

# DIPLOMACY DIGEST

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Potpourri

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If you are seeing DIPLOMACY DIGEST for the first time, greetings. There is no other zine in the hobby even similar to this one. This is the zine for the reader; no games have ever been run. And by and large, I don't cover sports, elections, other games, SF, beer, music, etc --- tho there are plenty of good zines for that. My personal life is mentioned very infrequently. What I do cover is the game and hobby of Diplomacy: GMing, publishing, hobby history, strategy and tactics, ethics, ratings, personalities, humor, openings, stabbing, losing --- and many many more. Most issues, unlike this one, are devoted to a single theme. The backbone of this zine is the reprints, plus my commentary on the essays. These are drawn from my archives of over 7000 zines. This allows me to reach into the past and across the oceans to gather material which deserves another audience. I have the well-known zines, and some so obscure only a few dozen people ever saw them. So whether the subject is Italy or GMing errors of Losing or whatever, I can bring together views from different times and different locales. All back issues are kept in stock, and subscribers can order complete runs, or zero in on just the topics that interest them. All single issues (except for rare oversized ones) are 11 or 12 pages. This is printed offset, and has been published regularly for well over 10 years. If you've any questions, just ask.

NEW ZINES

Carolina Command and Commentary Dave Hood 604 Winkerbell Chapell Hill, NC 27514. 50¢ per issue  
Cross Rifles Joseph Santella Old Rt 6, PD #8, Brewster NY 10509. \$8/year  
Lord of the Boards Ian Mitchell 347 Benjamin Rd Victoria BC Canada V8Z 4W1. \$2/5 Typically for Canada, a team effort.  
Benzene Mark Lew 438 Vernon #103 Oakland CA 94610 (60¢ per issue)  
Shrodinger's Cat Mike Dominskyj PO Box 702 Ignace Ont Canada P0T 1T0  
Take A Look Martin Lewis 95 Vicarage Rd Watford, Herts. WD1 8PJ, England  
Gamers' Anonymous Philip Reynolds 2869 Oak St Sarasota FL 33577  
Comrades in Arms Tom Swider 262-D Garfield Ave Collingswood NJ 08108

Thats a nice collection for the last few months. Benzene is not actually new, but is returning after about a two year break. Mark is one of the hobby's quirkier writers, and I'm delighted to see this zine back, tho he's not quite the same person he was before. There are no games, but you get a writer who tries hard to stand squarely in front of you so as  
*turn to middle of page 10*

Finding a very short strategy essay that goes beyond generalities isn't easy. This one comes from Impassable #10 (Sept 1972)

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR  
by  
Doug Beyerlein

To win a game of Diplomacy it is often very necessary to conquer an edge or corner of the game board. For countries like England and Turkey (and this is partially true for Russia and France) this is accomplished at the start of the game. However, for the other countries to gain such a valuable position this takes considerable effort. How to achieve such positions is the subject of this article.

Corner positions, such as England and Turkey, give those powers two advantages which none of the five other powers possess. The first is that they only have one front, which runs diagonally across the board, along which to fight. This means that they can never be caught in a two-front war. Secondly, their home supply centers are always behind a wall of units. Any interior country which moves in strength to one front always leaves the possibility of its other neighbors walking in from behind. Because of these advantages, England and Turkey will win or draw one game out of four, while Russia and France will win or draw one game out of five, and Italy, Austria, and Germany can only manage to win or draw one out of every seven games played. The task is then to find a way in which the interior powers (Italy, Austria, and Germany) and the edge powers (Russia and France) can gain the advantages of the corner powers (England and Turkey).

The way to accomplish this task is outwardly simple: kill England and Turkey as fast as possible. This is difficult, though not impossible, because of the strength the two corner powers derive from their two advantages mentioned above. For example, assuming that France, Germany, and Russia attack England, it will be either France or Russia (the edge powers) which will gain the advantages of the destroyed corner power. The interior power, Germany, will still be surrounded by new corner and edge powers. Thus, the task is doubly difficult for the interior powers. To illustrate these situations better, I have constructed the following chart. It explains who an interior or edge power should attack, the needed allies, and during which phase of the game.

