

Boardman Nauseates, McLendon Staunchly Defends, and Berch Pontificates, all in:

# DIPLOMACY DIGEST

Issue #39

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Ethics Again!

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All students(at any level)of diplomacy or foreign affairs should note the passing of Hans Morgenthau. Tho never holding government office, his views were widely influential. He was a pragmatist, who beleived that the best basis for foreign policy was a clear perception of the nation's interests, and said "moral principles can never be fully realized, but must at best be approximated through the ever temporary balancing of interests and the ever precarious settlement of conflicts." During the cold war he supported a strong military stance by both the US and its allies, but cautioned that, "The anticommunist crusade ... is likely to destroy all nations" He was scornful of what he considered unrealistic views of the world, calling "world opinion ... largely a myth" and never accepted the communist"monolith"theory. And he had two maxims that would serve the dippy player well to remember: "Never put yourself in a position from which you cannot retreat without losing face, and from which you cannot advance without great risks." and "Never allow a weak ally to make policy decisions for you." In view of those two quotes, it is unsurprising that He was a very early critic of the Viet Nam War. He never hesitated to criticize US foreign policy when he felt it was contary to our true interests, as he did not accept the notion that such criticisms were unpatriotic.

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Shortly after #38 went out, I got a goodly number of responses and figured I'd have the makings for a response issue (like #20). Plus I had a TZC all lined up on the subject of Ethics as well. Of course, as soon as I started organizing the issue along whose lines, naturally, the stuff stopped coming! And since it looks like there will be 3 TZCs thismonth, I might as well get started. (Sorry, numbering is out-of-order).

## The Zine Column #31

### Zine Nooze

One of the most hilarious issues of the year is Black Frog #13. This is a fictional account of a dispute in a two player game, as revealed in a series of letters between the GM and players. A superb blend of the beleivable and the absurd. It is available for the price of (cringe) \$2, but you might be able to get it if you sub at his rates of \$12 for 24 issues or one year, which ever comes last.

Dumb idea of the month comes in Volkerwanderung #14. It seems that he doesn't like the influence of rating systems: "one major force which does erode the hobby of Diplomacy is player-rating systems." And "I see the constant eroding of my pleasure in the hobby by these damn numerical rankings of players." Those who don't like rating systems usually just ignore them, and thats that. A sensible approach. But paradoxically, he takes the opposite approach, and wants to give them greater influence over the play of given games. He proposes that people stab those in the top twenty! Yes. He even rpints the top 20 of DTRS (about half of whom aren't even in the

U.S.) and urges other pubbers to do likewise. This is absurd; it makes no more sense to stab a top-20 player than to ally with him, for that reason. Either reduces the freedom and maneuverability of a player, and that reduces the fun of the game. Dippy is a game of such wide-open possibilities that it is a shame to limit them in any way by creating a stab-list.

As long as I am dumping on V, I might as well mention an inaccuracy in the Why Me? review. In it, Dave Arnott sez "If you have a problem that you are unable to work out with your GM, Lee ((Kendter, Sr)) is the person to contact." Not so (unless you are just looking for some advice, in which case, Lee is as levelheaded as they come in this hobby). But he is the BNC, and a ruling of "irregular" is really a last ditch procedure. What you want is an Ombudsman. For games in North America, they are:

Francois Guerrier Box 32 Station A Ottawa Ontario Canada K1N 0T9 (CDO Ombudsman)  
Randolph Smyth 275 - 3rd Street S.E. #314 Medicine Hat Alta Canada T1A0G4 (NADF)

Francois handles the games with a Canadian player or GM in the game, Randolph takes the others (The one exception is the PDT games, for which I am the Ombudsman). Smyth, who has long and extensive experience as both a GM and a player, was recently elected unanimously by the NADF to fill the present gap in coverage. Those are the people to go to if you cannot resolve the matter with your GM. Of course, whether the GM will heed the Ombudsman is another question entirely.

