

God Save The Zine

Issue 9 (October 2023)



DEADLINES
Friday 27th October 2023

Editorial

Welcome to a randomly Thunderbirds-themed issue of **God Save The Zine**.

The past month has flown over. Being retired is such a busy time of life. Lots of driving up to Kings Lynn, to check on the work going on up there, a few trips to London (some "work", most play), driving to Manchester as our youngest leaves home. That sort of thing. Which means the zine review section is shorter than normal as I have just run out of time.

I appreciate that it may be a bit ambitious getting a game of **Mercator XIV** going – but inside you will find more information to try and enthuse you. I'd appreciate it if other editors could mention it and try and rustle up players from all over the hobby. I know it is a bit of a stretch, but nothing ventured etc.

We have quite a few on the circulation list of this zine who don't play any games – which is fine. However, this issue I have published the rules to Bourse in the hope that we can get a game running to accompany Game F (otherwise known as **Fascination**). Bourse is a fairly simple financial game whereby you invest in the currencies of the various Diplomacy powers and aim to make as much money as possible. It's a simple game, it requires no player interaction, and you can join at any time – though the earlier you join, the better the chance of increasing your investment. If you'd like to play, just send in some orders – any questions, email me.

I have printed another instalment of Pete Birk's History of Cons – but I noticed that in between instalments Pete seems to have omitted the very first MidCon! To bridge the gap, I have included Richard Sharp's review from **Dolchstoß**, but it has meant there is quite a lot of recollections and anecdotes this issue. Sorry for that.

As this issue is a bit on the long side, I've put the Intimate Diplomacy Tournament into a separate report which will go to the players.

Many thanks to all the contributors this issue, particularly Des Langford for his article and Sandra Bond for another poem. Please keep the letters coming – it's always interesting to hear from you.

Is Democracy working?

I was wondering about this, as I listened to yet more depressing news on the TV.

It appears to me that democratic politics in the west (well, certainly in the UK and USA) has been on the slide since the second world war. We weren't even truly democracies until we had universal suffrage for both sexes (and the US had the additional hurdle of overcoming segregation). But politicians from the 30s and 40s certainly come across as a far more serious bunch of people than the jokers we have now.

With the advent of radio, television, 24 hours news, social media etc. etc. the more we have democratised the media, the more we are exposed to how easily led and ill-informed most of humanity is. In Ronald Reagan we had a Hollywood B List actor becoming president, but Ronald was a political giant compared to the likes of Trump and the frankly geriatric Biden. In the UK we have had our own jokers in Johnson and Truss. The extremes in society and politics (with their natural authoritarian tendencies) have become more and more pronounced on the right and the left. Most people just want to keep their head down and get on with their lives, but their lives are being affected and controlled by a bunch of self-serving idiots. Whatever politics is, it certainly isn't a meritocracy if electors in the USA have to choose between Trump and Biden.

I'm just not sure that collectively we are mature enough and sufficiently educated to be able to make democracy work through a filter of social media. There seems to be so many ways for popularists and conspiracy theorists to set the political agenda on all manner of issues, while politicians only concern themselves with their own ideological hobby-horses or very short-term electoral popularity. It used to be the politics of the sound bite, but now it is often just half-lies and sometimes, plain lies.

The UK has been living beyond its means for years. We have failing infrastructure and declining public services, just because we can't face up to the fact that we can't afford the services we think we are entitled to. It will all end in tears as the NHS, law and order, care for the elderly etc. etc. will gradually collapse because no one is willing to take the steps needed to reform what we have and face the fact that we are going to have to find ways to pay for it. The masses are kept busy with a whole host of distracting issues, while a few continue to exploit the economic system for all it is worth.

Maybe Marx was right about the dangers of the dictatorship of the proletariat. If the agenda is being set by Twitter/X, Tik Tok and Instagram, we should all be very afraid. Where have all the grown-ups gone?

Some Zines Seen

Damn The Consequences #232 just popped through the letterbox. News that Brendan Whyte's game **Carolingian Twilight** was the featured game with issue 342 of **Strategy & Tactics**.

As the **S&T** website says: "**Carolingian Twilight: Decline of an Empire AD814** is a two to six-player game covering the decline of the Carolingian Empire following the death of Charlemagne (Charles the Great) in AD 814. The Salic Law of the Franks required that at a man's death, his property was divided among all his sons, which led to civil wars among Charlemagne's descendants when the inheritance in question was the Empire itself. From the various wills, wars and treaties dividing and redistributing the Empire during the 800s, emerged the nuclei of the modern states of France, Germany, and Italy. Each scenario depicts the period following a particular division of the empire, with each player taking on the role of one of the heirs. The object of the game is to reunite the Empire under a single ruler, while fending off not only fraternal Frankish rivals, but also the hostile surrounding foreign powers." The reviews look very positive and I suspect it will sell out soon. Surely there's a Diplomacy variant in this waiting to get out?

I am playing a couple of games in **Ode**, so I always look forward to receiving it. Issue 440 turned up, on time as usual. This issue completes 44 years of continuously producing **Ode** - certainly a UK record. Congratulations John, only six more years to the Big 50! John has almost filled a list for a rarely played variant called They Came From Outer Space, rules in this issue of **Ode**. It's basically a game in which aliens colonise the Diplomacy board - could be a lot of fun. Why not join in?

The Cunning Plan 296 made for sobering reading. Sadly, Neil has been beset by another tragedy in his life as he told us of the sudden death of his elder brother. Thankfully issue 296 was effectively edited by James Hardy, who did a great job of managing one of the best letter columns in Dipdom. Quite a bit about football in this issue, maybe I should start writing about the fact that I have been a Sunderland supporter for over 50 years and how they are one of the most thrilling football teams in the country? Thrilling, I hear you ask? Absolutely - it's always, will they get promoted, will they get relegated, will they throw away that 2 goal lead?

(Answers: usually no, usually yes, almost certainly).

The **TCP** lettercol also features a long discussion about the colours of the rainbow, rainbow flags and the like. Did you know that the popular notion that a rainbow has the colours Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo and Violet (i.e., seven colours) is nothing more than a cultural con trick. A rainbow has a continuous spectrum of light, the tendency for humans to discern a few distinct colours is an artefact of human perception and the idea that there are seven colours is totally arbitrary - indeed Isaac Newton first described rainbows as having only five colours. He then upped the number to seven to align with the belief system of the sophists, who thought there was a connection between colours, the musical notes, the then known objects in the Solar System, and the days of the week. In reality you can have as many colours as you want - human eyesight can apparently perceive over 100 variations.

Issue 123 of **Fury of the Northmen** featured the life story of the British author Robert Graves (famous for being the author of *I Claudius*). I remember reading his autobiography *Goodbye To All That* when I was at Uni. That's what makes **Fury** a great zine, there's always something interesting to read and you always learn something.

Issue 163 of **Diplomacy World** has just been released. Doug Kent is a God. I cannot believe that he has managed to shoulder the burden of editing **DW** for so long. His name should have been carved on the Sacred Sycamore of Hadrian's Wall in tribute to his greatness - now it is sadly too late. This issue has a decent mix of content, including a tribute to Steve Doubleday from Brian Creese and Pete Birks, David Hood on Demonstration Games, Mal Arky on the World Cup of Diplomacy, Thomas Haver on the World Boardgame Championships Diplomacy Tournament and much more.

Last, but not least, issue 2 of **34** from Mal Arky has hit the Internet. Download it and read it. Varied content, real enthusiasm and plenty of ideas. I know how much effort goes into producing a zine, particularly one as good as this, so please take a look. Issue 2 has lots of content from Malcolm, I particularly liked his article on variant design, something I've opined on myself at times and his nostalgia piece on **Springboard**. Whatever happened to Danny? Mal also has a piece about what we thought the future of the Hobby was in the 1990s. Fascinating. I need to write to him about that!

Damn The Consequences: Brendan Whyte,
obiwonfive@hotmail.com

Ode: John Marsden,
johnmarsden_ode@yahoo.co.uk

The Cunning Plan: Neil Duncan,
issuepunkzine@hotmail.co.uk

Fury of the Northmen: Colin Bruce,
furyofthenorthmen@btopenworld.com

Diplomacy World:
<http://www.diplomacyworld.net/>

34:
<https://sites.google.com/view/34thedipzine/home>

The 2023 UK Games Zine Poll

from Alex Richardson

a) WHO MAY VOTE? Anyone who sees at least one eligible zine.

b) WHICH ZINES ARE ELIGIBLE? Any zine published in the British Isles which has produced an issue in 2023 (up to and including the Poll deadline); is distributed by post, as an e-mail, as an attachment to an e-mail or as a download from a website; and runs games that we would recognise as 'postal' ones (e.g. Diplomacy, Railway Rivals, 18xx, En Garde! or United, to name only a few).

c) HOW TO VOTE. List all of the eligible zines that you see and give each one a mark between 1.0 (low) and 10.0 (high), to one decimal place if you wish. Editors may vote for their own zines. Votes should be sent by e-mail from the voter's own account to alex.bokmal@googlemail.com. The Poll deadline will be midnight on **TUESDAY 31ST OCTOBER 2023**.

Up for consideration this year will be: **Astradyne, Astro, Capricorn, The Cunning Plan, Dane's Games, Devolution, Extra Time, Ford Super League, Fourtrack Mainline, Fury of the Northmen, God Save The Zine, Hopscotch, In Off The Post, Last Orders!, ...mais n'est-ce pas la gare?, Minstrel, Ninety Minutes, Obsidian, Ode, Open Management, Puma, Striker, Top of the League, To Win Just Once, United Side of Hopscotch, Variable Pig and Will This Wind/Outbreak of Heresy.** (As usual, though, please let me know of any folds or glaring omissions.)

Letters

Eddy Richards

Enjoyed the zine! In particular the article about Manorcon, as this was one that I attended regularly, my first being in 1983 I think (as I started at Birmingham University in 1982). I even won the Dip tournament one year (1984 or 5 I would imagine). However, I think that Steve Jones is in error in saying that it moved to High Hall after one year, as it was definitely at Manor Hall for at least 2 or 3 years after the first one - I dug out some old copies of the Birmingham Dipsoc mag to check that my memory was right and there are adverts for Manorcon confirming this. As it happens in the same ancient folder I came across a whole bunch of rules for variants including English Civil War by a certain Steve Agar.

SA: Birmingham DipSoc Mag? Any chance of copies for the Archive? Yes, I was fairly obsessed with the English Civil War in my teens but couldn't see how I could make it into a Diplomacy variant, so I just opted for a 2-player game. Maybe it is worth revising and republishing?

My holiday this year was in Split, Croatia, somewhere I'd never been before. Although it was during the mega heatwave, and was extremely hot, it wasn't as bad as most of the other countries in that area. A really interesting place, with plenty of historical attractions - Diocletian's Palace being the main one, shops, restaurants and houses intertwined amongst the ruins. Reasonably cheap food, some nice beaches and lovely boat trips - one in a thunderstorm - made this quite memorable, especially as it was the first time I'd been abroad for about 5 years.

SA: I'd really like to go to Split. Diocletian's palace looks wonderful based on pictures from Google.

Toby Harris

Another great issue. Found myself thoroughly enjoying Steve Jones' history of Manorcon. The original "BUDS" team (Birmingham University Diplomacy Society) were effectively the founders of the event so far as I'm aware, so it was only fitting that one of their members won the first ever WDC.

SA: Phil Day?

Geoff Wilde

Car Hire - a warning

This year has been a busy one for us and Irish weddings - three in fact. They normally involve a 5 or 6 day stay and car hire. The last trip via Shannon airport proved to be rather unpleasant when hiring a car from Europcar.

We took receipt of car at 7pm and as usual took a video and photographs of all the "damage" areas on the vehicle. There were more than indicated on the damage /checkout sheet. After 7pm there were no staff in the compound to draw attention to the additional damage areas.

Six days later and we dropped the car off, it was after 7pm and no compound staff again. The Europcar airport reception desk staff were only interested in taking the keys off us.

Two days later and we received a bill and a debit of €600 off our credit card. Apparently, there was a 6cm scratch on the passenger side front bumper. Scandalous that a scratch should cost €600 to buff and polish out!

Obviously, we challenged this proving existence of "scratch" from our dated/timed photographs taken on arrival.

We provided them a list of 7 additional "damage" areas (in addition to their 5 marked areas) on the car which were not itemised on the checkout sheet. Of course, Europcar explained not all damage areas are itemised as they are deemed fair wear and tear. This then opens up a potential debate on their and my definitions of what fair wear and tear is? A blank check book for them?

It took several days of email argybargy and telecoms for them to back down. As a company Europcar have been prosecuted in Australia for fraud and misrepresentation. It transpired that in some cases staff were earning bonuses for billing customers for reporting additional vehicle damage!

The lesson here is to always have photographic/video evidence when hiring vehicles otherwise you will be billed by unscrupulous car hire companies.

SA: Good advice – I usually video the car on my phone when I get it. The only time I have taken out extended insurance to cover all accidental damage (as it is often very expensive) happened to be on our honeymoon – and coincidentally that was the only time that I've ever had an accident in a hire car. When we got to our honeymoon hotel, they insisted on parking the car for us. Afterwards they were very keen to

ask me if I knew there was a lot of damage to the front of the car, I think they were worried in case I blamed them. Thanks to the extended insurance, didn't cost a penny.

Mark Nelson

As a postscript to my loc about Steve Doubleday there are two of his variants that I would like to mention. (I would have done so last time, but I ran out of time.)

I don't remember their names or when they were published, other than that they were published in **Gallimaufry** over thirty years ago. I obviously found them interesting at the time, because I still remember them. One of them is a "fail" and one is very interesting. In both cases they are played on the regular map with the regular powers. We will see that there is an unexpected connection between them that I might have spotted at the time, but which has only occurred to me recently.

In the first variant, the "fail", in winter 1900 the players submit an algorithm which the GM subsequently uses to determine their orders. If at a later date a player wants to change their algorithm they may do so, however their units hold in CD for that season. Why is this variant a "fail"? My comment to Steve was along the lines of what was he going to do if a player submitted an algorithm containing 30,000 lines of pseudo computer code. He subsequently modified the rules to impose some maximum limit on the size of the algorithm, which I remember being quite small (maybe two pages). I don't remember if at the time Steve published the variant, I already knew that people were writing diplomacy players or if just seemed reasonable that at some future date someone would. I wonder if Steve had heard of Mark Berch's War on Automatic Pilot rule for handling NMRs and if this was the inspiration for the variant.

The second variant is a huge success in my book. Each power has a time-travel facility in their capital city which can be used once to send information back into the past. However, time travel is slow. Suppose that you have just submitted your Spring 1903 orders. As part of your orders you can activate your time-travel device and send information back to just prior to Spring 1901. Your information will arrive just prior to Spring 1905. If before Spring 1905, at any time, you lose control of your capital city then your time travel centre is destroyed and the information you sent back doesn't make it. If the game finishes in a draw, you agree to destroy your time travel centre and the information you sent back doesn't make it. If the

game finishes in a win, then the game finishes in a win. (Incidentally, you don't have to send information back to pre-Spring 1901, you can send it back to any previous season).

