

# British Endgame Study News

Special number 34

March 2003

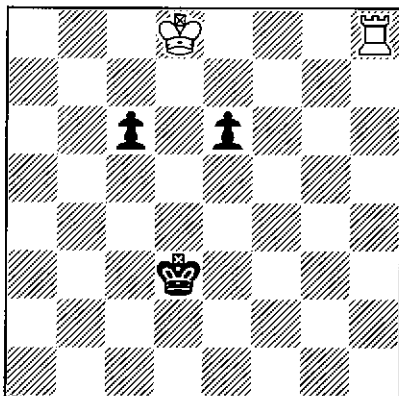
*Edited and published by John Beasley, 7 St James Road, Harpenden, Herts AL5 4NX*

ISSN 1363-0318

*E-mail: johnbeasley@mail.com*

Some studies by

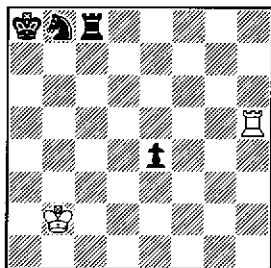
**Iosif Krikheli**



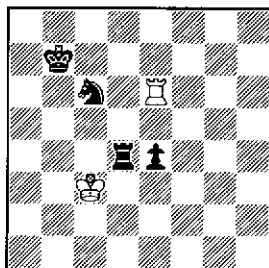
Which way should the White king go?

## Some studies by Iosif Krikheli

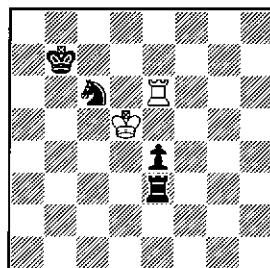
The strength of chess composition in Georgia is well known, and among its leading lights has been Iosif Krikheli (1931-88). Krikheli composed in several fields, but it is his studies that are of interest to us here. A collection, edited by David Gurgenzidze, was published in Tbilisi in 1995. Most were conventional studies in contemporary style, but in the 1980s he became interested in endgame theory, and he produced a series of charmingly pointed works which are both entertaining and instructive. I suspect that this is the section of his output on which future commentators will concentrate; even so, let us start with some compositions in his earlier style.



1 - draw



1a - 1 Re5, after 4...Kb7



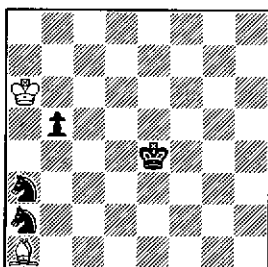
1b - main line, after 7 Kd5

1, which deserves to be better known, appeared in *The Problemist* in 1969. White must win back material before Black can consolidate, so let us start 1 Re5. Black replies 1...Rc4, and after 2 Kb3 Rd4 3 Kc3 he has 3...Nc6. The further attack 4 Re6 is met by 4...Kb7 (see 1a), and if White plays 5 Rxc6 Black can interpolate 5...Rd3+ before recapturing. He can try 5 Re7+, but it is not going to help: 5...Kb6 6 Rc6 Kb5 7 Re5+ Ka4 8 Re6 Rd3+ 9 Kb2 (9 Kc4 Na5+ 10 Kc5 e3) Rd2+ 10 Kc1 (10 Kb1 Kb3) Rc2+ 11 Kb1/Kd1 Rc4 12 Kd2 Nb4 and 13 Ke3 can be met by 13...Nc2+.

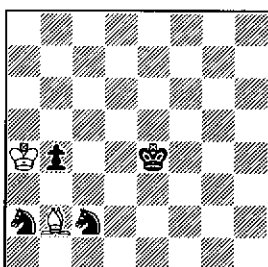
So we need something better, and the answer is **1 Ra5+**! This seems to be pushing Black where he wants to go, **1...Kb7**, but after **2 Re5 Rc4 3 Kb3 Rd4 4 Kc3 Nc6** (4...Ra4 5 Kb3 Rd4 6 Kc3 repeating) **5 Re6** we have 1a with Black to move, and this turns out to be reciprocal zugzwang. We have seen how Black can win with White to play, but with Black to play we have 5...Kc7/Kb6 6 Rxc6+ and Black can no longer interpolate ...Rd3+ before recapturing, or 5...Ra4 6 Kd2 with Ke3 etc, or **5...Rd3+ 6 Kc4 Re3 7 Kd5** (see 1b) and the pawn will fall as soon as the knight stops checking.

