

A supplement for

MARC MILLER'S
TRAVELLER



CORE

101 GOVERNMENTS



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A supplement for

Traveller®

"Davus Farrar... Yes, I'd like the exit visa please... Yes, that's the - hold on, by Lorbil, goddess of transactions, what's this bill?"

"Yes please sir off-world person, this payment is required to allow you to leave."

"This is a joke, isn't it? 'Use of planetary oxygen at a rate of Cr3 per day?'"

"Pleasing you sir but we all share this world's beautiful air and your breathing sir has been adding contamination to it."

"And what's this? 'Import of various bacteria and micro-organisms...' blah blah, hold on - this is a list of normal human gut bacteria!"

"Yes sir thanking you but our ecology is sensitive to external contamination."

"Oh yes? And I guess you're going to tell me you don't have any gut bacteria?"

"Oh sir, we are all born in debt to our society. The best we can be hoping for is to pay back our dues by working hard throughout our pitiful lives."

"Look, this item reads 're-education of citizens'? This lot totals nearly Cr100!!!!"

"I'm afraid after talking to people like you many citizens require counselling as they become bewildered as to the benefits of our wonderful society."

"You mean they see the light, that's what you mean!"

"I'm sorry sir but your bill is now Cr150 - I feel I will need to be counselled myself due to the trauma of this interview."

"I want to see a supervisor! NOW! No, hold on! Let me guess - it's more expensive to re-educate a supervisor, yes?"

"Of course yes thank you sir."

"Oh take the !*?!* money. I just want off this god-forsaken dirt ball."

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101 GOVERNMENTS

or

"Wherever you land there will be little eccentricities particular to that area, which you ought to know about otherwise you might end up in jail."

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Introduction

What's in this book and how to use it

This booklet is intended to provide Traveller® referees with a selection of governments or rulers with which to flesh-out the myriad worlds of the Imperium or your own custom star systems.

Introduction

Probably one of the most important features of a given world (beyond whether one can breathe the atmosphere) is the government. The rulers of a world dictate the laws by which one must abide, the attitude of the natives to visitors, and frequently the basic philosophies by which everyday life operates.

Governments provide Traveller® players with a wide variety of challenges and adventure opportunities, in addition to being valuable background 'colour'.

Format

This supplement is divided into sections according to the government codes used by the Scout Corps to classify the method by which a world is ruled.

Each entry in a section has the following details:

- a description of the government - its basic ideology and distinguishing features,
- a section for the referee containing additional details which might not at first be apparent to player-characters (PCs),
- a plot which you may wish to exploit, linked in some manner to the government and its background.

You should feel free to adapt any or all of this information to suit your campaign background and/or personal preferences.

Selecting a Government

Consult the section of this book corresponding to the government code from the Universal World Profile (UWP) of the world your players are intending to visit.

Either skim read the available government entries and decide which is most suited to your purposes, or choose one government description at random.

Now read through the entry in detail and make notes on any ideas which occur to you, with regard to similarity to an existing regime (which will help you describe it to your players). If any plots or non

player characters (NPCs) occur to you, jot these down too.

Player Information

Generally the PCs should be able to gain most of the information in the description section (of a government entry) simply through background knowledge of the area or quick reference to any decent library data source.

The referee section contains data which the PCs should only obtain through a detailed library search or, in preference, by talking directly to travellers who have already visited the world.

Adapting for Alien Worlds

The government descriptions in this book avoid, where possible, any reference to the type of world on which they are set. In most cases you should be able to adapt a given government to the planet, whether it be a rocky asteroid or an Earth-type planet.

For a more extensive fleshing-out of the world's culture and religions, refer either to the (long-out-of-print) World Builder's Handbook or Grand Census, both for Traveller by Digest Group Publications. Alternatively, use the BITS 101 Cultures and 101 Religions books.

Background

As per the other "101" books from BITS, the data in this book are largely independent of the Traveller era or Milieu and can easily be adapted to any campaign or rule set.

This Book

Is the largest 101 book to date, expanded from the usual 40-44 pages to a whacking great 56! As usual, we've tried not to waste space on pictures, and you may notice some variation in text size - we had to make the font smaller in places just to fit everything in!

We sincerely hope that you find this a useful aid to playing and enjoying Traveller®.

0: No Government

Anarchy or Eden?

"No discernible planetary government structure."

1. Clan World

Description: The locals are all members of families, each of which has a specific job. Thus there are Talkers (diplomats and merchants), Fighters, Healers, Growers, Herders, Butchers, etc. Individuals are referred to by a personal name and a matri- or patronymic and occasionally by a nickname. An example name, combining these factors, could be: Sam's Boy Shifty Dickie Talker.

Referee: Any visitors wishing to do business here are required to undergo adoption into the most appropriate family. They must then uphold that family's interests and good name (i.e. they shouldn't defraud the natives and then fly away). Casual visitors may join the Guest family. Once adopted into a clan, taking on the attributes or responsibilities of another clan is frowned upon except where necessary, e.g. in an emergency.

Those who abuse local hospitality are expelled into the Pariah clan, the consequences of which are unpleasant, if short lived.

Plot: This world has many inherent hazards relating to its atmosphere, flora and fauna. However, only the Healers are allowed to discuss such things, so PCs may well fall foul of these dangers while the Talkers and others stand by looking helpless (they're not allowed to apply first aid, either...).

2. Enlightenment

Description: The inhabitants of this world believe that each individual is a lone agent, winning through out of pure self-interest.

They accept that individuals have dependants who need support (families comprise individuals who share responsibility for the dependants). The locals co-operate only on a barter or reward basis, e.g. trading medical treatment for food. Physical goods,

services and the promise of future support or services are all valid barter items. Knowledge is also valuable and can be bought and sold.

This society requires that its members have a thorough understanding of its ideology, and that they are sympathetic to it. The main local taboo is that no one can try to win through by offering "peace enforcement" or security services. This results in a prompt lynching. Failure to perform a contract is a very shameful thing, which results in a dearth of people to do business with in the future (in addition to any retribution by the other party).

Decisions affecting the society as a whole are reached by consensus, either face to face or through electronic or video media.

Referee: PCs should be careful what they offer or promise on this world - the inhabitants do not recognise groups, governments nor many of the laws off-worlders take for granted. The inhabitants also react very badly to anyone not fulfilling their contracts.

Plot: Torbas Zik approaches the PCs to get him off planet quickly. He has obtained a valuable collection of antiques in exchange for telling an important local of a planned assassination attempt by a fellow local. Not only has Torbas found his information was wrong (invalidating his deal) but the supposed assassin is irate and is also after him.

3. Liberty County

Description: The citizens of this world perform some mineral extraction, farming and low grade manufacture. However, their main interest is to live free, rather than to become rich or important. They have a horror of centralised authority and of having rules and orders imposed upon them. They abhor concepts such as police forces, taxes and trade restrictions.

The citizens band together as a local militia, and go out on patrol, mainly to prevent fires, find lost children and so on, but also to look out for signs of government interference.

Settlers with the same ideology are welcome, but will be shunned if they prove a disappointment.

Referee: Free traders and independent travellers are welcome here: weapons, luxury and novelty items are sought after, as is news of local oppressors (i.e. any neighbouring governments). The locals take most visitors at their word, and will become very angry if they ever find out their trust has been betrayed. Trading activity will be a little slow, given the dispersed population.

Plot: Thieves from a neighbouring world have taken refuge here, with enough cash to live out their lives. There are no police here, no extradition treaty and the thieves are now on best behaviour. However, the noble who was their last victim is hiring a group of bounty hunters to covertly bring them back for trial...

4. Eden

Description: The natives of this world live in blissful innocence amid the ruins of a high technology civilisation. A combination of bad leadership, extreme conservatism and popular apathy led to a decline in their knowledge, to the degree that they are no longer able to sustain their high-tech systems.

The populace has dropped sharply due to a lack of medical treatments for diseases brought recently by off-worlders. They are now barely self-sufficient, relying heavily upon remnants of the old technology. For example, many use food from the cold locker stores in the old buildings, cooking it in the automated (talking) microwave ovens. However, as each piece of equipment fails, it can rarely be repaired.

Referee: Traders may find little to trade here or may strike lucky - if they have a replacement part or technical knowledge required to keep a critical piece of equipment going, the locals might just decide to swap for

some fabulous works of art or some other valuables which are now of little use to them.

Plot: One of the PCs acquires a minor illness prior to visiting. A number of locals become nervous that they will be subjected to a new plague and make every effort to save their people by 'getting rid' of the PC.

5. Grievance Day

Description: This world is the worse for an ancient disaster and a brutal civil war. The natives live in small, dispersed clans who survive by reclaiming the resources of the preceding civilisation. They break down old buildings to get at the masonry and metal frames, excavate power lines and water mains and filter the contents of spoil tips.

Each clan has a defensive element, an extraction element and a defined territory. Some areas have been poisoned by weapons of

war, such that extracted resources must be traded for food and medical supplies (often from off-worlders). Occasional truces are called and sites are cleared to allow ships to land. However, the clans tend to spend more time stealing from each other than observing their frontiers or trading peacefully.

Violence has been reduced to some degree by Grievance Day, a regular truce allowing the clans to gather peacefully. The event focuses upon setting out each clan's grievances against each other, so that they can be cancelled out. Any inequalities remaining (e.g. you killed Jim, we killed Leonard, but you knocked down our toilet as well, so you owe us) are compensated for in trade goods, or by a promise of service. This system is actually quite equitable and Grievance Day has developed into a popular fair, including lots of eating, drinking and sporting events.



Referee: Local hospitality traditions hold strangers inviolate until a feud develops, and most of the locals are reliant upon food, medical or other imports. Traders may be paid in reclaimed antique currency, specie, reclaimed valuable materials, or by barter.

Cleared landing fields will adjoin the territory of 2D clans. Each day the PCs' ship remains, roll 3D. If the roll is less than the number of clans, there is a spontaneous outbreak of violence, which could carry over to the PCs ship. Visiting Grievance Day gives a ½D bonus on any trading-related tasks or rolls.

If this society has acquired space or star travel, piracy may be a problem and the system may be amber rated.

Plot: Violence erupts during a visit by the PCs and wounded natives try to take refuge with the PCs (for example aboard, or hiding beneath their ship). The PCs must decide whether to watch these victims being massacred, or help defend them (the landing zone is in theory the 'territory' of the PCs so they might be excused if they use force to defend themselves).

6. Get That Stitched!

Description: In this state groups are formed on gang lines, held together by terror. There is no law, and interpersonal relationships are generally governed by superiority in combat. Interpersonal issues are usually resolved without a fight, on the basis of which individual would most likely win if a fight did occur.

There is a common and seemingly unbreakable cycle, from timid deference and lordly restraint between gangs, to irritable co-operation, the formation of larger gangs, and then sudden break-up in a spasm of violence. Lesser individuals follow the local top dog then

scramble to serve someone else when their leader gets killed. Internal gang coup d'etats are rare - most gangs merge through competition between leaders. The end result is a hybrid of organised crime and a return to the ancestral savannah. Being old and sick is a disadvantage; a point appreciated by the local scavengers and predators.

This society is now very resistant to change.

Attempts to regulate it by neighbouring worlds (and the Imperium) have failed, although occasionally a few power-suited marines are sent in to show the locals who's boss.

Referee: As members of the Imperium, PCs are regarded as part of the Emperor's 'gang' and are shown some respect in the startown and startown. They can go further afield if they like, but will then be dependent upon their own abilities to win over the natives.

Plot: A foolish vice-president of a neighbouring world was taken hostage in startown. His ransom is a starship and an array of weapons. His company, encouraged by the Imperium, wishes a group of PCs to infiltrate startown, determine which gang is holding the VP and try to obtain his release - by whatever means necessary.



...as even a minor mistake in translating between alien languages can lead to a major diplomatic incident.

1: Company/Corporation

Toeing the Company Line...

"Government by a company managerial elite; citizens are company employees."

1. Jorkil Company

Description: This corporation controlling this world dominates the starport and all aspects of high technology. The company only supports the population in respect of any work they do for 'Uncle' Jorkil (the company literature portrays its leaders as parental figures). For example, individuals engaged in important work for the company have their health needs taken care of; when not working directly for 'Uncle J', they must pay for their own medicines and treatment.

The same philosophy is applied to law enforcement, crime prevention, the fire brigade and other 'public' services. A side effect is the tendency of the police to emphasise protection of company property and interests over that of people generally. Similarly, unless the inhabitants of a building are deemed important to corporate plans, the fire brigade will give them a lower priority than saving the building they are dying in.

The result is that there are two strata of citizenship: core employees, who effectively have a job for life; and mobile employees, who are taken on to perform specific tasks. The society is thus divided between well fed, smug, healthy "haves" and diseased, malformed "have nots". The "have nots" can only pay rent while working for 'Uncle J', otherwise they live in shanties around the local corporate citadel, and cluster around the gates when the gang bosses come out to hire day labourers. Any "have nots" fortunate enough to acquire a longer term job (e.g. domestic service or medical experiment subjects) get accommodation inside the compound but are usually thrown out at the end of their contracts. Occasionally, in a fit of human frailty, some corporate managers adopt "have nots" as surrogate family members, but are forced to pay for their medical and educational expenses.

Falling from favour with the company can devastate one's life, thus most citizens are constantly anxious and untrustworthy. Apocalyptic and salvationist religions are strongly represented among the "have nots". The company seeks out and eradicates unionists and other revolutionaries.

The private education system requires the "haves" to devote much of their income to assuring that their children will be qualified to remain in the core work force. "Have nots" with remarkable talents come to the attention of the company through police information, and may be recruited into new risky ventures or the dirty tricks divisions.

Referee: Travellers to this world will be untroubled provided that they pay for everything, including the costs of any investigation of crimes perpetrated against them. If they can't pay, then they will find themselves living in a rusty shack eating cardboard salvaged from the corporate tip...

Plot: A corporate executive has been cunningly back-stabbed by a colleague; through manipulation of the computer systems, the executive has no access to his accounts and unless he can pay a range of bills within a few days, he may be thrown out. He pleads that the PCs help him with a loan (a large amount!), help resolve the computer problems (by hacking if necessary) and trace whoever was responsible (he can't prove it is his colleague). If they are successful, he can repay them twice over (a huge amount!)

2. Sensitivity Inc.

Description: This society is corporate controlled and dominated, but all the inhabitants are voter-shareholders in the company. However, the votes are skewed so that the executive has the same influence as the management and workforce combined. This means that the chairman's casting vote usually clinches any close-run decisions. All

the locals have been indoctrinated into believing that this is as it should be.

To avoid accusations that it is behaving like Jorkil Company (q.v.) this corporation has elaborate social security provision, frequent "partner satisfaction" surveys, wear-what-you-like days and a lot of culturally uplifting events. Ceremonies to reward the employee of the week, month, year and so on are big occasions, marked by extensive buffets, balloons and lapses in manners.

The only downside to this is the amount of paperwork (printed and/or electronic) required to get anything done.

Referee: Travellers will probably find the whole mess suffocating, and it will be very expensive to reside on this world unless you work for the company. Every employee will be desperate to get good feedback on the customer satisfaction forms they are required to use for every transaction.

Plot: The PCs are approached by a harried trade executive. He feels his well-paid position is in jeopardy unless he signs up a major deal and gets a 105% customer satisfaction return on it. He'd like the PCs to pretend to be top level executives from off-world, sign the papers, give him an excellent mark, and meet his bosses. Provided the subterfuge goes well and his position is stabilised, in a month's time he will simply tell his bosses that the off-worlders renege on the deal - he should have something else in place by then. Unfortunately for the PCs, he's actually setting up this fraudulent deal for a colleague whom he intends to frame. The PCs may notice that the paperwork doesn't have their patron's name on it yet (he plans to fill in his colleague's details later).

3. Berek State

Description: This world is run by public limited companies, but along franchise lines rather than monolithically: Berek Trading, Berek Humanitarianism, Berek Externalities, Berek Judicial Services, Berek Interior, etc.

Citizens have one voting share in each company as a birthright. The private limited companies compete to win the franchise to provide services for each public company. The public companies have a charitable ethos: they do not distribute a profit, but reinvest and otherwise disburse their dividends among worthy causes. There is no tax as such, as such funds are recouped through the dividend system.



When negotiating with a foreign world, one must remember that however human one's opposites appear, their philosophy and aims may be totally alien.

The operations of the state are performed by the successful franchisees, under the scrutiny of the appropriate company's board, but there is obviously scope for corruption: the franchisee's employees can collaborate to skew votes (at the company's General Meetings) in the franchisee's favour, and the franchisee's executives can bribe board members to collude with them

against the public interest. Naturally, a private company's first duty is to its shareholders rather than to the community, so franchisees tend to emphasise big dividends over good service.

Citizens are encouraged to develop an interest in the public companies, and may purchase extra shares in them, either with cash, or through the cash equivalent of voluntary good works undertaken in the community. Citizens are encouraged to attend General Meetings, but seldom do.

Referee: Travellers will find that everything on this planet falls into one of two categories: privately owned and swanky, or publicly

owned and shoddy. Trade will involve a certain amount of bribery (failure at a routine task means that the PCs must take the worst 2 of 3 dice on the actual value table). The usual boundary disputes occur between agencies (all trading tasks take 1/2D more hours than usual, or an extra 1/2D days if a routine Administration roll is failed).

Violent travellers will find that the state's police and armed forces are poorly equipped and understaffed, but that private security forces are top quality and well armed.

Plot: Tolomek are a private company who hold the major starport ticketing franchise. They double-book tickets, add excess fees and generally make a packet. The PCs may fall foul of their deceit or may be hired by a government official to determine why Berek Starports (the public company responsible for all franchises within the starport) hasn't stopped this. It's simple - key people in Berek Starports are getting huge cash backhanders from Tolomek. The latter are willing to kill to keep this a secret, as it is hugely profitable.

4. Company Town

Description: This state is controlled by a very self-conscious company (Seal of Quality, inc. SA. PLC) which has decided that awkward things like quality control and customer satisfaction can be dispensed with provided that the company motto "A Sealed [thing] is a good [thing]" is repeated often enough, and that SoQ's imprimatur appears on the item or service in question. Every conceivable product bears the company logo and certificate of quality, complete with a facsimile of the founder's signature, which looks a bit like "Mr. Walrus".

Of course, what this means is that everything produced locally is expensive tat, and there is a healthy black market in products from other brands. In fact there is a vogue amongst the higher management to use nothing produced by SoQ, except when appearing in public.

Referee: Travellers will be pestered for off-world designer goods and pressed to endorse local products. If they ever try to complain about the quality of anything locally produced (this situation is likely to arise within minutes of arrival on the planet), they will be shown The Seal with all due solemnity, and told to lump it.

A similar fate awaits traders at the starport. Unless they have agreed a black market sale, they will have to pay to get their goods inspected and Sealed. Usually the goods are declared inadequate, dangerous and are "destroyed" (i.e. stolen) by the customs officials. Merchants can circumvent this by becoming SoQ franchisees: 100 credits gets you a little rubber stamp. All one needs to do then is stamp the goods (which will take ages) and customs will be happy. Obviously, this works in reverse with exports: Sealed goods are almost worthless off-world. The PCs can while away those days in jump space by rubbing The Seal off their goods.

Plot: The PCs are approached by a young woman who says she can supply them with Seal stamps with apparently legal ink (the ink contains tiny coded microdots) which fades after a given period of time. Strangely enough the PCs have just received an order for a shipment of valuable off-world grav vehicles that would not be allowed on world unless carrying the Seal... is it too good to be true?

2: Participating Democracy

Go on, voter... make my day!

"Government by advice and consent of the citizen."

1. Smug World

Description: This world was settled by idealists who were taken with the philosophy and teachings of an ancient civilisation from their homeworld. Following these principles, they have created a society of citizen-warrior-philosophers, who bow to no outside power (unless it has spinal meson guns).

The citizens feel that it is the civic duty of each person to spend some time (typically a year) in the police, the judiciary, or as an executive officer (minister). The holders of these posts are selected at random from a list held in a central computer. The citizens' education prepares them for this variety of roles by being rather broad, if not superficial.

All legislation is decided by popular ballot, which is done through the communications net (if this world has a population digit of less than 100,000 voting is performed face to face in a big stadium).

Visitors are accorded rights and privileges only so far as they can pay for them, or to the extent that these people are of interest to the state. Traders, manufacturers and visiting experts are welcome, but refugees and settlers are not. Visitors intending a long term relationship with this world can buy a residency permit, giving them slightly more rights and protection than a casual visitor.

The local laws favour citizens first, residents next and visitors last. For citizens, extreme punishments include death or exile (which most citizens dread) but fines are the most frequent penalty. Visitors and residents can expect death and/or the confiscation of property. The Imperial Consulate (at the starport) will offer safe haven for fugitives.

Referee: Visitors will tend to find the locals infuriating: they are smug, superior and condescending. As they are convinced that their society is perfect, they are even less bearable when travelling off-world.

Plot: The Imperial Consulate is looking to provoke a major incident with the locals to justify a full scale invasion. They may hire the PCs to hack the voting computers (or otherwise rig the system) to cause sufficient panic that the marines can be called in.

2. Caring and Sharing

Description: The citizens of this world have the highest opinion of themselves as individuals, and are keen that their fellow citizens agree with their self assessment.

The planet was settled by religious extremists who fought a particularly bloody war. This ended in the moderate factions turning on and killing their demagogues (an event still marked by the Sanity Day public holiday). The moderates decided upon a new doctrine which encapsulated the positive, life affirming parts of the old scriptures and enshrined "no more leaders, no more gods" as the highest public doctrine.

