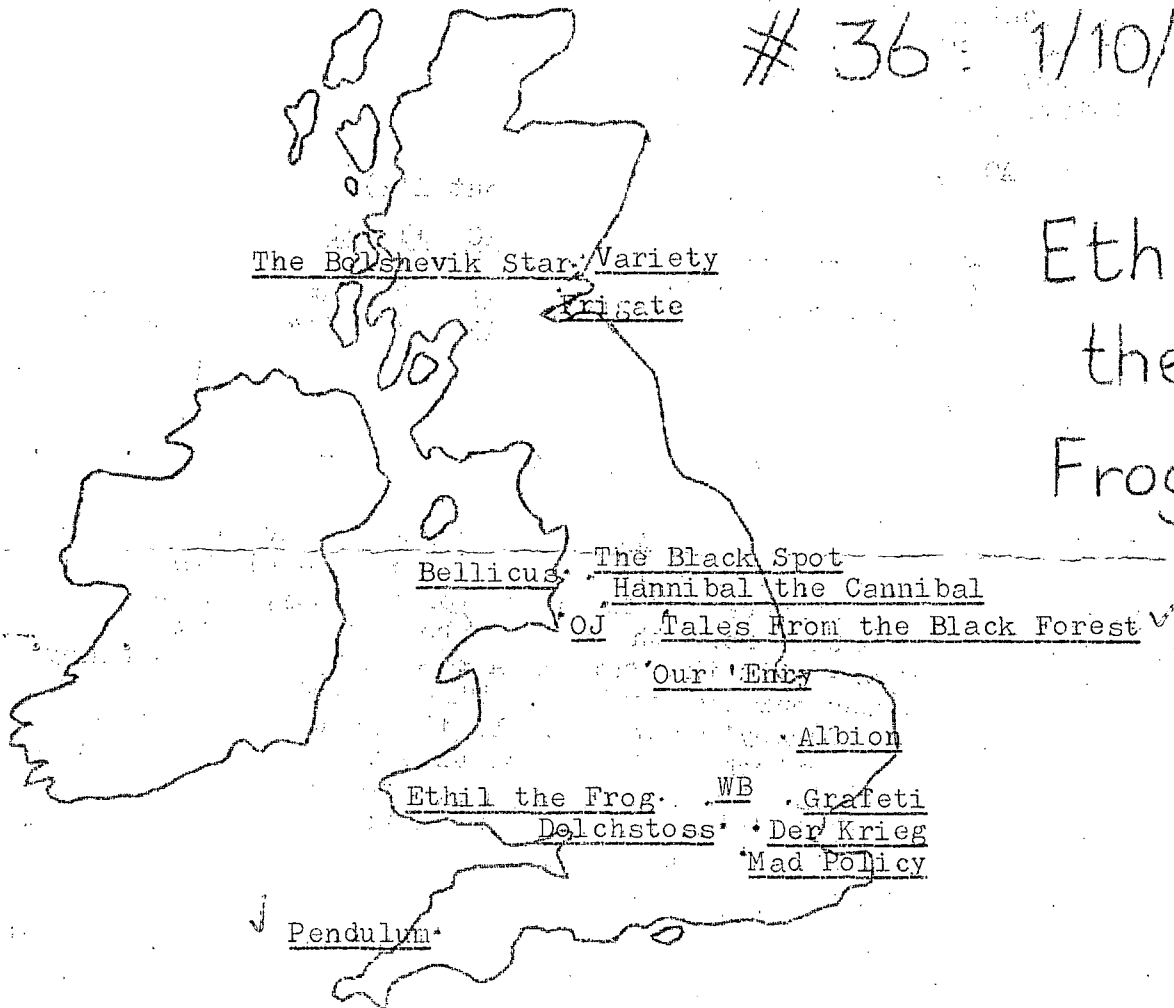


# 36 1/10/73

Ethil  
the  
Frog



Edited by John Piggott, Jesus College, Cambridge, CB5 8BL, U.K.; and printed by Ian Maule. Rates are 10/60p inland (or 17/£1.01); 4/£1 airmail, 8/£1 third class overseas. This is Tapeworm Publication No. 44 and the circulation is still 89.

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News and Notes

Those poor, misguided fools among you who read 1901 and all that will have seen the computer-generated version of Charles Schulz' "Snoopy" on the cover of a recent issue. Andrew Holt is providing these computer pictures, and he just sent me one. Unfortunately, it is 99 characters wide... Anyone got a micro-elite typewriter they have no use for?

