

Passchendaele 39

THE HUNDRED DAYS

When Napoleon returned from exile on Elba Island in 1815 to recreate his empire, he had several problems repairing the damage resulting from his earlier defeats and departure. Chief among these was the determination of the Great Powers to defeat Bonaparte and destroy what he represented. This situation eventually produced one of the most famous battles nearly one hundred days later.

It may be interesting to compare these circumstances to the post-Passchendaele hoax situation. While I don't believe anyone in the hobby wishes me ill (Napoleon was more unfortunate with his peers) and while the only swords and muskets I may have to worry about are letters and 'zines expressing discontent (Napoleon had no such luck, the "pen-is-mightier-than-the-sword" saying notwithstanding), we have one thing in common. Both Napoleon and I were believed incapable of returning to "business as usual" after our absence.

The hobby in general was simply happy to see me come back; nevertheless the gloom and doom predictions flourished as a few individuals declared that I would have a lot of trouble "picking up the pieces". While those pundits were never really precise, they generally felt that the hobby would be so outraged by the hoax that I would have immense difficulties resuming my GMing and publishing activities. A favourite horror story was that my NMR rate would skyrocket as my credibility plummeted and my player ranks were depleted by mass desertions.

In all fairness, I must say that those "pundits" were relatively new to the hobby. Little could they know that old bored François (yaaaawn) really couldn't care less if their predictions ever came true, as he happens to think that hobby difficulties - no matter how great - will never rank as more than the least of his problems, nay, as more than a minor inconvenience. While this isn't to say that I normally go looking for trouble, it might be best if these individuals came to the realization that the worst hobby "problems" - and even perhaps a hobby furor - can be easily by-passed or even ignored. And not just by me. In this light, phrases such as "problems" and "picking up the pieces" are rather devoid of any significance to me.

Still, I am pleased to report that each of their pronouncements has yet to come true, after a little over one hundred days. There has been no player walk-out. The NMR rate, if anything, has declined (20% last issue, 7% this issue, the average usually oscillating between 15% and 25%). No publisher has boycotted this publication in protest.

There has been no avalanche.

Perhaps this is where Napoleon and I differ: I have not met my Waterloo.

This is the January 22, 1982 issue of Passchendaele, a 'zine published semi-weekly by François Guerrier, Box 32, Station "A", Ottawa, Ont. K1N 0T9 (1-613-234-4437). This is Tethysaurus Presses Publication 119.

Subscriptions to this 'zine are available at 10/\$6.50. There are openings in Jena, a regDip game. Alain Martine, Steve Bergstrom, Dave Davies, Bob Acheson (?) and Ian Eckloff are signed-up. The game-fee is \$5.00. Only two other players are needed.

Steve Berrigan, 1394 Highgate Rd., apt. 6, Ottawa, Ont. K2C 2Y6 (1-613-829-7289) is the guest-GM for 1980 HL.

The standby list includes Blair Cusack, Steve Berrigan, Bob Acheson, Barry Hickey, Steve Bergstrom (?), Alan Hoffman, David Carter, Deane Spordakos and Peter Ashley.

- COAs:
- (1) Blair Cusack, 656 Josselyn Ct., Kelowna, BC. V1X 5V9.
 - (2) Don Tinker, Bio Chem Dept., M U N, St-John's, Newfoundland. A1B 3K9.
 - (3) Steve Hutton, Rm. 6, West 5, Village 1, Box 460, Waterloo, Ont. N2J 4B6.

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR OF THE NERD OF THE MONTH AWARD COMMITTEE

R. L. Morton,
173 Irving Avenue,
Ottawa, Ont.
K1Y 1Z6

Mr. François Guerrier

Box 32, Station "A"

Ottawa, Ont.

K1N 0T9

Dear Mr. Guerrier,

After due and serious consideration, the Committee (of one) is pleased to proclaim, and hereby bestows, the NERD OF THE MONTH (for October 1981) AWARD (and thereby entitling the recipient to all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities thereof), in recognition of your recent acts of grossness towards the Diplomacy hobby in general, and towards the undersigned in particular.

RALPH L. MORTON

Registrar and Chief Scribe of the First Magnitude.

RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF NERDS

1. You are entitled, and may demand, to be addressed as "NERD!" on formal, and other, occasions where your award is publically displayed (see 3 below). The title "NERD!" is not hereditary.

2. You are entitled to proceed to your apartment/house/jail room, and bay at the full moon, for a period not exceeding 60 seconds, on 29 February of each year.

3. On formal, and other, occasions, you are required to affix to your forehead a suitable sign displaying the word "NERD!" in 1½ inch (3.82 cm) yellow gothic letters on a pink background, to specification 1-GP-50. A daffodil, of the King David variety and having a stem not exceeding four inches (10.16 cm) in length, clenched in the teeth and protruding from each ear, is optional for all occasions except formal ones.

P.S. Told ya this was coming, Nerd!

((Amusing...))

((All kidding aside, I have one question before I accept the award: what in hell is a daffodil?))

Steve Barker, 1374 Highway 11, apt. 6, Ottawa, Ont. K2G 2Y6 (1-613-822-7282)

The standby list includes Blair Gussak, Steve Barker, Bob Johnson, Barry Hickey, Steve Barker (?), Alan Hoffman, David Carter, James Spordakos and Peter Ashby.

- (1) Blair Gussak, 656 Josselyn Ct., Kelowna, BC. V1X 2V9.
- (2) Don Tinker, Box 100, Newmarket, Ont. L3Y 3K9.
- (3) Steve Barker, 1374 Highway 11, apt. 6, Ottawa, Ont. K2G 2Y6.

Now we all by these presents that
this day we have awarded the

Men of the Month

To François Guernier

FOR ACTS AND ACCITUDES of GROSSNESS

Robert L. Norton
REGISTRAR AND CHIEF SCRIBE
OF THE
NERD OF THE MONTH AWARD COMMITTEE

THE CONFESSION

(Garry Fairbairn)

Now that I'm retiring, I can confess to a hobby hoax. I do not exist. Nor does Bob Acheson, Blair Cusack, John Leader, Bernie Oaklyn or Randolph Smyth. These are all front names for John Kelley, who recently had a sex-change operation and is known as Kathy Byrne.

So thorough is the hoax that John/Kathy even lined up people in different cities to impersonate the false names. Everything worked well except for Leopold Nerforvinski in Ottawa, who suffered a concussion one day and came to believe he really was F. Guerrier...

((...And he had me fooled for all that time...er, she had me fooled... argh, never you mind...))

((You know, my files are still full of old stuff dating back several months. One such item is an article submitted by Randolph Smyth in April 1980...! The only problem with it is that he forgot to include a title...:))

???

(Randolph Smyth)

A novice reading the Rulebook might think that GMing is a process similar to arithmetical calculation: a given set of inputs always leads to the same output in an adjudication. Except in some offbeat cases involving the legality of convoys, where the Rulebook itself is ambiguous and confusion/controversy still exists, this is true of the adjudication as distinct from a dozen other operations which the postal GM is also called on to perform. In these areas, where the Rulebook (designed for face-to-face games) gives little or no guidance, there is still plenty of room for individual interpretations.

I'll just list a few of the most obvious questions which a GM should answer before he opens his first game: (1) Should neutral orders be used for NMing players in 1901? Which ones, and for which seasons? (2) Should standbys be used when original players drop out? Does the size/potential of the leaderless position make any difference? (3) What is the minimum acceptable format for delivery of orders? Do you require all of date, signature, game/year/country/'zine designation? Must the orders be on one side of the paper, with a minimum sheet size? What about telephoned and otherwise-delivered orders? (4) What deadline intervals will you use? This makes a difference to the quality of play/negotiations, perhaps to the number of NMrs, but also to your treatment of the inevitable error (short-deadline games must be delayed to account for errors; a separate mailing may permit long-deadline games to proceed). (5) How far will you go towards protecting the interests of the individual player as opposed to the group as a whole, when the two clash?

