Some Games from the Dutch

“Children’s Newspaper”

De Kinder-Courant

Article by Fred Horn

Each week, from July 1, 1852 up to sometime in 1905, a special children’s newspaper existed in Holland. Educational articles and interesting facts were the bulk of the writing, but on occasion entertaining articles were added, like puzzles and small funny stories.

Also, from time to time, an extra feature was added to the paper—the ‘so-called’ “Centsprenten”—a more or less only Dutch phenomenon. A few of these games, to be glued onto cardboard for use. We do not know how many games were published during all those years as no index was ever added to the paper. And because of their age, along with the fact that they were “added to” as well as it was play material for kids are the reasons only a few survived. To date we know of:

NIEUW GARIBALDI-SPEL
(from August 7, 1860)

NIEUW SPOORWEG SPEL
(from c. 1860)

Railway-Goose Game (no name)
(from c. 1870)

GRENADIERRSPEL
(from c. 1875)

Quartet with Flowers (no name)
(from 1902)

Different cards were printed (9 each time) on a page in each weekly issue over a longer period.

It seems at first sight, that the surviving ones also have interesting features for adults, as will become clear in the showing of two board games out of these five mentioned games. For more information (in Dutch) on the games look at:


I will start with an amazing one:

NIEUW GARIBALDI-SPEL

This is the most interesting game because the play principle is not Goose-like but an extended variant of “Asalto.” And it is the only one where a) the explanation on how to make the game and its pieces is included with the game, and b) the game rules survived.

The name of the game is taken from Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882). Garibaldi was a nationalist fighter for the unification of Italy (the Risorgimento). From 1860 on he fought with his men (the Red-shirts) for Italy’s freedom.

Garibaldi is headlined at this moment in most of the newspapers, and his name is mentioned everywhere, nearly in the whole of Europe. Will this game find a small place in your playthings’ locker, and give you a lot of pleasant moments, which will reward me plentifully for my effort I put into it.

And next, information about the game.

Color all striped lines red, and after that glue the game (on cardboard —FH). First I advise you to add some colors to the map; most of you must have drawn maps at school, so you are aware how to do this. To others, I advise you to pick up an atlas, and use its maps as a model when coloring.

In advance, you have to construct 30 little soldiers, identical to the adjoining pictured one, or anything else you wish, and attach these to pieces of cork or wood; the best thing is to turn it on a lathe from timber. Two of these soldiers must have a distinctive mark; for example a red painted bonnet, because they will represent Garibaldi and Massini, who have to defend the fortress/stronghold in Sicily. The other 37 pieces can remain as originally made, with the exception of one, representing the king of Naples. I will advise to color this one blue, which gives at best his state of mind, because of his ultimate wish to “leave the case blue, blue” (This is a Dutch saying: blauw, blauw laten, which means; “do not act and suppose nothing is happening” —FH).

The before mentioned 37 men must be placed in Naples, on the dots, which are connected by the black lines. When all are posted just seven dots remain empty between Naples and Sicily. Garibaldi and Massini must be posted, one at the left- and the other at the right-side of the fortress/stronghold, in such a way that the dot at Catania in between is not occupied.

When all the men are placed in position, the Napolitans begin with an outbreak, that is, they can move along the black lines to unoccupied dots. They are not allowed to move along the red lines: they must always move forward and never backwards, and their goal is to conquer the stronghold of Sicily, which will be successful, after Garibaldi and Massini are driven away, and the complete fortress is filled up with Napolitans on all of the dots (N.B. One of the crossings of the lines in the fortress of Sicily has no dot. This may be an error.

—FH), or by immobilization of both

Translation:

AMUSING THINGS

A few words concerning the “Nieuw Garibaldi-spel”

I have once again ventured to be helpful to the respected editorial staff in their difficult task: if I did succeed, it is to the judgment of the kind subscribers, to whom I hereby offer my “Nieuw Garibaldi-spel.”

He conquered Sicily in 1860 and a year later he invaded Calabria on the mainland out of Catania and brought the kingdom of Napels to an end after the capture of the town of Napels. This game represents the events from 1860.

Game sheet opposite page

From the collection of Eric van Waarden
gentlemen, in such a way that they have no escape route and have to surrender. The king of Napels must be placed upon the dot, nearest to (the town of—FH) Napels, and he is not allowed to move from there, but only when forced to do so out of the strongest need, because when he is taken prisoner by Garibaldi or Massini, the game ends, and the siege is theirs.

