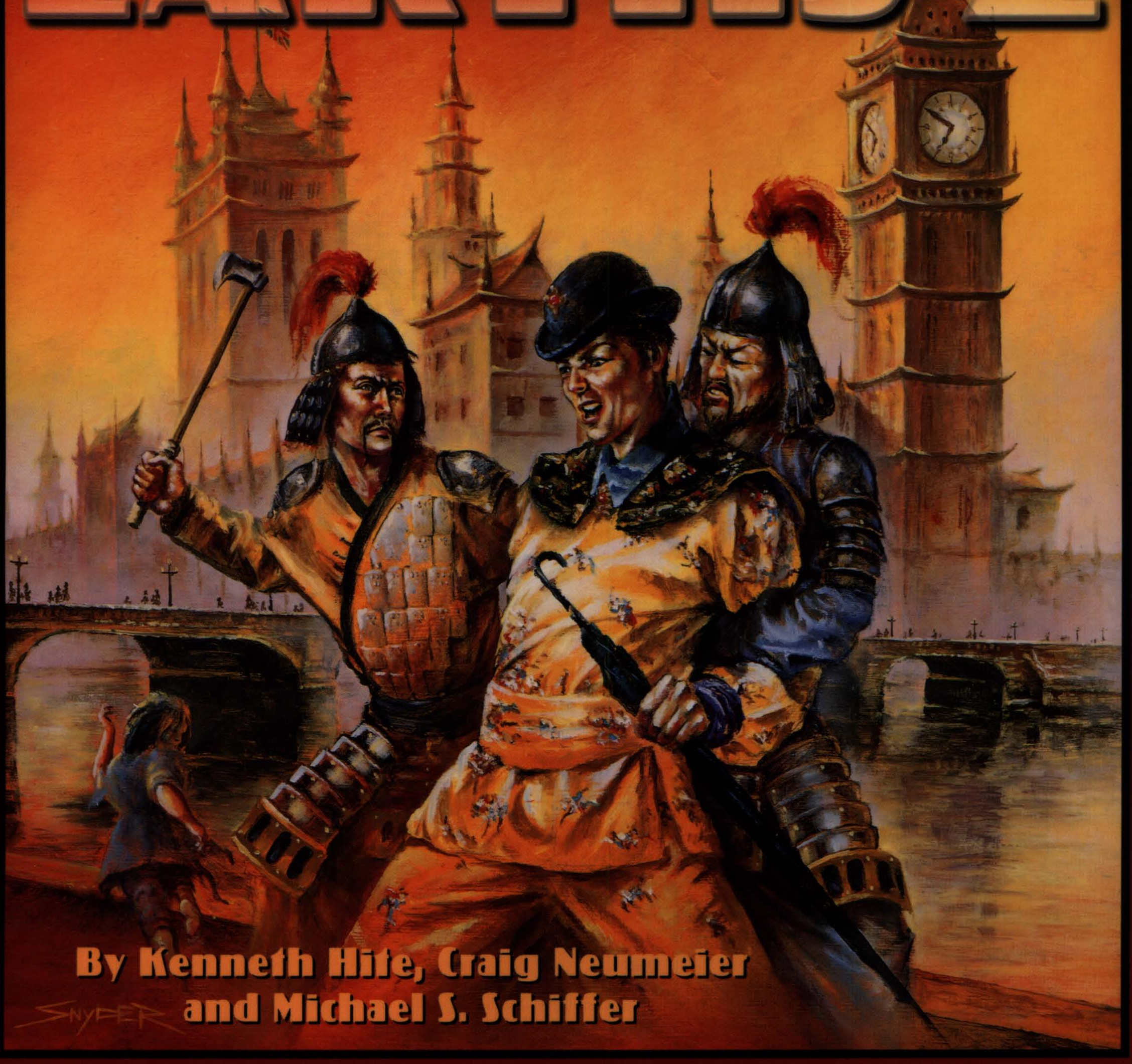
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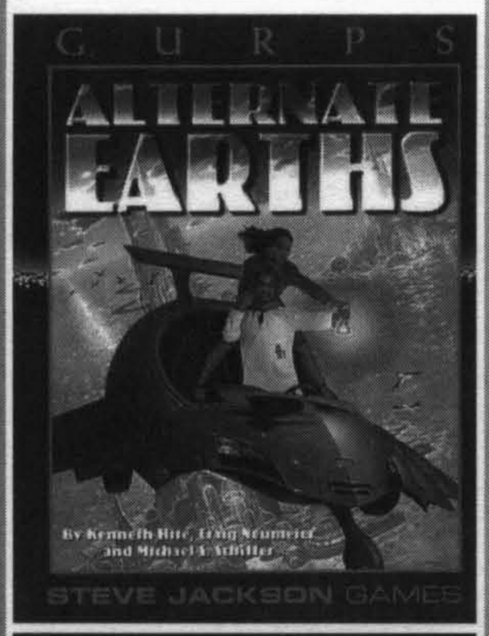


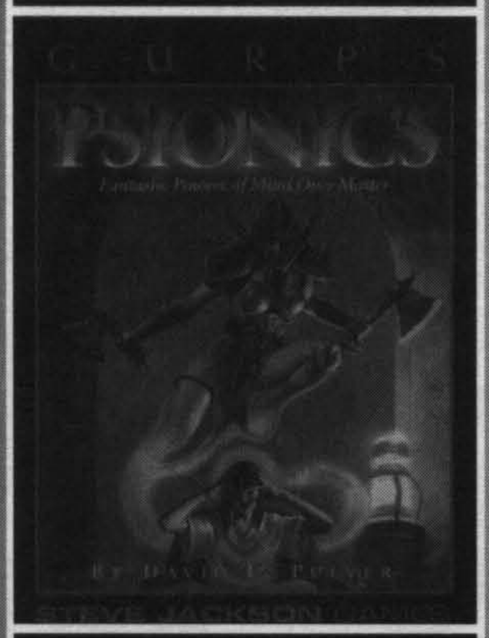
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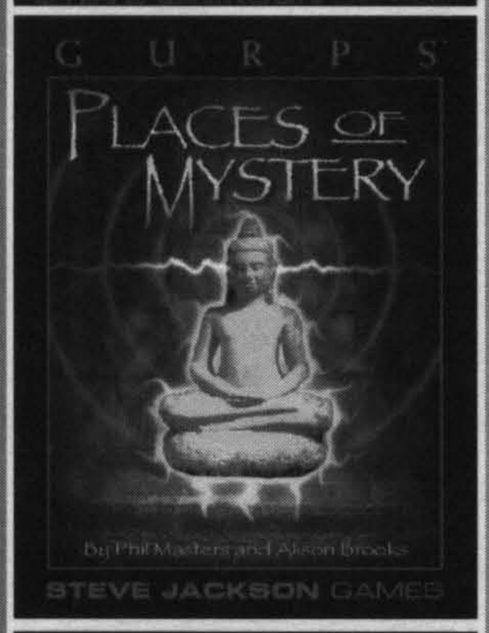
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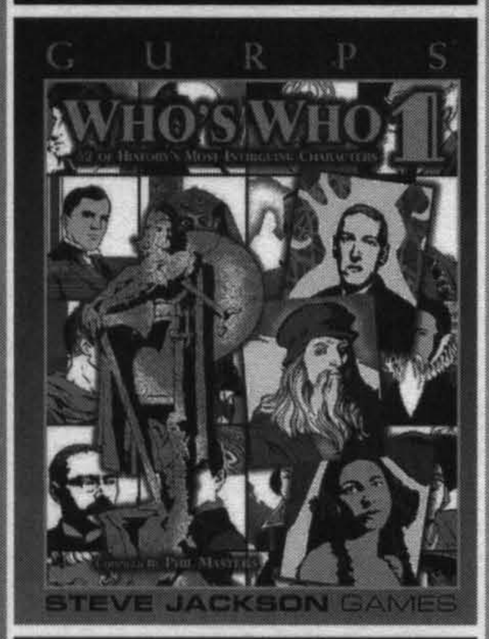
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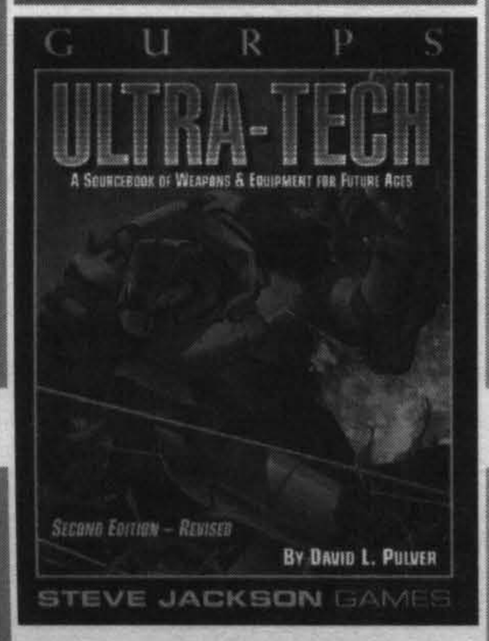
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# ALTERNATE EARTHS 2

## Further Explorations into Infinite Worlds

*by Kenneth Hite, Craig Neumeier, and Michael S. Schiffer*

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# INTRODUCTION

## About *GURPS*

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*GURPSnet.* Much of the online discussion of ***GURPS*** happens on this e-mail list. To join, send mail to majordomo@io.com with "subscribe GURPSnet-L" in the body, or point your World Wide Web browser to **http://gurpsnet.sjgames.com/**.

The ***GURPS Alternate Earths 2*** web page has updates, resources, and links at **www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/altearths2**.

## Page References

Any page reference that begins with a B refers to ***GURPS Basic Set,*** *Third Edition Revised;* e.g., p. B144 refers to page 144 of ***Basic Set.*** CI refers to ***Compendium I,*** CII to ***Compendium II,*** GT to ***GURPS Traveller***, T:BC to ***Traveller: Behind the Claw,*** S to ***Space,*** and so on. See ***GURPS Compendium I,*** p. 181, for a full list of abbreviations for ***GURPS*** titles. Or visit **www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html** for an up-to-date list.

*To me, all the past is alive with alternatives, and nobody can show, nobody has really attempted to show, that they were not real alternatives.*
*– G.K. Chesterton*

*When we realize that the actual outcome did not have to be, that any alteration in any step along the way would have unleashed a cascade down a different channel, we grasp the causal power of individual events. . . . Contingency is the affirmation of control by immediate events over destiny, the kingdom lost for want of a horseshoe nail.*
*– Stephen Jay Gould*

*History is the sum total of things that might have been avoided.*
*– Konrad Adenauer*

Alternate Earths are worlds that might have been – the results of decisions that were not made, or random events that happened differently. Even a small change in the past can snowball until "today" is entirely different, a world which has never known the United States of America, or has already reached the stars. Whether resulting from alterations made by time travelers, or existing in parallel dimensions of reality, such alternate histories are a staple of science fiction.

***GURPS Time Travel*** gives guidelines for role-playing a campaign across many eras and/or timelines, and presents the "Infinite Worlds" campaign, a frame for crossworld gaming. The first ***GURPS Alternate Earths*** presented six parallel worlds which demonstrated the many possibilities of alternate-history settings. Demonstrated, without exhausting – six of an infinity.

This sourcebook is a sequel in theme and style, but not in content: the worlds of this volume have no connection with those of its predecessor. ***GURPS Alternate Earths 2*** presents six more timelines for use as a few among the Infinite Worlds, or as independent settings. Each chapter also includes notes on designing characters and campaigns specific to the individual timelines.

## About the Authors

*Kenneth Hite* has an M.A. in International Relations from the University of Chicago, and it looks very nice in its leatherette folder. He has been writing games since 1981, and writing them professionally since 1995. He is currently the Line Developer for the ***Star Trek Roleplaying Game*** from Last Unicorn Games, and his weekly "Suppressed Transmission" column in *Pyramid* lets him write off the oddest books on his taxes. His wife, Sheila, has no cause for alarm.

*Craig Neumeier* got a history degree and game writing collaborators at the University of Chicago, and has not regretted either (yet). A roleplayer since 1980, he steadfastly maintains the soc.history.what-if FAQ against all enemies, foreign and domestic. He has a Master's degree in history from the University of Minnesota, specializing narrowly in a single timeline.

*Michael S. Schiffer* has been roleplaying since 1979. He, Ken, and Craig began collaborating on alternate histories at the University of Chicago, where he earned a B.A. in history. With degrees in both law and library science, Mike works in Chicago as a reference librarian, which comes in amazingly handy. His wife Linda is very tolerant.

# 1 AGAIN, INFINITE WORLDS



## Homeline and Infinity

Homeline, as described in ***GURPS Time Travel***, is an alternate history very close to our Earth, diverging with the invention of parachronics by Paul Van Zandt in 1994; the current year is 2015. Parachronics is a monopoly of the Van Zandt's umbrella corporation Infinity Unlimited, which licenses it to other groups but retains supervisory rights.

Infinity has branches of researchers, merchants (White Star Trading), and a non-profit charity group. It also serves as legal custodian of the other timelines, and insists that Homeline organizations keep security, protect the environment, and "better the lot" of the natives before giving them development contracts. The most likely employer of a PC group is the Infinity Patrol, the enforcement arm. The Patrol audits Homeline activities in other worlds, rescues lost travelers, and keeps "the Secret" (of the existence of crossworld travel) from getting out to other timelines. It has also acquired the job of defending the worlds against Centrum. The I-Cops can field over ten thousand agents . . . which still leaves them spread grossly thin among the hundreds of known parallels.

## Campaign Crossovers

Any of the scores of ***GURPS*** supplements could find use in an alternate worlds game. Some specific suggestions are given in other chapters. More generally, the historical sourcebooks ***GURPS Vikings, GURPS Russia, GURPS China,*** and ***GURPS Arabian Nights*** are immediately relevant to the worlds presented here. The first ***GURPS Alternate Earths*** presented some ideas for adapting other sourcebooks for use with parallel worlds, and in that tradition.

### *GURPS Technomancer*

A world already part of the "Infinite Worlds" setting, which could develop crossworld travel based on technology, magic, or a unique combination of the two. It would be a particularly suitable home base for a campaign in which *both* magic and technology work to traverse the dimensions, and worlds that specialize in one are usually hostile to the other.

*Continued on next page . . .*

# Crossworld Campaigning

This sourcebook presents six alternate histories designed as adventure or campaign settings. Like the first ***GURPS Alternate Earths***, it is particularly intended for use with the "Infinite Worlds" campaign presented in ***GURPS Time Travel***. Five of these worlds can also be used alone or in other paratime settings. The last, Centrum, is the campaign villain from the "Infinite Worlds" setting (see sidebar and pp. TT84-112 for the campaign heroes). It could be inserted into any crossworld game that needs an enemy: the Centrans are expansionist, paranoid and ruthless, but not unrelentingly evil. (For a pure villain, give crosstime travel to Reich-5 from ***GURPS Alternate Earths***.)

## The Alternate-Based Campaign

Each world in this sourcebook includes notes on running a campaign in that setting. All are in the midst of unsettled periods, so character groups should not lack for things to do. Although similar to straightforward historical games, such campaigns' displacement from reality allows the GM to push some element beyond the confines of history: the Norse of Midgard go a-viking on a *much* broader stage, and China's real-life decadent empires pale in comparison with Ming-3. It also frees the game from concerns of strict historical accuracy – especially important for GMs with inconveniently knowledgeable players.

Each chapter also gives some suggestions for adding cinematic or fantastic elements. Aeolus is a world on the brink of change, in which scientists could make fantastic discoveries or explorers uncover lost secrets without seeming out of place, while the grim tone of Cornwallis lends itself to conspiracies and Illumination. In Midgard and Ming-3, most people still believe in magic of one form or another: perhaps they're right. Caliph, of course, is already a science fiction setting.

## Parallel-World Campaigns

A game could also involve visits to more than one parallel world. The discovery of other timelines can "open up" any campaign into a larger framework, though the usual warnings about major changes to a campaign setting apply. In particular, take care to avoid a spiraling increase in power.

### The World Gate

The simplest variety, often found in fiction, limits the accessible worlds to two, an origin (usually Earth) and a destination. Characters from our world can be flung into any of these alternate histories, providing both an unusual setting for a campaign and PCs with a familiar cultural background: players may enjoy the opportunity to explore a new world along with their characters.

Characters can seek out whatever power was responsible for the transference, trying to find their way back home. If the transference can be repeated, getting back will just be the beginning: access to another reality will likely change both worlds a great deal, and the PCs, as the ones who know the way, become very important people. Or they can forget about their original world, find niches in the new world, and settle in. This path is the one most often taken in fiction (romance subplots are nearly required). Some knowledge of modern technology will give characters an edge in most of the timelines in this book, *if* they can survive long enough to make use of it.

## Agents

Games involving travel to many different timelines typically have the PCs employed by some sort of crossworld agency. A covert group which explores and polices the parallel worlds, such as the Infinity Patrol (see sidebar and pp. TT99-102), is perhaps the most common. But other sorts of organizations are perfectly possible: a merchant company could make enormous profits from paratemporal trade, even if required to keep their origins secret. Homeline's Time Tours, Ltd. (pp. TT108-111) is a crosstime tourist agency with a tendency to stumble into adventure situations, at least when the tourists or guides are PCs.

The major advantage to this campaign frame is that it gives the PCs direction in the midst of a setting which can be paralyzingly vast. They may have considerable leeway in how to accomplish their assignments, but they also have a solid reason for going to particular worlds, and clear goals for their activities once they get there.



## Independents

A game of independent world-jumpers will need either a clear campaign goal, or limited control over their destinations, or both – otherwise they are *bound* to go to worlds the GM hasn't prepared. A classic option is the travelers who don't have control over their destination – whether seeking a way home (the *Sliders* option), or just flitting about doing good deeds (the *Doctor Who* option).

Or they could be among the few who know how to travel among a limited set of worlds. This campaign frame could keep the PCs busy with other groups who are abusing the secrets of crossworld travel. Alternatively (or once the villains have been vanquished), the campaign could focus on the PCs themselves, and how to use their knowledge of crossworld travel without becoming villains in turn. Is it better to let the various timelines develop on their own, or should the resources of the advanced worlds be used to help the more primitive? And what to do about that world where magic seems to work?

## Campaign Crossovers (Continued)

### *GURPS Illuminati*

Any world can be Illuminated, of course – but is the Conspiracy in one world just a branch of the real trans-universal Conspiracy (in which case, anyone who stumbles on parachronics becomes a direct threat to Them), or are they parallel organizations locked in mortal combat? Maybe there are lots of Illuminati, and all of them have parallel versions, so the Bavarians of one timeline may fight the Bavarians of another with the help of the local Templars. In any case, switching people from one world to another every now and then is just the sort of unfathomable thing they do. (A psychology experiment? Restoring the temporal balance? *Upsetting* the temporal balance?)

### *GURPS Places of Mystery*

If a campaign is to start by switching characters from one world to another, there is a lot of fictional precedent for having the worldgate appear in a mystically significant ruin. The barriers between worlds are thinnest there, and many of the sites will be just the same in an alternate timeline. Maybe the gate depends on an astrological conjunction, or maybe the PCs can find out how to open it again . . . but will it lead home, or to a different world entirely?

### *GURPS Dinosaurs*

Sooner or later, crossworld travelers are bound to run into a world that mimics Earth of the *really distant* past. Crossworld merchants may be interested in setting up a dinosaur zoo on their home world, while others may prefer to go on safari. For folks itching to run a man-meets-dino game, consider an alternate where the dinosaurs survived in the Americas, Australia, or a similarly isolated ecosphere.

### *GURPS Warehouse 23*

It would be surprising if the Facility *didn't* contain artifacts, and possibly creatures, from other timelines. It is entirely possible that Warehouse 23 contains a method to alter history . . . or, perhaps, a device which could grant Temporal Inertia (p. CI46) to a PC group, allowing them to notice that history is *already* changing – *all the time.*

*Continued on next page . . .*

**For both initial and later visits, probably the most useful modern tool you can have is a small computer, hand-held if possible, with a historical, geographic, and linguistic database. A digital camera (no film needed) is very useful for retrieving information. Don't emphasize weapons: you should be avoiding combat. The sonic stunner is the perfect "quiet" weapon if your TL permits it, otherwise you'll have to make do with silencers. Don't neglect antibiotics: the odds are very good that a random parallel world will be full of diseases your immune system has never encountered. If panimmunity is available, take it!**

## For an Extended Visit

If you're planning to emigrate and have time to prepare, get all the information your home timeline offers about your destination area. Load down that computerized database with maps, climate data, and a profile of the local ecology as well as basic science. Don't neglect guides to low-TL medicine and chemistry. If you have data on the human inhabitants, take that too – although many alternate histories, including all in this book, have changed so much that such information may not be very useful.

In this situation you'll also want to give serious thought to achieving fame and fortune by "inventing" something the locals haven't yet devised. The options are legion: ***GURPS Time Travel*** suggests office supplies as a money maker (p. TT14); you might also consider cosmetics, recipes, and ceramics. Even without consumerism, there are possibilities. For instance, the only really color-fast dye for most of history was indigo: synthetic dyes could make you *very* rich in the textile business. It would be unwise to introduce new weapons – gunpowder, atomics, whatever – to a timeline without them, unless you are prepared for the ensuing military revolution.

## More Reality Seeds (Continued)

***Otranto, 1481***

Although the sieges of Vienna in 1529 and 1683 get more attention, the possibility of a Turkish invasion of the European heartland was never more real than in the months following a successful Ottoman landing at the foot of Italy. Had Mehmet the Conqueror not inconveniently died, or had the succession been less tumultuous, disunited Italy would easily have fallen to waves of Janissaries and ghazis working from shortened supply lines and naval supremacy (advantages that the besiegers of Vienna did not possess). Aborting the Renaissance, the Ottomans could have crushed Austria and Hungary from two sides and then marched into the sunny south of France. Spain, unable to afford extravagances while fighting for its life against the Turk, doesn't sponsor Columbus, and a Moorish navigator discovers America for Suleiman the Magnificent.

***Corfu, 1085***

Rather than a Muslim Conquest of the West, consider a Catholic Conquest of the East. The Norman king Robert Guiscard almost made himself the master of the Byzantine Empire, a victory potentially more impressive and momentous than his fellow Norman William's conquest of England. Had Guiscard not died in 1085 (and had the Venetians not joined the Byzantines to defeat his navy at Corfu), this gifted general and able king might have reformed the Empire and perhaps retaken the Holy Land without requiring the disruptions of the Crusades. Guiscard's nephew and heir, Roger II of Sicily, had the most brilliant court in Europe in our history – with the resources of Constantinople, he could have led Christendom into a new golden age.

***Fashoda, 1898***

When British General Kitchener, pursuing the fleeing Sudanese up the Nile, reached the small town of Fashoda, he found French Captain Marchand already encamped there and claiming the area for France. Kitchener forced the French out of the Sudan with a threat of war, but had the French not backed down, World War One would have started two decades early – with the Germans allied to the British! France falls rapidly, and Russia escapes the stress of a long war. The world might have entered the 20th century with a guaranteed imperial peace under Victoria's sons and nephews, and without Lenin, Hitler, or Stalin.

*Continued on next page . . .*

## More Reality Seeds (Continued)

***Constantinople, 619***

With the Persians to the east and the Avars to the west, the only pieces of Byzantine territory left to the Emperor Heraclius were the city of Constantinople itself – and Heraclius's homeland, the province of North Africa. Heraclius considered removing the seat of Empire to Carthage, only agreeing to remain after a personal plea from the Patriarch of the Church. Had that worthy been less persuasive, Byzantine society might have been replanted in the south and Greek Orthodoxy, rather than Islam, become the religion of the African kingdoms. A unified Greco-African empire stretching from Sicily to Ethiopia could have dealt with the Arabs and expanded into the Indian Ocean while Charlemagne's heirs were still squabbling over a few acres in the Rhineland.

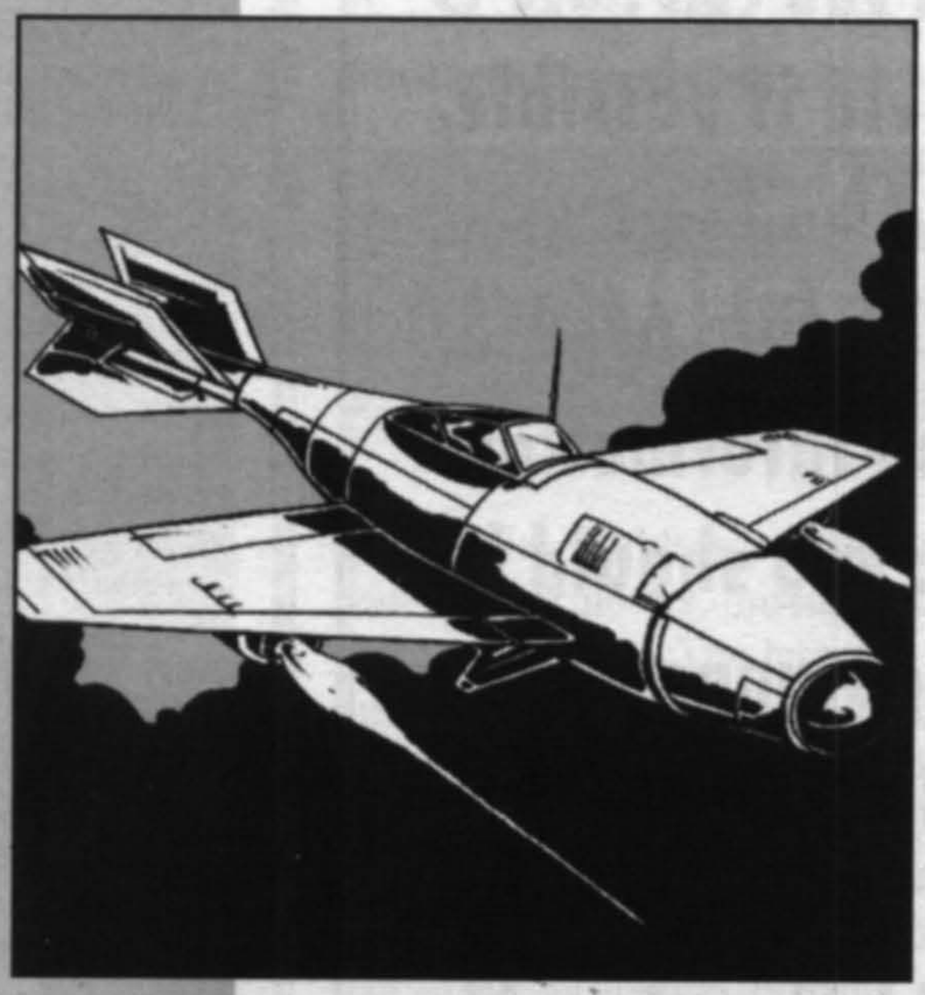
## Conquistador Variations

Ever since Martin Padway saved 6th-century Italy in *Lest Darkness Fall*, a classic SF scenario has sent modern men into a more primitive society threatened by outside forces, and had them rise to power by leading the defense. This set-up could work very well for a campaign – defending against a conqueror is nicer than being one. Aeolus's Republican Alliance is the most obvious choice from this book, though it is more advanced than the usual choices. Or a Homeline team could be stranded on a shifted historical echo as Centrum's Uplift Service moves in. The bibliography lists some classic versions of the scenario: use them for inspiration, or just steal the plots wholesale.

Another option would be to play the *native* leaders of the resistance to an outtime invasion. For the PCs to have a fighting chance they will have to be extremely competent, and the enemy should be few in number although possibly well-equipped. Particularly cunning GMs might not even mention the outtime nature of the opposition to the players; discovering that secret can be a key element in such games.

### Worldline Conquest Made (Relatively) Easy

The most extreme "mission" in another timeline is outright conquest, though PCs are probably more likely to fight a would-be conquistador group than to *be* one – unless they work for the Centrum timeline's Uplift Service (see p. 113).



For guidelines on conquering a large but more primitive empire, there is no better source of advice than the real-life Conquistadors. A large centralized empire (TL 1 minimum, and 2 is better) is a better target than lots of little groups, perhaps harder to take but easier to hold. Finding local allies to multiply your forces is critical: if everybody loves the local empire, seek your fortune elsewhere. In fact, work through native rulers as much as you can until you have a firm grasp of local politics.

Assuming everything goes right, a paratime conquistador could decapitate an empire in just a few decisive battles – Cortés overthrew the Aztecs in three years. Conquering an entire timeline would take far longer, depending on how long it takes to modernize the military of your new empire. Use local talent but modern organization. You probably know more about strategy and tactics than the locals, and are almost certain to have a better grasp of logistics. If you have time to train a military force of your own, proper discipline is even more important than weaponry. This is not to say that weapons are unimportant: as your basic firearm, consider the Sten Gun (p. HT118), a submachinegun that can be produced by fairly primitive workshops.

Use machines that you can repair and keep running with local tools: a P-51 Mustang is about as advanced a plane as you should consider, for instance. It need hardly be said that air power is a *tremendous* advantage in timelines that aren't accustomed to it – Aeolus gives a purely alternate-history example. Similarly, if the other side doesn't have radios, you will want them: instant communications can let you defeat an enemy many times your size. (Not to mention its many non-military uses.) Unless you have a *lot* of backup, we don't advise invading worlds less than three tech levels below yours. How well technological "miracles" work to overawe the natives is really a GM's call – the nearly agnostic and very sophisticated Roman aristocracy will not be impressed by barbarians claiming to be gods, no matter how showy their trinkets.

Once well started at empire-building, attention shifts from Cortés to that other Renaissance figure, Machiavelli. The game of power politics focuses on understanding why people are loyal in this culture, so you can keep your allies and break up coalitions against you. If your new empire has a traditional enemy – one that you haven't already enlisted – crushing them is often a good way to win support and will give you a larger empire in the bargain.

Never make the mistake of underestimating the natives: if a charismatic leader and/or military genius appears among your enemies you *must* eliminate him by any means necessary and as soon as possible. Primitives aren't idiots; man for man, they're better suited for survival in their world than you are. The last thing you need is for some local Geronimo (or Washington) to start pulling guerrilla jujitsu on your paratime mercs, capturing some assault rifles, and possibly reverse-engineering them.

# 2 CORNWALLIS

## Anne-Robert Jacques Turgot, Baron de l'Aulne

Appointed Comptroller-General of France by King Louis XVI in 1774, Turgot was far from the model of a French aristocrat. Fat, shy, serious, and above all a gifted student of economics and administration, his only ally at court was the King. In our history he came into open conflict with two formidable opponents. The Comte de Vergennes, Louis's foreign minister, supported aid to the American rebels, hoping to humble Britain and possibly regain Canada. Turgot clearly saw that such support was not only expensive, but would set a dangerous precedent – surely His Most Catholic Majesty could not support armed rebellion against a fellow monarch, even the King of England. Turgot might have won that argument, but he also objected to the appalling extravagances of Marie Antoinette and her court. The Queen was an enemy he could not defeat, and her supporters forced Turgot into ignominious retirement in May of 1776 – he died, a broken man, only five years later. But in Cornwallis's history, Turgot forgave the Queen her trifles, rightly seeing the royal budget as irrelevant compared to the morass of the French administrative and taxation systems. With Marie neutralized, Louis took Turgot's side, and his Six Reforms set the groundwork for a rationalized economy that lessened revolutionary pressures in France – and doomed revolutionary hopes in America. Success favored his health; he lived well past the crisis of 1789 in Cornwallis, dying in 1797 at the age of 70, covered with honors.

*Nor show a reason from the stars*
*What causeth peace or civil wars . . .*
*But all's to no end, for the times will not mend*
*Till the King enjoys his own again.*
*– lyrics from "The World Turned Upside-Down" (1745 variant)*

It is 1984. The revolution failed in America, and never came in France. The old ways remained the only ways in the courts of Europe, changing slowly and grudgingly. After two centuries, the world finally had the resources to waste on global warfare, and the technology to fight one with. From that war, a new, cruel revolution arose, implacably opposed to the Five Thrones of the Quintuple Alliance.

# History

## The British Empire and the Quadruple Alliance

The 1763 defeat of France in the Seven Years' War left Britain and its monarchy supreme and confident in its God-given right to rule. Rude and common American colonists, resisting Parliamentary taxation and royal decrees, rose in futile rebellion against the mightiest fleet and most professional army in the world. The wise minister Turgot ended a harebrained French scheme to support the rebels, and monarchy was preserved. Those in England (and France) who opposed the *ancien régime* found themselves cut off from power and money; the American Rebellion had taught Lord North and his landed Tory supporters that their position, although granted by God, must be confirmed by law and politics. The Tories acquiesced, and even encouraged, King George III and his successors in their Second Restoration of true royal power. The French court learned the same lesson, and Turgot's sensible restructuring of the royal finances gave the Bourbons the leverage to build such guarantees into law after the Estates-General of 1789.



Having shored up their position domestically, the French aristocrats maneuvered to restore it internationally. France's Foreign Minister Talleyrand and the Austrian Foreign Minister Metternich brought Spain and Russia into a Quadruple Alliance against Britain and her long-time continental supporter Prussia. France's superior population gave the Allies the advantage at first, but military reforms in Prussia turned the tables.

By 1820 all six powers had fought three wars to a stalemate, and agreed to keep the status quo in Metternich's masterpiece, the Treaty of Strasbourg. Significantly, all six powers also had centralized, bureaucratic monarchies built to govern the new mass armies war had brought. Industrial progress, chancy enough in wartime, slowed to a crawl as entrenched interests lobbied hard and well against new, and potentially threatening, changes in the economy. Taxes, royal writs, and a ripple of depressions stalled Europe, and the scattered urban and peasant risings caused by harsh times kept the monarchs harsh as well.

## The Rise of Russia



With the European courts hobbling their own economic growth, dominance in Europe was sure to fall eventually to the empire with the most men and resources – namely, Russia. Beginning with the long, brilliant reign of Czar Alexander II, the Russian Empire moved slowly but inexorably to the lead in European politics. Alexander turned millions of Russian serfs into "state peasants," transferring their labor from the farms of the nobles to the roads and mines, and eventually railways, of his far-flung domain. Alexander's military reforms allowed Russia to conquer European Turkey in the Russo-Turkish War, and to hold off Austria, Prussia, and France in the Constantinopolitan War which followed.

With a huge population (including Manchurians, Koreans, and Japanese annexed in the East), immense deposits of iron and coal, and a steadily increasing industrial base, Russia rapidly became the fulcrum around which European diplomacy revolved. Prussian Chancellor Bismarck managed to add Austria to the Anglo-Prussian alliance and expand Prussian interests into the wreck of Turkey, and rebellions in Poland and Yapon (Japan) slowed Russian expansion, but under Czar Paul III's First Minister Count Sergei Witte, Russia again fought the rest of Europe to a draw in the Levant War over (and throughout) the remainder of the Middle East.

## The War of the Quintuple Alliance

The Sevastopol Accords, which had divided Asiatic Turkey into spheres of influence, broke down completely in 1944 with the discovery of vast oil fields in Mesopotamia. As Austria desperately modernized and Prussia fell victim to oil-driven inflation, Czar Peter IV invaded and annexed Persia. From there, Russian agents could bribe local chieftains to divert Prussia's oil to the Czar's refineries; this competition flared into war in 1962 when a Prussian Army detachment pursued fleeing Kurdish oil-pirates into Persia. A Quintuple Alliance (Spain and France joining the Anglo-Prussian-Austrian Triple Alliance) mobilized its armies and navies (newly equipped with motorcoaches, dirigibles, and machine guns) against the might of the Russian bear. The war spread into Europe this time, and into India and America, as Paul attempted to defeat all his enemies at once.

The first truly global, industrial war (which introduced poison gas, airplanes, napalm, tanks, and liquid-fueled rockets to battlefields) strained all the Thrones' overburdened economies to the breaking point, although the Austrians fared the best with their more advanced industries (thanks to the inventions of the Serbian Nikola Tesla) and more resilient economy (thanks to the reforms of the Austrian Finance Minister von Mises). Russia's finally began to overheat and collapse with the strain of fighting five offensive wars simultaneously. By 1974, the Russians had been driven back across their own borders, and the Allies slogged painfully across the frozen expanses of the Ukraine and Caucasus.

Peter's ambition doomed the Romanovs; exhausted after 14 years of war, cut off from oil and food, and dying in waves of influenza, the urban mobs of Moscow, St. Petersburg, and elsewhere rioted. Count Yelenev's abortive military coup and the flight of the Romanovs to Prussia cemented the public disgust with royalty; the army collapsed in mutinies and infighting, and the Allies declared victory and left Russia to its misery. The Russian Republic proclaimed by Railroad Minister Yuri Orlov stemmed the rebellions, although Orlov was overthrown by Chairman Andropov of the KPB, the Committee of Public Safety. Andropov's general Boris Gromov successfully reconquered rebel areas such as

### The American Rebellion

The wonder is that the rebels lasted six years. The British suffered a series of reverses in Massachusetts, but regained the initiative with several victories against the main rebel army under George Washington, which was under-supplied without French money and munitions. The turning point, a threatened attack by General Cornwallis, forced the rebels out of Valley Forge in the "Winter March" from Pennsylvania to Virginia. Washington performed a minor miracle simply by keeping his army functioning, but won no significant victory for the remainder of the war. The American forces were increasingly disabled by inadequate supplies. (The absence of the military reforms made by our history's Baron von Steuben, a Prussian officer in French service, also cost the Continentals deeply.) British forces marched south from Tory New-York and north from a successful landing at Savannah in 1778, isolating New England, until Cornwallis' victory at Yorktown destroyed the American army and forced the Continental Congress to ask for terms. Though scattered actions continued for four more years in New England – put down by Loyalist forces operating under Banastre Tarleton, which were built up into a local garrison force – the war was over.

The start of the Rebellion had persuaded Europe's monarchs of the potential for subversion inherent in the Enlightenment; its failure persuaded even many of its supporters of democracy's ultimate futility. The last generation of the *philosophes* turned increasingly to the "enlightened absolutist" as their ideal rather than pursuing the mirage of popular sovereignty. As the 19th century dawned, the Enlightenment increasingly seemed a fantasy of the past as royal governments grew more efficient and the industrial revolution increased state power.

## The Russian Revolution

Where the abortive American Revolution had been a planned political action, the Russian Revolution 200 years later began as a spontaneous social upheaval. Despite millions of dead and years of increasing economic strain, the Czar's government was losing the War of the Quintuple Alliance: once allied troops entered Russian territory in 1974, the conviction grew that the old ways had been tried and found wanting. Count Yelenev's attempt to create a military government and continue the war could not even win the support of most of the army, let alone the rioting commoners; its only real accomplishment was the assassination of the Czar and the flight of the terrified royal family.

For several months, Russia had no government, reduced to a chaos of mobs, would-be warlords and local groups trying vainly to keep order. The Railroad Ministry emerged as the most potent centralizing force, recruiting first the various rural and town councils *(sovyeti)* which had emerged in the vacuum after the collapse of the monarchy, and then a sufficient fraction of the remaining military to give its orders authority. The great principles of the Republic were nationalism and efficiency: Orlov broke the power of the nobility, but was frustrated by continuing local rebellions and resistance. He was duly replaced by Andropov, whose increasingly radical government vowed to sweep aside every law, custom, or institution which impeded the greatness of Mother Russia, be it as venerable as the Orthodox Church, serfdom, or the subordination of women. Equality and revolutionary enthusiasm, means to serve nationalist ends, became goals in themselves, and for the first time breaking the power of monarchism everywhere became a popular goal.

Boris Gromov's Dominate is seen by most citizens not as the betrayal of the Revolution, but as a way to solidify its achievements, replacing the terror of the Years of Blood with a stable revolutionary order. It is not intended to be a democracy: the local *sovyeti* are supposed to bring the grievances and concerns of the people to the attention of the government (in the person of their local citizen commissioner, or *grazhdanskiy commissar*), not do the governing themselves. Revolutionary Committees, groups of local officials (deputies) who work under central directives, do the business of the state.

Finland, Yapon, and Lithuania before mounting a coup against Andropov and proclaiming himself the *Perviyy Grazhdanin* (First Citizen) of the Russian Dominate.

The Five Thrones remain uneasy allies, on guard against outbreaks of this new disease of revolution. Although many issues, from mercantilist competition to fishing rights to colonial boundaries, divide the powers, the Russian threat keeps the Quintuple Alliance intact with minimal friction. The very existence of the Russian Dominate denigrates the monarchs' legitimacy, and the Russian insistence on exporting the contagion of revolution actively strikes against the very foundations of royal power.

# Locales

The Quintuple Alliance and its opponent the Russian Dominate between them rule or dominate everywhere worth owning in the world. Only the fever-ridden African interior and warlord-plagued China remain outside the European sphere of control.

## The British Empire

No European monarch reigns over more territory than Charles III Battenberg, by the Grace of God King of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and Prince-President of the Royal East India Corporation. In addition to his titular demesne, Charles holds sway over much of North America, New-Holland, and the Cape Colony along with sundry islands and coaling-stations. With this geographical dominance comes political power; the other Four Thrones concede Britain's place at the head of the Quintuple Alliance, guaranteed by the unequaled Royal Navy and the limitless coffers of India. India does more than prime the economic pump of Empire; its sepoys serve as colonial garrisons throughout the British realm. From Vancouver to Botany-Bay to Charleston to Capetown, no British port is without its "India Town" smelling of curry and ringing with the stamp of booted subalterns on cobblestone. Indians also farm plantations from Guiana to Fiji to the Sugar Islands and Jamaica.

England itself is perhaps the most prosperous kingdom on Earth; without the internal tariffs which bind other kingdoms' economies, and with plentiful stocks of iron and coal, English industry thrives. England produces fine textiles (of Midlands wool and Indian cotton) and steel, and ships. Contrastingly, Ireland seemingly produces only poverty and rebellion, as it competes with portions of the American colonies for the most blighted and oppressed European land under the Five Thrones.

### British America

The colony of Quebec serves as the linchpin for British America. Not only the farms and fisheries of the Saint Lawrence Valley and the Ontario prairies, but the responsibility for the "Red Children of the Great White Father" fall under the purview of the Governor-General in Montreal. From Quebec's westernmost point, at Fort William on Lake Superior, the Royal American Railway line runs across the continent to Fort Langley opposite Vancouver Island. North of that line lie the rich fur lands of the Royal Hudson's Bay Company; south of it lies the Sioux Nation, also under the Governor-General's protection. West of Indian territory and south of Fort Langley, the Oregon Country serves as a source of timber and as a dumping-ground for exiles and transportees.

Most of these come from the 13 colonies of the Atlantic seaboard, which, despite the loyal protestations of the Tory landlords in New-York and Charleston, have been rebellious thorns in the British side for two centuries. Although the Tory plantations in the South and along the Hudson ship beef, wheat, rice, cotton, and tobacco back to the mother country, the rest of the colonies possess too many rocks and hills (and with the white population restricted by the Quebec Act – and the British Army – from crossing the Appalachians, too many people) for efficient farming. Some iron and coal mines in Pennsylvania and western Virginia feed the chartered manufactories in New-York and New-Jersey, but since those profits cross the Atlantic, the colonies remain poor and, consequently, fertile soil only for treason.

## London

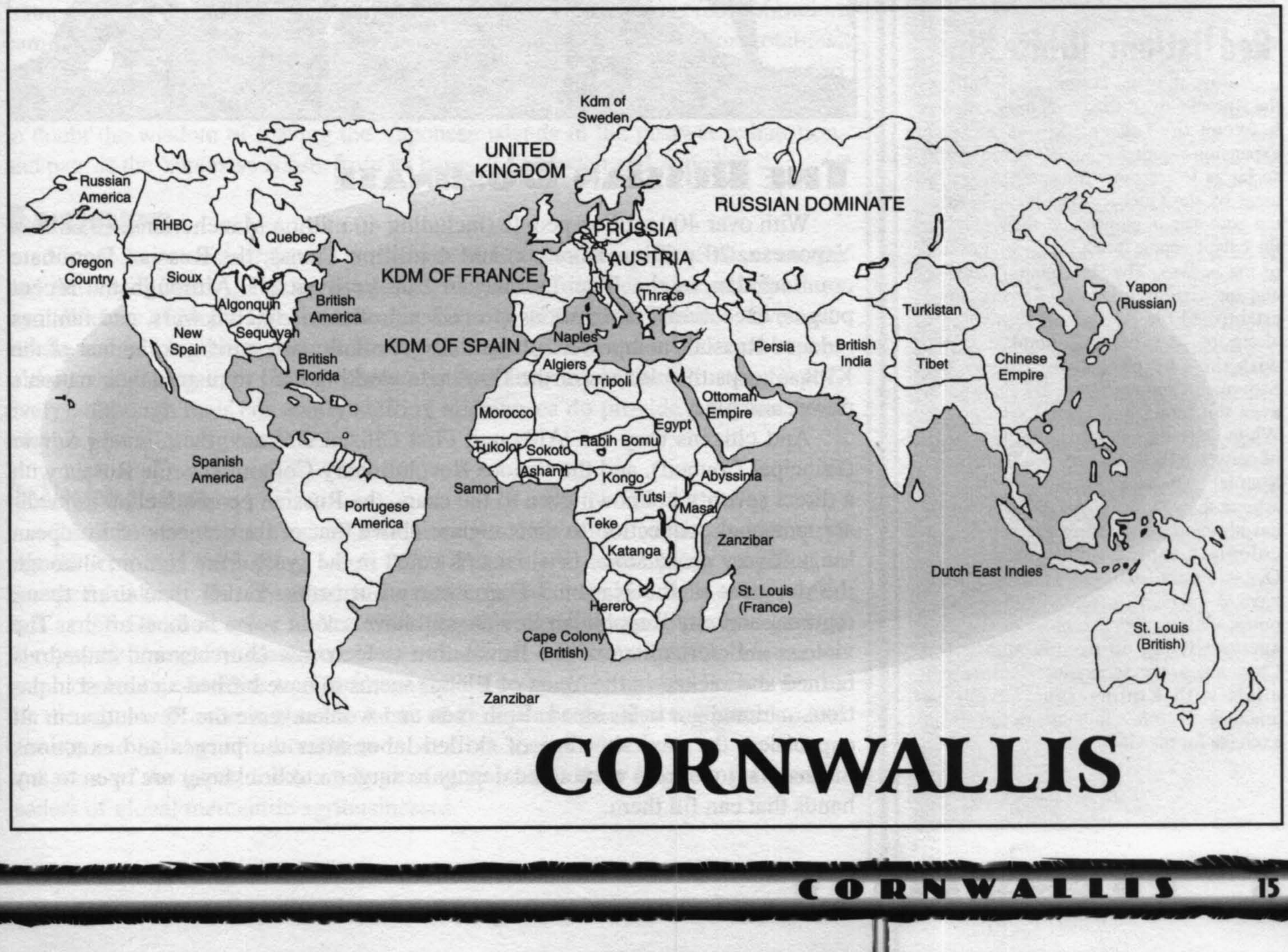
London's six and a half million people put up with the fogs drenched in coal-smoke and oil-stink, and with the petty exactions of government clerks and minor wardheelers, in exchange for the knowledge that their home is the largest, richest, greatest city of the world. Power over the globe flows between Kensington Palace and the New Naval Hall (built during the War) on the Isle of Dogs, and London crackles and hums in that circuit. Irish stevedores, Indian sepoys, Chinese brickmakers, black Caribee indentures, American mechanics, Egyptian weavers, and now exiled Russian nobles and their sympathizers, give the metropolis a polyglot character unlike any on the globe.

London's carbon-sodium lamps burn night and day over the busy motor-coachyards, rail and tube stations, docks, and aerodromes carrying food and workers into and around the city and machine parts, supervisors, and orders out of it.

## Colonial Cities

Besides Quebec, which remains gracious if a bit antiquated, and the bustling hive of activity at the capital in Montreal, the main urban centers in British North America lie along the eastern seaboard where Europeans first planted them 300 years ago. Savannah and Charleston, the main railheads of the South, still see revolts among the Black, Hindi, and Irish longshoremen and balers on the docks and assemblage-plants. Partially as a result, most of the local Tory aristocracy now lives on plantations outside the city limits, keeping order using sepoys and Cherokee mercenaries. Norfolk has grown into a major port for Virginia tobacco, wheat, and beef, and along with Catholic Baltimore and Congregationalist Boston remains a hotbed of anti-British subversion. Both Red Army cells and Washingtonian lodges meet in the kerosene flicker above certain taverns and motorcoach yards. Philadelphia, as the headquarters for Tarleton's Legion and the main Royal Navy Yard in the colonies, is cowed by nightly patrols – the local Quakers love not the King, but love violent rebels still less.

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# CORNWALLIS

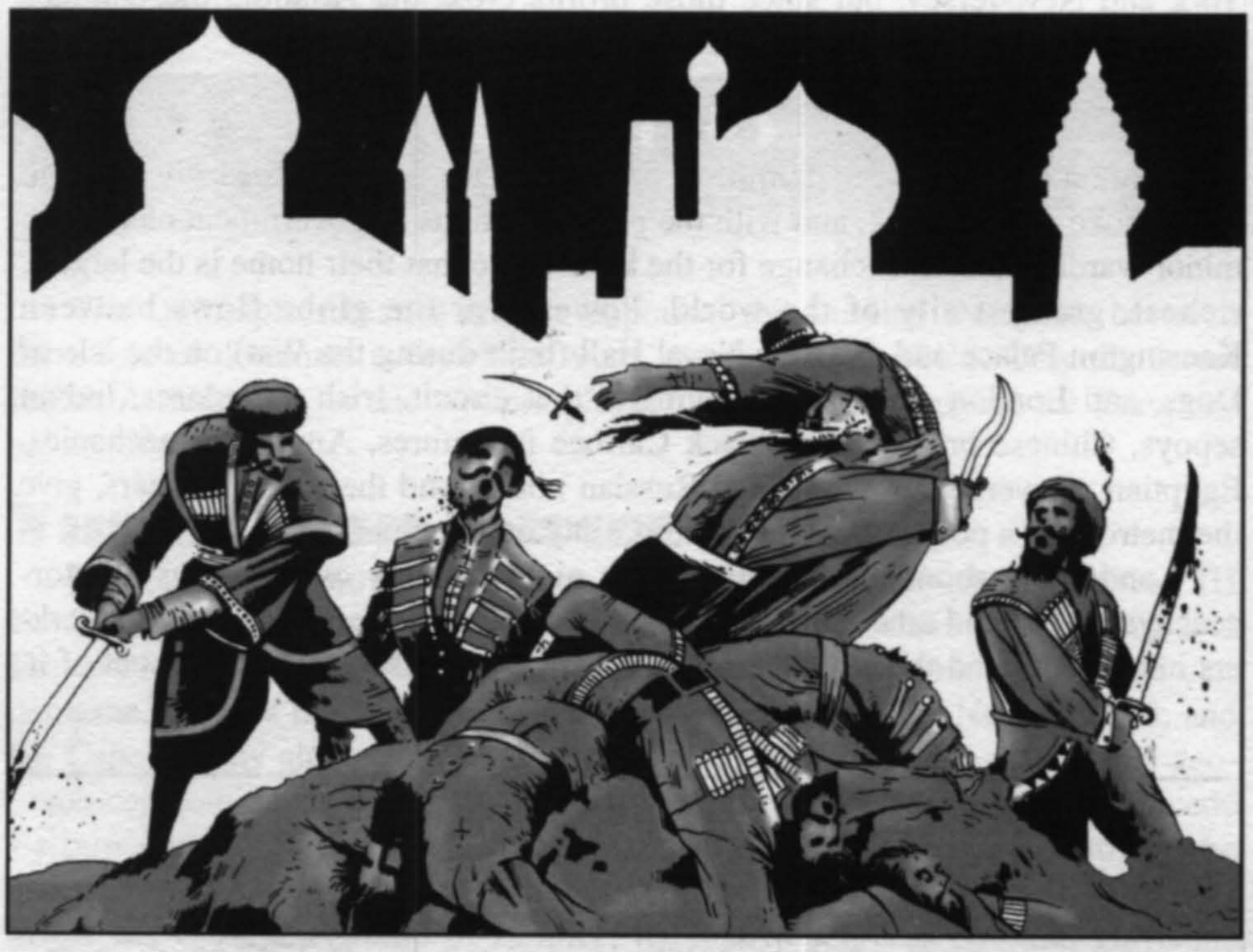
## Colonial Cities (Continued)

New-York, of course, is the social heart of Tory collaborationism; Manhattan's theaters, kinematograph orpheums, and music-halls take pride in being more royalist than the British. The workers in the chartered manufactories in Brooklyn and Bronckstown, seeing the fruits of their labors drain across the ocean or (worse) up the Hudson to Tory plantations, think otherwise. The Lord Mayor of New-York, Lord John Lindsay, has recently introduced guarded worker-barracks surrounded by barbed wire (imports from the Cape Colony and New-Holland, respectively) to control class violence by gangs like the True Sons of Liberty and the Velvets. Some more extreme gangs (like the Dils, the Deadmen, and the Redd Kross Gang) adopt "ruddy" Red Indian styles like the Mohawk haircut and black buckskin jackets to demonstrate their commitment to America, not Europe.

## Red Nations, White King

Before the first American Rebellion, the British Crown tried keeping a balance between the Indian nations and the expansion-minded colonists, even going so far as to restrict white western settlement by the Quebec Act of 1763. After the colonists demonstrated their perfidy, the balance came down firmly on the side of the natives. The statesman Tecumseh and his visionary brother Tenskwatawa established the Algonquin Protectorate along the lines of the Iroquois League, with the Cherokee following as the Sequoyah Confederation. By the 1880s, even the Sioux had formally taken the White Queen's salt, placing a patchwork of petty Indian states between British and Spanish America. Britain's policy of arming their Indian client states is a critical element in penning the rebellious colonials behind the Appalachians. Occasionally, officials from Montreal have to intervene to settle intertribal disputes, or investigate rumors of Russian agents stirring up trouble among the Cheyenne or the Seminoles. (Further parallels with Kiplingesque adventure amongst the *other* Indians are left as an exercise for the GM.)

Rings of factories sit in London's suburbs, churning out aeroplanes, motor-coaches, electrical equipment, and all the other industrial goods imaginable. London's all-night lights give it a sinful reputation in the conservative countryside, one which the tendency of strong-willed, unmarried women to travel there for work (sewing shirtwaists, typing forms, or other trades less respectable) only reinforces. Indeed, a young Welsh country Methodist seeing the fires of the Bexley and Ealing refineries for the first time might think himself thrust into Hell; spending some time in the rookeries of Spitalfields or the slums of Whitefriars will convince him.



## The Russian Dominate

With over 400 million people (including 40 million Manchurians, 40 million Yaponese, 20 million Koreans, and 4 million Finns), the Russian Dominate counterbalances the Five Thrones of Europe by itself. Although the recent purges, executions, emigrations (forced and otherwise), civil wars, and famines reduced Russia's manpower substantially, revolutionary spirit – or the fear of the KPB – keeps the citizens of the Dominate working hard to restore their nation's power and glory.

And citizens they are. Although First Citizen Gromov, the *Glavnyy Sovyet* (Principal Council), and the various Revolutionary Committees rule Russia with a direct severity unknown even to the czars, the Russian people feel an immediate, personal connection to their regime above that of the subjects of European kings. Every *grazhdanin,* or citizen, is equal in the eyes of the Nation; although the deputies of the National Duma carry out orders rather than draft them, regional and city Republican Soviets still have a loud voice in local affairs. The vicious anticlericalism of the Revolution (which saw churches and cathedrals burned and sacked in the Years of Blood) seems to have birthed an almost idolatrous nationalism in its stead. Both men and women serve the Revolution in all capacities; the vast shortage of skilled labor after the purges and exactions means that jobs from committee deputy to surgeon to bricklayer are open to any hands that can fill them.

### Petrograd

Petrograd, formerly Saint Petersburg, remains the capital of Russia, and as such, the center of the Revolutionary movement worldwide. Its districts, or *storony,* spread over five large *ostrova* (islands) and both banks at the mouth of the Neva River. A *naberezhnaya,* or wharf road, runs along every tributary, and along the many *kanaly* which keep barge traffic moving throughout the city. Bridges and broad *prospekty* link the *storony* along with a thick grid of elevated railways. (Built on a swamp, Petrograd cannot boast the labyrinthine underground railways of Moscow.) The 1976 Revolution burned its way through much of the city center on the south bank of the Neva, but the new factories and government offices along the Nevskiy Prospekt restore life to the city. The lowering bulk of the *Spravedlivosti Krepost* (Fortress of Justice), formerly the Peter and Paul Fortress, on the Kamennoostrovskiy Prospekt, removes that life from any and all traitors to the Revolution. Across the Neva from the *Krepost,* in the *Respublikanskiy Dvorets* (the Revolutionary Palace, formerly the Winter Palace of the czars), Boris Gromov directs the affairs of his fellow citizens.

### Yapon (Russian Japan)

Japan's ruling shoguns rejected foreign ways in the 17th century; in 1871 foreign ways returned with a vengeance, in the form of a Russian Navy expedition. Japan's samurai were no match for modern rifles, artillery, and tactics. After a few battles which more resembled slaughterhouses, Yapon became the southeastern anchor of the Russian Empire. Rebellions in 1877, 1905, and 1936 seemed like ludicrous comic-opera protests doomed to failure; no Yaponese possessed modern weapons or training. The British-provoked rising of 1974 was more serious, and General Gromov more than earned his revolutionary commendations stamping it out in 1980. Yapon today is a garrison state; the *gulags* (concentration camps) Gromov set up in the countryside remain holding pens for notables, rebels, and hostages. The Russian Navy uses massive forced labor corvees to reconstruct its port facilities at Yokohama and Nagasaki; the British Navy begins to doubt the wisdom of leaving the Yaponese islands in the postwar exhaustion, and patrols the Yaponese coasts from its bases at Sandwich and Amoy.

## Europe

Monarchs or aristocrats rule every state in Europe (except the Swiss cantons and the Papal States), and tie the lesser kingdoms, duchies, and principalities into alliances of blood and convenience with one of the Five Thrones. Even relatively major kingdoms such as Portugal, Naples, or Sweden make no moves without consulting their patrons (currently Britain, Austria, and Prussia, respectively), although their constantly shifting allegiances do provide a barometer of relative power among the Five.

### The Kingdom of France

Currently on something of a relative downturn as Prussia and Austria rebuild from the War, King Louis XX's France still holds pride of place in European culture. French remains the language of cultivated folk everywhere. Just as the Bourbon court at Versailles remains the diplomatic nerve center of Europe, the French Academy continues to rule art and literature – no kinematograph orpheum considers itself truly complete without the newest French drama for the screen. France is also the heart of European agriculture; France's ideal climate and soil benefit more than most from the new methods of agronomy, and some of the great dukes are beginning to rebuild their flagging fortunes as leaders of global mercantile agribusinesses.

### Being Monarchist

Subjects of the Five Thrones are taught to accept hierarchy as the way of the world, whether ordained by God or by such substitutes as Fate and Nature. A few exceptional individuals may rise above their station, but the only alternative to an obedient mass with an ordered aristocracy above it is chaos, which leaves no man secure.

The aristocracy firmly believe in their own superiority, justifying it by their adherence to the strictures of honor, their cultivation of the arts of civilized living, and their families' service to the crown – when they bother to think of the matter at all. Men are brave and honorable, women modest and deferential, and both punctilious in maintaining their good reputation. The middle classes aspire to nobility themselves, imitating their betters' classical education, conspicuous consumption, and ideas of social propriety. Neither is accustomed to paying much attention to the mass of the populace below them, whose miserable lives can only lead to impoverished minds and degraded spirits.

While the structure of society is aristocratic, the structure of the state is centralized monarchy. The Throne is not merely the source of order and honor, but of real privileges: not only nobles who wish an official role but merchants or manufacturers have to seek royal sanction. In return for money and support, the Throne secures the position of its favorites: every town council and corporation knows that its legal privileges are revocable benefits. Such loyalty to the state as the lower orders possess is usually conceived as personal fealty to the monarch instead of identification with an abstract "nation." In return the Throne offers occasional relief measures and such public goods as sanitation and basic schooling, but without any real plan to make fundamental improvements to the conditions of life (indeed, such a thing is hardly conceivable).

The exigencies of Great War strained the elite's belief in honor, and the Russian Revolution has caused them to look with consternation on their own lower orders, realizing for the first time the extent of the cultural gulf between them. How many in the villages and urban slums would embrace the ideals of the revolution remains uncertain – though the limited success of the "Red Armies" so far suggests that the fears of the upper classes may be overblown.

## Spanish America

Since the 1890s, America has once again been the making of Spain, this time on a sounder basis than the looting of the 16th century. After the shocking Indian rebellions of the 1880s, Spain abandoned mercantilist principles and deliberately fostered development in its colonies, even extending them representation in the *Cortes* in order to unify its disparate possessions. The Indians have been pushed even further to the margins of society, or lost the remnants of their identity in the new wave of Hispanicization. In much of the Caribbean entrenched local interests still resist reforms, and may even stand on the verge of rebellion. But elsewhere the people now identify with Spain (rather more than Spain identifies with America), and the King enjoys immense popularity among all classes, from homesteaders in northern Mexico and southern Argentina to the new urban industrialists. The cities from San Francisco to Buenos Aires are increasingly bound into a common economic and cultural network. Indian-inspired styles of painting and architecture, creativity in everything from music to cooking, and an emerging universal American Spanish are all spread by the most widely-circulating journals in the world and increasing travel by the new middle class.

Conservative fears have been calmed by a widespread revival of traditional Catholic piety sparked by the Virgin's Californian apparitions of the 1960s, near the town named for her as Queen of Angels, *la Reina de los Angeles.* (She is widely believed to have prophesied Russia's apostasy and its eventual fall.) Religious lay fraternities are an important element in the emerging culture of Spanish America, their enthusiasm often running ahead of its wealthy but understaffed Church. They have even begun using the wireless for devotional and educational broadcasts.

Today, Spanish America is probably more prosperous than British America, and is certainly advancing more rapidly: immigrants from the eastern seaboard have joined the Mexican influx to underpopulated California and Argentina. It stands in particular contrast to the somnolent reaches of Portuguese Brazil, whose mines and plantations – some still worked by slave labor – support a few riddled coastal cities slumbering in peeling, sun-bleached memories of the elegance of previous centuries.

Militarily, although French armies fought well in the War, the Navy suffered by comparison to the British and Spanish fleets. France's heavy industrial combines produce goods mostly for the domestic market, as high tariffs keep out superior Prussian motors, Austrian dynamos, or British calculators. Only French wine, clothing, and silk find ready foreign buyers. Thanks to French Algiers, the French industrial and military machine is self-sufficient in oil, and motorcoaches are more common in large French cities than any other in the world.



## The Kingdom of Prussia

The Prussia of King Frederick IV Hohenzollern does not feel like a victor. Prussian forces did less than superbly against the Russian invader, and only massive social-military mobilization preserved the Hohenzollerns from their ignominious fate in the Levant War, when King William II reached the French lines only hours ahead of the Russian Cossack cavalry.

Faced with the lures of Russian republicanism across the border, a restive Poland annexed as a desperate buffer, and an economy in postwar turmoil and oil-fired reinflation, the Prussian court has turned to vigorous repression. The Prussian Geheimpolizei (secret police) have a reputation almost as fearsome as the Russian KPB, and an eagerness to root out revolutionary tendencies that shows little concern for technicalities like actual guilt or innocence. Prussian newssheets blame Russian agents for everything from the rising price of chocolate to the rumors of deviance clinging to the royal court at Potsdam. Prussian chemical and motorworks remain the finest in the world, but increasing labor unrest driven by a tight market and onerous taxation keeps production lower than it should be.

## The Kingdom of Spain

King James II Bourbon is that rarity, a genuinely popular monarch, as he reaps what earlier rulers have sown. Spain began reforming along Russian lines at the beginning of the century, tying Spanish America to Madrid with telegraph cables and favorable economic charters, transforming the Mexican and Peruvian peasantry into wards of the crown rather than of local hidalgos, and building a network of rails to encourage intra-colonial trade. Spain builds ships, aeroplanes, and rifles at least as good as Russian models; the colonies produce not only Mexican oil and Californian gold but furniture, diesel engines, and cotton cloth. The inspired notion of King James I to grant free land in the colonies to veterans (and later to homesteaders of many other kinds) produced a passionately pro-monarchist yeomanry. A Catholic revival in the colonies has spread to Spain itself, serving as patriotic inoculation against irreligious Russian republicanism.

### The Austrian Empire

In addition to his central European domains (which stretch from the Black Sea to the Alps and from Cracow to Albania), Emperor Otto I Habsburg rules the Lower Netherlands, a smattering of German towns, and several north Italian duchies. (As Holy Roman Emperor, he technically rules all of Germany, but not even the Austrians pay that much heed.) He hasn't made the job of keeping this heterogeneous empire together any easier by stubbornly promulgating the Hayekian reforms of his ministers. Every interest at court howls as its own ox is gored by the systematic erosion of internal customs barriers, abolition of taxes, and reduction of subsidies and privileges.

Fortunately, Austria's industry remains ahead of its competitors thanks to superior dynamo designs, and to cheap river transport and hydroelectric power. The success of Austrian arms in the War created a wave of patriotism. Unfortunately, patriotism combines with the "revolt of rising expectations" created by reform, nourishing republican agitation in Vienna and other cities. Coffeehouses and universities see regular discussions – verging on riots in some cases – between "atomist" student clubs, republican cells, and demobilized soldiers.

## The Rest of the World

### Ottoman Turkey

The Ottoman Empire rests on two things: an ocean of Arab oil, and a forest of European bayonets. In order to maintain their access to the first, the Five Thrones supply the second. The formal spheres of influence drawn up in the Treaty of Sevastopol went by the wayside during the War, but rough regional lines remain. The national oil concerns of Britain and Prussia hold pride of place in Mesopotamia, but Austrian and French export interests loudly claim privileges in Anatolia and Syria. In general, however, Turkey, like the Khedivate of Egypt, depends on European soldiers and administrators to rescue it from the chaos that European companies abet.

### China

With the Russian annexation of Manchuria in 1882, the endemic chaos of the Chinese Empire became total disarray. Revolutionaries, bandits, and warlords everywhere saw their chance to rebel against the corrupt Manchu Dynasty and took it. The European Thrones intervened where possible to protect their own holdings and spheres of influence, but eventually the War distracted them and they left China to its own devices.

In 1965, the Wucheng warlord Lin Piao successfully took Peking, deposed the Emperor Pu Yi, and declared himself the first Hong Emperor. Eager for stability, the Europeans recognized his rule in exchange for a promise to invade Russian Manchuria. Although Lin (now the Emperor Sai Lung) cursorily marched on Harbin, he mostly used the weapons the Quintuple Alliance provided to crush his rivals. The currently 78-year old Emperor continues to play the Russians and the Alliance against one another in attempts to keep European involvement in China to a minimum. The British post at Amoy (along with the smaller Prussian post at Tsingtao and the French station at Changchiang in the south) currently remains inviolate, although foreign privileges elsewhere have suffered.

### Africa

Although Europeans planted trading posts along the African coast, the cost of penetrating the interior always remained greater than any possible benefit to putative colonizers. When the British finally abolished the slave trade in 1847,

## Being a Good Grazhdanin

The ideal citizens of the Dominate are completely devoted to the glory of Russia and the revolutionary principles of efficiency, equality, and enthusiasm. Impatient with the shackles of the past, they look forward to a glorious new age. The precise nature of the anticipated future remains vague: most seem to have some notion of worldwide republican governments – led by Russia, of course, as first into the new era and manifestly superior to the smaller nations. Individuals are expected to submerge themselves in the cause and take every opportunity to serve the Revolution. These opportunities are very broad: the old hierarchy and regulations have been abolished in favor of an open meritocracy in which all citizens are equal and any can rise to the top.

It is uncertain what proportion of Russians really follow the ideals of the *grazhdanin* as opposed to those who act the part out of fear of the KPB. The terrors of the Years of Blood have receded since Gromov's takeover, but the Committee of Public Safety retains broad powers "to preserve the revolution," and its formally-correct legal proceedings are scant comfort when private Czarism and public Christianity remain criminal and the *galaxy* remain full. On the other hand, the Dominate benefits from Russia's deep patriotism, and the pride felt in Russia's swift return to its pre-War Great Power status. The proverbial Russian conservatism seems to have been eroded by a century and a half of industrialization, and few voices were raised even to defend the Orthodox Church when the Republic decreed its extinction. Certainly the most *visible* citizens of the new Russia are those flourishing in the new order: serfs turned army officers, Russianized Korean shipmasters, women directing Revolutionary Committees, innovative writers and musicians.

## First Citizen Boris Gromov

The most powerful man in Cornwallis began his career as a young officer during the Great War. His substantial military gifts were less significant in his rise to power than his uncanny political skills and entirely ruthless ambition: he was one of the first officers to embrace the Republic, offered his services to Andropov when Orlov still looked unassailable, and toppled Andropov in turn only after the Chairman of the KPB had finished the dirty work of the "Years of Blood," breaking all resistance to the new state and making himself the most hated man in Russia. Gromov's rule seems comparatively benevolent.

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## First Citizen Boris Gromov (Continued)

In his mind Russia, the Revolution, and Boris Gromov have become inseparable: destroying the old order in Europe, making Russia supreme in the world, and increasing his own power are a single great task. He never hesitates to do whatever that task requires, being equally capable of working inhuman hours to reform the laws and root out corruption, or sending opponents to labor camps and deliberately working them to death. The traumas of the Great War are no deterrent to his preparations for the final struggle with the Five Thrones: since that war must come, he is working to insure that it starts under conditions of his choosing.

Gromov affects a hearty persona which resonates with the image of the Russian commoner rather than the effete courtier; in truth, this image (which fits his stocky, muscular appearance) is just another policy. His enormous good humor and occasional volcanic outbursts of temper, on the other hand, are genuine. He has a remarkable capacity for creating loyalty and an awe-inspiring skill at choosing subordinates.

## Communications

The major means of swift communication in Cornwallis is the telegraph network, which connects all the major towns of Europe. There are sparse networks in Yapon, Algeria, India, New-Holland, and America (though Spanish America is beginning to rival Europe), and only the first and last are connected to the European network by undersea cable. Government postal systems are reliable within Europe, chancy outside it: private concerns are more certain of delivery but even slower. Tesla invented the telephone in 1904, and small-scale networks have been constructed in several parts of Europe, but even today it is a rich man's luxury in most places. The main cities of Austria have denser networks as the 'phone filters down the social scale. Austria is also the only country where the wireless is used for general news and entertainment broadcasts. Russia and Spain are experimenting with the use of wireless transmissions for education in their more remote possessions.

Books and journals are the major vehicle of mass culture – which usually takes the form of poorly-written adventures, romances, or pallid religious tracts – and information about current events is disseminated by newssheets. All are subject to censorship by government offices. Although the censors used to find it easier to punish infractions (often severely) than to check material before publication, the spread of Revolutionary ideas has brought a crackdown.

European interest in Africa (except French Algiers and the British Cape) dwindled to almost nothing. African nations like Tukolor, Samori, and Ashanti grew by turning secondhand European weapons on their enemies. Aside from the occasional missionary and the even more occasional arms trader, they have most of the continent to themselves.

