

# Passchendaele 41

## NOBLESSE OBLIGE

Each period of hobby history has generally been characterized by a fad, a fashion, a theme. While this isn't to say that the periods featured only one theme each, they were nevertheless dominated by one major debate with other discussions coming up episodically. As if by magic, periods ended and others commenced (after a small transition) as the subject matter of their respective themes was exhausted and people found some other object of discussion. Examples of this period/theme typology are easy to come to mind: the early 1970's featured great talk about hobby organizations, the mid-seventies witnessed a virtual explosion of how-to-play articles, while later years were marked by increasing disenchantment with organizations and articles as the hobby braced itself for a seemingly unending torrent of fakes and hoaxes.

A new trend seems to have developed, though, as there has been some talk about responsibilities and obligations in the hobby. A handful of individuals started talking about this and "irresponsible" individuals with the turn of the decade, and this group has now enlarged to include a sizeable proportion of the hobby - with its staunchest allegiances coming from relatively new publishers.

This group upholds that everyone in the hobby should fulfill their obligations, and - they stress - that there ought to be sanctions against "irresponsible" persons. This translates into the expression of the following pivot themes:

- (1) GMs/publishers should publish a decent publication and GM games with a minimum of errors and delays. Above all, they should fold "responsibly", carefully reimbursing all outstanding debts (e.g., unused subscription credit) and helping in the relocation of their orphaned games if they must retire at all.
- (2) Players, on the other hand, also have obligations of their own. They don't have to be good: a sloppy player is not irresponsible, merely incompetent; his GMs will simply penalize him for every error he makes. If they must quit, though, players should be "responsible" enough to resign instead of dropping out of their games; and dropping out of games while joining others is certainly a no-no. Some people even go so far as to villify simple NMRs.

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This is the February 19, 1982 issue of Passchendaele, a 'zine published semi-weekly by François Guerrier, Box 32, Station "A", Ottawa, Ont. K1N 0T9 (1-613-234-1437). This is Thethausaurus Presses 123.

Subscriptions to this 'zine are available at 10/\$6.50. There are openings in Jana, a regDip game. Alain Martine, Steve Bergstrom, and David Davies are signed up. The game-fee is \$5.00.

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

The standby list includes Blair Cusack, Steve Berrigan, Bob Acheson, Barry Hickey, Alan Hoffman, David Carter, Deane Sperdakos, and Peter Ashley.



(continued from the front page)

Noblesse oblige - the concept that privilege and responsibility go hand in hand - is a slogan that could easily be coined to this attitude. GMs and players alike enjoy "privileges" in the hobby: GMs share in the immense joys of adjudicating games (and often, publishing a 'zine of their own) while most players get something out of the thrill of playing Diplomacy by mail. But they had better be responsible (as in not ruining other people's pleasure) though, or else their privileges should be withdrawn.

I can't really disagree with (1) and (2), no more than I can disagree with the privilege-responsibility link when in a "real" life context. Still, my resistance builds up when some people would have us apply "real life" values to a mere hobby. My basic philosophy is that GMs, publishers, and players are amateurs, not professionals, not parties to a legal contract. Yes, it's nice for a player to resign instead of dropping out of sight; yes, NMRs can destroy a game; and yes, it can be frustrating when a publisher sneaks away with your hard-earned money and leaves your games in a mess. No big deal about it, though: there's no earthshaking difference between resigning and dropping out (the original player is replaced in either case) and publishers rarely have substantial funds in custody so there's no big rip off when one occasionally strings the hobby along. It isn't the end of the world if a game is ruined or damaged by an "irresponsible" action or another: it's only a game.

I'm not condoning any of these actions, merely wondering if responsibility has its place in a hobby: insistence on high responsibility standards certainly doesn't seem to play a part in other collective hobbies I am in. Even in the face-to-face game, there is no expressed discontent when one or more players must leave: yet, their departure normally signals the often premature termination (=spoiling) of the game.

I guess I'm not so much reprobating the theory behind reprobating "irresponsible" individuals (which certainly has been around for a time, if only in embryonic form) as I am repulsed about the way the ideas are often expressed. Streams of public denunciation and outrage will rarely do much good, and will deter the victim/target from ever coming back to the hobby and making amends. This will usually make the outraged persons happy all right, but nothing truly constructive is accomplished. And there are names for people so ungracious as these...