These "non-adjudication" questions are the only ones where significant disputes can arise with the players, since the Rulebook is generally quite clear on adjudications, and everyone can recognize that an adjudication is correct or not. Between GMs, differences of opinion also exist, which I'll try to illustrate by describing a few "types" which best represent a few of the major schools of thought:

(1) "Get-it-over-with": This GM emphasizes speed above all, making the closest possible approach to the classical tournament/face-to-face game. Deadlines are short (1-2 weeks); house rules are streamlined and offer few player options that may complicate matters. Separations and delays are unheard of, which puts a premium on the GM's consistent absolute accuracy in adjudicating. Press is de-emphasized: the games section of the 'zine may

look like a warehouse issue due to the stark concentration on the moves. Games can be over within a few months, but it is questionable whether they are true "postal" games at all since the players are virtually forced to use the telephone for all negotiations.

((I don't believe that prompt deadlines have anything to do with press, quantitatively or qualitatively. There is no causal relationship. While "fast" games leave the players with less time to write press, it might well be also that the participants have more interest (why else join a "quick" game?). I am inclined to believe that such games actually feature a greater abundance of press release, because the players are really keen if nothing else. A good operationalization of this is the Brutus Bulletin - while you may argue about the quality of the press in this erstwhile "zine" (which is beyond the scope of this discussion, but anyhow...), you can't deny it had loads of it.

((The obvious exception to your mention of the telephone are so-called "local" games, games with players from the same geographic area (e.g., all-Ontario games, American East Coast games, and etc.). While the proximity of the players usually allows for two or three week deadlines, long distance rates often are still around to deter extensive use of Ma Bell. Not that it really matters, anyhow: my definition of a "postal" game is any game with results channelled through the mails. Perhaps your definition is an exercise in hairsplitting - is a game "postal" only when more than 50% of the communication is by mail? Or is the threshold only 35%? 75%? Is the difference even meaningful enough to bother with a distinction? I wonder.))

(2) The British Bunch: The hobby has developed in completely different directions in Britain/Europe; rules which are extremely unusual here are the norm there, and vice versa. British GMs rarely use standbys: a player who abandons his position may return at any time to pick it up, but in the meantime even the largest positions are in civil disorder. Occasionally, over half the units on the board are in OD, which may make things less enjoyable for the survivors but is truer to the idea that the game is a fight to the finish among the seven starting players.

The British also prefer a Fall/Winter combination rather than Winter/Spring. Again, this is in closer line with the Rulebook which prohibits negotiation before the Winter adjustments in face-to-face games; but when both must actually be submitted together, it's harder to anticipate the right Winter adjustment after a complicated Fall season, than Spring moves after a (relatively) simple Winter.

In general, I believe the British have remained more literate (the North American hobby has been influenced far more by the tactical/wargaming crowd) with a correspondingly greater emphasis on the press, and other "frills" of the game on the part of GMs and players alike.

(3) The Literalists: These GMs believe in the absolute supremacy of every clause, express or implied, in the Rulebook. Of course, the basic rules are the foundation of the game, as every GM must be a "literalist" to some degree - more so than the average player who sees many rule disputes in light of what will benefit his position. However, there is disagreement over how far this can be taken when the Rulebook was written for face-to-face play. The adjudications themselves are identical for the postal version, but the Rulebook makes other pronouncements which are, in varying degrees, inappropriate for postal play. Some GMs will try to apply them anyway; others will "wing it" with their own modifications.

(4) The Traditionalists: Almost by definition, most GMs fall into this category. They believe that the correct way to resolve a dispute is to fall back on a precedent or do as the majority of other GMs would do. There is some merit to this since it tends to unify the hobby, making it easy for players to enter games in different "zines" without

getting burned by unusual house rules. For inexperienced GMs, the "normal" way is almost always better than any variation they can think up themselves. However, since new cases are always coming up, applying old ones can give a less-than-perfect result - and establishes a new precedent!

These "schools" don't exist in isolation, but are the extremes of a continuum with their opposite numbers. I'm writing from the perspective of a "slow and steady", "North American", "anarchist", "revolutionary" GM, which permits the easiest identification of the other extremes. None of the positions taken are wrong: several GMs do have ideas which are considered truly in error by the entire mainstream of the hobby, but it's not within the scope of this article to discuss individual aberrations.

