

British Endgame Study News

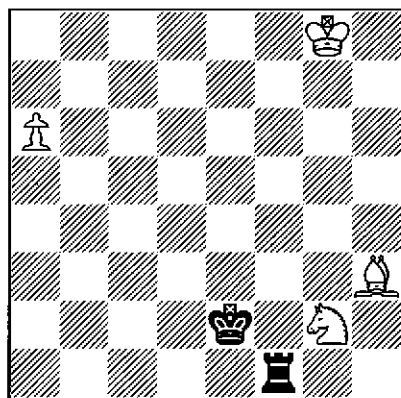
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Some studies by

Jindřich Šulc

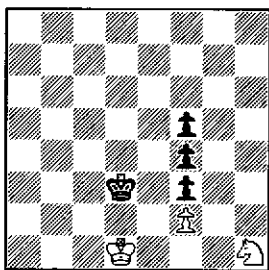


White to play and win

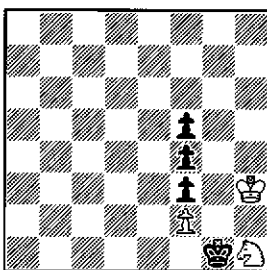
Some studies by Jindřich Šulc

In 1997, *EG* printed a request for information regarding Jindřich Šulc (see *EG* 124 p 104). This has now been answered in splendid style by the publication by SNZZ in Brno of a booklet by Emil Vlasák and Vladislav Buňka. This gives a biographical sketch together with all his known studies and problems, and it is clear that Šulc was a composer of considerable talent whose work well deserved collection.

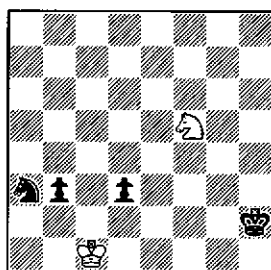
Šulc (1911-1998) was born in Mnichovo Hradiště, a town in Northern Bohemia some 70 km from Praha (Prague), and spent his professional career in Liberec and Pardubice (in Northern and Eastern Bohemia respectively). German-speaking readers who find Czech orthography forbidding can imagine his name translated into German as "Heinrich Schulz", which will get the pronunciation of his surname approximately correct ("š" = English "sh", "c" = "ts"), but the "ř" of "Jindřich" gives trouble even to BBC announcers. Šulc's composing career was restricted to two relatively short periods of his life, from 1940 to 1950 and again from 1955 to 1960, but he is not the first who has given intensive attention to chess and then moved on. His studies are in the best classical style, featuring simple positions and piquant solutions, and if you haven't already tried to solve the front-cover study I suggest you spend half an hour on it before reading on. If Timothy Whitworth and I had known about it when we were writing *Endgame magic*, it would at the very least have been short-listed for inclusion.



1 - draw



1a - after 5...Kg1



2 - draw

While you are thinking about this, have a look at **1** (2nd Prize, Šach 1941). White may seem to have a secure draw, but we shall see that his knight is vulnerable and if it tries to escape by 1 Ng3 Black will win at once (1...fxg3 2 fxg3 f2). Hence 1 Ke1, to which Black replies by 1...Kc2 with a standard turning attack on wK. 2 Ng3 still fails (2...fxg3 3 fxg3 Kd3 4 Kf2 Ke4 5 Kf1 Ke3 6 Ke1 f2+ 7 Kf1 Kf3 8 g4 Kxg4 9 Kxf2 Kf4 etc), hence 2 Kf1 Kd2, and 3 Ng3 yet again fails (3...fxg3 4 fxg3 Ke3 and as in the preceding note).

