

Another issue of Ed Wrobel's favorite zine...

THE VOICE OF DOOM

#92

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by BRUK

Just kidding with that lead-in, folks. It is entirely possible that somewhere out there is a zine Ed Wrobel likes better than VD.

Well, maybe VD is never late, but sometimes VD wishes are. Happy belated VD to all you sweethearts out there; I neglected to mention it last issue.

Down to business. In case I don't get to print his letter this time, James Woodson, PO Box 18645, Corpus Christi, TX 78418 wants me to advertise that he is willing to trade info regarding the Quote contest. He sez he already has 18 of them. Speaking of which, those of you who read this issue carefully might find a few clues hidden here and there. Then again, you might not...

Seems I had trouble getting the wording right on the Dippy Spaces Quiz, question #5. The question should read: "From which land space is it impossible for an English unit to retreat as the result of a Russian-supported Turkish attack in 1904?". Sea spaces will not be accepted as answers, and dammit, that's supposed to be army, not unit. You get the idea. As I type this, I have no entries for either contest.

Gary Coughlan, 4614 Martha Cole Lane, Memphis, TN 38118 publishes the very entertaining Europa Express and he has just come out with a very special FREE issue, describing his trip to Europe. Thanks to Gary for an excellent job. EE is, in my opinion, the very best zine in the hobby. If you haven't seen it, you're going to die.

Back to the topic of contests...I have received more than one protest that Steve Knight should have won Doomie of the Year. Folks, it's not a serious contest. I just sorta choose the combination best essay/most deserving candidate, but the idea of the whole thing is to have fun dumping on your favorite Doomie; not to win. So shaddup and enjoy it, hey?

Anyone who skips the RICEL press this issue is a masochist.

And one of my readers writes, "Sorry, I didn't find 'Computers Don't Argue' funny at all. 'Picking Your Nose,' however, was the funniest I've ever read...but don't tell anyone I said that." OK, I won't, but I would like to know if there are any more closet cases out there; people who actually liked that article. Anonymity guaranteed on request.

The Voice of Doom is a journal of postal Diplomacy published every now and then by Bruce Liney, 73 Ashuelot St., Apt. 3, Dalton, MA 01226. Phone (413) 684-0567. Subs are 10 issues for \$5.00. Standbys are wanted. There are no game openings.

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The deadline for all games contained herein is March 16, 1984.

How to Coat Your Moves with Warm Fuzzies

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Nancy Poppine was the first to tell us that a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down. In real life, we frequently make use of this principle when dealing with others. Invariably, we try to put our actions in the best possible light whenever necessary. Whether we do this in order to clarify a genuine misunderstanding, or to hide a truth that we don't want known; it is human nature to make oneself appear as good as possible to outsiders, especially when we have reasons to value their opinions.

In a sense, we in the Diplomacy hobby are all naughty little children caught with our hands in the cookie jar, since this sort of behavior manifests itself over the Diplomacy board as well. In some cases, a player's moves tell the whole story; the all-out attack cannot be hidden behind a screen of sweet-talk any more than the fully supportive moves of a genuine ally need such explanation. But one of the beautiful aspects of the game of Diplomacy is that, in a well-played game, most moves fall somewhere in the continuum between these two extremes. Thus, despite the fact that tactics will ultimately determine the outcome of the game, the negotiations surrounding them are often as well since identical sets of orders can be placed in juxtapositions radically different from one another, depending upon the diplomatic skills and strategies of the players submitting them.

I'm whipping lines my well-worn theoretical rut again, dammit. How about one of my infamous examples, taken from the recently-concluded Swedish Roundabout? My France was part of a Western Triple alliance and early on, I was trying to set up Bob Oauch's Italy for the quick kill. Randolph Smyth, playing Germany, suggested the Fall '01 order of F Spa(nc). Tactically, this move may have been the best one available, but my diplomatic skills not being what they aren't, I doubt my ability to convince Italy of my benevolent intentions after making such a move. Since I wanted to buy an extra season of non-aggression in the Mediterranean, and since I wasn't sure of either of my allies at this point, I decided to avoid tipping my hand and moved F Mid-Spa(nc) instead.

All well and good, but then back came a letter from Oauch wondering why I had chosen the south coast rather than the north. After all, F Spa(nc) has far more potential against Italy than does F Spa(nc), or for that matter, F Por. So Bob's question was reasonable and had to be answered. Certainly, the move was ambiguous (in terms of my plans for the unit, that is), and so it had to be portrayed in the best possible light. I thought long and hard about my reply before writing it. If I failed to convince Bob that the move was not hostile, I could lose a significant advantage in my upcoming war with Italy. I started by telling him that no agreements had been made regarding how I was to take Spain, so that my move was not a stab. Why the south coast? Well, there had been no reason not to. Anything F Spa(nc) could do, F Mid-Spa(nc) could do as well or better. The fleet was better able to defend against Italy should he attack me. I said (it's easy to keep a straight face postally!), and if this unhappy circumstance did not come to pass, it could be used for my (supposed) upcoming attack on England. In fact, it was better disguised by being on the south coast, I told Bob, since I could now explain it away to the Englishmen as anti-Italian!

Well, the explanations worked even though I think Bob was still suspicious, and I stabbed him successfully in '02. But the point is that my story was bought because it was believable. F Mid-Spa(nc) could very well have preceded an attack on England, and backed up with my claims to that effect, it was sold as such.

Enough of the example, though. Whether you are trying to set up a Big Lie or pacify someone whom you do not plan to betray, it pays to back up your moves with negotiations that portray them in as innocuous a manner as you can. Warm fuzzies, if you will. The same moves that might normally provoke an attack of retaliation just may be tolerated when accompanied by a good explanation, true or not. (And low-profile moves are of course such easier to pass off in this manner, so in general save your real surprises for the Big Stab -- but that's another article.)

This is just one more way in which negotiation and diplomacy can affect the course of the game -- a helpful hint from the ol' BRUXER, to be used against your opponents. But never, never against me.

SPAIN FINALLY FAILS; ENGLAND GROWS TO FIVE!

Summer 1911

ITALY: A Mar r PIE

Fall 1911

ENGLAND (Ansoff): F Nth-LON, F Nwy-SWE, F NAT-NWT

FRANCE (Williams): A Spa S A Mar (d; r Gas, OTB), F POR S A Spa, A MAR S A Spa, F ENG-Mid, A BUR S A Mar

GERMANY (Wittmond): F EDI-Nwg, F Swe-DOF, F Kie-BAL, A Bel-RUH, A MUN S A SIL (OTM), A SIL-Boh, A RER S A Mun, A LVN-War

ITALY (Howerton): A TYO-Mid, A PIE-War, A VIE S TURKISH A Gal-Boh (NSO), F NAP H, F Lyo-SPA(ac), F MID-Por

RUSSIA (Beyerlein): A MOS-Lvn, A PRU-SIL, A WAR-Lvn

TURKEY (Leritte): F WES S ITALIAN F Lyo-Spa(ac), F NAF-Mid, F Tyr-LYO, A ARM H, A BOH S ITALIAN A Tyo-Mid, A GAL S RUSSIAN A War (OTM), F Con-BLA, A Rum-UKR (A SEV S)

Supply Center Chart:

ENGLAND: Lvp, Nwy, StP, LON, SWE	5, build 2 (room for 1)
FRANCE: Par, Bre, MAR, Por, Ypp, Jpp	4, remove 1
GERMANY: Home, Don, Hol, Bel, Jpp , Edi	7, remove 1
ITALY: Ven, Rom, NAP, Gra, Trl, Vie, Wpp , SPA	7, build 1
RUSSIA: Mos, War, Jpp	2, remove 1
TURKEY: Home, Bul, Ser, Bud, Rum, Wpp , Tun, SEV	9, even

Game Notes: The F/G/T draw proposed last season did not pass. Proposed now is an (illegal) concession to Austria. Please do not vote by next deadline.

Press:

KAISER to PROF. LERITTE: Well, I'll say this for you, George -- you sure do stick to the game plan.

ENGLAND to BRUK: I understand that your house rules require you to edit my orders, but kindly leave my press alone. If I had intended to say "Rattray Head had been passed," I would have done so. When you are aboard a moving ship, you appear to be stationary and the land appears to move. Impressionistic, get it?

