

THE ARMISTICE DAY NEWSLETTER



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<http://www.diplomacy.co.uk/armisticeday>

ARMISTICE DAY

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Postal Diplomacy Waiting List

Warren Galenzoski , Anthony Coogan. 5 needed.

Help – A Replacement England is Needed for the Abstraction Game!

See page 27. Chris Martin has resigned from Tannenburg for personal reasons, and I am seeking a replacement player for his 9 centre England. Anyone taking the position over gets the zine free for as long as his involvement in the game continues.

Railway Rivals

(To be GM'd by Richard Gooch)

Northern Italy Map P: 3 wanted. Bruce Edwards, Ken Laidlaw

South Sweden Map SWE: 4 wanted.

Netherlands: 1 wanted. Kevin Lee, Brad Martin, Allan Stagg, Tim?

Isle of Wight: Full. Charlie Wilson, Jim Reader, Pat Carey, Bruce Edwards

Volunteers wanted for the **Trans-Canada Map Experiment** (essentially a very very long thin map). Kevin Lee, Jim Reader.

Richard apologises for the fact that these games haven't got started yet – he has recently lost his job and his Internet access. However, things are sorted now and he will be in contact very soon.

Editorial

I am going to bore you yet again with news of what has gone wrong with my PC this time. Those of a techophobic disposition are recommended to skip the next three paragraphs.

I have to confess, this time it was all my fault. I had trouble with the new version of Zone Alarm Pro. Indeed, I got so fed up with it I decided to install Norton Personal Firewall instead. However, I didn't uninstall Zone Alarm Pro first. That was my first mistake. When the two programs clashed with each other I uninstalled Zone Alarm first. That was my second mistake. This ended up leaving bits and pieces of the earlier version of Zone Alarm on my PC which still kept conflicting with the Norton product. So I tried to delete the odds and ends manually. That was my third mistake. Within 10 minutes I had rendered my PC almost unusable in that everything took several minutes to do waiting for bits of redundant programs to time out. Aaaaagghh! Oh well, I thought, just reinstall Windows, after all, all my data is backed up, isn't it? So I reformatted and reinstalled and everything was great.

Then I came to restore Turnpike, my email client. Ah. Turnpike was in the Program Files folder which I hadn't backed up. That wasn't in itself a problem – the real problem was that the email database resided in a sub-folder in the Program Files folder as well – which also hadn't been backed up. So I had wilfully deleted every email I had ever kept going right back to 1994 and all the email addresses I had accumulated as well! SHIT!

At this point I felt so frustrated I didn't want to look at the zine at all – I knew that a random selection of orders for the games were in the deleted mail database, so I had probably lost a good third of all the orders I had been sent for this issue. To be honest, for several days I couldn't even be motivated to sort the mess out. I was just feeling so sorry for myself.

What caused me to get off my backside and tackle the problem was the news that **Dolchstoß** has folded (see Hobby News below). This almost made me feel ashamed that I was getting depressed because of what is really only an administrative problem caused by my own negligence. So after a lot of searching around my hard drive, the missing orders were identified,

games GM'd where I could, and players emailed requesting duplicate sets where necessary. Slowly the whole thing is being put back together. I can only apologise for the chaos and delay.

Back to A5 this time, for no other reason than I prefer it, despite the added complexity. I have justified it to myself by removing all the Diplomacy maps for games where all the players have access to the Internet – they are all available on the web after all. Doing this not only reduces the size of the zine, but dramatically increases the speed of printing the zine.

I am also changing all my Diplomacy web pages – soon everything will be under the banner www.diplomacy.co.uk. This site will house the Diplomacy Archive, the Variant Bank, Armistice Day and a new play Diplomacy online service – with automated GMing, automatic chasing of late orders for a defined grace period (say 2 days) etc. etc. So all the hassle of running games disappears – all I have to do is keep an eye on things. Many, many thanks to Harm Elzinga who has done all the hard bits.

Apologies to those who sent letters by email, only for me to lose them again. Please don't be put off contributing, because in the words of the pop song which accompanied the Labour victory of 1997, **Things Can Only Get Better.**



Those who receive *Dolchstoß* knew that in issue 274 Richard was complaining about having lost his voice. Unfortunately, issue 275 discloses that the reason has turned out to be a cancerous tumour which is pressing on the nerve which operates his right vocal cord – and he has another tumour in his lung. As Richard Sharp eloquently put it, “Maybe the anti-smoking fascists were right all along.” This is very bad news. I am sure you will all join me in wishing Richard all our best wishes in fighting this illness – fortunately Richard

isn't the sort of thing to take anything lying down, but the strength he will need for the fight means that he has taken the clearly sensible decision to fold *Dolchstoß* (all games are being re-housed by John Marsden).

It's funny how I think of Richard as a sort of friend, despite only having met him once face to face in the 25 years (on and off) we have been corresponding. (I'm not sure he thinks of me as a friend – maybe just as an irritating 17 year old Marxist.) The phrase “end of an era” is often over-used, but not in this case. Postal Diplomacy can never be the same again. I will miss *Dolchstoß* sorely.

I have taken the liberty to reprint in this issue an interview with Richard that appeared in the last issue of *Diplomacy World*. I know most of you don't see it. Somehow, it appeared fitting.

Sprouts of Wrath No. 53 from Mark Wightman still sees Mark suffering from back problems – it can't be good news that these have lasted so long, and pain like that is absolute agony. In the circumstances it is credible that he has managed to keep going at all. More tales of how mark torments those who try and sell him anything through cold calling – hell, I almost feel sorry for anyone knocking on his door! With game reviews, con reviews, a sub-zine and a letter column, this is an entertaining and solid zine – the only downside (in my humble opinion) being a surfeit of footnotes. Mark Wightman, 52 Park Road West, Bedford, MK41 7SL.

In days gone by Mark could always be relied on to say something damning about *GAME* from Nic Chilton, issue 48 of which turned up recently. *GAME* used to be an incredibly efficient zine, but these days seems to struggle on with the rest of us mere mortals. This issue has a nice long rambling editorial which confirms Nic's status as an early adopter, coupled with the usual “what I did on my holidays”, which is always more interesting than what I did on my holidays. Also in this issue is an interesting article from John Dennett on how to make educated guesses (I still find it hard to believe there are as many as 50

piano tuners in Chicago). Nic Chilton, 21 Nowell Street, Harehills, Leeds, LS9 6HS.

Where Is My Mind? issue 42 was as entertaining as ever - though David Oya's writing style is becoming more reminiscent of Iain Bowen with every issue I see (*sans* camp of course). I wouldn't go as far as to accuse David as being a little strange but he is the first person I have seen to review the recent **Lord of the Rings** film and conclude "cutting Tom Bombadil ruined it for me" – yeah, sure – definitely the most important character in the book, absolutely crucial. On the other hand, David liked Christopher Lee's performance, which I have to confess I didn't – he was just too like the 2-dimensional Christopher Lee we know and love from crappy Hammer vampire movies.

WIMM? Also benefits from having sub-zines galore, including **Calafia's Island** from hobby old-timer Conrad von Metzke (who also seems to like Christopher Lee in **Lord of the Rings** – so I guess I'm in a minority on that one). Another excellent sub-zine is **Tinas** from Allan Stagg, who also reviews **Lord of the Rings** (lamenting the loss of Mr Bombadil as well – though not as emphatically as David and fails to mention Christopher Lee at all). What is it about that film which has made every zine editor go out and see it? I suspect it is that we are all males of a certain generation. David Oya, 24 Kingsway, Banbury, OX16 9NY.

Alex Bardy almost makes a move up north in **Underneath the Mango Tree** No.29, but not quite. I can quite understand the desire to move from the South East to somewhere like York, provided you can get something approaching the same pay. The quality of life will be far higher and it is probably a better (and cheaper) place in which to raise a family. Shame it all fell through. Alex is going through the traditional zine editors blues at the moment and he foresees the zine slowing down and taking a bit of a back seat. Let's hope it passes, as **Mango** is really an excellent zine, with many attributes of the chattier zines of days gone by. OK, it doesn't run Diplomacy, but hell I can do without the competition. Alex Bardy 29 Harrier Way, Evelyn Mews, Beckton, London, E6 5YP.

The Cunning Plan breaks the 100 barrier and keeps on going (fortunately disproving my suspicion that Neil would call it a day at issue 100). The zine is more or less carried by a handful of correspondents who always make for an entertaining letter column, but Neil seldom seems to contribute much these days apart from the latest instalment of the saga of the AA trying to make him redundant (and failing). Like many zines, waiting lists are taking an age to fill and the number of games running seems in steep decline – it is so obvious that zines like this need some new blood to sustain them, but I guess there aren't many newcomers any more. Neil Duncan, 25 Sarum Hill, Basingstoke, Hants., RG21 8SS.

With the passing of **Dolchstoß**, **Greatest Hits** will take over the mantle of the elder statesman of the hobby. In Issue 256 Pete mentions he has been to see **Lord of the Rings**, but cleverly fails to review it, so we are kept in the dark as to whether he laments Tom Bombadil's loss or not (my guess is that he didn't). Pete has a nice piece of hobby history reviewing the first 15 issues of **The Acolyte** (actually called **Apocalypse** for the first five issues – which may be why Pete couldn't find them). It's articles like this that inspire me to do more work on the Zine Archive, but there just isn't the time. Pete Birks, Top Flat, 4 Lewisham Hill, Lewisham, London, SE13 7EJ.

Moving up into second place in the longevity stakes is John Marsden's **Ode**. Up to issue 234, the zine seems a bit reinvigorated by the change of format a few months back. As John may well be taking on quite a few of the **Dolchstoß** games, it is to be hoped that the new subbers will energize the zine even further. A staggeringly reliable zine, with lists open for Dip, Mercator, RR and Acquire, this is probably the one I'd go for myself if all I wanted to do was play a game to a reliable timescale and stay in touch with the rest of the hobby. John Marsden, 91 Westwood Avenue, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 9RS.

Out of space. I'll make sure that I look at different zines next time.

LETTERS



Richard Williams

It's nice to see the World's most incompetent government actually admit it is total garbage. Now they are trying to con most of the idiots of our population that they are raising taxes for the NHS. Sadly most of the population as usual will be brainwashed into believing this. The fact our glorious PM writes for the Sun says it all really. A garbage paper for someone who is garbage.

SA: *Hasn't stopped Margaret Thatcher, John major and William Hague from writing for the Sun as well. No doubt you would rather have Norman Lamont running the economy.*

Warren Galenzoski

Hello, I trust this letter finds both you and your computer in better health. This postal Diplomacy is bad for the nerves. I don't know who or what to believe, and I'm sure it will only get worse. How much will it cost for a subscription for someone living in Canada???

SA: *Currently £1.50 per issue.*

Can you explain to me what Gunboat Diplomacy is? I think it's no negotiation?

