

# DIPLOMACY DIGEST

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Criticism and Tirades

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One of the many imaginative ideas Larry has come up with recently is to compile a list of the "Ten Most Significant Events in the Diplomacy Hobby in 1985", which he did by polling the DW staff and pooling their answers. I think this is such a good idea that I plan to do the same in my January issues henceforth, and I plan to use the DW list as a point of departure for my comments.

1. "The Diplomacy World story" (2nd on my list). Larry writes, "...I think their selection of this story was less DW jingoism than a reflection of their delight in being able to pick a positive story for the #1 slot." But lets not kid ourselves. This was also a very negative story. DW's default was one of the largest in hobby history, and only one issue was put out in 1985 (one regular issue).
2. "The Special Hobby publications of 1985" (my tie for 5th) --- including the Zine Register, the BBB census, Master of Deceit and two DW reprint series. Good and useful reading is what helps keep the hobby interesting
3. "DipCon XVIII" (not on my list at all). Of the 11 DipCons since I entered the hobby, this one seems to have had one of the smallest impacts on the hobby, in terms of people who attended, and written stuff in zines.
4. "The 1985 Runestone Poll Story" (my third). Despite the attempts to derail and to belittle, this was, in Larry's words, "a polling success and a technological triumph in statistical analysis," with recording breaking voting.
5. "The Feud" (my first), or as I put it, "Intense levels of feuding cause much hard feeling in the hobby". This had so many participants, and took up so much space, and so many effects, that its hard to see it as low as 5.
6. "The Canadian Renaissance" -- especially NFA, Excelsior, and the new Praxis and Canadian Diplomat. (My 4th)
7. "Major Zines Fold" (my 7th) -- Coat of Arms, Dogs of War, Frehwon, EPGIART, Give me a weapon!, NSWG, and Paging Main. Some clearly, some not
8. "Hobby services Change Hands" (my 8th) Variant Bank to Davis, Orphan Games to Sherwood and Burgess, Freshman poll to Daf Langley, Magus Poll to Burgess, Zine Register to Billeness, Archives to Peery. He also listed here the restart of the Int. Subscription Service (my tie for 5th)
9. 100dds and Ends Larry lists the DW Fake #401 (my 9th), Graustark #500 (my 10th), MaryCon III, DafCon III and a few other items.

So the year had its ups and downs. It may be that the most significant --- and ominous --- event for the hobby was the decision of some retailers (e.g. Toys R Us) not to carry Diplomacy on their shelves.

((Our first essay doesn't have a title, but what written by Lew Pulsipher for Impassable #59, December, 1975. When you read it, please remind yourself that this essay is 10 years old!))

I have decided to concentrate on what I think is the most serious problem we face. This is the tendency of those most involved in hobby activities (other than actual play or the game) to look at all problems in terms of personalities rather than on the merits of the situation --- that is, very subjectively, rather than objectively. We must cultivate a new attitude, a bureaucratic attitude in the older sense of the word: each person serving the hobby in any capacity must make the utmost effort to step outside himself. The attitude which considers the ad hominem argument to be superior to any other can only ruin our image to non-players and to new players.

The subjective reasoning which dominates hobby circles commonly follows this pattern: such-and-such an activity does not meet with someone's approval (often for very personal reasons); consequently, the person who is responsible for that activity (call his "A") is categorized as "evil", "inimical to the hobby", "completely self-interested", or is in some way regarded as harmful. The activity is not considered of itself, but only insofar as it is connected with the individual. Often, the initial "unworthy" activity is not present --- someone simply takes a dislike to A, and thereafter A's activities are resisted, obstructed, ignored, etc. In the extreme, A is considered so destructive or whatever, that any activity that destroys or reduces the capability of, or respect for A is automatically good, and consequently something that ought to be supported. I have seen many examples of this kind of "thinking". This can go to great extremes of pettiness, as for example when someone answering a survey rates a zine published by A in the worst possible terms, knowing that this will reduce the published result, even tho anyone half-way objective would say that the zine has some good points, if only in reliability and repro quality.

The most common examples of thinking of this type are that the TDA or IDA is bad for the hobby because "A" (John Beshara, Walt Buchanan, Edi Birsan, Rod Walker --- take your pick) is closely associated with that organization. Even if you despise A, it does not follow that the associated organization does no good for the hobby. (IF in fact it does no good, this arises from the activities of the organization, not from its association with one person or even with a group of persons). Another extreme example of this fallacious "reasoning" is this actual statement: "The necessary and sufficient evidence for its ((an article))) being a lie is that it is signed" so-and-so. The article may be "a lie", but it does not matter a whit whose name is at the top. Each action, such as the article, ought to be judged on its own merits, not with an eye to the worst possible construction. It is easy to find dark motives or "evil" if you're looking for it. In fact, we might find that if this silly argument goes on (on ALL sides) that the arguments are self-fulfilling prophecies.

