

# DIPLOMACY DIGEST

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I'm high as a kite. Higher, even. Up in the clouds. No, its not what you think. Its not actually me that's high. Its my words. What on earth is Berch talking about?

I was interviewed for an article which appeared in the October 1978 issue of TWA's inflight magazine "Ambassador". The article --- all of one page --- was about wargaming in the broadest sense, and wasted lots of time on D & D and such. But our hobby got its little mention. Since this is a reprint zine, that's exactly what I'll do:

"A Patent examiner, age 33, ((thats me)) claims that war games are "self expressive." He specializes in a psychology/strategy game called DIPLOMACY. "I find DIPLOMACY more competitive than bridge or chess. You have to decide a person's motivation -- if he'll keep his promises, if you should keep yours. It can get pretty cutthroat." Actually, I think that the above is really a composite quote, and what I said was that DIPLOMACY was for me a form of self expression. But I got a big kick out of the whole thing.

Since this issue will be used as a sample, and since I've gotten quite a few new subscribers in 1978, a little summary of what this zine is all about is in order. DIPLOMACY DIGEST is devoted to the presentation of articles about the Diplomacy hobby. The widest possible range is covered. Thus, I try to cover alliances, personalities, cheating and ethics, cross game alliances, dropouts, the play of specific countries, face to face, gamesmastering, alliances, history of the hobby, houserules, humor, losing, win only/strong second, tournaments, diporganizations, adjudication problems, negotiations, press, publishing, puzzles, ratings, rules and rules changes, stabbing, stalemates, statistics, strategy, tactics, variants, villifications and treads, and whatever else I or you can come up with. These articles are mostly reprints, and are drawn from my zine collection which at last count exceeded 5300 zines, probably the third largest in the hobby. Basically, there are two types of issues. Issues like this one are potpourri, with a scattering of different topics. More common are the theme issues, often double issues on a single subject. These have included issues on Italy, GM-player relations, villifications and tirades, stalemates and Austria. In addition to the reprinted material, some original material appears (for which I pay \$2 sub credit per page), usually written by me. Sometimes I write a rebuttal to an article. A semi-regular feature is "The Zine Column", and sometimes I contribute to one of the theme issues. Occasionally there is a follow up article. In addition, there is my own column, which usually covers just the first page (this one is the exception). And thatsit. No games are run, and I don't cover other war-games. There are no columns of plugs, collections of jokes, extensive lettercolumns latebreaking news. Just articles, and lots of them. This is thus a somewhat specialized zine. But my readers seem to like it. I was very pleased to see that it

please turn to last page

((The opening article is from the Dragon and the Lamb #25 (Steve McLendon, Box 57066 Webster Texas 77598. Subs 12/\$4.00. Game Fee \$1.50 + \$2.50 Deposit. Triweekly and quite punctual), November 1978))

A REPLY TO MARK BERCH'S "The Rulebooks Forgotten Sentence"  
by Steve McLendon

The sentence in question, quoted from the Diplomacy Rulebook, reads "A Badly written order, which nevertheless can have only one meaning, must be followed." Mark the illustrates, through four examples, how most GMs ignore this sentence in their adjudications. I will give my comments on each of Mark's four points. So dig out your Diplomacy World so you can understand my comments as referenced to Mark's.

1) PLAYER FAILS TO STATE NATIONALITY OF FOREIGN UNIT HE IS SUPPORTING

If one would read Rule IX,1 carefully he would see that stating the nationality of a foreign unit is required. The particular section reads:

"To order a support, it is necessary to write the location of the supporting piece, the word "supports" or its equivalent, and both the location and destination of the piece receiving support. The letter "S" may be used to mean supports. Thus, A Tyr-Mun, A Bur S A Tyr-Mun, or for units of another country A Sil S RUSSIAN A War-Pru."

If stating nationality were not required, what is the rulebook's purpose for drawing special attention to it, as in the last part of the last sentence? (the underlining is mine, to accentuate the part in question).

((THE question here is which to follow: The rule itself, which specifies only "location and destination", and the example; which supplies the nationality, and therefore (?) indicates that it is required. I believe that the rule-standard is the proper one, for the following reasons:

1. Common sense. A rule is a rule; the examples are only for guidance. And this is no simplified, slapdash rule. Its so precise that it even provides for abbreviated for of Supports.

