

**GARRY
KASPAROV
ON MY GREAT
PREDECESSORS
PART V**



POPULAR CHESS

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Introduction

Life after Fischer

This volume is devoted to the twelfth world champion Anatoly Karpov and his historic opponent Viktor Korchnoi, and to their staggeringly dramatic struggle for the chess throne, which filled the unusual vacuum that had arisen after Fischer's untimely departure. Another important topic – the openings revolution of the 1970s-1980s – proved to be so extensive and interesting, that a separate, 6th volume, has had to be devoted to it.

In the previous volume I put forward the provocative suggestion that, in a match with Fischer, Karpov would have had real winning chances, and that the American champion declined to defend his title as he was afraid of losing to an unfamiliar opponent – the leader of a new generation, a forceful professional, who had fully assimilated the lessons of his great predecessor. Now I will try to justify this suggestion, by imagining a possible scenario of the match and carefully studying those unique qualities of Karpov, which enabled him for almost a quarter of a century to be at the summit of chess or literally only a step away. This chapter turned out to be one of the longest in the entire series, which is not surprising: Karpov's influence on the development of chess has been truly epochal – it was felt right to the end of the 20th century.

But an enormous contribution has also been made by Korchnoi, a legendary player, who has been able to accomplish the seemingly impossible – conquer time. Contrary to all the impressions about age limits, this great match and tournament fighter reached his creative peak at the age of 47, surpassing the former champions Petrosian and Spassky. In the history of chess he is the only challenger to have played de facto three matches for the world crown, in one of which, Baguio (1978), he all but became world champion. And this when he was 20 years older than his opponent!

After all, it appeared that the young Karpov, supported by the entire might

of the Soviet machine, simply had no equals: the older generation of top-class grandmasters had already left the stage, the middle generation had been ‘knocked out’ by the Second World War (and Fischer had ‘knocked out’ himself), and in the younger generation, for all its brilliance and professionalism, there was no star of champion-like magnitude. The only real intrigue in the mid-1970s appeared to be the Fischer-Karpov match, which would undoubtedly have given the development of chess a colossal impulse. When it collapsed, there was a temporary period of quiet and disappointment. But nature cannot endure empty spaces, and soon a vigorous attempt on the chess summit was made by Korchnoi, for which he was forced to leave the USSR, where he had been persecuted, and enlist the moral support of the West.

His battles with Karpov, especially the match in Baguio, had a very great influence on all aspects of the game – the purely chess aspect, off the board, and psychological. As it later transpired, this was the prelude to Karpov’s clashes with the leader of the next generation – the author of these lines (the topic of Volume 7). But Korchnoi, after handing the ‘Olympic baton’ to me in our 1983 match, has continued to play successfully in tournaments and as a result has shown himself to be an exceptional example of competitive longevity. In this respect only Lasker and Smyslov can compare with him, but Korchnoi’s victories have been achieved in the ultra-intensive chess of the present day!

All these matches for the world championship demanded serious research work. Here not only were the fruits of the post-Fischer opening revolution reaped, but also the rapid advancement of chess thinking was continued, towards the present-day computer era...

When analysing anew the games of Karpov and Korchnoi, and remembering the games already examined of other champions and challengers, I began thinking about the role of intuition in the accomplishments of outstanding players. This question intrigued me: is this not the root of differences in playing styles? It turns out that the great masters can be arbitrarily divided into three groups.

1. Players with relatively poor intuition (of course, only by the standards of champions): Steinitz, Botvinnik, Euwe, Fischer... But they had qualities which compensated for their somewhat straightforward play: erudition, logic, orderliness, iron will and an extraordinary capacity for work.

2. Players with strong, at times phenomenal strategic intuition: Capablanca, Smyslov, Petrosian, Spassky, Karpov... Of the challengers, perhaps only Rubinstein can be added to this group. All of them would find the best places for their pieces with staggering ease and accuracy.

3. Players with a strong specific intuition, operating in sharp situations where the material and positional equilibrium was disturbed: Lasker, Alekhine, Tal, Kasparov... And also Chigorin, Bronstein, Stein and Korchnoi, who in the early 1960s was called

‘Tal in reverse’.

Some may find this division questionable, but it is the fruit of a thorough study and comparison of the games of the champions. Incidentally, when analysing the old games with a computer, I discovered that many intuitive decisions by the classics were correct and that far more mistakes were made in later analysis. This would seem to be a paradox: after all, when analysing there is no hurry and one can move the pieces. But the point is that at this moment the intuition which operates intensively during a game, in conditions of extreme tension and limited time, is switched off. Intuition truly is the tsarina of the chessboard!