And it may be noticed that the tempo must be lost at once. If White tries 1 Re5 Rc4 2 Kb3 Rd4 3 Kc3 Nc6 4 Re8+ hoping for 4...Kb7 5 Re6, Black has 4...Ka7.

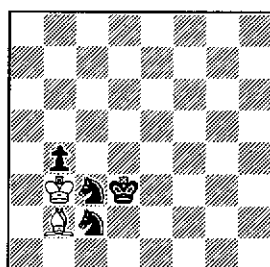
Krikheli took a particular delight in stalemate studies, and 2 gained 2nd HM in *Thèmes-64* in 1980. Again White must do something before Black can consolidate, hence **1 Ka5** intending 2 Bb2 etc, after which only **1...b4** offers Black any hope. White naturally continues **2 Ka4** with visions of Bb2 and Kb3, and if **2...Nc2** then **3 Bb2** (see 2a). Black cannot now usefully prevent Kb3 (3...Nd4 4 Ba3 b3 5 Bb2 and the pawn will go), but he can play **3...Kd3**, and after **4 Kb3 Nc3** both knights are safe



2 - draw

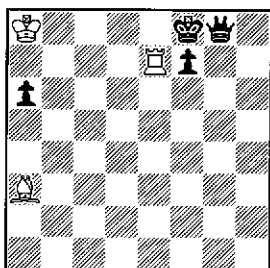


2a - after 3 Bb2

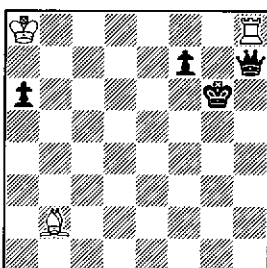


2b - after 4...Nc3

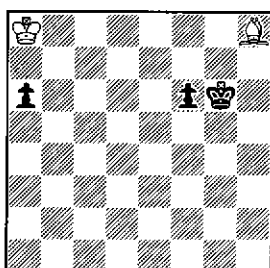
(see 2b). But there is a cost: **5 Ba3!** threatens to remove his last pawn, and **5...bxa3** is stalemate.



3 - draw

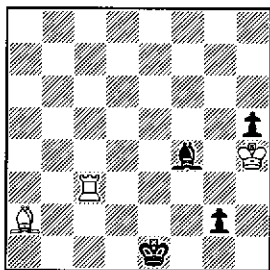


3a - 4 Rh8 "mate"

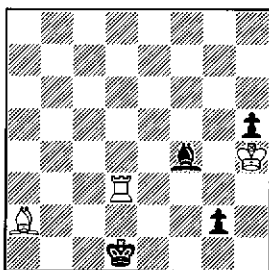


3b - after 5...f6

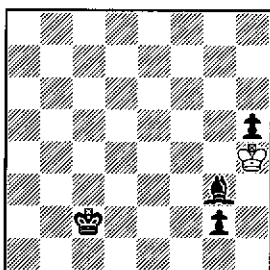
**3** (3 *Comm Revista Română de Șah* 1985) is an amusing trifle: **1 Rb7+ Kg7+ 2 Rb8 Qh7 3 Bb2+ Kg6 4 Rh8!** (see 3a). Black can try **4...Qxb8 5 Bxb8 f6** shutting out the bishop (see 3b), but White can draw à la Réti: **6 Kb7 a5 7-8 Kd5 a3 9 Ke6**.



