

DIPLOMACY DIGEST

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Special Anniversary Issue

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And welcome to the anniversary issue. It was twelve months ago almost to the day I'm typing this that I first began distributing the zine. Special anniversary issues are a bit of a tradition in the hobby. Publishers sometimes try for a fat issue, full of press and letters and original articles by the readers, all as the zine's celebration-of-myself. And yet, that wouldn't really do here. Loads of original articles are not really what the zine is all about; that's really Diplomacy world's territory. As for articles by other people, well, that wouldn't be anything out of the ordinary. So the dilemma was how to produce an issue that was true to the character of the zine, yet be different and special in its own right. The solution? The articles you see here (with two exceptions) were all published under my own name in other zines. I am reprinting myself.

One exception is the lead article, an experiment. I am trying my hand at writing some in-depth zine reviews. I am also using the format as a springboard to discuss some hobby related issues, in this particular case, the use of replacement players. That is not an essential feature, tho, and could be cut. If this works out, it will be a frequent feature here, and the articles will be a little longer than what appears in this issue. I'm also considering the format of a look at the zine thru time, seeing how it has evolved, as opposed to the present article, which is more of a snapshot-of-the-present approach.

The other exception is an article reprinted from Face-to-Face, an anonymously distributed publication mailed out late in April. The recent Diplomacy World reprinted the major essay from it, basically a call for A-H support for the face to face hobby. Some interesting issues about postal's dominance of the hobby are raised. I plan to take advantage of what I assume will be a period of increased attention to face to face play (the editor of DW in his column announced that henceforth DW will give much more attention to this aspect of the hobby, totally reversing himself from the previous issue, and called for discussion of the issue). The next issue will be a theme issue on face to face ... Dippy. I have already lined up material from Arena, Dolchstoss, Impassable and elsewhere; serious and humorous material, a variant, etc. Good stuff, folks! I also seek the following: 1. Any reactions you see in Dipzines to the Face-to-Face issue that came out. I've already got material from Jermonger, Dragon and the Lamb, and Rebus Sic Stانبus, but if you've seen any more, please forward it to me. Xerox it if you can; if you can't, send it to me and I'll return the sheet. 2. Any reactions that you have to it, or the article in DW or the one reprinted here. I already have something from Michalski. If I print your letter, you'll get an issue added to your sub. Pro or con, I don't care. 3. The identity of the writer. This would be a perfect place to express yourself further. You will have a forum here. Po! Its shaping up to be an interesting issue, and it will be even more interesting if I get plenty of response from you on these three points.

The rest is my own material. I have published in over a dozen publications other than here since I entered the postal hobby. There will be some changes in my attitude toward writing for others in the coming year. First off, a greater proportion of what I write as original articles will appear here. DIPLOMACY DIGEST is, after all, a mode of my own

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SHOULD THERE BE A FROG IN YOUR FUTURE??

by Mark L. Berch

If you're a typical subscriber to DIPLOMACY DIGEST, you don't get any British zines. And why should you? American zines began earlier, so it's understandable that our best is going to be better than their best. Further, it's to be expected that the zines will be directed to a lot of purely local concerns, of little interest here. Finally, what with mail delays it's pretty much impossible to actually play in those zines. If that's what you thought, you'd be wrong on all points. This article will be an in depth look at one of the best: Ethil the Frog (John Piggott, Flat 6, 15 Freeland Road, Ealing Common, London W5 3JM) with an emphasis on a recent issue, #15 (April 1978).

The centerpiece of the issue is a series of Zine reviews. You've seen the type in U.S. zines -- two or three pages of reviews, giving the basic essentials, plus anywhere from a sentence or two to as much as a paragraph. The comments are usually either neutral or positive, seldom both, seldom negative. That's not how it's done in Ethil. To begin with, it runs nine pages. The average one runs several paragraphs, the major ones as much as 4-1/2 pages. Many give a brief history of the zine, so that the present can be compared to previous humble beginnings or glorious start. Discussion centers on the quality of writing, size and regularity of the zine, reliability of the GMing, availability of other games in the zine, and John's opinion of what the future of the zine looks like. The goal is to tell the reader what to expect if he decides to sub, filtered of course thru his own prejudices, which he's very up-front about. I have never seen anything of this scope (32 zines) or quality in a U.S. zine. The reviews in the final issues of Impassable, for example, weren't even close. I might add that this is not a freak occurrence. In Feb 1977 1001 and all that there was a comparable job, running 7 1/2 legal size pages, complete with a tabulation of 23 zines, giving data on frequency of publication, games carried, size, pages per issue and much much more.

Getting back to #15, there's also 2 1/2 pages of a letter column, shorter than usual, with a brisk discussion of politics, with Riposts by John in double parens. And of course there's John's page one editorial. All right, alright you say, there must not be much room for the games. Wrong again (ever notice how you seem to get all the weak lines around here?). There are 13 games run, and judging from recent issues, I'd say that GMing errors are pretty rare. There's also a game of postal Jotto (you have to guess six 6-letter words, with a \$10 prize). There's also an anon column called "Fetlock", and a goodly number of cartoons. Rounding things out is a full page, very detailed review of a SF game called "Stellar Conquest", with suggestions on how to play, and evaluation of some psychological problems the players will face and generally makes the game come alive before your very eyes. The issue ends with a review of Niven's "A World out of Time", with a quality of writing that you would expect to see in The Maximax Gazette.

