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DEADLINE FOR
ISSUE 25

SATURDAY
9th JULY

SPRING OFFENSIVE



A MONTHLY POSTAL DIPLOMACY ZINE FROM STEPHEN AGAR, 79 FLORENCE ROAD, BRIGHTON, EAST SUSSEX, BN1 6DL. TEL. 0273-562430, COMPUSERVE 100276,775. COST 3½P PER SIDE (60P UNWAGED, £1.20 ABROAD)

EDITORIAL

I suppose my personal big news this month is that I am coming clean and confessing that all being well Esme and I are expecting our first child to be born on or near 28th October. I await this event with some trepidation. Will *Spring Offensive* become a baby zine? Time will tell, but I can confirm that it is my intention (with Esme's support and encouragement) to continue with *Spring Offensive* irrespective of the impending presence of a small pink loud thing.

When I haven't been devising new and fiendish ways to privatise the Post Office at work, the past month has been mostly spent retrieving zines from people willing to donate their collections to the MidCon Collection - many thanks to Jeremy Tullett, Steve Thomas, Andy Bolstridge and Chris Tringham. Promises of future help have been received from (inter alia) Pete Birks, Richard Egan, Richard Sharp, John Wilman, Des Langford, Geoff Challenger and even Andy Bate. Apart from Chris Tringham's collection (which is very good on the 1978-82 period) all other zines received so far have been catalogued up to 1992 - though I'm still missing a lot of *Thing on the Mat*, *Greatest Hits*, *Y Ddraig Goch*, and *NERTZ* from the 1980s. Do any of you have copies of these zines that you are willing to surrender to what is after all a hobby resource?

I enjoyed what I saw of FurryCon 94 which was held at the Old Ship Hotel in Brighton over the Bank Holiday weekend. Although the Diplomacy Championship only managed two boards, that was still a 100% increase on last time and with work I hope to make it three or four boards next time. All in all more than 120 gamers attended FurryCon with *The Uninspired* (Marcus Pratt, Darren White, Steve Campbell and Chris Boote) winning the Intergame contest and Steve Jones picking up the Clive Mewse Memorial competition for the best individual performance. The Diplomacy championship was won by Martin Burgdorf, with Peter Berlin coming second as a result of the fact that I (in my position of tournament Director!) gave him some duff advice about the scoring system being used - Martin and Peter were trying to stitch up a 2-way draw between them, but the bad advice from me meant that they draw they agreed actually gave Martin a narrow victory. Ooops! Good job Peter's got a sense of humour.

WordDipCon IV approaches and I hope to see many of you there over the weekend of 23-25 July. See the Forthcoming Con listings for details. I would urge anyone who has not been to a Con before to consider a couple of days at WorldDipCon - the accommodation is not too expensive (if a little Spartan) but that is all more than made up for by the quality of the company and the long lists of games to play, tournaments to join and opportunities for eating and drinking to excess. If you're lucky you will have just had enough time to get over the experience by the time MidCon comes round in November. Speaking of which, I have been given provisional permission by Esme to attend MidCon even though we may have a 3-week old baby at the time. Obviously if the baby is late or there are complications I may not be able to make it - but I will try.

A few things are missing from this issue. Leuctra, Naxos and Cannibalism are on inserts, as should be Younstown if I can find Calum's orders (I know they're round here somewhere) - this is due to me running out of time to finish everything before this issue goes to print. Verona, Orchomenus, Heraclea and Yarmuk are held over for various different reasons. Chris Hardy sent me the latest *White Noise*, but I can't read Atari formatted discs, so I can't print it. To cap it all, the Avagadro report won't print. Aaaarghh! Why does everything happen at once!

Issue 25 next time - a quarter century. Time for a celebration - opinions on the first 25 issues are solicited for a retrospective issue. TTFN.

A Roundup of News & Zines

Greatest Hits No.184 was as entertaining as usual, bringing with it news that Pete has finally landed a job which repays his considerable talents with less than trivial sums of money. However, the back page of the zine (which was out of character with the rest of the zine) was very maudlin indeed, and announced that **Greatest Hits** is to fold in the sense that there will no longer be a printed paper publication, but some sort of zine will survive on email. But he doesn't seem too sure "I may return tomorrow with a printed **GH**. I may never return" and he ends the piece with the enigmatic "Enough. This was **GH** 184. I can promise you something soon, as soon as I know as I know I am safe." I certainly hope all is well in East Dulwich and that we don't lose a fine zine and a fine friend. If **GH** does disappear the postal Diplomacy hobby as it stands today will be more or less unaffected, but the world will be a poorer place. You can't say more than that.

Nothing to Declare continues to look promising, even though issue 14 did contain an attack on me from Kim Head, who repeats the same attack in **Gallimaufry** No.141. (By the way Kim, I've had more copies of your flyer than the cat's litter tray can reasonably cope with. Kim appears to assume that something is lawful just because a lot of people do it - is it lawful to drive at 80 mph on motorways? **Nothing to Declare** has a healthy letter column and a good bit of all round chat, some of it with a sports bias. Paul has lists almost full for Diplomacy (only one needed), Gunboat Diplomacy and Columbus as well as emptyish lists for several other games. Recommended. Paul Bennett, 103 Deleval Close, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 4QP.

After Tringham's recent computer problems **Megalomania** No.59 turned up on time, though Chris managed to spread six pages over seven sides as his word processor through a wobbly. **Megalomania** complements **Hobby News**, which Chris puts together with John Dodds, quite well. **HN** is a deathly dull listings zine (but still very useful) while **Megalomania** provides Chris's personal opinions on Life, television, Commuting & the Hobby. Talking of **Megalomania** those of you with long memories will remember that 10+ years ago when **Megalomania** was in its prime that Chris had a certain reputation for (allegedly) forgetting to post issues to his subscribers. So imagine my surprise when going through Chris's old zines with him to discover a copy of issue No.45 (back in 1982) which was addressed to Tony Hetherington and correctly stamped, which had been returned to Chris because he forgot to write an address on it. There was also a re-adjudication addressed to Tony Hawkins with both address and stamp, but which had evidently never been posted. So write immediately to Chris Tringham, 10 Jubilee Court, London Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, CR7 6JL and you too can be missed off a mailing list.

LIES No.21 was fairly chunky, even though a majority of the zine is taken up with game reports and postal rules for **United Nations**. I particularly liked the report on his trip to India by Richard Jackson ("It is a land of 1001 smells, mostly bad, but if you expect the worse it can only get better.") and the totally incomprehensible A3 map of Empires of the Middle Ages. Lists are open for Diplomacy, Arena and United Nations. Contact Richard Egan

at 23 Cleve Road, Knowle, Bristol, BS4 2JR if you want to play in what is proving to be the most reliable and frequent zine in the UK.

I enjoyed issue 5 of **The Spice of Life** put together by Miguel Lambotte and Jef Bryant - **SoL** is the official organ of the Belgian Variant Bank and includes lots of variant descriptions and descriptions of other PBM games, the rules to Banzai II, a survey of variants played by post in Europe, an update to the Belgian VB catalogue, a discussion on variant playtesting and lots of variant-related information. The cost is £1 and it is available from Jef Bryant, Rue Jean Pauly 121, B-4430 ANS, Belgium. This is the sort of thing that the UKVB should do. Speaking of which, James Nelson has announced that he would like someone else to take over the UKVB from him. Given my interest in variants (and given he has supplied my address as the contact point for queries in the interim) I have offered to look after the UKVB for him for 18 months, but as yet he has not replied to my email. If I was running the UKVB I would probably just use a page of **Spring Offensive** to catalogue updates etc. which would compliment the existing variant material in the zine. Anyway, whoever ends up running the UKVB will get my full support.

The results of this years Gladys Awards were suitably embarrassing with **Spring Offensive** picking up Best Zine and Best for Diplomacy and Variants with **Smodnoc** second in both category. **Spring Offensive** also picked up Best for Hobby News and Best Looking Zine. All this praise is very nice, but far too flattering - I await the backlash with some trepidation. Neil Duncan also had a good showing with Best Lettercolumn and Best GM, while **Smodnoc** got Best for Other Games. **Cut & Thrust** deserves an honourable mention for Derek's two second places and one third. 48 people voted.

A big welcome to **On The Game**, a new zine from Paul Cockayne of 18 Henry Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 7NA. On The Game is taking over two of the **Smodnoc** sub-zines, namely John Colledge's **The Blue Nosed Special** and David Tittle's **Novelty**. Lists are open for Diplomacy, the Crossword Game, Bus Boss, Acquire, Fictionary Dictionary, Railway Rivals, Best the Boss, Blow Football, Mornington Crescent, Designer Dice, United and many more. No doubt a SAE would elicit a free issue. If this sounds like your sort of zine then write off to Paul now!

