

Themes & Tasks

THE SOUL OF CHESS PART 2

OLEG PERVAKOV

In the previous issue of **EG** we started to talk about the pawn – “the soul of chess” according to A. Philidor. In this part we shall concentrate on the most surprising move of the pawn – promotion – and the themes and studies connected with it.

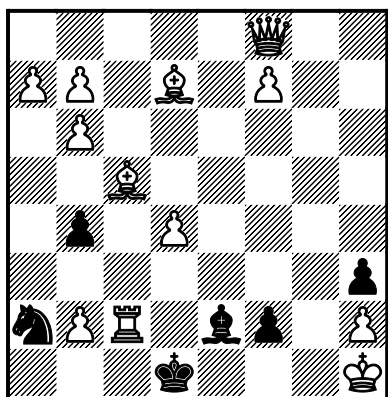
In a game the pawn usually only promotes to the strongest piece – the queen. In second place, certainly, is promotion to a knight – in order to win a tempo, material, or to continue a mate attack by a check, etc. The latest example is the game Shirov-Aronyan from the recent tournament in Morelia-Linares (by the way, there the knight promotion was necessary to prevent mate). Bishop and rook promotions are extremely rare in practice.

A queen promotion is often seen in studies, so we shall not discuss it here.

1. Multiple underpromotion

We certainly begin with promotion of a pawn to all three weak pieces – illustrated in the well-known study P.1 by V. Korolkov.

P.1 V. Korolkov
1st prize *Pravda* 1929



h1d1 1153.73 12/6 Win

White has to win, but it is already difficult to defend against the two mate threats Bf3 and f1Q. The pawns that have almost reached the promotion square come to help. But first there is piece play.

1.Rd2+ Kc1 (1...Kxd2 2.Qh6+ Kc2 3.Qxh3) **2.Rd1+! Kxd1 3.Ba4+ b3!** Black doesn't want to be a punchbag and counter plays. **4.Bxb3+ Ke1 5.Bb4+ Sc3! 6.Bxc3+ Kf1.** The mate on f1 has been prevented, but now a rectilinear protection of the square f3 – **7.Bd5** – leads to stalemate after **7...Bf3+ 8.Bxf3**. It is necessary to lure the black bishop to b5 – at any cost! **7.Bc4 Bxc4 8.Qc5! Bd3 9.Qb5! Bxb5.** Now, finally, the pawns speak the decisive words: **10.b8S! Bd3 11.a8B!** (11.a8Q? Be4+ 12.Qxe4 – stalemate) **11...Be2 12.f8R!**, wins. As from the deep sea three heroes appeared (one even stronger than the other) – a knight, bishop and rook – and destroyed the enemy's army.

This is the first study with three sequential promotions into different minor pieces. It is important to note the extra plus: promotions follow one after the other in the classical sequence – N, B, R. At the time this excellent study was merciless criticized by A. Gurvich. In my opinion – that was totally unfair!

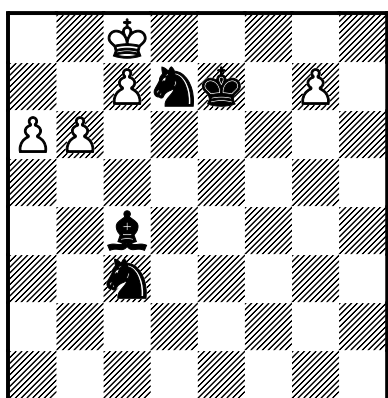
This idea was realized in the most economical form by an excellent Polish grandmaster (P.2).

The three black pieces are a formidable force which is difficult to fight even with a queen. For example: **1.g8Q? Bxg8 2.a7 Se4! 3.Kb7 Bd5+ 4.Ka6 Sd6.** All that remains is **1.a7 Ba6+ 2.b7 Se4 3.g8S+! (knight) Ke8! 4.Sf6+! Sexf6 5.a8B!** The bishop's turn. Bad is **5.a8Q? Sd5**, and mate is inevitable. **5...Se5!**

6.Kb8 Sc6+ 7.Kc8 Bf1 8.b8R! And finally, a rook! And again the strongest piece renders White clumsy assistance – **8.b8Q?** Ba6+ **9.Qb7 Se4 10.Qxa6 Sd6** mate. **8...Ba6+ 9.Rb7!** (but not **9.Bb7?** Se4 **10.Bxa6 Sd6** mate), and Black necessarily reconciles to stalemate with the immured promoted bishop and a pinned promoted rook – for example, after **9...Se4**. Superb!