Players should have a clear understanding of the type of GM they're playing under before they enter a game. Any responsible GM will deliver good service according to the values of his schools, but a strong performance against the other players in the game can be negated if these values are not understood.

LES PARTIES:

1979AB, Fall 1908.

ENGLAND WINS GUESSING GAME AS FRENCH DEFENSES COLLAPSE.

England (Al Hoffman): A NWY H; A STP H; A Lon-PIC; F KIE H; F HOL S F BEL; F Den-NTH; F BEL S A Lon-PIC; F ENG C A Lon-EDI; F IRL-NAT.
 France (Bernard Sampson): F BRE S F SPA(SC)-Mid; F SPA(SC)-Mid; F MID-NAT; A Pic-Bel (ret - PAR, OTB); A BUR S A Pic-Bel; A Mun S Italian A TYO (ret - RUH, OTB)
 Italy (David Carter): F EAS-AGE; F ION S A GRE; A TYO S A VIE; A VIE S F ADR-Tri; A TRI-Ser; F ADR-Tri; A GRE S A TRI-Ser;
 Turkey (Garry Fairbairn, but see below): A Gre ret - BUL. A MOS H; A BER S A SIL-MUN; A War-GAL; A BOH-Tyo; A BUD S A SER-Tri; F CON-Smy; A SER-Tri; F AEG-Gre; A SIL-MUN; A SMY disbands (impossible); A BUL-Ser.

The deadline for Winter 1909/Spring 1910 is March 5, 1982. A E/F/I/T draw has been proposed. Please vote with your Winter 1909/Spring 1910 orders (abstention:yes). Garry Fairbairn has resigned: the Turkish standby is Steve Berrigan.

Fall 1909 S.C. Chart:

England: Home, My, Swe, Den, StP, Kie, Hol, Bel (10). Even.
 France: Home, Spa, Por, My (5). Remove 1, even, or build 1 depending on the retreats.
 Italy: Home, Tri, Vie, Tun, Bud, Gre (7). Even.
 Turkey: Home, Bul, Rum, Ser, Bud, Sev, Mos, War, Ber, Aps, Mun (12). Build one as played one short.

1 So far as I can tell, an error crept up last Winter when I assigned ownership of Bud to Italy (it was actually Turkish). This resulted into Italy playing with a "flying Dutchman", with one unit too many. This is the first time I've made such a terrible mistake, but it would have helped indeed if the players had brought it to my attention as it was easy to spot. I'm afraid the error will have to stand, though Bud is now listed as being Turkish.

1979 AC, Winter 1910/Spring 1911.

THE TWO WICKED WITCHES ARE AT IT ONCE MORE!
 WESTERN POWERS MAKE AN ABOUT-FACE TO RESIST BRITAIN AS LONDONIANS CHANT,
 "RULE BRITANNIA!"

Austria (Bob Acheson): A Vie-BUD; A Rom-Tus (ANNIHILATED); A APU S Turkish F Ion-NAP; F ADR S A Tyo-VEN; A Tyo-VEN.

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England (Steve Colombo): Builds F EDI, F LON. A Bud-TRI; F HOL S F Edi-NTH; F Edi-NTH; F Nrg-NAT; F Fin-BOT; A STP H; A SWE-Den; F Lon-ENG.
 France (Steve Barrigan): F TYN S F Nap-ROM; A PIE-Ven; A TUS S F Nap-ROM; F Nap-ROM; F Wes-TUN; A Mar-GAS; A Bur-BEL.
 Germany (Roy Norton): Removes A Pru. A Mun-RUH; A KIE H; A SHI-MUN; F DEN S English F HOL-Nth (no such order).
 Italy (Dan MacLellan): No units available.
 Turkey (David Carter): A WAR S A Ukr-GAL; A MOS S A WAR; A Ukr-GAL; F GRE S F Eas-ION; F AEG S F Eas-ION; A Sev-RUM; A Rum-SER; F Eas-ION; F Ion-NAP.

The deadline for Fall 1911 is March 5, 1982. Note that I will not accept Roy's orders next deadline unless they are accompanied with a subscription renewal, as his subscription will expire way before then. Therefore, I will ask Alan Hoffman to submit standby orders in case he doesn't.

