

THE

DIPLIMAT

Summer 1975

The Diplomat is the magazine of the International Diplomacy Association's Novice Committee. It is published quarterly with novice information and reprinted articles of interest to the new play-by-mail Diplomacy players. It is published by Peoples' City Publishers, Toronto, Canada.

If you have any questions about play-by-mail Diplomacy, or about the International Diplomacy Association Novice Committee, we encourage you to write one of the following committee members:

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We hope that the enclosed material will be of help to you, and that you will contact us if you have any questions, suggestions, or special problems.

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If your Diplomacy set does not include the revised 1971 rulebook, we encourage you to order it from Games Research. The cost is \$1, postpaid. The 1971 rulebook offers many clarifications of problems experienced with the 1961 rulebook.

SOME BASICS by Joel Klein, IDA Novice Committee Chairman

Postal Diplomacy is not new; games have been conducted by mail since 1963. It is approximated that there are over 1500 postal players throughout the United States alone. While the core is in North America, postal games are conducted throughout the world.

Let's look at some definitions of useful terms:

The Gamemaster: (or GM) He is the 8th party in the game. It is his responsibility to adjudicate and publish the result of each move with impartiality, reasonable promptness, and consistency. The important thing to remember is that the hobby consists primarily of amateur hobbyists who are GM'ing on their leisure time. As with most other things, it's a matter of finding a game master

The GMs (cont.) who strikes you as funny, reliable, or possesses what ever qualities you're looking for. Their publications vary; some GM's simply print out the results with no commentary, while others add bits of humour and articles of interest. Usually you can't go wrong by choosing an established gamesmaster, or a game insured by IDA (explanation later), which for a small fee, will ensure that if your GM and magazine should disappear, (yes it does happen) your game will continue.

Subscriptions: Most publishers, even when there are no games being opened (started) by said publishers, solicit subscriptions at a prescribed rate (e.g. 10 issues for \$2, but the price varies). Watching a game in progress can be instructive, and is frequently a reason for subbing.

Game Fees: Since it is your interest to play postally, the entry fee will be of some interest. The fee is necessary for the publisher to help offset his costs of printing and mailing. Most publishers operate at a loss; in fact, I cannot think of a single publisher who breaks even.

Fees range from about \$2 to \$10, depending on the magazine. There are two basic methods of charging the fee to the player:

- a) a flat fee, say \$5 for which you will enter a game and receive all issues required for completion of said game, and
- b) a newer method, wherein you pay \$2 or so to enter the game, and you maintain a subscription throughout the length of the game. This works out to a reasonable fee, and it does cover a publisher for a rise in costs, such as mailing, which looks to rise with each new postal contract.

Needless to say, a) and b) are mutually exclusive.

Deadlines: Games are basically run on 3 or 4 week deadlines. That is, orders are called for on a certain date and the next deadline is 3 or 4 weeks away, (depending on the GM). This allows about 2-3 weeks for communication.

There are 3 basic ways in which orders are called for by GM's. Let's look at each seperately:

1) **3-season system:** With this system there are 3 separate deadlines in each game-year. The first deadline is for Spring orders. For the second deadline, you must submit your summer retreats and your Fall orders. The third deadline is for autumn retreats and winter builds. This is the system used most frequently in North America.

2) **The Prophetic System:** This system condenses play into 2 seasons per game-year. The first deadline requires Spring orders plus a list of retreat options (listed in order of your preference) for each unit which might be required to retreat. If you fail to specify a retreat for a dislodged unit, the unit is eliminated.

The second deadline is for Fall orders with possible retreats AND Winter builds or removals. Again these must be listed in order of preference.

Although this system requires more advance planning, it speeds a game along much more rapidly. This system is used most frequently in the U.K.

3) **The Conditional System:** It developed as a modified Prophetic system. Again there are two seasons, but here your "Spring" orders include last year's fall retreats, plus your Winter builds (which can be made conditional on everyone else's retreats) and your spring orders (which again can be made conditional on the fall and winter decisions of the other players).

The second move season each game-year is for Fall orders, which may be made conditional on the summer retreats.

The conditional system is a new one presently used by only a few GM's.

Press: (Propoganda) One major difference between postal (Play-by-Mail) Dippy, as opposed to face-to-face (FTF) play is the matter of press releases. They are generally submitted with orders, sometimes intended to supplement them (ie: referring to the moves) or as a separate entity (a story). Most 'zines carry press releases. They vary from dull policy statements to short stories, humour, character assassination, and range from one shot affairs to lengthy series, with a thread running through (an example of the latter being Brenton Ver Ploeg's Glomphf, which was a mainstay of his writing). Occasionally, press will overshadow a game, and in some cases is the reason for a game's following among non-players. Some people can write good press; others cannot (but consistently do write, it's sad to say). Further explanation of propoganda is out of the scope of this material.

Magazine: Or 'zine for short. This term encompasses any amateur publication dealing with Diplomacy. They range from carbon-copy affairs (usually move printouts with no press) to full fledged magazines (sometimes running 20 pages or more with game, press, articles, and occasional editorializing by the publisher). It is a matter of personal taste as to which is superior. You will probably pay less for straight game printouts, but not necessarily. Further distinctions are:

Gamezine: carries games (for the most part this is what has been referred to up to now).

Genzine: carries no games and deals with general articles on Diplomacy.

Warehouse zine: carries a large number of games with no press or other frills.

Propagandazine: carries propoganda from one or more players in a specific game.

Boardman Numbers: These are used to identify postal Diplomacy games. They are in the form 19##-X, in which the ## indicates the year in which the game was started, and the X refers to the specific game. So, the first game started in 1975 is called 1975-A. The next would be 1975-B, 1975-C,....., 1975-Z, 1975-AA, 1975-AB,... and so on. The present BNC (Boardman Number Custodian), the person who keeps track of all games and assigns numbers to new games, is Doug Beyerlein.

