

# The League of the Last Days

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Welcome to the second issue of *The League of the Last Days* – a free irregular zine which aims to discuss life, the universe and everything connected with the rise and fall of postal Diplomacy. This zine is available on the Internet and hardcopies are also available by post free to anyone in the UK who would like a copy – provided you write and ask to be put on the mailing list. Overseas readers must content themselves with the free version available on the Internet (sorry).

This issue is being put together on my nice new laptop in the sitting room (as Esme is using the study) and no doubt you've all noted my new address which is:

**Stephen Agar, 4 Cedars Gardens, BRIGHTON, BN1 6YD**

Well, the new house is looking almost nice now – though clearly the decorating still needs to be sorted out. After a few false starts I did finally manage to get a wireless network up and running, which means that our 2 PCs and my new laptop can all share the broadband connection (which is kept permanently on by the router). The three computers can also exchange files, use each others printers etc. which has proved useful once or twice.

I have found it very difficult to going back to commuting after nearly two weeks off over Christmas. If someone had told me ten years ago that I would end up spending 4½ hours every day going to and from work I would have thought that they were mad. Not only is it a waste of a substantial portion of my life, it is stressful, tiring, and it means I see very little of the children during the week. If I have an early meeting, getting up at 5.30am is not uncommon and I rarely get home before 8.00pm (usually later). It is particularly miserable in the winter as all travelling is done in the dark – and as everyone knows the train service these days is truly crap. And it costs a fortune – my annual season ticket was £3,876 last year – and that's after a discount to recognise the appalling service from the previous year. It is only the aforementioned iPod that makes commuting bearable.

I was a bit surprised the other day when Freddie (age 7) asked me if I was a “homeowner”. When I confirmed that I was, he went on to tell me that on the TV there are nice people who are waiting to help me. This puzzled me a bit until I remembered that at least 25% of the commercials on Cartoon Network seem to be for secured credit, debt consolidation etc. You know the sort of thing, members of the general public (who usually come across as educationally sub-normal) in their sitting rooms saying how Moneybags Finance changed their life and they would recommend them to anyone. Now I am sure there is a role for such companies (though I think they could do with a bit more regulation), but it strikes me as a bit odd that the channel they seem to advertise on the most is Cartoon Network. Do people on low incomes and with lots of debt sit around during the day watching cartoons? Seems unlikely to me, but I guess these companies should know their market.

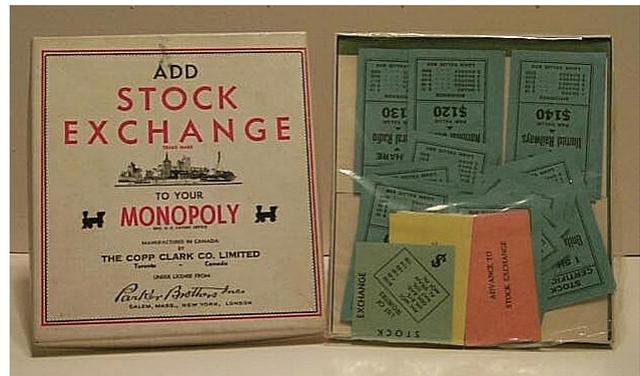
Personally I don't like debt – a hangover from having an overdraft for pushing ten years, which at its worst hit over £11,000. At the moment the only debt I have is the mortgage - I use a credit card, but its is paid off every month in total by direct debit, something many credit card companies don't even let you do. I think the trouble with times when interest rates are low is that it tempts people into debt because it is affordable, but then you don't have the inflation to erode the size of the debt. The economists at work maintain that when inflation is low the priority should be to pay off debt and that seems intuitively right to me. The £300K mortgage we have seems ridiculously large to me and I think my New Years resolution will be to start overpaying to reduce the capital quicker. After all, it isn't worth saving at the moment because inflation and tax mean that saving actually erodes the capital. God, I really have become middle aged, I haven't I? I'll be talking about pensions next.

Talking about debt, one thing that we must do this year is put double glazing into the front of the house. The back of the house has been done, but the front has 1930's leaded windows, which are generally buckled and drafty (not to mention a security risk). But the idea of talking to a double glazing firm is rather daunting, given the horror stories of hard selling and the difficulty of telling if you have been given a competitive price. I found a *Which* report on the Internet which said that over 75% of people had

problems with getting double glazing installed and that national firms often quoted prices double of those offered by smaller regional firms. There is quite a lot to do to this house – double glazing, new conservatory, new garage door, loft conversion etc. – and all involve me in finding quality suppliers at a decent price. But how do you go about doing it? Even contacting some of these companies is a nightmare, not to mention the inconvenience of arranging appointments at home. If only there was such a thing as a Small Building Work Project Manager who would take all the hassle away (including having the inevitable rows with builders over defects) then I would gladly pay for the service. Maybe it is only me who gets stressed out by these sort of things.

But life is also about having quality time with your children. Yesterday I spent 2½ hours playing *Monopoly* with the kids – the *Simpsons* version – and I must confess to having forgot what a rubbish game *Monopoly* is. It really isn't enjoyable at all. You spend half the game trying to build sets at the mercy of dice throws, then the remainder of the game on the verge of insolvency. Eventually one player is kind enough to build so much on Mayfair (or Burns' Mansion in this case) to bankrupt anyone who lands on it. Then after another 15 minutes or so of waiting to land on the fateful space, the other players eventually do (Freddie's eyes inevitably filling with tears as he loses all his money and property) and the game is over. Have I missed something? Why oh why is this game so popular? By the way, anyone else remember Victor Logan and his rules for Advanced Monopoly? Could anything redeem this terrible game? I have read some good reports of the Stock Exchange add-on which Parker Bros. published in 1936 (the year after the original game) the original rules for which can oddly enough be found on the Hasbro website at

<http://www.hasbro.com/common/instruct/StockExchangegame.pdf>



Anyway, I would certainly welcome advice on quality family games to play with kids aged 7 and 9 – preferably ones that don't last more than an hour. After all, you can have too much quality time with children.

### The Future of the Zine Archive

I still remain committed to looking after the Hobby's heritage – but the time has come to do something about the huge amount of space the whole thing takes up. Since we moved I still haven't got around to getting the Zine Archive out of storage (I need a new garage door first to weatherproof the garage) – but a 21<sup>st</sup> century solution is called for. Therefore I have decided to scan the lot and make the archive available on DVD. Of course this will take time – but it is surprisingly quick given I have a scanner with an automatic document feeder (although colour paper can be a pain). But I need guidance as to what do I do with the originals? Which should I keep? Which should I try and find a new home for? Which should I scrap? Also, for the technical minded amongst you – am I doing the right thing by scanning them as B&W 300dpi and saving them as PDFs? Any suggestions gratefully received.

I guess in the ideal world we would keep all the originals – so does anyone have a spare decent sized room that they are willing to fill up with old zines? Anyone out there with a 4 bedroom house all to themselves? If that pleas fails (and I suspect it will), I would really appreciate guidance as to which originals to keep? Do I go for complete sets of some zines (*Albion?* *Dolchstoss?* *Mad Policy?* *Greatest Hits?*), or do I go for sample issues of a wide number of zines? Or what? Does anyone care other than me? If I don't get any comments then I will just do whatever I feel like, so if you do care please express a view.

### UK Zines Seen during the Last Days

As part of an experiment as to how long it takes to scan zines, I scanned all zines received since the last issue of this humble rag (about 12 weeks). However, there really wasn't that many of them. So I also need some help in identifying zines I haven't got for the archive (just let me know which ones I've missed and I'll subscribe) and any help with any of the missing issues. So, the only zines I've received since last issue (up to 1/1/04) are:

**Bloodstock** – issues 162-165. Openings for: United; Outpost; Acquire; Intimate Dip. Contact: Mick Haytack, 43 Swanmore Road, Littleover, Derby, DE23 3SD.

**Borealis** – issue 54. No openings. Contact: Ian Harris, 36 Brecon Place, Perkinsville, Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham, DH2 1HY.

