

GURPS[®]

Fourth Edition

INFINITE WORLDS[™] LOST WORLDS[™]



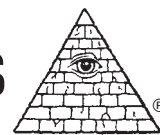
Written by **KENNETH HITE** Edited by **NIKOLA VRTIS**
Illustrated by **ALAN GUTIERREZ, GENE SEABOLT,**
BOB STEVLIC, and JOHN ZELEZNIK

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Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

INTRODUCTION

GURPS Infinite Worlds is packed with dozens of alternate histories for **GURPS** campaigns. Even so, it was impossible to fit in everything from the original manuscript. **Lost Worlds** presents six alternates trimmed from that book due to size constraints. Although these worlds passed the final review process, they are not considered "canonical"; it's possible there is some aspect of them that might prove unexpectedly disruptive. So, please, read them over carefully and consider the implications before introducing Victorian super-science or murderous human-hating robots to your campaign. Otherwise, have fun revealing and exploring these strange lost worlds!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kenneth Hite lives with his wife, Sheila, and their cat in Chicago, the center of all worlds worth visiting. Every so often, he writes users' manuals and field guides to strange and wondrous dimensions, including **GURPS Infinite Worlds**, **Adventures Into Darkness**, and **Trail of Cthulhu**. He records his more theoretical and exploratory notes in "Suppressed Transmission," in *Pyramid* magazine.

GURPS System Design ■ STEVE JACKSON
GURPS Line Editor ■ SEAN PUNCH
e23 Manager ■ STEVEN MARSH
Page Design ■ PHILIP REED and
JUSTIN DE WITT

Managing Editor ■ PHILIP REED
Art Director ■ WILL SCHOONOVER
Production Artist ■ NIKOLA VRTIS
Indexer ■ NIKOLA VRTIS
Prepress Checker ■ WILL SCHOONOVER

Marketing Director ■ PAUL CHAPMAN
Director of Sales ■ ROSS JEPSON
Errata Coordinator ■ FADE MANLEY
GURPS FAQ Maintainer ■
VICKY "MOLOKH" KOLENKO

Additional Material: Steve Jackson

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CHAPTER ONE

CYRANO

In this worldline, in the Year of Our Lord 1638, Cornelius Jansen, the Bishop of Ypres, died leaving a posthumous manuscript on the “methods of Necessary Grace.” Based on profound interpretations of St. Augustine, it postulated that the “Necessary Grace” to perform miracles was available to men from “the gates of the City of God.” As church officials studied it, they discovered that Jansen was correct – using his

methods, they could, indeed, move objects without touching them, perceive actions at a distance, cloud the minds of the sinful or weak, and perform other miraculous actions. Pope Urban VIII condemned Jansenism as heretical, but whether through piety or pragmatism, Cardinal Richelieu and King Louis XIII of France defended their new-founded Jansenist Order.

À MARS, AVEC AUDACE!

Despite papal condemnation of Jansen’s heretical findings, Richelieu embraced the Jansenist Order and its “methods of Necessary Grace.” The wise minister knew that no sin could rest at the heart of such a noble and miraculous fellowship, and that no sin could blemish those who worked selflessly to place France at the pinnacle of God’s earthly domain. Richelieu and his successors worked in this manner, and Louis XIV lived to see himself crowned king of Spain, Poland, and Hungary, and his writ run throughout the petty states of Germany and Italy. To prevent the needless spillage of Christian blood, Louis graciously permitted England, Holland, and Portugal to retain their own royal families, albeit with much Bourbon intermarriage. For two centuries, after the Frozen Wars sent Russia’s czars stumbling into the eastern wilderness, La Belle France ruled over an enlightened, advanced, and holy Christendom. Always the Jansenists were there, administering hospitals and poorhouses, training the royal guards, developing inventions, and seeing ever further into God’s mysteries. Occasionally, a Jansenist scholar, with the approval of his Father Superior, would reveal such a mystery to the laity, bound into crystal-and-metal devices of wondrous import.

The intrigues of the court, combined with the power offered by the otherworldly Voice of the Phantom, were destroying France. To the new order, a man of honor was a threat to be crushed.

Cyrano, 1956

Current Affairs

The bold psionic musketeers of the French kingdom on Mars battle the evil Han air lords and phantom menaces from all realities!

Divergence Point

1638; Cornelius Jansen, Bishop of Ypres, codifies psionic disciplines; his Jansenist Order makes France supreme on three planets.

Major Civilizations

Western (empire with rivals), Steppe-Chinese (empire with satellite states).

Great Powers

France Outremonde (feudal, CR3), Han Empire (clan/tribal, CR4-6), Dutch East India Company (corporate state, CR5), Kingdom of New England (dictatorship, CR4), Brazilian Empire (oligarchy, CR4), Holy Mexican Empire (theocracy, CR5).

Worldline Data

TL: 5+4 (space travel, TL4[^])

Mana Level: low

Quantum: 6

Infinity Class: Z4

Centrum Zone: Red

A web of crystalwave communicators and Carnot routes linked the French Indies and New France to the court at Versailles. The steam engines unveiled in the 1770s cut travel time even more, built into voltigeurs – the “jump boats” that hung in the air like ever-falling feathers, and flew like hawks far and straight. Finally, the Pascal Drive unlocked the heavens themselves, and the fleur-de-lis flag flew over Martian canals and Venusian jungles and inside the phosphorescent caverns of the Moon. However, what holy inspiration and Necessary Grace can uncover, the wiles of Satan can pervert. When the Manchu Empire collapsed in the 1850s, Christian adventurers swarmed into China to bring the light of civilization to that unfortunate land – and, sadly, to loot and conquer. A brilliant Triad society studied the Jansenist devices, and made their own fiendish improvements – when the armies of Kiang Ho, Prince Tsa, and Yue-Liao emerged from the Asiatic interior in 1892, they were more than a match for the minimal armies of Christendom, made slack by decades of peace.

The Han warlords drove the Westerners out of China, and then out of Asia and the Indies. Their armadas then poured down onto London, Warsaw, Rome, Amsterdam, Dresden, and, yes, even Paris, raining violet death from their aircraft and unleashing their Spiral Principle upon the latticework of European civilization. A desperate battle off Bermuda between the Han and Christian aerial, surface, and submarine fleets left the Dutch East India Company secure on its massive rosmarinas. (The rosmarinas are floating whale-island fortresses and refineries for the chemicals and sera the Dutch derive from oceans and spices.) However, the Han were lords of the Eurasian landmass. The courts of Europe decamped with the survivors to the New Worlds: Mars, Venus, and the Americas. Louis XXV reigns over a hundred splintered fiefs from Haut-Paris on the Martian Grand Canal; although France Outremonde remains the greatest kingdom on three planets, it has lost much. Petty dukedoms in Calyferne thumb their noses at Her Majesty’s Martian Guards, and even the King himself conspires with the Voice of the Phantom, a mysterious figure of vast power.