INTERIOR POWERS

Country: AUSTRIA		
<u>Game Stage</u>	<u>Allies</u>	<u>Enemies</u>
Initial	Rus, Ita	Tur
Mid-Game	Ita, Eng	Rus
End-Game	Ita	Ger

Country: GERMANY		
<u>Game Stage</u>	<u>Allies</u>	<u>Enemies</u>
Initial	Fra, Rus	Eng
Mid-Game	Fra, Tur	Rus
End-Game	Fra	Tur, Aus

Country: ITALY (Western Attack)		
<u>Game Stage</u>	<u>Allies</u>	<u>Enemies</u>
Initial	Eng, Ger	Fra
Mid-Game	Ger	Eng
End-Game	Rus	Ger

Country: ITALY (Eastern Attack)		
<u>Game Stage</u>	<u>Allies</u>	<u>Enemies</u>
Initial	Aus, Rus	Tur
Mid-Game	Rus	Aus
End-Game	Ger	Rus

EDGE POWERS:

Country: FRANCE		
<u>Game Stage</u>	<u>Allies</u>	<u>Enemies</u>
Initial	Ger, Rus	Eng
Mid-Game	Rus	Ger, Ita
End-Game	Tur	Rus

Country: RUSSIA		
<u>Game Stage</u>	<u>Allies</u>	<u>Enemies</u>
Initial	Ita, Aus, Ger and Fra	Eng, Tur
Mid-Game	Fra, Ita	Aus, Ger
End-Game	Fra	Ita

As you can see from the above chart, it is in the interest of each interior and edge power to begin his attack against a corner power (England or Turkey). For Russia it is often possible to attack both England and Turkey at the start of the game. For the interior powers it is usually necessary to first destroy a corner power, then an edge power, and finally another interior power to win.

Although the chart, in my opinion, shows generally the easiest and quickest way to win, it is not the only way to win. Personalities will always influence alliance structures and therefore a player should be flexible enough to change his plans with the changing conditions. And if you get an interior or edge country in your next game, remember Buchanan's Law: "In Diplomacy, the equality of the countries is directly proportional to the quality of play."

# DECEPTION OF THE GM?

((The most common Houserule in postal Diplomacy is Thou Shall Not Deceive the GM. Rarely if ever will a GM try to define just what constitutes deception. Considering the extreme seriousness of the crime (most GMs will expell) this seems like a curious omission. Perhaps GMs feel that it will always be straightforward. Or perhaps they feel that a definition will tempt a player to find something just barely outside the definition. What follows is something which was (in my opinion) a rare case of an action at or near the borderline of GM-deception. This account comes from DIJAGH #4, Jan 1983, and was written by the GM, Glenn Taylor.))

## VITRO GAME 4 (Youngstown XII): A STUDY IN ETHICS AND PLAYING STYLES

At Vitro Laboratories, where I work, a number of games have been run in a format which is a sort of hybrid of face-to-face and phone play, often called in the hobby "school" games because they tend to occur in high schools or colleges ((In the earlier days of the hobby, some of these games got Boardman Numbers; I don't know whether they would get them now)). The format involves 1-3 moves per week (2 in our case) and most or all of the players working or attending classes at an institution, so face-to-face meetings are easy to set up. I find that one of these games in particular, which I ran, affords some fascinating insights into a problem of ... player-GM ethics which, tho not peculiar to this format of play, possesses some interesting subtleties therein... Game 4 was the first variant ... of the Vitro games; it was also the first with a prize fund (\$5 per player or a total of \$60, to be split 40-20 between the winner and second place)... ((extensive discussion of the game itself has been omitted))

...I found that in this format of play it was sometimes necessary to allow players to delegate the power to write their orders to others (whether the others were in the game or not), since people do get sick, miss work, go on vacation or business trips, etc. I treated the information of who was writing the orders for whom as public so that people couldn't give others the runaround: "You should be talking to X; he's writing my orders," with X then sending you to Y, etc. (I did allow those delegated to delegate others if they were unable to get orders to me, with no theoretical limit on this, except of course that if someone higher up on the chain changed his mind, that would supercede anything anyone lower down did.) This system seemed at least as suitable for "school" games as the various standby systems are for postal play.

Well, in EO4, Warren Naylor (India) had delegated his orders to Pick Dorsey (Russia). Barely before the deadline, I found an inter-office Mail envelope on my desk with Indian orders in it, unsigned, and in no handwriting that I recognized (something I'm usually very good at). This, combined with the fact that no one had ever submitted orders before by Inter-Office Mail (tho I'd never forbidden it) and that the later set of orders was strongly pro-British and pro-Italian, representing a radical shift in Indian policy, made me very suspicious. So I raced after Warren, who was leaving after lunch and was in a hurry. I told him this second set of orders had arrived and asked him if they were legitimate. He didn't bother to look at them, but stated that they were valid, assuming Dorsey had written them. After I did the adjudications, it was discovered that neither Dorsey nor Naylor, but someone unknown, had written them. I was very angry, since I had been deceived and a

player had been wronged. And there was a hell of a yell from the anti-Malz players ((Malz had gained much by the use of those orders)), which was certainly understandable. However, after considering the issues, I rendered my verdict: the orders would stand, because and only because Warren had endorsed them. He did so blindly, but that was his fault. He had a chance to look at them and failed to do so. I also took measures to prevent a recurrence: making inter-office mail an illegal format for submitting orders, and ruling that any set of orders left on my desk in my absence would be checked on by me. Maltz tried, with partial success to convince me and the others that he hadn't written them, and whoever had done so certainly could not have expected such a chancy scheme to work, but really would be trying to discredit Maltz or his allies by making it appear that one of them had attempted such a ploy ((Next we skip several pages and come to the second endgame statement by Richard Maltz))