**Cut & Thrust** – issues 222 – 224. Openings for: Horse Racing; Outpost; En Garde! Contact: Derek Wilson, 1 Juniper Road, Horndean, Waterlooville, Hants., PO8 0DY.

**For Whom The Die Rolls** - issues 100 -103. Openings for: 18xx; 6 nimmt!; Acquire; Diplomacy; Lancashire railways; New England Railways; Outpost; Battle!; Bus Boss; Dungeonquest; Railway Rivals; Sideline. Contact: Keith Thomasson, 14 Stepnells, Marsworth, Nr. Tring, Herts., HP23 4NQ.

**Greatest Hits** - issues 263 – 264. No openings. Contact: Pete Birks, Top Flat, 4 Lewisham hill, Lewisham, London, SE13 7EJ.

**Hopscotch** - issues 205 – 206. Openings for: Bus Boss; Golden Strider; Tribute; Middleman. Contact: Alan Parr, 6 Longfield Gardens, Tring, Herts., HP23 4DN.

**Obsidian** - issue 124. Openings for Diplomacy, Aberration III, Gunboat, Intimate Dip, Woolworth II-D, Breaking Away, Civilization, Eat Me!; Golden Strider; Grand Slam; Middleman; Snowball Fighting; Scrabble; Secrets; Tribute; Tutankhamun; 18xx; Titan; Silverton; Maneater; WWI Diplomacy. Contact: Alex Richardson, 86 Strathmore Avenue, Hitchin, Herts., SG5 1ST.

**Ode** - issues 249- 252. Openings for: Diplomacy; Gunboat; Seismic Dip; Bus Boss; Acquire; Railway Rivals. Contact: John Marsden, 91 Westwood Avenue, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 9RS.

**Ratadan** - issue 133 (have I missed some?). Openings for: Yellowbeard II; Mare Mediterraneum; Maneater; Diplomacy; Downfall; Age of Steam. Contact: Nigel Gould-Smith, The Old Barn, Knowle Village, Budleigh Salterton, Devon, EX9 6AP.

**Sprouts of Wrath** - issues 62 – 63. Openings for: Cleudo; Diplomacy; Gunboat. Contact: Mark Wightman, 52 Park Road West, Bedford, MK41 7SL.

**The Cunning Plan** - issues 115 – 118. Openings for: Diplomacy; Gunboat; Kraken. Contact: Neil Duncan, 25 Sarum Hill, Basingstoke, Hants., RG21 8SS.

**The Tangerine Terror** - issues 22 – 23. Openings for: Railway Rivals; 147 Break; Decathlon; Gridiron Morons; Euroliga; Rome; Boom Town; Advanced Postal Bobsleighbing; The One-Day Stuff; Dauntless; Royal Potrait; The Far Seas; Fantasy A&R; Deadwood. Contact: Howard Bishop, 43 Guinions Road, High Wycombe, HP13 7NT.

**Variable Pig** - issues 105 – 106. Openings for: Snowball Fighting; Café International; Golden Strider; Preposterous Prose. Contact: Jim Reader, Wethouder Gerssenlaan 27, 3454BA De Meern, The Netherlands.

**Where Is My Mind?** – issue 51. Openings for: Breaking Away; Golden Strider; Eat Me!; Work, Rest and Play; Matchplay Golf; Breaking Away. Contact: David Oya, 24 Kingsway, Banbury, OX16 9NY.

Omissions which spring to mind include **GAME** and **Strangitude**. And what happened to **Flight of Fancy**?

First, I must begin with giving my heartfelt congratulations to John Marsden for 250 issues of **Ode** and Keith Thomasson for 100 issues of **For Whom The Die Rolls** (which even included an entire game to celebrate). Well done, gentlemen.

Having spent a couple of hours scanning all those zines in, what do they tell us about the state of the hobby in the UK today? There are clearly a small number of incredibly reliable zines – **For Whom The Die Rolls**, **Ode**, **The Cunning Plan** etc., all of which are produced to a standard format – and I am not knocking it, how else can you turn out a quality zine to a regular timetable month after month after month? There are signs however that some of the formats look more and more tired as the circulations gradually drop, the feedback falls off, gamestarts take longer to fill and the page count decreases. In that sense it probably makes sense for there to be a certain thinning out of the ranks, so that a few viable zines remain. But what can't be replaced is the enthusiasm that newcomers to the postal hobby used to bring to it.

Now I would not normally criticise Neil Duncan, but **TCP** is becoming a bit of a bore due to Neil's constant sniping at Tony Blair over Iraq and his rabid anti-Americanism. Who else would Neil prefer in No.10? Michael Howard? And what's the real upset over this Iraq business – presumably Neil would prefer the war hadn't happened and Saddam was still around to torture and execute. OK, things are still pretty shitty over there, but they will improve and I have always been an advocate of the ends justifying the means. I just wish we would wage a few more of these wars to get rid of a few other regimes around

the world – particularly North Korea. Recent issues of *TCP* have also praised the TV program *Time Commanders*, which I must confess to finding a huge disappointment due to the TV company's insistence of using complete idiots as the "generals". Surely people with at least a passing interest in ancient history would be better than the general population who think that a cataphract is an eye problem.

Nice to see that *Obsidian* is still soldiering on, even with the last two issues printed as an A5 booklet which is a shade to small for my geriatric eyes. Especially when its printed on red paper. *Obsidian* has always been a favourite of mine, because Alex comes over as such a well-read, all round nice guy with interesting things to say. He's given up his 2<sup>nd</sup> hand book shop to become an online retailer – he'll be auctioning his really rare books on ebay next. Subzines from Bruce Edwards, Simon Cutforth and Andrew Fisher make it even more of a treat.

Another small but perfectly formed zine is *Borealis* – a soap opera of a zine documenting one man's struggle against the forces of the establishment in the NE of England. OK, it may not be the most regular of zines – but as a vehicle for staying o touch with like-minded souls, it's fine.

Next time I'll go through the foreign zines I see – all quality stuff such as *Graustark*, *Off The Shelf* and *The Abyssinian Prince*

### UK Zine Poll 2003

- |                           |                                       |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. For Whom The Die Rolls | 14. A League Of Our Own               |
| 2. Ode                    | 15. The Premier League                |
| 3. Hopscotch              | 16. Ref!                              |
| 4. The Cunning Plan       | 17. Devolution                        |
| 5. Sprouts of Wrath       | 18. ... mais n'est ce pas la gare?    |
| 6. Bloodstock             | 19. To Win Just Once                  |
| 7. Cut & Thrust           | 20. Minstrel                          |
| 8. Variable Pig           | 21. Striker                           |
| 9. The Tangerine Terror   | 22. Astradyne/Serendipity             |
| 10. Obsidian              | 24. Jumpers for Goalposts             |
| 11. Greatest Hits         | 25. Ninety Minutes                    |
| 12. The Blue Nose Special | 26. Oddball (highest new entry.       |
| 13. Where Is My Mind?     | 27. Pigbutton (Ratadan. /Track Events |

This time there were 59 votes in total – making it the fewest number of votes in a Zine Poll since the 3<sup>rd</sup> Poll back in March 1975 when the poll received only 54 votes spread between 29 zines (all of which ran Diplomacy). Many thanks to John Harrington for keeping this venerable institution going.

### The 2003 Postal Gaming Web Site Poll Results

So, Keith Thomasson succeeds in winning the **Web Site Poll** for the second year in succession, hotly pursued by Mike Dean's psychozine and Tom Tweedy's Dip2000 site once again. All three are excellent places in which to play games

### The 2003 Les Pimley Award

This award is presented every year to the person deemed to have made a significant contribution to the hobby, either during the year or over a period of time culminating in the year just gone. There was only one nomination this year and so the award goes posthumously the fondly remembered **Keith Loveys**.