Brian Yare, hated publisher of Grafeti, has found a job near London. I'll look forward to thrashing him at a few games when the NGC meetings reopen. Hope your salary's nice and high, Brian, 'cos I drink an awful lot...

My postal Scrabble game against the Walkerdines proceeds slowly. After three turns each, though, I am comfortably in the lead - gloat, gloat. I am about to start another game, against Richard Sharp; the GM for this one will be Peter Dean, who beat me in my first game. I do love these incestuous relationships - don't you?

The annual SF achievement awards (Hugos) were dished out in Toronto early last month. The best novel award went to THE GODS THEMSELVES, by Isaac Asimov, which will be published shortly by Panther. It's already available from Gollancz.

Congratulations to Graham Jeffery for winning the second Diplomacy competition in Games and Puzzles. Wish I'd found time to enter myself, now - I could have done with that five quid...

Some of you are sending me coins through the post. This is unsafe, as well as being against postal regulations. If you want to send me small sums of money, it is a much better idea to send unused British postage stamps - I do use the things, so it's no hassle. Okay?

1972K Finale - Spring 1916

Magazine: ETHIL THE FROG (issues 2-31). GM: John Piggott. Start: 31/1/72

ENGLAND: Phil Jones (out A04).

GERMANY: Andy Davidson (out A15).

RUSSIA: Graham Jeffery (drew A15).

TURKEY: Kevin Feintuck (out A03).

AUSTRIA: Peter Robertson (drew A15).

ITALY: Ian Maule (out A05).

FRANCE: David Christianson (dro S09), Jeff Oliver (out A12).

	<u>00</u>	<u>01</u>	<u>02</u>	<u>03</u>	<u>04</u>	<u>05</u>	<u>06</u>	<u>07</u>	<u>08</u>	<u>09</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>
ENGLAND	3	3	3	2	-											
GERMANY	3	5	6	7	11*	12*	11	12	13	13	10	8	8*	6	3	-
RUSSIA	4	6	8	9	7	6	7	6	8*	9	11	13*	15**	15	16*	17
TURKEY	3	4	2	-												
AUSTRIA	3	5	6	9*	10	10	10	9	8*	9	9	10	11	13	15	17
ITALY	3	4	4	2	1	-										
FRANCE	3	5	5	5	5	6	6	7	5	3	4*	3	-			

Official Austrian Version

As the Autumn of 1901 drew to a close, Austria entered the European conflict when savagely attacked by Turkish forces. The bridge-building service of the Austro-Hungarian Finance and Exploitation Company, based in Trieste, repulsed enemy units back across the Serbian border. War was declared and, after consultations with the Russian Ambassador, an anti-Turkey defence league was set up between our two nations. Through 1902, forces were built up while we held off Turkey's attacks. In the Autumn a massive attack on Bulgaria and a Russian attack on Ankara so unnerved the Turk that he was unable to issue orders to his troops, who fled in terror.

This success saw relations with Italy depress somewhat; but England became most friendly, and we revoked a secret declaration of war which had been sent him for writing insulting letters!

Turkish forces continued to retreat through 1903, which enabled us to occupy Rumania. We then launched an attack on Italy, capturing Naples. Italy's damaging effect on our overseas markets for the Austro-Hungarian Finance Co. had promised to become more serious, and French appeals for help against Italy could not be ignored. Venice was speedily captured, Rome followed shortly afterwards and Italy collapsed.

Germany, meanwhile, had double-crossed Russia, and since Turkey was no more and Italy merely a blot in Tunis, we agreed to build defensive fortifications to prevent German expansion East and South. Before plans were complete, however, Germany captured Warsaw and drove into the heart of Russia. Shortly afterwards he attacked Austria's borders, using enormous forces which had been gathered after England's defeat. In 1905 Austria fared badly, but at last France entered the war against Germany, having failed to make any headway in attacking Austrian-controlled regions of Italy. 1906 was no better, with the battle so fierce and casualties so high; unit after unit was disbanded and reformed behind the lines. Brilliant Russian counterattacks pushed the Germans back in 1907 while Austria reeled from German and French attacks, losing ground against Germany. Germany's success prompted him to invade France, which took the pressure off Austria's west flank in 1908, enabling us to rush troops from Italy to the besieged capital of Vienna. The French President disappeared, and Germany carved France asunder while Austrian forces hung on grimly.