Now, what happens when you submit your orders for Spring 1905?

First, the GM readjudicates 1901 and 1902. In Spring 1903 you knew what the other powers ordered in 1901 and 1902 (or at least you think you do, see below). The information you send me includes new orders for all those seasons, taking advantage of your pre-knowledge.

Secondly, the GM readjudicates 1903 and 1904. You don't know what orders the other powers submitted for these seasons, but at least you know where your units are.

Thirdly, the GM adjudicates Spring 1905. The other powers might be ordering units that no longer exist; indeed they might have been eliminated.

If you reach 18+ centres in either 1903 or 1904 the game finishes at that point.

What's the unexpected connection between the two variants? The player sending information back into the past does not know what disbands will be ordered by the other powers; either if a unit is dislodged or in any of the Winter seasons. Are they allowed to submit conditional orders for their units based upon what units are disbanded? Secondly, can all powers try to protect themselves against time-travel by making conditional orders that depend upon the location of units?

For example, suppose in Spring 1901 Russia orders F(Sev)-BLA and this fails. Russia is worried that Turkey might use their time machine to send in a new set of orders in which in Spring 1901 Turkey orders their fleet to Arm and then orders it to Sev. In this timeline Russia would have entered BLA in Spring 1901 and, in the absence of conditional orders, this unit would have held in position in Autumn 1901 because Russia did not order it. (Because Russia thought it was in Sev). Is Russia allowed to submit orders in Autumn 1901 that are conditional upon the location of the Turkish fleet? If only I'd thought about this at the time, I would have loved to hear what Steve thought about players being allowed to submit conditional orders that don't make sense but might make sense.

My feeling is that players should not be allowed to submit conditional orders in this way, if only because it starts to make life more complicated for the GM.

SA: *Time travel variants introduce an interesting concept, though I've never seen one actually being played. Although both of the variants you have talked about ring a vague bell, I haven't got a clue which ones they are. I'll do some research before the next issue and try and find them.*

If it helps, the following variants are in the Variant Bank under Steve Doubleday's name:

1378; 1810; 1938-II; Air War 1917; Antithesis; Beleriand; Berserker Diplomacy; Cabinet Diplomacy; Chained Lightning; Cluster Diplomacy; Crown of Thorns; Dark Tower III; Dark Tower IV; Elective Diplomacy I; Fagin's Diplomacy; Fellow Traveller; Five Dynasties Diplomacy; Hundred Years' War (II); Intrigue; Isostatic Diplomacy; Millenium (1000 AD); Multiverse Diplomacy; Stratics; Sublomacy; Tadek Dip (3-way Intimate); The Sundered Worlds; The Tarot Variant; Time Lords; Timelords II; Vote (Elective Diplomacy II); Dynastic Diplomacy IV; Telepath Diplomacy.

Christian Dreyer

Hi Stephen, a little report from my island in the Baltic. I live on the Åland islands. Åland is what all Diplomacy players yearn for, a true DMZ. Here's to anyone interested in history:

When Åland was incorporated into the Russian Empire in 1809 the Islands' new rulers initiated the construction of a large fortress at Bomarsund on the eastern side of the main island. During the Crimean War French and British troops attacked and seized the fortress, and at the ensuing peace negotiations held in Paris in 1856 Åland was demilitarised through a one-sided commitment from Russia.

When the League of Nations resolved the issue of Åland's constitutional affiliation in 1921 a decision was also taken to draw up an international convention. The inhabitants wanted to belong to Sweden (Swedish is the native tongue for all Ålanders) but Finland wouldn't have it. The convention, which confirmed the demilitarisation of 1856 and also neutralised Åland, was signed by ten states. Russia is not a party to the 1921 convention, but the 1940 Moscow Treaty on the Åland Islands and the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty contain provisions on the demilitarisation of Åland. Neutralisation is not mentioned, however.

Those who have right of domicile and moved to Åland before the age 12 are exempt from military service. Russia has a consulate on Åland mainly to oversee that the DMZ is not broken. If



Finnish marine goes here for some legit reason they have to tell in advance and the consul have formal (very ritual) meetings with our government when the government shifts.

Today Åland is a very small autonomous part of Finland. By law Swedish is the only official language and the Finnish government has to communicate in Swedish with us. There are 16 municipalities with in total 30 000 people. There are so few of us here that the first two times I got this zine by snail mail the customs opened it to check that it wasn't something I need to declare and pay for but from the third time they had learnt and just sent it through :) All the ferries between Finland and Sweden stops here because Åland is outside the EU common market so if they stop here they can sell tax free on the ferries., which means communications are great! Even though it's so small Åland has its own legislation about almost everything, mainly it's foreign policy and the court system that is the states mandate.

Now you can tell your spouse you actually learnt something by reading a Diplomacy zine :)

SA: Sounds like a fascinating place. How do you and your fellow Ålanders feel about joining NATO - does that compromise your neutrality?

Will Haughan

I enjoyed your account of A Lon-Tri. It has been on our list and now I think we will make the

effort. Interestingly you experienced extreme weather in somewhere you were visiting by plane. Bit of a conundrum for those of us in the comfortable people zone.

SA: See Richard Jackson below for the perils of going abroad.

I have also enjoyed the reprint of Pete Birks History of Cons. It made me laugh at the time (and still does) the influence of the gonzo journalism style when comparing Hunter Thompson's drug fuelled antics with stories of English middle class young men playing board games.

SA: It does seem like an age ago. Smoking, pre-GPS and pre-mobiles. Living life on the edge, maybe not.

Jonathan Palfrey

Your zine tends to be all about Diplomacy, which is fine, but I'm afraid I've lost interest in Diplomacy these days. It was never really my kind of game, although I completed about 10 or 12 postal games of it when I was a good deal younger, with an average kind of success rate.

Games I've been playing in recent times include chess and Sid Meier's Civilization VI (on the computer, without human opponents) and Railway Rivals (by e-mail). I'm currently playing one game of Railway Rivals in **Ode**.

SA: I am surprised that I haven't been able to generate any sort of demand for non-Diplomacy games - I did try. I would always be happy to print non-Diplomacy content, if I am ever sent any. Of course, GSTZ isn't going to be everyone's cup of tea, but I hope you read it occasionally and enjoy some of the hobby history. Many thanks for the photographs of EuroCon!

Of the two photos you've chosen to use, the two people in the first photo were Paul and Karen Simpkins (Karen sunbathing). In 1977 we had two separate houses not close to each other; that one was the one I slept in.

Pete's account is of course from his own personal point of view, as such things have to be, and somewhat blurred from alcohol and the passage of time.

My taxi ride was the end of a bad trip. I was living in West Berlin at the time. My alarm clock failed to wake me, so I missed my flight to Paris; fortunately, they let me on a later flight, but I missed the train I intended to take. I took an overnight train instead, which was packed, so I had to stand in the corridor all night. The train

split in half on the way, and I turned out to be in the wrong half, so I arrived in the morning at Brive: completely the wrong place. By then I was so fed up that I just got into a taxi and asked (in the remains of my school French) to be taken where I needed to go. I see from my diary that I paid 405 francs for the taxi ride.

Then I left my camera in the taxi. Fortunately, the taxi driver very decently returned it later. I have no memory of encountering Dave Allen or any other hitchhiker during the taxi ride; but then I do have plenty of holes in my memory. (I'm not a religious man, but my brain is holy.)

SA: Wow, what a terrible journey! Speaking of terrible journeys...

Richard Jackson

After 9 blissful days staying in a lovely house in Carvoeiro on the Algarve we headed for our Bank Holiday flight home from Faro airport. We arrived at 2pm for the 16:55 flight back to Bristol. Straight away we could see something was wrong. Too many people staring at the departure board.

At the time only about 2 flights were cancelled. Hey oh, ours is still on. By 16:30 we were getting worried as we still didn't have a boarding gate.

More and more flights flagged up with the big 'C'. 6pm came and who-oooh, we can check our bags in. Hop skip & a jump as we passed the ever-growing queue to the customer service EasyJet desk.

Our bags are on the carousel, and we are through security. By 7pm our flight is cancelled. Look on the bright side, we were stuck at Mulligan's Irish bar.

It may not be obvious to some, but when you are airside within the airport it isn't obvious or easy to leave one (unless it is via the actual plane. Lots of people wandering around looking lost. EasyJet staff were obvious by their absence. It came down to a couple of Ryanair staff to lead a Pied-Piper crowd (of Lemmings) through a maze of corridors & stairs, to arrivals, so that we can collect our bags.

Once back in the open we joined the queue for the EasyJet desk. It was so long that the earth's curvature hid the desk from sight. 2 hours later we were told there is no help with food, hotels or further flights. The only help anyone had was to "go on the app & book another flight". Now this was 28th Aug. The next available flight was 5th Sept.

This is where the fun started. You could spot those folk who took an interest in Geography at school. Hearing wonderful route via north Africa - Europe - Valhalla - Blighty. We did find a next day option via Frankfurt - Knock - Edinburgh - Bristol. It only took 41 hours with self-checking. Then the algorithms kicked in. Demand means price rises by £1000 per person. Of course, flight companies aren't profiteering from their customers misery!

By 10pm the airport is thinning out. Most people have headed for an hotel. We followed via Booking.com only to find our new hotel is full. Murphy's Law - Anything that can go wrong will go wrong. The modern-day age of Apps! Luddites will rise & crush this phenomenon. Oh, did I say that out aloud?

11pm and a kind hotel receptionist helps us phone around for a bed for the night. There's hope in humanity. We decide to bunk the night near the train station as we found a flight home on Thur 31st. It just happens to be from Lisbon to Heathrow. Well, we always wanted to visit Lisbon. BR should take note. A 3-hour train ride only cost us 20 Euros each. And guess what. We had a seat.

I would recommend a couple of days in Lisbon. It's hot, so an hotel with a pool is a must.

Anyway, back to flying. By now we didn't even know if the UK still existed. After the computer meltdown, everyone may have headed to the hills to live as hermits. Imagine a metropolis of hermits?

All will be good as we are flying TAP Air-Portugal. Well, they are no better than our own companies. The plane landed at the time it should have taken off. To their credit, the pilot did put their (imaginary) foot down and we landed 30 mins late. Unfortunately, too late to make our pre-booked bus home to Bristol. So 11pm at Heathrow bus terminal. What now. Hold on, hold on. There's a bus to Gloucester via Swindon. We were about to head for that one when we saw a new sign about a bus to Bath arriving shortly. My wife wanted the earlier Swindon bus & I wanted the closer (but later) Bath bus. The kids out voted my wife.

Now again, modern day Apps interfered. You cannot just board a bus & pay. You must book on the App. We are standing next to the driver trying to book. Hey-oh algorithms kick in again. £180 for 4 people one-way. The driver says "it is what it is". This was a little too much for my wife, who burst into tears. After a short awkward moment of telling him our experience, the driver said "put away your phone and just

get on board". My belief in humanity is resurrected. After mentioning that we could get a taxi back to Bristol, he says "just stay onboard as I'm going that way to the depot". This guy has now risen to sainthood in our eyes. Better still, when we arrive in Bristol, he informs us that he is heading along the river. Wow, we live one street back from the river. He drops us off about 100 yards from our house. My wife could kiss him (she didn't) and I'm wondering what come above a Saint. It's 2am on Friday and we are home.

We begin the task of trying to reclaim all of our costs from EasyJet. We kept as many receipts as possible (taxi's, bus, train, plane, hotels and food. Uber app helped us with some of these. Grudgingly, I had to climb down off the Luddites stool and agree they were useful. A claim for over £3k was submitted only for EasyJet to inform us that "they have looked into it and NO payment is due to an 'exceptional circumstance'". Where was MY exceptional circumstance? Not a penny for their cancelled homeward flight. If one was to read the small print, a flight isn't guaranteed.

I have to say that the air in the Jackson household went blue. The darkest blue one can imagine. To rub salt into the wound, I notice TV/radio ads appearing, to 'fly EasyJet'. Didn't the flight companies get bale out money from our government?

This would have been the end of the storey, but BREAKING NEWS. After going to our Credit Card company and the Insurance company (who by the way tried to wriggle out of any responsibility also), the Credit Card Co gave us a proforma form to send to EasyJet. Without any explanation an email said our claim is successful & low and behold +£3k appeared in our account. I even got 3 days pay included as I'm a Limited Company. Wow, I didn't see that one coming. So, was that EasyJets good will kicking in or has some arms been twisted. I will never know. Will I fly EasyJet again. Probably 'yes'. Ryanair & BA don't come out of this smelling like Roses either.

Apologies to my fellow gamers in Candidate for my lack of diplomacy, but my mind was elsewhere. A friend (with his family) just came back from Italy after using the train both ways. I'm just off to research this. Toodle pip. Rich.

SA: As it happens, my stepson Sam had his Ryanair flight cancelled last week when the airport he was flying from was closed due to high winds. To be fair to Ryanair, they arranged a hotel, paid for it and laid on a "rescue" flight

the following day. It's horrible when it happens. Let's see how long it takes Ryanair to pay any compensation...

Alex Richardson

Regarding the future preservation of the paper in the UK Diplomacy Zine collection, perhaps you could stick a photo of "the mother-in-law" in amongst the copies of **Dolchstoss**, **Mad Policy**, **War & Peace**, etc. then, when the time comes, simply claim that it is fresh material for the British Library's newest archive?

SA: Not a bad idea. I went to an "event" last week on Shirley's paper going to the British Library and had another word with them about the Diplomacy zines. They still seem quite keen, so I am hopeful. If not, any fancy giving a home to 50 boxes of zines?

If you can get your hands on a copy of a book called **Peanuts Jubilee: My Life and Art with Charlie Brown and Others**, meanwhile, there's a strip in which Charlie Brown edits a fanzine, dedicated to his favourite baseball player, Joe Shlabotnik. It's handwritten and restricted to one copy, though, perhaps because Snoopy was hogging the typewriter that day.

SA: How true to life. It is now on my wants list.

Mark Boyle

Thought I'd mention this since I'm killing time waiting for a washing load to finish.

I notice in your reprint of one of Birks' routine namedropping brown-nosing reminiscences ('Everyone who was anyone was there ...' oh dear, sounding like some vapid TikTok teen chick high-5-ing her "besties" or what?), he claimed in April 1975 he held a con during which Sharp and Piggott were playing Scrabble (well he was hardly going to say it was Joe Bloggs of Catford and Fred Noggins from Romford, was he? Not "box office" enough in his little world ...), which someone called Victor Logan had never encountered before.

So, in the pre-computer era of three channel telly, Mr Logan had never encountered a game in over half of all British homes [Source: Daily Telegraph 15 December 2008, "Scrabble: 60 facts for its 60th birthday."]? Calling bullshit on that one, especially when Birks further claimed Logan "was later to become one of the intellectual leading lights in the National Front".