### The Variant Bank

This has got quite out of date as 2003 has rushed past. However, my files are in the process of being updated and I have over 20 new variants to add to the VB, as well as some freshly scanned old variants to add to the website. On top of that I am fairly well advanced to creating a new web site for the variant bank using a database-driven design. I'll publish a list of new variants added next time, together with a short description. <http://www.variantbank.com>

### **2003 Hobby Awards**

The 2003 Don Miller Award for Meritorious Service goes to Chad Schroeder for running the Redscope diplomacy playing system - <http://www.redscope.com>

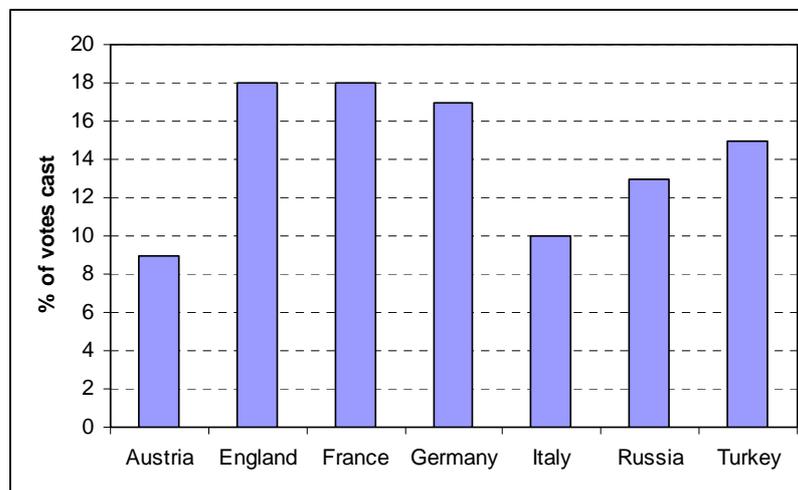
The 2003 Rod Walker Award for Literary Achievement goes to Paul Windsor for the article ``Persuasive Illogic'', in The Diplomatic Pouch 2002 Fall Movement - [http://devel.diplom.org/Zine/F2002M/Windsor/Persuasive\\_Illogic.html](http://devel.diplom.org/Zine/F2002M/Windsor/Persuasive_Illogic.html) - but also reprinted below.

The 2003 John Koning Award for Player Performance goes to Yann Clouet who led the Diplomatic Pouch Tournament Ratings at 2002 Year End - <http://devel.diplom.org/Face/DPTR/AllRatings.html>

The 2003 Fred Hyatt Award for GM Performance goes to Christine Stoy who is a Redscope and WorldMasters GM - [http://www.redscope.net/magazine/issue1\\_gmchristine.php](http://www.redscope.net/magazine/issue1_gmchristine.php)

Those awards tell the story of the Internet's domination of the hobby these days! Two of the four awards connected to the redscope website and the other two connected to the Diplomatic Pouch. That said, PaulWinsor's article is certainly a quality piece of work - it is a demonstration that there are still original articles around to be written.

### **Which is your Favourite Power in Diplomacy?**



A few months back I put a web poll on the [www.diplomacy-archive.com](http://www.diplomacy-archive.com) website, just for a bit of fun. Eventually 2057 votes were registered – although people can't be stopped from voting twice, it was made a little difficult as no more than one vote can be made from a single IP address – so someone couldn't vote twice in the same session. Anyway, 2057 is a lot of votes and overall the result should be fairly representative.

The results are a little different from what I expected. OK, Austria and Italy are clearly the least popular by quite a margin, but I was genuinely surprised that Russia came next – even behind Turkey. Personally I regard Turkey as quite a boring and limited country to play, while Russia at least has lots of options and statistically does quite well (except for FtF). Can people really prefer a Power which harder to eliminate to one which has more excitement and starts the game with four centres? No surprise that England, France and Germany are all well regarded – though perhaps it is more of a surprise that there is very little to choose between them. Why should players prefer Germany so much more than Russia, when in many respects they are very similar countries to play? Anyway, it is clear that people enjoy the western half of the board more than the eastern end.

### **Music Rediscovered**

As I have got older I think I have progressively listened to less and less music. Work is not like school – you don't bring your latest CD purchases into work and swap them around, nor do I have to write history essays in the dining room at the weekends to the strains of Mott the Hoople. The car is one place to play music, but the temptation is to play stuff I already know rather than branch out into contemporary music. However, now that I spend nearly four hours a day of my life commuting backwards and forwards to central London, I have started to listen to music in way I haven't done since I was a teenager. OK, I don't

have a peer group to introduce me to the latest musical sensation (maybe the kids will assist in this when they grow up just a bit more), but I don't mind buying a CD by an artist I am unfamiliar with on a whim in the hope I discover something I really like – though usually I don't.

One of the advantages of becoming middle-aged is that you reach a stage of your life where the best birthday presents are the ones you buy yourself. To celebrate turning forty three I indulged myself by buying a 40Gb iPod – that's a little device to play music on the train, which although smaller than packet of cigarettes can store the contents of about 900 CDs, maybe a bit more. However, the CDs don't magically get on to the iPod themselves, you have to "rip" them – i.e. extract the digital data from the CD and compile it into a format which the iPod can play – a process which takes a couple of minutes a CD. The whole process is made easier with the wonders of the Internet, as the software automatically connects to a database which downloads the names of the tracks and automatically names all the songs correctly.

Anyway, what I'm getting round to saying is that this has provided me with a marvellous excuse to go through all my CDs and actually rediscover albums which have lain unplayed for ages. Even though most of my vinyl was sacrificed to the trendy Goddess of Household Minimalism when we moved house a few months ago, CDs have been around long enough for me to have quite a few which haven't been played in the last decade (and even some which have never been played at all – I guess buying them must have seemed a good idea at the time). Now let's be honest, most of the CDs I own which are never played are never played for a good reason – and to save my blushes I won't embarrass myself by telling you of some of the crap I have bought over the years. However, some are really quite good and deserve to be rediscovered – so I thought I would share two or three of my discoveries with you.

How many people remember Stephen Duffy? He was a founder member of Duran Duran (with John Taylor and Nick Rhodes back in 1978), but left for a solo career before they had a hit!. He did manage a few hit singles himself in the mid-80's, and then disappeared into the Lilac Time (a slightly more acoustic and less successful version of the Beautiful South). Anyway, the Stephen Duffy album which I rediscovered a couple of weeks ago was the plaintive and slightly self-indulgent *I Love My Friends* (1998). I say self-indulgent because this album appears to be Stephen's life story all wrapped up into 13 tracks. The first track is even a mocked up tuning in to various radio stations (all of which are playing old Duffy songs from previous incarnations). I don't think that Stephen Duffy has ever had the success he deserved, but this album shows he is a great writer of literate pop songs.

Loudon Wainwright III deserves more recognition than he has received over the years. He started off as a slightly earnest political folk singer in the late 60's, but the album I have been playing recently is 1990's *More Love Songs* (which is certainly not a collection of love songs!). Co-produced by Richard Thompson and featuring Thompson backing him on most tracks, the album is all about Loudon's failed marriage (to Kate McGarrigle), life alone a long way from home (he was living in the UK at the time), feeling a failure (this CD didn't get a release in the USA) and rage against all sorts of things (such as feminism). All done with tongue firmly in cheek – there's even a song about him chatting up a girl fan only to discover at the crucial moment she's gay. An amusing and slightly disturbing CD – but more upbeat than depressing.

On a slightly louder note, the last album I want to sing the praises of is *New Clear Days* by The Vapors. It is always a good sign for an LP to have a nice pun in the title. The Vapors were a short-lived rather poppy new wave guitar group led by vocalist/guitarist Dave Fenton (who, unusually for a musician, was a qualified solicitor). One of the band's first concerts was seen by the Jam's Bruce Foxton, who asked them to perform on the Jam's *Setting Sons* tour. Before long, The Vapors were managed by Foxton and John Weller, the manager of the Jam (and Paul Weller's father).

