

He was only a barmaid in the UNION BOG Co. - until he discovered:  
THE BOLSHEVICK STAR.

Quotation Column.

M. Sherrad- "I'm afraid that the rest of this issue will appear a little anti-climatic..."

D. Morris-"gerremoff!"

B. Yare-"Knickers!"

W. Haven-"STAR is slightly better this issue." "concerns".

also being there that evening!

I intend to go down to Cambridge this weekend, so perhaps later this issue we'll have the full story of "How I got caught by the hands in a pinball machine." by John "They say I'll never play the piano again" Piggott!

Would the mad fools who keep sending orders to the wrong person please note that I do not guarantee to forward them. It surely isn't that difficult.

I'm trying a slightly new method of stencil cutting with this issue's cartoon, and hopefully there should be considerable improvement. I won't tell you what the method is unless there is at any rate.

SCOTDIPCON II

~~Unofficial~~ Informed sources now seem to be of the opinion that the long-awaited Scotdipcon 2 was held somewhere among the creepers in the "garden" of 19, Dooct Rd.. (the garden was designed by Dungking Morass whilst going through his Tarzan phase.)

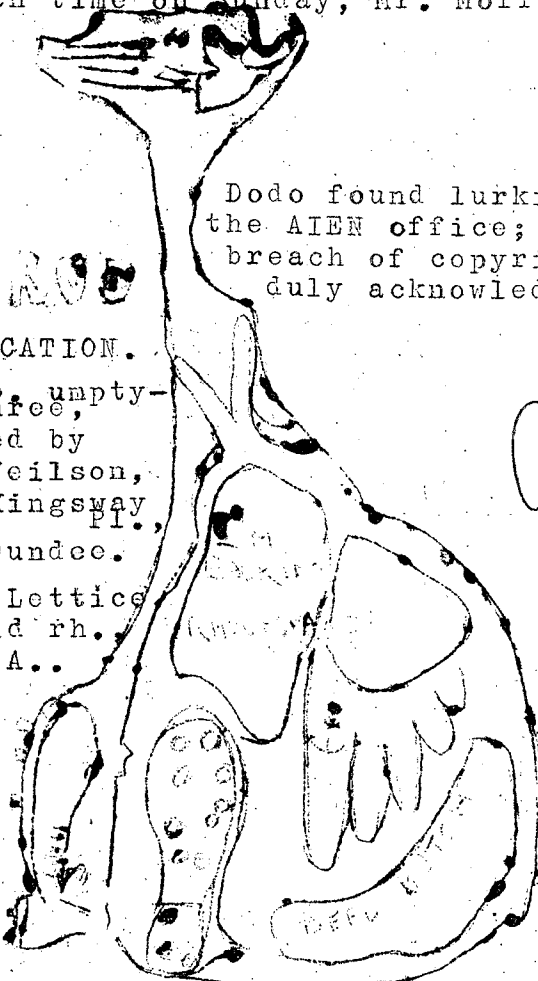
It seems, however, to have been rather a non-event, as Messrs. Morris and Yare were to be found watching a selection of blue films on Saturday night, (not having been present I cannot swear whether or not they were holding hands..) and were also in the Beer Bar at lunch time on Sunday, Mr. Morris

WHITHER THE DIPCON?

As intimated above, I did in fact visit Geoff Corker in Cambridge and a traumatic experience it proved to be; I hitched all through Friday night, through totally unintelligible darkest Yorkshire, and at about 4.30am arrived at a largish transport cafe just north of the Doncaster turn-off. The name was enough to send a shiver up the spine of the most seasoned of veterans: "HAVEN CAFE".

Visions of interminable games of Stalingrad, leering frizz-haired faces, expeditions through heaps of junk alongside which the Paris Sewers, the garden of 19, Dooct Rd. and the mind of John Piggott fall into insignificance, orthography conspicuous by its almost total absence, and unmeasured quantities of the world's greasiest and most dubious "tea" thundered through my mind with the weight of a Pinlicon at opening time. Why did I go in? It so lived up to my expectations that I can say with a fair degree of evidence to back me that Will Haven's mother runs a transport cafe on the Doncaster by-pass; I think too, that it is reasonably certain that she has the tea shipped down from Preston, without (puke) reheating.....

To return to the subject, however, I eventually arrived in Ca-



Dodo found lurking in the AIEN office; breach of copyright duly acknowledged.

