

**Yakov Vilner**  
**First Ukrainian Chess Champion**  
**and First USSR Chess**  
**Composition Champion**

**A World Champion's Favorite Composers**

Sergei Tkachenko

**Yakov Vilner, First Ukrainian Chess Champion and First USSR Chess  
Composition Champion: A World Champion's Favorite Composers**

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### **Yakov Vilner's key achievements**

- USSR Chess Master (1924)
- Five times champion of Odessa (1918, 1923, 1925, 1926 and 1928)
- Three times champion of Ukraine (1924, 1925 and 1928)
- Participant or prize winner of five USSR championships (1923, 1924, 1925, 1927 and 1929)
- Winner of the tournament in Kislovodsk (1917 and 1927)
- Winner of the tournament in Kiev (1929)
- Winner of the match for the title of best player of Odessa (1924)
- Winner of the *Chess Messenger* (*Shakhmatny vestnik*) correspondence tournament (1913-15)
- Winner of the All-Russian *Chess Messenger* problem solving tournament (1913)
- USSR champion at chess composition (1929, three-move problems)
- Outright winner or prize-winner of 30 chess composition competitions



Yakov Vilner

## *HIS FIRST STEPS IN CHESS*

The very first mention of Yakov Vilner's chess prowess was in early 1911, when he was still a student of the commercial college. He took part in the unique North versus South correspondence match over 100 boards.

The main organizer of this match on the Northern side was the editor of the chess columns in *Speech (Rech)* and *Modern Word (Sovremenno slovo)* Boris Malyutin. Laurent managed the Southern team. Many famous players of the Russian Empire played in this match: Alexander Alekhine, A. Evenson, L. Kubbel, F. Bogatyrchuk, E. Bogoljubov, S. Izbinsky, N. Laurent, V. Vladimirov, S. Weinstein, N. Grekov, A. Bobrishchev-Pushkin and others. Each player had to play his opponent over two games with both colors. Vilner faced off against B.F. Vasiliev from St. Petersburg. However, the 12-year old's entry onto the chess stage was unsuccessful. He lost both games and the match ended 101:99 in the North's favor.

That same year, the young man got interested in chess composition. However, his debut here too was unsuccessful. The first composition that Vilner created and sent to Laurent turned out to be an exact replica of a study by Adolf Anderssen, as Laurent pointed out to him. Well, this sometimes happens in composition.

In the course of 1911 Vilner attempted to get his first creations published in other Odessa outlets. However, he failed here, too. Vasily Vladimirov covered the first two in his chess column in *Southern Thought (Yuzhnaya misl)*, but pointed out that both were cooked. Still, he highlighted in the same article that Vilner has successfully solved two puzzles from a competition

### **Результат конкурса рѣшенных задач 1913 года.**

I ой призъ—Я Вильнеръ  $394^1)+7+10=411$   
II ой » —Л Готтсманъ  $383+7+9^2)=399$   
III-ий » —Н Любомировъ  $336+7+10=353$   
IV ой » —Л Травинъ  $332+8+6=346$   
V ой » —А Ивановъ  $328+7+10=345$

Далѣе слѣдуютъ В Г  $329^3)+8+7^4)=344$  Я Гольденвейзеръ  $259+7+10=276$ , Н Латышовъ  $227+1+8=236$ , А Тюменевъ  $216+5+10=231$ , Н Изюмовъ  $156-10+10=165$

Въ виду того что В Г отсталъ на 1 очко отъ пятого призера Редакция рѣшила выдать В Г добавочный VI ой призъ

Лицѣ, получившихъ призы, Редакция проситъ сообщить, какія книги удовлетворяютъ ихъ больше—содержащія задачный материалъ или сборники партій

Л. З.

