

BLOOD AND IRON

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The accursed USPO has delayed all of BI 33 for a week somewhere along the line. It took 8-9 days to reach Battle Creek, 11 to reach the Detroit area. So, this issue will have to be delayed a while to give everyone a chance to get moves in.

Excerpts from two letters (June 5 and 12) from George Phillies, 897 Main St. #4, Cambridge, Mass 02139.

"I would be a bit more restrained about criticizing Steve Cole for claiming that he has written Conrad von Metzke without getting a reply. As far as I can tell, I stopped getting replies to my (not very frequent) letters to him some months ago. One was a request for a B.N."

((The alleged letters were written to Conrad in 1973. Some months later, when I wrote Conrad to ask about possible letters, he was still very active. His reply came in about minimum time, and was over two pages long (of course, it concerned many things, not just Cole). He may not have replied to a BN request if he was not given sufficient information. And it's always possible that one letter was lost in the mail, though unlikely. Right now he still assigns BN regularly, but only for those GM's who send him their 'zine(s) without charge. He hasn't answered any of my recent letters either, but that began long after I'd asked him about Cole.))

"To set the record straight, I did not... promise that no AWA officer would run for re-election, when we held elections for permanent officers. Rod Burr had every intent of running for re-election, and attempted to do so. Kevin Slimak said that he would not run for Membership Secretary (he didn't); I said that I would not run for President, and kept my name off the ballot."

((My brother's memory is in agreement with George's statement; I could not and can not locate my copy of the AW 1-1 and was forced to depend on my (faulty) memory. I apologize if this has caused Rod any inconvenience, though I doubt that it has. This doesn't change what was said about George, which was the point of the article. Keeping one's name off the ballot does not mean one isn't running; there is no doubt in my mind, and I think those who read the BI 31 article will agree, that George was running for President even though his name wasn't on the ballot; and George has never denied that he was running. Is your conscience clear enough that you could do so, George?))

"Your characterization of "battle Report" as a "rip-off" is somewhat unprovoked. Sobottke (as far as I know) does not have his own duplication facilities; BR will have to be printed by a professional mimeo or offset business. That's what these places charge, especially for small orders. There is a possibility that BR will be able to be printed here, in which case the printing costs will be substantially less."

((I fail to see why people ought to be expected to pay more just because the publisher can't keep his costs down. I could do BI photo-offset without much trouble, through a minute-print type place. There are two in Battle Creek and one in Durham, e.g. (at least); the rate for 100 copies would be 3¢ a page (less than what Sobottke is thinking of charging). But then BI would cost twice as much. It's utterly absurd to expect people to pay more for exactly the same material just because it is produced more expensively--it would not be

significantly more readable. You have to consider what the alternatives are. If I were offering services and information through BI that were not available elsewhere, then I might reasonably expect people to be willing to pay more for it; but BI is not that unique (and in any case, I dislike the idea of fleecing subscribers--that's how I think of it). What alternatives are available to Battle Reports? In fact, Sobottke is entering a glutted, or nearly-glutted, market. Midwest Gaming Review and El Conquistador accurately and completely report gaming news in the area, the former charging very low fees. Why would anyone, except a person ignorant of the state of the market (i.e., unaware of what MGR and EC offer), pay as much as Sobottke expects to charge? The information can be acquired more completely and more cheaply. That is why I said what I said.))

MISCELLANEOUS

1. I have received a fake issue of Costaguana. The style is reminiscent of Conrad, but it's not Conrad. The envelope (assuming I found the correct one in the basket) was postmarked 067. There was no return address, unusual for von Metzke. Peggy Gemignani supposedly orders a supported attack against a supported attack, both by her own units. Even she isn't that messed up. The paper isn't like Conrad's, the typewriter isn't like Conrad's, the handwriting on the envelope isn't like Conrad's. Besides, why am I getting a Costa after so long? And what are variant games doing in Costa? And is there a Rachmaninoff 4th symphony? It's not listed in my Schwann, and I certainly never heard of it, but it reviewed in this issue (supposedly recorded by an orchestra, conductor, and company I never heard of). Someone read Conrad's article in Diplomacy World about the Moeshoeshoe hoax and decided to pull the same thing on him. Maybe Edi Birsan? Arena, Impassable, and Slobinpolit Zhurnal are reviewed on page one, so perhaps their editors are involved...I hear there's a fake K. 35 around as well...

