

## The Early Years Reexamined

by Richard Shagrín

"It's what you learn after you know it all that counts."  
- John Wooden

"Beware of false knowledge; it is more dangerous than ignorance." - G. B. Shaw

"Knowledge is ruin to my young men." - Adolf Hitler

"I knew I should have called play 17." - Thomas Shaw

This is my second draft of a criticism of David Bottger's article on THIRD REICH in volume 14, number 3. Thanks to your friendly editor's mini-review "Well written, but incorrect" I have agreed to rewrite it. Therefore, I want to make clear that all brilliant ideas are my sole property, and any mistakes are the fault of the editor! "The victor will never be asked if he told the truth." - Adolf Hitler

"If facts do not conform to theory, they must be disposed of." Mr. Bottger has disposed of some inconvenient facts and I have a feeling that despite his request for "outraged" reaction that Winston Churchill's comment "personally I'm always ready to learn, although I do not always like being taught" will apply. I must request an examination of his premises. First, why must the German player "Occupy Warsaw in Fall 1939 ... or delay the Axis timetable for the conquest of the low countries and France"? To digress briefly, I "invented" the one-way American Kamikazi attack on the Japanese carriers in Midway based on a similar examination. The rules do not require the Germans to attack Poland (I cheated, I looked through the rules to make sure). To win, the Germans must conquer at least one of France, Russia, or England. Two make a tactical victory and three a strategic victory. The marginal victory condition does not require any be conquered, but it is hard to conceive of 28 objectives being occupied by Winter 1943 without at least one down and two to go. In the Alliance game, Germany only needs six to eight

objectives, but even this objective is greatly facilitated by conquest of not Poland so much as the major powers. Now all this is logic, and "logic is like a sword, those who appeal to it shall perish by it." - Samuel Butler, Poland is worth BRPs and must normally be taken by Germany eventually. But what if ...

We might attack in the West. Bottger's third option discusses the advantage (??) of letting the French occupy Luxemburg, in order to attack them across a river in order to get a bridgehead. Why not let them into Berlin in order to attack from the east (across a river) and put a bridgehead in Berlin, too? Of course this is sarcasm, in the remote eventuality my readers think I advocate making the German attack any harder than necessary. Do I get an Iron Cross? The advantages of the Fall 1939 Western offensive include starting one hex closer to Paris thanks to Luxemburg's lack of garrison. I like the attack Bottger suggests under the heading "A Two Front War" but I don't see why it has to be run as one. To get a bridgehead, infantry can attack from Aachen into Belgium (against a tripled one factor infantry), taking advantage of a now solid front of non-attributionable hexes (Antwerp, Brussels, bridgehead, Aachen and Essen). With infantry support the French may well be rolling for "Vichy" by mid 1940. In addition to the bridgehead attack, one infantry should occupy the vacant Maginot line hex. An infantry and an armor attack Sedan with air support as required. Now we have three exploiting armor (two from Frankfurt, one with the infantry in the Maginot line) to send against (a) the hex between Sedan and Paris and (b) Brussels (one armor with air support can attack from the newly cleared bridgehead square and then move in, completing the clearing of our supply line to the armor adjacent to Paris. Two more infantry can easily clear the Hague, and the remaining infantry can attack Denmark with support from the fleets to make a 3 to 1. Ye friendly editor has confirmed that from their base in East Prussia this can easily be accomplished. What about the rest of the 25 factors required to start in the east? Well, the rest is air that staged to useful western cities in time to aid in the attack-all except one factor that flies to Helsinki to scare away the big bad Russian Bear. We

could save some BRPs on declarations of war (the Netherlands for one, Denmark for two) and start some infantry in Finland. Whatever you put there on setup stays there (and subtracts from the points you can put in other minor allies) until you attack Russia and march it overland or capture a port. No SR transport, or invasion is permitted into Finland as it has no ports or beaches. Of course, builds in the East are rapidly required to bring us up to 25 factors-two infantry, two fleets, and a one point air unit in Finland do it nicely, and can sit in the port in East Prussia and not even suffer attrition. Best put something in Rumania, too. But enough minor, obvious points. What about my other "What if ..." ?

