

British Endgame Study News

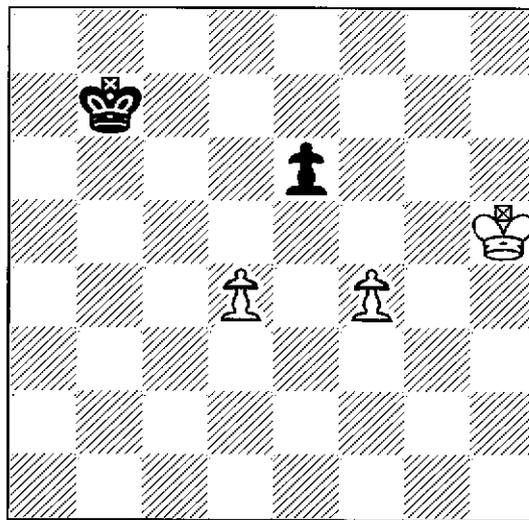
Special Number 11

June 1998

Edited and published by John Beasley, 7 St James Road, Harpenden, Herts AL5 4NX

ISSN 1363-0318

Some studies by **Artur Mandler**

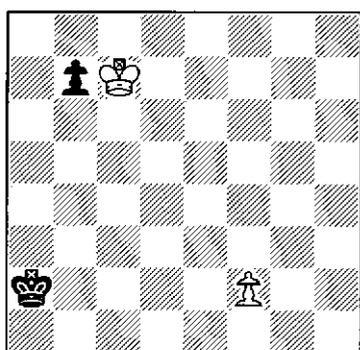


White to play and win

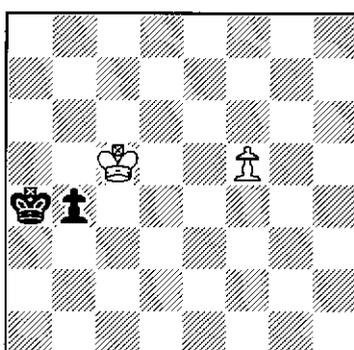
Some studies by Artur Mandler

In 1970, the chess club of the Central Army Institute in Praha published a book *Studie* containing the studies of Artur Mandler (1882-1971). Mandler is perhaps best known for his 1931 edition of Réti's studies, but he deserves recognition in his own right; he worked in the natural style favoured by Réti and Grigoriev, and these three were perhaps the pre-eminent masters of this most demanding form of chess composition. However, while Réti and Grigoriev are well represented in *Endgame magic*, Mandler is less so. Let us redress the balance.

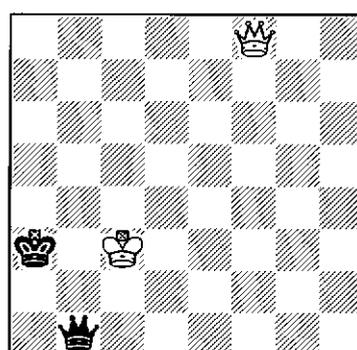
The 1970 book, which was printed from typescript, was written and typed by Mandler himself ("Autor JUDr Artur Mandler" in the credits is one of my authorities for the spelling of his name, the other being his use of "Artur" in the text of the 1931 Réti book even though the German form "Arthur" appears on the title page) and it offers two great advantages: each study is accompanied by an author's caption, and the solutions are in the author's own words. In addition, we have a list of his own favourites among his studies, confided to Harold Lommer shortly before his death and reproduced on page 421 of *EG* 21. The selection that follows is taken from this list.



