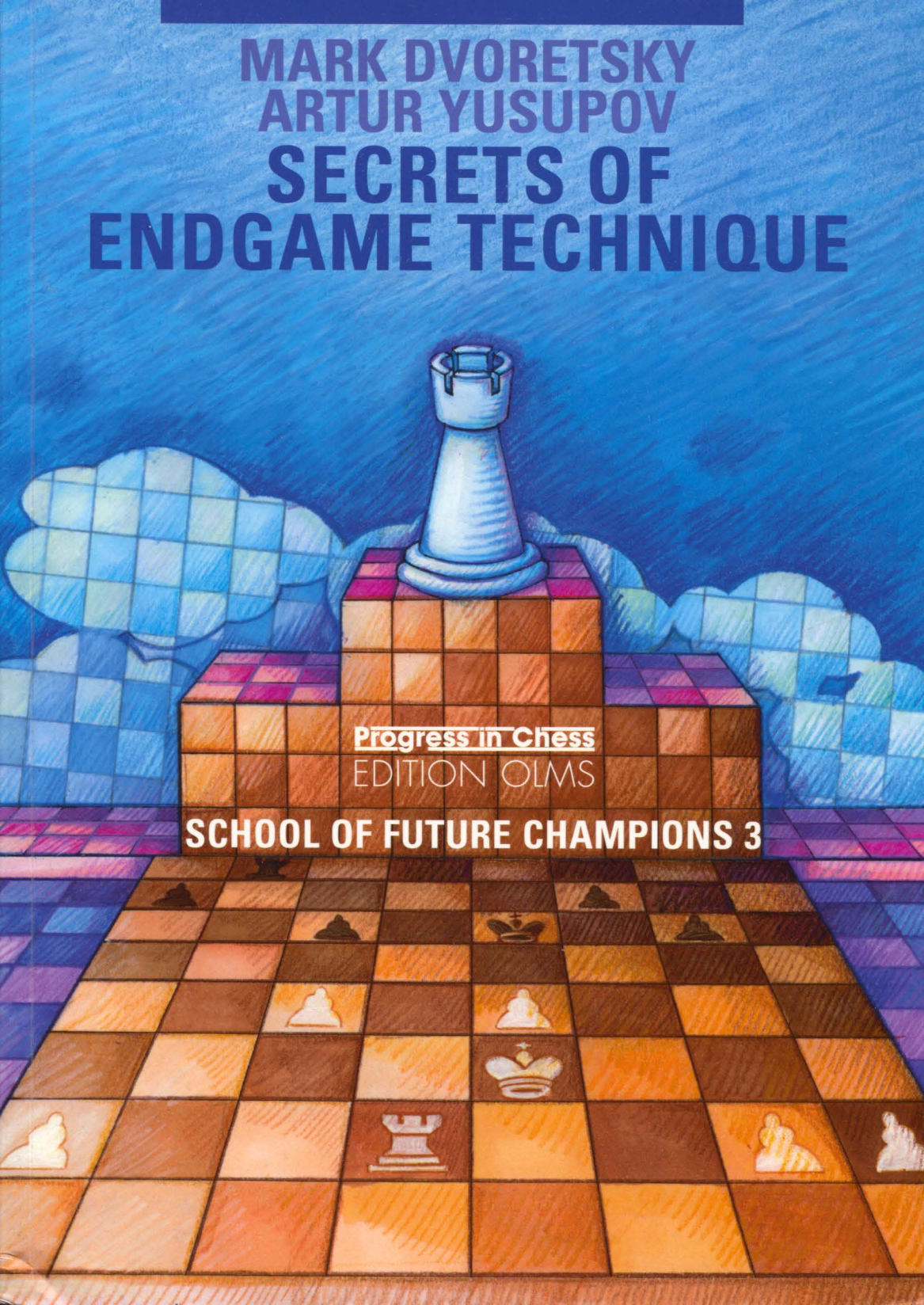
MARK DVORETSKY
ARTUR YUSUPOV
SECRETS OF ENDGAME TECHNIQUE



Progress in Chess
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SCHOOL OF FUTURE CHAMPIONS 3

Progress in Chess

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Mark Dvoretsky and Artur Yusupov

Secrets of Endgame Technique

School of Future Champions 3

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by Ken Neat

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Contents

Mark Dvoretsky

Preface

Perhaps, dear reader, you are already familiar with the first two books, based on material from the Dvoretsky-Yusupov school for talented young players (*Secrets of Chess Training* and *Secrets of Opening Preparation*). Then you will already know the main principles by which we are guided. We have held several thematic sessions of the school, devoted to a particular aspect of improvement in chess. The aim of the sessions was not to convey specific information – for this we had too little time. It was far more important to discover the deficiencies in the pupils' play and to help them to eradicate them, to demonstrate the most effective ways of studying chess, and to acquaint them with general mechanisms, ideas and methods of play.

You now have before you the third book (there are five in all). It is based on our work at the third session of the school, devoted to the problem of improving endgame and technical mastery.

During recent years the regulations for tournaments and matches have changed significantly – now games are hardly ever adjourned. Previously, after taking play into an ending, you could investigate its subtleties in home analysis, whereas now you have to act directly at the board. Without an excellent knowledge and, what is even more important, understanding of the laws of the endgame, it is not easy to cope with this task, especially if account is taken of accumulated fatigue from the preceding battle. And yet endgame mistakes are the last in the game – it is no longer possible to repair them! It is clear that today the importance of endgame and technical mastery has grown sharply.

In my bookcase there are numerous weighty tomes devoted to the theory of endings. Is it conceivable to assimilate and remember all the information contained in them? It turns out that it is not at all necessary to do this. After reading the first part of this book, you will see that 'your' system of endgame knowledge can and should be compact, easy to assimilate and remember, and you will learn how to develop it, by making the acquaintance of certain important sections of the theory of rook and minor piece endings.

The second part of the book is devoted to an analysis of complicated practical endings. Such an analysis helps to deepen and consolidate endgame knowledge, and aid the development of traits of character and thinking necessary to every player.

The technique of converting an advantage is a stumbling-block for many players. To raise your technical mastery requires developing in yourself certain important skills in seeking and taking decisions, moreover not purely chess, but, so to speak, 'psychological-chess' decisions. The question of how to improve your technique is examined in the third part of the book. Here are both the 'theory' of this question, and its practical application – both by a critical analysis of games played by young players, and at the very highest grandmaster level.

By tradition, the final part is devoted to an analysis of games by the pupils of the school.

This book was first published in the 1990s. During the preparation of this new edition I checked all the games and endings on a computer, which, naturally, gave rise to

numerous improvements and additions. In addition, a quite large chapter has been added, one which was written many years after the first edition was published. In it some instructive examples of the successful or unsuccessful solving of complicated technical problems are analysed – they will help you to understand more deeply the technique of converting an advantage, a problem which is exceptionally important for every player.

Practically all the players whom I have trained have possessed good technique and an excellent understanding of the endgame. This means that the working methods described in this book have stood the test of time. I hope that they will also prove suitable for you.

PART I

Endgame Theory

Mark Dvoretsky

How to Study the Endgame

Many young players 'flounder' when it comes to playing endings. They would not be averse to improving their endgame mastery, but they don't know exactly how to do this. In chess literature practically nothing is said about methods for the independent study of endgame theory. We will now endeavour to partly fill this gap.

Two main ways of improving in the endgame can be distinguished:

I. The study of theory (development of erudition, enrichment of the store of endgame knowledge).

II. Improvement in the general technique of endgame play.

It stands to reason that these two directions are closely inter-connected, and progress in one of them invariably leads to progress in the other. However, let us nevertheless consider them separately.

I. THE STUDY OF THEORY

To expand your store of knowledge you need to make a systematic study of various types of endings. Here the traditional division by material is quite appropriate. By successively examining, for example, pawn, knight and queen endings we assimilate the specific features of these types of endgame.

All endgame positions can be arbitrarily divided into 'exact' and 'problematic'. Positions which are familiar to us, in which we know beforehand the evaluation and correct plan of action, we call 'exact'. Note that they are familiar to us, and not to the theory of endings in general. Different players have different stores of exact positions.

All remaining positions belong to problematic. In them we do not demonstrate our knowledge, but fight, seek the best moves, and calculate variations – in short, we play.

A naïve opinion is prevalent, identifying the mastery of endgame theory with a knowledge of numerous exact positions. But is a large store of specific knowledge really necessary? After all, exact positions (apart from the most elementary) occur rather rarely in practice. More often a player has to fight in problematic situations. He should study the general endgame laws which apply in them and the most common regularities, playing methods and typical evaluations. All this, together, of course, with the most important exact positions, is what comprises the integral system of our endgame knowledge.

I must once again emphasise: the store of positions which you need to know exactly is

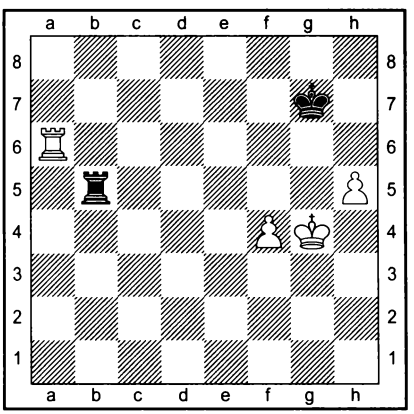
comparatively small. Only in rook endings do you need to have a firm knowledge of several dozen specific positions; in other types of endings – much fewer. When studying them it is often not necessary to delve into complicated analyses – it is sufficient merely to remember the main conclusions.

Take, for example, rook endings with f- and h-pawns. They occur quite rarely, but nevertheless they do occur, so that it would be useful to obtain some impression of them. However, it is hardly advisable to study the entire theory of this type of endgame – it is just too complicated. What, then, from this theory should the practical player add to his armoury?

Above all, the information that such endings are normally drawn. It is useful to examine a practical ending, demonstrating the main defensive ideas.

Gligoric – Smyslov

Moscow 1947



The black rook is excellently positioned on the 5th rank, preventing the white king from advancing. If 1 f5 there follows 1...♖b1, threatening a series of checks from the rear.

1 ♖g6+ ♔f7!

1...♔h7 would also not have lost, but in this case the defence would have been much more difficult.

2 ♖g5 ♖b1!

A typical rook move in such situations – from here it retains the possibility of checking the enemy king both along the file, and along the rank.

3 ♖c5

If 3 h6 it is wrong to play 3...♖g1+? 4 ♔f5 ♖h1 5 ♖g7+, when Black's king is forced back onto the 8th rank and this leads to a loss. He is saved by the waiting move 3...♖a1!, 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 having his king forced back onto the 8th rank. This would have occurred 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 sufficient to keep the rook in the corner.

12 ♖d4 ♖a1

13 ♖d6 ♖a5+

14 ♔g4 ♖a1

14...♖b5 is also possible, returning to the position with which we began.

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**

An important theoretical position has arisen, one which should have been included in our system of precise knowledge at an earlier stage – in the study of endings with rook and pawn against rook.

26 ♖e1	**♖a7+**
27 ♖e7	**♖a8**

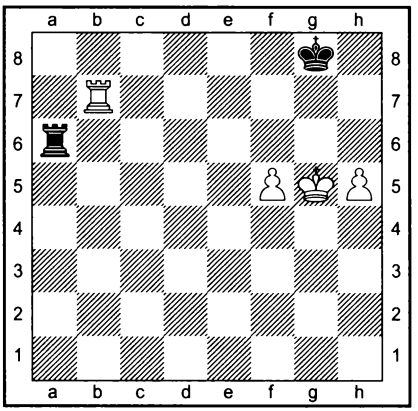
It is simplest to keep the rook on the eighth rank, not allowing the white king there. But also possible is 27...♖a1 28 ♔f8 ♔g6 29 f7 ♔f6! 30 ♔g8 ♖g1+! with a draw.

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

Draw.

An examination of such an ending helps us to draw certain general conclusions. We now know where Black should place his rook. And the king, as was shown by Ilya Maizelis, is best kept at f7 until there is a danger of it being driven onto the back rank. Then it can stand at g7 and subsequently even at h6, attacking the white pawn.

It stands to reason that by no means all positions with f- and h-pawns are drawn. The most important exception has already been mentioned several times – when Black's king is cut off on the back rank, he normally loses.



1 f6	**♖a1**
2 ♖g7+	**♔h8**

2...♔f8 3 h6 followed by the unavoidable h6–h7.

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

The next move will be 8 f7 (the h5-pawn deprives the black king of the g6-square).

It is sufficient to play through this variation just once on the board – there is no need to memorise it, especially since White also has other ways to win.

This is probably all that the practical player needs to remember about the given type of ending. As you see, not really so much and not really so difficult!

Let us see how another, rather more extensive section in our system of endgame knowledge is constructed – the theory of endings, in which a rook fights against pawns. A basis for study can be provided by any endgame manual, for example, Ilya Maizelis's monograph *Ladya protiv peshek* (Rook against pawns), published in 1956 (in contrast to opening books, those on the endgame hardly date at all). Here some 400

positions are examined. Clearly we are not able to study and remember all this information. We need to select the most important key endings for practical purposes.

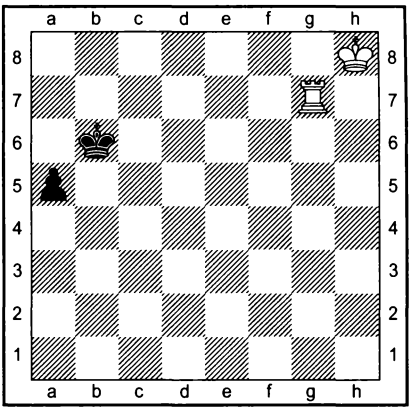
But how to choose the most important material? This is the main problem. What tells here is the player's intellect, and his ability to work with books, to generalise, and to draw conclusions. He is also helped by the knowledge (even if incomplete) that he already has, and by his own practical experience in the given field.

The play in endings with rook against pawns is dynamic in character, and every tempo has a decisive influence on the outcome. It follows that here there is no large-scale strategy, battle of plans, or deep regularities (as, say, in endings with opposite-colour bishops). There are also hardly any exact positions, by relying on which we could avoid the need for concrete calculation. The main role is played by a knowledge of typical techniques, which help the correct move to be found more quickly and variations to be calculated more certainly.

The procedures are best mastered with the help of elementary positions, in which they are employed and where their action is not obscured by extraneous analytical details. Subsequently the exact pattern of the position my be forgotten, but the impression of the technique will remain. Sometimes such a position – the conveyor of the technique – is simultaneously an exact position which is important for us; in this case, of course, we should memorise it.

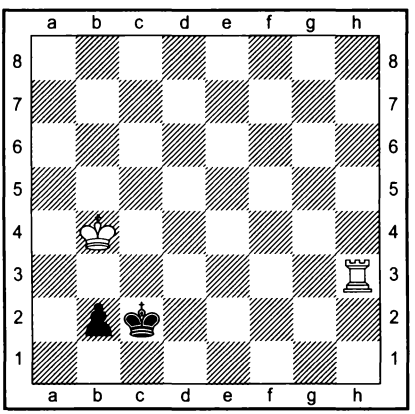
So, using some very simple schemes, let us examine the main ideas which apply in endings with rook against pawns.

Cutting off of the king



White wins, by playing **1 ♖g5!**. When the pawn reaches a3, it can be eliminated by ♖g3 (or with the pawn on a2 – by ♖g1 and ♖a1). If it is Black to move, then 1...♔b5(c5)! leads to a draw – as it is easy to see, cutting off the king along the 4th rank by 2 ♖g4 does not achieve anything.

Promotion of the pawn to a knight

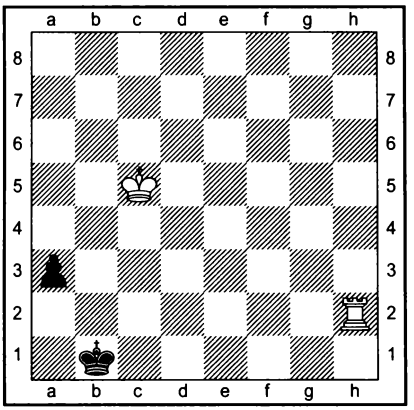


1 ♖h2+ ♔c1 2 ♔c3 b1♘+! 3 ♔d3 ♘a3 4 ♖a2 ♘b1! with a draw, but not 4...♘b5? (in endings with knight against rook, the knight should not be separated from the king).

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

bishop's pawn or a central pawn only the promotion to a knight saves Black.

However, with a rook's pawn this idea no longer helps.

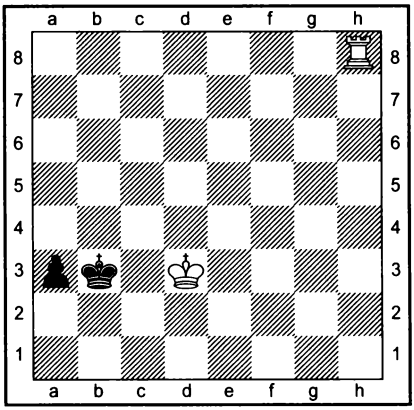


1 ♔b4(c4) a2 2 ♔b3 a1♘+ 3 ♔c3, and Black is in zugzwang.

It is useful to note that if Black also had a pawn on b5, all the same this would not save him: 3...b4+ 4 ♔xb4 ♘c2+ 5 ♔c3 ♘e3 6 ♔d3 ♘d5 7 ♖h4 ♔b2 8 ♖d4, and the knight, which is separated from the king, is soon lost. 6 ♖h4! (instead of 6 ♔d3) wins even more quickly: 6...♔a2 (6...♘d1+ 7 ♔d2 ♘b2 8 ♖b4 ♔a2 9 ♔c2 ♔a1 10 ♖b8; 6...♘d5+ 7 ♔b3 ♔c1 8 ♖c4+ ♔b1 9 ♖d4) 7 ♖a4+ ♔b1 8 ♖e4 ♘f5 9 ♖e5 ♘d6 10 ♔b3 ♔c1 11 ♖c5+ ♔b1 12 ♖d5.

Stalemate

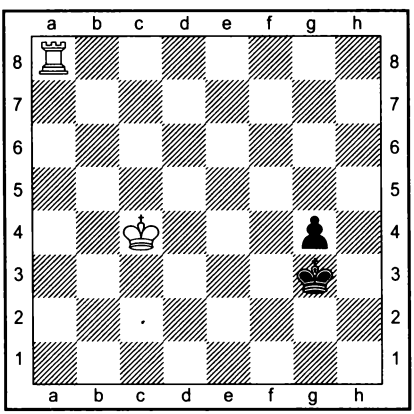
We have already examined one very important practical instance of stalemate. Here is another example (which, incidentally, constitutes one of the few 'exact' positions that it is useful to memorise).



It is hopeless to play 1...a2? 2 ♖b8+ ♔a3 3 ♔c2! a1♘+ 4 ♔c3 ♔a2 5 ♖b7 with zugzwang. The only way to save the game is **1...♔b2! 2 ♖b8+** (2 ♖h2+ ♔b3!, but not 2...♔b1? 3 ♔c3) **2...♔c1! 3 ♖a8 ♔b2 4 ♔d2 a2 5 ♖b8+ ♔a1!.**

As you see, when learning new ideas one can sometimes repeat material that has been covered earlier (in this case – promotion of the pawn to a knight).

An intermediate check to gain a tempo



The diagram position arose in the game **Korchnoi–Kengis** (Bern 1996). Black resigned, after calculating the following forced variation.

1...♔f2 2 ♖f8+!

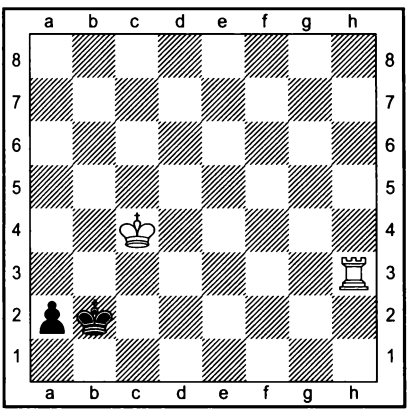
2 ♔d3? g3 3 ♖f8+ ♔e1! leads to a draw.

2...♔e2 3 ♖g8! ♔f3

Thanks to the intermediate check, the king has been driven one square back – from f2 to f3.

4 ♔d3 g3 5 ♖f8+ ♔g2 6 ♔e2 etc.

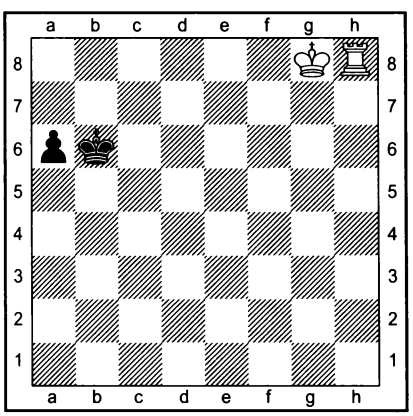
'Shoulder-charge'



1 ♖h2+ ♔a3!

By not allowing the enemy king to approach the pawn, Black gains a draw. It is incorrect to play 1...♔b1? 2 ♔b3 a1♘+ 3 ♔c3.

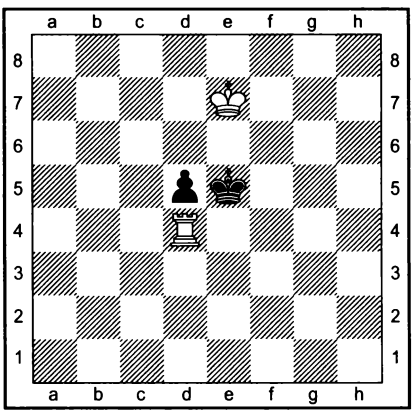
Now let us examine a slightly more complicated example.



1...a5? does not work in view of 2 ♖h5! – we already know this idea. But 1...♔b5? is also bad: 2 ♔f7 a5 3 ♔e6 ♔c4 (3...a4 4 ♔d5) 4 ♖a8! ♔b4 5 ♔d5 a4 6 ♔d4 ♔b3 7 ♔d3 a3 8 ♖b8+. The only saving move is **1...♔c5!**, preventing the approach of the enemy king to the pawn.

Outflanking

The ideas of 'shoulder-charge' and 'outflanking' are vividly expressed in a famous study by **Richard Réti** (1928).



1 ♖d2(d3)!! d4 2 ♖d1! ♔d5 3 ♔d7!, and Black is in zugzwang: if 3...♔c4 4 ♔e6, or 3...♔e4 4 ♔c6.

1 ♖d1? is a mistake: 1...d4 2 ♔d7 (2 ♔f7 ♔e4 3 ♔e6 d3) 2...♔d5! (Black prevents the outflanking) 3 ♔c7 ♔c5! (3...♔c4? 4 ♔d6! d3 5 ♔e5), and it is White who ends up in zugzwang.

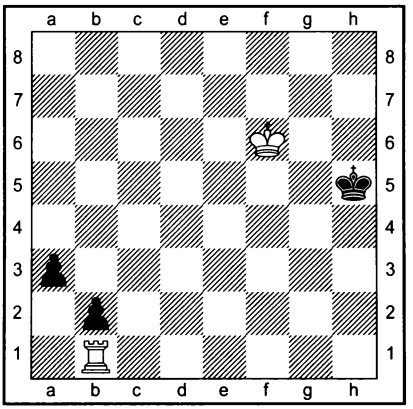
Let us now turn to positions in which a rook fights against two connected passed pawns.

Mate threats to the opponent's king

If the pawns are far advanced (two black pawns on the 3rd rank, or one on the 2nd rank and the other on the 4th), then the rook is unable to stop them. However, sometimes

it is possible to save the game, by pursuing the opponent's king when it is pinned to the edge of the board.

B. Horwitz, J. Kling
1851

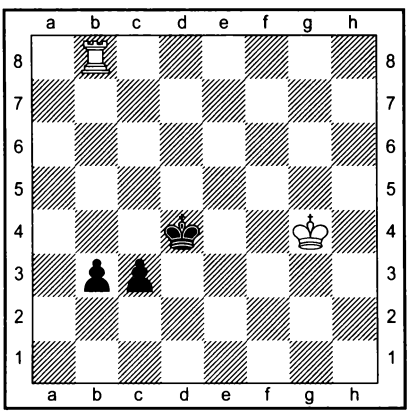


1 ♔f5 ♔h4 2 ♔f4 ♔h3 3 ♔f3 ♔h2 4 ♔e3! ♔g2

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

5 ♔d3 ♔f3 6 ♔c3 a2 7 ♔xb2 (or 7 ♖f1+) with a draw.

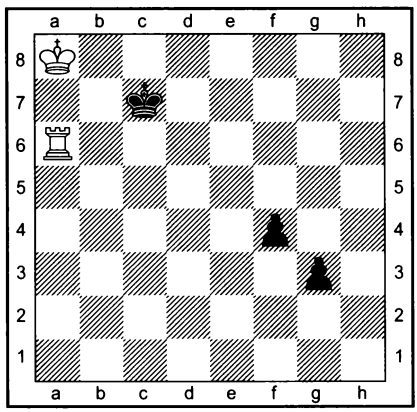
Intermediate check before the capture of a pawn



In this position **Herman Fridstein** resigned against **Anatoly Lutikov** (Riga 1954). He considered the variation 1 ♖xb3 c2 2 ♖b4+ ♔d5 3 ♖b5+ ♔d6 4 ♖b6+ ♔c7, but did not notice the saving intermediate check **1 ♖b4+!**.

I should mention, incidentally, that different players can single out different ideas and rules, depending on their experience and knowledge. In the above example attention should be paid to the manoeuvre with which the black king escapes from the checks (after 1 ♖xb3?). But you can also disregard it, if this idea is already well known to you.

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



1 ♖g6! ♔d7 2 ♖g4! g2! 3 ♖xg2 ♔e6 4 ♖g5!, winning thanks to the fact that the black king is cut off from the pawn along the 5th rank.

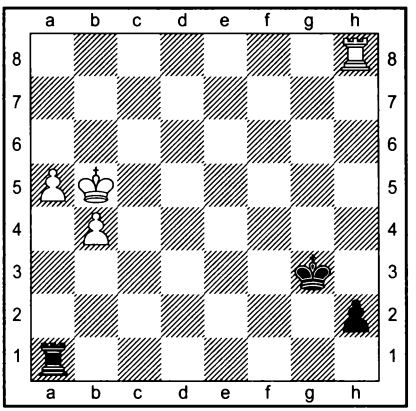
In Maizelis's book he gives a position by Sozin, which differs only in that the white king is on a7. In this case after 1 ♖g6! ♔d7 there is a second solution: 2 ♔b6 ♔e7 3 ♔c5 ♔f7 4 ♖g4 ♔f6 5 ♔d4! (5 ♖xf4+? ♔g5 6 ♖f8 ♔g4 7 ♔d4 g2) 5...♔f5 6 ♖g8 and wins.

But 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 advance?

Maróczy – Tarrasch
San Sebastian 1911



There was an easy win by **1 ♖xh2 ♔xh2 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 advances the pawn behind which the rook is not standing. Secondly, his remaining pawn is further away from the enemy king, which does not manage to attack it.

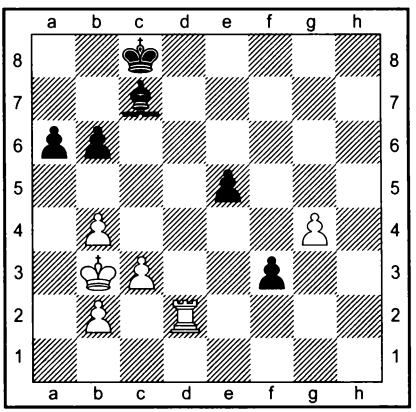
2 a6? is a mistake in view of 2...♔g3 3 ♔b6 ♔f4 4 a7 ♔e5 5 ♔b7 ♔d5 6 b5 ♔c5, when the black king succeeds in 'locking on' to the b-pawn. Or 4 b5 ♔e5 5 ♔a7 ♔d6 6 b6 ♖b1! 7 ♔b7 (7 b7 ♔c7) 7...♔c5.

The game went 1 ♔c6? ♖c1+ 2 ♔b6 ♖c4! (threatening the interference 3...♖h4) 3 ♖xh2 ♖xb4+ 4 ♔c5 ♖a4 5 ♔b5 ♖xa5+ with a draw.

It would be possible to expand further the store of typical ideas, but for a start it is sufficient to limit ourselves to these, the ones most used.

Some of the ideas mentioned operate not only in endings of the given type. Thus, for example, the rook should be placed to the rear of the more advanced pawn in nearly every case, when it is fighting against two connected passed pawns.

Alekhine – Tartakower
Vienna 1922



Alexander Alekhine analyses the natural continuations 36 ♔c2, 36 ♔c4, 36 g5 and 36 ♖h2, and shows that they are sufficient for a draw at best. There is only one way to win.

36 ♖d5!!

White's fantastic move finds a precise explanation, from the standpoint of typical ideas for such endings.

The variations springing from this rather unlikely move (it attacks one solidly defended pawn and allows the immediate advance of the other) are quite simple when we have descried the basic idea: The black pawns are inoffensive:

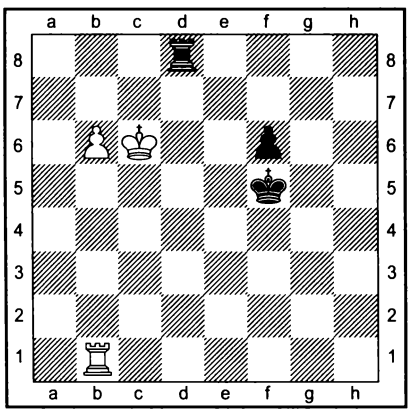
1) When they occupy squares of the same colour as their bishop, for in that case White's king can hold them back without difficulty, by occupying the appropriate white square, for example 36...f2 37 ♖d1 e4 38 ♔c2 ♗f4 39 ♖f1 and 40 ♔d1.

2) When the rook can be posted behind them, but without loss of time, for example 36...e4 37 ♖f5 ♗g3 38 g5 e3 39 ♖xf3 e2 40 ♖e3 (Alekhine).

It makes sense to also examine endings which are closely linked to those being studied. In the given instance – sharp rook endings, transposing into endings with rook against pawns. In them we encounter ideas with which we are already familiar.

Alekhine – Bogoljubow

World Championship Match,
19th Game, 1929

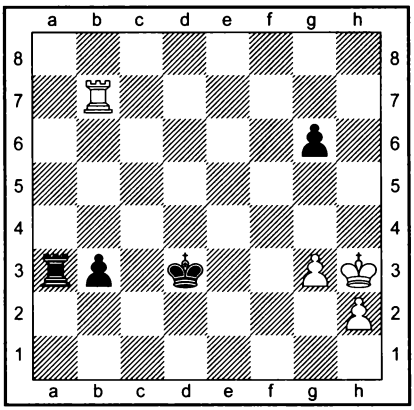


In the game there followed **70...♔g4? 71 b7 f5 72 b8♕ ♖xb8 73 ♖xb8** and White won easily by approaching the pawn with his king. But Efim Bogoljubow could have saved the draw by employing the 'shoulder-charge'.

70 . . . ♔e4!

The black king must be placed in the path of the opponent's king.

Of course, we will also meet new ideas which operate in sharp rook endings. The most important of them is ***inteference.*** We have already encountered it in the analysis of the Maróczy–Tarrasch ending. Now we will examine a far more complicated example.



This position could have occurred in the game **Lapin – Utyatsky** (Bryansk 1965).

1 . . . ♔c2

2 ♖c7+ ♔b2!!

Only this paradoxical move, suggested by Utyatsky, leads to a win. It involves the idea of interference. For example, if 3 ♔g4 Black decides matters with 3...♖a5! 4 ♖c6 ♔a3! 5 ♖xg6 b2 6 ♖b6 ♖a4+ and 7...♖b4.

3 ♖c6 ♖a4!

4 ♖xg6 ♔a3

4...♔c3 or 4...♔a2 is also not bad.

5 ♖b6

5 ♖f6 b2 6 ♖f1 ♖c4 7 ♖b1 ♖c1.

5 . . . b2

Threatening the interference 6...♖b4.

6 ♖xb2 ♔xb2

7 g4 ♔c3

8 ♔h4 ♔d4

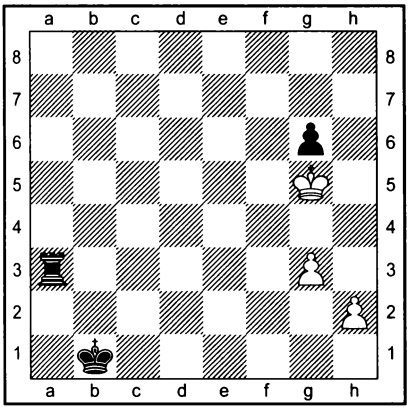
9 ♔g5 ♔e5

10 h4 ♔e6

And Black wins easily.

Thanks to the threat of interference, Black forced his opponent into hurrying to give up his rook for the pawn. In the event of the routine 2...♔b1?, interference no longer occurs and White can wait until the pawn reaches b1. From there, incidentally, it takes longer for the king to reach the opposite wing.

3 ♔g4 b2 (3...♖a5 4 ♖c6 b2 5 ♖xg6 ♔a2 6 ♖b6 with a draw) 4 ♔g5 ♔a1 (4...♖b3 5 ♔xg6 or 5 g4) 5 ♖b7 b1♕ 6 ♖xb1+ ♔xb1.



White can now achieve a draw in various ways. It is useful to examine the resulting variations, since in this way we will repeat and consolidate our knowledge of endings with rook against pawns. In the analysis extreme care has to be taken – despite the apparent simplicity, here one can easily go wrong.

1) 7 ♔xg6 ♔c2 8 g4 ♔d3 9 h4 ♔e4 10 h5 ♔f4 11 h6 ♖a6+ 12 ♔h5! with a draw (shoulder-charge). It is amusing that Utyatsky suggests 12 ♔g7? ♔g5 13 h7 ♖a7+ 14 ♔g8 ♔g6 15 h8♘+ ♔f6 16 g5+ ♔xg5 17 ♘f7+, but we already know that, according to theory, after 17...♔f6 18 ♘d6 ♖a5 (or 18...♔e6) Black wins.

2) 7 ♔xg6 ♔c2 8 h4 (in Utyatsky's opinion, 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 thanks to stalemate.

3) 7 g4 ♔c2 8 h4 ♖g3 9 ♔f4! ♖h3 10 ♔g5 ♔d3 11 h5 gxh5 12 gxh5 ♔e4 13 h6 ♔e5 14 ♔g6 ♔e6 15 ♔g7! with a draw, as in the previous variation.

Thus we should build up our theory of the endgame in the most economical way, by singling out the most generally used techniques and the most important exact positions. How best to assimilate and consolidate this material is another matter. Here one cannot get by without a familiarity with additional examples, including complicated practical endings (such as the one we have just been analysing). It is useful to try and solve a series of training exercises on the given topic. And above all, I recommend that you analyse independently those endings which you happen to encounter.

What does an independent analysis of endgame positions give us?

1) We learn new ideas and methods, expanding our system of knowledge, and we refine the information we already have.

2) After analysing a large amount of material, we have a better understanding of what features are typical and important and should therefore be included in the 'system', and which are accidental in character. As a result we form our endgame impressions most clearly, economically, at the same time without omitting anything important.

3) It improves our analytical mastery.

4) At times some players gain the impression that they largely understand the secrets of chess and that to find the best move in the majority of cases is no problem. They only need not to blunder, and to obtain the openings they want. Analysis helps to rid themselves of such illusions, and shows what an enormous wealth of ideas is sometimes concealed in the seemingly most modest position. It guards against superficiality, and aids the development of such important traits as precision, accuracy, industriousness, and so on.

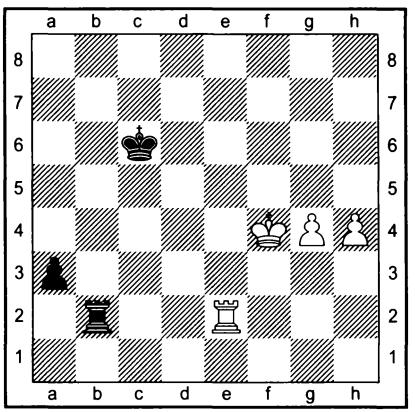
5) An analysis of your own games enables deficiencies in your play to be objectively diagnosed.

6) Analysis sometimes leads to interesting results, affording creative pleasure.

Once when I was looking through *Chess Informator*, an ending annotated by one of my pupils, Alexey Dreev, caught my eye.

Dreev – Moskalenko

USSR Young Masters Championship, Lvov 1985



A draw results from 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 faces a choice. In the game it moved towards the kingside, but by placing his rook behind the passed pawn White won easily: 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.

1 . . . ♔b5

In *Informator* the following analysis is given: **2 ♖e5+!! ♔b6** (2...♔b4 3 ♖e8 ♔b5 4 ♖b8+! and 5 ♖a8) **3 ♖e3!** (all the exclamation marks are by the annotator) **3...♖b4+ 4 ♔f5 ♖a4 5 h5 a2 6 ♖e1 a1♕ 7 ♖xa1 ♖xa1 8 h6 ♔c7 9 g5! ♔d7** (9...♖h1 10 g6! ♖xh6 11 g7 ♖h5+ 12 ♔f4 ♖h4+ 13 ♔f3 ♖h3+ 14 ♔g2) **10 h7 ♖h1 11 g6** and wins.

Unfortunately, this entire variation is a comedy of errors, at the basis of which is Dreev's natural, but in the given instance incorrect striving to definitely place his rook behind the opponent's passed pawn.

After 9 g5 Black saves the game by 9...♖h1! (the place for the black rook is to the rear of the more advanced pawn) 10 g6 ♖h5+! (remember the Fridstein–Lutikov ending), or 10 ♔g6 ♔d7 11 ♔h7 ♔e6 12 g6 ♖g1! (and this we have already seen in one of the variations of the Maróczy–Tarrasch ending).

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

But before this Black went wrong: he could have drawn by 4...a2! (instead of 4...♖a4?) 5 ♖a3 ♖b5+ 6 ♔g6 ♖a5 7 ♖xa2 ♖xa2 8 h5 ♔c6.

Even so, the ending is won. Only, the rook should not be placed on e3.

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)

Also possible is 6 h7 ♖xh7 7 ♖xa2 ♖h8!? 8 ♖a4! or 8 ♖a6! followed by 9 ♔g5, but not 8 g5? ♔e6 and not 8 ♖e2? ♖f8+ 9 ♔g3 ♖g8 with a draw.

6 . . . ♔e7

7 ♔g6

7 h7 is also strong.

7 . . . ♔f8

8 h7

And White wins.

It remains to analyse the rook check at e5, which in fact deserves not two exclamation marks, but more probably one question mark. Let us verify 2 ♖e5+?! ♔b4!?.

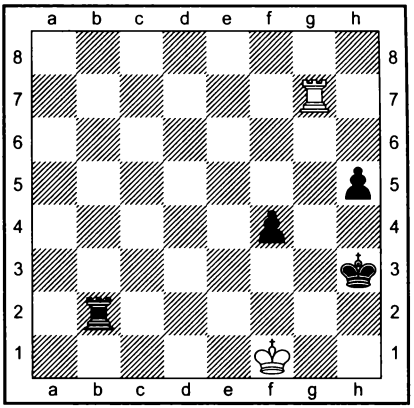
If 3 ♖e8? Black plays not 3...♔b5?, but 3...a2!. Then 4 ♖a8 ♖c2! with the threat of 5...♖c4+, 6...♖c5(c3)+ and 7...♖a5(a3) leads to an immediate draw. And if 4 ♖b8+, then 4...♔c4 (or 4...♔c3) 5 ♖a8 ♖b4! (threatening interference: ...♔b3+ and ...♖a4) 6 ♖xa2 ♔b3+ 7 ♔f5 ♔xa2 8 h5 ♖b5+! (the king must be driven to the unfortunate h4-square – this is not difficult to achieve, using the rook's long range) 9 ♔g6 ♖b6+ 10 ♔g5 ♖b5+ 11 ♔h4 ♖b1! (and now the rook moves to the rear of 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!? all the same the rook has to be returned to the first rank. But then it is clear that the check was pointless – White is forced to calculate the lengthy variation 3 ♖e1 a2 4 ♖a1 ♔b3 5 h5 ♖b1 6 ♖xa2 ♔xa2. Now it is incorrect to play 7 h6? ♖h1 8 g5 ♔b3 with a draw. But as yet the win has not been missed: 7 g5! ♖h1 8 g6! or 7...♖f1+ 8 ♔g4! (8 ♔e5? ♖h1!) 8...♔b3 9 g6.

In 1976 the USSR Championship was held in Moscow. In the very first round my friend Boris Gulko adjourned his game against grandmaster Taimanov in a complicated rook ending. Before the resumption he asked me to join in the analysis.

In order to figure out precisely some very intricate variations, we had to turn to the theory of the rook endgame with f- and h-pawns. The elementary information about these endings, which was given above, was not sufficient for us. However, the necessary positions could not even be found in books on the endgame, so that we had to supplement 'official' theory with our own analyses. Here is a very important key position that we found *(see diagram).*

White's king is cut off on the back rank. Does this mean that he is bound to lose? It turns



out that the answer is no. After all, the black king too is not well placed – it is cut off on the h-file.

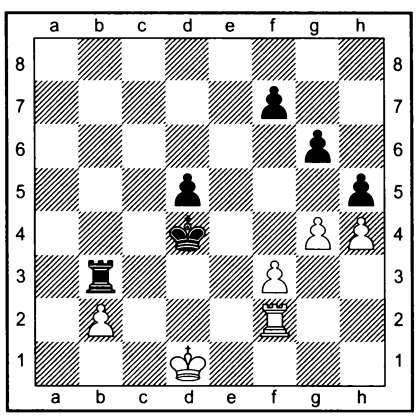
1 ♔g1! h4 2 ♖g8 f3 3 ♖f8 ♔g3 (or 3...♖g2+ 4 ♔f1 ♔g3 5 ♖g8+ ♔h2 6 ♖f8) **4 ♖g8+ ♔f4 5 ♖f8+ ♔e3 6 ♖e8+ ♔d3 7 ♖d8+ ♔e2 8 ♖e8+ ♔d1 9 ♖f8(e3)** with a draw.

However, if it is Black to move he wins, by depriving the enemy king of the important g1-square.

1...♔h2! 2 ♖g8 (in the event of 2 ♖f7 or 2 ♖h7 Black wins by 2...♔g3) **2...h4 3 ♖g7** (3 ♖g4 h3 4 ♖xf4 ♔g3 5 ♖f8 ♖b1+ 6 ♔e2 h2) **3...h3 4 ♖g8 f3** (or 4...♖g2) and wins.

Taimanov – Gulko

44th USSR Championship, Moscow 1976



42 . . . ♔e3

The sealed move.

43 ♖e2+ ♔xf3

44 gxh5 gxh5

45 ♖e5 ♔g4

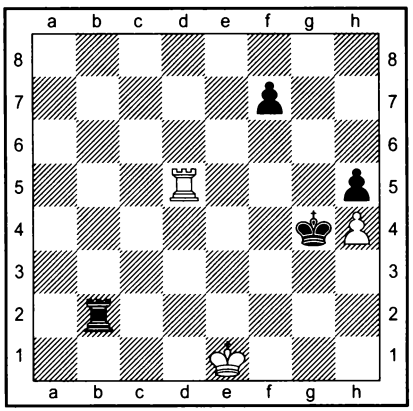
Weaker is 45...♖xb2 46 ♖xh5! ♔e4 47 ♖h8, and White should gain a draw.

46 ♖xd5 ♖xb2

47 ♔e1

After 47 ♖d4+ ♔g3 48 ♔e1 f5 49 ♖d5 f4 50 ♖g5+ (50 ♖xh5 ♖b1+ 51 ♔d2 f3) Black does not play 50...♔f3? 51 ♖xh5, but simply 50...♔xh4! 51 ♖g8 ♔h3 52 ♔f1 ♔h2!, achieving a winning position, since his king succeeds in reaching h2.

But now we have reached the culmination of the entire endgame.



The natural move 47...f5? is a mistake. After 48 ♔f1 ♖h2 49 ♔g1 ♖xh4 50 ♔g2 f4 51 ♖d3 a 'normal' (i.e. drawn) position with f- and h-pawns is reached, and with the black rook badly placed. If 48...f4 there follows 49 ♖g5+ ♔xh4 50 ♖g8 ♔h3 51 ♔g1 with a draw, since the white king has reached g1. And 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?

We assumed that 48 ♖f5 also did not help in view of 48...♖b7 49 ♔f1 (49 ♔f2 ♔g4 50 ♖f6 h4) 49...♔g4 50 ♖f2 ♖b1+! 51 ♔g2 f5. To prevent the king from being pushed onto the back rank, the white rook must guard the 2nd rank, where it is too passively placed. Black wins easily, by advancing his pawns.

Alas, a mistake crept into our analysis. By continuing 49 ♖a5! (instead of the losing king moves) White exploits the long-range power of his rook and draws by driving the opponent's king to a less good position: 49...♔g4 50 ♖a4+! ♔g3 51 ♖a3+ ♔g2 52 ♖a2+ ♔g1 53 ♔e2! (now in a number of variations it becomes possible to shut the king on the edge of the board after playing the rook to the g-file) 53...♔g2 54 ♔e1+!.

48 . . . f6!

We thought that this subtle move was the only correct one, since in the event of 48...f5 49 ♖g7 ♔h3 50 ♔f1 the white king succeeds in reaching g1 (50...♔h2 does not work in view of 51 ♖g5). But here too we were wrong! After 50...h4! 51 ♔g1 Black has the winning resource 51...♖b4!, which he did not have in our basic position – there the pawn was already standing at f4. 51 ♖g8 ♔h2! is hopeless, as is 51 ♖g5 f4 52 ♔g1 f3 52 ♖f5 ♔g4 (the rook is placed too close to the king and is unable to give checks). A good illustration of how carefully and cautiously one should use theoretical knowledge: a slight change in the position, and well-known procedures and evaluations may prove invalid.

49 ♔f1

49 ♖g7 does not 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 his h-pawn, and then blocks the g-file with his rook, and the white king proves to be too far away from the rook's pawn.

49 . . . ♔g4

White's position is hopeless, since his king is cut off on the first rank, and he has been unable to shut in the opponent's king on 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.

After 66 ♔g3 f2 67 ♖a2 ♖b3+ 68 ♔h2 Gulko wanted to win in the quickest way – 68...♖f3!. The 'scientific' 68...♖e3 69 ♖b2 ♖e8 70 ♖b1+ ♔e2 71 ♖b2+ ♔f3 72 ♖b3+ ♖e3 73 ♖b1 ♖e1 is also good, only not 69...♔e1?? (instead of 69...♖e8!), as **José Raúl Capablanca** once played in a similar position. After 70 ♖b1+ ♔e2 his opponent **Vera Menchik** could have drawn with the obvious 71 ♔g2!. But there followed 71 ♖b2+?? ♔f3, and Menchik resigned. This happened at the 1929/30 Hastings tournament. This curious incident shows how careful one has to be when playing even the most simple endings.

Gulko and I reached another interesting position, important for the theory of the endgame, when analysing **46 ♔c2** (instead of 46 ♖xd5). We examined a provisional variation, which was far from forced, and which in addition (as was revealed with the help of a computer database of endings with a small number of pieces, created more than a quarter of a century later) contained numerous mistakes. However, at the time we were attracted not by the variation itself, but its concluding position.

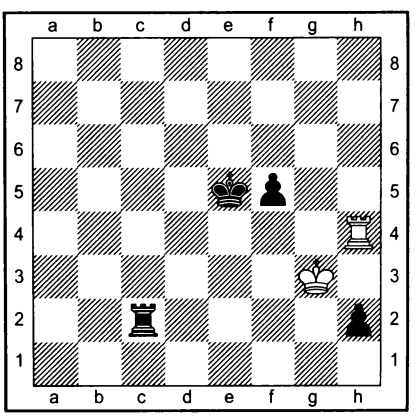
46...♖b5 47 ♖g5+ ♔xh4 48 ♖f5 ♖b7 (48...♔g4 49 ♖xf7 h4 comes into consideration) **49 ♖xd5 ♔g4 50 ♖d4+ ♔g5 51 ♔d3** (51 ♖d8 is also possible) **51...♖xb2 52 ♔e3 h4 53 ♔f3 h3 54 ♖g4+?**

The only way to draw is 54 ♖d5+! f5 55 ♖d8 h2 56 ♖g8+! ♔f6 57 ♖h8, or 54...♔g6 55 ♔g4! h2 56 ♖g5+ ♔f6 57 ♖h5 ♔e6 58 ♔f4.

54...♔f5 55 ♖f4+ ♔e6

55...♔g6! wins: 56 ♔g3 h2 57 ♖g4+ ♔f5 58 ♖h4 ♖c2, or 56 ♖g4+ ♔h5 57 ♖g8 ♖b3+58 ♔f4 (58 ♔f2 ♖b1!) 58...♖b6! 59 ♖g5+ ♔h6 60 ♖g3 (60 ♖g8 ♖f6+ 61 ♔e5 ♔h7!) 60...♖b4+! 61 ♔f5 ♖b5+.

56 ♖h4 h2? (Black should go back with his king: 56...♔f5) **57 ♖h6+?** (57 ♖h5! is essential, aiming to provoke ...f7–f5 in a situation where the black king has not yet occupied the e5-square) **57...♔e5 58 ♖h8 ♖c2 59 ♖h4** (the threat was ...♔e5–d4–c3–b2–c1 etc.) **59...f5 60 ♔g3**



The move that suggests itself, 60...f4+?, does not win: 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 that it is White's turn to move. He will be forced to play 61 ♖h8 (61 ♔f3 is not possible on account of 61...♖c1! 62 ♖xh2 ♖c3+), and the black king can advance, bypassing its rook, in order to approach the h-pawn along the first rank. Note that it is the c2-square that the black rook should occupy. If it is on d2 or e2, the white rook is no longer obliged to leave the 4th rank (there is the move ♔f3!). With the rook on b2 the king's route via the queenside around its rook becomes too long.

In other words, the position is one of mutual zugzwang. White must be given the turn to move.

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+

65 ♖h8 ♖e2!, intending 66...♔d2.

65 . . . **♔c3**

66 ♖h8

66 ♖c8+ ♔d2 or 66...♔b2

66 . . . **♖e2!**

In the event of 66...♔b2? 67 ♔f4 ♔c1 68 ♔xf5 ♔d1 69 ♔g4 the black king is too late.

67 ♔f4 **♔d2**

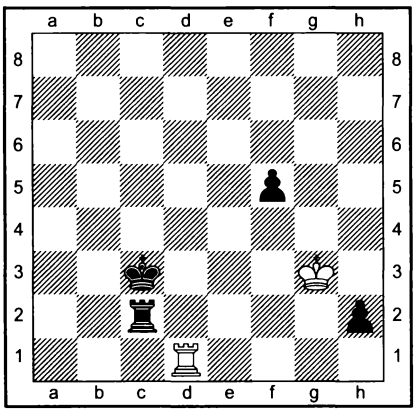
68 ♔xf5 **♔e1**

69 ♔g4 **♔f1**

70 ♔g3 **♔g1**

The king has arrived just in time!

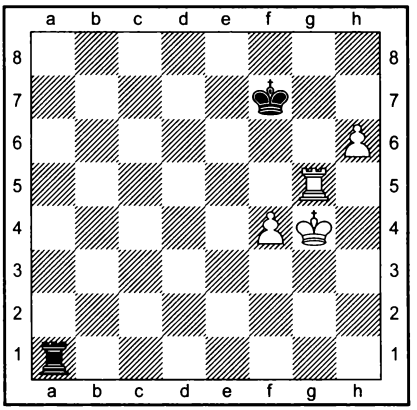
Thirty years later I discovered the possibility of a more tenacious defence. Instead of 66 ♖h8 it makes sense to play **66 ♖d1!?**.



To win, it is sufficient for Black to return with his king to the f-pawn while the enemy rook is tied to the 1st rank. But how to achieve this? If **66...♔c4** the opponent replies **67 ♖a1** (67 ♖f1 ♖d2; 67 ♔f4 ♖f2+ 68 ♔g3 ♖d2), after which it is pointless to play 67...♔d5 68 ♖a5+ ♔e6 (68...♔e4 69 ♖a4+ ♔e5 70 ♖h4) 69 ♖a6+ ♔e5 70 ♖h6 (intending 71 ♖h4) 70...♔e4 71 ♖e6+ ♔d3 72 ♖d6+ ♔c3 73 ♖d1!, and so on.

Before bringing the king back, it is important to place the rook on d2. Then the manoeuvre of the white rook to h6 (by analogy with the variations just considered) loses its strength – Black again advances his king, and the white rook can no longer reach d1. The most accurate is **67...♖a2!** (not immediately 67...♖d2 68 ♖a4+ ♔d5?! 69 ♖h4, and it is necessary to start all over again) **68 ♖b1 ♖d2 69 ♔f3** (69 ♖a1 ♔d5) **69...♔d5** (threatening ...♔e5–f6–g5) **70 ♖b5+ ♔e6 71 ♖b6+ ♔e5 72 ♖h6 ♔d4 73 ♖d6+ ♔c3 74 ♖c6+ ♔b2 75 ♖h6 ♔c1**, and Black wins.

Now let us again remember the ending with which we began: Gligoric–Smyslov. In the note to White's 3rd move the variation **3 h6 ♖a1!** was analysed.



However, we did not consider the attempt, by playing **4 ♖g7+ ♔f6** (the retreat to the 8th rank is hopeless, of course) **5 ♖c7**, to reach the position which we have just been discussing. Knowing of the impending danger, Black can avoid it without great difficulty – the defensive resources are quite sufficient.

5...♔g6

5...♖g1+ 6 ♔f3 ♖h1 is also good.

6 h7 ♖h1!

But here it is wrong to interpose a check: 6...♖g1+? 7 ♔f3 ♖h1 8 ♔e4.

7 ♔f3

Nothing is given by 7 f5+ ♔f6. In reply to the waiting move 7 ♖b7 Black can also wait: 7...♖h2, not fearing 8 ♖b5 ♔g7! 9 ♖g5+ ♔h8!. Also good is 7...♖g1+ 8 ♔f3 ♖h1 9 ♔e4 ♖e1+, since with the rook on b7, as we know, the king's route to outflank the rook is too long: 10 ♔d5 ♖d1+ 11 ♔c6 ♖c1+! 12 ♔b6 ♖h1 with a draw.

7...♔f5!

The simplest way of demonstrating that the position is drawn. But Black also does not lose after 7...♔f6!? 8 ♔e4 ♖e1+ 9 ♔d5 ♖d1+ 10 ♔c6 ♖h1!. With the king on f6 White does not have the important move 11 ♖e7, and in the event of 11 ♖d7 (or 11 ♔b7) 11...♔f5 the black king succeeds, after eliminating the f4-pawn, in returning to g6 in time.

II. IMPROVING YOUR TECHNIQUE

I will now talk about how you can improve your technical mastery. For this you need to study problems which are common to all (or to many) types of endings. Problems, such as the enhanced role of the king in the endgame, zugzwang (and a very important specific instance of it – mutual zugzwang, and corresponding squares), the advisability of this or that exchange, and so on. It is especially important to sense the spirit of the endgame, to develop the optimal mood for playing it, and to understand the psychological chess laws which apply here.

All this is best studied by analysing practical endings, played by great masters of the endgame. As an example, let us look at a game by grandmaster Ulf Andersson.

Andersson – Franco

Buenos Aires 1979

English Opening

1 ♘f3	**♘f6**
2 c4	**g6**
3 ♘c3	**d5**
4 cxd5	**♘xd5**
5 e4	**♘xc3**
6 dxc3	

Andersson likes and knows how to play the endgame, and so already in the opening he happily exchanges the queens.

6 . . .	**♕xd1+**
7 ♔xd1	**f6**
8 ♗e3	**e5**
9 ♘d2	

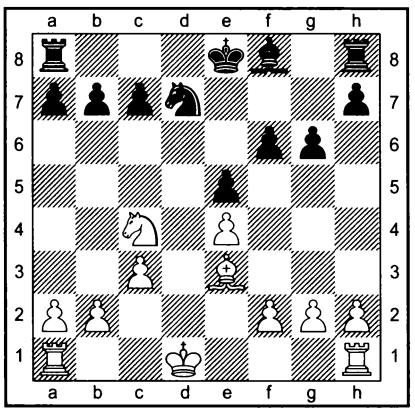
9 ♗c4!?.

9 . . . **♗e6**

10 ♗c4 **♗xc4**

10...♔f7 looks more logical, but here too after 11 ♔c2 ♘d7 12 b4 Black experiences certain difficulties: 12...♘b6 13 ♗b3 or 12...h5 13 g3, intending 14 f4.

11 ♘xc4 **♘d7**



12 b4!

In the endgame one should carefully watch for the opponent's ideas and if possible frustrate his plans. Here Black wanted to equalise the game completely with 12...♗c5.

12 . . . **♘b6?!**

An inaccuracy! The only defect of Black's position is that his bishop is more passive than the opponent's. He should have tried to exchange it, by playing 12...h5!? followed by ...♗h6. The game Andersson–Mestel (Hastings 1978/79) continued 13 f3 ♗h6 14 ♗f2 ♘b6 15 ♗xb6! (15 ♘a5? 0-0-0+) 15...axb6 16 b5 ♔e7! (in the endgame the king is best placed in the centre of the board – therefore Black avoids queenside castling) 17 a4 ♖hd8+ 18 ♔c2 ♔e6, and Jonathan Mestel managed to retain the balance. White acted more directly in the game Loginov–Sideif-Zade (Aktyubinsk 1985): 13 ♔c2 ♗h6 14 ♗xh6 ♖xh6 15 ♖hd1 0-0-0 16 ♘a5 ♖hh8 17 ♖d3, and retained slightly the better chances.

12...f5!? came into consideration.

13 ♘a5! **0-0-0+**

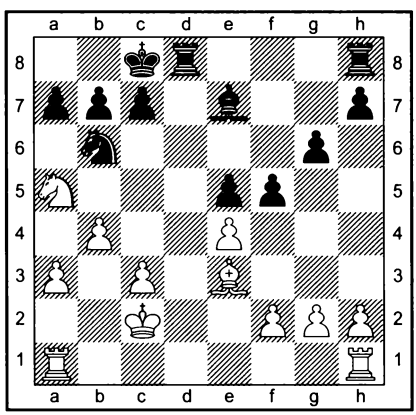
14 ♔c2 **♗e7**

Now if 14...h5 White would have replied 15 ♖hd1 ♖xd1 (15...♗e7) 16 ♖xd1 ♗h6? 17 ♗xh6 ♖xh6 18 c4 ♖h7 19 c5 ♘d7 20 c6 with advantage. Even so, 14...h5 was a useful move – the exchange of rooks would have eased Black's defence.

15 a3!

Andersson prepares an offensive on the queenside with c3–c4–c5. This positional threat provokes the opponent into dubious activity.

15 . . . **f5?!**



16 ♗xb6!!

The 'automatic' 17 f3 would have allowed the opponent to gain counter-chances, by attacking the e4-pawn (...♘b6–d7–f6). Andersson makes a timely correction to his plan. A move earlier the exchange of minor pieces would not have given anything: 15 ♗xb6?! axb6 16 ♘c4 b5, but now the e5-pawn comes under attack.

16 . . . **axb6**

17 ♘c4 **♗f6?**

Black defends too passively. He should have thought about 17...♖hf8!. If 18 ♖ae1, then 18...b5! 19 ♘xe5 fxe4 20 ♖hf1 ♗g5. After 18 exf5 ♖xf5 19 f3 Black has a choice

between the interesting, although questionable piece sacrifice 19...e4?! 20 ♖he1 exf3 21 ♖xe7 fxg2 22 ♖g1 ♖f2+ 23 ♔b3 b5 24 ♘e5 h5! (with the idea of 25...c6 and 26...♖dd2) and the quieter continuation 19...♗g5!? (threatening 20...e4 or 20...b5) 20 ♖he1 b5 21 ♘e3 ♗xe3 with an inferior, but tenable double-rook ending (21...♖ff8, intending 22...e4, also comes into consideration). Little is changed by 19 ♖hf1 ♗g5 (weaker is 19...♖df8 20 f3 e4 21 ♖fe1 ♖g5 22 g4! ♖xf3 23 ♖xe4 ♗f6 24 ♖d1! with the threats of 25 ♖e8+ and 25 h4) 20 ♖ae1 b5.

As was pointed out by Maxim Notkin, a similar double-rook ending arises after 17...fxe4!? 18 ♖ae1 ♖hf8 19 ♖hf1 ♗h4!? 20 g3 ♗g5 21 ♖xe4 (21 a4!?) 21...b5! 22 ♘e3 ♗xe3 23 ♖xe3.

18 a4!

White not only consolidates the position of his knight at c4, but also begins an offensive on the queenside. 18 b5 was less accurate on account of 18...fxe4 and 19...♖d5.

18 . . . **♗g7**

19 ♖he1 **♖he8**

20 b5!

20 a5? b5 was less good. The target (the b6-pawn) should be fixed, and only then attacked.

20 . . . **f4**

21 a5 **bxa5**

22 ♖xa5 **b6**

23 ♖a7

Threatening 24 ♘xb6+.

23 . . . **♗f6**

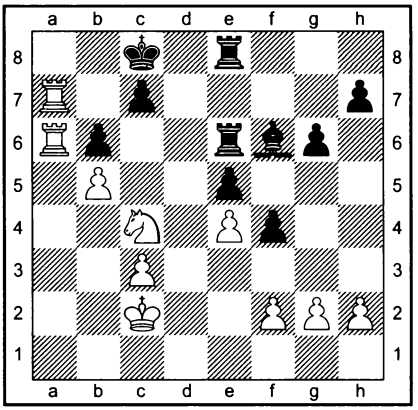
24 ♖ea1 **♖e6**

25 ♖1a6!

Creating the strong threat of 26 ♘a5 and 27 ♘c6.

25 . . . **♖de8**

(see diagram)



With his active play on the a-file White has tied down the opponent's forces and forced his rooks to move off the open file.

26 ♔b3!

This unhurried manner of play is typical of Andersson. Just in case he improves the position of his king and awaits a convenient moment for the further strengthening of his position. This is the way to convert an advantage in the endgame – by doing everything possible to restrict the opponent's possibilities, and then, without hurrying, look for new breaches in his defences. *To many the rule 'do not hurry' may seem paradoxical, but in fact it is seen in practically all the endings of games by the great masters of the endgame. Look carefully at the endings of Capablanca and Flohr, and you will see with what slowness, sometimes bordering on tedium, they convert an advantage* (Sergey Belavenets).

26 . . . **♗d8?!**

It was this that Andersson was waiting for!

27 ♖a8+ **♔d7**

28 ♖a2!

A convenient moment has arrived for a regrouping of the forces: exploiting the poor position of the bishop on d8, White seizes control of the d-file. But Alisa Galliamova's suggestion 28 ♖6a7!, with the idea of 29

♖b8 and 30 ♘xb6+, was possibly even stronger.

28 . . . ♗f6
29 ♖d2+ ♔e7
30 ♖a7!

Of course, there is no point in White exchanging his active rook for the opponent's passive rook.

30 . . . ♖c8
31 ♖d5 ♔e8
32 h3

In such positions Andersson loves to make waiting moves.

32 . . . ♔e7
33 ♘b2!

The knight has done an excellent job at c4, and now it moves to d3, from where it will support the advance of the c-pawn, and from where it can itself advance further via b4. Note that White did not play this a move earlier, since he was afraid of the reply 32...c6 – he waited until the opponent's king had gone to e7.

33 . . . ♔e8

33...♖d6 was more tenacious, after which it was best to reply 34 ♖xd6! ♔xd6 35 c4, intending 36 ♘d3, 37 c5+ and 38 ♔c4.

34 ♘d3 ♗g7

34...c6 35 ♖dd7! cxb5 36 ♘b4.

35 c4 ♗f6
36 c5 bxc5
37 ♘xc5 ♖e7

37...♖b6 38 ♘d7!.

38 ♖a6!

Systematic play! With gain of tempo White gains control of the 6th rank – he prevents ...c7–c6 and obtains the e6-square for his knight.

38 . . . ♗h8
39 ♔c4!

Again, just in case, Andersson improves the position of his king.

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

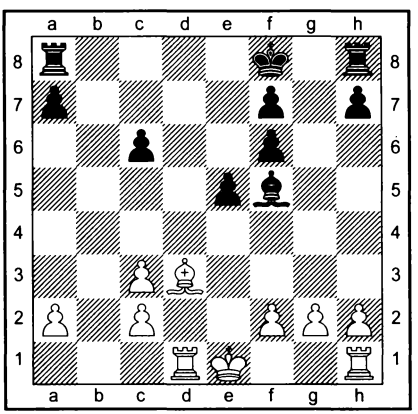
Black resigned, since 42...♖b7 43 ♖d8+ leads to mate, while if 42...♖c8, then 43 b6 is decisive.

A classic example of virtuoso endgame play! The study of such endings assists the development of taste for the endgame and improves technical mastery.

From the methodological point of view it is useful to see the same problems displayed in a negative form – by examining examples in which typical endgame mistakes are made. The following game was played on the women's board in a competition for Moscow higher education establishments in 1972/73.

Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 e6 6 ♘db5 ♗b4 7 ♘d6+?! ♔e7! 8 ♗f4?! e5! 9 ♘f5+ ♔f8 10 ♗g5 d5! 11 ♗xf6 gxf6?! (11...♕xf6! suggests itself) **12 exd5 ♗xf5 13 dxc6 ♗xc3+ 14 bxc3 ♕xd1+ 15 ♖xd1 bxc6 16 ♗d3** (16 ♖d6!?)



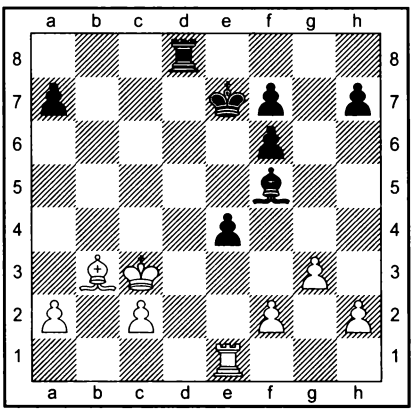
16 . . . e4?

After achieving the better endgame, Black immediately makes a positional mistake – she places a pawn on a square of the same colour as her bishop. 16...♗e6 17 ♗e4 ♔e7 18 ♗xc6 ♖ac8 19 ♗e4 ♖xc3 suggests itself.

17 ♗c4 ♖g8?

Again a fundamental mistake – the player with Black does not pay attention to her opponent's possibilities. Of course, 17...♔e7 followed by 18...♗e6 was correct.

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



The advantage is now with White, who is threatening 26 f3.

25 . . . ♔f8?

Moving the king away from the centre in the endgame is nearly always a mistake. 25...♗g6 26 f3 f5 was preferable.

26 ♖e2 ♗g6
27 ♖d2 ♖xd2?

An incorrect evaluation. The bishop endgame is lost. 27...♖c8+ was more tenacious.

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 slight inaccuracy. In accordance with the principle 'do not hurry', before changing the pattern of the play White should have strengthened her position to the maximum. In the given position – 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 about the reply 39...h5. But after this Black, with nearly all her pawns on squares of the colour of her bishop, would undoubtedly be lost.

39 . . . fxg4
40 hxg4 h5!

When defending an inferior endgame it is useful to exchange as many pawns as possible.

41 gxh5

With the pawn on a3 White would have played 41 ♗xe4 ♗f7 42 g5!, eliminating the f6-pawn, which hinders 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 put up a tenacious defence. The move in the game loses immediately.

46 c6! ♗e8

Otherwise 47 ♗f5.

47 c7 ♔d7

48 ♗c6+!

Black resigned.

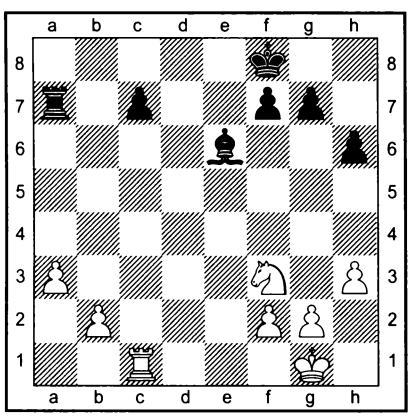
A player's endgame technique is based on a mastery of the whole arsenal of ideas he has accumulated – from understanding the spirit of the endgame and its most general laws, to minor techniques which he encounters when studying his own or other players' games. To illustrate this, I will acquaint you with one ending of my own, broken up into elementary components.

First we will examine four 'intermediate products', which, incidentally, are quite instructive in themselves.

1) It is well known that in the endgame the role of logical thinking increases. One must be able to compile plans, outline a scheme for arranging the pieces, and so on. A classic example is provided by the following ending.

Capablanca – Ragozin

Moscow 1936



This is what José Raúl Capablanca writes about this position:

White's plan is to prevent the advance of the c-pawn (after which the b-pawn could become weak) and to control the entire board up to the fifth rank. This is achieved by moving the king to e3 and by placing the rook at c3, the knight at d4, and the pawns at b4 and f4. After he has attained such a position, White will be able to advance his queenside pawns.

The following moves are easy to understand – Capablanca consistently carries out his plan.

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 required arrangement of the pieces has been achieved. Now Capablanca wants to regroup his forces, by playing his knight to c3 (or c5).

43 ♘e2 g6

44 ♖d3+ ♔e6

45 ♔d4?

In winning positions even highly experienced players sometimes involuntarily relax and make tactical oversights, risking losing the fruits of their correct strategy. That is the case here: White's last move is a serious inaccuracy (45 f5+! gxf5 46 ♘f4+ or 46...♔e7 46 ♘c3! was correct), which could have been exploited by 45...♗b5!. In the event of 46 ♖e3+ ♔d6 Black creates the threat of 47...c5+, while after 46 ♘c3 ♗xd3 47 ♘xa4 ♗f1 he regains his pawn.

45 . . . ♖a6?

46 ♖e3+ ♔d6

47 ♘c3

The queenside pawns are now ready to advance. In passing 48 ♘e4+ is threatened.

47 . . . **f5**

48 b5 **♖a8**

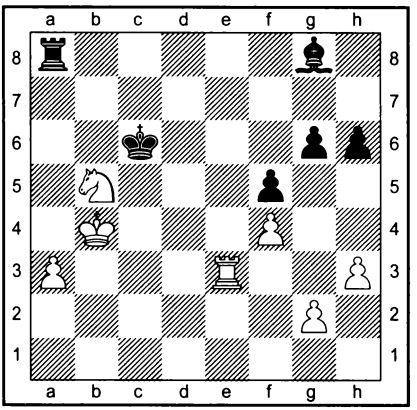
48...♖xa3 49 ♘e4+ fxe4 50 ♖xa3 ♗xb5 51 ♖g3.

49 ♔c4 **♗e6+**

50 ♔b4 **c5+**

51 bxc6 **♗g8**

52 ♘b5+ **♔xc6**



53 ♖d3!

Take note: White does not advance his passed pawn, but switches to an attack on the enemy kingside pawns. This is fully in the spirit of an important principle in the conversion of an advantage – the 'principle of two weaknesses'. After creating a second weakness in the opponent's position, by playing against it and then, in case of necessity, again switching the attack to the first weakness, you convert your advantage in the most methodical way.

In the broad sense of the word, a weakness in the opponent's position can be not only a vulnerable pawn or a badly placed piece, but also our own passed pawn, which he is forced to blockade, or an invasion square, which he has to cover.

53 . . . **g5**

54 ♖d6+ **♔b7**

55 fxg5 **hxg5**

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 will have noticed, of course, that when playing the endgame Capablanca twice repeated moves. Here is what Sergey Belavenets writes about this:

The repetition of moves in the endgame plays an important role. Disregarding the fact that it gains time for thinking, it can be mentioned that, by repeating moves, the active side acquires certain psychological gains. The defender, whose position is inferior, often cannot withstand it, and he creates a further weakening which eases his opponent's task. In addition, repeating moves enables the position to be clarified to the maximum extent. We know that some upholders of 'pure' chess will severely criticise us for this advice. But we cannot refrain from advising players: sometimes repeat moves in the endgame. In the struggle every chance has to be exploited, and there is nothing ugly or unethical in repeating moves.

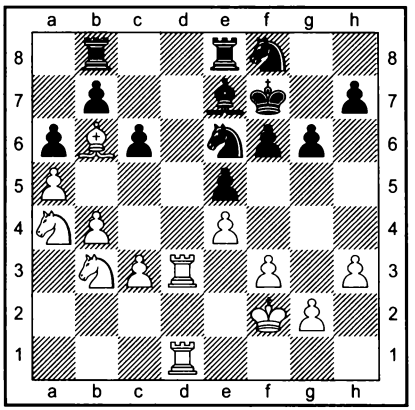
3) Let us examine an example from one of my own games.

(see diagram)

White has an obvious advantage, but for the moment the invasion points are securely defended.

Dvoretsky – Kikiani

Kiev 1970



35 . . . **♗d8**

I did not even begin to examine 36 ♘bc5 seriously, since I noticed an opportunity to gain a tempo by a simple triangulation manoeuvre with the bishop.

36 ♗a7! **♖a8**

37 ♗e3

Threatening 38 ♘bc5.

37 . . . **♗e7**

38 ♗b6

If now 38...♗d8 the move 39 ♘bc5 gains in strength – the b7-pawn is not defended.

38 . . . **♖ab8**

We have reached the position with which we began, but with White to move.

39 g3

The 'do not hurry' principle in action: while the opponent is unable to do anything, all the even slightly useful moves should be made. Why not, just in case, take away the f4-square from the knight?

39 . . . **♗d8**

40 ♗a7 **♖a8**

41 ♗e3

White is not averse to repeating his manoeuvre. Faced with such unhurried manoeuvring, the opponent does not know what he should fear in the first instance. Kikiani decided to prevent f3–f4, which in fact was hardly a threat, since it would have weakened the e4-pawn.

41 . . . **g5?**

42 ♘bc5!

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

42 . . . **♖b8**

43 ♘d7 **♘xd7**

44 ♖xd7+ **♖e7**

45 ♘c5 **♔e8**

46 ♖xe7+ **♔xe7**

47 ♖d7+ **♔e8**

48 ♖xh7 **♘c7**

49 h4 **gxh4**

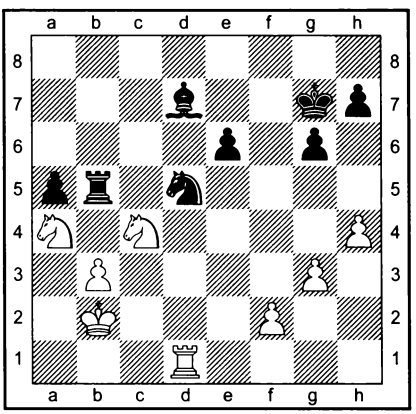
50 gxh4

Black resigned.

4) Let us examine another endgame by Capablanca.

Capablanca – Yates

New York 1924



Note the pretty knight circuit, thanks to

which White won a pawn.

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

The rest is accurate, Capablanca-style conversion of the advantage. White's first objective is to improve the placing of his pieces: first his knights, and then his rook.

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**

After strengthening his position to the maximum and tying down the opponent's forces, White 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!	

Again, as in the game against Ragozin, Capablanca operates in accordance with the principle of two weaknesses. For a time he defers the advance of his passed pawn and launches 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.

64 fxg5	**hxg5**
65 hxg5	**♗g2**
66 ♖e8	**♖c7**

66...♖xe8 67 ♘xe8+ ♔f8 68 g6!.

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

Centralisation of the king.

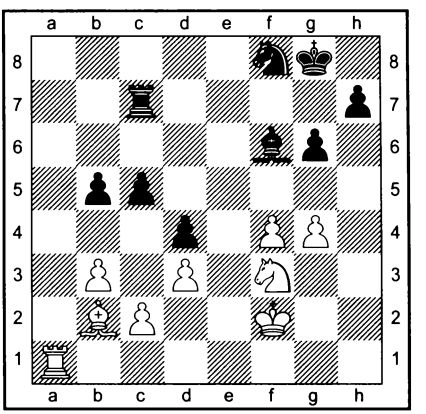
70 . . .	**♗b7**
71 ♔d4	**♗c8**
72 g6	**♘b7**
73 ♘e8!	**♘d8**
74 b5	**♔g8**
75 g5	**♔f8**
76 g7+	**♔g8**
77 g6	

Black resigned.

And now see how all this information enabled the following ending to be won.

Dvoretsky – Privorotsky

Kiev 1970



29 ♖a5	**b4**

29...c4 30 ♗xd4 was no good, but 29...♘e6 was worth considering. After the move in the game Black will no longer have any counterplay.

Now, following the example of the Capablanca–Ragozin ending, White outlined a scheme for the deployment of his pieces. Obviously, the knight must be played to e4, the king brought up to f3, the rook placed on a6 and the bishop on the c1–h6 diagonal, and, finally, the pawn advanced to f5.

30 ♘d2	**♗e7**
31 ♘e4	**♘d7**
32 ♖a6	**♔f7**
33 ♔f3	**♘b8**
34 ♖a8	**♘d7**
35 ♗c1	**♘b6**
36 ♖a6	**♘d5**
37 f5	**gxf5**
38 gxf5	

The plan has been successfully carried out.

38 . . .	**♖d7**

Here I saw that the triangulation method for gaining a tempo, found two rounds earlier in the game against Kikiani, might again come in useful. The only difference is that here the tempo is won not by the bishop, but by the rook.

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

It is now White's turn to move.

42 ♗h6	**♖c8**

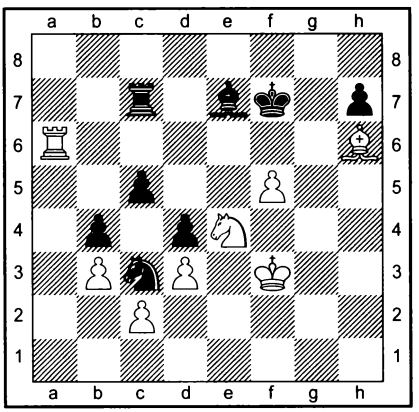
42...♖d7 is now bad because of 43 ♖a8 and 44 ♖h8, winning the h7-pawn.

43 ♖a7	**♖c7**
44 ♖a6	

If 44 ♖a8 there is the reply 44...♖c6, and so the rook returns to a6. In the event of 44...♖c8 White would probably have played 45 ♗g5!?, but it did not prove necessary to weigh up this move.

44 . . .	**♘c3?**

Belavenets was right – Black could not withstand the pressure, and he himself avoids the repetition of moves.



Now White carries out a curious circular manoeuvre with his knight, resembling that which Capablanca made against Yates.

45 ♘d2!	**♘d5**
46 ♘c4	**♗f6**

47 ♘e5+ was threatened.

47 ♘d6+	**♔e7**
48 ♘e4	

After making four successive moves, the knight has returned to where it began. But Black's defences are now completely disorganised. The threat is 49 ♘xf6 ♘xf6 50 ♗g5. If 48...♔f7, then 49 ♖d6 is decisive.

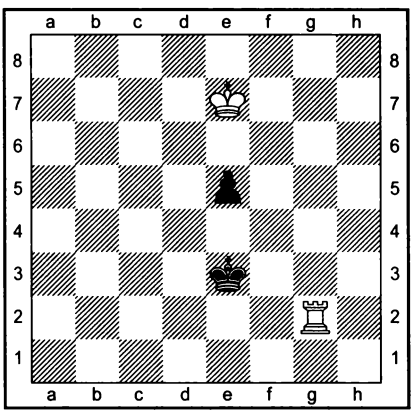
48 . . .	**♗h8**
49 ♖e6+	**♔d8**
50 ♗g5+	

Black resigned.

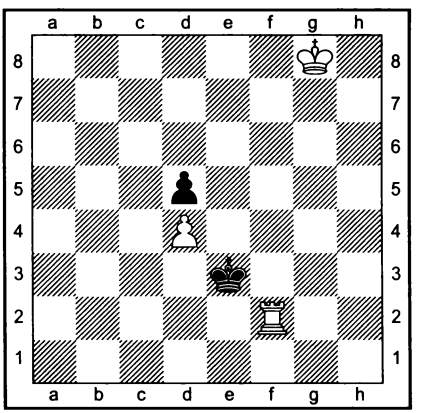
Thus by reflecting on the games of great players and the recommendations which they give in their commentaries, and by considering your own competitive experience, you can sharply improve your technical mastery.

In conclusion I offer several exercises, in which a rook fights against opposing pawns. The process of trying to solve them will offer you training in the practical application of the theory of this type of endgame.

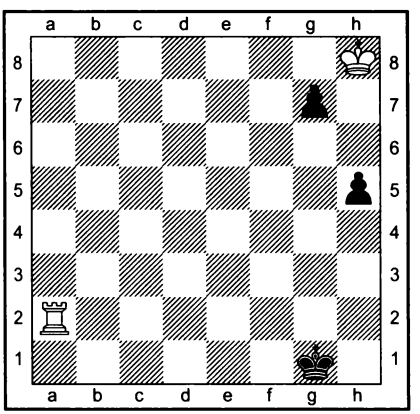
Exercises



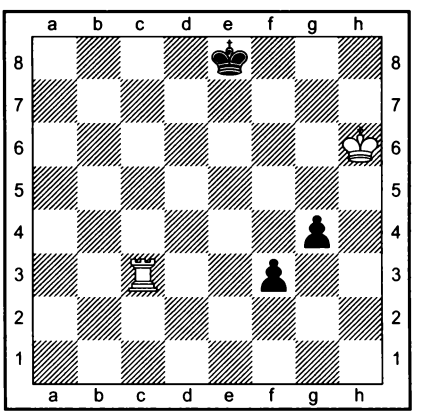
1. White to move



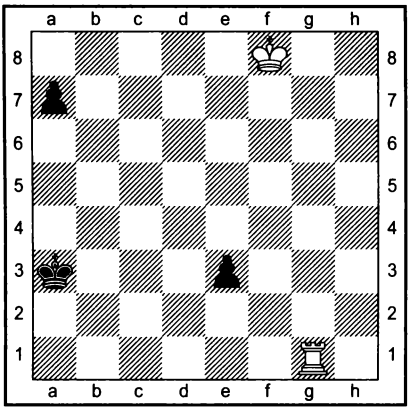
2. White to move



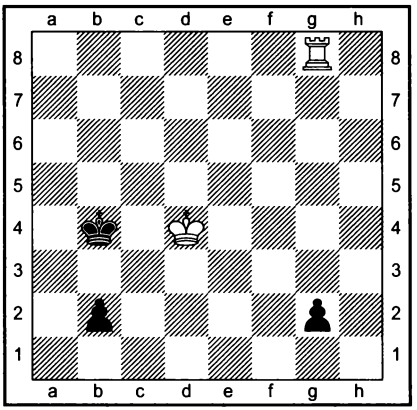
3. White to move



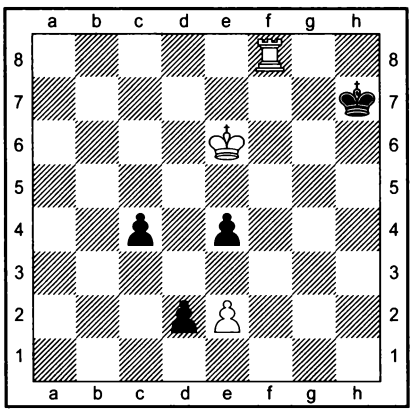
4. White to move



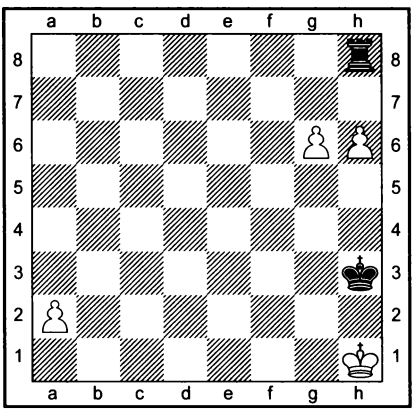
5. White to move



6. White to move



7. White to move



8. White to move

Solutions

1. Yu. 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 gain of tempo, and then, after ascertaining the position of the enemy king, to send the white king in the opposite direction, on an outflanking manoeuvre.