# Technology and Society

In general, Cornwallis is TL6, with some areas of lag where custom enshrines or politics protects antiquated practices, and a few advanced developments mostly driven by the late war (the brilliant Polish refugee Piasecki's invention of the rotothopter in 1967 came as a godsend to Tarleton's Legion and similar units). Relativity and quantum physics have not yet been developed, and Cornwallis' engineers still mine the classical physical-chemical model for advances in industrial chemistry such as plastics, sulfa drugs, and light metallurgy. The primary power source is oil and coal, and most large cities are electrified, even in India and the Americas (although not in Africa, the Near East, or the Indies). In most respects, however, the colonies remain at TL5 for the average person. Combine harvesters came into common use in Russia, Spanish America, France, Hungary, New-Holland, and British Canada by the 1930s. Mechanical harvesting and industrial fertilizers finally ended major famines in Europe, raising birthrates enough to fuel a new "baby boom" born in the 1960s and 1970s. These young people make up the most active components of both revolutionary and monarchical factions in seminaries, universities, and factories; urban unrest and social turmoil are becoming fixtures of Europe's overcrowded nations despite the absence of famine and the generally positive economic climate.

Hollerith calculators perform large-scale computations (especially for artillery and rocketry); their utility for flexible data storage is minimal. They can, however, maintain Bertillon physiognomic records, and are widely used by police (and secret police) systems. Data exchange is mostly by messenger, as cryptography remains primitive and few cities have secure telegraph communications, thanks to onerous licensing restrictions.

## Transportation

Air transport uses dirigibles or cargo aeroplanes; shortages of refining capacity (and squabbling over jurisdictions) keeps commercial airlines moribund, although a royal passenger airline operates to Spanish America and within Spain. Jets exist only on drawing boards or the secret test sites in Siberia or New-Holland. Wartime power-plant research has driven steam and gasoline engine designs as far as early TL7, along with some industrial engine and turbine designs. Travel within the Russian Dominate requires an internal passport; such papers are needed in Europe or the Americas only at customs borders, and only then with loads of goods.

### Slow Rail and Low Petrol: European Transport

The problems of transportation, even more than supply, defeat European desires to fully motorize trade and transportation on the Continent. Motorcoaches remain rare even in Prussia; licenses to own and operate them take years to process. Licenses to operate petrol dumps or coachyards are even slower coming, since European aristocrats disapprove of a mobile population

and the existing merchants see no reason to improve trade networks for potential competitors. Even within some nations, railway gauges have yet to be standardized; military administrations solve the problem by building special military tracks on top of civilian rail nets, but that leaves civilian trade and transport slow and frustrating. Excess petroleum refining and cracking capacity, built during the War, remains under military jurisdiction as well in many cases. Thus, prices are higher, and selection poorer, in any given market than either supply or demand would indicate.



### Bolshie Dvizhushchie: The Great Trains of Russia

Russia began building rails in the 1850s, but Alexander II turned what had been a half-hearted nod toward Westernization into an obsession. By 1896, Japanese and Manchurian laborers had laid rail from Pusan and Dairen to meet the Slav and Turkish corvees pushing east from Moscow and St. Petersburg. The rail network was critical to mobilizing Russia's enormous resources, transporting ore, grain, and soldiers across the vast distances of the interior over a quarter-million miles of tracks.

The Russian 7 1/2-foot track gauge is the widest in common use (most European rails are 4-5 feet wide), and its locomotives are by far the largest on Earth. The insatiable need for transport keeps older steam locomotives operating alongside modern diesel engines. In mid-century Russia even experimented with truly gargantuan engines designed to run on two parallel tracks at once; a few are still in service. Railway workers served as the core cadre of the revolution, and remain idealized heroes across the Dominate Ironically, Andropov purged Alissa Rosenbaum, whose novels of heroic rail-building spurred nationalist sentiment in the 1940s and 1950s and became radical texts in the 1970s.

### Bush Pilots and Colonial Transport

Getting around the colonies is difficult, with railroads only used to connect mining centers and inland cities to their ports, except in Spanish America. Internal roads are poor-quality or absent, making coach travel (motor- or horse-drawn) slow, expensive and exceedingly uncomfortable. Towns therefore cluster around navigable rivers and canals, and riverboats are the most popular means of long-distance travel for passengers as well as freight.

Since the 1970s air travel has become increasingly common in the colonies, using the huge surplus of small airplanes made obsolete by the improvements of the Great War. Demobilized pilots typically lack the business skills and connections to run a formal business, managing to live hand-to-mouth by ferrying passengers and small packages much more rapidly than any available alternative. Given the prevalence of customs barriers, it is difficult for a bush pilot *not* to be a smuggler, and most hardly try to avoid it.

## The "Red Armies"

The Dominate's ideals and agents have proved quite capable of beating the Quintuple Alliance's quarantine, and advocates of revolution have sprung up across the civilized world. Many are cell-based organizations which can only harass the royal governments in minor ways while awaiting Russian liberation, but others are revolutionary evangelists who dream of building up enough force to free their own nation. Some have begun acts of terrorism (a term not yet current) or even guerrilla warfare, in less thoroughly-policed areas like Thrace, Bavaria and Sicily. It is these last "Red Armies" which have given their name to the whole movement.

Without the influence of Marxism, the Red Armies see no reason to concentrate their recruitment efforts on industrial workers: they seek converts especially among the "suppressed" middle classes (those without the aristocratic connections necessary to thrive) and the most desperate poor, who are as likely to be peasants as proletarians. The failure of the people to rally behind them remains mysterious to the revolutionaries, and most believe that a victory against their royal opponents will rouse the slumbering masses.

The best-equipped Red Armies are those just across the Russian border, in the Oregon Country, Norway, Thrace, Austrian Romania, and Poland. The Dominate has also been trying to encourage such movements further afield in Europe British India. It has been disconcerted by the recent growth of Red Armies in Bavaria, the Netherlands and Italy whose nationalism is tinged with strong anti-Russian sentiment: the Russian Committee of Foreign Correspondence sends representatives to such Armies, attempting to bring them back into the fold.

## Medicine

Medical technology lies somewhat behind the main technological line, dipping into TL5 in some places. This backwardness springs from scanty epidemiology, low sanitation levels, and little progress in the biological sciences (themselves closer to TL5 than TL6). Food is usually dull and (due to the lack of knowledge about vitamins) often less nutritious than it should be. Antisepsis is known, as is anaesthesia, but the practice of both varies dramatically from place to place. Sulfa drugs are the new "miracle cures"; penicillin remains just moldy bread. Thanks to the War, artificial limbs are more advanced than any other medical development, and the royal patent to produce them for the military is a much-coveted favor.

## Mercantilism

Dominant since the 17th century, mercantilism is practically identical with economics in Cornwallis, attaining its classical form after synthesis with Malthusianism showed the potential for catastrophe in unregulated population growth. Viewing the economy as one tool of state power, mercantilism advocates government intervention to improve the nation's relative position in trade and industry. It sees both as zero-sum games, to be expanded at the expense of other nations. Growth in international trade has thus been very slow. Mercantilists view colonies as suppliers of raw materials and captive markets, while manufacturing and commerce should remain monopolies of the mother country.

In practice the main effects of mercantilism have been to keep colonial areas undeveloped and to slow economic and technical growth generally (though of course no one in Cornwallis, except a few Austrian theorists, has any reason to believe that faster progress is possible). Colonies tend to be restive, correctly feeling exploited, and repeatedly explode into rebellion. The Thrones keep the lid on colonial discontent by maintaining garrisons (usually drawn from other colonies) and the occasional full-scale war. The expense of this solution has led to a variety of experiments in colonial governance, but all except Spain's have been hampered by the continued embrace of mercantilist dogma.

# Campaigning in Cornwallis

Campaigns in Cornwallis will generally involve picking a side and wading in swinging. Although there's room for the standard amoral PC party of mercenaries and ne'er-do-wells in the dives of Alexandria or Trebizond, or for freelance monster-hunters in the urban jungle of London or the high frontier of Spanish America, in general this is a world clearly, and uncompromisingly, divided.

Players may find it easier to pick adversaries than allies, given that the basic division is between the brutal reactionaries of the Five Thrones and the radical (perhaps even proto-totalitarian) tyranny of the Dominate. The gamemaster may allow the players to select some smaller faction within the greater conflict that they can support more wholeheartedly, perhaps American democrats or Austrian liberals, or may encourage them to struggle to reform the evils of their own side at the same time as they struggle to destroy the greater evils of the other (an option that works better for outtime visitors or others with resources much greater than a random group of player characters). Or the players may just be left in the position of attacking a great evil in the name of a lesser evil, a situation hardly unknown in gaming or real life.

A Cornwallis campaign centered around Russia or Europe has a cultural and political setting more like the era of the French Revolution and Napoleon than any part of the 20th century. A TL6 level of development (emphasizing large-scale heavy industry) makes contemporary monarchical centralism more menacing than anything known in the past, however, and the Dominate may be more frightening yet.



## "Scarlet Pimpernel" in Russia

One type of parallel campaign that suggests itself is the swashbuckling adventures of the League of the Scarlet Pimpernel, rescuing the innocent victims from *gulags* and prisons with steady nerves, quick-witted ingenuity, and panache. Gentlemen from across Europe (retaining, of course, their devotion to their aristocratic codes of honor) can rally behind an anonymous hero, and perhaps even they will not know if he is a Russian emigré or, like the Baroness Orczy's Pimpernel, a selfless foreigner. The Dominate maintains the security apparatus of the KPB, with its midnight arrests and denunciations of counter-revolutionaries – or the setting could be moved to the Years of Blood for a more hysterical atmosphere of ferocious mob violence and rampant paranoia.

In contrast to some other Cornwallis campaigns, such a game will definitely be cinematic, with elaborate schemes, cunning disguises and devices, and *lots* of opportunity for hair's-breadth escapes. (See ***GURPS Scarlet Pimpernel*** for more details.) While saving innocent victims from the revolutionary terror is worthwhile in itself, there is also the chance that the PCs will stumble upon the identity of a key Russian agent in Europe, or some other secret which will send them into the midst of high politics.

## Napoleonics

Sooner or later, every *grazhdanin* expects it to come to war. The Revolution will not be safe until it has pulled down the Five Thrones – or, in other words, until Russian hegemony over Europe has been established. Gromov's dream scenario would have Britain crippled by colonial revolts in India and/or North America when revolution breaks out in Europe and the forces of the Dominate can march in with the ground already prepared.

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### Into the Bear's Den

Navigating the labyrinth of canals, elevated rails, wharfs, docks, roads, and drawbridges in Petrograd is not for the novice, or for the easily lost. Much suspenseful adventure can spring from chases along these mazes of ironmongery: the PCs can be trading shots with the Petrograd police, lose their pursuers behind an elevated train, jump to the roof of a moving barge, and have to dodge KPB bullets from a watchpost on the drawbridge ahead. As the players gain confidence, the arena can be broadened, not only to other cities in Russia proper, but to the exotic lands of Yapon and even the distant slave-labor mines in the frozen interior.

## Steel Men and Iron Ships

GMs can also build a straightforward military campaign around the clash of Russia and the Five Thrones. One centered on the high seas has the advantage that it can begin well before the outbreak of formal hostilities, as the players can be sent to show the flag throughout the world's oceans – and that literary models to use for inspiration and adventure concepts are easily available (the Hornblower and Aubrey & Maturin series). Cornwallis is at a 1930s level of naval technology, so battleships remain the kings of the sea and no one has imagined aircraft carriers, but the style and disciplinary methods of the British Navy are still those of 19th century fleets. The tone may be less cinematic but can be equally dramatic on the literal front lines of the world's central confrontation, with the Russian submersible *podvodnaya* fleet keeping tension high.

## The Next American Revolution

The other obvious campaign setting is North America: here, the inspiration owes less to the Napoleonic or any historical era, and more to the timeless fight for independence. There is no shortage of American patriots eager to take the place of Washington and Jefferson, Lincoln and Lee!

### American Revolutionaries

In contrast to the usual situation for the last 200 years, the most mutinous area of British North America today is the Oregon Country – by virtue of its position near Russian Alyeska, and a tradition of harboring exiled democratic radicals like Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, and Eric Arthur Blair. Both Oregon and the east coast feature serious internal divisions among the would-be rebels, as apostles of the Dominate compete for influence with Hayekists, atomists, New-York gangs, and old-fashioned Washingtonians. A PC group can support one faction, or disagree among themselves and agree only on the cause of national liberation.

In any case, an American campaign will focus on small-scale espionage, spying on the foe, gathering munitions and allies, and perhaps the occasional sabotage or assassination mission, all the while dodging the Royal Colonial Mounted Police and the rotothopter gunships of Tarleton's Legion. Once such adventures pall, the revolution can break out and create a whole new set of challenges, both against the British and with internal disputes.

### Russian Aid

Russia recognizes the British as the bulwark of the monarchist order and their chief rival for global dominion. Naturally, they like the idea of a Revolution in North America almost as much as the Americans appreciate the thought of a Great Power ally. Gun-running between Oregon and Russian Alyeska is relatively simple compared to smuggling Russian weapons into Boston, Norfolk, or Baltimore harbor. Besides the opportunity for PCs as Russian advisers, aid from the Dominate will be a major plot device in a Revolutionary campaign.

## Napoleonics (Continued)

More likely, the explosion will come first in Eastern Europe, beginning a wave of revolutionary movements across Europe and a grimy, depressing war suitable for campaigns based around small military units on the front lines – *Sharpe's Rifles* in Germany or the Balkans, or Ranger squads seconded to the British Naval Office of Bells, Charts, and Buoys (what we would call Naval Intelligence). If Austria loses its gamble on development and the explosion comes there, the situation will favor Russia, with one of the larger members of the Quintuple Alliance an early casualty. If it comes in Prussian Poland, the balance of forces is much more even, and is likely to turn to stalemate while the war is decided on other fronts. Since Austria is also perhaps the most admirable of the Five Thrones, this choice will also determine whether the moral high ground lies with the monarchists, the revolutionaries, or with neither.

## Washingtonian Freemasonry

Every revolutionary movement needs an organizing framework, whether it's the Jacobin Clubs of our history's France or the "atomistic clouds" and "chainbreakers" in the universities and slums of Cornwallis's Europe. In America, that framework is "Washingtonian Freemasonry." Freemasonry in Europe rapidly fell out of favor as the powers that be closed known Masons out of contracts and social advancement, but in America it flourished precisely because of royal opposition. St. Andrew's Lodge in Boston formed the nexus of the Sons of Liberty in the 1770s, and George Washington was hardly the only Mason to play a crucial role in the American Rebellion.

After his execution in New-York, rumor began to spread throughout the colonies that Washington had been elected Grand Master of the United States of America in a secret ceremony in 1777. Whether true or not, it became an article of faith and a litmus test for "patriotic" American lodges. By now, virtually every operating group of American rebels meets as a Lodge of American, or Washingtonian, Freemasonry, usually using some cover name from obscure Masonic lore. Masonry being both deeply confusing to outsiders and technically not illegal, even in the colonies, it serves as a kind of shadow underground, an interface between rebels, criminals, freethinkers, and radicals of all kinds.

## Illuminating Cornwallis

As in our history, the rise of revolution in Cornwallis heralded the creation of modern conspiracy theory. Although the Thrones have used the Russian threat as excuses to crack down, yet again, on Freemasonry, the primary "fear-literature" of anti-Russian propaganda focused on the "Asiatic heritage" of Russia. Theorists took the widespread fad of studying Yaponese fighting arts and the appreciation for Chinese art among the Russian aristocracy as evidence of Asiatic penetration. Now, although the police have more than enough to worry about hunting down Red Army cells, pamphleteers have seized on the Theosophical Society (founded by Helena Blavatsky in St. Petersburg in 1875 to study mystical truths handed down from Indian "Secret Masters") as the true agents of the "Asiatic menace," the hidden hand behind the overthrow of the Czars and the Sepoy Rebellion, and the focus of darkness in the Secret World.

Gamemasters running an Illuminated campaign in Cornwallis can agree with its native theoreticians, postulating the Nine Unknown Seers plotting against the West from their subterranean headquarters beneath Kashmir: Red Republican Revolution is but a glove on the hand of the Dread Kings of Agharti! By contrast, Russian propaganda paints sinister pictures of Jesuit manipulation of the Five Thrones, arranging the breeding of monarchs and their degenerate spawn to leave Rome supreme again in Europe. Perhaps both sides are right, and the Vatican and Shangri-La duke it out for global dominion. Or, perhaps, some force unknown to the locals (the creepily monarchist Prieuré de Sion, for example) or grossly underestimated by them (Bavarian Freemasonry) lurks behind it all.

### *Claves Lux: the Keys of Light*

Or, of course, the Conspiracy can be the good guys in this relatively unpleasant world. Founded by George Washington in America and the Marquis de Lafayette in France, this secret society works tirelessly to overthrow monarchy and tyranny in all its forms. Depending on the campaign, the Claves Lux can operate as elite freedom-fighters striking without fear or warning, as subtle intriguers working to infiltrate and control key bureaucracies for good ends, or as a fraternity of scientists trying to build a better life for people everywhere. In more cinematic games, the Claves Lux can have a secret base beneath the Appalachians, a covert fleet of airships, or a hidden island in the Caribbean. Key personnel, be they deadly submariners, brilliant surgeon-gadgeteers, magical anarchists, or dedicated millionaire playboys, can operate anywhere in Cornwallis that liberty is endangered.

## Cornwallis Timeline

**1776** – Turgot quashes covert French aid programme to American rebels.

**1777** – Cornwallis defeats Washington at Princeton. Formation of Tarleton's Legion, British and Loyalist aristocratic elite cavalry.

**1778** – Washington starved out of Valley Forge, forced to retreat to Virginia in the Winter March.

**1780** – Gordon Riots create surge of antiliberal feeling in Britain.

**1781** – Washington surrenders at Yorktown, hanged with Jefferson, Franklin, Hancock, and other leading rebels. Quebec Act reconfirmed; Iroquois and Cherokees armed and allowed to massacre illegal white settlers west of Appalachians. Lord North's Tory government enjoys huge majorities in Parliament; Burke and Fox forced to resign.

**1789** – French Estates-General summoned, Third Estate and royal appointees in other two transfer powers to monarchy.



**1792-1799** – Sugar War between Britain and Franco-Dutch Alliance; Britain takes Cape Colony, West Indies.

**1810** – Dunmore Cotton collapse causes depression in British textile industry, new state controls on stock-corporations. Bankruptcy of Maudslay School, its engineers mostly imprisoned for debt.

**1811** – Loose confederacy of Algonquin tribes under Tecumseh recognized as subject nation under the British Crown.

**1813** – Facing a French threat, Scharnhorst builds the Landswehr in Prussia, creating the mass national army tied to royal/state authority.

**1815-1819** – Joseph de Maistre writes his *Essay on Constitutions,* advocating centralized monarchy and opposing scientific development. Hegel's *Science of Logic* (1816) gives impetus to Prussian centralization. Sismondi's *New Principles of Political Economy* (1819) argues for further state regulation of the economy to prevent social conflict.

**1827-1835** – Calhoun's Rebellion begins in South Carolina, put down using Cherokee troops and Tarleton's Legion. Jeremy Bentham exiled to Oregon with other British radicals; Carolina rebels deported to New-Holland.

**1841** – First major railroad connects Berlin and Amsterdam with only 14 changes of track and grade.

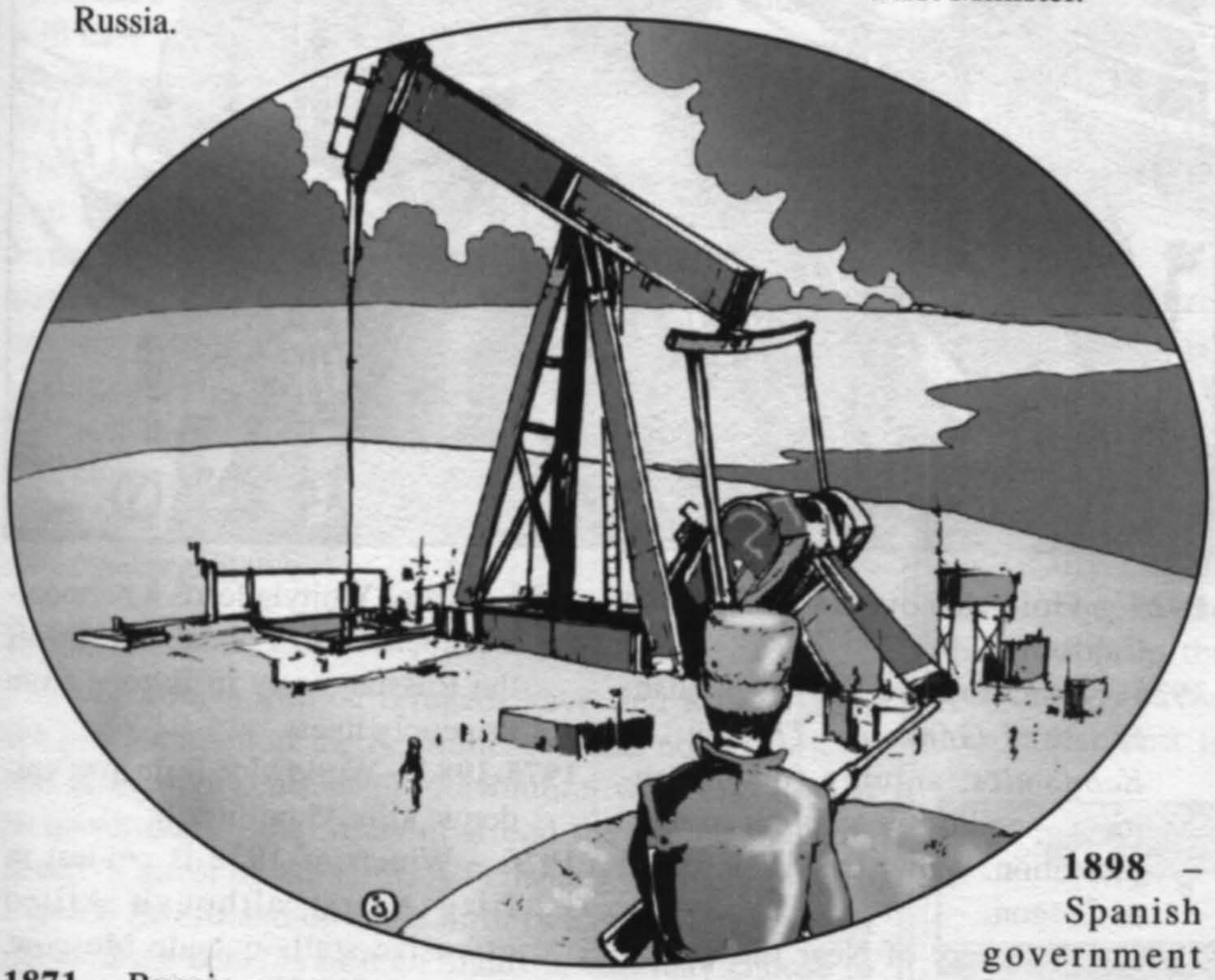
**1846-1849** – Famines lead to string of urban riots in Paris, Milan, Naples, Trier, Barcelona, Dublin, and Budapest. After Paris Rising, Swiss dissident Alexis de Tocqueville deported to Guiana. Other dissidents deported to Spanish America, Siberia.

**1855** – Frédéric le Play begins science of demographic statistics. Accession of Alexander II to the throne of Russia; Alexander II begins massive use of serf corvees to build rail lines in Russian Empire.

**1857-1858** – Great Mutiny leads to nationalization of East India Company.

**1859-1863** – John Brown's Revolt in Virginia. Lincoln, Lee, other rebel leaders hanged or sent to New-Holland.

**1868** – After a four-year war, Russia annexes all Turkish Europe; Ottoman capital moved to Angora. Triple Alliance of Austria, Prussia, and France declares war to force Russia to reopen the Dardanelles; Spain allies with Russia.



**1871** – Russia conquers unopened Japan to forestall British.

**1874**– First oil well drilled, near Kuban, Azerbayjan.

**1875** – Stettin-to-Trieste Railway is the first transcontinental rail line in a common gauge (only Prussia and Austria agree to standardize).

**1878** – Treaty of Copenhagen ends Constantinopolitan War in Russian victory.

**1880s** – Indian rebellions put down in Spanish America by extermination; Sioux officially transfer allegiance to British Crown from Spanish Crown. Colonial Police and Tarleton's Legion put down urban riots in New-York, Boston, Charleston, Dublin, and Philadelphia.

**1887** – British-Prussian consortium under Georg Goethals completes construction of Suez Canal; beginning of major Prussian influence in Turkish Empire.

**1889-1894** – Asian bubonic plague hits Britain, Continent.

**1892** – Czar Alexander II abdicates in favor of his nephew Paul; Czar Paul III appoints Sergei Witte First Minister.

**1898** – Spanish government reformed along Russian lines, attempts to integrate Spanish America with Spain (provincial reform, railway construction) begin.

**1904-1926** – Working in Vienna, Tesla invents telephone (1904), carbon-button lamp (1910), wireless (1914), AC generator (1926).

**1907-1912** – Levantine War between Russia and Triple Alliance stems from Russian intervention in Turkey on behalf of the Sultan; ends in Sevastopol Accords, a peace of exhaustion arbitrated by the British dismembering Turkey into spheres of influence.

**1909** – Spain lays Havana-Seville transatlantic cable; uses Mexican troops to put down a Catalan rebellion.

## Campaigning in the Lincoln-Lee Rebellion

The second American Rebellion was sparked by John Brown's raid on Norfolk in 1859, which set off a chain of uprisings across the eastern seaboard. Uncoordinated and inadequately prepared, they were defeated in detail by British forces spearheaded by Tarleton's Legion. The most effective rebel group, Abraham Lincoln's American Republic, actually drove the British out of the entire colony of Virginia and succeeded in functioning as an independent government for almost four years, but not even the military genius of General Robert E. Lee could withstand the full might of an industrialized opponent.

This is the ***Old West*** era of Cornwallis, though most of the actual West is in the hands of British-sponsored Indian Nations or part of Spanish rather than British America: cowboy culture is thus strongly Hispanic, even in most of the Oregon Country. Players in the midst of the rebellion will have their work cut out for them to keep it from going down in flames, whether as military leaders or as diplomats trying to win foreign support in the courts of France, Spain, and/or Russia.

## Tarleton's Legion and the Sepoys

The great adversary of revolutionaries in America since the days of Washington has been Tarleton's Legion. From its beginnings as a Loyalist cavalry unit used to put down the Green Mountain Boys and other New Englanders who refused to admit defeat, it has evolved into a special-purpose force for defeating local insurgents. Though even more aristocratic than the regular army, Legionaries are highly-trained and invariably the first to embrace new military technology. Groups who want to play full-fledged counter-revolutionaries cannot do better than Tarleton's Legion: His Majesty's Government lends them to other Thrones as a service to public order, so Legionaries may see service in North Africa, India, South-East Asia, or even Poland.

When teams of commandos aren't enough, the Legion calls in the sepoys for straight-up battles and frontal assaults. Colonial troops from India, the sepoys are a blunt instrument: British racism keeps officers from demanding the same standards of behavior as in the regular army, and their reputation for ferocity (especially the Sikh and Gurkha units) even helps to break the will of the enemy.

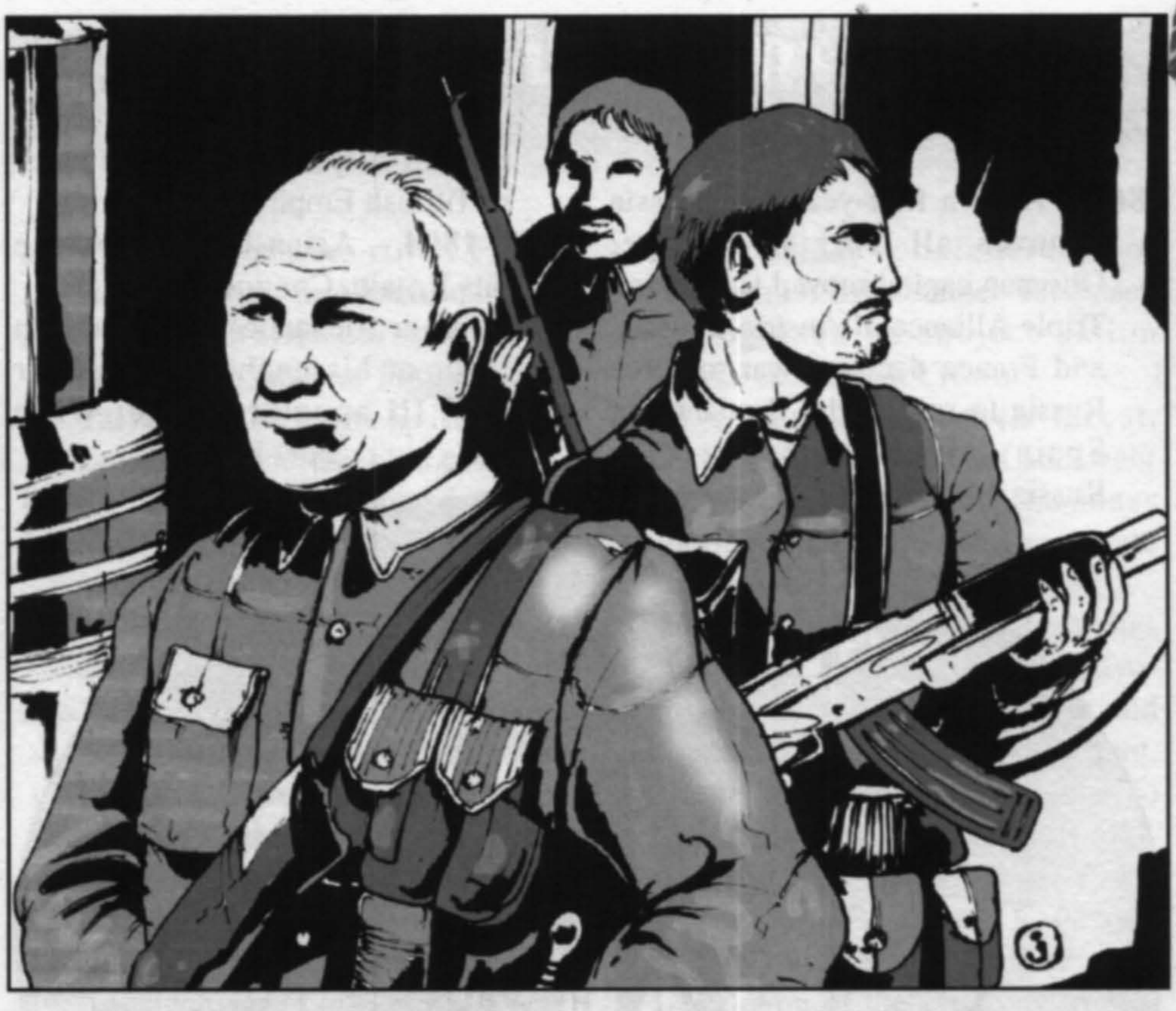
## Outtimers in Cornwallis

In the Infinity, Unlimited setting, Cornwallis is in Quantum 7, making it easier for Centrum to reach. Centrum appears to be trying to infiltrate the Dominate (very difficult so far) and the revolutionary Masonic Lodges (with rather more success). The Infinity Patrol coordinates its North American activities with the U.S. government, fighting both Centran and Dominate influence in the American underground. The British and Russian governments have also sent teams to Cornwallis, trying to influence their counterparts – Infinity has had to arrest diehard Soviets seeking to introduce Homeline technology and Communist ideology to the Dominate. Infinity concentrates on the Austrian Empire, mindful of its unique orientation toward progress.

## Cornwallis' World of the Mind

In this world, the European tendencies toward bureaucracy and state power took no detours in the direction of popular sovereignty. To most conventional philosophers, steeped in the Hegelian and Comteian tradition, power flows from the state to the people, not the reverse. This modern notion, "monarchical centralism," is the natural successor to the "divine right of kings" heading the Great Chain of Being. Russian republicanism, by contrast, argues that people and State derive mutual legitimacy from each other, although currently the people are discouraged from questioning the People's will.

Although Austrian economists may argue otherwise, it has been an article of faith since Malthus that unchained economic growth creates population disaster, and should therefore be managed by the state. The fact that such management inherently favors entrenched economic interests is either an unavoidable truism or a further opportunity to mitigate chaotic changes. This solid consensus is only now coming under attack, both empirically by the Hayekist schools in the Austrian court and philosophically by the "atomistic" beliefs of many intellectuals. "Atomism," as formulated by Heidegger and Sartre, holds that only individual action can have philosophical meaning, since actions imposed by society (including morals and other constraints on action) are by definition unconsidered. Although both oppose monarchical centralism, atomism and Hayekism disagree on many fundamentals. Hayekism follows Popper in arguing that open societies are absolute goods where atomism denies social absolutes of all kinds.




**1929** – Gold discovered in Spanish California.

**1936** – John Maynard Keynes publishes the *General Theory of Economics,* arguing for government spending in addition to regimentation. Writer Eric Blair exiled to Oregon.

**1944** – Discovery of Near Eastern oil fields; beginning of breakdown of Sevastopol Accords as Thrones compete for oil. Friedrich Hayek publishes *The Road To The Pyramids,* which builds on the work of the unknown Adam Smith and argues against centralized economics.

**1949** – Sikorsky and Leonov build the first airplane.

**1956** – Austrian Emperor Otto I appoints Ludwig von Mises Finance Minister, begins to implement Hayekian reforms in the economy.

**1958** – Czar Peter IV annexes Persia.

**1962-1975** – Great War (Britain, France, Austria, and Prussia against Russia) breaks out over Russian attempts to take Prussian concessions in Mesopotamia.

**1971** – Karol Wojtyla leads a nationalist rebellion in Poland cutting off the Russian army in Europe from its supply lines.

**1975-1983** – Worldwide influenza epidemic kills 35 million.

**1976** – Winter of 1976 is coldest in fifty years; although Allied offensive stalls outside Moscow, Russia finally collapses in revolution. Prussia annexes Poland, Balkans redivided, Persia restored to Shah Reza II. Too exhausted to reconstitute Imperial monarchy, Allies leave nascent Republic of Russia (under the anti-monarchist Yuri Orlov) alone.

**1978** – Yuri Andropov seizes power, executes Orlov, beginning of Years of Blood. Gromov reconquers Japan, Manchuria, royalist Alaska.

**1981** – General Gromov overthrows Andropov, becomes First Citizen of new Russian Dominate.

**1983** – Policy of "quarantine" put in place against Russia by Quintuple Alliance.

# Characters

## Typical Character Types

### Aristocrat

The elite of the Quintuple Alliance, bred and schooled to authority. It is expected that any significant enterprise will have an aristocrat to lead it: after all, who else could? Aristocrats must have Status 3 or higher, had better be Wealthy, and may well have a Patron or Military Rank. They should have Code of Honor or a nasty Reputation, and are likely to be Overconfident. All should know Fencing, Savoir-Faire, French and probably English; social skills from Carousing to Leadership to Intimidation are very common. Aristocrats possessing any craft, medical, professional, or scientific skills should take an Unusual Background and possibly a Reputation as eccentric, coarse, or indelicate; thief/spy skills should only go to aristocrats in a cinematic "Scarlet Pimpernel" or adventurous espionage game.

### Bezhenets'

Well over a million refugees have fled Russia since the proclamation of the Republic. At first, nobles, priests and other opponents of the Revolution were encouraged to leave; during the Years of Blood they often fled just ahead of arrest by the KPB. A *bezhenets'* is likely to have Clerical Investment or noble birth (which no longer gives many of the benefits of high Status: a GM may choose to consider this merely an Unusual Background); former officers of the Imperial military have Courtesy Rank. They tend to have each other as Allies or Ally Groups. Wealth is unlikely, and Poverty is fairly common, as is a Code of Honor or Vow to work against the Republic. Skills depend on their original position, though many picked up Streetwise, Fast Talk, or Survival in the process of escaping.

### Revolutionary

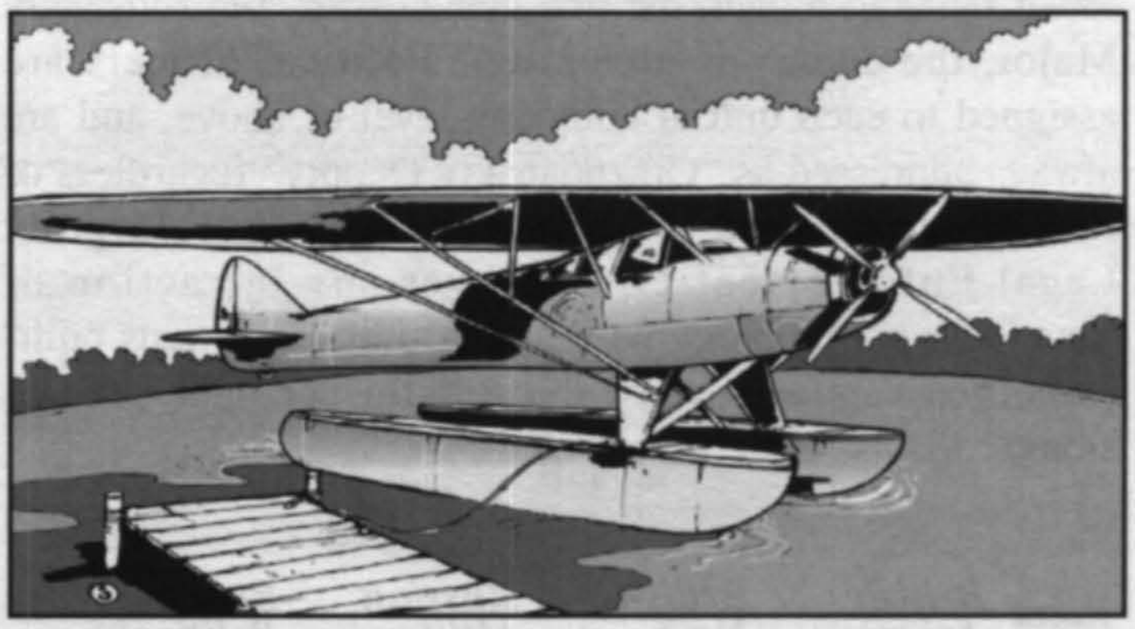
Possibly an American liberal or Polish nationalist but most likely to be inspired by the Russian example, the revolutionary is a spectre haunting the Five Thrones. Besides North America and Eastern Europe, revolutionaries are common in southern Italy (including Sicily), Bavaria, the Netherlands, and Norway – and British India is beginning to see them in increasing numbers. Revolutionaries all have a powerful Enemy, and almost all are Fanatics, while many suffer from low Status, Poverty and/or a Social Stigma. Their Patron or Ally Group is unlikely to be very potent, throwing them back on the resources of their own Voice or Charisma, Strong Will, or Luck. Skills should certainly include Politics and Acting; a revolutionary might also know Bard and Streetwise, Stealth and Demolitions, or even Tactics and Leadership.

### Byelik

The Russian equivalent of the revolutionary is the *byelik* or monarchist, part of the disorganized underground opposition to the Dominate. They must face worse conditions and a more deadly Enemy than revolutionaries against the Five Thrones: Paranoia is common. Danger Sense, Alertness or Empathy may help a byelik to survive. A byelik is unlikely to be interested in Politics (Theology is more common), but will certainly have Streetwise and/or Survival: Thief/Spy skills are at least as prized as combat ability.

### Bush Pilot

A demobilized pilot or young entrepreneur trying to make a living as a freelancer with a surplus airplane – extremely useful to a party trying to make their way across Russia or North America. Bush Pilots will find Absolute Direction to be a godsend, and may also have Luck and/or Daredevil. Though less likely than other veterans to be physically crippled, many pilots are Hard of Hearing. They frequently have some level of Poverty after paying the upkeep on their plane. Piloting and Navigation are mandatory, and many also have Merchant (usually at fairly low levels), Fast Talk, Forgery and Survival.



### Legionary

The Special Forces of Cornwallis, elite soldiers trained especially for counter-insurgency activities, most Legionaries are British (the general name is taken from Tarleton's Legion) but Prussia, France, and even Spain also have a few such units. They have military advantages like Military Rank, Combat Reflexes and Toughness. Legionaries have a mandatory Duty, but are less likely to have a Code of Honor than a Sense of Duty to their unit or the Throne; Intolerance and Bully are also all too frequent. Combat/Weapons and Military skills are emphasized, of course, as well as Tactics and Piloting (Helicopter) for rotothopter assault teams.

# Advantages

### Legal Enforcement Powers see p. B21

Given the low regard for civil rights in Cornwallis, all police officers have at least 10 points of Legal Enforcement Powers. Top agents in the various secret services and all members of the agents of the Russian KPB and the Prussian Geheimspolizei have the 15-point advantage.

### Military Rank see p. B22

Commissions in most military forces can be purchased up to Rank 5, although in most countries non-aristocrats are not allowed to begin above Rank 3, and the Prussian Army and British Navy use professionally-trained officers exclusively. Russian promotions are today based strictly on merit, and their "rationalized" system of ranks is used for both services. Note that Military Rank gives automatic Status in Russia, but not in the Quintuple Alliance. The Revolutionary government has joined all the services together in the Republican Forces; *polkovniki* command warships as well as divisions. Ideologically, every soldier is supposed to be addressed as *"Grazhdanin"* (Citizen). In practice, especially from lower ranks to higher, the two blend, as in "Grazhdanskiy Major, the enemy is attacking." Political officers are assigned to each unit at company level or above, and are always addressed as "Grazhdanskiy Deputy" regardless of rank. They have no line command, but have 15-point Legal Enforcement Powers over any infraction of Revolutionary ideology within their unit. Ambitious political officers sometimes use this to influence military decisions.

| *Rank* | *British Army* | *British Navy* | *Russian Military* | *Russian Political* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | General | Admiral | Marshal | Senior Deputy |
| 7 | Brigadier | Rear Adm. | General | |
| 6 | Colonel | Captain | Polkovnik | Legate |
| 5 | Major | Cmdr. | Major | Deputy |
| 4 | Captain | 1st Lt. | Captain | Commissar |
| 3 | Lt., Subaltern | 2nd Lt. | Lieutenant | |
| 2 | Cornet, Colour Sgt. | Chief Petty Officer | | Sergeant |
| 1 | Sergeant | Petty Officer | | Kapral |
| 0 | Private | Seaman | Ryadovoi | |

### Patron see p. B24

A high noble is typically a 15-point Patron in Cornwallis, while the Dominate government costs a base of 30 points. Frequency of appearance is generally fairly low, especially if the PC is off in enemy territory sowing confusion.

# Disadvantages

### Code of Honor see p. B31

The Gentleman's Code of Honor (p. B31) is expected of all aristocrats, and is affected by many in the middle classes. In Russia, of course, it may get you denounced to the KPB. True Revolutionaries will sacrifice anything for the cause, which is less a Code of Honor than Fanatic.



### Enemy see p. B39

Britain and Russia are 40-point Enemies; the other major governments have shorter reach and might be worth as little as -30 points. Frequency of appearance will be dictated by the campaign: "Scarlet Pimpernel" types who make a career of spiriting prisoners out of the hands of the KPB *need* a lot of points.

### Illiteracy see p. B33

A disadvantage everywhere in Europe, Russia, and America except Brazil. For Africans and Asians, illiteracy is normal and Literacy must be purchased as an advantage.

### Intolerance see p. B34

This disadvantage is very common in its class-based forms, and also appears frequently in ethnically-mixed areas such as Austria. In the Dominate, ethnic Intolerance is considered evidence of an un-revolutionary spirit, but Intolerance of religion is actively promoted.

### Social Stigma see p. B27

Women are *second-class citizens* everywhere in Cornwallis except in the Muslim world and Brazil, where they rank as *valuable property.* Even in Russia, where the Revolution has brought women to full legal equality, deep-rooted attitudes remain. Catholics in Britain, Protestants in France and Spain, and Jews everywhere are

also second-class citizens, suffering legal disabilities as well as the -1 reaction roll. Indians – both kinds – are *minority groups* in the British Empire. Turks, Persians, Manchus, Koreans and Yaponese are minority groups in the Dominate – although assimilated, Russian-speaking, patriotic members of these groups may buy a positive Reputation to offset the penalty. The same applies to full-blooded *Indios* in Spanish America. Africans are treated as *outsiders* in the civilized world, even in America (where they may have lived for generations). The GM should also use reaction modifiers for relative Status. Dislike among classes is very common, and it is appropriate to assign reaction penalties for lower Status even if all involved have positive Status. Reaction bonuses for high Status are appropriate, but represent a healthy fear as often as awe of a superior.

## Skills

### Martial Arts

Eastern fighting styles are hardly known in Europe, although fencing remains a gentleman's art and methods of brawling (seldom formalized into schools) are admired among the lower classes. The Russian occupying troops in Yapon were intrigued by the unarmed skills of the Czar's new subjects, and study of the martial arts was a fad among the aristocracy in the 1890s and urbanites in the 1950s. Dojos, especially for jujitsu and taekwondo, are still fairly common in major Russian cities.

# Economics, Jobs, and Wealth

## Prices and Currency

The various nations, mercantile banks, and shippers of Cornwallis use a bewildering variety of currencies, from the Canadian and New-York colonial dollars to the new Austrian Reichsbanksmarks. Traders must resign themselves to changing currency at every border, losing a few percentage points in the process. To the extent that there is an international standard, it remains the British pound sterling (£). 12 pence (12d) make up a shilling, and 20 shillings (20s) the pound. The Russian Dominate's *sestertsy rossiya* (CP) fluctuates wildly in real value, but the Dominate's Ways and Means Committee pegs the official exchange rate at 1 CP to £1. Average starting wealth in Cornwallis is £100, with at most 20 percent of that sum in liquid capital – the rest will be sunk into rooms or property.

| | |
|---|---|
| Bitter, pint | 5d |
| Carbon-button lantern | £2 |
| Court attire | £10 and up |
| Hair powder | 7s |
| Lodgings, common | 2s 8d/night |
| Lodgings, hotel | £1/night and up |
| Meal, common (pasty and cheese) | 7d |
| Meal, gentleman's (grouse and beefsteak) | 8s |
| Mechanic's tools | £2 10s |
| Motorcoach | £65-£300 |
| Petrol, one gallon | 2s |
| Pocket-lucifer | 10s |
| Pocket watch, silver | £6 |
| Railway fare, per 10 miles | 8s |
| Smallsword, dress | £10 and up |
| Typewriter | £3 |
| Wine, bottle (Austrian Imperial Tokay) | £2 |
| Wine, bottle (French *vin ordinaire*) | 2s |
| Workingman's clothes | 4s |

## Social Status and Cost of Living

| *Level* | *Monarchy* | *Russia* | *Cost of Living* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | Emperor | First Citizen | £15,000 |
| 7 | King | Principal Counselor | £5,000 |
| 6 | Prince, Archduke | Committee Chairman | £1,000 |
| 5 | Duke, Marquis | Governor, general | £200 |
| 4 | Earl, Viscount | Deputy | £80 |
| 3 | Baron | Tribune, Committee legate | £65 |
| 2 | Landed gentry | Commissar | £35 |
| 1 | Doctor, mayor | Local deputy, rail engineer | £10 |
| 0 | Ordinary subject | Citizen | £6 |
| -1 | Peasant, servant | Poor citizen, muzhik | £3 |
| -2 | Street tough | State serf | £2 |
| -3 | Beggar | Beggar | 10s |
| -4 | Transportee | Zek | 5s |

This table includes the cost of servants in monarchist nations. Everybody with any pretensions to Status 1 or better keeps at least one servant. As a rule of thumb, to properly be fit for Society, one should keep three times the number of servants as one's Status. Hence, a doctor should probably have not only a valet, but a cook and a housemaid; a duchess should always travel with a retinue of at least 15 (and probably maintain at least 15 more in each of her residences).

### Status and Class

With the major exception of Russia, social mobility in Cornwallis is limited: a successful commoner may rise as high as Status 2 by purchasing an estate, or sink as low as -4 by pursuing a life of crime, but Status 3 and better are

reserved to the aristocracy, Status 6 and higher to royalty. Noble titles of Status 3 may be available for purchase from the Thrones when the treasury needs funds (and now is such a time) or granted for extraordinary service. The only way to rise higher than that is by marriage. Even then, a lower-Status bride or groom may get a Reputation as a social climber or *nouveau riche* which will take years to overcome. Wealth gives the normal bonus for purchasing Status, but no amount of money will make a mere Earl the equal of a Duke.

## Military Technology

Although the War made the virtues of firepower clear, the Austrian Army is the only one of the Five Thrones to have added a full-auto capability to its standard rifle, the Skoda .58. The other four have varying models of breechloading bolt-action repeaters, reserving autofire for special forces such as Tarleton's Legion and royal units such as the Black Watch or the Prussian Guards. After the Revolution, the Russian Army went over to an automatic rifle, the *Ravenstvo* .30. The Czarist forces rejected the "Equality gun" at the beginning of the War because its inventor, one Mikhail Kalashnikov, was a commoner.

At sea, the battleship remains king, with the Royal Navy's superdreadnoughts reaching 65,000 tons. The Spanish Navy has experimented with deck-launched aircraft for reconnaissance, but no navy currently has aircraft carriers even under design. The Royal Navy uses towed barrage balloons and dirigibles extensively, however, which help spot deadly Russian *podvodnii* – Russian submersible doctrine has almost certainly advanced along with design, and the new engines Russia introduced at the end of the War allowed "pods" to stay underwater far longer without fouling their own air.

Although submersibles use sonar, radar does not exist on Cornwallis; lack of effective air defenses was part of the reason that the final Allied raids on Russia were so brutal. Although Cornwallis's armies possess tanks, aircraft, and rotothopters (helicopters) the Thrones' military doctrine has not yet advanced to the blitzkrieg or combined-arms air-land battle – the new Russian generals may not be so hidebound in the next war.

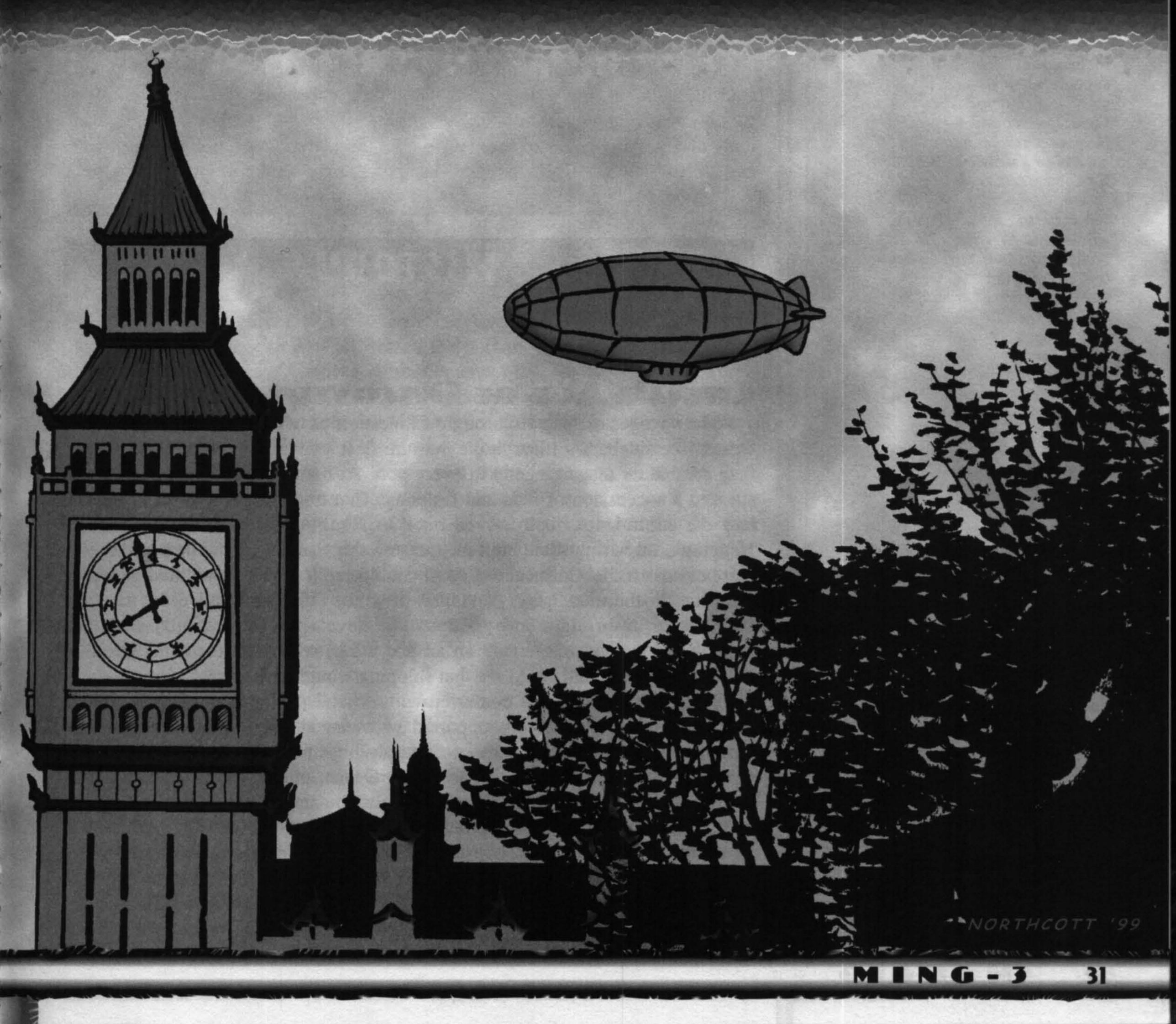
### Going Like .60: The "More Is More" School of Firearms

Although in our world the trend in military small arms has run toward smaller bullets fired more rapidly (with greater muzzle velocity), in Cornwallis, the old ways remain the best ways. The introduction of the Enfield .577 in 1853 not only sparked the Sepoy Rebellion in India, it also nearly bankrupted a number of royal-chartered ammunition companies. Ever since, the caliber of the standard Royal Army round remains fixed at .577. French rifles still take a .702 Minié bullet, the Prussians hold to the old .607 Dreyse needle-gun standard, and the Spanish remain satisfied with their 1887 Frontera .50 carbines.

## Job Table

| *Job (prerequisites), Monthly Income* | *Success Roll* | *Critical Failure* |
|---|---|---|
| *Poor Jobs* | | |
| Beggar* (none), Acting × 2s | HT | -1i/3d |
| Laborer (ST 11+), £1 | ST | LJ/2d, LJ |
| Street Vendor* (none), Merchant × 5s | IQ | -2i/-1i,1d |
| *Struggling Jobs* | | |
| Factory Worker (ST 10+ or DX 10+), £5 | PR | LJ/LJ, 4d |
| Peasant (Agronomy 11+), £4 | PR | -1i/-3i |
| Servant (no attribute below 7), £IQ/2 | IQ | -1i/LJ, 1d |
| *Average Jobs* | | |
| Clerk (Accounting or Administration 12+), £7 | PR | -1i/LJ |
| Coachman (Teamster or Driving 12+), £6 | PR | -1i/LJ, 4d |
| Policeman (Shortsword (Nightstick) 12+), £7 | PR | 2d/3d, LJ |
| *Comfortable Jobs* | | |
| Doctor* (Physician 12+, Status 1 or 2), Skill × £3 | PR-1 | -3i/-6i |
| Officer (Status 1+, Politics 12+, Leadership 9+), Rank × £20 | Best PR-1 | 2d/-1 rank, 3d |
| Royal Agent (Politics 13+, Administration 12+, Status 1+), Politics × £3 | Politics-2 | -1i/LJ and banished from court |
| *Wealthy Jobs* | | |
| Aristocrat* (Status 3+, Savoir-Faire 11+), £100+ | PR-5 | -1 Reputation/banished from court |
| Chartered Merchant (Politics 13+, Status 2+), £80+ | PR-2 | -1i/-6i, lose charter |

# 3 Ming-3



## Jeng Ho (Cheng Ho)

In 1381, the Ming prince Ju Di (Chu Ti) took Yunnan from its Mongol rulers. Among the casualties was the Muslim Ma Hajji, whose younger son, Ho, was taken prisoner. Ma Ho was made a eunuch and the prince's servant at the age of 13. He advanced quickly, commanding troops when Ju Di challenged his nephew, Ming Chyen Wen, for the throne. In 1402, when Ju Di took Nanging and began his reign as Ming Yung Lo, he honored Ma Ho by giving him the family name Jeng.

Soon afterward, Ming Yung Lo ordered the creation of a fleet of over 300 ships and 28,000 men. Some believed he intended to pursue his predecessor, rumored to have fled south disguised as a Buddhist monk. Others believed it to be a mercantile venture. The ships ranged from 120 to over 400 feet in length, and included merchantmen, warships, and support vessels (such as 20 tankers to carry drinking water for a month at sea). Eunuchs commanded the fleet, and Jeng Ho was commander-in-chief. In the autumn of 1405, Jeng Ho's fleet set sail for Calicut, on the west coast of India.

During its many voyages, the fleet sailed as far east as the Phillippines and as far west as southeastern Africa. It brought gifts from the Emperor (silk, cotton, horses, porcelain, tea, and much else) and received tribute in return, but also engaged in more straightforward trade. The sailors navigated by compass heading and by the constellations, weathered those storms they could not avoid, and battled pirates (using gunpowder weapons, including grenades filled with metal pellets and tubes which could set fire to sails). When they returned home, they brought elephants and giraffes, Arab drugs and magnifying lenses, and even, on occasion, foreign rulers.

In Ming-3, Ming Yung Lo's grandson and successor was deprived by plague of the advice of his mother, who had been opposed to foreign adventures. He instead followed the example of his grandfather, and Jeng Ho commanded the fleet for the rest of his days. In 1431, the fleet rounded the Cape of Heavenly Attention (Good Hope), but concluded that there was little of interest on Africa's west coast. On his return, he left the fleet at Arabia to perform the *Hajj*, and died in the holy city of Mecca. He left behind a family to venerate him (descended from his adopted sons) which remains powerful in the Middle Kingdom, and a legacy of Chinese naval power that continues in Ming-3 to the present day.

*You are all too anxious to awake us and to start us on a new road . . . but you will all regret it, for, once awaked and started we shall go fast and far – farther than you think – much farther than you want!*

*– Wen Syang*

In the early 15th century, ships from China began to travel the Indian Ocean. The great ships, vastly larger than European vessels, brought gifts to local rulers in lands from Indochina to East Africa and returned with curiosities, tales, and envoys to the Son of Heaven's court. In our own world, the voyages ended by Imperial edict and the ships were scrapped. In Ming-3, the Middle Kingdom continued its outward probes, making contact with the rest of the world while it remained superior in technology and organization.

Four centuries later, the world revolves around Nanging (Nanking), which rules an empire of unprecedented extent and majesty. Nevertheless, all is not well under Heaven. The Empire faces ten thousand minor crises, none threatening in itself but taking a wearying toll when combined. Rumor carries the news of natural disasters, military setbacks, and dearths. Though few dare speak of it, all know the signs. Has the Ming dynasty lost the Mandate of Heaven, its divine authority to rule? And if so, what will come next?

The more dedicated of the dynasty's servants labor, perhaps in vain, to forestall the curse of interesting times, while their colleagues grow ever more corrupt. Increasing numbers of soldiers and scholars, peasants and merchants, criminals and princes begin to prepare for the unmentionable future. Conspiracies and shifting alliances abound, and flashpoints may appear anywhere, any time. What more could an intrepid band of adventurers wish for?

# History

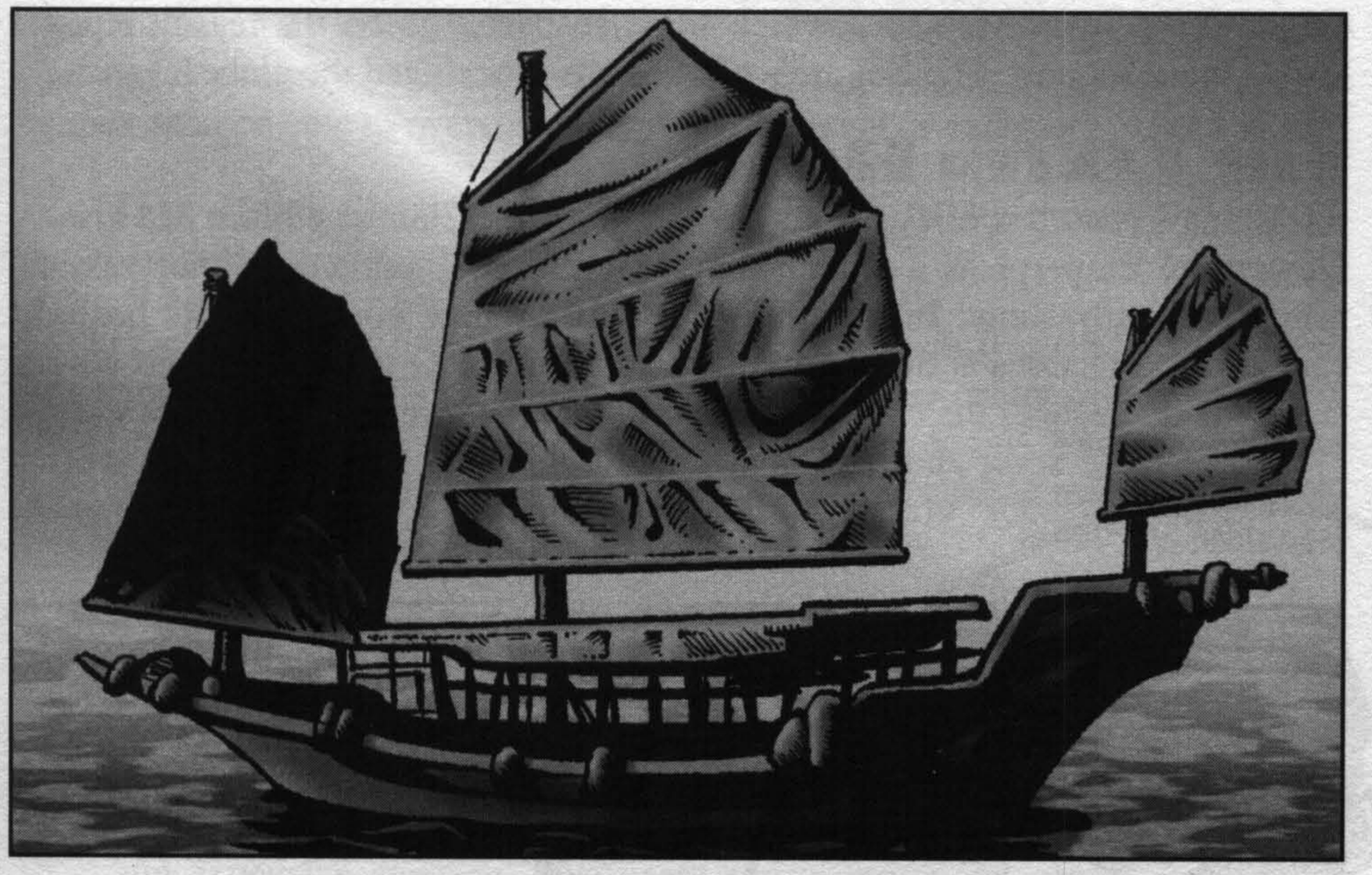
## China's Age of Discovery

The voyages of Jeng Ho brought Chinese ships to every corner of the Indian Ocean (see sidebar). Although the treasure fleet's voyages brought no net profit, they created an instant legend in every port. At home, the rarities brought back sparked a succession of fads and fashions. That trade might have been ignored had the capital not been moved back to Nanging from Beiging (Peking). Nanging's shipwrights had built the treasure ships, and were not prepared to lose that business if their influence at court could keep it going. In addition, the latest offensive in the reconquest of Annan province (Vietnam) called for men and supplies to be brought in by ships. The development of supply lines and amphibious tactics was largely an ad hoc affair, with practice racing ahead of military theory, but all could see that shipping would have to vastly increase.

Magnates and generals conferred with officials, officials conferred with the Emperor, and Imperial edicts supported a growing shipbuilding industry. To protect the merchants (and the seaborne supply lines to Annan), China built up its navy. The Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean, initially small but backed by the occasional 400-foot-long ship bristling with cannon and flanked by smaller craft, overawed most potential pirates in that region.

After 1450, China discovered that local troubles along the trade routes from Africa and India could be simplified by using the techniques for transporting armed men across the sea developed in the Annanese War.

Initially intending merely to hold strategic bases (often retaining the local ruler after his proper submission to the Emperor), the Chinese soon found that they had to pacify the base's hinterland, and then the principality which had a border quarrel in that hinterland. Without any conscious plan, Indonesia, the Malay peninsula, southern India, Arabian ports and the entire east African coast from Mugadushu (Mogadishu) in the Horn to Sofala (in our world's Mozambique) became tributaries, then provinces.



As the Indian Ocean trading system finished adapting to Chinese primacy, new ships appeared from the southwest. Though much smaller than the Chinese naval craft, they were more heavily armed than the typical merchant in those years of Chinese-enforced peace. The new ships sometimes traded, sometimes raided, and, most shocking of all, seized the port of Goa, in direct defiance of the Chinese protectorate. Chinese reinforcements made short work of the newcomers, but their countrymen continued to make the seas a dangerous place.

The Minister of the Fleet obtained permission from the Emperor to deliver a reprisal to those who had flouted his majesty. Captured pirates were persuaded, by gold or by iron, to reveal the location of their home and its robber lord, somewhere beyond the Cape of Heavenly Attention. Reaching their faraway land would take time and expense, but these raiders must be taught that distance was no protection. Further persuasion supplied the fleet with navigators who could sail the rough western waters. Chinese flotillas worked their way up the African coast, capturing the forts the newcomers had themselves established. Finally, in 1519, a Chinese fleet (carrying largely Arab and Turkish troops, with a small Chinese cadre) anchored at Lisbon to deliver the mandated chastisement to Alfonso de Albuquerque's master.

Despite the confused rumors from Africa, this attack by Moors under the command of the Grand Cham astonished the Portuguese. Still more daunting were the invaders' practiced tactics of amphibious invasion. When King Manuel the Unfortunate and his eldest son John fell on the battlefield, Manuel's brother-in-law Charles I of Spain claimed the right to intervene for the defense of Portugal and Christendom. Conflicting Portuguese claims and the total disruption of communications left Portugal effectively leaderless, and in the aftermath of that kingdom's swift collapse Spain found itself fighting for its own life. An attempt by Spanish galleons to sever the Chinese lines of communication saw the Iberian ships cut to pieces off the Canaries.

## GURPS China

While Ming-3 contains nearly half a millennium of alternate development, its regard for precedent and tradition is no less than historical China's, and GMs will find that much of the information in ***GURPS China***, particularly regarding the Ming and Manchu periods, can be adopted with little modification. Nonetheless, the Middle Kingdom's administrators in Ming-3 often draw *different* lessons from the past than the Ming emperors and bureaucrats in our own history. The China of Ming-3 is more confident and less insular than its historical counterpart. Its institutions, while similar to those in ***GURPS China***, are naturally not identical.

## Other Chinese Parallels

In the Infinite Worlds campaign background described in ***GURPS Time Travel***, Ming-3 is one of several worlds in which Chinese civilization forms the dominant feature.

In **Ming-1** (current year 1500), European and Arab civilization were more thoroughly subjugated by the Mongols, and Ming China (remarkably similar to its Homeline historical equivalent) is the only large, stable empire in a sea of petty khanates and ephemeral kingdoms.

In **Ming-2** (current year 1708), the Jesuit missions to China succeeded in converting the Emperor and a large fraction of the population. This change derives, at least in part, from a papal ruling that veneration of ancestors did not constitute idolatry. Chinese-Western collaboration (and competition) appears to be setting off the Industrial Revolution somewhat earlier than in Homeline's history.

**Song** (current year 1659) *did* undergo an Industrial Revolution shortly after co-opting a steppe prince named Temujin to lead its armies against the neighboring Tatars. It is currently at the cusp between TL6 and TL7.

**Xia** was at first believed to be a historical echo of Homeline circa 2000 B.C. – until explorations around the Near East and India discovered no civilizations at all. Thus far, the settlements around the Huang Ho appear to be the only ones making use of agriculture. Archaeologists hope to return when funding becomes available, to see if the other centers of civilization were never settled, or if they were abandoned for some reason.

## A Note on Spelling

Because of the Imperial court's relocation to southern China, Ming-3 official Chinese is substantially different from its counterpart in our own world. For this reason, and to make it easier to distinguish between Ming-3 persons and locales and their equivalents in our own world (or Infinite Worlds' Homeline), this chapter uses a modified Yale romanization system for Ming-3 names. The first time a reasonably well-known or historical name is used, its equivalent in the modified Wade-Giles of ***GURPS China*** will be given, e.g., "Nanging (Nanking)".

## Chinese Calendars

A full discussion of the Chinese calendar may be found in ***GURPS China***, pp. 23-24. Suffice it to say that the Chinese recognize a solar year divided into 24 periods, and a lunar year divided into twelve months. Most major events are scheduled by the lunar calendar. The years themselves fall in a decade-long rotation, the Celestial Stems, in which each two-year period is identified with a Chinese elements (wood, fire, earth, metal, or water) and the familiar twelve-year rotation, the Hourly Branches, named for different animals (the animals also divide the day into twelve two-hour periods). The two rotations combine to form a 60-year cycle. Thus for 1859, the Stem is metal and the Branch is the sheep.

Because the Chinese of Ming-3 believe that celestial events can affect events under Heaven, the determination of the calendar is an important official function. The Emperor gives calendars to local rulers to ensure that they perform both rituals and routine acts at auspicious times. The publication of a different calendar by an Imperial subject, or an error in the prediction of an eclipse by an official, can have grave repercussions. (Normally, religious calendars like those of Christians and Muslims are ignored, but officials may take notice of them if those groups are believed for other reasons to be plotting sedition.)

Some historians (all native to the Iberian penninsula) believe that the Spanish might still have won had they not also had to contend with French opportunism at their rear or the plague which ended the siege of Barcelona. Ming-3 scholars of the art of war universally grant that the decisive battle at Saragossa might easily have gone the other way (though most would contend that the defeat of the Son of Heaven's forces would merely have prolonged the inevitable). In the event, after Saragossa the Chinese eunuch Ma Hi could justly call himself Governor of Wan'gwe (the Sunset States). With Iberia, China also gained the gold of Mexico – which some suspected to be the reason reprisal turned into conquest. The Empire's possessions now ringed the globe.

## The Center Holds

China's central role was in theory nothing new. Chinese culture had always viewed the Emperor as a universal ruler, and foreigners were either vassals, rebels, or barbarians. In practice, the realm's new commitments brought changes, and factions at the court attempted to use those changes to their advantage. The interests of the court eunuchs (in close alliance with Jeng Ho's successors) and the bureaucracy (which, to counter to the eunuchs, grasped at the army it had long starved and disdained) fueled the consolidation of conquests on both land and sea. The two factions sometimes worked at cross-purposes: in the invasion of Mogul India, naval troops from the south fought several battles with army troops from the northeast before matters were brought under control.



Europe, meanwhile, remained mostly quiescent. The Habsburgs' loss of Spain left France dominant in Christian Europe (although the Turkish conquest of Vienna left that smaller yet). Francis I won the title of Holy Roman Emperor, and he and his heirs gained effective control of the German states. The Empire increasingly took the Chinese state structure as a model (see sidebar, *Chinoiserie,* p. 36). As the Chinese garrisons in Iberia dwindled, the French monarchy increasingly recalled that the Spanish and Portuguese inheritances belonged to it by right.