Let's consider attacking Russia in Fall 1939 I have no shame, why should you? If the fleet is in Leningrad and the Russian northern garrison is weak, particularly if non-existent between Lakes Ladoga and Onega, a reasonable case can be made for a super-quick two front war. A 3-1 is conceivable against a Russian two factor infantry unit in Leningrad (quadrupled to eight factors). With 75 BRPs or 60 if Moscow also falls, and no fleet in being, almost all the Russians must be on the board all the time. The winter of undoubled Germans will occur in 1939, with Russia at its weakest. Holding in the West will be a difficult assignment, but under the circumstances could be worth it. Russia can only spend 45 BR Ps per turn (37 in 1940). If reduced to 39 factors on turn one, 36 must be built to stay alive. This takes 30 BRPs for infantry and 12 for armor. If Germany can kill 4 more factors of infantry (even less air/armor) in Fall 1939 (in addition to the 2 lost in Leningrad) Russia must surrender! Makes the palms of my hands sweat. The offensive is even free. Mind you this time I'm NOT recommending this attack. I'm with . S. Gilbert, who *"led his regiment from behind -/ He found it less exciting. / But when away his regiment ran, / His place was at the fore."*

Another benefit that should be brought out is the 25 BRPs for the partition of Poland. Somewhat to my surprise, ye fiendly (sic) editor has informed me that Russia can capture them before Germany takes Warsaw. This "amendment" to rule 6.2 (second

paragraph) makes delaying the capture of Warsaw less attractive, but given a superquick two front war as above, the Russians probably won't be able to afford the BRPs, units or time to capture what is otherwise theirs. And the Germans can, with luck do so before the start of 1940. This makes up for a lot of Western neutrals not captured. I don't know how to coordinate rule 6.4 prohibiting offensives in Russia in the first winter with the probable need to conduct an offensive against Poland. Probably if you "offend" against Poland you will not be able to Attrition against units in Russia. Maybe the editor will put in his three cents worth to settle the question. (Inflation is everywhere, it used to be two cents worth. Or as W. C. Fields said, *"the cost of living has gone up another dollar a quart."* As I read the rule, an offensive would be allowed in winter against the cities needed to capture the 25 BRPs. *(Poland and the Baltic states are not in Russia - thus the prohibition against German attacks in winter would not apply, as the Germans wouldn't be in Russia yet - Ed.)*

I'm saving some comments on taking Warsaw for last, so now let's consider the strategem (as opposed to a strategy gem) of Italy "piggybacking" into war with Yugoslavia (saving the cost of a declaration of war) by virtue ("virtue is learned at mother's knee; vice at other joints") of Germany's declaration of war on Yugoslavia, combined with activation of the Axis alliance by Italy declaring war on an Ally, The laconic editor, with a single "yes", has notified me that this rubegoldberg play works. However it also makes Yugoslavia an Ally of France and England. Even if they were not, as soon as the "clever" attrition ploy is played, France (for example) can eliminate one of their own units in the Med, and gain Yugoslavia's BRPs. See rules 3.71 and 3.7, particularly the last paragraph of 3.7. Since elimination of at least one Yugoslavian unit was required for success, this approach must be judged a failure.

In the matter of Russian Invasion of Turkey (RIOT, for short) the calculation of the present value of saved BRPs is correct as far as it goes. But it doesn't go very far. What happens, given RIOT, when Huns Undertake Reconquest of Turkey (HURT, which is

both the long and short of it)? Russia loses a fast 30 BRPs, and lives with a base of 106 instead of 124 for the rest of the war. This 18 BRP difference could be Russia's every year. If you believe Turkey will stay Russian every year, I have an interesting real estate proposition for you - the Brooklyn Bridge. Among other reasons, the Germans need to kill the fleet by denying it a Russian port or other friendly port to park its carcass. The shortest distance to Batum is through Turkey. As an alternative to a Russian attack on Turkey to avoid the "unwanted initiative," how about an attack upon Persia and Iraq? Perhaps the British in Egypt could use some help. For motivation for this generous act, this may open up the southern lend-lease route or at least gather Mosul (the red dot might be useful) to the Russian side. If Lebanon-Syria is Vichy, Russia might even get 5 BRPs out of the trip.