All this is crammed into 24 pages, a little larger than the usual 20. These pages are larger than what you generally see here. He uses 66 lines, as opposed to about 61 here and about 55 in a typical gamesinhere. At 85 characters per line, it's slightly shorter than mine but noticeably longer than most US zines and longer than any that uses pics. The zine uses a digest style format and reduced printing. The printing quality is if anything better than Diplomacy World.

As for playing, if Ron Kelly can, then so can you. It's more expensive and the mail is slower, but you'll meet different kinds of people, like maybe the guy who's a pilot in the Rhodesian Air Force, or a guy who resigned from a game because he was offended by a lot of polish jokes. You should get hold of the HRs first, as some differences appear. Some use prophetic builds, for example. I myself would not play in Ethil the Frog at all. This is because John, like many British GMs, will not use Standbys as a matter of principle. No replacements. This arises from an obsession with the name of the winner, a feeling that only someone at the start is entitled to win, regardless of what type of game results. And those results can be pretty sad. In 1976 AH and 1975DJ for example, England submitted only one set of moves (Sp01). As of Fall 01, it was a six-person game. I categorically refuse to believe that a better game resulted as a result of this refusal to substitute. Diplomacy is, after all, a seven person game, a principle quoted by many of

the same GMs for not allowing proxy orders. Nor is this the worse that can happen. In 1975 FX, the Italian player, after opening a Lepanto in SpO1 at the behest of Austria, resigned from the game. The GM aborted the game right there, returning the GM fees. All the Diplomatic work done by the players went down the drain. For a Sp O1 NMR they resort to a transparent semantic dodge: A replacement player is brought in and the deadline is reset, but they piously declare this to be a "new game". They don't even bother to scramble the country assignments in this "new game". At the other end, results can be just as odd. In one game, Howell Davies had a guaranteed winning position with 17 centers. He then welched on a poker debt, burning the Italian player and the GM of same game. He was then expelled, putting the 17 center country in GM. The players would be then obliged to continue the "war". Common sense prevailed and the remaining ~~the~~ players just drew it there. One of these days I'm gonna write an article on the subject and submit it to a British zine, because there are some good arguments for using substitutes that I've not seen aired. But the above should give you some idea of what to expect. On the other hand, NMRs are much less common in British zines (or at least, the majors, as those are the only one's I'm familiar with), and the policy means that if you don't NMR out, you do have a better chance of winning, obviously. But you'll never get a chance to trot out your shine-up-to/pull-the-wool-over-the-eyes-of the newcomer skills.

Anyhow, I find Exhil to be lively, humorous, informative, provocative and just plain damn good reading. Easiest way to sub is to send \$3 for ten issues to Conrad von Metzke PO Box 626, San Diego Calif 92112. Air mail is more expensive watch, and even that rate may be a little obsolete. And tell 'em you heard about it here.

The last issue of DIPLOMACY DIGEST concluded with an Article by Eric Verheiden. In Watergate #5 there appeared the first serious article on play-of-the-game I ever wrote. It has been edited slightly:

A RES-ONSE TO "TACTICS OF OFFENSE AND DEFENSE II"

Eric Verheiden's article purports to be the "Russia and Austria-Hungry move(s) with the single objective of destroying Turkey as quickly as possible." The assumptions made:

- 1) Everyone else (primarily Germany and Italy) is neutral
- 2) Turkey correctly anticipates each move against it and takes the most effective countermove
- 3) Russia and AH cooperate perfectly

Unfortunately the writer left out one, unstated, assumption:

- 4) Russia is a sucker

Let's say that I was AH and came up to you, Russia, and said: "I have a fool-proof plan for demolishing Turkey, requiring only you and me" You'd doubtless reply: "Great! Who gets what?" "Well, you will get, with my help, Rumania!!!! Isn't that splendid! I, on the other hand will have to console myself with Serbia, Gre, Bulgaria, Con, Smy and Ank. Fair enuf?" At this point, you'll probably be convulsed with laughter. After you've composed yourself, I'll be forced to point out that there are a few hitches in the plan (for Russia, naturally. whose plan do you think this is?) In addition to gettin virtually none of the spoils, Russia is going to have to tie up an incredible three units holding onto this miserable southern empire. And for those three units, its going to be an excruciatingly dull game. After FO1, none of these units makes a single move. The fleet never gets into the water. Even the unsuccessful moves are monotonously boring. After SpO1, A Ukr is ordered to Sev (unsuccessfully) every single season. This is continued long after the move has any meaning. If by some chance the Russian flett got into the Black Sea there would be no need to protect Sev by 1903 or so.

If Russia can manage to stay awake during all this, some alarming developments will be noted. AH, not normally known as one of your major naval powers, will have an astounding four fleets by W04, with the ability to build a fifth in W05 from the fall of Ank, providing that the ADr is not totally clogged. This should be all the more alarming to R since the usual naval counterweights to AH naval might are gone (Turkey is destroyed

and Italy is "neutralized"). In fact, the S05 moves should see the first Aus Fleet onto the Black Sea, entering Con as Aus A Con takes Ank with support from Aus A Smy. And if Russia fails to take the Bla on that very move, a second AH fleet will enter the Black Sea littoral in the Fall of 1905. And if that is not enuf to worry about, note that A Rum is defenseless all the while, since Rus A Ukr is "Involved " elsewhere.

