔d8! 60 ♗xa4 ♔e7 61 ♔f5 ♗e1 62 ♗b3 ♗d2 with a draw.

b) The most dangerous is 59 g3! a3! 60 gh! (60 ♗b1 ♗xg3) 60...a2 61 e7 a1♕+ 62 ♔f5 ♕b1+ 63 ♔f6, but I don't quite see how White wins after, for example, 63...♕b4! 64 f5 ♕xh4+ 65 ♔f7 ♕c4+ 66 ♔g7 ♕d4+ 67 f6 ♕d7 68 ♔f8 (68 ♗f5 ♕e8 69 ♗e6 ♔d6; 68 ♗f7 ♕g4+ 69 ♔f8 ♕b4) 68...♕d6 69 ♔g8 (threatening 70 e8♘+!) 69...♕e6+ (or 69...♔b6).

55 ♗f7! a3
56 e6! a2

57 e7 a1♕
58 e8♕+ *(D)*



B

This position is clearly forced. It is not possible to mate the black king, so White's aim is to exchange queens and then to capture the g6-pawn and win the bishop in return for the e-pawn. This plan is entirely feasible, but not without difficulty.

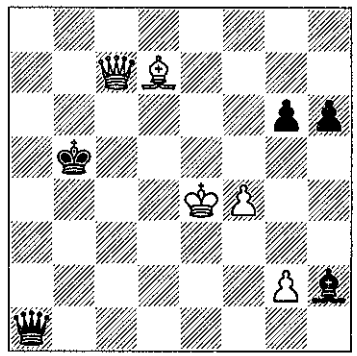
58 ... ♔c5
59 ♕c8+ ♔b6
60 ♕b8+ ♔c5
61 ♕c7+ ♔b5
62 ♕b7+!

Nothing is offered by 62 ♗e8+ ♔a6! 63 ♕c6+ ♔a7 64 ♕c5+ ♔b8!.

62 ... ♔c5
63 ♕d5+! ♔b6
64 ♕d6+ ♔b7

64...♔b5 is bad due to 65 ♗e8+.

65 ♗d5+ ♔c8
66 ♗e6+ ♔b7
67 ♕d7+ ♔b6
68 ♕d8+ ♔c5
69 ♕c7+ ♔b5
70 ♗d7+ *(D)*



B

70 ... ♔b4

Moving away to a6 (as in the analogous position with the bishop on e8) now loses: 70...♔a6 71 ♕c6+ ♔a7 72 ♕c5+ ♔b7 73 ♗c6+ ♔c7 74 ♗b5+ ♔b7 75 ♕c6+ ♔b8 76 ♕d6+ ♔b7 77 ♗c6+ ♔b6 78 ♗d5+ ♔b5 79 ♕c6+, and so on.

71 ♕b6+ ♔a3
72 ♕a5+ ♔b2
73 ♕xa1+ ♔xa1
74 ♗e8 ♔b2

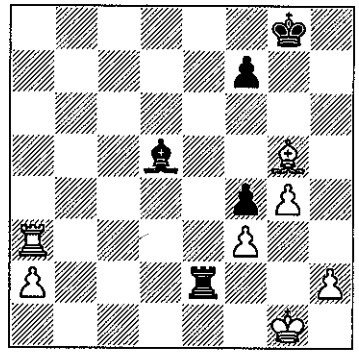
Or 74...g5 75 f5 ♗d6 76 ♗h5 ♔b2 77 f6 ♔c3 78 ♔d5 ♗a3 79 f7 ♔d3 80 g4 followed by ♔e6-d7-e8.

75 ♗xg6 ♔c3
76 f5 ♔c4
77 f6 ♔c5
78 f7 ♗d6

79 ♗h5 ♗f8
80 ♔f5 ♔d6
81 ♔g6 ♔e7
82 ♔h7 ♔f6
83 ♔g8 ♔e7
84 g4

and Black is in zugzwang.

So it seems we have proved the win for White – to do this we required 35(!) moves of analysis (done jointly with Mark Dvoretsky). Such long variations are rarely flawless, so it is quite possible that the readers will find either a defence for Black or a shorter path to victory for White.



B

Zviagintsev (17) – Onishchuk
Berlin 1993

How should Black defend this position, by 35...♖xa2 or 35...♖e3? In other words, is the position after 35...♖e3 lost? During the game Black answered this question in the affirmative and play continued as follows:

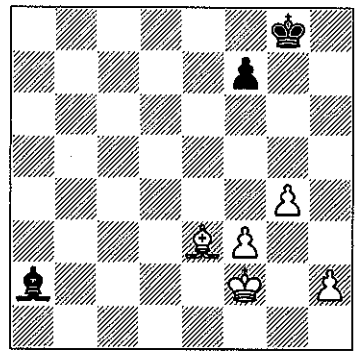
35 ... ♖xa2
36 ♖d3! ♖a1+
37 ♔g2 ♖a2+
38 ♔h3 ♗c4
39 ♖d8+ ♔g7
40 ♗xf4 ♗f1+
41 ♔g3 ♖g2+
42 ♔h4 ♖f2
43 g5!

and White has preserved two extra pawns, since on 43...♖xf3 there follows the decisive 44 ♗e5+ ♔g6 45 ♔g4. The game ended in victory for White on the 100th move.