AN  
PUBLICATION.  
No. empty-typed by G. Neilson, 28 Kingsway, Dundee.  
& J. Lettice David rh. St.A...

mbridge, after delivering and collecting the frames for panel beating in cars from as far afield as Biggleswade, and penetrated the ludicrously prosperous portals of Jesus College, Cambridge. In less than two days I played one game of the 1812 area variant (of course I won.), one game of Diplomacy where I held out against Andy Davidson and Martin "I obey" Mellish, humiliating them completely, despite the non-aid given by John Piggott of the gorgeous baked-bean coloured jacket. (er, it was a 6 way draw Richard..... Richard?..), and also one game of Decline and Fall, which just showed that beauty can't win all the time. Now, the most significant thing is this: in that weekend, a few Cambridge students and I played as many games as were played at the much better publicised Scodipcon 2, this being fairly typical of Dipcons now. Has the Dipcon lived and died in a paltry year, one asks? (Controversial; Andrew Waldie please reread!)

## L E T T E R S

ANDREW WALDIE "Other zines in the British Dippy field have items of interest, other than the games and press. Many zines have letter columns (DK, EtF, Hannibal, WB etc.), articles on Diplomacy, wargames, book reviews (EtF), editorial comment on various topics (IDA, Bob Harris' complaints, Andy Davidson, Orphan games, Diplomacy statistics.) So, John, why don't you have something of this nature? I am sure that you must have other interests apart from Diplomacy; why not tell us about them? Alternatively you could write a controversial article ((!!!!!!)) and ask for readers' opinions.....your readership isn't apathetic, it just wants some encouragement from you, the editor. You started the Star; you invited people to subscribe to it; we pay you to run a zine and we expect you to show some enthusiasm in return. The onus is on you John, you can continue to give the impression that you are just publishing the Star in order to obtain free games, trades, and the nomenclature of GM, and in return you can expect players to give you the cold shoulder; or, you could get off your arse and put a little work and effort into editing the Star and then and only then will the Bolshevik Star begin to even approach the standards set by most zines in Britain.

.....(( pregnant pause..... It has long been my belief that the space between the ears of the average Diplomacy player is directly related to, no, is even preserved by the space between the covers of the average Diplomacy zine. Der Krieg, long a bastion of the semi-literate bourgeoisie, has recently implemented a programme of expansion involving a political letters page, which, with the airing of the editor's rather cranky views, ( I quote: "It won't be any great loss if a soldier, provoked by McGahey, shootshin(sic) through the eyes..") has attracted even crankier views, for it is a relatively simple matter to encourage one particular point of view in a letters column, even without conscious thought.(ambiguity realised!)

Nor are other zines much better; Ethil is the only one to have anything approaching a letters column in any sense of the word, and even that would get pretty sparse if John Piggott stopped insulting Mike Sherrad. I aired my views on the IDA some time ago, it having since been proved conclusively that British Diplomacy players are just as apathetic about joining it as they are about writing me letters about it. As for Hannibal, this rag consists of poor English, fatuous articles on variants ( I ask you, what are we supposed to think when we get an article on War of the Rings which claims that "it is closer to Regular than Third Age..." gets the country list hopelessly wrong, and refers us to Enry XII?), and large amounts of pink paper separated from itself by rows and rows of dots. (issue 6 page 15 is a prime example.). It may seem strange to you, but it is my belief that I should print only what is worth printing; I could fill up space with imbecile articles on "Diplomacy", with polls that would get me laughed out of an O level statistics class, with political arguments that ought to emigrate to Rhodesia, but I don't, and what do I get? Some turd who has nothing better to do writes me

a letter telling me I don't do enough work, and that I should put more trash in my zine, causing me to be crude to him and to several GMs, to stay up far later than I intended, driving the poor bastard downstairs out of his skull with my typing, and driving myself wild with the consequently increased number of mistakes I have to correct. I do not trade games, and the only British trade I don't play in at present is Hannibal. I must admit it was always one of my boyhood ambitions to be reckoned one of that band of folk-heroes - Piggott, Yare, Pinley, Yare, Morris, Yare..... have you even the faintest conception of how much work is involved in "editing" a zine?

Games: Star E, Quelle 3002.

Forgot the Mordor retreat of a fan-col last time, sorry.