The new French government declared its sympathy with our aims to defeat Germany, and at the same time Austria allowed her ally Russia to re-occupy certain areas of the Balkans to increase the size of her forces. Treachery was suspected by the GM, but Russia occupied Rumania and Bulgaria with Austria's blessing, since the Austrian Emperor was at this time in hospital suffering from injuries received directing his armies at the front.

Tunis was captured, and joint Russo-Austrian attacks threw Germany back in 1909, but while Russia invaded Germany, the German troops, unable to retreat, threw their full force against Austria's main cities. Disaster then struck for Germany: his master spy was caught in the act and executed, leaving his forces paralysed without knowledge of our intentions. 1910 and 1911 saw Austrian troops on the offensive, capturing Munich, while Germany tried to crush the remains of France out of revenge for their changing sides. Austro-Russian forces rolled through Europe, pushing Germany out of his

homeland and trying to bolster France's bold stand. Finally, in 1912 his remaining bases were handed to Austria by a France too confused and defeated to carry on. Germany was then systematically squeezed, till he was finally trapped in London and Paris in 1915, where his final extermination was celebrated by the victory of the allies who won with a draw, and the longest convoy to show our joint mastery of the entire continent.

A thoroughly enjoyable game. Thanks to all, including the GM, but especially to Graham Jeffery in Russia there.

--- Franz Josef Robertson.

#### From Russia

I started the game with the idea of allying with Andy and either Austria or Turkey. I wrote off to all three (Andy and I had already discussed alliances before the game started, so things were already set up there). Pete Robertson was the only one, besides Andy, to reply; and so my mind was made up. I was anti-English and anti-Turkish.

As is obvious to anyone following the game, I've been allied with Austria from 1901, despite a brief period in the middle of the game when things seemed to go the other way.

My plans had gone well. Turkey was eliminated and England had to fall in a couple of turns. It was then that Andy turned on me; I was stupid, really, to leave myself so unprotected. Russia recoiled into instant defence, and it is only through the grace of God that I survived! I was lucky to have an ally in Austria, which did not waver despite his being attacked.

Then came a surprise move. Andy offered me an alliance to break the stalemate! I was to move my units against my old ally Austria, and then to attack him. I calculated that I had two turns before I need actually commit an aggressive act against Austria, and this was my chance! I had two turns with Andy off my back, after which I could strike back at the stabber.

The offer of alliance came so close to the deadline that I could not let Peter know what was going on. It must have been quite a shock to see me and Andy break off hostilities and turn towards him...

My stab on Andy was somewhat more effective than his on me. The end was a long time coming, but it was worth the slog. Pete and I decided to have a long convoy; initially it was to have been part of our campaign, but as time went on, our plans changed, and the convoy was extended just for the hell of it.

A fun game, and my thanks to all the other players for making it so. And thanks to you too, John!

#### GM's notes

This game shows the sheer power of a lasting alliance in a game of Diplomacy, where both parties really trust each other. Particularly interesting is the fact that, towards the end, Graham Jeffery did not stab his ally when he could have achieved the victory criterion easily by doing so; and that in the middle-game he chose to remain with Austria rather than throw his lot in with Germany (which would have spelled a fairly quick doom for Austria).

Some would say, however, that it isn't as much fun playing a game of Diplomacy where two players form a cast-iron alliance, as it is playing a more anarchic game. I've encountered this problem myself in face-to-face play, where sometimes the first task of five 'normal' players is to eliminate the other two who are sure to ally with each other and split the board between them without bothering to talk to anyone else. Of course, this all depends on how often it happens...

In terms of game-years, this game is nearly the longest in the history of British postal Diplomacy. Only one game exceeds its length, the famous Albion 69/2 which is still going strong, having reached 1924! Albion 70/4, which also ended recently, reached 1915, and is level second with this present game. I believe the longest game ever recorded reached 1928.

I think also that the convoy from Smyrna to St Petersburg, featured as a *jeu d'esprit* by the winners of this game in their last turn, here succeeded for the first time in postal history. No doubt I will be corrected if I'm wrong, but I don't think I am.

All in all, a very entertaining game. Many thanks to the players who made it so...