Search any reputable reference work on the British far right (Walker, Copsey, etc) - let alone any primary sources from university library archives - and you will struggle to find Logan

beyond being an NF candidate in Hitchin in the 1979 general election (when its tinpot Fuhrer John Tyndall blew its meagre resources on standing in over 300 seats with mostly 'paper' candidacies) and the following year's council elections where Logan only managed to get 59 votes despite there only being two other candidates for the Hitchin Oughton ward. Back in that era, the "intellectual leading lights" of the NF (and that really is to stretch a concept...) were Martin Webster, Richard Edmonds and Richard Verrell the holocaust denier; and they simply parroted what Tyndall believed.

In short, it's fine an example as one will find of Birks' putting sauce, a flake and sprinkles to sex up another of his beige anecdotes. Come back Rosie Roberts and her tax returns stories in **Electric Monk**, all is forgiven,

SA: Electric Monk - now there's a name from the past. Will move it up the "next zines to scan" list. I do remember Victor, though I am not sure where from. StabCon perhaps. He did strike me as a bit odd, but I can't remember why.

*The far right in British politics never seem to quite go away, though I've lost track of the various groups that keep popping up. The latest seems to be something called the **For Britain Movement**, which seems to be a weird amalgam of woke sensibilities and fascism that were deemed too extreme for UKIP. It appears that the far right are picking up some "liberal" causes and mixing them with the old favourites of hate and fear.*

Brendan Whyte

James Hardy's mishearing of the Carmina Burana lyrics cracked me up: I joined the university choral society just to sing Carmina Burana, which was the music of a male deodorant ad to my generation....

I recall the joys of shouting "Das sint alles Megadeath".

Our conductor had to keep telling one sopranos off for yelling "Slut!" (not "Sla!") seems there were some female jealousies as a result of the attractions of one of the less homosexual of the tenors...

I'm a little concerned about your house rule 4.7. It seems to incentivise suicide as a winning strategy... (or at least, does not discourage murder dressed up as suicide, either to prevent an unwanted draw, ... or just to get the stupid game over so we can play something involving NATO, nukes and/or Nazis...). It certainly brings new meaning to the phrase "Diplomacy widow"

"Now, John, I know I shagged your wife during the last game, but that was partly your fault for getting me eliminated in 1903 then playing the game through to 1944. That's a lot of time for Sheila and I to kill. But I am man enough to admit it to you, to admit my fault, and how I loathe myself for having done it. But, to try to make it up to you, I believe I have found a means to guarantee you the win in our present game..."

SA: Seems like a legitimate diplomatic tactic to me, leverage is leverage. Murder is a bit extreme though - still, if you really want to win...

Gavin Begbie

I'm finally sending this to you from the strangest situation. I've been on one of our last pig hunts of the season and should have been home days ago, but due to circumstances beyond my control I'm effectively 'stuck' on the coast with my solar phone charger barely working and seeking the highest point for reception tonight.

SA: That has to be one of the strangest emails to accompany orders I've had yet. Pig hunt?

Martin Davis

A week or two ago, I was listening to *Wish You Were Here*, celebrating once again its extraordinary power in this, its 50th year. When it was released, I'd already been playing *The Great Game* for two years. And yet it had never struck me before how it defined my playing style.

"Every year is getting shorter never seem to find the time. Plans that either come to naught or half a page of scribbled lines. Hanging on in quiet desperation is the English way."

OK, well, scrub the word "English." I've played every country, and others in variants (Carthage in *Diadhoki II*, that was fun), and unfailingly had good ideas that crumble in practice.

*SA: And of course, that is a quote from *Dark Side of the Moon*. Did Syd Barratt do the rest of the group a favour by dropping out? Probably. I'm very fond of his solo albums though, even if they do sound more like demos.*

"Most men lead lives of quiet desperation and go to the grave with the song still in them. "

*Henry David Thoreau (1817 - 1862)
American Author*



Bourse III

by Don Miller, Richard Walkerdine, Allan B Calhamer and John McCallum

Bourse is not really a Diplomacy variant, but a separate game to be played together with a Diplomacy game. The rules are believed to have been originally created by Don Miller but have been tweaked by others. This amendment allows players to sell more currency than they purchase in order to amass a reserve of dollars, which may be used on a future turn when they wish to purchase more current than they sell.

1. Each player starts with 1000 units of currency of each country in the game; Austrian crowns, English pounds, French francs, German marks, Italian lira, Russian roubles, and Turkish piasters. All are equal in value and worth \$1 at the start of the game.

2. Deadline for Bourse orders is normally a day or two before the deadline the Diplomacy game. The orders are in two parts, buying and selling.

3. Each time 100 units of a currency is sold its value in relation to the dollar drops \$0.01. Thus, if in the first season the total of everyone's orders results in 500 more marks being sold than bought the price of the mark for the following season would be equal to \$0.95. Each time 100 units of currency is bought the price in relation to the dollar rises \$0.01.

Only complete multiples of 100 units of currency affect the value of that currency. If 299 more marks were bought than sold its value only rise \$0.02. If 299 more francs were sold than bought its value would only drop \$0.02.

4. A player is not allowed to buy more currency than can afford, although he may buy less. If for example a player sells 100 marks at \$1.50 to realize \$150 and wishes to buy 100 lira at \$1.25, costing \$125, he may leave the surplus \$25 as a balance of dollars against future transactions. On a subsequent turn he could for example sell 100 roubles at \$1.15 to realize \$115 and purchase 100 pounds at \$1.25, costing \$125, by using \$10 from his accumulated surplus. There is no limit to the number of dollars that may be withdrawn from a player's accumulated surplus at any one time, but this surplus is never allowed to go into deficit.

5. A player may never sell more than 500 units of any one currency at one time. He may buy as many as he can afford.

6. Each season the GM will list who bought and sold what, old price, net change, new price, and surplus dollars in a convenient table. He will also list the holdings of each player in the game and their net worth.

7. Unless a country is eliminated the value of its currency will never drop below one unit equalling \$0.01. The value of a currency has no upper limit.

8. When a country is eliminated from the Diplomacy game (after the autumn season) the value of its currency drops to zero and all trading in that currency ceases.

9. Anyone may join the Bourse at any time and will receive 1000 units of currency of each country still in the Diplomacy game.

10. At the end of the Diplomacy game each Bourse player's worth will be computed as follows: the number of supply centres owned by each player multiplied by the number of blocks of 100 units of that country's currency owned by the Bourse player (fractions will be carried). This if England wins with 18 centres followed by Italy with 16 centres and a player has 10,000 pounds and 5,000 lira, he would gain 1800 credits for England and 800 credits for Italy for a total of 2600.

[The picture above is the Paris Bourse]

JOIN A GAME OF BOURSE!

Bourse: Paul Simpkins. Lots more wanted. A fun financial game run alongside the new regular Diplomacy Game F (Fascination). Just send me some orders to participate!

How to Manage a Good (two-way) Alliance

a personal view

by Des Langford

1. It is important to recognise your ally's needs and desires and to give them an (almost) equal importance to your own. If you want to go for a two-way split it's all about compromise. They will want a reasonable share of joint gains just as you do. What is a reasonable share may vary but the starting point is 50/50, or if you can manage it 55/45 in your favour.

For example, if you are already one or two centres ahead when you form the alliance it is in your favour to split future gains equally, which gives the appearance of fairness. If you are one or two behind, you should try to at least gain the first new centre when taking turns.

2. Your ally will also want security from attack by you and it is important to accept this reasonable requirement without taking any offence. It is no more than you should require of them for yourself. Where possible this should be done by agreeing a DMZ between you.

3. In negotiating a deal with your ally look for things that are important to one party but less so to the other. That way you can each give way on the unimportant things in order to achieve your main objectives.

4. If the allies are separate with an enemy in the middle this is ideal for a pincer manoeuvre with both attacking the unfortunate piggy. Being separate the allies have much less to fear from each other, so this is a perfect scenario.

5. If the allies are neighbours, it is a bit trickier. They should ideally have different objectives, so that in theory both can benefit. For example, one ally could go West and the other East, or one ally such as England be predominantly a naval power and the other a land power such as Germany. Then you can each engage in largely separate battles while covering each other's backs with an agreed DMZ.

6. The above points apply to relatively equal allies but if the allies have severely unbalanced forces the scenarios are quite different.

6(a). If you are a tiny power relying on a larger one for survival you must aim to make your small force indispensable. Ideally you should be crucial in holding a defensive or stalemate line. Without being arrogant you should press for whatever you can get from your puppet master in return for your help. This could be anything from a share of the victory to survival on a single centre.

6(b) If you are the larger power with a puppet ally you should treat them with respect in order to ensure they do your bidding on joint orders - consult rather than dictate. Treat them how you would like to be treated and you may find they become faithful to you, possibly even to the point of signing over their unit(s).

In these circumstances it is desirable to do the best you can for your minor ally provided it does not compromise your own result. That way you are likely to gain their respect in any future games (and it makes you feel good!).

7 If you have a good long-term alliance, it is best to stick with it and share a two way rather than stab your ally for a centre or two. The only circumstances in which a stab would be sensible is near the end if they foolishly allow themselves to become so vulnerable that you could virtually win the game with a coordinated strike. This is unlikely to happen with experienced players but may occur with an inexperienced or too trusting ally.

8 The best alliance players are neither too trusting nor too suspicious. Too trusting and you become vulnerable to a stab, too suspicious and you endanger the alliance. Good communication is key to ensure proper coordination and you should not leave agreement until near the deadline. You should only pass information about your moves on a "need to know" basis. That way you will not be suspicious of a leak by your ally if an opponent makes lucky guess of your orders. Similarly, do not seek information from your ally which is not relevant to your plans, otherwise they may suspect you of leaking.

It is quite interesting that a lot of the above advice about recognising your ally's needs is also relevant to negotiating a compromise deal in the real world (hopefully without a stab).



The HMV Institute (formerly known as Digbeth Civic Hall), the venue for MidCon I

MidCon I

(Digbeth Civic Hall)

18th-19th September 1976)

by Richard Sharp

Dave Allen was going to report this, but hasn't, so you'll have to make do with me. I can't tell you everything, alas, for instance, I have no idea what was going on at the doors end of the hall most of the time - Pete Cousins told me, "Nicky's running round shouting that he's a Syrian tank and there's a bunch of cretins pretending to believe him!"

I can't even tell you about the Formula 1 Championship, because that was held during licensed hours, and I was engaged elsewhere. From my, admittedly somewhat specialized, viewpoint there were two major drawbacks: the "bar" in the hall served Watney's instead of beer, and the hall closed each evening at just about the time that I (and most of the people whose company I tolerate) wish to start the day's games-playing. I will not bore you with details of my attempts to get a drink in or near Birmingham, which were as disastrous as I expected, in this wasteland of Ansell's and Mitchell & Butler's, two obscene beverages suitable only for little girls; nor will I harrow readers of sensitive disposition with an account of the Ronnie Fisher route from Birmingham to Kinver, or what Pete Birks said when Ronnie eventually got him home at 4 am.

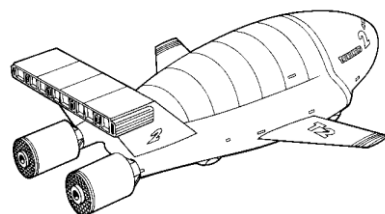
I partook of the Diplomacy Championship, despite its absurd timing, and found myself opposed in a qualifying round by Doug Wakefield, Greg Hawes, Bob Brown, Ronnie Fisher, Ian Waugh and ... er ... someone else. We played under the baleful eye of Glyn Palmer, who kept telling us how close it was to closing time. Eventually by dint of some desperate diplomacy and coin-tossing a winner was produced, which happened to be me, and I hope they change the rules next year.

The final was a six-way draw, Sounds boring? Hell, it was anything but, and the result was a fair one, arrived at after ten hard-fought game-years, I shared the draw with Andy Holborn, Mike 'Troublemaker' Ingham, Pete Cousins, Tony Taylor and Andy Allars, while Hans Swift was the somewhat unlucky eliminee. Anyone interested in a more detailed account of this (and it really was the best FtF game I've played) will find a two-part serialization just started in Greatest Hits, Pete Birks having stayed through the whole game to write it up. Doug Wakefield and Steve Pratt both gave up time to gamesmaster it, and did it well.

I did manage to get one or two other games in - Speed Circuit and darts, mainly, plus a rather headachy afternoon poker session which cost me £15 or so, since recovered with interest, I'm happy to say,

The AGM was held at a ludicrous time - late on the last day, when most people, myself included, had already left, Any debate on the status of this meeting seems quite pointless until such time as we can agree to hold it properly and punctually, at a convenient time. All in all, a good event, though, thanks to Dave Allen's efforts. As usual, my happiest memories are not what Nicky would call game-related: Glyn Palmer recounting to the younger generation how he and Doug rescued me at the siege of the Alcazar ("Well, we had to -he had the bottle-opener"); Pete Birks asking the management of the hotel to put his bill on the bill; Greg Hawes's map-reading ("Got it! I've found Birmingham!"); and many other similar idiocies.

[Reprinted from **Dolchstoß** 46 (October 1976)]



A History of Cons (Part 4)

by Pete Birks

First published in **Greatest Hits**
201 (May 1996)

The last **ScotDipCon** was held in late 1976. Wink, now partnering Linda rather than Ruth, was moving to Bath. We failed to reach the Scarisbrick Arms, and ended up in an obscure Stockport pub. We parked on a mud patch in front of a building obviously designated for demolition, only to be told halfway through the drinking session that the cars were in the landlord's front garden. Luckily, we were so charming by this time that by closing time the guys were offering to hold a con in the pub the following year.

We were clearly younger in those days, since we also managed Carlisle (meeting Paul Almond, Ron Fisher and Andy Holbom) and Glasgow, eating with Pete Cousins and Greg Hawes, even before we turned up at the Con.

This **ScotDipCon** was the time that Pete Charlton insisted that the police be called because he was sure that he had been short-changed 50p.

I see from my recollection of this event that Fisher and I went to a Chinese fish and chip shop in Lancaster and sat on a park bench, eating, early in the morning. "I felt like a vagrant", I wrote.

By 4.30am we were about to drop Baird off in Oxford when we decided that staying the night might be a good idea. Now, these things seem to happen to me (ask many people I know!) but Baird lent Pete Cousins and me a room which was "vacant for the weekend". Four hours later the girl whose room this was walks through the front door. My first line of "I can explain!" was followed by a realization that I could explain, I really could, but I wasn't quite sure exactly how, at the moment.

The girl said, "oh well, never mind", and left. This led me to suspect that it wasn't her room either. And her name was Elizabeth.

Piggott and Wakefield (both "unavoidably detained") were missed, and attendance at this historic event was lower than might be expected because the 1976 **MidCon** had moved things from the housecon to the "event con".

