

# Politesse

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The Dale City Negotional Nonwargaming Journal of Douglas  
Byrnes' Endgame Statementry and Paean to Baltimore Serving  
All Pollitry Since November 1982 November 1983  
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## The Truth about the New Membership Rates

Baltimore has many exiles, as near as Washington, as far as Heidelberg, who never cease reviling their native town with soft-tongued scurrility, whose hunger to be away from Baltimore and obsession with the town create an appetite for Baltimore in the stranger. Baltimore is multifarious; has the

attractive dirt of a fishing town, the nightmare horizons of a great industrial town; it is very old, sordid, traditional, and proud. It despises no sort of traffic that can be conceived of; it is not fanatical; it has a self-sufficiency as towns of old Europe, even in the hideous yellow waste bays full of abandoned shacks, the mazy sameness of its mean, white-stepped streets, its traffic in pleasures both respectable and disreputable.

--Christina Stead  
The Man Who Loved Children

## Greetings

Many pubbers crassly refer to their less responsive subbers as "dead wood." Politesse deploras such a...such a lack of...well, politesse. We prefer to visualize our readers as wheat and chaff. A glass cannot be half full if it is not also half empty. How would you know if you were happy if a tree never fell in the forest on your silver lining dashing your cloud with no one around to hear it and making you sad? Nevertheless, many of you are not reading this. We intend to put a stop to such activity immediately. Thus, on this, our first anniversary, we present an updated PoliStatus Report and Deadwood Trimming Threat--

Those checked apply to you.

\_\_\_\_\_ Your last contribution was \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ issues. Last issue cost \$47.00 to print and \$14.00 to mail. Printing photos cost much more. We value your patronage.

\_\_\_\_\_ Free sample. Wanna fully adjustable PoliSub? You pick the sub rate and the number of issues. Great deal, huh? And these dunning "PoliStatus Reports" only come out once a year in November.

\_\_\_\_\_ Are you still out there? Haven't heard from you in a while so this is your last issue but there's still time to subscribe!! See above.

\_\_\_\_\_ We trade or "mutual sub."

You are a store or a gaming club or a flagship or something like that. Have you been publicizing us?

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Politesse carries announcements of face-to-face Diplomacy games and other stuff.  
Ed Wrobel, 3932 North Forestdale Avenue, Dale City, VA 22193 (703) 670-3489  
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# Maggie's Fine

The Society of Bibliophilic Gourmands (SOBIG) met at the northern Virginia home of Tina Brundage on November 5 to discuss The Man Who Loved Children by Christina Stead. It was an intimate gathering, with Mary Chao, Maggie Loebach and Ed Wrobel joining the hostess.

Stead is one of those expatriate Australians whom few have read and still fewer enjoyed. (The introduction is entitled "An Unread Book.") One SOBIGer, who shall remain anonymous, confessed that he simply could not read the novel and refused to attend! A second completed the 500+ pages with effort. I, for one, found something endearing about Sam Pollit, the highly eccentric, decidedly childlike, overly-optimistic man who loved children. Mrs. Chao and Ms. Loebach were in violent disagreement, condemning poor Sam (he styles himself thus) as an impractical, selfish, bullying loafer. I must admit that his childish gibbering, e.g., "Sunday-Funday" and "Looloo...Dotta det up, Loogoobrious, make da tea," becomes tiring (at times Stead feels compelled to insert a parenthetical translation) and Sam is probably largely responsible for his family's fall into poverty. But I refuse to blame him for the suicide of Henny Pollit, his shrewish spouse. Henny, of the Baltimore Pollits, is Sam's second wife. The beloved first, mother of the author's persona, Louie, is dead many years. Some might feel that Sam's peculiar personality has driven Henny to shrewery but it is clear that the source of her dissatisfaction is too-great expectations. While Sam revels in his domestic life and his career as a civil servant, Henny scorns her children, her husband and her neighbors. She was born to greater things.

