

Foreword

The autobiographical three-volume *Garry Kasparov on Garry Kasparov* is a continuation of the series *My Great Predecessors* (Parts I-V) and *Modern Chess* (Parts 1-4).

Initially I was intending simply to annotate about three hundred of my best games, dividing them into three volumes in accordance with the stages of my competitive career: the pre-champion period (1973-1985), the time when I was champion within the FIDE framework (1985-1993) and the years outside of FIDE (1993-2005). But then I realised that to complete the picture I needed to include not only the best, but also the most memorable games and endings, which became landmarks on my chess career (although some of them have already been annotated in previous books).

Throughout my life it has been said that I won mainly thanks to deep and comprehensive opening preparation. Thereby – deliberately or otherwise – my ability to play creatively at the board itself was disparaged. ‘I don’t know another player who would prepare so thoroughly for a match or a tournament. In this respect he surpasses even the legendary Botvinnik’, Anatoly Karpov once said about me. In fact, without the ability to play creatively at the board, nothing can be achieved, whereas the art of preparation has been a distinguishing feature of many world champions and has always furthered the progress of chess thinking.

In the 1920s Alekhine worked at chess more persistently than anyone before him in history, and as a result the entire culture of the ‘amateur game’ sharply improved. In the 1940s Botvinnik’s methodical mind and scientific approach assisted the transformation of chess into a genuine profession. In the 1970s Fischer’s fantastic enthusiasm for analytical work forced any player who did not want to ‘miss the boat’ to devote more time to theoretical preparation. In the 1980s, when I became the leader of the new opening revolution, the need for such preparation was already axiomatic.

I grew up in an atmosphere of strict discipline, created by my mother. My chess outlook was formed at the school of Mikhail Botvinnik, and my opening repertoire developed under

the influence of my trainers – the outstanding analysts Alexander Nikitin and Alexander Shakarov. Apart from an innate combinative gift, from childhood I possessed an unlimited appetite for analytical work. I studied all the latest games of the leading grandmasters, recorded novelties and analysed critical positions, trying to find improvements. The choice of a particular opening system was always the fruit of deep creative processing, and certainly not blind imitation.

Later, in the period when I was fighting for the world crown, my circle of analytical helpers expanded, but as before I tirelessly generated my own ideas. And when personal computers appeared, I was the first player to include machine analysis in my system of preparation and to make systematic use of playing programs and databases. Soon I discovered how weak some of my earlier preparations had been. A useful, sobering discovery! Under the microscope of powerful computer programs it transpired that at times I had gone along to a game not with a some kind of Excalibur, but with a blunt pen-knife.

Nevertheless, my intensive preparation was invariably rewarded with good results, even when by no means all the ideas were used. Between labour invested and success achieved there always exists if not a direct connection, then some almost mythical one. Probably also a psychological one: after all, every time when beginning a battle, I thought that I possessed some ‘deadly weapon’, and this gave me confidence, even if the weapon was unused or proved to be altogether ineffective.

This volume contains one hundred newly annotated games and endings. It is partly based on my first book *The Test of Time* (1986). In the preface to it Botvinnik wrote:

‘Kasparov is on the right path: analyses of games should be published by a player not only to afford pleasure to the readers, but also, by putting forward the results of his work to their strict judgement, to be able to use the readers’ criticisms to check the objectivity of his searchings. This is an essential step for anyone who wishes to become a researcher in chess. In this way creative and competitive successes can be raised, and the very maximum possible “squeezed” out of his talent...’

The large amount of annotation work done then was, of course, not free of analytical mistakes, and in addition the rapid progress of opening theory has changed the assessments of numerous variations. Therefore a number of annotations had to be significantly refined and amplified, and some shortened. As Botvinnik anticipated, ‘not all the games have survived’. But on the whole my earlier conclusions have withstood the test of time.

I should like to express my gratitude to my former trainers Alexander Nikitin and Alexander Shakarov for their help in preparing the manuscript for publication.