

## Informal Composing Tourney of “The Problemistic Courier” Endgame studies Edition 2018-2020 by Steffen Slumstrup Nielsen

*In the final award, two changes were made. Emil Melnichenko's study, originally not in the award, is now placed at 3rd honorable mention. I mistakenly evaluated the study as a cook, but it is correct as long as the solution is cut short and ends with 12. exd8=Q.*

*Furthermore, Pavel Arestov's d8d3, originally given 3rd commendation is identical to Krikkheli 1995 (HHdbVI#24833) and has been removed from the award.*

*Thanks to Harold van der Heijden for making me aware of these two grave errors.*

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Thank you to editor Dan-Constantin Gurgui for asking me to judge the tournament, which attracted 24 studies from 20 composers. The tournament, originally scheduled for 2018-19, was expanded by one year.

I considered the level of the tournament satisfactory. As always I have some comments of a general nature. This time they are mainly about excitement. If the purpose of the study is stirring emotions what then is the role of those technical studies that constituted a large part of the entries? Some studies left me untouched due to a lack of surprise. In terms of construction these studies were of a very high class, with all pieces moving and without exchanges or other flaws. But 15-20 moves of gradual progress will inevitably be boring without a “change of scene” during the action. Would you show such works to players in your local club?

We are rightly taught to avoid excessive captures and exchanges. 15 years ago in “Wege zu Schachstudien” Martin Minski put up the rule that there should be no more than one capture every third half move. I prefer to put the bar at an even lower frequency of every fourth or fifth move.

In Varantim no 76 in 2018, Gady Costeff writes amusingly of vegetarian studies (without captures). But avoiding captures all together is certainly not desirable, as Costeff writes himself. In fact, I believe there is such a thing as “too pure” when it comes to studies. Sometimes captures are useful tools in radically changing the events on the board. Studies should neither be a bloodbath nor completely meatless.

Even the first prize study to my mind suffers from an overdose of purity.

Below are some words on the studies that are not in the award (king positions in brackets)  
Hlinka/Kekely (h6b6) correct play without artistic value. The final position is a draw, but this is clear only to very strong players. The authors mention that the study is a Meredith (the term for studies or problems featuring up to 12 pieces). While this distinction may make sense in the realm of mating problems, it is meaningless as a virtue when it comes to studies, which are supposed to have far fewer pieces on average. Indeed, this particular study has 9 pieces.

Hlinka/Kekely (d4f1) see comment above.

Hlinka/Kekely (d8b8) needless introductory exchanges followed by technical play.

Hlinka/Kekely (e4h6) this win study of some theoretical interest features a mutual zugzwang leading to Troitzky positions with a Black pawn on the g-file. As we recall, this is always a win, if the pawn is blocked on g6. In the winning line of this study the pawn reaches g5. In the logical try the pawn reaches g5 as well! So what is the difference? Well, the White king is slightly better placed in order to contain the Black king in the h8-corner of the board. The authors offer no explanation about what is actually happening. In any case the study would have been much better simply beginning with 1. Ke5-f4!

Gurgui (a4e2) this is a technical study without surprises.

Garcia/Krug (e1g1) a study with spread out tactics of interest, but with a lack of focus. In the mating position after 12 moves there are still 12 pieces left on the board.

Garcia/Krug (f7h8) a much better study by the Austrian/Argentinian duo 6. Kf8 is excellent, but final rook sacrifice on h6 is too well known and pawn-b6 is unfortunate.

Tarasiuk (b4b1) a rework of Kazantsev's 4th hm. from 64 in 1933 (HHDVBI #76946, see appendix ). One pawn is spared, but I don't find the eventful introduction in sync with the subtle finish.

Arestov/Keith (h7e7) this study is simply too technical for my taste. Gradual progress is made, but interest is lost.

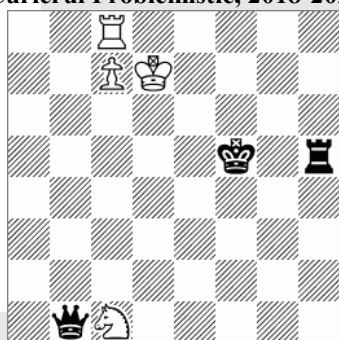
Sayman (a5d2) I consider this a fine study for solving, marginally too little for the award.