SA: *basically it's Diplomacy without knowing who the other opponents are, so negotiation is not possible. However, postal Gunboat usually allows "press" to be broadcast with the game report.*

What do you think of this variant which I will call U.N. Diplomacy. Briefly if all the players agree via secret vote to a U.N. resolution then it becomes a rule enforceable by the game master. Example: All players agree that for the remainder of the game Germany is not allowed to build fleets and so the GM will not allow Germany to build fleets.

SA: *Difficult to see why Germany would agree to that one. Sounds a bit like Somewhat Demiurgic Diplomacy (the rules of which are below the letters column). This*

game has been played postally but it is a totally insane experience.

I am considering boycotting **The Mirror** newspaper. I find their views on the Americans treatment of Osama's boys disturbing. This thing we call liberal democracy is an ongoing experiment. We in the west are pushing the boundaries of human freedom. Remember the proof that freedom is the natural human condition is self evident by the will and force men will use to get it. And still there are men who will deny me my freedoms and they're locked in 4 by 8 cells in Cuba where they belong. The only fair treatment they deserve is a clinical execution. Where are these Muslim super soldiers prepared to die for their cause. Surrendering to CNN won't get you 40 virgins in heaven. The bible says judge not lest you be judged. Well I say judge lest you not be judged. Freedom loving people everywhere have a right to force our will on the ignorant masses. Democracy and free enterprise work.

SA: *Hmm. So you are assuming that the Americans have got the right guys? I wish I had your confidence. And free enterprise works for whom?*

Fred Davis

First, let me make a comment on the importance of making a will. Inge and I both wrote wills shortly after our son, Kevin, was born in 1973. It's important for you both to have wills, since one never knows what may happen. It was important that we each left every-thing to the other, with a specific listing of items like automobiles and any family silver. It was even more important to list guardians for our children, in case we were both killed, as in an auto accident. We named my first cousin and her husband, living in New Hampshire, as the first set of guardians, and one of Inge's brothers, living in Germany, as the backup guardians. (I'm an only child).

In my wills, I specifically mentioned my Diplomacy files, which then included the NAVB as well as my **Bushwacker** and Diplomacy SIG files, and specified who should get this material. Unfortunately, one of the people so-named is no longer active

in the hobby, but I haven't gotten around to appointing a new person yet. I may just ask Kevin to take care of this, until he finds someone else who might be interested. I'd hate to think of the **Bushwacker** and **Diplomag** files being tossed out when I die. Since I'm now 71, I realize that I may have only another 10 years to go. I've urged Inge not to throw anything away until some hobbyists have reviewed it.

SA: Yes, I too would hate to think of the Zine Archive I have collected being thrown into a landfill site – especially the zines I have been producing since I was a teenager (which my kids might find interesting when they grow up and I am dead and buried). Of course I would add any material you might leave to the hobby to the variant Bank if you would like.

When Don Miller died, I went to his basement files and brought out all of "his Dip files, and packed them off to Larry Peery in San Diego, CA, to be placed in the Diplomacy Archives. It had been mixed up with Don's other major interests, files on Science Fiction and Detective stories. His widow wouldn't have known how to separate them. Fortunately, my **Bushwacker** files are in clearly labelled 3-ring notebooks, as are my **Diplomags**.

Now, getting back to Diplomacy. Thank you for sending me a copy of what you have on file in your Variant Bank. You probably have the most complete file of variants in the world. I note that you call it just the Variant Bank. Have you merged what was once the UKVB and the NAVB into a sole file? Also, what you sent me does not show the number of pages of rules and/or maps for each variant, nor do you show a sales price. As you know, my NAVB files showed the exact no. of pages involved in each design, and I charged a flat 10¢ a page for whatever I sold, except for a few Combined Editions.

SA: Basically I've abandoned that way of charging, as it was just a hassle to maintain. Most request for variants I get come electronically – and I can scan and email variants for no cost (just my own time). See the details elsewhere in the zine for how I charge for paper copies.

Also, I note that you've sent me just the Game listings in the Bank. Do you maintain a separate listing "Categories"? You don't mention anything about Categories in this list, although the variants are shown with their correct alphabetical designations.

Perhaps there is a first page which describes what the different Categories are? It can save potential buyers time they realize that the games are listed according to category. Please explain this to me. You may remember how hard Walker, Von Metzke, and I worked to establish these categories, with Sacks always causing trouble by complaining. Now that Sacks is dead, there are no more complaints about our work.

SA: If you have access to the Internet, go to <http://www.variantbank.com> – where the whole Variant Bank is listed alphabetically, by ARDA category and by number of players. As it is all on a database I can print it out any way I choose.

So, perhaps you could mention in a future issue of **Armistice Day** that I still have some variants available for sale here in the U.S. This would be for the benefit of N. American readers, who wouldn't have to send to Britain, and get involved in currency exchanges, to purchase certain designs. I realize you can't tell them exactly how many designs I may still have, as there are too many of them. You could say that this includes any variants which I personally designed, plus any on which I've made modifications on someone else's design. Plus the Youngstown Variant Package. I've also kept the designs for any other Dip game which I've actually played, but I guess that wouldn't be specific enough. You could say that N. American readers may wish to contact me first, to see if I have the game on hand, before writing to you for a copy.

SA: If anyone wants to contact Fred about this he can be reached at 3210-K Wheaton Way, Ellicott City, MD 21043, USA.

I saw a report that the next issue of **DW** was again delayed by a new computer crash. I hope this has now been rectified. Can you give me an estimate on when the next issue of DW will appear? May I

suggest that you may wish to change the listing of DW from a Quarterly to a Semi-annual publication, if you continue to have problems. Or, how about producing an issue every 4 months? I don't know what the name for such a periodical would be. I do know that the constant delay in the appearance of D.W. may cause some people to lose interest in subbing to it.

SA: *The latest issue is indeed out. Not sure that anyone is really interested in subbing to it in the traditional sense, as it can be downloaded free from the Internet at <http://www.diplomacyworld.org>. It gets more readers know then it ever has before (but less feedback and contributions)*

Let me add that I very much enjoyed reading **AD** #11. The article on Kaiser Wilhelm II was especially good. I never knew that he was married twice. I do remember that there was a minor flap in May 1940, when the German troops reached Doorn. I believe the Germans offered to allow him to return home, but he refused their offer. I recall that at least one German sentry was stationed at the entrance to his home for the last year of his life, ending in June 1941, presumably for his protection from any angry Dutchmen.

SA: *Yes, I like history articles and they will resurface next issue.*

Hope all is well with you and Esme. I've been seeing several doctors lately, but they all say I'm O.K. as long as I keep taking my medication. Fortunately, I'm one of the lucky ones with insurance coverage on my prescription medications. Many people in America don't have this.

SA: *There are many things wrong with the National Health Service, particularly the under-investment and out-dated work practices. But at least for all practical purposes it's free.*

Howard Bishop

I heard on the radio that Consignia were threatening to up the cost of a first class stamp to 33p if/when mail deliveries are opened up to competition. I really don't understand how making the postal delivery business a free-for-all could be in the public

interest. It certainly hasn't worked for the rail network.

SA: *Basically I agree with you. However, Consignia aren't threatening to increase the cost of a letter, as they are not allowed to increase charges without the Regulator's consent and prices are frozen for at least another year. Prices have gone up well below inflation, and it is the fact that they can't be increased to something like 29p^{1st} class, 20p^{2nd} class which is contributing to Royal Mail's losses (that and a slow down in mail volumes).*

Competition in the postal business will only result in cheaper prices for large mailers (such as the banks) and higher prices for the general public (which is exactly what has happened in Sweden when their postal market was liberalised about 8 years ago).

There are many things wrong with Consignia (apart from the name) – notably years of under-investment and 1960s work practices (by both management and union) which weren't properly addressed in the 90s. However, I don't see how allowing private carriers to cream off the easy mail will make solving the company's problems out any easier.

THE VARIANT BANK

Until last October this was officially the North American Variant Bank (NAVB). At the moment the Variant Bank includes the rules for 1389 variants. The additions to the Variant Bank in 2002 are (in the order in which they were added to the catalogue):

Hugh's Engineered Diplomacy Variant by Hugh Polley (m45) - 07

Easter Island Diplomacy by Simon Cole (vb14) - 03

Diplomap by Michael Harvath (ru12) - 07

Xenophobia by Stephen Agar (rb123) - 07

Air Power Diplomacy by Douglas J. Burgoyne (m46) - 07

Star Trek Civilisation Diplomacy by Michael Harvath (st02) - 07

Post-Modern Europe I by Earle Ratcliffe (qp09) - 13

Post-Modern Europe II by Earle Ratcliffe (qp10) - 13

Post-Modern Africa by Earle Ratcliffe (dm06) - 14

Civilization Diplomacy Variant by Babak Talebi (rm95) - Xx

Seven Blind Whisperers In One Big Darkness by Mikko Saari (rd34) - 07

Rapid Deployment Diplomacy by Mikko Saari (rb125) - 07

Warlock Diplomacy by ??? (rg20) - 07

Game of the Clans III by Stephen Agar (pe29) - 10

Diplomacy Teams by ?? (rt10) - 07

Caribbean Diplomacy by Steph Mabie (lc02) - 05

Setup Diplomacy by David M Stewart (rs56) - 07

Maharajah's Diplomacy by David E Cohen (ei06) - 07

Crusade 1200 by Tommy Larsson and John Pitre (mc06) - 09

X2 by Jake Lloyd (rb126) - 07

Duo by Frank Hegermann (rx30) - 02

Pirates of the Caribbean by Steph Mabie (lc03) - 07

Karibik by Martin Asal (lc04) - 08

1847 by by Sven Becher and Franz-Marc Boas (pg04) - 06

Star Trek Diplomacy II by by Peter Balasz, Franc Hegermann, Andreas Cellar, Thomas Kruzler and Raoul Mazhar (st03) - 07

Rules for all the above variants can be found at <http://www.variantbank.com>

Hard copies for any rules in the Variant Bank can be supplied on request 50p (first variant) and then 25p for each variant thereafter. Overseas customers add £1.50. Maximum order in one go = 10 variants. Note, some variants are very large, others only a couple of paragraphs – so it's swings and roundabouts. I reserve the right to ask

for more money if you order a variant which is incredibly large ☺

A CD of the whole variantbank.com website (which currently includes the rules for 420+ variants plus a catalogue for the whole variant bank) is available for £1.50 (UK), £2.50 (overseas).

I will scan and email individual variants on request (no charge), but it may take a few days to get around to doing it. No bulk orders though.

SOMEWHAT DEMIURGIC DIPLOMACY (rc02)

by Nick Kinzett

(1) The Diplomacy rulebook (1971 etc) applies except (a) that this game will always require an independent arbiter (in a postal version, the Games Master / Referee); and (b) as modified below.....

(2) Every Spring season, each player may submit a **RULE-CHANGE PROPOSAL**. This is done through the arbiter, thus concealing authorship, and is subject to the following:

(a) Such proposals may not be made conditional on the outcome of the current season's orders, nor vice versa. In effect, they are submitted along with the orders, but only revealed by the arbiter once all retreats have been executed.