Several of my friends have dropped out in the past and I have maintained our relationships, giving me some insight on how it works. Drop outs are not necessarily irresponsible: it's just that something's come up in their lives and Diplomacy took a low priority. They haven't got time to devote substantial thought to leaving the hobby conventionally. It's not that the person hasn't got the time to write a dozen short letters announcing his resignation from games, or that he hasn't got the money to refund outstanding subscriptions to his erstwhile 'zine: it's just that his thoughts and funds are tied to some other project. The intent to go respectably is there: but by the time they do have the capability to carry out their intentions it's normally too late and it won't do their image much good anyhow - besides the hate mail they received after dropping out is sure to help them rationalize their past actions and any feelings of guilt quite adequately.

I don't expect this editorial to do much good in the short run, perhaps so because serious arguments have been brought up - paradoxically - to admonish serious attitudes about "responsibility". Besides, those with such strong emotions about "irresponsible" persons aren't likely to be swayed easily by arguments of any kind, their position being already cast in concrete. Still, in the belief that the hobby works much alike a pendulum, I look forward to the day when people will (again) have more perspective on the matter and stop screaming needlessly. Solutions for irresponsibility and irresponsible persons probably lie in moderation and understanding.



PASSCHENDAELE LI.

1976CX, Fall 1920.

RUSSIA ACKNOWLEDGES ALLIED SUPREMACY IN GERMANY  
AS POWER STRUGGLE SHIFTS TO THE MEDITERRANEAN.

England (Steve Berrigan): F KIE S A BER; F Hal-NTH; F BAR S A STP; F BOF C A FIN-Lvn; A STP S A FIN-Lvn; F BAL C A DEN-Pr; A BER S A DEN-Pr; A DEN-Pr; A FIN-Lvn.  
France (Eric Kirchner): A Pie-TYO; A RUM S A MUN; F WES-Tyn; F TYN-Rom; F TUN S F WES-Tyn; A MUN S A Pie-TYO; F TUS-Rom; A BUR S A MUN.  
Italy (David Grabar, but see below): F ADR S A TRI; A VEN S A TRI; A TRI S A VEN.  
Russia (Stephen Hutton): A Tri ret - BUD. A Mun ret - BOH. A MOS S A LVN; A LVN S A PRU; A Tyo-VIE; A SER-Tri; F NAP S A Apu-ROM; F ION H; A Apu-ROM; F AEG S F ION; F ALB S A SER-Tri; A SIL S A PRU; A PRU S A SIL; A War-GAL; A BUD S A SER-Tri; A BOH S A Tyo-VIE.

The deadline for Winter 1920/Spring 1921 is April 2, 1982. David Grabar has resigned: his replacement will be David Carter. Eric Kirchner's orders were submitted by Steve Berrigan by proxy.

1920 S.C. Chart:

England: Home, Den, Swe, Nwy, StP, Kie, Bar (9). Even.  
France: Home, Por, Spa, Bel, Hol, Tun, Mun (9). Build one.  
Italy: Ven, Tri, ~~Nth~~, ~~Nap~~ (2). Remove one.  
Russia: Mos, War, Sev, Bud, Vie, Rum, Gre, Ser, Bul, Con, Ank, Smy, Rom, Nap, ~~Tri~~, ~~Nth~~ (14). Even.

1978Q, Fall 1912.

EUROPE CONSIDERS SURRENDER!

Austria (Al Hoffman): A VIE S A TYO-Boh; A TYO-Boh; A BUD-Gal.  
France (Bob Acheson): F Nap-ION; F Rom-NAP; F WES S F TYN; F TUN S F Nap-ION; F PIE H, unordered; A Tus-ROM; F MID H, unordered; F ENG-Bel; F LYO H, unordered.  
Germany (Randolph Smyth): F BAL H; A MOS S A War-UKR; F STP(NC) H; A BOH-Vie; A LVN S A MOS; A War-UKR; F BEL-Bug; A GAL S A BOH-Vie; A MUN S A SIL-Boh; A Pru-WAR; A SIL-Boh.  
Italy (Steve Colombo): A VEN S Austrian A TYO (no such order).  
Russia (Peter Ashley): A Sev-Rum (disbands).  
Turkey (Garry Fairbairn, but see below): A Ukr-SEV; F Aeg-GRE; A Alb-TRI; F Ion-ADR; A RUM S A Ukr-SEV; F EAS-Ion.