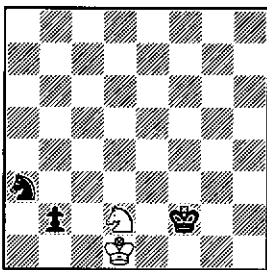
So 3 Kg1 Ke2, and now 4 Ng3 is even less successful (4...fxg3 5 fxg3 f2+ and mate in a few). Hence 4 Kh2 Kf1, and still 5 Ng3 doesn't work (5...fxg3 6 fxg3 Kxg3 7 Ke2 and wP will fall). So 5 Kh3 Kg1 and now wN is doomed (see 1a), but at long last White can play 6 Ng3! Clearly 6...fxg3 7 Kxg3 will lead to the loss of all Black's

pawns, and if **6...Kxf2** then **7 Nxf5** holds the draw (for example, **7...Ke1 8 Nd4 f2 9 Nf3+ Ke2 10 Nh2**).

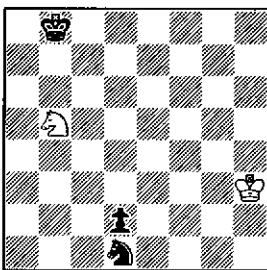
The composer remarked that he initially set up the position with colours reversed, only to discover after a month of analysis that the knight could escape. Fortunately, we have one of the rare cases where turning the board round converts a refutation into a satisfying study.

2 is simpler. This was originally part of a couplet which gained 5th Honourable Mention in the Louma twin study tourney of 1941, and although its companion was subsequently found to be unsound it offers sufficient to stand on its own. Black to play has several wins of which **1...d2+ 2 Kxd2 b2** is the simplest, and if White tries **1 Kb2 d2 2 Ne3** then **2...Nc4+** wins. So we try **1 Ne3**, hoping for **1...d2+ 2 Kd1! b2 3 Nf1+ K-** **4 Nxd2** (this is why White avoided **2 Kxd2**), but **2...Kg1** is sufficient to win.

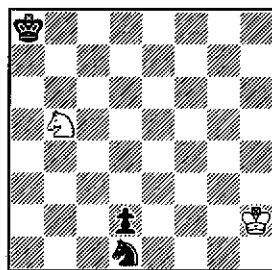
Correct is **1 Nd4**, when **1...b2+** is clearly hopeless (**2 Kxb2 d2 3 Nf3+** and **4 Nxd2**), and if **1...d2+** then again **2 Kd1!** leaving **d2** free for wN. There follows **2...b2 3 Nf3+ Kg2 4 Nxd2**, but Black can reply **4...Kf2** stalemating wK (see **2a**). This forces wN to move and his only check soon loses, but **5 Nb1!** makes a pleasant if familiar end to the proceedings.



2a - after **4...Kf2**



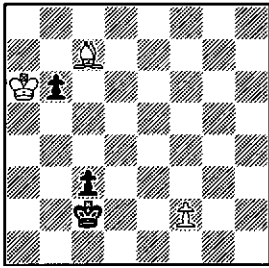
3 - draw



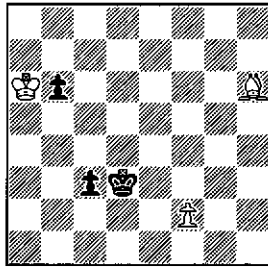
3a - after **1...Ka8**

The amusing **3** (*Šach na Vysočině* 1945) appears in the booklet under a heading which translates literally as "The kettle theme"; "bottling-up" would be our way of putting it. Like **2**, this is the survivor of a pair whose other member was eventually found to be unsound, but again it offers enough to stand on its own. A move by wN will allow **1...Nc3** and **2...d1Q**, and a move by wK to a light square will allow bN to check. This leaves the three dark squares, but **1 Kg3** is easily refuted (**1...Nf2 2 Nc3 Ne4+**) and **1 Kh4** takes wK out of play and gives bK time to come up (**1...Nf2 2 Nc3 Kc7 3 Kh5 Kd6 4 Kg6 Ke5** etc). So it must be **1 Kh2**, and now any move by bN will allow White to play **2 Nc3** and draw in comfort (say **1...Nf2 2 Nc3 Ne4 3 Nd1 Kc7 4 Kg2 Kd6 5 Kf3 Kd5 6 Ke3**).

