STARBURST

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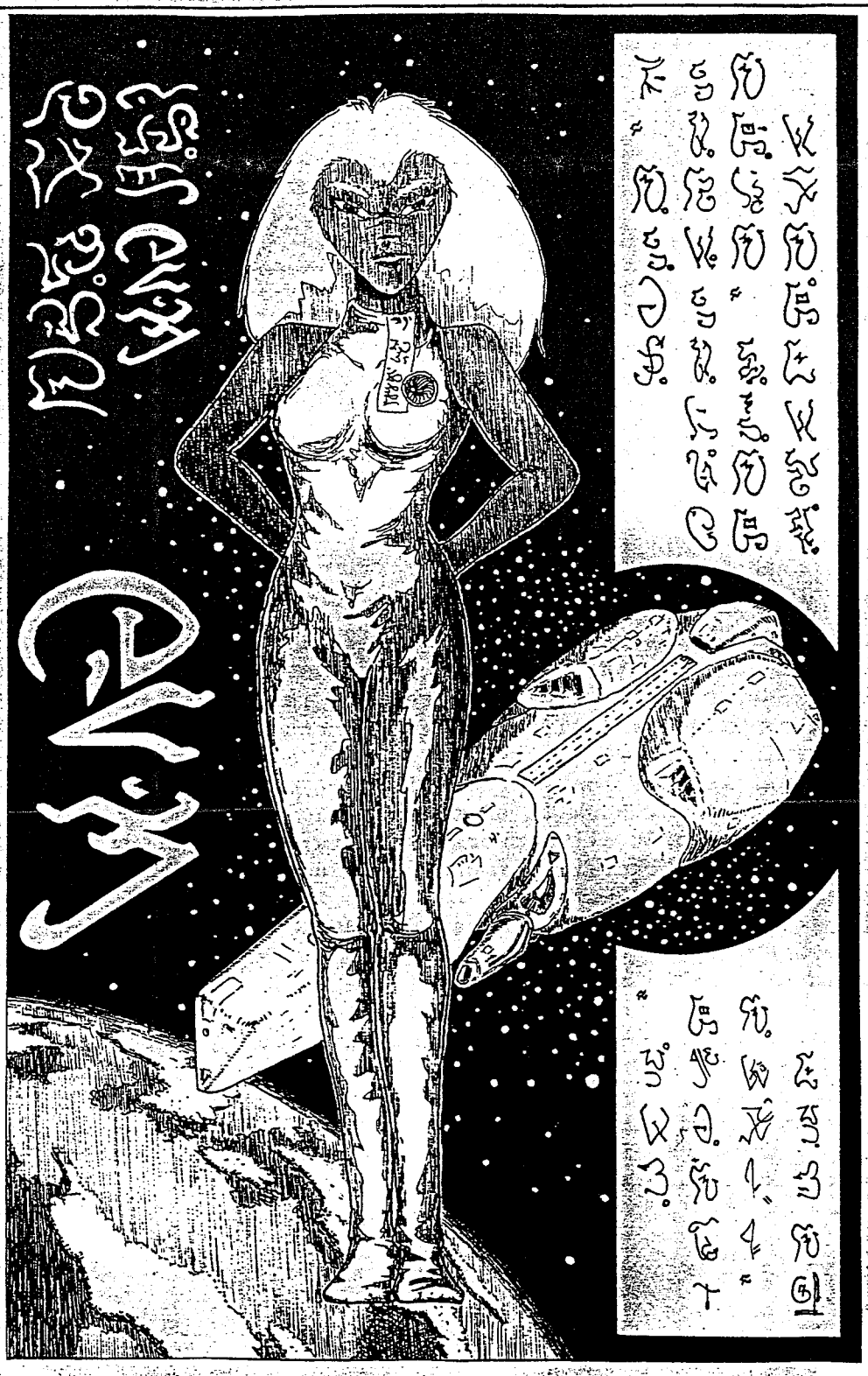

COVER ART

This issues cover art is a recruiting poster for the Izrats Kriezhlas Unity Space Navy. This piece of artwork was kindly provided by David Thornell.
STARBURST welcomes submissions of artwork and articles and all members of HIWG are encouraged to submit items for publication.