*Results of the Chess Messenger problem solving competition in 1913*

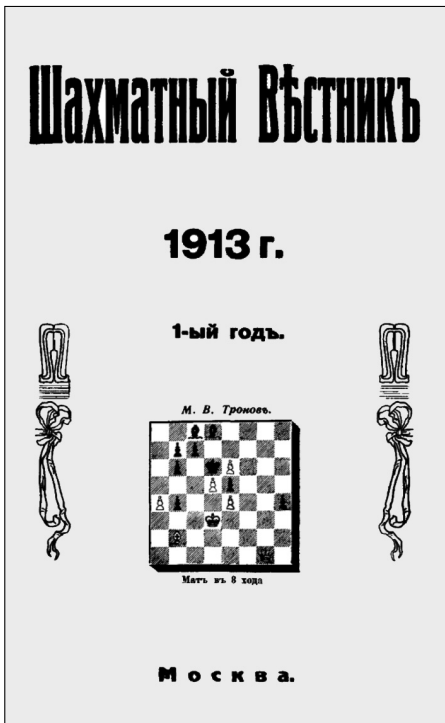
published in the previous issue (see my book on Alekhine for a portrait of Vladimirov).

This problem solving turned out to be useful for Yakov. In 1913 he took part in a major All-Russian problem solving competition organized by the well-known Moscow magazine *Chess Messenger* (*Shakhmatny vestnik*).

This time, his debut was successful: Vilner decisively won first prize in this prestigious tournament, finishing a whole twelve points ahead of second place!

That year, *Chess Messenger* also published three puzzles composed by Vilner, which later won honorable mentions. These were the young composer's first successes in this field, impressing the stern judge Lazar Zalkind!

The young Yakov also took part in the *Chess Messenger* All-Russian chess correspondence tournament. It lasted more than two years and Vilner shared first place with the well-known Kharkov player V. Borisovsky. Unfortunately, many of the games were cancelled as some of the participants were mobilized into the army, with WWI starting during the competition.



*The first ever issue of Chess Messenger, which contained the magazine's editorial policy and introduced its impressive production team*

### ***Chess Messenger***

*This magazine was published every two weeks in Moscow from January 1913 to October 1916. The publisher was Alexei Alekhine, brother of the future world champion.*

*It was instantly one of the best chess publications in the world, thanks to its prompt reporting of chess news and high-quality game commentary.*

*Its print runs were modest for the time, just 1,000 of each issue, yet it only managed to cover half of its costs. Its financial state worsened after the outbreak of WWI.*

*Chess Messenger was the last chess periodical to survive in the Russian Empire.*



## THE BEST PLAYER IN ODESSA

Yakov Vilner featured constantly on the pages of *Odessa News (Odesskie Novosti)* from 17 June to 25 July 1918 (new style) as well as several other Odessa publications. This was due to his successful performance in the city championship. Here is *Lights* (No. 5, 15 (2) June 1918):

*The day after tomorrow in the Kruzhok club (48 Grecheskaya Street) a tournament begins between the strongest players in Odessa, organized by the student chess circle of Novorossiysk University.*

*Apart from the old warriors, who will meet once again over 64 squares after a long interruption, V.G. Brannasky, B.M. Verlinsky, I.M. Greenberg, D.Y. Dolberg, G.I. Inge, N.E. Laurent and E.V. Ratner, we will witness for the first time the play of the young Odessite Y.S. Vilner, who has a sharp and exciting playing style and whom we know from his friendly games as well as last year's tournament in Kislovodsk, where he won first prize. Other players include K.A. Lerner – a well-known player from Belostok – as well as two very strong players A.A. Sukhov (comrade “Nikita” [a party pseudonym]) and B.E. Gereshinovich – co-editor of the newspaper Southern Worker (Yuzhny Rabochy).*

*Finally, some places have been allocated to the winners of the recent student tournament, some of whom have wide tournament experience, such as the student Gonsiorovksy, as well as young players whose successes are in the future and, perhaps, in the very near future, in this very competition. And it will be no surprise if these young lads cause a serious reshuffling of its results and freeze out one of the favorites.*

Of the strongest players in Odessa, only Vasily Vladimirov and Paul List didn't take part in the tournament. However, they were members of the organizing committee. The latter was chaired by the head of the student chess club, Felix Shpanir.

Vilner won this impressive tournament with the brilliant score 12.5 out of 14. Boris Verlinsky took second place, having lost his game against Vilner. 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> places were shared by Gonsiorovksy and Lerner, but they were far behind the first two players.

