

*History*

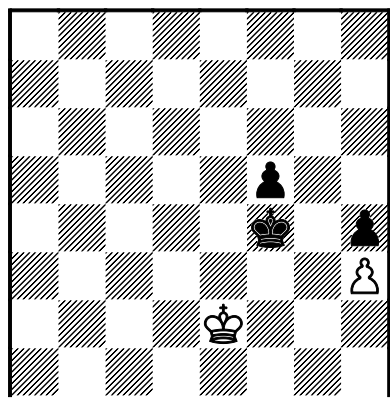
# AN EARTHLY PAWN PASSION OR THE MASTER'S MIRACULOUS RESURRECTION

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BY THE TWO SERGEIS:  
S.N. TKACHENKO AND S. DIDUKH<sup>1</sup>

[SNTk] The pawns-only endgame is a frequent guest at the otb table. With an eye to the endgame today's grandmaster aims to create flaws in his opponent's pawn structure, so as to take advantage later. However, real life has shown that the great ones of this world, wonderfully as they conduct the opening and middle game phases, not seldom commit lamentable blunders and oversights in even elementary pawn endings.

**TD.1** L.Yudasin vs. V. Osnos  
Leningrad 1987

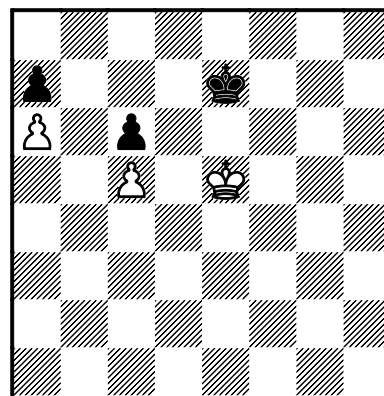


e2f4 0000.12 2/3 WTM

Yudasin took the opposition (TD.1) with **1.Kf2**, and offered a draw on the spot, with the remark that this was 'a known draw that is in all the books'. The experienced Osnos, aghast at his own ignorance, accepted. But the books tell a different story: 1...Ke4 2.Ke2 f4 3.Kf2 f3 4.Kf1 Ke5 5.Ke1 Kf5 6.Kf1 Ke4! Confronting White with triangulation. 7.Ke1 Ke3 8.Kf1 f2, and the pawn queens.

TD.2 is an amusing oddity that occurred between two players who are just as well known.

**TD.2** V. Bologan vs. E. Dizdarevich  
Sarajevo 2004



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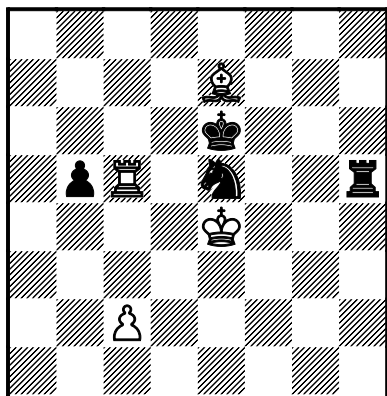
With the capture of bPc6 the position will resemble TD.1. OK, the positioning of the a-file pair isn't quite the same. The Bosnian IGM ignored this minor discrepancy, played **1...Ke8?? 2.Ke6**, and stopped the clocks. But here we do have the book position, with a draw by 1...Kd7! 2.Kf6 Kd8 3.Ke6 Ke8, with reciprocal zugzwang, a piece of wisdom picked up by beginners at chess school: 4.Kd6 Kd8 5.Kxc6 Kc8 6.Kd6 Kd8 7.c6 Kc8 8.c7 stalemate!

Resigning a drawn endgame (TD.3) was also the experience of the fabled Maia Chiburdanidze, costing her first place in the North Urals Cup.

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1. This article was published in the Russian language in *Problemist Ukraina* 3(13) in 2007. It appears in **EG** for the first time in English, and with the addition of example TD.5.

**TD.3** E. Skripchenko vs. M. Chiburdanidze  
Krasnoturinsk 2004

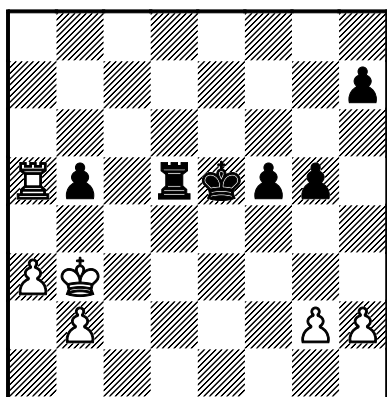


e4e6 0413.11 4/4 BTM

Having fallen into a pin Chiburdanidze plays correctly for a while by avoiding 1...Kxe7? 2.Rxe5+ Rxe5+ 3.Kxe5, when she would have lost the opposition. So: **1...b4! 2.Rb5 Rh2 3.Rxe5+ Kd7 4.Kd3 Rh3+ 5.Re3**. Now, after the natural 5...Rxe3+ 6.Kxe3 Kxd7 7.Kd3! – the most sly! – it was good thinking to have spilt a drop of blood with 7...b3! 8.cxb3, seizing the opposition with 8...Kd7!, and equalising. But all this was irrelevant, for the ladies champion unexpectedly stopped the clocks!

With TD.4 we can cite a recent case of GM blindness in a pawn ending.

**TD.4** S. Rublevsky vs. V. Zakhartsev  
Championship of Russia,  
Premier League, 2007



b3e5 0400.44 6/6 WTM

By playing 1.Kc3, White would have been in no danger of losing. But the longing to reach a safe drawing haven played him a mischievous trick. **1.a4?? bxa4+ 2.Kxa4 Rxa5+**

**3.Kxa5 f4 4.b4 g4 5.b5 f3 6.gxf3 gxf3 7.b6 Kd6!** This device, common in the studies world, to decoy the opposing king into check, did not enter the calculations of one of Russia's strongest grandmasters. The scales fell from White's eyes and he resigned, having failed to see: 8.Ka6 f2 9.b7 f1Q+. Check.

Glancing at these far from complex examples we can't help thinking of the words of Nikolai Dmitrievich Grigoriev, the master-practitioner and famed poet of the pawn endgame: Grandmasters don't like pawn endgames because they simply don't understand them!. To my mind the relevance of this remark today lies in the reluctance of players to delve into the subtleties. Devoting the lion's share of their training to openings preparation ('To reach the ending phase you have to survive that far!') a grandmaster will naively rely on solving otb endgame problems when he meets them, and not before. It is sadly the case that with the shortening of time controls such optimism, as we have seen, is misplaced.

Successful liquidation of this widespread lack of competence in pawn (and not only in pawn!) endgames can come about by solving studies. Sharp examples are not needed for honing the imagination and combinative vision: quite straightforward ones will make up for deficiencies in chess upbringing. Mark Dvoretzky, one of today's top trainers, has gone down this path. By transferring them to a file these studies become a source of nourishment for his star pupils.

