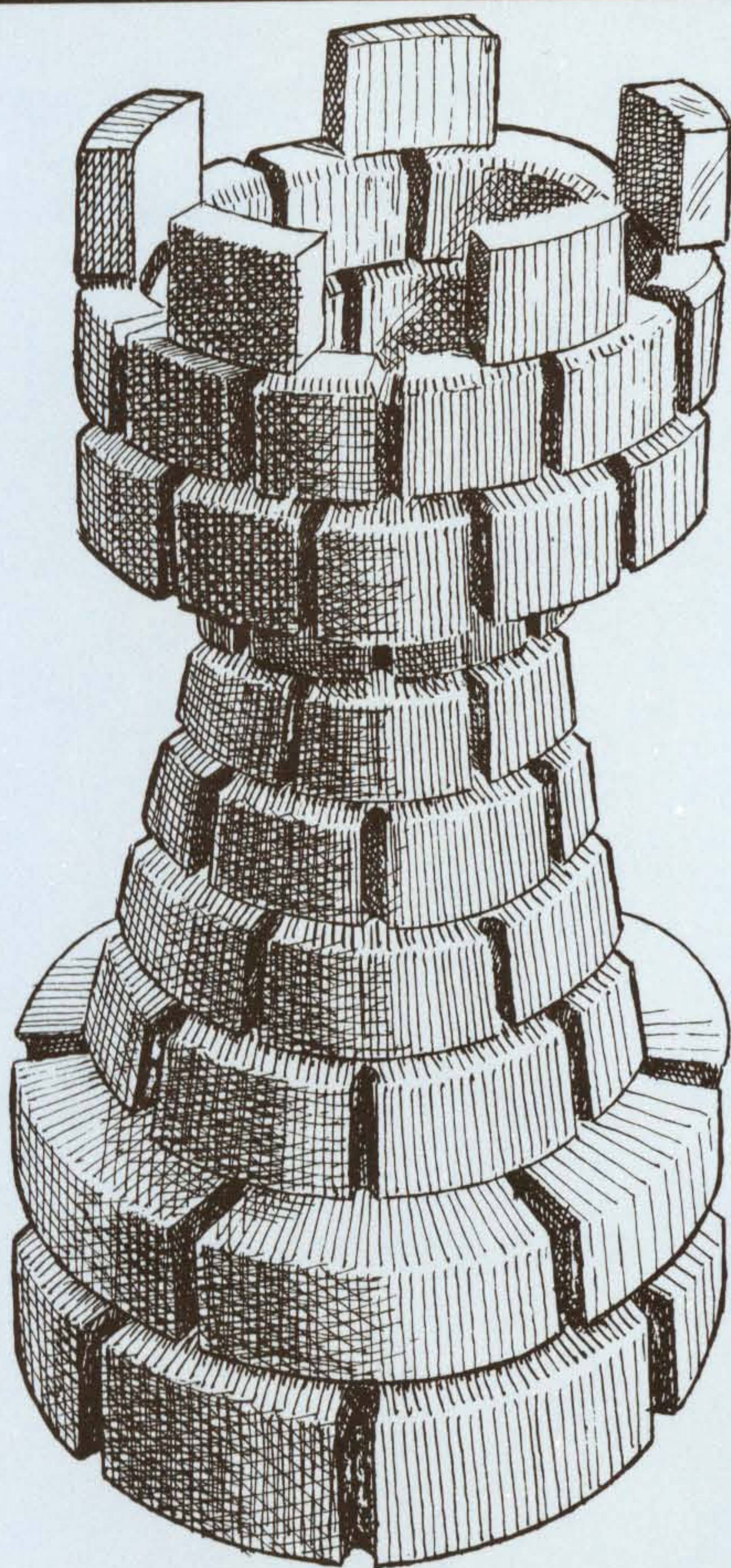

PRACTICAL ROOK ENDINGS



GRANDMASTER
EDMAR MEDNIS

Practical Rook Endings

**International Grandmaster
Edmar Mednis**

1995

Moon Township, Pennsylvania

Chess Enterprises



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Preface

I am pleased to be associated with CEI and its editor, Bobby G. Dudley, in bringing practical endgame instruction to chess players. *Practical Rook Endings* is such an effort. Separately published will be *Questions and Answers on Practical Endgame Play*. My objective in these books is the same as in all my endgame writings: by clearly explaining the major principles of endgame play, to enable the reader to score more points in his practical endgame play.

This book is partly based on material published by me in chess periodicals. However, everything has been thoroughly reviewed, updated and expanded to make it clearer and more easily usable. Hopefully by now analytical errors are at an absolute minimum. Your assistance in calling them to my attention will be appreciated.

Edmar Mednis

New York 1982

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Introduction

Of all endgames, the most common ones involve rooks and pawns. Therefore for the practical player the most important endgame is the rook endgame. As in all technical subjects, so also in rook endgames there is a certain amount of theoretical information that must be mastered. This information will be presented and explained in the pages that follow.

However, there is one overriding principle of rook endgames that I want to mention even before starting the most basic theoretical discussion. This principle is so important that just by following it you will, in the vast majority of cases, be choosing the correct course of action. Of course, I will be referring to this principle throughout this book.

The magic principle is: **ACTIVATE THE ROOK AND KEEP IT ACTIVE!** It is immaterial whether you are trying to win or hoping to draw: this principle applies to *both* sides.

Chapter 1

Rook vs. Pawn(s)

Section 1: Rook vs. Pawn

The endgame of Rook vs. pawn usually results from a queening race by both sides, where one side has been forced to sacrifice its Rook for the enemy pawn.

The following guidelines apply to this endgame:

- To win, both the Rook and King must be able to cover some square which the pawn must still cross.
- To have any drawing chances at all, the defending King must be at least on the *fourth* rank. Otherwise the Rook decisively cuts the King off from assisting in the further advance of the pawn.
- Generally the pawn should be advanced *ahead* of the King.
- The Rook is usually placed best on the 7th or 8th rank, acting on the *rear*.

A characteristic position, where the decision hangs by a thread, is shown in Diagram 1. White on move wins; Black on move draws.

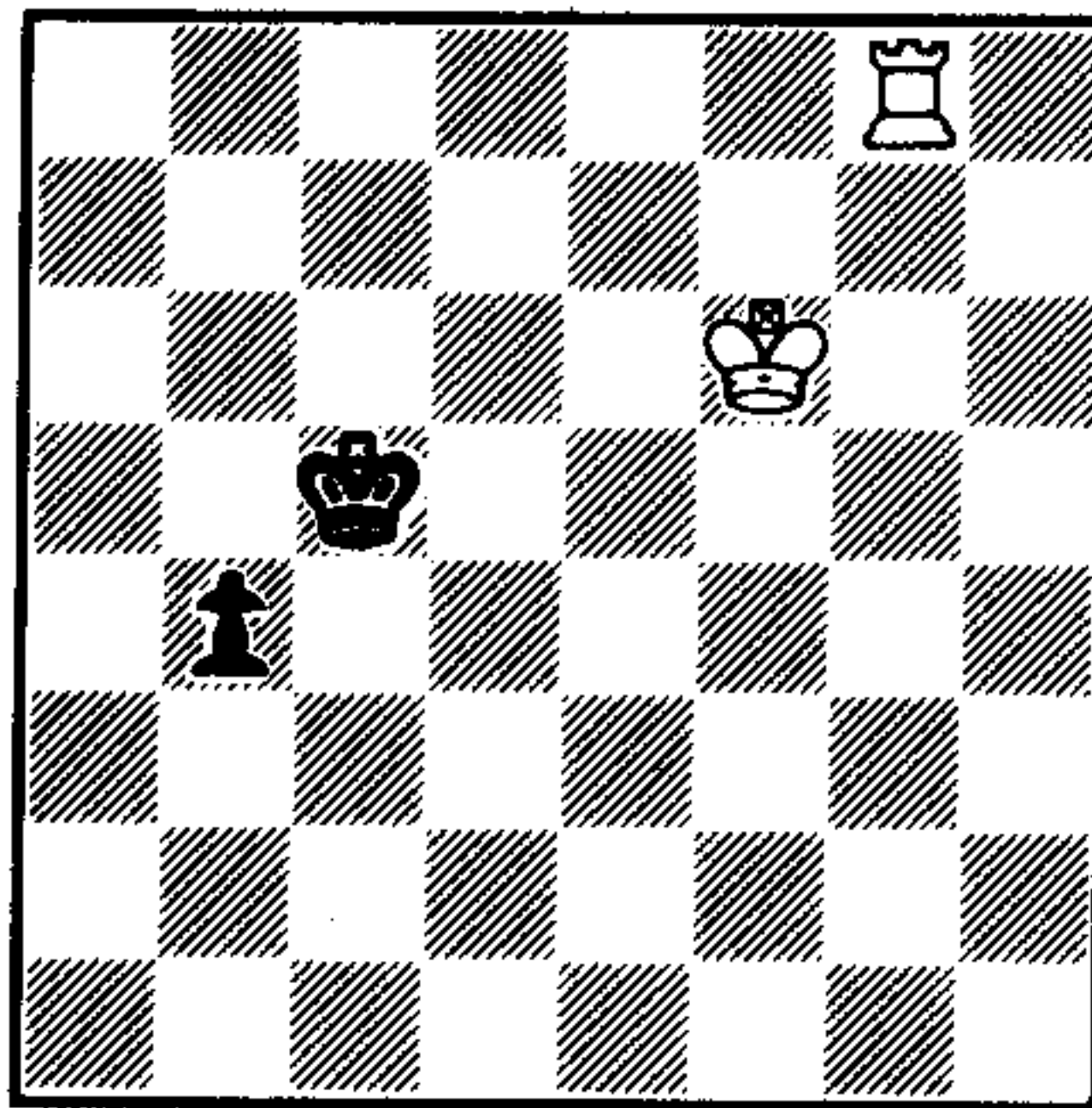


Diagram 1

Play with *White on move* is:

1 Ke5!

The only correct move. Since Black's King is already on the 4th rank, White's Rook can't cut it off from assisting the pawn, i.e. 1 Rg4? is useless because of 1...b3 followed by 2...b2. Also incorrect is 1 Rb8? since after 1...Kc4 the position is drawn — as will be shown shortly.

To win, *White's King must get back toward the b-file as quickly as possible.*

1 Kc4
2 Ke4!

Just as on the previous move, so also here and on the next move White moves his King as close as possible to the b-pawn, while simultaneously containing Black King's freedom as much as possible.

2 Kc3
3 Ke3! b3
4 Rc8+!

This check on the file is the key method of forcing Black's King to give way to White's King when the White King has placed itself opposite to Black's.

4 Kb2
5 Kd2! Ka2
6 Rb8!

Placing the Rook immediately in position for stopping the pawn is the most reliable method. However also winning is 6 Kc3 b2 7 Ra8+ Kb1 8 Rb8 Ka1!? 9 Kc2.

6 b2
Only delaying the end is 6...Kb2 7 Rb7! Ka2 8 Kc3.
7 Kc2

And White wins.

Play with *Black on move* from Diagram 1 is:

1 b3

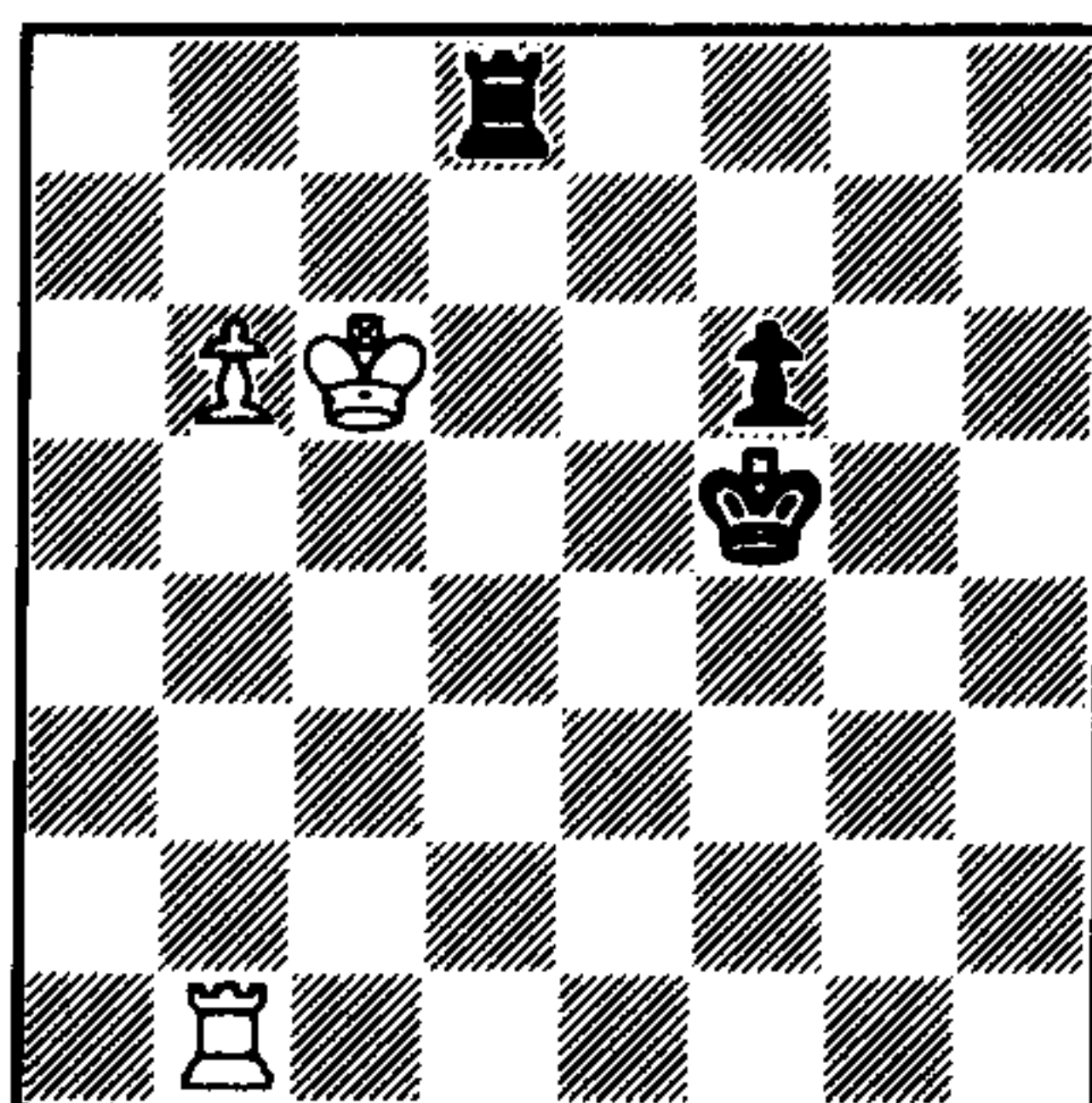
Also drawing is 1...Kc4, with transposition into the same basic positions as after the text move.

2 Ke5 Kc4
3 Ke4
After the immediate 3 Rc8+, Black has the saving 3...Kd3!
3 b2
4 Rb8 Kc3
5 Ke3 Kc2
Draw.

Being a full tempo ahead of our previous line, Black is not forced to blockade his own pawn after 6 Rc8+ (6...Kb1?? again loses), but draws with either 6...Kb3 or 6...Kd1.

As we have just seen, to hope to draw the defending King must do two things: assist the pawn's advance *and* prevent the enemy King from approaching the pawn. The practical considerations involved are illustrated very well from Diagram 2 at the top of the next page, A. Alekhine - E. Bogoljubov, 1929 World Championship Match, Game 19. Black on move. It is easy to see that White must be significantly better since in short order Black will have to give up his Rook for the b-pawn. There are two different ways for Black to play his King: the wrong way and the right way.

Diagram 2



Alekhine -
Boguljubow
1929 Match,
Game 19
Black on move

The game continuation is the *wrong* way:

1	Kg4?
2 b7	f5

White's King also gets back in time after 2...Rb8 3 Kc7 Rxb7+ 4 Kxb7 f5 5 Kc6.

3 b8(Q)	Rxb8
4 Rxb8	f4
5 Kd5!	

Since White's Rook is already ideally placed on the 8th rank, the correct strategy is to bring back the King.

5	f3
6 Ke4!	

Note how undisturbed White's King is in achieving his goal of getting to Black's pawn.

6	f2
7 Rf8	Kg3
8 Ke3	Black resigns.

Black's problem in the above line was that White's King was given a field day.

From Diagram 2 the *correct* way — and sufficient to draw — is:

1	Ke4!
2 b7	f5
3 b8(Q)	Rxb8
4 Rxb8	f4
5 Rb4+	

White's King can not approach the pawn, unless White's Rook gives up his preferred location on the 8th rank. There are no winning prospects in 5 Re8+ Kd4! 6 Rf8 Ke3 7 Kd5 f3.

5	Ke3
6 Kd5	f3
7 Rb3+	Ke2!

It is imperative that Black's King be kept as active as possible. Losing is

7...Kf4? because of 8 Kd4! f2 9 Rb1 Kf3 10 Kd3 Kg2 11 Ke2.

8 Ke4	f2
9 Rb2+	Ke1
10 Ke3!	f1(N)+!
Drawn.	

This specific position is a theoretical draw. In general, endgames of Rook versus Knight are drawn as long as the Knight *remains near the King*. If the King and Knight become separated, then there is a good chance that the Knight can be trapped and go lost.

Section 2: Rook vs. Pawns

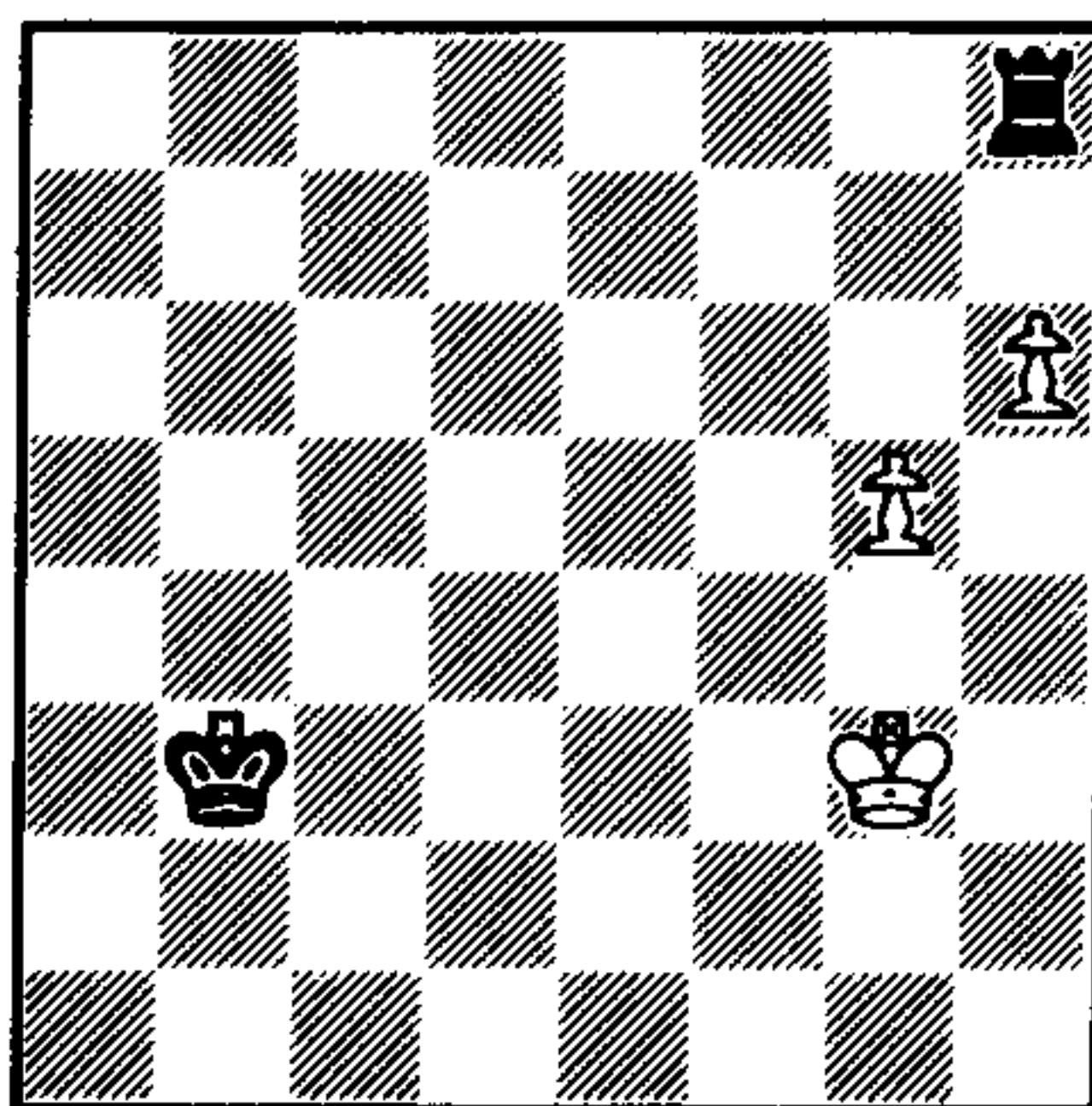
When the Rook has to cope with two or more pawns, the specifics can get rather complicated. An accurate evaluation of each position requires specific attention to the respective King locations, pawn configuration and Rook location. The many variables present make it difficult to generalize, yet some generalization is required to make the subject comprehensible. Therefore the following general principles will be of help in the evaluation of potential positions and in providing the basic direction of indicated play:

- As a very broad generalization: if the stronger side's King is near the pawns, he wins against two pawns and draws against three or four pawns.
- Two or more pawns win, if they are well advanced, their King can assist them and if the enemy King is away.
- Two connected passed pawns, in the absence of Kings, win if *both* are at least on the sixth rank, but *otherwise lose*.
- Against three connected pawns, the Rook wins if its King is near and the pawns are no further advanced than the fourth rank. One pawn on the 6th gives good drawing chances and a pawn on the 7th forces the opponent to go for the draw.
- Connected passed pawns are much stronger than disconnected passed pawns.
- In coping with disconnected pawns, the Rook should first play against the pawn whose advance is supported by the King.
- In all cases, both Kings want to head for the pawns. The pawns need the help of their King to advance, while the enemy King wants to get in *front* of the pawns to stop them.
- For stopping pawns the Rook is often most effective on the first rank.
- If the side with the Rook also has a pawn, this increases its chances

significantly because the pawn can usually be transformed into a decisive passed pawn.

Of the various Rook vs. multiple pawn endgames, the one of greatest practical importance is Rook vs. *two connected passed pawns*. It usually results from a queening race where one side has given up its Rook for the enemy pawn. The kind of practical situation that comes up often is shown in Diagram 3, L. Gutmans - Tseitlin, USSR 1976, after Black's 51st move.

Diagram 3



Gutmans-Tseitlin
USSR 1976
After Black's 51st

White's pawns are well advanced and can be supported by the King, while Black's King is far away. Therefore it is easy enough to conclude that White is better. But can he win? He can, if he can get his g-pawn going as soon as possible. The correct and winning way is:

52 Kh4!	Kc4
53 Kh5	Kd5
54 g6	Ke6
55 g7	Ra8
56 h7	& White wins.

The play, I think, is rather straightforward. Do note how the presence of the White King unleashed the dynamic power of the connected passed pawns.

However, White in fact did not win the game. The actual game continuation was:

52 Kf4?

Instead of maximizing the power of his pawns, White gives top priority to containing Black's King. Since this cannot be done, the whole approach is unsuccessful.

52	Kc4
53 Ke5	

Trickier would have been 53 Kf5!? since then the obvious 53...Kd5? loses to 54 g6! Rxh6 57 g7. Necessary is 53...Rf8+! to force White's King to an inferior square. After both 54 Ke6 Rh8! and 54 Kg4 Kd5! 55 g6 Ke6 Black is safe.

53

Kd3!

Sneaking in behind White's pawns is often an effective way to activate the defender's King. In this case, however, the routine 53...Kc5 also draws, e.g. 54 Kf6 Kd6 53 Kg7 Ra8 56 h7 Ke6 57 h8(Q) (or 57 g6 Kf5) 57...Rxh8 58 Kxh8 Kf5.

54 Kf6

The game was called a draw after 54 Kf5 Ke3 since after 55 g6!? Rxh6 56 g7 Rh5+! White's King, to escape checks, must either go to the 7th rank (whereupon ...Rh7 draws) or cross into the g-file (whereupon ...Rg1 draws).

54

Ke4

55 Kg7

Ra8

56 h7

Kf5

57 g6

Kg5

58 h8(Q)

Rxh8

59 Kxh8

Kxg6

Draw.



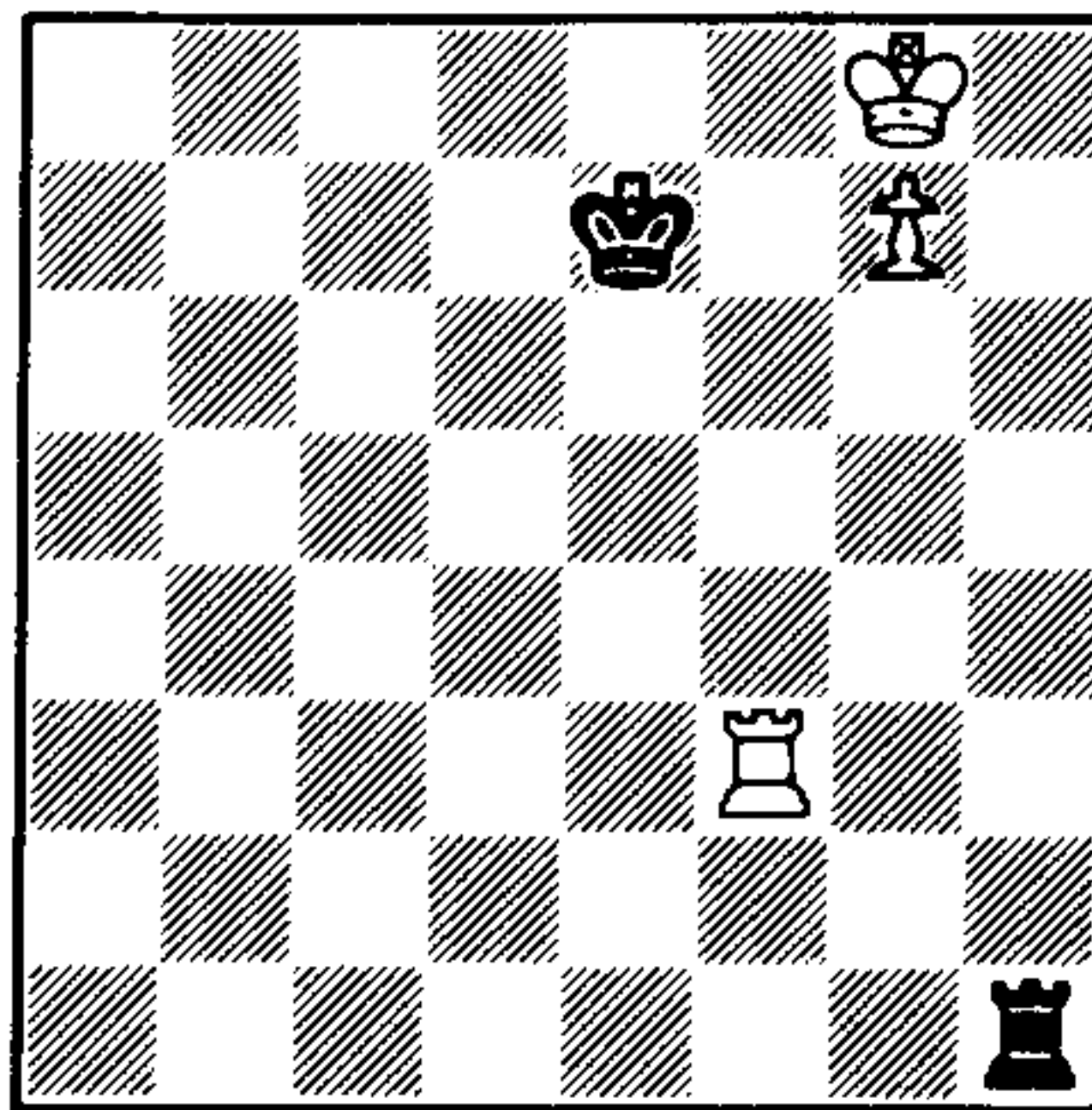
Chapter 2

Rook & Pawn – Basic Principles

Section 1: R + P vs. R – Lucena position

The single most important winning position to know is the so-called Lucena position. The stronger side should always head for it, while, conversely, the defending side should prevent its occurrence. A typical position is shown in Diagram 4.

Diagram 4



Lucena position

The key characteristics of the Lucena are: White's King is on the *eighth* rank in *front* of his own pawn and the King can not be bothered by meaningful checks; Black's King is cut off from the pawn by *only one file* (otherwise the win is even easier). The Lucena position is won for all pawns, *except the Rook pawns*, and irrespective of who is on move.

Assuming it is Black's move, best play from Diagram 4 is:

1 Rh2

Black must stay on the h-file. After, e.g. 1...Ra1, White wins easily with 2 Rh3! followed by 3 Kh7.

2 Rf4!

The start of the key winning method, called "building a bridge".

2 Rh1

3 Re4+ Kd7

Obviously hopeless is 3...Kf6 because of 4 Kf8.

4 Kf7 Rf1+

5 Kg6 Rg1+

6 Kf6 Rf1+

There is no viable defense. If 6...Rg2, White builds his bridge with 7 Re5! followed by 8 Rg5. If 6...Kd6, White wins with 7 Rd4+! Kc6 (after 7...Kc7 White can again build the bridge with 8 Rd5 followed by 9 Rg5)

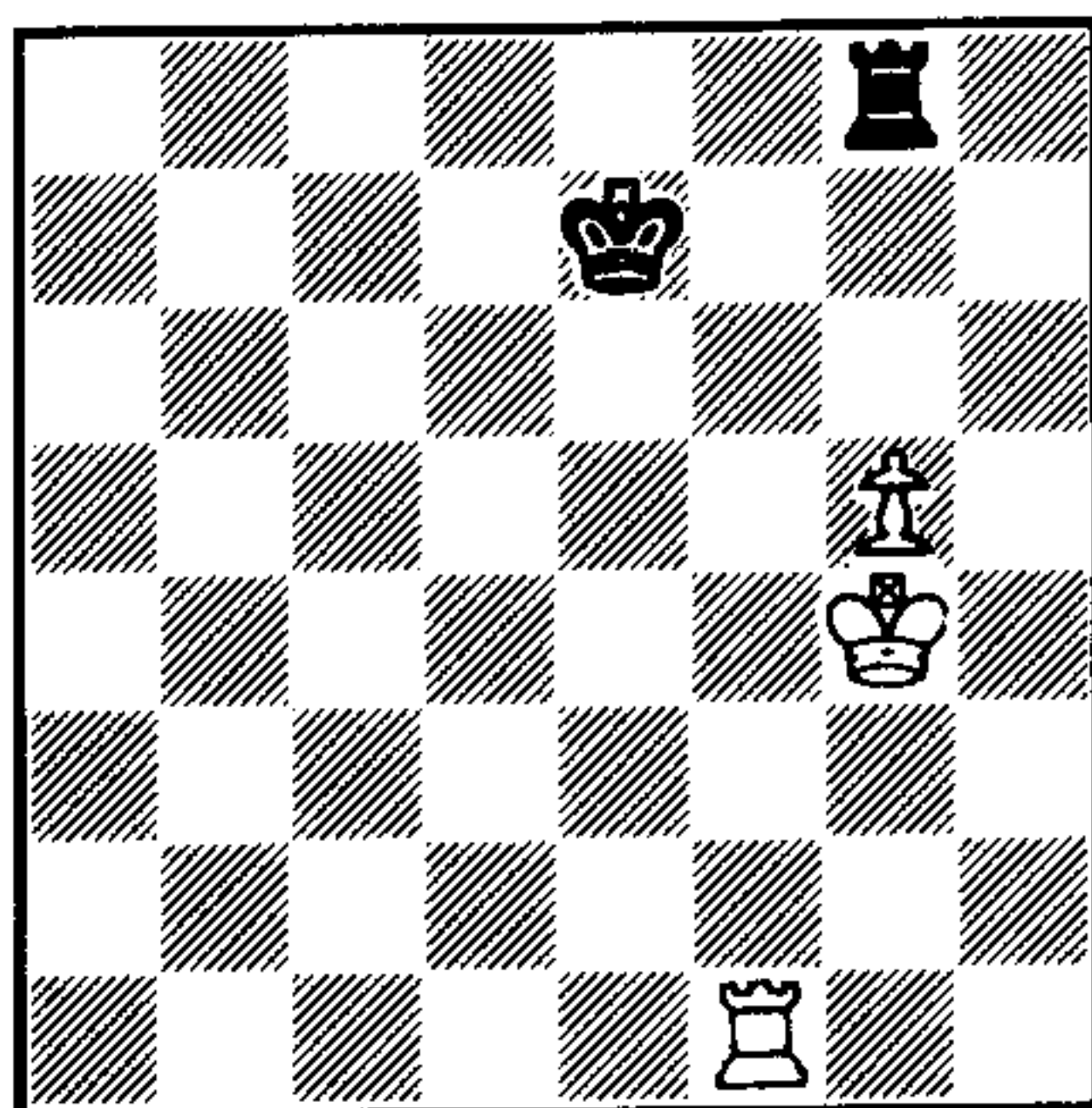
8 Rd8.

7 Kg5! Rg1+
8 Rg4! and White wins.

The bridge has been completed and White's pawn will queen.

A practical demonstration of how the Lucena position is reached is shown from Diagram 5. Note that Black's King is cut off from helping to stop White's pawn.

Diagram 5



White on move wins

Black on move draws

White on move wins because he can reach the Lucena:

1 Kh5!

White is now ready to start advancing the g-pawn. Since passive defense is hopeless, Black has nothing better than to start checking.

1 Rh8+
2 Kg6 Rg8+
3 Kh6 Rh8+
4 Kg7 Rh2
5 g6 Rg2

Black tries to prevent the Lucena (King on g8, pawn on g7) but can only postpone it by a bit.

6 Kh7! Rh2+
7 Kg8! Rg2
8 g7 and White wins.

White has obtained the Lucena position and wins as from Diagram 4.

