

DIPLOMACY DIGEST

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Potpourri

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For those of you seeing DD for the first time, or who have just started their sub: There are no games here --- this is a zine for the reader. Every aspect of the game and hobby of Diplomacy is covered: Strategy and Tactics, hobby history, GMing, tournaments, personalities, ethics, variants, ratings, face-to-face, negotiations, press, vilifications and tirades, play of specific countries, statistics, stalemate lines, publishing, alliances, humor, house rules, stabbing and much more. The articles, mostly reprints, are drawn from my archives, which, at Over 8500 issues, is the second largest in North American. These are organized into theme issues, or as potpourri as this one. There are also occasional issues of just original material, such as the account of the top-board play at Dip-Con 1979, which relied heavily on tape-recorded accounts of the negotiations. In addition, "The Zine Column" is a regular feature, hobby news and my commentary on what is happening in other zines. Plus of course my front page editorial, normally devoted to other than telling people what most of them already know about the zine. And that's pretty much it. I print occasional letters (and I do encourage response), but what's printed here normally must stick to comments on what has appeared previously. With very rare exceptions, there's no coverage of music, movies, SF, politics, etc. I've got no objection to that stuff, but when I write on it, that will appear elsewhere, in better forums. If you've any questions, just ask.

Work is proceeding on "Son of Lexicon", which will appear this winter, with new entries, corrected, and updated entries. If you have any new terms that you think should be included, get them to me (and suggest a definition if you like, tho I'll have the final say you understand). Ditto for corrections and updates. I'd also be interested in knowing if anyone would be interesting in typing it.

Available from me is Farrago #2. This is a general press release describing how planning is going for DIPCON XV. Several innovations will take place, the best of which is that we'll have plenty of time available for play, reducing the need for curtailed games. Round 1 will be Sat, 1 PM (assembly) till 11 PM if needed; Round 2 is Sunday 9-3. There will be a seminar/panel discussion Sat morning, 10-Noon. F #2 covers that, staff, a bit of history and more; copies are available for an SASE. #3 which will be available in late Dec or early Jan will be a discussion of various possible scoring systems, and can be obtained for 2 20¢ stamps. Work is proceeding well and we are hoping for the biggest and best DIPCON of all time.

A few corrections on the quiz results given in #51. Lanny's Byrne Syndrome is correct, I've gotten confirmation from Kathy on that. Also, I got a bit carried away, Manaical is another game entirely. I got A.D.A.G.'s translation wrong. Fred Davis tells me it means "To the left, to the right" --- what sightseeing guides in 19th century were notorious for saying to American tourists they were rushing thru places like the Louvre. Gad that was a poorly written sentence! Oh well, on with the show!

Conflicts in Postal Diplomacy are generally of three types. Player vs Player, Player vs GM, and Everybody vs The Postal System. From the latter arena comes Peter Birks' tale from Greatest Hits #23, May 1976:

Dont Try to beat the G.P.O, Just Keep On Fooling Them

The last issue of GH was posted on March 31st, neatly stapled, and popped into the letterbox, just the same as the previous 21 issues. The next day, I came home from work, and there were 79 issues of GH (ten fewer than I sent out, I never did discover what happened to them) with a note from the Stockwell sorting office.

"These items of mail are in a dangerous state and have been returned so that you can place them in envelopes. As you can see, the stamps have been franked; to obtain a refund, write to 208 Sloan St WC1."

Well, this did not please me, so, the following morning, I stormed into Stockwell sorting office, with the intention of convincing the guy on duty that franking the mail legally obliged them to deliver it. (I had no idea whether this was true or not, but it seemed a fair gamble). The response from the chap was as follows:

"My colleague has obviously, er, refused these items on the grounds of danger, and I'm afraid I must back him to the hilt on this fact in particular. Er, can't take the mail, I'm afraid....no, we shouldn't have franked the mail, we should have returned it to you unfranked....'fraid you've been conned there....go to 208 Sloan St, they'll refund it....no, no chance of me delivering the mail on the quiet, you'll just have to put them in envelopes, readdress them and re-stamp them....it ain't my fault that it'll take you another evening, you should have put them in envelopes in the first place, then none of this would have happened."(End of conversation).

So off I trekked to Sloan Street, a 1/2 hour journey, and I'm already late for work. The doorman at Sloan St had no idea who I should see. After 10 minutes of jabbering he finally rings someone up. 5 minutes later a middle-aged gent (looking like a retired postman) meandered down the stairs, and looked at my 79 copies of GH.

