

# Introduction

When about twenty years ago I decided to change my opening repertoire with black and replace the Sicilian with the Ruy Lopez, one of the main problems I faced was the huge amount of theory and the deviations White had at his disposal, should I prepare lines like the Breyer or the Zaitsev Variations. So I realized that first I would have to learn all the deviations for White (the Exchange Variation, the ♔e2 line, the line with d4 without h3, the d3 variation, etc. – to name just a few), and then, after learning all this theory I would still have to solve the problems Black was facing in the actual Breyer or Zaitsev Variations.

The easy solution to this problem was to actually deviate myself. And so I started to learn the Cozio Variation, the Smyslov Variation, the Classical Variation (3...♙c5) and a little later the Jaenisch Gambit.

This was a practical decision which also scored well, because white players would normally take some time to think as early as move 5 or 6, instead of banging out the first 15 moves, which would have been the case if I had indeed opted for the Breyer or the Zaitsev.

Over the years I did broaden my Spanish arsenal with the Open Variation and the Marshall Variation, and only about 15 years later came the time for the Breyer, the Zaitsev and the Chigorin.

In this book I have aimed to explore these ‘sidelines’ for Black, and to give a practical opening guide to a tournament player who is willing to employ these variations, whereby he will often bring a fight to his opponent’s doorstep as early as move 6 or 7.

Although I am a Ruy Lopez player with Black, I tried not to be biased – I have also tried to give routes for White to get an opening advantage.

One important aspect of these ‘sidelines’ improves their practical viability. Many years ago I talked to my French colleague grandmaster Joel Lautier, who at the time played the Siesta Variation of the Ruy Lopez with Black. I was not fond of the Siesta – I considered it dubious and challenged the viability of his opening choice. His answer was quite simple: ‘Yes, White is objectively better, but the position is sharp, the line is not often played and the vast majority of my opponents will have to make do with a maximum of a few hours of preparation before the game, versus my 100 hours of work at home. Under such circumstances, in a sharp and relatively unexplored position, I should be the favourite and the tables should turn.’ This reply made sense – his results in the Siesta were good. Later I often employed a similar kind of opening preparation (never even close to 100 hours, though!), and with success. I even played the Siesta at some stage!

While working on this book in 2009, I got the chance to apply some of the ideas I discovered along the way in a number of practical games. Four of these are included at the end of the chapters where they belong.

The variations analysed in this book have been played by many famous players, including World Champions, as Black. The positions are in general fundamentally sound and most of the time the advantage White gets (this book also contains some crushing novelties for White!) is just a 'regular' opening advantage which he normally gets anyway in many different openings for the simple reason of being White.

Apart from their practical virtues, the lines analysed in *The Ruy Lopez Revisited* are often great fun to play, with sharp tactical complications offering Black as many winning chances as in certain sharp Sicilians. The difference is that there is still considerably less theory and, probably, more scope for fresh ideas in the Spanish 'sidelines' you will find in this book.

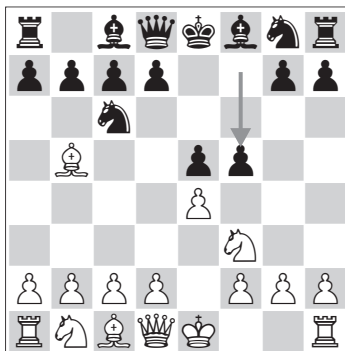
Ivan Sokolov  
October 2009

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# Part I – Jaenisch Gambit

1.e2-e4 e7-e5 2.♘g1-f3 ♝b8-c6 3.♙f1-b5 f7-f5



The Jaenisch Gambit (in many sources wrongly attributed to the German lawyer Adolf Schliemann – who, however, championed 3...♙c5 4.c3 f5) is a romantic way for Black to meet the Ruy Lopez. It is experiencing a renaissance at the moment.

Well-known theoreticians like grandmasters Tseitlin, Parma and Matulovic employed the Jaenisch regularly, and with success, in the period between the mid-1960s and the 1980s. In the 1990s the gambit found few adherents among better-known grandmasters and until a few years ago it was just a surprise weapon, occasionally seen in top tournaments. Nowadays, due to the efforts of Radjabov and Carlsen, the Jaenisch is back on the stage and a regular guest in top encounters.

After 4.♘c3 fxe4 5.♘xe4 d5 6.♘xe5 dxe4 7.♘xc6, Black is at a crossroads where he can choose between 7...♚d5? and 7...♚g5. We will discuss these lines in the first two chapters. Black's alternatives 5...♘f6 and 5...♙e7 are treated in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively. Black's main deviation on move 4, discussed in Chapter 5, is 4...♘f6. White can deviate early with 4.d3, a line discussed in Chapter 6.

