

## SERIES REPLAY: Third Reich Demonstration

The Series Replay was originated to demonstrate turn by turn moves of expert players in a normal game format and expose these moves to critical analysis. Frequently our judges have been harsh in their criticism and such is again the case in this issue. This would, at first glance, be surprising in that our players are all “names” of considerable repute in the wargaming field having professionally published or assisted in the publication of a considerable number of wargames. Yet, your critique should be tempered by the fact that it was a first attempt, and few of the players professed being well versed in the play of the game. Indeed, some extremely foolish moves were made by both sides, but getting burned is often the only way to learn not to play with fire. Regardless of what you may think about the quality of play, this demonstration game offers an excellent chance to show first impression strategies and just how valid or invalid they may be. Combined with the Design Analysis column in this issue one is left with a very valuable lesson on the play of this complex and intriguing game.

### Cast of Characters:

- |                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| • <b>Germany</b>      | <b>Lee Euler</b>        |
| • <b>Italy</b>        | <b>Al Nofi</b>          |
| • <b>Britain</b>      | <b>Dave Isby</b>        |
| • <b>France</b>       | <b>John Prados</b>      |
| • <b>Soviet Union</b> | <b>Lenny Glynn'</b>     |
| • <b>Judge</b>        | <b>Donald Greenwood</b> |

### PRECARIOUS POWER: ITALY

By Alfred A Nofi

Playing Italy in *Third Reich* presents an interesting set of problems. Italy is considerably weaker than any of the four other players in the game. Indeed, several of the neutral countries, namely Spain and Turkey, actually have larger ground combat forces available to them than Italy at the beginning of the game. Even when the Italian force pool has been exploited to the fullest, and assuming no irreplaceable losses, Italy still has inferior ground combat strength to what France has on the first turn of the game. But, of course, by that point it is assumed that France will have been thrown out of the game by Italy's Axis partner, Germany.

Germany, is not merely an ally of Italy in Third Reich, it is a necessary fact of life. Ad while the situation is not completely one sided, it can be readily demonstrated that Italy needs German assistance far more than Germany needs Italian assistance. But this is where an interesting situation seems to develop. Germany needs whole hearted and complete Italian cooperation to strike in Southern France, thereby forming a left wing to the massive German force which will smash into Northern and Eastern

France on the first turns of the game. If Italy does this, Germany can knock France out of the war quickly. Failure in this means that when the Allies begin to collect together enough strength to enable them to start looking for places to pick up, the Germans will be unable to spare resources to go to Italy's aid in the Mediterranean. So cooperation with Germany must be a cornerstone of Italian strategy, even in a game with separate victory conditions.

The next important consideration in Italian strategy is the defense of Italy. Italy is the most vulnerable of the players, with several predictable landing beaches within easy reach of Rome. These must be held at all costs, necessitating a rather considerable garrison in Italy itself. Obviously, the necessity will severely hamper Italian offensive and defensive operations on virtually all fronts. But there is a way in which Italians can assume a moderately aggressive posture, while still conserving sufficient strength for the defense of Italy. This is the evacuation of Libya.

Usually, games of *Third Reich* result in a massive Axis commitment of forces to North Africa, with the conquest of Egypt and its two attractive objectives in mind. The key issue, as to whether the Italian player should stage a relatively early withdrawal from Libya, is whether or not the German player is willing to commit himself to a massive redeployment of forces to Africa. The Italians cannot go it alone in Africa. They can in the Balkans where the Allies are somewhat restricted in their ability to intervene effectively. Yugoslavia, which almost always falls in one turn, is worth 20 BRPs, four times what Libya is worth and contains an objective. Greece is worth 10 BRPs and has yet another objective. The forces evacuated from Libya can be more effectively deployed in to the Balkans where several objectives and considerable resources are available for relatively little effort. To be sure, the Allies must be able to utilize some of the forces they might otherwise have employed in North Africa. In fact, they usually send a portion of their North African contingent into Greece. But the Allies must still maintain credible garrisons in North Africa, for the Italians will still retain the capacity to make a amphibious swoop on Egypt. Thus, evacuation from North Africa, which could be turned to that the Allies are already committed there in a massive way, helps the Axis cause in two ways. First the Allies are still required to devote resources to secure areas, and second the Italians are able to relieve Germans in covering the Balkans.

So, we come to an understanding that Italian strategy in Third Reich should revolve around three principle points.

1. The defense of Italy.
2. Cooperation with Germany in France.
3. Confinement of offensive operations to the Balkans.

(Incidentally, in a game in which each party is pursuing separate victory conditions, these principles need not change. Italy begins with four objectives in hand. Giving up Libya, but overrunning Yugoslavia and Greece, results in a net game of one objective. This is five, which is one short of an Italian decisive victory. And, assuming the Italians have been careful in his

deployment, his forces will be within two hexes of an additional five objectives once he has completed these operations: Marseilles, Lyons, Budapest, Polesti, and Istanbul. Needless to say, in the face of a collapsing Germany, or of a Germany triumphant in Russian, the Italians should be able to acquire at least one of those five, whether through seizure or adroit diplomacy.)

So now that we have established an optimum Italian strategy, let us examine what happens in a real case, when much of the above was yet unclear. The case referred to, of course, is that to which the bulk of this article is devoted.

