

STILL THE ONLY ZINE TO RANK IN THE TOP FIVE IN BOTH THE 1978 AND 1979 LEEDER POLL IS:

# DIPLOMACY DIGEST

Issue #29  
November 1979  
Original Articles

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Subs: 10 for \$2.50  
Europe: 10 for \$3.00  
Circulation: 1001

This issue will contain no thundering denunciations of Buddy Tretick (Bernie Oaklyn). However, I feel that you all are owed an explanation of why I got so involved in this matter in the first place. Your editor was hit by a double dose of "There but for the grace of Ghod go I", and I decided to set my karmic accounts in order.

Our story begins in EARLY 1978. I was very suspicious of the U.S.P."S", and so was casting about for a D.C. area GM. I was subbing to Claw and Fang at the time, as was startled to notice that he actually had three guest GMs from the Washington area. I asked to be put in a game with one of them, and in March, Don Horton wrote me that a game would start with Oaklyn "soon". Months went by. Games filled left and right in C&F, but I herd nothing from Don. It appeared to me that either Don had changed his mind, or forgotten about me, or some problem had occured. As it turned out, at around that time, problems were occuring in 1977IW, a game that Bernie was GMing. The result of this was that Oaklyn was removed as the GM. I do not know for sure whether that was the reason that the game was never filled, but it would not surprise me. I don't need to tell you what a difficult position I would hve been in later on if in fact I had landed up with Oaklyn as a GM. I had been saved by events outside my ken or control.

Tis was not my only close call. After I had given up on the Oaklyn game, I decided to switch to a C&F game to be GMed by Rod Walker. I had several reasons for that. I had seen his HRs and was impressed by their detail. Rod allowed a country preference list, which appealed to me because the countries I had played so far had been extremely unbalanced (only I, G, and T, in my games as an original player). And around that time I had been combing thru Rod's old Erehwons, one of the most entertaining zines which has ever existed. I had in the back of my mind trying to persuade Rod to restart the zine. So I had ulterior as well as...as...what is the opposite of ulterior anyhow? Anyhow, I had my motives.

Also signed up for Rod's game was --- you guessed it --- Bernie Oaklyn. For reasons that I do not know, Rod became suspicious and would not let Bernie into the game. Bernie screamed and yelled and complained to Don, but Rod would not budge. Once again I had been saved. Rod and I have certainly had our differences as to how 1978HQ has been run, but I am appreciative for his acts of keeping Bernie out of the game. Indeed, so far as I know, Rod was the first person to blow the whistle on Bernie, a fact that that Mr. Boardman would do well to keep in mind. Boardman has this strange habit of trying to work in a criticism of Rod walker often when he castigates Bernie, despite Rod's being Bernie's earliest, and one of his most persistant, critics

Turn to page 11, near the top.

Back in issue #24 of DIPLOMACY DIGEST I discussed the scoring system brouhaha of DipCon XII. By way of background of why I wanted a new system to be tried, I listed some of the reasons that I did not like the oft-used Rocamora system. In this system, a player gets one point for each supply center held at the end of the game. He also gets 1 point for each person that he does better than with the same country (thus, if his Germany does better than 10 other Germanies on other boards in that round, he gets 10 points). Occasionally, 1 point is given for each person at your board that you best, and 1 point is given for each person eliminated in 1905-1908. No reduced victory criterion is used. Anyhow, some time back, Greg wrote me a response, and I now have the space to print it:

THE ROCAMORA TOURNAMENT SYSTEM VERSUS THE BERCH SYSTEM: A REBUTTAL by Greg Costikyan

A rating system should:

- a) encourage both good play and good diplomacy
- b) minimize the impact of rating system considerations on play --- i.e. players should not make decisions on the basis of their ratings standings, but instead should play the game as they would in the absence of such a system;
- c) should provide each player with equal opportunity to gain points --- it should not be unbalanced in favor of any nation or nations.