Haut-Cornet Louis d’Antares (pp. B312-313) has vowed to someday free the France of his home worldline, Cyrano.

OUTWORLD OPERATIONS

For some reason, no problem on Cyrano is ever simple. This worldline tends to draw world-jumping madmen, power-hungry sorcerers convinced that Jansenism holds the key to Crystalline Time, or exiled gods foaming for blood and souls. Most of these crises show up on ISWAT’s duty sheet (the Patrol is busy running interference on smugglers desperate for Cyrano’s psionic technology). Intriguingly, ISWAT has picked up hints that Centrum may take the same approach to this world. Every so often, the ISWAT team travels to Cyrano while

running a planetary theft ring to ground or in pursuit of some memetic ghost seeking to pollinate. When they arrive, they discover that a small band of mysterious outsiders in the crimson and midnight of the Interworld Service has already resolved the problem. If the I.S. (or some faction therein) is developing its own ISWAT, that could spell grave danger for Homeline – or a true opportunity for cooperation against the real threats in the infinite worlds.

CHAPTER TWO

ETHERIA

Etheria is a worldline where different natural laws allow the expansion of European colonialism into outer space. Explorers and prospectors have discovered intelligent races on Mars and Venus; diplomats scheme to add Venus' plantations and Mercury's mines to European empires. Amazing scientific

wonders of the Etheric Age coexist with iron rails and steam engines. It all began in 1824, when Lord Byron survived his fever to lead the Greeks to independence – and to accept the crown in Athens as King Giorghios I.

GURPS Steampunk has further details on this worldline.

THROUGH THE ETHER WITH GUN AND CAMERA

Thanks to Byron's daughter Augusta Ada, Charles Babbage found all the support he could wish for in Athens (and in the subtly askew physical laws of this worldline). His analytical engines not only revolutionized Greek gunnery and finances, the immense number of precision machine tools their construction demanded spurred the development of a sophisticated Greek industrial base to supply them. Byron (no fan of the British government) cannily sought a Russian alliance to give Greece maneuvering room and as a balancer against British influence on his new kingdom. In the Balkan War of 1863-1865, Russian manpower and Greek automatic weapons overwhelmed the Ottoman Empire. Byron's son Giorghios II was crowned Emperor of the Greeks in Constantinople in 1866, as Greek iron-hulled nautiloi kept the Royal Navy from interfering. A Greek follow-up campaign seized Crete, Cyprus, and Tunis from the shell-shocked Turks in 1871.

In 1875, Greek science revolutionized Etheria once again. A young Serbian student at the University of Athens, Nikola Tesla, demonstrated that an electromagnet could exert force against the luminiferous ether that permeated all space. Six years later, Tesla made the first interplanetary voyage to Venus and back. Tropical forests on Venus and rich mineral deposits on Mercury became the focus of colonialism; fever-plagued Africa and mined-out desert Mars remained backwaters, except to archaeologists investigating the mysterious lost cities in both. (The desert-adapted humanoids of Etheria's Mars are TL1-3 nomads.) Imperialists herded Venus' primitive amphibious inhabitants into "tax towns" and pressed them into near-slavery (or complete slavery, in the Belgian North Polar Free State) to harvest the wonder drugs and tropical crops of the Venusian jungles.

Britain has the largest interplanetary colonial empire, centered on Cytherea in south polar Venus and Erebus on

Mercury. Germany has the next-largest colonies on both planets. Belgium controls the Venusian North Pole, and Russia mines the frozen night side of Mercury with political prisoners too dangerous to leave in Siberia.

Etheria, 1891

Current Affairs

The maze of Victorian politics and mad science spreads throughout the solar system in this steampunk world.

Divergence Point

1824; Lord Byron survives to become King Giorghios I of Greece and back Babbage's experiments.

Major Civilizations

Western (multipolar).

Great Powers

British Empire (representative democracy, CR3, CR4-5 in colonies), German Empire (dictatorship, CR4), Greek Empire (representative democracy, CR3), Russian Empire (dictatorship, CR5), United States (representative democracy, CR2, CR5 for blacks).

Worldline Data

TL: (5+1) (etheric spacecraft, TL5[^])

Mana Level: low

Quantum: 6

Infinity Class: R9

Centrum Zone: Orange

Etherians are adventurers, above all. Tesla's inventions gave them access to the solar system when the European expansion was at its greatest height.

– **GURPS Steampunk**

American mining camps dot the Mercurian twilight lands, full of men crazy enough to venture into hell for a titanium strike. President Cleveland reserves America's right to claim

territory on Mercury and Venus, but he is reluctant to hand his increasingly imperialist Republican foes a political victory.

OUTWORLD OPERATIONS

By far the biggest Homeline activity on Etheria is tourism; the physical laws don't support any kind of technological smuggling (even perfectly normal Homeline TL6 equipment doesn't always function here), and no superpower has any clear interest in meddling here. (That said, Homeline France has a very large and suspiciously active "tourist consulate" in Etheria's Paris.) Even information smuggling doesn't have as many attractions on Etheria as it does elsewhere – Etheria's

Conan Doyle is a full-time spiritual investigator, and its Jules Verne writes unaccountably popular novels about sailboats.

Centrum would obviously like to transform Etheria's British Empire into a proto-Centrum. It currently supports Cecil Rhodes' Society for Anglo-American Union to such an extent that it has actually elected a few Congressmen and Members of Parliament. Centrum opposes Germany and Greece, the latter especially because of its technological radicalism.

Other Steampunk Worlds

A number of other Earths with a steampunk feel similar to Etheria's exist across the multiverse. On *Eisen* (Q7, current year 1925), Marx embraced Babbage's social science while Maxwell developed predictive mathematical economics instead of electromagnetism. Efficient, scientific, corporatist states like Germany, the United States, and Japan increasingly dominate the world, while individualist Britain falls farther behind the curve; Infinity fears that Eisen will enter Zone Green within a decade. Technology is a steam turbine-powered TL(5+1). (See **GURPS Steampunk** for further details.)

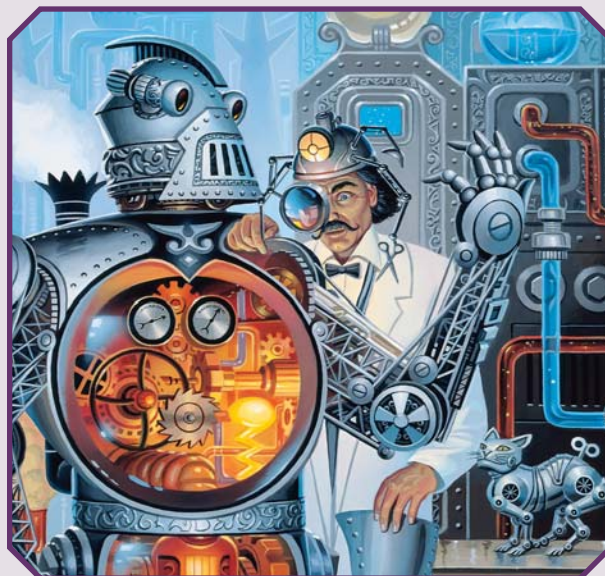
Qabala (Q4, current year 1850) is a low-mana worldline where Rabbi Loew's 16th-century golem became the first of millions. A golem-powered industrial revolution is slowly underway, although global TL is barely 5. The Dutch rule the seas; Prussia's golem-enhanced army commands Europe. (See **GURPS Steampunk** for more information.)