### ITALY IN THE WAR OF 1939-1942

At the onset of the game I assumed, as the Italian player, that any operations I would undertake would be towards a cooperative Axis victory. In negotiations with the German player, it was agreed the Italians should devote themselves to a massive involvement in Southern France, while marginally strengthening their positions in other theaters. This was how things stood at the start. But then the Allies undertook some Machiavellian diplomacy.

The Allied players offered to assist Italy in its objectives in the Balkans if Italy would stay out of the war in France. This offer was too tempting to be sure and was turned down. But the Allies were persistent and kept trying to make a deal. Eventually one was worked out. This was for the British to turn Malta over to the Italians in exchange for Italian non-involvement in the fighting in France for one game turn. Now, of course, this sort of deal was attractive. However, on the other hand it did have the disadvantage of tending to harm mutual Axis interests. Without Italian support, Germany would not be able to overrun France as quickly as necessary for a rapid redeployment into other theatres. Yet, the deal was not binding beyond one game turn; there would be no way for the Allies to retrieve Malta should the Italian player later renege. So I accepted the offer. Needless to say, my Axis partner was extremely unappreciative. On this note the game began.

**Game Turn 1; (Fall 1939):** While Germany overran Poland, Belgium and Luxembourg; the Italians stood down from offensive positions on the French frontier and transferred naval forces to Malta. By not involving myself in the fighting, I was also able to conserve BRPs and thereby manage to build up my entire Force Pool, save for the additional naval unit. Meanwhile, the British Evacuated Malta, leaving the Italian Fleet in possession, and began beefing up their forces in France. The French, by stripping their Alpine frontier, were able to form a fairly solid line against the Germans; and the Russians having agreed to partition the Balkans with Germany and Italy, began an invasion of Rumania. At this point, two things were not clear. Although the Germans were tied down in France, the Italy has available considerable forces, and was not yet involved in any fighting. This left considerable flexibility to the Axis. But much would hinge on what the Allies did. I had no illusions about their friendship, but I did calculate that events in France, plus the current rate of BRP expenditures would prevent them

from acting in concert against me for at least two more turns (Spring 1940), during which time I would rip to rip off a piece of territory or two, reinforce my people in Africa and begin to transfer troops to the support of Germany. Things did not work out quite so neatly, however (turn 1 BRP = 75 - 18 expended on Force Pool development (leaving 57).

**Game Turn 2 (Winter 1939):** This turn found the Germans still grinding away in France, knocking back the Allies but suffering a steady loss of units. I used the Italian Fleet, plus forces previously deployed to Albania to launch a combined land-sea invasion of Greece and overran the entire country save one unit in Athens. At the end of this move, after replacing some minor losses suffered in Greece and developing my final naval unit (thus achieving a full Force Pool), I began to re-deploy to reinforce the Germans, shifting some units to the North and also beefing up my people in Africa. I reasoned that due to Allied commitments in France, plus the current state of their BRPs, I would have one more turn before they were able to jump me. I was wrong. While the Allies maintained their positions in France, they managed to scrape together sufficient naval and ground strength to land behind my lines in Italy itself, which was poorly garrisoned. A quick advance up the peninsula and a hard fight before Rome gave them the capital and me a tremendous headache. Meanwhile, the Russians completed their occupation of Rumania and began to set-up for further conquests.

**Game Turn 3 (Spring 1940):** The Italian situation was pretty grim at the beginning of this turn. With Italian forces scattered throughout Greece, Malta, Albania, and Libya; and the British and French occupation of Rome itself, things looked dim for Italian survival. But it was not all that bad. While the German player continued his operations in France, he managed to make available five ground combat units to cover Northern Italy. And then the Italian Fleet began pulling troops from Libya, Albania, and Greece; accumulating a dozen points of ground combat strength in that fashion. This, added to the troops still in Italy, the Italian air units, and the newly raised naval unit, were able to destroy a major British army and liberate Rome. Of course, this left minimal forces to contain the Greeks, and old Libya and Malta. Since losses had been heavy, I attended to rebuilding as much as possible, while redeploying to isolate two additional groups of Allied in Italy. The Allies, seeing the way the situation was developing, wisely abandoned the continent to its fate, while evacuating the other. Then they attacked, throwing two groups of units into Greece, landing in Malta; and overrunning Libya. The Russians, meanwhile leisurely acquired Bulgaria. In general, this turn had not gone badly for the Axis. Although Malta and Libya had been lost, and although the situation in Greece was highly unsatisfactory, the Allies had been badly handled in their Italian adventure. Moreover, the Allies had stretched themselves to the limit and had reached the end of their resources. The situation, if not overwhelming favorable, might still turn out well for the Axis.

**Game Turn 4 (Summer 1940):** Having cleared the Allies from Italy itself, the Italians proceeded on two fronts. Air units were transferred to Germany to support the German drive on

Paris, which succeeded in taking the city at great loss to the defenders, while the Italian-German ground units were transferred to Greece in hopes of improving the situation there. Meanwhile, the rebuilding of forces went on. The Allies, although unable to act in the Mediterranean, were able to scrape together sufficient strength to drive the Germans out of Paris, although incurring great losses to themselves. The Russians paused, apparently watching the developments in the West.

**Game Turn 5 (Fall 1940):** This turn, and the three immediately following it, were more or less ‘flat’ periods of the game, corresponding historically to the periods of equilibrium which prevailed in Europe in 1940-41, early 1942, early 1943 and early 1944. The Italians and the Allies passed in the Mediterranean and in the East, Russia took Hungary. But all sides paused to rebuild and reorganize.