2. I am selling most of my old dippyzines cheap. If anyone is interested, let me know what you want. For quite a period I have most of what was around (unfortunately).

3. I recently received a nomination ballot for the Calhamer Awards from John Leeder. Apparently Biehl konked out on ILA. Now they're condemned to a rush job. The categories are better, but not much.

4. Tom Webster, 379 103rd Ave, Plainwell, MI 49080 is running games of Battle Plan played on a Risk board with some changes, Emperor of China, and Nuclear Destruction, for 25¢ per turn. Rules are free. ((I assume that means postal rules for EoC and BP, which are available elsewhere in full form--EoC is a bookcase-type parlor game.))

5. Larry Peery, PO Box 8416, San Diego, Calif 92102 is publishing a series of booklets on play of Diplomacy. The first is "England", and is available for \$2.50. Part of the high cost is for offset printing. There are about 30 pages of text plus many maps. It is directed toward the novice, and if you are a novice who doesn't worry about money then it's something to get hold of. Personally, I think there is more satisfaction in learning to play a game well on one's own rather than using "how to play" articles. That's how I learned Diplomacy, and while it results in some knocks (especially when you don't have any PTF experience), it is more rewarding. The article itself is fairly well written; players have different theories of what England ought to do to win, and this is an explanation of one of them, though alternatives are always considered. Peery did his playing before my time; he was considered a fairly good player then. He doesn't play (at least by mail) any more.

Scott Rich sends some additions to his SER OPT I:

Some rulings on the variable sized units.

1) The size of a unit ordered to MOVE can not be cut (unless you are using the Key Rule or the Cutting of the Cutting of Support)

2) The size of the support given by a unit is cut by the LARGEST attack + support (this means that uncoordinated attacks do little). Support cannot be cut by a unit moving from the space it is being given into--example, AUS A4 SER-RUM; RUS A4 BUL-SER, A2 RUM (S) A4 BUL-SER...the Austrian move would fail (the 4 army could not go through the 2 army because the 2 army is part of a larger attack). However, if the army in SER has at least 3 supports, he'd go through. If there is a TUR SEV-RUM, several things would happen depending on the size of the TUR army: 1-not big enough 2-the RUS A2 gives no support and is dislodged by the AUS A4 (the RUS gets SER), 3-same as the 2, 4-standoff all around, 5(and higher)-the TUR gets RUM, neither A4 moves.

3) A convoying fleet may still convoy if the largest attack (+ supports) is smaller than the fleet + supports.

4) Units of the same player stand each other off (the commanders of each unit, no matter the differences in size, cannot pull rank on each other).

Other additions:

5) Armed Neutrals-- 2 unit size, armies only.

6) Supply lines--During Winter OR at the end of all moves.

7) Exchange of Position--possible only if no third unit tries to move in. ((These are references in part to my

8) You only Live Once Footnote in MOVES #14 which I'll

9) Center Ownership-any season explain later if I have room.))

The Paper units are great for stabbing! If England and Russia are mopping all others together in the south, either could order a surprise build in Norway (fleet for Russia, army for England) to try for home centers. Paper units can be gotten rid of quickly--just throw them into battles!

PARTISAN RULE:

If a home center is taken by a foreigner, a Partisan army is raised in the center (this can be extended to neutrals when they are first grabbed).

1) PA (Partisan army) moves at the same time as armies and may be convoyed.

2) PA's interrupt control of supply centers--even home centers become neutral.

3) PA's are not affected by armies or other PA's, they are ghosts for all game purposes.

4) Rule 2) is in effect only if the PA is the only thing sitting on the supply center during fall. Several PA's on the same center all do the same thing.

5) A PA is removed from play only when the home supply center it was raised on is recaptured by a 'native' army/fleet, ie, a PA move order is PAR Par-Bur or PAR Par (H). PA's are the only 'named' units (necessary for the rule as difference from a player naming his units for fun).

6) If using PA's for neutrals, the PA is raised and does not move.

((I think the PA rule would just slow the game down, with most units tied to garrison duty. A much more interesting rule, I think, is the Guerilla Build. A player may build in one of his home centers if he has lost it, if it is unoccupied AND he's entitled to a build.