ARNOR(McBay): 2a ths-grh; da art-inl; a ett-nis; a bra-tha.

GONDOR(O'Rourke): a sgc-umb s by a hrd;;((so I'm a semi-colon freak)) a ano stand s by a nti, a leb & a lan; da dol-anf.

MORDOR(Charlton): naz hen-ano s by 3a por; a dea-rau; a min-hen s by a udu; da sha ns da nuw; a cel stands; a dog stands; a isg-wen; a cad stands; a umb stands and waves two fingers at Gondor's 2a. stencil(typewriter)falls apart thro' underlinings.

RHOVANION(Corker): 2a ang-cad; a crk-ang; a nir-crk; a nwi-nir; da wil-nwi; a sow-eny.

ROHAN(Thompson): 2a ere-nor s by a lor; a wen-wol; da fan-wen; a ith s gondor a ano.

RETREATS: mordor a cad & a umb disband.

- A: 5 bases: tha,grh,inl,ano,ths. Build a inl,a ano.
G: 7 bases: dol,leb,nti,tol,ano,hrd,umb. Build a dol.
M: 8 bases: bar,udu,min,isg,dog;hen,cel,rau. No change.
RH: 7 bases: esg,nir,nwi,wer,ang,crk,cad. Build a nir.
R: 6 bases: fan,wen,edo,ere,nor,lor. Build a edo,a fan.

Minas Tirith: Calling all ringbearers and any other people who will give aid to Gondor. Only from Rohan will men come when we call, come to the aid of Gondor.

Handy Cabs: Well, we can't give you one just now, but if you'd like to wait till the next ice age.....

Elland Rd.: Edras-Edoras: Well David, I think Norman Hunter is only the second best man in the Rohan side. The greatest is undoubtedly Billy Brenner.((and why would they be in the Rohan side if they didn't have pointed heads?))((think about it, Brian)) As you see he is the best player in the whole WOLD.

STAR A, Spring 1904.

UK(O'Rourke): a lpl gives a 2l gun salute to the departing french((?)) f lon-nth; f eng s german a hol-bel;

FRANCE(Sherrad): a mar-spa; a pic-bre; f iri-eng; a bur ns a bel.

GERMANY(Dunn): f den-swe; a hol-bel s by a ruh; a nun-bur; a kie stands unordered.

ITALY(Ovens): f tun-tys; f nap-tys; a alb-ser; a vie-tri; a boh-vie; f tri-adr.

RUSSIA(Pinley): f ank-con; a bud s italian a alb-ser; a run-but; a nwy-fin; f swe-ska; f sev-bla; f stp(nc)-nwy; a nos-sev; a war-gal.

TURKEY(Davidson): a gre-apu c by f ion; f acg-gre s by a ser; a gre stands unordered; f ens s f ion.

Retreats: french a bel disbanded; turkish a ser-run.

Potsdan: The Kaiser sat staring gloomily into the flames of the fire. The only light in the room, it cast eerie flickering shadows on the walls and ceiling, a ditting reflection of the gloom and despair hanging over western Europe like an unhealthy cloud. It was raining heavily outside, the sentries shivered in their greatcoats as they trudged their monotonous beat.

The Kaiser thought about the war - it was dragging on, little was being accomplished and too many had already died. European Diplomacy was a... (sic),

was becoming decadent; 'Bug John Piggott' shows, an ever increasing fascination with puss((sic)), filth and excrement being the obvious symptoms. Times were changing and war was no longer what it used to be. 'Revolution!', 'change!', 'progress' - these were the watch-words of today. Even the STAR had managed to get a new duplicator; now that you could actually read it his monacle, even, was of no further use. Perhaps the world had out-grown Kaisers, everything pointed that way; were the old virtues now totally despised? The Kaiser sighed. He could still remember the days of jolly German soldiers with sparkling eyes, days when the army liked to march and sing, when everyone read the Iliad and when it was enough merely to stick a bayonet in a man's guts without worrying about morals, politics, puss, excrement or homosexuality.

He thought about the publishers of the STAR - what drove men to such things? How did they manage to keep going? Didn't they know you couldn't go on running a pressless magazine for-ever?((duh, wouldn't you die in the end....)) The Kaiser listened for a while to the hissing and crackling of the slowly dying fire. The clock chimed out four. Already the grey, sullen sky was beginning to darken.