Bruce Linsey's Voice of Doom has celebrated its first anniversary with a 32 page fatso #26. Included are the results of a Poll on some very tough Rulebook questions, items that fall between the cracks (badly written orders, furthest-from-home removals) VOD has traditionally featured a heavy diet of both letters and articles, both serious and humorous, and has been able to feature an amazingly wide variety of writers. He now has game openings, too, for \$3. There has been some controversy tho. Bruce expelled a player for deception of the GM, which, for various reasons did not sit well with some people. Just this week I received a letter from a publisher who told me that he felt Bruce was wrong because, the deception is against the VOD HRs, no penalty was specified. So be warned! If you feel that you (or your enemy) should be able to try to deceive the GM and not be expelled, stay away from VOD. Bruce also has openings in the variant "Proxy Plomacy"; my own proxy-style variant will appear in the upcoming DW and is, methinks, a much more challenging game.

I am somewhat alarmed to see some of the price rises in U.S. zines recently. One zine which has, for the last three issues anyhow, run only 8-9 pages (exclusive of cover) charges new subbers 10/\$6, and an increasing number are charging 45¢+. The hobby has always relied on a good number of people getting lots of zines they don't actually play in. The pubbers themselves, if they trade, are largely insulated from these rises, I worry that the average hobbyist may feel it necessary to really cut back. I assume these price rises are really justified by increased costs. On the other hand, game fees are underpriced in general. I think that well-established GMs should be charging at least \$6, not counting NMR deposit, and I do not agree with the practice of not charging any (or perhaps \$1) game fee. Such practices cause both parties to devalue the game itself. The services of a top GM are worth far more than the, say, \$3 that Lee Kendter Sr charges. Yes, increased GF will cut back somewhat on the number of games entered, but that is good. The average player is in too many games, and I think part of the reason is that those \$2 games are so enticing. I hope that pubbers who feel that they must bring in some more \$\$ will lean toward raising GFs rather than sub rates.

Lessee...The address for Black Frog is Jack Masters 25711 N. Vista Fairways Drive Valencia, CA 91355. His #17 just arrived --- very funny; The guy is a real wit. It wouldn't be fair to describe it...LSD, mentioned Lastish, features in #1 the best printing in the hobby --- it looks like it was composed on a word processor, then offset. There are some good zine reviews, and a demo telephone game, for those interested. He also showed the good taste of mentioning my name 3 times. Yes, Mike, the first thing we experienced pubbers do is count the number of times our name is mentioned in Issue #1 of some zine. That's how we decide whom to plug.

More Dirty Pool at Graustark

I was hoping not to have to mention this at all, but Boardman has been so unceasing in his attacks on me that he becomes impossible to ignore.

It all began when Dwayne Shreve wanted to find out if publishers would print anything, no matter how inaccurate, so long as it attacked Tretick. So he wrote a letter recounting the dreadful doings of one Roger "icepick" Tretick and Dwayne Shreve. Since Roger was fictitious and Dwayne was himself, there were no true victims. It was signed with a totally fictitious "Robert Ames", and sent to Bruce Linsey and John Boardman. When he told me what he had done, I confidently predicted that no one would print such anonymous accusations, especially since everything he had said about himself was false, and could be determined to be false with a minimum of checking. Bruce ignored it altogether (so much for his reputation for always seeking controversy!), but Boardman printed the whole thing in Graustark #417, along with some commentary, even giving Ames' supposed address. When I got the copy, I was tempted to just ignore it --- after all, if he was going to do something so stupid, why not let him stew in his own juices? But then I figured, if I had egg on my face, I'd want someone to tell me, so at least I'd be able to wipe it off by setting my readers straight. So I wrote him. I also pointed out that his statements that Walker had switched sides on the Tretick matter were absurd (believe me, if anyone knows who's on which side in this mess, its me!). And since I am aware of his editing techniques, I told him that if he wanted to quote from the letter, he had to run the whole thing, without editing.

I expected to get a short note of thanx from John, but boy was I wrong! In the fine tradition of clobbering the messenger of bad news, I got a very angry response. First, he says he knew it was a hoax: "Of course Ames was a hoax. If Buddy Tretick wants to forge a letter full of information to his discredit, I'll cheerfully print it!" Of course, he didn't tell his readers specifically that it was a fake. Anyhow, the problem was, when I wrote Boardman, I didn't have permission to use Dwayne's name, so I just referred to him as "the perpetrator." He flew into a rage, and twice said that I was not to write him unless the letter contained the name of the perpetrator.