Our chess world is such that, delighting in study canvases we all too often lose sight of the artists themselves. Who are they, these providers of teaching materials? What impels these chess sorcerers, these unselfish devotees, sifting the chessboard day and night in pursuit of, what, some airy chimaera? What do we know at all of their lives, of their lives' labours?

In the present essay we, the two Sergeis, hope to remedy this injustice by telling the reader about the most well known name since Grigoriev linked to pawn study ideas –

Mikhail Afanasevich Zinar. The flourishing of his creativity, almost all devoted to the end-game with pawns, lasted throughout the 15 years of the USSR's decline into history. My co-author, SD, has volunteered for the mission to display Zinar's oeuvre through the most delightful of his studies.

[SD] They do say that for a complete assessment of a man one must await his death. If this is the case the chess world has already had the opportunity on two occasions to evaluate the eminence of M.A. Zinar as a composer. The first time was in 1990 when, to everyone's surprise, Zinar 'put his affairs in order', and the second time – not so long ago – when rumours of his premature demise circulated. Praise be, Zinar is alive and well!

This joyous news has warmed the hearts of his admirers in every corner of the globe. After recognising for the second time the gigantic services to the world of chess composition made by the Ukrainian master, from everywhere there poured in urges for someone to pay a visit to the living legend, for support and contact to be maintained, and, in short, to do everything to revive his interest in composing.

Zinar composed his first study at a time when the pawn study's creative high-jump bar had been raised to its superb heights thanks to the splendid work of Nikolai Grigoriev. What a paradisaal age for chess that was! Chess literature was published in edition sizes running to many thousands. F. Bondarenko's *The Study in the Pawn Endgame*, appearing in 1973, turned out to be a priceless seedling that fell onto fertile ground. Miraculous shoots sprang up within a mere twelvemonth when *Shakhmaty v SSSR* established the début of a 23-year-old from Feodosia named Mikhail Zinar. It was a study showing intricate play of the kings based on corresponding squares.

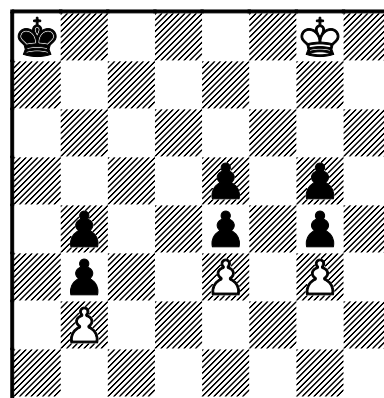
Later on Zinar returned time and again to this complex area of pawn ending play, but it was in 1983 that he expounded his special expertise in the pages of Yuri Averbakh's *Chess Endings* grand opus. (SNTk: A rare event in-

deed in the otb world for an IGM to entrust a significant part of his work to a modest candidate master!)

Right from the start of his creative activity Zinar was true to all that was best in first class work: technique of a high order combined with intriguing ideas.

### TD.5 M. Zinar

*Krimskaya pravda*, 1975



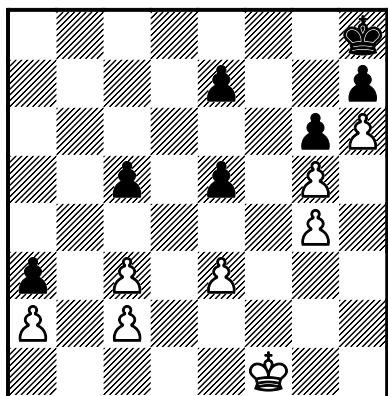
g8a8 0000.36 4/7 Win

In TD.5 White's task is to capture the black e-file pawns without allowing bK in to attack wPb2. This can be done if he can take the e4-c4 opposition. Relevant corresponding squares stretch the length of the b- and f-files. It won't do to step onto the f-file straight away, so: **1.Kg7! Ka7! 2.Kg6! Kb6!** Otherwise bPg5 will be lost. **3.Kf6!** The opposition is worth more than material gain: **3.Kxg5? Kc5 4.Kf5 Kd5**, when it is Black who is winning. **3...Kb5 4.Kf5! Kc6 5.Ke6!!** Impressive stuff! The good and sage white monarch turns his nose up at no fewer than four black pawns! **5...Kb6 6.Kd6! Kb5 7.Kd5! Kb6 8.Kxe4!**, with a win.

The surest way to surprise the chess amateur with the beauty of composition is to show him some of Zinar's pawn endings. On the most varied of types of amateur they produce a uniquely captivating effect. It could not be otherwise! The belief that nothing could be simpler than a pawn ending is exploded when their eyes pop out under the pressure of his deep and refined ideas. The sweep of the struggle in TD.6 excites – unfailingly.

**TD.6 M. Zinar**

special prize, *Shakhmaty v SSSR* 1977



f1h8 0000.76 8/7 Win

**1.Ke2!** This move must not be delayed! 1.c4? Kg8 2.Ke2 Kf7 3.Kd3 Ke6, and there is no way into Black's camp. Or 1.Ke1? c4!, putting an end to all incursions. **1...e4! 2.c4! Kg8 3.Kd2 Kf7 4.Kc3 Ke6 5.Kb3 Kd6 6.Ka4!** The pawn is not for taking: 6.Kxa3? Kc6 7.Ka4 Kb6, drawing. **6...Kc6 7.Ka5 Kc7 8.Kb5 Kd6 9.Kb6 e6 10.Kb5 Ke5! 11.Ka5(Ka6).** The 'appetiser' c5 is poisoned: 11.Kxc5 stalemate. **11...Kd6 12.Kb6 Ke5 13.Kb7! Kd6 14.Kc8 Ke5 15.Kd8! Kd6 16.Ke8 Ke5 17.Kf7 Kd6 18.Kf6!** Leaving the black footsoldiers alone has become an acquired habit: 18.Kg7? Ke7 19.Kxh7 Kf7 20.c3 e5, drawn. **18...Kd7 19.Ke5 Ke7 20.Kxe4.** At long last a pawn that can be taken has surfaced! **20...Kd6 21.Kf4!** Straight away 21.Kf3? is shown to be bad after: Ke5 22.Kd2 Ke4 23.Ke2 e5 24.Kf2, the second black stalemate! 21.c3? is also to be avoided. To come to the point, White might surely have moved his cP earlier, but as we shall in due course see it must be left in its starting blocks. **21...e5+ 22.Ke4 Ke6 23.Kd3 Kd6 24.Kc3.** wK's Mediterranean cruise has lasted 20 moves. But staying put will get him nowhere. Accounts must be settled with bPa3. **24...Kc6 25.Kb3 Kb6 26.Kxa3 Ka5 27.Kb3 e4 28.Ka3 Kb6 29.Kb2!** So as to knock bK off balance with his next. **29...Ka5 30.Kb3! Ka6 31.Kc3 Ka5 32.Kd2 Kb4 33.Ke2 Ka3.** If 33...Kxc4 a quick decision results from: 34.Kd2 Kb4 35.a3+ Kxa3 36.Kc3 winning. **34.Kf2 Kxa2 35.Kg3 Kb2 36.Kf4 Kxc2.** Had wP stood on

