are and it is useful to prevent a knight check on f3.

The theory on 19 ♔f2 is still in flux. After 19 … ♗e6, the preliminary verdict must be that Black is in difficulties after 20 ♗h3! ♔b8 21 fxe5 ♘xe5 22 ♕g3!∞/± **Menéndez Rodríguez–Kukla, CAPEA40-Pr-25 corr 2011** (1-0,40) (*22 ♕e4 ♘hf3 23 ♗f4 ♗d5 24 ♕f5∞/=* and 0-1, 45, **E. Laine–Uusitalo, Pauli Aulaskari Memorial Corr A 2010** *Kirjeshakki 2012/04 p. 103 (Uusitalo)* (not in ICCF archive)).
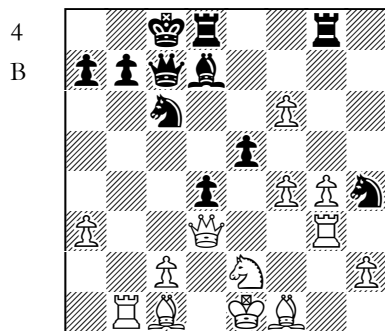
There is however an inspired defence, again due to Stengelin: **19 … ♖ge8!!? 20 f7** (*20 ♕e4 ♕d6 21 ♖g3 ♕xf6±*) **20 … ♖e7 21 ♕h7 exf4 22 ♕xh4 ♖xf7**, when four correspondence games, **de Groot–Stengelin** and **Poulheim–Stengelin**, both **WC33/pr02 corr 2009**, **P. Laine–Stengelin, SUI-25/B2 corr 2010**, and **Ottesen–Stengelin, WC35/½-final-07 corr 2011**, all drawn, attest that Black has full compensation for the sacrificed piece.

Conclusion: 19 ♔f2 appears to give White an edge but no more.

E: (*from* **(1)**) **19 ♖g3!!(4)**

Other tries leave Black under some pressure but holding. But this is a clear-cut refutation. White again leaves the K-side pawns in place and neatly neutralises all Black's defences.

White meets **19 … ♗e6** with 20 ♖b5, planning 20 … ♗d5? 21 ♖xd5!± (cf. 19 ♖b5 in A above). After 20 … a6 21 ♖c5 ♕d6 22 ♖xc6+! ♕xc6 23 fxe5, Black does not have the saving resource 23 … ♗c4 because of 24 ♘xd4!±±: cf. the cor-

responding lines after 19 h3 and 19 ♔f2, where Black takes on d4 and checks on f3 with knight and queen respectively.

After **19 … ♖xg4** 20 ♖xg4 ♗xg4 21 ♕g3 ♘f3+ 22 ♔f2 ♕d7 23 h3 ♗h5 24 ♕g7, play has followed Djurhuus's original analysis of 19 f7, but there Black could continue 24 … ♗xf7=. Here 24 … e4 25 ♕xd7+ ♖xd7 26 ♖b5 ♗f7 27 ♗g2±/±±, **Cerrato–Stengelin, SUI-25/B2 corr 2010**, leaves White a clear pawn ahead with well-placed pieces (1-0, 51).

On **19 … ♖ge8**, 20 ♕e4 now leaves Black poorly placed: 20 … ♕d6 21 f5 ♕xf6 22 ♖h3±±.

If **19 … e4**, 20 ♕xe4±± (*20 … ♖xg4 21 ♕h7* or *21 ♖b5!? ♖e8 22 ♕xe8+*).

Finally **19 … a6** (vs. ♖b5 and preparing … ♗e6) has often been reached by transposition. In addition to 20 f5±±, **Karpov–Giulian, simul, Glasgow 1984** (1-0, 43), White has 20 g5!±± (*20 … e4 21 ♕xe4 ♗f5 22 ♗h3*: another benefit of 19 ♖g3).

Conclusion: in this labyrinth, there is no way out for Black. ▶

FW   MCDONALD, Neil, *French Winawer* (Everyman 2000)—*see issue 18.*
tWW   MOSKALENKO, Viktor, *The Wonderful Winawer* (New in Chess 2010)—*see issue 16.*
FD-ps   PSAKHIS, Lev, *French Defence 3 Nc3 Bb4* (Batsford 2004)—*see issue 18.*
AC:tF   WILLIAMS, Simon, *Attacking Chess: the French.* London: Gloucester (Everyman) 2011. ISBN-13: 978-1-85744-646-3.

THE NEW WINAWER REPORT

Editor: Seán Coffey

Into the Labyrinth—I

It's easy to understand the appeal of the modern 12 … d4 lines in the Poisoned Pawn: Black appears to equalise fully and reliably, and does so while allowing White far less latitude in setting the direction of the game. In the former main line, 'White can play perhaps 8-10 fundamentally different set-ups, and several of them are ultra-critical, requiring ingenious tactics for Black to stay in the game', as Watson puts it in his most recent book.