A week later he began the first of a series of attacks on me, in #418. He concluded with a call for a boycott not only of my zine, but of any zine which gives me "space" --- a true secondary boycott, and the first time (that I am aware of) that anyone has urged a boycott of this zine. In addition, in violation of my specific instructions, he quoted an excerpt from the letter. In view of the fact that back in 1979 he quoted from an off-the-record letter from Eric Ozog, this was hardly surprising.

A little while later, having gotten permission, I wrote John a second letter, defending my actions, giving him Dwayne's name, and responding to his questions and accusations on various topics. I figured that since I had given JB the specific piece of information that he demanded, that would resolve the matter. Boy was I wrong! I received a second critical letter from him, and he indicated to me that he would not allow me to defend myself in Graustark. And finally, he said he was uninterested in resolving the matter, and that he just wanted me to "go away." And a couple of weeks later he blasted me again in #420, calling me a "pimp" to Shreve's "whore" (I hope you've got the bod' for it, Dwayne.....).

By this time I was getting pretty pissed off.. JB is attacking me and not letting me defend myself. What's more, he wasn't even keeping his stories straight. Remember, he said he knew it was a hoax, but would "cheerfully" print it anyhow (or, as he said in #418 "I wasn't going to throw them ((the accusations)) away." )At the same time, he villifies the letter itself later on. In #420 he calls it "slandorous accusations" and a couple of times calls it "poison pen business". But if it was so dreadful why did he print it? If he hadn't printed it, no one would know about it! He is willing to crucify me for my purely after the fact role, but his role was far larger --- he printed it without doing a bit of checking, and, so he says, knowing it was a hoax. JB made an error in printing it, but rather than owning up to the fact, he points the

accusatory finger at everyone else.

Since I could not defend myself directly, I decided to bypass John and write up directly to his readers. I prepared a cover letter giving the background and chronology of this business, and then let the letters speak for themselves by just photocopying them, along with a few other matters referred to in these four letters. These went out around the time that #420 was mailed.

I promptly got a note from John thanking me for sending out the mailing, saying that the "exchange of correspondence ... can only be to my advantage in the current controversy." Talk about your stiff upper lip!! I very much doubt that it will have the effect he thinks it will, but then again I'm hardly objective. But here's an interesting clue. When I sent him a copy of the packet, I enclosed a note saying that since I couldn't find a recent subber list, I'd had to resort to game-starts, COAs, etc, so that there were many who didn't get it. Now, if he were really pleased, he'd likely send me his mailing list so I could finish the task. I did get some sympathetic mail (plus a smattering of new subs), including a copy of a letter sent to John by one Glen Taylor (not one of my subbers), who said "...I must say, it seems unfair of you not to allow Berch to defend himself in your pages against attacks on him. Also, I'm amazed at your casuistry in deliberately twisting Rod's words on the subject of Tretick..." Despite the fact that I asked for those who disagreed with me to write, I did not get one letter criticizing me for my actions in this Ames business.

I figured that that would pretty much be the end of it, and I was willing to let things drop if he would. No such luck. #421 takes up the cause again, calling me one of "The Liars" and saying that I was "Shreve's accomplice" This is absolutely untrue. I knew nothing about this at all until the deed was done. The entirety of my role was in telling JB that he had been hoaxed. If I had known what abuse I would get for doing that I never would have written him.

And one final thing. Tho he attacked me in #418, #420, and #421, he did not send me a copy of any of those issues; I had to rely on friends. Also, there are a host of secondary issues that were discussed in this, but enuf is enuf. If anyone wants a copy of this mailing that I sent out, send a stamped business sized envelope (15¢).

I am sorry to go on like this. But this is an ethics issue. And while John is a fine GM, his hobby ethics in this matter are, in my opinion, perilously close to the gutter. (John Boardman 234 East 19th Street Brooklyn N.Y. 11226).

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((Differing concepts of just what ethics are can be seen in the following, starting with Don Dewsnap in Claw and Fang #73 12/10/76))

#### DIPLOMACY AND ETHICS

The question of ethics in Diplomacy may be distasteful to some, since Diplomacy in the real world is generally unethical and is a nasty analogy. So first off, realize that ethics is a separate subject, and neither diplomats nor Diplomats need be unethical.