As for Sam, he cannot believe darling daughter Louie's confession of her part in the suicide. Evil is only absolute and abstract for Sam. His daughter has already surpassed him. She struggles; he does not. She feels hard and strong; he mouths formulas. What appeals to me in Sam is his fairy-tale mind. There is too-little Sam in most of us. Conversely, there is too much Sam in Sam. His schemes are grossly impractical. He can never see outside himself, despite his oft-articulated desire for justice and universal brotherhood.

Louie is really our window on Pollitry. She is not a narrator but we know that Stead's background parallels Louie's. In the end it is Louie who comes of age- Louie who lives the crisis- Louie who makes the choice. Her resolve to poison her bickering parents is undertaken for the sake of her numerous siblings. She bears little malice; within the framework of her father's mishmash of high morals, such an act is almost directed. Her step-mother sees the poison and, in despair, gulps it down. Her gesture is not heroic. It is simply an end to much misery: her own, Sam's...and certain readers.

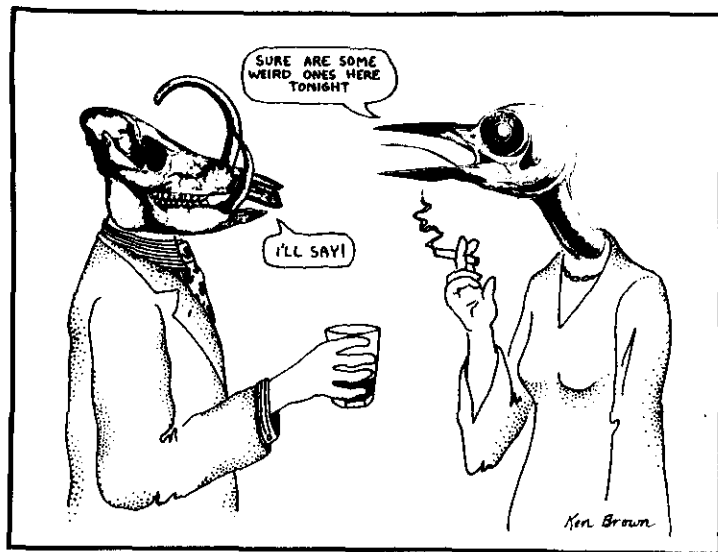
--EW

When her style is at its worst you have the illusion that, once set in motion, it can rattle along indefinitely, narrating the events of a picaresque, Pollit-y universe with an indiscriminating vivacity that matches theirs.

