



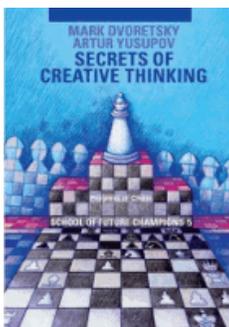
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The Instructor

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A Poor Queen Position

In all the games I'm offering for your attention this month, the white queen found itself in a vulnerable position soon after the opening. That circumstance influenced the subsequent course of the battle and its outcome in a decisive manner.

Trois – Polugaevsky
Interzonal tournament, Riga, 1979

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.d4 b6 4.g3 Ba6 5.Qa4 c5 6.Bg2 Bb7 7.0-0 cd 8.Nxd4 Bxg2 9.Kxg2 Be7 10.f3 0-0 11.Rd1 Qc8 12.Nc3 a6 13.e4 d6 14.Be3 Qb7



[FEN "m3rk1/1q2bPPP/pp1ppn2/8/Q1PNP3/2N1BPP1/PP4KP/R2R4 w - - 0 15"]

1.?

White will probably need to reinforce the c4-pawn soon with the move b2-b3. But then his queen falls into a difficult position – in connection with the maneuver Nb8-d7-c5. He should have transferred his queen to a more solid position immediately: 15.Qc2! Rc8 16.Qe2, intending Rac1, b2-b3, with approximate equality. This plan can't be refuted with 16...Qc7?! 17.b3 b5? (17...d5? doesn't work either) because of 18.cb! Qxc3 19.Rac1+-.

But in the game there followed **15.Rac1?! Rc8! =/+ 16.Qb3 Nbd7 17.Nb1 Nc5 18.Qc2 b5 19.Qe2 bc 20.Rxc4 d5** and Black seized the initiative and went on to win.

Portisch – Taimanov
Leningrad, 1959
(Notes based on Mark Taimanov's)

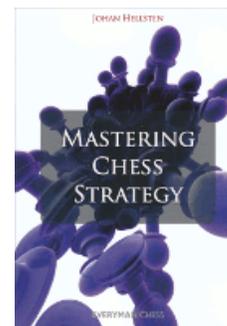
1.c4 e6 2.Nc3 Bb4 3.e4 c5 4.Qg4!?

A roughly equal position arises with 4.g3 Nc6 5.Bg2 Nge7 6.Nge2 0-0. The Encyclopedia of Chess Openings recommends 4.Nb5 d6 5.a3 Ba5 6.b4 a6 7.ba ab 8.cb Nf6 9.Qc2 (Serper – Rajsikij, Poland, 1991) and with hardly any justification evaluates the outcome of the opening in White's favor – obviously under the influence of the positive result of the game for him.

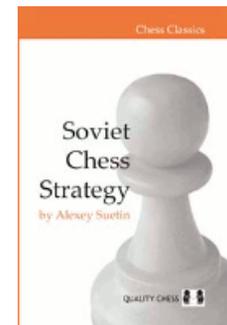
4...Kf8

4...Qf6? wouldn't be good, of course, because of 5.Nb5, and moves like 4...g6 aren't even worth assessing.

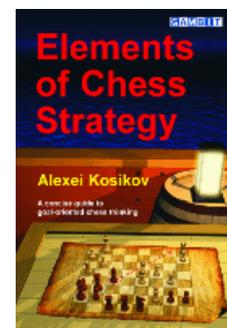
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[FEN"rnbq1knr/pp1p1ppp/4p3/2p5/1bP1P1Q1/2N5/PP1P1PPP/R1B1KBNR w KQ - 0 5"]

5.Nf3?!

A natural but unsuccessful move. The white queen will feel uncomfortable on the kingside, and that will become the leitmotif of the entire game. Taimanov recommends 5.Qd1!? ("The Moor has done its job.") 5...Nc6 6.g3 (or after Max Euwe: 6.f4 d6 7.Nf3 Nf6 8.d3 unclear) 6...Nf6 7.Bg2 with a double-edged position. White has lost two tempi on queen moves, but on the other hand the king on f8 doesn't beautify Black's position.

5...Nf6 6.Qh4 d6 7.Be2 Nc6 8.0-0 h6! 9.d3



[FEN"r1bq1k1r/pp3pp1/2nppn1p/2p5/1bP1P2Q/2NP1N2/PP2BPPP/R1B2RK1 b - - 0 9"]

1...?

Black wants to play g7-g5, but for that he has to defend his rook.

9...Rh7!

An apparently unusual but very logical move. 9...Kg8 was less precise – the king isn't positioned as solidly on the g-file as it is on f8.

10.Ne1

Otherwise, after g7-g5, Black would have continued Nh5-f4.

