

Pigmy

PIGMY : Steve Agar, 3 North Road, Chester-le-Street,
Co. Durham, DH3 4AQ. Tel (0385) 883309. Cost 18p.

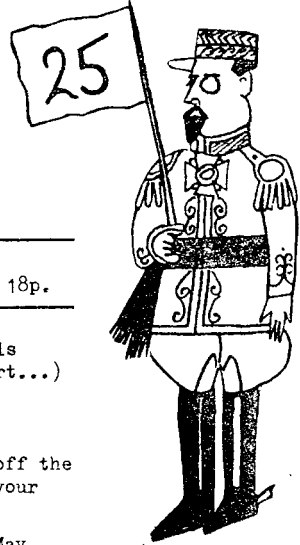
DEADLINE : FRIDAY 25th MAY (A day after my 'A'levels
start...)

COA's: Steve Doubleday to 88 Goldings Road, Loughton,
Essex, IG10 2QN. From 14/5/79.

Credit: Was, due to a million and one reasons, missed off the
last issue. Your current credit is marked on your
envelope.

F/TV & Kingmaker to respective GM's by Saturday 19th May.

"Whatever my reservations about school-boy editors, I still look forward to the
day when I am proved wrong (ie, when a schoolboy editor reaches his 25th issue,
say, before his nineteenth birthday)." - Bob Howes, Lemming Express 37.



"WHAT'S ALL THIS I HEAR ABOUT GM INTERFERENCE?"

EDITORIAL . . .

A rather odd issue this time. For a start this hasn't been done on a stencil - but you'll have noticed that by now, and also I have nine games missing! God! I haven't got a clue what I'm going to put in this issue. Turn the page to find out. Although this issue is litho the price won't be changing - I have discovered that it is far easier to put out a zine if you can type the originals up on paper, instead of messy stencils. Of course I will take note of any comments with regards as to which you prefer, but I guarantee to do what I want to regardless.

Diplomacy World, the Rolls Royce of American zines, hasn't been seen for quite a while now (probably because I ignored their last letter). Most UK publishers trade with DW in order to maintain the hobby archives, even though it's quite a lot of trouble to save up issues and post them off in bulk. DW only comes (came?) out four times a year, so most UK publishers lose money by this arrangement - hence I conclude that we are doing them a favour, not the other way round. However, DW has recently changed hands, and the new publisher wants to save money by cutting back on trades. Now we may have the honour of trading with DW only if we can produce 12 issues per year, if not the publisher has to send them some cash to preserve the trade. I may well be misjudging public opinion (or should that be publishers' opinion?) but I think most editors will tell them what they can do with their damned zine! DW is no great loss - all it ever did for me was to confirm my opinion that most American males are small-minded and officious. We don't need to send UK zines to an archives in America - Mick Bullock must get all UK zines anyway.

All of this brings me onto our relationship (or lack of it) with the American hobby. It strikes me that there must be many excellent US zines that we never see. Good articles and good ideas should be able to cross the Atlantic. The UK hobby is very isolated - we never give the USA a look in, yet they out-number us by far. With the passing of the DW arrangement our last tenuous links with America have gone. What can we do to replace them?

Now I can take insults just as casually as I can give them, but I draw the line when someone starts to turn nasty - in short, I feel that I have the right to complain about the attitude adopted by Peter Calcroft in the last issue of spirit; in short I do not like being called a "deliberate liar". I stand by what I said last issue - there is no excuse why spirit had to go litho and boost its price by 67%. Peter told me that he was going to have to change from photocopying - but why litho? Why not mimeo? Commercial printers don't deal exclusively with off-cut litho, Peter could have had the zine done on stencils for $\frac{1}{4}$ of the price!

Anyway, the rights or wrongs of the point I made is not important - what is important is the childish attitude of Peter - to get so excited about a remark like that suggests an insecurity problem. What struck me as being particularly petty was the little digs and lies that were aimed at me throughout the last issue. I won't waste time refuting all the various allegations made, though that would be simple enough - I merely wonder how long someone with such a massive personality problem as Peter obviously has will be able to survive in this hobby.

Finally, Calcreeep says "... Stephen is the only current editor I can think of who practices this sort of thing (ie. deliberate lies, entirely for the purpose of provoking an argument with another editor)." Really? Give me one example! Anyway, some people just aren't worth arguing with (mentioning no names).

New Statsman No 6 has just arrived, fully recovered after its short holiday. Endgame reports on all games up to the end of 1978 have now been published, and the next issue should see things completely up to date. As well as publishing NS Mick is running the Zine Poll again (details last issue). I reckon that NS is one zine that you should all see - and it doesn't cost much (about £1 a year).

On stencils there are numbers down the side of the margin, so that I know I've got to stop when I get to line 65. Blank paper has no such device, so I'd better

THE GAME OF DIPLOMACY by Richard Sharp

Let me say before I begin, that I consider this book to be one of the biggest things that has ever happened on the postal Diplomacy scene. It should do more for this hobby than a thousand zines - actually getting this hobby onto the shelves of public libraries is a significant step. Although I recognise the book as good news for the hobby, that does not mean that I endorse everything that Richard says.