(b) Proposals should not exceed fifty words in length, although the arbiter may occasionally pass a longer suggestion which takes his/her fancy. The arbiter may also edit a proposal for the sake of clarity or consistency.

(c) Proposals should aim to modify or add to game-mechanisms. In theory, this can mean anything at all, but the arbiter may veto anything he/she considers impossible extraneous, e.g. an obligation to recite poetry whilst submitting orders.

(d) Proposals must be theoretically applicable to all players, except in respect of introducing an additional player to the game. That is, one may not be unduly

player-specific, such as excluding victory to a given party.

(e) Changes to the victory conditions may be proposed, but must still conform to the basic Diplomacy precepts: that is, that the winner must be singular and that a game which concludes without a winner being determined is held to be a draw.

(f) Proposals may not change the basic rules for this variant, as listed hereunder paragraphs 1-5. Nor may they alter those houserules which govern postal adaptation, for the obvious reason that these are for the convenience of the arbiter.

(3) Every Autumn season, players conduct a secret ballot (through the arbiter) on each outstanding proposal. Each player has votes equal to the number of supply centres he/she holds at the end of that season (or, if the game has changed to allow survival without supply centres, one vote to such survivors).

(a) Votes may be made conditional on the outcome of the current season (though not, obviously, on the outcome of any of the current votes).

(b) To pass a proposal requires more than half of the 'definite' votes (meaning those cast For and Against: abstentions are ignored).

(c) Once votes for every outstanding proposal have been assessed, the arbiter will announce which proposals have been passed or rejected, without reference to the number of votes which secured each decision (or, of course, to who cast what).

(d) Those proposals which are passed become Rules of the Game until further modified or rescinded. The arbiter will arrange some identification for such rules for the purposes of ready reference.

(4) In the event that two or more rules (new or old) are discovered to be mutually exclusive in their effects, the arbiter is empowered to modify them in any way he/she sees fit to remove the contradiction. Depending upon their temper, integrity and claim to logic, an arbiter will listen to reason, but I suppose we'd better trot out the old

saw that in the event of disputes the arbiter's decision is final.

(5) OPTIONAL RULE. Instead of starting the game with 1901, there is a preliminary game-year (1900) in which no orders are executed, just Spring proposals and Autumn votes. The number of votes available to each player is based on their initial centres.

Reprinted from Zeeby No.65 (Sept. 1987)

Diplomacy World Interview IV

Jim Burgess Discusses the British Hobby with Richard Sharp

Richard Sharp was born in 1942, while the world was preoccupied with more interesting matters taking place at Stalingrad and El Alamein. He grew up in a games-playing family, learning bridge at the age of 11 and playing it regularly at public school (where cards were banned) and then almost continuously for three years at Oxford. Following this waste of an expensive education, he was briefly the world's most incompetent bank clerk before finding a congenial niche as an editor in a London publishing house. He launched his Diplomacy zine, *Dolchstoß*, in 1972, and is still publishing 30 years later, give or take a slight hiccup from 1979 to 1983. He left publishing in 1976 to write books, and had four of them published, noting in the process that the only time he made any money out was by translating other people's or teaching bridge. In 1979, having spent three years working out the obvious, he went to work as a freelance for a translation agency, and is still doing so 22 years later. He now lives quietly with his second wife, Bronwyn, in a decrepit 17th century house in a small town outside London, drinking lots of beer at the pub three doors down, smoking a hundred fags a day, and spending a couple of months a year driving around Europe and the rest working 60-hour weeks to try to pay for it all. His two children by his first marriage, Dominic and Pippa, have both married

recently, so his outside interests are now confined to bridge, beer and baccy. His ambition is to live in France, preferably at someone else's expense.

JB (Jim Burgess): Richard, as an American looking from afar you are known most for inventing names for practically every possible opening that players can make, for being one of the game's best but idiosyncratic players, and for being one of the Brit hobby's most consistent zine publishers. I intend to ask you about all of that and more, but first could you please recount "your beginnings", how you got interested in Diplomacy in the first place and what hooked you on it for life?

RS (Richard Sharp): Hollow laughter about my being "one of the game's best players"!

JB: Hey, I have to snag people and get them started answering these questions somehow!

RS: But I first heard of the game in late 1971, from friends, and first played it on Boxing Day that year. I was hugely impressed, even though my debut was a brief one: as Italy, I was alarmed to see my German ally talking eagerly to Austria in about 1903. When I tried to cut in, Germany turned a cold eye on me and said, "Go home, greaseball." In the early months of 1972 I was turning my thoughts to inventing a postal version of the game ... then out came issue 1 of Games and Puzzles and I found that someone had beaten me to it. I signed up for the British Diplomacy Club (BDC), found myself in a game by midsummer, formed a friendship in that game that endures until today, was talked into running "a game or two" myself, and that was how it began.

JB: Ah ha! Then, I'd like to ask you about **Dolchstoß** first. It is said that you once had about 350 subscribers. Is this true?? As someone with what I believe is the largest extant postal mailing list (my szine The Abyssinian Prince goes out by mail to about 140 every three weeks, and more by Web/E-Mail) and knowing what a major chore this is, how ever did you manage that many people? What is your mailing list down to now??

*RS: I'm honestly not sure now, but it was in the region of 400 for a brief period, during the heyday of the National Games Club (NGC), of which **Dolchstoß** became the house zine. It was a complete nightmare producing that many copies on an old duplicator, and it clearly couldn't last. Circulation today is in the low 90s and falling, which is fine.*

JB: Do you believe there is a continued future for Postal Diplomacy zines? Does that future include you for a foreseeable period of time??

RS: I think we're maybe coming to the end of the road, slowly. E-mail Dip seems to be killing the postal hobby, though by all accounts the e-mail version has some serious weaknesses. As for me, I am finding it increasingly difficult to maintain standards with my huge workload as a translator, but I don't have any plans to fold just yet. If I find my standards have become unacceptably low, I might have to think again.

JB: Since I don't receive your zine (though I have inquired about trading in the past), some of these questions might seem a bit trivial or obvious, but how integrated is your zine into E-Mail? Are you considering a web page at any point in time?? Do most of your players E-Mail orders, letters and press?

RS: Nothing personal there – I don't trade with non-UK zines simply in order to keep my circulation down. As for e-mail, it's only a couple of months ago that I reluctantly began accepting e-mail orders, though I welcome letters by that route. I have no plans for a web page, not wanting to do anything that might attract more subscribers!

JB: How did you come to write the only published book on Diplomacy? And did it make your fortune?

*RS: It just so happens that one of the **Dolchstoß** subbers at the time, the late Simon Dally, was managing director of Arthur Barker, an imprint of the publishing house Weidenfeld & Nicholson. He commissioned the book. It certainly didn't make my fortune – just a few hundred*

pounds to supplement my then meagre income as a bridge teacher. Not only that, but it wrecked my Dip playing career, because I became "famous", always a bad move in Diplomacy.

JB: Enough of the boring background, let's get to some of the fun stuff! What is this thing called "Bedbug Island" and where did you get the idea for it??

*RS: I vaguely remember that "Bedbug" started life as a character (an Orc) that I used in press for a Tolkien variant. "Bedbug Island" was the setting for quite a long series of articles I wrote in Games and Puzzles: a windswept island in the South Atlantic used as a detention centre for incurable games addicts. I later used it, and still do, as my dateline for GM press in **Dolchstoß**. It caused a furore when someone, Nicky Palmer I suspect, sent in some bogus press from "Bedbug Island" (with a lower-case L instead of the capital I); this was not against house rules, so I printed it, and it caused mayhem in the game, the players reasonably claiming that with such small and indistinct print it was impossible to tell the two apart.*

JB: Heh, heh, I allow the players in my zine to impersonate the GM in the press and think their pathetic attempts to do so are lame rather than mayhem causing. I believe you used to be involved with the British Diplomacy Club and the National Games Club. In the US hobby we have had our fair share of associations and clubs too. Do you think they were all doomed not to work, and are we better off without them today?

RS: No to both of those. The BDC, and its successor the NGC, did in fact work well for a considerable period. Their main value was that they offered some sort of guarantee of continuity at a time when zines were appearing and disappearing all over the place. I don't think we miss them now that the hobby has shrunk so much, but they did no harm and quite a bit of good at the time.

JB: Do you have very many new subbers and players, or are most of the games amongst the old crew from the 1970's?

RS: Roughly a third of my current readers were receiving the zine in the 1970s. About a third of current players, too, were active in the 1970s, though this figure is distorted by the fact that one of the six current games was restricted to players from that era. I get very few new subbers nowadays, maybe 2-3 a year.

JB: How much press do they write? How do you encourage it, or do you? What do YOU think the role of press should be, what would you like to see in **Dolchstoß** and elsewhere?

*RS: Years ago I was a very enthusiastic press writer, but not any more. Most of the press in **Dolchstoß** seems to consist of apologies for failure to write enough letters. In my early days in the hobby I used to love the long and sometimes inspired press series that appeared in British zines, especially **Ethil the Frog**. Today I neither encourage it nor discourage it: the fact is that I hate copy-typing anything, even press.*

JB: In my view, good press games help to bind the players together better, but sometimes that can lead to LESS dynamic alliance play, not more. You are famous for your opposition to what the Internet world today calls "carebear" play (in your case, the famous battle against the "Karma League"). Could you expand on your thoughts about player relationships and the wider view of the game – and of course shifting alliances?? There also is the "Armoured Duck" (the player who plays pure tit-for-tat game theory and takes all stabs as "forever") that is a dagger in the heart of shifting alliance play. Do you have some thoughts on these issues?

RS: The Karma League? Good grief, that was a long time ago – I can barely remember it. There is no doubt at all that the best games I have played in, and run, have seen constant shifts in alliances. The most enjoyable game I ever played, a very long 1976 one in which I was Germany, involved me in alliances with all the other players at different times, several of those alliances breaking and reforming as necessity dictated, with three different

players reaching 14 or more centres at various times, though the eventual result was a 4-way draw. Equally, there is no doubt that the best players bear no grudges and, more importantly, expect none to be borne against them. I have just suffered at the hands of an "armoured duck" who stabbed me early on and wouldn't withdraw even when disaster loomed; I was eliminated, sure, but he won't be far behind, and that style of play does annoy me.

JB: Now let me turn to "oddties" which you are famous for. I believe you have stated that in British postal play there never has been a Diplomacy game that did not have at least ONE standoff in Spring 1901. I can't cite an example, but I'm SURE that such a thing has happened before in both the E-Mail and US hobbies. One explanation for this might be a Brit style fascination with arranged Spring 1901 standoffs in various parts of the board, do you have an explanation for this?