Even the mighty are falling these days. The legendary 24hr turnaround of **Smodnoc** is no more for Toby has announced that he will be taking a week to turn round in future as he starts to take things easy while he heads off for retirement. One of the few zines not to have a nasty letter from Kim Head about me - there's always next time I suppose. As many of his subzines are either calling it a day or jumping ship, **Smodnoc** will soon just be a shadow of its former self.

I couldn't let this issue about a mention for **The Cunning Plan** No.17. You'll have to get up a lot earlier than that to make me fall for the old dummy page routine Neil! Though I have to say that I thought the special Agar edition was less of a parody than you probably intended.

THE THINGS THEY (ONCE) SAID

This is the beginning of a new series where I publish some a quotes from well known hobby celebrities and you try and guess who said it. Try your luck with these two quotes...

(1) "...the party should say, yes we are for the nationalisation of the Banks and the Finance industry, yes we support unilateral nuclear disarmament, yes we seek a major redistribution of wealth from the 7% who hold 84% of this countries wealth, yes we are going to break up multi-nationals within Britain, yes we are going to re-unify Ireland, yes we are going to ban private health care as it leaches resources away from the NHS, yes we are going to invest in our housing stock and not nuclear fission plants, yes we are going to clean up our environment and not defend ourselves against a hypothetical enemy. Yes we are... [etc. etc.] If this sounds a little revolutionary then so be it. Up the Revolution!"

Clue: the person involved is now a Liberal Democrat activist.

(2) "I am not liberated, and would no more want a female bridge partner or chauffeur than a male secretary (or a male wife)."

Clue: the person concerned is now well know as being half of a husband/wife bridge partnership.

FORTHCOMING CONS

SUMMER STABCON

Will take place at Wolton Hall, Manchester over the weekend of 1 - 3 July 1994. Features board games, role-playing games and wargames, and if the weather is good there will be an area for foam and steel weapons and a live action tournament. As the event takes place in and around a bar, you must be 18 or over to attend.

Rooms are £16 per person per night, or £21 if you want breakfast as well. You must pay a £5 per night deposit on booking, and the remainder on arrival. Registration is £5. Cheques should be made payable to Stabcon and sent to 17 Davenport Park Road, Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 6LU.

MANORCON 12/WORLD DIP CON IV

Will take place at Birmingham University from Thursday 21 to Monday 25 July. Accommodation is £19 (sharing) or £20 (single) per person per night and registration is £5 per day or £15 for the whole 5 days.

The WorldDipCon Diplomacy championship will consist of five rounds, the one on Saturday also being the World Team Championship. Other events include the Railway Rivals world championship, United world championship and tournaments of Acquire, 1830, Outposts, Kingmaker, bridge, croquet, Rostherne games, Speed Circuit and Intimate Diplomacy. Francis Tresham will be running several Hartland games and demonstrations.

For more details, and to register, write to Richard Walkerdine, 6 Honeybourne Way, Wickwar, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire GL12 8PF (Phone 0454 299073).

TRINGCON

Organized by Alan Parr (6 Longfield Gardens, Tring, Herts HP23 4DN), this is a small informal event for up to thirty people on Saturday 24 September in Tring. To register, send a deposit of £2-£5 to Alan. The total cost will be under £10 (including lunch).

ESSEN GAMES FAIR

20 - 23 October in Essen, Germany. The largest games event in the world, featuring Intergame, the European card and board game championship for teams of 4. More details from Friedhelm Mertz, Alberichstr, 15-17 Bonn, Germany (Phone +49 228 342273).

MidCon

November 18-20 at the Royal Angus Thistle Hotel, Birmingham. Room rates are £26 per person per night (sharing) or £32 (single). Registration is £8 until 31 August, after which it will rise to £10. Brian Williams, 30 Rydding Lane, Millfields Estate, West Bromwich, B71 2HA.

Features the National Diplomacy Championship, remaining qualifying events for which include: London (4 September), and Woodbury near Exeter (10-11 September). For details contact the national co-ordinator, John Dodds, at 55 Leigham Vale, Streatham, London SW16 2JQ (phone 081 677 3287, or e-mail jdodds@cix.compulink.co.uk).

MASTERCON 2/EURODIPCON 3

The location is the Kings Head Hotel in Cirenster, Gloucestershire, and the dates are Friday 24 to Sunday February 1995. Registration is £10 per person, with a special concessionary rate of £5 for non-UK residents, and hotel rooms are £23 per person per night sharing or £25 single.

To register, send £10 (or £5) to Shaun Derrick, 313 Woodway Lane, Walsgrave, Coventry CV2 2AP.

HOBBYMEETS

BRISTOL: The Knowle (Back Bar), Leighton Road, off Priory Road, off Wells Road. 1st Friday of the month. Paul Norris (0272 427061) Richard Egan (0272 774460)

EXETER: Thatchmeet at the Mount Radford on Magdalen Road on the 1st Wednesday of each month. Rob Mulholland (0392 494072).

FAREHAM: Richard Williams (0329 236125) organizes a get-together at his house, on the 2nd Sunday of even-numbered months from 10 am.

HERTFORDSHIRE: Semi-regular meetings on Monday and Friday evenings to play games in place such as Hoddesdon, Tring and Hemel Hempstead. Alan Parr (0442 824173) or Martin Draper (0992 460117)

LONDON (1): The Royal George, Eversholt Street, near Euston station, 3rd Wednesday of the month. Contact Vic Hall (071 326 0125) or Mike Allaway (081 863 6413) for details.

LONDON (2): The Small Furry Swiggers meet at the Royal Oak in Regency Street, Westminster every Wednesday from 6.30. Costs £2.

The **NOTTINGHAM & DERBY** Board Games Club meets every Thursday from 7-10.30 pm. Contact Mick Haytack on 0332 511898.

NORTH YORKSHIRE: Tap & Spile, Monk Bar, York, on the 2nd Sunday of the month, at noon. Contact Iain Bowen (0904 640095) or Pete Sullivan (0325 364153).

OXFORD: Every Wednesday during term-time at 7.30 in the nuclear physics building off Keble Road. All welcome. Details from Mark Stretch Flat 23, Stevens Close, Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 6JW (term) or 2, Over Mill Drive, Selly Park, Birmingham B29 7JL.

RIPLEY, near Woking: Usually 2nd Tuesday of the month, but can vary depending on availability of regulars. Starts with a curry and moves to a pub. Contact Dane Maslen (0483 721856) in advance to check on dates.

The **SHREWSBURY** Games Club meets every Sunday from 2.00 pm to 10.00 pm at The Lodge, Monkmoor, Shrewsbury. More information from Mark Kennett (0743 361417).

HOBBY SERVICES

The Finishing Touch is produced by Richard Sharp, Norton House, Whieldon Street, Amersham, Bucks, HP7 0HU. The results of all Diplomacy games played in the UK: an invaluable source of reference for statisticians, or to find out something about your opponents

The Novice Package provides a large amount of useful information for those who are new, and not so new, to the hobby. Includes a 56 page booklet with articles on playing Diplomacy and other games by post, a glossary of hobby jargon and pen pictures of hobby personalities, plus a number of sample zines and addresses for hobby services and zine editors. £2 from John Dodds, 55 Leigham Vale, Streatham, London, SW16 2JQ.

Zine Bank: Send a large (A4) SAE stamped for 200g to John Dodds, (address above) and he will send you about half a dozen different zines.

Mission from God lists all the zines in the hobby, with information about prices, sizes, frequency, etc., together one or more brief review to give a flavour of what the zine offers. £1 from Peter Sullivan, 55 Brunton Street, Darlington, County Durham DL1 4EN. Next issue late July.

Ipsos - Endgame Statements

Game: 1992DI - Ipsos. Commenced: *Spring Offensive* No.4 (September 1992). Finished *Spring Offensive* No.22 (April 1994).
 GM: Stephen Agar.

	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	Result
AUSTRIA (John Etherington)	3	4	3	0	-	-	-	-	-	7th
ENGLAND (Tony Hastings)	3	4	5	5	4	5	3	2	0	5th
FRANCE (Paul Ridout)	3	5	6	6	6	3	2	2	2	=3rd
GERMANY (Richard Williams)	3	6	6	8	10	10	16	15	19	WINS!
ITALY (Ian Hinds)	3	4	4	7	7	10	9	12	11	2nd
RUSSIA (Dave Allen)	4	4	3	1	0	-	-	-	-	6th
TURKEY (Mike Gallie)	3	5	6	7	7	6	4	3	2	=3rd

RICHARD WILLIAMS (Germany) Winner

A shame that virtually everyone threw the towel in, even if victory was almost a certainty. It would have been nice to have battled for the 18, rather than have them handed on a plate.

