

# British Endgame Study News

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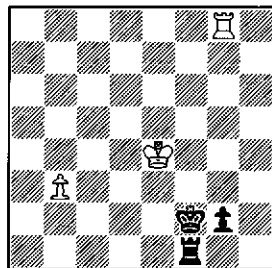
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from a study by  
Jacob Aagaard and  
Yochanan Afek  
White to play and draw

**This issue.** There is a report of the most recent work by Marc Bourzutschky and Yakov Konoval, a special number devoted to the studies of F. Sackmann, and a little poser (alongside) for those who think they know when they can draw with pawn against rook. There is no *Braille Chess Magazine* material this time, because each of the three studies in my latest article for it has recently appeared in *BESN*.

**Endgame studies for *The Problemist*.** When giving Yochanan Afek's address in March, I copied from March 2008, forgetting I had notified a change of address in June. He is in fact at Olympiaweg 48/1, 1076 XA Amsterdam (afek26@gmail.com).

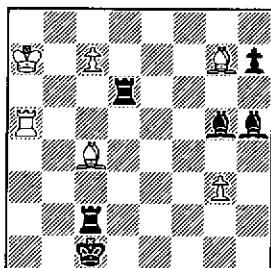
**The "International Chess Composition Union".** It is reported that in March, FIDE abolished its "Permanent Commission for Chess Composition", and set up a "Special Project" for composition with a budget for 2009 of 7,000 euros. The PCCC reacted by reconstituting itself as an "International Chess Composition Union" independent of FIDE. It apparently intends to continue as before, though of course it will no longer be able to use FIDE's name nor to do things on FIDE's behalf.

Readers who detect a lack of enthusiasm for all this politicking are quite right. How the problem world conducts itself is no concern of *BESN*, but for a healthy endgame study fraternity we need people of three kinds: composers to produce good studies, editors and authors to disseminate them, and an audience to appreciate them. I can see no role for committees.

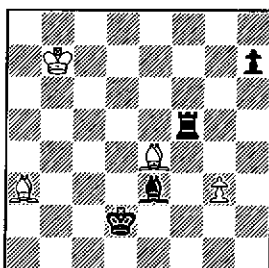
**Spotlight** (see also back page). Paul Valois has drawn my attention to a yet earlier anticipation of the little Q v R + P trifle of mine which I "published" in 1999 and quoted in *BESN* in December 2000 (see special number 31, page 6, and our ordinary number for June 2004): Kling, *Land and Water*, 1872. In truth, however, this was no more than a self-quotation, because the same position shifted sideways occurs towards the end of one of the studies in the Kling and Horwitz book of 1851.

Thanks to Harold van der Heijden's databases, and the sophisticated Costeff-Stiller interrogation program CQL, howlers of this sort should now be things of the past.

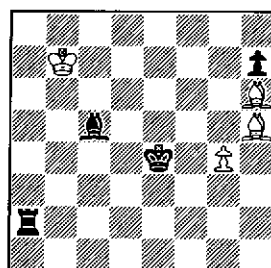
## More light on the WCCT



1 - draw



1a - 6 Bxf3, after 9 Be4



1b - 6 Rc5+, after 10 g4

Paul Valois tells me that the statement that one of the WCCT judges had given zero to certain studies because of their dependence on computer-generated databases, although made with apparent authority and reported to the meeting in good faith, was not in fact correct. According to Vladimir Bartosh in *Uralsky Problemist* 56, he considered them unsound. From 1, after 1 c8Q Be3+ 2 Kb8 Rb6+ 3 Qb7 Rxb7+ 4 Kxb7 Bf3+ 5 Bd5 Ra2, play 6 Bxf3 Rxa5 7 Bf8 Rf5 8 Ba3+ Kd2 9 Be4, and we have 1a. The judge apparently regarded this as drawn, but Bartosh presents analysis by the composers showing a win for Black, and assumes that if the judge had been aware of this he would have reconsidered his mark. My thanks to Paul for translation.

Jaroslav Pospíšil plays 6 Rc5+ Bxc5 7 Bh6+ Kc2 8 Bxf3 Kd3 9 Bh5 Ke4 10 g4 with a blockade on g4/h5 (see 1b), but this leaves White a rook down on the rest of the board and I would expect Black to be able to force a win sooner or later.

