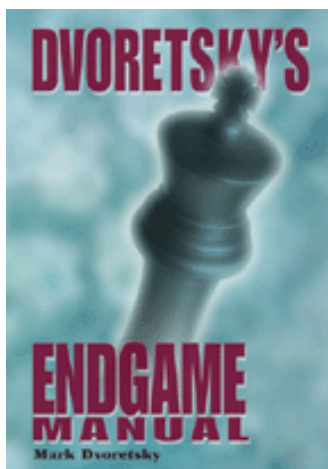




C O L U M N I S T S

The
Instructor
Mark Dvoretsky



Theoretical Discoveries

Part 1

Many players probably see endgame theory as something almost impervious to change, a frozen block of ice, forever fixed in such endgame manuals as the Yugoslav *Encyclopedia of Endgames*, or Averbakh's five-volume work.

But in fact, endgame theory is constantly developing - although not so furiously, nor so noticeably, as the opening. And I am not referring here to new items in the endless pile of endgames from practice, analyses and studies, but rather to actual theory: restricted in scope, and available for acquisition, something that would do a practical player good to study, absorb and utilize. It was precisely this theory that I laid out in my most recent book, *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual* - which has already gone through two editions in the past year in Germany (there it's titled, *Die Endspiel Universität*), and which was published in the USA in October 2003.

In my manual, I managed to give newer, clearer, and more understandable presentations of many kinds of endgames (because rethinking the experience of the ages is also a way of developing theory), and to demonstrate, along with classic examples, the clearest and most instructive endgames played in recent years, to offer new analyses, and to correct many errors that had occurred in previous publications.

After the book's publication in German, some readers sent me analytical notes, which were incorporated in the preparation of the American edition. The majority of these inaccuracies and errors pointed out by readers were of a non-essential nature, having practically no influence on the concept of the respective

The Chess Cafe E-mail Newsletter

Each week, as a service to thousands of our readers, we send out an e-mail newsletter, *This Week at The Chess Cafe*. To receive this *free* weekly update, type in your email address and click Subscribe. That's all there is to it! And, we do not make this list available to anyone else.

[Click Here to Subscribe](#)

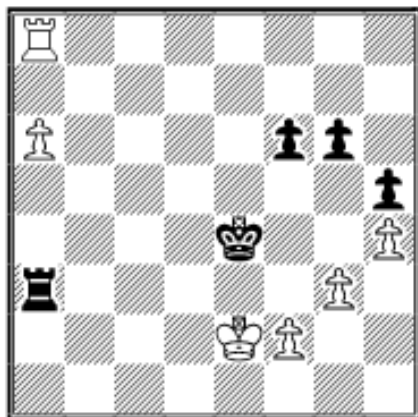


divisions of the manual. But here, in the theory of rook endgames with an extra pawn on the opposite wing, revolutionary changes have recently occurred. Very few players know about this as yet; it is to them that I dedicate this [two-part] article, which I now present to my readers.

So: The position before us is one in which the kingside pawns are equal (three vs. three), with White having an extra pawn on the a-file. Let's restrict ourselves to those situations in which the stronger side's rook is in front of the pawn, while the other rook is behind it.

- *The advance of the pawn to the 7th rank maximally restricts the enemy pieces. However, if the enemy pawns have no weak spots, then the game is drawn, since it makes no sense to bring the king up to support the pawn, when he has no shelter against checks on the file.*
- *The stronger side wins in one of the following three cases:*
 - *a) When the pawn at a7 may be traded for enemy pawns, and a winning pawns-on-one-side endgame results;*
 - *b) If he can win the enemy rook for the pawn. This usually requires the creation of a passed pawn on the other side, which may be used to drive the enemy king from its safe square. This goal can be achieved with the advance of the f-pawn; passed g- or h-pawns are usually of no value;*
 - *c) When the passed pawn may be given up to exchange rooks with a 7th-rank check, creating a winning pawn endgame.*

You will find plenty of instructive examples illustrating these rules in my Manual, and also in my **ChessCafe** articles from February 2001 and June 2003. However, I am going to present one classic endgame (illustrating Point (a)) here, because it is very important from a practical standpoint, and because we shall have many occasions to refer to it later.



Unzicker - Lundin

Amsterdam Olympiad 1954

White to move

48. f3+! (of course, not 48. a7? Ra2+ and 49...Kf3) **48...Kf5 49. a7!**

If Black's pawn were still at f7, the Black king could return to f6 or g7, and the position would be absolutely drawn. But now White's plan is to get his king to h6, and then to exchange his passed pawn at a7 for Black's kingside pawns by Rb8-b5+. Black cannot prevent this.

In principle, all you need to know about this position is that it is won, and the winning plan. The variations presented below (fleshing out and correcting earlier analyses here and there) demonstrate some tactical refinements and show Black's helplessness. They are useful to examine, but of course they need not be memorized.

In the study of endgame theory, it is necessary to separate the important facts - the most important positions, variations and ideas (which are all, as a rule, rather simple and easy to memorize) from the other information, which is not so valuable in and of itself, and only helps you to assimilate the main ideas. Such a division of labor, which eases the task of the reader to assimilate the theory of endgames, is used in my book; it is, however, unfortunately missing from all other guides to the endgame.