Let's examine the consequences of the rook exchange:

35 ... ♖e3
36 ♖xe3 fe

Now 37 ♗xe3?? ♗xa2 38 ♔f2 *(D)* would be a blunder – in spite of White's two extra pawns, the position is drawn. Consider:



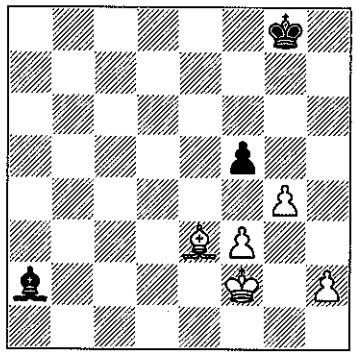
B

a) If Black defends passively, there are certain dangers, which are illustrated by the following variations: 38...♗b3 39 ♔g3 ♗d1 ('taking aim' at White's pawns) and now:

a1) 40 h4 ♔g7 41 h5 ♔h7 42 ♗d4 ♗e2 43 g5 ♗d1 44 ♗f6 ♗e2 45 ♔f4 ♗d1 46 ♔e4 ♗c2+ 47 ♔e5 ♗d1 48 ♔f4 ♗e2 49 h6 ♔g6 50 ♔e4 ♗d1 51 f4 ♗c2+ 52 ♔e5 ♗b1. Now nothing is achieved by 53 f5+ ♔h7 54 ♗e7 ♗c2 55 ♔f6 ♗b1 56 ♗b4 ♗c2 57 ♗d2 ♗b1 58 ♔e5 ♗c2 59 g6+ fg 60 f6 ♗b3 61 ♔d6 ♔g8. 53 ♔d6 is a little more tricky, threatening to move the king to g8, but Black parries the threat by 53...♔h7! 54 ♔e7 ♔g8 55 ♗c3 ♗c2 56 ♔f6 ♗b1 57 f5 ♔h7!.

a2) 40 f4!? ♔h7 41 f5 ♗e2 42 ♔f4 ♔h6 43 ♔e5+ ♔g7 (with the present structure the king must not be allowed to f6, as then White plays g4-g5-g6) 44 g5 ♗d1 45 h4 ♗e2 46 ♗d4 ♗d1 47 ♗c5 ♗g4 (47...♗c2 is quite possible, as on 48 h5 there is 48...♗d1! 49 h6+ ♔h7 50 ♔f6 ♗c2) 48 ♗b4 ♗d1 49 ♔d6 ♗c2! 50 ♗c3+ ♔g8 51 ♔e5 ♔g7 52 h5 ♗d1! 53 h6+ ♔h7 54 ♔f6 ♗c2 with a draw, as in the previous variation.

b) The simplest way of building a *fortress* is 38...f5! *(D)*. Then the possibilities are:



W

b1) 39 ♔g3 fg 40 fg ♔h7 41 h4 ♗e6 42 h5 ♗d7 43 ♔h4 ♗e6 44 g5 ♗f7.

b2) 39 h3 ♔f7 40 ♔g3 fg 41 hg ♔g6 42 f4 ♗e6.

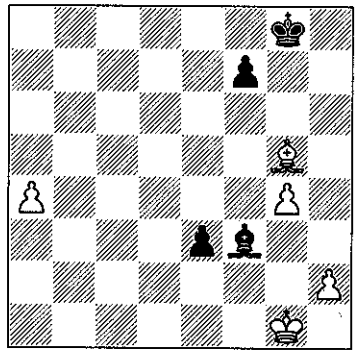
b3) 39 g5 ♔g7 40 h4 ♔g6 41 ♔g3 ♗b3 42 ♔f4 ♗d1.

b4) 39 gf ♗b1 40 f6 ♔f7 41 ♗d4 ♗h7. Black will continue, depending on the situation, by manoeuvring his king between the squares f7 and g8 or his bishop along the b1-h7 diagonal or the squares h7 and g8.

