

British Endgame Study News

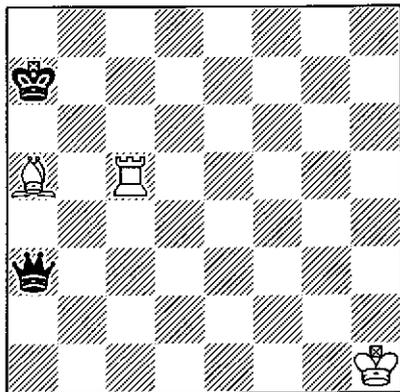
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Edited and published by John Beasley, 7 St James Road, Harpenden, Herts AL5 4NX
ISSN 1363-0318 *E-mail: johnbeasley@mail.com*

Some studies by

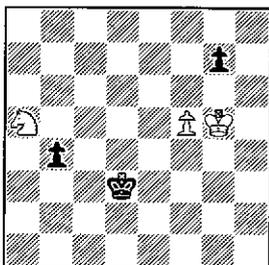
Vitaly Halberstadt



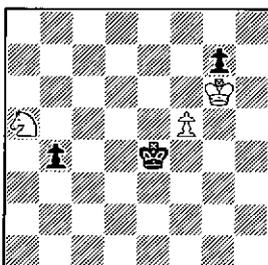
White can draw only by 1 Be1 Qe3 2 Bg3!!

Some studies by Vitaly Halberstadt

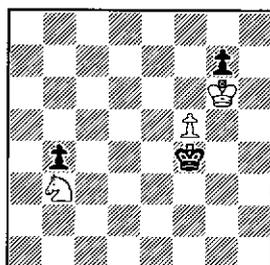
Vitaly Halberstadt (1903-67) was born in Odessa, but he appears to have moved early; he was champion of Paris in 1925, and *Le Guide des Échecs* (Giffard and Biénabe, 1993) describes him as "Joueur et problémiste français". He was an editor of *La Stratégie*, and wrote *L'opposition et les cases conjuguées sont reconciliées* with Marcel Duchamp in 1932 and *Curiosités tactiques des finales* (a selection of his studies) in 1954. He took particular interest in pawn endings, in minor-piece promotion battles, in tactical play with and against queens, and above all in reciprocal zugzwang.



1 - win

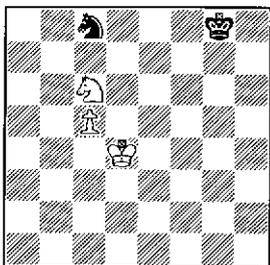


1a - after 1 Kg6 Ke4

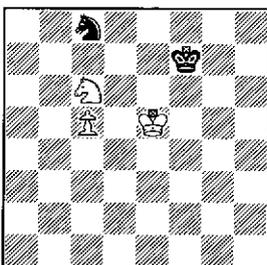


1b - main line, after 5 Nb3

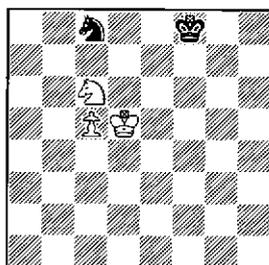
The natural move in 1 (*BCM* 1940) is 1 Kg6, but 1...Ke4 gives 1a and White gets nowhere: 2 Nc6 b3 3 Na5 b2 4 Nc4 b1N! (5 Nd6+ Kd5 6 Kxg7 Nd2 7 f6 Nf3 and if 8 f7 then 8...Ng5), or 2 Nb3 Kf4 3 Nc5 Kg4. But 1 Kf4 leaves bK short of moves: 1...Kd4 2 Nc6+ and 3 Nxb4, or 1...Kd2 2 Nc6 b3 3 Na5 b2 4 Nc4+, or 1...Ke2/Kc2 2 Nc6 b3 3 Nd4+. Only 1...Kc3 remains, and after 2 Kg4 Kd3 3 Kg5 we are back to 1 with Black to play. Now 3...Ke4 4 Kg7 gives 1a with Black to play, and we see that it is reciprocal zugzwang: 4...Kf4 5 Nb3 (see 1b) Ke5 (5...Ke4/Kg4 6 Nc1 Ke5/Kf4 7 Nd3+) 6 Nc5 and if 6...Kd5 then 7 Kxg7 Kxc5 8-10 f8Q+.