Press:

Vienna-GM: Question: Do you know why Jesus wasn't born in Quebec?
 ((That's an oddie, and of course I know the answer: "Because God couldn't find three wise men or a virgin..."))
 Answer: Because God couldn't find three wise men or a virgin.
 ((See... I knew the answer all along...))

1979GR, Fall 1908.

TURKEY PREVENTS AUSTRIA FROM LEAVING... TURKEY!

Austria (Bob Acheson): A VIE H, unordered; A Ven-TRI; A Nap-Rom (ret - AFU, OTB); A CON-Bul; A UKR-Mos; A Gal-RUM; F Smy-EAS; F BLA S Turkish A ARM-Sev; (no such order); A BUD S A VIE.
 England (Barry Hickey): A SEV H; F Bar-NRG; A Mos-WAR; F Nrg-NAT; F Bot-SWE; F Kie-HEL; F BER-Hel (impossible); A NWY H, unordered; F NTH S A HOL; A HOL H; A STP-Mos; A LVN S A Mos-WAR.
 France (Stephen Hutton): A Ruh-MUN; A Tyo-VEN; A Boh-TYO; A Bel-RUH; F Gre-ION; F ROM S F Tyn-NAP; F Tyn-NAP; A Par-EUR; A Pie/S A Tyo-VEN.
 Turkey (David Carter): F AEG-Bul (so); A ARM S English A SEV.

The deadline for Winter 1908/Spring 1909 is March 5, 1982. The following proposals have been forwarded: a concession to England, a F/E draw, a T/A draw, and a concession to the GM. Don't forget to vote on each proposal - except for the concession to the GM (I don't need to win, I know I'm the best...) - with your Winter 1908/Spring 1909 moves. Read my houserules to see which proposal takes precedence if more than one passes. An abstention will be considered as a "yes" vote.

Fall 1908 S.C. Chart:

Austria: Tri, Bud, Rum, Bul, Ser, Smy, Con, Vie, War, Nap, Ven (8). Remove 1 or even depending on the retreat.
 England: Home, Nrg, Swe, StP, Den, Hol, Kie, Ber, Sev, Mos, War (13). Build 1.
 France: Home, Por, Spa, Bel, Tun, Mun, Gre, Rom, Nap, Ven, Vls (12). Build 3, as played one short.
 Turkey: Ank, ~~Edi~~ (1). Remove 1.

Press:

Vienna - GM: You could have given me the English position, and Barry the Austrian.
 ((But... I thought you liked challenges, Bob...))

1980 CE, Winter 1902/Spring 1903.

GERMANY CONTINUES TO EXPAND AS ENGLAND FINALLY INTRODUCES THE DRAFT.

Austria (Bob Acheson): Removes F Alb. A VIE S A Bud-TRI; A SER S A Bud-TRI; A Bud-TRI.
 England (David Carter): Builds F LON. A May-STP; F BAR S A May-STP; F NPH S F Lon-ENG;
 F Lon-ENG.
 France (Mike Carroll): NMR! A Min ret - OTB. A Bur H (ret - EEL, PAR, GAS, OTB);
 A MAR H; F Eng H (ret - BRE, MID, IRI, BEL, WAL, OTB); F SPA(NC) H.
 Germany (Bernie Oaklyn): Builds F BER. Plays one short. A Kie-MUN; A Min-BUR;
 F DEN S F Ber-BAL; A PIC S A Min-BUR; F Ber-BAL; A RUH S A Min-BUR;
 Italy (Chris Edwards): NMR! Will play one short. F ION H; A Tri H (ret - ALB, VEN; OTB);
 A TYO H; A GRE H; F NAP H.
 Russia (Stephen Hutton): A MOS S A War-UKR; A War-UKR; F BOT-StP(sc).
 Turkey (Tom Swider): Builds A CON. A Rum-GAL; A Bul-Ser; A Sev S A Con-RUM;
 F BLA C A Con-RUM; A Con-RUM; F AEG S Italian A GRE.

The deadline for Fall 1903 is March 5, 1982. The standbys are: (1) France: Peter Ashley; (2) Italy: Al Hoffman.