Perpetuating such a system requires thorough indoctrination, so the locals adopted a standardised education system. Anyone vexed by the workings of this perfect state can share their doubts and feelings with special therapists, who reassure them with their own positive experiences.

All laws are debated through the communications net, often passionately, but never acrimoniously: having opinions is a virtue, as is being susceptible to reasoned argument. All citizens are fairly well informed and each will debate enthusiastically with outsiders. Foreign policy is essentially conciliatory and accommodating. (This planet may be considered part of the Imperium, but this is a legal fiction: all Imperial facilities are at the edge of the system, and are jump-capable. Both the Imperium and the locals maintain the pretence that the Imperium will leave if the locals ask it to.)

This society may seem perplexing to outsiders: rich employers and their poor

employees meet on terms of perfect social equality; each understands this financial disparity as a negotiated relationship, freely entered into by both sides.

Leadership in defence is entirely formalised: the Book of Strategy and Tactics is owned by all citizens, and is updated regularly by the citizens (after debate, naturally). All citizens train in the local militia, but they supply their own equipment, so their armament varies widely. The militia is mostly light infantry with a small amount of powered armour and a few fighter planes. Close friends may purchase, crew and maintain a tank or a flying gunship between them.

Referee: Visitors can find this society heavy going: the locals are friendly enough, but very talkative, being keen to brush up their debating skills with foreigners. The simple legal system applies with equal force to all on the planet, and trade is fair and equitable. You can also buy or sell almost anything here, although items which allow individuals to exert undue power (biowarfare weapons or thermonuclear devices) are taboo.

Plot: A group of rich citizens wish to take passage off-world to study a new jetcopter gunship and (probably) purchase it to bring back and run as part of the militia. As well as the problems of helping obtain and ship such a war machine, the PCs will have to cope with their patrons' need to assert their superior culture over everyone that they meet.

3. Neurosis

Description: The citizens of this world are obsessed with their mental health, the negative effects their actions have on others and, much more importantly, the effect that others' actions have on them. Hence, most days in the workplace begin with a "colleagues circle" meeting where co-workers sit down and discuss how they hope the day is going to go. Inevitably, the end of the day concludes with a similar "workshop" where they analyse how the day lived up to their expectations. Any unresolved conflicts are worked out in counselling sessions.

The same behaviour is carried over into family and other personal relationships, and

spontaneous "sharing" frequently breaks out at the slightest excuse.

At the planetary level, this translates into protracted discussions which continue until a consensus is reached. This has caused all policies to end up somewhere between laissez-faire and abject capitulation to external reality. The planet is recognised as a difficult entity, in part because its natives are so neurotic.

All crime is seen as a mental illness of sorts, so that all criminals (who are mostly foreign) are kept in counselling until they are better (i.e. completely brainwashed by the resident neurotics). Arresting criminals usually involves stun weapons and is carried out with apologies and sincere enquiries about the feelings of the perpetrator. Having to resort to lethal force is regarded as failure.

Referee: Travellers may find being asked "how do you feel about that" all the time a bit odd, but can amuse themselves by provoking anger among the natives.

Perhaps surprisingly, trade is a brisk and efficient affair: the transparency of local behaviour is a barrier to any sharp practice: they know that the trader wants a healthy profit, they know what they can afford and a compromise is reached. However, the method of reaching the deal seems strange.

Plot: A PC is mistaken for a wanted criminal and, after being stunned and apologised to, is taken off to be "counselled".

4. Victim Culture

Description: This society is self-consciously and idiosyncratically "fair". Recognising that all people have different talents and abilities, and that society tends to work in favour of those who have a certain set of these (intelligence, good looks, rich parents, etc.) this state is run on a sort of handicap. The list of beneficial traits has been identified, and all the things which make you unattractive to an employer or business partner get you extra points (the higher your points score, the greater your need for a state benefit or service, thus the sooner you get housing or medical treatment).

This scheme has worked through to the legislature, where people like to speak for themselves (no one else would understand).

The executive is artificially large, to allow all disadvantaged groups to have a voice. Large companies must have a workforce with the same percentage of each disadvantaged group as occurs in the wider population. In many cases this has had the effect of promoting very small commercial outfits except where the state is in control.

Referee: There will be some odd moments for visitors here, for example when confronted by a queue, a local will work out who is more disadvantaged, and who is less so, and push in at the boundary. Stern but very patient liaison officers will be on hand to make sure that everything is working well. They will be particularly keen to assist any neophyte traders in finding "responsible" people to deal with. People will read labels thoroughly and then quiz shop assistants on what their interpretation of the words is. Leaflets covering rights and responsibilities will be thrust at strangers. Traders in search of a quick deal will be pursued by other agents demanding that their more disadvantaged collective be considered.

These effects will become more extreme the further visitors stray from the starport. Provided merchants ignore any trading partners beyond the small, efficient outfits they find by themselves, and fend off any approach from the state sector they'll be fine. If they don't then they roll only 1D on the sale value table, and have to spend ½D days longer than normal concluding their business.

Plot: The PCs give passage to, or share a voyage with, travellers from this world. These people will interrogate stewards (and other passengers) about all conceivable minutiae: which allergenic compounds are present in their bedding, dietary requirements, etc. Anything the PCs find annoying will become an absolute necessity to these people.

5. Stakeholder Society

Description: In addition to venerating an individual's civil rights, this society also imposes commensurate obligations. So to be educated, you must be attentive; to be protected by the law, you must abide by it yourself; to have a stake in government, you must dedicate yourself to public good.

Everyone has a vote and anyone, in principle, can be a minister or a judge. However, there are far fewer positions of trust than there are people who fancy the jobs, so one must be appropriately committed to following the correct dictates: a minister for environment would be expected to clean up the parks; a judge would help run evening classes for delinquents; a housing official might serve up soup to the homeless.

The legal system does not try a criminal on a single offence but rather their whole life and value to society are considered, with the specific offence acting as a pretext to bring the accused into court. Similarly, the accuser or victim is also audited and the remedy (if any) is doled out according to each party's contribution to society; any loss caused to society in general (and then to the victim in person); and what either party may promise about their future conduct. Punishment is creative, to say the least.

Referee: This system works tolerably well for the planet's native population but travellers will find that their value to the host society is close to nil, and that they are treated with appropriate scorn. Any court or rules decisions will be to their disfavour. This is especially important in trade: if the value rises above 150% of normal, the other party will immediately file a complaint for sharp practice, which might result in anything from a fine, to impounding the PC's ship.

Plot: The PCs are arrested (with good reason or mistakenly) for a minor misdemeanour but then find they have to justify their entire life's works or (given their low value to this world) they will be sentenced to several years of community labour.

3: Self-Perpetuating Oligarchy

Dead men's shoes

"Government by a restricted minority, with little or no input from the masses."

1. Jane Austen World

Description: The state is controlled, in its own interest, by an entrenched local nobility. Life is skewed in their favour by a mix of legal privileges and exemptions. They maintain their influence by instilling a sense of deference in the population, by ownership and control of the media and by ensuring that their children are better educated than those of 'the great unwashed'.

Whether the lives of the common people are appalling or comfortable depends entirely on the disposition of the local grandees. The nicer nobles have philanthropic establishments, the others have workhouses. However, to stop the peasantry becoming an eyesore, most communities have a poor house, a soup kitchen and a damp and run-down 'cottage' hospital.

Referee: Visitors of high social status (A+) will find themselves fêted, but will of course be expected to reciprocate. Lower class itinerants will find themselves worth as much as their bank balances. Anyone acting against the interests of the aristocrats (whether causing them harm, defrauding them or stealing from them) will find the state responds with ultimate force.

Plot: A noble's son has eloped with one of the 'unwashed'. His parents cannot be seen to condone this, nor to actively pursue him. They will pay the PCs well to persuade him to give up his love or else ensure he has a permanent 'accident'.

2. Senate and People

Description: This society is mostly comprised of a plebeian class, although it is controlled by a self-appointed patrician class. The patricians take all political offices, in particular all posts in the ruling senate. They are educated to believe that they should act in the interest of the state as a whole, and that their lofty social position requires them to take an equivalently high moral stance. The fact that they enjoy these privileges and get to make all the big decisions is taken as proof that their society works.

Legally speaking, the senate can regulate both themselves and the people, while the people can pass laws covering their own behaviour (plebiscites). It is possible for suitable individuals

to be elevated to the patrician class, but the most that the average pleb can expect is to be looked upon as a senior pen-pusher.

Referee: The local laws regard all visitors as plebs unless they have a Social Standing of A+ in which case they are given honorary patrician status for their stay. Laws are fair and rational, typical penalties being imprisonment, fines, industrial conscription, exile or death, with reduction to plebian status being a dread sentence applied to a few sinful patricians.

Plot: A trader has a valuable trade deal for this world, but has no chance of sealing the deal unless he is regarded as an honorary patrician. Given his actual SOC of 6, he is seeking PCs of higher class to give him a few quick lessons and to accompany him as an entourage (to reinforce his status and give him on-the-spot advice).

3. Business World

Description: This world is ruled by a gang of rich merchants who arrange things so that they remain in charge. Unlike a corporate state, these people do not co-operate but rather they compete through the action of their diversified corporations. Eventually one corporation may become truly dominant (becoming government code 1), but that time is very remote indeed. Members of the successful corporations bid to provide the various services: police, health, media, etc., and then run them down in pursuit of profit.

Crime and punishment is focused on protecting the merchant rulers. Breaking a contract, taking or breaking the possessions of the rich, or defaulting on a loan are all heavily frowned upon, while killing a labourer is usually thought a fairly minor crime. All the corrective services have been put out to tender and are of a low quality: death by drowning, working on chain gangs and so on. Fines and confiscation of assets are *de rigueur* for any sentence, however trivial.

Referee: Visiting traders can expect to have a prolonged stay. They must first decide just whose landing and entry clearance service will provide the best value (roll $\frac{1}{2}D$ + world population code for the number of offers). Whether selling or buying cargo, or purchasing other kinds of goods or services, they will receive multiple offers from a

range of providers, all of whom are extremely competitive and will be greatly offended if not chosen by the PCs. This will be true regardless of the financial standing of the travellers involved: the locals always believe there is a profit to be made, even from the poorest traveller.

Plot: A man gives a PC a holocrystal just before being executed in cold-blood by the security forces. The crystal contains details of a plot by one merchant group to dominate the world through collusion with an Imperial megacorp. Naturally, any of the merchant groups would pay huge amounts to get hold of this evidence.

4. New Jane Austen World

Description: The ruling class on this world is an elegant, propertied elite, who act as magistrates and make their laws in a comfortable palace. Their luxury is maintained by a yeomanry which outnumbers them by approximately 20-to-1, most of whom are brave, cheerful, cheeky (but respectful), and as thick as two short planks.

The world's income actually derives from off-world holdings of the most scandalous type: strip mining, asset stripping, sweatshops, flouting of safety regulations and even direct slavery, etc.

Referee: Visitors are treated politely; high status travellers are invited to parties and weekend trips shooting wildlife. Merchants will wheel and deal over a barley wine in a comfortable drinking establishment.

Laws are strictly applied, but by very polite police officers. As soon as the suspect gets to prison or into a convenient cellar, the façade drops; they are beaten black and blue before being shipped off to a work camp on the frontier.

Plot: The PCs are asked by an off-worlder to investigate the disappearance of a young off-worlder noble. The youth offended one of the elite and, on a pretext, was arrested and sent to a work camp. Discovering this will be difficult - the noble's itinerary is known by contacts at the starport, but a direct approach to those he visited last will be politely rebuffed with denial of ever having met such a youth. More questioning will lead to internment in a work camp, but a covert approach to a lady-in-waiting will reveal she was 'sweet' on the youth and will explain how and why he was taken away. Getting him out of the labour camp and then exacting his revenge may prove more tricky.

5. The Rule of the Fittest

Description: The founders of this perfect state were much inspired by a long-dead philosopher

(analogous to Terra's Friedrich Nietzsche). Regrettably, their inspiration was a woman-hating loon with cerebral syphilis. It is still disputed whether they knew this, or whether they simply thought this wouldn't have coloured his outlook.

The state that they have built revolves around not trusting half of the population or allowing them near to anything important, while forcing the other half to endure a variety of physical and mental tortures. The latter is intended to make them stronger... or destroy them. Few supermen ever think they're going to fail, despite the appalling score of corpses preceding them.

The top dog is whichever male has devoted most time and effort to becoming a physical and mental colossus. The ruler controls as many underlings as he can dominate. His 'pack' is similar to a top-down diversified corporation with a harem in the annexe. While collusion with other colossi would seem advisable, this is not on, as the mightiest heroes are those who stand alone. The end result is that public life is dominated by men with wonderful immune systems, very focused intellects, big muscles, surgically reinforced joints and ligaments and the most monumental self regard. The difficulty is that they don't understand compromise, diplomacy, win-win situations or women. Actually they hate women.

Referee: Interstellar relations could be better: every visiting man is treated as an opponent in the game of "I'm hard, I am," and women can conduct no business apart from gyrating on tables, cooking and having babies. The Imperium would like to give the natives a kicking to show them what a real society can do, but this would be a diplomatic *faux pas*.

Plot: The PCs find themselves in a confrontational situation with a local 'top dog'. There will be off-duty members of the Imperial marines around who will back up the PCs, encouraging them not to back off. Whether they lose or win (competitions like "let's see who can catch a bullet in their teeth" are commonplace) the competitive nature of the marines and followers of the 'top dog' will result in a small fight, which builds into a huge running riot (the Imperial Marines have been waiting for a good excuse to have a go at these "posers" and if there is a plausible enough pretext - e.g. protecting Imperial citizens such as the PCs - their commander is more than willing to let the leash slip.)

6. Warlords Inc.

Description: This society is controlled by an association of free companies who use the planet

to provide logistical support for their military ventures. Foreign currency and trade goods are obtained through the sale of military services: the association takes a percentage of an individual unit's fee.

This state has an evil reputation and could well be rated as an amber or red zone. Criminals, deserters and assorted sociopaths end up on this world in search of sanctuary or even gainful employment. Soldiers being soldiers, there is constant friction between the military and civilian populations.

Trade is problematic: the state is oriented to the export of services and the import of goods, thus the major way to make money is to ship in goods (often weaponry) and ship out mercenary units. Since the latter are usually en route to a war zone, this can be a risky (if lucrative) business.

Referee: Visitors are regarded as sources of valuable intelligence and (if they act at all suspiciously) may be suspected of being spies. They are questioned very closely on arrival and will be followed at any time that they leave the starport. Strangers are also often the victims of bullying or random violence by mercenaries. The number of criminal types on the world makes it an exceptionally hazardous place to spend any time.

Plot: A nearby world fears its rebels may be supported by a coup using troops from this world. The PCs are hired to spy on incoming equipment specific to such an operation (e.g. desert kit if it is a desert world, hostile environment kit if it has a hazardous atmosphere), etc. If the PCs can locate the unit hired for the coup, they will be paid an extra fee to infiltrate the unit (as mercenaries) and sabotage it before it can help the rebels.

7. Thebes by Heinlein

Description: This state is a model of a balanced economy and domestic order, but only members of the military can hold positions of authority or be involved in politics. This means that the army is inclined to swank about and has extra privileges (such as tax exemptions and the right to insist on being called "sir" by civilians).

Foreign policy is, ironically, conciliatory: there is a good chance that those entering a battle will never return home, and as wielding power requires one to be alive, it is generally accepted that the risks of being on the losing side are unacceptable - better to avoid conflict if possible.

Referee: The conciliatory nature of the ruling military leads to an interesting problem for visitors: much of the local iconography and oral tradition is

devoted to praising the heroism and ability of the soldier/rulers, who actually rarely do anything more dangerous than watching their troops marching around the parade ground. Pointing this out is a severe breach of etiquette, of course.

That aside, visitors will find this state to be orderly and pleasant enough, provided they remember that they are legally defined as being inferior to the local military and watch their manners. There is a local underground, and visitors who get embroiled with it are in no end of trouble.

Plot: The PCs are approached by Yain Trumps, who wishes to smuggle some heavy armaments off-world. Yain arranged for the stolen weapons (missiles and light artillery) to be replaced with plastic replicas, on the principle that the world has avoided war for decades and the mothballed equipment wouldn't be missed...

8. World of the Generals

Description: The military holds this state under its rule with unabashed brutality. Members of the officer corps hold civilian posts of commensurate status: thus lieutenant generals are continental governors and subalterns are borough mayors. The people are cowed, despondent and if suspected of any misdemeanour are given to disappearing mysteriously at about three in the morning ("travelling off-world" in official parlance).

The generals enjoy the prestige of huge public engineering works. The underground press claims that the foundations of these developments are full of the bodies of those who fell foul of the regime.

Referee: General advice to visitors is to be very careful indeed. Do not give offence to the local provosts and do not criticise the local regime when outside your ship. An increasing problem is that the state is not awfully efficient. The generals like to kit out their favourite troops in gaudy uniforms and enjoy the latest toys, and this accent has a depressing effect on the local economy. As the soldiery haven't been paid in living memory, they are given to inventing impromptu taxes and collecting these at the point of a gun.

Plot: A number of rebel groups have taken to Robin Hood style operations, robbing military banks so that the poor can pay their taxes. The PCs are asked to smuggle weapons to one such group.

4: Representative Democracy

I know I said that before the election but things have changed now...

"Government by elected representatives."

1. A World in Balance

Description: This planet is ruled by two political parties who command roughly half the vote each and who are, to outside observers, mostly indistinguishable. The difference between them is that one party, the Democratic Republicans (DR), favours finance and banking while the other, the Republican Democrats (RD), is inclined towards trade and industry.

This dichotomy influences the balance of trade: when the DR are in charge the local currency is strong, and thus imports are cheap, but the cost of exports rises. This has the effect of depressing the industrial sector and raising unemployment. The electorate therefore vote for the RD next time round. The RD depress the local economy, causing import prices to rise and making it easier for industrial producers. However this feels like an austerity regime to the electorate, the inflation rate rises and imports become more expensive. Thus the DR gets back in again.

Referee: The main effect on visitors is that prices are rather volatile. Every time they stop off at this world, decide who is in power (roll 1D, odds = DR, evens = RD). If the DR are in, then import prices (paid on cargo being sold) are lowered by 2D%, and export prices (paid on goods being bought) are raised by 2D%. The reverse is true if the RD are in charge.

Plot: The PCs are hired to help ship out a large consignment of computer technology - the seller is desperate to get it off planet before the election results are known; he will then wish it to be shipped straight back. He is using the fluctuation of import/export prices to perpetrate inventory fraud to avoid taxation.

2. Special Interests

Description: This planet has a pluralistic system entrenched by proportional representation. This means that while significant shares of the vote are held by a few mainstream parties, the balance of power is in the hands of an assortment of fringe groups and eccentrics.

The actual composition of the government changes rapidly as new coalitions are formed and then break up acrimoniously. The main feature

here is that while the main partners in a coalition can get their policies through, they have to bow to the interests of their more specialised partners.

Referee: The PCs cannot depend upon constancy in the economy or laws of this world!

Plot: Roll 1D before the PCs' ship touches down to determine the current political situation:

1: Religious extremists have managed to outlaw work during new religious holidays of 1/2D days a week (consecutive or spaced out).

2: Moral tribunals have decided that some forms of dress are outrageous for one sex or compulsory for another (generally being too disgusting to contemplate).

3: Protectors of family life have passed a law preventing non-married or same sex groups who aren't siblings, or parents and children, from sharing hotel rooms.

4: In an effort to protect local jobs and industries, visiting traders are prohibited from doing their own work: they have to hire local intermediaries at all stages. They are not allowed to hire themselves out to other such merchants!

5: Exports of local products are being taxed at 5D% to encourage economic self sufficiency.

6: To save the environment from the perceived effects of synthetic graviton emission, visiting ships are required to dock at an orbital facility and hire a reaction engine powered lighter to transport their goods to the surface (and back again).

3. A House Divided

Description: This world is a two party state where strife rules: one party represents the rich and their lackeys, and another party represents the workers. The vote is calculated on the basis of electoral districts rather than by number of voters so, by making sure that the workers' districts are more densely populated than those of the rich, the rich party tends to be in control. This makes for a very robust political culture indeed. The workers are organised as a constitutional party, but also have revolutionary aspirations. The rich are similarly constitutional, but retain private investigation and enforcement services.

The division between the two parties can be seen at every level of society, from the insincere works picnics and other outings (at which the

bosses can be seen grimacing at the forced intimacy) to union disputes which are occasionally turned into terrorist plots by *agents provocateur*. Civil rights marches have previously turned into massacres. To balance the rich party's unfair weighting of the electoral districts, rich districts are frequently threatened (with street violence or explosions) to make them return Worker representatives at the next election.

There can be vicious street fights (often on a huge scale) between unionists and the 'scabs' who continue to work while their colleagues are on strike. The only break in this regime are the four World Unity Days: planet-wide parties where the rich try to placate the poor with festivals of food, drink and entertainment. These are clearly unsuccessful, but are now expected by the masses, such that stopping them would simply cause yet more bloodshed.

Referee: Travellers can expect delays of ¼D days in commercial activities undertaken on this world. The delay is usually due to wildcat strikes and unofficial stoppages. Prolonged stoppages or walkouts may cause delays of up to 5D weeks.

Visitors may be approached by members of either party, to favour them in transactions, seek political leverage off-world, or even infiltrate the opposing party. Traders who consort with 'scabs' may well be beaten up by workers. Those who do not go through official channels and work directly with labourers may be beaten up by the rich party's enforcers.

Plot: The PCs stumble into a small street fight between unionists and some bosses protected by hired security. Depending upon their attire, the PCs are mistakenly assumed to be with one or other group and are also assaulted. One of the unionists throws a petrol bomb, a security man shoots back...