2. "Therefore (?)" I say this because some things are provided in the examples which are plainly not required. The first is coastal information provided, which even Steve admits is not essential. This destroys the logical concepts that inclusion in the examples implies its absolute necessity. Further, there is the matter of format. The examples in the rules invariably completely write out the name of the country; and completely capatalize it. I know of no GM who requires both of those features, or for that matter, either of those features.

3. The "badly written order". Above, A Sil S A War-Pru admits of only one meaning, and thus must be followed. This was after all, the entire point of my article. In this regard, Rod Walker, in Claw and Fang #96, 10 Nov 1978, states "I understand Mark's argument that failure to include the other country's name makes the order only "badly written" under Rule IX.4(last sentence), and probably the rulebook is sufficiently unclear to allow that." After this begrudging admission, Rod trots out his good-ole standby argument: "However, the intent of the 1971 revision was to require that inclusion." Bah!:

1. Even if true, we can't operate things on people's theories about what Cal-hamer "really" meant. We should stick with what the rulebook says.

2. The 1961 Rulebook has the rule stated in the exact same form.

3. If anything, there is a trend away from providing superfluous information. In the 1959 Rulebook, armies were labeled with numbers (e.g. 4th Austrian army), but the requirement.

Thus, I stand by my article. The rule itself does not require the information, and the badly written rule will excuse its absence)((BUT SEE ADENDUM ON PAGE 10)).

((At this point, Steve quotes and agrees with my points on either failing to state a coast, or mistating a coast, from which a unit is leaving. Lest the innocent reader think that these things don't happen, something quite similar occured in

1976R, when the English player's "F Spa(sc) S F MAO" was disallowed because he had F Spa(nc), resulting in the dislodgement of F MAO))

4) PLAYER MISLABELS AN ARMY FOR A FLEET, OR VICE VERSA.

I think precedent has been set sufficiently throughout the hobby that the "A" and "F" designators are required. Even the Rulebook uses the "A" and "F" designators throughout its examples. Nowhere does it say these designators may be omitted. The examples do not constitute rules per se, you declare? That may be, but the only deviations from the examples that the Rulebook specifically allows are: 1) the coast designation and 2) particular abbreviations.

At the 1975 DipCon in Chicago, I miswrote an order: A Lyo-Mar. As Head Gamesmaster, Allen B. Calhmer himself rules the order invalid and illegal. And if a palyer mislabels his As and Fs, I will likewise so rule.

((Steve and I seem to agree here that this requirement is based on "precedent" rather than the explicit requirement of the rulebook. His "Nowhere..." sentence is correct but irrelevant. Theexamples are always printed, and in Black ink, and nowhere does it say that script or blue ink may be used. And contrary to the above, the Rulebook does not "specifically" allow the player to omit the superfluous coastal designators that are included in the examples. The fact that they can be omitted arises from the understanding that just becuse something is included in the examples does not imply that it is required. Finally, I direct your attention to VII,7. This gives a very detailed description of the format for writing orders, down to suggesting specific abbreviations. No mention is made of requiring the A/F designators, or even of using them at all. If the rulebook had intended to require them, this would have been the proper place to so state. Its interesting to note that Rod Walker, and arch-believer in going by what the Rulebook intends, does not penalize a player for omitting or misstating this information))

((Since the above was written, I had received a survey from Jerry Jones, who is poling publishers on these and some other types of adjudication problems. I encourage those who received it to fill it outand return it.

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((The Christmas season approaches, and this of course calls for the reprinting of Christmas classics. This one is by Frank Meriwell, and appeared in Claw & Fang #20, Dec 1, 1973))

SEASONS GREETINGS TO ALL MY FRIENDS

Golly, it doesn't seems like a year has passed since I sent all of you my Christmas letter last time. As usual, this has been quite an eventful year for myself, my' lovely wife, Dolly, my three wonderful children, Tom , Dick, and Hary, and they family dog, Xenophanes.