How the meeting might have acted in the light of this information can only be conjectured, but conflicting verdicts of "so-many points" and "unsound, rejected" are not sensibly combined by averaging, and a natural first step would have been to find out if the rejections were justified. Where they were, the study could have been thrown out altogether; where they were not, as appears to have been the case here, the zero mark could have been discounted, and the study given the average of the rest.

The analysis of 1a above goes to move 21 with many subvariations, and Bartosh accompanies it with a comment, in bold type, that complicated variations to prove soundness lessen the value of studies. I am not so sure. Yes, it is always pleasant to be able to refute a wrong White move quickly and easily, but if necessary I am willing to say that the computer has proved that it does not work; if White has only one move to win, he has only one move to win, whether the refutation of the rest is a matter of instant observation or of six months of computer analysis. Furthermore, this tourney required composers to incorporate a set theme, and it can be argued that the aesthetics should be those of the task composition, where any constructional artifice is allowed if it enables the task to be achieved. And if recent progress is maintained, we shall have 8-man databases within ten years or so, and finding the result in positions such as 1a and 1b will be just a matter of looking up the answer.

## More seven-man computer progress

Earlier in the year, I had another report from Marc Bourzutschky, which he has kindly allowed me to quote. I have edited slightly for publication, in particular by expanding some of the technical terms.

'My main focus on 7-man endings has been on material XPP/YP\*, where the \* indicates queen promotions only, and where X and Y can be pieces or pawns. This should cover most endings of practical interest, RPP/RP and PPP/PP already cover the majority of cases that arise in practice. My goal is to perform a reasonably exhaustive scan of all games and studies where such endings have arisen to find non-trivial examples. I'm pretty far along with the generation and verification of such endings. On the way, I've run into some fairly long endings with a single pawn, albeit with the "depth to capture or promotion" metric (DTC) rather than the more natural "depth to capture or pawn advance" metric (DTZ) for pawn endings (DTZ would require more programming, and we already have thoroughly debugged and efficient code for DTC). The biggest so far is QNP/QB\* with DTC=191, which took a little over a month to build on a personal computer. Other endings of this type are QBP/QB\* (138), QBP/QN\* (123), QNP/QN\* (146), QR/QBP\* (107), QR/QNP\* (85). The deepest so far is QPP/QP\* (222), with two a-pawns vs an f-pawn. Some of these endings may be shorter when underpromotions are considered. The most interesting example I have so far is actually for the 6-man ending RRP/Q (243), compared to RRP/Q\* (258). I have not examined in detail how far before the end a deviation between the maximal lines for RRP/Q and RRP/Q\* is forced.

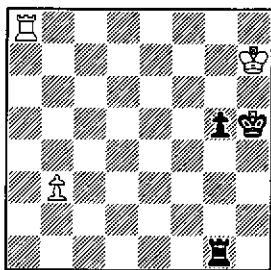
'I'm continuing to generate pawnless endings as well, to search both for long lines and for full-point reciprocal zugzwangs. So far, QNN/QB (272), QNN/QN (282), RRN/RR (290), QBN/QN (317), QBN/QB (330), QN/RBN (517) remain the only endings longer than RN/NN. Full-point reciprocal zugzwangs are rare (26 so far) and I still have only one example without knights: Kc1, Qf4, Bc4 v Ke1, Rb2, Ba3, Bf2 where White loses in 2, and Black in 96. I posted this on the net some time ago. Unfortunately it involves a promoted piece, and I'm beginning to think that there may be no other examples.' The number of full-point reciprocal zugzwangs has since increased to 87, mainly because of 29 in RNN/NN and 20 in RBN/NN (the latter including the position that Noam Elkies found many years ago), but there has been no further example without knights.

I asked Marc whether he imposed Q-promotion-only right to the end, or used all-promotion tables once the position was down to six men. He said that initially he imposed Q-promotion-only right to the end, but that he has since switched to allowing for all promotions once the position is down to six men. 'This should give slightly better results when analysing game positions' (and sidelines in studies).

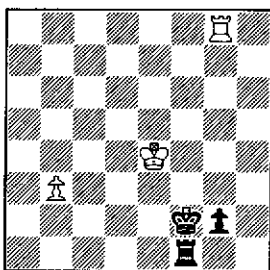
He adds an interesting quantitative observation. 'For RP/RP, which has about 10.6 billion legal positions, only about 26 thousand can't be won if only queen or knight promotions are allowed. About 4.6 million can't be won with queen promotions only. There are a little over five thousand positions with bishop promotions.'

