

# RETALIATION

July 13, 1979 or thereabouts

#2

Well, I'm back, and this time I even have a title with me. Suppose that makes me a real publisher now doesn't it? Not until a game starts? OK, then read on.

Game name: First

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There it is, my first game start. NOW I'm for real! Please excuse the spastic spacing, my typewriter is not in the best of health. Yes, that is my brother playing Italy, but I guarantee that the only advantage he'll have will be never missing a move. I'm too young to ruin this fabulous career in publishing by doing something underhanded. If too many people complain, I'll have to do something. Write him and discover that he is a real being before saying anything, please. Please remember to put your name and country on your orders, which are due for Spring 1901 by 6:00 PM, August 10. Seven players are still needed for the second game, so there are plenty of openings. Only one free game to a customer. Number on the envelope is the last issue signed up for. Pay up!

## Origins '79

Remember last issue when I promised to give you the scoop on Origins this year? Well, I always keep my promises (usually). Having been to the two Origins conventions previous to this one, I can happily say that pre-con organization was the best yet. (Those clowns at SPI still owe me \$8 from Origins '77....) I registered late and still got confirmation back within ten days. Rooms were all booked up, but none of my tournaments were closed out (Risk, Diplomacy, Chivalry & Sorcery). When I ran into some difficulty with my event tickets, the problem was cleared up almost instantly. Once the various tournaments got started up, though, the usual delays cropped up: absent minded GM's and not enough time allotted to pre-game preparations. My final round of C&S ran from 11 PM Saturday until 6:30 AM Sunday! The Diplomacy tournament was well organized and well run throughout, but I have several complaints about their system for scoring. In years past, a system of scoring was used where players were rated relative to others who played the same country in that round. This led to narrow wins, open games, and generally enjoyable play.

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Mark Berch, publisher of Diplomacy Digest, devised the scoring system, and I must give him credit: "theoretically" it is a fine system. Mark and several others researched 50 recent postal games to determine the number of centers the winner had at the end of 1907 and 1908, and predicated the victory conditions on that. The lucky number turned out to be 12. Thus, they got the brilliant idea ~~to that if they changed~~ the victory conditions to 12 centers at the end of 1907 (the end of the game). What they didn't count on was the drastic change in tactics the players would resort to. In round 1, yours truly was part of a three way draw. My game long ally and I were going for a two way draw the entire time, ran out of time and had to settle for a three way. Either of us could have taken three centers from the other with a minimum of difficulty during the later stages and gained a "tournament victory". All my friends called me foolish for refusing an easy win, but I would not stoop to playing "tournament Diplomacy" (at least not yet). The second round went by uneventfully enough, I stayed alive as part of a four way draw. The third round comes along, and, Lo and Behold! your GM made top board (one of the winners failed to show until too late). When I learned how some of the others came to be there, I wanted to leave. My egotistical side took over, however, and I couldn't resist. Mr. Berch arranged to get all the players comments (if possible) on the course of the game, so we had this character running around with a tape recorder the entire time. He must have burned up a lot of energy. I'd definitely like to read his report on the game. Unfortunately, he was hoping for a classic and got a dud! One of my opponents was there because he won a coin flip, and another won because his competition in the game he won was a woman and the other players didn't want to lose to her. They stalled her and gave him the necessary centers with no struggle. In my opinion (and I have plenty of 'em), that is not Diplomacy and I refuse to play that way. (If you disagree, come on over to my house, I just got a brand new Iron Maiden and my collection of thumb-screws is the best on the East Coast.) It hurts the game and takes all the fun out of it. ANYWAY, the game turned out to be a six way draw. There were no alliances the entire game, and I was wiped out because I tried to start something while depending on an "ally" for help. MISTAKE! I'm tired of crying, does anybody else have anything to say?

I'm still learning how to type!

#### THE BERCH SYSTEM

Game value: 60 points  
Center value: .01 points each  
Victory: 12 centers in Fall 1907, 1 center margin  
Division of points: 60 divided by # of survivors  
All 60 go to a single winner  
20 each to double winners

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Centers were used merely as a form of tie breaker. It looks like a good system at first glance, but I don't thing the designers ever play-tested it to find out how it worked. They may have then thought twice. I do believe in playing to win, but this system encourages playing not to lose. Your comments are welcome.

Remember, orders are welcome in my hot little hands by August 10. Press releases will also be printed to help me fill up all this space, please! Also, a friend has expressed interest in GMing a PBM D & D campaign, any victims willing?