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Foreword from the Publisher

The idea for this book came to me shortly before finishing “The Safest Sicilian”. It is good to have a solid weapon against the Sicilian, but after all, most of us play this opening in order to begin a hand-to-hand fight right from the first moves. So I felt bound to offer the Chess Stars fans a sharper alternative to the Taimanov. At the same time it had to be a reliable repertoire to serve you for many years to come. Of course that could be only the Najdorf.

Fortunately my quest for the most qualified author around quickly led to success, when grandmaster Kiril Georgiev, ex-world junior champion and playing coach of Bulgarian national team, agreed to write his first serious book. Apart from being a very strong tournament player with a current Elo of 2661 (his best ranking in the world was number 9), Kiril is known as one of the best blitz players. He is a regular in the ICC battles and often experiments with new ideas “at highest blitz” level.

I explained to him the book structure, which should follow the

form of “The Safest Sicilian”, and the Najdorf project was launched.

Several months later I realised that it was a really huge task. There was no hesitation how to meet 1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♗f6 5 ♗c3 a6 6 ♕g5. All top players employ the Poisoned Pawn variation and Kiril has been using it with big success for twenty years already. The Sozin was also in perfect theoretical health although Nisipeanu occasionally has been trying to shake this opinion. As a publisher I saw a problem with the treatment of the English Attack. Georgiev plays it in the Scheveningen style with ...e6, but I did not approve of it against 6 ♕e2. This structure is very flexible. It leads to extremely complex positions which need a whole book to delve in them. At the same time 6 ♕e2 e5 is much easier to play and perhaps even objectively best.

Unfortunately there is no way to build a repertoire based on 6 ♕e2 e5 and 6 ♕e3 e6. By changing the move order with 6 ♕e3 e6 7 6 ♕e2, White could easily outmanoeuvre us to unfamiliar ground.

Finally we decided to advocate 6...e5 to both bishop developments on move 6. That called for a co-author and the other coach of Bulgarian teams grandmaster Atanas Kolev (current Elo 2538) turned to be the best choice. He plays these positions with both colours and lately has spent a lot of time analysing them. In fact he has been intrigued by the “Najdorf project” ever since its start and ardently emphasized the merits of the 6...e5 approach. As an editor I endeavoured to prune down the flood of variations which he summoned to prove his assessments and novelties.

The result of 14 month’s work is an ambitious book, which aims to arm you with a complete repertoire against 1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3. All topical variations are covered in depth. You’ll find a lot of original analysis on the most critical positions of the Najdorf.

The material is up-to-date to February 10 2007.

Parts 3,4 and 5 are written by Atanas Kolev, all the rest is from Kiril Georgiev.

For the translation and editing, as well as the general concept, you should blame me:

*IM Semko Semkov
February 2007*