

# THIRD REICH WITH FINESSE

## DIPLOMACY IN MULTI-PLAYER THIRD REICH

by Otto Schmidt II

*Although I've never met Otto Schmidt, I get the impression that he is a veteran in long standing of the DIPLOMACY ranks. His analysis of THIRD REICH which follows deals entirely with the diplomatic aspects of the Alliance Game, bringing out into the open all of the seedier tricks that version can entail. Unlike the Coalition Game in which two players control their destinies exclusively as Allied and Axis contingents, in the Alliance Game up to six players each control a major power, and although they are prohibited from attacking their historical partners, they don't have to help them either as everyone fends for themselves. Yet, to my way of thinking, THIRD REICH is too detailed a game demanding too large a commitment in playing time to reduce it to a conflict of personalities. A non-cooperating ally who refuses to become involved in "the war" may share a win in the game, but would surely never play another THIRD REICH game with me. In my opinion, deals of this sort belong on the DIPLOMACY board, not in THIRD REICH. Be that as it may, there are those for whom this type of play is accepted practice, and Mr. Schmidt's analysis offers an excellent insight into the dastardly realm of diplomatic THIRD REICH.*

The problem with wargames is wargamers. All too often they act as players rather than as participants. By a participant, I mean a surrogate for the real life counterpart, or what the gamer himself would have liked his real life counterpart to be. By a player, I mean simply a person who is playing this GAME rather than using the game as a vehicle to explore the possibilities and options of the real historical (or not so historical) situation. I suppose that implicit in any game is the prime directive of WIN!!!! Winning in wargames unfortunately in many cases ends up simply as knowing the last little wrinkle of a rule or "dirty trick". In short, pedantry and minutia rather than sound principles and rational play tend to pay off. How many times have I heard: "Ahh, no. You cannot move your Guards Mechanized Division, for see back here on this rail line ..." and the opponent gleefully points to the little black unit and announces triumphantly, "Your supply line is blocked by my 443rd SS Volksturnigrenadier Mess Kit Repair Battalion Band and Laundry Unit " (all twenty-one Rheumy old men and barely toilet-trained Hitler Youth.) But I cavil. While this is lamentable (both the pedantry and my cavilling), it is obvious that in most straightforward, one side against the other games, there is no other way. This is simply the byproduct of the system, a by product that is both good and bad and not without its historical precedents.

But the tragedy lies in it being used to the exclusion of other methods in games where such options are open. Such a game is

*THIRD REICH.* Unlike most "one on one-ers", *THIRD REICH* offers group (not necessarily team) play. It offers interaction among a group of players. In short, it allows diplomacy. Especially fascinating is that it allows players to work out the effects of diplomacy on the operational and strategic level.

Of course, implicit in diplomacy is the stab in the back, or the "cut". Unlike other games where diplomacy is a factor, in *THIRD REICH* there are limits to who and how deep you can cut any ally or member of the "same side", but you CAN cut him nevertheless, and in more ways than one. Central to all this is the reason for the cut. Obviously, unless you're a homicidal maniac you only cut an ally when you have something to gain. Cutting for the glee of it does not pay. You should cut only when it will help you directly to WIN. Because of the peculiar victory conditions of *THIRD REICH*, you can cut your ally's throat and still win big, even while fighting the same enemy. Confused?? Dyin't be. I'll explain. In the Alliance game, you will notice that to achieve their levels of victory, the states must gain or retain a certain number of objective cities. Now there are 42 such objective hexes on the map. When fighting the campaign game, you will notice that for everyone to get a decisive victory is impossible (a total of 56 centers, or 14 more than there are on the board.) However, it is definitely NOT impossible for two or more players to have a decisive victory and still not occupy all the centers on the board. This happens quite often, i.e., Britain/U.S. with 21 and Soviet Union with 18; the usual or historical result. When you start playing with the numbers, a curious range of winners comes out. There is room at the top for ANY FOUR PLAYERS provided that Britain/US or the Soviet Union is not one of the four.