So what are ethics? Broadly, it is the contemplation of the best means to happiness and survival. This includes consideration of oneself, one's fellow players, the whole hobby of Diplomacy, and anything which contributes to any of the above. So an action is ethical in so far as it prompts survival in these areas, and unethical to the opposite degree.

Some players never tell a lie nor stab an ally. Others play to win no matter what. Most fall somewhere in between. Note, however, that this is not a scale of ethics. It is not necessarily unethical to stab someone, nor ethical not to. Almost every move in a game of Diplomacy presents choices. An ethical player will make these choices on the basis of the greatest overall survival, as outlined above.

For instance, the object of the game is to own 18 supply centers. If all games ended in a draw or a tie, the hobby would suffer, for who would want to play? So ideally, every game should have a single winner. It is ethical to win. However,

greatest survival of all players suggest that the ideal state is a seven way draw every time. Or is it? Actually, no. The main reason to play the game is to learn and demonstrate diplomacy. Ideally the best diplomat in each game would win. In doing so, he would teach the others a little more about diplomacy, thus increasing their chances of winning (and surviving) in the future. So it is OK to win ((This reminds me of the line used by those wagering on their own chess games: "We're not betting. The loser is merely agreeing to pay for his useful chess lesson in winning." But I digress)).

It can safely be said that every stab is the result of failed diplomacy the stabber's or the stabees' or both. It follows then that a stab is a penalty, pain, for not knowing diplomacy well. An ethical player will only stab if it is the only way to win. He will then find the flaws in his diplomacy that got him into such a position, and figure out how to avoid them ((why would he want to be avoiding situations where he can stab for the win?)). The player who stabs without assuring a win, or who stabs and learns nothing from it, doesn't increase anyone's survival, and is unethical.

In sum, then, ethics in Diplomacy amounts to learning to win by Diplomacy. A player who is not even trying to improve his skill as a diplomat is a liability to any diplomacy game and to the hobby. Bearing this in mind, let us move up to ever higher levels of enjoyment and skill as a group, by being ethical as individuals.

((That engendered the following response in C&F #74 by Bruce Schlickbernd, entitled:))

#### THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ETHICS AND STUPIDITY

Don Desnaps article on Diplomacy ethics suffers badly from poor terminology. Anyone who can expend the energy to pick up a dictionary will find that "ethics" imply moral judgement. Given the moral parameters of the game, there is nothing immoral or unethical about stabbing a person regardless of how it will affect the outcome of the game. Now, the stab might well be stupid, suicidal, or sheer lunacy; but since this is a game, and the game permits such, a player is not unethical to do such. About the only matters that are truly unethical in Diplomacy are cheating: deception of the GM, cross game alliances, and the like.

Don's article was basically his opinion on how the game should be played. But without saying whether or not I agree I agree with his philosophy, I must point out that simply because another player does not agree with Don's set of values does not make him unethical, or even stupid. Many times players are not overly concerned with winning: Conrad von Metzke's famed Austrian play where he often committed suicide -- effectively speaking --- would be a glowing example of differing game values. You may not agree with such values -- fine, attack the player in question.

An "ethical" (i.e. good) player under Don's reasoning will only stab if it is the only way to win. This is a rather incomplete game outlook ((its also not what he said)). Often a player might have to stab another because the other player has become to much of a liability or threat, even tho a stab will not necessarily assure him of winning, it can still enhance his chances, or at least enhance his chances of not losing. ... A good player (or at least one concerned about winning) will consider both the short and long range effects of a stab, in terms of tactical, strategic, and diplomatic outcomes. If the advantages outweigh the disadvantages (and I must stress keeping in mind long-range effects such as your reputation in future games), a player can still be doing the right thing without assuring the win with such a stab...

The wise player, then, will try and learn from his mistakes and improve his skills. To not do so is not unethical in any way, shape or form, but most likely is stupid.

((Finally this by Dennis Goldston in C&F #75:))

ETHICS: OUR RESPONSIBILITY

(turn to page 8)

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14 Sept 80  
Box 57066  
Webster, Tx 77598

((From Steve McLendon))

Dear Mark;

Re: the Great Spy Scandal. I can tell you now that my view is not going to be the popular one, and probably 2/3 of the GMs who read this will be lining up to put their own personal dent in my skull.