The Jaenisch should appeal to any black player who is 'looking for trouble' at an early stage of the game. There are many dynamic ideas and still many lines to explore. I personally support Black's cause and I think the Jaenisch is a fully-fledged variation.

Here is a survey of the chapters in this Part:

**Chapter 1:** Main Line 4.♘c3 fxe4 5.♘xe4 d5 6.♘xe5 dxe4 7.♘xc6 ♚d5

**Chapter 2:** Main Line 4.♘c3 fxe4 5.♘xe4 d5 6.♘xe5 dxe4 7.♘xc6 ♚g5

**Chapter 3:** Fully Playable: 4.♘c3 fxe4 5.♘xe4 ♘f6

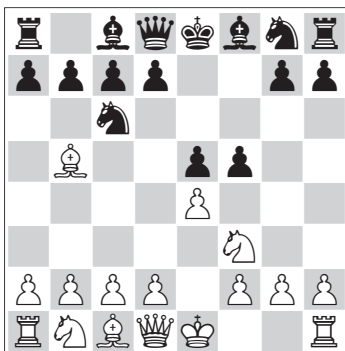
**Chapter 4:** The Risky 4.♘c3 fxe4 5.♘xe4 ♙e7

**Chapter 5:** The Main Deviation 4.♘c3 ♘f6

**Chapter 6:** The Practical 4.d3

# Index of Variations

**Jaenisch Gambit**  
**1.e2-e4 e7-e5 2.♘g1-f3 ♘b8-c6 3.♙f1-b5 f7-f5**



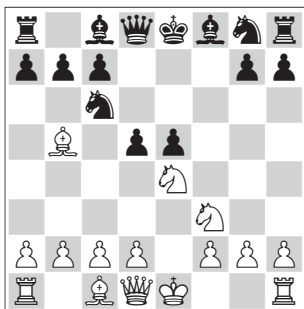
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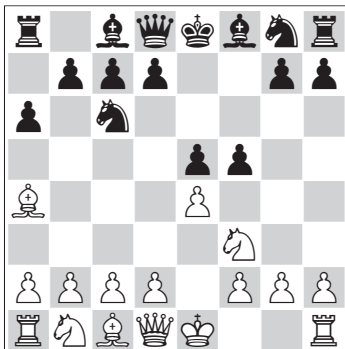
## 4...f5xe4 5.♘c3xe4 d7-d5



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1.e2-e4 e7-e5 2.♘g1-f3 ♞b8-c6 3.♙f1-b5 a7-a6 4.♙b5-a4 f7-f5



5.♘c3 ..... 127

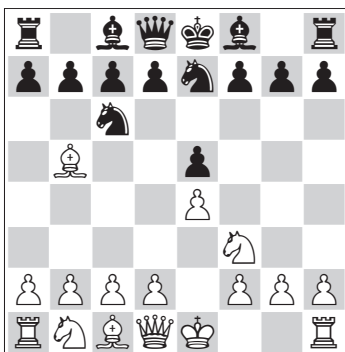
5.d4

5...fxe4 ..... 128

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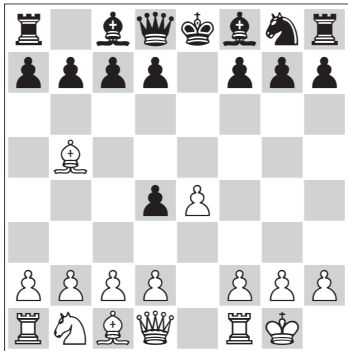
4...g6 ..... 149

**Smyslov Variation**  
**1.e2-e4 e7-e5 2.♘g1-f3 ♝b8-c6 3.♙f1-b5 g7-g6**



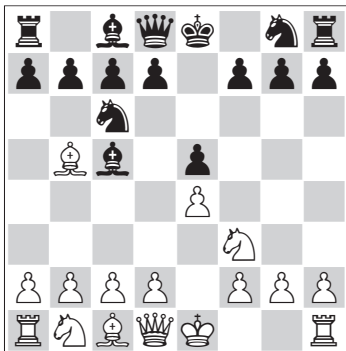
- 4.c3 ..... 167
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**1.e2-e4 e7-e5 2.♘g1-f3 ♝b8-c6 3.♙f1-b5 ♚f8-c5**

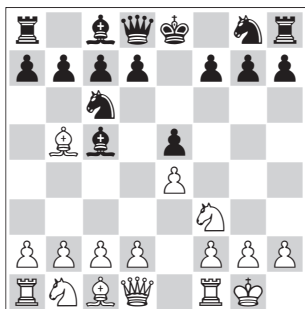


**4.c2-c3**



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