Let us see how the Rocamora and Berch systems stand up in the light of these considerations:

Encouragement of good play and diplomacy: The Rocamora system encourages both good play and good diplomacy --- because a player who plays and executes his diplomacy well will wind up with more centers, and will also do better than players with the same country on other boards. The Berch system often makes good play irrelevant because a good player may wind up in a draw with a poor player --- but both players gain nearly the same number of points. Thus in a two-way 16-1 draw, one player will gain 30.16 points, and the other 30.01. I don't consider this equitable. ((I am typing this as he wrote it. His numbers are correct, but its not clear what happened to all the other centers --- that adds to only 17. Also, since 16 will almost certainly be a win under my system, he may have had some other numbers in mind.))

Minimizing rating-system considerations: Mark's major objection to the Rocamora/Birsan system is the fact that players receive points only for centers, and thus are encouraged to play for the maximum number of centers, not to win the game. Mark feels that this is wrong, because to him, winning is the only important thing in Diplomacy.

This may be a valid objection. However, in the time constraints of a tournament, it is almost always impossible to play a game to conclusion; consequently, either one must define a "winner" differently from the ways the Diplomacy rules do (as Mark does) or else one must have some alternative system for assigning points. Further, as far as I --- and many other players -- are concerned, winning is not the only consideration in Diplomacy. Given a chance, I'll go for a win every time; but if winning appears impossible, I will continue to press for the best showing possible --- try to gain as many centers as possible. The only other rational alternative is to drop out of the game (if I can't win, why should I play?) Thus, although I agree that a winner ought to gain some additional advantage, I also think that a "strong second" player ought to gain points as well.

And, in my view, Mark's system of declaring one player to be a "winner" if he has fewer than 18 centers is an artificial expedient, and one that destroys much of the interest in the game.

Further, his system encourages players to eliminate each other in situations where they would not normally do so. For instance, if I am playing a 10 center Italy,

and someone else is playing a 1 center Austria, I may allow Austria to continue as my puppet because his last unit is in a strategic position. Under Mark's rules, however, U would eliminate Austria so that fewer players would join in the draw. This introduces another artificial consideration.

Clearly, therefore, the Berch system introduces more artificial elements to tournament play than the Rocamora system does. In order to ameliorate Mark's objection to the fact that a winner under the Rocamora system gains no additional benefit, I'll suggest to Mike ((Rocamora)) that the winner of a game (under the Rulebook definition) be given an additional 10 points (which, with an 18-center winner, would give the victor 28 points, plus points for doing better than players at other boards).

Equitable balance: Under the Rocamora system, a player of a given nation is given one point for each player of the same nation that he beats. In other words, in a ten-board tournament, the player of the best Germany in a single round would gain nine additional points. This system is designed to give a handicap to players of exceptionally poor or exceptionally good nations. Thus, if Italy does poorly in the tournament overall, the average Italian player will gain fewer points for centers than, say, the average German player; but the best Italian player will gain as many points for beating other Italies as the best German player will gain for beating other Germanies. Thus, the Rocamora system helps alleviate the inequities of Diplomacy.

Under the Berch system, each player has, in theory, an equal chance of gaining points; but no handicap is built into the system, and consequently the Italian and Austrian players are at a disadvantage, while the English and Turkish players are at an advantage. This is not equitable.

Mark doesn't like this handicapping system because he thinks that it encourages cross-board negotiations --- a player with a good Italy may wander to the other boards and encourage other players to gang up on Italy. (He may even make a deal with an Austrian player on another board by agreeing to stab Austria on his board if Austria stabs Italy on the other board). This is true, but a certain amount of cross game discussion is inevitable. I will suggest to Mike that he add a provision outlawing cross-game negotiation to his tournament rules, providing point penalties for people who break the provision.

In Conclusion: Both of Mark's criticisms of the Rocamora/Birsan rating system are valid --- the system does not sufficiently reward a winner, and it does encourage cross-game negotiation. Both of these are relatively minor problems which can easily be corrected (and the corrections will be incorporated in the Rocamora/Birsan tournament system). But the Rocamora system is still clearly superior to the Berch system because it encourages good play while the Berch system makes good play irrelevant; it minimizes rating-system considerations while the Berch system introduces a number of such considerations to play; and it partially handicaps the various countries, while the Berch system does not.

Mike Rocamora and I will be volunteering to run the DipCon tournament next year at MichiCon.

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BERCH'S DEFENSE

Greg's article is quite revealing, not so much for a few misunderstandings about the BTSS, but for how it shows that Greg and I have very different views on what Diplomacy is all about.