ZHODANI RELIGION

Awile ago Grant Sinclair turned up the following Library Data on a Zhodani Religion. While we are not sure of the original source the entry is reproduced below for the potential use of developers.

The Three: This religion holds that there are three deities of equal power but different outlook. One is good, one is evil, and the third mediates between the other two. Doctrine is dedicated to the precepts of law and order. Imperial scholars believe that the religion began in Zhodani space long ago. Worship of the Three flourishes in the Imperium, but is nevertheless watched by Imperial authorities.
A popular holy symbol is a group of three small, identical objects (preferably gems or crystals) worn around the wrist, neck or head. Most believers are traditionalists. A number of church officials have publically supported right wing political candidates.

REMARKS

In the United States a new Traveller Magazine has begun production. It is called The Traveller Chronicle and is published by Sword of the Knight Publications. They are currently negotiating with GDW for a Traveller licence.
Subscriptions are for 4 issues and are $I4 US for surface mail and $20 US for airmail. The editor is Kevin Knight. People wishing to subscribe or contribute should write to;

The Traveller Chronicle,
Sword of the Knight Publications,
2820 Sunset Lane, #II6,
Henderson KY 42420.
United States of America.

The magazine has already produced four issues, although it is still possible to get back issues. To date the magazine has focused on publishing a version of Far Frontiers Sector similar to that produced in the old ARES magazine.
On my instructions Grant Sinclair has begun corresponding with Kevin Knight via E-mail concerning possible future publication of our Yiklerzdanzh material. The initial response to this looks promiseing. It may be an idea for developers to get a move on with their work in case things do work out.
I would also like to invite all members to think about writing adventures set in Yiklerzdanzh. It would certainly improve chances of publication if we had a few adventures set in the sector.
On another aspect of Yiklerzdanzh, a new document is being put together - 7C00, this will be an overview of the sector. It will have four parts I. An overview of the sector and the political situation therein; 2. Various bits of interesting Library Data from all over the sector; 3. assorted rumors and adventure hooks, again from all over the sector; and 5. highlights from the sector timeline. It is my hope that this document will go a long way towards unifying everyones work and make the sector more playable for refs and players.
Speaking of running games, Richard Fields is planning to run a campaign set in Yiklerzdanzh using Zhodani as player characters. I am looking forward to hearing his response on how the sector plays for him.

KELDOC#002
SUBJECT: ZHODANI
TOPIC: GOVERNMENT TYPES
DATA: The Zhodani have been detailed since the earliest days of TRAVELLER, being for a while the baddest of the bad guys while the Fifth Frontier War was in Progress. Papers and documents have been written on them, detailing their language, origin, history, physiology, society, government, laws, institutions, etc. They are one of the three human (if I can use that title) major races, and as such, when their worlds have been looked at, have been classified the same as any other homo species.

The classification of Zhodani government types has been, in my opinion, more that liberal. Without wanting to hearken back to that dark period of McCarthyism, the Zhodani do not have a liberal democratic system of government like the Solomani, not do they have a type of caste society as do the Vilani. I do not talk here of what happens on individual worlds inside these starnations, for although they are important their individuality is generally submerged beneath the more obvious character of the starnation itself. What I am referring to is the form of government of the starnation as a whole. The Third Imperium a self perpetuating oligarchy, ruled by an emperor, with some of the worlds owned and ruled by nobles in the social structure that encompassed the emperor. Most of the worlds of the Third Imperium though had any one of a number of governments, each of which owed allegiance to the emperor through him, to the nobles who held the reigns of Imperial government in the domains, sectors and subsectors that they occupied. I believe that is was a minority of worlds in the Third Imperium that were actually owned or ruled by members of the imperial nobility.

The Solomani Confederation provides a similar example. Each worlds in the Confederation has it's own type of government. These worlds may be independent. or they may be members of a group of politically or ethnically or religiously related worlds. They all have, however, membership in the Confederation. Though the Confederation requires some taxes from them to assist in running the Confederation as a whole, each world or group looks after its own affairs. As in the Third Imperium, some worlds are directly ruled by the Confederation government, but these again seem to be in the minority.