**Game Turn 6 (Winter 1940):** The fall of Paris meant the establishment of a Vichy regime. The Germans moved to occupy most of France and set up defenses against an Allied invasion. Meanwhile they began to redeploy to face the Russians. The Italians, assisted by the return of their air units from France, were able to capture Athens, in spite of a major British effort to relieve the city by sea, which resulted in a considerable naval battle with attendant heavy losses on both sides. This left only a British army at Salonika on European soil. And while the Italians and Germans rebuilt and redeployed, the British and Russians passed.

**Game Turn 7 (Spring 1941):** This was the quietest turn of the game, as everyone strove to rebuild their losses and reorganize his forces. The British position in Greece being too strong to cope with adequately, the Italian player joined the Germans, Russians, and British in passing.

**Game Turn 8 (Summer 1941):** The Italians were the only people active in this turn. While everyone else remained passive or actually retreated, the Italians overran Yugoslavia completely, bring their front up to the Russians in Rumania. In face of this, the British evacuated their enclave at Salonika and the Russians virtually abandoned Hungary. And everyone began redeploying and rebuilding with greater fever. Although no one was aware of it at the time, Italy had, practically speaking, shot its bold in the game. With a fully developed Force Pool (less only one naval unit), the Italians were now at the end of their resources and were just able to cover Italy itself, while holding a small mobile force in a central location to counter any Allied or Russian threats. The game would now be up the true “Great Powers”.

**Game Turn 9 (Fall 1941):** This was the turn everyone had been waiting for, the Russo-German War. The Germans, moving rapidly, were able to hit and isolate and entire Russian army group in the Balkans, thereby destroying it, while pinning the Russians all along their front in Poland. Meanwhile, the Italians began to redeploy to cover their territories and the Allies passes, preferring to wait out their time and rebuild their forces further.

**Game Turn 10 (Winter 1941):** The Italians again passed, although preparing to assume occupational duties in Bulgaria

and Rumania. Meanwhile, the Germans drove the Russians out of most of Rumania and southern Poland. Then the allied moved, springing a surprise invasion of Germany itself through the North Sea coast, which was but thinly defended. The Allies had managed to accumulate the forces necessary for this operation by carefully pulling naval forces out of the Mediterranean and bringing them to Britain, where they combined with the newly formed ground forces. In a massive battle around Berlin involving seven separate die roll, the German defense was crushed. Meanwhile, the Russians helped pin down large German forces in the East.

**Game Turn 11 (Spring 1942):** The Italians attempted to send forces northwards into Germany in an effort to assist in the relief of Berlin but were unable to intervene decisively. The Germans, unable to scrape up more than a handful of troops to relieve their capital, collapsed. With the fall of Berlin, the players, by mutual agreement, decided to end the game.

The end of the game was purely by agreement and based on the logical and obvious fact that Italy could not stand against the Allies alone. Technically, however, Italy might actually have emerged the winner. We were, after all, playing the 1939 scenario, which ends in Summer, 1942. According to the individual victory conditions, for that scenario, Italy needs eight objective hexes to win the game decisively. On that turn in which the game ended, Italy already possessed five objectives (Rome, Milan, Genoa, Athens, and Belgrade). A further five were within two hexes of Italian held territory (Lyon, Marseilles, Budapest, Polesti, and Istanbul), all but one of which were completely undefended. Now given the existing Allied and Russian dispositions at the end of the game, it is not impossible that Italy might not have grabbed at least four of these on the last turn, and just possibly held two against all comers, particularly in the case of Lyon and Marseilles). This would have given Italy seven objectives, though for an unrealistic, though legal tactical victory. In World War II Italy was incapable of surviving the collapse of Germany. In *Third Reich* it is, but only in the ext of the game’s artificial time limits.

## OPERATION STALL - BARBAROSSA

By Lenny Glynn

For the Soviet Player, the 1939 scenario is a situation characterized by a few basic facts: A) He cannot attack Germany until the Fall, 1941 turn; B) If the German player garrisons his minor allies: Rumania, Hungary, Finland, and Bulgaria, they are also invulnerable to Soviet attack until Fall, 1941; C) Germany will invariably be deeply involved in a Western Front campaign for at least three or four turns. Even an anti-communist alliance with the Western Powers to conduct a “Phony War” while the Germans invade Russia can’t work. The Allies are not allowed to make a true, formal peace with Germany, so their armies in France represent a major threat that must be watched, and until the Allied position in France is eroded, the German cannot afford

to invade the Soviet Union. The combination of these factors dictates Soviet strategy.

Assuming that the German garrisons his minor allies, the Soviet player's search for Basic Resource Points to meet the inevitable German invasion is canalized southward, toward Turkey. In Turkey, the Soviet player finds thirty BRPs available to help him replace units that the German invasion will destroy. But the conquest of Turkey consumes between two and three turns, since the Turkish armed forces are the most powerful of the minor nations in the game, next to Spain, and their capital, Ankara, is not easy to get at. Because the campaign takes time and requires the deployment of most Soviet forces, it should begin as soon as possible. In our test game, my plan was to invade Turkey by Spring 1940 at the latest, but even that would have involved substantial and unreasonable delays. The proper move is to head into Turkey on the first turn of the game, using all but four or five of the weakest Soviet infantry units. A half dozen Soviet 2-3's should be used to screen the Soviet border with the Reich, in case a hysterical, megalomaniacal German player decides to open a two front war. These six units are more than enough to establish Soviet presence in the zone of Eastern Europe reserved to the Russian player under the provisions of the Nazi-Soviet Pact.