Looked at another way, the tactics of the article, and the article itself are unrealistic, because they treat the tactics in a vacuum. Tactically, the plan is fine for Russia -- no set of Turkish moves can threaten him. Strategically it is a fiasco, because once the entire campaign is over, Russia's position is virtually hopeless, because of the Austrian monster he has helped create. The initial assumptions become more and more strained as the game continues. What is Italy to think as this steady stream of Austrian fleets is generated? How will Russia going to hold on to his northern allies when they see that Russia is making no progress in the south and is becoming increasingly dominated by the Austrian. Who wants to ally with a sucker?

Lastly, Turkey himself should be able to turn the tables on Austria. After W01, he can correctly point out to Russia that the plan at this point (remember, the conditions specify that Turkey can accurately foresee the moves coming) has nothing further to offer Russia -- the next four centers will all go to Austria. Given Austria's intentions, Russia and Turkey differ only in the order in which they will be consumed by Austria.

((On rereading the above, I want to stress that there's nothing intrinsically wrong with Eric's moves per se, and in particular the 1901 moves are a strong start. But Diplomacy is not entirely or even primarily a game of tactics, and synthesizing a plan for A/R to destroy T just on the basis of the tactics required gives the somewhat absurd and ultimately unworkable plan that you see above.))

From the Bushwacker Sixth Anniversary Issue (March 1978, Vol VII #3) comes....

THE TUNISIAN PRONUNCIATION

Robert Lipston's award winning article "The Tunisian Opening" (D&G #41) has been criticized in some quarters as being a bit too elementary. It begins at the beginning and goes nowhere. This is not the case. It may go nowhere, but it certainly doesn't start at the beginning. For the true beginner, whether in a Face-to-Face game or playing another player or GM, one must begin with a more fundamental question: How does one pronounce "Tunis"?

There have long been two schools of thought: The long-double-O (as in "loony tooner") and the short-u (as in "toon"). Indeed, most of Diplomacy's major feuds (Walker v Bushwacker, Snake v Everybody, Lepanto v Turkey, USFS v Hobby) are now believed by revisionist historians to have arisen from this dispute.

The beginner usually confronts this matter the very first time he plays Italy. Austria pulls him aside and they agree on this strange attack on Turkey. And then, just to be sure, Austria asks Italy to repeat, so there won't be any foulups. "Uh, well, I go Rome to Apulia and then I convoy to, uh....." What to say? Its not a simple matter of what's "right". There's always the dictionary for that (alho how does one explain scurrying for the dictionary in the midst of negotiations?) But how does one choose which one Austria prefers? The wrong guess will provoke either gales of laughter or any icy stare, neither of which is conducive to a game long alliance.

All too often the novice, tormented by this difficult choice of pronunciation (ever wondered why the "u" is dropped on going from pronounce to pronunciation?) will grasp at the only way out and blurt out "...uh, uh,....Greece!" I can state for a fact that 90% of all novice-attempted convoys to Greece in 1901 arise from just this dilemma.

But even the well prepared player still faces the problem: Which is right, and, more serious, how to remember which is right in the heat of battle. Some years ago I solved this problem with the discovery of the following limerick while researching this issue on one of the smaller islands of the Lesser Tunisian Antilles:

There once was a liney named Dunice
Who convoyed from Yorkshire to Tunis
While it tank every fleet
The Italians were beat
The the army cried out "Don't meroon us!"

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I don't think I need to go into the abuse I received on first publishing that limerick from the short-u crowd. A joint IDA-TDA-DNTMFA-MITSGS-ILGSU investigative panel ruled it invalid for the use of non-Diplomacy sources.

I then discovered another one, this time in a reproduction version of Graustark, a "prog" distributed prior to the appearance of #1. It went like so:

There once were some Frenchmen in Tunis
Who said (to the Italians) don't impugn us
For the Turk we must halt
The his grievly is your fault
And beside, if we war, it'll ruin us

This attempt fared no better. It seemed that the Union-of-owners-of-Graustark-#1 had years ago raided the Hoosier Archives and destroyed all copies (other than mine, of course) previous to Graustark #1, so as to ~~immm~~ protect their investment. It was further pointed out that only in Washington D.C. would such a strained pronunciation of "ruin" be acceptable. So I was forced to discover yet another, this time stuck in an old game board which dated back to the days of Calhamer's playtesting of the game:

Some Germans retreated to Tunis
Where their presence was truly a nuisance
They called out to the Kaiser
Now don't be a miser
What we really need here is a funis

The firestorm of criticism over this one was too much. I was ^{compelled} to stop discovering even older limericks. A special edition of Vigil Writing was published with a detailed proof that Calhamer could not possibly have heard of a word such as "funis".

So I shout out my challenge to the short-u gang: I challenge you to a duel on the field of limericks. The score is 3-0 in favor of the long-double-O. Come forward with three of your own or start pronouncing the word right!