What then happens to the Zhodani? There must be plenty of little HIWGers (myself included) or CDWers or others who have sat down and generated UWP's for a Zhodani world or two. What happened when we came to the government designation. This can describe a governmental system ranging from anarchy through to a religious autocracy and including almost anything else that the maker could think of. Yet the member worlds of the Consulate don't seem to be able to have this type of government. The subsection on government in the section on the Consulate has a description of citizenship and government; *Citizenship (and thus the right to vote) in Zhodani society is restricted to the Nobility. Proles and intendants cannot vote, although they can express their opinions to the Nobility and attempt to lobby or persuade Consuls to specific courses of action.*

This paragraph seems to be in direct opposition to the first sentence of the subsection which states; *The Zhodani Consulate is a democracy.*

There is movement in the Zhodani social system. Through the Psionic Olympics, people of the Prole class may move up to the Intendant class, and Intendants may become Nobles. Class movement may also occur in

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other unusual situations. Basing the number of Nobles and Intendants on the die roles possible for Zhodani characters created by players, about 8% of the population are Nobles and about 9% of the population are Intendants. The ratio of Intendants to Nobles is however listed as 8:8. So if the total percentage of Intendants and Nobles in the population wasn't changed the new percentages would be about 12% and 4% respectively. This shows that 4% of the population hold citizenship in the Consulate, while 96% have no citizenship and are subject to the laws and decisions enacted by the Nobles. That is not a democratic society no matter how it is phrased.

A more appropriate description of the government of a stock standard ordinary world would be a Charismatic Oligarchy (C). A world could be described as Balkanized (7) if there were some regions that had local ruling councils (3) while others were subject to Colonial (6) rule from another world, or if a region was personally owned by a high ranking Noble (A). Other descriptions such as Company (1), Civil Service Bureaucracy (8), and even Impersonal Bureaucracy (9) could be used.

The two democratic systems (2-Participating, and 4-Representative) could not be used, as they are not possible inside the Consulates system. A Feudal Technocracy (5) would also not be possible, due I believe to the disappearance of the Technological Nobles from the mainstream of Noble power. Anarchy would be very rare, as a lack of government would indicate that none of the social engineering or control that is present elsewhere in the Consulate was on that particular planet. Not impossible, but it would maybe a good reason to put a Red Zone planet in a subsector rather than created randomly or in some number (this could be used to some good effect in a Hard Times region somewhere on the edges of Consular space).

I believe that a more appropriate table to roll for Consular government type would be something along the lines of the one below;

0 - None
1 - Non-Charismatic Dictator
2 - Company
3 - Self Perpetuating Oligarchy
4 - Charismatic Dictator
5 - Colony
6 - Civil Service Bureaucracy
7 - Balkanized
8 - Charismatic Oligarchy
9 - Charismatic Oligarchy
A - Charismatic Oligarchy
B - Religious Oligarchy

Though this table dramatically reduces the number of government types available to worlds that are generated within the Zhodani Consulate, I feel that is more accurately depicts the social engineering that has been part of the Consulates history for thousands of years.

There is of course an explanation for calling the Consulate a democracy. This would be that as far as the Nobles are concerned, it is a democracy, and can be so because the Intendants and the Proles aren't counted except as chattel. If that was the case, then all the things that Consulate ambassadors have been saying, the Third Imperium and others not really understanding the happy and productive way of life in the Consulate, would only have ever been so much rubbish.

Geoff Kelly © 1992

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March 10, 1992

Zhodani Expansion

Introduction

When the Zhodani timeline is examined, there are a number of interesting questions that arise:

- Why did the Zhodani expand so slowly?
- Why did the Zhodani stop expansion except towards the Core?
- Why did the Zhodani repeatedly attack the Imperium?
- When did the Zhodani acquire Jump-2 and Jump-3?

The purpose of this document is to propose my thoughts and stimulate discussion.