House Rules: Well written though the Diplomacy rulebook is, it is certainly not all-inclusive and questions do arise over certain rulings. As a result, some, though not all, publishers print house-rules. Besides stating policy as per deadlines, fees and the like, they often include listing of rule adjudications on what may be considered dubious points. When entering a game, you will be furnished with a copy of your GM's house-rules (if he has any, of course) which will clear most foul-ups before they occur. If you are also new to Diplomacy in general, these will provide some help.

Playing time: The amount of time spent on any one game varies. However, one should roughly figure on an hour or two when the game starts (to write everyone if possible, your neighbours otherwise). Then there is the time spent reading and replying to letters you receive, as well as posting orders regularly (a set should preferably be sent in immediately on receipt of the zine. This way you have time to revise them if you wish, but are still assured of not being caught without orders). The amount of time spent on any one game (ie: whether writing, setting up the board, planning, etc. varies substantially. One full hour each deadline is a good guideline). There is usually more effort put into a postal game than a face-to-face game, but then it's spread over a long period of

Sample order Sheet: To remind you of the required game information, the following is a sample way of writing orders which lists all normally required information:

Spring 1901 Game # - 1974--XX
Orders For: ITALY

Today's Date: July 1, 1974.

A Ven H A Rom--Apu F Nap--Ion

Yours,

Johnny Canuck
 Johnny Canuck
 1867 Dominion Ave.,
 Stoney Creek, Ontario,
 Canada.

It would be well to warn newcomers not to overload themselves. It would be a good idea to enter only one game to start with, perhaps two. Play these for a few months, and then set a limit as to how many games you feel you can handle. You should have a rough idea of this by then. I would advise entering only a few games, building up slowly and preventing any conceivable overload. Remember, it takes two years basically to finish a game of postal Diplomacy. If you start entering games too often, you might at sometime find yourself overcommitted. In addition, we offer another mild warning: GM's are people, and for them as for most of us, most of everything else we do is more important than Diplomacy. This will result in the occasional delay, and occasional player difficulties. For most of us then, this is a labour of love.

When a player resigns or disappears from a game, a replacement is assigned. Most GM's maintain a list of "standbys", people willing to enter a game in progress if needed. Usually a GM will ask for standby orders after a player misses a turn. Standby orders are a set of Conditional orders submitted by the person named by the GM. These standby orders are conditional on the current player missing a second move. Usually, if the present player misses again, and the standby orders are used, the standby player then takes over the position. In most cases, the cost to standby is only the cost of a subscription to the zine in which you are standing by.

Being a standby is a reasonable way to join games, and one can build up experience as well as good ratings by entering games as a standby. Several player ratings systems are maintained and most of them do not penalize players for a poor standby finish, especially if the original position was a poor one. These positions provide valuable playing experience (often in middle and end game stages). Replacement policy varies among GM's, so check it out.

A note should be made of the International Diplomacy Association (IDA), especially since this is, after all, sponsored by the group. It is basically an organization of players for the intent of improving the hobby by organizing and furnishing such services as this Novice zine. For further information on IDA write: Walt Buchanan, R.R. #3, Lebanon, IN 46052.

I'd like to express my appreciation to Burt Labelle, as he helped furnish me with some ideas from his Andromeda Chronicle which was in turn partly derived from Rod Walker's Pontrevedria.

If you have any questions about play-by-mail Diplomacy, please write me or any of the members of the Novice Committee. (see page 1 for our addresses).

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Normally, we publish several short articles on strategy in each issue of Cepheids, instead of one long dissertation. However, we feel that the following article merits attention in Cepheids, Brenton Ver Ploeg, although presently

retired from the hobby, developed a notable reputation for his skill in negotiation and a "never say die" approach to the game.

This following article originally appeared in Brenton Ver Ploeg's Platypus Pie, and was later printed in the 1973 IDA Handbook.

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF NEGOTIATION, OR, HOW TO AT LEAST
GO DOWN IN STYLE, IF YOU GOTTA GO DOWN**
by Brenton Ver Ploeg

First, MAKE A DECISION! If you equivocate through too many years of play, if you play the neutral, first and foremost friendly to all powers, a couple things may happen to you: you may simply not get the initiative that you need to win, or you may find that all the cooperation that the other players have done while working together makes them rather more prone to continue working together than to split the alliance for you. Initiative, of course, is all essential, because no matter how fragmented the other half of the board, you have to be at about 8 or 9 pieces when their war starts to show a clear winner. If you don't commit yourself to an ally, the chances are rather greater that you will be several pieces smaller.

Once you have made the decision concerning your ally and direction of expansion (a more extensive discussion of this issue follows in Part II of the article, "Initial Negotiations"), stick with it! You will, it happens, often find yourself in slow going in tactical terms. Often, in fact, you get completely bogged down. Now, since your ally is often fighting alongside you, the tendency is for his or her lines to be most open, and you can often garner a couple of extra centers simply by stabbing the former ally. Barring very unique circumstances--don't do it. The gain in centers will oftentimes be comprised by a loss in credibility in general, and specific antipathy in the game where the attack occurs.

Along the same lines, try to avoid directly lying to your intended enemy. It is possible that he will be equally offended when you attack him anyway, but he may not. Moreover, once you explain to others what happened, they may understand too. Recall that a single Diplomacy game does not stand by itself. This doesn't mean that you should get into 40 games so that you can make cross-game deals; it does mean that reputations spread quickly. Enemies, as Doug says, often crop up simply because you attack them in a game. If you can avoid it, soften the blow by not making an iron-clad alliance with him with full intentions of breaking it later. You will note, of course, that this is often tactically expensive. Maybe he will suspect something, and come after you. Maybe you will lose a season in time, or maybe even a year.

It's thus at this juncture that you must balance in your own mind the basic tenet of keeping the initiative, discussed above, with some other basic principles. I suggest that it's often worth the cost, in extra time needed to subdue an enemy, to avoid the sort of truly "dirty" stab that many players seem to think the true beauty of Diplomacy. It's a decision you must make for yourself, and I don't pretend that my views are any better than anyone else's, but you should at least weigh the alternatives before plunging the dagger.