One of the more pleasant surprises of the last year for me has been my discovery of the greatly overlooked Canadian zine Fol Si Fie (Randolf Smyth, 249 First Avenue ~~68888~~, Ontario K1S 2G3, subs 10/\$3). He recently put out a 28 page Issue#100, chock full of articles, with no less than three on the subject of stabbing. His HRs are very player-oriented -- for example he will not penalize you if you forget to give the nationality of a foreign unit you're supporting, or if you mislabel an Army for a Fleet. He allows joint orders and code words and temporary substitutes and much more. Randolf is a very successful dippy player, and his articles reflect his experience. "nd he has the good sense to print my stuff, such as this from #94 (Jan 1978)

1977 IDA Diplomacy Handbook: A Review

From Greg Costikyan comes the first Handbook in two years, and it is, in a word, different. There are no play-of-the-game articles, usually the backbone of such affairs. Instead, Greg concentrates on creative writing and variants, using both original and reprinted materials.

Starting things off is a gem by Costikyan, variously entitled "Printer's Note" or "Publisher's Notes". It is a chilling evocation of the power that the publisher's mimeo or ditto equipment has over him. Just one page long, its one of the Handbook's highpoints. Next is Robert Lipton's "What the hobby really needs." I've just shown the article to my wife for her evaluation and she says....what was that...."He can just go and..."...uh, actually dear, that sounds fairly interesting, why don't we...."

Next is ((a reprint of)) Von Metzke's "Allan B. Calhamer is a phallic Symbol", a delightful analysis of all of Diplomacy entirely in a sexual context. It remains hilarious on repeated readings and confirms the opinion that Conrad is one of the hobby's most creative writers. Also included is a reprint of Bob Lipton's Calhamer-award winning "The Tunisian Opening". A perfect example of the mock-tactical article, it provides

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This is photocopied
directly from The
Mikumaru Gazette
#63, 1 May 1977.

THE GUESS

BY MARK L. BERCH

DAMN, I hate this way of choosing countries. Everybody writes down just their first choice. If no one else goes for what you want, you're in. Otherwise, you ballot again. And again. With a coin flip to end any impasse. They do it this way just to get the tension juices running. I opt for France. The papers are exposed: F-E-F-E-E-T-R. Damn! Corner powers gone, snapped up, and I get nothing. I figure I'll cut my losses and go for Germany.

The first season of negotiations is the usual blur. I like to keep track of who is talking to whom for long periods of time but, as Germany, I'm too busy. Russia neglects to demand I keep out of Denmark in the Spring, so that problem is taken care of. Mainly, I'm trying to get France to stay out of Burgundy. Picardy, Gascony, I don't care. Things seem a little vague and hard to keep track of. I'm encouraging all my neighbors to start fighting each other, promising everyone help if they will just get things moving.

The moves are all in. Everyone sits back to inspect the board. We have a strict rule: Once the adjudications are done, you don't move the pieces about. You don't even touch. That's what the conference maps are for.

The Spring moves have me in Denmark, Kiel and the Ruhr, Russia in St. Petersburg and France, alas, in Burgundy. I could have seen what was coming. First, a quick meeting with England, pointing out that Russia "always" goes to Finland and would he please stand France out of Belgium and if you do this, I'll keep Russia out of Sweden, pretty please? No dice. "Too risky," he says. Next, I corner Italy. When you gonna attack France? "I dunno," is his reply. "Maybe in the next game." At this point Russia collars me, promising me the Sun, the Moon and a black hole if only I'll not...

But all this is merely delay. For my big guess I can block either France's move to Belgium or Munich, if I can only figure out where he's going. If I cravenly defend Munich, then his taking of Belgium will give him three builds and I won't be able to dislodge him without England's help, which help probably will not come. If I brazenly take Belgium, I'll have to spend all of 1902 kicking his army out of Munich and wherever and I'll probably lose Munich in the process and get nothing in return.

France is mocking me by repeatedly flipping a coin in the air.

"If you need some help," I say solicitously, "I'll gladly help you write your moves."

"Nah, I can do this one in my sleep."

The moment of decision has come. My entire world shrinks to the guess. I go for Belgium.

France goes for Munich.

I sit, stunned. France lets out a quick whoop and zips his azure cube into Munich. I wish I... I wish I wish I wish....

I look at the board again and freeze. I feel the adrenalin rush begin as my body absurdly prepares for fight or flight. My army is still in the Ruhr. France's, still in Burgundy. I am dazed, confused. Someone is calling for builds.

"What happened?" I finally manage to croak. Several players look at me oddly. Then I realize. It's a trick. France has mocked me once again by switching the armies, against the house rules. I lunge for my discarded orders. They will clear things up.

A Ruh-Mun.

I cannot understand what is happening. Everything is unreal. I distinctly recall going for Belgium. I distinctly recall France cackling as he took Munich. I'm sure of it and yet how could the orders change themselves? They couldn't. Perhaps something is wrong with my memory. Come to think of it, I cannot recall even organizing this game. But I must have. My mother certainly

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hadn't. But forgetting things is not the same as these false memories. What is going on? There must be another solution. How can orders just change? Somewhere a bell is ringing, but that's impossible. We never use a timer in the Winter season. I see Austria juggling two red cubes and I realize I have no idea what is going on in the Balkans. That's not like me. There is something very wrong with this game. I don't understand. Everything is turning brown. Somewhere an alarm is ringing...