For the Turkish invasion; two of the Soviet fleets should be deployed in the Black Sea to facilitate amphibious landings and the first Soviet turn should see builds of all possible forces to aid in the invasion. The declaration of war plus offensive option against Turkey costs the Soviet player 25 BRPs and the occupation of the Soviet zones of East Europe costs an additional .10 BRPs. The remaining ten BRPs that the Soviets may expend on the first game turn must be used to build infantry units close to Turkey, and a combination of 3-5 armor and 3-3 infantry units to support the Russian invasion should be added the very next turn. Two Soviet air units should be based on Sevastopol to support an invasion at Samsoun if the Turk hasn't overwhelmingly garrisoned the beach there. If Samsoun can be seized and held by the Soviets, Ankara, and with it Turkey, will fall swiftly. If not, Turkish resistance may drag out two or three turns. The Soviet player should carefully calculate the odds of an air supported sea invasion at Samsoun, to take account of the possibility of losing expensive and difficult-to-replace naval and air units in exchanges.

The Soviet Black Sea Strategy outlined here was the one I adopted going into our test game. But the failure of the German player to garrison his minor allies forced me to adopt a more aggressive Balkans game. The ripe fruit, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Hungary, was there for the harvest. This colossal blunder cost him his Balkan allies in the first six turns of the game, sharply cut into his Force Pool (and BRP capabilities for the years following). Russian players should not anticipate such German errors. Once burned, twice wise. Few Germans will fail to make the investment of half a dozen combat factors to bar the Russian from the Balkans and Finland.

The Soviet problem then is how seriously to take the German threat at various stages of the action, how to prepare for

the expected invasion, and how to stymie it when it comes. On the first point, the Soviet player need not worry. 'A German invasion of the Motherland before the Fall of France is almost impossible. In many respects, however, such an invasion is strongly in the Soviet interest since as long as France and England are actively fighting on the Western Front the German cannot afford to throw the full weight of his resources into Russia. Thus, the goal of Soviet-Allied Diplomacy should be to trigger a premature *Barbarossa*, playing on the gullibility of the German player. The Soviet player has nothing to gain from placating the German, and whenever possible should seek to irritate him and draw him into an attack against Russia before France falls. Of course, if the German garrisons his minor allies, the Soviet will be hard pressed to find ways to irritate Germany, but if the German fails to hold any of his allies, the Soviets should attack it immediately, both to seize the turf, and its BRPs, and to provoke the German to intervene. One possible Russian move would be to agree with the Allies to lure the Germans into Russia in exchange for a free Allied hand against Italy. This is a safe strategy. If the German buys it and invades Russia, while the Allies attack Italy and its colonies, the Allies will have the option of switching immediately to the attack on the Western Front, forcing Germany to pull forces out of Russia. Yet Russia and Germany will be engaged in the second front of a two-front war. In any case, even if the Western Allies would like to betray the Russians, they simply cannot afford to, since a German victory in the East inevitably implies their defeat: the sheer number of objective hexes in Russia overrun by the German would preclude an Allied win.

If the German is shrewd and sets out systematically to destroy the West, the Russian is in most respects helpless. Barred by German garrisons from invading the Balkans or Finland, the only way he can gain more BRPs is in Turkey. Once the Turkish conquest is finished though there is little he can do but wait for the German initiative. Finishing Turkey by Summer, 1940 gives the Russian an additional 55 BRPs plus thirty per cent of any BRPs left unexpended to maximize growth in the 1941 Year Start Sequence a year in which German invasion is virtually certain.

Conservatively, the Soviet player should enter 1941 with almost 160 BRPs. These should be used to bring Soviet strength to the maximum allowed in the scenario Force Pool. When the invasion comes, in Spring or Summer, Soviet strength should be deployed in depth in front of the German main thrust; with strong armor reserves to snap at any breakthrough units and to pose the threat of possible Soviet counter offensives. Tactically, the Soviets should attempt to stay in touch with units threatened with being surrounded; they should try to find a weak link in any German encirclements and punch through to surrounded units. Recontacted and resupplied units should be withdrawn by strategic redeployment, whenever possible. Always take a proffered chance to surround substantial German forces. The threat of losing armored units and the time consumed in extricating them wears down German morale and exhausts BRPs. If the Soviet has planned his first year and a half of

moves well, he will have ample BRPs to spend replacing units lost to the Germans in such aggressive and risky action so Turkey, the Soviet zone in Eastern Europe, and any German minor allies he may have seized become money in the bank for the Soviet player to expend stopping the German. No major commitment of main armor and air reserves should be made, however, unless the German extends an armored column too far and presents the Soviet with a fifty-fifty chance of inflicting heavy casualties. One or two such defeats in Russia and the German is through. The Soviet armor should be used behind the main sector of fighting to keep the German on guard against such a possibility.