The book opens with a chapter on the basic rules which you lot can safely ignore. However, the following two chapters are invaluable to the postal diplomacy player, as Richard goes through all the tactical devices that allow a player to use the rules to his full advantage. I must admit that I came across a couple of manoeuvres that I hadn't thought of before, such as "The Loop". Given that postal diplomacy is the sort of game where a player can spend hours gazing at the board, working out the various combinations of moves that he could play, if that player has read these chapters on tactics then he'll see far more possibilities than he would have managed on his own.

Drifting away from general tactics and styles of play, Richard then devotes a chapter to each country, describing what he considers to be the best opening moves, though I feel that he is a bit narrow-minded at times. For example, in the chapter on France Richard dismisses the idea of standing-off an English attack on the Channel saying "... it is entirely absurd, since if England wants to go to the Channel you do far better to let him in! If you stand him off, what happens? Either you have to do it again in the autumn, thus preventing yourself building in Brest, or you let him in... in which case, why bother in the first place?" This sort of remark is fairly typical, unfortunately. Richard is complacent about the threat to Brest - I would prefer to let England into the Channel in the autumn rather than the spring anyway. The chances are that if you clash over the Channel straight away, then you can probably form an alliance along the "okay we tried to stab each other and failed, let's be friends" line. If England takes the Channel in the autumn then you build F(Bre); your defensive position would be that good that England should see the follies of his ways - if England does something else then you don't build the fleet. I admit it isn't a brilliant argument, but it is a point of view that Richard doesn't even consider mentioning. To be pedantic, let's take another brief example. In the chapter on Germany, Richard refers to the move F(Kie)-Den as a "valuable card which Germany cannot afford not to play." Fair enough Richard backs up this statement with a convincing argument - but he doesn't do justice to the alternative, F(Kie)-Hol. If you examine the statistics, Germany wins more often when he moves to Hol than when he moves to Den. I admit there's not that much difference between the two, yet **having read** Richard's book you would expect a move to Hol to be a 100% disaster. In short, while not disagreeing with Richard, I think that he doesn't do justice to the alternatives available to the player who doesn't just want to do what Richard says.

Having gone through all the various openings, Richard turns to postal diplomacy. There is a short introductory chapter outlining how to write letters, how the hobby works etc, then a chapter titled "Vive la Difference!" which in my opinion is the most interesting chapter of the book. In reality this chapter is merely an excuse for Richard to tell a few amusing hobby anecdotes - obviously to an experienced postal player these tales are far more gripping than chapters on opening moves. The book ends with a chapter on variants - going through all the well-known ones giving a brief description.

I think there is one flaw in Richard's reasoning behind Diplomacy strategy. He assumes that every game will feature seven players who will continue to the bitter end. Unfortunately this is rarely the case. It's all well and good saying how certain alliances are not feasible etc. but no book can take into account the difference that a dropout can make to the diplomacy of a game.

If you can afford this book (£7.50, published by Arthur Baker) then buy it! If you can not afford it, then order it at your local library. One way or another, see it!

MARAT

How flattered I was to see that Keith Black remembered Rats live on no evil star! Skilled as I am in reading between the lines, I quickly spotted that what he really missed was my column. This was all the encouragement I needed - I have decided to return. And here I am. There have been problems, Swanson would print anything, he was quiet and asked no questions - but Agar is, of course, a South African agent and so I have had to take laborious steps to cover my trail.

However, for all my public silence, I have not been inactive. You may have often wondered what has happened to most of the old "hardcore", I don't know what they are doing now, nor do I care, it is enough for me that they have gone. No longer do we have Herd, Murphy, the Nobles, Wakefield, Nicky Palmer, Davies and Walkerdine. Piggott, Taylor, Godfrey, Logan, Evans, Willis, Ball, Nye, Davidson and Morris are going, or have reduced their gaming activities below irritation level. Of course there have been a few failures - Birks, Challenger, Doubleday and Scott went only to return.

I laugh when I hear the Calcrafts and the Booths attacking the "hardcore" - it no longer exists! The game is dominated now by jumped up little pip-squeaks who were not even born when the fearsome Palmers stalked the land. Aah, how I would like to lock the pathetic Openshaw in a padded cell with Doug Wakefield! What irony that when last I saw Wakefield he was cowering in a miserable Parisian superb, weeping profusely at the thought that his beloved Cheadle Hulme was being over-ran by thousands of pre-teen left-wing punk-rockers (like Openshaw). But I regret nothing. I would do it all again. And if the new crop is contaminated by a few weeds, I shall not hesitate to mow them down again. A few warped individuals will not prevent the common good.