As can be seen in the below table, doctor of philosophy and editor of the chess column in the newspaper *Odessaer Zeitung* V.G. Brannasky withdrew from the tournament (due to illness) after four rounds. Those who suffered from this circumstance included Vilner, who had already defeated Brannasky (on time). The games Greenberg – Laurent and Dolberg – Iglitsky were cancelled when, in each case, neither player showed up! Each player was awarded zero points as a result.

No. 3. Dutch Defense

VILNER – VERLINSKY

Championship of Odessa, 1918

Commentary by Y. Vilner

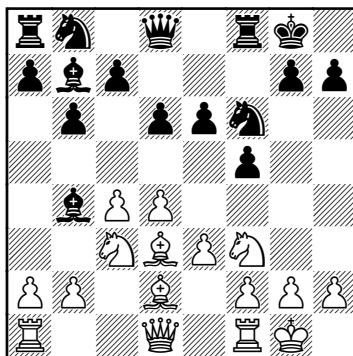
1.d4 e6 2.c4 f5. By switching the move order, black has achieved a Dutch where white cannot create a dangerous attack after 1.d4 f5 2.e4 fe 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.f3 ef 5.♗xf3, and white has better development and an attack for the pawn (N. Laurent).

3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e3 ♖b4 5.♙d2. The doubling of pawns on the c-file needs to be avoided here.

5...b6 6.♙d3 ♖b7 7.♗f3 0-0 8.0-0. Alexander Alekhine against Levitsky (St. Petersburg, 1912) played 8.♙c2 ♙xc3 9.♙xc3 ♘e4 10.0-0-0 d5 with approximately equal play (N. Laurent).

8...d6? This weakens the pawn on e6. Black should have played 8...♙e7 and then d7-d6 or ♘c6.

The computer doesn't consider 8...d6 to be a serious mistake. Other good continuations are 8...♙e7 and 8...♙xc3 9.♙xc3 ♘e4.



9.d5! ed 10.♗d4! Immediately exploiting the weakness on e6.

CHAMPIONSHIP OF ODESSA, 1918  
(17 June to 25 July)

No.	Player	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Points	Prize
1	Y. VILNER	♦	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	½	1	+	+	1	1	12.5	I
2	B. VERLINSKY	0	♦	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	+	1	1		11	II
3	V. GONSIOROVKSY	0	0	♦	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	+	1	1	9	III-IV
4	K. LERNER	0	0	1	♦	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	+	½	1	9	III-IV
5	A. SUKHOV	0	0	1	1	♦	1	0	1	½	1	½	½	0	1	+		8	V
6	B. BRODSKY	0	1	0	0	0	♦	1	0	½	½	1	½	1	+	1		7.5	VI-VII
7	V. BULATOV	0	0	1	0	1	0	♦	1	0	0	1	1	+	½	+		7.5	VI-VII
8	N. LAURENT	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	♦	-	0	1	1	-	+	1		7	
9	E. RATNER	0	0	0	0	½	½	1	+	♦	1	0	0	1	+	1		7	
10	D. RUSSO	0	0	0	0	0	½	1	1	0	♦	1	½	1	1	1		7	
11	K. VASYUTINSKY	½	0	0	½	1	0	0	0	1	0	♦	0	1	1	+		6	
12	A. ROZENMAN	0	0	0	1	½	½	0	0	1	½	1	♦	½	0	+		6	
13	N. GREENBERG	-	-	0	0	1	0	-	-	0	0	0	½	♦	½	0	1	2	
14	D. DOLBERG	-	0	-	-	0	-	½	-	-	0	0	1	½	♦	-		2	
15	A. IGLITSKY	0	0	0	½	-	0	-	0	0	0	-	-	1	-	♦		1.5	
16	V. BRANNASKY	0	0	0										0		♦			

10...♖e8. 10...♖e7 would be met with 11.♗xf5, while 10...♖d7 loses to 11.♗xf5.