To begin with, I did NOT say that winning is "the only important thing" or "the only consideration". What I did say is that it is the most important. But there is also drawing, and, if that is out of the question, then he should "try for as good a survival as he can manage." (DD #24)

The core question is this: What is the point of the game? To me, it is to win, either alone or by sharing the win with as few other parties as possible. Supply centers are important, but only as a means toward that end of winning/drawing. To Greg, its just the opposite. The Supply centers are an end in and of themselves. The accumulation of supply centers is the point of the game. I say this because, except for the token 10 point bonus (I'll get to that in a minute) your performance is evaluated solely on your ability to accumulate supply centers. This is a very fundamental difference.

One vital ramification of this is the role of the draw. It is quite important in the BTSS, in both the original form and in the modified form that I'll get to shortly. Most tournament games in BTSS end in a draw, as do most FTF games. The size of the draw, and whether you are in it or not enormously influence your score at BTSS. But the draw doesn't exist either in Greg's thinking or in his scoring system. He says above "...if winning appears impossible, I will continue to press for the best showing possible --- try to gain as many centers as possible." This is a pure expression of the strong second style of play. Gaining a draw does not exist as a goal in Greg's philosophy of dealing with games you cannot win. And it does not exist in his scoring system either, for there are no such things as draws. This removes a lot of the richness of the game. Draw discussions and maneuvering are among the most interesting aspects of the game, at least to me. Who will be included? Who can be safely eliminated? To quote, of all people, Mike Rocamora: "Too many games end as four and five way draws because the players do not know how to safely eliminate the superfluous players." (DW #12).

Greg has made a step in the right direction, but only a step, with his 10 point bonus for winning. But this is mere tokenism. In, say, a 16 board round (as was Round 1 at DipCon XII) the winner will now get  $15+18+10 = 43$  points, of which less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  is the winners special bonus. More important, wins will be almost impossible under the Rocamora system, because of his insistence on an 18 center win requirement. At this years DipCon, there was a win rate of 22%. I am very proud of that figure. It says: Try to win, because winning is a reasonable shot! By contrast, at past tournaments with the Rocamora system, wins were very rare. Alas, I do not have specific data. I do recall that at the first round of DipConIX (1976) there was 1 win in about 22 boards. At Origins 77, there were very few wins. That says: "Unless you are an extremely good player, or face unusually weak opposition, don't bother even trying to win. Its just not a reasonable goal." And that, my friends, is very sad, because, as I said, trying to win is the point of the game. In recent years, all major tournaments have ended at 1908  $\pm 1$ . Its so hard to reach 18 in that time in the competitive world of tournament play that its hardly worth trying. Yes, Greg, it is an "artificial expediant" to lower it from 18. But ending a game on account of time is also artificial.

I do not agree with Greg about minimizing the impact of rating system considerations. So long as the players know what the rating system is, it will significantly impact the game. The Rocamora system, in my opinion also introduces artificial elements into the game. For example, it doesn't matter if you ally pulls further and further ahead of you, so long as he does not turn on you. If you land up with 9 centers in first place you get the same number of points as if you were with 9 centers and in last place. If someone wins that's no skin off your back. All that sounds pretty artificial to me; it certainly doesn't correspond to how I play either FTF or postally. In Greg's example of the 10 center Italy, yes, I eliminate the 1 center Austria, unless it is too risky or difficult for me to do that. If he is clever enuf to get into that position, or is such a good diplomat that he talks me out of it, he may be richly rewarded for his skill. Yes, this is ruthless, but I assume that players are looking for a very competitive game, more competitive than a typical postal game and certainly more than a social sort of FTF game.

The idea that all share equally in a draw comes directly from the rulebook. I find it a little odd that Greg objects to that when he is such a pureist about the

18 center rule. Nonetheless, so many people have found this idea unacceptable that in the modified BTSS this will be changed. Top man in the draw will get a +4 bonus; bottom guy will get -4 (giving a difference of 8). In 4-6 way draws, there will also be +2 and -2 for next-to best and worse.