There is nothing "wrong" with what Andy Davidson did. The rules certainly allow for this sort of skulduggery. In fact, they even point out that almost no she-nanigans are barred.

Piggott contends that the "Diplomacy period" ends, for that player, when his orders have been written and lodged with the GM. I couldn't disagree more. The "Diplomacy period" begins when the adjudications for the current season are released, and does not end until the next deadline.

During this time, a player is allowed any scheme his clever mind can concoct (except trying to deceive the gamesmaster) to improve his chances. This includes lying, flying across the country to take another player out to dinner, forging letters, seducing the GM's wife - the sky is pretty much the limit.

Piggott himself hit upon the key: "In a way, all this is my fault, for not keeping players' orders under lock and key". The GM has a responsibility to the players in the game, and it is not limited to merely adjudicating. For one, he must insure (to his best capability) that players' orders remain confidential. He is the one figure in the game players can count on to maintain a position of trust and impartiality.

Piggott betrayed the confidence of the players in his carelessness with their orders, knowing that they were easily accessible by another player. In my opinion, Piggott is the only one who did anything wrong. Any punitive action against Davidson would have been unjustified.

I can cite a similar (though not identical) example from my own experience. I was playing in a game in Cliff Mann's Watergate. Linda Brendlinger was also a player in that game. But she was Cliff's girlfriend and lived fairly close to him. This should have bothered me but at the time I simply thought that GM confidence was inviolable.

One night I called Cliff to give him my orders. He said he was ready to take them down. Then I heard some noises at the other end and Cliff said, "Stop it, Linda!" I asked Cliff, "Is that Linda Brendlinger?" He replied that it was, and I immediately blew my top. He should have informed me Linda was there beforehand and at least given me the option of giving him the orders anyway or calling back later. Cliff claimed he was merely going to write them down, not read them out loud.

Now, should punitive action have been taken against Linda because the GM was irresponsible enough to let her have access to my orders? I think not. Security of players' orders is one of the prime responsibilities of the GM, and only the GM.

Of course, the GM has no control over players' orders while they are in transit to him. A player who steals out of his mailbox is another matter. Stealing from a mailbox is a federal crime and, if discovered, should be prosecuted to the limit. But once a player's orders are in the GM's hands, they are HIS responsibility.

What advice would I give to a GM who has found himself in this predicament? Well, his first action would be to hold up the game and notify all other players of the breach in his security. There would then be two options open to the players:

- 1) Terminate the game and start over. Notify the BNC and suggest that the game be declared irregular and abandoned.

2) The players could agree to resubmit orders for that season and continue play. Note that if the players all agreed to do this the game would NOT be irregular.

In summary, I side completely with Davidson. Piggott was the one who made the error, and he should have faced up to it.

((Boy, when Steve takes a swing at someone, he'd better duck! A style I like!

((Steve is quite correct when he focuses the attention on Piggott. Knowing that there were local players makes the "lock and key" approach mandatory. Any discussion of Andy's culpability must not obscure that fact. Certain minimum precautions must be taken by any thoro GM, and John P let his players down.

((However, that, in my opinion, does not take the player off the hook. What if the orders were under lock and key --- and the player picked the lock? Quoting the law won't do any good. Its just as unlawful to enter the room without permission as to enter the drawer (locked or unlocked) without permission. And, as a practical matter, while you probably could get a conviction for interfering with the mails, its very unlikely you could get one for picking a door or drawer lock, if nothing was taken. The police just aren't going to sweat the small stuff.

((The players must show a certain amount of restraint. For example, in an ordinary FTF game, players are not permitted to look at the orders of another once they have been turned in (at least, in the games I've been in). To do otherwise forces everyone to keep his thumb on his orders, and pretty soon things get put of hand. And Steve. do you really believe that the sky is the limit, except for trying to deceive the GM? If offering a bribe to the GM acceptable? The problem here is that you can get into absolutely dead end situations. If there is "nothing wrong" with looking at the orders, then how about altering them? The player will scream bloody murder that the GM was deceived --- but if the GM knew about the alteration, is it really deception?