When the game started I only knew John (Austria) and as he took an early bath my chances grew, as the others were inexperienced. Since the start of the game I have met Tony (England), Paul (France) and Dave (Russia). The biggest single problem was Mike (Turkey). When the game started he lived in Czechoslovakia and less than 50% of my letters apparently got through, so I gave up writing. When I needed Mike at the end, Stephen didn't give his new address despite regular requests. I had a less than 50% success rate when I knew where he was, so what hope did I have with the country split into two! As it turned out, being out of communication didn't matter. [SA: I don't recall any query about Mike's address, as far as I know he never moved and everyone knows that Prague is the capital of the Czech Republic]

When the game began I was eager to have my favourite Anglo/German alliance. I could not have had a keener ally than England. Unfortunately Tony seemed to forget that I was part of the alliance and wanted all the centres himself. Tony was a little upset when I implied he was thick. He kept thinking he had great ideas. They were great ideas for England but I was getting nothing.

Tony had this amazing knack of demanding his plan, I repeatedly refused, then two days before the deadline he agreed with me. By which time I had decided to poke at him, so many times I used his late decisions as the excuse for my little attacks on him. With Russia trying to get everyone at each others throats, I used this to my advantage and had a great start. I learnt how to handle England and my only problem was France. Unfortunately for Paul, he was the only one who wanted to attack me, so after early success he was quickly pushed backwards.

Austria and Russia were both heading for early baths, although I did offer Russia a lifeline - instead he chose to commit suicide. I was prepared to keep him going as a front line against England. It was the only chance he had of survival. Quite unbelievably he sent my letter to England who forwarded it on to me. The result was that Russia got immediately knocked out. I rarely encounter people who forward letters on, let alone when it is their only chance of survival they send the letter to the person that would need to be attacked.

I also had a stroke of luck in Autumn 1903 when England decided to go by the map as printed in *Spring Offensive*, which had my position marked on it incorrectly. I didn't tell Tony this which was to help enormously. I knew he was going by the map rather than the game report, as he was at my place when we planned what to do! What happened was that I could trash one of his units, the vital A(StP), knowing that it couldn't be retreated, as the map position suggested

that I couldn't dislodge it. Tony was not amused at the outcome as I controlled the North Russia / Scandinavia area as a result.

By now I'd convinced England into destroying France, while conning him over my activities in the north. My only concern was Italy. Ian (Italy) was already discussing a 17 - 17 split, which I played along with. I was only interested in winning though. In case Italy got ahead, I was regularly writing to England and France, in case a stalemate line was required. I openly told them both I planned to stuff them, but should Italy look like winning, I would immediately back off and form a line.

Nothing actually went wrong. Paul (France) played for survival, while Tony played very oddly. He should have sat in Iberia. Instead he decided to fight me, an impossible task and France ran into the vacated Iberia. Italy was not amused, he wrote to me informing me of what he thought of the others. Not many complimentary comments! Then promptly decided not to move again himself. I could have been stopped on 17 centres, had he got himself together with France and Turkey. I am sure France would have been willing, but the chances of doing anything with Turkey were so remote, I wasn't worried. In fact had Italy bothered he may have just done it with only France, but to just give up is astonishing.

To the players. I know John (Austria) is a good player when in the mood and I was glad when he got stuffed. This time he stood no chance. Dave (Russia) I know can play a lot better than he did here - now he is more experienced he does much better. All I found out about Mike (Turkey) was that playing from Eastern Europe was foolhardy. Tony (England) has, I hope, learnt a lot from this game. His enthusiasm is unquestionable even if his general play has much room for improvement. Tony, remember that an alliance is a partnership, where your partner may just appreciate a couple of centres themselves. Paul (France) did well in an impossible position. The only person to battle until the bitter end. Having seen him a few times I gather he attacked me because I was experienced! In hindsight not a wise move, although provided England agreed then I was going to attack France anyway. I would like to play against him again in more friendly circumstances. Ian (Italy) only appears interested when things go his way. I can understand his frustration with Turkey, but he appeared to make no effort to work with anyone else. Thanks to Stephen for GMing my first German win at the fifth attempt. Three of the previous four I was stopped on 17. My only regret is not being made to work for what turned out to be a simple win.

IAN HINDS (Italy) 2nd

I started this game believing that with Italy to play and no Diplomacy experience for 20 odd years that I stood little chance.

The Austrians were quite dismissive of my overtures, even hostile. I worked first to remove this direct threat. Austria seemed able to do

more damage to me than anybody else. I knocked Austria out in 1903 taking all 3 centres in one turn - some said it was luck!

The Turkish were never a problem other than their unpredictability and gunboat stance. I had by this time a solid French alliance and would have been happy to make it a permanent game winner. As time went by it seemed France was less friendly so I struck hard at this ex-friend. The net result was that what remained was so hostile that I had to finish it off. A couple of mis-orders and a lost set of orders led me to concede that Germany was now too far ahead to catch.

PAUL RIDOUT (France) =3rd

Congratulations to Richard for a convincing victory. Well done also to Ian Hinds for running in a close second.

At the outset of the game, once Richard had introduced himself and commented that he was participating in over 20 games of Diplomacy, I realised that he posed the biggest threat. I tried to get Tony Hastings (England) to join me (France) against Richard (Germany). All went OK until Spring 1903 when France supported Germany into Moscow and wrecked my plans of joint action against the Germans. England

declared war on France in Autumn 1904, bearing fruit for Richard's diplomacy!

As Tony proved untrustworthy I nurtured my alliance with Italy which worked well until I was stabbed unceremoniously in Autumn 1905 losing 3 centre in the process! This is how a stab should be done and it effectively put France out of the game. With Germany and Italy each with 10 centres it became a two-horse race, eventually Richard's experience paid off.

Well done Richard and thanks to all the others in an absorbing contest.

STEPHEN AGAR (GM)

I think Richard is a little harsh on Ian, who never gave up, it was just that his Spring 1909 orders were lost in the post, and as a result he thought there was no possibility of stopping you from winning. I suspected that Mike might find it difficult playing from Czechoslovakia, and the game might have ended very differently if he'd taken more of an active part in the game. Still, no dropouts, which is a relief. Congratulations to Richard on his victory and rather forthright endgame statement.

Gaugemala - A Late Final Statement

Chris Tringham (England) 5th

My initial actions in this game were influenced by the belief that Richard Sharp (Germany) was the strongest player in the game and that therefore Pete Birks (France) and I should resist the temptation to attack each other. We agreed that neither of us would move to the English Channel, and I turned my attentions to Walkerdine (Russia), co-operating with John Miller (Turkey) to attack him from both ends. This went reasonably well, and by Spring 1902 I was in St Petersburg. Simultaneously, I took Belgium with support from Sharp, but amidst great confusion in Autumn 1902 Richard moved in whilst I moved out. I felt at the time that I was slightly conned out of Belgium, and Richard also persuaded me against supporting John Marsden (Austria) into Moscow. With hindsight, this was a key point in the game, and if I hadn't allowed myself to be persuaded by Richard, I am sure the game would have had a very different result.

Then Italy and Germany joined in on the attack on France, and his resistance soon crumbled. I did make some effort to co-operate with Italy, but all I got back were a few postcards, and my tendency to leave everything to the last minute didn't help, particularly as I didn't have a phone number for Jeremy. I wasn't overly surprised when I was next on the Italy/Germany shopping list, and that put paid to my chances. I then signed my units over to Richard Sharp in return for the promise that he would keep me in the game, and watched as an interested spectator. I did read the letters from Richard, and kept an eye on the game - I thought that I would share in a 4-way or 5-way draw, and by the time I realised that this was unlikely it was too late. Incidentally, in my previous game of Diplomacy I signed my units over to Andy Bate, but eventually took them back (and we ended up

slugging it out before settling for a draw), so I don't regard these sort of arrangements as permanent or unbreakable.

John Marsden did make one or two rather half-hearted attempts to persuade me to change sides (John kindly made the offer that Jeremy would order my units for me), but Richard had cleverly left my units in positions where they were vulnerable to attack from him, so I needed quite a lot of persuading. John very nearly managed it, but when I talked to Jeremy at MidCon he seemed convinced that Richard was going to win anyway, and that made my mind up.

I think that Richard thoroughly deserved his win - he worked very hard, and came up with some very persuasive arguments at critical points. I never felt that my continued support was being taken for granted, and his reputation for telling the truth except in certain limited circumstances stood him in good stead.

Thanks to Stephen for his efficient GMing, and to the other players for making it a very enjoyable and interesting game (at least early on). All I need to know now is who was ordering which units.....

Postscript : Having read the endgame statements in *Spring Offensive* 23, it is clear that there was the opportunity to create an anti-Sharp alliance sufficiently early to stop him winning. All I can say is that I could easily have been persuaded to join such an alliance, but John Marsden was the only person who even tried to persuade me, and he didn't do a very good job. Jeremy was an obvious ally at various stages, but never seemed interested (though I will admit that I didn't try as hard as I might have done). John Miller and I had one exchange of correspondence and then got on with life at opposite ends of the board, and Richard Walkerdine was as enfeebled as I was for the most of the game.