I woke up in bed, very surprised. It really shouldn't have surprised me. Bed is where I usually am when I wake up. What a weird dream! No wonder I couldn't remember organizing the game. Who'd want to dream that aggravation? I wobbled to the bathroom, bowed down in front of the mirror and washed. Maybe my subconscious wastelling me it's time to get up another face-to-face game. It had been quite a while.

"Are you up, dear?" my mother called from downstairs.

"No, I'm sleepwalking!"

"I'll fix you some eggs. There's mail for you."

Two good reasons to come down: gobble down my eggs and rip open my Diplomacy mail. I scotched down the steps and spotted the pile of mail, topped by *The Nixumarx Gazette*. Of course. Now I understood the dream. The I-need-a-YTF-game theory was wrong. I was Germany in 1977 TV, faced with just the dilemma I had dreamed of: My mind had decided to deal with my fears by playing out the mis-guessed scenario and get it out of my system.

I rifled through the sine, past Lipton's *Why Diplomacy World is Boring Part 17* and Sacks' *People I am Rather Angry With Nos. 48-63 (C-E)*, admired Stu Shiffman's ultimate "minimal art" cover" and finally found the crucial move:

A Ruh-Bel.

Ah, that feels good, I thought. I could now support myself into Belgium in 1902. And then I saw it. My name was not by the German moves. It was there by France! It was happening again! As I clutched the sine in terror, the blood drained from my face and I began to shake.

"Oh, dear," my mother said. "You've been stabbed again, haven't you?"

If it were only that simple. This was far worse than being stabbed. My most recent theory on last night's dream was worthless. The dream was a premonition. What could I do?

Suddenly it came to me. Of course. Sacks had screwed up. Everyone knew what a careless GM he was. No, that couldn't be it. It was one of Sacks' good-natured pranks. Good old, fun-loving, anything for a laugh... that theory seemed even worse.

"I don't understand why you play this game when it gets you so upset," my mother said.

Her voice moved me to action. I tore off to my room and began to ransack my desk for my 1977 TV file. When I found the manilla envelope I ripped it open and paged frantically through the papers for my orders. The caption was in the slightly fuzzy print of a carbon.

1977 TV FRANCE Spring 1901

That was impossible! I desperately turned to my correspondence. France to Italy, France to Russia, France to Turkey France to Austria... I felt dizzy.

My world was collapsing and I was caught in an utterly impossibly situation. I knew I was -- or had been -- Germany. I had even dreamed about it, hadn't I? But, somehow, I had all this French correspondence. There was no explanation. My dream had warned me of the terrible paradox I was to face. I thought bizarrely of looking up the situation in the 1974 Handbook. I knew I was doomed, trapped more securely than a lone army in Tunis. I could tell no one. Who would think me sane? It was hopeless, hopeless, hopeless. I vaguely realized I was fainting. Somewhere an alarm was ringing...

((When I wrote that, I was unsure about what level of clues I should use. In the first dreamsequence there were several: The action had no history (who had organized the game?), things are vague, a player says "I can do this one in my sleep", etc. I had hoped that by switching into the past tense when he "awoke" from one dream into the second I could preempt the suspicion that this was yet another dream. The second had only one clue: The "sleepwalking" line. Were you fooled or did you guess before the end??))

quite a contrast to some other material I'll get to shortly. Fred Davis contributes "Why Kiel instead of Hamburg?", a history of early Diplomacy gameboards and how the Supply Centers were named. Robert Sacks contributes a droll letter on a subject with which he has much familiarity --- destructive criticism. And rounding off the good stuff is my own "On the importance of building Fleet Moscow". Modesty prevents me from detailing what an entertaining article this is; suffice it to say that John Leader has pronounced it a "classic".

Adam Kasanoff contributes two, "Drug Diplomacy" and "How to write Press without really doing so", but neither quite jells.

Descending into the pits we have two major items. Once upon a time the Xponent printed "The value of building St. Petersburg North Coast" which engendered a series of parodies. Greg has indiscriminately collected as many as he possibly could find and reprinted them all (alho not the original article). Going for quantity rather than quality was a poor decision; many of these overlap, and most are just not too original. The other is Scott Rosenberg's "Dudland", a series of press which ran in The Pocket Armenian some time back. Taste of course varies widely in press (which is good or there be little variety). I personally found this almost totally boring. I say "almost" because there's a very funny scene on a letter by "Sir Rodney du Walque". There is a great deal of in-humor centered on New York City characters, feuds of the past, etc. While I'm sure that a lot of effort went into it and many (especially in the NYC area) enjoyed it when it first came out, it is quite a bit dated by now. Alas, these two features consume 1/3 of the Handbook.

Also included are two selections on variants. The first is Greg's "Regular Board Variants", a compilation of 13 variants which change the rules but not the board. They vary from minor changes to massive rewrites, and by giving a wide choice, it functions as an excellent way to entice the non-variant player to try something different. A real winner. The other item is Greg's own variant "Lest Darkness fall", complete with map and six pages of rules. Unfortunately, I am unqualified to judge the variant, alho I do wonder at the imagination shown in naming three provinces "Mauretania Tingitana," "Mauretania Caesariensis," and "Mauretania Sitionensis".

