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# Bibliography

## Books

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*The English Opening Volume 1*, Mihail Marin, Quality Chess 2009

*Mastering the Chess Openings Volume 3*, John Watson, Gambit 2008

*The English Opening*, Zenon Franco, Gambit 2006

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Chess Informant

New in Chess

## Internet resources

Databases

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10 Days ([www.Chessmix.com](http://www.Chessmix.com))

Chess Publishing ([www.chesspublishing.com](http://www.chesspublishing.com))

Chess Today ([www.chesstoday.net](http://www.chesstoday.net))

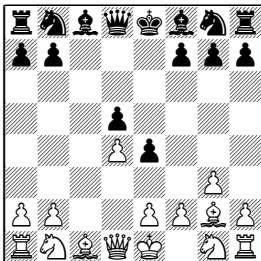
# Introduction

This book aims to offer an active Black repertoire against The English Opening 1.c4, the Reti 1.♘f3, and their siblings that arise after 1.g3. More importantly, we try to offer not only variations, but also a *philosophy* of how to treat such openings.

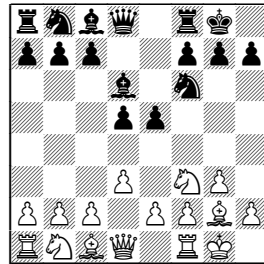
A century ago they called them simply “irregular”. Since then, nobody has revoked the importance of the centre, but nowadays we are so swept off by the torrents of variations the engines provide that we tend to forget conventional wisdom.

Our reasoning is simple: if White gave us a chance, we should seize central space; if he played passively, we should advance. Our goal is to reach an ideal pawn centre:

1.c4 e5 2.g3 c6 3.♗g2 d5 4.cxd5 cxd5 5.d4 e4;

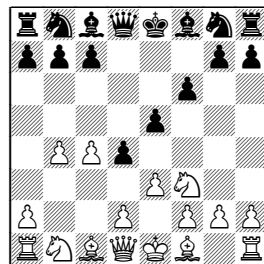


1.g3 e5 2.♗g2 d5 3.d3 ♘f6 4.♘f3  
♗d6 5.0-0 0-0;



We apply the same approach to the Reti:

1.♘f3 d5 2.c4 d4! and if 3.b4 f6!  
4.e3 e5



You may find old books or annotated games that criticize Black’s set-up on the first diagram. All the better for you – this book will arm you with an innovative approach and thorough original analysis

which often refutes widely accepted assessments. Many of our main lines are nearly unexplored and they are blank spots in theory.

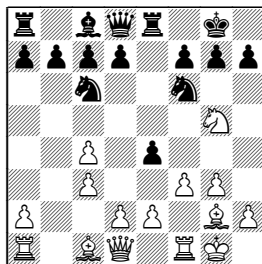
Chapter 1 offers a repertoire based on 1.c4 e5 2.g3?! ♖f6 3.♗g2 c6!.

Chapter 2 presents an independent alternative repertoire based on 1.c4 e5 2.g3?! c6!?

We explain the pros and cons of the two move orders in the correspondent “Main Ideas” chapters. Both are of equal worth and claim the initiative since the first moves. We have not tried to find equalizers. On the contrary, we believe that Black has all the reasons to fight for an initiative so we chose enterprising lines, often connected with pawn sacrifices. We discovered amazing variety of positions where Black can give up one of his central pawns to get a strong attack in return.

Chapters 6 and 7 deal with a more restrictive approach from White: 1.c4 e5 2.♖c3! ♖f6 3.♗f3! ♖c6 4.g3. This is played “by the ABC-book” and we have little ground for an early activity here. Still, we chose the most active options after the move 4...♗b4. We do not cover lines with 4...d5 at all.

Especially interesting is the line 5.♗g2 0-0 6.0-0 e4 7.♗g5 ♗xc3 8.bxc3 ♞e8 9.f3.