BRUK to ENGLAND: Sorry 'bout that, ol' chap!

FRANCE to TURKEY: Please accept my most cordial thanks for your kind and useful warning concerning Germany harboring future designs upon my territory. I have also suffered from apprehension about Germany's ambitions. If possible, I would appreciate it if you would enlighten me in one additional area. WHAT IN HELL DO YOU EXPECT ME TO DO ABOUT IT WITH YOU AND ITALY CRAWLING UP MY ASS LIKE A CHEAP PAIR OF UNDERWEAR?

CHRISTIANA ((via ENGLAND)): The snow still lay heavy on the banks of the fjord, but the breeze which ruffled the Royal Standard at the main truck carried a hint of Spring. A bitter Spring, thought the Captain as he stood before the ranks by the gangway. And more bitter still for the portly, greying man beside him, his nondescript clothing at odds with the panoply of uniforms.

"He is late," remarked the grey man quietly.

"Quite so, your Majesty," said the Captain.

On the gangway platform, a lookout tensed. "Two boats approaching from astern Sir!"

((ORION continues next page))

ORION (continued)

The Marines on the quarterdeck presented arms, and the boatswain's pipe skirled. A slight scrape sounded as the first boat came alongside. The lookout rendered a salute, faced inboard, and bawled out "His Royal Highness, the King of Norway!"

The two kings clasped hands at the head of the gangway, walked together across the quarterdeck, and disappeared into the wardroom passageway.

"You may pipe 'stand easy,' Mr. Bristow," said the Captain. "The guard will remain at their posts."

"Very good sir."

The Captain walked forward, and mounted the ladders to the bridge. The wan light sprinkled on the fjord, flashing on the ripples around the outriggered torpedo nets and on the brightwork of the other ships in company. It was hard to believe that the Royal Marines were fighting desperately for the Swedish border passes a few miles away, or that a German squadron lay in the Firth of Forth. That England's ruin should be so inevitable; that it should have been caused by the march of armies in Southern Europe, so far away. England was prostrate, France was doomed, and a dark cloud of domination would soon blot out the sun.

The Captain thought of the meeting in the wardroom below. What, he wondered, was there left to discuss?



P E G A S U S

1982Z

RUSSIA SURGES; GERMANY AND TURKEY HANG ON AGAIN!

Summer 1910

AUSTRIA: NMR! F Smy r OTB

GERMANY: A Ser r ALE

Fall 1910

AUSTRIA (Huak): A PIE-Tyo, A Ser-Tri (d; r Alb. OTB), A VEN S A Ser-Tri,
A Con-BUL (F AEG S, A GRE S), F Eas-Smy (NSU)

ENGLAND (Halverstadt?): NMR! F For U (ann), F WAL U, F LVP U, F EDI U

FRANCE (Chatfield): F Spa(sc)-FOR (F MID S), F Wes-TYR, A Bre-PIC, A BUR-Ruh,
A PAR-Bur (A BEL S), F Eng-LON

GERMANY (MacFarlane): A Alb-TRI

RUSSIA (Meisner): A TYO-Ven, A VIE S GERMAN A Alb-Tri, A Rum-SER (A BUD S),
A Bul-Con (d; r Rum, OTB), A SMY S A Bul-Con, F HLA-Bul(sc),
A ARM S A Smy, A MUN-Bur (A RUH S), F Hlg-HOL, F Nwy-NIH

TURKEY (Punches): F ANK-Bla

Supply Center Chart:

AUSTRIA:	Gre , Ven , Rom , Nap , Con , BUL	6, even
ENGLAND:	Edi, Den , LVP	3, even
FRANCE:	Home, Spa, FOR, Tum, Lon, Bel, YFB	8, even
GERMANY:	TRI	1, even
RUSSIA:	Home, Ber, Swe, Kie, Nwy, Mun, Rum, Vie, SMY , SER, BUD, HOL	15, build 3
TURKEY:	Ank	1, even

Game Notes: A concession to Russia has been proposed. Please vote by next deadline.

The French army in Burgundy is indirectly supported by the supported attack coming from Paris, thereby making it a beleaguered garrison, and it is not dislodged by Russia. Would Mark Frush, 1013 Milton St., Apt. #304, Madison, WI 53715 please stand by for England? Jake, please note that 3 NMRs ((PEGASUS continues next page)) within 5 game years is a drop in VD...

PEGASUS (continued)

Press:

ALB ((via GERMANY)): Banzai!
 ALB to LON ((via GERMANY)): Hang in there, Jake. I'll be there as soon as I can build some fleets.
 ANKARA to LONDON: I believe that this season is my swan song -- maybe I'll do better with my innovative campaign in Pres Politics -- sure!!
 ANKARA to DECLINING POWER AUSTRIA: Thanks for the help, too bad we didn't cooperate soon -- we could have stopped him back then.
 ANKARA to GM: Thanks.
 BRUX to ANKARA: Hey! Come back here! You ain't done yet!

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Q U A S A R

1982AE

WINTER? SNOW PROBLEM. IT'S AN ICE SEASON...

Winter 1909

AUSTRIA (Orloff): even
 ENGLAND (Glaspy): Remove F Bot
 FRANCE (Burd): even
 GERMANY (Howerton): Build A BER
 ITALY (Kettman): Remove A Rom
 TURKEY (Sweeney): Build A ANK

Game Notes: The A/E/F/T draw proposal did not pass. The seasons in this game were separated by player request. All moves and press currently on file will be valid unless superceded. Spring 1910 only will be played at the next deadline.

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R I G E L

1983K

STILL ANOTHER DORING WINTER (HINT! HINT!), BUT THIS PRESS WAR IS HOT ENOUGH TO MELT ALL THE SNOW FROM INDIANA TO IDAHO!

Winter 1904

AUSTRIA (Knight): Remove A Tus, F Apu
 ENGLAND (Sweeney): even (out)
 FRANCE (Hare): even
 GERMANY (Heintzman): Build A BER, A KIE
 ITALY (Ellis): Build A NAP
 RUSSIA (Kleiman): even
 TURKEY (Reilly): Build F ANK

Game Notes: The seasons were once again separated by player request. (Guys, is this really necessary?...) Press designated as printable for the winter only appears on the following pages, except that I've also included the English press since he's now out of the game. Bob, you're welcome to continue writing press in RIGEL, if that's what turns your crank! Moves and press on file will be valid at the next deadline unless superceded. Spring 1905 only will be played then.

I offer the following proposal to the players in this game: that press will be printed on the deadline submitted regardless of season separations. Such a change in procedure is OK under my houserules, if all six of you vote yes (NVR = no).
 ((RIGEL continues next page))

RIGEL (continued)

Press:

SWEENEY to WORLD: "God, these German ships stink," I mutter under my breath. "Isn't it bad enough being defeated in England!?! Traded like a third-string baseball player to Germany and soon (sob) to Russia! I can't stand the cold, I tell you!" I (and my four Hun (rifle-armed) guards) move to the balcony -- I pull my cape closer about me as the chill wind bites into me. My (probably) last view of England. A corporal approaches. "Sir, you are to report to von Heintzman!" he says. I give him credit, his contempt for me is barely audible.

I am escorted to the castle where von Heintzman awaits me. They haven't even allowed me to change out of my pink cashmere PJs yet (with purple hearts, of course). I eagerly await a chance to remove myself from the wind.

Von Heintzman sits behind his hand-carved Welsh desk -- he offers me a chair. I, of course, sit.

"Welcome, welcome to my 'little' ship," says Nelson. "Call me Nelson and make yourself at home." I notice a large variety of small arms on the wall -- displayed for my view. They were mostly English -- of course. A body lies on a table in the corner -- swagged in a shroud.

"Don't plan anything -- my sources say that you are good with pistols and no weapon is loaded in these chambers. Guards -- you may withdraw for a time." I warily regard Nelson; I decide to continue a pretense of insanity. "Two," I cry, "What did Germany get that France thought he would?"

"Come now, Bob -- I may call you Bob, can't I?" he smiles. "I knew for a certainty that you aren't mad -- merely a pretense to fool the unwary. So let's be adults, shall we?"