With regard to cross game considerations, the bit about cross game negotiations was only the minor part of it. The big problem, that Greg did not deal with, is not the negotiations, but just "seeing" how your competition is doing, and adjusting your play accordingly. If you see that you are best man for the country, you are likely to assume a very cautious style of play. With no more people to overtake, your main concern is not being overtaken by the pack. Ben Zablock's article in the next DW will touch on that. This information can be gotten by a quick walk-thru of the other boards, and thus rules against looking at other boards will be almost impossible to enforce. I believe that it is unfair to the other players for such information to impact the game, but it's well nigh unavoidable.

With regard to the handicapping, it's not clear to me that there's much of a need for it. Yes, most players will tell you that the countries are not balanced, and thus it is needed. But if you inquire more specifically, you will find much diversity of opinion as to just who is strong and who is weak. The strongest country? I think the average postal player would name Russia. On the other hand, Greg lists England and Turkey. But these all may be wrong. Using the criterion of S.C.s held at games' end at DIPCON XII, the strongest country was France. True, Dipcon XII didn't use the Roc system, but I doubt that the nature of the system used by the players will affect the relative country strengths.. Weakest? Greg says Italy and Austria. But at Dipcon XII it was Russia.

The handicapping points is the most distinctive feature of the Rocamora System, and in a large tourney will distribute more points than the SCs held. In theory it should even out whatever discrepancies there are, and thus provide a valuable gain to balance off the above mentioned drawback. In practice, the cure is MUCH worse than the disease. It introduces an enormous randomizing factor. Two people can get the same results with the same country, and be scored quite differently. It introduces a great deal of luck into the game.

The reason for this is the statistics of small samples. There are so few boards to go by that big swings occur from round to round. Here's an example. At DIPCON XII, player C got Austria = 3 (3 centers at end of game) in the first round, and Tur = 3 in the second round. Player B got the T = 3 in the first round, A = 3 in the second. A fair rating system should score these two the same, since their outcomes were the same. But in fact, player C would have gotten 6 more points! Why? Because in one round, A and T did nearly the same --- the average differed by less than 1 S.C. In another, there was a substantial difference. Player C got his A=3 in the round where A did poorly, and beat 11½ others; player B got his A=3 in a decent round for Austria, and got only 6 points. There is nothing flukish about this, just the normal variations when you have small samples. Another example: In round 2, E did noticeably better than G. In the third round, it was just the reverse. I am just not going to believe that between Sat nite and Sunday morning the relative strengths of the countries switched. But the handicap system, willy-nilly assumes that they have.

Another randomizing factor is present even if the countries all keep their same relative strengths. Suppose you got a 18 center win with F in round 1, top F, and a wipeout with G in round 3. Your friend does the same, but in reverse order. You will do much better, because in your win, you got 15 points for beating 15 Frances, but he got only 6 points for beating 6 Frances: There are always more boards in the first round than the last. If you get wiped out, it matters little the size of the round, but if you win or do extremely well, it matters a great deal. In the Roc system, the last round is the least valuable, as there are the fewest points available.

((Please turn to the middle of page 10))

THE FIRST ONE WAS SO GOOD THAT ALL OTHERS SINCE HAVE BEEN ANTI-CLIMACTIC-or-  
MY FAVORITE STAB by Dave White

I learned how to play Diplomacy while killing time waiting to take final exams (and stay warm in -22° weather) at the University of Wyoming. After bouncing about through Colorado, Arizona and Louisiana catching occasional ftf games (usually with less than 7 people), I became frustrated enough to try my hand at some pbm games. As with most zealous novices, I sent out a flurry of SAGE's.

The first response I had was from Steve Heinowski, who pubs TER-RAN. I told him I was so desperate to play that I'd even take Italy (which I consider to be the pits). "Italy is no problem," he wrote. "I ALWAYS need ~~volunteers~~ volunteers to play Austria, though." Like an idiot, I volunteered for and got the position of Austria in 1978 AB, an AREA-rated game; my first pbm game ever.

The stab that I consider my best and favorite actually came in the fall of '03. I knifed an ally of 3 years, apparently catching him completely by surprise, allowing one of his units to be annihilated, ripping off 2 supply centers and (unsuccessfully) supporting another attack which would have damaged him further still. Discouraged by the pitiful position left to him and the fact that he had just been disemboweled by a loyal ally, he went into civil disorder the next turn!