2 - win



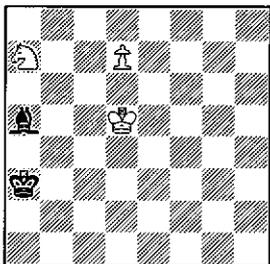
2a - reciprocal zugzwang



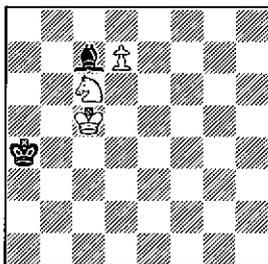
2b - reciprocal zugzwang

The key to 2 (*Les Lettres Françaises* 1952) is that both 2a and 2b are reciprocal zugzwang. From 2a, BTM, 1...Ke8 2 Ke6 etc, or 1...Kf8 2 Kf6 Ke8 3 Ke6, or 1...Ne7 2 Nxe7 Kxe7 3 c6 Ke8 4 Ke6; from 2b, 1...Kf7 2 Ke5 and we have 2a. The solution

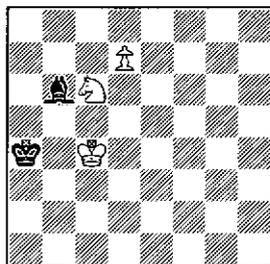
follows at once: not 1 Ke5 Kf7 (2a) nor 1 Kd5 Kf8 (2b), but **1 Ke4! Kf8** (1...Kf7 2 Ke5, 1...Kg7 2 Kf5) **2 Kd5 (2b) Kf7 3 Ke5 (2a) Kf8 4 Kf6 Ke8 5 Ke6** etc. The positions Ke6/Ke8 and Kf6/Kf8 are of course also reciprocal zugzwang.



3 - win



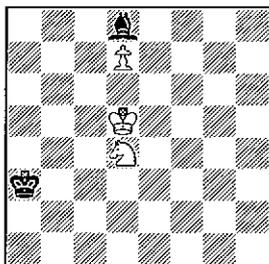
3a - reciprocal zugzwang



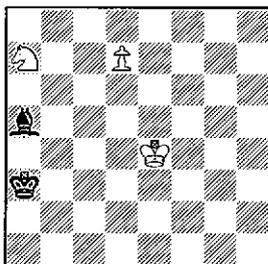
3b - reciprocal zugzwang

Halberstadt took first prize in the 1936 Lamare-80 Jubilee Tourney with a pair of related studies based on no fewer than six reciprocal zugzwangs, but when quoting them in *Curiosités tactiques* he suggested that the version 3/4 in twin form made its point even better. The key positions are **3a** (BTM, 1...Kb3 2 Kb5 with Ka6 and Kb7 to follow), **3b** (1...Ka3 2 Kb5 etc, or 1...Bc7 2 Kc5 giving **3a**), and **3c** (1...Ba5 2 Ne6 with Kc6 and Nc7, or 1...Kb2 2 Nc6 Bc7 3 Kc4 and Kb5 etc, or 1...Ka4 2 Nc6 with 2...Bc7 3 Kc5 giving **3a**, or 2...Bb6 3 Kc4 giving **3b**, or 2...Bh4 3 Ke6 and 4 Ne7).

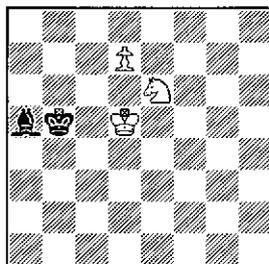
Now let us look at **3**. The wN wants to reach d4, commanding e6 and e8, but after 1 Nc6 Black has 1...Bb6, and 2 Nd4 can be met by 2...Bd8 (**3c**). Nor do other moves help: 2 Kc4 Ka4 (**3a**), or 2 Kd6 Ka4 and 3...Kb5. But after **1 Nb5+ Kb4 2 Nd4** the move 2...Bd8 gives **3c** with bK on a4 (in other words, as if we had had **3c** and Black had played ...Ka4), while 2...Bb6 is met by 3 Ne6 Kb5 4 Kd6 with Nc7 to follow.