"Yes, you may call me Bob." I now realize Nelson "Poodle" Heintzman is not easily fooled. "Masterful play, but then I expected it. I hoped that you would stab and destroy France before you killed me."

"Then, I would be fearful of you and France joining against me. My Russian ally and I have made an agreement. England, the North Sea and France are mine. Scandinavia, the Northern seas and you are theirs." Nelson laughs. "Russia's press has fallen far below his 'standard' since we cut off his lines of communication with you. Tell me -- is it true? Do you really write all his press?"

"Sweeney, Robert G. Jr., '20376745026', Prime Minister what walks and talks and deceives himself?" I cleverly reply. "What?" says Nelson. "What? The French believe in his own safety."

"Why have you brought me here?" I whimper. "Why, why, why?"

"For this!" he says as he steps over the shrouded body, "This is for you!"

I'm stunned! It's Ty!

"You see," he says, as I recover from the shock. "I control Ty in a unique manner. This is actually a radio-controlled clone robot."

"You have made my control of France disappear." He sits down. "The Ministry will take over the government and I fear I must attack my former ally."

"I am very displeased." His hand reaches under his coat, the smile disappears from his face, I stare into a gold-plated .38 revolver. The muzzle reminds me of a large canyon. BANG!

The guards rush in and stare in horror as Nelson and I embrace over the clone's dead body.

"You're right," says Nelson, "it is fun to shoot Ty! (Now, about that next Jeopardy spoof...)"

We walk from his cabin, the sun is smiling, I feel tranquil. A kindred spirit! I wish him well...

BRUX to SWEENEY: Well, they took you out of the real war, but they haven't taken you out of the Press War!

((RIGEL continues next page))

RIGEL (continued)

ANKARA: Ring...Ring...Ring...

ANKARA: Hello?

MOSCOW: May I speak to Rich Reilly, please?

ANKARA: This is him.

MOSCOW: Rich, this is Dave. I was calling to discuss the next Jeopardy press release.

ANKARA: Oh?

MOSCOW: Yea, your last version wasn't too bad, but...well, I think you need to work on the next one a little harder.

ANKARA: Oh...yes...well, I'm sorry about that, Dave, but...you know, there's a lot of call for my press these days and...

MOSCOW: From Germany and France, I suppose...

ANKARA: Yes, the "Black Forest" press is mine.

MOSCOW: That was very good. How much did he pay you for it?

ANKARA: Welllll...you know I'm not doing it for the money, Dave. I mean, I'm LOSING money on this business, what with the cost of envelopes and stamps and typing paper, and...

MOSCOW: Yea, I know \$50.00 doesn't go too far nowadays. Would \$100.00 help you think of better things?

ANKARA: Yea, Dave, I think that it might help quite a bit. Nelson paid only \$75.00 for "Black Forest". For a hundred I oughta come up with something REALLY nice.

MOSCOW: You mean REILLY nice? Ha.

ANKARA: Dave, you should leave the jokes to me as well.

MOSCOW: Sorry, Rich.

ANKARA: Yes, \$100.00 should give you a good jump in the press war.

MOSCOW: What...how much...You know, Rich, I'd just like to win the press war.

ANKARA: Interesting thought, Dave. I understand that you computer people make lots of money.

MOSCOW: Not that much, Rich.

ANKARA: Well, surely more than students.

MOSCOW: I guess you did say you were losing money.

ANKARA: I get by.

MOSCOW: How much for the world's greatest press release?

ANKARA: The world's greatest?

MOSCOW: Well, at least one that won't be surpassed in 1984.

ANKARA: Well, Dave, that's a hard thing to put a price on...

MOSCOW: \$500.00?

ANKARA: You did say the greatest?

MOSCOW: \$750.00?

ANKARA: Why don't you try a more "rounded" figure?

MOSCOW: \$1000.00. I'll have to get a loan...

ANKARA: It'd be worth it...

MOSCOW: Oh, I know. But going for all the marbles in one shot won't allow me any little one-liners. Or my chess move.

ANKARA: Tell you what I'm going to do, Dave. Since you're my favorite customer, I'll throw in a couple of little extras.

MOSCOW: You would! Great!

ANKARA: But not Jeopardy.

MOSCOW: OK, how about one that attacks BRUK? You know, he did mess up my orders with that silly date rule.

ANKARA: Yes, Dave, we've gone over that before. You know that you should send even your updated orders to me first for proofreading.

MOSCOW: I said I was sorry, Rich. How about one that attacks BRUK?

ANKARA: OK.

((RIGEL continues next page))

RIGEL (continued)

MOSCOW: That would be great. (I know that I won't be blamed by BRUK, because he knows that Rich writes everything.)

ANKARA: Well, Dave, who do you want to insult this time?

MOSCOW: How about Greg? He did dislodge your fleet.

ANKARA: Yes.

MOSCOW: And Nelson. He does have more little blocks of wood than anyone else.

ANKARA: OK. What about BRUK?

MOSCOW: Yes, he gives free issues to people who write silly articles about using nasal stuff as a diplomatic ploy, but he doesn't give free issues for good press.

ANKARA: Yes, press better than anything else in VD.

MOSCOW: And how about getting Knight for trying to get on the GM's good side by doing his house rules for him?

ANKARA: Yes, Cupcake...

MOSCOW: Oh, and then Ty for suggesting that his face is worth voting on.

ANKARA: OK, Dave, but remember that you're only sending \$1000.

MOSCOW: Oh. You want cash again?

ANKARA: That's the normal arrangement...

MOSCOW: OK, so what do I write?

NORTH SEA ((via RUSSIA)): It was a very cold winter day. Admiral Schauski was on the bridge of the Klov, flagship of the First Russian Fleet. "Lt. Spasky," commanded the Admiral. It was obvious that the author couldn't think of any clever Russian names.

"Yes, sir," responded the young officer.

"Can you explain to me why the temperature has increased 25 degrees in the last two days? Surely this warmth is unusual for the Norwegian orders."

"Well, sir, from what I can tell, we are lost. And in our process of becoming lost, we have sailed further south than we normally intended."

The Admiral considers the young man's explanation. "And who is responsible for the navigation of the fleet?"

The Lt. hesitates. "Why, you are, sir."

"Exactly," responds the Admiral. "Therefore, is it possible that the fleet is lost?"

"No, sir."

"Lt. Spasky, we are here, in the North Sea, to engage the German Third Fleet in wargames. Apparently, the Germans have been delayed. Typical, for that country is led by a magic-worshipping fool and a dwarf. Apparently, they are short in more than one area."

The Lt. chuckles. The Admiral continues, "They say that the Kaiser has seen giant flying lizards, and his mind is filled with fright. And what does he fear? Why, a man scarcely 40 inches tall. How can the leader of such a country have a mind so badly shaped?" With that, the Admiral leaves the bridge, confident that the Germans will arrive and that his dear Tsar's plan to test the German sea power will be completed by the week's end.

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE: JEOPARDY

(Linsey) Double Jeopardy categories are: "Famous Quotes", "Favorite Computer Languages", "Sports", "Orders", and our favorite, "Ethnic Jokes". Mr. Ellis, who has yet to score, will begin our questioning:

(Ellis) I'll have to try Orders for \$20.

(Linsey) The answer is A Ser H, A Ser S A Bud.

(Ellis) How to get fan mail from Ed Wrobel?

(Linsey) Correct, for \$20. Of course, just subbing to VD would also do that.