None of this is in violation of the rules. The victory conditions simply refer to actual possession of the center at the end of the game. Thus, it is entirely conceivable for Germany to approach Britain, say, "Look, I'll make you a deal: you agree to roll over on France, and let me take it easy, and in return I promise NO invasion, no London Blitz, no U-boats. You leave me alone and I'll leave you alone. In that time, I'll go east, cut the heart out of the Russians, and dance the same minuet for you in France, Italy, the Balkans, and wherever else is needed to give you 21 victory centers, and I keep whatever is left. " Britain then agrees, and it goes according to plan. He plays with his fleets and American divisions while the Krauts are rampaging through Russians. 1944 comes along and the Allies say "Oh Adolf ..." and the Germans dutifully evacuate (to a man) France, Italy, the Balkans, etc. The British move in and they let the clock run out on the game and win. Both sides have a tasty meal of Bear and Borscht. Or conversely, the Russians propose the same deal to the Germans. "Look Comrade, you take Poland, and turn west. Let me have the Balkans, Turkey, Mosul, Sweden, Norway and Greece, and I'll stand pat while you take England, and the West, then we'll let the clock run out on the Capitalist swine. "Or, I'll give you an example of a game that really happened."

I once was in a *THIRD REICH* game that took place at one of the Origins conventions. It was not in one of the tournaments, but had been engendered "spontaneously" in the Rathskeller at

Johns Hopkins. (A lot of other things were done spontaneously in the Rathskeller that night, but I will allow the police blotter to remain the sole record of them.) Two friends and I had attracted two others to play an alliance game version of the campaign game. Very early in the game (1940), the person playing the Germans turned to me (Italians), who had not yet declared war, and demanded, "Declare war and give me your air forces." Horrors!! In my mind flashed visions of those wonderful Reggians, Cants, Savoia Marchettis, Macchi 200's et al sent to die the death of a dog at the hands of Hurricanes, Spitfires, and (shudder) worst of all, Dewoitine D 500's. Not to mention the 30 BRP's from next year's paycheck from Mussolini to replace them. Of course, I told the little fascist to bug off. He retorted in his best Hitlerian falsetto, "Then you're throwing the game-I can't take France in 1940 now, and we'll lose the war. " I replied in perhaps my best stage Italian, "No, no. 'Sense Tedeschi (kraut). You may lose the war, but I won't lose the war. " I had not yet declared war on Britain or France, so I huddled with the Allied players and worked out a compromise that if they would not contest my attempts to take over Yugoslavia and Greece (whom I was fighting), I would not declare against them ever. The propositions further embraced that I would not make any further hostile moves in the Mediterranean, and would not give the Germans any BRP's. Once signed, the Allies evacuated the Mediterranean (not a limey to be seen), and concentrated everything in the Atlantic. France never fell, and by the time the Russians could get in the Allies were in Berlin. The war ended with Germany totally defeated, Russia not even able to get a stalemate, Britain with a tactical and France and Italy with decisive victories!

Does this shock you? Does the prospect of four players getting together and agreeing to carve up a fifth shake your faith in the rules or the system? It shouldn't. It's all historical. Bear in mind that the first example (dinner with Russian dressing) is exactly what Hitler proposed to England, and what England rejected. Bear in mind that the Second example is exactly what did happen with the signing of the Nazi-Soviet pact-more or less-and it was only altered by Hitler's attack on Russia (though it is probably true the Russians did not intend to live up to it either). Bear in mind that the third example, from my game, is exactly what the British would have liked to see happen given the reality of war, and in fact is probably what they were willing to give to see Italian neutrality.

The Second World War was fought for two reasons and to decide two things. One was whether the provisions of the treaty of Versailles were to be discarded and irretrievably cancelled. This was decided overwhelmingly in the affirmative. By the end of the war German resurgence had been a fact, French continental supremacy, English maritime supremacy, curtailment of the spread of Bolshevism, and the independence of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Albania and all the self-determinist principles of the treaty had been swept away. The hold of the great powers on their empires was broken and would not last long. The League of Nations had died long before the war. The second question was whether fascism or

communism would provide the alternative and adversary to the free societies of the west. The war did NOT decide which system would eventually dominate the world, THAT question is yet to be decided. It will come in round three of this great ongoing ordeal that started in World War I. The decision as to whether man is to be ruled by democracy or totalitarianism must wait for World War III.