The deadline for Winter 1912/Spring 1913 is April 2, 1982. Garry Fairbairn has resigned - his replacement is Steve Berrigan. A France/Germany two-way draw has been proposed. Please vote with your orders, an abstention counting as a "yes" vote.

1912 S.C. Chart:

Austria: Vie, Bud, ~~Tri~~ (2). Remove one.  
France: Home, Spa, Por, Edi, Lpl, Lon, Tun, Nap, Rom (11). Build one.  
Germany: Home, Hol, Bel, Den, Swe, Nwy, StP, War, Mos (11). Even.  
Italy: Ven, ~~Nth~~ (1). Remove one.  
Russia: ~~Sev~~ (0). Out, and thanks, Peter.  
Turkey: Home, Bul, Gre, Ser, Rum, Sev, Tri (9). Build three as A Gal was annihilated.



1979HZ, Fall 1905.

DUH...

Austria (Deane Spardakas): A TRI S A Vie-TYO; A Vie-TYO; A SER S A RUM; A RUM S A SER.  
 England (David Grabar, but see below): F NAT-Mid; F YOR-Lon; F Nth S F YOR-Lon (ret - NRC,  
SKA, EDI, OTB); A Lpl-Wal (ret - GLY, EDI, OTB).  
 France (Ron MM Brown, but see below): A LON H; F Wal-LPL; F MID-Nat; F ENG S A LON;  
TRI S F Wal-LPL; A BEL S A BUR; A BUR S A BEL.  
 Germany (Andy Lischett): F SWE-NWY; A FIN S F SWE-NWY; F Den-NTH; A HOL H; A MUN H;  
A SEV S Austrian A RUM; A MOS S A SEV; F HEL S F Den-NTH; F SWI-WAR.  
 Italy (Al Hoffman): NMR! A APU H; A VEN H; A ALB H.  
 Turkey (Steve Hutton): A GRE-Ser; A BUL-Gre; F BLA-Rum; F AEG S A BUL-Gre; F TON-TUN.

The deadline for Winter 1905/Spring 1906 is April 2, 1982. Ron MM Brown has resigned, and his replacement will be David Carter; David Grabar has also resigned, and his will be Barry Hickey. The standby for Italy will be Bob Acheson.

1905 S.C. Chart:

Austria: Home, Ser, Rum (5). Build one as played one short.  
 England: Edi, StP, ~~Wol~~, ~~Lpl~~ (2). Remove two, or one, or even depending on the retreats.  
 France: Home, Spa, Por, Bel, Lon, Lpl (8). Build one.  
 Germany: Home, War, Mos, Sev, Den, Hol, Swe, Nwy (10). Build one.  
 Italy: Home, Tri (3). Even as played one short.  
 Turkey: Home, Bul, Gre, Rum (6). Build one.

1979KH, Winter 1907/Spring 1908.

PEACE MOVEMENT CHEERS AS GM REMOVES UNITS ALL OVER THE PLACE!

Austria (Andy Lischett): F GRE S A RUM-Bul; A TRI H; A SER S A RUM-Bul; A RUM-Bul;  
A TYO-Mun; A MUN-Ber.  
 England (Stephen Hutton): Builds A LON, F EDI. F Pa-SPA(SC); F Mid-BRE; F Tun-WES;  
F StP(nc) S A Lon-NWY (ret - BAR, OTB); A FIN S A Lon-NWY; F ENG S F Mid-BRE;  
A Hol S Austrian A MUN-Kie (no such order; ret - RUH, BEL, OTB); A Lon-NWY;  
F NTH C A Lon-NWY; F EDI S F NTH.  
 France (David Carter?): NMR! GM removes F Spa(sc). A PIE H, unordered.  
 Germany (Al Hoffman): No removal received; GM removes A Bre. A Mun ret - BER.  
F SWE-Fin; F DEN-Nth; A BER-Mun; A Bre-Pic (no such Bre); A MOS S A Lvn-STP;  
A Lvn-STP; F KIE S F Hel-HOL; F Hel-HOL.  
 Italy (Peter Ashley): A Vie-Tyo; F Nap-Rom (ret - ION, APU, OTB); F Mar-LYO.  
 Turkey (Bob Acheson): A BUL-Rum; F BLA S A BUL-Rum; A SEV S A BUL-Rum; F Tyri-NAP;  
F AEG-Bul(sc).