RS: *No. To be honest, I don't remember saying that, but if I did I'm sure it was true. Because of stereotyped opening play, a standoff in BLA is almost invariable in British games, while those in Gal and Bur are also extremely common. Personally, I prefer not to be involved in S01 standoffs, except that when playing France I do like to play Mar-Bur and have it stood off. The BLA standoff is bad for Turkey, in my view, and the Gal one bad for Russia. I have formed the impression in recent years that face-to-face tournaments have influenced the choice of openings in Britain, so that S01 standoffs are becoming more common, not less.*

JB: We want the REAL truth on this one. Who REALLY invented the Vain Rats variant? The party line is that if it wasn't you, then it was either Steve Doubleday or Doug Wakefield (for the readers, the Vain Rats variant gives "secret powers" to each player that they can exercise in the game – mostly played for silliness). Do you run games of Vain Rats in **Dolchstoß**??

RS: *I didn't know this was controversial. Anyway, there's no doubt about it: it was my idea. The first description of the variant appears in **Dolchstoß** 45, published in the*

late summer of 1976. It says in the preamble "some time ago I suggested to Steve Doubleday that ...", so probably Steve and I had discussed it. I certainly ran the first postal game, NGC 206V, which must have started in early 1977. I believe I ran further games, but can't now be sure. Nowadays, I no longer run variants at all, sadly: they take too long to adjudicate, and God knows I have enough trouble adjudicating regular games!

JB: In a shift toward discussing openings, you have named the devastating "Hop, Skip, and Jump" opening where Austria moves to Rumania and then is convoyed by a Russian fleet that has gained the Black Sea into Ankara. As Russia you are said to have pulled off this opening in a game with Paul McGivern as Austria. There also is supposed to be some silliness about Paul's wedding and Steve Jones. Can we have your official side of what seems to me to be a fascinating story? I understand, of course, that you won the game.

RS: *It's a long story. One of the better games, certainly. This account is off the top of my head, because I no longer have a copy of my game end statement. Incidentally, I don't believe I did name this opening. Paul, a very old friend, and I found ourselves playing Russia and Austria in that game to Steve Jones's Turkey. Steve had a ferocious and well deserved reputation; we had never played against him before. We hatched a plot to take this 1980s upstart down a peg or two by making him the first Turkey ever to be eliminated in 1902.*

JB: As an aside, I was eliminated in 1902 as Turkey in the US postal game Missionary Position in 1982, so that would have been in the British hobby (I suppose I shouldn't be admitting this, but it was a fun game).

RS: *Against a less good player than Steve it would never have worked, but it went like a charm, and after the S02 moves we were indeed in a position to take him out. At this point Steve wrote, I think, the best Dip letter I ever received, offering in effect to provide naval resources for the A/R alliance if we*

would let him survive. It was cogently argued, and I was convinced. (Paul was less keen: "Let's kill the crafty buggger off!") And so we left Steve alive, and all went well. Then Paul got married, and I travelled to Newcastle to officiate as his best man. The rat had promised me I wouldn't have to make a speech ("No, no, bonny lad, certainly not!"), but this proved to be a stab. Well, two could play at that game. I told Paul I was a bit worried about his possibly NMRing, because of the pressures of honeymoon organization, and offered to order for him for one season, an offer he accepted with pathetic gratitude. So, of course, I moved all the Austrian units out of their supply centres and all the Russian ones followed straight in. GM Pete Calcraft marked the occasion with the memorable headline "May the Best Man Win". And I duly did, eventually, after some spirited resistance from the inevitable Steve Jones, who managed second place despite his close thing in 1902. The moves are all on record somewhere, but I don't have them. I think the orders for the relevant units were:

S01:

Austria: F(Tri)-Alb; A(Vie)-Bud; A(Bud)-Rum
Russia: A(War)-Gal (smokescreen) F(Sev)-BLA; A(Mos)-Sev
Turkey: F(Ank)-Con A(Con)-Bul A(Smy) stands

A01:

Austria: A(Rum)-Ank; A(Bud)-Ser; F(Alb)-Gre; Builds F(Tri), A(Bud), A(Vie)
Russia: F(BLA) C AA(Rum)-Ank A(Gal)-Rum; A(Sev)-Arm; Builds A(Sev)
Turkey: F(Con)-AEG; A(Bul) S RA(Sev)-Rum; A(Smy)-Con; No change

S02:

Austria: A(Ank) S RA((Arm)-Smy; F(Gre) S A(Ser)-Bul;
Russia: A(Arm)-Smy; F(BLA) S AA(Ank); A(Rum) S AA(Ser)-Bul; A(Sev)-Arm
Turkey: F(AEG) S A(Bul)-Con; A(Con)-Smy
Turkish A (Bul) annihilated

... and Turkey is a dead duck. I know his defence wasn't perfect in S02, but he had some hideous guesses to make.

JB: Great! You must have named more Diplomacy openings than any person, living or dead. You seem to have a special

fascination with Central Powers openings (Austria, Germany, Italy). Can you give us some of your general views on openings, as well as on why you have a compulsion that does not allow you to permit any observed opening to go unnamed?

RS: I did name a lot, though clearly not as many as I'm credited with! As for my general views on openings, they reflect my general views on the game as a whole: that if you don't play to win, you should give up your place to someone who will. The only exception I make here is Austria: Austria used to go out 02/03 in countless games and the ultra-defensive Southern Hedgehog opening at least makes sure that doesn't happen (in 02 anyway). However, if Austria feels he can trust Italy (a) he's probably wrong but (b) if he isn't the Key Lepanto is his best winning opening, as of course it also is for Italy. As Russia I virtually always open Mos-StP, because in a good game Russia rarely wins without doing well in the north. As Turkey I never open to BLA: I hate playing Turkey anyway, the only country I've never won with, and F(Ank)-BLA lays him wide open to the Lepanto in all its forms and guarantees a long defensive grind. As England I virtually always open to ENG, whereas most Englands rush into the StP bottleneck and then try to negotiate a draw – all winning chances have gone. And as France, logically enough, I let England into ENG if he wants it. Some openings were named before I was started, you know: the Lepanto and the Northern Dash are two that come to mind. And I don't think the Maginot was mine, though I'm not sure. I named a lot for the book, thinking it would make it more readable. I had some fun doing it, anyway!

JB: I'd next like to ask you about a few of those openings, probably driven quite a bit by ones that I have encountered recently. First, the Hedgehog and its better relations. The F Tri-Ven move is seldom seen in either the US postal hobby or the worldwide Internet hobby. As I am exposed to Brit players quite a bit, I have come to appreciate the Hedgehog's subtleties (though the Alpine Variation [A Vie-Tyr] is

distinctly unsubtle). Do you have any explanation why this opening continues to remain popular in Brit circles but has not travelled well? Do you see any significant shifts in which of the Hedgehog variants is most popular these days?

RS: The Southern Hedgehog still seems popular here. There are good reasons for this. If you trust Italy, you may as well play the Key Lepanto, good for both of you. If you don't, F(Tri)-Ven stands out a mile: it draws the teeth of the most popular Italian opening over the years, Ven-Tyr, Rom-Ven. I admit it's defensive, but it works. As to why it hasn't travelled, search me! It would be interesting to know whether O2/O3 exits for Austria are more common over there; they should be, because their frequency went down sharply when the Hedgehog became fashionable.

JB: Yes, I'm sure that Austrias around the world should pay attention to this and stop getting eliminated from the start. Since I have all of these moves in my repertoire it makes Austria lots more fun to play. Next, the Crimean Crusher (Turkey attacks toward Russia with all three pieces, successfully). I must admit, this one is personal since I recently pulled this opening and then got ZERO 1901 builds. Not to digress too much, but this was supposedly with a strong AT alliance, and I wanted to "test" the Austrian from the start and he failed (at least from my perspective). I would assert that this opening isn't really as powerful or successful for Turkey as one might think. What are your current feelings about the Crusher?

RS: I'm going to plead ignorance here. I certainly didn't name this one, and have never seen it tried. How do you stop Russia making the almost invariable move to BLA?

JB: Brilliant negotiating, of course. It practically requires close Austrian assistance, so that BOTH can assure Russia that moving the fleet to Rumania will be a successful and productive move. Russia has to be inclined this way a bit to start, but is more likely to believe that Turkey really is moving the fleet to Con when he hears supporting information from Austria.

RS: I suppose it has the merit of being non-defensive, but ... no, not for me!

JB: Keeping with other openings that "don't really work", what about the Barbarossa (Germany attacks Russia strongly from the start)? Do you believe this opening has viable options for German success?? Have you ever seen it work? The only time I tried it, I was crushed, though admittedly that was with Kathy Byrne (now Caruso) as Russia and she knew how to take advantage of every predicament.

RS: No, I think it's hopeless: all the tries I've seen have resulted in an early exit for Germany, though admittedly Russia has a horrible time too. There is this crazy notion, apparently popular in British FTF games, about a 3-way EFG alliance, where Germany starts with Barbarossa. I cannot believe that Germany has ever survived to the end of a game after that start.

JB: And next, one that always has mystified me a bit, but I think that you have a fondness for, the Anschluss (the strong Austria/Germany alliance). When offered this alliance from either side, I have not been able to trust the offerer and thus have not made it work. Still, theoretically it seems to be VERY strong, but you see it so seldom in games I play. Do you know why? How would players approach it more effectively??

RS: I am completely convinced of the merits of the Anschluss. Attacks by A on G or vice versa are so rare anyway (for good reason) that there is, quite simply, no case to be made against it. There are countless games from the early days of the British hobby where Austria goes out in O3 followed by Germany in O4. They have everything to gain and nothing to lose by standing firmly back to back. If A is really confident in G, he can even afford to abandon the Hedgehog for something more aggressive; as long as G leaves A(Mun) at home in S01, the threat to intervene on Austria's side is a genuine deterrent to Italy.

JB: There are just two more things that I want to touch on. First, your other writing.

Your range (that I know of) goes from your famous satire on "Scatter Theory" (the idea that one spreads out one's units at the start of the game, rather than concentrating power anywhere – I find this an especially effective German strategy for real though) in **Games and Puzzles** to your book, **The Game of Diplomacy** (which is very organized and to some minds even a bit dogmatic). Is the range of writing styles that you have used something that you have developed actively, or has it just "happened"? What do you see as the "growing edge" of your writing today?

*RS: First, I didn't invent the Scatter Theory – that was Nicky Palmer. I've written in various styles, I suppose, to suit my subject matter. My articles in G&P were all facetious, satirical if you like. The Dip book was supposed to interest people in the game, and therefore needed to be relatively serious, though with a light touch. My bridge book was entirely serious, with only the occasional pale gleam of humour. Today, I fear, I do no creative writing at all except the tiny bit that appears in **Dolchstoß**: I learnt long ago that, unfair as it seems, I can earn far more by translating 60,000 words of other people's garbage than sweating to produce the same amount of my own! If I had more time I would like to try my hand at a distinctly light-hearted "motorist's guide to France", and occasionally compose a few pages in my mind ... but I don't see myself ever having the time.*

JB: And lastly, you are famous for your love of Tolkien and your involvement in Tolkien fandom. This is far from unusual in Diplomacy players. I'd like you to comment on the relationship between Tolkien and Diplomacy from your point of view. Also, how do you feel about the recent "revitalization of Tolkien" with both increasing serious academic thought about his work as well as a new series of movies that have just begun?