This came to a head under Emperor Louis II (King Louis XIV). Perhaps he wished to distract the Germanies in preparation for revoking the toleration of Protestantism, or perhaps he saw Chinese weakness in the shrunken forces in Spain. Whatever his motivation, the French offensive began with great success. Its defeat, when it came, was primarily economic rather than military. France simply did not have the wealth to pay for a sustained campaign. If Louis II's palace looked like a small, distorted copy of the Forbidden City, building it had taken wealth and labor which had not gone into productive or military efforts. The Chinese failure to persecute heresy pleased as many of the Empire's German troops as it offended, and though the Spaniards first welcomed the French as liberators, they soon saw them as a coarse, lawless band of invaders. Chinese reprisals, when they came, merely put the seal on an inevitability. Louis's journey to Nanging to perform the *kotow* was itself an anticlimax, hardly noticed in the capital itself, but it nonetheless meant the end of the Bourbon realm's independence.

## The Sword Dance and Disorder Under Heaven

The supremacy of the Empire did not, of course, lead to unending peace and stability. Leaving aside the eternal intrigue within the Forbidden City, the military was split twice by the rise of ambitious Imperial relations. The first time, in 1553, the rebellion was quickly put down, but the second conflict in the mid-18th century lasted for six years and encouraged dangerous speculations. Many times, an ambitious, foolish, or insufficiently dutiful Emperor risked the displeasure of Heaven by ignoring his ritual duties for his favorite wife, or by trying to plot naval strategy personally. Nonetheless, the wealth and majesty of the Empire seemed able to overcome any threat, internal or external . . . for a while.

*"From ancient times, death has come to all men, but a people without confidence in its rulers will not stand." – Confucius*

In the last century, however, something has changed. It is said that warlords rule realms in the Lands Beyond the Sunset and in the center of Africa, recognizing no Emperor. The same is said of mountainous regions much closer to the heart of civilization. The cities, even the capital, are ruled as much by rival triads as by Confucian officialdom. The officials themselves, some say, no longer fear the traditional punishments for accepting bribes. In the villages, sons speak against their fathers, and the ancestors are not properly revered.

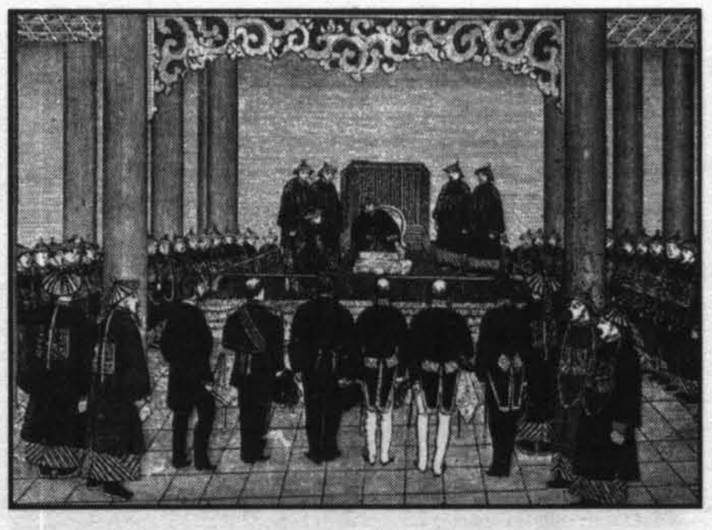
Twenty-five years ago, famine left a million Indians and Central Asians dead, while the Emperor seemed mesmerized by gold coming in across the Eastern Ocean. Fifteen years ago, what began as a peasant rebellion on the Siberian plain nearly turned into a conflagration, and continues to demand a large and expensive garrison. Five years ago, a provincial capital in Dungjeu was sacked and burned by barbarians (though reprisals followed). Surely the Empire cannot continue dancing between disasters forever.

# All Under Heaven

## The Middle Kingdom

In Ming-3 Chinese, Junggwe or "the Middle Kingdom" refers to all lands which recognize the suzerainty of the Emperor, whether directly or as client states. Some provinces have been Chinese since there was such a thing as China. For others, the only obvious Chinese influences are the ruler's trip to Nanging for confirmation and a visit from a tribute ship every five years. Strictly speaking, the Emperor's servants do not recognize the legitimacy of non-tributary states, but a variety of formulas exist to permit negotiation, trade, and warfare with the remaining polities. Even those foreign lands, however, recognize China's place as the center of the world.

By now, the entire margin of the Indian Ocean and most of the Pacific Rim have been fully absorbed into the Chinese system. Local customs vary as much as they ever have, and most religions are tolerated so long as they do not question the political order. (In the last several centuries the Empire's Christians and Muslims have altered their focus from winning independence to converting the dynasty.) Elites everywhere have been Sinified to one degree or another, which creates a uniform culture in which an educated man (or a woman who travels with him) can travel anywhere and find familiar surroundings (i.e., in Ming-3, Savoir-Faire is the same worldwide, but Streetwise is much more specific to locale and culture).



### The Mandate of Heaven

As explained in ***GURPS China*** (p. 13), the Emperor's authority derives from Heaven's choice of him and his dynasty. Most of the Emperor's day-to-day duties involve audiences with his officials or ceremonies to mediate between men and Heaven. Thus, as an example, every spring the Emperor performs a farming ritual for which a thousand peasants assemble before a plow, an ox, and barrels of fertilizer. Actors dressed as the spirits of wind, clouds, thunder and rain, observe as the Emperor stands behind a golden plow, holding a whip. An official performs a ritual planting, and then selected peasants present the Emperor with baskets of the five principal grains, to signify a good harvest.

In general, while the Emperor's authority is absolute, he does not have a great deal of control over his everyday life. Ritual controls virtually every moment of his day, and an entire government department, the Board of Rites, plans and supervises these events. Strong Emperors have sometimes succeeded in implementing policies (or at least changing schedules), but in practice courtiers and officials can guide the Emperor when he seems to be leaving the proper Way. (Not without some danger: a head-to-head conflict with the Emperor *will* leave the courtier a head shorter, and possibly his sons as well.)

#### *Interesting Times*

Because the Emperor is charged with ensuring peace, good harvests, and the like, their failure to appear may suggest that he has lost Heaven's favor. Of course, a single bad omen in the reign of a strong and successful ruler may mean nothing. But if people already suspect that the dynasty is in danger, every meteor shower or earthquake may be taken as a sign. When the dynasty has lost the Mandate, it is not only permissible but proper to try to determine who now may have it, and to follow him. Equally important: killing an Emperor who no longer has Heaven's sanction is *not* regicide. Of course, winning and holding the place of the Emperor is the only sufficient – or necessary – proof that Heaven has made its choice.

## Chinoiserie

Chinese rule and influence has not, of course, eliminated local cultures from the world scene. Nonetheless, elites all over the world have modified their practices as a result of Chinese influence. Indian princes learn Chinese calligraphy, and African merchants wear the same silks as their Nanging counterparts (if a year or two out of date). But nowhere did the enthusiasm for all things Chinese take off as quickly as in Europe.

Soon after the Chinese conquest of Spain, France found itself with neighbors who disdained *Frenchmen* as uncultured barbarians. In itself, that was no novelty – the Moors and Italians had done the same not so long ago – but the Chinese had the sophistication and treasure to back up their attitude on an unprecedented scale. The Chinese governor's palace at Lisbon was larger, better ventilated, more brightly colored, and more richly decorated than anything of which the French Roman Emperor could boast. When pride moved the French Emperor and his vassals to correct that (especially after the Chinese established a permanent embassy), artists and artisans alike turned to the Chinese themselves for ideas and raw materials.

At the same time, the wisdom of the East drew Europe's thinkers and natural philosophers. Surely an empire which rivalled Rome in age and which could send forth such global power had many lessons to teach. Political philosophers studied Confucius, natural philosophers turned to Taoist alchemy, while new heresies clearly based on Buddhism blossomed. Hybrid ideas arose, like the brief suggestion that the Roman Emperor enjoyed the Mandate of God (which fell from use after L'Empereur Soleil was forced to acknowledge that as the Sun is subordinate to Heaven, so was he to the Son of Heaven). While the Catholic Emperor has driven Protestantism to the fringes, both Catholics and Protestants have picked up language and ideas from the eastern religions they have come into contact with. But for the color of his robes, a bishop might now be mistaken for a mandarin.

While Latin and French remain important languages within Europe (along with the many never-standardized Germanic, Italian and Slavic dialects), the more globally useful Chinese languages have assumed greater importance for scholarly work and diplomacy. For the educated, knowing only European languages is the mark of a provincial scholar, or a religious extremist unwilling to traffic with pagan sages.

## Nanging

Capital of a global empire for nearly half a millennium, Nanging (increasingly called Jungging, the Central Capital) is quite simply the center of the world. The ruins of the original city have long been buried by the monumental Forbidden City (more commonly called Danui, or "the Great Within"). That capital within a capital, which would be a medium-sized city, is home to innumerable eunuchs, even more women of the court, and the Emperor. Surrounding it in a ring is the Imperial City: administrative offices for the bureaucracy, with a few residences for the highest ranked mandarins. Because officials are expected to live an austere life, these quarters are stark, though the Imperial City holds many parks, lakes, and gardens reserved for their use. (Most high-ranking bureaucrats possess luxurious estates elsewhere, but to mention this fact in the Imperial City is a grave offense against propriety.)



Around the Imperial City, Nanging itself has grown in every available direction. In theory, residence in Nanging is controlled by the Bureau of Rectitude in Accommodation, which limits the city to a million (literally, ten thousand hundreds) citizens. In fact, there has long been official exemption for even the most extended family, and illegal residents outnumber legal ones by at least three to one. The central districts bear the marks of the 18th century reconstruction of the city using *feng shui* (geomancy) to maximize the harmony and good fortune of the Emperor. Five *li* (a bit under two miles) out, however, the order dissolves into the organic growth of the New City (home to merchants, lesser officials, and other folk of middle rank).

Five more *li* sees the beginnings of the region not properly part of Nanging at all, though it easily contains the bulk of the city's population. It encompasses the landfill islands that have turned Hywenwu Lake into a swamp and covers the foothills of the Dz'gin mountains. Here, makeshift buildings go up overnight (and burn down just as often). Here those who would make their fortune and those who have just lost it congregate. Here too are the laborers who dredge the harbors, draw the rickshaws, work in the manufactories, and carry the ten thousand goods that keep the city alive and rich. It is said that anything may be found in the Outer City if one but looks long enough – and if trouble doesn't find the seeker first.

## Datsin

The ancient Chinese name for the Roman Empire now describes the vassal realm which controls Europe from the Pyrenees to Poland (which paid separate homage to the Emperor to avoid being crushed between Datsin and Russia). Datsin has long organized itself along Chinese lines, with a bureaucracy chosen by examinations (geared more to canon law than Confucian) and several attempts to "rationalize" the borders of the German and Italian states (which have resulted in three civil wars so far).

Despite its vassal status, Datsin has attempted to assert supremacy over those areas in which China has expressed little interest, like Scandinavia and Italy. The result has been a series of wars which have exhausted and impoverished the continent. Attempts to colonize the eastern coasts of the Americas foundered for lack of support and some direct interference by China (which wished to discourage "pirate bases").

# Southern Africa: Ming-3's Casablanca

For three centuries after Jeng Ho's first visit, southern Sijeu (Africa) was an infrequent destination for Chinese sailors. Control of the ports along the coast alternated between pirates and garrisons to suppress piracy. Both pirates and soldiers intermarried (and otherwise interacted) with the locals, resulting in a mélange of Chinese, Indian, San, and Bantu, speaking a Chinese-derived creole (though Chinese and Swahili are common second languages).

The culture was largely one of tribal agriculturalists until the coming of the warlord Shan Chi. Some claim that Shan arrived with an outlaw band, fleeing Imperial justice, while others say that he was a native of Nansijeu who rose to power on his own merits. His discovery (or seizure) of the diamond fields brought him wealth, and then power. After General Jeu admitted his shameful failure to dislodge the bandit king (and retired to vast estates unexplained by his previous income) the Emperor confirmed Shan Chi's rule over the "province" of Nansijeu.




Currently, his son Shan Bei rules Nansijeu, which continues to combine nominal loyalty to the Emperor with de facto independence. Its capital, Lyeuging (at the site occupied by our world's Johannesburg), is a frequent destination for those who wish to avoid Imperial scrutiny, a link to the largely untravelled realms of central Africa, and a jumping-off point for exotic animal hunters. Shan Bei's police maintain peace in the cities, the diamond fields, and the mines, but care little what business is transacted so long as the consequences fall elsewhere. Overinquisitive Imperial officials may be deported for inadequate papers, may acquire an "inheritance" like General Jeu's, or may simply vanish. (The local wildlife seem to have developed an inexplicable taste for the more nosy sort of human.)

## Tsinghau (England)

The fall of Spain and the discomfort of France initially seemed to spell new opportunities for the kingdom of England. As China consolidated its hold on Iberia, English ships took advantage of the Empire's long lines of communication and supply. English shipwrights adopted many elements of Chinese ship design, producing ships that were smaller, but more agile, than the major ships of the Chinese navy. English raids on inadequately defended supply and treasure ships infuriated the governors of Wan'gwe, who continually called for reprisals. The masters of the navy in faraway Jungging, however, were slow to authorize major actions still further beyond the realm of civilization than Wan'gwe itself.

When English sailors began raiding in the Pacific as well, Jungging could no longer ignore them – particularly when through a combination of incredible luck and sheer audacity, the English captured the bulk of a silver shipment from Meisigwe. The admiral Heu Myen was dispatched to end the terror of these islander pirates once and for all. This he did, first hunting down English ships in the Pacific, then in the Atlantic. Though the English won several victories in the course of the campaign, the Chinese could afford to trade ships ten for one indefinitely, and the power of numbers finally told.

Finally, Heu Myen established bases in Ireland from which to strike at England itself. As Chinese gold flowed to the supporters of Mary Queen of Scots (who was spirited out of England shortly before her scheduled execution), Elizabeth I found herself facing both internal and external dangers. While Heu Myen did not attempt any extended land campaigns, his harbor raids and blockade largely destroyed England's maritime economy. In 1588, the last major fleet action in the English Channel left Elizabeth virtually without a navy. To preserve her kingdom, Elizabeth submitted to terms dictated by Heu Myen: English ships would henceforth bear no weapons, and Chinese bases were established at the island's major ports. Elizabeth was also forced to name James VI of Scotland her heir in 1592, disrupting her previous tactics of keeping her courtiers and royal peers guessing as to her intent. The kingdom's defeat played into the hands of apocalyptic Puritans, and the theaters of London were closed by 1598. Shakespeare's last known play, *King Alfred* (dealing with Alfred the Great's resistance against the Norse) was never performed.

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## Tsinghau (England) (Continued)

A century and a half later, when Emperor Louis II's rising was put down (see p. 34), the Chinese assumed more complete control in the northern Atlantic. King James of England and Scotland was required to make full submission to the Son of Heaven. (The revolts which resulted were put down by local troops armed with Imperial weapons and funds.) As a result, the province, which retains a fair degree of control over local affairs, received the name Tsinghau, "green and pleasant."

England's merchant shipping recovered, and its sailors remain in demand. The Imperial navy itself has long had a disproportionate number of sailors from Tsinghau. Few have risen to high rank, largely by choice. However, in the early 19th century Lasyeu Chweihau, an Englishman who devoted himself to naval service with a fervor rarely seen before or since, became the fleet's youngest admiral. Outside of Europe, "Tsinghau" and "sailor" are virtually synonymous.




## The Irish Triads

The various dockyard gangs which grew up following the Chinese conquest of Europe were primarily interested in controlling the ports and the associated illegal trades flowing from them, and were primarily run by Irish sailors. Secret signs and watchwords helped coordinate the global traffic in smuggled goods and piracy, as did family connections to the Old Country. To the Eyes of Heaven, these gangs resembled the Triads they knew back in the Middle Kingdom, and the Emperor's men therefore treated them as such. After two centuries, the reality has begun to match the police reports, if only out of self-defense. The gangs now follow traditional Triad organization, practice a common martial art in Si Lei Li, and have begun to fabricate legendary stories of hidden Druid traditions and secret schools of Celi Dei teaching the sweet science somewhere in the Hebrides. Although sons of Erin still rule the docks, the Irish Triads now include Welsh, Scots, English, Basque, Breton, Portuguese, Dutch, and Norse members in all ranks – to the Eyes of Heaven, all Red Hair Brigands look alike.

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# The Lands of the Western Morning

The Middle Kingdom first learned of Dungjeu (the Americas) the long way round, from the Spanish and Portuguese. Word of cities of gold and silver quickly led to trans-Pacific expeditions by Japanese and Chinese sailors. Mexico remained an appanage of the Iberian province for a while, but ultimately China lost patience with various disputes between the Church and the Spanish governors, and brought it under direct control in 1598. Soon afterward, the new governor followed up on rumors brought back by Spanish expeditions and discovered the Inca, whom the Chinese quickly clientized.

In both Meisigwe (Mexico) and Fusang (Peru), disease sent the population into a downward spiral, and farmers and laborers from Asia moved in to fill the gap. At present the general population of both areas is largely Asian, with significant American Indian and European components.

European efforts concentrated on the eastern coasts, but the Iberians were not permitted the sorts of free-ranging voyages which might have led to large-scale slave trading. (The African slave trade survives, but on a smaller scale primarily within Africa and the Middle East.) A poorer Europe never sustained a serious attempt to colonize the Americas, though small settlements near the Grand Banks fisheries remain.

The Gwesai (a league of tribes speaking an Algonquin language) hold most of the eastern edge of North America and trade food to Meisigwe and Europe, largely for the guns with which they maintain their dominance. Recently an apocalyptic religion called the Bear Cult has arisen among the Gwesai. Cultists have removed in secret to (it is thought) Caribbean islands to "prepare." What they are preparing for, and how, is not known, but even the Gwesai, whose own recreations frequently involve injury and death, consider the Bear Cultists to be frightening and extreme. The Eyes of Heaven (see p. 42) dispatched to investigate the cult did not return.

On the west coast, there is a continuous band of settlement from Vancouver (site of the provincial capital, Gindu) through central California. As conditions have grown more precarious in the heartland of the Empire, migration to America has increased. Thus far, the emphasis appears to be on building the coastal provinces rather than expanding into the more inhospitable climates to the east and north.

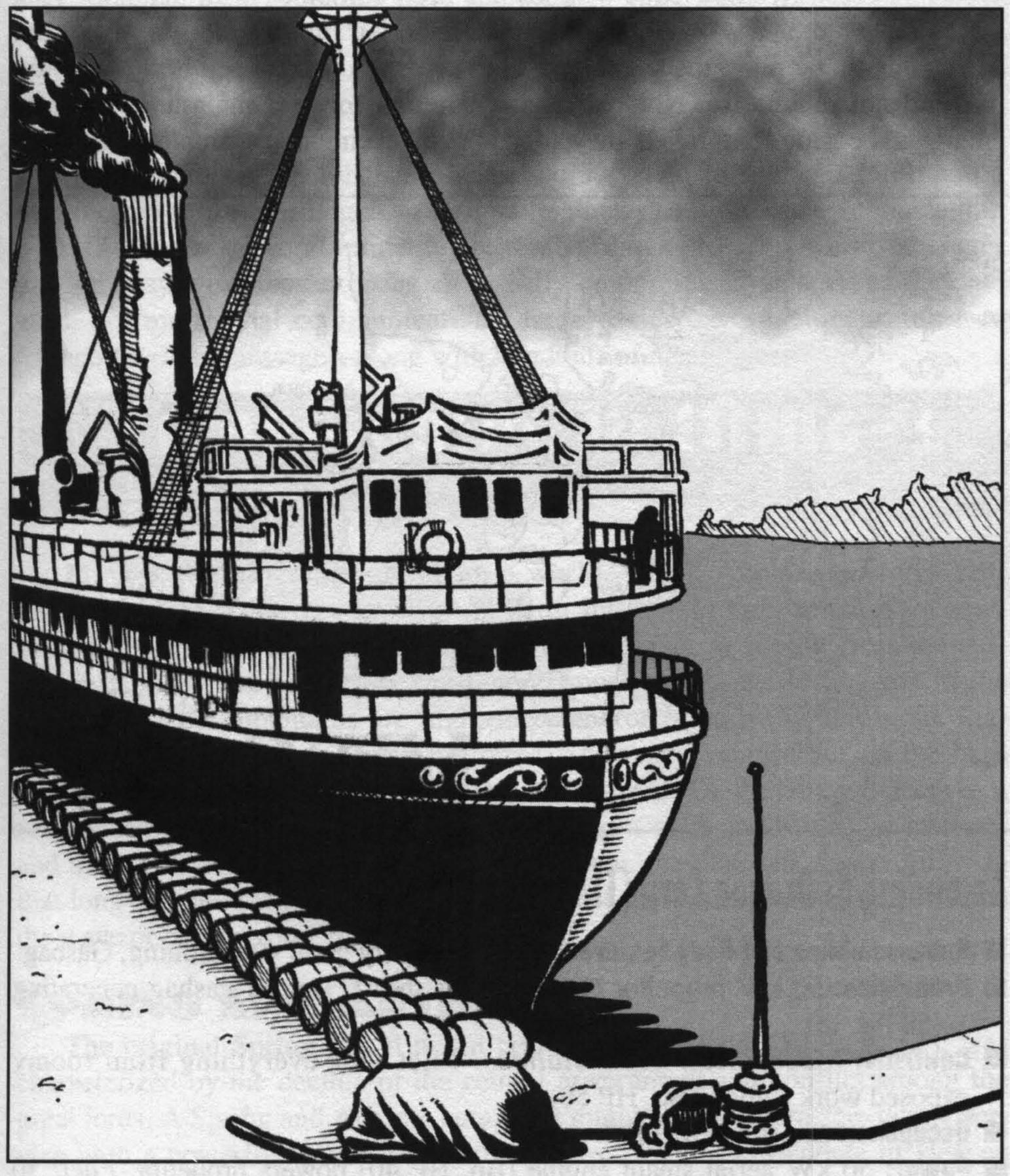
# Technology and Society

Ming-3 is at about TL4 in science, but at TL5 with respect to industrial processes. While in some ways in advance of the West in our own history (e.g., blimps in the 19th century), Ming-3 has not seen mechanical power replace human muscle to the same extent. It is still cheaper to use a thousand men with spades than a hundred men with dynamite and pumps to dig a canal, and it is more profitable to hire many peasant weavers rather than build an automatic loom. Mass production and standardization are common, but conveyor belts replacing runners or camshafts replacing men with hammers are not. Steam engines are used when their greater power is called for (as in warships or locomotives), but not to save labor.

# Transportation

## Land

The most common form of land transport remains the human foot. For the wealthy, other people's feet serve to pull their carts. In more sparsely populated areas, a horse or ox may substitute. Railroads have begun to appear (though canals are preferred where practical), but the cost of a railway ticket remains beyond the average peasant's means.



## Water

Travel by water is central to the Empire, and its boats and ships show an astonishing variety. In rivers and canals, traffic ranges from mere rafts to articulated junks, built in sections to negotiate sharp curves by bending at the joints (or, if necessary, to separate entirely for tighter passages). On the seas, sail remains the rule. The navy, and some of the wealthier merchants, have fleets of steamships. By law, only naval vessels may be armed, but few merchants will venture out nowadays without a few disguised guns or a rocket launcher hidden in a secret compartment, and "flare guns" may be more powerful than the law allows. Player characters with combat skills will find that they can be hired as "sailors" even if they can't tell a sail from a tablecloth.

## The Irish Triads (Continued)

***Si Lei Li*** ***10 points/21 points***

As the Irish Triads begin to make common cause and accept a common ideology and mythology, their many fighting styles are also merging into a common whole. From its origins in dockyard boxing and stick-fighting, Si Lei Li (in Chinese, "thunder-splitting power") has evolved into a hard martial art school, although popular imagination still credits Si Lei Li ollaves with callous brutality and the ability to absorb massive punishment in order to inflict picturesque, but effective, maimings on their opponents. As with most martial arts, there are many Si Lei Li schools, each with its own focus. The Blue Hounds Triad school exalts the quick flurry of jabs, the Brothers of Logha swear by the thick, knotted club of blackthorn wood, and the Sons of Athairne believe that Druidic mysticism must inform every warrior's actions.

*Primary Skills:* Boxing, Broadsword (for shillelagh), Karate

*Secondary Skills:* Boxing Art, Short Staff, Shortsword, Wrestling

*Optional Skills:* Gaelic, Poetry, Staff

*Maneuvers:* Aggressive Parry, Choke Hold, Close Combat (Broadsword), Eye Gouging, Head Butt, Jab, Slip

*Cinematic Skills:* Bardic Lore, Drunken Fighting, Kiai, Power Blow

*Cinematic Maneuvers:* Enhanced Parry (bare hands), Roll With Blow

GMs may allow wuxia Si Lei Li fighters to buy Extra Hit Points at 5 points each for the purpose of absorbing damage only (see MA98).

## The Mountains are High, The Emperor is Far Away

Chinese culture has long recognized that the power of the Emperor, theoretically absolute, can be limited by mere geography. As a result, the Control Rating of the Empire varies considerably. Any place easily reached by water, railroad, or road from its provincial capital has a Control Rating of 5. A typical village on the periphery, infrequently visited by the tax collector or the army will have a CR of 4. Settlements which can only be reached during part of the year, or where the route is especially precarious, will have an effective CR of 3. Virtually no place in Ming-3 has a lower CR; when the government becomes that weak, village elders, local strongmen or a nearby warlord will intervene. Barring riot or general uprising this will raise the CR back to 3, as most Ming-3 communities would deem anything less to be dangerous anarchy.

## Medicine

Medical theory remains at TL4 or below, as Ming-3 medical philosophy remains a mishmash of Taoist theories of balancing forces and assorted folk remedies. What research that does take place concentrates primarily on possible routes to immortality. Thankfully practitioners have learned enough about practical biochemistry to have abandoned mercury and other heavy metals in these preparations, but life extension remains elusive (or, if not, darkly secret).

Day-to-day medicine and pharmacology, however, has produced a rough body of practice which approximates TL5 medicine. Acupuncture and various willow-derived analgesics are effective at relieving pain. Doctors practice inoculation against smallpox by taking samples from the infected (usually someone recently inoculated himself) and treating the samples with time, dilution, and heat to reduce the chance of a severe new infection. Bones can be set, wounds cleaned and treated with sterilizing preparations, goiters treated with animal thyroids, and so on. The explanations for why a particular treatment works may vary, but the flow of information around the Empire has permitted some selection among treatments, to the benefit of patients.

## Psionics and Chi Powers

If the GM wishes to use psionics (or cinematic "normal" skills) in his Ming-3 campaign, explaining it all as focused Chi is absolutely the way to go. Many exciting Taoist herbaries and pharmacopeias detail excruciatingly expensive, involved, and (in many cases) toxic substances to ingest for strong Chi. Although there are many possible ways to organize psionic Chi powers (the eight trigrams, the twelve beasts, Yin-Yang, etc.), one of the easiest is by element. Having the proper Chi (after ingesting an elixir created using Alchemy (Taoist)) is vital to using the proper power. One such system relating ***GURPS Psionics*** skills to the elements might look like this:

*Wood Chi:* Astral Projection, Teleportation
*Fire Chi:* ESP, Psychokinesis
*Earth Chi:* Antipsi, Healing
*Metal Chi:* Electrokinesis
*Water Chi:* Psychic Vampirism, Telepathy

## Air

Two centuries ago, an unknown inventor made the leap from China's man-carrying kites (see ***GURPS China,*** p. 41) to true gliders. Since then, gliders have been invaluable for military reconnaisance and for silent insertion of troops. Glider wings are made of silk cloth, which remains expensive, and they can rarely be recovered after a military operation. In the past, glider pilots have served as messengers, but currently the semaphore telegraph system is considered more reliable.

More recently, knowledge of kites has been combined with balloons (long used as toys) to create small bamboo and silk hot-air blimps. Thus far, these can carry their single pilot, the steam engine to drive the vehicle and heat the air for lift, and not much else. Not yet reliable enough for reconnaissance nor safe enough to be a toy for the rich, they are so far an invention in search of a function.




## Ascending Ki Dragon Carp (TL5)

- **Subassemblies and Body Features:** Body with very good streamlining, Gasbag.
- **Propulsion:** 50 kW propellor (Bo), 125 lbs thrust. Hot air gasbag generating 1,450 lbs. lift.
- **Controls:** Mechanical. *Crew Stations:* Pilot runs everything from roomy exposed work station (Bo, HP 50).
- **Occupancy:** Short. *Crew:* Pilot.
- **Power:** 50 kW aerial steam engine (Bo, HP 40) powers propellor. *Fuel:* 30 gallon light fuel tank (Bo, 17HP) holds four hours fuel.
- **Space:** *Access Space:* 17cf. *Empty space:* 35.7 cf. in body.
- **Volume:** Body 90 cf, Gasbag 87,000 cf. *Area:* Body 125 sf, Gasbag 12,000 sf
- **Structure:** Super-light frame, very expensive materials.
- **Hit Points:** Body 19, Gasbag 120.
- **Armor:** PD2/DR4 expensive wood open-frame armor covered by PD2/DR2 TL6- nonrigid armor on body. Gasbag PD0/DR0.
- **Vision:** Good.
- **Statistics:** Empty Weight 1,031 lbs. Usual payload 200 lbs. Loaded weight 1411 lbs (0.71 tons). Volume 87,090 cf. Size modifier +8. Price: $65,868. HT 8.
- **Aerial Performance:** Stall speed 0. Can fly. AMT 125 lbs. Drag 2435. Top speed 20 mph. aAccel 2 mph/s. aMR 0.125. aSR 3. aDecel 0.5.

## Science

Ming-3 has not gone through a general scientific revolution. Newtonian mechanics and astronomy are about as well developed as their historical counterparts. However, science as an enterprise remains the province of individual researchers with sporadic communications, wholly intermingled with alchemy, philosophy, and mysticism. The material superiority of Chinese civilization drew the best Western minds to China (in person or through their studies), where they made noteworthy contributions to Confucian philosophy and, in several cases, served as excellent local administrators. Technological improvement proceeded as fast or faster than in our own history, but systematic science appears never to have been more than a brief fashion.

### Communications

The Empire has established a semaphore system to transmit information quickly, and ships are charged with signalling news as soon as they come within sight of a tower. Several ministries have code books to send secret messages using this system, but the codes are usually compromised as soon as they are used. For more local communications, larger cities have pneumatic tubes to transport written messages, along with hundreds of messengers.

# Campaigning in Ming-3

Ming-3 is an increasingly chaotic world, which spells opportunity for adventurers. They may be involved in court intrigue in the capital. They may choose to serve one of the many factions which hopes to benefit from the current instability. The characters can ignore Imperial politics, setting out to the lands where the mountains are high, the emperor is far away, and gold, diamonds, or ancient treasure may be found. They may venture out on the high seas where treasure is helpfully packed and marked. Or they may belong to a secret society whose goals they only slowly learn as they advance its interests and their own. And if things begin to slow down, the GM can always throw in that long-awaited civil war or revolution and let the characters scramble to ride the wave or be overcome by it.

## Spring and Autumn

The original Spring and Autumn period (see ***GURPS China***, p. 64), was characterized by the decline of the central government and conflict among the great lords. A Spring and Autumn campaign might see the characters taking service with a powerful Patron, who either hopes to win the Mandate of Heaven himself or intends to help his own patron do so. Some adventures would require diplomacy and political skill, while others would be straightforward attacks against rivals. And if their patron does not turn out to be the Superior Man they believed him to be, he may be more dangerous to the characters than his enemies. Intrigue can work both ways, after all.

### Warlords

Warlords are military leaders who have effective power over a certain area, as with Shan Bei in the Diamond-Studded Desert (see Southern Africa, p. 37). As the center loses its grip, provinces remain with those strong enough to hold them. A wealthy area with a lord who treats the population well may not mind that the taxes fail to reach Nanging. And if the lord needs more money, he may find it easier to "tax" his neighbor's province than his own. Where the Emperor

## Outlaws of the Ocean Margin

At the Empire's height, piracy was driven to virtual extinction. The navy made it too dangerous and unprofitable to truly succeed, and countries which harbored pirates felt fierce reprisals. For a time, the stereotypical pirate (Japanese, by tradition) appeared only in stories and histories. Now, however, the navy is spread too thin, and its captains and admirals have grown corrupt. Once again, despite the navy's new steamships and repeating guns, each merchant ship must defend itself on the high seas. The fact that the means to do this is technically illegal has slowed the merchants' arming, but only until the next report of a merciless pirate attack.

Player characters may choose to play pirate hunters for the government (either naval personnel, or Eyes of Heaven sent to check up on the navy). They may be passengers called upon to help defend the ship when an attack comes. Or, of course, they may be pirates themselves, robbing from the rich and middle class, and giving to . . . whomever they so choose. In some cases pirates are true freebooters, but in others they may be in effect the navy of a warlord or vassal kingdom (whose masters would of course deny any such thing). Either way they should know that captured pirates who fail to bribe or escape their captors *will* be tortured, rather brutally, for information leading to whatever coast or inlet harbors their comrades.

Barring influence at court (or with the local officials), an unsuccessful career will end in execution. Then again, some famous pirates have ended as captains in the Imperial fleet, particularly during wartime. (In some cases, they have had to agree to become eunuchs first, which has been something of a deterrent.) ***GURPS China***, p. 90. discusses the Chinese image of pirates (or *wako*); GMs might also wish to consult ***GURPS Swashbucklers*** for more ideas for the pirate campaign.



## Ming-3 Crosstime

Ming-3 might make an interesting home base for psionic worldjumpers (see TT32), who use Taoist alchemy or meditations from obscure termas to send themselves (body or soul or both) across the worldlines and further their goals in other histories. If PCs, the Ming-3 worldjumpers might be members of some mystical sect (The Twenty-Third Lamasery) seeking magical treasures from other realities, members of a Triad looking for allies elsewhen, or even scholars seeking knowledge of all things under Heaven.

However, the psionic worldjumpers of Ming-3 make even better villains to baffle and perplex PC teams from other dimensions. Without a technological edge, the Ming-3 Eyes of Heaven who cross the Gate of Worlds have to depend on subterfuge and arcane arts to achieve their goals; the GM should give such foes the necessary skills in abundance. Run as a nefarious crosstime conspiracy, such a group would make an excellent Weird Menace adversary for the Order of the Hourglass (TT76) or its crosstime equivalent. Ming-3 reality sculptors hoping to control other worlds' *feng shui* points fit well in a ***Places of Mystery*** or Illuminated game. A fully cinematic wuxia/chambara martial artist team from Ming-3 would give even the toughest and best-armed I-Cop teams (TT84) pause and challenges – especially if the *gwailo* I-Cops are trying to infiltrate some alternate China.

## Wuxia

Roughly translatable as "flying people," wuxia is less a subject matter than a state of mind. The wuxia genre is roughly equivalent to the cinematic or chambara styles of play; it focuses on high action and exciting fights, with broadly, but well defined characters and truly appalling villains. Films like Tsui Hark's *Once Upon A Time in China* series are ideal sources for a wuxia Ming-3 campaign; the tech levels are about right, for one thing, and the action sequences divinely inspired. Other classics of wuxia (like Hark's *Swordsman* series and *Zu: Warriors of the Magic Mountain*) depend on more magic and mysticism than the standard Ming-3 setting, but the genre staples of evil eunuch mandarins and/or thieving, rascally Westerners fit right in without emendation. Wuxia-style games should allow any and all cinematic martial arts skills (especially Flying Leap, p. MA37).

is strong, of course, such an official would quickly be removed. But the realm has grown large, and even steamships take time to reach the far provinces. Brushfire wars have grown more common, and indeed sometimes it is easier for the central government to ratify a conquest than to reverse it. The player characters may be soldiers of a loyal governor, or they may be mercenaries willing to fight for the highest bidder. Successful warlords are open-handed with loot, after all.

### Eyes of Heaven

The PCs may be working to preserve some semblance of order in the face of the coming collapse. If so, they may well decide to serve the Emperor as Eyes of Heaven. The job combines aspects of spy, police officer, magistrate, and soldier. Eyes of Heaven report directly to their own bureau in Nanging, and owe loyalty only to the bureau and the Emperor himself. A group of Eyes is the perfect unit for an investigative campaign, rooting out corruption, rebellion, and crime within the Empire. Of course, corrupt officials and quasi-independent warlords know the Eyes too – an investigation may be discouraged by regrettably permanent means.

### Imperial Marines

The Imperial Navy patrols the seas and keeps the peace. When a warlord or pirate has earned reprisals from the state, the Imperial Marines are the first to go in. Recruited from all over the world, the Marines have been trained to function as a single unit by application of Confucian and Legalist means: they are indoctrinated in proper behavior and punished or rewarded as a collective body. In these troubled times, Marines may be sent anywhere, particularly as corruption in the land forces makes those soldiers less reliable. A revolt may provide the backdrop for a standard military campaign, or an elite Marine unit may serve as a less subtle, better armed tool for missions like those of the Eyes of Heaven.

## Fists of Jade, Swords of the Dragon!

This wuxia (see sidebar) campaign frame centers on the struggle between the Irish Triads and the Eyes of Heaven. Depending on the sympathies of the GM and players, the PCs can be valiantly defending the Son of Heaven from the "red-haired ghosts" and their horrific Si Lei Li killing styles or brave members of the Fianna Fhinn, attempting to overthrow the corrupt eunuchs and mandarins of the Ming dynasty and restore the Mandate of Heaven to the Emperor of Datsin (or to the hidden heirs of Wen Chi, a popular cause for much Triad agitation). Adventures can combine political intrigue, dockland gang warfare as corrupt mandarins secretly support rival crime bosses, and high-flying action as Si Lei Li masters unleash the dreaded satiric spells of Bardic Sorcery while hurling green lightning from their blackthorn clubs!

## Weird Menace and Ming-3

Much of the wuxia genre centers on evil mandarins (often eunuchs) building secret power bases among the criminal or sorcerous underworld to overthrow civilization (a.k.a. the Chinese Empire). Western pulp writers like Sax Rohmer told the same kinds of stories about fiendish mandarins like the insidious Dr. Fu Manchu working to overthrow civilization (a.k.a. the British Empire). Either way, it's a tale of Weird Menace, and a campaign in this milieu will have a lot of creepy fogbound kidnappings, mysterious beasts from the far corners of the world killing innocent scholars in unpleasant ways, opium, somebody's beautiful daughter, and miles and miles of underground laboratories and sanctums. Depending on the feel, GMs can tilt the Weird Menace campaign to ***GURPS Horror*** or ***GURPS Cliffhangers*** or even ***GURPS Illuminati***.

# Ming-3 Timeline

**1406** – Tran dynasty in Annan (Vietnam) overthrown. Ming Yung Lo sends in a punitive expedition.

**1407** – Lacking a Tran heir, Yung Lo declares Annan a Chinese province.

**1418** – Binh Dinh Vuong launches uprising in Vietnam.

**1424** – Plague outbreak decimates Mongols. Ming Yung Lo successfully pushes the Mongol frontier well north of the Great Wall, but dies during his return to Beiging. Ming Hung Si succeeds him.

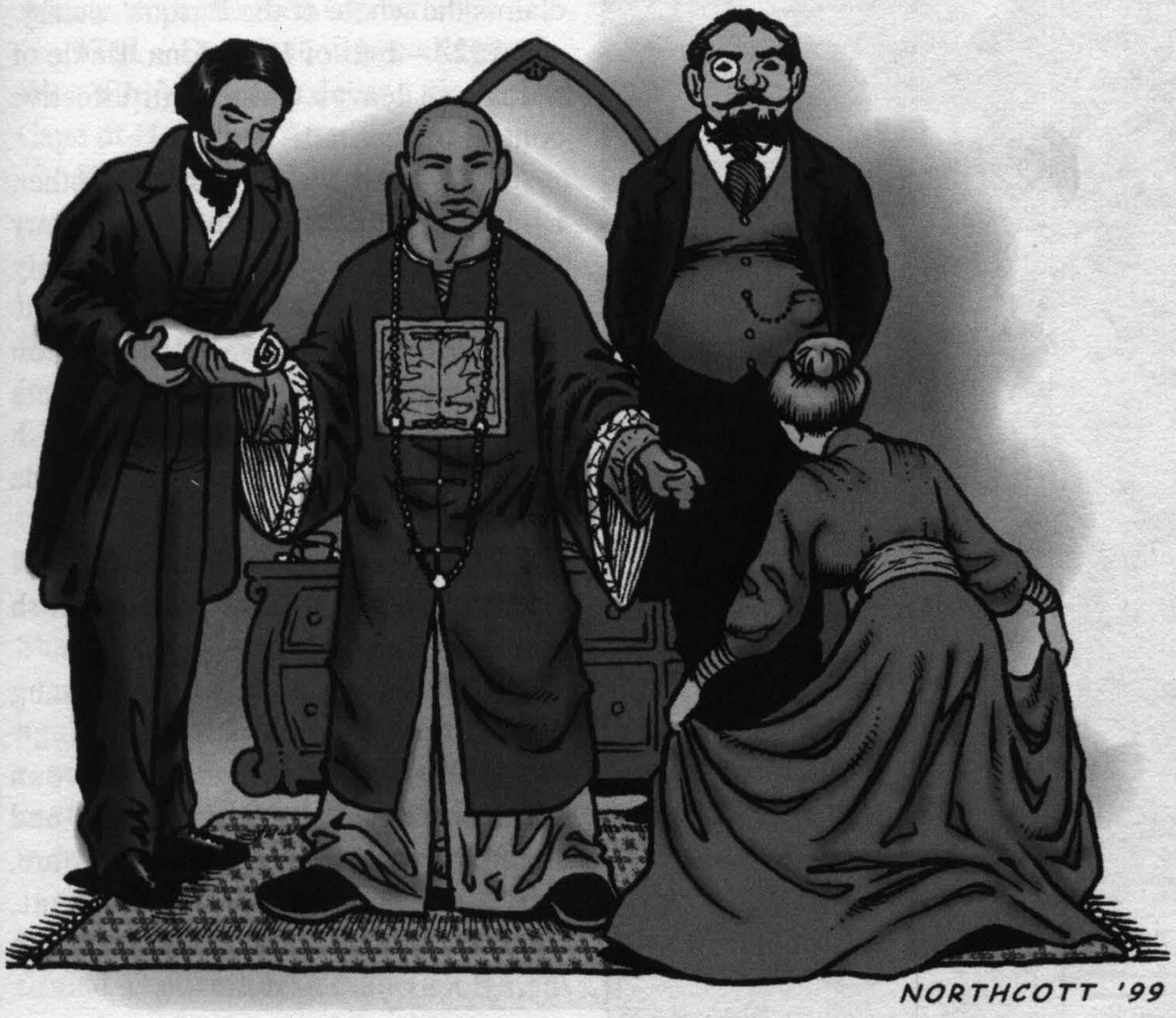
**1425** – Jeng Ho expeditions curtailed. Ming Hung Hsi dies, succeeded by Ming Hywen De.

**1426** – Plague strikes Beiging. Dowager Empress dies. As plague worsens, Ming Hywen De moves the government back to Nanging (at first a temporary measure). Binh captures Hanoi.

**1428** – Using military forces freed from the quiescent Mongol frontier, China returns in force to Vietnam and drives Binh from Hanoi. Some ships from Jeng Ho's fleet used to transport troops to the coast of Vietnam.

**1431-33** – Jeng's final voyage, rounding the Cape of Heavenly Attention (Good Hope) but finding little of interest in southwest Africa. On the return leg, Jeng leaves the fleet at Arabia to perform the Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca).

**1430-35** – Despiute strategic and political advantages, Binh's insurgency is overwhelmed by Chinese numbers and superior logistics. Binh dies in battle, his adult male relatives are killed, their male children made court eunuchs. Vietnam (and later, the rest of Indochina) henceforth known as Annan ("the pacified South").




## Being Ming-3 Chinese

Life in Ming-3 is a web of personal obligation. At the center of everything is filial piety: respect and obedience to a living ancestor, and reverence and veneration for a dead one. Family bonds are important everywhere, and many of the most powerful political and economic forces are nothing more nor less than extended families organized to help one another. The concept of nepotism is virtually meaningless – who would not help a deserving relative before a stranger? Secret societies play on the impulse to family ties, forming brotherhoods of unrelated individuals sworn to kill and die for one another.

Perhaps as a consequence of the emphasis on family or perhaps as a cause of it, Ming-3 culture does not focus on individuals. Collective responsibility and collective punishment are routine. If Confucian filial piety demands that a son lie about his father's crime, Ming-3 justice may punish the family as well to discourage others from harboring a criminal. (A character might learn that he has been sentenced to death or maiming for the treason of a great-uncle he hasn't seen in 20 years!)

Ming-3 does not recognize the sorts of hard and fast racial and national distinctions which have been so important in our own modern history. The basic question is where one is along the line from outer barbarian to the Confucian superior man. Certainly, someone with ghost-pale skin and faded hair will be deemed more likely to be a barbarian than a scholar, but familiarity with the Chinese classics will make any man civilized. (Of course, without family connections, he may still be a very civilized pauper.)

Women have a harder lot. Traditionally, they are expected to serve their own families until marriage and their mothers-in-law and senior wives afterwards, and so many women find themselves. Years of subservience often leaves a wife longing for the day when she can visit terror on her own daughter-in-law, as the cycle continues. Upper class women add to this the crippling practice of foot-binding (see ***GURPS China***, p. 88). Yet among the middle class, the merchants, and even the courtesans and prostitutes, there remains a small window of escape for women to live on their own as something other than a servant.

## Three Swords Against the Mandarin Li Shelyeu!

Another campaign possibility is the alternate historical romance. Combining the swashbuckling of the Three Musketeers or Cyrano de Bergerac with the heavy Chinese influence reaching Europe (perhaps viewed through the filter of a pulp or Wuxia sensibility) offers the chance of doing something fresh with established legends. The PCs may be D'Artagnan and his friends (or near equivalents, if they want to design their characters themselves) in the court of Emperor Louis I, facing the plots of a Richelieu immersed in the ancient wisdom of the East as well as the politics of the West. Perhaps the Red Eminence is possessed of the Taoist immortality elixir, and plans to shape the Empire for generation after generation. (It is perhaps worth noting that in a late Dumas book, Aramis is shown to have outlived his companions by means of a mysterious drug which bestows long life.) Perhaps the Cardinal's intrigues involve France's rivalry with the Chinese governors of Spain, or perhaps he seeks an alliance against the Emperor's judgment. And surely D'Artagnan would not be averse to carrying a fine blade made by the swordsmiths of Riben.




**1436** – Chinese establish permanent trading presences at Java, Sumatra, Johor.

**1440-50** – Chinese bases at Ceylon, Bengal, Goa, Hormuz, Jedda, Aden, Mogadishu. Beginning of Pax Sinica on the Indian Ocean. Discovery of Nanhai (Australia).

**1462** – Mamluks attempt to withhold tribute to China. Arabian coast brought under direct Chinese administration.

**1488** – China intervenes in Japanese civil war, establishes protectorate.

**1498** – First reports of pirates originating from somewhere past the Cape of Heavenly Attention.

**1510** – *Folangyi* (Portuguese) seize Goa. Chinese forces retake the city by force, capture the Folangyi leader, Alfonso de Albuquerque. In reprisal, Portuguese ships seized throughout the Indian Ocean.

**1513** – Imperial court gives approval to a puntive expedition against the western pirates.

**1516-1518** – Chinese forces (with Folangyi and Folangyi-trained navigators) take Portuguese forts on western African coast. Reports reach Iberia of these invasions by vast ships, bristling with cannon.

**1519** – Chinese ships appear in Lisbon harbor. Sino-Iberian war begins. King Manuel of Portugal and his heir killed on the battlefield, prompting Spanish intervention. Conflicting claims leave Portugal in chaos. King Francis I of France takes advantage of Iberian troubles, is elected Holy Roman Emperor.

**1520** – Fall of Portugal. Naval battle off Canaries; end of the Spanish navy as an effective force. Francis I sends envoys to negotiate with the Chinese leadership.

**1521** – Madrid falls to Chinese forces. First Siege of Barcelona. Francis I forbids German and Italian forces' participation in the Iberian war.

**1522** – Second Siege of Barcelona. Spanish victories in Valencia. Francis I claims the whole of the Basque country.

**1523** – Fall of Barcelona. Battle of Saragossa leaves Chinese in effective control of Iberia.

**1553** – An Wei Emperor's brother, Li Jau, rebels with substantial army support. The army is brought firmly under bureaucratic control.

**1580s** – Admiral Heu Myen (Japanese: Hiyoshimaru) conducts anti-piracy campaign, sweeps British and Franco-Flemish raiders from trade routes.

**1598** – Chinese take direct control of Meisigwe (Mexico) from Spanish administrators.

**1599** – Chinese discover Fusang (Peru).

**1630-34** – Conflict between Chinese settlers in Central Asia and steppe nomads becomes open warfare. After the Mongol tribes' defeat, Empire resettles many in Nanhai with their flocks.

**1648** – Russian expansion east meets Chinese expansion north. Border set about halfway across Siberia.

**1695** – Poland, uneasy about its Swedish, French, and Russian neighbors' intentions, preemptively submits itself to Nanging. Its army and administrators begin to train under Chinese tutelage.

**1704** – Rebellion of Luwei of Datsin (Louis XIV) defeated.

**1705** – Luwei brought to Nanging to submit to the Emperor. Swedish attack on Poland provokes retaliation by that province. Sweden incorporated into the Empire under Polish administration.

**1757** – Wen Chi's rebellion begins. Garrisons in Americas, southern Africa, and the provinces of Datsin (but not Poland) declare for the rebel. East Africa, India, and the island provinces remain loyal to the Emperor.

**1758** – Governors of southern Indian provinces go over to Wen Chi. Naval struggle in the Indian Ocean inconclusive. Pro-Wen Chi riots in Nanging.

**1760** – Loyalist action retakes southern India. Naval battles off east Africa decimate Wen Chi's fleet.

**1761** – Datsin switches allegiance. Wen Chi's forces driven from the Cape of Heavenly Attention.

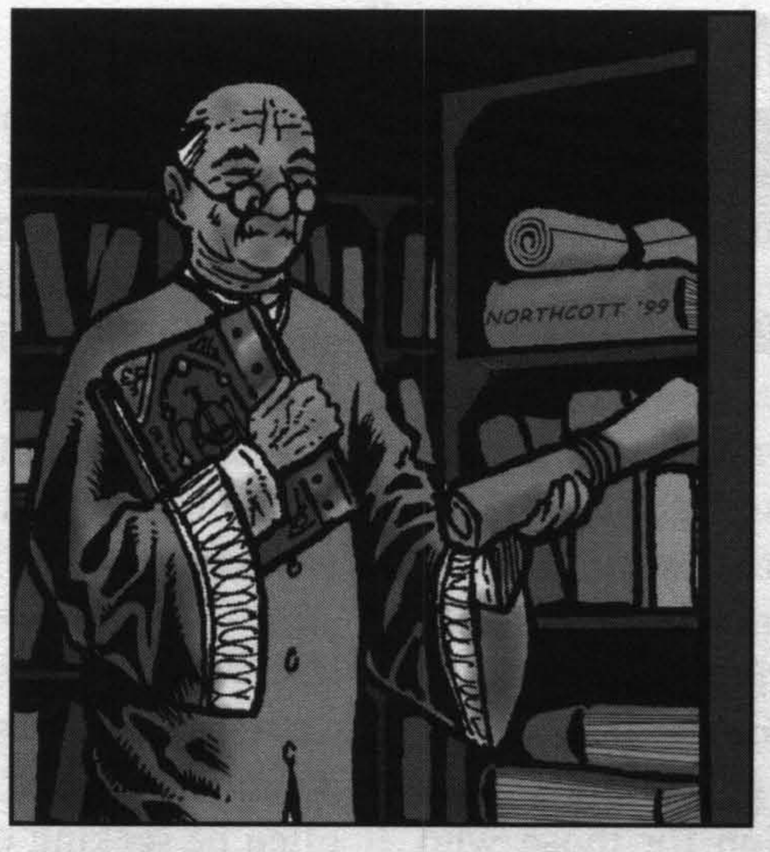
**1762** – Wen Chi's loyalists driven out of Gindu. Wen Chi flees south.

**1763** – Fusang (Peru) refuses to harbor Wen Chi for fear of reprisals. Ship carrying Wen Chi and his sons intercepted and sunk off the coast by Chinese navy. End of rebellion.

**1810** – Shan Chi begins to establish power in Nansijeu. Early resistance dealt with primarily by his lieutenant, Shaga Taisyang (in our history, Shaka Zulu).

**1813** – Imperial troops first sent against Shan Chi. No major battles recorded, but Shan Chi remains in control and the Imperial forces return in far smaller numbers.

**1815** – Shan Chi performs formal submission to the Emperor, is confirmed as governor of Nansijeu.




**1816** – Falling out between Shan Chi and Shaga. Shaga disappears from sight. Some claim he was killed, while others say he founded a kingdom to the north in the continental interior.

**1818** – Chinese intervene in Mogul succession dispute. Losing candidate, Prince Jahangir (himself educated in the Chinese classics), tries to reverse the verdict by force of arms. With troops trained under Chinese discipline and heavy weapons captured from Ming armories, Chinese control of India is threatened.

**1820** – End of Mogul rebellion. Jahangir retains enough bargaining power to arrange exile for himself and transfer of Mogul administration to a third candidate. Chinese power in the Mogul hinterland not fully restored.

**1834-9** – Famine strikes central and southern Asia. Estimates suggest tens of millions die, with indications that corruption or even deliberate policy kept food from reaching the Mogul provinces.

**1841** – Death of Shan Chi, accession of Shan Bei in Nansijeu.

**1843** – Mild food shortages in eastern Siberia provoke riots. Fearing neglect by the government, settlers commandeer transportation facilities and grab supplies from neighboring villages. Even after food supply assured, feuds and reprisals take years to settle.

**1859** – Present, 30th year of the Lung Wa Emperor.

## Ming-3's World of the Mind

The history of Ming-3 China has produced substantial differences in outlook from its counterpart in our own history. The Ming realm has never been forced to treat with foreigners as equals, still less from a position of inferiority, and its long glory has put the shame of Mongol rule far behind.

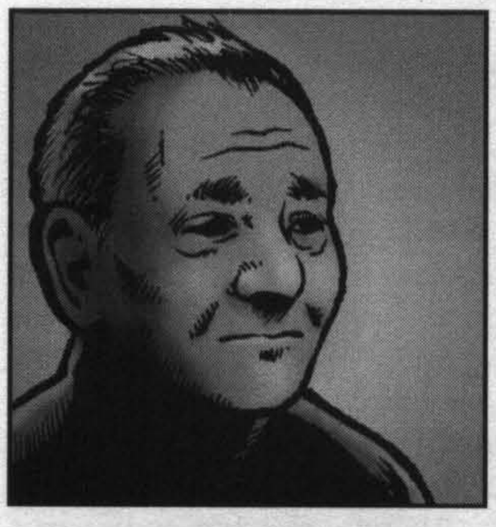
Even the enemies who wait, impatiently, for the dynasty's fall define their own fates in terms of Nanging. Some plan to wrest titles and privileges from a new Emperor needing acknowledgment, some hope to win the Mandate themselves, some hope only to be lost in the chaos, but no one expects the center to fade to irrelevancy. Whether the end comes in a hundred years of civil war or a division into warring kingdoms vying for the Imperial title, there is a consensus that in the end a new dynasty must one day form. Right or wrong, that impression will last long after the overthrow of the last Ming emperor. (Compare Europe, where there was still a Roman Emperor as late as 1806.) The idea of a community of equal, sovereign states, interacting via war, diplomacy, and trade (and lacking any central organizing force) is wholly alien.

The intellectual world of Ming-3 is quickly becoming a fragmented chaos of mysticism and apocalyptic fervor. While the old traditions of Confucianism and Buddhism and, further West, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity remain popular, more and more people are turning to prophets and secret societies offering more immediate rescue from the looming troubles. Adherents tend to throw over their old social ties, going on to anything from becoming wandering mendicants to elaborate plots involving suicide and assassination. At the same time, one may find quiet Confucian scholars reminding their students that Confucius himself wrote of order while living in a time of great turmoil, but these are not so visible nor so symptomatic of a troubled regime. And by now, everyone is looking for those symptoms.

At the same time, Ming-3 values ideas of continuity. Even as chaotic times approach, the ancient rituals and customs assure people that this, too, is part of a cycle which has turned many times before. Dynasties rise, and fall, but the general mindset of Ming-3 does not believe in *fundamental* change. If this contradicts the apocalyptic view that many have taken, it is a contradiction which Chinese society has endured for millennia.

# Characters

## Typical Character Types



### Bureaucrat

At present, the typical Ming-3 bureaucrat is more likely than not to be corrupt. The cost of preparing for the examinations is high, the rewards are great, and there is no recognition for those who tread the path of righteousness. Yet the state would long since have fallen into chaos but for its few unrewarded superior men, as Confucius would have them. A high-ranking official may be a Patron for the player characters, while a less exalted bureaucrat may have useful Contacts. Note that as an adversary, an honest bureaucrat may be a more difficult obstacle than a dishonest one (the latter can, after all, be bribed, intimidated, or blackmailed). They must of course be Literate, and have Chinese Ideographs, Writing, and Calligraphy skills commensurate with the examinations they have passed. Other possible skills include Administration, Diplomacy, Politics, and Literature. If the character has served as a magistrate, he may also have Law, Interrogation and Detect Lies.

### Triad Member

"If the inferior man is brave without Righteousness, he will become an outlaw." The members of the secret societies which riddle the Empire range from street toughs to their nameless, venerable masters. It is said that some of these are immortal Taoist magicians, and it is certain that some are high-ranking officials, relatives of the Emperor, generals, and wealthy merchants. The Triads of Ming-3 are part mafia, part religious sect, part rebel conspiracy, part business concern. From the Righteous and Honourable Sons of Fhinn to the Heavenly Brotherhood of Ismail to the Yellow Eyebrows, all demand similar skills. A low-level thug may have Brawling or some martial arts, an appropriate Gun, along with many of the Thief/Spy skills. Middle ranked members vary widely, but (depending on the career path) Accounting, Interrogation, Merchant or Streetwise are likely skills. All members have a Patron, and a Duty to him. Making Enemies is, unsurprisingly, not especially difficult. Some Triads have associated martial arts styles: a Burmese dacoit Triad member would have Bando (p. MA78), for instance, and an Irish Triad member would have Si Lei Li (p. 39).

### Merchant

Merchants don't get a lot of respect in Chinese society. On the other hand, they can go anywhere, and with luck and skill they can become quite comfortable. Merchants should of course have their eponymous skill, and Fast-Talk and Diplomacy can aid in making the sale. Those who travel long, unpoliced distances should have some combat skills and/or reliable bodyguards. Depending on their preferred mode of travel, other appropriate skills include Survival, Teamster, Navigation, and Boating.

### Scholar

Usually the scion of a well-off family, the scholar occupies himself with study. As an adventurer, he will often be seeking obscure Taoist or Buddhist texts rumored to carry the secrets of transmutation and immortality. (If the campaign has a supernatural element, he may even find them.) A Scholar should have Literature and Writing skills, and probably Calligraphy as well; correctible Bad Sight is not uncommon. A scholar who shades over into mysticism may also have skills like Meditation and Breath Control.

### Eye of Heaven

Eyes of Heaven bring the Emperor's oversight to faraway or otherwise inaccessible places. They have 15-point Legal Enforcement Powers and a Duty to the Emperor. Acting and Disguise may be helpful in getting into situations in which an Imperial representative might otherwise be treated ill. Combat skills are highly desirable. The ability to Interrogate witnesses and Detect Lies help ensure that the law is carried out, securing the harmony of society. Doing so will, in time, likely make the Eye some powerful Enemies.

## Advantages

### Legal Enforcement Powers see p. B21

As noted above, Eyes of Heaven have 15-point Legal Enforcement Powers. Any local magistrate possesses 5 point powers; while in principle they retain their status in other locales, in practice the power to enforce the law goes to those assigned to that prefecture.

### Patron see p. B24

This is an exceedingly common advantage. Triad members, servants of the Emperor, members of an extended family and merchant sailors, all will tend to have a patron-client relationship with the uncle at the top of their respective hierarchies. However, except in the smallest organizations, frequency of appearance should be low. The patron will generally have many different operations going, often independent or even at odds with one another.

### Ally Group

see p. CI19

By the same token, many or most characters should have an ally group. Ming-3 is not an atomized society, and the social structure takes its networks very seriously.

### Literacy

see p. B21

As noted in ***GURPS China,*** p. 30, literacy in Chinese logographs is a difficult skill, even for native speakers. A 5-point Semi-Literacy will allow a character understand some common ideographs. For 10 points, Full Literacy will allow the character to understand contemporary written works anywhere in the Empire. Writing Chinese well requires two separate skills. Writing (M/A, Literate characters default to IQ-5) determines the elegance of the prose. Calligraphy (defaults to Artist-2 or DX-5) applies to the beauty and harmony of the characters themselves.

The ability to understand abstruse scholarly works is a separate skill, Chinese Ideographs (M/A, defaults to Language [Japanese, Korean, Okinawan or any Chinese] -3. Prerequisite: Literacy.) If this skill exceeds the appropriate language skill, it is possible to discern the meaning of a text without being able to read it aloud (although most characters include a pronunciation cue). The Civil Service examinations require a Chinese Ideographs skill of at least 12, varying upwards depending on the level of the examination.



## Job Table

| *Job (prerequisites), Monthly Income* | *Success Roll* | *Critical Failure* |
|---|---|---|
| *Poor Jobs* | | |
| Laborer (none), $25 | ST | 2d/4d |
| Rickshaw driver* (ST 12+, DX 11+), $30 | Best PR | 1d/2d, rickshaw confiscated or destroyed |
| Poor Peasant* (none), $10+board | 10 | -1i/-3i |
| *Struggling Jobs* | | |
| Factory laborer (ST 9+, DX 7+), $40 | 10 | -1i/2d, LJ |
| Scholar (Literature 10+, Writing 11+), $10 | Worst PR | -3I |
| Average Peasant (Agronomy 9+), $35+board | PR | -1i/-3i |
| *Average Jobs* | | |
| Sailor (Seamanship 10+ *or* any combat skill, 11+), $80 | PR | 2d/5d, LJ |
| Local Official (Literature 10+, Law 10+), $120 | Worst PR | -1i/-3i, LJ |
| Pirate (Seamanship 9+, any combat skill 12+), $150 | Combat skill-1 | -1i,3d/5d |
| *Comfortable Jobs* | | |
| Physician* (Physician 13+, Diagnosis 13+ *or* Fast Talk 13+), $400 | Worst PR | -1i/-3i |
| *Wealthy Jobs* | | |
| Court Eunuch (Savoir-Faire 13+, Politics 12+), $6,000 | Worst PR | -1i/LJ |
| Minister (Savoir-Faire 12+, Politics 13+), $7,000 | Worst PR | -1i/LJ |
| Merchant Magnate (Merchant 14+, Administration 14+), $8,500 | Worst PR | -1i/-6i |

## Disadvantages

### Social Stigma (Barbarian) see p. B27

One result of Ming-3's cosmopolitanism is that even the most remote barbarian now enjoys the social status of the primitive near neighbors of the Chinese. Being a barbarian is a 5-point Social Stigma. However, it may also imply illiteracy, ignorance of Chinese, or lack of experience with technology, all of which may create further disadvantages for the character.




## Skills

### Martial Arts

In a realistic campaign, martial arts will tend to have the impact they had in real history: i.e., none to speak of, save to provide a training discipline for a triad or secret society and a set of fighting skills for talented individuals. Of course, in a cinematic campaign, martial arts will permit feats bordering on magic. In either case, most widespread Ming-3 martial arts will be forms based on Chinese kung fu rather than Japanese or Korean forms. The exceptions are national martial arts, or the arts exclusive to triads such as Si Le Li (p. 39).

### Occultism see p. B61

While this primarily concerns Chinese occultism, after centuries of mixing an Occultist can reasonably expect to know something about the Empire's constitutent cultures if he wishes. A Chinese Occultist will know about European, African, and Central or South American mystic knowledge if he makes his roll at -2. More obscure cultures will require more difficult rolls at the GM's discretion.

### Piloting see p. B69

Ming-3's more unusual vehicles demand their own skills for successful piloting. Gliders and Manned Kites share a single Piloting skill which defaults to IQ-6 and Piloting (Hang Gliding) -5. Piloting a Ming-3 blimp is a separate skill; that and the Kite skill default to one another at -3.

# Economics, Jobs, and Wealth

## Prices and Currency

Officially, the Ming dynasty has replaced silver with paper money, and indeed until 50 years ago the experiment appeared successful. Since then, however, fiscal difficulties have forced the paper currency into mild but increasing inflation, and the last few decades have seen the return of silver to everyday transactions. The more firmly under central control a province is, the more thoroughly the restrictions on specie will be enforced. Underground transactions are conducted almost entirely in silver and strings of copper *cash* coins, or by barter.

Both silver and paper currency are measured in *taels*, standardized ingots, or fractions thereof. However, at present a silver *tael* is worth about 20 paper *taels*. The paper tael (symbolized arbitrarily by $) is used below.

| | |
|---|---|
| Plate of rice | $0.10 |
| Bottle of rice beer | $0.05 |
| Five course banquet, per person | $50 |
| Chopsticks, plain | $.75 |
| Chopsticks, ivory inlaid with gold | $500 |
| Rickshaw ride, per hour | $0.50 |
| Messenger delivery, within city | $1 |
| Messenger delivery across Empire, per *li* | $.10, $5 minimum |
| Horse feed and stall, per day | $15 |
| Room near center of Nanging, per month | $5,000 |
| Nanging to Mugudushu, by sail | $30 |
| Nanging to Mugudusu, by steamship | $150 |
| Peasant clothes | $2 |
| Official robes | $100 to $1,000 |

## Social Status and Cost of Living

| *Level* | | *Monthly Cost of Living* |
|---|---|---|
| 8 | Emperor | $120,000 |
| 7 | Local King | $50,000 |
| 6 | Minister | $10,000 |
| 5 | Provincial Governor | $8,000 |
| 4 | Warlord | $3,000 |
| 3 | Magistrate | $800 |
| 2 | Navy captain (eunuch) | $500 |
| 1 | Military officer | $150 |
| 0 | Peasant | $30 |
| -1 | Street peddler | $10 |

## Military Technology

Even in its decline, the Empire remains the paramount military force on the planet. No warlord state can match its numbers, training, or resources. As a result, the greatest threat to a Chinese military force is another Chinese military force, which makes the prospect of civil war or internal rebellion a matter for great concern. The continuing development of explosive and incendiary weapons ensures that the next conflict will bring even more destruction than the Mogul rebellion did. As may be seen below, even a single primitive fuel-air explosive can wreak fearsome devastation. The spread of weapons like the Divine Hailstorm of Many Pearls has already begun to demonstrate the limitations of tactics from the era of musketry.

Outside the military, personal weaponry is theoretically subject to strict laws. In fact, small concealable weapons are common outside major cities, and a deft bribe can turn the eye of an inquisitive official. Obvious weapons will draw questions unless the PCs have an official position, ties to a prominent local family, or the protection of a powerful society. In cities still built largely of wood and bamboo, eruptors and fire lances make everyone a bit nervous.

***White Ghost Gun:*** A refinement of the European flintlock musket, which was itself a refinement of the Italian-German wheellocks. Due to the large bore (.65 caliber), multiply damage by 2 after subtracting the target's DR.

***Sleeve Gun:*** This popular item, which blends nicely with the long sleeves of Chinese fashion, is usually a .50 flintlock pistol. Multiply damage by 1.5 after subtracting DR.

***Many-Greetings Sleeve Gun:*** Same as above, with a pepperbox revolver mechanism.

***Eruptor:*** An improved blunderbuss, usually found loaded with shards of porcelain and scraps of metal. The firer gets a +1 to hit, due to the spread of the ammo.

***Magazine Eruptor:*** This eruptor has a feed mechanism with ten packets of shot (usually wrapped in flimsy rice paper). Various packets might include lead balls, poisoned crockery, or bone fragments. Notoriously unreliable, on a roll of 17 or more, it explodes doing 5d damage to everyone within 3 yards.

***Fire Lance:*** This successor to a 10th-century Chinese weapon is basically a large Roman candle which shoots flame and shot. Fire lances are one-shot weapons, but well-made ones have more than one barrel. Add $20 to cost and one pound to weight for each barrel. Fire lances are fired using Guns (LAW) at -2 plus TL penalties, if any.

***Water of Feng Fire Lance:*** This tricky weapon fires liquid-fueled incendiaries. The firing mechanism has a stopcock and reservoir; the gunner can trade off range or damage by adjusting the fuel mixture. Either of these parameters can be divided in half in order to double the other parameter; for example, a Water of Feng Fire Lance can fire 6d shots with a Max range of 150 and a 1/2D of 45. Operating the Water of Feng Fire Lance is a P/A skill; it defaults to Guns (Flamethrower) at -4 and to Guns (LAW) at -6.

***Divine Hailstorm of Many Pearls:*** Something akin to a wheellock Gatling gun using counter-rotating gearing and lever arms to fire from multiple barrels as the gunner turns the mill-handle. Firing the Divine Hailstorm of Many Pearls defaults to Gunner (Mechanical Machine Gun) at -2 plus TL penalties. Multiply damage by 1.5 after subtracting DR.

***Instrument of Regrettable Necessity:*** This primitive fuel-air explosive consists of fine coal-dust and atomized Water of Feng compressed by powerful pumps into a ceramic cylinder. The standard 10-pound Instrument can be set on a burning cart and rolled downhill, loaded onto a war-kite and flown into enemy positions, or dropped, flaming, from a balloon. It does 40d×2 damage. The largest such Instrument, a 600-pound barrel that took 450 men ten days to pump full, had a truly salutary effect on the walls of the rebellious city of Agra, although the attractive tomb of Shah Jehan was also leveled in the blast.