The deadline for Fall 1908 is April 2, 1982. The standby for France is Blair Cusack.

1980HL, Fall 1904.

GGM: Steve Berrigan, 1394 Highgate Rd., apt. 6, Ottawa, Ont. K2C 2Y6 (1-613-829-7289).

Austria (Barry Hickey): A Tri ret - Vie. F NAP H; A BUD-Tri; A Vie S A BUD-Tri.  
 England (Denial Falter): F ENG S F BEL; F BEL H; F NTH-Den; F STP(NC) H; F Nwy-SWE;  
F SKA S F Nwy-SWE.

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- France (Steve Colombo): F Tyn-ROM; F TUN-Ion; F Mid-BRE; A Mar-GAS; A SPA eats shaladas (H); A BUR H.
- Germany (Bob Acheson): A RUH-Bel; A HOL S A RUH-Bel; A MUN-Ruh; F Swa-Den (ret - BAI, BOT, FIN, OTB); F HEL S A HOL.
- Italy (Stephen Hutton): A TYO-Vie; A TRI S A TYO-Vie; F ADR S A TRI.
- Russia (Al Hoffman): A Ukr-WAR; A Sev farts in the direction of the piss coloured coast (H) (as Andy Lischett would say... but not in Sevastopol: ret - MOS, RUM, OTB).
- Turkey (Danial MacLellan): A GAL S A Rum-UKR; A Rum-UKR; A SER S Italian A TRI; F GRE S F Aeg-ION; F Aeg-ION; F BLA S A Arm-SEV; A Arm-SEV.

The deadline for Winter 1904/Spring 1905 is April 2, 1982.

1904 S.C. Chart:

- Austria: Vie, Bud, Nap, ~~Tri~~ (3). Even.
- England: Home, Bel, StP, Nwy, Swa, ~~Hol~~ (7). Builds one as A Hol was annihilated.
- France: Home, For, Spa, Tun, Rom (7). Build one.
- Germany: Home, Den, Hol, ~~Swa~~ (5). Even or build one depending on the retreat.
- Italy: Ven, Tri, ~~Rom~~, Nap (2). Remove one.
- Russia: War, Mos, Rum?, ~~StP~~ (?? 3?). Even or build one depending on the retreat.
- Turkey: Home, Bul, Ser, Gre, Sev, Rum? (?? 8?). Even or build one depending on the Russian retreat.

Press:

- Ber-Lon: Can we be friends again?
- Ber-Par: It's a good time of the year for tacksos.
- Ber-Con: It would do my poor little old heart good to watch the Wicked Witch of the East meeting the Wicked Witch of the North in StP.
- Ber-Lon: Just kidding, ignore the above. ((Which of the above? "Ber-Lon" or "Ber-Con"?))
- Berlin-Cuerrier: I couldn't write press releases and forget all about my favourite, competent, intelligent GM. How far will flattery and lies get me? ((Flattery will get you nowhere. You'll get further by stating simple facts, viz, that I am competent, intelligent, handsome, strong, and good.))

Prize Game Commentary

(Randolph Smyth)

Fall 1901.

- Austria (Stephen Hutton): A SER S A GAL-Rum; A GAL-Rum; F Alb-TRI.
- England (Paul Rauterberg): F Nrg-NWY; F NTH C A EDI-Hol; A EDI-Hol.
- France (Hugh Polley): F Mid-PCR; A BUR-Mum; A Mar-SPA.
- Germany (Bob Acheson): F Den-SWE; A KLE-Hol; A RUH-Mum.
- Italy (Stephen Bergstrom): NMR! A VEN H; A TYO H; F ION H.
- Russia (Danial Palter): F StP(sc)-BOT; F SEV S Turkish A Arm-RUM; A MOS S F SEV; A WAR-Gal.
- Turkey (Al Hoffman): F BLA C A Arm-RUM; A Arm-RUM; A BUL S A Arm-RUM.