In early 1977 Ian Jones held **YorkCon**. Notice that the hobby was one of the first departments of users of the English language to put a capital letter in the middle of a word. Paul Simpkins took a large party to his Conservative Club where Richard Sharp lost a game of snooker (apparently one of the longest ever played to Steve Pratt. Sharp referred to this as a "tight tactical battle". The same con evokes memories of the worst Chinese restaurant in history, although I vaguely recall a worse one in Leeds, or Bradford. Other attendees included Piggott (who bought bundles of books and then resold them at a profit) and Roy Talor (still sane) and Glyn Palmer (still not eating curry).

At Ron Canham's con Sharp came across a couple of shocks. He had to play darts in Ipswich when at the time you divided your score by five and played 61 up via cribbage board scoring. His second shock was discovering that new NGC member K Loveys was the Keith Loveys, meaning that even Sharp had to admit that he was the second-best bridge player in the NGC.

"Games Day" was not always held in September in those days, and in February 1977 in the region of Chelsea I found a young Peter Swanson. This was the first time I met the Leviathan crowd and happily the last time I met Lew Pulsipher, a 6ft 6in beanpole who believed that his height gave him more right to talk than anyone under, er, 6ft 6in. We eventually retired to Andy Davidson's in Greenford and played yet another large stake game. Since at the time the master of Eliot College UKC was bringing up the matter of "gambling" at the next Senior College meeting (due to a couple of £500 pots and one £900 pot) the sums of +£50 on the night may seem minor. But they were big enough sums at the time, I can assure you. One nice win paid for a week in Paris.

And, speaking of France, we hit:

EuroCon '77

I have just read my own account of this seminal event, and it bears no relation to my recollection thereof. This means one of two mutually exclusive things. Either I was lying at the time, or my memory really is shot to hell. But I vaguely recall the nightmare's first night's sleep, and now know why I prefer a more luxurious mode of travel than sleeping in a French ditch on the way down.

There were 11 of us in this particular convoy - Pete Charlton, Glyn Palmer, Andy Wright, Ron Fisher, Andy Holborn, Dave Clarke, me, John



Piggott, Richard Sharp, Iain Drylie and Andy Wright. Stiff as hell the following morning, we drove 50 miles before breakfast. At lunchtime we played cricket outside a graveyard. In the evening of the second day of travelling, we rendezvoused with Tony and Rosi Taylor, conned a round out of Tony in a game of spoof, and then Andy Wright and I lusted after what turned out to be a 15-year-old girl. At least I had thought her to be 17; Andy thought she was only 13, and still lusted.

After a couple of nights of no sleep arriving at the con site was quite a blessing, where we found that the Simpkins car (with Nyes accompanying) had crashed coming round a tight bend. Much to the locals' bemusement, it was another English car into which they crashed. One Frenchwoman muttered it was a bad way to finish a holiday. Paul corrected her and said that they were just starting their holiday. "Not you. For you the holiday is finished", she replied. There's just some logic you can't compete with, isn't there?

But the English are tougher than that and the Simpkins & Nyes caught the train to con-site Lubersac. Also, there shortly after our arrival were Roland Prevot and Jean-Pierre Lalo (fortunately, I recall, a doctor!) and Dave Allen and Jonathan Palfrey. Jonathan had caught a cab from many miles away (the cab driver had

started to turn back when he realised how far JPRP wanted to go) and he saw a bearded Dave Allen hitch-hiking on the way. Tapping the cab driver's shoulder to alert him, the driver immediately agreed about how these long-haired hippies should be driven from the country, and that they gave France a bad name...

On Sunday night we visited a restaurant. Now either the quality of restaurant we are used to has changed, or France has changed, but I have written in my record that most French restaurants did not open on Sunday nights in 1977. Richard Sharp circumnavigated this problem by informing the patron that there were 21 of us. Pleased at this turn of events, the patron gave Richard and those of us with him a couple of bottles of wine while we awaited them (no mobile phones in those days, pal). The restaurant, normally closed Saturday evening, discovered that there was a demand (it was full) and that the offer of free wine to 10 of the 21 English eaters was a mistake. Those 10 drank 18 of the 23 litres drunk. The others managed a mere bottle a head. (Sharp, Fisher and I had of course managed a bottle ahead.)

Or so I am told. The following fortnight was a haze. Craig Nye sang the "throwing-up blues" one night. John Piggott stood in the middle of a

lot of fields drinking Glenfiddich (you can never be too sure) and Fisher won the £10 freeze-out.

For those who imagine that Sterling has been in a nosedive since the second world war, the French Franc was at about 8.20 to the pound in 1977. Since then it has been up to 12, I admit, but I suspect that it is not the pound's deterioration which has been the cause of the feeling that France has become "more expensive", but that the French have conspired to charge any self-evidently English people twice as much as any other tourist and six times as much as anyone French (but half as much as Japanese or Germans).

I seem to have written that the best meal of the fortnight cost us £8 a person. I recall it to this day. It was in Bergerac and an experience for a 21-year-old who had never eaten anything "epicurean". I remember being impressed by Jean-Pierre Lalo ordering the "gastronomique" menu at FFr65, and also being impressed by the meal. But it's sad that it cost me £90 a person to experience a similar joy 20 years later. But, then again, after inflation perhaps it's not such a different change.

Sadly, during the second week Prevot and Lalo left, but their departure was ameliorated by the

arrival of the Jarvinens and two crates of German beer.

Ronnie and I created the masterpiece of the fortnight. Funny, so many events in life seem to start with "Ronnie and I". We had noticed two important things. The first was that the Cafe de la Paix had a beautiful barmaid called Francoise Kerloch, and the second was that it had some youngsters in it playing rather bad French billiards.

Now, French billiards has been excluded from society in the manner of bar billiards, Lancastrian and Kent dart boards, different dart-throwing distances, and the like. French billiards required its own kind of table, involving no pockets, and only cannons being a scoring stroke. In the old version, you had to hit a ball, hit (I think) exactly three cushions, and then hit another ball. This table, which was a relic from the days before the second world war, had survived, but the youngsters were just playing "ordinary" cannons.

After a meal, wine, and a few spirits in, Ron and I decided to take the Cafe by storm. We donned three-piece suits, placed duty-free cigars in the



French Cricket: Andy Wright, Dave Clarke, Richard Sharp, Craig Nye, Glyn Palmer, Allan Ovens, Pete Charlton, Ron Fisher

breast pockets, brought out our cue chalk, and were ready.

We drove down to the cafe.

Ron and I walked in, put our name down for a game (much laughter from the kids on the table) and waited.

What we did not realize was that the entire con would follow us down. Simpkins played his drunken "I speak English loudly to get understood" part. He was drunk, but he still spoke fluent French. His five-minute speech trying to order a beer was a masterpiece. I precis.

"A pint of Theakstons please".

"Pardon?"

"A pint of beer".

"Je ne comprends-pas".

"A PINT OF BEER".

"Un biere?"

"Yes, are you deaf?"

"Quelle biere?"

"Beer is that stuff. THAT STUFF". (points at beer tap extravagantly, turns round and expresses that all foreigners are clearly idiots).

"En pression?"

"NO! I WANT BEER!"

At this point one of the non-French-speaking English con members walked up and said "pardonnez- nous. Il est fou", and Simpkins walked back to his seat like a demented gorilla.

Could this night get worse?

Oh yes. I asked Ron if he fancied a G&T. Ron answered, quite sensibly, that a French cafe in non-English tourist-land would be unlikely to stock such a drink. But we tried, and out from the back came a dusty, full, bottle of Gilbey's London Dry Gin, ca. 1950 we thought. Francoise (dark-haired, Breizhic) had no idea what gin was, what the measures should be, or anything about gin at all. It took us five glasses each to finish this litre bottle, at three francs a glass.

Meanwhile the rest of the troupe had arrived from the restaurant opposite, and the French kids had given up after Ronnie (a county player) and I (a tough git) had won through skill and psychological bludgeoning. Sharp was drinking neat Calvados and Pete Charlton was asking for triple brandies and creme de menthe. Ron Fisher (whose band had recently released an album called "Down to the last p") kept on saying "Rock on". The French kids had referred to some people (not me!) as "les vieux". Thus, the phrase "rock on les vieux" was born in the Cafe de la Paix.

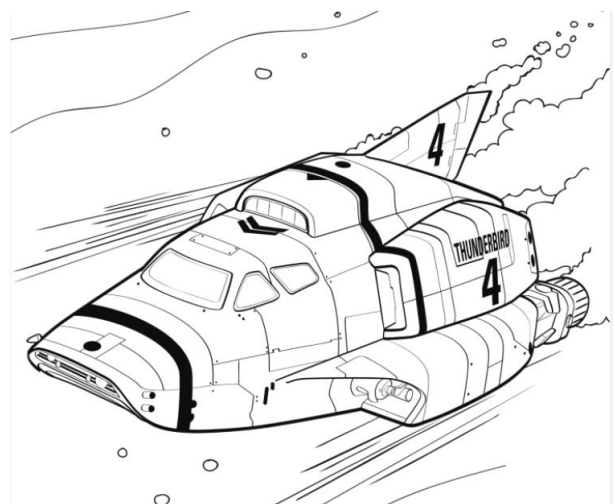
During the second week we enjoyed a trip to the middle of great claret territory, Paulliac. I recall this mainly because I spent a considerable time sitting out of a car window at 60 mph while we overtook Andy Wright. It's ok, I wasn't driving. And Andy Wright was driving the other car because Glyn Palmer had driven for three miles on the wrong side of the road and mentioned the minor fact that he couldn't see.

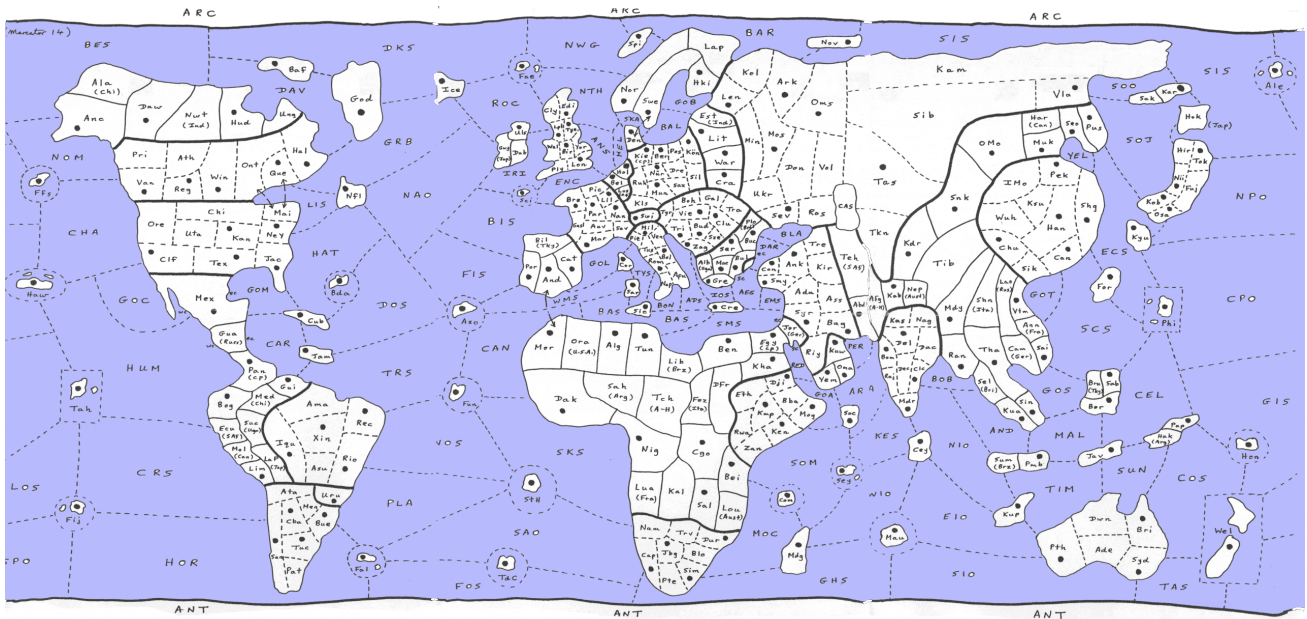
An impressive occurrence in the second week was Andy Holborn saving my life. As I searched for a bottle of water in the middle of the night on the "sleeping platform", I fell off the edge. Ten feet below Andy Holborn's chest broke my fall. Unfortunately, I did wake up Andy and bend his bed in half, but I was ok.

On the Thursday before the end of the holiday Ellie Nye suffered some kind of aftershock of the car crash and had to leave. On the last night of the holiday, I managed to get food poisoning. I didn't realize that it was food poisoning at the time, of course, although I was feeling distinctly ill. I was dropped off by Tony and Rosi Taylor at Canterbury and spent a week in Fordwich, during which time my weight dropped to just under nine stone.

I see that I haven't mentioned that many games. We played a bit of poker, a lot of bridge, and a fair amount of chess. There was a game of cricket at which Piggott demonstrated that it was not quite his forte. I'm quite sure that a lot of other games were played, although I suspect that Diplomacy was not one of them.

[Photographs provided by Jonathan Palfrey]





MERCATOR LINKS

The core rules for Mercator can be found at:

<https://diplomacyzines.co.uk/home/contents/alphabetical-list-of-variants-by-name/m-variants/mercator-rules-1985-ed-gp24/>

The rules for Mercator XIV are at:

<https://diplomacyzines.co.uk/home/contents/alphabetical-list-of-variants-by-name/m-variants/mercator-xiv-gp28/>

Steve Jones's articles on Mercator XIV opening strategy can be found at@

<https://diplomacyzines.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Mercator-XIV-Opening-Strategy.pdf>

generously done is give you a detailed insight into how the best players approach the game.

When you first look at the rules of Mercator, your reaction is likely to be that the game is more tactically complex than Regular. So it is, but that is not where the main skill lies. The bigger board and increased number of players mean that the strategy has also become more complex, and that is much more significant. The most successful Mercator players are those whose strengths are in the areas of strategy and psychology.

For tactics, a basic competence is enough. The truth of this comes through all the time in Steve's articles. He never just concerns himself with the current season. He is always looking ahead at how things are likely to develop, and he is constantly aware of what his neighbours are likely to be thinking. Use what he has to say as a model and try to do something similar. You are unlikely to do well if you take things on a "one season at a time" basis; there are several experienced, tactically first rate, players who do this, and they rarely if ever come close to winning.

So, strategic planning is one thing you should work at; the other is diplomacy. Mercator is a faster moving game than Regular, and this, plus the greater number of players, means that you have to be constantly active on the diplomatic front if you are to keep up with what is going on. Detailed discussions with your favourite neighbour are no longer enough. It won't seem like this at first (for reasons I shall deal with in the next paragraph) but by the middle game your communications network must be global.