## WEAPONS TABLE

| *Weapon* | *Malf* | *Type* | *Damage* | *SS* | *Acc* | *1/2D* | *Max* | *Wt* | *RoF* | *Shots* | *ST* | *Rcl* | *Cost* | *LC* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| White Ghost Gun | 15 | cr | 3d-2+ | 14 | 5 | 100 | 800 | 8 | 1/20 | 1 | 10 | -2 | $70 | 0 |
| Sleeve Gun | 15 | cr | 1d+ | 11 | 2 | 45 | 300 | 2 | 1/20 | 1 | 10 | -2 | $150 | 0 |
| Many-Greetings Sleeve Gun | 13 | cr | 1d+ | 12 | 1 | 45 | 300 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 10 | -2 | $180 | 0 |
| Eruptor | 14 | cr | 5d | 14 | 3 | 15 | 100 | 12 | 1/15 | 1 | 13 | -4 | $50 | 0 |
| Magazine Eruptor | 13 | cr | 5d | 14 | 3 | 15 | 100 | 12 | 1/2 | 10 | 13 | -3 | $150 | 0 |
| Sleeve Eruptor | 14 | cr | 3d | 11 | 3 | 5 | 50 | 2 | 1/15 | 1 | 10 | -3 | $150 | 0 |
| Fire Lance | 14 | cr | 2d-1 | 15 | 6 | 400 | 700 | 5 | 1 | 1-3 | 9 | -2 | $50 | 0 |
| Water of Feng Fire Lance | 12 | exp | 3d | 15 | 5 | 90 | 300 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 9 | -2 | $500 | 0 |
| Divine Hailstorm of Many Pearls | 14 | cr | 5d+ | 20 | 12 | 300 | 1,500 | 400 | * | 15 | n/a | -1 | $2,000 | 0 |

* (skill+DX)/3

# 4 MIDGARD

*We shall see the Vikings trampling the nascent civilizations of Roman and Orthodox Christendom out of existence . . . to leave the field free for a new Scandinavian structure on barbarian foundations.*

*– Arnold Toynbee,* ***A Study of History***

By 1412 Midgard, the World of Men, is a world in rebirth. After the fading of the first fury of the Vikings, Christendom both east and west lay in ruins. Just as a previous century's Germanic invaders eventually became heirs to what they destroyed, so have the Norsemen built new nations on the stones of Rome and Byzantium using the tall timbers of Scandinavia. These Northern states war with each other and reach out to once more reave the world.

# History

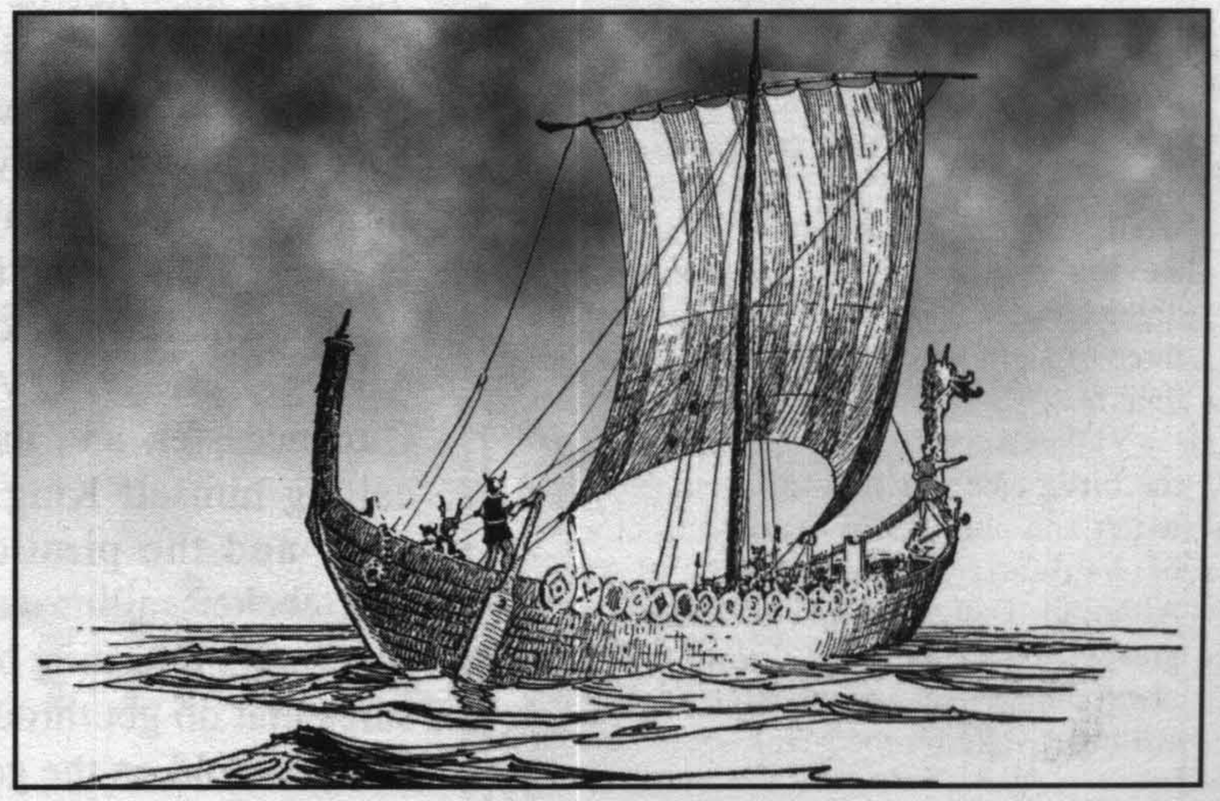
## The Fury of the Northmen

The Norse perfected oceangoing ships at exactly the wrong time for Christian Europe. The sleek longships Scandinavians built in the 8th century A.D. fell on the unprotected coasts of England, Frankland, and Germany, while other Norse pushed south along the rivers that a different world would call Russian. Drawn by the renewed prosperity shining from a flickering civilization, Norse pirates, raiders, and conquerors – the Vikings – put cities all along Europe's coast to the sack.

The critical Viking raid came in 860, when two chiefs managed to take Constantinople by surprise, sending unimaginable flows of treasure and the secrets of Greek Fire back to Scandinavia. Without the treasure, the Scandinavian economy would have eventually contracted and the armies of conquest which replaced the piratical navies might have eventually succumbed to problems of numbers and supply. With Greek Fire, even the few centers of resistance – Paris, Rome, Winchester – fell in brief sieges ideally suited to Viking strategy. Christendom might still have weathered the fury of the Northmen, but the heathen Bulgars smashed their way through Christian Greece and Thrace just before the Magyars poured across the steppes and leveled a looted Germany.

## The Northern Light

Perforce, the Scandinavians found themselves the models for European culture and society. Fortunately, newly enriched with Greek and Arabic silver and learning, they met the challenge. Although trade and learning increased, so did feuds, duels, and warfare. After two centuries of internecine struggle, Danemark united the West under Knut the Great, just as Jarvik Klókráda (the Well-Advised) firmly centered the Kingdom of Gardarika on Koenugardr while leaving the cities enough freedom to trade and prosper. On the other flank of the Norse world, a richer Iceland planted a permanent colony in the New World while developing codes of law and literatures unparalleled in history. When Christianity returned to the North, it was chastened and forced into the paths of a less pervasively religious world.



## The Sack of Mikligardr

To the Norsemen, it was Mikligardr: The Great City. Nestled at the rich crossroads of Europe and Asia, Constantinople was the beating heart of the Byzantine Empire, spiritual center to Eastern Christendom, legendary for its wealth and power. Behind the finest navy and thickest walls in Europe, it was impregnable to all comers, a bulwark of civilization. So, of course, the Vikings decided to sack it. Two bold captains, Hoskuld and Tyri, assembled a fleet of longships (and, no doubt, a number of piratical hangers-on) and sailed against the city in the summer of 860, while Emperor Michael III had the army out on campaign. In our history, the raiders were turned back by (depending on the source) a great storm, the miraculous intervention of the Virgin, or a massive bribe. In Midgard, however, the drakkars pierced the Golden Horn and seized the city in a lightning attack. Religious dissidents gave the Northmen the secret of Greek Fire, with which they devastated the Byzantine Navy on its return from campaign. Stuffed with loot, the Vikings sailed away, leaving a garrison to hold Mikligardr and use it as the base for future raids into the rich Mediterranean.

This stroke not only cut the heart out of Eastern Christianity, it also gave the Scandinavian kingdoms vastly more resources with which to build ships, hire mercenaries, and feed more people. The Norse raids following 860 were thus vastly more effective and devastating than in our history – and they had the final argument of Greek Fire, which destroyed the "bridge of ships" protecting Paris, burnt the English defenders in their swamps, and left Rome a smoking ruin. In the East, without the Byzantine model to follow, the Russian Slavs assimilated themselves to their Norse rulers' civilization, or migrated west to Poland.

## The Vinland Colony

In both histories, sailors caught in storms or simply roving for adventures' sake spotted lands to the west of Iceland, or even Greenland. Ari Marsson saw "Mikilyrland," or Great Ireland, and Bjarni Herjulfsson scouted not only a barren Helluland (Baffin Island) but a tree-rich Markland (Labrador and Newfoundland). A source of timber was essential for tree-poor Greenland and Iceland, so Leif Eiriksson sailed west to find this forest island in 1000. In our history, Leif found fresh grapes in a rich land, and named the country Vinland. In Midgard, Leif had additional ships on his voyage thanks to the generally higher level of prosperity in Viking countries. He found not only Vinland the Good (along the shore of what we would call Massachusetts), but also the Grand Banks, the richest single fishery in the world.

Where Thorfinn Karlsefni's abortive colony fell to internal dissension and Skraeling (native) attacks in our history, in Midgard he mounted many fishing voyages, sure of profit on each one, and mapped out the entire coast along the way. By 1018, when Thorvald Eiriksson (killed by Indians in our history) founded Leifsholm on Manhattan Island, the Norse knew the Mikilyrlander coast as well as they knew the vastly less hospitable shores of Greenland. With knowledge, spare wealth, and the Grand Banks and Maine forests drawing an endless stream of Icelanders to the new world, Vinland soon became a self-supporting new Norse nation.

## Iceland

Although the eruption of Mt. Hekla and the onset of the Little Ice Age have worsened conditions for its 50,000 inhabitants, Iceland remains a vibrant center of Norse culture. Icelandic whalers are the finest anywhere, giving the barren island a prime export – whale oil has many uses in the new machines from lighting to lubrication. Iceland's many volcanoes produce ample sulfur for gunpowder. Knarrs take rich cargoes of walrus ivory, wool, and fish from the Thorsness and Reykjavik docks. Icelandic skalds are highly prized, and many Vinlanders spend three to eight years in Iceland learning at their feet.

Vinlanders especially honor Iceland as the birthplace not only of their greatest writer and poet Snorri Sturluson but also of Vinlander government and law. Although Danish kings sometimes cast greedy eyes at the Land of Ice, there are always more than enough Vinlander ships willing to fight for the island's freedom.

Norse expansion rode out the Mongol invasions, which only transferred the seat of Gardarika to the more commercial Holmgarders by eliminating the Rurikid monarchs. In the wake of Genghis and Ogedai, however, the Gardarikismen found an ideal road for trade with the East, and Norse civilization took another jump. Gunpowder (and possibly movable type) came out of Kinland (China) and spread to the rest of Europe in traders' hulls. Of course, many of those hulls sport cannon now, and sail the outer seas in search of new treasures and new opportunities.

# Locales

## Lands of the North

The great "European" powers stretch down from the gray seas of the North, from Vinland the Good to Gardarika, Land of Cities. There the sons of the Vikings rule, and everywhere else, they sail in search of trade, knowledge, and plunder. Most of the Northlands share economies based on farming, sheep raising, and fishing, although the fur trade in Gardarika and Vinland, and the crafts of the cunning vélverkers in Danemark and Svearika bring silver and silk from foreign lands. Even in the more crowded and penned-in monarchies, the king rules as first among equals. (His equals are not entirely equal – jarls are the hereditary nobility, themselves first among the carls, or free men.) With little in the way of large-scale agriculture (between potatoes and short growing seasons), even thralls may keep much of what they raise – except in Sikel, where the old Roman latifundia return.

When the system fails, as it did during the rebellions of Norway against the Danes, it promotes chaos, true enough. But when there is plunder for any brave man over the horizon, and when the new arts and sciences put silver in pouches and on shoulder-clasps, the free-and-easy Scandinavian culture allows every man to pursue his wyrd, his destiny, to his own satisfaction – and to his country's benefit.

### Danemark and the Isles

Made supreme in the West by its conquest of England, Danemark has always had the population advantage in its interactions with Norway (an occasionally mutinous underkingdom), Scotland and the Isles (usually under Danish protection for a nominal tribute), and Svearika, its great rival. Under King Eirik VII, that may not be enough. Not only is Eirik's grasp on the reins of power loose even for a Danish Great King (his great-aunt the Queen Mother Margrete still holds great influence, even as she approaches 60), but the steady inflow of silver from the new viking-lands of the south has upset Danemark's economy. Inflation ruins the stay-at-homes, and the adventurous find more profit overseas in India, Mikilyrland (the Americas), and Piparasland (the Indies).

Danemark is also beset by rebellion and (ironically for a nation built by Vikings) piracy. Owain Glyndwr, the king of unsubdued Wales, has taken Circenceaster, and threatens the great Danish fort at Repton. A native leader, calling himself King Jakof I, has refused Danish tribute in Scotland. Jakof's navy and the piratical Vitalienebrüder (Victualling Brotherhood) of Jon Störtebeker sailing out of the Hanse towns now prey on the stórdrakkars and serkknarrs returning to Roskilde and London from far-faring. However, the treasures that do get through more than pay for Danish primacy in Europe, and keep a choke-hold on the gates to the Baltic.

## Svearika

Rich in iron, timber, and good farmland, Svearika covets Danemark's position, both politically and geographically. Penned up in the Baltic, the Swedes keep links with the Hanse towns and occasionally try inciting disaffection in Norway and invading Skáney (the Danish province on the southern tip of the Scandinavian Peninsula) or the Magyar Khanate to break out of the Baltic box. Right now, King Magnus IV supports the Vitalienebrüder with money and ships, and keeps strong garrisons in Hamburg and Lübeck to protect his Hanseatic allies from the Danes. Ambitious Swedes, especially those deprived by feud or poverty of opportunity at home often take the Várar, the oath of service to a foreign king (the Turkish and Barbary states especially delight in the tall "faranj") – and some Varangian guards end up lords in their own right.

Uppsala, the capital, is a major center of learning. Any merchant knows that the Bókarhall, where the greatest skalds, vélverkers, and foreign scholars congregate, will pay well in silver for new books – and in gold for certain old books.

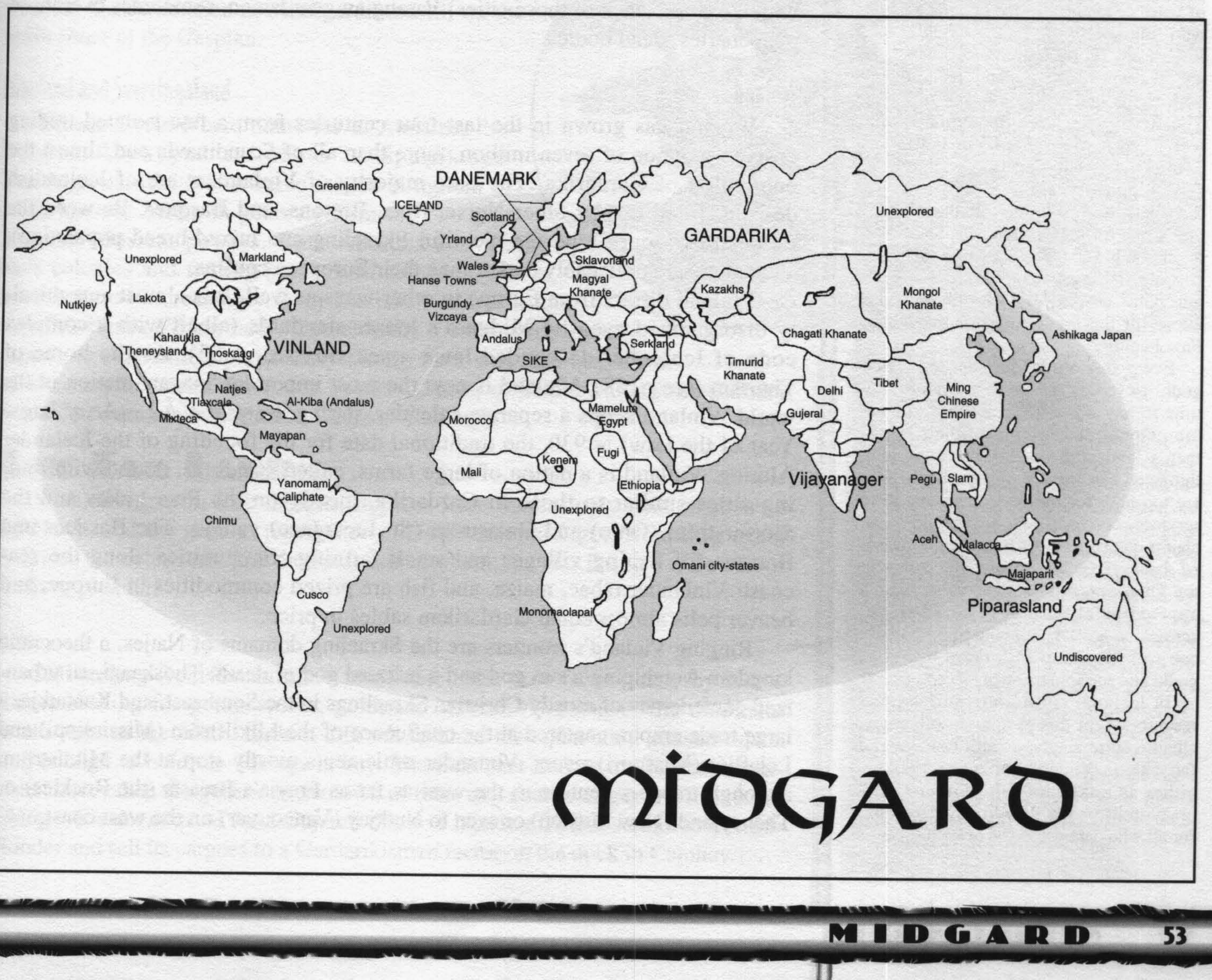
## Gardarika

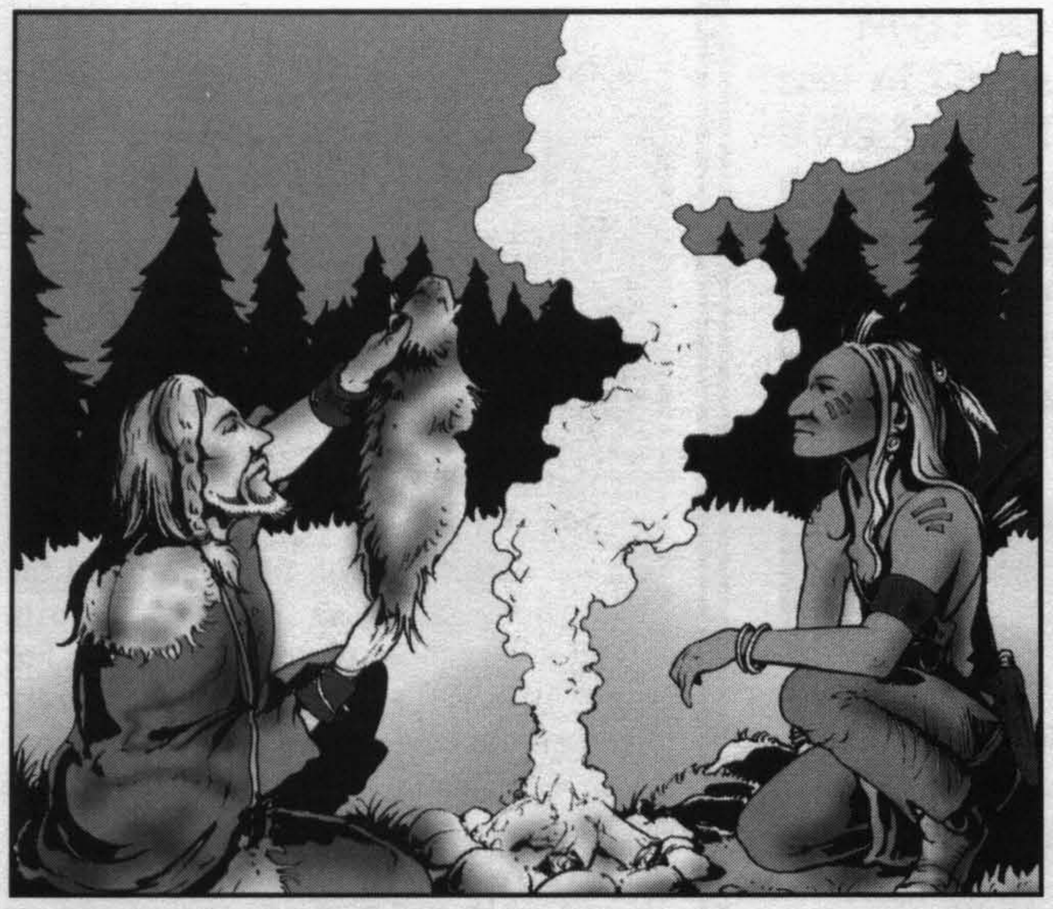
Gardarika, the "Nation of Cities," springs from the first Varangians; the Norse who traveled down the Volga and Don rivers in search of trade and power. Deprived of kings by the Mongol invasion, Gardarika has rebounded under the Princes of Holmgard (Novgorod).

## Every Man A King: Vinlander Government

In Vinland, the law is absolute, but justice is freelance. The old Norse concept of the Thing, an assembly of all free men to decide the laws, lies at the heart of Vinlander government. Thorvald Eiriksson imported the laws of Iceland almost directly when he established the Vinlander Althing on Thingsholm (Bedloe's Island) in Leifsholm harbor. For the two weeks around midsummer every year, all Vinlanders have the right to travel to Thingsholm and speak at the annual meeting of the Althing, the Vinlander legislature. The head of the Althing, the lawspeaker, presides in sessions, gives legal advice, and recites all the laws aloud at the Althing (one third each year of a three-year term). If he omits a law, and none object, that law is repealed.

*Continued on next page . . .*





## Every Man A King: Vinlander Government (Continued)

Voting in the legislature is the prerogative of the godhar, the important chiefs of Vinland. Each godhi controls a share of votes dependent on the number of men who follow him (or her). A godhi's followers are called a godhordh, which is also the word for the status (comprising both rights and obligations) of a godhi. The first godhi were the captains and leading men who settled Vinland in the 11th century, but since the godhordh is private property, many of those men or their heirs have sold their godhordhi (the going rate for a well-reputed – Status 4 – godhordh is $60,000). Skraeling sachems, Basque fishing patriarchs, and Jewish gunsmiths now sit on the Althing, godhi every bit the legal equal of the Norse First Families.

Every free Vinlander chooses which godhi to follow, and may switch at any time to any other godhi willing to have him. Godhi do not control their thingmen's land, and taxation is low (since thingmen can leave a godhi whose taxes are too high for the protection and other services received). Like godhordhi, legal claims can be sold for fractions of awarded damages (godhi appoint the courts in the Quarters, administrative divisions approximately ten days' hard travel across), so a weak carl abused by a godhi can sell his claim to a more powerful godhi and see some justice.

In Iceland, constraints on land and resources kept this system an oligarchy, albeit a surprisingly smooth-running and fair one. In Vinland, this code produces either an anarchic "might over right" crazy-quilt or the peak of true freedom for all who dare grasp it – or both.

Holmgard's government, an oligarchy of local councils called the vjetje, has become the pattern for the whole land. Although actual participation in the vjetje remains a prerogative of rich merchants, bishops, and nobles, any man may attend the vjetje council meetings, and political arguments sometimes become heated brawls. The threat of riot keeps the vjetje reasonably responsive, and gives the merchants plenty of incentive to found new trading cities far away to get rid of malcontents.

Gardarika is now ruled by the Adalvjetje, a great council from all the cities of the land. Outlying rural districts, herdings, are under herdingsmen, who owe tariffs to the mayor of their city. Although Gardarika is immensely rich in fur, beef, milk, and wood, Gardarikismen peasants often wind up poor and hungry (less hungry thanks to Vinlander potatoes, though) – the urban biases of the vjetje can allow a selfish herdingsman to ignore rural needs. Fortunately, the former Mongol lands are fertile and (relatively) warm; new peasant colonies often attach themselves to a south-expanding merchant house and wind up higher on the social scale when the new town gets its own vjetje.

Gardarikismen fur traders reached the eastern ocean in 1380, and only the fading Mongol presence prevents them from irritating the Ming even more. Blocked from Kinland (China) directly, Gardarikismen merchants now infiltrate, bribe, and occasionally conquer city after city along the Silk Road – sometimes with the connivance of those cities' Varangian guardsmen, sometimes over those mercenaries' dead bodies.

### Vinland

Vinland has grown in the last four centuries from a few isolated trading posts to a nation of seven million, more than all of Scandinavia and almost the population of Gardarika. The bare majority of Vinlanders are of Icelandish descent, filled out by other Norse, Irish, Bretons, and Basques. Between the Celts and Basques (and the plentiful Skraeling and mixed-breed population), Vinlanders are noticeably darker than their European cousins.

Vinland differs from Europe in other ways as well. It is almost anarchically disorganized even by Midgard's looser standards (albeit with a complex code of Icelander-descended laws – see sidebar, p. 53). As the home of Thorism (see p. 58), Vinland is now the most important "pagan" nation in the world. Vinland keeps a separate calendar, setting the year 1 Á.L. (*Ár af Lög* – Year of the Law) at 930, the traditional date for the founding of the Icelander Althing. Vinland is a nation of large farms, called steadings, dotted with trading cities similar to those in Gardarika, mostly on the Five Lakes and the Sjormrström (Ohio) and Gataström (St. Lawrence) valleys. The Basques and Bretons fill fishing villages and small farming communities along the seacoast. Vinlander tabac, maize, and fish are prized commodities in Europe, and beaver pelts almost equal Gardarikan sables in price.

Ringing Vinland's frontiers are the Skraeling domains of Natjes, a theocratic kingdom worshiping a sun god and a buzzard god of death; Thoskaagi, an urbanized confederacy of mostly Christian Skraelings in the Southeast, and Kahaukja, a large trade empire centered at the confluence of the Mikilström (Mississippi) and Lejafljót (Missouri) rivers. Vinlander settlements mostly stop at the Mikilström, although trappers venture to the west as far as Freyja's Breasts (the Rockies) or Theneyland (New Mexico) or even to Nutkjey (Vancouver) on the west coast.

# Lands of the South

## The Rest of Europe

The only Norse nation outside the sea-ring of the North is Sikel, founded by Mediterranean raiders and mercenaries in the 11th century. The kings of Sikel hold Italy up to Rome, but the towns in the northern plain are as irksomely independent as the Hanse cities in Germany. Burgundy, the sole Christian state to survive the *völkerwanderung* of the 10th century, is a satisfied Danish client state dominated by the Cistercian monastic order. The Magyar and Bulgar khaganates fight sporadic border wars and worry about Svearik. King Magnus takes advantage of chaos in Sklavonland to push Svearik's borders south, ostensibly to help the Christian Sklavonish boyars defeat the pagan Lietuvans of King Jogaila.

## Serkland (West Asia)

The Norse colony at Mikligardr (technically a Gardarikan member city) remains relatively safe from siege, although the Turkish beys and pashas of Serkland are always willing to try raids on Mikligardrer outposts. Mameluke Egypt remains the strongest state in the region following the collapse of Tamurlane's empire a decade ago. The remains of his khanate still rule Persia and Mesopotamia, but rebellious emirs carve the Timurid borders back every year. Merchants from Serkland trade carpets, silver, coffee, and slaves with the Gardarikismen at Mikligardr and Itil on the north shore of the Caspian.

## Blauland and Svertingaland

Blauland (the Norse name for al-Andalus, the Moslem Umayyad caliphate in Spain) and Svertingaland (the Norse name for the Kingdom of Mali, and for Africa in general) form the two great Atlantic Moslem powers. Both Andalus and Mali have colonies and trading posts in Mikilyrland, which have suffered increasingly from Danish, Vinlander, and Swedish-Hanse Viking raids. Occasionally a particularly bold captain or one with a particularly strong fleet will raid one of the Moslem corsair states (Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, or Tripoli) along the Barbary Coast – or even major ports like Cadiz or Gambiya.

# The Far Faring

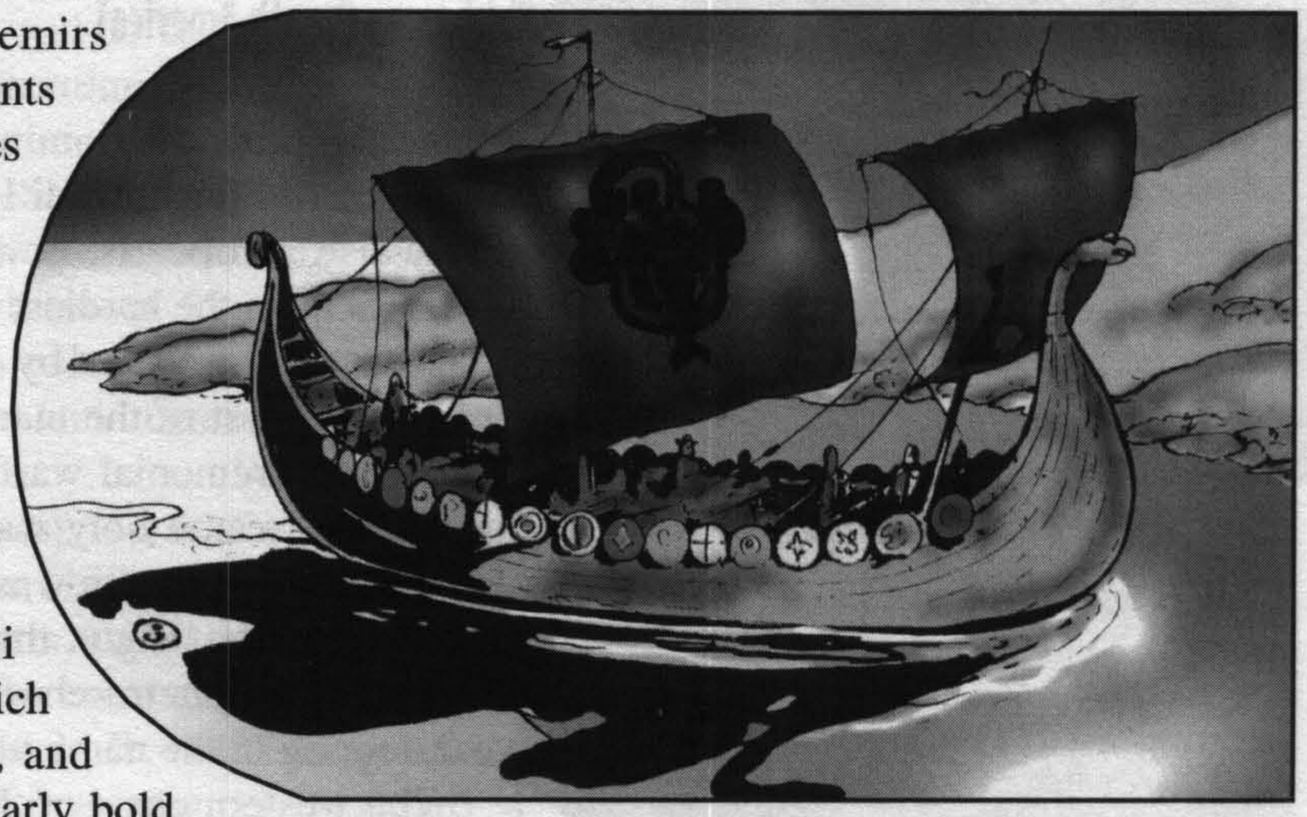
With advances in ship designs, impetus from increasingly cold weather in the North, and the general resurgence of Norse cultural vigor, Northmen again spill into the outer seas (and the lands around them, the "far faring") in search of profit or plunder.

## India

Still reeling from Tamurlane's invasions, India now faces piracy by Norse raiders looking for gems, spices, gold, and slaves. Vijayanagar, the dominant Hindu state in the south, finds it difficult to unite the squabbling coastal rajahs long enough to hold the Vikings at bay. The merchant traders of Gujerat, meanwhile, have taken the general breakdown of rules as a chance to get in a little local viking – it's not unusual for a Gujerati dhow to hijack a Danish serkknarr in midplunder and sell its cargoes to a Gardarikismen factor on the dock in Cambay.

## Ketsalsland (Mexico)

The combined culture shock and plagues brought by Moslem traders in the 12th century destroyed the old Toltec empire in the "land of the quetzal bird." By now, the population has restabilized at around 10 million, most of it Moslem. Tlaxcala, which dominates the east coast of the mainland, and Mayapan, leader of the Maya city-states of Yucatan, are the major powers in the region, along with Andalusian al-Kiba (Cuba) and the expanding Yanomami Caliphate. Mosques and coffeehouses now rise alongside pyramids and tecpans in Zempoala and Chichen Itzá. Only Mixteca, centered on Mitla in the Oaxaca Valley and ruling the west coast of Ketsalsland, remains pagan, worshiping the old gods with blood sacrifice and ball games. The two cultures clash over the rich Valley of Mexico, where a congeries of tribes roils with the sound of jihad and the smoke from burning human hearts.

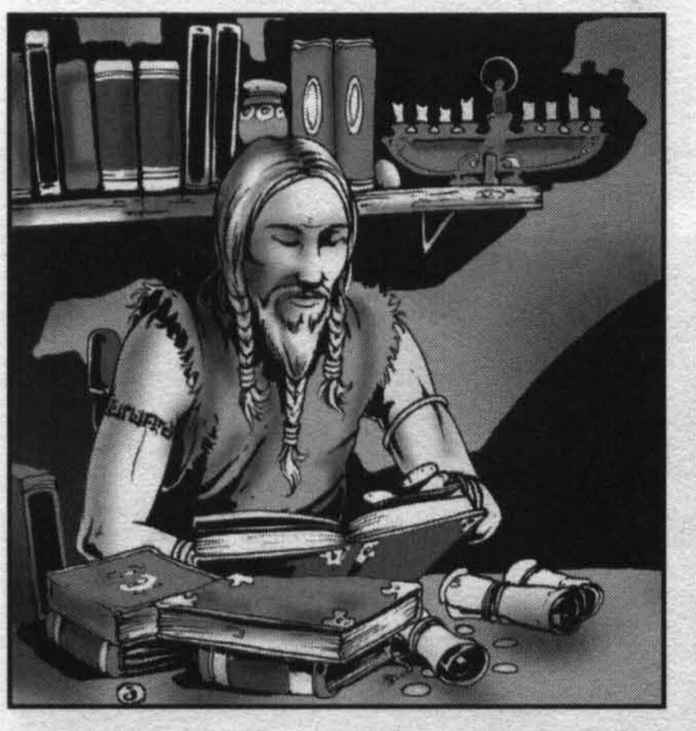


## Nihon

Nihon's culture, like the Norse, is on the upswing. Zen Buddhism, spreading throughout the islands, drives the new literature, the arts of masters such as Shubun, and the arts of flower arranging and gardening. A new dramatic form, *Noh,* brings virtues of restraint and formalism to the stage. Nihon's wealthy merchant class trades sulfur, copper, lacquer ware, and weapons (Norse traders particularly covet fine katana) with Chinese and Gardarikisman factors. Outside the rich Ashikaga shoguns' capital of Kyoto, of course, the *sengoku* era of warring daimyo continues almost without letup. Many impoverished Nihonese fishermen and farmers (and even some ronin) have become *wako,* pirates; others join the roving *yakuza* gambler gangs.

## Medicine

Midgarder medical care is a mish-mash of traditional herbalism, Jewish anatomy, Chinese acupuncture, Arabic alchemy, and hot irons. As a general rule, treat it as TL3 – exceptionally learned doctors or (in a cinematic campaign) skilled wise women may be able to heal at TL4 rates. The general level of health in Norse society, however, is higher than the TL indicates. Potatoes and maize have been grown for centuries, and dietary variety and general nutrition is superior, even in Gardarika, to the analogous period in our history. Especially in Vinland, the population grows rapidly thanks to plentiful food and the relative cleanliness of Norse culture.



## Other Religions

Besides the expanding powers of Islam and (less deliberately) Christianity and Thorism, Midgarders have many religions. Especially in more polyglot Norse cities, they may have many at once, praying to Hvítakrist, Thor, Ganesha, the Amida-Buddha, or Kwan Yin depending on the circumstance. The Jews, of course, remain solidly monotheistic. And, in the lower-heat religious world of Midgard, they also remain unpersecuted save by the occasional mad emir. Large Jewish populations live in Andalus, Gardarika (almost one in seven Gardarikismen is a Jew, mostly of Khazar descent), and Egypt. Jews in Norse society may own land and work it, unlike in our own medieval era. However, the Jewish traditions of learning, and their widely spaced geography, keeps them (and the devoutly Christian Armenians) active in trade and in fields related to easily-portable wealth such as jewelry, gold and silversmithing, and spices. Jewish scholars contribute central elements of the new learning in Uppsala, Holmgard, and even "pagan" Leifsholm.

### Kinland (China)

The Chinese, by contrast, are by no means soft targets for raiders. In fact, under the Yung Lo Emperor, the Ming have embarked on an ambitious program of naval expansion. The admiral Cheng Ho's ships, four times as long and vastly better armed than even the mightiest stórdrakkar, travel the Indian Ocean coasts gathering tribute and intelligence for the Ming court. So far, only sporadic fighting has erupted between the Chinese fleets and the Norse pirates, but a showdown is likely.

### Majapahit

The rich archipelago the Norse call Piparasland may be where that showdown occurs. The Hindu island empire of Majapahit, centered on Java, collapsed with the death of the Maharajah Hayamwurak. Now, local island chiefs pledge allegiance to whomever arrives with the largest ship, and plot the theft of said ship immediately thereafter. Moslem Malays operating out of Malacca build trading posts on Sumatra, Chinese junks sally forth carrying the writ of the Emperor, and Vikings descend on the Moluccas, hoping to fill their holds with pepper, cloves, and other spices. Failing that, Majapahit's temples are awash in gold, gems, pearls, and expensive wood.

### Skógarey (South America)

The southern continent offers little in the way of glory, and until recently Moslem merchants dominated its legitimate trade (mostly wood, slaves, and peppers). Although Wadi'l-Adar (Maracaibo) was once a prosperous port trading in fish and pearls, now it bristles with Yanomami warcraft – too prickly a target for even the hardiest Viking.

Converted to Islam by traders from Mali a century ago, the Yanomami were only the fiercest of the many Xiriana tribes of the interior, living on cattle raids, somewhat-ceremonial warfare, and mayhem. Once brought into the Faith, however, they became holy warriors sworn to bring the other pagans (and the soft and decadent coastal towns of al-Urinuq) into a new Caliphate. Still in the first bloom of convert vigor, the Yanomami now dominate the river valleys of northern Skógarey. Their xebecs spread further into the Ketilsea (Caribbean) every year, looting in the name of the Prophet.

The western coast of the continent falls under the lords of Chimu, who rule a quiescent population in a highly stratified empire knit together by large-scale irrigation and road networks. From their capital of Chan Chan, the Chimu warily watch the seas for Viking raids, and their Andean hinterland for attacks from the upstart Inca of Cusco. Everywhere else, the continent holds barely TL0 tribes, with some adventurous types reaching into TL1.

# Technology and Society

The Norse cultures of Midgard have just begun to enter TL4, and although their societies remain early-medieval in many respects they possess much of the same energy and ambition as those of our history's analogous period, the Renaissance. The Norse know that the world is round, of course, and scholars are approximately evenly divided between heliocentric and geocentric models of the universe. Since both Christianity and astrology have vastly less influence in Midgard, it's unlikely to make much difference when they do figure it out.

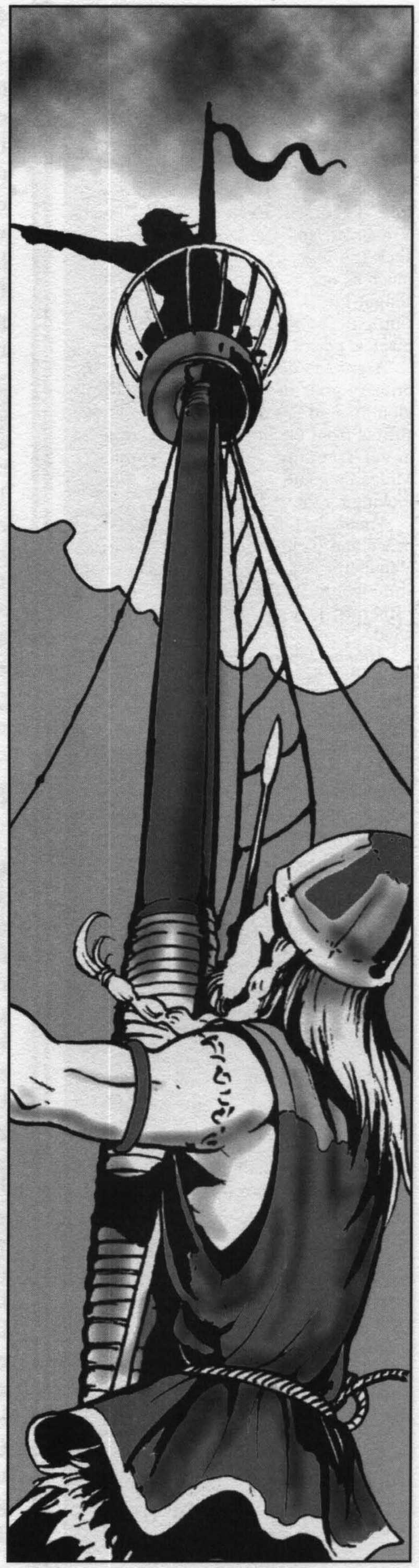
## Seagoing Vessels

The first Viking ships, the drakkar and knarr, sufficed to smash Europe and discover the New World. However, they possessed disadvantages that even the addition of Chinese compasses could not overcome. Fortunately, a richer society with more foreign shipwrights in Norse harbors could and did.

First and foremost, a clinker-built ship (in which the hull consists of overlapping planks rather than carvel-built caulked and seamed ones) can only reach about 120 feet in length before developing serious leaks. The introduction of the bandsaw and jigsaw to the yards at Birka, Ribe, Hedeby, and Trondheim allowed Norse shipwrights to produce longer, deeper-hulled carvel-built craft for trade and war. Second, the single square-rigged sail, ideal for running before the wind, can be very unhandy when tacking or sailing across the wind. Triangular lateen sails, common in the Byzantine Navy and among Arabs, make such maneuvers possible. Midgard's shipwrights married the lateen and square sail rigs in multi-masted carvel-built ships three centuries earlier than our history's caravel, putting shipbuilding in Midgard into very late TL4 verging on TL5.

The resulting ships also specialized in war or trade from the start (although the difference to the Norse has always been more formality than any thing else). The three-masted stórdrakkar (great drakkar), holding 35 to 60 32-lb. guns in a PD 4, DR 24 hull 125 to 175 feet long and 25 to 35 feet in the beam, resembles a sleeker version of the Spanish galleon from our history. (Its cargo capacity is somewhat smaller, at 200 to 400 tons.) Smaller drakkars sport two masts and keep the light hull (PD 3, DR 15) and shallow draft of their ancestors, enabling them to run up on any beach and attack using Greek Fire siphons and small cannon loaded with fafnirsteeth (see p. 68). Most independent Viking captains sail these smaller drakkars using brig or schooner rigs, which at almost 13 mph with all sail and a good wind can outpace even stórdrakkars.

The modern serkknarr ("Saracen knarr"), by contrast, is a fat three-masted merchant ship resembling our history's East Indiaman (150 feet long, 50 feet in beam), and for much the same reasons. Serkknarrs usually hold 600 or more tons of cargo, although some trade that space for extra cannon or manpower. (the standard serkknarr boasts "two eights" of 24-lb. or 32-lb. guns). The extra guns and men can help a serkknarr beat off a pirate attack (standard PD 3, DR 20, but sloping and bracing can increase both, again at the expense of cargo space), and if a particularly good opportunity presents itself, launch one in fine Viking style. (Well, in slow Viking style; a serkknarr can make 8.5 mph under the best possible conditions.) Some slower serkknarrs still sport the archaic "war castle" on the poop and bow, bristling with long-range chaser cannon and other unpleasantness.



### Other Transportation

On land, the fastest travel by horse or, in southern Scandinavia, by horse-drawn canal boat (becoming a horse-drawn iceboat in winter). Sledges remain the standard mode of transport in northern Scandinavia and throughout most of Gardarika. In Vinland, plentiful horses draw sledges over log roads in built-up areas, or over the snow in empty ones. Navigation, both by land and sea, uses the compass and the innate sense of direction possessed by most Norse travelers and traders, although Jewish and Greek scholars sometimes produce useful (conformal straight-line projection) maps for merchant houses (especially in Gardarika). The Norse sun compass allows sailors to estimate latitude to within 5 degrees and thus, with some confidence, sail out of the sight of land.

## The Nine Worlds

Midgard is not only a parallel Earth in this book; to the Norse it was one of nine worlds existing as branches from a great tree, Yggdrasil. Even civilized Danish, Vinlander, and Gardarikisman far-farers seek the legendary Eight Worlds now, much as our own history's conquistadors sought Prester John and El Dorado. In a fantastic or magical campaign, these magical places might even be findable.

*Asgard* is the home of the Aesir, the primary gods of Norse and Thorist religion. Asgard lies over the rainbow bridge Bifrost from the mortal world, across the never-freezing Ifing. Romantic Midgarders still follow the Gulf Stream, looking for the end of Bifrost.

*Vanaheim* holds the Vanir, the gods of peace and plenty. In Gardarikan legend, Vanaheim is a land of endless summer somewhere in the middle of Frörland (Siberia); it is the country north of the wind.

*Alfheim,* where dwell the elves, is also the special home of Frey, god of fertility. Some look for it also in Frörland, but it may also be a magical island which appears and disappears in the Baltic.

*Jotunheim* holds the malevolent ice giants, and every sailor knows exactly where it lies: at the North Pole, locked in the endless icecap. Sometimes gates to Jotunheim come loose and sail south, frozen in icebergs.

*Svartalfheim* is the dark version of Alfheim; the "dark elves" live here. Some sailors say that Svartalfheim is a hall at the heart of Svertingaland's jungles, but others say it appears as a reflection in the water wherever Alfheim is seen.

*Nidavellir* is the home of the dwarves, and again opinion is unanimous. Any volcano will take you there soon enough, but the "front gate" of Nidavellir is Mt. Hekla in southern Iceland.

*Muspellsheim,* land of the fire giants, is either at the uttermost south (an opinion falling out of favor as more and more travelers round the Cape to raid India) or a brass city in the middle of the Sahara.

*Niflheim* is the abode of the unworthy dead – those who died of disease, cowardice, or old age. Like Nidavellir, there are many (some would say too many) entrances between it and Midgard. Any especially thick fogbank, especially on the ocean, can lead to Niflheim, but the steaming swamps on the borders between Natjes and Vinland are especially ill-omened.

# Other Technology

The combination of Donarsson's printing press and economic expansion create ever more fields of knowledge and opportunity for the vélverker with a new idea. New mining methods, combined with new furnaces (another Chinese import), vastly increase iron production even in Svearika, and more so in Járnvik (Duluth) on the shore of the Five Lakes in Vinland. Steaders in Vinland experiment with springs for carriages, gunsmiths in Danemark attempt to perfect wheellocks, and every lord seeks new mills and new looms to feed and clothe his burgeoning subjects. Gunpowder and printing both contribute to centrifugal forces in Norse society by weakening those same lords, but this merely returns people to their traditional relationship with lords and kings: equals freely offering service in exchange for obligation.



# Midgarder Religion

Traditional Norse society keeps religion somewhat in the margins. The favor of the gods is important, but nothing can alter a man's character but his own actions, and his wyrd is permanent. In many Norse tribes, the jarl also served as religious leader; when the two functions separated, the secular held clear advantages. Even now, with most of the Norse world Christian, society hews to tribal mores and not to the dictates of the Church. Although the Bishop of Roskilde is perhaps the most powerful cleric in the world, he has little power over other bishops. Not even the Christian kings of Svearika and Danemark persecute worshipers of Thor, and in Gardarika a man's religion is, like his business, his own business as long as he pays his tariffs (which support all temples equally in progressive cities like Itil, Tmutorakan, Mikligardr, and Holmgard).

## Thorism

When Viking raiders smashed Rome and Constantinople, they left Europe without a spiritual center. Thorism, a religion descended from Norse paganism (in much the same way that Hinduism evolved out of Indo-Aryan paganism) fills that niche. Thorism, so named because Thor the Thunderer serves as the primary intercessor between man and Heaven ("fighting on man's side"), is a practical religion emphasizing self-reliance and the Norse virtues of honesty, hospitality, courage, and loyalty. Thoristic metaphysics derive from the intersection of theological questions about divine will and Greek conceptions of Fate above the gods (both taken from sacked Byzantine libraries) with the Norse ethos of wyrd, or immutable destiny. In some mystical branches of Thorism, the other gods and giants are conceptual embodiments of virtue, vice, will, and identity; in mainstream Thorism, the Aesir and Vanir function somewhat like the saints in our medieval

Catholicism (as lesser intercessors) and somewhat like the gods they once were. Temples to Odin and Frey are most common after Thor's, although the hammer-sign of his church hangs over even their doors. Much of Thorism's spiritual power derives from reading or chanting the sagas and eddas, or from listening to skalds in the open air.

### Hvítakristers

However, Christianity didn't cease to exist with Christendom. Many common folk in Norse lands, especially women, worshiped Hvítakrist (the Pale Christ). If only to keep peace in England, the Danes perforce allowed Hvítakrister monks and priests to continue services. (Celtic Christianity made a big recovery with the wreck of the Anglo-Saxons, and is the most common Hvítakrister faith in Vinland.) The Cistercian movement in Burgundy and the Basque Pyrenees (which by now almost resembles Tibet's similarly monastic-dominated society) produced a new generation of persuasive evangelists, among them St. Bernard of Clairvaux and St. Dominic de Guzman. These missionaries brought undeniable personal power and magnetism, as well as messages of mercy and caring which resonated with thralls and women. Promises of heaven for all believers contrasted well with the restrictive Norse paganism, and even with Thorism's message that the righteous dead became Thor's sworn men at the end of time.

The official acceptance of Christianity by the Scandinavian kings (and more importantly by more and more of the common carls) has eroded older Norse customs. Taking multiple wives has (mostly) died out, and more and more Hvítakrister carls and jarls manumit their thralls. Hvítakrister priests have assimilated some Norse practices as well; for example, even Christians cremate their dead rather than burying them. Many Norse Christians still keep their hammer amulets handy in case of a storm.

## Campaigning in Midgard

Midgard, first and foremost, is a world of adventure. It may be just barely possible for PCs to find a boring farm in northern Svearika (although watch out for those pesky lawsuits-by-combat) or out-of-the-way Skraeling village (which will soon need defending from Aztec mujaheddin, Vinlander wolfshead bandits, or howling Apache warriors – or all three), but it hardly seems worth the trouble. Everywhere you look, someone is building an empire, looting a ship, haggling for spices, or practicing the fine art of shore bombardment. More intellectual challenges can of course exist, from Machiavellian attempts to dominate Vinlander politics to deadly Roskilde court intrigues with a whiff of something rotten in Danemark.

### Worldreavers

The new burst of Viking activity gives a clear framework for a globetrotting Midgard-based campaign of Viking-Swashbuckler adventure. Swedish and Danish younger sons of jarls, adventurous Vinlander duelists, Gardarikan minor merchants with an eye on the main chance – all can show up anywhere in the world. Of course, so can Tlaxcalan ghazis, Mohican wrestlers, Malian metalsmiths, Tibetan scribes, Irish minstrels, Chinese smugglers, or Moorish magicians. On the quays of Leifsholm or Tangier or Calicut, any or all of the above could meet in a tavern and decide to chase down rumors of a treasure map.

### How to be Norse

The ideal Norseman in Midgard, as in our own history, is honest, generous (to guests and to underlings), brave, and loyal. Coupled with character should come skill in all things. Jarl Rognvald Kali of Orkney summed up the Norse self-image when he versified "I am a keen chess player, nine skills I know; seldom do I make a mistake with runes, I have books and crafts constantly in hand; I can ski, shoot, and sail, to meet any occasion; I am master of the two arts of harping and poetry." Only fighting prowess and luck are needed to create the Norse Renaissance Man.

The Norse woman is also fiercely independent in spirit and under law, especially in Vinland. Even in Scandinavia, she can undertake independent projects (such as bridge-building), own property, and divorce her husband at will. Wives and concubines accompany Norse traders and help stead the Vinlandish and Gardarikan frontiers. In Gardarika, especially, widows have a social position identical to that of their deceased husband.

Norse of both sexes are practical, pragmatic folk (among other advice, the Norse *Hávamál* says "Praise no ice until it is crossed, and no beer until it is drunk") with strong family feelings. A central concept of Norse society is equality; any free person can carry weapons, own land, speak at the Thing, and swear an oath in court. The last may be the most important; if a man's word is worthless, he is nothing.



## Outtimers in Midgard

In the Infinity, Unlimited campaign, Midgard lies in a Quantum 7 backwater. Too primitive and balkanized to aid one or the other sides in the time war, but too dangerous to simply exploit, Midgard is left to scholars and tourists. (It's made to order for Time Tours, Ltd., although visitors have to sign a number of frighteningly specific personal-injury waivers.) Most I-Cop or Centran I.S. duty in Midgard involves rescuing one or the other type of visitor from some dire fate. Given the danger of the setting, and the value of allies, Interworld Servicemen and I-Cops have even been known to collaborate on particularly tricky extractions.

### Piracy

This is Midgard's Golden Age of Piracy. A piratical Viking campaign combines simplicity with scope. Players know how pirates act, and possibly even how Viking pirates act. Pirates, be they Norse, Moorish, Chinese, Malay, Yanomami, Hanse, Gujerati, or Nihonese, all prey on unguarded (or lightly guarded) cargoes ashore and afloat. They then try to steal it from each other, dissipate it in high living guzzling lokisvatn (a distilled mead similar to rum; cheap lokisvatn has more sugar than honey in it) and chasing whores, and then repeat. The main areas for piratical activity include the Moslem Ketilsea, the Indian Ocean and the Indies, the Mediterranean, and the Baltic and North Seas.

Both the Norse and the Nihonese have extensive shore raids in their piratical tradition (and the others learn fast), sometimes operating inland for months at a time. (It's almost childishly easy to hook PCs up to such a raid, ambush their supporting army, and force them to fight their way back to the sea through hostile country alone.) These raids hit weak states like the ones in India, Ketsalsland, Majapahit, and (to a lesser extent) the Mediterranean.



### Conquest

Many pirates aspire to greater things than a full hold and a splitting hangover. The Vikings of four centuries ago conquered jarldoms and kingdoms for themselves; this generation is no less ambitious. The ideal place for a PC group of would-be jarls to seek is a small nation, possibly a Moslem emirate in the Levant, a rich Skraeling coast, a city-state on the Silk Road, or an island groaning with spices on the monsoon trade routes. Many of these places already have Varangian guardsmen – whether they become allies or obstacles depends on the PCs' persuasion and the GM's fiendishness.

Akin to tales of conquest are tales of settlement and frontiers. Gardarikan fur-trader "range wars" over particularly rich ermine warrens, Vinlander steaders on the Great Plains fighting off the Pawnee, duels between outlaws and huscarls in the streets of a frontier village, a sudden gold rush to the Black Hills or the Lena Valley in Frörland – any of the Old West stories you care to game can happen in Midgard.

## Wyrd Tales

It takes little effort to add magic and the supernatural to Midgard. The scope of a supernatural campaign can verge from low fantasy piracy with the occasional cursed emerald or small kraken to mythic games of gods and men torn from the sagas and eddas. Do the fire and ice giants decide to get in on the Viking action themselves? Will Thor and Raven duke it out for the New World? Does the coming of the Little Ice Age herald the Fimbulwinter and the beginning of Ragnarok?

### Seaxes and Sorcery

Rather than Rafael Sabatini, adventures in Midgard can take Robert E. Howard as a model. Any of his novels of iron-thewed barbarians (or frontiersmen, or mercenaries, or . . .) meeting trouble and terror in foreign lands can inspire scenarios in Midgard. For the horror-minded GM, Midgard presents a plethora of monsters; not only the trolls and barrow-wights of Norse legend but Malay penggallen, Nihonese oni, Skraeling skinwalkers, and Egyptian mummies can threaten the PCs.

### Here Be Dragons

Midgard is almost a conventional fantasy world anyway. There are a number of different ways to take that last step, and a GM can use any or all of them. Rune Magic (pp. M90-93), Skraeling shamanism (pp. R116-124 or OW68-75), or any magics from ***GURPS Russia, GURPS China, GURPS Aztecs,*** or ***GURPS Arabian Nights*** might show up in Midgard along with more conventional "clerical" magic (pp. B100-113) for the priests of the Aesir (and possibly of the Pale Christ). To increase the fantasy feel yet further, subtract 3 from the crit. number for all firearms (including ship cannon), or do away with gunpowder entirely.

The other thing to add, of course, are the fantasy races. Alvar (Elves, p. FF58) dominate the forests of North America and Siberia, and Dwarves (p. FF50) control the Appalachians and Alps,. Barrow-Wights (p. UN84) and Trolls (Ogres, p. FF120) can be isolated monsters, although a race of Barrow-Wights living in the ruins and catacombs of Rome and Mikligardr would add a note of dark horror. Similarly, cities of Merfolk (p. FF111) under the ocean can present any number of roleplaying opportunities from submerged romance to undersea piracy.

## Illuminating Midgard

Conspiracy theorists can find the Assassins in Midgard's past, along with St. Bernard of Clairvaux, "the Illuminatus of the West." In our history, he wrote the Templar Rule; in Midgard he set Burgundy on the road to monastic theocracy and converted Danemark. Skaldic societies might hide secrets of rune lore passed down from the Druids, or from ancient Aryan Atlantis. (Nazi mystics of the Thule Society who open up a world-gate to Midgard would make excellent villains for either a crosstime campaign or a game set entirely in Midgard, with the PCs as brave heroes attempting to stop these sorcerers with their magic "Schmeissers," "Fokkers," and "radio.") Norse society has been surprisingly resilient; perhaps it has some hidden protector such as the Tero from within the Hollow Earth. In any tale of conspiracy, subterfuge, lies, and false seemings, of course, a Midgarder will see one hand for sure – the ultimate Trickster, Loki.

## Midgard's Life of the Mind

The Norse have many virtues, but philosophy is not one of them. Thorist skalds and priests have begun working out the implications of their fatalist metaphysics, but the casual attitude of many Midgarders to religion means that such insights lie fallow for now. On the other hand, Norse practical political science is really quite advanced: when a civil suit can lead to a duel to the death, nonconfrontational means of arbitration come to the fore. Many Norse hire a Hvítakrister priest or Jewish rabbi to judge disputes, with a percentage of any award (almost all judgments are monetary, even if denominated in woolens or cows) going to the poor.

Norse laws are written with admirable clarity and economy, and the tension between king and jarls, between a warrior aristocracy and an egalitarian ranching ethos, produces some remarkable court precedents while keeping Norse societies (mostly) free of tyranny and abuses. When the system occasionally breaks down, the truly outstanding verbal skills of the Norse commemorates the bloodshed in thrilling sagas, poetry, and novels. Snorri Sturluson's greatest work, *Poulssaga,* is a thrilling tale of a Vinland thingman who defeats the king of Danemark, rises to kingship himself, and is killed by his own son when he becomes a tyrant. Not only did this prose saga create the Norse fictional tradition, it has become something akin to holy writ among Vinlanders and those who admire them.



# Midgard Timeline

**860** – Fall of Mikligardr to Varangian expeditionary force; Vikings take the secret of Greek Fire, dominate trade routes to the East.

**862** – Rurik founds Holmgard (Novgorod).

**866** – Bjorn Ironside sacks Rome.

**870** – Viking settlement of Iceland begins.

**871** – Death of the English kinglets Aethelred, Alfred, and Aethelwulf in battle against Ivar and Halfdan; England becomes Danish.

**880** – Ketil Flatnose makes himself king of Scotland.

**881** – Helgi of Holmgard takes Koenugardr (Kiev), unifying Gardarika.

**885** – Fall of Paris to the Vikings; final destruction of the Carolingian empire.

**910** – Khagan Siman of the Bulgars defeats King Basil of Greece; Balkans fall under Bulgar rule.

**911** – Hrolf becomes jarl of Normandy.

**920s** – Magyars invade, conquer central Europe; Magyar Khanate stretches to Rhine.

**930** – Ulfljot of Lon and Thorleif the Wise codify Icelander law; first meeting of the Althing in Iceland. Á.L. 1.

**937** – Olaf Sytryggrsson makes himself High King of Yrland.

**955** – Abd-er-Rahman of al-Andalus conquers southern France, Asturias; guarantees the independence of the Basques in exchange for an end to raiding.

**966** – Sverting Ingvarsson of Koenugardr sacks Volga Bulgar; Siberian rivers open to Varangian fur and silver traders.

**982** – Eirik the Red begins the exploration of Greenland.

**983** – Ari Marsson of Iceland sights Mikilyrland, the new world.

**986** – Bjarni Herjulfsson scouts out Markland, brings tales of a land of timber to tree-poor Iceland.

**1000** – Leif Eiriksson scouts out Vinland, discovers the Grand Banks on his return trip.

**1002-1015** – Fishing and lumbering expeditions chart the Vinland coast.

**1018** – Thorvald Eiriksson founds Leifsholm (Manhattan), beginning of the Vinlander Althing.

**1028** – Knut the Great unites England, Scotland, Danemark, and Norway into the Kingdom of Danemark and the Isles.

**1031** – Ingvar the Far-Faring reaches India.

**1035** – Thangred of Normandy begins the conquest of Sikel (Sicily and Naples).

**1050s** – Plagues sweep Skraeling peoples. Vikings move into empty lands along river valleys.

**1067** – Squabbling Anatolian Grikslander states fall to Seljuk Turk invaders; Mikligardr withstands brief siege.

**1069** – Boleslav II of Sklavonland defeats Asgeir Arisson at Pinsk, establishes independence of Western Slavs.

**1100s** – Basque and Breton sailors begin transatlantic voyaging.

**1106** – Moslems settle al-Kiba (Cuba).

**1118** – Bernard of Burgundy begins Christian missions to the Danes and Swedes.

**1120s** – Moslem traders spread Islam, plagues throughout Ketsalsland (Mexico).

**1157** – Valdemar I of Danemark converts to Christianity.

**1176** – Lombard League defeats Velimund II of Sikel at Legnano; north Italian towns independent.

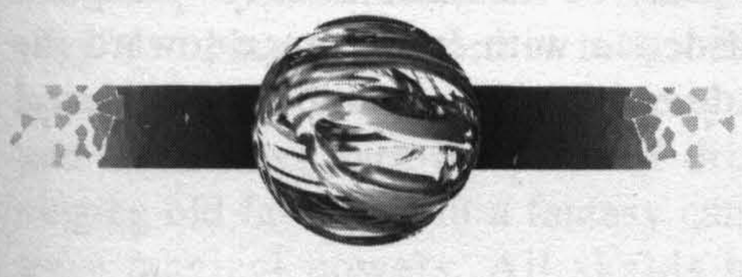
**1188** – Magyar khagan Bela III converts to Christianity.

**1204** – Eruption of Mt. Hekla decimates Iceland; Snorri Sturluson emigrates to Vinland.

**1212** – King Valdemar II of Danemark defeats Jon of Normandy at Boven; Normandy added to the Kingdom of Danemark.

**1227** – Vinlander fleet defeats Danish fleet in Orkneys with help of Norse rebels; Iceland remains pagan and outside royal authority.

**1233** – Dominic de Guzman converts King Birger I of Svearika to Christianity.



**1237** – Mongol invasions disrupt Gardarika; entire Rurikid royal line dies in battle at Koenugardr; Christianity makes wide gains in upheaval and chaos.

**1244** – Snorri Sturluson composes *Poulssaga.*

**1256** – King Eirik V of Danemark, needing support against the rebellious Haakon of Norway, grants town and trading charters to the Hanseatic towns Lübeck, Antverpen, and Köln.

**1263** – Death of Haakon the Rebel brings Norway back under Danish crown.

**1267** – Alfgeir of Holmgard begins rebuilding of Gardarikan cities under nominal Mongol suzerainty; resumption of steady eastern Gardarikan trade with Kinland.

**1277** – King Valdemar I of Svearik conclusively conquers Prussia, driving the Lithuanians into Sklavonland.

**1281** – First use of gunpowder in Europe at Battle of Pruth, as Holmgarders drive off Swedish invaders.

**1294** – Battle of Itil shatters Mongol rule in West; Gardarika reformed under Holmgarder leadership.

**1315** – Beginning of Little Ice Age; cooling weather in Scandinavian, north Vinlander, Gardarikan heartlands drives new period of expansion as surplus population is forced south. Greenlanders begin emigration to Vinland.

**1325** – Sultanate of Mali begins transatlantic trade, conversion of the Yanomami to Islam.

**1354** – King Valdemar IV of Danemark begins campaigns against Hansa towns.

**1375** – Pagan Mixtec and Moslem Tlaxcalan confederacies come into conflict at Tenochtitlan; Tenocha convert to Islam, join Tlaxcala for protection.

**1380** – Kamhatsvik founded on east coast of Frörland (Siberia); Gardarikans reach Pacific.

**1381** – Unemployed feltmaker Reinn Donarsson of Murrum in Gardarika invents the movable-type printing press.

**1385** – Bjorn Einarsson successfully raids Vijayanagar; beginning of Danish Viking voyages to India and Majapahit.

**1389** – Death of Hayamwurak of Majapahit; attacks of Muslim Malay pirates and Vikings plunge East Indies into chaos.

**1391** – Following the depredations of Tamerlane, the Gardarikans polish off the Golden Horde and begin recolonizing the Don Valley.

**1395** – Pirate Jon Störtebeker begins his career in the Baltic and North Seas.

**1402** – Owain Glyndwr of Wales begins war against Danemark; Scotland rebels under Jakof I.

**1405** – Cheng Ho begins Chinese imperial naval expeditions in Indian Ocean.

**1408** – Andalusian trading posts in al-Urinuq (Venezuela) conquered by expanding Yanomami Caliphate.

**1412** – The present.



# Characters

## Character Types

Players and GMs may want to consult ***GURPS Russia, GURPS Arabian Nights, GURPS China, GURPS Japan,*** and maybe ***GURPS Aztecs*** for Midgard character possibilities; the "outlander in the crew" is an almost mandatory cliché.



### Viking

To go *a víking* is to set out on a piratical raid or invasion. Pirates of any nationality can thus, technically, be Vikings. Most Vikings keep an eye on the main chance; even a perfectly peaceful voyage that offers profit (or adventure and glory) is one worth making. Some Vikings only attack enemies of their king or jarl (a -5 Code of Honor), while others fall on anyone who looks helpless (Greed). All Vikings should have an appropriate Area Knowledge, Boating, Gunner (Naval), Navigation, and either Seamanship or Shiphandling. Any Craft skill is appropriate on a large ship. Of the myriad weapon skills, Norse Vikings will often have Black Powder Weapons, Broadsword, or Axe/Mace. Axe Throwing and Spear Throwing predominate over Bow skills for ranged attacks. Captains might need Leadership, Shipbuilding, Tactics (Naval), or even Merchant. Absolute Direction, Combat Reflexes, Toughness, and kindred advantages mark the successful Viking (a successful captain will have a Reputation such as "Lucky," "Fearless," or "Deadly"). Disadvantages will probably include an Enemy or two, along with the piratical range of mental disadvantages and Odious Personal Habits. One Eye is traditional.

### Varangian

A soldier (or rarely a sailor) who takes the Várar (see p. 53) becomes a Varangian, a mercenary in foreign service. Some wind up high officers, or even rulers themselves. Others wind up dead, of course, but that's wyrd for you. Varangians must have excellent combat and weapon skills (typically Black Powder Weapons, Broadsword, Spear, Shield, Knife, and Axe), along with Tactics and Brawling. Savoir-Faire (Military), Leadership, Riding (horse), and the appropriate languages for dealing with employers (typically Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Malay, Hindi, or Tamil) come in very handy. Varangians should have Combat Reflexes as well as the appropriate Military Rank; fellow Varangians or loyal natives may make up an Ally Group. Some soldiers may be Berserk, especially in a cinematic campaign. Varangians should take a Sense of Duty (unless they plan to overthrow their employer, in which case a Secret may be indicated). Many Varangians combine Overconfidence with Intolerance toward the "locals." This attitude can lead to any number of physical disadvantages.

### Steader

A steader is a frontier farmer in Vinland or the southern river valleys of Gardarika. Agronomy, Animal Handling, and local Area Knowledge are mandatory, and Survival (forest or prairie), Beekeeping, Fishing, Tracking, Traps, Riding (horse), Naturalist, and so forth are quite common. Weapons may include Bow, Spear, Staff, and Knife. Steadings, like ships, require (or at least support) any number of craft skills. Some steaders may have language skills for the local tribes. Almost any advantage will come in handy. Most steaders have Dependents (spouses, children, possibly huscarls or thralls), many suffer from Poverty, and out on the frontier Odious Personal Habits are common.

### Vélverker

Experimenting with guns, presses, mills, and ship fittings, the skilled Norse metalworkers verge on becoming scientists. For now, they are called vélverkers; gadgeteers, engineers, and craftsmen rolled into one. In addition to craft skills (especially Armoury, Blacksmith, and Mechanic), vélverkers usually have Engineer (specializing in Primitive Machines, Mining, or Guns) and often Metallurgy and Geology. A cinematic vélverker would surely have Lockpicking, Traps, Starglazing, and the Gadgeteer advantage. Vélverkers often have Ambidexterity and one or more levels of Manual Dexterity, and many have a Patron. Disadvantages might include an anachronistic Absent-Mindedness, a traditional Lame, or a more conventional Curious, Loner, or Workaholic.

### Merchant

How can you tell a Viking from a merchant? If you're armed, he's a merchant. Many merchants have far-flung interests and investments, which gives PC merchants an excellent excuse to go to the edges of the earth and get into trouble. All merchants should have Merchant skill and Area Knowledges; Fast-Talk, Savoir-Faire, Jeweler, Administration (if only to know whom to bribe), Law, and languages are sure to come in handy as well. Gardarikisman merchants possess Status and Wealth, and possibly an Ally Group of huscarls. Most merchants possess Literacy and a wide spectrum of Contacts, and many have a Patron. Cultural Adaptability is worth its weight in gold, but Charisma and Voice are useful, too. Stereotypical merchants have Greed and Miserliness, of course.

### Skald

The poets and minstrels of Norse society, in Vinland they also play an important religious role. Skalds have numerous responsibilities and immunities in Norse law, and can always earn the price of drinks and a meal by singing old favorites. In a fantasy campaign, skalds may have magical powers. All skalds have Skaldic Lore (p. CI147), Bard, Poetry, Singing, Performance, Savoir-Faire, and Musical Instrument (Harp). Vinlander skalds also have Law and Theology (Thorist). Skalds may also have Diplomacy, Heraldry, History, or Literature, along with sundry weapon or craft skills. Some skalds have Patrons, and all have Claims to Hospitality and Bardic Immunity in Norse countries (the GM may want to adjust the prices of those advantages in a globetrotting piratical game). Silly skalds have Rapier Wit. Skaldic disadvantages may include Berserk, Compulsive Carousing, Lecherousness, or, dangerously, Truthfulness. Many skalds have sworn Vows, and the archetypal skalds have either One Eye or Blindness.