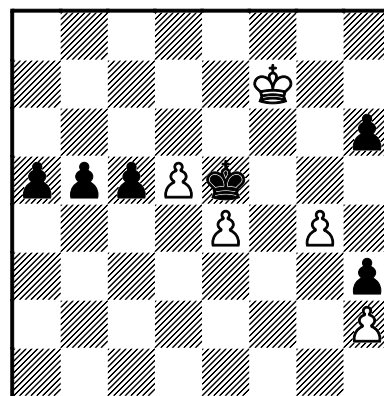
c3 Black would not have lost a crucial tempo! **37.Kxe4 Kc3 38.Kd5.** Victory!

Such a gigantic contest with a royal progress over the whole board, a threefold refusal to capture, and two midboard stalemates! Even if a person could withstand such an aesthetic assault on his senses, there is nonetheless no doubt at all that he would be won over by the single fact that the outcome hangs on one skinflint tempo hoarded by White to the very end!

Record ideas fell into Zinar's lap with astonishing ease! Looking at the natural pawn setting of TD.7 it is hard to believe that a task lies hidden there.

**TD.7 M. Zinar**

special prize, *L'Italia Scacchistica* 1982



f7e5 0000.45 5/6 Win

Tempting as it is to support the d-pawn's advance, it doesn't work: 1.Ke7?! c4! 2.g5. Too late. 2...c3 3.gxh6 c2 4.h7 c1Q 5.h8Q+ Kxe4 6.d6 Qc5 7.Qh4+ Kd3 8.Qxh3+ Kc2, and Black makes a draw.

**1.g5!** The g5 square will be needed by a future wQ. **1...hgx5 2.Ke7,** and no fewer than five variations sprout from this node:

- a4 3.d6 a3 4.d7 a2 5.d8Q a1Q 6.Qh8+, or
- b4 3.d6 b3 4.d7 b2 5.d8Q b1Q 6.Qd6+ Kxe4 7.Qg6+, or
- c4 3.d6 c3 4.d7 c2 5.d8Q c1Q 6.Qd5+ Kf4 7.Qf5+ Ke3 8.Qxg5+, or
- g4 3.d6 g3 4.d7, and:
  - gxh2 5.d8Q h1Q 6.Qd6+ Kxe4 7.Qc6+, or
  - g2 5.d8Q g1Q 6.Qd5+ Kf4 7.Qf5+ Ke3 8.Qxc5+.

It is all so beautiful and so simple! Every pawn plays its part, the second and fourth lines show symmetry, as do the third and fifth. A superb creative achievement with an elegant logical introduction.

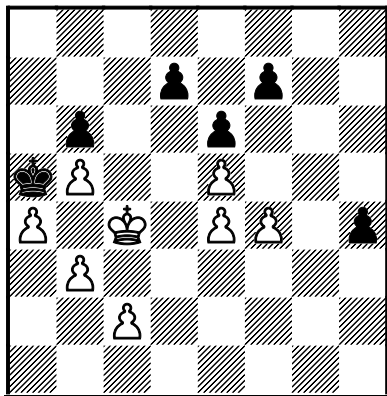
(SNTk: It is unfortunate that in the 1.Ke7?! try all is not so smooth. It is clear that after 8.Qxh3+ Kc2, Black must still fight for equality – wPd6 is extremely dangerous. There is a long analytical variation introducing a dissonance into the study's basic idea. I think that this weakness lay behind Zinar's suppression of the first move when this study was reproduced: wPg4 was removed, and bPPh3h6 were replaced by bPPh4g5 respectively.)

From what Zinar tells us this study was composed in 1977 at the same time as another composition showing the win of six queens. Sadly, this suffered from duals, so the record stays with TD.7.

TD.8 is probably the best known of all Zinar's studies.

**TD.8** M. Zinar

1st special commendation,  
*Shakhmaty v SSSR* 1980



c4a5 0000.75 8/6 Win

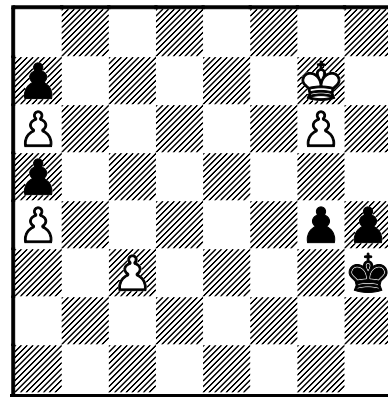
Seeing that bPh4 cannot be stopped, the similarity with the well known Réti manoeuvre is clear. But we see not prepared for a real miracle. **1.Kc3 h3 2.Kb2!!** Is the king abandoning the chase? On the contrary, he's tensing his muscles! **2...Kb4.** Or 2...h2 3.Ka3 h1Q 4.b4 mate the first. **3.c3+ Kc5 4.Kc2 d5.** Or 4...h2 5.Kd3 h1Q 6.b4 mate the second. **5.Kd3.** Not 5.exd5? exd5 6.Kd3 d4! **5...dxe4+ 6.Kxe4 h2.** After 6...f6 wK reins in the runa-

way: **7.Kf3 h2 8.Kg2.** Can you believe this, looking at the diagram? **7.Kd3 h1Q 8.b4+ Kd5 9.c4** mate the third. A blood-curdling duel with three injections of checkmate.

It is hard to overestimate Mikhail Afanasievich's achievements in the realm of successive underpromotions. The starting pistol for this phase of his career was the publication of TD.9, in which for the first time in a pawn study there are two underpromotions to rook.

**A.9** M. Zinar

3rd prize, *Bulletin of Central  
Chess Club of USSR* 1978



g7h3 0000.44 5/5 Win

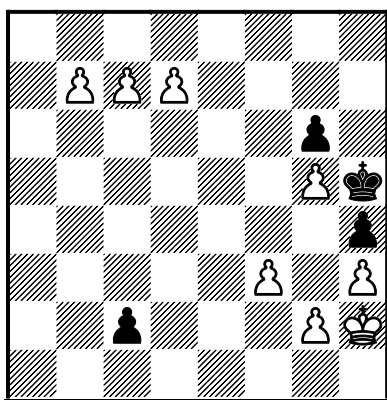
**1.Kh6! g3 2.g7 g2 3.g8R!** Not 3.g8Q? g1Q 4.Qxg1 stalemate. **3...Kh2 4.Kh5 h3 5.Kh4 g1Q 6.Rxg1 Kxg1 7.Kxh3 Kf2 8.c4 Ke3 9.c5 Kd4 10.c6 Kc5 11.c7 Kb6 12.c8R!** winning. 12.c8Q? is stalemate.

