

DIPLOMACY DIGEST

Issue #106
June 1987
Potpourri

Mark L Berch
492 Naylor Place
Alexandria VA 22304

Circulation: 90
Subs: 10/\$5.00
Europe: 3/E1

This issue, like all potpourri issues, will be used as a sample, so please allow me to introduce myself. This is the zine for the reader; no postal games have been run, or will ever be run here. I don't do other games, or sports or science fiction or movie reviews or whathave you. Even my personal life occurs very infrequently. But when it comes to the game and hobby of Diplomacy, I cover everything: Openings ratings, humor, hobby history, gamesmastering, publishing, tactics, press, ethics, face to face, and a dozen other areas. Usually, each issue is devoted to a theme. The mainstay of the zine is reprints, and of course my commentary on them. I have an archives of over 7000 zines to draw from. This allows me to reach into the past, into zines so obscure that only a few dozen people ever saw them, into zines from Europe and Australia. All back issues are kept in stock, and subscribers may order whichever ones correspond with their interests.

The zine has been in operation for almost ten years, but I'm afraid I have to undercut that image of stability a bit, for this summer will be a bit of a trial. We are, for the first time since 1975, moving. Our new address will be 11713 Stonington Place, Silver Spring MD 20902, but please don't use that before July 8 (there will be another reminder next issue). Anyhow, the archives will be packed up in a couple of weeks, and this summer will be a very busy one, since the house is going to need some work. I have pulled out some material for an issue, but I'm also going to try an experiment that I've been wanting to do for some years. Enclosed should be a sheet of some questions. I intend to take your responses, and my comments, and make it a "You Be the GM!" theme issue. I prefer, but do not require, that you send it to me in camera ready form (typed on white paper, single spaced with a decent ribbon). Anyone whose material I can use, and is in that form, will get a free issue added to his or her sub. In addition, if your response comes in early enuf, I may append my reply, and send it back to you for any further comments you might have, so as to more fully develop the issue, and make it a more authentic dialogue. So send in your thoughts as soon as you can. Don't feel that you have to answer all the questions; just the ones where you have something to say. Altho these are posed in the form of particular situations, the questions reflect, I hope, underlying issues. And of course I hope you find the process entertaining. Try to be concise, but take the space to go into any question with whatever depth you feel is necessary.

Enclosed is probably the last Runestone Ballot that you'll receive. If you've put this off, take the time to fill it out. Unlike a lot of other aspects of the hobby, this one treats everyone the same, pubbers and subbers alike --- each get just one vote each. Pubbers who have done well deserve your (collective) vote of confidence. The others, well, sometimes the jolt can be the impetus for needed changes. And don't forget then Diplomacy Alliance Against Cancer.

AN ABC OF DIPLOMACY DOUBLE-TALK

((This originally appeared in the British zine Chimera, by Dave Tucker, and was recently reprinted in Ode. I've edited it some, and then added some more of my own))

Carefully considered: I've not had time to read it.

Correct me if I'm wrong: Don't contradict

Everybody's entitled to their own opinion: You don't know what you're talking about.

I'd be grateful if: You had better do it or else

I don't mind constructive criticism, but: Mind your own business

I'll get in touch: You won't be hearong from me

I'm sure you're right: I'm sure you're wrong

I must have gotten it wrong: I'm right, but there's no point in arguing.

In depth: Too long

Off the record: I've told everyone

Strictly off the record: I've told 20 people

Sorry about the misunderstanding: I've been lying again

A demilitarized zone: A place I want to occupy before you

I'll be honest with you: Prepare for a barrage of lies

With due respect: Thinking very little of you as I do

You and I both know: You don't know but I'm telling you

You will appreciate the fact that: You will not like the fact that

I'm sure your ideas are better than mine: I'll let you think your ideas are better than mine

He's a damn good player: Attack him, not me

May I suggest the following: Do the following and don't argue

((And now some new ones))

I've always wanted to try this opening: I've never been able to find anyone gullible enuf to go along with this opening

Your letter didn't get here in time: I didn't want to do what you asked.

Whichever plan you do, let me know: I can stab you either way

It was so obvious I neglected to mention that: I knew you wouldn't like it.

We can sort out the S.Cs later: My barganing position will be stronger later

I had completely forgotten that Belgium was yours: You foolishly left

Belgium open

My disorder was accidental: It was deliberate.