((The position that Brendlinger was in is quite different. She did not ask to be present during the fone call. There was no intent on her part.

((Ultimately, I come back to Guerrier's words again. Actions such as Davidson's are "undermining the... services which the GM make available to all players as recompense for game-and sub-fees." It is not fair for other players for any player to participate in this undermining process. And to consider it not wrong places local players at a dis-advantage --- as non-locals will wonder if they have used such a trick. Steve puts the case exceptionally well, but I am not persuaded.))

((Moving on to others, Non-GM Bill Becker suggests:))

"Scoundrel Davidson refuses to resign; it is his only way out, since he was caught red-handed. So what do I do? I accept his moves! My next issue explains the incident. All players involved in games with Andy are told that the next season is due again and here are Andy's moves - do what you will with them."

((A similar approach comes from Mike Mills:))

"...That player's opponents would then know that he knew the moves and would take the necessary adjustments if any. Under these circumstances I would expect the players in the game to mete out punishment under fire --- on the board. D ((Expulsion)) is too harsh for the first offense especially in a situation where the rules of correct conduct are not clearly defined. C ((NMR for that season)) seems appropriate, tho it is also unethical to disregard a player's orders which were otherwise submitted correctly." ((I'm not sure here if Mike intended, as Bill did, for the others to see the orders of Andy first. I, too, am very bothered by the idea of NMRing a player who sent in legal orders, and for that reason might not do as Piggott did. Expulsion is too severe in such an uncharted area. I might do as Becker describes. What Andy did is wrong, and here, punishment fits the crime. He wanted to see others' moves first --- now, they see his!))

...Ethics involves standards of conduct, and in Diplomacy, these standards are ill-defined at best and certainly lacking in force. To understand the problem of definition, , you have to look at examples. Bruce cites deception of the GM as unethical, and the vast majority would agree. Yet even in this extreme case there is room for dissent. Since almost all GMs include this item in their house rules, it can be argued that deception of the GM is more a legal matter than an ethical one. In any case, the sanctions against such behavior are there and are clearly understood.

From that point onward, however, we see only shades of grey, such as the infamous cross game alliance. It is not difficult to say what a cross game alliance is, but it is very hard to prove that there has been one. Suppose two people in two games work together for a two way draw in both games. Is that prima facie evidence of collusion? It is not an easy question to answer.

((He then discusses briefly forged and remailed letters)). And finally there is the question of that marvel of science, the telephone. How many games have been affected by a call? Is it ethical for one player to have an advantage over another because he can afford a bigger phone bill? Or what about the players who have access to Watts lines and pay nothing? No, ethics is not cut and dried.

As for enforcement, there is almost nothing outside the house rules ((but a GM can put almost anything he wants into the House Rules)) and complaints to the IDA ((R.I.P.)) etc. Some players take justice into their own hands and seek vengeance on the accused , frequently employing the same techniques they consider to be wrong in the first place ((this I doubt very much. They may use techniques that others consider to be just as/almost as bad as the original problem)).

What is the solution? We could add more rules covering these and other situations and apply some type of sanctions, etc. I would oppose this approach on theoretical grounds. Legislating morality, in my opinion, fosters an attitude of "If its not against the rules, it must be OK." ((Actually, that attitude is fairly common, and I don't think its all that bad. It prevents someone from getting screwed because he thought that a particular tactic was unfair when really it wasn't considered so by the others. If everyone understands the rules, the same set of rules, there may well be less argument over the rules, and none will feel victimized.)) The other extreme (essentially the way things are now) would be to avoid the problem by saying that its impossible to agree on definitions and sanctions, so we must depend totally on the individuals judgement. Somewhere inbetween there must be a better way...If we could agree on a list of ethical do's and don'ts for novices, surely we could warn them of the potentialities and advise them on some ways to avoid ethical dilemmas ((they are not, however, truly avoidable, and besides, what makes you think that novices will pay any attention?)). True, such an approach involves no small effort; but clearly the standards of conduct we operate under will be a direct measure of what we are willing to accept --- even a hobby carries a responsibility.