Mercator

Hints For Beginners

by Stuart Dagger

Part One – General Strategy

The first thing you should do, after acquiring a copy of the rules, is get hold of a copy of Steve Jones's articles on opening strategy in Mark 14. Do this even if the Mark you are to play is a different one, for the usefulness of what Steve has to say in those articles goes way beyond specific advice on opening moves. What he has

The victory criteria mean that the game can be decided elsewhere on the board, without your ever coming into military confrontation with the winners, and so the only long-range control you can exercise is diplomatic. Endeavour to be on good terms with all the countries who are doing well; that way, if the game ends in an alliance victory, you have a good chance of being on the inside. Four more tips before I move on to more specific matters:

(1) Think of the game as a middle-distance track race. Your aim is to keep up with the leaders without being exposed in front. If you lose touch, you will find it difficult to get back, because of the speed at which things go. Remember there are no draws for small countries at this game. If you don't win, you lose, and to win you have to be big.

(2) You are more likely to get someone to do you a favour if you were on good terms before you needed his help.

(3) Never underestimate the psychological effect of the letter written soon after the game report has been received and of the early reply to letters sent to you. The person you are dealing with wants to feel that he and what he has to say are important to your plans.

(4) When planning your moves always begin by looking at the position from the point of view of your neighbours.

The next thing I want to discuss is the first two seasons. These do not tend to proceed as they do at Regular. To see why, look at the number of neutral supply centres at the start relative to the number of starting units. At Regular 22 units chase 12 neutrals; at Definitive Mercator 61 chase 47, while at Mark 14 you find 97 chasing 80. The difference in ratios is significant. At Regular the initial neutrals are a scarce resource; at Mercator they aren't. That being so, the case for making an early decision on whom to attack is very weak. Most people will be keeping their options open until after the March builds, and the prudent course is for you to do the same.

To see why, consider what would happen if you were to launch an immediate assault on a neighbour. It is unlikely that you would catch him completely defenceless. Units that you could both have been using to pick up neutrals will, instead, be engaged in fighting each other, and both of you will emerge from the first build season with fewer units than would otherwise have been the case. Moreover, neutrals, which would have been yours had you been less bellicose, will, instead, go to other powers in the

region. Then, after the March builds, when these sharks start looking round for victims, they will catch sight of the two of you, weakened, committed and already bleeding.

It is inevitable that the first April will be a time for choosing targets, and so your aim must be to reach this point not looking like a victim. To do that you must have as many units on the board as you can manage without causing alarm and without having exposed your back unnecessarily in getting them. Being too cautious is a common error on these first two moves. Cover the obvious sucker punches, but otherwise go for all you can reasonably get. Rely on diplomacy to keep the peace with your neighbours and to ensure that the regional share out is acceptable to you all. You also want to go into the April negotiations on as good terms as can be managed with as many of your neighbours as possible. If you allow any needle to creep in prematurely, you will be handing a very strong diplomatic card to possibly hostile third parties.

This relatively peaceful beginning, which is a characteristic of Mercator, tends to mean that the diplomacy gets off to a slower start than you probably expect. Players in the immediate vicinity ought to be writing to you, but don't expect too much at this stage from far off parts of the board. Prior to the first move I reckon on detailed negotiations with all my neighbours on the immediate problem of how to divide up the neutrals, and nothing more than "Hi there, I'm Cindy" letters to anybody else. Since I am not planning any attacks at this stage there isn't a lot to be said to non-neighbours, and hypothetical musings on future strategies could well prove dangerous. I am especially careful about what I say to countries which are next door but one, as a malicious leak could induce jumpiness in a neighbour whom I have been trying to keep calm.

But don't let this slow start mislead you. As the game takes shape, the diplomatic tentacles of those destined to do well will spread, and from then to the end of the game the level of the negotiations will build. At Regular the diplomacy tends to slacken off as alliances solidify and stalemate lines loom. At Mercator alliances don't solidify, and the later stages are dominated not by stalemate lines but by talk - some genuine, some not - of alliance wins, with nobody quite sure of what the rest are really up to. If, by the second build period, you aren't conscious of working hard, you aren't doing enough. The main element in determining whose strategic plans win out is diplomatic

control, and you won't achieve that without putting in a lot of work.

Part Two - Tactics

The tactical features that distinguish Mercator stem from three things:

(1) the use of "piggy back" convoys, in which armies board fleets, travel with them and then disembark. This shouldn't cause you any conceptual problems; it is, after all, the natural way to organize a convoy, and it is Regular Diplomacy, with its "stepping stone" convoys, which is eccentric.

(2) the division of each season into time scales. This was originally done in order to make the "what happens when" of the convoy rule clearer - armies get on and off fleets either before the main action (TS1) or after it (TS3). Later, extras were added to increase the options open to the attacker.

(3) the adoption of the Key rule. This says that a unit, which is trying to move, is vulnerable to a flank attack should its attempt fail. The effect of its use in Mercator is to increase the risk attached to certain manoeuvres - specifically, supplementary movement in TS3 and the self stand-off (mainly TS2).

What I want to do is show you the consequences of these changes, and some of the possibilities that they open up. It is an attempt to shorten the learning process, so that you don't have to wait until you see someone gaining an advantage from a clever tactical ploy before realising that that is something you could have tried two seasons back. I shall begin by looking at TS3, because that is the one whose relevance starts on the first move.

If your first set of orders look just like a set from a game of Regular Diplomacy, with no embarkations, you are making an error. To see why, let us consider the position of Italy at the start of a game of Regular.

On move one he puts a fleet into the Ionian, preparing a move two convoy to either Tunis or Greece. The Grecian convoy gets him off to a good start if it works, but there is a fair chance that he will be stood off, in which case there is the unpleasant possibility of no 1901 builds.

Now consider what would happen if he had the Mercator options open to him. The move to the Ionian would be followed by a TS3 embarkation. Then the TS1 portion of move two would see a landing in Greece, effective before the Turkish army in Bulgaria or the Austrian one in Serbia

could do anything about it. In TS2 of move two the army could then be supported in position by the Ionian fleet, or it could cooperate with one of the Austrian/Turkish units against the other. It is a much more attractive prospect for the Italian player, and it becomes even more so if you throw in the possibility of supplementary TS3 movement.

Now turn one could close with an Italian army/fleet in ADS, AEG or EMS. Suddenly the least regarded country on the board has become the terror of the Mediterranean. It follows from all this that if you aren't making use of the TS3 possibilities right from the start, you are playing under a handicap. And the result of that will be fewer builds than you should have had come the first adjustment phase.

Embarking coastal armies on to adjacent fleets will usually increase the options open to them on the following move, so you should always consider it. Don't do it only if, either there really is no point, or there is a risk. The only circumstances in which there could be a risk occur on an "Autumn" move when an army embarking from a supply centre could, as a consequence, either fail to gain it or lose it to a foreign, disembarking army.

Supplementary movement in TS3, i.e., the extra move which is available to any fleet or army/fleet which has already been involved in a successful embarkation or disembarkation, is riskier, though the positional gains, when it works, are well worth having. The risk comes from the Key rule. Should your attempt at the extra move be blocked and should someone else attempt a TS3 move into your space, meeting your fleet anything other than head on, you will be dislodged, and that is bound to be bad news. At best you will lose control of an important sea area, and at worst, because of the retreat restrictions which operate in TS3, you could also lose both units. However, don't be put off; the gains to be made are great. So always consider the supplementary moves, but when you do, consider also the possible dangers. Is an enemy likely to have a newly formed army/fleet adjacent to yours?

One more tip before I leave TS3: it is possible to use the supplementary move rules to give yourself a double chance of gaining a particular sea space. Suppose that (using the geography from the Regular board) the British player has a fleet in the North Sea and an army in London and that the French have a fleet in Brest. He wishes to attack France by moving to the Channel and conveying the army across. If the

French player suspects that this is so, he will fail, because the two fleets will stand each other off. And unless other fleets intervene, they can continue to stand each other off indefinitely; the army in London will not come into play. At Mercator things are different; now the existence of the army is critical. The British player orders:

TS2 F(NTH) - ENC

TS3 A(Lon) E F(NTH), A/F(NTH)- ENC

If he is stood out in TS2, the TS3 orders come into play; if he isn't, they lapse. The point is that, when you are giving orders for units in later time scales, you don't have to assume that earlier orders for the same units succeeded, it is equally legitimate to assume that they failed. Watch out for this one, the opportunity for it occurs quite often.

In TS1 the "extra" is the fact that the landing of an army may be supported by its carrier fleet. There is a penalty for this, but it only applies to the fleet; the landed army has all the TS2 rights that it would have had had it been in the province since the end of the previous season. Because these attacks are double strength, and because they take place before the main action in TS2, they are obviously very powerful.

The only defences are a TS2 counterattack, pushing the landed unit back, into the sea (which will destroy it since armies can't retreat on to fleets); prevention, i.e., making sure that hostile army/fleets don't get into your coastal waters; and having a nearby army/fleet which can, by ordering a supported landing of its own, stand the enemy off. All this should be reasonably clear from a reading of the relevant section of the rules, and there aren't really any non-obvious consequences- tricky guesses, yes, but no hidden wrinkles.

For an example of the sort of situation that can arise, consider the following - again Britain and France, and again the geography of the Regular board:

Britain has an army/fleet in the North Sea, France one in the Channel. The bone of contention is, obviously, London. The British player's options are:

(1) TS1 F(NTH) S A(NTH) L Lon

(2) TS1 A(NTH) L Lon, TS2 F(NTH) S A(Lon)

(3) TS1 A(NTH) L Yor, TS2 F(NTH) S A(Yor)- Lon

There are corresponding moves for France. Analyse the various possible results. You will find that it is a perfect "paper/scissors/stone"

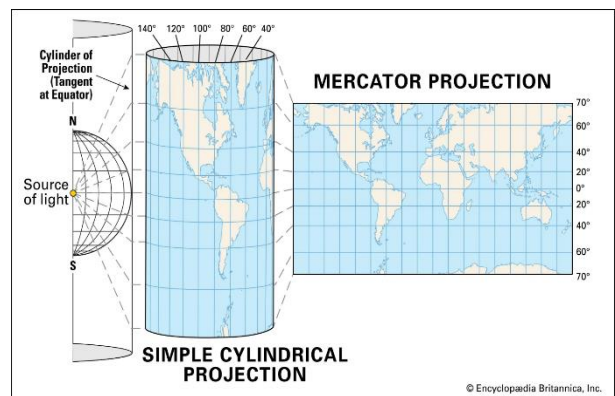
guessing game. Understand this example, and you haven't much more to learn about TS1.

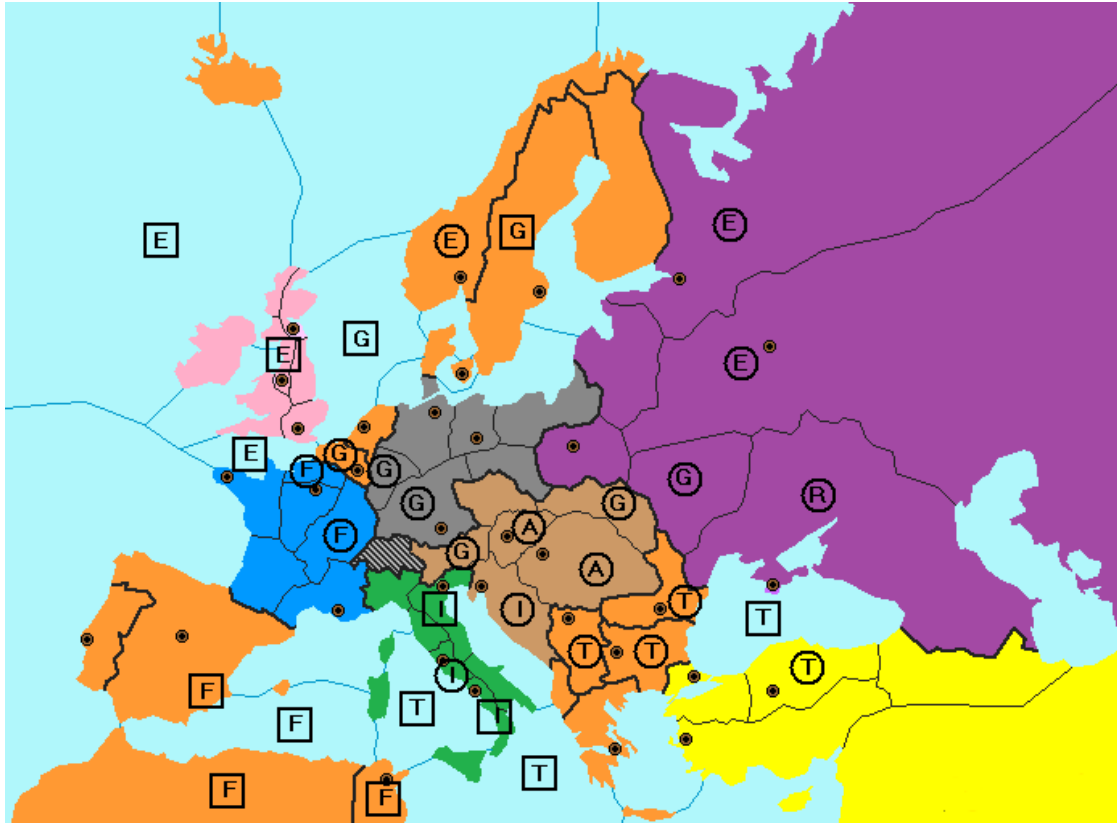
TS2 precedes much as a normal season in a game of Regular Diplomacy. The only difference, and it is a significant one, is the use of the Key Rule. Its introduction is in line with Mercator's general policy of tilting the balance towards the attacker. The rules give examples of how it operates, and so there doesn't seem much point in repeating them here. At first, you will almost certainly tend to forget that it is in operation, but provided that you remember to order your retreats and that the self-stand-off is no longer a soft option, you will come to no great harm.

Mention of retreats brings me to the last area I wish to look at. The time scales mean that by the end of a Mercator season some quite complicated situations can have arisen, and so it is just about inevitable that the retreat rules have to be complicated if they are to cover all the possibilities in a satisfactory way.

However, although they are complicated, don't put off reading them carefully, as they have some important consequences. Note, especially, the restrictions which operate on retreats caused in TS3. Note too, the way that a dislodging unit can, by travelling through a neighbouring region, "intimidate the natives" and thereby cut down the places to which the dislodged unit can go.

One final piece of advice: think about inventing a general retreat rule to be used for all units which haven't been given specific retreat orders. It is better to have a unit retreat somewhere, even if it is not to the best spot, than to have it disbanded because you failed to anticipate that a retreat might be needed. It is very difficult to foresee all the possibilities; so build a safety net.