"These are franked! I thought that it was meter mail. Well, that puts the matter in a different light altogether. Stockwell shouldn't have franked them, you know....oh, you told thme that did, you?...Well, you're at the wrong place altogether, I'm afraid, we only deal with meter mail refunds. You want to go to Victoria....You're late for work already? I'll tell you what, I'll fone them up....(Gets on the phone, dials the wrong number, eventually gets thru).....Hello! I've got a chap here with 79 items of rejected mail, trouble is, the silly buggers at the sorting office have franked the stamps before sending them back, and he wants his money....Yes, he's willing to surrender the items of mail....(at which point I screamed "NO, I'M NOT!") Well, we can't just refund 88 x 6 1/2 p on your say-so, we've got to have some proof, so you have to surrender the mail. It's OK, you get the stuff back within a month or so, with the cheque for the stamps....It's got to go out urgent has it, well I'm afraid we can't help you then, you've lost your money. After all, you didn't expect us to pay you straight away, did you? These things have to go thru the correct channels....."

At which point, I retired, defeated, shattered, an hour late for work, and with no prospect of getting my money back. I faced an evening's work in readdressing the envelopes (which I had yet to buy), and was about £ 6 out of pocket, whne, IDEA! Why not post the stuff again? Which is what I did, over the week following. Whoever I passed a postbox, in when a bundle of 5 GH's, already stamped, but, knowing the P.O.'s inefficiency, almost certain to be delivered. I didn't have to readdress the envelopes, I didn't have to buy any more stamps, and the littel consumer had the last laugh at the big bureaucracy. So if any of you didn't get GH #22, you know why. If you did, but had to pay 13 1/2/17p for the privilidge of getting it, drop me a line and I'll add it to your credit. I wouldn't mind betting that no one got charged, tho.

The moral of the story? I don't really know, but its nice getting your own back at an organization that treats you like dirt. Up yours G.P.O.!(I had the ocassion to do something similar recently. Some copies of DD mailed well before the canadian strike came back, cancelled. I just remailed, with no trouble))

((Way back in DD #41 I reprinted the first part of Edi Birsan's famous compilation of "Famous Stabs In Postal Diplomacy", which first appeared in the 1975 IDA Handbook. This continued in #48, and now concludes with this final installment:))

The prior set-ups and stabs have all been executed with an acceptable range of risk and chance of success. The strategic considerations were taken into account, and the parties involved decided to make a go of the stab. What follows is an example from a current game, in which there was an apparent lack of proper consideration for strategic settings which resulted in a poor stab. Such moves are characteristic of too many current stabs and their victims have the genuine right to feel quite annoyed, for if there is anything worse than being stabbed, it is being stabbed poorly or foolishly.

GAME: 1975A

Zine: Hoosier Archives

GM: Walt Buchanan

Positions at the end of the S02 Season:

Austria (Len Lakofka) A Bul, Ser, Tyo, Tri; F Gre (5)
 England (Mike Rocamora) F Spa(sc), Eng, Nth; A Nwy (4)
 France (Ted Holcomb) F Mid, Por; A Mar, Pic (4)
 Italy (Edi Birsan) F Wes, Ion; A Pie, Ven (4)
 Russia (Don Pitch) F Swe, StP(nc); Bla; A Ukr, Lvn, Rum (6)
 Turkey (Marie Beyerlein) A Con; F Ank, Aeg (4) (one short)
 Germany (Steve Brooks) A Bur, Mun, Kie; F Bel, Bal (6)

Past History: E, G, and I had designed a perfect stab/attack on F in S01, managing to pull the French Army out of Mar whereas the French were hoping to stand off (prearranged with G). In the east, R was in Gal ((in S01)) and it looked good for the attack on Austria to allow for the west to concentrate on F. In the Fall, however, R and T apparently decided to ally with Austria against the other and promptly went to war, with R pulling out of Gal. In S01, Aus moved to Tyo, practically gaining a lock on Ven, while the attack on France continued and the Austrians sided with R against T.

The pre-F02 arrangements are somewhat critical to understand what happened: The EGI triple alliance had decided that Ven was hopeless and the best thing to do was to have the Germans come down from Mun to Tyo to cover in the following year while at the same time exposing Austrian home centers. Also, the Germans were to support I into Mar to assure that Italy would not have a removal and thus would be able to assist in throwing the Austrians out of Ven and continue to press the French. In the north, E-G was to take Swe from R and prepare to move on central R in the following year. In the east the Russians and Austrians were prepared to move further against T if possible.