On page 23 the article makes another of those comments that just MUST be examined. Marx said "*Military intelligence is a contradiction in terms.*" Groucho Marx, not Karl. It must have been Bottger's military intelligence that decided Germany must effect a one-turn conquest of Norway and that that objective can be attained only by a paratroop assault. (Does anyone know what to call Polish paratroops? Give up? Air pollution.) There is a rule that can help the Germans carry out a one-turn assault with armor, without building more fleets. Rule 3.8 allows the Germans to use an Italian 2 factor armor unit together with a German 4-6 (together they make the carrying capacity of the two fleets) to attack a Norwegian beach and exploit to attack Oslo. Thanks to having air support available there is no need to risk the paratroop unit. It dies forever if eliminated out of supply and there is no adjacent German ground unit (new rules). For ten lousy BRPs and an opportunity to stop Britain from "*breaking windows with Guineas*" (sending BRPs to Russia early in the game when Britain can't really afford to), the risk (of losing the paratroops) is too great. Note that if the fleets and armor start in Kiel the invasion can hit either beach, one will have to be undefended. To continue examining the premise, why does the conquest have to be a one turn victory? There are times when Allied forces are not available or the fleets have already been used. Alternatively,

one can manipulate BRP levels to get two turns in a row. Finally, I don't see any reason why the German shouldn't be happy to counter-punch a British invasion. It ties up a higher percentage of the British forces than of the German in what is basically a sideshow, at least compared to the conquest of France or Russia.

*"The British need have little fear o a "Sealion" in 3R ... The main threat to British survival is an air assault on London."* - David Bottger. I gather the definite impression Bottger favors sending all but seven factors (holding London) away from home. Like all insufficiently examined premises, this can get sticky. Someone showed me at Origins '77 a little trick with the German paratrooper on a port, SRing units in and next turn combining air and land assault on London. If the Germans have been manipulating their BRP level, the next turn could be before the British get a chance to react. Even if not, seven factors are not enough to stop the Germans, at least not frequently enough for my preference. You have to watch out for these "unfair" tricks. *"We were not fairly beaten, my lord. No Englishman is ever fairly beaten."* - George Bernard Shaw

A final Bottger proposal proves it ain't those things you don't know that hurt you; its all those things you know that ain't so! He knows what he wants, to tie up the most German armor and air units with his defense of Warsaw. What he knows that isn't so is that German infantry can reach Brest-Litovsk. His criticism of the Beyma or Standard defense is that he prefers "to make this 2:1 attack with a 3-3 infantry, a 4-6 armor and 1 air factor." Naturally this ties up fewer armor units and results in a lesser expected loss. Except that Bottger's "Standard" Defense (not Beyma's) is defending Brest-Litovsk against an infantry unit that can't get there to attack the Polish 2-3 untripled, his reasoning is flawless. *"Whatever is only almost true is quite false, and among the most dangerous errors, because being so near truth, it is the more likely to lead astray."* - Henry Ward Beecher

I do have one modest suggestion to amend the Beyma defense which is indeed a standard. I like to

put the air unit on Brest-Litovsk. It has psychological effects that can lead the German to attacking a 1-3 and then Warsaw across the river. If it doesn't work, you haven't lost anything vital. Along with the conquest of Poland, Bottger has some options. You know my methods now, Watson. As usual, I disagree that it is wise to avoid the "Do Nothing" option. There is a concept in Naval Warfare, of a "fleet in being." *"Force is never more operative than when it is known to exist but is not brandished."*- Alfred Thayer Mahan. Building up your forces to exploit enemy errors is a mini-max strategy. You try to minimize the maximum loss you can suffer. With two-front war strategies, even if one front is "only Poland" the Germans are taking chances that they may not need to risk. If 60 factors of infantry you could build in the Fall of 1939 (or 28 armor, or whatever) could exploit enemy errors next turn and in future turns throughout the game, but you will not have the forces available to take advantage if they are not built now, you have a difficult decision to make. Defense in depth is seldom an error. Either side can make errors that require lots of troops for the German to win after. You might plan a lot of attrition. It works better with 61 factors.

We already discussed attacking Russia. See how the assumption that Poland must be attacked first has clouded the situation. With the same data I chicken out, but Bottger *decides* not to attack because "most of (Germany's forces) will be attacking Poland on the first turn." We also discussed attacking in the West, which Bottger discards as ineffective. But it is ineffective because everybody is messing about in Poland. Finally, we have covered the fallacy in attritioning Yugoslavia - that a major power can take the losses instead. To recapitulate (never capitulate, just recapitulate), you owe it to yourself to ask the magic question "Why did he say that" when you hear an authority speak. *"The important thing is not to stop questioning."* - Albert Einstein.