[SNTk] Two R-promotions in an 'almost' pawns study had been done by Vladimir Bron in 1930. Why 'almost'? The point is that in order to carry out his idea the future composition IGM had to call on the services of a bQ, which White ruthlessly gobbles up on the second move.

[SD] The interest in underpromotions stimulated by TD.9 was no laughing matter. Many authors entered the P-ending underpromotion lists. But the principal instigator was not to be left behind. Zinar assiduously updated the chess world with his finds: in 1983 there was the first synthesis of successive underpromotion to achromatic bishops; in 1986, to knight and bishop; in 1988 to a pair of monochromatic bishops; and in 1990, to rook and knight in

a study to win. The attempt in 1988 at triple underpromotions to rook failed to survive close analytic scrutiny. Luckily in 1988 this fantastic idea was rescued by A.Davranyan. But saving a study with four-fold underpromotion to knight has so far eluded everyone's grasp. To tell the truth this idea has extracted a vow of loyalty from the pawns wizard and awaits his return to the composing fray. But all are charmed by the TD.10 'shortie'.

**TD.10** M. Zinar  
special honourable mention,  
*Shakhmaty v SSSR* 1983



h2h5 0000.73 8/4 BTM, Win

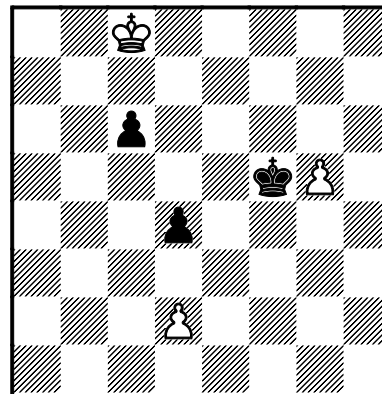
**1...c1Q 2.c8R!** If 2.c8Q? Qf4+ 3.Kh1 Qc1+ 4.Qxc1 stalemate. **2...Qb2 3.b8B!** If 3.b8Q? Qe5+ 4.Qxe5 stalemate. **3...Qd4**, hoping for 4.d8S? Qxd8 drawing, but: **4.d8R** wins. Not one of the three white pawns on the seventh rank actually queens!

I respectfully doff my hat to the skill of Mikhail Afanasevich in ferreting out artistic subtleties in known theoretical positions. With special felicity he dredged the Q vs. cP end-game, as in TD.11 (also TD.12 and TD.15).

From the very start vigilance is the watchword. **1.Kb7!** Naturally not 1.d3? Kxg5 2.Kc7 Kf4 3.Kxc6 Ke3. **1...c5 2.d3.** With wKc7 or wKd7, then after 2...c4 he would either obstruct his pawn or be subjected to check by a promoted bP. **2...Kg6!** Holding wPg5 hostage. **3.Ka7!!** Black's calculations included only 3.Kb6 c4 4.dxc4 d3 5.c5 d2 6.c6 d1Q 7.c7 Qd7 8.Kb7 Kf5, when Black would win. **3...Kf7.** If instead 3...Kg5 4.Kb6 draws, or if 3...c4 4.dxc4 d3 5.c5 d2 6.c6 d1Q 7.c7 Qd7

8.Kb8, when Black lacks just one tempo to rejuvenate his pawn. **4.g6+! Kg8 5.g7! Kxg7 6.Kb6(Ka6) c4 7.dxc4 d3 8.c5 d2 9.c6 d1Q 10.c7 Qd7 11.Kb7 Kf6 12.Kb8**, when bK is one step away from the winning zone.

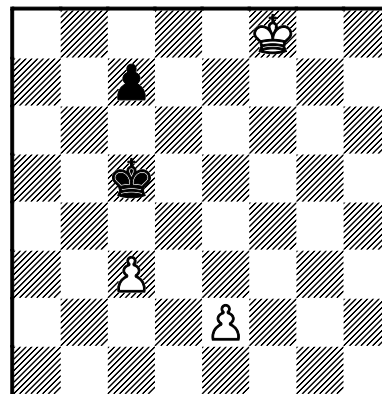
**TD.11** M. Zinar  
2nd prize, Moscow tourney, 1983



c8f5 0000.22 3/3 Draw

The play in TD.12 is set by a reciprocal zugzwang linked to a well known theoretical draw where the queen cannot cope with a pawn on the third rank.

**TD.12** M. Zinar  
1st special prize, *Shakhmaty v SSSR* 1981



f8c5 0000.21 3/2 Win

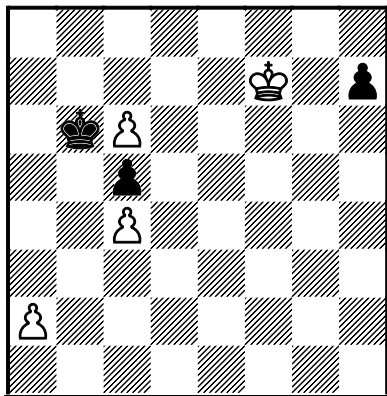
**1.Kg7!!** You're a hero if you found this move by yourself – you'll have thrown down the gauntlet to a grandmaster of the first rank! After 1.Kf7?! Kd5, White is in zugzwang: 2.Kf6 (Kg6, Ke4;) Kc4! 3.e4 Kxc3 4.e5 c5 5.e6 c4 6.e7 Kd2! 7.e8Q c3, with our theoretical draw. No better: 1.Ke7? Kc4, and 2.Ke6 Kxc3 3.Kd5 Kb4! 4.e4 c5, with mirrored marches, or 2.e4 Kxc3 3.e5 c5 4.Kd6 c4 5.e6 Kb2 6.e7 c3 7.e8Q c2. **1...Kd5 2.Kf7!**, and

zugzwang afflicts Black. **2...Ke5**. Even less satisfactory is 2...c6 3.Ke7! or 2...Kc4 3.e4 c5 4.e5 Kxc3 5.e6 c4 6.e7 Kd2 7.e8Q c3 8.Qd8+ Kc1 9.Qg5+!, the diagonal being unobstructed! **3.Ke7(Ke8) Kd5 4.Kd7 Kc4 5.Kc6!** It would be careless to play 5.e4? Kxc3 6.e5 c5, flunking the win because wK is in wQ's way. **5...Kxc3 6.Kc5!** winning. A study in the classic mould!

The Crimean master's virtuoso technique and outstanding fantasy have yielded a rich harvest of high class studies. In the course of the 15 years from 1976 to 1990 he produced around 200 original compositions (that is, not counting versions and corrections). On top of that his oeuvre was confined within the narrow limits of pawn specialisation, at that time deemed more or less explored! Despite this, one manufactured article after another, each more beautiful than the last, emerged from the great study composer's workshop: shining ideas harmoniously assembled and clothed with elegance.