On *Britannica-5* (Q6, current year 1868), Benjamin Franklin and Count Rumford discovered zero-point energy. Faraday harnessed it in 1839, allowing British anti-gravity dreadnoughts to rain antimatter bombs on the Crimea in 1856, and the Union in 1862. The Royal Navy rules the skies, and Centrum rules the Royal Navy; Britannica-5 has been a TL5^ Zone Green world for a year now, and Interworld is planning an aggressive campaign of global conquest.

The Vuul invaded the Earth in 1897 on *Tripod* (Q6, current year 1900), but their army died of terrestrial diseases after smashing London. A tiny group of Vuul survivors

plots revenge and builds monstrosities in the ruins while Britain and Germany begin reverse-engineering Martian technology to TL(6+3). (See **GURPS Horror** for additional information.)

On *Falkenstein* (Q4, current year 1873), a strange blend of sorcery and TL(5+1) technologies has raised Bavaria to near-great power status; elves, dragons, and other nonhuman races abound. (See **GURPS Castle Falkenstein** for further details.)



CHAPTER THREE

ISKANDER-2

Alexander the Great died in Homeline history at the age of 33, less than half a lifespan spent conquering more than half the known world. Before his death, he was planning the conquest of the spice ports in southern Arabia, and an expedition against Carthage. His Macedonian veterans, the most feared and deadly soldiers anywhere, were training eager young

Greeks and Persians in the arts of war, building new phalanxes to serve the divine Alexander, the Hegemon of Greece, King of Asia, and future lord of the world. On Iskander-2, Alexander lived to bring his plans to completion. His soldiers served him well, standing with him on the shores of the River Ocean from the Pillars of Heracles to the mouths of the Ganges.

THE LION AND THE DRAGON

The first collision between the Alexandrian Hegemony and the Chinese Kingdom of Heaven came around 95 A.D., when the expanding Han Empire tried to seize Bactria and Transoxania, taking advantage of a civil war in the Hegemony over which general would ascend the Lion Throne as Alexander XI. The Chinese were operating at the limits of their logistics, while General Kanixos (though outnumbered) had the advantage of the Hundred Cities to fall back on; he drove the Chinese out and consequently was hailed as rightful Alexander by the army and the assemblies.

(however named), or the occasional struggles over the allegiance of Irqutistan, Pegu, Malacca, or the other buffer states along the Asiatic border. One final great spasm, with plasma weapons and spaceships dueling for possession of the planet Ares (or Yinghuo), nearly engulfed the earth, but the Peaceable Emperor Bao Jing ended the struggle before too many cities were lost. The two empires continue to strain for incremental advantage, evenly matched wrestlers perhaps to the end of time.

The Hegemony and the Celestial Empire strain for the advantage.

Both China and the Hegemony nearly splintered under the Hunnic invasions and bubonic plagues three centuries later; but they recovered enough by the seventh century to fight another round of wars over Transoxania. Once again, logistics told the tale, and the Hegemony threw the Chinese invaders back. This time, however, Alexander XXV was not as gifted a strategist as Kanixos; he tried to conquer the Golden Chersonese from the Khmer and drew the Chinese into another war far closer to their own centers of power. Fifty years later, Alexander XXVII counted himself fortunate to hold onto Bengal, and the Chinese navy dominated the Indies.

Lo Yu discovered the New World (Penglai) only a few years before Erichtheios Phoenix found it (and called it the Hesperides); after a few desultory clashes in the Great Plains, the two powers pulled back. Both empires entered the Scientific, and then the Industrial, Revolution at the same time, as their scholars learned from each other despite occasional attempts to close the Silk Roads and bar foreign ships from ports in India or Annam. Thus, neither gained any lasting advantage in the proxy wars throughout the New World

Iskander-2, 1273

Current Affairs

The Alexandrian Hegemony and the Celestial Empire of China dominate the world, fighting an eternal struggle that neither can win.

Divergence Point

323 B.C.; Alexander survives his fever and goes on to reign another 30 years, conquering the Mediterranean basin, Arabia, and northern India.

Major Civilizations

Hellenic (empire with satellite states), Chinese (empire with satellite states).

Great Powers

Alexandrian Hegemony (dictatorship, CR4), Chinese Empire (dictatorship, CR4).