((RIGEL continues next page))

RIGEL (continued)

- (Ellis) How about Orders for \$40?
- (Linsey) And the answer is, "A Ven-Tri".
- (Knight) What was the opening Italian move in the RIGEL?
- (Linsey) Correct for \$40.
- (Knight) How about Orders for \$60?
- (Linsey) Answer: A War-Gal.
- (Knight) What mistake has the Russian made twice in the RIGEL?
- (Linsey) Correct for \$60.
- (Knight) How about Famous Quotes for \$20?
- (Linsey) And the answer is "Dave Kleiman".
- (Kleiman) Who said, "I cannot vote on Ty's face, as I do not have a copy of his face on which to inscribe my vote."?
- (Linsey) Correct for \$20.
- (Kleiman) Well, let's try Favorite Computer Languages for \$20.
- (Linsey) The answer is COBOL.
- (Heintzman) What is Nelson Heintzman's favorite computer language?
- (Linsey) Incorrect -- I didn't even think you knew what a computer was.
- (Hare) What to write in, if you're interested in your fingers dropping off?
- (Linsey) Correct, for \$20.
- (Hare) Let's try Famous Quotes for \$40.
- (Linsey) And the answer is "Bob Sweeney".
- (Sweeney) Who said, "Please find enclosed a small sample of dung from my last visit to the stables."?
- (Linsey) Correct for \$40.
- (Sweeney) How about Famous Quotes for \$60?
- (Linsey) The answer is Porter Wightman.
- (Reilly) Who said, "We're all going broke! Who's getting our money?"
- (Linsey) Correct for \$60.
- (Reilly) Let's try orders for \$60.
- (Linsey) The answer is "Fleet Tunis retreats to North Africa".
- (Reilly) What is wishful thinking on Kleiman's part?
- (Linsey) Correct for \$60.
- (Reilly) Let's try sports for \$20.
- (Linsey) The national sport of Austria.
- (Knight) What is baking cupcakes?
- (Linsey) Correct for \$20.
- (Knight) How about sports for \$40?
- (Linsey) The national sport of Russia.
- (Knight) What is cupcake eating?
- (Linsey) Correct for \$40.
- (Knight) Sports for \$60.
- (Linsey) The national sport of Italy.
- (Kleiman) What is playing with matches?
- (Linsey) Correct for \$60. And now for a word from our sponsor...

- BRUX: Word.
- ST. PETERSBURG to BERLIN;
- 1) P-QN4 P-K3
- 2) P-QN5 P-QB3
- 3) P-K4 ???

- LIVONIA to SNEAK #6: Do you really know Steve Payne?
- UKRAINE to ANYBODY: Who the heck is "Tommy the Wondertrout"?
- BRUX: I'm not gonna say I dunno, but it sounds fishy to me...

((RIGEL continues next page))

RIGEL (continued)

REILLY to RIGEL: Well, folks, Ty has had the courage to admit that I wrote his press. Now how about the rest of you, hm? Nelson? Dave? Are you ready to fess up? What's this, some of you don't believe I've been writing all the RIGEL press? *Sigh* Well, that's what I get for being so kind-hearted. Perhaps then, my droogs, you'd care to hear a different story...the story of...

The R.A.T. Alliance.

It was late in the evening of November 15, and your humble narrator, diligent student that he is, was reading "Oedipus Rex" for the seventh time, to insure its prominence ((oops...permanence)) in his memory:

"But is he not quick in his duplicity?
And shall I not be quick to parry him?"

So deeply involved in this tragedy was I that I jumped in surprise when I heard the firm knocking on my door. And this was no ordinary firm knocking, let me tell you. This was a knocking both desperate and promising, and I knew immediately that someone had come to beg. Not in the need for beggars, I decided to ignore the knocking. But when it persisted, I went to open the door.

There stood Lori Kleiman.

"Lori! What a surprise!"

"Hello Rich. I was just in the neighborhood and...I hope I'm not disturbing you."

"Not at all. Come in. Have a seat..." We sat down together on the couch. "So how's it going? How's Dave?"

"Fine, fine. Dave's fine..."

"Good. And you?"

"Great..." She paused, and I saw that she was nervous about something.

"Anything wrong?"

"No...no..."

"Ca'on" I coaxed. "You can tell me."

"Well...it's Dave. He's not doing so well."

"Oh? How so?"

"Well...he's depressed, really depressed, about this RIGEL game you and he are in. All day long he mopes about the house, moaning and groaning that he's doomed, and wishing you'd stop attacking him. You know, he really thinks very highly of you, Rich, and...he'd really prefer to work with you."

"Yea, I know, Lori. But surely he realizes this is just a game...that it's all for fun."

"That's just it, he doesn't know it's just a game. He acts like he really is the Tsar of Russia...and...it really hurts him when he's not doing a good job."

"Really? He takes it that serious?"

"He even calls me his little Tsarina...and I have to call him Nikolai."

"That's amazing. But I guess we all have our little secret fantasies. Mine is that Bo Derek will be lost in Moscow one day, and she'll come up here looking for directions, and I'll invite her in and she'll sit on my couch with me."

"Yes...well..." She looked down at her hands. "Dave's not much fun to live with when he's losing. Even Whiskers avoids him, and..."

"And you've come to ask me if I'd lay off him."

"Oh Rich, it'd mean so much to me."

"But Lori, I can't do that."

"Oh please, Rich, for me. Please, pretty please!"

"Lori, my ethical principles...I've got to continue against Dave. He lied to me terribly in our negotiations, and he attacked me with vicious propcanda..."

"Rich, please, I'll do anything...anything!"

"Lori, I...I'm sorry."

She hesitated a moment, then said in a soft voice, "Rich, I'll do anything."

((RIGEL continues next page, and I'll bet we have a captive audience now...))

RIGHEL (continued; quit slobbering)

I was taken aback.

"Anything?" I gulped.

"Anything." She gazed at me seductively.

Now I know what you're thinking, little droogs. You're thinking that Lori's offer to do anything was enough to make me forget my ethical principles. But you're wrong, my friends, oh yes. For what actually happened is that, at that very same moment, I remembered another of my ethical principles. "Forgive and forget," is how it goes. Therefore, I replied...

"Okay, I'll do it."

"You will? Oh thank you, Rich! Thank you, thank you, thank you."

"Don't mention it."

"I'm forever in your debt."

"True. But I want you to realize that I'm not doing this for...your offer... but because I want to help you and Dave out. What we do will just be a symbol, of sorts, of my animosity with Dave. Austria will still be my main ally."

"Of course..."

"So I'll write Dave, and put together an R.A.T. alliance, and then..."

And then I saw Lori gazing at me with lustful eyes. Quickly she slid over close to me. I put my arm around her, pulled her against me, and then...

...a knock on the door interrupted.

"Damn!" I cursed, as Lori pulled away, "I'll be right back." Quickly I went to the door, and opened it to discover a gorgeous, brown-haired girl whom I immediately recognized.

"Excuse me," she said, "I'm lost and...I was hoping you might help me."

I quickly recovered from my surprise. "Of course. Come in and sit down. I'll find a map. Um, Lori...I think we'd better finish our talk some other time."

"But, what about our agreement?"

"Don't worry. The RAT's on! Now hurry on home. The Tsar is probably hungry." I practically pushed her out the door.

"Yes, well...goodbye."

I closed and locked the door, then turned to my beautiful guest.

"Well..." I smiled, motioning toward the couch. "Have a seat..."

And that, my brothers, is why I, your humble narrator, pulled away from the Russian front just as I was on the verge of victory.

VENICE: In response to public speculation concerning the safety and welfare of the family of the Italian Prime Minister, the German High Command has announced that despite the fierce fighting which has indeed devastated this city, the Prime Minister's family is as fit as a fiddle and living comfortably under German house protection. In fact, reliable rumor has it that the Kaiser himself has directed one of his highest court officials, one Rasputin, to venture forth and personally oversee the family's needs...

SEVASTAPOL to GM: I assume that when a dateline says "KAISER" that we are referring to the German Kaiser? (Note: VD #87, KAISER to SULTAN)

BRUK: You assume correctly.

NELSON to BRUK: Aha! I think we share birthdays if yours is August 16th? ((Yup!)) I predate you a bit, of course. Let me know the year of your birth, will you? ((1955)) Four famous people have died on August 16th that I know of so far... Depending on your year of birth, you could be the reincarnation of...whom?

BRUK: I'll bite. Who are they?



Note to the SIRIUS players. I have not yet received Mark Berch's ombudsman ruling on the protest in the game, so we'll hold until next deadline...

The Gossip Column

From Dick Martin (excerpts):

Bruce,

I've had a few pages of VD #90 referred to me for comment -- specifically Kathy Byrne's letter regarding ombudsmen and your reply. I must agree with you on this matter, ombudsmen are entirely worthless.

((Dick then goes on to describe at some length the details of an experience he had involving an ombudsman, concluding that "Never again will I call an ombudsman, for any reason."))