**TD.13** M. Zinar

1st prize, 64-*Shakhmatnoe obozrenie* 1982



f7b6 0000.32 4/3 Draw

**1.Kg7!** A 'feint' worthy of Réti or Sarychev! It is hard to reject the knee-jerk 1.Kf6? Kxc6 2.Kg5, but after 2...Kb6 3.Kh6 Ka5 4.Kxh7 Kb4 5.Kg6 Kxc4 6.Kf5 Kc3 7.Ke5 c4 8.a4 Kb4, when Black wins. **1...h5 2.Kf6 h4 3.Ke5 Kxc6 4.Kf4 Kb6 5.Kg4 Ka5 6.Kxh4 Kb4**. The sole difference from the try lies in wK being on h4 instead of on h7. As they say in Odessa, 'two big differences'. But the route to a safe haven is sown with mines. **7.Kg3! Kxc4 8.Kf2!** It is the square f3 that is

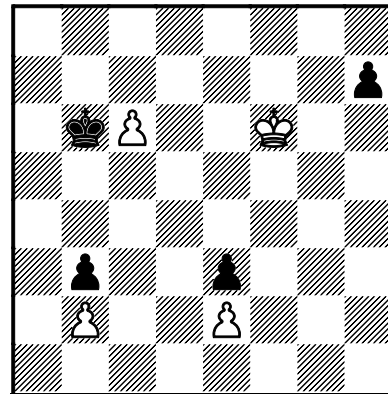
mined: 8.Kf3? Kd3 9.a4 c4 10.a5 c3 11.a6 c2 12.a7 c1Q 13.a8Q Qh1+, winning for Black. **8...Kc3 9.Ke2!** picking his way between the 'chcking' squares e1 and e3. **9...c4 10.a4** – drawn. Staggering for a miniature!

For years and years nothing approached the astounding expressiveness of the Réti or Sarychev 'feint' moves, in other words a pointed royal shrug losing two whole tempi. Until, that is, the year 1984.

**TD.14** M. Zinar

special commendation,

*Shakhmaty v SSSR* 1984



f6b6 0000.33 4/4 Draw

**1.Kg7!!** The natural 1.Kg5? loses: Kxc6 2.Kh6 Kd5 3.Kxh7 Ke5 4.Kg6 Kf4 and so on. **1...h5 2.Kf6! h4 3.Ke5 h3 (Kxc6? Kf4) 4.Kd6**, drawing. Laconic genius!

I am not acquainted with Mikhail Afanasevich Zinar in person. But I had read and re-read his book *The harmony of the pawn end-game* co-authored with the late V.M. Archakov many times, even before I composed my first study. Seeing that I possessed no other book on composition it is readily understandable if such remote tutoring exercised a formative influence. Dear Mikhail Afanasevich, please accept the heartfelt thanks of an unknown pupil and ardent fan of your talent. May pawns once more reveal to you their innermost secrets!

[SNTk] With a smooth baton transfer from Sergei Didukh I shall now share with the reader memories of my own encounter with Mikhail Afanasevich Zinar.

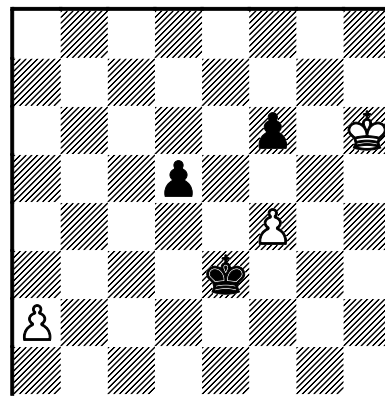
Setting out on the studies path at the latter end of the 1970s I was bewitched by Richard Réti's brilliant pawn bravado and the wonderful works of the Soviet master Nikolai Grigoriev. As it then seemed to me, after such miraculous studies how was it possible to find anything new and original to say in such a restricted sub-domain of the chess art as the ending with pawns? But then up over the horizon sprang the Mikhail Zinar star. This man re-ploughed the pawn study field, in all directions, to yield entirely fresh beauties and nuances. (It is curiously symbolic that his date of birth – 9v1951 – coincides with Victory Day celebrated in the Soviet Union!)

My eyes opened particularly wide at the winning study, pawns only, in the anniversary tourney marking 1500 years of the Ukrainian capital Kiev. At that time I was a student at the Kiev Polytechnic Institute, and from time to time turned up at the evenings bringing together the capital's lovers of the poetry of chess. At one such gathering Vladimir Mikhailovich Archakov, organiser of the anniversary tourney, told the assembled company that about 80 studies from every corner of the Soviet Union had been received. I was fascinated to know who would have been victorious on such a mighty study battlefield. Favourites mentioned were entries from E. Pogosyants, G. Nadareishvili, Al.P. Kuznetsov, V. Dolgov, L. Mitrofanov. But all these renowned masters of mixed piece configurations had to make way for a first grader from Feodosia named Mikhail Zinar with an advocacy of the narrow pawn band of the chess spectrum. (The title of USSR Master of Sport, the next step up from candidate, was awarded in 1986 for a third place in the 16th Individual Championship, for which studies in the 1981-82 period were valid.) Sharing first and second places with the glorious Leopold Mitrofanov, Zinar demonstrated in this event that the pawn ending was not ripe for consigning to the archives.

**1.a4 Kd4 2.Kh5!!** White loses out in a hand-to-hand confrontation: **2.Kg6? Kc5 3.Kxf6 d4**, when White loses the treacherous

**TD.15 M. Zinar**

1st/2nd prize, Kiev 1500 AT, 1982



h6e3 0000.22 3/3 Draw

a-pawn. A wait-and-see strategy fares no better: **2.f5? Kc5! 3.Kh5 d4 4.Kg4 d3 5.Kf3 Kd4 6.a5 Kc3 7.a6 d2**, and Black promotes with check. **2...f5!** This is more sly than **2...Kc4 3.a5! Kb5 4.Kg4 Kxa5 5.Kf5! Kb4 6.Kxf6** with equality. **3.Kh4!!** Fantastic self-restraint! The 'provoked' **3.Kg5?** loses: **Kc5! 4.Kxf5 d4 5.Ke4 Kc4 6.a5 d3 7.Ke3 Kc3 8.a6 d2 9.a7 d1Q 10.a8Q Qe1+ 11.Kf3 Qh1+**, winning wQ on the diagonal, or, in this, **6.f5 d3 7.Ke3 Kc3 8.f6 d2 9.f7 d1Q 10.f8Q Qe1+ 11.Kf3 Qf1+**, inflicting the same punishment on the file. Study within a study! **3...Kc5 4.Kg3 Kb4 5.Kf3(Kf2) Kxa4 6.Ke3 Kb5 7.Kd4 Kc6 8.Ke5!** Making his way to the pawn by a diversionary route. **8...Kc5 9.Kxf5 d4 10.Kg6! d3 11.f5 d2 12.f6 d1Q 13.f7**, now a theory draw.