2023BB All The Madmen (Autumn 1004)

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Neil Kendrick)
A(Bud) s A(Vie); A(Vie) s A(Bud)

ENGLAND (Lindsay Jackson)
A(Nwy) Stands; A(StP) s A(Mos); A(Mos) s
GERMAN A(War) - Ukr; F(NAO) - MAO (FAILED);
F(ENG) s GERMAN A(Hol) - Bel

FRANCE (Mike Benyon)
F(Spa) sc - MAO (FAILED); A(Pic) s A(Bel); A(Bel)
Stands* (DISLODGED TO Bur); F(GoL) - WMS;
F(Tun) - NAF; F(TYS) - Tun; A(Tus) - Pie (FAILED)

GERMANY (Toby Harris)
F(Den) - NTH; F(Swe) Stands; A(Hol) - Bel; A(Ruh)
s A(Hol) - Bel; A(Tyr) - Pie (FAILED); A(Gal) s
A(War) - Ukr; A(War) - Ukr

ITALY (Colin Smith)
F(Nap) s TURKISH F(ION) - TYS; F(ADS) - Ven;
A(Tri) s F(ADS) - Ven; A(Ven) - Rom

RUSSIA (Simon Billenness)
A(Sev) s A(Ukr) - Rum; A(Ukr) - Rum* (FAILED,
DISLODGED - DISBANDED NRP)

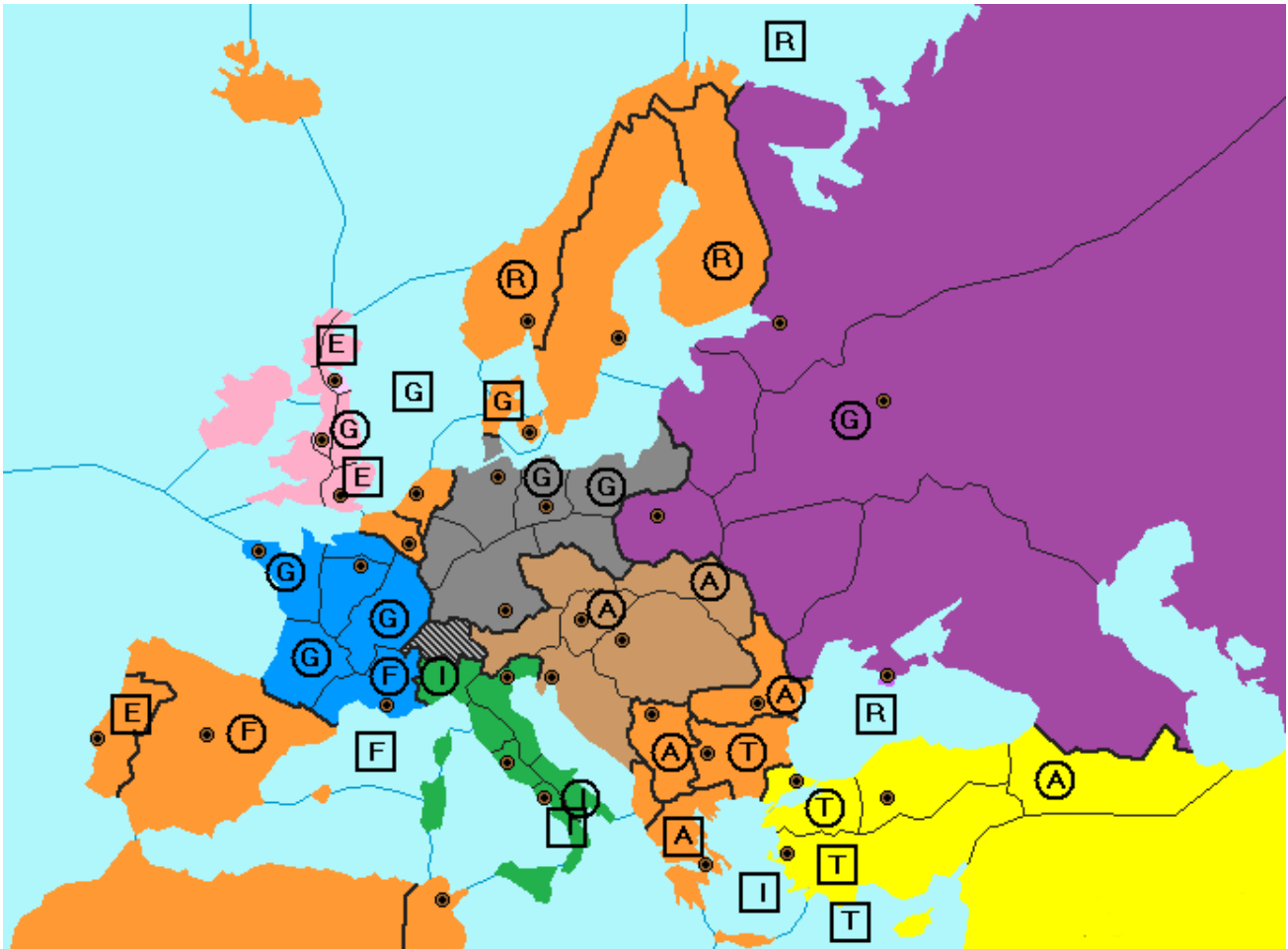
TURKEY (Neil Duncan)
F(ION) - TYS; F(AEG) - ION; A(Ser) s ITALIAN
A(Tri); A(Rum) s A(Ser) (CUT); A(Bul) s A(Rum);
F(BLA) s A(Rum); A(Con) - Ank

Autumn 1904 Adjustments:

A: Bud, Vie = 2; No change.
E: Nwy, StP, +Mos, Edi, Lon, Lpl = 6; Gains 1.
Builds F(Lpl).
F: Spa, Tun, Por, Bre, Mar, Par -Bel = 6; Loses 1.
Removes A(Tus).
G: Swe, +Bel, Hol, War, Ber, Den, Kie, Mun = 8;
Gains 1. Builds A(Mun).
I: Nap, Ven, Tri, Rom = 4; No change.
R: Sev, -Mos = 1; Loses 1.
T: Ser, Rum, Bul, Ank, Gre, Con, Smy = 7; No
change.

Press:

France-England: "Sorry Mike. The stab was nothing personal. Sadly France and England are natural rivals, just as Germany and England are natural allies." So what you are essentially saying is that this isn't a game of diplomacy as you aren't interested in negotiation, only predetermined tactics. That would explain while you passed up a legitimate opportunity to attack Germany a couple of seasons ago. You would have been better saying nothing as my only tactics now will be to defend fully against you rather than trying to stop Germany. I would have accepted the stab as a good tactical move but in two short sentences you have really got my back up!



2023BC Big Brother (Spring 1904)

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Scott Camplin)

A(Bud) - Rum; A(Gal) s A(Bud) - Rum; F(Gre) s ITALIAN F(ION) - AEG; A(Ser) s F(Gre); A(Sev) - Arm; A(Tri) - Vie

ENGLAND (John Galt)

F(NWG) - Edi; F(ENG) - Lon; F(MAO) - Por

FRANCE (Civil Disorder)

A(Spa) Stands ; F(GoL) Stands ; A(Mar) Stands

GERMANY (Hans Swift)

A(Ber) - Pru (FAILED); F(Kie) - Den; A(Par) - Gas; A(Bel) - Yor; F(NTH) c A(Bel) - Yor; A(Mun) - Bur; A(Mos) Stands; A(Bre) Stands u/o ; A(Pru) Stands u/o

ITALY (Derek De Rooy)

A(Pie) - Ven (FAILED); A(Apu) - Ven (FAILED); F(Nap) - ION (FAILED); F(ION) - AEG

RUSSIA (Hugh Polley)

F(Nwy) - BAR; F(Rum) s TURKISH A(Bul)* (CUT, DISLODGED TO BLA); A(StP) - Nwy; A(Fin) s A(StP) - Nwy

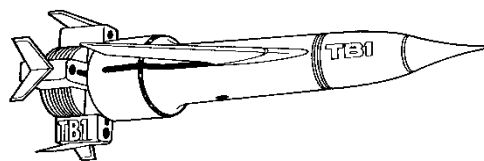
TURKEY (Kevin Wilson)

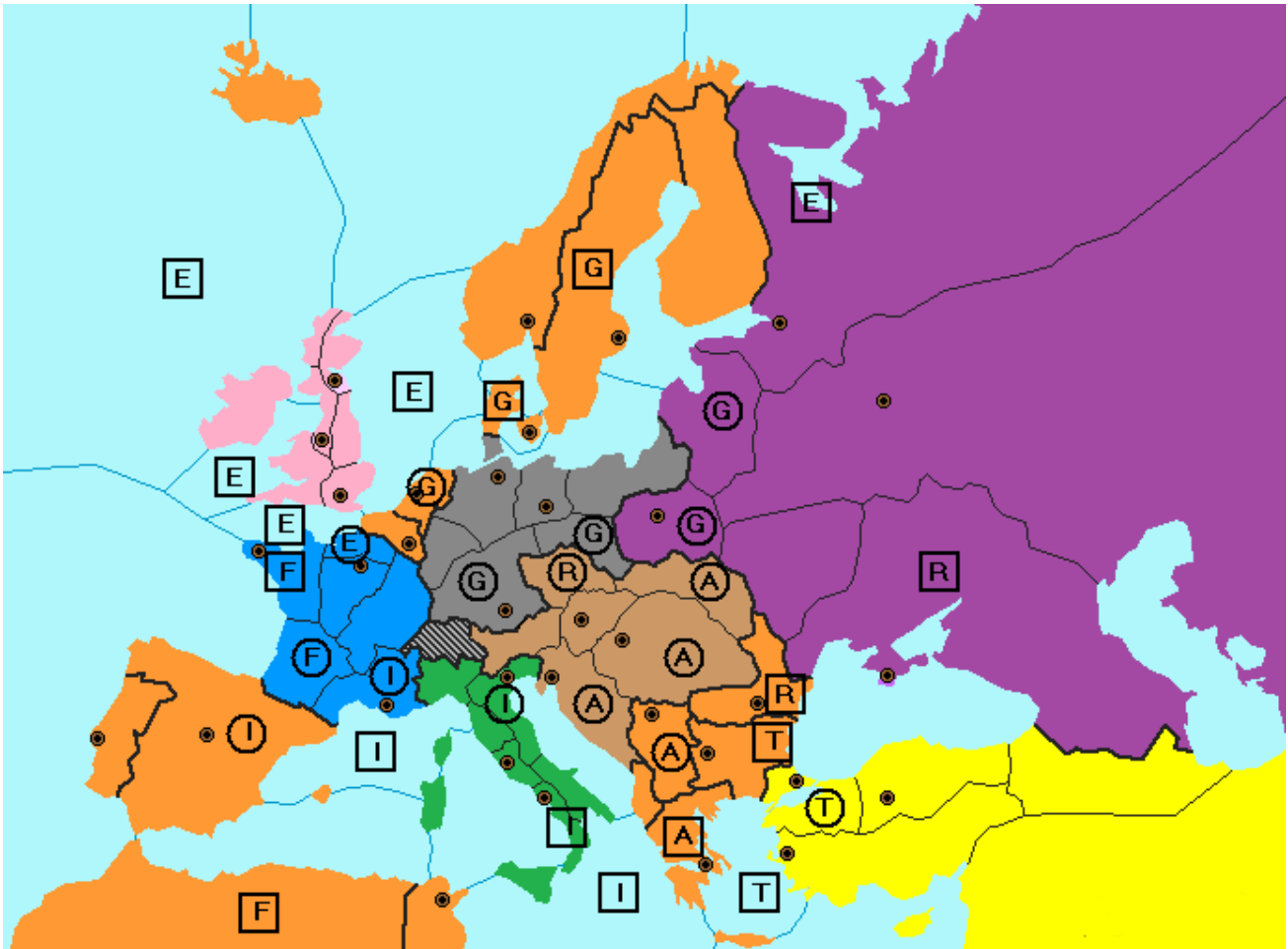
A(Bul) s F(AEG) - Gre; A(Con) s A(Bul); F(AEG) - Gre* (FAILED, DISLODGED TO Smy); F(EMS) - ION (FAILED)

Press:

The Geek's Win Odds: Germany 50%, Austria 25%, Italy 14%, Turkey 5%, England 5%, Russia 1%, France 0%

Geek Notes: Germany has no real opposition and can disrupt with moves such as Mos S Rum or Black to Sev. Turkey and Italy would have to take Greece to cause Austria any problems, other negative, Germany could move to Sil, Boh, Tyr; so long as Turkey is hanging in there no hurry. Italy is boxed in, only one good move, a stab of AH @ Gre. Turkey is in trouble if Ser-Arm, best write lots of support orders.





2023BE Candidate (Autumn 1903)

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Gavin Begbie)
A(Vie) - Gal; A(Bud) - Rum (FAILED); A(Bul) s A(Bud) - Rum* (CUT, DISLODGED TO Ser); F(Gre) s A(Bul) (CUT); A(Tri) - Bud (FAILED)

ENGLAND (Paul Simpkins)
F(NTH) Stands; F(Nwy) - StP nc; F(NWG) - NAO;
F(ENG) s A(Bel) - Pic; A(Bel) - Pic; F(IRI) - MAO (FAILED)

FRANCE (Richard Jackson)
F(Bre) - MAO (FAILED); A(Pic) - Bre* (FAILED, DISLODGED TO Par); F(NAF) - Tun (FAILED); A(Gas) - Spa (FAILED); A(Mar) s A(Gas) - Spa* (CUT, DISLODGED TO Bur)

GERMANY (Jason Finch)
A(Lvn) s A(Pru) - War; A(Sil) s A(Pru) - War; A(Pru) - War; A(Kie) - Hol; F(SKA) - Den; F(BAL) - Swe