However, from Diagram 5, *Black on move draws* because he can prevent the Lucena:

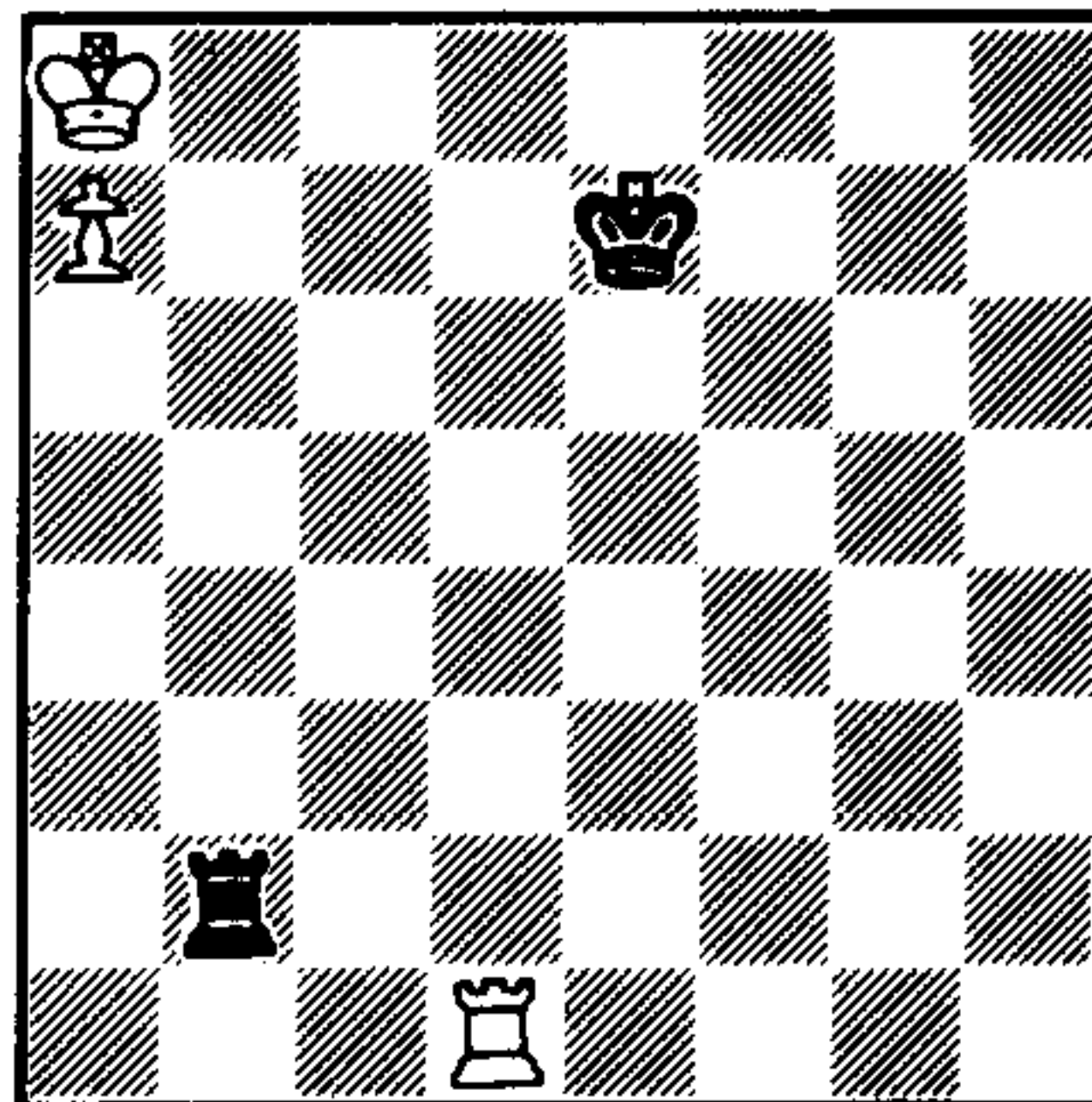
1 Rf8! Drawn

2 Rxf8 Kxf8 and 2 Rf5 Rxf5! 3 Kxf5 Kf7 lead to drawn K & P endgames, while otherwise (after e.g. 2 Ra1) Black brings his King over in front of the pawn with 2...Kf7.

Just as in K & P endgames, so also in Rook endgames the Rook pawn is the worst to have. Even to win the very favorable case of the Lucena position, the enemy King must be cut off by *more than three files*. Thus if White has an

a-pawn and Black's Rook controls the b-file, Black's King must not be closer than on the f-file. Otherwise there is no win. Consider now Diagram 6.

Diagram 6



Drawn

Since Black's King is already on the e-file, the position is drawn, no matter who is on the move.

The strategic considerations are the following: In order to win White must free his King starting with Rb8. Black can not prevent that Rook move, but his King can be brought over just in time to prevent the escape of White's King.

With White on move, thematic play is:

1 Rh1	Kd7!
2 Rh8	Kc7!

The only move to draw. Remember that in general the defensive King wants to be as close as possible to the pawn.

3 Rb8	Rh2
4 Rb7+	Kc8!

Keeping White's King contained.

5 Rb1	Rc2!
Drawn.	

By ensuring his King a location on the c-file Black ensures the draw. There is no way for White to progress because he can not liberate his King.

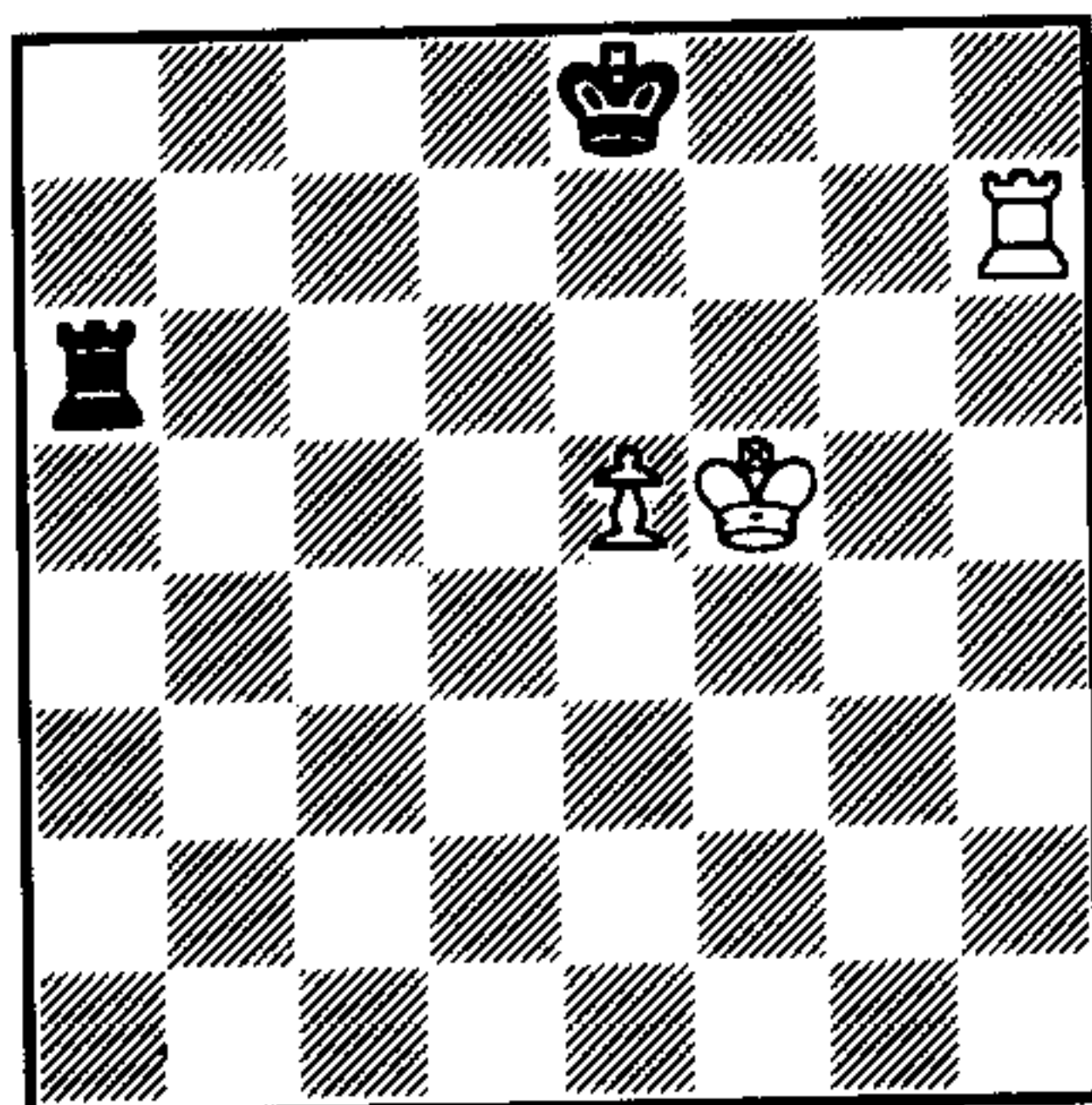
Section 2: R + P vs. R – Philidor's position

Just as the pawn up side always wants to achieve the Lucena position, so the defending side always wants to obtain Philidor's position. The key type is shown in Diagram 7. The main characteristics of Philidor's position are: Black's King is in front of the pawn and Black's Rook is on *its third rank*, thereby preventing White's King from getting to his sixth rank.

Philidor's position is *drawn for all eight pawns* and *irrespective of who* is on move.

Thematic play from Diagram 7, with White on move, is:

Diagram 7



Philidor's position

Draw

1 Rb7

In effect a waiting move in the hope that Black will make an error.

1

Rc6!

Remember that Black wants to retain his Rook on the third rank.

2 e6

White threatens to follow-up with Kf6, which would be winning as after 2...Ra6? 3 Kf6! Therefore at this moment Black must activate his Rook.

2

Rc1!

3 Kf6

Rf1+

4 Ke5

Re1+

5 Kd6

Rd1+

Drawn.

The position is drawn since White has no meaningful way to escape the checks. Note how the pawn on the *sixth* rank has deprived the King from obtaining shelter.

The foolproof defensive technique in drawing R vs. R + P endgames is:

(1) Aim for Philidor's position by playing your Rook to the *third* rank.

(2) Keep it there until White plays the pawn to the *sixth* rank.

(3) At this moment play the Rook to the *eighth* rank and start checking from *behind*.

Section 3: R + P vs. R — Other cases

A) Defensive King is in front of the pawn, but Philidor's position can not be reached.

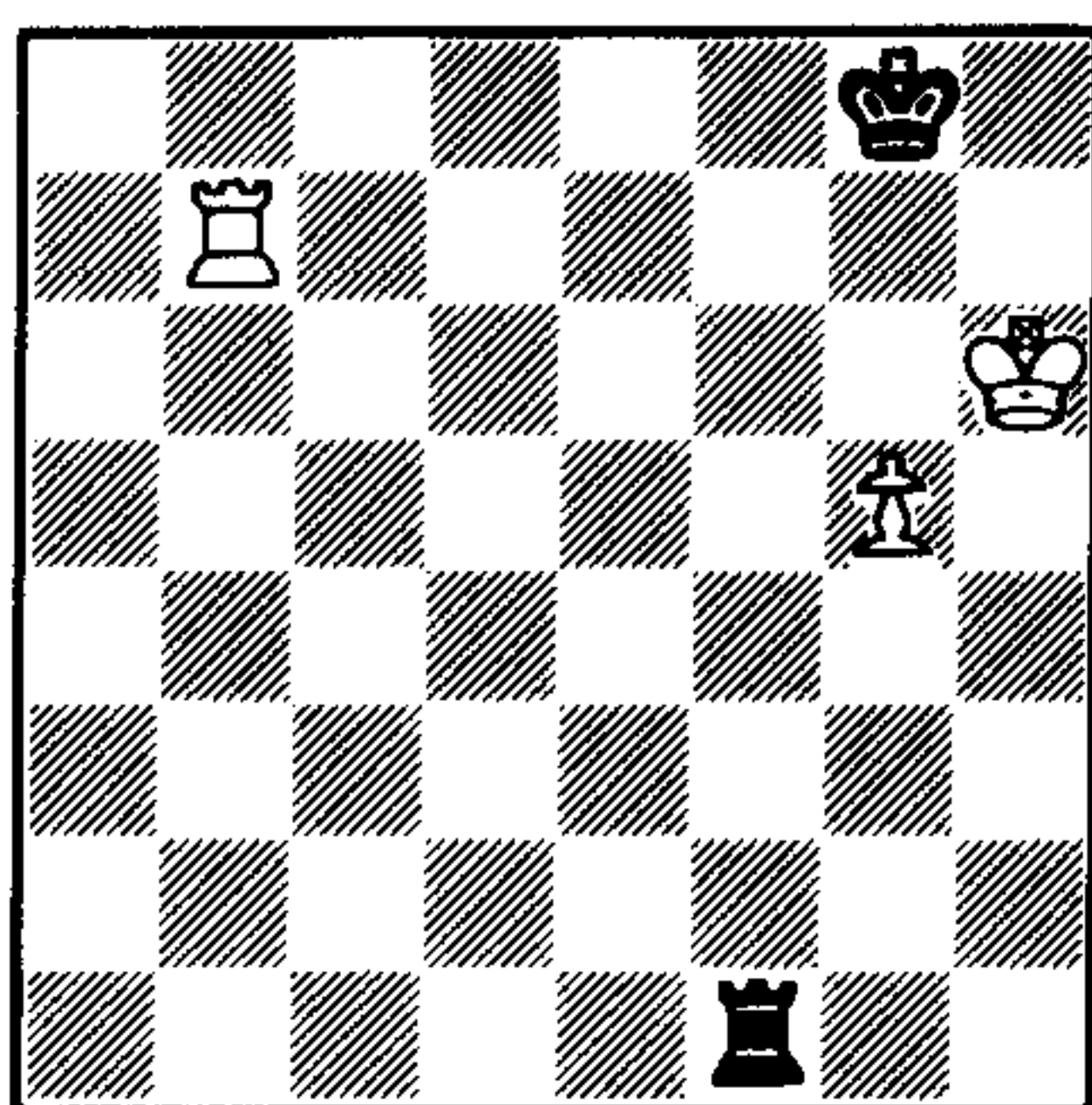
In real life the defending side often cannot obtain Philidor's position. The side up the pawn will try to get as much as possible out of its position and therefore will allow simplification only if it can achieve something which offers better winning chances than possible from Philidor's position. It is very important therefore to consider how to defend against the various pawns if your King is already in front of the pawn, but you cannot get your Rook

to the third rank. As will be seen, there are some key differences between the methods required for the various pawns.

The *Rook* pawns offer no winning chances at all. As long as the defensive King and Rook remain on the first rank, the defense is impregnable.

Also for the *Knight* pawns, the only correct drawing method is *passive* defense by the Rook. The key position is shown in Diagram 8, with Black on move.

Diagram 8



Black on move draws

To draw Black must play:

1 Rf8!

Then White can not make progress, for instance:

2 g6 Ra8

3 Rg7+ Kh8

White's King must be kept out. Losing therefore is 3...Kf8? 4 Kh7!, etc.

4 Rh7+ Kg8

Drawn.

Black is safe because White can never play g7 with his Rook on h7, since then with ...Ra6+ Black wins White's Rook and the game. With the h- and g-pawns passive defense works because the stronger side can not effectively play on *both* sides of the pawn.

Perhaps surprisingly, active defense — except of course for the foolproof Philidor's position — actually loses. Thus from Diagram 8, losing is the "active":

1 Rg1?

2 Kg6! Kf8

Forced since 2...Rf1 3 Rb8+ Rf8 4 Rxf8+ Kxf8 5 Kh7 leads to a lost K + P endgame.

3 Rb8+ Ke7

4 Rg8!

The key winning method: by keeping the g-pawn protected, White will be able to advance it and in due course reach the Lucena position.

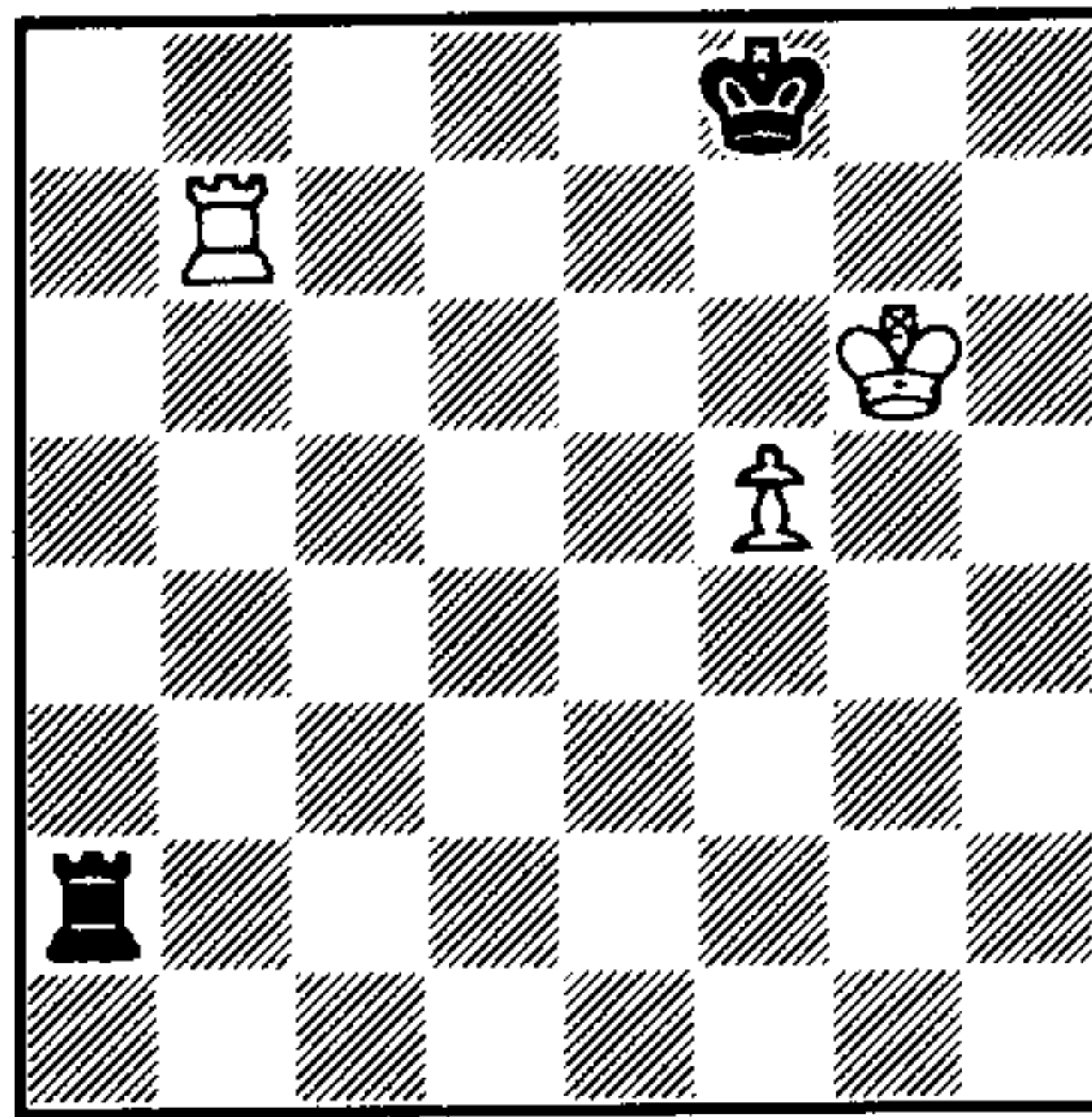
4 Rg2

5 Kh7!	Kf7
6 g6+	Kf6
7 Rf8+	Ke7
8 g7	Rh2+
9 Kg8	and White wins.

White has obtained the Lucena position and wins as from Diagram 4.

However, *passive* Rook defense loses against the other four pawns: the c-, d-, e-, and f-pawn. This is so because the stronger side can maneuver on *both* sides of the pawn. The situation for a Bishop pawn (here the f-pawn) is demonstrated from Diagram 9, with Black on move.

Diagram 9



Black on move draws

Losing is:

1	Ra8?
2 f6	Kg8
3 Rg7+!	

But of course not 3 f7+? Kf8 with a draw.

3	Kf8
4 Rh7!	Kg8
5 f7+	Kf8
6 Rh8+	and White wins.

To draw from Diagram 9, Black's Rook must be utilized actively. The correct plan starts with:

1	Rf2!
--------	------

It is best to immediately place the Rook *behind* White's pawn, so that White can not advance it later at *the* desired moment.

2 Kf6!

Here is Black's second moment of truth. White obviously threatens 3 Rb8+ so that Black's King must move, thereby giving up his favorable in-front-of-the-pawn location. Black loses if he plays 2...Ke8?: 3 Rb8+ Kd7 4 Rf8!, reaching the thematic winning position demonstrated already from Diagram 8. The only correct move is:

2	Kg8!
--------	------

The correct King direction is *always* given by the following easy-to-remember rule: the King should *head for the pawn's shorter side*. For the f-pawn, the g-h side is obviously much shorter than the e- to a-side.

3 Rb8+ Kh7

4 Rf8

White now is ready to start advancing his pawn with Ke7, f6, Rd8, etc. — aiming as always for the Lucena. Note that after the immediate 4 Ke6, Black has 4...Kg7!

4 Ra2!

Activating the Rook for checking White's King from the side, which would stymie White after e.g. 5 Ke7 Ra7+ or 5 Kf7 Ra7+. The reason why the defender's King should be played to the short side can now be appreciated. The Rook has full scope for checks from the *long* side, since his own King is not in his way!

5 Re8

Getting ready to interpolate the Rook on side checks.

5 Rf2!

Again preventing the advance of White's King and thereby the f-pawn.

6 Re5

With the f-pawn protected by the Rook, White threatens to win with 7 Kf7 and 8 f6. Black must prevent this.

6 Kg8!

7 Ke7

Again threatening 8 f6.

7 Kg7!

Drawn.

Black has set up a fully defensible position. After e.g. 8 Ke6 Ra2 9 f6+ Kf8 we have reached something like an advanced version of Philidor's position.

Play against the *center* pawns is similar to that against the Bishop pawns. Again the defender's Rook must be utilized actively. The kind of situation that often comes up in practical play is illustrated from Diagram 10, E. Mednis - T. Weinberger, Cleveland 1975, after White's 41st move.

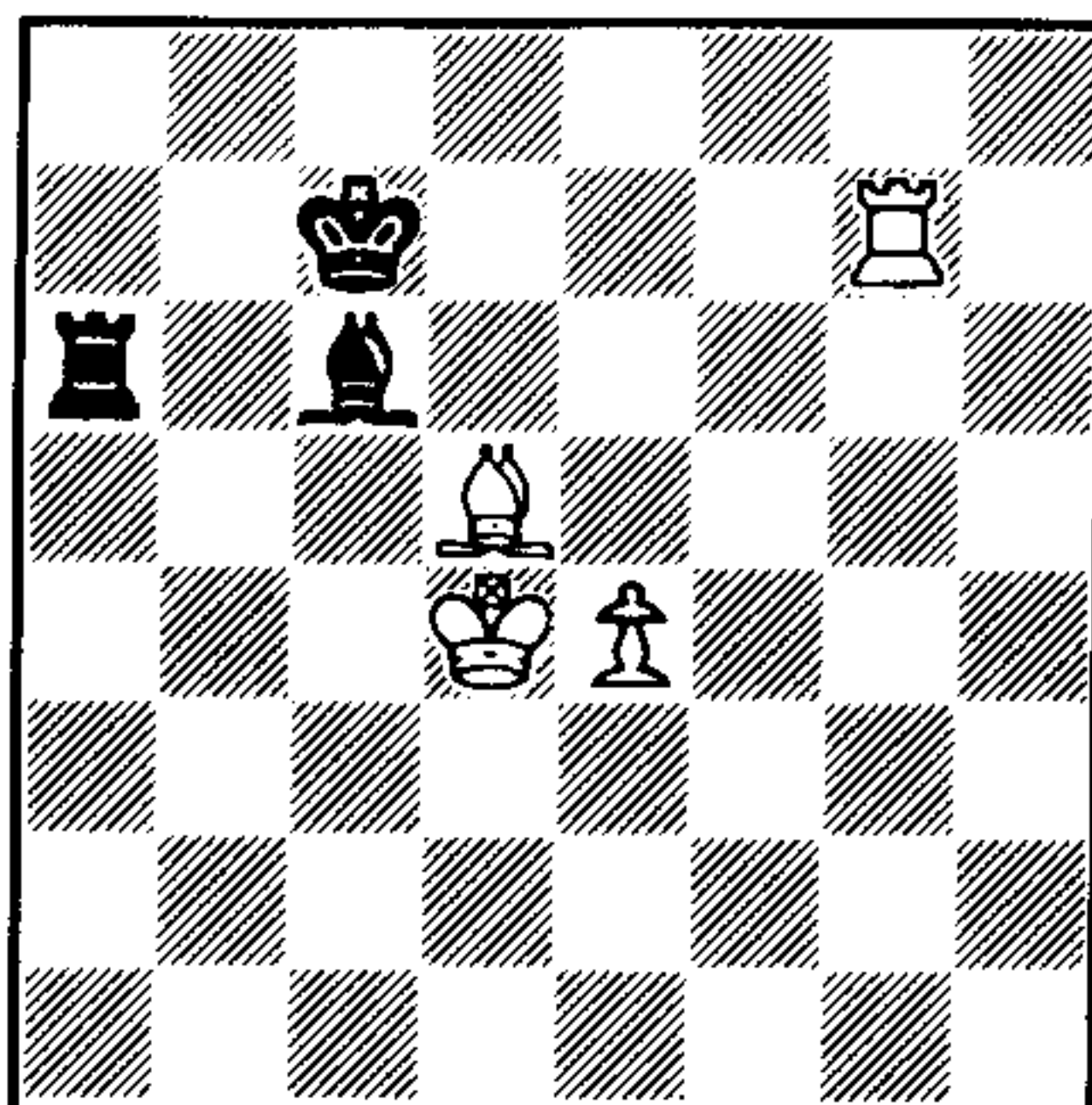


Diagram 10

Mednis-Weinberger
Cleveland 1975
After White's 41st

In the game Black played 41...Bd7 and after committing some errors he lost on move 60.

However, Black here had the opportunity to achieve a theoretically clearly drawn R + P endgame. (He avoided it because he thought it was lost!) The drawing method is:

41 Kd8!
42 Rg6

Deactivating the Bishop offers no real practical chances. The coming R + P vs. R endgame is very favorable, but Black can draw *if he knows the required endgame theory*.

42 Ra4+
43 Ke5 Bxd5!
44 exd5

Obviously Black can not achieve Philidor's position, yet he can draw by activating his Rook:

44 Ra1!
45 Ke6 Rd1!

In general, the Rook should immediately go *behind* the pawn to prevent its advance at *the key moment*. Inferior is 45...Re1+?! 46 Kd6 Kc8 47 Rg8+ Kb7, even though for the very favorable defensive case here (King on the short side, pawn still on the fifth rank) Black can draw with perfect play, 48 Kd7! Rh1 (only move) 49 Rg7 Rh8! (only move) 50 d6 Kb6! (only move).

46 Kd6 Kc8!

Heading for the short side. While for the very specific case of a *center* pawn *still on the 5th* rank (our situation!), the defender's King can also be on the long side, it is *always simpler and better* to be on the *short* side.

47 Rg8+ Kb7
48 Rd8

Threatening 49 Ke7, followed by 50 d6, winning.

48 Rh1!

Getting in the position for checking from the side.

49 Re8! Rd1!
50 Re5 Kc8!
Drawn.

The threatened 51 Kd7 must be prevented. Black is now safe since 51 Ke7 is easily met by 51...Kc7.

In all of the kind of R & P endgames resulting from Diagrams 9 and 10, the defending Rook should be in *one* of these two positions:

- (1) *Behind* the pawn — such as d1 or d2 here.
- (2) In the *far* corner — such as h1 or h2 here.

B) Defensive King is cut off from the pawn.

Positions where the defending King is cut off on a *file* are both frequent and important. (Considerations similar to those discussed here also apply if the King is cut off on a *rank*.) One instructive example was already discussed from Diagram 5. For that kind of a situation it is good to know the following general rule, as given by Reuben Fine:

If the pawn is on the fifth rank with its King near and the Black King is cut off from the queening file, White wins. The only exception is if Black can afford to oppose Rooks and by doing this can chase away White's Rook, thus enabling Black's King to move over to stop the pawn. As will be recalled, if Black is on move in Diagram 5, he can save himself with 1...Rf8!, since this fits the above exception exactly.

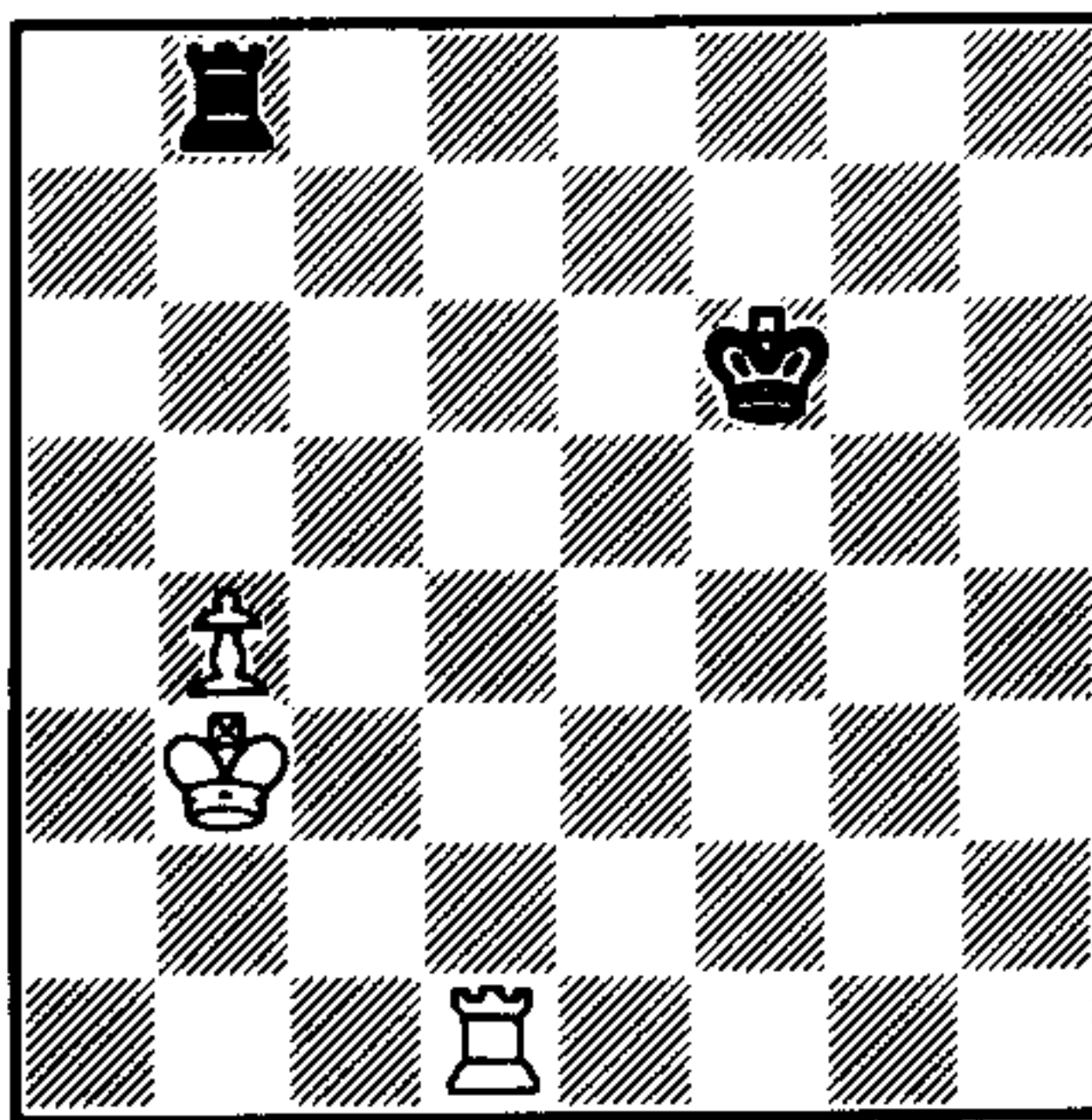
For other pawn locations, the following rules apply:

(1) With the pawn on the third or fourth rank and its King near, White wins only if the Black King is cut off a distance of *three* files from the pawn for the *Knight* pawns and two files from the pawn for the *Bishop* and *center* pawns.

(2) With the pawn still on the second rank, while Black's King is on the fourth or fifth rank, White wins only if the Black King is cut off at a distance of *five* files from the pawn.

All these endgames require very exact play to achieve the theoretically indicated result. This will be shown from Diagram 11, which can be captioned: White to play wins/Black to play draws.

Diagram 11



White to move wins

Black to move draws

The characteristics of the position are: White's pawn is a Knight pawn and is on the fourth rank; Black's King is cut off *two* files from the pawn. We can build on this information as follows:

A) *White to move wins*, because after:

1 Re1!

...Black's King is cut off by *three* files. Thematic play then is:

1 Kf5
2 Kc4 Rc8+

There is nothing better since White was threatening to simply push his pawn starting with 3 b5, 4 Kc5, 5 b6, etc.

3 Kd5 Rb8

Further checks chase White's King where it wants to go: 3...Rd8+ 4 Kc6 Rc8+ 5 Kb7!, followed by a rapid advance of the pawn.

4 Rb1!

The Rook must protect the b-pawn, thus giving up his watch over the Black King. Yet that King is still far away and the favorable factors of active White King and well placed White Rook, while Black's Rook is inactively placed, all lead to an easy win for White.

4 Kf6
5 b5 Ke7
6 Kc6! Kd8
7 b6 Kc8

On 7...Rc8+, with White having the choice between 8 Kb7 or 8 Kd6, winning easily in each case.

8 Rh1 and White wins.

B) *Black to move draws* because after:

1 Ke6!

... Black's King is only *two* files away from the pawn and this *coupled* with the *King's* location on the *third* rank is just sufficient to draw. However, insufficient to draw is 1...Ke7? because White is able then to get the pawn to the key *fifth* rank: 2 Rd4! Ke6 (2...Rd8 3 Rxd8 Kxd8 4 Ka4! Kc7 5 Ka5! Kb7 6 Kb5 is a won K + P endgame) 3 Kc4! Rc8+ (Or 3...Ke5 4 Rd5+ Ke6 5 b5! Rc8+ 6 Rc5 Kd7 7 b6!) 4 Kb5 Rb8+ 5 Kc6 Rc8+ 6 Kb7 Rc1 7 b5 and White wins since he is sure to obtain the Lucena position.

2 Rd4 Ke5!

Here we see the *other* point of Black's first move. Not only does Black want to be close to the pawn (i.e. be on the e-file), but the King *must* also be able to attack White's Rook, whenever the Rook threatens to let the pawn advance or to free the King.

