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## PREFACE

Every grandmaster who intends to begin defending the black side of the open games must first find the right answer to the question - which line to choose against the Ruy Lopez? I was no exception to this rule. I was taking a walk once with my friends Alexander Riazantsev and Igor Kurnosov and they came up with a wonderful idea: “You’ve always been an excellent endgame player; study the Berlin Wall!” I liked that advice very much and it gave me a clear direction for studying a new repertoire.

I worked hard at mastering 1...e7-e5 for Black and the results were very fruitful in the 2011 World Cup, where I had no problems at all after 1.e2-e4. I was especially happy with the outcome of the opening battle against the outstanding theoretician M. Kobalia. In fact, in one of the main tabias of the anti-Berlin system I found an order of moves which I believe to be among my best analytical achievements.

In this book Roman Ovetchkin and I have decided to illustrate the theoretical section with model games and thorough analysis of these will undoubtedly help the reader to gain a better grasp of the finer points of this system and orientate himself among the enormous amount of information available.

My co-author and I very much appreciate the help, in the creation of this book, of our friends, GMs I.Kurnosov, P.Ponkratov and A. Riazantsev, and my life-long coach N.Ogloblin. We should also like to thank its editor, Sergey Soloviov, without whose invaluable advice this book would probably not have come to fruition.

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*Ekaterinburg, February 2012*