GARRY KASPAROV ON MODERN CHESS

PART TWO

KASPAROV VS KARPOV

1975-1985 including the 1st and 2nd matches

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Foreword

My duels with Anatoly Karpov are essentially the finale of my multi-tome project *My Great Predecessors*. Initially I had in mind only our five matches for the world crown, but in the course of the work I felt the need to give a complete picture of our many years of rivalry and to present all the games between us (there were 181!) – from the first, played in a simultaneous display back in 1975, to the tournament, rapid and even blitz games, including the last, played in 2006.

However, it is the matches, of course, that are at the centre of this narrative: this was one of the most intensive duels in the history of top-class sport. Our matches consolidated the achievements of the openings revolution of the 1970s, and, in turn, prepared a powerful information and research explosion, which made the game even more dynamic and deep, demanding complete dedication and highly professional preparation. These factors became the main driving force of the changes which occurred in chess at the close of the 20th century – a kind of prologue to the computer era.

In this fierce clash of two opposing styles, a new dominating tendency was formed and, as a result, in the early 1990s a different chess reality emerged. An enormous store of ideas appeared, and a knowledge of these more than compensated for lack of experience. And the young generation which grew up on these matches (Anand, Ivanchuk, Gelfand, Kamsky, Akopian, Shirov, Kramnik, Topalov...) confidently seized the leading positions in the world, supplanting those who were unable to adapt to the changes. The chess elite suddenly became younger: playing in 1993 in Linares, I was already a thirty-year-old veteran! There remained myself and Karpov – and the young, for whom a detailed study of typical middlegame schemes became a part of their ordinary everyday work.

The overall score of our five successive matches (1984/85, 1985, 1986, 1987 and 1990) is almost equal: 21 wins for me, 19 for Karpov and 104 draws. Nevertheless, each time when the decisive moment arrived, I was always able to win. For me this means more than any statistics of victories and defeats. I demonstrated my best results when it was most important. It would appear that in my success there was a certain historical predetermination.

Although the peak of this epochal confrontation came in 1984-1990, it retained its sharpness right up to the super-tournament of the six strongest grandmasters in the world in Las Palmas (1996), where I took first place, whereas Karpov shared last place and ceased to be regarded as a real contender for the crown, even though he was still the FIDE champion. Here our chess roads diverged: for a long time to come I was still No.1 in the world rating list, whereas he began to drop down. And the last duels between us no longer exerted the previous influence on the development of chess.

The account of my duels with Karpov, which will occupy three volumes, partly resembles my earlier books *Dva matcha* (Two Matches, 1987)[1], *Child of Change* (1987) and *Unlimited Challenge* (1990). However, here I now see many situations more deeply, through the prism of my life experience. Since I have already concluded my chess career and am armed with powerful analytical programs, my commentaries have become both more frank, and far more accurate. But the evaluation of individual moves will still take into account the psychology of the struggle! Since over the months and years of our confrontation we came to sense so keenly each other's condition, psychological motifs often had a serious influence on the decisions taken.

In this volume there are 76 games – our early meetings and our first two matches. In addition, I have returned to the important events which preceded them. 'Never before in the period of FIDE rule has the ascent of the challenger to the summit involved such difficulties (and difficulties of a non-chess sort),' wrote Botvinnik, before noting: 'The FIDE leadership tried even to remove Kasparov from participation in events for the world championship: in 1983 he was disqualified, and in the semi-final Candidates match with Korchnoi he was defaulted without playing. But this intrigue collapsed and Kasparov forced his way through to a match with Karpov...'

Our first match (Moscow 1984/85) was an unlimited one. The regulations, which were highly constraining for the challenger – play to six wins without counting draws and a return match (also unlimited!) – were adopted by FIDE with Karpov's agreement before his match with Korchnoi (Baguio 1978), although return matches had been abolished back in the early 1960s. However, playing for many months without a restriction on the number of games proved to be beyond Karpov's strength. At the finish in Baguio he suffered three defeats, and in our Moscow match he lost the 47th and 48th games, after which the FIDE President terminated the match 'without the declaration of a result'. Botvinnik called it 'an absolute disgrace, thank God the only one in the entire history of chess!'