3 Rd7

In the hope of following up with 4 Kc4. There are no prospects in 3 Rc4, since Black's King can come closer with 3...Kd5! White's pawn is still on the *fourth* rank and with Black's King cut off only one file, the position is a clear draw.

3 Ke6!
4 Rd4 Ke5!
5 Kc3 Rh8!

Activating the Rook is the best policy. However, Black can also draw with 5...Ra8, though only by a hair: 6 Rc4 Rb8 7 Rc6 Kd5 8 Ra6 Rc8+ 9 Kb3

Rc6! However, losing is 5...Rb7? since after 6 Rd3! Black is unable to prevent White's King from getting to c4 and the pawn to b5.

6 b5

After 6 Rd7, it is Black's King who again does the job: 6...Ke6! 7 Ra7 Kd5!, with a drawn position.

6

Rb8!

7 Rh4

Or 7 Rb4 Kd5!, drawing. With the text move White keeps the pawn protected by tactical means. But Black, of course, is more than satisfied to just get his King back.

7

Kd6!

8 Kb4

Kc7!

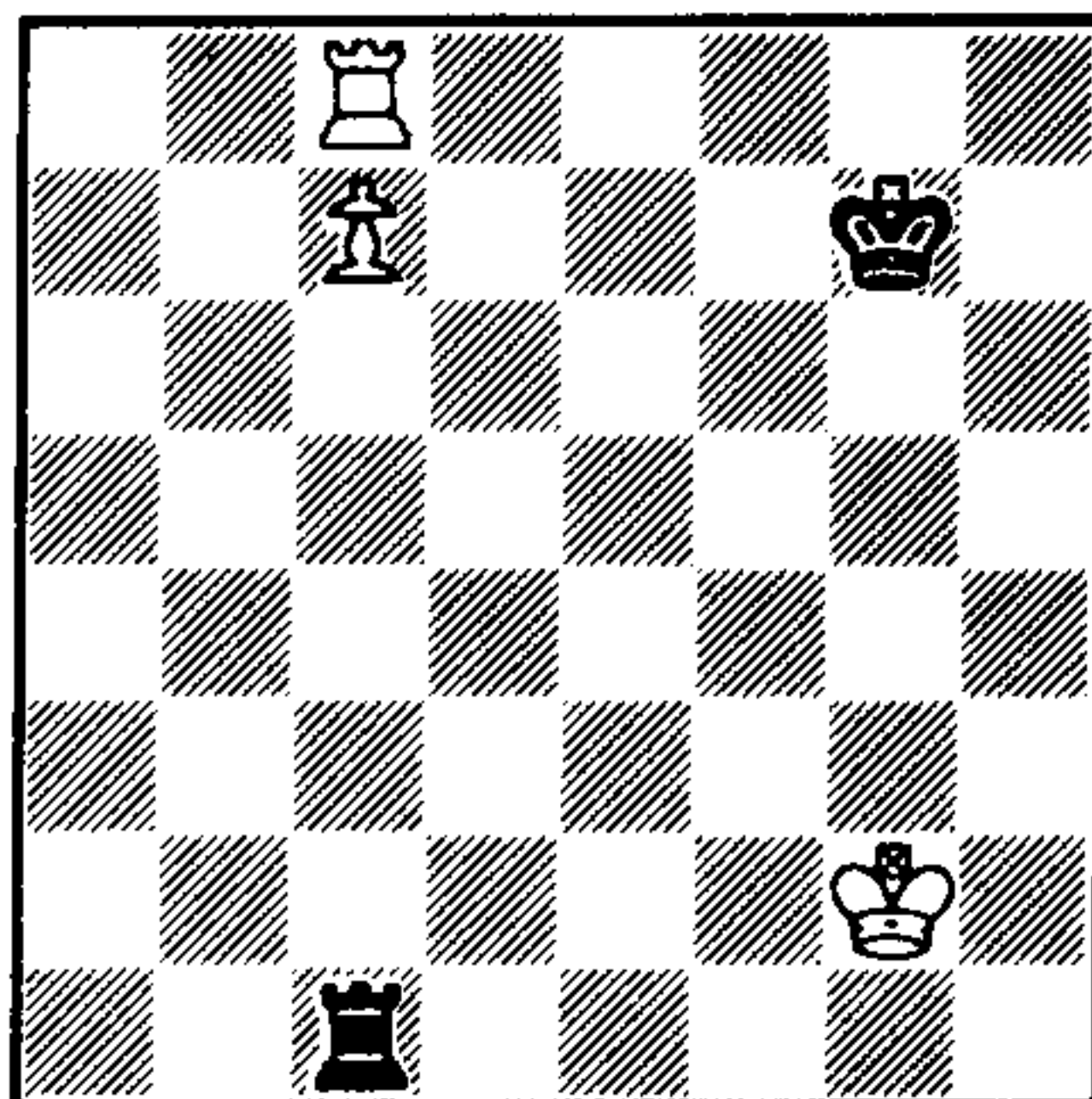
Drawn.

By getting his King in front of the pawn Black has assured the draw. As a matter of fact, Black can even set up Philidor's position.

C) Pitfalls the stronger side should avoid

Even in favorable appearing positions, the stronger side wants to avoid the following two potential problems: immobilizing his Rook and depriving his King of shelter. This worst-of-both-worlds' situation is shown in Diagram 12.

Diagram 12



Drawn

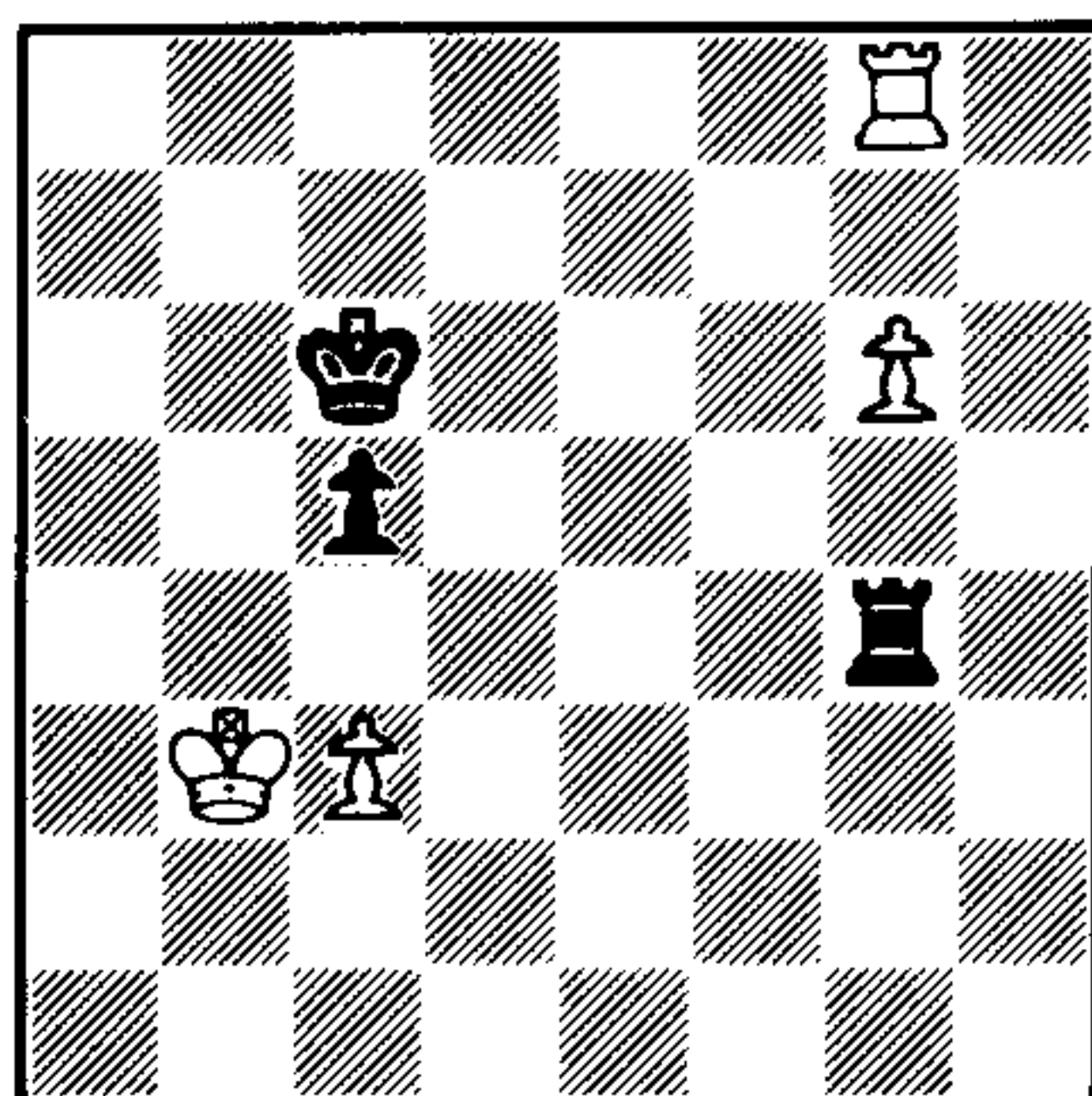
Note that White's Rook can not move without losing the c-pawn. Moreover, because the pawn is already on the 7th rank, White's King is prevented from finding refuge on the Queenside. All that Black has to do is to keep the Rook in an active location (e.g. c1 or c2) on the c-file. When White's King gets to d6 or d7, Black starts checking the King from behind until the King gives up protection of the pawn. Then the Rook returns to the c-file to retain the status quo. Positions of the Diagram 12 type are absolute draws.

The "inherent secret" of the draw is that Black's King can remain securely on g7 or h7. Thus even if we add a g-pawn (or an h-pawn) to Diagram 12, the position remains drawn. But the addition of a *f-pawn* (e.g. on f5)

allows White to win as follows: 1 f6+ Kf7 2 Rh8! Rxc7 3 Rh7+, followed by 4 Rxc7.

The king of pitfalls — and opportunities — that come up in practical play are well illustrated from Diagram 13, L. Ljubojevic-S. Gligoric, Match Game No. 9, Belgrade 1979, White on move.

Diagram 13



Ljubojevic-Gligoric,
1979
White on move

White is up an advanced passed g-pawn, yet the fact that his Rook is rather immobilized and his King presently cut off, make the win uncertain. However, White does have a major potential trump card: his other pawn is the c-pawn and we have just learned that if White can win Black's pawn, then even with a completely immobile Rook on g8, the position is won.

White's winning method is:

1 c4!!

The strategic point behind this move is to force Black's pawn to remain on c5, where it will be shown to be vulnerable.

1	Rg3+
2 Kc2	Kb7
3 g7	

This ties down Black's Rook to the g-file and Black's King to the a7 and b7 squares. White can not win by trying to play his King to g7 since this will give Black's Rook time to capture White's c-pawn and then Black's c-pawn will be sufficient to draw.

3	Ka7
4 Kd2	Kb7
5 Ke2	Ka7
6 Kf2	Rg5
7 Kf3!	

White now is ready to advance his King up the field to get at Black's c-pawn.

7	Kb7
8 Kf4	Rg1
9 Ke5	Rg2

10 Kd5 Rg5+
 11 Kd6! Ka7
 12 Kc6! and White wins.

Because of *zugzwang* Black has only a choice of how to lose. After 12...Ka6 he loses his King; after 12...Rg1 he loses the c-pawn, and White wins by simply racing his c-pawn up the board.

Yet in the game continuation, neither side took advantage of its opportunities:

1 g7? Kb7?

Correct and sufficient to draw is 1...c4+! Then White's Rook would have remained immobile on g8. Black's King could remain safely on a7 and b7 and Black's pawn on c4 would be easily protected by the Rook on g4. A likely continuation: 2 Kb4 Kb7 3 Kb5 Ka7 4 Kc6 Rg6+ 5 Kc5 Rg4. Because Black's King has access to *both* a7 and b7 while White's King is attacking the c-pawn, there is no way to put Black in *zugzwang* ("under compulsion to make an unwanted move"). Therefore there is no way for White to progress on the Queenside; if White's King heads to the Kingside, then Black defends as in positions without Queenside pawns – see Diagram 12.

2 c4!!

Transposing into the winning line demonstrated earlier.

2 Rg2
 3 Kc3 Black resigns.

White wins exactly as shown from Diagram 13 earlier.

Section 4: The stronger side has 2 connected passed pawns

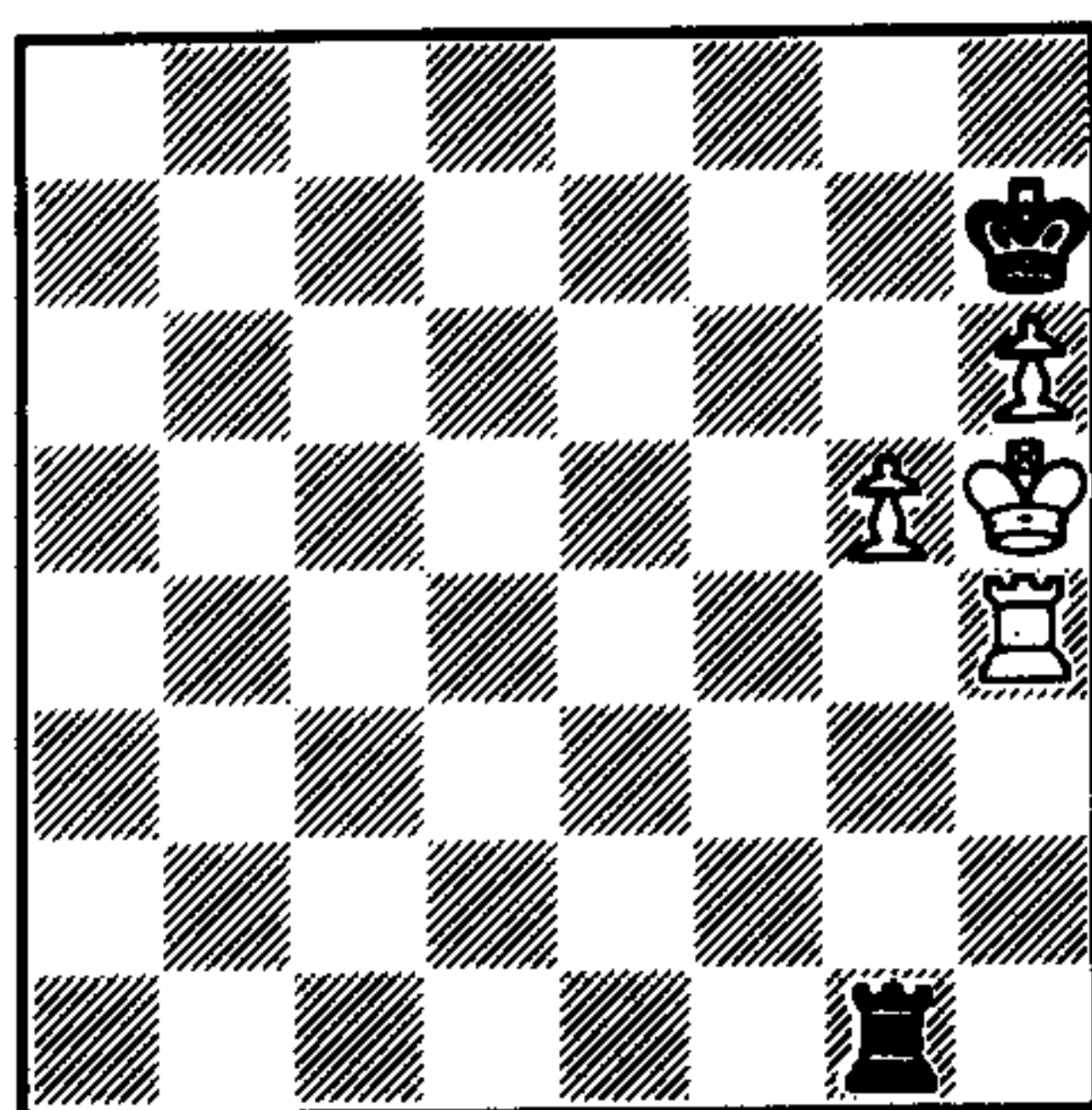
In Rook endgames connected passed pawns are by far the most effective kind of passed pawns. The win is theoretically easy when one side has Rook and two connected passed pawns and the other side just a Rook. As long as the pawns are advanced in unison and with the support of the King, the defender has scant hope to stem the tide.

Whatever practical difficulties do exist, exist only for the Knight pawn - Rook pawn combination. These pawns are a bit more difficult to advance because the stronger side can only operate on one side of them. Moreover, when one of the pawns (particularly the Rook pawn) reaches the 7th rank, there is the risk of allowing a stalemate continuation. A model case of how to handle the latter stages of such an endgame is shown from Diagram 14, J. Zukertort - W. Steinitz, London 1883, White on move. Black's Rook is placed very actively and White's progress seems stymied. However, in fact progress comes easily enough. (See Diagram 14 at top of the next page).

1 Rh2!

In effect a waiting move which forces Black's Rook to an inferior

Diagram 14



Zukertort-Steinitz,
London 1883

square along the g-file.

1	Rg3
2 Re2!	Rh3+
3 Kg4	Ra3

By having shortened the Black Rook's scope along the g-file, White has prevented further checks by Black and can now activate his own Rook.

4 Re7+	Kg8
5 g6!	Ra4+
6 Kf5	Ra5+
7 Re5	Ra8

At this moment it is good to keep in mind the following practical advice by Reuben Fine: *The safest way to win is to leave the pawns on the sixth rank and go for the exchange of Rooks.*

8 Kf6!	Ra6+
9 Re6	Ra8
10 Rd6!	Re8
11 Rd5!	Ra8

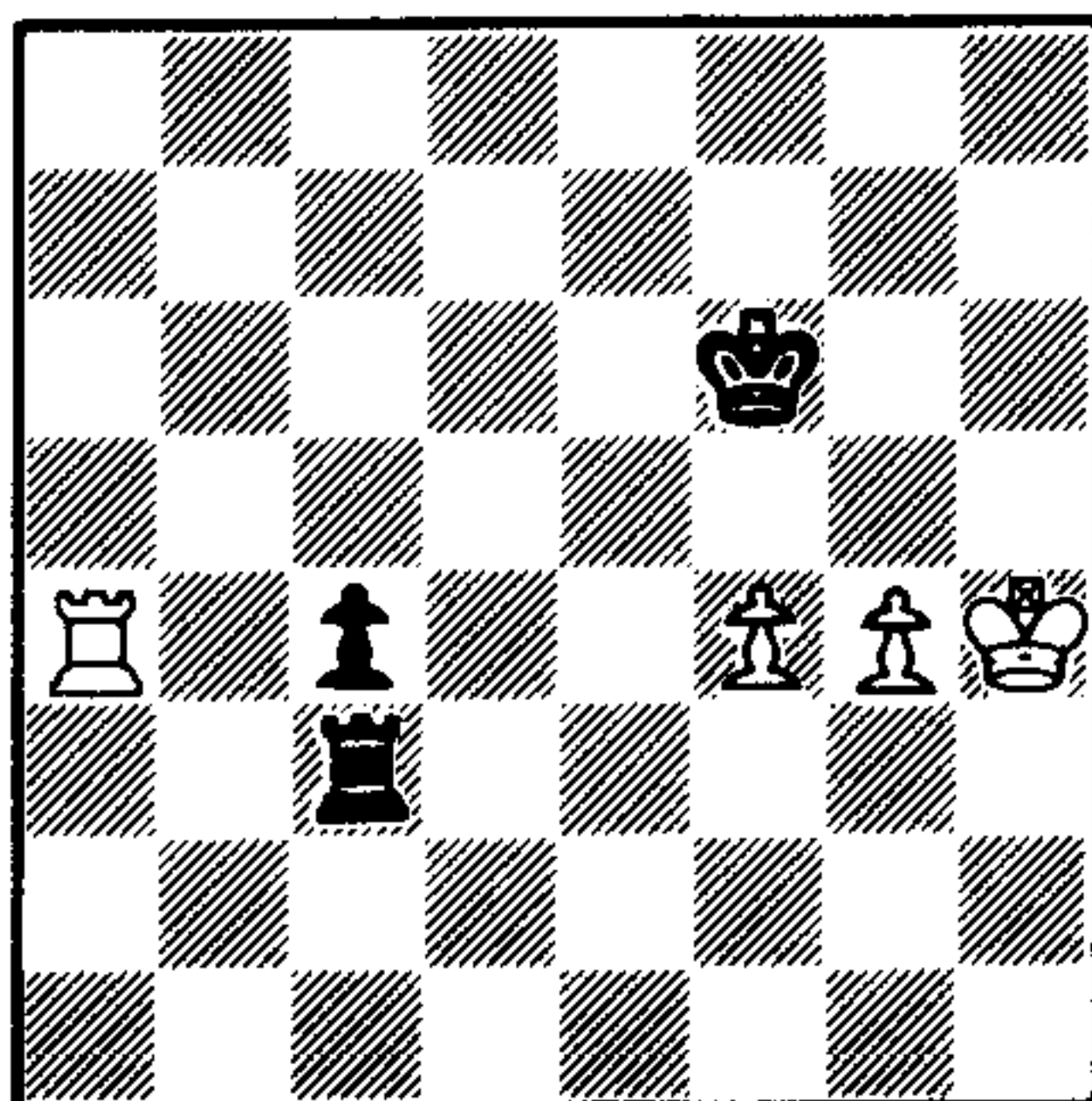
On 11...Kh8 12 Kf7! Rf8+ 13 Ke7! followed by 14 Rd8.

12 Ke7!	Ra7+
13 Rd7	Ra8
14 Rd8+ and White wins.	

Of considerably greater practical importance is the situation where one player has two connected passed pawns on one side of the board and the opponent has a single passed pawn on the other side. The general rule is that this is a win unless the single passed pawn can quickly queen or the stronger side's King can not help his pawns to advance.

A typical situation is shown in Diagram 15 on the next page, E. Mednis - B. Toth, Madonna di Campiglio 1974, after Black's 45th move. Since the White King can assist the pawns' advance, while Black's pawn is no queening threat, White can be certain that he should win.

Diagram 15



Mednis-Toth
Madonna di
Campiglio 1974

Play continued:

46 Ra6+ Ke7
47 Kg5!

Activating the King so that it can help in the pawns' advance.

47 Rc1
48 f5 c3

White's Rook can now easily and effectively stop the Black pawn. Black's alternate try is 48...Kd7, after which White wins as follows: 49 Kf6! c3 50 Ra3! c2 51 Rc3, with Black having nothing better than to transpose into the game type of position after 51...Rg1 52 Rxc2 Rxc2 53 Kf7!

49 Rc6! c2
50 Kg6! Rg1

Otherwise White continues with 51 g5 and 52 f6. Note that even though Black's pawn is the farther advanced one, its further progress is stopped and White's connected pawns are in a position to march forward steadily and inexorably. With the text move Black trades one set of pawns, yet this is of no help since White obtains the Lucena position.

51 f6+ Kd7
52 Rxc2 Rxc2
53 Kf7! Kd6
54 Re2!

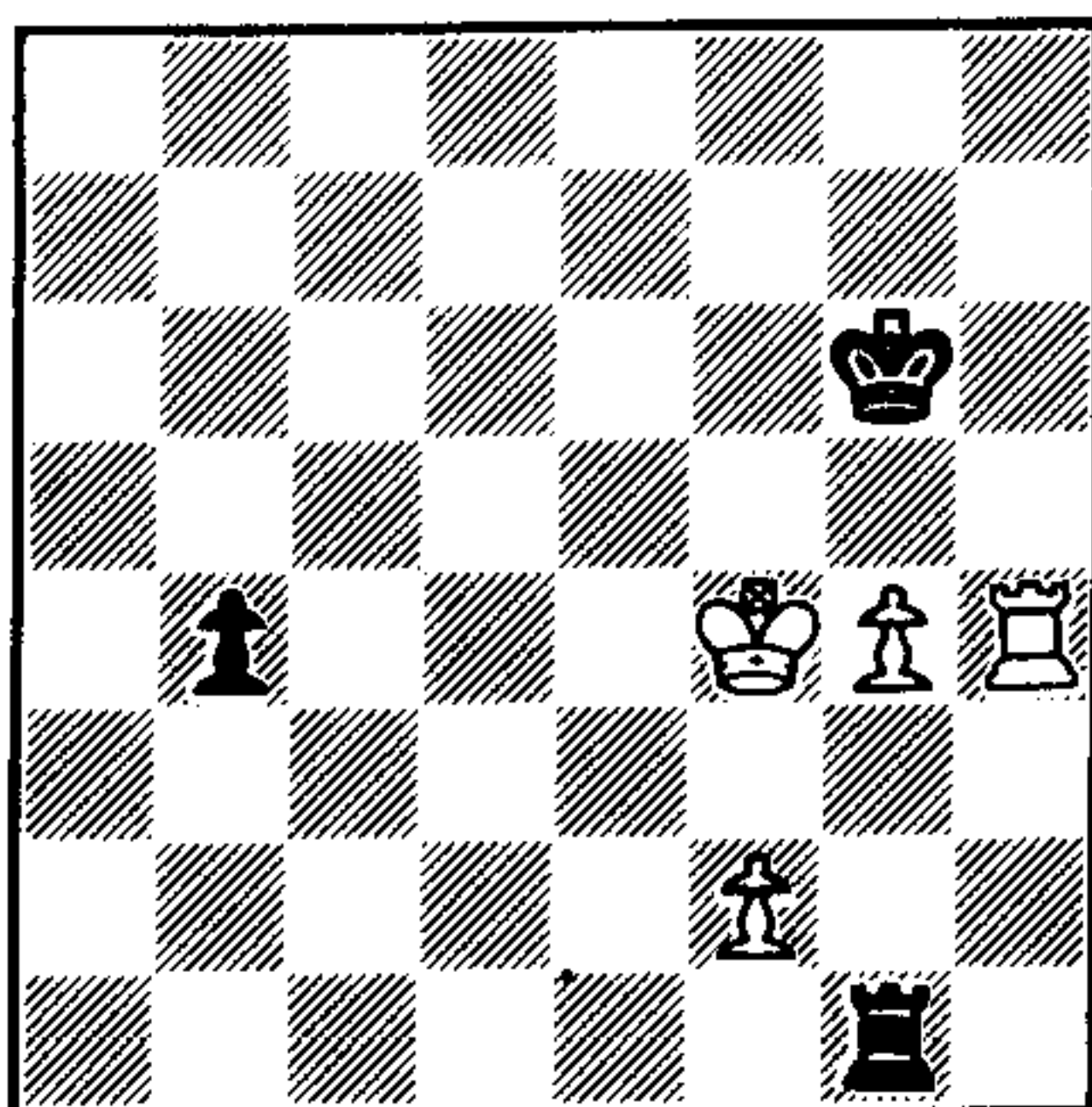
Cutting Black's King off from the f-file.

54 Ra4
55 Kg7 Rg4+
56 Kf8! Black resigns.

After 57 f7 White will have the Lucena position and will win as from Diagram 4.

The practical difficulties that can easily crop up in theoretically won positions are well illustrated from Diagram 16 on the next page, P. Ostermeyer - J. Dueball, Mannheim 1975, after Black's 50th move. The pawn configuration is similar to that of the previous example and despite the temporarily clumsy location of White's Rook, White should *ultimately* win.

Diagram 16



Ostermeyer-Dueball
Mannheim 1975
After Black's 50th

The game course was:

51 Rh5!

White gets ready to place the Rook in the active “behind the pawn” location on b5.

51

Rc1!

This is Black's best chance. By having the Rook at the side of the pawn, the Rook will be placed more actively than possible in the “in front of the pawn” location. Therefore inferior is 51...b3?!, leading to thematically the same situation as Diagram 15. White wins similarly: 52 Rb5 Rb1 53 Rb6+ Kf7 54 Kf5! b2 53 f4! Black's pawn is stopped and his Rook immobile. At the very least White will be able to obtain the Lucena position.

52 Rb5

Rc4+

53 Kg3

Rc3+

Here is White's first decision point — a point which he does not pass. From here on, I shall analyze both the preferred winning approach and the game continuation.

A) Preferred winning approach

54 f3!

Stopping the checks, while keeping the King near the pawns so that they can start working together.

54

b3

The alternative is 54...Rc4 55 Rb6+ Kg7 (55...Kg5? 56 f4+! Rxf4 57 Rb5+ followed by 58 Kxf4). With Black's King chased away, White's King and pawns can move forward: 56 f4! Kf7 57 f5 followed by Kh4, Kg5, etc.

55 Kf4!

Rc4+

56 Ke3

Rc3+

57 Ke4

Kf6

After 57...Rc4+?! 58 Kd3 Rf4 59 Ke3 Black's pawn goes lost for nothing.

58 f4!

Starting to activate the pawns. By taking g5 away from Black's King, White, after the coming Rb6+, will push Black's King back to its second rank.

58 ...	Rc4+
59 Ke3	Rc3+
60 Kd4	Rg3
61 Rb6+	Ke7
62 g5	Rf3
63 Ke5	Rc3
64 Rb7+	

Further immobilizing Black's King. Note how all of White's forces have been made to work together.

64	Kf8
65 g6	Rf3
66 f5	Re3+
67 Kf6	and White wins.

It is true that the winning procedure seeminly did take a long time. Yet the *key* to practical success is not speed, but the end result! And as long as White's King and pawns work *carefully together*, the win is inevitable.

B) *Actual game continuation*

54 Kg2?!

There is no logical explanation for this unnecessary retreat.

54 ...	b3
--------	----

Here is the second decision point. White can still win with the careful 55 f3!, e.g., 55...Rc2+ 56 Kg3 b2 57 Rb6+ Kf7 58 f4, followed by f5, Kf4, Kg5, etc. Even though Black has gained some immediate time, it is of no long term benefit.

55 f4??

With White's King contained on the *second* rank, cut off from his pawns, the position becomes a theoretical draw.

55 ...	Kf6!
--------	------

But not 55...Rc2+?? 56 Kg3 and White's liberated King wins.

56 Rb6+	Kf7
57 g5	Kg7
58 f5	Rc5!

Because White's King can not help, there is no satisfactory way to protect the overly advanced pawns.

59 Rb7+	Kg8
60 Rb8+	Draw.

The likely continuation would be 60...Kg7 61 f6+ Kf7 62 Rb7+ Kf8 63 g6 Rg5+ followed by 64...Rxc6.



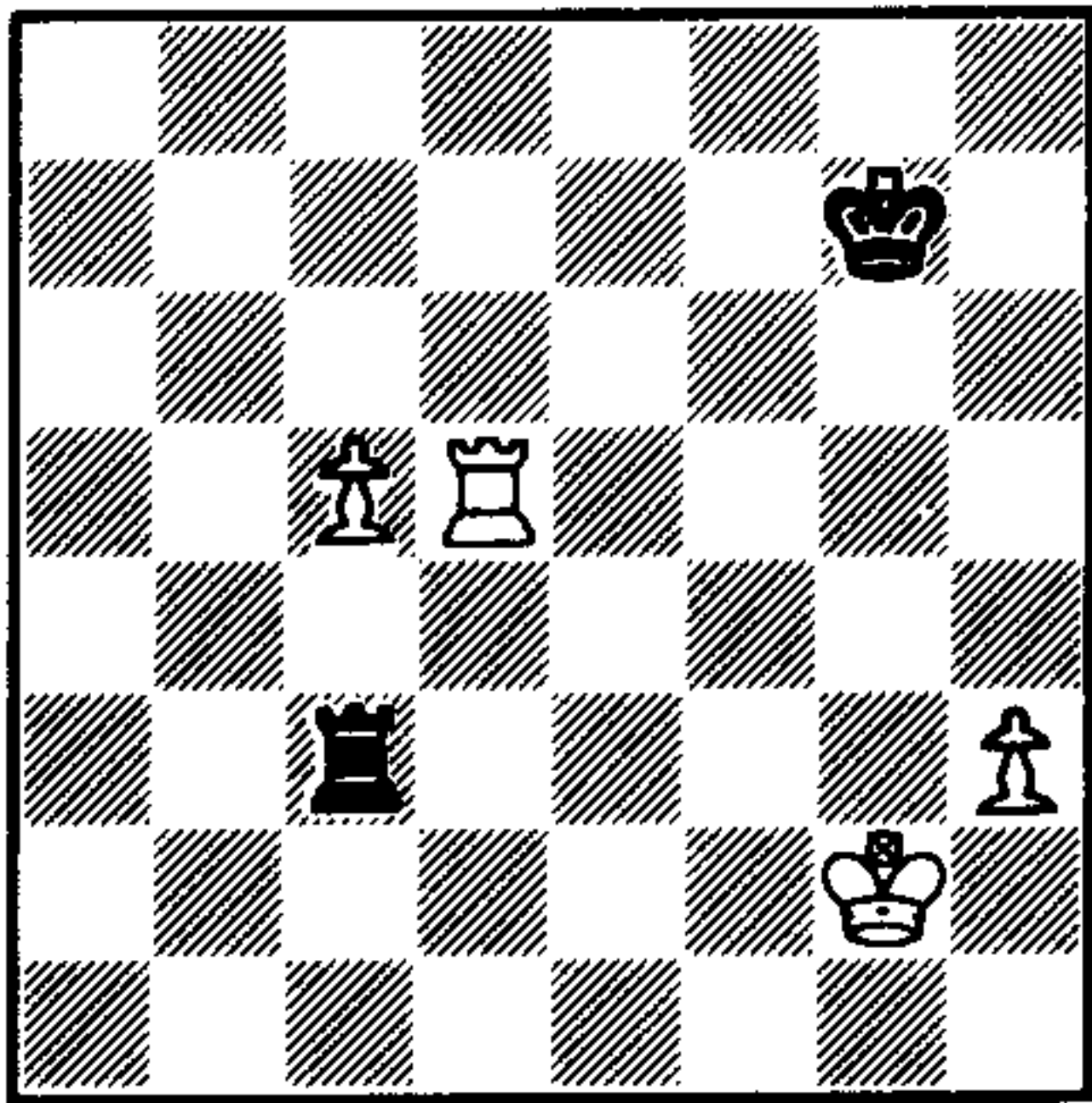
Section 5: The stronger side has two disconnected passed pawns

In R + P endgames, disconnected passed pawns are nowhere as strong as connected passed pawns. Still, endgames of Rook and two disconnected passed pawns versus a single Rook are also generally won. The only significant exception is the combination of a- and c-pawns (or f- and h-pawns) where the defender's King is back and straddling the pawns. Such positions are theoretically drawn, yet not easily so. Even in master chess, the stronger side wins more than 50% of the time.

