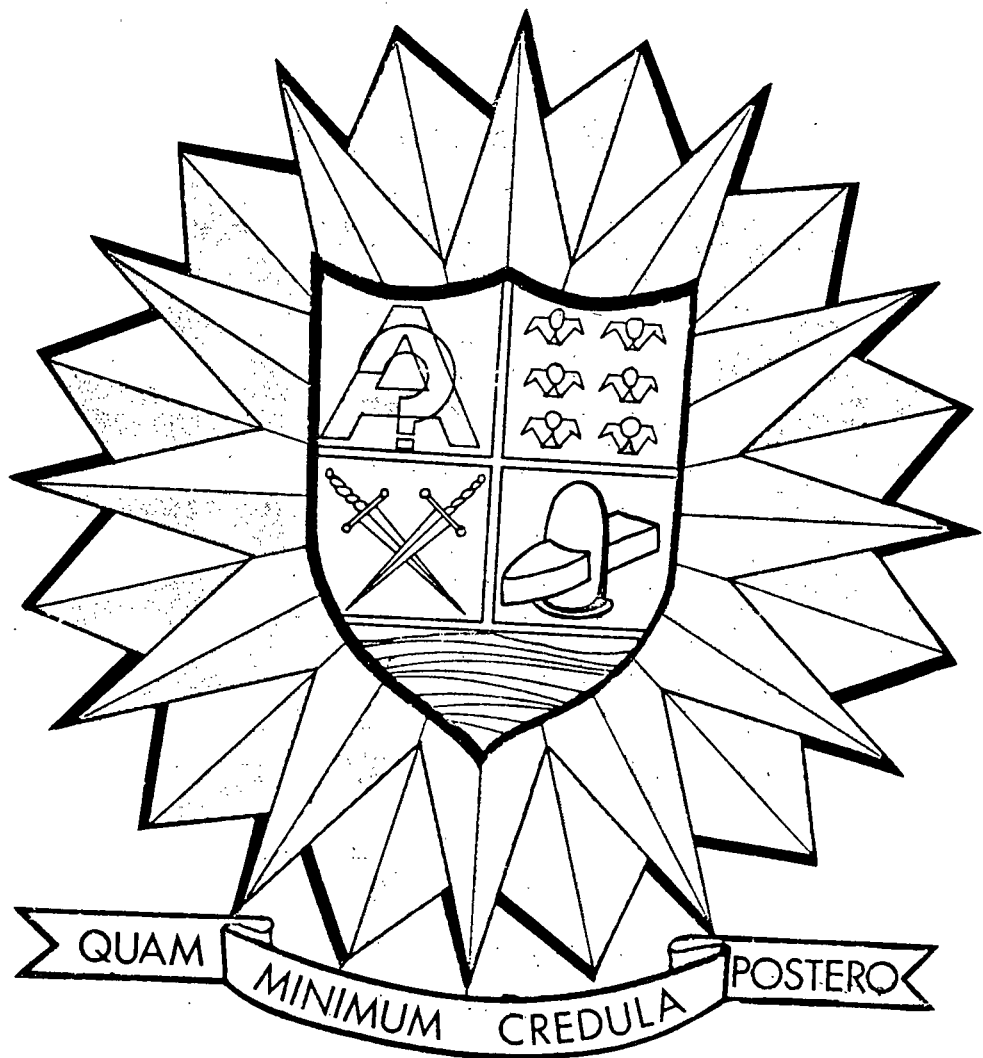


FALL  
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\*\* ISSUE 1 \*\*  
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STEVE AGAR , WADHAM COLLEGE , OXFORD.

What! Me, take the piss? Never.