Alas, the scandalous conclusion of the match overshadowed its rich chess content, which was not in fact professionally studied by the experts. And yet, despite the obvious mistakes, in particular by me, it was from our unlimited marathon that modern chess proceeded in a new direction. This was my first major event where I did not annotate the games. Why? The tension was so great and prolonged, and the psychological background so dark, that I had no desire to tackle this work. Besides, there was also no time – a new match was due to begin within six months... Now I am finally able to fill this gap.

[1] A slightly different English version, *New World Chess Champion*, was published by Pergamon Press in 1986.

When work on this volume was approaching completion, I added to my life experience by spending some time in jail. In late November 2007, just before the rigged parliamentary elections, I, like many other representatives of the opposition, clashed head-on with the police and the arbitrary judicial rule of Putin's Russia. The five days spent in captivity became for me a fundamentally new reference point in my relations with people. From behind bars, everything, as in chess, is seen in black and white – many expressed their solidarity, but there were also those who did not pass the test of elementary decency. Anatoly Karpov made an attempt to visit me in prison – the solidarity of champions proved stronger than political and personal disagreements! He was not able to do this: the authorities, who did not allow any lawyers to see me, did not make an exception for Karpov. But in the new system of coordinates his goodwill gesture outweighed all the negative factors which had accumulated during our long years of confrontation.

I should like to express my gratitude to my former trainers Alexander Nikitin, Alexander Shakarov and Yuri Dokhoian for their help in the preparation of this manuscript for publication.

Chapter One

On the Eve of Battle

First Acquaintance

My first baptism of fire outside of Baku came at the All-Union Youth Games (Vilnius 1973), where at the age of ten I received the first prize in my life – 'to the youngest participant in the tournament'. But the most important result of this trip was a meeting with Alexander Nikitin, state coach of the USSR Sports Committee – my future long-standing friend and mentor. At that time he was looking for promising juniors for Mikhail Botvinnik's chess school and in August 1973 he arranged an invitation for me to one of its sessions. I passed the rigorous examination and was enlisted in the school. To come under Botvinnik's guidance was an undoubted stroke of good fortune.

The school opened at the Trud Sports Society back in 1963, but it did not exist there for long, only a year and a half. Among its first pupils was Anatoly Karpov. However, in his book *Sestra moya Kaissa* (My sister Caissa), published in 1990, he practically denies that Botvinnik was his teacher:

'I did indeed attend three sessions of the school... I had only just reached the age of twelve, and I was the youngest candidate master in the country... We arrived for the first session with the scores of our own games, so that it was easier for Botvinnik to understand with whom he was dealing. He went through the games carefully, but it has to be said that Botvinnik was very biased. He had his own criteria of chess talent; in fact I would even put it more forcefully – his template, which he considered to be close to the truth. And I did not fit into this template, not at all. Since I had never studied theory, from the very first moves I would end up in an opening pit. My opponent, following the latest recommendations, would confidently begin burying me, but I would endeavour to climb out! I would dig my heels in, dodge the blows, find remarkable resources, walk a tight-rope, scheme, set false trails.... In general, I would balance on the edge of a needle.

'None of this reached Botvinnik. He didn't look that far. The other juniors were more fortunate: their play was more correct, familiar and recognisable, which provoked positive emotions in Botvinnik and corresponding assessments. It stands to reason that against this background I couldn't expect anything. Assessing my play in a conversation with his helper Yurkov, Botvinnik said: "this boy has no

understanding of chess, and he has no future in this field..." I think it was incredibly fortunate for me that I immediately became labelled as an ignoramus, and so hardly any attention was paid to me...

'Even so, he made an impression on me – not as a chess player, but as a person. As a chess worker. As a thinker... Listening to Botvinnik, observing him, thinking about him, I saw that chess science was not only the memorising of variations. It was a special world with its own laws, a world which as yet was unknown to me. What was it about chess that attracted me? The game. The struggle. The creating. But chess science offered something that was as yet unknown to me: a satisfaction from knowledge, from penetrating into the essence of positions, ideas and moves. Observing Botvinnik, for the first time I fully sensed this, but I was not yet ready to understand it. Moreover, I was not ready to accept it. I was even less ready to accept the thought that chess was a labour. Botvinnik emphasised this at every meeting. True, he linked this with the highest goals, for which I was not aiming, and so for me all his preaching fell on deaf ears. This was not for me, I thought, naively convinced that for me chess would always be merely a game.'