Of course it is advantageous for White to preserve the passed a-pawn. One extremely important principle for exploiting an advantage – *the principle of two weaknesses* – remains in force for opposite-coloured bishop endings (there is more detail on this principle in the chapter 'Exploiting an advantage'). White's passed a-pawn and his passed pawn on the kingside tear the opponent's defence in two. The fact that White will lose his extra material for a while has no essential significance: *the nuances of the position are more important than material.*

Thus play should continue:

37 a4 ♗xf3 *(D)*



W

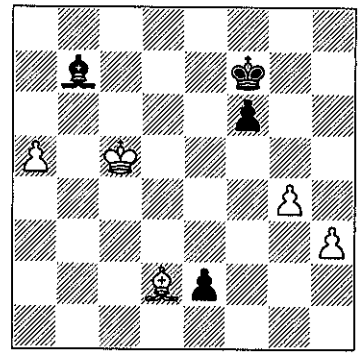
Now White has a choice between the moves 38 h3 (A) and 38 a5!? (B):

A. 38 h3 e2
39 ♗d2 ♗b7!
40 ♔f2 ♗a6

Now Black has placed his bishop ideally and White comes up against serious difficulties. Thus 41 g5? ♔g7 42 h4 ♔g6 43 ♔e3 is bad in view of 43...f6! 44 gf ♔xf6 45 ♔d4 ♔e6 46 ♔c5 ♔d7 47 ♔b6 ♗d3 48 a5 (48 ♔b7 ♗e4+ 49 ♔b8 ♔c6) 48...♔c8 49 ♔a7 ♔c7 50 h5 ♗c4 51 h6 ♗d3 52 ♗e1 ♔c8 53 ♗g3 ♗e4 54 a6 ♗d3 55 ♔b6 e1♕ 22 ♗xe1 ♔b8.

Correct is:

41 ♔e3 f6!?
42 ♔d4 ♔f7
43 ♔c5 ♗b7
44 a5 *(D)*



B

Now if 44...♗g2 45 h4 ♗f3 46 a6 ♗xg4 47 a7 ♗f3, then not 48 ♔b6? ♔g6 49 ♔c7 ♔h5 50 ♗e1 f5 51 ♔b8 f4 52 a8♕ ♗xa8 53 ♔xa8 f3 54 ♔b7 ♔g4 55 ♔c6 ♔h3 56 h5 ♔g2 57 h6 f2 with a draw, but 48 ♔d4! ♔g6 (48...♔e6 49 ♔e3 ♗d5 50 h5) 49 ♔e3 ♗b7 50 ♔xe2 ♔h5 51 ♗e1 with an easy win – the king again heads for the a7-pawn.

A more stubborn defence is:

44 ... ♔e6!
45 ♗e1!

Not 45 ♔b6? ♗g2, which is analogous to the variation above.

45 ... ♗g2
46 h4 ♗f3

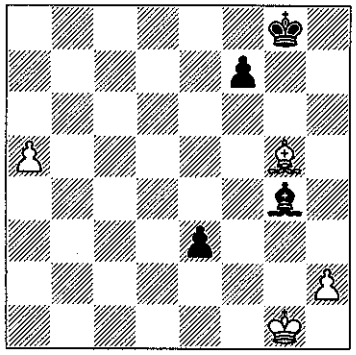
47 a6 ♗xg4
48 ♔d4 ♗f3
49 ♔e3 ♗c6
50 a7 f5
51 ♔xe2 f4
52 ♔d3

and White will still have to overcome technical difficulties.

B. 38 a5!

This is White's strongest continuation.

38 ... ♗xg4 *(D)*



W

39 a6 ♗f3

After 39...e2 40 ♔f2 ♗f3 41 ♗d2 ♗c6 42 h4 Black is defenceless against White's plan of advancing one pawn to h6, another to a7, taking the e2-pawn and bringing the king over to the queenside. It is important that the white bishop defends its pawn and prevents the advance of the opponent's passed pawn *along the same diagonal.*

40 a7

40 ♗xe3 is also good.

40 ... ♔f8

Black's only hope is to move his king over to the a7-pawn, and then it will be sufficient for him to give up his bishop for the h-pawn.

41 h4 e2

41...♔e8 42 h5 ♔d7 43 h6 +–.

42 ♔f2

and Black cannot defend against White's plan as indicated above.

So we have reached the conclusion that the exchange of rooks loses, although it forces White to play fairly accurately.

From the opening to the endgame

The following game was played at the second session of the school, which was devoted to opening preparation. We suggested to the young players that they play 'an open hand': they told their opponents in advance which opening variation they were going to play. They were then supposed to master the theoretical recommendations in the given opening variation, to analyse recent games and to think up new ideas so as to surprise their opponents.

In modern chess openings, debates are sometimes settled after twenty or even thirty moves in a distant endgame. This was what happened in the game we are about to analyse.