Along those lines, there is room in Diplomacy for a "Silence is Golden" rule, if applied judiciously. Doug ((Douglas Beyerlein)) says in his article, and it's generally true, that you should write absolutely everyone involved. That's almost always a good idea, but there are cases in which it might not be, and they almost always involve a case where you have decided to attack X player.

This may be for reasons of country position, or for reasons of player structure, but the reason is immaterial--the point is that you have not promised this player anything, and thus, when the attack comes, you cannot justifiably be condemned for duplicity. The lessening of your Diplomatic option is the disadvantage but you may even get that back sometime later, in the following situation: suppose that the battle lines and alliances change rapidly while you are fighting the player you initially attacked. If, for reasons of your own (remember that this should be done rarely) you decide that you want to switch sides and ally with your former enemy, you are in a much better position to do so than you might have been otherwise. You can say to him "Look, we have been honest with each other. We have never lied to each other, and, in fact, we haven't even corresponded much with each other because we were fighting. We have illustrated our good faith to each other, but that damned X, in country Y, has made promises to the both of us. We should, thus, combine the good faith elements in this game and wipe the bastard out."

Nothing so inelegantly worded, however, is recommended.

There is a possible variation to this which might appeal to the intended enemy's sense of humour, in case, once again, you want to keep your options open in the future, which is always a good idea. You can write him a facetious alliance offer. The only time I have done this was in a game where I was playing Austria, and had a Russian alliance to attack Turkey. I wrote Turkey asking an alliance, but specifying the 'customary' terms--I got Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria in 1901, with Greece to be traded for Ankara in 1902. Turkey would, naturally, build nothing but fleets in Smyrna, but, to show good faith, would not build more than two units in the first six game years, regardless of how many centers he happened to take, and, well, you get the idea.

So, I agree utterly with Doug's wisdom--keep your options open. But I suggest to you that there are other alternatives to writing even enemy players all the time. Of course, there are many situations where you would want to correspond at all times. All I can recommend is that you use your best judgement. Diplomacy is 5% tactics (though in some cases, of course, games become 99% tactics), 45% Diplomacy, and 50% intuition (in which category I include lady luck).

Second, don't make a foolish BLUNDER when you write letters--avoid the TEMPORARY PLAYER SYNDROME. It is a basic fact of life that many Diplomacy players come and go. Consequently, when decisions are arrived at concerning the allies one will choose in a game, little things may make a difference.

There is, for instance, no rule that says that a player who signs himself "The Duke of Luxembourg", and emblazons his letters with all sorts of embossed royal seals, may not be a very excellent player. Many times, in fact, this is the case, and, many times, other players in the game tend to want to free themselves of the potential inexperience that this practise indicates. (I don't say it is done with justification, just that it is done.) So, you gain nothing from using this technique. Write to the potential ally as if they were exactly what they are--players in a board game in which you both have designs on success, not as if he or she were a head of state, unless it's tied into your press.

Another thing to avoid, as Doug says, is the "Bare Bones Diplomacy Letter". This is acceptable after you know the player and you have an alliance, I suppose, but it's better not to do it even then. At the start of the game, however, it's a disaster. Again, many players have a tendency to drop out five line letters. This categorizes you right away in none too favorable a light. Moreover, the person you might intend to ally with could assume that you would never write him a letter like that if you intended to do anything other than attack him, (see the 2nd full paragraph on this page for an analagous situation) and that isn't exactly to your benefit either. More importantly, however, you needn't be so cynical as this analysis in order to write longer letters. You might find, and indeed are

likely to find, that the person you are corresponding with is an interesting person, and you may broaden your horizons.

The final aspect of the "short" letter is this: as Doug says, a major aspect of Diplomacy is being able to discern the personalities of your opponents simply through the mail, and, sometimes, over the phone. If you receive a letter which just makes a brief proposal, and nothing else, that person isn't really giving you a chance to see what their thought processes are like, unless the letter is long and contains a lot of analysis concerning the game (there is nothing that says you have to be intimate). In short, they aren't giving you a fair break, and there doesn't seem to be much of a reason why you should give THEM one, does there? So, lengthen those initial letters, and discuss something more substantial than "Let's attack Germany--he's a dirty ass".

Then too, don't do anything stupid. If you are in a feud--that's stupid.

Third, manage your double-crosses well--STAB ELEGANTLY. There are two aspects to this, the first one of which is the oft-repeated tactical dictate that you should never, never stab unless it's really going to hurt your opponent, and unless the momentum you gain is enough to counteract any adverse effect it may have elsewhere on the board (AND, I might add, elsewhere in the whole field, where your reputation might suffer. There is no reason why you should have to stab someone more than once every two or three games.)

To this, I add a second necessity, though it's hardly particularly original with me: always write a letter to the person you have stabbed, and try to make certain that it arrives after the deadline date (that is, of course, obvious) and before the magazine arrives. This last is less obvious, but equally as persuasive, if in a more subtle sense. There is always a shock when you see in the magazine that you have been stabbed. No press release can possibly explain all the reasons you might have, and, in any case, a press release can't be very persuasive. It sometimes helps to add a humorous press release (besides which--it's FUN) at the time of the attack, but you should not allow such an important letter as this to apply to public channels.

Note well that writing the person you attack, during the season of initial attack, does not only apply to people with whom you have had a close alliance (where it should be obvious) but also to EVERYONE you attack, save those people you attack early in the game that you have chosen not to write at all. (Parenthetically, I might add that you should NEVER use the 'silent' treatment on anyone other than someone you plan to attack at the start of the game.) If you have not promised them anything of real value, if you have let the correspondence between the two of you grow cold...these are things which you should tell the person you attack. You should, in fact, be able to point to several indications you gave the person that you were, in fact, planning to attack him. The big catch--these should be TRUE.