Weaker Soviet units should be used in the forefront: 1-3's and 2-3's with 3-3's and 2-3's in a second line of defense. Such a deployment faces the German with trouble in executing exploitation attacks and enables the Soviet player to yield only a hex or two per turn. Since German invasions before Spring 1941 are unlikely, and since the game ends in Summer 1942, the Germans' chances of putting Russia out of the war are slim. However, their chances of seizing five of the Soviets objective hexes: Riga, Lvov, Dnepropetrovsk, Kharkov, and Smolensk are very good unless the Soviet defends well. Riga and Smolensk will probably be seized whatever the Russian does, but timely offensives against German spearheads directed at the other objective hexes will help to stop the Nazi. Finally, if they have conquered it, the Russians should hold European Turkey as strongly as they can afford to without endangering the Motherland. That will force the German to fight to get the Istanbul objective hex, or screen the Russian forces strongly to protect Athens and Polesti. The Soviet fleet, based in Tzmir, should be made available for cooperative action against the Italians in the Med as soon as Germany invades Russia. British action in the Balkans should be a quid pro quo in any such Soviet naval adventure. The Finnish front should simply be screened and ignored unless the German foolishly starts strong forces there. Riga should be fought for, and the Russian should attempt to draw the German in a salient toward Smolensk which can be threatened by attacks out of the Riga bridgehead and the Pripet marshes.

No resources should be yielded to the German without making him pay in BRPs. Empty hexes may be abandoned to rationalize lines, but no cities that will become air bases, no objective hexes to contribute to his victory. Not one heavy machine tool comrade! Not one ear of corn! One last note: If by some chance, the German has failed to knock out the French by Fall 1941, the Soviet player must strike for Krakow, Polesti, Warsaw and, yes, Breslau; using the Carpathian mountains as a shield for the left flank of a thrust into Germany: dropping an invasion fleet against Rumania only two hexes from Polesti. This possibility assumes massive German losses in the west, and offers the prospect of Berlin's fall by scenario's end. So, my principal advice to Soviet strategists is this: Either invade Turkey soon, or consider yourself one.

## THE GERMAN DILEMMA

### Economic Causes, Military Consequences

By Lee Euler

One can analyze the German position in *Third Reich* in terms of its advantages (central position, enormous Force Pool) at its disadvantages (inferior resources, weak Italian ally). However in doing so, we soon come up against the fact that nothing inherent in the German position is decisive to the outcome of the game. This is because Third Reich, to an extraordinary degree, leaves everything up to the initiative of the individual players. The game gives the player a mere handful of limiting factors; his force pool and his economy are donnees, and lets him carry the ball from there. This is appropriate to the game of grand strategy: Hitler, after all, didn't have a big rulebook in the sky telling him he couldn't have a new air force until the fourth turn. As grand strategist, he dictated his own moves, and planned his own rate of reinforcement. This is precisely what *Third Reich* asks the German player to do.

Thus, the German should realize that management of the economy is not just a kinky novelty grafted onto a conventional military game. It is central to his strategy. Decisions in one turn affect his ability to wage war for many turns in the future. For example; a brilliant but costly campaign early in the year can turn to bitter defeat later if the player's BRPs have evaporated in the process.

One must also bear in mind that the German, as the player with the initiative, must pay for offensive options which the Allied player can stop with no-cost Attrition turns. Moreover, the forces needed to generate offensive momentum; aircraft and tanks, are both expensive and likely to suffer heavy losses. The allied player can meet offensives with comparatively cheap infantry forces.

The BRP system is an elaborate feedback mechanism governing policy over a period of months and years. It is the player's strategy reserve. As a result, BRPs must be rationed out carefully for maximum effort. To overcome the great odds against him, the German player must maximize his own economic position while forcing his enemies to spend themselves into oblivion. To an astonishing degree, campaigns are decided by who has the BRPs on the fourth turn of the year.

### COUNTER FRENCH STRATEGY

The problem of conquering France will serve as an example of how important that economic factor is. There is no purely military solution for this because, with the help of a few British units, the French can deploy in depth of two, or even three hexes along the front. This renders breakthroughs towards Paris impossible. As a consequence, the Western Front tends to degenerate into a 1918-style slugging match with the Allied player using attrition turns to throw back the Germans.

The German player cannot sustain this war of attrition because the Anglo-French alliance has almost as many BRPs as the Axis. But consider a BRP-maximization strategy in which

the German player spends two 1939 turns in conquering minor neutrals. He should take Belgium and Luxembourg on the first turn in order to put as few hexes as possible between himself and Paris. Poland should also fall on this turn. (Note that the German does not have to pay for either a declaration of war or offensive option against Poland). On the second turn, having spent about 40 BRPs on new units, the German should take Holland, Denmark, and Yugoslavia. The Italians will be strong enough to capture Greece. The outcome of all this will be 90 additional BRPs on the 1940 year-start sequence.

The point of this strategy will now become apparent as the attack turns to France. In the games I have witnessed, the Allied Player is usually able to stop the German by allocating defensive air support to lower the attacker's odds. (The arithmetic of the process is obvious since the attacker need to allocate 2 precious air units for ever one the defender has, and the Axis simply does not enjoy that sort of numerical superiority. However, with this high BRP level, the German can pursue a counter-air strategy. This is costly to both sides but Germany can afford it, the Anglo-French cannot. Supposing the German player knocks off all six Allied air units at the beginning of each turn, in two turns the enemy will be broke. Meanwhile, he has to meet Germany's overwhelming superiority on the ground.