Kiriakov (15) – Svidler (14)
Daugavpils 1990
Grünfeld Defence

1 d4 ♘f6
2 c4 g6
3 ♘c3 ♗g7
4 ♘f3 d5
5 cd ♘xd5
6 e4 ♘xc3
7 bc 0-0
8 ♖b1 c5
9 ♗e2 ♘c6
10 d5 ♘e5
11 ♘xe5 ♗xe5
12 ♕d2 b6
13 f4 ♗g7
14 c4 e5
15 ♗b2

The alternative is 15 0-0.

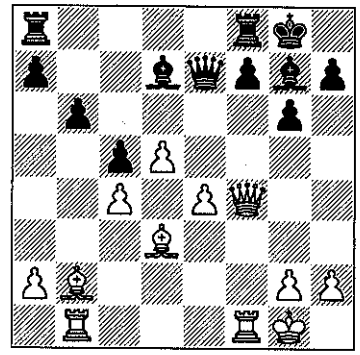
15 ... ef

The other possibility 15...♕d6 occurred in the game Komarov-Smejkal, Bad Mergentheim 1989, published in *Informator 48.*

16 ♕xf4

16 ♗xg7? is bad in view of the *zwischenzug* 16...♕h4+, and if 17 g3 fg 18 ♕h6, then Black plays 18...g2+!.

16 ... ♕e7
17 0-0 ♗d7
18 ♗d3 *(D)*



B

18 ... ♖ae8

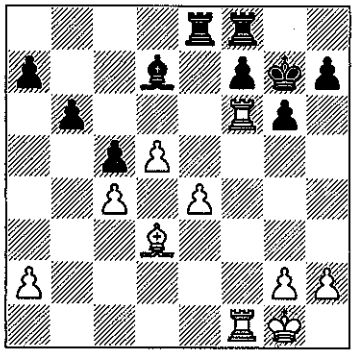
The latest word in this variation is the immediate exchange of bishops. In the game Sakaev-Ftačnik, Dortmund 1992 Black achieved equality after 18...♗xb2 19 ♖xb2 f6 20 ♗c2!? ♖ae8!? (with the idea of ...f6-f5). Instead of 20...♖ae8, Stohl's recommendation in *Informator 48*, 20...♕e5 21 ♕xe5 fe, is less precise since after the move indicated by Kiriakov, 22 ♖fb1!, White keeps better prospects in view of the threat a2-a4-a5.

19 ♗f6!?

This is more precise than 19 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 20 a4 f5 with equality, as occurred in the game Vaiser-Stohl, Biel 1989.

19 ... ♗xf6
20 ♕xf6 ♕xf6
21 ♖xf6 ♔g7
22 ♖bf1!? *(D)*

22 ♖d6 ♗a4 23 ♖f1 f6 is worse – Stohl.



B

White has the initiative in the endgame that has arisen. Of course the pressure along the f-file is not too unpleasant for Black on its own. The real problem is that his opponent has an extremely simple plan for strengthening his position on the queenside: White wants to play ♗c2, a4-a5 and create a *second weakness* in the black camp. Therefore Stohl's suggestion for changing the character of the game by 22...♗f5!? 23 ef ♔xf6 24 fg+ ♔g7 (24...♔e5?? 25 g7) 25 gh ♖e3 deserved serious attention. If now 26 ♗f5, then Black replies with 26...♖d8 27 ♖f4 ♖ee8. After 26 ♖d1 Black has a choice between three moves:

a) 26...f5 27 d6 ♔xh7 28 d7.

b) 26...♖d8 27 ♔f2 ♖e5 28 a4 a6 29 ♖b1 (Stohl).

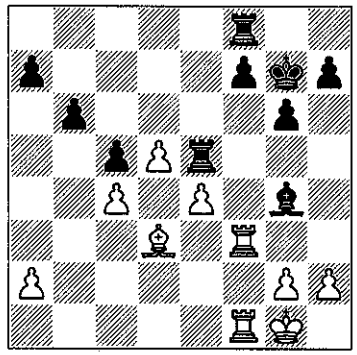
c) 26...♖e5!? (intending ...b6-b5 and ...f7-f5) 27 g4 b5 28 ♗f5 bc 29 ♔f2!?.

The move in the game does not enable Black to solve his problems.

22 ... ♖e5
23 ♖6f3

The possibility of the move ...♗f5 makes White nervous and he incorrectly removes his rook from its active position. More precise was 23 ♖1f4!, and now on 23...♗f5 there would follow the simple 24 ♖c6.

23 ... ♗g4 *(D)*



W

White wants to begin play on the queenside by 24 ♗c2, and then 25 a4 or 25 ♖a3. The main problem of Black's position is that his theoretically good bishop is not taking an active part in the game. The only object of Black's counterplay is the e4-pawn. But 23...f5? does not work in view of 24 g4. It was therefore worth thinking about transferring the bishop to g6 by 23...f6, and then ...g6-g5 and ...♗e8-g6.