By the way, it's interesting that you believe there are instances where a GM should not be fair to his players. No wonder you have so many problems as a GM. Did it ever occur to you that it would have been entirely fair to wait on calling an ombudsman until a concrete complaint had been lodged in SIAM? Must I forever be crucified for a situation that I immediately tried to correct, and when that proved impossible, apologise for? Don't you have anything better to do?

All right here is the second half of the last double-issue Retal I sent you. You now owe me 20¢. This is because you only paid for one of the two issues in that double issue. I know you wouldn't want something for nothing, and I expect a check by return mail. You could, certainly, return that full double issue to me for a full 20¢ refund. I want to be fair about this.

((You? Fair? Meh, heh, that's a good one..

OK, I'm printing as much of this letter as I did because you, like anyone else criticized in these pages, have a right of reply. I deleted the part of your letter which had nothing to do with the case at hand.

Actually, my use of the Swedish Roundabout situation was not intended to have the effect of further crucifixion of you. Rather, I was simply using it as an example of a situation in which the GM (in my opinion) should not have obliged a player's request for an ombudsman. From your letter, it would seem that even you now agree that the request was premature at best (since you "tried to correct" it and you say you apologized for it). I can understand, though, that my comment may have come across differently than it was intended. It was just the best example I had at hand for a rebuttal to Kathy's letter, that's all.

Regarding who owes who any issues or money, why don't we just give the facts and then let the readers decide? I had an issue remaining in my sub to Retaliation. Your next issue was a double. You cut it in half diagonally, and sent me half of it that way. Several months and 80¢ of my postage later, you finally sent me the other half of the issue.

How about it, Doomes? Would I be justified, if you send me a check for 10 issues of VD, in cutting your copies diagonally in half and sending you half of each of the next 20? Or sending you the matching halves several months apart? Maybe I'm alone in my opinion, but I still think Dick owes me an issue of his zine and 80¢ for the postage I have spent trying to get it from him. And I will not hesitate to say so. And if I'm wrong and Dick doesn't owe me anything, at least the facts have been aired.

Sorry, Dick. If you don't like my bitching about the way you handled my sub, maybe you should fulfill your obligations more fairly.

Finally, I'm opposed to your opinion that ombudsmen are worthless, I don't believe there are any instances where a GM should not be fair to his players, and I'd love to hear about all these problems I have as a GM. Thanx for writing.))

From Jim Williams (2/7/84):

Dear BRUX,

At long last I have found the time and energy to send you my thoughts on paper. In addition to those aforementioned thoughts, I've taken the liberty of slipping a

cheque for \$10.00 into the envelopes as well. This should right a most grievous wrong which I brought onto myself by allowing my sub to lapse. Shame on moi.

My free time of late is becoming harder to come by, and my non-gaming relationships in the hobby have suffered as a result. I fully expect this trend to continue as my United league heads into the summer months. Letters like this one will become a rare commodity. VD does have a way of inspiring me every once in a while so you probably won't have a complete piece of driftwood on your hands. (I know Kathy says "deadwood" but I yams what I yams.)

Thanks for sending me that quote contest. It's quite an interesting idea. Unfortunately, I don't think I'll be able to put the time into it that I'd like to. Hell, I'm not even sure if I know which one is mine! I think it's the very basic #((no, I'm not going to say the number!)), but I'm not anywhere near certain of that. If it is, I'm plessed that you couldn't find a more profound statement than that. If that's not me, then whoever said ((oh, all right)) #18 is a yutz for sounding like me. Where do you get these ideas from, anyway, BRUK?

Well, I have to run along now. As usual, time is of the essence. Someday real soon, I'll write again. 'Til then...

((Great to hear from you again, and to know that you'll still be a Doogie!
Since the quote contest is so difficult, here are just a few more teeny clues.
#30 was not John Kador, #38 was not Mark Berch, #62 was not Rod Walker, #80 was not Ronald (Canada) Brown, and #94 was not Alex Lord. Just in case anyone was wondering.))

From Kathy Byrne (2/4/84):

Dear Bruce,

I'd like to make some comments on issue #90.

If you were truly a hobby anarchist who anhorred hobby organization, you would not get BNs or contribute your \$1.00. No one forces you to get BNs for your games, so why bother to get one if you are so opposed to them? It seems a little hypocritical, if you ask me. And please don't say that you do it for your players as you have many times stated that if your players don't like the way you run their games, they can play elsewhere. So if you are sincere in your statement then you should be running your games without BNs just as the Canadian Peter Walker does -- now he is an anarchist.

As for your statement "We need a BNC? Why? To give out BNs? What for? So that we can rate games? How come?" I wish to thank you for making my job so easy! However, I beg to differ with you on what the BNC really does. More important than rating a game is making sure that the games are being run in a timely manner. I keep an eye on the games and follow up on all complaints. If I see a GM who is not coming out, I not only write him, but I notify the orphan service as well.

Yes, I know, who needs the orphan service? Well, Bruce, I'd hate to have to tell you just how many people have needed that service. Since you hardly play in any games, at the moment none, I can understand why you wouldn't need their help. This may really surprise you but not only does the orphan service badger and browbeat uncaring GMs who have folded and left their players hanging (i.e. Overby, Jones, Arnett, etc.), but it also is responsible for helping a GM like Al Pearson place his games with new GMs to insure a proper fold. And yes, I know if everyone who made a GMing commitment followed through on it -- we wouldn't need the service. But this is not the Garden of Eden, and things aren't all houky dorey! So even though you don't need the orphan service or the BNC -- others do.

As for who needs an ombudsman -- obviously not you, you've made that perfectly clear, but what about the players? I went to an ombudsman once, the GM was sure he was 100% correct in his stance, I thought otherwise. The ombudsman agreed with me. But if the GM had been as stubborn as you are and said I know I'm 100% right, an injustice would have been done to the player as no ombudsman would have been allowed!

Sorry to disagree, but I feel the Ed Wrobels of this world have a right to challenge a GMing decision.

Your "one" case against ombudsmen is definitely not the rule, but more the exception. I was also sorry to see that you felt that the GM (Gary) hurt the game by accomodating a player. I'd rather play under a GM who tries to accomodate his players, rather than one who blocks them from going to an ombudsman for a 2nd opinion. That's like a doctor who says to his patient why get a 2nd opinion to see if you need surgery -- I'm obviously 100% right, so let's just do it.

Your second reason that you can't afford for the ombudsman to rule in the player's favor or "mess things up by ruling incorrectly" is laughable. What you are saying is if the ombudsman doesn't agree with your ruling then he is incorrect. Isn't it possible that the player and ombudsman are right and you are wrong? It must be nice to know that you are always right.

I know we disagree on the rights of the player, but I really fail to see how your case against ombudsmen holds water.

As for your cover, if I had known that I would have to stomach Borch's picture, I never would've nominated him for Doomie of the Year! First DW, now VD, at least KK readers will never be subjected to the Dipmaster's picture!

((Those poor, deprived souls!

The first part of your letter, before you get to the stuff about ombudsmen, is very well done. I will back down somewhat from my hard-line stance of a couple of issues ago, mainly because I overstated it badly to begin with. Yes, there are people who need the services of the BNC, the orphan service, the novice packet, and so on. I don't argue with that point, nor do I mean to belittle the work you do as BNC. But the point I was trying (unsuccessfully, I feel now) to make is that I do not think that, as helpful as these services are to some people at some times, the people who are not using them should have to pay for them. Let's just suppose, hypothetically, that a "diptax" were levied on all games whose GMs decided to go along with it, and that part of the money went to the orphan service. Why should I, in joining a game run by Gary Coughlan or Bob Sergeant, e.g., be required to pay one red cent to the orphan service? If and when the time comes that a game I am playing in needs help from the orphan service, then fine, I'll pay whatever it costs to get my game going again. Likewise, I don't see why a player who signs up in VD should have to pay anything other than what I charge him to play in VD. And, lest you think that I'm just being personally Scroogey about this whole thing, may I point out to you that I didn't accept any money for my hobby service (Supernova) at the last Origins, nor shall I in the future, except from those people who are buying it directly. Why should someone have to pay me money for Supernova just because he is playing in a Dip tournament? In no way does this belittle the novice packet; I've heard from a lot of people who have told me how useful and important it is. But my principle is that only those people who use it should have to pay for it.

I hope this clarifies what I intended to say to begin with. Looking over my response to the Langley letter in #90, yes, I agree that I went way overboard.