4. Under the Thumb of the Firm

Description: On this world the local politics are dominated by one middle ground party (the Firm), while the margins to left and right are cluttered with a number of smaller groupings. These latter could defeat the Firm if they co-operated, but over many years they have only managed to bring themselves to do so for a few voting issues and never for the main elections. The Firm has been in power for so long that it is thoroughly enmeshed with the local establishment, where it makes corrupt deals, gorges itself at the public trough and generally flaunts its invincibility.

The local media is respectfully reproving of the government's excesses, but always supports them fully at election time.

Referee: Obsequiousness is the order of the day for dealing with any business, as the Firm has stamped its corruptive influence throughout this world's corporations. This abuse of power leads to inefficiency and delay. Most contracts, guarantees and other 'paperwork' are defective (due to fraud or plain incompetence) such that any goods exported from this world will lose 3D% of their supposed value when sold off-world. Regular traders pay bribes to ensure that they get what they really paid for, but new visitors are likely to get 'stitched up'.

Plot: A new leader has arisen within the ranks of Democoop, one of the many parties. He is so politically adept that he might finally manage to bring several of the smaller parties under a single banner. Naturally, the Firm does not wish this to happen. The PCs may be hired to implement the Firm's wishes (by discrediting, threatening, kidnapping or killing the new leader) or they may be hired by Democoop to prevent such events.

5. Eternal Vigilance

Description: This state reluctantly changed from a pure to a representative democracy because the process of face to face discussion on a planetary scale was too time consuming and, if truth be told, the people were disillusioned with it.

However, the authors of the present constitution were fond of the old ways and did their best to assure that personal freedoms were protected at all costs. They instituted the most ferocious anti-trust legislation possible and supplemented it with the "True Description Act" and laws to limit the size of any company.

In effect no company can exist where the actions of its workers are more than two steps away from its chief executive, i.e. the chief executive delegates to a line manager, who then instructs the actual workers. This has the result of limiting the largest companies to about 400 employees. To an extent, this is circumvented by establishing a pyramid of holding companies, but it has the salutary effect of cutting down on bureaucracy.

The Anti-trust laws are designed to "prevent utterly the combination of commercial or private enterprise against the public good". They specifically forbid collusion in price fixing, enforce competitive tendering "in a company's area of operation", and have a vaguely worded "conspiracy against the public good" clause.

The most entertaining law is the True Description Act, which limits advertisements to a simple, uncontentious account of a product's purpose, fitness for the same and its shortcomings. The Act also proscribes any advertisement which "seeks to induce excessive demand" which means that it is quite hard to introduce new products to this market. A second, less obvious aspect of the Act is that excessive induced demand often arises from built-in obsolescence, so all manufacturers and importers either do their best to provide sturdy, hard wearing goods, or include the caveat "this machine will break one month after the guarantee period expires" in their advertisements.

Referee: Private travellers may find the openness and honesty of the local culture refreshing. However, traders will have to acclimatise themselves to telling the truth. Failing a Trading or Broker roll for a cargo means the quality of their cargo has been challenged and it loses 1Dx10 % of its value.

Plot: Covert use of a hierarchy of holding companies is, to some degree, acceptable. However, the PCs are hired to investigate the remarkable success of a select few companies in off-world dealings. These companies are part of a huge fraudulent holding structure by an Imperial megacorp. The latter will do its best to conceal this, as the Anti-trust advocates would be vehemently opposed to such interference from a huge external corporation.

6. Public Accountability

Description: A close shave with a military coup convinced this state's people that they would have to keep a firm hand on their representatives' throats. To regain public esteem, politicians were required to stand as individuals, not parties and were also obliged to publish a personal manifesto. This has to cover two areas: the hopeful candidate's plans and the ethical philosophy which inspired them.

Electoral terms run for five years, of which the first and last six months are, respectively, a settling-in period and a public audit. To stand any hope of re-election, and occasionally to avoid criminal charges, the incumbent politicians have to satisfy their electorate that they did what they promised (or must offer transparent reasons why they failed); that they kept faith with the spirit of their tenure of office; and that they avoided bringing dishonour on the elected assembly. This last item requires that politicians not only abstain from wrong doing, but that they abstain from giving

the impression of wrong doing, and even of frivolity.

Referee: The system works well. The public are genuinely interested in current affairs and tend to be politically literate (features which may surprise many visitors). In return, the natives find ignorance of politics to be pitiable and they may treat their guests as over-sized children. The high awareness of current affairs means that local traders will only accept plausible stories about cargoes and business ventures so all trading, bribery and fast talk tasks will be one level harder.

Plot: The PCs are hired to gain evidence of a given politician's wrong-doings. In fact, he's squeaky clean so after a short investigation their patron will pay them to fabricate some appropriate evidence. Best to be off-world by the time it gets to court...

7. Clear and Transparent

Description: This world noticed that without a substantial involvement of the electorate, the representative democratic systems of neighbouring worlds tended to die off, being replaced by an oligarchy or dictatorship. A major contributor to this failure rate seemed to be the ability of political parties to buy themselves into power with saturation advertising such that people felt that their vote didn't actually count for much.

All political parties are now state funded and are forbidden to generate their own income. All parties have to be constitutional, i.e. prepared to contest and abide by the results of elections. All valid candidates receive a fixed sum in electoral expenses and a couple of public servants to act as aides. Party members can offer their services for free, but any expenses have to be approved by Electoral Civil Servants. Elections use an "additional member" system: candidates stand in first-past-the-post contests, and any imbalance (between the number of seats won and the total proportion of the vote gained by each party) is made up by giving extra seats to representatives drawn from each party's list of reserve candidates.

To promote this election culture, elections and referenda are held regularly: each party has to contest a quarter of the seats every year, and any changes to the constitution have to secure 67% of the vote in a referendum. Rather than make voting compulsory, the electorate are exhorted to take part: the fact that they have voted is recorded on their Citizen Smart Cards. Legally, politicians can opt to ignore correspondence from, or refuse to acknowledge the existence of non-voters.

Accountability is assured through a tiered government, with political power devolved at the lowest level to phalanxes, each of 5,000 members, which are responsible for day to day local policies, with a budget and employees to implement them. City, county, regional, continental and planetary levels have increasingly greater power but at a strategic level, rather than operational.

Additionally, the concepts of state security and official secrecy were abolished: all correspondence received by elected politicians is available for voters' scrutiny on the local computer web and all political conversations can be observed, either through a voice conference facility or through visitors' galleries at all the conference chambers. The same goes for all civil service activities. Of course private or personal business is excluded, but "any elected representative or civil servant caught trying to conceal improper public activities behind the veil of privacy" are dealt with very sternly indeed (barred from future public office or government employ and imprisoned for 2D years).

Referee: Visitors here will find that everything is orderly and will notice that there are always elections and referenda taking place. Trade will run smoothly with very little red tape, but travellers will find that they will require a patron (a voter who will help the PCs by talking on their behalf) if they intend to get involved in anything which involves the local power structure (this might be as simple as resolving a customs dispute).

Plot: A number of individual intelligence units have noted a large amount of confidential government and military data making its way off world. Naturally, all political discussions are, in theory, available to the public but security matters are 'talked around' using catch-phrases and code words as otherwise significant on- and off-world interests could be compromised. They believe the intelligence leak is being perpetrated by a neural learning computer which can somehow amalgamate the multitude of publicly available data into a clear definition of future military and government actions. In principle, the government cannot move against this; the freedom of information movements would crucify them. However, a small group of off-worlders, suitably supported by local intelligence units, could locate the spies, destroy the computer and stop this data getting off-world.

8. Different and Complementary

Description: This state's extreme sex segregation grew backwards out of the pre-Diaspora Solomani fashion for declaring that females required extra political representation and considerations for their "special interests" to be covered adequately. A parallel thrust of the period was the obsession with the supposed genetic determinants of key female abilities: always knowing where things are, superior social skills and affinity for co-operative work. Later in Solomani history, this ideological predisposition broke down with exposure to different, inarguably genetically human cultures, a greater appreciation of hysteresis effects and of the role of infantile behaviour conditioning (i.e. "nurture").

Most other humans quietly brushed this whole idea under the carpet, but this state fell in love with it. During the Long Night, the complementary roles of nurturer and protector became so thoroughly entrenched in the local culture that they are never questioned. Thus there is now a society with parallel governments (first past the post for males, proportional representation for females, reflecting the respective notions of "competition" and "co-operation"), and a bewildering set of rules as to which sex can do what. This last feature has not been determined 'rationally' but has evolved over the centuries from an initially random distribution of sexes and jobs.

Another oddity is that, due to the extreme sex segregation males and females rarely meet for any reason other than for copulation: all youngsters are raised exclusively by females, and boys are thrown out into the male world when they reach puberty.

Referee: Visitors here will find that they are expected to talk only to members of their own sex. Members of each sex will even try to convince PCs that the sexual liberalism outside this world is wrong. They will also find that there are arbitrary distinctions between man's work and woman's work. Of course, this inefficiency means that things arrive late, in different sorts of containers (add ½D days to delivery time to model this).

Plot: Whenever the PCs undertake a task, roll 1D: an odd number indicates the task is "man's work", otherwise it's for women only. Deliberate and repeated breaking of these rules will result in the PC being beaten up by irate members of the opposite sex.

5: Feudal Technocracy

Look, you hunt for food and I type on the computer, okay?

"Government by specific individuals for those who agree to be ruled. Relationships are based on the performance of technical activities which are mutually beneficial."

1. The Nerdmeisters

Description: In this society, the scientific community has left no one in any doubt as to who's in charge. The scientists maintain their control through knowing useful things such as the self-destruct codes for the life support system, the power plants and the communications network.

The scientist 'upper class' are curious people and always trying out new ideas, for which they need experimental subjects. Naturally, this leaves them little time to do "little" things like grow food, make clothes or build shelters. As a result they are kind enough not to blow up other people's power plants (etc.) in return for being kept in luxury.

The creation of children is of great importance to the scientist rulers - they are constantly searching for means to refine and perfect their gene pool. Unfortunately this has led to genetics becoming the major interest of these leaders - not only do they rank each other on their parentage, but they also experiment widely with the extremes of bio-modification, eugenics and other sciences. Naturally, rather than subject their fellows to experiments, they make wide use of the 'lesser' populace as laboratory subjects.

Unlike the world of Genetics are Good (q.v.), the general populace are not happy with their lot. However, isolated outbreaks of rebellion are quickly put down when the offending city's power, life support and other critical functions are turned off. Clearly this threat tactic would become invalid if all the peoples rebelled at once - for the Nerdmeisters would be committing suicide if they killed off all their workers. However, should such a time come, perhaps the ruling class would decide it was better to go out with a bang...

Referee: Visitors, especially good looking ones, would be advised to make their dealings

with this society as perfunctory as possible. The ruling classes like to compete with each other to see who can acquire the best 'mates' from off-worlders. 'Courting' consists mostly of exchanging information on lineage, IQ rating, etc. At best, attractive visitors (of either sex) will find themselves surrounded by several suitors all having the social skills of a rampant terrier.

Plot: A PC with a particularly high physical or mental aptitude is approached by a man offering a free ticket for an all-expenses holiday on this world. He will even offer other members of the PC group tickets if necessary. Unbeknownst to the PCs, the Nerdmeisters view visitors as useful sources of novel genetic material, which may be obtained for their experimentation through a variety of means... if they are not careful, they will find they don't need a return ticket, but they may be saved by local rebels.

2. Gun Power

Description: On this world the military-industrial complex has simplified the process of government to: "we make the weapons and you will do things for us or you will die". This is distinguished from a military dictatorship (q.v.) in that it is the *armaments sector* rather than the military which has achieved a primacy in this state; the companies retain the services of the military as their servants, not as their masters.

The prioritisation of military hardware above other productivity has done untold harm to the competitiveness of the rest of the society. Needless to say the natives are generally listless, oppressed and occasionally individually aggressive. Except, that is, when they aren't being shot at, experimented upon or drafted into the militia.

Referee: Visitors can expect to face moral dilemmas as the gun makers watch their soldiers push people around. They can also

expect to be watched very carefully themselves just in case they are industrial spies. They might even get embroiled in a local revolutionary organisation or, even worse, into a government trap.

The tech level for armaments and computers will be at least one level higher than any other category of technology. The lack of high quality goods in these other areas means that the world is often willing to trade for them in exchange for some really excellent engines of destruction.

Plot: The PCs are hired to infiltrate one of the high tech weapons factories and steal some of their advanced design work. Very risky, but extremely well paid!

3. Doing our Bit

Description: On this world, people are free from taxes and any other kind of obligation provided that they spend one sixth of each year performing their trade for the state. This period is usually taken as one or two blocks during a year (for an Earth-type world, for example, this would be two 30-day periods or one 60-day period).

This philosophy has resulted in a great deal of standardisation in software engineering and manufacture generally, to allow tasks to be passed from one person to the next as easily as possible. Consequently, a lot of the 'noise' which slows down work in other societies is absent. Coupled with the very light burden on the citizen, this society is mostly made up of enthusiastic workers.

There is no full time police force or army but rather a territorial force six times normal size, of whom one sixth are on duty at any one time. To fill the remaining five-sixths of their time, there are a lot of private security, mercenary and investigation outfits. During a crisis, mobilisation of the assets of this state would be prodigious.

Similarly, the public medical and education services are much smaller than their private counterparts, and needing to rely on them would result in real personal disadvantage.

Referee: For visitors, this society should be safe enough, but with a couple of caveats: the constant turn-around of officials makes bribery and other corrupt practices difficult, and local

prices are quite volatile. The authorities frequently seek to make good any deficits in their balance of trade with impromptu tariffs, which can significantly impact visiting traders.

Plot: An Imperial agreement has just been delayed again by the regular change of officialdom. The Imperium wants the agreement signed now, and will hire the PCs to ensure the current official has an accident (or similar) so that his successor - known to be sympathetic to the agreement - will have to enter office a month early.

4. Genetics are Good

Description: The founders of this world believed in the overriding importance of genetics in personality formation, and decided to take advantage of it to found the perfect state. The colonists were social scientists and experimental biologists who experimented with their genetic material to create the perfect inhabitants for their world.

A millennium or so down the line, they have produced a society which works... almost. The early settlers divided the duties of their people into two basic categories: obeying and leading. The obedient were to do all the work, and were adapted to fit their new duties through both genetic engineering and behavioural conditioning, while the leaders (intended to make all the tough choices) were tinkered with to develop their mental faculties. Touchingly, this tinkering also included incorporating anything which had been reported to promote psionic abilities.

When the scientists felt that they had produced a stable product, they used further manipulation to fix the traits they had introduced as dominant characteristics. They also conditioned the various different populations to reproduce only within their own groups, both through social pressure and by rendering the products of cross group reproduction infertile, effectively producing a selection of different species. This planet is thus effectively inhabited by a variety of very specialised, distinct groups, each with its own form of life style, work, entertainment, etc.

However, while the inhabitants have found physical characteristics are easy enough to manipulate, they have had much less success

with intelligence, which tends to be developed through environmental processes. The stability and conservatism of this society has reduced the need for incisive and innovative minds (the daily round is not all that stimulating) and the local culture no longer encourages intellectual curiosity.

Note that unlike the Nerdmeisters (q.v.), the inhabitants of this world have completed their genetic manipulation and all are happy with their resulting place in society.

Referee: Although this world disturbs most visitors, it makes sense to the natives. They feel that they all have a place in their society.

Many visitors make the mistake of thinking that the inhabitants of this world are either evil scientists or mindless drones. The truth is more complex: despite the appalling behaviour of their remote ancestors, these people are fully aware individuals, who happen to be very good at what they do.

When creating NPCs or PCs from this world, roll 2D for each characteristic except SOC. Any points above 7 in INT or EDU can be transferred to STR, DEX or END as desired. SOC is assigned at the end of character creation and is equal to 2 plus the officer rank level achieved. A character who rolled a UPP of 784A8?, could opt to move 2 points from INT and 1 from EDU, perhaps to give a UPP of 78777?. If they mustered out at rank O4, their SOC would be 2+4=6.

Plot: The PCs are recruited to covertly locate and copy the ancient records of the founding geneticists - their patron believes significant information about psionic powers may be found therein. (Genetic engineering for psionic powers didn't actually work, but a lot of people suspect that it might have.)

5. Techno-princes

Description: When this paradise was founded, the technocrats responsible decided that their best bet for continued primacy was to establish two parallel societies: their own

diversified social structure and a similar society for the non-technocratic majority. In return for taking care of information and technology needs of the majority, the latter were expected to reciprocate by doing the laundry, growing the food, building things and serving in the army.

After the Long Night, the technocracy still resides in large palaces, patronises the arts, has its own shops and *familia* regiments in the army (with nice white uniforms, shiny buttons and lots of frogging). However, everything they have is now shoddy and second rate. Apart from the Princes' full time (foreign) servants, everything done for them is done reluctantly and badly. The food and goods the proles deliver is the worst of any given batch. Princely orders are followed in the *Švejkite* manner. In practice manoeuvres, the *familia* is allowed to win through the opposition's expedient of marching across a large area of open ground. When the proles serve as mercenaries elsewhere, or take part in interstellar exercises, they are a daunting prospect, whereas the *familia* are regarded as a laughing stock and ranked lowest in fitness for role or marksmanship competitions.

Referee: Non-noble visitors are treated courteously and receive uniformly excellent service. Trade is honest and efficient (-½D to delivery times, +2 to all categories of cargo, freight and passengers available).

Plot: The PCs are hired to escort an Imperial noble (part of the Diplomatic Corps) on world. The noble is expected to call on her local counterparts. The journey is bad enough: the limousine hasn't been cleaned (inside or out) in living memory, but it is as nothing compared to the abysmal hospitality. School dinner-quality catering, power cuts, no heating and grimy bed linen are the best most Princely families can manage. They are also under the impression that this is because their useless proles can't do any better.

6: Captive Government

Yes sir, of course sir, whatever you say sir

"Government by a leadership answerable to an outside group. Often a colony or conquered area."

1. Civilising Mission

Description: This planet has come under the control of a more powerful neighbouring government which claims to be helping the host society by expanding its industrial and knowledge base and by rooting out corruption. In reality it is trying to wipe out all the cultural reference points which made this planet unique. The conquerors genuinely believe that they are civilising this world, but will refuse to acknowledge that they are doing it in an unnecessarily violent manner.

The rulers maintain a constant smiling friendly appearance while dissidents are murdered or simply disappear. There are "spontaneous" public demonstrations of support for the regime, and a change in taxation policy subsidises collaboration and intermarriage with the invaders. Cultural exchange events force the locals to come to appreciate the superior values of their new masters, and informally compulsory "friendship circles" are commonplace.

Referee: Visitors are likely to notice how heavily the virtues of peace and order are emphasised on this world. They will find the cost of local produce to have been pushed to one or other extreme. Some goods are expensive because they have been through the invaders' quality control, while other goods are very cheap, being sold by locals desperate to liquidate their assets and leave.

It would be as well for visitors who intend to return, such as traders, to affect a sympathy for the ideas of the ruling power; failing that, neutrality would be a good choice. Anyone taking an interest in the plight of the conquered is just begging for trouble. It is not unknown for off-worlders who ask too many questions to suddenly 'disappear'.

Plot: The PCs are asked to ship a cargo of agricultural machinery to this world. The crates really do contain farming equipment, but the

associated paper and electronic "manuals" are filled with rebel literature inciting insurrection. This is unlikely to be noticed at customs, but will be traced back to the PCs later, once the literature is widely available.

2. Just Children, Really

Description: The rulers of this world are not the same species as the ruled. The leadership monopolise high technology and have imposing military forces, while those they rule work in the mines, on the land or in dangerous occupations. The rulers hold themselves aloof and have little if any interest in the affairs of their subjects. All that matters is that the food and the ores appear on time in the right quantities. Failure to comply has been known to result in a large rock falling from a very great height.

Referee: No doubt travellers would find this treatment of a whole species deplorable, but it is unlikely that they will discover the true situation. Around the starport and major towns there are plenty of collaborators who will give the party line if asked, who will bow and scrape and do cute native things, and who will kill or maim their own kind for a bit of material comfort. What most travellers will notice is that raw materials are cheap and plentiful and the facilities gracious.

Plot: The PCs are recruited as 'aides' (bodyguards) for a reporter and her cameraman who wish to covertly poke around in the outback of this world, to determine just how despotic this regime is. They will certainly be watched, but with some thought should get some prize-winning footage. This will be irrelevant if none of them manage to get off-world alive...

3. The Guests

Description: This society is controlled by a foreign power which wishes to remain aloof

from the street level butchery necessary to maintain control of this world.

Local traitors, *Quislings* and other criminals provide the illusion of a government with domestic support, supposedly free from outside influence. Needless to say this is far from the truth. The local forces are equipped by the "friendly" power, are subordinate to it in wartime, and the embassy of their "guests" is enormous, with rather a lot of signals intelligence equipment, and what looks like an armoured barracks.

Everything available in the markets is low quality and there are seemingly endless queues. The listless, hopeless look in the eyes of the populace shows how their "guests" have broken their will. There are frequent power failures (except in the government blocks which have their own generators) and the government services (police, emergency services, etc.) prioritise the "guests" and their underlings.

Locals who express doubts about their "guests" are either framed for small, non-political crimes or disappear, if only for a while. If they return, they are thinner, quieter, and fully aware of the wonderful people who help their society stand on its own feet.

Referee: Visitors to this world will notice, but would be advised not to remark upon, the failing state of this society.