*Actually, the move 10...♖e8? is a serious mistake. The only way for black to hold the position was via 10...dc! 11.♗xc4+ d5 12.♗d3 ♗c8 13.♗xf5 ♗c6 14.a3 ♗e5! and so on.*

11.♗cb5 ♗xd2 12.♗xc7!?! This was hardly correct (*the computer believes it to be the strongest move!*), but white had to complicate the game, as he absolutely had to win, given that even a draw would have delivered first prize to black. The simple continuation 12.♖xd2 accorded white significantly better play, as he would open up the c-file and black would have a weak pawn on c7.

If here c7-c5, then the pawn on d6 would weaken. If 12...dc, then 13.♗xc4+ d5 14.♗d3 ♗a6 15.♖ac1 c5 16.♗d6 with much better play.

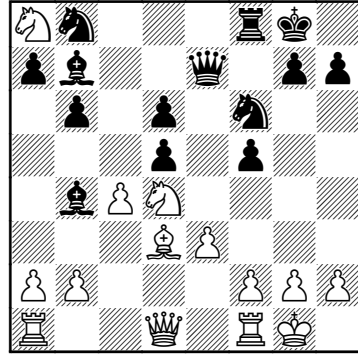
*If 12.♖xd2?! then black can play 12...♗a6! 13.♗xf5 dc 14.♗e6+ ♔h8 15.♗xc4 ♗e4! and a better position.*

12...♖e7? This blunder loses the game. He should have played 12...♖f7 and if 13.♗xa8 then he would have replied 13...♗b4. If 14.♗xf5, then 14...♖e8 with a quiet position.

*Alas, black would not have had a quiet position after 12...♖f7 13.♗xa8 ♗b4 14.♗xf5 ♖e8 15.♖a4! ♗c5 16.♗b5 ♗xa8 17.b4 and an excellent position for white.*

13.♗xa8 ♗b4. If 13...♗a5 then 14.♖a4 dc 15.♗xc4+ d5 16.♗d3, and if 16...♗xa8, then 17.a3, and the bishop on a5 is inevitably lost.

*Actually, 13...♗a5! was black's sole chance of saving the game, as he would have met 14.♖a4 with 14...♗a6! 15.♗xf5 ♖d8 and so on.*



14.a3 dc. If 14...♗c5, then 15.♗xf5 ♖d7 16.b4 and so on.

15.ab. *It was simpler to continue 15.♗xc4+ d5 16.ab ♗xa8 (or 16...dc 17.♖xa7 ♖e4 18.♖f3! and so on.) 17.♗xf5 with a crushing position.*

15...cd 16.♖xa7 ♖e4 17.♖f3 ♗xa8 18.♖xa8 ♗d5? Loses straight away. He should have played 18...g6. That said, black's position is already beyond salvation.

19.♗xf5 ♖xf3 20.gf ♗c7 21.♖a7 ♖xf5 22.♖xc7 ♗a6 23.♖c6 ♖g5+ 24.♗h1 ♖b5 25.♖a1 ♗xb4 26.♖a8+ ♗f7 27.♖xd6 ♗c2 28.♖a7+ ♗e8 29.♖xd3 ♖xb2 30.♖dd7, and black resigned a few moves later.

That was a very tense battle in which Vilner didn't heed Alekhine's advice on move 8 and instead chose his own way to fight for the initiative.

His game with the 3<sup>rd</sup> prize-winner was played in an excellent style.

No. 19. Slav Defense  
**BOGOLJUBOV – VILNER**

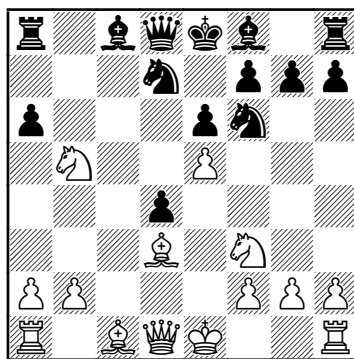
4<sup>th</sup> USSR Championship  
 Leningrad 1925, 14<sup>th</sup> round

Commentary by Y. Vilner

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.c4 c6 4.e3  
 e6 5.♘c3 ♘bd7 6.♙d3 dc 7.♙xc4 b5  
 8.♙d3 a6. “This is an old move. Most  
 experts in this now popular opening  
 prefer 8...♙b7, and some even try  
 8...b4, although the reputation of the  
 move 8...a6 remains quite strong” (G.  
 Kasparov).