This kind of faulty reasoning may be fun for some, but it does not make for consistency or fairness. How can we establish precedents so that the many essential hobby functions can be carried out smoothly, no matter which person happens to be filling the post at the moment, if we think in terms of personalities? Each person being different, each decision will have to be made in isolation from any other decision, depending in large part on such truly irrelevant factors as how well those involved know each other and whether they like each other or not.

I do not advocate covering up our differences, acting as if they are not there. I do not advocate "moderation" per se. There are substantive issues which must be discussed so that some resolution can be reached; but they ought to be discussed in terms of the merits of the arguments, not in terms of who advocates or opposes the argument. We will be much better off permitting our differences to surface so that they can be resolved rather than letting them fester in cliques and private letters.

Inevitably, in a hobby of this size there will be many views, sometimes contradictory. Unless we can out aside juvenile personality and anti-personality cults and

cliques, until we can step outside ourselves and view the hobby problems objectively, and in a broad, foresighted manner, we are doomed to squirm in an immature rut, and we will be treated by the "outside world" (and ultimately even by GRI ((the then owners of the game)) with the contempt we deserve.

((There's a lot I could say, but I'll stick to this: its depressing to think that something so relevant to today could have been written ten years ago.))



((One of the more cantankerous characters to grace our hobby was Alan Rowland. The zine Paroxysm had printed some rather harsh letters by Alan, with somewhat reproachful replies by Harry Drews. Then came the following by Alan, appearing in #13, Aug '75))

Alan Rowland: I would also like to say that after the Drews-Rowland letters are published that I wrote a lot of things in those letters to get him angry which apparently worked. Once I know that someone has a low-boiling point (I don't, but when I get mad, I am horrid.), I love to incite them as I love a good argument or a battle of wits. After they are published, and some replies come in, I would like you to include this, as I am afraid that this will soon get out of hand and that either Harry or I will kill each other which will prove a blessing to the world or we will become bored to death. I am frankly disappointed by his replies, since they lack a cruel, evil intelligence behind them, which is what I wanted in the letters. I did not intend to start this episode tho I did not realize he was so sensitive and serious. An emperor troll, a rabid commie, a lousy Third Reich player, poor musical taste, and a subhuman cretenoid life form are things which I use in everyday life. Needless to say, if everybody acted in such a fashion I would be dead as would the entire region in which I live.

Doug Ronson ((Editor for that issue)): It preturbs ((sic)) me to have found it necessary to print the above letters, yet it was. We would like to make it clear that any pointless insulting or namecalling and other "jokes" without taste toward the staff or readers of Paroxysm will not be tolerated. It shocks me that Alan's aim all along was merely to irritate and intimidate Harry. I would hardly call the insults made by Alan as being part of "a good argument or battle of wits." Need I express my opinions about a person who runs the risk of hurting a person just so he can have a tiny bit of satisfaction from his "joke"? I realize Alan has been singled out, perhaps unneccarily, but I feel a precedent must be set for future issues of Paroxysm. Unless there is something new which needs to be discussed, I declat~~x~~ the matter closed and forgotten.

((A slightly stuffy response, eh? Still, its his zine, and regardless of what his standards are, its best that they be made quite clear. Alan may be a little extreme, but there are many people who feel that an exaggerated, insulting, or namecalling approach is the best way to elicit an unguarded, and thus more honest response from the other party. Its not my style, but I have to admit, I have seen it work any number of times, tho an awful lot of hard feelings can result if things go to far, as they easily can. It seems to me that Alan's side letter was designed to make sure that didn't happen.))



((Our next item begins with these remarks by John Piggott in Ethil the Frog(New) #6, June, 1977))

Not that anyone will care, but Albatross has a new editor: Ian Lee. Lee used to have a 'subzine' (= column) in Sauce, but on getting the Albatross job has impetuously chucked it aside. This is known as starting as one means to continue; fortunately someone was available to take it over. Ex-editor Paul Humphreys will have a 'subzine' in the new Albatross, which will, we are assured, be run on the same lines as the old one. This is an example of two wrongs falling dismally to make a right, I imagine. Lee says: 'I... wish to carry out Paul's wish for an apolitical zine, so (new) Albatross will not be affiliated to the NGC, IDA, Safeguard and all that crap. I will refrain from giving zines bad reviews, and also hope the critics get off Richard Nash's back ... The zine poll is a farce so any position will not force me to fold...'

That sounds pretty wet to me, but I suppose things can only improve. (Ian Lee, 49 Fleet Ave, Upminster, Essex).

((This inspired the following letter in #8:))

Clive Booth: Go easy on Ian Lee. Perhaps your criticisms are valid, but new, young publishers need encouragement, not public slating. I'm not saying that you should have told lies about Albatross/Cormorant and passed it off as something it wasn't, but I do think you should have tempered your comments a little. Thank God you weren't in the publishing field when I started Chimaera; for "John Piggott" to have slated my first attempt would have destroyed me. (From your point of view, you're probably wishing you were in the publishing field then....) Its all very well for you to say that zine reviews shouldn't be taken personally, but when you're new to the game you don't see it like that.