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On the next page is an article reprinted from Walter Buchanan's excellent gazette Hoosier Archives, by permission of the author and Mr Buchanan. Rates for foreign subscribers to HA are 8/\$2, 26/\$6 from Walter Buchanan, R.R.3, Lebanon, IN 46052, U.S.A. It comes out biweekly and features articles on good play, rating systems, and allied subjects, plus a demonstration game.

THE VIENNESE DILEMMA  
(Or, The Plague of Being Caught in the Middle)

by Len Lakofka

The players of Austria and Italy are both plagued with an almost insolvable problem - expansion. Both are threatened by the Eastern and Western steamrollers of Russia-Turkey and England-France. They do not have a clear path of co-operative expansion without running into each other or without causing some interesting cases of passing through each other's normal zones of expansion. Thus, their diplomacy is tied together.

Austria, effectively, has no tactical advantage since she can be raped by three countries in 1901 and can do nothing about it! Any aid for her plight would have to come from the West, and the countries of the West have their own fish to fry. Even if they do come to the rescue, they find Austria in ruin and almost hopelessly broken. The record of past Diplomacy games dramatically shows this fact. Austria is eliminated more than any other power.

Therefore, a discussion of tactical moves by Austria rely on diplomacy and the stab. It is fairly standard for tri to go to alb, and a bud-ser. An Austrian who abandons the Balkans is sure to fall prey to an Eastern power(s). The key for Austria is her strategic piece - a vie. It must set the tone for Austria's diplomatic mission, for the other pieces are tied to their Spring 1901 roles for 80% of the time.

A Vie can attack/defend by going to Galicia. A Vie can force a fight in the Balkans by going to Budapest if he feels Russia will not go to Galicia, or if he has a Russian ally. It can defend Trieste, but that is a poor ploy versus the Italian onslaught of a ven-tyr!, a rom-ven. It can make the super defence move of a vie-tyr(!), in anticipation of an Italian move there, or as an attack move in co-operation with Italy or a Western power. And finally, a vie can throw up his diplomatic hands in confusion and HOLD on tight.

The factors that control the movement of the Austrian pieces, played competently, are all diplomatic in nature. Austria's prime concern is to seek a firm understanding with Italy. This understanding should neutralise Tyrolia and safeguard it against German intervention, and neutralise the Adriatic. The goal is to have Italy go west while maintaining interest in mutual defence against Turkey. Secondarily, a treaty with Italy to attack Turkey is next on the line of priorities. Why second, and not first?

As Italy goes, so go the other major spheres of influence. If Italy goes east, then two Western powers grow at the expense of the third. If Italy goes west, then two Eastern powers grow at the expense of the third. But if Italy keeps her fingers in both pies, then no dramatic shift should be seen.

If Austria can't obtain a friend in Italy, her problems will be terrific! She has then to gain an alliance with Russia or Turkey versus the other. Yet this is fraught with problems. Russia and Turkey can be powerful allies, much to Austria's chagrin, and Italy can form an excellent alliance with Russia, and secondarily Turkey, to crush the Austrian homeland to pieces. Note the Italian-Russian alliance is more deadly because it pincers the Austrian homeland, while the Turkish-Italian alliance only attacks the Balkans in a pincer.

So if Austria has Eastern allies and/or an alliance with Turkey, how can she move?

(1) Ally with Italy, neutral or ally with Turkey, hostile Russia. Her best a vie move is to Galicia, to prevent occupation by Russia. Since alb-gre will not be challenged, a ser can aid in attacks on Rumania.

(2) Ally with Italy, neutral or ally with Russia, hostile Turkey. a vie-bud is favoured to allow a ser to shift to Greece while Serbia can harass Bulgaria.

(3) Ally with Italy, neutral Eastern powers. This is a toss-up. a vie-bud is favoured only if Galicia will remain open. It gives you Balkan mobility. a vie-gal or tri(?) does not. a vie hold offers the promise of a dull opening with no vigour or momentum. A tepid Austria is fair game!

(4) Neutral Italy, ally with Russia, neutral Turkey. a vie-tri has a little favour as a temporary move. a vie hold is also adequate. An attack on Italy is not favoured because the Turkish direction is unclear.

(5) Semi-hostile to neutral Italy, ally with Russia and Turkey. Now you get to act cute! a vie-bud!?, a bud-ser, f tri-ven!? This move interrupts the Italian shift of armies and prevents Italy from acting effectively. a vie went to bud because a ser-gre, a bud-ser may be required.