P.2 J. Rusinek

1st prize *New Statesman* 1971

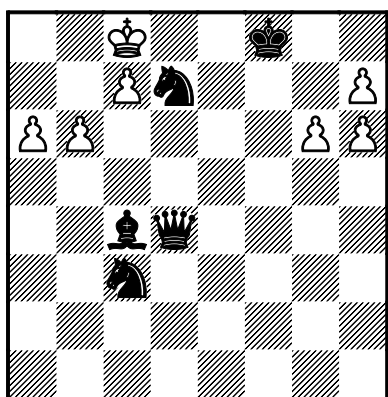


c8e7 0036.40 5/4 Draw

Later Jan added three pieces and achieved the last promotion – to a queen – and once again demonstrated the world uniqueness of position P.2. (HH: as a matter of fact, Rusinek had originally already composed this version, but found it inferior. He considered the extra material needed too high a price for the extra promotion).

P.3 J. Rusinek

64, vii1978



c8f8 3036.60 7/5 Draw

1.h8Q+ (1.h8R+? Ke7) 1...Qxh8 2.g7+ Qxg7 3.hxg7+ Ke7 4.a7 etc. Of all studies with promotion into all four pieces (Al-lumwandlung, AUW) known today, this example is perhaps the most successful.

2. Record number of promotions into the same piece

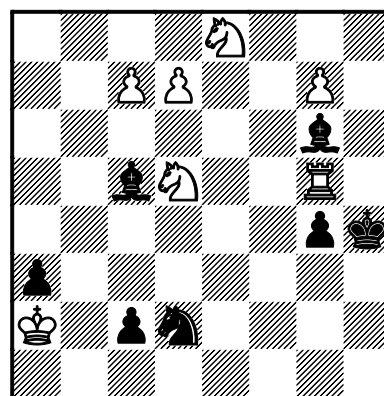
2a. Transformation into a knight

In the excellent article by Wieland Bruch “Exploring the watershed between more-mover and study” (EG171, supplement) the study (B80) by A. Chéron, *Journal de Genève*, 1964 with an eightfold knight promotion, which is actually a problem by W. Shinkman, *Deutsche Schachzeitung* 1908, corrected by Chéron by adding four (!) non-playing pieces. Nevertheless, this is the formal record. Therefore the study by M. Babic (*FIDE Album 1995-1997*, D54) with six promotions, is wrongly presented in the Album as a task [HH: this is the first correct win study with 6 S-promotions and the Phoenix theme].

In my opinion the most successful examples feature a triple knight promotion. Here are three of them.

P.4 V. Korolkov

1st prize 64, 1937



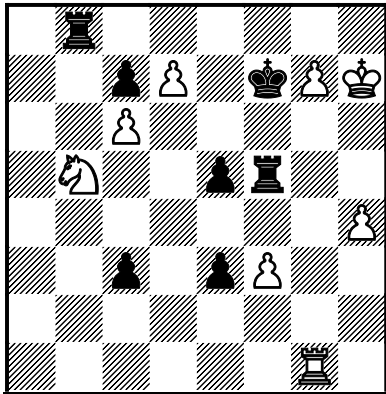
a2h4 0165.33 7/7 Win

Black’s most terrible threat is the knight promotion c1S+ and subsequent mate. Therefore White’s actions should be prompt. **1.Rh5+! Kxh5 (1...Bxh5 2.d8Q+; 1...Kg3 2.Rh1) 2.Sf4+ Kh6 3.g8S+! Kh7 4.Sgf6+ (4.Sef6+? Kg7! 5.S6h5+ Bxh5) 4...Kh6**

(4...Kh8 5.Sxg6 mate) **5.Sxg4+ Kh7 6.Sef6+ Kg7 7.Se6+ Kf7 8.d8S+! Ke7 9.c8S mate!** The answer to Black's threat is three knight promotions and mate in five horse powers!