I should like to express my thanks to USSR Honoured Trainers Alexander Nikitin, Igor Zaitsev and Mark Dvoretzky, grandmasters Yuri Razuvaev, Yuri Dokhoian and Vladimir Belov, and master Alexander Shakarov, for assistance in the preparation of this volume for publication.



Korchnoi and Karpov face off at Amsterdam, 1987

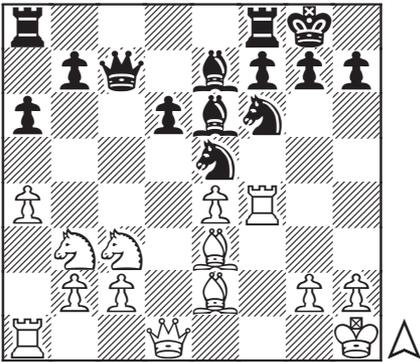


above: Korchnoi at Amsterdam, 1976
below: Korchnoi at Wijk aan Zee, 1978



Game 56
A.Karpov-L.Polugayevsky
 Candidates Match,
 Moscow 1974, 6th game
Sicilian Defence B92

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6
5 ♘c3 a6 6 ♙e2 e5 7 ♘b3 ♙e7 8 0-0
♙e6 9 f4 ♚c7 10 a4 ♘bd7 11 ♚h1!? 0-0
12 ♙e3 exf4 13 ♚xf4 ♘e5

**14 a5!**

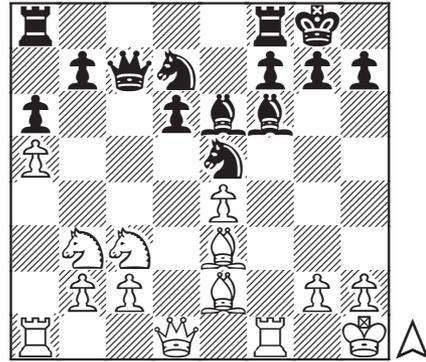
An important improvement (in the 4th game 14 ♘d4 was played – *Game No.54*). White immediately fixes the enemy queenside and vacates the a4-square, via which his queen’s rook may come into play.

14... ♘fd7

Later they played only 14... ♚ac8 or 14... ♚fe8 – *Game No.57*.

15 ♚f1 ♙f6?!

Underestimating the role of White’s potential outpost at d5, which is in enemy territory and therefore demands special control. 15... ♚ac8 or 15... ♚fe8 is sounder, not fearing the manoeuvre ♘d4-f5.

**16 ♘d5! ♙xd5 17 ♚xd5!**

A sudden sharpening of the struggle – an intuitive sacrifice of two pawns! In explaining this unusual decision in a commentary made in 1978, Karpov discloses the peculiarities of his style:

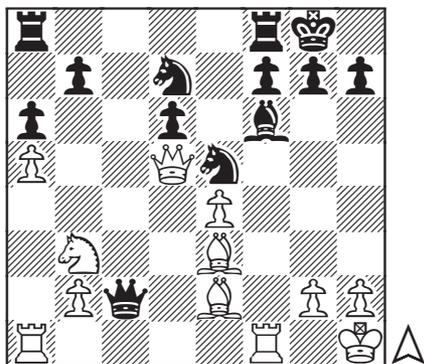
‘Sometimes I am reproached for being dry, rational and careful. Yes, I am a practical player, and my play is largely based on technique. I attempt to play “correct” chess and never take risks as, say, Larsen does. As White, like everyone else, I aim for an advantage from the very start, but as Black I try first of all to equalise. But when there is a choice of moves, I by no means choose the simplest, but rather the most expedient. If there are several equally good continuations, my choice depends to a great extent on my opponents. Against Tal, for instance, I prefer to go in for simple positions, which are not to his taste, whereas against Petrosian I try to make the play more complicated. But if I see only one correct path, then, whoever is playing against me, I go only along that path. However, I feel that in recent times my style has undergone certain changes.

‘Let us return to the game. Previously

the sacrifice of two pawns, which I offered to Polugayevsky, would probably not have occurred to me. Everyone thought that it had been prepared at home. But, “as God is my witness”, it was pure improvisation at the board. Even today I find this a “terrible” decision on my part. But after the quiet 17 exd5 ♖c4 18 ♔xc4 ♚xc4 nothing remains of White’s opening advantage.’

17... ♚xc2!

Accepting the challenge! Polugayevsky thought for more than an hour here: suppose White had a forced win prepared at home?! In Karpov’s opinion, ‘in the event of Black declining the sacrifice, he would have come under heavy positional pressure.’ In my opinion, after 17... ♖c6 18 c3 ♔e5 he would merely have had a slightly inferior position, but – and this is far more important – Polugayevsky probably did not believe that he would be able to defend it against Karpov!