This album was released in 1980 and even had a hit single taken from it – *Turning Japanese* - only the second hit single ever that I am aware of (it reached No.3) which dealt with the subject of masturbation (the first being The Who's *Pictures of Lily* - and the third being the Buzzcock's *Orgasm Addict*). Listening to this album again I am struck by how similar the sound is to The Jam at the height of their success (the two groups even had the same producer). The opening track *Spring Collection* could easily be a Weller composition – the whole album is great motorway music.

In 1981, **The Vapors** released the more ambitious and darker album *Magnets*, yet it received lukewarm reviews and poor sales; the group disbanded shortly after its release. Shame.

## Letters

### **Richard Scholefield**

I won Mons – my third win! Thanks for starting the game off in March 2001. Yes please, I would like to receive the paper zine of the League of the Last Days – I found No.1 an interesting read and my son who has a degree in English and History says you write well.

The other reason for writing is to mention RSI which is really a pain. I have noticed you mention playing the odd computer game – mind how you go and take rests. Once you have RSI you can't easily get it cured and it totally messes up and keyboard based work. I've taken four breaks to write this letter in my attempt to keep communication going despite the problem.

### **Ray Evans**

I was very sorry to hear of Don's sad death. I had known him for many years, and considered that what he didn't know about wargaming (or simulation gaming), wasn't worth knowing. Curiously although I knew Don for many years, I only met him once--and that very briefly. Also despite playing in many of Don's Diplomacy games, we never actually met over the Diplomacy board. I have a feeling it would have been an interesting experience.

As regards *Courier*, well I've been busy sweeping the many years of accumulated dust off the mag shelf, and discover that the last copy I have is issue 242. I believe Don did intend to continue *Courier* in the US, however he decided not to. Thus I suspect issue 242 is the last to see the light of day.

*SA: Many thanks, I didn't think I'd ever find a copy of issue 242. I see that by then all the Diplomacy games had finished and Don was just running RR. Thanks to your generosity I know have a full run of Courier from issue 1-242 for the archive. Anyone interested can have a look at Courier 242 on the [www.leagueofthelastdays.com](http://www.leagueofthelastdays.com) website.*

### **Fred Davis**

Were you able to obtain any further information on the death of Don Turnbull? I sent a sympathy card addressed to Mrs Turnbull, assuming that Don was still married at the time he passed away, asking for more information (and outlining my relationship with Don over the years), but never received a reply. Perhaps there was no Mrs Turnbull?

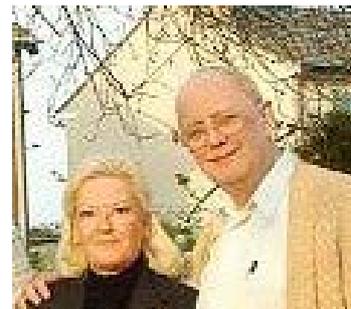
I'd appreciate anything you can do to find out more details. I remember that Don had a son names Christopher from his first marriage, and I think he may have had two daughters by a subsequent marriage. These people would all be grown up by now. I met Christopher twice. If there were some address to which I could send a sympathy card or a letter, I'd like to have it. I'm the kind of person who doesn't forget old friends. Anything you can do or suggest would be appreciated.

### **Dave Tant**

Don and I and half-a-dozen others have been playing Dungeons and Dragons as a group for over 25 years now. We started at conventions like A.H.I.K.S. and then moved on to meeting at each other's houses for (often long) weekends, or renting large houses for a week. I don't think I've ever met Fred, but he may know Allan Ovens and Bill Howard who've known Don even longer than I. If he (or anyone) is interested there are pictures of the group, along with some often humorous stories of our "adventures" on [www.greyhawk.org.uk](http://www.greyhawk.org.uk)

I never knew Don's first wife, and indeed only met Chris once. When I first knew Don he was living with June Woodhouse, who confusingly also had a son, by a previous marriage, called Chris. He never married June but they had a daughter, Caroline, who must be about 21 now and is, I believe studying at London University.

At some time in the eighties Don threw up his job with the Education Dept in Cambridge and became Chairman (or Managing Director or probably both) of T.S.R.(U.K.) having become friendly with Gary Gygax, the "inventor" of D&D. Things went well for some years until, in the way of Americans, everyone began suing everyone else and the U.S.



Don and Terry

company began to go down the pan. Don's U.K. branch was the only one still turning in a profit and actually supporting its parent. In due course that registered and whoever had gained temporary control of T.S.R. in the U.S. decided that the U.K. sub couldn't be left under the control of some limey and Don was out.

Don claimed they still owed him a lot of money, and the only way he could hope to get it was to go to the U.S. and sue! In the event he stayed out there for some 5 - 6 years, at first working for Gygax, then other games firms and finally as some sort of freelance journalist, with most of his wages going to the lawyers. During this time he got married again, to a lady called Diana, although I feel this may have been largely to acquire a green card, as after a few weeks we back home heard no more about her.

Eventually he accepted that he was never going to get anywhere with his legal actions and came home. June had sold their enormous house in one of the best roads in Cambridge and there was at least enough for him to have a little terraced house in which he quickly installed nine cats and an American lady called Terry. They got married and his son Chris was his best man, the only time I ever saw Chris. Don now started a third career as a self - taught computer programmer setting up computer systems, and did very well at it. Then in 2002, deciding that he could work from home pretty much anywhere, they took advantage of the high property prices in Cambridge and moved to a very nice detached house in a little village near Blackburn in Lancashire, where Don originally came from. At last he had a big enough place to host D&D games again, and the group went up there for four days in April this year.

Don and Terry were both heavy smokers and by this time everyone else in the group had given up, if indeed they'd ever started, so Don spent most of the time sitting with his back to an open door so that he could smoke without upsetting us. By the end of the weekend he was complaining of a sore shoulder, which we all thought was from the draft. In fact it later emerged that this was the first evidence of cancer, finally diagnosed in May. There was apparently no treatment possible and not a lot of time left. During July we all took turns to go up and see him and it was distressing to see someone practically turning to skin and bone before your eyes. He died on 5th August and we all went up for the funeral service and cremation.

*SA: Any readers interested in Don Turnbull's role in TSR and Dungeons & Dragons will find some information in an extended interview with Gary Gygax at <http://www.dungeonlord.co.uk/interviews/gygax.htm>.*

## **Fred Davis**

I've recently discovered that a new Diplomacy-like game is on sale at a "Wizards of the Coast" game store, called "Age of Imperialism" I did not buy a copy when I first saw it, as the price is \$50. When I returned to the store a week later, they were sold out. I've put my name on their list, to be notified when a new shipment of the game arrives. In the meanwhile, I'm wondering whether anyone else has seen this game, and perhaps written a review on it. If so, I'd appreciate having your opinion on it.

From studying the cover on the box, I believe this game could be considered a Diplomacy variant. The box shows that the game board includes the entire Eastern Hemisphere, with provinces and sea spaces marked off. Judging from the pictures of Queen Victoria and Kaiser Wilhelm on the cover, the game must be set in the era from about 1860-1890. Illustrations show that the game set includes many different types of pieces, such as Infantry, Artillery & Cavalry, and, perhaps, Leader pieces. These might be useful for FTF Diplomacy games, too. The pieces are sold separately, if one just wants to buy the pieces. If no one else has done so, I'd be willing to write up a review of the game for publication in a Dipzine. It's produced by a company called Eagle Games, but no address for. this company is shown on the outside of the box. They're also selling a new game using similar pieces called-"American Civil War." Also a \$50. price. BTW, the pieces are referred to as being of the "1/72" size. I was unable to tell from the cover as to whether any naval units are included.