The sTab

Austria: A Tyo-Ven, A Tri S A Tyo-Ven, A Ser S F Gre, F Gre S A Bul, A Bul? H
 England: F Spa(sc) S Ital A Pie-Mar, F Eng-Bre, F Nth S A Nwy, A Nwy H(dis)
 Germany: F Bal-Swe, F Bel-Nth, A Kie-Den, A Bur-Par, A Mun-Bur
 France: A Pic-Par, F Mid-Bre, A Mar-Pie, F Por-Spa(sc)
 Italy: A Pie-Mar, F Wes S Eng F Spa(sc), F Ion-Gre, A Ven-Tri(dis)
 Russia: F StP(nc) S F Swe-Nwy, A Lvn H, A Rum S Aus A Bul, F Sev-Bal, A Ukr-Sev
 Turkey: F Aeg S Ital F Ion-Gre, A Con-Bul, F Ank-Con

The German moves gained him 2 centers, Den and Swe, both of which could have been obtained without breaking any existing alliances, but in doing so he stabbed E and I, and pulled off one of the more infamous knifings. Strong points? Not many. It was sheer hope that by swinging back and forth the Germans would be able to pick up enough SCs and maybe an effective Russian ally to gain a superior position in the game.

Weak Points: The refusal of the support to Italy in Mar and not going to Tyo meant that Italy would either have to remove one unit on the French border, or give up territory to Aus, i.e. Nap or Rom. If the unit were pulled off the French border, such as F Wes, then France would become more of a nuisance to Germany and England thus probably ending German hopes for a quick campaign in the west. If the Italians removed from the Italian frontier, i.e. F Ion or the dislodged A Ven, then Aus would grow very quickly without any counterbalance in the east and with enough excess units to threaten Germany in 1903. So the refusal to move A Mun-Tyo and support Italy in Mar really hurt

join in a game).

On the other hand, when a woman finds a really trustworthy ally, she can do great things. This applies particularly to the friend I mentioned earlier, who plays with her husband. Her logic cannot be faulted: "If he doublecrosses me, he gets no dinner for a week" --- enough to make the keenest Diplomat think twice! Of course, it eliminates some guesswork for the other players; those 2 will certainly become allies, come hell or high water, no matter which countries they are playing. But it can be most frustrating: When Germany and Austria form an unbreakable alliance, it is a little difficult for the other powers to get at each other!

I have never seen such a game played to its conclusion (we are usually all asleep by 1910), so I don't know if it is possible for a woman to win outright. As a staunch Women's Liberationist, I should love to be told that of course it has been done, that women are every bit as good as men, at Diplomacy as at everything else. Meanwhile, undeterred, I have decided to go on a waiting list for a postal game -- but even this raises a problem. What other country will be prepared to negotiate with me, if I am playing in the same game as my husband?

((My thanks to Fiona for the above...The last sentence...has now come true, she is currently playing in 1972EC in Der Krieg. Husband Brian Yare is not involved, however --- Richard Walkerdine))) ((Curiosly, in the middle of the game, she changed her name: "No, we haven't got a standby in for Russia. Mrs. Fiona Yare now wishes to be called Miss Fiona Vincent..." --- this from Der Krieg #26. She had a long alliance w R with A, but was stabbed by Austria, who took all her home centers and won))((Next is John Piggott's letter from Mad Policy #6))

"Evidently Fiona Yare hasn't seen Ethil the Frog's 1972BK, where a woman looks reasonably likely to win. Irene Taylor has 11, and Harry Bell 9. Curiously, Irene is Harry's fiancee....((It didn't quite turn out that way. Both Irene(E) and Harry(f) both eventually NMRed out. That game featured one of the oddest Englands you'll ever see. In w06 she had 2 fleets and 10 armies)) Apart from this, tho, females haven't been all that successful in British Diplomacy. Apart from Ailsa Turrel in BDC1..and Fiona and Irene, the only others who have partaken are Kathy Hudson and Stella Berg in War Bulletin "B", way back in the mists of antiquity (late 1970). Neither of them really knew how to play, and they both got cut to pieces. Kathy eventually fell in love with my letters (or so it seemed) and assigned control of her country to me. That was how I won my first game of postal Diplomacy. Kathy has since got married. ((And now we have our own Kathy Byrne, who has won twice with Italy alone, not to mention her other successes))

This month's history item is the account in Brodingnag #68, 9-7-67, of the most famous hoax, and one of the most famous games in all postal history: The 1964C "Eric Blake" hoax. The account was by its then publisher, John McCallum.

The Fake "Eric Blake"

"The war is over; now our troubles begin" ----- Moshe Dayan

The general's remark applies not only to campaigns in the Sinai Desert but to simulated wars played with chips of wood on a cardboard field, and the troubles can begin as much as a year after the end of battle.