Costeff (f3g5) after publication of this study, the composer became aware of a predecessor, which he informed me about: A fascinating threemover by Ofer Comay (See appendix), with play split up into four similar variations. Costeff is ambitiously exploring chess problem themes in studies, for instance his two Turton Doubling studies from Tarasiuk 50 JT and The Problemist 2014 and his zugzwang Plachutta from Hoch 70 JT. I think the present theme of interference is less suited for studies, and since the basic setup is known from Comay's problem, I cannot put the study in the award. This time, honesty didn't pay.

Arestov (d3d8) this study is 100 percent anticipated by Krikheli 1995 (HHdbVI#24833).

On to the awarded studies. The presentation of the solutions are by the composers with minor edits by me.

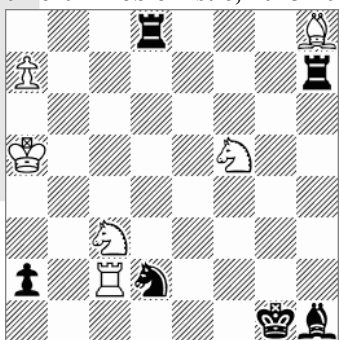
**1<sup>st</sup> Prize**  
**Martin Minski (Germany)**  
**Curierul Problemistic, 2018-2020**



(4+3)

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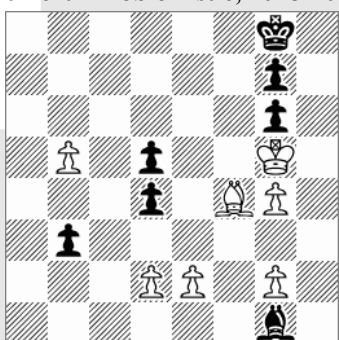
**2<sup>nd</sup> Prize**  
**Piotr Murdzia (Poland) &**  
**Martin Minski (Germany)**  
**Curierul Problemistic, 2018-2020**



(6+6)

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**3<sup>rd</sup> Prize**  
**Vladimir Samilo (Ukraine)**  
**Curierul Problemistic, 2018-2020**



(7+7)

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### 1<sup>st</sup> Prize – Martin Minski (Germany) no. 71, Curierul

**Problemistic 2/2019** *A tour de force of high technical level and with good Black counterplay (especially 5...Rd6+) During the first 11 half moves, not a single piece is captured. Black and White go on the attack alternately. Given the tactical nature of the play it is easy to forget we are actually dealing with a miniature.*

**1. Rb8!** (1. Rf8+? Ke5 {/Kg6/Kg5} 2. c8=Q Rh7+ 3. Kd8 Qb6+ -+) **1... Rh7+!** (1... Qe4 2. Rb5+ Kg6 3. Rxh5=) **2. Kd6** (2. Kd8? Rh8+-) **2... Rh6+ 3. Kd7** (3. Ke7? Qe4+ -+) **3... Qe4!** (3... Qxc1 4. c8=Q= battery 3... Qa1 4.c8=Q= battery Qg7+? 5. Kd8+ +- (5. Ke8+? Re6+ -+, **4. Rb5+!** 4. c8=Q? Qe6+ 5. Kc7 Rh7+ 6. Kd8 Rh8+ 7. Kc7 Rxc8+ -+, 4. Rf8+? Kg5! -+, **4... Kf4!** 4... Kg4 5. c8=Q battery Qe6+ 6. Kc7 Rh7+ 7. Kb8 =, 4... Kg6 5. Rb6+ Kg7 6. Rxh6 =, **5. Rb4! Rd6+!** 5...Qxb4 6. Nd3+ Ke4 7. Nxb4 =, **6. Kc8!** 6. Kxd6? Qxb4+ -+ **6... Qxb4 7. Nd3+! Rxd3** model stalemate 1/2-1/2

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize – Piotr Murdzia (Poland) & Martin Minski