My disorder was deliberate: It was accidental

My fleet-to-army ratio was getting unnaturally low: Fleets can reach your SCs faster than armies

France told me over the fone: France said nothing of the sort

The tactic you suggested hadn't occured to me: I was hoping you wouldn't notice that plan

The plan has major risks: The plan has risks that I have to take

The plan has minor risks: The plan has risks that you have to take.

I think we trust each other enuf now to skip the arraigned standoffs: I'm finally ready to attack you.

I get only short term benefits: I get to build right away

You get the long term benefits: It'll be a long time before you ever build

A 17-17 draw is a very satisfying conclusion: I can't figure out any way to get my hands on the 18th center

F Mid-Spa(nc) is such a rare FO1 move that I overlooked it: I'm attacking Tunis in FO2.

WHAT IS A WIN ?

((By longstanding Hobby tradition, a ratingsmaster determines which games will be rated in his system. They will normally rate all games except those held to be irregular by the BNC, but they are free to rate other games as well, or to set additional requirements. The following is a letter from Len Lakofka, the Curator of the Rogues' Gallery Rating System. It concerns 1972AK, in which John Boyer was voted a win with 12 centers, and appeared in JASTRAZB #26 $\frac{1}{2}$, April 1974. It was written to the players of 72AK.

To have a rating system work, it must be standardized in its means of rating the players. This is essential so that every win and draw (with the same number of players) has equal weight. The accolade of a win or the creation of a stalemate shows ability and determination. Concessions when the conclusion is obvious, or draws that are voted because (1) considerable time has passed without positional change or (2) the position is deadlocked (or very nearly so) and members of an alliance will not stab one another also carry equal weight with clear cut wins and unbreakable stalemate positions declared a draw by the gamesmaster.

Each country begins with a set number of centers. To win he must gain 15 more centers (14 for Russia). If he gains only a few then how can his win have equal weight with a one in which his final total is 18 or more?

Concessions have become more and more common and voted draws that are not deadlocked (or even close) have occurred. It is my opinion that such nonsense will lead to Austria declared winner in Fall 1901 or a 7 way draw called in Spring 1902! Those are extremes, of course, but clearly a line must be drawn.

I have said that to win and be rated in ROGUES' GALLERY as a win, these conditions must be met: 1. The player has 18 or more centers after a fall move, or
2. The player must have more centers than any other player (i.e. active country) and that number must be 14 or more centers.

The conclusion of 1972AK does not meet either of these criteria and will only be rated as a French win if sufficient seasons are played out so that France has 14 centers and a vote is again taken. The total of all centers held by persons voting against the win (or draw) cannot equal or be greater than the supply center total of any one player voting for a win (or draw).

1972AK WILL be rated as a 4-way draw with Austria surviving by ROGUE'S GALLERY. Comments are always welcome. ---LEN LAKOFKA, Curator, ROGUES' GALLERY RATINGS

Gamesmaster replies:

I also invite comments and replies and will provide adequate space for their printing. However, my personal feelings are that the players, with full knowledge of the victory criteria of Diplomacy, voted a concession to John Boyer's France. That vote indicated that none would either try nor be successful in attempting to stop John from eventually fulfilling the 18 center victory criterion.

((I tend to agree with the latter comments. Diplomacy is won by a combination of persuasion and force. If you can persuade everyone else to go along with your win, then you've achieved the point of the game. There's no point in requiring everyone to go thru the motions of playing out another gameyear; it's a waste of time and money. And if players agree to a seven way draw in 1902, so be it. If the ratingsmaster feels that the players have voted a non-sensical conclusion to the game, then he should simply refuse to rate the game. But to assign an outcome to the game (here, the 4-way draw) that the players never agreed to is to act in an arbitrary manner))

CAPORETTO

((More openings have been created for Italy than any other country. This one is a bit unusual, in that it doesn't reveal itself until 1902. It is by Gil Neiger, and comes from Pouch #53, March 1974. This was the 1st Anniversary issue, and ran 77 pages, considered then to be an astounding accomplishment even for a zine with 3 editors))

In Duncan Smith's recent series of articles on Diplomacy openings he mentioned for Italy the Western and Eastern Lepanto. However, he left out the Northern Lepanto, or Caporetto opening.