If you're still reading at this point, you see a flaw: if you can correctly claim that you warned him, however covertly, HE should be able to see it too. That is of course accurate, but it doesn't mean a great deal as far as disadvantages go. This is so because all you have done, in effect, is made your deals with this person in the same manner in which he has made deals with you. In fact, the way 95% of all Diplomacy players make deals with each other. The truth of the matter is that you don't have to attack a person simply because you leave that option open. In fact, as often as not, you may not attack them at all. Omission doesn't mean antipathy, and anyone that thinks so is being foolish. More, it is suggesting a situation I consider absurd, though it happens in perhaps the large majority of Diplomacy games: everyone allies closely with everyone else, and we find out what's REALLY happening in the Fall of 1901 and the Spring of 1902. There is no reason in the world that games cannot proceed to their end without ever having made a "firm" alliance.

It is, of course, a value judgement. Doubtless, it's possible to suffer at the

hands of someone who thinks you plan to attack simply because you don't ally with him until 1920, but you have to weigh these issues for yourself--it may be worse to ally with that person and then attack him. But keep one thing in mind forever--there are large numbers of Diplomacy players that operate on amoral principles entirely, and you must be aware of that. NO system operates well in isolation, and meeting other players, and other systems of approach, is not only refreshing, but challenging.

The balancing act becomes acute, and if you reason that this article does nothing to point out just how you should lean, then you have correctly analyzed it. I haven't really regarded it as an attempt to do so. But this is a philosophical difficulty that everyone solves for themselves, and recall that it's only the third part of the general heading--General Principles. If you want to double-cross at will, feel free. But expect some repercussions in both the short term and long term senses.

INITIAL NEGOTIATIONS--COMMIT YOURSELF AND GO!

There is clearly not going to be space, ((in his zine)) for this part of the article. I am truly long-winded. What I wanted to discuss here was the difficulty of making that initial commitment, and the manner in which it should be made: contingent upon other players, or the country you have? There are advantages and disadvantages to both methods, and distinctions are to be made between a position in which you know none of the people on the board, and one in which you know them all, either through past contact or through reputation (I know an excellent player who once studied all the games of his opponents, and, you can believe, was much stronger as a result). However, there isn't time for this now and will be concluded in next issue. ((the following is from the next issue))

PART II--The Initial Negotiations:

It's clear enough, as I said last issue, that you have to reach a clear commitment with a certain group of allies, and then push as quickly and aggressively as possible towards that goal. But, as the years go on, it is apparent to me that to precipitate a commitment is as bad as none at all. Most initial negotiations periods are never over a month, and often actually use much less time than that. 90% of the first moves I have received in the three PP games ((his zine's games)) have been received weeks in advance of the deadlines. Sometimes, this is all you need, but sometimes I think you need twice that long, if only to correctly analyze your enemy. My worst error in a Diplomacy game was in assuming that the grand strategy of the game was the most important, and that people could be moulded to that end. Unfortunately, I inverted friends and enemies, and was stabbed by the player who was to be the long-term ally, and befriended my intended worst enemy. All too late for me to react with any degree of flexibility, naturally, and the game was hopelessly and irrevocably lost.

This implied at the time that all games should be run on the basis of the personalities involved. That sounds perfectly simple, I agree, but it involves disadvantages. The most irritating possible letter to receive early in a game is one that absolutely refuses to be committal in any way or form. He is waiting to see what YOU offer, which, by some strange coincidence, is just what YOU are waiting for. You'll probably end up fighting. At best, you'll end up with a very neutral agreement. It's for that reason that it is often best to try to get some idea what the players may be like BEFORE you write them. The best way to do this is to know them in advance of course, but, until someone does the very valuable work of preparing game records for certain players, you have to dig through all the records yourself, or pay Rod or someone else with the records to do it on their time. (they might do it gratis for someone with a few games, but after that

probably should give them something for their time).

Alternatively, or perhaps supplementally, you can call them on the phone. Diplomacy ought not to be influenced by costs, but the simple fact is that Diplomacy IS so influenced. It is for that reason that players in the same geographic area have an advantage, because communication between them is so much more sure, or, at worst, cheaper. But there's the other side of the coin there too, because it's certainly a worthwhile Diplomatic weapon to claim that X & Y, residents of the same area, will therefore ally, so that they should BOTH be cleaned out before that happens. Naturally, it's not necessarily (or even often) the case that these people DO ally, but the burden is now on them to convince your potential ally that they are in fact mortal enemies, one with another.

If you can do this sort of initial groundwork, or get some sort of reasonably reliable hearsay evidence concerning the player whom you might want to influence, it's time to go to work. If the player is trustworthy, I suggest that you commit yourself to a specific initial line of attack, and ALSO COMMIT YOURSELF TO A GRAND TACTICAL SCHEME. Andy Phillips, in regard to last issue, has written me that there should be better reasons to ally with someone than that he or she is a "Great Person". I of course agree 100%, and in addition to being reliable, you should doubtless be able to convince a potential and desired ally that you are both willing and able to fulfill your portion of the alliance. The Grand Tactical-Strategic proposal is of this nature. Here, you would describe the middle and end games, as you see them, in terms of what powers will be battling what other powers. After the initial round, if your alliance is accepted in a manner which you think is sincere, your alliance should be cemented into somewhat more detailed terms. Specific plans should be formulated concerning what is to be done with various other countries, and consideration should be given to how the situation might change. The ideal situation, which is actually not too hard to attain unless you have some real close-lipped people dragging down the game, is one in which you will not be surprised by anything that happens on the board. Allowing for a reasonable amount of breakdown, no massive strategic shifts should manage to perpetrate themselves without your knowledge, or at least some sort of idea that they might take place. Ideally.

And that, dear friends, is why it is next to impossible to "teach" Diplomacy. You can "teach" the tactics element, I suppose, and there are a large number of articles by those much more skilled than myself in that regard which you should read before even attempting prolonged play of the game. But the rest of it is by "inference". You must, on the basis of what is often nothing more than intuition alone, decide whom you can trust and for how long. If you think that you are about to be attacked, please try to think compromise. That is--offer the attacker a center or two in order for him to go away and bother someone else.