Expansion

Firstly, let's look at the reasons for expansion. The *Zhodani Alien module* and the *Referee's Companion* both contain the same paragraph:

> *Zhodani expansion was the result of a natural curiosity and of economic forces within Zhodani society; expansion and production made for a better standard of living. Worlds were explored, colonies established, industries created.*

I think that this does indeed provide a rationale for expansion if taken a step further. No matter how much curiosity the Zhodani had, they could not expand without the technology and economic resources to back the project. The initial explorations would only have been followed by others if they showed economic potential or spin-offs. Otherwise they would have been an enormous economic drain to the society, rather than a benefit.

As an example of this, look at the huge cost of maintaining the current space program with just a few shuttles. The cost of an interstellar operation when starting from scratch must be mind-boggling - and could further expeditions be justified if there was no return on investment?

Obviously the Zhodani found there were benefits, as they mounted 50 interstellar missions in the 785 year period from -6200 to -5415 (approximately 1 every 16 years on average). This resulted in colonies in 6 star systems within 4 parsecs. At this stage, trade was by sublight ships in *research, information, and very valuable or novel goods*. These trade voyages would not have been very frequent as it took 50 years for the round trip calling at each colony.

Thus, the colonies would have to have been pretty well equipped when they were established as they could not expect frequent supply runs. This would also mean that they would have had a fair degree of autonomy (or lack of control) from Zhdant. The amount of control the Zhodani can exert is, I believe, one of the missing factors in determining their future expansion.

In -5415 a *working prototype* of the Jump drive was produced. The books say: *Within 10 years, Zhdant was operating a fleet of jump ships and exploring space within 50 parsecs.*

The majority of this fleet of primitive Jump-1 ships, would undoubtedly have been used to improve trade and communications with the existing colony worlds. Perhaps some may even have been warships, to re-assert Zhdant's control if economic methods were not enough. How many ships could have been built during this period, given that they were still fairly experimental and costly?

How many of these would be out exploring? Obviously, the whole area within a 50 parsec radius could not have been explored, so I take this statement to mean that maybe a ship or two had reached a distance of 50 parsecs from Zhdant in some direction. This direction would most likely have been along a trail of worlds only Jump-1 apart, as far as possible.

This, with the initially small number of ships, may explain why the Zhodani took 295 years (-5120) to discover the Addaxur which were only about 40 parsecs from Zhdant . The trip is a minimum of 40 jumps from Zhdant (probably 2 years travel) into an area with no starports or other repair or maintenance facilities. No doubt with the discovery of an alien empire, the resources were made available to build a chain of bases to keep an eye on them - which probably accounts for the 10 year period before open contact.

How did the Zhodani conduct their exploration and colonisation efforts?
With the development of the Jump drive, the cost of exploration would have dropped considerably. The speed of exploration would also increase dramatically.

There would be limitations to exploration by Jump-1 ships, such as the distance between stars and the number of jumps that could be made before lack of maintenance became a problem. This would initially restrict a ship to perhaps a 10 to 15 parsec radius until forward bases could be established in promising areas.

With jump-1 technology, economical routes would have to be established along strings or clusters of worlds only one parsec apart. No doubt there would be the odd two parsec jumps between strings of worlds requiring collapsable or drop tanks. However exploration, and certainly exploitation of areas containing more scattered worlds would be very difficult and costly.

The rift 20 to 30 parsecs to spinward of Zhdant would have restricted early travel in this direction. Either this, or an available string of Jump-1 worlds, may explain why the Zhodani expanded nearly 100 parsecs in the other direction until they bumped into the Vargr (2,615 years after the jump drive was discovered) and the Vilani (800 years after that).

Initially the Zhodani colonised the worlds surrounding them, not because they were the best, but because they were the closest. The advent of the jump capable ships would have provided an enormous boon to Zhdant. The Zhodani could now exploit the existing colonies, and decide which other worlds were worth the cost of establishing further colonies or bases.

How did the Zhodani maintain control of this expanding empire? Initially there would be no problem, as I am sure there were plenty of nobles eager to control new areas. This would have caused the psionic nobles problems. Although they controlled or outnumbered the nonpsionic nobles on Zhdant, how could they control their spread on the new worlds? Many more psionic nobles would be required if they were to stay in control. Perhaps a shortage of psionic nobles explains their apparently slow and cautious expansion, and even their eventual halt to expansion.