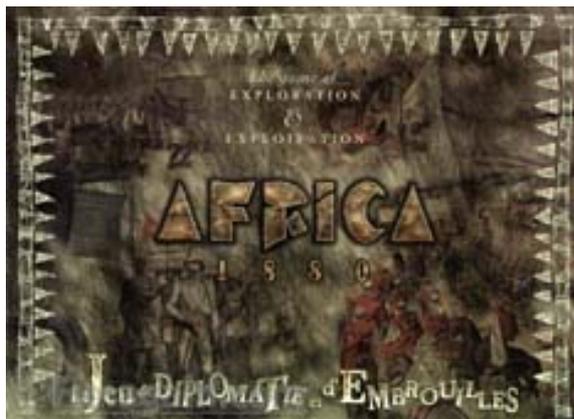
If it is determined that this game is really a Diplomacy Variant, I'd encourage the current Variant Bank Custodians to so declare it. But, first we have to study it.

*SA: From what I can gather by looking on the Internet, it doesn't appear to be a Dip variant, but something more akin to Axis and Allies – i.e. there is no simultaneous movement and all combat is resolved through throwing dice. One review said:*

*“I’ve played a lot of games over the years, from simple one-rule games to complex wargames, and this one definitely fits in the ‘luck-driven-wants-to-be-a-thinker’s-game’ category. It looks very fancy and you feel you’re in for quite an adventure when you sit down at the table, but the game turns out to be entirely too dependent on die rolls. Like someone else said, everybody is entitled to their opinion. But to compare this game with Diplomacy is an insult to poor old Allan Calhamer.”*

*For a game which feels far more like Diplomacy to me, take a look at Africa 1880 – which has negotiations, simultaneous movement and no dice. Here is the only decent review of the game I could find – I do have a copy of the game but have never had the chance to play it.*

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**Africa 1880 designed by Francis Pacherie**

**Published by Tilsit (1997)**

**Review by Greg Schloesser**

The game is a Diplomacy-style game by a Tilsit, a French company, and is marketed in the U.S. by Clash of Arms. It is based on the colonial development of Africa during the late 1800's by the European powers. Players each represent one of the six European countries seeking to develop (and exploit?) the African continent. The players in our contest were Clyde Hayman (Italy), Doug Daigle (Germany), Jerry Maus (France), Eric Allemand (Great Britain), Willard Fann (Belgium) and I (Holland).

Players begin by landing one of their tokens along the coastal territories of Africa. Each turn, they must write 'orders' for their pieces on the board. These orders take one of three forms:

- 1) Develop: Add a development marker to the territory. Territories require from 1 - 4 development markers in order to become fully developed, thereby making possible the placement of a colony marker.
- 2) Explore: expand from one's current location into a neighboring adjacent territory.
- 3) Nothing: Er, do .... nothing.

Further, one may also land a new token along a coastal territory IF the territory does not contain another token. It must be vacant, or no landing orders can be made.

Players can peacefully co-exist in a territory IF neither has declared WAR on each other. Declarations of War must be recorded when orders are being written. This is why the diplomacy period is so important. Players must negotiate and consult with their opponents in order to further their objectives. Unlike Diplomacy or Machiavelli, players are free to move into any adjacent territory and co-exist with other tokens, but if any nations present in a territory are at war with another, then a conflict exists and must be resolved. If everyone is at peace, then everyone is happy and can co-exist.

The determination of War vs. Peace is important as colonies cannot be placed if a state of war exists amongst any of the nations involved. Players ultimately earn victory points based on territories they occupy which have been fully developed and have a colony placed, so the placement of a colony is of utmost importance. Further, once a colony is placed, no further pieces may be moved into that territory.

Conflicts are resolved by a quick determination. If a player has more players allied with him than at war with him, then his piece will stay in an area in conflict. If not, then the piece is ousted. Thus, it is entirely possible for ALL pieces in a territory to be ousted depending upon the war / alliance status of each nation. When a piece is ousted, it is not retreated ... it is removed from the board.

The game is played in five year increments running from 1880 to the outbreak of World War I (1914). There are potentially eight turns, but the game can end sooner if all of the colony pieces are placed. At that point, victory points are determined.

Victory points are earned in the following manner:

1. 8 VP if a territory has a colony and a player has the only token present;
2. 3 VP if a territory has a colony and there is more than one player present;
3. 1 VP for each country allied with a player at the end of the game.

The main objective for a player is to be in on as many territories as possible that have a colony present and, if at all possible, be the sole occupant of a territory that has a colony. Thus, negotiations are critical in determining the war / peace status so as to oust opponents from key territories or to insure an overall peaceful status in a territory so that a colony can be built.

The game is one of swaying alliances. Unlike Diplomacy, most players are in contact with each other early and often, so negotiations must usually be conducted with ALL opponents. One other big advantage is that the game plays very quickly ... ours was over in two hours.

In our inaugural match, all of the coastal areas were occupied by turn two, so no further landings were possible. On the very first turn of the game, Great Britain surprisingly declared war on France, successfully ousting his token from Alger. This set the tone for a brutal war between the two which lasted pretty much intact for the entire game. Most other players' alliances and hostilities shifted from turn-to-turn.

One of the most important decisions to be made during the course of the game is whether to spend a turn developing a territory or continuing to expand by exploring. Placement of a colony is not possible until a territory is fully developed, which can take up to four turns in some areas without help from other players. Several colonies were unable to be placed as time ran out before the territories could be fully developed, while others were unable to be placed due to the war status of the nations present in the colonies. This ultimately cost everyone vital victory points.

On the final turn of the game, Holland, France and Germany united and declared a joint war against Britain and Belgium. This cost the two dearly, ousting them from several territories and relegating them to the bottom rung in the final standings.

It wasn't enough, however, to allow Italy and Holland to catch Germany. Germany had successfully planted her most valuable colonies in South Africa, insulating them from incursions from her opponents. Thus, Doug was able to secure three colonies without the presence of any other power, contributing an impressive 24 points to his point total.

The final results were:

Doug (Germany): 51; Greg (Holland): 44; Clyde (Italy): 36; Jerry (France): 35; Eric (Britain): 25; Willard (Belgium): 20

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### **Realism in Diplomacy and its Variants**

**by Michael Golbe**

When we play a Diplomacy game in character - as the Kaiser, Tsar, Sultan, King or Premier, or as their Foreign Minister or top General - we are fulfilling one of the central goals of the game as an historical simulation. A main goal of a wargaming simulation is to allow players to experience, to one degree of accuracy and realism or another, the challenges, problems and/or emotions of a real wartime commander. Dip players generally value this aspect of gaming quite highly.

Wargames can attempt to simulate reality at any of several levels: small unit tactics, large unit tactics, grand tactics, strategy, grand strategy, or practically any point in between. This choice analogizes to the level of commander into whose shoes the player is stepping: platoon leader, divisional CO, front commander, C-in-C, Head of State, or anything in between. In Diplomacy, the player assumes the position of a sort of combination C-in-C, Foreign Minister, and Head of State. How well does the game re-create for the players the challenges, problems and emotions facing that somewhat abstract person?

Remarkably well, actually. Especially considering the simplicity of the rules. Theoretically, by increasing the games complexity, one could increase the realism. For instance, the realism of Diplomacy pretty much stops at about the front level of generalship. When Russia orders A WAR - GAL the level of abstraction applicable to that one campaign is absurdly high. To simulate the situation of that army commander, other games employ maps with a thousand or more hexes, many hundreds of little cardboard pieces representing battalions or regiments, and a rulebook scores of pages long. Theoretically, one could combine that rulebook with Calhamer's, have a map the size of a small apartment, and allow seven intrepid players to walk in the shoes of not only the head of state, but all sub-commanders down to the divisional level.

Calhamer's remarkable achievement was delivering an opportunity to play war at the Head of State or Foreign Minister level (almost unique in wargaming), and making that experience very realistic with very simple rules. The intraplayer communication in Diplomacy allows one to get a feel for what it took to win an entire war in a complex and flexible multilateral environment. The geography of Europe, though simplified to a huge degree, nevertheless plays a crucial role in the game. As a result, for most of the seven powers, historically accurate grand strategies are re-created: England seeks generally to maintain a balance of power on the continent; Germany usually seeks at all costs to avoid a two-front war; Russia's greatest strength lies in its strategic depth and one of its greatest problem is lack of ocean access; Italy likes to see which way the wind is blowing before committing itself.

