

# EREHWON 95 *zap!*

20 Feb 76

...is giving you the evil eye.

\*\*\*\*\*



...our legal firm would be glad to represent you and all your little vikings, Mr. Anderson. There is, however, the problem of payment. We normally have a contract, but since your signature is so particularly worthless, we'll consider taking your soul (such as it is) as a down...

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### OUR OFFICE STAFF

TWO  
NEW  
GAMES  
OPEN  
!  
EREHWON  
95A  
with this  
issue

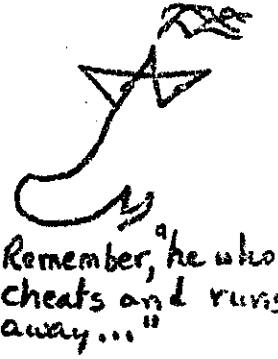
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GRI  
sells  
"our"  
game  
to A-H  
BOYCOTT  
"CITEX  
-76"

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Overheard at a slave market in old Richmond, prior to the Civil War: "May I put this on my MassaCharge?"

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Overheard at The Brass Rail in San Diego when one of the sisters walked in (a rare occurrence indeed): "So why look? If you've seen one girl, you've seen 'em all..."

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THE SURGEON GENERAL HAS DETERMINED THAT SMOKING EREHWON MAY BE DANGEROUS TO YOUR HEALTH. HE SUGGESTS THAT GRASS, TOBACCO, AND/OR FULMINATE OF MERCURY ARE PROBABLY PREFERABLE IN THAT REGARD. IF YOU ARE GOING TO READ IT, REMEMBER THAT PEPTO-BISMOL WILL SOOTHE, COAT, AND PROTECT WHATEVER GETS IRRITATED IN THE PROCESS. ON THE WHOLE, HOWEVER, IT WOULD PROBABLY BE BETTER IF YOU JUST OD'D ON YOGHURT AND HAD DONE WITH IT.

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PLEASE READ THIS

As my readers know, I am not slow to speak out when I feel something is wrong. My willingness to greet almost any subject with an open mouth has earned me a reputation in some quarters of being a partisan and feud-oriented person...an undeserved reputation, I might add.

Anyway, to the extent that there is feuding and partisanship in the hobby--and there certainly is--I am asking that it be put aside at least long enough to take hobby-wide action against postal Diplomacy's biggest and most determined blight.

As you know, or should know by now, postal Diplomacy's annual Convention, DipCon IX, will be held in Baltimore during July this year. However, news is now out that Gordon Anderson is trying to organize an unauthorized "DipCon IX" in conjunction with a business venture of his called "Citex".

For reasons indicated below, I am asking that everyone in the hobby boycott the Chicago "DipCon" and the associated "Citex". I am further asking that you get everyone you know to do the same, especially any business firms which might otherwise be wasting their time and money getting involved with a losing proposition.

Ordinarily, just ignoring Anderson would seem to be enough. The real DipCon is in Baltimore, everybody knows it, and that's where the hobby is going to get together. However, I feel that more outspoken and determined negative action is needed. Over the past few months, Gordon Anderson has been as much benefit for the hobby as a hard freeze does to orange tree. A few for instances:

1. Twice in as many years he has tried to blackmail the IDA into making him their Editor despite the fact that the vast majority of the members want nothing to do with him. He has lied, cheated, threatened, and bullied in a vain effort to get something for nothing.
2. He has paid off DipCon debts (cash prizes for DipCons VII and VIII) with bad checks and/or flimsy excuses. His latest trick in that regard is a clumsy attempt to place the blame on none other than the game's inventor, Allan Calhmer. Nobody has been fooled, and the individuals whom Anderson has bilked are apparently going to sue.
3. Although nearly everybody in the hobby (not including me, by the way) wanted to start rotating the DipCon site, Anderson tried to stop it by the only method he understands (apparently), lying and bullying. He pretended that he had applied for a trademark for "DipCon".
4. Anderson has polished the most unbelievable and scurrilous lies about some of the best people in the hobby...including John Boyer, Gil Weiger, Edi Birsan, Allan Calhmer, Walt Buchanan, John Moot, and others.

His behavior is utterly antisocial, negative, destructive, and selfish. The hobby owes him a vote of "no confidence". We have at our disposal one powerful and effective weapon. I urge you to use it.