9.e4 c5 10.e5 cd 11.♘xb5.  
 B. Blumenfeld’s move (“he tried  
 it against A. Rabinovich in the  
 Moscow championship of 1924” – S.  
 Voronkov), which was considered  
 to be a refutation of black’s entire  
 defensive system. However, this  
 game places a question-mark against  
 such a view.

“The first outing of the move  
 11.♘xb5 on the international arena  
 (Bogoljubov – Thomas, Baden-Baden  
 1925) caused a sensation, but Alekhine  
 immediately warned: ‘Blumenfeld’s  
 novelty is interesting and deserves to  
 be thoroughly analyzed; however, to  
 consider it a refutation of the Meran  
 Variation is at the very least being  
 frivolous. Actually, the haste with which  
 such verdicts are issued is very typical  
 for modern analysis and is the diametric  
 opposite of the precise and serious work  
 of the time of Steinitz and Chigorin’”  
 (S. Voronkov).



11...♘xe5! A very interesting  
 and, evidently, the best defensive  
 system, making white follow a forcing  
 variation where black has sufficient  
 counter chances. This move was  
 first shown by Sozin (“in notes to the  
 game Bogoljubov – Thomas, which  
 continued 11...ab 12.ef e5 13.fg ♙xg7  
 14.♚e2!” – S. Voronkov).

“The capture on e5 turned out to be  
 a surprise for Bogoljubov. Evidently,  
 when selecting this line, he was guided  
 by the game from round 8 between  
 A. Rabinovich and Gotgilf, in which  
 Alekhine’s recommendation 11...ab  
 12.ef ♙b4+ (12...gf! Sozin) 13.♚f1 gf  
 14.♘xd4 ♙b7 was refuted by the move  
 15.♙e3!” (S. Voronkov).

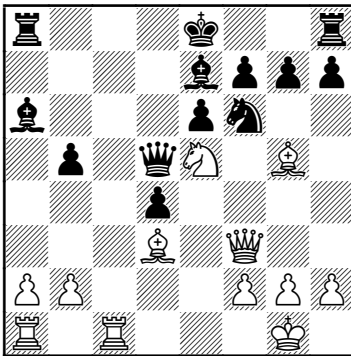
12.♘xe5 ab 13.0-0. For the  
 purpose of attack white sacrifices a  
 pawn, which is unlikely to be sound.  
 It would have been better to select the  
 forcing line 13.♙xb5+ ♙d7 14.♘xd7  
 ♚a5+ 15.♙d2 ♚xb5 16.♘xf6+ gf  
 17.♚f3 ♚d8 18.♚xf6? ♚d5.

“Obviously, black won’t play  
 18...♚d5 (it must have been a typo by  
 Vilner), but actually 18...♚g8 19.♚f3  
 ♙b4 20.♚d1 ♚g5, and it’s not easy

for white to untangle his pieces,' B. Vainshtein wrote in his book on the Meran System. However, the move 18...♖d5 isn't a typo at all, but it only leads to a draw: 19.♗xh8♖e5+ 20.♙e3 ♗d3! 21.♖d1♖xe3+” (S. Voronkov).

13...♗d5! 14.♗f3. “It was better to play 14.♗e2, so as not to block the f-pawn” (S. Voronkov).

14...♙a6 15.♙g5 ♙e7 16.♖fc1(?). The rook occupies an open but irrelevant file. 16.♖fe1 was better.



16...0-0 17.♗h3. 17.♗g3 would also have been met by 17...h6, but with even more force.

“This isn't right: after 18.♙xh6 ♗h5 19.♗c6! ♗xc6 20.♙h7+ ♗xh7 21.♗d3+ ♗xh6 22.♖xc6 white wins a queen for 3 minor pieces and equalizes” (S. Voronkov).