3c - reciprocal zugzwang



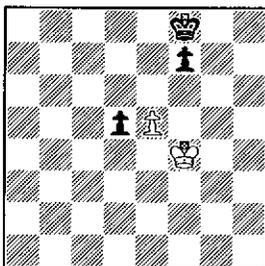
4 - win



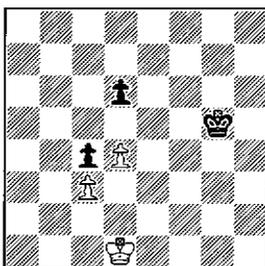
4a - reciprocal zugzwang

In **4**, with wK back on e4, 1 Nb5+ doesn't work because Black has 1...Kb4 and 2...Kc5. Instead, **1 Nc6**, and if 1...Bb6 then 2 Kd5 (quickest) with 2...Bc7 3 Kc4! Ka4 4 Kc5 (**3a**) or 2...Ka4 3 Kc4 (**3b**) or 2...Kb3 3 Nd4+ Ka4/Kb4 4 Ne6 Kb5 5 Kd6; alternatively, **1...Bc7 2 Nd4 Ka4** (2...Bd8 3 Kd5 gives **3c**, and 2...Ba5 3 Ne6 Ka4 transposes) **3 Ne6 Ba5** and now not 4 Kd5 Kb5 (**4a** WTM, 5 Kd6 Bb4+ 6 K-- Be7) but **4 Ke5! Kb5 5 Kd5** (**4a** BTM, 5...Bb6 6 Kd6 and bB is too close to wK).

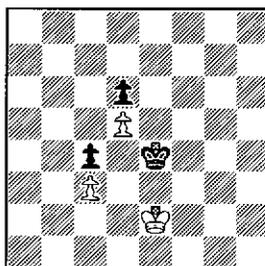
8 (*Contributo* 1925), 3D, draw by **1 Kc2** etc; 9 (original to the book), 2D, win by **1 Kb1** etc; 10 (original), 0V, win by **1 Kb2** etc; 11 (original), 2V, win by **1 Kb1** etc; 12 (*Československý šach* 1930), 3V, win by **1 Kb1** etc; 13 (*Magyar Sakkvilág* 1930), 1D, draw by **1 Kb2 Kg8 2 Ka1!** The defender merely has to occupy a corresponding square; the attacker's task is to prevent him from doing so, usually though not always by occupying one himself, after which he can advance and eventually force penetration on one wing or the other.



14 - draw



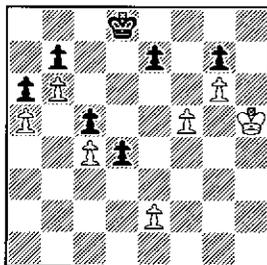
15 - draw



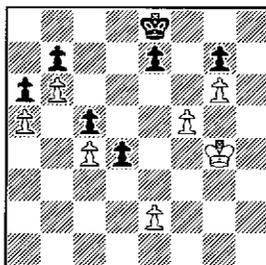
15a - after 3 d5

There are a dozen more pawn studies in *Curiosités tactiques*, but we have room for only three. 14 (*Československý šach* 1935) starts with the remarkable move **1 Kg4!**! Now White can hold out: say **1...Ke8 2 Kg5 Ke7 3 Kf5 Kd7 4 Kf6 Ke8 5 Kg5**.

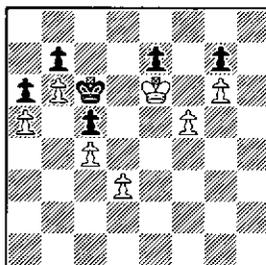
In 15 (*Schackvärlden* 1936), Black is about to outflank White, and the only hope is to throw the d-pawn: **1 Kd2 Kf4 2 Ke2 Ke4 3 d5!** (see 15a). Now **3...Kxd5 4 Ke3** is a P v 2P draw. But White's timing must be right, because 15a is reciprocal zugzwang. If he plays **1 Ke2 Kf4 2 d5**, Black's reply **2...Ke4** gives 15a WTM, and **3 Rd2** is met by **3...Kf3** (Black leaves the d-pawn firmly alone and goes for the c-pawn).