But by using such simple rules the esteemed Mr. Calhamer did make some choices and compromises that lessen the quality, or realism of the simulation. Historically, the seven powers were not equal in strength, and they were not as freely able to ally with or attack others based only on strategic considerations. Cultural and political affinities played a large role in the alliance formations made from 1900 to 1914. In the game, these historical constraints are nicely, but a-historically replaced by the players' affinities with each other based on personality and other fairly random factors.

I'm sure most readers would agree that Calhamer's standard Diplomacy is truly a great game. Like chess it is a never-ending source of challenge and a superb test of skill. And it exceeds even chess in the way no two games are ever alike. But because its qualities as a simulation, however remarkable, are far from perfect, many variant developers (myself included) have attempted to adapt the games strengths to efforts to increase realism. Our goal is to minimize the loss of qualities that make Diplomacy great while maximizing the augmentation of simulative quality or realism. (This is the case only with one class of variants - other classes have other goals.)

The qualities most realism-increasing variants seek to preserve are: power balance, the importance of intraplayer communications, and the simplicity of the rules. The last is usually the first that gets compromised. The first is the hardest to preserve.

Without making the rules more complex, theory would imply there are only three ways to increase the games historical realism: 1) apply the same rules to a different historical conflict to which they are even more fitted, 2) change the rules without adding complexity, or 3) a combination of the above. The standard rules have been adapted, more or less without change, to practically every multi-power conflict in history, from ancient times to projected future wars. However, the Calhamer rules, without modification, do not seem to be more fitted to any other conflict. The importance of supply centers makes any simulation prior to the industrial revolution problematic. The importance of air power makes any simulation after World War One problematic. In the Napoleonic Wars, destruction of the enemy's armies was much more important than occupation of his industrial zones, and naval warfare was much different: less strategic and with many fewer amphibious operations. The Calhamer rules would be more adaptable to the Balkan situation from 1878 to 1912 than to anything before, but navies were fairly unimportant and whenever one narrows geographic scale from the continental to regional level, mountains and rivers should play a larger role in the grand tactics of armies.

Power balance is the next problem. As mentioned, even Calhamer had to make significant concessions to accuracy here. In the critical period of 1815 to 1930, no continental conflict presented a good opportunity for a balanced multi-player game. The world was just not a balanced place.

Focusing then on World War One itself, what rule changes, which do not increase complexity, might increase realism? Being able to raise units in captured supply centers is one such change. If, for instance, Britain held Holland for a year or two, those dockyards could probably have built a fleet as easily as Smyrna, Trieste or Sevastopol. Belgium should be able to field an army as easily as Edinburgh, Brest or Venice. But playtesting has proven that any simple rule change in this direction upsets the delicate game balance. It would certainly be more realistic to have a supply center in Ruhr than in almost any other province except London or Liverpool. But there's no way to do it without ruining balance. Calhamer playtested every such variant extensively.

We can therefore conclude that to increase simulative realism, the rules must be made more complex. What general areas are ripe for exploitation?

In the Calhamer rulebook, there is nothing that addresses relations between powers. They may ally, stab, talk with, or ignore each other at will. Its rather remarkable, when you think about it, that a game called Diplomacy has absolutely no rules regarding that very subject except the length of the FTF diplomacy period and the pithy statement that: The rules do not bind a player to anything he says; deciding whom to trust as situations arise is part of the game. We all know that this freedom of action is what helps make Dip a great game. But historically, the war began in large part because Russia felt obliged by formal treaty to aid Serbia and Germany felt obliged by formal treaty to aid Austria-Hungary. Can formal diplomacy rules increase realism without causing a loss of fun and flexibility? Many variants have rules that enforce or encourage various alliance structures, including even entire United Nations Organizations.

Another unrealistic aspect of the Calhamer rules are those dealing with convoys. Although the appearance of an army hopping from fleet to fleet across the seas seems silly, it is realistic to assume one needed naval control of each sea zone to allow a convoy to safely proceed, and the rules simulate this fairly nicely. It's not so much the movement of troop transports that's unrealistic, it's that those Marines can invade amphibiously with as much force as a WWII D-Day landing. There is simply no way that in WWI, even with fleets in the Heligoland Bight and North Sea, England could have dislodged a German army from Denmark or Holland. The effort would have made Gallipoli look like a walk in the park. For that matter, even without the convoys, fleets could not take control of entire countries like Belgium or Greece. Trying to fix this would be so destructive of game balance that no one has really tried. And though naval warfare may be unrealistic in the standard game if one looks at it from the standpoint of an Admiral, from the Head of States perspective its fairly accurate: England must control the North Sea or die. Italy wants desperately to get into the Atlantic but finds it hard to do so. They cannot afford to lose control of the Mediterranean. Russia seeks warm water. Germany seeks the breakout that would spell British doom. And Austria has a navy (usually) in name only.

One area that Heads of State did have to be concerned about, but is totally ignored in the game, is trade and supply. England, famously, attempted a continental blockade in 1914. While Germany managed to overcome this to a degree by mobilizing continental resources and relying on substitute materials, it was a factor. So also was the U-boat campaign against England. Some variants address these issues. And while the need for a supply line has always been essential in warfare, in the game a single Russian army can wander through Germany and end up in Paris, a thousand miles from the nearest source of supply, and remain there forever. In one game I played as Russia I did just that, and ended up only with that Parisian army at the end. I know there are lots of Russian émigrés in Paris, but I didn't think they could support an entire army! Though this is unrealistic, it's not a big problem for the game, and rules to fix it would probably be more complex than they are worth.

Some of the Heads of State had to be very concerned about internal security, the Tsar especially. As it turned out, his overthrow was critical to the outcome of the war. But other than a player needing a prolonged bathroom break, such dynamics are not considered in the Calhamer rules. Some games employ shadow governments and multiple factions to simulate these aspects of history.

Although it was less critical in WWI than in WWII, technological innovation during the war years was, and could have been an even more, important historical factor. U-boats, airplanes and tanks all improved significantly during the war. They all ended up being crucial in WWII. Had the first war lasted longer (as

it often does in games), these developments would have been even more important. Some variants try to deal with this.

Finance is another aspect of modern war ignored by Calhamer. Without gold reserves, war-fighting potential was severely limited. Some variants seek to address this issue.

One of the most obvious shortcomings of the Calhamer game as a historical simulation is its limited geographic scope. WWI was, after all, a world war. There was fighting in sub-Saharan Africa and in the waters off South America, and a major campaign in the Middle East. Many variants address this shortcoming, especially the latter.

Finally, it has always seemed odd to players that the Calhamer game begins in 1900, a full fourteen years before the actual outbreak of armed hostilities. Among his reasons for this: war could have begun at almost any time in this period. This is certainly true. But it did not, and for good reasons. Those fourteen years were very busy ones. There were alliances forged and re-forged, two Moroccan crises, a Balkan war, and significant rearmament programs. This period is as much a part of the diplomatic story of WWI as what came after 1914 - even most of the story. But other than the fairly arbitrary selection of a starting year, the rules ignore it. Some variants try to deal with this aspect.

Some variants, of course, attempt to address several of these issues. But I don't know of any that attempt to address them all. Such a variant would be too complex. Playing it would be impracticable. But finding some way to design such a game that would be almost as playable as standard might be called the holy grail of this class of variant design.

Because historical accuracy in simulation is one of many values that wargamers hold dear, efforts to make variants that increase accuracy without sacrificing other important values have been pursued consistently for years, and are likely to continue indefinitely. The fact that no variant has supplanted the standard game in popularity is due to the fact that all efforts to increase accuracy imply losing some degree of playability or balance, and most players hold these values even dearer.

