

MARSOVIA

Vol. I. No. 3

April 29, 1966

Late Winter 1966

With the game list at last complete and the press releases not yet rolling in (except for one butchery by von Metzke), this issue will be devoted to assorted comments on strategy, another player sketch, miscellaneous nonsense, and whatever other idiocy is needed to complete an issue. Since I am the Fascist that von Metzke talks about in the last issue of COSTAGUANA (Surprise!) I may as well start there.

While I certainly think that John Boardman has gone overboard on this anti-war bit (see elsewhere in this issue - I'd say where but von Metzke is still running the stencils and I don't have the faintest damned idea where it will appear) he does have a right to embellish his 'zines with whatever he wants. He at least has been publishing opposed viewpoints in his diplomatic pouch. However, it seems that Reinsel has a point too. It is rather annoying (and could be even worse if a copy were sent to Art Canfil) to receive this, especially since the uninformed could easily get the impression from reading only the sticker that GRAUSTARK was some May 2d publication. Guilt by association is still with us.

Since this problem does exist, MARSOVIA will from time to time take whatever peculiar political stand I am committed to at the moment, but it will not publish any mottoes on the address space which might embarrass our subscribers if seen by their neighbor or postman. OK?

In fact, I feel political just now, so I reprint in its entirety a letter to the editor from the SACRAMENTO BEE:

"Editor, THE BEE:

"I was told that if I voted for Goldwater that taxes would go up and there would be further war in Vietnam. They were right. I voted for Goldwater, taxes have gone up and there is more war in Vietnam"

I have some more material on this that I might run next issue, but with the anti-Boardman editorial enough is enough. Let's turn to some more diplomatic areas.

There has been a lot written in every 'zine about the games-masters' attempts to change the rules. Put bluntly, I'm agin' it. There is no question that the rules need changing, but as I see it there are only two possibilities. One is that Calhauer changes them. This would be best since he has the copyright, the most experience with the game, and probably the finest idea of where they need changing. However, there are no signs that this will be done. The other

possibility is to form all the players into the American Diplomacy Federation, something like the American Contract Bridge League, and acquire from Calhamer the right to adapt rules of mail Diplomacy. Notice that in either case, if the inventor doesn't want to go along we don't change anything, at least not and still call it Diplomacy. I except, of course, those interpretations already made and necessary to the game; after all, interpretation is anyone's field but rules changes are something else again.

I think this ADF bit has its advantages even apart from the rules changes. First of all it gives us an identity. Second, it would be a good vehicle for inter-club games and tournaments and such. Third, it might bring some order out of the field. Finally, I would hope that, once organized, with our very own post office box, we might get a plug-sheet inserted with the Diplomacy sets. I don't know how many people who would like to play mail games if they knew about them are lost because they buy their set at some out-of-the-way store, are not SF fans, and never run across a Diplomacy bulletin. The only way to get through to these people is with a note coming with the game. The proliferation of magazines makes a central clearing house with a complete list the best device for that.

All of this depends, in the final analysis, on Allan Calhamer and Gamss Research. Incidentally - there was a rumor around a while back that Diplomacy was going to be sold to Parker Brothers. Anybody know what happened about that?

While we are waiting some action on these questions MARSOVIA will continue to enforce my interpretation of the rules, that come with the game as already noted in Issue I. I am adding one thing to this. If any player is unsure of how a rule will be interpreted, he may write for an opinion before sending in his moves; or, alternately, he may send in two sets conditional upon my interpretation if he clearly states what point is unclear and how he wants each set used. That is, use set A if you interpret the rules to mean I can do this; otherwise use set B. The purists will object that a player who does not know the rules should simply forfeit a move, to which I agree. This is meant only for those areas where there is a great deal of discretion for the gamesmaster AND I have not indicated how I will decide. Any other case, the first set of moves will either make it or be treated as an illegal order. This is probably even less clear than before, but I will be happy to try to explain individual cases by mail.

Now to another player sketch. This week the spotlight is on GYM, not to be confused with T.R.B. from whom he derives his politics. Again I quote completely:

*C.F. von Metzke, whose full name would fill the page, is the last of the original inhabitants of what is now the L.A. City Dump ((in this, at least, he is serious)). On 2 February 1944, in Yee Sun's Chinese Restaurant in San Francisco, Mr. and Mrs. Ross von Metzke ordered glazed duck and got a son or mistake. The duck kid grew up in the streets of San Francisco, standing in the front of

buses and calling out the stops between his house and his psychiatrist's office.

"Later graduating to the streets of Los Angeles, C.F. used to walk from Sunset and Micheltorena to Hollywood and La Cienega just to avoid the seven-cent bus zone fare.

"Since arriving in San Diego, the Navel of the Universe, in 1957, C.F. has been a Socialist worker, a Young Democrat, a Young Republican, ((that's a lie, it was actually a Calif. Collegiate Republican - the more moderate wing of the college GOP crew)), and a states' rights man; a Unitarian, a Baptist, a Roman Catholic, and an agnostic; an oboe player and French horn virtuoso (simultaneously); and, in outside-of-madness escapades, a fan of Joseph Conrad (his namesake), Josef Haydn, Eugene Delacroix, Lord Byron, Dag Hammarskjold, Adlai E. Stevenson, and Franklin Pierce. His favourite word is 'sycophant', which he learned from Bob Ward in a Password game at Leo Crawford's in 1962 ((unfortunately too late to give us the points))."

((I can add that he is also addicted to driving his '48 Nash down truck trails at 3 in the morning and going to Jacumba at 2:30 a.m. after bridge games. He is as unpredictable in Diplomacy as in life, and you may get a good ally for the whole game or be stabbed in Spring 1901. Your position will have nothing to do with his decision.))