I wasn't going to relate the Martin Nicholson saga - but having just read Richard Hucknall's comments in RiP 5 I've changed my mind. Richard says: "Surely Agar does not intend to re-surface again? He has lost all credibility and I know what some of my subbers think of him." First things first - resurfacing implies submergence, and even in my more morose moments I have never gone in for submarine impressions. Admittedly, I did wrong by taking a 9 week holiday before Christmas when I encountered University - but only one subscriber got all het up about it, and his reaction was childish in the extreme. Anyone who goes to the length of threatening me with legal action (despit getting the name of the "offence" I'd comitted wrong), writing to my parents and writing to the Warden of Wadham College (Sir Stuart Hampshire - eminent Philosopher) all over a couple of quid credit is either mentally subnormal or ignorant. This hobby does not work in such a way for subscribers to behave like that - Martin received ample explanation (and if he'd sent his letters to the right address I might even have replied sooner!). In the end I just sent a cheque for £3 to Richard Hucknall because I couldn't find Martin's address, despite the fact that I owed him less than that. FoE was the only other zine I knew he received. If Martin knew this hobby a bit more he wouldn't have made such a prat of himself - whereas Richard Hucknall, by contrast, becomes a bigger prat the more hobby experience he gets.

## VARIANTS AND UNCLES 6

As I slouched back in my Scottish and Newcastle breweries comfy chair, marvelling at the hunchbacked figure of Richard Gooch, and wondering why on God's earth anyone would arrange a hobby meet in a pub which hasn't got any beer on (S&N are on strike), I took a sip of my Lime & Lemon and mumbled some cohesive sentence to the effect of when do you want VaU 6. "Tomorrow" came the reply. That was 5½ hours ago and here I am. Before I go to bed tonight I've got to produce something original on variants. Dicky Hucknall will never believe this...

Mobtown was a variant I'd thought of reprinting for a while - I was talking to Andy Evans about it tonight (he of Trojan Horse fame), and discovered to my surprise that he'd actually played it postally (!?!). He commented that the play balance was crap - so I've just invented a brand new scenario for the game to improve things. I hope you think it is worth trying - Richard will run a game if there's any interest.

One idea that seems to be taking off in the USA is the idea of a vacation month. Doug Beyerlein has reintroduced an old idea of John Boyer's that for one month a year, Diplomacy zines should stop producing to allow everyone a chance to catch up on other things. Doug suggested August, because it's a holiday period, but it seems that December is favoured as well (Christmas etc.). There seems to be a very real chance that one of these proposals will end up happening over there - should we follow suit?

More Miller Nos. crap. Pete Calcraft was talking to me about recording variant games and hinting at the use of some sort of designator. Now Mick Bullock never bothered to keep records on variants and no harm ever came of it. However, I can see the sense in wanting to know if a game has ever been played postally if you want to redesign or reprint it - but how many people does this apply to? Just me? Although I still discover odd things (such as the fact that Mobtown I was played postally) I know enough to get by - on the whole there's not much point. I did once start this project off - listing all the variant gamestarts in 1978, but once collected the information was never very useful. (Did you know that of the 39 variants started, Mercator and Stab between them amounted to a third of the total - while games such as Ecliptic, Republic, ReDiscover and War of the Stars were actually being played? Fascinating.) Sorry Pete, I don't think variants are worth the effort, cause back to 1978 it's easy to find everything out, but before that it's impossible. No one cares anyway.

UKVB. At the moment I have five outstanding enquiries that will be answered this week. I am perfectly willing to continue to run this service, as long as people realise that when I'm at College, it's not possible to do anything - I can't take all my stocks with me! Consequently, when I go back in 3 weeks, no more letters will get answered until June. I hope a UKVB list appears somewhere in this issue (depends if Richard will type one out for me). It's practically the same as last time anyway.

VaU 7 will be bigger and produced next week (it's 6.15 am and I'm going to bed soon!) so it should be better. The only reason I've stayed up all night doing this is to prove to some people that I do still exist. It will include, variant descriptions; Cannibalism (an old Jeremy Maiden variant set on a desert island, where you find, kill and eat other survivors); World War III (by Scott Rosenberg); a new variant by me (who else?); an article on Mercator and even a bit of letraset! A good 14-16 sides there.