He knew what he had to do. He would send them a press release. Was it not proof of his greatness that he could contemplate such an action? Yes, such a task was worthy of Bismarck's successor. But what was there to say? What if they didn't print it? Supposing the printing was illegible, could he really afford the ill-will which would be bound to arise through the causing of eye-strain throughout Europe? What would the other rulers think? Britain professed friendship, but what might the prime minister do when he saw the press-release? The idea of being mocked by the Irishman was more than the Kaiser could bear to think about.

He got up from his chair, shaking his head sadly. No, he just couldn't do it.

Hobbiton: Wowie, smash, kerpowzap! This fast motion and action is just too much for me.....

St. Petersburg to American Military Adviser:

Dear Mr. Kelly,

Many thanks for your intervention. You only got one directive wrong. We feel that your command to occupy Ankara was unjustified. Perhaps it was because we would never have dared. Unfortunately you have now involved us in a war with the Sultan which we did not desire. However it will be prosecuted with the utmost vigour as the Turks are now our only enemy. If you wish to try your hand in the "Black Spot" space-time continuum at no charge, please let our chief of staff know your requirements.

Gosh: isn't he noble?

Dundee: Oh! Oh! My poor little ex-fleet in Norway has been wiped out by this ever-so-nasty stand-in who seems determined to have my guts in all the games I'm in. Will the dear-beloved GM please get a better one (ie one who likes me) the next time.

Channel Isles/Kanal Inseln/Isles de Manche: One down, five more to go!

Blackburn Municipal Library: We would respectfully like to remind you that "How to Impress Your friends in 70 Languages" is now many days overdue, and we would be grateful if you would return it with all haste.

STAR B, autumn 1903

Received from Colin Walsh:- standby orders for I game, apology for missing last time but no orders for D! Sigh.....

UK(Piggott): f mao-por; f lpl-nao; f nwy-nth; f hel-kie s by a den.

FRANCE(O'Rourke): f nao-mao; f mar-spa(sc); a par-bre; a pic s a bel; a bel s german a hol; a bur s german a mun.

GERMANY(Kelly): f hol ms a kie; a mun s a ber; a ber s a kie.

ITALY(Walsh): nmr...a vie, tri, tyr, f ion, tys stand unordered.

AUSTRIA(anarchy((who is this anarchy cretin anyway))): a ser stand.

RUSSIA(Ward): f pru-ber s by f bal; a bud-ser s by a rum; f sev s a rum; a ukr s f sev.

TURKEY(Charlton): f bla-rum; f gre stands; a bul-ser; a arm-sev.

Retreats: none.

A: 1 base: ser. no change.

UK: 6 bases: lon, lpl, edi, por, den, nwy. Builds f lon.

F: 5 bases: spa, par, bre, mar, bel. Removes a bur.

G: 4 bases: hol, kie, bor, mun. No change.

I: 5 bases: ven, tri, vie, rom, nap. No change.

R: 7 bases: swe, rum, bud, war, stp, mos, sev. Builds a war.

T: 5 bases: gre, bul, ank, smy, con. Builds a con.

Paris: God strewth who does Piggott think he is? Superman?

Meanwhile in a nearby Phone-booth: Mild mannered man Clark Piggott feverishly struggled with his Ladybird galoshes. He pulled on his Rabbitman suit with a swift jerk of his teeth, and spitting out the crumbling remains of his dentures smashed through the flimsy phone booth door, discovering that although the phone booth was flimsy, the door was not. "This is a job for Rabbitman," he croaked, as he reeled over the streets of Metropolitan City, complete with door....

Paris: How does he hope to beat Russia, Germany and myself?

North Atlantic: "Faster than a speeding bullet, swift, sure, un-stoppable?" You? Who do you think I am anyway?" said the good fairy, dealing our hero a heavy blow between the ears with a family sized can of beans.

Paris: Hell's teeth the man's an absolute idiot; he's not strong enough to beat one, never mind all three. Ye Gods....!?!

North Atlantic: Clutching his wounded head our hero spiralled down towards the freezing ocean.....