RS: It is no surprise to me that Tolkien is so popular in the hobby. Diplomacy, after all, takes place in a fantasy Europe; more generally, all games are escapist. The Dip variants based on Tolkien, to which I have made occasional contributions, are great fun to play, especially with good press

writers. I have not come across any serious academic thought on Tolkien, and hope I never do! I feel sure that the Prof. himself would have been torn between outrage and hilarity at such an idea. Academics can make anything boring, even Tolkien.

JB: As an American academic, perhaps I resemble that remark. An America anyway, there are scholars doing academic work on Tolkien.

*RS: As for the recent films, I have just reviewed the first at length in **Dolchstoß**. I am all in favour of them, and can accept their shortcomings (from the Tolkien purist's point of view) with a good grace. To film Tolkien is clearly impossible, but creative artists love to attempt the impossible, and why not? I just wish they'd let me write the script.*

A BRIEF HISTORY OF DIPLOMACY VARIANTS (from 1963 to 1980)

by Fred C. Davis Jr.

There have been Diplomacy variants almost from the beginning of the hobby. Strictly speaking, a game in which the Rulebook is not followed to the letter is a variant, such as a game permitting units to move directly between Spain and Worth Africa, or permitting the "Coastal Crawl." There have been provisions for play with less than seven players in the back of the Rulebook ever since 1961, although these suggestions were not originally called variants. Between 1963 and 1967, many people played the 5-man and 6-man games listed in the Rulebook, and some postal games were started.

The first deliberately designed Diplomacy variant was Youngstown This was created by several members of the Youngstown University Diplomacy Club in the mid-60's (Jack Tucker, John Koning, John Smythe, et al.). They frequently had more than seven players present at their weekly FfF games. They created a 10-man game by

adding eastern and southern extensions to the Regular board and establishing India, China and Japan as additional Great Powers. Rod Walker saw the original board on a visit to Youngstown. When he returned home he created an improved version, called Youngstown II, and printed it in his zine in early 1963.

Youngstown II was the first variant to make use of boxes to effectuate long-distance and around-the-world movements by fleets. Despite its flaws (a weak Russia; stalemates), Youngstown has been played the most of all postal variants. One reason may be its comparative simplicity. Several other people have made efforts to break the stalemate lines and otherwise improve this variant. The most common version played in America is Youngstown IV, by Andy Phillips, which clarified and slightly improved the Walker version. In the U.K., Richard Walkerdine's 1972 version, known as Youngstown VI, is the one usually played¹. In Youngstown VIII, Dick Vedder added the rest of Africa, and added Transvaal, to make it an 11-player game. Walker completed the globe by adding the Americas in a 11-Power version called Youngstown XII in 1978.

Other earlier variants included several Middle Earth variants, based on the Tolkien trilogy. The first non-Rulebook postal variant ever played was Middle Earth II, designed by Don Miller of Wheaton, MD which was first published in 1969. Don, was the GM for this game, which I believe was eventually designated 1965Ae. The question of how to designate these games for postal purposes arose early, since it was realized almost from the beginning that Boardman numbers were suitable only for Regular games. Don Miller came up with the concept of using lower case letters following a "Boardman-type" designator, to identify each Postal variant by its type. He began with the letter "a" for the first postal variant, which was a game of "3 x 3, Turkey omitted" (a team game) and went down the line as he came across new variants. Since his own Middle

¹ There are four minor differences between IV and VI, of which the most important is that fleets in Suez may convoy in VI

Earth II was the fifth variant design to be played postally, that was given the designator "e". Thus, the oldest designs have only a single letter designator, or a two-letter designator starting with "a". The most recent designs bear two-letter designators in which the first letter is 'h.', "i", or "j". It should be noted that this lettering system refers to the order in which the Custodian has the game called to his attention, so it does not necessarily reflect the exact order in which the postal games began. The numbers issued for variant games played postally are called Miller Numbers in honor of their inventor. Unfortunately, no Miller Mos. are issued for games that have never been played by mail, although in a few cases a designator was given to a game which never got off the ground.

Don Miller became the first Miller Number Custodian. He held the post from 1965 to 1971. He then turned it over to Lew Pulsipher who began issuing numbers beginning with 1972Abu. It should be noted that there was no attempt to classify the variants by category. Back in the days when there were less than 50 known variants and maybe only 200 people in the entire postal hobby, such a thing was unnecessary. Whenever a Miller Number Custodian found he was unable to continue, he would pass the job on to another person. In most cases, this exchange was made smoothly. Lew turned the Custodianship over to Conrad von Metzke, who spread the concept of the Miller Numbers to Europe by issuing designators to several British and Continental games. He also started the custom of having Assistant MNC's for overseas areas. Many of the early variants, except for the Tolkien ones, had concentrated on special rules, such as the creation of special pieces (e.g. Double Armies) or new types of moves (e.g. Spain-North Africa), played without alteration to the Regular board, or with only superficial changes to the map.

I think that there was a general reluctance, prior to 1968, to alter the Board as given by Calhamer except along the edges. The Tolkien variants may have been only a fad

(there seem to be very few of them being played currently) but their importance is that they permitted variant designers to break out of the confines of a map of Europe, to construct a variant design anywhere in the world, or even out of it. There were some good Tolkien designs, and some, like Mordor Vs. the World, with a gigantic Mordor surrounded by normal Powers, which were badly unbalanced. As time went on, most players came to realize that play balance was usually more important than historical accuracy, just as, in the Regular game, it's important that England and Turkey start out at equal strength, although this is historical nonsense.

I came into the hobby just as Rod Walker was starting a series of "Imperialism" games in his zines in 1968. Rod had used the title, "Imperialism", for all of the wargames he had invented since high school days, so the early titles had nothing to do with Diplomacy. However, with Imperialism VII and VII-R, he created some of the most well-designed and elaborate Dip variants which had ever been seen. These designs featured enormous maps of Europe and environs, with each Power beginning with 7 units and 7 Home SC's and with special Convoy rules. These games were too large to have been played FTF unless they could have been left standing for weeks. However, they set a high standard for all future designers. My position as Italy in Imperialism VII-R (1968Tam) was my introduction to variant gaming.

When I sat down to study the Regular game, I saw two flaws almost immediately. One was that several of the provinces were badly shaped, either from an historical viewpoint, or from the point of where the shape would or wouldn't permit a piece to move. This included the historical violations caused by the prohibition against moving to places like Ireland and Sicily, which were integral parts of the U.K. and Italy, respectively, at that time. The other flaw lay in the convoy rules, which I felt were inadequate and too restrictive.

I had expressed some of my unhappiness with the Regular board in my first Diplomacy article, which was printed in Don Miller's *Diplomania*. Rod Walker encouraged me to

go ahead with my concepts, as he was interested in bringing out a series of variant designs. These came out under the "Aberration" heading, which meant nothing except that they were considered experimental. They were all published in his zine *Zothique* in 1969. "Aberration I" was the test game for what became Abstraction. I played in it to get a better feel, while Rod was the GM. "Aberration II" used the same map but different rules. Other games in this series featured Rod's designs. After "Aberration I" ended (I won), some additional changes were made, and, in order to maintain the "Ab" nomenclature, I dubbed it Abstraction. This game introduced my main contribution to the variant sub-hobby; namely, the piggyback convoy rule, which permits fleets to carry armies around the board at a faster pace, in what are called Army/Fleets. Without A/F's, designs featuring a great deal of water, such as Atlantica or the global variants, would have been impossible. Abstraction was first published in its final form in Don Turnbull's *Albion* in 1970. (Turnbull introduced both Regular and variant postal Diplomacy to Britain). *Albion* had a fairly large North American circulation in those days, so it received good publicity on both sides of the pond.

Abstraction tried to reach a middle ground between the small number of units and SC's in the Regular game, and the very large number in such designs as Imperialism VII-R, while simultaneously improving the map in several areas. My solution was to give every ordinary Power 8 provinces and 4 Home SC's. Russia received 10 and 5. Austria was given one additional ordinary province for defensive purposes. The en-tire south shore of the Mediterranean was included, as it ought to be in any scenario featuring all of Europe. The wild move from Norway to St. Pete was eliminated. The design also inadvertently eliminated most of the stalemate lines, although I had not been consciously seeking that remedy.

I'd like to think of Abstraction as a milestone in the variant sub-hobby. It's one

of the few designs which continues to be played after so many years, and it was selected by Richard Sharp in his book, **The Game of Diplomacy**, as "perhaps the only variant which improves upon the original." Since its introduction, the A/F Convoy rules have been adopted by many other designers, sometimes with additional refinements. I've also used it in all of my other designs except United States Diplomacy, which is the only one of the "Davis" variants where naval units are not extremely important.

Diplomacy variants can be divided into three general classes. These are: 1. Games using the Regular board, but different rules; 2. Games using new scenarios, but the regular rules; 3. Games using both new or expanded maps and changes in the rules. Most of the earliest variants fell into either the first or second class, but most of the modern designs are in the third class. Among the different scenarios are designs which merely expand the map of Europe, designs which use entirely different areas, such as England, North America, or the Roman Empire; global variants; and designs based on interstellar space. Designs can also be classified as falling into Classical, Medieval, Napoleonic, 19th Century, 20th Century, and Future Time Periods. There are also variants allotting economic values to every province, with associated treasuries used for construction of new units, maintenance of current forces, lend/lease, and bribery. Other rules give special characteristics to certain units such as aircraft, submarines, Double armies, units moving at double-speed, and units lead by Heroes or Wizards. At last count there were about 550 known Diplomacy variants. While most of them continue to have between 7 and 9 Great Powers, some have as many as 15. One, using the Regular board, can be played with either 11 people with 3 units each, 17 with two, or 34 with one apiece. (AAwr67).

When I got ready to start publishing at the end of 1971. I made a list of the people who were then publishing zines. As of 1980, Turnbull is the only one of these people still publishing a gamezine (**Courier**). However, several of the variant designers from the

earlier days of the postal hobby are still around. The most brilliant designer is probably Lew Pulsipher. He is also the most prolific, with over 30 designs listed in the North American Variant Bank Catalog. Lew has published a book of some of his better designs, **Diplomacy Games & Variants**. Lew was cranking out designs in 1969, and is still going strong.

Don Miller was the leading designer of the early days. He invented Hypereconomic Diplomacy, which is probably the most complex variant ever designed. He was most helpful to me when I was a novice. Because of eye trouble, Don is no longer active in Diplomacy, but he still publishes a wargaming zine about once a year, along with some science fiction fanzines.

Dick Vedder designed many games based on historical themes from the Classical world. His tour de force was to design three different variants from the days of the Roman Empire which can all be played on the same board (Diadochi, Triumvirate, Imperator). I understand that he still follows the hobby from his post in Arizona.