.....I knew that this meant hostilities. I tried to think of a way out. I could not think of anything that had a chance of working but I conceived the idea of bogus orders in order to create confusion (I hoped). I knew that it could not possibly work. I did it. It worked. Warren identified the bogus orders as his and they were accepted. I told Richard Yarcheck about it just after I did it and we were both greatly amused --- when it worked we were astounded.

I did not and do not regard this as an illicit act. I see it as throwing sand in the face of the enemy. It was done to me (as GM) in a previous Vitro game. The major hemorrhaging which resulted was unwarrented (Horton condemned me in public but congratulated me -- "Smoooooth" -- in private) I do not apologize for it altho I apologize to Glenn for all the abuse he took from lesser players (abuse to which he should have been immune). It was Warren's mistake, pure and simple. It was not Glen's mistake or misjudgement - he acted according to the rules...

((In the next issue, there was a letter of general agreement from Peter Ansoff, who asked...))

With regard to Maltz's justification of the whole thing: did you have a general policy of verifying unsigned or otherwise questionable orders with the player involved? If so, then Maltz is right; he is not deceiving you since he knew that you would automatically check with Warren anyhow. If you did not have such a policy, then it sounds like a clear case of deception ((To this rather dubious line of reasoning, Glen responded as follows:))

Actually, I did not have such a policy clearly enunciated before the event, tho I certainly have done so since ((Of course, by Ansoff's "reasoning" such a policy would thus make Maltz's action non-deception, and thus more likely to occur --- exactly the opposite of the intended effect!)). Silly me, I thought it would not be needed, since it seemed intuitively obvious to me that impersonating another player to the GM destroyed the basic fabric of the game, and therefore everyone would know it would not be tolerated and, hopefully, would not do it. However, even if I had a stated policy of verifying questionable orders, and Maltz had made the attempt anyway, he would still have been attempting to deceive me and, if I had been able to identify him as the perpetrator, he would have been punished by expulsion....

((For me, there are two key facts. Together, they raise a real question as to whether Maltz's actions really were deception of the GM:

A. The orders were unsigned. A signature would have been a forgery, and thus a deception per se. But these unsigned orders don't explicitly state who they came from.

B. Proxy orders were permitted. If proxy orders were not permitted, the mere fact that these were Indian orders would be tantamount to saying that they were written by the Indian player, since only the Indian player can order the Indian units. But in a proxy-orders-permitted game, that's not true.

Thus, I believe a reasonable case can be made that these orders don't quite rise to the level of deception of the GM. They can be viewed as a legitimate attempt to get Warren to validate orders that he later won't like. I think it's entirely reasonable for a player to assume that a GM, presented with unsigned orders in a proxy game will try to verify them, and will not use them without such verification --- an assumption that turned out to be correct.

Incidentally, Maltz had another option in this sort of game. He could always claim that either Warren or Rick had given him a verbal proxy, so he was only doing what he thought he could do. The failure to sign could be explained as either a) an oversight or b) acting on instructions ("Don't sign them; Glenn will then check with me and that'll give me a chance to change my mind if I want"). Warren and Rick will both deny this, of course, but the GM will be unable to conclude that Maltz is lying. It's just one word against another, and either side could be lying. Without firm proof, no expulsion can take place. For all he knows the story could be entirely true. Warren may have done the whole thing to set up Maltz into submitting unsigned orders.....

It's a close point, but I don't consider his actions to quite be deception of the GM. For someone to be fooled, they have to make an assumption, and that's not Maltz's doing.))



((If you were to put out fifty issues, and you did them once a year, it could be a lifetime's work. If you did them once a week, it wouldn't even get you thru the year. Is a rapid pace a plus or a minus? For an exchange of views, we turn first to Dot Happy #8, Sept 1981. The editor, Allen Wells wrote an essay, "Reflection of a year in the hobby" --- his first year in the postal hobby, and that included the following:))

**Burnout.** Too many people are taking on too much, I will be the first to agree. It would be better to have a person doing half as much if he stayed around twice as long. In players this manifests itself in joining too many games in the beginning when the enthusiasm is high and the load per game is low. In GMs it is the temptation to start a lot of games at once to fill player pressure. To add too many people to the sub list. People should never add just 'one more thing' if they are near saturation. There will always be low times, busy times, times when you move and change jobs without even a single day off. Had I been so loaded that I wasn't really enjoying the hobby, my move might have gotten me to fold too!