In a very true manner, the diplomatic arrangements you make face up to and answer these alternatives. This is what I meant way back at the start of the article about participating rather than playing. The players just sit down, set up the units and play the game. The participants sit down, set up the counters, and address themselves to the questions above. They determine the course they want to take and then play the game. The participants choose what type of world they want and in effect what the "world order" will be "Old World ... New Order, or "Communist man." These are the essential alternatives. In fine, a player asks himself, Will I throw in with the west? Do I trust Herr Hitler? Will I be safe with the Soviets in the Balkans? Will the Allies renege when I'm up to my ears in Moujiks? Perhaps the answer to these questions, and in fact what questions must be answered, is again intimately bound up with what a country must do to win.

This will bring us down to the nuts and bolts of capabilities and possibilities.

To reprise then, players in *THIRD REICH* who take the game at the obvious, frequently set inordinate and usually unattainable obstacles in front of themselves. If we assume that the diplomatic arrangements made and arrived at during the war are inevitable then of course there is nothing else to be said.

But our game presupposes that as Hitler you might NOT be a madman, or as Stalin not a vicious paranoid, or as Churchill only desirous of keeping Britain named Great Britain, or as Roosevelt you won't die untimely. One of the most attractive parts of the game is not the ten variants, but the ability of players to rewrite history through alternate arrangements and policy.

The examples of the time prove many of these points. Spain was a fascist power, but it did NOT join the struggle against the west. Italy, up to Munich, was more sympathetic to the West than Germany. There is nothing to have prevented Italy from NOT going to war. Had she done so she might have survived the war intact, and followed the course of Spain. Italy, though a major Mediterranean power, was out of her league when she dealt with Hitler. Of course, whatever arrangements are made, they can be reneged upon. The trick is to make the deal so attractive it cannot be reneged upon. Now to the details.

## GERMANY

To attain a decisive victory, Germany requires eight Victory centers. She begins the game with five: Berlin, Leipzig, Breslau, Essen, Aachen. This means that she must acquire and retain until the end of the game at least three more. "Mirabla Visu" they can be found in Poland (and you thought Hitler was mad. He just read the rules!); Warsaw, Krakow and Lvov. But even better, in 1941, two more fall into their hands; Budapest and

Ploesti (all this and troops too). In short, Germany does not have to go far afield to get their win, but, of course, she MUST hold it. Keep your eye on the bottom line! What makes victory is not your parizers slashing Russia, Luftwaffe pounding London, or the Kriegsmarine sinking ships. It is if you maintain those eight victory centers. Lose sight of that and you will doom yourself to the pursuit of ephemeral glory. Ah, but therein lies the rub. Germany can only afford to take their eight and sit if they make arrangements with the other powers. Any arrangement with another power MUST provide that that other power at the end of the game is on top with you. If you don't offer partnership in decisive victory, you won't have a deal. Accommodation with the Britain/US will almost definitely mean going one of two ways. The first and easiest will be to get the west to agree to roll over on France and give it up almost dishonestly easy (like a free trip to Paris clear of even zones of control). Only by taking France can you allow the British to get around not being able to take an allied center. In fact, the Germans must take them, and then the British must retake them later. In effect, this sort of arrangement agrees to cut up Russia, it has been determined that Russia will be the man left out. Britain will usually insist on your rolling over on Italy in return. The final tally will then look something like this. Britain holds France, Spain, England, all of Africa, Italy, Scandinavia, Yugoslavia, Greece, and possibly Turkey or Persia for its 21, Germany holding the rest. It is the easiest to arrange because it is between only two of the players, the two player allies to be axed are powerless to react against it (more so if there is no French or Italian player), and the Russian, deprived of lend lease and aid from the west (an obvious prerequisite) must fall to the German pounding. Should France be a player, and in on the deal, it becomes more difficult as replacement for the three French centers must be found for the Allies elsewhere. Budapest or Ploesti, and both Istanbul and Mosul, will compensate, but this is touchier as they involve removal of German minor allies from the map along with their troops, something the Germans, having given up so much already, should be very wary of. Should the Italians also be in on the deal with the French, that is almost impossible for their demands will remove six centers (their requirements of a decisive victory) from the Allied total. The only place to find these is South Russia, Stalingrad, Astrakan, Grozny, Maikop, Dnepetrovsk and Karkov. (Shades of Deniken and the Whites). As to the feasibility in real life, the first is definitely so. Germany was quite prepared to sell its ally down the river. After all, to Adolf, allies were only javelin catchers, and he could have, after defeating France, set Vichy up and then retreated to Germany, having been content with the destruction of the last vestige of the "Diktat" of Versailles. Not likely considering his personality, but a possibility.