10...g5 11.Qg3 Nd4 12.Bd1 e5

The position is already in Black's favor. White should have defended accurately with 13.Nc2 or 13.Qe3. Lajos Portisch makes an impatient move, only weakening his position.

13.h4?!

Black is stronger on the kingside, so opening lines is favorable to him.



[FEN"r1bq1k2/pp3p1r/3p1n1p/2p1p1p1/1bPnP2P/2NP2Q1/PP3PP1/R1BBNRK1 b - h3 0 13"]

1...?

13...Ne6!

An excellent maneuver: the knight is going to f4. On 14.hg hg 15.Bxg5, there follows 15...Bxc3 16.bc Nxe4! 17.Bxd8 Nxc3 18.fg Nxd8 with a better endgame for Black. 13...Bxc3 14.bc Ne6 was also possible.

14.Nc2

14.Nd5 Bxe1 15.Rxe1 Nxd5 16.ed Nf4 isn't much better.

14...Bxc3

He's managed to exchange off the bishop, which has been removed for a long time, and what's more, he's done it after the d4-square was used by the black knight.

15.bc Nf4

The storm clouds over the white king's position are thickening. 16...Rg7 is threatened, with an inevitable opening of the g-file. That's also the payback for the rash move 13.h4.

In the event of 16.hg hg 17.Qxg5, Black has a choice between winning the queen 17...Nh3+ 18.gh Rg7 (Taimanov), which, in my view, isn't completely convincing because of 19.f4!, and the less impressive, but then again probably stronger 17...Nxd3!?.

16.d4?!

That's already desperation!

16...Rg7

Of course, not 16...Nxe4 because of 17.Qe3. Black's position is so strong that deviating from the course he's taken would be unforgivable.

17.Qh2

17.Bxf4 gf 18.Qd3 is more stubborn.

17...Nxe4 18.de de 19.Bf3 Nxc3 20.Bb2 g4! 21.Bd5 Nce2+ 22.Kh1 g3

A logical conclusion to Black's plan – by sensibly exploiting the poor position of the queen he reaches the white king.

23.fg Nxc3+ 24.Kg1 Nfe2+ 25.Kf2 Qf6+ 0-1

Karpov – Larsen
Tilburg, 1980

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.d4 Nxe4 4.Bd3 d5 5.Nxe5 Nd7 6.Qe2?! Nxe5! 7.Bxe4



[FEN"2kr1b1r/pppq1ppp/4b3/4Q3/3P4/4B3/PPP2PPP/RN3RK1 b - - 0 11"]

Black has excellent compensation for the pawn he sacrificed in the opening.

11...Bb4!?

A subtle move. By removing the a5-square from the queen, after 12...f6 Black wants to chase it to the kingside, where it will be attacked by the advancing black pawns. And if White brings his knight out to c3, a transfer to a favorable "opposite color" for Black is possible.

Then again, as Artur Yusupov indicated, the direct 11...Bd6 12.Qa5 Bd5! (threatening 13...Bxg2 or 13...Qg4) 13.f3 (13.h3!?) 13...Qe6 14.Qd2 Rhe8 is also sufficiently strong.

12.Nc3?!

Now Black's idea justifies itself. On 12.a4, there would have followed 12...a6!, preventing the move 13.Qb5. And if 12.a3, then 12...f6 13.Qg3 Bd6. In the event of the more principled 12.c3 Black has a choice between 12...Bd6!? (the pawn removes the c3-square from the knight) and 12...f6 13.Qg3 Be7 (13...Bd6 14.Bf4 is worse – the d4-pawn is defended) 14.Nd2 h5.

12...f6 13.Qg3 (13.Qb5 Qxb5 14.Nxb5 Bc4 is bad, but 13.Qf4!? deserved preference.) **13...Bxc3 14.bc h5!**

14...g5 15.f3 h5 16.Qf2 is less precise.

15.h4 g5!

There's an obvious advantage on Black's side. He's attacking, which is particularly dangerous in connection with the presence of opposite-colored bishops on the board. And White has no counterplay on the opposite flank.

There followed **16.f3** (16.hg? h4 17.Qh2 h3 or 17...fg) **16...Rdg8 17.Rf2 Qc6 18.Bd2 g4 19.f4 Bc4 20.d5 Bxd5 21.f5 Re8 22.a3 Re4 23.Re1 Rhe8 24.Rxe4 Rxe4 25.Kh2 Qc5 26.Bf4 Re1 27.Bd2 Ra1 28.Qe3 Qd6+! 29.Rf4 b6 30.c4** (30.Qe8+ Kb7 31.Qxh5 Bf3!-) **30...Bxc4 31.Qd4 Qxd4 32.Rxd4 Bb5 33. Bh6 Rxa3 34.Bg7 Bd7 35.Rf4 Ra5 36.Bxf6 Bxf5** and Black won in thirty more moves.