Let me point out that I'm not one of the editors who congratulated Ian on his first issue .... but that's the sort of thing I would do to a new editor, just to encourage him. If there are things wrong with a zine, you can mention it in a letter, not in a zine with a circulation of 125. No, that's wrong: mention it in your zine by all means, just don't go to humiliate the poor editor. Once they've been around for 2 or 3 issues, and are feeling their feet a little more, then if they haven't corrected their faults you can take them to task in your zine. Anyone who has passed issue 3 is fair game, but have a little consideration before, please.

John Piggott: Let's get this straight once and for all: my original comments in EtF #6 were scathing about what Ian Lee intended to do and I printed them mostly (I have to admit) because I had twelve lines to fill, but partly because a public announcement is usually more effective than a private note in a letter, and I genuinely didn't want Ian to repeat Paul Humphreys' mistakes. What happened after that is none of my doing; while opening my mail one morning I blinked my eyes for a second, and when I looked up, I found Ian Lee had contrived to tie himself to my rack of Torture (with spikes for the Puncturing of Tender Egos). To have refused to give the handles a few twists would have been unforgivably churlish.

In any case, Ian had a subzine in Sauce of the Nile for some time before he took over Albatross/Cormorant, and so ought to have picked up the rudiments of zine editing months ago. He certainly shouldn't be making elementary mistakes like like typing outside the frame where it says, "Do Not Type Outside This Frame" (a legend which appears on every decent stencil that's ever been made) at this stage.

Just as a matter of interest, will someone please tell me what a person's first issue should be assumed to be substandard? Logic tells me the opposite, and that a prospective editor would normally take extraordinary care over his first two issues, on the grounds that if #1 is no good, nobody's going to come back for a second dose. On the other hand, if an editor hits a damp patch after a good year his readers would probably stay with him in the hope that the previous standards might be resumed.

Remember, no deadline is attached to ((I think he means, "exists prior to")) the first issue of a zine, so the editor has as much time as he needs to produce the very best product he's capable of. That's the policy, anyway, that made my first issue a success.

((The very first issue of Ethil the Frog is, shall we say, unimpressive. There is a gamestart, which he calls ETHIL THE FROG 'A' game, which certainly shows a lack of imagination. Next are some HouseRules, in which he tells us, for example, that the abbreviation for St.Petersburg is "StP". He also says, "The gamesmaster will set a deadline for each move", and "You are advised to sign your name on all orders", and "Please do not dropout without telling anybody" (underscoring his) and other bits of invaluable advice. He then takes 14 lines to tell us that he intends to start up a game of Abstraction, and perhaps a few other variants. Next are a few zine reviews, none of them running as much as five full lines, and that includes such transparent padding as "ALBION itself is well worth getting..." without telling us a single thing which appears in Albion itself (he only mentions the Courier subzine). Other really informative comments include, "I don't know whether Colin's got any other games up his sleeve." The next topic is "Ethil's Move Schedule", and he tells us, for example that "Builds and retreats, where applicable, should be submitted with the previous move"

---and other items which, if John had any sense of organization, would have appeared in the House Rules. He also tells us that "If a player is entitled to build extra units, but has not asked for them, he won't get them." Its amazing how often publishers forget to mention this fact.

Things actually go downhill from there. He notes that only three of the players in the 'A' game "have any significant experience with postal diplomacy", and he makes some fairly pathetic attempts at giving advice: "phone calls are obviously a good idea", "You don't actually have to do any diploming at all, of course; the amount is quite up to you", etc. A short time later, he's back to imploring people not to drop out "without telling anyone"; he appears to be quite paranoid. And so it goes.

He doesn't bother to mention what the gamefee is. The closest is his, "the second and each subsequent game will cost you 25p", which I suppose is his subtle way of saying that there is no game fee. I'm afraid you'll get what you pay for here

And ~~no~~ think, John has had his entire life to prepare for this first issue, so this three-pager is presumably the very best product he's capable of.))



((Sometimes a soft response works fine for an insult. This was from a letter by Paul Rayner in Mad Policy #53, March 1976))

.....Secondly, I must thank you for trading your very fine zine for my very much better one. Thirdly, I must ask you not to publish any more derisory remarks about me in your zine again, no matter how true they are. (MP, p13, para 5).

I must point out that these remarks were brought to my attention by my 4 year old son. I gave him MP to read because he is the only one capable of understanding it.

"An I.Q. of 1.97" indeed! I must point out that when I left nursery school at the tender age of 12 a few years ago, or so, I had an I.Q. of 2.08, 3 more than the average Labour member of Parliament.....Since then I have added an extra .01 to my I.Q. each year, and have now reached the stage where I am .20 in front of the National Games Club Committee, and .25 in front of the writer of that article.