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The Zine Column #30

The Hobby's Golden Summer

The North American postal diplomacy hobby is now in its 18th year, and its had its peaks and valleys. But in terms of publishing blockbusters, there has never been such a time as the summer of 1980 (which I'm stretching to include all of Sept). For while the hobby is usually lucky to have one such item per year (and there really were weren't any in 1978 or 1979), this summer there are three! The first was --- must I remind you -- the Lexicon of Diplomacy. Already a hobby classic (because I said so, that's why), it will remain in print (with occasional updates) for at least as long as I am in the hobby, as a standard reference source. The third will -- I assume -- be Guerrier's Second Anniversary Issue, due out late in Sept or so. But the topic here is is Bruce Linsey's novice packet, Supernova.

The most striking thing about it is its immense size --- 35 pages (actually, as these are oversized pages (up to 67 lines per page, and 12-to-the-inch type)



its closer to 45 ordinary pages). Looking just at the original articles, it features the widest variety of writers ever assembled (that I am aware of) in a single publication (and that includes all the handbooks): Sergeant, Verheiden, Ron Brown, Walker, Konrad Baumeister, Davis, Dan Isaacs, Martin, Coughlan, with multiple submissions from Smyth, Cuerrrier, Linsey, and myself. And there is a rich variety of reprinted items as well. What a treasure trève!

It starts with a slightly overenthusiastic introduction, and then quickly gets down to the mechanics of postal play, including three pages with the Q&A format, including such as "Is it better to stick with older, most established GMS" (take that, K.B.!). After the samples and guide to abbreviation, there is a series of seven short essays, one on each country. This will be very useful to hand to someone coming over for his first FTF game as well. An all-to-brief look at the hobby's history is followed by a look at reputations. Bruce's article on being stabbed overlaps somewhat with Cuerrrier's later article on "Stabbing and Revenge", tho the latter has a wider scope. Smyth contributes two excellent collections of very down to earth advice on the practical side of being a novice in a world of sharks. Cuerrrier has a good overview of differing playing styles and philosophies of the game's end, which is important for those coming from a limited set of FTF friends. I've written an introduction to tactics, Dick Martin on Press, and Smyth (again!) contributes a spectacular essay on the psychological aspects of the game, perhaps the best I've ever seen on that topic. There's an overly long article on the fone --- it goes on and on. And there's some great reprinted material, too. Chief among these items is the full set of end-game statements for 1979E, a very good choice for something like that. It is inevitable that there will be some overlap, but its not a serieous problem, and in some cases its helpful to have plural views.

Some will of course say: Let them leard the hard way, like I did --- its more fun. Perhpas, but it can be very discouraging before you get the hang of it, because there are so many mistakes to be made, and I am certain that we lose a lot of people that way. It is available to novices free (tho 20¢ for stamps would be nice), and to anyone for cost (75¢). Bruce will also be enclosing a flyer describing up-to-date game openings and such. I realize that I've spent an awful lot of space on this but when such a fine publicat/on comes out it is hard not being enthusiastic (Bruce Linsey Bldg 11 Apt 21 Leisurville Watervliet, N.Y. 12189)

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((The following is a letter from Peter Swanson in Ethil the Frog #44, 20 Feb 1974))

"Playing in a game in 1901 and all that I wished to send an anonymous letter to an adjacent country. As the postmark would have given me away, I decided to ask Mick ((the GM)) to post it for me in Halifax, enclosing a note in the envelope explaining why Mr. Anon E. Mous did not necessarily live in or near that city. Mick refused, saying that the other players might object. I respected his decision as GM, and I didn't take up the argument either, mainly because it was now too late for the letter to have the desired effect. However, I do not fully understand Mick's objections, and perhaps now is the time for this to be clarified, together with whatever you have to say.

"I persoanlly must take Richard Sharp's view. I don't see the objections you or Mick have about forwarding other people's lies, since they really do the same thing when they print press releases. Of course, telling deliberate lies to a player on behalf of another is taboo. Still, I beleive you should have had no qualms about passing on Richard's letter.

John Piggott, Ed : " Lookit - press releases are different. Where a zine prints black press... it is implicit that some of the things said therein might be lies, and some of these lies might be attributed to other players. That's one of the great things about press, after all - but then, who beleives what they read in the press releases?