ZINE PRINTING SERVICE

Andy Bolstridge is considering offering his services as a 'zine publisher. If you're an editor and would, possibly, be interested in having someone else print, collate and post your zine please get in touch with him. Likewise, if you're considering starting a zine but wouldn't otherwise be able to start up, Andy would love to hear from you.

turnaround for this would be quick, posted same day in most cases, zines could be sent via Royal Mail or e-mail and costs would be "competitive". Output quality would be immaculate, and Andy would consider typesetting your zine as well as printing it.

So if you are the least bit interested by this contact Andy on 091-232 4281 or at 42 Goldspink Lane, Sandyford, Newcastle, NE2 1NR.

To Be Or Not To Be?

by Stephen Agar

Consider the characteristics of a zine editor. He (or even she) is some one who spends anything from 20 to 120 hours a month, producing a zine (usually at a significant financial loss) mainly for the benefit of others. Of course, running a zine is a hobby as much as playing chess, going fishing or even indulging your passion for machine knitting, but it is also relentless. If you don't feel like going fishing any particular weekend you don't have to. But if you don't produce your zine on time you will feel that you are letting others down. So, the picture is of someone who has a hobby that they enjoy, but nevertheless a hobby which to an extent is out of their control, with time pressures imposed by the interests of others. In short, zines can dominate leisure time, even when you don't want them to.

Therefore, it is not particularly surprising that from time to time a zine editor is less than efficient and at some point they will fold the zine completely. Folds are less fashionable than they once were, in the mid-70s zines were lucky to make it into double figures, whereas today there are more zines in treble figures than single figures (!), but folds are of course an essential part of the postal games hobby, in much the same way in which death is an essential part of life. I've seen quite a few folds in my time (though not as many as some) and I've probably folded more zines than any other current editor (three at the last count) so permit me to describe the three common scenarios.

Le Fold Classique

The classic fold is when an editor suddenly decides he's had enough and takes responsible and appropriate action accordingly. Either the editor produces a final issue in which he says (for example) "*Perspiring Dreams is folding and this is the last issue for the present.*" (as in *Perspiring Dreams* No.41) or one month the zine just doesn't turn up, but soon afterwards the subscriber receives notification that the zine has indeed folded and either gets his subscription back or is notified who has taken over his game (E.g. my own *Pigmy*). In my opinion this is how all folds should be handled. Make a decision and stick to it, don't let your zine have a long and agonising death which results in both editor and subscriber feeling less and less satisfied with what is being produced. Doing a zine badly is worse than not doing it at all, because the morale of everyone involved will suffer.

One frequent signal that a fold is on the way is the Drastic Reduction Ploy, so beloved of editors who are in self-denial about the likelihood of them folding their zine. What happens is an editor announces that whatever he is going to do he is NOT GOING TO FOLD, but that the zine is all too much for him and all his problems will be solved if he can just slim the zine down a little. This is usually a sign that the editor concerned has mounting negative feelings about producing a zine which he explains away to himself on the grounds that it's just too much work, and therefore he convinces himself that if the zine is made more manageable his enthusiasm will return. This is rarely the case. A disinclination to produce a zine is usually a feeling that is too strong to be assuaged by jettisoning the letter column, the variants or the game of United. Although the size of the task awaiting the editor may indeed be too large to handle comfortably, once a zine has got too big it is not easy to cut it down to size quickly enough so as to lighten the editor's burden to any significant extent. I am not saying that cutting a zine down to size can never work, just that it usually doesn't, because in reality a feeling that the zine is too big is often symptomatic of a larger malaise.

A dramatic example of the slim down ploy is the false fold (much like a false start in reverse). This is where it all gets too much for the editor concerned and he announces that he is folding. However, after a while he regrets his decision, and so doesn't fold after all.

Once a fold has even been mooted, it is likely that the zine won't last six months. Mike Clarke openly considered folding his zine *Sidewalk* at issue 18, reconsidered and decided to soldier on, and then folded

at No. 21 anyway. Back in the 70s I announced *Pigmy* was folding in issue 29, but I changed my mind, yet folded after issue 32 anyway.

Fade Away and Radiate

Many editors seem to think that the responsible thing to do is to finish the games they've started albeit in a progressively anorexic zine. In my view they are mistaken. Forgive me for using a rather strained metaphor, but it is not responsible for a captain to take his crew down with the ship. Zines which slim down and don't pass subscribers en bloc to another zine inevitably lose the hobby players, especially as the slimmed down zine will rapidly lose its connection to the mainstream hobby (cutting trades, little non-games material etc.). Those subscribers not playing games will be the first to go, their enthusiasm diminished by the experience of the run down, though as they are more likely to see other zines the hobby may not suffer. The players are a different kettle of fish though (kettle of fish? I wonder where that comes from?) if they stay in the game they may be playing in the diminishing zine for many months and, if they are not already playing in other zines, they may indeed be lost for good when the game ends or the zine finally folds. A zine which is being run down in a sorry thing indeed which saps the very lifeblood from the hobby because those very games and players, placed in a new home, may help to render another (perhaps new) zine viable and hence contribute to the hobby.

Admittedly, some run-downs are better than others - Guy Thomas has certainly handled the gradual fold of *Realpolitik* very well, keeping some chat in the zine and maintaining a degree of regularity. On the other hand, since *Electric Monk* announced a run-down last autumn Andy and Maddi have only produced 3 issues and the last issue is months overdue. Other zines which have followed a similar path include *1901 and all that*, *Fall of Eagles* and *NMRI*.

The Disappearing Zine

The Disappearing Zine-fold is characterised by editors who simply let the gaps between issues get longer and longer until no one is quite sure whether the zine has folded or not. In extreme cases the zine can have been missing for over a year, but the editor concerned does not actually admit to having folded and there is no sight of subscriptions being returned (because to do so would be to admit yourself and the world in general that you've folded). This is without a shadow of a doubt the worst way for a zine to die and editors who behave in this manner are letting their subscribers down, because no matter how bad your personal problems may be, there is no excuse for not telling people what is going on. The most famous example of a zine disappearing into thin air was probably the fold of the now rehabilitated *Dolchstoß* in early 1980, but other recent examples of Disappearing Zines include *Garbage In, Garbage Out* whose editor Duncan Proffitt just disappeared into thin air, Mike Clarke's *Sidewalk*, the legendary Froggy (last seen March 1993) from Andy Bate (a member of the ManorCon Committee) and *NERTZ* (last seen April 1993). Other zines which are starting to display similar tendencies include *The Assassins Handbook* (one issue in seven months) and *Born Losers* (two issues in a year) - though as Edmund isn't running any games he can be partially forgiven. Often a zine which is on course for a gradual fade away will suddenly disappear, whatever the good intentions of its editor. It remains to be seen if *Electric Monk* is a case in point.

The sad thing about editors who indulge in such non-folds is that they will not admit to themselves that this is what they've done and the fact that they are often still in touch with the hobby means that the rest of us are really far too tolerant of their behaviour. It almost makes me come out in favour of a Hobby Organisation or some sort of Players Charter to the effect that if a zine disappears without explanation for (say) three months then the editor will acquiesce in re-housing their games. Games in Invisible Zines are the most likely to wither and die by virtue that there is often a long delay before the rest of the hobby

even catches up on the fact that there is a problem, and if the editor is uncooperative than it can be impossible to save them at all. Not every subscriber sees several zines, so disappearing zines kill enthusiasm for the hobby in some of their subscribers and are thus a drain on hobby resources. In short they are a disgrace.

Campaign for Real Folds

The Campaign for Real Folds was a spoof idea I had a few months back, but the message is a serious one. We need to make it clear to editors and potential editors that it is OK to say that you've had enough, whether you've produced 3 or 30 issues. If you no longer enjoy editing a zine then STOP. Tell your subscribers, hand over the games to another zine, and rest easy knowing that you have acted in everybody's best interests. You know it makes sense.

MORE ZINES SEEN

Odardle No.19 contains details of Bill Turner's latest computer disaster - his monitor melted! Bill was so pissed off he considered folding - £1,400 worth of kit and lots and lots of problems over the past 6 months. Computers are so bloody unreliable - I lost a whole week this issue because of a upper memory conflict when using MSWord, hence very little preparation was done this time. The problem is, once you're used to using a computer there's no turning back. Similar software problems have been experienced by Steve Doubleday in putting together **Gallimaufry** No.141, but then Steve always has such problems (and always described them in great detail).

I got a copy of the first issue of **The Brilliance of Massed Violins** from Don Clarke, 7 Oakley Road, Shepshed, Loughborough, LE11 9AR. It is basically a FRP zine with the threat that he may run Diplomacy.