24 ♖3f2 ♗d7?!

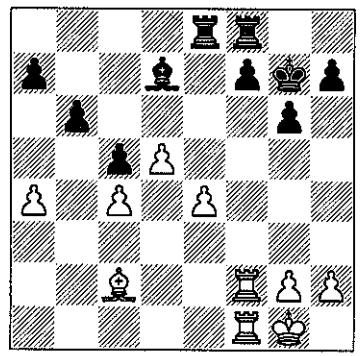
Even now it was not too late for 24...g5! with the idea ...♗h5-g6. With his actual move Black employs waiting tactics which might not have deserved to pay off.

25 a4

25 ♗c2!?.

25 ... ♖ee8
26 ♗c2 *(D)*

On 26 a5 there is 26...ba 27 ♖a1 (27 ♖b1 ♖b8) 27...a4 28 ♗c2 ♖e5, but instead 26 h4 deserved attention. Lulled by his opponent's activities, White wants to play at his own convenience, and underestimates Black's freeing break.



B

26 ... f5!

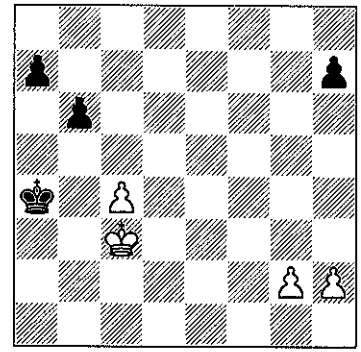
A subtle solution to Black's defensive problems, the assessment of which depends on the pawn ending that arises by force.

27 ef ♗xf5
28 ♗xf5 ♖xf5
29 ♖xf5 gf
30 ♖xf5 ♖e4
31 d6! ♖d4
32 ♖d5 ♔f6!

32...♖xd5? 33 cd ♔f7 loses in view of 34 g4 ♔e8 35 g5 ♔d7 36 h4 ♔xd6 37 h5 ♔xd5 38 g6 hg 39 h6.

33 ♖xd4 cd
34 ♔f2 ♔e6
35 ♔e2

White fails to use all his winning chances. Black's task would have been more complicated after 35 ♔f3 ♔xd6 36 ♔e4 ♔c5 37 ♔d3. After 37...♔b4 38 ♔xd4 ♔xa4 39 ♔c3! *(D)* it may appear that White wins. However, Black is saved by an unorthodox defence.



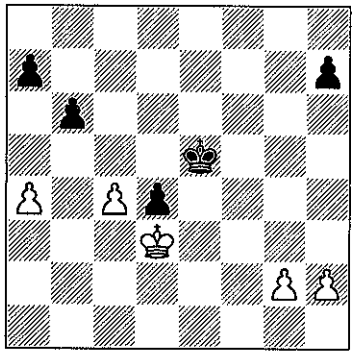
B

39...b5 40 g4 and now 40...a6!! (or indeed the reverse move order, 39...a6 40 g4 and now 40...b5!, but not 40...♔a3?? in view of 41 c5!, winning) 41 h4 (41 cb ♔xb5)

41...♔a3, and in the queen endgame arising after 42 c5 b4+ 43 ♔d2 b3 44 c6 b2 45 c7 b1♕ 46 c8♕ Black should avoid defeat.

35 ... ♔xd6
36 ♔d3 ♔e5! *(D)*

Now 36...♔c5? loses because of 37 g4.



W

37 g3 h6!
38 h3 h5!
39 g4 hg
40 hg ♔f4
41 ♔xd4 ♔xg4
42 ♔d5

A draw results after 42 a5 ♔f4! 43 a6 (43 ab ab 44 ♔d5 ♔e3) 43...♔f5 44 ♔d5 ♔f6 45 ♔c6 ♔e6 46 ♔b7 ♔d7.

42 ... ♔f4!

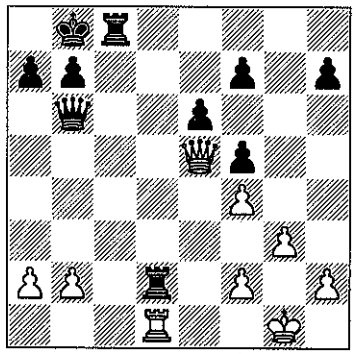
Not 42...♔f5?? in view of 43 a5! ba 44 c5, winning.

43 ♔c6 ♔e5
44 ♔b7 ♔d6
45 ♔xa7 ♔c7

and the players agreed to a **draw**.

Exchange

Is it worth exchanging queens and entering the endgame? How can we assess the consequences of an exchange of rooks? You often find you have to answer questions like this during a game. It is not surprising that in the endgame, when very few pieces are left, it is especially important to tackle the problem of exchanges correctly.