Press:

Vienna: Either:

- (1) there's going to be an imminent I/T confrontation; or,
- (2) I'm going to get clobbered.

Constantinople: Sultan Swider sends an evil laugh towards Austria. "Your days are numbered!"

((Well, that answers Bob's question, at least...))

1980 KM, Winter 1902/Spring 1903.

THE TSAR IS AT BAY... NO SURPRISE THERE,
 HE'S ONLY ACHESON...

Austria (Barry Hickey): A BUD S A Vie-GAL; F Tri-VEN; A Vie-GAL.
 England (Peter Ashley): F HEL H, unordered; F NTH H, unordered; A YOR H, unordered;
 F NWY H, unordered; A Bud S A Vie (no such Bud, no such Vie);
 A Vie S A Bud (no such Vie, no such Bud); F Tri-Alb (no such Tri).
 France (David Carter): A Bur-BEL; A MAR-Pie; A Par-BUR; F Spa(sc)-WES;
 F LYO S F Spa(sc)-WES.
 Germany (Blair Cusack): F Bal ret - DEN. A Kie-HOL; A MIN S A BER-Sil; A BER-Sil;
 F DEN S English A NWY-Swe (no such order, no such Army).
 Italy (Al Hoffman): A TUS S A Tyo-PLE; A Tyo-PLE; F ION-Tyn; F TYN-Weg.
 Russia (Bob Acheson): F SEV S A RUM; F BAL S A SIL-Ber; A SIL-Ber; A Gal-Bud (ret - UKR,
 WAR, BOH, OTB); F SWE-Den; A RUM S A Gal-Bud.
 Turkey (Deane Spordakos): Builds F SMI. A Bul-Rum; A SER S F Aeg-GRE; F RAS S F Smy-AEG;
 F BLA S A Bul-Rum; F Aeg-GRE; F Smy-AEG.

The deadline for Fall 1903 is March 5, 1982.

Press:

St.-Petersburg: Oh, Oh, a little teeny error there.

Moscow: Looks like I'll have to bail you out again.

Sevastopol: Better save some for support for me.

Warsaw: The other three centers don't communicate with Warsaw at this present time.

Berlin: Death to the Communist swine!

Kiel: "Beat, beat, beat, beat..."

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(1980) KM press, continued from p. 9)

Munich: "...Beat the Bolsheviks now!"

Kiel: "Beat, beat, beat, beat..."

Munich: "Beat the Bolsheviks now!"

Berlin: "Rise up... come on!"

Kiel: "Beat, beat, beat, beat..." (arms raised, heading East)

Munich: "...Beat the Bolsheviks now!"

Berlin: "I hope you don't view this with bad taste..."

Constantinople and Monda: Qui Vive?

1979 AQ Commentary

(Eric Verheiden)

Fall 1908

France (David Carter): F Mid-ENG; F TUN S F Wes-TYN; A BUR-Par; F Nrg-NTH;
A YOR S F LOW; F EDI S F Nrg-NTH; F Wes-TYN; F PLE H; F LON S F Mid-ENG.

Germany (Ronald Brown): A Kle S Russian F Hol (ret - HOL, OTB; no such order).

Italy (Andy Lischett): A Nap ret - APU; F Smy ret - EAS. A APU-Nap; F EAS H.

Russia (Randolph Smyth): F Bar-NRG; A Rum-SER; A Tyc-VIE; A Sve-DEN; A BRE-Par;

F ENG-Bre (ret - TRI, WAL, PIC, OTB); F Hol-BEL; F Ska-NWY; A STL-MON;

A Mun-KIE; A Ukr-RUM; A BUD S A Rum-SER; A BER S A Mun-KIE;

F Nth S F Bar-Nrg (ret - SKA, HEL, HOL, OTB).

Turkey (Steve Berrigan): A TRI-Ser; F Ion-ADR; A VEN H; A ROM S A VEN; F NAP S A ROM;

F AEG S A Con-BUL; A Con-BUL; A SMY H.

1908 S.C. Chart:

France: Par, Mar, Spa, Por, Tun, Edi, Lpl, Lon, X's (8). Remove 1.

Germany: Kle, Hol? (0? 1?). Build 1 if A Kle ret - Hol unopposed. Otherwise, out.