In Graustark #130, John Boardman states that he used the name "Eric Blake" as a pseudonym and as a mailing address through which to receive literature of a quasi-fascist nature. He has also, over that signature, published articles and letters supporting that political position. ((In those days, Boardman was on the left, politically)). The use of noms-de-plume is an old and well established custom in SF-fandome circles...The Diplomacy world is concerned with ... whether 1964C can be regarded as a fair game. In that game, John Boardman ... played ... England, using his own name, and Turkey as Eric Blake...the two countries generally regarded as the naturally strongest on the board. John Boardman won as England; he, as Eric Blake, was the only other

strong survivor. Jim Goldman's France had one piece remaining at the end of play; all the other players ... had been earlier eliminated. The question is, can this win, by a man who actually played 2 positions in the game, be allowed to stand in the record books of the game?

Every GM must, to some extent, accept the good faith of his players on trust. He gets game applications from many people, only a few of whom will be personally known to him. Some of the others he may know thru correspondence, but, in most games, there will be many whom he will know nothing about. In 64C, the GM had even less direct contact than usual with the players, prior to the beginning of the game. What happened:

The first postal Diplomacy game, 63A, was run by Boardman in Graustark. On its completion ... Boardman began another, 1964A. Some months later, he wanted to begin still another game. As it was the custom to carry only one game in a zine, he announced that he would publish a second zine, Fredonia, to carry the new game. Applications were more numerous than they had been for previous games and Boardman issued an appeal for another publisher to run the game and absorb the overflow of Fredonia applicants. Boardman stated that he would like to play himself in that additional game if formed.

Dick Schultz responded to that appeal, so that when 64B, the Fredonia game, was made up at the end of April 1964, Boardman sent Schultz his own application and, at the same time, a list of those who, he said, had applied to enter the Fredonia game, but for whom there was no room ... including ... such well known players as Derek Nelson and James Goldman. It also included the name of Eric Blake... There were not enough names on the list to make up a full board, so there was a delay of a week or so while Schultz recruited to complete the board, and then Brobdingnag was launched, to carry 1964C ((in May 1964)). Note that Dick Schultz does not appear to have had an opportunity to even see "Balke's" application but was merely presented with a list which included his name.

The game, to outward appearances, followed a rather traditional course; JB's E allied with Goldman's F against Nelson's G... Russia also joined in the attack on Germany, leaving his home territory nearly defenseless. Russia fell very quickly before a T-A attack. Turkey then pressed on against Austria and easily destroyed it. In the west, war broke out between the erstwhile allies, E and F. In the east, Eric Blake had only to face Len Bailes' Italy. Bailes put up an able defense and fought well against vastly superior numbers. However, the conclusion of that campaign was foomed. When I took over the game in W08, Italy had 2 units left and obviously could not long survive. The ET alliance against R had continued against A and was now in full force against F ... James Goldman ... who, when I took over the zine ... had about a third of the forces on the board and was at war with both E and T, each of whom also had about a third of the forces.

What would normally have happened here would have been for the power in the middle to try to break the alliance by supporting one or other of his enemies against the other. Needless to say, with E and T controlled by the same brain ... F was whittled down rapidly between the two giants. Eventually a war did, ostensible, break out between E and T with F now in the English camp. The terms offered to F were so severe that it was down to one unit when Boardman's England won the game.

(An interesting sideline here. Oneseason, near the end of the game, Blake had submitted no moves by the deadline. The game seemed to be at an interesting point in the duel between the giants, and I didn't want to see it resolved by the chance of a move possibly lost in the mail ((which raises an interesting question in GMing ethics)) . So I resolved to phone Blake. No street address had ever been given, just a P.O. Box number ... The New York telephone operator informed me that there was a telephone in the name of Eric Blake, but it was ... a secret, unlisted number. By this time I was sure that I was dealing with a paranoid, who not only lived in a Post Office box but kept an unlisted phone. What puzzles me now is, why does John need an unlisted phone. The P.O. box as an address for extremist political literature is one thing. But what purpose could the unlisted phone serve? Oh well, Blake is a common enuf name, the phone may have belonged to someone else.

What is to be done about the game? On reading Graustark #130 ... I wrote Schultz, and all the players, including one who resigned and his replacement, and one other well known player and GM not connected with the game. All the players who replied agreed with my feeling that the game should be dropped from the records. Schultz has not committed himself on what should be done but has indicated that he was in ignorance of the situation...Boardman's HRs, given in #17, and repeated in other more recent issues state "In short, players may practice deception among themselves, but not with the GM." I feel that this is a case where a player did, very grossly, deceive the GM. As the game ended over a year ago, it is not possible to apply John's own penalty, i.e. suspend the player. The next best thing would seem to be to declare the game a mismatch and to delete it from all records and rating lists ... it will not be recognized in future editions of the BROB Rating List.