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(continued from page 5)

1901 S.C. Chart:

Austria: Home, Ser (4). Build one.  
 England: Home, Nwy (4). Build one.  
 France: Home, Spa, For (5). Build two.  
 Germany: Home, Swe (4). Build one.  
 Italy: Home, (3) Even.  
 Russia: Home (4). Even.  
 Turkey: Home, Rum, Bul (5). Build two.  
 Neutrals: Den, Hol, Bel, Tur, Gre (5).

"I wonder if five neutrals after 1901 sets any kind of hobby record. Or the fact of Germany missing out on Bel, Hol, and Den while still building one and still seeming to be in fair shape? This may not hold for long, though: England's choice of Hol and France's of Mun indicates a failure in Berlin's negotiations, if not a full-fledged western alliance. Russia may put pressure on Swe next year, too, though his A War-Gal indicates that his land forces have other things on their mind. At the moment, though, Germany seems friendless - even the Italian A Tyo may have been headed for Mun.

"The Cinderella story is certainly Russia this Fall, though he pays for the Spring NMR by lacking a build. With a Turkish ally, he should be able to survive a long time - but can he do more unless his neighbours voluntarily give up Rum or/and Swe? He should not feel bound to Turkey if Al intends to keep Rum, since a desperate Austria should be promising him the moon. On the other hand, the Turk would be foolish to go out of his way for Russia as long as there is any question about whether Den will continue. Was last Spring's NMR a never-to-be-repeated occurrence, or are this Fall's moves a flash in the pan? Their correspondence will tell them, but the rest of us must wait.

"Italy is the question mark now. No reason to NMR, certainly - he had one of the more interesting, if not promising, positions after the Spring moves. Even without a build, he can hang on until next year with ease. France will be far more interested while Austria seems doomed to defend against the east. In fact, Italy's three units may do more than any others to change the game in the next few years, if the eastern and western alliances stick together.

"I'm 'alarmed', in a sense, that the Fall indication is for an E/F vs. R/T race across the central powers. If followed through, these games can become quite boring; but I'm pretty sure that a four-way draw won't suit anyone, so look for a shakeup sooner or later.

((Would suit me: the greater the draw and the less I pay out in prize money! But I don't really count, though...))

"Turkey is out in front just now, with an ally who is weak but still very useful; in excellent position against an enemy whom everyone else is tempted to attack as well; and with Greece a strong possibility for another center in 1902. France is in almost exactly the same situation, but he is only fielding a single unit against Germany and his relationship to England is still less certain. England isn't doing badly, but may get a stiff battle with Germany over the neutrals in the area - his Fall moves indicate a willingness to cooperate with Russia, though, so 1902 may see Anglo-Russian mutual support in Swe/Den. Considering that both are lagging behind their "allies" (?), it may be in both their interests to cooperate now, even if they come into conflict later. The big loser would be Germany: his diplomacy and Austria's must get into high gear.

"Next year, Turkey should manage at least one build, possibly two; ditto for France; Russia could be on the same path with some solid diplomacy. Italy will take Tur and probably another center from somebody, though he must look toward avoiding quick gains by E/F and/or R/T, which is more likely to crystallize those dangerous alliances. England should take one; Germany and Austria, alas, will do well to stay even without a diplomatic reversal."



GIMME A GUN, AND I'LL TURN INTO A COP

Everyone who

- (a) assaults a public officer or peace officer engaged in the execution of his duty, or a person acting in aid of such an officer;
- (b) assaults a person with intent to resist or prevent the lawful arrest or detention of himself or another person; or
- (c) assaults a person
  - (i) who is engaged in the lawful execution of a process against lands or goods or in making a lawful distress or seizure, or
  - (ii) with intent to rescue anything taken under a lawful process, distress or seizure,

is guilty of

- (d) an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for five years, or
- (e) an offence punishable on summary conviction."

-- Section 246(2) of the  
Criminal Code of Canada.

...And that's what might happen to you, folks, if you ever decided to inflict bodily harm on me (for whatever reason - any reason will do) and if you don't choose your timing properly, for I am now a member of an Ottawa area police force. In all truth, though, you'd probably get away with it with only a suspended sentence or a \$28. fine or both. Still...