The trick is to run your center count up after you've begun to lose home centers.))

It's now July 1, and my mail today indicates that people in CA probably don't even have BI 33 yet. My aunt works at the Bellevue PO, and I asked her what might have happened. Given that the mail was postmarked correctly here, she couldn't figure it out. Perhaps it was put in a third class pile in error. Anyway, clearly I can't wait for moves to come in. So I'll finish this (the first three pages are already printed) and mail it out July 2.

A letter (excerpts) from Thomas Galloway, 237A Regulus, Va. Beach VA

"You were right, the BI's showed up. ((TG and another subber live in the same town. The other's BI's arrived in three days (third class!) and his hadn't showed a week later.)) Post office is worthy of a SF story. Get this; I got a letter from my father (written on or before the 20th) that comments on the latest S&T on tanks. It's now the 27th and I haven't seen a thing from them."

((Read above for an even better (worse?) story. And now for a good one about S&T. I've received nine orders for Supernova from people in NJ, CT, and MA (and nowhere else) in the past two weeks, the result of a plug in Sackson's column in S&T. One guy ordered, received SN third class, ordered backish, and may have those by now and I still haven't received S&T. I'd guess your father lives in Mass., hmmm? Bulk mail is very slow, and I suppose it spreads rather like a ripple in a pond, with NYC as the center.))

"Is your Cole issue going to be separate from BI?"

((Yes, when I get around to it. I'm temporarily occupied with more important things--almost anything, in other words.))

"What do you think of Battleflag coming out? If they were really bought out by some other company, why don't they tell us who it is? Their mag is certainly looking better. I thought the interview and the last article by Totten were both full of crap. Do they really expect the readers to believe them (and the readers in this genre aren't dumb) when they draw invalid conclusions from a given set of premises? Again and again. I have one thing to say to these lesser zines who continually whine about SPI (and I'm shouting now--gritting teeth, etc.): if the method SPI uses to make and sell games and a magazine isn't inherently correct--they'll fold up for lack of support. If it turns out that there's enough people who like their product to keep them in business, then shut up and leave us alone. Can't forget that we're still basically on a barter economy. If nobody wants my beaver pelts then I won't be able to sell them, but if people DO like my beaver pelts then they'll buy them no matter what Joe Blow down the road says."

"End of ranting and raving. Sorry the fit hit me when I was doing your letter, but then you make as good a Dear Abby as we've got in the hobby."

((Ugh, I'm wounded. Dear Abby? Never touch the stuff--neither of the sisters. ME a DA?

"Everybody else seems to be going around saying things based on opinion (again I speak of Battleflag) so I will too. But I'm going to label it such. This is pure bull coming from my mouth/typewriter without one iota of evidence: I think AH and AH-lovers are scared silly that AH might be run out of business. (Wargaming end)

BUT...as long as Battleflag puts out a game with every issue I'll buy it. You see, that's what it's all about--people are collectors

(amongst other things). Stamps, coins, books,...why not games?"

((I haven't received Battle Flag yet. I think you are being unreasonable. SPI has their right to do things their way as long as they sell games, right? So why shouldn't those who don't like SPI have as much right to express themselves as those who do like it? And is anyone, buyer or not, to be forced to accept what SPI chooses to publish? Rather, shouldn't people attempt to influence SPI so that they'll change their products in ways the people prefer? And in a "barter economy", doesn't anyone have the right to attempt to influence what the people are buying (given that they don't employ lies, libel, etc.)?)