Trade goods purchased here will fetch 1D % less on resale off-world due to their lower quality. There will also usually be ½D days delay in acquiring the goods at the port. Selling one's goods here is problematic: the state's inefficiency has led to it imposing heavy taxes on imports, and all government-related contracts will be for a selling price of 2D % below the normal trade price. Traders could sell to the black market of course, but this would be dangerous. Naturally, traders from the colonising power will get preferential treatment and will make a point of rubbing their competitors' noses in that fact.

There may be occasions when visitors are contacted by members of dissident factions, or by *agents provocateur*. Such visitors should be careful, for the "guests" operate a wide network of spies and turn-coats.

Plot: The PCs are tasked to deliver a cargo of luxury goods to the "guests" embassy. En route (either during the stellar trip or on planet) dissidents will attempt to plant a bomb in the cargo. If the PCs allow this to happen, they will be blamed when the embassy suffers severe damage and will be hunted down by several hired assassins.

4. Regrettable Necessity

Description: In this society, the locals are being ruled from outside because they are fractious, unpleasant and downright dangerous if left to their own devices. There are military governors, huge forces and a lot of humanitarian support for the occupation, but the locals are firmly opposed to it. The civilised nature of the occupation is evident from the labyrinthine rules of engagement and standard operating procedures followed by the peace keepers, to the extent that the locals frequently ambush them, rob them and embarrass them with seeming impunity.

While this society is dangerous, especially if you are a peace keeper, it is not amber rated. That would be an admission of failure.

Referee: Travellers should be advised that the authorities take a very dim view of arrivals with military backgrounds seeking to "tour the country". Shipments of weapons are, needless to say, banned.

However, because of the need to perpetuate the fiction of order, trade prices are controlled to keep them in line with neighbouring worlds.

Plot: The PCs are hired to escort an off-world charity-sponsored medical team who are bringing critical vaccines to this world to fight a new epidemic. Unfortunately, not only are some natives hostile to help from outsiders (believing the epidemic is a bioweapon simply to make them dependent on off-world help) but rebels may steal the medicines, believing they can sell them on the black market. In any armed conflict, the peace keepers will be of little use due to their overly limited engagement rules.

5. Masters and Servants

Description: This society has just lost a war to someone who means business. There

is no sham of acceptance or democracy here, just a naked display of force. From the police who walk the streets armed with assault rifles, to the punishment beatings and public executions, there is no sign of any accommodation with the invaded.

Almost everything here requires a permit or licence (with associated interviews, fees and delays). All types of travel are monitored, with checkpoints being a regular feature of all land-based transport systems. The soldiers use a special form of currency - occupation credits - and expect priority treatment ahead of citizens and all but the most important off-worlders.

The conquerors will not be satisfied until they feel sure that every native head will bow to them. The locals rebel sporadically, and are cut down. Dissident leaders are rounded up, tortured and killed. Whole villages are wiped out in revenge for the death of one invading soldier. Public gatherings of more than ten people are forbidden and are broken up with force - the use of chemical agents is commonplace and live rounds and fragmentation grenades are used against large crowds.

The invaders are quite unabashed about their brutality: they are the victorious army, what else should they do?

Referee: If they can stomach this, travellers will find this society a place where a lot of unsavoury business can be done profitably. Individual soldiers will have plenty of loot that they would rather convert into hard cash. All kinds of recreational goods are needed by the army, and the local output will be very cheap (if of low quality). It would be best, of course, if travellers remained inside the starport compound. There are a lot of desperate people out in the dark streets of the surrounding cities.

Plot: The PCs are approached by a group of soldiers who wish to have various art treasures smuggled off-world. They will want two of their number to escort the cargo to a bank on a neighbouring world. However, not only is a higher-ranking officer trying to track down these treasures for his own collection, but the locals will also try to regain them - by persuasion if possible, by force if necessary.

"No central ruling authority exists. Rival governments compete for control."

A Balkanised world can have any number of member states (Earth currently has about 176) and the exact number or type of these governments may change frequently. Individual states can have any form of government although the Traveller formula tends to skew them towards anarchy, democracies and oligarchies.

What matters from the interstellar perspective is the relationship of the world as a whole with the outside community.

1. United States

Description: This world considers itself to be sufficiently urbane to have a single voice at the interstellar level, while maintaining diversity at home. It therefore has a supranational authority which runs the starport and represents individual states' interests with the outside and vice versa.

Referee: Travellers to this world will find that although the facilities are adequate, they lack personality and are not run efficiently. The cuisine is designed to assault as few palates as possible, and the officials they meet are anodyne and uninteresting. However, as soon as they go out into the street, things will change. A big issue with supranational authorities is that they tend to be money hogs, so there are many people more than happy to undercut them. This borders on illegality, but it's profitable. Travellers will probably not get any worse punishment than a slapped wrist if they get caught: the authority is intended to preserve the wonderful diversity of this world, and the travellers are up to their necks in it.

Essentially, authority facilities are boring, expensive and safe, the outside is a bit wild, inexpensive and very stimulating. Merchants can get 1D % better prices if dealing direct with the public, and deliveries take ½D less days to arrive. This is illegal but socially acceptable behaviour.

Plot: One of the states believes it has been badly represented by the supranational authority. The PCs will encounter this due to the disruption of starport operations by a computer virus, small firebombs, etc.

2. Stability in a World of Difference

Description: This planet's starport is a huge orbital installation. Early in this planet's history, a commercial group decided to relocate to the Clark belt (where geo-stationary orbits are possible). After some competition with the main world, they quickly monopolised interstellar travel. Eventually a 'peaceful' agreement was reached with the multiple world states, such that the commercial group took over ownership and operation of the associated ground port under licence from the individual states. The agreement can be summarised as: "We will pay rent for these ground facilities. In return for this, we won't drop rocks on you and you won't try to infiltrate, assault, or destroy our orbital port."

The commercial group realised early on that they needed to supply all the states with ports to keep them happy. Although a few of the states had attempted to begin their own ground ports, the investment needed to complete ports in every state was well beyond the capability of either the states or the orbital port owners. The solution arrived at is a mobile ground facility: essentially a huge set of caravans and trailers which deploy around a landing area and contain prefabricated buildings housing all the facilities for the port. Portable beacons, communication equipment, etc. provide quite adequate traffic control and landing telemetry.

To stop any nation complaining, the facility is rotated between all of them over a rather long (32 year) cycle, and the rent is paid out to all the states, with the current host of the down port getting a double share.

Referee: Travellers will find the orbital terminal to be comfortable and efficient, but the surface element is a bit of a dump. If the orbital port were ever to be destroyed, the starport would immediately drop to class E.

To reduce the likelihood that the surface nations ever decided to try to take-over or destroy the orbital facility, the port authority makes sure that its rates are very good indeed, and that its operation is efficient and fair. Taxes are thus minimal, the effect for traders being that all goods

they sell will fetch ½D % more than usual, and all bought goods will be ½D % cheaper.

Plot: The mobile starport is about to move nations but the current host wishes ill of its successor and wishes to delay the transfer and disrupt operations thereafter. The PCs may be hired to perform the necessary sabotage or, alternatively, to prevent such a delay.

3. Let a Thousand Flowers Bloom!

Description: Every state on this world maintains its own starport, its own individual interstellar policy and its own territorial space (projected from the state's terrestrial borders for as far as their sensors will reach). This arrangement obviously favours the equatorial countries (their territory includes the Clark belt) and there is a technological gradient on the planet, with the richest and most advanced states straddling the equator, while the less well off and more backward polities cluster around the poles.

The main starport is linked to the most advanced and powerful nation, and serves to entrench its status as this world's policeman.

Referee: On approaching this world, many visitors will be heading for the main starport, but they will still receive a huge volume of communications traffic from other starports, (advertising their services) and from all the states whose space the PCs have violated on the way in (the precise volumes of space owned by each is constantly being re-negotiated). Despite threats of retaliation or interception, there will be no trouble: no one in authority is quite that stupid. However, when the PCs land, they will be served with bills from everyone they have annoyed. They don't have to settle these (as none of the states has jurisdiction within another's starport) but should they land at a different port in future, they will find that such charges are never forgotten, and the interest charged on unpaid fines can mount up quite quickly...

Plot: On landing at one starport, the PCs find their ship has been mis-registered as owing fines from 12 years ago. The accrued interest is around Cr5,608,345...

4. Our Own World, Our Own Way

Description: This planet really celebrates its own diversity. It is divided into intensely proud if somewhat insular states who are determined to emphasise their own cultural traditions, which are

very diverse indeed. Cultures range from the extremes of the depraved to the noble and saintly.

During a fit of moral responsibility, the Imperium established an enclave on this world, so that anyone who wanted to return to sanity could exercise the rights and privileges of Imperial citizenship by getting drafted. In time, this enclave has grown into the world's starport and trading centre, and is a rich source of income for the Imperium.

Referee: Travellers will find the starport unremarkable enough, except for the Rag Market, a huge enclosure, partly roofed, where all the world's nations and many of its trading houses maintain a presence. This market can provide almost anything, including large quantities of contraband and illegal items. An especial favourite is "copyright infringement alley", where canny locals will knock out copies of any item, "just like the real thing, honest, guv".

This highly competitive environment works in the traveller's favour, so visitors can expect to benefit by 2 x ½D % on all prices. The enclave has stopped competing as a brokerage, but still charges for berthing and demurrage. Anyone can rent a stall in the Rag Market for 2 credits per hour per square metre.

Plot: The PCs find their next shipment off-world is of local fakes rather than the real item. If this is freight, the receiver will accuse the PCs of selling the real goods and trying to replace them with cheap rubbish; if the PCs bought the shipment, then the fakes were sufficiently good to fool them, but not their buyers. No doubt the PCs will want revenge!

5. Who Cares?

Description: This planet was settled by a large number of laid back folk who decided that it was their spiritual duty to take it easy for the rest of the galaxy. They are split up into little (county sized) 'statelets' which occasionally bicker and fight, but which mostly just get along.

Economic activity is very depressed here. The locals are fond of poppies, hemp, mushrooms and other similar cash crops, practice highly efficient (in terms of yield per hectare) but labour intensive agriculture, and generally just hang out.

From an outside observer's perspective, there is a huge reservoir of concealed unemployment, and the local health service is rudimentary, emphasising acupuncture, homeopathy and other 'alternative' therapies.

Wars, when they break out, are generally very small scale and have a low fatality rate. Preferred

weapons are explosive compounds and mind altering chemical agents: the locals have a gift for both.

Referee: There is a surprisingly high level of interstellar traffic to this world, simply because it is a good place to get out of your head, and because the natives sell their crops at a low price. The starport is actually run by immigrants who, despite being heavily reliant upon the local crops, are still viewed by the locals as oppressively uptight.

Some locals live in the starport area, because they like proper medicine, electricity, etc. Trade here takes for ever (2D extra days per transaction) and selling to the natives for cash is not profitable (prices generally 5D % lower than on nearby worlds). However, direct bartering of imported goods for native crops could result in a cargo which is worth a huge amount on other worlds, provided one has the black market contacts to safely sell such mind altering drugs. Of course, the customs officials of neighbouring worlds take a close interest in any cargo or passengers originating at this world.

Plot: The PCs take a local passenger off-world but find him apparently dead just before landing on the next world. He is actually in a drug-induced catatonic trance and will recover in 24 hours, but it should scare them and the customs officers will arrest him for the other 'medicinal herbs' in his luggage.

6. Mind Games

Description: This world seems like an unusually fractious balkanised planet, with a healthy demand for engines of destruction and a very competitive, very comfortable and extremely secure starport. For the benefit of traders and rash tourists, the Starport Authority maintains an office in the capital city of each state on the world, these offices having full embassy status.

Referee: What is not apparent to outsiders (i.e. PCs can only find this out the hard way) is that the Starport Authority is controlled by a self-perpetuating clique of psionic adepts who arrange things to keep the world's nations at each other's throats. They also manage trade so that visitors will always make sufficient profit to encourage their return, but never a huge amount (this will require some arithmetic if you are so inclined: work out how much the PCs need to satisfy their repayment schedule and salaries, then give them enough extra for a round of drinks). The psionics also arrange for the efficient delivery of outgoing cargoes, and visiting traders should find their stay very pleasant indeed.

Plot: The PCs meet (or transport) an enthused psi-shield seller en route for this world. Shortly after arriving they find him murdered. No guesses for who's responsible, if you've read the referee's bit above...

7. Under Strain

Description: The experts at the Census office agonised long and hard before deciding that this world was in fact Balkanised. Constitutionally it has a global representative democracy, but unfortunately, this and the attendant rule of law only hold good as far as the starport and nicer parts of the urban centres are involved. The outback is the site of an armed struggle which has been going on for as long as anyone can remember.

Despite having purported ideologies, the various revolutionary factions are now gangs of racketeers and kidnapers who prey on their host population and occasionally operate in the big cities with the assistance of dupes, bleeding hearted liberals and dedicated urban guerrillas. The situation is complicated by the fact that a lot of constitutional political parties have historical links with the guerrilla movement, and some even control its actions and give warning of government moves against them.

A lot of the factions have more than one division, so a constitutional party could have military, cultural and urban revolutionaries. The factions cover a range of beliefs, from religious fanaticism, through autonomous government to communism.

The planetary government is incapable of policing the entire world, and focuses its efforts on the main population centres. This normality is punctuated by assassinations and robberies (the main manifestation of revolutionary activity in the cities). The government mounts its own raids into the outback, often with Imperial or mercenary assistance.

Referee: Outside the safe havens noted above, this society could be sufficiently dangerous to rank an amber rating. Anyone dealing with a specific faction automatically becomes an enemy of the others. Travellers in the hinterlands risk kidnap and ransom, or torture and execution as a spy.

Traders will find that selling prices for mood-lifting drugs, weapons and surveillance equipment are in their favour (add ½D to the roll on the sale value table). There is a healthy passenger trade for mercenaries, fund-raisers for the revolutionary groups and journalists, as well as a steady

outward trickle of exiles and ex-revolutionaries on the run.

Plot: The PCs are hired to smuggle a shipment of medical supplies from the starport through customs and some guerrilla-infested outlands to a specific rebel group. The PCs can disguise the supplies or bluff their way through. Hidden amongst the medicines is a vial containing a lethal bioweapon for use by the rebel group.

8. Rich Tapestry

Description: This world has a drastic assortment of cultural purists, separatists, bigots, segregators and others who all have the constitutional right to enforce their own laws on members of their own societies. This situation grew out of a desire during the immediate pre-Diaspora period for smaller cultures to be preserved from absorption in the United Earth machine by their settlement elsewhere. An early attempt at colonisation was delayed by an argument over the authorities' desire that the colony's descendants be able to rejoin mainstream human society at a future time. The emigrants were strongly opposed to this and refused to do anything other than mount noisy protests until they got their own way.

The end result is a Commission which regulates off-world trade for those societies which desire it, joins in on the losing side in the frequent wars (to prevent the absorption of one state by another) and which returns refugees to face their remote ancestors' ideas of justice. The Commission retains armed forces drawn from those societies which have a warrior ethic, and enables some kind of regular outside contact, but otherwise does nothing at all for the people.

Referee: Visiting merchants will find that the Commission's trading facilities are fine (they retain the services of passionate free traders to run this for them). Similarly, travellers' accommodation needs are well taken care of, and the cuisine is outstanding. Many of the small states and communities are well worth a trip and partly finance themselves out of tourism but there are other, more hard line polities where the only holiday might be described as a "bracing survival adventure".

Plot: The Commission hires the PCs' ship to transport holidaymakers to one of the states which has only just opened its doors to foreigners. The travellers come back rather less happy than they went and the PCs will suffer their angry ranting!

9. Perfect Chivalry

Description: This world has a huge number of petty kingdoms and principalities due to the use of appanage (the provision of territory for each heir) as the system of inheritance. This has led to the fragmentation of society into minute portions, some little more than a church, a pub and a handful of farms. Given that each of these portions is meant to support a monarch in style, economic efficiency is lamentable.

There is very little hope of the formation of larger polities, short of fratricidal wars of conquest or (much more commonly) the acquisition of lands and titles by financiers through foreclosure. However as local tradition requires that land be held by people, not by institutions, the financiers rapidly find themselves effectively becoming the new magnates. Unless they limit themselves to one child, these new nobles end up splitting their estates just as their predecessors did.

The wars which rage across this planet are curious affairs: a principality could become lost inside a golf course; a tractor mounting a light machine gun is heavy ordnance; and logistics is no problem when you are just popping next door for a bit of a scrap. War is thus a picnic which both sets of villagers come along to watch. Those who feel like getting stuck in, line up with their seigneurs, shotguns at the ready and drink themselves into fighting trim. While the princes exchange stirrup cups and choice snacks, the commoners make rude gestures at each other. Then the two lines advance, there is a whiff of buck shot and they settle down to clubbing each other with their gun butts. Fatalities are rare, but injuries are common, so the wars happen at the beginning of summer or after the harvest, so as not to interfere with farming.

Referee: Travellers who like to see thick nobles and sturdy peasants beating seven bells out of each other in a rural idyll will find their tastes well catered for here. The same doesn't go for merchants: few of the local principalities can actually provide a full cargo, and it is rare to find a local factor who will take an entire consignment of goods off a trader's hands, so trade is distressingly slow: add 2 x ½D days to trading tasks. Similarly, the need to consolidate produce from a very large number of small suppliers means that the unit cost of goods on this world is higher than it would otherwise be (subtract 1 from the roll on the actual value table).

Plot: A noble hires the PCs to infiltrate the courts of his neighbours such that they have convenient 'accidents', allowing him to expand his

rather small holding; should the neighbouring villagers cause problems he expects the PCs to teach them a lesson.

10. Gone Native

Description: This planet, which supported its own sentient life before humans "discovered" it, was earmarked for a campaign of conquest by settlement. It was hoped that aggressive human colonists would kill the natives out of self-preservation, thus saving the principal companies the trouble and expense. However, to the settlers' immense credit, they soon realised the true situation and made common cause with the indigenous population against their masters.

A protracted guerrilla war followed, with the natives and their human "traitor" friends keeping the corporate authorities penned into environmentally sealed enclaves along the coasts and around the starport. The corporations would probably have won in the end, but for the Long Night which cut them off from outside aid and forced them to exploit the rest of the planetary system for resources, rather than fight against an enemy which was recovering as fast as the corporations' external support dried up.

Over the next millennium, as the more hard line corporate types festered in their citadels and the defector/native alliance fused into a remarkable mixed species civilisation, the space-based element realised that it had very little in common with the companies on the surface and developed along separate lines.

The system now consists of a variety of societies: the bitter, siege-minded Strongholds filled with "true" humans; asteroid belt colonies and O'Neill stations; and a patchwork of sophisticated native/human Republics. The spacers are the system's police and take a dim view of the wars which occasionally break out between the Strongholds and the Republics.

Referee: Visitors will have most to do with the space-based civilisation as they regulate trade and operate the system defence squadron. The Republics are mostly self-sufficient but being outward looking and energetic societies they like to receive visitors, and quite often have good quantities of goods to trade. The Strongholds are worth a visit too, provided travellers are human, in no way adapted to non-Earth standard conditions, and have not previously visited the Republics (those who have are tolerated but distrusted).

Everyone they meet will ask "When is the Race coming to help us?" in all seriousness, which could be good for a few laughs. The Strongholds' most interesting export is their icons, which "fuse human supremacist imagery and aspirational spirituality into durable artefacts of breath-taking power and restraint", according to the catalogue.

A referee might opt to make the natives either Droyne or Chirpers.

Plot: The PCs are hired by a Republic to investigate rumours that Stronghold extremists have hired an off-world laboratory to develop a bioweapon to exterminate this world's non-human residents.

8: Civil Service Bureaucracy

Please fill in the application form in triplicate

"Government by agencies employing individuals selected for their expertise."

1. Private Empires

Description: This world was once a representative democracy which funded its numerous political parties from the public purse, to eliminate corruption. Combined with the power sharing arrangements typical of proportional representation, this resulted in the parties becoming closely associated with the ministries which ran the services in which they were most interested. Thus the socialists got health and transport, the tree-huggers got environment and so on. After a while, the democratic state withered away and the parties decided that, as they were going to control their favourite ministries anyway, they may as well save the exchequer the expense of funding a moribund electoral super-structure.

Consequently, if you want to do good, you join Health, Transport or Environment, and if you were a bully at school, then the Ministry of the Interior is the place for you. Of course, joining a ministry is the same as pronouncing your political and ethical principles to the world. A side effect of this is that all the ministries have a most pronounced personality all of their own: austere and dignified for the Exchequer, whimsical for the Environment, laconic for War.

Referee: Travellers shouldn't find too much to bother them here, except that they will be operating at an unfortunate junction between the Exterior, Exchequer, Trade and Transport ministries, so each major activity will be delayed by 1D hours while the civil servants sort out their boundary disputes.

Plot: Major financial cutbacks are required by the Exchequer and Transport gets to be the one picked on by its peers this time. As a result anything not currently making a profit at the starport grinds to a total halt, berthing fees and import taxes quadruple overnight.

2. A Lamp in the Dark

Description: In this society, the administrators realised quite quickly that while politics is a matter of fashion, government is a matter of style. The civil service recruits suitable new members from the best that the world's schools can produce, and ensures that their appreciation of culture, reality

and their circumstances is complete. When suitably indoctrinated, they start in the lowly Departments and, with sufficient determination and talent, end up in high office.

Regulations are passed rather than laws, and they are formulated and revised by experts in the field. Thus the society is stable, cultured and ordered. It is also diabolically inefficient, serves its people badly and is only stable because of the energy of the departments of Information Services and of Public Order. The civil servants do not apply brutal retribution to dissenters; they know talent when they see it. Working on the principle that the best game keepers are ex-poachers, captured rebels tend to be signed up for the appropriate department and then 'educated' to act for, rather than against, the government.