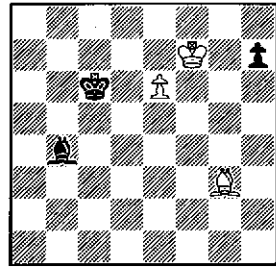
So Black must move bK, but **1...Kb7/Kc8** will allow an immediate draw by **2 Nd6+** and **3 Ne4**. Hence it must be **1...Ka8** (see **3a**). Now both kings are bottled in their respective corners. White must still avoid light squares and **g3** is still poisoned, so **2 Kg1** is forced; Black can only reply **2...Kb8**; and we have **3 Kh2** with a draw by repetition.



4 - win



4a - after 3...Kd3

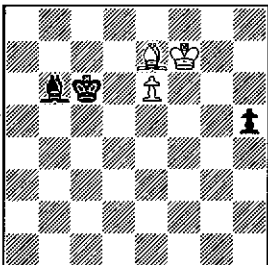


5 - win

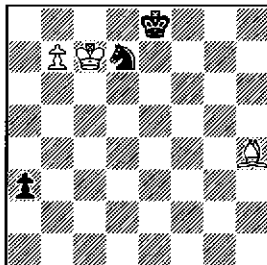
4 (3rd Prize, *Národní listy* 1941) makes a good introduction to the bishop studies. 1 Be5 is too slow (1...Kd3 2 Kb5 c2 3 Bb2 Ke4 and 4...Kf3), and White must bring wB to bear on c1 at once: **1 Bf4**. There follows **1...Kd3** (threat 2...Ke2) **2 Bc1!** (2 Bg5/Bh6 can be met by 2...Ke4, since 3 f4 will block wB) **Kc2 3 Bh6!** (we shall see in a moment why 3 Bg5 is inadequate) **Kd3** (see 4a) **4 f3! Ke2! 5 f4 Kf3 6 f5 Kg4 7 f6 Kh5** (ah, if wB were on g5 it would now fall) **8 f7!** and wins. And there is a similar motif after **1...Kd1**: **2 Bd6! Ke2 3 f4 Kf3 4 f5 Ke4 5 f6 Kd5 6 f7**, but not 2 Be5 Ke2 3 f4 Kf3 4 f5 Ke4 and if 6 f6 then wB falls.

If it were not for bPh7 in 5 (2nd Prize, *Šachové umění* 1948), White would have an easy win: 1 Bh4 Kd5 (nothing better) 2 Be7 Ba5 3 Bf8 Bd8 4 Bg7 and 5 Bf6. However, the pawn allows Black to counterattack, and if White persists in forcing his own pawn through he finds that Black promotes first: 1 Bh4 h5! 2 Be7 Ba5 3 Bf8 Bd8 4 Bg7 h4 5 Bf6 h3! 6 Bxd8 h2 7 e7 h1D with a draw.

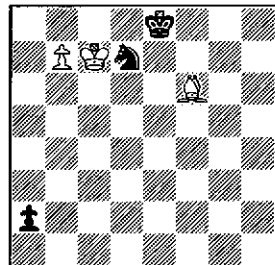
So White must gain a tempo, and the necessary manoeuvre is subtle. **1 Be1! Bc5** (1...Bd6 2 Bh4 h5 3 Be7 Bc5 will lead to the same thing, and 1...Ba3 makes things casier) **2 Bh4 h5** (nothing better) **3 Be7 Bb6** (best) gives 5a, and having chased bB from the diagonal a5-e1 White can now claim it for himself: **4 Bb4!** There follows **4...Bd8 5 Ba5!** (now White chases bB to the "wrong" side of e7) **Bg5 6 Bc3 h4 7 Bf6** (now bB is shielded from e7, but playing 6...Bd8 instead of 6...h4 wouldn't have helped) **h3 8 e7 h2 9 e8Q+** and wins.