Thank you, Marc, for an interesting and informative update.

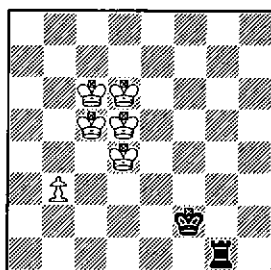
## Recently published British originals



1 - draw



1a - after 8...Kf2



1b - White to play can draw

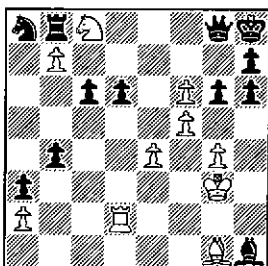
Jacob Aagaard, who was British Champion in 2007, is a very welcome recruit to the ranks of players who compose endgame studies. His first appeared in *The Problemist* in November 2007, but although neat it proved to have been anticipated. **1**, a joint composition with Yochanan Afek, appeared in *The Problemist* in March.

There is a lengthy but essentially routine introduction to get the White pieces into play, **1 Kg7 g4** (1...Rf1 2 Rh8+ Kg4 3 Kg6 Rc1 4 Rf8 Rc5 5 Rf1) **2 Kf6 g3 3 Kf5 Rf1+ 4 Ke4 g2 5 Rh8+ Kg4 6 Rg8+ Kh3 7 Rh8+ Kg3 8 Rg8+ Kf2** (see **1a**), and we have reached the heart of the study. The solution as given continues **9 Kd4!!** (9 Kd5? Rb1! 10 Rf8+ Kc3! 11 Re8+ Kd3! and wins) **Rd1+ 10 Kc5! Rc1+ 11 Kd4!! Rb1 12 Rf8+ Ke2 13 Rg8!** with a draw, the exclamation marks being in the original, and much of the motivation is summarized in **1b**, which shows the squares which the White king must occupy if he is to draw after ...g1Q and the resulting exchange. There is more to it, of course (right at the end, if White plays 13 Re8+ Kd2 before returning to the g-file, Black can win by promoting and then playing his king over to and up the a-file), but **1b** gives the essentials.

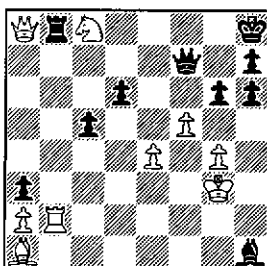
No editor can be expected to decline something as good as this, but I have to say that a problem magazine strikes me as being quite the wrong place for it. Problemists are not renowned for their knowledge of endgame play - in the delightful words of Jack Gill, reviewing *Endgame Magic* for *The Problemist* in 1996, "From youth up, we have fallen into the minimalist school of endgame theory and practice" - and I fear that the great majority of readers will have passed by in glazed incomprehension. The place for a study like this is in an endgame textbook, where how to play with rook against pawn can be expounded first, after which the subtle moves from 9 Kd4 onwards will be viewed with delight rather than bewilderment.

At the other end of the compositional spectrum is Caspar Bates's **2** opposite. This appeared in *The Problemist* in November 2006, but it was buried within an article on a problem theme and I overlooked it. The analysis given in *The Problemist* would occupy at least a page of *BESN*, and I shall confine myself to the main lines.

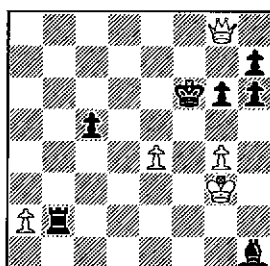
**1 Bd4** threatens **2 f7+**, and if 1...Qf7 then **2 bxa8Q Rxa8 3 Nxd6** and the pawn roller will win. Hence **1...c5 2 Ba1 b3 3 f7+ b2 4 Rxb2** (other moves can be shown to fail) **Qxf7 5 bxa8Q**, and we have reached the key point of the study (see **2a**).