((Criticism is sometimes addressed to zines rather than to people. The following is by Conrad von Metzke, and appeared in Costaguana Vol VII, #4, Feb 1974))

#### Honest Reviews of the Diplomacy Press

First, a few observations. It would seem that most people who have been waiting for this column to begin have expected some kind of denunciation of such things as one-page printouts, scathing excoriation of sloppy printing and editorial illiteracy, vehement objection to miserable GMing, and like that. To a certain extent, I shall not disappoint. But I need to warn you: Some of those things don't bother me in the slightest. For instance, the one page jobs. As long as they don't put on airs, and pretend to be something they aren't, I'm all for them. And so a competantly-rendered, acceptably produced one-sheet zine would get an 'A'.

In addition, when I do assess a magazine that contains more, and tries to do so, my main interests are as follows:

Is it interesting to read? Does the writer understand the fundamentals of the use of English? Is he aware that stencils are capable of correction? Is he cognisant of the fact that 3-week deadlines spaced at 6-week intervals constitute a contradiction in terms? Does he take himself seriously? Too seriously?

Thats all very nebulous to be sure. And that's precisely the point. Except in a few areas like printing quality, most of what I shall be 'judging' will be things dealt with only in terms of personal prejudice.. Readers should keep thin in mind before taking me too seriously.((What follows are some of his reviews. Addresses and rates omitted))

Xenogogic. Larry Peery ..... I picked this as a starting point quite at random, and it is a dreadful place to start. Xenogogic per se is not a Diplomacy magazine; it is an offset (and immense) effort deadling with large simulations, particularly in the vein of international affairs -- which is to say, the real wargames played by war professionals. Many articles are printed on the periphery of this field too. Larry's actual involvement with Diplomacy is confined now to a few malingering games tossed out irregularly on one-sheet reports, and their availability and worth to non-players are questionable. I tend to consider Xenogogic A tad overblown. Most of the articles are too long, and many don't really impart any information. The proofreading department too often suffers from aphasia. Worth having if you're really committed to the field it deals in, but the more casual reader would, I fear, feel gypped. And would be, too.

Shaaft Andrew Phillips ..... Strictly a print-out of moves, dealing with mild variant games. Printing altogether too frequently execrable. Reliability outstanding. There may be openings but you had better ask, and the second question to ask is, "Openings in what?" Readership interest nil.

Big Brother Charles Reinsel ..... All other considerations pale before the overriding fact that this publisher is a crook. This trade should be banned.

Blood and Iron Lewis Pulsipher....No recent information. I haven't seen an issue of this in 4 months, and can only review it on an 'as-it-was-then' basis. It is acceptably printed, deals entirely with variants and similar items, and used to have a letter column which alone made the thing worth having. Organization of the issues is an atrocity. Tends to pendency but not at the expense of informative worth. ((Conrad has mellowed quite a bit since then. I'll do one more set of tart zine reviews. This is presumably by Greg Warden, and appeared in En Passant #48, Feb 1974))

El Conquistador: Gordon Anderson .... As far as format goes, this magazine can't be beaten. But as with most such "professional" products, it lacks the personality and good humor that I find necessary in a diplomacy magazine. I guess if you want to play Diplomacy efficiently, albeit somewhat dryly, this is the place for it.

The historical articles are superficial, and show no great amount of personal thought or research. The wargaming articles are boring to one such as myself who is only interested in Diplomacy.....

The Orphan J.H. Fleming This is a slick, glossy magazine with little heart and little soul. Most of the magazine is "filler", little drawings and items that add little interest. Spacious is the word for the format (which by the way seems to be Xerox), since there are great gobs of empty space. The publisher seems to encourage press but the players don't write it. Each game has its own map each issue to show the position of the units. This seems to me to be an unnecessary waste of effort. The Ally of the Month feature is the height of poor taste: socially and aesthetically. The few items of interest are Xeroxed from other publications. What does it all amount to: Proof that good format alone won't make a good diplomacy magazine. Mr. Fleming's unselfishness, however, in devoting so much effort to orphan games is to be commended.



((Our next two denunciations are of games themselves, and both were written by Richard Sharp, appearing in Dolchstoss. The first was in issue #36, March 1975, and the second was in #69, Feb 1979.

#### A Memorable Game

Any reader contemplating a game in Jealicious may take warning from BD3, which has just finished therein. This involved 12 players, 7 of whom dropped out, and lasted 26 months before ending as a two-way draw in Spring 1908, an average of 15 weeks per game year. The two-way draw (a certainty from Autumn '04 when only two of the original seven survived) was refused by the GM, who (a) persuaded standbys to enter the game, (b) invited the standbys to vote on a game they had never played in and (c) never published the result of the vote anyway. Other oddities: the Turkish moves for Spring

'01 were written in Autumn '01 (!) by Austria (!! ) and accepted by the GM(!!!). One player contrived to drop out after being eliminated; another's name was misspelled in every report, despite his feeble protests that he knew how to spell it. All in all, outstandingly the worst game I have ever played. You have been warned.