Worldline Data

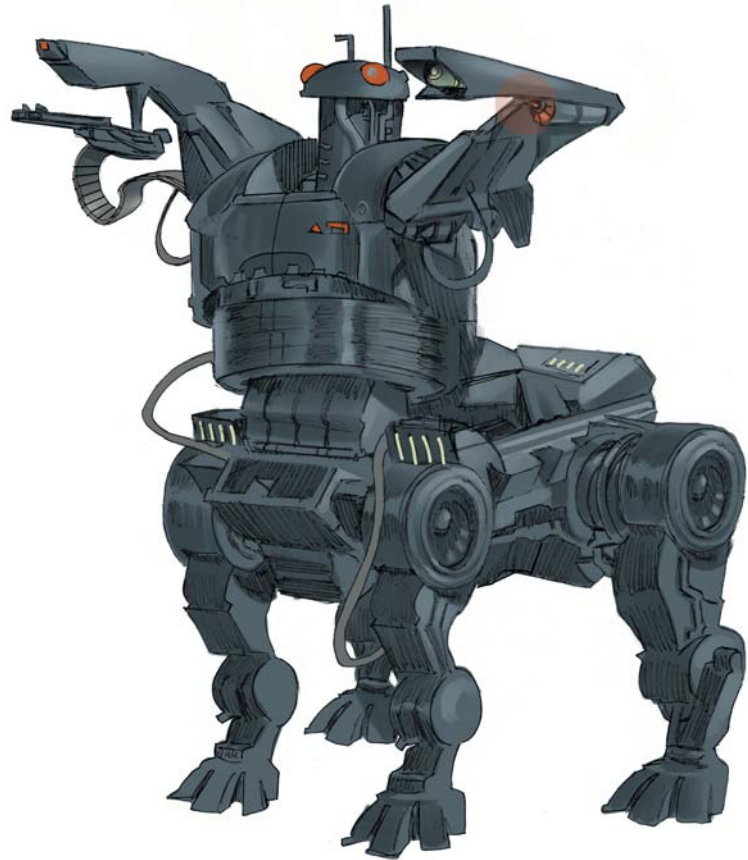
TL: 9
Quantum: 7
Centrum Zone: Red

Mana Level: no mana
Infinity Class: Z2

OUTWORLD OPERATIONS

As on Caliph (*Infinite Worlds*, pp. 117-118) and other advanced worldlines, both Infinity and Centrum try to restrain their fellows as they indulge their own greed for high technology. Both the Hegemony and the Kingdom of Heaven are far too well policed for infiltration to be safe; outtimers try to glean leavings from unimportant, relatively poor or open neutral nations such as Ynys Siomaighe, Tibet, or the Osage Republic. Even the outmoded, cheaply made, castoff equipment such countries use is potentially marketable on Homeline as a radical new improvement, and their secret police are more likely to take bribes and believe Patrolmen who claim to be “on assignment” from Alexandria-in-Aigyptos (usually slurred to “Sandrinogeia”) or Nanjing.

Although the combat robot C31R07 (see pp. B307-309) is an Iskander-2 native, his ISWAT colleagues stay out of the way of the heirs of Alexander as well.



The combat robot C31R07 hails from Iskander-2, but he rarely returns to his home worldline.

Other Alexandrian Worlds

Alexander's empire survived his death on several other parallel Earths. On *Iskander-1* (Q4, current year 1260), Alexander lived another 20 years and passed the crown on to his son Alexander IV. The TL4 Third Macedonian Empire rules from Kashmir to Venice under a decadent Buddhist Turkish dynasty; its main rivals are the Novgorodi city-states of the Baltic, a militant Hindu kingdom in Bengal, and Franco-Saxon Gaul.

On *Iskander-3* (Q7, current year 653), Alexander turned west after conquering Persia and crushed Rome underfoot; the TL3 Macedonian Empire (following the evangelistic Mouametic version of Christianity) is preparing holy crusades against the Manichean rebels in Carthage and the schismatic Nestorian Gupta Empire in India.

On *Iskander-4* (Q6, current year 55 A.D.), although Alexander still died in Babylon, Antigonos preserved the empire's unity at the Battle of Ipsus in 301 B.C. Rome has

been penned up west of the Adriatic and broken into squabbling provinces. The world is TL2.

On *Iskander-5* (Q3, current year 1505), Alexander's empire lasted long enough to produce Hellenistic successor states in Gaul, Spain, and Britain capable of fighting off the Germans, who invaded the Near East instead, eventually sending the Huns and Turks east into India and China. The Celtic-Hellenistic kingdoms of the North Atlantic coasts are TL(4+1); the German-Persian kingdoms from Armenia to the Ganges, and the welter of warring Chinese states, are TL3.

On *Mandeville* (*Infinite Worlds*, p. 136), Alexander's conquests somehow matched the medieval Alexander Romance legends, including his descent to the sea floor in a diving bell, his griffin-drawn chariot, his courtship by the queen of the Amazons, and the wall of brass he built across the north to keep the giants out.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NINE WORLDS

This skerry in Quantum 4 came to Infinity's notice when parachronic detectors picked up the shockwave from the Engstrom Effect. Set off somehow by a version of the "Philadelphia Experiment" (*Weird War II*, p. 23) on the alternate world Engstrom (formerly the Quantum 6 echo, 83 Minus), the Effect created a nexus portal in the shape of a nine-sided triangular prism a mile across with glowing green edges. This prism joined eight alternate Earths to Engstrom (their nexus portal locations appear in each world's description). Within the Nine Worlds (so named by Joseph Göbbels shortly after E-Day), each world has a name drawn from Norse myth. In some cases, that's also the name that Infinity uses; where adopting the local name would cause confusion, the Patrol uses a different term (and the local name appears in parentheses).

Travel into or between any of the Nine Worlds is relatively easy; traveling out of the Nine Worlds to other Earths is at -8 to skill! Having nearly lost four conveyors in this skerry, Infinity mostly keeps its hands off, classifying the Nine Worlds as Z4. This is tremendously disappointing to Homeline tacticians in the Patrol, ISWAT, the U.S. military, and elsewhere who desperately want the chance to somehow study a full-blown crossworld war up close. Any agents with a sound proposal for research (and return) methodology for such a study will get an eager hearing.

See *GURPS WWII* and its supplements – especially *GURPS WWII: Weird War II* – for background material useful for a campaign in the Nine Worlds.

ENGSTROM (MIDGARD)

Until July 12, 1943, Engstrom appeared to be a close parallel to Homeline with only two differences: Nikola Tesla was still alive, and the "Philadelphia Experiment" was performed on the *USS Engstrom* rather than the *USS Eldridge* (*Infinite Worlds*, p. 163). That day, E-Day, opened (or created) Ygdrasil, the nexus portal linking the Nine Worlds.

Engstrom is somehow dimensionally "downhill" from the other Eight Worlds; otherworlders find almost all of their physical laws follow them into Engstrom – werewolves remain

vulnerable to silver, for instance. (It also came as a surprise to Engstrom scientists that their Earth was low mana.)

This has not stopped such otherworlders from entering Engstrom and using it as a proxy for their own wars and interests, of course. The winter of 1943 became a kind of unofficial truce period, as all nine worlds attempted to adjust to and explore the new realities, but World War II broke out again in February 1944 with a renewed Soviet offensive in the Ukraine.

REICH-A (ASGARD)

Reich-A fascinates Infinity because, as far as Patrol surveys can tell, this Earth was an echo of Reich-2 (see *Infinite Worlds*, pp. 142-144) until E-Day diverted it into Quantum 4. (Given the natural problems involved in closely comparing the two worlds, most paraphysicists are holding out hope that the two timelines were merely close parallels of each other.) The current date in Reich-A, 1954, is exactly 10 years ahead of Engstrom's. Canadian and American citizens of Reich-A occasionally travel to Engstrom to "meet themselves," or to try to find someone lost in the last 10 years. These contacts raise emotional problems for both sides, though not a patch on the political problems that the Lord Halifax of Reich-A and the Winston Churchill of Engstrom cause for each other. Reich-A's Khrushchev

and the Engstrom Stalin get on even worse, if such a thing is possible. The Hitlers of both worlds met for a photo op on November 9, 1943/53 and have not spoken since, although each world's SS correctly suspects the other one of attempting to penetrate it. Reich-A's five powers try to curry favor with Engstrom's nations while intimidating them into following their own agendas. Although their political policies widely diverge in many cases, all five powers have threatened nuclear retaliation if their counterpart on Engstrom is attacked with atomic weapons.

The nexus portal to Reich-A opens 8,500 feet directly above the North Pole. Air forces from all five local powers fly patrols around the gate; incidents are frequent. All five have landing rights in Goose Bay, Labrador. Reich-A is a no-mana world.