The Core Expeditions.
The Zhodani had been travelling the stars for 1,415 years before they launched their first core expedition. These expeditions must have been an enormous drain on the resources of the whole of the Zhodani Consulate. The effort and cost involved in establishing colonies and bases along the route would have been incredible. The drain on nobles, skilled personnel and new technology would also have been huge.

This begs the question of how well the Zhodani worlds are colonised. Are the worlds genuine colonies, or are the populations just a means of exploiting the resources of a world to provided supplies for the Zhodani core expeditions and later wars with the Imperium? As new technology, such as Jump-2 and Jump-3 ships were developed, it would be the Core corridor and the frontiers with the Vargr and Imperium which would have first call on the new developments.

End to Expansion
Around -1000 (4,415 years after the jump drive was discovered) the Zhodani Consulate reaches its present size (approximately 5,000 worlds in 143 subsectors within 100 parsecs of Zhdant, with another 1,500 in another 32 subsectors further out), and has not expanded for over 2,000 years, except towards the Core.

I believe the expansion stopped for the following reasons:

- Size - effective control over such a larger area is difficult to maintain.
- Manpower - there were not enough psionic nobles or Thought Police to maintain control over a larger area.
- The Core Expeditions - these were bleeding off both human and material resources.
- Alien contacts - resources required to maintain border areas and protect Zhodani interests once the Vargr and Vilani were encountered.
- Frontier Wars - also bleeding resources.
- Exploitation - resources may have been milked for short term gains rather than re-invested or developed for the future?

Frontier Wars
Although the primary cause of the wars has always been expressed as being due to social differences and the use of psionics, this seems a poor reason to start a war you cannot win. More probably, the Zhodani were alarmed by the size and expansionist tendencies of this neighbour. The pre-emptive attacks left the Imperium in no doubt that the Zhodani were serious about defending their territory.

In the long run this would have the effect of impressing upon the Imperium that it was not cost effective to hassle their aggressive Zhodani neighbours. The first two wars were prior to the suppression of psionics by the Imperium, but later with the anti-psionic stance, the wars took on a more cultural note. They still achieved their original purpose of reminding the Imperium not to mess with them.

Jump Drive Development
Apart from the timelines stating when each race developed the Jump-1 drive, the only other reference that I could find were the Vilani development of Jump-2 in -5430 (3805 years after they developed Jump-1) and the Solomani invention of Jump-3 somewhere from -2235 to -2219 (only approximately 200 years after they discovered Jump-1, and 3100 years after the Vilani developed Jump-2).

The Vilani were obviously happy to sit on their Jump-2 drive while it gave them a technological edge over any opposition. The Solomani, on the other hand, were in the situation where they needed to catch up and improve on the existing technology out of military necessity.

It is quite probable that the Solomani did not *invent* the Jump-2 drive, but *acquired* it from the Vilani as spoils of war in their early raids. The intensity of research over such a relatively short period obviously paid dividends with the invention of the Jump-3 drive within 200 years.

The Vargr also may have acquired Jump-2 from the Vilani during their pillaging raids from -2400 onwards, rather than have developed it themselves.

So when did the Zhodani obtain Jump-2? It is possible, although I think unlikely that they had it for the first core expedition in -4000. It is highly probable that they would have had it by -2000 when they first contacted Vilani traders.

The Zhodani would have been aware of the Vilani through the Vargr for some time before they made contact. If they had not already developed Jump-2 by this stage, possibly they bought it as booty from the Vargr. This time period (around -2350) fits in quite well with the slow Zhodani expansion.

Although the Solomani had invented Jump-3 by the time contact was made, this technology may well have remained secret through the collapse of the Rule of Man and into the Long Night. It is possible that the Zhodani might have obtained Jump-3 this early, but I tend to think that they developed it themselves once they knew it was possible and had digested the secrets of Jump-2. With the collapse of the Vilani as a potential threat, any pressure to speed development would have vanished.

I think a more appropriate date would be around -1100, just before the Zhodani stopped their expansion in -1000. The development of Jump-3 would provide a huge impetus to the Core explorations, and would perhaps also help to explain the lack of interest in expanding the borders elsewhere. It would make some existing territory more accessible, thus diverting settlement efforts into consolidating these regions.