16 - win

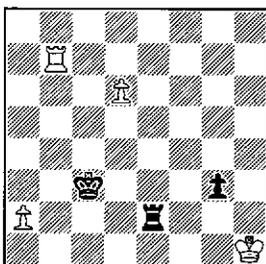


16 - 1 Kg4, after 1...Ke8

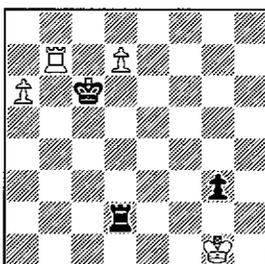


16b - 5 exd3 stalemate

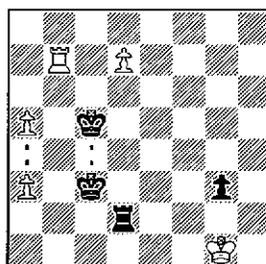
16 (4 Pr Troitzky Ty, *Zadachy i etyudy* 1930) shows Halberstadt in more exotic mode. Try **1 Kg4**: no, **1...Ke8** (see 16a) and Black has a stalemate defence (**2 Kf4 Kd7 3 Ke5 Kc6 4 Ke6 d3 5 exd3**, see 16b, or **2 Kf3 e6 3 fxe6 Ke7 4 Kf4 Kxe6 5 Ke4 Kd6 6 Kf5 Kd7 7 Ke5 Kc6 8 Ke6 d3 9 exd3** and the same without e7/f5). Instead, **1 Kg5! Ke8 2 Kg4** (16a BTM) **Kd8 3 Kf3 Kd7 4 Kf4 Kd6 5 Ke4 Kc6 6 Ke5** and so on; this time, White can penetrate without giving stalemate.



17 - win



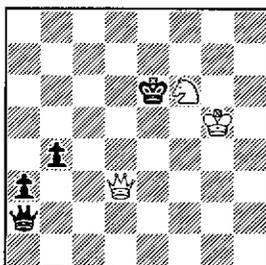
17a - reciprocal zugzwang



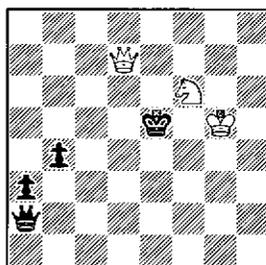
17b-d, the same

Halberstadt composed relatively few rook-and-pawn studies, but 17 (3 Pr *Magyar Sakkvilág* 1936) makes its point very neatly. The key position is 17a. A move by bK loses at once (1...Kc5 2 a7), while a move by bR or bP concedes the pawn and allows wK to advance (1...g2 2 Kh2 2 Rd- Kxg2 etc). White to play, 1 Kh1 allows 1...Rh2+ 2 Kg1 Rd2 repeating, and if he tries 1 Kf1 Rf2+ 2 Ke1 Black plays 2...Rf8, and wR must abandon the attack to stop the g-pawn. So 17a is reciprocal zugzwang, and it follows that all the positions from 17b down to 17d are reciprocal zugzwang also.

The solution is now quickly seen. White plays 1 d7, and does Black play ...Rd2 straight away or does he give a check first? If he tries 1...Rd2, White plays 2 a4! and we have 2...Kc4 (bK must be able to meet a6 by ...Kc6) 3 a5 Kc5 4 a6 Kc6 5 Kg1! giving 17a with Black to move. If Black checks first, 1...Rh2+ 2 Kg1 Rd2, White plays 3 a3!! (17d), and 3...Kc4 4 a4 (17c) Kc5 5 a5 (17b) Kc6 6 a6 again gives 17a. But if White commits himself by moving his a-pawn first, Black can take advantage: 1 a4 Rh2+! 2 Kg1 Rd2 3 d7 Kc4 (17c), or 1 a3 Rd2!! (this appears to gain a move, but in fact is an ingenious way of losing one) 2 d7 Rh2+ (ah!) 3 Kg1 Rd2 (17d).