B

Mugerman – Makariev (14)
Moscow 1989

Black should have taken into consideration that his pawn structure on the kingside is spoiled and in the endgame is vulnerable to attack by the enemy king. It was therefore not a good idea to swap

queens. After the correct continuation 25...♔a8 26 ♖xd2 ♕c6 (followed by 27...♕c1+, 27...♕f3 or 27...a6) Black would have had counterplay.

25 ... ♕c7?
26 ♖xd2 ♕xe5?!

Again a bad decision. The exchange on e5 only improves his opponent's pawn structure (the e5-pawn holds two opposing pawns on its own). Stronger is 26...f6!, to which White should reply 27 ♕e3, retaining somewhat the better chances. Instead the pawn endgame after 27 ♕xc7+ ♔xc7 28 ♖c2+ (28 ♔g2!?) 28...♔d7 29 ♖xc8 ♔xc8 30 ♔g2 ♔d7 31 ♔h3 ♔e7 32 ♔h4 ♔f7 33 ♔h5 ♔g7 34 f3 is drawn:

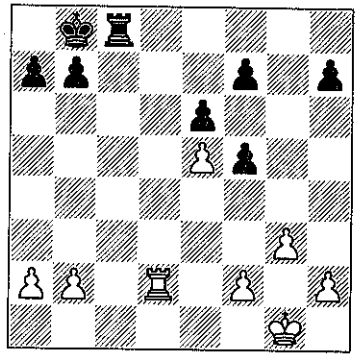
a) 34...h6! 35 g4 ♔h7 36 g5 hg 37 fg ♔g7 =.

b) Note that 34...♔h8? 35 ♔h6 ♔g8 36 g4 ♔h8 is wrong in view of 37 h3! (but not 37 h4? ♔g8 38 g5 e5!) 37...♔g8 38 h4 (zugzwang) 38...♔h8 39 g5 fg 40 hg winning.

27 fe *(D)*

In spite of the material equilibrium, Black's position is critical. How is he to defend against the white king marching over to the weakened kingside pawns? In the game Black did not manage to solve this problem:

27 ... ♖c1+?
28 ♔g2 ♔c7



B

29 f4 ♖a1?!
30 a3 ♖c1
31 ♔h3 ♖c5
32 ♔h4 ♖d5
33 ♖c2+ ♔d8
34 ♔g5

Black has now achieved a totally hopeless endgame.

The assessment of the position depends largely on whether or not Black can send his king over to the kingside. In this case he will be forced to allow the exchange of rooks.

Thus:

27 ... ♔c7
28 ♖c2+

Not 28 ♔g2? ♖g8, with an acceptable position for Black.

28 ... ♔d7
29 ♖xc8 ♔xc8

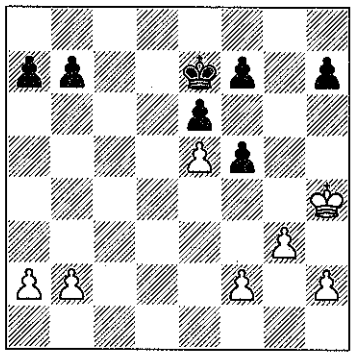
An interesting pawn endgame has arisen. White directs his king towards the opponent's pawn

weaknesses, and the black king rushes to the defence.

30 ♔g2 ♔d7
31 ♔h3 ♔e7

The active counterplay comes too late: 31...♔c6 32 ♔h4 ♔d5 33 f4 ♔e4 34 ♔g5 ♔f3 35 ♔f6 ♔g2 36 ♔xf7 ♔xh2 37 ♔xe6 ♔xg3 38 ♔xf5 h5 39 e6.

32 ♔h4 *(D)*



B

Now Black has a choice between 32...♔f8 (A) and 32...f6 (B).

A. 32 ... ♔f8
33 ♔h5 ♔g7
34 ♔g5

Not 34 f3? in view of 34...f6!.

34 ... h6+
35 ♔h5 ♔h7
36 f3

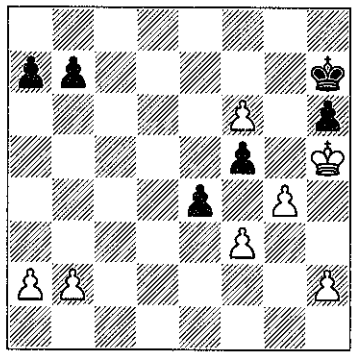
As will become clear from the following variations, it is better technique to insert the moves 36 b4 b5.

36 ... f6

In the event of 36...♔g7 37 g4 fg 38 fg ♔h7 39 g5 hg 40 ♔xg5, the presence of a *distant passed pawn* decides the outcome.

37 ef e5
38 g4 e4 *(D)*

38...f4 39 g5 e4 does not save Black either because of 40 g6+ ♔g8 41 ♔xh6 ef 42 g7 f2 43 ♔g6 and 44 f7 mate.