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

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

2...♔e2 3 ♔e5 e3 4 ♔e4.

The hasty 1 ♖g5? leads to a draw in view of 1...♔f4! 2 ♔f6 e4. Both 1 ♔d6? e4 2 ♖g5 ♔d3(d2)! and 1 ♔f6? e4 2 ♖g5 ♔f3(f2)! are also incorrect, since the outflanking manoeuvre becomes unrealisable.

2. E. Kolesnikov (1989).

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

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 king has arrived just in time.

3. J. Moravec (1913).

The direct 1 ♔xg7? h4 2 ♔g6 h3 3 ♔g5 h2 4 ♔g4 h1♕ leads only to a draw, since 5 ♔g3?? ♕h8 is not possible. The g7-pawn must be kept on the board.

1 ♔h7!! **h4**

1...g5!? 2 ♔g6 g4 is another try, hoping for 3 ♔xh5? g3 4 ♔g4 g2 5 ♔h3 ♔h1! with a draw. To avoid stalemate, the h5-pawn must be left alive: 3 ♔g5!!.

2 ♔g6 **h3**

3 ♔g5 **h2**

4 ♔g4 **h1♕**

4...g5!? also fails to save Black: 5 ♔g3 h1♕+ 6 ♔f3 g4+ 7 ♔xg4 ♘f2+ 8 ♔f3 ♘d3 9 ♖a4 (or 9 ♔e3 ♘e5 10 ♖a4), and the knight will soon be caught.

5 ♔g3

4. V. 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 are at an end: if 6 ♖c3+, then 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. Sokov (1940).

The routine 1 ♔e7? throws away the win in view of 1...♔b4! 2 ♖e1 (otherwise 2...♔c3) 2...a5 3 ♔d6 a4, and the black king 'shoulder-charges' White's. The move ...♔b4! must be prevented.

1 ♖b1!! **♔a2**
2 ♖e1! **a5**
3 ♔e7 **♔b3**

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

4 ♔d6!

Only not 4 ♖xe3+? ♔b4 5 ♔d6 a4 6 ♖e4+ ♔b5! with a draw (again a 'shoulder-charge').

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

6. J. Peckover (1960).

1 ♔d5!!

Everything else loses:

1 ♖b8+? ♔a5 2 ♖g8 ♔a6;

1 ♔e3? ♔c5 2 ♖c8+ ♔b6! 3 ♔f2 g1♕+ (or 3...♔b7);

1 ♖g7? ♔b3! 2 ♔e3 ♔c4 3 ♖c7+ ♔b5!.

1 . . . **♔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

The black king is unable to escape from the pursuit.

7. V. Pachman (1960/61).

1 ♖f1! **c3**
2 ♖h1+!!

It is very important to place the rook on g1 with gain of tempo. White loses after 2 ♔f7? ♔h6 3 ♔f6 ♔h5 4 ♔f5 ♔h4 5 ♔f4 ♔h3 6 ♔e3 ♔h2!, when he ends up 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!

The same zugzwang position has now arisen with Black to move.

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

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

10 ♖f1!

Black is unable to win.

8. V. Hortov (1982).

Which pawn should be advanced? This question can only be solved by a deep

calculation 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.

14 a5?, hoping for 14...♔e6? 15 ♔b6 ♖b8+ 16 ♔c7! ♖g8 17 ♔c6! ♖c8+ (17...♔f6 18 h7) 18 ♔b7 ♖g8 19 a6, also does not work. Black replies 14...♔c6! 15 a6 ♖e8(d8) 16 h7 ♖e7(d7)+ with perpetual check.

14 . . .	♖b8+
15 ♔a6!	♔c6
16 ♔a7	♖g8
17 a5	♔d6

17...♔c7 18 h7.

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

The black king was only just too late.

With the pawns on g6 and h7 the king is able to attack them a 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 18 ♔b7 ♔e6 19 a6 ♔f6 20 a7 ♔xg6, or 18 ♔b6 ♖b8+ 19 ♔a6 ♔c6 20 ♔a7 ♖h8 21 a6 ♖e8(d8)!.

Mark Dvoretsky, Artur Yusupov

The Theory and Practice of Rook Endings

Mark Dvoretsky

Of all the types of endings, it is rook endings which demand the most intensive study. Why is this?

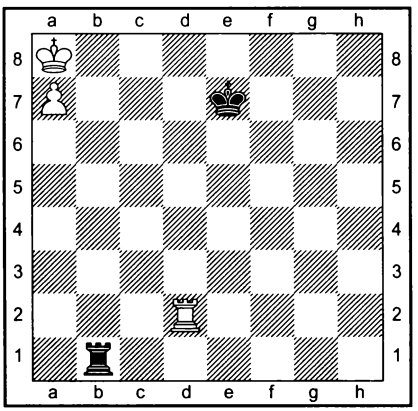
Firstly, they occur more often than other types. A good half of all the endings that occur in practice are rook endings.

Secondly, here there exists a fairly detailed theory of positions with a small amount of material (for example, rook and pawn against rook), which may also be repeated in our games. This theory should be mastered.

In other types of endgame the situations with a minimal number of pawns are either quite simple, or not very important. This means that there a knowledge of exact positions is hardly ever required – it is likely that you will never need it. It is sufficient to know the typical ideas and methods. But in the rook endgame you cannot get by without studying a considerable number of exact positions.

I offer for your attention one of the sections of rook endgame theory – endings with a pawn on the rook's file. As usual, we will begin our analysis with the simplest cases. And in general, we will not delve too deeply into theory – we will merely pick out the most important positions and the ideas involved with them.

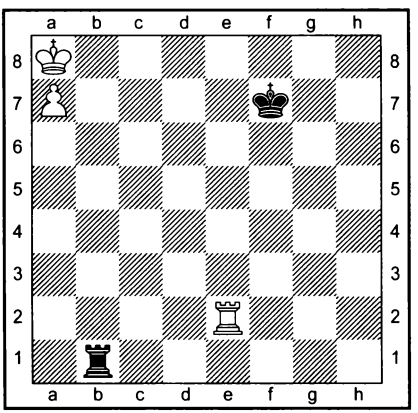
1) Stronger side's king in front of the pawn



A draw is inevitable. The only way to try and free the king from imprisonment is by playing the rook to b8. But then the black king will stand guard in place of the rook.

1 ♖h2 ♔d7 2 ♖h8 ♔c7 3 ♖b8 ♖c1 (of course, 3...♖h1 is also possible) **4 ♖b2 ♖c3**, and White cannot strengthen his position.

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



Now White wins, since the black king does not succeed in reaching c7.

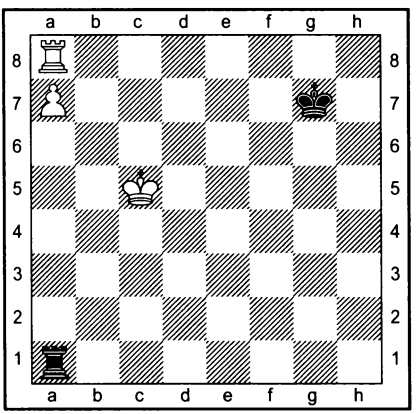
1 ♖h2 ♔e7 2 ♖h8 ♔d6 If 2...♔d7, then 3 ♖b8 ♖a1 4 ♔b7 ♖b1+ 5 ♔a6 ♖a1+ 6 ♔b6 ♖b1+ 7 ♔c5. With the black king at d6 it is no longer possible to escape via c5, and a different route has to be found.

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

This is the only subtle moment. It is hopeless to play 8 ♖e6? ♖a1 or 8 ♖a6? ♖h8+ 9 ♔d7 ♖h7+ 10 ♔e8 ♖h8+ 11 ♔f7 ♖a8 with a draw.

8 ♖c6+! ♔**b5** (8...♔d5 9 ♖a6 ♖h8+ 10 ♔c7 ♖h7+ 11 ♔b6) **9 ♖c8 ♖h8+ 10 ♔c7 ♖h7+ 11 ♔b8**

2) Stronger side's rook in front of the pawn; pawn on the 7th rank



This is a standard defensive scheme: Black's rook is behind the enemy pawn, and his king is on g7 (or h7). The white rook is tied to the pawn and cannot move from a8. If **1 ♔b6**, then **1...♖b1+**. The king has no shelter from the vertical checks. After driving it away, the rook returns to a1.

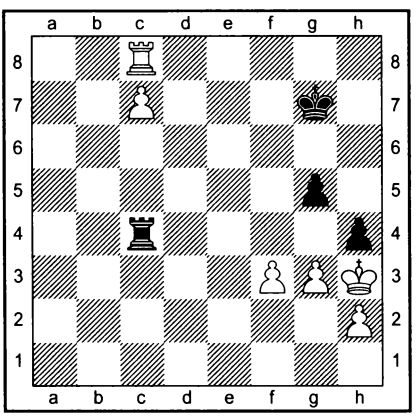
I should mention that other, more complicated and less reliable systems of defence also exist: the black king may hide 'in the shadow' of its white opponent (say, at c3), or, with the black rook on the 7th rank – 'in the shadow' of its own rook. We merely mention these ideas, but we will not study them. Sometimes they are sufficient for a draw, sometimes not.

Let us add a white pawn on h5. Nothing has changed. Black does not pay any attention to it. It is also a draw with a white pawn on g5.

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

It is no accident that I have 'chewed over' these elementary cases in detail. You should have a very clear impression of them, and should always remember and make use of them when considering more complicated positions.

Khaunin – Fridman
Leningrad 1962

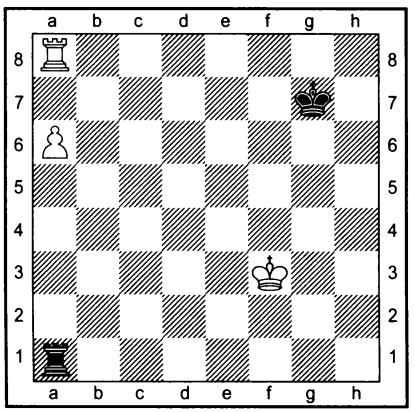


In the game there followed **1...hxg3 2 hxg3? g4+! 3 fxg4**, when a draw was inevitable, since White was left with a knight's pawn (whether one or two is of no particular importance).

He could have won by 2 ♔xg3! ♔h7 3 h4!

gxh4+ 4 ♔h3 ♔g7 5 f4, when the f-pawn advances with decisive effect.

3) Stronger side's rook in front of the pawn; pawn on the 6th rank



The main difference between this position and the previous ones is that the white king now has a shelter against vertical checks – at a7. It heads for there, in order to free the rook from having to defend the pawn.

But the black king is unable to run to the queenside: 1...♔f7? 2 ♔e4 (2 a7? ♔g7 is premature) 2...♔e7 3 a7! ♔d7(f7) 4 ♖h8.

2...♖a5 (instead of 2...♔e7) 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 (but not 11 ♖b6? ♔d7) 11...♖b1+ 12 ♔a8 ♖a1 13 a7, and a situation that is familiar to us arises: the black king does not reach c7 in time.

In view of this analysis, Siegbert Tarrasch considered this position to be won. But later (in 1924) a saving plan was found. It is based on the fact that the a6-pawn provides the king with a shelter against vertical checks, but not against horizontal checks. The rook must be transferred to f6.

1...♖f1+! 2 ♔e4 ♖f6!

It is important to attack the pawn, in order not to release the rook from a8. The resulting position is known in endgame theory as the 'Vancura position' (from the name of its discoverer – Joseph Vancura).

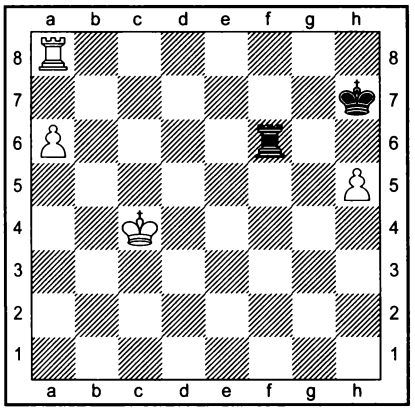
What can White do? If a6–a7 there always follows ...♖a6 (of course, the black king will not move from g7 and h7). If the pawn is defended by the king, there follows a series of checks, and then the rook returns to f6. For example: **3 ♔d5 ♖b6 4 ♔c5 ♖f6!** (the best square for the rook!) **5 ♔b5 ♖f5+!** etc.

If in the diagram we move the white king to f4, we obtain a position which was analysed in 1950 by Pyotr Romanovsky. 1...♖f1+? 2 ♔e5 ♖f6 is now bad because of 3 ♖g8+!. But all the same there is no other plan – only the switching of the rook to the 6th rank. Therefore let us play **1...♖c1!**. If 2 ♔e5 there follows 2...♖c6 – and we reach Vancura's drawn position. White must take the opportunity to remove his rook from a8: **2 ♖b8 ♖a1 3 ♖b6** (weaker is 3 ♖b7+ ♔f6 4 a7 ♔e6).

With the rook on a8 Black's king was tied to the kingside, but now it can head towards the pawn. But this must be done cautiously: he loses after the hasty 3...♔f7? 4.♔e5 ♔e7 5.♖b7+ ♔d8 6.a7. Correct is **3...♖a5! 4 ♔e4 ♔f7! 5 ♔d4** (if 5 ♖h6, then 5...♔g7!, but not 5...♔e7? 6 a7 ♔d7 7 ♖h8!) **5...♔e7 6 ♔c4 ♔d7 7 ♔b4 ♖a1**, and the draw is obvious.

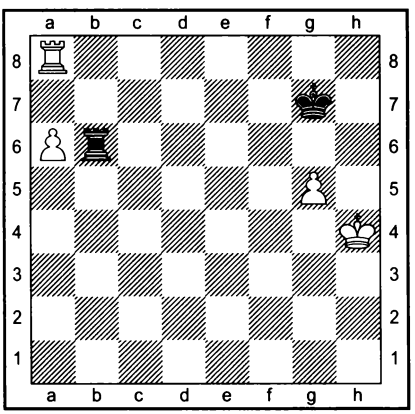
Note that the kings had a race to reach the queenside. If the white king had been closer to the pawn, Black's king might not have arrived in time. This means that the attempt to switch the rook to the 6th rank cannot be delayed – this plan must be carried out as soon as possible.

The system of defence examined by us is very important. In particular, this is how the defence should be arranged when the opponent has two extra pawns – 'a' and 'h'.



The h-pawn does not help White – the draw is just as elementary as in the previous example. If **1 ♔b5** there follows **1...♖f5+**. After driving away the king, the rook continues its watch of the 6th rank. If the white pawn is repositioned at a5, the black rook would be placed on the 5th rank, and so on.

Now let us analyse a position with a- and g-pawns.



1 . . . ♔h7!

2 ♔h5

Threatening 3 ♖a7+ ♔g8 4 g6 and 5 ♔h6.

2 . . . ♖h6+!

3 ♔g4

3 gxh6? – stalemate!

3 . . . ♖b6

Strangely enough, in books on the endgame this position is not analysed. It had to be studied independently. White wins. The main reason is that the black rook does not have the important f6-square, and the 6th rank proves too short.

4 ♔f5

Again threatening 5 ♖a7+.

4 . . . ♖b5+

5 ♔f6 ♖b6+

6 ♔e5

6 ♔f7 ♖b7+! is pointless.

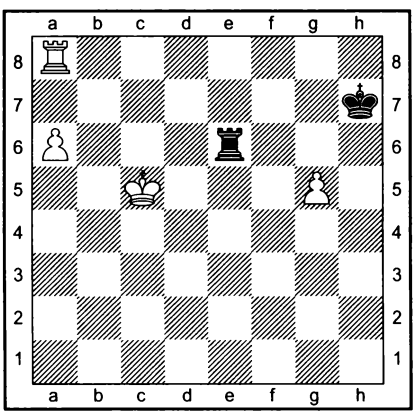
6 . . . ♖c6

Of course, Black does not have time to capture the g5-pawn: 6...♖b5+ 7 ♔d6 (7 ♔d4) 7...♖xg5 8 ♖e8 ♖a5 9 ♖e7+ ♔g6 10 a7. He also loses quickly after 6...♔g7 7 ♔f5! ♖b5+ 8 ♔g4 ♖b6 9 ♔h5 and 10 ♖a7+.

7 ♔d5 ♖b6

8 ♔c5 ♖e6

8...♖g6 9 ♖a7+ ♔g8 10 ♔d4.



9 ♖a7+! ♔g6

In the event of 9...♔g8 the white king returns to the kingside.

10 ♔b5 ♖e5+

11 ♔c6 ♖e6+

12 ♔c5!

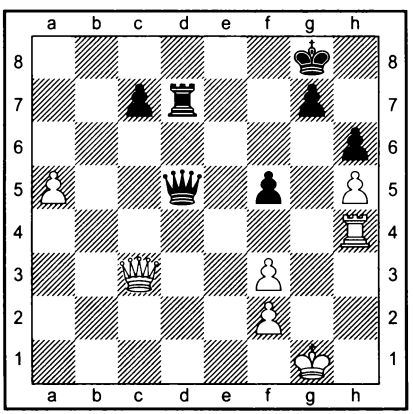
The decisive zugzwang!

Instead of 9 ♖a7+ White also wins by 9 ♔b5 ♖e5+ 10 ♔c6 ♖e6+ 11 ♔c5! (but not 11 ♔c7? ♖g6 12 a7 ♖g7+! with a draw). Here too Black is in zugzwang! The variation 11...♖e5+ 12 ♔d6 ♖xg5 13 ♖e8 is already familiar to us, while after 11...♔g7 the rook is deprived of an important square, from where it could give a check. Now the white king boldly advances: 12 ♔b5 ♖e5+ 13 ♔c6 ♖e6+ 14 ♔c7 ♔h7 (there is no longer the reply 14...♖g6) 15 a7! ♖a6 (15...♖e7+ 16 ♔d6) 16 ♔b7 and wins.

Artur Yusupov

A practical player should be able to confidently find his way in typical rook endgame positions. See how, making use of the ideas we have just examined, I was able to save a difficult ending against an ex-world champion.

Karpov – Yusupov
Linares 1991



It is Karpov to move. What possibilities does he have?

Black must seriously reckon with ♕c3–c4 (immediately, or after the preparatory 41 a6). But, after exchanging queens, he can give a check on d1 and place his rook behind the passed pawn – this is a very important defensive resource, typical of rook endings.

On prophylactic grounds it makes sense to remove the king beforehand from the first rank: 41 ♔g2!?. Now after the exchange of queens the black rook does not come to the rear of the passed pawn. Even so, Black gains sufficient counterplay, by continuing 41...c5 42 ♕c4 ♕xc4 43 ♖xc4 ♖c7 followed by ...♔f7–e6–d5, or 42 a6 ♖a7 43 ♕a5 (43 ♖a4 f4) 43...♕c6(d6).

41 a6 ♕a2

The pawn has to be halted. In the given instance it is not the rook that is placed behind it, but the queen. I thought for a long time about the possibility of continuing the fight in the middlegame, but I did not find anything convincing and I decided not to avoid the exchange of queens.

42 ♕c4+

Anatoly Karpov did not think for long over 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 is switched to the rear of the passed pawn. This very important device is merely a particular instance of the general principle of rook endings, which says that the rook should be active.

44 ♔g2 ♖a1

45 ♖c6

When a pawn is attacked from the rear, it is

usually preferable to defend it with the rook from the side, rather than by standing in front of the pawn. The rook on c6 is very active – it is controlling the 6th rank and attacking the c7-pawn.

45 . . . **♔f8**

Sooner or later the white king will try to break through on the queenside. Black begins a counter-plan – he plays his king to d7, in order to activate his c7-pawn or achieve the exchange of several pawns.

46 f4

If 46 ♔g3, then 46...♖a4.

46 . . . **♖a3!**

Subsequently every tempo may prove decisive – therefore the white king's passage to the queenside must be hindered as much as possible.

47 ♔f1 **♖a2**

48 ♔e1 **♔e8**

49 ♔d1 **♔d8!**

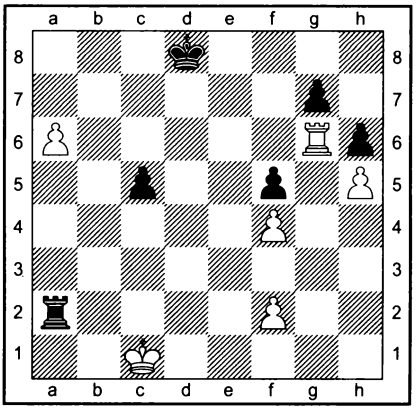
An accurate move. 49...♔d7 suggests itself, but I was concerned that after 50 ♖g6 the g7-pawn would be captured with check. Of course, 49...♖xf2? was premature in view of 50 a7 ♖a2 51 ♖xc7, and with his king cut off along the 7th rank, Black loses quickly. But now the capture on f2 is threatened.

50 ♖g6 **c5**

Not 50...♖xf2? 51 ♖xg7 ♖a2 52 ♖g6. Therefore Black activates his passed pawn.

51 ♔c1

In such situations one somewhere has to stop making common sense moves and, after accurately calculating a way to draw, force events. Such a moment has now arrived.



51 . . . **♔c7!**

52 ♖xg7+ **♔b6**

53 ♖g6+ **♔a7**

54 ♖c6

Karpov aims to eliminate as many black pawns as possible. In the event of 54 ♖xh6 ♖xf2 followed by 55...♖xf4 the draw is obvious.

54 . . . **♖xf2**

55 ♖xc5 **♖xf4**

A text-book position with a- and h-pawns is reached. Of course, 55...♔xa6 was possible, but it was more methodical to play 'by the book', especially since I was short of time on the clock.

56 ♖c6 **♖g4**

57 ♔d2 **♖g5**

58 ♖xh6 **f4**

59 ♔e2 **f3+**

Black does not need this pawn. If you know for certain that a position is drawn, you should try to ensure that extraneous details (like a 'non-theoretical' pawn) do not accidentally hinder you.

60 ♔xf3 **♖c5**

61 ♖h8

Here, just in case, I adjourned the game. To my surprise, Karpov turned up for 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 place for the rook. If now 67 h6 ♖c6 68 h7, then the rook should be placed behind the pawn, but the immediate 68...♖h6 loses to 69 ♔g7. Therefore Black must first give some checks: 68...♖c7+! 69 ♔f6(e6) ♖c6+ with a draw. But on the d-file the rook would be too close to the king, and after 68...♖d7+ 69 ♔e6 Black would lose.

67 ♖h7	**♔xa6**

Only now, when the rook has gone to h7, can the a6-pawn be taken. But with the rook on h8 it should be ignored.

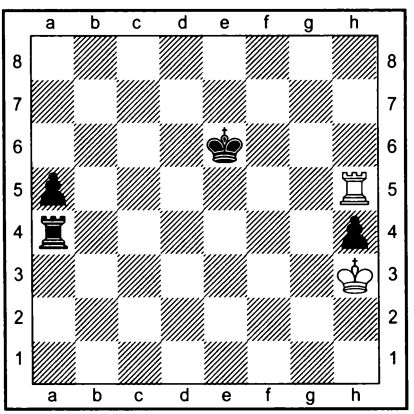
68 h6	**♖c7+**

Draw.

Mark Dvoretsky

Although the ideas that we have been discussing are elementary, by no means all players are familiar with them. Even grandmasters sometimes 'flounder' in standard theoretical endings. Here is a tragic-comic example.

Szabó – Tukmakov
Buenos Aires 1970



For White it is sufficient simply to wait, keeping the a5-pawn under fire, in order 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+! etc. When you know the plan of defence, the moves make themselves – here there is nothing cunning.

However, the highly experienced grandmaster László Szabó had no idea of how to play these types of endings, and he lost a completely drawn position. Apparently Vladimir Tukmakov also did not know them, since he commented on the course of the play as follows: 'Theory considers this endgame to be drawn, but I seemed to win 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 ♖h1! 70 ♖xa5 h3 71 ♖h5 h2 and 72...♖a1.

69 . . .	**a4**
70 ♖h6+	

70 ♖xh4 a3 71 ♖a4 a2.

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

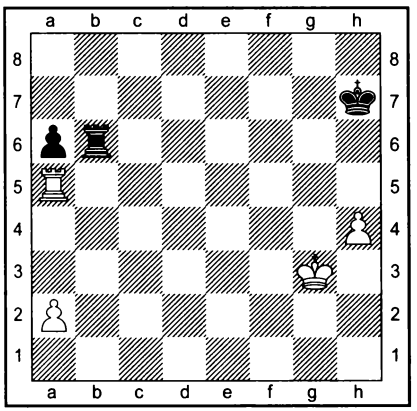
73 ♔g2	**♖c1**	**48 . . .**	**♔g6**
74 ♖a5	**♖c3**	**49 h5+**	**♔f7**

White resigned.

I found another, similar example in the magazine *New in Chess*, in an article by Tony Miles about the 1989 USA Championship. He analyses the ending of a game by the winner of the championship, Stuart Rachels, against grandmaster Dmitry Gurevich. It would appear that none of them, including the commentator, was familiar with the ideas of the given endgame.

Rachels – Gurevich

USA Championship, Long Beach 1989



Miles writes: 'Since rook and a- and h-pawns vs rook is often drawn, it is hard to believe that White should win this. The defensive task is not simple, though.'

Of course, it is not essential to give up the pawn, but from the practical point of view this is the best course. Subsequently you no longer have to think, since you will be acting in accordance with theory. Remember: this is how Yusupov acted in his game against Karpov. Otherwise you will be forced to act independently in a position which, although drawn, is unfamiliar, and it will be easy to make a mistake.

A clear demonstration of Black's ignorance of theory: Gurevich, like Szabo in the previous example, incorrectly moves his king to the opposite wing.

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	

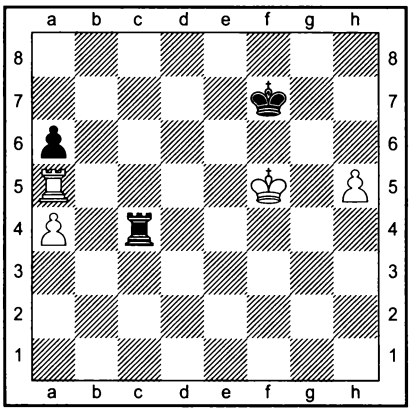
Here the game was adjourned. In home analysis it is important to look in a book and familiarise yourself with the theory of the endings that may arise during the resumption – in the given instance, with the theory of the endgame with two extra a- and h-pawns. But Gurevich did not do this.

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

Black changes his plan of defence and returns his king to the kingside. In the event of 63...♔c7 he was probably concerned about 64 ♔b4 with the threat of supporting the 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?	

71 a5 was stronger.



71 . . . ♖c6

71...♔g7! 72 ♖xa6 ♔h7 would have forced a draw. In principle, delaying this is now not without its dangers – after all, Black has to reckon with the following plan: the white pawn goes to a5, the rook defends everything along the 5th rank, and the king heads for b7.

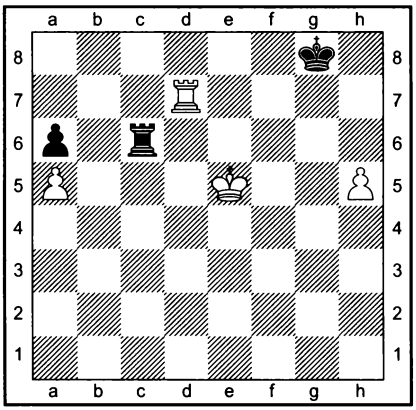
72 ♔g5 ♔g7
73 ♖d5 ♖c4
74 a5 ♖c6
75 ♖d7+ ♔g8
76 ♖a7?

After 76 ♖e7! White's position is apparently now won. For example: 76...♖c5+ 77 ♔g6 ♖c6+ 78 ♔f5 ♖c5+ 79 ♖e5, or 76...♔f8 77 ♖b7! (with the deadly threat of 78 ♖b6) 77...♖c5+ 78 ♔g6 ♖c6+ 79 ♔h7.

76 . . . ♖d6?

It was essential for Black to exploit his opponent's mistake, by playing 76...♖c5+ 77 ♔f6 ♖c6+ (neither 77...♖xh5? nor 77...♖xa5? is possible, in view of 78 ♔g6) 78 ♔e7 ♖c5 (or – as recommended by Miles – 78...♖h6) 79 ♖xa6 ♖xh5 (or 79...♔h7) with an obvious draw.

77 ♔f5 ♖d5+
78 ♔f6 ♖d6+
79 ♔e5 ♖c6
80 ♖d7



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

80...♔h8 could have been tried, in the hope of 81 ♖d6 ♖c5+ 82 ♖d5 (82 ♔f6 ♔h7!) 82...♖c6 83 ♔f5 ♔g7 84 ♖e5 (with the threat of 85 ♖e7+ and 86 ♖e6) 84...♔f7!. But the subtle move 81 ♖e7! enables White to win: after 81...♔g8 82 ♔f5! ♖c5+ (82...♔f8 or 82...♖h6 – 83 ♖e6! and 84 ♔g6) 83 ♖e5! (only not 83 ♔f6? ♖xh5 84 ♔g6 ♔f8!) he wins. This position occurred later in the game.

80 . . . ♖h6
81 ♔f5

The sealed move. Here the game was again adjourned.

81 . . . ♖c6

In the event of 81...♔f8!? (not allowing 82 ♖e7) 82 ♔g5 ♖c6 White would have won by 83 ♖b7!.

82 ♖e7! ♖c5+
83 ♖e5 ♖c1

After 83...♖c6 84 ♖e6 ♖c1 White has a pleasant choice between 85 ♔g6 and 85

♖xa6 ♔f7 (unfortunately, 85...♔h7 is not possible because of 86 ♖e6) 86 ♖a7+ ♔f8 87 ♖a8+ ♔f7 88 a6 ♖c5+ 89 ♔e4 ♖c6 90 a7 ♖a6 91 ♖h8. The flank attack on the rook's pawn only works if the king is on g7 or h7.

84 ♔e6!

The king heads towards the a6-pawn. Black can no longer save the game.

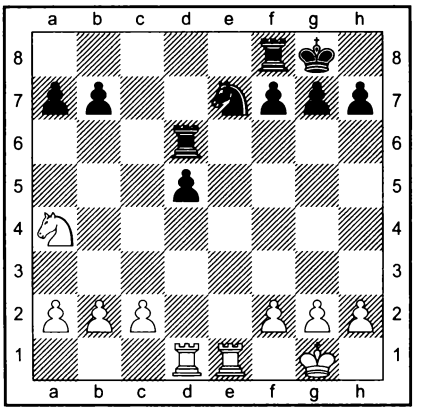
84...♔g7 85 ♔d6 ♔h7 86 ♖c5 ♖b1 87 ♔c6 ♔h6 88 ♖d5 ♖b2 89 ♖d7 ♖b5 90 ♖d6+ ♔h7 91 ♖d5 ♖b1 92 ♖d7+ ♔h6 93 ♖b7 ♖a1 94 ♔b6 ♔xh5 95 ♔xa6 ♔g6 96 ♖b5 ♔f7 97 ♔b7 ♖e1 98 a6 ♖e7+ 99 ♔b6 ♖e6+ 100 ♔a5 Black resigned.

In these last two examples both the moves and the comments made by grandmasters make a comic impression, for one simple reason – they were not sufficiently familiar with the basic theory of rook endings.

Our next step should probably be an analysis of positions that are closely linked with the type of endgame already studied – namely, endings in which each side has two or three pawns on the kingside and one has an extra passed pawn on the queenside (usually a rook's pawn). Such a situation often occurs in practice. But this is already another topic, and here we will merely mention it. I will restrict myself to one example, in which the same idea was used as we saw in the Karpov–Yusupov game, but did not see in the Rachels–Gurevich ending: the sacrifice of a pawn to transpose into a theoretically drawn position.

Bakulin – Dvoretsky

Moscow Team Championship 1974



Reckoning that if 18...♖e6 the reply 19 ♘c5 was unpleasant, I wanted to play 18...♘c6. But my sense of danger operated and I began to have doubts about the position arising after 19 c4 d4 20 ♘c5 b6 21 ♘d3. White creates a pawn majority on the queenside, he securely blockades the d4-pawn, and he controls the e-file. The advantage is on his side: perhaps not a great advantage, but an enduring one. When I showed this ending to Rafael Vaganian, an expert on the French Defence, he assessed the position as unfavourable for Black.

By accurately defending, one can probably avoid defeat, but this is a difficult and thankless task. Being an active player, I usually avoided this type of passive defence, and endeavoured to find a way of sharply changing the course of the play, of forcing events, either with the aim of clarifying the situation, or, on the contrary, of complicating the play as much as possible.

Returning to the rook move to e6, I quickly found the forcing variation which occurred in the game.

18 . . . **♖e6!?**

19 ♘c5 **♖xe1+**

20 ♖xe1 **♖c8!**

20...♘g6 21 ♘xb7 ♖b8 22 ♘c5 ♖xb2 23 ♖e8+ ♘f8 is not worth considering – the pin on the knight is extremely dangerous. For example, White can play 24 g3 f6 25 ♘d7 ♔f7 26 ♖xf8+ ♔e7 27 ♖b8.

21 ♖xe7 **♔f8**

As you see, combinative vision sometimes helps even when playing 'tedious' endgames.

22 ♖xb7

In the event of 22 ♖e2 ♖xc5 the position is roughly equal.

22 . . . **♖xc5**

23 c3 **d4**

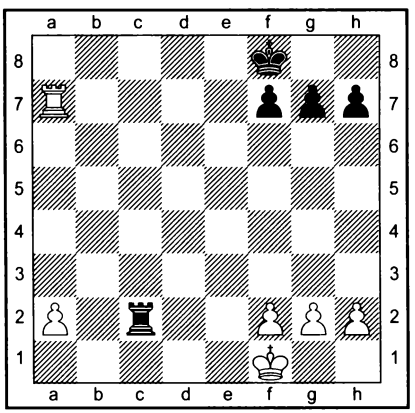
24 ♔f1

24 ♖b3?? d3 25 ♔f1 ♖e5!.

24 . . . **dxc3**

25 bxc3 **♖xc3**

26 ♖xa7 **♖c2**



I knew for sure that this was a draw, and a fairly simple one, and so without hesitation I went in for the exchanging combination. Of course, had I not made a previous study of this type of endgame, I would hardly have decided to give up a pawn. Who knows how the game would have ended after 18...♘c6, whereas as it was I easily made a draw.

Thirty years later I realised that endings of this type were by no means as harmless as I then thought. In 2003 in the theory of rook endings with an extra pawn on the wing a revolution occurred, and positions which had seemed completely drawn proved to be won or at the least very dangerous. You can find these new ideas in my articles or those of grandmaster Carsten Müller in the archives of the internet site Chesscafe.com, and also in my book Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual *from the same publisher. If I had known about the future discoveries, I would perhaps have rejected the combination (in favour of 18...♖e8!? followed by 19...♔f8), and at the least I would have played the endgame more carefully.*

However, my decision to sacrifice a pawn was taken not only on purely chess grounds – it was influenced, as well as the subsequent play, by certain extraneous factors. At that time I was teaching in the chess department of the Institute of Physical Culture. We were planning to hold a tournament on the Scheveningen system: students (candidate masters) against masters, and I had to find some opponents for our students. The Moscow Team Championship, held in the Central Chess Club, attracted nearly all the Moscow masters, and this was the most convenient place to hold discussions. After transposing into a comparatively simple ending soon after the start of play, I gained the opportunity, by making my moves without much thought, to rush to the other boards and press players who were strolling about to take part in our tournament.

Because my attention was divided, some of my moves were not the most accurate, but I nevertheless gained a draw.

27 g3 g6 28 ♔g2 ♔g7 29 ♔f3 h5 30 h4 ♔f6 31 ♔e3 ♖c3+

31...♔e6 or 31...♔e5!? was simpler, keeping the f-pawn under attack.

32 ♔e4 ♖c2 33 f3 ♖e2+

With the a-pawn still on its initial square, Black could have permitted himself 33...♖c4+ 34 ♔d3 ♖c1, intending to attack the g3-pawn by 35...♖g1.

34 ♔f4 ♖b2 35 ♖a6+ ♔g7

The confining of the king at g7 is rather unpleasant for Black. However, in such situations he has available quite a good plan of counterplay: ...f7–f6 and at the first convenient opportunity ...g6–g5. For example, 36 a3!? ♖b3 37 ♔e4 f6!?. And it is not easy for the opponent to decide on 36 a4 in view of 36...♖b4+ 37 ♔e3 ♖b3+ 38 ♔e4 ♖b4+ 39 ♔d5 ♖b3, although sometimes (but, I think, not in the given instance) the resulting complications favour White.

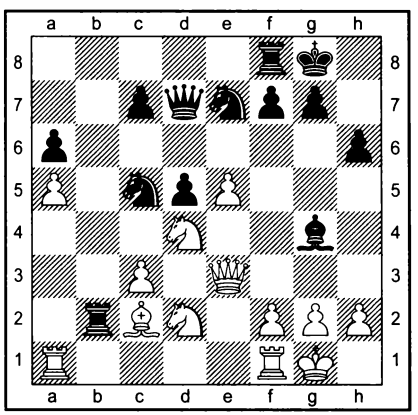
36 ♖a3 ♔f6 37 ♖a6+ ♔g7 38 ♖a4 ♔f6 (38...f6!?; 38...♖f2!?) **39 g4 hxg4 40 fxg4 ♖f2+ 41 ♔g3 ♖c2 42 ♖f4+** (42 g5+ ♔e5 is not dangerous for Black) **42...♔e6 43 a4** (43 ♖f2 ♖c3+ 44 ♔f4 f6) **43...f5 44 gxf5+ gxf5 45 ♖f2 ♖c4 46 ♖a2 ♖c3+ 47 ♔f4 ♖c4+ 48 ♔g3** (48 ♔g5 ♖g4+ 49 ♔h5 ♔f6 50 a5?? ♖g8) **48...♖c3+ 49 ♔g2 ♖c4 50 h5 ♖h4** Draw.

Artur Yusupov

I should now like to show you several extracts from my games, in which practical, rather than purely theoretical rook endings arose. However, initially the first example does not resemble an endgame at all.

Ljubojevic – Yusupov

Linares 1991



20 . . . ♗f5!

Black carries out a tactical exchanging operation, involving a positional pawn sacrifice – a procedure which has already been mentioned here several times. In the given instance the pawn is given up for the sake of activating his own forces.

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

Of course, the extra passed a-pawn is dangerous, but Black correctly calculated that the pressure of his rooks along the 2nd rank would enable him to maintain the balance.

27 ♕b6

If 27 ♕a7, then 27...d4 28 ♕a8+ ♔h7 29 a6 (29 ♕f3 ♕xf3 30 gxf3 ♖a2 is roughly the same as that which occurred 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**

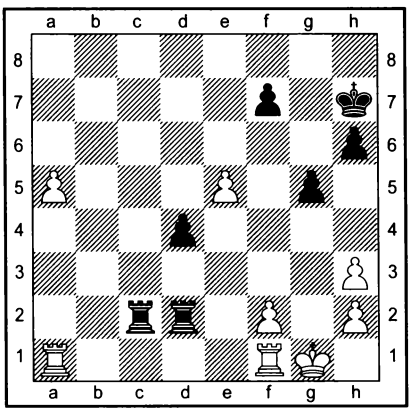
As Dvoretsky pointed out, 29...♕xe5 30 a6 ♖a2 was simpler, since if 31 a7?! Black has 31...♖xa1 32 ♖xa1 ♖a2!, and he remains with an extra pawn.

30 ♕h3

In the event of 30 ♕g3 Black would have continued 30...♖d3 31 f3 ♖d2 with the dangerous threat of 32...♕f4.

30 . . . **♕xh3**

31 gxh3



Things seem to be bad – after all, the white rook is positioned behind the passed a-pawn. However, thanks to a tactical subtlety Black nevertheless succeeds in stopping the pawn from behind.

31 . . . **♖a2**

32 a6 **♖xf2!**

33 ♖xa2

Forced.

33 . . . **♖xa2**

34 ♖xf7+ **♔g8**

35 ♖d7

35 ♖f6 d3.

35 . . . **♖xa6**

36 ♖xd4 **♔f7**

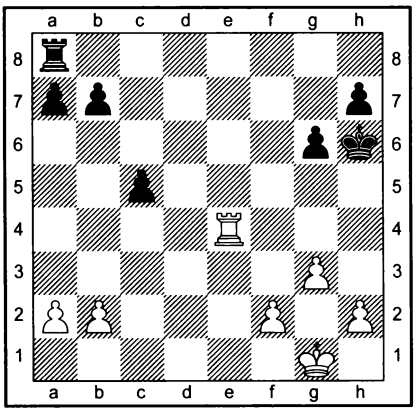
37 h4

Draw.

The following example is also devoted to rook activity. Generally speaking, the main principle in rook endings is that the rook should be active!

Yusupov – Barbero

Mendoza 1985



White has a slight advantage thanks to the fact that his rook is more active, and also as a result of the rather unusual position of the black king at h6.

Now the most natural try seems to be the activation of the black rook by 28...♖d8 29 ♖e7 b5 30 ♖xa7 ♖d2 31 b3 c4 32 bxc4 bxc4. If the king were not at h6, White would immediately have to agree to a draw in view of the unavoidable exchange of the queen-side pawns. But here he can still play for a win by 33 h4! c3 34 ♔g2 c2 35 ♖c7 c1♕ (35...g5 is simpler, obtaining a theoretically drawn ending with h-pawn against f- and g-pawns) 36 ♖xc1 ♖xa2 37 ♖c7 with the threat of 38 g4.

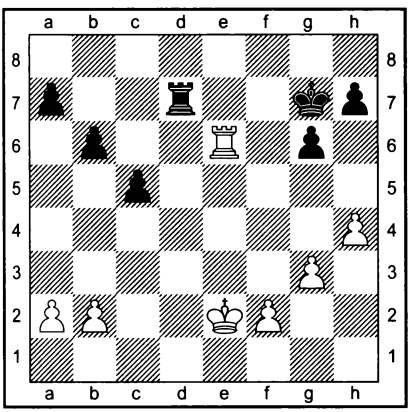
Gerardo Barbero carried out an operation which also makes sense. Exploiting the fact that the pawn endgame is satisfactory for Black, he decided to secure the 7th rank for his rook.

28 . . . **♖g8**

29 ♔f1 **♖g7**
30 ♔e2 **♖d7**
31 h4

The immediate 31 ♖e5 came into consideration.

31 . . . **♔g7**
32 ♖e5! **b6**
33 ♖e6



33 . . . **♔f7?!**

Black should have deprived the white rook of the important c6-square. After 33...♖c7! 34 ♖d6 ♔f7 35 h5 ♔e7 the position would have remained roughly equal.

34 ♖c6

The white rook is very well placed. It cuts off the enemy king along the sixth rank and prevents the advance of Black's queenside pawns.

34 . . . **♔e7?!**

It was better to take active measures to divert White from his planned offensive on the kingside: 34...♖e7+ 35 ♔d3 ♖d7+ 36 ♔c3 ♖e7, intending ...♖e2.

35 h5! **♔f7?**

Again passively played. 35...gxh5! 36 ♖h6 ♔d8 was essential. After playing his king to c7, Black could then have advanced his b- and c-pawns.

36 hxg6+ **hxg6**
37 f4

White now has a serious advantage. Black's king is tied to the g6-pawn, and his rook has to defend the 7th rank – its activity will lead to the loss of a pawn. And against passive defence White is free to strengthen his position.

37 . . . **♔g7**
38 b3 **♔f7**
39 ♔e3 **♔g7**
40 ♔e4 **♔f7**
41 ♔f3

41 ♔e5 is also good.

41 . . . **♖e7**
42 ♔g4 **♖d7**
43 ♔h4

Threatening 44 g4 and 45 ♔g5, when after a check on the 5th rank there follows f4–f5 or ♔h6.

43 . . . **♖d2**

Black decides to play actively, but it would have been better to do this a few moves earlier.

44 ♖c7+ **♔f6**
45 ♖xa7 **b5?**

45...♔f5 was more tenacious.

46 ♖c7?!

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

46 . . . **c4**
47 ♖c6+! **♔f5?**

47...♔f7 was more tenacious, but this too would not have saved the game: 48 bxc4 bxc4 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**

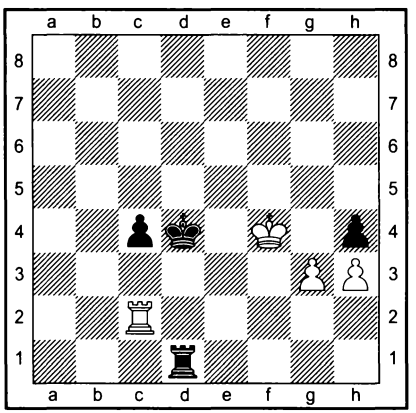
51 b4	**g5+**
52 fxg5	**♖d4+**
53 ♔h5	**♖xb4**
54 ♖xc2	

Black resigned.

Initially the ending was almost equal. What was the reason for Black's defeat? Firstly, he defended very passively, and was too late in activating his rook. And secondly, he was caused a mass of problems by the excellent position of the white rook. Note the intermediate move 32 ♖e5!, which secured the ideal square c6 for the rook. From here it tied down literally all the opponent's pieces and pawns.

Yusupov – Tseshkovsky

Moscow 1981



A typical situation: soon I will have to give up my rook for the c-pawn and an endgame with rook against pawn will be reached. Every tempo may have a decisive influence on the outcome.

The direct **43...hxg3?** (43...♔d3? 44 ♖f2! or 44 ♖g2! comes to the same thing) **44 ♔xg3 ♔d3 45 ♖a2** allows White to save the game. The main variation is quite instructive.

45...c3 46 h4 c2 47 ♖xc2 ♔xc2 48 ♔f4!

Of course, 48 h5?? ♖d4! is bad for White, but he also loses after 48 ♔g4? ♔d3 49 h5 ♔e4 50 ♔g5 ♔e5 51 ♔g6 ♔e6 52 h6 ♖g1+. From f4 the white king 'shoulder-charges' Black's, not allowing it to approach the pawn.

48...♔d3 49 h5 ♖h1 50 ♔g5 ♔e4 51 h6 ♔e5 52 ♔g6 ♔e6 53 ♔g7! (but not 53 h7? ♖g1+ 54 ♔h6 ♔f7 55 h8♘+ ♔f6 56 ♔h7 ♖g2, and Black wins) **53...♔e7** (53...♖g1+ 54 ♔f8) **54 h7 ♖g1+ 55 ♔h8!** with a draw.

Unfortunately, my opponent found a much stronger possibility.

43 . . .	**♖f1+!**
44 ♔g4	**hxg3**

Now after 45 ♔xg3 ♔d3 46 ♖a2 c3 47 h4 c2 48 ♖xc2 ♔xc2 White can no longer save the game, since his king cannot go to f4.

45 ♖d2+	**♔e3**
46 ♖g2	

46 ♖c2 would not have helped in view of 46...♖f8! (46...♖f4+! 47 ♔xg3 ♖d4 followed by 48...♔d3 is no less strong) 47 ♔xg3 ♖g8+, and the king on the h-file is extremely badly placed. 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**

But now the fact that the white king is cut off along the 4th rank proves decisive.

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

White resigned.

Two ideas, typical of such endings, were clearly seen during the course of the play:

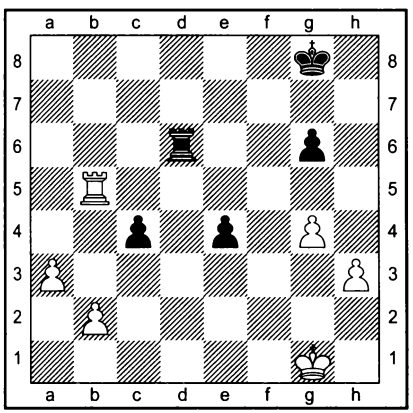
1) the cutting off of the king along the 4th rank – thanks to this, Black won the game;

2) the 'shoulder-charge' – White was hoping to save himself by employing this device, but with an intermediate check Vitaly Tseshkovsky disrupted my plan.

In the following, more complicated ending, similar motifs occurred.

Yusupov – Timman

Candidates Match, 5th Game, Tilburg 1986



The evaluation of the position is not in question – White has a big advantage. The logical move was **38 a4!** – it is important to advance the passed pawn as soon as possible. Black's passed pawn is not dangerous – to ...e4–e3 there is always the reply ♔f1.

How could the game have developed?

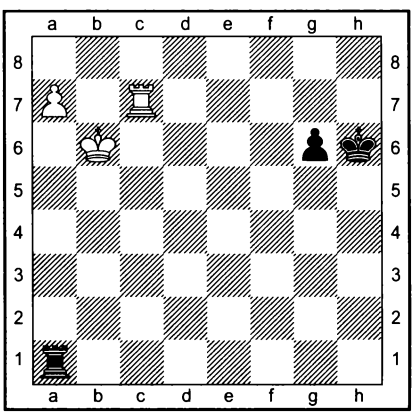
38...♖d3 39 a5 c3 40 bxc3 e3 (threatening 41...♖d1+ 42 ♔g2 e2) **41 ♔f1 ♖xc3 42 a6 ♖a3 43 ♖b6 ♔f7** (43...g5 is bad: 44 ♖g6+ ♔f7 45 ♖xg5 ♖xa6 46 ♖e5 ♖a3 47 ♔e2 ♖a2+ 48 ♔f3 ♖h2 49 ♔g3 ♖e2 50 ♔f4) **44 g5**.

If Black stays passive, he ends up in zugzwang (for example, 44...♖a2 45 h4).

He is forced to exchange pawns: **44...e2+ 45 ♔xe2 ♖xh3**. Now, after slightly improving the position of his rook in a typical way: **46 ♖f6+! ♔g7 47 ♖c6** (threatening 48 ♖c7+ ♔f8 49 a7) **47...♔f7**, White plays **48 ♔d2**.

If 48...♖a3 there follows 49 ♔c2 ♖a5 50 ♔c3 ♖xg5 51 ♔b4 ♖g1 52 ♔c5 g5 53 a7 ♖a1 54 ♔b6 g4 55 ♔b7 and wins (the black king is cut off from its passed pawn).

And if **48...♖g3**, then **49 a7 ♖a3 50 ♖c7+ ♔e6 51 ♔c2 ♔f5 52 ♔b2 ♖a6 53 ♔b3 ♔xg5 54 ♔b4** (threatening 55 ♖c5+ and 56 ♖a5) **54...♔h6** (the only defence) **55 ♔b5 ♖a1 56 ♔b6**.



Look in Mark Dvoretsky's book *School of Chess Excellence 1: Endgame Analysis* – there in the chapter 'Rook against Pawns' a very similar position is analysed. The best defence – **56...♖b1+** (if 56...g5 the most accurate is 57 ♖c8!) **57 ♔c6 ♖a1 58 ♔b7 ♖b1+ 59 ♔c8 ♖a1** – all the same does not help: **60 ♔b8 ♔g5 61 a8♕ ♖xa8+ 62 ♔xa8 ♔f4 63 ♖f7+!** (a typical intermediate check 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.** 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 etc.

Incidentally, now you will see why on the 46th and 47th moves White replaced his rook at c6 – in order to free the b6-square for his king. Such 'trifles' sometimes decisively affect the result of the game, and on no account should they be disregarded.

Unfortunately, in a time scramble I committed a significant inaccuracy.

38 ♔f2 ♖d3

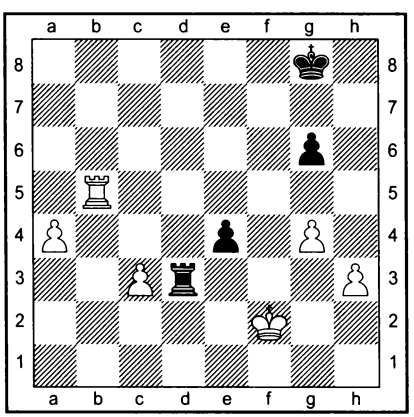
Of course, the king must not be allowed to go to e3.

39 a4 c3

39...♖xh3? would have lost: 40 ♖c5 ♖b3 41 ♖xc4 ♖xb2+ 42 ♔e3. After the inevitable fall of the e4-pawn White achieves an ideal construction – his rook defends both pawns along the 4th rank, not allowing any counterplay. The king can calmly approach the a-pawn.

There was also the interesting move 39...♔f7 with the idea after 40 ♖c5?! ♔e6! of supporting the passed e-pawn with the king. 40 a5 c3 41 b4! is stronger (but not 41 bxc3 ♖xc3 with a draw). After 41...♖d4 42 ♔e3! ♖c4 43 ♖c5 ♖xb4 44 ♖xc3 ♖a4 45 ♖c5 the same winning position, as occurred later in the game, is reached.

40 bxc3



40 . . . ♖xc3?

On the last move before the time control Jan Timman makes a decisive mistake. He thought that he would always be able to advance his pawn to e3, but he did not take account of the strong impeding reply 41 ♖e5!.

If Timman had seen this, then, even without delving into variations, simply by the method of comparison he would have preferred 40...e3+! 41 ♔e2 ♖xc3. Here the black rook is slightly more active, and the white king is slightly further from its kingside pawns than in the game. After 42 g5 ♖a3 43 a5 ♔f7 44 ♖e5 ♔f8 the position would apparently have been drawn. For example: 45 ♖e6 ♖xa5 (45...♖a2+ followed by 46...♖xa5 is even more precise) 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

The situation arising after 41...♖xh3 42 ♖xe4 has already been discussed. In the event of 42...♔f7 (with the idea of bringing the king to g5) the strongest is 43 g5!.

42 a5 ♖a4
43 ♔e3 ♔g7
44 g5 ♔f7
45 h4 ♔g7
46 ♔f4

Also good is 46 ♖e7+ ♔f8 47 ♖e6 ♖a3+ 48 ♔f4 (or even 48 ♔xe4 ♖xa5 49 ♖xg6 ♖a4+ 50 ♔f5 ♖xh4 51 ♖a6).

46 . . . ♔f7
47 ♖b5

If now 47...♔e6, then 48 ♖b6+ ♔d5 49 ♖xg6 or 49 a6, while if 47...♔g7 there follows 48 ♖b7+ ♔f8 49 ♖b6 ♖xa5 (49...♔f7 50 a6) 50 ♖xg6 with an easy win. In the last variation

we clearly see the difference in the position of the black pawn – with the pawn on e3 there would have been no win.

47 . . . **e3+**
48 ♔xe3 **♔e6**

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

49 ♖b6+ **♔f5**
50 a6 **♔g4**

What would have happened after the capture of the h4-pawn? Of course, 51 ♖b5+ and 52 ♖a5 – how can one not exploit an opportunity to place the rook behind the passed pawn!

51 ♖xg6

51 ♖d6? was less good 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 final touch – a 'shoulder-charge'.

57 . . . **♖a2**
58 ♔b6

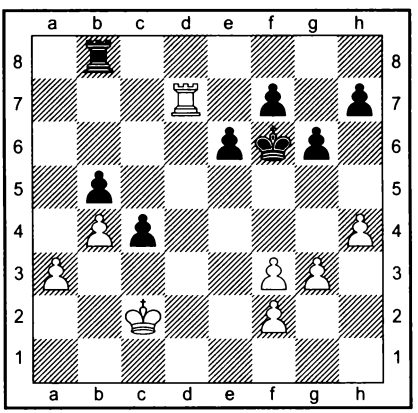
Black resigned.

The 1998 No.5-6 issue of the magazine Shakhmaty v Rossii published an extensive article by Alexey Kuzmin, in which the grandmaster pointed out a number of mistakes in the analysis of the Yusupov–Timman ending. It turns out that 40...e3+ would not have saved Timman. White succeeds in breaking through decisively with his king: 41 ♔f3! ♖xc3 42 ♖e5 ♖a3 43 ♔f4! ♖xa4+ 44 ♔g5, and the resulting ending with two pawns against one is won. This means that there is no reason to criticise his choice on the 38th move.

Moreover, the alternative 38 a4?! would in fact have thrown away the win. The variation considered by Yusupov – 38...♖d3 39 a5 c3 40 bxc3 e3 41 ♔f1 ♖xc3 42 a6 ♖a3 43 ♖b6 ♔f7 44 g5 e2+ 45 ♔xe2 ♖xh3 46 ♖f6+ ♔g7 47 ♖c6 ♔f7 48 ♔d2 ♖g3 49 a7 ♖a3 50 ♖c7+ ♔e6 51 ♔c2 ♔f5 52 ♔b2 etc. is unconvincing. Instead of the incorrect 51...♔f5? Black should hold his ground: 51...♔d6! 52 ♖g7 ♔c5 53 ♔b2 ♖a6 54 ♔b3 ♖a1, and White is unable to strengthen his position. He in turn could have successfully forced events earlier: 41 a6! (instead of 41 ♔f1) 41...♖d1+ 42 ♔g2 e2 43 a7 ♖a1 (43...♖g1+ 44 ♔f3) 44 ♖e5 ♖xa7 45 ♖xe2. But this happened only as a result of Black's mistake 40...e3?. According to Kuzmin's analysis, by playing 40...♖xc3! 41 a6 ♖a3 42 ♖b6 ♔f7 43 h4 e3 he would have gained a draw.

In conclusion, here is a very complicated, purely analytical ending.

Yusupov – Mestel
Esbjerg 1980



This interesting position with an unusual white pawn configuration on the kingside arose immediately after the adjournment. Only a win offered me chances of taking first place in the tournament and achieving the

grandmaster norm, and so I had to spend the entire free day analysing the adjourned position.

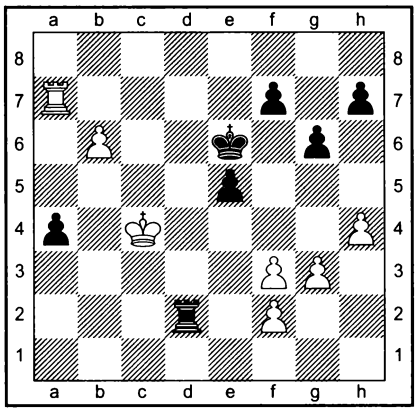
42 a4! bxa4

43 ♔c3

White has an extra piece in play – his king. This factor will tell, for example, if Black plays 'according to the rules' (but in fact routinely): 43...♖a8? – placing his rook behind the passed pawn. In this case there follows 44 ♖d2, then ♖a2 and ♔xc4, and the a-pawn will be lost. Black cannot defend in this way – he is clearly too late with his counterplay.

The best chance was **43...e5!**. Jonathan Mestel did not play this, because 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 the game. 52 ♔a8 ♔b3 53 ♖xa3+ ♔xa3 54 b7 ♖b3 leads to a drawn pawn ending, while 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! (59...♖b7!? 60 ♕e4+ ♔c1 61 ♕c6+ ♔d2 is also possible) 60 ♕d1+ ♔b2 61 ♕xf3 a1♕+ 62 ♔b4 ♕a7 with a drawn queen ending.

I was intending **44 ♖a7!**, but then Black activates his rook by **44...♖d8!**. After **45 b5!** (weaker is 45 ♔xc4 ♖d2 46 b5 ♖c2+!) **45...♔e6!** (45...♖d3+? is bad: 46 ♔xc4 ♖xf3 47 b6 ♖xf2 48 ♖xa4, or 47...♖b3 48 b7 ♔f5 49 ♔c5) **46 ♔xc4** (46 b6? ♖b8) **46...♖d2 47 b6!** (47 ♖xa4 ♖c2+!) Black would have had to make a difficult choice between 47...♖c2+, 47...♖xf2 and 47...♔d6.



1) 47...♖c2+ 48 ♔b5 ♖b2+ 49 ♔c6 ♖c2+ 50 ♔b7 ♖xf2 (note that Black has employed a typical procedure – he has first driven the king onto the square in front of its own pawn, and only then captured a pawn) 51 ♔a8 ♖xf3 52 b7 ♖b3 53 ♖xa4! (all the same the pawn has to be captured, so it is better to do this immediately, in order to halt the passed e5-pawn, even if only for a moment) 53...f5 54 b8♕ ♖xb8+ 55 ♔xb8.

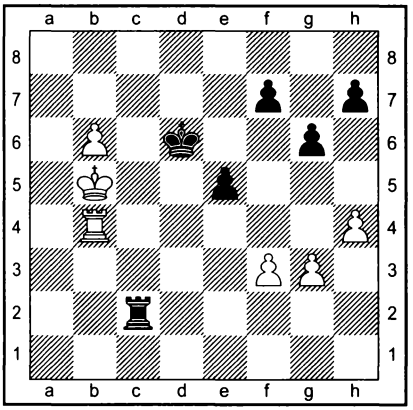
The resulting sharp position would appear to be won, for example: 55...e4 56 ♖a5! (it is important to cut off the black king) 56...h6 (56...e3 57 ♖a3 f4 58 gxf4 ♔f5 59 ♖xe3) 59 ♖a6+! ♔d5 60 ♖xg6 e3 61 ♖g8 ♔e4 62 ♔c7 ♔f3 63 ♔d6 e2 64 ♖e8 ♔xg3 65 ♖xe2 f4 66 ♔e5 or 66 h5.

2) 47...♖xf2 48 ♖xa4 (48 b7 ♖b2 49 ♔c5 does not work in view of 49...a3!) 48...♔d7?! (what happens after the strongest move 48...♔d6! will be seen in the analysis of the following variation) 49 ♖a7+ ♔c6 50 ♖xf7 ♔xb6 51 ♔d5, and White must win, since the black king is too far away from the kingside pawns.

3) **47...♔d6 48 ♖xa4** (48 ♖xf7 a3 49 ♖xh7 a2 50 ♖a7 ♖xf2 leads to a draw) **48...♖xf2**

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

49 ♖b4 ♖c2+ 50 ♔b5



Initially I thought that the pawn ending arising after **50...♔d7! 51 b7 ♔c7 52 ♖c4+ ♖xc4 53 ♔xc4 ♔xb7 54 ♔d5** was won in view of 54...♔c7 55 ♔xe5 ♔d7 56 ♔f6 ♔e8 57 ♔g7 h5 58 g4.

But Black can defend more strongly: **54...f6!**. Now it does not help to play 55 ♔e6 ♔c6 56 ♔xf6 ♔d5 57 ♔g7 ♔d4 58 ♔xh7 ♔e3 59 ♔xg6 ♔xf3 60 h5 e4 or 57 g4 ♔d4 58 h5 gxh5 (58...♔e3 is also possible) 59 gxh5 e4! 60 fxe4 ♔xe4 61 ♔g7 ♔f5 62 ♔xh7 ♔f6! with a draw. If instead **55 g4**, then **55...h5!** (55...♔b6? 56 g5! or 55...♔c7? 56 ♔e6 ♔c6 57 g5!) **56 gxh5 gxh5 57 ♔e6 ♔c6 58 ♔xf6 ♔d5 59 ♔g5 e4!**, and again it is a draw.

As you can see, to find the narrow path enabling Black to hold on is extremely difficult, even in home analysis. In any event, Black was obliged to play 43...e5!. The continuation in the game loses without a fight.

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

In essence, Black has simply lost a tempo. In the analogous position, which we have already analysed, the pawn stood at e5 and the king could be brought into play with ...♔e6. Now this resource is not available, and therefore Black has no defence. 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**

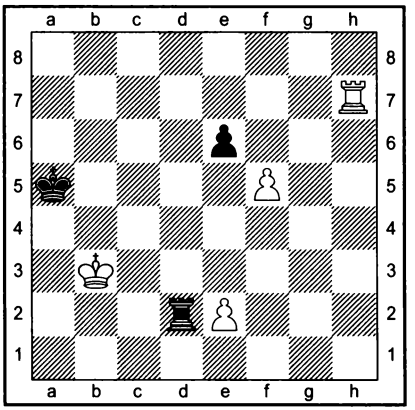
49...♖b2+ 50 ♔c5, threatening 51 ♖a6+ and 52 ♖b6.

50 g4+!	**♔f4**
51 ♖xa4	

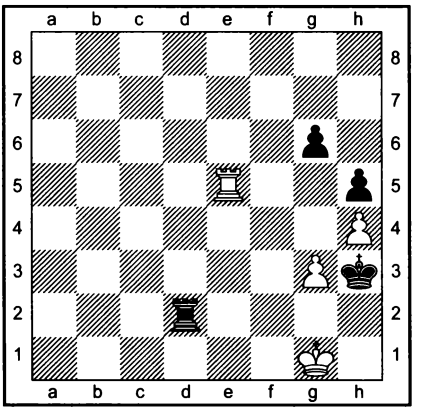
Black resigned.

This game also gives an opportunity for discussion about the technique of playing the endgame. Every tempo, even a seemingly insignificant one (such as ...e6–e5!), can have a significant and possibly decisive influence on the outcome of the game. You should always choose carefully the most accurate way of putting your plans into practice.

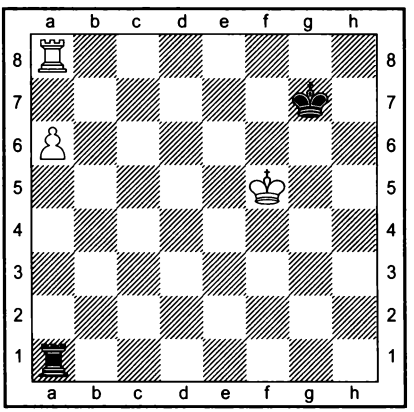
Exercises



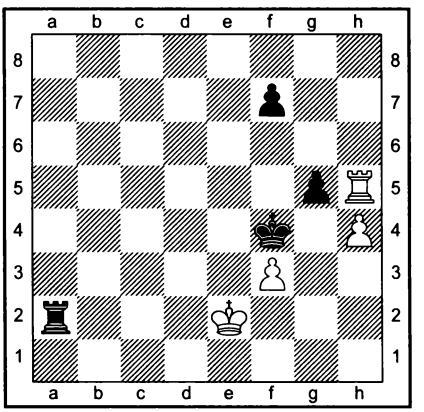
1. White to move



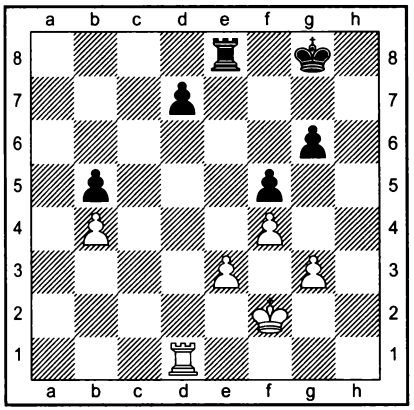
2. Black to move



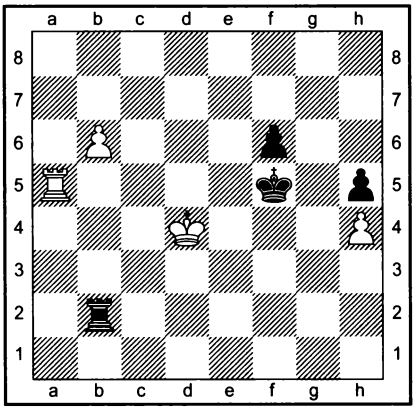
3. White to move



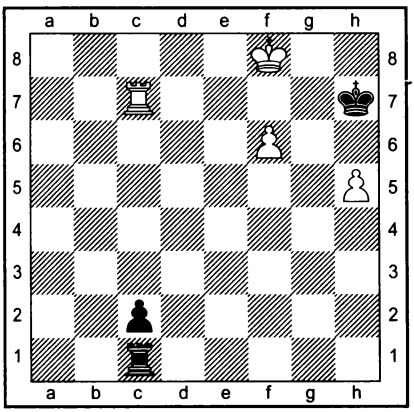
4. White to move



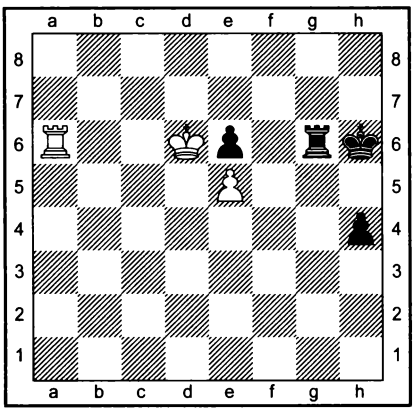
5. White to move



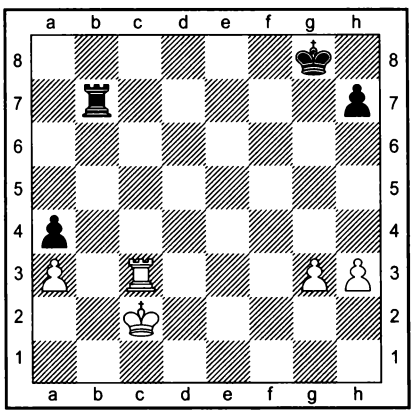
6. Black to move
Is 59...♔g4 possible?



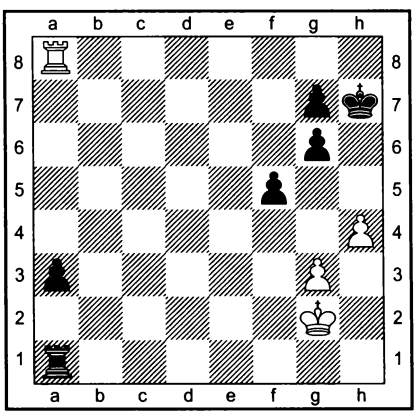
7. Black to move



8. White to move



9. Black to move
How would you evaluate the position?



10. Black to move
Is 1...a2 good or bad?

Solutions

1. A. Rinck (1906).

1 f6 **♖xe2**

1...♔b5 2 ♖h8 ♖d7 3 ♖e8, or 1...♖d4 2 ♖e7 ♖e4 3 ♖e8 and wins.

2 ♖h5+!

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

2 . . . **♔b6**

3 ♖f5!!

2. Trabattoni–Barlov (Valetta 1979).

It is not enough to find a good idea; you must also choose the most accurate way of carrying it out. White has two moves: 1 ♖e6 and 1 ♖g5. Which of them is correct?

1 ♖e6! **♖g2+**

2 ♔h1! **♖xg3**

3 ♖xg6!

The game went **1 ♖g5? ♖g2+ 2 ♔h1 ♖f2!** (2...♖xg3? 3 ♖xg6!) **3 ♔g1 ♖f6.** White found himself in zugzwang and resigned a few moves later.

3. P. Romanovsky (1950).

The rook must be switched to the 6th rank, but how can this be achieved? 1...♖f1+? 2 ♔e5 ♖f6 3 ♖g8+ is not possible, and 1...♖b1? 2 ♖a7+ ♔h6 3 ♖b7 ♖a1 4 a7 also loses.

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 instead 2...♖g5?, then 3 ♖a7+ ♔g8 4 ♔f6! ♖a5 5 ♖a8+ ♔h7 6 ♔e7.

3 ♔d7

3 ♖a7+ ♔g8 4 ♖f7 ♖a5 5 ♖a7 ♖h5!.

3 . . . **♖h6!**

4 ♔c7 **♖f6!**

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

4. Vaisser–Martinovic (Vrnjacka Banja 1984).

1 ♔d1!! **gxh4**

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 lead to a loss:

A) 1 ♔d3? gxh4 2 ♖xh4+ ♔xf3 3 ♖h5 ♔g4 and 4...f5. The white king is stuck on the 'long side' of the pawn.

B) 1 ♔e1? ♔e3! 2 ♔d1 gxh4 3 ♖xh4 f5! 4 f4 ♖a1+ 5 ♔c2 ♖f1 6 ♖h3+ ♖f3 7 ♖h8 ♖xf4.

C) 1 ♔f1? ♔xf3 2 ♔g1 (2 ♔e1 ♖a1+ 3 ♔d2 gxh4 4 ♖f5+ ♔g3 5 ♖xf7 h3 6 ♖g7+ ♔f4 7 ♖f7+ ♔e5 8 ♖h7 h2) 2...♖g2+!

Not 2...gxh4? 3 ♖f5+! (3 ♖xh4? ♔g3) 3...♔g3 4 ♖xf7 or 2...g4? 3 ♖f5+ ♔g3 4 h5! ♖g2+ (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).

43 ♖d5! **♖e4**

43...♖b8 44 ♖xd7.

44 ♖xb5

And White retains excellent winning chances, for example: 44...d5 45 ♖b7!, cutting off the king on the 8th rank, or 44...♔f7 45 ♔e2! and 46 ♔d3.

The game continuation **43 ♖xd7?** was a mistake because of **43...♖e4!**. The point is that if 44 ♖d4 Black can go into the pawn ending: 44...♖xd4! 45 exd4 ♔f7, and if 46 d5 ♔e7 47 ♔e3, then 47...♔d7! 48 d6 (48 ♔d4 ♔d6) 48...♔c6! 49 ♔d3 ♔d7! 50 ♔d4 ♔xd6.

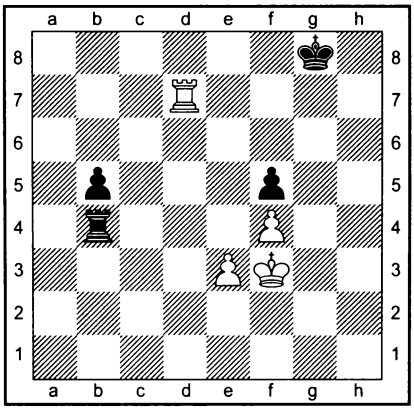
White's comparatively best chance is to go into a queen endgame by 46 ♔g2 (instead of 46 d5) 46...♔e6 47 ♔h3 ♔d5 48 ♔h4 ♔xd4 49 ♔g5 ♔c4 50 ♔xg6 ♔xb4 51 ♔xf5 ♔c4 52 ♔g5! (52 ♔e5 b4 53 f5 b3 54 f6 b2 55 f7 b1♕ 56 f8♕ ♕e1+) 52...b4 53 f5 ♔d5! 54 f6 ♔e6 55 ♔g6 b3 56 f7 b2 57 f8♕ b1♕+ 58 ♔g5 (58 ♔g7 ♕b2+ 59 ♔g8 ♕f6!) – in this case the opponent is still required to defend accurately, although objectively the position is a draw.

44 g4 fxg4 45 ♖d4 g3+! 46 ♔xg3 (46 ♔f3 g2) **46...♖xe3+ 47 ♔g4 ♖b3 48 f5 ♔f7 49 ♔f4 gxf5 50 ♔xf5 ♔e7 51 ♔e5 ♖b1 52 ♔d5 ♖c1** Draw.

An interesting attempt to play for a win was suggested by Viorel Bologan: 43 ♔f3?! ♖e4 44 g4! ♖xb4 (44...♔f7 45 ♖xd7+ ♔e6 46 ♖g7 ♔f6 47 ♖b7 ♖xb4 48 g5+ ♔e6 49 ♖g7) 45 gxf5 gxf5 46 ♖xd7.

(see diagram)

Black can apparently hope to save 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 (Candidates Match, 12th game, Palma de Mallorca 1974).

In the game Black preferred the cautious **59...♔e6** and after **60 ♔c5** he made a decisive mistake: **60...♖c2+?** (60...♔d7! was necessary, with good drawing chances). There followed **61 ♔b5 ♔d6 62 ♔a6 ♔c6 63 ♖a1 ♖c4 64 b7 ♖b4 65 ♖c1+ ♔d7 66 ♖c8** Black resigned.

As was shown by Igor Zaitsev, the active king move would have secured a draw, but only if Black had found a far from obvious defensive idea.

59 . . . **♔g4!**

60 ♖a4!

Threatening 61 ♔c3+.

60 . . . **♔h3!!**

60...♔g3? is hopeless: 61 ♔c5 f5 62 ♖b4 ♖c2+ 63 ♔d6 ♖c8 64 b7 ♖b8 65 ♔c7 ♖h8 66 b8♕ ♖xb8 67 ♖xb8 ♔xh4 (67.. f4 68 ♔d6 f3 69 ♔e5 f2 70 ♖f8 ♔xh4 71 ♔e4) 68 ♔d6 ♔g3 69 ♔e5 h4 70 ♔xf5 h3 71 ♖b3+ ♔g2 (71...♔h4 72 ♔f4 h2 73 ♖b1) 72 ♔g4 h2 73 ♖b2+ ♔g1 74 ♔g3, or 68...♔g4 69 ♔e5 h4 70 ♔d4! (70 ♖b4+? f4! 71 ♖xf4+ ♔g3) 70...h3 (70...f4 71 ♔d3 ♔f3 72 ♖h8!) 71 ♔e3 h2 72 ♖g8+ ♔h3 73 ♔f2 h1♘+ 74 ♔f3.

61 ♔c5 **f5**

62 ♖b4 **♖xb4!**

63 ♔xb4	**f4**
64 b7	**f3**
65 b8♕	**f2**

And White cannot win.

7. Petrosian–Karpov
(44th USSR Championship, Moscow 1976).

51...♔h6? 52 f7 ♔h7 (52...♖a1 53 ♔g8) 53 h6 ♔xh6 (53...♖a1 54 ♖xc2 also does not help) 54 ♔g8 leads to a position from Emanuel Lasker's famous study. White wins by gradually pushing back 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+.

51 . . .	**♔h8!**
52 f7	**♖a1!**
53 ♔e7	

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**. Draw agreed in view of 63...♖h7.

53 . . .	**♖e1+**
54 ♔f6	**♖f1+**
55 ♔g6	**♖g1+**
56 ♔h6	**c1♕+!**
57 ♖xc1	**♖g6+!**

Either capture leads to stalemate.

8. Makarychev–Vasyukov
(Vilnius 1980/81; variation from the game).

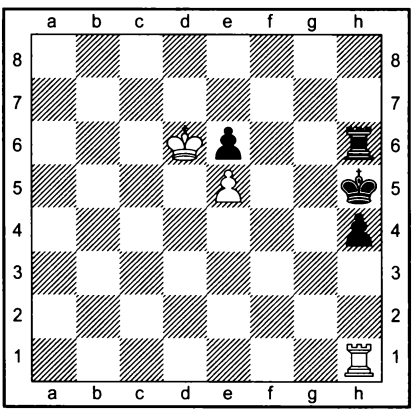
Black will win if he can manage to advance the h-pawn just one step more. After the obvious 1 ♖a1? ♔h5 (threatening 2...h3) 2 ♖h1 ♖h6! White ends up in zugzwang: 3 ♔e7 ♔g4 4 ♖g1+ ♔f4 with the threats of 5...♔xe5 and 5...h3, or 3 ♖h2 ♔g4 4 ♖g2+ ♔f3 5 ♖h2 ♔g3 and 6...h3.

White needs to obtain the same position, but with Black to move.

1 ♖a2!!	**♔h5**

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

2 ♖h2	**♖h6**
3 ♖h1!	



Now it is Black who is in zugzwang. He is unable to 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.

9. Larsen–Kavalek
(7th match game, Solingen 1970).

White wants to play ♖c4. If Black is forced totally onto the defensive with ...♖a7, then White's extra pawn together with the passive black rook should ensure him a straightforward win.

That is what happened in the game: **1...♔g7? 2 ♖c4 ♖a7** (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 hxg4 10 hxg4 ♖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.

1...♔f7, suggests itself, 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 parried, but 4 g5! creates a new threat: 5 ♖g3 followed by 6 ♖g4 or 6 h5 (rook behind the passed pawn). Black's position becomes critical.

1 . . . h5!!

The only way to save the game! In the event of 2 ♖c4 ♖b3! 3 ♖xa4 ♖xg3 there is no check on g4 – the position is drawn. If 2 h4, then 2...♖g7 and 3...♖g4, if there is nothing better. The rook on g4 is very active – it attacks the white pawn, defends its own and restricts the mobility of the white king. Finally, if 2 g4 there is the reply 2...h4!, fixing the white h3-pawn as a target for a counter-attack along the 3rd rank (in the event of ♖c4).

10. Moiseev–Bagirov (Moscow 1956).

Sooner or later Black will have to play ...a3–a2 (the march of the king to the a2-square is obviously unreal). The only question is whether at the same time he can obtain a second passed pawn on the f-file.

There was a straightforward win by **1...g5! 2 hxg5 ♔g6 3 ♖a7 a2! 4 ♔h2 ♔h5! 5 ♔g2 g6 6 ♖a4 ♔xg5**. Then Black moves his king and plays ...g6–g5 and ...f5–f4, achieving his aim.

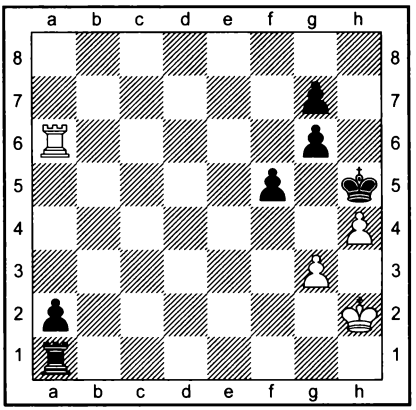
In the game he chose a different, far less successful move order.

1 . . . a2?

2 ♖a6! ♔h6

In the event of 2...g5 3 hxg5 the king cannot approach the g5-pawn.

3 ♔h2 ♔h5



Can anything be done against the threatened ...g6–g5 ?

4 ♖a4! ♔h6

5 ♖a6! ♔h5

6 ♖a4! g5

7 g4+!!

This is the whole point – Black can no longer obtain a passed pawn on the f-file.

The game concluded: **7...♔xh4 8 gxf5+ 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 White cannot play 16 ♖xg7? ♔f3. It was for the sake of such variations that Black left the f5-pawn alive.

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** Draw.

Mark Dvoretsky

From the Simple to the Complicated

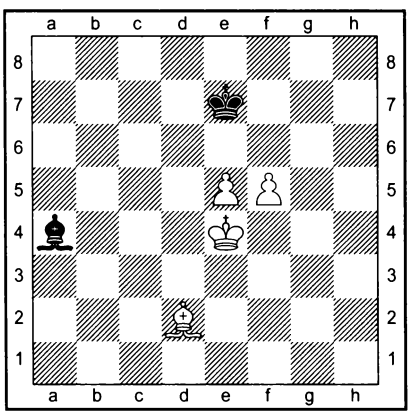
The Theory of Endings with Opposite-colour Bishops

When trying to master any type of endgame the most important thing is to lay a firm foundation: to pick out the most important theoretical positions, ideas and techniques, which underlie our notions of the endgame in question. As a rule, the necessary basic knowledge is made up of a small number of rather simple positions, but they must be understood in every detail and firmly remembered.

A successfully developed system of basic endgame knowledge provides a reliable guide in the analysis of more complicated situations and helps them to be more successfully understood. How this occurs, I will show using an example of endings with opposite-colour bishops.

Connected passed pawns

Let's discuss in detail the following elementary ending.



White is threatening to play e5–e6 (perhaps after a bishop check), then ♔e5 and f5–f6. In order to counter this plan, Black must take control of the e6-square. But from where, d7 or b3? We will consider both possibilities.