(6) Hostile Italy, ally with Turkey, neutral Russia. f tri-alb, a vie-tyr!, a bud-ser is almost required. This blocks the most damning Italian opening versus Austria of a ven-tyr, a rom-ven. The fleet and army shift to tri and tyr may be too bold as a war-gal could break you wide open.

(7) Hostile Italy, ally with Russia, neutral Turkey. This is getting tough! You can't cover everything, but a vie-tyr, a bud-ser, f tri-alb is probably favoured. a vie-tri is colourless, but f tri-ven, a vie-bud, a bud-ser, or f tri-ven, a vie-tyr, a bud-ser can be played. The latter throws back the Italian aggression but it lays you open to Turkey in Greece or Serbia.

(8) Everybody neutral. I don't know either! a vie plays by itself is best, I suppose. It offends no-one - well, almost no-one!

(9) Hostile Italy and/or hostile Russia or Turkey. Take up bridge playing, seriously. Forget the debate team.

Fall 1901 moves by Austria are usually defensive, but some bizarre attacks are open:

A. From a ser, a bud, f alb,

(1) you can explode with a bud-rum s by a ser (and hopefully Turkish a bul or f bla);

(2) f alb-ion!, a bud-rum! s by a ser;

(3) a ser-gre, f alb-ion, a bud-ser.

B. From a tyr, f alb, a ser,

(1) a tyr-pie?!, f alb-gre with a ser supporting. Build f tri & a vie;

(2) a tyr-ven or tri is far from outlandish;

(3) a tyr-mun is another story entirely.

C. From f adr, a tri, a tyr - how did you get into that position, von Metzke?

To conclude this mess we need to observe one giant problem and a few facts. In many Italian wins, we find an early attack on Austria; in many Austrian wins, we find Italy being attacked before 1904. So how do you get Italy to ally? You both need satellite alliances against other powers so you can proceed independently and have your final alliance when your foes are out of the way! Therefore, when writing your country preference list - pick England, Turkey or France!

(( This article first appeared in Hoosier Archives 67, and appears here by permission of the author and of Walter Buchanan. Many thanks to both. ))

### The Mick Bullock Column

A group of Royal Engineers wanted to cross a jungle river by means of a rope. The problem lay in getting the rope across, for the stream was wide and full of crocodiles.

The cros got the first volunteer, so the Sergeant yelled: "Sapper Bullock! Strip off and swim across with the line!"

Brigadier Ethilfrog was horrified - Bullock hadn't even volunteered. But by the time he protested, Bullock was halfway across the river. The crocodiles swam up to him, nosed about, sniffed, and went away again.

The rope fast, the rest of the soldiers crossed safely. On the other bank, the Brigadier asked the Sergeant how he'd known that Bullock would cross safely. The Sergeant told him to examine Bullock's backside. On one buttock was tattooed: "1901 and all that for Calhamer Award", and on the other "Liverpool City League Champions".

"I see," said the Brigadier. "Not even a crocodile would swallow that, hey?"

(( All characters fictitious. Any similarity to real persons is purely intentional. ))

Let's continue with the humour (?) for a bit... turn the page.

An innocent though voluptuous girl went to work in a broom factory. The foreman was annoyed when she gave notice to quit, so he asked her why she wasn't staying.

"It's all the stuff you handle in this place," explained the girl. "It's made me ill." She went on to explain how, since handling the black bristles on the brooms, a lot of hairs had started to grow between her legs. The foreman explained that this happened to everyone and that there was no cause for alarm; but she was unconvinced and eventually the foreman took her into the toilet and dropped his pants to prove it to her.

"Blimey," said the girl. "You've got it worse than me - you've grown the broom's handle as well."

An Englishman visited America and was told a joke there. An American said to him: "There was a girl walking down the street who was passed by a man walking, a man on a bicycle, a man on horseback and a man in a car. Which man knew her?" Our hero gave up and was told, "The horseman knew her."

The limey didn't think it was terribly funny, and a few weeks later, after he'd returned home, he told his friend: "Funny sense of humour they have in America. For instance, I'll tell you one of their stupid jokes. There was a young lady walking down the road. She was passed by a pedestrian, a bicyclist, an equestrian and a motorist. Which man knew her?"

"I don't know," confessed the friend.