W

39 fe fe
40 ♔h4 ♔g6
41 ♔g3 ♔xf6
42 ♔f4 e3
43 ♔xe3 ♔g5
44 ♔f3 ♔h4
45 ♔f4 ♔h3
46 g5 hg
47 ♔xg5 ♔xh2
48 ♔f4 ♔g2
49 ♔e5 ♔f3
50 ♔d6 ♔e4
51 ♔c7 b5

52 ♔b7!

52 ♔c6 b4 53 ♔b5 b3 is wrong: 54 ab ♔d3 55 ♔a6 ♔c2 56 b4 ♔b3 or 54 a4 ♔d3 55 ♔b4 ♔c2 56 ♔a3 a5 stalemate!

52 ... ♔d3

52...a5 53 ♔b6.

53 ♔xa7 b4

53...♔c2 54 b4 ♔c3 55 a3.

54 ♔b6 ♔c2
55 b3

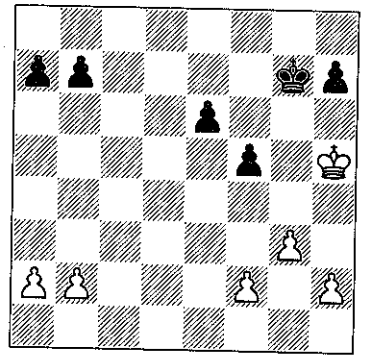
and White wins.

B. 32 ... f6

White's task is more complicated after this move:

33 ef+ ♔xf6
34 ♔h5 ♔g7 *(D)*

34...♔e5 35 ♔h6 ♔e4 36 ♔xh7 ♔f3 37 ♔g6 ♔xf2 38 ♔f6 ♔g2 39 ♔xe6 ♔xh2 40 ♔xf5 ♔xg3 41 ♔e5 brings the game to a variation just examined.



W

Now White achieves nothing after either 35 ♔g5 h6+ 36 ♔h5 (36 ♔f4 ♔f6) 36...e5, or 35 f3 because of 35...♔f6! 36 g4 fg 37 fg ♔e5.

It looks logical to strengthen the position by:

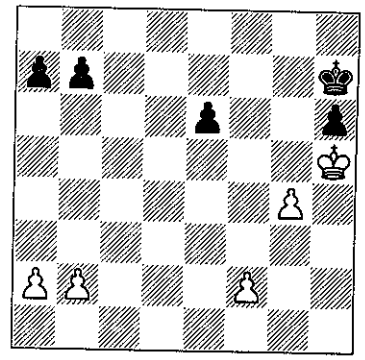
35 h3 h6

As will become clear from the variations given below, any movement by the black pawns on the queenside only makes White's task easier. For example: 35...a5 36 a4 h6 37 g4 fg 38 hg ♔h7 39 f4 ♔g7 40 g5 hg 41 fg e5 42 ♔h4 ♔f7 43 ♔g3 ♔g6 44 ♔g4 e4 45 ♔f4 e3 46 ♔xe3 ♔xg5 47 ♔d4 ♔f5 48 ♔c5 ♔e4 49 ♔b6 ♔d4 50 ♔xb7 ♔c5 51 ♔a6 ♔b4 52 b3.

36 g4

Certainly not 36 f3?? e5 37 g4 f4.

36 ... fg
37 hg ♔h7 *(D)*



W

Now the straightforward 38 f4? does not achieve White's aim. After 38...♔g7 39 g5 hg 40 fg e5 41 ♔h4 ♔f7 42 ♔g3 ♔g6 43 ♔g4 e4 44 ♔f4 e3 45 ♔xe3 ♔xg5 46 ♔e4 ♔f6 47 ♔d5 ♔e7 the white king does not break through to the queenside pawns. Now it is apparent why the black pawns on a7 and b7 should stay where they are.

A draw also results after 38 g5? hg 39 ♔xg5 ♔g7 40 ♔f4 ♔f6 41 ♔e4 e5 (but not 41...♔f7? 42 ♔e5 ♔e7 43 f3 ♔d7 44 ♔f6 ♔d6 45 f4 ♔d7 46 ♔f7 ♔d6 47 ♔e8 b5 48 b4, and if 48...e5, then 49 f5 wins) 42 ♔d5 ♔f5 43 b4 (on 43 f3 Black has both 43...♔f6 and 43...♔f4 44 ♔e6 ♔xf3 45 ♔xe5 ♔e3 46 ♔d6 ♔d3 47 ♔c7 b5) 43...b5 44 ♔c5 a6 45 ♔d5 e4 46 a3 ♔f4 47 ♔e6 ♔g4! 48 ♔e5 ♔f3.