This position has been in the lime-light ever since the K-K match in 1987 and it seems that it is hyper-topical again. We analyse both 9...e3!? and 9...exf3 in order to give you alternatives.

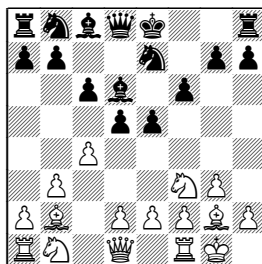
I have always been eager to find an exploitative strategy against passive opening play. I have started with the set-up d5-e6. My idea was to advance slowly, gradually rolling the pawns into the enemy territory. The following game illustrates the zest of this strategy:

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**Sveshnikov-Semkov**  
**Albena, 1987**

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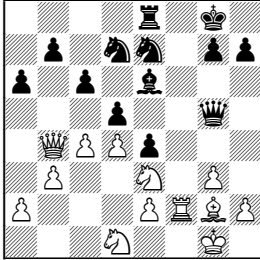
1.g3 d5 2.♗f3 e6 3.♗g2 ♗d6 4.0-0  
♖e7 5.c4 c6 6.b3 e5 7.♗b2 f6



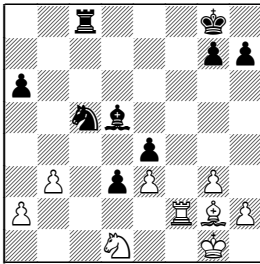
8.♗c3 a6 9.d4 e4 10.♗e1 f5 11.f3

## Introduction

0-0 12.♖c2 ♔e6 13.fxe4 fxe4  
 14.♞xf8+ ♚xf8 15.♚d2 ♘d7 16.♙a3  
 ♙xa3 17.♘xa3 ♘g6 18.♖c2 ♜f5  
 19.♘e3 ♞h5 20.♟f1 ♘e7 21.♘cd1  
 ♞e8 22.♟f2 ♜g5 23.♞b4



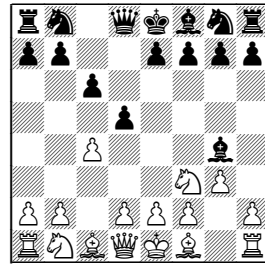
23...c5 24.♞xb7 cxd4 25.♘xd5  
 ♘xd5 26.cxd5 ♘c5 27.♞c6 ♞c8  
 28.♚d6 ♞xd5 29.♞xd5 ♙xd5  
 30.e3 d3



31.♙f1 ♘d7 32.♙e1 ♘f6 33.h3  
 ♞c2 34.♞d2 ♞c1 35.♞b2 ♞c2 36.g4  
 h6 37.a4 ♙f7 38.b4 ♙e7 39.b5  
 a5 40.b6 ♙b7 41.♙f1 ♘d5 42.♞b5  
 ♞h2 43.♘f2 d2+ 44.♙xd2 ♞xf2+  
 45.♙e1 ♞f6 0-1

This book presents a refined and more aggressive version of the above strategy. We emphasized on piece play, regarding the pawn centre as a mean and not as a goal. We can always sacrifice it in order to get to the enemy king.

Finally, I should mention the line 1.♘f3 d5 2.g3 c6 3.c4 ♙g4 – Chapter 12.



It falls out of our general line of preparing ...e5, but it is the best way of meeting White's move order according to Delchev.