BOYCOTT "CITEX-76"

Pass it on

## THE IDA PUBLISHER'S HANDBOOK

[There is no lack of organizations in the hobby. They are primarily private ego-trips ("IDA") or useless title-mongering entities ("TIDA"). While it must be confessed that the IDA has some internal problems, it is without a doubt the only "Diplomacy Association" of any description which is trying to do something to better the hobby. Yet another example:]

The long-awaited Publisher's Handbook is finally out! It is \$2.50 (\$2.00 to IDA members) from Len Lakofka, 644 W. Briar Pl., Chicago IL 60657. I have some positive things, some negative things, and a definite thing to say about it. The definite thing is: buy a copy, by all means!

Len is, God knows, not the world's best writer or speller. I winced when he said that most of the Handbook had to be written by himself because input was spotty from others. The final result was not the literary disaster I had expected...it's not bad at all. The best bit is in a section where Len advises everyone to brush up on grammar, spelling, syntax, and like that (without making a single error [um, a single major error] himself), and ends with a quotation... "The pen, haveing [sic] writ,....". Oh, well,..... [Len identifies the quote as "anonymous", which it is, sort of. It's actually a misquote from the Rubiyat... "The moving finger writes, and having writ, moves on; nor all your piety nor wit/can cancel half a line, nor all your tears wash out a word of it."]

Quite frankly, this little (28 pages) booklet is the most informative thing I've seen in the hobby. Ever. It may not tell you everything you need to know about publishing, but I cannot tell you anything it has left out. At \$2.50 it's a frigging bargain. The articles it contains are thorough, informative, and even interesting. The layout and presentation is about as good as I've seen anywhere in the hobby: it's clear and readable, not at all crowded or jumbled. Len has devoted a great deal of care to making this a most presentable and worthwhile booklet. He has succeeded. He has fewer than 300 copies available. I strongly suggest you get one now. If good work goes not unrewarded, this will be a sell-out before the end of summer.

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NOTES ON THE GAME

1975CY is in a sort of limbo at the moment. I have suddenly not heard from some of the players and there may be a number of replacements necessary before the animal may continue. Next issue should be back to abnormal, as unusual.

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## A COUPLE OF REVIEWS

The Hindenberg. I am not big on "disaster" movies (although I liked "Earthquake" because the idea of L.A. flatter than a fritter really turns me on). This one, however, is one of the best of the genre. For one thing, it is based on a real event. For another, it has a lot of the forward thrust of a Greek tragedy...you know the disaster is going to occur. The suspense builds up from a mystery element in the plot...who is planning to blow it up? I also learned a hell of a lot about how the old commercial dirigibles operated. The dialogue and acting aren't bad. The movie has been getting some bad reviews...apparently from people who expect everything to be a masterpiece on the order of "The Seventh Seal". Well, I'm sorry...this is a damn good movie. It is entertaining, informative, and interesting. It is great escapism and bitching nostalgia. What more can you ask (well, a cheaper admission price, to start...)?

Shardik. I'm in the middle of it. This is an extremely powerful and moving modern work, and I'm extremely impressed with it. It's not the usual sort of fantasy work; it is very realistic and hard-hitting, dealing with human foibles in a way that Tolkien (e.g.) did not. IlikeitIlikeitIlikeitI  
APARTANDTHENHAVETOGOBACKANDCORRECTTHELETTERS THATAREOUTOFPLACEWIA TAPAININ THE

[This item was written several months ago. I sent it to Bob Lipton, who rejected it in a fit of pique (he cancelled our trade agreement shortly thereafter). I then sent it to Nick Ulanov for THE TIMES, but he has since ceased to publish. The Nixon visit to China makes this old item even more relevant now than it was.]

WON'T YOU COME OVER, DEAR RICHARD; OH, WON'T YOU COME OVER, CHARMING DUCKY?

Most people know Richard Nixon as the world's greatest living argument for reviving the more ancient functions of the Tower of London. Not many, however, know him as America's potential answer to Marco Polo. Yet, in one of the most preposterous pronouncements yet to issue from San Clemente, Nixon declared that he would accept, if offered, the Ambassadorship to the People's Republic of China. Are you ready for that?

Anybody with the unlimited gall to believe that he, the nation's Most Unwanted Man, would ever be seriously considered for a diplomatic post, yet, just might make it. Alas. Let us consider a possible moment in the near future, when Richard Nixon goes trotting across the Pacific to

[Peking, late 1976. The newly-appointed American Ambassador to the P.R.C., the Dishon. Richard M. Nixon, is being shown the new Embassy building by the recently-appointed Chinese Foreign Minister, Mao T'ai-tak. He is accompanied by his Charge, John Mitchell. The scene is the Ambassador's private office. Enter Nixon, stage right.]