As you all know, my hobby is playing a game -- Diplomacy -- by mail. Without going into all the details, let it suffice to say that there are seven players who write lies (ha ha) to ane another and send in movement orders to an eighth person know as a gamesmaster. The one that lasts the longest, wins. I started 35 new gamesthis year and finished 12. This means that Iam currently participating in something over 120 active games. The precise number is nor clear since these gamesmasters occasionally go bananas and their games remain inactive before someone else takes the game over.

I had to give up my job in April or May. It was interfering with all the letters I had to write. I won't bore you with the details except to tell you the satisfaction that I got when I uttered those immortal words, "You can't fire me, I quit!" The only trouble was that I had been fired three weeks before bu no one had bothered to tell me. I guess I really should have gone in more often. But being an assistant taster in a pet food factory was rather demeaning work.

I'm not sure exactly when Dolly left me. I believe it was sometime during the



many different ways, in so many different places, by and to so many different people that even to break the surface of the types of stabs would require other articles. But, as the sayings go, the stab is many different things to many people, and one man's stab is another man's legitimate attack.

From my observations of people in various stages of Diplomacy I have reached the conclusion that novices have more fun. I have been stabbed by more first timers than any other group--and theirs are most often the ones that are done only for fun, without strategic reasons. Many wargamers are attracted to Diplomacy for no other reason than this thrill that is unobtainable in their chosen field of gaming. There are the players who will stab for the sake of stabbing, anyone and anything. I once heard a player say that its no fun to eliminate someone because then you can't stab him again!

As players become more experienced, they develop a bit more discretion and will usually stab to gain something. This, ipso facto, removes some of the fun. It is in this period that the "coalition players" enter stage left, hiss the villain, and so on.

Finally, after years of playing add inevitable boredom to the traditional patterns of play, the "character stabbers" enter--many, if not most, of the N.Y. crowd fall into this group. Basically, a character stabber will not stab for no reason, but will stab only for fun -- whether it helps his position or not is irrelevant. This sort of playing style requires thorough familiarity among all the players in the game -- the character stabber will be left in the cold in a game with strangers. The fun comes in when you get to stab the same guy four times in one game -- after doing the same thing in the last four games ((you'd think that the victim would be wise at this point, but...)), or stabbing someone and taking five centers in one season -- something I have never done but have had the misfortune of being subjected to. Or stabbing all the other players in the game in the same season. Or personal-joke stab. The list continues endlessly ((I doubt it. I think he just ran out)).

This is the sort of stabbing that you could witness at just about any of the meetings at the House of Games on 72nd street. Poor Gene Prosnitz is the real victim of multiple stabs in the same game. The "middle group" -- serious -- ((Scott would have to be considered a "serious" dash user)) players who show up there just can't seem to understand why we "ruin" their games without jokes ((?)). Because we don't react according to the dictates of good strategy & tactics in a particular situation, the game doesn't go as expected, and the "middle group" people get disgusted.

But all that means that we have all the fun!

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This is the IDA election-time again, so I thought that you might be interested in a few of the more entertaining ones from time past. The first is from Diplomacy Review IV, 5, Sep/Oct 1975, for the office of Pacific Regional Secretary; the second from Diplomacy Review VI, 1, Feb 1977, for the office of President. Each are in the distinctive style of the candidate.

Rodney Walker: Someone has been fool enough to nominate me for this post and since I have sufficient fortitude to resist anything but temptation, I am naturally going to run. All of my potential opponents are good men, so you should only vote for one of them.

A candidate has to make promises. I will not promise you pie in the sky. I will not even promise you success. I will promise you spectacular, inimitable, legend-making failure. What other politician can make that statement (or be that honest)?

You will remember the epochal job I did as ombudsman this past year. I jumped in with both feet, got things really going, and then resigned because it was too much work. Then you got John Leeder, who should have been elected Ombudsman in the first place ...except that he's not as big a kook as I am...so you see there is



with Tunis will get two builds: Two fleets thus giving Italy three fleets and one army by the winter of 1901.