Other pawn combinations should win. Very often the winning technique consists of giving up one pawn so as to draw away the defenders and thus bring about a theoretically won Rook plus single pawn versus Rook endgame (e.g. the Lucena position). The generally best place for the stronger side's Rook is guarding the pawns from the side.

The relative ease with which these endgames are won is shown from Diagram 17, V. Ciocaltea - E. Mednis, Orense 1973, after Black's 67th move.

Diagram 17



Ciocaltea-Mednis
Orense 1973
After Black's 67th

White's Rook is well placed to the side of his pawns and even though Black's Rook is actively placed, White wins easily enough:

68	h4	Kf6
69	h5!	Ke6
70	Rg5	Kf6
71	Rg6+	Kf5
72	c6	

If Black's King moves, White plays h6. And otherwise White brings his King over to help the c-pawn advance. Black's chances for a successful defense are nil.

72	Rc2+
73	Kf3	Rc3+
74	Ke2	Ra3
75	c7	Rc3
76	Rg7	Kf6
77	h6	Black resigns.

White's simplest win is just to move his King up the d-file all the way to d8.

Positions where the defender also has a passed pawn are usually too specific to allow valid generalizations. The significant factors can be Rook activity, King activity, strength of a particular passed pawn — in other words, various strategic factors. These will be covered in the next chapter.

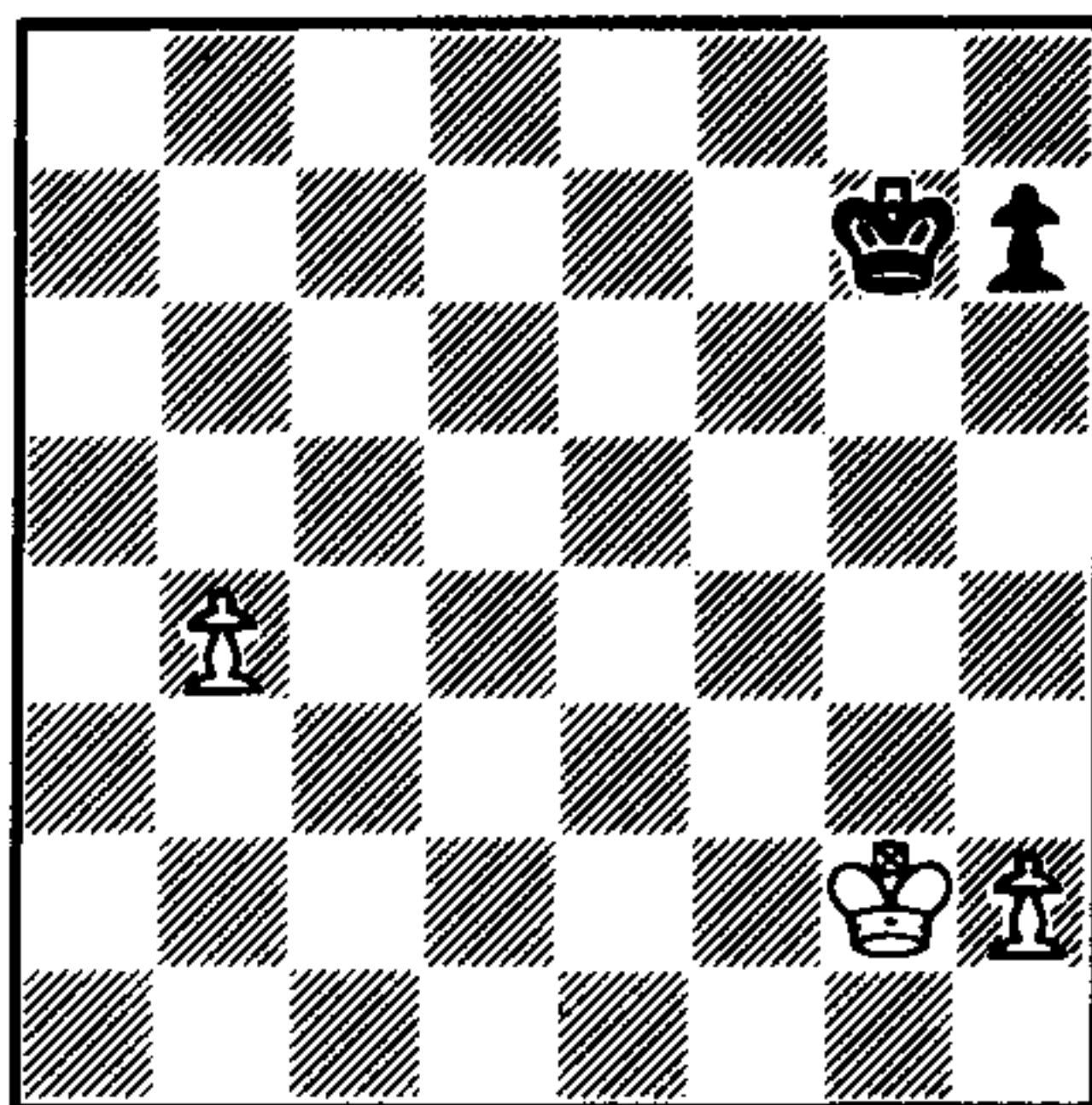
Section 6: Correct Rook play

By a careful study of the previous material the reader has already learned much about the play and characteristics of the Rook. Here then is a good time to present the following conclusions and guidelines.

The Rook is quite unique in that its attacking and defensive powers are different. In the attack it is truly a major piece and can do much damage. Yet it is a very clumsy defender and even the King can attack it with impunity! Thus, Rook activation becomes a very important part of the strategy of R + P endgames, as will be demonstrated further in Chapter 3. Often it becomes worthwhile to sacrifice a pawn in order to activate the Rook — both in going for the win or attempting to draw.

Optimum Rook placements in positions having a passed pawn can be demonstrated by considering the basic situation of Diagram 18.

Diagram 18



For *White*:

(1) The *best* location for White's Rook is *behind* the passed pawn, i.e., on b1. This is so because as the pawn advances, the Rook's scope is increased.

(2) The *worst* location for White's Rook is *in front* of the passed pawn, i.e., on b8. It is clear that as the pawn advances, the Rook's scope is decreased and when the pawn reaches b7, the Rook can become immobile.

(3) An *in-between* location for White's Rook is on the far side of the pawn, e.g. on c4. The Rook has excellent scope from here, yet *can not assist in the pawn's advance*.

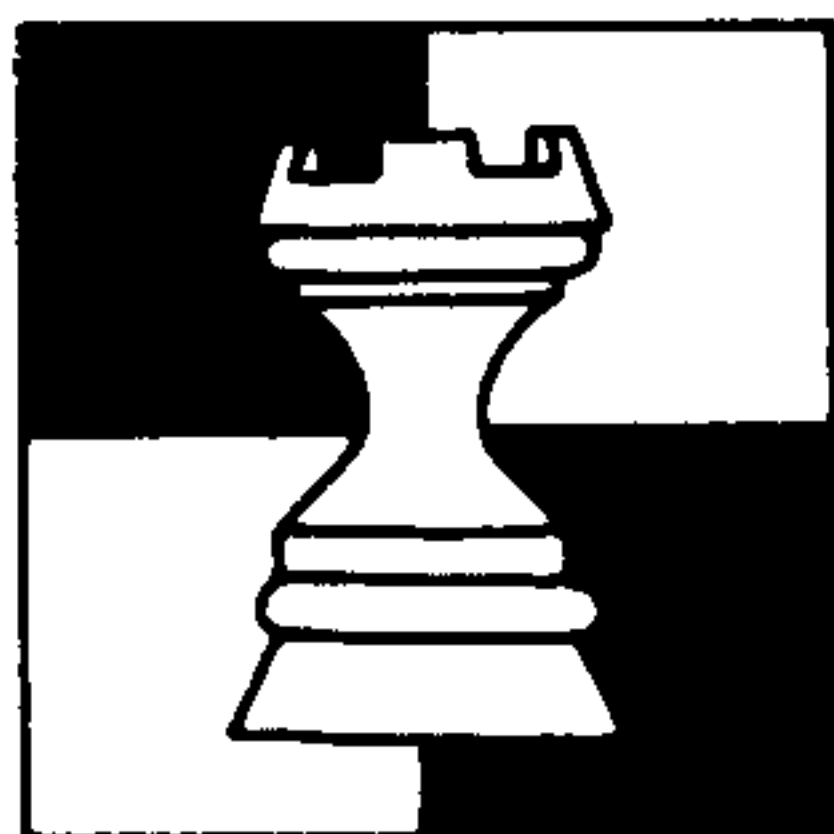
Exactly similar considerations apply for the position of *Black's* Rook:

(1) Black's *best* location is also *behind* White's pawn, i.e. on b1. The Rook is inherently active on b1 and its scope increases as the pawn advances.

(2) The *worst* location for the Rook is in *front* of the pawn, i.e. on b8. Not only is the Rook inherently passive here, but its scope decreases further as the pawn advances.

(3) An *in-between* location for the Rook is on the far side of the pawn, e.g. on c4. The Rook is active enough here, yet is not able to prevent the advance of White's pawn. Unless Black's King can be brought over to stop the pawn, Black's Rook will have to revert to one of the other two locations.

Keeping in mind the above discussion regarding best Rook locations allows us to formulate the following extremely important principle: *Rooks belong behind passed pawns, whether your own or the opponent's.*



Chapter 3

Rook & Pawn — Strategic Themes

Introduction

A saying in master chess — and only half in jest — is that “all R & P endgames are drawn”. Of course, this can not be strictly true, yet it refers accurately to the observed fact that very many superior endgames get botched into draws while very many inferior endgames are saved into draws. The correct application of the main principles and strategic themes of R & P endgames will enable the practical player to win superior positions and hold inferior ones. The purpose of this chapter is to supply the necessary tools in the form of correct handling of the King, Rook and pawns.

The single most important practical question is: when, under normal conditions, is a one pawn advantage sufficient to win? By “normal conditions” is meant a position where the only significant problem for the defender is that he is down a pawn. This question is considered and answered in Sections 1 - 3. Sections 4 and 5 consider the role of the active Rook; the role of the King is covered in Sections 6 and 7.

Section 1: Material advantage of one pawn — all pawns are on the same side

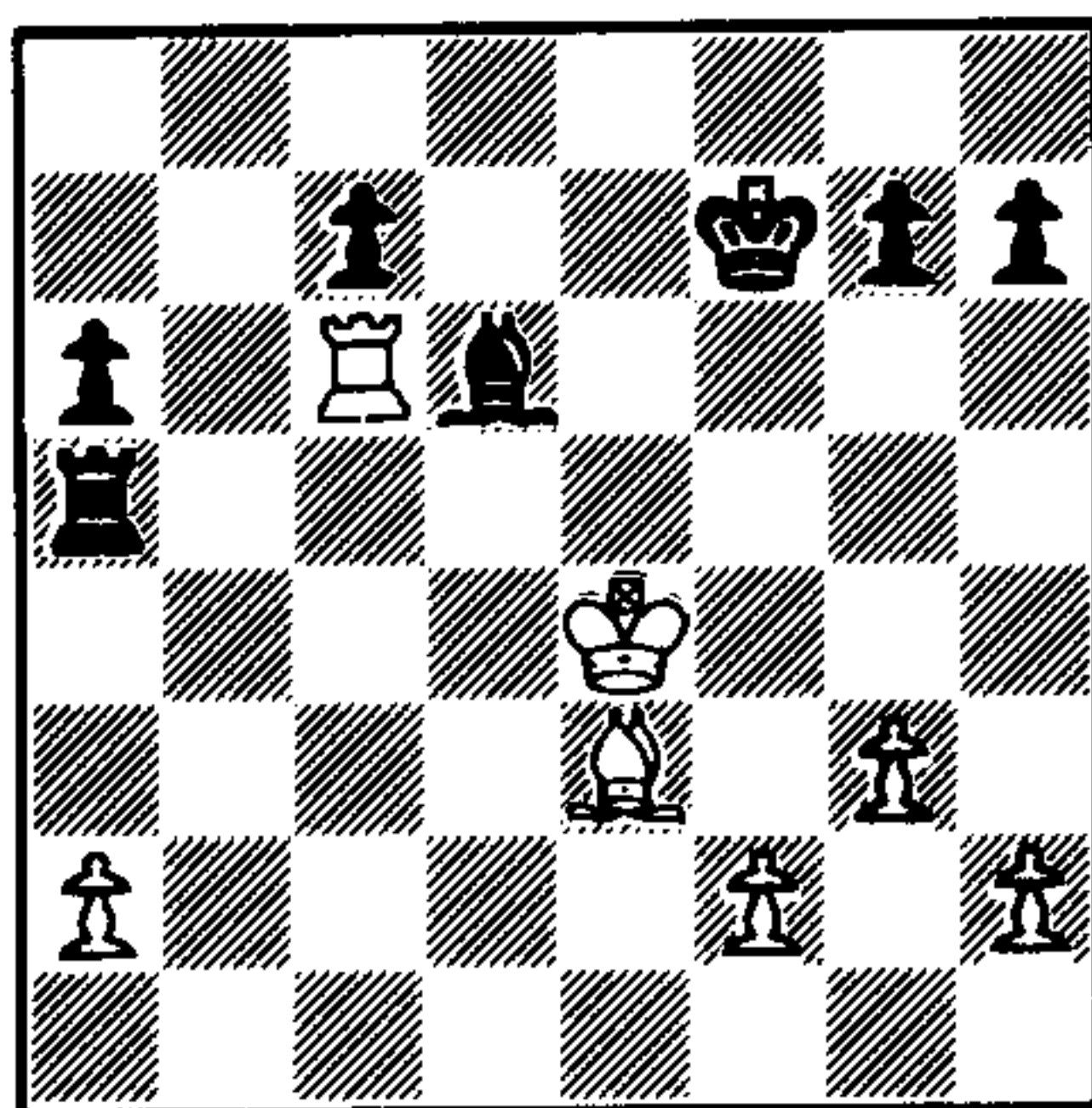
With pawns only on one side, *a one pawn advantage is insufficient to win*. This is true because the inferior side, with correct defensive play, can prevent the stronger side from achieving more than the drawn Rook and pawn vs. Rook endgame discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

The general defensive approach is to aim for such *routine* pawn exchanges that the securely drawn Rook and pawn vs. Rook endgames result. On the other hand, the stronger side will try to achieve some strategic advantages whenever *it* offers a pawn exchange.

Because normal positions with a one pawn disadvantage are drawn, this information can be used by a defender to voluntarily simplify a more complicated inferior position down to such an inferior yet drawn one. A typical example — from the highest level of master play — is shown from Diagram 19, Robert Fischer - B Spassky, 1972 World Championship Match, Game No. 16, after Black's 27th move. White's position is uncomfortable because Black has an active Rook and a passed c-pawn. If, for example, White now plays the passive 28 Rc2, Black responds with 28...Ke6, followed by ...Ra4+ and ...Kd5,

and has a very powerful, active position.

Diagram 19



Fischer-Spassky
1972 Match, game 16
After Black's 27th

Therefore White is quite interested in going for a theoretically easy and clear draw and plays:

28 Bf4!	Ra4+
29 Kf3	Ra3+
30 Ke4!	Rxa2

After White has kept his King active with 30 Ke4!, Black has nothing better than to capture the loose pawns.

31 Bxd6	cx d6
32 Rxd6	Rxf2
33 Rxa6	Rxh2

The slugfest is over and Black has won a pawn. But the resulting two pawn vs. one pawn endgame is a certain theoretical (and practical) draw since there is nothing wrong with White's strategic position.

34 Kf3!

Carefully retreating the King to ensure that it can protect his pawn. The position could now be abandoned as a draw, though Black did play on for another 26 useless moves: 34...Rd2 35 Ra7+ Kf6 36 Ra6+ Ke7 37 Ra7+ Rd7 38 Ra2 Ke6 39 Kg2 Re7 40 Kh3 Kf6 41 Ra6+ Re6 42 Ra5 h6 43 Ra2 Kf5 44 Rf2+ Kg5 45 Rf7 g6 46 Rf4 h5 47 Rf3 Rf6 48 Ra3 Re6 49 Rf3 Re4 50 Ra3 Kh6 51 Ra6 Re5 52 Kh4 Re4+ 53 Kh3 Re7 54 Kh4 Re5 55 Rb6 Kg7 56 Rb4 Kh6 57 Rb6 Re1 58 Kh3 Rh1+ 59 Kg2 Ra1 60 Kh3 Ra4 Draw.

Simplification into a considerably more inferior — yet still drawn by a hair — one pawn vs. two pawn endgame will be demonstrated in Chapter 5 from the game Soltis - Byrne, 1978 U. S. Championship.

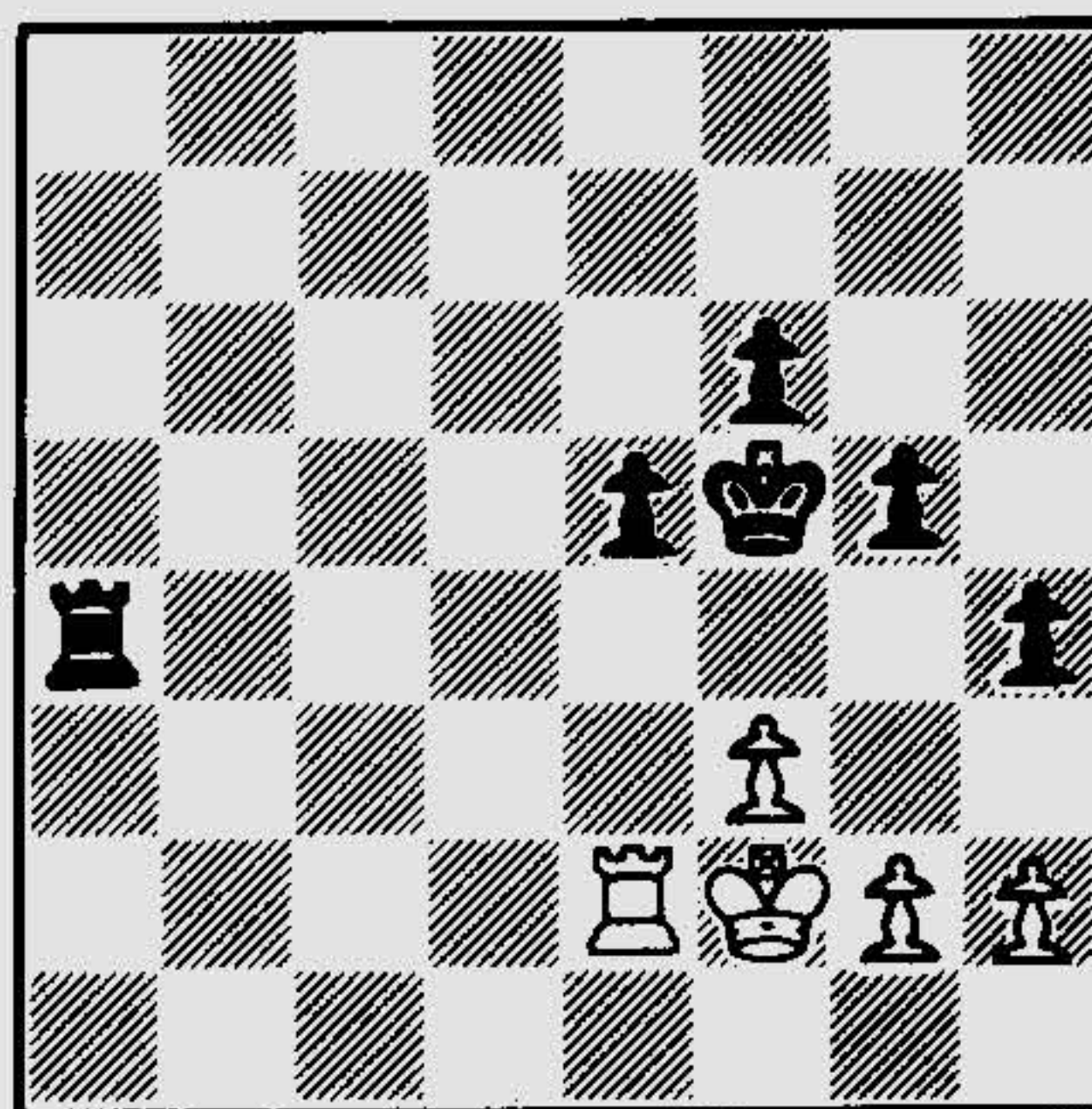
Also *rather easily drawn* are endgames of Rook plus three pawns vs. Rook plus two pawns. Only where the extra pawn is the e-pawn are there reasonable practical winning chances. (Note: For the sake of consistency, all examples given have the pawns on the Kingside.)

From a practical standpoint, the most important endgame is Rook plus four pawns vs. Rook plus three pawns. It occurs regularly in actual play and can also be the starting point for the simpler endgames discussed above. *Under normal conditions this endgame also is drawn.* Yet it is invariably played out and the defender must understand the defensive themes in order not to lose.

It is of utmost importance to prevent the encroachment of one's position by enemy pieces and pawns. A valuable defensive goal is to be able to have the h-pawn on h5 if defending with Black or on h4 if defending with White. Simplification into a reasonably normal four pawn vs. three pawn endgame, and the play therein, is shown by the game Lombardy-Zuckerman, U. S. Championship 1978, in Chapter 5.

The defender does not want to allow the type of position shown in Diagram 20, Harandi - Vaganian, Rio de Janeiro Interzonal 1979, after Black's 45th move.

Diagram 20



Harandi-R. Vaganian
Rio de Janeiro '79
After Black's 45th

It is safe to say that White is lost. His position is so passive that Black will be able to penetrate with his King or create a decisive passed pawn – or achieve *both* goals. White now played:

46 Rb2

Aiming to activate the Rook. There is no satisfactory plan. After 46 h3 Kf4! Black continues with 47...f5 and 48...e4; after 46 g4+ hxg3+ 47 hxg3 g4! Black will have the winning combination of a passed e-pawn, active King and active Rook.

46 g4

With the plan of undermining White's pawn formation with 47...h3. Therefore White has nothing better than to capture, yet Black then achieves his first goal of a passed e-pawn.

47 fxg4+ Kxg4

immediate threat is 52...Ra1 mate. Though at the moment this is a Rook plus three pawns vs. Rook plus two pawns endgame, it is hardly a normal one! Black can even easily afford to give up his h-pawn.

52 h3	e4!
53 Rxh4	f4
54 Rh8	Ra1+
55 Kh2	Kf2!

Black's active King is now ready to assist the advance of either of his pawns.

56 Rf8	f3
57 h4	

If 57 gxf3, 57...e3! and the e-pawn goes through. But White can delay this only for a moment.

57	Rg1!
58 gxf3	Rg2+
59 Kh1	e3!
60 Re8	Rg3
61 Kh2	Rxf3

White resigns.

White's Rook will go lost for the e-pawn while White's h-pawn will go nowhere.

Section 2: Material advantage of one pawn – the pawn is an outside passed pawn

With pawns on both sides of the board, it is usually possible to create a passed pawn on the side having the pawn majority. Most commonly the extra pawn is on the Queenside. Moreover, the passed pawn most often created is the a-pawn. Therefore, it is this situation that I will emphasize.

In positions where the Kingside pawn formations are equivalent and one side has a passed a-pawn, the most critical factor in evaluating the position is the respective Rook placements. The stronger side's Rook can be behind its pawn, in front of it or to the side of it. I shall look at each of these in turn.

A) The stronger side's Rook is behind its pawn

If the stronger side's Rook is *behind* its pawn, the position is *usually won*. The thematic case is shown from Diagram 21 on the next page, A. Alekhine - J. R. Capablanca, World Championship Match 1927, Game 34, after White's 54th move. Though theoretically speaking the position is won for White, in real life he still must achieve the win. White's winning method will consist of the following general steps:

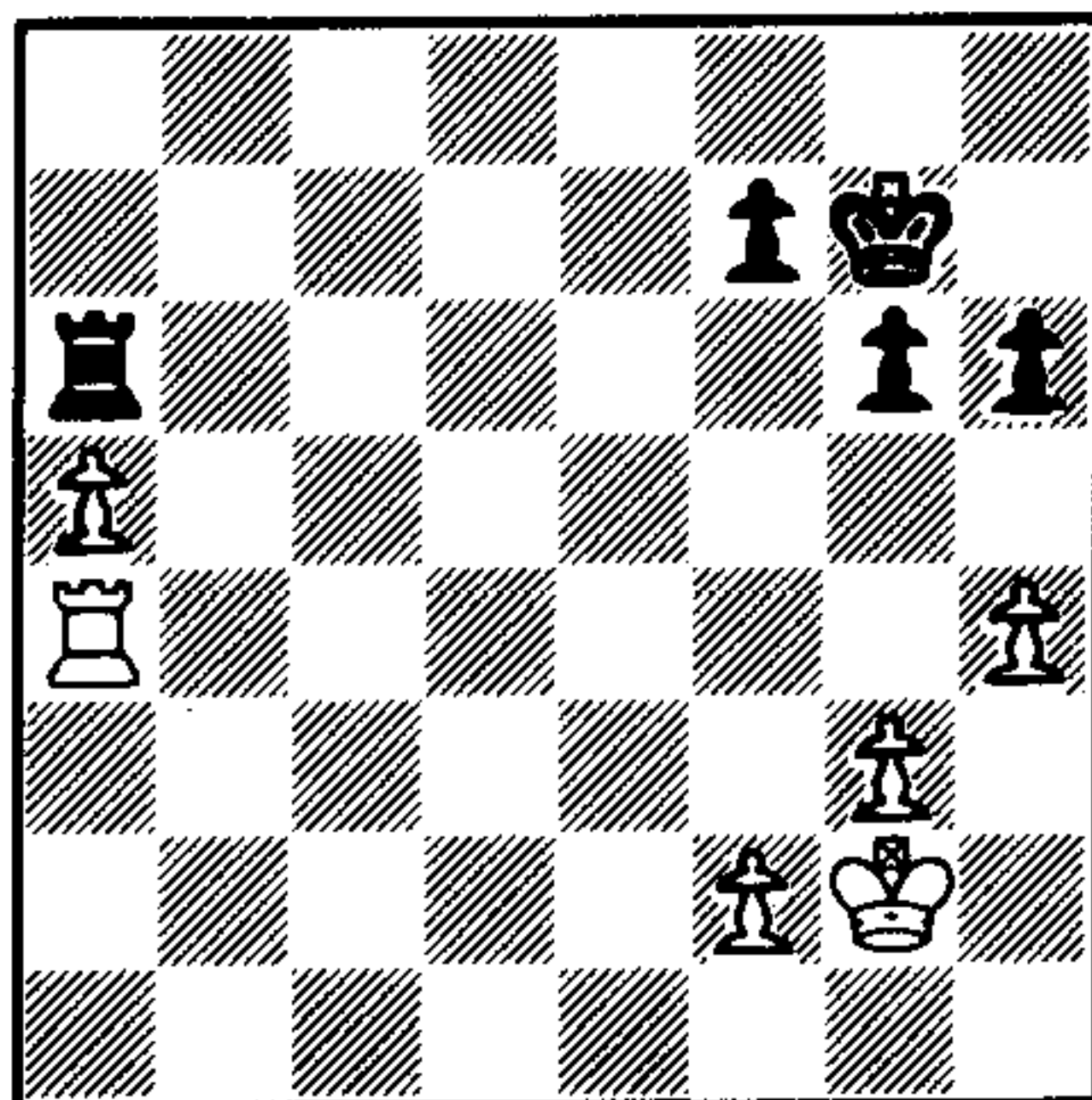
Step No. 1: White centralizes his King and hopes to get it into Black's Queenside.

Step No. 2: Black's King will have to prevent this. This will allow

White's King to penetrate into Black's Kingside.

Step No. 3: At the appropriate moment White's Rook will give up protection of its a-pawn and will also head for Black's Kingside. The active King and Rook team will capture sufficient Black pawns to win the game.

Diagram 21



Alekhine-Capablanca
'27 Match game 34
After White's 54th

Let us now follow the execution of the above plan:

54	Kf6
55 Kf3	Ke5
56 Ke3	h5
57 Kd3	Kd5
58 Kc3	Kc5
59 Ra2!	Kb5

Since moves by his Rook or pawns would just make matters worse, Black's King has to give way to White's. The minor evil for Black is to allow White's King to head toward Black's Kingside.

60 Rb2+

Just a sophisticated way to save a couple of moves on the clock and thus allow more thinking time for substantive decisions. Winning this game would make Alekhine World Champion; thus he is as careful and practical as possible. Of course, he doesn't expect Capablanca to fall for 60...Kxa5?? 61 Ra2+ Kb6 62 Rxa6+ Kxa6 63 Kd4 and White's King will devour Black's Kingside.

60	Kc5
61 Ra2	Kb5
62 Kd4!	Rd6+
63 Ke5	Re6+
64 Kf4	Ka6
65 Kg5!	Re5+
66 Kh6	

With his King securely into Black's Kingside, White has completed Step No. 2.

66	Rf5
67 f4	

White's position is so strong that he has an alternate win. By means of a sophisticated King maneuver, White can put Black into *zugzwang* as follows: 67 Kg7! Rf3 68 Kg8! Rf6 69 Kf8! Rf3 70 Kg7 Rf5 71 f4. After Black's King moves are exhausted, the Rook will have to move and White will capture the f-pawn for nothing.

67	Rc5
68 Ra3	Rc7
69 Kg7	Rd7
70 Kf6!	

Placing the King in position to immediately benefit from the coming f5 break is White's simplest and most direct win. In the game Alekhine won in a somewhat more complicated way: 70 f5 gxf5 71 Kh6 f4 72 gxf4 Rd5 73 Kg7 Rf5 74 Ra4 Kb5 75 Re4! Ka6 76 Kh6! Rxa5 77 Re5 Ra1 78 Kxh5 Rg1 79 Rg5 Rh1 80 Rf5 Kb6 81 Rxf7 Kc6 82 Re7! Black resigns. Since Black's King is cut off from the Kingside, White at the very least will achieve the Lucena position.

70	Rc7
71 f5!	gxf5

Or 71...Rc6+ 72 Kxf7 gxf5 73 Rf3 Rc5 74 Kg6, etc.

72 Kxf5	Rc5+
73 Kf6	Rc7
74 Rf3!	

White is now ready to execute Step No. 3: get his Rook into Black's position, at Black's pawns.

74	Kxa5
75 Rf5+	Kb6
76 Rxh5	Rc3
77 Rg5	and White wins.

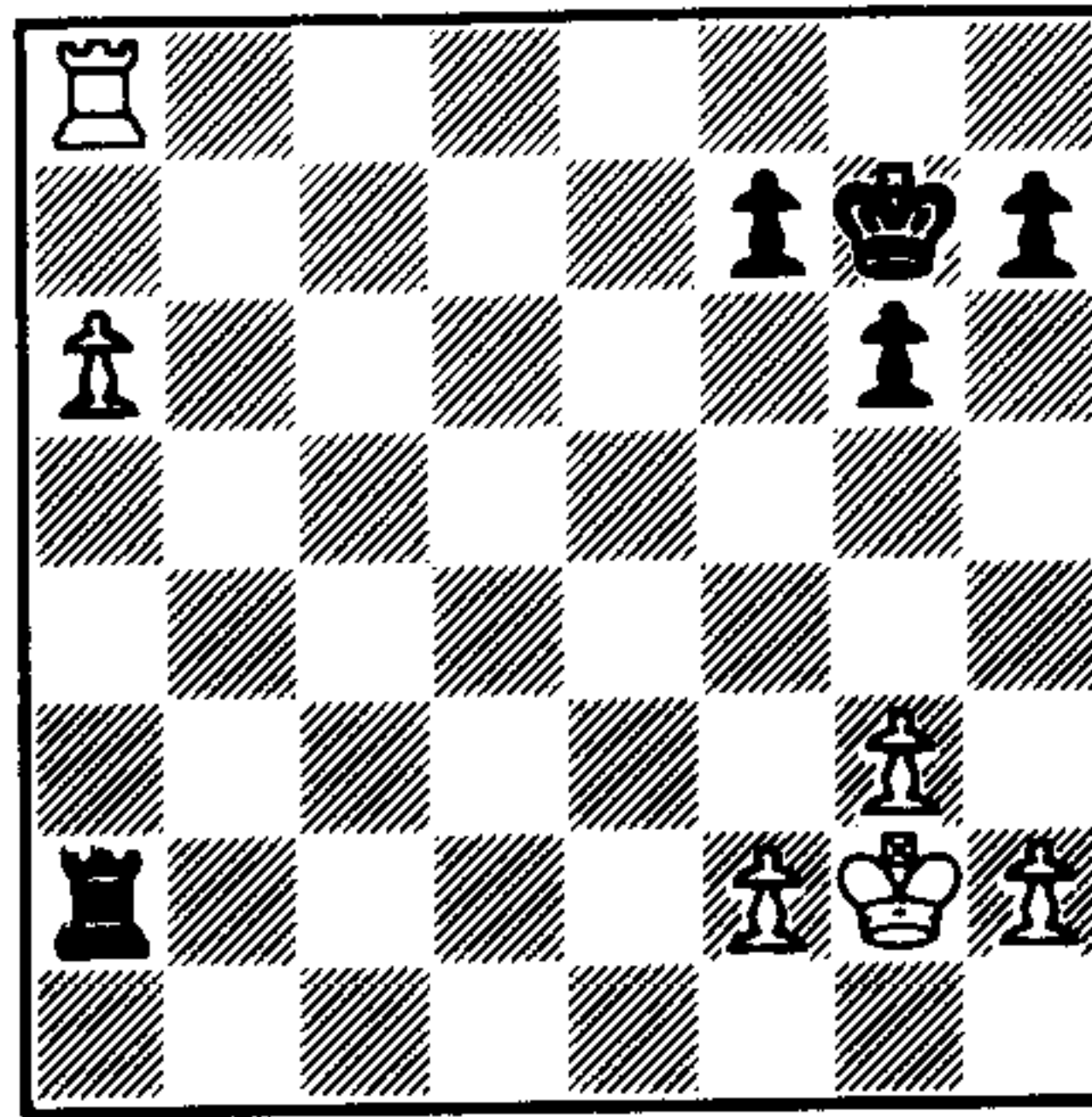
With Black's King so far away, the h-pawn is a sure Queen-to-be.

B) The stronger side's Rook is in front of its pawn

However, if we reverse the Rook positions in Diagram 21, the evaluation changes drastically. Look at Diagram 22 on the next page. *No matter whose move it is, this position is drawn.* Black's Rook is very active, both watching the a-pawn and menacing White's Kingside. White's Rook is rather contained, doing nothing but protecting its pawn. White can not advance his pawn to a7 since then his King will not be able to find shelter on the Queenside. If, on the other hand, White's King heads for the Queenside with the a-pawn still on a6, then Black will capture at least one of White's Kingside pawns. In further play Black will probably have to sacrifice his Rook for White's a-pawn, but Black's King and passed Kingside pawn will draw against White's Rook since White's King will be too far away.