2 - win

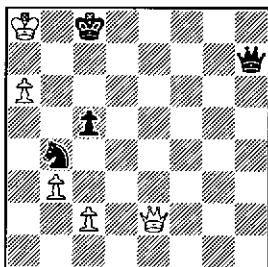


2a - after 5 bxa8Q

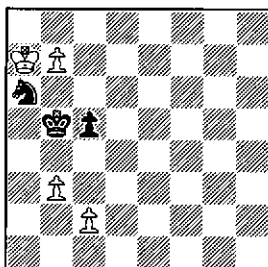


2b - 5...axb2, after 11 Qxg8

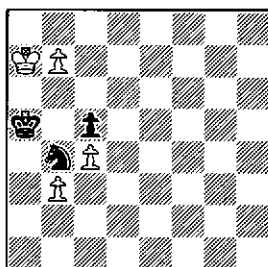
The line given precedence in *The Problemist* is **5...Rxa8**, when we have **6 Rb8+** embodying the theme of the article (a man discovers an attack from a second friendly man and simultaneously ambushes itself behind a third). There duly follows **6...Kg8** **7 Ne7** mate. However, Caspar tells me that he provided text without bold type, and in it he says that he prefers to have Black seeing this coming and choosing the more tenacious **5...axb2**. This leads to **6 Bxb2+ Rxb2** **7 Nxd6+ Qg8** **8 Nf7+ Kg7** **9 f6+ Kxf7** **10 Qd5+ Kxf6** **11 Qxg8** (see 2b), and the composer says "and wins" though after 11...Rg2+ my computer would want me to play on and prove it.



3 - win



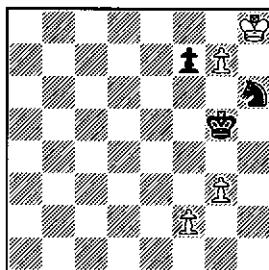
3a - after 5...Kb5



3b - after 7...Nb4

Jeremy Morse's 3 recently appeared in *Correspondence Chess* as "London Evening News 1955 (corrected version)". **1 Qe8+ Kc7** **2 Qb8+ Kc6** **3 Qb7+ Qxb7+** **4 axb7 Na6** **5 Ka7 Kb5** gives 3a, **6 c3!** **Ka5** **7 c4 Nb4** gives 3b, and **8 b8N!** forces mate next move. Jeremy's original setting, which pioneered this knight promotion and has been widely quoted, had the b-pawn on b2, intending **6 c4+ Ka5** **7 b3**, but alas **6 b3 Ka5** **7 c4** worked just as well.

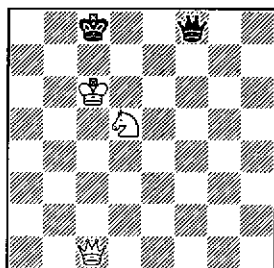
In the meantime, P. Joița and V. Tacu had gained second prize in *Revista Romana de Sah* 1958 with **4: 1 Kh7 Kh5** **2 f3!** **f5** **3 f4 Ng4** **4 g8N!** etc. So, strictly speaking, 3 is merely a version of 4 - or should we look at it the other way round, since Jeremy had undoubted priority in respect of the knight promotion, and credit 4 to "Morse, Joița, Tacu"?



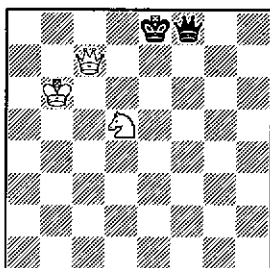
4 - win

## From the world at large

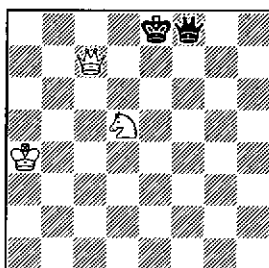
David Gurgenzidze's 55th birthday tourney was in two sections, for "miniatures" (not more than seven men) and "baby studies" (not more than five), and I hoped for great things. In the event, I was rather disappointed. Yes, gone were the complicated and characterless heavyweight positions so prevalent in normal tourney awards, but in their place were vastly long and characterless sequences of moves, doubtless proved by computer to be unique but lacking any obvious form or structure. I started playing through the first prizewinner in the "miniatures" section, and frankly I gave up; I could see neither what was being done nor why. No doubt this will be regarded as a comment on myself rather than on the study, but if I cannot understand a study myself I cannot expound it in *BESN*.



1 - win



1a - 1 Kb6+, after 2...Ke8



1b - main line, after 3 Ka4

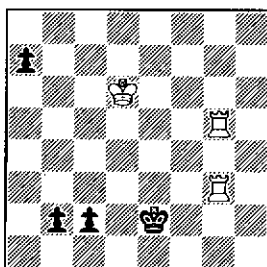
One that did take my fancy was Oleg Pervakov's 1, which took an HM in the "baby studies" section. Given as a "thematic try" is 1 Qe3, refuted only by 1...Qf7, but the relevance of this is not immediately clear to me. The natural move to try, also given though not as a "thematic try", is 1 Kb6+, when 1...Kd8 2 Qc7+ Ke8 gives 1a and White can make no further progress.