OUR PLATOON EASILY TOOK FIRST PRIZE IN THE TRENCH-GROWN VEGETABLE COMPETITION

Diplomacy

How Well Do You Know The Rules?

As I'm raiding **Perspiring Dreams** No.18 this issue I thought I'd reprint this rules quiz which John Dodds published at the beginning of 1982. When John printed this quiz only 3 out of 18 entries were 100% correct. Can we do better? Answers for next time...

1. A(Edi)-Nwy; F(NTH) C A(Edi)-Nwy; F(NWG) C A(Edi)-Nwy.

Does A(Edi) get into Nwy?

2. T: A(Ser)-Rum; A(Bul) S A(Ser)-Rum
A: A(Bud)-Ser; A(Rum) S A(Bud)-Ser; A(Gal) S A(Rum)

What happens here?

3. R: A(StP)Stands
E: F(BAR) S F(GoB)-StPsc; F(GoB)-StPsc

Does F(GoB) get into StP?

4. E: A(Yor)-Lvn; F(NTH) C A(Yor)-Lvn
G: F(Den) & F(BAL) C ENGLISH A(Yor)-Lvn

Does A(Yor) get into Lvn?

5. R: A(Bul)-Con; A(Sev)-Ank; F(BLA) S A(Sev)-Ank
T: A(Ank)-Con; A(Arm) S RUSSIAN A(Sev)-Ank

Does A(Sev) get into Ank?

6. F: F(TYS) C A(Tun)-Nap; A(Tun)-Nap
I: A(Nap)-Tun; F(ION) C A(Nap)-Tun

Which unit is in Nap after the adjudication?

7. I: A(Nap)-Rom; A(Apu) S A(Nap)-Rom; F(ION)-TYS; F(Tun) S F(ION)-TYS
F: A(Rom)Stands; F(TYS) C ITALIAN A(Nap)-Rom

Does A(Nap) get into Rom?

8. E: F(Bre)-Gas; A(Pic) S GERMAN A(Bur)-Par
F: A(Par)-Bur; A(Gas) S A(Par)-Bur
G: A(Mun)-Bur; A(Bur)-Par

Which unit, if any, gets into Bur?

9. E: A(Edi)-Nwy; F(NWG) C A(Edi)-Nwy; F(Bel)-NTH; F(ENG) S F(Bel)-NTH
G: F(NTH) C ENGLISH A(Edi)-Nwy

Does A(Edi) get into Nwy?

10. R: A(Arm) S A(Sev)-Ank; A(Sev)-Ank
T: A(Ank)stands; F(BAL) C RUSSIAN A(Sev)-Ank

Does A(Sev) get into Ank?

11. E: F(MAO) S F(Spa)sc-WMS; F(Spa)sc-WMS; F(Nap) S F(ION)-TYS; F(ION)-TYS
I: F(Tus) S F(TYS); F(TYS) C A(Rom)-Tun; A(Rom)-Tun
F: F(WMS) & F(GoL) C A(NAf)-Tus; A(NAf)-Tus; F(Tun) S F(WMS)

Does F(Spa)sc-WMS succeed?

12. A: A(Tri)-Apu; F(ADS) C A(Tri)-Apu
I: F(ION)-ADS; F(Apu) S F(ION)-ADS

Does F(ION) get into ADS?

CITY STATE

by Hartley Patterson

- The rules of Diplomacy (1971) apply except where indicated below.
- The starting positions and home supply centres are as follows:

VENICE: F(Venezia); A(Aquileia)
 GENOA: F(Corsica); A(Genova)
 MILAN: A(Milano); A(Lodi); A(Novara)
 MANTUA: A(Mantova); A(Parma); A(Brescia)
 FLORENCE: A(Firenze); A(Pistoia); A(Siena)
 POPE: A(Roma); A(Viterbo); A(Spoleto)
 EMPEROR: 3 DA's in "Germany"

- The starting date is Spring 1301. Victory conditions are as in the regular game.

4. **Venezia and Genoa:** These are double supply centres for the home players only; for other players they are normal. They count as single centres for the purpose of satisfying victory conditions. To retain this double status, Venice and Genoa must be able to trace a chain of adjacent sea spaces, either vacant or occupied by their own fleets, from the double centre to the southern edge of the board. If such a chain cannot be traced in a Winter season the centre reverts to single status until the chain is re-established.

5. **Ports:** Venezia, Genova, Pisa, Napoli are ports. Fleets may only be built at ports by any player controlling them. A player with fleets, who in a Winter season controls no ports, must disband a fleet before normal adjustments are made, irrespective of supply centre counts.

6. **Messina:** The Messina Box is treated as a normal sea space for the purpose of movement, support, convoy etc. It is deemed to be adjacent to all six spaces on the southern edge of the board (Tyrrhenian Sea, Ischia, Salerno, Bari, Adriatic Sea, Split). Occupation of Messina does not have any effect for the purposes of rule 4.

7. Sieges:

(a) A unit dislodged from a supply centre may choose to retreat "behind the walls" instead of leaving the province.

(b) A unit behind the walls" is so indicated by being placed in double brackets, e.g. A((Mil)).

(c) A unit "behind the walls" controls the supply centre but not the province, which will initially be occupied by the dislodging attacking unit.

(d) A unit "behind the walls" may either attack into the province or stand. It may not support, nor may it be supported in attacking or standing. Its attack would cut any support attempted by a unit in the province.

(e) If the province falls vacant for any reason the unit "behind the walls" automatically reoccupies the province.

(f) A unit attacking a province in which there is a unit "behind the walls" may be ordered to raise the siege ("R"). If the attack succeeds, the attacking unit does not move, but rule 7(e) applies instead.

E.g. MILAN A((Lod)). A((Mil)) R A((Lod)). A((Pav)) S A((Mil)).
 MANTUA A((Lod)) retreats

(g) A unit "behind the walls" for two successive move seasons is disbanded during the retreat phase of the relevant season (i.e. before control of SC's is determined). Thus, a unit retreating "behind the walls" in the retreat phase of Autumn 1302 would be removed during the retreat phase of Autumn 1303. For the avoidance of doubt, a unit occupying a space containing a supply centre will automatically take control of the supply centre in the relevant adjustment phase if there is no unit "behind the walls" when the adjustments take place (even if it has only just been removed in the immediately previous retreat phase).

(h) A fleet may only be "behind the walls" in a port. It is only besieged as per 7(g) if all adjacent sea AND coastal spaces are occupied by units belonging to another player throughout the period.

8. The Emperor:

(a) The Emperor starts the game with three double armies supported by his notional off-board centres in Germany. If a 2A is destroyed or removed it is rebuilt in the following adjustment season in Germany. Apart from these three units all Imperial units are ordinary single armies and fleets. A double army may not split any of its actions and any attack on a 2A will cut any support given by that 2A completely.

(b) Only Imperial units may enter the "Pass" and "Germany" boxes. The "Germany" box connects to all the "Pass" boxes, the "Pass" boxes connect to on-board provinces as indicated by the arrows on the map. Only one Imperial unit at a time may occupy a "Pass" box. The "Germany" box may contain any number of units.

(c) A unit that starts a move in a "Pass" box must attempt to move. If its move is blocked, it is retreated automatically to "Germany".

E.g. EMPEROR: DA(STG)-Com" [retreats to Germany]
 MILAN: A((Mil)) SA (Com); A((Com))Stand.

(d) For every TWO on-board supply centres controlled by the Emperor he may build a single unit. This unit may be built in any vacant centre owned by the Emperor, or in Germany. The Emperor may build fleets as in rule 5. Only one unit may be built (2A or A) in Germany in any build season.

(e) The Emperor is eliminated if there are no 2A's on the board (i.e. not including Germany or the Passes) at any time from Spring 1303 onwards. All remaining Imperial units stand thereafter and are removed during the next adjustment phase.

(f) A DA cannot dislodge a unit "behind the walls".

Sources:

Power and Imagination - City States in Renaissance Italy by Lauro Martines.

The Times Historical Atlas

Phillips World Atlas

Designer's Notes:

The original version had two "Interventionists", France and Germany, with Naples as an on-board power instead of Mantua. Cutting out Naples helped with the Diplomacy, concentrating the action in the North Italian plain, rather than having it split up into several tactical actions the length of the peninsula. France was dropped as one "interventionist" seemed to be enough - we are actually in a period when the Emperor, rather than the King, was constantly charging into Italy to assert his rights. The curious Venice and Genoa rules are in an attempt to reflect their concern with the trading interests overseas, notably in the Eastern Mediterranean as a legacy of the Crusades. "Behind the Walls" should result in some interesting situations. Hanging on to a supply centre may at first seem a better proposition than a retreat, but it severely restricts the unit doing so and in summer a retreat in the hope of recovery in the autumn may be a better prospect. The Emperor may find himself in a particularly frustrating position, with the Italians hiding in their cities and refusing to come out and fight!