--Randall Jarrell

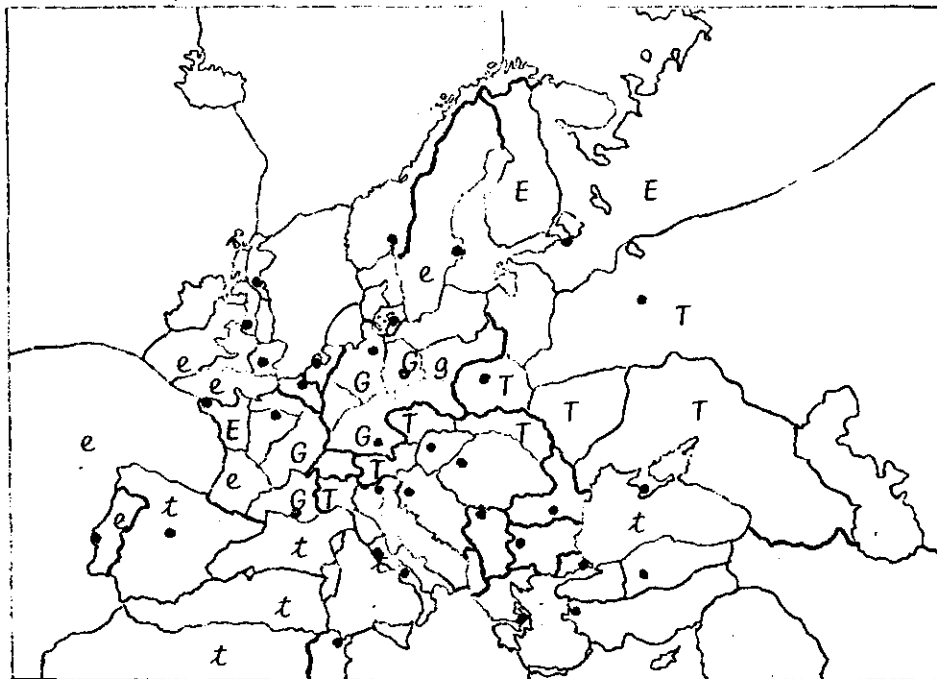
# HadaGame

Myers Game 10/83H, our first Halloween game, was held 10/29/83 at the Poli-Abode in Dale City. This game was dubbed BooCon by Diplomacy World. It was not a convention by any stretch of the imagination but the costumes were great. We were particularly impressed by Cannon's sword, Dancause's axe and Fahrmeier's double masquerade-as Richard Rogers as a Mexican bandit. You would suspect that these people are out to deceive others and wreak destruction or something. Your editor was the only player attired as a gentleman and look what happened to him. But that's another story- read on.



|                             | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07  | 08 | 09  | 10  |
|-----------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|-----|-----|
| A (Warner, The Hobo)        | 5  | 5  | 3  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 1   | 1  | 1   | 0   |
| E (Dancause, A Lumberjack)  | 5  | 5  | 7  | 7  | 9  | 9  | 10  | 10 | 9   | 9   |
| F (Cannon, The Assassin)    | 5  | 5  | 4  | 1  | 0  |    |     |    |     |     |
| G (Fahrmeier, El Bandito)   | 5  | 5  | 6  | 6  | 6  | 7* | 7*  | 7* | 7   | 7   |
| I (Wrobel, A Diplomat)      | 3  | 3  | 2  | 1  | 0  |    |     |    |     |     |
| R (Peel, Son of the Desert) | 5  | 6  | 6  | 8  | 8  | 7  | 2   | 1  | 0   |     |
| T (Byrnes, The Graduate)    | 5  | 5  | 6  | 9  | 10 | 10 | 14* | 15 | 17* | 18* |

The Triumph of Islam, Fall 1910



Denmark was neutral in '01. Note that in '05 Aus went down to 1 center and Fra and Ita were eliminated. Rus went from 7 to 2 in '07, perhaps an unlucky coincidence. Tur went from 6 to 9 and from 10 to 14 quickly. Asterisks indicate the power played short. This was the first textbook win in a Myers Game. There was a concession in the only Fredericksburg Myers Game.



Left, the boys threaten to dismember my brand new Canadian Dip set if I take any more photos

Below, Warner (with pumpkin), Fahrmeier (a.k.a. Richard Rogers), Dancause and Byrnes



Above, Wrobel, Cannon and Peel

Right, Dancause shows Fahrmeier how he proposes to stab France

...the placid, high-minded heavens of Pollitry were rolled up and there was a landscape to the far end of the sky- an antique, fertile yeoman's country, where, in the shelter of other customs and tribal gods, people believing themselves to be the children of God stuck to their occupations, gave praise and accompanied their humblest deeds with the thunder of mystic song.

- The Man Who Loved Children  
Christina Stead

### Endgame Thunder

England: Statement of the Foreign Office Concerning the Recent War

This office wishes to state emphatically that, Russian propaganda to the contrary, the Turkish success was not simply the result of the Anglo-German alliance. That alliance was a logical expression of common interests produced by a common heritage and was one of the saner developments of the war. What profited the Turks was a combination of their own shrewdness and the miscalculations of others, ourselves included.

Once war became inevitable, it was clear that German and English interests were similar. Spheres of influence were devised; Holland and Denmark for them and Norway for us. France was allowed to develop peacefully into the Mediterranean; but Russia was to be challenged in Sweden. The Russians pushed into the Baltic instead and Germany took Sweden. The next year or two was spent in a contest of will between Germany and Russia with our activity limited to supporting Germany in Scandinavia. At the end of 1902 a truce was arranged which allowed Russia into Sweden in return for a general disengagement. His Majesty's forces remained in Norway.