((I'm surprised to get this one-sided view from you, because I thought that by now you'd been exposed to many sides, even though you're fairly new to gaming. Unfortunately, many S&T readers are simply ignorant of what else is offered in wargaming. They take SPI's word as gospel, when those who aren't ignorant (especially when it comes to military history) can only scoff at much of what the SPI "gods" say. The SPI comments about the latest AH games have been close to libelous, for example. They've said that Third Reich will be quite a bit like World War II, virtually the same in fact except that TR is supposed to employ production centers. Will S&T readers bother with TR after hearing this? Not the ones who have to depend solely on SPI for information. But TR isn't anything like this, and in fact it resembles SPI's game no more than any hex grid game might (on the same subject). SPI tells us that they're raising prices to avoid driving AH out of business, among other things. BULLSHIT. They need to raise the price to stay in business (AH doesn't have financial troubles; SPI has and does), and they're trying to deflect attention from the fact that they're offering considerably inferior physical quality for only \$2 less than AH's games, and in the process they're trying to cut down AH. This is the lowest type of criticism I know of. In the guise of reporting news SPI repeatedly takes potshots at AH and simply gives misinformation. The greatest sin in wargaming (or in most anything) is to misinform another person; SPI seems to delight in doing so. I am not an AH lover- in fact, I've purchased very few of their recent games, fewer than of SPI's. I would suggest, though, that anyone who thinks AH is going down the tubes should read the latest General, including a report on their new line of mail-order games. It might open the eyes of the ignorant. Of course, this is just my opinion, but anyone can read S&T, the General, etc and then look at Third Reich (well, I have an advantage there, since I'm play-testing it--look at it when it comes out, though) and form their own opinion. I suppose I might be a bit more objective than BF, since BF is in competition with SPI in many respects and I'm not. For that matter, I look at the two-player-game companies from the viewpoint of a multi-player gamer,

I never did understand the collector mentality, I'm afraid. It's getting so there are too many games to collect. I used to read the rules for all games, but I gave that up over a year ago. It's difficult enough trying to keep general track of SF&F games and Diplomacy variants (neither of which I really collect, by the way).

You may have noticed from this reply and the reply to Phillies that I'm not a big fan of capitalism as it runs in this country. More often than not it's just a way of taking advantage of the consumers' ignorance. Hmmm...do you think that may be why I publish news-type zines rather than something else?

I hope I haven't done Thomas a disservice by printing this. If you send me something that you don't want printed, just say so.

Thomas still has openings for Algernon Diplomacy for price of postage. Rules are in BI #31 for this limited intelligence variant.

74Mfe-Middle Earth V--Spring 2750

ANGMAR (Southard) A MtGun-Carr, A Fwaith-Pchel, A Ang-NDow, A Dun-Tha
DWARVES (Schlickbernd) A Erlu-Min, A Ere-ErMi, A Iron WeWas, A Iron

Sowas (yes, remember there are two of them)

ELVES (Eynon) A Lor-Cele, A NMir-Carr, A Iml-Gla, A Lune-Thes
GONDOR (Berendt) A Anor-Wold, A Dola-Anf, A MinTir-Ith, A Leb-Poros
HARAD (Clumm) RHUN (oop...) A ERhu-NRhu, A SRhu-WRhu, A FHar-SNur,

A Umb-NHar

MEN (Farquhar) A MtMir-Mir, A SMir-SWild, A NMir-EWild, A Forn-SDowns
MORDOR (McCormick) A Udu-Dea, A Bar-Udu, A MinMor (H), A EpDua (H)

Standby for this game is Tom Durling.

DEADLINE FOR ALL GAMES (same season(s) as before for others) IS
JULY 18. Don't wait around, I have many moves already and will not
be here that weekend (MichCon) so I won't be waiting.

When about 10 days have passed and you haven't received BI, you
can figure that the mail screwed up (unless it's finals time--then
give me two weeks). So write and find out what's going on! I should
have had a pile of inquiries--instead I got one (and that by local
phone). You guys should have known that the next deadline would be
June 29, if you were reading BI thoroughly, so you should have sent
me something by then. The best way to miss a move is to let things
ride instead of finding out what is happening. I'm also surprised
at how many of you depend on one set of moves. That's an invitation
to the US PC to nail you.

Someone asked about my phone number. It's in the House Rules,
guys, that's what they're there for after all. Someone also phoned
in moves after 10PM. This is prohibited by the House Rules--people
in this household (not myself, of course) are in bed by 10 READ
THE HOUSE RULES, guys. It'll save you a lot of grief, and I didn't
spend the time doing them just so that I could repeat them here.

I'll print the phone numbers of those players who send them in;
some people are either rich or have access to free long distance
phones through work, and they like to negotiate by phone. Never
initiated it myself...

Anyone who thinks the deadline is too short for 74Mfe (it
shouldn't be) can ask for a delay of four days in order to make a
possible move change. But don't depend on me granting it--it might
help if you tell me exactly why you want the extra time.

73Et error--Rhovanion builds A Mirk, not Cele!

Lewis Pulsipher

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