Unfortunately, the decision weighs most heavily on Jim Goldman ... who, if this had been a normal game with 7 genuine players, might have been expected to do better than he did. Conceivably he might have won. One player felt so strongly about this that, in replying to my letter, urged that Goldman be declared the winner. Well, Goldman did not win the game so he cannot be declared the winner. With the disallowance of 1964C, his ranking will suffer, since he did survive in the game, and since he had 10-11 units for a long time in the middle game ((BROB looked at all years)). I don't see that there is anything that can be done to avoid this - the game must be counted or not counted...No doubt lawyers in the crowd could tell us of many similar instances in the wider world.

To John Boardman: In Graustark #137, you state "...as I have previously stated, the Graustark rules for postal Diplomacy are in no sense to be regarded as obligatory for other GMs...Dick Schultz ... had no stipulation on this point, one way or the other. The accusation that in entering 64C under a pseudonym, I broke a rule, refers to a rule which did not exist."

This whole argument appears very disingenuous. First, your first quoted sentence seems to imply that, while Graustark games will be conducted under the highest ethical standards, a far lower plane is acceptable in other, lesser, publications. Second, there is no complaint from anyone ... that you entered a game under a pseudonym, the complaint is that you played two positions in the same game...Brannan has played games as Dan Brannan, and others as Steve Cartier, and even, I think, one or two as Charles Brannan which, I believe, is his legal name. Who has ever objected?

As to your statement that no rule existed ... in G #17 you stated your rule, quoted above, that deception of the GM would not be tolerated. In #20 you asked for applications for a new game, 64B, which you intended to form, and stated that the rules for postal play to be followed were those given in #17. In #21 you ... asked that someone volunteer to act as GM for another game in case there should be enough applicants to fill two games. In #23 you announce that Dick Schultz had accepted your invitation ... in #24 you again mention the two new games forming, and asked players to send in their \$2 fee for either of them to yourself. And, in fact, the games were not arranged with the first 7 received going into Fredonia, and later entries, together with your own going to Schultz. You already had 7 when I sent in mine and yet I ended up in Fredonia, not Brobdingnag, so that the decision as to which players would play in which game was made by you. So your statement that Schulz "organized" 64C is not correct, he competed the organization of it ... but a large part of the preliminary organization was done by yourself. The 2 games were twins throughout.

In the circumstance I think most would agree that, barring explicit statement to the contrary, it could be assumed that both games would be conducted under the same rules...That Schultz, at least, thought so is shown in B #1 where, when setting up length of deadlines and the like, refers to the rules in #17 as his authority. It is a fact, however, that he did not explicitly state, in so many words, that he would follow the G rules. In brief, I think that most individuals involved must have felt that the game was played according to your rules, that ... you deceived the GM...as well as deceiving

is like a newspaper ... the comparison is completely misapplied. A reporter is the person who writes the story ((i.e. player = press writer = reporter)) not the one who reviews it!! The proper title for Jim Benes is Editor. And Editors DON'T have the right to change facts. As per your example, imagine the trouble a real editor would get into if he identified a source who wanted to remain secret!!!....

HINSDALE---....The press release was anything but anonymous since it was obviously came from Mr Klitzke. There were no directions that it was to be printed as anonymous. Therefore, it was attributed to its proper source, Mr Klitzke...a similar situation had never come up before, but before the issue of Dippy that is in question had hit the stands, in fact, before it was even printed, the decision was made to attribute the press in question on the basis of arguments that have been appearing in these pages lo these many weeks. No rule was invented to justify an action...I myself am a news editor. I have every right to correct copy, which I do -- and that includes attributing it to sources who don't state specifically that they wish to remain anonymous. ((Round 5 then began in the following issue:))

MUNICH -- Once again, I refer you to your dictionary. By Definition something unsigned by the author is anonymous. Since my PR was unsigned (before you changed it) it was anonymous....If you really did act in good faith I apologize for the defamation of character. It doesn't say much for your intellegence, however. If you were a newspaper editor of a large city faily and received a story which did not name its sources, would you really insert the names?

HINSDALE--By definition you're still wrong because you obviously signed the piece of paper your PR was on --- it did not come separate from your orders. Any editor would indeed identify the source of a story or kill it because otherwise he runs the risk of a libel suit. ((And now for the conclusion, from Vol 3, #6, May 11, 1975))

BERLIN (AP)If it was a choice between changing my press and withholding it, why didn't you keep it out? That would have been vastly more acceptable to me.