The vision of Anglo-German unity coupled with the apparent tolerance towards France of the two powers had resulted in the appearance of the Eastern European RAT alliance (rattus europa orientalis). The Italians, fighting with their traditional valiant ineffectiveness, were soon being shredded between the two millstones. With an understanding reached in the North, English interests became focused on France and the Mediterranean. Sympathy for Italy was at its annual peak in London (the opera season was just starting) and the French had built two more fleets and were playing fast and loose with our oceans. It was time for action in the west. After consultations with Berlin, it was decided that the objectives of relieving the pressure on Italy and recovering control of the oceans could best be served by relieving France of the burden of its central government and this the Anglo-German alliance set out to do.

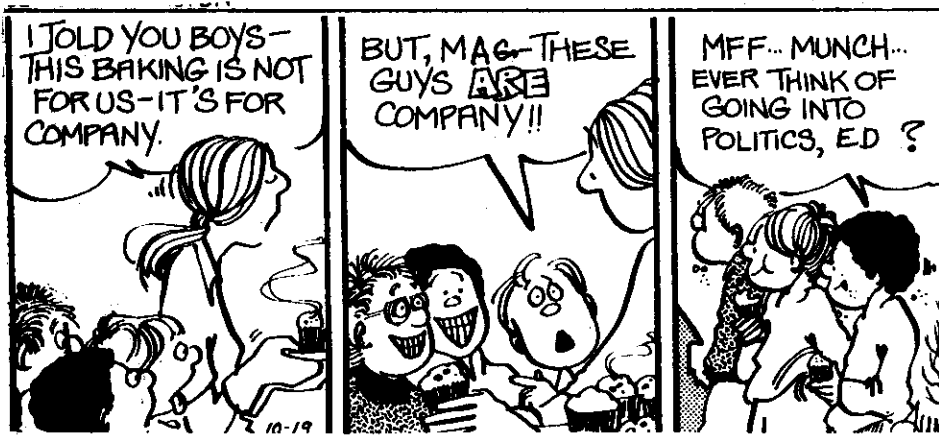
Much to our regret, the French were unbelievably stubborn over the affair. Unable to stand against the combined forces of England and Germany, nonetheless they stubbornly refused to accept the inevitable. A French fleet actually succeeded in slipping into Liverpool where they won over the populace with large distributions of wine, maintaining themselves for some time in this fashion. Another fleet was able to hide in Naples for a while, the Italians having taken Marseilles. In the end, however, they were reduced to a single cannon on a ship in the Gulf of Lyon subsisting on the largesse of Liverpoolians. A final offer of survival in return for cooperation was rejected and the Royal Navy at last restored order to Liverpool.

A major result of the French campaign was the disappearance of the RAT alliance. The Austrian leader was reported to have a large interest in Russian affairs. (Other reports say he was formerly a pastry cook at Demel's- but this may stem from the Austrian tradition of topping their uniform hats with whipped cream- the officers also get cherries.) In any case, the Russians were soon conducting their affairs in Vienna, Budapest and neighboring cities. The Austrians were now reduced to an army at large in Central Europe ("schlepping" is the correct term) and a bewildered contingent in Venice. During the excitement, the Turks supported the Russians and also

slowly and inexorably moved west, establishing a naval presence in the Ionian Sea. With the French campaign winding down, the next step was to establish the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean before the Turks arrived.

At this time, the Italians were maintaining a precarious existence between Rome and Marseilles with an army in the latter and a fleet in the Gulf of Lyon. The French, not yet reduced, held the Western Mediterranean. It was arranged that the Royal Navy would take the Western Med with the assistance of the Italian fleet. Before this movement could be executed, however, the Austrian army in Venice awoke to its impending dissolution at the hands of the Turks and rushed to Rome in a body to receive absolution. In doing so, they used up the supplies intended for the Italian fleet and the latter was forced to disband thus depriving the Royal Navy of its expected support. The French fleet moved to the Gulf of Lyon leaving the way clear for the Turk to move west. The Turks moved quickly and repeatedly outguessed the Admiralty so that English forces never succeeded in passing Gibraltar. This was to be a major factor in the subsequent Turkish victory. During this time, the Germans took Marseilles, thus ending the Italian role in the conflict. The Austrian army disappeared to the north, leaving the Turks to sift thru the wrumble of Italy.