After 1...♗b3? the position is lost. First White gives a ***verifying check with his bishop***, in order to determine the position of the enemy king. In so doing it is ***important that the bishop should prevent the king from wedging itself between the pawns after White plays e5–e6***. Hence, 2 ♗g5+!.

Next ***the white king makes a by-pass manoeuvre to the aid of the e-pawn, on the opposite side to where the opponent's king has moved***. For example: 2...♔f7 3 ♔d4 ♗a2 4 ♔c5 ♗b3 (4...♗b1 5 e6+ and 6 f6) 5 ♔d6 and 6 e6+. Or 2...♔d7 3 ♔f4 ♗a2 4 ♗h4 ♗f7 5 ♔g5 ♔e7 6 ♔h6+ ♔d7 7 ♔g7 ♗c4 8 ♔f6 and 9 e6+. After the pawns have reached e6 and f6, even if the threat of f6–f7+ is parried, White repeats the same procedure: a verifying check with the bishop and a by-pass by the king.

It is incorrect to play 2 ♗b4+? ♔f7! (Black's only hope is to provoke a premature e5–e6+ and wedge his king between the pawns) 3 ♔d4? ♗c2! 4 e6+ ♔f6 5 e7 ♗a4 with a draw. ***As soon as the pawns are blockaded on squares of the same colour as their bishop, the draw becomes obvious.***

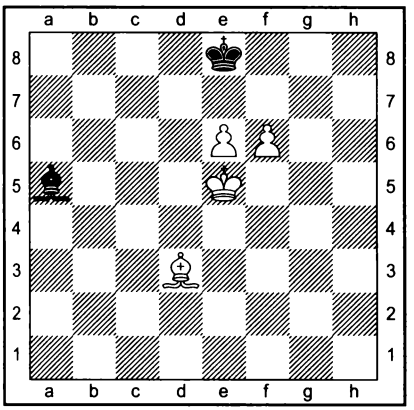
Thus, with his bishop on b3 Black loses. On the other hand, **1...♗d7! 2 ♗g5+ ♔f7** leads to an easy draw. Subsequently Black waits, moving his bishop between c8 and d7. In order to prepare e5–e6, White would need to make a by-pass with his king from the left,

but this is impossible, since the king is tied to the defence of the f5-pawn.

The following rule suggests itself: ***the bishop should be positioned such that, while preventing the advance of one pawn, it simultaneously attacks the other***.

We will use the ideas from the basic position just examined for an analysis of other positions. First some comparatively simple ones.

Let us shift all the pieces one rank forward. What has changed?

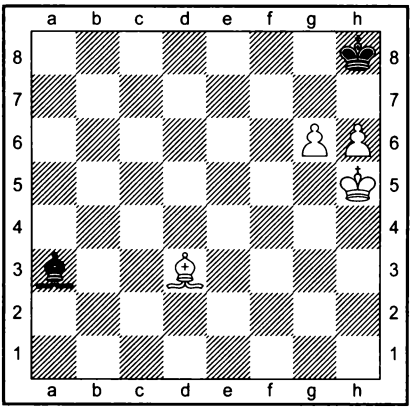


In the event of 1...♗b4 there is no difference. White wins in exactly the same way (a check and a by-pass by the king); moreover, here, as it is easy to see, both checks at b6 and b5 are equally good.

After **1...♗d8 2 ♗g6+** (or 2 ♗b5+) **2...♔f8 3 ♔f5** Black loses because of zugzwang – in contrast to the previous position, he no longer has a waiting move with his bishop.

(see diagram)

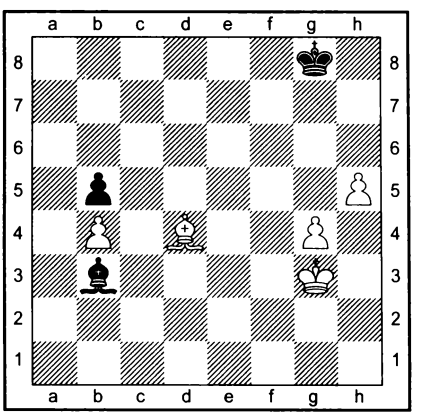
The proximity of the edge of the board introduces new features into the evaluation of the position. Let us verify 1...♗b2. If Black could also manage to play 2...♔g8 and 3...♔f8, the draw would become obvious.



After all, with the king on f8 White's only plan – a by-pass with the king from the right – is impossible: the edge of the board prevents it.

But it is White to move, and he shuts the opponent's king in the corner by 2 ♗c4! and then carries out the standard manoeuvre – the by-pass with the king from the left: ♔h5–g4–f5–e6–f7.

After **1...♗f8!** the by-pass is no longer possible, but what about the threat of zugzwang? In order to put the opponent in zugzwang, White must deprive the king of the g8-square by playing **2 ♗c4**. But after **2...♗xh6! 3 ♔xh6** things end in stalemate.



In all the situations examined earlier the

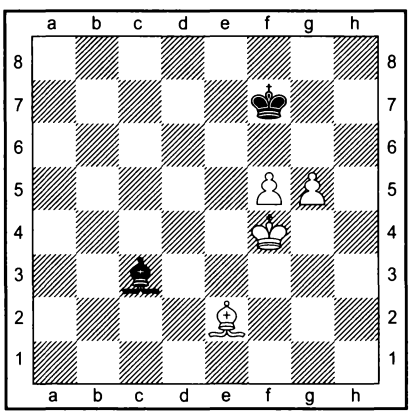
weaker side was aiming to give up his bishop for the two pawns. Here, of course, this familiar plan of defence will no longer save him. Does this mean that Black is doomed? It turns out that he is not – wing pawns can sometimes be stopped without resorting to the bishop sacrifice.

1...♗d1! 2 ♔h4 (otherwise g4–g5 cannot be played) **2...♔f7 3 g5 ♔e6! 4 g6 ♔f5!** White cannot advance either his king (the edge of the board prevents this), or his h-pawn. And if 5 g7, then 5...♗b3 and 6...♗g8, with a secure light-square blockade of the enemy pawns.

The following example is much more difficult.

M. Henneberger

1916



The black bishop is not in its best position (the place for it is at e7 or d8). In the basic theoretical position, with which we began, against such a bishop White won easily. If we reason logically, only one factor, distinguishing the given position from the basic one, can prevent the implementation of the standard winning plan – the proximity of the edge of the board. Let us see!

'According to the rules' White should give a check on h5, to control the g6-square. The black king should move to e7, forcing the white king to make a by-pass to the right, where there is little space for manoeuvring.

1 ♗h5+ ♔e7! (after 1...♔g7? 2 ♔e4 there is nothing to prevent the by-pass by the king from the left) 2 ♔g4 ♗b2 3 ♗g6 (otherwise the king cannot advance, but now the important g6-square is inaccessible to the king) 3...♗c3 4 ♔h5 (threatening 5 ♔h6, 6 ♗h5 and so on) 4...♗g7! 5 ♗h7 ♔f7! 6 ♗g6+ ♔e7, and White has been unable to achieve his aim – to prepare f5–f6+.

As we know from the basic position, the check from the other side also does not achieve anything: 1 ♗c4+ ♔g7! 2 ♔e4 ♗d2! 3 f6+ ♔g6.

Even so, the resources for playing for a win are not yet exhausted. The black king can first be lured to g7, and only then the bishop switched to the e8–h5 diagonal, preparing a by-pass by the king from the left.

1 ♔g4	**♗b2**
2 ♔h5	**♔g7!**

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

3 ♗b5	**♗c3**
4 ♗e8	**♗d4**

4...♔f8 5 ♗g6 ♔g7 is equally good.

5 ♗g6

In the event of 5 ♔g4 (threatening 6 ♗h5, 7 ♔f3, 8 ♔e4 and so on) the black king succeeds in switching to e7: 5...♔f8! 6 ♗h5 ♔e7, transposing into the first of the variations we examined.

5 . . .	**♗c3**
6 ♔g4	

White's plan appears to have triumphed: 6...♔f8 7 f6 is bad for Black, and otherwise White plays 7 ♗h5. But at this moment the black bishop succeeds in switching to its lawful place.

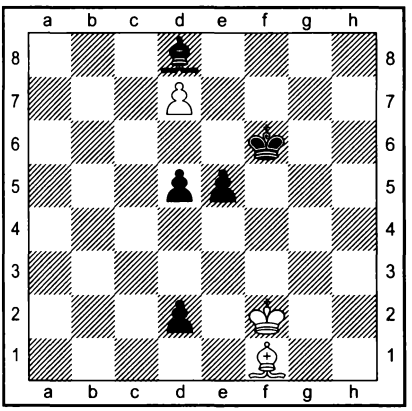
6 . . . ♗a5!!

Because of the position of the bishop on g6, 7 f6+ is not possible.

7 ♗h5 ♗d8

Black has set up the drawn position which is basic to this type of endgame.

At one of our training sessions Sergey Dolmatov and Vadim Zviagintsev tried to solve a study by **Jan Timman**, composed in 1989.



1 ♔e2 (1 ♗e2? e4 or 1...d4 is bad for White) **1...e4 2 ♔d1!?**

In Timman's opinion, in the event of 2 ♔xd2 ♔e5 3 ♗b5 d4 White loses, because his bishop does not manage to switch to c2: 4 ♗a4? ♗g5+ 5 ♔e2 d3+. Therefore White leaves the d2-pawn alive and plays for stalemate! He allows the black pawn to go to d3 and is ready to meet ...e4–e3 with the bishop sacrifice ♗xd3!.

2...♔e5 3 ♗e2!

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

3...d4 4 ♗h5 ♔f6

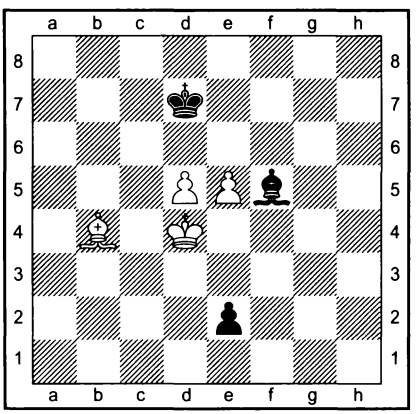
After 4...d3 5 ♗g6 ♔d4 6 ♗h7 the draw is obvious (6...e3 7 ♗xd3).

5 ♗e2 ♔f5

5...♔g5 is pointless: 6 ♗c4 (intending ♗g8–h7) 6...d3 7 ♗xd3 exd3 8 ♔xd2.

6 ♗c4! (but not 6 ♗h5? d3) **6...d3 7 ♗g8** (alas, the crude 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 had doubts about the evaluation of the position arising after the capture of the d2-pawn. Let's set it up with colours reversed, so that it will be easier to draw an analogy with ideas that are already known to us.



The white bishop occupies an ideal position, whereas on the h3–c8 diagonal the black bishop is not it its best place. Without the e2-pawn the win would not be in doubt, but here White constantly has to reckon with the threat of the diverting sacrifice ...e2–e1♕, after which for an instant the bishop loses control of important squares in front of its pawns. The question is whether or not Black is able to make use of this resource.

1 ♔e3

Threatening both the capture of the e2-pawn, and the march of the king to f6. After 1...♗g4 (1...♗h3? 2 ♔xe2) 2 ♔f4 Black is unsuccessful with 2...e1♕ 3 ♗xe1 ♗h5 (with the threat of 4...♗f7) 4 e6+ ♔d6 5 ♔e4, while if 2...♗h3 3 ♔g5 e1♕ 4 ♗xe1 ♗g2, then 5 e6+ ♔d6 6 ♗b4+ ♔xd5 7 e7, and the pawn queens. But what else can he do?

1 . . . ♔c7!!

The key idea of Black's defence! It is important that the pawn should not advance to e6 with check (for example, after 2 ♔xe2 ♗e4). Without the e2-pawn White would reply 2 e6, but here this leads to an immediate draw: 2 e6 ♗xe6 3 dxe6 e1♕ 4 ♗xe1 ♔d6 (Black's moves can also be interposed).

In the event of 2 ♔f4 the simplest is 2...♗d3 (2...♗h3 also does not lose) 3 ♔g5 ♗c4 or 3 e6 e1♕ 4 ♗xe1 ♔d6. Finally, after 2 ♗a5+ ♔d7 3 ♔f4 the main defensive idea in such endings proves possible – the switching of the bishop to f7: 3...♗g6! and 4...♗f7 (4 e6+ ♔d6).

After moving the pieces around for a short while, we decided that the endgame was drawn and hence that Timman's study was incorrect, since it contains a second solution.

Later, when I was on my own, I again set up the pieces and found another attempt to play for a win, based on zugzwang.

2 ♗e1 ♔d7

3 ♗a5!

Now it is bad to play 3...♔e7? 4 ♗b4+ ♔f7 (4...♔d7 5 ♔xe2) 5 ♔d4, when there is no defence against the march of the king to d6 (active counterplay is 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

3...♗h3 4 ♔f4 (4 ♗b4 ♔c7!!; 4 ♔xe2 ♗g2 5 e6+ ♔e7! 6 ♗b4+ ♔f6) 4...♔e7! 5 ♗b4+ ♔f7 comes to the same thing.

4 ♔f4 ♗h3

Here the idea of playing the bishop to f7 no longer works: 4...♗h5? 5 e6+ ♔d6 6 ♔e4.

5 ♔g5 ♔e7!

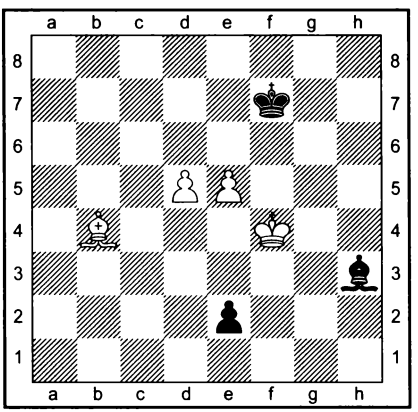
Otherwise ♔f6 cannot be prevented (as we already know, 5...♗g2? is bad: 6 e6+ ♔d6 7 ♗b4+ ♔xd5 8 e7).

6 ♗b4+ ♔f7

6...♔d7? 7 ♔f6.

7 ♔f4

White has managed to lure the opponent's king to f7 and now his king heads in the opposite direction – a by-pass to the left.



I phoned Zviagintsev and told him about the plan I had found. Half an hour later Vadim phoned me back and reported that the position was nevertheless drawn!

7 . . . ♔g6!!

The only chance of saving the game is the bold manoeuvre of the king to f5. After the incorrect 7...♗c8? 8 ♔e4! Black unexpectedly ends up in zugzwang and loses: 8...♔g6 9 e6 or 8...♗h3 9 ♔d4. It is curious that the zugzwang here is mutual; if it is White to move he cannot win – 9 ♔d4 ♔g6! transposes into the main variation, analysed

below, while in the event of 9 ♗e1 ♗h3 10 ♔d4 the black king returns to the queenside: 10...♔e7 11 ♗b4+ ♔d7 12 ♔e3 ♔c7!! etc.

8 ♔e4

Threatening 9 e6.

8 . . .	**♗f5+!**
9 ♔d4	**♗c8!**
10 ♔c5	**♔f5**
11 ♔d6	**♗a6**
12 e6	**♗c4**

Or 12...♗b5 – White cannot win.

As you see, the analysis proved to be rather difficult, and full of by no means obvious manoeuvres by both sides. But even so, at the basis of the analysis were ideas which we derived from the basic theoretical position.

Separated pawns

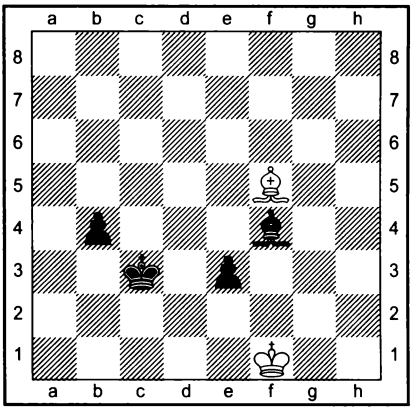
Generally speaking, the further apart the pawns are, the more difficult the defence. When I was young I learned a humorous rule for assessing such endings: if you can reach both pawns with the fingers of one hand, then the position is drawn; if you can't (the distance between the pawns is too great) the position is won!

Alas, such a guide is too imprecise to be trusted. In fact, here there exist many different situations which it is not at all necessary to study and remember. The outcome usually depends on the possibility of a breakthrough by the stronger side's king to the pawn being stopped by the bishop, in order to queen it.

But the following ending should definitely be included in our system of basic knowledge.

Berger – Kolterman

Arkhangelsk 1948



1 ♔e2	**b3**
2 ♔d1	**♔b4**
3 ♗h7	**♔a3**
4 ♗g6	

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

4 . . .	**♔b2**
5 ♗f7!	

The threat was 5...♔a1 and 6...b2. By attacking the b3-pawn, White forestalls the opponent's plan.

5 . . .	**♔a2**
6 ♗e6	**♔a3**

With the threat of 7...b2 8 ♗f5 ♔a2.

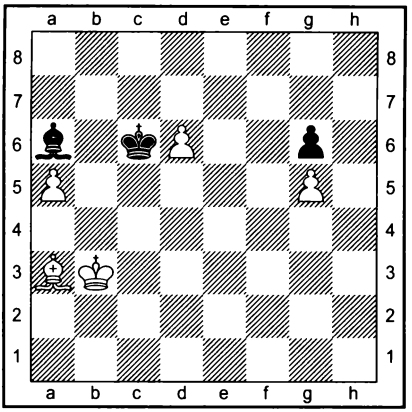
7 ♗f5!

Draw.

Let us consider a more complicated ending.

Yu. Averbakh

1954



In the first edition of the monograph on chess endings edited by Averbakh, the analysis of this endgame contained a serious mistake – it was discovered by Yusupov, when I invited him to try and solve this position. However, Averbakh himself corrected the mistake in a subsequent edition.

1 ♔c3 ♗f1 2 ♔d4 ♗e2 3 ♔e5 ♔d7

Now it is wrong to play 4 ♔f6 ♗d3 5 a6? ♗xa6 6 ♔xg6 ♔e8, when the familiar Berger–Kolterman ending is reached (with reversed colours).

The correct plan is to play for zugzwang. From d3 the bishop defends the g6-pawn along one diagonal, and along the other it prevents the advance of the a-pawn; therefore it has no moves. The white king must not be allowed to reach e7 – this means that, apart from d7, the black king also has two other squares: e8 and d8. The first can be taken away from it by placing the white king on f7, and the second by moving 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 if it is Black to move he saves the game – he can prevent the opponent's king from going to the kingside and set up a secure 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 ends up in zugzwang: 8...♗d7 9 ♔b6 ♗f5 10 d7+! ♔xd7 11 ♔b7 or 10...♗xd7 11 a7.

8 ♔b6	**♗f3!**

8...♔d7? 9 ♔b7.

9 ♔c5	**♔d7**
10 ♔d4	**♔e6!**

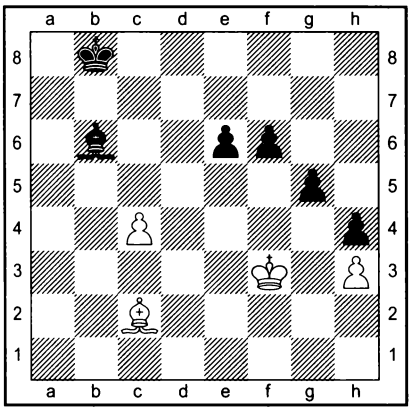
And White cannot win.

Endings with many pawns

After studying for many years the theory of endings with opposite-colour bishops, I observed several rules which, as it turned out, apply in nearly all such endings and greatly help in confidently finding your way in them.

Before turning to a description of my theory of endings with opposite-colour bishops, I will show an example in which, despite its simplicity, nearly all the rules that we will be talking about are displayed.

Textbook example



If it is White to move he saves himself by **1 c5! ♗xc5 2 ♗b3 e5 3 ♗e6 ♔c7 4 ♔e4**. Later he simply plays his bishop up and down the h3–c8 diagonal.

1. **Drawing tendencies.** This is perhaps the best-known property of endings with opposite-colour bishops. Here it is sometimes possible to save the game when you are 2-3 pawns down (as, for instance, in the example just examined). And remember the endings with two connected passed pawns – in what other type of endgame may such an enormous material and positional advantage prove insufficient for a win?

The consequences of this rule are obvious: ***the stronger side should be extremely careful both when transposing into an ending with opposite-colour bishops, and when playing such an ending – here it is easy to run into a drawing counter-chance. And for the weaker side, transposing into an ending with opposite-colour bishops is sometimes a last resort – here the chances of a draw are sharply improved.***

II. **Fortress.** A fortress is a system of passive defence, consisting in the construction of an impregnable position, in which it is sufficient to stick to waiting tactics since everything is securely blockaded and defended.

The main theme in endings with opposite-colour bishops is the theme of the fortress. The weaker side aims to construct a fortress, while the stronger side aims to prevent its construction or (if it has already been constructed) find a way of destroying the opponent's defences.

In the textbook example the concluding position constitutes a fortress. White does not seek any active counterplay, but simply waits, and the opponent is unable to do anything.

When playing endings, an ability to analyse positions logically, by thinking in plans and schemes, is very important. The role of logical thinking is especially great in endings with opposite-colour bishops. In the majority of cases they should not be 'played', but 'constructed' – first look for the arrangement of pieces and pawns which makes the position impregnable, and only then verify by calculating variations whether it is possible to achieve the planned set-up and whether it is indeed impregnable.

The following mechanisms constitute either the most important general methods of constructing and destroying a fortress, or features of the most typical and frequently-occurring types of fortresses.

III. Arrangement of the pawns. There is a well-known principle which prescribes that pawns should be placed on squares of the opposite colour to those on which your own bishop moves. In endings with opposite-colour bishops this principle remains valid for the stronger side (it is especially important with regard to connected passed pawns).

But, ***contrary to the general rule, the weaker side should keep his pawns on***

squares of the colour of his own bishop – in this case it is usually possible to ensure that they are securely defended. Indeed, a pawn defended by the bishop can be attacked only by the enemy king, which means that it remains invulnerable. In other types of endings such a pawn may be attacked not only by the king, but also by another piece (knight or like-colour bishop).

In the textbook example the weaker side's pawn is on a light square – the colour of its own bishop, and this factor ensures the solidity of the fortress constructed by White. In the initial position the stronger side, with his dark-square bishop, has only the one pawn on e6 correctly placed on a light-square. If Black were able to approach it with his king, he would then play ...f6–f5 and easily convert his material advantage. The only way to draw is to force the e-pawn to move onto a square of the colour of its own bishop.

IV. Nuances in the position are more important than material. In endings with opposite-colour bishops the number of pawns on the board is often of far less importance even than seemingly insignificant changes in the placing of the pieces or pawns. Therefore ***in endings with opposite-colour bishops, positional pawn sacrifices constantly occur.*** Thus in the textbook example White happily sacrifices a third (!) pawn in order to achieve a 'trifle' – shift the black e-pawn one step forward.

V. Principle of one diagonal. ***Both for the stronger, and the weaker side it is very important that the bishop should defend its own pawns and restrain the enemy pawns 'without being torn', along one and the same diagonal.*** In the concluding position of the textbook example the bishop on the h3–c8 diagonal defends the h3-pawn and stops the two enemy pawns on f6 and g5.

But in the Averbakh position analysed earlier the bishop defends the g6-pawn along one diagonal and restrains the passed a5-pawn along another. Such a situation is unfavourable for Black. ***In the solution and the false trail you saw two typical ways of exploiting the defects of a 'torn' bishop: zugzwang and diversion.***

VI. Pawns 'under attack'. ***A typical defensive procedure is an attack on the opponent's pawns by the bishop.*** In this way either they are forced to move onto less favourable squares of the colour of their own bishop (as in the textbook example), or the opponent's king is tied to the defence of the pawns (as in the basic position with two connected passed pawns or the Berger–Kolterman ending).

Endings very often occur where the stronger side has a passed pawn. It must be blocked by the king (first system of defence) or the bishop (second system of defence).

VII. First system of defence – the weaker side's king blocks the opponent's passed pawn, and the bishop defends its own pawns. This is the basic and usually the most reliable method of defence.

Attempts to destroy the first system of defence always involve creating a second passed pawn, often by means of a pawn breakthrough.

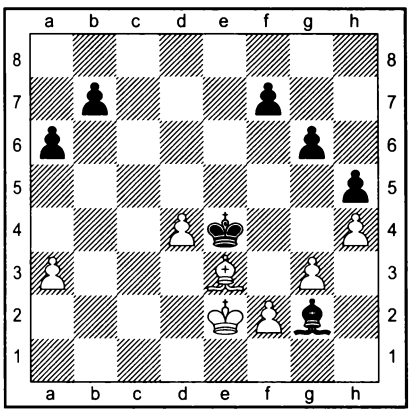
VIII. Second system of defence – the bishop stops the passed pawn (or sometimes two, along the same diagonal), while the king, expressed in football language, engages in 'zonal defence' – it protects its pawns and restricts the activity of the opponent's king.

Attempts to destroy the second system of defence always involve breaking

through with the king to its passed pawn (sometimes after a preparatory diversionary attack on the opposite wing).

We will now do some training in the employment of this theoretical foundation for the analysis of specific endings. We will try to approach them in a logical way: we will point out which system of defence has been employed or should have been employed by the weaker side and in what way it may be possible to try and destroy this fortress, whether the pawns are correctly placed, whether it isn't possible to put the opponent's pawns 'under attack', whether, in order to carry out some idea, it is possible to sacrifice a pawn or two, and so on.

Fuchs – Kholmov
Dresden 1956



Black will probably obtain a passed pawn on the queenside, but it will be blockaded by the opponent's king (first system of defence). The only winning chance is to create a second passed pawn. For this Black needs to play ...f7–f6, ...♔f5 and g6–g5, then exchange on h4 and win the h-pawn. In the game Ratmir Kholmov successfully carried out this plan and won.

In a book he wrote on the endgame, Nikolai Krogius considered this outcome to be perfectly logical. In fact the position is, of course, drawn – this is clear at first glance, it being sufficient only to remember the drawing tendencies with opposite-colour bishops.

How can one explain such a bad mistake in evaluation, made by a player who at one time was quite a strong grandmaster? In my view, by a change of profession: one by no means fine day Krogius decided to 're-qualify as a manager', first in his native Saratov, and then in Moscow – he became head (and, it should be mentioned, a very nasty head) of the Chess Administration of the USSR Sports Committee. Apparently Caissa is a jealous woman who seeks vengeance when she is betrayed.

43 . . . **f6!**

44 ♔d2

White's objective is to defend the kingside with his bishop and not allow the opponent to create a second passed pawn there. For the moment the move in the game does not yet spoil anything, but it was simpler to play 44 d5! ♔xd5 45 ♔d3(d2) followed by ♗e3–b6–d8 (the f6-pawn 'under attack'). The draw would then be obvious – after moving his king to f5 and playing ...g6–g5, Black would be unable to make any further progress.

44 . . . **♔f5**

45 ♗f4?

Now the opponent inevitably obtains a passed pawn on the kingside. Meanwhile the 'pawns under attack' procedure could also have operated successfully here: 45 ♗h6! g5 (45...♔g4 46 ♗g7 f5 47 ♗h6 or 47 d5) 46 ♗g7!, preventing 46...♔g4. 45 d5! ♗xd5 (45...g5 46 d6 ♗c6 47 ♗d4) 46 ♗d4 or 46 ♗b6 g5 47 ♗d8 was also good. It is evident that procedures in the playing of endings with opposite-colour bishops, such

as the sacrifice of one's own pawns or attacks on the opponent's, were unknown both to the national master Fuchs, and to grandmaster Krogius.

45 . . .	**g5**
46 ♗c7	**♔g4**
47 ♗d8	**gxh4**
48 gxh4	**♔xh4**
49 ♗xf6+	**♔g4**
50 ♔e3	**♗d5**
51 ♗e7	**b5**

White resigned – in the opinion of Krogius, because of the variation 52 ♗d8 h4 53 f3+ ♗xf3 54 ♔f2 h3 followed by the switching of the king to the queenside (on the h3–c8 diagonal the black bishop defends its own pawn and restrains the white d-pawn). In fact 53...♗xf3? is a mistake, of course, in view of 54 ♗xh4!; Black should play 53...♔g3!.

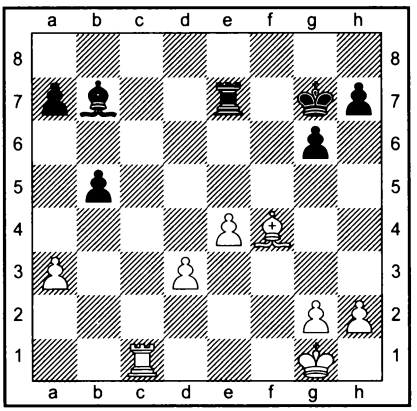
Meanwhile, even after 45 ♗f4 a draw is still possible. As was shown by grandmaster Sergey Shipov, by continuing 47 ♔e3! (instead of 47 ♗d8) 47...gxh4 48 gxh4 ♔xh4 49 ♔f4 ♔h3 50 ♗d8 White would have saved the game.

And also later, just two moves before capitulation, it was possible to gain a draw by choosing 50 ♔c3! (instead of 50 ♔e3?) 50...h4 51 ♔c4 h3 52 ♗e5 ♔f3 53 d5 ♔xf2 54 ♔c5 ♗f3 55 d6 ♗c6 56 ♔b6 ♔g2 57 d7 (Carsten Müller, Frank Lamprecht).

And yet White's 45th move was a fundamental mistake: instead of finding and erecting a secure fortress, he allowed the opponent to complicate the play advantageously.

Bogoljubow – Ed. Lasker

New York 1924



White should win thanks to his powerful pair of connected passed pawns. It was simplest to bring the king to the centre: 36 ♔f2. Apparently Efim Bogoljubow was striving to play as safely as possible – he wanted to prevent ...a7–a5 and with this aim he decided to exchange the rooks. In the game his plan proved justified.

36 ♖c7 ♔f7 37 ♖xe7+ ♔xe7 38 ♗d2! (forestalling Black's counterplay on the queenside) **38...♔e6 39 ♔f2 ♔d6 40 ♔e3 ♔c5 41 ♗a5**, and White won easily.

Remember the need to exercise caution when transposing into an ending with opposite-colour bishops, in view of the inherent drawing tendencies. As was shown by Alexander Alekhine, Black could have saved the game.

36 ♖c7?	**♖xc7!**
37 ♗xc7	**b4!**

The sacrifice of a pawn is a common phenomenon in endings with opposite-colour bishops.

38 axb4	**♗a6!**
39 d4	**♗d3!**

This is also a standard defensive procedure – an attack on the enemy pawns. They are

forced to move onto squares of the colour of their bishop, where they completely lose their strength, since they can easily be blockaded.

40 e5 **♗c4**

41 ♔f2 **a6**

When defending, pawns should be kept on squares of the colour of the bishop.

42 ♔e3 **♔f7**

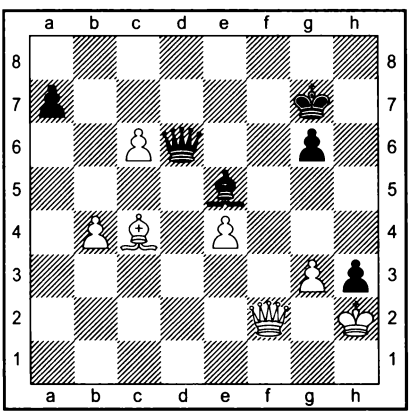
43 ♔f4 **h5**

The position is drawn.

Taking into account the principle 'nuances in the position are more important than material', we should also check 38 ♔f2!? (instead of 38 axb4), in order not to allow a blockade of the central pawns. However, after 38...bxa3 there is no win for White – the a-pawn diverts the bishop from its control of the squares in front of the connected passed pawns. Here is an approximate variation, suggested by Igor Bondarevsky: 39 ♔e3 a2 40 ♗e5+ ♔f7 41 ♗b2 ♔e6 42 d4 (42 ♔f4 h6) 42...♔d6 43 d5 h6 44 ♔d4 ♗a8 45 e5+ ♔d7 46 ♔c5 (46 e6+ ♔d6) 46...♗b7 47 e6+ ♔e7, and White is not able to strengthen his position.

Kharlov – Khenkin

Copenhagen 1993



The game concluded: **44...a6? 45 ♕a7+ ♔h6 46 ♕e3+ ♔g7 47 ♕g5!** (Black underestimated the strength of this move) **47...♕d4 48 c7! ♗xg3+ 49 ♔xg3** Black resigned.

It is not my intention to give a detailed analysis of the ending. I will merely show one way (I would not assert that it is the only one, but in my view it is the simplest) of gaining a draw. Why not immediately eliminate the main enemy – the c6-pawn?

44 . . . **♕xc6!**

45 ♕xa7+

Nothing is given by 45 ♕f7+ ♔h6.

45 . . . **♕c7!**

The bishop and the g3-pawn are attacked, and therefore the exchange of queens is practically forced.

46 ♕xc7+ **♗xc7**

Transposing into an ending with opposite-colour bishops is an important defensive procedure, with the help of which one can sometimes save a difficult position, and therefore, of course, the suggested plan deserved serious consideration. Grandmaster Igor Khenkin was afraid that the endgame was lost, since White has two extra pawns. In fact it is a simple draw, and in establishing this we are helped, apart from the general guide ('drawing tendencies') by a quite specific one. If White gives up his g3-pawn, we obtain the well-known drawn situation from the Berger–Kolterman game. But if he advances it to g4, Black replies ...g6–g5, and blocks all the enemy king's approaches to the upper half of the board. Here is an approximate variation:

47 ♔xh3 **♔f6**

48 ♔g4 **♗d6**

While there is time, it is useful to force the opponent's pawn to stand on a square of the colour of its bishop.

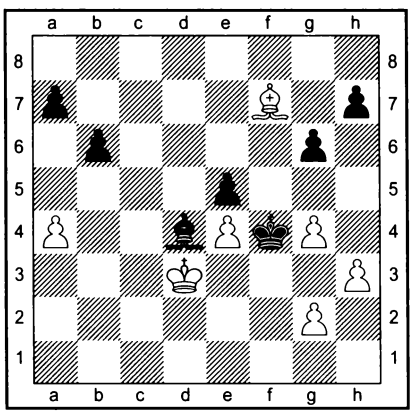
49 b5 **♗c7**

50 ♗d5 **♔e7**

51 ♗c6	**♔f6**
52 ♔f3	**♔e7**
53 g4	**g5**
54 ♔e3	**♗b6+**
55 ♔d3	**♔d6**
56 ♔c4	**♔e5**

The draw is obvious – there is nowhere for the white king to break through.

Vakhidov – Timoshchenko
Tashkent 1982



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

In the game he chose the first system of defence: he switched his bishop to the defence of his pawns, and kept his king on the queenside.

1 ♗b3 g5! 2 ♗d1

2 h4 gxh4 3 g5 does not work: 3...♔g3! (but not 3...♔xg5? 4 ♗e6 ♔f4 5 ♗f5 ♔g3 6 ♗h3 with a draw) 4 ♗g8 ♔xg2 5 ♗xh7 ♗c5!, and Black wins.

2...a6 3 ♗f3 b5 4 axb5 axb5

It appears that White is out of danger – his bishop has defended his pawns, and his king is blocking the opponent's passed pawn. But the bishop is really very passive – soon it will not have a single waiting move. If the king can also be deprived of its mobility, a zugzwang situation could result. This aim, strangely enough, is quite achievable: the white king is gradually pushed to b3 and the black king will occupy the d3-square, from where it continues to tied down the opponent's bishop and at the same time threatens to support its passed pawn. But if the pawn were slightly further away – on the a-file – a draw would become inevitable.

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** (again zugzwang!).

If 14 ♔b3, then 14...♔d3 (the decisive zugzwang!) 15 ♔a2(a4) ♔c2 and wins.

The game went **14 ♔d5 b3** and White resigned.

Now let us try to set up the second system of defence – use the king for the defence of the kingside. But this plan too is not altogether reliable – after all, the bishop will have to perform two tasks: not only contain the enemy passed pawn, but also defend its own e4-pawn, and along a different diagonal. This means that here too a zugzwang position is quite likely.

1 ♗d5 g5! 2 ♔e2 h6 3 ♗b7 ♗c5 4 ♗d5 a6 5 ♗c4 (5 ♗b7 b5 6 a5 b4 7 ♗xa6 ♔xe4 is no better) 5...b5! 6 axb5 a5 (Black happily sacrifices a pawn for the sake of creating a passed pawn) 7 ♗d5 a4 8 ♗c6 a3 9 ♗d5 ♗b6. Zugzwang! The white bishop has no moves, since it is 'torn' between two diagonals. In the event of 10 ♔f1(e1) ♔e3 the black king breaks through to its passed pawn, while if 10 ♔d3, then 10...♔g3 11 ♔e2 (as it is easy to see, 11 ♔c3 ♔xg2 12 ♔b3 ♔xh3 13 ♗e6 also does not help)

11...♔xg2 12 ♗e6 ♔xh3 13 ♔f3 ♔h4 14 ♗f7 ♗c7 (again zugzwang because of the bishop being 'torn') 15 ♗e6 h5 16 gxh5 ♔xh5 17 ♔g3 ♔g6 18 ♔g4 ♔f6 19 ♗d5 ♔e7! 20 ♔xg5 ♔d6, and Black finally carries out the main idea for destroying the second system of defence – the breakthrough with his king to the passed pawn.

Is the initial position really lost for White? Let's use our knowledge of opposite-colour bishops to guess where a saving line might nevertheless be concealed.

First of all one should usually check the basic system of defence – the first. But how to securely defend the kingside with the bishop, and prevent there the creation of a second passed pawn? The manoeuvre of the bishop to f3 solves this problem, but it inevitably leads to zugzwang. Is there no other way? Remember the procedure 'pawns under attack' and for the sake of implementing it let us be prepared to sacrifice a pawn!

1 g5!! **♔xg5**

2 ♗g8! **h5**

2...h6 comes to the same thing. 2...♔f6 3 ♔c4 also does not achieve anything.

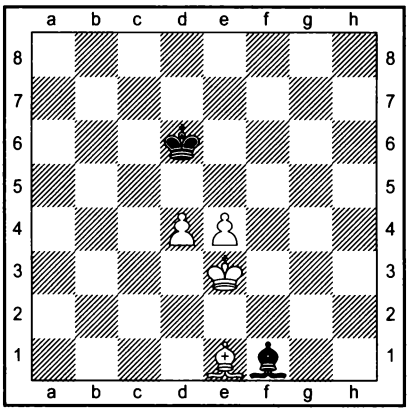
3 ♗f7 **h4**

4 ♔c4

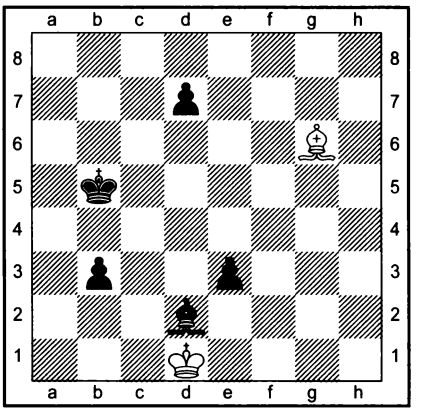
The draw is obvious, since now the bishop easily copes with the defence of the kingside. White's moves can be transposed: 1 ♗g8 h6 2 g5!! ♔xg5 3 ♗f7.

In conclusion I offer a few exercises, in the solving of which you will train yourself in the practical application of your theoretical knowledge. I advise you also to look at the instructive endings with opposite-colour bishops, analysed in my book *School of Chess Excellence 1 – Endgame Analysis.*

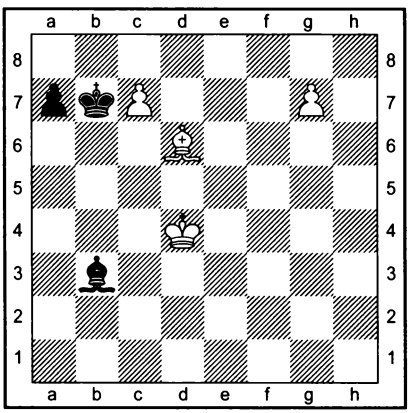
Exercises



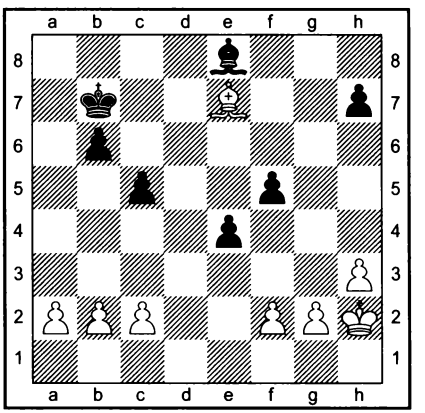
1. Black to move



2. White to move



3. White to move



4. Black to move

Solutions

1. S. Tarrasch (1921).

It is not possible to prevent the advance of the pawns to the 5th rank (for this the bishop would have to be switched to c6). But how should the black pieces be deployed against pawns on the 5th rank? Obviously, bishop on f7(g8) and king on d7. It is this set-up that must be prepared.

1 . . . **♗c4!**

1...♗b5? is incorrect: 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 managed 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!**

'Pawns under attack' – Black does not allow the opponent's king to go to f6. However, the less accurate 5...♗f7 6 ♔f6 ♔e8! 7 ♗f4 ♗g8 was also sufficient for a draw.

6 ♔f4 **♗g6**

7 e5 **♗f7!**

A basic drawn position has been reached.

2. V. Chekhover (1950).

If White should succeed in winning the d7-pawn, this will lead to a familiar position from the Berger–Kolterman game. But if he doesn't? Then he must at least force the b-pawn to take a step forward, onto a square of the colour of its bishop, so that the black king will be unable to break through via b2.

1 ♗e8!

'Pawn under attack!'

1 . . . **♔c6**

2 ♔e2!

2 ♗f7? d5.

2 . . . **♗c1**

While White is tied down, the black bishop is switched to a better position.

3 ♔d1 **♗b2**

4 ♔e2 **♗d4**

5 ♔d1 **♔d6**

5...♔c7 is answered in the same way.

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: 16 ♔d1? d3! is bad for White.

16 ♔d3!

Black cannot make any progress.

3. A. Norlin (1922).

The typical plan is to march the king to the pawn which is being stopped by the bishop, i.e. to f8. But then Black will advance his a-pawn, diverting the bishop from the defence of the c7-pawn.

The only winning chance is to switch the bishop to a5, from where on the same a5–d8 diagonal it will defend its own pawn and stop the opponent's. But first the c7-pawn must

be defended with the king, without allowing ...a7–a5–a4. If the black pawn should reach 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 vacate the d6-square for the king beforehand. 3 ♔c5?! is inaccurate in view of 3...♗b3! with the threat of 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! (threatening 6 ♗c3) 5...♗e8+ (5...a5 6 ♔b5) 6 ♔d6 ♗f7 7 ♗c3! and 8 ♗a5.

4 ♔b5!

The variation given by the author is slightly longer: 4 ♔c5 ♗b3! 5 ♔b5! ♔b7 6 ♔b4! and 7 ♔c5.

4 . . . **♔b7**

5 ♔a6 was threatened.

5 ♔c5 **♗b3**
6 ♔d6 **♔c8**
7 ♗c3

The next move will be 8 ♗a5, after which the king will finally be able to win the bishop for the g-pawn.

4. Nimzowitsch–Tarrasch
(Kissingen 1928).

Black must decide how to combat the threatened attack by the king on his kingside pawns. The 'active' 39...f4? is hopeless: 40 ♗g5 e3 (40...f3 41 g4), and White has a pleasant choice between 41 fxe3 and 41 f3 e2 42 ♗h4 followed by ♔g1–f2. First let us see what happened in the game.

39...c4?

Moving the pawn onto a square of the colour of its own bishop is, in general, a sound positional idea (imagine that White were to play c2–c4, b2–b3 and a2–a4 – then the b6-pawn would be transformed into a serious weakness). The move made by Black is not bad in itself, but for the reason that it does not help to solve the main problem of the position – the defence of the kingside pawns.

40 ♔g3 ♔c8 41 ♔f4 ♔d7 42 ♗b4 ♔e6 43 ♗c3 ♗d7

If Black keeps his bishop at g6 and uses his king to stop the future passed pawn on the queenside (first system of defence), at an appropriate moment White will attack the bishop by h3–h4–h5 and obtain a second passed pawn. For example, 43...♗g6 44 ♔g5 ♔d5 45 g3 b5 46 h4 ♔c6 47 b3 cxb3 48 cxb3 ♔b6 49 a4 bxa4 50 bxa4 ♔a6 51 a5 ♔b5 52 h5 ♗e8 53 ♔xf5 ♗xh5 54 ♔xe4 with an easy win. Therefore Black leaves his bishop on the queenside. Unfortunately for him, his king cannot simultaneously defend the h7- and f5-pawns, and therefore his bishop will be 'torn' between the defence of the f5-pawn and the struggle against the opponent's passed pawn.

44 g3 b5 45 ♔g5 ♔f7 46 h4 ♗c8 47 ♔h6 ♔g8 48 b3 cxb3 49 cxb3 f4

This is already desperation in a hopeless position. If 49...♗d7 Aaron Nimzowitsch gave the following variation: 50 ♗b2 ♗c8 (50...♗e8 51 ♔g5 ♗d7 52 ♔f6, and the white king breaks through on the queenside) 51 a4 bxa4 52 bxa4 ♗d7 53 a5 ♗c8 54 ♗a1, and Black is in zugzwang (54...♗a6 55 ♔g5 ♗c8 56 ♔f6).

50 gxf4 ♗d7 51 ♔g5 ♔f7 52 f5 ♗c6 53 ♔f4 (the standard plan: the king heads towards the passed pawn which is being combated by the bishop) **53...♔e7 54 ♔e5 ♗e8 55 ♔xe4 ♗c6+ 56 ♔e5 ♗e8 57 ♔d5 ♗f7+ 58 ♔c5 ♗e8 59 ♗e5 ♗d7 60 ♔b6 ♔f7 61 f6 ♗e8 62 f4 ♔e6 63 ♔a6! ♔f7 64 b4 ♔e6 65 a4 bxa4 66 b5** Black resigned.

As usual, we should first look for a possibility of setting up the first system of defence – leave the king on the queenside and ensure the defence of the pawns by the bishop. If the principle 'pawns under attack' is remembered, the correct solution (pointed out by Averbakh) does not seem at all difficult.

39 . . . **♗b5!**

40 ♔g3

40 g4 fxg4 41 hxg4 ♗e2 42 ♔g3 ♗f3.

40 . . . **♗f1!**

41 h4 **h5!**

42 ♔f4

Otherwise it is not possible to strengthen the position.

42 . . . **♗xg2**

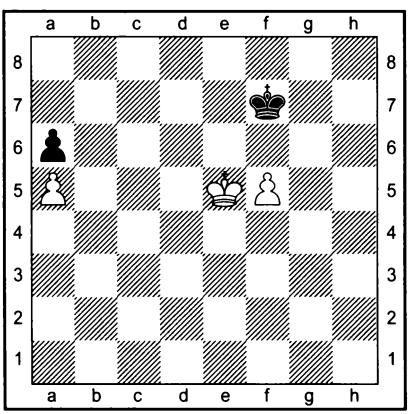
The black bishop easily copes with the defence of the kingside pawns.

Mark Dvoretsky

The Arithmetic of Pawn Endings

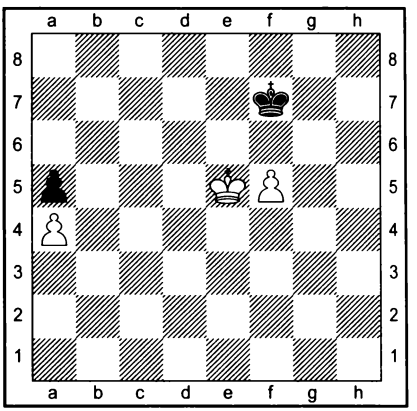
A rapid evaluation rule

Positions with a pair of blocked rooks' pawns and an outside passed pawn for one of the sides occur quite often in practice. Therefore it is useful to be able to evaluate them quickly and accurately. The winning plan is obvious: march the king over to the rook's pawn. The opponent has to eliminate the pawn on the other wing and then rush with his king to the corner, in order to stop the rook's pawn. In which cases does he manage to do this?



Here White wins: **1 ♔d5 ♔f6 2 ♔c6 ♔xf5 3 ♔b6 ♔e6 4 ♔xa6 ♔d7 5 ♔b7.**

Now let us shift the queenside pawns back by one rank.



It is easy to see that the position has become drawn: **1 ♔d5 ♔f6 2 ♔c5 ♔xf5 3 ♔b5 ♔e6 4 ♔xa5 ♔d7 5 ♔b6 ♔c8.**

If, say, the kings and the f-pawn are shifted one rank down or to the left, Black again loses. But what happens if the queenside pawns are also shifted down?

Of course, if you have the position in front of you, it is easy to give an answer to any such question. But in practice such situations often arise at the end of lengthy variations, which you have to calculate, and to lengthen the calculation by several more moves may prove difficult. It would be desirable to learn to determine the evaluation of the position immediately, on first looking at it.

A simple method of rapid evaluation was suggested by Walther Bähr in 1936. To me this rule seems not altogether convenient, and besides it does not extend to cases where the king is not to the side of the passed pawn, but in front of it. In connection with this I should like to offer a somewhat

different method of rapidly evaluating such positions.

1) The first rule coincides with Bähr's analogous rule: ***if the rook's pawn of the stronger side has crossed the middle of the board, the position is always won.*** It follows that from a single glance at the first diagram it may be concluded that the position is won.

2) We will call the position in the second diagram 'normal'. This is what makes it such:

a) between the queenside pawns there passes the invisible demarcation line, separating the upper and lower halves of the board;

b) the black king, which is aiming for the c8-square, reaches there without loss of time. This happens because the passed pawn has already crossed the key h3–c8 diagonal, or is on this diagonal.

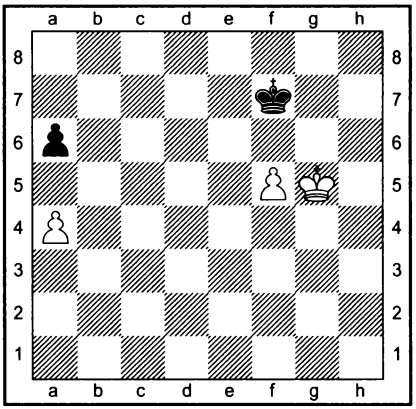
A 'normal' position is drawn.

3) Each shifting of the kingside pawn one square down from the h3–c8 diagonal is equivalent to a tempo in favour of White. For example, the pawn on f4 gives one tempo in favour of White, and the pawn on e4 gives two. One further tempo for the stronger side may be given by having his king not to the side of the passed pawn, but in front of it.

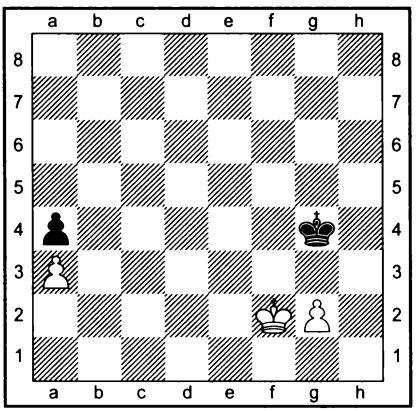
But each shifting of the queenside pawns one square down compared with the 'normal' position gives the defending side a tempo. With the pawns on a3/a4 Black has one tempo in his favour, and with the pawns on a2/a3 he has two.

White wins only if the sum of tempi, calculated in this way, is in his favour.

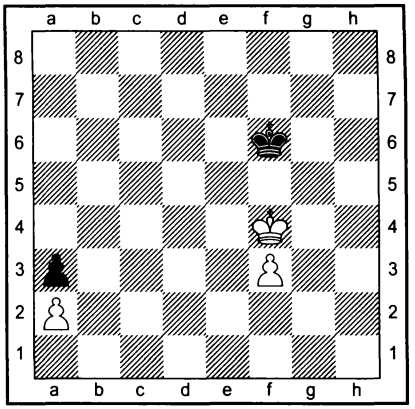
The formulation suggested by me looks rather complicated and cumbersome, but if you learn it thoroughly you will find it very easy to use.



With White to move, it is a win: **1 a5!** (the pawn has crossed the middle of the board). With Black to move, it is a draw: **1...a5!**, and a 'normal' position arises.

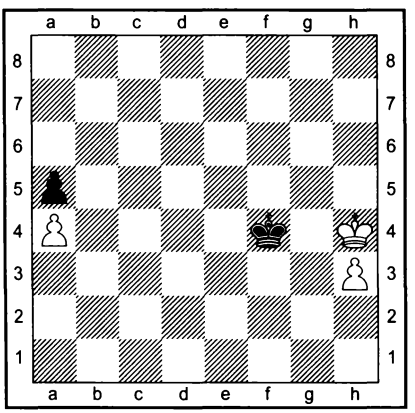


White wins: he has two tempi (the g2-pawn is two squares lower than the g4-square), while Black has only one. But if the queenside pawns are shifted down one rank, the score becomes 2–2 and the position is now drawn.



Here, of course, it is White to move (with Black to move he has to concede the opposition and White can queen his f-pawn). White wins, since the score is 3–2 in his favour (two tempi are given by the pawn on f3 and another one by the position of the king in front of the pawn). He wins by **1 ♔e4! ♔e6 2 ♔d4(d3).** It would be a blunder to play 1 ♔e3? ♔e5(f5), since then a position with a tempo ratio 2–2 is reached (the white king is no longer in front of the pawn, but to the side of it), and this means a draw.

One more useful detail. Let us suppose that White's passed pawn is a rook's pawn, and his king is in front of it, but the enemy king is confining its opponent to the h-file. ***This situation is equivalent to the one in which the king is to the side of the pawn.***

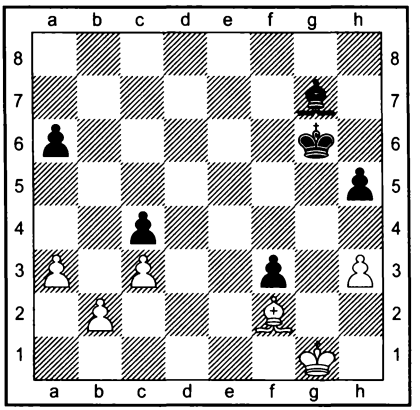


According to the afore-mentioned rule, this should be a draw. And indeed: after **1...♔f5 2 ♔h5** (2 ♔g3 ♔g5 – a 'normal' position) Black does not play 2...♔f6? 3 ♔g4, when White acquires an extra tempo, since his king is in front of the pawn, but **2...♔f4! 3 h4** (3 ♔g6 ♔g3) **3...♔f5 4 ♔h6 ♔f6 5 ♔h7 ♔f7(f5) 6 h5 ♔f6!** etc.

Now let us examine some more complicated endings, in which a mastery of the rule suggested by me significantly eases the calculation of variations.

Privorotsky – Peterson

Riga 1967



Black's positional advantage is obvious. His plan is clear: ...♔g6–f5–e4 and then an attack by his bishop or king on the queenside pawns. This plan can be prevented by offering an exchange of bishops, but this demands precise calculation.

1 ♗d4! **♗xd4+**

1...♗h6 2 ♔f2 ♗c1 3 ♔xf3 ♗xb2 4 a4 with equality.

2 cxd4 **♔f5**

3 ♔f2 **♔e4**

4 d5!

Otherwise 4...♔xd4 5 ♔xf3 ♔d3.

4 . . . **♔xd5**
5 ♔xf3 **♔d4**
6 ♔e2 **c3**

If 6...h4 7 ♔d2 a5 there follows 8 ♔c2 or 8 a4, but not 8 ♔e2?? c3 9 bxc3+ ♔xc3, and Black wins.

7 bxc3+ **♔xc3**
8 h4!!

The only way! Otherwise Black himself would have played 8...h4!, then picked up the a3-pawn and won, since his pawn on the other wing has crossed the middle of the board. But after the move in the game a 'normal' position arises, and this means a draw.

8 . . . **♔b3**
9 ♔d3 **♔xa3**
10 ♔c3

We have reached the last of the textbook examples that we analysed.

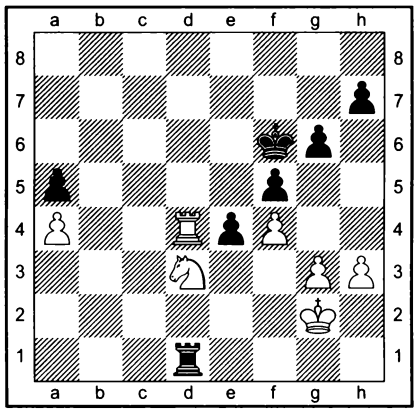
10 . . . **a5**
11 ♔c4! **♔a4**
12 ♔c3 **♔b5**
13 ♔b3

Draw.

In the calculation of this ending, different versions of this type of position arose. If White does not evaluate them 'mechanically', by using the rule given above, but tries to work out the variations to the end, he each time has to calculate some ten more moves, and this is not at all easy.

The players in the following ending faced even more complicated problems.

Matanovic – Botvinnik
Belgrade 1969



In his notes Mikhail Botvinnik analyses two courses of action for White: 43 ♖d5 and 43 ♖d6+ ♔e7 44 ♖a6. In fact there is also a third: 43 ♔f2!, for example, 43...exd3 44 ♔e3 ♖a1 (44...♖g1 45 ♔f2) 45 ♖xd3 ♖xa4 46 ♖d6+ followed by 47 ♖a6, and White should gain a draw.

But let's forget about this possibility and try to choose the more accurate of the two possible rook moves.

First, after analysing some short variations, we must try to disclose the difference between them, and compare their virtues and drawbacks.

In the event of 43 ♖d6+ ♔e7 44 ♖a6 a clear draw results from 44...♖xd3 45 ♖xa5 or 44...♖d2+ 45 ♘f2 e3 46 ♔f3! (46 ♖xa5 ♖xf2+ 47 ♔g1 is also possible) 46...e2 (46...exf2 47 ♔g2) 47 ♖a7+. However, the capture on d3 with the pawn is unpleasant: 44...exd3! 45 ♖xa5 ♔d6. Now 46 ♔f2? is bad in view of 46...♖g1!; White is forced to play 46 ♖a8, allowing the black king to approach its passed d-pawn. Is this rook ending lost or drawn? You can't say immediately, and this means it is time to cut short the calculation and switch to a verification of the alternative possibility.

43 ♖d5! **♖d2+!**

Now the rook ending arising after 43...exd3 44 ♖xa5 is not dangerous for White: 44...d2 45 ♖d5, or 44...♔e6 45 ♖e5+ ♔d6 46 ♔f2 d2 (46...♖g1 47 ♖e3) 47 ♔e2 ♖g1 48 ♔xd2 ♖xg3 49 ♖e3. On the other hand, thanks to the pin on the knight along the d-file, Black can interpose a check with his rook, enabling him to transpose into a favourable pawn ending.

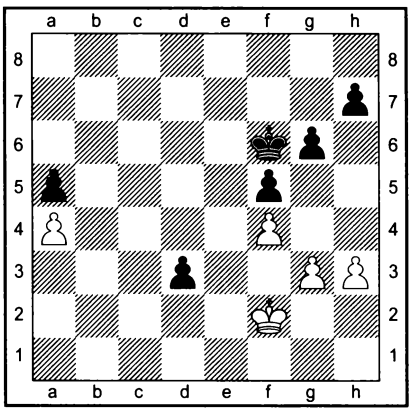
44 ♔f1 **♖xd3**

45 ♖xd3

A forced exchange, since otherwise the g3-pawn is lost.

45 . . . **exd3**

46 ♔f2



Alas, here too it is not immediately clear whether White can save the game. But nevertheless, pawn endings are usually more forcing in character compared with rook endings, and here, as a rule, it proves possible, by calculating a variation to the end, to give an exact evaluation of the position. Therefore we should concentrate our efforts on the calculation of this pawn ending. If it should turn out to be drawn, we will make the move 43 ♖d5, but if it is lost then we will reluctantly have to go into the unpleasant rook ending by 43 ♖d6+ ♔e7 44 ♖a6 (I again repeat, that we have agreed to forget about the existence of 43 ♔f2).

In the pawn ending Black has two plans of action: bring the king to the centre in the hope of putting the opponent in zugzwang, or break through on the kingside with ...g6–g5.

The first plan, as it is not difficult to see, is completely harmless: 46...♔e6 47 ♔e3 ♔d6 (47...♔d5 48 ♔xd3 h6 49 g4) 48 ♔xd3 ♔d5 49 g4 h6 (if 49...fxg4 50 hxg4 h5 there is 51 f5!, although 52 gxh5 gxh5 53 ♔e3 also does not lose) 50 g5! hxg5 (50...h5 51 h4) 51 fxg5 f4 52 h4 ♔e5 53 ♔e2 with equality.

46 . . . **g5!**

47 fxg5+!

Not 47 ♔e3? gxf4+ 48 gxf4 ♔e6 49 h4 ♔d5 50 ♔xd3 h5.

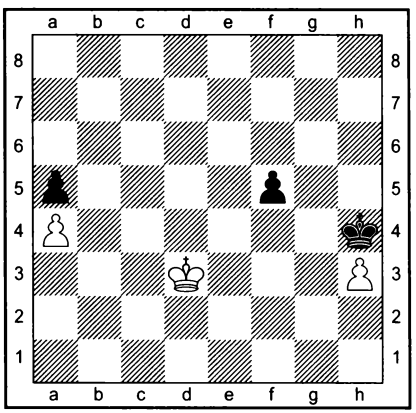
47 . . . **♔xg5**

48 ♔e3 **h5**

49 ♔xd3 **h4**

The situation arising after 49...f4 50 gxf4+ ♔xf4 has already been seen in the previous example. The white king does not manage to attack the a-pawn, but it does not need to – it is sufficient to shut in the enemy king on the h-file, for example: 51 h4 (or 51 ♔d4) 51...♔g4 52 ♔e4 ♔xh4 53 ♔f4 with a draw.

50 gxh4+ **♔xh4**



Which of the two natural moves, 51 ♔e3 or 51 ♔e2, should be made? Let us refer to the rule given above. After Black wins the h3-pawn, according to our arithmetic he will have one extra tempo, since the f-pawn is one square higher than the key c1–h6 diagonal. White will draw only if he can force the pawn to advance to f4. bpk

It becomes clear that 51 ♔e2? loses: 51...♔g3 (zugzwang) 52 h4 (52 ♔f1 ♔xh3 53 ♔f2 ♔g4, and Black has even two extra tempi) 52...♔xh4 53 ♔f3 ♔g5 54 ♔g3 ♔f6 55 ♔f4 ♔e6 56 ♔f3 ♔d5 and so on.

51 ♔e3! ♔g3

52 ♔e2

Now it is Black who is in zugzwang and he is forced to advance his pawn.

52 . . . **f4**

53 ♔f1 **♔xh3**

54 ♔f2 **♔g4**

55 ♔g2

A 'normal' drawn position has arisen.

Alexander Matanovic did not manage to calculate the pawn ending exactly and he preferred to retain the rooks. Let us see what this led to.

43 ♖d6+? ♔e7 44 ♖a6 exd3! 45 ♖xa5 ♔d6 46 ♖a8 ♔c7 (Black repeats moves, to gain time for thought) **47 ♖a5 ♔c6 48 ♖a8 ♔c5 49 ♔f2 ♖a1! 50 ♖d8**

The only saving chances were offered by 50 ♔e3!? ♖g1! 51 g4 fxg4 52 hxg4 ♖xg4, and now, probably, 53 f5.

50...♔c4 51 ♔e3 ♖e1+ (51...♖g1? 52 ♖d4+) **52 ♔f2 ♖e2+ 53 ♔f3 ♖e6! 54 a5 ♔c3 55 ♖c8+ ♔d2!** (only not 55...♔b3? 54 a6! d2 55 ♖d8 ♔c2 56 a7 or 54...♖xa6 55 ♔e3 ♖d6 56 ♔d2) **56 h4**

According to analysis by Botvinnik, White would also have failed to save the game by 56 ♖c7 h5 (56...♖e1? 57 a6 ♖a1 58 a7) 57 ♔f2 ♔d1 58 ♔f3 d2 59 ♔f2 ♖e2+! 60 ♔f1 ♖e3 61 a6 (61 ♔f2 ♖a3 followed by ...♖a1–c1) 61...♖xg3 62 a7 ♖a3 63 ♔f2 h4 64 ♔f1 ♖a4 65 ♔g2 ♔e2 66 ♖e7+ ♔d3 67 ♖d7+ ♔e3.

56...♖e1! 57 a6 ♖a1

Now if 58 ♖c6 Black decides matters with 58...♔e1 59 ♖e6+ ♔f1 60 ♖d6 (60 ♔e3 ♖e1+) 60...d2 61 ♖xd2 ♖a3+, and White is mated! 58 ♖a8 ♔e1 59 a7 d2 60 ♖e8+ ♔f1 61 ♖d8 ♖a3+ leads to the same finish.

58 ♖c7 ♔e1 59 ♔g2 ♖xa6 60 ♖e7+ ♔d1 61 ♖xh7 ♖a2+ 62 ♔f1 d2 63 ♖c7 ♖a1 64 ♔f2 ♖c1 White resigned.

PART II

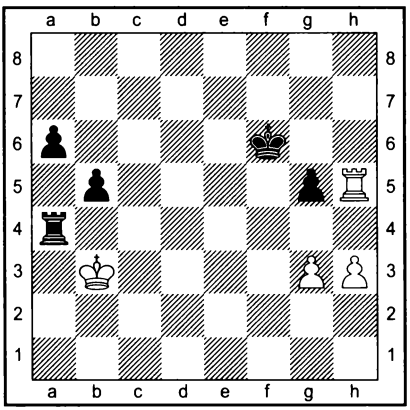
Endgame Analysis

Vladimir Vulfson

Typical Endings with Connected Passed Pawns

I should like to show you the rather complicated analysis of an ending of one of my games. After studying it you will have a better understanding of the theory of rook endings with connected passed pawns.

Zlotnik – Vulfson
Moscow 1983



The adjourned position; it is my move. The national master Anatoly Donchenko suggested an excellent idea for Black. Usually with an advantage you are recommended to avoid pawn exchanges, but this is an exception to the rule.

1 . . . **g4!**

Black wants to tie the enemy rook to the defence of the g3-pawn. 2 ♖h4 is obviously hopeless, and therefore I studied, in the main, 2 hxg4 ♖xg4. Things are difficult for White: nothing is given by 3 ♖h6+ ♖g6, and so he is forced to play 3 ♖h3, but here the rook is exceptionally passive.

But here Boris Zlotnik unexpectedly made a move which I had overlooked in my analysis.

2 ♔b2

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

The move is an interesting one, and during the game it seemed to me to be very strong. But after a thorough analysis I began to have doubts about its strength. The point is that when Black eliminates the g-pawn and obtains a position with connected passed pawns, the basic method of defence is to try and wedge the king between the pawns and blockade them. But here the king, in solving a partial problem (involving the g3-pawn), voluntarily moves away from the queenside pawns.

2 . . . **gxh3**
3 ♖xh3 **♖g4**
4 ♖h8

With his rook on h3 White, naturally, cannot hope for success, and so he activates it.

Black's reply is forced, since if 4...♖xg3? there follows 5 ♖a8 with an immediate draw.

4 . . . a5

Passed pawns must be pushed.

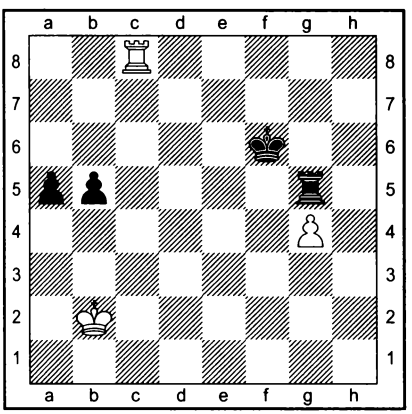
5 ♖c8

Again it is not possible to capture on g3 because of 6 ♖c6+ followed by 7 ♖c5. I also reckoned with 5 ♖a8, to force one of the pawns to advance and allow the king more quickly to wedge itself between them. But I think that in this case too White would not have been able to save the game.

5 . . . ♖g5

The rook defends the pawns from the side. In such situations this is the best place for the rook. Now the black king is free to go where it wants.

6 g4!?



Now the capture of the pawn leads to a typical drawn position with connected passed pawns, one which occurs quite often: 6...♖xg4? 7 ♖c6+ ♔e7 8 ♖c5 ♖b4+ 9 ♔a3 ♔d6 10 ♖h5. If 10...♖b1 there follows 11 ♔a2. Black cannot strengthen his position, since his king has no shelter from the side checks.

6 . . . ♔e6?

6...♔e5! suggests itself. Why did I reject this move? The reason was a psychological one. My opponent was the national master Zlotnik, a chess teacher in the Institute of Physical Culture. I greatly respected him, and to me he was an expert. When you play such a person, a definite complex appears, you begin to fear everything, and therefore it can be difficult to make an active move.

Besides, I did not consider that the position was one where every tempo counted, I thought my king would always be able to go over and capture the g4-pawn, and for the moment it would not be bad to help the queenside pawns.

What would have happened after 6...♔e5 ? Let us try to provoke the advance of one of the pawns: 7 ♖a8. Black replies 7...a4, and if 8 ♔a3(c3), then simply 8...♖xg4. The king has not managed 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 with a win. The fact that his king is cut off along the 6th rank does not concern Black – his rook will free the king by ...♖c4–c6.

Thus, 6...♔e5 was a very good move, but I played differently.

7 ♖c1

White wants to place his rook behind his passed pawn.

7 . . . ♔d6?

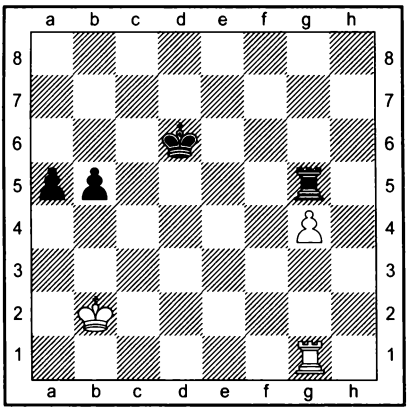
7...♔d5 was far stronger.

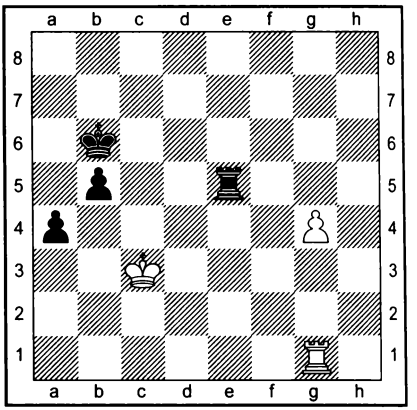
8 ♖g1

I should like to dwell on this position in more detail.

(see diagram)

White has succeeded in significantly activating his rook. If his pawn were on g5, he would undoubtedly be able to draw. But with the pawn on g4 his rook has not so many squares for manoeuvring. Black now has two plans for playing for a win:





1) play his king to the help of the queenside pawns;

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

We will first examine the simpler plan, involving 8...♔c5. It is obvious that if Black can place his pawns on a4 and b4 he will win easily. Therefore White's objective is to hinder the advance of the pawns, lure the rook away from g5 as soon as possible and begin advancing his passed pawn.

First let us analyse **9 ♔b3**. If 9...b4 (with the threat of 10...♔b5) there follows 10 ♔a4 ♔b6 11 ♖f1 ♖xg4 12 ♖f5! with an immediate draw.

Let us verify **9...a4+ 10 ♔a3 ♔b6! 11 ♔b4** (preventing 11...♔a5) **11...♖e5!**. Against the threat of 12...♖e3 White has two defences: 12 ♖g3 and 12 ♔c3 (12 ♔a3 ♖e2 is unsuitable, since the king remains in a mating net).

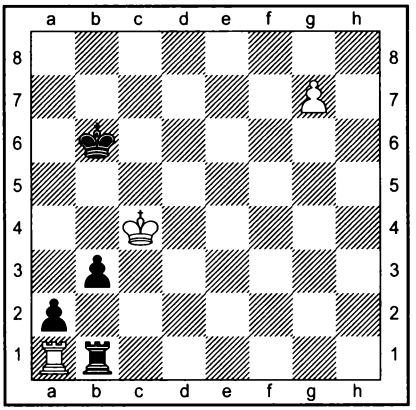
After 12 ♖g3 ♖e4+ 13 ♔a3 ♔a5 (with the threat of 14...♖e2) 14 ♔b2(a2) b4 the black pawns reach their goal sooner than the g-pawn. No better is 13 ♔c3 b4+ 14 ♔d3 a3! 15 ♔c2 ♖e2+ etc.

Let us examine **12 ♔c3**. Here the win for Black is not obvious.

In lessons devoted to the technique of converting an advantage, an important principle has been mentioned: to make use of any opportunity to improve even slightly your own position and weaken the opponent's. Here Black can move his king forward, but in this case the white pawn advances and there is no longer a win. The only way to the goal is to interpose the check **12...♖c5+!**. If 13 ♔b2, then 13...♖g5, and the b-pawn advances to the 4th rank. In the event of 13 ♔d4 Black can either advance his pawn immediately, or first play 13...♖g5. There only remains **13 ♔b4 ♖c4+ 14 ♔a3**.

The direct 14...♔a5? does not achieve anything: 15 ♔a2 b4 16 g5 b3+ 17 ♔a1! a3 18 g6 b2+ (for 18...a2 and ...♔b4–a3 Black is just one tempo short) 19 ♔b1 ♔b4 20 g7 ♔b3 21 ♖g3+ ♔b4 22 ♖g1.

The correct move is **14...♖c2!** (with the threat of 15...♔a5) **15 ♔b4 ♖b2+!** (nothing is given by 15...♖f2 16 ♔c3; first the position of the white king must be clarified), and 16 ♔a3 ♖f2 17 ♔b4 ♖f3 is bad for White, while after **16 ♔c3** there follows **16...a3 17 g5 b4+ 18 ♔c4 a2 19 ♖a1** (19 g6 ♖b1) **19...b3 20 g6 ♖b1 21 g7**.



21...♖xa1 22 g8♕ ♖c1+ 23 ♔xb3 a1♕.

[Nowadays, for the analysis of both opening and endgame positions, increasing use is made of computers. John Nunn and Graham Burgess checked the concluding position of this variation on a computer, and it transpired that after 24 ♕b8+ Black cannot avoid perpetual check. For example, with the king on h7 there follows 1 ♕e4+ ♔g7 2 ♕e7+, and with the king on c8 – 1 ♕g4+ ♔b8(b7) 2 ♕b4+.

Nevertheless, Black has a way to win – but instead of 21...♖xa1? he should play ***21...b2!****. Here is the analysis by Nunn and Burgess:*

22 g8♕ *(22 ♖xa2 ♖c1+ 23 ♔d4 b1♕ 24 g8♕ ♕b4+ with a quick mate or win of the white queen)* ***22...♖c1+! 23 ♔d5*** *(23 ♖xc1 bxc1♕+ 24 ♔b3 ♕b1+ 25 ♔c4 ♕b5+)* ***23...♖c5+ 24 ♔d6 ♖c6+!***

24...bxa1♕? is premature: 25 ♕b8+ ♔a6 26 ♕a8+ ♔b5 27 ♕b7+ ♔c4 28 ♕f7+ ♔b4 29 ♕b7+ ♖b5 30 ♕e4+ ♔b3 31 ♕e6+! with perpetual check.

25 ♔d7

After 25 ♔d5 bxa1♕ 26 ♕b8+ ♔a5 27 ♕a7+ ♔b5 28 ♕b8+ ♖b6 29 ♕e8+ ♔b4 30 ♕f8+ ♔b3 the checks come to an end.

25...bxa1♕ 26 ♕b3+

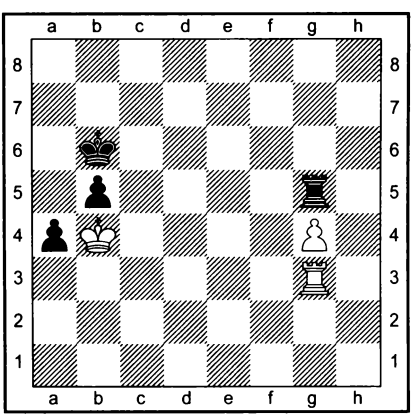
No better is 26 ♕b8+ ♔a5 27 ♕a8+ ♔b4 28 ♕b7+ ♔a3 29 ♕a7+ ♔b3 30 ♕b7+ ♔c2! 31 ♕xc6+ ♕c3 32 ♕a4+ ♔b2 33 ♕b5+ ♔c1 34 ♕f1+ ♔c2.

26...♔c5 27 ♕a3+ *(27 ♕c2+ ♔b4 28 ♕e4+ ♔a3 29 ♕e7+ ♔b3 30 ♕f7+ ♖c4)* ***27...♔d4! 28 ♕b4+ ♔e3 29 ♕e7+ ♔f3****, and Black blocks the next check with his queen or rook* – Dvoretsky.]

As you see, the win is very complicated. Besides, White's defence can be improved at the very start of the variation. Instead of 9 ♔b3?! we can play more cunningly – **9 ♔a3!**, so that the pawn should move to a4 without check.

9...a4 (no better is 9...♔b6 10 ♖g3!) **10 ♖g3!**. Now 10...♔b6 11 ♔b4 leads to a position of mutual zugzwang, and with Black to move. 11...♖e5 is pointless, since 12...♖e3 is not a threat and White can simply advance his pawn. After 11...♔a6(c6) 12 ♖g1 ♖e5 the move 13...♖e3 is no longer deadly and again 13 g5 can be played.

Let us try **10...♔c6!? 11 ♔b4 ♔b6**.



Now it is White who is in zugzwang. We already know that he loses after 12 ♖g1 ♖e5; let us see whether **12 ♖g2 ♖e5 13 ♔a3!** helps him. The difference compared with the position of the rook on g1 is immediately apparent: after 13...♔a5 14 g5 the black rook cannot invade at e2. Black is forced to advance his pawn: **14...b4+**.

To where should the king move? The outcome depends on this. Of course, **15 ♔a2!**, so that the a-pawn should advance without check. All the same Black plays **15...a3** (but now without gain of tempo!) **16 g6 ♔a4**.

Threatening 17...b3+ with mate. White loses after 17 ♖g1 b3+ 18 ♔a1 a2, but he finds the defence **17 ♖g4! ♖e2+ 18 ♔a1!**. And now 18...a2 is dangerous only for Black: 19 g7 ♔a3 20 ♖g3+ b3 21 ♖xb3+! ♔xb3 22 g8♕+.

Thus we have established that in the event of 8...♔c5 White gains a draw.

In the game I moved my king the other way.

8 . . . ♔e5

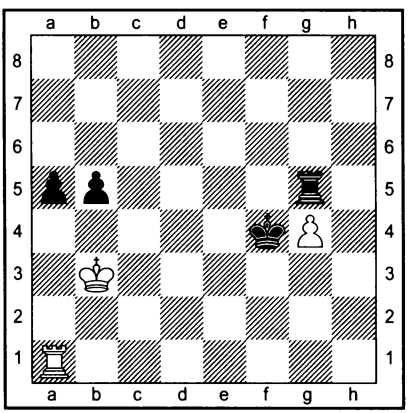
You see, the king has nevertheless reached e5, but instead of going there immediately it has wasted time, by wandering about on the e6- and d6-squares.

9 ♔b3

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

9 . . . ♔f4

10 ♖a1



Here I did not bother to ponder over which pawn to advance, and this was a mistake – one pawn move leads to a win, and the other to a draw. Let us first see what happened in the game.

10 . . . a4+?

11 ♔b4 ♔xg4

12 ♖a3?!

My opponent embarks on a ruinous course. He probably thought that he would be able to restrict my king along the 3rd rank, but in fact his rook is badly placed here.

12 . . . ♔f4

13 ♖c3??

Any move along the 3rd rank loses – the rook should have moved off it.

13 . . . ♖g3

My rook goes to b3, after which the pawns queen of their own accord. Black won easily.

But how should my opponent have defended? Let us assume that we do not know the theory of endings with such a pawn arrangement – let us try acting simply by using common sense.

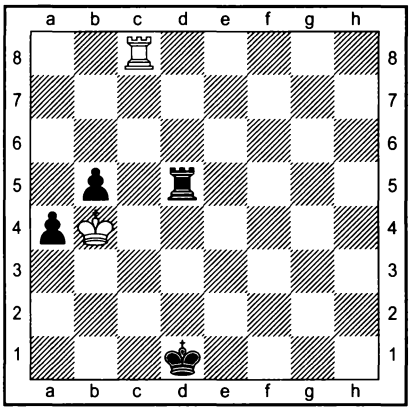
Let us ask the question: 'What does Black want?' Undoubtedly, to take his king to b2, after which it will be possible to give up the b5-pawn and queen the a-pawn. Let's try and hinder the movement of the king, by cutting it off along a file.

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 place the rook on e5 – then a check on e1 will drive the king away. 18...♖d5 is premature in view of 19 ♖e1+. Black must play for zugzwang. The white king on b4 is ideally placed, so the position of rook must be improved.

19 ♖d2 ♖d5 20 ♖c2 (now 20 ♖e2+ ♔d3 is hopeless for White) 20...♔d3 21 ♖c8 (21 ♖h2 is also not bad) 21...♔d2 22 ♖c7 ♔d1.

(see next diagram)

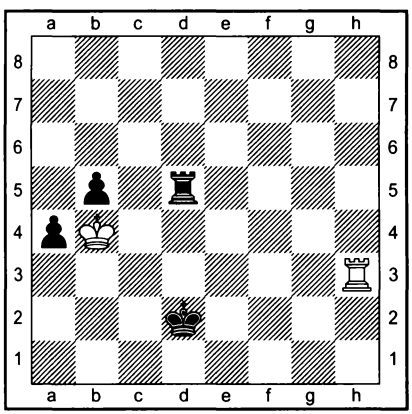
Up to this point White has not been in any particular danger, and he could have defended in various ways. But here he must make an accurate move (23 ♖c3 or 23 ♖h8), since Black has created the concrete threat



23...♖d2. For example, 23 ♖c7? ♖d2 24 ♖c3 (24 ♔xb5 a3 25 ♔b4 a2 26 ♖a7 ♔c1) 24...♖b2+ 25 ♔a3 ♖b1. After 26 ♖h3 there follows 26...♔c2 with the threat of 27...♖b3+, while if 26 ♖c8, then 26...♔d2, and the king approaches the pawns. It has acquired an excellent shelter from the side checks at a5. This is one of the important winning positions.

And now – the main drawn position, which it is also essential to know.

H. Kasparian



Could we have reached this position? Quite possibly. White could always have placed his rook on the 3rd rank. The only plan to play for a win is 1...♔c2 2 ♖h2+ ♖d2 3 ♖h3! (it is important to control the a3-square) 3...♔b2. At first sight White is in trouble – Black intends 4...♖d4+ and 5...a3. But let us verify: 4 ♖g3 ♖d4+ 5 ♔c5! (5 ♔xb5? a3 6 ♖g2+ ♔c3 7 ♖g3+ ♖d3). If the rook goes to e4, it is now possible to capture the b5-pawn and after 6...a3 to begin side checks. The king has to step onto the d-file, but then the rook attacks the a-pawn and this leads to a draw. This was Kasparian's conclusion.