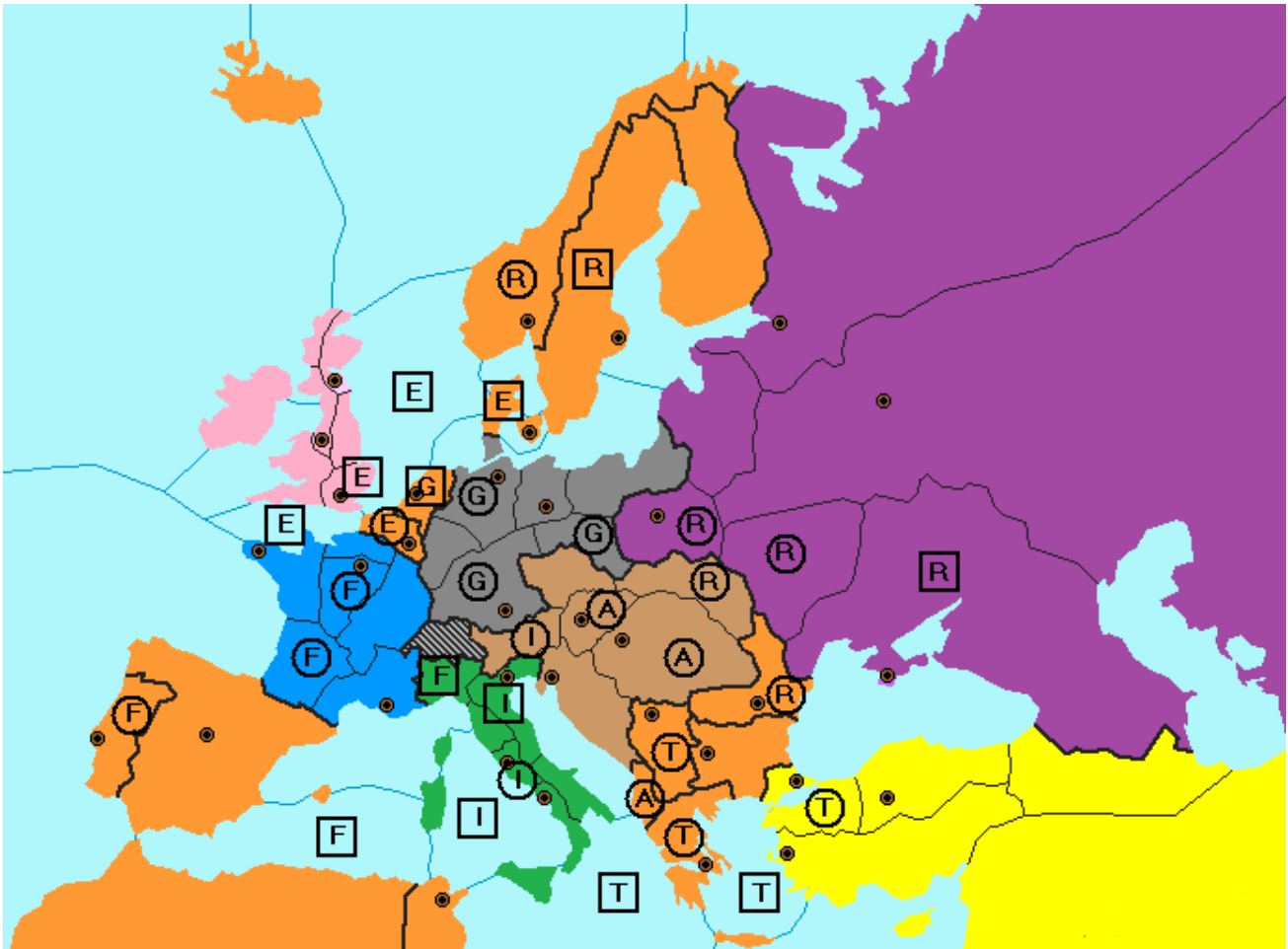
ITALY (Dominic Braithwaite)
F(ION) - Tun (FAILED); A(Pie) - Mar; F(GoL) s A(Pie) - Mar; A(Spa) s A(Pie) - Mar (CUT)

RUSSIA (Joseph Stark)
F(Sev) s F(Rum); F(Rum) s F(Sev) (CUT); A(Gal) - Boh; A(War) - Mos

TURKEY (Paraic Reddington)
F(BLA) - Bul ec; A(Con) s F(BLA) - Bul ec; F(AEG) - Gre (FAILED)

Autumn 1903 Adjustments:

A: Bud, Ser, Gre, Tri, Vie = 5; No change.
E: StP, Nwy, Bel, Edi, Lon, Lpl = 6; No change.
F: Bre, Par, Por -Mar, -Spa = 3; Loses 2. Removes A(Bur), A(Par).
G: +War, Hol, Den, Swe, Mun, Kie, Ber = 7; Gains 1. Builds A(Mun).
I: +Mar, +Spa, Ven, Tun, Nap, Rom = 6; Gains 2. Builds F(Nap), A(Ven).
R: Sev, Rum, Mos -War = 3; Loses 1. Removes A(Mos).
T: Bul, Con, Ank, Smy = 4; No change. Builds (No build ordered).



2023BF Diamond Dogs (Autumn 1902)

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Hugh Polley)

A(Vie) s A(Bud) (CUT); A(Ser) - Rum* (FAILED, DISLODGED TO Alb); A(Bud) s A(Ser) - Rum (CUT); F(Tri) s ITALIAN A(Tyr) - Ven (MISORDER)

ENGLAND (Jack McHugh)

F(ENG) c A(Lon) - Bel; A(Lon) - Bel; F(SKA) - Den; F(NTH) s F(SKA) - Den (CUT)

FRANCE (Martin Davis)

A(Spa) - Por; F(WMS) - Tun (FAILED); F(GoL) - Pie; A(Bur) s ENGLISH A(Lon) - Bel* (CUT, DISLODGED TO Gas)

GERMANY (Alexandre Marcondes)

A(Den) s RUSSIAN F(Swe)* (CUT, DISLODGED TO Kie); F(Hol) - NTH (FAILED); A(Mun) s A(Ruh) - Bur; A(Ruh) - Bur; A(Sil) - War (FAILED)

ITALY (Caetano Darwin)

A(Tyr) - Vie (FAILED); F(Apu) - Ven; A(Rom) s F(Apu) - Ven; F(TYS) - Tun (FAILED)

RUSSIA (Vick Hall)

F(Swe) s ENGLISH F(SKA) - Den; A(Ukr) - War (FAILED); A(Gal) - Bud (FAILED); F(Sev) s A(Rum); A(Rum) s A(Gal) - Bud (CUT); A(StP) S F(Swe)(NO SUCH UNIT); A(Nwy) Stands u/o

TURKEY (John Trevor-Allen)

A(Bul) - Ser; A(Gre) s A(Bul) - Ser; F(AEG) - ION; F(Con) - AEG

Autumn 1902 Adjustments:

A: Vie, Bud, Tri, -Ser = 3; Loses 1. Removes F(Tri).

E: +Bel, +Den, Edi, Lon, Lpl -Nwy = 5; Gains 1. Builds F(Lon)

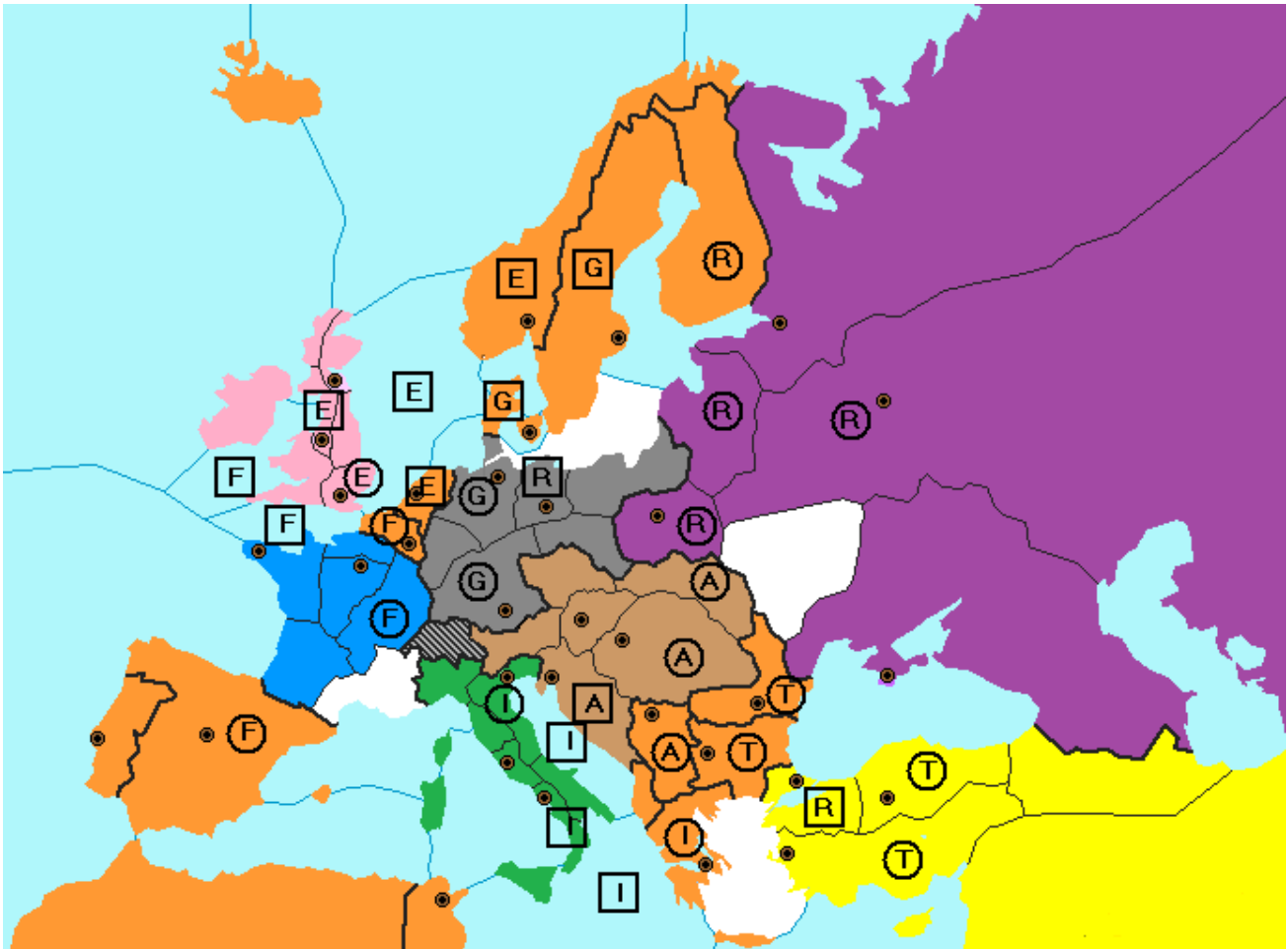
F: +Por, Spa, Bre, Mar, Par = 5; Gains 1. Builds A(Par).

G: Kie, Hol, Mun, Ber -Den = 4; Loses 1. GM removes A(Bur), No Removal Ordered..

I: Ven, Rom, Tun, Nap = 4; No change.

R: Swe, Sev, Rum, +Nwy, War, Mos, StP = 7; Gains 1. Builds A(War).

T: +Ser, Gre, Con, Ank, Smy = 5; Gains 1. Builds A(Con).



Black Hole Dip II Everyone Says Hi! (Autumn 1902)

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (John Tait)
A(Gal) - War (FAILED); A(Bud) s A(Ser); A(Ser) s A(Bud) (CUT); F(Tri) Stands

ENGLAND (Christian Dreyer)
F(NWG) - Nwy; F(NTH) s F(Hol); A(Lon) Stands;
F(Lpl) - IRI (FAILED); F(Hol) s RUSSIAN A(Lvn) - Kie
(MISORDER)

FRANCE (Alexandre Marcondes)
F(IRI) - Lpl (FAILED); F(ENG) s ENGLISH F(Lpl) - Wal
(MISORDER); A(Spa) Stands; A(Bur) s A(Bel);
A(Bel) Stands

GERMANY (Kevin Wilson)
A(Kie) s F(GoB) - Den; A(Mun) s A(Kie); F(Swe) s F(GoB) - Den (CUT); F(GoB) - Den

ITALY (Mog Firth)
A(Ven) - Tri (FAILED); F(Apu) - ADS; A(Tun) - Gre;
F(ION) c A(Tun) - Gre

RUSSIA (Philip Murphy)
F(Den) s A(Fin) - Swe* (CUT, DISLODGED TO Ber); A(Fin) - Swe (FAILED); A(Lvn) - Mos (FAILED); A(War) - Mos (FAILED); F(BLA) - Con

TURKEY (David Partridge)
A(Rum) - Ser (FAILED); A(Bul) s A(Rum) - Ser;
A(Smy) - Ank; F(Con) - AEG

True Random Number Generator

Min:

Max:

Result:

2

Min: 1, Max: 75
2023-10-01 18:59:47 UTC

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2 = AEGEAN SEA

THE TURKISH F(AEG) IS DESTROYED!
SMYRNA NOW BORDERS THE IONIAN SEA!!

Autumn 1902 Adjustments:

A: Bud, Ser, Tri, Vie = 4; No change.
E: Nwy, Lon, Lpl, Hol, Edi = 5; No change.
F: +Spa, Bel, Por, Bre, Mar, Par = 5; No change.
G: Kie, Mun, Swe, +Den, -Ber = 4; No change.
I: Ven, +Gre, Tun, Nap, Rom = 5; Gains 1. Builds F(Nap).
R: +Ber, War, +Con, Mos, Sev, StP -Rum = 6; Gains 1. Builds A(Mos).
T: +Rum, Bul, Ank, Smy, -Con = 4. Builds A(Smy)

GAMESTART

Regular Diplomacy

Fascination

AUSTRIA: Leif Kjetil Tviberg
leifkjetil@wemail.no

ENGLAND: Joseph Stark
jmstarkca@hotmail.com

FRANCE Gerry Bayer
starhop8@gmail.com

GERMANY: Martin Davis
martin_davis@ntlworld.com

ITALY: Pete Doubleday
pmdouble3012@gmail.com

RUSSIA: Geoff Wilde
geoff.wilde8@gmail.com

TURKEY: Lars Huth
huth@mailbox.org

OK - remember that we use conditional retreats and builds. The House Rules are available [here](#).

There's an unusual backstory to this Bowie track, Luther Vandross had written a song entitled "Funky Music (Is a Part of Me)" and was serving as a backup singer to Bowie's live tour in 1974. Vandross would sing "Funky Music" during the supporting portion of the shows on the tour. Bowie retained Vandross as a backup singer for the sessions of **Young Americans**. During those sessions Bowie and Vandross reworked "Funky Music" into "Fascination," including mostly brand-new lyrics by Bowie. When Bowie asked Vandross permission to record "Funky Music" himself, Vandross responded "What do you mean 'let' you record it. I'm living in a building with an elevator that barely works and you're asking me to 'let' you record one of my songs." **Fascination** thus became Vandross' first published songwriting credit. This is one of the few Bowie tracks that Bowie never performed live.

UK Games Conventions

7th October 2023:

TringCon, Marsworth Millenium Hall, Marsworth, nr. Tring. See www.tringcon.org for details.

27th-29th October 2023:

HandyCon, Delta Hotels by Marriott, Milton Keynes. See www.handycon.co.uk for details.

3rd-5th November 2023:

MidCon, Derby Mickleover Hotel, Mickleover. See www.fbgames.co.uk/Midcon for details. I'm all booked, attending with my son Freddie. Attempting to get a game of Diplomacy going on Saturday!