Remember too the anti-communist bias in the west (read about the sentiment prior to the attack on Russia, and especially that after the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact and the truncation of Poland.) Remember that one of the reasons for the Allied attack on Norway was an attempt to bring aid to the Finns in their winter war struggle AGAINST the Soviets. Landings at Petsamo

and active operations against the Russians were contemplated. "Volunteer" units and monetary aid were sent by way of Sweden.

On the other side of the coin, there is the possibility of German rapprochement with Russia. This is less attractive in the long run, but quite so in the short run. (The short run if you intend to renege on the agreement and attack the Russians later). In the short term it allows you to concentrate all your efforts on destroying or neutralizing England, and when she is taken begin a punitive and spoiling attack on Russia. In the long term, keeping the deal will mean a number of problems. Since Russia is prevented from attacking Britain/US or France, its eight centers must be gained from neutrals. The neutrals in that area are both poor in centers and tend to be German minor allies. Norway and Sweden are allowable, Istanbul or Mosul (if the Allies have not already taken them, and since Mosul is a plum ripe to fall, depend only on Istanbul), Budapest, Belgrade. Ploesti are the ones. But they involve certain unpleasant sacrifices. These are the encirclement of Germany-Poland by the red menace, loss of ALL minor Allies, their BRP's, and units, attainment of a base BRP level of 245 for the Soviets, and if your Italian ally is a real player, the forfeiture of the areas of prime interest to HIM to the Russians. If he is a non-player this is not a difficulty. Finally, the German must realize that even given Russian docility England is much harder to take than Russia.

Generally, then, most German diplomatic arrangements will tend to involve the destruction and/or partition of the Soviet Union. But the Germans must also look for possibilities in making a deal with France alone. A quiet and tractable France secures Germany from direct invasion far more than a ton of units will do. Obviously the British/US cannot invade France, so any action MUST BE against Germany directly by the beaches east of Bremen. Not an optimum site for Overlord. This is a valuable tactic, and in fact is one of the only ones the French can use to counter a suspected sellout by the British but more of this later.

But even more important than this is the German precautions to prevent an arrangement made dealing them out! This will come primarily in two variations. A direct straightforward Britain US and Russian arrangement (France will be conquered and the game will be fought with historical parameters). Second is an Italian sellout in return for Mediterranean concessions from the Allies. Loss of the threat to the Mediterranean will mean that the British can concentrate all their power in England making Sea Lion impossible and the threat of Overlord viable almost immediately upon the agreement. To counter either of these is difficult. The British/US-Soviet is definitely a winning combination (it did, after all, win). In most cases, though Germany is defeated, the Soviets gain their victory while the US/Britain does not (in real life they got 19 to the Soviet 19, a marginal versus a decisive). The German must play on this fear in the Allies to his advantage. That is just about all he had: that and threatening to purposely concentrate much more against him than the Russians. The Russians cannot really be bullied in this, as they know they have the upper hand, and unless the Germans

are prepared to throw the game deliberately to the British/US, will probably win no matter what the Germans do. As to the Italians, it is even more difficult. Frankly, by aligning with the Germans (unless they are part of an agreement worked out with Britain/US or the Russians) all they really do is ensure that they will be attacked and probably conquered. The Germans (as in real life) have nothing to really offer them. On the other hand, alignment with Britain/US will gain (as in one of the examples) more than enough victory points and BRP's to satisfy its requirements. Promises of BRP aid are nice but ephemeral. The Italians know that when the Germans get into trouble in Russia or wherever else they decide to get into trouble, they'll waltz on the deal and keep them. Then there's the air force ... and the navy. They lose 'em, you rebuild them. In short, any competent Italian player will know all you will really do is take. Therefore, you must work on inculcating in him a fear that someone will take more. High on the list are the Russians.