HINSDALE The PR was printed because the player obviously sent it in to be printed --- and because we certainly didn't think that there would be such a terrible stink about crediting the said player with his own work. ((Well, folkes, what do you think? If I get some interesting responses, I'll run some -- or just a vote total.))

This issue has had some longish items, so I'll conclude with some shorter ones. First up is Doug Beyerlein writing in Impassable #15 1-12-73

Winning Diplomacy --- a Hint

This article is not concerned with the mechanics of gaining the necessary 18 SCs for victory. In fact, it assumes that you already know how to maneuver the pieces around the board...

To win a standard game of Diplomacy, one must defeat 6 other players. Altho generally this is not an easy task, there are many ways of accomplishing it. To some, a win is a win and whether or not one has made six life-long enemies in the process matters little. However, that philosophy soon loses defenders when in a following game a former victim returns with only the thought of revenge. Therefore ... there's gotta be a better way. And, of course, there is, and that is what this article is all about.

A player while winning must do whatever is within his/her power to soften the defeat of the other players. This goes a long way to preventing the possibility of future revenge. To do this involves allowing minor neutrals or allies to survive the end of the game, as survival is usually the goal when a win or a draw is no longer within sight. In a close victory, where every unit and center is needed for the win, this may not be possible. However, there are many win situations where the victory is assured and a little extra aid can be given to allies and puppets to guarentee their survival and make them feel that they were part of the winning side.

When the victory has been formally declared by the GM, the winner should take the time to write all the other surviving players thanking the allies for their help and complimenting the opponents for the good fight which they provided ((apparently, those whowere wiped out don't get this!)) This after-the-game diplomacy is the final touch to

to a well played game. A gracious winner ends the game as he/she begins it: without enemies.

Anyone who plans on staying in Postal Diplomacy more than just a few years strive at all times to make the minimum number of enemies. If you plan on winning many games, this is doubly difficult. Therefore, building a reputation of fair and unselfish play will go a long way in this direction, and in the end make those future wins just a little bit easier. ((I'm not sure how much of this I buy. Obviously, if you've got the game locked up, you shouldn't go and wipe out an ally or puppet. But I suspect that few people make that mistake, so that's hardly useful advice. Things get dicey, tho, if your win is only probable. For example, if your ally/puppet switches sides, you can be stalemated, but if you stab him, he's got the centers for 18. This is not an uncommon occurrence. So you have to weigh the relative value of the benefit in this game versus a possible benefit in another game, when your victim may, as Doug indicates, want to pay you back for your perfidy. Does that strike you as having a bit of cross-gaming character to it? Perhaps, perhaps not? If it doesn't, lets change the facts a little. While you're pondering this dilemma, your ally/puppet sends you a copy of the above article, either from Impassable or from DD (in the latter case, complete with my comments) No comments of his own, just the article --- he wants to be subtle. The point is there, tho: He could easily choose to link your behavior in this game with his attitude in another. Also, if the point of the game is (at least, for the player with a very strong position) to win, then should one endanger the achieving of that goal --- even a little ---by considering what might happen in another game? Something to think about.))
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 ((For the final article, here's an "opening" from Hoosier Archives #79. 7-8-72))

THE REVERSE LEPANTO --- WHO SAID IT COULDN'T BE DONE? by Len Lakofka

Poor Austria gets its rear end kicked in another game! Everyone sighs and says, "Poor soul, too bad he didn't get a good country." But he did! The effective coalition that is furiously dismissed by pendant and prophet alike is the A-T alliance. It has no vigor or possibility is the usual canard. Yet a very workable tandem can be achieved if Italy can be abated for a year.

Spring 1901: Austria A Vie-Gal, A Bud-Ser, F Tri-Alb; Turkey F Ank-Con, A Con-Bul, A Smy-Arm?! This seems almost standard except for A Smy-Arm. That move, coupled with a shift to Galacia, keeps Russia at bay. He may take Rum but he can't be aggressive because the FO1 moves will be: A Vie-Tyo -- or A Gal-Rum, A Ser-Rum! -- or A Ser S A Gal-Rum, F Alb-Ion! A Bul-Gre, F Con-Bul(ec), A Arm-Sev or Ank depending on your course.

What a strange combination, I hear you cry. But look at it carefully. R has likely not gained Rum or has lost Sev. Austria gets 1 or 2 builds, Turkey one and likely 2. If A and T each get 2, the alliance will blast R and I to hell and back by building F Smy, F Ank, A Bud and F Tri!