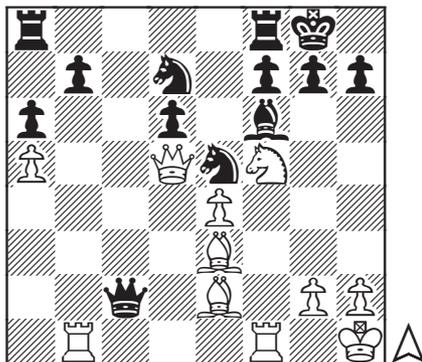
18 ♖d4 ♚xb2

18... ♚c5?! 19 ♖f5! is dangerous.

19 ♚ab1 ♚c3 20 ♖f5 ♚c2!

The best defence. After 20... ♖c5 21 ♔d4 ♚c2 22 ♖xd6 ♚xe2 23 ♔xe5

♖d7 (23... ♔xe5? 24 ♖xf7!) 24 ♔g3 White’s domination would have extended over almost the entire board.



21 ♚be1?!

This move took Karpov 20 minutes, but... ‘An inaccuracy: now Black finds a defence. After 21 ♚fe1 White would have gained a big advantage.’ Yes, the deployment of the rooks is one of the most treacherous opening/middlegame problems! But in the given instance it made sense to leave the rook on the b-file, retaining the threat of its invasion at b7. However, whether White has an advantage after 21 ♚fe1 is still an open question:

1) 21... ♚fd8 22 ♖xd6 ♖b8!? (no direct refutation of this manoeuvre is apparent) 23 ♚xb7 ♖bc6 24 ♔b6 ♔e7 25 ♔xd8 ♚xd8 26 ♚xe7 ♖xe7 27 ♚xe5 ♚d2 28 ♚b1 ♖g6! 29 ♚h5 (29 ♚d5 ♚xd6 30 ♚xd2 ♚xd2 31 ♔xa6 ♚a2 with equality) 29... ♚xd6 30 ♚d1 ♚f6 31 ♚xd8+ ♚xd8 32 ♚d5 ♚b8 33 g3 ♖e7 with drawing chances;

2) 21... ♖c5 22 ♖xd6 ♖cd3 23 ♔xd3 ♖xd3 24 ♚ed1, and here Karpov considers only 24... ♖f2+? 25 ♔xf2 ♚xf2

26 e5, winning, or 24...♗e5 25 ♖xb7 (in my view, 25 ♕d4 or 25 ♖xb7 ♖ab8 26 ♖b6! is stronger), although 24...♗b2!? is also possible, with good chances of holding on after 25 ♖dc1 ♗d3 26 ♗xd3 ♖xd3 27 ♖d1 ♗e5, or 25 ♖f1 ♗d3 26 ♗xd3 ♖xd3 27 ♖xb7 ♖fb8! etc.

21...♗c5?!

An obvious move, but... now Black is balancing on the edge of a precipice! It is strange that Karpov does not make any comment on it: after all, back in 1975 Botvinnik pointed out that 'Black could have immediately mobilised his queen's rook by 21...♖ad8!, and in the event of 22 ♖xd6 (22 ♗xb7?! ♗c5! – G.K.) 22...♗b8 consolidated the placing of his pieces.' After 23 ♗c5 ♗a4! this would indeed have given him a clear way to equalise:

1) 24 ♖a1 ♗b3 25 ♖fb1 (25 ♖ab1 ♗a2) 25...♗bd7! (forcing the exchange of queens) 26 ♖xb3 ♖xc5 27 ♕xc5 ♖d7! 28 ♕b6 (or 28 ♖xf7 ♖xc5 with equality) 28...♕xa1 29 ♕xd8 ♗c5 30 ♖b6 ♖xd8 31 ♖xb7 ♖xb7 32 ♖xb7 ♕c3 with a draw;

2) 24 ♖xb7 ♖d3 25 ♕xd3 ♖xd3 26 ♖xf6 (or 26 ♗f5 ♖d7 27 ♗c5 ♖xc5 28 ♕xc5 ♖e8 29 e5 ♖d5 etc.) 26...gxf6 (26...♖d7 27 ♗c6 ♖xe3! will also do) 27 ♕h6 ♖e8 28 ♗f5 ♗d1! 29 ♗f1 ♗xe1 30 ♗xe1 ♖xe4 31 ♗c1 (31 ♗g1? ♖ed4) 31...♖c4! with a draw.