((That triggered the following reply in the next issue from John Michalski, editor of Brutus Bulletin. The next comment then came again from Allen))

Re: the note on "burnout" in the last DH -- I beg to disagree. There may be people who burn out rapidly, but these are most often younger types who are real enthusiastic this month, maybe next month, but when Black Dots #6 is due, they have shifted their attention elsewhere. That's not what I call burnout, by the way: that's immaturity. You are right to applaud the hobby stalwarts who plug away, once a month, every month, with their 5-8 pages. They are useful and a credit to themselves and our hobby. However, they rarely produce great zines. Good zines, yes; reliable zines, yes; exciting zines? Action zines? One you'd sub to with no intention of playing in? No. No, the "top" zines, the ones you're glad to see in the mail even when you're not in any games, are ones whose pubbers are doing what you call "too much".

You are wrong to say it is better to have someone put out half as much for twice as long. I published 100 issues in 4 yewars - roughly every 2 weeks, a little more. Would the letter column, the feuds, the mudslinging/humor/BSing have been better once every 4 weeks for four more years? Definitely not! The reason BB gained some fame and mention here and there was because it was big and current, and because it was current, it got material that made it big (which then filled it faster, making it more current, etc., etc.). Now, perhaps BB was a special case you say. Well, let's look elsewhere. Black Frog last spring was coming out twice a week it seemed to me. No 2 were alike, few had contributions -- it was all Masters, or fakes by him. Clearly he was "burning himself out". But would BF be BF if it only came along every 3 or 4 weeks? What about VD? It's come out 18 straight weekends lately. Sure Brux outht to have been chasing skirts instead, but would VD be what it is if it were only 5-6 sheets each month? Hell no! VD is what it is precisely because it is put out by a character who would rather spend 4 months publishing at quadruple rate than do anything else. He really did answer his phone with a deep, rumbling "The-Voice-of-DOOMMM" when he lived alone; nuts? Sure! But hell, that's what makes a mediocre monthly warehouse into a great zine. You've got to be a little crazy. The crazier the better! Give me great zines for 3 years insetad of mediocre ones for 6 or 10 or 19 years anytime.

The hobby's best is put out by those who burn themselves out to do the best job they can, as much as they can. People pacing themselves are fine, but those exceeding the pace of the hobby are the ones who make it all worth while.

#### **My Comments:**

*Thanks John, a point definitely well made! You are, of course, right in saying that the biggest contributions to the hobby are made by people who are devoted to an almost insane degree, and that this devotion cannot last forever before the person tires from it.*

*However, I would say that most of the disagreements we have is over the definition of burn-out. I would say that a zine which is published intensely for 3 years has had a long, fruitful life. What I was considering to be burn-out is what you referred to as 'immaturity'.*

*In the sense which you use, I am almost definitely burning myself out. I do not expect to be publishing Dot Happy forever, quite possibly just until the games that I am starting finish. But who knows! On the other hand, my idea of burn-out is pushing your involvement in the hobby until you can't stand it any more, and then dropping out of sight...*

((For whatever its worth, Brutus Bulletin lasted 109 issues; Voice of Doom, 100 issues, and Dot Happy, 21 issues. My preferences color my views in this matter. In my view, BB produced an intensity not seen before or since. And Voice of Doom was the greatest dipzine of all time. In theory, rapid publication would imperil quality, but it hasn't turned out that way at all. I can no longer even manage to get 12 issues of DD out per year (I put out nine). I have little doubt that this would be a better zine (and with a higher circulation) if it were published more often. With a rapid pace of publication, not only is the zine more current, as John points out, but the interactions among the readers are more vibrant because response more quickly follows remarks, and it becomes closer to a true conversation. Besides, if you know that the "next round will be out in 1-2 weeks", you're more likely to sit down RIGHT NOW and write, rather than putting it off (and off and off). The monthly zine is the backbone of the hobby, but only because very few of those who publish can manage to put out a zine more frequently than that. Indeed, zines which appear less frequently than one per month have become significantly more common in the 80s.))