Nei – Gurgidze

Soviet Championship, Kharkov, 1967

1.c4 c5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nc3 e6 4.g3 b6 5.Bg2 Bb7 6.0-0 Be7 (6...a6!?!; 6...d6!?) **7.d4 cd 8.Nxd4 Bxg2 9.Kxg2 Qc8 10.Qd3 Nc6 11.b3 Ne5! 12.Qe3**

Grandmaster Mihai Suba, who commented on this game in his book *The Hedgehog System*, recommends 12.Qd2. Both queen retreats seem about the same to me.

12...Qb7+ 13.f3 Ng6 14.Rd1 0-0 15.Bb2 h5



[FEN"r4rk1/pq1pbpp1/1p2pnn1/7p/2PN4/1PN1QPP1/PB2P1KP/R2R4 w - h6 0 16"]

1.?

16.Qd3?!

The alternative mentioned by Suba, 16.h4?!, is dubious, in my view, as it weakens the kingside. Black replies 16...Ng4 17.Qd2 f5; for example, 18.e4 fe 19.Nxe4 e5! 20.Re1 (the knight can't retreat because of 20...Rxf3!) 20...ed 21. fg Rae8.

But the move in the game, which prepares e2-e4, isn't the best either. The queen soon finds itself vulnerable on the d3-square, and subsequently it can no longer find itself a stable spot.

He should have exploited the position of the queen on e3 by playing 16.Ne4! The endgame that arises after 16...Nxe4 17.Qxe4 Qxe4 18.fe is favorable for White: the defects in his pawn structure are more than compensated for by his space advantage and pressure on the d-file.

16...h4 17.e4 Nh5! (threatening 18...Nf4+) **18.Qe3 Rae8!**

Two non-standard moves by Black have allowed him to seize the initiative. After the planned f7-f5, the queen feels uncomfortable on e3.

19.Nde2 f5 20.ef



[FEN"4rrk1/pq1pb1p1/1p2p1n1/5P1n/2P4p/1PN1QPP1/PB2N1KP/R2R4 b - - 0 20"]

20...ef!

What romantic chess, leaving d5 en prise. I was always convinced that the players of the past knew less but played better chess, Suba writes.

It seems to me, though, that the more natural 20...Rxf5 was, in any case, no weaker than the move in the game. Possibly Bukhuti Gurgendidze was distracted by the reply 21.Qe4. But then there follows 21...Qc8!, defending the e6-pawn to prepare d7-d5. The prophylactic 22.Rac1 allows Black to develop a dangerous attack with 22...hg 23.hg Rg5 (or 23...Ref8 first). And if 22.Nb5, then 22...hg 23.hg d5! 24.cd (24.Qg4 Rg5) 24...ed 25.Qg4 (25.Rxd5 Nxc3!! 26.Nxc3 Nf4+ 27.Kh2 Rxd5 28.Qxf4 Rxb5-) 25...Nh4+! 26.gh Bxh4, and White can't defend himself from two threats at once, 27...Rxe2+

and 27...Rg5.

21.Qd2 Qb8

Black declines to exchange queens by 22.Qd5+. It would have made sense for him to first exchange pawns on g3, although on 21...hg 22.hg Qb8 the reply 23.Rh1 is unpleasant. Then again, instead of 22...Qb8? the continuation 22...f4 23.Qxd7 Qxd7 24.Rxd7 fg isn't bad.

22.Nd5

In the event of 22.Qxd7 the move 22...Bb4 is strong. But the sealing move 22.Re1! allowed White to hold the defense: no direct refutation is evident. Now the natural 22...hg?! lets almost his entire advantage slip because of 23.Nxg3!.



[FEN"1q2rrk1/p2pb1p1/1p4n1/3N1p1n/2P4p/1P3PP1/PB1QN1KP/R2R4 b - - 0 22"]

1...?

22...Bb4!!

An impressive concluding combination. The white queen comes under a knight fork in the variations 23.Nxb4 Rxe2+! 24.Qxe2 Nhf4+ 25.gf Nxf4+ 26.Kh1 Nxe2 27.Rxd7 Rf7 and 23.Bc3 Rxe2+! 24.Qxe2 Bxc3.

23.Qd3 hg 24.hg Rxe2+! 25.Qxe2 Qxg3+ 26.Kf1 Ngf4 27.Nxf4 Nxf4 28.Qf2 Qh3+ 29.Kg1 Bc5 30.Bd4 Rf6 0-1

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