Italy: Nap, Ser (0). Out.

Russia: Home, Rum, Bud, Vie, Mun, Bar, Hol?, Bel, Den, Sve, Nrg, Kle, Bre, Ser
(16? 17?). Build 5 to 2 depending on the Hol situation and on the retreats.
Room for 4.

Turkey: Ank, Con, Bul, Gre, Tri, Ven, Rom, Nap, Smy, X's (9). Build 1.

"Not much additional to say. Brown's resignation is effectively a no-op (no operation in computer-ese). Russia (Smyth) should probably win in 1909, certainly by the end of 1910. It depends on the German retreat (best of luck, Bern). ((Bern Sampson, the replacement for Brown)), the effectiveness of French resistance and whether Smyth snatches another center (like Trieste) from Turkey.

"Can analysts propose concessions?"

((No, but you certainly have said it often enough to give the players a hint...))

And now (drums, tatata) here comes a true hobby curiosity, an item not oft seen anywhere in the hobby anymore, an item submitted to me on April 4, 1980 and that's been sitting in my files (unthinkably!) for all that time. I am - of course - referring to an article by none other than the one and only Curtis Gibson:

THE OM-ED. AS PLAYER - CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All of us who read much on politics in the papers are familiar with the term "conflict of interest", & especially so if interested in judicial affairs. We frequently see where

(continued from p. 10)

a judge has "disqualified himself", i.e. declared himself either too involved in the affairs of one or both sides in a litigation to be able to maintain their confidence in his impartiality, or to be able to preserve the public's confidence in it.

The best judges realize that respect for the judiciary depends equally upon a judge's intelligence (or general competence) and public assurance of his untrammelled impartiality. While there is some danger of going too far and disqualifying oneself for potentials toward partiality that no one is to worry about, I have no recollection of reading any criticism of judges on that point, & in Diplomacy we've seen no such tendency.

Fortunately or not, my last game was in Graustark, where Ed. Boardman uses no guest GM and is not a player in any zone. This enables him to be one of the most impartial, & most confidence maintaining, of all GMs. In Diplomacy (which he reinforces by strict deadlines, & other means too). We can't expect all GMs to be equal to Boardman in reliability & efficiency of service, but they'd do well to use him as a standard in integrity & avoidance of conflict of interest.

Let's grant that GMs should be able to continue in their playing career, but only by never playing in their own zone, nor in any game with anyone who is playing in their zone, nor under any GM or Pbr. who is playing in their zone. These would be clear cases of conflict of interest, corruptive of the confidence in impartiality we, the hobby, have to build & uphold. So, if you're playing in any game into which comes a new player over whom you are GM, or pbr., you ought to immediately resign from that game (better warn its GM beforehand that you have a list, given, of so & soes you can't remain in the game with if they entered).

If it is not clear to someone why this conflict of interest is intolerable, I had better explain now. I've found some Diplomacy players claim they can't see it.

Let's say GM Bob has 1980// ((deleted)), with players A, B, C, D, E, F, & G in his zone ((deleted)). A & E are novices. In zone ((deleted)), Bob enters ((number of game deleted)) & finds he has Germany, and that Mr. A has France. He's a veteran, & likes to play Ger.-Fr. alliances. But now the fact he's GM-ed.-pbr. over Mr. A in another game queers the whole thing. If Bob is rather unsensitive to novice anxieties he can go ahead undeterred & play A with the same kind of Fr-G alliance propositions he usually uses. In that case A may react in any of several ways, but all will be influenced by the fact that he is keenly aware of how easily GM-Pbr Bob can ruin his ((deleted)) game if Bob turns hostile to him. The better he knows Bob or his reputation that better he'll be able to guess how much rough treatment he can risk deal out to him as a player in ((deleted)) without creating hostility, and also how much Bob would let hostility influence his GM-Pbr. conduct towards A. But he's surely going to wonder, at least. And he'll also wonder if Bob as pbr.-Ger. didn't realize his bid for Fr. alliance had at least some unseen weight, make a lot of extra weight, that a bid by Eng. would not have.