5a - 1...Bc5, after 3...Bb6



6 - win



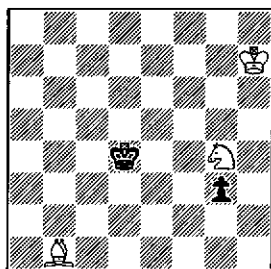
6a - reciprocal zugzwang

6 (*Oběžník východočeské župy* 1944) is based on 6a, which is an unlikely position of reciprocal zugzwang. If in 6 we try the apparently natural move 1 Bf6, bearing on

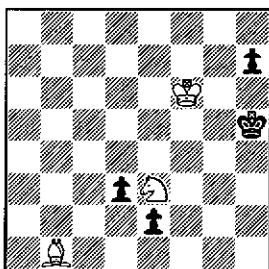
a1 at once and hoping for 1...Nxf6 2 b8Q+, Black replies 1...a2 and we have 6a with White to move. Now White can make no progress, as experiment soon confirms. For example, 2 Ba1 allows 2...Ke7 getting bK off the back rank, and the follow-up 3 Bf6+ can be met by 3...Ke6 keeping him there; now Black is threatening 4...Nc5 winning wP, since White's promotion no longer gives check and Black can meet it by a fork on a6.

However, if White waits with 1 Bg5! Black still has nothing better than 1...a2, and now 2 Bf6 gives 6a with Black to play. The given main line is 2...Kf7 3 Kxd7 Kxf6 4 b8Q a1Q 5 Qh8+ with a neat skewer to finish, and if Black tries the diversionary sacrifice 2...a1Q 3 Bxa1 Ke7 we have 4 Bb2 (say) and 5 Ba3.

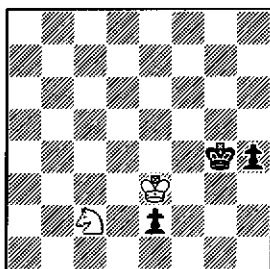
And there is one other neat touch: the apparently equivalent time-wasting move 1 Bd8 fails because it blocks the eighth rank, once more allowing Black to draw at once by 1...Nc5.



7 - draw



8 - draw



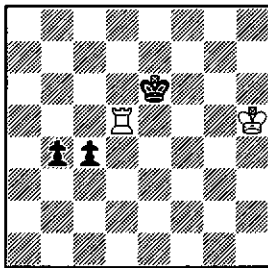
8a - 1...Nxc2, after 5 Ke3

The objective "draw" might seem rather conservative in 7 (*Oběžník východočeské župy* 1943), since White has what would normally be a winning material advantage, but Black's pawn is very threatening and White's pieces are poorly placed to stop it. Any move by wN will lead to immediate promotion, and if wK advances by 1 Kh6 we have 1...g2 2 Nh2 (ready for 2...g1Q 3 Nf3+) Ke3 3 Ng4+ Ke2! and even the sacrificial 4 Bd3+ does not help White (4...Ke1! 5 Nh2 Kf2 6 Ng4+ Kg3).

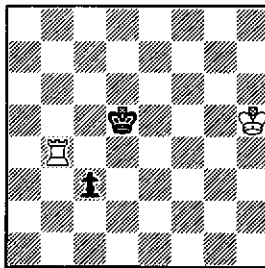
This leaves the bishop, but it cannot easily get into play and the retreating move 1 Ba2! hardly seems likely to help. However, after 1...g2 2 Nh2 Ke3 3 Nf3! all becomes clear. Black must accept the sacrifice by 3...Kxf3, and now White has room for the spear check 4 Bd5+.

8 (*České slovo* 1941, dedicated to J. Louma) has a gorgeous first move: 1 Bc2! This provides a way of meeting the threatened 1...e1Q (2 Bd1+ Kh4 3 Ng2+), and if Black tries 1...dxc2 2 Nxc2 Kg4 hoping to run the h-pawn we find that wK can get down in time: 3 Ke5 h5 4 Ke4 h4 5 Ke3 (see 8a) and either 5...h3 6 Kf2 h2 7 Kg2 or 5...Kg3 6 Kxe2 h3 7 Ne3 h2 8 Nf1+.