### BRITAIN/US

Foremost in the British/ US player's mind should be the fact that he has to achieve the most victory centers to win. Any player who loses sight of that fact is both bound to lose and wasting his time playing. The British/US can really go only one of two ways; either rapprochement with Germany or arrangement with Russia. Both involve great difficulties. Arrangement with Russia means a long, hard slugging match that might end in defeat, and almost certainly will mean less than decisive victory. Arrangement with Germany will mean on the one hand the abandonment of Allies (France and Italy), or on the other hand, harvesting your victory centers in Southern Russia "taken back" by gratis from the Germans. (He puts a 1-3 on them and you take it with armour and air force.) Remember that you begin the game with seven centers, and to win must get 14 more. Agreement with Germany means finding them in France, Italy and the neutrals; or else, if these powers are in on the deal, occupying ALL OF RUSSIA AND POLAND or its equivalent. Not an easy task. (Re-establish the Tzar?) To balance this difficulty the British/US are provided with by far the most attractive items to offer to either of the totalitarian powers. To the Germans they can offer an absolutely free hand in Russia, and NO BRP AID! To the Russians they can offer the second front which is really all that is going to save them from the Germans. (Not necessarily the invasion, but the drain on front line troops caused by the need to garrison the beaches and capitals.)

Then Britain will have people coming to them rather than the other way around. As to a Russian-German pact, these things really suit the contracting parties poorly and are not likely to last. If, however, Britain expects it will hold then the only thing for it is to try to unite France and Italy. This is done by guaranteeing Italy's neutrality by concessions in the Balkans and all out support of France.

The most fruitful ground for negotiations and arrangement though is Italy.

The gift of a benevolent Italy is the gift of the game. Consider: With Italy neutral (or friendly), all forces from the Mediterranean can be stripped for home defense and Europe. It means that the British and the French can, between them, maintain six air flotillas, the equal of the Germans! This alone will almost ensure that France will never fall. Without decisive air superiority the Germans must bludgeon, not blitz. Any gains made can be retaken in no cost attrition options. It means with the excess units that there can be NO Sea Lion, and almost unlimited SR to the continent, with the French fleet doing all of it and the remainder of the British ready to intercept the Germans. In short, without Mediterranean considerations to worry about, the best the Germans can hope for is to get to the outskirts of Paris by the time the Americans (or the Russians) come in.

This will have further repercussions. In a very great sense the stance Italy takes will affect Russia. Russia might be prepared to sell you out to the Germans under normal circumstances, but he will be most unwilling to do so if he knows the Germans will not have Italy as their ally and are so much the weaker.

Thus, in effect, lining Italy on your side will almost certainly bring in Russia. If he does not, then he must declare against Italy and by default, Germany

As I have said before, you have the most to offer Italy. Conversely, having Italy on your side will make Germany more willing to "go east, young man, go east". After all, no Africa Corps ... no Italian air force ... no fleets, etc.

### RUSSIA

As the Russian player, you must never let one thing out of your mind. That is that both sides, Britain/US and France, and the Germans/Italians (or whatever combination) have much more to gain from seeing you skinned alive than not. You must be very wary for both camps will want to deal you down the river.

Face it, Ivan, you're NOT part of the Allies. The British/US would be more than happy to see the Germans carve you up instead of them, and the Germans would like that just fine. The other side of the coin is not so nice. You could offer the Germans freedom of action to turn against the west, but there are two serious flaws to that. The first being that the west is much harder to defeat than you. The second is that you will require your victory centers from the most inconvenient places (German minor allies and the Balkans). The most opportune deal for you is part of the aforementioned Italian sell out.