Talking of warped individuals reminds me that I am smitten with election fever! No doubt you, good reader, are just as bad. Who will you vote for? The Meteyon Kernow? the Fancy Dress Party? the Goto Blazes Party? Jesus and his Cross? Are you in favour of local independence? Then are the English Nationalists for you? or the SNP, the Rhodesian Front, the East London People's Front, Wessex Regionalists, Cornish Nationalists, Sevenside Libertarians, Fine Gael or even Plaid Cymru? But we will have to wait 'till May 3rd to have this burning question answered. Will the existence of both the Dog Lovers Party and the splinter group, "liberal dog lovers", split the canine vote? And what about the three anti-EEC parties and the four Marxist parties? Of course the question is whether Prince Charles will leave the country when the Harridan Thatcher is elected. And what about the NF? A lot of nonsense has been written about the recent riots, but it seems to me that a worthwhile point has been missed.

Much as I despise the slimey political opportunists and mindless, intolerant fanatics who make up the Anti-Nazi League, there is much to be said for their stance. If the NF are about to follow the route to power that the Nazis took, and will use power in the same way as the Nazis (which is what they and the ANL profess to believe), then who wouldn't be prepared to take to the streets to stop them. But they aren't really a threat and the ANL's attempt to exploit them is merely bad taste.

Lastly the golden guillotine awards. When the revolution comes, the editor of The Sun shall be like a (larry) Lamb unto the slaughter. Also the Redgraves for they are a pain in the arse.

- MARAT

[Thanks. I'm not sure how the readers will react to an anonymous columnist, but I'd welcome some more contributions if you have the time. I've only seen a couple of issues of Rats, but from what I've seen I must admit that I can't see the connection between it and Pigmy. By the way, I'd rather live in Communist Russia than Nazi Germany anyway, so give me the ANL anytime.]

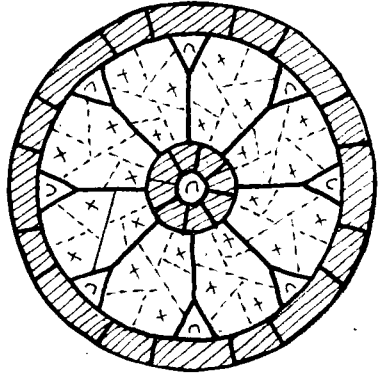
Trying to design a variant by Steve Agar

Obviously, before you can even begin to create a new variant you must decide exactly what sort of variant it is going to be - historical, based on a book, SF, abstract, expanded board etc. For the sake of this article I am going to try to design a variant with optimal play balance and simple rules.

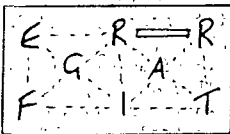
What gives a game good play balance? Theoretically every power must stand an equal chance of winning - yet that can only be achieved if the geography of every country is identical, and if the relationship of one country to the other countries is the same for every power on the board.

One solution would be to have a circular playing area, each country being a sector of the circle, with one neutral inbetween each country, and every country being the same.

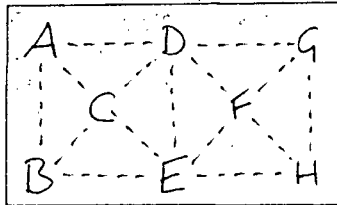
(See right. A perfectly balanced variant?
X = sc. Δ = neutral sc. /// = sea.)



A good variant could be designed along these lines, but to my mind the game would have one major flaw - by its very nature alliances, etc. would be decided on personalities. Okay, personality comes into Diplomacy, but to base a game on it might be a mistake. Do players really want a perfectly balanced game? I doubt it. The Great Game itself suffers from play balance problems - yet it seems quite popular. Therefore, let's steal the format of our variant from the standard Diplomacy board. If we examine the relationship of the various powers in Diplomacy we get a diagram that looks suspiciously like this:



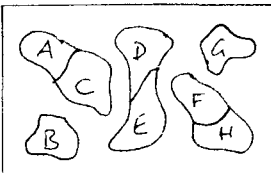
From this diagram we can see that Russia plays the roles of two countries - so if we are going to base this variant on the successful Diplomacy model, it will make things easier if we have eight players, based on the following diagram:



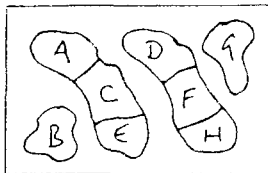
However, things are not that simple. For the sake of variety, if nothing else, we are going to have to introduce sea spaces - but sea areas will upset the play balance if we are not careful.

Accepting the limitations imposed by the need for the game to be playable, the idea is to introduce sufficient sea spaces to give scope for interesting naval manoeuvres, without biasing the board too much. The best way to reach a satisfactory result is to play around with some tiny sketch maps and see what comes up. Don't be afraid to introduce islands, because the balance problems they pose aren't too difficult to overcome. This is how I arrived at my initial design:

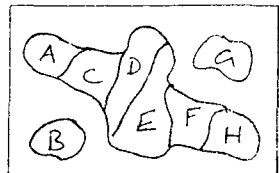
1.