STAR C MvtWIV, tuille 3003

ARNOR(Ward): a bb mit stands; a art stands; a iml-nis s by 2a ere; a dun s 2a ere; a tha s a dun. ((no build made last time, sorry))

GONDOR(Robertson): a sgo-umb; 2a hrr-hrd; da mti-sgo; a lam-esf; a ano ns a ror;

MORDOR(Thompson): a ith-ano s by 3a hen; a hrd-sgo; a udu-dea; a bar-udu; a fan-wol; a mis-ere s by a mor; a crk-nom; da sha-nuw; naz kha-eem; a mim-sha; a isg stands; a ang-crk.

RHOVANION(Wein): 2a gla-crk s by a mir; a gun-ang; a wer-wil; a dog-gla; da esg-nom.

ROHAN(Sherrad): 2a rau-ith; a isn-cdo; a cdo-wem; da wem-fan s by a lor; a cel s a lor.

Retreats: godnor a ano-lan; mordor a hrd, a mis, a crk annihilated!

Heard in Barad Dur: "Sauron, this is Mordor."

Much later somewhere in Broadmoor: "Murder, Mordor, you oafs, it's a play on words. Gibber."

STAR I, tuille 3002 War of the Rings.

Now, first of all, despite the most earnest wishes of Mr. Piggott, the only Mordor army that can move in mountains is the one based in gun. However, as I accept that I am (or was it Gordon?) partially to blame for this misunderstanding, I took the liberty of altering the sillier parts of John's orders before I saw the others. He can't feel very strongly about it or he would have said when I saw him. Might I also point out to Andy Davidson that his support into a mountain area is invalid? Pant, pant....

MORDOR(Lindsay): 2a dog-wil; 3a udu-dag; 2a dea-ith s by 2a mim; 2a mor-dun; 2a beo-riv; a umb stand; 2a igd-gap.

ROHAN(Davidson): a fan-mm3 s by 2a wem; a eem-rau; a wol-eem.

GONDOR(O'Rourke): a isn-gap; a dol-lam; 2a ith stand s by a mti; a pel-har; a har-nhr.

MEN(Corker): a nwi s elvish a mir-beo; a esg-wrh s by 2a rhn; a dal stand; a shi-nen; a bre-ndo.

ELVES(Piggott): a mir-beo; a ere-mor; 2a lor-bro.

DWARVES(Robertson): a ere-and; a erl2-bar; a tha-dun; 2a gun stand.

RETREATS: gondor 2a ith-sit;

Mordor has been taken over by Pete Lindsay, Haig 46, David Russell Hall, St. Andrews. Thanks also to Colin Walsh, who was beaten to the draw, just.

Barad Dur: WORKERS RULE RIGHT ON!

The Oroworkers' Soviet announces that after a year's hard

land, have been utterly overthrown and eliminated. The follow

struggle the fascist gangster and his reactionary running-dogs, who oppressed for so long the peace-loving Orcs of the beloved Homeland, have been utterly overthrown and have now been committed to corrective institutions in the Dol Guldur Homes for retired artists Complex. The Revolutionary Tribunal has determined the following Foreign Policy:

- 1) Peaceful co-existence with all other Workers' States.
- 2) To work peacefully and Democratically to establish Socialist policies in all other countries.
- 3) Ruthless opposition, at all levels, to any attempt by opportunistic; pseudo-imperialistic, crypto-fascist brigands to oppose the Revolution.
- 4) Re-acquisition, by negotiation if possible, of all territories lost by the incompetent junketings of the corrupt pirate and his henchmen.
- 5) Recovery of certain National Treasures, held dear in the hearts of the culture loving Orkish peoples, sold long ago by the oppressor and his lackeys to finance their bunglings and debaucheries.

Moria: The Badger drew himself up, took a firm grip of his stick with both paws, glanced round at his comrades, and cried: "The hour is come, follow me!" And flung the door open wide. My!

What a squealing and a squeaking and a screeching filled the air! "Toad he went a-pleasuring!" yelled Toad. "I'll pleasure them!" and he went straight for the chief Weasel.....

Dol Guldur (cell 369): Bauron Doodles was at the end of his tether, or, to be more precise, his chain. For three days now he had been clanking away miserably all by himself: "How soon they forget," he sighed. Suddenly, the door flew open; Bauron cringed - that only ever happened in Hartley Patterson press releases, and if he was in WAR BULLETIN it would be months before he found out who it was.

My typewriter is full of biscuit crumbs.

STAR D Spring 1903- it had to happen; after Ron Kelly's display in A game last issue Billy O'Rourke has sent in orders conditional on who rules Russia!