Publisher's Notes:

This variant is being published in *Spring Offensive* No.24 in more or less its original state. I have tidied up the rules concerning removal of a unit "behind the walls" and clarified the position of 2As. The only substantive change which has been made is to allow the Emperor to build ordinary units in Germany, which allows the Emperor to build a unit in Winter 1301. I have also changed the starting date to make it 1301 (because of the synergy with 1901) rather than 1300.

City-State

ITALY 13th Cent.

by Hartley Patterson, August 1980

GERMANY
BOX

(UKVB 1982)



MESSINA
BOX

Diplomacy is a Race!

The problems with trying to rate Diplomacy games for Tournaments are many and varied. Any system needs to be able to rate the performance of a player in a particular game with the other players in that game as well as being able to use the rating as a basis for comparisons with players in other games. If that was not bad enough, few FtF games of Diplomacy are played to the bitter end, so the rating system has to take account of the fact that games end prematurely (E.g. 1911), a fact which itself gives rise to questions such as when should the game end and is it desirable to encourage players to act differently in the final year of a limited game-year contest, then they would have acted had the game being allowed to continue (i.e. do you sanction the final year rush for centres?).

There are so many difficult questions associated with rating Diplomacy games that it is difficult to know where to begin. Should there be a reduced victory criteria? Should coming in second be a partial success or a total failure? Should a player's performance be determined, if only in part, by what happens on other boards? Should all those who participate in a draw share equally? What importance, if any, is attached to supply centre counts during the game?

There are no easy answers. Better minds than mine have looked at this problem from every angle imaginable and no system has managed to command universal, or even general, acceptance. However, I would like to examine some basic assumptions and see how far it gets me.

I think any good rating system will be simple and will keep to the spirit of the original game. Diplomacy played to its natural conclusion only focuses on the end result, it is irrelevant how you got there or how long it took. A player who got to 17 centres and is then gradually reduced to 8 or 9 centres has **failed**, he is not rewarded for having done well early on, he is penalised for not having managed to capitalise on his initial success. Therefore, the first principle I would adopt in a Tournament rating System is that it is the **end result** that counts, if someone shoots his bolt too soon then hard luck. Any system which gauges the quality of the play on the cumulative record of the player throughout the game is simply not true to the spirit of the game, because it can lead to the situation where the winner of the game is the person who was 2nd or 3rd at the end of the game! This is similar to saying that when a football team led the game 1-0 for the first 85 minutes and then conceded two goals in the last five minutes of the game, then they are really the winner (because they were ahead for longest) even though they lost 2-1! Perhaps the Labour Party should have formed the last government because they were ahead in the Polls for the vast majority of the last General Election campaign... Yes, it is hard on someone who has done well, but who has been stuffed towards the end of the game, but if he/she was a good player then they wouldn't have let it happen! For example, consider the following game...

	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	Pt
A	3	4	3	4	4	3	3	2	1	0	0	27
E	4	4	6	6	5	7	7	8	9	7	4	67
F	5	6	6	6	7	6	8	8	8	11	15	86
G	5	5	4	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	19
I	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	52
R	5	6	5	4	4	4	1	1	1	1	0	32
T	4	5	5	7	8	8	10	10	10	10	10	87

France is a clear winner (15 centres), Turkey 2nd (10 centres), Italy 3rd (5 centres), England 4th (4 centres). Yet if you use a continuous supply centre count then the winner is Turkey, France 2nd, England 3rd, Italy 4th! Is that fair? More importantly, is it true to the spirit of the game?

You shouldn't feel sorry for someone who peaked too early and exposed himself to a combine onslaught, because Diplomacy is a race and those that fall behind in the final stretch should be counted as losers who put up a good fight, not winners! Of course this will encourage a "stuff the leader" mentality, but that is only as it should be. The good player is one who times his ascent to the top of the

greasy poll so that he can remain there. I believe that ongoing track record should count for nothing, just as it counts for nothing in a game of Diplomacy played according to the full rules.. Therefore, personally I would reject the systems used at MidCon and MasterCon (and maybe even ManorCon - I can't say because I don't understand there system) because they are based on a players track record over the whole game. Any scoring system that produces a result which says that the player who was second or third when the game end is really the winner is not at all true to the spirit of the game.

One criticism of this view is that it encourages centre grabbing at the end, which is not how the game would be played if it was continuing to the bitter end. To this I can only reply that the game is not being played to the bitter end, so you can't judge it by the criteria that would apply if that were the case, you can only try to approximate the spirit of the game. Certainly a race to be ahead at (say) Autumn 1911 is more akin to a race to 18 centres, than continuous assessment. I see nothing wrong with centre grabbing at all, provided everyone knows that the idea is to have the most centres at the end of the game. If players want to leave themselves open to stabs on the last move, then that's up to them. That sort of situation is infinitely preferable to the results of using continuous SC counts as a way of assessing progress which leads to the situation whereby a player who had a dominating position in the mid-game and yet who was ultimately defeated can still score more than the players who ultimately defeated him! After all, why compensate the player who may have been ganged up on at the end of the game, when you don't compensate the player who was ganged up on at the beginning of the game and eliminated. FtF Diplomacy would be far more exciting with a nail biting finish with everything to play for - the player who leaves himself open to a devastating stab on the last move does not deserve to win.

Having concluded that final supply centre count should be the only criteria, how is this turned into a manageable rating system? I favour simplicity.. Give an outright winner 100 points, then rank behind such a winner all the possible permutations in the order in which you think they should have preference and allocate points accordingly. Now this seems far too simple not to have been thought of before and rejected. What am I missing?

Position	Final SC Count	Points
Outright Win	18 or more	100
1st	17	92
1st	16	91
1st	15	90
1st	14	89
1st	13	88
1st	12	87
1st	11	86
1st	10	85
1st	9	84
1st	8	83
1st	7	82
1st	6	81
2-way draw	17	80
2-way draw	16	79
2-way draw	15	78
2-way draw	14	77
2-way draw	13	76
2-way draw	12	75
2-way draw	11	74
2-way draw	10	73
2-way draw	9	72
2-way draw	8	71
2-way draw	7	70
2-way draw	6	69
3-way draw	11	68
3-way draw	10	67

Position	Final SC Count	Points
3-way draw	9	66
3-way draw	8	65
3-way draw	7	64
3-way draw	6	63
4-way draw	8	62
4-way draw	7	61
4-way draw	6	60
5-way draw	6	59
5-way draw	5	58
6-way draw	5	57
7-way draw	4	56
2nd	16	55
2nd	15	54
2nd	14	53
2nd	13	52
2nd	12	51
2nd	11	50
2nd	10	49
2nd	9	48
2nd	8	47
2nd	7	46
2nd	6	45
2nd	5	44
2nd	4	43
3rd	11	42
3rd	10	41
3rd	9	40
3rd	8	39
3rd	7	38
3rd	6	37
3rd	5	36
3rd	4	35
3rd	3	34
3rd	2	33
3rd	1	32
4th	7	31
4th	6	30
4th	5	29
4th	4	28
4th	3	27
4th	2	26
4th	1	25
5th	6	24
5th	5	23
5th	4	22
5th	3	21
5th	2	20
5th	1	19
6th	4	18
6th	3	17
6th	2	16
6th	1	15
7th	4	14
7th	3	13
7th	2	12
7th	1	11
Eliminated 11	0	10
Eliminated 10	0	9
Eliminated 09	0	8
Eliminated 08	0	7
Eliminated 07	0	6
Eliminated 06	0	5
Eliminated 05	0	4
Eliminated 04	0	3
Eliminated 03	0	2
Eliminated 02	0	1

On this basis, using the example on the previous page, France would have 90 points, Turkey 49, Italy 36, England 28, Russia 10, Austria 9 and Germany 7. That looks just about right to me. What do you think?