22 ♖xd6 ♗cd3 23 ♕xd3 ♖xd3

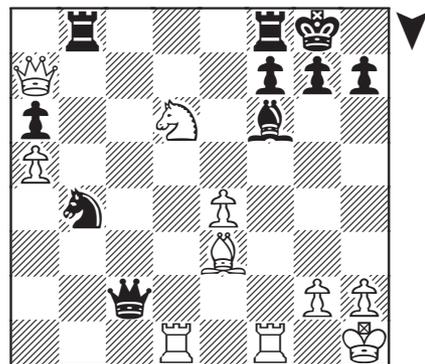
'The only move! After 23...♗xd3? 24 ♕d4 with the threat of ♖d1 Black's position would have become critical.' (Botvinnik). For example: 24...♗g4 25 ♖d1 ♗e2 26 e5! with a classic catastrophe on the f7-square.

24 ♖d1 ♗b4 25 ♗xb7?!

Karpov hurries to regain the material as soon as possible, although 25 ♗h5! (after Botvinnik's move 25 ♗f5 Black has the satisfactory reply 25...♗c6) 'would have created the threat of 26 ♖xf6 gxf6 27 ♗g4+ ♖h8 28 ♕h6, which is not easily parried – 25...g6 26 ♗c5.'

Of course, after 26...♗xc5 27 ♕xc5 Black's defence is difficult, but it would appear that he has a saving regrouping – 27...♕c3! 28 ♖xb7 ♖fe8 29 ♖f3 ♗a2 30 ♖d6 ♖e5 with equalising chances, or 28 ♖f3 ♗a2 29 ♖b1 (29 ♖df1 ♕b4! 30 ♖xb7 ♕xc5 31 ♖xc5 ♖a7 32 e5 ♖c8 with equality) 29...♕e5! 30 g4 (if 30 ♖xb7, then 30...♖fd8 forces a draw) 30...♗c3 31 ♖xb7 (31 ♖bf1!?) 31...♖fb8! 32 ♖xf7 (32 ♖e7 ♖b1+ 33 ♖g2 ♖b2+ is no better) 32...♖xb7 33 ♖xb7 ♕xd6 34 ♕xd6 ♖xe4 35 ♕e5 ♖f2+ 36 ♖g2 ♖xg4 37 ♖g7+ ♖f8 38 ♖xh7 ♖d8, nevertheless gaining a draw.

25...♖ab8 26 ♗a7



26...♗c6?

Polugayevsky cracks under the tension and commits a decisive mistake. '26...♗e2 would have given Black some

counterplay, although even here after 27 ♖b6 the advantage is with White.’ (Karpov). A questionable assertion: 27...♗d3! 28 ♘f5 ♗f4 29 ♗e3 ♕e5, and no advantage is apparent.

27 ♜de1!? is far more unpleasant for Black. After this Botvinnik recommended 27...♞h5 (? – G.K.) 28 ♜f5 ♞g4 ‘with a tenable position’, but here 29 e5! is strong. And 28 ♜xf6! gxf6 29 ♗f5 is even better, with an irresistible attack: 29...♞b5 30 ♕h6!, or 29...♞fe8 30 ♞c7! etc.

Where then should the queen move to? After 27...♞g4?! the quiet 28 h3 ♞e6 29 ♜d1 is possible, as is the sharp 28 ♜xf6!? gxf6 29 ♗f5 ♞xe4 30 ♗e7+ ♖h8 31 ♕d2 with the initiative for White. 27...♞a2? is dangerous because of the same thematic sacrifice 28 ♜xf6! gxf6 29 ♗f5, when it is doubtful whether Black has a satisfactory defence: 29...♗d3 30 ♞xa6 ♞b1 is bad on account of 31 ♗e7+ ♖g7 32 ♕h6+!! when Black is crushed; if 29...♗c6, then 30 ♞xa6 ♞xa5 31 ♞f1! with decisive threats, while after 29...♞xa5 there is a quiet move of murderous strength – 30 ♜f1!! (30...♗c6 31 ♞d7 etc.).

It would appear that only 27...♞b2! (defending against ♜xf6!) would have retained equal chances, for example: 28 ♗c4 (nothing is achieved by 28 ♞b1 ♞e2 or 28 ♜f2 ♞e5 29 ♕f4 ♞d4) 28...♞a2 29 e5 ♗c2!, and Black is alright. **27 ♕f4!**

A typical Karpov move, denying the opponent even a hint of counterplay:

‘The threat of e4-e5 restricts Black, and his knight at b4 finds itself out of play.’ The sharp 27 ♜xf6! gxf6 28 ♕h6 with the threat of ♞e3 would also have been decisive, for example: 28...♞c2 (28...♗d3 29 ♕xf8) 29 ♜c1 ♞d3? 30 ♞d7! ♞e2 31 ♞h3, or 29...♞e2 30 ♞d4 ♗d3 31 ♞xf6 ♞b2 32 ♞g5+ ♖h8 33 ♞g3! etc. In the press centre this exchange sacrifice was fervently upheld by Furman, but after seeing Anatoly’s move, he said: ‘That’s also good.’