((Its actually pretty rare, but every so often you reach a board situation where you really do have the entire game, diplomatically and tactically, within your grasp. These times are worth relishing --- and writing about. I referred to one of these situation that I had, in the last issue. This was by Richard Hucknall, writing in his Fall of Eagles #50, October 1980. The set-up is a bit complicated, so unless you're very good at doing these things in your head, I'd suggest you set up the board and follow his description of a season where he really took charge of the game))

## MY FINEST HOURS

Some of the time, in the wheeling and dealing of postal Diplomacy, things go right for you. Some of the time they go sadly wrong. On very rare occasions you manage to pull off a coup which is either daring, imaginative, complex, or so unexpected that the memory of it stays with you over the years. In my fifteen or so postal games I can recall but a handful of such events where fate smiled kindly on me but each one is memorable for different reasons. This will, I hope, be the first article on each of these events. If you are interested in the strategy and tactics of Diplomacy then I would advise you to get out the board and set it up to follow the play - if you are not then I suggest you turn the page.

This first episode concerns the events of just one season. This was Autumn 1903 and it proved to be the crucial point of the whole game. The game was 76AL (Godot) run in the now defunct Bruce by the still very active Paul Simpkins. The situation after Spring 1903 was as follows :-

Austria (Paul Willis) F(Gre) ( 1 centre - Gre)

England (John Blakesmith) F(Den), F(HEL), F(Hol), F(NTH), A(Lon), A(Yor) (6 centres - Lon, Lpl, Edi, Nor, Hol, Den)

France (John Hicks) F(Bel), A(Bur), A(Par), A(Gas), F(MAO) (5 centres - Bre, Par, Mar, Spa, Por)

Germany (Steve Scarlett) A(Kie), A(Ruh) (4 centres - Ber, Kie, Mun, Bel)

Italy (Robert Sturges) A(Ven), A(Ser), A(Alb), F(LOS), F(AEG), F(EMS) (6 centres - Rom, Nap, Ven, Tun, Tri, Ser)

Russia (Myself) A(Nor), F(Swe), A(War), A(Gal), A(Bud), A(Ukr), A(Rum), F(Sev) (8 centres -  
Stp, Mos, War, Sev, Swe, Rum, Bud, Vie)  
Turkey (Peter Kaufmann) A(Bul), A(Con), F(ELA) (4 centres - Con, Ank, Smy, Bul)

In order to appreciate the diplomacy of this vital season and the subsequent moves it is necessary to out-line-how the game had developed. My Russia was on a healthy 8 units. I had a very good alliance with Italy - a very good alliance indeed. With Turkey's help we had smashed Austria down to one unit by A02 and in that same season launched a joint attack on Turkey. The south appeared straightforward for me as long as the Italian alliance held, and I believed it would hold for a while yet as Italy had much to gain. In turn, Italy had a strong non-aggression pact with France and they had both kept to the letter of their agreement.

France was a strange player - not the kind of person I am endeared to in this hobby and I felt I could hope for little or no co-operation from him. A typical personality clash. England and France had agreed to attack Germany and had been fairly successful in this. Spring 1903 had seen England supporting a French fleet into Bel and so they were working fairly well together. England was a very sound player and we had exchanged many long letters and I had wrung an agreement out of him whereby he let me have Nor in 1903 for assistance for him against Germany. Hence my A(Nor) which had moved there in S03. Germany was totally incompetent and he can best be summed up by quoting from a letter he sent me one day after the game lineup. "France & Italy will be fighting it out, I've seen to that! I repeat, one day!" I had humoured him - non-aggression pacts, promise of support against English and French attack etc - and it had allowed me to get established in Scandinavia. He had not surprisingly NMR'd in Spring 1903.

Although my position at this time was healthy I had a problem. As long as I continued my alliance with Italy, France and England must stick together and they would take Germany between them. My prospects for gains in the north would be almost nil and I would be having to fend them off. Once Turkey was eliminated, Italy would not be in a position to attack France and I could find myself fighting him as well. This I didn't want. My aims were to continue the Italian alliance and push on in the north against first England, and then Germany. But how to do it?

From the placing of the units it was obvious that England was going to attack Kie to offset the arranged loss of Nor. France was already sitting in German Bel from where Germany could not dislodge him. In addition, France could take Mun if all went well (or if Germany NMR'd again!) As I didn't want to attack Italy I had to do something to ensure that I could advance in the north that season. Next year would be too late as they would be too well established.

My first move was to ring directory enquiries. Hooray - Steve Scarlett was on the 'phone! Our letters had not exactly been numerous and for this season I knew a letter would not suffice. Having contacted him I soon realised that his NMR was the result of disinterest so I tried to jolly him up. It's a great hobby - we're not dead yet - you can figure in a multi-player draw, and so on. Having got his interest up a little I suggested he ordered A(Kie)-Mun to stand off possible French attack on Mun, and A(Ruh)-Hol to cut English support for an attack on Kie. If I in turn ordered to Den it was possible that Kie would be retained and that Germany could retain his home centres and get a build. (He had lost two units the previous Spring). In addition I agreed to send units to Pru & Sil to help him defend in 1904! Germany believed that my move to Nor was a stab on England and not pre-arranged. So far so good.

