

STATREP

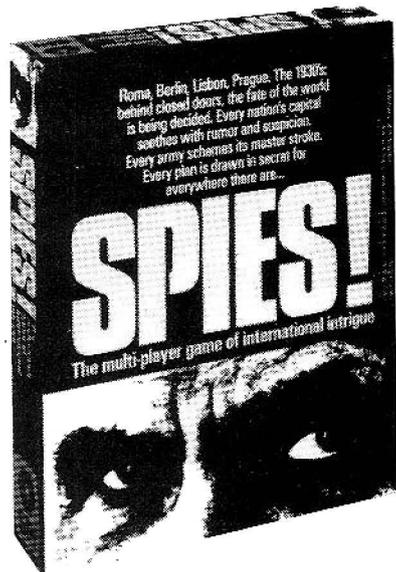
# SPIES!

## A Statistical Report of Game Characteristics

by Claude Bloodgood

Lightning-fast decisions and narrow escapes are just the tip of the iceberg in *SPIES!* Anything can happen, and usually does when least expected. A secret is discovered, a spy sanctioned, escape impossible because money is lacking to finance it. Enemy police must be avoided unless your spies have papers, and allies are always questionable at best.

*SPIES!* is a dual-level game, and this report is focused on the short game; all statistics were compiled from short game play. A future report will explore the long game which is even better.



Having a multi-player game to review is quite a bit more challenging than the more common two player games, but it is interesting. *SPIES!* can be played by as few as two, but it is really a five player game. Statistics were compiled from five player games only. Sides were rotated as often as possible, with as many players changing as was practicable. Most players tried at least two sides; many played all five.

Luck and skill are key factors in *SPIES!* Quick-thinking players win more frequently than careful plotters. An ability to make alliances and discard them at critical points is essential.

*SPIES!* is an excellent family game for adults and teens. Reading chits and acting on what is read would make it difficult for younger children. This game is highly recommended!

### Statistical Analysis

#### Participating Players: 64

79.0% of active players selected *SPIES!* from an inventory of more than 85 titles available during the 45 days ending 10/13/81.

#### Repeat Players: 57

89.1% of 64 participants played *SPIES!* again after completing one game. Because *SPIES!* is a multi-player game, set-play has not been utilized for statistical purposes.

#### Total Games Played: 35

This number is really significant when the number of players and limited time (45 days) is considered. *SPIES!* generates lots of interest!

#### Average Playing Time: 4.61 hours

Total playing time was 161½ hours for 35 games. New players can expect their first game to take about 6 hours *unless* at least one player is experienced with *SPIES!* The average playing time should run between 3½ and 4 hours with five experienced players.

#### Shortest Complete Game: 3.25 hours

Five experienced *SPIES!* participants had no trouble getting below the 4 hour game length repeatedly.

#### Longest Recorded Game: 7.10 hours

Five inexperienced players trying *SPIES!* for the first time.

#### Best Side Results: Multi-player game

Germans scored 14 wins. British had 12 wins, while others struggled. French (5), Russian (3), and Italian (1) combined wins totalled only 9.

#### Game Imbalance: Multi-player game

Results suggest that Germans and British have the major advantage, but while the Italians won only once they came in second 19 times. A well balanced game with everyone having a chance, *SPIES!* depends on rapid decisions and luck.

### Game Balance Analysis

The short game is essentially a fun game with good play balance. The results are mis-

leading since a lot of key mistakes destroyed winning chances for all sides. The Russian side is the weakest, yet is quite playable. Overall play balance is very good.

#### Play Balance: 8.70

Average of 64 responses. 9 is perfectly balanced; 1 is totally unbalanced.

#### Playability: 8.89

Average of 64 responses. 9 is supremely playable; 1 is unplayable.

#### Length of Game: 7.05

Average of 64 responses. 9 is exactly the correct length; 1 is much too long or short.

#### Game Challenge: 8.61

Average of 64 responses. 9 is extremely challenging; 1 is no challenge.

#### Rules Dispute: 8.27

Average of 64 responses. 9 is none of consequence; 1 is constant disputes.

### Comments on the Game System

*SPIES!* offers real enjoyment and challenge with one of the briefest and clearest set of rules around. It is difficult to anticipate the real complexity of the game when reading the rules, but once play begins it quickly becomes apparent that *SPIES!* is not for slow thinkers. Each action taken can have sudden repercussions as well as potential benefits. Players must cope with four opponents, each capable of affecting the outcome. The rules do not interfere with play. The mechanics are simple, and the game is a delight to play. ■■



Reduced version of part of the *SPIES!* map.