This will work because you provide a drag on German forces during the years they are fighting alone against France, and as such the Allies would very much like to have you. Secondly, it is rather easy to take the cities in Poland and possibly a few in Germany to get your victory. On the other hand, if the Germans make the deal with the British. you are not an odds on favorite to survive. Generally then, in most arrangements, the savior of Holy Mother Russia will be the Red Army. Skillful handling of your troops is the only thing that will save you in the face of an arrangement unfriendly to you. Not

that you stand a chance of winning alone, but you might induce the Allies to renege on their agreement with the Germans and attack anyway. Generally though the outlook in the diplomatic field for you is pretty bleak.

I would like to take a moment here to digress. Many players may consider this situation entirely unrealistic and biased. That it may be biased is true, that it is unrealistic is certainly false. As I have said before, there was great anti-communist sentiment rampant in Europe prior to WWII. Especially in France and England. In France the rather strong showing of the communists in the elections of the '30's scared the rightists out of their wits. The revolving door quality of French governments of that time was due not only to ineptitude and scandal but also to the absolute refusal of many rightist and centralist parties to have anything to do with the communists, and further their refusal to have anything to do with any party that would have something to do with the communists. The "Front Populaire" which gave France its only government of any length in the '30's was constantly plagued with dissensions between Fascist, Monarchist/Bonapartist, Centerists, Liberals, Socialists and Communist parties. The government it provided could thus be nothing but barely effective and not in any sense adequate. (There were at last count something more than 390 separate parties in France, which I believe is more than the number of species of cockroach). In England, although the party system was not as bad, the fear of communism to the much more numerous and wealthy upper middle (and for that matter lower) classes accounted for the resentment. Remember revolution appeals only to people who have nothing to lose. To a great extent the French communists came from just this group. The English, even the lower classes, on the other hand had a very great deal to lose. Then too there was the British Foreign Service which must be considered truly elephantine in its memory of the withdrawal of Russia from World War I. The British knew they almost lost the war in 1918 because of that, and their experiences with the White armies and the Bolsheviks left them with a bad taste in their mouths. Further, for most of the inter-war years the great fear was not of German expansion but of Russian. German rearmament and Hitlerian bellicosity came only in the last five years before the war, and the truly rabid stage but a mere two or three. German demands in territory and national sovereignty were, when viewed from the principles of self-determination as expounded in the 14 points, entirely legitimate, nay, even in view of much of the Versailles provisions not explicitly aimed at Germany they were legitimate. The rearmament of Germany was both excused and welcomed in the west as a counter to the threat of Soviet Communism! (Though it must be admitted this attitude prevailed more in England than in France). Prior to Hitler the big bogeyman of Europe was the Russians. And it must be added in all fairness that the Russians did not help improve the picture. It was their age of unfeigned attempts at world revolution. All nations were crippled by strikes and civil labor disputes which while in some cases were not directly sparked by the communists, they nevertheless temied to move into the forefront after they got

started and constitute the most violent, vocal and visible elements. The Russian government itself openly and publicly proclaimed its intention to "strike, disrupt and delay", all workings of the capitalist state. Top this off with the vivisection of Poland, devouring of the Baltic states, and the Winter War and you begin to wonder why Churchill ever turned Hitler's deal down!

In short, the game represents exactly the difficulty the Russians would have in selling any sort of rapprochement with the west (provided Hitler wanted to deal). Churchill said that to defeat Hitler he would ally with the devil if need be, well he did. In the game there is little to gain from a Russian alliance unless the Germans will not deal. The course of history after the war has proven that there was little to gain from an alliance with the Russians *then*.

### ITALY

I suppose I have always had a soft spot in my heart for Italy, both historically and in the game. Those beautiful off-white ships of the Navy, those wonderful wonderfols in the Reigna Aeronautica, the laughable tanks ... Ahh, all this and cavalry too! But in the game, Italy has to win on more than sentimentality. With a requirement of six victory centers, Italy does not have to gain many, two in fact. She already possesses four, Genoa, Milan, Rome and Tripoli. Luckily Yugoslavia and Greece fit the bill nicely. They are also small, relatively poor and highly inaccessible countries vis a vis the Allies. On the other hand, that wonderful prohibition against the Germans from attacking them seals off the only viable assault route on these neutral centers. Italy itself is not easy to assault amphibiously. There are two choices for Italy. She can declare war or not declare war. Not declaring war will be profitable only if an agreement is reached with the Allies that will allow Italy freedom to take her centers at her leisure and then stand pat. It is perhaps the trump card of the Italians, and in fact is one of the most powerful deals in the game. Certainly it can be the most far-reaching of any of them. Any other accommodation with the Allies should be avoided. Such other arrangements will without fail involve declaring war on the Allies. The Allies might offer Malta or the centers of South France, but I think this is a bad bet. Peace, like virginity, once broken can never be mended. The Italian paucity of BRP's at least early in the game, works to her advantage because to declare war consumes so much of them. Hence they act as a guarantee to Italy's friendly compliance rather than a spur to attack the Allies. The second alternative is to attack. I consider this by far the lesser of the two because:

1. The BRP cost.
2. The difficulty of attaining any neutral centers (the Krauts hog it all for themselves). Denied the easy kills, all that is left is the rocky road to Suez.
3. The difficulty of getting and retaining any centers taken from the Allies (taking them usually means bringing the Germans along and you know how the neighborhood goes down when they move in.)

4. You get your fun early in the war, but you are very soon called upon to send 10 factors (usually your air) to do Hitler's bidding (some crummy interception or soakoff), usually in Russia where you have ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO GAIN!
5. Being the weak member of the alliance, when the British/US make their return you are going to be the first to die. There are however very good reasons for throwing in with the Germans. Perhaps the best is the historical one. (Mussolini believed the Allies were turkeys and couldn't figure out the rules, and Hitler could.) If you have a strong sense that this may be true in the game you are playing then by all means throw in with the Germans.

On the other hand the Allies may not deal. In this case you should still make a pretense of dealing with the Allies (the German will never really know) and extract a full pound of flesh from the Germans for any aid you give them. By this I mean the following.

1. Make SURE you get the Greek and Yugoslav centers and BRP's.
2. Make sure the Germans give you some BR P's besides.
3. Stipulate quite clearly to the Germans that no troops to Russia, in fact no Italians outside of the Mediterranean, and Malta MUST be reduced and the Germans MUST do it all. (Get them to use their air force to counterair) and YOU take possession of it.

These are the very concessions the Italians wanted from the Germans, but backed down on. I consider it imperative to ask for them. Not to the letter, of course, the Germans will always welch on some of them but having so many you cushion yourself and will wind up with just the number you can hold and really need. Also the two variants numbers 4 and 9 increase immensely the Italian bargaining position with either side.

The watchword for the Italians is "To the British, treat 'em nice, to the Germans, make 'em pay".

## FRANCE

Of all the powers, France has to do the least to win, all she had to do is survive. The three she starts with are all she needs to win. But to survive is a neat trick. The difficulties are many. Weak army, weak air force, weak position, weak BRP's. Further, you have an Ally (Britain/ US) who stands to gain a lot by casting you to the wolves. No BEF in 1940 is like a day without sunshine. Ah, but two can play that game. Selling the British out to the Germans is a good trick, and really devastating. The Germans can then turn against Russia and the neutrals and win, and the British will be out in the cold to even get a stalemate. Remember, French friendship will guard the beaches of Normandy better than a thousand Atlantic Walls. The French should be pushing the British to seek an Eastern solution to Hitler's egomania, after all, better the borscht eaters than them. Both variant 1 and 2 help the French attain these goals in making them a more viable partner in a war.

The key to France in the game is to make any deal that will allow you to survive! If you do that, you've made it to the top. (See, the Maginot line was useful after all.)

Central to all these arrangements is a timetable of turnover. What that is is a general agreement as to when in time the centers to be turned over are done so. If the centers do not confer any specific benefit or BRP's this is not of major importance. However, when they do, fairly restrictive guidelines should be set. Remember that the clock is always running, and as the game wends on, your time for relysial against an ally who cheats on his agreement is fast slipping away. Remember that when you deal for Budapest and Ploesti which involve BRP's and German minor Allies. He may well want them at the end of the game just at the point when you want your centers! This is an added factor to consider when dealing for these areas of the countryside. You can allow your partner in the arrangement a turn or two of grace, but you can't take "next turn" for an answer forever.

Good luck and don't take Russia!