Now, the Italians have the option of moving A Rom-Tus/Ven and then into Pie in the Fall as the fleet takes Tunis. In 1902 the Italians can move F Tun and F Rom west with A Pie, as F Nap goes into the Ion to bolster the Austrians on the Turkish front. OR, the Italinas can go the Lepanto route, with the difference being that rather than having A Ven sitting around looking foolish, they will have F Rom to move into the Tyrr and stab into Wes or Lyo as they land an army in Syria. While this one piece attack on France isn't generally advisable, under the pressure of an Angl-German attack the one piece may just crack open the Fench front long enuf for the Italinas to pick up a center ((at 1903 at the earliest)) Or should the western alliance include France, the extra fleet can act as a safety valve to stand off the first impulses of a French Stab and help convoy Army Tunis back to the Homeland... before too much damage is done.

While this is not an overpowering opening it is an example of another opening with Italy: A Country which needs every option that it can create.

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The Zine Column #5

The Mixumaxu Gazette: An Appreciation

As anyone who cares already knows, TMG is shutting down. He will finish out his games, and since several of them are still young, this will be a rather prolonged fadeout, in the style of 1901 and all that. But issues after #90 will be little more than games; the hobby is losing one of its pillars. Bob gives three reasons, the first of which is that it just isn't as much fun any more. The second is mostly his own doing: "the cost is becoming prohibitive". Up until quite recently issues were 22¢, ludicrously underpriced considering that he has no special deal (like Bob Sergeant has), and only in 1978 did he even start charging for his games. His final reason has to do with another writing project that he is embarking on.

TMG has always been one of my most preferred zines, and until a brash newcomer arrived not too long ago it was my very favorite gameszine. It is hard to say precisely why, but it has to do with the fact that Bob believed in standards, both for himself and for others. The quality of writing there, most of which was Bob's, was exceeded nowhere in the hobby. My best "creative" dippy item, the "Sodality" story, appeared there, and I'd have really wanted it nowhere else. Because in TMG it would be in good company. Another area of standards was punctuality. The zine was always on time, a remarkable feat for a zine with 90-odd issues. And he tried to get others to adhere to standards as well, criticizing good publications when he felt that they could be better.

All this is not to say that Lipton and TMG were faultless. Bob would sometimes sit on letters for months before publishing them, and heard I had our differences about his handling of press. At times the zine became choked with games, and some of them ran into troubles because of a couple of guest GMs. And traces of intolerance would occasionally flash thru. But these are all small and when in the future I wistfully leaf thru my old TMGs, they'll be long forgotten. I guess what I'm saying is this: , When I reach issue #90 of DIPLOMACY DIGEST, if my zine is held in as much affection by my readers as his has been by his, I will be one lucky man.

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Past issues of DD have covered the variant hobby, with a discussion of Balance in Variants in #1, a recounting of some of the history of variant organizations, and variants for fewer than seven players with the same board. This one comes from #71 of 1901 and all that, (10/29/76) and is presumably by the editor, Mick Bullock.

PROXY DIPLOMACY

1. Standard Rules apply, except:

2. Players will <sup>only</sup> order their own country's units in (all) Autumn seasons, except where a proxy player NMRs for him in a Spring season, in which case his conditional orders (if submitted) will be used.

3. Spring orders are always submitted by proxy players, determined by reference to the chart below:

Player	Orders units belonging to						repeats
	S01	S02	S03	S04	S05	S06	
E	G	R	T	A	I	F	
G	R	T	A	I	F	E	
R	T	A	I	F	E	G	
T	A	I	F	E	G	R	
A	I	F	E	G	R	T	
I	F	E	G	R	T	A	
F	E	G	R	T	A	I	

Thus in S01 England submits orders for Germany's units, Germany submits orders for Russia, Russia for Turkey, etc. (Notice "board" order is used) In Autumn 01 each country orders its own units. Then in S02 England orders for Russia, Germany for Turkey, Russia for Austria, and so on.

Where a country is eliminated then the country whose units it should have ordered will have its units ordered by the country who would have ordered the eliminated country's units (....).((No, I have no idea what "(....)" means)). I.e. if Austria was eliminated in A02, then as Austria would have been due to order England's units in S03, this will now be done by Germany, who should have ordered Austria's. This principle applies regardless of the number of countries eliminated and always the chart is followed where applicable. ((This makes sense. When a country is eliminated, its proxy is left with nothing to do, no units to order. And one country is left with no one to order its units. This rule puts the two together)).