In this position I discovered another curious subtlety: Black can try 5...♖d1!. Again it is not possible to capture on b5, and 6 ♔b4 is necessary, but then there follows 6...♖b1. Now it is essential to take the pawn: 7 ♔xb5! a3 8 ♔a4 a2 9 ♖g2+, and the king is deprived of the important b1-square – draw! [*There is another way to draw: 6 ♖g2+ ♔b1 7 ♖g3 or 6...♔c3 7 ♔xb5 a3 8 ♔a4* – Dvoretsky.]

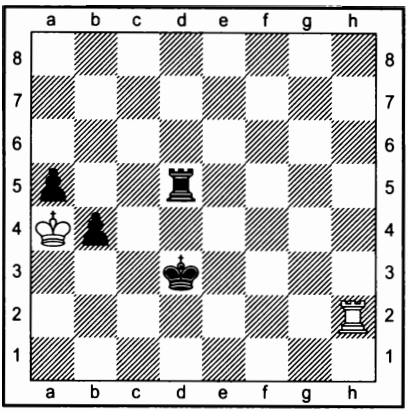
Let us return to the position after White's 10th move. We have seen that 10...a4+? leads to a draw. Let us now analyse **10...b4! 11 ♔a4** (11 ♖g1 ♖xg4 is hopeless) **11... ♔xg4**.

This pawn configuration is obviously stronger than a4–b5, since after the sacrifice of the a5-pawn the remaining b-pawn is more dangerous than the a-pawn, and affords more winning possibilities. For the moment the black king is free to approach the queenside (12 ♖f1 ♖f5 etc.). Let us see what methods of defence White has against pawns on b4 and a5.

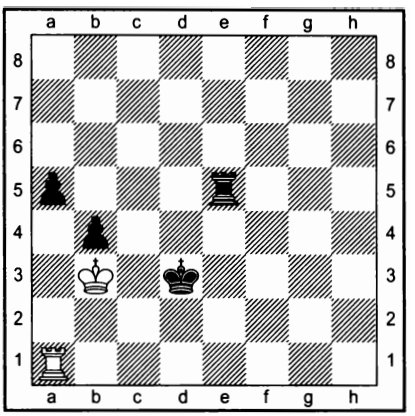
The first: playing for stalemate.

(see diagram)

If the black king goes to c3, there follows ♖c2+!. But this mechanism is easily destroyed – playing the black rook to the 2nd rank proves decisive.



The second: the attempt by White to place his own king in the way.

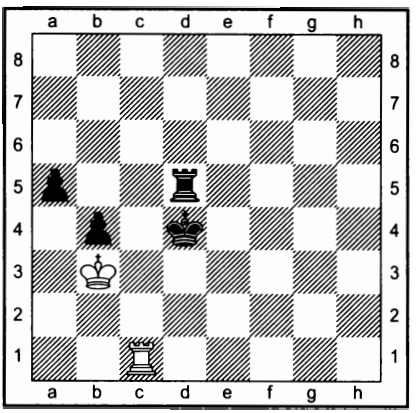


The drawback to the position of the king on b3 is that it comes under check along the 3rd rank.

1...♔d4 2 ♖a2 ♖e3+ 3 ♔a4 (forced) 3...♔c3, or 2 ♖a4 ♖e3+ 3 ♔b2 ♔c4! 4 ♖xa5 ♖e2+, and a won position, well known in theory, is reached.

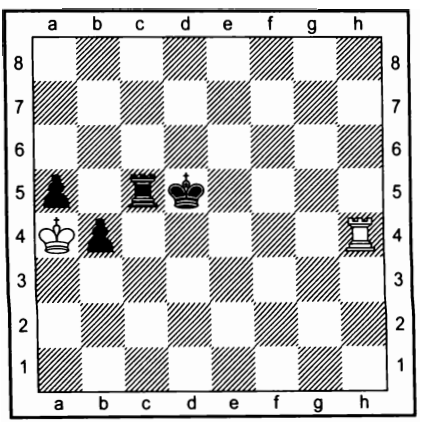
Black wins in roughly the same way with the enemy rook on a8 (instead of a1): 1...♔d4 with the idea of ...♖e3+.

The third: to cut off the black king along the file.



What is the simplest way to win here? Let's improve the position of the rook: 1...♖e5. The threat is 2...♖e3+, lifting the blockade of the pawns. Both 2 ♖d1+ ♔c5 3 ♔a4 ♖e3 and 2 ♔a4 ♔d3 (not immediately 2...♖e3? 3 ♔xa5 b3 4 ♔b4) 3 ♖c8 (or 3 ♔b3) 3...♖e3 4 ♖c7 ♔d2 are hopeless for White. You see that the key square for the king in this type of ending is d4 – it is very important to occupy it! And after this – according to circumstances: if the white king is at a4, the route ...♔d4–c3–b2(c2) becomes possible. With the king on b3 it comes under check and the black king can then go to c5 and b5.

It all seems to be very simple, but look at the following position:



What is the evaluation? Draw! The king

cannot break through anywhere.

We arrive at a general rule for this type of ending:

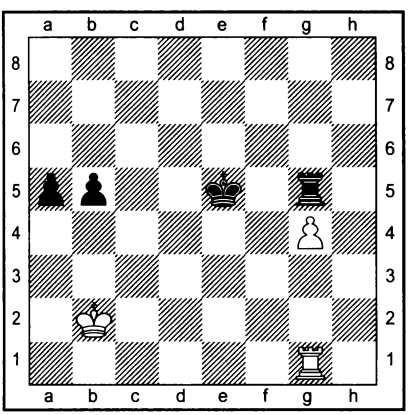
- If the black king is cut off in its own half of the board, the position is drawn;

- But if it breaks through into the opponent's half of the board, the position becomes won.

A general conclusion for this type of ending also suggests itself:

Black's plan of moving his king towards the white pawn and capturing it leads to a win, whereas the plan of playing the king to the help of the queenside pawns only draws.

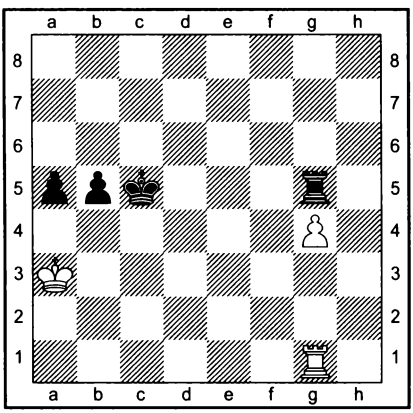
However, later analysis sometimes introduces serious corrections into seemingly established conclusions. On one occasion I looked more carefully at the position after 8...♔e5.



Why did White play 9 ♔b3 ? The immediate **9 ♖a1!** was far more logical. Now the reply ...b5–b4 is no longer possible, and after **9...a4 10 ♔a3** (not 10 ♔c3 ♖xg4 11 ♖b1 ♖c4+) White need not fear 10...♖xg4 11 ♖b1 with an immediate draw. Black replies **10...♔d5**, but **11 ♔b4 ♔c6 12 ♖g1** leads to an already familiar drawn position.

The number of mistakes that the two players made in this endgame! The reason was an inadequate knowledge of the theory of rook endings. They had no 'beacons' by which they could be guided.

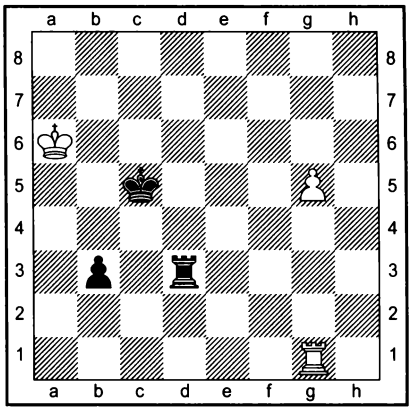
Thus in the game the moving of the king to the kingside (alas, rather belatedly) should have led to a draw. Then I again returned to the position after 8...♔c5 9 ♔a3.

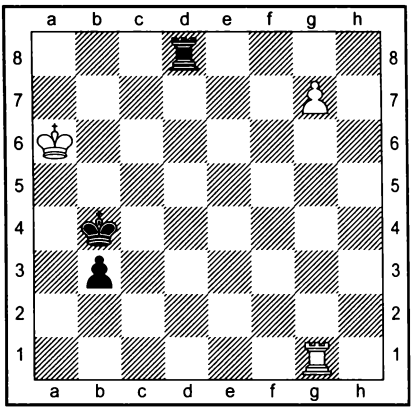


We have seriously studied only 9...a4, but there is also another idea: **9...b4+! 10 ♔a4 ♖d5!**. The threat is 11...♖d3. There is no point in returning with the king: 11 ♔b3 ♔b5 (with the threat of 12...♖d2), and White loses. In the event of 11 ♖c1+ ♔b6 12 ♖f1 ♖d3 13 ♖f6+ ♔c5 14 ♖f5+ ♔c4 15 ♔xa5 (15 ♖f4+ ♖d4 and 16...♖xg4) 15...b3 Black wins, since his passed pawn advances more quickly than the opponent's, and also it is supported by the king.

Let us verify **11 ♔xa5 ♖d3 12 ♔a6** (otherwise mate; 12 ♖c1+ ♖c3 is bad for White) **12...b3 13 g5**.

(see diagram)





The direct 13...b2? (with the idea of 14...♖a3+ and 15...♖a1) leads only to a draw in view of 14 ♖b1 ♖a3+ (14...♖d2 15 g6) 15 ♔b7 ♖b3+ 16 ♔c7 ♔b4 17 ♔d7! ♔a3 18 ♔e6(e7), and the white king, paradoxically, succeeds in uniting with its pawn.

13...♔b4? is hopeless: 14 g6 b2 15 g7 ♖d8 16 g8♕ ♖xg8 17 ♖xg8, and if 17...b1♕? 18 ♖b8+. After 13...♔c4? both 14 g6 b2 15 g7 ♖d8 16 ♖g4+ and 14 ♔a5 b2 15 g6 ♔c3 16 ♔a4 are possible [*this last move is a mistake in view of 16...♖d8 17 g7 ♖a8+ 18 ♔b5 ♖g8; a draw is given by 16 g7 ♖d8 17 ♖g3+ ♔c4 18 ♖g4+ ♔c5 19 ♖g5+ ♔c6 20 ♖g6+ ♔c7 21 ♖g1* – Dvoretsky.]

However, Black finds a subtle solution: **13...♖d7!! 14 g6 ♖g7**. In this way the mobility of the white king is restricted – now it can neither approach the b-pawn, nor move to the kingside. After **15 ♖g5+ ♔b4 16 ♔b6** (16 ♖g4+ ♔a3 17 ♔b5 b2) **16...b2 17 ♖b5+ ♔c3 18 ♖c5+** (in the hope of driving the king to b1 and returning to g5) Black replies **18...♔d4! 19 ♖b5 ♖xg6+** and wins.

[*In fact this way to win from the last diagram is not the only one: in all the alternative variations Black's play can be improved.*

A) 13...♔b4? 14 g6 ♖d8! (instead of 14...b2) 15 g7

(see diagram)

In the event of 15...♖g8 White saves himself by continuing 16 ♖g4+ (or 16 ♖g2) 16...♔a3 17 ♖g3 ♔a2 18 ♖g5! b2 19 ♖a5+ ♔b3 (19...♔b1 20 ♖g5) 20 ♖b5+ ♔c3 21 ♖c5+ ♔d4 22 ♖b5. If instead 15...♖a8+, then 16 ♔b7 (or 16 ♔b6 b2 17 ♔c6) 16...♖g8 17 ♔c6 b2 18 ♔d5 (a very important tempo; Black cannot reply 18...♖xg7) 18...♔c3 (threatening 19...♖xg7) 19 ♖g3+ ♔c2 20 ♖g2+ ♔b3 21 ♖g1! ♔a2 22 ♔e6, and the king succeeds in joining up with the g7-pawn.

B) 13...♔c4 14 g6 (in the event of 14 ♔a5 b2 15 g6 the simplest win is by 15...♖a3+!, but 15...♖g3 16 ♖xg3 b1♕ is also possible – in view of the unfortunate position of the white king) 14...♖d8! 15 g7 ♖a8+! (we already know how a draw is gained after 15...♖g8?) 16 ♔b7 (16 ♔b6 b2 is no better) 16...♖g8 17 ♔c6 b2 18 ♔d6 ♖xg7! (with the king on b4 this move would not be possible), and Black wins.

C) 13...b2 14 ♖b1 ♖d2! 15 g6 ♖g2 16 g7 ♖g6+!, and on the next move Black will capture on g7 either with check, or with a threat of mate – Dvoretsky.]

Thus our initial conclusion has been reversed: the plan of moving to the help of our pawns proves to be stronger than the march of the king to the g4-pawn.

Mark Dvoretsky

Adventures on Adjournment Day

It is said that winner of the first prize is always lucky. From the examples demonstrated below, you will see that in the USSR Cup (the club team championship of the country) in 1976 in Tbilisi our Burevestnik team was indeed lucky. But when you have by no means the most impressive line-up, competitive good fortune alone is not enough to win by an enormous margin (before the last round we were already 7½ points ahead of our nearest rivals). Our success was largely secured by the friendly atmosphere reigning in our team, the benevolence and mutual help. An important role was also played by our superiority in the analysis of adjourned positions (although from the examples given below you would probably not say this) – when they were resumed the results of a good dozen games came as a pleasant surprise to us.

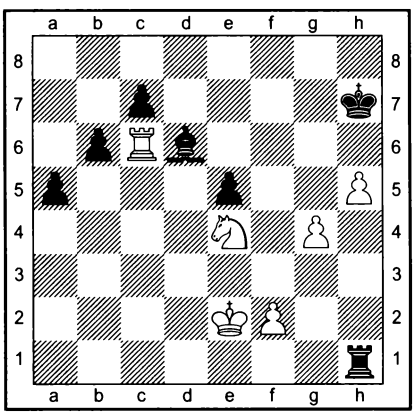
On the evening before the adjournment day our leader Vasily Smyslov adjourned his game against Mikhail Tal in what was a dangerous position for him. At a team meeting he said that the following day he would need help with the analysis.

'Of course, of course, let's look at the position together,' grandmaster Taimanov offered his services.

'Thank you, Mark Evgenevich, but I would like to work with Mark Izrailevich,' Smyslov replied.

Of course, it is flattering to have the reputation of being a good analyst, although at times it is slightly onerous – after all, my game was also adjourned. But the following morning Smyslov and I sat down to look at his position. After three hours of exceptionally intensive work my head was literally splitting, but on the other hand it appeared that we had found a way to save the game.

Tal – Smyslov
Tbilisi 1976



Of course, it is unfavourable to play 42 g5? ♖xh5 43 ♘f6+ ♔g6, and therefore Tal's sealed move was obvious.

42 ♘xd6 **cxd6**

Now the capture of the b6-pawn allows Black to activate his king: 43 ♖xb6 ♔h6! 44 ♖xd6+ (44 f4!? exf4 45 ♖xd6+ also does not win) 44...♔g5 45 f3 e4! with counterplay sufficient for a draw, for example: 46 ♖g6+ ♔f4 47 fxe4 a4.

White must play more sharply.

43 ♖xd6!

We have a choice between 43...b5 44 ♖a6 a4 and 43...♖b1. In both cases the opponent sends his king forward. The queenside

pawns do not advance very quickly – during this time danger impends over the black king. The following variation is an instructive one, illustrating the typical ideas in the position and the difficulties facing Black.

43...♖b1 44 ♔f3! (44 g5? ♖g1 is premature) 44...a4 (44...♖b4? 45 ♔g3 and 46 g5) 45 ♔e4 a3 46 ♖d7+ ♔h6 (46...♔g8 47 ♖a7 ♖b3 48 ♔f5 or 48 g5 is completely bad for Black) 47 ♔f5! (threatening 48 g5+ ♔xh5 49 ♖h7 mate) 47...♖g1 48 ♖a7 ♖g2 49 f4! exf4 50 ♖xa3 ♖g3 51 ♖a1! f3 (not 51...♖c3 52 g5+) 52 ♔f4 ♖g2 (52...♖h3 53 ♖b1 f2 54 ♖xb6+ ♔h7 55 ♖b1 ♖b3 56 ♖f1 ♔h6 57 ♖xf2 also does not help) 53 ♔xf3 ♖c2 54 ♖b1, and Black is short of the one tempo which would enable him to block the pawns securely and set up a familiar drawn position with king on g5 and rook on c5.

Even in such sharp endings, where everything can depend on a single tempo, sometimes it is not worth immediately delving into the mass of variations. You should first logically weigh up the situation and look for a plan, a general idea, which should be carried out. What, do you think, is this idea?

It turns out that Black should switch his rook to the 8th rank. Firstly, from here it covers the king – to checkmate it the opponent will have to bring forward his king and both pawns, and this demands time. Secondly, it may be possible to place the rook behind its own pawn and advance it, while giving up the other.

So, the general plan has been found. It is merely necessary to find the most accurate way of implementing it.

43 . . . b5

As Tal commented after the game, 43...♖b1 was nevertheless possible, but only in connection with the plan indicated above: after 44 ♔f3 a4 45 ♔e4 Black should play 45...♖b4+! 46 ♔f5 ♖f4+ 47 ♔g5 ♖f8.

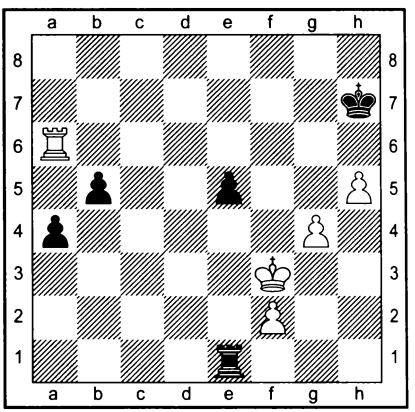
44 ♖a6 a4

45 ♔e3

We considered 45 ♔f3 to be more accurate. Tal was concerned about the reply 45...a3, but in this case Black loses: 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 of 50 ♖h7+ or 50 g7 ♔h7 51 h6 and 52 ♖a8. Therefore Smyslov would have played as in the main variation of the analysis – 45...♖c1!. But after the move in the game Black acquires an additional possibility.

45 . . . ♖e1+

46 ♔f3



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 did not see how White could win. But on the other hand the main plan of defence also seemed sufficient for a draw, so that it was not easy for Smyslov to make a choice. He realised perfectly well that, in view of the lack of time for analysis, in any branch a mistake could creep in. The only question was, where was this more probable?

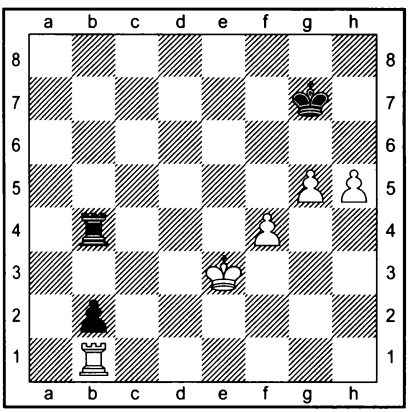
47 ♔e4 ♖c4+?!

This was how we intended to switch the rook to the 8th rank. True, in this way the position of the white king is improved, although the e5-pawn remains invulnerable. We rejected 47...♖c8!, because we considered that Black was lost in the position arising after 48 ♔xe5 ♖b8 49 g5 b4 50 ♖a7+ ♔g8 51 ♖xa4 b3 52 ♖a1 b2 53 ♖b1.

Not long before the resumption Vasily Vasilievich came up to me.

'You know,' he said, 'it would appear that White's three pawns do not win.'

'That can't be so!' I said in surprise, and I tried to refute his conclusion, but without success. Here is the key position.



1...♖b3+ 2 ♔d4 (2 ♔d2 ♖b4 3 f5 ♖b5) 2...♖b4+ 3 ♔c3 ♖xf4 4 ♖xb2 ♖h4! with a draw.

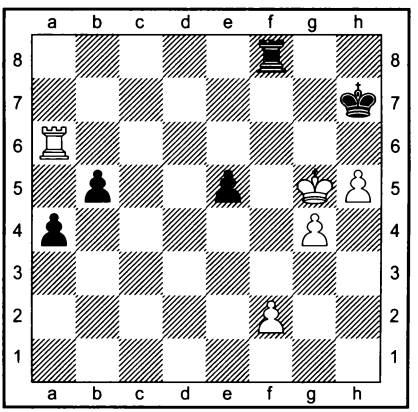
The discovery made by Smyslov is instructive and pretty, and I think that it is of considerable importance for the theory of rook endings. But we no longer had time to verify it thoroughly.

[Many years later grandmaster Carsten Müller nevertheless found a winning plan for White. He suggested 2 ♔e4 ♖b4+ 3 ♔f5 ♖b5+ 4 ♔e6 (4 ♔g4 ♖b4 is hopeless) 4...♖b6+ 5 ♔d5 ♖b5+ 6 ♔c6 ♖b4 7 f5 ♖g4 8 h6+ ♔h7 9 ♖xb2 ♖xg5 10 ♖f2 etc. If Black waits: 7...♖b8 8 h6+ ♔h7, the most accurate is 9 ♔d5! (but not 9 ♔c5? ♖g8!) 9...♖b4 10 ♔e5 (because of zugzwang Black is forced to allow the king into the lower half of the board) 10...♖b5+ 11 ♔f4 ♖b4+ 12 ♔g3 ♖b5 13 ♔g4 ♖b3 14 ♔h4 with a decisive zugzwang.]

To the grandmaster's question, which plan of defence it would be better to choose, in reply I merely shrugged my shoulders. Without waiting for advice, he said that he would think about it once more at the board. And he made his choice in favour of the main variation, which we had planned from the very start. Alas, it was here that a mistake had crept in.

48 ♔f5 **♖f4+**

49 ♔g5 **♖f8**



50 h6!

Here it all became clear to Smyslov. In our analysis we had somewhere given a check on a7, after which there is no win. In sharp endings such as this, every tempo is precious – White leaves the king on h7, in order to advance his pawn to g6 with check.

50 . . . **b4**

51 ♖xa4?

An unexpected amnesty at the very last moment. White could have won by 51 ♔h5! b3 52 g5 ♖b8 53 g6+ ♔h8 54 h7 ♔g7 (54...b2 55 ♔h6) 55 ♖a7+ ♔f6 56 g7.

51 . . . **♖b8**

52 ♖a7+

It is now pointless to play 52 ♔h5 b3 53 g5 b2 54 g6+ ♔h8!.

52 . . . **♔h8**

53 ♖a2 **b3**

54 ♖b2 **e4**

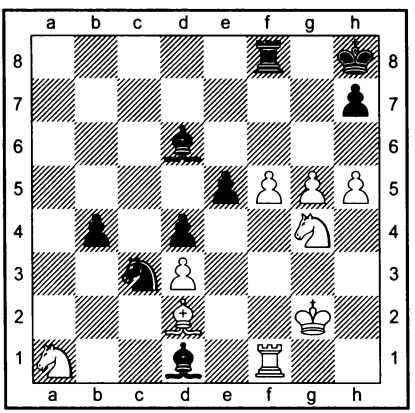
55 ♔f4 **♔h7**

Draw.

That same day I too resumed by game (also a sharp endgame with passed pawns for both sides). It was adjourned before Smyslov's game, and so I had managed to look at it, although, obviously, I no longer had time to check the variations.

V. Kozlov – Dvoretsky

Tbilisi 1976



Analysis showed that, amazingly enough, the position was a forced draw.

41 ♖xd1!

The sealed move.

41 . . . **♘xd1**

42 f6 **♖a8**

After 42...♘e3+ 43 ♗xe3 dxe3 44 ♔f3 ♖a8 45 ♘b3 ♖a3 46 ♘c1 b3 47 ♘xb3 ♖xb3 48 g6 ♗f8 49 ♘xe5 Black is unable to convert his extra rook.

43 ♘b3

If 43 g6 I was intending 43...hxg5 44 hxg6 ♖xa1 45 ♗h6 ♖a7! 46 f7 ♖xf7 47 gxf7 b3. It later transpired that after 48 ♘xe5 b2 49 ♘c4! b1♕ 50 ♘xd6 White does not lose, for example, 50...♕a2+ 51 ♔g3 (51 ♔h3? ♕e6+ and 52...♕xh6) 51...♕f2+ 52 ♔h3 (52 ♔g4? ♘e3+) 52...♕f3+ 53 ♔h4 ♕f6+ 54 ♔h5. Apart from 45 ♗h6, also possible is 45 ♘h6 ♖a7 46 g7+ ♖xg7 47 fxg7+ ♔xg7 48 ♘f5+ ♔g6 (48...♔f6 49 ♘xd6 b3 50 ♘e4+ ♔f5 51 ♗b4 b2 52 ♘d2) 49 ♘xd6 b3 50 ♘c4 b2 51 ♘xb2 ♘xb2 52 ♔f3 ♘xd3 53 ♔e4 or 52...♔f5 53 ♔e2.

43 . . . **♖a3**

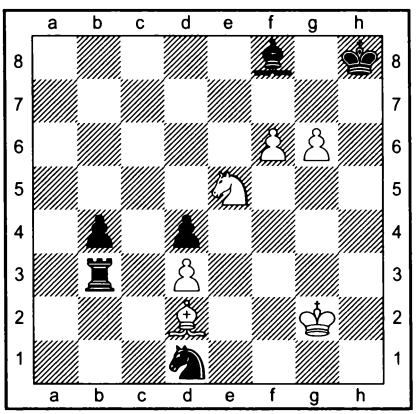
44 g6 **hxg6**

45 hxg6 **♗f8**

46 ♘xe5!

The simplest way to draw. 46 ♘c1 b3 47 ♘xb3 ♖xb3 48 ♗h6 ♘e3+ 49 ♗xe3 dxe3 50 ♔f3 was also possible. I merely wanted to check whether my opponent might mix up the move order by choosing 46 ♗h6?. In this case after 46...♘e3+ 47 ♗xe3 (47 ♘xe3 ♗xh6 48 ♘f5 ♗f8 49 g7+ ♗xg7 50 fxg7+ ♔h7 51 ♘c5 b3) 47...dxe3 48 ♘c1 Black does not play 48...b3?, but 48...♖c3!.

46 . . . **♖xb3**



47 ♘f7+

I was expecting 47 ♗h6 ♖b2+ 48 ♔h3 (after 48 ♔g3 there is the unpleasant reply 48...♗d6!, and if 49 ♘g4, then 49...♖g2+! 50 ♔xg2 ♗xf4) 48...♖f2 49 ♗xf8 ♖xf6 50 ♗xb4 with a drawn endgame. In my analysis the move made by White in the game was not even made on the board, since I thought that after 47...♔g8 48 ♘h6+ the exchange on h6 followed by playing the rook to f2 would retain Black's extra pawn. And when my opponent nevertheless went in for this variation, I instantly (a typical mistake!) made the moves that I had planned beforehand.

You always have to reckon with the possibility of 'holes' in your preparatory analysis – after all, not all its details will have been worked out with identical thoroughness. Perhaps there was no point in again checking all the previously prepared variations, but at least I should have taken a fresh look at the position, to avoid any bad oversight.

47 . . .	**♔g8**
48 ♘h6+	**♗xh6??**

48...♔h8 was essential, with a draw. The move in the game should have lost after the interposition of 49 f7+!.

49 ♗xh6??	**♖b2+**
50 ♔g3	**♖f2**

Now it is Black who wins.

51 f7+	**♖xf7**
52 gxf7+	**♔xf7**
53 ♗c1	**♔e6!**
54 ♔f3	**♘c3!**
55 ♔f2	**b3**

White resigned.

As you can see, tournament fortune was indeed on our side!

Artur Yusupov

Solo for a Knight

or what one horse power is capable of

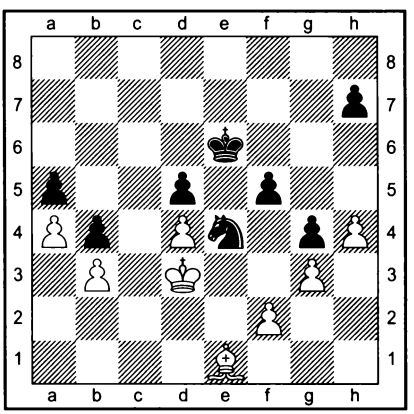
There are many horses trained to help their riders so as to run upon any one that appears with a drawn sword...

Michel Montaigne

At the end of the 16th century the French philosopher was probably taken on trust. I, on my own experience, have been fortunate enough to satisfy myself of the unusual capabilities of a knight.

Gheorghiu – Yusupov

Luzern 1985



The Romanian player went in for this position, erroneously assuming that he would be able to construct an impregnable fortress.

45 . . . f4!

46 ♔e2

If 46 gxf4, then 46...♘d6! 47 f3 (or 47 ♗d2 ♘f5 48 h5 ♔f6 49 ♗e1 ♔g7) 47...gxf3 48 ♔e3 ♘f5+ 49 ♔xf3 ♘xd4+ 50 ♔g4 ♘xb3, and Black wins.

46 . . . ♘d6!

As Florian Gheorghiu informed me after the game, he overlooked this knight move in his adjournment analysis. 46...♔f5 would not have given anything because of 47 ♔d3, while if 46...♘f6 there would have followed 47 f3!.

47 ♔d3

Black's task would have been more complicated after 47 f3. It would appear that 47...gxf3+ 48 ♔xf3 ♘f5 49 ♔xf4 ♘xd4 throws away the win, since White activates his bishop: 50 ♗f2 ♘xb3 51 ♗b6 ♘d2 52 ♗xa5 b3 53 ♗c3 ♘c4 54 g4 b2 55 ♗xb2 ♘xb2 56 a5, or 51...♘c1 52 ♔e3! ♘a2 53 ♗xa5 b3 54 ♔d2 h5 55 ♗c3!. Interesting play results if instead of 54...h5 Black plays 54...d4!? 55 g4 ♔d5. In reply 56 ♔d3!? ♘c1+ 57 ♔d2 comes into consideration, but White can also go in for a sharp variation suggested later by Mark Dvoretsky: 56 g5 ♔e4 57 h5 d3 58 ♗c3! ♘xc3 59 ♔xc3 ♔e3 60 g6 d2 61 g7 d1♕ 62 g8♕ ♕c2+ 63 ♔b4 b2 64 ♕g3+, and the king will hardly be able to avoid perpetual check.

The correct continuation is 47...♘f5! 48 fxg4 ♘xd4+ 49 ♔d3 ♘f3 50 ♗f2 ♘e5+ 51 ♔e2 (if 51 ♔d2 there follows 51...♘xg4 52 ♗b6 fxg3) 51...f3+ 52 ♔f1 (similar variations occur 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

Now White is in zugzwang, and he himself is forced to break up his fortress.

48 h5

48 ♗d2 would also not have saved White in view of 48...fxg3 49 fxg3 ♘xg3 50 ♗f4 ♘f5! 51 ♗c7 g3.

48 . . . fxg3
49 fxg3 ♔f6
50 h6

White's last hope is the vulnerable placing of the black pawns on the queenside. Thus the careless 50...♘xh6?? is answered by 51 ♗xb4!.

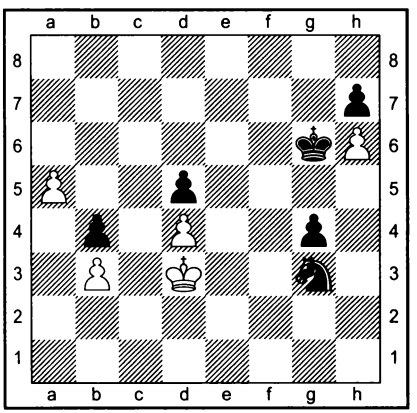
50 . . . ♔g6!

Not so convincing is 50...♔e6 51 ♗f2 ♘xh6 52 ♗e3 with chances of a draw. When he made this move, Black had to calculate the variation which occurred in the game.

51 ♗d2 ♘xg3
52 ♗xb4 axb4

52...♘e4? 53 ♗xa5 g3 54 ♗c7.

53 a5



In the race to queen, the white a-pawn has a head start: it requires just three more moves, whereas the black knight can reach the a8-square only in four moves. Disappointment 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 unusual feats...

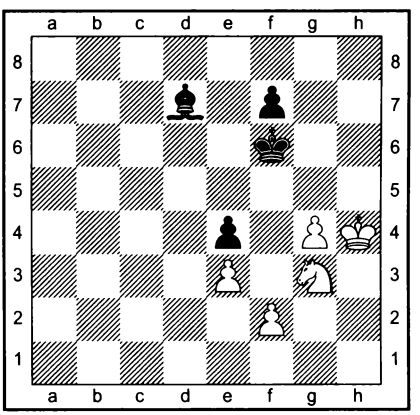
53 . . . ♘h5!!
54 ♔e3

54 a6 ♘f4+ 55 ♔e3 ♘e6 56 a7 ♘c7 and wins.

54 . . . ♘f6
55 ♔f4 ♔xh6
56 a6 ♘d7
57 a7 ♘b6
58 ♔xg4 ♔g6
59 ♔f4 ♔f6
60 ♔g4 ♘a8

White resigned.

Yusupov – Li Zunian
Luzern 1985



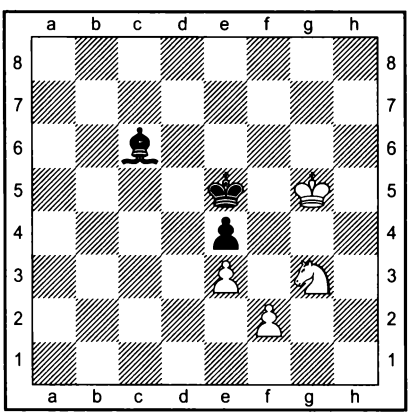
In this position the game was adjourned for the second time. Although during the first adjournment session I managed to win a pawn thanks to the enthusiasm of the white knight, which accomplished an heroic raid in the enemy rear – ♘g4–f6–g8xh6–g8–e7–

c6–d4–e2–g3 – a draw still seemed to me to be the most probable outcome. After a brief analysis it transpired that apart from the exchange of the g-pawn there was no other realistic plan of playing for a win. After this White is left with a single target – the e4-pawn. The impression was that Black could fairly easily solve the problem of its defence. However, serious work on the position inspired hope, and I began to realise that the last white piece, standing modestly at g3, was truly a 'Montaignian' knight.

59 . . . **♔e5**
60 ♔h5 **f6**
61 g5 **fxg5**
62 ♔xg5

Black is at the crossroads, since the bishop can defend the pawn from various sides. For a long time the plan chosen by the Chinese player also seemed the strongest to me.

62 . . . **♗c6**



Black keeps his bishop on the b7–a8 squares, and when his king is evicted from e5 it aims for d3.

63 ♘f5 **♗a8**

Of course, not 63...♔d5 because of 64 ♘e7+.

64 ♘e7!

White must prevent the passage of the black king to d3. For example, 64 ♘h6? leads to a draw after 64...♔d5 65 ♔f4 ♔c4 66 ♘f5 ♔d3.

64 . . . **♔d6**

The more accurate 64...♗b7 will be analysed later.

65 ♘g6 **♔d5**
66 ♔f4

White's plan takes shape. The winning idea is to occupy the key e5-square with the knight. From there it not only covers the d3- and c4-squares, but also aims for d7 or f7.

66 . . . **♔c5**

In the event of the natural 66...♔c4 White would have won by 67 ♘e5+! ♔c3 68 ♘d7!. The threat is 69 ♘c5, after 68...♔c4 there is the fork 69 ♘b6+, while if 68...♔b4, then simply 69 ♘f6.

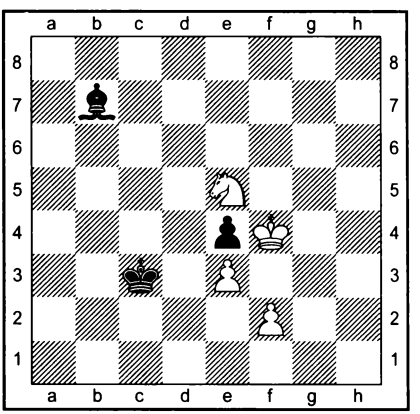
67 ♘e5! **♗b7**

Or 67...♔b4 68 ♘d7, and Black loses.

68 ♘f7!

Since there is no satisfactory defence against the threat of 69 ♘g5 (if 68...♔c4 69 ♘d6+), Black resigned.

Let us return to the position after 64 ♘e7. Instead of 64...♔d6 Black had the more cunning 64...♗b7. If now 65 ♘g6+ ♔d5 66 ♔f4, then 66...♔c4 67 ♘e5+ ♔c3.



This is a position of mutual zugzwang. With Black to move he would be lost: 68...♔d2 69

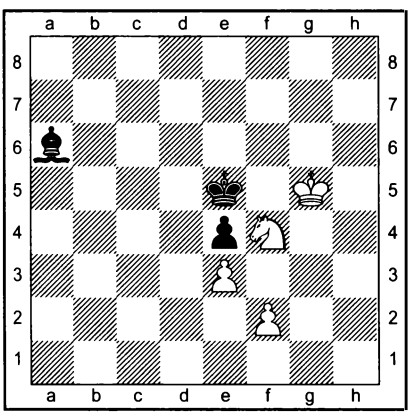
♘d7, 68...♗a8 69 ♘d7 ♔c4 70 ♘b6+, or 68...♔b4 69 ♘f7 ♔c3 70 ♘d6. But it is White to move and he is unable to win: 68 ♘f7 ♔d3, or 68 ♘d7 ♔c4 69 ♔e5 ♗c6.

The natural 66 ♔f4? was a mistake; White can win by 66 ♔f5!! ♔c4 (66...♗c8+ 67 ♔f4 ♗b7 68 ♘e5 ♗a8 69 ♘d7, and Black has no defence) 67 ♘e5+ ♔c3 68 ♔f4, and the situation analysed by us is reached, but with Black to move.

It remains to clarify what would have happened if Black had carried out his plan more accurately, i.e. obtained the position in the last but one diagram with his bishop on a8 (with the bishop on b7 White wins by 1 ♘f5, and if 1...♔d5, then 2 ♔f4 with the irresistible threat of 3 ♘g3). In this case 1 ♘f1! leads to a win. After 1...♔d5 there follows 2 ♘d2 ♔e5 (3 ♔f4 was threatened) 3 ♘c4+ ♔e6 (3...♔d5 4 ♘b6+) 4 ♔f4 and 5 ♘d2, while if 1...♗b7 – 2 ♘h2 ♔d5 3 ♘g4 ♔c4 4 ♘e5+ ♔c3 5 ♔f4, and again a familiar position is reached (cf. the last diagram).

Thus the system of defence with the bishop on b7–a8 runs into a far from obvious refutation.

Black could have stuck to another line of defence with his bishop on g2–h1. We will examine the following important positions.



Here White wins irrespective of the turn to move.

1 ♘g6+ ♔d5 2 ♔f4 ♗f1

If 2...♗e2, then 3 ♘f8! ♗f3 4 ♘h7 ♔c4 (♘f6+ was threatened) 5 ♘g5.

3 ♘e7+ ♔e6

3...♔d6 loses immediately in view of 4 ♘g8! ♗g2 5 ♘f6.

4 ♘c8!!

This at first sight ridiculous move becomes understandable, if the goal of the knight's unusual route is noticed – 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;

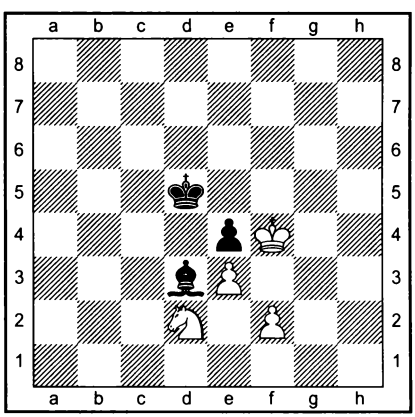
c) 4...♗b5 5 ♔xe4 ♔d7 6 ♘b6+ ♔c6 7 ♘d5;

d) 4...♔d5 5 ♘b6+ ♔c5 6 ♘e7+ ♔d6 7 ♘f6.

5 ♘b6 ♗c2 (otherwise ♘b6–a4–c3) **6 ♘c4**

Although White has not in fact managed to transfer his knight to c3, his achievements are very considerable: the black bishop has been forced onto the b1–h7 diagonal, where it is less well placed.

6...♔d5 7 ♘d2 ♗d3



8 ♔f5

Black is in zugzwang and is forced to allow the knight to go to f1 (8...♗e2 9 ♘xe4 ♗d3 10 f3).

8...♗c2 9 ♘f1 ♗d1

Or 9...♔c4 10 ♘g3 ♔d5 11 ♘h5 and wins.

10 ♘h2 ♗c2 11 ♘g4 ♔c4 12 ♘f6 ♔d3 13 ♘xe4 ♔e2 14 ♔f4, and White wins.

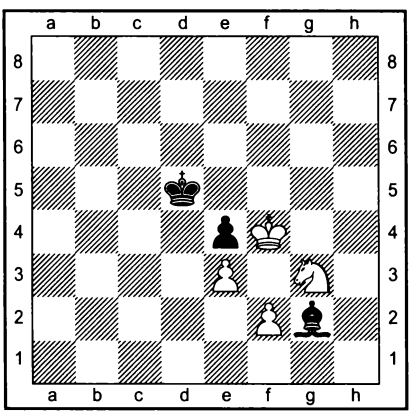
Here I should make a slight digression and refer the reader to the start of this interesting endgame, where the author praises the 'enthusiasm of the white knight'. In order to eliminate the last bulwark of Black's defence – the e4-pawn, the white knight had to complete a veritable round-the-world journey (f4–g6–e7–c8–b6–c4–d2–f1–h2–g4–f6–e4).

In the position from the last but one diagram it could have been 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 bishop for knight.

5 ♘f5 ♗g2 6 ♘g3



A very important position of mutual zugzwang. If it is Black to move he is forced to occupy the f3-square with his bishop, allowing the knight to go to f1.

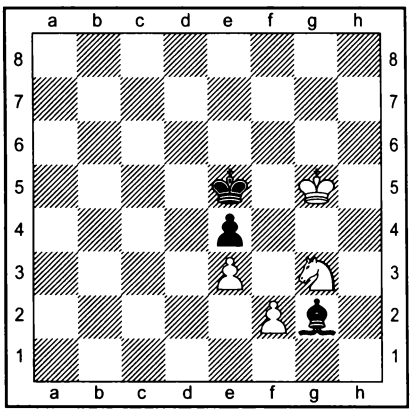
6...♗f3 7 ♘f1 ♗d1

7...♗g2 is bad because of 8 ♘d2! ♗h1 9 ♔g3.

8 ♘h2 ♗c2 9 ♔f5

If 9 ♘g4, then 9...♔e6.

9...♔c4 10 ♘f1! ♔d5 (10...♔d3 11 ♘g3) **11 ♘g3** followed by ♘h5, transposing into a winning position which is already familiar to us.



Although the bishop is at g2, all the same White is able to win.

1 ♘f5!

Nothing is given 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, similar to the main variation. 1...♗h1 2 ♘h4! is bad for Black.

2 ♘h4! ♗f1 3 ♔f5! ♗e2 4 ♘g6 ♗f3 5 ♔f4 ♗g2

Black also loses after 5...♗e2 6 ♘e7+ ♔e6 7 ♘f5 ♔d5 8 ♘g3 ♗f3 (the position of mutual zugzwang from the last but one diagram has been reached) 9 ♘f1 etc.

6 ♘h4 ♗f1 7 ♘f5 ♗g2 8 ♘g3

Again a familiar mutual zugzwang position. White wins.

It is more difficult to win when Black moves first:

1...♗h3! (preventing the important manoeuvre ♘g3–f5–h4) **2 ♔h4!** (White tries to give

his opponent the move) **2...♗c8**

Or 2...♗g2 3 ♔g4 ♗f3+ 4 ♔g5 ♗g2, reaching the position from the last diagram with White to move.

3 ♔h5! ♗d7

If 3...♗h3, then 4 ♔g5, and White has succeeded in giving his opponent the move. 4...♗c8 5 ♘h5 ♗h3 6 ♘f4 followed by ♘g6+ and ♔f4 transposes into variations analysed earlier.

4 ♔g6! ♗g4

Or 4...♗c8 5 ♘h5 ♔d5 6 ♘f6+.

5 ♘h5 ♗f3

If 5...♗h3, then 6 ♘f4 is possible.

6 ♘f4 ♗h1 7 ♔g5 ♗f3

This position has already occurred in the notes. I will 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.

With this the author concludes his analysis of this interesting endgame. I will be very indebted to readers for any corrections, refinements or refutations.

Mark Dvoretsky

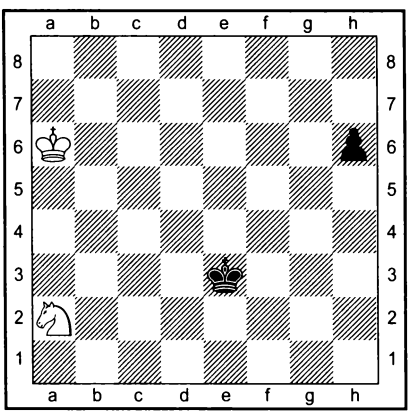
More about the 'Montaignian' Knight

When I saw the analyses by Artur Yusupov in the previous chapter I was reminded of several studies on the same theme, which in their time made a strong impression on me. I hope that they will also appeal to you. Their beauty lies in the unusual amount of work carried out by the white knight, the paradoxical manoeuvres of the white pieces, and above all the precision and depth of logic behind these manoeuvres.

Before enjoying the solutions, try to find the answers yourself. I should warn you beforehand: the problems are very difficult, and you will most probably have to move the pieces on the board (perhaps only the second example might be solved in your head). But even so, don't be in a hurry to make moves – first reason to yourself about the final and intermediate aims of both sides, the plans they will carry out, any important intermediate positions, and so on.

N. Grigoriev

1932



A knight can stop a rook's pawn, if it succeeds in 'touching' any square in its path (apart from the corner square h1). In the given instance it is clear that the knight will aim for the h2-square. How to reach it – seeing as the black king stands in its way?

Here are some logical considerations, which will make it easier to find the solution. The knight can reach h2 via g4 or f1. Each of these routes can be controlled separately by the black king. It is necessary to create a 'double attack' – by threatening to go to h2 by both ways. The knight can reach f1 via d2, and g4 via e5. Do you see the intersection point of these two routes?

1 ♘b4! **h5**

2 ♘c6!

Not 2 ♘d5+? ♔f3!, and the pawn cannot be stopped. ***Note that a king restricts a knight most effectively when there is one square between them along a diagonal, or two squares between them along a rank or a file.***

2 . . . **♔e4!**

Of course, not 2...h4? 3 ♘e5, when the g4-square can be covered only by 3...♔f4, but then there follows 4 ♘g6+.

3 ♘a5!!

Only in this way can the knight reach the key c4-square, from where it can aim for both f1, and g4. 3 ♘d8? would have lost after 3...h4 4 ♘e6 ♔f5! 5 ♘d4+ ♔g4.

3 . . . **h4**

4 ♘c4!

4 ♘b3? ♔e3.

4 . . . **♔f3!?**

The last trap. 4...h3 5 ♘d2+ and 6 ♘f1 leads to an immediate draw.

5 ♘e5+!

5 ♘d2+? (hoping for 5...♔g2? 6 ♘c4! h3 7 ♘e3+) is a mistake because of 5...♔e2! 6 ♘e4 h3 7 ♘g3+ ♔f2, and Black wins. In this variation he is able to deflect the knight from its route to h2, and, as you can see, 'touching' the h1-square with the knight does not help White.

5 . . . ♔g3

Forced: the g4-square must be guarded, but if 5...♔f4, then 6 ♘g6+.

6 ♘c4! h3

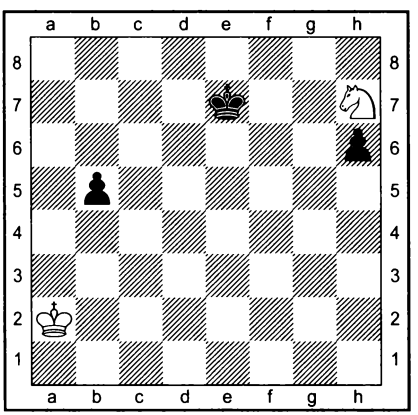
7 ♘e3!

White has achieved his aim: If 7...h2 8 ♘f1+, while after 7...♔f3 there follows 8 ♘f1 ♔f2 9 ♘h2 ♔g2 10 ♘g4 ♔g3 11 ♘e3 etc.

In conclusion I should mention that 2 ♘c2+? (instead of 2 ♘c6+!) would be justified after 2...♔e4? 3 ♘a3! ♔d3 (3...h4 4 ♘c4) 4 ♔b5! and ♘c4, but 2...♔f2! leads to a win.

D. Gurgenidze

1970



This study is an artistic adaptation of a position by Nikolai Dmitrievich Grigoriev.

The threat of winning the knight is easily parried by approaching the b5-pawn with the king: 1 ♔b3(a3) ♔f7 2 ♔b4 ♔g7 3 ♔xb5 ♔xh7 4 ♔c4, and the king enters the square of the h-pawn. What, then, is the problem?

It turns out that Black can save a very important tempo by avoiding the attack on the knight and satisfying himself with merely restricting its mobility: 1...♔e6! 2 ♔b4 ♔f5 3 ♔xb5 h5, and the pawn queens. This means that in reply to 1...♔e6 White must immediately tackle the h-pawn with his knight.

In a practical game without much hesitation many players would play 1 ♔b3 ♔e6 2 ♘f8+ ♔f5 3 ♘d7 h5, and only now think about where next to direct the knight. The paradoxical feature of the position is that here such a generally-accepted way of acting does not work – it is necessary to think earlier!

1 ♔a3!! ♔e6!

2 ♘f8+! ♔f5

3 ♘d7 h5

4 ♘c5 h4

5 ♘b3!!

This is why it is important to calculate all the variations as early as the first move – the b3-square must be left free for the white knight. 5 ♘d3? would have lost after 5...h3 6 ♘f2 h2 7 ♔b4 ♔f4 8 ♔xb5 ♔f3.

5 . . . h3

6 ♘d2 h2

6...♔f4 7 ♘f1 leads to a familiar drawn position.

7 ♘f1 h1♕

8 ♘g3+

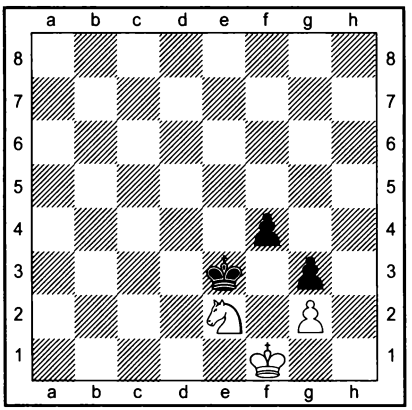
(see diagram)

1 ♘g1

In contrast to the previous position, here the first move can be made without thinking. But what next – how to drive away the enemy king? For a start we at least need some idea. Let's see where the knight should aim for, in order to create difficulties for the opponent.

R. Réti, A. Mandler

1924



We find the square c2. From here the knight takes away the important e3-square, and it is itself invulnerable in view of the reply ♔e2. The black king has to be at d2 or d1. But with the king on d1 White has the decisive ♘b4! followed by ♘d5. It is clear that here we begin to have mutual zugzwang positions.

Black has to play accurately from the very start. 1...♔d3? is bad in view of 2 ♘f3 ♔e3 3 ♘e1! ♔d2 4 ♘c2! ♔d1 (4...♔d3 5 ♔e1! ♔xc2 6 ♔e2) 5 ♘b4! ♔d2 6 ♘d5.

1 . . .	**♔d2!**
2 ♘f3+	**♔d3!**

Now it is pointless playing 3 ♘e1+ ♔e3! 4 ♘c2+ ♔d2 5 ♘b4 ♔e3 6 ♘d5+ ♔e4 7 ♘f6+ ♔e3. To win, the opponent must be given the move. But how can this be achieved?

3 ♔e1!	**♔e3**
4 ♘e5	**♔e4**

In the event of 4...♔d4 White wins by 5 ♘g4! ♔d3 6 ♔d1, breaking forward with the king, since 6...f3 fails to 7 ♘e5+.

5 ♘c4!	**♔d3**

5...f3 6 ♘d2+, or 5...♔d4 6 ♔e2!.

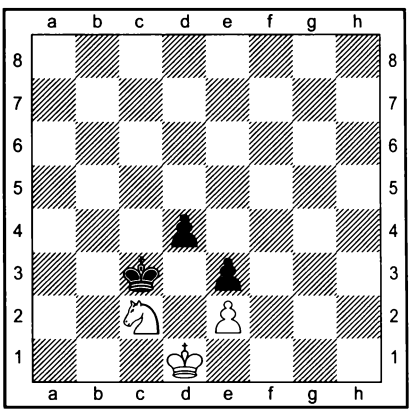
6 ♘d2	**♔e3**
7 ♘f3	**♔d3**
8 ♔f1!	

The knight's circular journey has enabled White to achieve his aim – he has given the opponent the move. The rest is already familiar to us.

8 . . .	**♔e3**
9 ♘e1	**♔d2**
10 ♘c2!	**♔d1**
11 ♘b4!	**♔d2**
12 ♘d5	

R. Réti, A. Mandler

1924



Here White's task is even more difficult than in the previous study. The winning plan suggested there (which in itself was not at all obvious) does not work here: the left edge of the board interferes. After all, the knight has no square equivalent to the important b4-square in the previous example.

True, a new possibility has appeared – the activation of the king along the route d1–e1–f1–g2–f3. It is obvious that White has no other winning plan. Black will try to prevent it by attaching his king to the e2-pawn from d2 or d1. It is easy to imagine that here too mutual zugzwang positions cannot be avoided. Let's try to work things out!

Let's suppose that White's knight is on d3, his king on f1, and the black king on c2.

Then Black loses after 1...♔d2? 2 ♘f4 (2 ♘e5 ♔d1 3 ♘f3 is also good) 2...♔d1 3 ♔g2. He must play 1...♔d1! 2 ♘f4 (2 ♘e5 ♔d2 3 ♘f3+ ♔c3) 2...♔d2!, and if 3 ♔g2, then 3...d3! with a draw.

From this the following conclusions can be drawn: if White plays ♔e1, then with the knight on d3 Black must reply ...♔c2!, while with the knight on f4, e5 or c5 the correct reply is ...♔c3!. The position with the knight on c5, black king on c3 and white king on e1 is one of mutual zugzwang.

The following step in our logical analysis of the position is to clarify the importance of the e4-square for the knight. Let us suppose that the knight stands on e4, the white king on d1, and the black king on b3. Then if it is White to move 1 ♔c1! is decisive. But things are no easier for Black if it is him to move: if 1...♔b2 there follows 2 ♘c5! ♔c3 (2...♔b1 3 ♘e6) 3 ♔e1!, and the afore-mentioned position of mutual zugzwang is reached with Black to move.

Thus the knight must be brought to the e4-square. This is not at all easy to achieve, seeing as White constantly has to watch out for ...d4–d3.

1 ♘e1 **♔b2**

2 ♘d3+ **♔c3**

Nothing is changed by 2...♔b1 3 ♘c1 ♔b2 4 ♘a2, while 2...♔b3 shortens the solution: 3 ♘f4 ♔b2 (3...♔c3 4 ♔e1! ♔c2 5 ♘d3, and Black is in zugzwang) 4 ♘d5 ♔b3 5 ♘c7! etc. – cf. the main variation.

3 ♘c1!

But not immediately 3 ♘f4 because of 3...♔b3!, and if 4 ♘d5 there is the reply 4...♔c4!.

3 . . . **♔b2**

4 ♘a2!

A manoeuvre, found in the solving of the previous study, also comes in useful here. As you remember, 4...♔b3? 5 ♔c1! ♔xa2 6 ♔c2 is bad for Black. He is forced to move his king along the 1st rank, away from the c3- and c4-squares.

4 . . . **♔b1**

5 ♘b4 **♔b2**

6 ♘d5 **♔b3**

6...♔b1? loses immediately to 7 ♘c7 ♔b2 8 ♘b5.

7 ♘c7!

The shortest route to e4 is via f6. However, the direct 7 ♘f6? is refuted by 7...♔c4!! 8 ♔c2 d3+! 9 exd3+ ♔d4 and 10...e2. Therefore the knight chooses a more intricate route: d5–c7–b5–d6–e4.

7 . . . **♔c3**

Here 7...♔c4 8 ♔c2 is now pointless.

8 ♘b5+ **♔c4**

9 ♘d6+ **♔c3**

9...♔d5 10 ♘f7.

10 ♘e4+ **♔b2**

10...♔b3 11 ♔c1.

11 ♘c5! **♔c3**

12 ♔e1!

White has achieved his aim – he has set up the required position of mutual zugzwang with his opponent to move.

12 . . . **♔c2(c4)**

13 ♘d3

Again zugzwang!

13 . . . **♔c3**

14 ♔f1 **♔d2**

15 ♘f4

The final, decisive zugzwang. 15 ♘e5 ♔d1 16 ♘f3 is equally good.

15 . . . **♔d1**

16 ♔g2

Thanks to the lengthy knight manoeuvre, the white king has finally gained the opportunity to break free.

PART II

Technique

Mark Dvoretsky

Converting an Advantage

Chess players suffer from many ailments. One of the most common and serious is poor technique in the conversion of an advantage. Even champions sometimes suffer from this illness – it is sufficient to remember the 1990 match for the world championship between Garry Kasparov and Anatoly Karpov.

How frequently after an unsuccessful game do we state with vexation to our opponent, trainer, or a casual spectator: 'I had a completely won position!' But it is pointless complaining about fate – it is better to think about the causes of the mistakes made, and endeavour to understand what playing or personal deficiencies are behind your errors. I will now dwell briefly on the main factors which hinder the normal conversion of an existing advantage.

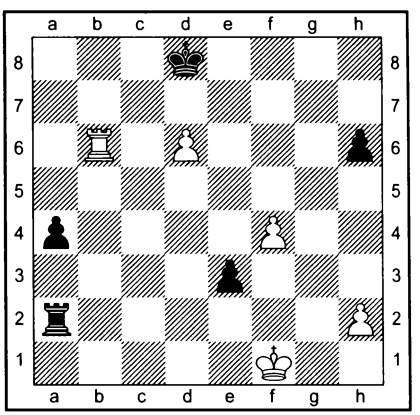
I. Tiredness towards the end of a game

It is clear that after several hours of intensive struggle a player becomes tired. But some become more tired than others. It is in the last few minutes that the fate of a game is often decided, and therefore many additional points can be gained by a player who retains a sufficient reserve of energy towards the end of a round.

The play of grandmaster Yusupov is always deep and interesting, and he spends much time and energy on solving the problems which confront him in the first half of a game. But for its later part he often lacks strength, and here he makes serious errors. It was only for this reason, for example, that he did not win his Candidates semi-final match in 1989 against Karpov. Yusupov constantly outplayed his formidable opponent, but was unable to convert this into wins on account of tiredness towards the end of a game. Here is one of the most annoying examples.

Karpov – Yusupov

Candidates Match, 6th Game,
London 1989



Yusupov saw that in the variation **38...a3?**

39 ♖a6 ♖f2+ 40 ♔e1 a2 41 f5 he would not have time to win the rook: 41...♖xh2 42 f6 ♖h1+? 43 ♔e2 a1♕ 44 ♖xa1 ♖xa1 45 f7. Therefore he played **41...♔d7**, and after **42 f6 ♔e6 43 ♖a8! ♔xd6 44 f7 ♖xf7 45 ♖xa2 ♔e5 46 ♖a6** the players agreed a draw.

Yet Black could simply have captured the pawn:

38 . . .	**♖xh2!**
39 ♖a6	

39 f5 ♖f2+ and 40...♖xf5.

39 . . .	**♖f2+**
40 ♔e1	**♖xf4**
41 ♔e2	**♖e4**

With an easy win, for example: 42 ♖a5 (otherwise ...h6–h5–h4) 42...♔d7 43 ♖d5 h5! 44 ♖xh5 ♔xd6.

Why didn't Artur play this? By his own admission, at that moment his mind had simply switched off, and he did not see any other possibilities apart from 38...a3?.

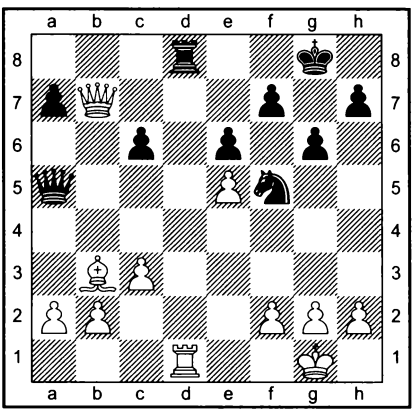
If you are let down by tiredness, perhaps it means that all is not well with your physical preparation? The prescription in such cases is clear – you must do more physical exercise and devote more time to sport, in particular exercises for stamina (for example, slow but long-distance running). Consider devising a rational daily regime during a competition, enabling you to relax properly and regain your energy before a new game. Finally, also during a game you can husband your strength, by using for relaxation those brief minutes of respite when it is your opponent's turn to move. However, all these are fairly serious questions, demanding a special discussion, and not just a brief mention.

II. Insufficiently stable nervous system

Throughout a game it is very important to maintain full concentration and unbroken attention to everything that is happening on the board. But it is not everyone's nervous system that is ready for such prolonged tension. Often a player composes himself only at especially important moments of the struggle, but when the main problems seem to him to be resolved, he loses his vigilance and begins acting carelessly. It is here that mistakes usually occur.

Mestel – L. Popov

Olympiad, Malta 1980



White is a sound pawn to the good, but he now has to resolve a difficult problem: what position to go in for, so that the opponent will have the least in the way of counter-chances. The following possibilities suggest themselves:

a) 25 ♖e1 ♖d2 (25...♕c5 is less accurate in view of 26 ♕a6! ♖d2 27 ♖e2);

b) 25 ♕xc6 ♖xd1+ 26 ♗xd1 ♕xa2 (stronger than 26...♕xe5 27 ♕a6!) 27 ♕b5 ♕a1 28 ♕e2 a5, and it is not easy for White to strengthen his position;

c) 25 ♖xd8+ ♕xd8 26 ♕xc6 ♕d2;

d) 25 ♖xd8+ ♕xd8 26 ♕xa7 ♕d2.

In every case Black retains counterplay, and the outcome remains unclear.

Jonathan Mestel found an excellent solution.

25 ♖xd8+!	**♕xd8**

26 ♗c4!!

The bishop will securely defend the king from f1. For the moment the queen remains on b7, from where it defends the b2-pawn. The a7- and c6-pawns are weak, and soon White is sure to create a passed pawn on the queenside.

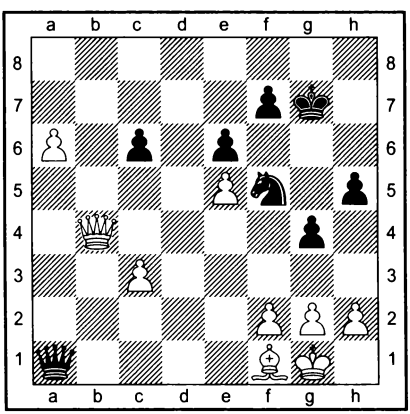
26 . . .	**♕d2**
27 ♗f1	**♔g7**

27...♕c2 was more tenacious, preventing the following strong move by the opponent.

28 a4!	**a5**
29 ♕b6	**h5**

Black's last faint hope is to break up the white king's defences by the advance of his g- and h-pawns. He no longer has any other possibilities.

30 ♕xa5	**♕xb2**
31 ♕b4	**♕a1**
32 a5	**g5**
33 a6	**g4**



It is clear that Black's position is completely hopeless. But it is very dangerous, in believing this, to weaken your attention and stop checking variations. For example, if White plays 34 ♕b8 ♕c1 35 a7? (35 ♕b6! is correct), then after 35...♘e3! 36 fxe3 ♕xe3+ 37 ♔h1 ♕c1(e1) 38 ♕h8+ (38 ♕b6 ♕xf1+ 39 ♕g1 ♕a6 with equality) 38...♔xh8 39 a8♕+ ♔g7 40 ♕a6 ♕xc3 Black gains quite good saving chances – at any event, a lengthy struggle still lies ahead.

34 ♕b7! was strong, ensuring the advance of the pawn while retaining the option, in case of necessity, of defending the bishop from a6. 34 g3! also came into consideration, after which Black does not have a single sensible move.

34 ♕b6	**h4**
35 a7?!	

Was it worth allowing the opening up of White's own king position? 35 g3! would have given an elementary win.

35 . . .	**g3!**
36 ♕a6?	

Here it is – relaxation when only one step away from victory! 36 fxg3 hxg3 37 h3 would have won, for example, 37...♕a2 38 ♔h1 ♘h4 39 ♕a6 ♕f2 40 a8♕ ♘f3 41 ♕8a7 c5 42 ♕xf7+! ♔xf7 43 ♕b7+ and 44 ♕xf3. However, such a variation is too complicated for a player in time-trouble. In any case, with more accurate preceding play the game could have been concluded far more simply.

36 . . .	**gxf2+**
37 ♔xf2	

In the event of 37 ♔h1 ♕c1 38 a8♕? White, paradoxically, even loses – after 38...♘g3+! 39 hxg3 hxg3 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 the nervous system be trained to endure prolonged tension? Here too it is probably not possible to get by without

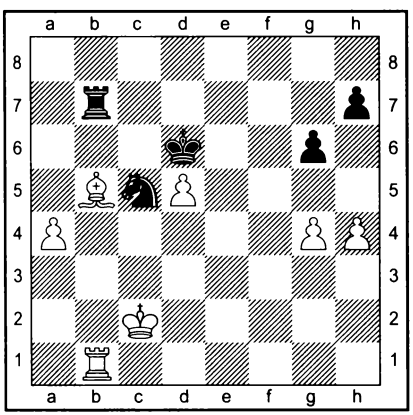
physical preparation ('healthy in body, healthy in mind!'); self-training exercises or even yoga are probably useful. Specific chess training is also possible. You can practice playing specially selected exercises, in which you have to find a long series of the only correct moves. Try conducting individual games or even entire tournaments with the aim of concentrating to the maximum throughout the entire game.

III. Time-trouble

Nearly every player can remember depressing instances of time-trouble adventures, in which the fruits of all the preceding work were ruined. But even so I will show you one more example, together with an instructive assessment of his own actions, which was given in his notes by an ex-world champion.

Alekhine – Tylor

Nottingham 1936



Black's position is, of course, completely hopeless. If 46...♔xd5 there follows 47 ♖d1+ ♔e6 (47...♔e5 48 ♗c6) 48 ♔c3. Tylor tries his last time-trouble chance.

46 . . . **♘xa4**

47 ♔d3??

Regarding this Alekhine writes in the tournament book:

An awful move, the fact that White was very short of time is, to my mind, as little to be considered as an excuse, as for instance the statement of the law-breaker that he was drunk at the moment that he committed the crime. The inability of an experienced master to deal with the clock should be considered as grave a fault as a miscalculation.

White would have won by 47 ♗xa4 ♖xb1 48 ♔xb1 ♔xd5, and now, if there is nothing better, 49 ♗e8!? ♔e5 50 h5 ♔f4 (50...gxh5 51 ♗xh5) 51 hxg6 hxg6 52 ♗d7 (Alekhine).

47 . . . **♔xd5**

48 ♗c4+ **♔d6**

49 ♖xb7 **♘c5+**

50 ♔e3 **♘xb7**

Soon the players agreed a draw.

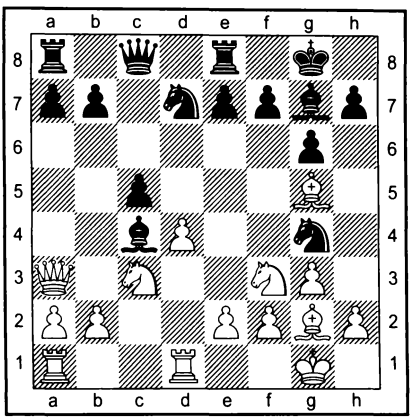
Again I will not speak in detail about how to combat time-trouble. I will merely mention two main methods: ***1) 'anti-time-trouble' games; 2) time-study of games, with a subsequent analysis of the reasons for getting into time-trouble.***

Points are lost not only in your own time-trouble, but also in the opponent's. This happens because a player often disregards a well-known principle of how to act in such situations. ***If you have the better position, never play on the opponent's time-trouble. Act exactly as you normally would, not even remembering about your opponent's lack of time***. Why? By playing quickly, so as not to allow the opponent to think over his moves, you essentially drive yourself into the same time-trouble as him. But in a difficult situation the opponent is fully composed and mobilised, whereas you, by contrast, lulled by your advantage in time and position, are awaiting the fall of his flag and are unable to play at full intensity.

In the hope of exploiting this psychological effect, in difficult situations some players deliberately get themselves into time-trouble, and there they often change the unfavourable course of the play.

Mark Tseitlin – Makarychev

Krasnoyarsk 1981



Only 14 moves have been made, but Black's position is difficult, and in addition he had already spent nearly all the time on his clock – he had just 6 (!) minutes left for 26 moves.

Obviously it is important for White to develop his rook at c1 as soon as possible, in order to create pressure on the c-file. However, after the immediate 15 ♖ac1 he has to reckon with 15...h6.

15 h3!? looks strong, and after the retreat of the knight – 16 ♖ac1. Black would probably have replied 15...h6, intending to create complications after 16 ♗f4 cxd4!. But White can very well waste a tempo: 16 ♗c1 (16 hxg4 hxg5 17 ♖ac1 is also not bad) 16...♘f6 17 ♗e3 cxd4 18 ♘xd4 followed by ♖ac1. ***An unhurried method of playing, when you simply strengthen your position without allowing any counter-chances, is the most unpleasant for an opponent who is in time-trouble.***

15 dxc5 ♘xc5

16 h3

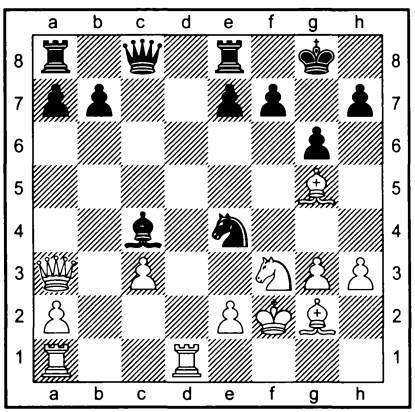
Before placing his rook on c1, Tseitlin wants to drive away the knight. In the event of the immediate 16 ♖ac1 he was concerned about the reply 16...♕f5, when Black acquires tactical ideas associated with the weakness of the f2-point. The following combinative variation is interesting: 17 e4! ♘xe4 18 ♘xe4 ♕xe4 19 ♘d4 (the bishop at c4 is under attack) 19...♕e5 20 ♗f4 ♕h5 21 h3 ♘f6 (21...♘xf2 is worse: 22 ♔xf2 e5 23 g4! ♕h4+ 24 ♗g3 ♕f6+ 25 ♔g1) 22 g4! ♘xg4 23 hxg4 ♕xg4 24 ♕g3 ♕xg3 25 ♗xg3 ♗xa2 (25...♗a6 26 b4 ♖ad8 27 ♘b3) 26 ♗xb7 ♖ad8 27 ♘c6. The concluding position is undoubtedly in White's favour, but the outcome is still not clear – too many pawns have been exchanged.

16 . . . ♘xf2!?

This piece sacrifice is Black's best practical chance. If 16...♗xc3 the simple 17 hxg4 ♗g7 18 ♖ac1 would have followed.

17 ♔xf2 ♗xc3

18 bxc3 ♘e4+



19 ♔g1?

This is what Sergey Makarychev had to say: *Such a disdainful attitude to one's own material can be explained only by the opponent's time-trouble. In the event of* 19

♔e1 ♘xg3 (19...♕c7 20 ♗f4 e5 21 ♘xe5! ♖xe5 22 ♗xe4 favours White) White would have had some difficulty in consolidating his position, but Black would not have full compensation for the piece. Perhaps Tseitlin preferred – at any price – attack rather than defence, reckoning that the only significant factor was the difference in the clock times?!

19 . . . ♗xe2

20 ♗f4

If 20 ♖d5, then 20...e6 (20...♕c6!?) 21 ♖e5 ♗xf3 22 ♗xf3 ♘xg5 23 ♖xg5 f5, and the white rook is out of play.

20 . . . ♗xd1

21 ♖xd1 ♕xc3

21...♕c5+!? 22 ♕xc5 ♘xc5 was perhaps sounder, intending ...♖ac8, ...f7–f6 and ...e6–e5 with an excellent endgame for Black.

22 ♕a4 e5!?

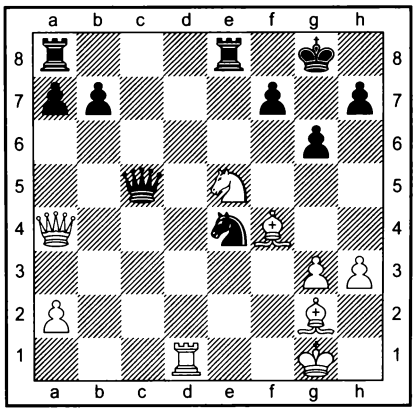
22...♕c5+ 23 ♔h2 ♘c3 24 ♕c2 leads to a sharp middlegame, in which Black's chances are not worse, but White gains the opportunity to launch an attack on the king, which in time-trouble seemed unpleasant to me. The move in the game forces exchanges, and maintains for a time the strong position of the knight on e4 (Makarychev). As you see, in time-trouble an experienced player sometimes manages both to calculate variations, and to assess the position correctly.

23 ♘xe5

23 ♗xe5? ♕e3+! (or 23...♖xe5 24 ♘xe5 ♕e3+!) is bad for White, while 23 ♕xe4 exf4 24 ♕xf4 ♕e3+ 25 ♕xe3 ♖xe3 26 ♖d7 ♖c8 27 ♖xb7 ♖c1+ 28 ♔f2 ♖a3 leads to an unclear endgame.

23 . . . ♕c5+

(see diagram)



24 ♕d4??

Symptomatic: despite the opponent's time-trouble (or more precisely – because of it), it is White who commits a decisive oversight. It was essential to play 24 ♔h2 ♘c3 25 ♕d4 (otherwise 25...♖xe5) 25...♕xd4 26 ♖xd4. Makarychev gives the following variation: 26...g5 27 ♗xg5! (27 ♘g4 gxf4 28 ♘f6+ ♔f8 29 ♘xe8 fxg3+ 30 ♔xg3? ♘e2+ is bad for White, but 27 ♗d2!? ♖xe5 28 ♗xc3 is safe for him) 27...♖xe5 28 ♗f6 ♖c5 29 ♖d7 with quite good drawing chances for White. However, he also has the right to lay claim to more, by playing 29 ♖g4+! ♔f8 30 ♖g7, for example, 30...♖ac8 31 ♖xh7 ♔e8 32 h4! ♘d5 33 ♖h8+ ♔d7 34 ♗h3+ ♔d6 35 ♖xc8 ♘xf6 36 ♖xc5 ♔xc5 37 g4 with a serious advantage. Black's play can be improved on the 28th move, by placing his rook not on c5, but more actively on e3. And instead of 26...g5 it probably makes sense for him to choose 26...♘e2!?.

24 . . . ♖ad8!

25 ♗e3 ♖xd4

26 ♗xd4 ♕c2

27 ♖a1 ♖xe5!

White resigned.

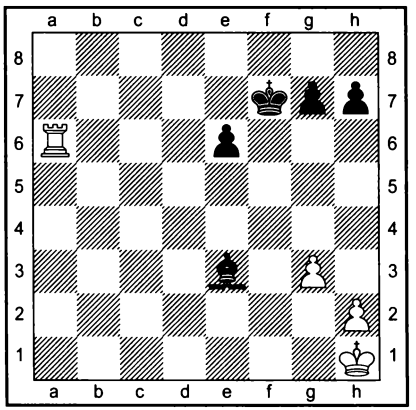
It is curious that on all the moves that we have seen, Makarychev spent just three minutes – one half of his reserve of time.

IV. Inadequate knowledge of endgame theory

In the majority of cases the conversion of an advantage has to be carried out in the endgame. It is clear that, if you are not familiar with theory, you are much more likely to make a mistake.

Wolff – Browne

USA Championship, Durango 1992



It is quite possible (although not inevitable) that Black will lose his e-pawn, and therefore it is useful to have some information about endings with two pawns against two on the same wing. The most important conclusion is this: by placing his pawns on h5 and g6, Black sets up an impregnable fortress – the opponent's king is unable to approach his pawns.

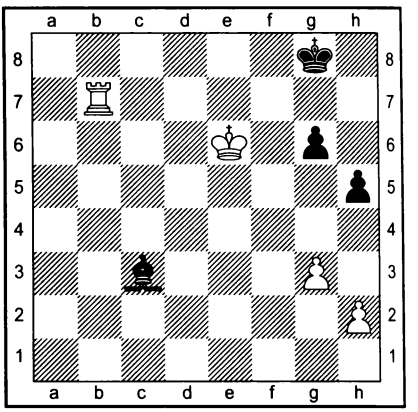
(see diagram)

It obviously makes sense for White to prevent the erection of this defensive system, by playing g3–g4! But if it is Black to move, he should play ...h7–h5!. But, alas, neither player knew this position.

50 ♔g2?! **♗d4?!**

51 ♔f3?! **g6?**

A strange move, which significantly worsens Black's position. His king is now forced to



retreat to the edge of the board (and yet he could have kept it at f6), and the h-pawn for ever remains backward.

52 ♔e4 **♗f6**

53 ♖a7+ **♔g8**

54 g4!

At last!

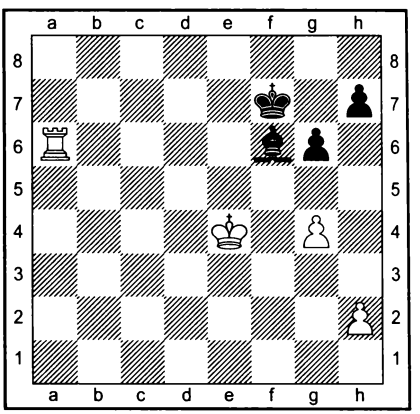
54 . . . **♗c3**

Why give up the e6-pawn without a fight? 54...h6 55 ♖b7 ♔f8 suggests itself.

55 ♖e7 **♗f6**

56 ♖xe6 **♔f7**

57 ♖a6



57 . . . **♗c3?**

Black should have placed his bishop on h4

and played ...h7–h6. If White's pawn were at h3, there would be altogether nothing that he could do (I once found this fortress in the course of a joint analysis with Boris Gulko of one of his adjourned positions). With the pawn on h2 it is possible to march the king to h3 followed by ♔g3 and h2–h4. However, this plan is not easy to carry out, and also in reply to h2–h4 White has to reckon with the strong reply ...h6–h5!

58 ♖a7+ ♔g8

59 ♖d7?

If during the game Patrick Wolff had known about the system of defence with the bishop on h4, 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 gxh5+ 66 ♔xh5 ♗b4 was more tenacious. For many years this position was considered drawn, but in 1993 the chess composer Noam Elkies nevertheless found a winning plan.

65 ♖c6! ♗b2

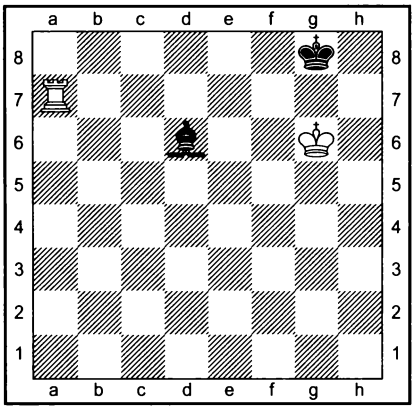
66 ♖a6 ♗c3

67 ♖a4! ♗e5

68 h5! ♗c3

No better is 68...gxh5+ 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 hxg6+ 73 ♔xg6.

(see diagram)



Another important theoretical position! Black loses, if his king will be shut in the corner (with a light-square bishop, by contrast, it would be a draw). As is not difficult to see, fleeing from the dangerous corner does not work in view of the unfortunate position of the bishop: 73...♔f8 74 ♔f6 ♔g8 (74...♔e8 75 ♔e6) 75 ♖g7+ ♔h8 (75...♔f8 76 ♖d7) 76 ♔g6 and wins.

69 h6 ♔f7

70 ♖c4 ♗e5

71 ♔f3 ♗d6

72 ♖c8 ♔e6

73 ♖h8! ♔f5

74 ♖xh7 ♔xg5

75 ♖d7

Black resigned.

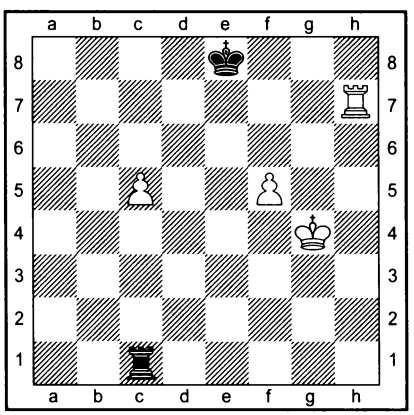
In the second issue of the *American Chess Journal* grandmaster Wolff gave an excellent commentary on this endgame. By studying his analyses, you, for example, will learn how White wins if he remains with a pawn on h5 or g5 against a black pawn on h7. All this is very interesting and useful, but nevertheless not essential. Whereas the fortress with black pawns on g6 and h5 should definitely enter your store of endgame knowledge.

Why in particular this position? Firstly, here it is sufficient to learn the assessment of the

position and the basic idea of the defence (not to allow the king to approach the pawns) – you don't have to remember any complicated variations. Secondly, this assessment (draw!) is automatically transferred to positions with a white h- or g-pawn against a pawn on g6 (after all, White can play g3–g4 and capture on g4 with the pawn or a piece). And above all, this position is the most universal and informative. Very often the pawns of both sides have not advanced further than the 2nd or 3rd rank, and then it is clear that Black should aim to play ...h7(h6)–h5!, and White – g2(g3)–g4!.

One of the methods of converting an advantage is to transpose into an endgame position that is known to be theoretically won.

Larsen – Torre
Interzonal Tournament, Leningrad 1973



The simplest way to win is to sacrifice the c5-pawn. After 78 ♔g5! ♖xc5 79 ♔g6 followed by 80 ♖h8+ we reach an elementary theoretical ending, which is completely hopeless for Black, since his king is on the 'long' side of the pawn.

78 ♖c7?!

Bent Larsen decided to keep both of his extra pawns, which, of course, is also good enough to win. Why then should his decision be criticised? Well, because after 78 ♔g5! the game would have concluded – theory, well known to Larsen, would have begun. Here it would no longer be possible to go wrong. But after the move chosen by him, play continues in an unfamiliar position, which means that the probability of a mistake remains.

78 . . .	**♔d8**
79 ♖c6	**♔d7**
80 ♖d6+	**♔e7**
81 f6+?	

And here is the decisive mistake, which leads to a draw. White should have played either 81 ♖e6+ ♔f7 82 c6, or 81 ♖d5.

81 . . .	**♔f7**
82 c6	**♔g6**
83 ♔f3	**♖e1!**

This is the whole point – the king cannot break through to either of its pawns.

84 ♔f4 ♖e2 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.