NIXON: [Claps hands.] Ooooooooooooooh!

[Enter Mao T'ai-tak, John Mitchell, and a young Chinese official, stage left.]

MAO: This will be your office, Mr. Ambassador. The entire building will be finished by next month.

NIXON: Well, let me say this about that: It looks very nice. Um... where are the microphones?

MAO: All velly cleverly concealed, Mr. Nixon. Of course, we have all lead your velly clever new book, Listening In For Fun and Plofit.

NIXON: Well, let me make perfectly clear that I am glad you had lead ...um, read my book. But about the microphones...

MAO: Oh, we can't tell you where they are. That's part of the game, you know. However, you are perfectly welcome to find them and take them out, or put some of your own miclophones in....

NIXON: Make a note of that, John.

MITCHELL: Yes....

NIXON: Shut up and write. You said enough last year.

MAO: Now, for a mere 5000 ydan a thlow, we can allange for you to listen in on other Embassies...except those paying our 10,000 ydan "potection" fee. And for a mere 7500 ydan we can allange for you to have an unlisted bug. These are all monthly charges, of course.

NIXON: Well, let me say....

MAO: And the "potection" fee is per countly you want potection against.

NIXON: Well, who hasn't paid a protection fee against us, yet?

MAO: Wang, the envelope. [Wang, the young Chinese, hands him a large red envelope. He opens it and reads.] Ah, sooooo...we can allange for

you to bug Nepal, the Vatican...no, Pope Paul paid up when he heard you were coming...Botswana, Angola, and...mmm...Spain.

NIXON: Spain??? They don't have an embassy here!

MAO: That is so. For them there is a 2500 yuan long-distance fee. Now, let me introduce you to our Liaison Officer, who will help you with anything you need: Smith Wang.

MITCHELL & NIXON: Smith???

SMITH: Yes. I am the ultimate result of American imperialism. Ahhh...so...you are surprised I speak your language so well. You see, I was educated at...

NIXON & MITCHELL: Don't say it!

WANG: ...Plinceton. Oy, vey!...that just sripped out...

MAO: Wang just had his blain washed and can't do a thing with it... but his doctor is going to pin it up for him this afternoon. Come, gentlemen, your living quarters are not yet finished and, until then, we are going to put you up at one of Peking's finest hotels.

SMITH: Yes, the Di-nai Erh-t'ing.

NIXON: That sounds perfectly nice. Does it mean anything?

MAO: In your language, I believe it translates, "Gate of Heavenly Water". Step outside there; your official car is waiting. [Exeunt Nixon and Mitchell, stage left.] Well, Wang, crank up the mikes and let's see how reception is from the Di-nai. ... You look puzzled. Anything wrong?

SMITH: I thought I had my wallet with me, but it's missing...

MAO: Aiyeeeeee! So is mine...and my watch...[They run for the door and exeunt, stage left. Off-stage voices:] Driver! Quick! Follow that official car!!

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### THE "GEMIGNANI" "AWARDS"

I see that Robert Sacks is again perpetrating the so-called "Gemignani Awards" on the hobby. If they were done in the spirit of teasing and fun, I would say, "fine". They are not. They are, in general, an ugly blend of cattiness, unnecessary negativeness, and personal vendetta. In fact, inasmuch as Ms. Gemignani withdrew, long ago, her permission to use her name, Sacks' ugly little project is even more negative than it might otherwise have been.

This publication will not carry either the ballot or the results of that uncalled-for vote. I earnestly request other publications to follow suit.

SENDHIMBACKIFTHATDOESNTWORKMAYBEWECANMAKEHIMOURAMBASSADORTOMARSONAPERMANENTE

### COLOPHON

EREHWON is a monthly 'zine of postal Diplomacy and other rites of Cthulhu. Subscriptions are 5/\$1...however, if you are a postal Diplomacy publisher, and if I have refused a trade agreement with your 'zine, and if you are not a member of "IDA", you may subscribe at 8/\$1.

Back issues available: 40, 45, 50-94. They are 15¢ each; 10¢ each in batches of 2-11; 12 issues for \$1 and 8¢ each for each additional copy.

All prices quoted are in US\$, cash, check, or stamps.

This is Alcalá Publication #646, edited and published by Rod Walker, "Alcalá", 1273 Crest Dr., Encinitas CA 92024; telephone, (714) 753-7657.

DIPLOMACY is a game invented by Allan B. Calhmer. Who owns the copyright and sells the game may just have changed: it used to be Games Research Inc.; it may now be Avalon-Hill. Rumors to that effect have appeared as both "unconfirmed" and "confirmed" in THE POCKET ARMENIAN and PREDAWN LEFTIST. I suspect the said rumors are true.