The correct move is the unlikely 1 Kb5+. The extra square d7 is no help to Black (1...Kd7 2 Qc6+ Kd8 3 Qa8+), hence again 1...Kd8, and now after 2 Qc7+ Ke8 White has 3 Ka4! (see 1b). This puts Black in zugzwang. His queen must continue to guard e7, else White will mate there, and if 3...Qf7 then 4 Qc8 mate instead.

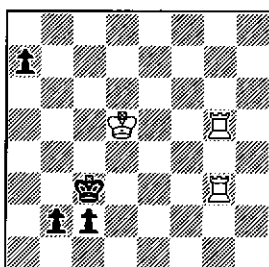
The only pity is the absence of a true "thematic try" which Black can refute only by playing to reach 1b with White to play (it is in fact a reciprocal zugzwang). However, we cannot have everything, and what we do have here is pleasant enough.

Aleksei Sochniev's 2 (opposite) took an HM in the "miniatures" section. 1 Rg2+, and if 1...Kf1 my computer gives 2 Rg1+ Ke2 3 Rb5 c1Q 4 Rxb2+ Qxb2 5 Rg2+. 1...Ke3 2 Ke5 Kd3 3 R5g3+ is easy, and the main line move is 1...Kd3. 2 Kd5 Kc3 3 R2g3+ gives 2a, and there are two lines.

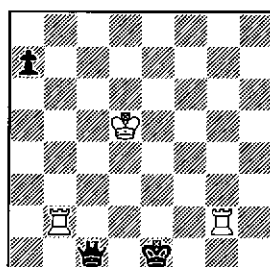
Given as "A" is 3...Kb4, but while neat enough it seems relatively straightforward: 4 R5g4+ Ka5 5 Ra3+ Kb5 6 Rb3+ Ka5 7 Rg7 a6 8 Rgb7, and for some reason precedence is now given to 8...c1Q allowing 9 Ra3 mate. If instead 8...Ka4 then 9 Rxb2 c1Q 10 Ra2+ etc.



2 - win



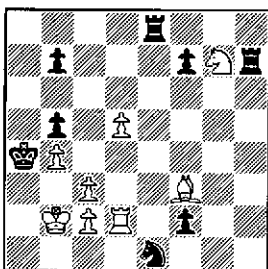
2a - after 3 R2g3+



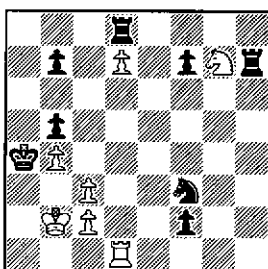
2b - 3...Kd2, after 6 Rbxb2

Line "B", which I personally find more interesting, follows 3...Kd2, and continues 4 Rb3! c1Q 5 Rg2+ Ke1 6 Rbxb2 giving 2b. Black is now helpless. 6...Kf1 allows 7 Rbf2+ Ke1 8 Rg1+, hence 6...Qd1+, but 7 Ke6! neatly hides the White king and Black can resist no longer.

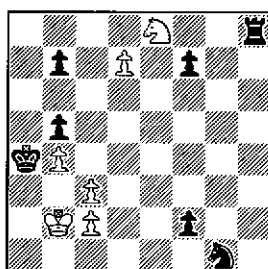
There have been some nice moves here.



3 - win



3a - after 3 Rd1



3b - after 6 Ne8

László Zoltán's 65th birthday tourney, reported in *EG* 175, required studies in which the same theme was shown by both White and Black. Pál Bennó's prizewinner 3 is not a position I would normally quote in *BESN*, but the finish is amusing and most of the wood seems to be necessary to produce it.

1 Rd1 threatens mate on a1, but Black has 1...Nd3+ 2 cxd3/Rxd3 Re1 and it is he who will win. Another try is 1 Nxe8 f1Q 2 Rd1, met by 2...Nd3+ 3 Rxd3 Rh2 4 Rd1 Rxc2+ 5 Kxc2 Qf2+ 6 Rd2 Qxf3 with a draw, or if here 2 Be2 then 2...Rh2 3 Bxf1 Rxd2 and again Black will win.