1 - win

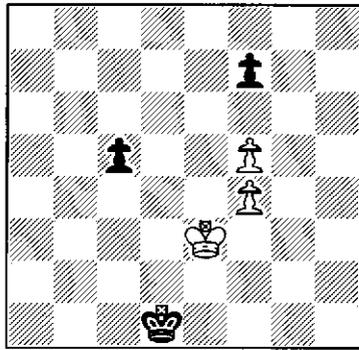


1a - after 4...b4

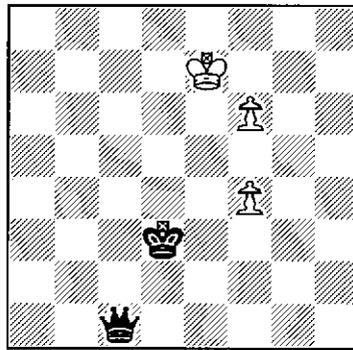


1b - after 9 f8Q+

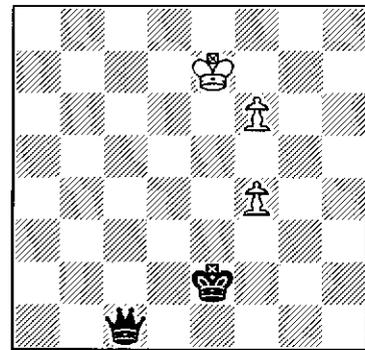
1 (*Národní osvobození* 1938), the first of the book's 27 pawn studies, is in *Endgame magic*, but it is too famous to omit and in any case it gives me a chance to reproduce Mandler's own commentary. "Pawn against pawn" is his simple caption to this study, and he continues: "Four-man chess positions are very popular, because they entice the solver to have a go, and this is particularly true of pawn studies. The solver is surprised when he finds out that the solution is not as easy as the simplicity of the position has led him to expect. In the present study, if he is solving honestly and not psychologically, he will start by trying 1 Kxb7. But this fails; Black plays 1...Kb3, bringing bK within the square of wP, and wK is too far away to defend it. Neither is 1 Kb6 correct, on account of 1...Kb3 2 Kc5 Kc3 3 f4 b5 etc. Correct is **1 Kd6 Ka3** (not 1...Kb3, bK must not obstruct bP) **2 Kc5 Ka4 3 f4 b5 4 f5 b4** (see **1a**) **5 Kc4** (not an easy move, because wK loses two tempi while bK only loses one) **b3 6 Kc3 Ka3 7 f6 b2 8 f7 b1 9 f8Q+** and wins (see **1b**). If 1...b5 then 2 Kc5 Kb3 3 Kxb5 (not 3 f4, when 3...Kc3 draws) Kc3 4 Kc5 Kd3 5 Kd5 wins." All quotations are in my translation, and I have added *BESN*'s usual intermediate diagrams.



2 - draw



2a - 1 f6, after 7 Ke7

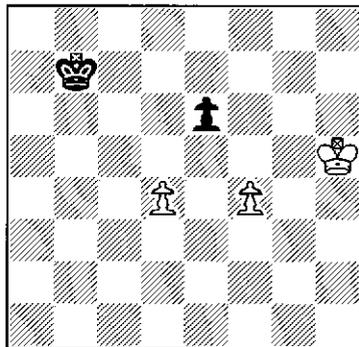


2b - main line, after 7 f6

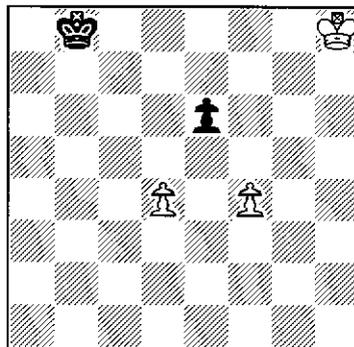
“What’s it all about?” is Mandler’s caption to **2** (3rd prize, *Československý šach* 1951). He starts by trying the natural 1 Kd3 to defuse White’s principal enemy, but after 1...f6 2 Kc4 Kd2 3 Kxc5 Ke3 we find that both 4 Kd5 Kxf4 5 Ke6 Kg5 and 4 Kc4 Kxf4 5 Kd3 Kxf5 are wins for Black. Nor is 1 Ke4 any better; 1...Kd2 2 Kd5 Ke3 3 Kxc5 Kxf4, and again Black wins.

So we try 1 f6, but now Black can preserve bPc5, and after 1...Kc2 2-3 Kd5 c3 4 Kd6 Kd3 (4...Kd2 only draws, bK must make for f8 as quickly as possible) 5-6 Kxf7 c1Q we find that bK is just close enough to win: for example, 7 Ke7 (see **2a**) Qe3+ 8 Kf8 Ke4 9 f7 Kf5 10 Kg7 Qe7 11 Kg8 Qe6 12 Kg7 Qf6+ 13 Kg8 Kg6 14 f5+ Qxf5 15 f8Q Qe6+ etc. If 7 Kg7 then 7...Qb2.