One goal of any simulation is (or should be) to educate. And even playing the highly abstract simulation that is Calhamer's Diplomacy can teach players a great deal about WWI. I consider variant-making to lessen the abstraction of that historical simulation, and thus increase educational value, a worthwhile effort, but I approach it with great humility given the seemingly ideal balance Calhamer achieved between balance, accuracy, simplicity, and sheer fun.

My latest effort is the *Escalation* variant, which attempts primarily to simulate the restrictions on diplomatic flexibility, and the effects of pre-war agreements and preparatory mobilization and manoeuvres. It seeks to balance the need for militaristic aggressiveness with the diplomatic disincentives to strike out immediately and without limits. Ideally, the game would begin with several years of increasing tension and preparations for war (thus the name Escalation) before hostilities actually break out. The rule changes that accomplish this add much more complexity than I would like, but perhaps not so much as to overwhelm the novelty and educational value of the more realistic feel the variant gives the player for the challenges, problems and emotions faced by the Tsar, Kaiser, King, et cetera. Play-testing and rules refinement are on-going and only time will tell if I've delivered enough increased realism to make up for the losses in playability, and if I've preserved sufficient game balance to satisfy and attract willing players.

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### **English Strategy**

**by Don Turnbull**

I think it was Allan Calhamer, the inventor of Diplomacy, who first referred to England in the game as "The Wicked Witch of the North". Certainly, England is potentially a strong country, and many players, until they learn better, are rather envious of the controller of English destinies. However, don't run away with the idea that playing England is all cakes and ale.

England occupies an enviable and unique position on the board. It is placed at one corner, so need not be apprehensive about attacks from the west when initially advancing towards Europe. It is surrounded entirely by sea spaces, and starts off with a superiority of fleets, so control of the local seas can be gained

without too much trouble. Invasion of England requires sea power, and other countries cannot build sea power quite as quickly as England; it is an easy country to defend, for this reason. Finally, in designing the games Calhamer's policy of directing the action towards the centre of the board is as favourable to England as it is unfavourable to Austria (see the last article in this series). All these factors add up.

On the other side of the coin, England has only one sure build in 1901 - Norway. Even this can occupy the attention of all three units, if Russia chooses to be awkward. The growth potential is thus small, at least until English forces start to get a foothold in Europe. What, then, should a player for England attempt in the opening stages?

Control of the seas is the first priority. The North Sea is easy (and vital); the Norwegian Sea is just as easy, though Russia might be more interested in leaving that space vacant; the English Channel is a sore point with France. The first bout of negotiation will be with France concerning the Channel. The opening move Brest-Channel, while not disastrous, can be dangerous. Russia must be approached concerning her attitude towards the Norwegian Sea and Scandinavia in general. Norway is just as 'English' as Sweden is 'Russian'. And Norway is adjacent to Sweden. Need I say more?

England cannot be forever content to play around the seas and in Norway. If she is to expand (and to play a defensive game as England is to invite trouble - both Germany and France have higher growth potentials) then it must be in Europe. This, in turn, means building armies fairly early in the game and convoying them to France, Germany or Russia. Although the 1901 build should be a fleet, there is a lot to be said for building an army in 1902.

England has three clear directions of advance. Let's examine, briefly, the pros and cons of each.

France. A successful French campaign ensures almost complete control of the western side of the board; it gives English forces another good defensive position, since France is not an easy country to invade; it gives a good yield of centres; finally, it removes the problem of the Channel. However the issue isn't clear cut. France isn't a country which can be easily invaded, in my experience. You cannot expect much co-operation from Italy. If you are going to make France your first target, you need to ensure two English builds in 1901 and only one for France, and this involves much co-operation from Germany and Italy. Finally, the campaign must be quick, since other countries can build up in other areas quicker than England can in France. I need hardly add that the opening move F(Lon)-ENC is most dangerous!

Germany. There are fewer centres to pick up in Germany than there are in France, bearing in mind the fact that your allies in the venture will want their pick of the spoils. But Germany is easier to invade than France. However, don't forget that, while you are occupied in Germany, France is picking up easier builds elsewhere, and will emerge stronger than you.

Russia. Initially, Russia is engaged on two fronts, so with German help in the north, and Turkey making nasty noises in the south (see how far your diplomacy has to extend?) it should be relatively easy to conquer Russia. However, there isn't much to be gained. Apart from St. Petersburg, all the centres yielded are of considerable interest to your allies - Germany wants Sweden and Warsaw, Turkey wants Moscow. In addition, having finished with Russia and perhaps gaining two centres, France and Germany will probably be stronger than England. And don't forget that either France or Germany will constitute the second target. There is the advantage that England would then control the entire north of the board, but that doesn't mean much since there is no-one else around and little to defend.

To the above arguments, add just one more strategic



point. Germany is the only country in the north which can build two fleets bearing directly on English waters. And remember that if England ever has to defend her shores, fleets will be in the van of the attack.

Got the message? Right. Germany is my choice, albeit a marginal one. England must be prepared to accept slightly lower gains in exchange for a stronger position in the middle game. Which country, of France and Russia, must you enlist to help you in the German offensive? Remember that one of these will be your second target. My personal preference is to form a strong and lasting agreement with Russia. If played correctly, this can result in England and Russia expanding in different directions in the middle game, without a conflict of interests.

One final point about the opening before considering the moves themselves - England cannot withstand an attack by a Franco-German alliance, even with Russian support. If France and Germany are set to attack you, plead with Russia and Italy, build fleets whenever possible, and pray.

Opening moves for England are less complex than those for Austria. The North Sea is essential, and the Norwegian Sea only just less so. The position of the army after the Spring move has been hotly debated. In the final analysis, Edinburgh is a better place for it than Liverpool, but once again the attitudes of other countries govern this. It is nice to gain Norway with a fleet in 1901, convoying the army to Holland; it is also rather difficult to convince Germany that this is in her best interest.

Probably the best opening move is F(Lon)-NTH; F(Edi)-NWG; A(Lpl)-Edi. This allows for all sorts of options. If you want an army in Norway (though this is anti-Russian) then it can get there by either fleet, with the other one giving support if necessary. Alternatively, the army could go to Denmark, Holland or Belgium. Finally, a French move from Brest to the Channel can be countered without losing flexibility.

By the way, you haven't forgotten to COMMUNICATE and NEGOTIATE, have you?

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## Oceania V

by Frank Bacher

A very special thanks to René Krokowski for lots of advice on design and gameplay issues as well as steadily motivating me to make this variant finally available.

Rules:

Powers involved and their starting positions:

Australia(A): F Cairns (cai); F Brisbane (bri); A Coral Sea Islands (coi)

France(F): A Avarua (ava); F Papeete (pap); A Pitcairn Islands (pit)

Indonesia(I): A Sorong (sor); F Timor (tim); F Jayapura (jay)

Japan(J): F Manila (man); A Ryukyu Islands (ryu); F Nampo-Shoto (nsh)

New Zealand(N): F Christchurch (chc); F Wellington (wel); A Kermadec Island (kei)

USA(U): F Midway (mid); A Honolulu (hon); F Christmas Island (chr)

Marshall Islands(Z): F Kwajalein (kwa); F Southern Marshall Islands (smi); A Majuro (maj)II. Island chains:

Not suprisingly, Oceania consists of lots of island chains. These chains have some special characteristics:

1. To identify island chains without a doubt they don't have the usual dark blue sea colour around them but are coloured "light blue". Island chains consist of Islands and the water around them. Therefore these chains can be occupied by a fleet or an army, but of course not by more than one unit at a time.

2. Basically two different types of island chains exist: Chains with only one space (e.g.Pitcairn Islands (pit) and so called multispaced island chains (e.g.Solomon Islands (nsi/ssi). Within such a multispaced chain both, armies and fleets, may move to adjacent parts of the chain (e.g. A or F nsi - ssi and vice versa).

3. The most important feature is that armies can move *\_directly\_* from one island chain to another ("island hopping") as long as both chains (independent of being multispaced or singlespaced) border the same sea province. This feature is restricted to armies.