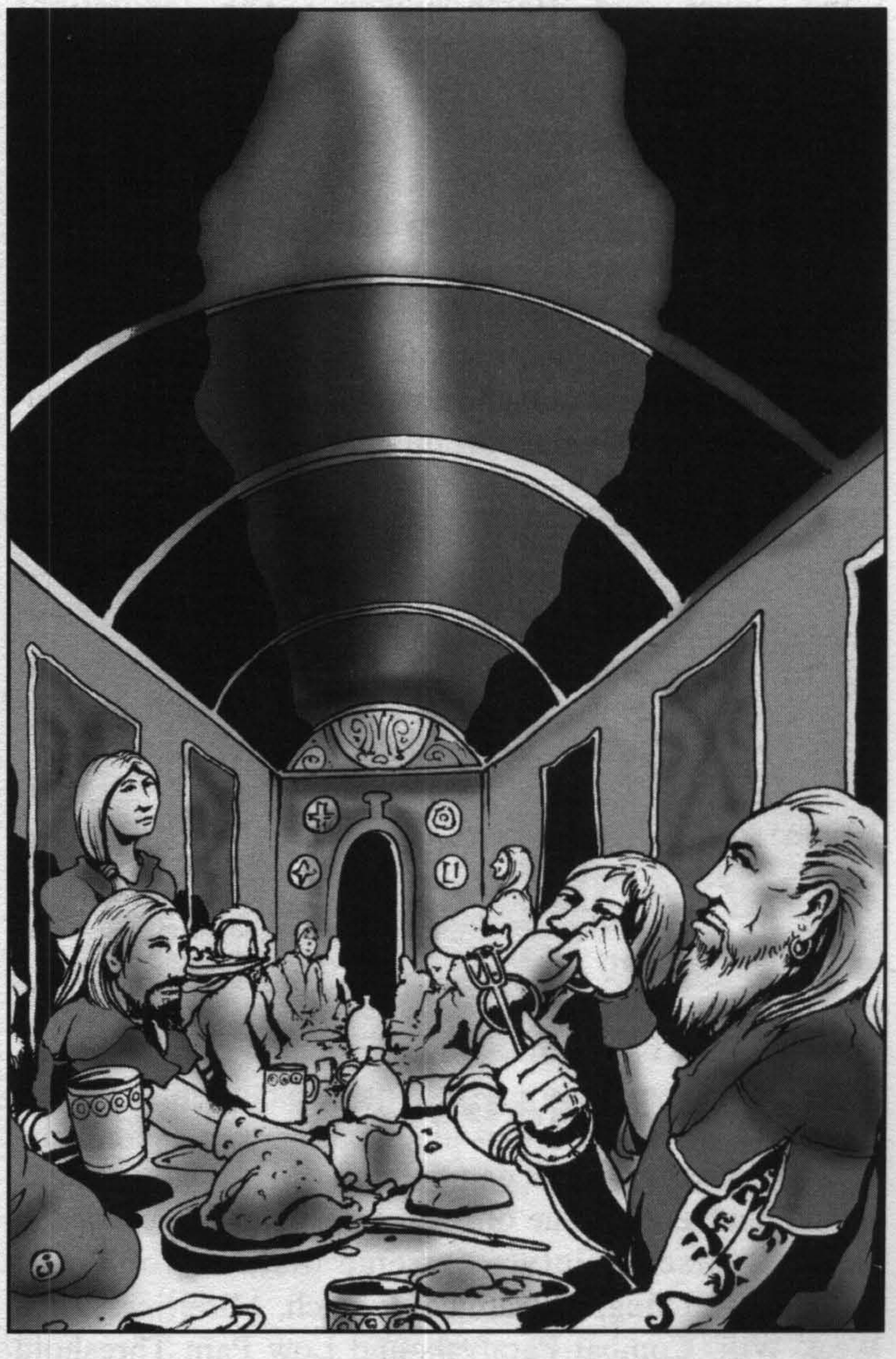
## Advantages

### Ally Group see p. CI19

Any Norseman possesses an Ally Group; his kin. Without family, a Norseman is not only less safe, he is less human. The sworn men and followers of a hringgjafari, the godhordh of a godhi, the huscarls of a jarl, the in-laws and factors of a Gardarikisman merchant; all these Ally Groups form the core of Norse society. The point value should depend on the PC's Status; anyone of Status 4 or better definitely possesses a 30-point Ally Group. Especially in an all-Norse campaign, GMs should probably allow an additional 30 points or so for the characters' Ally Groups. Norse PCs out a-Viking may save points by leaving their Ally Group at home (Quite Rare appearance), but most take a significant fraction with them.

### Claim to Hospitality see p. CI21

In theory, every Norseman possesses a 10-point Claim to Hospitality with every other Norseman. In practice, of course, such claims vary with Status and occupation. For skalds, the advantage likely remains worth a full 10 points; Gardarikisman merchants surely possess 5-point claims upon others of their kind; hired duellists can claim 1 or 2 points worth of satisfied clients and sticklers for tradition.



### Literacy see p. B21

With the advent of the printing press, Literacy is now a 5-point advantage in Norse societies and Semi-Literacy (p. CI29) is the norm, worth 0 points. Elsewhere Literacy still costs 10 points.

### Patron see p. B24

A character's Patron is likely his jarl, godhi, or hringgjafari. There are no 30-point Patrons in Norse society; even Queen-Mother Margrete cannot exert that kind of influence.

### Reputation — see p. B17

This advantage is *the* most important component of the Norse identity. Any PC with a known or obvious advantage or disadvantage should take the appropriate Reputation if possible. Reputations for skill are also important, especially for skalds, merchants, Varangians, and captains. Often, Norsemen receive nicknames denoting their Reputations; good ("the Lucky" and "Eagle-Eye"), bad ("the Simple" and "Flat-nose"), and mixed ("the Clever" and "Harsh-spoken"). The Reputations "kinslayer," "oathbreaker," and "wolfshead" (banished outlaw) all cause -4 reactions in any Norse.

### Wyrd — see Destiny, p. CI36

This advantage (or disadvantage) should be nigh-mandatory in any fantasy, occult, horror, or similarly mystical game set in Midgard, at least for Norse characters. Even in a mundane campaign, the GM may allow this for Norse PCs, since they may subconsciously attempt to fulfill the Norns' prediction and bring about their wyrd.



## Disadvantages

In a mostly-Norse campaign in Midgard, the GM should double the value of the following disadvantages to reflect Norse society's extreme distaste for them: Compulsive Lying, Cowardice, Eunuch, Miserliness, and Weak Will. Combat Paralysis and Low Pain Threshold might also affect one's Reputation, and thus be worth more points.

### Berserk — see p. B31

Not as common in "civilized" Norse Europe as it once was, this disadvantage still appears in Vikings and Varangians under the hot sun of the far faring. Note that in a traditional Midgard campaign, a true berserker must fight naked (perhaps with the Bulletproof Nudity rule from p. CII76). In a fantastic campaign, Norse lycanthropes (especially werebears) must take this disadvantage.

### Code of Honor — see p. B31

*Viking Code of Honor:* Be courageous but not foolhardy, tenacious, cheerful, hospitable, open-handed, loyal, and above all never break your word. Insults and wrongs to you, your kin, or your sworn men must be avenged in court or in battle. Live well and die well. -10 points. Although the Viking Code of Honor is less common than it once was, it is still expected of every Norseman and Norsewoman of Status 0 and above.

### Social Stigma — see p. B27

Women, foreigners, and religious minorities (Hvítakristers or Moslems in Vinland, Jews anywhere, old-school pagans or Moslems in Scandinavia) have a -5 point Social Stigma. Note that a Dane in Sweden, or a Gardarikisman in Vinland is *not* a foreigner. Not only does he probably have relatives there (intermarriage remains common throughout the Norse world), any Norseman (except an outlaw) is more a brother than some whey-blooded outlander. Leysingar (freed thralls), magicians, and unassimilated Skraelings possess Social Stigmas worth -10 points.

## Skills

### Languages — see p. B54

Old Norse split into West and East dialects only four centuries ago. Even now, Vinlander and Icelander are mutually intelligible dialects defaulting to each other at -1, at most. Danish has diverged with many Anglo-Saxon loan words, and Gardarikan has adopted some Slavic elements. Both default to Vinlander and Swedish at -2, and to each other at -4. Swedish and Vinlander mutually default at -3, along with Vinlander to Danish or Gardarikan, and any modern Midgard language to Old Norse runes. Outtime speakers of our world's Icelandic default to Vinlander at -2; other modern Scandinavian tongues of our world default to their Midgard equivalents at -4. There is no default from either modern Russian or Swedish to Gardarikan.

### Law — see p. B58

Any carl (Status -1 or higher) is likely to know a surprising amount about his local law code, especially his rights and obligations. Most Norse law codes are very similar. Icelanders and Vinlanders get a +3 to their skill in each others' law, +2 for Scandinavian law, and +1 for Gardarikisman law. The equation works the same in the other direction; Gardarikismen get a +2 for Scandinavian law, and a +1 for Vinlander or Icelander law.

# Economics, Jobs, and Wealth

## Prices and Currency

The Vinland silver scyld (marked with the shield-rune of its coiner; forging is a killing offense), is represented by $. The Gardarikan silver dram, Danish and Svearik kroner are roughly the same weight, and remain convertible (all three currencies are on an upswing driven by the new southern trade). Prices (and cost of living) in Danemark are 10 to 30 percent higher because of inflation. Standard starting wealth in Midgard is $700, with only 20 percent available outside fixed goods like homes, fishing boats, livestock, etc. The GM may make all a character's starting wealth available for less than Wealthy adventurers who put everything into a risky voyage to the far faring.

| | |
|---|---|
| Arrack, bottle | $3 |
| Axe, steel | $25 |
| Boots, leather | $20 |
| Bread, 2 fresh loaves | $1 |
| Cloak, fur | $30+ |
| Eye makeup, indigo | $3/lb. |
| Hat, beaver | $5+ |
| Lokisvatn, appx. 4 gallon keg | $80 |
| Paper, 60 pages | $3-$5 |
| Pepper, 1 lb. | $20 |
| Pipe, clay | $1 |
| Rope, 10 yards | $1-$5 depending on weight |
| Schooner-rigged light drakkar (75' long) | $5,000 |
| Sea-rations (biscuit and lutevisk) | $4/week |
| Thrall, untrained male laborer | $20 |
| Whale-oil lantern | $7 |

## Social Status and Cost of Living

The mannbaetr (the Norse equivalent of the Anglo-Saxon wergild) for killing a man begins at 100 times the monthly cost of living for his Status (the price for an eye is half that, and losing an ear a fourth), payable to his relatives. Reputation (of the killer or the victim), or the judgment of the court, may modify that up or down.



Status in Midgard remains heavily dependent not only upon birth but on reputation. Even the Scandinavian monarchies remain relatively open and mobile structures; the nobility both considers itself peers of the king and open to famous worthies; much of any Midgarder's social standing rests on his peers, after all. In Gardarika, wealth plays a rather larger role in social status than in Scandinavia. In Vinland and Iceland, status is literally bought and sold with godhordhi (see *Every Man A King,* p. 53). One important role in Vinlander society is the hringgjafari (ring-giver), the name for anyone famous who makes his name without being a godhi. A hringgjafari's reputation and status depends on the number of followers he can support with generous gifts (hence the name). Followers of hringgjafari roughly equate to huscarls in Scandinavia. For players who don't mind a clear "party leader," a hringgjafari and his (or her; between Icelandic egalitarianism and Algonquin semi-matriarchy, Vinland is full of opportunities for ambitious, skilled women) followers might make a good PC group.

### Social Status and Cost of Living Table

| *Level* | *Vinland* | *Gardarika* | *Europe* | *Cost of Living* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | No equivalent | Prince | King | $4,000 |
| 6 | Lawspeaker | Mayor | Prince | $2,000 |
| 5 | Major godhi, renowned hringgjafari | Rich merchant | Markman | $1,000 |
| 4 | Godhi, rich hringgjafari | Bishop, Herdingsman | Jarl | $500 |
| 3 | Minor godhi, hringgjafari | Merchant | Herdingsman | $300 |
| 2 | Poor hringgjafari | Minor herdingsman | Captain | $160 |
| 1 | Rich steader or vélverker | Rich townsman, captain | Rich carl | $80 |
| 0 | Steader, vélverker | Townsman, rich farmer | Huscarl,carl | $40 |
| -1 | Tenant steader, professional duellist | Farmer | Poor carl | $20 |
| -2 | Bandit, leysingi | Peasant | Outlaw | $15 |
| -3 | Thrall | Thrall | Thrall | $10 |
| -4 | Wolfshead | None | None | $0 |

# Weapons

## Loki's Powder

The Norse acquired gunpowder from China during the Mongol period, and quickly saw its potential. Norse ships have sported guns for almost two centuries, and have mounted broadsides with gunports since the 1380s. However, the unreliability of firing mechanisms has kept man-portable longarms rare – matchlock *surtsspjóts* ("Surt's spears," or firearms in general) are fine if they don't get wet, but if there's one thing a Viking knows about any weapon, it's that it will get wet. Perhaps some clever craftsman in Ribe or Koenugardr has invented a wheellock that works more times than not; if so, he's keeping it to himself. Some steaders in Vinland and Gardarika use Surt's spears, but most stick to the old-fashioned kind.

The most dependable (in the sense that, if they go off at all, someone will be badly injured) firearm loads are fafnirsteeth. This is the generic term for any multiple-shot load, from the gravel, nailheads, and bone used in a *tyrsropi* ("Tyr's belch," or blunderbuss) to the lovingly shaped small metal balls fired from drakkar cannons to clear the decks of enemy vessels.

## Melee Weapons

All true sons of the North, however, feel the greatest possible satisfaction from personally powering that shaped metal into the vital sections of a foeman. Melee weapons in Midgard run the gamut from Mixtec *macahuitl* to Nihonese *nunchaku.* (The Tibetan *nan dao,* an elongated chisel-bladed great axe mounted on a quarterstaff, is a current favorite among Varangians in South Asia.) Nonetheless, the three-foot, double-bladed steel sword (followed by the throwing spear and the axe) retains pride of place for Norsemen from the plains of Vinland to the jungles of Java.

# Job Table

| *Job (prerequisites), Monthly Income* | *Success Roll* | *Critical Failure* |
|---|---|---|
| *Poor Jobs* | | |
| Thief* (any two Thief skills at 12+), IQ × $2 | DX-2 | 3d/3d, caught |
| Thrall (none), room and board | 11 | 2d/4d |
| *Struggling Jobs* | | |
| Duellist* (Law 11+, weapon skill 12+), $25 | best PR | 4d/4d, disgraced |
| Longshoreman (ST 11+), $20 | PR | -1i/2d or LJ |
| Shiphand (Seamanship 10+), $10 plus room and board | PR | 2d/LJ |
| *Average Jobs* | | |
| Fisherman* (Fishing 11+), $50 | PR | 1d/3d, 2I |
| Vélverker* (Craft or Engineer skill 11+), skill × $5 | PR | -1i/-2i |
| Huscarl (Savoir-Faire 12+, weapon skill 10+, Status 0+), $35 plus room and board | best PR | -1i, 2d/-1i, disgraced, LJ |
| Master Seaman (Craft skill 11+, Seamanship 13+), $45 plus room and board | worst PR | 1d/2d, -1i |
| Trapper* (Survival 11+, Tracking 10+), Tracking × $5 | worst PR | 2d/3d, -1i |
| *Comfortable Jobs* | | |
| Merchant* (Merchant 13+), skill × $15 | PR | -1i/2d, -1I |
| Rich steader* (Agronomy 11+), $120 | PR | -1i/1d, -1I |
| Ship captain* (Shiphandling 12+), $175 | PR | -1i/2d, lose ship |
| Skald* (Skaldic Lore 13+, Bard 13+), $90 | best PR | -1i/disgraced |
| *Wealthy Jobs* | | |
| Hringgjafari* (Status 2+, Leadership 13+, one famous skill† at 13+),best PR × $20 | Worst PR | -2i/-3i, disgraced |
| Jarl/Herdingman* (Status 3+, Savoir-Faire 14+), $500 | PR-2 | -2i/disgraced |

† The skill that makes one a hringgjafari is usually Shiphandling, Merchant, or Strategy, but there are hringgjafari vélverkers, skalds, and even doctors.

A disgraced Midgarder suffers losses to Reputation consonant with the nature of the failure. This should be role-played, as should (ideally) the disgraceful incident. Being banished as a wolfshead (outlaw) is the worst thing that can ever happen to a Norseman, and he must perform mighty deeds to restore his good name. (Eirik the Red founded Greenland, and his name is still mud in Norway.)

# 5 CALIPH

## Other Muslim Worlds

Infinity knows of 17 parallel worlds with divergences centered on the Muslim powers. Caliph is the only one more advanced than Homeline, although **Jihad-2**, in which Constantinople fell in 676 and Europe followed, is well into an industrial revolution in their year 1429. In **Jihad-1**, where the Arabs defeated the Franks at Tours in 732, Muslim Europe is still stagnating with the rest of the world at TL4 in the year 1881.

In **Ottoman-1**, the Turks took Vienna in 1529 and marched into Germany: the future of the Anglo-Spanish alliance, leading all that's left of Christian Europe, looks increasingly bleak. **Ottoman-2's** Empire extends over a huge part of Asia, following their 1407 conquest of southern Russia in cooperation with Tamerlane, but the European kingdoms they have long ignored are pulling ahead of them. Curiously, both timelines are in local year 1766.

Other Muslim timelines include **Andalus,** in which the Muslims of Spain defeated attempts at reconquest and went on to discover America in 1484, **Isma'il,** in which the Safavids defeated the Ottomans in 1512 and built a millenarian Shi'ite empire stretching from India to North Africa, and **Khedive,** in which Mehmet Ali and his successors built Egypt into a modern state during the 19th century.

## The Abbasids

The second dynasty of caliphs presided over the classic period of Islamic civilization. Yet they spent the years 750-1258 as powerless puppets, and even the early caliphs such as Haroun al-Rashid worried about the legitimacy of their rule. Haroun's heirs allowed Shi'ite sectarians to grow in power by seeking the favor of the family of 'Ali (the Prophet's nephew and son-in-law), and failed to impose Sunni interpretations on the Ulama.

In Caliph, however, their role as "Patrons of the Holy Koran" gave the Abbasids a new form of religious authority, a basis for agreement with the Ulama, and the self-confidence to chastise the sectarians and reform the military. After destroying Byzantium, the great enemy of the Faith, their prestige was unassailable.

*Oh Mankind, surely you are the ones who have need of God; He is the All-Sufficient . . . if He but wills it, He can do away with you and make a new creation: surely that is no great matter for God.*

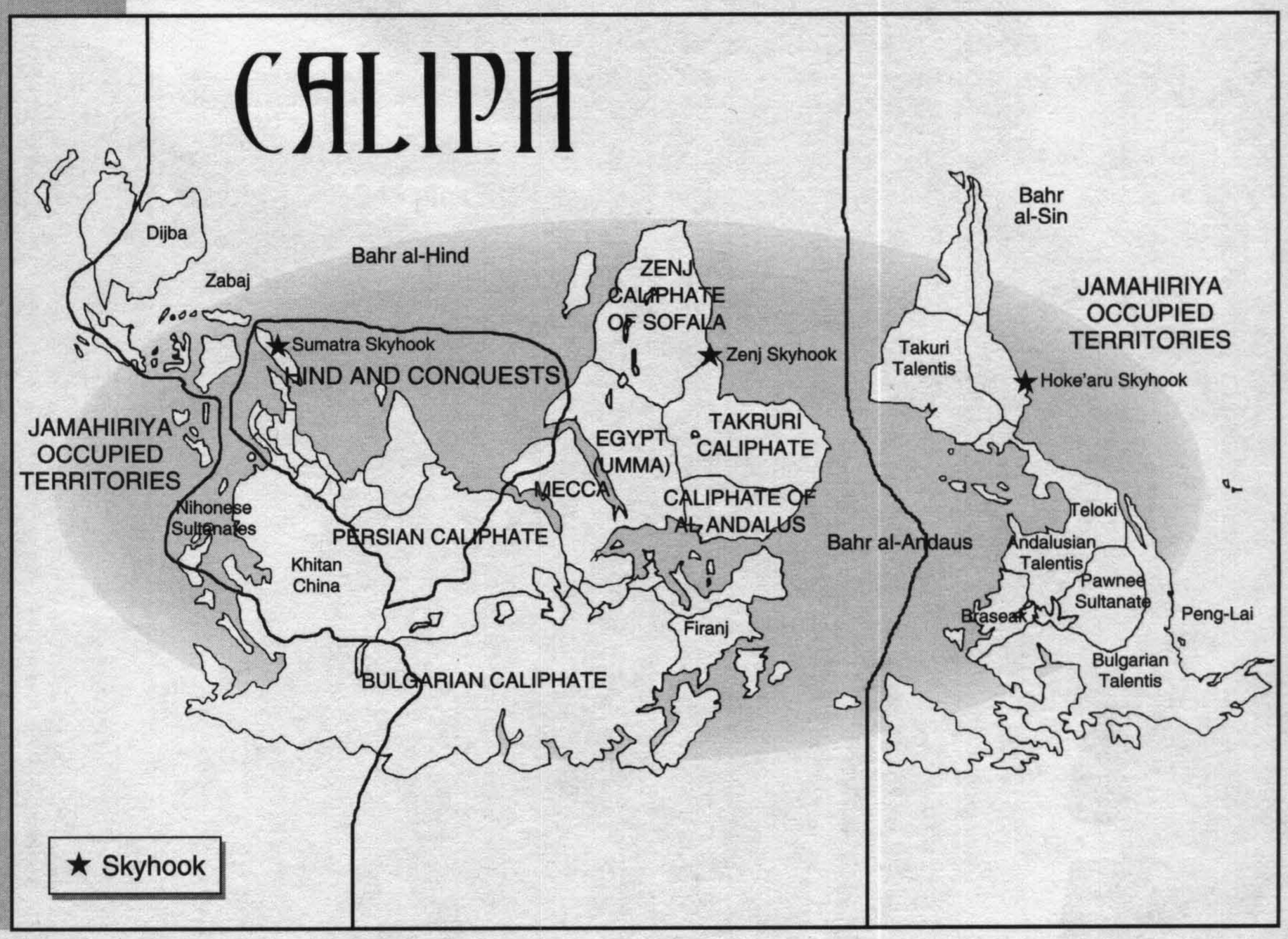
*– The Koran, 35:15-17.*

This timeline has only reached 1683, but visitors could be forgiven for thinking it centuries in the future. Diverging with a scientific revolution under the Abbasid caliphs of the 9th and 10th centuries, it has advanced far beyond 20th-century Earth, with universal prosperity and interstellar colonies. At present, a global war threatens its achievements.

# History

The rise of Islam is one of the most astonishing facts of history. Within a century, this new religion had transformed the Arabs from a minor people on the margins of the civilized world to the masters of the most widespread empire yet known. The Caliphate was the central feature of the world – literally, as the Islamic empire was the first in regular contact with all of the main centers of the Old World. In Homeline history, the meteoric rise of Islamic civilization faltered, and while it remained perhaps the most advanced and certainly the most widespread society on Earth until the 15th or 16th century, it stayed on a cultural plateau while Europe burst forth in the Renaissance.

In Caliph, however, the invention of the printing press in 9th-century Baghdad sparked an Islamic Renaissance when the first flush of expansion had hardly faded. The Abbasid caliphs supported the resulting burst of innovation, and were richly rewarded by the gunpowder weapons they used to overwhelm Byzantium and Rome.



## The Great Transformation

By the time the Abbasids split into successor states, the Muslim world was well towards modernization, with personal firearms and Newtonian physics. Egypt achieved naval control of the Indian Ocean, as far as southern Africa and the island continent of Djiba (Australia), while its rival Andalus (Muslim Spain) established itself in the Mediterranean and leaped across the Atlantic to the new world of Talentis (hardly noticing the Christian colony in the far north). Persia fought with the Turks for control of inner Asia, while to the north their protégés the Bulgars expanded from their Volga heartland to dominate their Khazar and Russian neighbors. The impact of Muslim culture even reached the Khitans in northern China, whose conversion revitalized their state and led to the conquest of Sung dynasty China.

Egypt and Persia led the way into the Industrial Revolution, which began with oil (from Iraq and Libya) rather than coal. Their rivalry for control of the Muslim heartland lasted centuries, though ironically they fought together in the greatest wars. When the Global War began with revolts in their Asian colonial empires, they fought Bulgaria, Andalus and the African sultanates as well as the rebels – and, ultimately, were overmatched even with Khitan aid. This ten-year struggle introduced industrialized warfare to Caliph and was thought to have demonstrated the folly of armed conflict among the major powers. The Peace of Zanzibar ended the last conflict between the great caliphates for almost 350 years, although there were occasional scares such as the fall of the Ch'i dynasty in China or the suppression of the totalitarian Umarites.

**Egypt and Persia led the way into the Industrial Revolution, which began with oil (from Iraq and Libya) rather than coal.**

## The Millennium

The world had sufficient difficulties even without war, as technology continued to advance and society was repeatedly transformed. Technology brought prosperity and knit the Earth together in an increasingly unified global society, even as it began to reach outward to the stars. Older political structures came to seem outmoded: the decline of national governments reached its apex early in this century with the formal dissolution of the Egyptian Caliphate. Religious sentiment ebbed as a universal system of law and economics organized the secular world, only to come flowing back as the approach of the millennial year (1000 A.H. or 1591 AD) tapped into reservoirs of popular belief.

Meanwhile, as technology advanced, Caliph dealt with the side effects of success. Industrialization damaged the ecosystem, which was healed; universal prosperity brought economic dislocations, which were absorbed; and increasing longevity disrupted social assumptions in ways which have yet to be entirely resolved.

### Shattering the Golden Age

Fourteen months ago, an alliance of old-fashioned imperialists and a new sort of ideological state launched a war of conquest. At first, it was hard to believe that such an inexplicable atavism could pose a serious threat to the modern world, but that illusion has been dispelled. The aggressor Alliance now controls a third of the globe, and the rest has responded with a startling revival of martial enthusiasm.

## The Calendar

The Islamic calendar is lunar rather than solar, consisting of twelve months (alternately of 29 and 30 days) each beginning with the new moon. This comes out roughly 10 days short, so that a summer month one year will be in winter 16 years later. Islamic years are counted from the "Hegira," Mohammed's flight from Mecca in AD 622. To get an Anno Hegira date from an AD date, use the formula AH = 33(AD-622)/32 (and note that it will usually overlap into the following year). Thus, Caliph's present year 1094 AH is AD 1683/4.

## Lesser Breeds Without the Shari'a

Muslims have always thought of themselves as the center of the world, the most civilized people. In Caliph this prejudice was close to truth for centuries. China was their only rival in sophistication, and the Khitan conquest made "Khitai" part of the Muslim world even if most of its people remained idolaters. Byzantium and India fell to Islam more permanently. The peoples of Africa and the new continents of Djiba and Talentis were barely civilized at all, and their embrace of Islam went with their modernization. Only the impoverished fringe of Christian Europe (the Firanji or "Franks," Charlemagne's heirs) was both civilized, after a fashion, and non-Muslim.

Although the attitude has lost strength since the Global War, even today the international system is basically a Muslim creation. The distinction between *Islamic* and *civilized* is still vague, and calling Europe and China "almost Muslim" is intended as a compliment to their modern institutions.

## Why is This Map Upside Down?

The choice between putting north or south at the top of a map is arbitrary. Europeans have used north since cartography became advanced enough to stop using east, but medieval Muslim cartographers preferred south. In Caliph, modern cartography began in Egypt. Egyptians are accustomed to viewing the Nile as flowing "down" – the river delta is *lower* Egypt – and this tradition determined the pattern for Caliph's maps.

## Science and the Faith

Even in our history, Muslim science and mathematics built on the achievements of the Greeks to become the most advanced on Earth during the 8th through 13th centuries – they invented algebra, for instance. However, Islamic science was never widespread or well-organized enough to create self-sustaining advance, and it often had an uneasy relationship with the religious authorities.

In Caliph, however, the printing press made it possible for scientists to circulate their results, creating a scientific community (complete with research journals) of continental size. The scientists of Caliph built on each other's work and, in the 10th century, began a genuine scientific revolution.

Furthermore, conflict between religion and science was rare in Caliph. The apparent cause was the eccentric aristocrat abu-Masrur's masterpiece *Against the Vanity of the Philosophers,* one of the earliest printed works. At that time the Greek rational tradition combined abstract "Reason" with neoplatonic mysticism. Abu-Masrur examined one of this system's keystones, astrology, and refuted it by a careful *empirical* study. Religious thinkers, seeing Greek philosophy as a rival, were delighted. Abu-Masrur saw empirical science and divine revelation together providing a check upon the pretensions of abstract rationality. In that tradition, there has been more philosophical conflict *within* science than between "science" as an entity and religion.

## First Contact

Caliph anticipated contact with advanced alien life for generations, sometimes eagerly, more often fearfully. The actual event, in 1654, was a distinct anticlimax. The aliens' slower-than-light ship passed close to the colony world of Ahqaf, but there was little communication. As far as anyone could tell, they simply weren't very interested in talking with humans. (Use the Memer and Saret, pp. A60-64, or any other suitable race.)

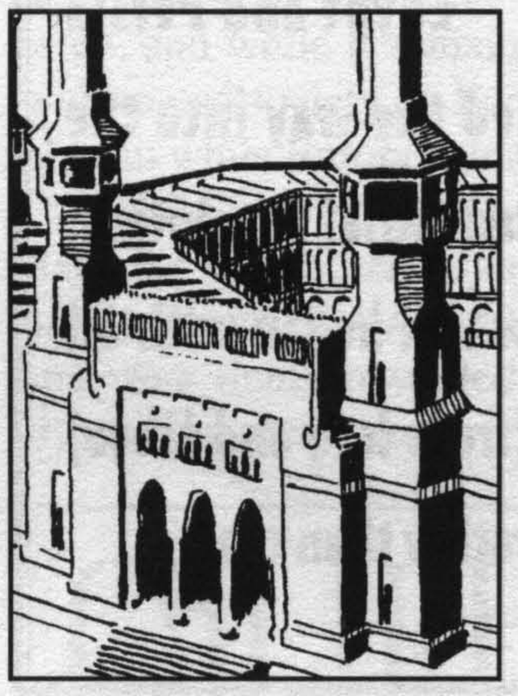
Twenty-seven years later, however, an automated ship brought an alien stargate into Ahqaf system. Apparently, there are a number of civilizations linked up by a common stargate network. The expedition reports are not fully compatible, and Earth generally agrees that some of them must be garbled, if not outright fabrications. No one is sure what nonhuman space is *really* like.

# Locales

Tradition divides the world between the Dar al-Islam, the areas where Islamic law has been established, and the Dar al-Harb, literally "the House of War," the lands still under infidel rule. This view was considered obsolete after the creation of the world-system, when even the regions not formally Muslim accepted Islamic institutions. The spread of Islam via jihad had become distinctly passé. All that changed when the war began.

## The House of Islam

The Dar al-Islam lacks a central government but does have the *Ulama,* the body of scholars who define and apply the *Shari'a.* Once the religious law of Islam, the Shari'a has become a uniform code of justice and international law. The Ulama is self-governing, with own licensing procedure, internal regulations and courts of appeal. It is a universal, independent judiciary which can even create new laws by precedent. However, it has no means of enforcement other than local authorities.



### The Caliphates

"Caliph," a word which originally referred to the successors to Mohammed's authority, has come to refer to any truly sovereign ruler – even one who isn't Muslim. The caliphates are those governments which have sovereign rights. While theoretically subject to the law, there is no human power which can lawfully (or practically) coerce them, and they can and do supplement the Shari'a with local regulations. They are expected to enforce the Ulama's judgments in their own lands and in the Umma.

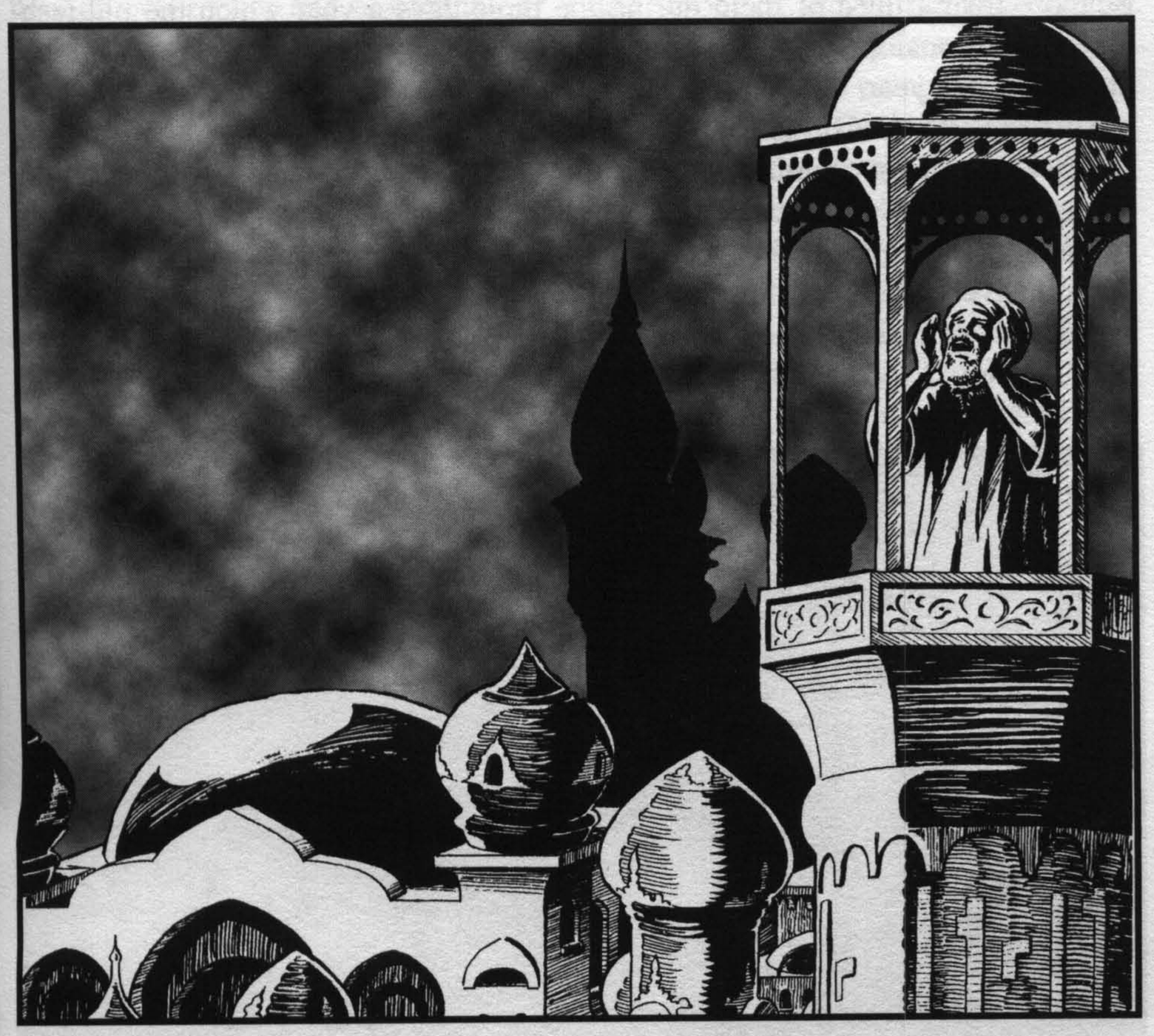
Political controls have weakened over the past few centuries (the average Control Rating is 3), but under wartime conditions the caliphates are invoking powers unused for decades. The six caliphs are supposedly co-equal in leading the military of the Dar al-Islam, but are having trouble coordinating their war efforts.

The four Muslim caliphates are Andalus, Bulgaria, Persia and Sofala; all are constitutional monarchies. Sofala's caliph is appointed and may be dismissed by popular vote; the others are hereditary. Together they have nearly a billion subjects and disproportionately great economic power thanks to high levels of education. Persia is locked in mortal combat with Hind, and has already lost half its territory, although it did turn back an invasion of its heartland with aid from Sofala. Andalus has lost its dominions in Talentis; it had only exercised nominal control over them but still wants to target the Jamahiriya first.

China and Firanj are members of the Dar al-Islam by courtesy and necessity. Firanj is a Christian state ruled by a three-house parliament; the elected caliph presides over the highest chamber. China is only about 20 percent Muslim (the rest are pagans and a sprinkling of Christians). Its caliph is one of the few unifying factors in a relatively backward, semi-feudal society of corporate states. Neither power is as enthusiastic about the jihad as the Muslim powers, but China feels endangered and Firanj is furious about the loss of its Braseal provinces in northern Talentis.

## The Umma

The word "Umma" originally referred to the community of Muslim believers. Over the last century, however, it has more commonly been used to mean that part of the world (almost all Muslim, although it includes pagan Nihon, Christian Armenia and the fringe of Europe) in which there is no such thing as a sovereign government. Political functions are handled by local governments, usually on the city level, but they are subject to rulings of the Ulama and interference by the caliphates.



Private institutions handle social services from education to safety regulation. Even social welfare is supported by foundations funded through the *zakat,* the annual poor tax expected of all Muslim believers. In recent months, the six caliphs have decreed an additional jihad tax which they intend to collect using these charitable foundations; its success in practice remains to be seen.

The Umma's overall Control Rating is 1, though it can be as high as 4 in particular areas. The chief restrictions on life in the Umma come not from law but from custom and an entrenched social hierarchy. Social mobility is actually lower than in the caliphates: occupations are monopolized by a few families in any given region. Only the most talented can expect to break into a profession on their merits, and even they are expected to cement their acceptance by marrying an appropriate spouse.

The Umma functioned well enough in peacetime, and its nearly two billion inhabitants thought they were the wave of the future. They proved ill-prepared for the re-appearance of wars of conquest. Most Umma lands in Asia and Talentis have fallen. Penglai (Vancouver Island), the Nihonese sultans and a few other holdouts demonstrate that it *is* possible for the Umma to resist conquest, although their success really owes more to their adversaries' over-extension than to their own strength.

## Personal Names

The complex naming system of early Islam (see p. AN64) has given way to a simpler personal name/family name structure. Many family names began as patronymics and take the form *ibn-Muqla* (son of Muqla); others originated as "parent" names of the form *abu-Latif* (father of Latif) or *umm-Karim* (mother of Karim), or adjectival names such as *al-Jurjani.* Others come from nicknames or job titles. Arabic personal names are very common in all ethnic groups.

## Who is a Muslim?

Islam means "submission to the will of God" (*Allah* is simply Arabic for "the God"). It is less a matter of belief in doctrines than performance of certain actions: the *Five Pillars.* The first is pronouncing the *shahada* or profession of faith, "there is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His prophet" – a convert need only recite these words before witnesses. The second Pillar is prayer: a Muslim should pray at dawn, noon, and sunset (this differs from standard practice among Muslims of our Earth). Third, fasting from sunrise to sunset in the month of Ramadan. Fourth, almsgiving to the poor: this usually takes the form of paying a tax, the *zakat,* to a government office or charitable foundation. Finally, every Muslim should make a pilgrimage to Mecca once in a lifetime.

Naturally, there are many other duties expected of the Faithful besides these five: Islam regulates marriages, forbids certain foods (notably pork and alcohol), and so forth. In modern Caliph, there are many groups with slightly different rules. They are hardly distinct enough to be called sects, and it is almost impossible to get any of them condemned as heresy. The most prominent follow 14th-century reformers such as Zayd al-Shirazi and Musa ibn-'Ali, whose interpretations seem more suitable to modern life. Traditionalists are also numerous, but are divided among themselves. The *rashidun* or "rightly-guided" have strict doctrinal interpretations and are more concerned with the orthodoxy of their members than other groups; they are especially common in space.

## Cities of Diamond and Dreams

A city in Caliph is a wondrous place: the architecture looks classically Muslim, but on a much larger scale, with minaret towers reaching a mile up into the sky. Modern construction uses tinted diamond as a cheap outer skin for buildings (emerald green and opalescent rainbow are the most popular colors). Aircars travel on invisible "streets" at many heights, often parking on upper floors: a Caliph city does business at many levels.

Coexisting with the physical city is a collection of nodes in the data network, a cluster of information and activity. The visible city would grind to a halt within hours were it not for the flow of its invisible twin. Virtual reality "telepresence" allows individuals anywhere to attend meetings or visit the *dreamfac* entertainment complexes of the world's most famous cities.

## The Fronts

Persia beat off Hind's first attack on its heartland with support from Sofala and Bulgaria, and is now enduring a second one. The Bulgarians are under attack in the far east, and rumor has it they are preparing to launch an offensive across the north pole. Andalus and Firanj have been skirmishing with the Jamahiriya navy, but so far the Bahr al-Andalus (Atlantic Ocean) has been almost peaceful.

Besides Persia, the most active front is the Nihon Sultanates, where the Jamahiriya is experiencing unexpected difficulty. It has also failed to capture the fortified island of Penglai (Vancouver Island) and the Andes skyhook in its home hemisphere.

The front in Djiba (Australia) is on the back burner while Hind devotes such effort as it can spare from the Persian front to the Chinese border, even as the Jamahiriya drives toward them from the north. Both have been careful not to cross *into* China yet; if their diplomats can keep it neutral their position will be enormously improved.

### Mecca, the Holy City

Three times a day, the devout pray while facing towards the Kaaba shrine at the center of the city of Mecca. One of the Five Pillars of Muslim practice is to make a pilgrimage to Mecca (the *hajj*) at least once. It is hardly surprising that Mecca is the religious and cultural center of the world.

Modern travel is cheap enough to make the hajj possible for all. As a result, the old city of Mecca, kept deliberately archaic, is now circled at a respectful distance by a ring-city of high-rises which caters to 150 million pilgrims annually, more than a third of them during the three days a year which the old-fashioned still consider the only time for a proper hajj. Pilgrims are even more numerous this year, with hajji praying for peace or victory more than outweighing the absence of visitors from the occupied regions.

Because of the uniquely international character of Mecca, the ring-city is home to the most vigorous blending in the arts and scholarship, and serves as a common neutral ground for face-to-face deals. By contrast, the old city is devoted exclusively to religion: Sufi chapterhouses, schools of the religious sciences, and dozens of shrines. The Stellar Caliphate (see p. 75) has guaranteed the safety of the Holy City, and orbiting warships are visible at night.



## The House of War

A term imposed rather than chosen, the *Dar al-Harb* is the region at war with the *Dar al-Islam.* The governments there refer to themselves as "the Alliance." By any name, they now control a third of the globe. Their initial goal was a peace which left them in a superior position; however, the ease of their initial conquests tempts them toward overstretch.

### Apostates: The Jamahiriya

The Jamahiriya began as a movement and has become a state. Over the past decades it won power in scattered parts of Talentis, various Umma cities and the Andalusian dominion of Taluqi (in the southeastern part of North America), but was unable to institute its programs under the Shari'a. Today, controlling the whole continent and 600 million people, the Jamahiriya plays by its own rules. While some of its leaders dream of global conquest, most would be content with one hemisphere and view further military action only as a means of forcing the Dar al-Islam to make a peace that gives it to them.

The Jamahiriya is an umbrella for all who reject the existing world-system. Some disapprove of the old system's religious tinge. Some desire rational control of the economy and society. Many have no patience with restrictions on scientific research. A few even believe that humanity needs to be jolted out of stagnation to meet the (potential) threat posed by aliens.

Official policy is separation from the global society in order to break free of its restrictions. Islam is permitted as a strictly private pursuit – even daily calls to prayer are illegal. Many leaders advocate the creation of a superior human species through cybernetics and biotechnology. Lurid stories of Jamahiriya experiments are common in the Dar al-Islam; it is hard to tell if they have any factual basis.

Bureaucratic controls are settling in place, using massive computer resources to allocate production and keep track of subversive activity: CR is 5 aspiring to 6. The various government branches are still evolving under wartime pressure, and local officials have broad discretionary powers. Overall policy is set by the Synod, a 1,200-member assembly dominated by a small clique of power brokers: it assigns executive authority to its members for particular projects.

### Allies: Hind

The caliphate of Hind has joined the enemy and is no longer considered part of the *Dar al-Islam.* Unlike the Jamahiriya, Caliph Abdurazzaq of Hind simply wants power. His 710 million subjects strongly supported his conquest of the rest of "their" subcontinent from Persia. They are less enthusiastic about his further conquests, but dissent is difficult (CR is 5, up from 4 before the war). The official position varies between claiming the new territories as a defensive perimeter and justifying them as ultimately beneficial to the inhabitants, calling Persia tyrannical and the Umma anarchic.

Hind retains a slight majority of pagans (as they call Hindus), and intolerance is common despite mechanisms for enforcing legal equality. While the caste system no longer exists, society is still fragmented into hundreds of groups with informal dress codes and rules of etiquette for dining or marrying outside one's own subculture.

## The Rightly-Guided Stellar Caliphate

Humanity beyond the Earth is scattered among hundreds of settlements, most in Earth's solar system. The 35 million people of the Dispersal belonged to the Umma by default – although their local governments were unusually powerful, because of the necessity for maintaining the technical infrastructure of survival. The most powerful local authority was Zaghawi Associates, something halfway between a political federation and a corporate partnership. For the last several decades, Zaghawi had been at the cutting edge of technology, in part because of its monopoly of AIs or *djinn* (see sidebar, p. 77). It had also been increasingly affected by the *rashidun* movement. When Zaghawi claimed the status of a sovereign caliphate, Earth paid little attention despite its control of a third of the people and over half the spaceships in the Dispersal.

Within weeks of the war's outbreak, *the Rightly-Guided Stellar Caliphate* asserted sovereignty over every human being and artifact beyond planetary atmospheres. Both sides on Earth consider the Stellar Caliphate unfriendly, the Muslims because it refuses to join the jihad, the Alliance because their enforced demilitarization of orbital space allows the supply of areas like Djiba and the Haqiyya skyhook. In fact, Caliph Husayn al-Zaghawi opposes the Alliance, but his major goal is to keep the war from becoming a planet-killer.

### Humanity in Space

Space stations are built of lunar or asteroidal material. Each is a delicate artificial ecosystem, with a population ranging from a few hundred to half a million, and only decades of experience make it possible to keep them functioning indefinitely, with occasional imports from Earth or another station.

The extension of similar techniques to non-Earthlike planets or large moons is certainly feasible, but settlement of Mars, the Jovian moons, and even Earth's Moon never really became popular. Stations are more convenient for almost anything you might want to do in space, and people who really want to *colonize* go to other stars.

### Colony Planets

The four colonies were all dependent on the homeworld until the recent troubles, despite political independence. In order of discovery, they are:

*Falaq*: a hot, wet, slightly low-gravity world, actually the moon of a gas giant. Its three settlements (initially by Haqiyya, Persia, and Zenj) are sizable but relatively primitive (TL9). Immigration has slowed since the other worlds were discovered; population 18 million.

*Pishon*: the most densely settled colony, with 31 million people, Pishon is a temperate world of archipelagoes in a planetary ocean. The islands have been terraformed, although the ocean still holds native life.

*Ahqaf*: the farthest, least Earthlike, and most important colony world, Ahqaf system is the home of the alien stargate. The planet is dry and very hot, with a bearable climate only around the north polar seas. Its original settlers (strict traditionalist Muslims) are being swamped by new arrivals; they total perhaps 5 million.

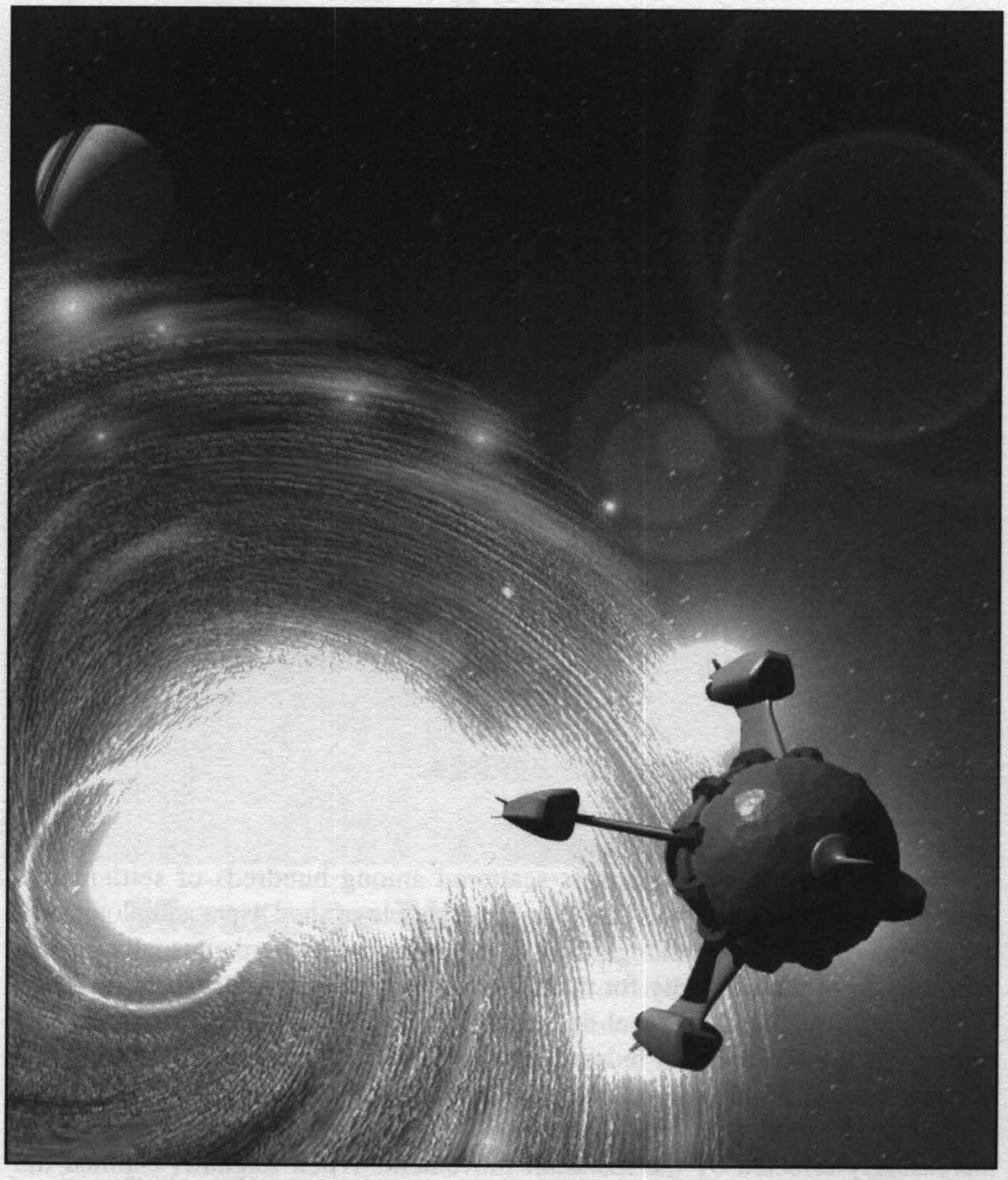
*Thule*: discovered and largely settled by Firanji. About 3 million live in the temperate equatorial regions of this small, cool world, and another million in system space. They have ambitious plans to improve Thule's climate by altering its atmosphere.

### Legends of Far Worlds

In an Earth-centered game, other planets serve the same thematic purpose as the parts of old maps labeled with fabulous empires or *"Here be Dragons"*: realms of unknown wonders. Even the colony worlds are poorly explored, and nonhuman space could hold anything.

# Technology and Society

Caliph is extremely advanced: the Stellar Caliphate is a mature TL11, and Earth is in its early stages. Fusion plants provide power, robofacs (p. UT17) produce consumer goods, while genetically-engineered crops have greened Earth's deserts. A communications network links every human on Earth and makes virtually all knowledge accessible.



Artificial diamond (actually, "diamondoids" with complex, artificial structures) is the most common building material in Caliph, either translucent or tinted to opacity. Advanced ceramics and polymers (including what ***Ultra-Tech*** calls "bioplastic") are also used, while metals have become uncommon.

Caliph uses molecular-scale machinery in many applications, but general-purpose nanotechnology requires volatile artificial feedstocks for power, rare elements for the control circuits, and hard vacuum to operate – free oxygen "poisons" it. Nano-assemblers are crucial to robofac operations but rare otherwise.

## Lifestyles

Caliph is a wealthy world, with a very high average standard of living. Not only does no one starve or go homeless, no one need miss access to education or the Net. Print culture still has a hard core of aficionados, while popular entertainment is dominated by virtual-reality experiences or *dreamgames* (p. UT40). Dreamgames from the previous century may be addictive, but modern producers add subliminal cues that prevent the problem.

In Caliph, race is of no importance – it is hardly worth noticing. Religion remains significant: the Shari'a recognizes the rights of "People of the Book" (Christians and Jews) and even pagans, but local restrictions are permitted and social intolerance is common.

Caliph's feminist movement long ago won its major points. Today, men and women are equal under the law although often segregated socially. Most professions are integrated, though a few remain disproportionately female (child care and medicine) or male (engineers, soldiers and teachers). Polygamy is still allowed under the Shari'a but is very rare. Divorce is easy for both sexes.

Piety, generosity, courtesy and hospitality are the most prized qualities in Caliph. Other favored traits are determined by region, social class, and generation – some age groups pride themselves on self-control, others prize transports of emotion.

## Tech Level

Humanity as a species is TL11, early in the range. Almost all standard ***GURPS*** ultra-tech could be available. There isn't as much TL variation as might be expected: most production is by robofac, and there are only a few TL10 models yet to be upgraded, mostly in China and southern Talentis. Outside of a few deliberately primitive villages, all Earth is at least TL10.

There is more variation elsewhere. The Stellar Caliphate is actually *more* advanced than Earth, close to a mature TL11, but many of the stations which it has just taken over were built at TL9 or TL10, and have limited access to TL11 equipment. The same applies to the colony worlds, where settlers have rushed ahead without the latest technology – some are said to have slipped as far back as TL8!

Normally the robofacs can easily supply everyone with the necessities of life. Land and human services can still be expensive, but manufactured goods are cheap. The average citizen is wealthy by earlier standards, and poverty hardly exists.

Of course, circumstances are far from normal: rationing has been imposed in many areas as the robofacs shift to war production. Since robofacs can produce any item, rearmament has proceeded very rapidly, but weapon designs are not up to Caliph's general level of technology. Military robofac designs are suddenly much in demand, and many battlesuits and military vehicles have been pushed from little more than designers' doodles to operational prototypes.

## Transportation

Standard personal transportation in Caliph is the aircar, equipped with a computerized guidance system and a communications link for use in the cities: drivers are channeled into three-dimensional "roads" and held on course by traffic computers. Ground transport is obsolete: horses are probably more common than automobiles, since both are the preserve of hobbyists. For long-distance travel, TL11 reactionless drives are erasing the distinction between air and space transport. *Most* planes are capable of reaching orbit, although their life support lasts only a few hours at a time.

### Space

Three "skyhook" orbital towers reach up from (or rather, down to) the Earth's surface at Zenj (East Africa), the Andes, and the island of Sumatra. Although less important since the development of thrusters, they still handle a large percentage of the cargo transport between Earth and space, and their zero-gee robofac complexes are economically important.

Genuine spacecraft usually thrust at a constant acceleration of 1 G, so that travel time from Earth orbit to the asteroid belt is about a week. Ships which travel exclusively in deep space may use antimatter fuel, but all ships that come cislunar use fusion plants to power their thrusters. Travel time between Earth and the stargates is between two and three weeks.

### Stargates

The only form of FTL travel in Caliph is the Tokati-Bandih Induced Wormhole Function or *stargate.* Disrupted by gravity, they must be built far away from planets and stars: the minimum distance from Earth's sun is 2.5 billion miles, or just inside the orbit of Neptune. Half a stargate pair must be moved into a corresponding far orbit around a distant star (to create a gravitational balance) before it can be activated, so initial exploration is always slower than light. An active stargate offers instantaneous travel between its two halves, no matter how far apart they are.

Caliph has sent automated probes equipped with stargate halves to every star system within 20 light-years, and every system with planets within 80 light-years. Even for the colony systems, analysis of the data has barely begun. In two cases, the stargates did not open and the probes failed to send back any information; successor probes are en route.

## Parachronics and Space Travel

If the GM introduces Caliph into a background with alternate histories, sooner or later someone is going to wonder how the Infinite Worlds of parallel timelines match up with the equally infinite worlds of interstellar space. Logically, they should be independent. If the Ahqaf in the Caliph timeline is a

## Robofacs and Strategy

As the Jamahiriya realized first, contemporary technology has made war economically sensible for the first time in generations. Earlier industry was more easily devastated than controlled, and forcing a skilled population to work was almost impossible. But a robofac concentrates the industrial production of a whole city into a single complex that a few loyalists can operate. Whoever controls a region's robofacs can dictate terms: unless the inhabitants can recapture them or get supplies from outside, they will cannot keep their society functioning. Thus, robofac-based strategy is a sort of inverted siege warfare. Destroying robofacs can prevent the enemy from using them, but may also starve the very people one is attempting to liberate. And with force fields, captured robofacs can be shielded from anything up to nuclear weapons.

## Readers

One of the major handicaps facing any outtime researchers in Caliph is that the printed book has been obsolete for 150 years, and few survive from the century before that. Instead, people use notebook-sized devices which can hold and display thousands of pages, downloading the documents they want from the Net. Wristcomps can be used in a pinch, but their displays are harder on the eyes.

## Artificial Intelligence and Djinn

Although expert systems are widely available in Caliph, AI is a recent development. The first truly sentient AI was constructed by the Rightly-Guided Stellar Caliphate in 1640; the spacers have so far managed to keep its design secret.

The Koran teaches that God made man from clay and *djinn* (singular *djinni*) from "smokeless fire." Religious authorities now agree this is as close as 7th-century Arabic could come to "electricity." It is widely accepted that the verses mentioning djinn were prophecies of machines to whom God would give souls.

Obviously, djinn have the same rights as all Muslims, and even an infidel djinni would have ordinary human rights. Of the 30 or so djinn built since 1640, all are devout Muslims and loyal vassals of the Stellar Caliphs, whose rise to power has been due in no small part to their service. (The paranoid believe that the RGSC destroys djinn which don't work out – or that the djinn are only faking their loyalty.)

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habitable planet without intelligent life, there is no reason that any alteration to Earth's history – say, to make it Aeolus or Cornwallis – should have any effect on the Ahqaf of that parallel timeline: it should still be the same uninhabited desert.

It might be more interesting if the parallel worlds match up, so that space travelers from different Earths will match to divergent Ahqafs (or wherever). If physical laws differ between timelines, other planets in those timelines probably should be different – matching psionic aliens to timelines with psionic humans, for instance. Different aliens will also match the style and themes of different timelines: the aliens from ***GURPS Atomic Horror*** clash with the tone of Caliph, but might work in Aeolus (and would fit perfectly into Gernsback from the first ***GURPS Alternate Earths***). In the Homeline/Centrum background, this kind of sorting could be excused by some sort of conservation principle.

Alternatively, it seems plausible that the mass and rotational speed of a planet might determine the orientation of the parachronics-accessible "band" in 8- or 9-dimensional space (see p. 115). In this case, a different set of worlds would be accessible from another planet, drastically increasing the number of timelines that can be reached, at least in theory. This solution would also imply that conveyors cannot be used in interplanetary space, which may be a good idea anyway.

## Computers

Caliph's computers are standard TL11 machines, except that Artificial Intelligences are much more difficult to create (see sidebar; the GM can decide whether this is due to local natural laws or just a consequence of Caliph's hardware and software conventions). Almost everyone carries a Complexity 4 wrist-comp with holographic display, desktop computers are Complexity 6, and the largest mainframes are Complexity 9. Most apartments are equipped with Complexity 5 systems that handle the appliances, answer messages and turn out the lights. Personality simulators are common but customarily limited so they don't fool people into thinking a system is sentient.

Computers are usually voice-activated with sophisticated natural language translation. No skill is required for ordinary use, and even programming is simpler once you know how to use the software assistance. Neural interfaces are available but are quite difficult to learn to use (in game terms, they always cost points); most people don't consider them worth the bother.

### Networks and Security

There is no real distinction between the communications and computer infrastructure: messages are just part of the data constantly circulating via cables, laser connections, and tight-beamed neutrinos. Almost all human knowledge is available on the Net . . . somewhere. Despite great efforts at indexing, it can still take search programs days to find obscure data.

The Net is *not* a cyberpunk-style "cyberspace." Environmental interfaces exist but are too distracting for any serious work. It resembles cyberspace, however, in that very few systems are truly isolated from the Net – most "secure" systems are linked through limited-access networks, but the total Net is far too complex to map, and there are always avenues of access that have been overlooked.

Which is not to underestimate security: hackers in Caliph must face literally *centuries* of evolved defenses, including many that continuously scan for unauthorized activity. Systems have multiple access levels (see p. CY68) with high-level privileges very difficult to obtain – the most secure systems allow high access only from special terminals that check DNA as well as passwords.

## Artificial Intelligence and Djinn (Continued)

Djinn are *machines*, not programs, and cannot be duplicated like computer files. TL10+ computers in Caliph incorporate non-algorithmic processes, and it is physically impossible to record a djinni's mental state. In fact, even cutting power to a djinni means that it will no longer be sentient when power is restored: this is legally equivalent to murder.

Djinn are not suitable as PCs save perhaps in very high-point campaigns set in space (they could run a spaceship, and perhaps remote robot drones). In ***GURPS Ultra-Tech*** terms, a djinni is a megacomputer, 10 cy and 1 ton in size, which incorporates (but is not the same as) a Complexity 9 computer system. The Genius and Compact options from ***GURPS Robots*** are not available. Cost including programming runs into billions, but there is only one source and they would never sell a djinni (which would, after all, be slavery).

## Longevity and Society

Longer lifespans have shaped society over the last 200 years. The effect was to prolong the dominance of older generations in positions of power, with corresponding conservatism in institutions. In some areas, individuals seldom reached policy-setting jobs until they were great-grandparents. In others it began to look as if retirees, still vigorous and chafing for something to do, would come to outnumber those of working age.

The century laws moved the retirement age to 100 and made it mandatory. Centenarians can expect decades more of life, and many become self-employed, but they cannot remain formally within a government or corporate hierarchy. The laws also require the surrender of one-third of all personal property to designated heirs (usually but not necessarily children) at one century past the birth of one's first child. Only a caliph can grant dispensation from the century laws. They do not apply in the Jamahiriya, however.

Other adaptations have been at least as important. People tend to socialize with those around their own ages, and generation-based communities have appeared. The colony planets have benefited slightly from centenarian immigrants, and far more from younger people seeking a frontier where they can get out from under the shadow of their elders. Sufi mysticism is popular among the older generations – it is a matter of debate whether that represents psychological maturity or denial of the present.

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## Medicine

Caliph's medicine averages TL12. Virtually any disease can be cured, epidemics are a thing of the past, and charity foundations make sure that everyone gets Level 2 panimmunity treatment. Level 3 panimmunity exists, but is expensive and still rare.

Over the last 300 years, average lifespan has increased enormously. The average person's physical and mental decline does not set in until after they see their first century, and most people live past 150 (see also p. 78). Regular anti-agathic treatments can hold aging to about a week per year, though the effects will wear off with unsettling rapidity if the treatments are ever stopped (make all the skipped aging rolls at one per week). The oldest human being is 229, and there are thousands of double-centenarians.

Cloning was not very useful until the recent invention of the forced-growth tank (a TL10 device in this world). Even today, there is no way to speed the *education* of a human clone. In addition, the forced-growth experiments also provided the key to regeneration treatments (normally TL12, see p. UT104), so there is no need for cloned organ donors. The major application of cloning so far has been providing animals for the colony planets. Braintaping (p. UT102) does not exist; it is at least TL12 in this setting if possible at all.



### Bionics

Artificial limbs and organs are unnecessary with regeneration, and visible cybernetic implants are terribly *gauche*. Cyberwear is very rare on Earth (though slightly more common among spacers).

*Mental* implants are still relatively primitive: an implant can hold a database to assist with a mental skill, but it still isn't possible to chip someone's reflexes for a physical skill, or to implant understanding of any skill's basic procedures. In game terms, skill chips (see p. CY40) may apply additional character points to a mental skill that the user already has, but they cannot grant new skills or assist with physical skills at all. Implants that affect personality exist, but lose effectiveness as the brain compensates for them: make a Will roll every month, Success gives a +1 on all future Will rolls against the disadvantage. The normal maximum of 14 (p. B30) does not apply, and once the modified roll reaches 18 the disadvantage is ignored.

## Longevity and Society (Continued)

Modern anti-agathics, invented in the past few decades, give a theoretical lifespan of *thousands* of years. Caliph's current laws and customs offer at best a cushion for the further accommodations that will be necessary.

## The Infowar

Physical combat is just one level of the conflict. Despite the best efforts of both sides, computer networks remain intertwined and offer another front in the war. Acquiring military plans is an obvious application, but far from the most important: skilled hackers can sabotage an operation before it ever begins, by erasing or subverting key files.

For example, Penglai is holding out using military equipment the Jamahiriya sent under the impression it was reinforcing its own troops. On the other side, the Jamahiriya crippled the resistance of Braseal (Christian North America) by scrambling its communications network. Most dramatically, Hind tried using war robots in the first offensive against Persia, but Persian programmers broke the robots' access codes and seized control of them. It is unlikely anyone will try that again.

Caliph computers have safeguards against accidents and pranksters, but nobody imagined the potential of computer manipulation as a strategy in wartime. The tactics of the infowar are still evolving.

## Biotechnology

Caliph's achievements in biotech are considerably below its general Tech Level, which in part represents religious objections to meddling with DNA, and in part simply a historic focus on other areas. Genetic engineering *has* revolutionized agriculture, and the desert belt which gave birth to Islam is desert no longer: the Sahara is a vast expanse of grassland while Arabia and Iran are fields of meta-wheat interrupted by belts of forest. Engineering of human beings and most animals has stagnated since legal restrictions were imposed in the 1550s.

Caliph has the *theoretical* capability for substantial genetic engineering and biomodification. However, except for plant genetics and disease research, the background work has never been done – in particular, the only human genetic engineering is prenatal screening for disorders. The *practical* level of biotech is TL8, although Caliph could advance very rapidly to TL10 if resources were devoted to it.

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## Biotechnology (Continued)

Biotech offers the most obvious field for inventions, since Caliph lags in biotech and could catch up rapidly – and, if the Jamahiriya survives, surely will. This field could produce a huge number of innovations in just a few years. Get a copy of ***GURPS Bio-Tech*** and start introducing things, remembering that braintaping (pp. BT116-123) and deep learning (pp. BT20-21) are not available. That still leaves gengineered human species, bodysculpting, xenotransplants . . . Caliph could be building proteus viruses in a few decades.

## Xenotech

Alien technology might do anything, which is why it is supposed to be strictly regulated. However, it isn't clear how well the authorities on Ahqaf have been able to enforce the confiscatory customs policies without support from Earth. Rumors abound of someone smuggling in devastating xenotech of one sort or another (speculations no doubt fueled by the Stellar Caliphate's silence about some of its more advanced devices), and it does offer GMs an excuse to drop *any* device into the game.

## Science Fiction and the Arabian Nights

Caliph mixes science fiction and Islamic culture, and the style of games set there should reflect this combination. Their point of contact is *wonder*: adventure settings in Caliph should be spectacular, and new technologies should be flamboyant rather than subtle. There aren't any unexplored islands left to have strange monsters or magnetic mountains, but there can be secret research enclaves working on robots or genetic engineering, or isolated space habitats with peculiar customs.

The *Nights* stresses the absolute power of fate, a theme in tension with most SF (as well as the very concept of alternate history). On the other hand, Scheherazadian protagonists are a good starting point for PCs: ordinary people granted some enormous stroke of luck that propels them into strange adventures.

Flowery language will help immensely in maintaining an *Arabian Nights* tone. Be polite, melodramatic, and use poetic stock phrases: never say "thank you" when you could say *Allah requite thee abundantly* or "hello" to an acquaintance without calling them *delight of my eyes.*

# Campaigning in Caliph

## A World at War

The most obvious Caliph campaigns center around the war. This presentation slants toward the Dar al-Islam, but it would be possible to portray the Jamahiriya as idealists trying to break free of a smothering universal empire with subtle but powerful controls.

### Mujahedin: Special Forces

Military operations thus far have involved small numbers of highly-trained, well-equipped troops fighting for control of robofacs and other key installations. These are perfect for player-characters. Reconnaissance involves both computer hacking and going out to take a look. Sabotage missions can be critical to the success of any military advance, and are handled either by infiltration or breaking-and-entering. Assassinations are a possibility: Caliph once had a code forbidding such things, but those niceties have largely been forgotten. (Caliph Abdurazzaq of Hind will be the target of choice.) Special forces may also be sent to organize and assist resistance movements in conquered areas.

Mujahedin are highly trained and *very* well-equipped. If a player with a technician character wants to design a TL11 battlesuit, he can probably get authorization to have the robofacs produce a few, with the usual bugs for experimental devices. A campaign could tend towards gritty realism (fantastic enough in this background) or cinematic fate-of-the-world adventures.

### The Home Front

When the Jamahiriya was a movement instead of a state, it had supporters all over the world. No one really knows how far the active spy network extends, but any former supporter is under a cloud of suspicion. There is enough spying and sabotage to keep police busy. It is not technically illegal in most areas to advocate peace or other Jamahiriya viewpoints, but spontaneous violence against such agitation is rarely prosecuted. Security forces are the barrier against the enemy's special forces. If they handle a problem well – especially a surprise attack – they may be assigned to more sensitive missions.

The PCs need not be professionals: these days, any random group could unexpectedly run across a critical military secret. After all, the *Arabian Nights* are filled with ordinary folk who are catapulted into the highest circles by a massive piece of luck.

### Resistance

Finally, a campaign could be set in occupied Asia or Talentis. Resistance fighters will face an occupation force with TL11 surveillance, but they can take comfort in the fact that the high technology increases *their* options, too – and nobody has much experience suppressing partisans in this day and age, so the ultra-tech won't be used to its best advantage.



# A World in Flux

The war may not appeal to every gaming group. It can either be removed from the background (perhaps the PCs can prevent its outbreak) or the campaign can be set in its aftermath. Either way, Caliph is still in for wrenching adjustments as the Stellar Caliphate asserts itself and the effects of alien contact begin to be felt. If the Jamahiriya survives, their program of human alteration will add yet another source of disruption. Since one of the persistent themes of science fiction is adaptation to change, the effect of new technologies and/or contact with aliens makes an excellent campaign feature.

## Building Further Tomorrows

One classic type of SF story involves the impact of a new invention. Caliph has adjusted to computers, space travel, robofacs, and anti-agathics, and seems to be coping with AIs. That still leaves a wide field of possibilities: ***GURPS Space*** singles out teleportation, braintaping, mind control, and man-machine interfacing as breakthroughs likely to alter society beyond recognition.

A campaign based around a technical breakthrough may involve dealing with attempts at suppression (which side are the PCs on?), profiteers, and dislocations as the invention becomes more common. The effect can be either a violent adjustment to a new and better society, or a disaster leading to the collapse of civilization.