Who can remain unimpressed by this 'bypass': **Kh6-h5-h4-g3-f3-e3-d4-e5-xf5?** Eight moves instead of two! How improbable it is that tempi, so important in everyday chess, should be so fatal. A consequence was inclusion in the *FIDE Album 1980-1982*.

Can one learn more about the man from a photo? Devotees of extra-sensory perception claim practically 'everything'. OK, but what would they say about the character waving his wand over the chessboard in the full swing of the 1989 All-Union congress of chess composition in Moscow? (Sitting next to Zinar is Vazha Neidze. Behind him is Oleg Efrosinin. Father off: Yakov Rossomakho and Nikolai



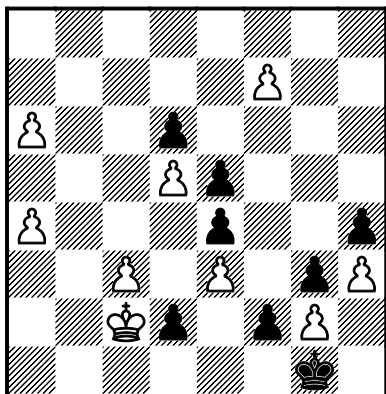
Zelepukhin. On the dais are David Gurgenidze and Valery Kozirev, part of whose head

shows. Evgeny Fomichev is moving towards them.)



Do they see in this enthusiastic figure – the first published snapshot of Zinar! – the future chess hermit? But just one year later Mikhail took a vow of chess silence... I don't know about ESP but I seem to discern the contours of our sixteenth example carrying the publication date 1989 and composed jointly with Davranyan! (SD referred to this study en passant when discussing the charms of TD.9.)

**TD.16** A. Davranyan & M. Zinar  
1st honourable mention,  
*Shakhmaty v SSSR* 1989



c2g1 0000.87 9/8 Win

**1.f8R!** The first case of rook-preference! Choosing the major piece is bad: 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.** The second! This time, if 5.a8Q? g2 6.Qg8 g1Q 7.Qxg1 stalemate! **5...Kg2 6.a5.** A transposition by 6.Rh8 is possible, followed by pushing the aP. **6...h3 7.a6 h2 8.Rh8 h1Q 9.Rxh1 Kxh1 10.a7 g2 11.a8R!.** The third! 11.a8Q? g1Q 12.Qh8+ Kg2 13.Qg7+ Kf3! 14.Qxg1 stalemate! **11...g1Q 12.Rh8+ Kg2 13.Rg8+**, and after the exchange of heavy pieces the cP runs through.

The second photo is also published for the first time. In it we see Mikhail doing his best to expound a record-breaking study to Anatoly Kuznetsov, who had care of the composition section of *Shakhmaty v SSSR*.

My face-to-face encounter with Zinar took place under somewhat unusual circumstances. I recall that at the end of February 1996 I planned a foreign trip to the Israeli congress for chess composition. The tedious bureaucratic red tape of filling in the necessary docu-

mentary formalities was disturbed by a thunderbolt! The examination of my data in connection with prison convictions brought to light the fact that at that moment I happened to be on the list of highly dangerous criminals! According to police records it emerged that Tkachenko (Sergei Nikolaevich), born in Odessa region on 26th January 1963, on more than one occasion stole a car of foreign origin! The procurator in charge of the investigation operated out of the town of Ananiv to the north of Odessa region, where the above-named comrade had perpetrated his criminal acts. All the data about the wanted criminal fully corresponded to what was on my completed questionnaire, so it looked more than likely that I would be spending the next few days in custody pending clarification of this monstrous misunderstanding. By good fortune one of the officials of the Odessa investigation department was well known to me, and, happening upon this breach of administrative protocol made a phone call to the Ananiv procurator with regard to suspicion of guilt. My wife's brother raised the alarm and took the freshly-fledged recidivist in his car to the 'confessional box'. I shall long remember how the local procurator reacted to my sudden appearance. A grimace of satisfaction in anticipation of the apprehension of arresting a dangerous criminal changed on the spot into utter disappointment! To have snaffled a big fish at small expense to his department only for it to be snatched from his grasp! It turned out that the bandit, all of whose personal data – surname, first name, patronymic, year, date and place of birth – completely corresponded to my own, was active in Odessa. An unheard of event in the world of jurisprudence. [Might it not have been a case of stolen identity? AJR]

On the way back to Odessa I made a détour to the village of Gvozdevka, which lay some kilometres from Ananiv. Anatoly Georgievich Kuznetsov's information was that Mikhail Afanasevich Zinar had moved there from the Crimea. At that time Mikhail had practically withdrawn from study composing (since 1990

only one study of his had been published), and, besides making his personal acquaintance I hoped to discover the reason for such prolonged abstinence. Having found, with the help of a communicative villager, the house where Zinar was living, I was informed that "Afanasevich is at lessons just now." So I waited for the house-owner's home-coming from the school where he was engaged in imparting 'labour discipline'. I introduced myself and transmitted the warmest of greetings from study colleagues. It became clear that our encounter cheered my new companion up, stirring up study memories.



A spread was quickly set up before us. Zinar told me that the chief reason for his hurried exit from study work was not a dearth of pawn study ideas but the rigours of humdrum existence. Already before the Soviet Union's collapse problems arose at work and accommodation in the Crimea. Sadly, this was also the case in his new residence of Gvozdevka, where all was not plain sailing: the village school paid veritable peanuts, so he was

obliged to look for sources of extra income if his family were to be fed. But finding work that paid in an impoverished village was impossible. Supplementary income came from raising geese, chickens and sucking-pigs, on which Mikhail spent all the 'free' time left after his school work was done. Living under such conditions, it was hardly possible to dump housekeeping chores to spend time at the chessboard following up study novelties and entering tourneys... Even postal expenses were incompatible with bucolic survival. It was scarcely possible to make something worthwhile in these circumstances, and to churn out second-class imitations was not on. What does the bottom line of our insubstantial art need from him? Maybe just to survive... was how my new companion summed it all up. I did my best to convince Mikhail that these were the temporary difficulties of a young state, that all would turn out for the best, and so on. As a last argument for not deserting the chess arena I told him about the creation in Odessa of the 'Black Sea' [T\*™] association of chess composers, one of whose aims was the material support of chess talent. Among its plans were the publication of a magazine 'The Problemist of the South' [T\* ] for the poetry of chess. There was substantial financial backing, behind which was a great enthusiast for chess, and that included chess composition. I also talked about the preparations of the Ukrainian team for the 5WCCT, and about the imminent memorial tourney in honour of the pawn master Nikolai Grigoriev...