I have never seen this opening used or used it myself. Therefore, the basis of this article is basically tactical. Caporetto is well known as the defeat that the Austrians and Germans dealt to the Italians in 1917 (Aus A Tri-Ven, Ger A Tyr S Aus A Tri-Ven, see A Farewell to Arms), but it is not so well-known that Caporetto was an Austrian town, and that the Italians had dealt several defeats to the Austrians along the Isonzo line in the previous year.

The opening generally assumes an Italian position after the first year of F Ion, F Nap, A Tun, and A Ven. The Spring 1902 moves would be F Ion-Adr, F Nap-Ion, A Ven-Tri, A Tun holds. If the move to Trieste succeeds (a reasonable assumption), then the Italians are in excellent shape. A supported convoy is then possible into Albania, giving a support on either Greece or Serbia. Or, the A Tri can be supported if necessary.

If the move to Trieste fails, one can still support oneself to Trieste in the fall, and make the convoy unsupported.

An alternative is that if Trieste is left vacant after Spring 1901, and it will be vacant in the Fall, one can move A Ven-Tri in Fall 1901, building an army in Venice, with the F Nap. Either way you are in a strong position after 1902.

Unfortunately, this opening requires several things to be true to succeed. France must be allied or neutral. Try to stimulate an Anglo-German alliance to attack France. You must have either Turkey or Russia (not both; although Germany may be a possible substitute) on your side. Turkey should prove to be quite awkward. Both Italy and Turkey are Mediterranean sea-powers at heart. However, an alliance with Russia is not impossible, and it may be the key to stopping the Austro-Turkish.

As with most stoppings of the Austro-Turkish, with this move, it is best smelled out before the first moves. If that occurs, Russia should move A Gal-Vie in the Fall (obviously moving A War-Gal in the Spring). If by some freak chance Italy can get into Venice in the first year, Austria (and the Austro-Turkish) is dead, and act on your own instincts. If not (don't try if you can't), Italy should support Russian A Vie-Tri in Spring 1902. This will usually work, though it can't be guaranteed. If it succeeds, the Austrian

position is torn in two, and cannot hold. Don't worry about the Russian A Tri blocking your expansion. He usually should be able to get into either Vienna or Budapest in the Fall, and if he can't, you can always oust him yourself, but this is not advised.

It is important that Turkey not get Sevastopol in the first year. Otherwise he can get a supported attack on the Ionian in Fall 1902. But usually this can be avoided if Russia is competent.

The beauty of Caporetto is that it is a wait-and-see move. By Spring 1902 any Anglo-German alliance will be formed, and a possible Russian alliance will be there, if either of the above are to appear at all. If they aren't, there are other moves for Italy.

(If your diplomacy has been careful, this should catch Austria by surprise, since it is based on 1901 moves that Austria will consider anti-T. The problem is that Turkey will likely consider you hostile --- not a good environment to go off attacking Austria. Supporting Russia into Tri in S02 may seem awfully generous, but the reverse (Russia support A Ven-Tri) will fail if Austria tries to expell Russia, as would seem likely. The one exception would be if the attack came from Tri (e.g. S02: A Bud S A Tri-Vie. If you can talk Austria into doing this, see if you can get Russia to go along with letting that attack succeed, you get into Tri, and then you support Russia back into an Austrian center in F02.

As Gil points out, this will work nicely with either T or R as ally, but the alliance with T is, I suspect, the better choice. Its safer to attack Austria with Turkey friendly and Russia hostile than vice versa. Plus, if Turkey takes a cooperative attitude, IT should have a good shot at taking both Ser and Gre in 1902, giving you 2 builds if Tri can be taken.))