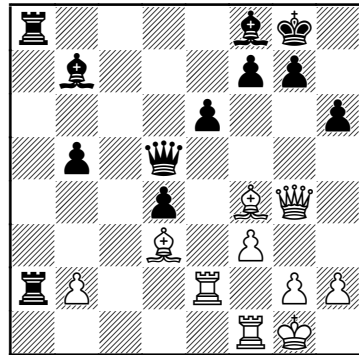
17...h6 18.♙f4. Had the knight on e5 been protected at this point, the bishop sac on h6 would have forced a draw.

18...♙b7 19.♖e1. Indeed, the rook is needed on the e-file, not the c-file.

“But too late. The return of the prodigal rook can no longer change anything” (S. Voronkov).

19...♙b4 20.♖e2 ♖xa2 21.♖f1 ♖fa8! 22.f3 ♙f8! 23.♗g4. “23.♙e4 is met by the pretty line 23...d3! 24.♙xd5 de 25.♖e1 ♗xd5” (S. Voronkov).

23...♗xg4 24.♗xg4.



24...♗b3! A crushing blow. White's queenside collapses immediately, like a house of cards.

“Vilner has got into his element and is bossing the game wonderfully!” (B. Vainshtein).

25.♙b1 ♖xb2 26.♖ee1 d3 27.♖c1 ♖a1 28.♙c2 (or 28.♙xd3 ♖xc1 29.♙xc1 ♗xd3 30.♙xb2 ♙c5+ and so on.) 28...♖xc1. White resigned. 29.♙xb3 is met by 29...♙c5+ with mate, while 29.♖(♙)xc1 ♖xc2 loses a piece.

“The Sozin Variation was first tested in practice in the 1925 USSR championship. Odessa Master Vilner, a strong tactician, read up on the Sozin to gain the required minimum technical knowledge before his game against Bogoljubov and then applied a novelty that marked out a sharp turn in the development of the Meran System (B. Vainshtein).”

Nikolai Grigoriev wrote about the atmosphere at the championship and the reaction of the spectators to the Odessite's win:

*Verlinsky would make a racket if he lost; he would glow if he won (he was practically deaf and dumb – S.T.). Seleznev would get up from his chair with the clear conscience of having fulfilled his duty by gaining another half-point, like a “mark of inward peace.”*

*Bogoljubov would stand up from the table with the appearance of an Olympian. You could read neither sorrow nor joy into I. Rabinovich's face. On the other hand, you would see either sorrow or joy on the face of A. Rabinovich. The palace spectators noticed all this, but they could have told you more: about the ovation for Vilner, who managed to defeat Bogoljubov for the first time...*

Apart from this ovation, Yakov Semionovich won the prize for “best result of a non-prize winner against prize-winners,” and his master's title was confirmed.

That tournament was over, so now it was time for another one – this time, an international tournament! A super tournament was planned for the beginning of November in Moscow with the participation of world champions Capablanca and Lasker, as well as the best other foreign virtuosos: Marshall, Torre,

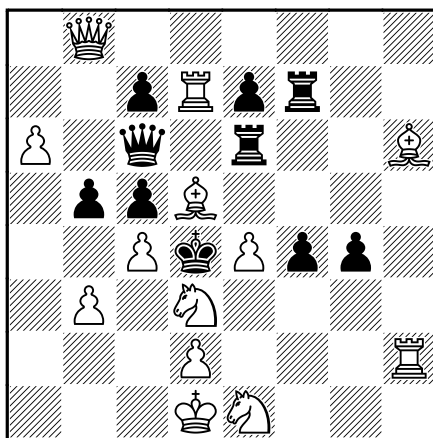


*Collective portrait of participants of the fourth USSR championship, 1925. Sitting (left to right): Vilner, Levenfish, Rokhlin (member of the organizing committee), Gotgilf, I. Rabinovich, Bogoljubov, Ilyn-Zhenevsky, Duz-Khotimirsky, Romanovsky, Sergeev, Nenarokov, Verlinsky and A. Rabinovich. Standing: Freyman, Sozin, Eremeev (member of the organizing committee), Grigoriev, Zubarev, Seleznev, Kaspersky, Kutuzov and S. Vainshtein (member of the organizing committee)*

The chess leadership of the Soviet Union had long thought about holding a national individual composition championship. It finally materialized in 1929! After complicated calculations by judges Yakov Vilner was declared Soviet champion in the three-mover section. It's true that many famous experts in this genre didn't participate, including Leonid Kubbel, Nikolai Malakhov and Semyon Levman, which beyond doubt reduced the competition's strength. But Vilner wasn't guilty of that. Note that three of the Odessite's compositions were included in the championship's list of ten best compositions overall!