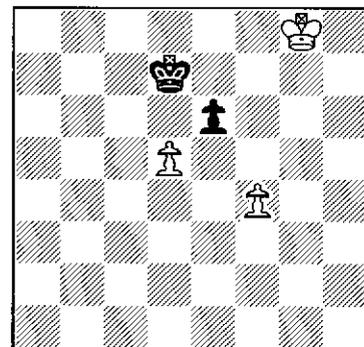
So, what is it all about? Let us go back to 1 Kd3, but after 1...f6 2 Kc4 Ke2 let us ignore bPc5 and play 3 Kd5! This leads to another position with two White f-pawns against bQ, but this time bK is one rank further away and White draws: 3...c4 4-5 Kxf6 c2 6 Ke7 (not 6 Kg7, when 6...c1Q 7 f6 Qc3 wins) c1Q 7 f6 (see **2b**).



3 - win

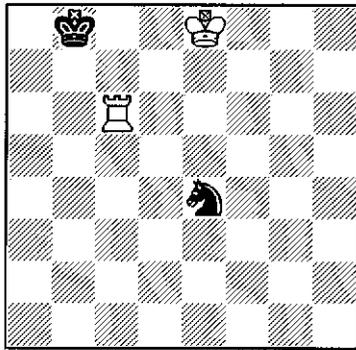


3a - after 3...Kb8

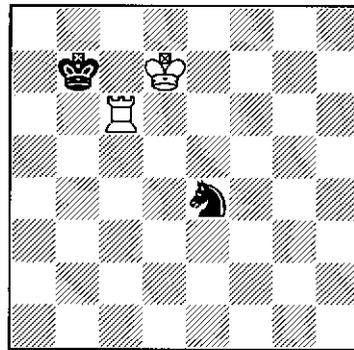


3b - 1-3 Kg8, after 4...Kd7

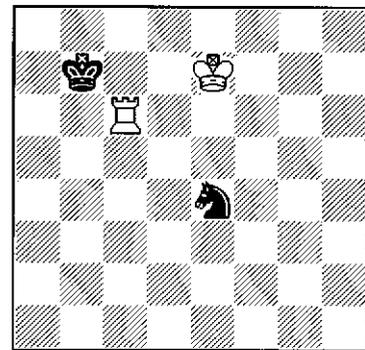
Mandler captions **3** (*Prager Presse* 1929) “A theoretical novelty”. If it were Black to play, White would have a standard win; with the aid of the opposition he would work wK round to e8 and e7, and the rest is easy. But with White to play it is Black who has the opposition; can he not retain it indefinitely, and hold the draw? Not quite. After 1 Kh6 Kb6 2 Kh7 Kb7 3 Kh8! he must play 3...Kb8 if he is to keep the opposition (see **3a**), but this exposes bK to check from f8 and now 4 d5! wins (4...exd5 5 f5 etc). Mandler points out that 1-3 Kg8 fails because after 3...Kc8 4 d5 Black can draw by 4...Kd7 (see **3b**). It’s a lovely reason for playing wK to the corner.



4 - win



4a - win

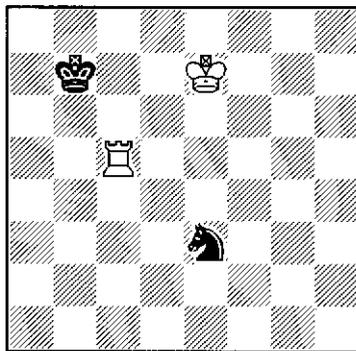


4b - no win

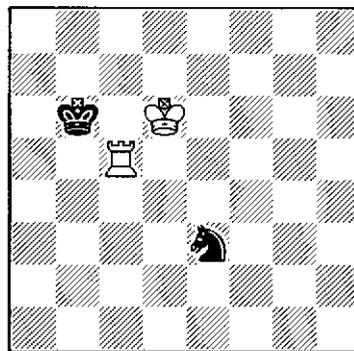
Mandler was one of those who analysed the endgame R v N before the advent of the computer, and the subsequent availability of definitive computer results should not blind us to their achievements. 4/5 (*Československý šach* 1933) shows a remarkable twin study which illustrates his ability to rummage through a pile of detailed analysis (quite a large pile, in this instance) and extract something interesting.

