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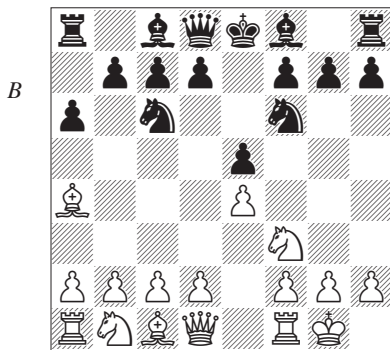
## Game 3

**J. Polgar – Mamedyarov***Olympiad, Bled 2002*

Ruy Lopez (Spanish), Open

The previous two games have both featured attacks on castled kings. Here we see the black king trapped in the centre of the board. In open positions, this is generally a highly dangerous situation for the king, as he is exposed to the full attack of the enemy pieces, down the open central files. The key feature of such attacks is to retain the initiative, and not allow the defender any time to evacuate his king from the danger zone, or to bring additional pieces into the defence. The attacker must operate with continual threats, to keep the defender off-balance.

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙a4 ♗f6 5  
0-0 (D)



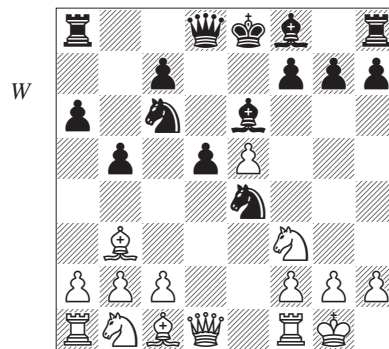
5...♗xe4

This move characterizes the Open Defence to the Ruy Lopez, championed in the early 20th century by the great German player and teacher, Siegbert Tarrasch. In the Closed Defence, which we saw in Game 2, Black plays 5...♙e7 and subsequently supports his centre by ...d6. This has the drawback of shutting in Black's king's bishop, and generally cramping his position. Dr Tarrasch abhorred cramped positions, and generally condemned any opening variation which involved such a position. Instead, in the Open, Black secures more space and open lines for his pieces, but this comes at the cost of some weakening of his pawn-structure. Over the decades, the line has generally been less popular than the Closed system, but has always had a core group of die-hard supporters. Former world champion Max Euwe was one such, while in more recent times, Viktor Korchnoi has upheld the variation in numerous games.

6 d4 b5

Capturing another pawn with 6...exd4 is extremely risky. After 7 ♙e1 the central position of the black king leads to problems.

7 ♙b3 d5 8 dxe5 ♙e6 (D)



This is the basic position of the Open Defence. Black's minor pieces have more activity than in the Closed line, but his queenside pawns are somewhat weak and over-extended. If he can achieve the advance ...c5 in favourable circumstances, Black can potentially look forward to a splendid game, but this is not easy to achieve against accurate play by White.

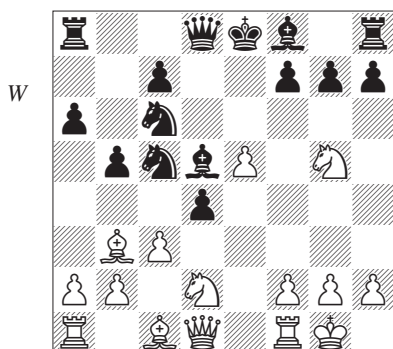
9 ♗bd2 ♗c5 10 c3 d4 11 ♗g5!

A truly striking move, offering a piece sacrifice. White's idea is to answer 11...♙xg5 with 12 ♗f3, when Black cannot adequately defend his c6-knight in view of the follow-up 13 ♙d5. In fact, this is all well-known theory, with 11 ♗g5 having first been played in a Karpov-Korchnoi world championship game, as far back as 1978.

11...♙d5? (D)

Mamedyarov hopes to avoid the complications resulting from accepting the piece, but

this move is a serious error in view of White's reply. Much midnight oil has been expended on variations beginning 11...♖xg5 12 ♜f3 0-0-0, although practical experience suggests that White's chances are preferable. These days, opening fashions change rapidly, but at the time of writing, Black tends to be avoiding this whole line and preferring 10...♗g4, rather than 10...d4.



### 12 ♜xf7!

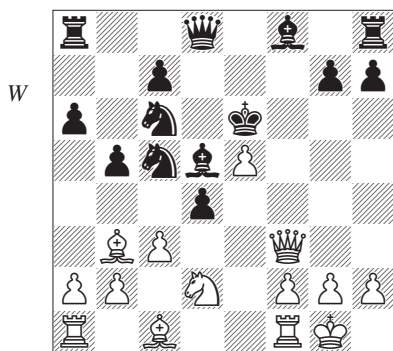
This sacrifice traps the black king in the centre, where it will be subject to a ferocious attack.

### 12...♗xf7

The only move, since after 12...♗xf7, White immediately regains his piece by 13 ♗xf7+ ♕xf7 14 ♜f3+ and 15 ♜xc6, remaining with an extra pawn and the black king trapped in the centre.

### 13 ♜f3+ ♕e6 (D)

Again forced, so as to defend the d5-bishop. White now has to consider how to prosecute the attack further. Clearly, it will be necessary to bring up some further reserves in due course, but first, Polgar forces Black to make a choice with his king.



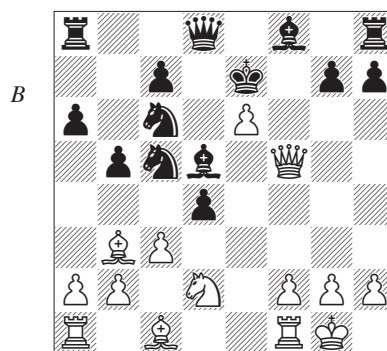
### 14 ♜g4+ ♕f7?!