And now, hold onto your hat. The second half of your letter, where you talk about ombudsmen, is a classic example of a great rebuttal to a position I have never taken. I am left with the uncomfortable feeling that you didn't follow what I said very carefully, and this time I think I was clear. Your argument starts off with a total misrepresentation of my views: "As for who needs an ombudsman -- obviously not you, you've made that perfectly clear..." and continues this way throughout.

In fact, I view ombudsmen as another very valuable hobby service, and I have used them several times in the past. You say that you feel the Ed Wrobels of this world have a right to challenge a GMing decision...and I agree. He got an ombudsman, in case you've forgotten. It's true that he lost the appeal, but he did get one.

You then go on to admit that there are exceptions. Fine; it is only these rare

exceptions in which I would refuse to go to an ombudsman for a player. Your analogy to the guy who wants a second opinion before surgery is way off beam -- such a case would get arbitration in VD. A better example would be a guy who walks into the doctor's office with blood pouring out of his nose, and then wants a second opinion when the doctor tells him he has a bloody nose.

If there is any doubt in your mind, or anyone else's, as to whether I will bend over backwards for the player when there is any shadow of a doubt who is right, consider that the situation with Woody's telephoned non-vote is the only time I've ever refused to go. Or better yet, consider Peter Ansoff's protest in HERCULES a while back. He ordered "F Nwy-Nth", intending to order his F Nwg (there was no F Nwy), and when I threw out the order he asked for an ombudsman. In this situation, I can fairly safely say I was "clearly right", and I think that practically any GM in the hobby would have ruled as I did. But the player got the benefit of the doubt, and I did call an ombudsman. I suppose it's pretty needless to add that the protest was disallowed, but the point is that I do not feel that I am always right.

But with all of the above, you might still point out that there are these "rare exceptions" when I will refuse to go to an ombudsman for a player. My question to you would be, should a player always have an automatic right of appeal? I think not, and players who disagree strongly do have the right not to sign up here.

Allow me to digress for a minute and talk about player rights. Whenever a player signs up for a game, in any zine, he is giving up certain rights that he would have in other zines. In Whitestonia, for instance, a player gives up his "right" to have his game run on two-week deadlines, simply because that's not how games in W are run. In Europa Express, a player gives up his "right" to have his game result published entirely in English, simply because that's not how EE games are run. In Brutus Bulletin, every player who signed up gave up his right to know the authorship of any press release, because that's not how BB games were run. And in VD, a player gives up his "right" to automatic appeal -- that's not how VD games are run. If a player is uncomfortable with that, he should play elsewhere. If enough players are uncomfortable with it, then VD either changes or goes out of business. So the question then becomes, do VD players, as a rule, feel comfortable enough with my judgement to keep playing here?

A while back I polled my readers on whether they would sign up for a new game here. One of the choices was "I would sign up instantly! VD is a great zine to play in." A huge majority of my readers in general chose this response, but the result from active players here at the time was astonishing. 20 out of 23 checked this choice on the poll. And you know as well as I do that if I announced openings tomorrow, I'd fill five or six games by the next issue. To me, the message is clear: players in VD have confidence in my judgement as a GM, enough to sign up for a game in which their right of protest is not guaranteed.

I don't claim that the results would be the same if the whole hobby were polled on the matter. I just claim that, for my players, my style of running games is basically suitable. And with all this talk of player rights, surely you will agree that VD's players have a right to play in games the way I run them, if that is their choice (when did I ever hold a gun to someone's head to play in one of my games?).

So tell me this, Kathy. The VD houserules state clearly that "The decision as to whether or not an ombudsman will be used to arbitrate a dispute shall, in the end, rest with the GM." If players want to sign up here under that rule, and feel they can trust my judgement enough to shell out a \$6.00 game + NMR fee to do so, would you really, truly deny them their right to do this? Or me my right to run games this way, provided I can find the players to play in them? I would surely hope not!

In closing, may I note that I have seen houserules that read as follows:

- 1. The GM is always right.
- 2. In case of GM error, see #1.

I wouldn't play under such a GM, because in my opinion most disputes do require an arbiter. But those games filled tee. It's a free hobby -- and may it stay thus!))

From Greg Ellis (2/2/84):

Dear BRUX,

When I got Ed Wrobel's public letter, I wrote him immediately and gave him my opinion. I wouldn't normally involve myself in matters like this, but somehow I already felt involved when I got that letter. I told Ed that I would be writing a response to you as well. As I said to him, this letter isn't necessarily for print, by I stand by my earlier comments that I am not ashamed of my opinions, so if you want to print this, go ahead.

First, I have to say that I did realize that you had done some editing of the letter you printed last issue ((#89)). I knew that without the benefit of ever having seen Politesse, and I must say that as intelligent as I have found the majority of dip players I have met are, I think most of them could tell the difference between Ed's normally smooth and eloquent style and the jerky cut-up version you presented. The editing was not very hard to spot, and also not very funny. As a joke, it was a poor one and not worth the effort.

Ed's response was equally wrong, however. If his public letter was serious, it was beneath the likes of Ed Wrobel. If it too was a joke, it wasn't funny either. I have great respect for Mr. Wrobel; I respect his apparent intelligence and ability. Although I rarely agree with what he writes, I always read it. Ed is very good with the written word, and judging from his reaction I guess he considered your playful tampering as tantamount to rape. Editing his letter in that way was wrong, even if he did it to you first. Ed's response was equally wrong.

Finally, I would like to add that I think your reaction should be one of two things: either print his actual letter in its entirety and apologize, or ignore it completely. Let's not have another useless feud. Ed's move lacked politesse; don't make the same mistake.

Other than that, there was one positive aspect of Ed's open letter: I am now considering starting up a zine! I won't run any games -- only a letter column. Every month I will print an updated list of my subbers and mail them out. Anyone who wants to put a letter in the letter column can type one up, make up the appropriate number of copies, and mail them out to my subbers. Think it will work?

((Sure. Just make sure you get Ed Wrobel on board in a hurry.

I appreciate your constructive criticism. You're right, my editing of Ed's letter did not come across as humorously as intended. Winsome, Losesome...

I disagree, however, with your criticism of Ed's action in sending out the circular letter. Honestly, now, if he had sent the letter only to me, you don't seriously believe I'd get all these juicy responses, do you? I for one am grateful to Ed for his action, and I hope other correspondents here will follow suit.

Also, you needn't worry about the possibility of a feud between me and Ed. Even ignoring for a moment the fact that we're friends, you don't really think I'd ever be so dumb as to feud with someone whose verbal skills are superior to my own, do you? I mean, he'd clobber me over the head with all those big words and then where would I be...))

From Chardo Edison (2/3/84):

Dear Bruise,

I'm throwing down the gauntlet, one I expect few will have the courage to pick up. I give you -- SUBSCRIPTION WARS! Here is \$20.00. That will up my sub expiration to #147! I challenge all comers to be as generous! I give everyone fair warning, though; there's a lot more where this check came from. Now, Bruise, no cheating by continually upping Ms. Froskin's sub gratuitously. This is going to be a fair fight! Chaaaarrrrrrrggggggg!

((OK, Doomies, you heard the man. You aren't going to let him beat you so easily, are you?! Start sending in those large checks now. Winner to be announced shortly...))

From Don Del Grande (2/9/84):

BRUK:

Glad to see my article in print so soon. I don't mind that it was edited, but you overlooked two things. First, my letter later in the issue mentioned an "advert" in the article, which was cut -- I think it was for my Campaign Trail opening in Life of Monty. (Oops, I did it again!) Second, the "Legion of Doom" is not a Diplomacy reference; it refers to one of my favorite shows every Saturday at 3:05 PM Pacific time on WTBS -- World Championship Wrestling (sanctioned by the NWA, of course). The man in the white top hat refers to "Precious Paul" Ellering, one of the most ruthless managers of wrestlers to send men into the squared circle. His wrestlers don't beat opponenets -- they punish them. Enough said...maybe you should have a house rule limiting each great power to one player.