4 is based on 4a and 4b. In 4a, White starts **1 Rc4**, and the key line is **1...Nf6+ 2 Ke7 Nd5+ 3 Kd6 Nb6 4 Rb4** with a known and quick win (4...Ka6 5 Kc6, or 4...Ka7 5 Kc6 and either 5...Nc8 6 Kc7 or 5...Na8 6 Rb1). If instead Black tries 1...Nd2, White drives bK to the edge by **2 Rb4+**, and now he can round up bN without allowing him to regain contact with his master. In 4b, however, Black can safely answer White's **1 Rc4** by **1...Nd2**. **2 Rb4+** no longer forces bK to the edge, and after **2 Rd4 Nf3 3 Rd5 Kc6 4 Ke6** Black can hold the draw by **4...Ne1**.

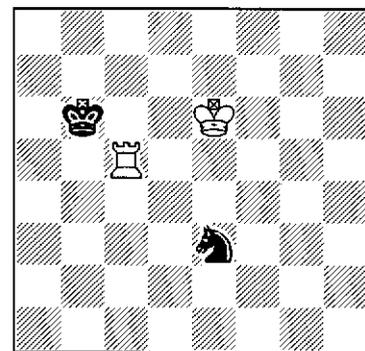
In 4, therefore, White must play precisely **1 Kd7**, and **1 Ke7** forfeits the win.



5 - win



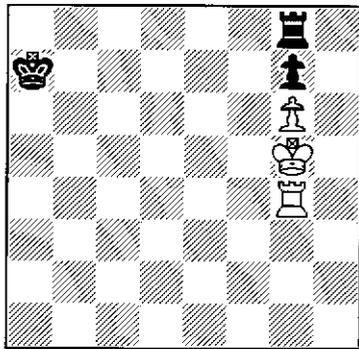
5a - no win



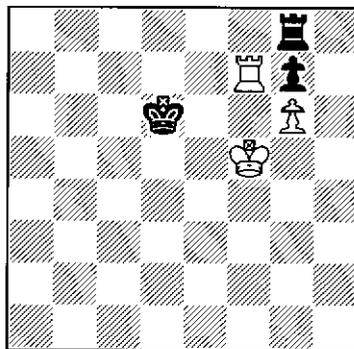
5b - win!

5 is similarly based on 5a and 5b, everything being one rank down, and now matters are the other way round. In 5a, the line **1 Rc3 Nf5+ 2 Ke6 Nd4+ 3 Kd5 Nb5 4 Rb3** no longer leads to a win, Black having more leeway at the top of the board, and Black escapes with a draw (4...Ka6 5 Kc5 Na7 6 Rb1 Nc8). In 5b, however, the line **1 Rc3 Nd1 2 Rd3 Nf2 3 Rd4 Kc5 4 Ke5** is now a win for White. The move corresponding to the previous 4...Ne1 is not available, and bN, separated from bK, will soon be picked up.

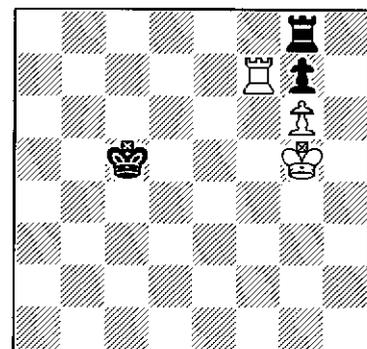
In 5, therefore, it is **1 Ke6** which is the winning move, and **1 Kd6** which merely draws.