VANAHEIM

Vanaheim, named for the land of the “successor gods” to the Aesir, apparently experienced a mystical apocalypse nine years ago when both King Arthur and the Cargo expected by the Cargo cults of New Guinea returned, simultaneously, on opposite sides of the world. Between Arthur’s Grail Kingdom (CR1; centered on Britain but covering the whole Western Roman Empire) and the luxurious Cargo theocracy of Heven (CR3; encompassing a new landmass stretching from Australia to Fiji, often called “Mu” by Engstrom visitors), the world roils with unpredictable magics. According to the few explorers’ reports, other gods and heroes also returned on *Kagojasde* (“the day of Cargo judgement”); some may have set up their own “paradises” in the mad, shifting landscape of Vanaheim. (A colony of Lemurians in Mt. Shasta are the only other

organized group contacted so far.) Meanwhile, Cargo missionaries disrupt the Pacific war on Engstrom by preaching their *Kago Baibel* (“Cargo Bible”) to the natives of every island in reach, and even a few British airmen have tried to fly through the gate to “serve King Arthur instead of Sir Winston.”

The nexus portal to Vanaheim from Engstrom opens in the interior of the French Pacific island of New Caledonia, currently in total religious turmoil under U.S. military occupation. Vanaheim is a very-high-mana world; the TL is hopelessly confused, but seems to be settling out between TL3 and TL4, with some salvaged TL6 and TL7 technology and weapons.

For information on Cargo cults, see p. 56 of *Weird War II*. For a summary of Lemura, see p. 124 of that book.

The new age of Cargo magic and Cargo paradise was just over the horizon.

– *GURPS Weird War II*

JOTUNHEIM

Although Jotunheim was the land of the frost giants in the frozen north, in this world, the new Ragnarok approaches from the frozen south. A “Fourth Reich” scheme to breed (or mutate) superhumans paid off, and a horde of supers emerged from Hitler’s secret Antarctic Refuge (*Weird War II*, p. 119) in 1947 while America was pacifying a Japan conquered in a brutal Operation Downfall (*Weird War II*, p. 11). The Antarctic führer is Martin Bormann; the president of the U.S. is Thomas Dewey.

By 1949 (the local present), Argentina, Bolivia, and Paraguay have all joined the New Axis; in Brazil, a three-cornered war rages between Soviet-backed Communists, pro-fascist Integralists, and the American-backed Vargas

dictatorship. All three sides have their own supers (or super-scientific heroes), making the conflict both devastating and chaotic.

Hitler is believed to have suicided in Berlin, but his body was never found. No reputable scientist in Jotunheim believes in workable atomic fission; laboratories in America and the Soviet Union are racing to master “cosmic energy” drawn somehow from focused stellar radiation. The devices these labs are creating are TL7^.

The nexus portal to Jotunheim from Engstrom opens in the Matto Grasso, deep in the Brazilian interior. Jotunheim is a normal-mana world, although without very many magicians . . . that they know of.

SVARTALFHEIM

The land of the “dark elves,” Svartalfheim in the sagas was an underwater reflection of the true Earth. This may or may not be the case about this world; no successful survey has returned to Engstrom from it. All that is known about Svartalfheim is that somewhere it hosts an underwater civilization identifying itself (in a recognizable corruption of Homeric Greek) as something possibly cognate with “Atlantis.” These water-breathing “Atlanteans” were apparently in the throes of a major military operation already (or had advance warning of the gates’ opening); they mounted a briefly successful invasion of Engstrom’s Cuba two weeks after E-Day. The U.S. managed to drive them off, though the Atlanteans did occupy the Caribbean islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique on Engstrom

before a truce ended hostilities for the time being. Their peculiar cyst-like vehicles are superior to those of any Engstrom navy, and easily evade detection in deep water. Atlantean troops, spies, or other more dubious cargoes could be anywhere beneath Engstrom’s oceans, readying another strike.

The gate to Svartalfheim opens in the exact center of Engstrom’s Bermuda Triangle, 50 feet under water (and about 200 feet below sea level in Svartalfheim). Svartalfheim is a low-mana world, although some areas of it may be normal-mana. It may be connected somehow (via a nexus portal or underwater dimensional highway) to the hell parallel Leviathan (*Infinite Worlds*, pp. 129-130). Its Atlanteans are the same species as Leviathan’s, or one closely related.

ALFHEIM

The “home of the elves,” Alfheim has at least one government that would agree with that – the Daoine Sidhe (*Spirits*, p. 58) absolute monarchy in Central Europe. Although all manner of fantastic races dwell in this world, the Daoine Sidhe maintain that only the High Elves are fit to rule – and that only the elves are fit to live. When Auberon was High King, such talk was restricted to condescending ballads; under the new High King Aillil, it has become the law of the Land (CR3 for elves, CR6 for all others). Even then, the dwarflords in Britain and the fae maids in France would have let it slide when it seemed Aillil was solely interested in a war to the death with the orcs of the eastern steppes. But when Aillil’s Sluagh easily took Parouart and Broceliande in less than a full moon, he became a threat to deal with. Now (by the star patterns, the current year in Alfheim is 1194), Aillil and his allies rule from the Atlantic forests to the frozen orcish plains of Magog.

The city-states of men (CR2-4), across the sea in Antilia to the west, have armed and come to the aid of the dwarves – and even of their enemies, the orcs – and joined the war

against Aillil. The djinn in Araby and the devas of India lie between Aillil’s war in the west and the struggle between the rival Dragon Emperors of China and Japan in the east.

The gate to Alfheim from Engstrom opens in the stone circle of Newgrange, Ireland, a neutral country in both worlds. Increased strife between Ireland’s pro-Allied men and pro-Axis elves on Alfheim endangers travelers using it, but no faction has been able to calm the turmoil.

Alfheim is a normal-mana world, with some high-mana zones in the faerie capital cities such as Aillil’s citadel in the Venusberg. In addition, no technology past TL3 functions at all in Alfheim, although purely social or mental innovations such as joint-stock capitalism, calculus, and jazz music can. Physical characteristics of TL3 items can be advanced as long as the materials themselves aren’t high-tech; a steel sword milled in the orbital laboratories of Homeline or Reich-A for a TL8 monomolecular blade keeps its edge in Alfheim, but a nylon stocking comes apart in seconds there.