THE STORY OF G8B

((This account of an early postal game come from Doug Beyerlein, and appeared in Voice of Doom #83, August 1983. Its extremely rare that someone will write about a game more than 10 years after it ends))

This game was started by Stephen Hueston in his zine, The East Ones. The announcement of the players and country assignments went out around New Year's Day. Bill Stewart, a local player, was assigned Austria and Rod Walker had Italy. Within the next couple of weeks Bill's father had a very serious heart attack and was placed in the hospital. Understandably, Stewart during this period lost all interest in Diplomacy, and when the deadline for the S01 orders came the GM ... had no orders ... from Stewart. After having no luck reaching Bill, Steve then called me, and asked if I would take play of Austria. Without the slightest idea of who had made alliance offers to Stewart and who had not, I ordered Austrian units to defend against all ... neighbors. My S01 orders were: F Tri-Ven, A Vie-Gal, A Bud-Ser ((Nowadays, this would be called the Hedgehog Opening, southern variation))

Following the publication of the S01 moves I received a letter from Walker asking for an Italian-Austrian alliance. I accepted his

offer at once as it appeared that my eastern neighbors were working for my demise. As time went on our alliance was working well and it was just a matter of time before we had eliminated R, T, and F. As we were the only two real powers on the board we knew that one or the other of us would win the game unless we decided to go with a 2-way draw. We therefore agreed to the 17-17 split to keep peace in the alliance.

As time went on, I was fighting the Germans and Walker was beating back the English. As I smashed my way into the German homeland I soon reached the point where I had 15 centers to Rod's 13. Altho I was committed to the tie, I started playing with the possibility of a stab and the quick gain of 3 SCs to give me the victory. At this time in the game, Hal Naus had taken over as GM while after a turnover of the English and German players, Andy Phillips and Conrad von Metzke had taken over these two countries respectively. After much thinking, and debating with myself I wrote to both Phillis and von Metzke and asked if they would help me if I stabbed Walker. This was a mistake. Conrad then mentioned my letter to Rod, and Rod reported the fact back to me as Rod apparently thought that Conrad was trying to get Rod to break our alliance. Why Conrad never showed Rod my letter is beyond me. Anyway my stab came in F13 when I took Ven and Kie from Italy plus picking up Swe from the Germans. That would have won the game except that Walker took Spain with support, forcing my fleet to retreat. I had blown the stab for F13, but by F14 I knew I could pick up 3 additional Italian centers, thus guaranteeing my victory. It was soon after the stab when a letter from Walker arrived. The letter had to be one of the best --- if not the best --- diplomatic letters ever written. It directly pierced my conscience for doing such an evil deed to one of my closest friends in Diplomacy. It was quite a while before I could sit down and write a reply, but I finally did. Rod then replied to that letter and asked for a continuation of our alliance and the draw.

I now had another very difficult decision to make and wished that the game had ended in F13 with my stab. I finally decided to tell Rod that I was going ahead with the Austrian Win. The very day that I was going to write the letter I received Barataria #1 from John McCallum announcing the start of 1972BD. As unbelievable as it may seem once again I was to play Austria; Walker, Italy! I knew that I would be forced into a war with Italy in 72BD unless I promised Walker a draw in 68B. Therefore, I told Rod that I had reconsidered and would give him the draw in 68B. We concluded an alliance in 72BD that was initially aimed at Walk Buchanan's Turkey --- but then that is another story. ((For those interested, Walt's account of that one appears in DW #6))

I was then faced with the problem of wanting the win in 68B, but was unable to produce it myself. In 68B Rod wanted very much to annihilate Phillip's England and the key to doing that was the English Channel. Therefore, I wrote Andy Phillips and described the situation where if he would let Walker throw the English fleet out of the Channel, Andy could refuse to retreat it. This would give Austria the majority of the units on the board ((ie Austria would then have 17 out of 33 units on the board)) (the victory criterion used in the original ((pre-1971)) GRI Rulebook) and the win. Phillips agreed to the plan as otherwise he would end up with zero centers and this way he would at least survive. Now we just had to wait for Rod to attack the English Channel with support and the game would be over.

Finally, in S15 (Sept 1972) Walker smashed into the

Channel and ... it was done. But then Naus called for F15 orders because by his HouseRules a game could only end at the end of a gameyear after the winter builds and removals, even tho the annihilation came during the summer retreat season. ((The Rulebook said victory occurred whenever a player had a majority of units. Variations from the Rulebook are tolerated less now than they were then)). Anyway, Walker did not send in his F15 orders, von Metzke moved his German Fleet into Fdi (giving G a build, but nowhere to build) and I had officially won 68B without attacking Italy ((The deal, tho, was that there would be a draw, not just no-attacks)). This was my 7th win and was only marred by the news that Rod was dropping out of the Diplomacy Hobby. After such a good battle it was too bad to see him go.....