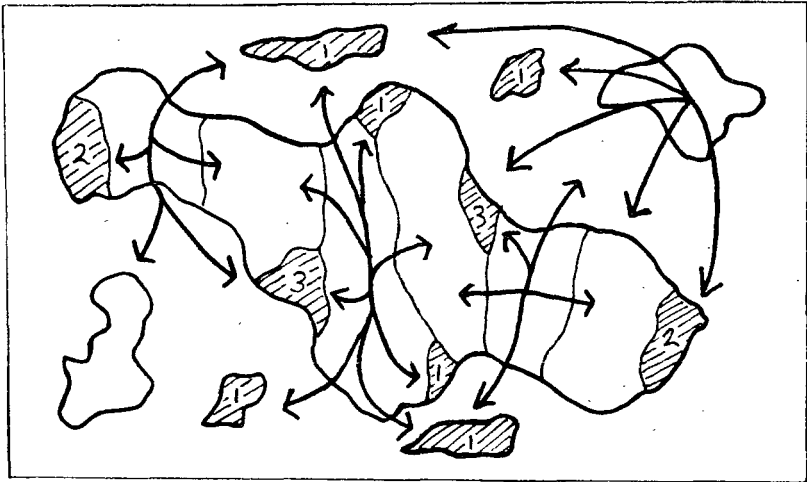
2.



3.



Right. So you've decided on an approximate design - now the difficult bit, balancing it. Basically there are two rules to follow, i) make sure that none of the powers can gain an immediate superiority, try to make it so that every power can pick up one neutral for certain, with a second as a possibility, and ii) give every country the potential for expanding in several directions initially (at least four) - let enemies be decided by diplomacy, not by the confines of the board. Before you get down to fixing boundaries etc. it is a good idea to draw out a small map putting down the approximate positions of the neutrals, marking in possible expansion routes. For instance:



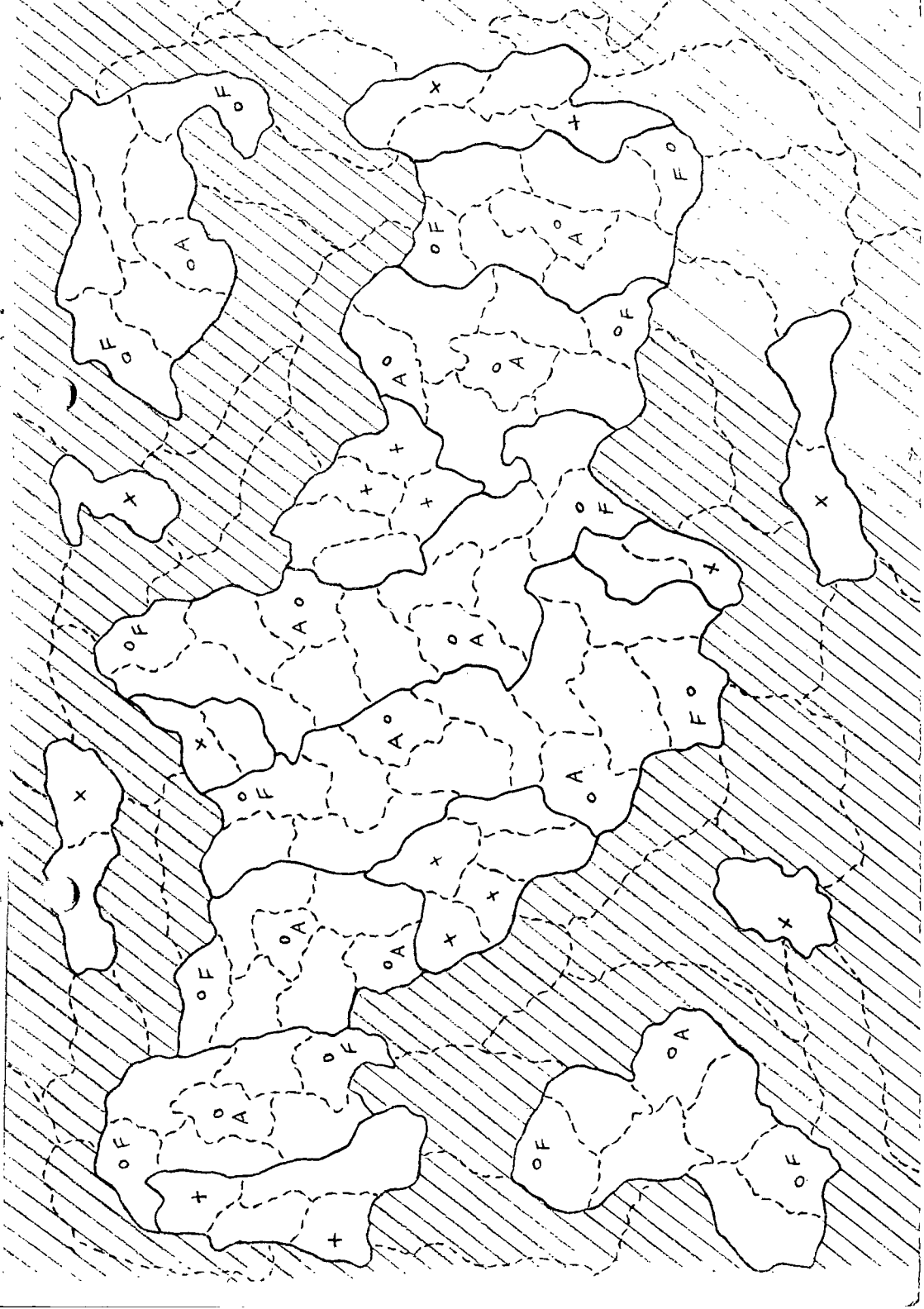
Any fool can see there's something wrong with that. Not only have the two centre countries got too many directions in which to expand, compared to the others, they've also got the most number of initial enemies to face. I remedied this problem by giving each of the centre countries four units initially, while imposing geographical limitations on what they could do during the first two moves - the easiest way of doing that is by inserting an extra province between the starting unit and the desired direction of expanding, or by allocating a fleet initially which prevents expansion inland for two moves.