**(Germany) no. 74, Curierul Problemistic 2/2019** *The*

*starting position is messy, with four vs four pieces and two miraculously unpromoted pawns. But the idea, excellently implemented with 3. a8Q, forcing a Black block on this square, lifts the study to prize level. In the end, Black to move is unable to win with rook, bishop and knight against two knights.. This bears resemblance to Minski's first prize study of The Problemist 2016-17 (HHDBVI #4438, see appendix) The composers emphasize the use of all four corners in the study, but I don't consider this an asset as the bishops are already on h8 and h1 in the initial position. **1. Bd4+!** deflection of the black rook from the 8th rank. (1. Rc1+? Kg2! -+ ) **1... Rxd4 2. Rc1+ Nf1** (2... Kf2 3. Nd1+ Ke2 4. Ng3+ Ke1 5. Nc3+ Kf2 6. Nxb1+ =) **3. a8=Q!***



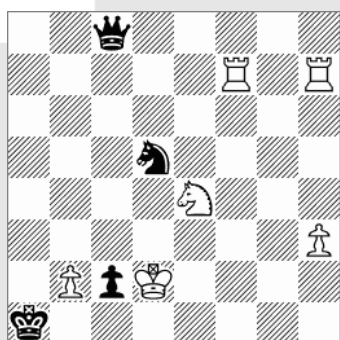
Logical try 3. Nxd4? a1=Q+ (or 3... Rxa7+ 4. Kb6 a1=Q 5. Rxa1 Rxa1 with the same position) 4. Rxa1 Rxa7+ 5. Kb6 Rxa1 6. Nc2 (position X with bBh1) Ra8! -+ 3... **Bxa8** 4. **Nxd4** a1=Q+ 5. **Rxa1** Ra7+ 6. **Kb6** Rxa1 7. **Nc2!** (position X with bBa8, domination) **Rc1** 8. **Ne2+** fork **Kf2** 9. **Nxc1** = 1-0.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Prize – Vladimir Samilo (Ukraine) no. 551, Curierul Problemistic 5/2020** *An earlier version of this study went unawarded in my 45 JT. But in fact this is a whole different work due to a much better introduction. Black's counterplay 1...d3 justifies the queen exchange in the introduction (without the exchange it would also have been difficult to avoid Black-to-move). The position after 7. g3 is funny and one of suspense. The kings fight it out, and in the end the check 11. e4+ saves White's day.*

*By the way, I consider the pawns on e2 and g2 a weakness (Bf1 was captured on f1), making the starting position unnatural.*

1. **b6 d3!** (1... b2 2. b7 b1=Q 3. b8=Q+ Qxb8 4. Bxb8 =) 2. **e3!** (2. b7? Ba7! 3. Be3 Bb8 -+) 2... **b2** (2... Bxe3 3. b7! Ba7 4. Be3 or e5 =) 3. **b7 b1=Q** 4. **b8=Q+ Qxb8** 5. **Bxb8 Bxe3+!** 6. **Bf4** (return) (6. dxe3? D2 -+) 6... **d4** 7. **g3!** (7. Bxe3? dxe3! -+) 7... **Kf7** zz 8. **Kh4 Kf6!** (8... Ke6?! 9. Kg5! (try 9. g5? Bxf4! 10. gxf4 Kd5! 11. Kg4 Kc4! 12. f5 gxf5+ 13. Kxf5 Kb3 14. Kg6 Kc2 15. Kxg7 Kxd2 -+) 9... Kf7 10. Kh4 = positional draw 9. **g5+ Kf5** 10. **dxe3!** (theme) 10. Bxe3? Dxe3 -+ 10... **d2** 11. **e4+ Kxe4** 12. **Bxd2** = Theme of 12th Arves Ty (delayed capture) with zugzwang for black or white.

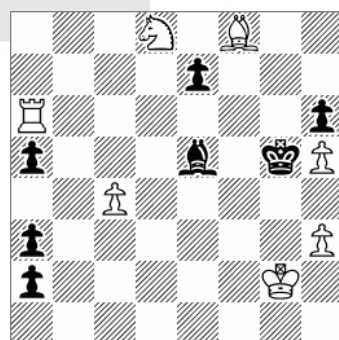
**1<sup>st</sup> Honorable Mention**  
**David Gurgenzidze &**  
**Vazha Neidze (†) (Georgia)**  
Curierul Problemistic, 2018-2020



(6+4)