4. A player may ((should)) submit orders for his own country even on a Spring season in case his proxy misses, in which case his own orders will be used ((these are the "conditional orders referred to in Rule #1)). To NMR on behalf of an opponent is a legitimate ploy ((but you should tell the GM)).

5. Usual rules about self-dislodgement still apply, (i.e. a proxy player cannot make his charge's country attack itself, etc.) but note that a player may dislodge his own country's units whilst representing someone else. Tactics.....?

6. The 2-season year will be followed - conditional retreats, provisional adjustments, etc ((Winter in 1901 at is ordered with Fall). Just's right hand rule covers unordered retreats. Spring disbands not allowed. Standby players to be used.

General: There is no realism analogy in the game, and so it should be considered a "fun" variant a la Black Hole, Schizo, etc

Tho the mechanics of the game would appear to allow of a certain randomness, the scope for diplomacy is great (not only does a player have to negotiate with different players each season with his proxy country, but he must also try to get the best deals for his own country, and must also bear in mind the consequences his present day actions will have in upcoming seasons, with regard to friendships, etc). Indeed there is probably so much diplomacy necessary that the game will be totally unplayable. T That plus the fact that it will probably go on for ever leads me to suggest a 1912 maximum (leader at this stage)... ((1912 sounds fine to me, but I doubt that it will take all that much longer. Indeed, it should be easier to knock out a diplomatically isolated country; blitzes should be easier, all because a country has only one season in which to defend itself, not two. But, yes, this will require a lot of Diplomacy)). (Proxy Plomacy II. A player will never order his own units...).

Proxy Orders in regular Diplomacy Games is a matter very seldom dealt with in HRs, which of course leaves the players in the dark as to their legality. When mentioned, there is often a blanket acceptance of them, until I write the pubber and ask if



that procedure doesn't allow the player to use as a proxy a player already in the game. Then they usually say well no, that's not quite what they meant, even if that's what they said. One of the truly Grand Old Men of postal diplomacy is John McCallum, and he didn't view the issue in just black and white terms, as seen in these two items, From SerenDip #67 (1/28/71) and #72 (3/6/71).

...My location here is somewhat remote and mail to and from Ralston ((Alberta)) sometimes takes a long time. Twice it has happened that allies wanting to give me support, but not quite sure how I planned on making my attack, and doubtful if they had the time to find out, sent me a signed paper, giving the name of game and season, and the name of the unit they were placing at my disposal, but the rest blank for me to fill in, and then the whole thing to be sent to the gamesmaster to be sent to the gamesmaster with my moves. I have never had such a thing happen in a game that I was running, but I would be prepared to accept such a move if it did occur. ((Don)) Turnbull's ((publisher of Albion, the first British dipzine) procedure is much the same as this except that the player offering the support doesn't sign a blank chit, but, instead, writes the gamesmaster that such-and-such unit will be ordered by so-and-so. For a single unit, one move at a time, I don't think that there is any particular objection to it. Where it would become serious would be if a player lost interest and assigned all his units, for the remainder of the game, to a friend of his playing another position. If a player is going to drop out or resign he should do so, the policy of the particular zine as regards replacement should go into effect, and all continuing players should be on a par as regards opportunities to negotiate with the replacement, or to make gains from the country in civil disorder, or whatever. For one country to be able to gain all the additional strength by a back-stairs deal would be very bad. But for a force of two, a move at a time, it saves time which may not be available in a game with a tight schedule.

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Andrew Philips: If I want to let another player order all my units, why shouldn't I? If I'm willing to do so, then time and convenience are still the only questions. Matter of fact, if I want to assign all my units to another player, again, why not? Other players can still negotiate with me, since I could presumably take my position back at any time; the effect would be the same as if I merely assigned a set of notes sent me by the other player or did something similar. Of course the inconvenience and risk of sloppiness or missed moves would be greater, but the question is really whether there is a legitimate GM interest in promoting such difficulties. The question is a basic one, and you haven't done justice to it so far.