Once you think you've balanced the map, it is a good idea to try to play the game through for a few years, just to see what happens. When I did this it occurred to me that if the two central powers allied they would be far too strong - therefore I adjusted their mutual border to make it easier for them to stab one another, and I adjusted the sea provinces to make attacks on the central countries easier from the four outer countries.

Overleaf is the finished map. Curiously, once I'd balanced half the map to my satisfaction, it struck me that there was no reason why the map shouldn't be symmetrical - as long as it wasn't too obvious. Hence, any country has the same chance of winning as its counterpart on the other side of the board.

The game should be played using the Multiplicity II rules that I published a while back - thus allowing A/F combinations without the fluid rules of Abstraction. Initial starting positions are marked on, neutral so's being marked with a X.

The next step is a proper playtest - but where will I find eight players with a sense of adventure?



LETTERS

Richard Brockington,
66 Moorside South,
Fenham,
Newcastle upon Tyne.

"Thank you for lending me "The Game of Diplomacy". I enjoyed it - almost as much as I enjoy Pigmy!

"I found the chapter on tactics particularly helpful, although he could usefully have expanded even more on the "Stalemate Line" which is obviously very important.

"I have two criticisms. I think it would have been worthwhile if Richard had included the full history of one or two completed games with as much of the diplomacy and press as possible. Perhaps 1974-N on which he draws so much, although not yet complete.

"Secondly I think that towards the end of the book he loses sight of a quite fundamental point: like all games, Dippy is only worth winning if you win it according to the rules. It may be permissible to try to fool the opposition by forging letters from the GM: in no circumstances could it ever be permissible to invade the GM's college rooms and inspect the orders submitted by the other players. How could anyone derive satisfaction from winning by such means?"

[Some good points there. I think it may have made matters very complicated indeed if Richard had included more variations on the stalemate line - as long as the reader is made aware of the requirements of such lines, and the need to plan ahead if he intends to form one, then I feel he has enough information. However, I do agree that an annotated game could have been a useful addition - perhaps to demonstrate the manoeuvres mentioned in the two chapters on tactics. 1974-N seems to have gone into hibernation along with Ethil, although it looks as though things are drawing to a close now (spring 1924, isn't it?).

I completely agree that extremes such as breaking into the GM's room are contrary to the spirit of the game - I find Richard's justification completely unconvincing. For those that don't know, Richard refers to an incident several years back when Piggott returned to his room only to find Andy Davidson busy copying out the orders submitted by his fellow players. John decided to compel Andy's units to stand for that season - though you can't help wondering if Davidson had done it before without being discovered. In similar circumstances I would probably go along with John.

All people are different - some will try to win by any means. It is my belief that any trick may be legitimately used to try to influence what a player does with his units, but that once he has sent off those orders they should be sacrosanct.

I think that many players may try to bend the rules in fact to face games - such as trying to overhear conversations and glimpsing orders. I don't mind this so much because every player has an equal opportunity to spy on the other players. Clearly every player does not have an equal opportunity to brake into the GM's room (thank God!).

Would any of you care to see an annotated Dippy game in Pigmy (using diagrams), with, say, one game year per issue? I'd try to find a better player than myself to write the commentary. Ideas please!]

STEVE AND CLAIRE



GAMES

(P/4) is held over because the three week deadline has caught out Ian Doherty, who I suspect returned from the U.A.E. too late to send some orders in. I know from his previous letter that he was assuming last issue would have a 4 week deadl deadline. If I hear from him in the near future I'll send out a game report. Troubleshooter must wait too.

(P/8) is held over due to player request. I apologise if that three week deadline threw some of you.

(P/9V), (P/10V), (P/11V), (P/13) are all held over due to the Irish postal strike. Does anyone have any idea what's going on over there? I hope that this break isn't going to ruin these games, but what else can I do?

It looks as though P/3 is going to monopolise this issue - in normal circumstances I would have sent out most of the P/3 press on a seperate sheet. Still if you read that lot you'll learn a lot about press writing, both what is good and what to avoid...

Next issue comes very close to my 'A'levels - indeed I have an exam on the day before the dealine. Consequently I reserve the right to edit out a lot of press (which I will print in issue 27).