The book is written in first person, but it is a collaborative work. Every line has been checked and discussed by both authors

*Semko Semkov  
 June 2016*

# Index of Variations

## The English Opening

### 1.c4 e5

2.a3 c6 136

2.d3 ♖b4+ 135 (2...f5 140)

2.♟f3 e4 3.♞d4 ♟f6 138 (3...♞c6 138)

**2.g3 c6** 3.♞c3 d5 (3...♟f6 64) 4.cxd5 cxd5 5.d4 e4 50

3.♙g2 d5 50; 3...♟f6 15

**3.♟f3 e4 4.♞d4 ♖b6** 44 (4...d5 44) 5.♞b3 45

5.e3 ♟f6 45; 5.♞c2 45

**3.d4 e4 4.♞c3** (4.d5 49; 4.♞h3 d5 5.♞c3 h6! 53) **4...d5** 50

5.cxd5 cxd5 6.♖b3 50 (6.♞h3 50)

5.♙g2 ♖b4!? 51 (5...♟f6 22)

5.♞h3 h6 53 (5...♟f6 53)

**2...♟f6 3.♙g2 c6** 4.♖a4 15; 4.d3 15; 4.e4 15

4.♞c3 d5 5.cxd5 16 (5.d4 e4 22)

4.♟f3 e4 5.d4 ♖b6 (5...d5 18) 6.♞c2 19 (6.e3 19; 6.♞b3 20)

4.d4 e4 5.♞c3 (5.d5 22; 5.♙g5 22) 5...d5 6.♙g5 22 (6.cxd5, 6.♞h3 22)

6...♞bd7 (6...♖b4 23) 7.cxd5 (7.♞h3 25) 7...cxd5 8.f3 25

8.e3 27

8.♖b3 ♙d6 9.♖b5 28

9.f3 31

9.e3 31

**2.♞c3 ♟f6 3.g3 c6** 4.♙g2 d5 5.d4 e4 21 (5.cxd5 cxd5 6.♖b3 16)

**4.♟f3 e4 5.♞d4 ♖b6** (5...d5 64) 6.♞c2 64

6.♞b3 64

6.e3 65

**4.d4 exd4** 66 (4...e4 5.♙g5 ♖b4 66)

**3. ♖f3 ♜c6** 4.d4 exd4 75  
 4.a3 e4 76  
 4.d3 ♙b4 77  
 4.e4 ♙b4 80  
 4.e3 ♙b4 5.♖c2 (5.♜d5 87) 5...♙xc3 6.♗xc3 88  
 6.bxc3 92  
**4.g3 ♙b4 5.♜d5 e4** 103 (5...♙c5 103)  
**5.♙g2 0-0 6.0-0 e4** (6...d6 117) **7.♜g5** (7.♜e1 127)  
**7...♙xc3 8.bxc3 ♞e8 9.f3 e3!?** 119  
**9...exf3 10.♜xf3** d5 121  
 10...♗e7 124

## The Reti

**1.♜f3 d5 2.c4 d4 3.b4 f6** 4.♗a4+ 148, 4.♙b2 148  
 4.d3 148  
 4.e3 e5 5.c5 a5 6.♗a4+ 149 (6.♙b5+ 149, 6.♙c4  
 149)  
 4.♜a3 e5 5.♜c2 ♜a6 151  
**3.e3 ♜c6** (3...c5 161) 4.exd4 162  
 4.b4?! 165  
**3.g3 c5** 4.e3 ♜c6 5.exd4 cxd4 6.♙g2 e5 7.d3 ♙d6! 177  
 (7...♜f6 177)  
**3...♜c6! 4.♙g2 e5 5.d3** (5.0-0 e4! 188) **5...♙b4+**  
 179 (5...♜f6 179)  
**2.g3 c6 3.c4 ♙g4** 4.♗b3 ♙xf3 196 (4...♗b6 196)  
 4.♙g2 e6 5.♗b3 198  
 5.0-0 199  
 5.cxd5 exd5 202 (5...♙xf3 208)  
**3.♙g2 ♙g4 4.0-0 e6 5.d4** 217  
 5.b3 218  
 5.d3 219  
**1.g3 e5 2.♙g2 d5 3.d3** (3.♜f3?! e4 225) **3...♜f6 4.♜f3** (4.♜d2 225) **4...♙d6**  
 5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 d4 226  
 6...c6 227  
 6.♜bd2 ♞e8 7.e4 c6 228  
 6.♜c3 c6 7.e4 229