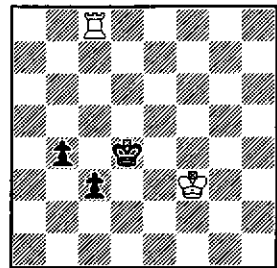
There remains 1...d2, moving a second pawn to the verge of promotion. However, White has 2 Bd1, blocking one pawn and pinning the other, and this proves to be good enough; 2...exd1Q 3 Nxd1 Kg4 4 Ke5 h5 5 Ke4 h4 6 Ke3 gives 8a with wN/BP on d1/d2 instead of c2/e2, and again neither ...h3 nor ...Kg3 is sufficient to win.



9 - win



9a - 1 Rd4, after 2...Kd5

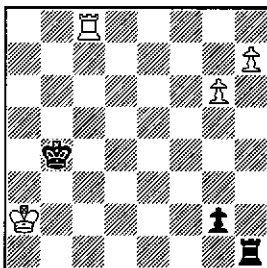


9b - main line, 4..Kd4

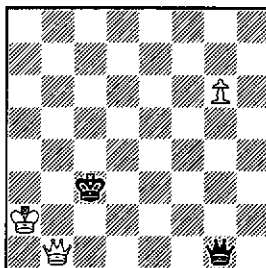
9 (*Svobodné slovo* 1946) has found its way into the textbooks. Which should White go for: the b-pawn, or the c-pawn, or both? He can guarantee winning one of them by playing 1 Rd4 and perhaps this is the most natural thing to do, but it proves to be insufficient: 1...c3! 2 Rxb4 Kd5 (threat 3...c2, see 9a) 3 Rb1/Rb8 Kd4 (or 3 Rh4 c2 4 Rh1 Kd4) and bK is active in support of his pawn while wK is still too far away to influence matters. And while 1 Rb5 will win all right if Black plays the natural 1...b3 (2 Kg4 Kd6 3 Kf4 Kc6 4 Rb8 Kd5 5 Ke3 Kc5 6 Kd2), Black again has 1...c3! and 2 Rxb4 transposes into the line we have just seen.

This leaves 1 Rc5, which does in fact win. Black has only 1...c3, leading to 2 Kg4 Kd6 3 Rc8 Kd5 (or 3...Ke5) 4 Kf3 Kd4 (see 9b). Black now threatens the apparently dangerous 5...b3, but White can cope without difficulty. The composer gives 5 Ke2 b3 6 Kd1 Kd3 (6...b2 7 Kc2) 7 Kc1 Kd4 8 Rb8 Kc4 9 Rb7 and wins by zugzwang, which is probably the simplest, but Karel Husák and Fritz point out that White can also play 5 Rd8+ Kc4 6 Ke3 and take the Black pawns from the side.

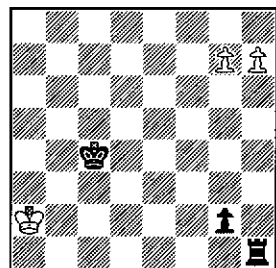
Readers interested in computer chess may like to know that Fritz gave 1 Rd4 and 1 Rb5 as its preferred choices for a long time, and only changed its allegiance to 1 Rc5 when it had reached a depth of 17 ply and filled more than half its hash table area. Even now, simple-looking endings can give computers quite a lot of trouble.