((()))

(P/6) 1978GM Regular Diplomacy GM: Steve Agar Spring 1905

ENGLAND (Malcolm Brown) F(Edi) S FRENCH F(Lon)-NTH; F(Hol)-HEL; A(Wal)-Lon;
FRANCE (Richard Brockington) F(MAO)-Spa sc.; F(ENG)-MAO; F(Lon)-NTH; A(Ruh) S
A(Bel)-Hol; A(Bur) & A(Sil) S A(Mun);
GERMANY (Martin Styler) F(Nwy)Std.; A(StP)Std.; A(Den) & A(Ber) S A(Kie) S ENGLISH
F(Hol); F(BAL) S A(Ber);
ITALY (Graham Tunnicliffe) F(Gre) & A(Ser) S A(Rum)-Bul*; A(Tyr)-Vie; A(Bud)-Rum;
F(EMS) S F(ION)-AEG; A(Ven)-Tri; F(Nap)-ION; A(Rom)-Ven;
RUSSIA (Keith Black) A(Sev) & A(Gal) S TURKISH A(Bul)-Rum; A(Mos)-StP;
TURKEY (Ian Phillips) A(Bul)-Rum; F(Con)-BLA; F(AEG)-Gre*; A(Ank)-Smy;

Retreats*: Italian A(Rum)-Ukr; Turkish F(AEG)-Con;

Press: Anon: The movement of the English pieces in this game is more erratic than in a game of vain rats - what will they do next I wonder?

Rome-Paris: As you can see I've agreed to your proposals. I only hope you have!

Anon: I hate you Phillips.

Moscow-Rome: You know what you can do with your offers.

Constantinople-Moscow: Sorry, but I am not that way inclined. I suggest we settle our earlier dispute at some time in the distant future, at OGScon for instance. Don't forget to bring your duelling pistols.

Anon: So do I.

Storytime: Once upon a time when beer was 4d a pint and a good time could be had by all with £1 and a bull-whip, a group of scientists sat down round a round table the ragged rascal ran... sorry dear readers, just a short attack of alliteration - back to normal service - and decided to create the ultimate Diplomacy player. Ian Phillips was the result and as you can see the experiment was a total failure.

(There'll be more of this rubbish next week unless a large sum of money is left behind the radiator of --- Town Hall public lavatory)

(press continued overleaf)

An Omen: I am a silly Paris dope,
A dope from Paris, near Pontoise,
And dangling on a six foot rope,
My neck'll know the weight of my arse.

Rabelais - Gargantua & Pantagruel

A letter to the Editor:

Lincolns Inn Fields.
22nd April 1905.

Sir,

We are instructed by His Grace Grand-Admiral Richard 37th Duke of Lyons to write with reference to the 24th issue of your publication "Pigmy" and the drawing depicted on the first page thereof. The caption on the drawing which is plainly intended to be a deliberate caricature of our client is "He NMR'd!"

Our client is aware of the current tendancy of zine editors to impugn his character. Until now he has chosen to treat them with the contempt which they undoubtedly deserve. This latest outrage however is something up with which he will not put. His Grace has not NMR'd. He is not in the habit of NMRing.

Our client has instructed us to inform you that he intends forthwith to blockade the port of Sunderland until penitent Wearsiders deliver you in irons to await his mercy. And if that causes you to fail your 'A'levels, you can always try the Baccalaureat instead.

We are, sir, your obedient humble servants,

STOUGE & STAB

Solicitors.

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(P/12) 1978JG Regular Diplomacy GM: Steve Agar Autumn 1903

AUSTRIA (Des Phillips) F(ION) S F(Alb)-Gre*; A(Vie) & A(Tri) S A(Bud);
ENGLAND (Nick Clennett) A(Swe) & F(NTH) S F(SKA)-Den; F(Nwy) S A(Swe); F(Bel)Std.*;
FRANCE (Ian Shearer) A(Mar) & A(Par) S A(Pic)-Bur; A(Tyr)-Boh; F(Tun) S AUSTRIAN
F(ION);
GERMANY (Rick O'Fee) A(Den)*S RUSSIAN F(GoB)-Swe; A(Ruh) S A(Hol)-Bel; A(Bur)-Mun;
ITALY (Anarchy) A(Rom)Std.*;
RUSSIA (Don Brown) F(GoB)-Swe; A(Ukr) S A(Gal); A(Rum) S TURKISH A(Bul)-Ser;
A(Mos)-StP; F(Sev)-BLA;
TURKEY (Richard Brockington) F(Gre) S A(Ser)-Alb; A(Bul)-Ser; F(Con)-BLA;
F(AEG) S F(EMS)-ION

Retreats*: Austrian F(Alb)-ADS. German A(Den)-Kie. English F(Bel)-ENG.

Winter 1903 Adjustments:

A: 5 Centres: Vie, Bud, Tri, Ven, Nap. NC.
E: 6 Centres: Lon, Lpl, Edi, ~~Ph~~, Nwy, +Swe, +Den. Builds A(Edi).
F: 6 Centres: Par, Bre, Mar, Por, Spa +Tun. Builds F(Bra)
G: 5 Centres: Ber, Kie, Mun, ~~Ph~~, Hol, +Bel. NC Builds A(Ber).
I: 1 Centre: Rom. NC
R: 5 Centres: Sev, Mos, War, StP, Rum, ~~Ph~~. Removes F(Sev).
T: 6 Centres: Ank, Con, Smy, Bul, Gre, Ser. NC.