This does not even take into account the Italian role in an attack on the French. Ideally, Italy should open a second front in the south. The two Italian air units will give the Axis a decisive edge over the Anglo-French (8 units to 6). What's more, it is wise for the German to have a couple of panzer units in the range of the French-Italian border. The Resulting breakthrough and exploitation can be devastating. Once again, the Axis BRP level makes it feasible for Italy to join the war at a cost of 35 BRPs only if she starts with an attrition option.

As the reader can see, a successful Axis plan requires high risks. For example, France is capable of taking the offensive to Germany while the Nazis grab off minor neutrals, so Germany must allocate units to the French border. In order to keep Russian out of the war, German must post a unit to Rumania (under rule 3.582) to prevent a Soviet incursions into the Balkans. All of this leaves the Axis with just enough strength to grab off six neutrals I mentioned. Even at that, the Axis must go broke by the end of 1939.

### ENGLAND OR RUSSIA

I estimate that France will fall on the fourth or fifth turn, after the Axis has expended about 200 BRPs (almost as much as the total Anglo-French BRP pool). This will leave the axis with about 100 BRPs, meaning that the rest of 1940 will not see any more major conquests.

What, then, should the German do after France falls? In the unlikely event that Britain has bankrupted herself defending France, the Germans might try Sealion. I consider it more probable that Britain will conserve the resources to withstand invasion. If there are two turns left in 1940, the Germans can back and Italian attempt to cut Suez, thus reducing England's BRPs. If there is only one turn left, I recommend redeployment

to the Eastern Front. If possible, peripheral operations should be run against Norway, Sweden, Spain or Turkey, again with the aim of expanding the Axis BRP pool. With my bias toward economic expansion, I favor this last strategy. If say, Turkey's 30 BRPs are added to the German pool, the Axis will start 1941 with 385 BRPs.

To say the least, this is formidable strategic reserve. The Russian player will very likely have only half as many BRPs. What's more, the Soviets have only three air forces, while the Axis should be able to spare five to the Eastern Front.

As with France, the German player should compel Russia to spend as heavily as possible, even as great cost to Germany itself. Germany's great economic strength will see her through. Again, Counter-air should be used wherever possible, because of its great cost to the enemy.

Starting as he does with a high BRP level, the German player will be able to build to the limit of his force pool, and will be able to maintain himself at, or near, the limit for the whole of 1941. Much of this must go to defending invasion hexes all over Europe. Alas, one drawback to the BRP maximum strategy is that all though little countries must be defended against the Western allies.

It is also true that Italy becomes rather a liability than a help at this stage of the game. With her weak force pool, and their territorial ambitions in the Balkans and North Africa, she becomes very vulnerable to British invasion. In Fact, in almost every game I have played, Italy has fallen to the West. The result of all this is that still more German units must be allocated to the Mediterranean. The Axis should not be deceived by Britain's small ground forces because of all those forces, after the fall of France, are available for offensive operations.

### COMBAT IN RUSSIA

Despite the difficulties, I am in favor of a German attack on Russia in Spring, 1941. The advantage to this is that if forces Russia to ration here relatively meager BRP pile over four game turns. The Axis player must understand that if Russian can somehow gasp through to the end of 1941, she gets all her BRPs back, and the German strategy of outspending Russia may be defeated. Basically the Russian player must be drawn into combat whenever possible for each of those four turns.

Russian cannot pursue the French strategy of deploying two hexes deep along the whole front. All the same, the Russians can effectively backstop their line of with armored units and excess infantry, thus preventing exploitations. They can also station their air beyond the range of German counter-air missions. And the Russian can generally extricate himself from German encirclements. The upshot is that the German must expect the going to be rough in the cradle of Bolshevism.

It is hard to predict whether Germany can actually conquer Russia in the 1939 scenario because the conflict depends on the tactical finesse of the two players over a long haul of some six turns. There is a note of encouragement; the Axis only needs 3 or 4 Russian objectives to win the war, and he should be able to bludgeon his way through to these. Optimum strategy is to head

for the objectives in southern Russia, rather head towards Moscow. Pick up Riga early in the invasion for don't press for Leningrad because it is invincible.

### SUMMARY

Germany does not have an easy go of it in this game. In the strategy I have outlined, France is the only Great Power Germany can expect to knock out, and even that victory cannot be taken for granted. Generally, the Axis has the strength to take the offensive in one sector at a time, and must hold quiet sectors with the least possible forces.

Britain plays the role of a spoiler. Beyond conquest herself, she can definitely delay the fall of France. What's more, Britain is always capable of knocking Italy out of the war, and even Germany itself, though lightning like amphibious invasions. This ever-present threat requires a costly German defensive disposition.

The backbone of German strategy is the conquest of minor neutrals. This alone gives her the economic power to defeat the array of forces against her.

investment of 6 factors of infantry, a yearly allotment of 45 BRPs plus an addition to the German Force Pool of 32 infantry and 4 air factors could have been saved. And only 3 factors must come from the German initial forces, as an infantry or even a replacement unit can be built and redeployed to Rumania after the combat phase of the Fall turn. While perhaps the initial oversight is excusable, standing by while the Russian captured an additional ally with each succeeding turn is not! Not when an investment of a single BRP and SR would have saved them! Although Germany's dependence on her Minor Allies is not as important in the '39 Scenario as in the Campaign Game or later scenarios they are still a major factor in any German win. The German player is forced to walk such an incredible: taut tightrope to win in *Third Reich* that a mistake of this magnitude can not be compensated without an equally costly mistake on the part the Allies. Indeed, I would go so far as to say that given competent play the Germans can not win the Campaign Game if they lose Rumania. Her cheap; and readily accessible forces are necessary to supply bulk for the German efforts in, the East when their lines are stretched incredibly thin.