6 - win

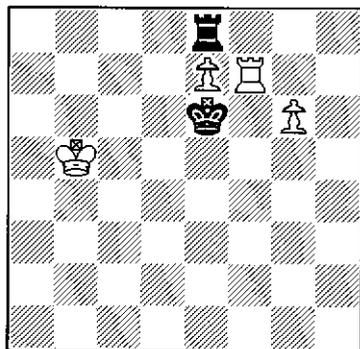


6a - reciprocal zugzwang

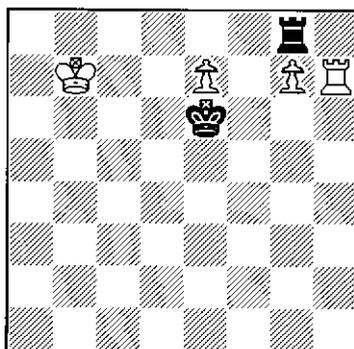


6b - 1 Rd4, 3 Rf7 Kc5

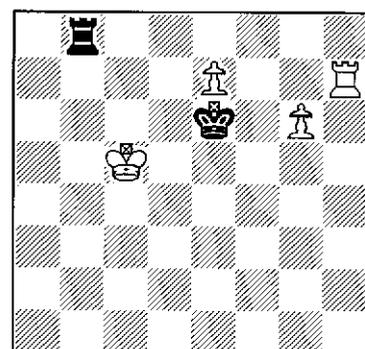
Mandler composed a lot of rook studies with pawns on g6/g7, a configuration which often demands subtle play. The natural first move in 6 (*Československý šach* 1950) is 1 Rf4, but the position after 1...Kb6 2 Rf7 Kc6 3 Kf5 Kd6 turns out to be reciprocal zugzwang (see 6a). A move by wK will allow bK to advance immediately, and if 4 Ra7 then 4...Rf8+ and either 5 Ke4 Ke6 or 5 Kg5 Rf1/Rg8. But after **1 Re4! Kb6 2 Re7 Kc6 3 Kf5 Kd6 4 Rf7** we have 6a with Black to play, and White soon wins (for example, 4...Kd5 5 Rd7+ Kc7 6 Ke6 etc). "But cannot Black also lose a tempo? No, because he cannot allow wK to occupy the e-file." And why not 1 Rd4? After 1...Kb6 2 Rd7 Kc6 wR must make up its mind, and if it plays 3 Rf7 hoping for 3...Kd6 etc, Black *can* lose a tempo, 3...Kc5 (see 6b), because wK does not attack e6.



7 - win

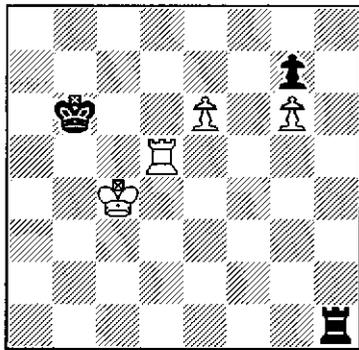


7a - 3 Kb7, after 4...Rg8

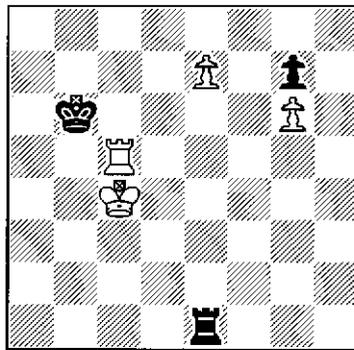


7b - main line, after 4 Kc5

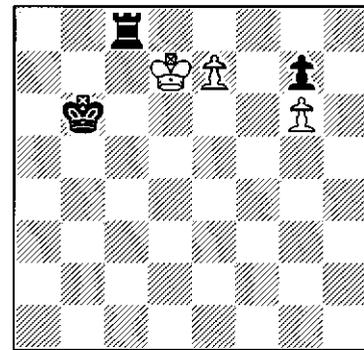
7 (*Československý šach* 1954) again has wPg6. Mandler captions this "Intricate tempo play", and adds that it is not easy to recognize where the tempoing starts and where it finishes. R + 2P normally win against R alone, but the vultures are hovering and only **1 Rh7** preserves White's advantage (1...Rxe7 2 g7 etc). Best is **1...Rg8**, and only **2 Kc6** stops 2...Kd7. There follows **2...Rc8+**, and wK must avoid the 7th rank (3 Kb7 Re8 4 g7 Rg8 gives 7a, and 5 Rh8 Rxc7 and 5 e8Q+ Rxe8 6 Rh8 Re7+ are both drawn). Hence **3 Rb6**, and now 3...Re8 is met by 4 g7 and 3...Rg8 by 4 Kc7! (wK being one square closer, 4...Re8 5 g7 Rg8 6 Rh8 is a win: 6...Rxc7 7 Kd8 Rxe7 8 Rh6+ etc). So **3...Rb8+ 4 Kc5** (see 7b), and 4...Rc8+ 5 Kd4 will drive wK where he wants to go. **4...Rg8**, therefore, but now **5 Rf7 Re8** gives the original position with wK one square nearer and the rest is easy (**6 Kd4 Rxe7 7 Rxe7 Kxe7 8 Ke5** etc). Mandler's complete analysis, refuting all minor lines, occupies more than a page.



