

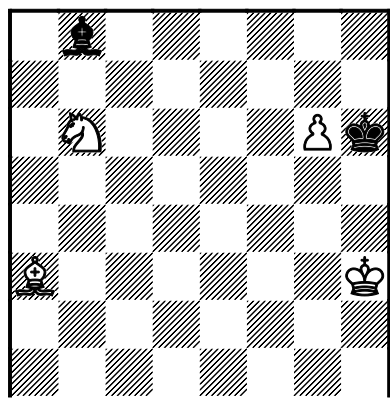
History

A DIP INTO THE ARCHIVES

TIMOTHY WHITWORTH

The study by Abram Gurvich shown in diagram **W.1** is well known. The story that lies behind it, however, is less familiar and may be worth telling. So let us start at the beginning.

W.1 A.S. Gurvich
1st Honourable Mention
Shakhmaty 1928/I



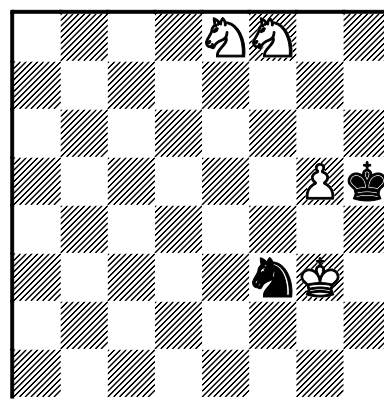
h3h6 0041.10 4/2 Win

In January 1928, **W.1** appeared in *Shakhmaty* and the solution was given four months later: **1.Sd7 Bc7** (1...Ba7 2.Se5 Kg7 3.Bb2 wins) **2.Sf8 Be5 3.Kg4** (3.Kh4? Bb2 4.Bc5 Bd4 5.g7 Bf6+ 6.Kg4 Kxg7 draws) **3...Bb2 4.Bc5!** (4.g7? Kxg7 5.Se6+ Kf6 draws) **4...Bd4 5.g7! Bxg7 6.Be3 mate**. “An elegant miniature!” was the comment of Vasily Platov, the editor of the studies section of the magazine. The publication of this study prompted Tigran Gorgiev to compose something along similar lines, but with a knight delivering the mate, instead of Gurvich’s bishop. Gorgiev’s piece was published with a dedication to Gurvich in the issue of *Shakhmatny Listok* dated 25 September 1928.

The solution of **W.2** appeared in the issue of 10 February 1929: **1.g6 Sh4 2.Sg7+ Kg5** (2...Kh6 3.Kxh4 Kxg7 4.Kg5 wins) **3.Sge6+ Kh6** (3...Kh5 4.Sf4+ Kg5 5.Sh7+ wins) **4.g7!**

(avoiding 4.Kxh4? stalemate) **4...Sf5+ 5.Kg4 Sxg7 6.Sd4 S~ 7.S(x)f5 mate**. If Black tries 1...Sd4, then 2.Kf4 Sc6 3.g7 Se7 4.Ke5 Kg5 5.Ke6 Sg8 6.Sd6 Sh6 7.Sf7+ wins. “A charming study by the youthful composer” was Leonid Kubbel’s editorial comment. Gorgiev had just turned eighteen when this study was published.

W.2 T.B. Gorgiev
1st Honourable Mention
Shakhmatny Listok 1928/II



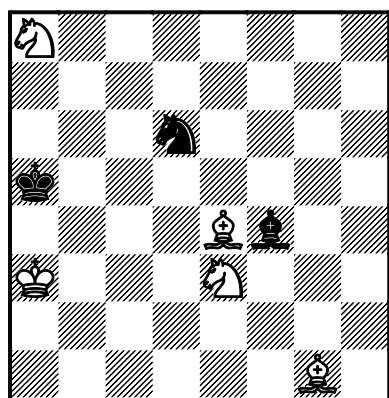
g3h5 0005.10 4/2 Win

Now it was Gurvich’s turn to take note of the work of his fellow composer. He conceived the idea of bringing together the two mating finishes in a single study. It did not take him long to produce **W.3**. Dedicating the study to Gorgiev, he entered it for a tourney organised by *Vechernyaya Moskva*, the closing date for which was 31 December 1929.