"Basically, the kind of problem you've brought up, and which Sharp and Ferguson en-



((From Steve Simon, 410 "O" Street, Washington, D.C. 20024:))

With respect to your views on ethics, I have this one simple comment: Anything that can't be fairly and equitably enforced shouldn't be a "rule". In particular, any "rule" the infringement of which can only be discovered by confession of the "wrongdoer" is a rule in name only. Stated otherwise, if a "rule" cannot be administered in such a way as to reward those who obey and punish those who don't, then forget it. All the moralistic preaching from all the editorial pulpits in the world won't save such a rule from its eventual, well-deserved oblivion. How does your notion that players have a duty to report cloaked errors stand up against this standard? Very Poorly. Most people who play in games would much rather win than feel good about having done the right thing; and since the latter would be the only means of enforcing your idea, I'd say you have about three strikes against you from the start

((Steve's argument is really very appealing. Practicality is an important touchstone in a hobby such as this, and many an otherwise fine standard or idea has turned out to be impractical, and thus valueless.

((However, I think that his standard is too stringent. If applied, we'd have very few practicable rules at all. Take what is probably the most common rule of all HRs: Thou shall not deceive the GM. But if the deception is successful, then it can only be "discovered by confession of the wrongdoer" So such a rule would fail to meet Steve's standards. Patching up the rule would not help. That would give something like this: "Thou shalt not get caught in the deception of the GM" Has a rather cynical ring to it, eh?

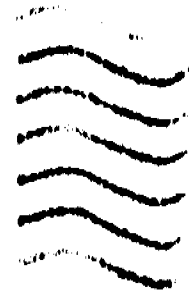
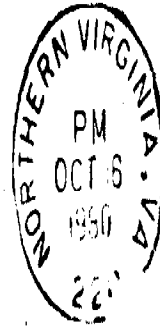
((Furthermore, many rules do have a considerable self-enforcing aspect to them. There are many people whose standard is that anything goes unless barred by the law or the houserules. For such a person, there is no obligation to report a cloaked error --- unless there is a HR on the subject.

((Finally, while I am sure that there are people who place winning above everything not everyone does. Specifically, I personally would rather feel good about having reported a cloaked error, than not reporting it and winning as a result. After all, if I am not going to feel good about a victory (and I wouldn't in those circumstances), then what's the point of it? It seems foolish to work so hard to get into a potentially winning position, and then taint the victory (in my own mind) by knowing that it was in fact occurring only by virtue of an error that the other party was powerless to discover.)) ((Next up is Doug Beyerlein))

"The problem with ethics in the game of Diplomacy is really more a problem of gamesmasterial procedure. A gamesmaster should make it very clear at the start of a game that no deception of the gamesmaster will be tolerated; the gamesmaster will treat all players fairly; and what deception occurs between players is of no interest to the gamesmaster. If a player steals a look at the gamesmaster's files then the player should be expelled from the game (e.g. Davidson in the Ethil game). If a player tries to bribe another or writes gamesmaster sounding press (e.g. Groundhogg in Spirit of the Age) and does nothing to deceive the gamesmaster then the gamesmaster should take no action against that player. It is as simple as that.

"I have used the idea of bribes a number of times in both face-to-face and postal games. Once in a DipCon tournament game I had an ally who was scared I was going to stab him. To show him that I would keep my word and not stab him I gave him a twenty dollar bill and told him that he could keep it if I took one of his supply centers. I kept the alliance and at the end of the game took my twenty dollar bill back. In another game in a tournament (1978 DipCon) I offered another player the first place prize in return for his help so that I would win the game and tournament. He didn't accept my offer. If you want to use money to win postal Diplomacy games it is probably better spent on phone calls to the other players than bribes. Brenton Ver Ploeg and David Crockett proved that."

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If the number 39, appears by your name, this is your final issue unless you send me CASH MONEY

The word "casuistry" appears on page 4. It is not misspelled. It is even the correct word!

If a new subber mentions your name (or, for pubbers, the name of your zine) I add one issue to your sub length. I can do this because I have avoided the expense of sending a sample (Obviously, this doesn't apply is he asks for a sample first!) There is not limit to how many free issues you can get this way

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