\*

Now, for an example of really inept play readers are referred to the Fall of Eagles invitation game, FOE 17. Richard Hucknall has fallen for the old-fashioned fallacy that GMs make good Diplomacy players, and has invited seven of them to participate in his invitational. I am playing Germany in that one. I thought at first that there were three competent performers among the other six, but one of them NMR'd in Autumn 1901, while the antics of Russia have been among the most remarkable I have ever seen - offered a free loan of Munich in 1901 he refused it and took Berlin with a stab, a manoeuvre which was certain to cost him Warsaw, and has. Only Pete Birks in this game has played reasonably, and as Italy he can't make much headway anyway. Austria is being played by Bob Howes, whom I regard as by far the worst player in Britain (our answer to Peggy Gemignani); I can only say that his performance in FOE 17 has exceeded my expectations. Autumn 1902, and still no letter from Austria to Germany. Meanwhile Roy Taylor (Turkey) is dropping out, as usual, and Paul Simpkins (England) has decided to ally with an already strong Russia who built F(StP)(nc) in 1901! My own part in this farce seems likely to be brief, but I'm certainly getting some laughs out of it while it lasts.

## THE MAIL

Since you insist, I'll begin with some pat-on-the-back remarks:

Ron (Calif) Brown: Keep up the great work with DIPLOMACY DIGEST

Conrad von Metzke: As I did in days gone by, so now I am truly enjoying DD. Its awfully nice to have a publisher around who knows what he wants to do and consistantly does it well. And your taste in material selection is impeccable.

J.C. Hodgins: I received your shipment of DD back issues and had an enjoyable time going thru them....I think DD is excellent, and I certainly intend to renew when the time comes.

Jim McCarthy: I still enjoy it, so to hell with the critics

Jim Burgess: I enjoyed it, especially the piece by Greg Warden

Jim Ulaky: I enjoy your zine and usually learn something to boot.

Conrad von Metzke: I thought I might shed a little light on the BDC 411 question of standbys. This was the one game in which I did have a different policy than my usual; tho I will normally allow standbys in (as you put it) "significant positions" (see also the latest COSTAQUANA for my forum question on this), BDC 411 was being managed under the auspices of the British Diplomacy Club. In general, BDC games (most all of which were run by Richard Sharp or Don Turnbull) did not allow for standbys; one of the principle reasons, apart from Turnbull's preference against them as a sort of unofficial precedent, was that players in BDC games had to be BDC members, and it was relatively awkward to try to coordinate membership lists with standby lists. There may have been other reasons, but in any case, I decided to follow Don's precedent.

I have a vague recollection of asking Don if I could change this policy for my game; but either he didn't reply, or my memory is poor and I in fact never asked. In any event, no standbys were needed during my brief tenure as GM, so I never really confronted the issue except except in theoretical terms. However, had it come up, I think I would have pulled out all stops to get a standby in. Unlike Turnbull & Piggott, I do believe in them -- very strongly.

As to what you term "the broader question" - which House Rules to use when a game is transferred - in general, it is rarely of major consequence; few HRs are all that different except in mechanical terms. In the cases where significant differences do exist, it is of course invariably easier for the adopting GM to use his/her extant rules for all games, even the new one; and I would suggest that, as long as all players have advance warning to the changeover, there should be no problems. I'm sure there are extreme exceptions, but I would think they'd be best dealt with one at a time.

((I think you're a bit too sanguine. Suppose a player promises his neighbor survival, in return for the puppet's help in setting up a draw. Such a deal presupposes that the GM will permit conceded draws. But suppose the new GM has a rule of "Draws Include All Survivors", as many GMs do? The new rules will completely derail his plan. A switch from 5- to 3- week deadlines would cause problems for many players (me for instance). If I had gone to the effort of finding a no-standby game, I'd want the new GM to do the same. There is a potential conflict between the player's interest in having the game run the same as before, and the GM's interest in having all the games run with the same HRs. As I have stated before in a different context (DD #94, bottom of page 6), I think the players' perspective ought to prevail. I would suggest that the new GM ask the players if they are willing to have the game run under the new House Rules. In my opinion, even a single objection should be enough to keep the old houserules.))

Bruce Linsey: In regard to the debate in DD #95 on whether a GM should provide a standby with players' addresses, I say absolutely yes. A standby is entitled to be able to negotiate freely with the other players, and without this information, he cannot write them. It is not realistic to assume he'll know where to find the addresses --- even more so when you consider the fact that for all he knows, a player has moved since the last mailing list was published, and he'll have to scrutinize all the intervening seasons to make sure the info is current.