P.5 A. Sochnev

1st/3rd prize Gurgenev 50 JT, 2004



h7f7 0701.54 8/7 Win

Here the triple knight promotion is preceded by a preliminary plan. **1.Sd6** forced sacrifice. Bad is 1.Rg5? Rxc5 2.hxc5 e2 3.g6+ Ke7 4.Sa7 e1Q 5.Sc8+ Rxc8 6.dxc8Q Qh4+ 7.Kg8 Qc4+, and 1.Kh6? Rf6+ 2.Kh5 Rf5+ 3.Kg4 Rf6 4.Kh3 e2. **1...cxd6**. Now White has to win a tempo somehow in order to have time to play c6-c7. This goal is achieved through a nonevident manoeuvre: **2.Kh6!** Again not 2.Rg5? Rxc5 3.hxc5 e2 4.c7 e1Q 5.d8S+ Rxd8 6.cxd8S+ Ke7 7.g8Q Qb1+ 8.g6 c2 9.Sf7 Kd7 10.Qd8+ Kc6 11.Qxd6+ Kb7) **2...Rf6+ 3.Kh5 Rf5+ 4.Kg4 Rf4+ 5.Kh3! Rxf3+**. The pawn f3 is eliminated, and the white king returns. **6.Kg4! Rf4+ 7.Kh5 Rf5+ 8.Kh6 Rf6+ 9.Kh7! Rf5**. And, at last, the final part of the preliminary plan: **10.Rf1! Rxf1**. And now advance bravely **11.c7! Rf5 12.d8S+! Rxd8 13.cxd8S+! Kf6 14.g8S mate!** An excellent logical study!

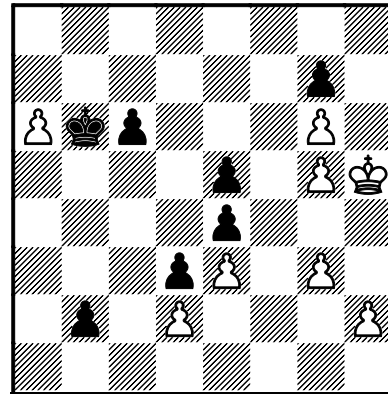
By the way, Alexey Sochnev has collected a large number of studies in which double underpromotions occur. And he was highly interested in record plans, in particular in studies with a high number of underpromotions and a small number of pieces in the initial position. Alas, the record (5 knight promotions, 10 pieces) did not survive – in the published posi-

tion a defect has been found that does not allow for a correction.

As an example of a mixed Black-and-White transformation into knights I present you the pawn etude P.6.

P.6 N. Kralin

2nd prize *Shakhmaty v SSSR* 1980



h5b6 0000.76 8/7 Draw

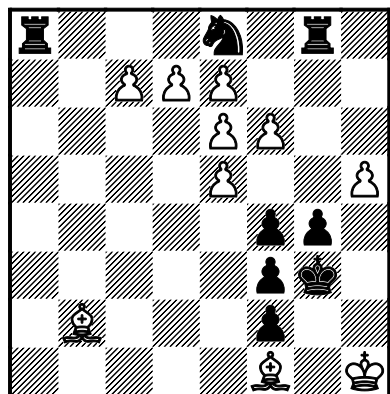
White's unique hope for rescue is a self-stalemate but already after the natural **1.a7! Kxa7** careful consideration is necessary in order to find the exact move – **2.g4! b1S!** (2...b1Q 3.h4, and stalemate cannot be prevented), and then another very effective move – **3.h3!!** In such cases a Russian proverb says “when you hasten – people laugh at you”. After 3.h4? Sc3 White is in zugzwang and loses: 4.dxc3 d2 5.c4 d1Q 6.c5 Qd4 7.exd4 e3 8.d5 e2 9.d6 e1S! 10.d7 Sd3 11.d8Q Sf4 mate. **3...Sc3 4.h4**. And now Black is in the same zugzwang. To prevent stalemate he has to move the king, whose position on a7 is invulnerable. **4...Kb7**. The best answer. If 4...Ka6 5.dxc3 d2 6.c4 d1Q 7.c5 Qd4 8.exd4 e3 9.d5 e2 10.dxc6!, and White is rescued by a check on c8. **5.dxc3 d2 6.c4 d1Q 7.c5 Qd4 8.exd4 e3 9.d5 e2 10.d6 e1S! 11.d7 Sd3 12.d8S+!** Now we see the drawback of the position of the black king on b7! **12...Ka6 13.Se6 Sf4+ 14.Sxf4 exf4**, and nevertheless it is stalemate!

2b. Bishop promotion

Here M. Zinar's record – fivefold promotion on the same square – is in place!