Martin Janta-Polczynski of Belgium is the leading designer in continental Europe. Martin is an engineer and some of his games, which are quite complex, reflect his technical and mathematical training. One of his designs, Pseudo-Classical Dip, was voted the best design of 1978. Martin came up with the Rule Module concept, under which certain rules can be "packaged" by themselves, for the use with almost any Diplomacy scenario. According to the Variant Bank catalogue, I am the third most prolific designer, after Miller, and Rod Walker is right behind me. Another designer of many games (albeit some are tongue-in-cheek is Greg Costikyan of New York.

Conrad von Metzke did not design many original games, but he published many, and sometimes he made alterations in other designs. The work he did in organizing the variants in an orderly manner in his "Variant Number" project served to help those who came after him in reclassifying variants. He

and Walker frequently worked together. Conrad became a father and got his law degree, and has dropped out of the hobby for about the 6th time. However, every time he dropped out he eventually came back, so don't discount the possibility that he may pop up again someday.

One interesting thing about the variant hobby has been the complete co-operation of Diplomacy's inventor, Allan Calhamer, and the owners of the copyright, in permitting this craziness to go on. Strictly speaking, any variant design which incorporates the rules of Diplomacy into its rules and/or uses any part of the original map for its board is violating that copyright. From a legalistic view-point, the only way to overcome this is to go the route followed by the publishers of the commercial game, Machiavelli, in which all of the Diplomacy rules and moves are rewritten in different language. Anyone who has played Diplomacy will recognize that Machiavelli is a variant, but by re-phrasing everything, they have been able to produce a product which can be sold for a profit.

Fortunately, most of us are not interested in profits, so we have not had to go beyond incorporating by reference all parts of the Diplomacy Rulebook not otherwise amended by our variant designs. This saves a tremendous amount of work. When Diplomacy was owned by Games Research, Inc., I was in communication with its President, John Moot on the subject of variants. He recognized that the postal hobby served a useful purpose by creating interest in the game, and thereby increasing sales. Following the same line of reasoning, he was not adverse to the publication of variants.

This attitude has been continued by Avalon Hill, which bought the game from GRI in 1976. At one point, I was corresponding with John Moot about the possibility of including a "variant package" in every Diplomacy set. The idea had originated with suggestions from Jeff Key and Lew Pulsipher that GRI publish a separate Tolkien variant. My suggestion was to include conference maps and rules for about three of the simpler variants. I had suggested Abstraction for one, as a basic

conservative design; a Tolkien variant for another, since these were then so popular; with the third to be chosen from a completely different scenario. I think that if GRI had continued to produce Diplomacy, something of this sort would have eventually occurred.

There is a pirated edition of Diplomacy called "1914", which is being sold in a Portuguese translation in Brazil. This is actually a variant, in that Italy starts out with F Rome, and North Africa is a SC. This actually improves the game, in that Italy is no longer a weak Sister, and I have suggested on occasion that players may enjoy playing the "Brazilian Variant" in FTF games.

Incidentally, the French translation of the rules used in the production of the officially licensed Common Market version of Diplomacy contain an error, which makes all games played by those rules variants. This error is a statement which says that a unit cannot support another unit into a third province unless the units are adjacent. Fortunately, French postal players are aware of the error, and have issued house rules to correct it.

The concept of having a universal variant bank, which would contain copies of all known variants, was conceived by Dick Vedder in 1969. Prior to that time, the Miller No. Custodians had received copies of new variants as publishers submitted them in order to obtain numbers for new postal games, but they did not have copies of other designs unless they had collected them on their own. In addition, there was nothing in the MNC list of responsibilities which required them to offer these games for sale. Dick Vedder spent several years gathering up all the variants he could find. Rod Walker's collection formed the base of the North American Variant Bank, with other variant buffs furnishing whatever they had. Old zines were also combed for forgotten designs.

By the time Dick had finished cataloging everything and was ready to sell copies of the games to all comers, he found that he was running out of sufficient time to properly maintain the bank. Therefore, he

turned over the bank to Dan Gallagher of Alexandria, Virginia, about 1974. Dan began publishing a newsletter, which was a combination of a catalog listing what designs he had in his files, and their prices, plus other news pertaining to the formulation and operation of the bank. There was a constant appeal to variant designers and publishers to be sure to send copies of their designs to the Bank. In late 1975, after publishing three issues, the pressure of other activities caused Dan to turn the Bank over to Dave Kadlecsek of San Jose, California.

Variant Banks had also been established by Hartley Patterson in England and Walter Luc Haas in Switzerland, sometime before 1975. I have been receiving Haas' zine, **Bumm**, since February 1975, and I know that he had already set up his Central European Variant Bank before then. The CEVB contained both English and German language rules for some of the games. Michael Liesnard also established a VB in Belgium, which featured original European designs, plus French translations of several of the American and British variants. There was a considerable exchange of photocopies of many variant rules and maps between the several variant banks during this period.

To the best of my knowledge, Burt Labelle, who followed Von Metzke as MNC, did not have his own variant bank. Robert Sacks, who succeeded him around December 1974, and held the MNC post for 4h years, probably had a large personal collection of variants, as he showed considerable knowledge of many of them when the re-classification issue arose. Sacks became very interested in the operation and co-ordination of the world's variant banks. Robert was wearing two hats, one as MNC, and a second as Chairman of the Diplomacy Variant Commission, which had been founded originally as a Committee of the IDA, to oversee variant activities. After a falling out between Sacks and the IDA Council, the DVC became an independent organization. It wasn't always clear to neutral observers as to when Sacks was speaking as MNC, and when he was speaking as the head of the DVC, but, in

any event, Robert believed that this combination of posts gave him the right to direct most of the activities within the variant sub-hobby. (I was a member of the DVC for a short period, but most of the leaders of the variant hobby who were not personal acquaintances of Sacks dropped out of that organization when it became clear that he wished to run everything his own way. Thus, the DVC never reached the status of being representative of the entire hobby.)

Sacks sought to coordinate the activities of the world's Variant Bank Custodians. The original concept of most of the Custodians was that they would simply work as equals with Robert Sacks, the WC, and the Assistant MNC's who had been appointed for the U.K. and Europe. However, Sacks demanded absolute control over the Variant Bank Custodians. He also tried to force another person into the slot of U.K. Variant Bank Custodian. The others were not prepared to give the WC such control over their operations. The end result was a complete break between the MNC and the V.B. Custodians. This was unfortunate for the hobby, but absolutely necessary from the point of view of the Variant Banks, which must retain their independence if they are to operate properly.

Meanwhile, I had been casually picking up variants out of the Dipzines along the way, starting with Scottie Scripti, a 7 or 8-player game based on the Irish and Scots kingdoms in the Middle Ages. Simply by saving almost every design which came my way from 1969-on, I found that I had about the third or fourth largest variant collection in the hobby. In 1977, Dave Kadlecsek began to fade out as Custodian of the North American Variant Bank. He ceased issuing any publications and failed to answer some correspondence. I set up my files in a more orderly tanner and created the North American Variant Bank - East, in order to have a backup bank available should the original bank fail.

Eventually, after a shaky period of about a year when there was some genuine concern for the NAVB's safety, Rod Walker was able to obtain custody of the main bank, and to operate it as the NAVB-West.

Rod and I exchanged copies of designs which were not in both banks, and established contacts with the overseas banks. There are about 300 variants on file with NAVB-West, and I have about 100 on hand in the NAVE-East. If anything should happen to either of us, or if either bank should be destroyed by flood or fire, one Bank could be reestablished by photocopies from the other's files. We also established a division of labor. For example, Rod prepared the NAVB Catalog, called ARDA#2, which is a complete listing of all the variants on hand in the Bank, for the use of GM's and players wishing to play or study variants. I became the contact point for communications between the world's variant banks. It is easier to channel such communications through one person, especially with postage costs being so high. Another project has been to set up a variant bank in Canada, so that Canadians can purchase variants in their own currency. This was still under formation at the time this is being written.

For many years, several people deeply interested in variants have sought to establish a re-categorization of the games into several logical classification. The major headings would be by type of game, such as Rule Changes with Regular Board, Europe-extended, Other Areas, Global, Fantasy and Space. Within each major heading, there needs to be subdivisions for the time periods involved. Hartley Patterson came up with a written proposal on this back in 1975. A committee was then formed under the leadership of Conrad von Metzke, to come up with a definitive system. Pulsipher, Vedder, Walker, myself and others all contributed our knowledge and suggestions.

In a publication called *Talabwo*, Von Metzke proposed a detailed system of "Variant Numbers." Unfortunately, this came to naught. Conrad and the committee could not get the support of the Miller Numbers Custodian, Robert Sacks, for this concept. Sacks had his own ideas on how the variants should be categorized. He held that no one except himself had the authority to introduce a new system. At one point, there appeared to be a danger that two different

sets of variant designators would be issued at the same time; Miller Nos. by Sacks, and Variant Numbers by Von Metzke. (In fact, I used a Variant No. for my Atlantica II-R game in *Bushwacker*). To avoid this breakdown, Walt Buchanan, then publisher of *Diplomacy World*, suggested that we hold a worldwide referendum of all Diplomacy publishers, to see whether they would support Sacks or Von Metzke as the official issuer of variant postal game designators. (This was done in December 1976.) Under Walt's supervision, I mailed out the ballots and a neutral third party who was above reproach (Doug Beyerlein) counted them on their return. The referendum settled nothing, as there was an exact 50% division of support for each party. (There were a high number of abstentions, presumably from those publishers who weren't interested in variants). Unhappily, the air had been poisoned by charges and counter-charges. Soon after that, Von Metzke withdrew from the field.

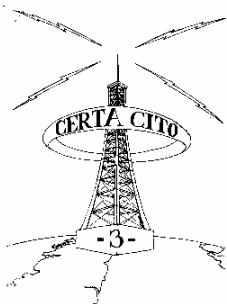
In 1978, Der Garvey of Cork, Ireland, appeared on the scene with a new classification system. This used a double designator for each variant. One was for the map or scenario; the other for the type of rules used. Drawing on his own collection, and those of the several variant banks, Garvey had soon classified 550 variants under his system. As he was a computer programmer, he had this all on tapes. He was able to call up the information either alphabetically, by Variant Number, by author, or by country of origin. As of February 1979, with the cooperation of the other Variant Bank Custodians, this system was about complete. Then, Garvey was cut off from the world by the 19-week Irish Postal strike. By the time the strike had ended, Garvey had fallen in love, and he shortly dropped out of the bobby. End of the variant number system.

Walker went ahead on his own and published the NAVB Catalog (ARDA #2) at the end of 1979. This lists every game available in the NAVB, and the cost of same. The variants are listed both by category and alphabetically, for ease of finding. Rod made use of the work done by

Von Metzke and Garvey, but did not follow their patterns completely. There are more categories under the ARDA system than were contemplated under the Variant Number scheme. This ought to make it easier for the prospective buyer to find exactly what he wants. However, the addition of more categories makes it more difficult for an observer to determine the nature of a game in a zine from its designator. The original idea had been to establish about seven broad categories, each with a distinctive letter, so that anyone who was into variants would immediately know into which classification a game fell. In any case, nobody has said that the ARDA Catalog is perfect, but it has one overwhelming advantage over all other systems - it is in operation.