Grandmaster Yuri Razuvaev, a student at the same school, was keenly aware of the essence of Karpov's unique gift: 'He was a genuine natural talent: when he was young he studied Capablanca's games – and he began playing. He was a purely practical player, a competitor!' Even so, Karpov gave Botvinnik some credit: 'His remarks regarding my completely feeble handling of the opening had their effect: I began reading chess literature.' Soon Botvinnik changed his opinion about the prospects of the modest lad from the Urals. When passing through Zlatoust, he met Tolya's parents and stayed with them, after which he gave this verdict: 'A good family and a serious boy!' And in the second half of the 1960s he several times predicted a great future for Karpov.

The work of the chess school was renewed in 1969 (by that time Karpov had already become world junior champion), and from the mid-1970s its pupils began achieving notable successes. I have to admit that my relations with Botvinnik were quite different to those that Karpov once had. Nikitin: 'The great maestro was delighted by his contact with Garry. He became visibly younger when chatting with the lad, who immediately became his favourite pupil. The teacher liked everything – the readiness of his replies combined with their accuracy, his speed of calculating variations and his staggering memory. It appeared that each new meeting was eagerly awaited by both of them.'

The wisdom of Botvinnik's approach, in my view, was that he never overpowered us with his authority, or imposed his style on his pupils – on the contrary, he did everything to help us develop our own abilities. He did not push, but with his innate tact as a teacher he would suggest the correct course. From the very start he sensed my striving for a dynamic, attacking style, and it was no accident, I think, that my first homework tasks included an analysis of Alekhine's games.

There was a period when I began to delight in the boundless number of variations that can occur in a chess game. Botvinnik warned me against becoming carried away by complexity for complexity's sake, and on one occasion he said: 'You will never become an Alekhine, if you allow the variations to control you, rather than the other way round.' This upset me, but, of course, Botvinnik was right. Later he wrote about this episode: 'From the very start it was clear that Kasparov stood out among

the other pupils by his ability to calculate variations very skilfully and many moves ahead. But Garry was an easily excitable lad, and I had to insist that he thought about a move before making it on the board. And I told him several times that there was a danger he would become a new Larsen or Taimanov.'

Just four months after the first session I achieved the candidate master norm in a tournament in Baku. Incidentally, also playing in it was Alexander Shakarov – an expert on opening theory and my future helper.

In the following year, 1974, to the surprise of many the team from Baku qualified for the final of the all-union tournament of Pioneers Palaces, which was held in Moscow. We had to play in simultaneous displays against grandmasters – the captains of the rival teams. Nikitin: 'This was a unique and unusual event. In each round there were six clock simuls on seven boards (the teams comprised six boys and one girl), and the grandmasters sometimes had a hard time of it. Although they did not play one another, and only the totals of their simul results were compared, the habit of being first forced them to fight as they would in a prestigious tournament... It is a pity that later these splendid tournaments were discontinued. For the chess fate of the juniors playing in these simuls, it was not so much the result that was important, but rather the priceless experience and the impression gained from playing against such formidable opponents.'

In the very first round I experienced a severe shock, on seeing in front of me a living legend – Mikhail Tal! I was even able to shake his hand! The meeting with Tal remained one of the most memorable events of my childhood. I had heard about the frightening, hypnotic glance with which he literally pierced his opponents. True, in order to overcome me, this was not required...