((This essay is a good reminder that Diplomacy, after all, is a game about people, and personal factors affect nearly all postal games. By modern standards, this game might well be rated as irregular, since the other players were not told in advance about Reyerlein's entry. The immediate yanking of a player for a S01 NMR, called "Goodby Charlie", is a good plan and one that I personally prefer to S01 neutral orders, but it should be done with a deadline extension and notification to other players. I seem to recall Randolph Smyth entering a game once as Russia under similar conditions, giving him the perfect excuse to open with the octopus, i.e. F Sev-Bla, A War-Gal, A Mos-Stp. But thats another story))



((Our next item comes from Fthil the Frog, Second Cycle #11, Nov 1977. In it, the editor John Piggott is replying to a letter from James O'Fee in which he expressed the view that the British system of FW combinations seemed inferior to the US style of WS combinations. As part of his long response, he included this digression, which has no discernable direct relationship with the question, but which did raise an interesting issue, and ,more to the point, did allow Piggott to toot his own horn.))

...What do you think of these immortal lines from War Bulletin 5 (Oct 1970), for instance? "John Piggott, of fiery tempered Italy, attempted a double-cross whose magnitude verges on the unpronounceable, and whose daring and imagination surpasses all but the most monstrous designs conceived by the devious-minded creatures that stalked the earth in ancient times, when the earth itself was freshly spawned out of the terrible energies that, fortuitously, no longer exist in our universe today" Shriek!! Now you know where I got my flowery language; that was my housemaster at school (now deceased, unfortunately) who used to say such things as "Oh, miserable, wretched boy, you have spread alarm and dency throughtout the whole form" ("Form" I think was "class". Ah, that GMS would write that way these days, but things tend to the co... these days. Ocassionally, you will see derisive comments made about how old timers (e.g. Rod Walker) wistfully recall the kind of writing seen in the "Golden Age" of the hobby. Those derisive comments come from people who never saw that writing. Some of it had a kind of flair that you just don't see anymore))

What I had done in that WB game was to write a "final, incontrovertable" set of orders on my official movement order form and

and send it to my would-be ally as "proof" of my good intentions, with an instruction that he was to forward it to the GM. Then (you guessed it) I produced a forgery of the order form and wrote a second, different set of orders, and sent it to Dave Berg ((the GM)) with the instruction, "These orders will supercede all previous sets - even final, incontrovertible ones!" To my annoyance, Dave disallowed this second set; in the face of vigorous argument, he ruled that in the future nobody would be permitted to submit non-retractable moves, but refused to reverse his decision over the present situation, adding for my benefit that I should consider myself not a war victim, but an innovator. As it turned out, it didn't make any difference in the long run; by 1905 everyone except me had dropped out of the game anyway, and so I was able to coast home with an easy win.)

((If you want to call that a win. They generally don't use standbys in Britian, and you can see what sometimes happens. GMS who pride themselves on having very complete sets of HRS might want to check them to see if they even mention the fact that a player is entitled to change his orders prior to deadline. By custom, virtually all postal GMS have permitted this (I know of only one, Charles Reinsel, who limited this right), but I can't recall ever seeing a set of HRS which set this forth. I tend to agree that its best if a GM does not permit "FINAL" orders, altho in general, I'm loath to endorse rules which limit what a player can do (except in cases where his actions interfere with the GMS ability to run the game). However, I think in this situation, it was proper for Berg to say that in the future, "FINAL" would be ignored, but stick to his original ruling. A reversal of policy should only apply to the future, because if a policy can be retroactively reversed, there's no point in having any policy in the first place. If a GM feels free to either follow a policy, or to reverse it, where does that leave the player? If Piggott's would-be ally correctly judged that Berg's policy was/would be to honor the "FINAL" label, then he should be entitled to rely on that policy, even if Berg would later decide the policy was unwise. Another issue was then raised in the last part of Piggott's discussion:))

Mick Bullock((the British Assistant BNC)) please note: Your records are at fault here. You have 1970BU recorded as a two-way draw, I/G, but I was actually ordering Germnay's units (Hartley Patterson ((the GM who replaced Berg)) will confirm this) and the correct result for this game was a win for Italy. OK?