If we forget these two colossal blunders, German theories are primarily sound. A policy of economic expansion and BRP attrition is viable but hard to achieve. Care must be taken to provide maximum DAS and garrison forces in the low countries to prevent them from being retaken the Allies just prior to the 1940 Year Start Sequence. This can be quite embarrassing when you not only come up empty-handed after your declarations of war and offensive investments but you've handed those same BRPs to the Allies for the price of an offensive option. It is especially important to take Norway as soon as possible lest the British beat you to it. The British do not have the armor to attempt a one turn takeover in Fall 1939 and will probably be too busy ferrying units to France to attempt such an invasion on the Winter turn. However, as soon as you see two armor units sitting in Britain you had best make sure Norway is yours on the next turn. Once taken, it is extremely difficult to retake from a well handled garrison force. As for Sweden, it definitely not worth the BRPs. Mr. Euler would have you spending on a Declaration of War plus several offensive options. It best serves Germany as a neutral, only to be defended if the British attack it from Norway in hopes of gaining a Baltic port. If the Russians want it, let them have it. They won't be able to get back their BRP investment from it in time to help them stop determined German offensive and every Russian unit tied down on garrison duty is one less to fight before the gates of Moscow. In short, a theory economic expansion must be approach realistically; taking only those countries which can be used economically and which must occupied to improve the German's strategic position.

The Italian player has handled himself in a much less questionable manner, but still could have improved on his game to a great degree. The British raid which took Rome in one turn could and should have been prevented. While the Italian really can't stop such raids it is fully within his power to limit their effectiveness. He should build all 6 replacement counters on the initial turn in and NW of Naples as well as in a line directly

## Overall Commentary

By Donald Greenwood

Even one playing of *Third Reich* is a great learning experience. Apparently, this statement holds true in this game because the commentaries on strategy included in this 'trial run replay' are, by and large, much more erudite than the play demonstrated in the game. Were these same players to attempt another game I'm sure the game would be quite different as a result of the experiences derived the first time around. However, even though we are talking in terms of strategic misconceptions rather than tactical errors, their after-game comments are still open to considerable debate.

The German player seems to have lost in remarkable fashion not so much because he made mistakes, but because he made more costly errors than did his opponents. Nevertheless, he lost the game in a quite unsuitable manner so he is a logical, place to start. His sudden downfall in early 1942 was not due to any colossal undertaking by the British but merely a logical and expected consequence of his own completely unrealistic defenses. Had he merely placed a fleet in Wilhelmshaven with a token ground force the beach would have been impregnable. Although air raids could gradually reduce this fleet it couldn't be done in the same turn as an invasion and additional naval forces could be strategically redeployed to the threatened area to maintain the shore defenses. It is possible to make a landing in the North Sea but only against either a very foolish German player or a very hassled one who has suffered severe naval losses. A conservative German player should be able to protect both the North Sea and Norway for an entire Campaign Game with a minimum of force. The other major German error which has already been pointed out by his co-players is the completely inexcusable failure to garrison Finland and Rumania. For an

south of the Adriatic beach. The beaches themselves do not have to be defended. This cheap deployment guarantees that Rome cannot be taken in one turn as happened to Mr. Nofi and insures that the British must invest in two offensive options if they are to attempt to take the city. It buys time for the Italian to transfer or build forces for his home defense and forewarns the German that his services may be required to the south in the next turn. The net result is a much more expensive raid for the British and one which the Axis can depend on defeating with regularity without leaving to chance a 1-1 desperation counter-attack. Frequently, the best course to follow against such a raid is purely defensive; letting the British player use his BRPs while you take advantage of the terrain. Offensive options should be restricted to necessary counter-attacks should Rome fall or the Allies have sufficient force and position to both take Rome and exploit around it. Otherwise, making sure you can always get a 2-1 on Rome should it fall is satisfactory and often means that the British player is wasting more BRPs in his attack than you are in defense of your homeland.

I would also take exception to the statement that Yugoslavia will always fall in one turn. I have yet to see the Italians take Yugoslavia against a competent defense in one turn without considerable German assistance. Were it not the case, I would always take Yugoslavia on the first turn and declare war on France in the second. However, usually I have to settle for an attrition option on the first turn against the Yugoslavs, giving them the coup de grace one turn later just in time for the 1940 Year Start Sequence. Greece is not worth attacking at this stage of the game as its conquest will take several turns and is best left until France has fallen. I would also caution against a premature withdrawal from Libya. Although I agree that the Italian stands little chance of making significant gains in Egypt, his presence in Africa causes problems for the British. If Libya is simply abandoned the British can take it with combined naval landings in one offensive option. If garrisoned properly, the British player can be forced to expend many more BRPs on additional Offensive Options if he is to secure Libya. The few forces this requires are not needed all that much elsewhere to merit their withdrawal. One must give a certain amount of credence to the matter of keeping open all your options. If Libya is abandoned, any later Axis moves to Africa will have to be amphibious assaults at the risk of the Italian fleet. If Libya is maintained, strategic redeployments will always make troop transports both safe and available.