Meanwhile, friction had been building up in the North once more. His majesty's forces in Norway were being repeatedly harrassed by Russian sailors from Sweden, and were happy to support a German offensive against Sweden. The Germans chose, however, to back off only to find the Russians attacking Berlin. Thus it fell to His Majesty's forces to lead the assault in Scandinavia while the Germans fought to save their homeland. After some hard fighting, St. Petersburg was taken and finally Moscow was held briefly also; but by then the situation was markedly different from when the drive started.



It will not have escaped readers of this narrative that the dominant powers in Europe at this point were England and Germany on the one hand and Turkey and Russia on the other. Naturally each side had attempted to split the opposing alliance many times. As Turkey continued to grow larger and larger, more urgent attempts were made to detach Russia, but since Russia insisted on the price, the alliances

remained undisturbed. Talks with the Turks were pleasanter, but seemingly no more productive. With the apparent stalemate in the west, the latter took on more substance. The objective of a Turkish move against Russia joined to the Scandinavian offensive became realisable and was, in fact, achieved; but again under much different

circumstances than intended.

The Turks had continued to build up forces in the Mediterranean, despite the apparent stalemate there. A sudden thrust caught the Admiralty off balance and the Turks were suddenly in the Atlantic. The Royal Navy responded strongly and soon drove the Turks from our ocean, but in so doing lost Spain and were never able to retake it. At this point, while His Majesty's forces were taking St. Petersburg, the Turks thrust suddenly and deeply into Russian territory. The Russians roared angrily and collapsed. Almost overnight 7 armies and fleets were reduced to 2 armies guarding Moscow and Warsaw. Now perhaps all of Europe could join against the Turk.

It was not to be. The Russians refused to cooperate and it was necessary for His Majesty's forces to take Moscow to save it from the Turks. At the same time, the one remaining Austrian army- surviving on Roman (and Turkish) charity- "schlepped" into Livonia. The Turks then retook Moscow with support from both Russia and Austria. In return, the Turks next destroyed the remaining Russian army and occupied Rome, cutting Austria's source of supply. The Austrian army survived long enough to take Moscow with English help; but were unable to resist the Turkish counterattack and disbanded (the survivors were absorbed into a comic opera troupe in Nizhnii Novgorod). Anglo-German forces were unable to retake Moscow and with no gains possible elsewhere, it was agreed to call it a war.

In conclusion, the reason for the Turkish success (aside from their own abilities) was largely the failure of the Royal Navy to seize the Western Mediterranean when they had to. Had we succeeded in so doing, all other factors would not have been so important.

- PD

They told her something about their lives, which were not cataclysmic, such as Pollitry lived, but lives lived in neat corpuscles, lives which only looked out, squinty-eyed, askance, dubious, through two fishy eyes.

- TMWLC, CS

Russia

What began with such promise, ultimately became, in the words of Kaiser Ed, "constipated" -- at least for us central powers. If only England had stabbed Germany; if only I hadn't believed Germany's offer of support into Sweden; if only I had supported Austria into Munich; if only I had Air Forces! O Temporas, O Mores...

- KP

Italy

Upon first glance it would appear that I had little success in this game. I alienated Austria-Hungary before Spring '01, failed to persuade Russia or Turkey to ally with me, could not prevent the French intrusion into the Med, lost Venice and did not recapture it, never built a unit during the entire game, was reduced to puppetry by 3:00 o'clock and eliminated shortly thereafter. Upon closer scrutiny, however, it is clear that I had no success whatsoever.

- EW

...besides which, she was so used to what she called the "Pollit buzzing" that she could bear it when the day was fine.

- TMWLC, CS

## Turkey

My opening diplomacy was directed at securing an alliance with Russia. Peel agreed in principle but rejected my suggestion of exchanging Sevastopol for Constantinople with the sequence F Sev-Bla-Con, A Smy-Arm-Sev. We never agreed on opening moves, so, expecting the worst, I ordered Ank-Bla in S '01. Ken had trustingly ordered Sev-Rum. Not wanting to lose my best ally, I apologized and retreated the fleet. I was lucky Ken did not take offense, for our alliance was to grow and prosper in the coming seasons.