((I wonder. This is another example of how the postal game differs over there. Altho its a common practice in Britain, you would not find North American GMS permitting a player to officially order pieces of two countries. Not only that, the GMS take an active part in the deception of the other players. In that game, Piggott, tho the actual German player, would not have been listed as such --- the GM would continue to list the original player, thereby deceiving the other players as to the true state of affairs. Usually this fact comes out in the endgame statements -- or not at all.))

((The next rather gloomy essay comes from Claw and Fang #73, Dec 1976))

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POSTAL DIPLOMACY: A GAME OF LUCK

by Robert L. Stimmel

Diplomacy has been called a game of skill instead of luck, but this isn't true-- especially postal Diplomacy. Only if a person has played in a very large number of games does the factor of skill exceed the factor of luck (because of the Law of Averages).

It's very well known that some countries have almost twice the chance of winning as do the weakest countries. What about the advantage of being near a country which has lots of NMRs, NRRs, and NBRs? This is an especial advantage if such a player misses every other move and isn't replaced for missing two moves consecutively.

School teachers are alleged to be so incompetent in grading English Composition papers that a student with a popular name receives a much higher grade than one with an unpopular name. Wouldn't names also affect the choice of a Diplomacy ally? That may be all a player knows of another player (except for his address).

What about players who live far from other players? This is a major disadvantage. I don't do as well in eastern zines as I do in California ones. I'm in a Colonia game where 3 New Jersey players have combined against me. Could geography have been a factor? I don't know.

Many players use long distance phone calls for Diplomacy, but that is unfair to young players who cannot afford long distance calls. One player is said to have spent over \$200 on one game. (I'm not a young player.)

Sometimes a Gamemaster will lose orders.

Sometimes a zine will be lost in the mail or one's orders may be lost in the mail. (I usually send duplicates.)

In a Colonia game I recently had three enemies who all dropped out of the game at about the same time. Entirely luck! Two had good positions.

One way to increase one's rating is to form 3 or 4 player cartels and then play for a tie. I recently entered a game at Winter 1903. Three countries were playing for a three-way draw. Result was certain at the time I entered but I forced them to play until 1906 before agreeing to the tie. (I was then down to one unit, and they were beginning to quarrel amongst themselves.)

An example of a game of skill is "two-man" Colonia. (Colonia is similar to Diplomacy but much larger.) The regular Colonia map was designed by Fred Hyatt, 400 State St., Boerum Hill, Brooklyn, New York, 11217. I suggested it could be played as a two-man game. It involves a lot of work as 139 units are divided between only 2 players--if all the SC are occupied. Perhaps a tournament of 8 players could play for a National Championship. (It might require more than 3 years as 3 rounds would be required for finalists.) In my opinion, only advanced players able to adjudicate moves should consider entering such a tournament.

((One of the charms of Diplomacy is that it does not rely on the mechanism of chance, e.g. dice. Oddly, the one exception is the assignment of countries, which the Rulebook states is to be done by chance. This provision is violated in the fairly common practice of using country preference lists to assign countries. The next time you hear someone say --- as the BNC did recently --- that violating the Rulebook in a way not necessitated by the postal aspect of play is GM interference, just point to the use of country preference lists. That aside, luck does play a role in multi-player games, and the more players, the more luck. I've played 5 postal games of intimate Diplomacy (a 2-player version), and there's certainly less luck involved. Still, there are situations which amount to guesses with only the least trace of shading. Your A Yor guards Lon or Fdi against the enemy's F Nth, and there are cases where guesses at other odds are involved. Tournament Diplomacy where the scoring system is not revealed in advance introduces an element of luck: If your personal value system, or playing style happens to correspond with the secret system, you are lucky. For example, given a choice of a strong second, or a 5-way draw, you opt for the former. If the scoring system gives more points for the latter, well, you're not lucky. Which players are in the game can be a factor. If the lineup includes someone you've had a good alliance with in the past, someone who you are on bad "hobby" terms with or whatever, that's a luck factor too. I think Stimmel overstates the case somewhat, but luck is here.))