49...Ra2+

49...Ra6 would change nothing: 50. Kd3 Rd6+ 51. Kc4 Rd7 52. Kc5 Re7 53. Kd6! Re6+ (Black gets mated after 53...Rb7 54. Rb8! Rxa7 55. Rb5) 54. Kd7 Ra6 55. Ke7.

50. Kd3 Ra1 51. Kd4

Note the following tactical trick: 51. g4+ hg 52. fg+ Kxg4 53.

h5! At this point, however, it doesn't work, because 51. g4+? can be met by 51...Kf4!

51...Ra5 52. Kc4 Ra3 53. Kc5 Ra1

On 53...Rxf3 54. Rf8 Ra3 55. a8Q Rxa8 56. Rxa8 Kg4, the simplest win is 57. Ra3 g5 58. hg fg 59. Kd4 h4 6. gh gh 61. Ke3 Kg3 62. Ra8.

54. Kd6 Ra3?! (54...Ra6+) 55. Ke7?!

White pursues his plan, missing a chance to end the game at once by 55. Rc8!, threatening 56. Rc5#.

55...Ra6

A bit cleverer was 55...Ra2, having in mind the variation 56. Kf7?! Ra6! 57. Kg7 g5 58. hg Kxg5 59. Kf7 Kf5 60. g4+? hg 61. fg+ Kf4 - it's important here to have the pawn at f6 defended by the rook. The squares a6 and f7 are in correspondence. White's simplest path is to avoid the mined square by continuing 56. Kf8! Ra6 57. Kf7! (zugzwang) 57...Ra3 58. Kg7, and here 58...g5 would be completely hopeless.

56. Kf7 Ra3 57. Kg7 Ra1 58. Kh6! Ra6 59. Rb8 Rxa7 60. Rb5+ Ke6 61. Kxg6 Ra8 62. Kxh5 Rg8 63. g4 Rh8+ 64. Kg6, and Black resigned.

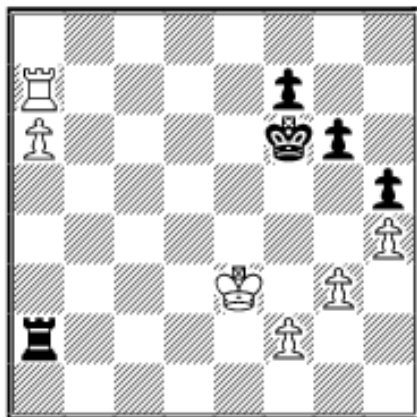
Now let's look at those situations in which advancing the pawn to a7 would be counterproductive. In such positions, *White usually advances the pawn to a6, and marches his king over to the queenside, where he finds shelter against checks on the file. However, the road there is lengthy; and in that time, the Black rook can gobble up a pawn or two. Then, it will give itself up for the a-pawn; and the resulting "rook vs. pawns" endgame is drawn, more often than not.*

The impetus for a new examination of this position was probably provided by the corresponding section in the German edition of my *Manual*, and by Karsten Müller's articles in

ChessCafe. At the time, I - and probably Karsten, as well - held to the traditional view of this kind of endgame: with correct play on both sides, the draw is reached almost always, and almost automatically, with plenty of leeway.

One of my readers, the Swiss player Johannes Steckner, has found a powerful improvement for White in one of the supporting theoretical positions. Later on, we were joined in our study of this ending by the German grandmaster, Rustem Dautov. The summer of 2003 saw a lively e-mail correspondence: Karsten with Steckner and Dautov, I with Karsten (and later on, with the Moscow trainer and expert on these endgames, Vladimir Vulfson). We exchanged the results of our researches, correcting and extending the analyses of our colleagues. As a result, this section of endgame theory acquired (in our eyes, at least) a whole new look, becoming considerably deeper and more complex. Herewith, I should like to bring together and organize our findings.

The following endgame will be an important guidepost for us.



V. Kantorovich, 1988

J. Steckner, 2003

White to move

In Issue No. 8 of the Moscow publication *Shakhmatny Byulleten* for 1989, a weighty article appeared by the Muscovite Vadim Kantorovich, entitled "The Outside

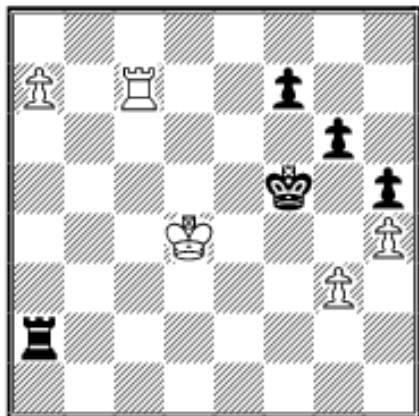
Passed Pawn"; and it began with the analysis of this diagrammed position. The main conclusion which followed from that analysis (and which I reproduced in the German edition of *Die Endspiel Universität*) was that Black draws, and with a couple of tempi in reserve.

But in fact, Black has a lost position!

1. Kd4! Rxf2 2. Rc7! Ra2 3. a7

On 3. Rc6+? Kf5 4. Kc5 Kg4 5. Kb5 Kxg3 6. Rc4 f6! 7. Ra4 Rb2+ 8. Kc6 Rb8 9. a7 Ra8 (Kantorovich), Black does indeed draw, and with two tempi to spare.