Leading up to this dastardly deed, like the zealous novice I was, I plowed into negotiations. Actually, I got pretty damn lucky! I negotiated GAL as neutral between Russia and myself and succeeded in convincing Russia that there was a combined Anglo-German offensive directed toward Scandinavia; "If that's the case, maybe you better move A MOS north." Then I write to Germany and ask him if he'd consider moving F KIE-DEN in Sp '01, then bounce Russia in SWE in the Fall--"No problem! I intended to do that anyway!" To England: "Conditions may be favorable for you getting into StP early in the game; you might want to convoy your army over to NWY to take advantage of the situation." Sounds good to him. So I fire off a letter to Turkey and offer an even split in the Balkens plus SEV and MOS if he'll move to BUL, BLA, and ARM in Sp '01. "You got a deal." Miraculously, I had engineered a 4to1 attack on Russia before the game got started, and even got Russia to participate in his own demise! I kind of felt sorry for him until I thought that those same 4to1 odds could just as easily have been directed toward me!

At the other end of the board, I was having a more difficult time negotiating with Italy. We finally hashed out a non-aggression pact that would have both of us vacating TRI and VEN. France never responded to my letters but finally called me on the phone the day before the deadline and lied through his teeth. He paid for it, as Germany, England, and later, Italy wiped him out in 3 years, finishing him off about the same time we gobbled up the last Russian morsel.

The Russian follies were a smash--there were no hitches. My only problem was Italy. He didn't trust me and staid in VEN. Fortunately for me, there was a mix-up in my orders, and I was still in TRI. I procrastinated and never pointed out the mistake. I did call Italy up, though,

to find out what was going on. We came up with a plan for Italy to hit Turkey's soft underbelly while I was using him to finish off Russia. Nice guy that I am, I even agreed to a delayed "Key" opening, allowing Italy to move to TRI to pick up an extra build for this purpose. All too quickly, though, it became apparent to me that Italy was too comfortable in TRI, his heart wasn't really into the Turkish gambit, and that he really wanted to grab off a slice of the French pie, so I blew him out of there in Sp '02. Incensed by my shabby treatment, he called for aid from Germany, who responded by filtering over to TYO and PRU. Having just swallowed the last Russian center, Turkey conned me into letting him move to GAL, with the intention of making Germany our next joint victim. An ill-fated attempt for Turkey to move into SIL forced him to retreat to BOH one turn later. Now I've got to make a decision--do I go with Turkey or Germany? I was equally suspicious of the two, but Germany was writing letters and Turkey only offered postcards. I tried to call both of them, but only reached Germany. After 2 hours, ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXX~~, I decided to go against my erstwhile, game-long ally, Turkey. Here's what happened:

TURKEY: F AEG-ION, A ANK-SMY, A MOS S (A) A WAR, F BLA S A RUM-SEV, A RUM-SEV, A BOH-MUN /annihilated/  
 ITALY: F EMD-ION, F ADR S F EMD-ION (only relevant units)  
 ENGLAND: A StP-MOS ( " " " )  
 GERMANY: A BUR-MUN, A PRU S A SIL, A SIL S A TYO-BOH, ATYO-BOH  
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~  
 RUSSIA: A UKR-WAR  
 AUSTRIA: A TRI-VIE, A GAL-VIE, A WAR S (E) A StP-MOS, A BUD-RUM, A SER S A BUD-RUM, F GRE-BUL(sc).

Net results after this fall '03 move had Turkish A BOH annihilated, I gained RUM and BUL (both Turkish), giving me a total of 8 centers. Had it not been for that lonely marauding Russian unit's last gasp, dying effort, England would have gained another unit at Turkey's expense. As it stood, though, Germany also had 8 units, England-7, Italy-6 and Turkey brought up the rear with 5, having gained 1, lost 2, and 1 unit annihilated.

Why did I stab Turkey? Well, Germany made me a super deal. All I had to do was sit idly by and watch him eliminate that forward Turkish unit, doing whatever I felt necessary to salve my paranoia (I covered VIE with a self-standoff to leave it open for builds). Besides, there laid RUM and BUL, open and inviting, and not a damn thing Turkey could do about it. The possibility that Germany and Turkey were allied and that I was being set up entered my head, but I quickly discounted it as Germany was so intent on annihilating Turkish A BOH. Suffice it to say, I guessed right.