The results of the tourney, with Gurvich’s study taking the first prize, were soon declared. Vasily Platov, who had been the judge, gave the full honours list in his studies column in *64*, 20 March 1930. In addition, he quoted Gurvich’s prizewinning position. Four months later, in the issue dated 30 July 1930, the readers of *64* were given the solution of **W.3**:

1.Sd5 Bc1+ 2.Kb3 Sxe4 3.Sdc7 Sd2+ 4.Kc2 Sb3 5.Kxb3 Be3 6.Bh2 Bg1 7.Bf4! Be3 8.Sb6! followed by 8...Bxf4 9.Sc4 mate, or 8...Bxb6 9.Bd2 mate. They were also given the disappointing news that the move 3.Sac7 enables White to win more simply. Because of this defect, the study was eliminated and the first prize was transferred to the study by Gorgiev that had originally been awarded the third prize. Zalkind's second prizewinner remained in second place: a transposition of moves at the end of the solution was found to be possible and this blemish barred its promotion.

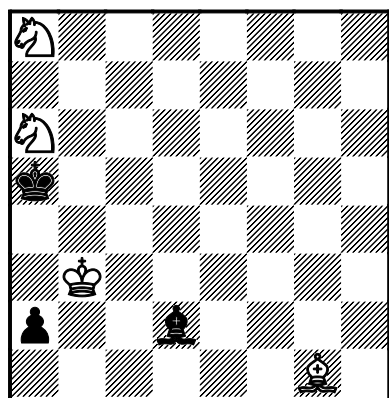
W.3 A.S. Gurvich
Vechernyaya Moskva 1930



a3a5 0055.00 5/3 Win

After this hiccup, Gurvich devised a fresh setting for his wonderful idea. It was published in 64, 15 January 1932.

W.4 A.S. Gurvich
Vechernyaya Moskva 1930
version 64 1932

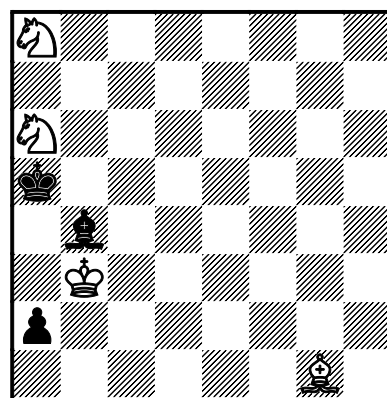


b3a5 0042.01 4/3 Win

The solution of **W.4** was given in the issue of 64 dated February-March 1933: 1.S6c7

a1S+ 2.Kb2 Sb3 3.Kxb3 Be3 4.Bh2 Bg1 5.Bf4! Be3 6.Sb6! followed by 6...Bxb6 7.Bd2 mate, or 6...Bxf4 7.Sc4 mate. This version of the study became widely quoted. It was included as #307 in the 1955 collection *Sovietsky shakhmatny etyud* ("650") and this led to a fresh discovery. In a two-page article in *Shakhmaty v SSSR*, March 1957, some of the studies in 650 were shown to be unsound, including Gurvich's #307. It was Vladimir Bron who contributed the observation that the move 3.Sb6 (instead of 3.Kxb3) is playable because it leads to the capture of one of Black's pieces. Gurvich's remedy was also given: the black bishop must start on b4.

W.5 A.S. Gurvich
Vechernyaya Moskva 1930
correction *Shakhmaty v SSSR* 1957



b3a5 0042.01 4/3 Win

The solution of **W.5** is essentially the same as that of the previous version: 1.S6c7 (threatening immediate mate) 1...a1S+ 2.Kb2 Sb3 (by giving up the knight in this way, Black gains the chance of a stalemate defence) 3.Kxb3 Bc5 4.Bh2 Bg1 (4...Bd6 5.Sb6 wins) 5.Bf4! Be3 6.Sb6! followed by 6...Bxb6 7.Bd2 mate, or 6...Bxf4 7.Sc4 mate. If Black plays 6...Kxb6, then 7.Sd5+ wins.

Gurvich included the study, now at last in its final form, in his 1961 collection *Etyudy*. However, in the heading above the diagram he made a mistake in crediting the original version with "1st prize" in the *Vechernyaya Moskva* tourney. This mistake has been repeated time and again by others. Is the study diminished without a prize? Of course not. A fine study needs no prize to validate its quality.