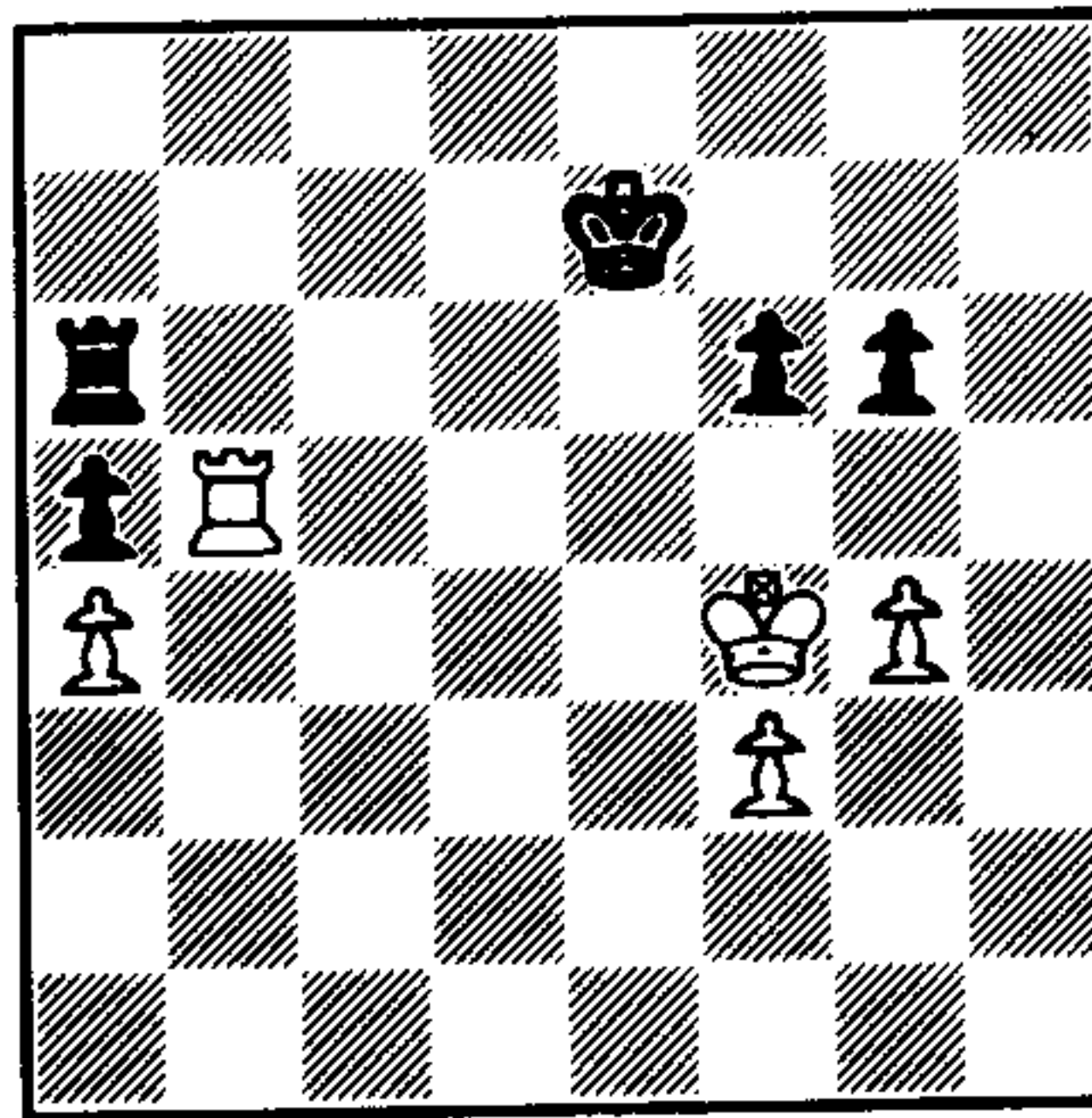
The above knowledge should allow Black to find the correct plan from

Diagram 22



Draw

Diagram 23



St. Petersburg -
London 1886-1888
Black on move

the correspondence game St. Petersburg - London, 1886-1888. It is Black's move and he is in some trouble. White has *the active Rook* and if Black does nothing, White's King will in due course walk over to the Queenside, win the a-pawn and the game.

Black's correct plan is to immediately *activate* his Rook:

1	Rc6!
2 Rxa5	Rc4+
3 Ke3	

White needs to keep his King potentially active. Therefore the text is more logical than 3 Kg3.

3	Kf7!
--------	------

Since White's King is at present contained, Black takes advantage of the available time to try to improve his King position.

4 Ra8	Kg7
5 a5	Ra4!

Getting the Rook *behind* White's passed pawn.

6 a6	Kh6!
------	------

Black's King would like to go to g5, where it both would be in a position

to menace White's Kingside while being free from potential checks by White's Rook. White must prevent that.

7 f4	g5!
8 fxg5+	fxg5
9 Kd3	Kg7!

Drawn.

By retreating his King to safety on g7 Black has assured himself of a drawn position. If White plays 10 a7, then his King will not find shelter on the Queenside and even if White would capture the g-pawn, the position remains drawn. (See the discussion from Diagram 12.) After 10 Kc3 Rxd4 11 Kb3 Rg1! Black's passed g-pawn is sufficient to draw.

The achievement of a similarly drawn endgame, starting from a pawn down double Rook endgame, is shown in Chapter 5 by the game Soltis-Regan, 1978 U. S. Championship.

If instead of having the a-pawn, White has a *b-* or *c-pawn*, his winning chances *increase*. There are two reasons for this: the King has a shorter distance to travel to be of help to its pawn *and* once Black's Rook has sacrificed itself for the pawn, the White King is closer for his return to the Kingside. Whether there is a win, depends of course on the specific position.

C) The stronger side's Rook is to the side of its pawn

Positions where the stronger side's Rook is to the side of its pawn — *and the defender's Rook is in the active behind the pawn location* — offer better winning chances than Diagram 22 type positions. However, to be fully confident of a win, one of the following conditions must exist:

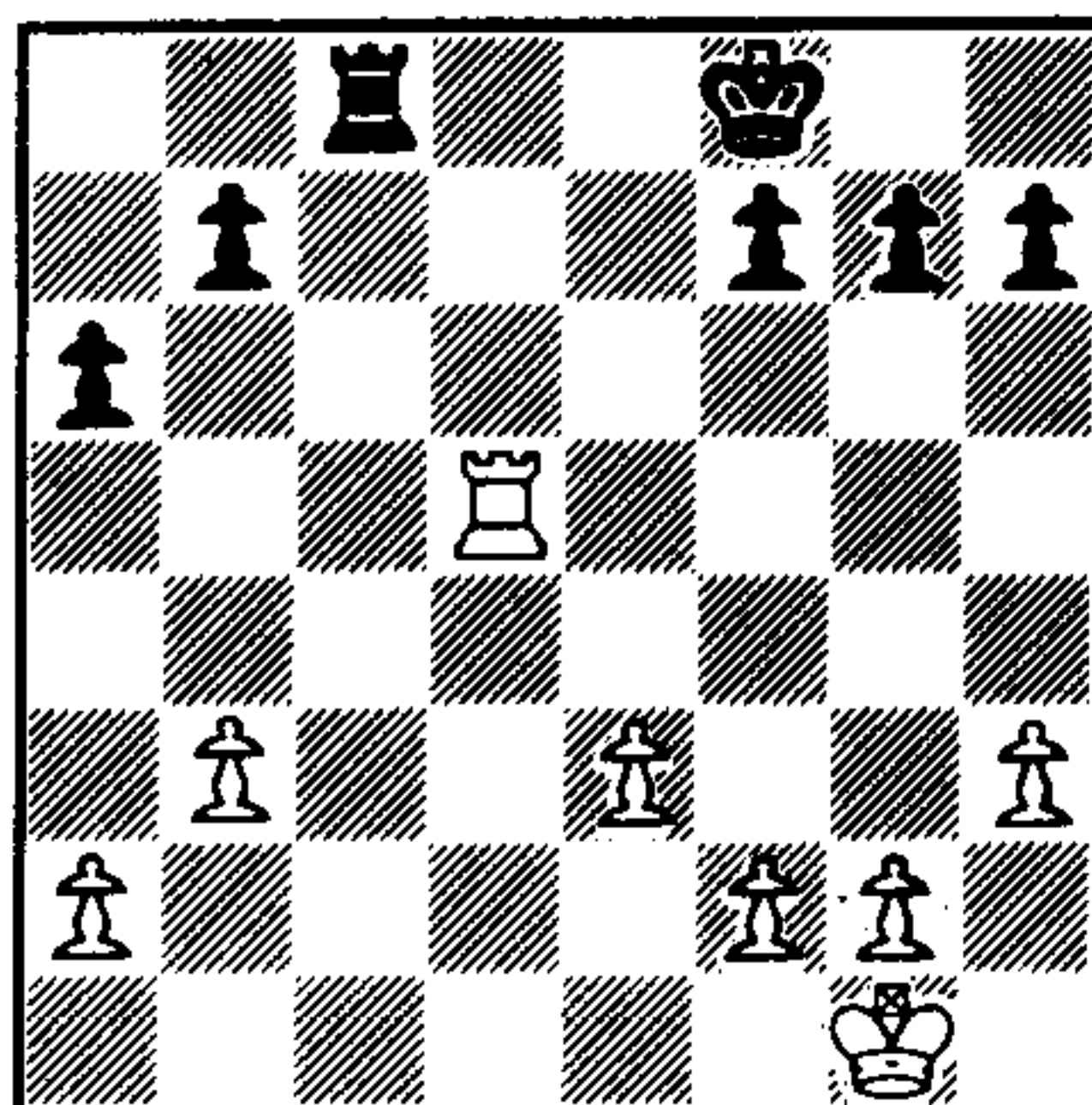
- (1) The pawn is already on the 7th rank.
- (2) The Rook is able to protect the Kingside pawns, thus allowing the King to head for the Queenside without any risk.

Section 3: Material advantage of one pawn — pawns on both sides of the board

The ultimate strategic theme is winning the pawn up endgame when there are pawns on both sides of the board *and* there are no other advantages in your position and no other disadvantages in your opponent's position. In theory such positions should be won. Yet absolute perfection is required to ensure the win. If the stronger side has strayed a bit, then with an absolutely perfect defense the defender should draw. Whether going for the win or the draw, the two most important qualities required are patience and care. Still, full play Rook endgames are tough and complicated and to achieve perfection is both difficult and rare. A good illustration from real life occurs from Diagram 24, Z. Ribli - A. Adorjan, 1979 Match, Game No. 3, after Black's 24th move. These two are world class grandmasters and their play over-all is good

and logical, but not perfect.

Diagram 24



Ribli-Adorjan
'79 Match game 3
After Black's 24th

In Diagram 24 White is up a solid pawn but has no other advantages. Therefore brute force tactics can not be expected to bring success. For instance, 25 Rd7?! is countered by 25...Rc1+! 26 Kh2 Rc2 and the best that White can expect is the drawish four pawn vs. three pawn endgame, with the pawns on the same side. White's winning process will have to require much time, care and patience. The over-all strategy should consist of the following four parts:

- (1) Protect White's Queenside from Black's Rook.
- (2) Force Black to create weaknesses in his Kingside pawn formation.
- (3) By a judicious advance of White's Kingside pawns, expose and take advantage of Black's positional weaknesses.
- (4) With Black occupied on the Kingside, make a decisive penetration on the Queenside.

The game course will show various critical aspects of the above plan:

25 Rd2!

Protecting the Queenside pawns and denying the Black Rook access to White's second rank, while still controlling the open d-file. White's multi-faceted Rook move has already accomplished Part No. 1!

25 ... Rc1+

26 Kh2 h5?!

Voluntarily weakening his Kingside is quite wrong, since this is what White wants to force in any event. In order is the non-committal, centralizing 26...Ke7.

27 Kg3 Ke7

28 Kf4?!

With this and the following King maneuvers, White loses just enough time to enable Black to achieve a defensible Kingside pawn formation. Correct is the direct 28 Kh4! and after 28...g6 29 Kg5! followed by 30 Kh6!. White's active King is perfectly placed to exploit in due course the weaknesses on Black's Kingside. This exploitation is made easier of course by the fact that White already has an extra pawn there.

28	b5
29 Ke5	f6+
30 Kf5	Rc5+
31 Ke4	g6
32 Kd3!	

Since White's King is presently denied access to Black's Kingside, it wants to be in a position to get into Black's Queenside. From now on White plays perfectly; except for the error on move 55, so does Black.

32	Rc1
33 Rc2	Rd1+
34 Kc3	a5

Forced as otherwise White penetrates with Kb4. Yet now — on a long term basis — Black's Queenside pawns are vulnerable to a potential attack from White's Rook on the fifth rank.

35 Rd2	Rc1+
36 Kb2	Rg1!
37 g3	Ke6
38 Kc3	Ke5
39 Kd3	Rh1
40 Rc2	Kd5!

White's threatened 41 Rc5+ must be prevented. Though Black's position is severely inferior, with absolutely perfect play it can be defended. Yet as the reader will see, to continually find the only correct move in inferior, complicated positions is almost a practical impossibility.

41 e4+	Kd6
42 h4	Re1
43 Kd4	Rd1+
44 Ke3	Ra1!

By keeping the a-pawn under attack, Black makes it impossible for the White Rook to leave the second rank.

45 Kf4	Ke6
46 f3!	

Since there is no reason to expect that Black's pawns will become more vulnerable, Part No. 2 can be considered to be completed. Therefore it is time to start Part No. 3: a judicious advance of the Kingside pawns. The text move removes the f-pawn from a potential attack by Black's Rook and also gets it ready for an appropriately timed g4 advance.

46	Kd6
47 Rg2!	

It is too early for the sharp 47 e5+?! fxe5 48 Kg5, because Black gets sufficient counterplay with 48...Rg1! 49 g4 e4!

47	Ke6
48 Rd2!	

With his Rook maneuvers, White has put Black very close to *zugzwang*:

(1) If Black's Rook moves, then decisive is 49 Rd5.

(2) If Black's King moves, then decisive is 49 e5.

Notice how White's patient maneuvering has put Black so close to the abyss. Black must move one of his Queenside pawns, but which is the correct one?

48 b4!

This one! After 48...a4? 49 bxa4 bxa4 White can put Black in *zugzwang* thus: 50 Rc2! Kd6 51 Rb2! Ke6 52 Rd2! a3 53 Re2! Kd6 54 Rc2! Ke6 55 Rd2! Now a King move loses to 56 e5! and a Rook move loses to 56 Rd3!

49 Rc2 Kd6

50 Rg2 Rd1!

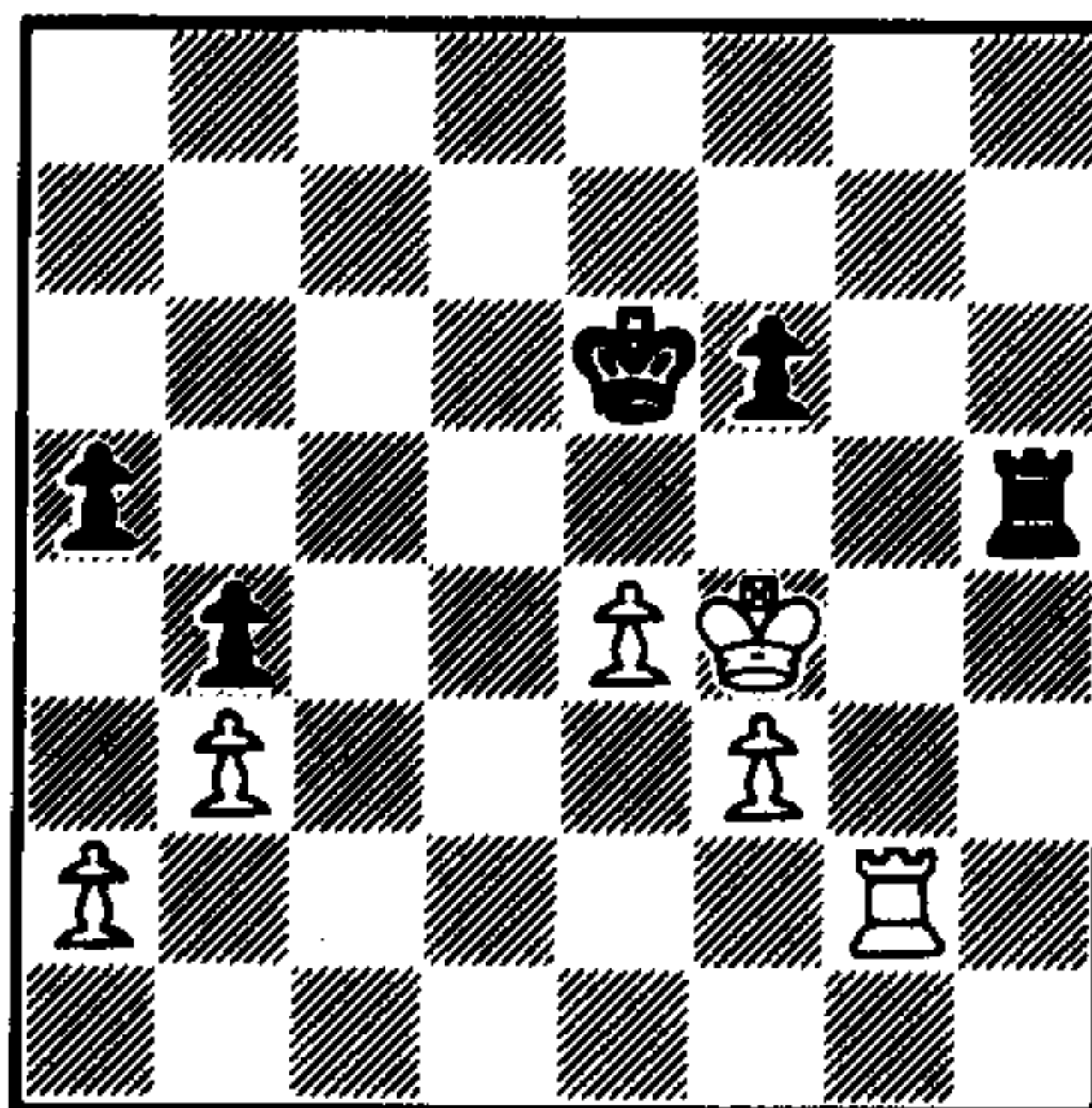
Black must prevent the thematic *zugzwang* position arising after 50... Ke6 51 Rd2! But now White is in position to execute a promising Kingside advance, since Black's Rook no longer is menacing White's a-pawn.

51 g4!

Again there is nothing in 51 e5+?! fxe5+ 52 Kg5 because of 52...Rf1! 53 Kxg6 Rxf3 and Black's passed e-pawn is of sufficient strength to assure a draw.

51 Rh1!
52 gxh5 Rxh4+
53 Rg4 Rxh5
54 Rxg6 Ke6
55 Rg2!

Diagram 25



Ribli-Adorjan
'79 Match game 3
After White's 55th

Protecting the second rank, while getting the Rook into position to swing it to the 5th or 8th rank. The exchange of Kingside pawns has yielded the following benefits to White:

- the f5 square is potentially accessible to his King.
- the fifth rank is now much more accessible to White's Rook for an attack against Black's a-pawn.

As his immediate object, White will try to set up a position where both of these factors would come into play.

Two moves before time control, Black is understandably short of time. How should he continue?

55

Rh4+?

This loses because White will be able to put Black into *zugzwang*. After the game Adorjan published a lengthy analysis to demonstrate that Black can draw after 55...Rc5! His main line is: 56 Rd2 a4! 57 Rd4 a3!! 58 Rxb4 Rc2 59 Rb6+ Ke7 60 Kf5 Rc5+ 61 Kg4 Rg5+ 62 Kf4 (Or 62 Kh3 Rh5+ 63 Kg2 Rc5!) 62...Rg2 63 Ra6 Rxa2 64 Kf5 Rf2 65 f4 a2 66 b4 Kd7! 67 b5 Kc7! 68 e5 fxe5 69 Kxe5 Re2+. In this position Black's King can hold the b-pawn while the Rook can hold the f-pawn. Even if White's King and f-pawn reach the favorable case of Kf8, f7, the position remains drawn since White's Rook remains stuck on the a-file. But, of course, all of this was impossible to foresee at the time Black had to make his 55th move at the board.

56 Ke3

Rh1

57 Rc2!

Re1+

58 Kf4

Ra1

59 Rh2!

Putting Black in total, final, absolute *zugzwang*. If Black's Rook moves, White wins with 60 Rh5. So . . .

59

Kf7

60 Kf5!

Rc1

61 Rh7+

Kg8

62 Ra7!

Resigns.

White wins at least another pawn while retaining a significant strategic superiority.

Section 4: Value of the active Rook — for winning

I have already said it before, yet it bears repeating again and again: the Rook is a unique piece in that its capabilities in attacking and defending are vastly different. In attacking it is truly a major piece and can do tremendous damage. Yet as a defender it is very clumsy.

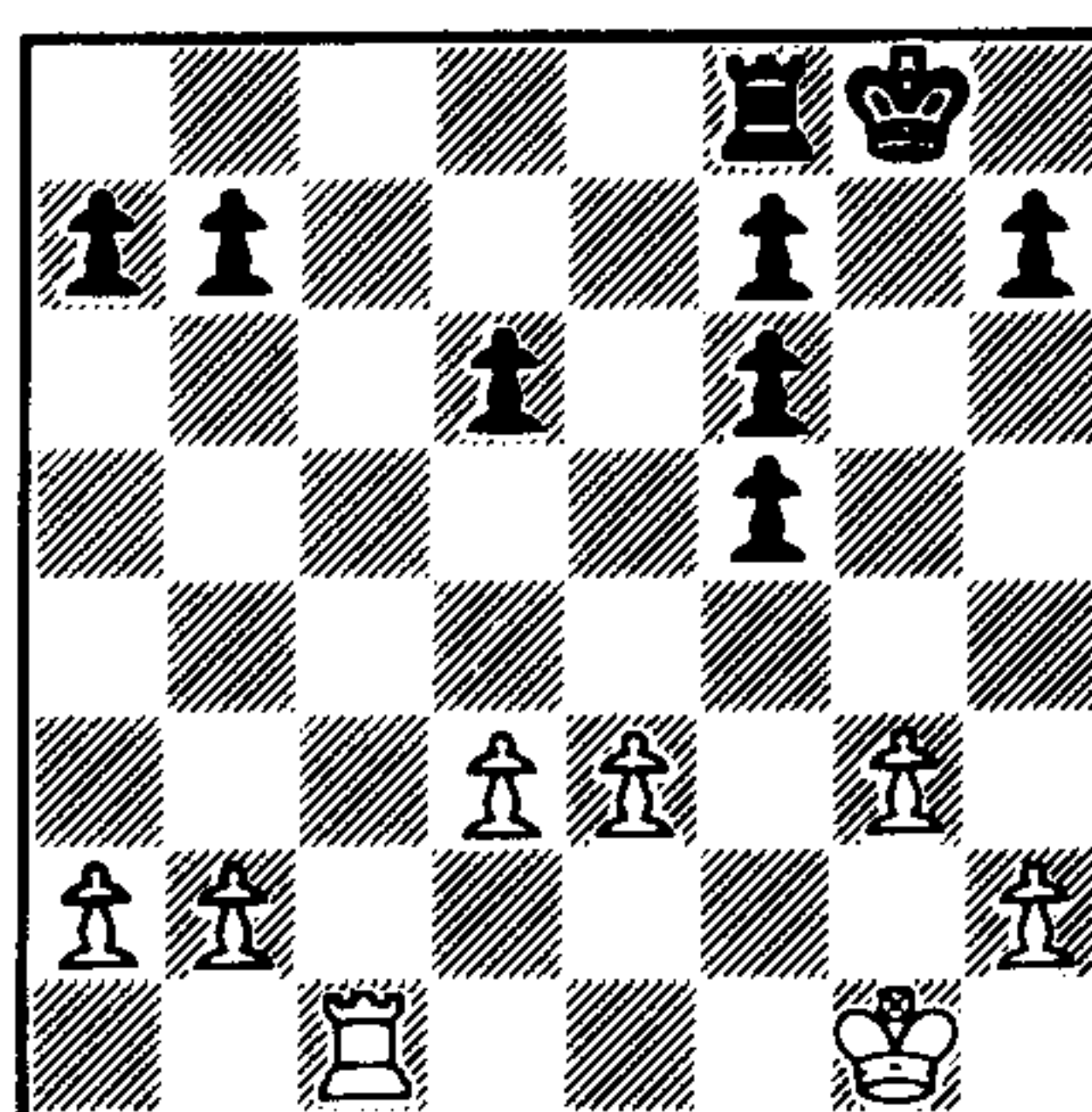
Therefore the most important theme of Rook endgames is: **ACTIVATE YOUR ROOK**. The Rook's single most active general location is on the 7th rank since very often enemy pawns are there for the taking and the enemy King can be prevented from leaving its first rank.

This section will demonstrate the utilization of the active Rook for winning; Rook activation as a defensive technique will be considered in the next section.

The damage that an active Rook can inflict is well illustrated from Diagram 26 on the next page, I. Csom - B. Zuckerman, Cleveland 1975, after Black's 23rd move. Despite being a pawn down, White has a significant advantage, since his Rook controls the only open file, will reach the 7th rank and

then start menacing lots of Black pawns.

Diagram 26



Csom-Zuckerman
Cleveland 1975
After Black's 23rd

Play now continued:

24 Rc7! Rb8
25 Kf2!

Both here and on the next move, Rd7 allows Black good counterplay with ...Rc8. Therefore White first activates his King.

25 a5
26 Kf3! Kg7

Otherwise White after 27 Kf4 will eat up Black's f-pawns.

27 Rd7 b5
28 Rxd6 Rc8!

Quite correctly activating his Rook. Over the next few moves, both Rooks demonstrate their powers by taking off as many enemy pawns as possible.

29 Rd5 Rc2
30 Rxb5 a4
31 Ra5 Rxb2
32 Rxa4 Rxh2

The action has ended with material equality but with a winning strategic superiority for White, who has two passed pawns while Black still has the tripled f-pawns.

33 Ra8! h5
34 a4!

White's Rook is presently as active as feasible. Therefore he immediately follows the principle: "Passed pawns must be pushed!"

34 h4
35 gxh4 Rh3+
36 Kf4 Kg6
37 Rg8+!

The maneuver starting with this move was pointed out by IM Zuckerman after the game. White regroups his forces so that he winds up with the active King and Rook, while relegating Black's counterparts to passive roles.

In the game White won considerably slower, but still steadily enough:

37 Rh8 Kg7 38 Ra8 Kg6 39 a5 Rxh4+ 40 Kf3 Rh3+ 41 Kf4 Rh4+ 42 Kf3 Rh3+ 43 Kg2 Rxe3 44 a6! Re2+ 45 Kf3 Ra2 46 a7 Kg7 47 d4 (Though Black's Rook is in the favorable position and White's Rook is unfavorably placed, the passed d-pawn is the winner. Black's f-pawns are simply irrelevant.) 47...Ra3+ 48 Kf4 Ra4 49 Kxf5 Ra5+ 50 Kf4 Ra4 51 Ke4 Ra5 52 d5 f5+ 53 Ke5 Kh7 54 Kf4! Rxd5 55 Rh8+ Black resigns.

37 Kh7

Or 37...Kh6 38 Rg3! Rxh4+ 39 Kxf5 Rxa4 40 Kxf6 Ra7 41 Rh3 mate; or 37...Kh5 38 Rg3! Rxh4+ 39 Kxf5 Rxa4 40 Rh3+.

38 Rg3! Rxh4+

39 Kxf5 Rxa4

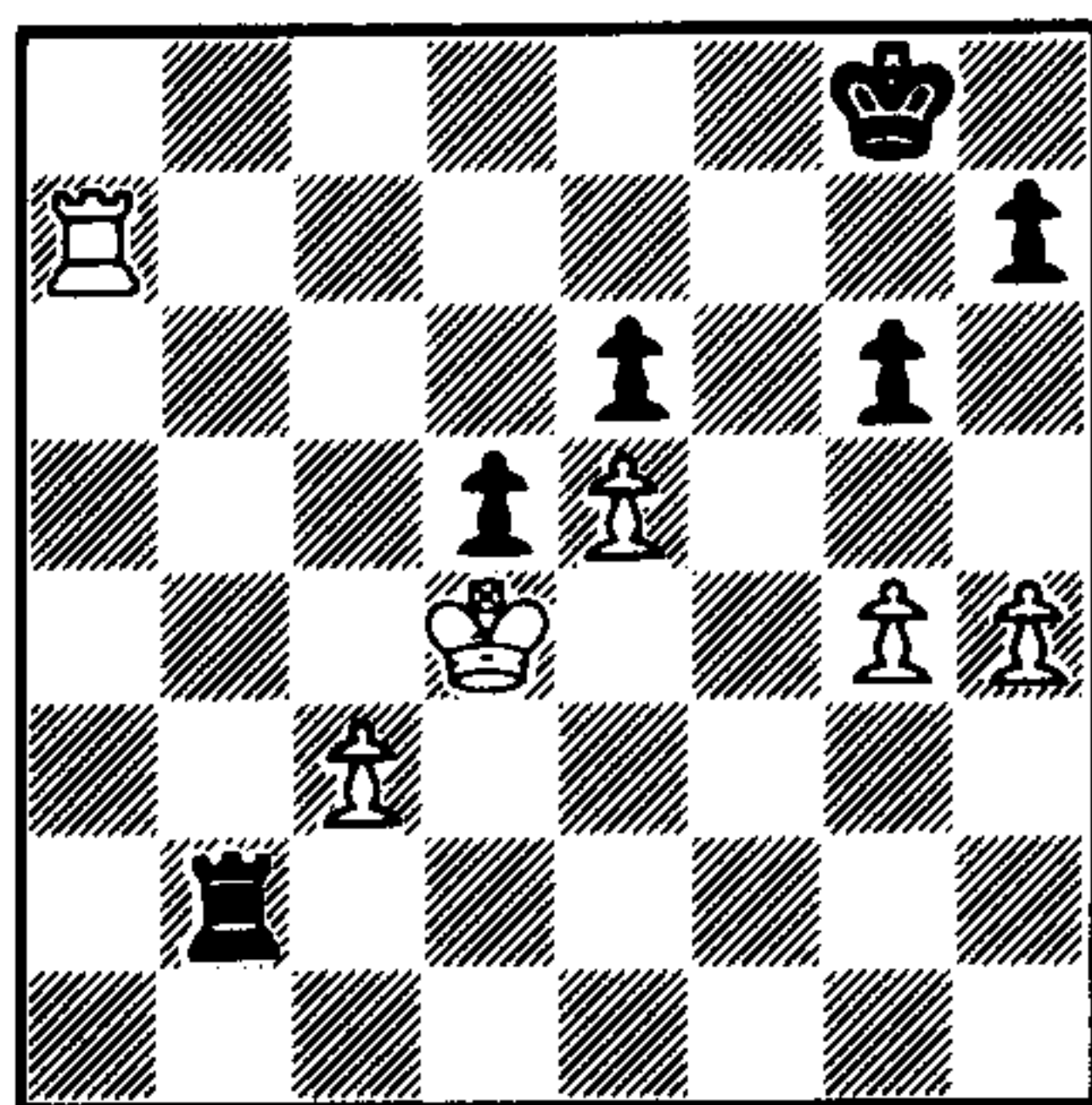
40 Kxf6 Ra7

41 Rg7+ and White wins.

After 42 Rxf7 White has the winning advantage of two connected passed pawns.

Since the Rook is such a strong attacker it is capable of creating mating threats. These become particularly dangerous when an active King can assist its Rook and the enemy King is contained on its first rank. A characteristic situation is shown in Diagram 27, A. Bisguier - E. Mednis, 1962/63 U. S. Championship, after Black's 42nd move.

Diagram 27



Bisguier-Mednis
'62/63 U.S. Champ.
After Black's 42nd

Both Rooks seem potentially active on the respective 7th ranks, yet White's has the thematic point of containing Black's King to the first rank. This factor, when added to White's King activity, leads to a winning position as follows:

43 Kc5!

Getting ready to not only attack Black's e-pawn but to be in a position to menace Black's King thereafter.

43 Rb3

44 Kd6 Rxc3

45 Kxe6 d4

46 Rd7!

Getting the Rook to the desired "behind the Black pawn location."

Black has no satisfactory defense, because his King is so insecure. If Black's King would be a free person in some reasonable location on the board, the chances would probably be even. But here Black is lost. For instance:

- (1) 46...d3 47 Kf6! threatening 48 Rd8 mate.
- (2) 46...Rd3. Black's Rook now is inactive and White wins with 47 Rd5!, followed by 48 Kd7, 49 e6, etc.

Therefore in the game Black immediately sacrifices the d-pawn, but this only helps to delay the inevitable.