P.7 M. Zinar

1st special hon. mention
Friendship 200 JT, 1983



h1g3 0623.74 10/8 Win

1.f7 Rh8 2.fxe8B! Takes care of the h5-square around which further events develop. After 2.fxe8Q? Ra1! (but not 2...Rxh5+ 3.Qxh5 Rh8 4.e8B! with transition to the author's solution) 3.Bxa1 Rxh5+ 4.Qxh5 Black is stalemate. **2...Raxe8 3.dxe8B! Rxe8 4.Bd4! Rh8 5.e8B! Rxe8 6.e7 Rh8 7.e8B! Rxe8 8.e6 Rf8** (or 8...Rg8 9.e7 Rg5 10.e8B) **9.e7 Rf5 10.e8B! The** final nuance for victory! The attempt 10.Bxf2+? fails: 10...Kxf2 11.e8Q g3 12.Qe1+ Kxe1 13.c8Q Kxf1 14.Qc4+ Kf2 15.Qd4+ Kf1 with an obvious draw.

2c. Rook promotion

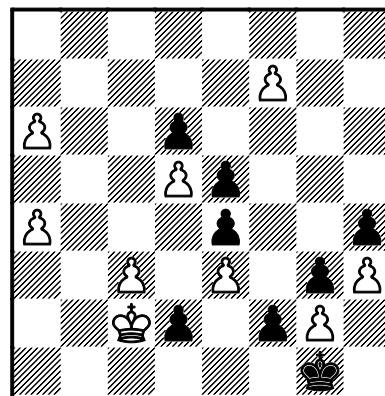
M. Zinar – the well-known modern master of the pawn study, and successor of N. Grigoryev – devoted a lot of creativity to underpromotion task records. Besides P.7, he owns another three task records. P.8 shows a triple rook promotion in a pawn study.

White has to promote three pawns to rooks in order to prevent stalemate on the squares h2, h3 and f3.

1.f8R! (1.f8Q? Kh2 2.a7 d1Q+ 3.Kxd1 f1Q+ 4.Qxf1 stalemate) **1...f1Q 2.Rxf1+ Kxf1 3.Kxd2 Kxg2 4.a7 Kxh3 5.a8R!** Queen promotion is again impossible – 5.a8Q? g2 6.Qg8 (or also 6.Qc8+ Kh2! 7.Qd8 h3 8.Qxd6 g1Q 9.Qxe5+ Kh1 10.d6 Qf2+ 11.Kd1 h2) 6...g1Q 7.Qxg1, stalemate. **5...Kg2 6.a5** (here and at the following move Rh8 can also be played – a quite admissible dual). Unfortunately another version of this task (Davranjan & Zinar, sp.

P.8 A. Davranyan & M. Zinar

1st hon. mention *Shakhmaty v SSSR* 1989



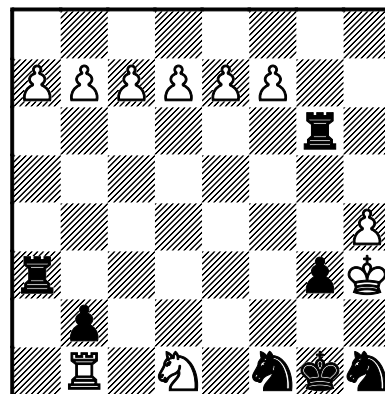
c2g1 0000.87 9/8 Win

prize 64-*Shakmatnoe Obozrenie*, 1989) has been cooked (13.Kd5 winning) **6...h3 7.a6 h2 8.Rh8** (8.a7? h1Q 9.Rb8 Qf1 10.a8Q Qd3+ 11.Kc1 Qxe3+ 12.Kb2 Qf2+ 13.Ka3 e3 and Black wins) **8...h1Q 9.Rxh1 Kxh1 10.a7 g2 11.a8R!** (11.a8Q? g1Q 12.Qh8+ Kg2 13.Qg7+ Kf3 14. Qxg1 stalemate) **11...g1Q 12.Rh8+ Kg2 13.Rg8+ Kf2 14.Rxg1 Kxg1 15.c4** wins.

A sixfold rook promotion is carried out in P.9.