Then came a long letter from England. He was worried about my rapid build up, but more worried about the French fleet in MAO. He knew France had a good alliance with Italy and so was a little wary of a French stab. As expected he said he intended taking Kie. My reply was that he should take Kie from HEL supported by Den. I confirmed that Italy had a good alliance with France and I suspected a stab. Why then didn't he get in first with A(Lon)-Bel via NTH & supported by F(Hol)? He could then build F(Lon), polish off Germany at his leisure as Germany dropped out (heh heh) while taking on France, while I stabbed Italy!



The next communication was one from France. Although it sounded odd in view of our failure to get on well previously, his proposals were interesting. He wanted to keep his Italian alliance and if I were to attack Den he would order to ENC. I believed the part about keeping friendly with Italy but was not too sure about the rest. However, I replied in agreement and suggesting he ordered A(Bur)-Mun also as Germany looked like dropping out. (Heh heh heh). It was all falling into place!

Then Italy wrote, Our campaign against Turkey was being conducted by Telephone but the reason for his letter was to send me a photocopy of a letter he had received from France. It was clearly genuine and proposed an English/French/Italian attack on myself. Before I had chance to reply I had another letter from England which enclosed a letter he had received from France! Both of these letters forwarded to me were almost identical. England, however, could not see the French proposals coming about. This was mainly because he was convinced that France would not move against Italy and so the F(MAO) would go in his direction. I replied saying that France had asked for my help in attacking England and suggested he took Bel while he could, in addition to Kie.

A final letter (and a prayer) to Germany to keep to the moves we had agreed and it was time to submit orders. The result of the season was :-

A : F(Gre)\*stands (disbanding)  
 E : F(HEL)-Kie, F(Den) S F(HEL)-Kie, A(Lon)-Bel, F(NTH) C A(Lon)-Bel, F(Hol) S A(Lon)-Bel, A(Yor) stands  
 F : A(Bur)-Mun, A(Par)-Pic, A(Gas)-Bur, F(MAO)-ENC, F(Bel) S F(MAG)-ENC  
 G : A(Ruh)-Hol, A(Kie)-Mun  
 I : F(AEG)+A(Ser) S RUSSIAN A(Rum)-Bul, F(EMS)-Smy, A(Alb)-Gre, F(IOS) S A(Alb)-Gre, A(Ven)-Pie(!)  
 R : F(Seg)-BLA, A(Rum)-Bul, A(Ukr)-Rum, A(Bud)-Vic, A(Gal)-Sil, A(War)-Pru, F(Swe)-Den, A(Nor) stands  
 T : NMR A(Con), F(BLA), A(Bul)\* (disbands)

I built F(Stpsc), A(Mos), Germany built A(Mun), France built A(Par). England didn't even bother ordering a disbandment so the GM removed F(HEL).

The rest of the game was easy. England and France were never able to patch up their differences, and Franco even forced his way into NTH. I was able to take out Germany quite comfortably as he dropped out in 1905. I could have won by grinding along in the north against England and France but I couldn't resist stabbing Italy as he turned away to attack France later in the game. I still feel a pang of conscience about the stab on Italy although I would have won without it and Italy still finished second.

However, it was that Autumn 1903 season that was the real crunch. Every move went as I hoped, as I planned, and as I arranged. Sheer poetry!

## THE NAME GAME

With this issue, I am starting a series which will occur occasionally, on the origins of the titles of Dipzines. Our first item is somewhat longish, but gives a bit of background on the subject in general.

"Laurania" ... is the name of the country which is the scene of action of the novel, Savrola, by Winston Churchill ... the English Prime Minister, not the American novelist of the same name. Savrola was the first book Churchill wrote, at an age of about 22, but not the first published... It was published in 1900... Churchill apparently regarded Savrola as a youthful indiscretion as it has never been reprinted although all his other earlier books have been... As is usual with fictional countries its geographical location is not specified too closely; Laurania is somewhere on the Mediterranean coast of Europe. It has a colony in south east Africa as Portugal does, so that a Portugal transferred from Iberia to the Italian peninsula would be about right.