This is winding down right now, I can tell. It's really almost next to impossible to get down in print all the myriad little things that run through anyone's head when they play a game of Diplomacy. I have played only four years now, which isn't a very long time compared to some of the real "old-timers" but I have seen some very clever tricks perpetrated. Reading can do something, but watching does more. Most of all, however, is interest. A player who doesn't give a shit is going to lose, 9 times out of 10. A player that is both interesting and challenging will, much more often than not, do well. Perhaps he or she will even win the game. Not only is interest contagious, it tells your potential allies that you are not about to become a negotiating drop-out, and makes you a very valuable friend, and very dangerous enemy. Sometimes things go poorly, of course, but it's when you can earn the MOST respect of your enemies. I have never eliminated a player who has written at length while being attacked, and kept attempting to change my mind. Furthermore, I have always endeavored to ally with them in future games, because I know that if they fought hard when they were losing, they will fight doubly when they are winning.

Turkey's defences often make for many a long battle against determined enemies. Doug Beyerlein, one of the hobby's strongest players explains how Turkey can be broken by cutting off its first build, Bulgaria. Doug is presently the Boardman Number Custodian for the hobby, the man who assigns numbers, and keeps records on all games taking place in the Diplomacy hobby. Thanks to Doug for permission to reprint this article, and to the article's original publisher, Walt Buchanan. The article originally appeared in Hoosier Archives #120. Incidentally, I would like to recommend that you consider a subscription to Diplomacy World, Walt Buchanan's new publication which has replaced Hoosier Archives. Diplomacy World is a 40 page publication printed by photo-offset, a truly beautiful result in the world of Diplomacy publications. Each issue contains a wealth of articles and information about the hobby. Sub rate is \$4. per year (4 issues). Walt will send you a sample if you will send him a couple of stamps, (20¢). Write: Walt Buchanan, R.R.#3, Lebanon, IN 46052.

THE BULGERIAN GAMBIT by Douglas Beyerlein

Probably the least contested 1901 gain is Turkey's taking of Bulgaria. Army Constantinople to Bulgaria in Spring 1901, backed by an additional army and a fleet, and Bulgaria is guaranteed Turkish in 1901. Or is it?

There is one set of orders, when used against an unsuspecting Turkish player, which will leave Turkey with only three centres at the end of 1901 and no future. This is the Bulgarian Gambit.

The required orders are simple; the diplomacy difficult. First the orders. For Spring 1901, Russia sends F Sevastopol to Rumania and Austria opens with the standard A Budapest to Serbia and F Trieste to Albania. Turkey is guided to a western attack with A Constantinople to Bulgaria and a followup into Constantinople with either A Smyrna or F Ankara. Then in the fall, Turkey is enticed to move A Bulgaria to either Greece or Rumania so that it cannot be supported in place. The opposition, Russia and Austria, strikes with F Rumania to Bulgaria (east coast), A Serbia Supports RUSSIAN F Rumania to Bulgaria, and F Albania to Greece. The Russian fleet takes Bulgaria, the Turkish army is annihilated or retreats to Constantinople, and the Turkish player counts only to three.

Now the difficult part: the diplomatic set-up of Turkey. Russia must convince Turkey to go west while feigning a northern attack. Thus in Spring 1901 Russia will claim Rumania with F Sevastopol and at most will only send A Warsaw south to Ukraine. This is a definite gamble on Russia's part. Austria's diplomacy in the spring is relatively simple. Therefore, the burden and the gain lies with Russia. It is all or nothing.

Assuming that Spring 1901 went according to plan, we now come to the fall. Here Russia has an easy time diplomatically and Austria must pull a fast one on Turkey. Turkey with units in Bulgaria and Constantinople may be content to hold with support. Greece can be attacked, but if Austria supports F Albania to Greece from Serbia, the Turkish attack is worthless without Italian support (which is very unlikely). So, to get Turkey to move A Bulgaria and therefore guarantee Turkey's loss, Austria must make some encouraging noises in Turkey's direction. Austria should say to Turkey that A Serbia is supporting TURKISH A Bulgaria to Rumania whether or not Turkey makes the move. This leaves Turkey (or so the Turkish player thinks) with two options: (1) either stand off the Austrian fleet into Greece, or (2) take the unsolicited support and attack Rumania. Then when the Fall 1901 orders are published, the damage is done and Turkey is dead.

The only remaining problem is who gets Rumania after the Russian fleet moves out. Either Austria can take it in return for the possible stand off over Greece, so as to have at least two builds or Russian A Ukraine can have it. This should be worked out at well in advance.

Finally, Russia builds F Sevastopol and Austria builds armies. And then it is only a matter of time before they own all of Turkey.

This subtle blitz has its risks, however. Russia, with only a maximum of two units in the south, can be hit hard by a combined Austro-Turkish attack. I have seen it go both ways and have just been fortunate to have been on the right side both times. In every case, diplomacy is the key and the gambit is doomed to failure without it. Used such, the Bulgarian Gambit is just one more way to kill Turkey.

Lewis Pulsipher has always been helpful in introducing novices to the world of variant Diplomacy. He wrote the following article specifically for publication here, we hope you will find it of interest, and that you will at some time look into the variant Diplomacy scene.

INTRODUCTION TO DIPLOMACY VARIANTS

by Lewis Pulsipher

Variants are games more or less based on standard (regular) Diplomacy which are played by over half of all postal players. One quarter of all postal Diplomacy type games begun in 1973 were variants. Some variants use a new or altered board and situation and retain almost all of the rules; others retain the board and change one or more of the rules; still others change board and rules extensively. Some closely resemble the standard game, while others bear little in common with it. There are even variants of variants. The games included in the rulebook for other than 7 players are variants with "altered board" (new starting positions and different (because fewer) player countries).

Some zines are devoted solely to variants, and a few players play only variants, but a mixture of stand and variant is more common.

Almost any subject you care to name has been used for at least one variant, though more are being produced each month. Among these are science fiction and fantasy (eg: Hyborian Age, Foundation), historical (1721, Didochi, Napoleonic), extension of the standard board and scenario (Youngstown, Abstraction), hypothetical (Lost Continents), and abstract (Anarchy, Black Hole). There are over 200 Variants with new boards and hundreds using the standard board.