Examples:

A Kermadec Island (kei) - Tonga (tog) is a valid move (valid as well: kei to cha, sfi, sao and ava).

A Avarua (ava) - French South Polynesia (fsp) is valid as well.

A Kermadec Island (kei) - Fiji (fij) is invalid as Fiji doesn't border a sea which is adjacent to Kermadec Island.

A fleet would have to move to the sea space first unless it sits on a multispaced island chain (see II.2.).

4. Armies dislodged on island chains cannot retreat to island chains bordering the same sea province. They can however retreat to a *directly* adjacent part of the multispaced island chain. This retreat procedure isn't presentable with Realpolitik. GM's have to take care that no illegal retreats occur themselves. Although illegal, RP allows those retreats. Fleets can retreat to all adjacent sea spaces.

Examples:

A dislodged army in Papeete (pap) could retreat to the Eastern Archipelago des Tuamotu (eat) but not to the Pitcairn Islands (pit) though it could normally move to Pitcairn.

5. A fleet occupying an island chain can convoy an army as it could in a normal sea space. It may convoy an army to an adjacent space or further away with the help of more fleets.

Examples:

A Southern Solomon Islands (ssi) - East Micronesia (emi)

F Northern Solomon Islands Convoys (nsi) A Southern Solomon Islands - East Micronesia

F Southeastern Marianas Sea (sms) Convoys A Southern Solomon Islands - East Micronesia

6. Please note that larger landmasses like New Zealand (wni, wel, chc, sou), Australia (per, noa, tow, cai, bri, syd, ade), Tasmania (hob), Celebes(ceb), the island of New Guinea (jay and pmo), the Philippines (man,ceb, dav) and Borneo (mal, sam) can't be reached or left by "hopping armies" from/to neighbouring island chains. Fleets can't convoy while they occupy such a space.

The reasoning behind these rules is that in our time movement from one island chain to another is easily possible by air, be it helicopters or water planes or whatever. Consequently fleets can't be transported by air and have to move between Island chains at "a slower pace". As for disbanding dislodged armies it should be logical that Air support isn't available in case of a stronger attack.

III. Coasts:

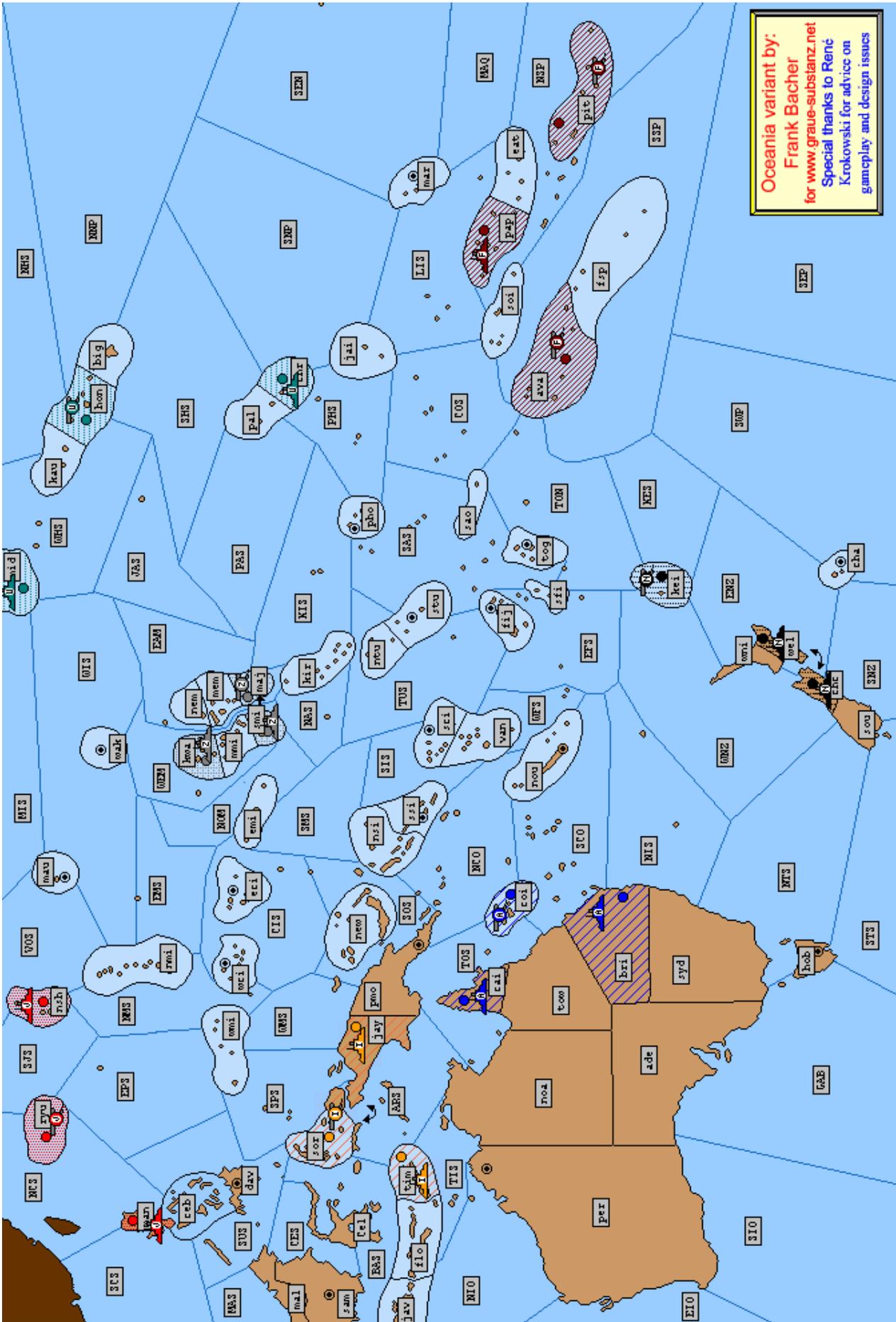
There is only one bicoastal territory. It's Townsville (tow) in the Northeast of Australia which has a west(wc) and an east coast (ec). The Torres Strait is adjacent to both coasts.

IV. Movement across narrow straits:

Wherever direct movement between two nonadjacent spaces is possible, this is indicated by arrows. There are three regions where this is possible. These are: Sorong(sor) / Jayapura(jay), Christchurch(chc) / Wellington(wel) and Southern Marshall Islands (smi) / Majuro (maj). Movement is possible in both directions for fleets and armies.

V. Impassable spaces:

South China and Taiwan are impassable and therefore marked in a darker brown than passable spaces. The occasional island(s) in a sea space which has no name is as well impassable even if not marked in dark brown.



VI. Dates and phases:

The game begins in 2000 with a Spring movement phase. The Standard rules apply as far as turns are concerned. There is a Spring and a Fall movement phase followed by retreats as well as an adjustment phase after Fall retreats.

VII. Build mode:

As in Standard you can only build in vacant and owned home supply centres.

VIII. Supply centers and Victory:

As the map has 39 supply centres, victory criterion is possession of 20 sc's after a Fall retreat phase.

IX. Remarks:

Some home centers of powers involved have been chosen not according to real nationalities but to balance the game somewhat more. E.g. the northern part of the Philippines isn't Japanese as well as the Pitcairn Islands aren't French (they're British for those who are interested). As well it wasn't that easy to closely follow naming conventions as some island chains do not have towns of a significant size. Suggestions for better names will anyway be carefully considered as the names are far from perfect.

Comments, suggestions, ideas, criticisms etc. should be directed to [bacher@graue-substanz.net](mailto:bacher@graue-substanz.net) and are very welcome. If you want to play a game of this variant please drop me a note as well to allow me observing the game (and maybe afterwards improving the variant).

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**Pure Dodecahedron Diplomcy**

by Pascal Hitzler

There are six Players: Blue, White, Pink, Yellow, Red, Green

Every player starts with two armies in his two home supply centers which are on opposite surfaces of the Dodecahedron, as indicated on the map. This variant is totally balanced.