11th-13th November 2023:

GridCon, Holiday Inn, Taunton. See gridcon.co.uk for details

19th-21st January 2024:

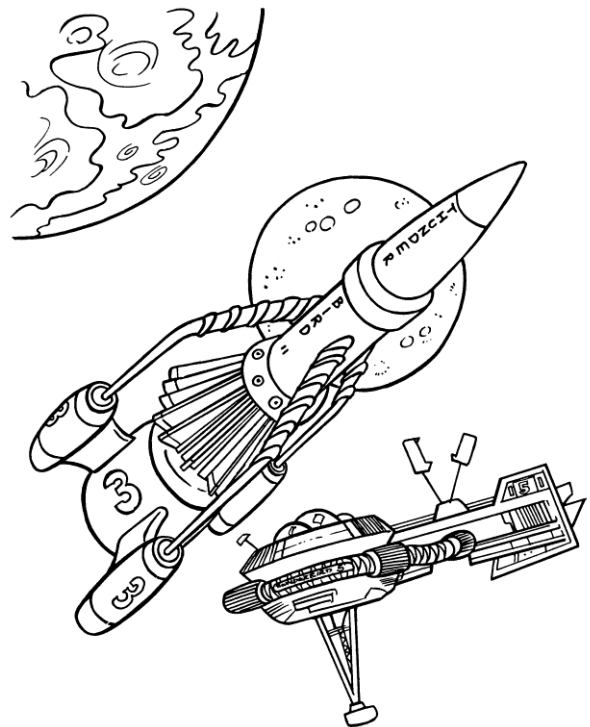
HandyCon, Delta Hotels by Marriott, Milton Keynes. See www.handycon.co.uk for details.

23rd-25th February 2024:

SoRCon, Holiday Inn, Basildon. See www.sorcon.co.uk for details

3rd-7th April 2024:

BayCon, Exeter Court Hotel, Kennford. See www.facebook.com/groups/baycon/ for details



POETRY CORNER

Simenon And On And On And On

I'd read a lot more whodunits,
I think I can safely say,
If the hero was Inspector Magritte
Instead of Inspector Maigret.
Maigret's adventures always end
With a criminal revealed;
But with Magritte, the plot twists come
From straight out of left field.
For sure, you can bet that Maigret
Will finger the guilty man;
But Magritte arrested an apple, a goat,
And a copper frying pan.
Maigret, he looks for fingerprints
To track the killer down;
But the elbow prints that Magritte found
Brought him deserved renown.
When the suspect vanished, Maigret
Felt anger and frustration;
But Magritte deduced the criminal
Escaped by evaporation.
So three cheers for Inspector Magritte --
His first name is René --
The most surreal, unorthodox cop
In all the Insûreté!

Sandra Bond

Waiting Lists

Regular Diplomacy (Game "G") (3 wanted): Ian ???; Icalar Black; Jason Finch; Nathan Deilly

Bourse: Paul Simpkins. Lots more wanted. Rules inside. A fun financial game run alongside the new regular Diplomacy Game F (Fascination). Just send me some orders to participate!

Mercator XIV (14 wanted): Brian Frew, John Strain, Brendan Whyte, **only 14 places left!** See inside for Mercator article!



Email: godsavethezine@gmail.com

DEADLINE
Friday
27th October 2023



LATE ORDERS!

A sub-zine constituting
The last earthly remains of the zine
formerly known as Last Orders!

Compiled by Simon Langley-Evans
Email for all orders lastordersdip@gmail.com

**Issue 52. September/October
2023**

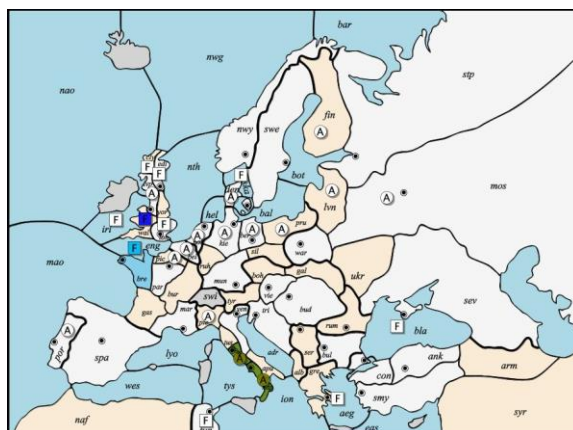
**Next deadline: See the Election
Section.**

So my friends this is it... this is the final issue of Late/Last Orders! The time has come to lay it to rest. The final Diplomacy game comes to an end in this issue which leaves us with just the Election game. I intend to run this by email without publishing the sub-zine to process the results. I am excited to see how the game pans out and if the players are all happy (please tell me if not) I will run the game with a 3 weekly turnaround in the hope that we get it finished before Christmas.

I would like to thank everyone who has been a reader of my ramblings over the last 4 years and especially the many people who have played in the Diplomacy, earlier versions of Election, Kendo Nagasaki and other games that have featured in the zine. Your time and contributions have been greatly appreciated and I hope that you've enjoyed it. All things must come to an end though, and I am going to be taking a bit of a break from the Diplomacy hobby for a while. It's only temporary though and, like a bad smell, I'll be back, but I think I have GM'd for the last time.

Since the launch of Last Orders! we have completed 9 games of standard Diplomacy and 16 games of Intimate Diplomacy. A full archive of those games is available [at this link](#). If you have a hankering to read old issues of Last Orders! Then Stephen has very efficiently added them to the [UK Diplomacy Archive](#).

Intimate Diplomacy Game



LO22 A Scarcity of Miracles

Brian Frew (Russia) plays Leif Tviberg (England).

Fall 1907

England: F edi -> cly Bounced with cly (1 against 1). Dislodged from nwg (2 against 1). F lvp Supports F edi -> cly Support cut by Move from Wales. Dislodged from wal (2 against 1). F lon -> wal

Russia: F aeg Holds, A bel Holds, A ber Holds, F bla Holds, F cly Supports F nwg -> edi, A den Holds, A fin Holds, A hol Holds, F iri Supports A wal -> lvp, A kie Holds, A lvn Holds, A mos Holds, F nth -> lon, F nwg -> edi, A pic Holds, A pie Holds, A por Holds, A pru Holds, F ska Holds, F tun Holds, A wal -> lvp

Russian mercenary

France: F eng Supports F nth -> lon

Neutral power

Italy: A nap Holds, A rom Holds

Autumn 1907

England: F edi Disbands (NRO), F lvp Disbands NRO

All of the English centres are simultaneously captured and Leif eliminated. So Brian wins a pretty decisive victory. Well played, sir! Commiserations to Leif who put up a noble defence and prolonged the game well beyond expectations given the odds against him.

APPROVAL INDEX		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Start	Start	Start	Start
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Start	Start	Start	Start	Start	Start	Start	Start	Start	Start	Start	Start	Start	Start	Start	Start	Start	Start	Start	Start	Start

1. Buy a new attack advert.
2. Play an attack advert to remove voters in current or adjacent Districts.
3. Place a standard voter in current or adjacent Districts.
4. Take one postal voter from the pool.
5. Place a postal voter in any District.

Party	Unused attacks	Attacks used	Postal votes unused	Postal votes used	Forces vote unused
SD	1	5	6	1	1
AU	3	1	4	1	1
G	3	1	6	1	1
FL	4	1	2	1	1

★ Campaign base for turn

1 District number

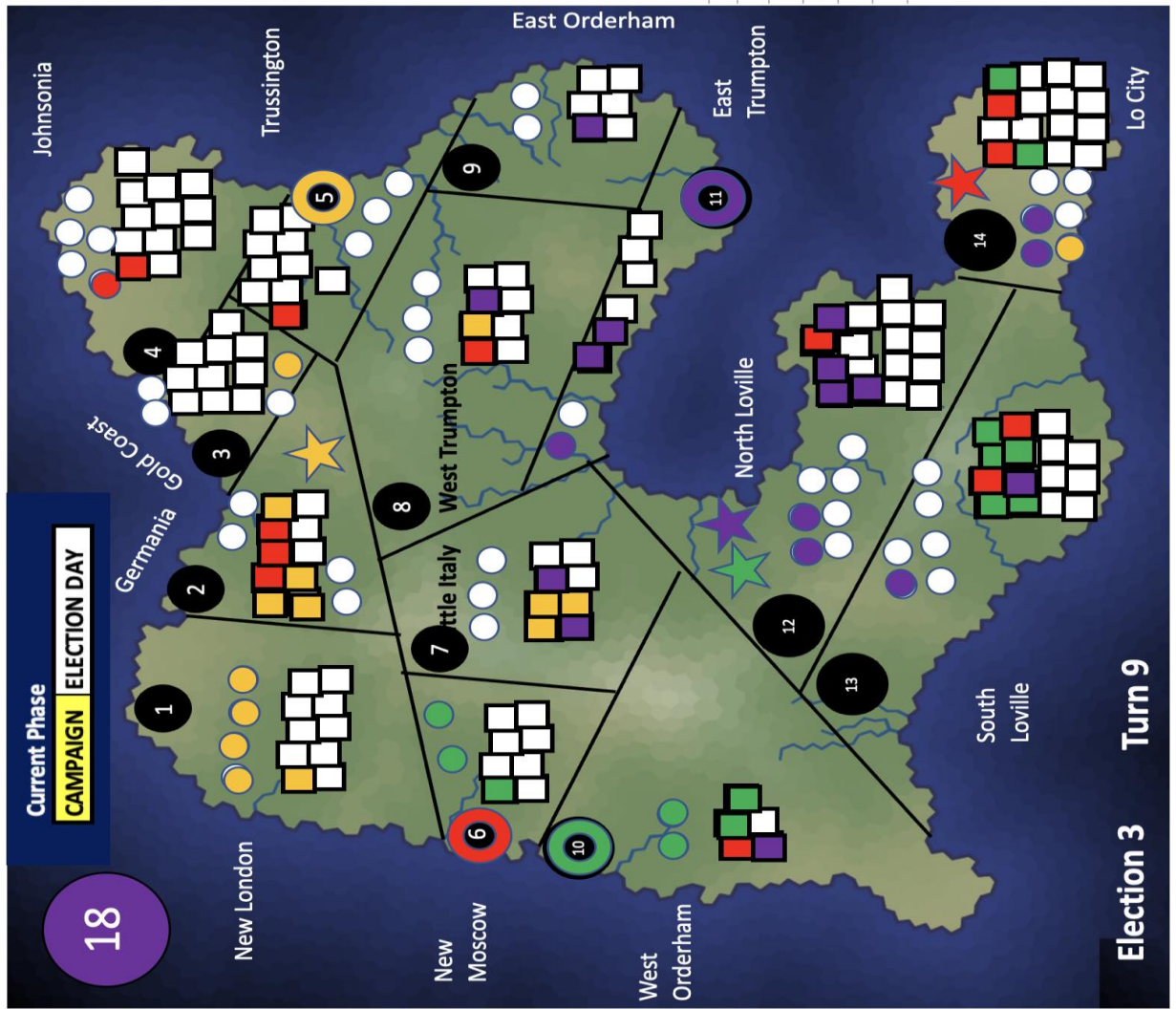
10 Postal votes remaining

○ Home district bonus vote

○ Postal vote slot

□ Standard vote slot

District	Seats
1	22
2	20
3	21
4	24
5	20
6	18
7	18
8	17
9	15
10	13
11	15
12	35
13	30
14	33



Election

The players and their parties are:

John Langley: leader of the Social Democrats (■ Home District 6).

Mark Firth: leader of the Green Party (▨ Home District 10).

Andy Lischett: leader of the Angelic Upstarts (▨ Home District 5).

Leif Tviberg: leader of the Free Lolanders (▨ Home District 11).

How the game will run from here.

Now that I have decided that there will be more Late Orders! we need to think about how the game will continue. This will now be conducted purely by email, so from your perspective nothing needs to change. You send me the orders and I will email you back with the adjudication. I will try and run it with a 3 week turnaround , with exact timings somewhat depending on how busy I am with my executive pensioning lifestyle. If you have a problem with that frequency, or would like to go even faster just let me know.

Your next deadline is: **SATURDAY 14th OCTOBER 8pm.**

So on with the game and the battle for supremacy in Loland...

Round 9

The Angelic Upstarts maintain their focus on the northern districts and firm up postal voter support in New London. However they come under attack from the Free Lolanders, who now have the lead in the Approval Index. The Greens recover some lost ground.

■ **SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (John)** Moves to District 14.

Attacks the Free Lolanders in D14.

Places one standard voter in D14.

Places one standard voter in D13.

▨ **ANGELIC UPSTARTS (Andy)** Stays in District 2.

Places one postal vote in D14.

Places two postal votes in D1.

▨ **GREEN (Mark)** Moves to District 12..

Places two standard voters in D14.

Takes one postal voter.

▨ **FREE LOLANDERS (Leif)** Stays in District 12.

Attacks the Angelic Upstarts in D7.

Places one standard voter in D12.

Places one postal voter in D14.

Note that we are now at a stage in the game where some orders will not be processed due to a lack of free space on the board (see rules on how clashes are resolved). Players may wish to order conditionally to protect against losing a move. It is quite likely that we will hit Election Day at Round 10, looking at the current position, so I have provided an overview of the Election Day protocols below.

Instructions For Next Round

1. At the start of the turn, the players select a District to be their Campaign Base. They can stay where they were on their last turn or move to any other District.
2. Perform 3 actions, which can be any combination of the following. Each of the actions is resolved by the GM in the order presented.

- Buy a new attack advert.
- Play an attack advert to remove voters in current or adjacent Districts.
- Place a standard voter in current or adjacent Districts.
- Take one postal voter from the pool.
- Place a postal voter in any District.

The GM will process attack adverts before voters are placed on the board. This allows a player to remove an opponent's voter and replace it with their own. A party which moves up to/or beyond points 10 or 5 on the Index can take postal voters as a bonus (4 votes at '5' and 2 votes at '10'). If they are knocked below the bonus points by an attack advert, they can claim the bonus again when they regain points 10 or 5 on the chart. There is no bonus for landing on or crossing the bonus line when voters are removed by an attack advert.

Don't forget that if you are playing one of your two fake votes, you should let me know. I will otherwise assume that the 14th and 15th votes you place are the fakes.

The [full rules are here](#).

Election Day is approaching fast, so here is a brief overview of what is coming. On the turn when one or more players hit the top of the Approval Index, Election Day will be triggered and for the following turn we are in Election Day phase.

In this phase of the game, the players no longer need a Campaign Base or move around the map. All actions can be performed anywhere on the board. Three actions can be taken in each turn.

- Take one postal voter from the pool.
- Place a postal voter in any District.

In addition on one turn they can place their Forces vote and this does not count as an action. Once placed the Forces vote cannot be moved.

- Once all of the postal vote spaces in a District are taken, the result for that District is declared. The GM will determine the ranking of each party in the District using the follow process:
 - Check for fake policies and remove from the count
 - Add any Forces votes that have been played for the District.
 - Count the total number of tokens (Standard, Postal, Forces) for each party.
 - Use the Vote to Seat conversion table for the District (Appendix) to determine how many seats go to each party.
- If there is a tie between two or more parties in the District, then the GM will equally share the seats between them. If this is not a whole number of seats, the party that is currently leading the election will receive the extra seat. If the tie occurs at the first District to declare, the extra seat will be allocated once a leader is established at a subsequent declaration.

As it stands in this game, the results for Districts 1, 6 and 10 will be declared immediately as all postal votes have already been allocated to a party. The state of the parties in the emerging parliament will be listed in the table below.

Party	Seats Won	Districts Won
Social Democrats	0	0
Angelic Upstarts	0	0
Greens	0	0
Free Lolanders	0	0