DIPCON

((Summertime is the right time for a DipCon report. This one is a small excerpt from a cheerful account by Tony Watson of DipCon 1978, appearing in his zine Ruritania #47 of July 1978. Most of it is his personal doings, with a strong California flavor, but so much of it deals with people like Tony, and Tom Mirti and Jerry Jones and Andy Cook, names that have little resonance in the hobby today. So I'll take a small piece of more general interest. This problem, I might add is a common one with reprinting Convention reports. Many of these are warm and entertaining, since the writer and the people are well known to many of the readers, but they don't reprint well))

...In general I was disappointed with the ((tournament part of)) DipCon. The tourney could have been organized a bit better; someone had suggested separating the PBM and local people and this would have been an excellent idea, since locals dominated many of the games. They were more adapted to FTF play (there is a difference) and a lot of the finesse and stealth of the type PBMs developed was lost to their more brutal tactics. Also, many were downright knothheads, tho that probably pertains to the whole crew of PBMs and locals more accurately. ((We faced this question in running DipCon in 1979 and 1982, and I don't agree. Mixed games are much better than all locals and all postal players. The less you know the others, the better, and thus, locals can "dilute" the PBMs and vice versa. Every effort should be made to break up combos of local players. For example, in this California tournament, Watson was one of several players from Las Vegas. Since there were at least 5 boards in the first round, it should have been easy to have no more than one LV per board, as I think there were no more than 4. Watson was quite up-front about this: "I suppose you could call the setup of the first round "lucky" for us Las Vegans: Mirti as Germany and I as Russia were in the same game....My chances of drawing were slim so I did the next best thing and slowly fed my centers to Mirti" --- who ended up with a 17-17 draw. In discussing the second round, he says, "I had already agreed with Mirti that we should, if given an opportunity like the previous evening, work to advance Mirti, since his tie of the previous round put him in good shape. It didn't work" --- they landed up on different boards. When local players make agreements before a game has even begun, its unfair to the other players. Its not so easy to stab someone if you know that you'll be spending many hours in a car with him on the way home. The same is true to some degree with postal players. The more of them are together in a game, the greater the chances that you get a pair with an active alliance in a postal game --- or an active war. When I set up the boards for DipCon in 1982, I tried to have exactly 2 or 3 postal players on each board, and was generally successful in making sure there were no more than one player from an given city in a game, tho there are limits on how well that can be done. And if postal and FTF players have different styles, so much the better. It will make for a more challenging game. It is true that some postal players will feel out of their element, what with the back-and-forth conversations, the hurley-burley atmosphere, the different sort of time pressure, etc. But they have advantages too. They are more experienced in the uncertain business of dealing with total strangers, as most local players deal with the same general crew. Postal players generally have a better knowledge of stalemate lines and more practice at long term planning, which FTF generally doesn't give much time for))

THE ZINE COLUMN # 98

Might as well start with the sad news; Europe Express has folded after 55 issues. This was the most honored zine in recent hobby history (in North America). Gary packed a tremendous variety of writing into EE, and was tireless in his efforts to get Europeans to write for EE. From playful mystery-picture contests to serious discussions of US*Europe relations, from hobby nooze to the game itself, EE tried to cover it all. I particularly enjoyed his headline-news history of World War I. And for those of you who think WWI is irrelevant history turn your eyes to the middle east. The Iran-Iraq war around Basra bears great resemblance to WWI trench warfare. The diplomatic situation in the middle east generally bears soe striking resemblances to the pre-WWI situation. Incidentally, altho Dick Martin in the April House of Lords gives EE a 70% chance of winning the Runestone Poll, the zine isn't eligible.

Two of my favorite zines are returning. Greatest Hits is back in a no-games format. Golly --- I don't know why I didn't think of that. Costaguana returns after a short break with another revolutionary plan: He's going to charge for the zine what it costs in printing and postage! People are so creative these days.

The biggest nooze from my, ego-centric point of view is the upcoming publication of volume II of the DW Anthology Series: The Collected writings of Mark Berch. Its coverage is thru DW #39, and it runs about 150 unreduced pages, for easier reading. Nearly all of the essays are accompanied by some commentary by me, explaining perhaps how the article came about, why I wrote it, connections with other essays, etc. In some cases, I have revised or amplified my views. The presentation is in chronological order, so to some extent, you'll be able to see how my writing evolved. Also included is a "Shep Rose" episode never before printed (it was turned down by Kathy Byrne for DW) and a bio. Some of this material is already out of print, and more will enter this category as back issues are sold out. Price is \$12, but may go up after publication (which will be quite soon), and any subber who buys will get a free issue of DD added to his or her sub (just let me know). Also to be available are vols III and IV. The former covers the over 50 variant games and articles on variants and the variant hobby from DW 1-39. That includes maps, rules, and discussion of variant design. DW has printed some of the best variants ever created. Vol IV covers the demo games --- all of them completed so far, including the moves and commentary --- an especially valuable collection for newcomers. Both III and IV are close to 200 pages, and will also be \$12 each. Prior to June 1, the three volumes can be had for \$30. (Larry Peery, Box 8416 San Diego, CA 92102)