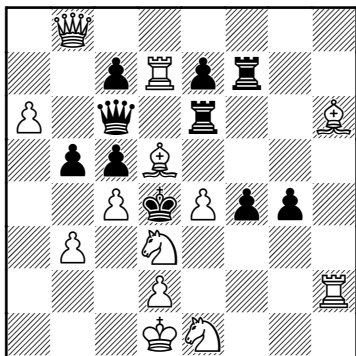
Composition **No. 82**, which shared first place, became a beacon for future strategic-themed problems.

**No. 82. Y. Vilner**  
Problems and Studies, 1929  
1st-2nd prize



#3

13+10



The solution begins with **1.♖e2!** and the quiet threat **2.♖e3!** ~ **3.♘c2#** (**2...fe 3.de#**): **1...♙xa6 2.♙a7!** with the threat **3.♙xc5#**; **2...♖b6 3.♙c6#!** – cutting off from the left (**2...♙~ 3.♙a1#**; **2...♙a3/♙xa7 3.♙xe6#**).

A second thematic variation arises after **1...♖xh6 2.e5!** with the threat **3.♖e4#**; **2...♙g6 (2...♙xd5 3.♖xd5#) 3.♙e6#!** – and an echo cut-off from the right.

The construction of this problem was justified by its complicated content and should not be considered clumsy. The composition was selected for the FIDE Album 1914-1944 and included in Evgeny Umnov's book *Chess Problems of the XX Century, 1901-1944* with the following commentary:

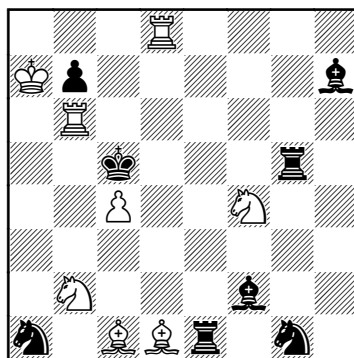
“The problem embodies an idea which is difficult to implement of diverting two black pieces along the same rank and then cutting them out of white's discovered check.”

Meanwhile, in his anthology (in Russian) of three-movers Grandmaster Yakov Vladimirov wrote the following about this composition:

“A bright tactical idea paving the way out for two black pieces and then cutting them off with discovered tactics.”

I would call this the very first “new-strategic problem”! The crowning “old-strategic problem” is normally considered to be the famous problem by Leonid Kubbel **No. 82a**, which was composed at around the same time as Vilner's work.

**No. 82a. L. Kubbel**  
Star (“Zvezda”), 1928  
1st prize



#3

8+8

**1.♙g4!** with the threat **2.♙f5!** **♖xf5 3.♘fd3#** and **2...♙xf5 3.♖d5#** – a Novotny theme.

Defending against the threat, the black rooks make anti-crisis moves: **1...♖ge5! 2.♘e6+! ♖xe6 3.♖d5#** and **1...♖ee5! 2.♖d5+ ♖xd5 3.♘e6#** – a Wurzburg-Plachutta theme.

Another anti-critical move by the bishop with its subsequent lock-out: **1...♙b1! 2.♙d2!** (the threat is **3.♙b4#**) **2...♘c2 3.♘fd3#**.



Two variations on the theme of obstruction: 1...♔c2! 2.♕d2! ~ 3.♕b4# (there is no 2...♘d2) and 1...♘c2 2.♕e6 ~ 3.♘a4# (there is no 2...♕c2).

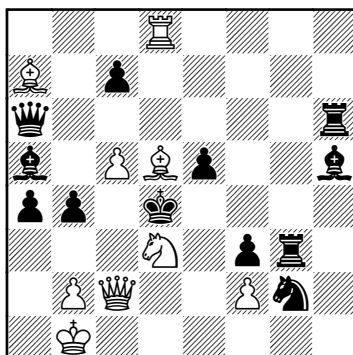
And for dessert a Grimshaw interference: 1...♞h3! 2.♕f3! ♕e4 3.♘e6# and 2...♞e4 3.♘fd3#. Additionally: 1...♞e2 2.♕xe2 and 1...♞xe3 2.♕xe3+.