I was even luckier when Warner and Wrobel were unable to organize an A/I alliance. In F '01 they each asked me for help against the other. I agreed to help them, took Greece, and built fleets.

The F '01 orders revealed an EFG alliance, so Ken and I decided to accept Dick's proposal of a RAT. The triple alliances were short-lived as treachery swept the board in '02. England and Germany joined in a vicious knifing of France, causing the frog to embark swiftly on a completely justified jihad against England. I became the beneficiary of this French policy, receiving timely support into the Tyrrhenian and Western Med. Encouraged by the dissolution of the Western triple, Peel immediately joined Fahrmeier in an assault on my new-found Austrian ally. I begged them to stop but they kept advancing on the innocent Professor Warner. His position was crumbling, so I helped in the only way I could. I took Serbia and Trieste- so his enemies would not get them- and defended his last center, Rome, until the end of the game.

The situation boiled down to R/T vs. E/G. I was battling Dancause at Gibraltar while Ken was desperately trying to hold St. Pete and Warsaw. Attempts to get Germany to stab England failed, so I decided it was time to pay Russia back for the earlier attack on my Austrian friend.

In '07 I hit Russia for 4 centers, and outguessed Dancause to gain the Mid-Atlantic. My F Mid eventually found a home in Spain, and in S '10 I took Moscow for my 18th center.

Thanks to Ed Wrobel for hosting the game, and to all the players for contributing (wittingly or un) to my first Diplomacy win.

- DB

## Doug Byrnes: The Man and the Myth

Once in a great while a gamester emerges who dwarfs his competition, a man with just the right combination of size, speed, luck and absence of moral character. Such a man is Douglas P. Byrnes, winner of last month's Rail Baron doubleheader and the holder of the first textbook Diplomacy win in a Myers Number game. On first glance Byrnes does not strike one as a winner. Stooped, balding and overweight, with a certain dullness in his eyes, and lacking the ability to pronounce words of greater than two syllables, Byrnes would not stand out in a crowd of boring middle-class Americans. Yet it may be that his appearance is his most potent weapon. Competitors naturally underestimate Byrnes and discover only too late that they have fallen into yet another machiavellian trap. Doug Byrnes- grand strategist, skilled negotiator, clever clone!!





## GOTALLETTER

Our sole letter this month is from renowned gamemaster and publisher, Bruce "Brux" Linsey. As a fiercely independent journal which eschews pagination and declines to issue numbers to its issues, we would be above reproof should we refuse to print Mr. Linsey's missive. Not only does he arrogantly demand that his letter be published ("For Print" is emblazoned across the top of the sheet), he enumerates his paragraphs. Apparently Mr. Linsey believes he is in a position to dictate his whims outside the games he masters in his obese publication, the Voice of Doom (VD). Such is not the case. Politesse kowtows to no Hobby Personality [other than Rod Walker, Larry Peery, Dick Martin and Eric Kane]. Further, we despair of the bourgeois, calculating, obsessive-compulsive nature of those who enumerate their ideas. Surely their notions are not so difficult to recall that one must label, viz., "Silly Idea #1," "Outlandish Construct #2," "Concept-unrelated-to-reality #3"? We think not. It is a matter of lack of style, an inexcusable substitution for proper prose transition. Surely an individual possessing Mr. Linsey's considerable discursive talent is capable of constructing a simple transitional sentence. However, whatever our own opinion of Mr. Linsey's badly-written letter, we find it utterly unambiguous and, despite his blatant effort to dominate and enumerate simultaneously, offer it herewith for our readers' amusement. -EW

Dear Ed-

I've been meaning to drop you a line since your last issue, and the current one provides all the more reason to write. Just to set the record straight on some points regarding the double-orders situation:

1) You have erred in saying that I used my ruling as an example of fairness. Naturally, I think the way I ruled was "fair," or I wouldn't have adjudicated the orders as I did. What I did hold up as an example of fairness was the fact that I went to an ombudsman rather than throwing out your protest altogether. If you know of a fairer way that I could have resolved the matter, could you please reveal it?