My optimism, boosted by one glass after another of homemade wine (according to my driver some six litres of this auspicious beverage were consumed), all but transmitted itself to mine host. Having retrieved a dusty chessboard from the attic, Mikhail rehearsed some interesting schemas for future studies with pawns. It was clear that the passion for pawns still excited the hermit of Gvozdavka! I was not to be left behind and in turn showed off a couple of new pieces of my own. Unnoticed, the evening crept up on us, so with a feeling of

a duty towards the studies community accomplished I set off back to Odessa. As a memento of that meeting I now have the gift of a copy of *The Harmony of the Pawn Study* presented to me by Mikhail, with his autographed dedication. (I can reveal a little secret. From beginning to end this book was written by Mikhail Zinar. But how was it to be published? The well-connected Archakov knew people in the publishing world and came to his aid – at the cost of Zinar's sole authorship.)

A few months later, finding myself in Moscow on business, I had a meeting with Anatoly Georgievich Kuznetsov and told the maestro that Zinar was 'alive and well and ready with new things for publication!' Right away the Moscow maestro penned a missive to Gvozdavka with an invitation to judge the contemplated pawns tourney.

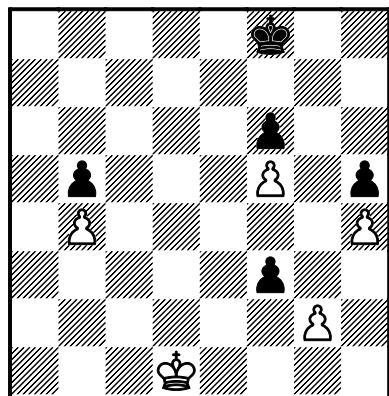
'If you want to make the gods laugh, just make plans.' Sad to say, life put a spoke our wheel of optimism. A local war broke out in Odessa between candidates for the post of governor, impacting even chess composition. Our chess benefactor, having supported the disgraced town mayor, was compelled to emigrate. Along with his exit the whole programme of development and sponsorship of chess composition folded. For a while I endeavoured to revive the project which had had such a promising start. But it was not to be ... At the end of 1997 I was forced to lie on my back in hospital with an aggravated skin complaint. Denuded of financial means the 'Problemist of the South' magazine simply faded away, and soon the association as well...

The most recent news of Zinar dates from 2000. The director of the Odessa Chess School of Olympic reserve [apparently a system for talent-spotting. AJR] advised me that he had met Mikhail Afanasevich and acquired from him a library of chess books and magazines. That year was the last in which Zinar has published a study (TD.17). I suspect that Mikhail composed this on the 6.WCCT theme – Refusal to capture based on win (or loss) of a tempo. Alas, none of the masters could achieve this specific thematic requirement

with pawns. At the last moment a rule clarification proclaimed that the theme had to be achieved with a piece, and not with a pawn....

**TD.17 M. Zinar**

*64-Shakhmatnoe obozrenie 2000*



d1f8 0000.44 5/5 Win

**1.g3!** Clearly the black pawn must not be taken. After 1.gxf3? bK can hover between squares d6 and c6, after which White has no way to strengthen his position. Now Black is deprived of this possibility because wK captures bPf3 and at the proper moment rams the opponent's position with g3-g4. **1...Ke7 2.Ke1!!** Black exults after the seemingly logical 2.Kd2? Kd6 3.Kd3! Kd5! 4.Ke3 Ke5zz 5.Kxf3 Kxf5 6.g4+ hxg4 7.Kg3 Ke4 8.Kxg4 (h5, Kf5;) f5+ 9.Kg3 Ke3, with a clearly level game. **2...Kd6 3.Kf2 Ke5 4.Ke3!zz** Black's turn! **4...f2 5.Kxf2 Ke4 6.Ke2! Ke5 7.Ke3! Kxf5 8.Kf3**, and we are by now familiar with this BTM set-up. **8...Ke5 9.g4 hxg4+ 10.Kxg4 Ke4** (f5+; Kf3!) **11.h5 f5+ 12.Kh3**, cutting off bP's threatened march and winning.

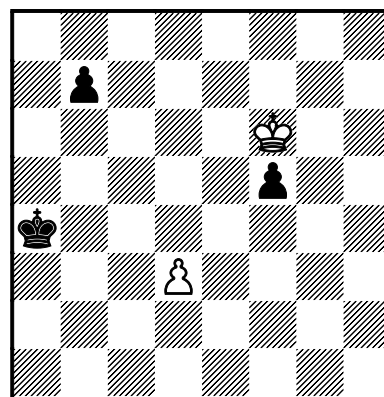
A nicely stitched together study, with small pretensions to originality. But what right had we to expect more after such a long lay-off?

Sad to say, there have been no more pawn revelations for the chess world from Zinar... In fact, no chess output at all – the keenly hoped for return to collaboration with Anatoly Kuznetsov never took place, the latter's earthly journey coming to an abrupt end in 2000. And shortly after that the bitter news reached me that Mikhail Zinar too had slipped into Eternity in the the Moscow master's wake.

To write that the pawn study has been orphaned by Zinar's departure would be to distort the truth. With Zinar's creative full stop the pawn study practically died the death itself! Rare work by individual authors failed to bring the wished for creative spurt to this twig, for we got instead things that were essentially reworks of known ideas. What I remember from this period is just one memorable pawn opus, the work of the Moscow international GM (TD.18).

**TD.18 O.Pervakov**

1st prize, *64-Shakhmatnoe obozrevie 2000*



f6a4 0000.12 2/3 Draw

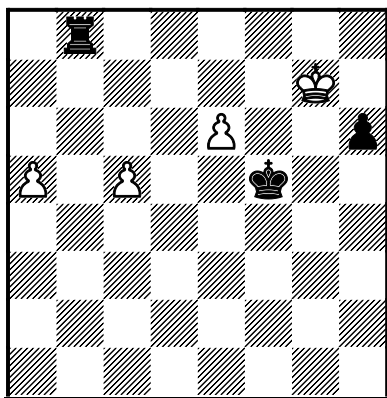
dP's take-off pursuit of the promotion prize simply won't do: 1.d4? f4 2.d5 f3 3.d6 f2 4.d7 f1Q+, Ah! It's check! And no better is 1.Kxf5? b5 2.d4 b4 3.d5 b3 4.d6 b2 5.d7 b1Q+, that check again! Maybe it's more attractive to try: 1.Ke5? b5 2.d4 b4 3.d5 b3 4.d6 b2 5.d7 b1Q 6.d8Q, but then comes 6...Qe4+! 7.Kf6 Qh4+, when wQ falls to a sniper's diagonal.