V. Poor technique in the conversion of an advantage

We will consider this problem in more detail. Grandmaster Igor Zaitsev once suggested a deep and valid idea: 'Technique is the art of the past'. If this is so, then a reliable way of improving your technique is to study classic models, and, above all, examples from the games of players who were famed for their mastery in this field. Players, such as Akiba Rubinstein, José Raúl Capablanca, Alexander Alekhine, Tigran Petrosian, Ulf Andersson... When playing through their games, think about why they were able so easily and

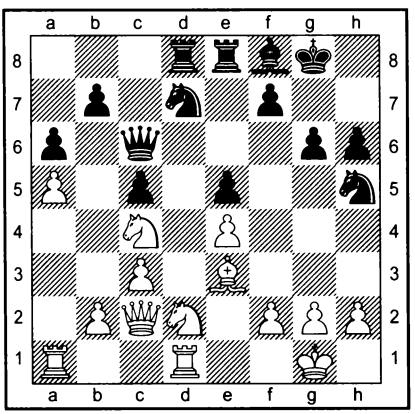
naturally to exploit even a seemingly imperceptible advantage, and you will gradually begin to notice their approach to such situations, those principles of converting an advantage which they consciously or subconsciously followed, and the techniques which they employed. We will now examine the most general of these principles and methods.

Maximum restriction of the opponent's counterchances

It is very important for every player to possess 'prophylactic thinking' – the ability to constantly ask yourself: 'What does my opponent want, and what would he do now if it were his move?' But the role of prophylactic thinking increases particularly when converting an advantage, when the maximum restriction of the opponent's possibilities, the elimination of the slightest counterplay or any useful operations to improve his own position, becomes probably the main principle.

I will show two examples from my own games.

Dvoretsky – Butnoris
Kiev 1976



Of course, White stands better. The opponent has a bad dark-square bishop, and as a consequence – weaknesses on the light squares. How can I strengthen my position? The plan of playing the knight from d2 to d5 suggests itself: f2–f3, ♗e3–f2 and ♘d2–f1–e3. It would seem that it can be begun with either 22 f3, or 22 ♘f1. It also makes sense to play 22 g3, depriving the enemy knight of the f4-square. Which of these three continuations is the most accurate?

White must carefully look to see what active resources the opponent has, and how he is intending to play. The move 22...♘f4 should not concern us too much – after 23 g3 ♘e6 the knight does not create any threats from e6 and does not control the weak d5-square, for which White is aiming.

The attempt to create counterplay on the kingside with 22...♕e6! followed by 23...f5 looks more serious. For example, 22 g3 ♕e6 23 ♕b3 f5!, and there is no time for 24 ♕xb7? in view of 24...f4. Or 22 ♘f1 ♕e6 (with gain of tempo!) and 23...f5.

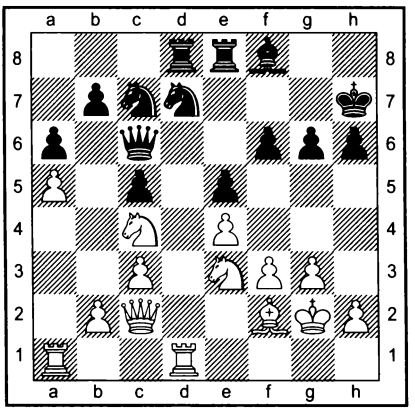
In the second variation White has an interesting tactical resource: 23 ♕b3 f5 24 exf5 gxf5 25 ♗xh6! ♗xh6 26 ♖d6 ♕f7 27 ♖xh6, although after 27...♘df6 his rook is stuck in enemy territory, and 28 ♘fe3! f4 29 ♘f5 ♕e6 30 ♘h4 e4 leads to a rather tense situation. And in general, when you have such a solid positional advantage, why calculate such complicated variations? After 22 f3 ♕e6 23 ♕b3 the capture on b7 is now seriously threatened, and Black is forced to divert either his rook, or his queen, to the defence of the pawn. It is this move order, therefore, that enables White to be fully prepared for the opponent's counterplay.

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,

when 26 h4 does not work because of 26...♘xf3+ 27 ♔g2 ♘d4 28 cxd4 exd4.

25 . . .	**♔h7**
26 ♗f2	**♘c7**
27 ♘fe3	



White has carried out his plan and increased his advantage.

Usually, when we look at a game, we do not pay any attention to modest moves such as 22 f3! and 25 ♔g2!. And yet it is thanks to them that events have developed in the desirable, quiet way for White, and the opponent has not gained the slightest opportunity to activate his game or complicate the play. But few are happy to defend passively without any counterchances, and in such cases new mistakes or inaccuracies are likely, making it easier for the stronger side to convert his advantage.

27 . . .	**♘b8**
28 ♘b6	**♕e6**
29 ♕a4!	**♘b5**
30 ♖d5	**♖xd5**
31 ♘exd5	

Threatening 32 c4 ♘d4 33 ♕xe8!.

31 . . .	**♖d8**
32 ♕c4	**♕c6?**

32...♕d6 was more tenacious. Now White lands a 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**

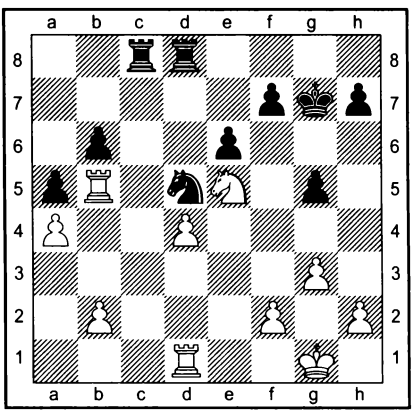
40...g4+ 41 fxg4 ♕g5 42 ♘xf6.

41 ♕e8+

Black resigned.

Zakharov – Dvoretsky

Ordzhonikidze 1978



Black clearly has a great positional advantage. When I ask, how he should continue in this position, usually either 29...♖c2 or 29...f6 and 30...♖c4 is suggested. And indeed, why not – seeing as White has no counterplay?

But nevertheless, think how you would play if it were White to move. And then you will find an idea which promises quite good chances of a successful defence – the manoeuvre ♘e5–g4–e3 with the aim of exchanging the mighty knight on d5. This knight dominates the position, cementing together Black's queenside and making the rook at b5 a passive, inoperative piece. But

in the event of the knight exchange, the rook will immediately be transformed – after all, it is attacking the b6- and g5-pawns.

It becomes clear what the best move is.

29 . . . **h5!**

Black retains all the advantages of his position and prevents the opponent's only promising idea.

The game did not last long.

30 ♖d2 **f6**

31 ♘f3 **♖c4**

32 b3 **♖c6**

The white rook has ended up in a trap.

33 h4 **g4**

34 ♘e1 **♘c7**

35 ♖xh5 **♔g6**

White resigned.

'Do not hurry!'

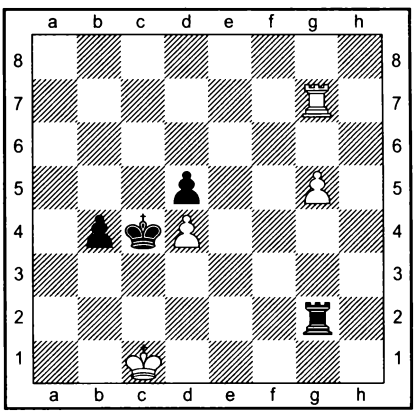
The inherent aim which a player should follow when trying to convert an advantage is not to win as quickly as possible. As yet no one has offered prizes for the smallest number of moves. You should endeavour to play with the utmost safety, exploiting all the resources of your position and completely restricting the active possibilities for your opponent. It is not a misfortune if you have to make an extra dozen moves on the board, if thanks to this you make your task easier and reach your goal more surely. In a sharp middlegame you may be tempted by the image of tiger, swiftly hunting down its quarry and tearing it apart, but when converting an advantage in the endgame you should rather imitate a python, slowly suffocating its victim.

The principle 'do not hurry!' was first formulated (but not explained to a sufficient degree) in instructional material on the endgame prepared by the Soviet master Sergey Belavenets. In fact, behind this brief formula are concealed various aspects of endgame technique, some of which we will encounter in the following examples.

'Do not hurry!' does not imply that you can carelessly squander tempi. On the contrary, every opportunity to gain a tempo should definitely to taken into account and exploited.

Leonhardt – Spielmann

San Sebastian 1912



One must possess great presence of mind, to not seize the booty immediately, but do this after several strong preparatory moves. The anticipation of victory often hinders the objection evaluation of a position.

It is to this factor that I prescribe the loss of a half point in what was a very important game for me – the most annoying instance in my chess career. This was at the finish of the San Sebastian tournament of 1912, at a moment when I had excellent chances of winning first prize. For me it was sufficient to win against Leonhardt... (Rudolf Spielmann).

The game went:

46 . . . **♔xd4?**

47 g6

It transpires that Black is in zugzwang. I should mention that here the zugzwang is

mutual – any move by White worsens his position.

47 . . .	**♔d3**
48 ♖d7	**d4**
49 g7	

After advancing his passed pawn to the 7th rank, White easily parries all his opponent's attempts. For example: 49...♔c3 50 ♖c7+ ♔b3 51 ♖d7, or 49...♖g1+ 50 ♔b2 ♔e3 51 ♔b3 (51 ♖e7+ ♔d2 52 ♖d7 d3 53 ♖e7 ♔d1 54 ♖d7 d2 55 ♖e7 is also possible) 51...d3 52 ♔xb4 d2 53 ♔c3.

49 . . .	**♖g6**
50 ♔b2	**♖g1**
51 ♔b3	

Draw.

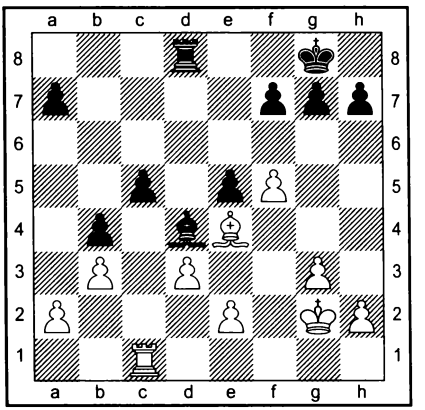
Of course, Black should have played **46...♔c3!**. If 47 ♔d1, then 47...♖g1+ 48 ♔e2 b3 is decisive. After **47 ♖c7+ ♔xd4** Black captures the pawn with gain of tempo, thanks to the attack on g5. Since 48 ♖b7? ♖xg5 49 ♖xb4+ ♔c3 is bad for White, he has to reply **48 ♖g7**. Now another tempo can be won by **48...♔c3! 49 ♖c7+ ♔d3**. Look at the position after **50 ♖g7**: as yet White has not done anything useful, whereas Black has eliminated the pawn and placed his king on d3.

And yet, contrary to Spielmann's opinion, even here he apparently did not have a win. For example: **50...d4 51 g6 ♖c2+!** (51...b3 52 ♔b1!, but not 52 ♖b7? b2+ 53 ♔b1 ♖xg6 54 ♔xb2 ♔d2) **52 ♔b1!** (52 ♔d1? ♖c6 53 ♖g8 ♔c3 54 g7 ♖c7) **52...♖c6 53 ♔b2! ♔c4 54 ♖g8** (54 ♔c2) **54...d3 55 ♖g7!** (but not 55 g7? ♖c7 with zugzwang), and Black is not able to strengthen his position.

If the opponent is deprived of counterplay, before changing the pattern of the play and initiating decisive action you should first strengthen your position to the maximum, by making all moves that are even slightly useful.

Réti – Romanovsky

Moscow 1925

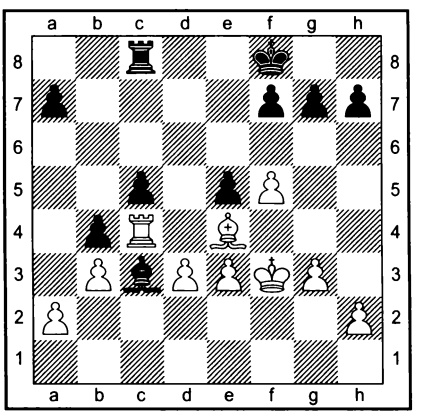


28 ♖c4!

White is planning ♔f3 and e2–e3. It is very important that, after the black bishop moves, the c5-pawn remains en prise. It will have to be defended by the rook, but then the white bishop will occupy an active position on d5, the king will obtain the excellent square e4, and the rook may be switched along the 4th rank to the kingside.

28 . . .	**♔f8**
29 ♔f3	**♖c8**
30 e3	**♗c3**

It would have been better to play the bishop to b2.



31 a4!

Methodically played! This move does not come directly into White's plan, but in itself it is useful – it is clear that the pawn stands better at a4 than at a2. The opponent will no longer have counterplay involving the switching of his rook to a6, and if White should somehow be able to capture the a7-pawn he will obtain a passed a-pawn. It is not clear whether these considerations will play any role, but this is not important. Any opportunity to strengthen the position even slightly should be exploited.

31 . . . **♔e7**
32 ♗d5 **♖c7**
33 ♖h4!

The black king is ready to go to d6, defending the c5-pawn, and therefore there is no longer any point in keeping the rook at c4. It is switched to the kingside to support the pawn offensive on that part of the board.

33 . . . **h6**
34 ♔e4 **♔f6**
35 ♖h5

Now Black must do something, since g3–g4, h2–h4 and g4–g5+ is threatened. He should probably have played 35...g6! 36 fxg6 (36 ♖xh6? ♔g5) 36...♔xg6 37 ♖f5 a5! (preventing a4–a5–a6 followed by ♖f5–f2–a2–a5–b5). The outcome would have remained unclear, although White could have developed his initiative by h2–h4–h5+ and ♖f5–f1–h1–h4–g4.

I checked a pretty attempt to prevent the closing-up of the queenside by 37 a5?!. The capture of the rook leads to an immediate mate: 37...♔xh5?? 38 ♔f5. Black has a difficult position after 37...♖d7 38 g4 ♖d6 39 ♗c4. Unfortunately, there is a spectacular refutation: 37...c4!!, and 38 dxc4? is not possible in view of 38...♔xh5 39 ♔f5 e4 40 ♗xe4 ♖c5+.

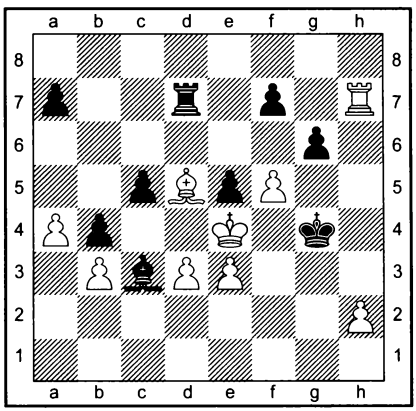
35 . . . **♖d7?!**

Pyotr Romanovsky tries to solve the problem by tactical means, but the combination he has prepared meets with a spectacular refutation.

36 g4

Of course, not 36 h4? g6 and the white rook is trapped.

36 . . . **g6**
37 ♖xh6! **♔g5**
38 ♖h7 **♔xg4**



Now it is clear what Romanovsky had in mind. In the event of 39 fxg6?? f5 or 39 ♗e6 fxe6 40 ♖xd7?? gxf5 White is unexpectedly mated. If 39 f6 Black was intending 39...♔g5. However, after 40 ♗xf7! ♔xf6 41 ♗xg6 ♖xh7 42 ♗xh7 he most probably is unable to save the ending with opposite-colour bishops. White attacks and captures the a7-pawn (perhaps after first playing his bishop to c4), after which one of the two passed pawns, a- or h-, is bound to decide the outcome. But with the pawn on a2 such an ending would certainly be drawn.

Richard Réti found a prettier and more convincing solution.

39 ♗e6! **fxe6**

39...♖e7 40 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 41 fxg6+.

40 fxg6! **♖d8**
41 ♖xa7 **♔g5**

42 g7 **♔h6**
43 a5

The passed a-pawn comes decisively into play. Now we can assess the true worth of the move 31 a4!. With his pawn on a2 White would have been unable to win.

43 . . . **♔h7**
44 a6 **♖d6**

The threat was 45 ♖b7 and 46 a7.

45 h4

White's last reserve joins the battle.

45 . . . **♗e1**
46 h5 **♗h4**
47 h6

Black resigned.

In cases when one side's advantage is insufficient for a direct win, it makes sense to manoeuvre, without changing the pattern of the position, in order to set the opponent various problems, even if they are not too complicated. And only when, after failing to withstand the prolonged pressure, he blunders or makes some error, can you then turn to decisive action.

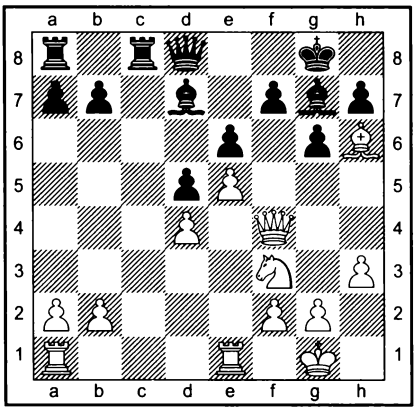
Such tactics of setting the opponent an endurance test can sometimes also make sense in positions with a big advantage. By provoking him into making a mistake, you can make it significantly easier to convert your advantage.

Mikhail Botvinnik remembers:

In 1936 in Moscow during the 3rd International Tournament I witnessed the resumption of the Capablanca–Ragozin game. The ex-world champion had an extra pawn and hence a won endgame. To my surprise, however, Capablanca did not undertake any positive action, but stuck to waiting tactics. Finally his opponent made an inaccuracy, and the Cuban won a second pawn and soon the game.

'Why didn't you immediately try to convert your material advantage?' I ventured to ask the great chess virtuoso. My companion condescendingly smiled: 'It was more practical to wait.'

Dvoretsky – Cooper
Philadelphia 1990



White undoubtedly has an appreciable positional advantage. He finds a convincing plan to exploit it, involving the creation of threats on the dark squares on the kingside.

18 ♗xg7

18 ♗g5 was also not bad. However, 18 ♘h2? would have been a serious inaccuracy in view of the strong reply 18...f5!.

18 . . . **♔xg7**
19 ♘h2 **h5**

I also had to reckon with counterplay on the c-file. If 19...♖c2 there was the strong reply 20 ♘g4 ♕h4 21 ♖ac1! ♖ac8 (21...♖xb2 22 ♖c7 ♗e8 23 ♖ec1 is equally cheerless) 22 ♖xc2 ♖xc2 23 g3! (23 ♖c1 ♖xc1+ 24 ♕xc1 is also not bad, when the white queen breaks into the opponent's position along the c-file) 23...♕xh3 24 ♕f6+ ♔g8 25 ♕d8+ ♔g7 26 ♘f6.

20 ♖ac1 **♖xc1**
21 ♖xc1 **♖c8**

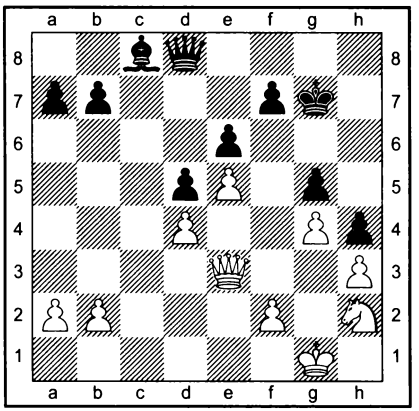
22 ♖xc8 ♗xc8

23 g4!

This is the whole point! Now 23...hxg4 24 ♘xg4, and if 24...♕h4 – 25 ♕f6+ (of course, it is also possible to delay this check) 25...♕xf6 26 exf6+ is completely bad for Black. He does not want to allow the exchange of pawns on h5, while if 23...♕h4 there follows simply 24 ♔g2 and 25 ♘f3.

23 . . . g5

24 ♕e3 h4



After 25 f4!? the h4-pawn is, of course, doomed. But in this case the white king becomes somewhat exposed, which may give the opponent some counter-chances.

For the moment I preferred not to change the pattern of the position and I tried to achieve success in positional manoeuvring, by tying the black pieces to the defence of the weak g5-pawn. Especially, since the possibility of f2–f4 will never run away.

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 almost certainly won, but again I did not want to force matters and I tried to obtain benefit from the fact that my opponent's pieces were tied down.

27 ♕a3 a5

28 ♕c5 ♔g6

29 ♔g2

A useful prophylactic move, which in some variations prevents the black queen from giving a check on c1.

29 . . . b6

30 ♕c2+

30 ♕d6? does not work in view of 30...♕xd6 31 exd6 f6!. But if Black should play his bishop to a6, then by placing his queen on d6 White will immediately decide the outcome. It makes sense to check whether the opponent will go wrong.

30 . . . ♔h6

31 ♕c6 ♗a6?

He does! Of course, 31...♔g6 was correct. Then I would probably have nevertheless agreed to win a pawn by 32 ♕c2+ ♔h6 33 ♕c1 ♔g6 34 ♘xg5 ♕xg5 35 ♕xc8, although first I would certainly have pondered over whether I had extracted everything possible from the type of position now on the board.

32 ♕d6! ♕c8

33 ♕e7 ♕g8

34 ♕f6+

Black resigned.

See how more easily (not more quickly, but more easily) I was able to win, thanks to the fact that I did not hurry to force matters.

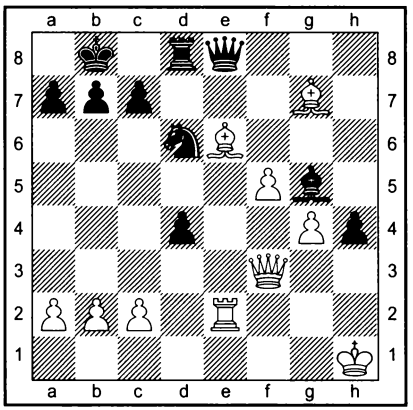
(see diagram)

White has the advantage. But what is it better to play: 38 ♗xd4 or 38 f6 ?

When you have a choice between advantageous positions with different material balances, all other things being equal you should choose the one in which the material balance is the most usual, the most standard. Here you will have more

Dvoretsky – Baikov

Moscow Championship 1972



experience and hence there is less chance of a mistake in the evaluation of the position or the subsequent play.

In the event of 38 f6? ♗e3 39 f7 ♕xe6 40 f8♕ ♖xf8 41 ♕xf8+ ♘e8 or 41 ♗xf8 ♘e4 Black, with a pawn for the exchange, complicates the play. Moreover, on a more careful examination of the resulting position it becomes clear that the advantage has now passed to the opponent.

The simple capture on d4 is much safer.

38 ♗xd4 **♕a4?**

38...♘b5! was much stronger. In reply 39 ♗c8? does not work in view of 39...♕c6, while after 39 ♗e5 ♘d4 40 ♗xd4 ♖xd4 Black has sufficient compensation for the pawn deficit. Possibly White should reply 39 ♗d5!?, when in the event of 39...♕d7 40 ♗e3! ♗xe3 41 ♖xe3 ♘d4 42 ♕e4 ♘xc2 43 ♖e2 or 43 ♖d3 he retains the advantage. However, after 39...♘xd4 40 ♖xe8 ♘xf3 41 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 the ending with opposite-colour bishops is probably drawn.

39 ♗e5 **♘c4**

Now the simple move 40 ♕e4! would have forced the transition into an absolutely won endgame (40...♘b6 41 ♕xa4) – Black's position would have been resignable. I saw it, of course, but I wondered whether it wouldn't be possible to achieve even more.

After noticing that 40 b3? is refuted by 40...♘xe5, I for some reason completely forgot about the same possibility in reply to 40 ♖e4 and I considered only 40...♕xc2. After discovering 41 ♗xc7+! and calculating its consequences, this is what I played.

40 ♖e4?? **♘xe5**

White's incorrect move could also have been refuted in a different way: 40...♘d2!? 41 ♖xa4 ♘xf3, and after the bishop moves Black has the decisive 42...h3.

41 ♖xe5 **♕xc2**
42 ♖d5 **♕c1+**
43 ♔h2 **♕xb2+**
44 ♔h3 **♖xd5**
45 ♗xd5 **c6**

Here the game was adjourned. The situation has completely changed – White's position is absolutely hopeless, not only because of the opponent's extra pawn, but also in view of the dangerous position of the white king. However, on the resumption I managed to confuse matters and save the draw.

I regarded my blunder on move 40 as merely an inexplicable 'eccentricity'. But when I showed the game to ex-world champion Tigran Petrosian, he took a quite different view of things.

'How do you explain why you avoided transposing into the endgame? You were in no doubt that it was won. But if you see an elementary solution, why then calculate variations and get involved in an exchange of blows?'

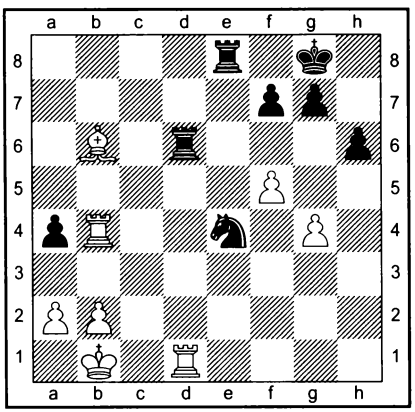
The moral of this sad episode is obvious. ***Always give preference to the simplest way of converting your advantage, in which case the probability of a making a mistake will be minimal. Avoid unnecessary complications, and never play 'for brilliancy'.***

Any 'trifles', capable of facilitating the conversion of an advantage, should without fail be taken into consideration. If, for example, you do not have much time left to the time control, make use of every opportunity to repeat moves. And after the time control has been reached, definitely adjourn the game, if you have a winning position. If you don't do this, because of tiredness you may make a mistake and spoil your position.

This last piece of advice has ceased to be topical in view of the change in the rules of chess competitions – games are no longer adjourned. The following example is nevertheless still instructive: it shows that overconfidence in success, combined with a certain haste and inaccuracy, is capable of having a negative effect on the play of even such a player, deservedly famed for his fine technique, as Anatoly Karpov.

Karpov – Korchnoi

World Championship Match,
22nd Game, Baguio 1978



White's position is absolutely won. Karpov should have sealed his next move, after which his opponent would probably not have bothered to resume the game. But for some reason the world champion made a few more moves at the board, and in the end he squandered his entire advantage.

41 ♖xd6 **♘xd6**

42 ♗c7?!

White avoids the obvious 42 ♖xa4 because of the reply 42...h5, which of course, however, does not change the evaluation of the position. In principle, the desire to find the most accurate way of exploiting your advantage is commendable, but in so doing you must accurately check the variations, which Karpov did not do. Incidentally, a similar mistake was made in his commentary by Mikhail Tal, who 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, casting doubts on whether White can win. So that the simple capture of the a4-pawn is the most reliable way to win.

42 . . . **♖e1+**

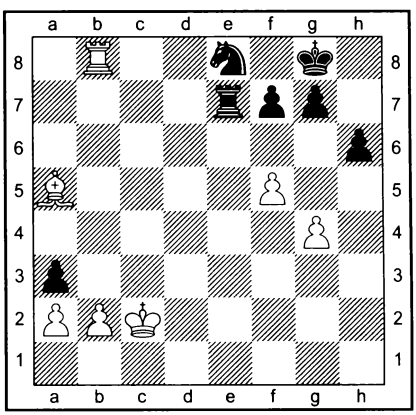
43 ♔c2 **♘e8**

Karpov simply missed this straightforward reply. Now, to avoid further mistakes, it was essential for him to ask the arbiter for an envelope and to seal his move. But the world champion continued in the same vein.

44 ♗a5 **a3**

45 ♖b8 **♖e7**

45...♖e2+ 46 ♔d3 ♖xb2 did not work in view of 47 ♖xe8+ ♔h7 48 ♖e2.



46 ♗b4??

Through inertia Karpov decided that now too the check on e2 was not dangerous for him. Of course, 46 bxa3 (or 46 b4) would have given an elementary win.

46 . . . ♖e2+

47 ♔d3?

Showing the same inertia. 47 ♗d2! axb2 48 a4 was essential, still retaining excellent chances of success. It is hard even to understand what exactly Karpov overlooked, since now both captures on b2 enable Black to save the game. Sensing this, Victor Korchnoi decided to adjourn the game at this precise moment, so that the opponent would not know which choice he had made.

47 . . . axb2

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 and ...h6–h5, obtaining a drawn position – there are too few pawns left on the board.

48 ♗d2

If 48 ♗c3, then 48...b1♕+! 49 ♖xb1 ♖xa2 50 ♖b8 ♖g2 51 ♖xe8+ ♔h7, and roughly the same drawn situation arises as in the 47...♖xb2 variation. There can follow 48 ♖e4 h5 49 gxh5 ♖h2 50 ♖g4 f6 51 ♔e4 ♖xh5, and to avoid ...g7–g6 the white rook has to stay on the g-file.

48 . . . ♖e7

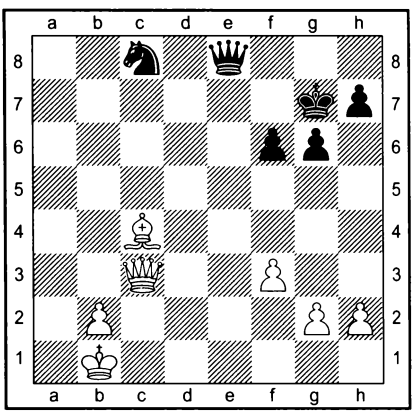
49 a4 ♖d7+ 50 ♔c2 ♔h7 51 ♖xb2 h5! 52 gxh5 ♘d6 53 ♖a2 ♘xf5 54 a5 ♘d4+ 55 ♔c3 (55 ♔b1 ♘b3, then giving up the knight for the a-pawn) **55...♘c6 56 a6 ♖d5 57 ♗f4 ♖f5** (57...♖xh5? 58 ♖h2!) **58 ♗d6 ♖d5 59 ♗g3 ♖g5 60 ♗f2 ♖xh5 61 ♔c4 ♘a5+ 62 ♔c3 ♘c6 63 ♖a4 ♔g8 64 ♔c4 ♘a5+** Draw.

The principle of two weaknesses

This principle is essentially one of the consequences of the more general rule of converting an advantage, which we have just been discussing – 'do not hurry!'. ***If the opponent is condemned to passivity, don't try to achieve success at one point alone – to hold it the defensive resources may prove quite adequate. Play more widely, and try to exploit weaknesses (and if possible – create new ones) on different parts of the board – then it will be much more difficult to defend.***

Alekhine – Sämisch

Baden-Baden 1925



How to convert the extra pawn? Advance it to the queening square? But Black will set up a blockade on the b6-square, the white king will be exposed and there will be a danger of perpetual check. I should remind you that queen and knight form a rather dangerous duo, if they are in the vicinity of the enemy king. Only in the event of the queens being exchanged will the white king be able to advance fearlessly to the help of its passed pawn.

34 ♕d4!

With this move and the next one White finds the correct winning plan, which is to advance his kingside pawns. The passed b-pawn must not advance until later, once the danger of perpetual check has been removed by the exchange of queens. A

concrete and clear evaluation of the position, typical of Alekhine – in his commentaries one can find numerous instructive features such as this.

34 . . . **♕e7**

35 ♗d3!

Perhaps the most difficult move in the game. Its purpose is to prepare an attack on the point h7. The winning method which follows leaves Black powerless to resist. (Alekhine)

35 . . . **♕c7**

36 g4! **♔f7**

37 h4 **♘b6**

38 h5 **gxh5**

39 gxh5

On the kingside Black has been saddled with a second weakness, and a very serious one (I should remind you: the first 'weakness' is the opponent's passed pawn, and Black constantly has to reckon with the threat of its advance). If now 39...♔g7, then 40 h6+!.

39 . . . **♕c6**

39...h6 was more tenacious.

40 ♗e4!

Of course, not 40 ♗xh7? ♕xf3 41 ♕xb6? ♕d1+ with perpetual check. If White desired, he could now have exchanged the queens and after 40 ♕e4 ♕xe4 41 ♗xe4 h6 42 ♔c2 gradually won the minor piece ending. However, the move in the game is far stronger, since it enables him to fix the weakness on h7.

40 . . . **♕b5**

41 h6 **♕b3**

42 ♗c2!

Now that the pawn on h7 has been blockaded, the next step is to force the exchange of queens. (Alekhine)

42 . . . **♕b5**

42...♕e6 43 ♕e4.

43 ♕d3 **♕xd3**

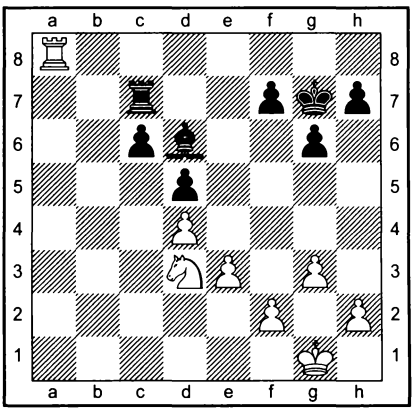
44 ♗xd3 **♘c8**

45 ♗xh7

Black resigned.

Kotov – Pachman

Venice 1950



White's positional advantage is determined by his better pawn structure, by the weakness of the c6-pawn. But this factor alone would have been insufficient for a win, if Black had now played 42...h5!.

42 . . . **♔f6?**

43 g4!

A typical move. White fixes a second weakness in the opponent's position – the h7-pawn. This was why it should have been advanced to h5. I should mention that 42...f5?! was much weaker in view of 43 h3 followed by g3–g4, and if Black replies 43...h5, then he again acquires a second weakness – this time on g6.

43 . . . **♔e6**

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.

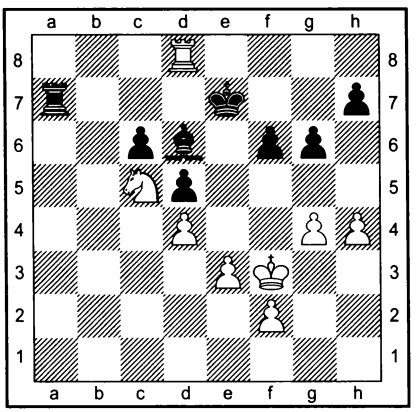
44 . . . ♖b7
45 ♖e8+

Before attacking the h-pawn it is useful to lure the black rook to a more passive position.

45 . . . ♖e7
46 ♖h8 f6
47 h4 ♖b7
48 ♔f3 ♖f7
49 ♖e8+ ♖e7
50 ♖d8!

White wants to place his knight on c5. It is important that after the exchange of minor pieces the black rook should be tied to the defence of the c6-pawn. ***Passivity of the rook is a very serious drawback in rook endings.***

50 . . . ♖a7
51 ♘c5+ ♔e7



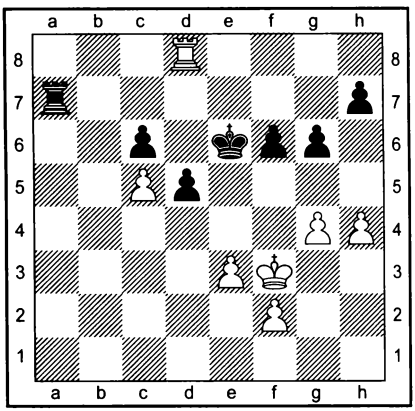
52 ♖c8!

A methodical move. 52 ♖h8 was incorrect in view of 52...♗xc5 53 dxc5 ♖a5! 54 ♖xh7+ ♔f8. Now the c6-pawn is under attack and Black does not manage to activate his rook. Thus if 52...♖c7 there now follows 53 ♖h8. Do you sense how uncomfortable it is to simultaneously defend two weaknesses – c6 and h7, and how much easier it would be to defend the weak c6-pawn alone?

52 . . . ♗xc5
53 dxc5 ♔d7
54 ♖h8 ♔e6

Now 54...♖a5 55 ♖xh7+ ♔e6 (the king cannot go to f8) 56 ♖g7 is bad for Black. Such 'trifles' play a very important role in the conversion of an advantage.

55 ♖d8



Alexander Kotov has successfully carried out his plan of transposing into a favourable rook ending. In his commentary he judged the resulting endgame to be won for White. However, in Jonathan Speelman's book *Endgame Preparation* this evaluation was called into question.

The English grandmaster's conclusion appears not be to compatible with the logic of the preceding play – after all, White has consistently outplayed his opponent and, it would appear, has the right to count on success. But what can be done – the defensive resources in chess are great, especially in rook endings, which according to Tarrasch are not usually won. The work done by Kotov was not in vain – almost out of nothing he has developed a dangerous initiative and posed serious problems for the opponent, which at the board the latter was unable to solve.

55 . . . ♔e7?!

Consideration should have been given to 55...♖c7! 56 ♖d6+ ♔e5 57 ♔e2 g5 58 hxg5 fxg5, and if 59 ♔d3, then not 59...♖c8? 60 ♖d7 h6 61 ♖d6 (Kotov), but 59...♖f7! 60 ♖xc6 ♖xf2 61 ♖c8 ♔e6! (Speelman). Instead of 56 ♖d6+ White can try 56 ♔f4!?, but after 56...♖d7! 57 ♖c8 d4 58 ♖xc6+ ♔e7 (58...♔d5? 59 ♖d6+) 59 exd4 (59 ♖d6? d3) 59...♖xd4+ Black again retains real drawing chances.

56 ♖d6 **♖a6**

57 g5!

White clears a way into the enemy position for his king.

57 . . . **fxg5**

58 hxg5 **♔f7**

59 ♔g3

Not immediately 59 ♔f4 ♖a4+ 60 ♔e5?? ♖e4 mate.

59 . . . **♔e7**

60 f3 **♖a3**

61 ♔f4 **♖a4+**

62 ♔e5

It would have been a mistake to play 62 e4? dxe4 63 fxe4 ♖c4 64 ♖xc6 ♔d7 65 ♖d6+ ♔e7 66 ♖d5 ♖c3! 67 ♔e5 ♖c4. The rook on d5 is too passive and therefore it is not possible to convert the pawn advantage.

62 . . . **♖a3!**

63 ♖xc6!?

Serious consideration should also have been given to 63 ♖e6+!? ♔d7 (63...♔f7 64 ♔d6) 64 ♔f6, for example, 64...d4 65 ♖d6+ ♔c7 66 ♖xd4 ♖xe3 67 f4, and Black's position is very dangerous.

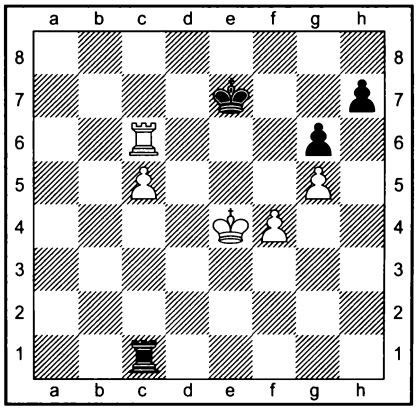
63 . . . **♖xe3+**

64 ♔xd5 **♖d3+**

64...♖xf3 65 ♖c7+ and 66 ♖xh7 is hopeless for Black.

65 ♔e4 **♖c3**

66 f4 **♖c1**



67 ♖c7+ **♔d8?**

In Speelman's opinion, even now, two moves before resignation, it was still possible for Black to save the game, and, moreover, very prettily: 67...♔e6! 68 ♖xh7 ♖c4+ 69 ♔f3 ♖xc5 70 ♖g7 ♖c6!!. Now 70 ♖xg6+ ♔f5 71 ♖xc6 leads to stalemate, and 70 ♔g4 ♔d5 to a straightforward draw (71 ♖f7 ♖a6 72 ♖f6 ♖xf6 73 gxf6 ♔e6 74 ♔g5 ♔f7).

And yet White's position would appear to be won. Having seen through the opponent's stalemate trap, he should 'take a move back' – 68 ♖c6+! ♔e7, then play his king to the queenside: 69 ♔d5 ♖d1+ 70 ♔c4 ♖c1+ (70...♖f1 71 ♖f6) 71 ♔b5 ♖b1+ 72 ♔a6 (with the threats of 73 ♖c7+ or 73 ♖b6), and after 72...♔d7 bring it back, exploiting the fact that the important f6-square is now accessible for invasion: 73 ♖b6 ♖c1 74 ♔b5 ♖b1+ 75 ♔c4 ♖f1 (75...♖xb6 76 cxb6+ ♔c6 77 ♔d4) 76 ♔d5 etc. (suggested by Sergey Dolmatov).

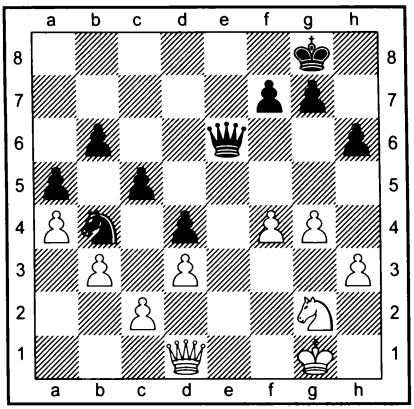
68 ♖xh7 **♖xc5**

69 ♖f7

Black resigned.

Spassky – Korchnoi

Candidates Match, 5th Game, Kiev 1968



This is what grandmaster Korchnoi had to say:

Despite the occasional inaccuracies committed, I consider my play in the middle stage of this game to be my best achievement in the match. But I wasn't quite able to complete the strategic picture – at the decisive moment I failed to display the necessary know-how. What was the problem facing Black? I will allow myself to quote Bondarevsky: 'White's pieces are tied to the weakness at c2, but a single weakness he is able to defend. Korchnoi was faced with the problem of starting play on the kingside, so as to create a new weakness in the enemy position.'

I realised that the move of the h-pawn appeared too routine to be the best. And I rejected 29...g5 on account of the concrete variation 30 ♕d2 f6 31 ♕e1!, when White neutralises his opponent's advantage. But the best move – 29...f5 (suggested by Flohr) completely escaped my attention! The point of the move is not only that after the exchange on g4 White's f- and g-pawns will be further weakened; also of considerable importance is the fact that, after the exchange of queens, Black can create an outside passed pawn by ...g7–g6 and ...h6–h5.

29 . . .	**h5?**
30 ♔h2	**hxg4**
31 hxg4	**g6?!**
32 g5!	

Now a draw becomes the most probable result: the pawn position is fixed on both the queenside, and the kingside. (Korchnoi). The game ended in a draw on the 51st move.

Exchanging

Grandmaster Kotov remembered for a long time the advice given to him by the experienced master Vladimir Makogonov at the international tournament in Venice in 1950.

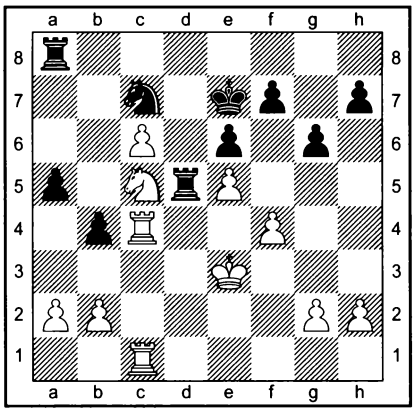
Don't sharpen the play – what for? Exchange the queens, and arrive at a position where each side has a rook and two or three minor pieces left. Which piece should you exchange, and which should you keep? There are few modern players who can solve this question correctly. They understand tactics, but in this you are superior to them.

When trying to convert an advantage you constantly have to think about the advisability of this or that exchange. One of the most general guides is given by the following rule:

Having a material advantage, the stronger side should aim to exchange pieces, whereas the weaker side should aim to exchange pawns.

(see diagram)

Vidmar – Thomas
Nottingham 1936



White has a decisive advantage. He should now move his knight from c5 and then play ♖c5, aiming to exchange the active black rook. 32 ♘e4 ♖ad8 33 ♖c5 (the prophylactic move 33 g3!? is also strong) 33...♖d3+ 34 ♔e2 ♖3d4 35 ♖1c4 is possible. 32 ♘d7 (with the threat of 33 ♘b6) and 33 ♖c5 is even simpler.

Milan Vidmar tried to carry out the same idea, but he did it in a very inaccurate way, overlooking the opponent's counterplay involving an exchange of pawns.

32 ♘b7?	**g5!**
33 g3	**gxf4+**
34 gxf4	**♖g8**

The first unpleasant consequence of White's mistake – the hitherto passive rook at a8 has come into play.

35 ♖4c2	**f6!**

Another pawn exchange, and moreoever the strong white e-pawn is forced off the board.

36 exf6+	**♔xf6**

It is obvious that the last exchanges have considerably increased Black's drawing chances. (Alekhine)

37 ♘c5	**♖g4**

Now it made sense to switch the knight to e5: 38 ♘d7+! ♔e7 (38...♔f5 39 ♘b6! is bad for Black) 39 ♘e5. Instead, White for some reason returns his knight to the rear.

38 ♘e4+	**♔e7**
39 ♘f2	**♖g8!**
40 ♔f3	

If 40 ♘d3, then 40...♖f5!, preventing 41 ♘e5.

40 . . .	**♘b5**
41 ♖c5	**♖c8**

After the exchange of the e5-pawn, the passed c6-pawn has been significantly weakened, since Black has acquired the opportunity to attack it with his king from d6.

42 ♖xd5?!	**exd5**
43 ♖c5	**♘d4+**
44 ♔e3	**♘f5+!**

Much worse was 44...♘xc6? 45 ♖xd5 with a significant advantage for White.

45 ♔d3	**♔d6**
46 ♖xa5	**♖xc6**
47 ♖a7	**♖c4**
48 ♖xh7	**♖xf4**

Black has managed to exchange a further 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**
52 ♔d1	**d4**

52...♖d4+ 53 ♔c2 ♖c4+ was simpler, seeing as 54 ♔b3? will not do in view of 54...♘d4+ 55 ♔a4 b3+ 56 ♔a3 ♖a4+! 57 ♔xa4 bxa2.

53 ♔d2	**b3!**

George Thomas forces the exchange of another pair of pawns.

54 axb3	**♖b4**
55 ♘d3	**♖xb3**
56 ♖d7+?!	

56 h4 was stronger, but even then Black would have successfully defended by activating his rook: 56...♖b8 followed by ...♖g8.

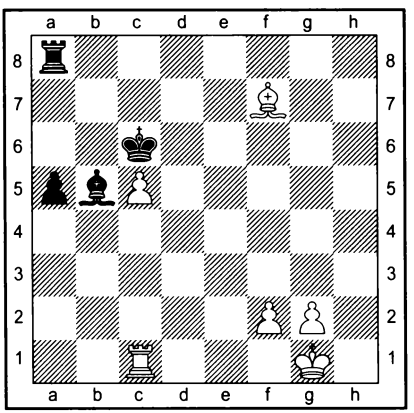
56 . . .	**♔xd7**
57 ♘c5+	**♔d6**
58 ♘xb3	**♘e3!**

There are too few pawns left on the board for White to hope for success 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.

It should be remembered, however, that the rule we have just formulated is too general to be trusted unconditionally – in chess such universal laws do not exist. This is merely one of the guides; the concrete features of the position often dictate a completely different course of action.

Ehlvest – Andrianov
Tallinn 1981



The passed a-pawn promises Black definite counter-chances, but even so White's material advantage should be sufficient for a win. However, not with the plan chosen by Jan Ehlvest.

36 ♗g6?	**♔c7!**
37 ♗e4?	**♗c6**
38 ♗xc6	**♔xc6**

The exchange of bishops was bad, since now the white rook is forced to take up a passive position in front of the enemy pawn.

39 ♔f1	**a4**
40 ♔e2	**a3**
41 ♔d3	**a2**
42 ♖a1	**♔xc5**

The draw has become obvious (if 43 ♔c3, then 43...♖g8 44 g3 ♖f8).

Instead of the incorrect exchange, White could have activated his kingside pawns: 36 g4!? (threatening g5–g6–g7). But it was safer first to centralise the king: **36 f3! a4 37 ♔f2**, and only then play g2–g4. Such strategy would have been in accordance with a principle of endgame play, formulated by Aaron Nimzowitsch: ***'The advance must be a collective one!'***.

VI. Lack of concrete action at the decisive moment

Let us suppose that your opponent has no real counterplay and that you, in accordance with the principle 'do not hurry!', are accumulating advantages little-by-little. But against tenacious resistance by the opponent you will probably be unable to win the game by technique alone – at some point you will certainly have to switch from positional manoeuvring to the precise calculation of variations, and seek a concrete way to the goal. Many players stumble at this point, with various factors playing their part. There is carelessness, arising in anticipation of a quick win, about which we have already spoken. There is the fully understandable aim to act 'with every comfort', not excessively exerting yourself, and not subjecting yourself to the risk of making a mistake in forcing play. There is the difficulty of determining that turning point, when you have

already extracted the maximum from playing according to the principle 'do not hurry!', which means that it is time to find a concrete variation, one which exploits the advantage gained and advantageously changes the character of the play.

I have noticed that brilliant positional players such as, for example, Salo Flohr or Anatoly Karpov, would successfully convert an advantage against opponents inferior to them in class. They manoeuvred, suppressed all active possibilities by their opponents, and when the latter failed to withstand the pressure, they made mistakes and themselves broke up their positions. But against opponents of equal class they often did not manage to convert even a big advantage. For the reason that, when faced with tenacious resistance, you cannot afford to miss an appropriate moment for concrete and precise action, and this is by no means the strongest aspect of such positional players.

Flohr – Keres

18th USSR Championship, 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?!**

A dubious move, which could have been called into question by the energetic 8 d5! ♘xc3 9 bxc3, and if 9...♗f6, then 10 e4! ♗xc3 11 ♗g5 (Udovcic–Kovacevic, Zagreb 1969). The usual continuation is 7...cxd4.

8 ♕c2	**♘xc3**
9 ♕xc3	**♗f6**
10 ♗e3	**♘c6**

10...♗xf3!? 11 ♗xf3 ♘c6 came into consideration.

11 ♖ad1	**♖c8?**

A serious mistake, after which Black falls significantly behind in development and ends up in a difficult position. He should have castled.

12 ♕a3!	**♘a5**

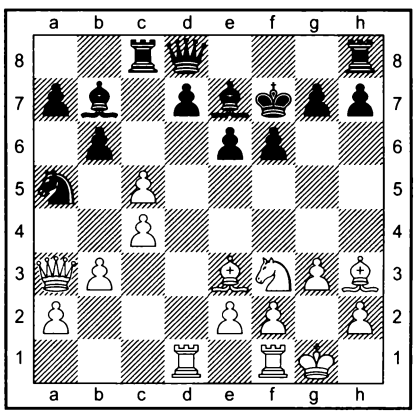
12...cxd4 really was better.

13 b3	**♗e7**
14 dxc5	**f6**

It is a bad sign, if moves such as this have to be made. But if 14...bxc5 there follows 15 ♘e5 ♗xg2 16 ♔xg2 d6 17 ♕a4+ ♔f8 18 ♘d7+ ♔g8 19 ♘xc5.

15 ♗h3	**♔f7**

16 ♗xe6 was threatened, and if 15...♕c7, then 16 cxb6.



White has an undisputed advantage. He is a pawn up, the black king is stuck in the centre, and the d7- and e6-points are obviously weak. But note that all these factors are not constant, but temporary. Imagine that Black plays ...bxc5 and ...d7–d6 – then he will consolidate his position. This means that White must act swiftly and decisively.

16 ♖d2?

An instructive commentary on the move

made by Flohr was given by grandmaster Isaak Boleslavsky:

In this position could White really not find anything better than the strictly positional doubling of rooks? If White really wanted to play positionally, he should have continued 16 ♘d4 ♗xc5 17 ♕a4 (17 ♕c1!? – Dvoretsky), *and to avoid the worst Black must exchange on d4. But the position demanded other measures, and after the energetic stroke 16 b4! White would have gained an irresistible attack. Here are some sample variations:*

1) 16...♘c6 17 cxb6 (17 ♖d2 is also not bad – Dvoretsky) *17...axb6 18 ♕b3 ♘xb4* (if 18...♗xb4 both 19 c5 and 19 a3 are strong, and even 19 ♗xe6+! ♔xe6 20 ♗xb6! ♕e8 21 c5+ ♔e7 22 a3 ♗a5 23 ♗xa5 ♘xa5 24 ♕b4 – 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 good enough to win; generally speaking, you should not continue calculating variations, if the evaluation of the continuation being analysed has become obvious – Dvoretsky) *23...♗xf2+ 24 ♔g2 ♘xd5 25 ♕xd5+ ♔e7 26 ♕xd7+ ♔f8 27 ♕xc8+, and wins.*

2) 16...♘xc4 17 ♕xa7 ♘xe3? 18 fxe3 ♗xf3 19 ♖xd7.

3) 16...♘xc4 17 ♕xa7 ♗c6 18 ♗xe6+! (or 18 cxb6 ♖a8 19 ♗xe6+! – Dvoretsky) *18...♔xe6 19 ♘d4+ ♔f7 20 ♘xc6 ♖xc6 21 ♖xd7 ♕e8 22 cxb6 ♘xe3 23 fxe3, and White, with four pawns for the piece and an overwhelming position, wins without difficulty.*

4) 16...♘xc4 17 ♕xa7 ♗d5 18 ♖xd5 exd5 19 ♕b7 ♔e8 20 ♕xd5 ♘xe3 21 fxe3 ♕c7 22 ♖d1 ♖d8 23 cxb6 ♕c6 (23...♕xb6 24 ♗xd7+ ♔f8 25 ♘d4 ♗xb4 26 ♘e6+ ♔e7 27 ♕e4! – Dvoretsky) *24 b7 ♕xd5 25 ♖xd5 ♔f7 26 b5, and White's powerful pawns decide the game.*

After the move made by White, the picture changes amazingly rapidly.

I should also add that after 16 b4! ♘xc4 the move 17 ♕xa7 is the strongest – 17 ♕b3 (hoping for 17...b5? 18 ♗xe6+! ♔xe6 19 ♘d4+ and 20 ♘xb5) is much worse in view of 17...♘xe3 18 fxe3 ♗xf3. However, also after 17...♗d5 18 ♖xd5 exd5 19 ♕d3 ♘xe3 21 fxe3 ♔e8 compared with the analogous variation with 17 ♕xa7 the a7-pawn would have remained alive.

16 . . .	**bxc5**
17 ♖fd1	**d6**
18 ♘e1	

Another passive move. 18 ♗f4 suggests itself, forcing the uncomfortable reply 18...♖c6 (if 18...♗xf3 19 exf3 ♘c6, then either 20 ♗xd6 ♘d4 21 ♗xe6+!, or 20 ♖xd6 ♗xd6 21 ♖xd6 ♕e7 22 ♗xe6+).

18 . . .	**♕b6**

The d6-point is easily defended, and there is nothing more with which to attack it – the f4-square will be taken away from the white bishop by …g7–g5.

19 ♕c1	**h5!**

Black has already seized the initiative. If 20 ♘d3, then 20...g5 21 b4 ♕c6. Possibly White should have tried 20 ♗g2 h4 21 b4!? – after 21...♕xb4 22 ♖b2 ♕a4 23 ♖xb7 (23 ♗xb7? ♖b8) 23...♘xb7 24 ♗xb7 ♖b8 followed by 25...hxg3 26 hxg3 ♕xa2 the resulting position is difficult to evaluate.

20 f3?!	**h4**
21 g4	**♘c6**
22 ♘g2?	

22 ♘c2 was better.

22 . . .	**♘d4**
23 ♖xd4	

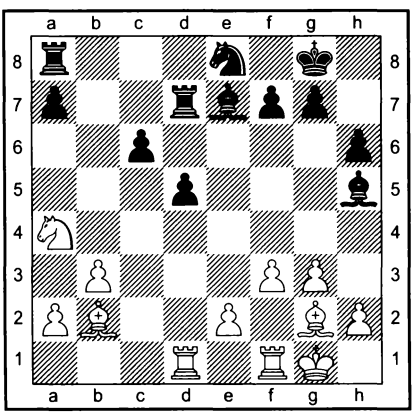
The time for combinations was earlier. In the subsequent play Black converted his exchange advantage, although the opponent did not exploit all his chances.

23...cxd4 24 ♗xd4 ♕a6 25 g5 fxg5 26 f4 g4! 27 ♗xg4 h3 28 ♕e3 ♖h6 29 ♘e1 ♖g6 30 ♕xh3 ♕c6 31 ♘f3 ♕e4 32 ♕g3? (32 ♔f2 ♖h6 33 ♕g3) **32...♔g8 33 ♖d3 ♖f8 34 ♗e3 e5! 35 ♕g2 exf4 36 ♗d2 ♗d8 37 h3 ♖e8 38 ♔f1 d5 39 ♖d4 ♕b1+ 40 ♗e1 dxc4 41 ♖xc4**, and White resigned in view of 41...♗h4! (but not 41...♗a6? in view of 42 ♘d2).

The entire game convincingly illustrates a well-known aspect of Steinitz's theory – ***the player with an advantage must attack, as otherwise he risks losing his advantage.*** In this clear formula the word 'attack' must be interpreted broadly – often it is necessary to find some precise variation, forcing combination etc., in short – a concrete and energetic way to exploit your advantage.

Petrosian – Spassky

World Championship Match, 12th Game, Moscow 1969



23 ♖c1

A natural move, retaining for White a serious positional advantage. Indeed, the c6-pawn is weak, the knight has an excellent square at c5, and the bishop at h5 is out of play.

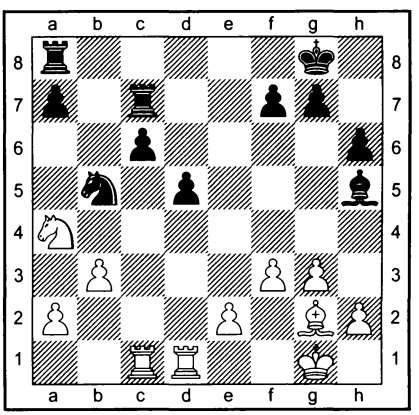
But couldn't White have played more accurately – 23 ♗h3 ? After all, after 23...♖b7 24 ♖c1 ♖c7 compared with the game White has gained a tempo – he has brought out his bishop to a more active position. If instead 23...♖c7, then 24 ♗e5 ♗d6 25 ♗xd6 ♘xd6 26 e4, exploiting the fact that the rook has remained on d1.

But it can also be exploited by Black! By giving up two minor pieces for a rook: 26...♘xe4! 27 fxe4 (27 g4 ♘g5) 27...♗xd1 28 ♖xd1 dxe4, he retains excellent chances of saving the game. There is no point in White going in for such an exchange, and the move made by Petrosian must be deemed the strongest.

23 . . .	**♖c7**
24 ♗e5	**♗d6**
25 ♗xd6	**♘xd6**
26 ♖fd1	

Threatening both 27 ♖xd5, and 27 e4 ♘xe4 28 g4.

26 . . . **♘b5**



White's advantage has crystallised. He now has numerous tempting continuations, but it is not so easy to choose the strongest. If 27 ♘c5 (with the threat of 28 ♘a6), then 27...a5 28 ♘d3 (threatening 29 ♘f4, then 30 a4 and 31 ♘xd5) 28...a4 29 ♘f4 ♗g6, and no direct win is apparent. To 27 ♖c5 Black replies 27...f5 (defending against 28 e4) 28 ♖dc1 ♖e7!? (28...♘d4 29 ♔f2 ♖ac8) 29 ♔f2 ♗e8

or 29 ♖xc6 ♘d4.

The strongest was 27 g4! ♗g6 28 f4, relying on a tactical subtlety: 28...f6 (or 28...f5) is not possible because of 29 ♖xc6!. In the event of 28...♗e4 29 ♗xe4 dxe4 30 ♔f2 Black's position is hopeless in view of the weakness of his c6- and e4-pawns. But 28...♗h7 is also no better: 29 f5 (29 ♘c3!?) 29...g6 30 e4 dxe4 31 ♗xe4 ♖e8 32 ♘c5 with an overwhelming advantage thanks to the tragi-comic position of the black bishop and the terrible threat of 33 a4.

White also had another promising possibility: 27 ♘c3!?, emphasising the vulnerability of the opponent's central pawns. The idea of g3–g4 and f3–f4 could have been put into effect slightly later.

27 ♔f2 **f6!?**

28 e3?!

Petrosian continues strengthening his position, but now his advantage is somewhat reduced, since the black bishop is included in the defence of the queenside pawns. But meanwhile White still had a concrete way of achieving a won position: 28 ♘c5! ♖e7 (or 28...a5 29 ♘e6 ♖cc8 30 ♗h3 with the unavoidable 31 ♘d4) 29 ♘a6 ♗e8 30 a4! ♘d6 31 e4, and Black loses a pawn.

28 . . . **♗f7**

29 ♗f1 **♘d6**

30 ♖c3

30 ♗a6!? came into consideration.

30 . . . **♔f8?**

A far from obvious mistake. Black should have taken control beforehand of the important f4-square, by playing 30...g5!. After 31 ♘c5 a5 32 ♖dc1 ♖e7 followed by ...♗e8 it would not be easy for White to strengthen his position.

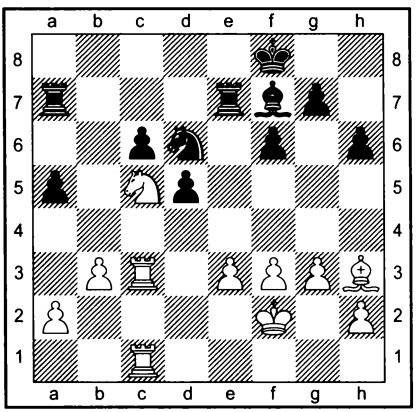
31 ♘c5 **a5**

32 ♖dc1 **♖e7**

33 ♗h3

White has prevented the important defensive move 33...♗e8 (34 ♘e6+ and 35 ♘d4) and created the threat of 34 ♘d7+.

33 . . . **♖aa7**



Black is only just holding on. One senses that it is time to find a concrete way to break through the opponent's defences. And there is such a way. After 34 ♘d3! ♗e8 35 ♘f4 White is threatening both 36 ♘e6+ followed by 37 ♘d4 or 37 ♘d8, and 36 ♖xc6 ♗xc6 37 ♘g6+. In the event of 35...♔f7 he decides matters with 36 ♖xc6! ♗xc6 37 ♖xc6 ♘b5 38 ♗e6+ ♖xe6 (forced) 39 ♘xe6, and the conversion of the extra pawn is not too difficult (if 39...a4 there follows 40 b4).

However, we nevertheless do not have the right to say that White's position is definitely won. Even in a seemingly difficult situation one can usually find resources, enabling defeat to be avoided or at least the opponent's task to be significantly complicated. That is also the case here. For example, there is a clever exchange sacrifice: 35...♖a6!? 36 ♘e6+ ♖xe6 37 ♗xe6 f5 38 g4 g6 39 gxf5 gxf5 40 ♖g1 ♔e7, and the unfortunate position of White's bishop means that the conversion of his material advantage is problematic. Instead of 36 ♘e6+, it is probable that 36 a4! is stronger – subsequently the knight may be switched to d4 not only via e6, but also via e2.

Often the best defence is active defence. I recommend checking 35...a4!. Here is an approximate variation: 36 ♖xc6 ♗xc6 37 ♘g6+ (37 ♖xc6 axb3 38 axb3 ♖a2+ 39 ♔g1 ♖xe3) 37...♔e8 38 ♘xe7 ♔xe7 39 ♖xc6 axb3 40 axb3 ♖a2+ 41 ♔g1 d4!? 42 exd4 ♘b5. For the moment the outcome of the game remains unclear – Black's counter-attacking resources should not be under-estimated.

Even so, the manoeuvre of the knight to f4 was the correct plan. Petrosian played a weaker move.

34 a4?!

The position can be unhurriedly embellished, if during this time the opponent is not able to do anything to strengthen his defences. This is not the case here. It is dangerous to abuse the principle 'do not hurry!'.

Apparently Petrosian was intending 35 ♘d3 ♗e8 36 ♘f4 ♔f7 37 ♘e2 followed by ♘d4 and he wanted to prevent the opponent from replying 37...♘b5. Generally speaking, it is useful to fix the black pawn on a5 and to deprive the knight of the b5-square. But if this is played, it should be after the switching of the knight to f4, and therefore now Boris Spassky forestalls the main danger.

34 . . . g5!

The f4-square is taken under control.

35 ♖d1

An exchange sacrifice came into consideration – 35 ♘d3 ♗e8 36 ♖xc6 ♗xc6 37 ♖xc6 ♘e8 38 ♘c5. Petrosian wants to play his knight to d4 via a lengthy route – d3–c1–e2, but during this time Spassky is able to activate his forces.

35 . . . ♔g7
36 ♘d3 ♗e8
37 ♘c1 f5
38 ♘e2?!

38 ♗g2 g4 39 f4 was better, with a probable draw.

38 . . . g4!
39 ♗g2 gxf3
40 ♗xf3 ♘e4+
41 ♗xe4 fxe4
42 ♘d4 ♖f7+
43 ♔g2 ♖f6

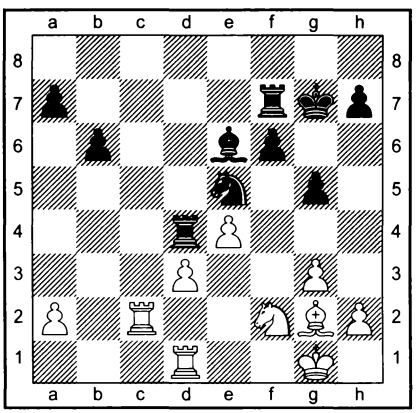
Black now has some initiative in connection with the strategic threat, after the exchange of a pair of rooks, of playing his king to d6. On the resumption the game ended in a draw.

Transformation of an advantage

The best way of exploiting an advantage sometimes involves a favourable change in the character of the position, giving up some advantages that you already have in favour of others. Such a method is called 'transformation of an advantage'.

Taimanov – Stein

34th USSR Championship, Tbilisi 1966/67



Black has a great positional advantage. He has securely blocked the opponent's central pawns, the bishop at g2 is 'bad', and the white knight also lacks mobility. The most natural plan, which Leonid Stein undoubtedly had in mind, involves the advance of the queenside pawns.

26 ♔f1

White intends to reinforce his central pawns by taking his king to e3 and if necessary placing his bishop on f1. His rooks would then be freed to take action against Black's queenside pawn offensive. At this moment it probably seemed to Stein that the conversion of his advantage by normal methods would not be so easy.

If the opponent makes an unexpected move, hindering the implementation of your plans, it is useful to ask yourself: 'What may be the drawback to the opponent's move?' But even after asking yourself such a question, it is not easy to come to the decision found by Stein – it is very much not in keeping with the unhurried character of the preceding play, and with Black's intended plan.

26 . . . f5!?

By opening the f-file, on which the white king stands for a moment, Black creates a threat to the d3-pawn. Of course, such a move, freeing White's bishop and knight, could only be made by a highly dynamic, non-routine player.

27 exf5 ♗xf5
28 ♔e2

I would have preferred to part with a pawn immediately, by returning with the king to g1.

28 . . . ♘g4!

Threatening 29...♘xf2 30 ♔xf2 ♗g4+ 31 ♔e3 ♗xd1.

29 ♖b2 ♘xh2

The conversion of the extra pawn is not difficult.

30 ♔e3 ♖a4
31 ♗e4 ♗xe4
32 ♘xe4 ♘g4+
33 ♔d2 ♘f2!

Remember: with a material advantage it is advisable 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's energetic actions were crowned by complete success. But it seems to me that what mainly told here was the psychological effect of Black's unexpected operation – there are nevertheless some doubts about its objective strength.

Serious consideration should have been given to the reply 27 ♗h3!? suggested by Grigory Kaidanov. After 27...g4 28 ♗g2 Black cannot play 28...♘xd3? 29 ♖xd3 ♖xd3 30 ♘xd3 fxe4+ 31 ♘f4, and nothing particular is promised by 28...fxe4 29 ♗xe4 or 28...f4 29 gxf4 ♖xf4 30 ♔e2.

Instead of 27...g4 combinations involving a sacrifice on d3 look tempting. However, if 27...♖xd3 there follows 28 ♘xd3 fxe4+ 29 ♘f2 ♗xh3+ 30 ♔e2. 27...♘xd3 is stronger, hoping for 28 ♗xf5?! ♘b4!! 29 ♖xd4 ♘xc2 30 ♗xe6 ♖xf2+ 31 ♔xf2 ♘xd4 with a won minor piece ending (32 ♗f5 is bad in view of 32...♘xf5 33 exf5 g4! 34 ♔e3 ♔f6 35 ♔f4 h5). White defends by 28 exf5! ♘xf2 (28...♗xf5 29 ♗xf5 ♖xf5 30 ♔g2 or 28...♘b4 30 ♖xd4 ♘xc2 31 fxe6 ♖xf2+ 32 ♔xf2 ♘xd4 33 ♔e3) 29 ♖xd4 ♘xh3 30 g4 with an unclear ending.

I think that in reply to 27 ♗h3 Black should move his bishop: 27...♗d7!. However, here too White retains some saving chances in a position where he is the exchange down: 28 ♗xf5 ♗a4 29 ♖dd2 ♗xc2 30 ♖xc2, or a pawn down after 30...♘xd3 31 ♖d2 ♘xf2 32 ♖xd4 ♘xe4 33 g4.

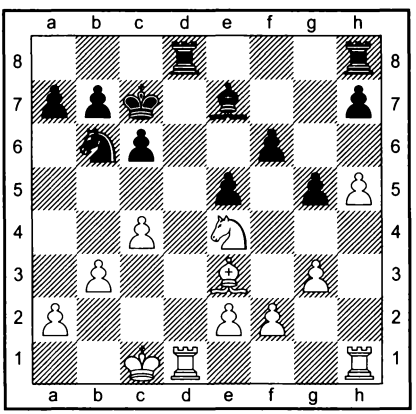
The strongest response to 26...f5 would

seem to be the cool-headed 27 ♔e2!. In the event of 27...f4 28 gxf4 gxf4 there is the satisfactory reply 29 ♗h3!, while after 27...fxe4 28 ♗xe4 ♘g4, as shown by Philipp Schlosser, White has the simple move 29 ♖f1! (29...♘xh2 30 ♖h1).

The transformation of an advantage – giving up some benefits that you already have for the sake of achieving other benefits – is a rather complicated technique, accessible only to players with a subtle understanding of the game. After all, you have to assess the situation correctly, and precisely weigh up the pluses and minuses of the decision being taken, in order not to 'buy a pig in a poke'. And psychologically it is not easy in a favourable position to take sharp decisions, depriving yourself of some advantages gained earlier.

Petrosian – Bannik

25th USSR Championship, Riga 1958



White unexpectedly offered an exchange of bishops.

18 ♗c5!

Why? Here is Petrosian's explanation:

Before deciding on this move, it was essential to thoroughly weigh up everything 'for' and 'against'. It looks illogical, since White voluntarily exchanges his 'good' bishop for the opponent's 'bad' bishop, instead of exchanging it for the knight (18 ♗xb6+) and consolidating his advantage. But on a deeper investigation of the position it becomes clear that after the possible exchange of rooks on the d-file and the transfer of his king to e6, Black covers his vulnerable points and sets up an impregnable position. In this case his 'bad' bishop would play an important role.

For my part I should comment that after 18 g4 ♖xd1+ 19 ♖xd1 ♖d8 20 ♖xd8 ♔xd8 21 ♗xb6+ axb6 22 ♔c2 White also retains excellent chances of success. He plays his king to e4 and his knight to d3, with the idea of a pawn offensive on the queenside, and in some cases even e2–e3 and f2–f4.

18 . . . ♖xd1+

Petrosian recommended the pawn sacrifice 18...♗xc5 19 ♘xc5 ♖he8 20 ♖xd8 ♔xd8 21 ♘xb7+ ♔c7 22 ♘c5 e4 (with the threat of 23...a5 and 24...♖e5), but it is incorrect in view of 23 ♘a6+ ♔b7 24 ♘b4 followed by ♘c2.

19 ♖xd1 ♗xc5

20 ♘xc5 ♖e8

21 ♘e4 ♖e6

21...♖f8 was no better: 22 g4 ♖f7 (22...♘c8 23 ♘c5 ♖f7 24 ♘e6+) 23 ♖d6.

22 g4 a5

23 ♖d3 ♘d7

24 ♔c2

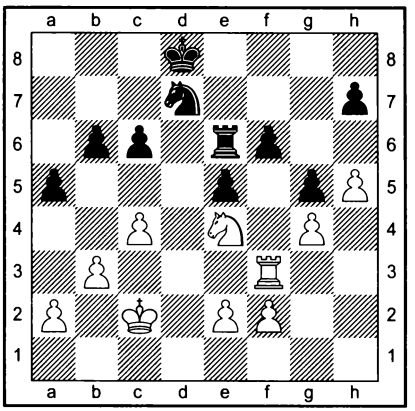
24 ♔d2!?.

24 . . . b6

Anatoly Bannik hopes to ease his defence by exchanging knights with 25...♘c5. White prevents this.

25 ♖f3! ♔d8

(see diagram)



26 a3!

Again Petrosian takes measures against the threat of an exchange – if 26...♔e7 (intending 27...♘c5) he had prepared 27 b4 axb4 28 axb4. Then there follows c4–c5, when the opponent is altogether unable to breath.

26 . . .	**c5**
27 ♔c3	**♔e7**
28 ♖d3	

After provoking ...c6–c5, which has weakened the d5-point, White returns his rook to the d-file.

28 . . .	**♖c6**
29 ♖d5	**♘f8**
30 ♘g3	**♘e6**
31 ♘f5+	**♔e8**
32 e3	**♘c7**

32...♘d8 and 33...♘f7 was more tenacious.

33 ♖d1	**♘e6**
34 ♔d3!	

The time has come to activate the king.

34 . . .	**♖c7**
35 ♔e4	**♖c6**
36 ♘d6+	**♔e7**
37 ♘f5+	**♔e8**
38 ♘d6+	**♔e7**
39 ♘f5+	**♔e8**

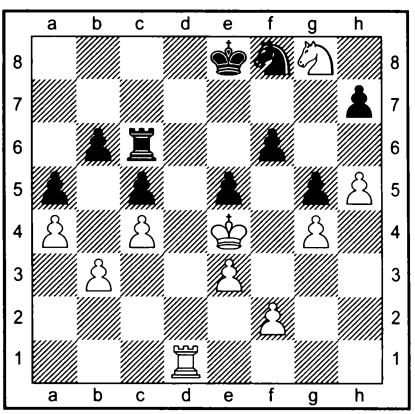
When converting an advantage, experienced players often resort to repeating moves, not only to gain time on the clock, but also in the hope that the opponent will try to change the unfavourable course of the play and, by avoiding the repetition, worsen his own position. However, this should be done carefully, avoiding the three-fold repetition of the position which occurred in the present game. It is strange that neither Petrosian, nor his opponent, noticed that after 39...♔e8 the position would be repeated for the third time and Black had the right to claim a draw. Most probably this all happened in a severe time scramble.

40 a4	**♘d8**
41 ♘h6!	

Not allowing 41...♘f7.

41 . . .	**♘e6**
42 ♘g8	**♘f8**

42...♔f7 43 ♖d7+! ♔xg8 44 ♔d5 is an elegant variation.



Now 43 ♔d5 ♔d7 is pointless, while if 43 ♔f5 there follows 43...♔f7 44 ♘h6+ ♔g7 45 ♖d8 ♘e6 46 ♖e8 ♘c7, and White loses his knight.

How then can he break through the enemy defences? ***When the opponent is condemned to passivity, one is very often***

aided by a very important endgame device – zugzwang.

43 ♖d2! ♔f7

In the event of 43...♘d7 White wins by 44 ♔f5 ♔d8 45 e4 ♔e8 46 f3 ♔d8 47 ♖xd7+! ♔xd7 48 ♘xf6+. Note that, before sacrificing the exchange, it makes sense, in accordance with the principle 'do not hurry!', to make two preparatory pawn moves, strengthening the position to the maximum.

If 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!

The exchange of rooks, strengthening the threat of an invasion by the white king, leads to a won knight ending.

46 . . . ♖xd6
47 ♘xd6+ ♔d7
48 ♘b5 ♘g7

This leads two moves later to zugzwang, but that is also how things conclude in the variation 48...♘f8 49 ♔f5 ♔e7 50 ♘c3 ♘d7 51 ♘d5+ ♔f7 52 e4 h6 53 f3.

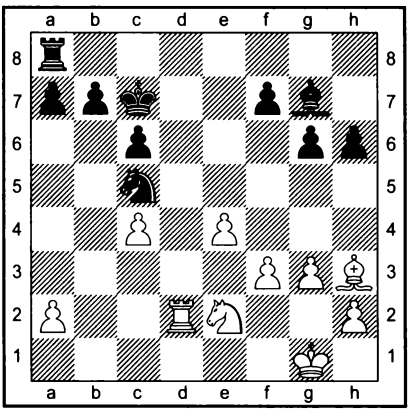
49 h6 ♘e8
50 ♔d5 f5
51 ♔xe5 fxg4
52 ♘c3 ♔e7
53 ♘e4 ♔f7
54 ♔f5 g3
55 fxg3 g4
56 ♘g5+ ♔g8
57 ♔e6 ♘c7+
58 ♔d7 ♘a6
59 e4 ♘b4
60 e5 ♘d3
61 e6

Black resigned.

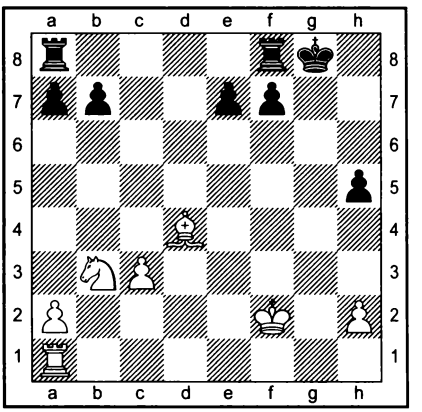
An excellent ending – in it White used many of the principles for converting an advantage that we have been discussing.

In conclusion I offer a few exercises, in each of which you have to choose the most methodical way of proceeding.

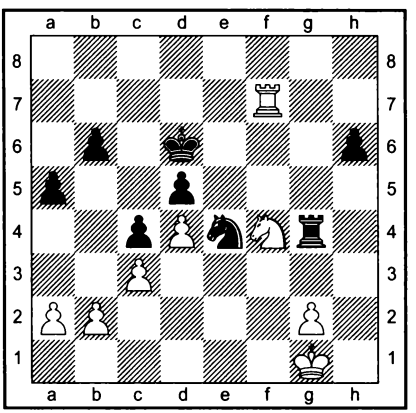
Exercises



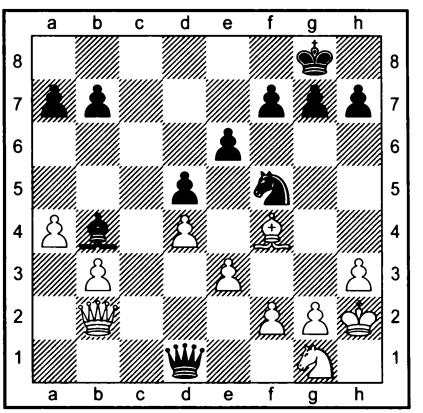
1. Black to move



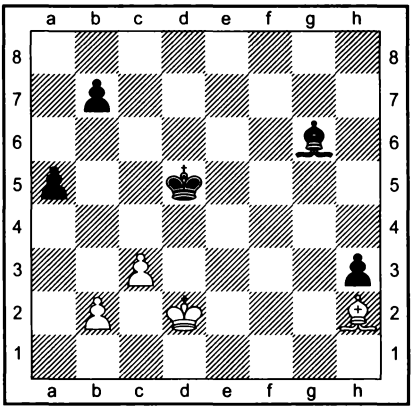
2. White to move



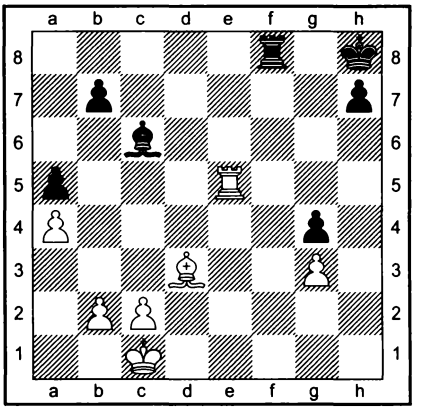
3. White to move



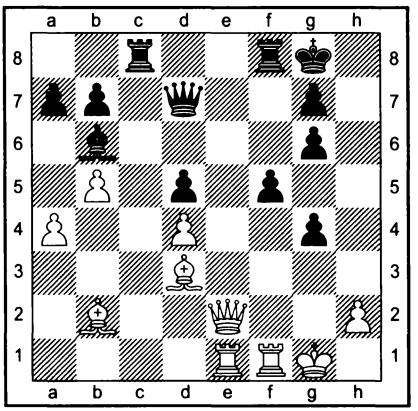
4. Black to move



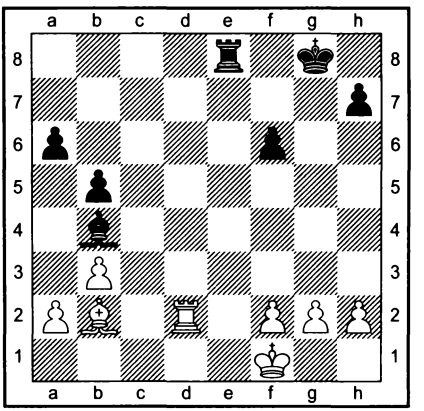
5. Black to move



6. White to move



7. White to move



8. White to move

Solutions

1. Koberl – Szabo (Budapest 1951)

23 . . . a5!

24 ♘c1 a4!

By advancing his a-pawn, Black has prevented the equalising manoeuvre ♘e2–c1–b3, prepared the development of his rook by …♖a8–a6–b6 or …a4–a3 followed by …♖a4, and, finally, created the preconditions for an attack on the opponent's queenside. If now 25 ♘d3, then 25...♖d8 26 ♗f1 ♖d4!.

The game concluded as follows: **25 ♔f2 a3 26 ♔e2 ♗b2! 27 ♖c2** (27 ♘d3 ♘a4!) **27...♖d8 28 ♗f1 ♘a4 29 ♘d3 ♘c3+ 30 ♔e3 ♘xa2! 31 ♘xb2 ♘b4 32 ♖c1 axb2 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 – Kiselyov (Sverdlovsk 1946)

Nothing is given by 22 ♖g1+ ♔h7 23 ♖g7+ ♔h6 or 23 ♖g5 f6 (23...♔h6? 24 ♗e3) 24 ♖xh5+ ♔g6. Black's important defensive move …f7–f6 must be prevented.

22 ♖e1! ♖fe8

If 22...e6 or 22...♖ae8, then 23 ♘c5 is strong.

23 ♖g1+!

23...♔h7 24 ♖g7+ ♔h6 25 ♖xf7 is now bad for Black.

There followed: **23...♔f8 24 ♘c5 ♖ed8**. As was pointed out by grandmaster Matthew Sadler, 24...♖ec8!? was more tenacious, when White should continue 25 ♘d7+! (less good is 25 ♖g5 b6 26 ♖xh5 f6 or 25 ♘xb7 ♖ab8 26 ♗g7+! ♔e8 27 ♖b1 f6 28 ♗h6 ♔d7) 25...♔e8 26 ♘e5 ♔f8 (26...♔d8 27 ♘xf7+; 26...e6 27 ♖g8+ ♔e7 28 ♖g7) 27 ♗e3 e6 28 ♗c5+! ♖xc5 29 ♘d7+ ♔e7 30 ♘xc5.