The actual solution starts 1 d6 Nxf3 (if instead 1...Nd3+ then 2 Rxd3 Re1 3 Bd5 threatens mate on b3 and wins, Black being able to avoid this new mate only by sacrificing in order to play ...Ka3) 2 d7 Rd8 3 Rd1, and we have the thematic moment (see 3a).

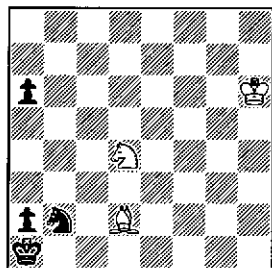
This time, Black can prevent the threatened mate only by the spectacular sacrifice-and-shutoff manoeuvre 3...Rh1 4 Rxb1 Ng1. But "à malin, malin et demi," as one of my solvers in *diagrammes* used to say: 5 Rh8 Rxb8 6 Ne8!! White does exactly the same, producing 3b, and we find to our surprise that it is he who will mate even though Black is a rook ahead and will promote first.

## News and notices

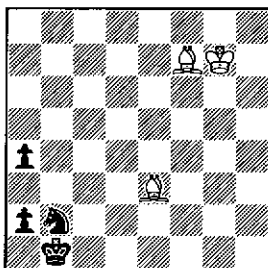
**Meetings.** John Roycroft tells me that the next **Pushkin House** meeting will be on **Friday July 3** at 6.00 pm (offers of talks to roycroft@btinternet.com please). 5A Bloomsbury Square (Holborn tube, Bloomsbury Way, SW corner of the square).

There will be a **Harpenden** meeting on **Saturday June 20**, light buffet lunch 1230, endgame study chat 1400 onwards. All who receive *BESN* from me will be welcome.

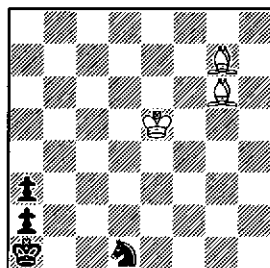
**Spotlight** continued. Timothy Whitworth considers that the study in March, which I described as a version by Paul Michelet of a 1924 study by Mikhail Platov, should have acknowledged a significant contribution by Troitzky. He cites 1 and 2 below.



1 - win



2 - win



2a - after 7 Ke5 Nd1

In Troitzky's 1 (*Deutsche Schachzeitung* 1909, revised for his 1924 collection), White wins by 1 **Nc2+ Kb1** 2 **Na3+ Ka1** 3 **Bc3** (3 **Bg5** would save two moves) a5 4 **Bh8** a4 5 **Kg7 N~** 6 **Kg6+ Nb2** 7 **Kf6** and down to 13 **Kc3 Nd1+** 14 **Kc2+ Nb2** 15 **Bxb2** mate. Mikhail Platov's study appeared in *Shakhmaty* in 1924, dedicated to Troitzky, followed by 2, by both, in Vasily Platov's 1925 anthology *150 izbrannykh sovremennykh etyudov*. Here, White wins by 1 **Bg6+ Ka1** 2 **Kf7 N~** (2...a3 3 **Bh6 N~** 4 **Bg7+ Nb2** 5 **Kf6** rejoins) 3 **Bd4+ Nb2** 4 **Bg7** a3 5 **Kf6 N~** 6 **Ke6+ Nb2** 7 **Ke5 N~** (see 2a) 8 **Kd5+ Nb2** 9 **Kd4 N~** 10 **Kc4+/Kd3+ Nb2+** 11 **Kc3** followed by 11...N~ 12 **Kb3+ Nb2** 13 **Bf8** and mate in a few, with the further twist, valid in 1925, that 4 **Bh8** wouldn't do because 13 **Bf8** would not be available. Sadly, we now know that White can also win from 2a by playing 8 **Kd4** and eventually coming down to 2B v N. In the 1924 Platov study, and in Paul's version of it, this is merely a minor dual late in the play. Here, it means that 4 **Bh8** works after all, which seems rather more serious.

But yes, "Platov and Troitzky, version by Michelet" seems appropriate.

*Anybody wishing to give notice in BESN of any event, product, or service should contact the Editor. There is no charge and no account is taken of whether the activity is being pursued for commercial profit, but notices are printed only if they seem likely to be of particular interest to study enthusiasts. Readers are asked to note that the Editor relies wholly on the representations of the notice giver (except where he makes a personal endorsement) and that no personal liability is accepted either by him or by any other person involved in the production and distribution of this magazine.*