2) In the example Caruso gave, where a unit receives the same order twice, I would allow the order to succeed.

3) When I polled on the matter, 35 Doomies said they would have ruled as I did and only 26 said they would have ruled with you. The 35 included several GMs. So I am far from alone in this situation.

4) Replying to Caruso, you seem to feel that implied orders should be accepted also. (E.g. A Nap S A Tus-Rom should be considered to imply A Tus-Rom, even if the latter is not written separately.) All I can say is - WATCHOUT! Once again, I am far from the only GM around who would not accept an order that you think is valid.

Keep up the good work with Politesse - you're a very entertaining writer!  
Best Brux

Yes, you chose the ombudsman. I guess that's fair, but why rub my nose in it to build your already insufferably huge ego to ever greater dimensions? But at that time you didn't have any politesse - that must have been the reason. I'm surprised that 26 of your own people voted against you. With such a large dissenting vote, doesn't it make you think twice about taking the radical action of throwing out a player's orders? Berch thinks it's awful for a player to refuse to accept an ombudsman's ruling; I think it's awful to throw out a player's orders; and you think it's awful to think. You want to put on your blinders, plug in your software and tune out reality. You damn me for having a hair out of place - and that's after I tried to comb it doomee-wise. However, you have impeccable taste in writers. You are the best and only brux, thank berch!

## THE HISTORY OF POLITESSE: PART ONE

A couple of years ago I was, in the words of the insidious Dick Martin, a "marginal face-to-face player from Baltimore," trying to assemble 6 other interested parties on any given date for a game of Diplomacy. It was a monumental task. Sometimes we would be short one player. Other times a player would leave in the middle of the game. Occasionally it would be impossible to come close to a quorum. The unfortunate thing about Diplomacy is that it's not the same with fewer than 7 players. There are variants and there are other games but...

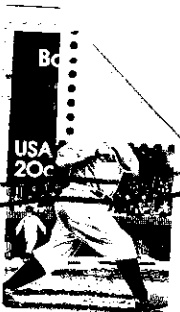
I began photo-copying gamestart announcements and sending them out rather than making phone calls but ended up calling anyway. When I moved to Virginia I asked Mark Berch for his list of D.C. area players and sent out about a dozen letters generally inquiring if anyone wanted to play Dip. There were maybe two responses-most didn't bother to answer- but that mailing eventually led to a game in Fredericksburg organized by Dave Lilley (another marginal f2f player). There I met Dick Warner of Mary Washington College who later invited me to work with him on MaryCon. About that time I began Politesse as a 4 page newsletter with poor repro quality. I expected that a regular monthly gaming announcement with reports of completed games going out to 50 to 70 gamers would attract 6 others for a game. And what do you know- most of the time it does!

There's been substantial support from the postal hobby in the form of subs, trades, encouragement, publicity and names of potential players. Although additional material has been added, the zine lives to make it easier for you (and me) to play Diplomacy and other multiplayer games.

We have no December game to announce but perhaps that's understandable with the holidays and such pending. Anyone out there want to host a January game? Dip, variant Dip, Civilization, Rail Baron, Illuminati, etc.? Recruit players through Politesse! Next issue out in late December. If our plans to attend ByrneCon 11/25 to 11/27 bear fruit, we will have a complete report of that gathering (destined to become the greatest reconciliation in the history of Dipdom or a street brawl). Coming also will be a report on the 11/19 Global Dip game hosted by Ken Peel- and maybe a startling announcement as well.

Bad news for Teledip enthusiasts- there don't seem to be 7 of you in the D.C. area. We have a "maybe" for January but this project may be shelved, barring an outpouring of some sort. Good news for Linsey toadies. Brux will host a little dipcon starting after Christmas and continuing at the New Year's Eve ByrneCon.

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Baltimore loves other things much worse, a real underworld of vice...a wicked convention which has imposed itself on a silly world, full of drinking, card-playing and racing. --CS, TMWLC