4 - draw

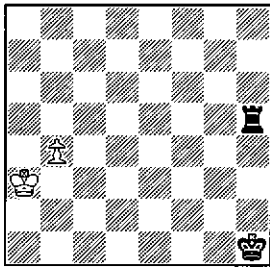


4a - after 2 Rd3+

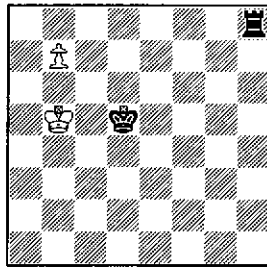


4b - after 5...Bxg3+

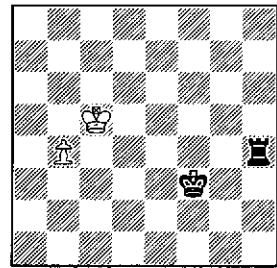
**4** was previously unpublished. Play starts **1 Rb3** (aiming for b1) **Kd1 2 Rd3+**, giving 4a. If **2...Bd2** then **3 Rg3 Be1 4 Kh3 Bxg3 5 Kxg2**; if **2...Ke2** then **3 Bc4 g1Q 4 Rg3+**, or **3...Ke1 4 Bb3 Be2 5 Rg3**; if **2...Kc1/Kc1** then **3 Bb3**. This leaves **2...Kc2**, met by **3 Bb1+ Kc1** (**3...Kxb1 4 Rd1+**) **4 Bc2! Kxc2 5 Rg3 Bxg3+** (see 4b) **6 Kh3 g1Q/R** stalemate. The stalemate was familiar, but the excellent lead-in was new.



5 - draw

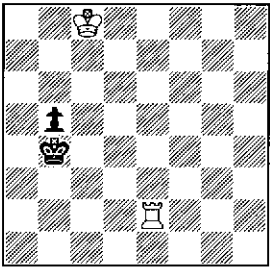


5a - 1 Ka4, after 5...Kd5

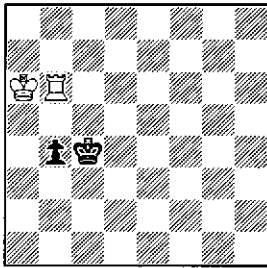


5b - main line, after 4 Kc5

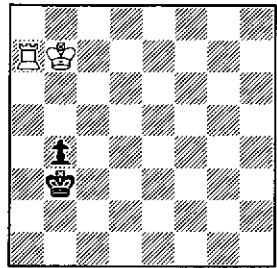
Krikheil's "theoretical" studies concentrated on positions with rook against pawns, and the remarkable 5 appeared in *The Problemist* in 1985. The natural move is 1 Ka4, but 1...Kg2 wins (2-3 b6 Ke4 4 b7 Rh8 5 Kb5 Kd5 etc, see 5a). And if this is too slow, surely 1 Kb3 is worse? But if now 1...Kg2 then 2 Kc4 and Black has nothing better than 2...Kf3 3 b5 Ke4 4 b6 etc, and if 1...Rh4 to stop Kc4 then 2 Ka4 Kg2 3 Kb5! Kf3 4 Kc5 (see 5b) Ke4 5 b5 Rh5+ 6 Kc6 Kd4 (6...Rh6+ 7 Kc5) 7 b6 Rh6+ 8 Kc7 Kc5 9 b7. In each case, the Black king is kept at bay, and White will draw.



6 - win



6a - 1...Kc3, after 7 Ka6

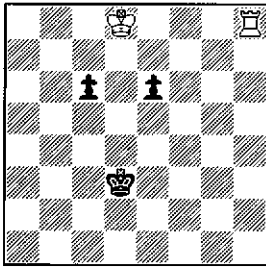


6b - 1...Ka3, after 3...b4

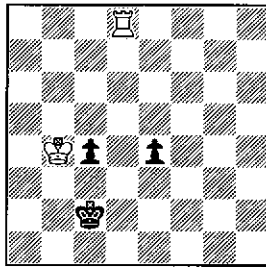
6 (*Magyar Sakkélet* 1986) shows the other side of the coin. 1 Kb7 Kc3 is drawn, and the way to win is 1 Re7. 1...Kc3 is now met by 2 Rc7+ Kd3 3 Rb7 Kc4 4 Kc7 Kc5 5 Rb6 b4 6 Kb7 Kc4 7 Ka6 gaining the a-file (see 6a), and 1...Kb3 by 2 Kb7 b4 3 Ka6 Ka2 4 Kb5 b3 5 Kb4 b2 6 Ra7+ Kb1 7 Kb3 Kc1 8 Rc7+ Kb1 9 Rc6 Ka1 10 Ra6+ Kb1 11 Ra2. Given as the main line is 1...Ka3 2 Ra7+ Kb3 3 Kb7 b4 (see 6b), and now the only move to win is 4 Ka6 (4...Kc3 5 Rc7+ Kd2 6 Rb7 etc).