As it turned out, Germany was, on the same turn, stabbed by HIS game-long ally, England, so he quickly turned his attention that way. Upon Turkey's going into CD, I scarfed up the remnants of the Turkish empire with virtually no interference. Italy, like a vulture, hovered around and tried to claim some of the spoils, but I managed to shut him off. With assistance from Germany, hell-bent on revenge for the English stab, I annexed Turkey's Russian holdings before England could make any inroads on them.

Which brings us to the present. I now have 13 units on the board and have submitted moves for Fall '08. If all of my attacks succeed, I will gain 5 centers this year, giving me the magic 18 for a win in 1978AB, AREA-rated, in my first pbm game, ever, as Austria.

((Dave has written me the following postscript:))

As it turned out, I eventually won the game. I had to stab again in order to do it! I slipped into Italy from A Tyo-Pie, then grabbed Ven. In the meanwhile, I swung my fleets around and landed at Nap and supported myself into Rom in the fall. At the same time, I swiped Nwy from England, and ripped off War, which I had given to Germany some years earlier. I gained 5 centers in the last year; at least one from each of the remaining players in the game.

((Dave's essay didn't win the DW Stab Contest, but it was a fine stab and a good essay, so I'm pleased to run it here. It earned him 16 issues!))

The Zine Column #20

Dirty Pool at Graustark

John Boardman has committed one of the worst indiscretions that an editor can do. He quoted directly from a letter, despite the fact that 1) It was clearly labeled as "Speaking strictly off the record" 2) It was obviously a very sensitive letter and 3) It wasn't even written to him (it was written to me). His reasons for this action are variously unbelievable and illogical.

Early in October, Eric Ozog wrote a circular letter to various publishers. In it he expressed confidence in Bernie Oaklyn. He also offered to reimburse anyone who was cheated by Bernie, and urged that the attacks on Bernie cease. In response, I wrote him a letter, including a copy of a long letter that I had written to John Leeder, which detailed the overwhelming evidence that Tretick and Oaklyn were one and the same, and asked him for his reaction to what I had sent him. He replied to me in a letter dated Oct 25. In that he said that he was unaware of all the evidence, and regretted that he had said that Oaklyn and Tretick were different, and said that he now believed that Alan was in fact his son. He said that he was worried about how much criticism that Oaklyn could stand, and some other things, which I'll get to. He said that he still considered Bernie to be his friend, and would stand by his friend, and would "keep a close watch" on FLD, to keep Bernie from trying to get away with anything. John Boardman and H.D. Bassett were mentioned in the body of the letter, as were several other publishers who have written about Oaklyn in various zines, so a copy was sent to them. A few days after receipt of his copy, John Boardman quoted liberally from the letter in Graustark #107, 3 Nov 1979.

In a post card to me, Boardman says blandly that "I hadn't realized that there was anything of a DNQ ((Do Not Quote)) character about "Ozog's" letter to you..." Well I just don't believe that. In the very first paragraph of that letter he says that he is "Speaking strictly off the record". I don't see how Eric could possibly have been more explicit or unambiguous. Boardman has been publishing for over 16 years in this hobby alone, and I have not the remotest doubt that he knows what "off the record" means.

It is when I look further that I see what appears to me to be his real reasons: He doesn't believe in Ozog as a real person. I had written a letter Nov 1 to Eric, in response to that Oct 25 letter. Boardman got a copy. But in it he refers to "your letter of 1 Nov to Buddy Tretick, of "Eric Ozog" as he now seems to be calling himself." (emphasis added). In his editorial in #107, Boardman puts Ozog's name in quotes wherever it is used, the same as he usually does with Bernie Oaklyn. And in the final paragraph of his editorial, he refers to Ozog (and H.D. Bassett as well!) as being pseudonyms for Tretick. He's very explicit about this belief of his!

Getting back to his letter to me, he warns to the theory: "I think your letter errs in treating "Eric Ozog" as if he were not Buddy Tretick. The hypothesis that "Ozog" is Tretick is based on the quite reasonable assumption that Tretick will do again what he has already done several times. At best "Ozog" is a Real Person serving as a mail drop for Tretick and a mouthpiece for Tretick's opinions." He goes on to give some other examples, but they are too silly to mention. This is total



garbage and I am completely disgusted.