Finally, there's Greg's article "How to Publish". Alho there are limitations on what can be covered in 4 pages, this is a pretty thoro job ((alho distinctly inferior to the one in the 1974 Handbook by Boyer)). But I do have some complaints. The first is balance. Over half the article is devoted to the, ah, "mechanics of reproduction", including a paragraph on hectography, which is of historical interest only ((on the other hand, then why did I waste a whole line on it(not to mention a double paren))). On the other hand, topics such as gamemastering, the quality of which can greatly effect what subbers think of the zine, are barely mentioned. Second, Greg has a very negative attitude toward offset, and repeatedly states that the use of it will make you a "pariah". I suspect that, aside from content, most readers don't care how the zine is published, so long as it is pleasing to the eye. I am of course not unbiased, as my own zine is produced by offset. Third, Greg shares a common NYC bias against Diplomacy World.

causing him to make some absurd statements like "the canaille [a fancy word for rabble] consider it [DW] to be a wonderously professional zine simply because it is offset-reduced" (underscoring added). And to say that Punestone has better reproduction than DW is to appear ridiculous. There are small inconsistencies as well. On page 17 he says that you need to run games; on page 18 he suggests a bimonthly zine without games (has there ever been such a zine???) ((With the new postal rates, its conceivable that DW could go this route)) He suggests that you stay away from politics as it will "turn your readers off" --- this despite the fact that Graustark, the most successful Dipzine of all time, has had a steady diet of political opinions.

While margins were kept small, several blank half-pages appear, due to lack of fillers. Oddly, it ends with a plug for Der Fliegende Hollander ((now defunct)). The reproduction is quite good, alho ironically the sentence "This Handbook is printed via mimeograph, as you can see, properly done, mimeography can produce crisp clear reproduction" was just barely legible in my copy.


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there was, in my opinion, entirely too much)) does not state the original source, a practice of which I do not approve ((I also don't approve of the syntax of that sentence, not that I read it again)). The publication was "funded" by IDA/NA, possibly the only useful thing they've done this year, aside from providing a good deal of entertainment. It is available from Greg Costikyan, Box 865, Brown University, Providence, R.I. 02912 USA for \$2, \$1.50 for IDA/NA members, and it's well worth the money ((I don't know if there are still copies. Greg??)).

What follows appeared in St. Geo. and the Dragon #14, 13 March 1977. The GM (at that time) was Don Kettel, and "Dragonmaster" is the Editor, Bob Sergeant, 3242 Lupine Drive, Indianapolis, Ind 46224. It was presented to appear in the issue with the WOI moves, but Bob, figuring that publication then might harm me, delayed it an issue.

DRAGON FIRE

Con Facing a Supported French Attack into Burgundy in Spring, 1901

by Mark Berch



The GM of the Leviathan game (1976IF) and the Dragonmaster stated that the Spring, 1901 moves were unique in that a supported French attack into Burgundy was (unsuccessfully) opposed by a German move into Burgundy. As I am the German player, I feel that some interesting points about tactics and psychology can be made about this circumstance.

I had written France strenuously arguing for the demilitarization of Burgundy, but had received only a non-committal response. I therefore felt that A Par-Bur was certain, and that support for this was likely. So why did I waste my move? The usual opening is A Mun-Ruh and with the French in Burgundy this forces the German player to an unpleasant guess: Will the French go to Belgium or Munich? Either can be blocked but a wrong guess means that either Munich will be lost or that the French will be in Belgium in a manner in which they cannot be dislodged without English help.

Most Germans take the cautious route and cover Munich, hoping the English will cover Belgium--or cover it themselves with F Hol, which I wasn't to have. So the Germans go A Mun-Ruh and then A Ruh-Mun. What's the point of that? Plus, if you get two builds, you have no choice as to where they'll go--only Kiel and Berlin are open.

Now, suppose the army were not in Ruhr, but still in Munich, as it was in 1976IF. The chance of Burgundy-Munich is quite small (would you do it?) and Mun-Ruh is a fairly safe move considering what a good position you'll get. If France goes Bur-Ruh, well you're still stuck in Mun in Fall 01, but then you'd have been there if you'd taken the aforementioned cautious approach. Most likely, France will go Bur-Bel. Especially in 1976IF one would expect this, as a Russian army in St. Petersburg lessened the chance that England would go for Belgium with the "Spare" fleet. The payoff to all this comes in Spring, 1902. With armies in Holland and the Ruhr, France can be immediately expelled from Belgium.

There was another way I could take advantage of the unusualness of the FA Bur/GA Mun situation. (I was aware of how unusual it is. A survey of 50 games reported in Diplomacy World, Vol. 3, No. 1, page 14 had noted that particular combination of German and French moves had not occurred.) In the spring I had gone F Kie-Den and Russia did A Mos-Stp. Russia naturally urged me not to stand him out of Sweden, making extravagant promises at the same time. England of course forcefully argued the opposite, pointing out how fast Scandinavia would be overrun, how Russia probably planned to convoy an army into Sweden, etc, etc. But was England just trying to provoke a German-Russian war for his own manifest benefit? Was Russia just trying to clear the way for the convoy? Who to believe?

Complicating things was the fact that both the Russian and English players were total strangers to me and the fact that two players in the Spring negotiations made derogatory statements about the style of play of the English player, one of which I had seen some confirmation of in his correspondence. The situation with France gave me the chance I needed.