"Well, would you believe the American answer is 'Horseshit'?"

(( This Transatlantic Terror was Tendered by Fred Davis. His address is 5307 Carriage Ct, Baltimore, MD 21229. Readers are reminded that attempts to convey explosives through the postal system may result in prosecution. ))

#### L E T T E R S

EDI BIRSAN The debate on the IDA in Ethil is quite interesting on rereading the material for a second or third time. My initial reaction is usually to disbelieve my eyes at what is being said. So what's to be done?

1. One group is attacking the IDA simply because it is an organisation. These people can probably be slowly won over only by action, and are not very accessible to reason, I fear.

2. Another group of people seem to be warm to the idea of organisation, but they want it to be a British-dominated national organisation. Actually, I can't decide if they are so much pro-national as merely anti-American. With them I and many other Americans have sympathy for we don't want an American organisation either... that's why the name is International Diplomacy Association. The problem of nationalism or anti-American nationalism (or whatever the hell it's called these days) is tied to another theme in the debate: simple and pure fear that the US/Canadian branch of the hobby is going to dominate and do something terrible to the British players, GM's and mom's Yorkshire pudding. But I see nothing, totally nothing, in terms of actions that the US players and GM's can do that would correspond, in reality, to a takeover. In short, what the hell is everybody afraid of? What do they think we are going to do to them? I think you'll discover there is no real logical basis for the fear. If you find something substantial that is bothering everybody, then get it out into the open and we'll solve it... but for god's sake we can't deal with a phantom motive for behaviour.

As for the Calhamer Awards, the titles were left undefined to allow each person to set his own criteria for achievement. If the hobby thought that the outstanding player was the one who won the most games ((Edi Birsan...?)) there would be no vote on the matter as it would be a statistical search. Instead, the Council thought that since there is no accepted measure of achievement in the hobby, we thought that we would just leave it up to the players to decide for themselves.

When you consider that over 100 people voted at very short notice, you can see there is great support for such awards and they will continue for as long as demand exists for such a service.

I had hoped that there would be a published list of all the nominees, with some discussion on them, prior to the voting. Unfortunately, this year there wasn't enough time for the IDA to do the publication, and instead we asked for publishers to print segments and the like of nominees in the various press categories. However, only Arena was able to print the nominees' works in the press region, and I was only able to find five of those press releases

for reprinting. We now know how people would like to see the job done, and now we have to find the people, time and money to see to it that the job is done.

(( I said a few words about the Calhamer Awards in etf 29 & 30, in reply to some rather silly comments from Mike Sherrad; I also wrote a lengthy letter to the Diplomacy Review detailing the things I thought were wrong with the awards organisation this year. Happy to say, most of my suggestions will be incorporated in the structure of the things the next time. Among my suggestions were more time for voting, tighter definitions of the categories (e.g., what period of time is covered), and the description of nominees which Edi mentions above. Probably it will not be possible to provide a truly impartial structure for the awards - 'irrelevant' factors such as circulation size will always play their part - but at least the effort will be made. ))

GREGORY WARD It has become a common practise for people to immediately design a Diplomacy variant whenever they spot a situation involving four or more antagonistic powers, whether in fiction or in history. Some people (no names, just an address: 54 South Tay Street, Dundee) even hunt for such situations, and design variants at the rate of about one a week. (Come to think of it, I designed a variant in three seconds the other week). It is largely hit-and-miss whether such games are successful. Diplomacy itself is a much more well-constructed game than something like Third Age, but I have enjoyed Ethil 'H' game far more than any regular games I have played. This is simply because postal Diplomacy-type games are a form of escapism (and I don't mean that in any derogatory sense), and a fictional situation, particularly one with the scope for personification of The Lord of the Rings, provides a greater spring-board for fantasy. Thus the letters, the press and even the normally mundane business of writing orders are likely to hold more interest. This is amply demonstrated by comparing the sheer volumes of press in, say, Ethil's Third Age games and War Bulletin's variants with that of, say, Der Krieg's regular games and Ethil's earlier regular games (in issue 19 there were 4 consecutive games without press). Surely that is a reliable indication of how much games are enjoyed? So, while many variants are, to the purist, terrible simply as games, with ludicrously unequal balances of power (and to the pedant totally unlike the situation they are supposed to represent), the players themselves seem to enjoy them more, and any carping on the technical side is surely ignoring the basic point of any game; that is, to entertain, divert and amuse its players.