3...Kf5

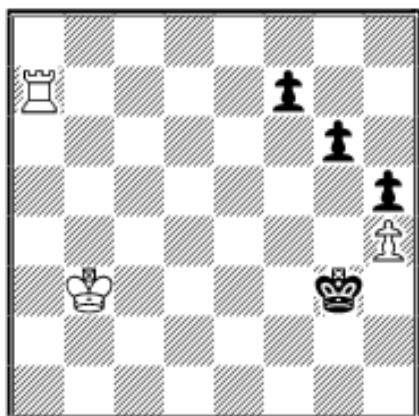


Here Kantorovich continued 4. Rxf7+ Kg4 5. Kc5 Kxg3 6. Kb5! Rb2+! 7. Kc6 Ra2 8. Kb7 Kxh4 9. Rf6 Rxa7+ - and here too, the draw is completely obvious.

For a long time, neither the position nor its associated analyses were doubted by anyone; only in the summer of 2003 did Steckner propose his powerful improvement for White: **4. Kc4!!**

The idea becomes clear in the variation **4...Kg4 5. Kb3! Ra6 6. Rc4+ Kxg3 7. Ra4**: White forces the rook sacrifice without having to waste time on the long king march to the a7-pawn, and now wins by one tempo ("Chess is the tragedy of a single tempo!").

7...Rxa7 8. Rxa7



8...Kxh4 9. Kc3

It's not time to take the pawn yet: 9. Rxf7?? Kg3=.

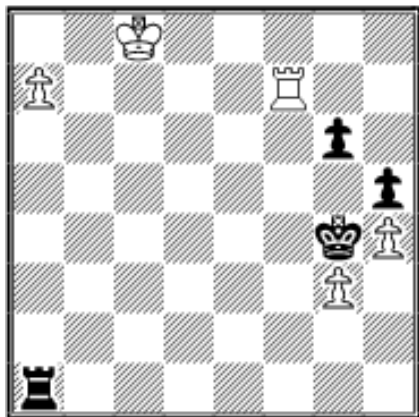
9...Kg3

9...f5 10. Kd3 g5 is no help - the rook will be able to deal with the three pawns.

10. Kd2 h4 (10...g5 11. Rxf7 wins) **11. Ke2 Kg2** (11...h3 12. Kf1) **12. Rxf7 h3 13. Rf2+! Kg3 14. Rf6** and wins.

Let's try another defense. How about 4...Ra1, removing the

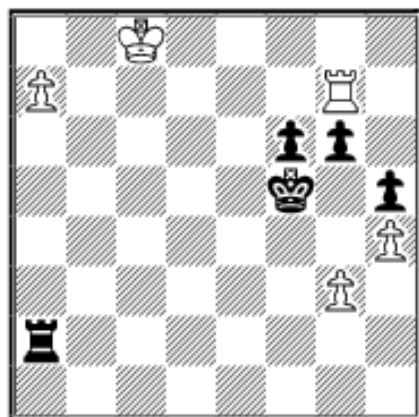
rook from the range of the tempo-gaining Kb3? But after 5. Kb5 the threat of White's rook interference can only be neutralized by a series of checks, which will in turn drive the White king forward: 5...Rb1+ 6. Kc6 Ra1 7. Kb7 Rb1+ 8. Kc8 Ra1 9. Rxf7+ Kg4



Now 10. Kb7 Rb1+ is useless; and White has only a draw after 10. Kb8? Kxg3 11. Rf6 Kxh4 12. Rxg6 Kh3 13. Kb7 Rxa7+. White gains the necessary tempo by 10. Rg7! Kxg3 11. Rxg6+ Kxh4 12. Kb7 Rxa7+ (White threatened 13. Ra6) 13. Kxa7 Kh3 14. Kb6 h4 15. Kc5 Kh2 16. Kd4 h3 17. Ke3 Kh1 18. Kf3, winning.

The only thing left to try is 4...f6. Now 5. Kb4? Kg4 6. Kb3 Ra6 7. Rc4+ Kxg3 8. Ra4 Rxa7 is a mistake - by comparison with the 4...Kg4 variation, Black here has already played the useful move f7-f6, which changes the evaluation of the position (9. Rxa7 g5=). The next few moves are forced: 5. Kb5 Rb2+ 6. Kc6 Ra2 7. Kb7 Rb2+ 8. Kc8 Ra2.

Unfortunately, White wins here too, by continuing 9. Rg7!



a) 9...g5 10. Kb8 Kg4 11. a8Q (but not 11. hg? fg 12. a8Q Rxa8+ 13. Kxa8 h4 14. gh Kxh4 15. Kb7 g4 16. Kc6 Kg3! 17. Kd5 Kf3=) 11...Rxa8+ 12. Kxa8 Kxg3 13. hg fg 14. Rxg5+ Kh4 15. Rg8 Kh3 16. Kb7, and the king reaches f3 in time.