10 - win



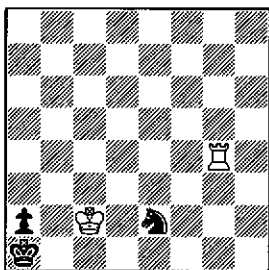
10a - 1 Rb8+, 5...Kc3, 6 Qxb1



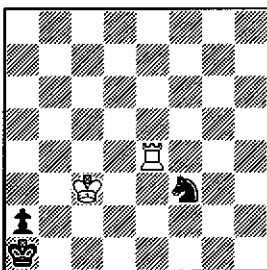
10b - main line, 2 g7

A plausible try in 10 (1st Honourable Mention, *Šach* 1942) is 1 Rb8+ Ka4 2 Rb1, when 2...Rxb1 can be met by 3 h8Q g1Q 4 Qa8+ K-- 5 Qb7+ K-- 6 Qxb1 guarding wPg6; is the resulting position with Q+P v Q a win or not? The answer is that if Black plays 4...Kb4 and 5...Kc3 it is certainly *not* a win (see 10a): Black can play

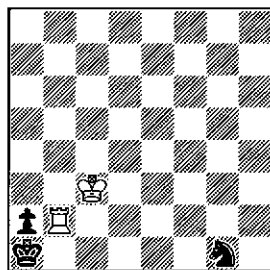
6...Qa7 mate! Correct is **1 Rc4+** effectively forcing **1...Kc4** (else **2 Rg4**), and now **2 g7** threatens to promote with check (see **10b**). Black seems to have little answer to this, since **2...g1Q 3 g8Q+** will leave White with queen for rook, but **2...Ra1+** holds out for a little (**3 Kxa1 g1Q+**). However, White can decline the bait, and Black's checks soon run out: **3 Kb2 Rb2+ 4 Kc2 Rc1+ 5 Kd2 Rd1+ 6 Ke2 Re1+ 7 Kf3!** and another check will be met by **Kxg2**.



11 - win

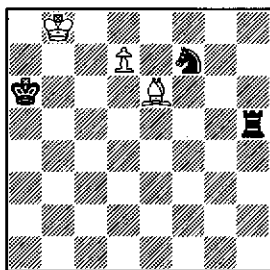


11a - after 2...Nf3

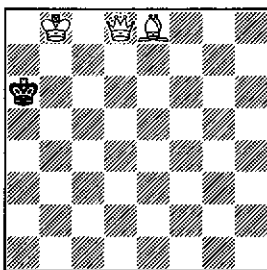


11b - after 4 Rb2

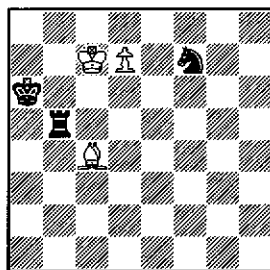
In spite of the number of studies with the material of **11** (*Oběžník východočeské župy* 1944), Emil Vlasák thinks that the winning manoeuvre was probably original. Play starts **1 Re4 Nd4+ 2 Kc3 Nf3** (2...Nc2 **3 Rg4 Na3 4 Kb3 Nb1 5 Rd4 Na3 6 Rd2** and mate next move), giving **11a**, and now only **3 Rb4!** leads to victory. The composer's main line continues **3...Ng1** threatening **4...Ne2+** (**3...Nd2** actually holds out a couple of moves longer, **4 Rh4 Nb1+ 5 Kc2 Na3+ 6 Kb3** and as above, but it leads to nothing new), and again there are traps: **4 Re4 Nf3** merely repeats the position, and so does **4 Kc2 Nf3 5 Kc3 Ng1**. The only way to make progress is **4 Rb2**, giving **11b**, and now **4...Nf3 5 Rf2** or **4...Nh3 5 Rh2**.