Why do people play variants? Some like new scenarios for press release purposes or simply for a change. Others like a greater challenge than the simple standard rules provide. Some become bored with standard Diplomacy after repeated plays. Many variants require different skills and a different type of thinking than is needed for standard Dippy, and many are more realistic. Some variants offer better play balance than those in the rulebook for numbers of players other than 7, and there are variants which can be played by more than 7 people. Finally, an inexperienced player has a better chance because experienced players cannot depend on memorized lines of play—all the players must analyze the new situation.

Variants are not often designed for general popularity. Usually they are aimed at a smaller group which is attracted by elements particular to that variant; most variants are played only a few times by mail, if at all.

Variants are usually available from individual publishers (who are often also designers) for 15-30¢ each. The best way to gain an idea of what typical variants are like is to order the MOW variant package, \$1.75 from Paul Wood, 24613 Harmon Ct., St. Clair Shores, MI 48080. This includes an introduction to variants, rules and maps for a dozen variants, and a list of rules that can be used with the standard game, all printed photo-offset.

The best current source for variant information is Diplomacy World, which carries a "variant information" column as well as at least one new variant each issue. DW#3 contains the latest comprehensive list of variants available in North America and is 75¢ from Walt Buchanan, P.R.#3, Lebanon, IN 46052.

The following handle special variant projects:

Robert Sacks, 15-F Tang Hall, 550 Memorial Dr., Cambridge, MA 02139 is the Variant Postal Diplomacy Designation ("Miller Number") Custodian. He assigns a unique identifying symbol to each postal game in the same manner as the "Boardman Number" custodian.

Dan Gallagher, 6425 King Louis Dr., Alexandria, VA 22312 is the Director of the North-American Variant Bank. Most Variants are now available from this one source.

Lewis Pulsipher, 423 Main St., Bellevue, MI 49021 is the Diplomacy World Variants Editor. All newly published variants are reviewed-described in Diplomacy World.

The following is an example of a variant with a new board and some minor rule changes. The map (opposite) is printed by the photo-offset method. PLEASE NOTE: One error on the map is that SERBIA is printed as a supply centre, it is not a supply centre, but a normal province. RISK counters or wargame counters may be used for units on this map. Thanks to Harry Drews for permission to reprint his variant.

NAPOLÉON'S EUROPE

designed by Gerald Drews
with assistance from Harry Drews

Rules: 1. All rules of regular Diplomacy apply, unless otherwise below.

2. There are seven major powers on the map: Austria-Hungary, France, Great Britain, Ottoman Empire, Prussia, the Russian Empire, and Spain.

Starting positions are:

Austria: A Corinthia, A Budapest, A Transylvania

France: F Brittany, F Provence, A Champagne

Great Britain: F Ireland, F Scotland, F London

Ottoman: F Greece, F Anatolia, A Rumelia

Prussia: F Pomerania, A East Prussia, A Silesia

Spain: A Castile, A Navarre, F Granada

Russia: A Circassia, F St. Petersburg, A Volhynia, A Moscow.

3. There are 41 Supply Centres in total. The winner is the player who first owns 17 supply centres at the end of a fall turn.

4. The first turn of the game is dated Spring 1795.

5. Fleets cannot move North Sea-Hanover-Baltic Sea. Instead they have the choice of either North Sea-Denmark-Baltic or North Sea-Sweden-Baltic. Fleets cannot move directly from the Aegean Sea to the Black Sea. They must move F Aegean-Rumelia-Black or F Aegean-Anatolia-Black. Rumelia and Anatolia are single coasted. An army can move directly from Rumelia to Anatolia. An army can move directly from Denmark to Sweden. An army cannot move directly from Naples to Sicily.

Designer's Comments: This variant was designed as to force some early confrontations. This is the most clear cut way to have a player's diplomatic skill made apparent. If you can't cut the mustard early then you may be zonked. The supply centres are distributed in a very uneven manner. They lie so tempting and inviting for every power except Russia. But can you trust your neighbours enough to forget about your borders and go after the supply centres (the neutral ones)? An early alliance in this game will be able to roll right over the opposition if it is disorganized. Russian access to many neutral centres is limited at first, but there are built in compensations.

Some liberties have been taken with history. France is weakened and Prussia and the Ottoman Empire strengthened, specifically to provide for an interesting game. I would appreciate all comments. At least try the game out. We hope the game is interesting and allows for varied strategies for each country.

(Harry Drews, P.O. Box 282, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. N2G 3X9)