7 (unpublished before 1995, as were 8 and 9) is one of the finest pseudo-symmetric studies in existence. Which way should the White king go? The correct move is in fact 1 Ke7, but the reason will not emerge until move 16.

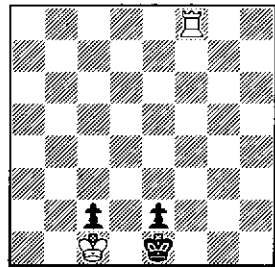
Let's play it through. 1...c5 2 Rd8+ (2 Kxe6 only draws) Ke3 3 Kd6 (the capture on e6 still fails) c4 4 Rc8 Kd4 5 Kc6 (as usual, the attacker plays to outflank the defending king) e5 6 Kb5 e4 7 Kb4 Kd3 8 Rd8+ Kc2 (see 7a) 9 Re8 Kd3 10 Ka3 e2 11 Kb2 Kd2 12 Rd8+ Ke1 13 Kc2 (or Kc1, the first choice White has had apart from blind-alley alternatives) e2 14 Rf8 c3 15 Kc1 c2 (see 7b) and we see the point: the only move to win is 16 Rh8 (16...Kf2 17 Rh2+ Kf3/Kf1 18 Rh1(+) Kf2 19 Kd2),



7 - win

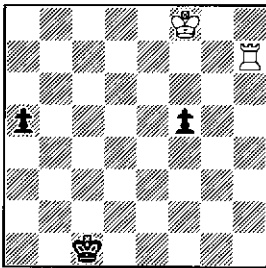


7a - after 8...Kc2

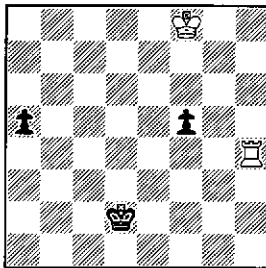


7b - after 15...c2

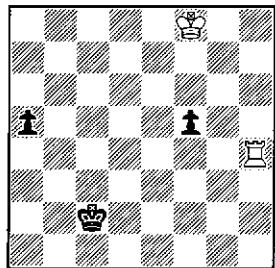
and had the White king gone the other way at move 1 the corresponding move would not have been available.



8 - win

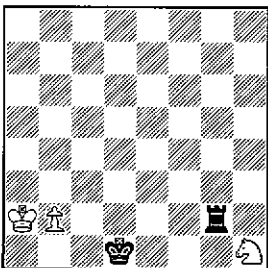


8a - White only draws

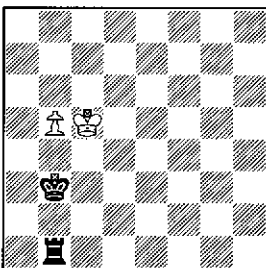


8b - White wins

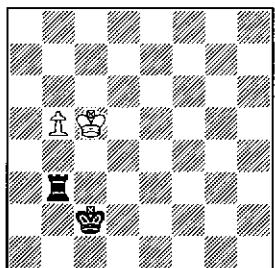
8 is a little easier. The natural move 1 Rh4 fails against 1...Kd2 (see 8a, 2 Rf4 a4 3 Rxf5 Kc3, or 2 Ke7 Ke3). But 1 Rh2 threatens Ra2, and the only move to defeat it is 1...Kb1. Now the Black king is one square further from e3, and 2 Rh4 wins: 2...Kc2 (see 8b) 3 Ke7 Kb3 4 Kd6 a4 5 Kc5 a3 6 Rh3+ etc.