(( Nice to see one of the players agreeing with the remarks I made way back in etf 18 about how variant games are more fun from the press release point of view than are regular games. I suspect it's more complex than that, however. Despite all the horrible nasty evil foul things I said in etf 34 about Third Age, I think it's still one of the better variants I've played; and I would expect that any variant which proved too intransigent from the playability point of view would soon lose its press. It'll be interesting to see what happens to Sherbet's Future War game... ))

(( Also, if press is the reason people play variants, how do you explain Andy Davidson's presence among the variant players? Care to tell us, Andy? ))

Incidentally, The Bolshevik Star has already established a tradition of printing terrible variants (in my opinion) such as Allah Akba'ar, Logical Diplomacy, etc. Woops, you're playing in both! Oh well; I can see the appeal of such games, but I don't share it. Somewhere I have a comment by John Lettice about Allah Akba'ar: in answer to a scathing criticism of it, he wrote, "I agree with you about Allah Akba'ar; it'll grind to a halt in no time". The wit and wisdom of John Lettice, 9/8/73. That took some finding - he has this nasty habit of writing 22-page letters, and stapling them upside-down in the wrong order.

(( Well, well, well. Can we believe our eyes? Is this the same person who is running a game of Allah Akba'ar in the Bolshevik Star for a quid a throw? And wasn't it John Andrew Carnegie Lettice (ho, what an apt name, there!) who made such a fuss about my 'hypocrisy' in splitting up the Frog? Dear me, one never knows who to trust these days... ))

(( Just how did your great-grand-uncle get rich, Mr Cauliflower? ))

(( As for my presence in the Allah Akba'ar game, I can only plead that I didn't inspect the game before signing up. I've not very enthusiastic about it now - I'm Saladin, for those acquainted with the game, and am forced into conflict with Cairo for the entire game, I reckon. My own fault for being too

impetuous, of course. Allan Ovens' Logical Diplomacy is in my opinion a little uninspired, but at least it's balanced - every player has an exactly equal chance to win as the board's hexagonally symmetric! ))

WILL HAVEN From my own personal point of view, I find that I tend to agree with you in adopting a restrictive policy towards games - Ethil would be a lot more interesting to me if it did let its games run down and had more interesting articles - though heaven save us from your bloody awful book reviews! - and it is now sufficiently venerable, and has a wide enough audience, to sustain such a policy. I wish I could do it with Son, but the trouble is it isn't established enough.

I don't think, generally speaking, Ethil is as good as it was - but then you don't need to be told that! - it's saddening, but somehow I feel that the first generation of wargaming zines, by which I mean War Bulletin, Ethil, Moeshoeshoe (any others?) and Bellicus, seem to be subject to a gradual but perceptible decline in quality, whereas the newer zines, with a few notable exceptions, aren't up to anything like as good. They contain games, yes, but any brainless moron (as I feel some editors are!) can GM games with a modicum of success; and what other content have they? It seems to consist of a trivial editorial rambling, which, okay, is traditional to some extent, but ~~nothing else. Not one of them is even making an attempt to produce articles~~ and items of interest with which to fill their zines - except for Dolchstoss, which is fast becoming one of my favourite zines.

And what of the current fad of putting boring, ancient 'jokes' in zines to pad them out? Even the word "jokes" jibes! Is this what postal Diplomacy has come to?

Makes me quite sad, really, and I can well see why you - and, I might add, myself - are getting to some degree a bit tired of the continued child-like activities of a few zine editors.

(( Indeed, yes; I used to await the arrival of each zine with an anticipation close on worship, but I find some of the latest creations (from both sides of the Atlantic, incidentally) distinctly uninspiring. Sometimes I get the impression that an editor has lost his initial enthusiasm for GMing, but has kept up the publishing habit - a fatal combination. I suspect quite a few publishers have been quite shocked to find that being a GM isn't as much fun as being a player, though personally I still like both sides; and, of course, it isn't all that easy to fold a mag once it's got going.

(( However, with the number of zines over here continually increasing, one can say that at least the discerning reader can make a choice as to which publications he subscribes to.

(( I wonder what the other publishers over here think of Will's letter? It would be interesting to know. It's reasonably obvious which publishers Will refers to - so do any of them care to blast back at him? ))

ETHIL THE FROG 36

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