The standby is entitled to ... not only the current position and SC holdings, but also the HRs and the entire published history of the game! It is, however, reasonable for the GM to send these items (especially the game's history) only on a specific request. In practice, it probably makes little difference to the guy what does going on in the game 5 years ago, but he is entitled to know in case he does want to use this information some how.

((This may seem going too far, but players may lie quite shamelessly to a standby about the history of the game, figuring he won't know better. Typically, the writer will explain that the war started with the standby's predecessor's stab, rather than the reverse. The player may want to check this out, and the GM should permit him to do that, even tho such requests will probably be quite infrequent.))

Jim Burgess: I think the U.S.O.S. has to at least try to be a watchdog, even as it keeps up the rhetoric of player responsibility. Too many players don't want to stir up trouble. As far as your point goes, you hit it right on the head. Prompt zines should be reported right away, while slow zines should be given a little leeway. The point of judgement is a slide away from promptness ... defined as what is average for the zine. ((I would tend to agree, tho what is "average" may be hard to come by. Suppose, as does happen, the zine had been like clockwork --- except the last issue or two had been quite late. Is it a "prompt" zine, or did it lose it?))



((We'll conclude the reprinted material with this excellent example of British-style bitching. Its by Mick Bullock, from 1901 and all that #80, 5-27-77))

The first oaf to come under scrutiny is the implausably named Marcus Umney-Foote. I am assured that M. U-F. does exist...

Mr. Umney-Foote seems to think that the Diplomacy world owes him a living. In #3 of his sesquipedianly-titled magazine Gallimaufry he writes:

"I have been absolutely amazed, devastated by the lack of help or guidance that I have received from the hobby as a whole. Apart from willingness to meet in the pub for a drink, there is very little else that anyone seems prepared to do to help out an aspiring writer. The only exceptions to this are Richard Walkerdine and ... Richard Sharp. But both of these gentlemen are very busy in various capacities within the hobby and can spare little time on advising rookies on how to start etc. Zilch! is what I get from the rest of you. I had envisioned taking part in some marvelous world-wide hobby spanning age groups, social class and cultural background. Instead, I find an ingrown, snobbish and elitish sub-culture that deserves the epithet 'sub' in nearly every category including substandard. Apart from a very few publications, which includes EtF, MP, and Dolchstoss and perhaps some other magazines which I don't as yet appear to have seen a copy, there are no magazines to which I would subscribe for actual cash."

....Mr Umney-Foote has never, to my knowledge, played postal Diplomacy. Nor had he, to my knowledge, ever been heard of by anyone else within the hobby until he suddenly appeared on the scene last November, his new magazine Gallimaufry being distributed with #62 of Mad Policy (I think).

G itself was 4 sides of photocopied material, 1 side being editorial policy and the other 3 a brief outline for the rules of Mr. U-F's new 49 (sic) player variant, Cities of Nowhen, which G was set up principally to run. One could fill a book in dissecting the ramifications of Mr. Umney-Foote's aims, the history of variant design, multi-player variants and their total failure in the past, difficulties in getting 49 players in a short space of time to join such a game, suspicion of phoenix-like publishers and publications, caution at investing hard-earned money in such ventures, responsibilities of existing publishers to their readers when plugging such ventures, etc, etc. Nevertheless, I gave Gallimaufry a brief mention in 1901 when I saw issue #3, Walkerdine went to much trouble to distribute umpteen sample copies, and plugs for G appeared in several other magazines. Quite a fair response I thought.

Issue #2 of G appeared 10 weeks later this time.

5 pages this time, mainly more complicated rules to add to those which had been in #1, plus the news that Cities of Nowhen had now been reduced from a 49 player variant to one for 7 players....Nevertheless, I gave a 6-lines review of G in #76. Mr. Umney-Foote had, as yet, made no mention of the fact that other publications in the Diplomacy field even existed. Several other magazines made further reference to G's existence.

Issue #3 of Gallimaufry, containing the above quote, appeared 7 weeks later.

In a hobby whose history is replete with the names of such apathetic colossi as .... Marcus Umney-Foote's less than dynamic entrance has already marked him down for future infamy. Mr. Umney Foote is undoubtedly an oaf, of the first magnitude. However, he is a very literate oaf, and so there is some hope for him.

If you are interested in playing in a 49-player variant (or one that is adaptable for play by only 7 players - its all the same), or simply interested in having a laugh at Mr. Umney-Foote's misbegotten outpourings, then I suggest you sample a few issues .... And that's the third plug in these pages which G has had in its 3-issues existence. That is ... 3 more than he's given me, and 2 more than he deserves.

((And that should do it. To keep things from getting too sensitive, I've made sure all the reprints are at least 7 years old. Should you be further interested in the topic, you can order #7/8 Villifications and Tirades, 21½ pages of somewhat harsher stuff than I picked for this issue (65¢), and another set in #43 (35¢).))