## Visitors From Beyond

Alien contact may have several effects, depending as much on the aliens as on how humanity reacts. However, the "Arabian Nights" flavor of Caliph demands restrictions on types of aliens. Aliens should certainly *look* exotic, and be equipped with strange technologies and outlandish customs, but they should not seriously call human culture into question. (The sidebar suggests a few possibilities from other ***GURPS*** supplements.)

Aliens should either be completely secular, or have primitive religious beliefs: sophisticated philosophies, especially religions, are not suitable – unless they are the result of revelation, perhaps in a way hardly recognizable. Some aliens will probably convert: the future surely holds alien hajji and may well include interstellar jihads.

Finally, remember that the more aliens you have visiting human space, the more you will have to assign a place in the galaxy when humans go through the stargates to visit *them,* and the more likely it is that your players will want to do so.

# Worlds Beyond

Finally, the Earth of Caliph is no longer the unique home of humanity. A campaign set elsewhere will be more work, and moving outward may be better suited as a change of focus for an existing game, after the group has become accustomed to the ordinary background.

## Life in the Stellar Dispersal

The space stations have a greater range of technology than Earth, and their relative isolation allows peculiar cultures to develop. All, however, must deal with the environment of deep space and the new reality of Stellar Caliphate hegemony – and the latter, especially, has upset old patterns everywhere. Players might be freedom fighters or RGSC troubleshooters. They could just as easily be a group of freelancers who happen to run across the isolated research project experimenting with nanotechnology . . . or the station of odd cultists who have been using drugs and genetic engineering to find the secret of psionics . . . or the xenotech probe that has just arrived, or that has been floating in space for millennia.

## Outcomes of the War

The war at present is delicately balanced. Hind and the Jamahiriya together control about a third of Earth: they are still on the offensive, but cannot in the long run prevail against their enemies' greater size.

### *Alliance Victory*

Hind and the Jamahiriya would be more than satisfied to maintain their current conquests. Hind wants to knock Persia out of the war and then fight defensively. If left in control of south Asia it will be the largest power on Earth, but probably too rigidly controlled to compete in the long term. The Jamahiriya would prefer to break apart the Dar al-Islam: its current aim is to coerce China into benevolent neutrality, and its diplomats are active everywhere. If pushed, it would probably betray Hind, and might even give Braseal back to Firanj. If allowed to survive, it is hard to predict the sorts of experiments it might pursue, let alone their results.

### *Islamic Victory*

If the war drags on, however, Hind and the Jamahiriya will surely be driven back by superior resources. Resistance movements could paralyze them if supplied from outside. It is all too possible that they would resort to annihilating the zone of conflict and threatening global apocalypse: the probable result would be a standoff leaving the Alliance with less than it currently controls and whole regions cindered. The Alliance might split as well, if one partner were offered what it wants in return for assistance against the other. The *best* plausible options, barring some war-winning miracle, would be a coup in Hind bringing conditional surrender, and/or the Jamahiriya breaking into pieces which could be dealt with individually.

### *Armageddon*

If the war gets seriously out of control, Caliph will become a post-holocaust setting. Either side could quickly produce nuclear or antimatter bombs in large quantities, biological weapons (though Caliph's medicine is advanced enough to handle most possibilities), or perhaps other doomsday weapons like nano-replicators or neural interface attack programs. The Stellar Caliphate will be available to offer help to whatever remnants of humanity survive.

## Alien PCs

A party of nonhumans, or mixed aliens and humans, is a possibility for a Caliph game. However, they will need a really good excuse for going to Earth, and a better one for being allowed down – almost the only justification acceptable would be the hajj. Aliens on Earth will automatically be the center of attention wherever they go, as everyone tries to gain their assistance and save them from exploitation by other groups.

Alien hajji expecting Earth to be a haven of sacred wisdom would be shocked by the reality: they might become disillusioned with Islam, or decide to join the jihad. Fearing either result, the Stellar Caliphate would certainly provide them with "bodyguards," creating interesting opportunities for role-playing a mixed group of aliens ignorant of the conflict raging about them and humans determined to keep them that way. If the aliens have their own agenda, things could get even more complex.

## Which Aliens?

Previous ***GURPS*** supplements offer a range of alien species that could be adapted. A good choice for First Contact are the Memer and Saret. Other races from ***GURPS Aliens*** which work well are the An Phar, Irari, Jaril, Kaa, Pachekki, and Engai – all are exotic in ways which do not disturb the correct *Arabian Nights* flavor. If prepared for the implications, use the Banduch, Riders or Markann. (Imagine Markann converts deciding their missing quality was divine favor!)

If your players don't mind aliens from other SF, many species could be adapted from ***GURPS Lensman*** (avoid the races with a Sense of Perception) and ***GURPS Uplift.*** The aliens from ***GURPS Planet Krishna*** would also work, although the planet names should be changed – no Muslim would dream of naming worlds after pagan deities! (Krishna could even be dropped whole into this setting, with Regulation 368 enforced by the Ulama and the Stellar Caliphate. TL11 scanners will block imports of technology, if not knowledge, as effectively as the St.-Rémy process.)

The Aslan, Droyne, and possibly Hivers of ***GURPS Traveller*** would work, as would several minor species. The K'kree religion makes them unsuitable, while the Vargr and Humaniti variants make no sense without Ancients.

## New Frontiers

The colony worlds offer a different set of challenges, especially now that Earth has abruptly cut them loose while it concentrates on its own affairs – Thule's terraforming project will be particularly affected. The colonies of Falaq might not be friendly to each other, and there has already been strain between Ahqaf's first settlers and the new arrivals. Much of Ahqaf and Thule remain unexplored, as do the depths of Pishon's oceans – they certainly hold new species, and perhaps even ruins from extinct civilizations.



## Into Nonhuman Space

A human party venturing out into nonhuman space is easy to justify: there will undoubtedly be people who want to bring the light of Islam to the aliens, to make a profit, or simply to see what the rest of the galaxy holds.

Galactic society will certainly involve many species. It may be relatively close-knit, in which case its Tech Level will tend to be uniform throughout the stargate network: TL12 is probably the best compromise level. On the other hand, it might be interesting if galactic society were TL11, or even TL10, allowing humanity to be a *major* disruption. Perhaps the stargate network comprises an ancient, decadent empire, which humanity can revivify or destroy.

If the various species and nations in the galaxy are *not* unified, the stargate network may be very complex, since the first resort of hostilities would be to close the gates. Technology can vary a lot more: by SF tradition, the more advanced species are culturally isolated and seldom interfere with the primitives around them.

# Caliph Timeline

**622** – The Hegira; beginning of the Muslim calendar.

**796** – Muizz-al-Dawlah invents the printing press in Baghdad; Haroun al-Rashid becomes patron of first (religious) publishing house.

**844** – Abu-Masrur writes *Against the Vanity of the Philosophers.*

**855** – Deposition of the Tahirid governors by al-Qahir re-establishes Abbasid central authority.

**873** – Yunis al-Kulaybi invents gunpowder.

**888** – Conversion of the Volga Bulgars to Islam.

**890** – Ill-conceived Shi'ite rebellion; Abbasids retake North Africa.

**904** – Abbasid conquest of Andalus reunites the Dar al-Islam.

**909** – Fall of Constantinople.

**920** – Caliph Muhsin sponsors first voyages of exploration in the Indian Ocean.

**940** – Founding of Sofala (in Mozambique).

**951** – Discovery of Djiba (Australia).

**965-70** – Persecutions send sectarians to Sofala and Djiba. First personal firearms.

**979** – Conquest of Italy, flight of Roman Church. German Emperor Liudolf begins reforms on the Abbasid model.

**987** – Liudolf elected king of France, reuniting Charlemagne's empire.

**991** – Volga Bulgars subjugate Kiev.

**1001** – Mahmud of Gahzna, a provincial governor, begins full-scale conquest in the Punjab.

**1006** – Ibn Sina devises the calculus and a general theory of mechanics.

**1011** – Gold discovered in southern Africa, massive immigration to Sofala from Arabia and Persia.

**1023** – Death of Caliph Muwaffiq without an obvious heir; succession war begins.

**1037** – Formal breakup of the Abbasid caliphate.

**1041** – Andalusians establish control of North Africa, shutting Egypt out of the Mediterranean.

**1046** – Volga Bulgars annex (Christian) Bulgaria.

**1050** – Exchanges of emissaries among various caliphates (starting with Andalus and Persia) begins new era in diplomacy. Egyptian merchant/naval force takes control of the Straits of Malacca.

**1052** – Anglo-Danish "Braseal" founded to replace failed Vinland colony (in northern America).

**1067** – Takrur, in West Africa, converts to Islam and begins modernizing.

**1071** – Egyptians complete Suez canal.

**1074** – Egyptians sack Palembang, dominate Zabaj (Indonesia).

**1089** – Takruri jihad conquers West Africa.

**1082-1116** – Reign of Emperor Conrad II, who recentralizes Holy Roman Empire, builds up a navy to stop Andalusian raids, and acquires England after Canute's empire collapses.

**1100** – Khitans, along the northern frontier of China, convert to Islam.

**1104** – "Discovery" of Talentis (America) by Sindbad al-Ghurabi of Cordoba.

**1118** – Andalusian jihad against Tula (in Mexico).

**1122-41** – Khitan conquest of Sung China.

**1143** – Persia begins expanding into Hind.

**1150** – Bulgarians land in west of Talentis, Takrur in east, beginning decades of scramble for colonies among all powers.

## Speed of Advance

Caliph spent slightly longer in TL4 than our history, after starting 600 years earlier, but then advanced at just about the same speed: they reached TL5 in the late 1100s, and TL6-8 at 50-year intervals starting in 1350. The swift advance typical of our 20th century has since slowed a little, perhaps because of improving longevity techniques. Caliph reached TL9 in the first decades of the 1500s and TL10 in the last; TL11 is fairly recent on Earth although the Stellar Caliphate is more advanced.

## Caliph's World of the Mind

Caliph was never as secularized as our Earth, and today religion is very strong. Despite religious differences of opinion, all Muslims believe in a remote creator God known chiefly in the moral demands He makes on human beings. Even though other religions still exist, most Muslims can't imagine that anyone could think of God differently. Atheism is understood, but socially despised. Purely secular philosophies are seen not just as mistaken but as antiquated, being associated with the 14th and 15th centuries (and contemporary China).

Politics in Caliph is relatively weak compared with ties based on the extended family or on voluntary, often temporary associations. Relatively few social functions are felt to be the natural province of governments – even the law is set outside and above them. The decline of state power in recent centuries probably owes as much to reflexive suspicion of political power as to globalization.

Caliph understands history, at least since Mohammed's revelation, as a straightforward linear progress, with stutters not affecting the overall trend. The rise of Islam broke the old cyclical patterns of history, with more and more of the globe joining in to the new society which Muslims first created until now it encompasses the world and reaches beyond it. The next challenges were expected to lie in outer space. There have always been critics of the modern consensus, some of them radical, but they have always been absorbed or neutralized. before posing a genuine threat to the world-system – until the Jamahiriya.

## Outtimers in Caliph

In the Homeline/Centrum setting, Caliph is a Quantum 6 timeline that has only just been discovered. Infinity's plans for dealing with a world of much higher technology did not envision a war zone and the consequent difficulties of operation. It may be possible for Infinity operatives to affect the course of the war without breaking the Secret (by, for instance, using parachronic viewers to get information which can be fed to one side), but the situation is so delicate they are unlikely to make the attempt unless the war is about to turn apocalyptic anyway. So far, the Infinity Council has been able to keep the timeline's existence an internal secret, and they fear the day when word gets out to Homeline's national governments.

Like any outtime visitors, Infinity wants to obtain Caliph's advanced technology. Unfortunately, information is harder to obtain during a war than in peacetime. It is very difficult to establish a false identity under current conditions, and just about impossible to operate without one (for starters, almost all money is electronic). Law-abiding citizens across the Dar al-Islam are ready to point security forces towards any sort of odd behavior. It may actually be easier to operate in Alliance territory – certainly easier to recruit local help. Of course, the personal consequences of detection are heavier, but many crosstime organizations might consider that an advantage. Better your captured agents should be killed on suspicion than questioned deeply enough to reveal the secret of their origins.

Simply copying Caliph technology will rarely be possible: their molecular circuitry can barely be analyzed by Homeline's TL8 machines and certainly cannot be duplicated. Some of them use scientific principles (like that allowing reactionless drives) that are completely opaque to Homeline scientists. The GM should be certain to enforce the penalties on TL-based skills, and may always rule that no comprehension or manipulation of a particular device is possible, any more than a microchip could be duplicated by Benjamin Franklin.

## Psionics

Psionics are a classic element of science fiction that does not exist in Caliph. There are anecdotal reports of ESP, telepathy and so forth, but scientific investigation has never turned up any solid evidence of psi and after a while people have stopped looking. The one possible exception is the reports coming from Ahqaf, which may indicate that certain alien species make use of reliable psionics. Or it may just be some sort of technology not yet understood. Or, for that matter, outright fantasy.

**1171** – Egypt begins mechanization of textile industry.

**1185** – First conversions of Haqiyya (Aymara) in the Andes.

**1202** – Ishaq ibn-Ayyub invents oil-burning engine in Basra.

**1227** – Andalus gives Sawi (Pawnee) firearms and support; they dominate the great plains.

**1236** – First steamships built in Egypt.

**1248-59** – Caliph Sevar IV of Bulgaria attacks Muslim heartland, defeating Persia; Egypt allies with Europeans to hold him off.

**1259** – Sevar dies after burning Mainz.



**1261** – Peace of Constantinople formally ends the Sevarian Wars; Holy Roman Empire becomes "Caliphate of Firanj" in international law.

**1275** – Sofala, and later Bulgaria, begin using coal-powered engines.

**1290** – Persia, Egypt and Bulgaria divide southeast Asia; war of influence begins in Turkestan.

**1302** – After an unsuccessful rebellion, Andalus revises its system of local governments in Talentis.

**1310** – Sofala establishes protectorate over central Africa using primitive machine guns.

**1328-38** – The Global War: Egypt-Persia-Khitan Coalition against rebels in Hind and Zabaj supported by (chronologically) Andalus, Bulgaria, Takrur, Sofala, and Firanj. Internal Chinese rebellions tip the balance

**1338** – Peace of Zanzibar gives rebels independence except for part of India, Egypt loses Sicily and pieces of Africa. Ch'i dynasty replaces Khitans.

**1363** – Feminist movement begins.

**1375** – Secularists dissociate the Ulama from Islamic law.

**1397** – Invention of computer chip in Egypt.

**1425** – Economic crisis leads to global coordination.

**1434** – Firas ibn-Basham walks on the Moon.

**1488** – Imperial authority fails in China; corporate feudalism.

**1499** – Layla Bandih creates an artificial wormhole.

**1502** – Totalitarian Umarites gain power in Takrur.

**1515** – Umarites try to seize power in Andalus but the caliphates combine to remove them.

**1531** – Orbital tower built in Zenj, first interstellar probes.

**1550** – Islamic revival, controversies over genetic engineering, cloning, bodysculpting.

**1568** – First interstellar colony at Falaq.

**1577** – Practical neural interface implants.

**1591** – The Millennium of the Islamic calendar; peak and rapid decline of extreme religious movements.

**1595** – "Century laws" end crisis over antiagathics.

**1602** – Caliph Murtada removed in Egypt and caliphate abolished.

**1611** – First modern robofac in Turkestan.

**1625** – Jamahiriya movement founded in Karkar (in South America), begins to spread through Umma in Talentis.

**1640** – Adnan, first *djinni,* constructed.

**1654** – First contact with aliens.

**1676** – Jamahiriya wins power in Taluqi (southeastern North America).

**1681** – Alien stargate opened in Ahqaf system.

**1682** – Hind and Jamahiriya launch invasions, mostly successful.

**1683** – Jamahiriya invades Bulgaria and Nihon, Hind launches northern offensive against Persia.

# Characters

## Character Types

Most classic SF character types might be found in Caliph, though the high level of prosperity will make hand-to-mouth vocations much rarer. Free traders would have trouble supporting themselves in human space, and Caliph campaigns will likely be (or at least start) Earthbound in any case.

### Soldier

There are several million soldiers in the war today. Most are recent draftees and will not have many points in their military skills. Officers will probably have longer careers behind them, but many will never have seen action and none has ever seen a really big war: GMs would be justified in setting a maximum to their Strategy and Tactics skills. Caliph's infantry is almost exclusively male, but pilots are disproportionately female. Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Danger Sense, High Pain Threshold and Toughness are all useful advantages for soldiers, though many draftees will have none of them. All soldiers have a Duty, and some are Fanatics. Skills will always include Guns and Beam Weapons; other common skills are Brawling, Carousing, First Aid, Gunner, Leadership, Piloting, Scrounging and Survival.

### Mujahed

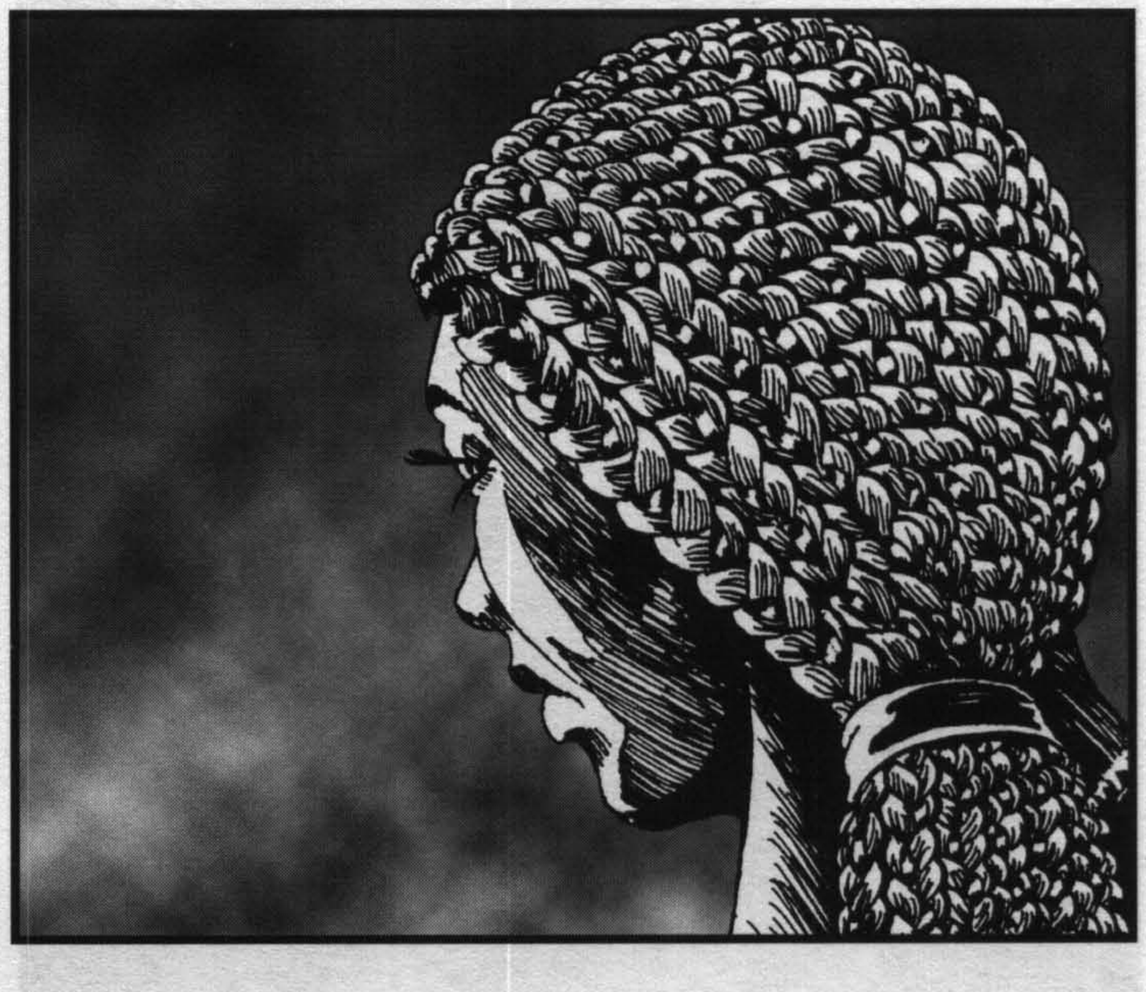
The *mujahedin* are the Special Ops of Caliph; they differ from soldiers in having, typically, many more points to represent their natural gifts and high levels of training. They are very likely to have some or all of the advantages listed for soldiers, plus Military Rank, Fit or Very Fit, and cinematic gifts like Daredevil, Hard to Kill, and Sharpshooter. Overconfidence is a common disadvantage. In addition to being skilled soldiers, mujahedin are likely to know Camouflage, Demolition, Stealth, Tactics, No-Landing Extraction and NBC Warfare.

### Secret Agent

Spies are in high demand at present. They may work by infiltration, breaking-and-entering, computer hacking or all three, and are bound to know a great deal about modern surveillance equipement. A spy must have a Patron, will almost always have Contacts, and will find Danger Sense, Eidetic Memory, Strong Will and Luck to be very useful. They are also likely to have Alternate Identities; a few of the best have been Zeroed. Duty is required, a Secret is almost mandatory, and Enemies are endemic to the trade – it is no wonder that many end up Paranoid. Secret agents may specialize in Social or Thief/Spy skills, but all will find Acting, Area Knowledge, Holdout and Intelligence Analysis helpful.

### Technician

Support personnel or infowar combatants, technicians play an important role in the war but are even more prominent outside it. Technicians are so common that one can be found with almost any advantage or disadvantage. The stereotype has Mathematical Ability, an Interface Jack, Versatile and perhaps even Gadgeteering, with minor physical disadvantages such as Overweight or Skinny (Bad Sight is surgically corrected) plus Shyness and Easy to Read. Skills are obvious, and will almost always include Computer Programming.



### Sufi

A Muslim mystic, usually belonging to a widespread brotherhood (*tariqa*). Sufis can be found in any profession, since most tariqas do not require significant devotions of their members, at least in the early stages. Spiritually advanced Sufis will take a -5-point Vow to live a simple life and avoid material entanglements: cost of living will drop to 1/8 normal but they will also have no expensive possessions or saved wealth. Sufi masters typically follow a Discipline of Faith, devoting their lives to prayer and teaching, but there are a few who still seek to live within the world. Sufis have a Claim to Hospitality (see p. CI21) from their tariqa worth 5 or 10 points, and Sufi masters will have Clerical Investment. They often have Strong Will, a Reputation and advantages that represent well-developed intuition. They may not take Wealth, even if they have not taken a vow. All Sufis should have Theology; masters will have Teaching and probably Poetry.

### Cadi

The cadis are both the judges who apply the Shari'a and the lawyers who argue before them, the independent judiciary of the civilized world. (The Ulama also contains legal scholars who are not practicing cadis.) A cadi is at least Status 2 and is quite likely to have a Reputation, good or bad. Most Muslim cadis have Clerical Investment and advise the Faithful on proper behavior in particular cases, but this is not strictly required. (Similarly, a Jewish cadi is frequently a rabbi.) The ideal cadi would have Alertness, Empathy, Piety, Strong Will and Voice, and the disadvantages of Honesty and Sense of Duty. Skills must include Law and probably Theology; Bard, Detect Lies, Diplomacy and Politics are also helpful.



### Spacer

Subjects of the Rightly-Guided Stellar Caliphate, whether they want to be or not, spacers are those who live and work in the void. They are relatively isolated from the human mainstream, and spacer cultures often have peculiar features (represented by Quirks or, rarely, Odious Personal Habits). A surprising number of Spacers are Primitive (TL9), and they may be Unfit if unused to operating in normal gravity. Common advantages acquired from life in space are Allies or Patrons (with a corresponding Duty; most spacers are members of tight-knit groups), Composed and 3D Spatial Sense. They are also fairly likely to have cyberwear; some even have bionics since regeneration is harder to come by in the Stellar Dispersal. All Spacers have Free Fall and Vacc Suit, and they are often skilled in Astrogation, Piloting and various technical skills.

## Advantages

### Clerical Investment see p. B19, CI22

Although Islam lacks a formal clergy, it has several types of religious professionals. The Ulama began as the interpreters of the religious law, and most cadis still instruct Muslims in what Islam requires of them. A Sufi master or professional prayer leader (*imam*) should also have Clerical Investment. There is no formal religious hierarchy in Islam. Individuals may gain personal authority from their wisdom or piety: buy a positive Reputation to reflect it.

### Cybernetic Implants see pp. UT104-110, CY29-41

Bionics are very rare in Caliph, since limbs and organs can be regenerated. Artificial implants are socially disapproved in the Dar al-Islam and Hind (though not by the Jamahiriya or the Stellar Caliphate): treat a visible implant as an Unnatural Feature, p. CI85. Undetectable implants, especially neural interface jacks (p. CI26), are more common. GMs may charge character points for cyberwear or not, at their discretion. Note that in the *Arabian Nights* the heroes encounter magic but rarely perform it themselves, so it may be thematically suitable to restrict cyberware by charging full points.

### Military Rank see p. B22

The current system of ranks originated during Persia's wars in Hind, and became standard during the Global War.

| *Rank* | *Title* |
|---|---|
| 8 | Caliph, Amir al-umara |
| 7 | Sirdar |
| 6 | Amir |
| 5 | Subadar |
| 4 | Rissaldar |
| 3 | Jemadar |
| 2 | Havildar |
| 1 | Askar |
| 0 | Ghazi |



### Panimmunity see p. CI28

Everyone in Caliph has Level 2 Panimmunity (TL10); Level 3 (TL12) is available but rare. It is recommended that GMs increase character point totals by 5, to make the Level 2 treatment free.

### Reputation see p. B17

Positive reputations are almost as good as Status in Caliph, and a celebrity or renowned scholar may take precedence socially over a high-ranking official. A Reputation may be based on piety, personal achievements, or – in the case of media celebrities – just a high public profile.

# Disadvantages

### Addiction see p. B30

Because of Caliph's high starting wealth, the dollar cost breaks for addictions should be $100 and $500 instead of $20 and $100. Any mind-altering chemical will be illegal in Caliph. Alcohol is forbidden for Muslims, and even tobacco and coffee are still suspect in traditionalist circles.

### Age see p. B27

In Caliph aging rolls begin at 110, not 50, and the increases in frequency come at 130 and 150. For those taking anti-agathic treatments, aging can be postponed almost indefinitely: at a rate of about one week per year, even those over biological 150 need roll only once every 13 years instead of every 3 months. Furthermore, all rolls are at HT+8. Under the circumstances, advanced age is worth no points as a disadvantage.

### Alcoholism see p. B30

Alcohol is illegal for Muslims, making this a 20-point disadvantage. Technically, non-Muslims are free from this restriction anywhere, but in practice Muslim governments forbid anyone to make or sell alcoholic drinks.

### Disciplines of Faith see p. CI89

Devoted Sufis may be ascetics or mystics or both. Monasticism is a Christian and Buddhist phenomenon. Vows of poverty are usually part of the package.

### Duty see p. B39

A soldier's Duty may range from "Fairly Often" for occupation troops up to the Extremely Hazardous level (p. CI78) for mujahedin.

### Poverty see p. B16

Poverty is rare in Caliph's wealthy society, and charitable foundations offer *everyone* a decent living by 20th-century standards. GMs may wish to reduce the value of this disadvantage. Sufis may be deliberately poor, but remember that someone who has taken a vow of poverty cannot also get points for low Wealth.

### Primitive see p. B26

This disadvantage is rare on Earth; it is more common among spacers, where many stations make do with TL9 equipment, or on colony worlds where the Tech Level may have slipped even further back.

### Social Stigma see p. B27

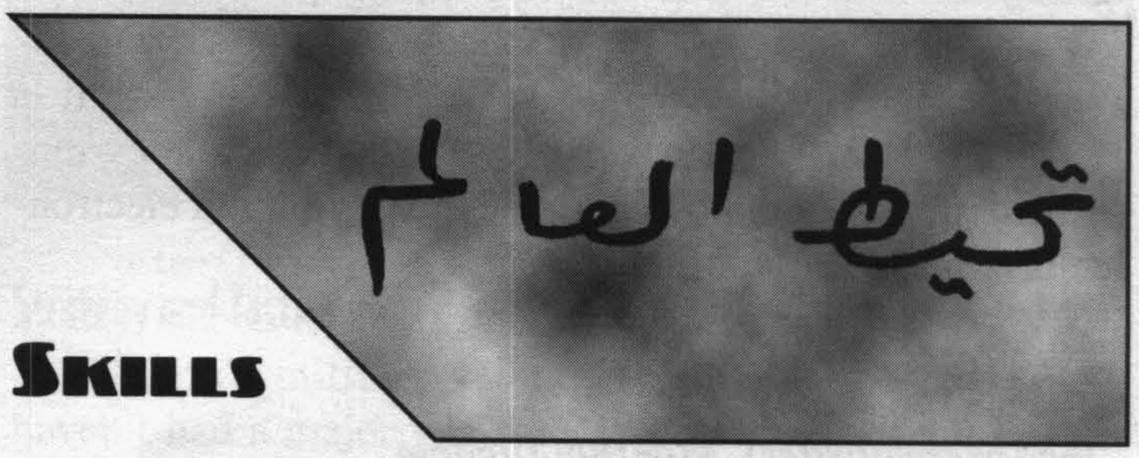
Caliph is completely free of racial prejudice, and gender discrimination is rare. Religious minorities are less fortunate: Jews are *second-class citizens* everywhere in Caliph, Christians are the same in Muslim areas, and members of other religions ("pagans" or "idolators") are *outsiders*. There are no penalties for Christians in Firanj or China, or pagans in China or Hind, and Muslims are never stigmatized. Intolerance of other faiths is common on all sides. Atheists are not sufficiently identifiable to have a Social Stigma, but should have a -3 Reputation with frequency dependent on outspokenness.

### Secret see pp. CI78-79

Supporters of the Jamahiriya have a -20-point Secret in the Dar al-Islam. Members of the Resistance in occupied areas have a -30-point Secret. Having cyberwear may be a -5-point Secret in some social circles.

### VR Addiction see p. CI95

This disadvantage is fairly uncommon since dreamgames began including subliminal signals to discourage it. One result is that VR addicts may suffer a negative Reputation for being weak-willed as well as the addiction.



# Skills

### Languages

Arabic is the universal tongue of modern Caliph: every native has it at IQ value for free. It is very close to classical Arabic, although with a greatly expanded vocabulary, defaulting at -2; most modern Arabic dialects default at around -4. A -4 penalty is also appropriate for the languages from our history that exist in Caliph, such as Bulgarian, Chinese, German (Firanji), and Malay.

### TL-Based Skills

Outtimers suffer the usual penalties for Tech Level, so TL8 Centrans would be at -15 with Caliph's TL11 equipment (a mere -10 with obsolete TL10 machines), and anyone from our Earth (TL7) would be completely lost. This does *not* apply to routine uses of the technology, which is designed to be user-friendly.

Electronics skills in Caliph subsume Photonics (p. CI157) skills, since machines generally use both wires and fiber optics. The difficulty a Caliph technician might have with equipment using exclusively one or the other is adequately simulated by the standard penalty for working on lower-TL devices.

# Economics, Jobs, and Wealth

## Social Status and Cost of Living

| *Level* | | *Monthly Cost of Living* |
|---|---|---|
| 7 | Caliph | $200,000 |
| 6 | Local ruler, high courtier | $100,000 |
| 5 | Corporate CEO | $75,000 |
| 4 | City governor, celebrity | $60,000 |
| 3 | Executive, military officer | $20,000 |
| 2 | Cadi, business owner | $10,000 |
| 1 | Public functionary, scientist | $5,000 |
| 0 | Ordinary citizen | $3,000 |
| -1 | Welfare recipient | $1,000 |

## Currency and Prices

National currencies are obsolete in Caliph; the universal monetary unit is the *dinar*, symbolized "$" here. It is roughly equivalent to an early 1990s dollar. Actual currency is hardly used; almost all money exists only in electronic accounts.

Caliph is extremely wealthy by the standards of less advanced worlds. Average starting wealth is $200,000, of which at least 80% will be tied up in home, aircar, computer and so forth. Poverty is almost unknown. Cost of living includes anti-agathics for Status 4+.

| | |
|---|---|
| Mutton, vegetables, and wheat bread | $10 |
| Dinner at a good restaurant | $120 |
| Shirt, trousers and topcoat | $75 |
| Fashionable turban or veil | $25 |
| Handmade robes of honor | $6,000 |
| Wristcomp | $800 |
| Desktop minicomputer | $10,000 |
| Neural interface implant | $4,000 |
| Net access, per month | $50 |
| Access to proprietary network, per month | $500+ |
| Access to subscription entertainment, per hour | $30 |
| Dreamgame set | $2,000 |
| . . . with induction helmet | $6,000 |
| Aircar | $8,000 |
| Ticket to orbit | $150 |
| Apartment, per month | $400 |
| Large apartment, per month | $1,100 |
| Suburban house | $180,000 |
| Anti-agathics, per month | $3,000 |

## Job Table

| *Job (prerequisites), Monthly Income* | *Success Roll* | *Critical Failure* |
|---|---|---|
| *Struggling Jobs* | | |
| Welfare Recipient (none), $1,000 | 8 | -1i |
| Student (none), $2,000 + Study | 8 | -1i/put on probation |
| *Average Jobs* | | |
| Doctor (Physician 13+), $8,000 | PR | -1i/-2i, LJ |
| Functionary (Administration 12+), $5,000 | PR | -1i/-2i, LJ |
| Imam (Clerical Investment, Theology 12+, Bard 12+), $7,000 | Worst PR | -2i/-4i |
| Programmer* (Computer Programming 13+), $7,000 | PR | -1i/-3i, LJ |
| Soldier (Beam Weapons or Guns 11+), $3,000 + RB | PR | 3d/6d |
| *Comfortable Jobs* | | |
| Cadi (Law 13+, Status 2+), $18,000 | PR | -1i/LJ |
| Intel Analyst (Intelligence Analysis 14+), $12,000 | PR | LJ |
| Scientist (any science 13+), $13,000 | PR | -1i/-2i, LJ |
| *Wealthy Jobs* | | |
| Governor (Administration 13+, Politics 14+, Status 4+), $75,000 | Worst PR | -2i/-3i, LJ |
| Executive (Administration 13+, Economics or Merchant 14+, Status 3+), $30,000 + $10,000 per Status level | Best PR | -2i/-4i, LJ, -1 Status |
| Media Celebrity* (Acting 12+; one of Bard, Dancing, Performance, Musical Instrument, Singing 14+; Status 3+, Reputation +2 or better), $90,000 | Worst PR | -5i/LJ |

* freelance jobs

## Weaponry

Thanks to centuries of comparative peace, Caliph's weaponry is TL10 except for TL11 force fields. Caliph's force fields are large and energy-intensive, used only for large installations and certain Stellar Caliphate spaceships: they are essentially immune to any attack up to megaton-level explosions. A few force fields have been breached when their control systems were not adequately isolated from the power grid or the Net, but most are self-contained and can only be brought down by persuading the controllers to turn them off. On the other hand, force fields do not penetrate very deeply underground, so sneaking in through the tunnels may be a viable option if it can be done before the defenders collapse or trap them.

Personal weaponry follows standard rules for Legality Classes, but under current (wartime) conditions use of *any* private weapons is likely to result in stiff penalties and careful investigation. Private citizens are most likely to have the tried-and-true sonic stunner.

### The Armor of Faith

Infantry wear powered combat armor granting ST 20; immunity to gases, sonics and paralysis guns; PD 6; and DR 100 for the torso, DR 75 for limbs and head, 50 for face and hands (add 25 to DR for TL11 suits; see pp. UT75-76). Some have camouflage options, all have integral sensors, holographic HUD and communicators. A variety of battlesuits improving on such armor and adding integral weapons are now in the experimental stage; none is common enought to be typical.

Standard infantry weapons are x-ray lasers and "smart bullet" gyrocs (see pp. UT46-47, 57). X-lasers are the usual weapon for pitched battles; occupation troops use gyrocs firing CHEM ammunition which won't affect their fellow troops. Properly equipped infantry has little to fear from irregular troops, but cannot withstand attacks from an aerospace fighter or "floating armor."

### The Hand of Allah

As is usual for travel in Caliph, most military vehicles fly. Either they are very fast, or heavily armored and slow, sometimes moving by reactionless thrusters. They are armed with x-ray Gatling lasers and brilliant missiles (see pp. UT54), with computer-assisted sensors and targeting. Such war machines are very effective on the battlefield but have difficulty maneuvering through urban settings.

As with battlesuits, military technicians are experimenting with many new vehicle designs. A few *very* heavily-armored examples are restricted to ground travel, others use various stealth techniques. Most are controlled by neural interfaces; unassisted pilots and gunners are too slow to compete. (It is even possible that some quirky Amir will design humanoid mecha, but they are unlikely to be used more than once in an even vaguely realistic campaign.)

Border patrols are continuous, by air and underwater units, and intruders are likely to be shot down without warning, since everyone is expected to know they should stay away from the front by now.



### Strategy and Tactics

Caliph's military science is unsophisticated – they haven't had a major war for 350 years and 6 Tech Levels. The Alliance's attacks have involved heavily-armed, highly-trained commando teams seizing robofacs and airports, isolating them with force fields until the arrival of the army of occupation. A team that cannot capture its target will usually destroy it while retreating. Genuine battles have been rare thus far, and have frequently ended with both sides destroyed. Collateral damage during conquest (or liberation) and occupation has been unexpectedly high.

The former militaries preferred to use small units with considerable discretion given to low-ranking officers in achieving tactical goals. These tactics are unsuitable for the mass armies now being recruited, and most officers are still bewildered by the changed situation: their use of large units is still quite primitive.

## Weapons Table

| *Weapon* | *Malf* | *Type* | *Damage* | *SS* | *Acc* | *1/2D* | *Max* | *Wt.* | *RoF* | *Shots* | *ST* | *Rcl* | *Cost* | *LC* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stunner | Ver. | Spcl. | – | 6 | 2 | 6 | 10 | 0.25 | 1 | 20/B | – | 0 | 400 | 5 |
| Gyroc carbine | Ver. (Crit.) | Spcl. | 8d (2) | 15 | 7 | 2,000 | 3,000 | 7 | 10 | 10/10 | – | 0 | 1,500 | 1 |
| Military x-laser rifle | Ver. (Crit.) | Imp. | 3d (2) | 12 | 15 | 1,800 | 2,400 | 7 | 8 | 150/D | – | 0 | 4,000 | 0 |
| Light artillery x-laser | Ver. (Crit.) | Imp. | 30d (2) | 10 | 20 | 4,500 | 13,500 | 60 | 4 | 100/E | 15T | 0 | 20,000 | 0 |

# 6 AEOLUS

*"They claim no thrones, they only ask to share*
*The common liberty of earth and air."*
*– Arthur Penrhyn Stanley*

A change in the wind created this world, dooming England's Glorious Revolution and ensuring centuries of French dominance in Europe (see sidebar "The Protestant Wind"). All things pass, however, and today the great issues are being decided in Central and Eastern Europe, where a newborn democratic alliance struggles to hold off the forces of reaction. The enemy has numbers and a trained army, while the infant Republican Alliance has the power of its populist ideals and a technological ace in the hole: the world's first air force.

Meanwhile, others are making history on a smaller scale. From the dourly fanatical American Commonwealth, missionaries and traders ply the seas and travel to the little-visited corners of the world. Far in both body and mind from the contest between monarchy and democracy, these dark-clad figures seek to bring the light of Christ to the heathen. In doing so, they face danger quite as often as the pilots of the Aeolian Corps.

# History

The failure of William of Orange to take the English throne in 1688 ended any chance that England might join an alliance against France. James II's victory over Parliament allowed him to let his Catholic sympathies and his partiality toward France become increasingly open. His 1687 Declaration of Indulgence had already abolished the legal disabilities of Catholics (and dissenting Protestants, though the latter group expressed little gratitude towards the "Papist" monarch). During the remainder of his reign, James circumscribed Parliament and pursued a French alliance.

Deprived of his hope of English aid – and sometimes facing direct English enmity – William continued to organize resistance to French expansion, but with little success. His League of Augsburg failed utterly to prevent a French takeover of the Spanish Netherlands and Lorraine. Soon afterwards, the death of the King of Spain left two major candidates for the Spanish throne. William organized an alliance with Austria and other states to support the Habsburg candidate, but Louis XIV won Spain and its overseas Empire for his grandson, Phillipe of Anjou. Louis's victory in the War of the Spanish Succession also allowed him to push the French frontier eastward into central Europe. France absorbed or clientized the western German states and positioned itself for further gains as opportunities presented themselves.

## The Age of the Monarchies

### France Ascendant

France solidified its new position during the Eighteenth century. French allies or puppets held thrones from Portugal to the Polish border. Because Protestants tended to be anti-French, France persecuted them within its borders (particularly in the areas it had taken from the Dutch). Ultimately these policies left only the rump Netherlands and Scandinavia with Protestant majorities on the Continent.

## The "Protestant Wind"

Aeolus diverges from our own history not by an event so much as the absence of an event. In our history, seven members of Parliament invited William of Orange to London to investigate the circumstances of the birth of James II's son, the new heir to the throne. They allegedly believed that the real heir had died, and that another child had been brought in within a warming pan. In fact, they were concerned that the heir to the Catholic James was now no longer his Protestant daughter Mary (who was married to William) but a boy who would presumably receive a Catholic upbringing. James had already suspended the penal laws against Catholics and non-Anglican Protestants and was pushing for their abolition. He had appointed Catholics to military command, and had even made a Catholic head of one of Oxford's colleges! Where would it end?

In our history, it ended when a Dutch fleet brought William to England in 1688. James, after marching out to meet him, sent his family to France and later fled himself. (To William's consternation, the king was captured by fishermen, who thought he was a Jesuit spy. James was allowed to escape again, and the fishermen told to mind their own business.)

However, William only came to England with a large helping of chance. The winds were blowing steadily against him for weeks on end. Suddenly, the winds reversed, and allowed the Dutch fleet to make the crossing. The wind in fact blew the Dutch ships too far – then immediately reversed themselves. This not only permitted the Dutch to land, but bottled up the English fleet in the Thames estuary.

This "Protestant Wind," so critical to William's takeover of England, never happened in Aeolus. William's ships were largely wrecked in an abortive attempt to cross the Channel, though William himself survived. James had the instigators of the invasion executed for treason, and forced through measures tolerating Catholics and dissenters. For a generation, Britain was a haven of religious tolerance (at least for Christians) – which resulted in the first large wave of departures by Protestants who did not want to see "Papistry" tolerated.

*Continued on next page . . .*

## The "Protestant Wind" (Continued)

Game Masters may wish to consider the possibilities offered by the idea that for this divergence point, *our* history's events are the unlikely ones. (Weather patterns which do anything William of Orange needs them to do?) This could be the springboard for a ***GURPS Time Travel*** adventure in which the PCs must learn what *really* happened – or even make events happen themselves. Perhaps the characters, or their opponents, have access to some sort of weather control device, or a superpower, or a magical device. The characters may be from Aeolus, pursuing villains who would aid the anti-Stuart coup. Alternatively, they may be from our world, and have to decide how (and *whether*) to create the history they remember.

## Independence Abroad

The 18th century determined the shape of the Americas. Britain returned to the Catholic fold under the Stuart kings. As a result its colonies in North America became disproportionately peopled by what were characterized as "the hotter sort of Protestant." Meanwhile, Brazil became the first independent American country in 1758, when the Franco-Spanish monarch chased Portugal's ruling house from Europe. As Brazil survived and achieved modest prosperity, British, French and Spanish colonists slowly began to question whether they truly needed the home country's protection.

In 1847, the British Crown brought the matter to a boil in its colonies, creating legal impediments for Protestants to force acceptance of the Act of Reunion. Riot, and then rebellion, quickly followed. Desultory support from Russia and Austria allowed the Americans to make swift gains. Plans for a reconquest fell afoul of matters nearer home, when France and its British ally became distracted by the Second War of the Spanish Succession.

As the war in Europe deepened, France viewed the American uprising as a distracting sideshow, much to the consternation of British ministers. Observing this from what had been meant to be a genteel exile, Louis, Duc d'Orleans determined to promote his American domains to a kingdom. The *Mexiquain* troops to the south refused to recognize his authority, but an alliance of convenience with the Commonwealth allowed him to secure his core territories in the Mississippi Valley.

*Continued on next page . . .*

In Britain, James II's experiment in toleration faced severe tests as Protestants repeatedly revolted against the Catholic monarchy. The leaders of these uprisings were exiled to the American colonies, and many of their followers went willingly rather than remain in a country tainted by "Romanism." The last great rebellion came in 1745, when King Charles III reunified the Church of England with Rome. It failed, and thousands of Protestants emigrated to America. Their homeland, they believed, was lost to Satan, and the end of the world could not be long in coming.



### Succession Crises

In 1833, King Ferdinand III of Spain died without a direct male heir. The laws of succession in this case differed in France and Spain. Under the law of Spain, the crown should have passed to the Princess Isabelle, who had a great deal of Spanish support. France's Salic law, under which neither a woman nor a man descended via the female line could succeed to the throne, determined that Charles, Duke of Burgundy should be king. At the time, Isabelle's supporters could do little but grumble as Charles took both crowns, and Charles VI could do little to assuage their anger.

In 1848, Spanish discontent, budding German nationalism, and colonial dissent combined with the ambitions of France's rivals, and a general European war ensued. France emerged shorn of Spain, Poland, Italy (which, to prevent its falling to Austria, became a neutral Papal state) and several of its American colonies (see sidebar).

France's revenge came in 1894, when a succession crisis tore apart Russia in a bitter civil war. Grand Duke Paul, brother of the dead Czar, demanded the throne. Paul claimed that the late Czar's heir, Nicholas, was mentally incompetent. That this was perhaps true did not prevent Russian nobles and others from flocking to Nicholas's support. France, seeing a chance to humiliate its old enemy, gave Nicholas substantial material aid. Austria supported Paul in exchange for territorial concessions. France was spoiling for a more direct fight, and in 1895 French and Austrian forces met in Hanover.

The War of the Russian Succession left Europe agitated but not greatly changed. Nicholas died, it is said, in battle, saving Paul the sticky problem of what to do with him. Nicholas's brother fled to the Russian territories in America. After a single attempt to take Alyeska, Paul appears to have decided the territories (which seemed mined and hunted out) were not worth the trouble to retake them.

# Revolution!

Even as the Russian war drew to a close, the beginnings of the next conflict were appearing in Italy. In 1906, Benedetto Croce published *Res Publica.* This treatise described a form of government, based on the Roman Republic and classical Greece, which would be responsible to the people rather than to the royal houses of Europe. This sparked a series of pamphlets and counter-pamphlets, all published in Italy (see sidebar, p. 98) and inspired a new political movement: the Sons of the Republic, or Republicans.

## Unrest in Austria

The War of the Russian Succession had created a great deal of discontent among the Habsburgs' subjects. Industrialized warfare had made the toll high in both lives and treasure, and most central Europeans felt they had gained little in exchange. Moreover, the dynasties had traded lands filled with Poles and Ukrainians as if they were so many sheaves of grain. At the same time, the nationalist propaganda Austria had used so effectively against France's empire had penetrated its own multifarious domains. Republicanism gave all this dissatisfaction a focus, and a dream of a better way to organize the world.

Attempts to quell loose talk through force inspired demonstrations, riots, and in some cases police mutinies. Throughout Central Europe, Republicans organized themselves into parties led by elected councils called *prytanies,* a name derived from an ancient Athenian political term filtered through the Russian of the early Republican theorists. Soon, it became clear that suppressing the movement would require a permanent state of emergency. Rudolph III compromised, expanding the Diet and making it more representative, and turning some local administrative responsibilities over to the prytanies themselves.

His successor, Maximilian II, hated those concessions and found it difficult to work with the Diet. As far as possible, he worked around it instead, legislating by royal prerogative and pursuing traditional dynastic diplomacy. By arranging his brother's marriage to the Russian Czar's only daughter, he believed he had ensured the realm's security for a generation. When the old Czar died and Joseph von Habsburg succeeded him, Maximilian knew he had been vindicated.

In Russia, the gulf between the Catholic Habsburgs and their new Orthodox subjects was papered over by the Declaration of Reunion. This left the Orthodox Church in charge of its own affairs while subscribing to a deliberately vague formula regarding the Russian Patriarch's place relative to the Pope. Czar Joseph seems to have expected no more than a token submission as his reign began. While he ruthlessly suppressed any open protest or revolt, he did little to change the practice of the Russian Church or to remind his subjects of his own Catholicism. The Czar's internal police and the Russians' memories of the last civil war kept resistance on a small scale.

While Russia accepted the change in dynasty relatively quietly, Austria grew restive. The bribes to Russian nobles which ensured the succession had come from the Austrian public purse. Taxes to replenish those funds coincided with an economic downturn, and soon every prytanie was protesting to the central government. Maximilian at last lost patience, and responded by forbidding the protests and stripping the prytanies of their powers.

## The End of the Habsburg Empire

In early 1939, the Diet presented Maximilian with a list of demands: the restoration of the prytanies, the recognition of a popular right of protest, a veto for the Diet on foreign policy initiatives, and so on. Maximilian responded by ordering the Diet to dissolve and imprisoning those members who refused to leave the city.

## Independence Abroad (Continued)

In the Peace of Vienna, the victorious Russo-Austrian alliance required England and France to recognize the loss of their North American territories. Britain objected, but could do nothing in the face of French exhaustion and apathy. The Commonwealth and Louisiane, their independence confirmed, almost immediately set to disputing their common border.

After the border wars, veterans (particularly from the Commonwealth side) drifted south, serving as mercenaries and general rabble-rousers in the cause of Protestantism and independence from Catholic France. Latin America proved uninterested in their missionary zeal but eagerly accepted their fighting skills and trade goods. First Mexique, then the Central and South American colonies took advantage of France's inward turning and European distractions to declare their independence. By the end of the War of the Russian Succession in 1897, only New France in northeastern North America remained a colony. (To the New French, independence seemed all too likely to lead to absorption by Louisiane or the Commonwealth.)

Most of the new American states adopted monarchy as their form of government. Where the ruler had noble blood, he became a king or prince. Mexique, whose leader was incontrovertibly common, became a Principate (from Augustus Caesar's title, *princeps,* or First Citizen). In recent years, Republican politics have filtered in from Europe. Since the Battle of Pressburg, Argentine and several other South American states have become Republics, though it is yet unclear whether the new regimes will be permanent.

## The Angel of Liberty

After the War of the Russian Succession, many refugees with radical views fled west, with a large number ending up in Italy. There they became the nucleus of communities which many new political, scientific, and technical ideas arose. Florence's reputation as a crossroads of ideas brought Henri Coanda to the city in 1930 to meet his correspondent, Mikhail I. Gurevitch.

As in our history, Coanda had been working on jet-powered flying machines as early as 1910. In Aeolus, the slower pace of industrial development took longer to catch up with Coanda's dreams, but the delay did encourage Coanda to refine his designs. Soon after he and Gurevitch began to pool their ideas, it was clear that they could use Coanda's jets to make heavier-than-air flight a reality.

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## The Angel of Liberty (Continued)

Coanda had initially intended to pilot the prototype himself. Unfortunately, during his first attempt in 1932, the engine caught fire during takeoff. Coanda survived the resulting crash, but his injuries demanded that the pair find another test pilot. After a brief search, Coanda hired 20-year-old Marina Raskova, herself a granddaughter of Russian refugees, and in 1933, Raskova became the first person to successfully fly a heavier than air craft.

The commercial development of overland flight was hindered by customs borders: even within the great empires, customs checkpoints with separate duties came every few miles. Fines incurred for a demonstration flight from Florence to Tours in 1935 came within a hair of bankrupting the company. As a result, air couriers and travel within Europe were practical only in the See of Rome. In 1936, Coanda attempted to interest the French and Austrian governments in reconnaissance aircraft, but was rebuffed. The Coanda-Gurevitch jets (like Goddard's rockets in our own 1930s) were viewed as wasteful toys at best and outright dangers to bystanders at worst.

In 1940, the Great Rebellion began. Soon after Jan Masaryk became Archon, Raskova flew her plane (then called the *Aeolus III*) to Belgrade and offered her services to the Republic. On being informed that Raskova had crossed hundreds of miles of territory in hours, bypassing government checkpoints and revolutionary chaos alike, Masaryk gratefully accepted.

As it happened, Raskova had not consulted Coanda or Gurevitch before making the offer. They ratified it – after learning that the Vienna prytanie had managed to capture a third of the Habsburg treasury. C-G moved the factory (including a handful of workers) to the outskirts of Vienna. The company made up a decade of losses in a single year and quietly began turning out Aeolus Mark III craft.

The Battle of Pressburg vindicated every hope the Alliance might have had for its air superiority. Raskova's plane, its lower surface painted with the image of an angel holding a broken chain, struck superstitious terror in enemies of the Alliance and raised cheers from Republican forces. That plane, and more and more often Raskova herself, came to be called the "Angel of Liberty," and Raskova became the human symbol of the struggle for freedom.

Raskova remains commander of the Alliance's air force, the Aeolian Corps. In theory, strategic decisions on how to use the Corps are made by the general staff, but in practice Raskova has an effective veto over what she characterizes as "ground-based thinking."

Uprisings began all over the kingdom. The Belgrade prytanie, still meeting illegally, declared a "Republic of Serbia." The prytanie invested the popular Czech councillor Jan Masaryk with emergency executive powers as "Archon." Following Serbia's example, the prytanies organized other provinces into republics and appointed archons of their own. The movement quickly reached Vienna, and the prytanies demanded that Maximilian restore the Great Compromise. Maximilian sent the army to break up the rebel government and hang its leaders. The troops joined the rebels instead, and Maximilian fled to Russia before the new government could decide what to do with him.

With the flight of the Emperor, Masaryk (elected Grand Archon and commander-in-chief by the archons who had made it to Vienna) prepared to defend the alliance of republics against the certain Russian invasion. With only half of the old Austrian army and a third of its supplies left to them, the Republican cause appeared doomed to swift failure. In desperation, Masaryk agreed to meet with Marina Raskova (see sidebar, p. 93), who claimed to have a decisive weapon to offer the alliance.

### War

The first major battle between the Habsburg forces and the Republicans came in 1941 at Pressburg, in the Republic of the Slovaks. The overwhelming Russian forces bore down upon the Republican defenders. With no warning but an unfamiliar whine from above, a squadron of C-G Aeolus III jet fighter-bombers appeared overhead. This first aerial attack in history did little actual damage: it destroyed the Russian reconnaissance balloons, dropped some dynamite bombs, and reported on the Russian positions. But the sight of flying machines dropping death with impunity broke Russian morale and gave heart to the Republicans. The Battle of Pressburg ended with a rout of the Russian army, and Marina Raskova became the heroine of the Alliance.

Newly inspired, the Republicans quickly turned the tide. Their advance as far as Russian-held Galicia under the cover of Raskova's Aeolian Corps has begun to seem a threat to the monarchic principle itself. But Russia's size and terrain has given the Habsburgs a chance to regroup, and a counterattack will come soon. France, currently enjoying its old enemies' discomfiture, may decide that Republicanism threatens it more than Habsburg ambition. The Alliance's few seaports make them a tempting target for a naval blockade. It cannot hold its monopoly on air power forever, and its armies are largely ill-trained volunteers. The coming year will determine whether the republics survive or the monarchy returns.

# Locales

## Europe

### The Republican Alliance

The Republican Alliance is theoretically a confederation of self-governing states. In fact, half of the "republics" remain under Habsburg control or have a divided government. The other half are running under anything from the old Habsburg structure (vetted for Republican loyalty) to ad hoc arrangements decided by the local prytanie. The only national institutions are the Aeolian Corps

(see p. 100), and the Grand Prytanie (made up of archons or their appointed representatives). While constitutional discussions and arguments (and fistfights) are regular fixtures throughout Republican territory, the republics have agreed to table the issue of permanent arrangements until the end of the war. The Alliance government operates primarily in French, the most common second language throughout Europe.

Thus far, the common threat has kept the Alliance's internal differences from turning into civil war. Republican philosophy is officially independent of religion. However, some republics have interpreted that as internal religious tolerance, and others as an endorsement of each republic establishing its preferred religion. The Alliance is not free of anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim activities, or conflict among Christian sects, but the High Archon has made it clear that internal strife will doom the Revolution. Alliance propaganda has made much of the Last Stand at Wilno, where Jewish, Catholic and Orthodox Republicans died together resisting the Habsburg forces.

In most cities held by the Alliance, the population affects an almost exaggerated egalitarianism. Those of high birth who have not yet fled make a point of deferring to the omnibus conductors and street sweepers – some perhaps from conviction, and others doubtless from fear. Perhaps a third of the Alliance's sixty million people are committed Republicans (themselves divided into a thousand factions) and another third sympathizers. The remaining third, divided among Habsburg loyalists and those who see no difference between the two sides, are watched closely. While censorship is against Republican principles, social pressure against "disloyalty" and monarchism is strong.

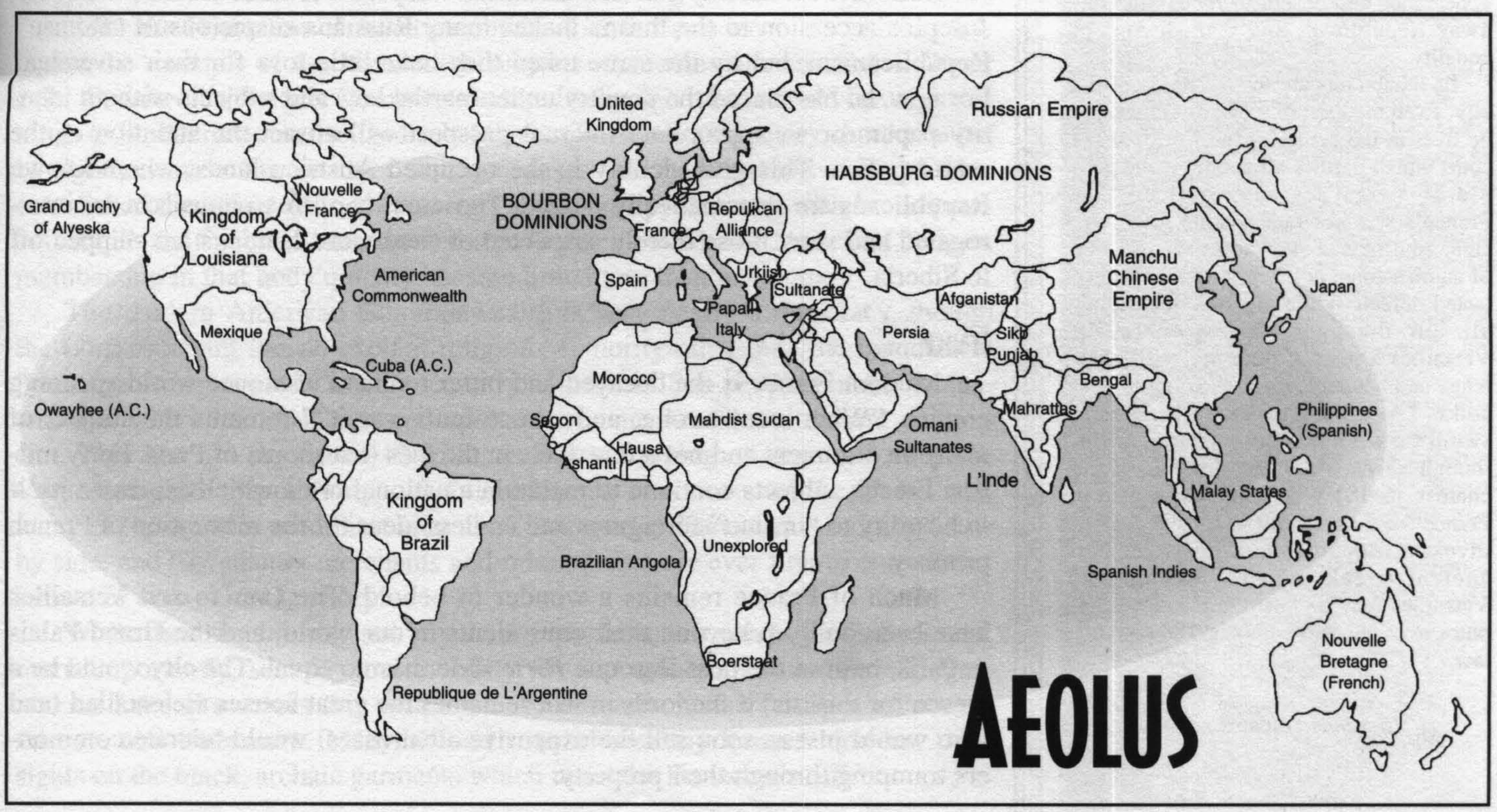
Away from the front, food continues to flow to the cities. Supplies grow tight, nonetheless, and several prytanies have had to forbid farmers from joining the army. For now, the Alliance controls the the industrial heartlands in Bohemia and Hungary, but these are uncomfortably close to the invasion route the enemy will likely take next year. In the end, the High Archon knows that the Alliance will need both military success and a functioning economy to survive.

## The United Kingdom

The Stuart kings tied Britain's fortunes to France, and for many years that served them well. The wars to reestablish Catholicism ended long ago. (By now the Privy Council will even tacitly tolerate quiet Protestants.) Meanwhile British traders paid lower taxes and faced fewer barriers to trade than their French counterparts, growing rich plying the seas between French colonies. If treaties demanded British contingents in France's European wars, Britain was in turn spared the need to pay for a great navy. The Stuart kingdom has never been a globe-spanning power, but it remains green, pleasant, and reasonably comfortable.

As in France, Britain's government is suspicious of Republicans at home and officially neutral towards both the Habsburgs and the Alliance. More important to the Privy Council are the economic losses inflicted by Commonwealth and Argentine shipping competition. In recent years conflicts between British and American merchant steamers have approached low-level warfare, though the national navies are not yet involved.

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## The United Kingdom (Continued)

Internally, the UK is relatively calm. The Irish, spared most of our world's Protestant Ascendancy, appear to be if anything less restless than the Scots or urban English. What organized political discontent exists seems to be centered on the industrial workers, owners of small businesses, and a minority of industrialists who together form a vague Republican faction. The Crown has not suppressed their publications, but it appears to be trying to wait out the "fashion" for radical politics. It seems likely that the outcome of the European war may have some impact on how seriously the Republican movement will be taken in Britain. For the moment, however, like other maritime traders, the UK is growing rich selling to both sides, and shooting wars over politics seem a faraway madness.

## Versailles

The already vast chateau at Versailles was greatly expanded in the wake of Louis XIV's victories, and added on to to distract from the kingdom's defeats of the 19th century. The city around it, long the center of power in France, has become an administrative capital rivaling Paris itself. With its wide, radial streets, its monumental architecture, and its constant pageantry, Versailles seems by its very appearance and design to rebuke the faraway Republicans and their dreams of equality.

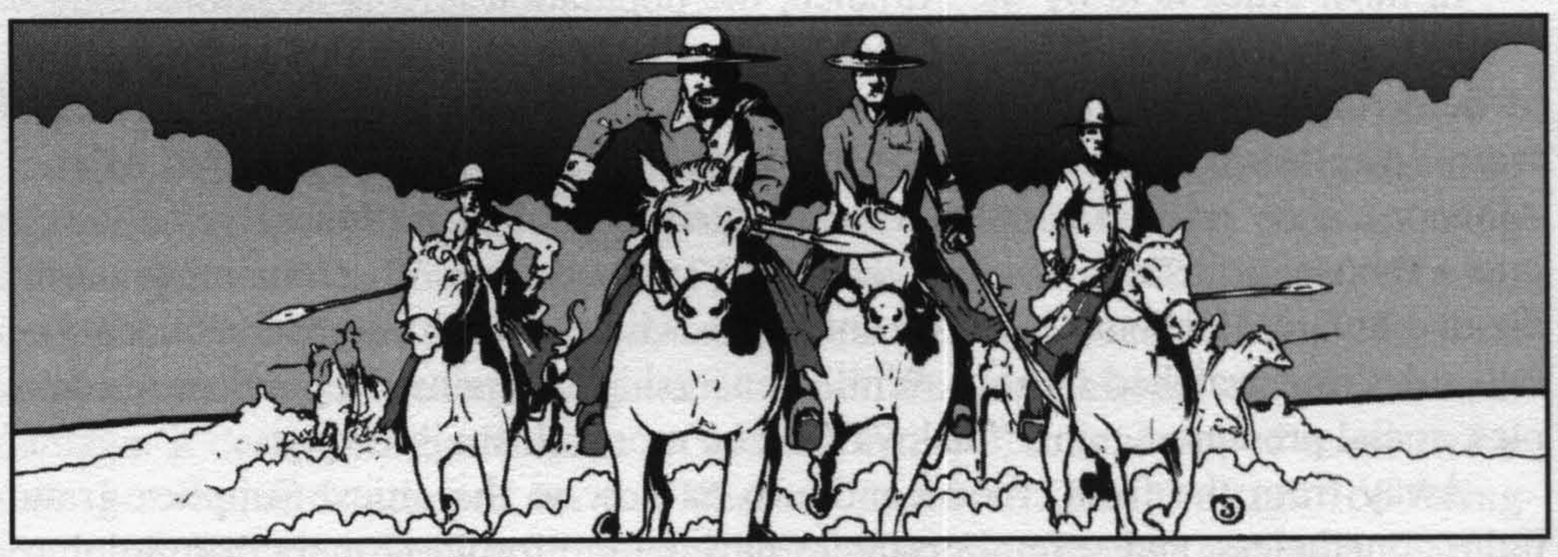
Its inhabitants are the reflection of the city. Even the least of servants knows that he lives at the center of the world, at the court which defines all courts. If the people of Versailles have noticed that France's star has faded, none gives any sign. And indeed, Versailles seems to be of another time, of the days before France tasted defeat. While the code duello has all but disappeared elsewhere, in Versailles a man of rank may still challenge and be challenged when honor is at stake. (And only in Versailles can a sword be worn without embarrassment, though *never* within the grounds of the chateau itself.) Where anywhere else in France the thés are full of furtive debates invoking Republican philosophes and ancient Greek political thought, in Versailles may be heard knockdown disputes over obscure points of 18th-century law.

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### The Habsburg Empires

After Maximilian's humiliation at the hands of his subjects, his brother Czar Joseph has taken charge of the Habsburg counterattack. He controls a country far larger, but far less industrialized than his brother's, and occupies the eastern third of the Austrian lands. Nonetheless, he knows that a long struggle favors the rebels, whose propaganda may weaken his troops' morale while their factories turn out ever more of those damnable "Aeolus" craft. He must crush them, quickly.

To do this, Czar Joseph has at his disposal an army several times larger than the Alliance forces. He can draw reinforcements from a population of 150 million, nearly three times the size of the Alliance. Unfortunately, his army's main experience has come from maintaining internal order and taking ground from the Ottomans and Persians, neither of whom have modern weapons, let alone aircraft. His troops, save for those from the farthest West, have been isolated from Republican ideas, but who knows how vulnerable they may be in the long run?



Moscow is probably safe from ground attack. The Czar does not know how far the rebel aircraft can fly, but they cannot take the city. He has prepared for raids, ordering fire brigades raised and placing guns along the approach routes.

The Czar is more concerned with the internal consequences of the European revolution. Fortunately for the Czar, the very anti-Catholicism sparked by Joseph's accession to the throne makes many Russians suspicious of "Roman" Republicanism, but by the same token they have little love for their sovereign. For now, he has placed the country under martial law, and subjects without identity papers or an appropriate internal passport will attract the attention of the secret police. This goes doubly in the occupied Austrian lands, where known Republicans are systematically purged. Those guilty of treasonous acts are interrogated and shot; those merely suspected of treasonous leanings are shipped off to Siberia.

### France

Modern France is the decayed and bitter remnant of a once world-spanning empire. "What went wrong, and whose fault was it?" remains the subject of many an argument and not a few duels in the thés (tea shops) of Paris. Forty million French subjects continue to maintain a national pride which expresses itself in hostility to "upstart" foreigners and endless ideas for the restoration of French primacy.

Much of France remains a wonder to behold. The Louvre and Versailles have been built up beyond their equivalents in our world, and the Grand Palais in Paris, built in the post-Baroque *Forte* style, has no equal. The city would be a mecca for tourists, if the lords in whose names the great houses are entailed (and who would just as soon sell the expensive albatrosses) would tolerate commoners tramping through their property.

Beyond Paris, France spreads out into numerous *gouvernements, intendances*, dukedoms, and innumerable other divisions dating from as far back as the feudal period. Some are industrial, some rural, but nearly every one boasts a lord or royal administrator who obstructs any serious reform. Internal customs checkpoints and duties slow travel and trade within the kingdom.

France has stayed out of the war, so far. Alliance diplomats have been dispatched to Paris to negotiate support, or at least a hands-off policy, saying that the Republicans have abandoned the Habsburgs' dynastic ambitions. The King's advisors – particularly those who have read Republican tracts – remain suspicious of the revolutionaries. French merchants are forbidden from trading with either side, with the result that French goods reach both combatants via British, Argentine or Commonwealth middlemen.

# Beyond Europe



## The American Commonwealth

The present structure of the American Commonwealth ironically owes much to King James II, whose effigy (along with those of his fellow Stuart kings) is burned annually at solemn Independence Day gatherings. James II formed a unified Dominion of New England from the northern tier of his American colonies, over the objections of the colonists. In 1736, under James III, all the remaining colonies were absorbed into a single Dominion of America administered from Philadelphia.

As Great Britain became more Catholic, the Dominion of America became a common destination of Protestants, voluntary emigrants and transportees alike. Outside Philadelphia itself, extreme Protestants organized, first for self-protection, later to enforce the standards of godly communities. Life quickly became unpleasant for those who did not conform, many of whom fled to Louisiane. The conversion of the Iroquois by an exiled John Wesley accelerated this process, and the British colonies in America developed a culture in which religion, rather than race, served as the critical dividing line.

After the Dominion of America obtained its independence, its citizens followed the example of the last British subjects to successfully overthrow Stuart rule, Cromwell's British Commonwealth. Its leaders deemed divine right of kings to be Papist nonsense, and ruled that a Christian community should be led by righteous men. The result of their consensus was the Covenant of Right. This established the office of Lord Protector: a lifetime appointment with broad powers. While the Covenant also created a parliament called the Council of Judges, membership in that body quickly became little more than an honor.

The modern American Commonwealth is very nearly a theocracy, though the Lord Protector has no explicit religious authority other than the mandate to "preserve America as a Christian country." Its 40 million people pursue an austere life, where luxury is frowned upon, vice is anathema, and dissent dangerous. This has not prevented its citizens from enjoying commercial success. Commonwealth clipper ships established trade bases around the globe, and many of the world's wealthiest men are Covenanters. Trade and religion go side by side, and Covenanter merchants and missionaries are ever first to enter little-known or unexplored territory.

While their wealth may not buy them overt luxury, it can buy comforts and, more importantly, security and mobility for a magnate's family. Few Judges, and no Lord Protectors this century, have come from the families of poorer farmers and tradesmen. Many second sons of wealthy houses have set their sights on the black, archaic garments which mark the Protector's office.