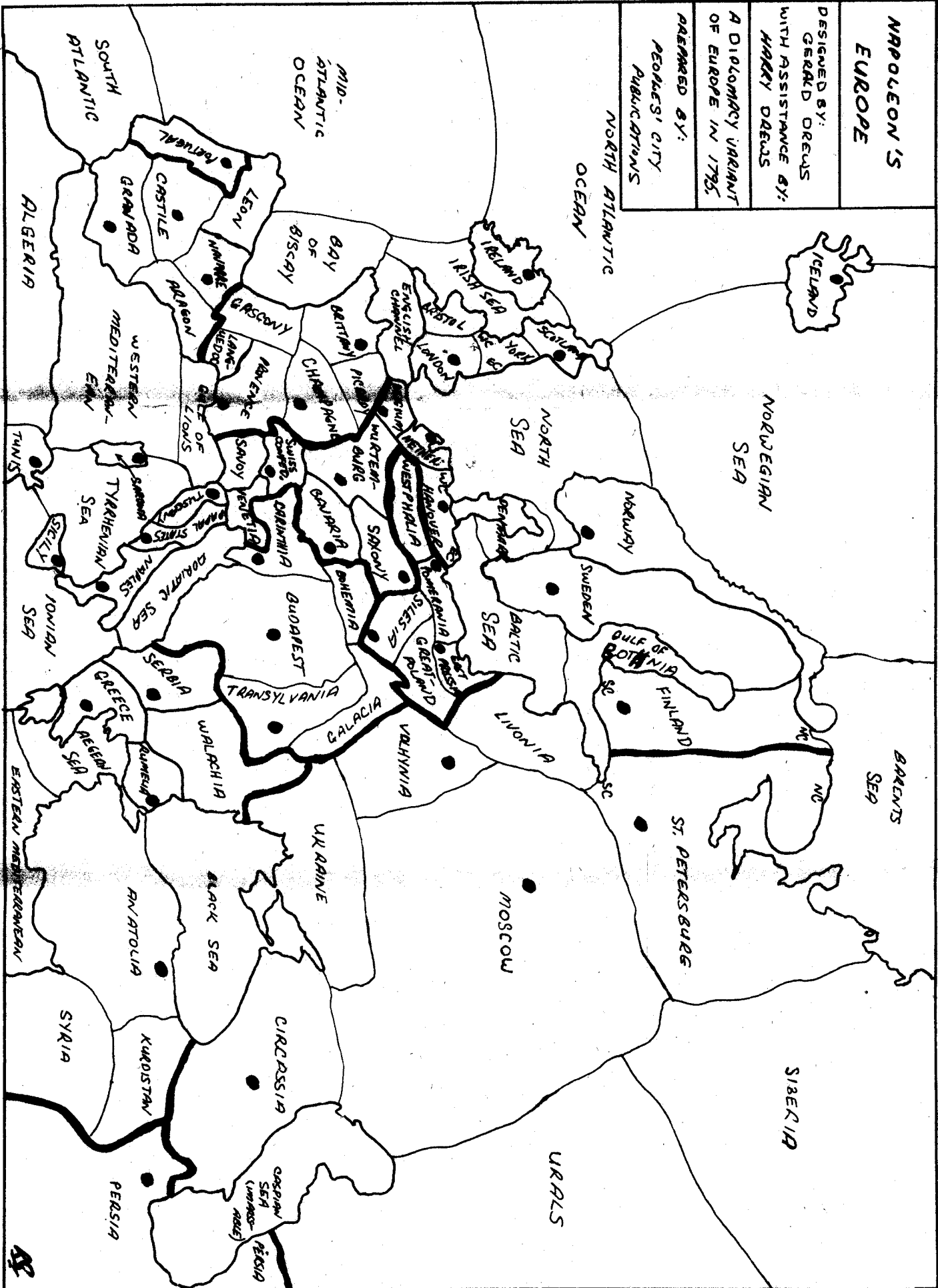
Remember: Please note the error on the map! Serbia is not a supply centre as indicated. Thankyou.

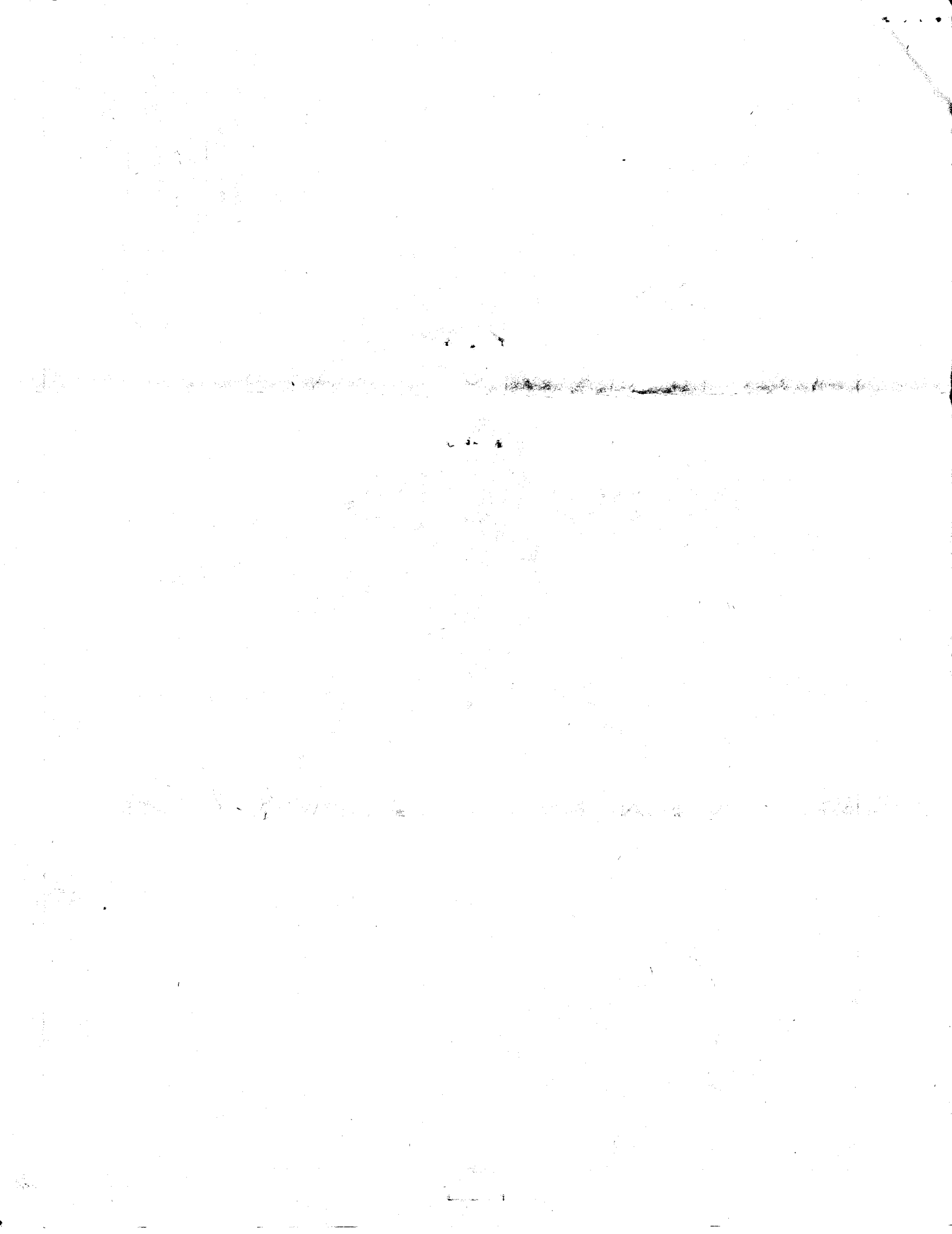
**NAPOLEON'S
EUROPE**

DESIGNED BY:
GERARD DREWS
WITH ASSISTANCE BY:
MARKY DREWS

A DICTATORIAL VARIANT
OF EUROPE IN 1795.