John McCallum: It seems to me that you are missing the point of the discussion. Obviously, if you are down to a few forces, have given up the struggle, but have obtained a concession from one of the major powers that, if you follow his instructions from that point onward, he will allow you to survive, it would be more convenient for you to be able to say to the GM "So-and-so can order my forces from now on." As you say, you can always change your mind and reacquire control yourself. And it is very much what happens in many many games, except that the player giving up control of the pieces is spared the necessity of sending in moves. But note that any such procedure is an open-ended invitation to widespread fraud. What is to prevent someone from entering a game being formed, and persuading his wife's second cousin who lives in Sweet Grass, Montana, to enter also. This cousin, who never heard of Diplomacy before and who has no interest in it, submits the moves that "our" player suggests to him, and then, on publication of those, writes the Gamesmaster that, from now on, his forces are to be controlled by "our" player? We have, in fact, one man playing two countries, unknown to the other players. Precisely the grounds on which 1964C was disqualified and rejected from all the records ((John Boardman played both England and Turkey, and won)). You may say that the same thing can happen now and of course it can, since no postal GM can be expected to personally know all the players. But it is very much less likely. The world is full of pranksters who would be delighted at the opportunity of disrupting a game if all they had to do was to send in

two letters. Every three weeks for two long years to transcribe the moves of a silent partner for a game he cares nothing about is a very different matter.

Consider a case where there is no fraud, in this sense. A player has shot his bolt. Another player offers him survival in return for control of the forces. You say that if you were this barely surviving player, the other players, the third parties, would have the same opportunity of contacting you whether you made your orders move by move or whether you made a blanket order to obey so and so until the end of the game. In your case, a well known player, in many games, that is correct. What about the case of a player in only one game? If he is allowed to say, "Obey so-and-so until the end of the game" what guarantee is there that he is still at his former address? Gamesmaster and other players may be deluging him with mail which he never receives.

One solution, and a perfectly legitimate one, is to say that every player must send in his own moves. In principle, I suppose, this is what we should all do. But that solution will sometimes work a very real hardship. For example, in the two games remaining in SerenDip there are players living in Europe. Mike Goldfein, serving in a U.S. military hospital in one case, Jim Boskey in England on a exchange professorship, or something of the sort, in the other. The playing rate in these games is not the fastest in the world but it is not the slowest either. The detailed interlocking moves often used by allies are just not possible for them, altho I think that they have time for general negotiation. So if some move a player sent me in moves for five of his six forces, and added, "F Ion is to support Boskey. If he asks for it to support his F Tun-Tyrr, do that. If he asks it to support the Fleet Tunis standing do that. Otherwise my fleet is itself to stand." I would be prepared to accept the order. To do otherwise and still have a fair game for these players and their allies would require extending the deadlines to six weeks or so, and we all know what happens to the interest in games with unduly long periods between deadlines. But this is not a right that they have, they have to ask. If the grounds for asking seem good, then OK. But if they want something similar again next season they will have to ask again. If this player wants to place all six of his forces at Boskey's disposal my feeling would be that this would not be what one would expect in the normal give and take of an alliance and I would probably refuse. The player has in fact no rights in the matter except for the right to order his own forces. Some slight relaxation of this, for cases of a player traveling or the like, may be asked for but then only a move at a time. The fewer the forces for which the privilege of transferring control is asked, the more likely I would be to regard it as a legitimate request. That is how it is in this magazine. ((Sounds reasonable to me too. All I'd add is that the players would be informed (e.g. by astericking the units' orders) that this had happened. Any GMs care to comment?))

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While typing up this issue, what should arrive but Lies, Deceit and Nefarious Schemes #23 11-25-78 ((Jerry Jones PO Box 8529 San Marino, Calif 91108, 10/\$4)), with the first part of his survey results. In discussing the question of whether the foreign nationality needs to be mentioned, Jerry raises a point that I could kick myself for overlooking. In Rule XII, 1 appears the following: "for clarity the player may wish to indicate the foreign nationality, as F Nth C English A Lon-Bel." For Clarity! The rule was in the discussion of the convoy order, but, as Jerry Jones put it, "My thinking is that what's good for convoys is good for support, so I say both moves succeed." And even if you don't accept that reasoning, this is another very big hole in the theory that appearance in the Examples implies that its necessary. One unrelated point. That article in LDNS referred to me as a member of "15 of the more steadfast GM's" Lest anyone get the wrong impression, I'll state for the record that I have never GMed a game in my life. I just talk big.