8 - win



8a - after 2 Rc5

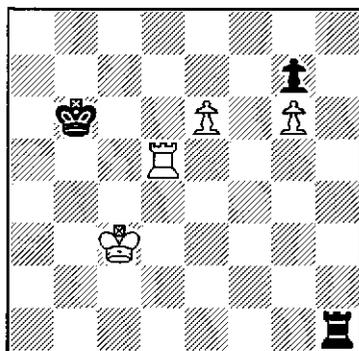


8b - 2...Rc1+, after 5 Kd7

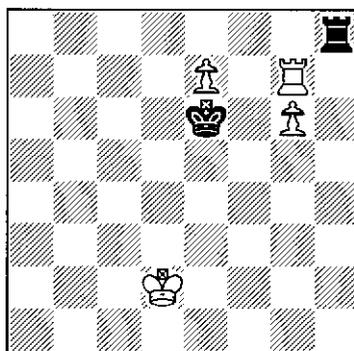
8 (*Československý šach* 1952; 2nd Prize, Czechoslovak Chess Federation, version) is one of Mandler's most difficult studies. He had examined this pawn configuration in other studies, and here he does not consider White's other alternatives but simply plays his first two moves: **1 e7! Re1 2 Rc5!** (see 8a). In fact Black just holds out after 1 Rd7 Kc6 2 Rxc7 Rg1, and if 1 Re5 Black can drive wK to the b-file or the second rank and then transfer bR to the eighth rank (1...Rc1+ and say 2 Kb4 Rc8 or 2 Kd3 Rd1+ 3 Kc2 Rd8). Now wP can be stopped, and bK will get across to mop up.

In respect of the actual solution, Mandler says, "It is not easy to see the purpose of these moves. Perhaps we should talk of a gain of tempo. If Black accepts the sacrifice, **2...Rxe7**, bR becomes badly placed, and must return to the first rank. However, this is not the whole story. The primary object of White's play is to rid himself of wPe6, which, like wR, stands in the way of its own king. In other words, we need to free the square e6 for the other White men." The solution continues **3 Kd5 Re1 4 Rc6+ Kb7 5 Re6 Rd1+ 6 Ke5 Kc8 7 Re7 Kd8 8 Rxc7 Rf1 9 Ke6 Re1+ 10 Kf7 Rf1+ 11 Kg8 Rg1 12 Kf8/Kh8** and wins.

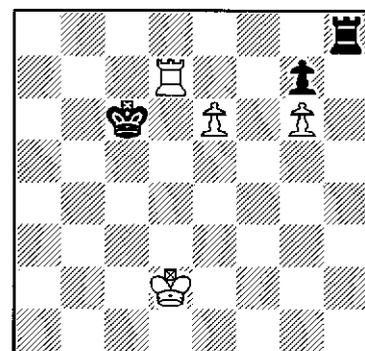
And there is more. Suppose Black plays **2...Rc1+** instead of taking the pawn. Now 3 Kd4 Rd1+ 4 Ke5 will win for Black, and what else is there? **3 Kd5**, allowing Black to capture wR with check! But there follows **3...Rxc5+ 4 Kd6 Rc8 5 Kd7**, giving 8b, and the rest is easy. If 3...Rd1+ in this line, White has 4 Ke6 winning.



9 - win



9a - after 4...Ke6



9b - after 2...Kc6

And if this were not enough, 8 was published with a companion, 9, in which wK is one square lower. The line 1 e7 Re1 2 Rc5 is now clearly inappropriate, and the correct move is **1 Kd2**. This threatens 2 e7, which also works after 1...Kc6, and best

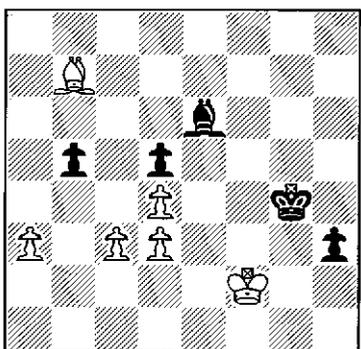
for Black is **1...Rh8**. (Mandler also notes **1...Kc7 2 Rd7+ Kc6 3 Rd8**, with the threat of **4 e7**.) There follows **2 Rd7 Kc6 3 Rxc7 Kd6 4 e7 Ke6** (see **9a**), and what is White to do? **5 Rh7** fails against **5...Rg8**, and **5 Ke3** against **5...Re8 6 Rh7 Kf6** (because **7 g7** will be met by **7...Rxe7+**). The only move is **5 Kd3!** avoiding the e-file: **5...Re8 6 Rh7 Rg8** (now **6...Kf6** can be met by **7 g7**) **7 Rf7 Re8 8 Ke4 Rxe7 9 Rxe7+** etc.