25 ♖g5! b6 26 ♖xh5 e5 27 ♗xe5! bxc5 28 ♗f6 ♔e8 29 ♖h8+ ♔d7 30 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 31 ♗xd8 ♔xd8 32 ♔f3 (White's outside passed pawn ensures him an elementary 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 given by 48 ♖f5 ♖g5.

48 a4!

With this unhurried move White forestalls the opponent's only sensible plan of …b6–b5–b4 and puts him in zugzwang. After any move by the knight from e4, 49 ♖f6+ is decisive. 48...♖g5 49 ♖h7 is bad for Black, while 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 transpires that 49...♖g5 no longer defends the pawn in view of 50 ♘xd5! ♖xf5 51 ♘e7+ and 52 ♘xf5.

49 . . . ♘d6

50 ♖f6 ♖h4

51 g3 ♖g4

52 ♔g2

Black's position is now completely hopeless. Tony Miles quickly converted his advantage. **52...h5 53 ♘xh5 ♔d7 54 ♔f3 ♖g8 55 ♘f4! ♖xg3+** (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
(Olympiad, Luzern 1982)

White's pieces have hardly any active possibilities. However, he nevertheless has

one chance to become active: ♕e2!, intending ♕b5!. For example, 30...h6? (generally speaking, this pseudo-prophylactic move is useful, but it does not parry the opponent's concrete threat) 31 ♕e2! ♕xb3 (in the endgame White gains a draw without difficulty) 32 ♕b5 b6 33 ♘f3, and the weakness of the f7-point ensures White sufficient counterplay.

30 . . . a6!

The opponent's only active idea is parried, and Black will soon create threats on the queenside by moving his knight across to 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 (Olympiad, Varna 1962, variation from the game)

If a passed pawn is blocked by a bishop, the winning plan usually involves breaking through with the king towards the passed pawn. But doing this immediately does not work: 1...♔e4? 2 ♔e2 ♗h5+ 3 ♔f2 ♔d3 4 ♗c7! a4 5 ♗d6 ♔c2 6 ♗a3 with a draw.

Black must first tie the white king to the defence of the queenside pawns, and only then break through with his king on the opposite wing.

1 . . . ♔c4!

2 ♗c7 a4

3 ♗e5 ♔b3

4 ♔c1 ♗c2!

4...♗h5 also wins.

5 ♗d6

Or 5 c4 b6.

5 . . . a3

6 bxa3 ♔xc3

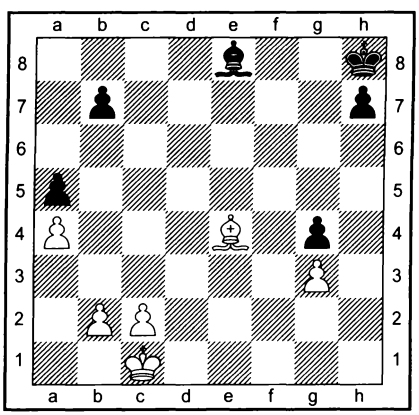
Then ...♗a4, ...b7–b5 and ...♔d3–e2–f3–g2.

6. Smirin – Vogt (Saltsjöbaden 1988/89)

In the event of 33 ♖xa5? ♖f3 34 ♖h5 ♖xg3 35 ♖xh7+ ♔g8 the passed g-pawn ensures Black sufficient counter-chances. The attack on the g3-pawn must be forestalled, and the move **33 ♗e4!?**, made by Ilya Smirin, looks a sensible solution to the problem. There followed **33...♗xa4? 34 ♖xa5 ♗e8** (34...♗c6 35 ♗xc6 bxc6 36 ♖g5) **35 ♗xb7 ♖f1+ 36 ♔d2 ♗g6 37 c4 ♖f2+ 38 ♔c3 ♔g7 39 ♖g5!**, and Black, finding no way out, lost on time.

Lothar Vogt could have exchanged either the rooks, or the bishops. Try to estimate (I mean estimate – to calculate everything is not possible and you have to trust your intuition) whether one of the exchanges (or both) offers realistic chances of saving the game. If your answer is positive, this gives grounds for seeking an alternative move to the one chosen by White in the game.

First let us examine the bishop ending: **33...♖e8 34 ♖xe8+ ♗xe8**.

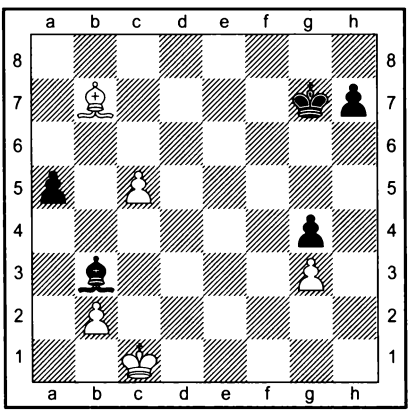


In the magazine *64 – Shakhmatnoe obozrenie* (1996 No.12), grandmaster Igor Zaitsev suggested a clever breakthrough plan: **35 b4!? b6** (Black loses immediately after 35...axb4? 36 a5 or 35...♗xa4? 36 bxa5 followed by 37 ♗xb7) **36 b5 ♗f7!** (it is important to forestall White's main threat c4–c5) **37 ♔d2 ♔g7 38 ♔d3**, restricting

himself to the variation 38...h6 39 c4 ♔f6 40 c5 ♔e5 41 cxb6 ♔d6 42 ♔e3 ♗b3 43 ♗c6 ♗xa4 44 b7 ♔c7 45 b6+ ♔b8 46 ♗xa4. Here I do not agree with him – Black's resources are not yet exhausted. To say nothing of the attempt, by sacrificing the h7-pawn with 38...♔f6, to bring the king to the queenside as quickly as possible in order to hinder c4–c5, he can also play more accurately in the course of the plan examined by Zaitsev.

38...h5 39 c4 ♔f6 40 c5 ♔e7! (but on no account 40...♔e5? – the place for the king is not in the centre, but in front of the pawns) **41 cxb6 ♔d8!**. How can White win here? It is not possible to queen a pawn: 42 ♗f5 ♗b3 43 ♔d4 ♗xa4 44 ♔c5 ♗d1 45 ♔d6 ♗f3 – the bishop has arrived just in time. And the position arising after 42 ♔e3 ♗b3 (42...♔c8) 43 ♗c6 ♔c8 44 b7+ ♔b8 45 b6 ♗d1 is drawn.

The main continuation is **35 ♗xb7 ♗xa4 36 c4**. Black avoids an immediate loss by playing **36...♗b3 37 c5 ♔g7**.



If 38 c6, then 38...♗d5! 39 ♗a8 ♗e6!. In the event of 38 ♔d2 ♔f6 39 ♔c3 Black finds the excellent manoeuvre 39...♗d1! with the idea of ...♗f3. It is not apparent how White can win. For example, after 40 c6 ♗f3 41 ♔c4 h5 42 ♗a8 ♔e7 43 ♔b5 it is bad to play 43...♔d6(d8)? 44 ♔b6 h4 45 c7 or 43...h4 44 gxh4 g3? 45 c7! (now it is clear why the king avoided the d4- and c5-squares – so that after 45...g2 the pawn should not queen with check), but Black continues 43...h4! 44 gxh4 ♔d6!, luring the king to b6 where it will be checked, and then 45...g3 (analysis by Zaitsev).

In the event of **38 ♗c8!** Black has two possibilities:

a) 38...h5 39 c6 h4 40 gxh4 g3 41 ♗h3 ♗e6 42 ♗g2 ♔g6 43 ♔d2 ♔h5 44 ♔e3 ♔xh4 45 ♔d4 ♔g5 46 ♔c5 ♔f4 47 ♔b5 ♔e5 (after 47...♔e3 48 ♔xa5 ♔f2 49 ♗h1 the king does not manage to return to the queenside in time) 48 ♔xa5 ♔d6 49 b4, and White should apparently win.

b) 38...♔f6 39 ♗xg4 ♔e5 (in this way, in Zaitsev's opinion, Black gains a draw) 40 ♔d2 ♔d5 41 ♔c3 ♗a2 42 b4 axb4+ (or 42...♔c6 43 ♗f3+ ♔b5 44 ♗e2+ ♔c6 45 bxa5 ♔xc5 46 ♔d2) 43 ♔xb4 ♔c6 44 ♗f3+ ♔c7 45 ♔c3, and there is nothing to be done against the decisive breakthrough of the king to the kingside. And this means that the exchange of rooks most probably would not have saved Black.

How can the defence be improved? The best saving chances in such situations are usually promised by transposing into a rook ending (everyone knows the saying: 'rook endings are never won'). And so, **33...♗xe4!? 34 ♖xe4**. However, after 34...♖g8? (34...h5? 35 ♖e5) 35 ♔d2!? with the idea of ♔e3–f4 Black is condemned to complete passivity and should certainly lose.

In rook endings you should aim to activate the rook. After **34...♖f1+ 35 ♔d2 ♖f2+ 36 ♔d1** (36 ♔d3 ♖f3+ 37 ♖e3 ♖f2 38 b3 ♔g7) **36...h5! 37 ♖e5 ♖h2 38 ♖xa5 ♔g7** followed by ...♔f6(h6) and ...h5–h4 Black gains counterplay, but is it sufficient to save the game?

There is also another way of transposing

into a rook ending: **33...♖f1+ 34 ♔d2 ♖g1 35 ♗xc6 bxc6 36 ♖xa5 ♖g2+ 37 ♔d3 ♖xg3+ 38 ♔e4**, and now either 38...♖g1 39 ♖c5 ♖f1! (38...g3? 40 ♔f3 g2 41 b3!) 40 ♖xc6 ♔g7 41 a5 h5, or **38...♖g2!? 39 ♖c5 ♖f2! 40 a5 g3 41 ♔e3!** (41 a6 g2 42 a7? g1♕ 43 a8♕+ ♔g7 44 ♕b7+ ♖f7 or 42 ♖g5 ♖xc2 43 a7 ♖c4+) **41...♔g7!?** (41...♖f1 would appear to be worse: 42 ♖g5 c5 43 ♖xg3 ♖a1 44 ♔e4 ♖xa5 45 ♔d5, and White is threatening 46 c4 followed by ♔c6–b6) **42 a6 ♖f1**, and the position is most probably drawn.

In the rook endgame Black would have retained good drawing chances. This factor casts doubts on the plan beginning with 33 ♗e4, and forces us to seek other ideas. Here is a suggestion by grandmaster Viorel Bologan.

33 ♖g5!

In the first instance, as we know, 33...♖f3 must be prevented.

33 . . . ♗xa4

34 ♖xa5!

An unexpected change of direction! In his commentary Smirin considered only 34 ♖xg4 ♗c6 with a probable draw.

34 . . . ♗c6

34...♗e8!? would seem to be more tenacious, aiming at the first convenient opportunity to play ...h7–h5.

35 ♖g5!

The rook resembles an annoying fly.

35 . . . ♗f3

35...♖g8 36 ♖h5 is no better.

36 ♖h5

The immediate 37 ♔d2!? ♖f6 38 b4 is also good.

36 . . . ♖f7

37 ♔d2

After skilfully tying down the enemy pieces, White now wants simply to strengthen his position by advancing his queenside pawns. In reply to 37...♗c6 nothing is given by 38 b4 ♖f2+ (but not 38...♖f3? 39 b5) 39 ♔e1 ♖g2 40 b5 ♗f3 41 ♖xh7+ ♔g8, but 38 ♖h4! is not bad.

Such a plan for converting an advantage (domination and the absence of counterplay for the opponent) is fully in the spirit of Anatoly Karpov. From the viewpoint of the practical player, it is very important that here practically nothing needs to be calculated (in contrast to the 33 ♗e4 variation, where one has to delve both into the bishop, and the rook endgame), and this means that the probability of mistakes is reduced.

Incidentally, the final conclusion about there being only one solution to the initial endgame position (and also about there being only one winning method in the bishop ending) is fully in accordance with Zaitsev's view: *My many years' experience of analysis have convinced me that in tense, balanced positions there cannot be two ways to win.* The same thought was also expressed by another experienced analyst, international master Gavriil Veresov: *In positions on the border between a draw and a loss, we normally find there is only one solution.*

7. Smyslov – Botvinnik (World Championship Match, 3rd Game, Moscow 1954)

Although Black has three pawns for a piece, his position is difficult. Vasily Smyslov could have decided the outcome in the middlegame, by breaking up the opponent's pawn chain and opening lines for his pieces by h2–h3.

27 ♕g2!

Threatening 28 ♖e5.

27 . . . ♖fe8

28 h3!

In the game there followed **27 ♕e6+? ♕xe6 28 ♖xe6**.

Usually piece exchanges are the easiest

way of converting a material advantage. But here, firstly, material is nominally balanced, and secondly (and this is more important), the fewer the pieces remaining on the board, the greater the role played by the pawns.

28...♔f7 29 ♖fe1.

If 29 ♖e5, then 29...♖fe8, when 30 ♖fe1 ♗c7 leads to roughly the same position as in the game. And if 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 convert his extra piece, since his king has nowhere to break through – the black pawns prevent this. But what a wonderful target they presented 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, and the players agreed a draw without resuming.

8. Dvoretsky – Zilberstein
(Ordzhonikidze 1978)

To where should the rook move, e2 or d1? But isn't it all the same – after all, in both cases White remains a sound pawn to the good? But you should not approach the conversion of an advantage so frivolously – otherwise very often disappointment will await you. You should try to discover the difference between moves and choose the one which is in some way better, more accurate than the other.

If 26 ♖e2 there follows 26...♖c8, when 27 ♖e6 ♖c2 is pointless. Having an obvious advantage, you don't want to complicate the play and weaken your queenside pawns by 27 a3 ♗f8. The normal continuation is 27 g3 ♔f7. We note that the black king prevents our rook from becoming active on the e-file, whereas the black rook on the c-file, a long way from the white king, is very active and it restricts the white pieces.

I myself wanted to seize the c-file, Therefore I began checking 26 ♖d1.

26 ♖d1! ♔f7

Black hardly has the right to sacrifice a second pawn by 26...♖c8 27 ♗xf6 ♖c2 28 a4 bxa4 29 bxa4 (29...♗c5 30 ♗d4; 29...♖a2 30 ♖a1). In reserve I also had the transition into 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 in all probability White should gradually win.

27 ♖c1!

Now 27...♗d2 is pointless in view of 28 ♖c7+ and 29 g3. White wants to calmly strengthen his position by g2–g3, ♖c2, and ♔g2–f3; his rook is constantly threatening to break into the opponent's position along the c-file. The resulting situation is more comfortable for White than after 26 ♖e2.

The further course of the game confirmed that my evaluation was correct – the conversion of the advantage proved to be an altogether easy matter.

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** (39...h5 40 g5 fxg5 41 hxg5) **40 ♔f5 ♖f2 41 ♖xf6+ ♔g8 42 ♖a6** Black resigned.

Artur Yusupov

Technical Procedures in a Grandmaster Battle

The game which I would like to show you was played in a grandmaster tournament in the Spanish town of Linares. In its initial stage the two players engaged in a difficult manoeuvring battle in a roughly equal position. Then an ending, slightly better for Black, was reached. It is instructive to follow those typical endgame procedures, thanks to which I was able first to increase, and then successfully convert my advantage.

Salov – Yusupov
Linares 1991
Réti Opening

1 ♘f3	**♘f6**
2 g3	**d5**
3 ♗g2	**c6**
4 0-0	**♗g4**
5 c4	

A normal position for the Réti Opening has arisen. In my view, 5 ♘e5!? ♗f5 6 c4 is interesting, since in the game after Black's reply the active knight advance is no longer possible.

5 . . .	**♘bd7**
6 d3	**e6**
7 b3	**♗d6**
8 ♘a3	

An unusual plan. Now in the event of ...e6–e5 the manoeuvre ♘a3–c2–e3 will highlight a certain weakness in Black's central pawns; however, if he avoids occupying the centre, White's idea does not present any danger.

8 . . .	**0-0**
9 ♘c2	**♖e8**

Black is not in a hurry to disclose his plans.

10 ♗b2	**a5**

Realising that for the moment the advance ...e6–e5 is unfavourable, I carry out another idea that is typical in such positions, trying to 'latch on' to the opponent's queenside. If now 11 a3 ♕b6, and White has problems with the defence of his b3-pawn.

11 ♖b1!

A deep prophylactic move. In reply to 11...a4, apart from 12 b4 Black also has to reckon with 12 bxa4!? ♖xa4 13 ♗xf6 and 14 ♖xb7.

11 . . .	**♗h5**

11...e5 is premature in view of 12 cxd5 cxd5 13 ♘e3 (attacking the bishop) 13...♗h5 14 ♘h4. So why not retreat the bishop in good time?

12 ♘e3

Again White prevents ...e6–e5. For both sides it is difficult now to do anything active. As is usual in such situations, manoeuvring begins without any clearly defined plan. The two players merely operate with 'short' positional or tactical ideas.

12 . . .	**♗c5**
13 ♕d2	

After 13 d4 ♗f8 the e4-point is weakened.

13 . . .	**♕b6**
14 a3!?	**♕a7**

Black intends in some cases to play ...a5–a4. For example, if 15 ♖fd1 there can follow 15...a4 16 b4 ♗xe3 17 fxe3 dxc4.

15 ♘c2 **♗f8**

The bishop moves away from the tempo-gaining b3–b4.

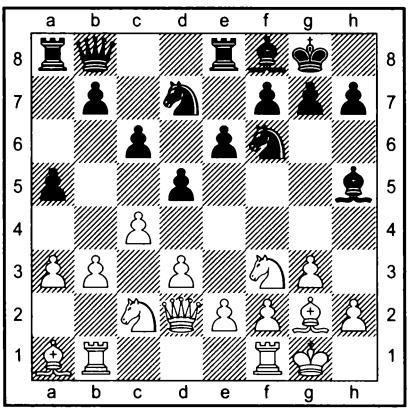
16 ♗d4

16 ♘e5 with equality came into consideration.

16 . . . **♕b8**

17 ♗a1

White thought that he had slightly improved the position of his bishop and worsened the position of the opponent's queen.



17 . . . **e5!?**

After all these clever manoeuvres I decided it was time for activity in the centre, since the move ♘c2–e3 does not have to be feared – the a3-pawn demands constant concern. Even so, this advance also has definite minuses – it weakens the d5-pawn and the f5-square.

18 ♘h4 **♕d8!?**

The opposition of the queens is advantageous to Black – in some cases the undefended state of the white queen may tell.

19 ♘f5

The position is roughly equal. The slight pressure of the white pieces is neutralised by Black's superior pawn formation.

19 . . . **♗g6**

20 ♘h4 **♗h5**

21 ♘f5 **♗g6**

22 ♗h3?!

The 'grandmaster draw' after 22 ♘h4 would have been the logical outcome. In his desire to play on, Valery Salov commits a significant inaccuracy – he loses control of the e4-point. I was able to exploit the 'hanging' position of the white pieces.

22 . . . **a4!**

The long-awaited advance!

23 cxd5

I had reckoned with this possibility and I had prepared a simple intermediate operation. But White had no choice: it was bad to play 23 bxa4? dxc4 24 dxc4 ♘e4 (with the threat of 25...♘g5) 25 ♕xd7 ♕xd7 26 ♘h6+ gxh6 27 ♗xd7 ♖e7 28 ♖xb7 ♘c5, or 23 b4? dxc4 24 dxc4 ♘e4 25 ♕xd7 (25 ♕e3 ♘g5) 25...♕xd7 26 ♘h6+ gxh6 27 ♗xd7 ♖e7 28 ♗h3 (28 ♖bd1 ♘f6) 28...♘d2 (28...♘g5).

23 . . . **axb3!**

24 ♖xb3

24 dxc6 bxc2 25 ♖xb7 did not work in view of 25...♘c5 26 c7 ♕d5.

24 . . . **♘c5**

25 ♖bb1 **♘xd5**

Now Black's position is preferable – the opponent has a weak pawn on a3.

26 ♘fe3

If 26 ♖fd1 Salov was apparently concerned about 26...e4! 27 d4 e3!.

26 . . . **♕g5**

Black continues the idea of exploiting the slight superiority of his pawn structure. 26...♘c7!? 27 ♘c4 f6, maintaining the tension, was also possible.

27 ♗g2 **♘xe3**

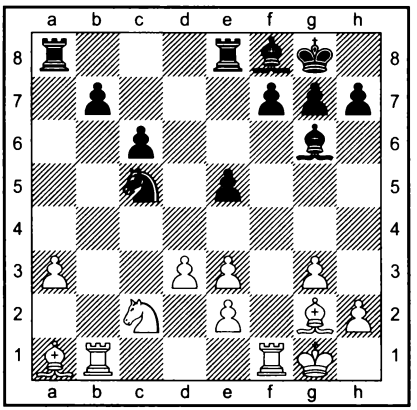
28 ♕xe3

28 h4!? came into consideration. In the event of 28...♕h6 29 ♘xe3! ♖xa3 White's pawn deficit would have been compensated

by the bad position of the black queen, while after a different retreat he would have captured on e3 with his queen, avoiding a further spoiling of his pawn structure.

28 . . . **♕xe3**

29 fxe3



Of course, the endgame is more pleasant for Black, but it is not easy for him to increase his advantage.

29 . . . **f6**

Black reinforces his e5-pawn and prepares ...♗f7.

30 ♗c3! **♖a7**

31 ♗b4 **♗f7!**

32 ♔f2

Salov defends in accordance with all the rules of the endgame – he covers his weaknesses and brings his king towards the centre.

32 . . . **♘b3**

33 ♗xf8 **♔xf8**

34 ♖b2 **♖e7**

When short of time it is useful to over-protect the important b7-pawn.

35 ♖fb1 **♘d2!**

In time-trouble Black gains time on the clock by repeating moves.

36 ♖d1 **♘b3**

37 ♔e1 **♘c5**

All the same the knight cannot be maintained at b3, and Black switches 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 from carrying out his plan. 39 ♖db1! ♗a2 40 ♖a1 ♗e6 41 ♖ab1 was stronger, when the pressure on b7 does not allow ...c6–c5 to be played.

39 . . . **c5**

40 ♖bb1?

A time-trouble error. After 40 ♖b5! ♗e8 41 ♖bb1 b5 White could have included his bishop in the defence: 42 ♗d5!.

40 . . . **♖d7!**

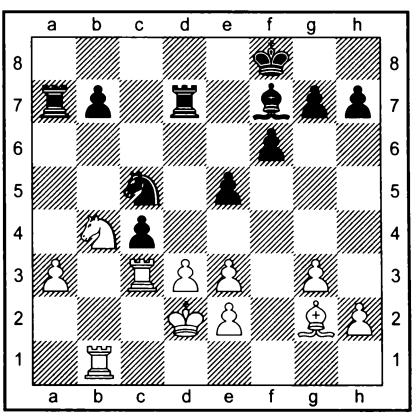
41 ♖dc1 **c4**

Here Salov spent a lot of time, apparently weighing up which was the lesser evil – the loss of a pawn or passivity, – and he chose the latter. In the variation 42 ♖b5 cxd3 43 ♘b4 (or 43 exd3 ♗c4 44 ♖xb7 ♖xd3+) 43...dxe2+ 44 ♔xe2 White does not have full compensation for the pawn.

42 ♘b4 **♘c5**

43 ♖c3

Now 43...♘b3+ 44 ♔e1 ♖xa3 is unfavourable because of 45 dxc4.



43 . . . e4!

Formally the move made by me is against the rules (pawns are supposed to be kept on squares of the opposite colour to your own bishop), but in fact it is very strong, since it shuts in the bishop on g2.

44 d4

Forced.

44 . . . h5!

44...♘b3+ 45 ♔e1 ♖xa3 46 ♗xe4 ♖a4 also looks good, driving back the knight and then advancing the pawns. But in this case the white pieces would have become active. I preferred to play for a second weakness in the opponent's position – shutting the bishop out of play (the first weakness is the a3-pawn).

45 ♔e1

45 h3 was better, in order after 45...f5 to have the reply 46 g4 (or 46 ♖f1 g6 47 g4).

45 . . . ♘a4

46 ♖c2 f5

The bishop on g2 has ended up on a square from which it is unable to escape. After the game Salov heatedly exclaimed that it would have been better if it hadn't existed at all – then he could at least have tried to obtain some counterplay on the kingside.

47 h3

Trying to activate the bishop.

47 . . . g6!

The last black pawn occupies a square of the same colour as its bishop. Rules are rules, but concrete considerations come first! It is important to be able to answer g3–g4 with ...h5–h4!

48 ♘a2 ♖a5

49 g4 h4

The trap has snapped shut!

50 ♔d2

Probably the only chance. White intends play against the h4-pawn with 51 gxf5 gxf5 52 ♖f1 followed by ♖f4. In the event of 50 ♘c3 ♘xc3 51 ♖xc3 b5 (and then ...♖da7) Black is effectively a piece up.

50 . . . ♔g7

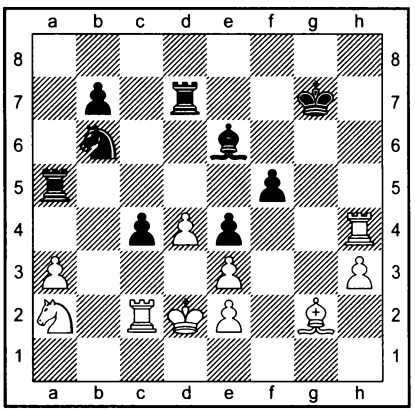
51 ♖f1 ♗e6

I decided not to defend the h4-pawn with the king, fearing that after 51...♔h6 52 ♖f4 ♔g5 53 gxf5 gxf5 54 ♖c1 it would be attacked by the rook from g1. Instead of this Black exploits the departure of the white rook from the queenside and begins decisive action there. All fully in accordance with the principle of two weaknesses.

52 ♖f4 ♘b6

53 gxf5 gxf5

54 ♖xh4



54 . . . c3+!

The quickest way of converting the advantage. The pawn moves into a three-fold attack, but nothing can capture it. For example, if 55 ♘xc3, then 55...♘c4+ 56 ♔c1 ♘xe3 is decisive.

55 ♔c1 ♗b3

56 ♘xc3 ♗xc2

57 ♔xc2 ♖xa3

I was expecting my opponent to capitulate, but unexpectedly White sacrificed his knight.

58 ♘xe4 fxe4

59 ♗xe4 **♖xe3**
60 ♗d3 **♖g3**
61 ♔d2

The time control was reached, and I immediately decided to seal my move, to avoid any chance accidents at the board. Of course, with an extra rook I could have continued playing, but it is my conviction that in a won position one should not do this. Tiredness after six hours' play sometimes leads to mistakes such as 61...♘d5?? 62 ♖h7+.

61 . . . **♔g8**

I should mention that, despite my extra rook, I analysed the adjourned position quite accurately, to make my life easier during the resumption. After all, a few pitfalls still remained.

62 ♔c3

Not the most tenacious. Now Black forces the exchange of the minor pieces.

62 . . . **♘d5+**
63 ♔c4 **♘e3+**
64 ♔c5 **♖g5+**
65 ♔b4 **♘f5**
66 ♗xf5 **♖xf5**
67 e4!?

In such situations it is useful to ask yourself the question: why doesn't the opponent resign? In the event of 67...♖xd4+?? White's last trap would have worked – 68 ♔c3 ♖a4 (or 68...♖fd5) 69 ♖g4+!.

67 . . . **♖f1**
68 d5 **♖c7**

White resigned.

In my view, the conversion of the advantage in this game was rather instructive. Black made use of several important procedures in such endings:

– when short of time he repeated moves, and later too did not hurry to force events, but gradually strengthened his position;

– not restricting myself to a direct attack on one weakness (the a3-pawn), I tried to operate broadly, breaking up the opponent's defences from different sides: play against the d3-pawn, restriction of the light-square bishop – the point is that during a game it is very difficult to switch from the defence of one point to another (especially in time-trouble);

– after obtaining a won position, Black was not in a hurry to mentally chalk up a point in the tournament table, but he continued playing carefully, maintaining his vigilance to the end.

Mark Dvoretsky

Lessons from One Particular Endgame

I will not come to the promised endgame straight away, because first I should like to discuss certain aspects of studying chess in general.

At the board we operate with moves and variations, but they are based on our understanding of the game, the development of which depends considerably on study and training work carried out earlier. So that this work should be productive, it is insufficient merely to memorise specific information – it is important that on the basis of it chess images arise. The most vivid images, which engrave themselves for a long time in your memory, are original and deep general ideas, manifested in clear, convincing variations.

Many ideas that are valuable for our self-improvement are scattered about in commentaries to games, written by great players. When studying such commentaries I often look at the words even more than at the moves. As soon as I see an idea which seems original and interesting, and in some way new for me, I immediately record it together with the position in which it occurred. I also record examples which successfully demonstrate rules and evaluations which have long been familiar to me – after all, it is useful to repeat them from time to time, and if possible in a vivid and memorable form. As a result I have been able to accumulate a quite extensive collection of the most diverse chess ideas, illustrated by excellent examples.

Young players, when reading books or listening to lectures, usually devote most of their attention to variations, disregarding with their eyes (or ears) the arguments of the author. I am convinced that in this way they lose much – after all, often the most valuable information is concentrated in the words. Sometimes it is worth dwelling even on simple, seemingly banal things – by repeating them, and discovering new aspects to them, you reinforce your understanding of chess.

It stands to reason that in fact everything is far more complicated than it appears on paper. Most commentaries in chess magazines and books are superficial, and sometimes no more than hack-work. Once an experienced master explained to me how he worked: If you place two fingers over a page of text and you see that under them there are only moves, it means that it is time to give a comment. You write something like 'The Ruy Lopez always leads to a tense and complicated struggle', and your fee increases by a rouble.

The ability to distinguish real feelings and thoughts from such verbal rubbish will come in useful to you not only in chess.

Often the reverse picture occurs. The author seemingly has some interesting ideas, but he is not capable of illustrating them with worthy examples. If a grandmaster annotates his own game, this problem normally does not arise: his general thoughts are closely linked with what happened on the board. But as soon as he decides to write an article or book on some extraneous topic, problems immediately arise, since he may not have appropriate material to hand.

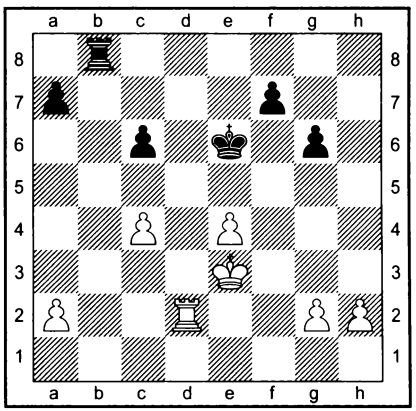
I remember looking through a book by Alexey Suetin *Put k masterstvu* (The path to mastery). The headings of many chapters seemed interesting, for example: 'Play by analogy', 'Unpromising positions', 'Loss of consistency', 'Problems of time utilisation when choosing a move', and so on. Here some genuinely important questions of chess mastery were raised. The book would have been excellent, if it had also been possible to obtain answers to them. Alas, in fact it was hack-work, like, in my view, nearly all Suetin's books. The author delved into hardly any of the problems raised. Most of the examples were either feeble, or superficially analysed, and were often very weakly linked to the topic in question. And without adequate analytical material it is impossible to draw informative conclusions. Besides, where was he to find good material? – after all, at some point Suetin practically gave up serious play and did not conduct any real training work. Of course, something remained in his memory – and thus to the chapter headings he attached the first episodes that came into his head, if they were even slightly appropriate. You look at the headings and you become curious about how the author understands the given problem. You read further, and you see: he doesn't understand it at all, and gets by merely with general words.

Probably the correct order of work is not from topic to example, but vice versa: from an interesting, well-analysed example to the generalisations stemming from it. This is how we will study the classic ending which I offer for your attention – incidentally, one of my favourites.

The heritage of the famous masters from the past provides an invaluable source for self-improvement. It is important only that you do not restrict yourself to rapidly playing the book variations on the board, but endeavour to check and understand them. And then from even a comparatively small amount of material you will be able to extract a great deal of interesting and valuable information.

Capablanca – Alekhine

New York 1924



It is White to move. He is a pawn up, but this advantage is not easy to convert (remember the semi-joking, semi-serious aphorism of Siegbert Tarrasch: 'Rook endings are never won'). Let us decide what candidate moves (or more precisely, what candidate plans) we have available. It is useful to immediately gather as many ideas as possible – otherwise, by delving too early into calculation, it will be easy to miss something that is indeed important.

39 c5 immediately suggests itself. The threat is 40 ♖d6+, winning the c6-pawn.

The second suggestion is 39 ♔d4, in the hope of breaking through with the king to c5.

There is also another plan: 39 h4 with the idea of 40 g4, 41 ♖h2 and so on – the white rook will occupy an ideal position to the rear of the passed h-pawn.

As you see, White has numerous tempting possibilities. In order to make the correct choice, it will be essential to take into account the opponent's counterplay.

Let's take them in order and begin with 39 c5. If 39...♔e5?! there follows 40 ♖d7. In the event of 39...♖b4?! nothing is given by 40 ♖d6+ ♔e5 41 ♖xc6 ♖xe4+ and 42...♖a4, but 40 ♔f4! followed by 41 ♖d6+ is far more dangerous. The best defence was suggested by Alexander Alekhine: 39...♖b5! 40 ♖d6+ ♔e5 41 ♖xc6 (41 ♖d7 ♖a5 or 41...♖xc5) 41...♖a5. With such an increase in the activity of his pieces, Black should not lose.

Now let's examine 39 ♔d4. Obviously, the king cannot be allowed to go to c5. 39...♔d6? 40 e5+ does not help, and therefore the reply 39...♖d8+ is forced. After 41 ♔c3 the threat of c4–c5 has become more serious, since now the c5-pawn may be defended by the king. However, it is not hard to forestall White's plan: 41...♖h8! 42 h3 ♖h5 (42...♖h4 also comes into consideration). The rook is well placed on the 5th rank – it controls the c5-square (if 43 ♔b4 a5+) and is able to attack any of the enemy pawns. It is evident that White has not achieved much.

It remains to verify 39 h4. The reply 39...♖h8! suggests itself (39...f5? 40 exf5+ is bad for Black). White plays 40 g3, preparing 41 ♖h2 and 42 g4. How can this plan be countered? Black is saved by the same rook manoeuvre: 40...♖h5! 41 ♖h2 ♖a5!. Now 42 g4? is unfavourable because of 42...♔e5 43 h5? ♖a3+ and 44...♖xa2+, and if 42 ♔f4 there follows 42...f6!, preparing in the event of g3–g4 to exchange the opponent's most dangerous pawn by ...g6–g5+!.

We have established that White does not achieve anything with the direct implementation of any of our intended plans. How can he nevertheless continue playing for a win?

Note that everywhere Black was saved by the switching of his rook onto the 5th rank. Let's remember about prophylaxis and try to find a way to prevent the opponent's main defensive idea.

Alekhine suggests the surprising move **39 h3!!**. Now if 39...♖h8 the h-pawn is not hanging and White replies. 40 c5. After 40...♖h4 the reply 41 ♖d6+ ♔e5 42 ♖xc6 ♖xe4+ and 43...♖a4 is unconvincing, but 41 ♖d8! is very strong. At the same time Black must now seriously reckon with 40 ♔d4, for example: 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 an obvious advantage. 39...♔e5 is dangerous because of 40 ♖d7. There only remains 39...c5 40 ♖d5 (if 40 h4, then 40...♖b4!, but not 40...♖h8 41 g3 ♖h5 42 ♖h2, and the 5th rank is too short) 40...♖b2 41 g4 (41 ♖xc5 ♖xg2 42 ♖a5 is also good) 41...♖xa2 42 ♖xc5 ♖a3+ 43 ♔d4 ♖xh3 44 ♖a5 with excellent winning chances for White.

It is significant that José Raúl Capablanca – a player with brilliant intuition – was unable to come to the correct decision, suggested by Alekhine – a player with a totally different way of thinking. A move such as 39 h3!! cannot be called intuitive, based on 'general considerations' – it could be found only after a deep and very concrete penetration into the secrets of the position.

Many years ago I was helping Botvinnik by giving some lessons at his school. On one occasion, at the request of Mikhail Moiseevich, I prepared an extensive endgame lesson for the young Garry Kasparov, which included in particular an independent analysis of the Capablanca–Alekhine ending. Garry found another way of forestalling the switching of the black rook to the 5th rank – the move **39 g3!!**. It appeals to me perhaps even more than Alekhine's recommendation, since it contains an additional active idea: 40 h4!. And there do not appear to be any drawbacks: for example, if 39...g5 there

is a pleasant choice between 40 h4 and 40 ♖f2 with the threats of 41 ♖f5 or 41 ♔d4.

Now let us see how the game went.

39 h4?! **♖h8**

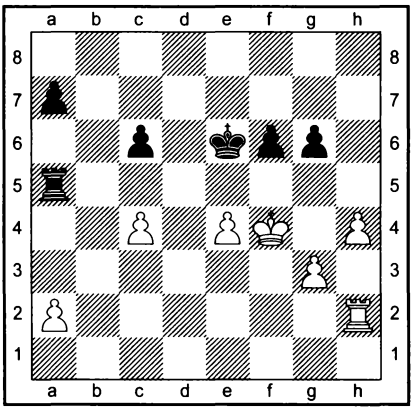
40 g3 **♖h5!**

41 ♖h2 **♖a5**

42 ♔f4

42 g4? ♔e5; 42 ♔d4? c5+.

42 . . . **f6!**



The main danger has been eliminated – if 43 g4 there is the reply 43...g5+!. The play takes on a manoeuvring character. Capablanca skilfully sets his opponent one problem after another, so that Alekhine is required to defend with exceptional care.

43 ♖c2 **♖e5**

Otherwise after 44 c5 the rook would have been cut off from the kingside and would no longer have been preventing White from playing g3–g4 and h4–h5.

44 c5

A double-edged move, but otherwise the position cannot be strengthened. White restricts the mobility of the enemy rook, but his own rook will be tied to the defence of the c5-pawn.

44 . . . **♖h5**

45 ♖c3

Threatening an exchange of pawns advantageous to White: 46 ♖a3 ♖xc5 47 ♖xa7.

45 . . . **a5!**

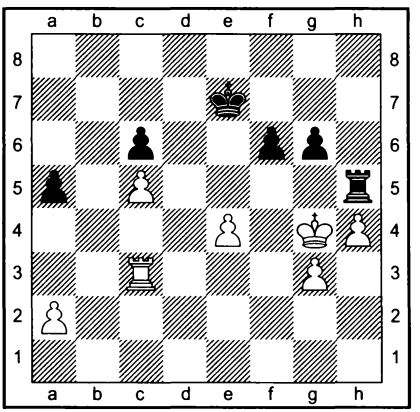
46 ♖c2 **♖e5**

47 ♖c3 **♖h5**

48 ♔f3! **♔e7!**

Both 48...♔e5? 49 ♖a3 and 48...♖e5? 49 g4 would have been incorrect.

49 ♔g4!



White wants to strengthen his position by ♔h3 and g3–g4. What can be done to oppose this plan?

49 . . . **♔f7!**

In reply to 50 ♔h3 Alekhine had prepared 50...g5! 51 ♔g4 ♔g6. Then he exchanges pawns on h4 and oscillates with his rook between e5 and h5.

50 ♖c4! **♔g7!**

White's subtle manoeuvres have forced the black king (which is obliged to control the g6-square) to move away from the centre. Capablanca sees that the most appropriate moment for transforming his advantage has arrived. He gives up his extra pawn, but activates his rook to the maximum and drives the opponent's king onto the back rank.

51 ♖d4! **♖xc5**

52 ♖d7+ ♔f8

52...♔h6? would have been risky: 53 ♖f7 ♖c4 54 ♔f3 ♖c1 55 ♔e3 ♖f1 56 ♔e2 ♖a1 57 ♖xf6 ♖xa2+ 58 ♔f3.

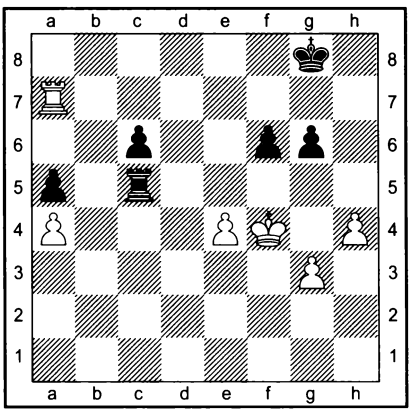
53 ♔f4

If 53 ♖a7 there is the reply 53...♖c4!?, but after the move in the game Black could have played 53...♖c2!?.

53 . . . ♔g8

54 ♖a7 ♔f8

55 a4! ♔g8



White has done everything possible to strengthen his position and now is the time for decisive action. The logical consequence of his preceding strategy would have been the variation 56 ♔e3! ♖c3+ 57 ♔d4 ♖xg3 58 ♖xa5 ♔f7 (in the event of 58...♖g4 nothing is given by 59 ♖a7 ♖xh4 60 a5 ♖h5!, but the reply 59 h5 is unpleasant) 59 ♖a8 or 59 h5. In Alekhine's opinion, Black is able to hold the position, but at any event he would have had to defend accurately.

Unfortunately, Capablanca did not want to sharpen the play and he chose a different plan, which leads by force to a draw.

56 g4 g5+!

57 hxg5 ♖xg5!

Of course, not 57...fxg5+? 58 ♔e3 – there is no reason to give the opponent a passed pawn.

58 ♖a6 ♖c5

59 ♔e3 ♔f7

60 ♔d4 ♖g5

61 ♖xc6 ♖xg4

62 ♖c5 ♖g5!

In this position the players agreed a **draw** in view of the variation 63 ♖xg5 fxg5 64 ♔e5 ♔g6! 65 ♔d6 ♔f7! (after 65...g4 66 e5 Black would still have had to defend a queen ending) 66 ♔e5 (66 e5?! ♔e8; 66 ♔d7 ♔f6) 66...♔g6!.

With what topic should the ending of the Capablanca–Alekhine game be linked? After a little thought you will see that there is no clear answer – in the process of studying the ending various aspects have come to light, identically important for the practical player. Let's remember what we have seen:

1) Excellent example of a practical rook endgame. Among the numerous evaluations and methods typical of this type of ending, with which the two players operated, I will single out a comparatively less trivial idea, which is very clearly expressed here. An open line, for which a rook should aim, may be not only a file, as usual, but sometimes also a rank.

2) Model example of accurate defence. It is instructive to follow how Alekhine, without losing his presence of mind in a difficult situation, move by move patiently resolved the problems facing him.

3) Various aspects of the problem of converting an advantage. Here we can mention: the importance of looking for and forestalling the opponent's counter-chances (at the very start of the ending); the maximum strengthening of White's position before changing the pattern of the play; the timely transformation of an advantage (the

51st move); finally, the need at some point (the 56th move) to abandon positional manoeuvring and choose a concrete course, involving precise calculation.

4) Demonstration of the importance of prophylactic thinking. Without it, of course, it is not possible to find the brilliant solution to the position on the 39th move. And subsequently too Alekhine's defence was based on taking account of all the opponent's active plans and forcefully opposing them.

5) Grounds for reflection about chess players with an intuitive way of thinking. We have seen which decisions are difficult for them or altogether inaccessible. The conclusion suggests itself, that even if you possess splendid intuition, you should develop in yourself the ability to constantly delve into the concrete details of the position and if necessary to accurately calculate variations.

For a chess player it is very important to evaluate objectively the strengths and weaknesses of a forthcoming opponent. A source of such evaluations is provided by an analysis of games played by him. Some of them will prove especially informative.

In the 1920s Alekhine was preparing for his duel for the world crown against Capablanca. This is what he recorded for himself after the New York tournament of 1924:

I took home with me from this tournament one valuable moral victory, and that was the lesson I learned from my first game with Capablanca, which had the effect of a revelation on me. Having outplayed me in the opening, having reached a won position in the middlegame and having carried over a large part of his advantage into a rook ending, the Cuban then allowed me to neutralise his superiority in that ending and finally had to make do with a draw. That made me think, for Capablanca had certainly been trying very hard in this game, so as to draw nearer to Dr. Lasker, who was in the lead, and who had won against me the previous day. I was convinced that if I had been in Capablanca's position I should certainly have won that game. I had finally detected a slight weakness in my future opponent: increasing uncertainty when confronted with stubborn resistance! Of course I had already noticed Capablanca committing occasional slight inaccuracies, but I should not have thought that he would be unable to rid himself of this failing even when he tried his utmost. This was an exceedingly important lesson for the future!

Later, in a famous article 'The 1927 New York tournament as a prologue to the battle in Buenos Aires for the world championship', Alekhine once again emphasised the role that the game with Capablanca had played for him:

This game, incidentally, was the starting point for my understanding of Capablanca's chess individuality.

I will also give some other assessments by Alekhine of the style of his historic opponent, which are confirmed by the ending we have examined. They may seem excessively sharp, but to some extent this is explained by the very tense personal relations which developed between the two champions. But objectively these assessments seem to me to be just (of course, only 'on a grand scale' – taking into account the very high standard of play in question).

...Capablanca is by no means an exceptional master of the endgame; his skill in this stage of the game is mainly of a technical character and other masters in certain fields of the endgame surpass or used to surpass him (for example, Rubinstein in rook endings).

...In Capablanca's games with the years one observes increasingly less delving into

the details of the position, and the reason for this is his unshakeable (I am talking all the time about the period before Buenos Aires) confidence in the infallibility of his intuition. The saddest thing for Capablanca is that this system of his of operating with 'good' moves almost without exception proved sufficient, since to a great extent he was opposed in the positional sense by a more or less helpless weapon. On account of this 'lack of punishment' in employing not the best moves, he, on the one hand, got out of the habit of that concentration of thought during a game, which alone can give a guarantee against possible elementary oversights, and on the other hand – his self-confidence grew immeasurably and turned almost into self-worship…

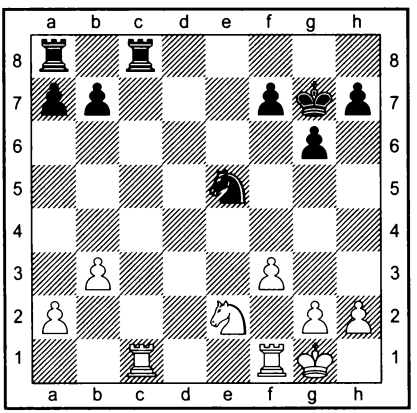
Mark Dvoretsky

Grandmaster Technique

I

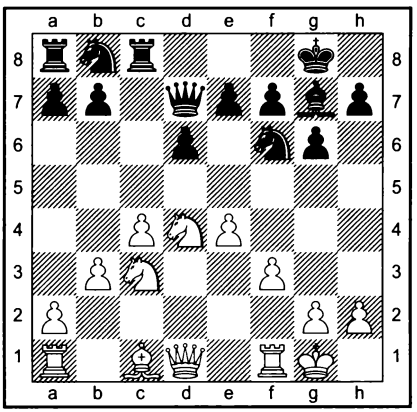
In August 2005 I gave a lecture in the London Chess Centre and showed the following position, taken from the magazine *64 Shakhmatnoe obozrenie* – the ending of the game was published there with notes by the winner Evgeny Najer.

Yandemirov – Najer
Russian Club Championship,
Dagomys 2004



Grandmaster Jonathan Rowson, who was present at the lecture, surprised me by remarking that this position is reached more or less by force in one of the modern opening variations, and that he himself had once played it.

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 ♗b5+ ♗d7 4 ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 5 c4 ♘f6 6 ♘c3 g6 7 0-0 ♗g7 8 d4 cxd4 9 ♘xd4 0-0 10 f3 ♖c8 11 b3



11...d5!

A clever blow in the centre, first employed, I think, by Vasily Ivanchuk against Alexander Delchev in the 2003 European Championship. In this way Black solves his opening problems – in fact, it is now his opponent who has to act carefully, to avoid getting into difficulties.

12 exd5 (12 e5 is dubious in view of 12...♘e8 13 ♘xd5 e6 14 ♘c3 ♗xe5) **12...♘xd5 13 ♘xd5 e6 14 ♗h6 exd5 15 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 16 cxd5** (16 ♘b5!?) **16...♕xd5 17 ♘e2**

Here peace was concluded in the game Gdanski–Kempinski from the 2004 Polish Championship, and a move (and a year) earlier in a game Yandemirov–Biryukov. And in general, looking in a computer database, I saw that in most of the games where this variation occurred there was effectively no play – the contestants agreed a draw somewhere between the 11th and 23rd moves.

In the summer of 2003 I published an article in the Russian newspaper *Shakhmatnaya nedelya* and on the *Chesscafe* site (it was also published somewhere else on the Internet) with a suggestion that a rule should be introduced forbidding conversations between players during play and, hence, premature draw agreements. Two years later my suggestion was successfully adopted at the super-tournament in Sofia. Its universal adoption would, I am sure, not only lengthen games, but also lower the percentage of draws. As we will now see, even in such a quiet and seemingly lifeless situation, where a draw is indeed the most probable outcome, it is possible to seek resources and pose problems for the opponent.

17...♕e5 18 ♕d4 ♘c6 19 ♕xe5+ ♘xe5 20 ♖ac1

We have reached the position in the first diagram. The at first sight mysterious move found by grandmaster Najer is the strongest – it was thanks to it that he won the game.

20 . . . b6!!

Let us try and reproduce Black's logic. First he probably checked 20...♘d3 and realised that after 21 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 22 ♖d1 the position was equal. Then his attention was drawn to the possibility of 20...♖xc1 21 ♖xc1 ♖d8 with the idea of 22...♖d2. Najer is an experienced player and he knows that in the first instance you must check active replies by the opponent – in the given case 22 ♖c7. There appears to be nothing better than 22...♖d2 23 ♔f2 ♖xa2 24 ♖xb7, but here Black's advantage is of a purely academic nature, and he has practically no chances of success. As was confirmed by the game Li Ruofan–Rowson, 2004.

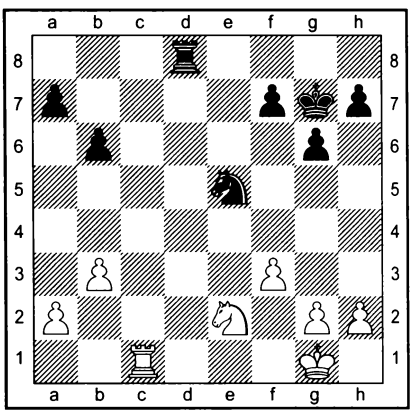
But after ...b7–b6 in this variation Black would remain a pawn up, since from a2 his rook defends the a7-pawn.

21 ♖fd1?!

After the game Valery Yandemirov suggested that he should have played 21 f4. Of course, advancing the f-pawn is not something that one wants to do – one can decide on this move only after employing prophylactic thinking and clearly appreciating the danger threatening White.

21 . . . ♖xc1

22 ♖xc1 ♖d8



Now after 23 ♖c7 ♖d2 the only way of avoiding the loss of a pawn is 24 ♘c3 (bad is 24 ♘c1?? ♖d1+ 25 ♔f2 ♖xc1), which allows the unpleasant pin 24...♖c2. The situation after 25 ♘b5 ♖xa2 26 ♖xa7 ♖b2 looks dangerous for White: the b3-pawn is under attack, and he has to reckon with the manoeuvre ...♘d3–f4(e1).

He should probably have restricted himself to the accurate move 23 ♖c2. But one does not want to place the rook passively, especially since after 23...♖d1+ 24 ♔f2 ♘d3+ the king has to be moved to the side – 25 ♔g3, since in the event of 25 ♔e3?! ♘e1 26 ♖c7 ♘xg2+ 27 ♔f2 ♖d2 28 ♖xa7 ♘f4 29 ♔e3 ♖xe2+ 30 ♔xf4 ♖xh2 White comes out a pawn down.

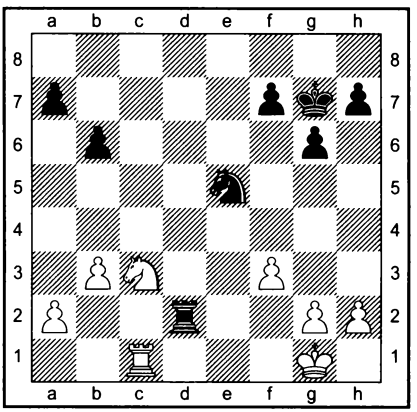
It is quite probable that after 23 ♖c2, and perhaps also after 23 ♖c7, the position would objectively have remained drawn. But it is one thing to calmly analyse at home,

and with the aid of a computer, and quite different to take a decision at the board. A forced draw is not apparent, defending is unpleasant – in such a situation it is easy to lose your bearings.

23 ♘c3?

A serious mistake! White wants to exchange the rooks, but fails to take account of the fact that the black king will be the first to reach the centre. In a knight ending a more active king is a very important factor.

23 . . . ♖d2



24 ♖e1?!

Obviously, when he made his previous move, White was intending the manoeuvre ♖e1–e2. Of course, the enemy rook on the 2nd rank cannot be tolerated, but he should have exchanged the rooks in a slightly more favourable way: by 24 ♔f1 (with the same idea: ♖e1–e2) 24...♘d3 (24...f6? 25 ♘e4) 25 ♖d1 ♖xd1+ 26 ♘xd1 ♔f6 27 ♘c3 ♔e5. In the game this same position was reached with Black to move.

White can make use of his extra tempo by playing 28 g3 (28 ♔e2 is evidently weaker: 28...♘f4+ 29 ♔f2 a6 30 g3 ♔d4! 31 ♘e4 ♘d5). But here too Black has a pleasant choice between 28...a6 29 ♔e2 ♔d4 30 ♔d2 ♘e5 31 ♘e2+ ♔c5 32 ♔e3 ♔b4 and 28...♔d4!? 29 ♘b5+ ♔c5 30 ♘xa7 ♘c1 31 ♔e1 ♘xa2 32 ♔d2 ♘b4 (and 33...♘d5) with an appreciable advantage.

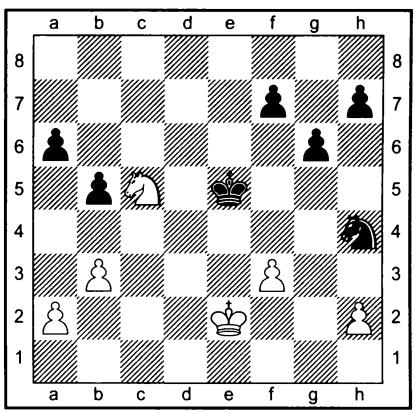
24 . . . ♘d3
25 ♖e2 ♖xe2
26 ♘xe2 ♔f6
27 ♘c3 ♔e5
28 ♔f1 a6

From the previous note it follows that 28...♔d4 was also possible, but in this situation the move in the game is, of course, more accurate.

29 ♔e2 ♘f4+
30 ♔d2

If 30 ♔f2, then 30...♔d4 is strong, as is the suggestion of Carsten Müller: 30...f5!?, and if 31 g3? ♔d4!.

30 . . . ♘xg2
31 ♘a4 ♘h4
32 ♔e2 b5
33 ♘c5



33 . . . a5!

Najer was not satisfied with the variation 33...♔f4 34 ♘xa6 ♘xf3 35 ♘c7 ♘xh2 36 ♘xb5, in which the play becomes sharper. In advancing his a-pawn he undoubtedly foresaw the tactical subtlety on the following move, which significantly facilitates the conversion of his advantage.

34 a4	**♔d5!**

In this way Black ensures the safety of his important a5-pawn.

35 ♘b7	**♔c6**
36 ♘d8+	

36 ♘xa5+ ♔b6 37 b4 bxa4 was completely hopeless for White.

36 . . .	**♔c5**
37 ♘xf7	**bxa4**
38 bxa4	**♔b4**
39 ♘e5	**♔xa4**

Black is a sound pawn to the good. The outcome is decided.

40 ♔d3 ♔b3 41 ♘c4 a4 42 ♘a5+ ♔b4 43 ♘c6+ ♔c5 44 ♘e5 ♔d5 45 ♘c4 ♘xf3 46 ♘b6+ ♔e5 47 ♔e3 ♘xh2 48 ♘xa4 ♔f5, and Black won.

It was pleasant for me to read the following comment by Najer about the move 20...b6!!:

A useful move, from which one can identify a pupil of Mark Dvoretsky or at least a careful reader of his books.

Evgeny Najer twice participated in my training sessions and has studied my books – obviously, his work has not been in vain. I think that the grandmaster's comments were evoked by the close similarity of this ending with one of the examples given in my book *School of Chess Excellence 3 – Strategic Play*, which I should now like to show you.

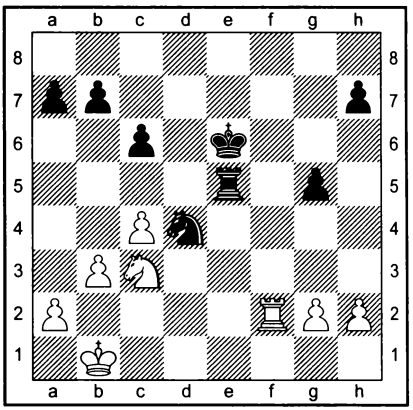
(see diagram)

Black's positional advantage is determined by the active placing of his pieces. But it is rather fragile: the slightest inaccuracy, and it will evaporate. Which is what happened in the game: **28...h5? 29 ♔c1! ♖f5 30 ♖xf5 ♘xf5 31 ♘e4 g4 32 ♘c5+ ♔e5 33 ♘xb7 ♘e3** Draw.

A very important principle in the conversion of an advantage is the maximum restriction

Stean – Hort

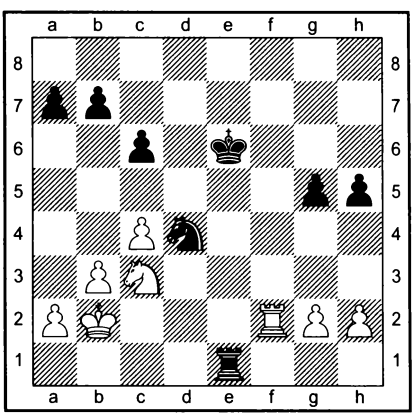
Biel 1981



of the opponent's possibilities, and the suppression of any counterplay, any useful operations aimed at improving his own position. To put this principle successfully into effect, use must be made of 'prophylactic thinking'.

Let us ask ourselves what White wants to play. His choice is limited. There is no point in attacking the knight: 29 ♖d2 ♖e1+ 30 ♔b2 ♔e5. Obviously the only sensible operation is to bring the king to the centre: ♔b1–c1–d2–d3. It is this that should be prevented.

28 . . .	**♖e1+!**
29 ♔b2	**h5**

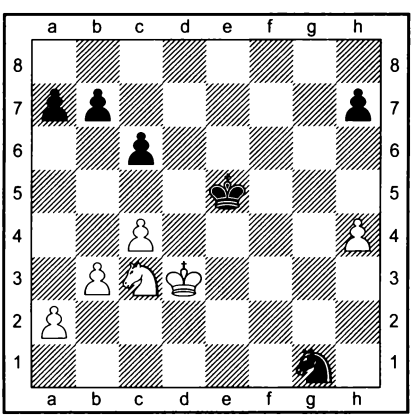


Having forestalled the opponent's intention, Black can now calmly strengthen his position. It is not easy for White to defend. For example, if 30 ♖f8 there follows 30...♖g1 31 ♖f2 ♔e5 32 ♘e2 ♖e1 33 ♘xd4 ♔xd4, and the dominating position of Black's king guarantees him a great advantage in the rook ending.

But a completely different interpretation of the position is also admissible. The black king is far more active than its white opponent, which can be especially perceptible in a pawn or knight ending (Mikhail Botvinnik once remarked: '*A knight endgame is the same as a pawn endgame*'). Artur Yusupov suggested **28...♖f5!?**. White replies **29 ♖xf5** (29 ♖d2 ♖f1+ 30 ♔b2 ♔e5 is unfavourable for him).

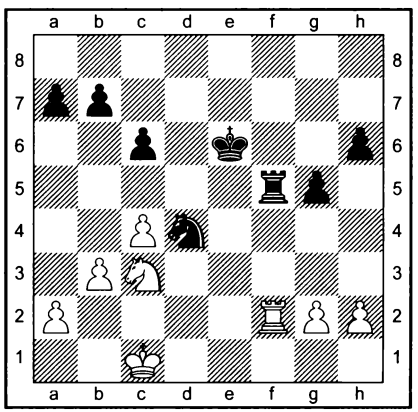
Now Black would like to capture with the knight, but after 29...♘xf5 30 ♘e4! g4 31 ♘c5+! (weaker is 31 ♘g5+ ♔e5 32 ♘xh7 ♘e3 33 ♔c1 ♘xg2 34 ♔d2 ♔f4 35 ♔e2 ♘h4) 31...♔e5 32 ♘xb7 he can hardly hope to win.

This means that he must play **29...♔xf5!**, intending 30...♔e5 and 31...♘f5. Events can then develop roughly as follows: **30 ♔c1 ♔e5! 31 ♔d2 ♘f5 32 ♔d3** (if 32 ♔e2 or 32 g3, then 32...♔d4 is strong) **32...♘h4 33 g3 ♘f3 34 h3 ♘g1 35 h4 gxh4 36 gxh4**.



And now 36...♔f4, 36...♘f3 or 36...h5. The concluding position of the variation is very promising for Black. But is it won? Couldn't White have played more accurately somewhere earlier? It is clear that here everything hangs by a thread: the slightest additional improvement to the defence, and the game will end in a draw.

Black's play can be improved. One is struck by the fact that he delayed slightly – his knight did not immediately reach the necessary square f5. Of course, it is desirable to capture on f5 with the knight. It is this that explains the recommendation by Vadim Zviagintsev: 28...h6!? (a mysterious move at first sight, wouldn't you agree!) 29 ♔c1 ♖f5.



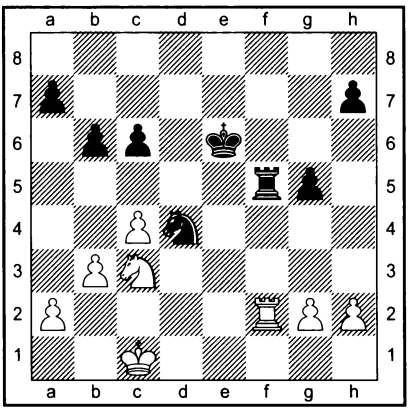
After 30 ♖xf5 ♘xf5 31 ♔d2 (31 ♘e4 is now pointless – the g5-pawn is defended) 31...♘h4 Black must win.

However, the exchange on f5 is not essential – 30 ♘d1! (but not 30 ♘e4 ♔e5) is far more accurate for White. For example: 30...♖xf2 31 ♘xf2 ♘f5 32 ♘d3, intending 33 ♘c5+ or 33 ♔d2 ♘h4 34 ♘e1. Little is changed by 30...♔e5 31 ♔d2 ♖xf2+ 32 ♘xf2 ♘f5 33 ♔d3, since if 33...♘h4 there is 34 ♘g4+ or 34 g3 followed by ♘g4+. We see that the position of the pawn at h6 is far from ideal.

And yet Zviagintsev's idea is logical – simply it must be put into effect slightly differently. I suggest another mysterious move – incidentally, the same one that Najer made.

28 . . . **b6!!**

29 ♔c1 **♖f5!**



White's position is difficult: 30 ♖xf5 ♘xf5 or 30 ♘d1 ♖xf2 31 ♘xf2 ♘f5 32 ♘e4 h6, threatening either to attack the g-pawn (33...♘h4 or 33...♘e3), or to penetrate with the king onto the 4th rank.

As you see, the similarity with the Yandemirov–Najer endgame is not restricted to the fact that in both cases the key to the position was an imperceptible pawn move. Here there was also the identical nature of the material and the pawn structure, and also the highly important role played by the activity of the king in a knight ending – a recurrent theme of Black's play in both examples.

However in the Stean–Hort game fundamentally different approaches to exploiting the advantage were possible. Which one do you like more? The first is purely technical (restriction of the opponent's plan; unhurried improvement of the position), but it does not demand deep calculation and therefore it enables time and energy to be saved. The second approach – the transition into the knight ending – is much more concrete and requires careful checking. The quiet pawn move on the queenside, preparing the exchange of rooks in the most favourable version, can be found only as a result of delving thoroughly into the secrets of the position.

There are two aspects to the process of converting an advantage. On the one hand, it demands accuract and methodical play, and on the other hand – an ability somewhere to cut short the manoeuvring, and find and calculate a concrete way to the goal. It is not easy to sense which is more correct at a particular moment. In the given example both approaches seem to me to be equally good, but this does not often occur.

II

It can happen that a position looks (and indeed is) completely won, and yet a player does not manage to convert it into a win. Very often (if of course, things do not occur in severe time-trouble) the cause is a loss of concentration and insufficient attention to those few resources which are still available to the opponent or which suddenly occur. A very important skill, enabling this type of mistake to be avoided, is prophylactic thinking, about which I write in literally every book of mine. The essence of it is that you need to put yourself in your opponent's place, constantly asking yourself the question: what can he undertake, and what would you do in his place if it were him to move?

In some of the examples given below the employment of prophylactic thinking enabled a player to find the optimal ways of exploiting an advantage, which at first sight were far from obvious. In others, by contrast, such possibilities were not exploited and the advantage evaporated.

Xie Jun – Larsen

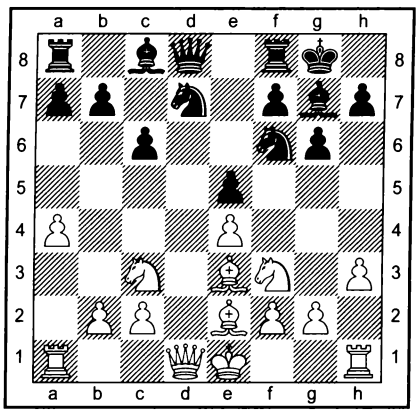
Monaco 1994

Pirc Defence

1 e4 g6 2 d4 ♗g7 3 ♘c3 c6 4 ♘f3 d6 5 h3 ♘f6 6 a4 0-0 7 ♗e3 ♘bd7 8 ♗e2 e5 9 dxe5!?

In the event of 9 0-0 White has to reckon with the reply 9...d5!?.

9...dxe5



10 0-0

Instead of this simple-minded move, 10 ♘d2! was stronger, and if 10...♕e7 11 ♘c4 ♖d8, then 12 ♕d6! with advantage to White (suggested by grandmaster Vladimir Potkin).

10...♕e7 11 ♕d3 a5!?

Black forestalls the bind on his queenside by a4–a5. He could also have considered 11...♘h5!?, a typical manoeuvre in such positions, with the idea of invading with the knight on f4, or even finding a convenient opportunity to play ...f7–f5.

12 ♕c4 ♖e8 13 ♖fd1 h6

Black's last two moves are logically linked: first the rook vacates the f8-square for the knight (which has just been prevented from going to c5), or perhaps also for the bishop, and then control is taken of the g5-point, in order to safeguard the f7-pawn from an attack by the white knight. However, this method of playing is too slow. He should probably have preferred 13...♕b4, intending to answer 14 ♘g5 with 14...♖f8, and 14 ♘d2 with 14...♗f8.

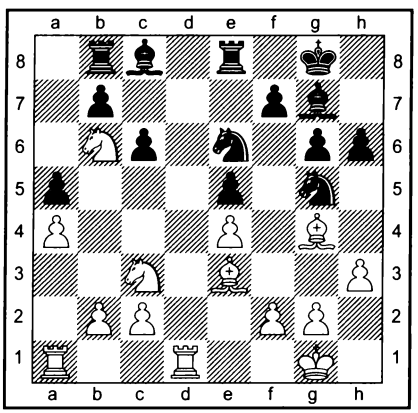
14 ♘d2

White intends to retreat the queen to a2 and occupy the c4-square with her knight. 14...♕b4!? was now essential, but Bent Larsen continues manoeuvring on the kingside, underestimating the strategic danger facing him.

14...♘h7?! 15 ♕b3 ♘g5 16 ♘c4 ♘c5?

The last chance was probably 16...♘e6, with the idea of sacrificing the exchange in the variation 17 ♘d6 ♘d4! 18 ♗xd4 exd4 19 ♘xe8 ♕xe8.

17 ♕a3 ♘ce6 18 ♕xe7 ♖xe7 19 ♘b6 ♖b8 20 ♗g4! ♖e8 (not 20...h5? 21 ♗xg5)



The knight on b6 is cramping the opponent's position, and the pin on the h3–c8 diagonal is extremely unpleasant. There is no doubt about White's enormous positional advantage; the only question is how to methodically exploit it.

The attempt to force matters, by invading with the rook on d7, is premature: 21 ♘xc8?! ♖bxc8 22 ♖d7? (22 ♗xg5 hxg5 23 ♗xe6 ♖xe6 24 ♖d7 is stronger, still retaining a slight advantage) 22...♘d4! 23 ♖xb7 ♖b8.

Black has activated his pieces, and his position is not worse.

Let us ask ourselves what the opponent would do if it were him to move. Obviously he would like to get rid of the pin by ...h6–h5. 21 h4 suggests itself, and after 21...♘h7 22 ♘xc8!? ♖bxc8 23 ♗b6 Black's position remains difficult. But White has to reckon with 21...h5!?. For example: 22 hxg5 hxg4, or 22 ♗e2 ♘h7 followed by 23...♘d4 – in both cases with good chances of equalising.

White nevertheless retains a solid advantage, by continuing 22 ♗xh5! ♘h3+ (22...gxh5 23 hxg5 with a sound extra pawn) 23 gxh3 gxh5 24 ♘e2! and 25 ♘g3. However, the decision taken by the Chinese player is even stronger.

21 ♗xg5! hxg5

In this way White has eliminated the possibility of ...h6–h5 and maintained the pin on the knight at e6. But without the following excellent move it would not have been possible to cramp completely the opponent's position.

What does Black want? Obviously his best chance is to disturb the powerful knight at b6 by the manoeuvre ...♗f8–c5.

22 ♘b1! ♗f8

22...♘d4 does not work: 23 ♗xc8 ♘xc2 24 ♖a2.

23 ♘d2 ♗c5

24 ♘dc4

The knight has arrived at just the right time, and now there is simply nothing that the opponent can move, whereas at some point White will invade at d7 with decisive effect. If 24...♖f8 (with the idea of 25...f5) the simplest is 25 ♘xc8 f5 26 ♘cb6 fxg4 27 ♘d7 or 25...♖bxc8 26 ♗xe6 fxe6 27 ♖d2 with a won position.

24 . . . ♗xb6

25 ♘xb6 ♔f8

26 ♖d2 ♔e7

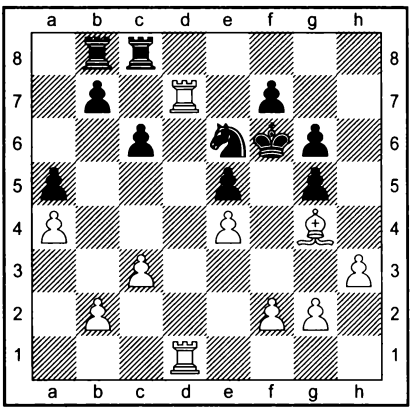
27 ♖ad1 ♖f8

Black has prepared ...f7–f5, but he does not in fact manage to play this – White has everything ready for the decisive invasion.

28 ♘xc8+ ♖fxc8

29 ♖d7+ ♔f6

29...♔f8 30 ♗xe6 fxe6 31 ♖h7 is also completely hopeless.



30 ♗xe6 fxe6

31 g4!

The next move will be 32 ♖1d3 with unavoidable mate (after the immediate 31 ♖1d3 there was the reply 31...g4). Black resigned.

Vadim Zviagintsev once prepared a new plan for White in one of the variations of the French Defence and he suggested to me that we should subject his analysis to a practical testing. We played a couple of training games with a short time control (15 minutes each for the game). And soon in the Russian Cup a new testing occurred – in a duel with a well-known expert on the French Defence.

Zviagintsev – Volkov

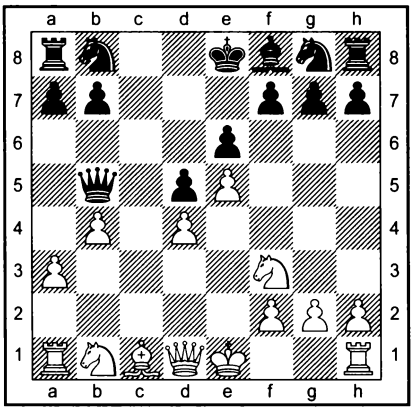
Russian Cup, Samara 1998

French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 c3 ♕b6 5 ♘f3 ♗d7 6 a3 ♗b5

After his failure against Zviagintsev, Sergey Volkov switched to 6...a5!? and in this variation (with alternating success) he played a couple of notable games: against Evgeny Sveshnikov and Peter Svidler.

7 b4!? cxd4 8 ♗xb5+ ♕xb5 9 cxd4



I regularly used to employ the French Defence with Black and I was happy if I managed to get rid of my 'bad' light-square bishop. Nowadays a spatial advantage has come to be valued more highly than it used to be – White happily goes in for such positions. It is no accident that the popularity of the 3 e5 variation in the Caro-Kann has increased sharply – there too Black's light-square bishop may be quickly exchanged.

The diagram position occurred in both of my training games with Zviagintsev. Black has a choice: whether to continue quietly, 9...♘d7!? 10 ♘c3 ♕a6 for example, or go in for sharper play, beginning with ...a7–a5. In the first game the tempting undermining of the queenside was tested.

9...a5?! 10 ♘c3

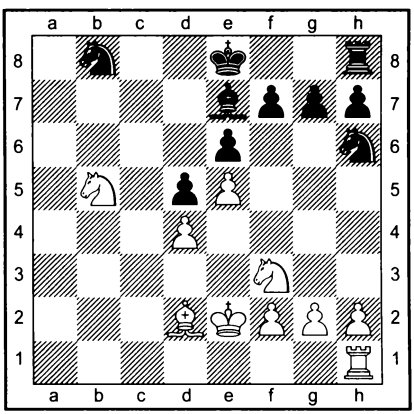
I played 10...♕c4 11 ♗d2 axb4 12 axb4 ♖xa1 13 ♕xa1, after which I stopped to think. In my preliminary calculations I had been intending 13...♗xb4 14 ♕a8 ♗xc3 15 ♕xb8+ ♔d7 16 ♕xb7+ ♔e8, but here I realised that White would easily bring his rook into play by either 17 ♕a8+ ♔d7 18 ♕a3, or 17 ♗xc3 ♕xc3+ 18 ♔e2, when there would be nothing with which to defend my king.

Searches for an acceptable defence proved unsuccessful, so Black chose 13...♘c6 14 ♕a8+ ♘d8 15 ♕a4+ ♘c6 16 b5 ♕xa4 17 ♘xa4 ♘a7 (with the faint hope of putting up a resistance in the blocked position after 18 b6 ♘c6) 18 ♔e2!, and Vadim confidently exploited his overwhelming lead in development.

10...♕c6 11 ♗d2 axb4 12 axb4 ♖xa1 13 ♕xa1 ♕a6 14 ♕a4+! (the same idea as in the training game) **14...♕xa4 15 ♘xa4 b5**

15...♘c6 16 b5 would have transposed into a position from the training game.

16 ♘c3! (much stronger than 16 ♘c5 – as in my game with him, Vadim aims to open lines) **16...♗xb4 17 ♘xb5 ♗e7 18 ♔e2 ♘h6**



White's solid positional advantage is determined above all by the poor placing of the enemy knights. It is important not to allow them into play.

19 ♖c1 suggests itself, but after 19...0-0 no progress is made by 20 ♖c7 ♗d8, and then, depending on White's move, ...♘c6, ...♗b6 or ...♘f5–e7. If 20 ♘a7 Black plays 20...♖e8 (intending ...♘d7–b6) 21 ♖c7 ♗f8 followed by ...♘f5–e7 – he retains a defensible position.

After some thought the grandmaster found a subtle plan, enabling him to immobilise both knights.

19 ♘a7!!

Subsequently I examined another, also very strong method of play for White: 19 ♖a1!? 0-0 20 ♖a7. Now 20...♘c6 21 ♖c7 ♖b8 22 ♘c3 ♖b6 23 ♘a4 ♖a6 24 ♖c8+ ♘d8 25 ♘c5 ♖a7 is completely hopeless, while in the event of 20...♗d8 21 ♗b4 ♘c6 (if 21...♖e8 the simplest is 22 ♖a8) 22 ♗xf8 ♘xa7 23 ♗xg7 White emerges a pawn up. But the continuation in the game is apparently even stronger.

19 . . . **0-0**

19...♔d7 loses to 20 ♖b1.

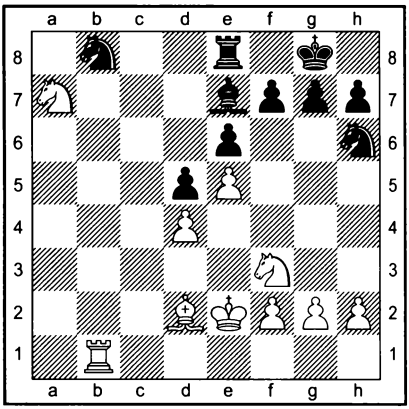
20 ♖b1!

The rook is better placed on the b-file than on the c-file.

20 . . . **♖e8**

If Volkov had foreseen his opponent's reply, he would probably have preferred 20...♘f5. If 21 ♖b7, then 21...♖e8? 22 g4 ♘h4 23 ♘xh4 ♗xh4 24 ♗b4! and 25 ♗d6 is hopeless for Black – his knight at b8 will be lost. However, it is possible to defend by 21...h5! 22 h3 h4. Vadim would probably have chosen 21 g4! ♘h4 22 ♘xh4 ♗xh4 23 ♖b7, intending both ♗b4–d6, and f4–f5.

(see diagram)



But now White must reckon with 21...♘f5, as well as 21...f6. For example: 21 h3?! f6!? (the knight aims for f7, but 21...♘f5 22 g4 ♘h4 23 ♘xh4 ♗xh4 24 ♖b7 ♗e7 is also possible) 22 exf6 ♗xf6 23 ♖b7 (23 ♗f4 ♘d7 24 ♖b7 ♘f8) 23...♘f5 24 ♗f4 ♘xd4+ 25 ♘xd4 e5!.

Also unconvincing is 21 ♖b7 ♗f8 followed by ...♘f5–e7.

21 g4!!

The crux of White's plan! The knight at h6 remains under arrest, as does the one at b8. 21...f6? is no longer possible on account of 22 exf6 ♗xf6 23 g5. Black loses after 21...♘d7 22 ♘c6! (22 ♖b7 ♘f8 23 ♘c6 ♘g6 is less accurate) 22...♘f8 (22...♗f8 23 ♖b7; 22...♗a3 23 ♖b7 ♘f8 24 ♖a7) 23 ♘xe7+ ♖xe7 24 ♖b8.

Possibly Black's best practical chance was to give up a knight for two pawns: 21...♘xg4!? 22 ♖g1 ♘xe5, but of course, this too is completely hopeless.

21 . . . **♗f8**

22 h3 **f5?!**

It would have been better to wait passively. The attempt by Black to free himself meets with a clear-cut refutation.

23 ♗xh6 **fxg4**

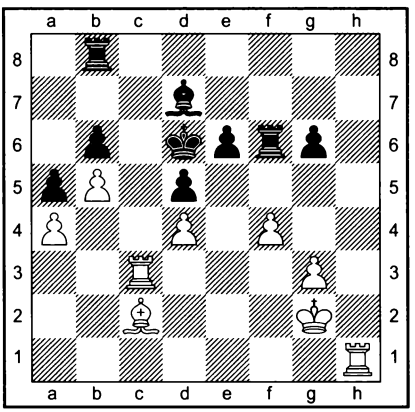
24 ♘h2!

Black evidently overlooked this move. The rest is easy.

24...gxh6 25 ♘xg4 ♘d7 26 ♖b7 h5 27 ♖xd7 hxg4 28 hxg4 ♖b8 29 ♘c6 ♖b2+ 30 ♔f3 ♗a3 31 g5 ♖b6 32 ♖c7 ♗b2 33 ♔g4 ♖a6 (33...♗xd4 34 ♘xd4 ♖b4 35 ♖e7 ♖xd4+ 36 f4) **34 g6 ♖a1 35 ♘e7+ ♔h8 36 ♔g5 ♖c1 37 ♔f6** Black resigned.

Lutz – Dautov

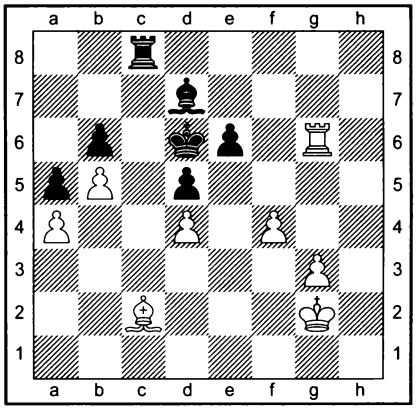
Germany, Bundesliga 1997



Things seem to be completely bad for Black – bad bishop, lack of space, weakness on g6 and an absence of any counterplay. But even in such positions (I will put it more definitely – precisely in such positions) you should be particularly attentive, by finding and neutralising beforehand all active resources for the opponent.

The natural move **43 ♖h6?**, made in the game, was aimed only at the automatic reply 43...♗e8 – then White plays 44 ♔f3 followed by ♔g4–g5. However, Black gains an opportunity to activate his game at the cost of a pawn, and Rustem Dautov exploited it.

43...♖ff8! 44 ♖xg6 (of course, White cannot allow the pin: 44 ♗xg6? ♖f6, and then ...♖g8 or ...♗e8) **44...♖bc8 45 ♖xc8 ♖xc8**



If 46 ♗d1?!, then 46...♖c4 is unpleasant. Christopher Lutz admitted that he panicked and reconciled himself to a draw. There followed **46 ♗f5?! ♔e7** (47 ♗xe6 ♗xe6 48 f5 was threatened) **47 ♖g7+ ♔d6 48 ♖g6 ♔e7** Draw.

In his informative and interesting book *Endgame Secrets* Lutz gave a rather complicated analysis, demonstrating that with accurate play he would still have retained good winning chances. I have doubts about his assessment, but even if my arguments may seem unconvincing, this essentially does not change anything: it is clear that in a position with a great positional advantage it did not make sense to allow such sharp counterplay.

46 ♗d3 ♖c3

46...♔e7? 47 ♖g7+ ♔d6 48 g4 ♖c3 49 ♗e2 ♖a3 50 g5 is bad for Black.

47 ♗e2 ♖c2

Not 47...♖a3? 48 f5 ♖xa4 49 f6!, but 47...♗e8!? 48 ♖g7 ♖a3 is quite possible and will probably lead to the same position which we reach in the main variation.

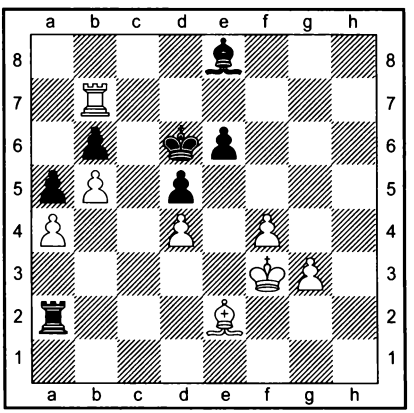
48 ♔f3

After 48 ♔f2 ♗e8 49 ♖g7 ♖a2 White cannot play 50 ♖b7? ♗h5, while if 50 ♔e3, then 50...♗d7 51 g4 ♖xa4 52 g5 ♖a3+ 53 ♔f2 ♖c3 with counterplay.