Leonid Kubbel considered this work with various already well-known themes included in it to be his best.

Yakov Vilner deliberately used in problem **No. 82** a completely new combination cutting off two pieces straight away in two variations. It's no surprise that this masterpiece became a beacon for a new type of problem.

It would have been interesting to ask the Odessite how he created this work. Did problem **No. 82b** encourage him to make this discovery?

**No. 82b. L. Isaev**  
L'Echiquier, 1927  
1st-2nd prize



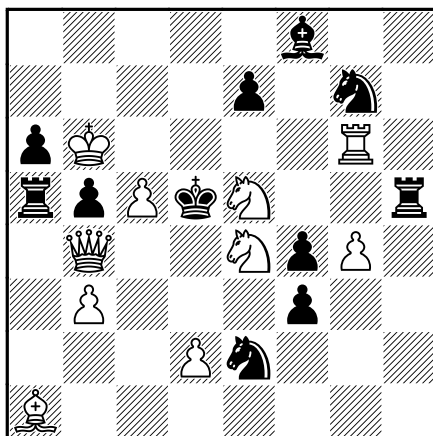
#2

9+12

1.♘e1! with the threat 2.♞e4#. And two variations with cutting out enemy pieces: 1...♞g6 (♕b6) 2.♕e6# and 1...♞b6 (♕g6) 2.♕c6#. Additionally: 1...♞g4 2.♘xf3#; 1...♞b6 2.♞c4# and 1...♞d3 2.♞xd3#.

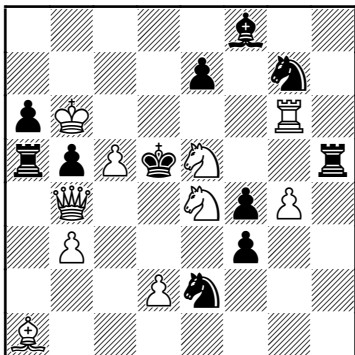
The unpleasant dual on the mating move: 1...♞xa7 2.♕e6# or 2.♞c4# diminishes the problem, though.

**No. 83. Y. Vilner**  
Chess, 1929 (reworked)



#3

10+11

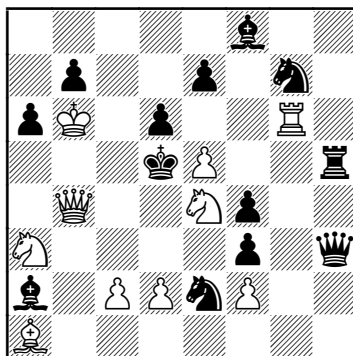


The first move **1.c6!** sets up the threat **2.♖c5+ ♔xe4 3.d3#**. And two variations: **1...♗xe5 2.♖d4+ ♘xd4 3.♘c3#!** (the squares e5 and d4 on the long diagonal are occupied by black pieces and the bishop on a1 can be cut off!) and **1...♘e6 2.♖d6+! ed 3.♘f6#!** (by analogy – the squares d6 and e6 no longer need to be guarded by the rook on g6!).

An original mechanism with two variations of a doubled complex blocking!

The first version of the problem, **No. 83a**, didn't have any defects, yet...

**No. 83a. Y. Vilner**  
Chess, 1929



#3

10+13

**1.e6** with the threat **2.♖a5+ ♔xe4 3.d3#**. And two variations: **1...♗e5 2.♖d4+! ♘xd4 3.♘c3#;** **1...♘e6 2.♖xd6+! ed 3.♘f6#.**

Alas, although the mating picture after **1...♘e6** is similar to the first line of the solution, it's not a pure variation. In the initial position the d6 square is already blocked, but after the first move the white pawn cuts the rook off from that square...

The reworking of the problem by Yuri Gordian into **No. 83** not only made it two pieces lighter, but added purity and gloss!