46	Rc8
47 Rxd4	Re8+
48 Kf6	Rf8+
49 Ke7	Rf7+
50 Kd8	

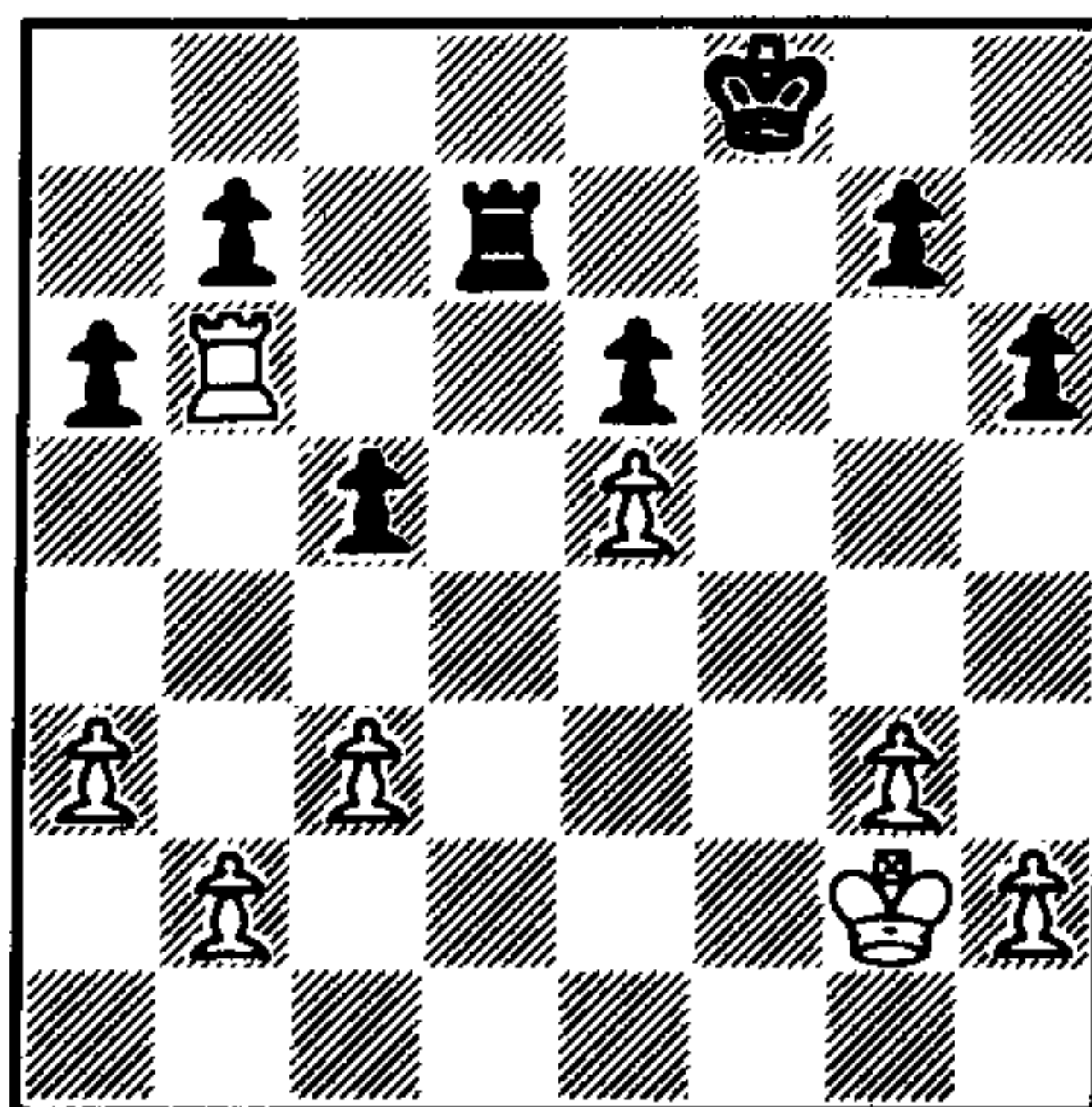
White's e-pawn is safe and Black's King still can not help prevent the pawn's advance. The concluding moves were:

50	Ra7
51 e6	Ra8+
52 Ke7	Kg7
53 g5!	Ra6
54 Rd8!	Ra7+
55 Kd6	Ra6+
56 Ke7	Ra7+
57 Ke8	Ra6
58 e7	Ra7
59 Rc8	Black resigns.

Next will come 60 Kd8 and the e-pawn will queen.

It has been mentioned several times that the Rook is clumsy on the defense. This clumsiness and lack of potency will be demonstrated from Diagram 28, E. Mednis - S. Matera, New York 1972, after Black's 29th move.

Diagram 28



E. Mednis-Matera
New York 1972
After Black's 29th

Black has vulnerable pawns on b7 and e6 and White's Rook is ideally

placed on b6 for attacking both. Since it is mathematically impossible for Black's King to simultaneously protect both these pawns, this means that Black's Rook will have to protect at least one of them and of necessity do this from a passive location. Therefore it is clear enough that White has a considerable advantage. What, however, is not obvious is how to transform the advantage of the more active Rook into a win. For this considerable patience will be required. The definitive steps are as follows:

Step No. 1: Centralize the King

30 Kf3	Kf7
31 Ke4	Ke7

Accomplished. The King is centralized so that it is ready to head to whichever side offers the most prospects.

Step No. 2: Gain space on the Kingside by a judicious advance of the Kingside pawns:

32 h3	Kf7
33 Kf4	

Since Black is utterly without counterplay and also is not able to defensively strengthen his position, White saves lots of time both here and later by move repetitions and similar methods. This will yield White much more available thinking time later on for working his substantive decisions. Remember that it is not the *speed* of winning that matters, but the *certainty* of it!

33	Ke7
34 Ke4	Kf7
35 Kf4	Ke7
36 h4!	Kf7
37 Ke4	Ke7
38 Kf4	Kf7
39 h5!	Ke7
40 Ke4	Kf7
41 Kf4	Ke7
42 g4!	Kf7
43 g5!	Ke7
44 g6	

Black refrained from capturing on g5, as that would allow White's King to penetrate into Black's Kingside. White, on his part, has achieved the following two objectives by 44 g6: (1) space on the Kingside, which will be useful later on, and (2) taking away the f7 square from Black's King. This makes the Black King-Rook team even more cramped.

44	Rc7
45 Ke3!	

Since Black's Kingside is inaccessible to White's King, the proper direction to head for is the Queenside. Therefore the next step is . . .

Step No. 3: Bring the King over to the Queenside.

45 ...	Rd7
46 Ke4	Rc7

Black must allow White's King to cross the d-file, since the alternatives are worse: (1) moving the King loses the e-pawn, (2) 46...c4 leads to a vulnerable c-pawn: 47 a4! Rc7 48 Kd4 Kd7 49 Rb4, etc.

47 Kd3	Rd7+
48 Kc4	Rc7

White's King is on the Queenside. Moreover, Black's Rook is now immobile.

Step No. 4: Prepare and execute a pawn advance on the Queenside so that the White King's scope is sufficiently increased and it can team up with its active Rook:

49 a4!	Kd7
50 a5!	Ke7
51 Rd6	Rc8
52 Rb6	Rc7
53 b4!	cxb4+
54 Kxb4	Rd7
55 c4!	

Even though Black is now rid of his vulnerable c-pawn, his position is closer to critical. White's c-pawn is now the battering ram that will decisively break open Black's position.

55 ...	Rc7
56 c5!	Kd7

This leads to the most thematic conclusion. The game continuation was: 56...Rd7 57 c6! bxc6 58 Rxa6 Rd4+ 59 Kc3 Rd5 60 Ra7+ Ke8 61 a6 Rxe5 62 Rxc7 Kf8 63 Rf7+ Black resigns.

57 c6+!	bxc6
---------	------

Or 57...Rxc6 58 Rxb7+ Rc7 59 Rxc7+! Kxc7 60 Kc5, with a won King plus Pawn endgame. After the text move White is ready for the last phase.

Step No. 5: The combination of White's King and Rook breaks decisively into Black's position:

58 Kc5!	Ra7
---------	-----

After 58...Kc8 or 58...Ke7, simplest is 59 Rxa6.

59 Rb8! and White wins.

Note that Black's Rook is still clumsily passive, whereas White's Rook can not be prevented from playing the decisive 60 Rg8!.

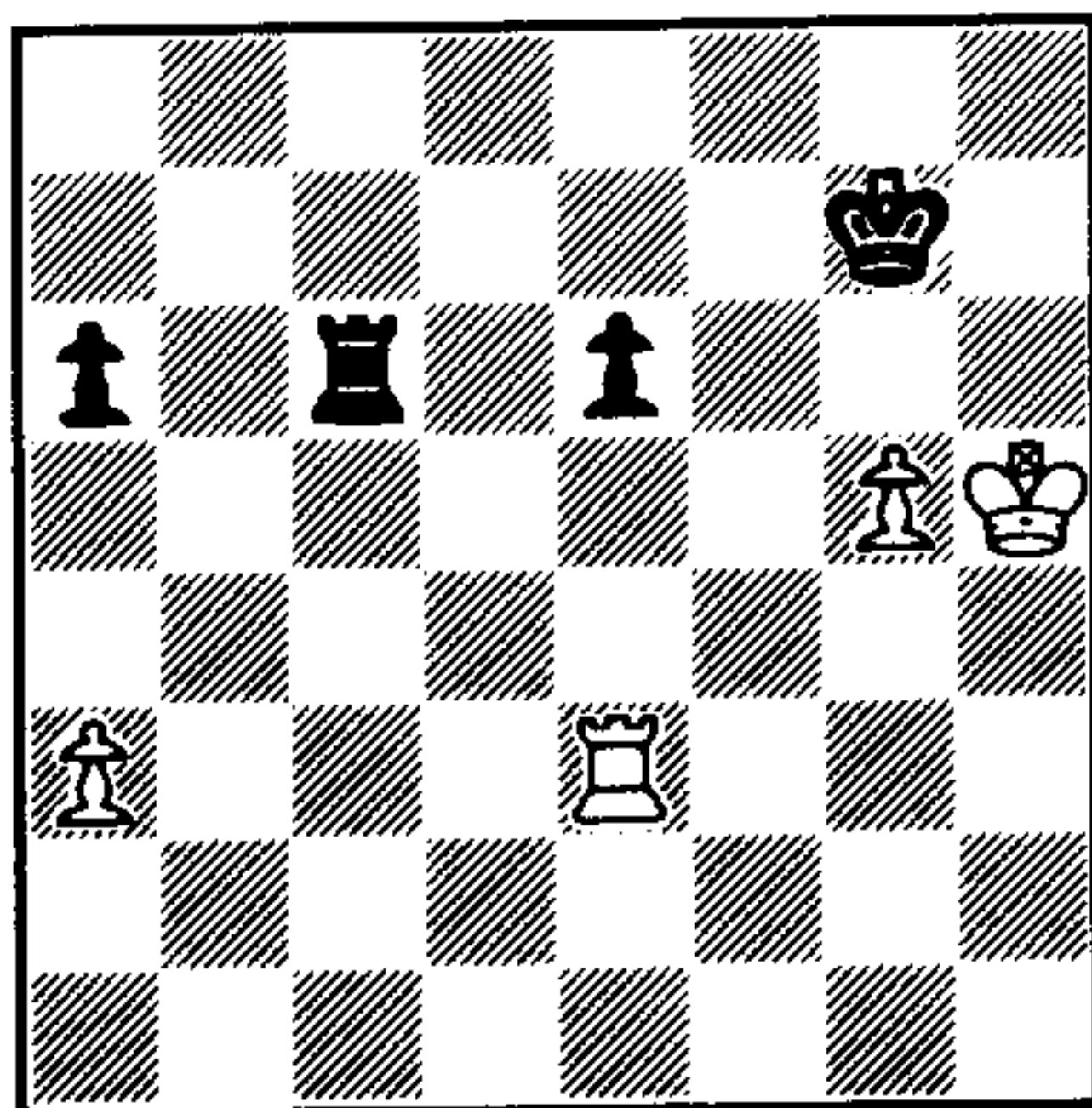


Section 5: Value of the active Rook — for drawing

If you have an inferior position, always be on the lookout for the chance to get sufficient counterplay by activating your Rook.

The creation and rapid advance of a passed pawn is often the most effective approach to counterplay. This is so because the Rook can be of great help in the advance of a passed pawn. This method is demonstrated from Diagram 29, B. Zuckerman - E. Mednis, New York 1977, after Black's 50th move.

Diagram 29



Zuckerman-Mednis
New York 1977
After Black's 50th

White has the advantage because his actively placed King can assist the well advanced g-pawn. White now plays:

51 Rb3!

Threatening 52 Rb7+, which would force Black's King back to the first rank. If Black defends against White's threat by playing 51...Rc7, then White wins a pawn after 52 Rb6. Therefore Black's best defensive plan is to utilize his only potential strength, the passed e-pawn.

51 e5!

It is true that Black here didn't have to create a passed pawn since he already has a somewhat sickly looking one. The important factor, however, becomes its effective utilization.

52 Rb7+ Kf8

53 g6 Rc1!

The Rook must be activated! Note how similar this is to the basic technique from Philidor's position. If White now plays 52 Kh6, Black chases the King back with 54...Rh1+. Compared to Philidor's position, the presence of the other pawns makes Black's job more difficult, but the principle of Rook activation remains exactly the same.

54 Ra7 e4!

55 Rxa6 e3

56 Rf6+ Kg7

57 Rf7+ Kg8

58 Re7 Re1!

The combination of far advanced passed pawn and active Rook is suffi-

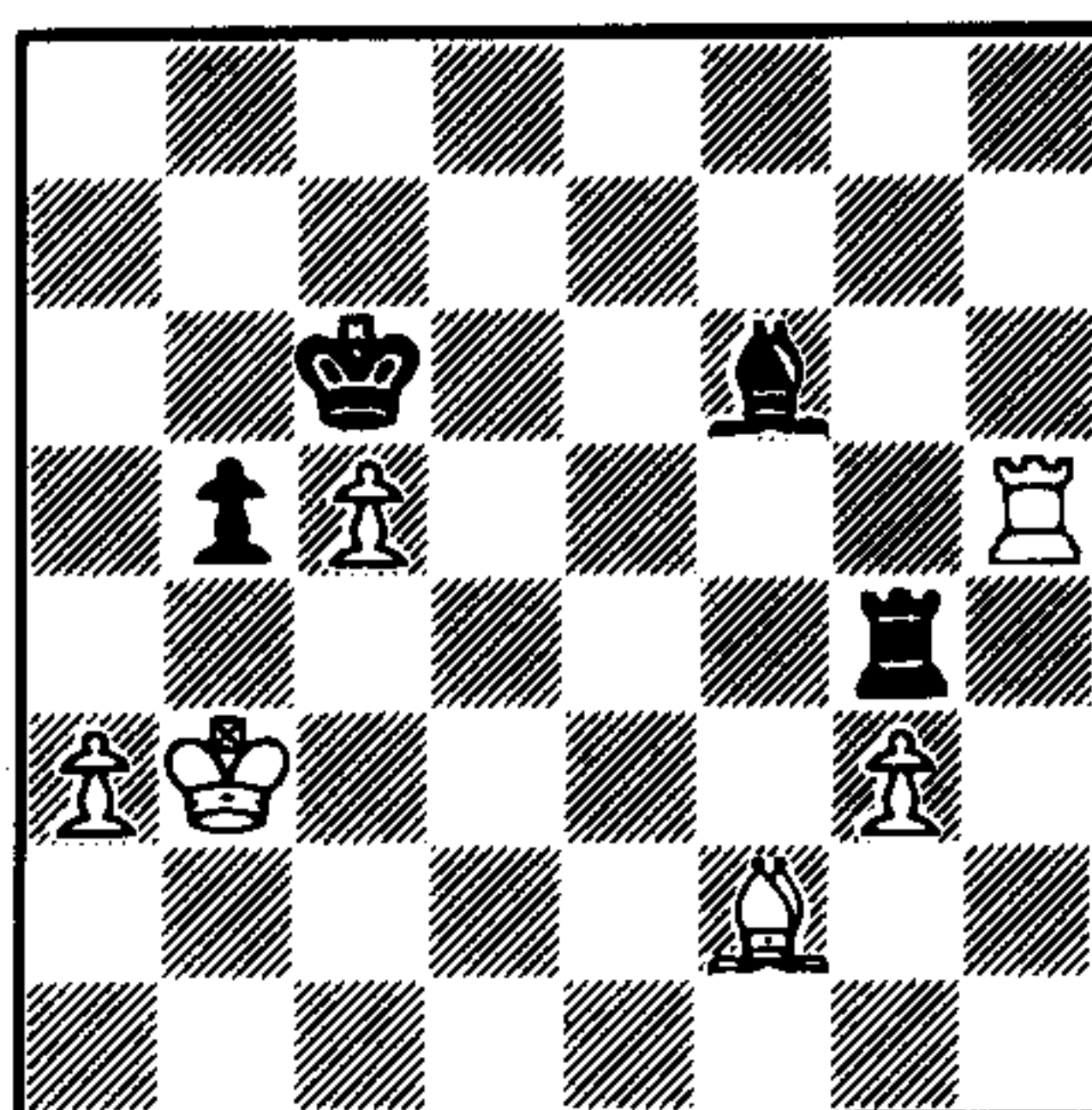
cient to draw. At this moment Black even threatens to win by 59...e2 followed by 60...Rh1+. Therefore White has no time to advance the a-pawn. King activation by 59 Kh6 is also easily foiled: 59...Rh1+ 60 Kg5 Re1! 61 Kf6 Rf1+!, etc. Thus in the game White brings his King back toward the e-pawn.

59 Kg4 e2!
60 Kf3 Ra1!
Draw.

After 61 Rxe2 Rxa3+ 62 Kg4 Kg7 63 Re6 Ra5 the position is a dead draw.

Because the Rook can cover lots of ground from far away, there are times when it is possible to sacrifice one or even two pawns to successfully set up an *active, defensive* Rook placement. Consider Diagram 30, V. Korchnoi - A. Karpov, 1974 Candidates Finals Match, Game No. 11, after White's 64th move.

Diagram 30



Korchnoi-Karpov
'74 Candidates Match
After White's 64th

Black's prospects indeed look bleak: he is down two pawns, has no compensation for that and White is threatening 65 Rh6, winning instantaneously. Yet Karpov had correctly foreseen that it is exactly this position that gives him the best drawing chances and he now forces a Rook and pawn endgame as follows:

64 Bd4!
65 Bxd4 Rxd4
66 Rg5

Required as otherwise Black draws easily after 66...Rg4.

66 Re4

This is the basic Rook and pawn endgame position that Karpov had in mind. Look at it. White is up two healthy pawns, but how is he to progress? A Rook move means giving back a pawn and if the King moves over to the Kingside, Black will capture the a-pawn. In any case, to hope to progress, White will have to give back one of the pawns. But Black will still be able to draw.

67 g4 Ra4
68 Kb2 Rf4

69 Kc2

Which pawn to give up? In the game White decides to sacrifice the a-pawn. The alternative is 69 Rg8, giving up the c-pawn so that the g-pawn can run. Black's drawing line then is 69...Kxc5 70 g5 Rg4! 71 g6 Kb6! 72 g7 Kb7!. Black's King has reached the safe a7/b7 harbor and draws.

69	Rf3
70 Kb2	Rf2+
71 Kc3	Rf3+
72 Kd4	Rf4+!

Black avoids the immediate 72...Rxa3?! since that allows White to make real progress after 73 Rg6+ Kc7 74 g5. The logic behind the text move is that it prevents the effective coordination of White's King and Rook.

73 Ke5	Ra4!
74 Rg8	Rxa3

Now 75 Rc8+ Kb7 leads to nothing since after White's Rook moves, Black's King returns to c6. Therefore White also must sacrifice his c-pawn and Black's passed b-pawn then is strong enough to draw.

75 g5	Kxc5
76 g6	Rg3!

Getting the Rook *behind* the pawn. There is no need to worry about the immediate 77 g7, since after 77...Kb4! Black's King is safe from checks whereas White's King will not find shelter.

77 Rc8+	Kb4
78 Kf6	Rf3+
79 Ke6	Rg3
80 Kf7	Ka3
81 g7	Draw.

Offered by White. The likely continuation is 81...b4 82 g8(Q) Rxc8 83 Rxc8 b3 84 Ra8+ Kb2 85 Ke6 Kc2 86 Rc8+ Kd2 87 Kd5 b2 88 Rb8 Kc2 89 Kc4 b1(Q).

Section 6: Value of the active King — for winning

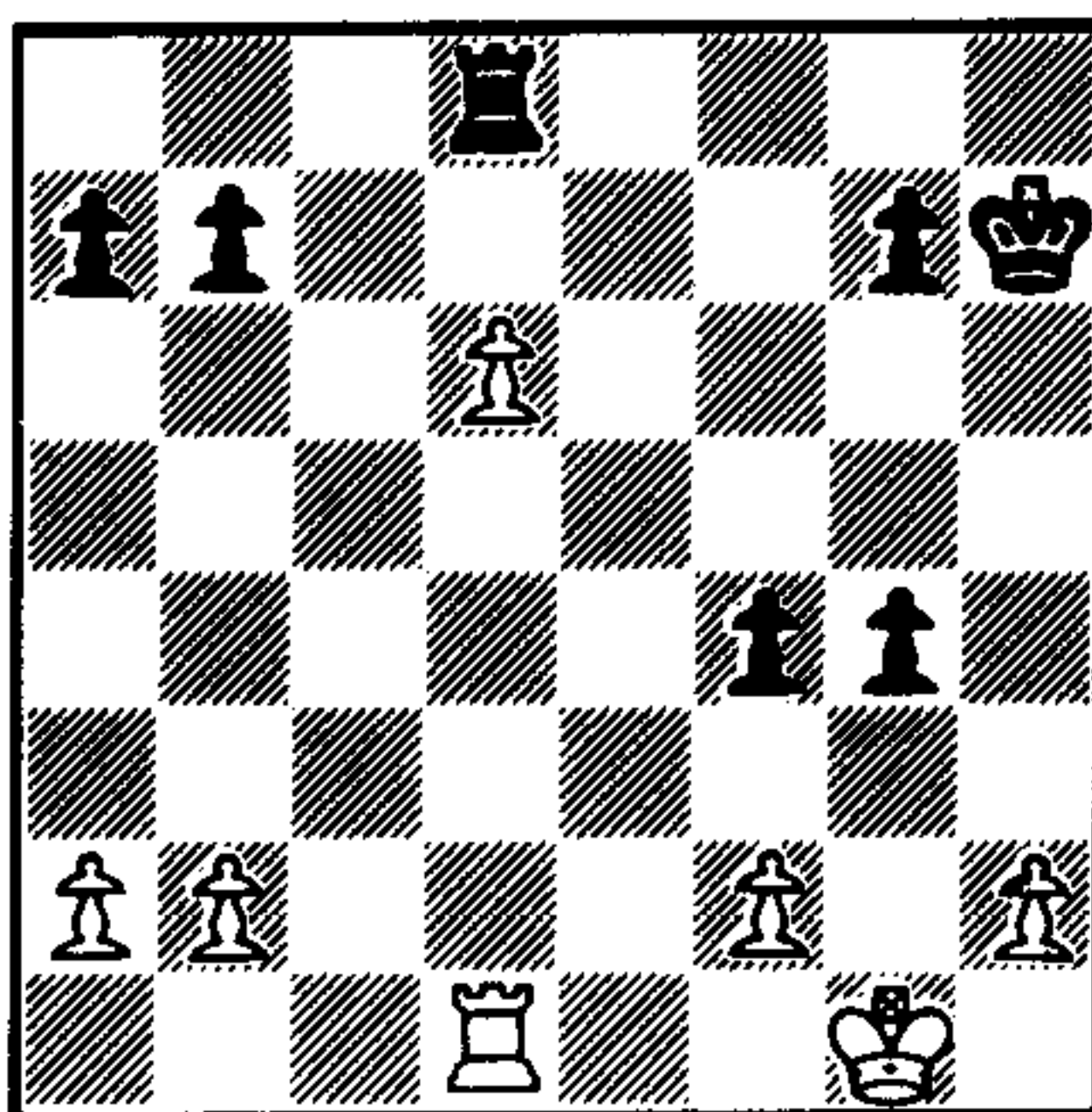
The concept that the King is a strong piece in the endgame and therefore should be activated and utilized is of course equally true for Rook and pawn endgames. A very instructive execution of the principle allows White to win from Diagram 31, W. Lombardy - K. Rogoff, 1975 U. S. Championship, after Black's 28th move. White has a slight advantage since his Rook is in the preferred behind-the-passed-pawn position, whereas Black's Rook is inactive-ly placed in front of the pawn. Still, the pawn needs help from its King, both to be secure and to hope to become a queening power.

From the diagram position on the next page White plays:

29 Kg2!

White prepares to create an outlet for the King starting with 30 h3. It

Diagram 31



Lombardy-Rogoff
'75 U.S. Champ.
After Black's 28th

is imperative for Black to now activate his King with 29...Kg6!, and then move it over to capture the d-pawn. This leads to a drawn King and pawn endgame: 30 h3! gxh3+ 31 Kxh3 Kf6 32 Kg4 Ke6 33 Kxf4 Rxd6 34 Rxd6+ Kxd6.

29 g5?

There are two serious faults in this move: Black loses a tempo for King activization and gives himself a vulnerable g-pawn.

30 h3!

Voluntarily dissolving Black's doubled pawns so that White's King can play an *active role*.

30 gxh3+

31 Kxh3 Rd7

32 Kg4!

Do note how effectively White has activated his King from g1 to g4!

32 Kg6

33 Rd5 Kf6

34 Rd1 Ke5?!

Being in extreme time pressure, White prefers to repeat moves rather than immediately go for Black's Kingside pawns starting with 34 Rf5+. Black has nothing better than to follow suit with 34...Kg6 35 Rd5 Kf6. Best play then is 36 Rf5+! Ke6 37 Rxd5 Kxd6 38 Kxf4 Kc6! 39 Ke3 Re7+ 40 Kd3 Rd7+ 41 Kc3 Rf7 42 Rg2. White should ultimately win, but the road would be long and hard. After the text move White wins easily, since his King can remain active, and the Rook remains *behind* the passed pawn.

35 Kxg5 Rg7+

36 Kh6 Rd7

37 Kg6!

Keeping the King as active as possible. Both now and in the near future White's d-pawn is poisoned since after the exchange of Rooks, White wins the

f-pawn and the game.

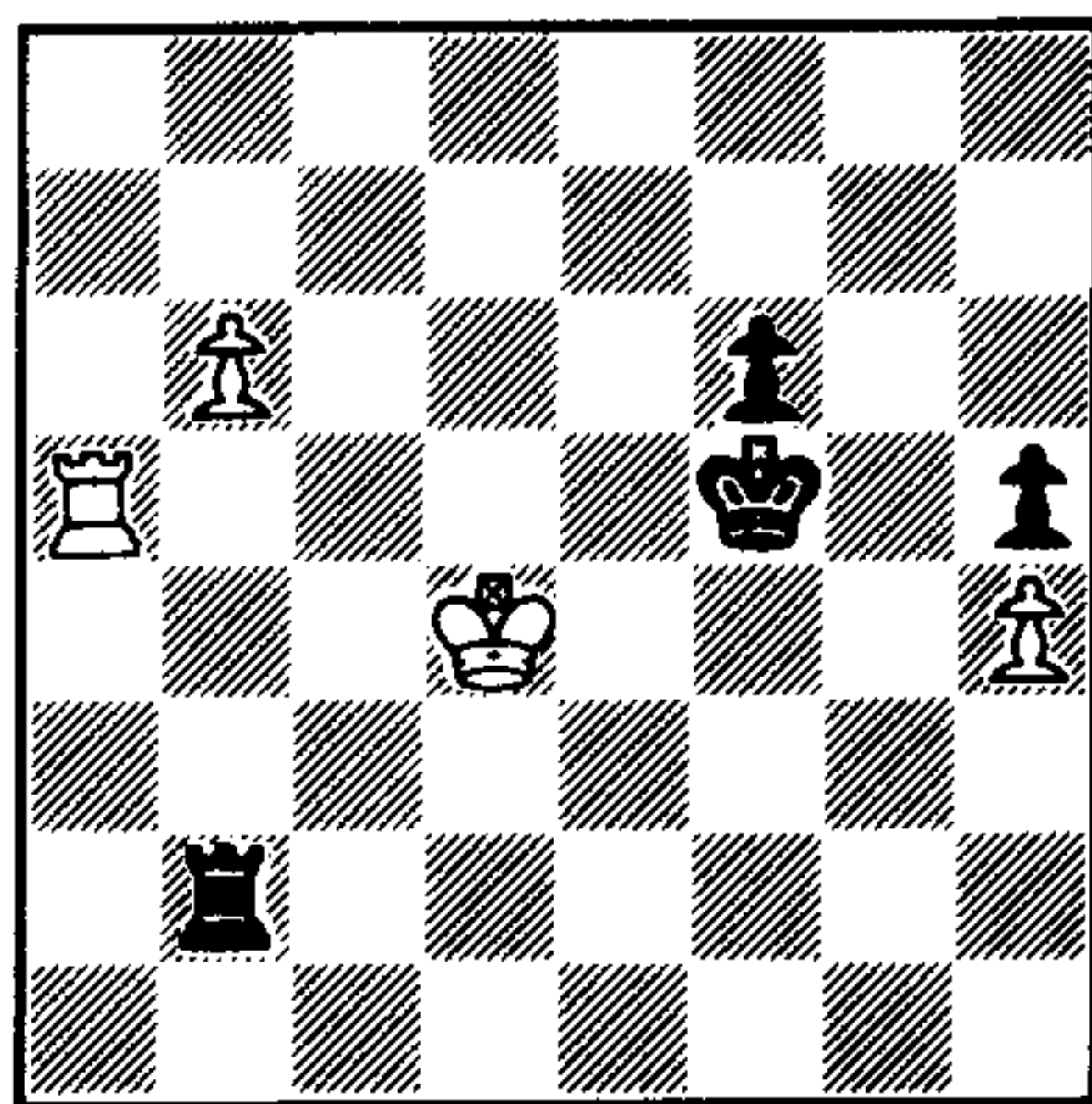
37	a5
38 Re1+	Kd5
39 Kf5	Rf7+
40 Kg6	Black resigns.

White has reached the time control and therefore Black resigns. A logical conclusion would be: 40...Rd7 41 Kg5! f3 42 Re3! Kd4 43 Rxf3 Rxd6 44 Rb3! b6 45 f4!. White's Queenside is secure and the passed f-pawn, assisted by the active King will be decisive.

Section 7: Value of the active King — for drawing

Very often the active King is an absolute must for drawing. An instructive example from actual master praxis is shown in Diagram 32, L. Portisch - T. Petrosian, 1974 Candidates Match, Game No. 12, after White's 59th move.

Diagram 32



Portisch-Petrosian
'74 Candidates Match
After White's 59th

White has a clear strategic advantage since his passed pawn is the further advanced one and his King can help it advance. Obviously, Black's King is in check and must move. But in which direction? Forward or backward?

A) Backward = the wrong way

59	Ke6?
---------	------

This is the game continuation. Black remains completely without counterplay and lost routinely:

60 Kc5	Rc2+
61 Kb5	Kd6
62 Ka6	Kc6
63 Ra1!	Rc4
64 b7	Rb4
65 Rc1+	Kd7
66 Rc8	Black resigns.

B) Forward = the correct way

59	Kg4!
---------	------

Black's only strength is the passed f-pawn and the King must be in posi-

tion to help out. At this moment it is not certain that Black can draw, yet this must be the only approach to offer some chances.

60 Ra4!!

Threatening a devastating discovered check with either 61 Kc5 or 61 Kc3 and thereby indirectly protecting both pawns.

60 Kh3!!

The only way to draw: the discovered check must be prevented, the King must be kept active, yet it can not go to g3, since that would allow White's b-pawn to queen with check — in the play to come.

61 Kc5 f5!

Passed pawns must be pushed! If White keeps the Rooks on, the f-pawn then provides sufficient counterplay. Therefore White plays the thematic:

62 Rb4 Rxb4!!

63 Kxb4 f4

64 b7 f3

65 b8(Q) f2

Drawn.

This position is a well known theoretical draw. The Bishop pawn on the 7th rank with the King assisting it, while the enemy King is sufficiently far away, is a theoretical draw. This is so because Black can save himself by stalemate if White's Queen captures the f-pawn. The thematic position is: Qf2, Black's King on h1 — with Black on move. Notice that the presence of the mutually blocked h-pawns does not affect this evaluation.

True, this was difficult — if not impossible — to foresee when trying to choose between the 59...Ke6? as played in the game or the correct 59...Kg4.

Still the *moral* is clear: in *inferior* positions, go for counterplay by activating your King. Remember that under such conditions, passive King play is inherently hopeless!



Chapter 4

Double Rooks

Double Rook endgames occur quite often in practical play, but usually get considerably less theoretical investigation. In general we can say that *the same basic principles apply as for single Rook endings*. Yet there is one very important sophisticated difference. Because two Rooks can impart a lot more power than a single Rook, endings which are unwinnable with a single Rook can be won with two Rooks. As a corollary, endings which are lost because one Rook can not achieve sufficient counterplay, can be drawn thanks to "two Rook power". Both of these important principles are illustrated below.

The single most important offensive plan is a mating attack. With just a single Rook, the participation of the King is a must. Yet double Rooks have more than sufficient power by themselves. Let's consider Diagram 33 which looks like a practical game but is in fact a marvelous endgame study by V. Evreinov, published in 1975. White is already a pawn down and about to lose his h-pawn. However, he is on move and immediately creates a mating threat with:

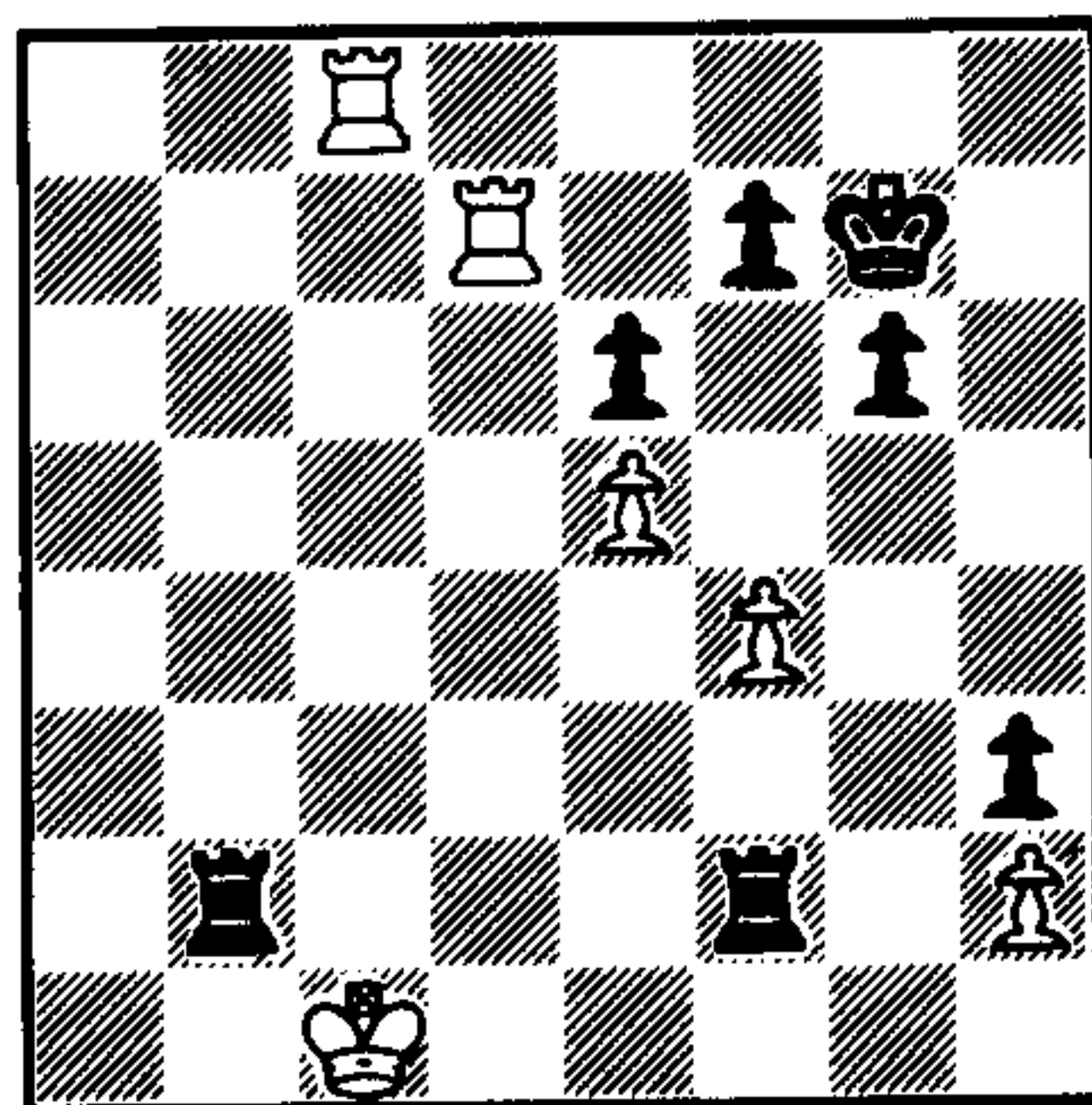


Diagram 33

V. Evreinov
Study, 1975
White to play
and win

1 Rdd8! g5

Forced so that the King can flee via g6 and f5. A routine mate occurs after 1...Rhx2? 2 Rg8+ Kh6 3 Rh8+ Kg7 4 Rcg8.