48...♗e8

In the event of 48...♖a2? 49 f5 ♖xa4 50 f6 ♖a3+ 51 ♔f4 (threatening 52 ♖g8) 51...♖c3 52 ♖g8 ♖c8 53 ♖xc8 ♗xc8 the bishop ending is lost for Black: 54 ♗d1 ♗d7 55 ♗a4 ♗e8 56 g4 ♗f7 57 ♗c2 (but not 57 ♔g5? e5) 57...♗e8 58 g5 ♗xb5 59 g6 ♗e8 60 g7 ♗f7 61 ♗g6.

49 ♖g7 ♖a2 50 ♖b7



Up till now we have been following Lutz's analysis. His main variation goes 50...♗h5+ 51 g4 ♗xg4+ 52 ♔xg4 ♖xe2 53 ♖xb6+, and White should win the rook ending.

It makes sense for Black to retain the bishops.

50...♖xa4 (instead of 50...♗h5+?) **51 ♖xb6+** (here Lutz terminates the variation) **51...♔e7**

The idea of Black's defence is to pursue the opponent's king and bishop with his rook. If 52 ♖a6, then 52...♖a3+ 53 ♔f2 ♖a2 or 53 ♔g4 ♖a2 54 ♗f1 ♖f2. If 52 ♔e3 there follows 52...♖a3+, and the king is unable to approach the rook (the vulnerable position of the bishop prevents this), while in the event of 53 ♔f2 White has to reckon with 53...♖a2 (53...♖a4!?; 53...♖b3!?) 54 g4 a4 (54...♗g6? 55 f5) 55 ♔e3 ♖b2.

What then should White have done in the initial position? Employ prophylactic thinking, guess the opponent's plan and take measures against the switching of the rook to the c-file, by moving the bishop off there beforehand.

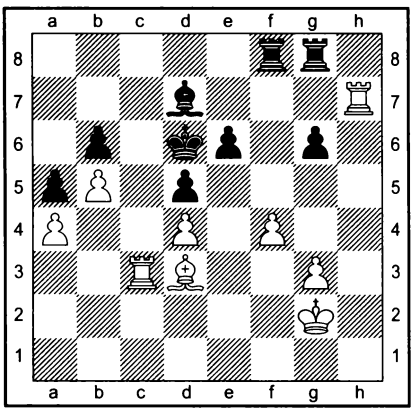
43 ♗d3!!

Now 43...♖ff8? 44 ♗xg6 or 43...g5? 44 fxg5 is totally bad.

43 . . . ♖g8

Lutz continues 44 ♖h6 ♖ff8 45 ♖xg6 ♖c8 46 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 47 f5, which, of course, is good enough to win. Vadim Zviagintsev found another, more interesting way.

44 ♖h7!? ♖ff8



Now a spectacular stroke proves decisive.

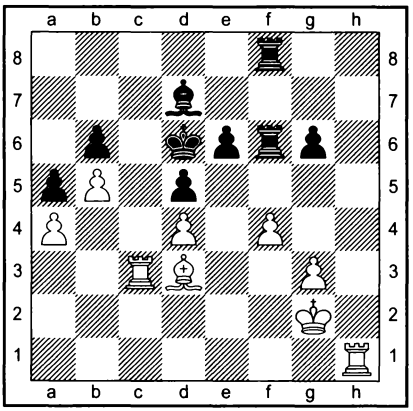
45 ♖c6+!! ♗xc6

46 bxc6

Mate is threatened: 47 ♖d7+ ♔xc6 48 ♗b5#, and nothing is changed by 46...♔xc6 47 ♗b5+ ♔d6 48 ♖d7#. Both 46...♖d8 47 ♗b5 and 46...e5 47 fxe5+ are also hopeless.

Black's best chance is **43...♖bf8!?** with the idea of 44...g5.

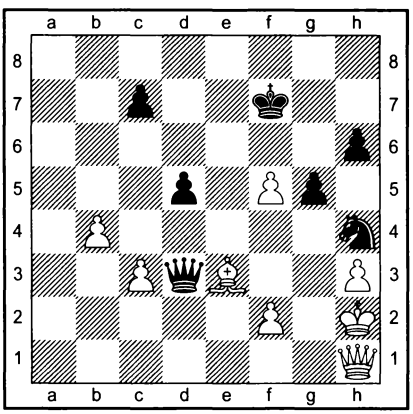
(see diagram)



44 ♖c2 is unconvincing: 44...g5 45 fxg5 ♖f3 46 ♗h7 ♖a3 47 g6 ♖ff3 48 ♖g1!? ♖xg3+ 49 ♔h1 ♗e8 50 g7 ♗f7. However, after **44 ♖h6 g5 45 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 46 fxg5 ♖f8 47 g6 ♖g8** (47...e5 48 dxe5+ ♔xe5 49 ♖c7 ♗e6 50 ♖b7) **48 ♔f3 e5 49 dxe5+ ♔xe5 50 ♖c7** White retains a significant advantage.

Timman – Kasparov

USSR v. Rest of the World, London 1984



Black has an obvious positional advantage, but it is not easy to exploit. On close examination it is discovered that every move has one drawback or another.

Of course, he would like to capture the pawn. But if 49...♕xf5?! there is the strong reply 50 ♕d1!, preparing not only a check on h5, but also 51 ♕g4.

In the event of 49...♘xf5?! White finds the tactical resource 50 ♗d4!, when 50...♘xd4? 51 ♕xd5+ is not possible, while if Black supports his d5-pawn by 50...c6, this exposes the king and the white queen breaks free: 51 ♕a1.

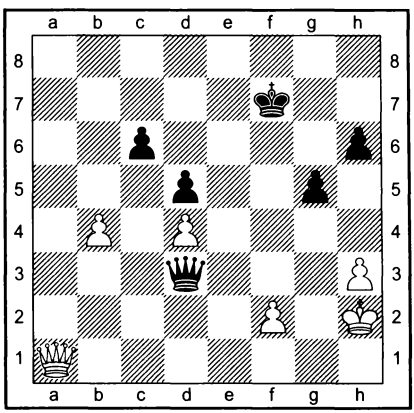
The same reply 50 ♕a1! is also good after the immediate 49...c6?!.

49...h5?! is tempting, since the pawn is invulnerable: 50 ♗xg5?? ♘f3+. In the event of 50 b5 ♕xf5 51 ♕d1 Black does not play 51...♘f3+?! 52 ♔g2 g4 53 hxg4 ♕xg4+ 54 ♔f1 ♕e4 (54...♔e6 55 ♕d3) 55 ♔g2!, but simply 51...♔g6! with an overwhelming advantage. A possible variation is 52 b6 ♕e4! 53 ♕h1 ♕e5+ 54 ♔g1 cxb6 55 ♗xb6 ♕e6! followed by 56...g4.

White is saved by the fine reply suggested by Kasparov: 50 c4!! ♕xc4 (50...dxc4 51 ♕c6) 51 ♗xg5 (now Black does not have 51...♘f3+) 51...♘xf5 52 ♕f3.

It appears that we have looked at all the sensible continuations and have not found a solution. Garry Kasparov also did not find one.

49...♘xf5?! 50 ♗d4! c6 51 ♕a1 ♘xd4 (51...♕f3 52 ♕a8!) **52 cxd4**



White's pawns are weak, but the open

position of the enemy king gives him adequate counter-chances.

52...♕d2

If 52...♕f3 Kasparov gives the variation 53 ♕a7+ ♔g6 54 ♔g1 ♕xh3 55 ♕b6 ♕e6 56 b5 with equality. Instead of 53...♔g6 it makes sense to try 53...♔f6!?, when 54 ♔g1?! ♕xh3 is now ineffective: after 55 ♕b6 ♕e6 there is no pin along the 6th rank – the queen is defended by the king. White must play 54 ♕a2, and if 54...♕f4+ 55 ♔g1 ♕xd4, then 56 ♕a8.

53 ♕a7+ ♔g6 54 ♔g2 ♕xb4 55 ♕d7! ♕xd4 56 ♕e8+

Jan Timman does not hurry to capture the pawn (56 ♕xc6+ ♔h5), hoping first to worsen the placing of the black pieces.

56...♔f5?!

As was pointed out by Kasparov, the only way to continue to play for a win was by 56...♔h7 57 ♕d7+ ♕g7 – however, the position arising in the variation 58 ♕f5+ ♕g6 59 ♕d7+ ♔g8 60 ♕d8+ ♔g7 61 ♕d7+ ♕f7 (61...♔f8 62 ♕d8+ ♕e8 63 ♕f6+ ♔g8 64 ♕xh6) 62 ♕xc6 ♕f5 is objectively drawn.

57 ♕d7+ ♔f4?! (57...♔g6) **58 ♕f7+** Draw.

Let us return to the initial position. Take note: for the moment White is completely tied down, and he not only cannot improve his position, but it is hard even to suggest a move which would not worsen it. However, Black faces the same problem, since his forces are now optimally placed. It is possible to play for zugzwang, only by deciding on a far from obvious king move.

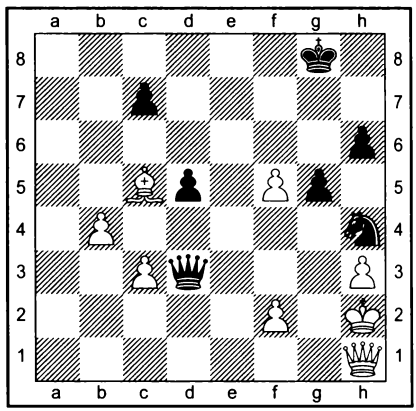
49 . . . ♔g8!!

Let us look at the opponent's replies.

In the event of **50 f6 ♔f7** things have not become any easier for White – it is again hard to offer him any good advice.

50 ♕a1 concedes an important central square to the enemy queen: **50...♕e4! 51 ♕h1 ♕e5+** (or, as given by Kasparov, 51...♘f3+ 52 ♔g3 ♕e5+ 53 ♔g2 ♘h4+ 54 ♔f1 ♕xf5) **52 ♔g1 ♕xf5** – the f5-pawn has been captured, and the opponent's pieces are still fastened down in the corner.

Let us consider **50 ♗c5**.

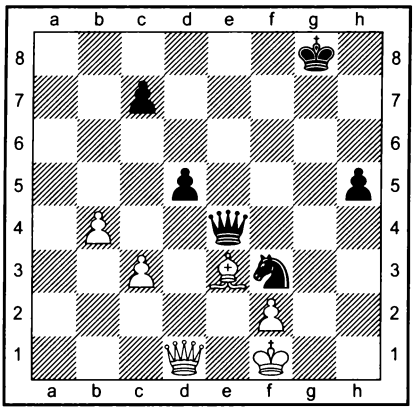


Kasparov gives 50...h5 (with an exclamation mark) 51 ♗e3 ♕xf5, overlooking a successful defence: 51 ♕c1! ♔f7 (or 51...♕xf5) 52 ♕e3.

Black retains a great advantage by continuing **50...♘f3+! 51 ♔g3** (if 51 ♔g2 both 51...♔f7 52 ♗e3 h5 and 51...♕xc3 52 ♕d1 ♕e5 are satisfactory) **51...♘d2+ 52 ♔h2** (52 ♗e3 ♘f1+ 53 ♔g2 ♘xe3+ 54 fxe3 ♕e2+ 55 ♔g3 ♕xe3+, and the resulting pawn ending is easily won) **52...♔f7**.

In reply to **50 ♗d4** the tempting 50...♕xf5 51 ♕d1 ♕f4+ 52 ♔g1 ♘f3+ 53 ♔g2 g4 54 hxg4 ♕xg4+ 55 ♔f1 ♕e4 56 ♗e3 h5 is not altogether convincing.

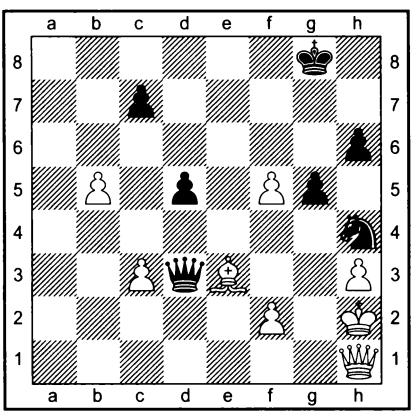
(see diagram)



White parries the threat of the h-pawn's further advance with the unexpected move 57 ♔g2!.

50...♘f3+ 51 ♔g2 ♕e4 is far stronger, and after **52 ♗e3** Black can play as in the 50 ♕a1 variation: **52...♘h4+ 53 ♔h2 ♕e5+ 54 ♔g1 ♕xf5**.

It only remains to analyse the desperate attempt **50 b5!?**.



It is justified only after Kasparov's suggestion of 50...♔f7 (again his exclamation mark should be replaced by a question mark) 51 b6! cxb6 52 ♕a1 with counterplay. Black should be satisfied with a sound extra pawn after **50...♕xb5 51 ♕d1 ♘xf5**.

Thus after 49...♔g8!! Black would have retained an enormous advantage, most probably sufficient for a win.

Of course, to find such a solution to the position was extremely difficult, even with the classical time control which was used at that time in all serious competitions. And it would be altogether impossible with the idiotically shortened control which is being propagated now by FIDE. If, God forbid, the officials are successful, deep and subtle ideas will completely disappear from tournament chess (with the exception of course, of opening finds, prepared beforehand with the help of computer programs). And what then will there be for chess enthusiasts to admire – standard plans and techniques, and simple combinations which have occurred a thousand times? You don't have to be an oracle to predict severe consequences in the future both for chess literature, and for the popularity of chess in general.

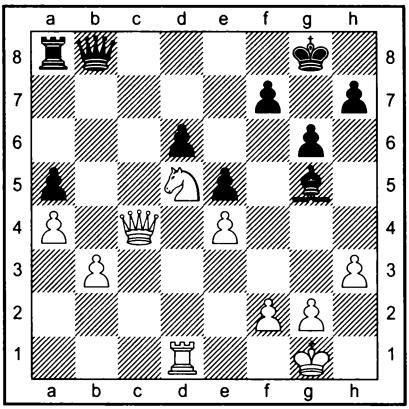
III

When a fruit is ripe, it should be gathered – otherwise it will over-ripen and become inedible. It is the same with the conversion of an advantage. It is important not to miss the appropriate moment for the favourable transformation of an advantage, leading to an immediate win or to a situation which can be played almost automatically. If you delay, subsequently such a convenient instance may not present itself again.

Alas, in overwhelming positions even very strong players sometimes enjoy life, stop acting concretely, and refuse to exert themselves or calculate variations that are even the slightest bit complicated, expecting that the fruit will itself fall from the tree. The possible consequences of this are very well illustrated by the following example.

Anand – Kamsky

Candidates Match, 5th Game,
Sanghi Nagar 1994



White's position is strategically won, thanks to the overwhelming superiority of his mighty knight over the 'bad' black bishop.

It is also important to note that at the given moment the white pieces are active, whereas the opponent's are disunited. If he is given time, Black will improve somewhat the placing of his pieces (for example, ...♗d8, ...♔g7, ...♕b7, ...♖b8), which, of course, will not change the evaluation of the situation, but will improve his defensive resources. This means that now, before this occurs, a concrete way of exploiting the advantages of White's position should be sought.

Ljubomir Ftacnik examined the plan of creating a passed pawn on the queenside: 35 ♖b1!? ♕d8 36 b4 axb4 37 ♕xb4 ♖a5 – in his opinion White has only a minimal advantage. In my view, the advantage here is very great – for example, White can play 38 g3!? followed by 39 h4, practically depriving the bishop of any hopes of taking part in the defence of the queenside. However, Black's moves in this variation are not obligatory.

A more convincing way was pointed out after the game by Viswanathan Anand himself: 35 ♘c7! ♖a7 36 ♘b5. Now 36...♖d7 37 ♕c6 leads to the loss of a pawn, while if 36...♖a6, then 37 ♕d5 ♗e7 38 ♖c1 – the opponent has practically no useful moves.

I should mention that in such situations the knight on d5 looks finely placed, but that is all – it is not itself attacking the weak d6-pawn, and is covering it from pressure on the d-file. Therefore the switching of the knight to c4 or b5 is a typical plan.

Anand decided not to change the pattern of the position, but continued his unhurried manoeuvring.

35 ♖d3? ♕b7

35...♕c8? was completely bad: 36 ♘b6 ♕xc4 37 ♘xc4 ♗e7 38 ♖d5 (Ftacnik). In *Informator* Anand awards the move played an exclamation mark and a ± sign (slight advantage for White). Of course, this evaluation is too pessimistic and was undoubtedly influenced by the result of the game.

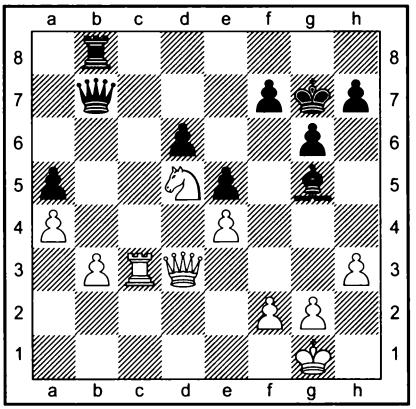
36 ♖c3 ♖b8

37 ♕d3 ♔g7

Anand considers 37...♗d8!? to be a poor reply in view of 38 ♖c4 followed by 39 b4 (38...♕xb3? is not possible on account of 39 ♕xb3 ♖xb3 40 ♖c8). But I am not convinced that White is guaranteed a win after 38...♔g7 39 b4 axb4 40 ♖xb4 ♕a7 41 ♖xb8 ♕xb8. We saw a similar situation in Ftacnik's variation (35 ♖b1), but there the bishop was unable to return to the queenside.

The next moment seems to me to be exceptionally important and instructive.

(see diagram)



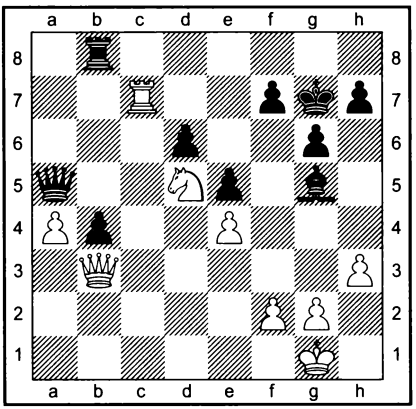
38 g3?

In accordance with the principle 'do not hurry' White gradually strengthens his position. Alas, the useful move made by him is in fact a serious mistake, which puts the win in jeopardy.

What is the point? How can this be explained and, what is far more important, recognised during a tournament game?

The point is that, apart from the long-term advantages of his position, here White also has one temporary plus: the possibility of occupying the 7th rank with his rook (the immediate 38 ♖c7 does not work because of 38...♕xb3, but he can first sacrifice a pawn: 38 b4). In combination with the subsequent attack of the queen on the f7-point, the idea looks tempting and therefore it should be thoroughly checked. After all, if White delays slightly, Black will cover the c7-point with 38...♗d8, and such an opportunity will not occur again. All the other advantages will remain, of course, but who knows whether they will suffice for a win?

So, **38 b4! axb4 39 ♖c7 ♕a8**. In *Informator* Anand suggests only 40 ♕f3?! ♖f8 (after 41 ♕b3 ♗d8 White has nothing special). The immediate **40 ♕b3!** is more logical, blocking the opponent's passed pawn and aiming at the f7-point. The only sensible reply is **40...♕a5!** – the queen ties the knight to the defence of the rook.



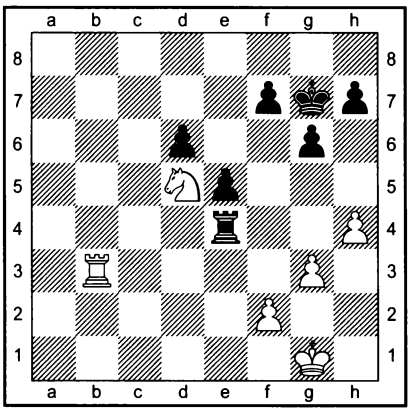
Nothing is given by 41 ♘b6 ♖f8 42 ♖c6 h5!?, and 43 ♘c4? ♕a8 44 ♖xd6 even loses: 44...♕xe4 45 ♖d1 ♖d8. The correct scheme of attack was suggested by Igor Zaitsev: **41 g3!** with the idea of 42 h4. The black bishop turns out to be at the crossroads: a move along either diagonal will involve serious concessions.

In the event of 41...♗d2? a swift mating attack proves decisive: 42 ♕f3 ♖f8 43 ♕f6+ ♔h6 44 ♘e7!. If 41...♗d8 there follows 42 ♖d7, and there is no satisfactory defence against a move by the knight: after all, the rook's path to f8 is blocked by its own bishop.

If 41...♖f8!? is played immediately, then after 42 ♖b7 White captures the b4-pawn and achieves a decisive superiority on the queenside – the enemy rook is not able to help, since it is tied to the f7-point. 42...♗d2 43 ♕f3 ♗g5 (43...♕d8 44 a5) 44 h4 ♗d8 45 ♕b3 etc. is also hopeless.

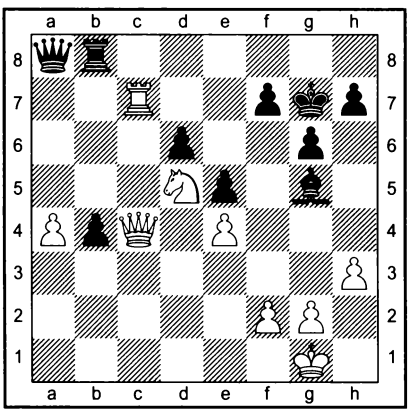
Possibly the best practical chance is a bishop sacrifice: **41...♖a8!? 42 h4 ♗d8 43 ♖d7 ♕xa4 44 ♕xa4 ♖xa4 45 ♖xd8 b3 46 ♖b8 ♖xe4 47 ♖xb3**.

(see diagram)



For the knight Black has two pawns, which under more favourable circumstances could have promised reasonable saving chances. But here, thanks to the maintained blockade in the centre, it seems to me that White should be able to convert his material advantage.

I should mention that White also has available another, sharper way of attacking: instead of 40 ♕b3 he can try **40 ♕c4!?**.



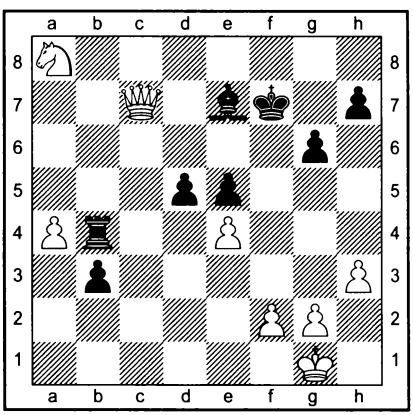
Now in the event of 40...♕a5 the rook is defended and the knight can go to any square. On the other hand, the a4-pawn is en prise, and the way is open for Black's pawn to the queening square. Let us examine some variations.

40...♕xa4? is totally bad: 41 ♖xf7+! ♔h6 (41...♔xf7 42 ♘b6+) 42 ♖xh7+! ♔xh7 43 ♕c7+ ♔h6 44 ♕xb8.

After 40...♗d8 there follows 41 ♖d7, and if 41...b3, then 42 ♘b4 ♔h6 (42...d5 43 ♕xb3 – Black is tied hand and foot) 43 ♕xf7 ♕xe4 44 ♕xh7+ ♔g5 45 ♖xd6 with the threat of 46 h4+ – White's attack is irresistible. And in the event of 41...♕xa4 White can decide matters with both 42 ♖xf7+!? ♔h8 43 ♖f8+ ♔g7 44 ♖g8+ ♔h6 45 ♘e3! and 42 ♘f6!? ♕d1+ 43 ♔h2 ♔xf6 (43...d5 44 ♖xd5) 44 ♕xf7+ ♔g5 45 ♕f8! (or 45 f4+! exf4 46 h4+ ♔g4 47 ♕xh7).

The comparatively best chances of a defence are given by 40...♕a5!? 41 ♘f4 (41 ♘xb4? d5! 42 ♘xd5 ♕e1+) 41...d5, although after 42 ♘xd5 b3 (or 42...♖f8 43 ♕b3!) 43 ♘c3 ♖f8 44 ♖b7 White remains a sound pawn to the good.

Fascinating complications arise in the variation **40...b3!? 41 ♘b6 d5! 42 ♖xf7+! ♔xf7 43 ♕c7+ ♗e7 44 ♘xa8 ♖b4!**.

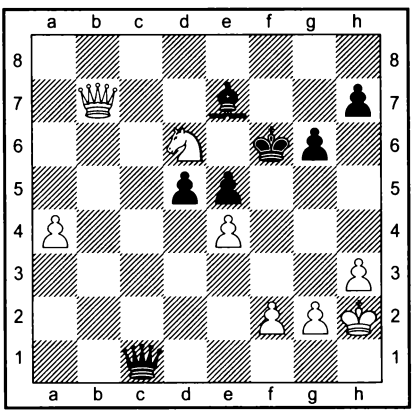


White faces a choice: he can either block the pawn with his queen, or disregard it and play for an attack.

A) 45 ♕c1 b2 46 ♕b1 ♗c5! (threatening 47...♗d4 and 48...♖c4) 47 a5! ♗d4 48 ♘b6 dxe4! (the position arising after 48...♖b5 49 ♘a4 ♖xa5 50 ♘xb2 ♖b5 is most probably lost) 49 ♔f1 ♗xb6!? 50 axb6 ♖xb6, and it is

not clear how White can make any progress – it would appear that the rook and the b2-pawn neutralise the queen.

B) **45 ♘b6! b2 46 ♘c8 b1♕+ 47 ♔h2 ♖b7** (it is doubtful whether Black has anything better – the threats to his king created by the queen + knight duo are just too dangerous) **48 ♘d6+ ♔f6** (48...♔e6 49 exd5+ ♔xd5 50 ♘xb7) **49 ♕xb7 ♕c1!?** (49...♕xb7 50 ♘xb7 d4 51 ♔g3 ♔e6 52 ♔f3 leads to a hopeless minor piece ending).



Black is threatening 50...♕f4+ with perpetual check. In the event of 50 ♕b6 d4! White again has to defend against the same threat – strangely enough, he does not have a powerful enough discovered check. However, he finds **50 ♕c7!! ♕xc7** (50...♕f4+ 51 ♔g1 dxe4 52 ♕c6! is no better) **51 ♘e8+ ♔f7 52 ♘xc7**, when he should win, for example: 52...dxe4 53 a5 ♗c5 54 ♘b5 ♗xf2 55 g3!.

Thus 38 b4! axb4 39 ♖c7 ♕a8 40 ♕b3! or 40 ♕c4!? would have promised White enormous winning chances. But now let us see how the game developed.

38 . . . ♗d8!

Of course, Black covers the c7-square.

39 ♕f3 ♕d7

Also after 39...♖c8 40 ♖xc8 ♕xc8 I am not sure that White would have been able to convert his advantage. For the moment Gata Kamsky prefers to retain the rooks, hoping to tie down the white pieces by the pressure on the b3-pawn.

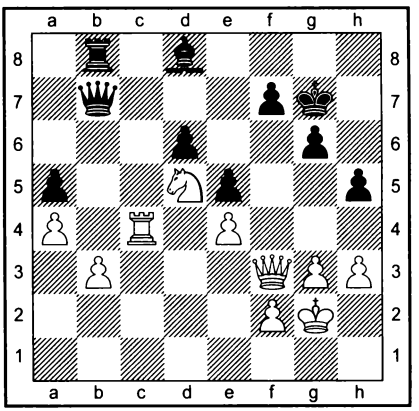
40 ♔g2

If 40 ♕g4 there is the good reply 40...♕e6!; in addition White has to reckon with 40...f5!? 41 exf5 ♕xf5.

40 . . . h5!?

It is useful to deprive White of the g4-square, and in some cases the pawn may also advance to h4.

41 ♖c4 ♕b7



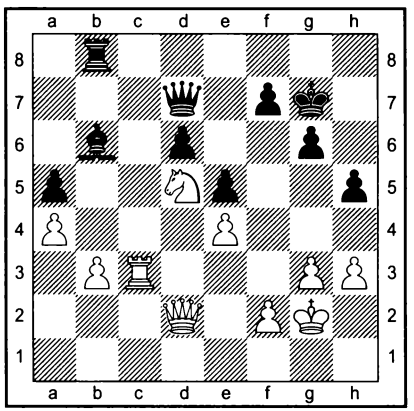
42 ♖c3

It transpires that it is not so easy to create a passed pawn on the queenside. Anand rejected 42 b4 axb4 43 ♖xb4 because of 43...♕xb4! 44 ♘xb4 ♖xb4. If 45 ♕d1 there follows 45...♖d4 46 ♕c2 (46 ♕b3 ♖xe4) 46...h4!? or 46...♗b6!?, when Black should not lose. He also retains a tenable position after 43...♕a8 44 ♖xb8 ♕xb8, for example, 45 ♕c3 ♕b1 46 ♕b4 ♕d3 47 a5 f5 (Ftacnik) 48 h4 f4 49 gxf4 ♕e2.

42 h4!? had some point. Black can wait, but in my view he can also take the pawn, although this is risky. After 42...♕xb3 43 ♕xb3 ♖xb3 44 ♖c8 ♗f6 Iossif Dorfman awards 45 ♖c6 an exclamation mark, but this is hardly justified. Only, Black should not

reply 45...♖d3 (in the hope of 46 ♖xd6? ♗e7!, when the bishop breaks free) in view of 46 ♖a6 ♖d4 47 f3, when 47...♖xa4 48 ♖xd6 leads to the loss of the bishop. 45...♖b8 46 ♖xd6 ♗d8 followed by ...♔f8–e8 is correct, when White's advantage is not too great. It looks more natural to play 45 ♖a8 g5! 46 hxg5 ♗xg5 47 ♖xa5 ♖a3 (47...♖d3) 48 ♖a6 ♗d2, but here too Black can fight on.

42 . . . **♕d7**
43 ♕e2 **♗b6**
44 ♕d2



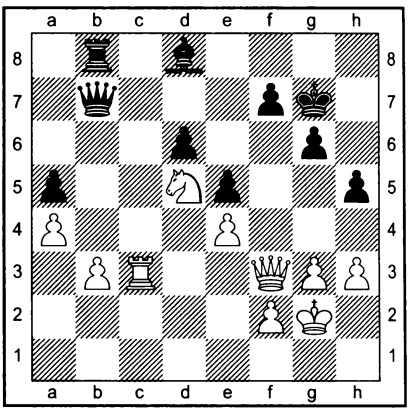
44 . . . **♗d8!**

David Bronstein was once asked how he had managed to save a game, where for a long time he had stood badly.

'Very simple,' replied the grandmaster, 'I merely endeavoured not to worsen my position, and, what is even more important, I didn't try to improve it.'

That is also the case here: Black should keep patient and wait – any activity will merely make things easier for the opponent. For example, in the event of 44...f5? 45 exf5 ♕xf5 White organises a decisive attack by 46 ♘xb6 ♖xb6 47 ♖c7+ ♔f6 48 ♕d5 ♕e6 49 ♕f3+ ♕f5 50 ♕a8. The attempt to activate the bishop with 44...♗c5?! is also unsuccessful – because of 45 ♕g5! ♕d8? (45...♕e6 is better, and if 46 ♖f3, then 46...♗b6 47 ♖f6 ♕d7) 46 ♘e7! ♔f8 47 ♘xg6+ fxg6 48 ♕xg6 and wins (Anand).

45 ♕c2 **♕b7**
46 ♕d3 **♗b6**
47 ♕f3 **♗d8**



How can White make progress? It would be good to exchange the h5-pawn for his g-pawn by playing g3–g4 and taking on g4 with a piece, and then battering the enemy king's defences by h3–h4–h5. However, there appears to be no easy way of putting this plan into effect. And in addition, he constantly has to reckon with the undermining of the centre by ...f7–f5 (this can apparently be played in reply to 48 h4).

48 g4?! **hxg4**
49 hxg4

It would be desirable to capture with the queen, but after 49 ♕xg4 there is the strong reply 49...f5!, leading to an unclear game.

49 . . . **♖c8!**

After the opponent has weakened his king's defences, Kamsky happily exchanges rooks. He eliminates the potential threat of the white rook switching to the h-file, while the opponent now has to key an eye on attempts by the black queen to break through on the kingside, and this factor ties his hands, not allowing him the freedom to

play actively on the queenside.

However, 49...♕d7 was also possible: 50 ♕g3 ♗g5 51 ♖c7 ♕e6, or 50 ♖c1 ♕b7 51 b4 axb4 52 ♕h3 ♗g5!.

50 ♕e3	**♖xc3**
51 ♕xc3	**♕a6**
52 ♕c2	

The queen covers the e2-square. 52 b4 axb4 53 ♕xb4 ♕e2 54 ♔g3 ♗h4+ 55 ♔xh4 ♕xf2+ 56 ♔h3 ♕f3+ would have led to a draw (Ftacnik).

52 . . .	**♕a7**

But now the black queen is threatening to invade at d4.

53 ♕d2	**♕b7**

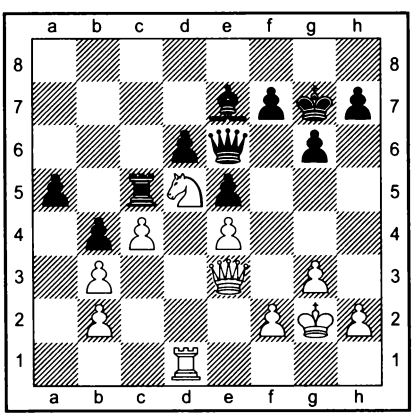
In the opinion of Yasser Seirawan, White would still have retained chances of success by playing 54 b4!? axb4 55 ♕xb4. I don't think so – 55...♕c8! ensures sufficient counterplay.

54 ♕d3

Draw.

Four years later a similar position again arose in one of Anand's games, but this time he was representing the weaker side.

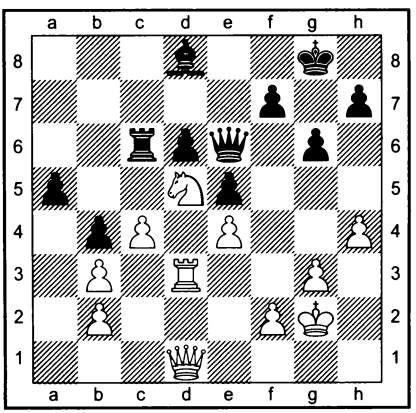
J. Polgar – Anand
Wijk aan Zee 1998



The main difference compared with the previous example is the queenside pawn structure. There the white rook was able to operate on the c-file, and one of the promising plans was the creation of a passed a-pawn. Here the queenside is practically closed and therefore play has to be created on the opposite side of the board. However, the blocking of the queenside also has its pluses for White: she does not have to concern herself about the backward b3-pawn, and the opponent is unable to exchange rooks, as Kamsky did

Initially Judit Polgar employs a well-known technique: she correctly deploys her heavy pieces on the half-open d-file – with the rook in front of the queen.

32 ♖d3	**♗d8**
33 ♕d2	**♖c6**
34 ♕d1	**♔g8**
35 h4!	



Judit realises that, by operating only on the central file, it will not be possible to win. Therefore she opens a 'second front' on the kingside – in full accordance with the well-known method of converting an advantage: 'the principle of two weaknesses'.

Black should have prevented the further advance of the h-pawn, by playing 35...h5!. Polgar was intending to have her way – by

continuing 36 f3 ♔g7 37 ♕e2 followed by ♖d1–h1 and g3–g4. But this plan is not easy to carry out – the white king's defences are weakened, and White has to reckon with the manoeuvre ...♗b6–d4 and with ...f7–f5.

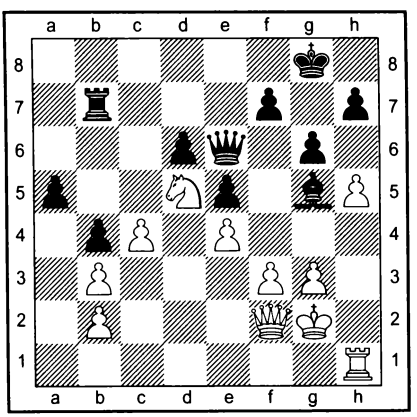
35 . . .	**♔g7?**
36 h5	**♗g5**
37 ♕f3	**♖c8**
38 ♖d1	

White prepares to switch her heavy pieces to the h-file, in order to create threats to the enemy king.

38 . . .	**♖c6**
39 ♕e2	**♖c8**
40 ♖h1	**♔g8**
41 f3!	

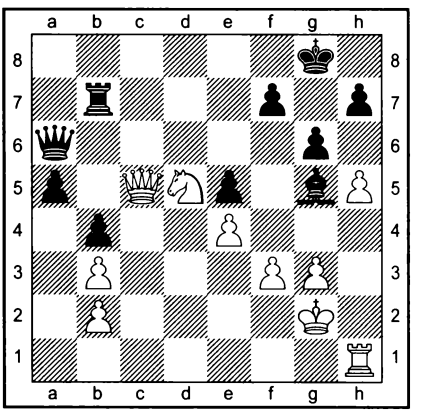
Excellently played. White frees not only the 2nd rank (for the manoeuvre ♔f1 and ♕h2), but also the f2-square, from where the queen will create the threat of invading along the g1-a7 diagonal. Another manifestation of the 'principle of two weaknesses': to make the opponent's defence as difficult as possible, he must be given problems over the entire board.

41 . . .	**♖b8**
42 ♕f2	**♖b7**



Black has defended against the queen's invasion along the diagonal, but at a high price – White has acquired a new possibility: c4–c5!

Before playing this, Polgar exchanged pawns on g6. A sensible decision, which would not require any commentary, had it not been for the variation **43 c5?! dxc5 44 ♕xc5 ♕a6**, given by the grandmaster as the justification for the move she made.



There is no longer time for 45 hxg6? in view of 45...♕e2+ 46 ♔h3 ♕xf3. However, White finds the spectacular stroke **45 ♘f6+!!**. Now 45...♗xf6? is not possible because of mate: 46 ♕c8+ ♔g7 47 h6#, and in the event of 45...♕xf6 46 ♕c8+ ♕d8 47 ♕xb7 ♕d2+ 48 ♔h3 Black does not gain sufficient compensation for the lost exchange.

There only remains 45...♔g7 46 ♘e8+ ♔g8, but after 47 ♕xe5 Black's position is difficult. Here are some sample variations: 47...♔f8 48 ♕xg5 ♕e2+ (48...♔xe8 49 ♕e5+ ♔f8 50 hxg6) 49 ♔h3 ♖b5 50 ♕f6! ♖xh5+ 51 ♔g4 ♖xh1 (51...♔xe8 52 ♖c1) 52 ♘d6 ♖h4+ 53 ♔xh4 ♕h2+ 54 ♔g4 ♕h5+ 55 ♔f4, and the checks soon come to an end, or 47...f6 48 ♕d5+ ♔f8 49 hxg6 ♕e2+ 50 ♔h3 ♕xf3 51 ♕c5+ ♔g8 (51...♖e7 52 g7+ ♔g8 53 ♕c4+ ♖f7 54 ♖f1 ♕h5+ 55 ♔g2) 52 ♕c4+ followed by 53 ♖f1 (there is also 52 ♘xf6+!?).

43 hxg6	**fxg6**

Now the shelter of Black's king is significantly weakened (true, in return he can hope to exploit the opening of the f-file for a counterattack – but things never come to this).

Anand rejected 43...hxg6 because of 44 ♕g1!? with an attack on the h-file. Perhaps he should have taken a risk. After 44...f5 45 ♕h2 ♗f6 the offensive is not so easy to organise. In the event of 46 ♕h6 ♗g7 47 ♕g5 (47 ♕h7+ ♔f7 48 ♖a1 ♖a7 with the threat of ...♖a8–h8) 47...♖f7 no mate is apparent, and it is not possible to switch the queen to the opposite wing, because of counter-threats to the king: 48 ♕d8+ ♗f8 49 ♕xa5? fxe4 50 fxe4? ♕g4, and it is Black who wins.

Artur Yusupov found the correct idea: 46 ♕h3! followed by the inclusion of the g-pawn in the storming of the enemy king's defences. For example: 46...♖f7 47 g4! fxe4 (47...f4 48 ♕h6 is unpromising for Black) 48 fxe4 ♖b7 49 ♔g3 ♖f7 50 ♕h6 ♗g7 51 ♕h7+ ♔f8 52 g5 (Black is in zugzwang!) 52...♖a7 (52...♖d7 53 ♖a1) 53 ♘f6 ♕f7 54 ♖f1 ♗xf6 55 ♕h6+ ♕g7 56 ♖xf6+ ♖f7 57 ♖xg6 or 57 ♖xd6 with an easily won rook ending.

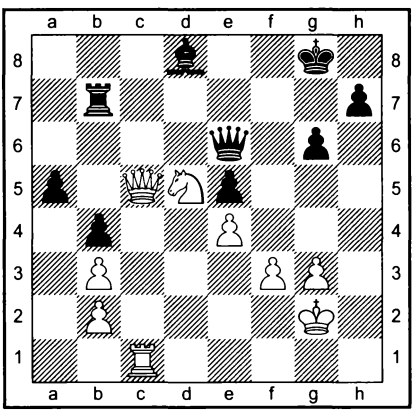
However, Polgar could also have played as in the game: 44 c5 dxc5 45 ♕xc5, although here this move is significantly less strong. Black creates sufficient counterplay, by continuing either 45...f5!? 46 ♕xa5 ♕c8!, or as recommended by the Indian player Sundararajan Kidambi: 45...♖b8!? 46 ♕xa5 ♖c8 47 ♖f1 (47 ♘xb4 ♕d6 or 47...♗e7) 47...♖c2+ 48 ♖f2 ♖xf2+ 49 ♔xf2 ♕h3. (This means that in the 43 c5?! dxc5 44 ♕xc5 variation Black should play not 44...♕a6?!, but 44...♖b8!).

It usually makes sense to pose the opponent such a choice. At the board it can be hard to decide which continuation is objectively stronger, or which at least is the more promising from the practical point of view. After 43...fxg6 things are easier for White – there is no longer any reason for hesitation.

44 c5!	**dxc5**
45 ♕xc5	**♗d8**

Here 45...♖b8? is no longer possible because of the double attack 46 ♕a7(c7).

46 ♖c1!



On the h-file there is no longer anything for the rook to do, and White switches it to the newly-opened c-file. Polgar wants to carry out the same regrouping of the heavy pieces as in the position with which we began: place the queen behind the rook (♖c4, ♕e3–c1), and then invade with the rook at c8.

46 . . .	**♔f7?!**

A loss of a tempo. 46...♔g7 was more accurate.

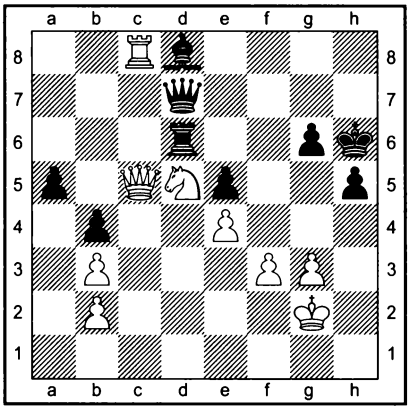
47 ♕e3	**♔g7**

Otherwise Black would have to reckon with 48 ♕h6.

48 ♖c4	**♖d7**
49 ♕c1	**h5**
50 ♖c6	**♖d6**

50...♕f7 51 ♕c5 was no better.

51 ♖c8	**♕d7**
52 ♕c5	**♔h6**



53 ♖b8

There was probably no point in White avoiding the natural move 53 ♖a8!? (with the idea of 54 ♖a7), since if 53...♗b6, then 54 ♕c1+ ♔g7 55 ♕g5 is strong (Polgar). However, this possibility will never run away.

53 . . . ♗f6

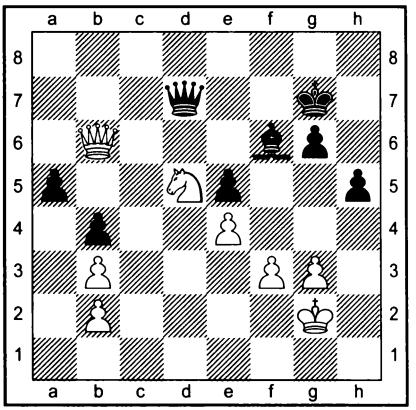
The counter-attacking attempt 53...g5?! was dubious in view of the weakening of the f5-square. White would have replied 54 ♖a8! ♕e6 (54...g4 55 fxg4 hxg4 56 ♕f2! ♔g6 57 ♕f8) 55 ♘e3 ♖d2+ 56 ♔f1 and wins (but, of course, not 56 ♔g1?? ♗b6).

In the opinion of Tibor Karolyi, who has written an interesting book about Judit Polgar, 53...♔g7 was more tenacious. Then White would have had a choice between simplifying the position: 54 ♖b7 ♕xb7 55 ♕xd6 and the more energetic 54 ♖a8!?, and then by analogy with Polgar's variation considered earlier: 54...♗b6 55 ♕c1 ♗d8 56 ♕e3 ♗b6 57 ♕g5.

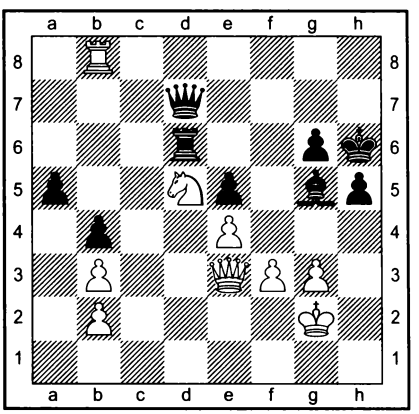
54 ♕e3+ ♗g5?

The move in the game allows the Hungarian player to bring the game to a spectacular conclusion. 54...g5? 55 ♘xf6 ♖xf6 56 ♖h8+ would also have lost immediately.

54...♔g7 was essential. Polgar gives the following variation: 55 ♖a8 ♕b5 56 ♖a7+ (56 ♘c7 is less good: 56...♖d3 57 ♕c1 ♕d7 58 ♘d5 ♗d8 59 ♕c2 ♖d4 – Karolyi) 56...♖d7 (56...♔g8 57 ♘xf6+ ♖xf6 58 ♕h6 ♕e2+ 59 ♔h3 ♕f1+ 60 ♔h4) 57 ♖xd7+ ♕xd7 58 ♕b6.



Black's position is difficult: 58...♗d8 (58...♗e7 59 ♕xa5; 58...♕d8 59 ♕c6) 59 ♕b8 (the e5-pawn is attacked) 59...♕e8? 60 ♘c7 and 61 ♕xd8!.



Now comes the final combination.

55 f4! exf4

56 ♖h8+!

Black resigned, not allowing his opponent to demonstrate the following pretty finish: 56...♔g7 57 ♕d4+ ♗f6 58 ♕xf6+!! ♖xf6 59 ♖h7+! ♔xh7 60 ♘xf6+.

Comparing the two games, it can be

mentioned that, in contrast to Anand, Polgar acted far more purposefully and consistently with White. However, she encountered a significantly less stubborn resistance on the part of the Indian grandmaster than that put up by Kamsky in the first example.

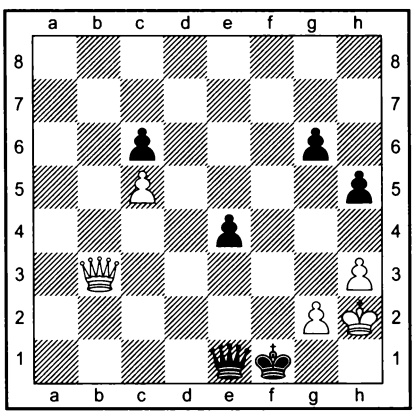
Well, all players have 'black' days. There is also another legitimate explanation: no one is perfect, and even outstanding grandmasters have situations (each have their own) in which they feel less confident. And this means that there is still scope for further creative improvement.

IV

We will now analyse several more examples (not so large-scale), where one of the players faced the same problem: finding the optimal way of converting his advantage. This can also be regarded as a collection of tests – all the positions are taken from my card index of exercises.

Szily – Ostvath

Hungarian Championship 1954



White is a pawn down, and the opponent's passed pawn is very dangerous. All he can hope for is perpetual check, or the advance of his c5-pawn (if he can quickly capture on c6).

It makes sense for Black to check carefully the direct plan of advancing his pawn. And only if it transpires that this plan does not work should he seek a more subtle way of converting his advantage.

44 . . . **e3!**

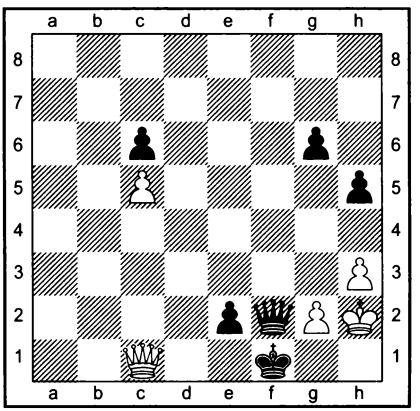
45 ♕c4+

45 ♕f7+ does not help: 45...♕f2 46 ♕xg6 ♕f4+ 47 ♔h1 e2 48 ♕d3 ♔f2 49 ♕c2 ♕g5.

45 . . . **e2**

46 ♕f4+ **♕f2**

47 ♕c1+



Andras Ostvath undoubtedly calculated this variation and decided that things would end in perpetual check: 47...e1♕ 48 ♕c4+ ♕fe2 49 ♕f4+ ♕1f2 50 ♕c1+ etc.

But the perpetual check can be avoided by promoting the pawn to a knight!

47 . . . **e1♘!!**

48 ♕c4+ **♕e2**

49 ♕f4+ **♘f3+!**

50 ♕xf3+ **♕xf3**

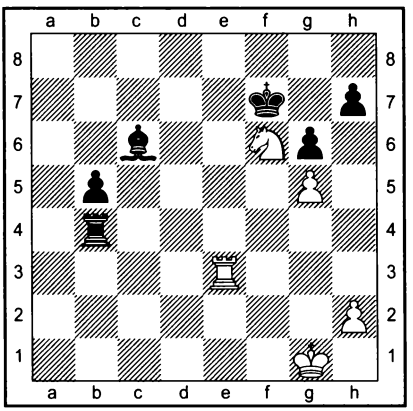
51 gxf3 **♔f2**

It is possible that the game can also be won differently. But no direct way is apparent (apart from the one shown above). Black

failed to cope with the problem and allowed his opponent to escape.

44...♕c1? 45 ♕f7+ ♔e1 (in the variation 45...♔e2 46 ♕xg6 ♕f4+ 47 ♔g1 ♕e5 a draw is given by 48 ♕d6!, but not 48 ♕xc6? ♕a1+ 49 ♔h2 ♔f2 with inevitable mate) **46 ♕xg6 ♕f4+ 47 ♔g1 ♕f1+ 48 ♔h2 ♕c4 49 ♕xc6 e3 50 ♕d6**, and the players agreed a draw.

Browne – Timman
Stockholm 1972



In the game **38...♖c4?!** was played, and if White had replied 39 ♘xh7! he would have created serious problems for the opponent with the conversion of his advantage, in view of the small amount of material remaining on the board. For example: 39...b4 40 ♘f6 ♖c3 41 ♔f2!.

Walter Browne preferred **39 ♖h3?!**, but after **39...b4 40 ♖xh7+ ♔e6** the enemy king came into play and his position became hopeless. There followed **41 ♖h3 ♔f5 42 ♖g3 ♖c3 43 ♖g4 b3 44 ♖b4 ♔xg5 45 ♘g4 ♗e4** (45...♗d5 would have won more quickly, not fearing 46 h4+ ♔xh4) **46 ♖xe4 b2 47 ♖b4 ♖c1+ 48 ♔g2 b1♕ 49 ♖xb1 ♖xb1 50 ♘f2 ♖b2 51 ♔g3 ♖b3+ 52 ♔g2 ♔f5 53 ♘h3 g5 54 ♘g1 ♔g4 55 h3+ ♔h4 56 ♘f3+ ♖xf3 57 ♔xf3 ♔xh3 58 ♔f2 g4 59 ♔g1 ♔g3 60 ♔h1 ♔f2** White resigned.

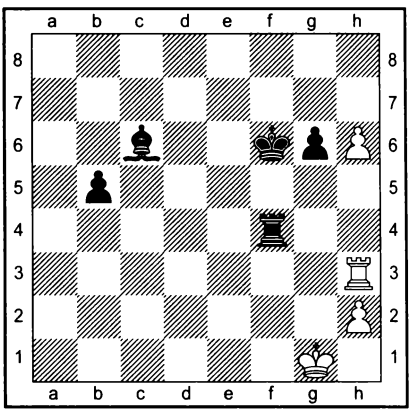
Why did Black give up his h-pawn? Why didn't he advance it (38...h6 or 38...h5)? Obviously Jan Timman was concerned about a combination.

38 . . .	**h6!**
39 gxh6!?	**♔xf6**
40 ♖h3	

However, Igor Zaitsev showed that the passed pawn could be stopped.

40 . . .	**♖g4+!**
41 ♔f2	**♖f4+**
42 ♔g1	

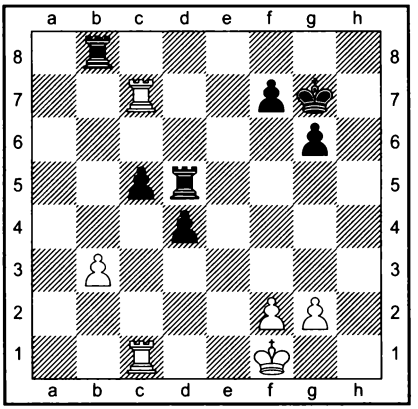
42 ♔g3 ♖f3+, or 42 ♔e1 ♖e4+ and 43...♖e8.



42 . . .	**♗d7!!**
43 h7	**♖f1+!**
44 ♔xf1	**♗xh3+**
45 ♔f2	**♔g7**

(see diagram)

Kunitz – Dvoretsky
Bad Wiessee 1997



Any position with an extra pawn promises Black good chances of success, but everywhere the struggle still continues: for example, after 34...♖b5 35 ♔e2 or 34...d3 35 ♖1xc5 ♖xb3 36 ♖c1!. However, he has available a combination leading to a forced win.

34 . . . **d3!**

35 ♖1xc5

35 ♖7xc5? d2 is totally bad for White.

35 . . . **♖h8!!**

36 ♔g1

The rook is taboo: 36 ♖xd5 ♖h1 mate. If 36 ♔e1, then 36...d2+ is decisive, while if 36 g3 – 36...♖xc5 37 ♖xc5 ♖h1+ 38 ♔g2 d2.

36 . . . **♖dd8!**

37 ♖c1 **d2**

38 ♖d1 **♖de8!**

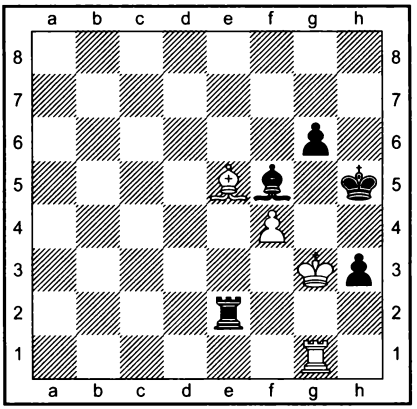
Of course, not 38...♖he8? 39 ♔f1. The capture of the d2-pawn is not possible because of mate.

39 ♖f1 **♖e1**

40 ♖d7 **♖h1+!**

White resigned.

Shirazi – Vasyukov
Tirucchirappalli 1978



Without resorting to drastic measures, it is hardly possible to convert the advantage. A combination comes to Black's aid.

80 . . . **g5!**

This move suggests itself: the threat is 81...g4 and 82...♗e4. However, this could not be played merely 'on general grounds', without precise calculation – Black had to reckon with the attack on his rook.

81 ♔f3 **h2!**

The exchange sacrifice 81...♖xe5? 82 fxe5 ♔h4 is sufficient only for a draw: 83 ♖a1! g4+ (83...♗e6 84 ♖a6 ♗d5+ 85 ♔f2 is not dangerous for White) 84 ♔f4 ♗g6 (84...h2 85 ♔xf5) 85 e6 g3 86 e7 h2 (86...g2? even loses after 87 ♔f3!) 87 ♖a8! ♔h3!. Paradoxically, the goal is achieved by a sacrifice of far more material – a rook!

82 ♖a1

Bad is 82 ♖h1? ♗e4+ 83 ♔xe2 ♗xh1 84 fxg5 ♗f3+.

82 . . . **g4+!!**

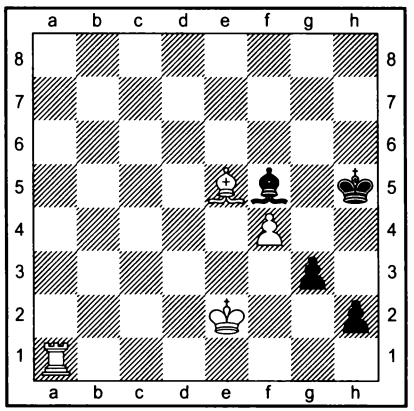
Strictly speaking, there was also a second solution: 82...♖a2!? 83 ♖h1 g4+ (but not 83...♗h3? 84 ♔e3! g4 85 f5 with equality) 84 ♔g3 ♖a3+ 85 ♔xh2 g3+ (85...♗e4 is

insufficient in view of 86 ♖e1! ♖h3+ 87 ♔g1 ♖h1+ 88 ♔f2 g3+ 89 ♔e2 followed by ♗d4) 86 ♔g2+ ♔g4 87 ♖e1 (87 ♖a1 ♖d3) 87...♖a2+ 88 ♔g1 ♖c2!? and 89...♔h3 – the opponent cannot hold this position. But if White had played 82 ♖c1!? (instead of 82 ♖a1), the rook sacrifice 82...g4+!! would have been forced – it is now pointless to play 82...♖c2? 83 ♖h1 g4+ 84 ♔g3, since there is no check on the 3rd rank: the c3-square is controlled by the bishop.

83 ♔xe2

83 ♔g3 ♗e4.

83 . . . g3



The two far-advanced passed pawns prove to be stronger than the rook. If 84 ♖a8, then both 84...♗h3 and 84...g2 are possible.

84 ♔f3 ♔h4

85 ♗d4 ♔h3

86 ♗f2

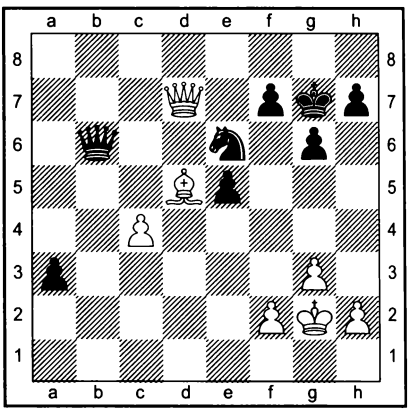
In the event of 86 ♖h1 the switching of the bishop to the a8–h1 diagonal would have been decisive: 86...♗d7.

86 . . . g2

White resigned in view of 87 ♖a8 ♗g4+ 88 ♔e3 g1♕.

Krantz – Yudovich

World Correspondence Team Championship 1979-80



Black can easily obtain a queen ending with four pawns against three on one wing: 39...a2?! 40 ♗xe6 ♕xe6 41 ♕a4 ♕xc4 42 ♕xc4 a1♕. But is it possible to win it? Is there not a stronger alternative?

After the exchange of minor pieces on e6 the white queen will occupy the a-file, and it will be possible to defend the a3-pawn only along the diagonal – then White will play ♕a5 and c4–c5. The idea of breaking through to the aid of the passed pawn via the currently barricaded e-file is not something that immediately comes to mind.

39 . . . e4!!

40 c5

40 ♗xe4? loses immediately to 40...a2 41 ♕a4 ♕d4 or 41...♕b2.

In the event of 40 ♗xe6 ♕xe6 41 ♕a4 nothing is given by 41...♕d6 42 ♕a5 with the threat of 43 c5, while if 41...♕e7 there follows not 42 ♕a5 e3!, but 42 ♕b3. Black decides matters with 41...e3! 42 ♕xa3 (42 fxe3 ♕xe3 is completely hopeless) 42...e2 43 ♕c3+ ♔f8 (43...♔g8) 44 ♕e1 ♕e4+! (but not 44...♕xc4? 45 f3 and 46 ♔f2 with equality) 45 f3 ♕e3, and White's position is

lost: his queen has no moves, his king is not able to come to its aid, and the c-pawn will be stopped by the black king.

Roughly the same picture results from 41 ♕a7 e3! 42 fxe3 (42 ♕xa3 e2 transposes into the previous variation) 42...♕e4+ 43 ♔h3 ♕f5+ 44 ♔g2 (44 g4 ♕f3+ 45 ♔h4 h6) 44...♕c2+ 45 ♔h3 ♕b2, and the a-pawn queens.

40 . . . **♕c7!**

41 ♕a4

If 41 ♗xe6 ♕xd7 42 ♗xd7, then Black does not continue 42...a2? 43 c6 a1♕ 44 c7 with a draw (in this variation the inclusion of the moves 42...e3 43 fxe3 does not change anything), but 42...♔f8! (or 42...♔f6!) 43 c6 ♔e7. The c-pawn is halted, whereas the bishop is unable to stop the a3-pawn.

41 . . . **♕xc5**

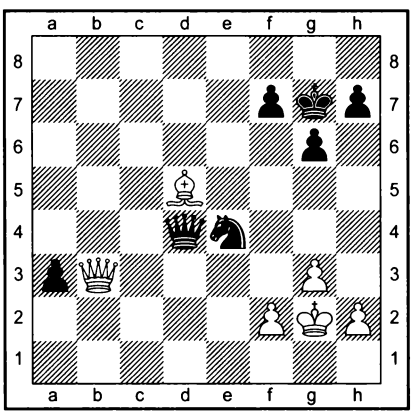
42 ♕xe4

There is no point in playing on two pawns down. If 42 ♗xe4, then 42...♕d4 most simply decides matters.

42 . . . **♕d4**

43 ♕f3 **♘g5**

44 ♕b3 **♘e4**



45 f4

In the event of 45 ♗xe4 ♕xe4+ 46 ♔f1 (46 ♔g1 ♕e1+ 47 ♔g2 ♕a1) there are two equally strong continuations: 46...♕a8 47 ♕a2 ♕a6+ 48 ♔g1 (48 ♔e1 ♕e6+) 48...♕a4 followed by ...♕b4–b2, or 46...♕h1+ 47 ♔e2 ♕c1 48 ♔d3 ♕f1+ 49 ♔e3 ♕e1+ 50 ♔d3 ♕xf2.

45 . . . **♕f2+**

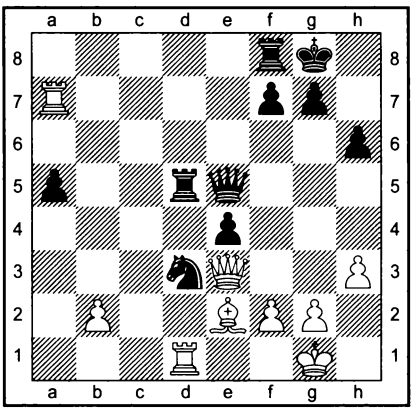
46 ♔h3 **♕f1+**

47 ♔h4 **♕e2**

White resigned.

Petrosian – Kholmov

Vilnius 1951



Ratmir Kholmov carried out a little combination, enabling him to win a second pawn.

33 . . . **♕xb2!?**

34 ♕xe4

34 ♗xd3 exd3 35 ♖xd3? ♕b1+ was completely bad.

34 . . . **♘xf2!!**

35 ♖b7

With the faint hope of 35...♕xb7? 36 ♕xd5 ♕b6?! 37 ♕d4 ♕xd4 38 ♖xd4, when the black knight is trapped. 35 ♔xf2 ♖xd1 would have left White the exchange down, while after 35 ♕xd5 ♘xd1 he would not have time to take the knight because of the threat of 36...♕b6+.

35 . . . **♖xd1+**

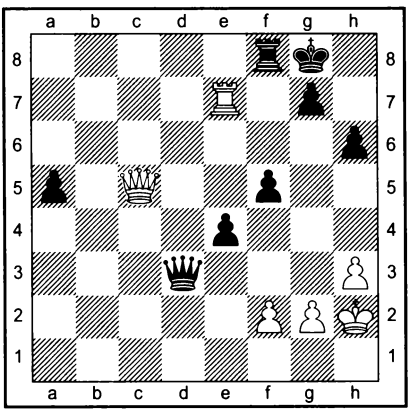
35...♘xe4 was also good.

36 ♗xd1 ♕d2

This leads to an ending that is easily won for Black.

37 ♕e2 ♕xd1+ 38 ♔xf2 ♕xe2+ 39 ♔xe2 ♖a8! 40 ♔d2 a4 41 ♔c2 a3 42 ♔b1 a2+ 43 ♔a1 g6 44 ♖c7 h5 45 ♖b7 ♔g7 46 ♖d7 ♖a3 47 ♖e7 h4 48 ♖e4 g5 49 ♖b4 f5 50 ♖b6 f4 51 ♖b5 ♔g6 52 ♖b6+ ♔h5 53 ♖f6 ♖e3 (of course, not 53...♖g3 54 ♖a6 ♖xg2? 55 ♖h6+! ♔xh6 – stalemate) White resigned.

But now I will explain why Black's 33rd move was awarded not an exclamation mark, but a '!?' sign, expressing some doubt. The point is that the opponent could have replied 34 ♖e7!. The only way to retain the two extra pawns is by 34...f5 35 ♗xd3 ♖xd3 36 ♖xd3 ♕b1+ 37 ♔h2 ♕xd3, but then there follows 38 ♕c5!, intending 39 ♕e5.

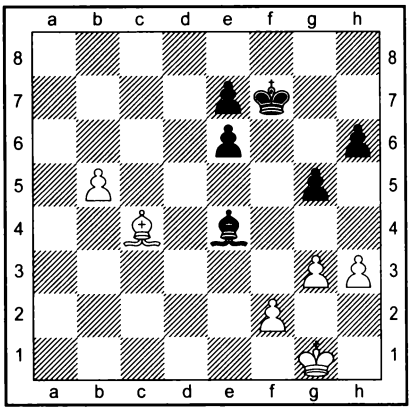


I doubt whether, with the opponent's pieces so active, Black will be able to exploit his material advantage. But then the question arises: should he have carried out the combination, and wouldn't it have been better to prefer the simple move 33...♖fd8, retaining a great advantage?

The conclusion: when forcing events in a favourable situation, it is important to check thoroughly the variations and evaluate their consequences – otherwise you can easily squander your advantage!

Pigusov – Atalik

Reykjavik 1994



A typical way of converting an advantage is to exchange the last pieces and transpose into a pawn endgame. The point is that pawn endings can usually be calculated right to the end. If the results of the calculation are favourable for you, it will no longer be necessary to play the position move by move (with a non-guaranteed outcome and the danger of making a mistake at any moment) – by forcing events, essentially we simply demonstrate an arrived-at solution.

In the given instance the exchange can be carried out by switching the bishop to g2. Let us check the variations.

33 ♗f1! ♔e8

34 ♗g2 ♗d5

34...♗xg2 35 ♔xg2 is hopeless – White's outside passed pawn will automatically decide the outcome. The attempt by the opponent to avoid the exchange also does not pose any problems: 34...♗d3 35 ♗c6+! ♔d8 36 b6 ♔c8 37 f3 followed by ♔f2–e3.

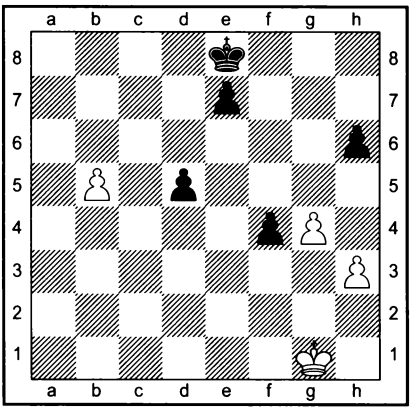
35 ♗xd5!

A difficult move – usually it is not recommended to improve the opponent's pawn structure. Here this is justified by the possibility of a pawn breakthrough on the kingside.

35 . . . **exd5**
36 f4 **gxf4**

It is pointless to play 36...♔d7 37 fxg5 hxg5 38 h4.

37 g4!



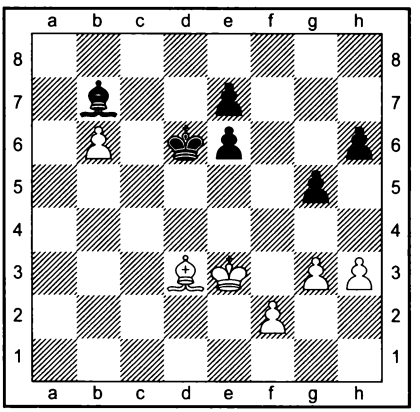
White succeeds in promoting a pawn just in time. Some of the following moves may be interposed.

37 . . . **d4**
38 ♔f1 **d3**
39 h4 **e5**
40 ♔e1 **f3**
41 b6 **♔d7**
42 b7 **♔c7**
43 g5 **hxg5**
44 hxg5 **e4**
45 g6 **e3**
46 g7 **f2+**
47 ♔f1 **d2**
48 b8♕+ **♔xb8**
49 g8♕+

It is not so easy to find and accurately calculate this variation. But to evaluate the consequences of other ways of playing for a win is even more difficult.

If 33 b6!? Black replies 33...♗b7 (33...♔e8? 34 ♗xe6 is bad), for example: 34 f4 gxf4 35 gxf4 ♔f6 and 36...e5, or 34 ♗f1 e5! 35 ♗g2 e4 36 ♔f1 ♔e6 37 ♔e2 ♔e5 38 ♔e3 ♗c6, and White is unable to make any progress.

White's play can be improved with the suggestion by Ernesto Inarkiev: 34 ♔f1! ♔f6 35 ♔e2 ♔e5 36 ♔e3 ♔d6 37 ♗d3.



In a joint analysis with Ernesto we were unable to find a way for Black to save the game.

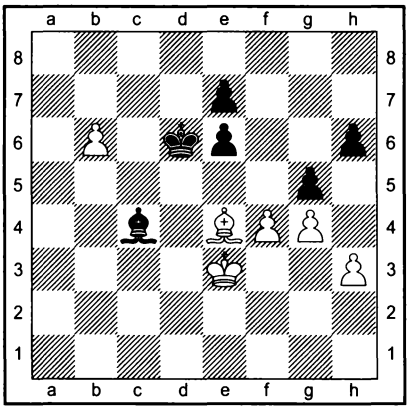
A) 37...e5 38 ♗e4 ♗a6 39 b7 (39 ♔f3 h5 40 h4 is also strong) 39...♔c7 40 ♗c6 (or 40 ♗d5 e6 41 ♗c6) 40...♗f1 41 h4 ♗h3 42 ♔e4 (the same move can also be made after first exchanging pawns on g5) 42... ♗g2+ 43 f3 g4 44 ♔e3 ♔b8 45 ♗e4 ♗h3 46 f4, and the white king breaks into the opponent's position.

B) To 37...♗g2 White does not reply 38 h4? gxh4 39 gxh4 e5 40 ♗e4 ♗h3!, but 38 g4!. The following variations arise:

B1) 38...♗xh3 39 ♔f3 ♔c6 40 ♔g3 ♗xg4 41 ♔xg4 ♔b6 42 ♔h5 ♔c5 43 ♔xh6 ♔d4 44 ♗e2, and Black cannot approach the f2-pawn;

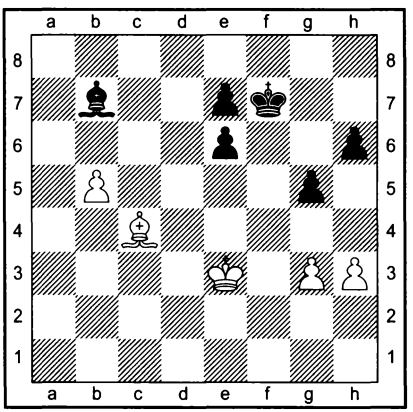
B2) 38...e5 39 f3 ♔c6 40 ♔f2 ♗h1 41 ♗e4+ ♔xb6 42 ♔g1 ♗xf3 43 ♗xf3 ♔c5 44 ♔f2 ♔d4 45 ♗b7 e4 46 ♔e2 ♔e5 47 ♔e3 h5 48 ♗xe4 with an easy win;

B3) 38...♗d5 39 ♗e4 ♗c4 40 f4!



After 40...♗f1 41 fxg5 hxg5 42 h4! or 40...♗a6 41 fxg5 hxg5 42 ♔f3 e5 43 h4 gxh4 44 g5 the passed g-pawn decides the outcome. 40...e5 also does not help: 41 fxe5+ (41 fxg5 is no less strong) 41...♔d7 42 ♗g2 ♗a6 43 ♔d4 ♗b5 44 ♔c5 ♗a6 45 ♗c6+ ♔c8 46 ♔d5 ♗f1 47 ♔e6 ♗xh3 48 ♔xe7 ♗xg4 49 e6.

The game went **33 f3?! ♗xf3 34 ♔f2 ♗b7 35 ♔e3**.

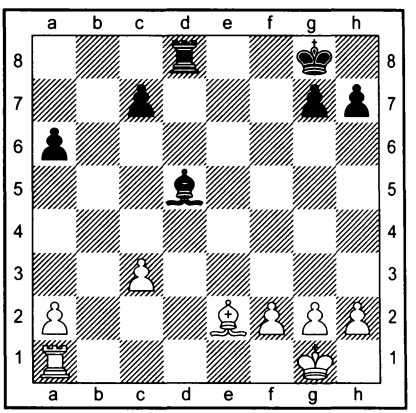


After **35...♔e8?? 36 ♗xe6 ♔d8 37 b6** the position became hopeless. There followed **37...♗g2 38 ♔d4 ♗f1 39 ♔c5 ♗g2 40 ♔b5 ♗f1+ 41 ♔c6**, and Black resigned.

But meanwhile, by continuing 35...♔f6! 36 ♔d4 e5+, Black would have saved the game. For example: 37 ♔e3 e4 38 ♔d4 ♔f5 39 ♔c5 ♔e5 40 ♔b6 ♗d5, or 37 ♔c5 e6 (37...e4?? 38 ♔b6) 38 ♔d6 (38 ♔b6 ♗d5 39 ♗xd5 exd5 40 ♔c5 d4) 38...e4, and now both 39 b6 e3 40 ♔c7 ♗d5 41 b7 ♗xb7 42 ♔xb7 ♔e5 43 ♔c6 ♔d4 and 39 ♗xe6 e3 40 ♗c4 ♔f5!? lead to a draw.

In the final example a strong impression is made by the technique of Paul Keres, based on a precise calculation of variations, and typical of the Estonian grandmaster's play.

Keres – Geller
Budapest 1952



White is a sound pawn to the good. The a6-pawn is also attacked, and he can pin the bishop by 26 ♖d1. A big advantage is retained after practically any of the numerous tempting continuations – the problem is to assess how promising they are and choose the optimal one.

If 26 ♖d1 the opponent will reply 26...♖e8! 27 ♗xa6 (27 ♖d2!? a5) 27...♗xa2. Pawn exchanges normally favour the defending side, which means that this way hardly deserves preference.

In the event of 26 ♗xa6 ♖a8 White can transpose into a bishop ending with an extra pawn: 27 ♗e2 ♖xa2 28 ♖xa2 ♗xa2, but his advantage may not be sufficient for a win –

here the assessment expressed regarding 26 ♖d1 is again applicable. And after 27 c4 Black can choose between 27...♖xa6 28 cxd5 ♖a5 29 a4 ♔f8 and 27...♗xg2 28 ♔xg2 ♖xa6. As is well known, 'rook endings are never won' – with a deficiency of just one pawn, the opponent has the right to count on saving the game.

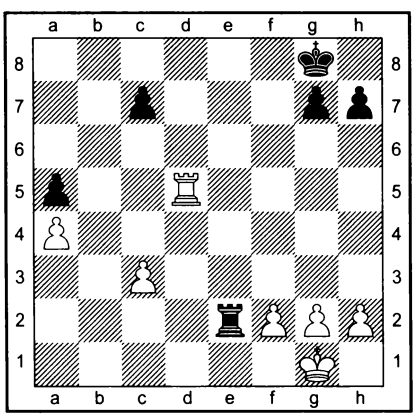
There is another idea which deserves to be studied: to remove the a-pawn from the attack by the bishop, in order to retain both threats: ♗xa6 and ♖d1 (as is well known, often 'the threat is stronger than its immediate execution').

If 26 a3?! Black has both 26...♖d6 27 ♖d1 ♔f7!?, and 26...a5!? 27 ♖d1 ♖e8 28 ♖xd5 ♖xe2 29 ♔f1 ♖c2 30 ♖c5 a4 – a second pawn is not lost and the chances of a draw are very real.

But if the a-pawn is moved two squares forward, things will be bad for Black in the rook ending, and also there will be the additional possibility of fixing the weakness at a6 by a4–a5.

26 a4! ♖d6

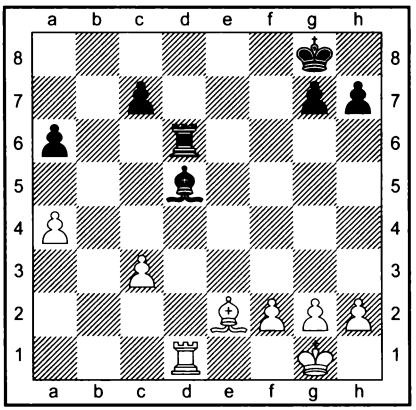
Accuracy would also have been demanded of White in the variation 26...a5 27 ♖d1 ♖e8 28 ♖xd5 ♖xe2.



In the event of 29 g3? (or 29 ♔f1?) Black is able to avoid the loss of a second pawn by playing 29...♖e4! 30 ♖xa5 ♖c4. Only 29 f3! ♖c2 30 ♖c5 is correct, when the loss of a second pawn is inevitable.

27 ♖d1

27 a5?! is premature on account of 27...♖c6. First the rook must be tied to the defence of the bishop.



28 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 29 ♗c4 is threatened – for this reason there is no time for 27...a5. If 27...♗b7 there follows 28 ♖xd6 cxd6 29 a5!, and the bishop ending is undoubtedly won: Black is not only a pawn down, but he has also been saddled with a weak pawn on a6, fixed on a square of the colour of his bishop.

I think that Yefim Geller should have tried 27...♖e6!?. The variations 28 ♗f1 ♗b3 29 ♖b1 ♗d5 and 28 ♗g4 ♖e8 (weaker is 28...♖e7 29 a5) 29 f3 (29 a5 ♗b3) 29...♗b3 30 ♖d7 c6 (or 30...♗xa4) do not seem sufficiently convincing to me – at any event, here Black can fight on. And in the rook ending after 28 ♖xd5 ♖xe2 29 ♔f1 ♖a2 it is not possible to win a second pawn. But nevertheless here we have a more favourable version for White of the rook endgame, compared with those examined earlier. By continuing 30 ♖a5 ♖c2 31 ♖xa6 ♖xc3 32 ♔e2 ♔f7 33 a5 ♖a3 34 ♖a7 ♔f6 35 a6 White will most probably win.

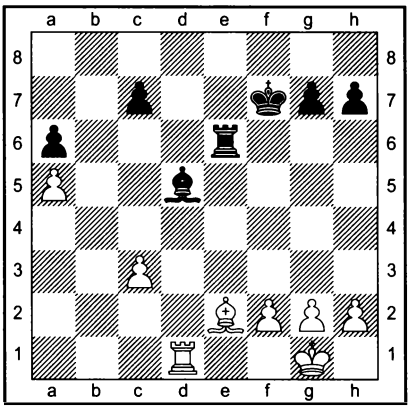
27 . . . ♔f7

28 a5!

The threat of 29 ♗xa6 has been created. 28 ♖xd5? did not work: 28...♖xd5 29 ♗c4 ♔e6 30 ♔f1 ♔d6 31 ♗xd5 ♔xd5 32 ♔e2 ♔c4 33 ♔d2 ♔b3.

28 . . . ♖e6

If 28...♔e6, then 29 f4 ♖c6 30 ♗g4+ is decisive.



29 ♗f1!

Not 29 ♗xa6? ♗b3. It is also not possible to win a second pawn in the variation 29 ♖xd5?! ♖xe2 30 ♔f1 ♖a2 31 ♖c5 c6.

29 . . . ♗b3

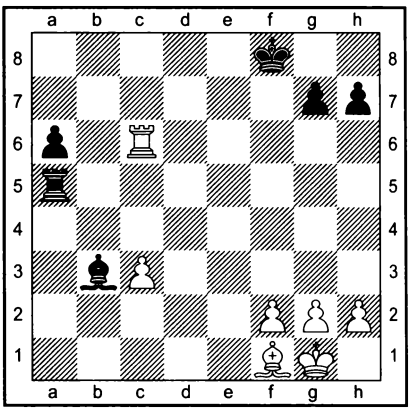
30 ♖d7+ ♔f8

31 ♖xc7

White has increased his material advantage. Now 31...♖e1 32 f3 ♖a1 33 ♖c5 is hopeless for Black.

31 . . . ♖e5

32 ♖c6 ♖xa5



33 ♖b6!

Accuracy to the end! After 33 ♖xa6? ♖c5 the c3-pawn would have been lost.

33 . . . ♗c2

34 ♖xa6 ♖c5

35 ♖a3 ♖d5

36 f3 ♖d1

37 ♔f2 ♖c1

38 h4 ♗g6

39 ♗c4 ♔e7

40 g4 h6

41 ♗d5

With his last few moves White has strengthened his position to the utmost, and further resistance is pointless. Black resigned.

Artur Yusupov, Mark Dvoretsky

Analysis of a Game

Dvoretsky. In the 1990 world under-14 championship Vasya Emelin finished second, behind only the famous Judit Polgar. He annotated in detail one of his games, played against the Romanian player Gabriel Schwarzman. Today we are going to analyse this game together.

Why this game in particular? Well, firstly, it is very interesting to deal with a genuinely conscientious analysis. You know, when you read a phrase like 'such-and-such a move came into consideration', it says nothing. Yes, it no doubt came into consideration. It is a quite different matter, if the commentator tries to investigate what was correct, and what was wrong. One can agree with Emelin's assertions or dispute them, but here at least there is something to think about.

Secondly, it fits in well with the basic theme of our session. From the opening, play went directly into a favourable ending for White. The problem of the technical conversion of his advantage faced Emelin throughout the entire game.

Emelin – Schwarzman

Fond du Lac 1990

French Defence

1 e4	**e6**
2 d4	**d5**
3 ♘d2	**♘f6**
4 e5	**♘fd7**
5 c3	**c5**
6 ♗d3	**♘c6**
7 ♘e2	**cxd4**
8 cxd4	**f6**
9 exf6	**♘xf6**
10 ♘f3	**♗d6**
11 0-0	**♕c7**
12 ♗g5	**0-0**
13 ♗h4	

D. Note the opening variation. White has chosen one of the most dangerous plans against the system chosen by his opponent. In particular: without the inclusion of the moves 12 ♘c3 a6. I first saw it in the game Zapata–Chernin from the Interzonal Tournament (Subotica 1987).