And even this is not all. Go back to **2...Kc6** (see **9b**). Black cannot defend bP_{g7} in the long run; cannot White postpone its capture, and bring up wK by **3 Ke3** or **3 Kd3**?

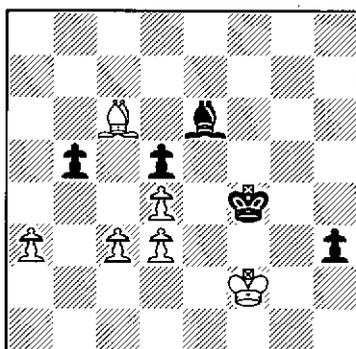
No, he cannot, as was shown by Mandler in *Československý šach* in 1950. Let's try **3 Ke3** first. Black can now draw by **3...Rh1 4 Rxc7 Rg1 5 Ra7** (if **5 e7** then **5...Kd7**) **Rxc6 6 e7 Re6+** and **7...Kd6**. If **4 Kf2** then **4...Rh5**.

All right, so let's try **3 Kd3**. Now the line above fails, because there is no check on the e-file at move 6. However, **3...Re8** now draws (it failed after **3 Ke3** because White could play **4 Rxc7** and **5 Kf4**, bringing wK into the fray). The rest is easy, but Mandler makes one last point: after **4 Rxc7**, the right move is *not* **4...Rxe6**, which seemed to be the object of **3...Re8** (it allows **5 Rg8** with a win for White, say **5...Kd7 6 g7 Rg6 7 Ra8** or **5...Kb7 6 Kd4**), but **4...Kd6 5 e7 Rxe7 6 Rh7 Re1** etc.

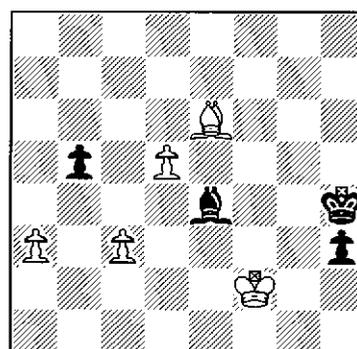
Simple though these positions appear to be, I would not expect one player in a thousand to analyse all of them correctly over the board.



10 - win



10a - reciprocal zugzwang



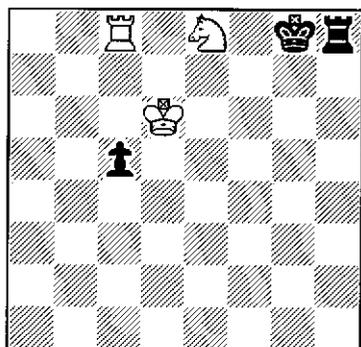
10b - **1...Bf5**, after **4...Be4**

10 (*Československý šach* 1954) brings us to bishops and pawns. The natural move is **1 Bc6** threatening **2 Bxb5**, but Black replies **1...Kf4** and once again this turns out to be reciprocal zugzwang (see **10a**). **2 Bxb5** is met by **2...Bg4** threatening **3...Bf3** and **4...h2**, and if **2 Bb7** then **2...h2 3 Kg2 Ke3** is good enough.

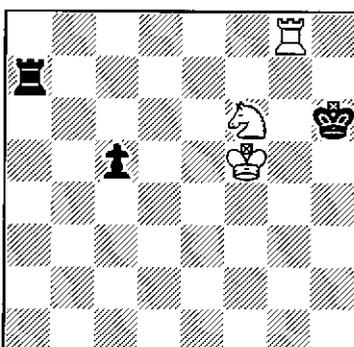
The correct answer is **1 Ba8! Be6 2 Bc6**, after which we have **10a** with Black to move. Mandler highlights no particular main line, but I would single out **2...Bf7 3 Bxb5 Bh4 4 Bd7**, when Black must play **...h2** before bB has gained control of g2; even the removal of bB from the diagonal c8-h3 has proved disadvantageous. Apart from this, we have **2...Kg4 3 Bxb5, 2...Bf5 3 Bxd5 Bxd3 4 Be6 h2 5 Kg2** etc, and **2...h2 3 Kg2 Ke3 4 Bxb5 Kd2 5 c4** and now for example **5...Ke3 6 Kxh2 Kxd4 7 cxd5** etc. The win is not always immediate, but it always exists.