## Versailles (Continued)

The foreign diplomats who come to Versailles find themselves in a world at once alien and familiar, for it is true that the royal courts of Europe and America have borrowed much from the French monarchy. The Alliance mission to France, lacking any career diplomats to call on, is very much a fish out of water. If it is permitted to enter Versailles at all (which requires a pass bearing a royal seal), its members must hope to make common cause with some more experienced envoys or else face certain failure.

## The Russian Diaspora

The chaos of the War of the Russian Succession created an atmosphere in which many radical religious and political theorists came to prominence. Each contender for the throne found it easier to tolerate, and even humor the malcontents, the better to root out his opponent's true supporters. While material shortages and the violence of the war itself prevented any sort of organization among the radicals, a steady stream of broadsheets and pamphlets could be found on the streets of Moscow throughout most of the war. For a time, the contending Czars even promised that this would be allowed to continue after the end of the war.

For a year after Czar Paul's victory he kept this promise, allowing printing licenses to virtually anyone other than Grand Duke Alexander's supporters. Then his government staged a crackdown, deeming that the enemies of stability had adequately revealed themselves. Several thousand Russians took advantage of the still-unsettled conditions to flee the country.

While Russian refugees appeared everywhere in Europe, Louisiane, and South America, a large concentration was attracted to Italy. Its relatively liberal government and the withdrawal of papal censorship (aside from explicitly heretical publications; see sidebar, p. 98) offered them the chance to continue their work elsewhere. Many of the emigrants, like Paolo Miliucov and Giorgio Plekhanov, became important figures in the early Republican movement.

## Italy and the Catholic Church

The great success of the Counter-Reformation during the 18th century increased tensions within the Church itself. France had made itself the ruler of half of Europe, and tried to extend its authority to ecclesiastical matters as well. Ultimately, the Church chafed under this, as successive Popes began to resist being treated as yet another Bourbon appanage. At the same time, by reincorporating Protestant lands, the Church had effectively absorbed new currents of thought into its own structure. While doctrinal and theological orthodoxy remained critical to the Church hierarchy, variant strains of political theory became a tacit means whereby the Church could counter Bourbon self-aggrandizement.

By the late 19th century, sympathy for nationalist and popular claims (and a reflexive reaction against interfering monarchs) had become endemic to the Catholic clergy. In 1896, Pope Pius IX promulgated a bull proclaiming that because all men are equal in the sight of God, a monarch's right to rule extended only so far as he ruled justly and well. Pope Pius was also troubled, however, by clerical involvement in worldly politics. He determined that the hierarchy must concentrate on the primary mission of the priesthood: the salvation of human souls. To separate the priestly vocation from civil service careers, he promulgated reforms which effectively turned temporal government over to a lay council. The council was initially selected by urban notables, but Pius' egalitarianism and Republican sentiment quickly led to a general broadening of the franchise.

As France grew ever more conservative in the wake of its mid-century wars, the See of Rome became the destination for those *philosophes* who found French censorship too restrictive. Secure in the knowledge that the Reformation had receded to Scandinavia and the Commonwealth, the Church censored little that was not outright heresy. As central Italy grew more accustomed to secular government, Church censorship took on a more advisory and less legislative character. The arrival of Russian radicals in the wake of the War of the Russian Succession accelerated this process, and soon Italy was the intellectual center of Europe.

The Church has not taken an official position on the Revolution, and is unlikely to do so. The Alliance has some informal support among the European clergy, but many of the higher ecclesiastical offices had developed ties with the older power structure. Church hospitals remain the primary centers of medical care throughout the former Austrian realm.

### South America

Since independence, South America has tended to reflect the political and social trends of Europe. The largest country, the Kingdom of Brazil, is now a constitutional monarchy where conservatives vie with an ever more vocal, Republican-leaning popular party. The second largest, Argentine, forced the abdication of King Emanuel IV soon after receiving news of the Battle of Pressburg. So far, there has been no response from the royalists, but it remains unclear whether they have accepted the *fait accompli.* (Rumor suggests that Brazil may supply whichever side seems weaker, to prolong the dispute.) The remainder of the continent is a mosaic of principalities and infant republics.

French is the language of the cities and of government throughout most of the continent, and is the second language of educated Brazilians. Outside the cities, Spanish-derived dialects remain common.

### Asia

The Ottoman decline has left the Middle East broken into petty states, and Persia has begun to expand westward into the vacuum. Further east, the doddering Manchu empire continues to rule China; the Europeans are distracted by their own quarrels and the American Commonwealth is interested in commerce and conversion, not conquest. Although the country boils with discontent, the Manchu government retains its hold. It remains "unopened," ruled by shoguns who have rejected the gun and the steam engine. It is a feudal state, whose only outside contact is the French trading post at Nagasaki. The Covenanter merchants at Okinawa actually handle most of the Japanese trade, but are barred from Japan proper due to their insistence on proselytizing. The kingdoms of Southeast Asia remain embroiled in petty warfare, their guns supplied by Commonwealth, Argentine, and British traders. No European power considers them worth the effort of conquest, as long as the spices and teakwood keep coming. The only major European colonies in Asia are French India and the Spanish Indies (Indonesia), both holdovers from an earlier, more ambitious time. The American Commonwealth limits itself to a scattering of islands which serve as trading bases.

## Technology and Society

This world had its scientific revolution at the same time as in our own history, but its industrial revolution came later and more slowly. Aeolus averages approximately TL6, but different disciplines developed at different rates. Communications technology resembles early TL5 (telegraphy is possible, but no one has established widespread telegraph networks, and the potential of radio is just being noticed) while its military aviation is early TL7. In general, technologies which require use of right-of-way (e.g., railroads, telegraphs and telephones, or running water) have been hindered by archaic regimes of land use and an atmosphere generally less favorable to entrepreneurs.

## Transportation

### Land

Railroads tend to be short, special purpose lines for transporting bulk products such as coal to rivers or oceans, where they can be carried further by watercraft. Aeolus internal combustion vehicles tend to be slow, due more to the

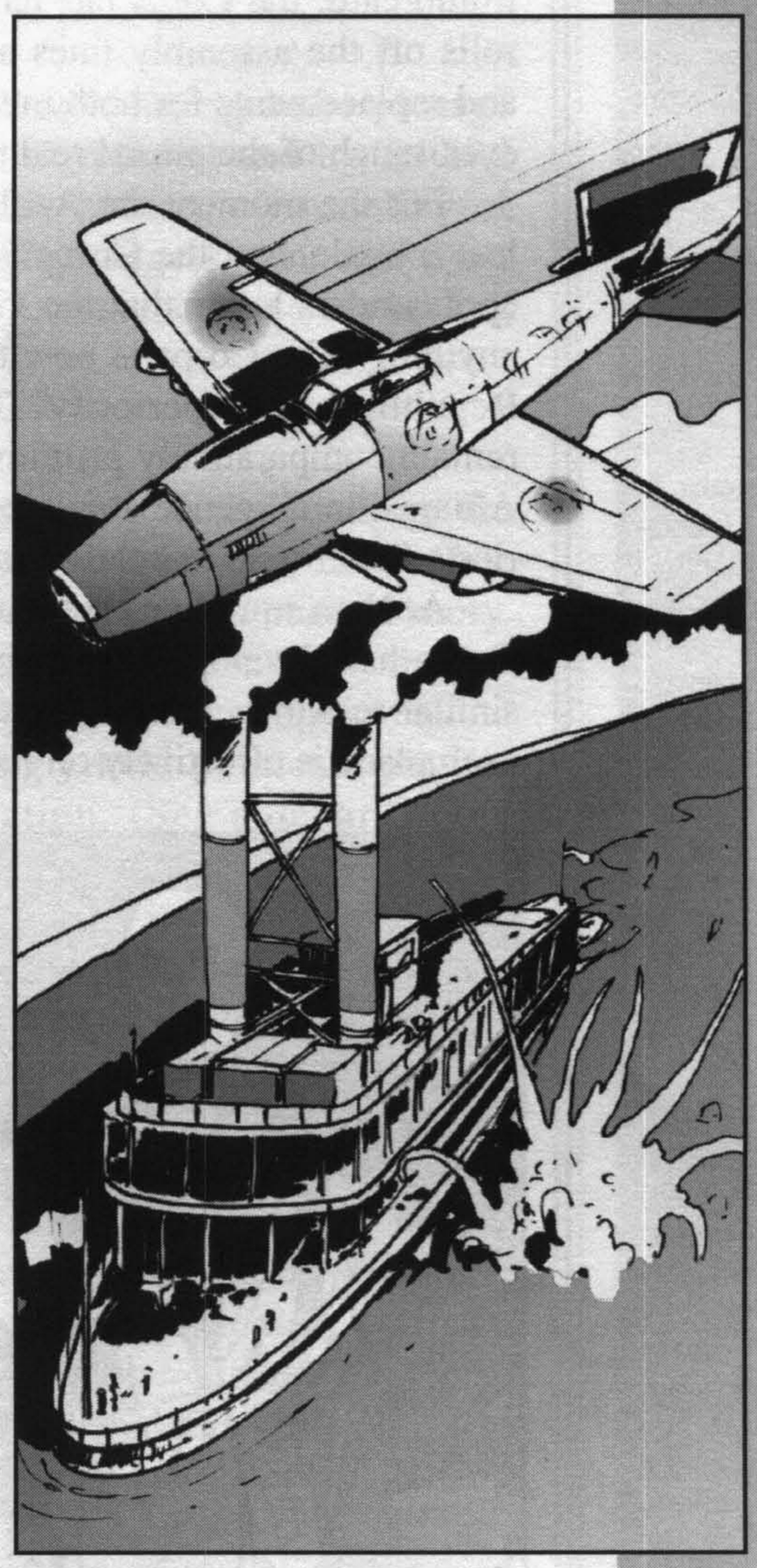
condition of the roads than the quality of the cars. While on test tracks a car can be driven upwards of 80 miles per hour; a more realistic top speed is about 30. Most cars are fueled by widely available alcohol.

### Sea

Steamboats and steamships have eliminated sail craft from most of the developed world. The most advanced merchant ships are built by the Commonwealth, and even on foreign ships the ship's engineer will generally be a Covenanter. Engineers in the Republic of Prussia have begun experimenting with submarines to counter the Russian blockade, with no results as yet.

Where practical, rivers are the primary inland transportation routes. Traffic consists of steamboats and barges (now joined in the Alliance by armed patrol boats). The pattern is similar in the Americas. For this reason the desert regions of Louisiane and Mexique have remained relatively undeveloped, while the Amazon's banks have sprouted numerous settlements.

Navies are generally far below the strength of their counterparts in our own history. With the loss of their overseas colonies, European powers concentrated on their land forces and coastal fleets. Naval warfare has been limited to fights over trade routes and fishing rights, and has never had a decisive effect on a great power struggle. The American Commonwealth and Argentine have the largest fleets, but this is primarily because they can call their merchant ships into service.



### Air

For the present, the skies belong to the Aeolian Corps. The Republicans skipped propeller planes entirely, moving straight to Coanda's jet designs. Airframe technology is not yet up to building something which can withstand speeds higher than about 120 miles per hour. Though this is slow for a jet, it outraces anything else in the world by a factor of four.

The state of aviation research in other lands is less clear, but several Russian spies have been caught in C-G factories. For the present, most militaries make do with reconnaissance balloons, but in the Russian army that has recently become a suicide mission.

## Military Technology and Tactics

Aeolian military technology and tactics resembles that of the late 19th century. The trench warfare of World War I is unknown, and experiences in the War of the Russian Succession suggest that it is unlikely to develop. Both sides are preparing for a war of mobility, and neither side has the manpower available in our World Wars. In a world with no Napoleon or wars for national survival (until now), Aeolus has not developed large mass armies or universal conscription. This may change as the war continues.

## Venice

Never incorporated into the Habsburg or Papal realm, Venice stands aloof. The ancient city of canals has been largely abandoned by the Doges for more stable ground on the mainland. The Old City, left to rot and decay (save for the Piazza San Marco) remains the province of those who don't wish to be noticed by an overattentive civil government. Venetian decay has bred a degree of fatalism into its people: in this most ancient republic, the new Republican ideas find few enthusiasts.

The Doge, fearing invasion by the Republicans or Russian forces, has responded by forbidding trade with either side while the war lasts. In fact, however, by night the city is a favored spot to load and unload unmarked cargoes whose destinations are spoken only in a whisper; customs officials are easily bribed. The canal city has also been the site of the few spy exchanges agreed to by the warring sides. Characters venturing there may find temporary allies or much-needed materiel, for the right price. But they would be well advised to go armed, and not alone.

## Blockade Runners

The war in Europe has opened up new opportunities for profit for those willing to dare the Russian navy in the eastern Mediterranean or the northern seas. The French embargo and the Russian blockade, along with the war itself, has slowed the overland trade. Moreover, the Republican Alliance needs rubber, hemp, and other overseas materials to keep its planes flying and its munitions plants operating. For the present, it can pay inflated prices; if the war continues for more than a year, the Grand Prytanie will have to find sources of wealth other than the Habsburg gold it "inherited."

Blockade runners range from idealists interested in the Republican cause (mostly Argentine) to hard headed commercial ventures which may even disapprove of Alliance politics (mostly Covenanter). They do *not* engage in prolonged combat – coming in sight of a Russian steamer means running or hiding if possible, bluffing if practical, and fighting only as a last-ditch effort.

## Spies

The Habsburg spy apparatus is a hodgepodge. Joseph has inherited a dubiously loyal Russian intelligence network informally called *Les Veilleurs,* "the Watchmen." (Naturally, the court language of the German rulers of the Russian Empire is French.) The leader of the *Veilleurs,* Vasily Sergeyevich Zubatov, has built an organization personally loyal to himself, organized in a cell system known only to himself and a few trusted associates. Zubatov was a favorite of Czar Paul's, and has shown little love for the new regime. The current Czar was known to be weighing a decision to force Zubatov's retirement against the loss of his spy network when the war broke out.

Nonetheless, insofar as Zubatov remains reliable, he and the *Veilleurs* are indispensable, and he is if anything more hostile to the Republicans than the Czar. The *Veilleurs* have long infiltrated the Russian Diaspora and the capitals of Europe, but Zubatov had not foreseen the importance of the Republicans or the prytanies until late. It is believed that his highest priorities are to insert an agent in the High Archon's office and to gain access to Coanda-Gurevitch aircraft plans.

The Habsburgs also have the remnants of the Austrian secret police. Too many of these have been discovered and expelled (or worse), and at least one high-ranking official has gone over to the Republicans. Nonetheless, the Czar retains communications with spies in Vienna, and the Russian army has several times displayed knowledge they should not have had. The Austrians and the *Veilleurs* are suspicious of one another, and do not generally work together or directly share information.

The Republicans have naturally had to develop their own intelligence/counterintelligence organization. Called "Argus," it faces the difficulties inherent in reinventing the wheel. Its has had some early successes, notably including the discovery of several *Veilleur* spies and a cache of Strategos (war ministry) documents intended for Russian hands. Most attribute this to the secret police defector alluded to above, but the Archon will not admit that such an individual even exists. The official head of Argus is Marian Rejewski, a Viennese of Polish descent. Rejewski's talents lie primarily in the decryption of coded messages rather than more active espionage, feeding the speculation that there is someone else at work within Argus.

### The Aeolian Corps

The Republican Alliance's elite corps of pilots unites the confederation more than anything else, including the central government. As the Alliance's trump card, the Corps has far more volunteers than it can use. Every plane that rolls off the assembly lines already has a primary and alternate pilot assigned, and replacements for both in training. With every plane needed for the war, however, much of the pilots' real training comes on the job.

For the moment the Aeolians are nothing if not confident. They have never lost a battle, and the Corps is the hero of the hour. Raskova and the other high commanders know that the victory at Pressburg was due as much to surprise as anything. The Corps is now trying to develop tactics to make actual use of the Republics' air superiority. Despite its use of jet engines, the Corps's tactics remain comparatively primitive, because it has never faced airborne opposition. Alliance intelligence suggests that may change soon. Every Aeolian plane carries a final bomb to be used to prevent the capture of an intact fighter.

Aeolian squadrons are hampered by their lack of radio communications. The Corps has developed a number of signaling systems (most successfully, lights similar to Aldiss lamps with colored lenses). Nonetheless, when combat begins, each plane is effectively on its own.



## Science and Medicine

Medical progress in Aeolus has been slowed somewhat by a stronger ethical resistance to vivisection of animals (fostered by the Church) and limits on human experimentation. Physicians have accepted the germ theory of disease (developed by Pasteur while living in Naples), and the first antibiotics have just been found in the lab. Aside from that discovery, however, medicine generally parallels that of our own world circa 1910.

The sciences are comparable to our own in the first or second decade of the 20th century. The Mendelian laws of inheritance have been firmly established (though evolution remains controversial). In physics, special relativity and quantum theory have only recently been developed. (Interestingly, the many-worlds interpretation of quantum theory appears to be dominant among physicists.) Radioactivity remains a laboratory curiosity.

# Campaigning in Aeolus

Campaigns set in Aeolus can range from aerial adventuring and espionage in Europe to Solomon Kane-style adventures of a Covenanter and his faithful allies in the pagan East. The latter type especially holds the possibility of becoming a ***Martial Arts***, ***Horror*** or very bizarre ***Cliffhangers*** campaign ("Let us pray for our heroes as the heathen fiend slowly lowers them into the boiling acid . . .").

## The Good War

If the campaign centers on Europe, its most likely subject will be the Revolution. The Alliance won an important victory at Pressburg, but its fate remains in doubt. This world offers the players a real chance to make history. Military action, espionage, and sabotage are natural opportunities to advance the Republican cause. Player characters may also participate in politics behind the lines. Most Republican characters have strongly held political opinions which can help flesh out a character's motivation. (See sidebar, *Being Republican*, p. 104.)

Away from the military front, adventures can also involve politics and diplomacy. The characters may be sent to Paris, to negotiate French aid or continued neutrality. They may be go abroad to secure critical supplies – a challenge in itself, given inadequate reserves of silver supplemented with IOUs backed by the full faith and credit of an infant regime. (Of course, the easiest solution may turn out to be liberating the supplies from the enemy rather than buying them outright.)

This section assumes that the characters are sympathetic to the rebellion. With modifications, however, the players could choose the other side. Certainly our own history has no lack of radical regimes more dangerous and repressive than what they replaced. Instead of a confederation feeling its way towards tolerance and democracy, the Republican Alliance could be a nascent dictatorship or else well on its way to mob rule. The Habsburg regime, whatever its failings, may be the only chance at a steady, evolutionary pace of reform. Note that even if the campaign doesn't interpret matters that way, the Habsburgs' supporters *will*. The players should be aware that their adversaries are not faceless stormtroopers, but people working from strong, reasoned convictions.

### Fighting for Freedom

If the characters are a military unit, the GM has a great deal of flexibility in designing adventures. Most players will not wish to play a regular infantry unit for any length of time, though the wargamers in the group may be interested in seeing what they can do with company-level tactics. (In this case, the Russians will usually have the Republicans outnumbered, but the Alliance will almost invariably have far better reconnaissance.)

More likely, the characters will be some sort of special operations force, charged with the most unusual and difficult missions. They may have to penetrate deep into enemy territory, thwarting secret aviation research, blowing up ammo dumps, or even recruiting Republican cells to sap the Russian army's will to fight. They may also be sent into disputed territory to engage in guerrilla tactics against the Russian regulars.

### The Kingdom of Louisiane

At the time of independence, the urban populace of Louisiane largely comprised the descendants of French and Spanish fortune hunters, along with British colonists who left the Commonwealth for one reason or another. These people had little interest in which branch of the French royal house ruled Louisiane; what loyalty the citizens afterwards felt towards the monarchy owed more to fear of the alternatives (particularly conquest by the Commonwealth) than to any love of the kingdom. Nonetheless, the monarchy survives, as the House of Orléans has thus far produced a series of highly competent and intelligent kings.

Currently, Louisiane is the richest country in the Western Hemisphere. Compared to the monarchies of Europe, Louisiane is relatively free, but it has no written constitution and the king's theoretical powers are virtually limitless. Nominally, the kingdom extends to the Arctic Circle, but in fact its influence is limited to the area south of a line linking the cities of Chicagaux and Les Anges, which contains some 45 million people.

Louisiane is everything its neighbor to the east is not: flamboyant, loud, irreverent, and profligate. Its capital, increasingly called simply "Orléans," has gained as much from the Commonwealth's suspicion of foreigners as from its location on the Mississippi. While the majority of its trade is wholly legitimate, Orléans is a natural meeting place for smugglers, mercenaries, pirates, and any others who would find the Commonwealth too stifling and South America too unstable. Louisianans of partial African or American Indian ancestry are not uncommon. Orléans also has a substantial community of Commonwealth expatriates. (These are proverbially the citizens most given to excesses of vice and debauchery.)

Louisiane is largely satisfied with its current borders, but friction over its border with the Commonwealth (and, less often, Mexique) occasionally threatens to break into open warfare. The kingdom attempts, with a large degree of success, to keep its relations with European states purely economic, though France and Russia are currently urging the king in no uncertain terms to refuse to trade with the self-proclaimed Republican Alliance. For the moment, its policy is to treat all comers equally, but the threat of an embargo by France and its allies may be persuasive in the long run. The Alliance, by the same token, has high hopes that Louisiane might be the first significant country to recognize the new regime, which would be diplomatically (if not materially) helpful to it. For now, however, the European conflict is far away, and a buoyant economy is the best antidote to what little Republican agitation there is.

## Coanda-Gurevitch Aeolus Mark III

This is an all-purpose military jet fighter-bomber using Gurevitch's light wood and metal frame on Henri Coanda's pioneering jet engine. The Coanda engine is a combination piston engine and jet. A gasoline engine drives a ducted fan which forces air into a pair of combustion chambers. Gasoline is injected into the chambers and ignited as a jet. The engine can run on piston power alone. Thrust is one third normal, and fuel consumption is one fourth normal. Instruments include a barometric altimeter, mechanical airspeed gauge, a compass, and an Aldiss lamp for communication.

*Subassemblies:* Wheels (two). Two wings.

*Propulsion:* One Coanda engine generating 600 lbs. thrust.

*Weaponry:* One TL6 .50-caliber (12.7mm) Skoda machine gun (BoF, HP 8). 400 × .50-caliber AP rounds (HP 8). Fifty 2-lb. dynamite bombs (HP 10).

*Instruments:* TL5 navigational instruments (HP 5).

*Controls:* Mechanical. *Crew stations:* Pilot and observer/bombardier in normal exposed crewstations.

*Occupancy:* Short. *Crew:* Pilot, observer/bombardier.

*Fuel:* Two TL6 13.5 gal. light fuel tanks (left and right wings, fire +2, HP 7), one TL6 54 gal. light fuel tank (Bo, fire +2, HP 25). 81 gallons gasoline (fire 11) for 3 hours operation at maximum thrust.

*Access, Cargo and Empty Space:* 10 cf access, 10 cf cargo, 17 cf empty space in body, 18 cf empty space in wings.

*Volume:* Body (91 cf), wings (20 cf each), wheels (4.55 cf). *Areas:* Body 125, wheels 17, wings 75 each. Total area 292.

*Structure:* Light frame, expensive materials.

*Hit Points:* Body 94, wheels 13, wings 56 each.

*Armor:* Overall: PD 2, DR 4 expensive open frame wood covered by PD 2, DR 3 nonrigid.

*Statistics:* Empty weight 1882.4 lbs. Usual payload 500 lbs. including bombs. Loaded weight 2,992 lbs. (1.5 tons). Volume 135.55 cf. Size modifier +3. Price $29,839. HT 11.

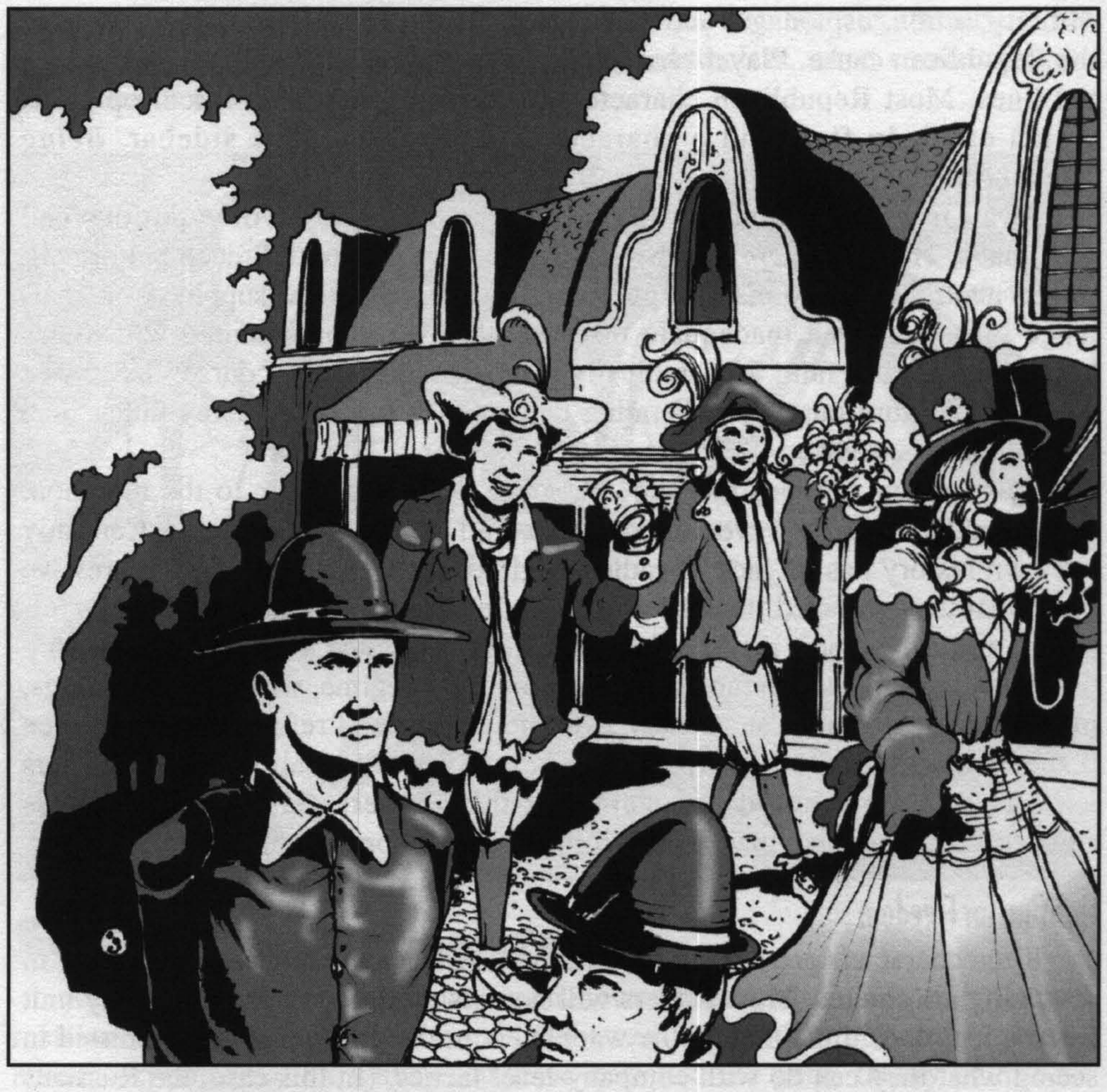
*Ground Performance:* Top speed 120 mph, gAccel 8 mph/s, gDecel 10 mph/s, gMR 1.25, gSR 1. Very high GP, 1/8 off-road speed.

*Air Performance:* Stall speed 35 mph, can fly. Aerial motive thrust 600 lbs. Aerodynamic drag 312. Top speed 120 mph, aAccel 4 mph/s, takeoff run 38 yards, landing run 31 yards, aMR 7, aSR 2, aDecel 28 mph/s.

### Thrilling Air Adventures!

As pilots in the Aeolian Corps, the PCs will be carrying the hopes of the entire Alliance. Pioneers in a new field of combat, the Corps is busily developing missions for its squadrons. Initially these will be reconnaissance and light raids, but the characters can expect things to get more complex as the Russians adapt to the new foe. Adventures may include rescuing a downed pilot and destroying his plane before the Russians can capture it, or experiments with dive-bombing and using machine-guns against ground targets. The characters may also be asked to serve as couriers, or even be sent to "show the flag" (and the Republics' technological prowess) at the capitals of potential allies and wavering neutrals.

Note that as the Aeolians are the heroes of the Revolution, any setbacks they experience will affect the morale of the entire Alliance. The pilots have political and social as well as military responsibilities, and the Corps (and Raskova) will expect the characters to live up to them.



## Trust in God and Keep your Powder Dry

Far from the turmoil in Europe, the American Commonwealth preserves the straightforward values of its Puritan founders. Its merchants, explorers, and missionaries travel to every corner of the world, in search of profits to be made and souls to be saved. Neither the legitimist monarchs nor the rebels, full of pride, stir the soul of the Covenanter. These vanities of the world shall pass, and only the simple truth of God will remain unblemished.

### The Covenanters

To the true Covenanter, the world is a battle. The forces of Satan are strong, for he is the Prince of this world, but for a man of faith there can only be victory or death, not defeat. In the Covenanter campaign, the characters will travel into lands little known to them, to spread the Word. Should it become necessary, they will not hesitate to pursue the evils they discover with the holy wrath the Lord inspires in them. Cannibal cults, the slave trade, a pirate island in the Pacific – any of these may draw the attention of a Covenanter eager to do God's justice. And the justice of the Covenanter God has precious little room for mercy in it.

### Than Curse the Darkness

The evils the Covenanter encounters may be more than mortal. Far beyond Christian shores, who knows what deviltry or black magic may still be practiced by unbaptized heathen? While the true solution is to bring the savages to Christ, they may first need to be rescued from the demon they worship as a god, or the witch doctor who holds them in thrall. The unexplored corners of the world may still hold mindless zombies or soulless vampires. Against the darkness, the Covenanter pits his strength, his skills with gun and knife, and the power of his faith.

## Aeolus Timeline

**1688** – The Divine Wind blows the other way, William of Orange returns to Holland. James II of England remains King. Louis XIV invades Germany and the Spanish Nether-lands, beginning the War of the League of Augsburg. New York and New Jersey are added to the Dominion of New England.

**1692** – Victory of the Anglo-French fleets over the Dutch at La Hogue.

**1693** – Peace of Ruiswick confirms French possession of the Spanish Netherlands and Lorraine.

**1700** – Louis XIV's grandson, Phillip of Anjou, declared King of Spain; beginning of the War of Spanish Succession.

**1701** – Death of James II of England, the Catholic Duke of Norfolk, Edward Howard, becomes Regent for the young James III.

**1704** – Franco-Bavarian victory at Blenheim. French navy bombards Amsterdam.

**1705** – Peace of Paris confirms French control of the Rhineland and Savoy; Phillip of Anjou confirmed as King of Spain; Naples transferred to the Pope; Austria takes Milan; House of Savoy transferred to Sicily and Sardinia; Dutch East Indies transferred to Spain.

**1712** – Death of the dauphin and his heir leaves King Philip of Spain heir to the French throne.

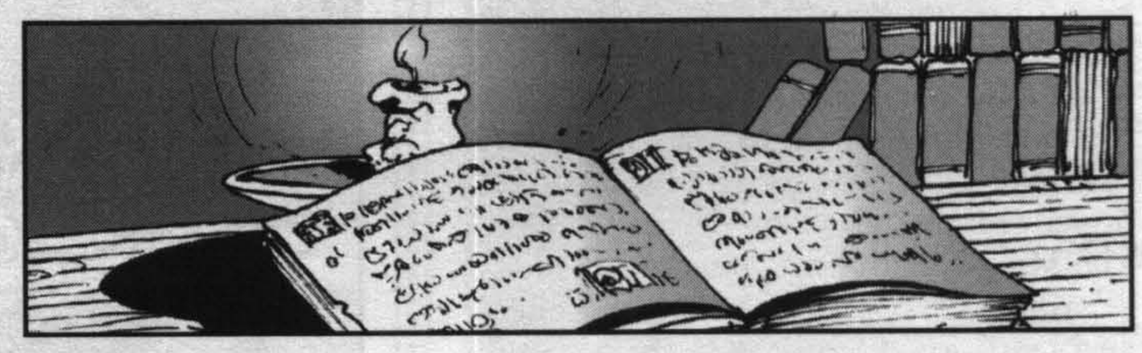
**1713** – Reorganization of the Carolinas and Virginia into the Dominion of Virginia.

**1715** – Death of Louis XIV; Philip VII of France unites the western German states, France and Spain under one rule. Rebellion of Calvinist Scots and Dissenter nobles against King James III crushed. Act of Union joins England and Scotland in the United Kingdom of Great Britain.

### C'est La Guerre, or Does Wealth Matter?

While this chapter includes information about starting wealth and cost of living, the most important fact for characters embroiled in the Revolution is that they are in the middle of a war. True, even in wartime, it is generally better to be rich than poor. But money in the bank may become inaccessible, or may be taxed or inflated away without notice if the war effort requires it. Prices may vary wildly: what was $1,000 in gold yesterday may not buy a single egg today, if rumors of a food shortage strike your character's locale. An invasion threat may lead to looting, or a player character may willingly sacrifice valuables for the greater good. (Silver plate can buy imported rubber from Covenanter profiteers, while silk dresses are a perfect material to turn into parachutes for the brave Aeolian Corps.)

If the PCs have joined the military, their personal wealth matters even less. The army will provide clothing and equipment – though in a hastily organized corps like the Alliance's, what the character brings with him may still be important. Pay may be saved or squandered, but in the field everyone will eat the same meals and endure the same conditions regardless of the state of his bankroll. When the war is over, wealth and pay will matter again – if the characters are on the winning side. If not, it is likely that they will all have to struggle to avoid prison or execution and escape to a faraway land – where they will likely start over with a wealth of zero.



### Clerical Magic for Puritans

In a Covenanter campaign involving supernatural evil or other unnatural menaces, a Puritan reverend can provide holy artillery. To properly use Clerical Magic (pp. R100-112), a Puritan minister needs no Power Investiture other than the True Faith advantage (p. CI47). Puritan clerics will not (and need not) use holy symbols, relics, or similar idolatrous mummery. Hymns (especially psalms), appropriately intoned Scriptural passages, and prayer are the Puritan cleric's stock in trade. A GM would be fully justified in treating all Puritan clerical magic as Miraculous Magic (pp. R113-115).

## Being Republican

The Republican movement grew out of philosophical and religious precursors in early 20th-century Italy. Its key idea is that of the equality of human beings as creations in God's image. It has explicitly rejected the idea of the Divine Right of Kings, or any other suggestion that any particular individuals were created to rule others. Naturally, given its Catholic roots, it has no special problem with the idea that some are called to give guidance. In the affairs of Caesar, barring explicit divine inspiration, Republicans believe that the people themselves must somehow find those so gifted.

In the Alliance, most prytanies and archons are elected, though the rules vary a great deal by region. In a few small areas, the locals have chosen to use unanimous consent (which in practice requires some fairly forceful politicking behind the scenes to get anything done), lots drawn to select randomly among eligible candidates, and even endurance contests (on the theory that the person who can hold vigil the longest or endure the greatest hardship wishes to serve the people best).

Aside from a general belief in democratic ideals, Republican ideas vary widely. Players may wish to consult political pieces written during the American, French, and Russian revolutions, as well as the Spanish Civil War (particularly Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*), to see the range of political opinion possible in a nominally united revolutionary army. However, the Republican movement does not touch explicitly on economic theory, which has not yet really developed as a discipline. Moreover, there is no concept of an all-encompassing "general will" or "dictatorship of the proletariat."

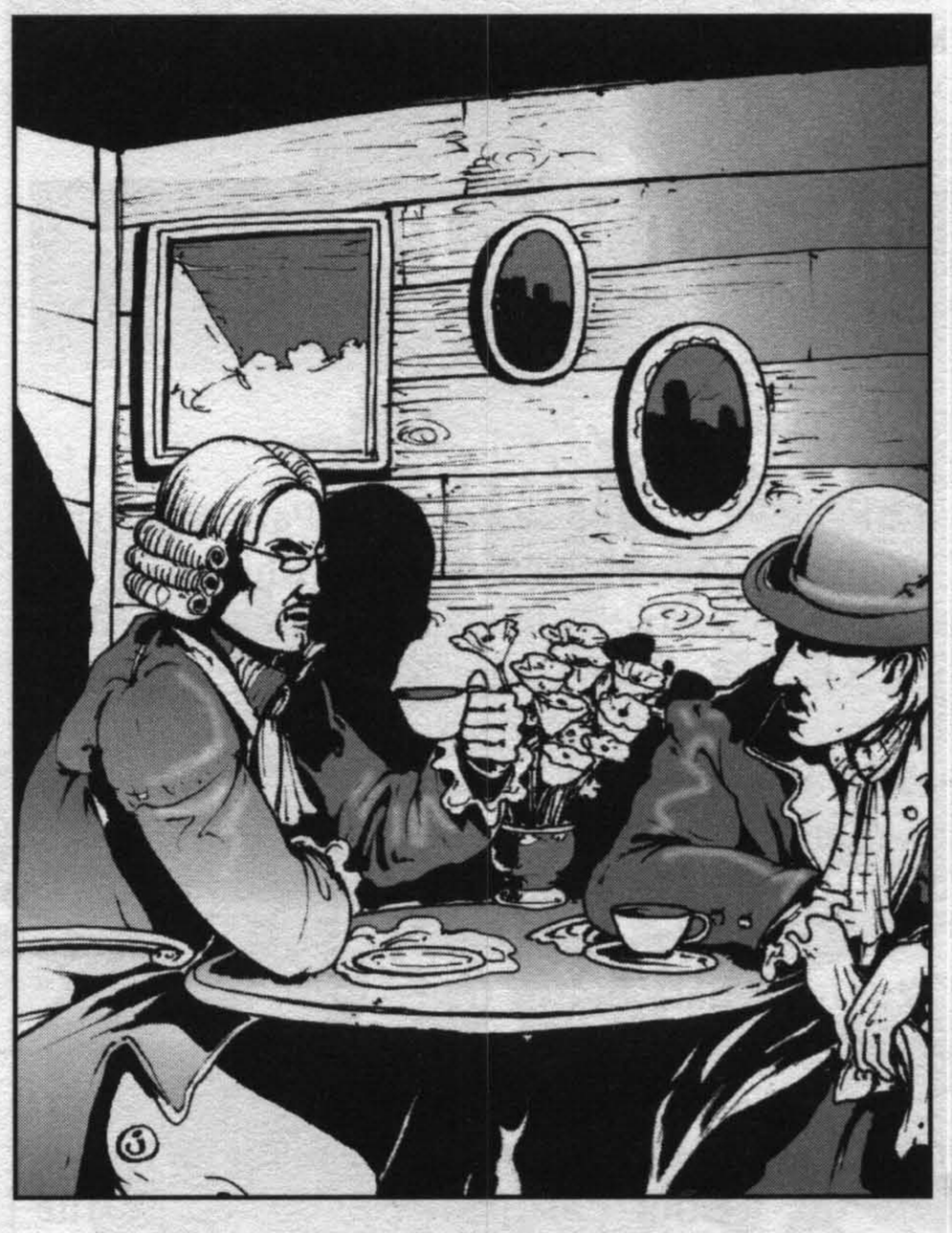
Major schools of thought have not yet organized enough to be called factions. The Minimalist school supports a national system of courts, schools, churches, and (voluntary) military forces, but demands virtual anarchy otherwise. The various Nationalist schools believe that the ancient kingdoms absorbed by the Habsburgs (on whose borders no two schools can agree) should be the basis for the boundaries of the new republics. The followers of Santieri (nicknamed the Gray Don for his lordly manner and muted clothing) call the state a "machine" for handling issues too complex for individuals. They are suspicious of constitutional limitations on government (since the nature of future complexity cannot be predicted) and strongly in favor of a technocratic state administered by impartial bureaucrats. (Centrum will like them.)

*Continued on next page . . .*

**1736** – Dominions of Virginia and New England unified; Pennsylvania's charter revoked and the Dominion of America established under royal control with its capital at Philadelphia.

**1738** – John Wesley exiled to America; converts the Iroquois to Protestantism.

**1740** – Concordat of Salzburg: Phillip recognizes Marie-Thérèse as Queen of Austria and Hungary in exchange for putting the Catholic Charles Albert of Bavaria on the Prussian throne. The War of the Prussian Succession results, Frederick II is deposed, and Charles Albert becomes King of Prussia and Bavaria.



**1745** – Act of Reunion rejoins the Anglican and Catholic rites. Protestants, Dissenters and Scots rebel.

**1746** – Battle of Culloden crushes Protestant rebels; virtually all British Protestants are transported to the American Colonies.

**1747** – Charles of Lorraine made King of the Netherlands by the French; many Dutch resisters exiled to the Cape Colony.

**1758** – King José I of Portugal overthrown; Ferdinand I invited by the nobles to become King of Portugal; the Marquis de Pombal and José escape; José I becomes King of Brazil and Pombal its first Minister-President.

**1812** – Russians found Fort Ross in California.

**1824** – Carnot invents the steam engine.

**1828** – Death of Tchaka Zulu leaves Natal in chaos; Boer South Africa expands rapidly.

**1833** – King Ferdinand dies without a male heir; Charles X becomes King of France and Spain; Loyalist Spanish object in favor of the Princess Isabelle.

**1840** – Charles IV's grandson, Richard IV, becomes King of Great Britain; Richard IV promulgates the Disability Acts in the Dominion of America, sparking acts of protest.

**1847** – American rebellion begins; British troops defeated in the Shenandoah Valley by American General Robert E. Lee.

**1848** – Beginning of the the Second War of the Spanish Succession.

**1849** – Austria and Russia intervene on the side of the rebels; Austrian general Kossuth takes Munich, Russians conquer Poland and take Berlin. Covenant of Right declared by rebels in the American Dominion; William Lloyd Garrison first Lord Protector.

**1852** – French defeated at Leipsic by the Russians and Austrians; Peace of Vienna gives Poland to Russia, separates Prussia and Bavaria, neutralizes Germanies and north Italy, makes Isabelle Queen of Spain, and recognizes independence of American Commonwealth and Louisiane. France retains Latin American colonies.

**1863** – War between Louisiane and the American Commonwealth. Generals McClellan and Burnside of the Commonwealth are routed by General Ouatie Debout, and the border is fixed at the Appalachians.

**1867** – Commonwealth mercenaries and adventurers drift into Latin America, aid anti-French rebels; Juares becomes Princeps of Mexique.

**1876** – Gold discovered in Russian America near Tainstvo [Sacramento]. Russian colonization of America increases.

**1877** – Louis XV becomes King of France. John Astor founds a Commonwealth trading fort on Singapore Island.

**1878** – Austro-Turkish War ends in Austrian victory; Balkan states become independent after Russian protests.

**1881** – Louisiane and Mexique fight frontier war; Basse-Californie and Les Anges confirmed as Louisianan.

**1894** – War of the Russian Succession begins.

**1895** – War spreads as France and Austria clash in the Germanies.

**1896** – Faced with widespread rebellions in South America, France grants its remaining colonies there independence.

**1897** – Paul defeats Nicholas, who is killed in battle. Grand Duke Alexander, Nicholas's brother, flees to Russian America and declares it the independent Grand Duchy of Alyeska. War in Europe ends.

**1906** – Benedetto Croce begins works on republican philosophy in Rome.

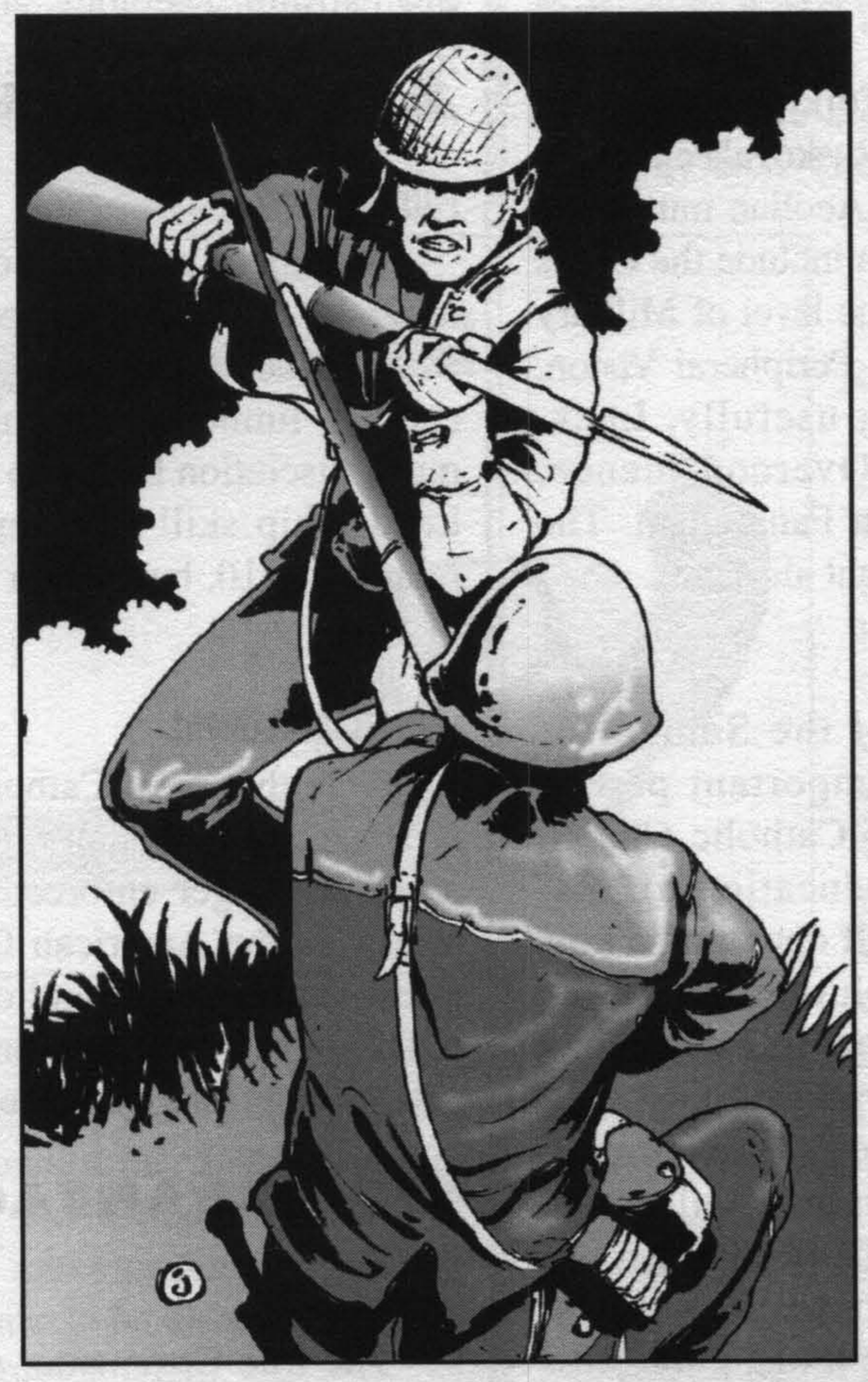
**1916** – Rudolf III becomes King of Austria.

**1920** – Great Compromise between Rudolf III and Republican *prytanies*. Electorate for Austrian Diet expanded.

**1927.** Maximilian II becomes King of Austria.

**1930** – M. I. Gurevitch and Henri Coanda meet in Florence, begin working on heavier-than-air craft.

**1933** – Marina Raskova makes the first successful heavier-than-air flight in Gurevitch and Coanda's *Aeolus*.



**1938** – Death of Czar Paul II; his son-in-law Joseph Habsburg becomes Czar Joseph I.

**1939** – Great Rebellion breaks out after Maximilian dissolves the Austrian Diet.

**1940** – Jan Masaryk elected "Archon of the Republic." Austrian army refuses to fire on the Vienna *prytanie*, Maximilian flees to Russia, Republican Alliance formed, Masaryk is elected High Archon.

**1941** – Russian invasion stopped by the intervention of a squadron of Coanda-Gurevitch planes. Raskova's C-G Aeolus III, *Angel of Liberty,* becomes symbol of the Republican Alliance. Russian forces in Siberia ordered west.

## Being Republican (Continued)

Even the method of electing governments is the subject of fierce disagreements. For example, Santieri's followers argue that instead of geographic or ethnic constituencies, any voluntary group of citizens beyond a certain minimum number be permitted to send a representative to the Grand Prytanie. The Nationalists believe in indirect election by national prytanies.

Naturally, given its origins, Republicanism does not have the anticlerical strain European modernism had in our own world. The Alliance believes in tolerance to minimize the strains among multiple Christian denominations, Muslims, and Jews, but true secularism is a fairly unusual worldview.

## Aeolus' World of the Mind

The rise of the Republican movement was accompanied by a literary renaissance (currently on hold in the Alliance for lack of paper). This world's literature gives a more prominent and matter-of-fact place to religion than our own 20th-century literature, though outright religious treatises tend to be the province of the clergy. Particularly in the Americas (except in the Commonwealth) and the Republican Alliance, authors tend to assume a fairly optimistic view of historical progress.

In France, the Royal Academy acts as the arbiter of literary merit, favoring authors who successfully imitate forms laid down during *la gloire* of the 18th century. French authors who experiment with more modern forms must contend with periods of royal censorship and academic disdain, or emigrate. Republican political tracts are forbidden, though news reports about the Alliance envoys often manage to include information about their views.

The "air thriller" has become a newly popular story genre across the world. Where direct reference to the war would be impolitic, these stories usually depict a private aviator (who has somehow acquired an *Aeolus*) flying into adventures in far Asia or Africa.

Without Adam Smith's work (Smith's father appears to have emigrated to America) the field of economics developed much more slowly in Aeolus. Even now, political thinkers appear to consider economic issues to be a matter of minting money, establishing laws governing contracts and taxation, and perhaps establishing refuges for the poor. Most countries retain high import duties, and France and Russia have internal duties as well. The Republican Alliance is a free trade area for now, but the republics retain the right to impose customs duties in the future.

# Characters

## Typical Character Types

### Aeolian

These pilots are the legends and folk heroes of the Republican Alliance. Thanks to Marina Raskova's example, female Aeolians are fairly common. An Aeolian must have a status of at least 4, and advantages must include the Corps itself as a 25-point Patron as well as some level of Military Rank. The pilot may have Night Vision, Peripheral Vision, Combat Reflexes, and perhaps most usefully, Luck. Common disadvantages include Overconfidence, Impulsiveness and possibly Republican Fanaticism. The Aeolian must, of course, take Piloting (light airplane).



### Jesuit

Members of the Society of Jesus play an important part in many aspects of Catholic Church activity, from education to missionary work. A Jesuit might find himself operating a hospital near the front lines of the Revolution, providing humanitarian aid and religious comfort to imprisoned Republicans in France, or rescuing persecuted Catholics from the American Commonwealth. Like the Covenanters, they can often be found far from Christian civilization, making forays into unknown territory. The Jesuit order is a 30-point Patron. All members must have the Clerical Investment advantage, and should have a -15 point Vow (Triple Vow: poverty, chastity, and obedience) and a -15 point Duty to the Order and the Church. (While Jesuits also take a vow of poverty, they are generally provided with sufficient operating expenses, and therefore they do not get points for being Poor.) Jesuits should also have Latin at IQ or better. Most Espionage skills are useful (though the modern Church strongly disapproves of Interrogation by torture). Disadvantages sometimes seen include Fanaticism, Intolerance, and Pacifism.

### Covenanter Merchant

The world has gone to Hell, and only the American Commonwealth stands fast. While subjects of the Lord Protector come in all varieties, the true Covenanter retains the ideals which brought his ancestors to America. Fanaticism goes with the territory, though a Covenanter can be kind and generous to those whose souls he hopes to save. His true hatred extends only to the Whore of Babylon, the Catholic Church, or to truly barbaric heathen practices like human sacrifice. The desire to be "in the world, but not of it," has not prevented some Covenanters from becoming rich through industrial or mercantile activity, and faith is no hindrance to sharp dealing. Wealth and accompanying Miserliness are not uncommon, but outright Greed is rarer. Religious Intolerance is very common. Covenanter skills might include Guns (Rifle), Seamanship, Theology, and of course Merchant.

## Advantages

### Military Rank see p. B22

Members of the Aeolian Corps are effectively two ranks higher than their equivalents in the surface forces with respect to pay and precedence at formal occasions. In combat, limited communications capabilities require that much discretion be left to individual pilots. As a result, the Leadership skill requirement for field grade officers is reduced to 10, but such a promotion also requires Piloting of 15+.

### Clerical Investment see p. B19

Note that most Catholic Europeans will not recognize or respect a Protestant ordination, though the laws against it are no longer enforced. This goes doubly for Catholic priests in the American Commonwealth, where a known priest has the equivalent of a -15 point Social Stigma (see p. B27). (Points should only be given if the campaign will take place primarily in the Commonwealth, of course.)

## Disadvantages

### Code of Honor see p. B31

The true Covenanter will not use the means of Satan to achieve Heaven's ends. A typical Covenanter Code of Honor includes: Never lie (though one need not speak the whole truth); protect the innocent when possible, and avenge them when not; the words of the unrighteous are like the wind, so dealing out retribution for an insult is vanity; bow your head before God, but before nothing of Man; swear no oaths, but die before breaking your simple word. -10 points.

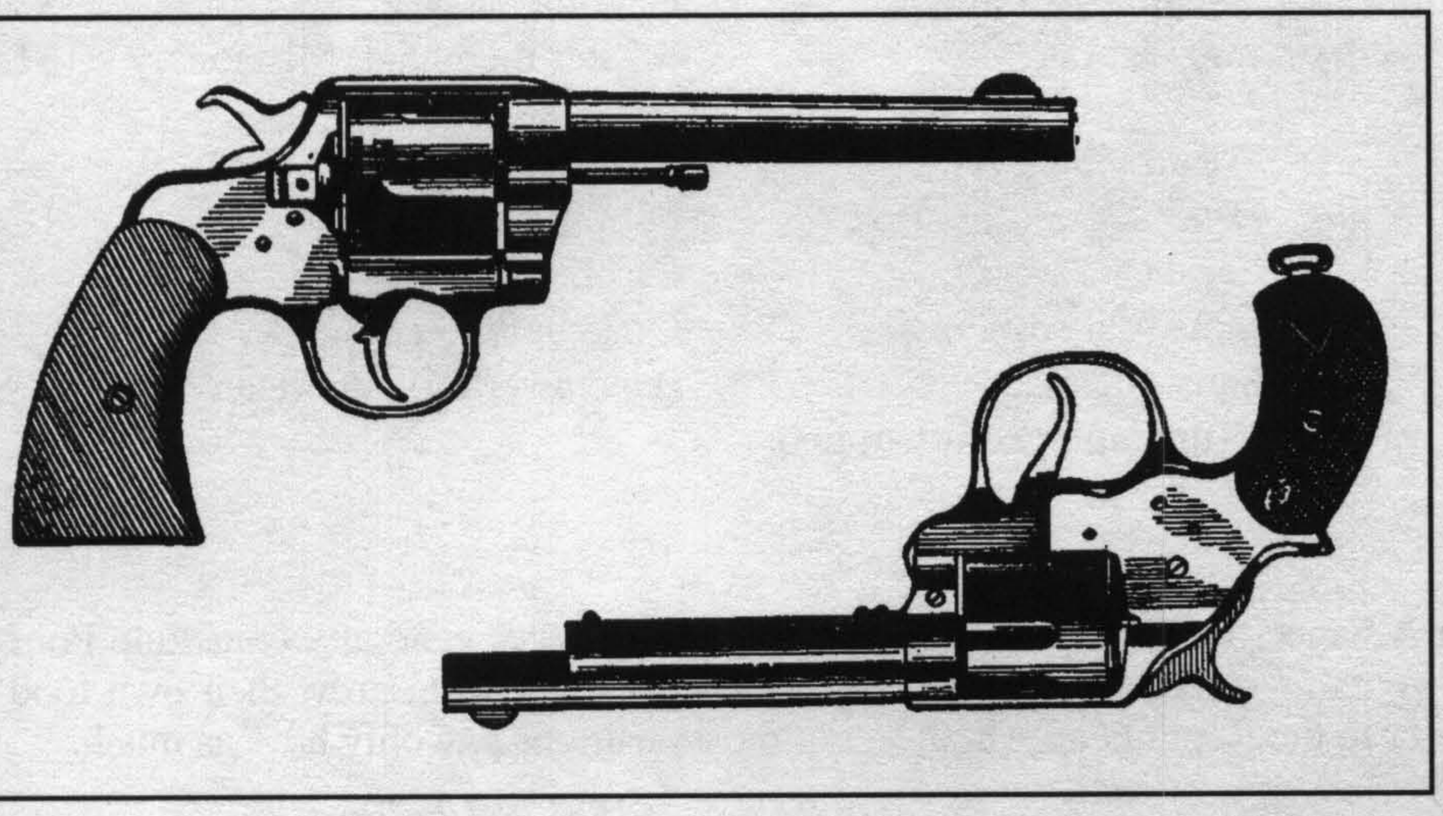
### Social Stigma (Religious) see p. B27

Religion remains a major element in the lives of most of the inhabitants of Aeolus. Even in the Republican Alliance, those who belong to minority religions suffer somewhat by being treated as Second-class citizens (-5 points). In France or Russia, dissenting Christians are no longer imprisoned, but they are Second-class citizens and Jews and Muslims constitute Minority groups (-10 points). In the Commonwealth, non-Protestant locals are Outsiders (-15 points), transient foreigners (at least in port cities) are treated as Minorities.

## Skills

### Languages

French is widespread in Aeolus; for non-Francophone inhabitants it defaults to IQ-4. South American rural dialects of Spanish pose significant comprehension difficulties, defaulting to Spanish learned in Spain at -2. For anyone other than a sailor or missionary, knowledge of Asian and African languages will generally require an Unusual Background.



### Advertising see p. T:FT103

This is the skill of the propaganda artist. Such people are much in demand by both sides of the Revolution, as well as among Covenanter and Catholic missionaries. It should be noted that propaganda does not have to be dishonest, though it can be; it is primarily a style of presentation.

### Theology see p. B62

Most Western countries have an activist, established church, and as a result most people in Aeolus are more acquainted with their own theology than the inhabitants of our own world. Informal theological discussions are only slightly less common in Aeolus wineshops than sports arguments are here. For inhabitants of Aeolus, Theology defaults to IQ-4, and is a Mental/Average skill rather than Mental/Hard.

### Martial Arts

Europe and America have had significantly less involvement in east Asia in Aeolus than they did in our history. Commonwealth merchants are active in the Asian trade, but are generally too transient (and too ethnocentric) to study local fighting styles. Asian martial arts remain essentially unknown in the West; to have them at all would require an Unusual Background. Only European fighting methods such as the French *savate* are available otherwise.

# Economics, Jobs, and Wealth

## Currency and Prices

Prices here are given in the French silver *louis* (symbolized "$"). The *louis* has remained relatively stable since the kingdom resumed enforcing the laws on precious metal content during the early 20th century. American currencies tend to be based on the *louis,* though the name varies and American coins are more often debased. The Russian ruble is equal to approximately half a *louis*. The Republican Alliance has issued paper certificates (redeemable in silver) called *thalers,* which promise redemption for one silver *louis* when the war is over. For the present, they are trading for silver at 500:1. As earlier noted (see sidebar, "*C'est La Guerre,* or Does Wealth Matter?" p. 103) money is often not the primary determinant of cost under revolutionary conditions, and prices may vary without warning. Individual republics have also issued their own money, with varying success.

| | |
|---|---|
| Skoda .36 revolver | $30 |
| Lebel .441 rifle | $80 |
| .441 rifle shells (144) | $15 |
| Sausage and beans, Pressburg | $0.30 |
| Wiener schnitzel, Vienna | $1 |
| Expensive meal, Paris | $10 |
| Bottle of wine, Hungary | $0.25 |
| Bottle of *vin ordinaire*, France | $0.50 |
| Bottle of Dom Perignon, France | $15 |
| Cheap inn, per night | $1 |
| Nice hotel, per night | $5 |
| Luxury hotel, per night | $12 |
| Pocket watch | $2 |
| Electric lantern | $2.5 |
| 50' hempen rope | $0.25 |
| Milan to Paris, by motor coach | $6 |
| Budapest to Vienna, by riverboat | $4 |
| Work clothes | $2 |
| Typical bourgeois clothes | $10 |
| Boots | $1.5 |
| Private boat | $500 |
| Fuel alcohol, denatured (1 *pinte*, = approx. one quart or liter.) | $0.10 |

## Social Status and Cost of Living

This table covers the Republican Alliance (and assumes that inflation has stabilized). Wealth is concentrated much more in places like France and Russia, where someone of status 6 or 7 might need ten times the income of his Republican equivalent, while a peasant of status -2 might scrape by on half the Alliance figure.

| *Level* | *Republican Alliance* | *France* | *Commonwealth* | *Cost of Living* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | | King | | |
| 7 | High Archon | Royal Duke | Lord Protector | $10,000 |
| 6 | Archon, Head of Aeolian Corps | Duke | Judge | $5,000 |
| 5 | Aeolian, Member of Great Prytany | Count | Popular evangelist | $2,000 |
| 4 | General | Baron, Chevalier | Admiral | $1,000 |
| 3 | Aeronautical engineer, *prytany* member | General, Admiral | General, Mayor | $500 |
| 2 | Catholic priest, famous Republican philosophe | Intendant | Master merchant, Missionary | $150 |
| 1 | Revolutionary soldier | Wealthy bourgeois | Minister | $60 |
| 0 | Ordinary citizen | Ordinary bourgeois | Farmer/Industrial worker | $30 |
| -1 | Poor citizen | Peasant | Farmhand | $20 |
| -2 | No equivalent | Industrial worker | Open heretic or doubter | $10 |
| -3 | No equivalent | Sans-chemise (unemployed urban poor) | (Unconverted) American Indian | $8 |

## Jobs Table

This table is specific to the Republican Alliance. In France, farmer and industrial worker generally constitute Poor or Struggling jobs rather than average; Russia contains serfs whose only compensation is the right to grow their own food as well as their masters'. The Americas are closer to the Republican Alliance, but most positions pay only 80% as much.

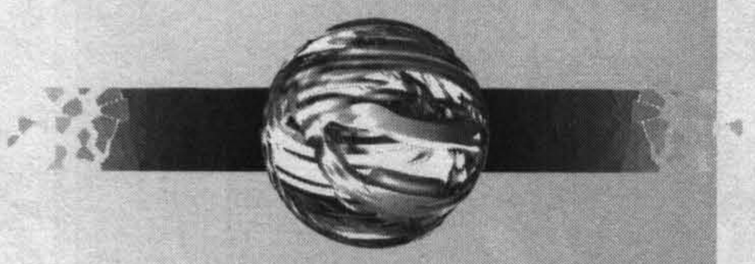
| *Job (prerequisites), Monthly Income* | *Success Roll* | *Critical Failure* |
|---|---|---|
| *Poor Jobs* | | |
| Farmhand (ST 10+), L10 + room and board | ST | LJ |
| Factory apprentice (DX 7+, ST 5+), L15 | DX | LJ |
| *Struggling Jobs* | | |
| Messenger (IQ 7+, DX 7+), L30 | DX | -1i/2d, LJ |
| Store clerk (no attribute below 7), L35 | IQ | -2i/-4i, LJ |
| Parish priest (Clerical Investment), L25 | IQ-1 | penance/censure by bishop |
| *Average Jobs* | | |
| Soldier (Combat Skill 7+), L30 + room and board | PR | i/LJ |
| Factory worker (DX 8+, ST 6+), L75 | Best DX, ST | -2i/-3i, LJ |
| Small farmer* (Agronomy 12+, ST 9+), L65 | 13 | -2i/-6i |
| Shopowner* (Merchant 12+), L80 | PR+2 | -1i/lose store, debtor's prison |
| Steamboat pilot (Seamanship 12+, DX 9+), L70 | DX | -1i/3d (boat wrecked), LJ |
| *Comfortable Job* | | |
| Airplane Mechanic (Mechanic 10+, DX 10+), L50 + room and board | DX | -1i/2d, LJ |
| Pilot (Pilot 10+, DX 12+), L80 + room and board | Pilot | -1I/4d (lose plane) |
| Surgeon* (Surgery 10+. DX 13+), L600 | DX | -2i/-51, Reputation -2 |
| University professor (any Scientific skill 13+), L400 | IQ-1 | -2i/-3i, LJ |
| Great Prytany member (Politics 11+), L300 | PR-3 | LJ/LJ |
| Steamship captain* (Shiphandling 10+, Navigation 8+), L800 | worst PR | -2i/3d, LJ (shipwreck) |
| Popular *philosophe** (Bard 10+, Writing 8+), L500 | PR+2 | -2i/-4i, Reputation -2 |
| *Wealthy Jobs* | | |
| Merchant Factor (Merchant 14+, trading organization in lucrative market), L1,500 | Merchant+3 | -3i/lose factory, debtor's prison |
| Fleet Owner (Merchant 15+, fleet), L2,500 | Merchant+4 | -6i (one ship lost)/fleet bankrupt |

# 7 CENTRUM

## Centrum Dark, Centrum Light

Centrans as presented here and in ***GURPS Time Travel*** are not nice people. They are faintly paranoid, often narrow-minded, and definitely ruthless. (Or, in their eyes: concerned with defense, impatient with archaic or senseless practices, and pragmatic in their determination to accomplish their goals.) It is very easy to make them yet more villainous: all they need is a suitably vicious ideology.

GMs who want a nicer Centrum, perhaps as a home base for PCs, can transform it without too much trouble: credit its people with genuine good intentions towards other timelines, and give them more regard for individuals in place of their end-justifies-the-means mentality. Play up their opposition to racial and religious intolerance, and their devotion to equality of opportunity. Centrum Light could even have a democratically-elected Parliament in place of the Forum, but it might be more interesting to keep it strictly meritocratic. (See also *The Federation*, sidebar, p. 121.) Homeline can be replaced with a more villainous adversary, or removed from the setting altogether. Or kept the same, with both sides coming to see past the nasty stereotypes each has of the other.



## The White Ship

King Henry I, ablest son of William the Conqueror, suffered his greatest reverse when the "White Ship" sank, sending his heir William the Ætheling to the bottom of the ocean. Although he tried to get the crown passed to his daughter and her second husband, on Henry's death England endured a civil war and two decades of anarchy.

In Centrum, the White Ship arrived safely in port. Henry I was followed peacefully by his son William III, who proved an acceptable if not inspired king. William's son Robert "the Crusader" spent literally all of his brief reign outside England, but his Queen gave the realm stable, effective government for more than half a century.

*If this is the best of all possible worlds, what are the others like?*
*– Voltaire*

The origin and focus of a paratemporal empire, Centrum has spent the last century sending explorers, spies, businessmen, and occasionally soldiers to dozens of parallel timelines. Having rebuilt and reunified its home planet after a cataclysmic war, Centrum was poised for major changes even before the recent discovery of another world of parachronic travelers. Today, in 2015, the conflict with Secundus (which calls itself "Homeline") is a primary concern.

# Centran Society

Although their society encompasses settlements on many timelines, the vast majority of Centrans still live on their home line, also called Centrum. World and government are seldom distinguished, and there is no distinction between government and society. The contemporary world-state is actually fairly recent, not much more than a century old, but its roots go deep into history.

## History

Centrum perceives itself as a radical break with its past, and really cares about history only because of parachronics – for which purpose the histories of other timelines matter at least as much as its own. A typical Centran knows rather less about his own history than a typical 20th-century American.



If they compared textbooks, the two would eventually discover that their worlds diverged in 1120, when the heir to the throne of England was or was not drowned. Shifting royal marriages and wars rapidly changed every detail of history. The English monarchs made themselves masters of northern and western France before the Hundred Years' War could even begin.

## Growth and Unification

The Anglo-French Empire was perhaps the strongest realm in Europe, but that barely allowed it to escape conquest when the Mongols arrived, less than a century after its formation. Unable to expand into Mongol-dominated Central Europe, the Anglo-French turned to the reports of a far western country brought by a Norwegian princess, sending ships across the Atlantic to explore a vast New World which they named *Terranova*.

The superior Asian technology brought by the Mongols combined with royal patronage of the early scientist Roger Bacon (see sidebar) to enhance the brilliant culture of the High Middle Ages. Like its age of exploration, Centrum's scientific and industrial revolutions progressed more slowly than ours, but began so early that it remained 100-150 years ahead of our own history down to the 20th century.

Anglo-French hegemony in Europe took centuries to achieve, in part because while the Empire's French subjects joined in the power politics of Europe, the English preferred to concentrate on the sea. After a succession war nearly broke the Empire apart, the crown tried to bind together the Empire's disparate components using new techniques such as steam transport, mass education, and drawing all the noble families to the fabulous imperial palace at Kensington. As merchants and industrialists rose to prominence, they were encouraged to join the nobility by the crown practice of granting new titles associated with huge fiefs overseas – a practice which led to "freelance imperialism" legitimated from London after the fact. By the mid-19th century, the Empire encompassed the globe, and its literally unrivaled power and wealth disguised internal divisions growing beneath the unified façade.

## The Last War

In 1902, it all went to hell. Even today, it is uncertain just who decided that the way to achieve full independence was to decapitate the imperial government. The nuclear obliteration of Kensington Palace, and London with it, began a decade of war among would-be successors, devastating the planet with bioweapons which multiplied out of anyone's control.

The only region left unscathed was the southern continent of Terraustralis (much more densely populated than our Australia), where a military-technical cabal, "the Centrum," took control. The Centrum used Terraustralis's isolation to withdraw from the conflict, and imposed draconian social controls to stop the spread of disease and maintain food distribution. Once its scientists had devised protections against the war germs, the Centrum ventured out into a shattered world. It resolved to rebuild, and to prevent future wars by imposing a unified, rational culture under a single authority. The wholly unexpected discovery of parallel timelines provided the means to accomplish this task.

## To Other Worlds

Linda Minott was the first Centran scientist to investigate anomalies in exotic experiments with high energy densities (known since the previous century) which gave the secret to creating parachronic fields. Parachronics gave access to the untapped resources of Earths where humanity had never evolved and, in the

### Eleanor of Aquitaine

In Homeline's history Eleanor of Aquitaine brought France' southwest as her dowry to King Henry II of England, who already owned its north. Centrum's Eleanor was even more important. She ruled the Anglo-French realms for most of the period from 1149 to 1172, first while her husband King Robert I was off on Crusade, then as regent for their infant son. As Queen Mother to the weak King William IV and then *his* son Henry II, she continued to dominate Anglo-French politics through a long life.

Eleanor proved the cleverest politician of the era. She coordinated the alliance with the German Emperor and the other great French nobles, and proposed the unprecedented step of dismembering France completely when it lay at their mercy. By her death in 1204, she had secured England's French possessions, including the old royal domain as well as her inheritance.

### Roger Bacon

Roger Bacon's precocious scientific writings had little influence in our 13th century. In Centrum, royal patronage gave Bacon his own college (Queen's) at Oxford, with an empirical bent to its studies of medicine and natural philosophy. Initially lacking the mathematics to provide scientific advances in more than fits and starts, Centrum's scientific revolution was a prolonged affair. The greatest success of the early Baconians was Hilary Walsingham's 1348 announcement that bubonic plague is carried by fleas and rats. Though too late to do more than cushion the initial shock of the Black Death, and that mostly in England, this great discovery did reduce the virulence of subsequent outbreaks and greatly speeded recovery.