Page 17!!!! More answers to Mark Paul's cartoons (keep 'em coming -- between the two of us, we'll cover everybody yet)...had Freedom in the Galaxy gone to TSR, chances are they would have rereleased it as it was, much in the way AH did (but AH put a backing on the mapboard -- one of the warping types, right? Maybe TSR should have -- nah, don't even think about that). After all, both A Glean of Bayonets and Battle Over Britain have rules in SPI style and the counters punch like the old SPI ones, unlike TSR's sand-blast policy to separating counters. I'm glad to see the German Banker's rules in The General to bring back the five-player Conquistador. I also agree with Down with the King -- the only things you can do are roll on those stupid tables to get prestige and influence enough to get enough henchmen to overthrow the ruler -- and that's about it! The way Alan Moon fixed up Flat Top, Avalon Hill doesn't need The Rising Sun -- just add maps to cover the entire Pacific, a few extra ships, and Flat Top becomes another War in the Pacific. As for Struggle of Nations, I don't like it -- it looks like a good game, but I don't like the situation it covers. I prefer more strategic things, like War and Peace, 1776, Third Reich, etc. But my favorite is still the Squad Leader series -- if you forget about Up Front, that is. How can three men start in buildings, advance to a swamp, retreat to the woods, advance back to hills, retreat to a gully, and advance to more buildings?

The bowels are a, e, i, o, u, w, and y? What about n? In the word "nth" -- which is a word -- n is pronounced "en", containing a vowel sound. I also can't believe I don't remember a word where "w" has a "u" sound. Any ideas?

When I lived in Berkeley while attending school in my early college career, I didn't vote straight Republican -- the Berkeley Democratic congressional candidate was the best choice. And Tom Bradley (Demo mayor of Los Angeles) was a better choice for governor in 1982 -- he would have won, according to some sources, had he been white. But the main point is -- vote sensibly, vote often, vote, and above all, vote for President Reagan. (That ought to make John Boardman happy.)

((I doubt it.

"N" is not a vowel in the word "nth". That word is the only one in the English language that has no vowels. Am not sure of any words where "w" sounds like "u", but in words such as "new" it is a vowel, teaming up with the "e" to make a "u"-like sound.

Re your discussion of games: YAAAAWWWN!))

From Ron Galicia (2/9/84):

Bruce,

Thanks again for the freebie.

((You're welcome. And just for writing and contributing to the Gossip Column again, you get this issue for free, too!))

From Jeff Noto (2/4/84):

BRUCE,

I knew there was some reason for me to write this. Enclosed is a sub extension check. Now I'm guaranteed to be here when VD hits the century mark.

My job as a hotel desk clerk is going well. Most of our clients are retired people who stay for months at a time. There is this one gentleman who is 92 years old and is legally blind, but still comes here from Buffalo, New York every winter. He's a great pro football fan and comes into the office when I'm working to talk football (he's really upset that the Bills let Chuck Know go to Seattle). This job may not pay much, but I'm learning a lot about the motel business and people.

How many hours did it take you to put together the quotation contest? It certainly cannot be much longer before the men in the white coats come to get you.

How far are you from Chicopee, Mass.? Lisa was born at the Air Force base there and spent the first ten years of her life in Massachusetts. Now she can't stand the cold weather.

I'm surprised you haven't announced any game openings. Four games in VD must be a record for fastest games run at one time for you.

I agree with Mark Paul when he says that Civilization is a great game. It does, however, have one drawback. During the last couple of rounds, the leader need only refrain from trading to avoid being hit by calamities (which are the only things that can really stop him from winning).

Well, it's getting to be late so I've got to run. Take care.

Sincerely,

The Only Goddamn Nincompoop
Who Nominated Jake Halverstadt
For Doomie of the Year.

((Four games in VD is very comfortable. I could even get used to it. (Or even two or three.) You may notice a recent decrease, for instance, in the rate of GMing errors around here. (Of course, I could carry this to its logical limit and GM no games, all of them perfectly...))

I throw together the Quote contest in around five or six hours one Sunday while lying in bed in a lazy mood.))

From Ken Peal (2/11/84, excerpts):

Dear Bruce:

Somewhere in the misty preboreal past, or when I entered Diodon, whichever is most recent, I may have agreed to join your standby list in Voices of Doom. Not being one to run away from my mistakes (or to simply ignore them, like certain others), I hereby request removal from said list. I assure you that if called, I will not submit. If elected to run a country, I will not serve.

...Your Elements of Persuasion article was interesting, but significantly flawed. "Deceit" may be an object of persuasion, but it is not a means. Read Aristotle's Rhetoric some time. The third element of persuasion is "ethos" (roughly translated as "image" or "strength of personality". Ethos is Carter's cardigan, Arafat's Kafayya, Castro's stogie and much more. It is the most powerful form of persuasion.

((Sorry, but on reflection I still feel that deceit is a means of persuasion, as well as an end. You can talk your opponent into being tricked, or trick him into doing what you want him to do. I guess it's all a matter of semantics, though.

Your request for removal from the VD standby list does not conform to the specifications outlined for such a request as set forth in my house rules. Please resubmit your request legally if you want to be taken off. Thank you.))

A break this time from boring negotiations articles...here's a boring tactics article instead!

England - the Wicked Witch of the North

England is a rather easy country to play, despite the many options available. The defensive position is tough to crack, making it fairly safe, and the offensive potential is at least average.

Preference lists submitted by players prior to a game will show England as a first choice more often than any other nation. Probably, this popularity is due in part to the ease with which this power can be played, but there is a deeper psychological reason as well. England is English-speaking; and, moreover, has been the "good guy" in recent world affairs, at least from an American standpoint. We in North America, for the most part, have less trouble identifying with England than with any other European nation. And I personally believe that that is the real reason for England's popularity.

A couple of generalizations can be made about playing England. More than any other country, England must rely on naval power. Toward the mid-or-end-game, armies can be used effectively on the continent, but in the early going, England's first concern is to build fleets. An England that does not control the high seas is no England at all.

Another rule of thumb is that often in the early and middle stages of the game, England will want to keep an army stationed at home (say, in Yorkshire) and/or a fleet in the North Sea for defensive purposes. This is less true after England has gained control of all of the surrounding areas and is thus more immune to a quick stab.

A third generalization would be the fact that if Russia is preoccupied in the south, England can often annex StP and hold it despite Russian attempts to regain it. A potential friend may be lost, but it may not matter if the move is timed to render the Czar impotent.

Let us examine the English options at the beginning of the game now. Suppose you have drawn this power; what are your choices in the early going? One beautiful aspect of playing this country is that you may not need to make a choice in 1901. Often enough, if France or Germany is sincere about an alliance, either or both will be glad to help you take Belgium. You can make your decision concerning an ally on the basis of the fall 1901 moves. And that army in Belgium can be used quite powerfully against either of the two neighboring powers.

Allow me to back up, though, to your pre-spring 1901 negotiations. There are some rules of thumb here, too. First and foremost, negotiate with France for an agreement of neutrality in the English Channel. This is important whether or not you intend to live up to it; a bounce there cannot possibly help either party. Secondly, talk Russia into not moving A Mos-StP. You may need to stir up some action (or rumors thereof) in the south, but you would like to keep that army away from Scandinavia. Third, start asking both France and Germany about the possibility of helping you take Belgium in return for your friendship.

What are the possibilities for your opening moves? For the fleets, there are only two sets of orders that are reasonable. The first, and most common, is F Edi-Nwg, F Lon-Nth. The second is F Edi-Nth, F Lon-Eng. The first is a cautious wait-and-see strategy; the second is riskier and usually involves stabbing France right off the bat. Let us look at the first set, which is known as the Churchill Opening.

With your fleets opening to the North and Norwegian Seas, you have an excellent chance of picking up both Norway and Belgium in 1901 while antagonizing no one. The army will be placed either in Yorkshire or Edinburgh, depending upon initial negotiations. The unit is more flexible offensively in Edinburgh, but is in a far better position to defend against a French stab if it is in Yorkshire. In Edinburgh, the unit can be conveyed into Norway without sacrificing Belgium. While an army in Edinburgh is often considered anti-Russian, it need not be. The Czar need only start worrying if the army is placed in Scandinavia, but the unit can also take Belgium while England places F Nwg in Norway, a move which can hardly be construed as an attack on Russia. So unless Russia objects or you suspect early French treachery, open A Lvp-Edi.