AUSTRIA (Corker): a rum-bul s by a ser & a gre; f alb s a gre; a vie-gal; a bud-rum.

UK (Pendlebury): f edi-nwg; f lon-nth; f nth-ska; f bel\_s\_a\_hol; a hol-kie.....!

FRANCE (Thompson): a tyr-mun s by a bur; a mar-pie; a pic s a bur; f bre-mao.

GERMANY (Davidson): a ruh-kie; f kie-hel; a den-ber c by f bal.

ITALY (Robertson): a tun stands; a ven-tri; f ion-gre; f nap-tys.

RUSSIA (Haven) ((he really is there this issue, folks!)): f gob-bal; a nwy-swe; a mos-stp; a ukr s f sev; f sev s austrian a rum.

TURKEY (O'Rourke): f bla-rum s by a bul; a con s a bul; a arm stands.

Ha-hum!: said the very high Sultan ((like, stoned out of his skull, peace man!)) as he saw Rumania being given to Austria by a friendly traitor. But no doubt this very nice fellow will get a good slice of the cake. Then what? Will the two nasties stop at me or will they keep going north? ((Will it rain tomorrow? Will the sky fall in? Will lady Cynthia meet a fate worse than death at the hands of Shifti Pasha? All these questions and more will be repeated at the end of next episode.)) This is now directed at Will Haven or his illustrious stand-in.

Paris: "For crimes against the Republic of France and to make sure of seeing Scotland win the World Cup in 1974, we the French Govt. have decided to seize Munich." ((seize Munich and die.....oh, never mind.))

Silence greeted this proclamation after its first public reading. This was due to the fact that there was no-body save the president there ((and can anyone think of a bigger nobody?)). -Emille N Dehaft, News at Ten, Paris.

Finished! I'd just like to take the opportunity to award Steve Doubleday a free game in compensation for not getting Arnor in E game.

It had not escaped my notice that he has stopped sending standby orders; come home, please. Notice vast expansion this issue-we can't afford it so either subscribers or subscriptions go up. Timesisard! I've half a mind to let Ron Kelly have a free game for services rndrd. can we afford it Gordon? -6-

## How to Play Diplomacy.

But, you say, I've been playing Diplomacy for ages, and I know how to. But do you? Considering the vast amount of trash on 'Diplomacy Strategy' being produced by certain individuals, I have my doubts. A certain gentleman in Ethil the Frog, for instance, bases an entire strategy article on getting four builds for Russia in 1901, and one wonders if this is not perhaps setting one's sights just a shade too high. This just goes to show, of course, that the sillier the things you say the more likely it is that some moron is going to stop producing games, and in between predicting the downfall of British Diplomacy, start bashing out every word you say, a la gibbon press. (actually, it's quite possible that Piggott only publishes these bum articles in the vain hope that someone will write in complaining about them.) This sort of article is all very well, but can you imagine some inexperienced player drawn to the hobby by Druncan Morris while in his Beaverbrook phase penetrating as far as Ethil, reading the article, draw Russia in his next game and.....the mind boggles.

To get down to the real article though..... First of all, don't try any of the instant-committal moves, such as f bre-eng or f ank-bla, unless you are very bored, feel you need the challenge of getting yourself in a bad position, feel that your moves are becoming stereotyped or have reasonable belief that one of your immediate neighbours is going to attack you first time anyway. (Just a little aside on stereotyped moves; if you follow a player's other games you often find he is in a rut - Andy Davidson frequently attacks England when he is Germany, whilst John Piggott always plays Russia: a war-gal; a mos-ukr, followed by a gal-boh; a ukr-gal in Autumn.)

The inadvisability of total commitment against a given country in 1901 can be illustrated by consideration of the following perfectly reasonable sets of moves:

France: f bre-eng; a par-gas; a mar-spa.

England: f lon-nth; a lpl-edi; f edi-nrg.