...Laurania was, then, the name of a fictional country, located in Europe, from a book published in 1900. It therefore conforms, in the most exact sense, to the tradition of naming Diplomacy magazines after fictional countries of the time and place of our game, a tradition begun by Graustark and Ruritania SEVEN years ago. ((This was from Serendip #41, May 1970, and was by John McCallum, and deals with a by then defunct zine of his. Its rather rare to find such a description in a different zine))

...Someone has asked about the origin of Valinor. It is the city of Valar in Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings. Extremely good book. ((Mike Muchnik in #2, Oct 1975))

"Ethil the Frog" is the name of the newspaper which first printed the truth about Doug and Dinsdale Piranha. I trust I shall hear no more carping about how esoteric my zine's title is. ((John Piggott in #40, Nov 1973))

The name "Poictesme" itself was an attempt to continue the near-dead tradition of naming magazines after invented lands. In this case, Poictesme is a fictional land created by James Branch Cabell, most notably inspired by his book "Jurgen", wherein the hero comes from said province. ((Bruce Schlickbernd in #2, Aug 1974))

...Back in March 1974, Pete Swanson, Greg Ward, Graham Jeffrey and I took a night coach to Preston to attend "Willscon", a classic con run by Will Haven in the most primitive conditions possible...On this coach ride, Greg Ward, at that time writing some very long and humorous press for Ethil the Frog game H .. suggested that if he ever started a zine he would call it Greatest Hits, so that he could call each issue, "Greg Ward's Greatest Hits Volume One", "Greg Ward's Greatest Hits Volume Two", and so on. As it transpired, Greg Ward never did start a zine, and faded out of the hobby not long afterwards. However, when I came to start a zine in Nov 1974, it seemed like a good title. For a start, it was memorable, it was seen quite often (there was a plethora of such albums at the time) and it had that little "volume" tag which I quite liked, and indeed kept ... until issue 36, I think. ((Pete Birks in #114, Feb 1984 --- imagine waiting that long! Of course, if I used a title that someone else created, I might wait even longer!))

That's it for this issue's installment. If any pubbers want to send their stories in, I'll be glad to run them, and you'll get an issue added to your sub.



#### FROM PAGE 1

you can see things as he does. Dominskyj used to publish Cum Grano Salis, so along with White and Guerrier, he's the third Canadian to return to publishing in about as many months. Now, if we could only get back Wells, Leeder, Coleman, Haywood, Truman, Head, McCallum... TAL is the service zine for the Assistant Miller Number Custodian for Britian, where variants are being played more than they are here ... Swider is yet another returning publisher. His zine (with punched holes so you can cut it in a 3-ring notebook) is variant oriented.

## THE ZINE COLUMN # 103

Conrad von Metzke has been out of commission for some weeks, and so a group of Canadians has put together Costaguana Canada. Its hard to label this. Its not a parody, as it has no sense of the burlesque. Its not a hoax, since there's no pretense that this is the real thing. But Mark Weidmark has put together some mighty fine reading. Alan Stewart has a salute to Benedict Arnold, there are some very funny

letters by Ron Brown, Zizek, Symth, and Acheson, Guerrier with some politics, a phoney Erehwon, and much more, with Weidmark dancing about with his comments almost everywhere. Bruce Linsey (Med the games, and there's even a little of Conrad von M in there too. Its silly, and of course not everything works, but to me this was a great success. Its also another fine example of the team-approach, which for some reason, only the Canadians seem to be able to pull off. I for one hope that the publishing bug has bitten Weidmark deeply enough that we can get a subzine or perhaps even a zine out of him --- his writing in here, both comments and articles, is just the kind of thing I like to see. Well done, guys!

I've just gotten my copy of the 3rd edition of the novice publication, Master of Deceit. Its got new artwork by Baker, and computers have done a wonderful job with layout and printing. But its got some of the same problems with content. The opening essay (a Q & A for novices) first appeared in the 1st Ed., was then retyped for 2nd Ed., and now rertyped, but it still has the same factual errors and misleading statements. And MoD is marred by the same political bias as before, altho this time its contradicted itself so spectacularly that its really pretty funny. Page 43 is called "Useful Publications" --- altho one of these is not a publication at all, and the plug for the Zine Register hardly seems necessary since its normally mailed with MoD. But Supernova, Bruce Linsey's novice package is not mentioned, nor is my Lexicon of Diplomacy, which has helped orient scores of novices to the hobby's jargon. Instead, a reference is made to "Space limitations and a desire not to make things too complicated..." OK, thats page 43. Pages 45, 46, 48, 49 and the back cover are all blank!!! The problem wasn't space limitations. The problem is that the editor --- Bob Olsen --- has such intense personal animosities that certain things aren't going to be mentioned regardless of what value they'd have for novices. Some polls are mentioned (most or all of them defunct) --- but not Linsey's Runestone Poll, where more people directly participate than any other hobby activity. There's a plug for the PDO census, long since out of print. Lots of zines are mentioned, some of them more than once and some of them defunct --- but not Diplomacy Digest, a zine which in some ways is tailor-made for novices. I've a number of other problems with MoD, but its not worth more space. Not Recommended.