A little bit of human interest. While I was producing Pigmy 18 I met a girl called Claire who was instrumental in taking up all my time so that Pigmy eventually died at issue 32. Further ventures had the same problem. Last Monday (2½ years later) Claire and I parted company. This definitely bodes well for postal Diplomacy (from where I'm standing, anyway).

Love and Kisses,

Stap . xxx .

## MOBTOWN II

designed by Steve Agar and Nick Morris.

Mobtown I was invented by Nick Morris in mid-1975, the rules were subsequently revised by Steve Doubleday and printed in Yggdarsil 8 by Phil Murphy. Mobtown II is a complete revision - the same basic rules are kept, with additions, but the board itself has been re-designed from scratch, reducing a 7 player game to one for 6 and hopefully improving upon the atrocious play balance.

Scenario: Mobtown is a city in the USA where a delicate balance exists between the rapacious and grasping criminal elements that make up the underworld power structure of the city. This balance is shattered when, on 2nd July 1919, a prohibition law is passed - now every true Mafiosi wishes to see his boss as Liquor King supreme. The highways are in the hands of the cops and are difficult to cross, but the mobsters have managed to gain control of some derelict subways.

0. All the tedious regular Diplomacy rules (1971) apply: except for...
1. Players - there are 6 players: Al Capone; "Baby Face" Nelson; Legs Diamond; Lepke; Lucky Luciano and Murder Incorporated. The names may be altered by the GM to ridicule the particular contestants.
2. The Gang - this is the basic unit of the game and functions similarly to an army in Diplomacy, except that it is amphibious and may enter any water area except Bootleg Bay which is impassable. A Gang is signified by a G. Eg. G(Lex)-Col; G(ECP) S G(Lex)-Gol etc.
3. The Don - this is a special unit representing the boss himself. He has no power of his own and can only move when accompanied by a gang. When moving with a gang he doubles the power of that move (ie adds +1), but if the G is forced to retreat he is left behind. A captured Don can be utilised by the mob that captures him in a similar manner, or he can be given the 'cement overcoat' treatment by a G leaving him on his own in a water area. Eg. G + D(PPU)-Har; G(Har)-Str; D(Har) cement overcoat. The D also drowns if the G he is travelling with is dislodged from a water space.

If a mob's D dies by one way or another, that mob's units will stand in civil disorder for the next move, while a new D is 'elected'. A new D is then created out of one of the G's already existing and placed on any home sc of that players choice (if none are free then the D is not built until one is recaptured). The net effect of rebuilding a D in this way is to leave that mob one short permanently as one sc is needed for the new D. The rebuilding of a D is optional. Only 6 D's may exist at any one time.

4. Highways - the city of Mobtown is criss-crossed by highways, these can only be freely crossed at the junctions marked. It is possible for a unit to cross a highway where no junction exists, but it will require an extra support to do this. Eg. G(P22) S G(Con)-Bur; Where two areas are connected by a junction they are considered for all intents and purposes to be adjacent. The area called Queens is an exception, the area being both sides of a highway, a G occupying this area is considered to be on both sides of the highway - no junction is needed.
5. Subways - these are represented by the arrows. These subways connect the areas marked thus G(Tam)-U-Ext is legal - but the use of the subway must be indicated to prevent ambiguity of orders. It is possible for two G's to swap places if one goes overground and the other underground. Any number of G's may use the same subway simultaneously, the only rule being that equally supported G's both using the subway cannot exchange places. Retreats can be made through subways, but not to the province from which a successful attack came. If two unequally supported G's attempt to switch places, one using a subway, the other overground, the one with the greater support succeeds and the one with less support is dislodged and cannot move to the province from which the attack came.

Eg. Al Capone G(Mic)-U-P49; Murder Inc G(Mem)-U-WCP; Lepke G(Cit)-U-Mic; all moves succeed.

Baby Face G(Pla)-U-Sun; Lucky Luciano G(Sun)-U-Pla; Legs Diamond G(RoE)-Cat; Lepke G(Cat)-U-RoE; the first two moves fail, the latter two succeed.