Andy Swenson promised me one of those things too. No word yet from Barrows, Cartier, Tzudiker, or Latimer, but I look forward to theirs.

Incidentally (my favorite word this issue) if anyone wants to try an experimental game such as those in Diplomania, especially that one where you don't know who else is playing what, I would be willing to run one if there is enough interest. Also, I will run digests of over-the-board games if they illustrate some particular point of strategy. Or, if they are just good interesting games, though I find I can't really get too excited about the game I am not in in another mag since I don't know the background to the move. If you have info on this with your game it might be more revealing.

A note on deadlines, printing skeds, and somesuch: As many of you know, while I edit this mag, the actual printing is done by von Metzke in San Diego for a while. As fewer of you know, von Metzke does not actually own a mimeo or spirit duplicator, but has the stuff printed by Gene Haskell. As none of you know, Gene Haskell does not actually own a duplicator at all, but merely has limited access to one. This explains the screw-up publishing schedule as we go from Ward to von Metzke to Haskell to CENSORED to von Metzke to the postoffice to you.

Deadlines will be rigidly observed. However, since I cannot guarantee just when an issue will be run off and mailed, I will send on the official publishing date a post card (airmail where that makes a difference) listing all moves of interest to you; all moves will be listed if there is room, if not you'll have to wait for the bulletin for moves I don't consider of interest to you immediately, as, France to Russia and v.v. The bulletin, with complete moves, releases, my comments, etc., will follow as soon

as humanly possible within this framework. And the New York Times thinks it has troubles with the ITU; let them try this way for a while and see what they think!

REGARDLESS....

MOVES ARE DUE HERE MAY 12 1966 ABSOLUTE RECEIPT DEADLINE. Gd lk.

Robert J. Ward, Gamesmaster - address moves, press releases, etc. to
RJW, 5716 'J' Street, Sacramento, Calif. 95819.

PRESS RELEASE:

LONDON: Philemon Cromwell-Snerd, Protector of the British Empire, today announced before a crowd of six gathered in Finstercestershire Square, Puddleby-on-the-Marsh, that he was attempting to "cast off the burthens of statemanship and return to my pig farm in west Cornwall." On the slogan 'Let's Get Piggy Deals out of London', the Peoples' Empire Expansion Party (PEEP) formed a coalition with the American Independent Farmers' Party of New Jersey, headed by one Henry J. Krajewski, another pig farmer. The coalition proposal carried Commons by a vote of 23-5, with 644 abstentions - the majority of them drunken ones. Since there has been no King since 1649, the new government was installed by the Lord Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, His Honour Sir F. Ira Highdrunt. The new Prime Minister is Mr. Krajewski, an American citizen; the Minister of Everything Else (MEE) is M.J. Mooshie, a Texas citizen and thus an alien to either the British Isles or the Crown Colony of America and Mississippi. It is not known what new agreement with the Republic of Texas made Mooshie's installation possible.

To a packed Parliament House Prime Minister Krajewski announced his first official act - he has declared war on Germany. After making his announcement Krajewski leaned from the rostrum toward the German ambassador, Dr. Heinrich Schweinbauer, and made a leering gesture accompanied by obscene cries. Reporters, pressing Dr. Schweinbauer for his comment, only heard him mutter "Well, that was sure stupid of him! What the hell kind of pig is he?"

SO DON'T FORGET THE DEADLINE!

now when the hell was it?...

Politics and Poker

With this issue we inaugurate a periodic page or so devoted to the outside world. This is done for a number of reasons, to fill space, to allow for an opposition voice to the ravings of John Boardman, and because it is rather inconceivable that anyone so concerned with make believe diplomacy should not be concerned with the real world. You are invited to send in material for this area as well.

If I understand the thrust of Boardman's arguments on the anti-war toy campaign we must stop the production of war toys because they glorify war to the child. Diplomacy however is all right because we after all are adults and beyond the influence so to speak. I think the illustrious doctor would have a hard time demonstrating any connection between games played as a child and adult aggressions. This is not an area where the rigid laws of physics he employs so well work. In fact I would expect that most aggressors (criminals if you will) never played too many games at all.

However on another level it seems that even if the connection is valid this would not necessarily militate against these toys. Even John Boardman wouldn't claim there is never a place for fighting, if only in self defense. If John is right about the toys it would seem they serve a valuable function in preparing and shaping the child to the uses of force. However devilic a totally pacifistic world might seem to some it does not exist, this is the wrong time to attempt to condition out survival instincts, which are acted out in these war games.

In addition the games are an important factor in shaping some sort of national consciousness and pride. Watch the kids for a while, they all want to be the Americans and win. John might call this nascent jingoism but it seems to me that it is far more important to instill a sense of commitment and differentiate it later than to attempt to stifle the feeling. It is possible to feel of course that this nationalism is itself antipatriotic. I am not arguing that John is entirely wrong merely that there is another side to the story.

Prescinding for a moment from the question of what should be done it seems that the anti war is stepping outside their framework of value to impose their demands. Surely such apostles of toleration should allow each parent to decide for himself if he wishes his child to play with these toys (or even let each child decide). Picket lines and similar pressure are exactly the tactics of aggression and force they so piously deplore. In fact why not bring out these other toys themselves and see if they sell. If they rightly interpret the mood of the American public they have a bonanza, if not why should some private toy company yielding to pressure be forced to suffer a loss to cater to their ideological whims. One can argue of course that it serves the toy company right for buckling but this isn't really germane.

In substance then it seems that the connection between aggression and these toys is not proved, that if it were true this might in their view be enough evidence but it fails to recognize the survival value of aggression response both personally and nationally, and in any case the actions are exactly those forces they deplore. In short the movement is internally inconsistent with its own tenets. Rebuttal, John?