The alternative retreat 14...♕e7 is better, but White still has a near-decisive attack. A previous game Svidler-Anand had continued 15 e6!, and White soon achieved a winning advantage.

### 15 ♜f5+ ♕e7

If the king goes to e8 or g8, the reply 16 e6 wins immediately, since Black cannot defend both the mate threat on f7 and the attacked bishop on d5.

### 16 e6 (D)



The most important thing in such positions is not to give the defender any breathing space, and Polgar demonstrates this admirably. Her last move attacks the d5-bishop, as well as lining up a possible check on f7 at some point. Depending on how Black replies, she intends to bring the d2-knight into the attack, in turn opening the way for the c1-bishop to give a potentially deadly check on g5. If Black captures the e6-pawn, this will open the e-file, and allow White's rook to become very active from e1. This is a typical example of how the initiative flows in such positions – by constant threats, the attacker deprives the defender of time to unravel his position and bring additional units into the defence.

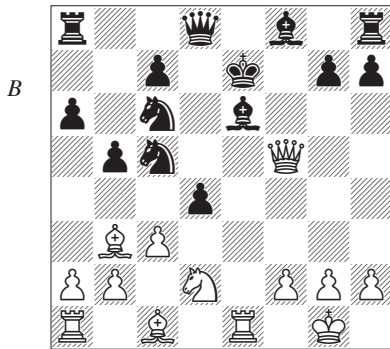
### 16...♗xe6

As noted above, this opens an important additional line against the black king, but Black had to do something about his attacked bishop. The alternative was 16...♞xb3, which would eliminate one of the attacking pieces. However, this exchange also eliminates one of Black's defensive pieces, and after the reply 17 ♞xb3, the white knight would join the attack, and the c1-bishop would also be ready to jump in. Polgar continues the variation by 17...♗xe6 18

$\text{♞e1}$  (threatening  $19 \text{ ♜g5+}$ )  $18... \text{♞c8}$   $19 \text{ ♜g5+ ♞d6}$   $20 \text{ ♜f4+! ♞e7}$  (by these last two moves, White has effectively developed the bishop for free)  $21 \text{ ♞c5}$ , with an overwhelming attack; e.g.,  $21... \text{♞d8}$   $22 \text{ ♞xe6+!}$  and  $23 \text{ ♞e1}$ , winning.

**17 ♞e1! (D)**

A very striking move, typical of such positions. White could regain the piece, with check, by simply  $17 \text{ ♞xc5+}$ , but this would weaken the force of the attack after  $17... \text{♞d6}$ .



Polgar prefers to strengthen the attack by bringing another piece into action. In such positions, as we have emphasized before, it is not the nominal piece-count that matters, but the number of pieces that are active in the crucial sector of the board. Both of Black's rooks, for example, are dormant in the present position.

**17... ♞d6 18 ♜xe6 ♞xe6 19 ♞e4**

Continuing the 'no respite' policy. The knight jumps into the attack and opens the diagonal of the c1-bishop, all with tempo.

**19... ♞e5 20 ♜g5+ (D)**

Another white piece joins the attack, and Black must now lose his queen. If  $20... \text{♞xg5}$ , then  $21 \text{ ♞xg5}$ , and if  $20... \text{♞e8}$ ,  $21 \text{ ♞f6+}$ . Black prefers the third option.

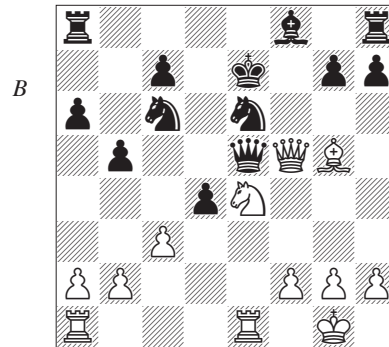
**20... ♞d7 21 ♞c5+ ♜xc5**

Or  $21... \text{♞xc5}$   $22 \text{ ♞xc6\#}$ .

**22 ♞f7+**

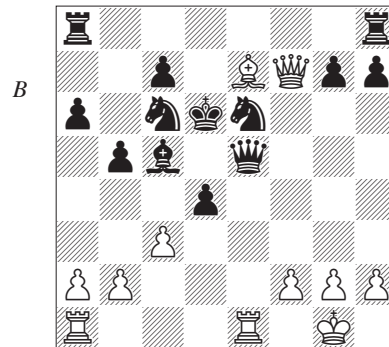
Once again eschewing material gain to pursue the attack to its logical conclusion.

**22... ♞d6**



$22... \text{♞e7}$   $23 \text{ ♞xe5}$  is no improvement for Black.

**23 ♜e7+ (D)**



**1-0**

Black resigned in view of  $23... \text{♞xe7}$   $24 \text{ ♞xe5 ♞xe5}$   $25 \text{ ♞e1+}$ , while fleeing with  $23... \text{♞d5}$  leads to a nice mate after  $24 \text{ ♞f3+ ♞c4}$   $25 \text{ b3\#}$ .

### The Essential Lessons

- A king which is trapped in the centre can be vulnerable to a devastating attack.
- From the attacker's viewpoint, it is frequently worth a sacrifice in order to trap the enemy king in the centre.
- As with all attacks, success depends on getting more pieces into action in the crucial sector of the board.
- It is frequently better to bring additional pieces into the attack than to take material (17 ♞e1!).