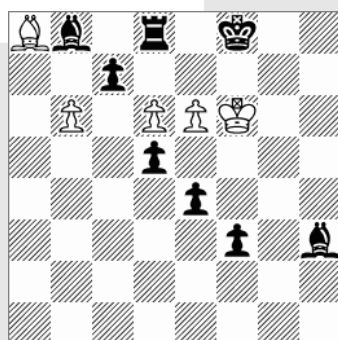
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**2<sup>nd</sup> Honorable Mention**  
**Amatzia Avni (Israel)**  
Curierul Problemistic, 2018-2020



(7+7)

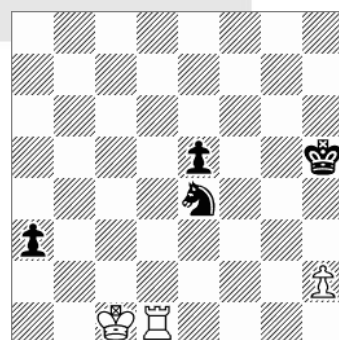
**3<sup>rd</sup> Honorable Mention**  
**Emil Melnichenko (New Zealand)**  
Curierul Problemistic, 2018-2020



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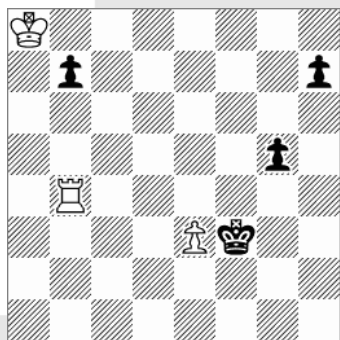
**1<sup>st</sup> Commendation**  
**Peter Krug (Austria) &**  
**Pavel Arestov (Russia)**  
Curierul Problemistic, 2018-2020



(3+4)

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**2<sup>nd</sup> Commendation**  
**Pavel Arestov &**  
**Alexander Zhukov (Russia)**  
Curierul Problemistic, 2018-2020



(3+4)

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### **1<sup>st</sup> Honorable Mention – David Gurgenzidze & Vazha Neidze (†) (Georgia) no. 549, Curierul Problemistic 5/2020**

*A pleasant study on the evergreen theme of placing the rook diagonally from the king. The Georgian duo GM David Gurgenzidze and IM Vazha Neidze. (1937-2020) skilfully added the try 6. Rb5, which lifts the study a lot. One may consider beginning with 4. Ra7+ but the stalemate after 2. Nc3 makes a good case for adding the introduction, despite the exchange on a2. 1. **Kc1 Nb4** 2. **Ra7+** (2. Nc3? Qa6 3. Ra7 Na2+ 4. Nxa2 Qxa7 5. Rxa7 stalemate) 2... **Na2+** 3. **Rxa2+ Kxa2** 4. **Ra7+ Kb3** 5. **Rb7+ Ka4** (5... Qxb7 6. Nc5+) 6. **Nc3+!** (Try 6. Rb5? Qxh3! 7. Nc3+ Qxc3=) 6... **Ka5** 7. **b4+ Ka6** 8. **Ne4 Qxh3** (8... Kxb7 9. Nd6+) 9. **Nc5#** 1-0,*

**2<sup>nd</sup> Honorable Mention – Amatzia Avni (Israel) no. 73, Curierul Problemistic 2/2019** *A pretty study with a good introduction in the style of Wotawa. I think this study brings about an interesting discussion. The idea of 5. Rg5! can be done with only 5 pawns on the board*