[We have a lot of material on "codewords"; our readers are referred to issues 93 & 94 for background and previous contributions.][My own comments are bracketed as is this introduction.]

Eric Just: One of the factors responsible for my original attraction to Diplomacy was the free-wheeling nature of the game--making up the rules as we went along, two sets of orders for a season (one to show to your about-to-be-former ally, one for the stab), flying Dutchmen, etc. One of the factors responsible for my lost interest in postal Diplomacy was the impossibility of these tactics. Admittedly, the thought of a Gamesmaster allowing the use of flying Dutchmen conjures up the image of total chaotic anarchy. From my point of view, then, the codeword concept brings back some of the thrill of bygone days. Your objection that the use of codewords allows a player to screw himself makes little sense: I love a game where the players have every opportunity to screw themselves. In fact, now that I consider it, codewords produce situations similar to the "two sets of orders" tactic from the "good ole days". They allow a player to stab his soon-to-be-former ally by using the codeword which produces the optimum stab. Fantastic!

[I can't argue with your logic, but I can't accept your premise. I prefer a more orderly game, where the outcome depends to the maximum degree possible on a player's skill, and to the minimum degree possible on his luck at negotiating the intricacies of unnecessary administrative procedures.]

Scott Rosenberg: This situation came up in one of my games back when I was but a new publisher who did not expect this sort of tomfoolery. I think it's completely inexcusable. It is a sign of laziness and nothing else, asking the GM to take the part of negotiator. I ruled it out. It simply creates more problems for the harried GM--and more opportunities for delay in the game, for players to complain of "partiality" on the part of the GM, and for players to screw themselves, as Rod pointed out.

[I must confess I'm not as vehemently opposed to codewords as all that, but I certainly agree with the essence of this argument. I don't like anything which will add to my work-load.]

John Leeder: Although our symposium hasn't brought us to an agreed position, it at least has isolated the points of disagreement so that others can make their own choices. This, I think, is a valuable function. [Agreed. That's why I'm printing it.] To summarize:

--You feel that a codeword is part of a player's orders and therefore another player's orders should not be made conditional on it. I don't feel a codeword is an "order" and see nothing unethical about allowing their use. [I don't see any way of resolving this. In my view, a codeword is an order, or at least a condition upon which orders are based, which amounts to the same thing.]

--You feel that the use of codewords affords more opportunities for GM and player error and should be prohibited on that account. I think this is not a valid point. Whether or not a player or GM could foul up, or some specific player did foul up in a given instance, is not relevant to the potential usefulness of codewords. Any system has a potential for error by those using it; it is the individual who is at fault when this happens, not the system. You can't say a computer is no good because programmers make mistakes. [Agreed in principle. However, I don't see how codewords help me, as GM, any. In fact, they do create an enormous potential for error on my part, and I'm rather an error-prone GM unless I am very careful. In addition, codewords increase my workload far more than I am willing to accept. Conditional orders are bad enough; but they save money.]

--You feel that the system gives its users a measure of protection against NMRs on the part of others, and thus an unfair advantage. My response is twofold: 1) anyone can use codewords, so the advantage is available to all, [and] 2) even if this were a drawback, it is vastly outweighed by the usefulness of the system. [That is a matter of subjective judgement and in mine, the disadvantage is far worse. In order for everyone to take advantage of codewords and NMRs, everyone would have to use codewords with virtually everyone else. That is the last thing I would want, given the increased potential for error and the increased GM workload.]

--You feel that postal players do not need anything to help increase the efficiency of their negotiations. I disagree strongly. Your point that a great deal of information can be packed into one letter is true enough, but in postal play in a single season it may be possible to receive the 'zine, write an ally, get a reply from the ally, and send in orders on the basis of that reply. But this is stretching things. If someone doesn't answer immediately, or if the mail is a couple of days slow, you're going to wind up with an NMR. There is no chance at all for a back-and-forth discussion during one season of postal play. The use of codewords can cut out two of these mailings and thus greatly increase the efficiency of the negotiations. You can send the letter to your ally, and your orders based on the codeword, at the same time. [You can always, as I do, send orders at the beginning and change them later if replies indicate you should. Most GMs today use a 3- or 4-week deadline, which does allow for some back-and-forth discussion if you reply right away. In any event, the pressure is on, just as it is in a 15-minute negotiation period. That is as it should be.]