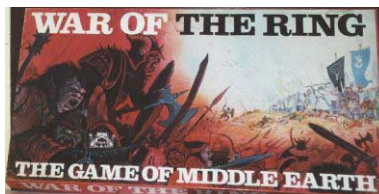
Meanwhile, Greg Costikyan had replaced Robert Sacks as the Miller Number Custodian in June 1979. A meaningful dialogue was begun between him and the Variant Bank Custodians. This came to a successful conclusion. If all goes according to plan, Walker will expand the ARDA Catalogue to include all known variants, and the ARDA nomenclature system will be used by the MNC to designate postal variant games, beginning January 1, 1981. The Variant banks will identify all the games in their files by the same set of designators. There will probably be no attempt to re-number the older postal games, although any pubber with an ongoing game, started in 1980 or earlier will have the option of obtaining a new number.

First published in Diplomacy World #27 (Spring 1981)



WAR OF THE RING

Fantasy Games Unlimited Inc. (1976)



This is perhaps the rarest professionally produced Diplomacy variant for those with an inclination to collect them. It was designed by Thomas E. Drake, though the rules do not acknowledge the fact that the game system is essentially that of Diplomacy. It has taken me over a year to track down a copy – and because of the number of Tolkien collectors out there, copies of this game often go for over £120.

Essentially this has the hallmarks of a 2 player game, though the rules allow for 4 players – two on each side. The counters themselves are cardboard, red for Mordor, Green for Gondor (32 for each player), while the map board is quite large at 22" x 22".

There are single, double and triple army units (as in most Tolkien variants), while home SCs have garrisons (either ½ unit strength or 1 unit strength). Armies may be converted into fleets in a coastal province and vice versa, while builds can be made in any vacant owned SC.

As you would expect there are personality units as well as regular units – e.g. Gandalf (4/3 strength), Strider (3/3 strength), three Hobbits (Frodo, Merry and Pippin) (all 0 strength) and no less than nine Nazgul (1/3 strength) all feature as special pieces – with Gandalf, Strider and the Nazgul all having an ability to move two spaces. All special pieces can co-exist with normal pieces, can move over mountains whereas ordinary units cannot and have various other advantages when it comes to the terrain.

Hobbits and the Ring move invisibly as far as the Mordor player is concerned – which does raise the issue as to whether in a two player game one player would tell the other

the truth. Sounds like a GM is needed to me.

Although the usual idea is to drop the Ring into Mt. Doom, rules also exist for sinking the Ring at sea – but it may in turn be recovered from the sea by a suitably equipped Mordor fleet.

There are various victory criteria – i.e.:

- The Ringbearer gets the Ring to Mt. Doom – 2 point victory for Gondor
- The Ringlord (i.e. Gandalf, Strider or a Gondorina 2A wearing the Ring) get to Barad-Dur – 1 point victory for Gondor.
- Mordor's 3A is destroyed - 1 point victory for Gondor
- The Ring is captured by or delivered to Mordor's 3A – 2 point victory for Mordor

- Gandalf, Strider, 2A Inladris and 2A Lorien are all destroyed – 1 point victory for Mordor.

There really isn't anything to this game which hasn't been covered by Tolkien variants such as Third Age or Downfall – indeed many of the amateur Tolkien variants are actually a lot more complicated by this. Although the rulebook is some 13 pages long, most of this is just paraphrasing the Diplomacy rulebook. I have put a copy of the mapboard below to give you an idea what the game looks like (the original is of course in colour).

As this game is a rip-off of Diplomacy anyway and long out of print, I think I should be fairly safe in making the rules available at the variant Bank in the near future. If you would like a copy of this game as a PDF file, just email me.



GAMES

**Regular Diplomacy - Ypres
Autumn 1901**

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Daniel Mitchell) A(Ser) - Bud (FAILED); A(Vie) - Bud (FAILED); F(ADS) – ION

ENGLAND (Andrew Guy) F(NWG) - Nwy; A(Yor) Stands; F(ENG) – Bel

FRANCE (Eamonn Rogers) A(Mar) - Spa; A(Bur) Stands; F(MAO) – Por

GERMANY (Ian Good) A(Mun) - Bur (FAILED); F(Den) - Swe (FAILED); A(Kie) – Hol

ITALY (Jeff Simard) F(ION) - Tun; A(Rom) - Ven; A(Ven) – Tri

RUSSIA (Matthias Wieler) F(GoB) - Swe (FAILED); A(Gal) - Vie (FAILED); A(Ukr) - Rum; F(Sev) – BLA

TURKEY (Ian Ashcroft) A(Bul) - Gre; A(Con) - Bul; F(Ank) Stands

Autumn 1901 Adjustments

A: +Ser, Vie, Bud, -Tri = 3; No change.

E: +Nwy, +Bel, Edi, Lon, Lpl = 5; Gains 2. Builds F(Lon), F(Edi).

F: +Spa, +Por, Bre, Mar, Par = 5; Gains 2. Builds F(Mar), A(Par).

G: Mun, +Den, +Hol, Ber, Kie = 5; Gains 2. Builds (No build ordered), (No build ordered).

I: +Tun, Ven, +Tri, Nap, Rom = 5; Gains 2. Builds F(Nap), F(Rom).

R: +Rum, Mos, Sev, StP, War = 5; Gains 1. Builds F(Sev).

T: +Gre, +Bul, Ank, Con, Smy = 5; Gains 2. Builds F(Smy), A(Con).

**Regular Diplomacy - Albert
Spring 1902**

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Clive Dechant - NMR!) F(Tri) Stands ; A(Ser) Stands* (DISLODGED - DISBANDED BY GM); A(Vie) Stands ; A(Bud) Stands

ENGLAND (Bob Pitman) F(ENG) - MAO; F(Lpl) - IRI; A(Bel) - Pic; F(NTH) – Nwy

FRANCE (Franck Delcroix) F(Spa) nc - Gas; A(Por) - Spa; A(Bre) - Par (FAILED); A(Bur) s A(Bre) - Par (CUT)

GERMANY (Steve Betteley) A(Par) s A(Mun) - Bur (CUT); A(Mun) - Bur (FAILED); A(Hol) - Kie; A(Ber) - Sil (FAILED); F(Den) s F(Kie) - BAL; F(Kie) – BAL

ITALY (Sean Haugen - NMR! - Anarchy) A(Ven) Stands ; A(Rom) Stands ; F(ION) Stands

RUSSIA (Glen Morris) F(GoB) - Swe; A(Mos) - Ukr; A(Gal) - Bud (FAILED); A(War) - Sil (FAILED); F(Rum) Stands

TURKEY (John Campbell) A(Gre) s A(Bul) - Ser; A(Bul) - Ser; F(Ank) - Con; F(Con) - AEG; F(Smy) – EMS



**Regular Diplomacy - Arras
Spring 1902**

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (John Campbell) A(Ser) - Gre; A(Bud) - Tri; A(Tri) - Tyr; F(ADS) s A(Bud) – Tri

ENGLAND (Warren Galenzoski) F(Lon) - ENG; F(NTH) s F(Lon) - ENG; A(Bel) - Bur (FAILED); F(Lpl) - IRI (FAILED); F(Nwy) - StP nc (FAILED)

FRANCE (Richard Scholefield) F(Bre) - ENG (FAILED); F(MAO) - IRI (FAILED); A(Par) - Bur (FAILED); A(Por) - Spa; A(Spa) – Gas

GERMANY (Richard Williams) F(Den) - Swe (FAILED); A(Hol) - Kie; A(Kie) - Ber; A(Mun) s A(Kie) – Ber

ITALY (Tim Deacon) A(Ven) s F(Nap) - Apu; F(Nap) - Apu; A(Rom) s A(Ven); F(Tun) – ION

RUSSIA (Tracey Jackson) A(Ber) - Sil; A(War) - Pru; A(Rum) - Gal; F(Swe) s A(StP) - Nwy (CUT); A(StP) - Nwy (FAILED); F(Sev) c A(Mos) - Rum (MISORDER); A(Mos) - Rum (MISORDER)

TURKEY (Jimmy Cowie) A(Arm) - Sev (FAILED); A(Bul) - Rum; F(BLA) s A(Bul) - Rum; F(Smy) - AEG

Press

Italy-Austria: Lack of communication means we are at war.

Italy-France: Good luck against the E/ bandwagon.



**Regular Diplomacy - Marne
Spring 1904**

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Howard Bishop) A(War) - Mos (FAILED); F(Gre) Stands; A(Pie) s A(Tyr) - Ven; A(Tyr) - Ven; A(Tri) s A(Tyr) - Ven; A(Vie) Stands

ENGLAND (Garyth Wright) A(Swe) - Nwy; F(NTH) s A(Swe) - Nwy; F(Lon) - Wal; F(Hol) - Bel* (FAILED, DISLODGED TO HEL); F(Lpl) Stands* (DISLODGED TO Ciy)

FRANCE (Tim Deacon) F(IRI) s F(NAO) - Lpl; F(NAO) - Lpl; F(Bre) - ENG; A(Pic) s A(Bel); A(Bel) s GERMAN A(Ruh) - Hol; A(Bur) – Mar

GERMANY (Neil Hopkins) A(Ruh) - Hol; A(Kie) s A(Ruh) - Hol (CUT); A(Mun) s A(Kie)

ITALY (Jeremy Tullett) F(ION) s F(EMS) - AEG; F(EMS) - AEG; A(Ven) - Tri* (FAILED, DISLODGED TO Rom); A(Nap) – Apu

RUSSIA (Mike Dean) F(Nwy) Stands* (DISLODGED TO NWG); A(Den) s F(BAL) - Kie; F(BAL) - Kie (FAILED); A(Mos) s F(Sev) (CUT); F(Sev) Stands* (DISLODGED - DISBANDED NRP)

TURKEY (Ellis Simpson) F(Ank) - BLA; A(Arm) - Sev; A(Bul) s AUSTRIAN F(Gre); A(Rum) s A(Arm) - Sev; F(AEG) – Smy

Press

Russia-All: So I lied...

France - Austria: I trust that there's no Austrian armies attempting to move to Mars!

Russia-Turkey: Isn't it about time we talked about this... oops, too late I guess :o(

France - Germany: Still allied? Perhaps we should communicate!

France - Russia: I assume that you want Edi?