9 - draw

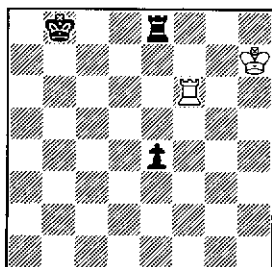


9a - 2 Kc4, after 5...Kb3

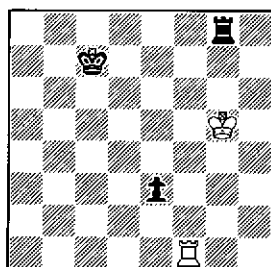


9b - main line, after 6 Kc5

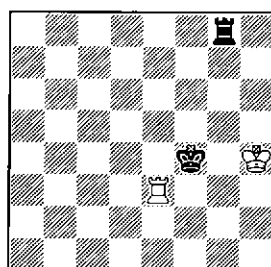
The knight in 9 is dead. Try 1 Kb3 Rh2 2 Kc4 to head off the Black king: no, 2...Rxb1 3 b4 Kc2 4 b5 Rb1 5 Kc5 Kb3 and wins (see 9a). Better is 2 Ng3, moving the capture to the third rank. Now the rook and king get in each other's way: 2...Rh3 3 Kc4 Rxb3 4 b4 Kc2 5 b5 Rb3 6 Kc5 (see 9b), and ...Kb3 is impossible.



10 - draw

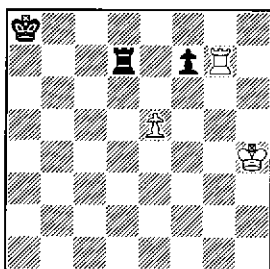


10a - after 3...Rg8+

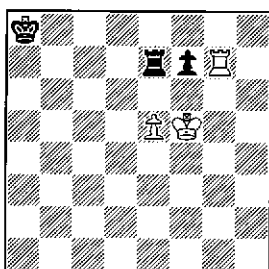


11b - 4 Kh4, after 6...Kf4

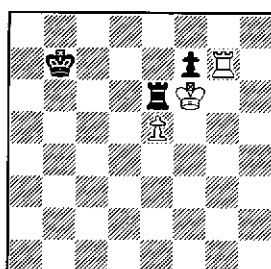
Naturally, Krikheli also composed rook-and-pawn studies with a rook on each side. **10** appeared in *Chess and draughts in BSSR* (I presume modern Belarus) in 1985. **1 Kg6** is natural and correct, and **1...Kc7** is Black's best chance; **1...e3 2 Rf1** makes things relatively easy for White. Play continues **2 Kg5 e3 3 Rf1**, and **3...Rg8+** drives the king back to the h-file (see **10a**). Correct is **4 Kh5!** with **4...Kd6 5 Re1 Re8 6 Kg4** to follow, but why not the obvious **4 Kh4** bringing the king closer? Because of **4...Kd6 5 Re1 Ke5! 6 Rxe3+ Kf4** and wins (see **11b**) - shades of Saavedra!



11 - win



11a - after 3...Re7



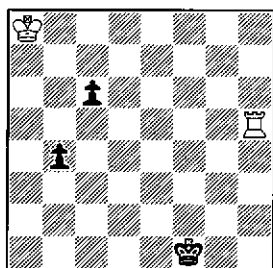
11b - after 7...Re6+

**11** was commended in *Chess Life* in 1987. The obvious start is **1 Kg5** intending **2 Kf6** and **3 Rxf7**, and the only defence is **1...Re7**. Now **2 Kf6** can be met by **2...Re6+** and White must retreat. He does so, **3 Kf5**, but the Black rook simply resumes his post by **3...Re7** (see **11a**) and how is White going to make progress?

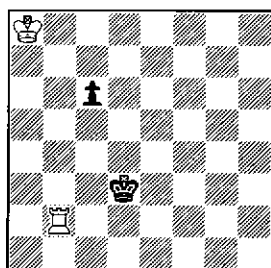
The first step is **4 Rg5** ready to take over defence of the pawn on e5. This renews the threat of **5 Kf6** etc, since **5...Re6+** will allow **6 Kxf7**. So Black plays **4...Re6** to prevent the advance, and White inserts a check: **5 Rg8+ Kb7 6 Rg7**. Black can only go back, **6...Re7**, and we have **11a** with the Black king on b7 instead of a8. Now the White king can advance again, **7 Kf6**, and this time the reply **7...Re6+** is ineffective (see **11b**); White plays **8 Kxf7** anyway, and meets **8...Rxe5** with **9 Kf6+** winning.