Review of 1981

by John Dodds

(reprinted from *Perspiring Dreams* No.20 (Dec. 1981))

Following the turbulence of 1980, the last twelve months have been relatively stable ones for the hobby. There have been surprisingly few zines folding and a large number of new ones have appeared on the scene. The new zines: *Diplomat*, *Sodd's Law*, *Home of the Brave*, *Dib Dib Dib*, *Blackmail*, *Bohemian Rhapsody*, *Denver Glont*, *Don't Shoot me*, *The Thing On The Mat*, *Casus Belli* seem to be largely coping well as their first Christmas approaches, although *Casus Belli* does appear to have vanished after only four issues. The only zine which folded were _____ and *Spirit*. *Putty Riffo* disappeared for a month or two when Rob Chapman became a father, but surprised everyone by bouncing back, as fit as ever. The increase in the number of zines reflects the hobby's increased membership brought about largely through Paul Simpkins novice introduction scheme and the flyer in the Diplomacy box, which has worked well throughout the year. Some zines reappeared after long absences. Dave Thorby has worked hard at breathing new life into *Lemming Express* and, as in 1980, *The Orient Express* made one appearance. Although *Spirit* seems to have folded, its Editor in Chief, Peter Calcraft, has had a busy year. Working quietly on the hobby stats, he has now almost cleared the backlog of work left by Mick Bullock when he dropped them fifteen months ago. Pete is one of the year's successes. When one considers the amount of opposition he faced when he commenced the task, it is surprising how complete the records are. Chris Tringham has been active too. Although we have only seen three issues of *Megalomania* in the past twelve months, he has produced three hobby news sheets and been a central figure in the organisation of the National Con. Richard Walkerdine ran the Zine Poll in June which was won (for the third year running) by *Greatest Hits*. *Fall of Eagles* and *Puppet Theatre News* were second and third respectively. There was a zine poll hoax too. Someone travelled to Weybridge to post some fake results in which *Voice* was reported to be the winner.

The National Con, MidCon III, was held in November at the Royal Angus Hotel in Birmingham whilst in Ireland, LepreCon 2 took place at Trinity College, Dublin. By all reports this was a great success and a number of hobby personalities spent a week in the emerald isle - most of it holed up in a tavern called O'Neill's. The regular hobby meets which used to take place in various pubs scattered across the country have wound down. Liverpool, Manchester and Nottingham are no longer served by them although I understand that the meetings in Newcastle and Exeter still take place. The London meet in The Lamb is going from strength to strength though, with over thirty attendees on many occasions.

In January, John Hopkins handed over control of *Compendium* to Paul Simpkins. This is a zine which concentrates on listing details of all other zines in the hobby (It doesn't list itself!). It's a magazine which is primarily useful to novices and has now been incorporated into the Novice Introductory Package. In the next few months, Simon Billenness will become its editor and I hope that he keeps producing it as regularly as its last couple of editors. *The Diplomacy Courier* caused a little stir in March. This was to be a medium for playing postal Diplomacy, run by Douglas Wilson, which didn't conform to the standard conception of a zine. It was to be a couple of sheets of photocopied game reports sent to players only. It was criticised rather harshly in its pre-natal stages by Richard Hucknall and others and died ignominiously after issue one. The Central Gamestart Service was taken over by Tom Tweedy in June when Richard Hucknall passed it on. It's been working efficiently over the last year and has allocated a fair number of games to a variety of zines including two to *Perspiring Dreams*.

Apart from Diplomacy, United has been the most popular game of 1981. Twelve months ago, a small league was starting in *Hopscotch*, but since then it has really taken off. *Duel Purpose* has forty players, *Sodd's Law* has twenty six and *Perspiring Dreams* has twenty four with a few more keen to play. Abroad there are several zines running the game and I expect that yet more leagues will be starting in Britain in 1982.

A-Z of VARIANTS

PART FIVE OF EXTRACTS FROM A FILE COMPILED BY MARK NELSON

This is an extract from Mark Nelson's A-Z Variants file (v. 2.0) which is available on Internet. I am excluding variants which are being run or have been published in *Spring Offensive*, and all variant descriptions which have been previously published in this zine.

INTERSTELLAR DIPLOMACY III (Low Pulsipher) sg03/05

(1) Steve Agar and James Nelson in Spring Offensive 19, January 1994. This space variant uses a symmetrical three-dimensional board, permitting horizontal, vertical and diagonal movement to both the vertical and horizontal. Players start with 400 credits, receive 20 credits from captured centres and credits can be spent on building fleets on the home centre or building Industrial Centres which then permit fleets to be built there. Fleets cost 8 credits per move to maintain plus additional credits for specific types of movement, which means that economics is a very important aspect of the game. General combat rules are as per Diplomacy save that multiple fleets are permitted.

JIHAD (Dick Vedder)

(1) STEVE AGAR in V&U 4 (September 1980) A European variant, although the board extends as far as India, set in 635AD. The powers are: (Type A) Arabs, Germans; (TYPE B) Byzantines, Persians, Franks; (TYPE C) Lombardy, Exarchate of Spain and North Africa. The powers are split into three types in order of size and given different victory criteria accordingly. A fairly complicated game with hidden movement, as well as a sense of humour. If the Arabs lose Mecca, then all Arab units must retreat towards it until it is recaptured, even if they have no hope of ever reaching it. This game has been played postally.

LEBENSRAUM III (McGregor) ??/07

(1) MIGUEL LAMBOTTE in SOL 2 (October 1990) Based on a world map, World War II with added rules for supply lines and aircraft.

LEGION (FI Montauban) ??/07

(1) MIGUEL LAMBOTTE in SoL 2 (October 1990) The Mediterranean in the era of the Roman Emperors --- six Governors and the Emperor battle it out.

LIMA 2B (Colin Hemming, Michael Jean-Paul Macedoni)

(1) STEVE AGAR in V&U 4 (September 1980) A variant dating back to 1972. This game uses a slightly expanded version of the regular map and incorporates a new type of unit --- the Air Squadron. Essentially squadrons act as regular units but they have a range of two provinces, instead of the usual one. In addition to stand and support, squadrons can 'bomb' and 'invade'. The original game was written in French --- I believe that the first English version was printed by Colin Hemming in the UK zine XL (1972).

LEMURIAN (S Gunnell).

Rules originally published in Tau Ceti 9. (1) Robert Sacks in Lord of Hosts 10, July 1976. An economic variant with armies, heroes and magicians; this is *not* a magic variant - magicians seem to be heroes of a type who don't allow other magicians in the same space. Two of the players cannot communicate with each prior to initial builds, one of whom may not hire magicians, and the other may not hire heroes, while the remaining two players are limited to four magicians at a time. There are three different types of supply centers with different incomes and properties -- one, the native centers, are hostile to magicians and if left alone can build double armies to resist the players. Perhaps playable.

LOEB-9 (Daniel Loeb)

(1) MARK NELSON (15/1/93). A nine-player variant based on an expanded regular board adding Norway and Spain as the new powers. Five new supply centres are added and the victory criteria is 20. Has been played by email.

LONDON NIGHTS (Andy Mansfield) pe17/07

(1) MIGUEL LAMBOTTE in SoL 2 (October 1990) Seven gangs from North London want to take over South London. Will the police be able to stop them?

MACHIAVELLI (??)

(1) MARK NELSON (28/1/93) A complex diplomacy variant set in Italy which adds rule for money, bribes, famines, assassinations and the such like. The rules, and map, can be downloaded from a Judge. Distributed commercially by Avalon Hill.

MAGIC II (???)

Rules originally published in Valinor 1. (1) Robert Sacks in Lord of Hosts 8, December 1975. D&D strikes! Could use a little simplification, but good. In addition to a standard set-up, one unit is knighted (double strength -- must be doubly attacked to totally cut support), and there is a hero and wizard for each player; heroes may accompany their own forces adding one to their strength, and travel alone (over land or water) without strength -- if they are unable to retreat they're annihilated. Wizards may move invisibly (if an enemy unit is in the same space it has 50% chance of detecting and capturing the wizard) or cast one of the fifteen spells in the game. Spells take effect before movement (a spell if broken if the wizard is discovered, hit by lighting or fireball, or attacked). The wizard starts with only a Learning Spell; certain spells must be maintained; one spell is Counterspell against several of the other spells; one spell (Light) may be cast while moving to counter Darkness.

MANICHEION (Claude Bouries) ??/09

(1) MIGUEL LAMBOTTE in SOL 2 (October 1990) This game adds two new player, God and the Devil who can bless (or curse) provinces. A blessing will neutralize a curse (= impassable). God and the Devil choose a power which they consider will be the winner. If they have guessed correctly they will win the game.

MARCHERVAP (Jon Lovibond) ??/??

(1) GORDON McDONALD in AC-MONG 40 (August 1991) This game is based on the political situation in Wales as it existed at the time of the treaty of Aberconway, 1277. There are a number of additions to the regular game. Castles, surprise, garrison armies and two named units: Llewlyn ap Gruffyd and Edward I. There are three Welsh players: Gwynedd, Deheubarth and Powys and three English: Crown, Mortimer and Clare. There isn't anything to stop the Welsh and or English powers helping each other, however, Llewlyn and Edward, leader units, in control of Gwynedd and the Crown respectively, can only be used against opposing nationalities. Llewlyn when 'stacked' with as Welsh unit adds 1 to its strength in attack and 2 in defence whereas Edwards counts as 1 for both --- this variant has similarities to many a wargame. Leader units and garrison armies don't count towards the stacking limit, which is two, so it is possible to have e.g. an Army, a Fleet, a Garrison Army and Llewlyn stacked in one province. However, mixing of units from different players is not allowed. Leader units cannot move into a province controlled by units from another nationality or alter the control of a supply centre on their own It is possible for the two leader units to co-exist in the same province providing no other units are present. Leader units can only be eliminated if surrounded and on their own their defensive (or attack) value counts for nothing. Castles, as would be expected, have a defence value (1) although this only applies if there is a garrison in residence. (They count as double supply centres.) If they are kept in a state of siege for four consecutive movement turns i.e. surrounded, all units occupying them are annihilated due to starvation, but the opposing forces have to wait to the following turn before moving in. Retreats into own castle only! There is also a limit to the number of fleets a power may build and garrison armies cannot be built even if some are lost. Turns go July, August, September, etc with two movement turns followed by a build turn. There are varying victory conditions, depending on the power and may include a certain number of castles or a dead opposing leader. Certainly an interesting game combining wargaming methods with Dip. Initially looks complicated, but if you're a wargamer it's easy to grasp and in reality

probably no more complicated than any other variant with additional unit types. Indeed easier than Ark Royal Dip (qv).