The government maintains strict control of prices of most products (leading to over- and under-pricing of many items compared to other worlds). It is a strong supporter of ballet, theatre and opera. However, it is a desert for sport fans. Imported entertainment, especially the cheap, tawdry type commands a premium among the common people.

Referee: The majority of this world runs on documentation, so PCs will find that progress will be fastest if they have paid for the best quality contracts, permits, etc. It is impossible to persuade any civil servant that there is any more efficient way to perform a service - it is ingrained within each such bureaucrat that doing job X requires form Y to be filled in (in triplicate), stamped by three departments (in different cities, or even continents) and then filed in the pending tray for several weeks. A hard-working traveller might persuade a clerk to place their form in the 'urgent' pending tray, but that's about as flexible as they get.

Due to its inefficiency, there are 1D day delays for all significant contracts. Prices are often fixed by the bureaucracy, meaning that an item in demand may have been fixed at a relatively low price (giving the opportunity for profit) or vice-versa. In general, traders making good Trading task rolls (or buyers in town using Streetwise) should get a 5D % reduction in price to reflect this. Less skilled traders may find some items 5D % more expensive than they normally expect

(currently being artificially inflated due to some bureaucratic ruling).

Plot: There is a growing mountain of holovideo sets which the government will literally give away if the PCs will ship them off-world. The alternative for this over-production is that the product is recycled - at great cost.

3. Non Profit Reward

Description: In this society, the basic dynamic is which department has the biggest share of the expenditure, the nicest offices and the most and best staff. This is because the civil service ethic is so deeply ingrained that the administrators' actual pay is not commensurate with their level of responsibility. Naturally, therefore, they seek compensation in other ways.

The main fight is between the Treasury and the Department of External Affairs, but all the other Departments are keen to compete in wasting money on grandiose schemes and private empire building: you might very well earn a lot less than some captains of industry, but they can certainly buy you a very expensive lunch.

The net effect of this is a top-heavy and inefficient administration which only remains in power through the wholesale collusion of other interested parties, such as financiers, manufacturers and organised crime. This means that the common people subsidise their own exploiters.

The rule of law is not too onerous here: it is manifestly unfair, and those higher up the pyramid get lighter and lighter sentences. However, there is no apparatus of repression, and the authorities do not care what outsiders think. There is dissent, but it is usually expressed as apathy and depressed economic activity.

Referee: Given the authorities' disdain for the views of outsiders, visitors are unlikely to get into trouble for criticising the way things are run.

General inefficiencies are likely to add $\frac{1}{2}D$ % to all purchase prices (subtract an equivalent amount from all PC selling prices).

Plot: The PCs are hired as streetwise aides to an entrepreneur who wishes to build a new office complex so plush that the civil servants will be fighting each other to get into it. He needs help making local deals plus he expects to need protection against the local mob, on whose toes he will be firmly treading.

4. Jobsworth's World

Description: Here everyone the state employs has strictly laid-down duties and responsibilities, which are fastidiously observed.

The governing ethic is don't do it if you aren't paid for it, and this attitude is common to all state controlled ventures, which of course includes the customs and port authorities and just about any service which travellers would want to use. Society fairly crackles with frustrations and irritation as counters close for three minutes because the relief shift is slightly late.

There is a private sector, mostly concerned with production and entertainment, but all services are firmly in the hands of the state, which directs them through an assortment of bureaux whose demarcation lines are exactly drawn and jealously guarded. Permits and restrictions, often seemingly pointless, abound. For example: fluorescent orange cartons show up against most backgrounds, and are therefore safer. So all cartons must be fluorescent orange. However, the precise definitions for these two terms are open to interpretation. Thus it might be possible to secure a good deal from an independent factor, but it could still be screwed up by an official refusing to allow the containers on the dock because either they're not fluorescent, or because they are fluorescent, but aren't cartons (and thus shouldn't be fluorescent)...

Referee: This society is most appropriate for light relief (for the referee) and maximum irritation (for the players).

Plot: You need me to tell you a plot? Start with fluorescent orange cartons and work up from there!

9: Impersonal Bureaucracy

The peasants are revolting...

"Government by agencies which are insulated from the governed."

1. The World Machine

Description: Some wise old professor once programmed a huge computer with an algorithm for the perfect society, and this planet bought it. The World Machine knows everything, makes the best decisions and orders society accordingly. At least that's what it said on the box.

The result is that this world has only one kind of anything: all walls are beige, all carpets rust, all plants are green with red flowers, everyone wears a grey boiler suit and all the soap is pine scented. A large and arguably inaccurate database of genetic traits is used to assign infants to schools and to their ultimate careers, and their subsequent education is designed to make them optimally productive for that career, no matter what other skills they may show a talent for.

The Machine rewards individuals for the work they do, and in accordance with the venerable professor's prejudices. Thus academics, domestic servants and workers get a reasonable standard of living, while bureaucrats, traders and security forces have much more spartan arrangements.

The planet's foreign policy is transparently tit for tat, with provision to mutuate to tit for two tats if the rest of the galaxy plays along. Diplomats, officials and other representatives are stonily loyal to the World Machine, and almost seem to be programmed themselves.

There is, of course, some dissent: this is fuelled by off-planet goods and information, and is ignored by the Machine provided that it does not run contrary to its algorithms. Coloured underwear is a sign of antisocial tendencies.

Referee: Visitors can expect to trade raw materials for utilitarian products through official channels, or contraband (cosmetics, lingerie, entertainment and software) for stolen or illegal goods (including computer parts and harrowing art work) on the black market.

Just wandering around looking foreign will be enough to generate a lot of interest, and visitors can expect to be pestered for off-world novelties. Tales of places where life is different go down well, of course, and PCs can get a long way with a packet of wine gums, which would be a taste explosion compared to the local food.

Plot: The PCs are hired to escort Dan the Mad Processor while on this world. Dan's act revolves around the destruction (by hammer, tongs and explosions) of old computer equipment. He was booked by a rebel group under the guise of a government department. His first performance will result in a riot by the Machine-loving crowd.

2. The Rule of Law

Description: This world's constitution, and a fairly complete plan of duties and responsibilities (including core job descriptions) is literally carved in stone. Huge monoliths carrying a total of several million lines of writing, are arranged in a rectangular grid pattern in the largest park in the capital city. Aligned with the long axis of the grid are the supreme court building, and the Justice Spire, a 100 metre obelisk used in public executions (the condemned are dropped from the top).

The preferred career here is the law, and all advocates (defence, prosecution and judiciary) are drawn, at state expense, from a pool which all local lawyers must join. Lawyers are assigned to each of the roles at random, and to prevent any suggestion of corruption, must refrain from developing social links with non-lawyers. Promotion is gained by winning cases or by making a ruling which isn't overturned on appeal. All trials are before a single judge, and both parties must be represented. As it is only prowess in court which counts, and not public acclaim, the advocates don't really bother with public relations, and the media are packed with trivia and light entertainment.

Referee: The problems for visitors to this world are largely concerned with the local obsession for litigation. There is no real leeway for bargaining, as everything is set down in stone, or can be extrapolated from one of the resulting legal codes.

The local currency is regularly deflated to ensure convertibility (into Imperial Credits) and prices for all goods are set under the Exchange of Goods Law. Any new import has to be judged by an appropriate court (i.e. the bargaining is performed on the trader's behalf by an advocate) and the price is then set, forever. This actually has a potentially huge advantage, in that traders will

know which speculative goods are likely to sell here, and which will not.

Plot: A corporate president is about to be sentenced to prison due to a technicality of the great laws. His defence is hopeless so he will hire the PCs to fabricate a copy of one of the monoliths, with the offending law modified in his favour. Replacing the huge stonework at dead of night will be no small feat!

3. Incorruptible

Description: To avoid any suggestion of corruption, and in the naïve hope of preventing any possibility of this, this world's civil service was taken over by brutal young reformers who established a faceless society. Anyone working for the state is forbidden to use a name while about the state's business, and no one encountering the state apparatus is allowed to actually meet a civil servant face to face: individuals or groups from each side sit in small booths with a separating grill through which they can speak. As technology has developed, electronic interfacing has allowed both parties to be separated by continents, while still allowing impersonal communication and the exchange of electronic documents.

Such practices extend to the police, who always keep their face plates down, and who are very intimidating as a result. Fortunately, this system doesn't work particularly well. While it is possible to segregate the civil service as much as possible, and to have closed leisure facilities and ghettos for bureaucrats, there is still a minority of hardy individuals who break through the wall and use their information to their own benefit. Similarly, the civil servants do have outside lives and interests, and these inevitably bring them into contact with their subjects. On these occasions personal relationships can develop, and the stony impartiality of the system gets subverted.

Referee: Travellers are likely to find this world somewhat strange. Newcomers might get the impression that the blank wall with the voice coming from it is just a tatty computer simulation. Problems arise if there is a difficulty of any kind (e.g. late deliveries, theft or accident) as in these circumstances it is never possible to determine which individual was responsible.

On the streets, the society appears almost normal. However, the people will seem twitchy: they never know when there might be an important official standing next to them (so they are always careful what they say), and the police really do look very mean.

Plot: A PC is attacked when his voice is mistaken for that of a 'faceless' civil servant by an irate individual who was refused his pension due to an administrative mistake. (When revealed as an off-worlder the attacker will be most apologetic.)

4. Moving Up

Description: On this world, the bureaucracy is separated from the people by a horizontal social barrier. All children take the civil service entrance exams, and are psychometrically tested. The results are sent to the recruitment bureau along with a picture of each child. Those who pass the criteria of native ability, venality and attractiveness are recruited into the élite, where they swan about in designer clothes and seek advancement through displays of ability, broadmindedness and adaptability. They also mix with similarly inclined financiers and industrialists into what amounts to a well organised conspiracy against the common people, and an outstanding party to boot.

Conditions for the masses and for any visitors are much the same: services are poor and facilities are badly maintained, it is next to impossible to meet anyone in authority, and the police always seem to have something more important to do.

Any tendency to foment revolution is dissuaded by a policy of making individuals feel alone against the power of the state: tax statements, permits and assorted permissions are all targeted at individuals, never pairs or groups. The media reinforce this image of self-centred individuals such that no one really trusts anyone else; even long-term partnerships (marriage, etc.) are fragile and subject to constant mistrust.

Referee: Off-worlders will find it difficult to relate to the people of this planet as they will all appear nervous and shifty, unwilling to commit to contract or relationship. Even a simple question (e.g. "What's the time?") to a stranger will be met with suspicion (e.g. "Why do you want to know?"). The same is true of mercantile relationships: unless the shippers have a prior arrangement (i.e. have been to a party) with the state, then they will be offered non-negotiable prices and be given a closed list of available freight and cargoes.

Plot: A rich couple have realised that their beloved child is not going to pass the civil service exams - they hire the PCs to rectify this, by whatever means they can.

5. Lobby World

Description: On this planet, the authorities do not care to deal directly with the citizenry. Rather, they prefer to use lobbying organisations as

intermediaries. This is a drain on local efficiency, and it is compensated for by bleeding the people through taxes.

The authorities recruit their personnel by a species of head-hunting, but this is unknown to the general populace. A special recruitment agency scours the colleges for the right stuff: motivated go-getting individuals who are willing to sever all personal and family ties in the public interest. These individuals then cultivate relationships with lobbying firms and between them they implement many extremely disparate business plans, building projects and other schemes.

The effect of all of this is to keep the bureaucrats and their lobbyist chums in the good life. Which is more than can be said for the locals: the ultimate consumers of "the grand plan" will find that it has been diluted, scrimped upon, left dangerously incomplete or just not done at all. While this is inconvenient in some cases, it is life threatening when it involves medical supplies or civil engineering (for example). In general the natives suffer poor service, little choice and long queues.

Naturally, the leaders have sufficient sway to ensure that they always stay on top (for example being admitted to the one hospital that hasn't collapsed and in which the life-support machinery is known to work properly all the time).

Referee: Travellers will find that a casual visit is a little uncomfortable, and that a business deal is close to a nightmare. All plans have to be funnelled through a lobbyist who will approach "a good contact". The contact will then mess around with the arrangements and attempt to get the outside party to agree on slightly worse terms than before (more stringent delivery schedule, lower price, different volume). Of course, adept traders will simply bump up their first asking price and will do very nicely out of it.

Plot: The PCs are inside a major building when part of it collapses - many civilians are killed but the PCs should escape (with some injuries). The collapse is blamed on the government's shoddy work and a particular lobbyist (should the PCs seek reparation).

6. Social Debt

Description: This society is essentially a meritorious gerontocracy, but it got there by an indirect route. The planet began as a Second Imperium penal colony. The idea that you had to work to secure your release had ingrained itself thoroughly before the Long Night came down. To avoid any awkwardness about due process, voting

and other inconveniences, everyone on this world is born in debt. Recognising in advance that each individual is going to be an irritation, a drain on resources and a safety liability for at least twenty years, the constitution imposes an individual's debt to society and the government insists on repayment from an early age.

Anything in the public interest (e.g. learning languages or science subjects) is rewarded by a lessening of the debt. Anything neutral (e.g. being creative, practising sports or studying the humanities) leaves the debt unchanged. Being a further drain (by illness, indolence and antisocial behaviour) increases the debt. A similar pattern is carried on after education, with work in the social interest counting in your favour. The greater the level of debt, the lower the level of entitlement to civil rights, and the higher the level of personal taxation.

Paying off a debt can be done by completing a career in police or military service, as a scientist, teacher, in medicine or as an administrator (the state's blind spot!). This enables the citizen to join the ranks of the Governors - thereafter regarding others in debt as untouchable (hence the impersonal nature of this state). There are no elections, law is revered, Governors generally enjoy their new-found powers and so are wholly approving of the arrangements. Unlike their citizens, Governors are also allowed to travel.

Referee: Trade is routine, except for the tariffs on products which might inconvenience the world: unhealthy foodstuffs, imported entertainment and all kinds of drugs. Some locals in heavy debt to their society may attempt to take passage off-world. Ships caught with such passengers will be in serious trouble.

Plot: The PCs will find themselves billed when they depart this world: the bill ranges from use of planetary oxygen to the import of *E. coli*, and the costs of re-educating several locals unfortunate enough to spend any time with the PCs. The bill must be settled before departure, by cash or by performing work for the state (the bill is Cr10 per day, more if the PCs have been particularly obnoxious).

7. Expert Opinion

Description: The settlers of this planet were awed by the massive intellect of their leaders. The leaders were so enamoured of their own abilities that their conceited beliefs have led to the government imposing a system of professional qualifications and aptitude examinations on the citizenry. To hold a job at a certain level, you must

have passed a specific examination. These examinations apply to nearly every aspect of life. By extension, the level of your skill in any area gives you a ranking against other citizens, and in a disagreement, the higher skill wins automatically, even if the argument deployed is actually wrong.

The locals are exceedingly deferential to those with higher level skills, and have been conditioned to accept their word without question. This system has attractions: everything is simple, there are no real arguments (except when experts with equal skills disagree), and the top down power structure enables big or impersonal projects to run efficiently.

Personal matters present difficulties, of course, and a recurring theme in soap operas is a love match across social boundaries. Either the lesser partner enrolls in night school in a heart-warming frenzy of self improvement, or the better qualified half debases themselves for love (their problems after the resulting loss of status are supposedly gratifying and instructive).

The main problem with this society is that its education system is obsessed with the recapitulation of received wisdom, and has stagnated completely.

Referee: Skills are ranked numerically (each rank being roughly equal to a level of a *Traveller* skill). For any major task, visitors are required to take a local examination to confirm their skills are appropriate. This costs Cr100 and takes 1 hour, per level of skill. This then allows the locals to determine whether the PC is lesser or greater with respect to a given skill. For example, traders determining the sale price of their goods only use their Broker skill level as a modifier if it is greater than that of the expert on hand when the deal is made (the expert's level will be $\frac{1}{2}D + \frac{1}{4}D$). If the PCs argue about this, then subtract the difference between their skill and that of the expert, from the value roll. PCs will generally find themselves either being held in awe for their great ability, or being lectured to as though they are slow, delinquent children.

Plot: If a PC exhibits some great degree of skill in a task, the locals will tell them of Hyilia - a great expert in the given field. Hyilia will challenge the PC to a test of the skill. If the PC does well and then spends 2 weeks per level of their current skill training with Hyilia, they will raise their skill level by 1 (once only).

8. Baksheesh, Baksheesh

Description On this world, the government does nothing except tax the population, build huge

pyramidal office buildings (actually these are arcologies where the bureaucrats live in luxurious isolation) and talk to important visitors. The Imperial Diplomatic Corps loves it here.

The same is not true at ground level: a great ocean of tatty shanties houses the majority of the population. The starport is in a fortified compound, and the only route from it to the pyramids is by air. The local occupations are begging, joining apocalyptic religions, casual labour and taking bribes. Local production is highly automated so that the need for skilled workers (aka industrial civil servants) is minimised and most jobs can be filled by people with no skills at all.

The culture of bribery applies everywhere (even the police can be bribed to overlook most crimes) except within the pyramids, where it is punished most severely.

Referee: With such a depressed local economy, this state relies heavily on its export trade in high value goods. As high value goods tend to be low volume, this world deals with small traders rather than bulk transporters, so merchants like the PCs are always welcome. This is evident from the fact that the port workers are clean, polite and eager to please. They will even beat beggars away with sticks if the PCs decide to go out and about. Naturally, this extra service should be rewarded. In fact any service beyond standing, smiling, with one hand open, palm upwards, at waist height, requires a small honorarium.

Once the fellow with the broom has swept clear the bit of pavement in front of the access terminal, merchants can conduct trade with the pyramids in the normal *Traveller* fashion, except that outgoing cargos will predominantly be luxury items. Traders who accept 'bargain' deals with anyone outside the pyramids will be robbed blind.

Plot: Tips are typically only $\frac{1}{2}D$ credits, but the PCs will only find this out through experimenting. A PC failing an Average Bribery task will over-tip; news of this will spread fast! Any future reward which is less than the first one paid out will result in truly shocking treatment: baggage will accidentally be tipped into an open sewer; freight containers of fragile goods will be dropped; environment seals will be open; and a lizard will appear in the bidet.

9. Gimme, Gimme

Description: This state's early liberal democracy mutated into a socialistic welfare state and then finally degenerated into a moribund system which was controlled by its civil servants. These bureaucrats put it very simply: "We will

implement the constitutional framework you want, for money and the promise that you will not to bother us".

The result was an inclusive constitution in which all the nice things that an individual could expect to happen were guaranteed by statute, and anchored in the requirement that they could only be rescinded by a 67% majority of the whole citizenship. This is such an unlikely event that only two constitutional guarantees have ever been revoked: the declaration of "eternal independence" from any interstellar empire except "our own" (the Imperium put paid to that), and the Lifestyle Acceptance Regulation of 3475 AD.

The locals are reasonably sure that their world owes them a living and are exceptionally obdurate and truculent when anyone suggests that they do things for themselves. They can just about motivate themselves to work in order to distinguish themselves from their neighbours, whom they despise as lazy and worthless.

Bizarrely, this society also pays lip service to personal growth, public service and virtuous living, all of which are enshrined in the state religion with such homilies as "Neither a lender nor a borrower be", "Just say 'Can do!'", "I broke it, I'll fix it." Apart from making a shoddy job of whatever it is they do, the main entertainments are watching horrific

themed chat and audience participation shows or trying to sue the Bureaucracy for non delivery of civil rights.

Referee: Travellers, especially those from the more robust cultures will find these people gruesome. Any complaint about poor quality, late delivery, rudeness or unhelpfulness will be met with an injunction to respect the subject of the complaint's civil rights next time. This will be accompanied by a Boycott of 5D hours. Travellers will, however, find the bureaucracy a pleasure to deal with: efficient, charming and wry.

Of course the rotten quality of this world's goods is well known in the trading community, and the maximum roll (including all skills and DMs) that can ever be reached on the trade value table is 9. After one trip, the PCs will find out why all the other traders stick to freight only, and the sole passenger service is by a subsidised liner with an ever-changing crew.

Plot: The PCs escape this world with a cargo and passengers only to find that the recipient expects the crates to have been hand-polished in transit and the forms to have been signed in high quality gold ink. This is after the passengers have spent the entire trip complaining about every trivial imperfection in their cabins, the food, etc.

A: Charismatic Dictator

We're not worthy, we're not worthy!

"Government by a single leader enjoying the confidence of the citizens."

1. The Living Saint

Description: This world is ruled by a genuine, albeit extremely focused philanthropist who makes sure everything is pleasant, peaceful and safe. This is brought about by a policy of indoctrination, the elevation of self-policing and following the leader's example to prime virtues. The leader's example is available in comic format, with daily updates in the state regulated news media. It is also taught to the world's children in parables and bed-time stories.

As concern for others is another virtue, the locals are very nosy and are always on the look out for the unsatisfied. Anyone failing to live up to the high standards of the leader is to be pitied... and re-educated. It is quite difficult for outsiders to find evidence of this aspect of the leader's plan, but if they look they will see the halfway houses where those on their way back into the community can be seen trying to fit in - trying to maintain a permanent smile, for instance.

Referee: It would be well for travellers to mind their manners, and for traders to choose their cargoes with care as all kinds of things can give offence here. However the prices are stable, and everyone seems nice enough.

Plot: Jenz Olsen has sold an awful lot of dolls of the Living Saint which quote his parables when squeezed. Unfortunately the dolls are cheap and are falling apart - the citizens are in uproar at this and are after Jenz who pleads with the PCs to get him passage off this world immediately!