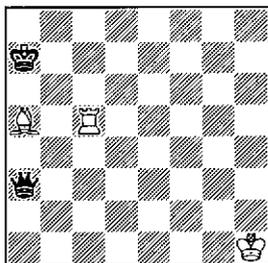


18 - win

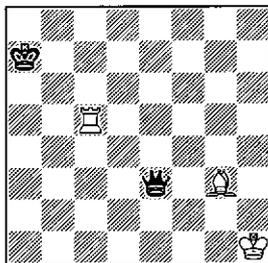


18a - after 1 Qd7+ Ke5

Endings with Q + N v Q tend to be long and difficult, but there are exceptions. The natural move in 18 (3HM *Schackvärlden* 1938) is 1 Qd7+, but 1...Kc5 gives 18a and White cannot make progress. Instead, 1 Qe3+ Kd6 (1...Kf7 2 Qe8+ and mate in a few) 2 Qb6+ Ke5 (2...Ke7 3 Qc7+ Ke6 4 Qc6+ transposes) 3 Qc5+ Ke6 4 Qc6+ Ke5 5 Qd7! and we have 18a with Black to move. Now bQ is lost: 5...Qb3 6 Ng4+ Kc4 7 Nf2+ Ke5 8 Nd3+ etc, or 5...Qc4 6 Qe7+ Kd4 7 Qe4+ Kc3 (7...Kc5 8 Nc7+ Kb5 9 Qb7+ Ka5 10 Qb6+) 8 Nd5+ Kb3 9 Qb1+, or 5...Qe6 6 Ng4+, or 5...Qg2+ 6 Ng4+.

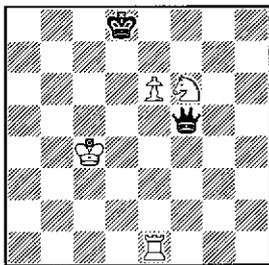


19 - draw

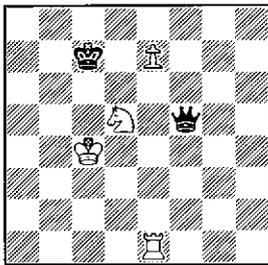


19a - after 2 Bg3

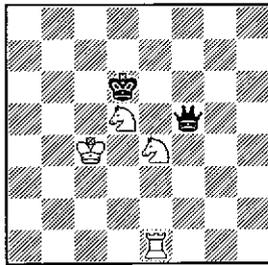
19 took first prize in the 1950 Réti memorial tourney. White will lose material however he plays, but after **1 Be1!** the capture **1...Qxc5** allows the pin **2 Bf2**, and **2...Qxf2** will be stalemate. White also threatens **Ra5+** followed by **Kg2** and **Kf1**, and only **1...Qe3** gives Black hope. The move **2 Bf2** now fails, because Black can take the bishop and then escape the rook checks (**2...Qxf2 3 Ra5+ Kb7 4 Rb5+ Kc6**, or **3 Rc7+ Ka6 4 Rc6+ Kb5**), but White has **2 Bg3!!** (see 19a). The pin **2...Qxc5 3 Bf2** still applies, and nothing else is better: **2 Qxg3** is met by **3 Ra5+** followed by a perpetual check on the a-file (and if Black tries to hide on h3, say by **3...Kg5 9 Ra5+ Kh4** intending **10...Kh3**, the killer **10 Rh5+ Kg4 11 Rg5+** is available), and **2 Kb6** by **3 Rc2 Qxg3 4 Rb2+** with a perpetual check on the second rank.



20 - win



20a - after 2 Nd5+

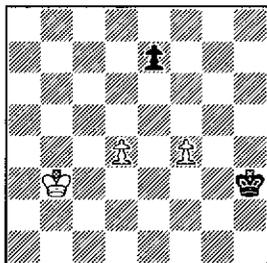


20b - after 5 Nc4+

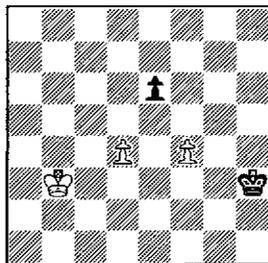
White can promote easily enough in **20** (1HM, Voellmy Memorial Ty 1952), but avoiding perpetual check will not be as straightforward. Halberstadt gives extensive analysis in *Curiosités tactiques*; we content ourselves with a sketch of the outlines.