P.9 M. Zinar

Special hon. mention
Shakhmaty v SSSR 1984



h3g1 0707.72 10/7 Win

1.a8R! Here White has to struggle against stalemate: 1.a8Q? Sf2+ 2.Sxf2 g2+ 3.Qxa3 Rg3+ 4.Qxg3. **1...Rb3 2.b8R!** (2.Rxb2? Rxb2) **2...Rc3 3.c8R! Rd3 4.d8R! Re3 5.e8R! Rf3 6.f8R!** The final chord. Neither now, nor earlier could White play its rook to the 3rd rank: 6.Ra3? Rxa3 7.Ra8 Rb3 8.Rcb8 Rc3 9.Rdc8 Rd3 10.Red8 Re3, and the black

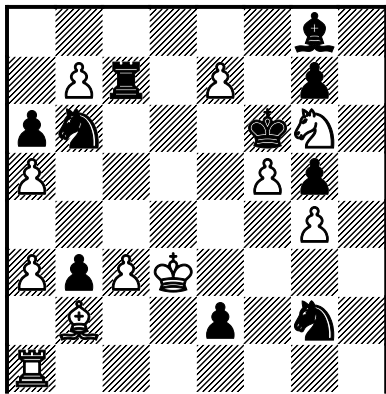
rook is safely surfing along the rank, evading persevering sticky colleagues. The rest is simple: **6...Sf2+ 7.Sxf2 g2+ 8.Rxf3 Rg3+ 9.Rxg3** wins.

Subsequently G. Costeff was able (EG 1999) to achieve a sevenfold promotion, but in his study the sequence of promotions is random, which disqualifies that study as an accomplishment of the task.

3. Babson Task

But Gady was the only composer to realize a 3rd/4th Babson-task in a study. Two earlier attempts by J. Rusinek failed because of incorrectness.

P.10 G. Costeff
Special hon. mention
Israel Ring ty 1998-1999



d3f6 0447.75 11/10 BTM, Win

First – what else?, introductory play:
1...Bc4+ (1...e1Q 2.Rxe1 Sxe1+ 3.Ke2 Rxe7+ 4.Sxe7 Sd7 5.Sxg8+ Kf7 6.Kxe1 Kxg8 7.Kd2 Kf7 8.c4 Ke7 9.Be5) **2.Kd4** (bad is 2.Ke4? Bd5+ 3.Kd3 Bc4+ 4.Ke4 Bd5+ 5.Kd4 Rc4+ 6.Kd3 e1Q 7.Rxe1 Sxe1+ 8.Kd2 Sf3+ 9.Kd1 Re4 10.c4+ Kf7 11.Se5+ Rxe5) **2...Rd7+ 3.Kc5 Sa4+ 4.Kxc4** (4.Kc6? Bb5 mate) **4...Se3+** (4...Sxb2+ 5.Kc5; 4...Rc7+ 5.Kd5) **5.Kb4**. The poisonous pawn b3 will sooner or later become evident: 5.Kxb3? Rxb7+ 6.Kxa4 Sd1 7.e8S+ Kf7 8.Sd6+ Kf6 9.Sxb7 e1Q 10.Kb3 Qe2 11.Rb1 Qb5+ 12.Ka2 Qc4+ 13.Ka1 Sxc3 14.Bxc3+ Qxc3+ 15.Ka2 Qc2+. **5...Rxb7+ 6.Kxa4 Sd1**. Black still can fight, but the end is near. And after 6...Sc4 White wins by a knight promotion: 7.e8S+! Kf7

8.Se5+! **7.Rxd1!** Too early is 7.e8S+? Kf7 8.Sd6+ Kg8 9.Sxb7 e1Q 10.Kxb3 Qd2 11.Rb1 Qd5+. Now the main line branches:

A. 7...exd1S 8.e8S+! Kf7 9.Sd6+,

B. 7...exd1R 8.e8R! (8.e8Q? Rd4+ 9.c4 Rb4+ 10.axb4 stalemate),

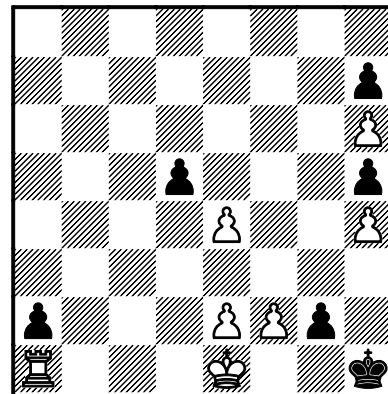
C. 7...exd1Q 8.e8Q! Qd4+ 9.c4! (9.cxd4? Rb4+ 10.axb4 stalemate).

It is hardly possible to demand any intelligent play in such a complex idea. Will some endgame study composer ever succeed in achieving the full Babson-task?

4. Valladao Task

The israeli study composer also owns, in my opinion, the most elegant expression of the Valladao-task.