Murder Inc G(PPU) & G(Pel) S G(Mic)-Mem; Baby Face G(Bgt) S G(Mem)-Mic\*; the G(Mem) is dislodged.

6. Timescale - each move represents a week, retreats taking place at weekends, and adjustments every other weekend. Possession on the second week ("autumn") is necessary to change ownership of a sc. The first move is Second Week, July 1919. In first week, the players decide which home sc their D will start from - these placement orders are sent in with the Wk2 July orders, the Wk2 orders may be made conditional on where the D is placed by any of the other players.
7. Victory - 17 centres.
8. Mobtown Police Department - if a G is forced to retreat to MTPD it is put in gaol and spends the rest of the game standing there. A G may not be ordered to disband if a retreat to MTPD is possible.

Abbreviations: \* = home sc; o = neutral sc;

Al Capone: DAN\* = Dope Avenue North; DAS\* = Dope Avenue South; Bnx\* = Bronx;  
"Baby Face": Wal\* = Wall Street; DtB\* = Downtown Bushwick; Sun\* = Sunset Boulevard;  
Legs Diamond: P37\* = Precinct 37; Brk\* = Brooklyn; Bro\* = Broadway;  
Lepke: Pie\* = Pierpoint; Que\* = Queens; P45\* = Precinct 45;  
Lucky Luciano: 5th\* = Fifth Avenue; WCP\* = West Central Park; Wch\* = Westchester;  
Murder Inc.: MaE\* = Manhattan East; Man\* = Manhattan; Sho\* = Shore.

Lib<sup>o</sup> = Liberty; P22<sup>o</sup> = Precinct 22; Con<sup>o</sup> = Coney; Cas<sup>o</sup> = Casino; Col<sup>o</sup> = Columbus;  
Riv<sup>o</sup> = Riverside; Cap<sup>o</sup> = Capitol; Mon<sup>o</sup> = Monument; Chi<sup>o</sup> = Chingtown; Lak<sup>o</sup> = Lakeside;  
Sou<sup>o</sup> = Southside; Cat<sup>o</sup> = Cathedral Parkway; Pla<sup>o</sup> = Plaza; Yon<sup>o</sup> = Yonkers;

Ast = Astoria; Bac = Backstreet; Bgt = Bogart; BoB = Bootleg Bay; BoR = Bootleg River; Bur = Burbank; Cag = Cagney; Can = Canal; Cem = Cement Canyon; Cen = Central Pool; Chc = Chicane; Cit = City Hall; DtH = Downtown Harlem; Doc = Dockland; DSt = Downstream; Eas = Eastside; ECP = East Central Park; Ext = Extortion Alley; Fla = Flatbush; 5th = 5th Avenue; GoG = Golden Gate; GCS = Grand Central Station; Gre = Greenwich Village; HaE = Harlem East; Har = Harbour; HaW = Harlem West; Hoo = Hooker Alley; Kin = Kings; Len = Lennox; Lex = Lexington; Lin = Lincoln Park; Lit = Little Italy; Lop = Loop; Lon = Long Island; Mad = Madison; Mem = Memorial; Mic = Michael Street; MTT = Mobtown Tribune; MTU = Mobtown University; Mur = Murphy Green; Pac = Pacific Bar; Pel = Pelham; Pen = Pentagon; Pol = Pollution Pier; Por = Portland; PPL = Protection Pool Lower; PPU = Protection Pool Upper; P49 = Precinct 49; P55 = Precinct 55; PSq = Pennsylvania Square; Raf = Raft; Rob = Robinson; RoE = Rockaway East; Roo = Roosevelt Drive; RoW = Rockaway West; Str = Straten; Sur = Surf; Syn = Syndicate Square; Tam = Tamany Hall; Tem = Temple; Tim = Times Square; UtB = Uptown Bushwick; UtH = Uptown Harlem; UCP = Uptown Central Park; Web = Webster; Wes = West Side; Whitestone; Yan = Yankees; 42nd = 42nd Street; 110th = 110th Street; 325 = Third and Twenty Fifth; Poi = Point;

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