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PREFACE

In this book, we have analysed one of the oldest variations of the Ruy Lopez – 1.e4 e5 2.♢f3 ♢c6 3.♟b5 ♢ge7.

The move 3...♢ge7 was particularly popular during the second half of the 19th century. It was played at these times by such outstanding masters like Adolph Andersen and Willhelm Steinitz. At the beginning and during the middle of the 20th century, the theory of the Ruy Lopez began to develop very intensely and the popularity of this old variation diminished rapidly. It remained in the shadow of the more complicated Chigorin schemes – 1.e4 e5 2.♢f3 ♢c6 3. ♟b5 a6 4.♟a4 ♢f6 5.0–0 ♟e7 6.♟e1 b5 7.♟b3 d6 8.c3 0–0 9.h3, the Marshall counter attack – 1.e4 e5 2.♢f3 ♢c6 3.♟b5 a6 4.♟a4 ♢f6 5.0–0 ♟e7 6.♟e1 b5 7.♟b3 0–0 8.c3 d5 and the Open variation – 1.e4 e5 2.♢f3 ♢c6 3.♟b5 a6 4.♟a4 ♢f6 5.0–0 ♢xe4 6.d4 b5 7.♟b3 d5 8.dxe5 ♟e6. In all these positions, Black's possibilities to seize the initiative proved to be greater...

During the 80ies and the 90ies of the past century, the popularity of the line 3...♢ge7 began to increase. Grandmaster Ivan Sokolov made a great contribution to the development of this system for Black and he tested it very often in his games. My long time friend and coach, the international master from the city of Izhevsk Alexander Filipenko was working as a coach in the Russian School of grandmaster Alexander Panchenko and he gave a course of lectures about this variation. Based on his knowledge and experience, during the 80ies and the 90ies of the last century, this system was played quite successfully in the tournament practice by such famous students of this School like grandmasters Alisa Galliamova, Maxim Sorokin and Ruslan Shcherbakov. Meanwhile, the theory of the variation 1.e4 e5 2.♢f3 ♢c6 3.♟b5 ♢ge7 was developing intensely. Black refrained from including the move a7–a6 at this early stage of the game, so that later, he did not wish to transpose to positions from the Steinitz Defence Deferred 1.e4 e5 2.♢f3 ♢c6 3.♟b5 ♢ge7 4.0–0 a6 5.Ba4 d6 6.c3 ♟d7 7.d4, or 6...g6 7.d4 ♟d7, in which Black ended up in very solid but rather passive positions. He was trying to enter situations which were not so typical for the long manoeuvring structures of the Ruy Lopez, but were more similar to the majority of the Open Games in which the value of every move increased considerably. Under these conditions, each mistake by White in the opening stage of the game may lead to Black seizing the initiative.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the development of the variation 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♗b5 ♗ge7 was given a new impulse and its popularity increased considerably. This was connected with the new and interesting idea that Black could give up the centre with 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♗ge7 4.0–0 g6 5.c3 a6 6.♗a4 ♗g7 7.d4 exd4 8.cxd4, or 6.♗c4 ♗g7 7.d4 exd4 8.cxd4, reaching very complicated positions with mutual chances. Nowadays, this variation is played by famous grandmasters like Levon Aronian, Sergey Karjakin, Vadim Zvjaginsev, Ivan Sokolov and many others...

Finally, I would like to mention that the entire variation 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♗b5 ♗ge7 has not been so well analysed yet.

Dear readers, I would like to believe that after you have read this book, you will make your own contribution with your games and analyses to the development of this system...

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