P.11 G. Costeff
The Problemist 2007



e1h1 0100.55 7/6 Win

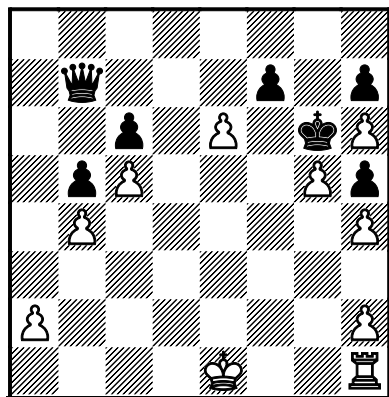
1.0–0–0+! g1Q 2.Rxg1+ Kxg1 3.Kb2 dxe4 4.f4! (hesitation will be punished: 4.f3? e3 5.f4 Kf2 6.f5 Kxe2 7.f6 Kd2 8.f7 e2 9.f8Q a1Q+ 10.Kxa1 e1Q+ drawing) **4...exf3 5.exf3 Kg2 6.f4 Kg3 7.f5 Kg4 8.f6 Kf5 9.f7 Kg6 10.f8R!** with a victory.

In a Valladao-task the pawn can formally promote to a queen. But, in my opinion, the ideal Valladao-task is when a pawn underpromotes. [HH: the “perfect Valladao” was defined by me as a study with: 1) underpromotion with the Q-promotion as the thematic try, 2) castling, with the thematic try Rf1/Rd1, and 3) A double step of the white pawn, which Black captures en-passant with

the single step as a thematic try. Costeff also managed this task!].

The author of P.12 managed in Valladao-task to carry out three different promotions. What about trying all four?

P.12 S. Hornecker
König und Turm 2007



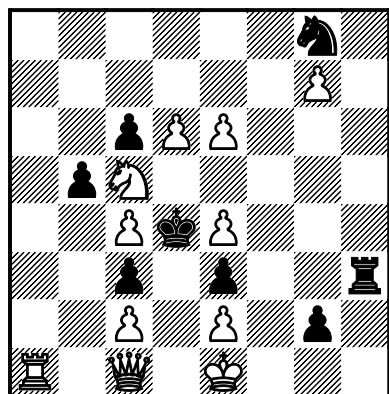
e1g6 3100.85 10/7 Win

1.0-0 (The king has to withdraw from the e-file in order to prevent checks) **1...f5!** After **1...Qe7 2.Rxf7! Qxe6 3.Rf6+ Qxf6 4.gxf6** pawn final is easily won for white. **2.gxf6**, and a branching:

- A. **2...Qc8 3.f7 Qxe6 4.f8S+!**,
- B. **2...Qc7 3.f7 Qe5 4.f8R!**;
- C. **2...Qa8 3.f7 Qxa2 4.Rf6+! Kxf6 5.f8Q+**.

Working on the theme of the VIIIth WCCT the authors of the following study were able to accomplish the Valladao task, although admittedly not in the ideal form.

P.13 N. Kralin & O. Pervakov
13th place 7th WCCT 2001-2004



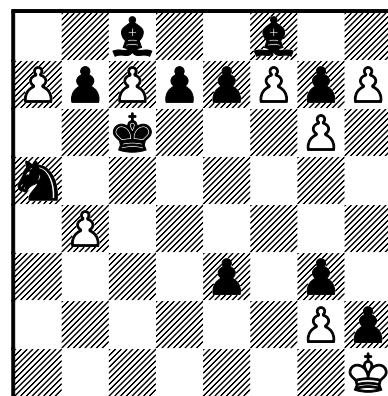
e1d4 1404.75 11/8 Win

1.Sb3+! As we shall see in the final position of this study, White has to get rid of the “fifth column” (pawn e4). Therefore it is too early for **1.Qd1+?** **1...Kxe4 2.Sc5+ Kd4!** Other ways lead to a fast defeat: **2...Kf4 3.Sd3+! Kf5 4.Qxe3 Rxe3 5.Kf2 Rxe6 6.d7 Rd6 7.Sc5**. Now the white king gets rid of a “traitor” from the inner circle: **3.Qd1+ Ke5! 4.Qd4+!** By retreating to e5 on the previous move, Black provoked its contender to play the erroneous **4.Sd7+?** **Kxe6 5.Sc5+ Kf7! 6.Ra7+ Kg6 7.Qd3+ Kh6 8.Qxe3+ Rxe3 9.Kf2 Rxe2+ 10.Kg1 Rxc2 11.Sb3 Rb2 12.d7 Rb1+ 13.Kxg2 Rd1. 4...Kxd4**. “The fifth column” is now liquidated, and White starts with the realization of the main plan: **5.0-0-0+ Kxc5 6.d7 Rh1 7.d8Q g1Q 8.Qd4+ Kb4 9.c5+ Ka5 10.Qxc3+ b4! 11.Qa1+ Kb5 12.c4+ bxc3 13.Qb1+ Kxc5**, And the finale **14.Qf5+!** winning.