This may be good news, though, for those of you who have been desperately trying to reach me by phone (with orders on deadline day, for instance) only to find that I wasn't home. Still, although you may get a hold of me at 1-613-746-3000 if there is no answer at my own number, I'd caution very strongly against relying on it to get your orders in on time; I have often been neither home nor at the office; and don't expect full attention even if you do reach me at the office. I'd be very busy.

My work may be divided into three parts, basically: C.P.I.C. operations, Operation Red Leaf, and records-keeping. C.P.I.C. (Canadian Police Information Center) is basically computer operation involving querying for information on known criminals and wanted persons (recent offenses, unpaid fines, outstanding warrants of committal, bench warrants, etc., address history, physical description, criminal record, you name it...) which serves as a basis for appropriate action against the individuals we pull over on the road or bring into the station; and it also involves programming new information into the system. Operation Red Leaf is an operation set up by the R.C.M.P. in cooperation with local Ottawa area local and provincial forces to seal off the capital area in the event of a major offense just committed against a V.I.P., such as kidnapping or murder. This involves some liaison work. Finally, record keeping does not require further explanation, except that it involves a lot of paper pushing.

So far I've liked the job: it involves enough paper work to keep me happy, the pay is half-decent, and the people I must work with have been pleasant. Just one complaint: the shift work. But then again I know I wouldn't like regular hours and prefer rotation. Another thing are the bloody vampiric taxes (I sort of miss being a student and benefiting from the government hand-outs and total tax exemption), but then again I'm not alone in



spitting out a bundle yearly, \$700. of which goes to finance the interest (alone) on the federal debt. Still, I'm seriously thinking of moving to the the patrol branch either within this or any other force (so expect a possible COA to some obscure place such as Yellowknife...): the pay is better and the work sounds as exciting (No, I'm not referring to the part where a constable on patrol (c.o.p., cop) must regularly fist-fight drunks and pukes - though I wouldn't mind that either...!).

It's about time I told you what I've been doing with my life: I've been working at my current employment for nearly nine months now!

OH, AREN'T WE OBSCENE TONIGHT DEPARTMENT

Parental Guidance Recommended for those under 18

I - as a general rule - refrain from printing sick jokes. This time, though, I think I'll do an exception:

Question: What were Hitler's last words before he committed suicide?

Answer: "Achsthaedt robst der arundst shuumel?!"  
meaning,  
"What's the matter with the Jews, can't they take a joke?!"

& & &

Two telephone linemen were repairing telephone lines in the desert in Saudi Arabia. One was on top of a post repairing the line while the second one was just sitting on a dune and watching. Suddenly, the employee on the ground yelled: "Ouch! I've just been bit by a rattlesnake!!!"

His partner asked, "Where did it bite you?"

"In the ass! I've been bit in the ass."

The first man didn't panic: he decided to phone a doctor.

"Hello?"

"Doctor, my friend here has just been bit by a rattlesnake. What can I do to save him?"

"Well, you must make a small X-shaped cut right on the bite, and then suck all the poison out, or your buddy is going to die."

"Thank you", the lineman said, and he hung up.

The victim was already twisting with pain, and in despair asked, "What did the doctor say? What did he say?"

His friend retorted: "The doctor said you were gonna die..."

& & &

Another version of the above story could be:

Some marines were undergoing training for jungle fighting in the Pacific. The instructor was explaining how to deal with rattlesnake bites: "If a rattlesnake bites your friend, you must make a small X-shaped cut right on the bite wound and suck all the poison out, or else he'll die. Any questions?"

One of the brighter trainees inquired: "...and what if you're bit on the cock?"

The reply: "Well, that's when you find out who your friends really are..."



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The reply: "Well, that's when you find out who your friends really are..."



Two men were having a real, meaningful conversation:

"Do you suck clean cocks?"

"No! Of course I don't!"

"Well, you dirty cock-sucker...!"

& & &

On her daily trek across the woods to her grand-ma's place, the Little Red Hood once met the Big Bad Wolf, who said: "I'm gonna eat you!"  
Red Hood's repartee: "Eat, eat, eat! Doesn't anybody fuck around here anymore?!"

Told you: sick...

### GAMESMASTER-RELATED ETHICS

(Bernard Oaklyn)

The Gamesmaster - that fool who hasn't enough to do in the normal course of life. A man with insufficient punishment in his life, warranting even more punishment for his sins within a gamezine.