But ain't that what this hobby is all about?!

(cont'd from p12) with a frequency and to an extent that would shake the very foundations of many a highly civilized society and bring a lesser realm to its knees in quivering, palpitating revulsion at the audacity of such creatures who obviously don't know a fun game of straight-laced ponderous austerity when they see one, despite what the rules say and what countless hundreds of past and present exponents of the game have shown to be true in game after game in the Age of Calhauer, and so they throw up their((next page))

Orphans and Player Rights

There is good news on the sadly neglected Orphan scene. First, Jerry Jones P.O.Box 8529 San Marino, Calif 91108 has offered to restart and then rehouse orphans, and helped with the Orphans from Suicide. Second, a Canadian, Randolph Smyth, 249 First Ave., Ottawa, Ontario K1S 2G5 Canada, has made a similar offer. Both of these pubbers are doing a fine service, both for the stranded players and for new zines who often like to get off to a strong start by picking up a few of these games. This has my support; if either they or the new GMs need back information about the game's history, and cannot get it from the players, the Berch Archives, second largest in North America, are available. You only need to ask.

A much more difficult matter is the murky question of player rights when a game moves from one zine to another. Are there such rights? Consider the following:

1. During this past summer a bitter struggle ensued as a result of my attempt to transfer a game from The Watergate away from the GM, Cliff Mann. For those unfamiliar with the zine, it has appeared only twice in the last 13 months, in March and June of 1978, which I consider to be considerably below an acceptable rate. There were numerous other problems. In the course of discussions, Cliff took the attitude that so long as the GM states his intention to continue the game in his zine, the players may not vote it out, even by unanimous vote. I suspect that many GMs share this view. Ultimately this game was transferred, but Cliff's stubbornness in this regard delayed things for several months. This is not an academic issue. I read in LDNS #23 that Cliff still intends to publish a "final issue", which was originally supposed to appear in August. Until he does, GMs and players alike will likely delay transferring the games, thereby making them staler and staler.

2. In the Mixumaku Gazette seven games were run by a Guest GM, Robert Sacks. As a result of a dispute which had nothing to do with any of the games or even the zine, Sacks pulled all of them out. Assuming that Lipton's version is correct, neither of these two experienced publishers even suggested polling the players. Bob Lipton indeed made no attempt to thwart the transfer, and simply reached a financial settlement. The players were not consulted.

3. Within the last month or so, a publisher with a lot of games has decided to fold. This pubber, A, has apparently decided to distribute the games to certain selected other pubbers, including B. Players have not, to my knowledge, been consulted, but word gets out. Meanwhile, players C and D, both subscribers here, have written me (of all people) stating that in their opinion, B is a dishoenst pubber, who favors his friends in the games, and claim to have proof. D is particular does not want to have any game of his transferred to a zine published by B. But do his wishes count for anything. I have used letters here because, in part, the names don't really matter, and because (unlike 1 and 2 above) the matter is neither already on the public record, nor am I speaking from personal experience.

These three incidents share in common the fact that players have little or no say in the process by which games are moved from zine to zine. I am not suggesting at this time what ought to be done about it, or even presenting a conceptual framework for the problem; what is presented above is purely anecdotal. I will say this, tho: The "fault" for this is as much the players' as the publishers. I have heard people refer to games halting for over six months, with the player either not writing the GM, or getting no response. And the player did nothing. Not even write the other players and see if they could find a new GM. Its "not done". And I suppose if you take that sort of treatment lying down, you deserve it.

Anyhow, what I'd like to do is get the dippy community talking about this situation. When this happens, more such stories will come out. From those should follow suggestions about what to do about all this, and perhaps a consensus will arise. From this could be born a more responsible set of hobby traditions.

.....  
((From page 10))hands(and perhaps their lunches)and lose while we stomp them to smithereens and win.