THE MAYA (John Boyer).

Rules Originally published as a supplement to Impassable. (1) Robert Sacks in Lord of Hosts 9, March 1976. Units serve as both armies and fleets; any number of fleets can be in a sea space; movement is between cities adjacent by road, each of the eight players has a single home city. The home city is the only land space which may have more than one ordinary unit in it, & only one player's; moves and builds alternate -- each land space is a city is a supply center. There is a special, temple, unit which can not be moved, but may be built in any owned center upon a net gain in centers owned -- they are built in lieu of ordinary units, but do not count against subsequent supply -- temples add defensive strength. The victory criteria is 15 temples in one or more centers. Recommended.

MEDIEVAL DIPLOMACY (Andrew England)

(1) ANDREW ENGLAND in Affairs of State (1988) This variant is loosely based around Feudal Diplomacy (qv) but has several added features to improve its historicity. Islam is included as a separate power with which none of the other players is allowed to negotiate. To this end it is run by the GM. Byzantium is also presented as a separate power to be run by a player and both the Vikings and Nomads are included as non-aligned powers which move in a random fashion. Additionally, the Vikings make raids into various coastal provinces. The importance of land in the medieval world is presented by making provinces as well as supply centres worth production points. The map has been extended to take in all of North Africa and the middle East hence making the possibility of Crusades a reality. Otherwise the variant the same as Feudal. Time will tell what the strengths and weaknesses of this game are.

MEDITERRANEAN (Max Feron) ??/10

(1) MIGUEL LAMBOTTE in SoL 2 (October 1990) The Mediterranean world in 1250BC: in spite of certain events (plague, famine) and other problems (corruption, rebellion...) the players must conquer provinces which provide them with money and final victory.

MERCATOR (Doug Wakefield et al)

(1) STEVE AGAR & JON LOVIBOND in Pigmy Special Issue (1979) This variant is played on a world map with 13 players and a total of 108 supply centres and has been subjected to eleven different revisions, but the rules for 'Definitive Mercator' are now available. The basic units in Mercator are armies and fleets, but players may also form Army/Fleet (A/F) units which enable the combined units to travel together for several moves. There are four different 'time scales' (TS) in use (i.e. certain types of movement are adjudicated before other types, e.g. armies land from fleets before normal army movement). Due to its size Mercator has had troubles with balance, but the recent revision is claimed to be as near 'perfect' as possible. You'll have to concentrate to do well. Several optional rules are provided that must be decided on before the start of the game. (2) BRYAN BETTS in MOPSY 18 (December ?? circa 1984/85) Mercator originated as a variant played on a world map --- a Mercatorian projection, i.e. one which wraps around into a cylinder. Several marks now exist, and all have certain differences from the regular game; largely in movement. In Mercator there are no convoys --- armies cross seas by forming a combined unit with a fleet. This A/F can move as a fleet, and can land the army, rather like an amphibious assault. Movement is in three phases: PHASE ONE: Armies may board or land from fleets. If a fleet gives up its own move then it may support its army to land. Since no defensive support is possible this is a very powerful attack. PHASE TWO: Normal diplomacy moves and supports. A/F's can move as a normal fleet. PHASE THREE: Armies may embark onto or disembark from fleets (without support). A fleet which embarks/disembarks an army may then move to a sea space. An example. Suppose England has F(ENC) and A(Lon). He may order: TS1: A(Lon) BF(ENC), TS2: A/F (ENC)-MAO, TS3 A(MAO) D(NAf), F(MAO)-WMS! As you can imagine, Mercator is a fast moving game, with the emphasis very much on attack. In addition, the cylindrical map means you can (with careful planning) attack your enemy simultaneously from both sides! No sooner does he think he's stopped your attack in the west then you slam into him from the east! The final important difference is the use of the 'Key Rule', which says that a unit which fails to move may be dislodged by an UNSUPPORTED ATTACK from any provinces other than the one it failed to move to. Example: ENGLISH F(NTH)-ENC, F(MAO)-Bre, FRENCH: F(Bre)-ENC. The French fleet is dislodged

from MAO since its move failed. In short, a great game, with opportunities for all sorts of blitzkriegs and dirty deeds --- and the chance to play countries like Australia, Brazil and Japan! (3) JAMES NELSON in SPRINGBOARD 45 (February 1991) This is a global variant of which there are a number of different versions. All powers have foreign build centres, and the game mechanics ensure that the game doesn't get bogged down. This fluidity makes the game a great tactical and diplomatic game, and it has attracted its own subculture of hard-core Mercator players within the UK hobby. The game is quite complicated, and the rules quite lengthy but once the basic concepts have been understood everything falls into place. There are a large number of articles on the game, both on the play and the design.

METEOROLOGICAL DIPLOMACY (???) ??/07

(1) MIGUEL LAMBOTTE in SoL 2 (October 1990) Weather conditions enable provinces to appear and disappear.

MIDDLE EARTH II (Don Miller) ??? 1965 ??/05

(1) STEVE AGAR in V&U 2 (July 1980) This is basically a map variant in which the players represent Arnor, Gondor, Mordor, Rhovanion and Rohan. The designer overcame the fleet limitation which is built into Middle-Earth variants by allowing armies to turn into fleets and vice versa, and outlawing convoys. There was no attempt to recreate the book --- Middle Earth was used as a scenario and nothing more.

MIDDLE EARTH V (Lew Pulsipher) ??? circa 1975 ???/07

(1) STEVE AGAR in V&U 2 (July 1980) In many ways this is just a seven player version of Middle Earth II, in which the players are now Angmar, Dwarves, Elves, Gondor-Rohan, Harad-Ruhn, Men of the North and Mordor. The fleet rules were altered to accommodate the convoy, allowing the fleet to army conversion to happen in any province but specifying that the army to fleet change could only take place in coastal SCs. In order to improve player-balance Lew introduced Mountain ranges (e.g. to surround Mordor) which are impassable apart from specifically marked mountain passes --- the effect of these mountains on the play balance are considerable (and make it easy to form a North-South stalemate line).

MIDDLE EARTH VIII (Lew Pulsipher) ??? circa 1976 ???/08

(1) Robert Sacks in Lord of Hosts 7, September 1975. Eight players, one move per year, one fortress per home country, army/fleet conversion, standard Pulsipher victory condition: a majority of units possible + one (to guarantee against 'false' wins). The Elves (located in the center of the board) have a fourth home center and Mordor has one home center in the center of the board. The location of the boundaries and fortresses do not make particular sense, given the Middle Earth setting, and the game lacks magic, alignment, and mountains; as a Middle Earth variant it is unappealing, although the design features and concepts would make a good abstract variant. (2) STEVE AGAR in Variants & Uncles 2 (July 1980) Really original title, huh? This is an eight player Middle Earth scenario (Agnor, Angmar, Elves, Rohan, Gondor, Rhun, Rhovanion and Mordor), designed primarily as a fast FtF game. The principal change is the introduction of a one movement season per game year, to speed up the flow of the game and to encourage adventurous tactics. Also, each player is given a home fortress centre (which adds one to a defensive unit). The fleet rules are those of ME II.

MINIMALIST DIPLOMACY (Phil Reynolds) vb07/07

(1) MIGUEL LAMBOTTE in SoL 2 (October 1990) The seven classic powers have one province each. Each one is adjacent to at least three others.

MOOSE (Paul Girsdanskyy).

Rules originally printed in Magna Avis 2. (1) Robert Sacks in Lord of Hosts 8, December 1975. A Scandinavian player and a Pacific theatre are added. Very confused.

MULTIPLICITY (Richard J.Walkerdine)

(1) STEVE AGAR and JON LOVIBOND in Pigmy Special Issue (1979) Basically exactly as Regular, except that the formation of multiple units is allowed. Multiplicity is played to a 3-season year. This variant doesn't seem too popular at the moment --- perhaps it is TOO simple for most variant players.