12 - win

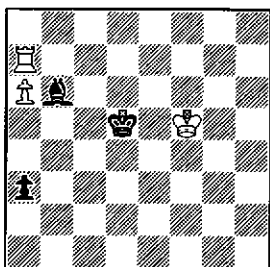


12a - 1 Bxf7, after 5 Kxb8

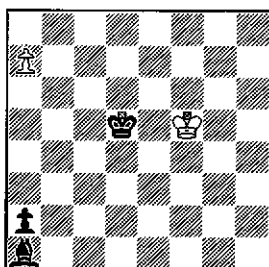


12b - main line, 2 Kc7

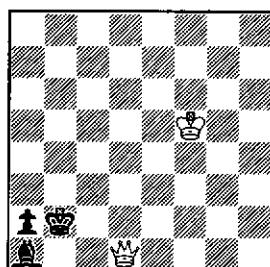
12 (*Svobodné slovo* 1948) appears to yield to **1 Bxf7 Rh8+ 2 Be8**, but after **2...Rh7 3 d8Q Rb7+ 4 Kc8 Rb8+** the necessary capture of **bR** will give stalemate (see **12a**). White must start **1 Be4+**, and now **1...Ka5/Kb6** lose because **wP** will promote with check. But Black has **1...Rb5+**; does it help? Not if White leaves the rook untaken and plays **2 Kc7** (see **12b**): **2...Ka5 3 Bxf7, 2...Ka7 3 Bxb5**. But of course not **2 Kc8**, when **2...Nd6+** and **3...Nxc4** will leave Black with **R+N v Q**.



13 - win

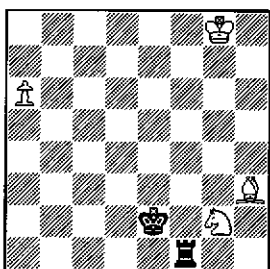


13a - after 4 a7

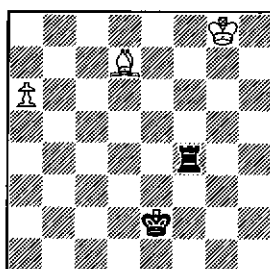


13b - after 8...Kb2

Where will wR go in 13 (7th Honourable Mention, Šach 1943)? The natural move is the check 1 Rd7+, but this allows Black to draw: 1...Kc4 2 a7 Bxa7 3 Rxa7 Kb3, or 2 Rc7+ Kb3 3 Rb7 a2 4 Rxb6+ Kc2. Correct is 1 Re7! shutting off bK, and play continues 1...a2 (1...Bxc7 2 a7) 2 Rcl Bd4 3 Ra1! Bxa1 4 a7 (see 13a). Now bK can defend bP, 4...Kc4 5 a8Q Kb3, but White can win bB either directly or by zugzwang: 6 Qd5+ (say) Ka3 (6...Kb2 7 Qd1) 7 Qd6+ Kb3 8 Qd1+ Kb2 (see 13b) and any waiting move by wK will do.



14 - win



14a - after 2 Bd7

And how did you get on with 14 (České slovo 1941)? White cannot consolidate his material advantage, because bR/bK will harass wB/wN/wP and wK is too far away to help; lines such as 1 Bc8 Kd3 2 Bb7 Ra1 3 Nf4+ Kc4 4 Ne6 Kb5 5 Nc7+ Kb6 6 Nd5+ Ka7 7 Nb4 Ra4 8 Nc6+ Kb6 9 Nb8 Kc7 and 1 Bd7 Ra1 2 Bb5+ Kf3 3 Nh4+ Ke4 4 Ng6 Kd4 5 Ne7 Kc5 6 Bd3 Kb6 7 Nd5+ Ka7 8 Nb4 Ra4 9 Nc6+ Kb6 are no more than drawn. The answer is 1 Nf4!! Rxf4 2 Bd7! (see 14a). The wP is still two squares from promotion on a wide-open board, but bR can do nothing on the fourth rank, and if he tries to move to a better rank he succumbs to a pin, skewer, or fork.

Jindřich Šulc - studie a úlohy is one of many attractive chess booklets published by SNZZ (ing. Zdeněk Závodný, Hohlíkova 8, CZ - 613 00 Brno, Czech Republic). My own bookselling service is restricted to books in English, so copies are not available from myself, but if any reader wishes to make contact I am very willing to use my good offices to help. They cover all aspects of the game: play, analysis, composition, and humour. - JDB