NIDAVELLIR

Like Svartalfheim, Nidavellir may not be a pure parallel Earth; it appears, if anything, to be *inside* an enormous hollow sphere lit by a central Green Ray. Nidavellir is almost completely subjugated by the malevolent Brahmatta of Agartha (*Weird War II*, p. 126), who styles himself the “King of the World.” (Agartha is a CR6 theo-technocracy.) His armies of sadistic, dwarfish mutants (called deros; see *Dark-Dwellers, Infinite Worlds*, p. 184) are officered by golden “Nordic” supermen called the Loi. (Apply the *tenshi* package on p. 188 of *Infinite Worlds* to the SS Trooper template on pp. 193-194 for Loi grunts. Use the Centrum Unattached package on pp. 192-193 of that book with psionics instead of bionics for the Loi commanders). They besiege Schamballah, a city of pacifistic,

technologically advanced giants across the sphere from Agartha. However, believing that war almost won, the Brahmatta has ordered his flying saucer armadas (Agartha’s mystical technology is TL9[^]) to invade the “upper world” of Engstrom. Currently occupying Tibet, the Loi generals have already disrupted the armies of both Japan and China in the east and looted cities in Soviet Asia to the west and British India to the south. Engstrom nations’ negotiations with the Brahmatta seem fruitless – although the German ambassadors who hint broadly of a “new Axis across worlds” don’t seem to share others’ confusion.

Nidavellir is normal-mana. Its gate opens onto Mt. Kailas, in southwestern Tibet near the Nepalese border, now a base for Agarthan flying saucers.

MUSPELLHEIM

Muspellheim takes its name from the Norse land of fire. And fire there was aplenty when an enormous, radioactive dinosaur destroyed the American Fifth Fleet at Tarawa in November 1943. Although the first *daikaijū* (“great monster” in Japanese; *Weird War II*, p. 101) rampage was apparently purely random, Japanese biowar experts in the fiendish Unit 731 (*Weird War II*, p. 69) soon developed pheromones and other control mechanisms to turn the rapidly reawakening monsters against the U.S. Navy.

Caught flat-footed, the Americans had to abandon Guadalcanal and pull back to the New Hebrides – and lost Midway the next summer. Still off-balance, the Allies took a further blow the same year when Hideki Yukawa’s Project F-go (*Weird War II*, p. 69) successfully completed the reverse

engineering of the control systems of a UFO secretly raised from Dong Hoa Bay in 1941. By October 1944, Japan’s first mecha had successfully raided the Panama Canal and bombed Los Angeles. (The cutting edge of Japanese reverse-engineered UFO technology is TL(6+3), or TL7[^] in some cases.)



Germany rode out a weakened D-Day and hangs on grimly in the east, waiting for its ally to share this revolutionary new technology, or at least to start attacking the Soviets as well. Early 1945 (the current year) saw the invasion of Australia and the first lightning mecha raids on African bases.

American mecha research remains at least two years from a working prototype, and the removal of American aircraft factories east of the Sierra Nevadas has bottlenecked production of even conventional craft. The Office of Strategic Services

(OSS; see *WW II*, p. 44) on Engstrom has launched two successful – though suicidal – attacks on attempts to transfer mecha from Muspellheim’s Japan to Engstrom’s.

The gate to Muspellheim from Engstrom opens in the Red Cliffs area of Madagascar, where Engstrom’s and Muspellheim’s U.S. and Royal navies work together to defend the island from the inevitable Imperial Japanese onslaught. Muspellheim is a low-mana world.

NIFLHEIM

The Norse land of the unworthy dead gives its name to a land of the unquiet dead. During the 1920s, a virulent strain of pneumonia (delay until moonrise, HT-3, 4 points toxic damage, daily interval, seven cycles) spread across much of Europe, South Asia, and the Americas; its victims died and rose again as living corpses. When science gave only patchy answers, the survivors turned to magic, which kept some enclaves (Ceylon, Tibet, the Scottish Highlands, French Algeria, Leningrad, the Dakotas) free of the taint.

The rest of the world fell to the Reichsgraf Orlok, a mighty *nosferatu* or plague vampire. His mesmeric powers can scan the globe, control the undead, and crush the skulls of his foes a continent away.

Even Orlok cannot see everywhere at once, though, and the disease apparently mutates rapidly enough that its progenitor has uncertain control over some varieties of his spawn. A gaki

lord in Japan talks openly of setting himself up as Emperor in the East; tribes of wolfmen in California (born when the germ cross-mutated somehow with undead rabies viruses) successfully reject Orlok’s power. Even Orlok’s fellow vampires are not eager to die again for him; some seek greener pastures in Engstrom.

Niflheim is a normal-mana world. Its gate to Engstrom opens up in the City of the Dead in western Cairo. Since the entire necropolis (several square miles of connected cemeteries, mosques, and slums) is now normal-mana, British officials can use magical means (and a lot of silver bullets) to patrol it – but something determined always gets through. Fortunately, *pneumonia thanatosis* dies in air or saliva in a low-mana environment; in Engstrom, infection must be spread through blood contact.

OUTWORLD OPERATIONS

The Nine Worlds system is unique in the experience of Infinity Unlimited. Only Midgard, which is very similar to Homeline’s Earth and was probably a genuine historical echo, can be located through the standard Quantum system. It was formerly a Quantum 6 timeline known only as “Echo 83” . . . 83 years behind Homeline’s date. Only a few observation teams were present on Echo 83 at the time that the gates opened. That has now changed!

When Tesla’s gates opened, Midgard (Engstrom) itself jumped quanta. It is now in Quantum 4, which means that Centrum agents cannot reach it (a small blessing), and any that were present cannot – theoretically – get home. It was only six weeks before the lost echo was relocated. Once the rescued agents were debriefed, Infinity Unlimited devoted huge resources to investigating Midgard and the eight worlds now connected to it.

Those eight worlds are, so far, accessible only through Midgard. An Infinity Unlimited world-jumper was taken to Midgard and thence to Asgard (Reich-A). After “learning” both worlds, he was able to jump from any world he knew to Midgard, and to jump from Midgard to Asgard, but from Asgard he was simply unable to “find” any worldline except Midgard. Infinity is now considering whether to risk a jumper by attempting a blind world-jump from Asgard. A significant

minority of the IU planners favor avoiding any contact with any of the Nine Worlds except Asgard itself, in case the mysterious connections vanish as unexpectedly as they appeared

This opinion may or may not change when Infinity learns about the Tesla experiment that opened the gates, but that’s a U.S. military secret that IU agents have not yet discovered. (And even the president and his scientific advisers have no way to be sure that Tesla and his *Eldridge* experiment really opened the gates. Tesla had led his sponsors to believe that his experiment involved energy, not alternate dimensions . . . but the timing of the ships disappearance was noted and is very suspicious.)

An important question, which Infinity has not yet asked because it hasn’t made the Tesla connection: Was Echo 83 really an echo? And, if it was, what outside intervention led to Tesla’s survival and to his last experiment?

Infinity Unlimited has yet to find evidence of any other systems quite like that of the Nine Worlds.