This sort of thing happens with reasonable frequency, I feel you will agree, and what is liable to happen if optimum play is assumed for both countries is that England moves a edi-lon c by f nth; f nwg-nwy. in Autumn, which should give him a build of f lpl unless Russia is feeling particularly belligerent. There are four possible moves the French f eng can make: a) f eng-iri. b) f eng-wal. c) f eng-lon. d) f eng-bel. In the first two cases, the end result is the same; f wal would be thrown out by a lon-wal s by f lpl in 1902, whilst a French build of f bre moving to Eng would be stood off by f nth in both cases. Support for f bre-eng from f iri would be cut by f lpl. Case (c) means there is no army lon, but it means that France is still left with f eng in 1902, leaving England able to build f lon; and move f nth-eng; a edi-lpl; f lon stands. This means that f eng-wal would succeed, f eng-lon and f bre-eng would be stood off. England would then move f lon-wal s by a lpl; f nth-eng, and we would be in almost the same stalemate position as in cases (a) and (b). d) would be a rather silly move to make after moving to the channel, as if you did get in Germany would be unable to resist the temptation of helping England in exchange for bel, whilst if you didn't you would have been stood-off by Germany, and would be popular with neither of your northern neighbours.

Thus, you will see that so long as England is a reasonably level-headed player a stalemate situation, where the advantage goes not to the two combatants but to the first of their neighbours to intervene, who will receive the lion's share simply because all of the defending forces are engaged in maintaining the stalemate on another front.

So why not open with fairly secure, ambiguous moves, which can be used as a basis for an attack on the one of your neighbours who is the most 'otherwise engaged'? After all, someone in the game is bound to have attacked at least one of your near neighbours in 1901.

Brief note on sacrifice opening a pic-wal c by f eng as outlined in a recent Hannibal: this is a reasonable opening but still very dangerous if you haven't managed to talk Germany and Italy into engaging themselves otherwise. A german move of a ruh-bur in autumn '01 would be safe, and perfectly feasible, and then would you be in it! This tends to be the case with all such openings; any advantage gained from an early strike all-out tends to be cancelled by an alert neighbour, and you would therefore have to use as much Diplomacy as you could to keep your other neighbours busy. Face it, how sure are you of getting the average player to do your bidding?

PS: Mail after March 15 MERRY XMAS?,  
to my home address please. JOHN LETTICE.



FOUNDATION: Hints for survival, by STEVE DOUBLEDAY.

A ramble around the subject of how to play the first space-going variant.

I must confess that when I first started playing this variant, I had little idea of the complexity of play and the problems involved with the gamesmastering of this variant. For gamesmasters, I would imagine that this game warrants photocopies of the original map with positions marked upon that map, and rubbed out from move to move. This is a good idea for the normal player as well. Personally I do not begrudge the time that setting up the board takes, as I get a better 'feel' of the way the game is going. I set out my maps on a 2' square polystyrene ceiling tile with coloured map pins. I use a combination of the 1cm long mapping pins and the 1 in. long dress-makers pins. These can be expensive and my own collection of pins etc. has cost me somewhere in the region of £2, but it is worth it. A set of dress-makers pins is not overwhelmingly expensive, and the method of play that I am going to describe requires that you have at least two per star - this makes 120. The pins themselves can be any colour and normally cost somewhere in the region of 16p per 40 pins. You can either sort them into two distinctive colour groups, or rely on your eyes picking out the fact that there are two on each star. As well as this it is essential that you keep some record of your moves. The gamesmaster has his hands full with other games as well as this monster, and you can spot gross errors by checking your moves off against the moves printed in the 'zine.

Having checked the orders you sent in (and for this purpose it is best to purchase a Duplicate book about 8" x 5") against the carbon copy and the 'zine, we move to the next stage.

Set up the board in its pre-move position. Then move all the units ordered which are not in conflict with other units. Where conflict has occurred check the adjudications. Bear in mind the fact that all units arriving at a star are calculated as being in the attack and all their supports irrespective of the starting points of the units. The calculation is carried out on a strictly numerical basis. According to my reading of the rules a 'clap-hands' manoeuvre is possible viz.

MULE: F.26-25 (s) F.31; F.29-25 (s) F.31; F.31-30.

EMPIRE COLONIES: FF.25-29.....cannot retreat to any point in Kalganian module and therefore must retreat into Trantorian module.

N.B. That the three Mule fleets on 31 could be ordered separately.

Having calculated and adjudicated the moves for the last period of movement, it is essential that you make sure that every unit is ordered. This sounds silly, but anyone who has played either the Union of Worlds (Mule) or the Traders will realise that the fact that certain points in space are represented twice means that care must be taken to order each unit once.