In SO2, Austria convoys A Gre-Apu!! while attacking Ven with support from Tyo ((if he has it)). In short, it becomes such a devastating opening for the 2 powers that the west must turn its head quickly or be lost.

If Italy supports Ven in place and its fleets try to take the Ion by dislodgement, F Ion retreats to Tyh! Austria can vary the opening and stab for Tyh at once, or go to Adr and cover Tri with A Bud. Playability and "mix" are given to the interior lines. ((Obviously, this was a quickie type of article, as he didn't go into it in any great detail. Austria, if she is serious about this anti-I campaign, will have to decide whether to go for a second build (War or Rum) at the twin risks of greater eastern involvement (albeit a weaker Russia) and no A Tyo in WO1, or go for just one build (possibly via an arranged standoff in Gal in SO1) so that she does have A Tyo. Austria also has some good stab-T options in SO2, as he knows A Gre will be ordered to move, particularly if T has only one build (and not F Smy), or if T must deal with Rus F Bla by building F Ank, F Con to challenge F Bal, F Sev. Moving to Ion is a true Gambit, trading Gre for position, but A must move quickly to convert position to gains))

The Zine Column #44

What's going on, Good and Bad

Black Frog #54 has arrived and is an object lesson to any publisher in how not to go about attacking someone. Jack Masters has become totally obsessed with trying to destroy Bruce Linsey and apparently will stop at nothing. He starts off with a series of quotations attacking Linsey, some of them anonymous. But then on the next page he says that some of these quotes only "simulate attitudes." In other words, he didn't have the quotes, so he made some up. He also has a quote which he says was, "extracted from ... the last letter Linsey wrote me in August 1981". Bruce has vigorously denied ever saying anything of the sort. Tell me, folks, how would you like to be attacked by simulated quotes from an anonymous person? Later on in the issue he photocopies a letter which is clearly labeled as "Off the Record". Now, I can conceive of some extreme circumstance in which it might be really necessary to let a few people know of some off the record information. But Jack doesn't claim that this is that kind of situation and indeed promises that he will run more such letters. His "explanation" is that "Sorry Bruce but you don't make the rules for me." But those are the hobby rules for off-the-record letters, and those who break them without a compelling reason deserve the criticism of the hobby.

Some of what he says about Bruce is plainly idiotic, says as, "he is the ultimate ratings player." But such a person has to get into a lot of games --- and Bruce has in fact joined fairly few. Much of the rest of the issue is a series of wild and unsubstantiated charges, such as that he has "doctor(ed) up letters". But the specific letters were not identified, so that there is no way Bruce can defend himself specifically (he's published hundreds of letters). He implies that Bruce is "on some kind of drugs", and much more. Really, its painful to read. There is, however, one point that Jack makes which I suspect that some of you will agree with: "Well, I hadn't started any feud, Bruce did", and "He started the damn feud". Baloney. It is true that the conflict began when Bruce revealed the fact that Masters had copied whole chunks of stories written by others, and passed it off as his own writing, even in one case going to the point of stating that he had "copywrote" the story --- and later insisting that if it were reprinted that he be credited. Bruce gave the specifics, names of stories, etc. I do NOT consider that starting a feud. I consider that to be investigatory journalism, on a par with my investigation in DD #23 and #24 into the Oaklyn-Alan connection. It is entirely proper. You can argue about how serious this matter really is if you like, but it cannot be considered irresponsible, and had I that information, I would also have revealed it. If Bruce is to be considered partially at fault for the current attacks on him in BF, then no one will ever be able to criticize what someone else says or does --- for that would be --gasp-- starting a feud. Controversy and criticism have always had a useful place in the hobby --- just as zines which have avoided it totally have their place as well. The trick is to stick to the facts, substantiate your charges, and avoid abusive language.

Since the above was written, some new events have overtaken the old. Bruce has sent me documentation that 8 of the "simulate attitude" quotes referred to above were copied directly from pages 26-27 and 72-74 of "2000 insults for All Occasions." Black Frog #55 and #56 have also arrived, and in some ways these are even more dreadful than the previous issues. It is clear that Masters has completely totalled his credibility. The extremely nasty quote in #56 was attributed to Fred Davis and is targeted at Kathy Byrne. Fred has denied ever saying it, and Kathy is justifiably furious that it was ever printed. Such language has no legitimate role in this hobby.