--You feel that, since your house rules do not specifically permit codewords, they should not be allowed. In other words, everything not permitted is forbidden. I feel everything not forbidden should be permitted. Codewords are not new to the hobby; why should you assume the players don't know about them? Even if they don't, that's no reason to prohibit their use to people who do. [I'm not exactly new to the hobby, John; and your notion of codewords is very new to me. I do not believe that everything not permitted is forbidden; far from it. However, in this case, it is only fair that all players know in advance what I will allow and what I won't. I will not allow codewords for any player until I allow them for all players and tell them so in print. To do otherwise is to be totally remiss in my responsibilities as a GM.]

I think that sums up our positions so far. I realize I've run on; however, I beg your indulgence in adding a few side points. Len's contention that only lazy players would use codewords is incorrect. Codewords are not a substitute for negotiations; they are a means of making them more efficient and transcending the limitations inherent in postal negotiating. "Orders should be clear and concise." This is true whether or not they are conditional on codewords. A GM who cannot follow a "clear and concise" set of orders even when they are conditional, does not have the intelligence to be a good GM. Codewords "increase the GM workload" only to a very small amount; any GM who forbids their use on that grounds would be irresponsible as well as lazy. (I don't mean this personally, Len--this is all hypothetical and issue-oriented.) [The practical increase in workload is probably small, I agree; that is because many players do not avail themselves of all possibilities--witness the minimal number who turn in General Orders or use other methods to protect themselves from "NMR". However, the potential workload increase is very large, and that is what I must base my decision on. Laziness has nothing to do with it; the question is, how much spare time do I have to devote to this hobby? Mine is limited.]

1. Scott Rosenberg writes a note on rock operas. "Actually, there are many more...in existence. Tommy and JCS are just the most well-known. The best one, in my opinion, is an obscurity called Arthur--or, The Decline and Fall of the British Empire, by the Kinks. It's fairly hard to get, and not very popular; but it contains some of the best rock lyrics and music of all time. The "Arthur" of the record is not the glamorous, courageous King Arthur of legend, but a middle-aged office worker. The music deals with the theme of purposelessness in the middle class, and did so long before it became a cliché. [Really? Have you read Rabbit!] It is--well, I won't waste any more superlatives on it; I just believe it is one of the best records. [Or Notes From the Underground!]

"The Kinks have done a few other rock operas; recently, they've been dealing with the same theme, but in a much less discrete and artful manner. Their Soap Opera is not very good, nor were Preservation Act I and Act II (although they contain some decent music). The two, of course, in addition to Tommy, did Quadrophenia, which may be a little too hard for some; I think it ranks with the best, though. The music on some of the instrumentals is some of the most intricate and beautiful rock ever recorded.

[Speaking of opera, I have a projected libretto I may try to peddle one of these days. It is called Slave of Mr. Vernon and deals with the life of Father George in a way which will not sit well with the D.A.R., although in the end Washington's decision to sacrifice his private life for the well-being of our fledgeling country makes the whole thing a noble tragedy. I don't feel, however, that "rock" will be an appropriate musical vehicle; I'm hoping to find a composer who can combine a modern idiom with music appropriate to the late 18th Century (as Samuel Barber did to some extent in Vanessa).

2. In case anyone is wondering, I am hard at work on Vol. 1, The Middle East, of my "Encyclopedia of Historical Geography". It has about 600 main entries grouped into about 2 dozen sections. I work every week on it, and am trying to find a publisher. Thus far, it seems to be too big for anybody to handle.

3. I am having better luck with my short stories. I have found sufficient favor with one publisher to prevent the usual instantaneous rejection slip. He's had my material for 2 months, now, so maybe....

Space permitting, I will have to print one of my more recent efforts. "Clay" got some nice compliments. It has, by the way, been extensively rewritten, and is now going through another draft to bring it into conformance with a cycle of stories I'm working on. They are set in an as-yet unnamed world which, among other things, is quite flat. An ancient land of this world was called Habaristyan, and when the Habari were driven forth from it, and vanished, they left behind them two fragments of their literary heritage. One was a collection of their sacred and profane writings. The other was an edited collection called the Sacerdote, long in print and accessible. The first collection consisted of a library of scrolls, long buried in caves near the village of Gorvan. They were uncovered by modern archaeologists and my stories represent translations of those scrolls, some with extensive annotation and footnoting. Completed stories include "Clay", "The Garden of Harab", "Nutcracker", "Tahomuth", "The Jewels of Sharaphat"; it is one of these I hope to see in print. In progress is a longish tale, "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom". I'll have to share some of this material with you in future issues, as space permits.

Ciao