## THE ZINE COLUMN #90

W. Elmer Hinton, Jr (20 Almont St. Nashua N.H.03060) is operating a "Postal Standby Locator", a pool of people who are willing to take standby positions. And you can put in special requirements if you like (one fellow will standby only for Turkey) Such a service could help both players and GMs. He also has a "Postal Player Locator", a list of people looking for openings in variant games. These appear in Foundation, "the organ of the Granite Archives". Thats available to "Granite Archive traders" and to subbers to his gamezine, Kaissa, and apparently to anyone who wants copies. He is also seeking "old or unwanted zine collections", to build up the Archives.

DW #41 has arrived at last. This is a multi-part extravaganza, which should be no surprise to readers of Xenogogic, but may be a bit jarring to others. DW proper runs about 50, Then a pullout called "DW past the age of 40", and second one called "The State of the Hobby 1985", which includes the regional editions, "Hobby Facts 1986" and more, plus a large map for the variant. All of it amounts to a tremendous amount of writing, so there's a lot of variety in both the subject matter and the quality of the reading. I especially liked a very thoro essay on conditional orders by Steve Wilcox, a thoughtful look at some questions involved in funding hobby services by Al Pearson, and some warm reminiscences by Rod Walker, Rex Martin, and Ken Peel. "Elkin O'G. Darrow" (whose writing style seems to be exactly the same as Rod Walker's) has some very good specific advice on how to forge alliances with distant players --- and an explanation of why they are needed. There's the usual collection of ratings, polls, hobby nooze and hobby services, etc. There's also a fair amount of what is often called "Peeryblah", tho on the whole its written a bit tighter than it usually is. There are those (such as myself) who like this, and those who don't. There's a very ambitious proposal by Stephen Swigger, some very fannish humor items, etc. As you'd expect some something this big (and new), not all of it works. The only real flops are the regional editions, which in the future will go only to people in that region. unless you ask for other ones.

The West, written by Daf Langley, for example has 3 items. The first is that STEVE LANGLEY will be GMing a postal game in support of DW. The second is that STEVE LANGLEY has transferred the Freshman zine poll all the way over to Daf Langley. Neither seems regional at all, and could just as well go in the main zine (in fact, both do appear elsewhere). And there's a nice writeup of DafCon 85/86, held at the house of, you guessed it, STEVE LANGLEY. So much for the ~~Langley~~ West region. Neither of the Canadians had much of anything to say, and the one from the South was lost by Larry, and there's no one for Central US. Peel came thru.

Ah, but thats a small problem. The Byrne/Peery team has put together an impressive, if belated, "comeback" issue. Its a strong start for DW's campaign to regain its rightful role as the "Flagship Zine" for the Diplomacy Hobby. I'm already looking forward to the next one (4/\$12, Larry Peery 8416 Box, San Diego CA 92102).

Several of the zines I get have openings at present. Conrad von Metzke (4374 Donald Ave San Diego CA 92117) has openings in Regular, Cline 9-man Variant (GGMed by Simon Billeness), and Cunboat. The zine is ludicrously underpriced at 22¢/issue, and there is no game fee at all. Conrad is probably one of the dozen most talented writers in the hobby, very entertaining and very smooth. The zine is very

eclectic; he writes on a tremendous variety of subjects, tho classical music and raising his two kids are recurrant themes. In general, he doesn't write about play of the game at all. One who does, and very well, is Paul Rauterberg, 4158 Monona Dr, Madison Wisc 53716 (10/\$5), has Game Openings in both his game, and one to be GGMed by Brad Wilson in Midlife Crisis. Unfortunately, MC has been very warehousey of late, as Paul has been doing relatively little writing for it. I hope that will change, soon. Steve Knight (2732 Grand Ave S #302, Minneapolis MN 55408) has openings in his Its a Trap! for a game permitting black press, and a game for novices. Both are \$5, plus a \$5 NMR deposit required. The zine has recently featured an extensive lettercolumn and discussion on various movies which I've enjoyed. Mark Larzelere, rated #1 in the 1985 Runestone GM poll, has a game for \$7, which includes a sub to his warehouse zine, Appealing Creed. Game will be run on 3-week deadlines (except for SOL), which is hard to find these days. Send your country preference list to him at 7607 Fontianebleau #2352 New Carrollton, MD 20784.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus is the US Orphan Service publication, put out by Jim Burgess, 100 Holden St, Providence, RI 02908, the man to see about rehousing your abandoned game. The zine's printing is on a par with, say, Newsweek, and I believe this is the first zine title with two commas in it. Issue #3 reports on, for example, problems in rehousing the Concert of Europe games. The North Sealth West George games have just about been placed, and Jim tells us not to expect another issue of NSWG. Jim is also looking for a Co-custodian, as Kieth Sherwood has resigned (and quit all of his games too, I understand), and had his The Inner Light games rehoused).