And now for the nooze....One of the most interesting game lineups of the year is in the Whitestonia Demo game, 1981III, which has Baumeister, Linsey, Martin, Arnawoodian, Osuch, Langley and Michalski, with Kathy Byrne as commentator. SO1 shows a variety of aggressive pieces: Aus in Adr and Boh, G in Tyo, R in Sil and Bla, T in Arm, and I in Pie Looks Like a hot one(John Caruso 160-02 43rd Ave Flushing N.Y.11358)...Dot Happy #9 has yet another no-Bul opening for Turkey: "The Russian Frolic" has F Ank-Bla, A Smy-Arm, A Con H, probably the best of the lot. The key is A Bud-Rum. Ordinarily this is very risky for Austria, as he may be kissing off Ser, but with A Con holding, there is no risk, and the plan will look better for Austria. Its well thought out(Allen Wells 1450

Worcester Rd #8109 Framingham MA 01701)...John Leeder, the Miller Number Custodian, has resumed publication of the variant stats zine, Lord of Hosts with #17. He sets forth some policy in that issue, including much closer ties with the North American Variant Bank, whose head (Rod Walker) will be a back-up for the MNC and vice versa. Also, the NAVB's game designators will be used in place of the old Miller Numbers, which were totally arbitrary. The new system classifies variants into various categories and sub-categories (such as periods of time, or geographical location) --- a very scientific operation. John approved and ratified actions that Rod had taken (assigning numbers) in the interregnum between Greg Costikyan and John. He hopes to have some interesting variant-oriented reading material, and makes a good start that issue(121 19th Ave NE Calgary ALTA T2E 1N9. Subs are 2¢/page plus postage)...If your game is seriously late, if you think the zine has folded, start first with your GM. If that doesn't work, contact one of the co-Directors of the U.S.Orphan Service, John Daly Rt 2 Box 136-M5 Rockwell N.C. 28138 or Kathy Byrne (See Caruso above). These two have done a lot of hard work in this area....It looks like one of the small-time pubbers of the early and mid 70s is returning: Ed Kollmer (former pubber of Narsil) is signed up for a game in Anduin....What is certainly the zine for reading what european writers have to say must be Europa Express. #9 had contributions from Finland, Belgium, England and West Germany(Gary Coughlan 4614 Martha Cole Lane Memphis, TN 38118)...One unusual trend to develop in the past year is that of subzines. There are now several times as many subzines in existence than there has ever been in the hobby's history. Zines have multiple subzines, there are subzines which move from zine to zine, and people who run different subzines in different zines. Some of these are ephemeral and last only for a few issues. While this can be great fun, it has also broken down the concept of what a subzine is, to the point where its often only a collection of miscel comments, jokes, cartoons. While there is nothing intrinsically wrong with this, it does, in a way cheapen the currency. Time was, when a subzine was a stable entity, usually running games. It was an excellent way for those who wanted to do some, but not all of the functions of putting out a zine ---- perhaps as a dry run before publishing. I'm not against any of these subzines. Indeed, to the extent that they help the pubber fill the zine, they are very helpful. But I do think that they'd be better if their writers would put more care and commitment into them.

Plague Times #9 arrived here, 23 pages thick and 17¢ postage due. Its the anniversary issue, so it may not be typical. There are two interviews with Dead Generals, Alexander of Macedon and Ulysess S. Grant. This latter item had promise, but Marion seemed to have trouble getting off "drinking" angle. There is a subzine ("Toxic Shock Syndrome") and the games are all named after diseases (Anthrax, Leprosy, etc). But the big emphasis seems to be on variants, with a new variant printed, and article by Fred Davis, and a number of games, rules to "BioWar" and more. There were some personality type items----an attractive mix(Marion Bates P.O. 381 Kalkaska MI 49646. Subs are 12 for \$7.50)...Garry Hamlin, writing in the 46 page 2nd Anniversary issue of Voice of Doom suggests a "Diplomacy Diehard Award" --- recognition for someone who has held on for a long time to an utterly doomed, tiny position in the interests of god sportsmanship in postal game. He points out that there is no such public recognition now for such actions. If this appeals to you, I suggest you write Garry at 111 Varnet Ct Midland MI 48640....Doug Beyerlein has restarted California Reports as a discussion zine on "current and potential uses of computers in the postal diplomacy hobby." He targets three areas in particular: Computer adjudication of games, keeping the records of completed games (and providing accesability to them), and use as a text editor ("word processing") for producing dizines. If you are interested in these or other computer related topics, send a self addressed stamped envelope to Doug at 640 College, Menlo Park, CA 94025. There are no subs: He'll just use SASEs. If you know someone who is interested in this, please pass this information on....One of the most unorthodox publications ever to appear is The Zine of Lists, including best songs, least used SCs, most obnoxious Yankees, etc. All in good fun, and available from Al Pearson Box 898 Charlestown WV 25414, and is, I think, 50¢.