### After the Apocalypse

62% of the world's people died between 1902 and 1912. Today, more than a century after the Last War, the global population is still substantially below 2 billion (it was 4.2 billion before the war), and the tropics, especially, are still thinly populated. Centrum has recovered from the experience economically, thanks to parachronics, and the Ecology Service eventually healed most of the physical damage. But it still feels the psychological effects: its determination to avoid the devastation of war on its home territory knows no bounds. Centrum accepted the existence of other Earths as long as there was no possibility they could become a threat, but hostility to Secundus was inevitable.

## Thinking Like A Centran

Centrum's basic values are order, rationality, and success. Order is identified with the unified state, and its natural opposites are anarchy and war. Most Centrans even view technological progress with suspicion – innovations should come slowly in order to minimize social disruption. Rationality means facing reality, and is manifest in successfully accomplishing one's goals. Centrum admires unclouded vision and unflinching will; thus, ruthlessness is effectively a *virtue* to them.

Centrum does value human life; it prefers to avoid killing people although it does not go to the same lengths as Infinity Unlimited. It has no patience with discrimination on any grounds except talent. The good of society is assumed to outweigh the good of any single member, and a major cause for concern is the growth of personal ambition and corruption in the upper ranks. The bulk of the Centran population is reasonably well-off, content and loyal, and the disaffected are more likely to seek to rise within the system than to change it from outside: such reforms as the Lockridge Protocols demonstrate that Centrum *is* capable of altering policy.

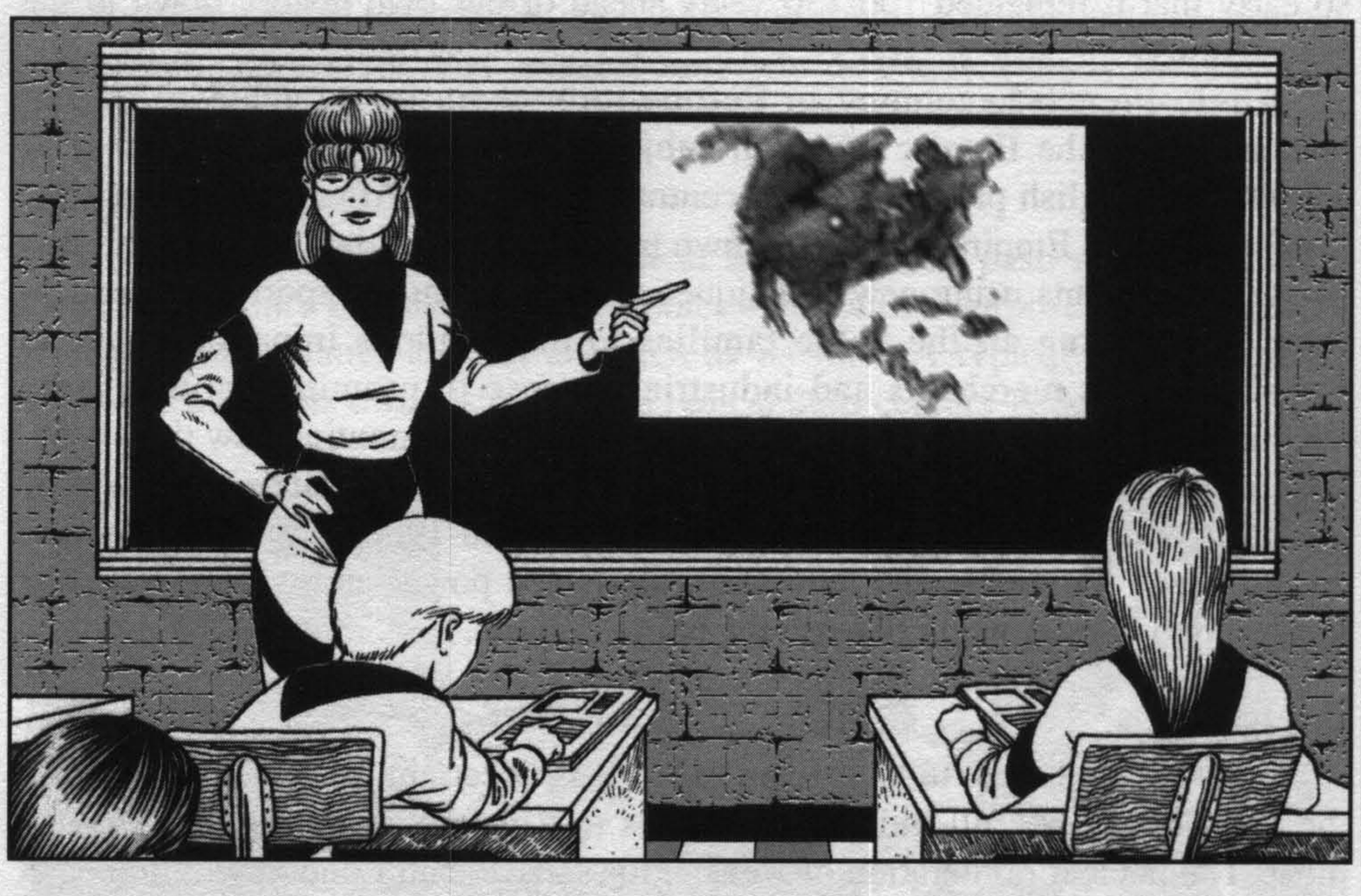
Living in a culturally uniform society, Centrans are generally narrow-minded, and tend to blame disagreements on irrationality in their opponents. Even Centrans of opposing philosophies have trouble coming to grips with each other's arguments, and they all find it difficult to conceive of a viewpoint which does not share most of their assumptions.

Centrans are expansionist for different reasons: some see gaining control of other worlds as a preemptive strike against any possible threat, some see it as a humanitarian intervention, and some think any increase of power is its own justification. All prefer to concentrate on the more advanced worlds: those are the ones which might discover parachronics, the ones in danger of having their own Last War, and the ones that are richest if they can only be organized properly. In any case, the logic of Centran expansion has no limits: only an undivided sovereign power is adequate safeguard against a repeat of the Last War. Some coordinators despair at this – there are, in theory, an infinity of worlds, and there is no physical reason that the number of accessible ones should not keep growing.

*Continued on next page . . .*

early years, the opportunity to buy or steal goods from many parallel cultures. After a few early mishaps, however, Centrum officially adopted a strict hands-off policy towards inhabited timelines (almost all of which were technologically primitive, anyway) and concentrated on the empty worlds. It had more than enough to do on its own Earth: curing the war plagues, halting the famines, deposing the local warlords and generally forestalling a descent into barbarism. Most of Earth's surviving inhabitants were happy to accept the alternative it offered; just as well, since they had no choice.

In recent years, having completing the reclamation of its Earth, Centrum has reconsidered its attitude toward other inhabited timelines. Some wanted to spread the benefits of their civilization, bringing superior technology and organization to less-developed worlds and saving the advanced ones from suffering their own Last War. Others believed continued expansion was needed for Centrum's own health, or were simply ambitious for new fields of action. The discovery of Secundus, another world of parachronic travelers (and nearly an anarchy!), has awakened deep-rooted fears and silenced the objections to expansion.



## Centrum Today

Modern Centrum has fulfilled the dreams of its founders. It is a self-consciously rational society that offers every citizen a decent life and a chance to fulfill a useful function. Everyone can rise as high as talents and drive will take them, regardless of race, gender, or ancestry. On the other hand, Centrum does not place a high value on notions of liberty or human rights, which it tends to consider superstitions. No individual matters much, compared to the good of the whole.

### Politics

Centrum is a regimented meritocracy: all citizens enter the Service for which they have most aptitude, to be promoted strictly by talent and achievement. Each adult citizen belongs to one of seven grades, corresponding to a specific rank within his Service. Everyone starts as a grade-1 citizen, and nepotism is discouraged by common opinion (as well as being illegal): people are supposed to rise on their own merits.

The Services have individual regulations about the meanings of the different grades: some are more overtly hierarchical than others. Command privileges do not ordinarily cross Service lines, but lower-grade citizens generally defer to higher ones socially. All citizens must display a badge giving their name, grade, Service, and personal ID number. Most Services also have a uniform their members wear while on duty (Interworld's are green and black).

There are hundreds of Services, some of which employ only a few hundred thousand people. The most powerful are Agriculture, Education, Energy, Health, Interworld, Justice, and Logistics. The Military Service is poised to become more important with Centrum's new interventionism, as is the new Uplift Service (see sidebar).

At the top, the grade-7 coordinators compete to set policy, working through their general assembly, the Forum, which holds supreme power. Unofficial factions determine broad policy: the dominant one at the moment is the *Interventionists*, who introduced the new policies permitting exploration of and (largely covert) interference in inhabited timelines. The discovery of Secundus vindicated them in the eyes of the *Pragmatics*, whose main goal is protecting Centrum from external threats or domestic disturbances. The main opposition group today is the *Progressives*, who want further improvements to Centrum's resource base and technology before taking on large-scale projects.

### Lifestyles

Personal wealth plays little role in Centran society, and the complexities of the economy have no effect on daily life. Citizens get basic needs free and are guaranteed employment; all live much better than the average resident of the old Empire. However, many types of equipment are illegal for personal use. If you need a stun gun, an airplane, or a general-purpose computer professionally, your Service will assign it to you; if you don't, you have no business buying one.

Centrum's Control Rating is 6. The Justice Service is commendably devoted, but it sees no point in legal niceties that might prevent quick apprehension and punishment of criminals, so, for example, interrogation under drugs is routine. Personal freedoms are permitted where they don't interfere with public order: for example, there is free speech (although the Services control all publishing and broadcasting).

Centrans work an 8-hour day and a 6-day week; they get Sunday off as a holdover from official Christianity. (Centrum does not publicly acknowledge religion; practice is free but not organized.) Television is monotonous, but music, mostly imported from other timelines, is extremely varied and surprisingly high in quality. Recreational drugs of several varieties are legal and common, though frowned upon by the upper grades.

## The Interworld Service

All parachronic travel is technically the province of the Interworld Service, and it runs all of Centrum's parachronic stations. In practice it delegates much of the routine transport among the safe zones to the various industrial Services, but otherwise jealously guards its monopoly. Calling in the military, although sometimes necessary, is a serious black mark against an I.S. agent; the resulting hesitation can give a bad situation a chance to get *far* out of control.

The Interworld Service maintains its own enforcers in order to avoid such embarrassments, and trains its scouts and covert agents for combat. The I.S. values *finesse* as well as ordinary success, and encourages the use of local resources. Its agents are supposed to take a long view, which accounts for their preference for secrecy and infiltration over quick-and-dirty interference: they want to maintain maximum freedom of action.

## Thinking Like A Centran (Continued)

***Thinking Like an I.S. Agent***

Field agents of the Interworld Service are often more broad-minded than their coordinators, but they still have trouble understanding concepts like democracy or fundamentalist religion. Secundus confuses them terribly because of Infinity's leasing parachronics to governments and corporations. Even those coordinators who might favor negotiation with Secundus see it as an anarchy – what with Infinity, the U.N., and powerful national governments, there's no one to sign a treaty *with*!

I.S. agents are trained to take a long view, which is one reason they prefer infiltration. The other is that massive force means losing control of local affairs to the Military or Uplift Service.

## The Uplift Service

Recently split off from the I.S., with some personnel from several other Services, the Uplift Service has the job of civilizing the less developed timelines where Centrum has acquired control. With recent policy changes and the war against Secundus, there are many more such worlds than in the past, and Centrum is finding the task more of a strain than anticipated.

Uplift is divided into private fiefs of small coordinator groups, each with its own idea of how best to modify a world for immediate exploitation and long-term absorption. They are being given an unusually free hand: the only rational way to proceed is to try many systems and check back in a generation to see how successful they have been. Rather hard on the natives, but their current chaotic squalor is not very attractive, either.

## Indentureds

Centrum's population is small enough to have a rough time supporting its civilization, let alone make use of all the other worlds within reach. One answer is automation, and Centrum does make fairly extensive use of TL8 robots – but many tasks require too much flexibility for machines.

Human workers from other timelines are an increasingly popular solution. These are not Service recruits; they are not citizens at all. Rather, Centrum offers contracts of indenture: standard terms are 30 years of labor with upkeep paid and settlement on a colony world at the end.

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## Indentureds (Continued)

Indentureds have few rights, and cannot become citizens (although their children can) unless a Service official buys out their contract and sponsors them. It is illegal to coerce anyone into signing a contract of indenture, but perfectly acceptable to recruit, say, Dominate political prisoners (see p. 16) or future sacrifices from the Tenochca Empire (p. AE93).

## Security

There is no single "Security Service." The Justice Service handles crime, and trespassing or possession of unauthorized items *are* crimes, but the other Services handle their own building and equipment security and many don't like to call in Justice.

The Logistics Service has software that tracks purchases and compares them with grade income, so the black market has to work in kind rather than using money. There is no paper or coined money anyway: credits only exist electronically.

Citizen IDs contain encoded retinal patterns and DNA sequences; they are *extremely* difficult to forge at TL8 or below. The computer network which keeps track of authorizations, on the other hand, is not as secure as Centrum thinks it is: hackers who have familiarity with Centran systems and an access terminal (both admittedly difficult to acquire) will never experience a penalty higher than -5, and -2 is more common.

## The Zones

Besides the "Quantum" system of parachronic physics, Centrum classifies all parallel worlds relative to itself, for purposes of travel and other permitted activities.

**Zone Violet** – The original homeworld.

**Zone Indigo** – Colony worlds, no other humans. Unlimited access. There are three Indigo lines on Q8 and one on Q9; each has a few million people.

**Zone Blue** – Empty worlds, including those naturally inimical to human life. Access restricted for safety reasons. There are also Q6, Q7 and Q10 Blue lines which could be colonies but have not yet been exploited.

**Zone Green** – Worlds with natives under adequate control. Restricted travel.

**Zone Yellow** – Worlds without established control, with natives too primitive to pose a serious threat. Access limited to Interworld (and Uplift) agents.

**Zone Orange** – Worlds without established control, with natives who have or could soon develop technology sufficient for parachronics. I.S. only.

**Zone Red** – Hostile worlds, and those with capabilities (e.g., TL8+ or psionics) which make them a potential danger. I.S. only.

Interworld is far larger than its Secundan analog, the Infinity Patrol. However, agents considered adequately trained to plan or complete missions on uncontrolled timelines are uncommon, and those teams make it worse by competing for the limited missions available. Harsh internal criticism *does* insure that every mission is thoroughly planned, with fail-safes and backups, but it also limits the total number of operations.



### Recruiting in Other Worlds

Centrum respects talent, and Interworld is painfully aware of how narrow its skill base can be. Under a 2012 amendment to the Lockridge Protocols, the I.S. has the right to invite "especially worthy" outtimers to sign up as grade-1 trainees. Candidates then endure a battery of tests for existing abilities, potential, and reliability, so the Service will know what to do with them. Testing poorly probably means being stuck in unimportant roles; failing the loyalty test brings either restricted movements and close monitoring (for those too valuable to lose), exile, or sometimes execution if the candidate is viewed as a potential danger.

Outtimers are the only group who suffer from widespread social prejudice on Centrum. Officially, recruits have the same chance for promotion as anyone else. Unofficially, the I.S. is likely to peg them to mid-level positions without much chance of advancement, especially if they were chosen in the first place because of a special talent for science, languages or psionics.

# Centran Technology

Centrum is basically TL8, with a few TL9 devices. Not valuing rapid technological progress, it has been at TL8 for almost a century, and its machines bear the marks of decades of slow improvement: they are reliable and rugged rather than flashy and "cutting-edge." Standardized power cells are used for all equipment that doesn't connect to the electricity grid. Computers are very common, but usually limited-program; there are lots of special-purpose networks, but no Internet.

Centrum is extremely rich as a society and has access to phenomenal amounts of raw materials. It disposes of trash and industrial waste in a lifeless Q8 world. Nuclear fission is the most common source of electricity, since Centrum doesn't need to worry about waste disposal. Some heavy industry has been relocated to the colony worlds, but ecological controls are in effect in all the worlds Centrans inhabit.

Most Centrans live in cities and use public rail systems to commute between apartment building and Service complex. Although old-style districts still exist in many towns, modern Centran architecture tends heavily toward gigantic glass-and-concrete boxes. The cities are linked by air, since rebuilding the rail network was deemed inefficient. Automobiles are common in the countryside, but few are privately owned; the Services, especially Agriculture, assign them for appropriate uses. Cargo transport is by GEV truck and ship, many of them equipped with parachronic field generators programmed to travel to one other line.

## Parachronics

According to current theory, an uncountable number of alternate timelines are arrayed in 9-dimensional space – but parachronic travel can reach only a small number. Active parachronic technology induces a polarization effect, so that travelers from the originating world can reach the timelines in an 8-space band. Within this band, the timelines group into energy levels or *quanta* that become increasingly difficult to reach. Centrum, on Quantum 8, can reach worlds on Quantum 7 or 9 fairly easily, and Q6 or Q10 with more difficulty.

The timelines are configured in a mathematically predictable pattern that changes slightly over time, though parachronic travel to a timeline tends to restrict its movements. Worlds can even switch quanta (observed just once in 107 years), or wander into the accessible band from outside – a "new" timeline appears every few years. Events within a timeline also affect its configuration, so that timelines move fractionally closer due to historical events that are "similar" (a word with a precise scientific meaning to parachronic physicists), or the reverse.

Timelines can theoretically have very different physical laws, but only fairly similar ones can ever be accessible. Most worlds have slight differences of interest only to physicists; the only visible change is a minutely slower time rate (so the local year is earlier). Centrum can reach a few worlds with significantly different natural laws – for instance, they know one with antigravity, one where nuclear fission is impossible, and at least two where people are sometimes born with psionic powers. There are also a few timelines (such as Caliph, in this book) with science so advanced that it's hard to tell if they have the same natural laws!



Centrum believed parachronic physics to be a mature science until recently, but everything was called into question by the discovery of Secundus, another timeline of crossworld travelers, located in Quantum 5. Parachronic technology is so sensitive that it should only function in a few timelines, and physicists were confident that these lines would repel each other: none could be closer than Q1 or Q15. So what else are they wrong about?

### How Many Worlds?

Centrum currently knows of about 600 accessible timelines, with a new one turning up every few years. Quantum 8, Centrum's home, has 46, Q9 and Q10 40-50 each, Q7 about 100. All the rest are in Quantum 6, three-quarters of them parachronically-unstable *echo* lines (see below).

The Q8 worlds are the most important, since they could theoretically reach Centrum using conveyors. However, most worlds on Quantum 8 are prescientific and TL5 at best. Four are TL6 and could become parachronic-capable in a few decades, one is TL7, two are TL8. Five reached TL7-9 before being destroyed by global holocausts; there are persistent rumors that one of those was still alive when Centrum discovered it back in the 1940s. Three of the timelines (Alpha, Beta and Gamma) are colonies with no native humans, though Beta was later found to have australopithecines.

In the other quanta, about a third of the timelines usually have advanced (TL6+) technology, and another handful have something else effective, like psionics. Some of the advanced lines are dependent on variant natural laws, such as Gernsback from ***GURPS Alternate Earths,*** but every known example could still build conveyors.

Centrum used Greek-letter designations for the empty worlds that were its major concern until recently. Officially, it now uses a number/letter/number code which gives quantum and Zone. In practice, I.S. agents use and imitate Infinity's system of nicknames based on the historical point of divergence or notable features in the present.

#### The Echoes

Almost three hundred Q6 timelines duplicate Secundus at some earlier point in its history. Parachronic physicists believe that having Secundus's parachronics operating so close to Centrum's is creating an interference effect attracting these timelines from outside the accessible band. Granted that these are the same scientists who were certain Secundus could not exist, there is still evidence for their new theory: the echoes go through predictable periods of *paratemporal instability*. During such periods (about a third of the time), an echo can shift configuration very easily, and interference in their histories can cause them to shift to another quantum – sometimes across several at once! After a major change the timeline tends to stabilize in place, whether it shifted or not.

*Continued on next page . . .*

## How Many Worlds? (Continued)

As a result, they have become the major "front" in the war with Secundus. Most scientists agree that shifting enough of the echoes into higher quanta will eventually cause Secundus itself to shift to a lower quantum via an action-reaction principle, possibly even out of the accessible band altogether. Centrum is also attracted by the idea of adding to the worlds available for exploitation. Operations on many Q9 and Q10 timelines have been put on hold while the I.S. concentrates on the echoes: if Centrum doesn't seize them now, it may never be able to.

At present, Centrum has shifted nine echoes to Q7 and six to Q8 or higher; two were sent to Q5 by mistaken calculations. Four more have accidentally been shifted to a higher quantum by Secundus, which has also moved three to lower quanta (and one back to Q6 from Q7): Infinity can rarely judge the effects of an intervention.

## Psionics

Psionics works in a majority of timelines, although some (such as that presented in ***GURPS Technomancer***) have "psi-static" that keep powers from functioning, or restrict them to a very low level. Psionically-gifted individuals, however, are born in only a very few timelines. Centrum is not one of them, but it actively recruits powerful psis, especially those who become aware of alternate timelines. There are several documented cases of a psi who makes his first parachronic jump becoming mentally unstable and/or gaining increased power.

A few psis, mostly teleports, have thus become *world-jumpers* (p. CI48), able to move between parallel worlds by internal power. The I.S. employs six world-jumpers, five teleports and a psychokinetic, and has killed at least two who wouldn't sign up. One of them made it to Infinity Unlimited in 2011, and it took Centrum almost three years to locate and eliminate her.

## Plots to Foil

Infinity Unlimited has no idea that one of Centrum's reasons for "stealing" echo timelines is to try and shift Homeline into a lower quantum. In fact, Centrum is trying to shift their enemy from Quantum 5 all the way to Quantum 3. Not only would that strand all the Homeliners unlucky enough to be on Q6 and Q7, it would make Homeline accessible from the dangerous Q3 lines such as Merlin (see ***GURPS Technomancer***), Reich-5, and Shikakumon (see ***GURPS Alternate Earths***).

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### Stations and Conveyors

The basic parachronic transport is the *conveyor*, which can be anything with a continuous outer surface that can make an electrical circuit with the field generator (there is no actual circuit, so a conveyor won't carry away a metal floor). Programming a jump takes a few seconds of computer calculations; the jump itself takes no time. Travel in space is not provided, so conveyors are usually built into enclosed vehicles of one sort or another. Conveyors range in size from 10-lb. capsules to battleship-sized; their parachronic generators take about 1/200 of their mass. The matter in the spot where a conveyor appears *vanishes* – theoretically it is displaced to a timeline outside the accessible band, but there is no way to be certain.

Conveyors can jump to another timeline in the same quantum on their own. To jump from Centrum to a timeline on Quantum 7 or 9 requires a conveyor *and* further parachronic circuitry from a parachronic *station*. Jumps from Q8 to Q6 or Q10 (or vice versa) require a conveyor, a station, and precise timeline configurations that only apply about 15 percent of the time, in windows about an hour long. Centrum's computers can predict the windows (roll 7 or less on 3d6 for a given hour), but become less accurate over time: the I.S. provides schedules four days in advance, and are wrong about the last day one time in six.



Stations are building-sized installations that only function on Centrum itself; there is no way to jump across quanta except by going through Centrum. It *is* possible for a conveyor on Q6, say, to travel to other timelines on the same quantum, although the driver had better remember to let the home station know about the trip if he intends to get home. A station can retrieve a conveyor from up to half a mile away in space. It cannot reliably send to any location other than precise corresponding points, except when exchanging one out-quantum conveyor for another.

Centrum has almost a thousand stations scattered over its surface, mostly around urban centers. It even has four seaborne stations that can be towed to any point in the oceans: resembling oil rigs, they are designed to transport aquatic and aerial conveyors. In addition to serving as transport hubs, the stations monitor the timelines. Centrum can reliably detect parachronic jumps among all accessible quanta; it can usually place them within a few miles and can calculate approximate mass with luck. On Q6 and Q7 Secundan activity is also detectable, but the physical location of jumps is spotty.

### Communications

To send messages between worlds, Centrum uses 10-lb. message-capsule conveyors, often equipped with radio transmitters and a balloon or ducted-fan engine to carry them to a safe height for the jump. Manned conveyors have an independent internal "mailbox" that they use when out-quantum, exchanging it regularly with a corresponding mailbox at home (as long as they are still in range of a station). Message drones are not often used on Q6 and Q7 missions: it isn't clear how good Infinity's scanning techniques are, but they *have* detected Centran conveyors before.

### Infinity Unlimited Parachronics

Secundus has slightly different physical laws reflected in its parachronics (Infinity is not aware of these differences, and Centrum wants to keep them ignorant). Secundan stations are called *projectors*, and they can send matter to a corresponding site in any Q5 world *without a conveyor.* To send to another quantum, or to retrieve from any parallel, requires both conveyor and projector. Secundus has the same restrictions on two-quantum jumps, and can only predict proper configuration about four hours in advance. Its equipment is more prone to misjumps (see pp. TT92-98).

Infinity can communicate between timelines with *parachronic viewers*, variant projectors which transmit and receive light. Like other projectors, viewers function only on Secundus. They do *not* require a remote unit to receive images, only to communicate, but are very sensitive to timeline configuration effects: the link is lost on a 6 or less for Quantum 5, 9 or less one quantum away, 11 or less at two quanta distance.

## Medicine and Bionics

Centran medicine is basically TL8, with TL9 treatments against contagious diseases thanks to decades of experience against wild bioweapons. Centrans who travel to other worlds get Panimmunity treatments as a matter of routine.

Centrum is capable of human cloning but lacks forced-growth tanks, so clones are only created as a special privilege for sterile citizens, public heroes, or unusually successful coordinators. The Progressives support large-scale cloning to increase Centrum's demographic base, but have failed to win the necessary commitment of resources to rear so many parentless children.

Bionic implants are available in Centrum, but most citizens don't have any need for them (they are, of course, legally restricted). Centrum's scientists have not yet cracked the neural interface problem, though they can manage prosthetics with simple, reflexive controls. Implanted communicators and holdout weapons are common among I.S. personnel who travel in dangerous Zones.

## Centrum Campaigns

The first use of Centrum is as the villain in an "Infinite Worlds" campaign. Probably the home world will remain offstage, but Infinity Unlimited would dearly love to know more about its enemy, so characters who prove exceptionally good at infiltration or at ticking off their superiors may find themselves assigned to visit Quantum 8 and report back. The odds of survival, let alone success, are not good unless the PC's have an edge – a rogue Centran to train or guide them, at least, and perhaps also special resources like psionics, magic, or strange technology. The prize for success would be information: how Centrum thinks in general, how they calculate timeline shifts, or perhaps news of a major plan (see sidebar).

### Plots to Foil (Continued)

A group of Pragmatics and Progressives has been arguing for a different approach: build a conveyor-equipped armada on one of the echoes in Q8, then deliberately shift it to Q5 and invade Homeline directly. The main argument against this tactic has been the expense, and the fact that the combined armed forces of Homeline dwarf the Military Service. But if Centrum were to gain more advanced weaponry (say, from Caliph, p. 89) or find allies among Homeline groups, it might try it.

A small faction of coordinators favors offering parachronic technology to worlds in other quanta, calculating that a partnership could control the other worlds more easily than Centrum alone. This viewpoint is unlikely to gain much popularity in the Forum, but if some setback panicked Centrum badly enough they might try to create a second front for Infinity on Q3 or Q4. Centran renegades are more likely to try this: breaking secrecy would be one way to win high position in a parallel world!

### Uplift Projects

A very unusual game could involve a team of Uplift Service coordinators assigned to "civilize" a Zone Yellow (or possibly Orange) world. In order to absorb the timeline eventually, long-term cultural changes will probably need to be set in motion. The basic goals will be political unity, open meritocracy, and technical progress; it would be a nice bonus to make them English-speaking. The means used are completely up to them: they will have a large budget and a few hundred personnel, but are unlikely to get much more help without impressive intermediate results. Be generous with equipment requested at the beginning of the campaign, but stingy with afterthoughts.

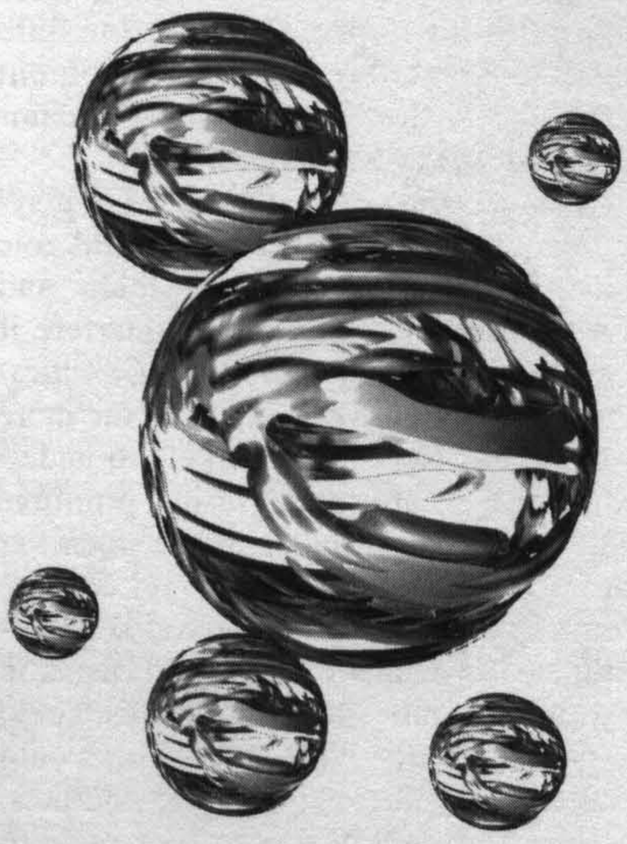
Such a campaign features a lot of player freedom and a more reactive GM role (but plan some surprises for them, and don't forget that Infinity will interfere if they can). Consult *Worldline Conquest Made (Relatively) Easy* (p. 10) for more suggestions. Centrans are likely to underestimate the natives, confusing primitive with stupid, and being confused whenever they don't act "rationally" (i.e., like Centrans). Centrum's leaders also underestimate the danger that an Uplift team, in learning to understand the natives, could come to identify with them. This could lead to some interesting moral conflicts, among the players themselves or with their superiors and subordinates.

## Secundus: Homeline Through Centran Eyes

Secundus or "Homeline" is a slight variation on our Earth, set forward to 2015 and with extensive use of parachronic travel. From Centrum's perspective, it is a chaotic, irrational mess. So many groups have parachronic technology, and they don't coordinate their efforts. Centrum cannot understand why the USA and other leading nations aren't fighting for dominance.

Centrum sees democracy as a primitive form of government – associated with Greek and Italian city-states – and keeps trying to understand Secundus as a variation of itself, looking for the people who *really* run things. Infinity Unlimited was the major candidate (Centrum is run more like a corporation than a constitutional republic), until its true size came out. Now it looks like a central power too weak to control struggling factions, and the apparent stability of the system bewilders Centrum.

Centrum portrays the Secundans as dangerous amateurs unprepared to confront the true implications of parachronics. Some I.S. scientists even view them as a literal threat to the universe, arguing that the echoes and anomalous timelines around Secundus (like Microworld, p. TT96, and Enigma, p. TT99) are signs that Secundus's parachronics damages the space-time continuum. (This theory would fit especially well in a "Centrum Light" campaign: Infinity might refuse to believe in the danger even as temporal anomalies multiply, while the Interworld Service frantically works to stave off disaster and find *someone* on Homeline who will listen to them . . .)



## The Dimension War

Generally, however, Centrans will show up on other timelines. Quantum 6 is the major focus of the struggle, but the I.S. operates everywhere. Centrum has a lot less trouble infiltrating a relatively open society like Secundus than vice versa, so they might even show up in low-Quantum worlds that they cannot reach directly, although they would need a special reason to risk their covert assets. No such reason is necessary on Q7 or even Q6: Centrum gives the I.S. all the resources needed to operate within its natural sphere of influence.

Centrum can also appear as an adversary in other crossworld campaigns: it would probably just try to recruit any independent travelers but would be remorselessly opposed to any threat to its parachronic monopoly. (Just make sure that it can't invade directly, to keep the campaign a war of influence instead of just a war.)

In either case, Centrans can fit any "secret agent" character type. It is often difficult to fit continuing NPCs into a crossworld campaign, but a Centran could be the mastermind whose schemes the players cross, the shadowy contact who gives them information but has a private agenda, or the misguided professional rival (usually of the opposite sex) who tries to recruit the PCs (or at least one particular PC).

## Playing Centrans

Players could also participate in the dimension war from the other side. Some groups may like to play the villains now and then. Or they could play outtimers recruited from situations horrible enough for Centrum to seem like a savior. If they will want to try fixing up their home timeline(s), the I.S. *will* let them implement any plan that leaves Centrum in charge. (If they are really successful, they may be transferred to the Uplift Service.)

Alternatively, the GM can make Centrum nicer, and perhaps get rid of the dimension war entirely. There is still a basic difference in approach: while the Infinity Patrol spends most of its time cleaning up other people's messes, the Interworld Service places more emphasis on making messes of its own.

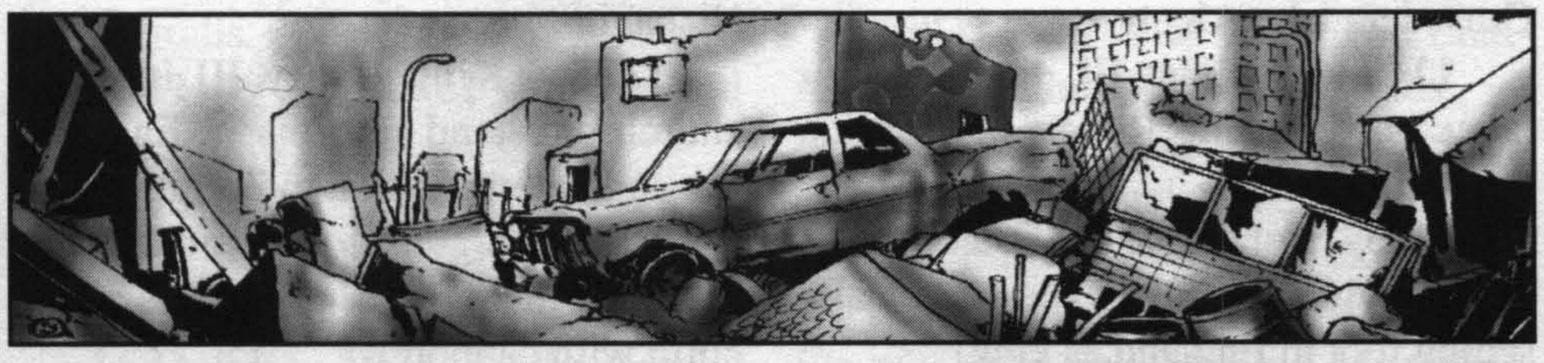
### Interworld Policies

The I.S. has no way of investigating timelines other than sending people in to take a look. Normally the first survey plants several teams in sites where most timelines have important cities (Jericho, Constantinople, London, Nanking, New Orleans). After that, they use aerial surveys in Zone Blue and Yellow, *lots* more agents in Zone Orange, and a few hand-picked agents in Zone Red.

It is important to note that Centrum has no general policy of secrecy about parachronics. In Zone Yellow agents usually pose as "visitors from afar," and use high-tech equipment almost freely: Centrum doesn't really care what the natives think as long as they're not a threat. In at least two low-tech worlds (including a Q7 former echo in the 16th century) the Uplift Service has deliberately revealed the existence of Centrum in the process of creating puppet governments.

In Zones Orange and Red, the I.S. is much more cautious, and strictly forbids revelation of parachronic travel to anyone who might conceivably build their own conveyors. If they know enough about how the locals think, they will have a cover story planned to fit the local mythology in case of exposure. For Cornwallis, the cover story would be a secret project run by Asiatic Russians or Spanish Jesuits; for a late 20th-century echo of Secundus, they would bring in a UFO or black helicopter.

Centrum's primary goal is always to gain enough influence to block the development of parachronics. But most I.S. personnel also want to be in a position to save any other timeline from its own Last War, which strengthens their general preference for timelines with a single hegemonic power over those with competing states. Centrum usually picks one side (the one they think they can infiltrate and modify most easily) and subtly builds it up while undercutting its rivals.



## Missions

If your players are going to try "stealing" an echo, the stereotypical Centrum mission, they will need a historical change: the GM can assign one, or, if the players know their history, they can try to figure something out themselves. Anything that makes our history more like Centrum is fair game – but the direction of shift usually can't be calculated for nuking cities and similar gross shifts. Players should also remember to have a backup plan in case their first try doesn't work.

The most common I.S. mission is long-term infiltration, building up Centrum's power structure on a given timeline or acquiring knowledge as safely as possible. Player groups are more likely to be assigned brief support missions, brought in to provide expertise that the infiltrators need to improve their position – often through illegal means like breaking and entering, theft, or "vanishing" someone inconvenient.

Investigation missions are another possibility: Centrum agents are continually on the alert for Secundan influence, and in the process have frequently uncovered anomalies in worlds they thought they understood. There are also straightforward Survey missions, either to newly appeared timelines or to worlds Centrum is only now getting around to examining in depth (usually because they now have someone who can stumble through the local languages). Some Zone Yellow worlds surely have undiscovered features – a barbarian world might turn out to be post-holocaust, with remnants of the old high culture still around, or a local superstition about magic might turn out to be rooted in fact.

## Renegades

A campaign could also be built around a team that breaks away from Centrum. The characters could start as renegades, or as an agent group that slowly becomes disillusioned with their superiors and decides to strike out on their own. If they go over to Infinity Unlimited, they might tip the balance of power. Finding a niche for themselves in some other timeline would also be possible, but would not make for very good gaming unless they try to carve out an empire, run across something unexpected (secret societies on Cornwallis, weird powers on Ming-3, etc.), or both. Wandering the timelines themselves is not really feasible unless they have a technical advantage so that their former colleagues can't track them down: perhaps "stealth" parachronics that hides their jumps, or psychotronics that link a world-jumper to a conveyor for trans-Quantum jumps.

## Timeline Shifts

If outtimers, either PCs or NPCs, do something that the GM thinks might "change history" on an unstable echo, roll 3 dice. If the tampering was according to a Centran plan, add 3 to the die roll result. The GM may also add from 1 to 5 to the result, depending on the apparent importance of the change. Any change can cause a shift in a random direction; a Centran plan will send the timeline higher 5 out of 6 times.

9 or less: no result – but add 1 to any further roll made within a week.
10, 11: no result – but add 2 to any further roll made within a week.
12, 13: no *immediate* result – but if the change is not reversed, roll again in 1d × 10 hours, at a +2. This modifier is cumulative if rolled more than once.
14, 15: a shift of 1 quantum, but not immediately – see below.
16, 17: a shift of 2 quanta. See below.
18 or more: a shift of 1d quanta, minimum 3. See below.

No shift will be immediate, and if the change is effectively reversed during the period of delay, it will not take place. (If the change was severe enough, however, there may be no way to negate it.) For the length of time before the shift, roll 3d6:

| | |
|---|---|
| 6 or less | 1d days |
| 7, 8 | 2d days |
| 9 | 1d weeks |
| 10 | 2d weeks |
| 11 | 3d weeks |
| 12 | 3d × 2 weeks |
| 13 | 2d months |
| 14-16 | 2d × 3 months |
| 17 or more | 2 years, plus two more rolls on this table |

## Sample Projects

So what is Centrum doing in the other timelines presented in this book?

***Aeolus***

Quantum 6, Zone Orange. Centrum dislikes aristocracies, so they and Infinity both support the Republican Alliance – they will probably end up backing different factions there, and Infinity will have better access and Slavic language skills. The American Commonwealth is English-speaking and hierarchical, but Centrum is wary of its strong religious ideology.

*Continued on next page . . .*

## Sample Projects (Continued)

***Caliph***

Quantum 6, Zone Red. Centrum's reaction to this TL11 world is panic tempered by greed – it wants the high technology, but *really* doesn't want to risk a world this powerful getting parachronics.

One solution would be to encourage the conflict to turn apocalyptic and then sort through the ruins. If Infinity knows about Caliph, too, the two sides may try to negotiate a mutual interdiction, which probably won't work very well: the technology is too tempting.

***Cornwallis***

Quantum 7, Zone Orange. The Dominate has a lot of potential from Centrum's perspective, if they can find the Russian-speakers needed. The British Empire is probably too set in its ways, even if they do speak English. A breakaway state in North America might give the best of both worlds. Homeline will challenge Centrum in both areas. Centrum has the edge on Q7 but, while prepared for the Infinity Patrol, it will be surprised when Homeline national governments also try to intervene.

***Midgard***

Quantum 7, Zone Yellow. Too primitive for Centrum to care much about it, but a good source of indentureds. I.S. importers would claim to be from some indeterminate land over the sea (perhaps hinting at Australia), which might have interesting side effects if the Norse went looking for it. Infinity would of course be horrified by Centran "slave traders."

***Ming-3***

Quantum 6, Zone Yellow. Centrum sees Ming-3 as a world on the verge of its own Last War: it lacks the tech for self-destruction, but it *is* a world-empire on the edge of breakdown. Centrum will want to stop that somehow, perhaps (in a triumph of cultural prejudice over reality) promoting Datsin as a successor state. Unfortunately, while Centrum has plenty of Asian agents, none of them speak Chinese very well. In the meantime, Infinity and Homeline China will be working within the Forbidden City.



## Centrum Timeline

**1137** – Prince Robert of England marries Eleanor of Aquitaine.

**1148** – Louis VII of France dies as Crusaders take Aleppo.

**1149** – William III dies, Eleanor takes power while Robert is away on Second Crusade.

**1155** – Robert the Crusader drowns after leaving Jerusalem (never actually setting foot in England as king).

**1163-67** – France defeated by England, Holy Roman Empire, and some French nobles. Flanders and the Ile de France to England "by right of conquest," Burgundy and Champagne become Hohenstaufen lands, Toulouse independent.

**1208** – Almohads defeat Spanish Christians. Teutonic Knights defeat Muslim attack on Aleppo.

**1210** – Pope Paschal IV preaches a Crusade against the Albigensians, but is forced to rescind it by Toulouse and Sicily.

**1241** – Emperor Charles IV killed by Mongols.

**1252** – Roger Bacon wins royal patronage.

**1262** – King Robert II of England sends expedition to Greenland and beyond, having learned of it from his wife Margaret of Norway.

**1269** – Khaghan Mongke dies, Arigboge wins over Kublai, who leads "White Horde" west.

**1272-85** – Kublai conquers Central Europe piecemeal. Arigboge conquers Japan.

**1281** – Kublai abolishes bishoprics and clerical privileges, gives Church lands to his supporters.

**1293-96** – League of Italian cities defeats Papal-Sicilian invasion.

**1301** – First slaves sent to Terranova from the Baltic.

**1321** – Cocini builds movable-type printing press.

**1323-57** – Central Terranovan cities conquered by Anglo-French.

**1333** – Ilkhans take Constantinople.

**1334** – John II the Great unites Hispania.

**1335** – King Henry III imposes church and land reforms in England; substantial emigration to Terranova.

**1337-43** – Sicily proclaims "Kingdom of Italy," conquers the north with cannon.

**1348** – Hilary Walsingham of Oxford discovers plague vector.

**1354** – Ottokar Przemysl defeats White Horde, crowns himself German Emperor.

**1357** – King William VI formally declares Anglo-French Empire, expands to Rhine valley.

**1379** – Sung retake Kaifeng; Japanese khanate independent.

**1386** – Hispanians round Africa.

**1430** – Hispania makes Japanese Khanate a protectorate.

**1434** – Ilkhanate breaks down into petty states.

**1468** – Maxoni discovers calculus.

**1475-91** – Russia and Denmark war with German Empire.

**1478-82** – Anglo-French Succession War won by cadet branch strong in England and Terranova, English becomes the language of government.

**1500** – Anglo-French merchants challenge Hispania in the East, gain position in India.

**1517** – Terranovan Anglo-French settle in Terraustralis.

**1522** – University of Barcelona begins first scientific journal.

**1529-41** – Twelve Years' War between German and Anglo-French Empires; AFE saved by Italy and the Jandari Turks.

**1565** – William the Magnificent builds Kensington Palace.

**1582** – Tomas Leseaux devises evolutionary theory.

**1601** – Rebellion in Terranova fails, Joseph I creates new overseas nobility.

**1598** – Jacob Havig invents the steam engine.

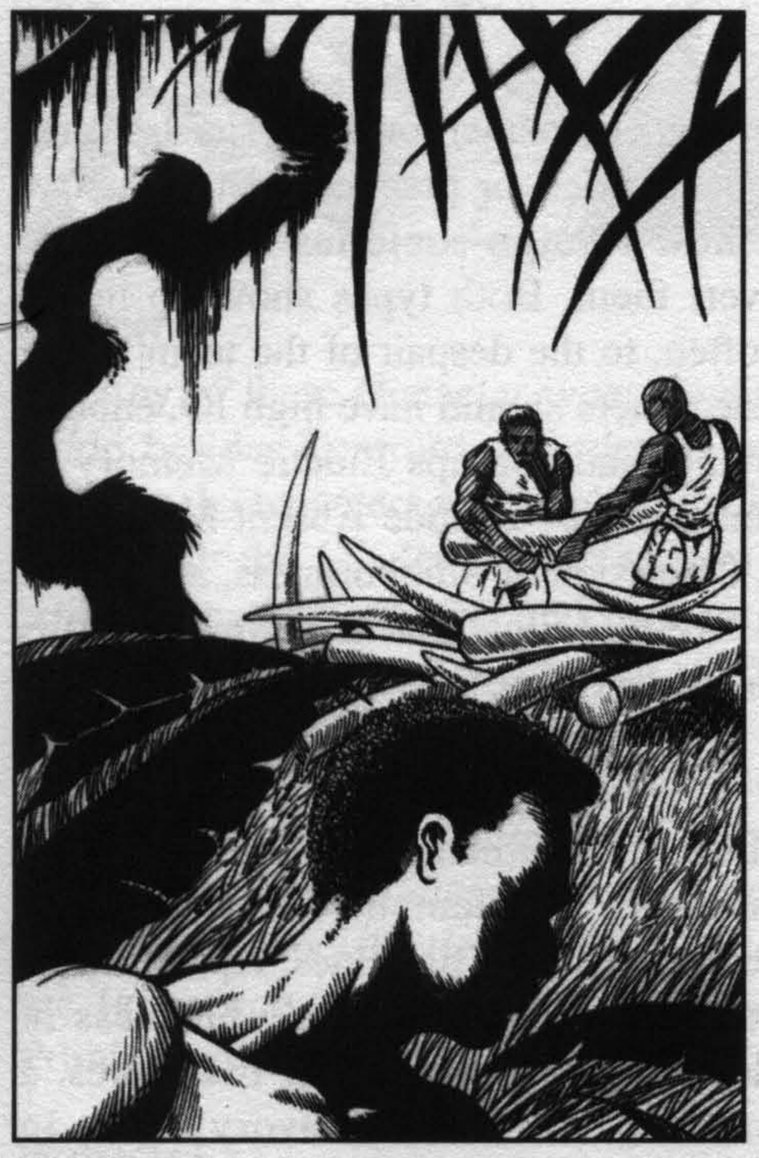
**1624-28** – German War begins over trade/naval dispute with AFE.

**1628-33** – War of the First Alliance as Hispania, Denmark, Italy join Germany. AFE still wins, breaks up Germany, acquires Japan and Terraustralis.

**1641-49** – War of the Second Alliance (draw).

**1655-57** – War of the Third Alliance, Anglo-French Empire supreme over Europe.

**1681-93** – "Bloody Eighties" insurrections, AFE absolutist reforms and mass education.



**1757** – Heads of Gordon & Guion Minerals ennobled and given company holdings in Africa as a fief.

**1768-75** – War against Muslim millennarians: AFE levels Mecca, annexes Middle East, suppresses local cultures.

**1790** – Ch'en dynasty breaks down in China.

**1841-50** – Russian War provoked by Emperor Joseph III, seeking a solution to bored and restless nobility: trench warfare, strategic bombing, tanks. Russian atomic bomb program uncompleted.

**1860** – Crown repression of popular anti-aristocratic and regionalist movements.

**1902** – The Last War: atomic destruction of London; 5 members of the royal family claim the imperial throne, 41 provinces declare independence.

**1903** – Chaos of war. "The Centrum" takes control of Terraustralis.

**1904** – European claimant releases bioweapons against Asians, which spread out of control (except in Terraustralis); nuclear retaliation. Plagues rage uncontrolled in tropics, wars sputter on in temperate zones; general breakdown.

**1908** – Linda Minott discovers parachronics.

**1911** – The Centrum establishes first medical/military centers in Asia for reclamation of devastated zones.

**1913** – Global survey finds scattered islands of civilization in a sea of military feudalism and barbarism; only a few large states (in Terranova, Russia and China); regression to TL6 or worse; population still declining.

**1916** – Centrum asserts global sovereignty, absorbing or removing local elites.

**1923** – Centrum begins aggressive program of global rationalization and cultural leveling, intensified after local risings.

**1934** – Parachronic travel is restricted to lines without people after natives in a TL4 timeline discover and torture Centran agents.

**1958** – Restoration of the home world officially completed.

**1999** – Interventionists and Progressives pass Lockridge Protocols, allowing restricted activity on inhabited timelines.

**2003** – I.S. operatives capture a foreign parachronic conveyor, visit the new timeline "Secundus" (alias Homeline).

**2007** – "Dimension war" becomes overt.

**2015** – The present.

## Other GURPS Worlds

***GURPS Alternate Earths***

Reich-5 and Shikaku-mon are inaccessible, fortunately. Ezcalli and Roma Aeterna are Zone Yellow: Centrum doesn't care too much about them, although the I.S. still runs operations there as experiments, training grounds, and a distraction for the Infinity Patrol.

Dixie, in Zone Orange, gets more attention. Centrum feels that the CSA is probably easier to transform than any rival; Infinity agents may face a moral dilemma on finding that Centrum is working toward racial equality in the CSA. It is also directing all sides away from research that could lead to parachronics (none are really close, but the CSA is investigating some backwaters of physics that could potentially mean trouble).

Gernsback is Zone Red: the I.S. has a major effort underway to win control of the World Science Council, building it toward world government in the process. Gernsback is a favorite of the radicals who argue for partnerships with other timelines: the WSC is close to many "correct" Centran attitudes and could be a formidable ally indeed.

***GURPS Fantasy***

Yrth is magically linked to some version of Earth, possibly Homeline . . . and there is a suspicious reference to White Star Trading (an Infinity Unlimited subsidiary) in ***GURPS Tredroy***. Even if Yrth is accessible to Centrum, most Centrans hate the very idea of magic and would prefer to ignore it. But if they find that magical crossworld travel is possible – and the Banestorm means it is – the I.S. will *have* to investigate.

## The Language Barrier

The I.S.'s biggest handicap is a result of Centrum's cultural unification. Creating a common world language – English – was a major element in the program. Other languages were deliberately wiped out (a project actually begun under the old imperials), and if there are any families which secretly retain fluency they have certainly learned to hide it. The only exceptions are classical Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, still known by some classicists.

Centrum is working on broadening its language base; indeed, that's one of the main reasons for recruiting outtimers. The Education Service has been dragging its feet, but many timelines know fairly effective techniques for teaching languages swiftly (usually based on immersion). It shouldn't be too long before the I.S. overcomes its prejudice against outtime ideas and starts to use them.

# Characters

## Character Types

Except for renegades, any character outside of Centrum's controlled worlds works for the Interworld Service, though some might be detached from other Services. In addition to general training (see *Skills*, below), all I.S. agents should know Beam Weapons, Guns, History, Parachronic Electronics, Parachronic Operations, and Parachronic Physics (if their Physics is 12+). Agents range from 75 points up to 200 or more. The GM may wish to start I.S. player characters at 150 points, giving all characters grade-3 citizenship [30] (see *Rank and Status,* below), and a Patron (Interworld Service, 9 or less) [40], with an associated Extremely Hazardous Duty [-20].



### Surveyor

New timelines may contain literally anything, and the only way to find out is to go check. Surveyors usually specialize in wilderness, low-TL civilized, or high-TL civilized. The first kind may have Absolute Direction, the others Empathy and/or Pitiable; all three find Alertness and Danger Sense useful. Disadvantages common to all three are Curious and Impulsive. Surveyors use a lot of technical assistance: in uninhabited or low-tech worlds the I.S. explorers should have Pilot, Electronics Operations (Sensors), or Photography as well as Survival and sciences like Botany and Ecology. Surveyors specializing in higher-tech timelines are more likely to have Intelligence Analysis, Scrounging, Survival (urban) and computer skills. Surveyors who deal with people should have Acting and Diplomacy; Bard, Forgery, and Streetwise wouldn't hurt.

### Researcher

I.S. researchers may be parachronic physicists working to revise current theories, or practical historians trying to figure out how foreign societies work so that Centrum can subvert them. Both types show up in the field surprisingly often, to the despair of the team acting as bodyguards. Researchers should have high IQ, enough Status to be annoying, and perhaps Eidetic Memory or Versatile. Disadvantages may include Absent-Minded or Clueless, Curious, Obsession or Stubbornness, and minor physical problems like Bad Sight and Overweight. Skills are very high in their area of specialization.

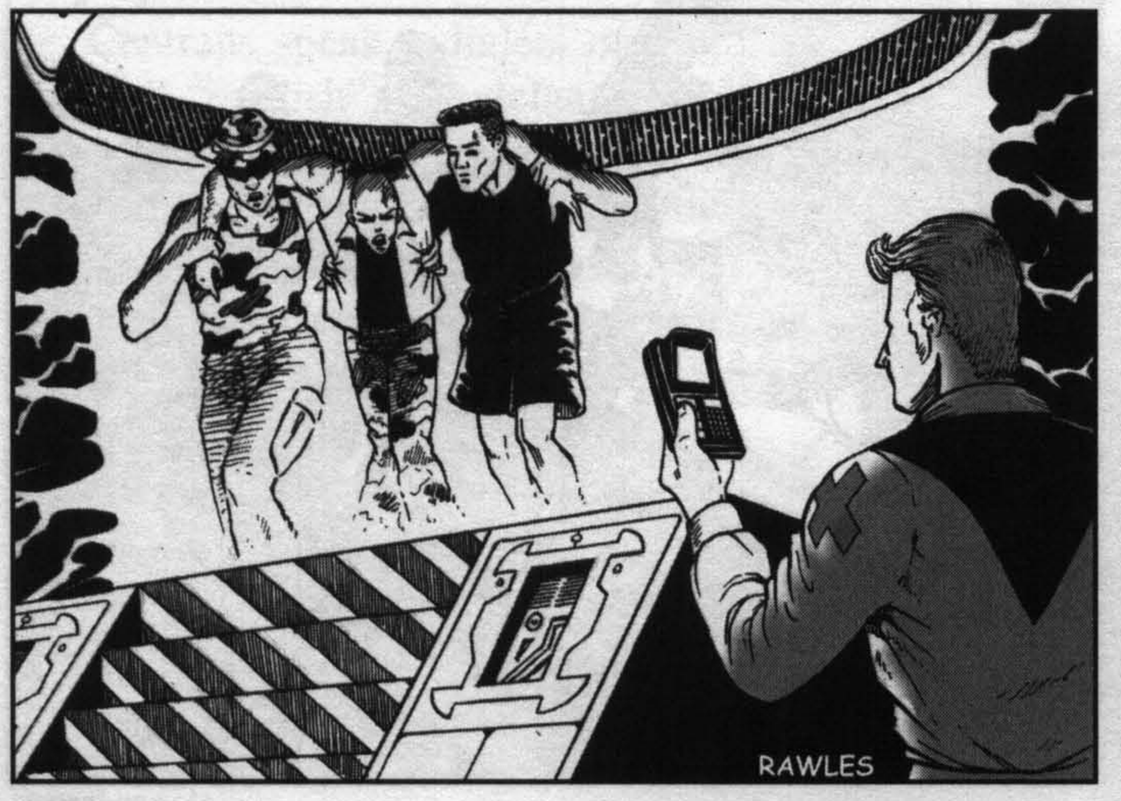
### Importer

A profession that has returned to prominence in the last 16 years, importers supplement Centrum's own resources with goods from other timelines. Apart from a small trade in artworks, their most likely business in Zone Yellow worlds is finding sources for indentures, a trade which often takes them into unsavory areas. In Zone Orange or Red, they have the challenge of setting up a business which can operate without local suspicion. To this end they often have Charisma, Composed, or Voice. Many of the standard "merchant" disadvantages are uncommon since Centrum hardly uses money; any Importer with Greed must also take a Secret (embezzler, -5). Skills include Acting, Administration, Economics, Fast-Talk, Forgery, Merchant, and possibly Streetwise.

### Enforcer

I.S. Enforcers are expected to handle problems efficiently and *quietly*: they prefer surprise strikes to confrontations. They default to non-lethal weaponry, but parachronics does give them the perfect way to dispose of any unwanted corpses that turn up. Common advantages

are Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Danger Sense, Fearlessness, Fit or Very Fit, High Pain Threshold, and Rapid Healing. Common disadvantages are Callous, Edgy, and possibly Overconfidence – but not Bloodlust, or anything else likely to attract too much attention. Skills should include Holdout, Interrogation and Stealth as well as combat skills.




### Outtimer

Any of these character types might be native to some world besides Centrum. In order to explain their recruitment, such characters must have some sort of special ability or skill: the I.S. looks with special favor on linguists, intuitive mathematicians, and psis (except for telepaths). They are also likely to decide that anyone too close to discovering them must have the makings of a covert agent – even on a primitive world, where their agents are less careful, it shows unusual mental flexibility. Outtimers are unofficially second-class citizens, and may even have a more severe Social Stigma. Other possible disadvantages are Ignorance (of the standard skills for all Centrans), Primitive and Secret (disloyal, -10).

### Unattached

Unattached agents are generic troubleshooters outside the Service hierarchies, appointed and assigned by Forum committees. Unattached agents are always grade-7, and may command *any* Service as a grade-5 member; treat this as 10-point Legal Enforcement Powers. They are typically assigned to lead a multi-Service project, or given the touchy assignment of internal investigations. Unattacheds should be be 200 points or more, with high IQ and a broad skill range. They will almost certainly have a Reputation, and are likely to have any of Alertness, Charisma, Empathy, Intuition and Strong Will. They should have a Sense of Duty, and may well be Fanatic, Overconfident or Workaholic. An Unattached Centrum agent makes an excellent continuing villain in a paratime game.

## Advantages

Because of Centrum's deliberate, enforced uniformity, Centrans (except for outtimers) should not have Cultural Adaptability, and require GM permission to take Language Talent.

### Panimmunity see p. CI28

All agents of the Interworld Service have Level 1 (TL9) Panimmunity: Centrum is very aware of the dangers of infections from other timelines.

### Patron see pp. B24-25

The Interworld Service is an extraordinarily powerful organization with advanced equipment and unusual reach in time and space, worth a base 40 points as a patron. I.S. agents can usually get help on a 9 or less; this can be bought up to represent informal connections. The cost is reduced by an Extremely Hazardous Duty (-20 points, p. CI78), which should not count against maximum disadvantages.

Other Services are usually worth 20 to 30 points as Patrons, being dependent on Interworld for parachronic transport. The Uplift Service (30 points base) seldom gives its teams additional help: they may not even be required as a Patron, and should not be bought with a frequency higher than 6 or less.

### Rank and Status see pp. CI29, B18

These advantages are not separate in Centrum. Citizenship grades are exactly equal to ***GURPS*** Status 1-7, and cost 10 points/level. Children have Status 0; so do former indentureds once their contracts end. Criminals and current indentureds have Status -2 (worth -10 points). The other negative Statuses have no equivalent.

Grade is dependent partly on assigned duties, partly on seniority, and partly on the whims of one's superiors: there are few dependable rules for assigning it. However, I.S. agents who actually visit other timelines should be at least grade-3; grade-5 is the highest level normally sent on missions (although some grade-6 administrators and even grade-7 Unattacheds insist on doing field work).

### Wealth see p. B16

Wealth levels hardly exist in Centrum. Incomes are low, basic goods are free, and practically everything you could buy is legally restricted anyway. GMs may require characters to take Wealth for their citizenship grade (grade-1 is Struggling; go up one category every two grades) – but it's simpler just to ignore money. I.S. characters spend almost all their adventuring time in other worlds, and all their equipment is assigned them. Centrum uses the *credit* as its unit of currency, about equal to a Homeline dollar.

### Bionics

Centrum has full TL8 bionics and many TL9 implants (pp. UT104-108; be cautious about introducing more advanced equipment from ***GURPS Cyberpunk***). Any body parts lost to injury or disease will certainly be replaced by bionic equivalents, and upgrades are fairly common: as long as you have an artificial arm anyway, you might as well add a holdout weapon. Centran cyberware is *always* disguised by plastic flesh.

Implants for healthy agents are harder to acquire – you have to persuade your superiors – but Centrum tries not to handicap its people: one piece of cyberware per citizen grade past 1 would be reasonable. Implant communicators are especially common.

I.S. teams are divided into those where everyone has bionic implants, and those where no one does. The latter are used in many Zone Orange and Red missions, when the local tech is sufficient to detect and/or interfere with implants.



### Magic and Psionics

Every known timeline in Quanta 7-10 is a no-mana area (possibly there are a few low-mana spots), so Centrum can and does ignore magic. Of course, with infinite worlds, there are probably Mana Enhancers (p. CI40) out there somewhere . . .

Centrum finds psionics less disturbing (except for telepathy, which makes Centrans paranoid), and actively recruits any psis it believes trustworthy. Furthermore, traveling by parachronic conveyor sometimes enhances psionic powers. The only known possessors of the World-Jumper ability (p. CI48) are psis, mostly teleporters, who manifested this power after their first parachronic jump.

GMs should charge a hefty Unusual Background for psionics (25 points sounds about right), and may want to make it even larger for powers that work in *all* timelines, if many worlds have "psi-static."



## Disadvantages

### Addiction — see p. B30

Centrum has many legal drugs, almost all artificial: none are very expensive or more than ordinarily addictive, for -15 points maximum value. I.S. field agents, however, are not allowed any addictions that are either incapacitating (including alcoholism) or require drugs not commonly found in many timelines.

### Enemy — see pp. B39-40

The Infinity Patrol is a base -30 point enemy, but is unlikely to target a particular Centran agent. When it does, it will always appear rarely, for a value of -15 points. The only other Enemies worth points are other Centrans, as professional rivals. A renegade agent will acquire all Centrum as a base -40 point Enemy.

### Fanaticism — see p. B 33

Many Centrans are fanatically loyal, a result of childhood conditioning. This disadvantage is actually *more* common in the Interworld Service: its agents see worlds with more freedom, but they also see a lot more suffering and chaos.

### Social Stigma — see p. B27

The only stigmatized group in modern Centrum is outtimers, who are at best *second-class citizens.* If habits and spoken accent are sufficiently different from Centran standards, they may even be considered *outsiders.*

## Skills

Every native Centran should put at least half a point in the following skills to represent the Lyceum curriculum: Administration, Computer Operation/TL8, Mathematics, Physics/TL9, Research, Running, Savoir-Faire, and Swimming.

### Languages

Centrans speak a dialect of English (which they also call "English") that defaults to Homeline English at -2. There are no other living languages on the timeline, although they have scholars with a good command of classical Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. Only very unusual Centrans know any other language, or Linguistics, at higher than IQ-2.

### Martial Arts

Centrum has no tradition of unarmed combat and still disdains it; they prefer guns. An Unusual Background is required for any skill besides Brawling, even the basic skills Boxing, Judo, or Karate.

### Parachronics

Centrans can make a Parachronic Physics (p. CI158) roll to guess how to affect an unstable timeline, but such guesses are not reliable unless refined by massive computer modelling. A basic penalty of -8 is appropriate, although a successful History roll may reduce the penalty to -6.

Centrans are at a basic -2 to operate or modify Infinity Unlimited parachronic equipment, or -4 for viewers. However, their more sophisticated knowledge means they are less likely to have serious mishaps even with Infinity's machines: on a normal failure they will catch the error in time to abort. On a critical failure, roll on the tables from ***GURPS Time Travel*** (pp. TT93-96) or just send them to the wrong place.

## Weaponry

The Interworld Service places a heavy premium on stealth weaponry. The preferred small arms are sonic stunners and needlers (p. B208, with more information on pp. UT50, 55-6); the latter are usually drugged with morphazine or soothe (pp. UT97-98). These pistols are often concealed in some innocuous small object; recently, the I.S. has even begun using mini-needlers (p. UTT57). Their weapons always have small explosives installed to destroy them if someone tries to open one, or automatically after three days without a reset. Once opponents have been neutralized, the agents can decide whether to dose them with Eraser drug (p. TT103), cut their throats, or make them vanish.

I.S. agents also wear light monocrys armor (PD2, DR8, or PD1, DR2 against impaling attacks) woven to look like normal clothes for the setting. They usually carry tiny radio communicators in primitive timelines, and will often use bio-beacons (swallowable tracers, p. UTT40) even in advanced ones. Agents with close combat skills prefer lines where they can carry weapons openly; if they can't, they often carry memory blades (p. UTT86) as backup weapons.



### The Big Battalions: Centrum's Military

The Military Service is fairly small for a world-state, with only about half a million under arms. Their basic function since the reunification has been quick, utterly crushing attacks against technically inferior opponents. M.S. infantry wear TL9 Combat Infantry Dress (p. B211, add 10 to all DRs); some units have TL8 psionic shields (p. P73) built into their helmets. Standard weaponry is a Gauss needle rifle (p. B209) and several grenades; chemical grenades with nerve agents are most common. Armor and aerial backup use guided missiles and lasers.

The Military Service also has a good understanding of the enormous utility of parachronic travel for appearing and disappearing at will. Against a really dangerous opponent, Centrum would certainly use drone conveyors to jump atomic bombs onto targets from an adjacent timeline.

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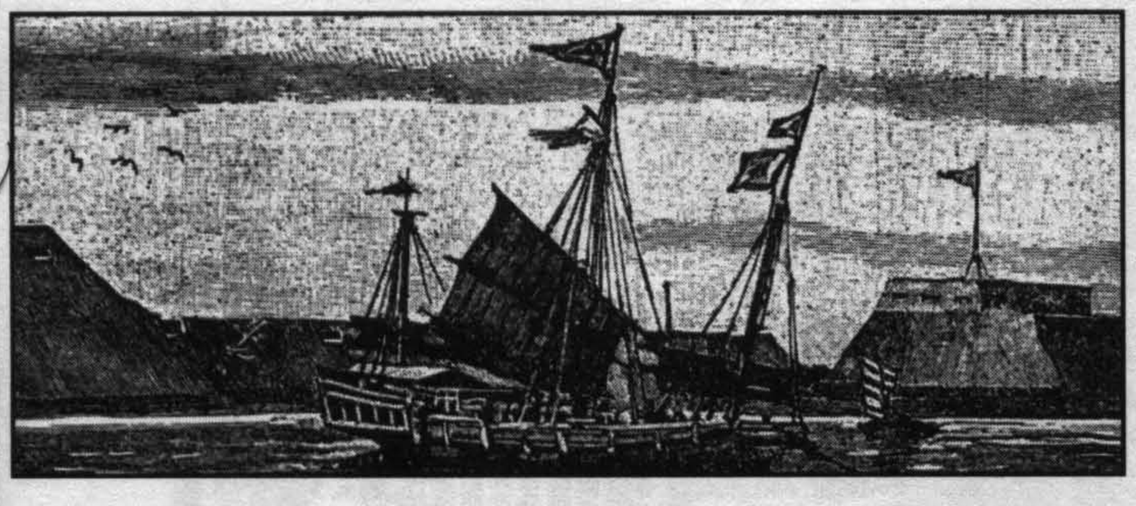
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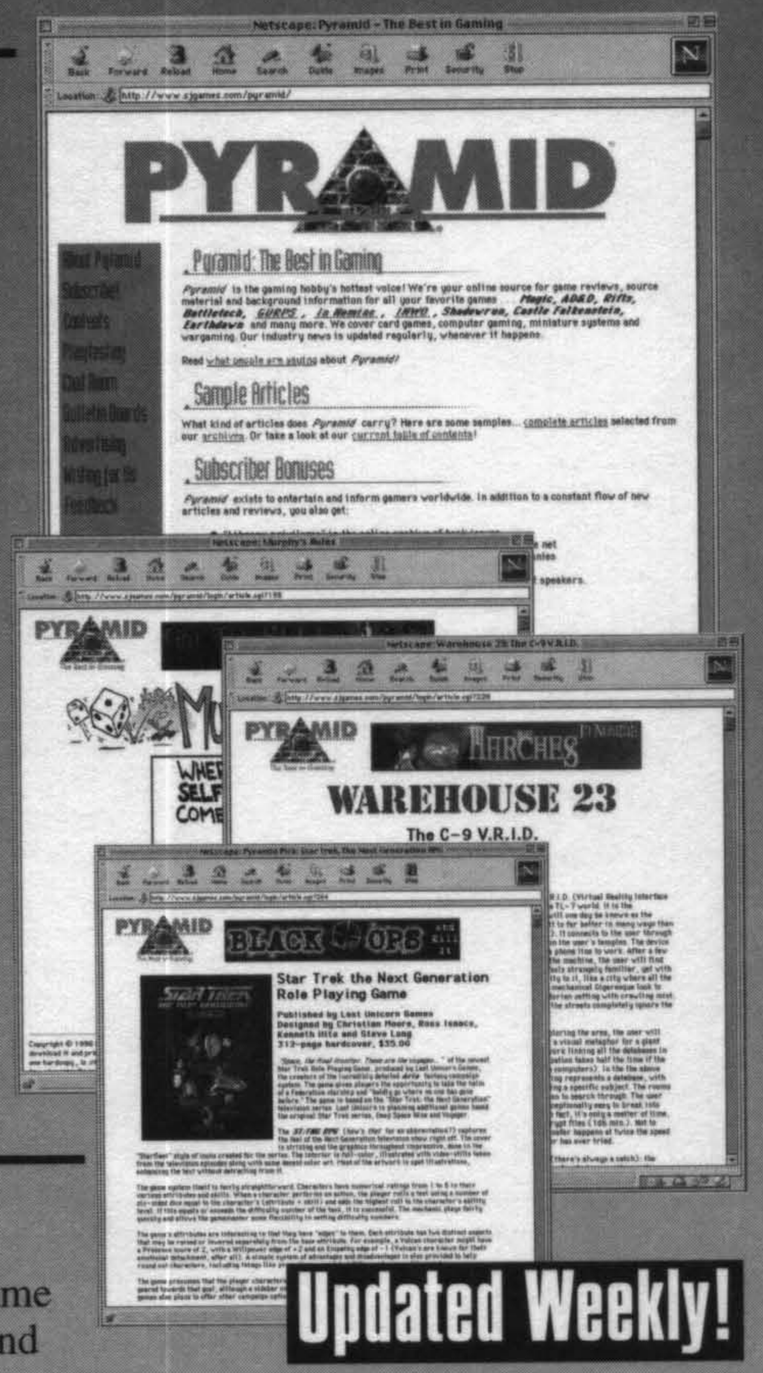
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