But then let's say Bob is, instead, quite sensitive about the situation, & feels it would be improper to make such a bid for A's alliance, wanting to avoid gaining any unfair advantage over others, like Eng., e.g., who have no GM leverage like him. In that case Bob is cramped, can't play his normal Fr-G alliance style, & maybe also doesn't dare to ally with Eng. lest that also outbids poor A due to A's dread of Bob's possible resentment should he find A has allied with Eng. apparently against him.

And that is all ignoring the equally pernicious effects on the other players in ((deleted)), should some of them know pro-G & pro-F are in GM-player relationship elsewhere. All who do know have to either suspect Ger will use that leverage on Fr or that Fr will be afraid to offend Ger, or some other less simple result.

Meanwhile, back in ((deleted)) the players that learn of the ((GM's name deleted)) game-start will begin to dread ((game number deleted)) reflex influence on ((game number deleted)). Will GM Bob now favour A in order to buy his cooperation in the other game? they wonder, & how much? And the very fact that he allows himself the advantage of that GM-player leverage in another zone's games makes them begin to doubt him, ethics & maybe imagine favoritism in ((game number deleted)) whether it's present or not. Some may assume that a Bob & A

alliance is going on in ((game number deleted once again)) even if entirely covered, & so feel they must favour A in ((game number deleted)) lest Bob start to rule against them. Or some will start to ally against A in ((game number deleted)) to punish for the unethical alliance they assume in ((game number deleted)).

Unfortunately or not, it is a fact that alliances are the main factor in Diplomacy. Unlike real history, in which nations often have triumphed by martial prowess, or by economic & technological advantages, in Dip all units are of equal strength, & all sup. ctrs. equally healthy. And in history God is impartial, while in Dip the GM is god and seldom impartial. Because God is impartial alliances are ineffective against moral & spiritual strength, eventually, given the total all-time result, harm & all. God is a compensative influence. In Dip the gods tend instead to be influences against justice instead of pro. So we had better work resolutely for the ideal of impartial GM-godhood, and eradicate even the unintentional causation of fear & favour.

((For those experiencing problems reading the above, Curt has been writing this way for a long time. Just substitute "g" for "ing", "t" for "the", and "tt" for "that", and etc. I suppose I could have edited the article, but then again that would have wasted a writing style that has come to be regarded as a curiosity.

((I have censored the article to a certain extent for I will not allow anyone to vilify any hobby personality in this 'zine, especially in cases where the said personality is now out of the hobby. I believe that the article is still as readable as it was originally.

((If the hobby were to follow Curt's advice (i.e., no GM should play in games with players also playing in his own 'zine), there is no doubt in my mind that the number of game-starts would decline rather dramatically. The hobby's GMs and publishers are amongst the most active players. Still, perhaps this wouldn't be such a bad situation after all, and perhaps it would be best if the result will be better ethics in the hobby.

((However, the view that GMs might be prepared to use their publisher "leverage" to force players into alliances they don't want - or that players may be so scared of their GMs that they will sucker-up to them in games they are in together - may be slightly paranoid. At the very least, it shows very little confidence in today's GMs (perhaps rightly so, but the sole GM Curtis mentions is hardly enough to support a generalization). In my experience, I have never seen these machinations at work in my correspondence. I have often been attacked by my players, and have often stabbed my GMs. If there are individual cases of unethical conduct by a GM in his games (i.e., an actual threat: "If you don't cooperate, I'll get down on you in my 'zine..."), then the hobby should deal with those particular cases of unethical behaviour alone. There is no need in my mind to penalize the totality for the actions of a small minority, if such actions indeed are extant. A good alternative would be to simply stay away from such GMs and publishers: there isn't even any pressing need for retaliatory/restrictive vigilante action.

((I guess it boils down to my own individual feelings about what I ought to do in various situations. My guideline is that I simply won't be influenced by the actions of others; my destiny is my own and I won't resign from any game just because one of my players has joined it. And if I'd like to join a game (e.g., because I like the GM and he has no other game openings), I won't stay away just because one of my players is already signed-up. This attitude permits me to save on game-fee money I'd be wasting if I resigned and to play under superior GMs instead of settling for crummier ones. Call me an unethical person if you will, and see if I care...))

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