PREPARED BY:
PEOPLES' CITY
PUBLICATIONS





This sheet is prepared as a supplement to the CEPHEIDS, in order to provide an up-to-date listing of game openings in the Diplomacy hobby. The bulletin is prepared irregularly, updated when ever we hear of sufficient new openings to make the previous sheet dated. Included are current subscription rates, and gamefees where applicable. Most publishers will send a sample copy of their zine for a stamp.

DIPLOMACY OPENINGS

Len Lakofka (644 W. Briar Place, Chicago, IL 60657) has openings for novice players only. The gamefee is \$6. or \$8. for North American Airmail (\$11. for Foreign Air Mail). These games will be carried in LIAISONS DANGEREUSES. Subs to LD are \$2/8 issues, \$2.35 by N.A. Airmail, or \$3./8 Foreign Airmail. New Players may standby in current games at NO COST. Ditto.

Laurence Gillespie (23 Robert Allen Dr., Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. B3M 3G9) has openings at \$5.75 (\$5. for IDA Members), a sub to ZEPPELIN! is included. Sub rates to: ZEPPELIN! are 12/\$2. Ditto.

Dave Kadlecek (1447 Sierra Creek Way, San Jose, CA 95132) has openings at a gamefee of \$1.50 plus a sub to SPICULUM. Subs are 10/\$2. Ditto.

Don Efron (1823 Dacotah Dr., Windsor, Ontario. N8Y 1S4) has openings in regular diplomacy at \$3. plus \$3. one year subscription. Ditto.

Michael Homeier (238 N. Bowling Green Way, Los Angeles, CA 90049) has openings in regular diplomacy for \$1. gamefee plus subscription. Subscriptions are 12/\$2.50. Ditto.

Harry Drews (P.O. Box 282, Kitchener, Ontario. N2G 3X9) has openings in PAROXYSM. Gamefee is subscription plus 15¢ per move G.M. fee, plus \$5. refundable deposit (refunded if you don't drop out). Subscriptions to PAROXYSM are 10/\$2. or 9/\$2. N.A. Airmail. Ditto.

DIPLOMACY PUBLICATIONS

DIPLOMACY WORLD (c/o Walt Buchanan, R.R.#3, Lebanon, IN 46052) is a non-game zine devoted to presenting articles on play, ratings systems, and general information to the hobby's players. This professionally printed magazine also includes a demonstration game. Sub rate is \$4. per year (issued quarterly). Walt will send you a sample if you'll send him a couple of stamps. Photo-Offset.

Another publication I strongly recommend is IMPASSABLE. Impassable is more of a "gamezine" but John Boyer, its publisher, always has a good lot of general interest articles and letters. Also maintains a good list of game openings. Very reliable. John Boyer, 117 Garland Dr., Carlisle, PA 17013) Subs are 12/\$2. or 6/\$1. Mimeo.

Len Lakofka offers an introductory zine for novices called KALEIDOSCOPE. For a free copy write Len at 644 W. Briar Place, Chicago, IL 60657. A stamp to pay for postage would be appreciated.

THE INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY ASSOCIATION'S DIPLOMACY HANDBOOK released this summer at the annual Diplomacy Convention is still available. The handbook is a 78 page mimeographed production which includes articles on good play, tactics, and general interest. Hoosier Archives' Demonstration Game 1972-CR is reprinted in full with analysis by Doug Beyerlein. Available to IDA Members for \$2. Non-members for \$3. Write: John Boyer, 117 Garland Dr., Carlisle, PA 17013).

Incidentally, if you are not a member of the International Diplomacy Association, you should consider joining. The IDA publishes a bi-monthly newsletter (approx. 12 pages) to its members called DIPLOMACY REVIEW. Your dues contribute to such worthwhile projects as the IDA Novice Packet, Game Insurance, and Variant Diplomacy Information. Dues are \$2. per year. Write the Vic. President/Treasurer: Walt Buchanan, R.R.#3, Lebanon, IN 46052.

DIPLONACY VARIANT OPENINGS

J. Antosiak (422 East Ave., Le Grange, IL 60525) opening of Youngstown Variant in ANSCHLUSS, gamefee \$4.

A&T Burkacki (13201 Dwyer, Detroit, MI 48212) opening of Bioplomacy Variant in RAGWEED, gamefee \$1. plus postage.

Don Efron (1823 Daotah Dr., Windsor, Ontario, Canada. N8Y 1S4) has openings of Youngstown Variant and Hard Choice in Brainwave. Gamefee \$3. plus sub of \$3./year.

Bob Hartwig (5030 N. 109th St., Longmont, Colorado. 80501) has an opening in Anarchy in his zine Peduck News. Gamefee \$2.

David Head (Box 1232, Huntsville, Ontario, Canada! POA 1K0) has openings in Antigonis Isles, and Atlantica I in Arrakis. The gamefee is \$6 (\$5 for IDA members).

David Kadlecck (1447 Sierra Creek Way, San Jose, CA 95132) has the following openings with the following gamefees: Scacchomacy \$1; Middle Earth VII \$1.50, Third Age II \$1.50, and Youngstown \$2. All gamefees plus sub of SPECULUM @ 10 for \$2.

Scott Rosenberg (182-31 Radnor Rd., Jamaica, NY 11432) has openings in 1618, 260 AD, Dilatory, Diluvian, Pacifica, and Stab-Happy in THE POCKET ARMENIAN. Subs to the POCKET ARMENIAN are 8/\$2. Inquire about gamefees.

We hope that you will be able to find enough satisfactory openings from this list to keep you happy. If you have any problems, or questions, please don't hesitate to write any member of the Novice Committee. Our addresses are on page 1 of the Cenheids. Thankyou.
(Print on lined paper)

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