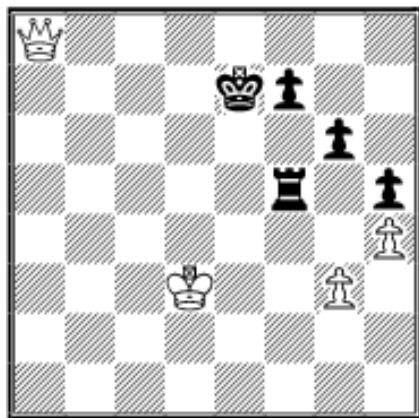
b) 9...Kg4 10. Rxg6+ Kh3 11. Rg7 Ra3 12. Kb8 Rb3+ 13. Rb7 Rxg3 14. Kc7! (14. Rb4 is also strong) 14...Ra3 (14...Rg8 15. Rb8 Rg7+ 16. Kb6 Rxa7 17. Kxa7 wins) 15. Rb3+! Rxb3 16. a8Q.

My earlier formulation of the typical course of play in such endings was as general as could be. Now, we really should give a more exact description of White's most dangerous plan. *The pawn goes to a6; the rook is on a7, and at the first favorable opportunity, relocates to c7, clearing the way for the pawn. White's king chooses his route so that he can execute the idea of interference - moving the rook to the a-file with tempo - as quickly as possible.*

The question arises: If it's Black to move in the Kantorovich/Steckner position, can he save himself? It turns out that the draw in such situations is not at all simple to achieve.

I began my examination with the obvious move **1...Ke5**, and soon found the line **2. Kd3! Rxf2 3. Re7+!** (the immediate **3. Rc7** is also worth looking into) **3...Kf6 4. a7 Ra2 5. Rc7 Kf5 6. Kc4!**, leading to a position we have already seen, where Steckner demonstrated a win for White.

Well, what if Black played **4...Kxe7 5. a8Q Rf5**, hoping to set up a queen-vs.-rook fortress?



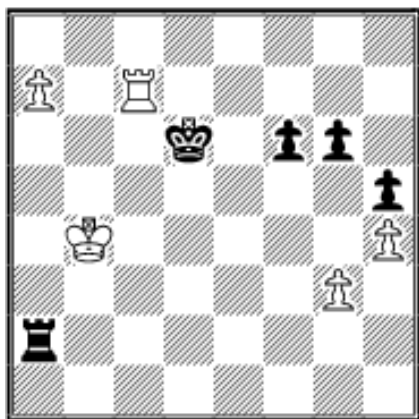
In such cases, it's very difficult to make a proper evaluation by yourself - you really have to look at the theory. Many years ago, Viktor Khenkin made a detailed analysis of the endgame of Belyavsky-Dorfman (Lvov 1978), which gave rise to a similar situation (except that there, Belyavsky had the queen). According to Khenkin's analysis, Black could expect to draw, but his king should stay at g7. With the king stuck in the center, Black loses.

Once again, Herr Steckner undertook to analyze this position, attempting to demonstrate that even if Black is on the move, he still loses. I shall introduce you both to his conclusions and to my own, with the variations illustrating them. These take up

considerable space; the full analysis would undoubtedly require a full extra page of this magazine.

In the line we just looked at: 1...Ke5 2. Kd3 Rxf2 3. Re7+, Black might leave his king in the center, by 3...Kd5 (or 3...Kd6) 4. a7 Ra2. White would continue 5. Rxf7 (with the king on d5, perhaps he could play 5. Kc3!?), and at the right moment, win by attacking the kingside pawns with his rook. Let's examine this characteristic and rather important variation. It was found by Steckner; I have added a few explanations and corrections.

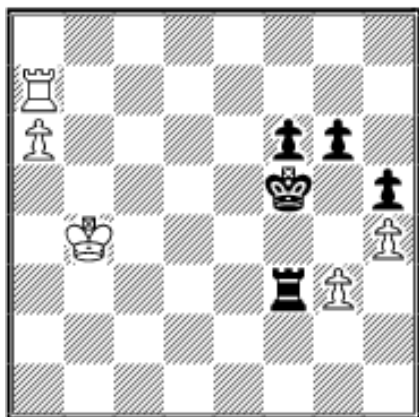
2...Kd5 (instead of 2...Rxf2) 3. Kc3 Rxf2 4. Rc7 Ra2 5. a7 f6
6. Kb4 Kd6



a) It's only a draw after 7. Rf7 Ke6 8. Rg7? (8. Rc7) 8...Kf5 9. Kb5 g5 (Black's last two moves could be transposed) 10. Kb6 Kg4. Now the continuation 11. hg fg 12. Kb7 h4 (12...Rb2+!?) 13. gh Kxh4 14. Rg6 Rxa7+ 15. Kxa7 g4 16. Kb6 Kg3! 17. Kc5 Kf3= is harmless for Black. If 11. Kb7, the immediate capture on g3 loses: Black has to drive away the White king first, by 11...Rb2+! 12. Kc8 Ra2 13. Kb8. Only now does Black continue 13...Kxg3 14. hg fg 15. Rxg5+ Kh4=. The most dangerous try is 11. Rg8!?, when 11...Kxg3?? 12. hg fg 13. Rxg5+ and 14. Ra5 is bad for Black, and 11...Rb2+? 12. Kc5 Ra2 13. a8Q Rxa8 14. Rxa8 Kxg3 15. Kd4! Kxh4 16. Ke3(e4) leads to a position where the rook will most likely beat the three pawns. The waiting move 11...Ra1! secures the draw, for example: 12. Kb7 Rb1+ 13. Kc6 Ra1 14. a8Q Rxa8 15. Rxa8 Kxg3 16. Kd5 gh=.

b) The strongest line is 7. Rg7! Kc6 (7...Ke6 8. Kb5 Kf5 9. Kb6 g5 10. Kb7 wins) 8. Rf7! (but not 8. Rxg6? Rxa7 9. Rxf6+ Kd5 10. Rf5+ Ke4 11. Rxh5 Rg7=) 8...f5 9. Rg7 Kb6 10. Kc4, and White must win.