2 f5!! g4!

Capturing on f5 — either way — blocks off the f5 square from the King and allows a forced mate. With the text move Black frees g5 for his King.

3 Rg8+ Kh6

4 Rxg4

Threatening 5 Rh8 mate.

4 Kh7

5 Rc3!! Rxh2

6 Rh4+ Kg7
7 Rg3+

Notice the flexible way that White's Rooks coordinate: first on the back rank, now on the side and soon again on the back rank!

7 ... Kf8
8 Rh8+! Ke7
9 Rd3! exf5

The threat of 10 f6+ forces this capture, but now f5 is taken away from the King. Therefore White again works on back rank mates.

10 Rdd8! f6
11 Rhe8+ Kf7
12 e6+ Kg6
13 Rg8+ Kh6
14 e7

To escape from mate Black has been forced to cede White a devastating passed pawn. But Black still has a trick up his sleeve.

14 ... Rbc2+!
15 Kd1 Ra2!

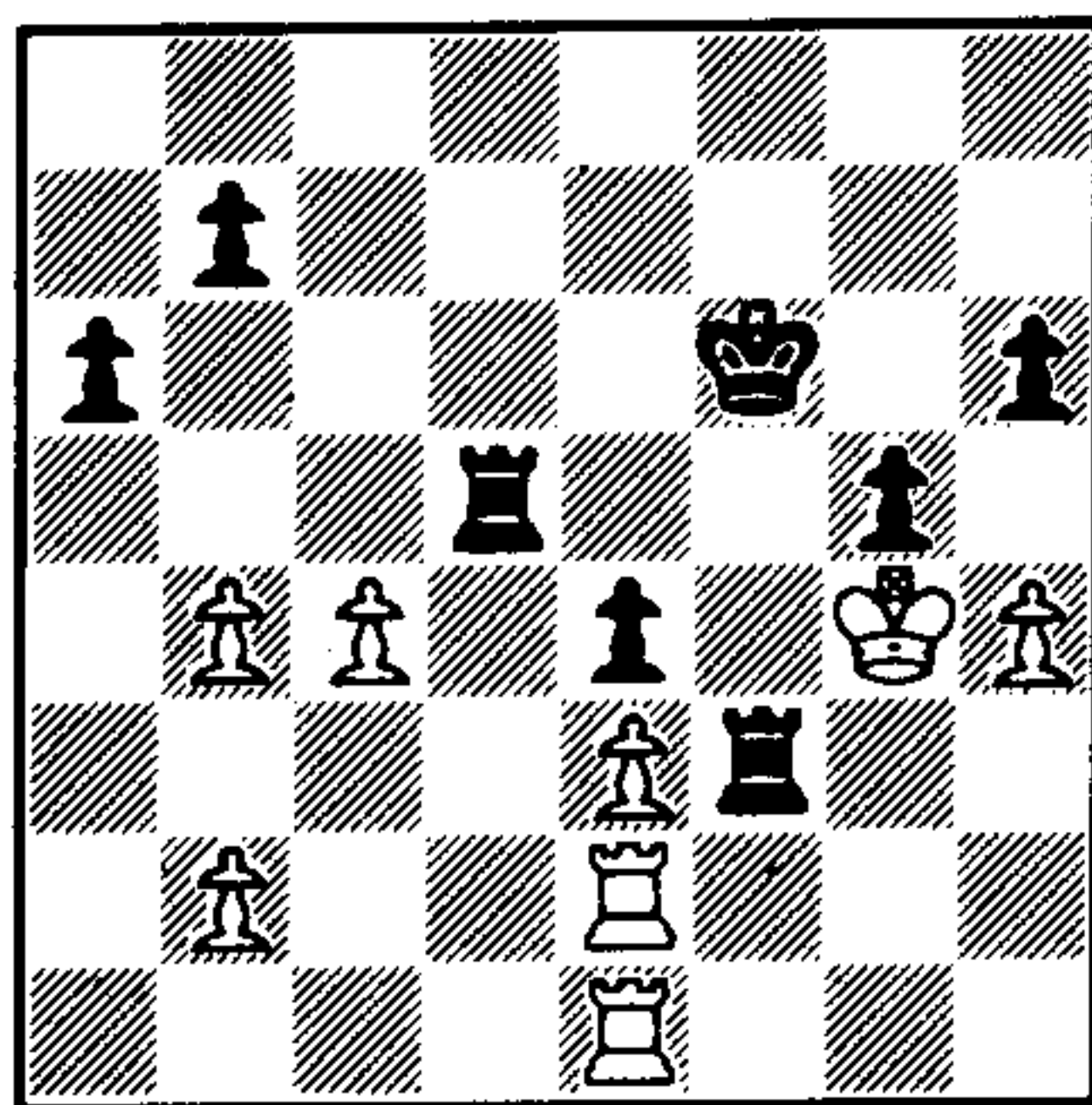
Threatening two mates: 16...Ra1 and 16...Rh1. Yet White comes first.

16 Rg6+ Kh7
17 Rh8+! and White wins.

No matter which Rook is captured, it is mate in short order.

Remember that for maximum attacking power the double Rooks need open lines, be they ranks or files. If the lines are not open, open them! This is excellently demonstrated from Diagram 34, D. Sahovic - V. Korchnoi, Biel 1979, after White's 39th move.

Diagram 34



Sahovic-Korchnoi
Biel 1979
After White's 39th

White's Rooks are very passive yet he seems to be holding on. However, Black has noted that White's King is rather vulnerable to a potential attack by the triumvirate of Black's Rooks and King. For this to be effective, lines must be opened, so:

39 ... h5+!!
40 Kxh5 Rd8!!

41 h x g5+

The attempt at fleeing also fails: 41 Kg4 g x h4! 42 Rc2 Rg8+ 43 K x h4 Kf5! followed by 44...Rh8 mate.

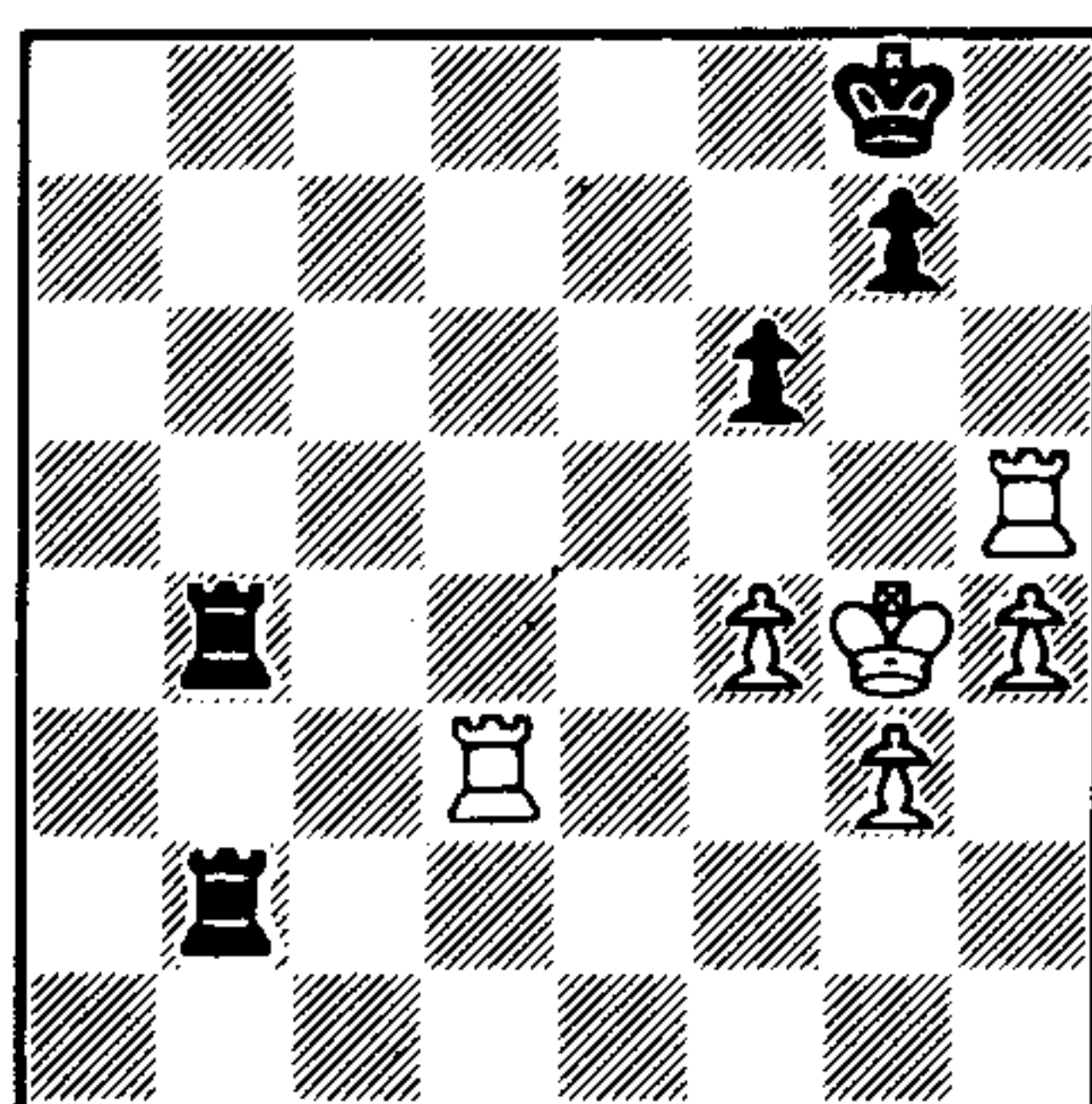
41	Kf5
42 Kh6	Rh3+
43 Kg7	Rd7+
44 Kg8	Kg6!

White's King is encircled by the enemy King and Rooks, with mate imminent.

45 Rf2	Rg7+
46 Kf8	Rh8 mate.

Equally thematic — though more prosaic — is the play from Diagram 35, T. Petrosian - B. Larsen, Biel Interzonal 1976, after Black's 47th move.

Diagram 35



Petrosian-Larsen
Biel 1976
After Black's 47th

Such a position with *single* Rooks is a *routine* draw. Yet the situation is *fundamentally different* here, since the two Rooks, operating in conjunction with White's King, can chase Black's King away from his sanctuary on the Kingside — and then Black's remaining pawns will become indefensible. White won as follows:

48 Rd8+	Kf7
49 Rhh8	Rb7

Defending his second rank. Already it is becoming clear that Black's King is starting to feel uncomfortable.

50 Rhf8+	Ke7
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Black's King can't remain on the Kingside since 50...Kg6?? leads to 51 h5+ Kh6 52 Rh8 mate.

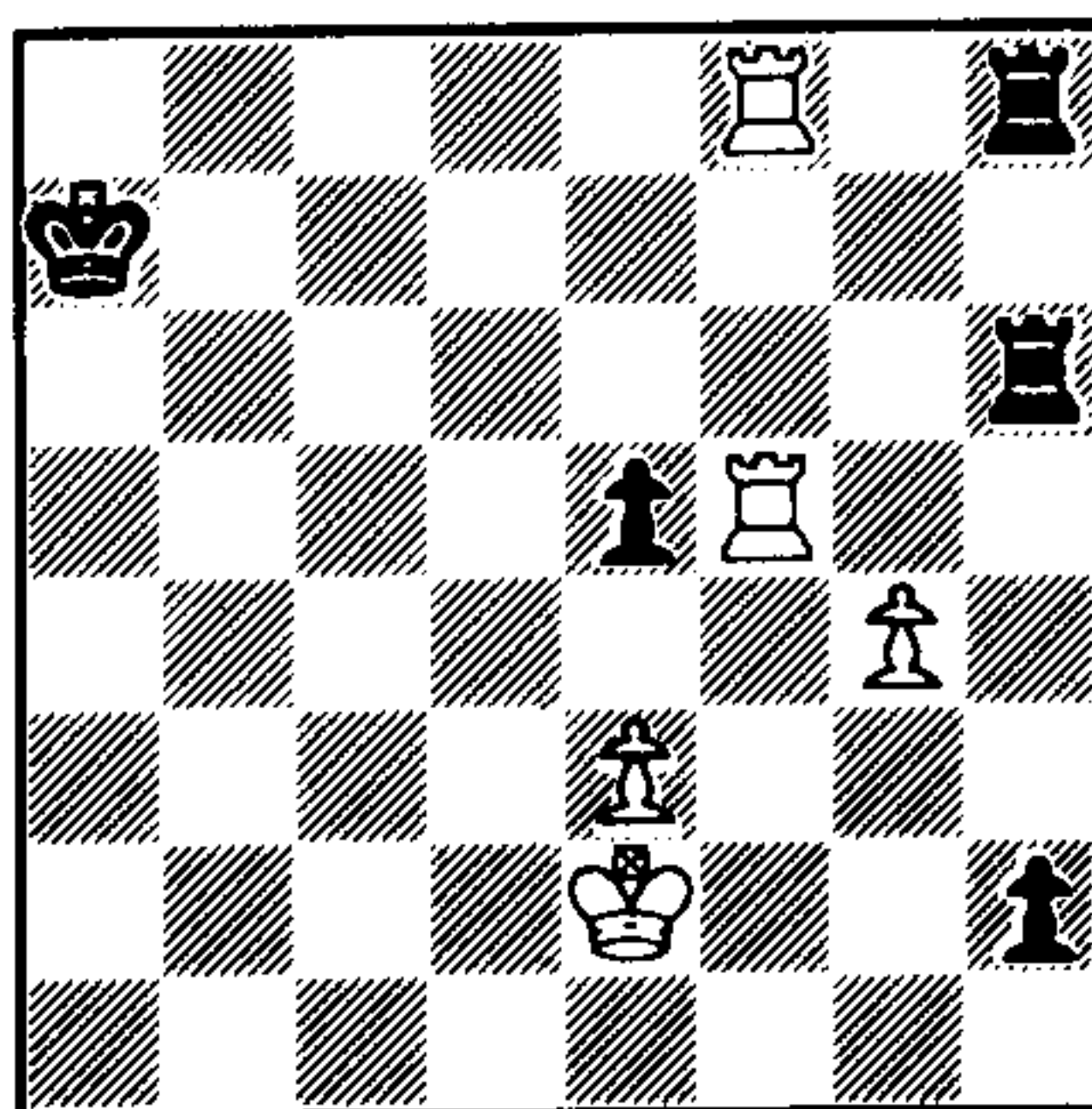
51 Kf5!	R2b3
52 g4	Rg3
53 Rde8+	Kd6
54 g5!	fxg5
55 h x g5	Rb5+
56 Kg6	Black resigns.

Actually Black, not seeing a reasonable move, overstepped the time

limit. He is absolutely lost: White's pawns are safe, whereas Black's g-pawn will go lost, e.g. 56...Rb7 57 Rf7! Rxf7 58 Kxf7 Rf3 59 Re4 Kd5 60 Ra4 followed by 61 Kxg7.

And now for the demonstration of the "defensive" powers of the double Rooks — in other words how to utilize the two Rook power to draw. The most important point to keep in mind is that as long as the Rooks have open lines they can be dangerous. In inferior positions, do not despair, but try to use your creativity to make full use of the double Rooks. A perfect illustration of the potential of double Rooks is shown from Diagram 36, a 1955 study by A. Wotawa.

Diagram 36



A. Wotawa, 1955
White to play and draw

Though White is on move, Black's h-pawn truly looks unstoppable. But why worry? We have lots of Rook checks and perhaps something good will come from them!? Therefore White starts checking:

1 R5f7+ Ka6

2 Rf6+ Ka5

Of course, after 2...Rxf6? 3 Rxh8 White has less than no difficulties. Similar motifs appear over the next several checks also.

3 Ra8+! Kb5

4 Rb8+! Kc5

5 Rc8+! Kd5

6 Rd8+! Ke4

Though White has been checking well, he seems to be at the end of his rope since Black's King has run away from the checks and appears safe. Yet...

7 Re6!!

...and Black has no time to queen because of 8 Rd4 mate! Black's reply is forced, i.e. equivalent to the text is 7...Rxd8.

7 Rxe6

8 Rxh8 Ra6

9 Kf2!

Of course not 9 Rxh2?? Ra2+.

9 Ra2+

10 Kg3 Kxe3

11 Rxh2	Rxh2
12 Kxh2	Kf4
13 g5!!	

The routine 13 Kg2? loses: 13...Kxg4 14 Kf2 Kf4 15 Ke2 Ke4 and Black's King having the opposition and in *front* of its pawn, wins.

13	Kxg5
14 Kg3!	Draw.

Black's King has been prevented from getting in front of the pawn and a routine draw is at hand.

Of course, not too many draws are that exciting. A more typical example is shown in Diagram 37, which resulted from I. Bilek - E. Mednis, Szolnok 1975 after the moves: 1 c4 g6 2 g3 Bg7 3 Bg2 c5 4 Nc3 Nc6 5 e3 e6 6 Nge2 Nge7 7 0-0 0-0 8 d4 cxd4 9 Nxd4 Nxd4 10 exd4 d5 11 cxd5 Nxd5 12 Re1 Qb6 13 Bxd5 exd5 14 Nxd5 Qxd4 15 Qxd4 Bxd4 16 Bh6 Bg7 17 Ne7+ Kh8 18 Bxg7+ Kxg7 19 Nxc8 Rfxc8.

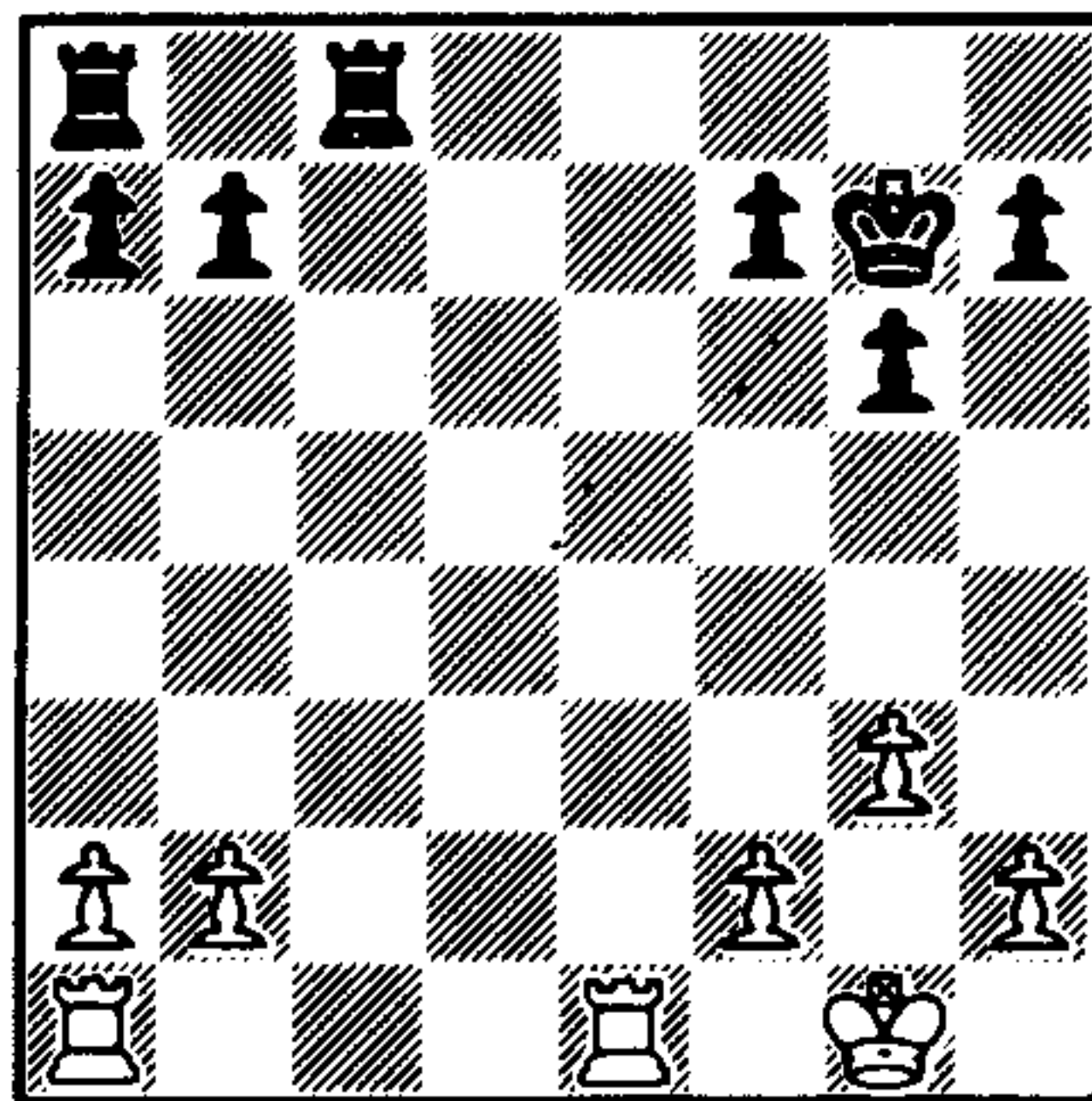


Diagram 37

Bilek-Mednis
Szolnok 1975
After Black's 19th

It would appear that White can gain the advantage with 20 Re7 since after 20...b6, White would be the first to double Rooks on the 7th rank starting with 21 Rd1. However, Bilek started thinking and thought and thought, and finally offered me a draw. Let us see why:

20 Re7	Rc2!
--------	------

Much stronger than the passive 20...b6?!. Rather than defending passively, Black goes for active defense by doubling his Rooks.

21 Rxb7	Rd8!
---------	------

Activating the other Rook.

22 Rxa7	Rdd2!
---------	-------

Doubled Rooks on the 7th rank are a particularly strong happening. In this position a single Rook there would not have much punch. However, the doubled Rooks allow Black to recover the sacrificed material by force. White's response is forced.

23 Rf1	Rxb2
24 a4	Ra2!

Getting the Rook *behind* the passed pawn. White has nothing better

than to advance it.

25 a5

Rd5!

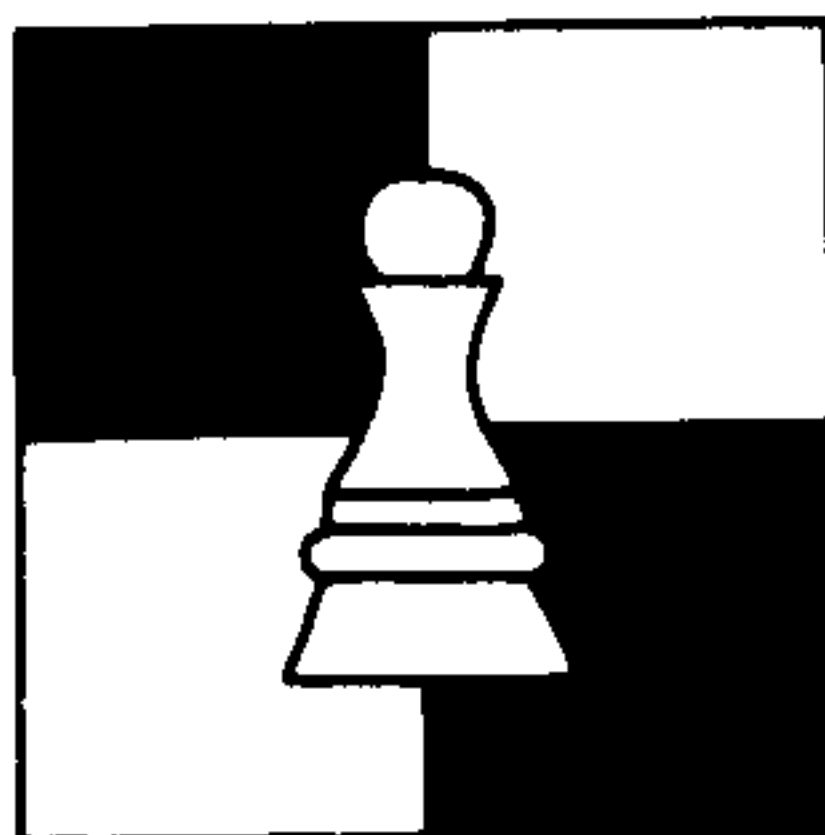
Attacking the pawn.

26 a6

Rd6! Draw.

Attacking and winning the a-pawn for total equality.

Sorry to say, these thematic variations never saw the light of day since Black of course had no reason not to accept White's draw offer.



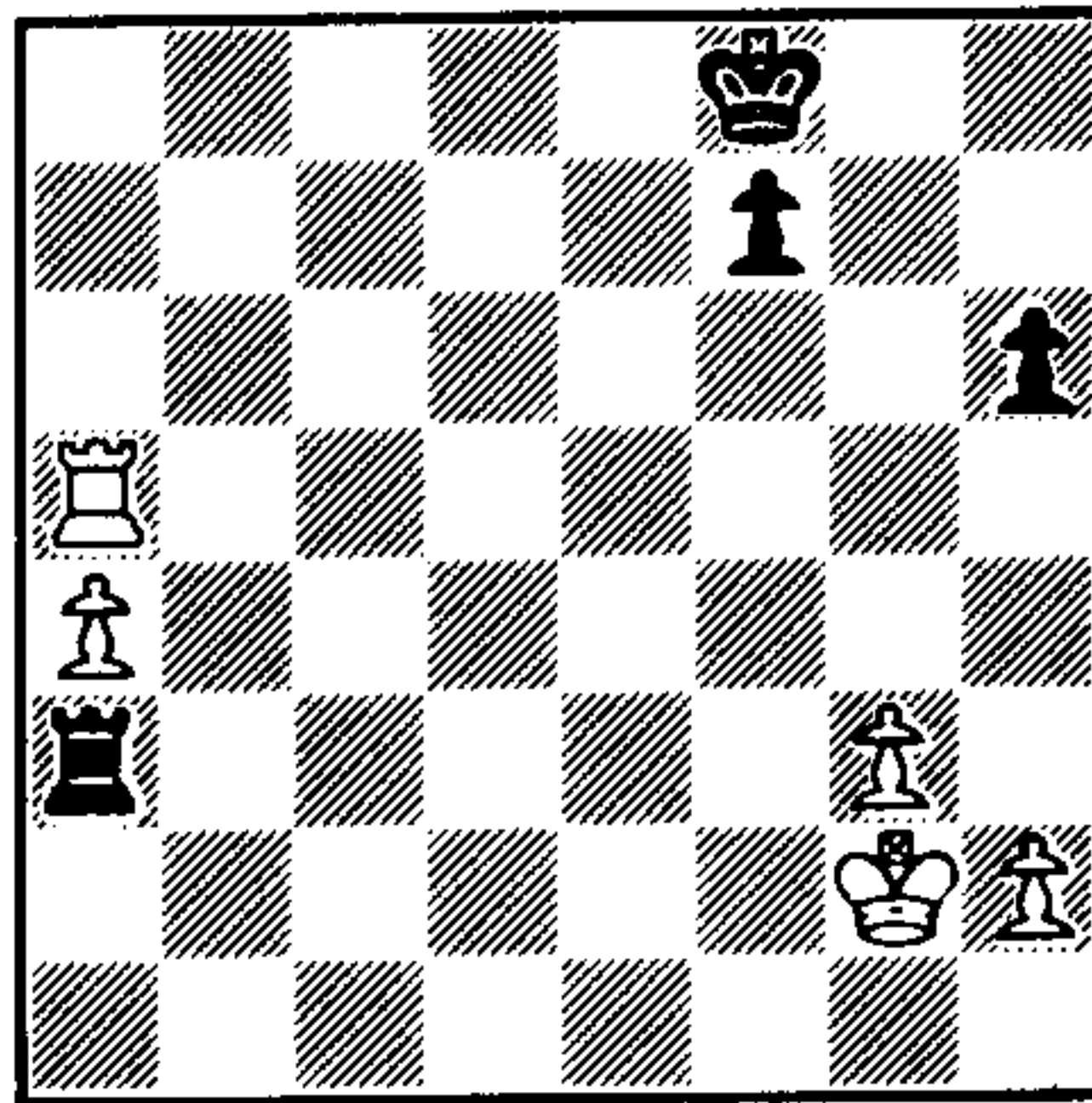
Chapter 5

Simplifying Into A Rook Endgame: Good Or Bad?

The most common endgame is the one where each side has a single Rook. Yet it doesn't occur as if by magic, but comes from a more complicated middlegame or endgame. It is therefore important and instructive to consider the kind of benchmarks that both sides should use in deciding whether or not to simplify. To see how top players do this, I have selected the following three examples from the 1978 U. S. Championship. In each case I shall discuss the simplification theme and then go over the resulting Rook endgame in detail.

Let's first look at the very important type of position shown in Diagram 38A, A. Soltis - K. Regan, after Black's 36th move.

Diagram 38A



Soltis-Regan
'78 U.S. Champ.
After Black's 36th

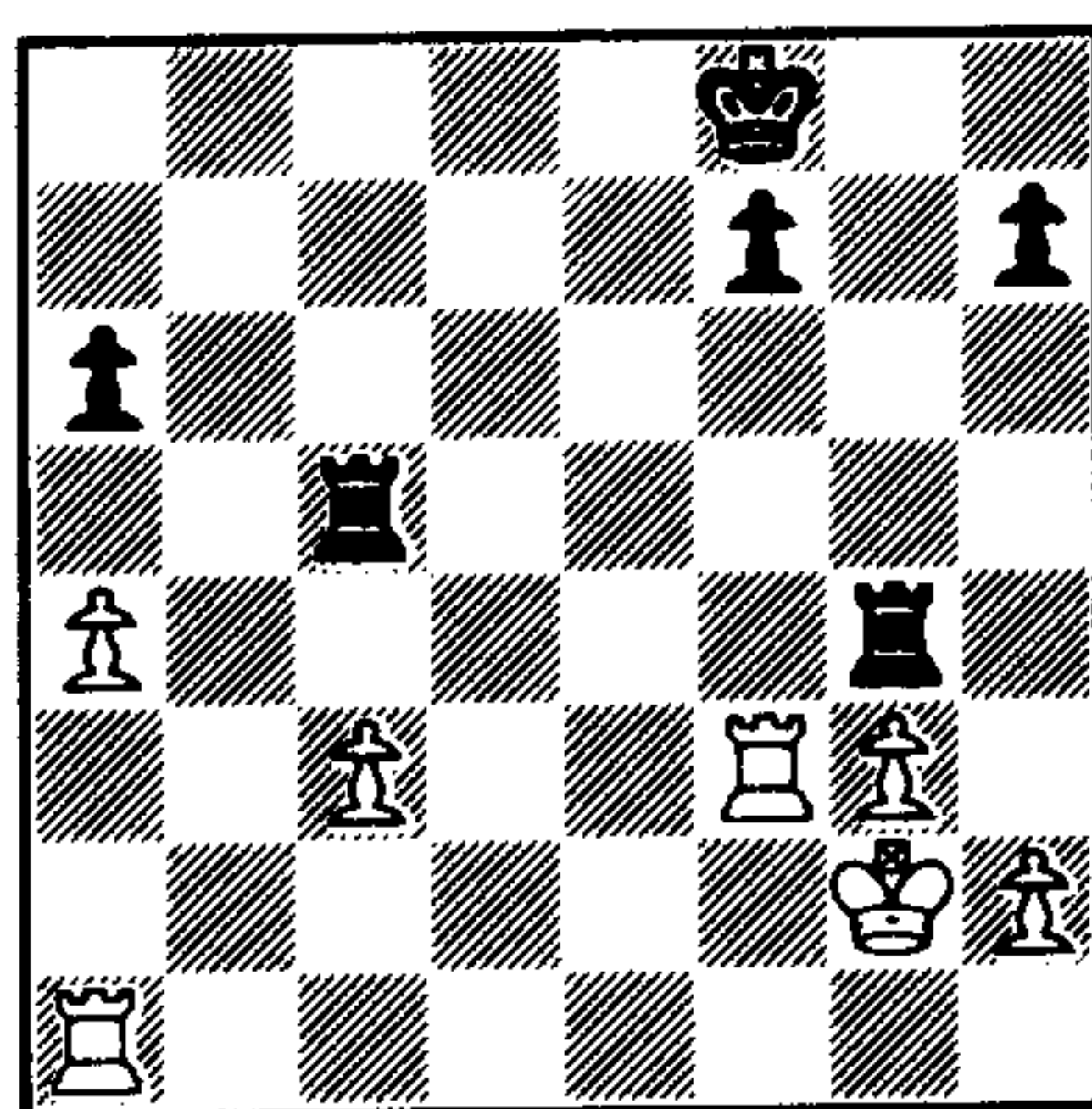
White is ahead a passed a-pawn, but his Rook is disadvantageously placed in *front* of the pawn. On the other hand, Black's Rook has the ideal, active position *behind* White's passed pawn. From this location it can both stop the a-pawn and attack the Kingside pawns if White's King would decide to head for the Queenside. With the a-pawn and the respective Rook placements, endings where the Kingside pawns are from zero to three on each side are drawn unless the defending side's pawns are weak and exposed to attack by White's King. Where each side has four pawns on the Kingside, White's winning chances are significantly increased as he is often able to create a weakness in Black's pawn formation by advancing his own Kingside pawns.