I wrote to England, innocently asking what I should do. Should I 1) A Mun H, trying to curry France's favor or 2) A Mun-Bur, seizing the time to make some progress ??? Of course, I had no intention of doing either, and knew that 2) was a lousy move. England could either A) ignore my question, or even worse, recommend 2). In that case, I would know that England did not have my best interests at heart, and I would F Den H, Or England could B) criticize 2) in which case he was not trying to sabotage me, or C) suggest that I do A Mun-Ruh, in which case the move was probably riskier than I first thought, since if it were reasonable to England then it might be reasonable to France and then France might do Bur-Mun and I'd be shafted. England's response was B. I realize this was a fairly slender thread on which to base a decision on whom to believe, but it was the best I had. I also got B from Turkey, whom I asked to see if I'd get C. One other purpose of this charade was that if England was funding my mail to France, then France would see that I was not even considering A Mun-Ruh and would not then do the devastating A Bur-Mun. For those who did not see the Fall moves, England did not stand me out of Holland, but rather stood the French out of Belgium. The German and Russian fleets both went to Sweden as A St.Pete went to Finland, and I was A Mun-Ruh.

Conclusion? Don't be afraid to try different or unusual openings, and to start to the opportunities presented by unexpected circumstances.

((That was my first, and I think only, detailed commentary on a game in which I was playing currently at that time. Since then, I have run across several games with the clash in Bur as described above. The game is presently at FOS, I have 14 centers, and its looking like it may give me my first postal win)).

Coming up next is that Editorial from Face-to-Face, referred to earlier.....

Yep, this is issue #1. The title tells it all: A magazine for those who play the game face-to-face. There is a richness and diversity to F2F Play in the NYC and elsewhere for that matter, but it gets very little attention from the Big NYC publishers. Look at Granstark, The Minuteman Gazette and Diman (speaking of which, issue #41 just arrived) and others: we're pretty much ignored. Rebus Sic Stanibus has occasionally printed material of special interest to the F2F player, but that's an exception. The attitude of most publishers is not much different.

But that's OK: It's their sine, and they print what they please. We need our own sine, to meet our own interests. What would go into a F2F zine? First off, news of F2F gaming. Tournaments and minicons and "Joe X is having open gaming at his Apt at..." People who were there could write up what happened. Another topic is of course articles on play, with a special emphasis on Face to Face tricks and procedures. Another area is variants. There are hundreds created by postal people, but the ones widely available (i.e. printed in a postal zine) are oriented toward postal gaming needs. We need especially good 5, 6, and 8 person games for those times when you don't get seven. Also we can use features like sequential movement (as opposed to simultaneous) that would be impractical in postal contexts. There's a whole field of Diplomacy/Risk hybrids that can be created that just can't work in a postal game. A special issue or two could be devoted to a "Demo game". The very best F2F players in a given area get together for a game (it may take more than one evening, or perhaps one organized around a school, with e.g. two day deadlines). Someone records the moves and the players (or anyone else for that matter) gives their commentary. Another feature could be occasional articles summarized or reprinted from the Postal Press, which would be of particular interest to F2Fers. We could have a spotlight on successful Diplomacy Clubs, and how they have operated. There's also the history of the F2F hobby. Perhaps someone could write about those early face to

games at Brooklyn College, and what that scene was like. For the Washington D.C. area -- there's a lot of FTF going on there, but the community never really got together. Articles on telephone games (which sometimes have run in regular Diplomatic Zines) under the guise of a regular postal game) would be interesting as well.

After looking at this whole zine, you may well say: I'm interested. How much does it cost to subscribe? How often will you come out? And who are you, anyway?

Well, who said it had to be done that way? I published this one. You publish the next one. Change the name if you like --- call it "Across the Board" or "In person" or whatever appeals to you if you don't like this title. Don't get me wrong --- I've got nothing against the usual postal style of subs, regular schedules, and the like. I've published a zine like that myself. And that's probably the way that FTF will land up, but it doesn't necessarily have to go that route. But either way, I myself can't do it. I hope that this zine, or an article about it will reach someone, or even better, some group who can. As for me, for reasons that I don't want to go in to, I prefer to remain anon for the time being -- just call me good old Lo8284871D. Its a dollar bill I own.

I'm sending this out to some FTF friends of mine of course. But I know that I can reach a much larger community thru the Postal Publishers and via word-of-mouth of other postal players. So alot of them will get this too. I ask you to spread the word. Even if another FTF does not come about, encourage people to write about FTF Diplomacy for your zine. I'm not hostile to Postal Diplomacy --- Indeed, I've played in many postal games. But its not the only way to go.

 the final item is from Centurion #38 (Sept 1977)

DIPLOMACY MAP QUIZ

Altho the nutritional advantages of an occasional Map Quiz are well known, they are often ignored by the experienced player who thinks them too easy. Think again! This one centers on the all-too-often ignored "Minor Provinces" (MPs), those land provinces which are not supply centers. Unless you are a beginner the entire quiz should be done without the aid of a map.