The move that saves the day is the obscure **1.Kg5!! b5 2.d4 b4 3.d5 Kb5 4.d6!** Not 4.Kf6? tempting though it is: Kc5 5.Ke6 b3 6.d6 b2 7.d7 b1Q 8.d8Q Qe4+ 9.Kf7 Qe4+, and curtains. **4...Kc6 5.Kxf5**, and the Réti mechanism gets to work: **5...Kxd6 6.Ke4**, halting the pawn, or 5...b3 6.Ke6 b2 7.d7, with mutual ennoblement. And Réti triumphs again in the line **1...Kb4 2.Kxf5 Kc3 3.Ke5!**, for after **3...Kxd3** just the same fate awaits this bP: **4.Kd5 b5 5.Kc5**. The alternative is to concede an echo-march to the eighth with **3...b5 4.d4 b4 5.d5**, which clearly will not be enough to win. Two Réti manoeuvres in a maljutka!

Sadly we have seen no other pawn spectacles since Zinar's time. Should we conclude from this that the pawn ending is for practical purposes exhausted? I leave the question open... But even if this is the case we must not simply bury it. In my view there are good prospects for the pawn ending in synthesis with pieces as makeweights. An example will clarify. (TD.19)

**TD.19** E. Kolesnikov

1st prize, *Shakhmatny vestnik* 1993



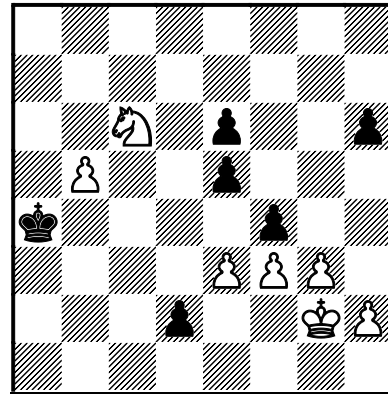
g7f5 0300.31 4/3 Draw

**1.Kf7! Rh8! 2.e7 Rh7+ 3.Kf8 Kf6 4.e8S+!**, avoiding mate-in-1 and ready for 4...Ke6 5.Sg7+ Kd5 with rook-win after 6.Kg8 Rxc7 7.Kxc7 h5 8.a6 Kc6 9.Kf7 h4 10.Ke7 h3 11.a7, equalising. The alternative is no improvement: 4...Kg6 5.c6 Ra7 6.c7 Ra8 7.Ke7 h5 8.Kf6 h4 9.Sg4, with the same outcome. **4...Ke5!** The most cunning! The point is that there is no sense in White playing 5.Sg7? h5! 8.a6 h4 7.a7 Rh8+. **5.c6! Rh8+ 6.Ke7 Rxe8+!** Well may we ask what White gains by this line. After the obvious 7.Kxe8 Kd6 8.Kd8 Kxc6 9.Kc8 h5! 10.Kb8 Kb5 11.Kb7 Kxa5 12.Kc6 h4, wK is in no state to overhaul the black infantry. Eureka!! **7.Kd7!! Kd5.** 7...Rh8 8.c7 Rh7+ 9.Kc6! drawn. **8.c7 Rh8 9.c8Q Rxc8 10.Kxc8 Kc6! 11.Kb8! Kb5 12.Kb7! Kxa5 13.Kc6! h5 14.Kd5**, applying tempo upon tempo to infiltrate the hP's quadrant. The familiar 'Réti-Prokeš' manoeuvre became an option due to non-capture of bR on move 7! The logical elaboration of the classic idea is clear as crystal.

And here (TD.20) is a fresh example from the work of my co-author on this article's theme.

**TD.20** S. Didukh

EG 2005 (correction 2007)



g2a4 0001.55 7/6 Draw

**1.b6 d1Q 2.b7 Qe2+.** No better is either: 2...Qc2+ 3.Kh3 Qxc6 4.b8Q Qxf3 5.exf4 e4 6.Qb7, or 2...fxe3 3.b8Q Qd2+ 4.Kh3 e2 5.Sxe5, equalising in both cases. **3.Kh3 Qf1+ 4.Kh4!!** But why not play closer to the centre? 4.Kg4? Qb5 5.b8Q Qxb8 6.Sxb8 fxe3 7.Sd7 e2 8.Sc5+ Kb4 9.Sd3+ Kc3 10.Se1 Kd2 11.Sg2 e1Q 12.Sxe1 Kxe1 13.Kh3. A surprise is in store for White here: 13...Kf1!! 14.g4 Kf2!zz 15.g5 hxg5 16.Kg4 Kg2 17.Kxg5 Kxf3 18.h4 e4 19.h5 e3 20.h6 e2 21.h7 e1Q 22.h8Q Qg1+ 23.Kf6 Qd4+, picking off bQ on the diagonal. **4...Qb5 5.b8Q Qxb8 6.Sxb8 fxe3 7.Sd7 e2 8.Sc5+ Kb4 9.Sd3+ Kc3 10.Se1 Kd2 11.Sg2 e1Q 12.Sxe1 Kxe1 13.g4! Kf2** – otherwise 13.Kg3 – **14.Kh3zz** – White gloats – **14...Kxf3 15.g5! h5 stalemate!** This spine-tingling stalemate is possible thanks to avoidance of a bQ check on move four!

The idea for this article came to me after an interesting interchange with Didukh. In one of his letters Seryozha asked me what I knew of Zinar's fate. In reply I told my namesake of the pawn maestro's demise, and suggested to my colleague that we write something together about his life and work. To learn the precise facts I telephoned the local Gvozdavka administration. The colourful Ukrainian voice on the wire informed me that... Mikhail Afanasevich Zinar was alive and 'teaching at the school'!

(I retain the original.) I remember insisting the other end of the wire three times, almost dumbstruck as I was by this so heartening piece of news. (One recalls Mark Twain's 'The report of my death is an exaggeration'. [Closer to home, Troitzky's death was prematurely announced in post-revolutionary years. AJR].) On having this fantastic resurrection confirmed I at once told my co-author. The response was salvo-like "That's great news! Extraordinary! Uplifting! Now I can get down to the article with redoubled energy. I have gone through The Harmony of the Pawn Study yet again. The studies are now chosen. I think that I'll be done in a couple of days, and then I'll send you the revision. Your tale will fascinate Everyone. Many people were interested in Zinar's fate after I had told them on the Internet

of his recent death. We can properly sum up a person's life only after he has passed on. We set up statues to the departed, and we even call factories and steamboats after them." Well, to express a little of our recognition and admiration while the man is still alive... Without such self-effacing zealots the world of chess would lose its fascination, its charm, its magic. Mikhail Afanasevich, we thank you for the sunshine of your studies! And there's something else ... come back to us!! The pawn study languishes without you. That is not why the Lord God has restored you to the chess world.

Lviv region, and Odessa  
2007



*S.N. Tkachenko (2007)*