Larry Peery is starting up work for the annual round of awards voting. The Don Miller Hobby service Award is for the person who has performed the most valuable service for the Hobby. The John Konig Award is for excellence in the play of Diplomacy (in any format). If you want to serve on the committee to run these ballotings (its not a lot of work) or wish to nominate someone, write Larry at P.O. Box 8416 San Diego Calif, CA 92102. Both are named after deceased hobbyists. The Pod Walker Award for Literary Excellence is being run by Alan Stewart (add below) For this you nominate a specific work (or series of works), and be sure to include a copy when you send in your nomination. There's virtually no "qualifications" for these awards, which began I beleive in 1984, except that the activity must have taken place in (tho not necessarily started in) 1987. Selection is by hobby vote. Deadline for nominations is April 1, and ballots will probably go out in the latter part of April.

Lets finish up with some shorter takes...#11 of Ken Peel's handsome Zine Register (8708 First Ave #7-2 Silver Spring Md 20910) is extremely informative and well organized. He also runs a Zine Sample Bank.....

Everything #74 has a real rarity --- a postal game (1984HO) which went to 1913 with every player playing out his or her position. It was won by Al Pearson...For information on Electronic Mail Diplomacy, you might want to contact Les Casey 33 Nestow Dr. Nepean, Ont CANADA K2G4E7...Simon Billenness (630 Victory Blvd Apt 6f, Staten Island NY 10301) not only has, like I do, a palindromic zip cod, but is running the ISE, which allows you to pay for foreign zines, etc in dollars. He has openings in an international Dippy game to be GMed by Bob Gossage, and in the variant Downfall of the Rings...the final issue of No Fixed Address, #39 has arrived at long last. When he had the time, Steve Hutton put a tremendous amount of time into this zine, which had a very active letter column open to anyone willing to expose his views to Steve's sharp eye. Steve wrote a lot about his own personal life, with a frankness and clarity that you often don't see. This one is near the top of my I-wish-this-zine-will-come-back-some-day list...Julie Martin has taken over publication of House of Lords...If your game has been orphaned, the man to see is Rod Walker, 1273 Crest Dr Encinitas CA 92024...I read in HoL that Apalling Greed has published its last. Mark Larzelere was one of the two best GMS I've ever had, and judging from some of the Runestone GM Poll results, a lot of other people felt the same way. In its early days, AG had some hilarious writing by Mark. Ah, for the early days of AG and Just Among Friends.... Alan Stewart, 702-25 St Mary St, Toronto, Canada M4Y 1R2 has two openings left in a game under the WAP or Berch Continuation of Campaign rule for handling NMRs, which has been ruled "regular" by the BNC. There's no game-fee, and the zine, Praxis features a brisk and sizeable letter column. The current issue, #19 runs 34 pages, almost all reading matter, including several pages of commentary on what going on in a wide variety of zines (Subs: Canada-10/\$8.50; U.S.-10/\$6.50)...One of the most specialized zines of all times is In Search of the Podunk News. Bob Hartwig is looking for issues #53-55 of his old zine (6612 W. 113th Ave Westminster CO 80020) If you liked the GMing Roundtable in DD #107, check out DW #49, where I have kicked off a regular feature, "You Be The GM," with a tough question on a cloaked error. The issue also has a nice roundtable on the pros and cons of W-S combinations vs. F-W, and extensive look at the AH Computer Diplomacy results, sci-fiction by me, Peery's view of the hobby in 1987 and more...FSF #184 and #186 has featured fine essays by Smyth on various midgame considerations, which is the most difficult part of the game to write about...Some Cons are being planned for this summer. DipCon XXI will be in San Antonio TX July 1-4 (Pete Gaughan 3121 E. Park Row #165 Arlin ton TX 76010). Can-Con '88 will be at Glendon College in Toronto August 12-14 and looks pretty inexpensive, accomodations-wise (Doug Williams 95 Dundonald St Barrie, Ont Canada). Manorcon, a well established British Can will host "World Dip Con", the first attempt at an international Con, July 15-19 at Birmingham University in Birmingham. Contact Simon Billenness 630 Victory Blvd #6F Staten Island NY 10301.

There's not much space left, so lets just plug the Lifer Awards, run by Don Del Grande, 142 Eliseo Dr Greenbrae CA 94904. Categories: Hobby Genius, Most Improved Zine, Best Zine for Hobby News, Best Letter Column Zine, Hardest Country to Play, Best Board Game other than Dip & its variants, Biggest Hobby Personality, True Hobby Master. Vote for as many as 5 in each catagory (and in descending order), and you don't have to vote in every catagory. You must sign your ballot, and get it to him by May 1, 1988.