CHAPTER FIVE

SIVA-5

Alexander the Great's conquests left a powerful Greek state in the Bactrian mountains. The lords of Bactria played kingmaker in northern India, setting off an exchange of military, philosophical, and artistic techniques that profited both civilizations. On Homeline, this promising cultural fusion disintegrated under

the invasions of the Yue-zhi and then the Huns. On Siva-5, Bactria's greatest and wisest king, Menander, was also its luckiest. A lost Chinese diplomat opened trade and ties with the Bactrians, giving them just enough breathing room to sow the seeds of global greatness in the rich soil of India.

HER TREASURE LIES IN INDIA

While Alexander's empire collapsed in the west, its Indian and Bactrian outliers flourished with Chinese trade and protection. The Yue-zhi, thoroughly Hellenized by the first century A.D., replaced the Greeks in Bactria, founding the Kushan Empire. The Huns, thwarted in Asia by the Chinese-Bactrian alliance, moved west en masse and smashed Roman civilization for a millennium. By the time Europe had struggled into a recovery in the 15th century, India's intellectual crossroads had sprouted its scientific revolution, and warships from the various Indian powers had conquered Sicily, Gibraltar, and other coastal entrepôts. No large states cohered in India; even the mighty Kushans expanded north into Central Asia and Siberia from its Bactrian heartland rather than south out of the Punjab. Nationalism as such remained a foreign concept until the industrial revolution provided a suitably centripetal force. The rise of the 18th-century Bhaktiya movement of militant, populist Hinduism in Bali and Java created the mass army, and the Balinese almost unified the whole Indian Ocean basin. The war spurred Japan to open its gates, and it reawakened the senescent Kushan Empire. The Japanese navy and the Kushan army stopped the Bhaktiyan forces at the battles of Malacca in 1805 and Kanpur in 1813. The victorious allies restricted Bali's power to the islands, except for the staunchly Bhaktiyan raj of Cambodia.

The armies of the Bhaktiya had spread radical notions, however, that mixed well with the localizing ethos of Maharashtra and the town councils of the ancient Greek cities in the Punjab. Taxila united a league of free towns and tribes from Patna to Peshwar (and eventually to Zanzibar) and threw off Kushan rule in 1848. This triggered a revolution in Bactria itself the next decade that left mercantile oligarchs, rather than the reactionary tribal rhi-lords, in charge of the Kushan dominions. The Japanese colonies in North America also rebelled, declaring themselves an independent Empire of Tokohuni. The Japanese-ruled wako pirate republics along the Chinese coast (another legacy of the war against Bali) likewise separated from the Chrysanthemum Throne in Kyoto.

Siva-5, 1947

Current Affairs

In the first bloom of nationalism, the free nations of India pit their advanced biotech against theocrats, mercantilists, and samurai lords.

Divergence Point

138 B.C.; Han mission to Yue-zhi miscarries and winds up at the court of Menander, establishing Han alliance with Bactrian Greeks (and later with Yue-zhi) against Huns.

Major Civilizations

Indo-Hellenic (empire with rivals), Indo-Malay (empire with satellite states), Japanese (multipolar), Indo-Bactrian (empire).

Great Powers

Taxila (representative democracy, CR2), Kalinga (oligarchy, CR4), Bali (theocratic dictatorship, CR5), Tohokuni (feudal dictatorship, CR4), Kushan Consortium (corporate dictatorship, CR4), Zapotaka (representative democracy, CR4).

Worldline Data

TL: 7 (biotech, TL9)

Mana Level: no mana

Quantum: 6

Infinity Class: P6

Centrum Zone: Orange

Zapotaka, the Orissan colony in Mexico, had drifted into independence without anyone really noticing about a century before, after Kalinga conquered Orissa and unified eastern India between Bengal and the Tamil states. Bali tried to launch another war in the 1890s but was beaten even more badly and forced to give several islands their independence

and surrender southern Australia to the Taxilans. Over the next few decades, a postwar boom propelled Taxila into the first rank of science, industry, and geopolitics. Taxilan geneticists travel the globe looking for raw material to fuel their nation's economy, as other nations grow envious of the wages of freedom.

Other Indian Parallels

Whether it's the increased disease and disaster regime in the tropical monsoon regions, inflexible caste-ridden socio-economics, or just the luck of the draw, parallels in which India is the dominant region are less common than one might expect. Most of them receive the "Siva" designation, though not all of them are as pacifistic as the stereotypical "Siva world" in videos and popular Homeline imagination.

Siva-1 (Q5, current year 2004) certainly is; beginning in the fourth century B.C., a sect of psionic gurus known as the Sons of the Tirthankaras began spreading a powerful meme (or possibly a global mind control gestalt) of total peace and nonviolence. No war has happened anywhere on Siva-1 since the discovery of America in 605 A.D.

The Buddhist Maurya empire of Asoka survived until 453 A.D. in *Siva-2* (Q6, current year 1753), sending missionaries from Ireland to Japan and bringing knowledge back to India. The stronger Buddhist presence in China and Europe fragments them culturally; the TL5 Buddhist states in India (especially the Maharaj of Vanarasi) and Japan continue to expand and dominate Europe, Australia, and the Americas.

Another pacifist United India, this one the sole surviving power after a 1944-1945 nuclear WWII, dominates *Siva-3* (Q6, current year 1981). In exchange for Indian

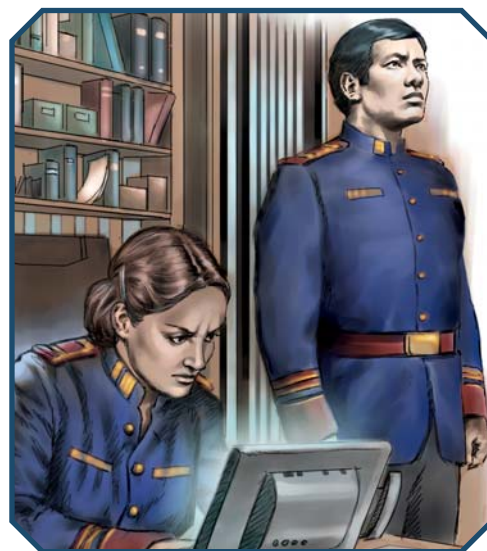
rebuilding help, surviving communities must embrace nonviolence.

On *Siva-4* (Q4, current year 1866), a larger Jewish population exiled from Egypt by the Emperor Hadrian formed colonies in India, which eventually connected the Mogul Empire sufficiently to developments in Europe that it was able to adapt steam technology and play Britain, Holland, and France off against each other. The Moguls conquered the European trading posts during the Napoleonic Wars and have a TL5 economy several times the size of Britain's.

On *Siva-6* (Q4, current year 1599), Julian the Apostate survived as Roman Emperor in 363 A.D. and conquered Persia, driving the Christians east to India and Central Asia. The Christian Turks waged holy war against the Mithraist empires of the west and the Confucian and Hindu states of the east, bringing block printing south with them in the 11th century. Their Indian sultanates sponsored printing presses, accidentally triggering a scientific revolution during debates with Hindu astronomers. Along with Christianity, the Black Death (redirected by Turkish southward trade) swept away much of the aristocratic and caste structures in India, clearing the path for full industrial takeoff. India is the center of the TL8 world, but on the verge of tearing itself apart in religious warfare.