And in conclusion two entertaining examples on the theme:

5. Incarceration of promoted pieces

P.14 M. Zinar
commendation Archakov JT 1989



h1c6 0063.77 8/11 Draw

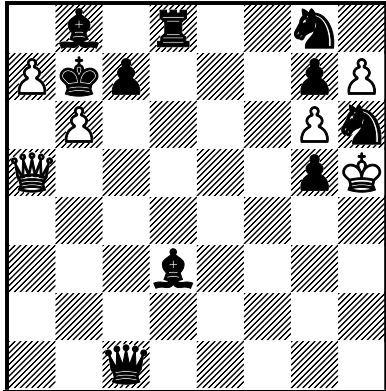
How to deal with the extremely dangerous black pawn on e3? Bad is **1.h8Q? e2 2.Qxh2 gxh2 3.a8Q e1Q+**. It is necessary to hope for **1.b5+ Kb6!** avoiding mined squares: **1...Kxc7 2.a8Q e2 3.Qxa5+ or 1...Kxb5 2.h8Q e2 3.Qh5+**. But now an original stalemate combination is possible: **2.a8S+!** (**2.h8S? e2 3.a8S+ Kxb5 (Kc5)**, or **2.h8Q? e2 3.a8S+ Ka7**)

2...Ka7 3.b6+ Ka6 4.h8S!, and stalemate is unavoidable

We should raise our hat for the author of P.15. To make such a romantic, vital study during such awful times!..

P.15 A. Hurtig

2nd prize *Schackvärlden* 1943



h5b7 4366.43 7/10 Draw

Black has an overwhelming superiority in force and mate threats. Rescue for White seems from area of a fantasy. But...

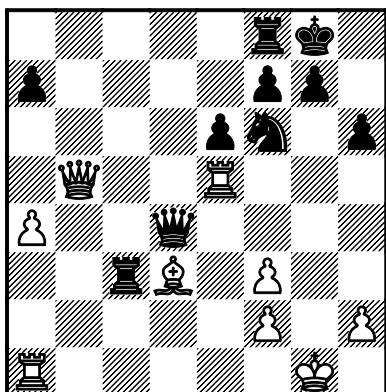
1.a8B+! It is easy to see that the black king easily escapes from two white queens after 1.a8Q+? Kc8 2.b7+ Kd7 3.Qd5+ Ke7 4.hxg8S+ Sxg8! (it is still possible to produce a blooper: 4...Rxc8? 5.Qe5+) 5.Qxd8+ Kxd8 6.Qxb8+ Ke7. **1...Kc8 2.b7+ Kd7 3.Qd5+ Ke7 4.Qe5+ Kf8.** “The time from two queens is gone, from one for a long time!”, – the black king triumphs. But a b-i-i-g surprise awaits him: **5.Qxg7+!! Kxg7.** Black has not yet given up hope: 6.h8Q+? Kf8! 7.Qg7+ Ke8 8.Qf8+ Kd7!, and again the white queen is finished. However **6.h8B+! Kf8** – stalemate!

SNIPPETS

Editor :

JOHN ROYCROFT

1. – Fritz 11 doesn't like resigning. When it does it bleats: *How could that happen? To me of all people! I give up.* However, it regularly defeats me in the quick games I play, by instantly seeing things like:



After Black's Qd8xwPd4. I played Be4, and after Rb3; threw in the towel.

Is it fanciful to imagine Fritz ‘teaching’ the technique of concocting introductory play?

2. – Gady Costeff finds the online audio-visual potential of <http://youtube.com/user/Lovuschka> ‘an order of magnitude more compelling than looking a study over in a magazine’. Do other web-empowered readers agree? ‘Lovuschka’ is Russian for ‘trap’.

3. – Solution to puzzle on page 188: 1.Sf7! draws.