Press: Constantinople: OK. Which wise guy has been using my call-sign?

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Spacefiller: Next issue should see the Pigmy Summer Quiz, an article on ID, and probably not that much else, due to 'A'levels. Let's have a few contributions from you lot, eh? I need all my meagre resources of energy for exams, but I'll print any decent stuff that you send in. Free issues offered as rewards, plus the added attraction of becoming world famous. A few of you have promised me things that never materialised, why not write that article today!

Hello to the newcomers reading this (especially Jeff Blake and Nick Howell).

(P/3) 1978EJ Regular Diplomacy GM: Steve Agar Spring 1905

AUSTRIA (Robert Stanford) A(Tri) S A(Ser)-Bud; F(ADS)-Alb; A(Ven)-Tyr;
 ENGLAND (Andrew Malcolm) F(Nwy) S RUSSIA: A(Fin)-Swe; F(NTH) C A(Yor)-Hol;
 F(Lon)-ENG;
 FRANCE (Richard Savage) A(Pic) S F(ENG)-Bel; A(Bur)-Ruh; A(Mar)-Gas S by F(MAO);
 GERMANY (Graham Tunncliffe) F(SKA)-Swe; F(Den)Std.; A(Ruh) S A(Bel)* S
 A(Mun)-Bur; A(Gas)-Par;
 ITALY (Nicholas Hoyle) A(Pie)-Ven; A(Rom)Std.; F(ION) S TURKISH F(Apu)-ADS;
 RUSSIA (Ian Phillips) F(Sev)-BLA; F(Swe)-BAL; A(War)-Gal; A(Vie)-Bud;
 A(Rum) S AUSTRIAN A(Ser); A(Fin)-Swe; A(StF)-Mos;
 TURKEY (Steven Rennie) F(BLA)-Arm; F(Cor)-BLA; F(Apu)-ADS; A(Bul) S A(Gre)-Ser;

Retreats*: German A(Bel) dead.

Press: Anon-Moscow: Why don't you just shut up and accept seventh place? After all, buggers can't be choosers...

Rome-Whoever wrote the press entitled "The Real Syndicate-The 'other' Syndicate": I know you are not the real Syndicate, although your subtle style obviously induced The Syndicate to believe that I wrote that verbal diarrhoea of yours.

The Syndicate: We trust that you all received our last communication and that you all heeded the directive that bogus press is to cease!

Attention all super-sleuths of P/3: Following the various "leads" given last issue as to who is behind The Syndicate, let me bring to your attention the remarkable interest in P/3 showed by David Phillips, as transpired through issue 55 of Puppet Theatre News ...

Nick-Richard: I will NOT allow you to write press in a language I can't understand.

Paris-World: Would the idiot who entered the ludicrous end-game proposal please declare himself. I believe the yellow van is waiting for him.

Shitty Ditty Time:

Stan the Man
 Had a plan
 So he started farting,
 But the blast
 Was so vast
 He did his vital parts in.

Stevie Rennie couldn't stop it,
 Neither could his sister;
 But he did it far too much
 And now he's got a blister.

Tun the Hun
 Had some fun
 With a carmelite nun.

Limerick Corner:

There is a young man called Stan,
 Who plays Dippy with marvellous elan;
 His strong points are stabbing
 And sneaky base-grabbing,
 He's win if they were part of his plan!

"What I value more than all worldly treasure,"
 Said Butty one day, "Is my leisure:
 For what I like most
 Is to play Dippy by post,
 It's slow, but it lengthens the pleasure!"

Moscow-London: Isn't it time you admitted to it, PAL? Get it?

The Syndicate-Europe: Bogus Press Release in defiance of our Directive - we will eliminate ourselves: You seem to have missed the point of our generous guidance, so here is a summary:- The Syndicate mastermind

- 1) has sent PAddington Bear eNvelopes postmarkeD in Bury, and
- 2) Must not necessarily participate in a DipLomaCy pOstal game.

In order that the above riddle should not tax your mental resources too heavily, we have underlined certain letters. Get the hint?

Butty-Tunafish: How would you like it spread!

Moscow-Thurdo the Tunn: Have you really got three friends?

Berlin-Moscow: I no more trust you than I trust Steven, Bobby, Andy, Ricky or Nick. So there!

LE MONDE APRIL 1905: TROUBLE IN SCANDINAVIA WORSENERD TODAY WITH SWEDEN CHANGING HANDS FOR THE 15th TIME. IN AUSTRIA THE EMPEROR BROKE HIS JAW, NATIONAL REJOICING LASTED THREE MONTHS. MEANWHILE SOURCES NEAR THE PRESIDENT PREDICT A NEW OFFENSIVE.