Play starts **1 e7+ Kc7**, and **2 e8Q** allows an immediate perpetual check starting with **2...Qc2+**. A preliminary rook move doesn't help, and this isn't the occasion for a knight promotion. The move that makes progress is **2 Nd5+** (see 20a), and if **2...Kb7** then **3 e8Q** has become possible because **3...Qc2+** can be met by **4 Nc3**.

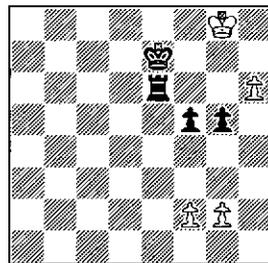
However, **2...Kd6** attacks wN, and now **3 e8Q** allows **3...Qxd5+** etc. But wNd5 bars c7 directly and c6/c8 by the fork on e7; can White afford **3 e8N+**? Indeed so: **3...Kd7 4 Nef6+ Kd6** (**4...Kd8 5 Re8 mate**) **5 Ne4+** (see 20b) **Kd7** (**5...Ke6 6 Ng3+ Qe5** doesn't help, **7 Nc7+ Kd6/Kf6 8 Ne8+ Ke6 9 Ng7+** with **9...Kd6 10 N3f5+** or **9...Kf6 10 N3h5+**) **6 Nc5+ Kd6/Kd8 7 Nb7+ Kd7 8 Re7+** with mate or a fork.



21 - win



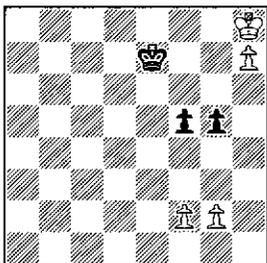
22 - win



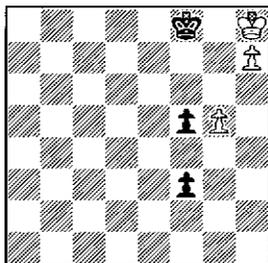
23 - draw

Two twin pawn studies to finish. The light but neat **21/22** appeared in *La Stratégie* in 1935. In **21** it is the f-pawn which must advance (**1 f5 Kg4 2 f6 exf6 3 d5 Kf5 4 Kc4** etc), in **22** the d-pawn (**1 d5 exd5 2 f5** etc). The refutations of the “wrong” moves are straightforward.

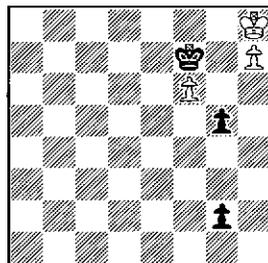
The twin positions in **23** (original to *Curiosités tactiques*) appear in the course of play. **1 Kg7 Rf6** (Black must bring bR to bear on h8) **2 h7 Rf7+ 3 Kg6** (3 Kg8 appears to be a dual, because 3...Rf8+ 4 Kg7 transposes, but this is only introductory play and no doubt it could be changed if necessary) **Rf8 4 Kg7 Rh8 5 Kxh8** gives **23a**, and is Black going to play **5...Kf8** or **5...Kf7**?



23a - after 5 Kxh8



23b - 5...Kf8, after 8 g5



23c - 5...Kf7, after 9 f6

If **5...Kf8**, **6 f4! gxf4 7 g4 f3 8 g5** holds the draw, see **23b** (**8...Kf7 9 g6+ Kxg6 10 Kg8** etc). This fails after **5...Kf7** because bK is one step further forward and Black can force mate after White's promotion, but **6 g4! fxf4 7 f4 g3 8 f5 g2 9 f6** now draws because Black must spend a move releasing stalemate (see **23c**). Halberstadt adds a few moves in each case to show that the ending with Q v Q+P is indeed drawn.

A very fine composer, in whose work the computer has not knocked many holes. This selection has been far too short to do proper justice, as those who have a copy of *Curiosités tactiques* will testify, but I hope it has given pleasure.

My thanks to Jurgen Stigter and Harold van der Heijden for procuring a copy of L'opposition et les cases conjuguées sont reconciliées for me, and my usual acknowledgements to Harold's invaluable "Endgame study database 2000" and to the library of the British Chess Problem Society. - JDB