In January 1975 I finished 7th in the USSR Junior Championship – out of more than 30 participants. In view of my age, this was not bad (the winner of the tournament was 17-year-old Zhenya Vladimirov, later one of my seconds). At that time Leonard Barden, chess columnist of the *Guardian* newspaper, made the following forecast: 'Whatever happens to the world title in 1975, most experts predict that Karpov will be Fischer's successor – this year, in 1978, or in 1981. But who will be world champion after Karpov? In my opinion there is a very clear favourite for world champion in 1990. He is 11-year-old Garry Weinstein from Baku, the youngest player in the USSR junior championship and the youngest candidate master since Karpov.' Barden was wrong by five years, but the very fact that he made such a prediction is worthy of note...

Eighteen months later, by a decision of the family council, I took the surname of my mother, and Garry Kasparov appeared in the world (more details of this will be given in my autobiographical volume).

In November of that same year, 1975, I finally made the acquaintance of Anatoly Karpov. We met in Leningrad at the regular tournament of Pioneers Palaces. Karpov was performing the role of captain of the Chelyabinsk team. He was twenty-four years old, and not long before he had inherited from Fischer the title of world champion.

Even so, that first meeting with Karpov did not provoke in me the same trepidation as the game with Tal. But the other lads in my team were nervous and they went along to the game as though they were already lost. In the foyer of the hotel, where the tournament was being held, I said: 'What are you afraid of? Karpov is the world champion, but even he can make a

mistake.' Apparently these words were overhead, and the following day one of Karpov's backers, the secretary of the local regional party committee Tupikin, said to my mother: 'Bear it in mind: Karpov is unforgiving.'

In their report on this round *Soviet Sport* wrote: 'During Anatoly Karpov's simul with the juniors from Baku there came a moment when the world champion was left with only one opponent – twelve-year-old candidate master Garik Kasparov. Karpov sat down opposite the young player and, naturally, the photographers did not miss this moment. The point is that Garik is one of our most talented young players, and who knows, perhaps sometime in the future there will be another Karpov-Kasparov encounter...'

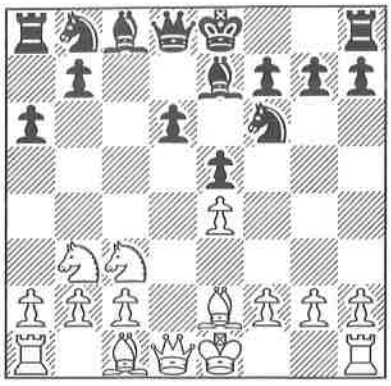
Who could then have imagined that years later, over a period of six years, we would have to play a hundred and fifty games against each other and spend more than 600 hours at the board?

Game 1
A.Karpov-G.Kasparov
Simultaneous Display,
Leningrad 08.11.1975
Sicilian Defence B92

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6

I think this was the first time I played the Najdorf Variation. Before the game Nikitin showed me the latest subtleties of the Polugayevsky Variation: after 6 ♗g5 e6 7 f4 b5!? 8 e5 dxe5 9 fxe5 ♕c7 10 ♕e2 ♘fd7 11 0-0-0 ♗b7 12 ♕g4 one should play not 12...♕xe5, but 12...♕b6. I remember that I tried to find out from my trainer: 'But what about this, and what about that?' And he said to me: 'Work it out at the board!' However, Karpov chose his favourite 6th move...

6 ♗e2 e5 7 ♘b3 ♗e7



8 ♗g5

Although this continuation had been occasionally employed by Fischer and Tal, it offers fewer chances than the usual 8 0-0. But there 8...♗e6 9 f4 would have led to a well-known position from the recent Karpov-Polugayevsky Candidates match (1974). And the champion did that which simultaneous players always do: he tried to deviate and take me away from official theory.

8...♗e6

Earlier 8...♘bd7 9 a4! was in fashion (Fischer-Olafsson, Reykjavik 1960; Karpov-Balashov, 38th USSR Championship, Riga 1970).