You would think that a responsible publisher, with a big circulation, would at least do a minimal amount of checking before making the charge that someone is just a pseudonym wouldn't you? I mean, this is a relatively serious charge because Ozog is in some postal games, some of which include Oaklyn as either a player or GM. The easiest thing to do is check the phone book. Among several Ozog's listed in the Chicago Phone book is a Walter Ozog at the same address that Eric uses. Now lets be reasonable: What are the odds that Tretick would establish a phone number for a pseudonym? As a matter of fact, I found that listing as far back as the 1976 Chicago phone book, which completely eliminates the pseudonym theory.

What about the "mail drop" idea --- that the letters are really from Tretick using a real person as a mail drop, and as a mouthpiece. To realize how unlikely this is, you really have to see the Oct 25 letter. In it Ozog states that he knows that Tretick and Oaklyn are one, and that Alan is his son, something that Tretick has absolutely never said. Further, Ozog presents numerous criticisms of Tretick. He says that Bernie is guilty of "name calling and continued lying." He is accused of covering up his mistakes. And most convincing of all, he worries that all the constant criticism "is bound to drive Bernie off the deep end", and says that Tretick himself is unsure about how much more he can take before he folds his zine. I cannot imagine Tretick writing such a letter, or even having a mouthpiece say these things on his behalf. Indeed, Tretick has never offered any sort of comprehensive criticism of his own behavior, or at any time admitted weakness. Admitting that he is having this trouble would only be expected to cause people like Boardman to be encouraged to keep up the ressure, whci is in fact just what Boardman said his reaction to that statement was. In short, I find it extremely unlikely that Tretick would have written such a letter (even the writing style is different) or instigated such a letter in a mouthpiece.

But just to be on the safe side, I decided to give Ozog a ring. A Mail drop, after all, isn't going to be very knowledgable on the subject. By contrast, I found Eric to be quite well informed, and possessing a fairly ambivalent attitude toward his friend. The "mail drop" theory is completely out of the question, and I think that if a reasonable man had overheard the conversation, he would not call Eric a mouthpiece.

My general impression of Eric, incidently, is that of a very amiable young man, perhaps in his late teens. He seems, however to be easily swayed. For example, at one point he waxed enthusiastic about the new appearance of FLD (apparently, its gone center staple) with a very neatly arraigned format, and expressed the idea that this would really boost the circulation. When I pointed out to him that his problems were never tht he had a messy format, but his attitude toward the hobby, and his unwillingness to be honest with the hobby, he rather quickly backed off, and conceded that the new appearance didn't go to the heart of the matter. Similarly, Buddy apparently now has a good supply of standbys --- but again, that wan't the criticism. It didn't take much of a spiel from me to turn him around, and I suspect that may be related to how Bernie got such a loyal friend so quickly. He also seemed to be somewhat burdened by some regrets, about a game he is GMing, things he has said about Tretcik, etc. My one piece of advice to him is that he put as much space between himself and Tretick as possible, and I am hopeful that he'll act on that.

With regard to the <sup>Oct 25</sup> letter, we agreed that the cat was out of the bag (esp. since Konrad Baumeister also published from the letter a few weeks later). There's no sense in pretending that it didn't happen, presumably the same logic Konrad used.

So I am irritated at John for speading this story, as well as the equally irresponsible labeling of H.D. Basset as a Tretick pseudonym. Ironically, in that same editorial, he reproachs some unnamed person for saying that Dick Martin (Publisher of Reta. liation) is a Tretick pseudonym, completely oblivious to the fact that that is exactly what he is doing, only to two people



classic on how England should try to get Belgium. He had (for a short time) what I think was the hobby's only game with 2 commentators. While I am very sorry to see STGTD depart, I'm grateful that Bob decided to go ahead and publish even tho he'd have to rely on the good graces of someone else.