One of the best devices of the press release writer is the interminable sentence.

ranked third in Leeder's North American Zine poll. I was even more pleased to see that nearly a third of my subbers voted in the poll, a much higher percentage than most zines.

The zine appears approximately one issue per month; #17 appears in my 17th month. Reproduction is via photoreduction, an offset process. The zine is available only by subscription; the sole trade is with DW, and I anticipate that Conrad will cancel all of those in the not too distant future. Wasn't all that just fascinating?  
.....  
And now, a concluding sentence from Conrad von Metzke (Hoosier Archives #57, 2-5-72)

BLOCK THAT METAPHOR! STOP THAT PUN!

or, It's not So Much Whether You Win or Lose, It's How Much You Write That Counts

There is a long-entrenched school of Philosophic Diplomacy thought abiding within our midst, of which the present signatory is perhaps the prime and most noteworthy example (Blush!), that states that the only positive good which can obtain from the play of this undeservedly popular and overly serious diversion comes from the simple act of writing as many reams and tomes of idiotic press releases, propoganda declarations, treaties, infantile and/or filthy poems, miserable puns, horrendous wrenching metaphors, literary mis-allusions, and all-around nonsense as it is possible to sucker the gamesmaster into printing at any given point in the course of any given game, which art has been highly developed for years by a large number of dreadfully boorish persons whose whole attitude toward this game is unquestionably appalling to the "serious tacticians" of the games such as Phillips and Brooks, and perhaps equally devastating to the ratings-list exponents such as VerPloeg and Beshera, who perhaps choose to phrase the "propaganda school" theories in a somewhat different and much less complimentary way, notwithstanding the fact that many of the acolytes and seasoned veterans of both of the other playing-type grouping do themselves enjoy a frequent and altogether too lengthy romp in the rhetorical swamplands of Merriam-Webster, as witness, to cite merely a single notable example, the platypus biographies and naturist studies of Mr. VerPloeg, whose legal footing gives him the almost unique ability to state an extremely erudite and valuable principle in learned terms closely approaching the deranged, altho: most people don't notice the dichotomy because they are too busy giggling with glee at the adventures of Glomphf the Magnificent, Eater of Frenchmen and Pieman Par Excellence in innumerable (and interminable) games carried in such diverse magazines as Brobdingnag, Costaguana, Diplomania, Die Schuldigkeit des Ersten und Vornehmsten Gebotes, and -presumably- Platypus Pie, to name a mere handful of newsletters that allow such persons as VerPloeg, Walker, Perry, and the undersigned to indulge their portentous whims by simply subordinating any and all considerations of tactics, strategy, victory, and good taste to those of length, volume, madness, originality of expression, desire for the propagation of whatever screwball ideas we happen to have at the time, insult, wrenching of language, boredom, hatred, affected erudition, and -quite probably the most important element of all this imposing list of criteria- sheer overwhelming of any opposition thru the easy and obvious expediant of weighting them so far down with reams of verbiage that they are utterly unable to move, thus ruing their game and giving us the walkaway victory we want in a game we could not otherwise hope to even make a dent in, altho it is presumed that if we chose to emphasize one or another of the alternative approaches - as do such as Walker and VerPloeg at time - we could in fact manage a strong degree of success merely by virtue of our long experience, intimate understanding of the inner mechanisms of the game in all its varied facets, and dogged tenacity which gives us the priceless gift of being able to gleefully trample all over opponents in times of plenty, and cheerfully kick the bad guys in the groin with our feet in times of mild adversity, and even - for lo! this does occasionally occur - accomplish the impossible win by such admirable expediant's as cheating, lying, bribing, slandering, and defaming, altho of course we seldom need to resort to such last-ditch efforts due to our almost unbelievable ability to write so much crap that the opposit on folds up and dies rather than read the stuff any longer than is absolutely necessary in order to look good in the eyes of their peers, who more often than not have themselves been subjected to the verbal barrage so often that they are in complete sympathy with the poor fool who cannot hope to understand the pristine logic and cool, controlled method whereby some players have arrived at the conclusion that ability to play the game is a totally valueless and vacuous skill when compared to the art of creating ingenious and humorous propaganda with a