I shall briefly discuss the opening stab of France: A Lvp-Wal, F Edi-Nth, F Lon-Eng. This is only recommended if you are sure of a German ally and Russian neutrality. The army will be placed in Wales to prepare for a convoy into France or Belgium. There are three choices of a destination; Brest, Picardy, or Belgium. Each is good in certain situations. If you wish to move to Brest, you must try to deviously make sure that France will not defend that province. If you bounce him there, he will have it open for the build of a fleet. So some tricky negotiation through a third party might be in order here. Move to Brest only if you are going to make it in. A convoy to Picardy, on the other hand, will hardly ever be stopped. And if France suspects that you will be trying for Brest, he will occupy it himself in his attempt to defend it, thus preventing himself from being able to build there. The disadvantage of the move to Picardy, of course, is that you will not receive that valuable second build. But the powerful position you gain may make it worth the loss. Finally, you can take Belgium, possibly with German support if necessary. In any event, after you have committed yourself with this opening, place the army on the continent in the fall. In all cases, the fleet in the North Sea will take Norway. Please note that I said you should be sure of your German ally for this opening; you will be leaving the North Sea open as you take Norway, and a German fleet in the North Sea would be an embarrassing spectacle indeed in 1901.

But England, more often than not, does well to maintain a low profile in the first year. A look at some of the longer range possibilities is now in order.

The England/France alliance may well be the most powerful on the board except for Russia/Turkey. With their backs to the Atlantic, it is very difficult for any other alliance to gain a powerful position against these two. Germany, of course, is the first unhappy victim. The Kaiser faced with England/France is a first cousin to the giraffe with a sore throat. The pair will often agree that England will take Belgium in 1901, while France takes the Iberian centers and tries for Ruhr or Munich. Belgium can be turned over to France once England takes Holland or Denmark. And Germany will last little longer than a snowflake in July. In fact, there are a few alternative options for England in 1901. He can, depending on circumstances, pass up Belgium and try for Holland or Denmark (usually resulting in a standoff), or in rare cases may even want to slip into the Helgoland Bight. There are several ways for E/F to clobber Germany. England's share of the spoils will probably consist of Holland, Kiel, Denmark, and Berlin. After that, if the alliance is to remain intact, Russia will be attacked. Of course, there is the possibility that one ally will stab the other after Germany falls; England is usually better equipped to stab France than the other way around. The usual agreements to prevent such a breakdown would be a pact not to build fleets in London, Liverpool, or Brest except when necessary; an agreement to avoid moving to the Channel, and limitations on the number of English armies which may be placed in Germany. Provided that the two remain loyal, France will wind up expanding through Italy and the Med while England starts bringing armies down toward southern Russia and Austria.

From the diplomatic standpoint, England/France would like to see Russia and Italy kept busy elsewhere until Germany crumbles. It's usually not too hard to talk Italy into moving east, and Russia should be kept busy in the south. Best bet: try to instigate an Austro/Turkish alliance. It can often be broken up later, or if not the pair will fall to the western two anyhow.

England/Germany is a bit less potent than England/France, though many players still prefer it. This pair has a somewhat easier time coordinating their positions; Germany can basically work on the interior of the continent while England nibbles away at the fringes. The first victim, not surprisingly, is almost always France. Unless a gross incompetent is playing France, you may well want to enlist Italian help for the initial campaign. Otherwise, the two of you are in for a long battle, France's

defensive position being among the best on the board. If Italian aid can be had, you may try to keep the eastern powers busy by encouraging either Austria/Russia versus Turkey, or Austria/Turkey against Russia. You generally do NOT want to see Russia/Turkey form; this alliance has a terrific chance of beating you after Austria falls. Turkey, in particular, must be diverted from a Mediterranean campaign because England will eventually be fighting its way in. Russia/Austria is your best bet here. A major problem with England/Germany is lack of balance. England can often stab Germany to death, but the reverse is much more difficult. The problem is, Germany has no use whatsoever for any fleets, so England can justifiably request that none be built. The result is that the Englishman can land on the shores of the continent just about anywhere and anytime he damn well chooses, and Germany can do little but watch. To my way of thinking, this alone would probably be reason enough for Germany to build a fleet or two - as a deterrent. In any event, barring a stab, Germany will be in for a long, drawn-out war with the southern or eastern winner(s) in the Tyrolia-Bohemia-Warsaw-Moscow area, while England expands into Iberia and Italy a bit faster. Except for Holland, Denmark, and Sweden; England would probably hold all the northern coastal centers; with Germany holding those three plus all the inland centers.

England/Russia is a less common alliance, and I'm going to give it a briefer mention. Frequently these two will join forces in the mid-game out of necessity, such as when things go wrong with other alliances that have been made. England might offer Norway to Russia in exchange for Kiel and Denmark, but the pair can work out the arrangements in several different ways. The northern Russian fleet may have to be annihilated for England's well-being, but if Russia holds Norway this should be acceptable. Once this alliance gets rolling, it is hard to stop. But I personally haven't been witness to many occasions where this alliance does in fact get rolling.

A mid-game alliance with Italy is certainly a good alternative. England will start by allying with either France or Germany and wiping out the other, but Italy will later join with England in a stab of the power in the middle. In this alliance, the parties will probably agree to leave their naval forces out of the area around Iberia.

And, of course, a cross-board pact with Austria or Turkey can be devastating. Especially if the ally is Turkey, the rest of the board, starting around 1905 or so, can be crushed in a "squeeze play" between the two witches. This alliance probably will not form solidly in the early going; both partners must first gain a dominant position on their own half of the board.

Finally, mention must be made of the western triple (E/F/G) alliance. For England, this is a terrific option. More often than not, the triple will make some headway before France or Germany gets the knife, but England is the least likely of the three to be stabbed. Not to sound overly pessimistic; this alliance can also hang together and rule the entire board in short order.

So, in conclusion, England has a wealth of good options and is a relatively safe and easy country to play. A bit of advice to the beginner: avoid the pitfall of using the abbreviation "Nor"; England's opening moves can be screwed up immensely by this trivial little oversight.

For many are the Englishmen have perished in the war,
By dreaming up the perfect plan, but ord'ring fleets to Nor.

Avoid that trap, build fleets early, and choose your ally slowly and carefully; and you should do well as England.

((This article was written in 1980. I still have a few golden oldies like this in my files. Looking back over it, I see a number of points that I now disagree with, especially the very limited attitude I had toward English openings. So don't take it as gospel. Just take it as the enthused scribblings of a hobby novice who had nothing better to do on a lunch hour four years ago...))

I like my more recent negotiations-type articles much better than this.))

The following information regarding DipCon 1984 comes from Al Pearson, Box 898, Charles Town, WV 25014.

The 1984 DipCon will take place in Dallas, Texas, in association with the 1984 Origins. Due to scheduling difficulties with the proposed university site, the dates and location have been changed. The new dates are June 21-24, and the con will be held at the Market Hall Convention Center and at two local hotels.

The current schedule calls for a two-round Diplomacy Tournament for Saturday and Sunday. Round one will start at 1:00 PM on Saturday with random board assignments. Round two will start at 8:30 AM on Sunday and will be seeded based on the round one results.

The DipCon Society meeting will be held at 9:00 PM on Saturday night. At least one variant tournament is scheduled for Friday, and a panel discussion is being planned for Saturday morning.

Origins plans to start sending out preregistration info in early March. Delta Airlines has agreed to a 30% discount on airfares to Dallas for this event. Further info can be obtained from Al Pearson by anyone interested. Alas, your humble editor is going to pass up Origins this year in favor of KabinKon and maybe KaneKon.

Well, pretty brief issue here, yeah? Some letters (Beyerlein, Reilly, Woodson, Peery, Brown) are being held over till next time as I didn't have time or space to type 'em all up for this ish. This is a long weekend thanks to George's Birthday, but I've been a bit under the weather for several days, plus I'm heading into Albany as soon as I get this in the mail on Saturday, and down to Hannacroix to visit my favorite ex-student on Monday, leaving less time than I'd like to get this issue together. Plus, there are some new and, um, exciting changes going on in my life right about now, which I hope to be able to share with all of you before too long. And no, I don't mean that I'm signing up for a new Diplomacy game...

BRUX

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