On 1...Ke6 2. Kd4! f6 (2...Rxf2 3. Rc7 Ra2 4. a7), Steckner shows a win for Black after 3. Kc5 Kf5 4. f3! Ra3 5. Kb4 Rxf3



I think this is a good time to turn our attention to a problem we often have to resolve, namely: which square is better for the rook, b7 or c7 (with the rook on a8, it would be: b8 or c8)? Sometimes the choice is made on purely tactical considerations: for example, with White's king at c5 and the rook at a8, Rc8 would be unplayable,

because of Rc2+. And if the rook is on a7, and the Black rook takes the 8th rank, then it would be a good idea to play Rb7 and a6-a7, creating the threat of Rb8. But, *it seems to me that most often, the best retreat for the rook is to the c-file*. In that case, the White king, which usually ends up on the b-file, will not interfere with the rook - that is, the threat of checks along the rank by White's rook, followed by setting up the a-file interference, will be strengthened. Of course, I can't demonstrate my assertion, only illustrate it.

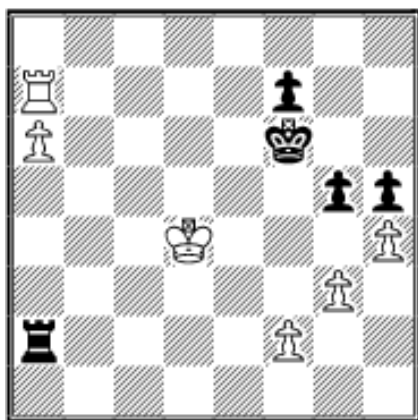
Back to the previous diagram. On 6. Rb7? Black, as G. Mileto pointed out, draws by 6...Rf1! 7. a7 (7. Rb5+ Kg4 8. a7 Rb1+ 9. Kc5 Ra1 10. Kb6 Rxa7) 7...Rb1+! 8. Kc5 Ra1 9. Rg7 g5 10. Kb6 Kg4 - we have already looked at this drawn position: see variation a) under the diagram preceding this one.

But on 6. Rc7! White wins: 6...Rf1 7. Rc4! Ra1 8. Kb5 g5 9. Ra4 Rb1+ 10. Ka5 Rb8 11. a7 Re8 12. Kb6 gh 13. gh. And 6...Re3 is no better: 7. Rc4 Re7 (7...g5 8. a7 Re8 9. Kb5; 7...Re8 8. Kb5) 8. Kb5 g5 9. Ra4 gh 10. gh Ra7 11. Kb6, and wins.

However, after 1...Ke6 2. Kd4 f6, there is a considerably simpler win, by 3. Ra8! Kf5 (3...Kf7 4. Kc5 is hopeless) 4. f3 and 5. a7, transposing to an endgame we know from Unzicker-Lundin, where marching the king to h6 brought victory.

1...g5!? is a lot harder to refute. The "un-theoretical" push of the g-pawn should be the right plan in principle. But there's a more accurate way of executing it; so the very complex analysis which follows has no particular theoretical value, but is in itself interesting, and is presented by way of illustrating the uncommon complexity of the problems which analysts and practical players sometimes encounter in these kinds of situations.

White responds 2. Kd4! (later on we shall examine 2. hg+?! Kxg5, and see that this makes Black's task considerably easier)

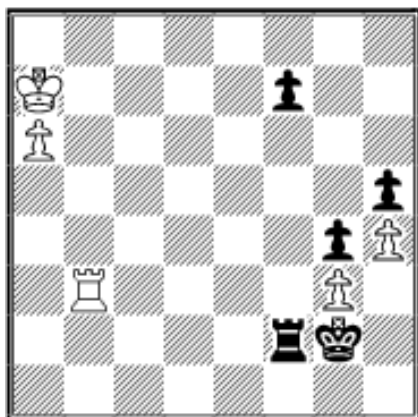


1. 2...g4? The idea behind this move is to take the f2-pawn at the right moment, and then to rely on the power of the far-advanced passed g4-pawn. Play might develop as follows:

3. Kd5 Rd2+ (3...Rxf2 4. Rc7 Ra2 5. a7 is hopeless) 4. Kc4! I also tested the immediate advance of

White's king; but there, White appears to fall short of success. White has to play Ra8 first, freeing the a7 square for the king.