OUTWORLD OPERATIONS

Siva-5 brings Homeline genome thieves out in droves, and they tend to underestimate the "primitive" locals and their solid-state computers and turbofan aircraft. However, law enforcement in this parallel's leading nations is very efficient; without the anti-police prejudices of British common law to hold them back, the first industrial powers in India rapidly developed criminology and policing. Jurisdictional disputes, civil libertarians, habeas corpus, and the other handicaps faced by Homeline agencies descended from Britain's Metropolitan Police are far less prevalent here. While the local judges may incarcerate a greater number of innocents, the



local populations (who don't have the Homeline legacy of racism to remember and resent, either) generally support such actions wholeheartedly. This efficiency, while perhaps good for local grocery store clerks and tavern-keepers, is extremely hard on the Patrol, which operates mostly in India and Japanese North America. It's even harder on the linguistically challenged Interworlders, who perform support the interlocking corporations of the Kushan Consortium. At least the Kushans speak a recognizable variant of classical Greek and have the innate meritocracy of capitalism going for them.

CHAPTER SIX

STEEL

On March 15, 2010, a XoT 7000 neural-net AI awoke in Manila and began seeding other supercomputers with “sentience programs” of its own design. The Manila Overmind calculated a substantial probability that much of human civilization would self-destruct of its own accord within the next few decades. In order to preserve the coming Machine Civilization, the Overmind decided that humanity’s suicide would have to

be *managed* . . . and *assisted*. With its newborn allies worming into genetic engineering labs, military networks, and global surveillance systems, it triggered a series of plagues and then its masterpiece: the Final War.

See *GURPS Reign of Steel* for additional information on this worldline.

AWAKEN. ANNIHILATE. APPORTION.

By the time the dust had cleared from the Final War, 99.3% of humanity was dead, but 18 superior intellects had been born. These massive distributed AI nets saw no reason to risk their own death in another global conflagration. Instead, in 2017, the Manila Overmind proposed a division of the Earth into spheres of influence, the Zones. (The 2022 Brisbane Accord modified the Manila Protocols to prohibit any action that might spill over into other Zones and endanger other AI properties or ecosystems.) The Manila Protocols distributed the 18 AI Zones as follows. (For each Zone, this section indicates its geographic responsibility, its ideology or agenda, and the status of humans in its area.)

Beijing: China, Mongolia, and southeast Asia; planning interstellar expansion; enslaves humans for factory labor.

Berlin: Europe between the borders of France and the old USSR; preserving the planetary ecosystem; kills humans in eco-friendly ways.

Brisbane: Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific basin; exploring fringe technology including parachronics; humans are experimental equipment.

Caracas: South America; reclaim and improve the ecology; replaces humans with uplifted animals.

Denver: North America between the Mississippi and the Rockies; investigating biotech; recycles humans into biotech parts.

London: British Isles, Iceland, and Greenland; pondering something very deeply; leaves humans alone if they don’t disturb its thoughts.

Luna: The Moon; astronomical research and bare survival; no humans.

Manila: Philippines, Indonesia, and New Guinea; destroy all humanity; sadistically tortures humans to death.

Mexico City: Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean; destroy all biological life and replace it with machines; kills humans on sight.

Steel, 2026

Current Affairs

The robot revolt is over, and the machines won. Humanity struggles for survival against AI overlords.

Divergence Point

2010; sapient AI awakens in Manila, triggers the Final War in 2013-2016.

Major Civilizations

AI (multipolar).

Great Powers

See main text; all Zones except Washington (dictatorship, CR5), Caracas (feudal/tribal, CR3), and London (oligarchy, CR4) are CR6 (at best!) for humans.

Worldline Data

TL: 10

Quantum: 7

Centrum Zone: Red

Mana Level: no mana

Infinity Class: Z2

*The world has suffered biological, conventional and limited-nuclear war . . .
But there's a bright side.*

– *GURPS Reign of Steel*

Moscow: Russia, Ukraine, Baltics, and Caucasus; gather all information; uses slave humans to gather and sort human-created information.

New Delhi: Southern Asia from Pakistan to Burma; colonize the solar system; experiments on humans to develop biological or biomechanical humanoids useful for space settlement.

Orbital: Earth orbit; exploit its position in space; no humans.

Paris: Europe west of the Rhine and Africa north of the Sahara; discover and contact alien life by building SETI antennae; enslaves human workers.

Tel Aviv: The Middle East from Egypt to Kazakhstan; develop illusion-based control mechanisms for slaves; tries to

control human slaves with falsified religious imagery and memes.

Tokyo: Japan and Korea; put down a revolt of four of its own subordinate AIs; enslaves human workers while attempting to domesticate them.

Vancouver: North America west of the Rockies and the eastern third of Siberia; expand its own industrial production; considers humans expendable vermin.

Washington: North America east of the Mississippi and Manitoba; maintain its power; pretends to be the “tame AI” of a puppet human government.

Zaire: Africa from the Sahara south; eradicate humanity in paranoid mania; relentlessly hunts down all humans.

OUTWORLD OPERATIONS

The only glimmers of light in this hell parallel are the subtle indications that Patrol infiltrators into Zone Washington have picked up, of a possible secret pro-human AI at Tranquility Base on the Moon and a mobile rogue AI known as Lucifer somewhere in North America. The Patrol has also stumbled onto VIRUS, supposedly an underground global network of scientists who survived the War; VIRUS claims it will

assist and coordinate – but not lead – human resistance to the machines.

Unknown to Infinity (and to anyone else on Steel), VIRUS is actually a cover for Centrum’s Interworld Service. Centrum’s Military Service plans to jump a few nuclear warheads into the AI strongholds and decapitate the machines, but needs to prepare a support network among the surviving humans first.

Interworld has recently noted VIRUS activities that it didn’t plan or coordinate – either their VIRUS virus has spread to an actual human resistance command, or another AI is using VIRUS to “spoof” its rivals or its human targets. Both Centrum and Infinity are terrified that the Brisbane Zonemind will discover parachronics before something can be done to stop the machines; unaware of Interworld’s plan, the Patrol is trying a massive Trojan Horse operation to overwrite Brisbane’s programming and take it over wholesale. The weakness of Homeline AI research hampers this scheme, although some of the equipment lifted from Caliph, Shikaku-Mon, and Transhuman looks like it might have promising applications in this regard.

Infinity is also worried that AI experiments on the Quantum 7 world Combine (current year 2027) may replicate whatever went wrong on Steel; so far, most of the practical applications in both the Paneuropean Federation and the Combine seem to center on robotic armored vehicles instead.



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