The matter of the Italian trade of a turn's peace for Malta is an extremely interesting proposition and, on the surface at least, a highly enticing one. The major drawback to diplomacy in *Third Reich* however is that the game naturally follows historic alliance lines and deals are not enforced. There is nothing to prevent the British from renegeing on their offer and holding on to Malta after the Italian turn has passed. In fact, I would be highly suspicious of any such offer unless the British player wanted still more from me on later turns. I wonder why Isby actually withdrew from Malta. He had no reason to honor his bargain other than to get something more later on, probably a

continued pledge not to attack France. The Italian player must be extremely wary of such offers because he does not have the punch to punish those who would stab him. His forces are just large enough to make the all important difference at certain crucial points in the game. Once those points have passed and Axis strength is on the wane the Italian's feelings can be cast aside with impunity. Italy is nothing without a strong Germany as Mr. Nofi so correctly relates. So if Germany is denied a fast kill in France no amount of double talk will win the game for the Italians. A snubbed German certainly won't help you when it's too late for him to win the game, and without a strong German threat Italy can easily be dismembered. Therefore, any such diplomatic deals entered into should only be done after consultation with the German. If nothing will be lost anyway, i.e. the Germans have no plans to attack France proper in 1939, then feel free to make the trade and maybe if you look gullible enough while you're doing it the Allies will think you dumb enough to play for more and will actually give you what they've promised. But in general, beware Englishmen bearing gifts.

The Russian player who benefited from the German mistakes in the Balkans is, nevertheless, subject to criticism. I contest quite enthusiastically his premise that invasion of Turkey is a good idea. His rationale for the move is to gain BRPs, yet considering the time he will probably be able to hold it he is actually detracting from his BRP possibilities by such a move. Assuming his conquest takes two moves it will cost him 40 BRPs plus losses taken against the Turks. Turkey is worth only 30, so unless the invasion is successful by the 1940 Year/ Start Sequence the Russian can expect a net loss of 10 BRPs by the time of Barbarossa plus whatever losses he has incurred in his attacks. In Spring, 1941 those 40 would be worth 52+ BRPs. These BRPs should be spent building forces in 1939 so 1940, will see a surplus and resulting gain in the BRP base for 1941. Turkey is a source of BRPs only so long as Russia can hold it. It is a prime target for Axis advances and often if the campaign in the west is a short one, the German will precede Barbarossa with an attack on Turkey; motivated less by the BRPs than by the flanking position it affords against Russia. By knocking off the Turks early, the Russians are doing the Germans a favor by eliminating one of their own buffer zones. Furthermore, I doubt the wisdom of lengthening the Russian front by taking Turkey. A conservative Russian player who prepares his forces well will have just enough forces to defend in sufficient depth along the western border to prevent massive German breakthroughs. By stretching his resources to defend too much, he defends nothing. Although lengthening the front is usually considered disadvantageous to the German, this is far less true this close to the Axis Minor Neutrals which can quickly supply fodder to fill holes. Only when the lines retract deep into Russia such that the German must tax his SR limits to bring up replacements does a longer front favor the Russians. Otherwise, it is to the advantage of he who holds the initiative and at this point in time that should be the German.

So much for errors of theory, now for those of fact. The Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe costs not 10 BRPs, but 25



as an Offensive Option must be paid for to enter the Baltic States. A Pass Option is not possible because you can't move across uncontrolled hexes in a Pass Option. Similarly, an Attrition Option is out because there are no enemy units to attrite at the end of the move. Therefore, simultaneous invasions of Turkey and the Baltic are not possible unless the Russian takes an Attrition Option against the Turks. This rules out any landing at Samsoun and probably will result in Turkey lasting 3 turns (and into 1941, making its capture far less than breakeven proposition). In any case, Turkey will never fall in one turn given a competent defense. Therefore, I would seriously doubt the wisdom of taking Turkey at the expense of having the Baltic States in hand for the 1940 Year/Start Sequence. Only if the German unduly prolongs the fighting in Poland, should the Russian have even the slightest provocation to expand in Turkey. The best Russian course is simply to play a waiting game; building forces and BRPs for as long as possible before the onslaught begins.

The French and British players do not favor us with a commentary so we can be less critical of them. The fact that the French player was put out should not be held against him, such is the fate of France in the game, barring a disastrous course of events for the German. Indeed, the Prados-Isby team should be congratulated for holding onto the country that long. For the German to win he usually must have France by the Fall, 1940 turn. If it goes in the Summer, 1940 turn he is in relatively good shape. If he waits until winter he is usually fighting an uphill battle the rest of the way. Barbarossa should be launched as early as possible in the 1941 Campaign season and it usually takes two turns to fully redeploy to the new front and set up the western defenses. We can assume then, that Mr. Prados handled his forces in fine fashion. Mr. Isby must also be given part of the credit as French defense is inexorably tied to British cooperation. And we cannot overlook the British manner of bringing the game to a close. Although one is tempted to cast more blame on the German than praise on the British, an error not taken advantage of is a nullity and we should congratulate Mr. Isby for taking advantage of the situation as it was offered to him.

In all, this game was played only moderately well. The best players or at least those most accustomed to the game system were cast in the role of the Allies which is unfortunate. The Axis, especially the German player, is working on a strict time schedule. One missed move may never get the chance to be made up. Therefore, the Axis side should generally be played by the more competent players; at least until a considerable degree of proficiency has been reached.