Keep in mind that a good duplicator can cost hundreds of dollars. How can you be absolutely sure that you'll want to publish long enuf to make such a large expenditure of cash justifiable? If you really want to publish, and if all other aspects of the job (having enuf free time, knowledge of the hobby, etc) are in place, and that office or school or club machine is staring you in the face, I say DO IT! If somewhere down the road you lose access to it --- which very frequently happens ---, you may find by then that you are committed enuf to the hobby to buy the machine. People do recover from this loss. John Kelley recently lost access to the school machine. He borrowed the \$\$\$ from his Dad, and after a short delay, The Beholder is back in business.

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(continued from Page 1)

Later, others, particularly Ron Kelly, presented additional information. I realized that I may have had two very close calls. Both Bernie and James Alan were local to me. I had seen enuf in my old dipzines about Buddy Tretick to know that if Bernie ~~was~~<sup>were</sup> indeed Tretick, and if Tretick had not in fact changed his ways, then the hobby was in for some trouble. I felt that I had a sufficiently "clean" reputation in the hobby to investigate the matter without having my motives questioned. I was confident that my own civil-libertarian instincts would keep me from acting unfairly. And I knew how much it could hurt to be burned by a GM. The actions of others had kept me away from Bernie in my games, and so I felt that it might be time to return the favor to the hobby. The result was the investigation that was reported in DIPLOMACY DIGEST #23 and #24.

Moving along, I read in Voice of Doom #3 that its editor, Bruce Linsey(71 Hudson Terrace Apts Newburg N.Y. 12550) is the Coordinator for the Novice packet. This is sorely needed --- I am very frustrated when novices write me and I have nothing to offer them. And Bruce will have the enthusiasm the project needs. Those interesting in writing something for this are urged to contact him pronto. Unfortunately, it seems that his original plans are to do the job mostly himself, which would be a mistake, as such a publication should present many different points of view. Bruce, incidently, just put out a 24 page #3. I have warned newcomers before about this. Its not so much that they risk burnout by not pacing themselves, but they make those of us who put out the usual 10-12 pages look bad. We can't have that!

Mark Larzelere, 307 Prescott East Quad, U of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109 writes me that he is a senior in computer engineering, and is interested in writing a program to adjudicate a diplomacy game. In DW #23, Carl Frisrom (you'd have to write Jerry Jones for the address) says he's interested in doing that too. And I know that Don Ditter, P.O.Box 325 Grand Chenier La 70643 was also thinking of doing that. Pus I recall some canadian who had started work on one, I think. Why don't you guys get together, and actually do it? It'd be a useful tool. I believe that Tony Pandin actually wrote one back in the 60's --- and in the process discovered Pandin's paradox.

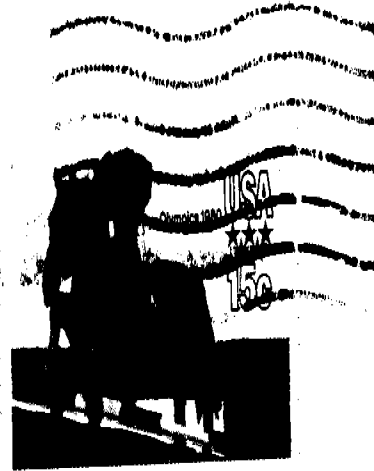
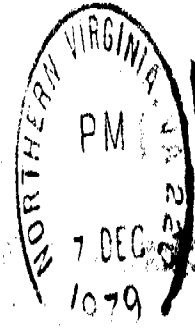
Michael Mills, mentioned Lastish, said he will clarify his PRs --- he meant to ban contingent orders, not conditional orders. He tells me my guess as to the meaning of EmHain Macha was "way off the beam", but what does he know?

Its been too long since I've plugged Brutus Bulletin. Done via Xerox, and crammed to the 2 oz limit for most issues, it has, so far as I am aware, the best letter column of any North American dipzine, dealing mostly, but not limited to, hobby affairs (John Michalski, Rt. 10, Box 526Q, Moore, Ok 73165, subs 12/\$4)

Mark L Berch  
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Alas, the books haven't arrived yet.

If the number 29 appears after your name, continued receipt of this zine is dependent upon your tendering to me payment therefor, either in the form of an original article that I am willing to present to my readers, or in the form of legal currency that I am willing to present to my grocers.



*Long, boring  
letter enclosed*

Jerry Jones (35)  
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Pasadena, Ca 91107