instead of 7. I noticed this and tried for some time to create a good introduction, but failed. My question is this: Is it essential that the implementation is economically perfect when presenting a small, pretty idea like this? Traditional conventions preach that it must be. Or may pawns be added for the sake of a better introduction. I am honestly in doubt. **1. Ne6+ Kf5** (1... Kxh5 2. Ng7+ Kg5 3. Kf3!! (3. Bxe7+? Kf4 4. Ne6+ Kf5! 5. Nd4+ Bxd4 6. Rxa5+ Ke4 7. Rxa3 a1=Q 8. Rxa1 Bxa1 =) 3... a1=Q 4. h4+ Kxh4 5. Bxe7+ Bf6 6. Bxf6+ Qxf6+ 7. Rxf6 +- ) **2. Nd4+ Bxd4 3. Rxa5+ Bc5!** a clever defence (3... e5 4. Rxa3 a1=Q 5. Rxa1 Bxa1 6. Bxh6 +- ) **4. Rxc5+** (4. Bg7? e5 5. Bxe5 Kxe5 -) **4... Kf6** (4... e5 5. Rxe5+ +- ) **5. Rg5!!** (Not 5. Bxe7+ Ke6! 6. Re5+ Kxe5 7. Bf8 Kf6 -) **5... hxc5** (5... Kxc5 6. Bg7+-) **6. h6 Kf5 7. Bg7 e5 8. Bxe5** accurate (8. h7? a1=Q 9. h8=Q Qb2+ =) **8... Kxe5 9. h7 1-0,**

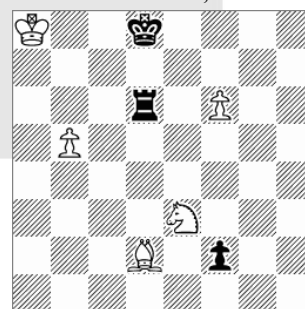
**3<sup>rd</sup> Honorable Mention – Emil Melnichenko (New Zealand) no. 364, Curierul Problemistic 4/2020** With a good systematic maneuver, White manages to capture three pawns. But the study finishes somewhat blandly with a winning endgame of queen vs two bishops. **1. e7+ Ke8 2. Bc6+ Bd7 3. Bxd5 Be6 4. Bc6+ Bd7 5. Bxe4 Bg4 6. Bc6+ Bd7 7. Bxf3 Bg4 8. Bc6+ Bd7 9. Be4 Bg4 10. d7+ Kxd7 11. Bc6+ Kxc6 12. exd8=Q**

**1<sup>st</sup> Commendation – Peter Krug (Austria) & Pavel Arestov (Russia) no. 552, Curierul Problemistic 5/2020** Long (too long for my taste) precise play and an amusing systematic manoeuvre by rook and knight. The finishing touch **17. Rf8** is attractive as well. **1. Rd5!** (Try 1. Re1? a2! 2. Kb2 Nf2! 3. Rxe5+ Kh4! 4. Re8 (4. Kxa2 Ng4 =) 4... Kh3 5. Rh8+ Kg2 6. h4 Kh3 7. h5 Kh4 8. h6 Kh5 9. h7 Kg6 10. Rf8 Nd1+ (Nd3) 11. Kxa2 Kxh7 =) **1... Kh4 2. Rxe5 Nf6** (2... Nf2 3. Re8! but not 3. Re7? Kh3 4. Rh7+ Kg2 5. h4 Kh3 =, 3... Ng4 4. Rh8+ Kg5 5. Kb1+-) **3. Re7! Kh3 4. Rf7! Ng4 5. Rh7+ Kg2 6. h4 Kh3 7. Kb1! Nf6 8. Rh6 Ng4 9. Rh5!** (9. Rh8? Rh7 Nf6 loss of time) **9... Nh2!** (9... Nf6 10. Rf5 Ng4 11. h5+-) **10. Rh8!**