Larry is also starting up "Diplomacy World News", a quarterly (alternating with DW) covering only news relating to the game or hobby of Dippy --- no games, editorials, etc. The price is only \$2 for 4 issues. Larry is also asking publishers who use it to pay a small fee (based on their circulation). This is certainly a novel idea --- Dipzine as UPI --- and I franly don't think that its going to be worth the controversy such an idea will engender (tho once DWN is established and people get hooked on it, it might be possible to switch to that). He also offers to print and include a 8½ x 11 flyer at \$10 per side, which may attract some new pubbers (I could easily see the value of, say, 2 pubbers splitting a page at \$5 each). For such a zine to work without a killing amount of work, pubbers will have to cooperate by sending him short blurbs to use, and Larry is going to have to recognize that to get this off the ground, he ought to drop, for now, the use charge and switch

to a bimonthly schedule as soon as possible. I can see this having great value for small pubbers who want to publicize special projects. Incidentally, if you are interested in helping with this project, get hold of Larry and see what can be worked out.

A couple of examples of how-they-do-things-differently-over-there come from the British zine Dolchstoss. GM Richard Sharp mentions almost in passing that the newest game features two brothers at the same address (as R-A). And it's not as he's desperate to fill a game --- in 1986, he filled ten of them. Richard also reported that if a player rang him up to say, "Sorry-must change my orders-only just got the read-judication", he would not volunteer the fact that there had been no re-adjudication (it was a forgery). In fact, he will bend over backwards to try to make a swindle succeed. "I often bend my own rules to avoid an NMR" he states, but "if I know a swindle is being tried, I shall apply the HRS more tightly than usual, tho not rigidly". A GM whose usual leniency toward late orders evaporates when he learns of an NMR-inducing swindle is not one that I'd play under. "I shall be on the side of the swindler" he proclaims. This, to me, is every bit as ethical as being on the novice side, i.e. having one rule for a novice, a different one for others.

You may recall that I previously touted my "War by Automatic Pilot" plan for handling the first NMR (Player is charged with NMR, stnadby called, but instead of all-units-hold, the previous seasons moves are repeated). It won't reduce the number of NMRs, but it should reduce their impact, especially if the NMRer is part of a stalemate line, as his supports will be retained. Anyhow, the BNC has recently ruled that this is not irregular, so long as it isn't used in a winter season (which is a minor aspect of the plan). I've prepared a letter with two suggestions on how to get around the winter problem, and if anyone is interested, just write. Anyhow, Alan Stewart, 702 - 25 St. Mary St. Toronto, ONT Canada M4Y 1R2 now has an opening in such a game, at \$5 in "your home currency". He is calling it the "Berch Continuation-of-Campaign Rule". He writes, "forget this WAP stuff -- "Automatic Pilot" sounds too mechanistic and turns people off, and inventions should be named after their inventor, thereby encouraging everybody to think up stuff to preserve their name in hobby history. WAP sounds like an ethnic slur." That latter point hadn't occurred to me. I thought WAP has the right sort of slightly cynical tone to it, and would be an easy name to remember. But if my best customer doesn't like the name, it's time to rethink. The new name is just as descriptive, and the ensuing public discussion has probably linked my name with the plan even more firmly (when the plan was first discussed in W/KK, the fact that I had created it wasn't even mentioned. Naturally, correcting that dreadful oversight was the first order of business!). So: The old name is out, the new name is in!

Time for a few last short takes. Dave Carter will be folding Sleepless Knights. This zine was apparently the workhorse of the Canadian Hobby in recent years in providing gamestarts. It also featured a particular brand of humor not seen in Canada since the days of Toronto Telegram... And finally, ODE reports that two British zines which folded in the late 70s have returned: Phyrric Victory and Eclypsor. Some people can leave, but they can't stay away!