On the other hand it's also a matter for some regret: the traditional lines are far more varied, complex, and interesting. One such line, perhaps the most critical, is the 13 ♕xc3 variation, where Black's efforts to break up the centre can leave White with up to four passed pawns on the K-side and up to a two-pawn advantage. In "A French Labyrinth" *New in Chess 1997/7 pp. 86-90*, Timman described the 'magnificent games' resulting from these 'fantastical pawn sacrifices', and hoped to inspire further examples. Fortunately the call has been heeded. This issue considers one defence to 13 ♕xc3, where there have been important recent discoveries …
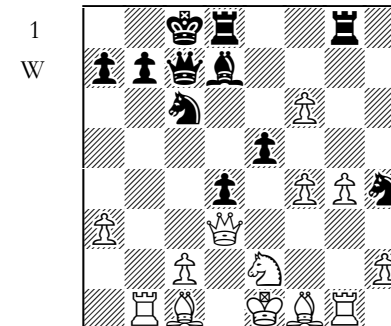
*   *   *

Poisoned Pawn: 13 ♕xc3 and 16 … f6!?

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♗b4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 ♗xc3+ 6 bxc3 ♘e7 7 ♕g4 cxd4 8 ♕xg7 ♖g8 9 ♕xh7 ♕c7 10 ♘e2 ♘bc6 11 f4 dxc3 12 ♕d3 ♗d7

13	**♕xc3**	**♘f5**
14	**♖b1**	**0-0-0**
15	**♖g1**	**d4**
16	**♕d3**	**f6!?**

A critical juncture. The main current alternative is 16 … ♘a5.

17	**g4**	**♘h4**
18	**exf6**	**e5(1)**

White has tried nine (!) different moves from **(1)**.

A: (*from* **(1)**) **19 g5/h3/Bh3/Rb5/Kd1**

These continuations, a mix of older and rare tries, are not best, but they well illustrate the themes from the critical lines.

With **19 g5** White resolves the attack on the g-pawn and threatens Bh3. This featured in early correspondence games but has an elementary drawback: 19 … e4! 20 Qxe4 (or *20 Qb3 Nf3+∓*) 20 … Bf5∓∓, confirmed by several examples.

Instead **19 h3** covers g4 without weakening the light squares, and this time 19 … e4? (a common try in early games) 20 Qxe4±± leaves Black with nothing. But Djurhuus's suggestion (cf. C below) 19 … Be6 halts the K-side pawns and leaves White with no obvious plan: 20 Bg2 Nxg2+ 21 Rxg2 Rge8 has been most common (=, at most) and 20 Qg3 Qh7 21 fxe5 d3 (*21 … Qxc2? 22 Rb2 Qh7 23 Nf4±±*) 22 Nf4 dxc2∞/= seems best.

With **19 Bh3** White shores up g4 and plans to meet 19 … Be6? with 20 g5±±. Black gains the advantage via 19 … Rge8 20 f7! (*20 Qg3? d3! 21 cxd3 Nd4*, though still complicated, seems to be winning for Black) 20 … Re7 21 Qg3 exf4! (now *21 … d3 22 Qxd3 exf4 23 Bxf4 Qxf4 24 Rf1* is no better than equal) 22 Bxf4 Qa5+ 23 Kd1 d3 24 Qxd3 Be6 25 f8=Q Rxf8∞/∓, with a perfect record from three correspondence games.

With **19 Rb5** (one example) White plans to meet … Be6-d5 with Rxd5. This has similarities with 19 Rg3 (E below), but is less accurate: 19 … Rge8 20 Qe4? exf4 21 Qxf4 Ne5∓∓; 20 Qg3 d3!∞/=.

Finally **19 Kd1**, with one (unsuccessful) example, removes the king from the e-file and from knight checks on f3. The king is

surprisingly safe on d1, and White gains an edge after 19 … e4 (*19 … Rge8?! 20 f7 Re7? 21 Qh3!±±*: cf. 19 Bh3 above; *19 … Be6 20 Rb5 a6 21 Rc5! Qd6 22 Rxe5!±*) 20 Qxe4 Rxg4 (*20 … d3?! 21 cxd3 Rge8 22 Qc4 Be6 23 Qc2±±*) 21 Rxg4 Bxg4 22 Rb5∞/±.
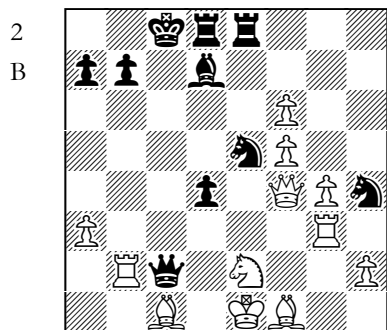
B: (*from* **(1)**) **19 f5**

White prevents … Be6, one of Black's main resources, and cuts off the retreat of the knight on h4. But he also gives up control of e5, which is too high a price.