(10. Rh7? Kg4 =) **10... Ng4 11. Ka2** (11. Rh7 /Rh5/Ka1 - loss of time) **11... Nf6 12. Rh6 Ng4 13. Rh5 Nh2 14. Rh8! Kg4!** (14... Ng4 15. Kxa3+-) **15. h5!** (15. Kxa3? Nf3 16. h5 Nh4 =) **15... Kg5 16. h6 Kg6 17. Rf8!!** (17. h7? Kg7 =) **17... Kh7!** (17... Kxh6 18. Rh8+ +-) **18. Rf4! Kxh6 19. Rh4+ 1-0,**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Commendation – Pavel Arestov & Alexander Zhukov (Russia) no. 69, Curierul Problemistic 2/2019** White avoids capturing pawn-b7 to avoid a future stalemate with rook vs. h-pawn. This stalemate remains hidden between the lines (or outside the lines, if you like) and this takes away almost all clarity and attraction of the study. **1. e4 Kf4 2. Rb5!!** (Try 2. Kxb7? h6!! 3. Kc6 Ke5! 4. Kc5 h5 5. Kc4 Kxe4 6. Kc3+ Ke3 7. Rb5 g4! 8. Rxh5 g3 9. Rg5 Kf2 10. Kd2 g2 11. Rf5+ Kg3 = 12. Rg5+ Kf2) **2... g4!** (2... Kxe4 3. Rxc5+-, 2... h6 3. e5 Kf5 4. e6+ Kxe6 see main line) **3. e5 Kf5 4. e6+!** (4. Kxb7? Ke6! 5. Kc6 h5 6. Rd5 g3 =) **4... Kxe6 5. Ka7!!** (5. Kxb7? Kf6 6. Kc6 g3 7. Rb3 h5 =) **5... b6!** (5... Kf6 6. Kb6! Kg6 7. Kc5 h5 8. Kd4+- ) **6. Kb7!!** (6. Kxb6? h6 7. Kc5 Ke5! 8. Kc4+ Ke4 9. Kc3 Ke3) **6... h6!** (6... Kf6 7. Kc6 g3 8. Rb3 leads to the main line) **7. Kc6! g3** (7... Kf6 8. Kd5 Kf5 9. Kd4+ Kf4 10. Kd3 g3 11. Ke2+-) **8. Rb3! g2 9. Rg3!** (9. Rb1? Kf5 10. Rg1 h5 11. Rxc2 h4 =) **9... h5 10. Rxc2 1-0.**

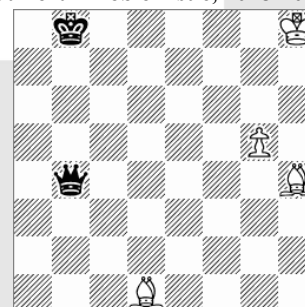
**3<sup>rd</sup> Commendation**  
**Andrii Sergiienko (Ukraine)**  
**Curierul Problemistic, 2018-2020**



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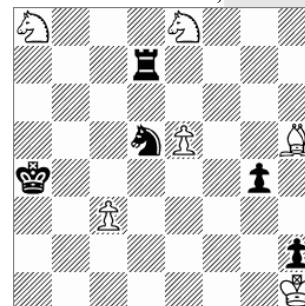
**4<sup>th</sup> Commendation**  
**Geir Sune Tallaksen Østmoe**  
**(NORWAY)**  
**Curierul Problemistic, 2018-2020**



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**5<sup>th</sup> Commendation**  
**Vladimir Samilo (Ukraine)**  
**Curierul Problemistic, 2018-2020**



(6+5)

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**3<sup>rd</sup> Commendation – Andrii Sergiienko (Ukraine) no. 553, Curierul Problemistic 5/2020** *A pleasant study with a clear final point. I would have begun with 4. Bg5+ as I don't see anything in the introduction that justifies the exchange on f1.* 1. f7 (1. Ba5+? Ke8 2. b6 Rxf6! (2... Kf7? 3. Ka7! Rd5 4. Ka6! Rd6 5. Nf1!+-) 3. b7 Ra6+ =) 1... Rf6 2. b6! (Try 2. Nf1? Kc7! (2...Rxf7? 3. b6 Kc8 4. Be3! Rb7 5. Bxf2 Rb8+ 6. Ka7 Rb7+ 7. Ka6!+-) 3. Be3 (3. Ba5+ Kc8! =) 3... Rxf7 4. b6+ Kc6! =) 2... f1=Q 3. Nxf1 Rxf1 4. Bg5+! (4. b7? Ra1+ 5. Kb8 Ke7 6. Bb4+ Kxf7 7. Kc8 Rg1/Rh1=) 4... Kd7 5. b7 Ra1+! 6. Kb8 Rf1 7. Ka7 Ke6 8. Bf6!! (8. b8=Q? Ra1+ 9. Kb7 Rb1+ 10. Kc7 Rxb8=) 8... Rxf6 9. b8=Q+- or 8... Kxf6 9. f8=Q+ 1-0,