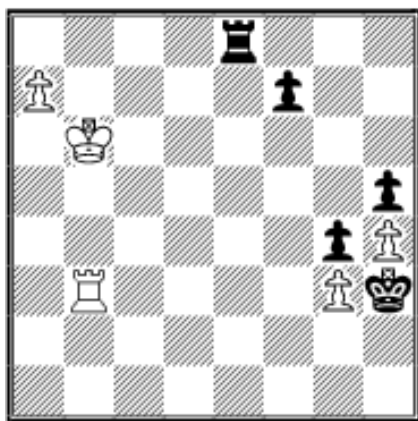
4...Ra2 (4...Rxf2 5. Rb7 Ra2 6. a7 wins) 5. Ra8 Kf5 6. Kb5 Rb2+ 7. Kc6 Rc2+ 8. Kb7 Rb2+ 9. Ka7 Rxf2 10. Rb8 Ke4 (of course, not 10...Rf3? 11. Rb5+ Ke4 12. Kb6, and wins) 11. Rb4+ Kf3 12. Rb3+ Kg2



13. Kb8! (just so - in combination with White's next move) 13...Rf3 14. Rxf3! gf 15. a7 f2 16. a8Q+ Kg1 17. Qa7 (after 13. Kb6, White would not have had this move) 17...Kg2 18. Qb7+ Kg1 19. Qb6 Kg2 20. Qc6+ Kg1 21. Qc5 Kg2 22. Qd5+ Kg1 23. Qd4 Kg2 24. Qe4+ Kg1 25. Qe3 Kg2 26. Qe2 f5 (26...Kg1 27. g4! wins) 27. Kc7

Kg1 28. Kd6 f1Q 29. Qxf1+ Kxf1 30. Ke5 Kf2 31. Kxf5 Kxg3
 32. Kg5 wins. Or 21...f5!? 22, Kc7! (the queen endgame after
 22. Qe3 Kg2 23. Qe2 Kg1 24. Qxh5 f1Q 25. Qg5 is probably
 won, too) 22...Kg2 23. Qd5+ Kg1 24. Qd4 Kg2 25. Qd2 Kxg3
 (25...Kg1 26. Qe3 Kg2 27. Qe2 Kg1 28. Kd6) 26. Qe2 Kg2 27.
 Kd6 f4 28. Ke5 f3 29. Qd2 Kg1 30. Qg5+ Kh2 31. Qc1 Kg2
 32. Kf4, winning (the last moves of this line were given to me
 by Müller).

White also does not let the win slip by 13. Kb6 Rf3 14. Rb5
 Re3! (14...Ra3? is hopeless: 15. a7 Rxa7 16. Kxa7 Kxg3 17.
 Rxb5 f5 18. Rh8) 15. a7 Re8 16. Rb3 Kh3 - it's just that he has
 to choose the right plan here:



The tempting 17. Kb7 Re7+ 18.
 Ka6 allows Black to defend
 successfully by 18...Re8
 (18...Re6+) 19. Rb8 Re3 20. a8Q
 Ra3+ 21. Kb5 Rxa8 22. Rxa8 Kxg3
 23. Kc4 Kxh4, with a draw likely.
 White achieves his goal by 17.
 Ra3! f5 18. Kc6 Rd8 19. Kc7 Re8
 20. Kd6! (but not 20. Kd7? Ra8 21.
 Ke6 f4) 20...Kh2 (2...Ra8 21. Ke5)
 21. a8Q Rxa8 22. Rxa8 Kxg3, and now either 23. Ra3+ Kxh4
 24. Ke5 Kg5 25. Ra8, or 23. Ke5 f4 24. Kf5 f3 25. Kg5,
 winning in either case.

I certainly would not have spent so much time on the analysis
 of 2...g4, if I had known that in the other line - the one in
 which Steckner had shown a win - Black could in fact draw;
 this was established two days later.

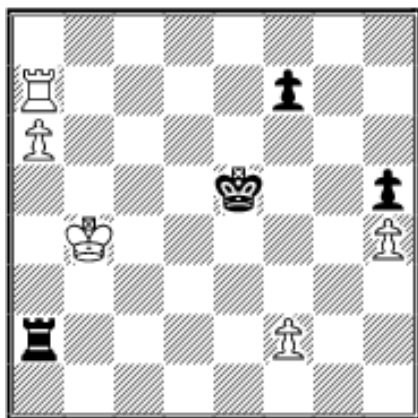
II. 2...gh 3. gh Ra5! Everything else is bad:

a) 3...Ra4+ 4. Kc5 Rxh4 5. Rb7 Ra4 6. a7 Kg5 (6...h4 7. Kb5
 Ra1 8. Rb6+ and 9. Ra6 wins; 6...Ra1 7. Kb6 wins) 7. Rb5!,
 winning;

b) 3...Rxf2 4. Rc7 Ra2 5. a7 Kf5 6. Kc5! (but not 6. Rxf7+?)