1. Which country or countries do not have exactly three MP's within their imperial boundaries?
2. Name the pair of MPs such that armies in them can exchange places by virtue of the fact that they are connected by 2 one-fleet convoy routes?
3. What MP is connected to more bodies of water than SCs?
4. Which 4 MPs are each connected to three other MPs?
5. What two (coastal) MPs share a common border, yet a fleet going from one to the other would require a minimum of 4 moves?
6. Same as #2, but one convoy route requires 2 fleets, and the other, three fleets.
7. Name both pairs of MPs which have a common coastline.
8. What MP is connected to two home centers and also two neutrals?
9. What bodies of water have no MPs attached to them?
10. What landlocked MP is connected to three home centers of the same country (i.e. is a "gateway province")?
11. What MP borders on the home centers of three countries?
12. What home centers border on the largest number of MPs?
13. What coastal MP is connected to three home centers of one country and to a neutral?
14. What MP is connected to two neutrals and yet is very rarely entered in Spring 1901?
15. What MP borders on zero neutrals or supply centers of another country and yet is very commonly entered in Spring 1901?
16. What MP does not appear as an answer to any of the above questions?

The answers: 1. Turkey 2. Apulia and Albania 3. North Africa 4. Galacia, Bohemia, Silesia, and Burgundy 5. Syria and Armenia 6. Wales and Clyde 7. Prussia/Livonia and Piedmont/Tuscany 8. Ruhr 9. Aegean, Barents, Skag, Helg, 10. Ukraine 11. Tyrolia 12. Ware and Munich (5 each) 13. Gascony 14. Finland 15. Yorkshire 16. Picardy. Why is this upside down? How well did you do? Did you enjoy the quiz?

self expression. I am one of the very few pubbers that I know who publishes more articles outside his own zine than in it. Indeed, now that I think about it (I'm composing this on the typewriter---it shows, doesn't it!) I wonder if there's anyone else that dumb around. Another change is that the best of my play-of-the-week material will henceforth appear in Diplomacy World, as I've been given a regular slot there. And I've learned to avoid a few pubbers, or at least to be leery. Two of them cut on material of mine for several months before letting me know that they'd use it. Another turned down an article (I assume) but never bothered to tell me. He just ignored it. These gentlemen are rude, and I will think twice before I submit anything their way again.

I suppose that some review-of-the-last-year is in order, but I'm not up for it. Instead, I'll share with you a delightful find and a big disappointment. In the first issue of DD I plugged The Watergate. Cancel that, absolutely and utterly. I don't want to get into any details, but Cliff Mann has turned out to be utterly unreliable, and his style has turned a lot of people off. Players in one of his games recently voted the game out. I don't even want to talk about it. But a real gem is Brutus Bulletin, from John Michalski, 913 N.E. 6th Street, Moore, Okla 73160, \$2 for all the issues till Dec 1, 1978. Running 20-30 pages of Xeroxed material, John has positively the liveliest letter column of any zine I get, (and is the only one I've seen that approaches the standard of the first cycle of Phil the Frog final dozen or so issues). That's where yours truly has been hanging out, letter wise, since winter. John features lots of news from other zines, often xeroxed direct, and his own writing style is loose and breezy. He also features a lot of right wing uh, uh, (editor searches for accurate word that won't alienate half his readers, fails). Tho there are no same openings at present, John uses 17 day deadlines, which he can get away with by mailing the zine on the deadline day (his wife, would you believe, phones him at work to tell him if any changes have come in, and then it gets mailed on the way home). Press fams will find plenty there, tho I don't approve of his allowing black press, and the players in one game voted against it.

Feedback has been another delight and reward for publishing this zine. In a sense, it's the highest reward. I don't normally publish letters-to-the-editor of appreciation, but for the anniversary issue I'll make an exception. I think it'll be the right sort of egomaniacal touch to this ultra-Berch issue.

"Thanks for doing an excellent, interesting, informative and entertaining zine" (John McElvany)

"I continue to enjoy your magazine, and look forward to further issues" (Branton Ver Ploeg)

"Unless the final two months produce a surprise, this is my choice for 'best new zine of the year'" (Randolf Smyth, Fol Si Pie)

"...as a would-be postal novice, I think yours is about the most valuable single publication I've come across" (Dave Marshall)

"...it's the best US zine I've come across for some time" (Richard Sharp)

"You do a good job...thanks for the readable product" (Galen Workman)

"New format gets Thumbs up from me" (Eric Kirchner)

"I enjoy your Digest and like the new size and style" (Philip Jurgens)

"Gamesmasters old and new are strongly recommended to get a copy of Diplomacy Digest #4/3...Top recommendation" (Bob Lipton, The Mixumaxu Gazette #76)

"Diplomacy Digest is exactly the kind of zine I have been looking for" (Mitch Bailes)

That should give you some idea, but of course, the ones who don't like it, don't write. I am very appreciative, and believe me, it puts just as large a smile on my face as when I see that some moves have gone real well in a game. And speaking of feedback: 1. Was agreed by all who wrote that last issue was boring, but appreciated. 2. I'd like your opinion on this type of anniversary issue, as I could do this next summer too if you like it 3. Are you interested in seeing more of these zine reviews? 4. John Beshers has sent me his new stalemate lines. When the editing is completed, these will be published, probably in the August issue. I may have a Verheiden article, too. 5. Finally, if you like the gamesine you play in, for heaven's sake, tell the pubber that. Zines have folded because, inter alia, they just got no response (Der Krieg comes to mind).