**Regular Diplomacy - Mons (01BB)
Autumn 1905**

ENGLAND (Dave Clark) A(Mos) - War; F(BAR) - Nwy (FAILED); A(StP) s F(BAR) - Nwy; F(ENG) - NTH (FAILED); F(NTH) - Edi* (FAILED, DISLODGED - DISBANDED NRO)

FRANCE (Jimmy Cowie) A(Lpl) - Edi (FAILED); F(MAO) - ENG (FAILED); F(NAO) – NWG

GERMANY (Richard Scholefield) F(SKA) s A(Swe) - Nwy; A(Swe) - Nwy (FAILED);

F(Den) s F(Hol) - NTH; F(Hol) - NTH; A(Bur) - Bel; A(Bre) Stands; A(Gas) s A(Bre); A(Boh) - Gal; A(Sil) s A(Boh) – Gal

ITALY (Nick Parish) A(Vie) s A(Bud); A(Bud) s A(Ven) - Tri; A(Ven) - Tri; F(AEG) - Gre* (FAILED, DISLODGED - DISBANDED NRP); F(ION) s F(AEG) - Gre (CUT); F(TYS) s F(ION)

RUSSIA (Bruce Edwards) A(Ukr) s A(Gal) - Rum; A(Gal) - Rum; A(War) – Pru

TURKEY (Tim Deacon) F(EMS) - ION (FAILED); F(Gre) s F(EMS) - ION (CUT); F(Con) – AEG; F(Smy) s F(Con) - AEG; F(Sev) - Rum (FAILED); A(Bul) - Rum (FAILED); A(Ser) s A(Tri) - Bud; A(Tri) - Bud* (FAILED, DISLODGED TO Alb)

Autumn 1905 Adjustments

E: +War, StP, Nwy, Edi, Lon, -Lpl = 5; No change. Builds F(Edi).

F: +Lpl, Spa, Por -Bre = 3; No change.

G: Swe, Den, Bel, +Bre, Hol, Par, Mun, Mar, Ber, Kie = 10; Gains 1. Builds A(Mun).

I: Vie, +Bud, Tri, Ven, Tun, Nap, Rom = 7; Gains 1. Builds A(Ven), F(Nap).

R: +Rum, Mos, -Bud, -War = 2; Loses 1. Removes A(Pru).

T: Gre, Smy, Sev, Bul, Ser, Con, Ank -Rum = 7; Loses 1. Removes A(Alb).

Press

Turkey-England: Wouldn't you be better off defending England or attacking Germany?

England-France: Many thanks for your kind considerations in this game but like you I feel like opting out of this one. It is no fun playing with a spoilt brat who is happy to ruin a game just because a player refuses to give up the advantage he has gained for his country. This is supposed to be a bit of fun a GAME...a contest of strategy. NO NATION gives up it's home centres & throws a game just because others do not wish to do his bidding. So keep your bloody ball, Jimmie.

Gunboat Stab HELIGOLAND

Held over due to very high number of NMRs. Come on everyone!

Regular Diplomacy - Marlborough Autumn 1907

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Anarchy - ex-Keith Loveys) A(Bud) Stands ; A(Rum) Stands* (DISLODGED - DISBANDED NRP); A(Ukr) Stands ; F(ADS) Stands

ENGLAND (Pete Duxon) F(Spa) nc - MAO; F(Por) - Spa sc; F(MAO) - WMS; F(GoL) s F(MAO) - WMS; A(Mun) - Tyr; A(Gal) - Ukr (FAILED); A(Pru) s A(War); F(BAL) Stands; A(War) s A(Lvn) - Mos; F(NTH) Stands; F(Nwy) s F(StP) nc; F(StP) nc Stands; A(Bel) - Bur; A(Lvn) - Mos; F(ENG) c A(Wal) - Bre; A(Wal) – Bre

FRANCE (Anarchy - ex-Paul Evans) A(Par) Stands

ITALY (Anarchy - ex-Richard Gee) A(Ven) Stands

TURKEY (Keith Smith) A(Alb) - Tri; A(Arm) s A(Sev); A(Sev) s A(Bul) - Rum; A(Con) - Bul; F(TYS) - Tus; F(ION) - TYS; F(Gre) - ION; A(Bul) - Rum; A(Ser) Stands u/o ; F(Tun) Stands u/o

Autumn 1907 Adjustments

A: Bud, Vie, -Rum, -War, -Mos, -Tri = 2; Loses 4. GM removes A(Ukr).

E: Spa, +War, Nwy, StP, +Mos, Bre, Mar, Por, Den, Bel, Mun, Ber, Swe, Kie, Hol, Lon, Edi, Lpl = 18; Gains 2. Builds A(Lon), F(Lpl). WINS!

F: Par = 1; No change.

I: Ven = 1; No change.

T: +Tri, Sev, Bul, +Rum, Ser, Tun, Rom, Gre, Smy, Nap, Con, Ank = 12; Gains 2. Builds A(Con), 1 short.

Versailles: Congrats to Pete – they all count, don't they? Thanks to Keith for sticking with it.

Regular Diplomacy - Jackson Autumn 1909

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Jeremy Tullett) A(Gal) - Sil* (FAILED, DISLODGED - DISBANDED NRP); A(Ukr) s *TURKISH* A(Mos) - War (MISORDER); A(Vie) s A(Gal) - Sil (MISORDER); A(Bud) - Gal (FAILED); A(Tyr) Stands; A(Ven) s A(Tyr)

FRANCE (Anarchy - ex-George Hornby) A(Mar) Stands; A(Gas) Stands* (DISLODGED - DISBANDED NRP); A(Par) Stands ; A(Tun) Stands* (DISLODGED - DISBANDED BY GM)

GERMANY (Colin Bruce) F(NTH) c A(Yor) - Nwy; F(MAO) - WMS; F(Spa) sc s F(MAO) - WMS; A(Bur) - Gas; F(Bre) s A(Bur) - Gas; A(Mun) - Bur; A(Ber) - Mun; A(Boh) - Gal; A(Por) Stands; A(Pru) s A(War); A(Sil) s A(Boh) - Gal; A(StP) - Mos (FAILED); A(War) s A(Boh) - Gal; A(Yor) - Nwy

TURKEY (Tim Deacon) F(GoL) s FRENCH A(Mar); F(Rom) s F(TYS); F(TYS) s F(ION) - Tun; F(ION) - Tun; A(Mos) s AUSTRIAN A(Ukr) - War (MISORDER); A(Sev) s A(Mos); A(Rum) s A(Sev); A(Ank) - Arm; A(Bul) s A(Rum)

Autumn 1909 Adjustments

A: Vie, Bud, Ven, Tri, Ser, -War = 5; Loses 1.

F: Mar, Par, -Tun, -Spa = 2; Loses 2.

G: +Spa, Bre, Mun, Por, StP, +War, Nwy, Lpl, Hol, Ber, Edi, Lon, Bel, Den, Swe, Kie = 16; Gains 2. Builds A(Kie), A(Ber).

I: -Rom = 0; Loses 1.

T: +Rom, +Tun, Mos, Sev, Rum, Bul, Gre, Nap, Con, Ank, Smy = 11; Gains 2. Builds F(Smy), F(Con).

Press

Turkey-All: Is it over?

Regular Diplomacy - Ascot Spring 1905

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY (Ian Northcott) A(Bul) - Gre (FAILED); F(Con) - Smy (FAILED); A(Rum) s A(Gal) - Bud; A(Gal) - Bud; A(Sil) - Gal; A(Boh) - Vie (FAILED)

ENGLAND (Dave Wreathall) A(StP) s GERMAN A(Pru) - Lvn (MISORDER); F(BAR) - Nwy; F(ENG) - MAO; F(NTH) Stands; F(NWG) - NAO

FRANCE (Mark Stretch) A(Mar) s A(Gas); A(Gas) s A(Mar) (CUT); A(Spa) s A(Gas)

GERMANY (Martin Draper) A(Ber) - Sil; A(Mun) s A(Ber) - Sil; A(Pru) s A(Ber) - Sil; F(BAL) c A(Kie) - Lvn; F(Den) Stands;

A(Ruh) - Bur; A(Bre) - Gas (FAILED); A(Par) s A(Bre) - Gas; A(Kie) - Lvn

ITALY (Richard Hucknall) F(AEG) c A(Smy) - Gre; F(EMS) - Smy (FAILED); A(Ven) - Tri; A(Rom) - Ven; A(Vie) - Bud (FAILED); F(GoL) - TYS; A(Smy) - Gre (FAILED)

RUSSIA (Dave Anderson) F(Sev) - Arm; A(Mos) s A(War); A(War) s A(Mos)

TURKEY (Anarchy - Ex-Chris Jones) F(BLA) Stands

Regular Diplomacy Brighton

This game has been proclaimed a 5-way draw between the players who didn't drop out - namely, Garyth Wright, Bruce Edwards, Mike Benyon, Mark Wightman and Ian Northcott.

Abstraction II

TANNENBURG (pre-July 1915)

AUSTRIA (John Colledge) A(Swa); A(Ser); A(Ode); A(Bul); F(Gre); A(Ukr); A(Vie); A(Bud), A(Zar)

ENGLAND (Chris Martin) F(Por); F(MAO); A(Bre); F(NTH); F(ENG); F(ANG); A(Den), F(Edi), A(Lon).

FRANCE (Anarchy - ex-John Boocock) A(Lyo)

GERMANY (Dave Clark) A(Swe); A(Bel); A(Par); F(Hol); A(Mun); A(War); A(Ruh); F(Kie); A(Dre)

ITALY (Bruce Edwards) F(WMS); A(And); A(Mar); A(Alg); A(Pie); F(CMS); F(GoL); F(EMS)

RUSSIA (Bob Pitman) A(StP); A(Vol); A(Nwy); F(NWG)

TURKEY (Nick Gladstone) F(Egy); A/F(CYS); F(WBS); F(Con)

Versailles: Chris Martin has resigned for personal reasons and I am seeking a replacement players. I hope to have someone very soon. Sorry for the delay.

Backpage

I notice that a great person has died this weekend while I have been putting this issue together.

Barry Took died from cancer, age 73. Took started his career as a stand-up comedian, but soon formed a writing partnership with Marty Feldman, who he had met while performing at a variety show at the old York Empire. The pair were the main writers on **Round the Horne**, the 1960s radio show that continued the comedy tradition started by The Goons, which starred Kenneth Horne and Kenneth Williams. Took also wrote a number of other radio shows, later moving to television with comedies including **Bootsie and Snudge**, which starred Alfie Bass and Clive Dunn. He became the voice of viewers when presenting TV's Points of View, and chaired BBC Radio 4's **The News Quiz**. In it, he kept the panel in order and the show proved such a success that it provided the basis for TV's **Have I Got News For You?**

Playlist: *Cruising with Reuben and the Jets* (Frank Zappa); *SAHB Stories* (The Sensational Alex Harvey Band); *Medea* (Jiri Antonin Benda); *Be A Devil* (Caroline Trettine); *Broken English* (Marianne Faithful); *Sound Affects* (The Jam); *Peggy Suicide* (Julian Cope); *What Now?* (Peter Hammill); *Fire and Water* (Free).

Change of Addresses

Anthony Coogan to 53 Father Scully House, Grenville Street, Dublin 1, Eire.

THE ARMISTICE DAY NEWSLETTER No.12

From: Stephen Agar, 47 Preston Drive, BRIGHTON, BN1 6LA.

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DEADLINE: Friday 27th April 2002

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