19 …	e4!
20 Qxe4	Rge8
21 Qf4	

The stem game **B. Nikolić–Plchut, WT/M/GT/229 corr 1988** *Informator 47/377 (Plchut)* saw White massacred in short order after 21 Qd3? Ne5∓∓ 22 Qb3 d3 23 cxd3 Ba4 0-1.

21 …	Ne5
22 Rg3	Qxc2
23 Rb2**(2)**	

For some time theory thought this bad for Black, based on **Goloshchapov–Ahlers, Essent Open, Hoogeveen 2002**: 23 … Nd3+? 24 Rxd3 Qxd3 25 f7±± (1-0, 45) *ChessPublishing.com, October 2002 (McDonald)*, Psakhis *FD-ps p. 227*. The

improvement 23 … Qc5! came to the notice of theory with **Goloshchapov–Svane, North Sea Cup, Esbjerg 2005**: 24 f7 Nxf7 ½-½ (a charitable draw: 'clearly better for Black', Goh *ChessPublishing.com, July 2009*; 'Black has the advantage, and a big one at that', Williams *AC:tF p. 183*). If instead 24 Kf2 Bc6∓, **Termeulen–Ahlers, Corus 4B, Wijk-aan-Zee 2005** ('∞' Neven *ChessBase Magazine 129, March 2009*; 'with initiative' Moskalenko *tWW pp. 216-7*), Black has halted White's K-side pawn roller and dominates the centre (though ½-½, 32).

The improvement should already have been known, having appeared in **Ruzo–Boissel, CCOL13 prel4-02 corr 1998** *Le Courrier des Échecs 501 (November 2000) pp. 286-7 (Boissel)*: 24 Rbb3? Ba4 25 f7 Nxf7 26 Rb4 Bc6 27 Rbb3 Re4 0-1.

Conclusion: 19 f5? gives Black a clear advantage.

C: (*from* **(1)**) **19 f7**

Often given as best ('!' McDonald *FW p. 27*, Neven, Williams *p. 181*).
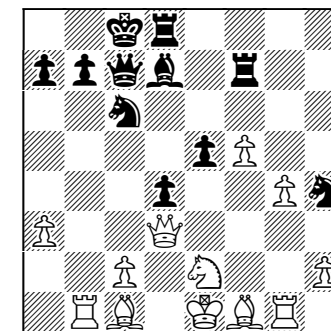
19 …	Rg7!?

A vast proliferation of theory emanated from **Hellers–Djurhuus, Gausdal 1992** *Informator 55/290 (Djurhuus)*: 19 … Rxg4 20 Rxg4 Bxg4 21 Bh3 Qd7. This was long held to be a forced draw after 22 Bxg4 Qxg4 23 Qg3 Qh5 (McDonald *pp. 26-8*), but later White racked up an overwhelmingly positive record via 23 Rb3, threatening to exchange queens: cf. Neven and Williams. The text is now usually recommended ('!', 'with great compensation', both Goh *ChessPublishing.com, May 2009* and Moskalenko).

20 f5!	Rxf7**(3)**

And now:

1) **21 Bg5** e4! (the more common *21 … Rh8?* leaves White much better after

Timman's *22 Bxh4 Rxh4 23 h3*), and if 22 Bxd8 Kxd8! (only thus), leading to a forced draw after 23 Qxe4 Be7 24 Qd5 (*24 Qd3? Re3∓∓*) 24 … Nb4! (so that … Nef3+, … Qc3 will lead to a perpetual) 25 axb4 ½-½ **Dambrauskas–Stengelin, SUI-25/B2 corr 2010**. Instead 22 Qxe4 Re8 23 Qd5 Ne5! or 23 Qf4 Ne5 give Black good play (∞/∓).

2) **21 Rg3** e4! 22 Qb3 (*22 Qxe4 Re8=*) 22 … e3!! 23 Qxf7 Ne5 24 Qd5 (*24 Qb3 Nhf3+ 25 Kd1 d3=*) 24 … Bc6 25 Qe6+ with a draw by repetition was **Jirků–Volek, CZE/C21 Czech corr Ch final 2009**.

So far so good. But there's a problem:

3) **21 Qg3!** (unplayed) forces Black to choose between the unpleasant 21 … Rh8 22 Bg5± and the unconvincing 21 … Nxf5 22 gxf5 Bxf5, when Black has some compensation but surely not enough (±/±).

Conclusion: notwithstanding some ingenious Black resources, White can gain the upper hand after 19 f7 (though not a clear win).

D: (*from* **(1)**) **19 Kf2**

Moskalenko's recommendation ('!'). The K-side pawns are well placed where they