A Gamesmaster is a person dedicated in the service of the Diplomacy game player, receiver of orders, adjudicator of conflicts, and rule enforcer.

When the gamesmaster accepts control of a game, he must first decide on the rules by which his game shall be played. After deciding on that doctrine he must then enforce it.

It is this very point that leads a gamesmaster into the age-old trap of being guilty of his own actions.

The 'Rulebook', published by Games Research, Inc., lists only those sets of rules by which the game is to be played, but leaves the door wide open to the problems of postal Diplomacy and the personal ethics of a gamesmaster.

Nevertheless, the Gamesmaster is a private entrepreneur, subserviant to none. And, it is within that role that the Gamesmaster operates. The doctrine that the Gamesmaster uses is his own. But, he must wield that authority with style and grace and fairness to all.

In discharging his duties, the Gamesmaster can be the fairest, and most ethical person in the industry, and yet, there will come a time when he will offend some of his players, or some of his readers.

A prime occurrence is where the gamesmaster fails to foresee everything that could possibly happen, a shortcoming due to his total experience and the experience of his masters before him!

In his attempts to anticipate the myriad of possibilities during the game, the Gamesmaster prepares his 'houserules', a listing of what he will do in the event of occurrences.

To begin with, generally speaking, the player does not get to see those house rules prior to signing up for the game. Standard practice seems to be lacking here, the Gamesmaster's first breach of ethics in his world of fairness to all.

The player sends for a sample of the gamezine. Then, he must either subscribe or play or forget it. Most players sign up for a game, as, that is what makes them a player in the first place. And, it is usually after the Gamesmaster receives the game fee that a set of so-called 'house rules' are in fact issued to the player. The player, thusly, is stuck with those rules, or faces personal embarrassment if he withdraws from a game that has already started.



However, it is really beside the point that a player gets to see the rules of play after the game roster has filled, since those rules are the same for all players, and therefore, fair.

Then comes the problem - an event that was not discussed in the game rules or 'house rules' comes into play.

Consider what transpires when a player misses his moves, and it is the game season, Spring 1901. Every player worth his salt knows that if a major power misses his moves during that season, his country is "shot".

And in that event, only certain countries gain unfair advantage over the other powers.

The gamesmaster feels the pain of knowing that the very survival of that power rests on his shoulders, alone.

Now, what's a guy to do. Shall he spend long distance money, not considered in the game fee, calling around the country trying to get a standby player to submit moves? Or, does he commit another breach of ethics and submit so-called 'neutral' orders himself, possibly listing anonymous standby player. He could also hold up the game another month while trying to get a message to the player of record, or obtain moves from somebody, somewhere.

But consider the players' feelings here - the opposing players, that is: his opinion is that a player is responsible for ordering his own country, and that missing his moves would not manifest itself in reward, i.e., someone else making his moves for him.

And, the ally of the player who misses his moves has still another story to tell, that being: "Why didn't you obtain standby moves?"

The player of record who misses his moves has even another gripe: "Why did you lose my orders?"

The gamesmaster can solve all of these problems and not be trapped into a breach of ethics if he would only have published just what he would do in the event that a player misses his moves during a given season. I don't mean just saying that neutral standby orders would be issued by the Gamesmaster; rather, that a specific set of orders would be followed in Spring 1901 in the event the player of record missed his moves.

Of course, to apply this for Fall 1901 would mean listing an exhaustive set of possible opening orders for each and every country, and then listing a set of Fall 1901 orders to be used with each set of Spring openings.

There lies the rub. How can a Gamesmaster, ethically speaking, issue a set of neutral orders - let me repeat the words 'neutral orders' - a set of non-hostile orders for every possible opening without listing every possible opening set of moves for the opponents' forces?

Of course he can prepare such a listing! But, then, that's too much work for him. He would rather chance that event happening and worry about a breach of ethics afterwards.

But, it comes up from time to time, and the screaming and shouting and shots heard around the world never stop after that.

Of course, after the player roster has been formed, the Gamesmaster can take it to vote, letting the players decide on what will be done in such event. But, try to get a consistent vote from seven different persons.