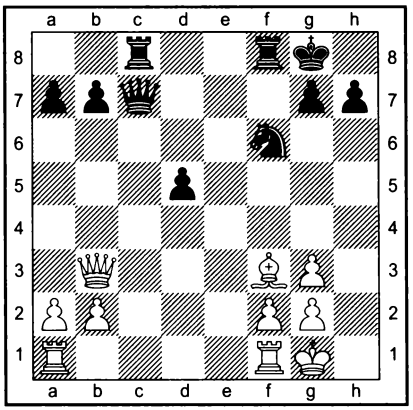
White is threatening the advantageous exchange of the dark-square bishops by 14 ♗g3, for example: 13...♘g4 14 ♗g3 (but not 14 h3? ♖xf3!). The standard reaction 13...♘h5 is dubious in view of 14 ♕c2, when 14...g6? 15 ♗xg6! hxg6 16 ♕xg6+ ♘g7 17 ♘g5 is bad for Black. All that remains is the central freeing advance ...e6–e5, but then Black is saddled with an isolated d5-pawn, which in the approaching endgame will become a weakness.

13 . . .	**e5**
14 dxe5	**♘xe5**
15 ♘xe5	**♗xe5**
16 ♗g3	**♗xg3**

Emelin. In one of the previous rounds of the world championship I reached the same position. My opponent **D.Zifroni** played **16...♗g4**. He exchanged on e2 and I was soon able to press on the d5-pawn.

17 ♕b3 (**D:** 17 ♖c1 ♕d6 18 f3 ♗d7 19 ♕d2 with the threat of 20 f4 was strong) **17...♗xe2 18 ♗xe2 ♗xg3 19 hxg3 ♖ac8**

(**D:** 19...♕b6!?) **20 ♗f3**



Here my opponent sacrificed a pawn, but did not gain sufficient compensation.

20...♕c4 21 ♕xb7 ♖f7 22 ♕b3 ♕xb3 23 axb3 ♖c2 24 ♖ab1 ♖b7 25 ♖fe1! Intending 26 ♖e3; Black cannot take on b3 because of ♗d1.

25...♖d2 26 ♖ed1 ♖xd1+ 27 ♗xd1 ♘e4 Here I went wrong: **28 ♗g4?** I should have played 28 ♖c1 ♘d2 29 ♖c3 ♖e7 30 ♗g4 ♖e1+ 31 ♔h2 ♘f1+ 32 ♔h3 ♔f7 33 ♗f5 g6 34 ♖c7+ ♔f6 35 ♗d3 with an obvious advantage.

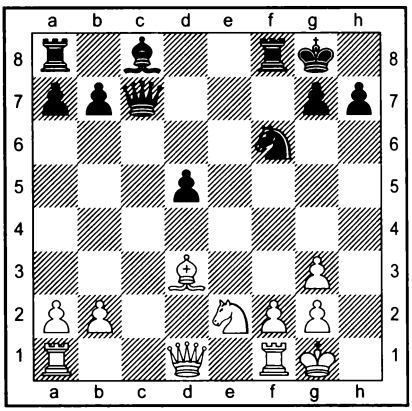
Yusupov. Why did you play differently in the game, and what was the reason for the mistake?

E. I thought that this was better, but in my calculations I simply overlooked some elementary detail.

17 hxg3!

(see diagram)

D. Strangely enough, this natural recapture would appear to be a novelty! Both in the afore-mentioned Zapata–Chernin encounter, and in two earlier games which I managed to discover, played by Radulov and Smyslov against Vaganian (Leningrad



1977), White captured on g3 with his knight, which is somewhat weaker. It was 17 hxg3! that at one time I analysed with Yusupov, and I remember that we did not find a clear-cut way to equalise.

Yu. Probably Black should avoid further exchanges and keep play in the middlegame. Say, 17...♗d7 and then ...♕d6 or even 17...♕e5!?, hoping if possible to develop an attack by ...♘g4. Here too White's position is preferable. But it would appear that in the endgame his advantage is greater, and in addition the opponent has no chances of creating counterplay.

17 . . .	**♕b6**
18 ♕b3	**♕xb3**
19 axb3	**♗d7**

E. 19...a5 20 b4 leads to the loss of a pawn, for example: 20...b6 21 bxa5 bxa5 (21...♖xa5 22 ♖xa5 bxa5 23 ♖a1 ♘g4 24 f4) 22 b4 a4 23 ♘c3 ♗d7 24 b5 ♖fb8? (**D:** after 24...a3 things are not so simple) 25 ♖xa4 ♖xa4 26 ♘xa4, and 26...♗xb5? fails to 27 ♖b1.

20 b4!

E. I prevent ..a7–a5.

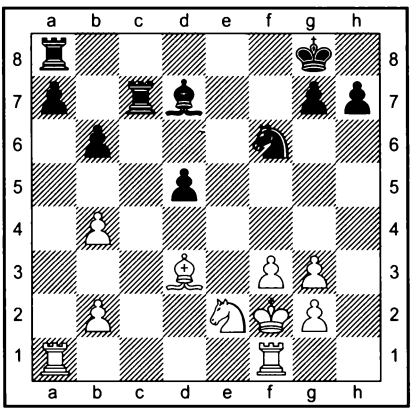
Yu. This is an important point. If Black were able to place his pawn on a5 unpunished, he would solve his problems.

20 . . .	**a6**

E. The opponent is afraid that, by playing b4–b5, I will fix his pawn on a7. Given the opportunity, he intends to exchange the bishops on b5. It was possible to defend differently: 20...♖fc8, then ...♖c7 and ...b7–b6, but all the same this would not have changed the evaluation of the position.

Yu. Don't rush. In the endgame it is always important how the pawns are arranged. Show us the variations that you analysed at home.

E. 20...♖fc8 21 f3 ♖c7 22 ♔f2 b6.



23 ♖a6 ♗c8 24 ♖a3 a5 25 ♖fa1 ♖ca7 (25...♖b8 26 bxa5 bxa5 27 ♖1a2 ♖a7 28 ♖xa5 ♖xa5 29 ♖xa5 ♖xb2 30 ♖a8 and wins) 26 ♔e3 ♗d7 27 ♔d4 ♔f7 28 ♘c3 ♔e6 29 ♗b5! – after the exchange of bishops it is not clear how to defend the pawn weaknesses.

D. In the variation found by Emelin there are several instructive points as regards the technique of converting an advantage. For example, the timely centralisation of the king, and the transformation of an advantage at the end (the exchange of the opponent's passive bishop for the sake of 'processing' his pawns). 23 ♖a6! is a typical move. The rook can be placed immediately on a3, but it is useful first to lure the black bishop to an inferior square.

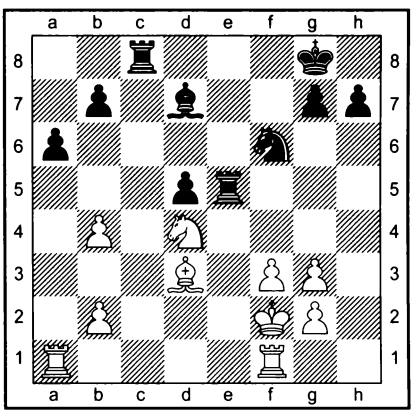
Yu. It is not essential to play 29 ♗b5. It is tempting first to strengthen the position on the kingside: 29 g4. However, the choice here is a matter of taste.

Let's just go back a little, to the position after 23 ♖a6. Black also has another idea – 23...♖f8!? (instead of 23...♗c8). It is desirable to defend the a7-pawn with the rooks from the side. Of course, here too problems remain: 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 the opponent has more pawn weaknesses. But perhaps this is how Black should have defended?

21 ♘d4

D. White blockades the isolated pawn. But, as Bent Larsen remarked in his time, one should always also consider the more direct plan – the attempt to capture it. In the given instance: 21 ♖a5!? followed by ♖d1 and ♘f4.

21 . . .	**♖ac8**
22 f3	**♖fe8**
23 ♔f2	**♖e5**



24 ♖fe1?

E. I wanted to play my king to the centre. But this move is not the best; 24 ♖fc1! was stronger. If 24...♖ee8, then simply 25 ♖c5 with the advantage. The attempt to gain

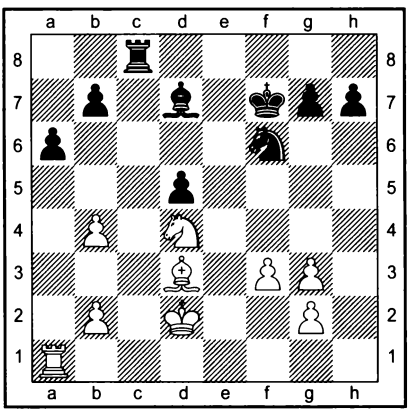
counterplay with 24...♖f8?! does not succeed. White replies 25 ♖c7. The check on g4 clearly does not give anything, and 25...♗b5 26 ♘xb5 axb5 27 ♖xb7 ♘e4+ 28 ♔g1 ♘xg3 29 ♖aa7 ♖g5 30 ♗xb5 is also bad. If 25...♗c8 there follows 26 ♖ac1, then the king retreats to g1, and it is not clear why Black has allowed the rook onto the 7th rank.

Yu. Here a simple principle operates: in the endgame the open file which is further from the king is more important (in the middlegame it is just the opposite). Therefore White should have fought for the c-file, and not exchanged the rook on e5, which is rather stupidly placed.

24 . . . **♖xe1**

25 ♔xe1 **♔f7**

26 ♔d2



26 . . . **g6?!**

D. Amusingly, Black has placed all his pawns on squares of the colour of his own bishop. Do you remember that at the previous session of the school we analysed the game Polugayevsky–Mecking (Mar del Plata 1971)? There Mecking defended in the same way, and this did not turn out well.

Yu. The position is worthy of more thorough consideration. Here we encounter a very important endgame problem – how to arrange the pawns. The fate of the game may depend on the pawn structure chosen by Black.

If one proceeds, so to speak, from strictly structural considerations, then 26...h5!? deserves serious consideration. For White it would be useful to stretch the opponent's defences and create a target on the kingside. In this respect the g3–g4 advance is very unpleasant. The move ...h7–h5 prevents it. After ...h7–h6 Black has more problems in the knight endgame – after the exchange of bishops it will be hard to drive the knight from f5.

Probably White should have advanced his pawn to g4 on the previous move, instead of 26 ♔d2.

E. In the event of 26...h5 I simply strengthen my position by 27 ♖e1 with the threat of 28 ♖e5.

Yu. Yes, you are suggesting the most natural plan. Let's have a look. Black can probably offer the exchange of rooks by 27...♖e8.

E. Then I play 28 ♖c1, and if 28...♖c8 29 ♖xc8 ♗xc8 30 ♗f5.

D. This is not dangerous in view of 30...♗xf5 31 ♘xf5 ♘e8 and then 32...♔e6. Probably White shouldn't exchange on c8 – 29 ♖c5! is stronger. If 29...♔e7, then 30 ♗f5 now gains in strength. Black should consider 29...g5!?, removing his g7-pawn from a possible attack.

Yu. Vasya analysed ...h7–h6. Let's check his analysis.

E. If 26...h6, then after 27 g4 ♔e7 I exchange bishops on f5. The knight reaches f5, from where it cannot be driven away. Sooner or later White will get to the weak g7 or b7-pawns. Therefore my opponent decided to cover the f5-square immediately.

D. Is it really all so clear? In your notes to the game you give the variation 28 ♗f5 ♗xf5 29 ♘xf5+ ♔f8 30 ♔d3. Let's continue it:

30...♖c4 31 b5 ♘d7! – Black gains counterplay. Besides, the exchange on f5 is not essential – there is also the immediate 28...♖c4!.

Yu. In itself the exchange of bishops does not yet win the game, although it creates dangerous threats. It also has drawbacks – vulnerable points appear in White's position; for example, the c4-square is weakened.

E. White should probably play more accurately. I suggest 28 ♖e1+ ♔d6 29 b3. The threat of 30 ♗f5 is renewed.

D. Black has to reply 29...♖e8 30 ♖c1 (30 ♖xe8 ♘xe8) 30...♖c8.

E. But then 31 ♖xc8 ♗xc8 32 ♗f5.

D. Never mind, for the moment there is a defence: 32...♗d7 33 ♗xd7 ♔xd7 34 ♘f5 ♘e8.

E. After 35 ♔d3 White has an obvious advantage.

D. Black's position is indeed unpleasant, but he still has some counterplay. 35...♔c6 suggests itself, with the intention of attacking the white pawns on the b-file.

Yu. It transpires that the move b2–b3 had not only virtues!

D. The exchange of bishops on f5 is a double-edged decision, since Black's 'bad' bishop is exchanged. Of course, in return White gains some important squares and attacks the enemy pawns. But if Black can parry the direct threats, his position may be improved.

E. There is one more try. I will not give a check on e1, but play 28 ♘b3.

Yu. We seem to have talked you out of the bishop exchange. Very well, let's check this. For the moment Black's actions are obvious: 28...♔d6 29 ♘c5 ♗c6, and if 30 ♖e1, then 30...♖e8. If 30 ♗g6 I play 30...♖c7, in order to have the move ...♖e7.

Even so, the exchange of bishops on f5 is a good idea; only, it must be put into practice rather more accurately. Say, 28 b3 ♔d6 29 ♗f5. Black has to move his knight from f6 (it is not doing anything there), but where to?

Let us sum up. After both 26...h6 and 26...h5 White retains the better chances, but Black can defend. It seems to me, that out of all the possible pawn moves on the kingside, he chose the least successful.

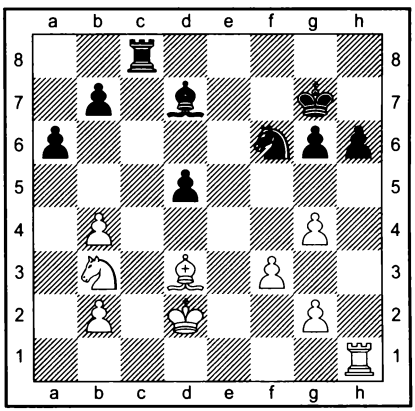
Note that in many variations the defensive plan involves playing the king to the centre, to d6, or exploiting the open c-file. All these resources appeared as a result of the exchange of the 'wrong' rook on the 24th move!

Now let's return to the game.

27 g4 ♘e8

Yu. On f6 the knight has no future – it must be moved from there. The only question is whether to do this immediately, or first prevent g4–g5.

E. Black would have done better to choose 27...h6. On h7 the pawn is weaker than on h6. Then I was intending to play 28 ♖h1 ♔g7 29 ♘b3.



If 29...♖e8 there follows 30 ♘c5 ♗c8 (30...♗c6 is bad in view of 31 ♖c1 ♖c8 32 ♘xa6 bxa6 33 ♗xa6 ♖c7 34 b5) 31 ♔c3 ♘d7 32 ♔d4. In the event of 32...♘xc5 33 bxc5 ♗e6 34 ♖e1 the position is completely

won (b2–b4, ♖e5, ♗d3–c2–b3). And if 32...♘f6, then 33 ♖c1 followed by ♘a4, and the rook invades on the c-file.

Yu. It is very obvious that White's advantage has sharply increased. But active defence by Black should also be considered: 32...♘e5 with the threat of 33...♘c6+.

E. The check can be prevented by 33 b5!.

Yu. Yes, after 33...♘xd3 34 ♘xd3 axb5 35 ♖e1 White has a decisive advantage. What else can be devised? Let's try 33...b6!? 34 ♘xa6 ♘xd3 35 ♔xd3 ♗d7. Now 36 ♔d2 ♗xb5 37 ♘c7 ♖e2+ is pointless. In the event of 36 ♔d4 the pawn cannot be taken, but 36...♖e2 is possible. Unexpectedly Black has gained counterplay. All the time White has to reckon with active possibilities such as this.

D. White still retains a great advantage by 36 ♘c7 ♖c8 37 ♖c1 ♗xb5+ 38 ♔d4 or 38 ♔d2. A check on e6 is threatened, and the d5-pawn is under attack. But if he doesn't want to go in for complications, he can simply play 32 ♘xd7 (instead of 32 ♔d4) 32...♗xd7 33 ♔d4.

E. Another set-up is no better for Black – 29...♖c7 30 ♘c5 ♗c8 31 ♔e3 b6 32 ♘a4...

D. Stop, stop, you're overlooking 31...a5!.

Yu. In addition White has to reckon with 30...d4!? (instead of 30...♗c8). 31...♘d5 is threatened.

D. Remember: earlier, in the analysis of 26...h6, Vasya underestimated the rook move to c4, which gave Black excellent counter-chances. When you stand better in an endgame, you must all the time keep an eye out for sudden activity by your opponent. I think it is typical of Vasya to underestimate his opponent's possibilities. This is dangerous, and is liable to cost many points, especially when trying to convert an advantage. You overlook something – immediately counterplay flares up, and of your advantage nothing remains.

E. If 30...d4, then 31 ♖e1 ♘d5 32 ♖e4 is possible.

Yu. Black is forced to reply 32...♘xb4 33 ♖xd4 ♘xd3. I would exchange pawns – this is an achievement for Black. 33 ♖e7+! ♔f6 34 ♖xd7 ♖xc5 is more dangerous for him. The rook ending after 35 ♖xb7 ♘xd3 36 ♔xd3 is, of course, inferior, but by no means definitely lost.

D. And yet another plan of defence should be examined: 29...♗b5!?. For example, 30 ♘c5 ♗xd3 31 ♔xd3 a5.

E. Then 32 ♘e6+ ♔f7 33 ♘d4.

D. Of course, after 33...axb4 34 ♖xh6 the position favours White, but 34...♖c1 retains some counterplay. True, after 31...a5?! there is a far more unpleasant reply: 32 ♖c1!. Therefore Black should try 31...b6!? 32 ♘xa6 h5 33 gxh5 ♘xh5 or 33 g5 ♘h7 34 f4 ♘f8 with some counterplay. In difficult situations it is sometimes worth defending in this way – sharply change the pattern of the play, and go in for material or positional concessions for the sake of activating your forces.

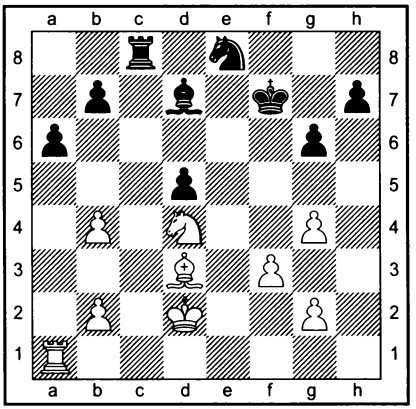
White can double the opponent's pawns: 30 ♗xb5 axb5 31 ♘c5. I had in mind 31...b6 32 ♘e6+ ♔f7 33 ♘d4 ♖c4 34 ♔d3 h5.

Yu. Unfortunately, after 35 b3! White has a great advantage.

D. Yes, that's true. But this means that the best plan of defence is nevertheless 29...♖c7!.

I have some doubts about 29 ♘b3. Should the knight be moved from the excellent square d4? In my view, consideration should be given to 29 ♖e1 ♔f7 30 ♖e5 ♖e8 (31 g5 was threatened) 31 ♖xe8 and 32 ♔e3.

Yu. Whatever difficulties Black would have subsequently faced, it is clear that 27...h6 should have been played. The prospect of a kingside bind by g4–g5 is just too unpleasant.

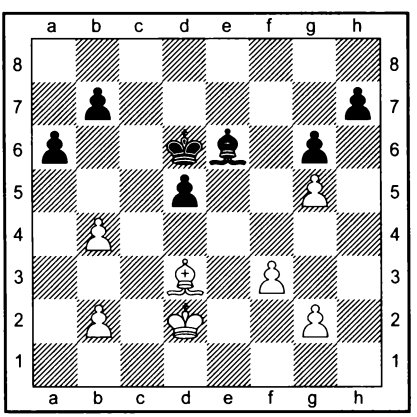


28 ♖a5?!

E. I should first have played 28 g5!, fixing the h7-pawn. And then thought where to put the rook: manoeuvre it to c5 or place it on h1.

28 . . . ♗e6

E. Another possibility is 28...♘c7. Then 29 g5 ♔e7, and here White does best to retreat his rook to a1 with the threat of 31 ♖h1. If he plays the inaccurate 30 ♖c5?!, then after 30...♔d6 31 ♖c1 ♘e6 (31...♔e5 32 ♔e3 ♘e6 33 f4+!, and 33...♘xf4? 34 ♘f3+ is not possible) 32 ♖xc8 ♗xc8 33 ♘xe6 ♗xe6 this leads to a won bishop ending.



Yu. Here you have a very deep and interesting analysis. Please show us it.

D. It is good that such an analysis has been made! It would be simplest to stop here and say 'White has the advantage'. Yes, the advantage, but is it sufficient for a win? In over-the-board situations there is not usually any particular point in seeking an answer to this question – it is sufficient to understand whether our position has improved or deteriorated, and whether we have extracted the maximum possible. But when there arises a position which can be evaluated exactly, you should endeavour in analysis to establish the truth.

34 ♔e3 ♗f5 35 ♗e2 ♔e5 36 f4+ ♔d6 37 ♗f3 b6

E. The pawns should be moved off the light squares.

38 ♔d4 ♗e6 39 g3 a5 40 bxa5 bxa5

Now I must seize control of the h3–c8 diagonal with my bishop and begin advancing my kingside pawns.

41 ♗g2 (zugzwang) **41...♗f7 42 ♗h3 ♗e8 43 ♗c8**

Yu. It would be desirable for Black to dislodge the bishop from c8 by 43...♔c7, but then there follows 44 ♗e6. If only this same position could be obtained with the bishop on f7... But I don't see how this can be achieved.

D. If 42...♗g8 (instead of 42...♗e8), then 43 f5!.

43...♗f7

E. The opponent has to reckon with f4–f5. For example, if 43...♗a4, then 44 f5 ♗c2 45 f6 ♗b3 46 f7 ♔e7 47 ♗e6 and 48 ♗xd5 is decisive.

44 g4 ♗e8 45 ♗b7 ♗f7

After 45...♗d7 46 ♗xd5 ♗xg4 47 ♗g8 Black loses a pawn (if 47...♔e7, then 48 ♔c5 is decisive).

46 f5 ♗g8 47 ♗a6 ♗f7 48 ♗d3 ♗e8 49 ♗b1 ♗f7

Bad is 49...a4 50 ♗c2 with zugzwang.

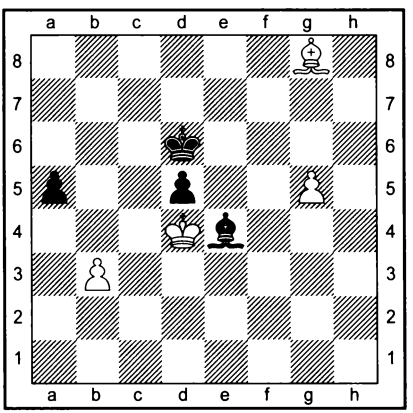
50 ♗a2 ♗g8 51 ♗b3 ♗f7 52 ♗a4

Again zugzwang.

52...♗g8 53 fxg6 (53 ♗e8 ♔e7) **53...hxg6 54 ♗e8 ♗e6** (54...♗h7 55 ♗f7) **55 ♗xg6 ♗xg4 56 ♗f7 ♗f3**

Now 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



58...♗c2 (58...♗f3 59 g6; 58...♔c6 59 ♔e5 with the threat of ♗g8–e6–f5) **59 ♗xd5 a4 60 bxa4 ♗xa4 61 g6 ♗c2 62 g7 ♗h7 63 ♗a2 ♔e7 64 ♔e5 ♔e8 65 ♔f6**, and White wins.

D. A remarkable analysis. The white bishop marches around the entire board. The length of the main variation is more than 30 moves!

Is it really all correct? In one of his articles Bent Larsen asserted that long variations always have some mistake in them; when he sees them, it awakens in him the instinct of a killer, a striving to immediately bury the entire analysis.

Yu. Let's return to the position after 58 b3. The white b-pawn is vulnerable – this is suspicious. Since everything else loses, let's try allowing the white king to go to e5.

58...♔c6! 59 ♔e5 ♔c5 60 ♗e6 ♔b4!. Black's objective is to give up his bishop for the g-pawn. White has two moves: 61 ♗xd5 and 61 ♗f5.

A) 61 ♗f5 ♗xf5 (61...♔xb3 62 g6) 62 ♔xf5 d4 – the pawns promote simultaneously.

B) 61 ♗xd5 ♗c2 (or 61...♗g6 62 ♔f6 ♗c2), and how can White improve his position?

D. Perhaps instead of 59 ♔e5 White should change plan: 59 ♗f7 and 60 g6. After all, now the black bishop does not manage to go via f3 to h5. In the event of 59...♔b5 I had in mind 60 ♗xd5 ♗g6 61 ♗e4 ♗f7 62 ♔c3 ♔c5 63 g6 ♗e6 64 ♗d3 and 65 ♗c4.

E. 60 g6 ♗xg6 61 ♗xg6 ♔b4 (61...a4 62 ♗e8+) 62 ♗c2 is even simpler. 60...♔b4 61 g7 ♗h7 62 ♗xd5 is completely hopeless – the white king goes to h6.

Yu. Yes, that's true. But I can also change the plan of defence. If 59 ♗f7 I play 59...♔d6! 60 g6 ♔e7 61 ♔e5 ♗c2 with a draw.

It appears that here mutual zugzwang positions begin to arise. White can try 59 ♗e6 (seeing as after 59...♔b5 60 ♗xd5 we have found a win) 59...♔d6 60 ♗f7.

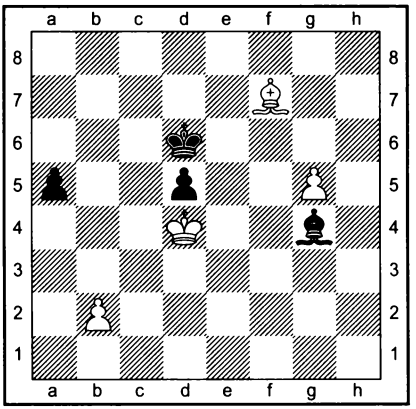
D. Black replies 60...♗f3. We have reached a position which we already had after the 56th move, only the white pawn has moved to b3.

Yu. So, as yet we haven't found a win. It has to be investigated whether White's plan can be improved. Vasya, please do this at home, to complete your analysis.

D. *Later Emelin found a simple improvement. Let us return to the position after Black's 56th move.*

(see diagram)

In the variation examined by him 57 g6 ♗h5 58 ♗e8 ♗g4 59 g7 ♗e6 60 ♗g6 ♗g8 61 ♗f5! ♔e7 62 ♔e5 d4! White does not capture the pawn, but makes a waiting move with his bishop (63 ♗c2 or 63 ♗e4), and the opponent finds himself in zugzwang.



Now we will continue the analysis of the game.

29 b5?

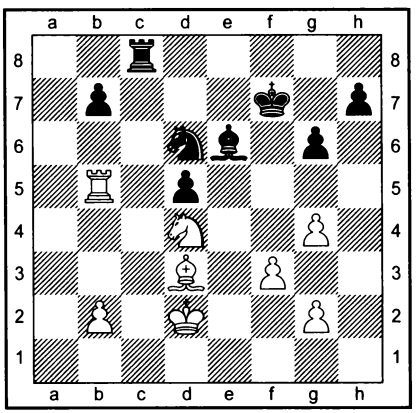
E. Here I was over-hasty. Again I should have fixed the enemy pawns by 29 g5!.

Yu. You began action on the queenside, without completing your work on the kingside.

E. I miscalculated: I considered 29...axb5 30 ♖xb5 ♘d6 31 ♖b6 ♔e7 and though that I would win a pawn by 32 ♘b5. I overlooked the reply 32...♖c6.

Yu. Yes, and after 32...♘xb5 a pawn is not lost (33 ♖xb7+? ♘c7).

29 . . .	**axb5**
30 ♖xb5	**♘d6**



31 ♖b6?

D. I was watching this game when it was played. From the side, of course, you don't delve into details, but some general impressions nevertheless remain. It seemed to me that the white rook had strayed off course and was cramped among the black pieces and pawns, as a result of which the opponent later acquired excellent saving chances. If Black did not have a knight, the rook would be excellently placed on b6, tying the enemy rook to the defence of the b7-pawn. But the knight on d6 seriously restricts the activity of the white rook.

31 ♖a5! was much stronger. The rook goes either to a7, or via a1 to h1. First, of course, it will be necessary to cover the c4-square by playing b2–b3. 31...♖c4 32 ♘c2 is pointless, while in the event of 31...♘c4+ 32 ♗xc4 ♖xc4 33 ♔d3 (intending 34 ♖b5) White has an undisputed advantage.

31 . . .	**♔e7**
32 g5	**♗d7**
33 ♔e3	**♗c6**

D. Schwarzman conducts the entire game very passively. I would have preferred 33...♖c1!?. The rook should pester the opponent, not allowing him to calmly strengthen his position. Rook activity is one of the important principles of playing endings.

E. White would have replied 34 ♘e2, preparing ♔d4 and ♘f4. 34...♖d1 is not possible because of 35 ♘c3.

D. Firstly, this is not so in view of 35...d4+!, when 36 ♔xd4 ♘f5+ leads to a draw. In addition, 34...♖h1! 35 ♔d4 ♗c6 36 ♘f4 ♖d1 or 36 ♘c3 ♖h4+ (36...♖h2) is possible. Your pieces are nicely placed, but it is not easy to make progress – the black rook hinders this.

E. The check on h4 can be prevented by 36 f4.

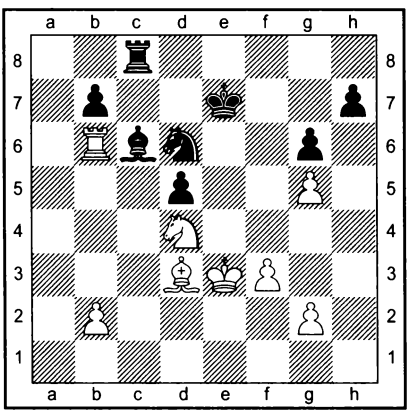
D. Then, say, 36...♖d1, and White does not have 37 ♘c3? ♘f5+.

Yu. Here it is not a matter of specific moves. It is clear that White has strayed from the correct course. His rook on b6 is inactive, merely attacking the b7-pawn, which is securely defended by the minor pieces. If the rook had been on a1, none of this counterplay would have arisen; on the contrary, it is the white rook which would have created threats from h1 or e1.

An advantage is usually accumulated little-by-little, but it can also be lost little-by-little. Thus here White has lost the greater part of his advantage as a result of such a 'trifle' as the poor position of his rook. In this ending the rooks are the strongest pieces, and their activity is of enormous significance. Both players underestimated the importance of this factor.

E. It is not essential to play 35 ♔d4 – the rook can be brought out via b4.

D. But then you are forced to lose time. Besides, ♔d4 forces the black bishop to take up a passive position on c6. Whereas in the event of 35 ♖b4 you constantly have to reckon with an exchange of minor pieces on f5.



34 ♘xc6+?

E. I should probably have withdrawn my rook. I was simply tired of playing against this bishop and I decided to exchange it.

D. You see, with your rook on the a-file the bishop wouldn't have bothered you at all. Whereas here the bishop restricts the rook. But even so, you shouldn't have exchanged it.

34 . . . ♖xc6?

E. Good drawing chances were offered by 34...bxc6!. After 35 ♔d4 the most accurate reply is 35...♖c7!.

35...♔d7 is weaker: 36 ♔c5 (36 ♔e5 ♖e8+ 37 ♔f6?? ♖e7 and the king is in a mating net) 36...♖c7 37 ♖b8.

D. Even so, the king move looks natural – it frees the rook from the defence of the c6-pawn. I suggest checking 35...♔d7 36 ♔c5 ♘f7!. The enemy king on c5 is too strong – Black must try to evict it. If 37 ♖b7+, then 37...♖c7, while if 37 f4 I reply 37...♘d8 38 f5 ♔c7 (or 38...♖a8). White retains the better chances, but the play is not just in one direction, and the situation becomes rather tense.

Yu. Perhaps White should nevertheless exchange rooks: 37 ♖b7+ ♖c7 38 ♖xc7+ ♔xc7 39 f4.

D. I must play my knight to b7. But not necessarily via d8 – I will try 39...♘d6, restraining f4–f5.

Yu. Then 40 g4 ♘b7+ 41 ♔d4 ♔d6 42 f5.

D. The g-pawn has to be given up, but in return Black can become active in the centre: 42...c5+ 43 ♔e3 c4 44 fxg6 hxg6 45 ♗xg6 ♔e5 followed by ...d5–d4+. If he can manage to exchange on the queenside, the draw will be not far off.

E. In the minor piece endgame I also considered another defensive idea: at the point when f4–f5 is played, to answer ...♘f7, capture on g5, and block the remaining white pawn with the knight.

Yu. A good plan. Apparently Black does indeed have good drawing chances.

E. I also do not see how White can win after

35...♖c7. For example: 36 ♖b8 ♖c8 37 ♖xc8 ♘xc8 38 ♔c5 ♔d7 39 f4 ♘d6 40 b4 ♔c7 41 ♗b1 ♔d7 (weaker is 41...♘f7 42 b5 cxb5 43 ♗a2) 42 g4 ♔c7 43 ♔d4 (43 f5 ♘f7) 43...♔d7 44 ♔e5 ♔e7.

Yu. Of course, you shouldn't have taken on c6, allowing Black to connect his pawns – after this it would appear that the game should have ended in a draw.

E. Schwarzman already had little time left, and with him about to get into time-trouble I wanted to change the position somehow.

Yu. Such an approach is by no means always justified. As a rule, when the opponent is in time-trouble you should still aim to make the strongest moves. This is a more effective strategy.

Show us what happened in the game.

35 ♖b4	**♖c7**
36 ♔d4	**♔e6**
37 ♖b6	**♖c1**

E. My opponent apparently believed me, that after 37...♖c6 the position was lost. In fact that is what he should have played. But he was in serious time-trouble.

Yu. Were you both short of time?

E. No, I still had some time left.

Yu. And on what move was the time control, the fortieth?

E. The fiftieth.

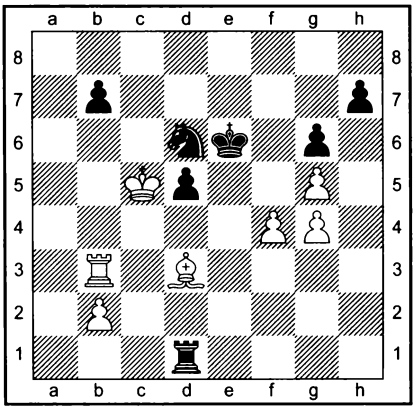
Yu. Well, then he's is a bad way. To hold such a position in time-trouble is almost impossible.

38 f4	**♖d1**
39 g4	**♔e7**
40 ♖b3	

E. Threatening 41 ♔xd5.

D. White also had another interesting idea: 41 b4!? (zugzwang!) 41...♔d7 42 ♔c5, transposing into a favourable rook ending.

40 . . .	**♔e6**
41 ♔c5	



41 . . .	**♖g1**

E. The rook ending is hopeless: 41...♘e4+ 42 ♗xe4 dxe4 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 towards its kingside pawns: 48...♔f7 (instead of 48...♔d6?). For example: 49 ♔e4 ♔g7 50 ♔f3 (50 b4 ♖b1 51 ♖xe2 ♖xb4+) 50...♖f1+ 51 ♔xe2 ♖xf4 with a draw. After 49 ♔e5 ♔g7 50 b4! (50 ♔e6? ♖f1; 50 f5 ♔f7! or 50...♖g1) 50...♖b1 51 ♖xe2 ♖xb4 52 ♖d2 ♖b7 (52...♖b5+ 53 ♖d5) 53 ♔e6 White probably wins, but this entire variation is rather complicated, and in addition Black could have taken control of the e6-square beforehand by 50...♔f7!?, and only then played 51...♖b1.

White probably wins more simply with 47 ♔e4 (instead of 47 ♖b3), and if 47...e2, then 48 ♔f3.

42 ♗c2	**♖c1**

Yu. 42...♖xg4 loses to 43 ♖b6. But isn't it possible, by playing 42...♖g2, to try and trick White? If 43 ♖e3+ ♔d7 44 ♗a4+, then 44...b5. In the event of 43 ♗d3 the rook will return to g1. For the moment the evaluation of the position seems unclear to me; a defence is still possible.

E. All the same White must be better.

Yu. Yes, but the question is now on another plane: is there a forced win or can Black successfully defend? His rook has become active and is attacking your pawns. You can no longer say that White has an obvious advantage – you must specifically check whether it is possible to crack the opponent's defence.

43 ♖c3	**♖e1**
44 ♖h3	**♖e2?**

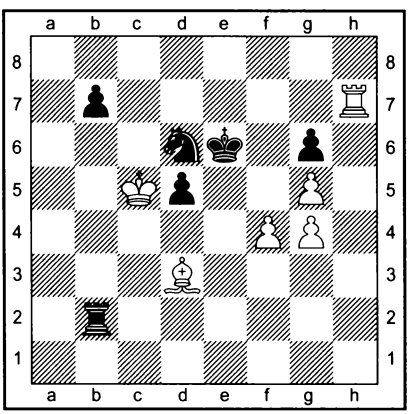
Yu. What for? The rook should have returned to c1. What would you have done then?

E. Defended the bishop with 45 ♖h2.

D. The opponent can reply 45...♘e4+ 46 ♔d4 (otherwise 46...♖f1) 46...♔d6!?, and if 47 ♗xe4, then 47...♖c4+.

Yu. Black also has the reply 45...♘c4. It is true that after 46 ♖e2+ it is bad to play 46...♔d7? because of 47 ♗a4+. But he can retreat 46...♔f7, when 47 ♔xd5? ♖xc2! is not possible. The result of the game becomes problematic. With 44...♖e2? the opponent really played into your hands, allowing your to activate your bishop. Had it not been for his time-trouble, I think you would have had to pay for the positional errors made earlier: 28 ♖a5?, 31 ♖b6? and 34 ♘xc6?.

45 ♗d3	**♖xb2**
46 ♖xh7	



46 . . .	**b6+**

E. 46...♘e4+ 47 ♗xe4 dxe4 could also have been tried, but I have time to capture the g6-pawn and stop the passed e-pawn. For example: 48 ♖h6 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 gain of tempi, exploiting the position of the enemy king. 49...♔d7 50 f5 ♖g2 should be checked. And instead of 52...♔f7 Black had the more tenacious 52...♔f8. Perhaps here too he is lost, but perhaps not.

Yu. This was certainly Black's last chance.

47 ♔c6	**♘c8**
48 f5+	**♔e5**
49 fxg6	**♖b3**
50 ♗f5	**♖c3+**
51 ♔d7	**b5**
52 g7	**♘b6+**
53 ♔e8	**♖a3**
54 g8♕	

Black resigned.

D. Well, what are your impressions?

Yu. The endgame turned out to be rather instructive, and in it there were several interesting points.

The first problem which both players encountered was how to arrange their pawns. First there was a clash on the queenside. With b3–b4 White threatened to cramp his opponent, and the latter did not find anything better than to reply ...a7–a6. In principle, with a light-square bishop it would have been better to keep the pawns on dark squares.

Then a similar problem arose with the kingside pawns. Black should certainly have prevented the activation of the white pawns with g3–g4, by playing ...h7–h5. But he

chose what was probably the worst set-up and allowed himself to be cramped.

There was an interesting point involving the exchange of rooks. It is important to remember than in the endgame your rook should aim to occupy a file which is remote from the enemy king, so that it does not prevent an invasion on this file.

The game could have turned into a graphic demonstration of the principle of two weaknesses, but Vasya did not fix in time the second weakness on the kingside by g4–g5 (the first weakness is the isolated pawn in the centre). If he had done this before playing b4–b5, he would certainly have stretched the opponent's defences more convincingly. At the same time he violated the principle 'do not hurry', which demands that the position should be improved as much as possible before turning to active measures changing the character of the play.

The main theme of the further course of the game was the activity of the rooks, which is extremely important not only in rook endings. White took his rook to b6, where it was hardly doing anything at all. In turn, Black delayed the activation of his rook.

As usually occurs in the playing of endings, on several occasions there was the need to assess the advisability of various piece exchanges. And by no means always did the two players act correctly.

A strong impression was made by the analysis of the bishop endgame. And it doesn't matter that in it we discovered a vulnerable place. In the solving of complicated problems, such errors are practically inevitable.

In general the commentary was very informative, but I gained the impression that towards the end Vasya became a little tired, and stopped drawing attention to resources for the opponent.

Incidentally, in positions of this type, when you have a slight advantage and the opponent has no counterplay, it is very important to watch for his possible activity, and not allow him to initiative double-edged clashes. Excellent examples of this can be found in the games of Anatoly Karpov. There is no way that he would have allowed the black rook to go to c1.

D. In the given instance the underestimation of the opponent's possibilities was seen mainly in the variations and less in the game itself, possibly because the opponent played passively. But in other games from the same tournament this deficiency greatly hindered Emelin. Remember, for example, his game against Zifroni, the first part of which we have seen. A clearly better ending with an extra pawn was even lost! In the last round, after excellently outplaying his opponent, Vasya blundered, missed a win, and as a result he finished half a point behind Judit Polgar.

When I was watching the game, I gained the impression that White was trying to convert his advantage in a non-methodical way. But the impression could have been faulty, and to check it I found it very interesting to look at his analysis. Now we have seen that White did indeed make a number of positional errors. In my view, the conversion of an advantage is one of the weakest aspects of Vasya's play, as usually happens with players who are inclined to underestimate their opponent's resources. He should do some serious work on this problem.

PART IV

Artur Yusupov

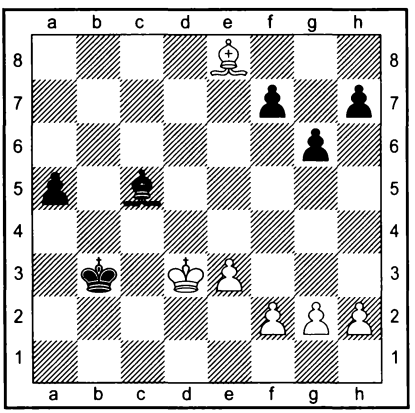
From Games by Pupils of the School

As we have already mentioned in our previous books, one of the most important resources for the improvement of a player is a serious analysis of his own games. The examples given below, annotated by our pupils, became a topic for discussion at joint or individual lessons. The young players' analyses were critically evaluated, and the results of these discussions form the basis of the present chapter. I hope that the readers will find much that is useful and interesting in these endings played by young players – they contain both successful decisions, and typical mistakes.

Opposite-colour bishops

Two examples from the games of Vadim Zviagintsev provide a good addition to the chapter on the theory of endings with opposite-colour bishops.

Baikov – Zviagintsev (14)
Moscow 1990



(see diagram)

49 ♗xf7+ ♔b4!

Black has to defend passively, since 49...♔b2? loses to 50 f4 a4 51 e4 a3 52 e5 a2 53 ♗xa2 ♔xa2 54 ♔c4 ♗a3 55 g4 ♔b2 56 f5 gxf5 57 gxf5 ♔c2 58 f6 ♗b2 59 f7 ♗a3 60 e6, and Black has no defence against the advance of the king to d7 followed by e6–e7.

The resulting situation is rather interesting. It is difficult to give it a clear evaluation immediately. White hopes soon to obtain two connected passed pawns. On the other hand, we know about the strong ***drawing tendencies*** of such endings: a minimal material advantage may prove insufficient for a win.

Let's try to point out the special features of the given position. Two details help Black to defend:

1) The passed a-pawn may divert the white bishop or restrict its mobility – thereby it will indirectly defend the kingside pawns which are situated on light squares.

2) The corner square h8 is inaccessible to the opponent's bishop. This factor enables Black to draw with a lone king against king, bishop and h-pawn – an important resource in many endings.

In principle, it is already possible to guess the further development of events. White will advance his f- and e-pawns, if necessary supporting them with the g-pawn. Black

must try to halt this advance and ideally set up a blockade on the dark squares. However, his king is badly placed and for the moment it is not taking part in the defence.

50 f4 **a4**

51 e4

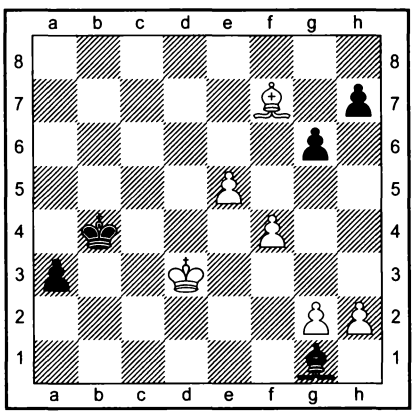
White is intending 52 e5 followed by ♔e4, g2–g4 and f4–f5. 51 ♗g8 would not have given anything in view of 51...a3.

51 . . . **♗g1!**

A defensive idea which is already familiar to the reader (from the chapter on opposite-colour bishops): '***pawns under attack***'.

52 h3

52 e5 looks more logical, but after 52...a3, according to analysis by Zviagintsev, Black can still hold the position. Let us look at his variations.



53 h4 h5!? 54 ♔c2 (54 ♔e4 ♗f2 55 f5 gxf5+ 56 ♔xf5 ♗xh4) 54...♔c5 55 ♗xg6 ♗h2 56 ♗xh5 ♗xf4 57 e6 ♔d6 58 ♗f7 ♗g3 59 h5 ♗f4 60 ♔b3 ♗c1, or 56 e6 ♔d6 57 f5 ♗g3 58 ♗xh5 ♗xh4 59 ♔b3 ♔e5 and 60...♗e7 with a draw;

53 h3 ♔c5 54 ♔e4 ♗f2! (if 54...h5, then 55 f5! is strong) 55 ♗a2 ♗h4 56 g4 (56 ♔f3? ♔d4!). Now 56...♗e1? is bad: 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.

Black must play 56...♔c6!, approaching the passed pawns with his king. It transpires that even the two connected passed pawns are insufficient for a win.

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 (70...♔c7? 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 an obvious draw.

It is useful to note the diverting pawn sacrifice, which enables Black to create an impregnable ***fortress***. This typical idea, which occurred in our examination of Timman's study, is a good illustration of the principle ***nuances in the position are more important than material***.

52 . . . **♗h2?!**

In the game this move fully justified itself, although Black should have reckoned with the reply 53 f5!. If 53...g5 or 53...a3, then 54 ♔d4 is unpleasant. After 53...gxf5 54 exf5 ♔c5 (54...♗e5 55 ♔e4 ♗f6 56 ♔d5 a3 57 ♔d6) 55 ♔e4 ♔d6 there follows 56 f6. Safer was 52...a3 53 e5 ♔c5, transposing into variations considered earlier.

53 ♔e3?! **♔c5**

54 ♗a2 **a3**

55 g4

Better practical chances were promised by 55 ♔f3 and 56 g3.

55 . . . **♔c6!**

56 e5

Neither 56 h4 h6! nor 56 g5!? was sufficient for a win. The move in the game allows Black to simplify the position immediately.

56 . . . **g5!**

57 fxg5 **♗xe5**

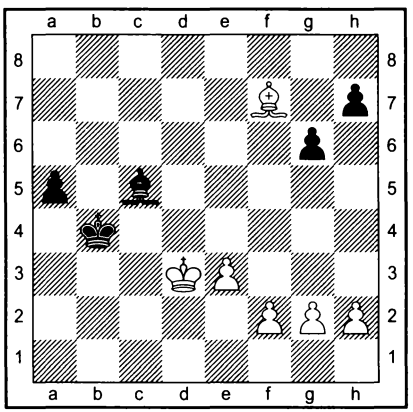
58	**♔e4**	**♔d6**
59	**♔f5**	**♗g7**
60	**h4**	**♔e7**
61	**h5**	**♗c3**
62	**g6**	

62 h6 ♗d2!.

62...		**h6**
63	**g5**	**hxg5**
64	**h6**	**♔f8**

And the players agreed a draw.

Note should be made of the largely competent actions by Zviagintsev, who quickly coordinated his forces and frustrated the opponent's plan by a timely attack on his pawns. But did White make use of all his resources? Let us return to the position after Black's 49th move.



In the chapter 'Converting an advantage' Mark Dvoretsky drew attention to the important principle '***do not hurry!***' One of the aspects of this principle is attention to 'trifles'. ***Don't neglect even the slightest opportunity to strengthen your position or worsen the opponent's.***

In the diagram position White could have weakened the opponent's pawn chain by **50 ♗g8!**. Here I should like to make two comments:

Firstly, White has to hurry with this attack, since with the pawn on a4 it is pointless to threaten the h7-pawn in view of the reply ...a4–a3. Here, however, there is no contradiction with the afore-mentioned principle. 'Do not hurry' by no means signifies marking time. The essence of the principle is that before making decisive changes to the position you should try to squeeze the maximum out of the existing structure.

The second comment relates to endings with opposite-colour bishops. We know that ***for the defending side it is normally advantageous to arrange his pawns on squares of the colour of his own bishop***. The given example is interesting for the fact that it shows: ***one should not blindly and literally follow rules without taking into account the features of the specific position***. White's plan is to advance his kingside pawns. The fact that the g6-pawn will be undefended will force Black to advance or exchange it, conceding the key f5-square to the opponent.

This was probably that small detail which was lacking in White's winning mechanism.

50...h6 51 f4

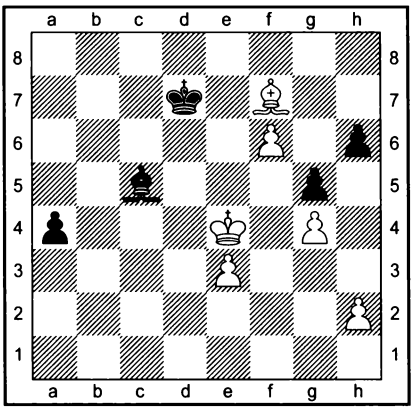
The hasty 51 ♗f7 g5 52 ♔e4? was weaker in view of 52...♔c3!. But now, if Black defends as in the game, he will no longer be able to set up a fortress: 51...a4 52 e4! ♗g1 53 e5 a3 54 h3 ♔c5 55 g4 ♔c6 56 f5 gxf5 57 gxf5 ♔d7 58 ♔e4 ♗c5 59 f6 ♔e8 60 ♔f5 ♔f8 61 ♗c4 ♗b4 62 e6 h5 63 ♔g5 etc.

His position is also not eased by 51...♗d6 52 g3 (with the threat of e3–e4–e5) 52...g5, after which, if there is nothing better, there can follow 53 f5 ♔c5 54 ♔e4 ♔c6 55 ♗b3! ♗c5 56 ♔e5! ♗xe3 57 ♔e6 and 58 f6.

Even so, the defensive resources are not yet exhausted (again remember about the '***drawing tendencies***' of endings with opposite-colour bishops). Let us try **51...♔b5!**.

In the event of 52 ♗f7 g5 53 f5 ♔c6 the

black king just in time joins in the battle against the passed pawns. For example: 54 f6 a4 55 ♔e4 ♔d7 55 g4.



The simplest way to draw is by 55...♗b6! 56 ♗c4 ♔e8!, when White gets nowhere with either 57 ♔d3 ♗d8 or 57 ♔f5 ♗xe3 58 ♔g6 ♗d4

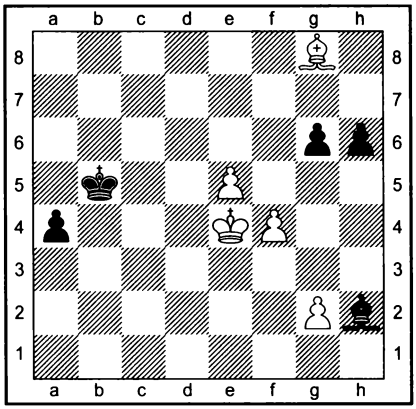
The routine 55...a3?! is less accurate in view of 56 ♗a2! ♔e8 (56...♗b6 57 ♔f5! ♗xe3 58 ♔g6 ♗d4 59 f7 ♔e7 60 ♔xh6 or 58...♔e8 59 ♔xh6 ♔f8 60 ♔h5 ♗d2 61 h4 gxh4 62 ♔xh4) 57 ♔d3!! ♔d7 58 e4 ♔d6 59 ♔c4, and there is no defence against 60 e5+. Incidentally, after 56 ♗b3? (instead of 56 ♗a2!) a defence would have been found: 59...a2! 60 ♗xa2 ♗a3.

Nevertheless, as Alexander Motylev indicated, Black also does not lose here, if in reply to 56 ♗a2! he chooses a counter-attacking plan: 56...♔d6! 57 ♔f5 ♗xe3 58 ♔g6 ♔e5! 59 f7 ♗c5 60 ♔h5 ♗e7 61 ♗b3 ♔e5 with a drawn position.

52 e4! ♗g1! 53 e5! (53 h3? ♗h2) **53...♗xh2 54 ♔e4 a4!**

Otherwise 55 ♗f7 g5 56 f5 wins easily.

(see diagram)

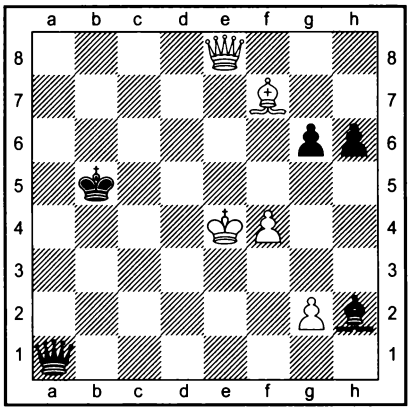


The primitive 55 g4? ♔c6 56 f5 gxf5+ 57 gxf5 ♔d7 58 f6 ♔e8 59 ♗c4 a3 60 ♔f5 (60 ♔d5 ♔f7!) 60...♔f8 61 e6 ♗d6 62 ♔g6 ♗b4 63 ♔xh6 ♗c5 leads to a draw. The white bishop cannot take control of the important e8-square, and therefore the black king easily prevents any attempt by the opponent's king to help its pawns.

Purely study-like subtleties 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). Now after 59 ♗c2 the obvious 59...a3 60 ♗b3 ♔d8 loses to 61 ♔f5! ♗g3 (61...♔e7 62 ♔g6) 62 ♔f6. Black should not cling on to the pawn – the blockade is more important: 59...♔d8! 60 ♗xa4 ♔e7 61 ♔f5 ♗e1 62 ♗b3 ♗d2 with a draw. The most dangerous is 59 g3! a3! 60 gxh4! (60 ♗b1 ♗xg3) 60...a2 61 e7 a1♕+ 62 ♔f5 ♕b1+ 63 ♔f6, but I somehow don't see how White wins after the approximate 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+) 68...♕d6 69 ♔g8 (threatening 70 e8♘+!) 69...♕e6+ (or 69...♔b6).

55 ♗f7! a3 56 e6! a2 57 e7 a1♕ 58 e8♕+

(see diagram)



This position would appear to arise by force. It is not possible to mate the black king, and therefore White's aim is to exchange the queens, then capture the g6-pawn and win the bishop for the f-pawn. This plan is quite realisable, although not without some difficulty.

58...♔c5 59 ♕c8+ ♔b6 60 ♕b8+ ♔c5 61 ♕c7+ ♔b5 62 ♕b7+!

Nothing is given by 62 ♗e8+ ♔a6! 63 ♕c6+ ♔a7 64 ♕c5+ ♔b8!.

62...♔c5 63 ♕d5+! ♔b6 64 ♕d6+ ♔b7 (64...♔b5 65 ♗e8+ is bad for Black) **65 ♗d5+ ♔c8 66 ♗e6+ ♔b7 67 ♕d7+ ♔b6 68 ♕d8+ ♔c5 69 ♕c7+ ♔b5 70 ♗d7+ ♔b4**

Now moving to a6 loses (as in the similar position with the bishop on e8): 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+ etc.

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.

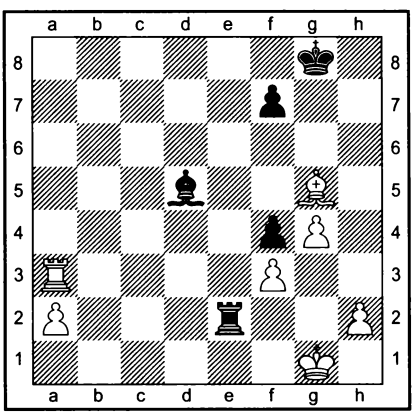
Thus a win for White would appear to have been demonstrated – this demanded an analysis 35 (!) moves in length (done together with Dvoretsky). Such lengthy variations are rarely without mistakes, and therefore it is quite possible that the readers will find either a defence for Black, or a shorter way for White to win.

[*As was already mentioned earlier, it is advantageous for Black to exchange all the kingside pawns: the position with white pawns on e6 and f6 against a black pawn on a3 is drawn. This factor suggests the correct plan of defence.*

50 ♗g8 h6 51 f4 a4 52 e4 ♗g1 53 e5, and now Black should play 53...♔c5 54 h3 h5!, achieving the exchange of pawns after g2–g4 – Dvoretsky].

Zviagintsev (17) – Onischuk

Berlin 1993



How should Black defend: 35...♖xa2 or 35...♖e3 ? In other words, is his position lost after 35...♖e3 ? In the game Black replied to this question in the affirmative, by choosing 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 retained both his extra pawns, since if 43...♖xf3 he wins by 44 ♗e5+ ♔g6 45 ♔g4. The game ended in a win for White on the 100th move.

Let us examine the consequences of the rook exchange. After **35...♖e3 36 ♖xe3 fxe3** it would be a blunder to play 37 ♗xe3?? ♗xa2 38 ♔f2 – despite White's two extra pawns, the position is drawn.

If he defends passively: 38...♗b3 39 ♔g3 ♗d1 (‘***pawns under attack***’) Black has to be aware of certain dangers, as the following variations demonstrate:

A) 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 given by 53 f5+ ♔h7 54 ♗e7 ♗c2 55 ♔f6 ♗b1 56 ♗b4 ♗c2 57 ♗d2 ♗b1 58 ♔e5 ♗c2 59 g6+ fxg6 60 f6 ♗b3 61 ♔d6 ♔g8. 53 ♔d6, threatening to play the king to g8, is slightly more cunning. However, Black parries the threat by 53...♔h7! 54 ♔e7 ♔g8 55 ♗c3 ♗c2 56 ♔f6 ♗b1 57 f5 ♔h7!.

B) 40 f4!? ♔h7 41 f5 ♗e2 42 ♔f4 ♔h6 43 ♔e5+ ♔g7 (with the given structure the king must not be allowed to go to f6, since then White advances g4–g5–g6) 44 g5 ♗d1 45 h4 ♗e2 46 ♗d4 ♗d1 47 ♗c5 ♗g4 (47...♗c2 is perfectly possible, since if 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 the same draw as in the previous variation.

The simplest course is the ***construction of a fortress*** – 38...f5!. There can follow:

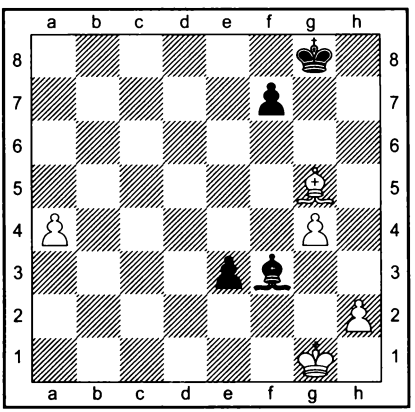
39 ♔g3 fxg4 40 fxg4 ♔h7 41 h4 ♗e6 42 h5 ♗d7 43 ♔h4 ♗e6 44 g5 ♗f7;

39 h3 ♔f7 40 ♔g3 fxg4 41 hxg4 ♔g6 42 f4 ♗e6;

39 g5 ♔g7 40 h4 ♔g6 41 ♔g3 ♗b3 42 ♔f4 ♗d1;

39 gxf5 ♗b1 40 f6 ♔f7 41 ♗d4 ♗h7. Subsequently, depending on the situation, Black manoeuvres with this king between the squares f7–g8 or with his bishop along the b1–h7 diagonal or the squares h7–g8.

Of course, it is advantageous for White to retain his passed a-pawn. A very important principle in the conversion of an advantage – the principle of two weaknesses – also applies in endings with opposite-colour bishops (more details about this principle are given in the chapter ‘Converting an advantage’). The passed a-pawn and the passed pawn on the kingside stretch the opponent's defences. The fact that White gives up some of his extra material does not play any significant role: ***nuances in the position are more important than material***. After **37 a4 ♗xf3** White has a choice between 38 a5!? and 38 h3.



After 38 h3 e2 39 ♗d2 ♗b7! 40 ♔f2 ♗a6 Black places his bishop ideally and White encounters serious difficulties.

Thus 41 g5? ♔g7 42 h4 ♔g6 43 ♔e3 is bad in view of 43...f6! 44 gxf6 ♔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♕ 56 ♗xe1 ♔b8. 41 ♔e3 f6!? 42 ♔d4 ♔f7 43 ♔c5 ♗b7 44 a5 is correct, and 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 towards the a7-pawn.

44...♔e6! is a more tenacious defence: 45 ♗e1! (45 ♔b6? ♗g2 is similar to a variation given 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 still has to overcome some technical difficulties.

38 a5! is stronger: **38...♗xg4 39 a6 ♗f3**

After 39...e2 40 ♔f2 ♗f3 41 ♗d2 ♗c6 42 h4 Black has no defence against the opponent's plan: advance one pawn to h6, the other to a7, capture the e2-pawn and take the king over to the queenside. It is important that White's bishop defends its own 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 take his king across to the a7-pawn; in this case 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 is unable to defend against the afore-mentioned plan by White.

Thus we have come to the conclusion that the exchange of rooks would have lost, although it would have demanded a certain accuracy on the opponent's part.

From the opening into the endgame

The following training game was played at the second session of the school, devoted to opening preparation. We suggested that the young players should 'reveal their cards' – inform their opponents beforehand what opening variation they were intending to choose. Then they had to familiarise themselves with the theoretical recommendations on the planned opening variation, analyse recent games, and devise new ideas in order to surprise their opponent.

In modern chess, opening disputes sometimes conclude only after two or even three dozen moves deep in the endgame. That was also the case in the game given below.

Kirjakov (15) – Svidler (14)

Daugavpils 1990

1 d4	**♘f6**
2 c4	**g6**
3 ♘c3	**♗g7**
4 ♘f3	**d5**
5 cxd5	**♘xd5**
6 e4	**♘xc3**
7 bxc3	**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 . . .	**exf4**

Another possibility, 15...♕d6, occurred in the game Komarov–Smejkal, Bad Mergentheim 1989, published in *Informator* Volume 48.

16 ♕xf4

16 ♗xg7? is bad, since Black interposes 16...♕h4+, and if 17 g3 fxg3 18 ♕h6, then 18...g2+!.

16 . . .	**♕e7**
17 0-0	**♗d7**
18 ♗d3	**♖ae8**

The latest word in this variation is the immediate exchange of bishops. In the game Sakaev–Ftacnik (Dortmund 1992) after 18...♗xb2 19 ♖xb2 f6 20 ♗c2!? ♖ae8!? (with the idea of ...f6–f5) Black

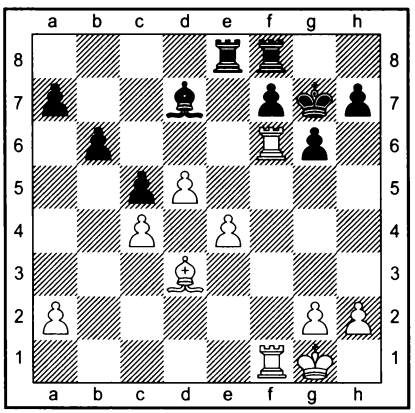
achieved equality. Instead of 20...♖ae8, Igor Stohl's recommendation in *Informator* Volume 48 – 20...♕e5 21 ♕xe5 fxe5 is less accurate, since after Kirjakov's suggestion 22 ♖fb1! White retains the better prospects in view of the threat of a2–a4–a5.

19 ♗f6!?

This is more accurate than 19 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 20 a4 f5 with equality, as in the game Vaisser–Stohl (Biel 1989).

19 . . . **♗xf6**
20 ♕xf6 **♕xf6**
21 ♖xf6 **♔g7**
22 ♖bf1!?

Less good is 22 ♖d6 ♗a4 23 ♖f1 f6 – Stohl.



In the resulting ending White holds the initiative. Of course, in itself the pressure on the f-file is not too unpleasant for Black. The real problem is that the opponent has a simple plan of improving his position on the queenside. By playing ♗c2 and a2–a4–a5 White wants to create a ***second weakness*** in Black's camp. Therefore serious consideration should have been given to changing the character of the play, as suggested by Stohl: 22...♗f5!? 23 exf5 ♔xf6 24 fxg6+ ♔g7 (24...♔e5?? 25 g7) 25 gxh7 ♖e3. If now 26 ♗f5, then 26...♖d8 27 ♖f4 ♖ee8. After 26 ♖d1 Black has a choice:

A) 26...f5 27 d6 ♔xh7 28 d7;

B) 26...♖d8 27 ♔f2 ♖e5 28 a4 a6 29 ♖b1 (Stohl);

C) 26...♖e5!? (with the idea of ...b6–b5 or ...f7–f5) 27 g4 b5 28 ♗f5 bxc4 29 ♔f2!?.

With the move in the game Black does not solve the problems facing him.

22 . . . **♖e5**
23 ♖6f3

The ...♗f5 threat acts on Kirjakov's nerves and he incorrectly withdraws his rook from its active position. 23 ♖1f4! was more accurate, when 23...♗f5 would be simply answered by 24 ♖c6.

23 . . . **♗g4**

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 nominally good bishop is not taking an active part in the game. The only target for counterplay is the e4-pawn. But 23...f5? does not work in view of 24 g4. Therefore he should have thought about switching his bishop to g6 with 23...f6 followed by ...g6–g5 and ...♗e8–g6.

24 ♖3f2 **♗d7?!**

Here too it was not too late for 24...g5! with the idea of ...♗h5–g6. Black's waiting tactics might not have proved justified.

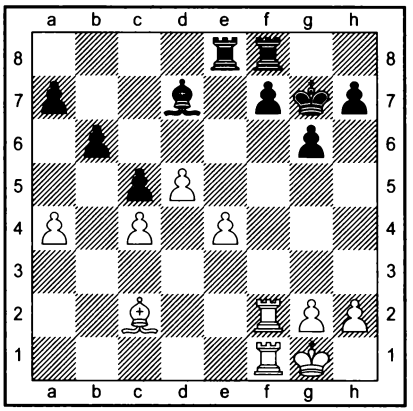
25 a4

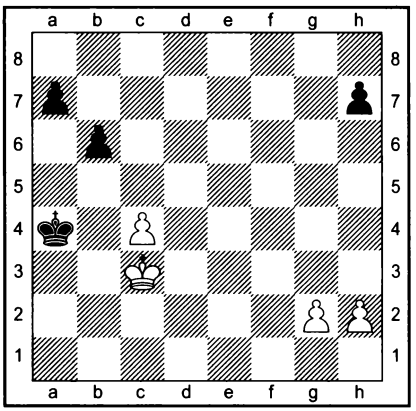
25 ♗c2!?.

25 . . . **♖ee8**
26 ♗c2

If 26 a5 there is 26...bxa5 27 ♖a1 (27 ♖b1 ♖b8) 27...a4 28 ♗c2 ♖e5. But 26 h4 came into consideration. Lulled by his opponent's undistinguished actions, Kirjakov wants to play 'with every comfort', and he underestimates a freeing breakthrough.

(see diagram)





26 . . . **f5!**

A subtle solution to Black's defensive problems, the evaluation of which depends on a pawn ending that arises by force.

27 exf5 **♗xf5**

28 ♗xf5 **♖xf5**

29 ♖xf5 **gxf5**

30 ♖xf5 **♖e4!**

31 d6! **♖d4**

32 ♖d5 **♔f6!**

32...♖xd5? 33 cxd5 ♔f7 would have lost in view of 34 g4 ♔e8 35 g5 ♔d7 36 h4 ♔xd6 37 h5 ♔xd5 38 g6 hxg6 39 h6.

33 ♖xd4 **cxd4**

34 ♔f2 **♔e6**

35 ♔e2

White does not exploit all his chances. The opponent's task would have been more difficult in the event of 35 ♔f3 ♔xd6 36 ♔e4 ♔c5 37 ♔d3. After 37...♔b4 38 ♔xd4 ♔xa4 39 ♔c3! it appears that things are bad for Black. However, he is saved by an unusual defence.

(see diagram)

39...b5 40 g4 a6!! (or 39...a6 40 g4 b5!, but not 40...♔a3?? in view of 41 c5!! and wins) 41 h4 (41 cxb5 ♔xb5) 41...♔a3, and in the queen ending arising after 42 c5 b4+ 43 ♔d2 b3 44 c6 b2 45 c7 b1♕ 46 c8♕ Black should be able to avoid defeat.

35 . . . **♔xd6**

36 ♔d3 **♔e5!**

Now 36...♔c5? loses to 37 g4.

37 g3 **h6!**

38 h3 **h5!**

39 g4 **hxg4**

40 hxg4 **♔f4**

41 ♔xd4 **♔xg4**

42 ♔d5

42 a5 ♔f4! 43 a6 (43 axb6 axb6 44 ♔d5 ♔e3) 43...♔f5 44 ♔d5 ♔f6 45 ♔c6 ♔e6 46 ♔b7 ♔d7 would also have led to a draw.

42 . . . **♔f4!**

But not 42...♔f5?? in view of 43 a5! bxa5 44 c5 and wins.

43 ♔c6 **♔e5**

44 ♔b7 **♔d6**

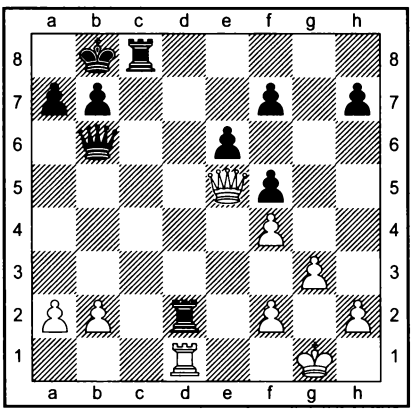
45 ♔xa7 **♔c7**

And the players agreed a draw.

Exchanging

Should I exchange queens and go into an ending? How should the consequences of the rook exchange be evaluated? Similar questions often have to be answered during a game. It is not surprising that in the endgame, when there are already few pieces left, it is especially important to solve correctly the problem of what to exchange.

Mugerman – Makariev (14)
Moscow 1989



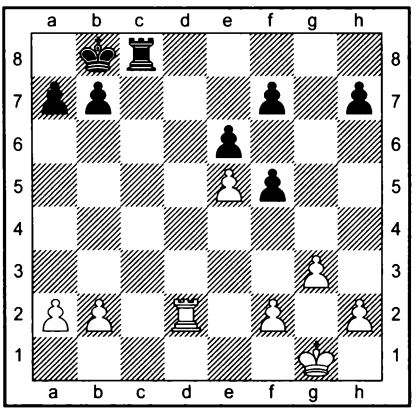
Black should take account of the fact that his kingside pawn structure is spoiled, and in the endgame the pawns can be attacked by the enemy king. Therefore he should not have exchanged queens. After the correct 25...♔a8 26 ♖xd2 ♕c6 (intending 27...♕c1+, 27...♕f3 or 27...a6) Black has counterplay.

25 . . . **♕c7?**

26 ♖xd2 **♕xe5?!**

Again a poor decision. The exchange on e5 improves the opponent's pawn structure – it undoubles his pawns, and moreover the white e5-pawn will hold back two black pawns. 26...f6! was stronger, when White should reply 27 ♕e3, retaining somewhat the better chances. The pawn ending 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 h6! is drawn: 35 g4 ♔h7 36 g5 hxg5 37 fxg5 ♔g7. 34...♔h8? (instead of 34...h6!) 35 ♔h6 ♔g8 36 g4 ♔h8 is incorrect in view of 37 h3! (but not 37 h4? ♔g8 38 g5 e5!) 37...♔g8 38 h4 (zugzwang) 38...♔h8 39 g5 fxg5 40 hxg5 and wins.

27 fxe5



Despite the material equality, Black's position is critical. How can he defend against the march of the white king towards the weakened pawns on the kingside? In the game Black was unable to solve this problem and after **27...♖c1+? 28 ♔g2 ♔c7 29 f4 ♖a1?! 30 a3 ♖c1 31 ♔h3 ♖c5 32 ♔h4 ♖d5 33 ♖c2+ ♔d8 34 ♔g5** he finished up in a hopeless ending.

The evaluation of the position largely depends on whether Black can take his king to the kingside. To do this he is forced to allow the exchange of rooks.

27 . . . **♔c7**

28 ♖c2+

28 ♔g2? ♖g8 with an acceptable position for Black.

28 . . . **♔d7**

29 ♖xc8 **♔xc8**

An interesting pawn ending has been

reached. White takes his king towards the opponent's pawn weaknesses, and the black king hurries to their defence.

30 ♔g2 ♔d7

31 ♔h3 ♔e7

Active counterplay is 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

Now Black has a choice between 32...♔f8 and 32...f6.

32...♔f8 33 ♔h5 ♔g7 34 ♔g5 (but not 34 f3? in view of 34...f6!) 34...h6+ 35 ♔h5 ♔h7 36 f3 (as will become clear from later variations, it is more methodical to include the moves 36 b4 b5) 36...f6 (in the event of 36...♔g7 37 g4 fxg4 38 fxg4 ♔h7 39 g5 hxg5 40 ♔xg5 ***the presence of the outside passed pawn decides the outcome***) 37 exf6 e5 38 g4 e4 (38...f4 39 g5 e4 does not save Black in view of 40 g6+ ♔g8 41 ♔xh6 exf3 42 g7 f2 43 ♔g6 and 44 f7 – mate!) 39 fxe4 fxe4 40 ♔h4 ♔g6 41 ♔g3 ♔xf6 42 ♔f4 e3 43 ♔xe3 ♔g5 44 ♔f3 ♔h4 45 ♔f4 ♔h3 46 g5 hxg5+ 47 ♔xg5 ♔xh2 48 ♔f4 ♔g2 49 ♔e5 ♔f3 50 ♔d6 ♔e4 51 ♔c7 b5 52 ♔b7! (not 52 ♔c6 b4 53 ♔b5 b3 54 axb3 ♔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.

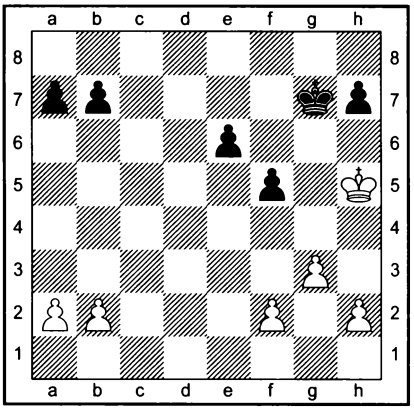
32 . . . **f6!?**

Here things are more difficult for White.

33 exf6+ ♔xf6

34 ♔h5 ♔g7

34...♔e5 35 ♔h6 ♔e4 36 ♔xh7 ♔f3 37 ♔g6 ♔xf2 38 ♔f6 ♔g2 39 ♔xe6 ♔xh2 40 ♔xf5 ♔xg3 41 ♔e5 transposes into a variation just examined, but 36 f4! ♔f3 37 ♔xh7 ♔g2 38 h4 wins more quickly.



Now nothing is given by either 35 ♔g5 h6+ 36 ♔h5 (36 ♔f4 ♔f6) 36...e5, or 35 f3 ♔f6! 36 g4 fxg4 37 fxg4 ♔e5.

35 h3

The most logical course – White strengthens his position on the kingside.

35 . . . **h6**

As will become clear from the variations given below, any advance of the black pawns on the queenside merely makes things easier for the opponent. For example: 35...a5 36 a4 h6 37 g4 fxg4 38 hxg4 ♔h7 39 f4 ♔g7 40 g5 hxg5 41 fxg5 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.

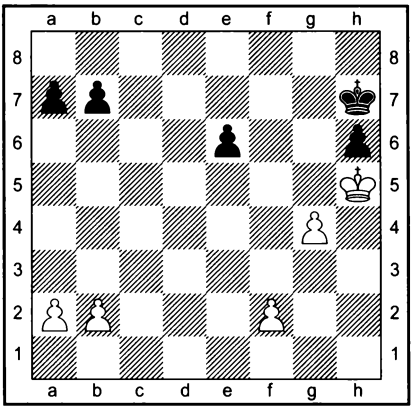
36 g4

But not 36 f3?? e5 37 g4 f4.

36 . . . **fxg4**

37 hxg4 ♔h7

(see diagram)



The direct 38 f4? does not succeed. After 38...♔g7 39 g5 hxg5 40 fxg5 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 cannot break through to the queenside pawns. Now it is clear why the a7- and b7-pawns should remain in place.

A draw also results from 38 g5? hxg5 39 ♔xg5 ♔g7 40 ♔f4 ♔f6 41 ♔e4 e5 42 ♔d5 ♔f5 43 b4 (if 43 f3 Black has either 43...♔f6, or 43...♔f4 44 ♔e6 ♔xf3 45 ♔xe5 ♔e3 46 ♔d6 ♔d3) 43...b5 44 ♔c5 a6 45 ♔d5 e4 46 a3 ♔f4 47 ♔e6 ♔g4! 48 ♔e5 ♔f3.

Let us remember about the principle '***do not hurry!***' and try further improving the position by the advance of the queenside pawns.

38 b4!

This move could also have been included earlier.

38 . . .	**♔g7**

Black is forced to stick to waiting tactics – otherwise White wins by creating an outside passed pawn on the kingside (f2–f4 and g4–g5).

39 b5	**♔h7**
40 a4	**♔g7**
41 a5	**♔h7**
42 b6	**axb6**
43 axb6	**♔g7**

From the point of view of the first plan (the creation of an outside passed pawn) the situation has not changed. But for the second plan the strengthening of the position proves significant.

44 g5!	**hxg5**
45 ♔xg5	**♔f7**
46 ♔f4	**♔f6**
47 ♔e4	**♔f7**

47...e5 also does not help: 48 ♔d5 ♔f5 49 ♔d6 ♔f4 50 ♔c7 ♔f3 51 ♔xb7 ♔xf2 52 ♔c6 e4 53 b7.

48 ♔e5	**♔e7**
49 f3!	

It is useful to note that White wins only thanks to the existence of ***two reserve tempi***.

49 . . .	**♔d7**
50 ♔f6	**♔d6**

Or 50...♔c6 51 ♔xe6 ♔xb6 52 f4 ♔c7 53 f5 ♔d8 54 ♔f7 b5 55 f6 b4 56 ♔g8 b3 57 f7, and the white pawn queens with check.

51 f4	**♔d7**
52 ♔f7	**♔d6**
53 ♔e8	

After gaining the '***horizontal opposition***', the white king performs an '***outflanking***' manoeuvre.

53 . . .	**♔c6**
54 ♔e7	**♔xb6**

Or 54...♔d5 55 ♔d7.

55 ♔xe6	**♔c7**
56 f5	**♔d8**
57 ♔f7	

And White wins.

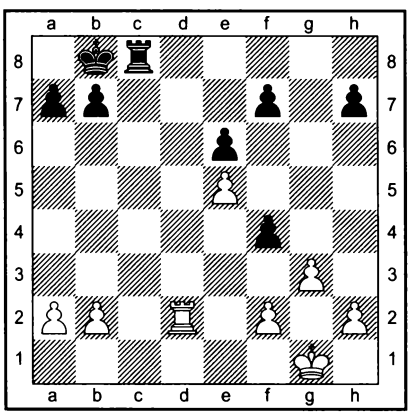
[*Ten years later grandmaster Viorel Bologan suggested a different plan in the pawn endgame, which wins more quickly:*

38 a3!? ♔g7 39 a4 ♔h7 40 ♔h4!? ♔g6 41 ♔g3 (intending 42 ♔f4) 41...e5 (41...h5 42 gxh5+ ♔xh5 43 ♔f4 ♔g6 44 ♔e5 ♔f7 45

*♔d6; 41...♔g5 42 f4+ ♔f6 43 ♔f3, and if 43...e5, then 44 f5) 42 ♔h4! a5 (42...e4 43 b4 or 43 ♔g3 ♔g5 44 b4 with zugzwang – this is why White needed the pawn on a4) 43 f3 (zugzwang) 43...♔f6 44 ♔h5 ♔g7 45 g5. Here the plan involving the '**expansion of the bridgehead**' (an exchange of pawns with the aim of breaking through with the king to the opposite wing) is especially effective, since the e5-pawn is immediately lost* – Dvoretsky.]

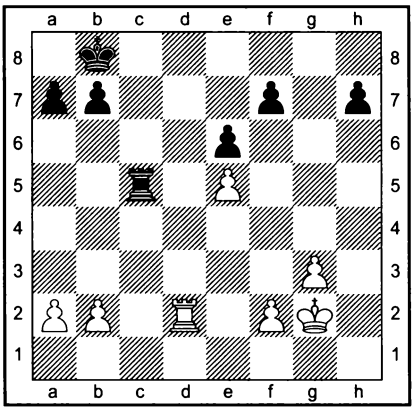
Thus 27...♔c7 would have led to an objectively lost pawn ending. At the board it was hardly possible to calculate all the variations exactly, and the probability of a mistake by White was quite high. In any case 27...♔c7 would have given more chances of saving the game than 27...♖c1+?, the move chosen.

However, Black has one more possible defence. By playing **27...f4!?** he would have changed the character of the play, and, as shown by the analysis given below, he could have successfully defended:



A) 28 gxf4 ♖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 with a draw;

B) 28 ♔g2 fxg3 29 hxg3 (29 ♔xg3 ♖g8+ and 30...♔c7) 29...♖c5.



30 f4 ♔c7 31 ♔h3 (or 31 ♔f3 h5!? 32 ♖h2 ♔d7) 31...h6!? 32 ♔g4 ♖c1, and the white king cannot break through to the black pawns;

30 ♖d7 ♖xe5 31 ♖xf7 h5, intending 32...♖e2 or 32...a5;

30 ♖d8+ ♔c7 31 ♖f8 ♖xe5 (31...♖c2 is weaker: 32 ♖xf7+ ♔c6 33 ♖e7! ♖xb2 34 ♖xe6+ ♔d5 35 ♖e7) 32 ♖xf7+ ♔c6 33 ♖xh7 ♖e2 or 33 ♔f3 h5.

[*White can also try 28 ♖d7!?. Then the obvious 28...f3? leads to a hopeless position after 29 h4 ♖c1+ 30 ♔h2 ♖c2 31 g4 ♖xf2+ 32 ♔g3 ♖xb2 33 ♖xf7 – the threatened advance of the kingside pawns is just too strong. The pawn ending after 28...fxg3 29 hxg3 ♖c7? 30 ♖d8+ ♖c8 31 ♖xc8+ ♔xc8 32 ♔g2 ♔d7 33 ♔f3 is also lost: 33...♔c6 34 ♔g4 ♔d5 35 f4 ♔e4 36 ♔g5 ♔f3 37 ♔f6 ♔xg3 38 ♔xf7 ♔xf4 39 ♔xe6 h5 40 ♔f6 h4 41 e6 h3 42 e7 h2 43 e8♕ h1♕ 44 ♕e5+ ♔g4 45 ♕g5+ followed by the exchange of queens, or 33...♔e7 34 ♔g4 ♔f8 35 ♔h5 ♔g7 36 g4 h6 37 f3! ♔h7 38 f4 ♔g7 39 f5, and Black is in zugzwang. His only hope is for success in the complications arising after 28...fxg3 29 hxg3 ♖c2* – Dvoretsky.]

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