2. A Popular Hero

Description: The despicable tyrant who runs this world is careful to keep his hands clean. By identifying himself with all that is good and his enemies with all that is wrong, and by casting his world as an island of hope in a sea of despair, he has convinced his subjects that he is their best hope. He has been so successful that the people assume that he doesn't know about the terrible, corrupt things that happen all around them. It is presumed that he is ignorant of the death squads and the internment camps. The leader's popular image is emphasised in colossal murals and sculptures, generally as a protector, provider of

knowledge or giver of presents, but also as a keen sportsman and enthusiastic dancer.

Referee: Visitors will see a different picture of course, and the local underground will be keen to open their eyes. This is very dangerous and traders would be advised to conclude their business quickly and leave. Anyone wanting to take in the sights will be sent out with a personable tour guide of an appropriate sex and shown a few public works and some charming folk dancing. Going off alone is forbidden. All service will be sloppy, slow and substandard; the only kind of dissent available is apathy.

Plot: A young woman befriends a male PC and asks him to take her off-world with him. She is one of the leader's ex-mistresses, has extremely incriminating holocrystal evidence with her (valuable to off-world rebels) and is being chased by the secret police.

3. Eridu

Description: This world is ruled by an individual dictator who is selected as the best available exemplar of the heroic idiom. The monarch must be wise, brave and fair; good looks are an added advantage. In return for spreading these qualities about, the monarch gets status, celebrity and stuff. Lots of stuff.

The monarch is the principal shareholder and chief executive of the world corporation, but must submit to the selection process every seven years. Selection is by open competition (The Contest), judged in the wisdom and fairness contest (The Moot), the skill at arms contest, and the war contest (involving a model of interstellar relations). The competitor with the highest total score becomes monarch while their predecessor joins the Council of Advisors.

The career of each monarch is followed very closely, partly because of the state propaganda machine, and partly because an intimate study of the opposition might show weaknesses.

The planet's laws can be a little confusing, as they are simply an accumulation of the decisions of previous monarchs, with commentary and clarifications by the Council.

The monarch cannot be bound by previous decisions, with the single exception that the

Contest cannot be outlawed. This can lead to problems should the monarch become mentally unstable or power-hungry; in theory the ruler could perform hideous acts and acquire vast wealth simply by passing the appropriate 'laws'. Such decisions may be moderated by the Council if necessary. Only once has a monarch become so crazed - they suffered an unusual demise which is never spoken of openly, and a new Contest was held immediately to find a new leader.

Referee: From a visitor's point of view, there are few hazards associated with this world. In fact if a traveller has all the right qualities then he or she will be eligible to enter The Contest; a lot of hopeful adventurers travel here to do just that.

Plot: Some act performed by the PCs' pilot during their visit falls foul of an ancient law which declares anyone doing such an act to be insane. Insane people cannot be allowed to pilot starships thus the PCs' ship is grounded. The only way out of this is to do some heroic act to disprove one's insanity - e.g. take part in The Contest.

4. Good Queen Bess

Description: This hereditary ruler has a very good relationship with her people, despite being tight-fisted, capricious and vengeful. She achieves this by frequently going out among her people, and modestly declining the credit for anything nice that happens. She is, however, the terror of her wealthier subjects, because she imposes herself (and the cost of her upkeep) on anyone who might be rich enough to support an independent power base. This has the gratifying result of making them poorer and also preventing much long term planning (i.e. finance and planning which might lead to a *coup d'etat*).

Referee: Senior visitors and traders are advised to send a small token of their respect (artwork or exotic produce) to the palace, on arrival. Occasionally, the queen has been known to impose upon off-worlders, perhaps to obtain (temporarily) an entire liner for her entourage to make a diplomatic visit to another system. The major traders accept this as a necessary imposition to maintain good trade relations.

It is best not to be rude about the queen. This will lead to fights with locals which the police won't bother to break up.

Plot: The PCs are passed by the queen's carriage in the street - the monarch notices some oddity in the PCs' behaviour or dress (e.g. likely given they are off-worlders) and insists that they accompany her for 1D+3 days to entertain her with

tales of foreign worlds ("insist" means do it or die). If they play their cards right they will be well rewarded, although once she loses interest in them they will be escorted back to the starport.

5. King of Kings

Description: This planet is constitutionally an absolute monarchy whose hereditary King (only males may be crowned monarch) prefers to keep the dirty business of ruling at arms length. The monarchy is supported by a system of *satrapies* whose rulers (*satraps*) can do as they please provided that they keep the King's laws, pay his taxes and acknowledge his supremacy. As a physical token of this subservience, the King maintains (at local expense) a small unit of guards in each Satrapy. These troops are quaintly kitted out in archaic uniforms on local riding beasts and are armed with wheel-lock pistols and scimitars.

The result is akin to balkanisation except that there is always an appeal to the King as court of last resort and all inhabitants will strenuously deny that the planet is disunited. The King also holds the popular annual Tribute Day holiday, which was originally a humiliating festival when the Satraps sent goods to the palace in a show of subservience. Now it is an excuse to parade the achievements and wealth of the satrapies, and is more like a carnival with floats, street parties and revelry. The current King, Cyrus XIII loves it.

Referee: There is no reason to be cautious on this world: the monarchy is popular, the Imperium is obviously an upward extension of the same principle of devolved authority, and the people are happy. The assorted Satrapies tend to be run on benign monarchy lines themselves although there is some friction and the following border incidents can be a little sharp. This might be inconvenient for travellers, but it is a gift to the Imperium's arms manufacturers, as it provides live fire tests in a variety of climatic conditions.

Plot: The lead officer of the Pontin Satrapy has caused the King great embarrassment by openly flirting with members of the monarch's harem. However, official retribution would show weakness on the King's part so he wishes to hire the PCs to do the job for him. The PCs can determine the means of embarrassment (e.g. dragging the officer naked through the streets), provided the officer is not killed. The King must not be implicated in the venture or his popularity would suffer.

B: Non Charismatic Leader

When I say jump, you jump... or else!

"Government by a single leader who does not have the popular support of the people."

1. Number One

Description: The Leader is in charge. It has always been that way, and always will. When this Leader disappears, another pops up and things go on as before. Opposition to order is futile and in any case very painful. The Leader owns everything, gives people enough to eat and drink and everyone gets by. Off-worlders come and off-worlders go, and things are always the same. The Leader is in charge, what else is there?

This grey, conformist society has been controlled by the Leader of its only political party for generations. The method of selection is unknown, but the result is obvious: order. There is dissent, and it is smashed, there is workplace inefficiency, and it is stamped out. There is crime and there are disappearances. The Party has been in charge for so long it doesn't even bother to pretend that there's an outside enemy. There is the Leader, there is order. Nothing else matters.

Referee: Travellers will want to conclude business here quickly, usually trading one sort of basic commodity for another. They will meet very few people and they will leave. Travel outside the startown is heavily frowned upon and any comments against the Leader will result in immediate termination of one's stay on the planet.

Plot: The PCs are hired to escort several anonymous citizens off-world. These people will pay well and expect to be aided while they tour a neighbouring world. These are not spies nor escapees, but party officials wishing to experience life beyond the Leader. Naturally, they will thoroughly disapprove of their visit but at least one will wish to return with samples of the "foul merchandise" (e.g. malt whisky) available here.

2. Hello Again

Description: This world started out as a religious settlement, loosely based on a peaceful, philosophical outlook (similar to Tibetan Buddhism). The key belief that has been retained after many millennia is that the Highest is reincarnated into the body of an innocent. Otherwise, the ruling class has been saturated with entirely secular, unbelieving priests.

When the Highest dies, there is a nine month interregnum, after which the priesthood is led to the birthplace of an appropriately unexceptional infant, who is taken into the Temple. The infant is taught rulership and law, and love of the new Leader is inculcated among the people. As a reward for providing the new Highest, the parents are taken, with any close family, into the Temple complex, where they live in blessed seclusion, free from the cares of the world. This is a polite way of saying that they are strangled and their bodies thrown into a deep pit within the Temple complex.

The priesthood have got the hang of power, and know enough psychology to avoid recruiting anyone who would upset the situation, so the state is run tolerably enough. The Temple is supported by the people's offerings, and the leader always seems concerned and just. As the Highest is publicly associated with all decisions, policies and state actions, it is in no way apparent that the Highest is just a puppet, and the long term consistency of government is taken as proof of the many generations of wisdom handed down through reincarnation. Needless to say, anyone who starts suggesting that the people are living under the heel of a gang of murderous hypocrites ends up in blessed seclusion (see above).

Referee: Travellers will find it fairly easy going within the starport and its surrounds; the priests understand about trade, and deal fairly. People seem content (or at least demonstrate the usual range of human emotions and behaviour), and the ruler seems to be affable, if remote.

Travel outside the normal territories is not restricted, and there is little sign of the true nature of the government. However, travellers who become involved in governmental issues might conclude that all is not what it seems. Naturally it is in their best interests to quiet while on planet.

Plot: The PCs are approached by a poor family in panic, who ask that their child be hidden for a few weeks. They know that the local priests have been eyeing up their little one as a new Highest and hope to save him, and their own lives, by hiding him until the priests have to go look for someone else.

3. El Presidenté

Description: This planet has been ruled by a self-selected (secondary) sociopath for as long as anyone can remember. Secondary sociopaths have a high order of social skills, but no empathy, and tend to cluster. They like each other and despise everyone else. As a result they have established themselves as a ruling élite, under the absolute control of the sociopaths' sociopath, El Presidenté. This relationship remains until one of the élite kills the incumbent tyrant and takes over. There is a purge of the outgoing president's supporters, and a general bloodbath.

This has bad effects on the populace: sociopaths have interesting hobbies, which generally have bloodletting elements, and they like to use political opponents as their material. Sociopaths also acquire the weak-willed as imitators and allies, so state oppression is of unparalleled brutality, but of doubtful efficiency.

Referee: Oddly, travellers are mostly inviolate: outsiders would not necessarily understand El Presidenté's unique genius, and might draw the attention of interfering do-gooders to the planet. Trade is therefore well regulated and encouraged.

The locals will seem to be exuberant and party mad (live, drink and be merry, because the death squad might call at three in the morning). Dissent is quite often expressed in magnificent local art forms: especially music, dance and literature (anything which can be slipped out on a really small holo-crystal, or which could be misinterpreted as meaningless pap).

The locals also understand the need for visitors to be polite to the government, but any sign that they might actually approve of the existing brutality will lead to sullen, uncooperative behaviour and perhaps even violence.

Plot: The next psychopath is advancing on the presidential palace and the Imperial ambassador wants out - now! The PCs may be seeking safety at the embassy or may be hired to help move out the ambassador's valuables to a villa safely outside the main city. In either circumstance, involvement in a running gun battle is likely.

4. Pomp and Circumstance

Description: This society is entirely governed by ritual observance, ornate ceremonial and is wholly hidebound by its traditions and heritage. The president is a hereditary figurehead and the government rules dispassionately. The bureaucracy makes sure that the citizens do as they should and that the hovertrams run on time.

Every single native family has a hereditary position which cannot be relinquished. All occupations have a dress code which cannot be altered. Every working day begins with the boss saying good morning to all the employees and thanking them for being there. They all thank their employer for their jobs. Every day the army officers ask their troops three times "Are you ready for war?", and the soldiers yell back "Ready! Ready! Ready!" The state is entirely impervious to change. At the start of the Long Night this seemed like a good idea, but it is inappropriate for the dynamic Imperial period. The only advantage of this ossified society is that it helps with tourism, but only for adventurous tourists. The ceremonies must take place just so, and although they include contingency plans for bad weather or illness, they do not in any way accommodate casual observers.

Referee: There are categories of trade goods ("Novelties" to local lawyers) which are simply not allowed on planet. To know which these are in advance, the PC must succeed at a Difficult *Trader* task. A Formidable Administration task must be rolled for a visiting merchant to mesh well enough with local activities to assure prompt delivery of goods: add one extra day for each point the roll was missed by.

Plot: Whether as visitors, or providing passage to natives, the PCs will encounter innumerable irritations. For example, coffee can only be served mid morning, after lunch and dinner; tea is limited to breakfast, mid afternoon and after supper (where cocoa can be substituted); specific alcoholic drinks are allowed at points during the day, with specific meals, etc.

5. Rota System

Description: The power bases - finance, mercantile, religious, military, communications media and manufacturing - take turns at running this world. Each puts up a dictator who has supreme executive power for a period of two years. This supremo is little more than a puppet, making policy adjustments in favour of their backers, in the hope that a number of these rulings will survive until the next presidency.

The end result is a selection of stop-go policies in virtually every area of public life, with a few behind the scenes compromises assuring some kind of basic economic activity. The major difficulty is that there is very little state provision of services, and most healthcare, education and transport needs are catered for by the private sector. The public domain most adversely affected by the rota system is the army, which tends to experience

eight years of retrenchment for every two of stable investment. This has knock-on effects in manufacturing, and except for small arms, all this state's materiel is imported. The police suffer too, as whichever power base is in office expects to be exempted from obeying inconvenient laws during its stint.

The power bases also expect exemplary service from the public sector (i.e. better treatment than the general citizenry). There are occasional rumblings of revolt, but the dictators are used to dealing with this.

Referee: Visitors to this world encounter run down, shabby municipal buildings, apathetic civil servants and an ever-changing panorama of public relations campaigns instituted by whoever is dictator at the moment. All public sector activities are inadequately trained, poorly equipped and unenthusiastic. They are also paralleled by bright, shiny private sector outfits who monopolise the profit making aspects of social provision. Private fire-fighters here are difficult to distinguish from protection racketeers.

Traders will find that conditions are generally favourable, especially during the Army's turn when the demand for arms goes through the roof. It is better to avoid this planet during the mercantile dictatorship when anti-competitive tariffs are imposed (10 credits per kilolitre in or out).

Plot: The media are currently in control and extremes of live entertainment are in vogue. Given their background the PCs are offered a weekly fee to have a holorecorder embedded in their skull to record their adventures for global broadcasts.

6. Nanny State Dissidents

Description: Travellers, malcontents and drug-users refer to the Exemplar of Morality as "Nanny". Especially when (as at the moment) Nanny is a man. The very first Nanny (also a man, Daniel Aston), had noticed at the same time as his devoted followers had given him control of the starport, the communications net and the power grid that the problem with laws was that someone would get around them by insisting that the court take notice of what the precise wording of the law said, rather than its intention. Nanny therefore decided to base all future social regulations on moral imperatives. This was unfortunate given that Nanny's main interests were decency, cleanliness, seemliness and corrective measures such as gruelling punishment drills, flogging and public executions. The central role of these concepts was

discussed at great length in *My Moral Struggle*, this world's equivalent of a digest of law.

Poor Mr Aston was badly let down by his own children, seven of whom fled the planet and four others he had to flog, brand and eventually hang for "ingratitude, slander and unrepentant lewdness". While this meant that there would not be an Aston dynasty, it did give him the idea of the Exemplar system. The most moral people in the realm would be observed, tested, graded, be inducted into the judiciary and be given cases to try and any eventual tie would be resolved by psychometric testing. The winner was the Exemplar in Waiting, to succeed on the death of the incumbent.

In the history of this world, rather a lot of elderly Exemplars have been found wanting and inherently uncorrectable. Touchingly, they always muster enough decency to take their own lives and spare the state the embarrassment of an appearance on the scaffold.

Referee: Travellers will find this world very hard going. Instead of a business deal, a trader is subjected to a discourse on what the local broker expects from the deal and the cargo and will ask painstaking questions until the visiting party has satisfied any reservations or queries. As lying and exaggeration are immoral, any false or colourful description of the cargoes will lead to an appointment at the whipping post.

Anything which promotes lewdness in others is also suppressed. Needless to say Aston was a vegetarian, teetotal non-smoker.

Private visitors will find the natives to be p-faced, repressed and easy to shock. They are also very conservative dressers, and are morally outraged by anyone who isn't. As a propensity for being shocked, combined with a willingness to act upon it, are prerequisites for a career on the bench or in government, it is wise not to upset anyone. This is especially true for foreigners, as the Book says they are "naturally wicked and wanton". They also refused to extradite Aston's seven children.

Plot: Three descendents of Aston's children have decided that they should return to the world to try to correct the mistakes of their predecessor. Depending upon the skill set of the PCs, they will be hired as aides, diplomats or bodyguards. The trip will be eventful and quite hopeless, with the main problem being how to avoid being imprisoned for wearing the wrong clothing during the hours of darkness, or somesuch.

C: Charismatic Oligarchy

Popularity may breed contempt

"Government by a select group, organisation or class enjoying the overwhelming confidence of the citizenry."

1. Party, Party

Description: This planet is ruled by a single party which is obsessed with public relations - on the grounds that if you can fool enough of the people enough of the time...

The Party is acutely aware of the fact that there are large parts of the economy that they don't control - the financial and manufacturing sectors - and hence limits its activities to promoting happiness in its people. This involves parades, festivals of culture, indirect taxation and stern discouragement of dissent and apathy. There are regular "Joy Days" and "Pride Marches", when the citizens are obliged to join in spontaneous displays of, well, joy and pride. At such times a liberal quantity of recreational chemicals and party food is provided by the government for its citizenry. There are plaques celebrating workers and citizens of the month, and diligent citizens are awarded the Hero of Labour medal.

Referee: Travellers may well be taken in by the regular "Joy Days" and "Pride Marches". What they might not appreciate is that the state also discourages private gatherings and occasionally seals off and systematically searches suspect housing estates. As can be imagined, there are disappearances, bits and pieces of non-elective brain surgery and organisations such as the Youth League for Truth and Beauty.

When trading, travellers are advised to deal with the locals in the state sponsored "Friendship Houses" where very good prices can be obtained (the commercial and industrial backers of the regime insist) and where visitors can be sure of meeting only the most contented citizens.

Plot: The PCs are hired by a concerned young woman who wants them to find her father - a cynical scientist, she knows he was going to join an Anti-Pride March several days ago. There were no incidents reported on the news but the PCs can determine from bystanders that there was a small scuffle and the protesters were removed to be 'educated'. Her father may be saved prior to this or may be found to have developed a sudden heartfelt love for the ruling party.

2. Si, Patron

Description: Like many worlds, there are 'haves' and 'have-nots'. However, here 'have-nots' set themselves at the feet of a 'have' - their *patron*. Patron-client relationships are the most common kind of non-familial bond in this society. The patrons give their clients jobs to do, and generally expect clients to protect their interests, in return for which the patron will patronise the clients' businesses, look after their health and security and burn down their houses if they defect to anyone else. That sanction aside, patron-client relationships are civilised enough. At an executive level, the patrons run the society between them - a sufficiently highly ranked patron can gain ministerial office by the acclamation of their peers. The patron can then appoint appropriate clients to offices within the ministry. As failure to perform, gross embezzlement or proven bribery results in a knife in the ribs, most patrons attempt to do their jobs well.

Becoming a patron is easy enough: you say "I will accept clients" in public and register yourself on the tax roll. Paying tax enables you to vote and to hold governmental office. The tax payable is quite onerous, being the previous year's deficit divided between all the patrons, and it needs to be recouped from the patrons' respective client bases. This means that patrons have to acquire clients. Ideally, prospective clients step out of the woodwork of their own accord; realistically, people need a special kind of persuading. Note that anyone, native or otherwise, can become a client or patron.

Referee: If, as for most visitors, you aren't a client, then you can enjoy the state's facilities for free; a situation which makes all the patrons unhappy. It doesn't last for long. Anyone who stays on the planet for more than two weeks or becomes a regular visitor will have to become some patron's client (or become a patron themselves).

Trade relationships will be done through any broker, but any repeat business should find its way to the same broker, or there will be great aggravation. Apart from that proviso, visiting this world is fairly safe.

Plot: When the PCs encounter Sylvia Fennig she will plead with them to help her - through an administrative error she was kept here beyond the 2 week period and forced to become a client. Legally she cannot leave unless (for example) a PC buys out her patron - she would be willing to work passage or whatever is required to pay them back.

3. The Rule of the Three

Description: This state has three executive offices, covering External Affairs, Internal Affairs and Finance. These positions are filled by the most hawkish and energetic candidates available, and the offices are held until death or voluntary retirement. If two of the officers feel that the third is bringing the government into disrepute, they can have that individual removed, which is seen as a valuable safeguard.

Each of the three is obsessed with public relations: being unpopular attracts envy and envy attracts assassination attempts, and all of them are keen to be recognised as the big movers within their spheres of influence. Selection for a vacant office is either performed by the two remaining rulers, or is by the outgoing incumbent's nomination.

Apart from friction with the treasury, and the fact that all three offices maintain their own intelligence and security forces, the spheres of influence do not overlap very much and there is little rivalry between them. Public support for this regime is based on the winning personalities of its leaders, its simplicity, and the multiplicity of intelligence and secret police services.

Referee: Visitors will find this world unremarkable; in fact it is remarkably orderly and peaceful when compared to most worlds.

Plot: The Internal Affairs (IA) secret service is trying to acquire a global surveillance capability which will allow it to monitor and then (through blackmail, etc.) manipulate the other two leaderships to ensure their successors all favour the IA philosophy. The PCs will be approached to smuggle part of this surveillance capability (high tech spying equipment) onto the world.

4. The Guild Masters

Description: This society is organised on craft guild lines: each job has an appropriate guild, and all the guilds have an internal ranking system. The higher ranks get to form governing bodies at the different levels: local, state, continental and planetary. The planetary government is composed of the guild masters, who are there until death or

incapacity takes them. Generally speaking, most guild members approve of their particular master's office and actions, but are less likely to extend this courtesy to leaders of the other guilds. However, being convinced of the merits of workplace organisation, they approve thoroughly of their state's political system.