Nonetheless, the game must go on, or so some say. A Gamesmaster must publish what he will do in certain cases, including those cases he does not think of. After that, and an occurrence, the Gamesmaster must act within the limits of his personal ethics. And, the players must abide by his decision.



Players do not have to stay with a certain Gamesmaster. If they do not appreciate that Gamesmaster's ethics, they can move on to another in their never ending search for the optimum Gamesmaster whose ethics are beyond reproach. But, then, we all know that there does not exist such a fellow, and if there were, his ethics would satisfy us, but some other guy would be totally dissatisfied.

((I am led to wonder if your article and your title have any logical connection at all. Any GM who doesn't have a house rule on such an important matter as 1901 NMRs isn't unethical, merely incompetent: poor ethics have more to do with dishonesty and fraudulent behaviour than sloppiness - unless you can also establish that people are sloppy intentionally (a tall order for anyone). Although definitions of ethics tend to differ from person to person, my view is that even the absence of any house rules at all does not constitute a breach of ethics, but merely disorganization. Similarly, I don't see why listing a specific set of orders to be used in case of a 1901 NMR is the only ethical way to resolve the problem: a simple solution is to use none at all (there's no reason why the GM should be held responsible for ascertaining that no position will miss a move in 1901, regardless of the consequences) or to use orders submitted anonymously. The latter solution is only inconvenient when the GM lives in a fairly remote area with no local players to call upon for orders.

((I have two additional objections:

((1. "...the players must abide by his... (the GM's)... decision" is a statement that reveals a relatively authoritarian attitude. There is no reason why the players should keep their mouths shut if they are dissatisfied with any GM decision. It would seem that a better alternative is to attempt to resolve any problem with the GM, and if this does not prove satisfactory, refer the entire matter to a neutral third party (e.g., an ombudsman). No reason for the GM to object, certainly: if his decision was so wise and good, he should have enough confidence in his judgment to allow an appeal - any competent ombudsman will certainly come down on his side anyhow. If on the other hand he isn't sure he was correct, then he should be flexible enough to listen to a second opinion.

((2. I certainly agree that players are always free to go to other GMs if they are dissatisfied with their current one. However, your view that no GM is beyond reproach is a little simplistic. There is no question that most GMs will have to take flak at some point: it seems to come with the job. Nevertheless, constructive player criticism shouldn't be viewed as a problem: it's only when the complaints surge up again and again that the GM is in trouble.))

That's it for this issue. I am calling for the following standbys for the following positions:

1976GX - Italy: David Carter.  
 1979HZ - England: Barry Hickey.  
 - France: David Carter.  
 - Italy: Bob Acheson.

1978Q - Turkey: Stephen Berrigan.  
 1979KH - France: Blair Cusack.

And now I guess I'll turn the TV on and watch the CHiPs guys make their monkey see, monkey do imitations of real-life cops, and then switch channels and watch Wayne Gretzky score another dozen goals in the last 15 seconds of the third period. All in all, a boring evening in perspective... ZZZzzzz... Oh well, I guess it's better than watching Hart to Hart...



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I don't see why listing a specific set of words to be used in a game is the only ethical way to resolve the problem. A simple solution is to use none at all. There's no reason why the GM should be held responsible for announcing that no position will arise in a game, regardless of the consequences, or to use words arbitrarily. The latter solution is only inconvenient when the GM lives in a fairly remote area with no local players to call upon for orders.

I have two additional objections: (1) "...the players must abide by his... (the GM's)..." is a statement that reveals a relatively authoritarian attitude. There is no reason why the players should keep their mouths shut if they are dissatisfied with any GM decision. It would seem that a better alternative is to attempt to resolve any problem with the GM, and if this does not prove satisfactory, raise the entire matter to a neutral third party (e.g., an arbitrator). No reason for the GM to object, certainly. If the decision was so wise and good, he should have enough confidence in his own judgment to allow an appeal. If on the other hand he is not sure he was correct, then he should be flexible enough to allow an appeal. I certainly agree that players are always free to object, GM's to beyond are dissatisfied with their current one. However, your view that no GM is beyond reproach is a little simplistic. There is no question that most GM's will have to take a look at some point. It seems to me that the "nevertheless, notwithstanding" player of criticism shouldn't be viewed as a problem. It's only when the complainant says that the GM is to reproach.



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