Speaking of Garibaldi, he is a man, who cannot be chained, and thus moves along the black as well as the red lines, and also goes forward or backwards as he wishes; but he also must, along with Massini (sic.), defend the stronghold Sicily; he also is allowed to penetrate Napels, and he has the rights to defeat every Napolitan, who comes too close.

Defeating an opponent is done in the way a capture is done in Dam (Checkers—FH). You sure will know how that works.

Before starting the game each player has to siake a ‘bagatel’ (I think this means something of a coin or sweetie or so —FH), which the winner receives at the end of the game.

When a Napolitan dares to move along the black lines, Garibaldi is allowed to capture him as a prisoner, and removes him from the board. To end, be lucky at play! Think hard each time on how to move, because making one slip can make you lose the whole game—adieu!

Greetings from: 7 Aug. 1860. C. H. R.

Note: the graphic on p. 25 is from the collection Eric van Waarden. The author suggested it be reproduced as a full page so one could utilize it as a game board.

The above translated rules are more or less an exact representation of the original text. Sadly not everything is as clear as one would wish.

a) The role of the other freedom fighter Massini is not explained at all! Does he have to stay in the stronghold Sicily? That is in contradiction with the rule that the Napolitans must capture ALL dots in Sicily to win.

Does he moves like Garibaldi? That seems the best option because somewhere it is stated that both Garibaldi and Massini can imprison the king of Napels to win. Also the taking of opponent soldiers must be like Garibaldi’s.

b) What to do with the king of Napels? When is he allowed to move? What is ‘the strongest need?’ An additional rule on how and when to move the king would sure be helpful.

c) Is the missing dot in Sicily an error or is Sicily conquered when 12 soldiers occupy the 12 dots?

After showing the concept of my article about the “Kinder Courant” to my friend Eric van Waarden, he sent me another GARIBALDI-SPEL from the past. The game pictured above is from the collection of “Het Openlucht Museum” in Arnhem. It was published by G. van der Werf te Veendam circa 1860 (size: 45 x 56 cm.) The game is played with three dice and printed in black. The original version has a colored Italian flag.

A typical “poster” that was meant to be hung in the shops where one could buy the paper (“Om in de Winkel op te hangen” = To hang it in the Shop on the wall).

A
A GAME BY ANY OTHER NAME

by Bruce Whitehill

The second game is from my own collection, now part of the collection of games at the Vlaams Spellenarchief in Brugge, Belgium.

This game is a so-called: “Take and Put Away” game, and played with two dice. The board is in fact an information sheet illustrating how to handle the situation when a certain combination of the two dice are thrown.

There is also a “Pot” where players ‘put in’ (zet) or ‘take out’ (trek) the corresponding number of chips that matches their throw.

...Might just be the same game. Mah-Jongg, the game that came over from China in 1922 and was “translated” from Chinese characters into English text, was copyrighted by J. P. Babcock, whose rules became the “Hoyle” of the American game. The “Mah-Jongg Company of China,” in Shanghai, established a “Mah-Jongg Sales Company of America.” They took out the trademark and, on their games and books, wrote, “If It Isn’t Marked Mah-Jongg It isn’t Genuine.” And, if that weren’t enough, “Mah-Jongg Is Not Sold Under Any Other Name or Trade-Mark.”

Mah-Jongg became very popular very fast in America. What was any other company to do if they also wanted to cash in on the craze and make some ungerenuine sets? How about the game of Ma-Jong? Hang on a minute—if we get rid of the hyphen and drop the second “g” but keep the “h,” we can also sell Mah-Jong. Wow, we haven’t seen anything like this since Ping Pong. I mean Table Tennis. (The story is so moving, I have to pause here a moment to grab a Kleenex.)

By the way, if you’re playing with friends, feel free to call the game with the “J” of the “Jongg” part pronounced like the second “g” in “garage.” But if you’re playing with an elite group of noisy tile-splitters, it might be best to say “Mah-Yong.”


Rules for Majong, 1923, Craftmaster Corporation: 24 pages copy

How to Play Mah Jong, 1923, Joan Bray, G. P. Putnam’s Sons: hardcover, 164 pages copy


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