A Tribute to Steven Rennie: What can one say that has not already been said about Steven Rennie? One could re-iterate the well-known but incorrect opinion that Steven has never won a game of Diplomacy. The facts behind this inaccurate rumour we can now reveal to the general public. Steven Rennie has never won a game of anything - while playing apple-bobbing all he got was a mouthful of water (for a fuller explanation of this country pastime please refer your s.a.e's to our resident country bumpkin, Bobby Stanford.

Berlin-Constantinople: So, 'tis war laddie! Steven Rennie's so thick he opens his car door to let the clutch out! He once bought 100 acres of land outside Southport for £1 per acre. Unfortunately the tide was out! Get it? Please yourselves!!

Moscow-London: You must have had a few when you wrote that rubbish on the "Real Syndicate".

Moscow-Anonymous: "Esteemed GM" - who are you trying to kid? Crawler!

The Song of the Ancient Tunafish Butty:

The Emperor Tunncliffe now has ended his assize
With justice done, his great schemes engulfed in fire,
And Stanford brought to his knees.
The day departs and evening turns to night;
The Malcolm's abed in vaulted chamber high;
Rennie comes, the greatest of all prats, to his side:
"Up Randy! Assemble thy whole imperial might!
With organ and arms unto Franconia ride;
Needs must thou succour the Savage where he lies
At Paris, his city, besieged by the bloody Krauts;
There for thy help the Sugarpop Fairies and icing-sugar
trolls s'it and cry."
Small heart had Randy to journey and fight;
"God!" says the King, "how weary is my life!" (Anyone who patronizes
the local brothel three times a week must be.)
He weeps, he plucks (Yes plucks) his flowing beard and

Read next week's exciting (cough) installment where the Emperor Tunncliffe lets sound his horns aloft! Also next week "Why Randy hates pseudo-punks" by A. Turkey Butty, Professor of Micro-Organisms, The Brothel, 3 Bury New Road, Manchester.

The History of BGS Dippy (part 2) by the Jolley Green Giant: Due to the dismay expressed by many, that our story which was started in Pigmy 23, was not continued in issue 24, we have decided to add a second episode to our story.

Our heroes were all going to Stan the Man's house for a game of dippy. As soon as Tunn arrived Stan said to him, "I was going to buy some Tetley's bitter, but they'd none left when I went to the off-licence." Tunn looked u up to the heavens and was heard to mutter, "Thank you, God."

As he walked into the room Tunn could see a group of assorted alcoholics standing around. One of these alcoholics in particular, Steven Rennie, was shaking uncontrollably cos he was already halfway through his first pint. Little Ian stood up in a corner and started to tell everyone what a good diplomacy player he was, Tunn, with his usually subtlety, told him to "Bog off." Richard Savage suggested that they start the game, but as usual, ever everyone ignored him.

(To be continued next issue. Will Ian lose the game and for once not claim to have been unlucky? Will Robert Stanford, for the first time in his life,

BACKBIT

A Zine of the Times is looking pretty sick. Shaun Derrick has two obstacles in the way of him being able to put out a decent zine. Firstly, he's been made redundant, so he's a bit short of cash. Secondly, he's split with his girlfriend and he was using her typewriter! We all have to face problems sometime. In the future Shaun is going to keep AZOTT to a bare minimum, and all games will be invitationals. That's the way to get gamestarts - the people he asks will get an ego-boost and he'll get the games. Nice one Shaun!

Bron Yr Aur 27 is overdue.

Dolchstoss is late again and given Richard's problems I can't see it being printed for a long time yet. How long are we going to wait this time before we start to think about rehousing games. I'm not really bothered about the main zine games, but Richard started a few novice games before his life got the better of him - I'd like to see something done about those novice games now.

Down Alien Skies has gone all funny. The last issue was reduced photocopy which looked dreadful, but I thought that Nick made the most of the situation. This issue was only 12 pages long - but Nick intends to make up for that next time. Have a look. (Nick Shears, 2 Jennifer Court, 92 The Street, Ashstead, Surrey)

Lemming Express 43 is long overdue.

Geordiecon will be held on the 7th, 8th and 9th of September at the Rex Hotel, Whitley Bay. This looks like being the major con of the year. For details write to Ian Waugh, 13 Briardene Drive, Wardley, Tyne & Wear enclosing a s.a.e.

Ethil the Frog is overdue again...

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13 - P/3.

14 - P/3 Press!

15 - P/2, P/5V.

16 - Backbit.

I bet this looks hideous compared to Megalomania, I don't think I'll ever be able to change the fact that I still lay things out as though I was using mimeo. Still, I reckon this is just about the first litho zine which has an emphasis on games and games-related articles instead of just gossip. Calcreep of course will disagree.

COA: Nicholas Hoyle makes life complicated by going to Camping de la Carabasse, 34450 - Vias, Herault, France till about 15th July (then he's off to Germany!) Letters cost 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ p and take 5 or 6 days.

Malcolm Brown has just rang up and begged me not to print a letter in which he makes a complete fool of himself - sure Malc, just for you.

Well, I've managed to knock off this issue using Friday night and Sunday - just wait and see what I'll be able to produce during the holidays!

DEADLINE 25 MAY

Tel. (0385) 883309