Tis the Award Season again, pushed up a bit by the fact that DipCon comes very early this year. The Rod Walker Award is for excellence in writing. Your nomination should include a copy of the piece of writing you are nominating the person for. The Don Miller Award is for Hobby Service during the previous year or so. And Larry is starting a brand new one, the John Koning Memorial Award, for excellence in the play of Diplomacy, in any format. For that one, please include a brief statement as to why you have nominated that particular person. Larry Peery (Box 8416 San Diego CA 92102) not only wants the nominations (by March 1, please), but also seeks volunteers to staff the committees that run these (its not a lot of work).

In a similar vein is the Lifers Awards, done by Don Del Grande (142 Eliseo Dr Greenbrae CA 94904. Send in your nomination (you get up to five in each catagory; if more than one, list in descending order) for Dirtiest Fold, Hobby Genius, Most Improved Zine, Best Zine for Hobby News, Best Letter Col, Hardest Country to play, Best game other than Dip/Variants, Perfect ally, Biggest Hobby Personality, and True Hobby Masters Society. You must vote in at least 7 categories(dont ask me why).

Simon Billenness(61A Park Ave Albany NY 12202) has taken over the entire Zine Register shebang. It is available by trade, or \$1.50 per issue. He has expanded it to include zines which don't run dippy or dipvariants. It will come out quarterly. He also runs the American Zine Bank. For \$2 and a "business size" envelope you can get a selection of zines. This is a good way to get a bunch of samples (he'll be using trade copies and batches of back issues to stock that) of various zines all at once. I especially recommend this to those new to the hobby, who would like to take a quick look around. Tell 'em you read about it here!

In DD #95, I had an editorial about Steve Langley's charge that I had stolen money from him, via his DD sub account. While I have ignored a great deal of Langley's gibberish about me here, no publisher can really prosper with that sort of charge hanging over his head. Anyhow, the editorial described the process whereby Steve kept coming up with new versions, and I kept shooting them down. He finally settled on a story, centering on the time when my sub ran out with Magus #31. He said that at that time we were to exchange \$6 in mutual sub credits. He gave the credit to me (thus giving me Magus #32-41), his story goes, but I didn't give him anything. Even if true, this would seem to be a simple oversight, but Steve calls it "theft." Steve even stated that the request was "a little note on the cover to ask you to credit me with \$6 worth of DD." The issue, he said was "the one that changed your sub from 31 to 41." That would be Magus #32, which was the first one to have a "41" on it; #31 just says, "last issue", so my sub hadn't been changed yet. I shot down that version by sending him the Xeroxs of #31 and #32's covers, which had no such request. I believe that he gave me a sub extension without a request for DD sub credit, because by the time #32 came around, I had already paid him \$6 in money. I rashly predicted that Steve would have to change his story once again, since the "little note on the cover" which Steve said would be there "if I'm telling the truth" simply wasn't.

But The Not For Hire #7 has only a minor change in his story. He insists that he did put the note, but now says it was on issue #31. He gets around the fact the issue was obviously addressed by Daf by saying that he wrote the note later. But what about the fact that the Xerox of #31 shows no such note? Steve resorts to a standard technique of his. He steps back into the gutter, picks up a handful of mud, and fires off a brand new accusation against me. He says that I am "deliberately attempting to manufacture misleading evidence." He prints my Xerox of the cover of Magus #31, and then prints what he calls "a recreation of the Magus cover in question." This is the same Xerox, but with him adding a note onto it. This recreation IS TOTALLY FRAUDULENT. People, I have that issue right in front of me as I type this. There is no, and never was any, such message, and there is nothing the least bit misleading about the Xeroxs I have sent Steve. In fact, I'll bring the issue to DipCon, where Steve or anyone else can inspect it. Steve has made an accusation here without the slightest shred of evidence, in much the same way that his "Love Triangle Scenario" accusation was made against Linsey, his "Liar" accusation was made against Hutton, and a dozen other accusations were lodged against the three of us --- with no justification.

Perhaps Langley's most astonishing statement about all this appears in remarks said to Gary Coughlan, also in #7: "I agree with you that your feud with Caruso is secondary to the Linsey-Byrne feud. As are my feuds with Linsey, Berch, and Hutton. If that single feud could be resolved, all the rest would crumble." I'm baffled by his inclusion of my name there. I have reviewed the entire history of this dispute, and I cannot find any connection to the Linsey-Byrne feud at all. There certainly is none at my end. Perhaps Steve would like to explain the connection at his end.

The only small consolation I have is the obvious failure of the zine, TNFH, in which Steve has made most of his reckless accusations. Priced at \$1 each, it has fallen increasingly short of its stated "thirty day or 40 page schedule" Paid circulation has actually fallen into the teens, and the list of those telling Steve they don't want to get the zine even for free, lengthens. In my opinion, anyone who takes seriously what he says about me (or Hutton and Linsey for that matter) is a fool. I'll repeat what I said in my original editorial in July: "I have such complete contempt for him. The accusations that he prints say little or nothing about me, but a great deal about him." Its still true.