Referee: Visitors will find that work place organisation has led to overpricing, and the friction between the different guilds results in delays in delivery or performance of services. Prices are 1D % to the PCs' disadvantage, and all deliveries are ½D - 1 days late. The only thing which the PCs can do legally on this world is to buy and sell through members of the Merchants' Guild and consume goods and services. To work on this planet requires guild membership which is pretty much hereditary.

Plot: The PCs encounter a fellow trader who shortly after is beaten to death by a gang. It turns out he had been selling outside the guild. Shortly after, the Merchant Guild head is murdered using off-world weaponry. The locals turn against the PCs and other off-worlders. This is all a plot by isolationists within various Guilds. The Imperium will hire the PCs to stay (or return to the world if they have fled) to find out who's behind it all.

5. The Best of the Best

Description: On this world competition rules. Society is fairly free and open, but public life and economic activity are oriented towards the recognition and reward of outstanding achievement, and the approving media do everything in their power to build public acceptance of the system. It works by consistently rewarding success: even those children with the highest test marks in the week's schoolwork are published. This continues into adult life, whether one works in business, government, industry, sport or entertainment. Each entry includes a lot of detail of the achiever - effectively a *curriculum vitae* of their life. People scramble to have their ideas endorsed and to be associated with celebrities or high profile events and products.

As the society has developed a fairly sophisticated ranking system for recognising achievement, those with the highest rank in any one sphere get jobs at the top of that endeavour. Hence the highest scoring financier is Treasurer for the next term. Terms are not fixed, but come to an end when an incumbent really screws up.

Referee: Travellers may feel exhausted by the spunky, go-getter attitude of the locals. In any trade, brokerage, gambling or other 'competitive'

activity, they will find that not only do their competitors generally get a bonus of ½D on any task roll, but even native colleagues will compete to out-do the PCs.

The failure of this society is that it really isn't that good at long term planning, and has a pronounced stop-go policy at the planetary level. This means that it tends to follow the natural trade cycle, and doesn't really stand out in the interstellar relations.

Plot: Radicals are fighting over whether key decisions (political, financial, etc.) can be left to neural learning computers which, although machines, can beat most natives in the specialised tests of individual ability. As a result of resistance to this concept, the PCs are hired by a computer importer to stop his imports being vandalised.

6. Cream Rises

Description: Much to the glee of the merchant and criminal classes who disport themselves at the base of this society's pyramid, their rulers are obsessed with the ideals of justice, austerity and probity. In fact psychometric tests for these virtues ensure that only individuals with these qualities in abundance make it into the ranks of The Guardians of Public Service. The government actually only concerns itself with public works: the transport infrastructure (and low cost public transport services), defence (including criminal law), health and education. Everything else is provided by free competition on the open market. The result of this is that the world has excellent hospitals, police and judiciary, roads and schools, a monorail system and a small, poorly equipped but superbly trained and well motivated army, system squadron and air force.

As a belief in ethical virtues has to reinforce itself constantly, and as the leaders of this planet are consciously selected for this trait, the rulers tend to view those who don't possess their vision with pity. Of course when they break one of the life-affirming, ethical laws, the Guardians get very peeved indeed and attempt a reconciliation. Failing this the full weight of the law falls on the criminal. However apart from fines, public work and shaming in the media, the main sanction is denial of the privileges of the high office which the malefactors wouldn't want anyway. Incarceration and exile are penalties reserved for the post persistent recidivists.

Referee: The local merchants are rather hawkish, but otherwise trade is normal. This society does have the advantage that medical treatment is free. Settlers are welcome, provided

they keep out of trouble, pay their taxes and don't annoy the local merchant/criminals (who take personal exception to being messed about). Retribution works on the principle that what the Guardians don't see, they can't stop or meddle with.

Plot: The PCs are asked to sponsor (i.e. provide free passage for) a poor, frail invalid to this world; unable to pay for treatment on his own world, the man can be given a few more years of life here. In return the PCs will get great publicity on his own world which should lead to more job offers.

7. Safety First

Description: This planet's timid population places all its trust in the Protector class, who do everything. In addition to a huge number of obsessive safety regulations (which cover anything: shoe laces are unsafe because you might trip or get caught in machinery, etc.) the people are convinced that it would be very bad for them to place themselves in danger. To get around this, everyone carries a little cellular transponder which broadcasts an "SOS" message whenever it is set off. The Protectors respond as quickly as they can.

The Protectors fill the roles of army, paramedics, fire brigade, police and government. A cynic might observe that the Protectors have taken over and imprinted abject submission on the populace, but this is not quite true. Anyone can become a Protector (psionic abilities are an advantage). Protectors are taught a major discipline (war, law or helping people), political philosophy and interstellar affairs. They are trained to take charge. They are supported by the press, sympathetic portrayal in soap operas and a monopoly on violence. Most of the time they don't abuse their position, but if they did, you'd never find out. A popular urban myth is of the Protectors' club where every vice is available.

Referee: Visitors who keep their noses clean and don't litter will be fine here. Of course the customs procedures are exacting (add ½D hours to clearance times). Visitors will see Protectors strutting around in their silver uniforms, but won't have anything to do with them unless they are involved in a disaster or break the law. There is no nonsense about the use of "minimum force"; the Protectors will not even attempt to take prisoners if they pose any kind of threat.

Plot: The PCs will witness a bank robbery by a rebellious local; the victims will flap about like landed fish but the robber (and the PCs will

have done anything other than grovel on the floor) will be arrested by the most heavily armed, uncompromising troops the PCs have ever seen.

8. From Each According to Ability, To Each According to Work Done

Description: This state began as a communist regime but failed to wither away, instead retaining all the characteristics of a one-party dictatorship, especially that of keeping its leadership in luxury at the expense of the citizenry.

Membership of the Party is the only route to good living, and membership is a privilege which has to be earned. Earned by showing a willingness to be indoctrinated into believing that everything the Party says is the truth, and to devote every free hour to Party work (snitching on neighbours, work mates and family members).

The final prize for Party work is induction into and promotion through the ranks of the Central Agency, which is where the real money is earned. Party members are quite convinced that the work they do entitles them to this level of reward (houses in the country, big cars, penthouse flats, champagne) and look forward to the day when the Revolution is so advanced the proles can have it too.

Referee: The Party will insulate Travellers from the worst inequalities; it is recognised that they wouldn't understand and could be upset. However, the locals will make strenuous attempts to contact outsiders, partly to beg trinkets, partly to engage in black market dealings, partly to get "the real story out" and occasionally to enmesh visitors in the overcomplicated schemes of the secret police. Trade proceeds normally except that merchants can't use any Broker +DM unless they first succeed in an average Streetwise or Bribery task.

Plot: Certain radical proles have decided they can't wait for the Revolution. A shipment of rich wines and foodstuffs carried on the PCs' ship will be poisoned while in customs. The PCs will be held responsible for the resulting massacre of Party members unless they can prove their innocence.

9. Show Trials

Description: This world is dominated by a Communist government which has been in power since the planet was settled by idealists at some time during the Diaspora. Unlike many similar worlds which just mutated into corrupt, inept

oligarchies, the Party on this world was made of sterner stuff.

Here the Revolution is continuous. The party and its acolytes (especially the talented youngsters who are brigaded together to be the cadres of the future) are always on their guard for signs of counter-revolutionary activities. The manifestations of this are a rise in materialism, apostasy, and the penetration of society by the agents of Reaction. The Party is very skilled in spotting these, of course, and they tend to appear every time there is a shift of personnel at the top.

The public face of this society is bland, impenetrable and efficient. However that is not the case for the locals: they face problems in manufacture (central planning is required for ideological reasons, but it is hard to implement) and in service provision. The Party is remote from the people: membership is by invitation, although brown nosed commoners can join the "Friends of the Revolution", which eats into your free time, and forces you to go out sweeping the streets before work starts. There is a constant demand for consumer goods, information on the outside world, and of course for low cost off world travel.

Referee: This doesn't affect visitors much, provided they don't stray from the starport or visit anywhere not on the official tour routes. More enterprising traders will encounter problems (Administration, Streetwise and Bribery tasks are one level more difficult) and if they get caught, they will end up on trial before the world's media, in prison and without the ship they came on.

Even hanging around in the starport is potentially fraught with danger: people are always trying to sneak information about the real situation to outsiders; sometimes they are sincere, sometimes it is state entrapment.

The real situation is shocking: show trials, executions, disappearances, poverty and ill health.

Trade with this planet is easy - the planned economy guarantees that traders will never lose money, but there is less latitude for a killing (roll $\frac{1}{2}D + 6$ on the goods value table; there are no Broker DMs). Visiting the natives can secure higher prices (1D+6, Broker skill can be used if successful at a Difficult Administration task, followed by either Streetwise or Bribery). Catastrophic failure could lead to incarceration and confiscation of assets.

Plot: The PCs are hired by an ex-scout who is concerned that attempts to amber rate this world seem to have failed, despite good cause. He wishes them to investigate the on-world scout group. Previously the Party has threatened court action or trade sanctions or mounted a charm

offensive but indeed there are two occasions on which key scouts have either been bribed or blackmailed.

10. Kitchen Cabinet

Description: This planet is ever so popular with tourists, travel shows and those journalists who churn out "and finally" items. It has an adorable aristocracy who participate in pretty rituals, silly light entertainment vehicles, high profile scandals and heart warming charitable crusades. These are never far from the headlines, but they are regarded by most as harmless fun.

It is occasionally wondered how such a collection of intellectual featherweights could run a society which is stable, happy and tolerably prosperous. The answer is that they don't. Due to this state's strict primogeniture and belief that all positions of responsibility should be filled by the scions of noble houses, all army officers, judges, bank presidents and high clergy are members of aristocratic families. All of these people have personal servants, to whom these nobles turn for advice. Consequently all matters of policy and diplomacy are decided by a conclave of butlers, who give highest priority to the preservation of their society's way of life followed by material advantage. The same is true of judicial sentencing, moral stances and general education.

When the inevitability of the Ramshackle Empire's collapse became apparent to the butlers, valets, ladies maids and nannies of this planet, they decided that it was in their duty to preserve their civilisation. They undertook an educating mission for themselves, inclining more towards P.G. Wodehouse than Machiavelli. Without ever dropping the façade that they were devoted servants, they so ingratiated themselves with their

employers that they ended up giving the advice on which all decisions were made.

They are resolved on this point: it is necessary to induce absolute dependence in their employers, so that the nobles instinctively look to their servants for any kind of help. The rule from below stairs is not apparent to casual observers: the Imperial Diplomatic Corps knows all about it but is quite happy to observe the appropriate formalities: ask a question one day, get an answer the next. This means that the aristocrats can agonise about it overnight and their body servants can put them out of their misery when they wake them with morning tea. The local nobility is so dependent on their servants that they won't travel without at least one of them.

Referee: None of this really affects non-noble visitors. The servants have arranged it so that none of the local ceremonial gets in the way of business, and that any rebellious feelings are diffused by a comprehensive and efficient welfare state. Actually, most locals have got into their roles and are happy to play the picaresque scamp. Noble visitors have to put up with house parties, parlour games (sardines, hide and seek or murder in the dark preferred) and attending race meetings. They will also find that their personal assistants turn bossy and manipulative. If they don't bring a servant, one will be provided.

Plot: The PCs are accompanying a group of nobles (as aides or perhaps as nobles themselves). One of the nobles is found knifed after a game of "murder in the dark". All the evidence points to it being a servant (whom the noble had offended earlier). In reality one of the other nobles held a long term grudge and planned the murder. The servants cannot be seen to solve the murder, nor to ask the PCs directly to solve it, but will act through their puppet 'masters'.

D: Religious Dictatorship

And now we say the Prayer of Taxation...

"Government by a religious organisation without regard to the needs of the citizenry."

1. Nice World

Description: Here a humanistic philosophy has taken hold and is choking the planet to death. Everything is nice, no one is ripped off, robbed, offended, hurt, lonely, and most important of all *left untreated*. This world checks everything: satisfaction surveys abound, all questions must be answered, and any problems are sorted out through face to face conciliation, group therapy and similar traumas. If you don't want to be better, you are drugged abducted and locked up until you do. And they can check.

Referee: Travellers here will find a multiplicity of tasteful, safe, high quality goods and services, high class entertainment and curious sporting events (like synchronised swimming). After their first encounter with the authorities they will learn not to complain about anything. Prices are normal, but nothing unsavoury is available.

Plot: The PCs will find it difficult to leave - not staying to breathe in the local atmosphere is seen as discontentment (and crying out for treatment), so any PCs expressing a desire to leave will be 'encouraged' to stay. If they are careful what they say and talk politely for at least a day or two they can 'escape'!

2. Home of Heroes

Description: This planet's population believes that it has the racial destiny of conquering the entire universe and that whenever its heroic warriors get killed, they are reincarnated into the next generation of the master race. The master race has not yet fulfilled its destiny because it is always being betrayed from within and conspired against from without.

Although some of the War Priests disagree, it is recognised by the planet's more moderate politicians that in order to take over the universe, they have to build up a big space navy and arm it with really good weapons. This planet is, therefore very keen indeed to trade with its neighbours and has a voracious appetite for anything that might give an edge in combat. It has a large intelligence unit dedicated purely to obtaining Ancient artefacts.

Dissent is not encouraged, but dissent in favour of a more hard line with foreigners is usually safeguarded by the War Priests. The majority of the diplomatic service are nothing more than spies, reconnoitring for the oncoming take over of the universe.

Referee: Visitors will be tolerated, trade will be fair, and will take place extremely quickly. The natives will be torn between the desire to show their wonderful civilisation to its future subjects, and the instinct to give them a kicking as a foretaste of the great Crusade. Complaining to the police won't help much.

Plot: A patron hires the PCs to follow a party of 'heroes' from this world (the patron believes they know the location of a minor Ancients site). The patron wishes the PCs to locate the Ancient site for him and (if possible) retrieve any artefacts not removed by the team of 'heroes'.

3. Unclean, Unclean

Description: The settlers of this new Eden were strictly isolationist and introverted, and tried not to have anything to do with the galaxy at large, until they discovered that they needed a lot of medical aid. The world's environment, flora and fauna harboured many illnesses which were only evidenced within the colony after several generations.

The true hard core went and hid themselves in the outback, while the more moderate factions began to encourage limited outside contact. Due to a desire to populate known space with the faithful, the hard core element are committed to generating big families, while as a result of pollution by more liberal influences, the moderates tend towards fewer, better educated children. This has had the result that there is a small starport with a tolerant but deeply spiritual community round it, amid a sea of fanatics.

The peace is kept by asking any visitors to respect local traditions and not to tease the country cousins, in return for which the savages won't sweep down and return the starport to "God's way". The liberals try to reinforce this by keeping themselves better equipped and more united than the hard liners but, being liberal, their hearts aren't really in it. What keeps the fanatics

manageable is their tendency to kill each other over tiny points of doctrine.

Referee: Prices are very competitive here, and weapons are a much appreciated trade item. The most striking thing from a visitor's point of view is the number of emaciated mad men with loud hailers who just stand on street corners bellowing drivel until they collapse from dehydration.

Plot: The PCs find themselves on the outskirts of the city when a group of the outback brethren come looking for trouble.

4. Mix n' Match

Description: This planet is ruled by the almost impossibly Labyrinthine precepts of an old, polytheistic, revealed religion. The great prophet (or new-age loon) Francis was once hit by the fundamental revelation that if everyone just followed the mythology of an appropriate deity, translated into a contemporary idiom, of course, then everything would be alright for ever. Francis might very well have understood the foregoing concept, but his successors have been arguing about it ever since.

This has not stopped the population from developing an intricate caste system in which each caste follows Francis' version of the myth cycle of an appropriate deity (updated to reflect real world conditions). The pantheon has been looted from the traditions of just about every culture which Francis had ever heard of so there are gods of fortune (for gamblers, venture capitalists and merchants); soldiers worship gods of war; the police follow gods of judgement and retribution; etc.

Problems arise because there are many overlapping deities (who are also regarded as spirit guides, guardian angels and totem figures) who have different mythologies. Consequently the instructions their followers take are inconsistent, and are in any case subject to reinterpretation in the light of contemporary reality. Add the caste system's strict demarcation and hereditary nature and you have a monstrously confused society where you need three people to do each job. However, as most of the divine traditions involved have fertility and "secret mystery" elements, there is much scope for time-wasting, mind-warping fun.

Referee: Visitors will be struck by the vast selection of temples, shrines, and churches, priests, acolytes, pilgrims and votaries and hordes of sellers of coloured beads, holy relics and "special" incense. As caste demarcation is so exact, there is only a small chance of a character being pestered by missionaries, however they will

be regularly quizzed by hopefuls to determine their background and employment: "A military man, eh? Ah well, you have come to the right place for I am Phelim of the ground trooper sect. Oh, you're a tank man. No, sorry, you'll be wanting Tyrannir, god of death by shelling."

The missionaries who concentrate on gangs of scruffy interstellar vagrants are probably not the sort the PCs would want to meet anyway. However, this doesn't apply to traders: Tlazoteotl, goddess of seduction and vice, is always happy to accept new worshippers. Obviously trade will take longer than usual, but given the effect of special incense on the native traders, visitors can opt to take the best two out of three dice on the actual value table.

Plot: A statue of a figure alleged to be Francis himself has been discovered on a neighbouring world. The PCs are hired to escort representatives of just ten of the key religions to examine the statue. These will want to bring back the statue but the local world regards it as an archaeological relic and thus sacrosanct. The PCs will be paid extra to help steal the statue.

5. Utopia

Description: When Thomas More wrote that only God could create the perfect state, he probably didn't have Edwin Scrope in mind. The astoundingly rich Mr Scrope, in his self realised role as the Perfect Being, decided to reinterpret The Great Book (of an ancient religion) in the light of his own perfection. He consequently erased all sexist, homophobic and similarly unpalatable references, and inserted the Book of Wondrous Machines and the Second Book of Leaving, in which he explained his pivotal role in the industrial revolution and the space programme. He re-edited the equivalent of Revelations to better account for human history and added the Book of Friends and Creatures in which he extended the privilege of having a soul to the "blessed ally species" of cats, dogs and horses, and explained what his worshippers could do to any other animal they came across. The Book of Herbs and Spices contained his work in the field of recreational pharmacology. While he was doing this he was also recruiting very suggestible people to lead to a promised land. They boarded a tatty old ship and set off corewards.

Old Scrope is long dead. This charismatic psychotic's embalmed, gilded corpse abides in a rather vulgar mausoleum. His work lives on and his people have prospered following his daft religion to the letter: it is lucky that the Book of

Wondrous Machines set the record straight on the value of π , not to mention that whole planets/sun orbit thing.

The legal system is entirely transparent: it's in a series of chapters of the book (analogous to Exodus, Deuteronomy and Leviticus) and is applied with perfect impartiality.

Referee: Travellers might well be bemused by the three Days of Rest, the strict diet (no meat originating from creatures of four or less legs) and the strange architecture, but this place should provide few unpleasant shocks.

The natives are hospitable in a pitying kind of way, but have many odd habits derived from the Great Book. There is their curiosity about those with earlobes (natives have their earlobes removed a few months after birth, for they provide a hiding place for the devil...). For some reason they also have a tendency to grab each other by the thigh - in a friendly manner, of course.

Plot: The PCs are hired by a group of fanatics who are in search of the Great Missing Chapter of Scrope's book (the bit that defines which end of a banana one should peel from and other great mysteries).

6. Heaven's Mandate

Description: Set up according to the New Revelations of the sage Kung Fu Tzu, as told to his prophet Julie Wong, this world is a nice, orderly, respectable, top down social pyramid. At the top is the Big Dragon (BD for short), ruling with the mandate of Heaven and sporting a rather far-out hat. At the bottom are the Dragon's dung - shifty reprobates such as beggars, merchants, financiers and other swindling, grasping parasites.

Between these two levels are the functionaries and state officers, then the defenders (the military/police caste) and the workers, who despite relative poverty have quite high status. Individual subjects take whatever jobs they fancy and for which they are suitable, but there is effectively a negative relationship between making money and achieving social advancement. Service to the state is admired, not money.

Government is simplicity itself. BD's directives are the last word in law and politics, interpreted if need be by the state Officers, and enforced by the Defenders. It is the duty of all other inhabitants to obey the BD's words, because the BD has Heaven's mandate. BD's rules are consequently the will of heaven, and that's that. Unless, of course BD loses Heaven's mandate to a worthier ruler. The test for this is easy too: it is proof positive that the incumbent Big Dragon has lost the

mandate of Heaven when said incumbent is overthrown in a coup d'etat or loses a civil war. In the case of natural death, the state officers provisionally nominate a suitable successor and wait for any tests of validity to resolve themselves.

Referee: Travellers will find that no matter how tolerant they try to be, the locals will make assumptions about them, based on their apparent social role. Thus ship's crew, nobility and working people will be treated with respect, while the merchants, generally the top dogs at the starport, have the worst facilities and are subject to intrusive customs procedures (body searches, et al). Cross-generation relationships are generally characterised by respect for the elder and indulgence of the younger, while inside the same generation they are far more liberally minded.

Currently there are only three laws and prescribed punishments: for killing, death; for theft, similar loss and adequate recompense; for injury, equivalent suffering and adequate recompense. What these mean is up to the presiding magistrate who sits alone and is judge, prosecutor and sole investigator. This society does not believe in prisons, and will frequently impose indentured labour instead.

Plot: The PCs are hired to help and guard an entrepreneur who is offering a 'wealth removal' service to help those who wish to achieve social advancement. Naturally, a few cynics have realised this isn't quite true to the spirit of this society and would like to teach the entrepreneur the error of his ways - should things heat up he will ask the PCs to get him and his valuables off-world quickly.