Let us recall the principle 'do not rush!' and try to strengthen the position some more by advancing the queenside pawns:

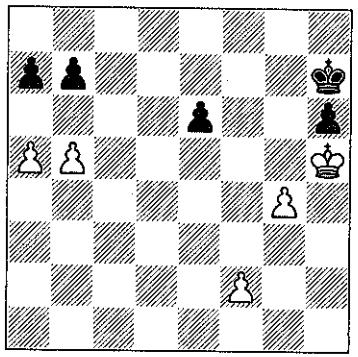
38 b4!

This move could also have been inserted earlier.

38 ... ♔g7

Black has to adopt waiting tactics – otherwise White will win by creating a distant passed pawn on the kingside (f2-f4 and g4-g5).

39 b5 ♔h7
40 a4 ♔g7
41 a5 ♔h7 *(D)*



W

42 b6 ab
43 ab ♔g7

From the point of view of the first plan (the creation of a distant passed pawn) the situation has not changed, but as concerns the second plan, White's position has been strengthened fundamentally.

44 g5! hg
45 ♔xg5 ♔f7
46 ♔f4 ♔f6
47 ♔e4 ♔f7

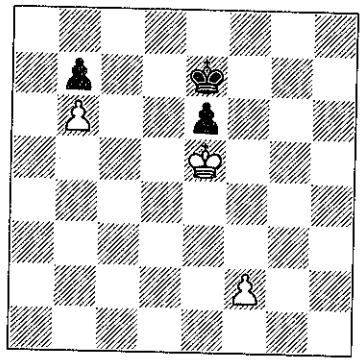
No help is 47...e5 48 ♔d5 ♔f5 49 ♔d6 ♔f4 50 ♔c7 ♔f3 51 ♔xb7 ♔xf2 52 ♔c6 e4 53 b7 and White wins.

48 ♔e5 ♔e7 *(D)*
49 f3!

It is useful to note that White wins thanks to his *two tempi in reserve*.

49 ... ♔d7
50 ♔f6 ♔d6

Or 50...♔c6 51 ♔xe6 ♔xb6 52 f4 ♔c7 53 f5 ♔d8 54 ♔f7 b5 55 f6



W

b4 56 ♔g8 b3 57 f7 and White queens with check.

51 f4 ♔d7
52 ♔f7 ♔d6
53 ♔e8

Having gained the 'side opposition' the white king 'takes the side route'.

53 ... ♔c6
54 ♔e7 ♔xb6

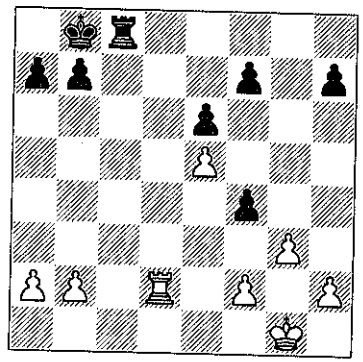
Or 54...♔d5 55 ♔d7.

55 ♔xe6 ♔c7
56 f5 ♔d8
57 ♔f7

So 27...♔c7 led to an objectively lost pawn endgame. In a practical game situation it is hardly possible to calculate the whole endgame. In addition, the probability of a mistake by White is fairly high. In any case, the continuation 27...♔c7 gives more chances of salvation then the move 27...♖c1+? that was chosen in the game.

However, Black had one other defensive option.

27 ... f4!? *(D)*



W

With this move he would change the character of the game and, as is shown by the variations given below, he would manage to hold the defence.

28 ♔g2

Or 28 ♖d7?! f3!, whilst 28 gf ♖c4 29 ♖d8+ ♔c7 30 ♖h8 ♖xf4 31 ♖xh7 ♔c6 32 ♔g2 ♔d5 33 ♔g3 ♔xe5 34 ♖h5+ f5! 35 ♖h4 ♖xh4 36 ♔xh4 ♔f4 37 ♔h5 ♔f3 38 ♔g5 f4 39 h4 e5 is a draw.

28 ... fg
29 hg

29 ♔xg3 is met by 29...♖g8+ and then 30...♔c7.

29 ... ♖c5
30 f4

Neither 30 ♖d7 ♖xe5 31 ♖xf7 h5 nor 30 ♖d8+ ♔c7 31 ♖f8 ♖c2 is dangerous. (*Typesetter's note:* In

the second line, White can continue 32 ♖xf7+ ♔c6 33 ♖e7! with good winning chances, for example 33...♖xb2 34 ♖xe6+ ♔d5 35 ♖e7 h5 36 ♖h7.

30 ... ♔c7
31 ♔h3

Or 31 ♔f3 h5!? 32 ♖h2 ♔d7 and Black holds on.

31 ... h6!?
32 ♔g4 ♖c1

and the white king will not be able to break through to the black pawns.

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