From positions such as Diagram 38A, White can readily run his a-pawn to a7. However, this will not win, because his King then can not find a hiding place on the Queenside and thus White's Rook can not be liberated from the a8 spot. Black simply keeps his King on g7 or h7 and White can't progress. With the pawn on a7, White's can't win even if he gets a passed g- or h-pawn,

because these can't dislodge Black's King from g7/h7. To win with an extra pawn on the Kingside, this must be a passed e- or f-pawn. Because the pawn on a7 takes away hiding places from White's King, the usual winning try consists of pushing it to a6 and then heading with the King to a7. To draw Black must in the meantime capture at least one of White's Kingside pawns and attempt to fashion a passed pawn himself. Then when White's a-pawn plus King will force Black to give up his Rook, White's King will be far away from the Kingside and Black's King plus passed pawn will achieve a draw.

What of the specific position shown in Diagram 38A? Black's isolated Kingside pawns are somewhat weak, but White is not able to attack them with his King without losing one of his pawns. Black can be confident that he can hold the position. How did he simplify down to this drawn position? Let's head back to the position after Black's 29th move, shown in Diagram 38.

Diagram 38



Soltis-Regan
'78 U.S. Champ.
After Black's 29th

Black is down a passed c-pawn and his three remaining pawns are isolated. However, both of his Rooks have active locations and keep White's a-pawn plus c-pawn under pressure. Black's chances are bright for simplifying down to a drawn single Rook endgame. Play continued:

30 Rb1! Rc7!

Black must protect his second rank. Faulty is 30...Rxa4?! because after 31 Rb7! White's Rooks would menace Black's King while regaining the sacrificed pawn.

31 Rb4 Rgc4!

Inferior would be 31...Rxb4? 32 cxb4 and White has, compared to the game, a much superior pawn formation.

32 Rf6 a5!

Black has his eye on the position of Diagram 38A. Playable should be 32...Rxc3, yet after 33 Rxa6 the double Rooks could give White some attacking chances against Black's isolated Kingside pawns.

33 Rxc4 Rxc4

34 Rf4!

With this and the following move White ensures his pawn advantage.

34	Rxc3
35 Rf5	Ra3!

Rooks belong behind passed pawns!

36 Rxa5	h6!
---------	-----

With the idea of taking away g5 from White's Rook. As a general principle, inferior would be the immediate 36...Kg7?! because after 37 Rg5+! Kf6 38 Rg4 White's Rook could be used both for protection of the a-pawn and the Kingside pawns and this could free his King for action on the Queenside. However — in this concrete case — it seems that after 38...Ra2+! 39 Kh3 h5! White's King couldn't really extricate himself from the Kingside, without at least one set of pawn exchanges.

After the text move we have arrived at Diagram 38A. How can White proceed?

37 Kh3

White hopes to activate his King via 38 Kg4 but Black puts an immediate stop to it.

37	Ra2!
38 g4	Ra3+
39 Kh4	

The King is precariously placed on the edge of the board (e.g. 40 Kh5?? allows 40...Rh3 mate), as well as being far away from any potential Queenside action. Somewhat better was 39 Kg2!?, as White doesn't need to fear 39...Ra2+ 40 Kg3 Ra3+ 41 Kf4 Rh3? because of 42 Rh5! followed by 43 a5. However, if Black continues with the simple 39...Kg7!, the position remains quite drawn.

39	Kg7
40 Ra8	Kf6
41 Ra7	Kg6
42 Ra5	f6

Black had sealed his 41st move so that this was his first actual move after adjournment. Black could well have kept the status quo by playing 42...Kh7 or 42...Kg7, since even after the latter, 43 g5 accomplishes nothing but a pawn exchange. However, Black's analysis had shown that the text move is more forcing and he preferred this kind of approach.

43 Ra7	Rc3!
--------	------

Not releasing White's King from its prison.

44 a5	Ra3!
45 a6	f5

By forcing White's a-pawn forward, Black's Rook has gained maneuvering room along the a-file. By exchanging a pair of pawns Black serves to free his King somewhat. It is immaterial whether White captures or plays 46 h3.

46 gxf5+	Kxf5
47 Ra8	Kg6!

Some care is required in almost all positions. Black must ensure that if White plays a7 his King can get to g7 or h7. Losing would be 47...Ra2?? as after 48 a7 a devastating check by White's Rook can not be prevented.

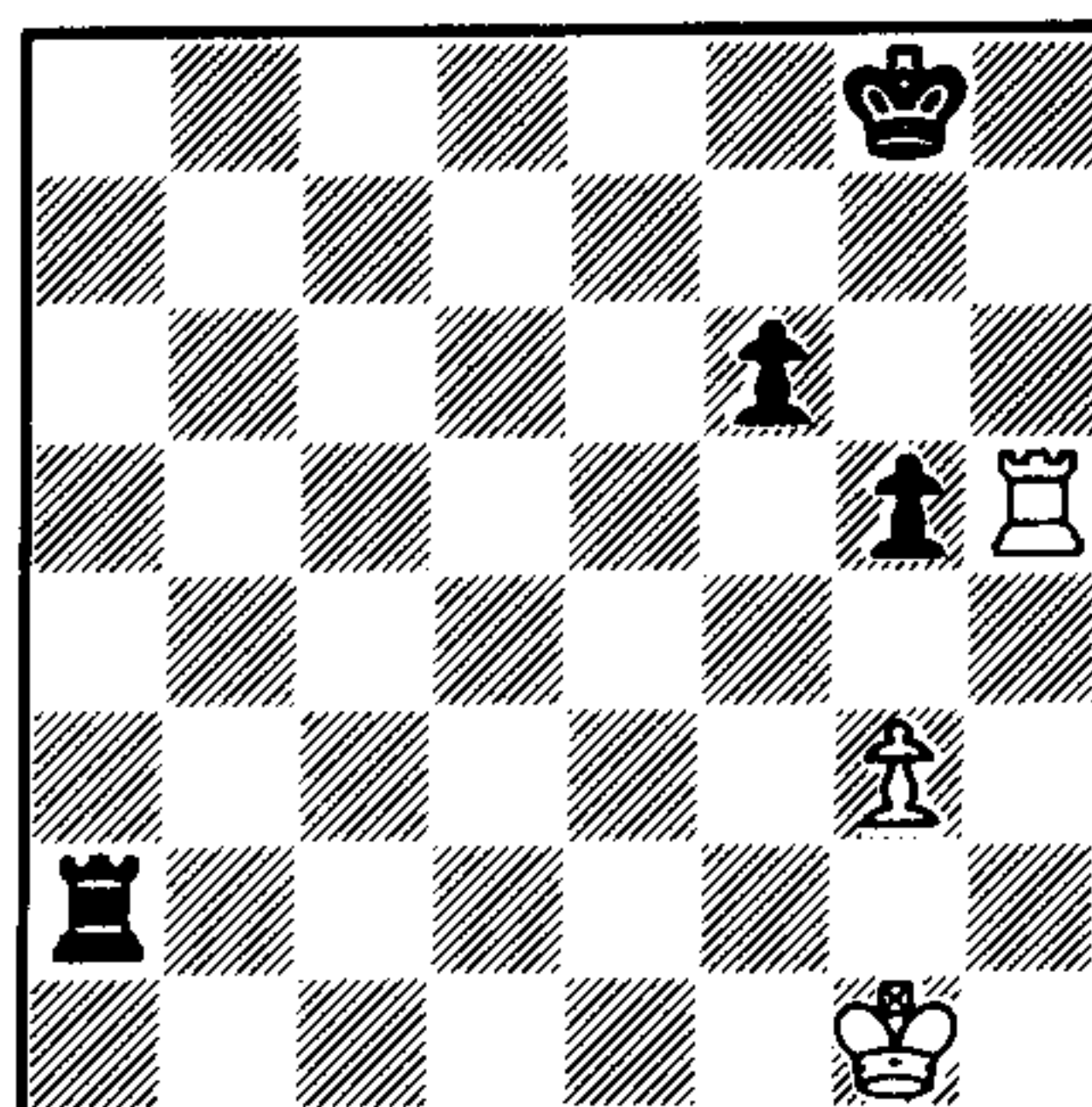
48 Kg4	Ra4+
49 Kf3	Kh5!

Here too the King is safe from checks. If White's King now heads for the Queenside, Black's King will capture the h-pawn for a certain draw. Therefore:

50 Ke3	Kh4
Draw.	

That endgames of Rook plus two pawns vs. Rook plus pawn where the pawns are on the same side and of "normal" configuration are drawn should be known to every practical player. The kind of pawn formation I mean is shown in Diagram 39A, A. Soltis - R. Byrne after Black's 46th move.

Diagram 39A



Soltis-Byrne
'78 U.S. Champ.
After Black's 46th

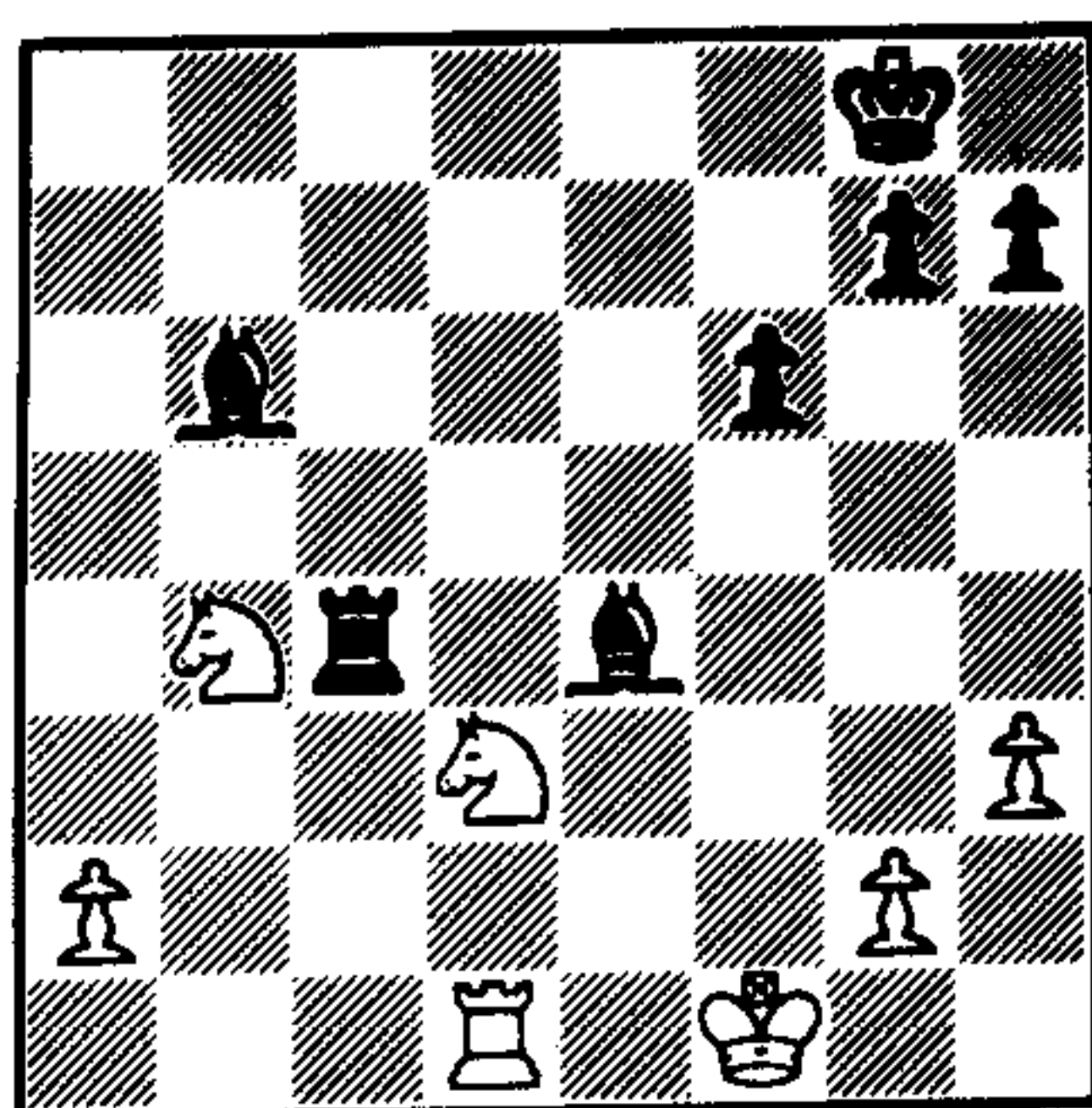
White does suffer from two negatives, however. The first — a minor one — is that his King is relegated to the first rank. The second — and more important one — is that his Rook is most awkwardly placed on the edge of the board. If the Rook could for instance be transferred to b5, White's draw would be assured. With hindsight we know that Diagram 39A is drawn. The foresight that White had to use was in making sure that he can activate his Rook *in time*.

Our basic starting point though is Diagram 39, at the top of the next page, which occurred after Black's 36th move. This kind of position in practice is very unpleasant for White. Black's Bishops have open lines against White's King and Black's Rook is also actively placed. The passed a-pawn is no compensation because it doesn't really threaten to go anywhere. Yet it does have certain "bargaining" power in that White can sacrifice it to exchange off one of Black's Bishops and thereby stem the pressure against his Kingside. This is how White was able to reach Diagram 39A:

37 a3!

By protecting the QN, White frees the other Knight for potential action.

Diagram 39



Soltis-Byrne
'78 U.S. Champ.
After Black's 36th

37 Rc3
38 Nf2! Bxf2

The only question here is which Bishop Black prefers to exchange: either the KB or the QB after 38...Bb7 39 Nd5 Bxd5. He retains the QB to be able to better attack White's Kingside pawns.

39 Kxf2 Rxa3
40 Rd2 h5
41 h4

Preventing 41...h4 which would fix White's g-pawn and make it more vulnerable to subsequent attack.

41 Ra4!
42 Nd5!

Aiming for Diagram 39A. After 42 Rb2 White would be in a very unpleasant defensive position, with a g3 being met by ...Ra3 threatening ...Rf3+.

42 Bxd5

The immediate threat was 43 Nc3 and after e.g. 42...Bh7 43 g3 White gets the Knight to the excellent defensive location of f4 or e3.

43 Rxd5 Rxh4
44 g3 Bh2+
45 Kg1 Ra2
46 Rxh5 g5!

Bringing us to Diagram 39A. White has recovered one of the two sacrificed pawns, but has had to pay with an-out-of-the-game Rook. How to activate it?

47 Rh3 Kf7

Black's King heads toward the center, as a way station for getting to White's Kingside. This, however, allows White's Rook to be freed from its captivity. The alternative King move was 47...Kg7, with the idea ...Kg6, Kf5, Kg4. But then White just has time for 48 g4!, e.g. 48...Kf7 49 Re3! Ra4 50 Rg3 Ke6 51 Kg2 Ke5 51 Kh3 Kf4 52 Rb3 Re4 53 Rb6! and Black won't be able to achieve anything more than he gets in the game (a passed g-pawn).

48 Rh7+	Ke6
49 Rb7!	Ke5
50 Rb4	f5
51 Kf1	

The sealed move. White's Rook is placed just fine so that there is no reason to move it. Therefore tempo moves by the King are in order.

51	Kd5
52 Kg1	Rd2
53 Ra4	Rb2
54 Kf1!	Rc2
55 Kg1	Rc4
56 Ra8!	

The Rook must be kept active so that it can attack Black's pawns.

56	Ke4
57 Rg8!	g4
58 Rf8!	

Finally White is assured of a draw. The attack on the f-pawn forces either the Rook or the King to protect it. If the King protects it, Black's Rook by itself can't make any progress; if the Rook protects the pawn (58...Rc5), White frees his King with 59 Kf2, which also simultaneously keeps out Black's King.

58	Rc2
59 Rf7!	Re2
60 Rf8	Rd2
61 Rf7	Draw.

There is nothing else for Black apart from 61...Kf3 62 Rxf5+ Kxg3 but then 63 Rf1! leads to an elementary book draw. But note that the draw with White's Rook *inactive* holds *only* for a-, b-, g-, and h-pawns. This kind of position is a *win* for Black with c-, d-, e- and f-pawns. Then Black's Rook can work on both sides of the board and White can't defend against all possibilities.

A fairly common guest in master tournament play is the endgame of Rook plus four pawns vs. Rook plus three pawns, with all pawns on the same side and a "normal" type pawn formation. A representative position is our Diagram 40A, W. Lombardy - B. Zuckerman, after White's 38th move (the diagram is at the top of the next page). As such endgames go, this is a modestly favorable case for White as the pawn formation on the g- and h-files gives him the opportunity for the g5 or h5 breaks. Nevertheless, both in theory and practice the Rook plus four pawns vs. Rook plus three pawns are quite drawn. Perhaps in only 1 out of 20 games does the stronger side win. However, they are always played out because the stronger side has nothing to lose. In this case, too, the position is drawn, and Black was quite right in steering for it — yet he must be prepared for a long siege.

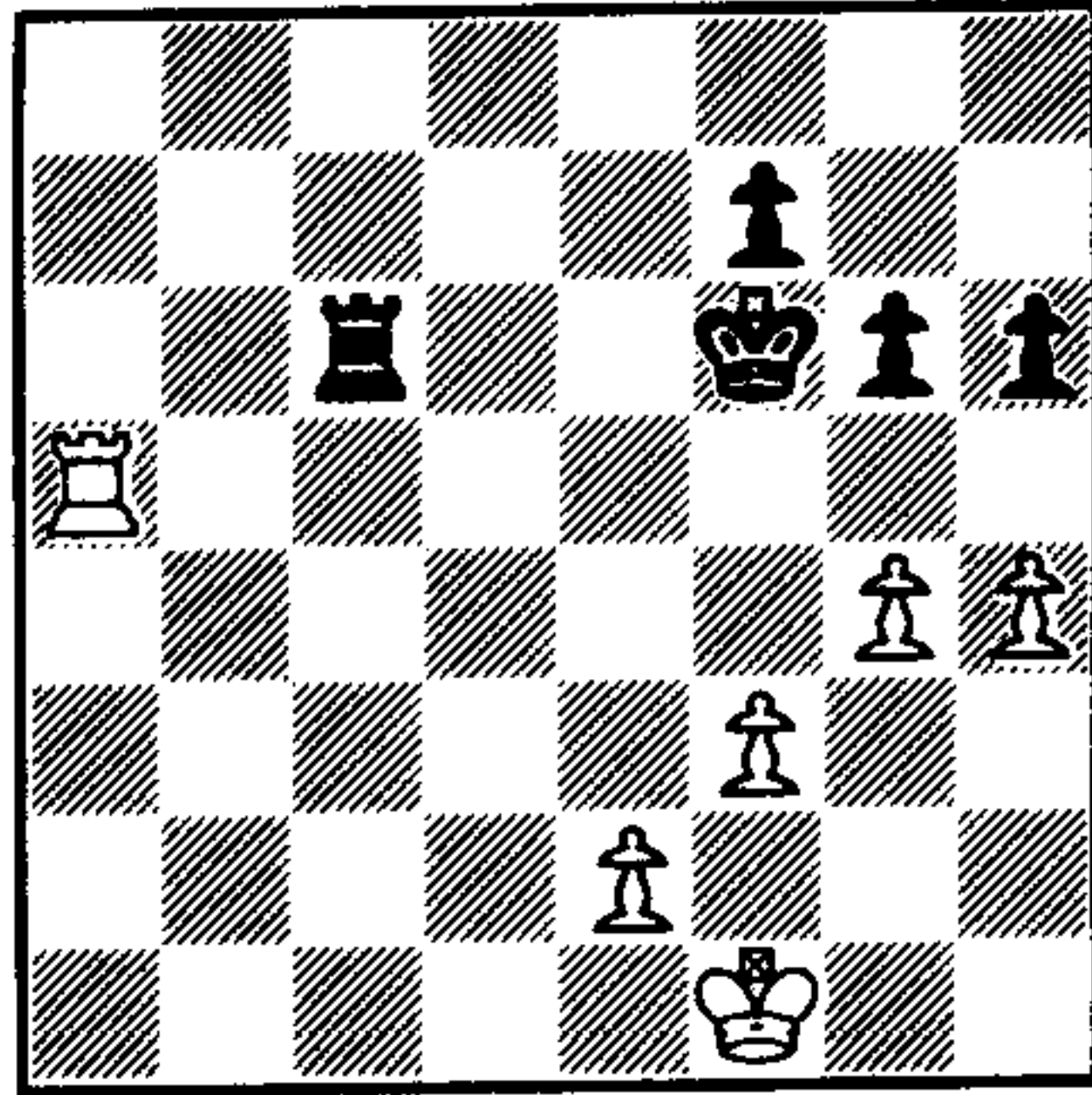


Diagram 40A

Lombardy-Zucker-
man, '78 U.S. Ch.
After White's 38th

To get to Diagram 40A, we shall start with Diagram 40 which shows the position after Black's 28th.

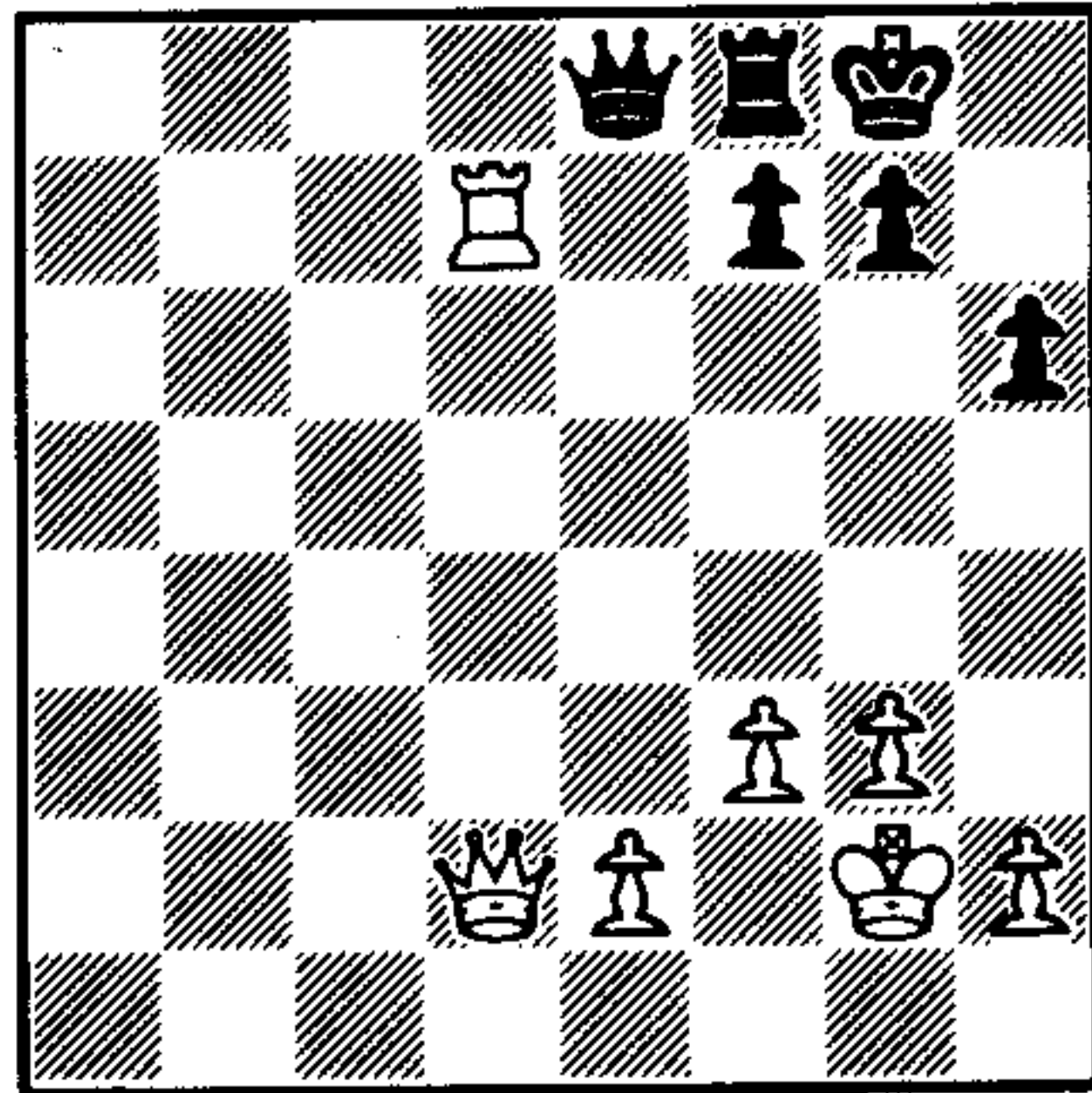


Diagram 40

Lombardy-Zucker-
man, '78 U.S. Ch.
After Black's 28th

White is up a healthy Kingside pawn and has an active position. Though passive, Black's position has a minimum of weaknesses, with only the h-pawn sticking out a bit. Overall Black must anticipate much careful and unpleasant defending. Fortunately for him, White was short of time and thus could never formulate a coherent attacking plan. He started off correctly by utilizing the King for protection of the e-pawn:

- | | |
|-----------|------|
| 29 Kf2 | Qe6 |
| 30 Kf1 | Qf6 |
| 31 Qe3 | Rb8 |
| 32 Qe4 | Rc8 |
| 33 Re7 | Qc6! |
| 34 Qxc6?! | |

In a certain sense an attractive move to choose in time pressure as obviously the risk of losing will now be zero. Yet the winning chances also get significantly reduced because the resulting endgame is hardly ever won. White should have kept the Queens on by playing 34 Qf5! and then in due course (probably after adjournment!) prepared a pawn advance to create weaknesses in Black's King position. Black's defensive job in such a case would have been considerably more difficult than in the game.

34 ...	Rxc6
35 Re5!	

Black's defensive task is made much easier if he can get in ...h5 as then White's attempts to activate his g-/h-pawns will lead to the routine exchange of a pair of pawns and thus bring Black much closer to a certain draw. Therefore, with this and his next move, White prevents this plan.

35 ...	g6
36 g4!	Kg7
37 h4	Kf6
38 Ra5	Rc1+

After White's 38th move we have reached Diagram 40A; as a starter Black quite correctly activates his Rook.

39 Kf2	Rh1
40 Kg3	Re1
41 Ra2	Rg1+

Black absorbed an hour on his clock to adjourn here, sealing this move. With it he signifies an interest in a "status quo" approach. The ultimate risk is that Black can land in a very passive position. After the game Lombardy recommended 41...g5!?, a plan also suggested under similar circumstances by Levenfish and Smyslov in their book on Rook endings.

42 Kh2	Re1
43 f4	Kg7
44 Kg2	Kf6

Continuing the "do nothing" approach. Here was a good opportunity for creativity with 44...f5! (Zuckerman). That would inhibit the advance of White's e-pawn and also achieve a welcome exchange of pawns.

45 Rb2!	Kg7
46 h5!	

As a Rook plus four pawns vs. Rook plus three pawns endgame gets played, it is clear that some simplification must result. The question is only in whose interest it will be. The defensive side wants a "routine" exchange of pawns, whereas the stronger side wants to add some strategic advantages to any exchange. White is on his way to achieving some here. If Black plays 46..g5?!, White after 47 fxc5 will have a protected passed h-pawn. If Black does nothing, White will himself play 47 hxc6 and after 47...fxg6 White's e-pawn will be passed, while 47...Kxg6 would lead to a permanent weakening of the f5 square with good chances for White's King to get to it. This last move and the game continuation are approximately equivalent.

46 ...	gxh5
47 gxh5	Kf6

Here too 47...f5!? seems to give Black a more pleasant defensive task.

48 Kf2	Rh1
49 Rb5	Rh3

50 Re5

All of White's pawns are now safe, the e-pawn is a healthy extra pawn, while Black's King plus pawns have little scope in inhibiting any activity by White. Thus Black's Rook must handle that load by itself. Can it be done?

50	Ra3
51 e3	Ra1!
52 Rb5	Rh1
53 e4!	Rh3
54 Kg2	

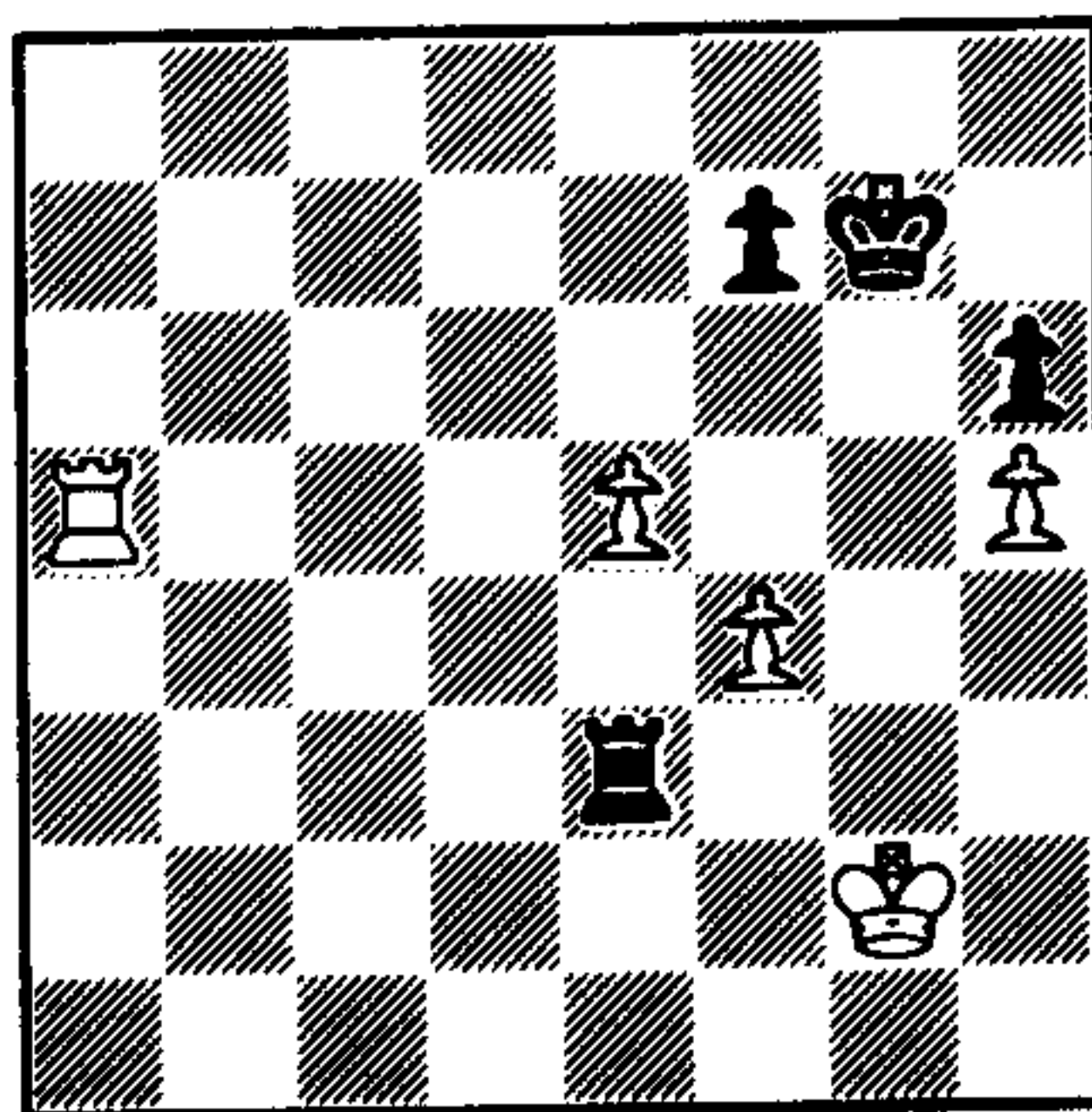
White has set his extra pawn in motion and now is about to chase Black's Rook away from its active location on h3 from where it both kept White's King away from the third rank and attacked the h-pawn. Black must give up one of these activities — which one?

54	Re3?
----------------	-------------

Black decides to keep White's King inactive — the wrong decision. It turns out that Black's King plus pawns are so contained that White's Rook helped only by its pawns can make significant progress. Imperative was 54... Rh4! with the attack on the h-pawn keeping White's pieces at bay, e.g. 55 Rf5+ Ke6 or 55 Kg3 Rh1 56 Kg4 Rg1+, etc. After 54...Rh4! it is not clear how White can make progress; after the text progress is immediate.

55 Rb6+	Kg7
56 e5	Kh7
57 Rb7	Kg8
58 Rb8+	Kg7
59 Rb5!	Kh7
60 Ra5	Kg7

Diagram 40B



Lombardy-Zucker-
man, '78 U.S. Ch.
After Black's 60th

61 Ra1?!

The plan associated with this move is chessically incomprehensible: White transforms his active Rook position into a completely passive one! GM Lombardy is a very fine strategist, understands positions as well as anyone and plays endgames excellently. How can he choose such an inappropriate plan, especially when time pressure was not present?

Of course, he saw that the thematic approach was to advance further the f-pawn: 61 f5! Kh7 62 f6 Kg8 63 Kf2 Re4 (63...Rh3? loses to 64 Ra8+ Kh7 65 e6!) 64 Kf3 Re1 65 Kf4. However, he also saw that after the temporizing 65...Re2, White can't win by the direct 66 Ra8+ Kh7 67 Rf8? because of 67...Re4+!! and a perpetual check with the Rook as White can not capture it without allowing immediate stalemate. Thus White decided that the position after White's 65th move "isn't a clear win". Perhaps not, but the winning chances after 66 Ra8+ Kh7 67 Ra7! Kg8 68 Rb7 are fantastic. After, for instance, 68...Rh2? 69 Ke4! White's King is ready to infiltrate via d5, d6, e7 and now 69...Rxh5?! loses to 70 Ra8+ Kh7 71 Rf8! Kg6 72 Rg8+ Kh7 73 Rg7+ followed by 74 Rxf7. My point is not that 61 f5! would have led to a 100% sure win, but quite definitely that it was the only rational direction in which to go.

White's error has the kind of psychological explanation that periodically affects all of us. After spending lots of time on a logical move, he decided that it doesn't quite look *perfect*. Thus with little additional "thinking" he played something which on *any objective* basis must be much worse. Has that happened to you? Only computers could be immune from this kind of human behavior!

61 Kf8
62 Rh1??

White wants to chase Black's Rook from White's third rank by playing 63 Rh3, but there is no time for such long winded plans. With 62 Ra6 Kg7 63 Ra5 White could have gotten ready for the indicated f5 advance.

62 f6!

Breaking the bind and exchanging a pair of pawns.

63 Rh3 Re1
64 Kf2 Ra1
65 e6

After 65 exf6 the easiest draw is 65...Ra5! followed by Kf7 and Kxf6.

65 Ra2+
66 Kg1 Draw.

After 66...Ra4! 67 Rf3 f5 (Zuckerman) Black wins back a pawn for total equality.



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