Mandler also draws attention to the line **1...Bxf5 2 Bxd5 Bxd3 3 Be6+ Kh4 4 d5 Be4** (see **10b**). Black now queens first, but White can still win: **5-6 d7 h1Q 7 d8Q+ Kh5 8 Qh8+** and **9 Qxh1**, with **10-11 Bxb5**. If **4...Bc4** in this line then **5 Bf7**.

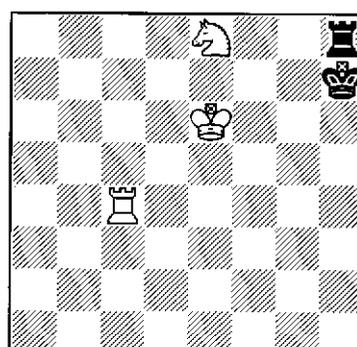
"A striking and delicately motivated key" is his caption: eminently fair comment.



11 - win



11a - 1...Rh7+, after 5 Kf5



11b - 1...c4, after 3 Rxc4

Space has compelled me to abbreviate or summarize most of Mandler's comments, but I started by quoting him in full; let me end by doing the same. "Various echoes" is his caption to **11** (*Wiener Abendblatt* 1927), and he continues:

"An immediate Ke6 fails against ...Kh7. White must play a waiting move, which threatens nothing but forces Black to weaken his position. The key **1 Ke7** frees the sixth rank for wR in case bK goes to h7. In addition to this tempo play, the study contains echoes both of mating positions and of the positions preceding them.

"**A**) 1...Rh7+. Now h7 is no longer available to bK, and so White can play **2 Ke6 Ra7** (after 2...Rh6+ we have the pure mate **3 Nf6+ Kg7 4 Rg8**) **3 Nf6+ Kg7 4 Rg8+ Kh6 5 Kf5** etc (see **11a**). White wins thanks to the circumstance that bPc5 prevents check from bR. This situation will recur in the next variation, one rank lower.

"**B**) 1...c4. This move increases wR's field of action (see **C**) and so permits **2 Ke6**. Now Rc7 is threatened. Black's move **2...Kf8** meets this threat (for 2...Kh7 see the next variation), since **3 Rc7** would now be answered by **3...Rh1**. **3 Nd6+** (Nf6+ is insufficient) **Kg7 4 Nf5+ Kh7 5 Rc7+ Kg6** (5...Kg8 6 Rg7+ Kf8 7 Rf7+ Ke8 8 Nd6+ and 9 Rd7 mate, a similar mate to 11 Rf7 in **C**) **6 Rg7+ Kh5 7 Ke5 Ra8 8 Kf4** with the threat of **9 Rg5** mate (in all essentials, this is **11a** one rank lower).

"**C**) 1...c4 **2 Ke6 Kh7 3 Rxc4** (see **11b**). This is where the increased range of wR is critical; if it stood on c5, 3...Kg6 would draw. **3...Rf8** (3...Rxe8+ 4 Kf7) **4 Nf6+ Kh6 5 Rh4+ Kg7 6 Rg4+ Kh8 7 Kf5 Rd8 8 Rh4+** (8 Kg6 Rd4) **Kg7 9 Rh7+ Kf8 10 Kg6** with the threat of **11 Rf7** mate; or **6...Kh6 7 Kf5** threatening **8 Rg6** mate.

"**D**) 1...Kh7 2 Rc6 (this is why the 6th rank must be clear) c4 3 Kf7 c3 4 Rxc3."

This study is subtle rather than spectacular, but there is a particular charm in the way the final positions of variations **A** and **B** echo each other one rank apart: not just the threatened mates, but also the crucially obstructive bP. Out of interest, I examined the five-man position with wKe6, Rc8, Ne8 against bKh7, Rh8 using the definitive Thompson database, and it is exactly as Mandler says; Rc4 wins, Rc5 does not.

When the final history of the chess endgame study comes to be written, Mandler's name will be found to stand very high; his natural yet sparkling studies will be remembered long after the more artificial creations currently in fashion have been forgotten. I hope this small selection has done something to honour his memory.

My thanks to the library of the British Chess Problem Society for access to the work from which this selection has been taken.