9 f4

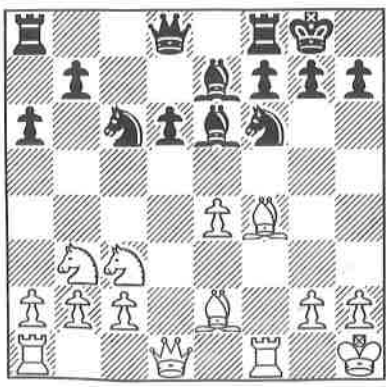
In the afore-mentioned match Karpov played this with his bishop on c1, and in the event of 9...exf4 he would have gained an important tempo for development. Moreover, after 9...♕c7 he used the tempo saved to squeeze Black on the queenside – 10 a4 (*Game Nos.54, 56, 57* in *Volume V* of *My Great Predecessors*). Now, however, Black is forced to capture on f4, and Karpov could have hoped that I would become confused somewhere, when he would be able to outplay me, even a tempo down.

Firm control over the d5-point – 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 11 ♕d3 (after 11 ♘d5 Petrosian and Fischer replied 11...♘d7!?) 11...♘c6 12 ♘d5 – leads to a roughly equal position in the spirit of the Chelyabinsk Variation: 12...♗g5 and ...♘e7 (a manoeuvre known from the game Taimanov-Boleslavsky, 17th USSR Championship, Moscow 1949), or first 12...♖c8 – as Tal played against K.Grigorian (39th USSR Championship, Leningrad 1971) and Hübner (Tilburg 1980).

9 ♗xf6 is of more current interest: 9...♗xf6 10 ♕d3 ♘c6 (10...♗e7 11 0-0-0 ♘d7 is also played) 11 0-0-0! (but not 11 ♘d5 ♗g5 12 0-0?! ♘e7!, Arnason-Kasparov, Dortmund 1980) 11...♘d4 12 ♘xd4 exd4 13 ♘d5 ♗xd5 14 exd5 0-0, or 11...♗e7!? 12 ♔b1 0-0 13 ♘d5 ♗g5 14 h4!? ♗xh4 15 g3 ♗f6 with sharp play (Kramnik-Anand, Wijk aan Zee 2004). This line has now acquired a large amount of theory.

9...exf4 10 ♗xf4 (thus, Karpov has carried out the first part of his plan) **10...♘c6 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♔h1**

In the variation with 8 0-0 this move would already have been made, and White would retain chances of seizing the initiative by 12 ♕e1.



Ironically, a position has been reached from the very line of the Neo-Scheveningen – 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘c6 5 ♘c3 d6 6 ♗e2 ♘f6 7 0-0 ♗e7 8 ♗e3 0-0 9 f4 e5!? 10 ♘b3 exf4 11 ♗xf4 ♗e6 12 ♔h1 – which later I was intending to play against Karpov in our first two matches (1984/85 and 1985), only here Black has played the additional move ...a7-a6, giving him an interesting possibility apart from 12...d5.

12...b5!?

An active Sicilian thrust (incidentally, it did not occur any more in practice), although perhaps it would nevertheless have been better to maintain the balance with the typical 12...d5 13 e5 ♘e4 14 ♗d3 f5 or 13...♘d7 14 ♘xd5 ♘dxe5. In the Neo-Scheveningen, with the pawn on a7, these positions are critical even today (cf. *Revolution in the 70s* p.151).

13 ♗f3?!

After conceiving the rook manoeuvre via f2-d2, Karpov clears the necessary space for it. However, for the moment there is nothing for the bishop to do on f3, and the inactive knight should have been immediately brought into play – 13 ♘d4!. The exchange 13...♘xd4 14 ♕xd4 gives White some advantage in the centre, while after 13...♘e5 both 14 a4 b4 15 ♘d5 ♗xd5 16 exd5 ♕d7 17 ♗f3 and 14 ♘f5 are possible.

13...♘e5 (now there is much more point to this move) **14 ♘d4 ♗c4 15 ♖f2?!**

The start of a standard manoeuvre, but in the given instance it proves unsuccessful. The rook will not find any work on d2, and the coordination of the rooks is disrupted. 15 ♖e1 would have retained equal chances – it looks more passive, but in variations similar to those in the game the rook is obviously better placed.

15...b4! (seizing the initiative) **16 ♘d5 ♘xd5 17 exd5 ♗f6 18 ♖d2**

Despite the weakness of the c6-square, Black feels very comfortable, and White already has to think about how to equalise. 18 ♘c6!? came into consideration, and if 18...♕b6 the sharp exchange sacrifice 19