Kg4=) 6...Kg4 7. Kb5 (7. Kc4!?) 7...Rb2+ 8. Kc4 Ra2 9. Kb3 and wins;

4. Kc4 Ke5!? 5. Kb4 Ra2



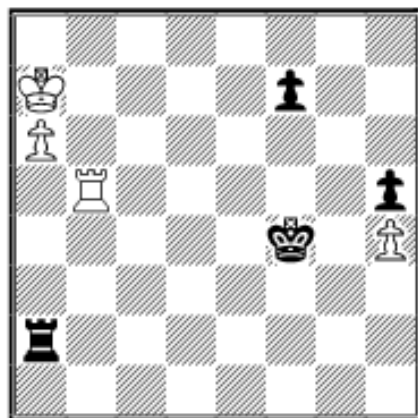
Here nothing comes of 6. Kb5? Rb2+ 7. Kc6 Rc2+ 8. Kb6 Rb2+ 9. Kc7 Ra2 10. Ra8 (10. Kb8 f5 11. Re7+ Kf6) 10...Kf4 11. Kb7 Rb2+ 12. Ka7 f5=.

6. f4+!! Ke6 (6...Kxf4+!? 7. Rxf7+; 6...Ke4? 7. Re7+) 7. Kb5 Rb2+ 8. Kc6 Rc2+ 9. Kb6 Rb2+ 10. Kc7 Ra2 11. Ra8 Kf5 12. Kb7 Rb2+ 13.

Ka7 Kxf4 14. Rb8 Ra2.

The attempt at a flank attack by 14...Re2? doesn't work. White first cuts off the enemy king from the h-pawn by 15. Rg8!?, and then outraces Black: 15...f5 16. Ka8 Kf3 17. a7 Rb2 18. Rb8 Ra2 19. Kb7 Kg3 20. a8Q Rxa8 21. Rxa8 Kxh4 (21...f4 22. Kc6 f3 23. Kd5 f2 24. Rf8 Kg2 25. Ke4 wins) 22. Kc6 Kg3 23. Kd5 h4 24. Kd4 h3 25. Ke3 wins (analysis by Vulfson and Dvoretzky).

15. Rb5



Here Steckner continued with 15...f5 16. Kb6 Kg4 17. Ra5! (but not 17. a7? Rxa7 18. Kxa7 Kxh4=) 17...Rb2+ 18. Kc7, and after winning the rook for the a-pawn by 18...Re2 19. a7 Re8 20. a8Q Rxa8 21. Rxa8, White's king has enough time to get back to the kingside.

As Vulfson correctly pointed out, 15...Kg4! was a more logical try. After the h4-pawn is captured, either the f-pawn or the h-pawn may advance; in the latter case, the move f7-f5 could turn out to be a loss of tempo. I tested the variations, and concluded that by making "only"

moves, Black could achieve a draw.

16. Kb6 (16. Rb4+ Kg3 17. Kb7 f5=) 16...Kxh4!

The immediate rook sacrifice is a mistake: 16...Rxa6+? 17. Kxa6 Kxh4 - in view of 18. Rb8! (only move!) 18...Kg3 19. Rg8+ (or 19. Kb5 h4 20. Rg8+!) 19...Kf3 20. Kb5! (but not the 20. Rh8? move which would be normal in such situations, because of 20...f5=) 2...h4 21. Rh8! (but here, this move is necessary) 21...f5 (21...Kg3 22. Kc4 h3 23. Kd3 h2 24. Ke2 wins) 22. Kc4 Ke3 23. Re8+!, winning.

17. Ra5 Rb2+! (you may see for yourselves that on 17...Rg2? 18. a7 Rg8 19. a8Q Rxa8 20. Rxa8, the White king gets back to the kingside in time) 18. Kc7

If Black gives one more check by 18...Rc2+?, then after 19. Kd7 he let slip the draw: 19...Rg2 20. a7 Rg8 21. a8Q Rxa8 22. Rxa8 Kg3 23. Rg8+! Kf3 24. Rh8! (here, the standard technique of "inserting a check to win a tempo" works just fine: 24...Kg4 25. Kd6 h4 26. Ke5 h3 27. Ke4 Kg3 28. Ke3 wins) 24...f5 25. Ke6 Ke4 (25...f4 26. Kf5 wins) 26. Kf6 f4 27. Kg5 f3 28. Kh4. Understandably, with the king on c7, these ideas do not work anymore.

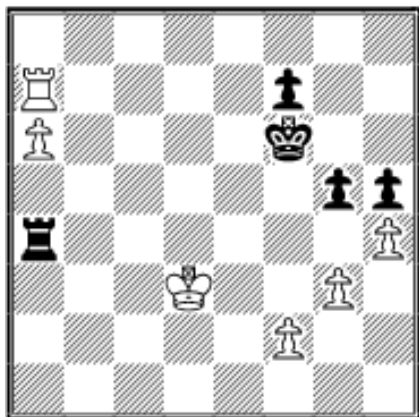
18...Rg2! 19. a7 Rg8 20. a8Q Rxa8 21. Rxa8 Kg3 22. Rg8+ Kf3 23. Rh8 f5 24. Kd6 f4 (or 24...Ke4) 25. Ke5 Ke3=.

Grandmaster Dautov found a simpler and safer means to a draw, based on the same g6-g5 idea; as it turns out, Black first needs to restrict the activity of the White king.

1...Ra4!! 2. Kd3

2. Ra8 is met the same way. And if 2. f4, then the simplest is 2...Ke6! 3. Kd3 f6 4. Kc3 Kf5 5. Kb3 Ra1 6. Kb4 Kg4.

2...g5!



