

Seitenstetten

#1

Issue Premiere



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Seitenstetten is yet another insanely deranged postal Diplomacy browse run under the anachronistic aegis of Grendel Press, P.O. Box 8342, San Diego, California 92102, U.S.A. *Sub rate is ten for a buck. For game openings, read the issue.

Background. In 1963, John Boardman started Graustark and the first postal Diplomacy game, right? 1963-A, a five-man game, right?

WRONG! A postal Diplomacy game began in the summer of 1962 in a newsletter since named, but not then called, Mongo. This is to be confused with a newsletter called Mongo issued by the present editor for a while last year and since incorporated into Costaguana; the more recent edition was Volume II.

Volume I - as it has since been dubbed by those who know - ran for five issues. Actually, they were not issues, except the last two, and they were in no real sense Dipzines as we understand the term.

What happened was this. In 1961-2 a group of people including the present writer engaged in a number of in-person Dip games both on and off the campus of San Diego State College (now California State University, San Diego). At the close of the school term in June 1962 the group fanned out widely, and for lack of seven to play in person I organized a postal game. The first 'issue' of Mongo was a carbon-copy letter asking the proposed players if they were still interested in playing. 'Issue' two was another carbon letter stating the countries, players and addresses, and setting a deadline. 'Issue' three was carbon copy but was not in letter form; instead it was a listing of Spring 1901 moves, following the format of the sample game in the Rulebook, and an announcement of the Fall 1901 deadline. (Press in those days was in the form of Treaties, Resolutions, Proclamations, etc., sent by each player individually to whomever he liked; none was printed in the 'magazine'.) Issue Four was on ditto copy and listed the Fall 1901 moves and a deadline for builds; Issue Five was also ditto and announced the termination of the game for lack of interest (two had resigned, two missed builds, one asked to cancel, and that did it).

For years these precious items were presumed long lost. However, about 2 years ago Rod Walker ran into an old friend who had been a player in the game, and said friend just happened to have

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damn near everything he had ever owned in his life - the packrat type, you dig? - including the so-called Mongo issues. (Lacking the first, the are-you-interested? letter, which has truly gone from the earth.) Rod conned the guy out of them, and he and I have been planning to reissue them ever since. We never did, and now Rod has gone inactive. So, while I cannot talk him out of parting with the actual physical evidence, I can use it for reference to bring you

Game 1962-A:

The original players were: Conrad von Metzke, playing Austria and (in effect) Gamesmastering and publishing; Rod Walker as England; Leonard Garland as France; Frank N. Setchell as Germany; Lewis D. Perry as Italy - he's the packrat; Jon N. Sutherland as Russia; and Charles Duke Kelley as Turkey.

Who are these people? Well, von Metzke and Walker you know. Garland has been active in postal Dip until last year, no longer has any interest in the game but still lives about a mile from me in San Diego - he's a professional student. Setchell is now an attorney in New Hampshire. Perry is an Episcopal priest, no idea where. Sutherland is now Dr. Jon Sutherland, assistant professor of history back where it all began - CSU San Diego. And Kelley is now Lt.-Col. Charles D. Kelley at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio. None of the last four has ever been diplomacy-minded since the collapse of this first-ever game, and except for Kelley I haven't seen them since 1962.

In other words, the only player still active and interested is your humble servant, von Metzke.

In those early days the concept of a Gamesmaster had not occurred to us. I 'adjudicated' and printed the moves principally because I had the easiest access to a duplicator, and also because it was my idea. But, in common with the old Diplomat games of Eric Just and Bob Foster, I played in my own gamesmastering affair.

The proposition now:

How about we finish this game up? It's almost like a new game, considering that only S/F 1901 is in the bag and the builds remain to be made - after ten years! It will be conducted by its original Gamesmaster, who - in keeping with modern policy - will not play. Therefore, we need seven players. There will be no fees.

Game publication will follow common present-day systems, not the old style as shown in the rulebook sample game. Standard press will be allowed. In order to circumvent difficulties, the 1971 rules will be used. In short, it will be little different from a brand new game, but with 1901 pre-played.

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It is admitted that the idea of such a game being the 'completion of a rediscovered orphan game gem', as Rod once advertised it, is ludicrous. If and when finished, this will be 1962-A in a purely technical sense, and for that reason it seems worth doing; but for practical purposes it is much like a new game.

If anyone is interested in playing it the old way, there's no real reason we couldn't. The changes involved from modern systems - we could use any or all of them - are:

1. 1961 rulebook. No house rules until something comes up.
2. Gamesmaster is also a player.
3. Publishing of moves, when possible, on a round-robin basis. This is the way it had been intended, and awaited only the other players finding reproduction facilities and/or regular addresses.
4. Press in the old manner, i.e. issued individually by the players and sent to whomever they chose.

Those who apply for entry to the game - I will run the setup - should specify which of the above they care to use, if any. If it is decided to use Item 3, any subscription monies collected by me will be refunded and a system will be worked out, if possible, to supply copies to interested parties. I will continue to play Austria if Item Two is agreed to.

And now - the 1901 moves already played.

Spring 1901:

A: a vie-tri. a bud-ser. f tri-alb.
E: f lon-ec. f edi-nth. a lvp-yor.
F: f bre-ec. a mar-spa. a par-gas.
G: a ber-kie. a mun-ruh. f kie-holl.
I: a ven-tyo. a rom-tus. f nap-ion.
R: a war-gal. a mos-stp. f sev-black. f stp sc - fin.
T: a con-bul. a smy (h). f ank-bla.

Fall 1901:

A: a tri (h). a ser (s) tri. f alb-gre.
E: f lon-ec. a yor (h). f nth-nwy.
F: a spa-por. a gas-spa. f bre-ec.
G: a kie-den. f holl-bel. a ruh (s) holl-bel.
I: a tyo-tri. a ven (s) tyo-tri. f ion-tun.
R: a gal-rum. f sev-bla. a stp-mos. f fin-swe.
T: a bul(h). a smy (h). f ank-bla.

Austria, France, Germany, and Russia each build two. England, Italy and Turkey each build one.

The only freaky thing about the moves was an item which I changed in the rehash above. The Austrian army Trieste was actually ordered 'a tri-ven.' In those days we had misread the rulebook and believed

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that a unit ordered to move could still be supported defensively if it failed to make its move. I am not going to 'correct' the 'error' because the intent was obviously to hold Trieste. (I should know; I made the move.) However, in the continuation of the game the rules will be read correctly, i.e. units ordered to move cannot be supported in defense. (The San Diego dip players continued to play by this misreading of the rules until 1985, when 'mainstream' postal Dippy arrived in town and we found out the truth.)

In the course of this game I will include reprints of the original issues (2 thru 5), short sketches of 1962-era Diplomacy in San Diego, pieces on San Diego's entry into the mainstream, and other such nostalgia that only Rod Walker is around to remember. If round-robin publishing takes over this will be occasional; if I do all the printing it will be regular.

So who wants to play?

Other GM's please spread the word....