1. Decide your strategy:(see below) and then which stars you wish to attack or defend.

2. Decide which units are going to do this. As you do this get a scrap of paper and write down the position of each unit you have, and as you order them put the order on the paper and put a pin against the units ordered. If they are on stars which are in both modules put a pin against both module positions.

3. Retreats are devastatingly important. Compared with 'normal' Diplomacy, one normally has more retreat spaces available and the gamesmaster, if he's in his right mind, will simply tell you that your fleet(s) is no longer in existence, if you fail to give a retreat. This is where the second lot of pins come in as you will have to put a pin against each star as you order its retreats.

4. Check and spend about 5 minutes making sure that if you're getting someone they can't get you!

5. Write the orders on your piece of paper into your records of moves book, and send it off.

IMPORTANT: Tell the GM immediately you become aware of any errors in adjudication, this is to give him as much warning as possible so that where it is possible he can order a change of moves or whatever.



More Ramblings About Strategy.

For those of you familiar with the various terms in the Foundation Trilogy, one particular word seems to stand out in the descriptions of stellar conflict - this is 'englobement' - To non-initiates this is the surrounding and extinction of a fleet by a number of other fleets. In terms of this game, I see very little chance for this type of manoeuvre. The best strategy, at the start of the game, is to attempt to gain strategically important points and then go for your opponent's jugular vein. No half-measures. The stars which are worth 3 as opposed to 2 supply factors are very important and they reflect the importance which these star sectors had in the Trilogy. The only 3-factor star rating I would quarrel with is Tazenda. So, what are the 'strategically important' stars? These are those stars dominating the shortest routes between you and your opponent's 'home' stars; the stars which have a large number of interconnections with other stars; and the 3-factor supply centres. Don't worry about whether you have too many supply factors to build a fleet/factor. The fact that you have a surplus is an insurance against someone taking a star from you and also a large amount of possession in this game, is pre-emptive possession. You are attempting to stop your opponent from gaining any stars. This goes double for home stars. If you take his home stars he cannot build and he is forced to either go for your throat or protect his own. He becomes incapable of subtle manoeuvring and as long as you have prepared the ground properly he must fall.

In Star 'G', the situation is resolving itself into a three-power conflict, Mule vs Tazenda vs Foundation. The position of this game is distorted by the fact that Empire Colonies and Empire have virtually been non-existent for most of the time. As the Mule, I attempted to gain the strategic stars on the 'outer' edge of the Kalgan module and to get forces into the Trantor module. At all times during the game each power is limited to two hyperspace moves in any one move, hence the importance of these stars. Although one has later to guard against the invasion from one module to another, at the 'early' part of the game, and indeed throughout the game, the strategic stars remain the same.

For the Mule, Quoriston, 26, is an essential. It is connected to more stars than any other on the board. It is a supply centre. It connects to three out of four of the home stars. Fylia (3f) 25, and Synmax (2f) 23, are very desirable for the Mule, and capture of Quoriston gives added leverage on them. 23, Synmax poses problems in that it is Empire Colonies Home star. The attack must go forward very steadily and very surely. Risks may be taken with non-factor stars, but these must be calculated as best as possible. Once this outer ring of stars 23,24,25,26 is fully in Mule control - then you can kick out at the more desirable targets. If you can go for Helicom 19 at the cost of Fylia, don't worry, it has added value in that it is the most important star in the Empire Colonies. If you hold this and the outer ring of Kalgan, victory is assured! Inward movement is a delicate subject at the moment. (see Star 'G' !) But it is obvious that Radole is a more than tempting objective.

The use of the link is difficult to discuss. So far in the game it hasn't been used to very great effect. Possibly because, like the 2nd Foundation, our 1 move prophecies aren't very good. I am bearing it in mind for the time that the intermodule hyperspace comes open and one can use them as bluffing (or otherwise) channels to home stars. In this the Mule has an advantage over the end-powers, in that his lines of communication, if he is careful, will never be stretched.

As can probably be gathered, I enjoy playing this game, and I think it is a good game. It has been much-maligned, as have other variants (e.g. Allah Akba'ar) because it requires extra effort to play..... but that discussion is another article.

\* \* \* \* \*

Many thanks, Steve, for the article. I find it particularly interesting since, besides gm'ing this one, I'm playing the Mule in two others! I find it useful to draw a small circle around each sector and then to colour these in according to which power they belong to. Alongside these, I write the sector number and its supply