27...♞a8 28 ♞f2 ♜ad8

If 28...♞c3, then 29 ♞e2!.

29 ♞g3!

‘The threat is stronger than its execution! Paradoxically, this often is indeed the case. White does not hurry to advance e4-e5 and increases the pressure.’ (Karpov)

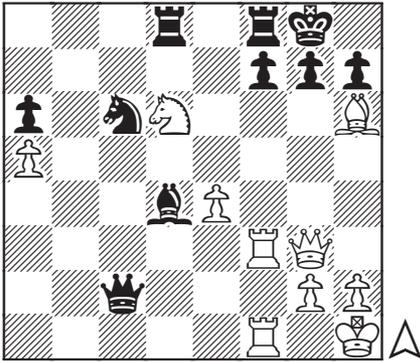
29...♞c3

‘Black has no satisfactory defence: Karpov has succeeded in implementing his most effective strategy – that of domination. Material is equal, but White’s pieces occupy strong positions and control the most important squares on the board, whereas the black pieces are merely convenient targets for him to attack. All that remains is for White to concentrate his forces for the decisive stroke against Black’s kingside.’ (Botvinnik)

30 ♜f3 ♞c2 31 ♜df1 ♕d4 32 ♕h6

A simple, but spectacular finish; 32 ♗f5 ♞xe4 33 ♕d6 would also have won.

32...♗c6



33 ♖f5

33 ♖xf7 ♔c4 would by no means have 'complicated matters', as Karpov writes, but was a second way to win: after 34 ♕xg7! to avoid a pretty mate Black would have had to part first with his queen – 34...♔xf1+ 35 ♖xf1 ♕xg7 36 ♗b3!, then with a rook – 36...♖xf7 (36...♘d4 37 ♘h6++ ♔h8 38 ♗g8+! and ♘f7 mate) 37 ♗xf7+ ♔h8, and after 38 ♗c7! – also with his knight!

33...♗b2

Or 33...♕e5 34 ♕xg7! ♕xg3 35 ♖xg3 (Karpov) 35...h5 36 ♕f6+ ♔h7 37 ♖g7+ ♔h8 38 ♖xf7+ ♔g8 39 ♘h6 mate (Botvinnik).

34 ♕c1! ♗b5 35 ♘h6+ ♔h8 36 ♘xf7+

To cap it all, Black also has to give up material.

36...♖xf7 37 ♖xf7 ♕f6 38 ♗f2 ♔g8 39 ♖xf6 gxf6 40 ♗xf6 1-0

The best game of the match.

The score became 2-0 with four draws. Karpov needed just one more win. He could perhaps have gained this in the 7th game. Polugayevsky played very nervously: first he lost the opening advantage he had gained, then he

suddenly launched an unfounded attack on the kingside, which merely led to the creation of weaknesses in his own position. On the 25th move Karpov could have advantageously opened the centre and gained a marked advantage. But, as Tal put it, 'it would appear that he decided not to deviate from his planned program, in which the optimal result in the "black" games was a draw.'

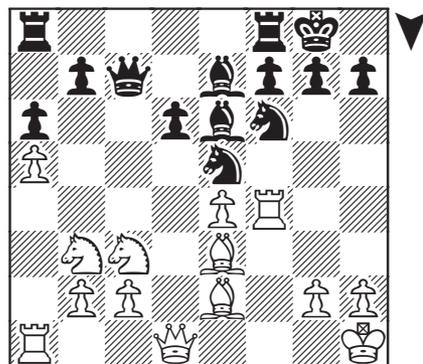
The match concluded in the 8th game. In essence, this was the finishing off of a seriously wounded opponent.

Game 57

A.Karpov-L.Polugayevsky Candidates Match, Moscow 1974, 8th game Sicilian Defence B92

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6
5 ♘c3 a6 6 ♕e2 e5 7 ♘b3 ♕e7 8 0-0 ♕e6
9 f4 ♗c7 10 a4 ♘bd7 11 ♔h1 0-0 12 ♕e3
exf4 13 ♖xf4 ♘e5 14 a5!

14 ♘d4 – Game No.54.



14...♖fe8