7. Voices

Description: This world is home to a charismatic, evangelistic faith which preaches that the Supreme Being talks to the faithful, and that the really blessed can hear the words clearly. Thus social selection is skewed towards the generation and veneration of people who hear strange voices or noises, whether due to vivid imagination or a mental affliction.

In the statistically very rare cases when the subject is dangerous (mentally unstable), they are regarded as having fallen under the spell of the Enemy. This isn't a reflection on the unfortunate subject, who needs looking after in a secure environment. Such subjects are cared for at the state's expense, not least because the pronouncements of the evil one are high grade spiritual intelligence. With enough faith, such people will be cured.

The "safe" voice-hearers are welcomed and supported, and their voices (which are, of course, generated by their own subconscious) are taken to be Divine advice.

The rationalisation of the system is this: order is reflected in the regular procession of the sun across the sky, the tendency of life to spread and of good people to prosper; chaos manifests itself when things break, when good things happen to bad people (and vice versa) and unpleasant random events.

The locals reason (as did the Greeks) that the whole immensity of the Divine is a bit much to take in and can drive you mad; this explains the mental instability of many of the better voice-hearers.

Referee: Travellers will find that they have to keep an open mind here: bullying the weak and pitiable isn't on, neither is being rude about the local religion. If the visitors do anything which the locals regard as suspect, such as sharp business practice, the advice of one of the blessed will be sought. As noted above, the blessed are integrated as fully as possible into society, so they will have been educated to a fair standard, and the Divine word could very well be intelligent advice. Quite obviously, law breakers are agents of chaos, so there's the asylum. The truly recalcitrant are 'put out of their misery'.

Plot: The PCs encounter several strange situations where 'blessed ones' suddenly begin giving away money or crying out for cuddling or sweet foods. The more perceptive PCs will note the same young child asleep in both locations - he is a strong natural psionic and his uncontrolled dreams are being received as words of holy wisdom by those around him!

8. Titter Ye Not!

Description: The original settlers of this planet had intended it to reflect the values of a leading occultist who believed himself to be a Great Beast. Fortunately, their descendants proved to have more robust mental health and all they retained of their founders' faith were the two dicta: "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law", and the contrary "love is the law, love under will". All on their own the inheritors reinvented simple utilitarianism and decided that, in combination, what the Great Beast must have meant was "Do what you want provided that you do not limit other people's freedom to do the same, and be nice to people. Sleep with them if you like."

The end result is a fanatically tolerant and easy going society, full of laid back, friendly, sensual people. They have very few inhibitions and taboos,

and raise their children in large, informally related family/ friend groups. They do appreciate real world needs and have a fully developed social structure protected by an indifferent military establishment.

Other native idiosyncrasies of note are their fondness for Gothic fashions and architecture and their puckish sentencing policy: the obverse of not limiting the freedom of others is that those who break the law are subjected to imaginative burdens and penalties. The locals have lost their original ponderous dignity and now talk with innuendo-laden flirtatiousness, punctuated with fits of giggles.

Referee: Some visitors enjoy the freedoms of this world, but the penalties for misdemeanours can be terrible. The market for luxury items gives a 2D % bonus to their selling price.

Plot: The PCs find themselves being held up by a gunman who insists upon robbing them without violence. If they cause violence back they will be the ones arrested...

9. Old-time Religion

Description: The people of this world follow the creed of their octopoid god scrupulously, but don't let it get in the way of business. They are fond of the sayings: "Ye shall have everything in abundance" and "The gods help those who help themselves". Their philosophy extends to "an eye for an eye", right down to the "root and branch unto the fifth generation". Revenge is a dish served with great relish, to just about anyone even vaguely involved in the original misdemeanour.

Strangely, the creed prohibits murder and advocates repentance and forgiveness. However, this has been refined over the years, following the principles that to err is human, and it is difficult to promise to do better (spiritually speaking) in a highly competitive environment. Thus confession, true repentance and forgiveness of sins are once-only deathbed events. This has the side effect that the locals are obsessed with technologies which prolong life and with procedures allowing the time of death to be determined with precision. In other words, when the locals are sufficiently decrepit that their doctors feel that death is imminent, a priest is called in, does the confession and forgiveness bit and a doctor applies a painless lethal procedure.

Society is composed of happy, striving capitalists with a scattering of priests. Priests come in two flavours: the Fellowship of Holy Poverty, and the much more numerous Apostles of Repentance. The Apostles are in charge, and dislike the Fellowship intensely, and would wipe

them out, but for their inescapable spiritual provenance, and the fact that they are a cheap manageable opposition. The Apostles take a much sterner line with independent holy people, self proclaimed prophets, and similar unbelievers, blasphemers and heretics.

The religion has a charismatic character, with lots of singing, dancing and speaking in tongues. Most of the locals truly believe that they have a personal relationship with the deity and interpret life events in that light.

Referee: Visitors may be inconvenienced by the regular days when all commercial activity is forbidden and everyone is 'encouraged' to go to church. Travellers should avoid causing offence; breaking the law can result in ferocious penalties. Visitors should not contradict the belief that everyday events can be attributed to the tentacles of the Almighty.

Psonicists are regarded as witches and are sentenced to death, along with their close relatives (to contain the spread of the 'affliction').

Plot: A member of the Fellowship begins following a PC around; if challenged he will refuse to declare his purpose until forced, when he will reveal that he has a method of calculating a person's time of death from their foot movements.

10. Mother Earth

Description: The inhabitants of this world think it's alive. Not as a metaphor, but as a matter of fact. They are therefore both grateful to the planet for allowing them to live on it and zealous about guarding it from harm. As a source of pollution and as a persistent threat to the ecology, they take steps to circumscribe their own actions for the benefit of their world. In order to imbed this philosophy in the social fabric, they have made a religion of it.

The precepts of this faith are to be found in *The Revelations to Maude* and are enforced by her priesthood. *Revelations* is an overcomplicated book in which the planet invited the Prophetess to a world where the faithful could abide, and in a novel twist, showed her two visions of the future. One was the destruction of the planet through misuse, while the other was the eternal bliss of living there with Respect.

Respect dominates the inhabitants' lives: all possible environmental harm is avoided through scrupulous recycling, careful management of local resources and the replacement of harvested plants with new ones. It is with deep regret that the locals acknowledge that their presence has lessened local biodiversity and they accept the increase in

domestic parasites (cockroach and clothes moth analogues and the growth of fungi around air vents) as a mild chastisement by the planet. They refuse to eat animals, preferring to grow vats of algae rather than eat food stolen from the mother.

Resource reclamation is accompanied by huge ceremonies of public contrition, which involve flagellation, fasting and general mortification of the flesh. The priesthood is on hand to make sure that the mortification is done with enthusiasm. They also prefer to live in floating off-shore structures rather than sink their foundations into the screaming body of their home.

Worship takes place in the open, either on a barge or in a field. The faithful declare what they believe, how grateful they are to their planet, list the nasty things they have done, and beg for forgiveness and the planet's continued sufferance. It is led by priests who look like extreme punks in dirty hessian. They have taken the mortification of the flesh to heart and practice body piercing, ritual scarring, fasting and the wearing of sackcloth and ashes (rubbed into hair and skin). They are very thin: as the local saying goes "a fat priest is a bad priest".

Referee: There is a flourishing trade with this world: the locals know a lot about ecology and are happy to take students and to export their ideas. It might be as well to note a few idiosyncrasies here: the penalties for littering, polluting and being disrespectful to the planet or its priests are severe. Visitors are required to make small acts of contrition for putting the biosphere to extra trouble and traders have to make a modest contribution to church funds (10cr per passenger or tonne of goods in or out).

Plot: The PCs will be able to find local health foods and natural materials ("from renewable sources") which are in high demand in the Imperium's speciality shops. However, all such shipments must be accompanied by an equal volume of their most odious sewage. In return, the PCs can import high tech goods which cannot be produced in an environmentally friendly way.

11. Will Robert's Big Idea

Description: Brother Bill Bob (3B) had a scheme. People were best off being nice to each other, managing their rage through sharing, caring and commitment. 3B also disliked the idea of leaders: once you knew the truth, what good were they? The swine would only change things. So Brother Bill Bob set it all down in 3B's *Threefold Way to Bliss*. This book, which ends with "This is the Word. Anyone who tells you different is just

plain wrong.”, inspired a movement which eventually took hold of a pestilential little rock somewhere in space.

Because there are no leaders, and because 3B hated to use the same word twice, the Word is packed full of ambiguities, shades of meaning and points of contention. The society which resulted works quite well: Brother Bill Bob's three other main fondnesses were for sexual segregation, the number 3, and its square 9; this is the basis of the Plan. Society is split, as nearly as possible into groups of nine people all of the same sex, who care and share and commit themselves to looking out for each other. Each individual is also committed to an outsider of the opposite sex. This pairing raises a family, whose children join an adult grouping when they turn 18. Actually, new adults are given the choice of joining a Nine of their own free will or breaking their parents' hearts and being shunned by the community. Sometimes the newly adult have to wait until a vacancy comes along.

The individuals' economic lives are based on their talents and inclinations, but they are always on hand to help the other eight members of their Nines. Groups which have less than nine members are open to new admissions. Social frictions break out over the interpretation of the Word, what to do when members of a Nine end up hating each other and how to deal with outsiders.

Referee: Outsiders usually show little interest in the Word, and are only concerned with seeing the sights, conducting business and waiting for a connecting flight. However it seems unjust to leave them ignorant of the Word, so they are pestered by evangelists.

Off-world traders are visited by their partner's other eight friends who make it clear that any deal must be fair and above board (if a PC forgoes all or part of the Broker DM on the Actual Value table, the portion forgone counts as a beneficial modifier in all social encounters). Consulting with the other eight adds ½D hours to major transactions and ½D days to delivery times.

Plot: The PCs get to share (or provide) passage with seven natives returning home after two were killed in an accident. In their need to acquire Nine-ship again, the natives will temporarily adopt two PCs into their group - at first simply befriending them, then increasingly talking of 3B's great book. They mean well - honest.

12. At Arm's Length

Description: This state is owned, financed, controlled and operated by the Galactic Church of Purity. The world itself is a den of vice, a haven for

criminals and a damn fine place to have a party. The Galactic Church found itself in possession of some very large development grants, and noted that most rates of return were on the low side. They then noticed that Kim Leslie, a noted figure in Solomani criminology, was in need of substantial investment for a licensed, taxed, otherwise peaceful sink of depravity provisionally named "Fun World". Initially, the Galactic Church had qualms, but then they looked at the dividends and decided that the irony of vice supporting virtue was just too beautiful. They leapt at the chance. A side effect of this was that members of the Galactic Church had a well deserved reputation for industry and probity, so a lot of other money followed theirs into the venture.

Eventually, there was so much cash available that the developers had to extend their vision to encompass a diversified host society to support their casino town. As Kim Leslie had a poor reputation, the Church became the major shareholders, with Kim receiving dividends. This is how it remains: the planet is brash, lively but rather trouble free: the authorities know who the criminals are but don't touch them if they keep quiet. In return, the fun houses pay taxes to the Church, and the Church has daily parades, preachers on every corner, pickets of the least salubrious attractions and a huge training college.

Although the Church's activities are sincere, possibly even acts of contrition for living off the wages of sin, most visitors think that they are part of the fun, and join in enthusiastically, contributing to charities, singing along with the choirs and teasing the pickets. Old hands among the faithful find this a little sad especially as neophytes tend to take false hope from this public acclaim.

Referee: There are no problems here unless visitors go armed, break the law or are obnoxious. The Church runs a tight operation and won't let anything spoil it (thus all trade prices are fair).

Plot: Brokers who consistently get good prices also get job offers: the Church has an eye for talent. So do the fun house bosses: likeable (high social skills), able (high gambling) or useful (high combat skills) people can earn a good living here. If the PCs stay in touch with their employers, they will find job offers on other planets too: some of the local crime groups are devout churchgoers.

13. Men of Bronze

Description: Someone had to try to recreate Plato's Republic, and these boys gave it a go. Everyone here is inculcated in the belief that they are an intrinsic part of their society, have a natural

and necessary role to fill for the public good, and that they will be personally satisfied only through the performance of their social function. Consequently, everyone is psychometrically tested, examined and certified fit for a specific occupation, separated from others as far as is possible, and trained up to be mentally and physically fit for the job.

Jobs run from "philosopher king" right down to "toilet cleaner", and each occupation has accepted standards of behaviour, "appropriate" living conditions, and a system of support and counselling to help people remain happy in their places. Of course people aren't bees, so this doesn't work very well: cognitive dissonance strikes in all too many cases, helped by Plato's complete loathing and absolute ban on anything frivolous or entertaining. In fact the only permissible pastimes are athletics and intellectual debate, which aren't enough, although they add new terror to the term "café society".

Therefore a lot of citizens find themselves in residential care, on drugs, or slaving after foreigners and their naughty diversions. This last is policed by the Men of Bronze, the local police force, customs service and army.

Referee: A difficult Psychology, or formidable Streetwise roll will alert PCs to corruptible Men through whom they can off-load contraband. Failing that, the only cargoes which the locals will touch are functional manufactures, raw materials and agricultural products.

Plot: The PCs bring a group of locals back to their homeworld. Strangely, the locals seem quite upset, claiming their eyes have been opened by seeing other worlds. Shortly after they land the locals are arrested by the Men of Bronze (for subversive activities) and the PCs will be interrogated to see if they were instrumental in 'corrupting' the minds of these people.

14. The Caliphate

Description: When the Solomani went to the stars, the word of the Prophet went along too, despite the problem that a pilgrimage to his birthplace might be hard to achieve. The society which emerged is a strict theocracy, in which everybody submits to the will of the One God and to the rule of his deputy the Caliph.

The Caliphate gave the second Imperium a great deal of trouble and here at least the Long Night was most welcome. Without the need to protect itself from the meddling of a hostile super power, this world settled down to the same kind of civilised, urbane, hospitable and tolerant society

that it had been in Earth's middle ages. In fact the Caliphate maintained its entire industrial and technological base intact throughout the Night, even to the extent of making discrete visits to Earth, so that at least some of the Faithful could visit their holiest place. This world is an unenthusiastic member of the Imperium, and because of the regular trips to Earth the Caliphate is simultaneously a security risk and an unparalleled intelligence resource.

The only real local difficulty is the argument over whether the sixth pillar of the religion should mean "struggle for personal improvement" or "holy war against the infidel?" The Caliph is satisfied that it means the first, and is happy to arrange the beheading of those who have a go at the second.

Referee: Travellers are advised to respect the local laws, especially those concerning mind-altering chemicals and addressing the question of vice. Woman travellers will find a better reception if they cover their legs and hair: the people in the urban centres are open minded and understand that strangers require some latitude, but appreciate it if their guests make the effort. Most of the time visitors will find the local people to be friendly, welcoming and interested in the worlds outside.

Traders should be honest and assertive in their dealings: they will earn friends and respect that way. Would-be criminals should be aware that the laws against theft and fraud are strict and punishable by savage beatings, mutilation or public execution.

Plot: The PCs' ship is chartered for a long trip in the direct of Sol. The travellers refuse to discuss their purpose (they are en route to their holy site on Earth and their intended ship was held up with a major drive failure).

15. Animal Crackers

Description: Everyone here is required to emulate the spiritual essence of the "Wise Animal Guides" in their daily lives, and all this state's knowledge is cast in parables featuring talking beasts. While, this is mostly confined in daily life to figures of speech and a truly awesome number of superstitions, the state religion does protect the lives of animals completely. The local people live on a strictly vegetarian diet supplemented with synthetic vitamin supplements, and will not hurt or otherwise interfere with an animal in any way.

Children are taught to be friendly but alert, (like the Harun Feather-rat). Merchants should be shrewd but honest (like Mr. Rolf the Jungle King). The Priesthood do their best to mimic the

movements and noises of their particular totem beast. The local soldiery are taught to be relaxed, but always ready (like cats), self-sacrificing (like the eek-bird) and loyal to their pack (like the sabre-elk). Pack is the local equivalent of "platoon" and the only higher level of organisation is the "herd" or "flock" in the air force. Most local terminology has animal associations: hospitals and schools are called "nests", homes are called "dens". Industrial structures are "dams" or "hives".

The people never do things like walk under ladders or break mirrors. They are forever putting fallen eye lashes in their hair and blowing out candles (supposedly giving them a free wish).

Local structures and natural features often have good or bad fortune associated with them and the people devote a lot of their time to making appropriate observances at them.

Referee: Nothing here should upset visitors unless they are carnivores, for whom no allowance is made. A disconcerting feature is the tendency of the natives to look at passing animals for inspiration or guidance: the movement of an insect or a cat's choice to yawn are taken, quite seriously as omens.

Things take time here: ½D extra hours for customs clearance and ½D days for deliveries.

Plot: When the PCs wish to use their ship, they find it surrounded by a small family of cats. The locals won't let them take off while the cats are there, nor allow them to move the cats. The locals will not deliver cargo, refuel the ship or do anything until the cats leave of their own volition.

16. Mother Knows Best

Description: This polity is an explicit matriarchy backed up by an uncompromising state religion and a really groovy statue of a big snake with a woman's arms, torso and thirty-six mammaries. On paper, the dominant ethos is life affirmation, mutual support and niceness, but the actual institutions strike outside observers differently. There is a hierarchy of matriarchs running from "Planetary" all the way down to "Community". Each matriarch is selected by her superiors and within her own sphere of activity, her word is final. To

complete the picture, every mother is matriarch in her own home.

The Sisters who founded this state were of the opinion that men were surplus to requirements. While the founders preferred to manufacture daughters only through gene splicing or the artificial fertilisation of ova with material from other ova, they did keep a store of frozen sperm just in case. When their medical capabilities declined during the Long Night they resorted to using the semen and eventually to making children the old fashioned way.

This produced a surplus of males. The society still practises male infanticide, but a proportion of boys are retained as pets and as soldiers. Deep in the Long Night a lot of the Sisters fell out and started to conquer each other, a process which led to the current Matriarchate. While women took all the command decisions, they used their expendable men as cannon fodder and this system has continued to the present day. Men appear in athletic competitions, the visceral blood sports favoured on this world and in the combat arms of the armed forces. Particularly impressive specimens are allowed to father the children of the more important Matriarchs. The locals boast that while girls need to understand science, art and politics, boys need only learn how to love, fight and tell the truth. Local men are very happy with the arrangements.

Referee: Male visitors will have problems here: they have no civil rights, and are not even really regarded as mentally competent. Any female companion will be assumed to be their owner and all business will have to be conducted through her. All male crewed ships can deal with this state through the legal fiction of being adopted by a local factor who will arrange things on their behalf. As the planet requires off world trade, the factor will do her best to secure good deals.

Plot: Female PCs with male companions will be invited to enter them in a competition - usually a hybrid of full-contact karate and wrestling, although it might include athletics or weight lifting.

Appanage: Making provision for all children, usually by dividing the parental estate between them equally.

Constitutional: Of the essence of the state. Constitutions can be written (usually delineating philosophical principles, personal rights and sometimes, responsibilities) or residual (anything not forbidden is allowed). A written constitution can fall into disrepute over time, because the meaning of words change. For instance "property" meant "that which is close and dear, including personal liberty" in the eighteenth century, now it just means "my stuff (which you don't touch, not ever)".

Democracy: Rule of the "?!*?!", a word usually inadequately rendered as "people" but which was originally understood to exclude women, slaves and effectively the uneducated and those too poor to take time off work. Most Classical and Renaissance writers preferred to translate "democracy" as "mob rule".

Feudal: The holding of land in return for a pledge of limited personal service, incorrectly taken to mean "abject subservience". A feudal society still has taxes and rents.

First Past the Post: An electoral mechanism where the candidate with the largest share of the vote wins, even if that share is not a majority of votes cast.

Hysteresis: The tendency of people to be influenced by their history.

Kung Fu Tzu (Confucius): His work, available in English as *The Dialects* describes a state where just laws, duty and respect for elders make everything right. This proposition becomes more attractive the older you get.

Machiavelli: Best known for the *Prince*, a short treatise on rulership, Niccolò Machiavelli also wrote the diabolical *Discourses on the Republic* and the fanciful *On War*. Machiavelli is the father of Realpolitik and the origin of the absurd proposition that "it is better to be feared than to be loved".

More, Saint Thomas: Coined the term "Utopia" (Greek "no place" or "good place"), had a fatal disagreement with Henry VIII and always wore a hair shirt (which his daughter took to wearing after his beheading).

Nietzsche: German thinker who wanted to "philosophise with a hammer". Nietzsche was a major influence on Nazi ideology and was obsessed with the idea of the "superman".

Patrician: The senior class in Roman society, from whom senators were drawn.

Picaresque: Having the properties of a loveable, lower class rogue.

Plato: Inventor of Atlantis as a metaphor for the consequences of pride and an implacable foe of light entertainment. He described his perfect state in *The Republic*.

Plebian, pleb: Non-patrician Romans.

Plebiscite: A law which plebs could pass and apply to themselves but not to patricians.

Primogeniture: Inheritance by the first born only (unless a will makes different provision and often provided that the first born is male).

Proportional Representation: Any one of several dozen suggestions of those who do badly under first past the post (q.v.).

Proletarian: "Rich through offspring" (i.e. the availability of children to sell into slavery). Very poor Roman citizens.

Quisling: A local puppet ruler for an invading power.

Realpolitik: A German compound word for the facile observation that politics is concerned with matters of pragmatic advantage, not abstract theories no matter how noble.

Republic: From *res publica* or "public affairs". A state managed in the public interest by its governors, typically a hereditary élite.

Švejkite: c.f. *The Good Soldier Švejk* by Jaroslav Hašek, in which the hero leads his regiment's surrender to the enemy by following all his orders to the letter.



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