**4<sup>th</sup> Commendation – Geir Sune Tallaksen Østmoe (Norway) no. 72, Curierul Problemistic 5/2020** *A technically perfect study, but also a somewhat technical one in the bad sense of the word. It failed to excite me. Often in such studies where White attempts to lose his bishop(s) the advanced pawn is on the a-, c-, f- or h-file and the motivation is stalemate. Here it is about a positional draw. Østmoe had a similar study for Kondratiuk MT 4th/5th prize 2018 (see appendix).* 1. Bg3+ Kc8 2. g6 Qe4! (Attacking both g6 and d1 (via h1). After 2... Qf8+ 3. Kh7 Qf5, one option is 4. Kh6 Qh3+ 5. Bh5 Qxg3 6. g7 {drawing because of the threat Bf7 3. Bc2!! (3. g7? Qh1+ 4. Kg8 Qxd1 wins) 3... Qxc2 4. g7 Qc3 5. Kh7 (5. Bf4? Qh3+ wins) 5... Qd3+ 6. Kh8 Qd4 7. Bf4! With the queen on c3, this was losing, but with the queen on d4, it is necessary 7. Kh7? Qe4+ (or 7...Qd7) 8. Kh8 Qh1+ wins 7... Qf6 The only way to prevent Bh6. (7... Kd7 8. Bh6 Ke7 9. Kh7 Qe4+ 10. Kh8 draws) 8. Bg5! Qxg5 9. g8=Q+ Qxg8+ 10. Kxg8 1/2-1/2,

**5<sup>th</sup> Commendation – Vladimir Samilo (Ukraine) no. 193, Curierul Problemistic 3/2019** *I would have begun this pleasant study with 4. Nb6. Again a try (5. Nd7) gives a study that little extra that made me include it in the award. It is a big shame that the echo variation 2..Rd8 3. Nb6+ Kb5 4. Nd7! Rxd7 5. Be8 does not work (3. Nc7 wins as well). Good study for solving.* 1. Nf6! (1. Bxg4? Re7! 2. Nf6 Ne3 3. Bd7+ Kb3 =) 1... Nxf6 2. exf6 [2. Nb6+? Kb5 3. Nxd7 Nxh5! =(3... Nxd7? 4. Be8! Kc6 5. e6+-) 2... Rd1+! 2... Ka5 3. f7 Rd8 4. Nc7+- , 2... Rd8 3. Nb6+ (3. Nc7+-) 3... Kb5 4. Nd7 Rxd7 5. Be8+-] 3. Kxh2 Rd8 4. Nb6+ (4. Nc7? Rh8 5. f7 Rxh5+ =) 4... Kb5 (4... Ka5 5. Nc4+- ) 5. Nd5!! The point [Try 5. Nd7? Rh8! (5... Rxd7? 6. Be8!+- pin 6. f7 Rxh5+ =)] 5... Rxd5 (5... Rh8 6. Nf4) 6. c4+ Kxc4 7. Bf7 pin Kc5 8. Bxd5 Kxd5 9. f7 Ke6 10. f8=Q +- Theme of 4th Youth CCC with the point on the 5th move.

### APPENDIX:

A. Minski, 2016



B. Kazantsev, 1933



C. Østmoe, 2018



D. Comay, 2009



- A. 1. Ra2 Qb8 2. Ba7 Nxa7 3. Na6 Qa8 4. Nc7 Qb8 5. Na6 Rg1+ 6. Rg2 Rxg2+ 7. Kh3 Rh2+ 8. Kg3 Rh3+ 9. Kxh3 Bg2+ 10. Kxg2 Qa8+ 11. Kg1 Nxd7 12. Rb8+ Nxb8 13. Ne6+ Kg8 14. f7+ Kxf7 15. Nac7 Qb7 16. Nd8+ Ke7 17. Nxb7 1/2-1/2,  
 B. 1. Ne3 d4 2. Nf5 h4 3. Ng3 hxg3 4. Ke2 Kg2 1/2-1/2,  
 C. 1. g6 Be3 2. Bxe3 Rf1+ 3. Bxf1 d1=Q 4. Be2 Qxe2 5. Bf4+ Kxf4 6. g7 1/2-1/2,  
 D. 1. Ndf3 threat: 2.Bf2#, 1... Rd6+ 2. Kf4, 1... Rc6+ 2. Ke4, 1... Rb5+ 2. Kd3, 1...Rb4+ 2. Kd2.