Play in **12** (unpublished until 1995) starts **1 Kd3 Kc7 2 Kc4 Ra8 3 Kb5 Kd8 4 Rd3+** (4 Rh3 Ra6 5 Rh8+ leads nowhere), and **4...Ke8** gives **12a**. Now the natural **5 Rd7** is met by **5...Ra7** (see **12b**), and White can make no further progress: **6 Rd5 Ra6**, or **6 Rc7 Kd8 7 Rh7 Ra6**. But **5 Rd6** effectively forces **5...Ra7** (**5...Ke7 6 Rd7+ Kxe7 7 Rxb7** is a win), and now **6 Rd7** gives **12b** with Black to move. Black can only

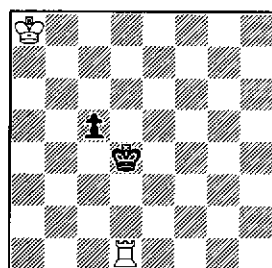




15 - win

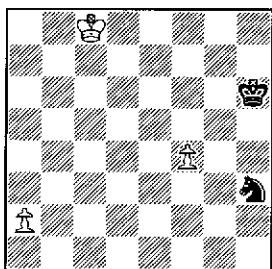


15a - after 4...Kd3

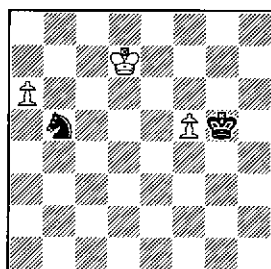


15b - after 7 Rd1+

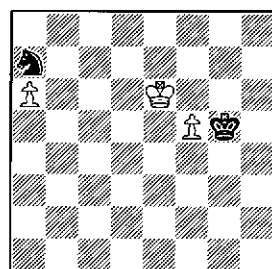
15 gained an HM in the Nikolaev-200 tourney in 1989. 1 Re5 shuts off the Black king and threatens 2 Kb7 etc winning the pawns, and only 1...b3 creates difficulties. 2 Re3 b2 3 Rb3 wins this pawn, but now the Black king can advance: 3...Ke2 4 Rxb2+ Kd3. This gives 15a, which had appeared in *L'Italia Scacchistica* in 1986. An immediate 5 Rb1 is defeated by 4...c5 (5 Rd1+ Kc2); White must first push Black to the fourth rank, 5 Rb3+ Kd4, and only now play 6 Rb1. There follows 6...c5 (nothing better) 7 Rd1+ (see 15b), and the rook will gain the c-file.



16 - win



16a - after 5...Kg5



16b - after 10...Na7 11 Ke6

Finally, a first-class pawns-against-knight study. 16 gained 4th HM in the 1984 Sarychev Jubilee Tourney. 1 a4 is natural and correct, and only 1...Nf2 stops the flying pawn (1...Nxf4 2-3 a6 Nb6+ 4 Kb7 etc). There follows 2-3 a6 Nd6+ 4 Kd7 Nb5 and the a-pawn is caught, so the f-pawn must take up the banner: 5 f5. But Black has 5...Kg5 (see 16a) and 6 Ke6 will allow 6...Nc7+, so how can White make progress? He can attack the knight by 6 Kc6, but surely it can keep running for ever?

Let's see. 6...Na7 7 Kb7 (or 7 Kb6 Nc8+ 8 Kb7 Nd6+ 9 Kc6) Nb5 8 Kb6 Nd6 9 Kc6 Nc8 10 Kd7 Na7 (10...Nb6+ is no better) gets back to 16a with the knight on a7 or b6 instead of b5, and now 11 Ke6 is playable (see 16b). The given reply is 11...Nc8, which is the most instructive though some moves hold out longer, and play concludes 12 f6 Kg6 13 f7 Kg7 14 Kd7 (the same trick) Na7 (or 14...Nb6+) 15 Ke8.

*My compliments to David Gurgenzidze on his "Iosif Krikheli : Endgames". No doubt it has involved considerable labour, but it is a valuable addition to chess literature. I think it is still in print, and I hope to obtain some copies for sale. - JDB*