If White allows 3...gh, then the rook takes the h4-pawn, and White's king is less active than after the immediate 1...g5!? 2. Kd4! - here is the point to cutting White's king off on the 4th rank. For example: 3. Kc3 gh 4. gh Rxh4 5. Rb7 (5. Kb3 Rh1) 5...Ra4 6. a7 h4=.

And exchanging pawns on g5 allows Black to begin his kingside counterplay immediately.

3. hg+ Kxg5 4. Kc3 Kg4 5. Kb3 Ra1 6. Kb4 Ra2

6...f5 6. Rg7+ Kf3 8. a7 Kxf2 is also possible.

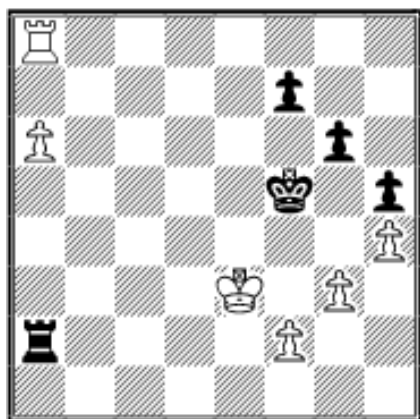
7. Kb5 (7. Rxf7 Rxa6=) 7...Rxf2 8. Ra8 (8. Rb7 Kxg3 9. a7 Ra2) 8...Rb2+

But not 8...Kxg3? 9. Rg8+ Kf3 10. a7 Ra2 11. a8Q+ Rxa8 12. Rxa8 h4 13. Rh8 Kg3 14. Kc4 and wins.

9. Kc4 Ra2 10. Rg8+ Kf3 11. Kb5 Rb2+ 12. Kc6 Ra2 13. Kb7 Rb2+ 14. Ka8 f5 (or 14...Rb6 15. a7 f5 16. Rg5 Rb5 17. Rg7 f4=) 15. Rg5 f4 16. gf h4 17. f5 Kf4 18. Rh5 Kg4 19. Rh8 Kxf5 20. Rxh4 Ke6, resulting in a known theoretical draw - if White's rook tries going to b8 to free the king, Black's king reaches c7.

The analyses I have been showing you are brand-new and as yet insufficiently checked - it's quite likely that they will also be improved and expanded. But the main conclusion is clear: *These kinds of positions are dangerous for Black, and sometimes completely lost; in any event, they require exceptionally accurate defense.*

With a small change in the position of White's rook and Black's king, we obtain still another "well known" theoretical position.



N. Kopayev, 1958
M. Dvoretsky, 2003

White to move

Notice *the optimal position of Black's pieces: the rook keeps the f-pawn under attack, while the king occupies the most active square available to it.*

Someone familiar with Nikolai Kopayev's endgame would show the variations 1. Kd4 Rxf2 2. Rf8 Ra2 3. Rxf7+ Kg4= and 1. f3 Ra3+ 2. Kd4 Rxf3 3. Rf8 Ra3 4. Rxf7+ Kg4 5. Rf6 Kxg3 6. Rxg6+ Kxh4 7. Kc5 Kh3 8. Kb6 h4=, achieving the draw without difficulty in both lines. However, White has a more dangerous try at his disposal:

1. Ra7!?

How now does Black defend? 1...Kf6? leads to the lost position of Kantorovich/Steckner; while 1...Ke6? leads to the same position with Black to move, and his poor first move - we have already looked at these lines. 1...Kg4?! 2. Rxf7 Rxa6 looks suspect - White will most likely win, by organizing an attack on g6. There's only one try left.

1...f6!

Black begins active counterplay without loss of time. On 2. Kf3 there follows 2...g5! 3. hg fg 4. Ra8 g4+ 5. Ke3 Kg6, and the king gets back to g7 in time.

2. Ra8

Threatening to reach the won position with the pawn on the 7th, which we know from the Unzicker-Lundin game, by 3. f3 Ra3+ 4. Ke2 Ra2+ 5. Kd1 Ra3 6. a7.

2...Kg4 3. a7 f5!

Now 4. Kd4 Kf3 is useless. White has to go for a position with pawns on one side only, but he cannot win it.

4. Rg8 f4+! 5. gf (5. Ke4 Ra4+! 6. Ke5 Ra5+) 5...Ra3+ 6. Ke4

White gets nothing from 6. Ke2 Rxa7 (or 6...Ra2+ first) 7. Rxc6+ Kxf4=.

6...Ra4+ 7. Ke5 Ra5+ 8. Ke6 Ra6+ 9. Kf7 Rxa7+ 10. Kxc6 Ra6+ 11. Kf7+ Kxf4=.

(End of Part One)

Copyright 2003 Mark Dvoretsky. All rights reserved.

Translated by Jim Marfia

*This column is available in **Chess Cafe Reader** format. Click [here](#) for more information.*



[\[ChessCafe Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Review\]](#) [\[Bulletin Board\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)
[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[Skittles Room\]](#) [\[Archives\]](#)
[\[Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About ChessCafe\]](#) [\[Contact Us\]](#)

Copyright 2003 CyberCafes, LLC. All Rights Reserved.
"The Chess Cafe®" is a registered trademark of Russell Enterprises, Inc.