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FUTURE HISTORY № 1 //

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In this issue of ZENITH I am proud to present the first article in the long-awaited FUTURE HISTORY series. I hope to present further articles in later issues of ZENITH.....PW

THE FUTURE HISTORY,

by H. BEAM PIPER.

A Note On Atomic Era Dating.

The Atomic Era is reckoned as beginning on the 2nd December, 1942. Christian Era, with the first self-sustaining nuclear reactor, put into operation by Enrico Fermi at the University of Chicago. Unlike earlier dating-systems, it begins with a Year Zero, 12/2/'42 to 12/1/'43, CE. With allowances for December overlaps, 1943 CE is thus equal to Year Zero AE, and 1944 CE to 1 AE, and each century accordingly begins with the "double-zero" year, and ends with the ninety-nine year.

Dates AE and CE are converted by adding or subtracting 1943: thus 1964 CE is 21 AE, and 1066 CE is reckoned as 877 PreAtomic. Atomic Era dating did not become official until 2nd December, 2143, or 200 AE. The Gregorian calendar, with all defects, was adopted, merely setting back Jan 1st to December 2nd. It took about fifty years for everybody to agree to it, and some fanatical religious sects opposed it to the end of Terran Federation history.

First Century AE.

World War II, 4 PA to 2 AE. Nuclear energy, atomic bombs, V-2 rockets. Organisation of UN. Korean War, AE 7-10. Artificial satellites, space-probes, etc. First landing on Luna, AE 27.

Collapse of UN owing to disputes as to national sovereignty over, and militarisation of, Luna.

World War III (Thirty Days' War). Organisation of First Terran Federation 32 AE.

First landing on Mars. (Cyrano Expedition, Col. Hubert Penrose.) 53 AE. (OMNILINGUAL : Astounding SF, February, 1957.)

Further explorations of Mars, Venus, Asteroid Belt and Moons of Jupiter. First Federation begins to crack under strains of colonial claims & counter-claims of member states.

Contragravity, direct conversion of nuclear energy to electric current, and collapsed-matter for radiation shielding. Serious financial dislocations.

Second Century.

World War IV. (First Interplanetary War.) 106-109; minor wars for ten years thereafter. Complete devastation of Northern Hemisphere of Terra. Second Terran Federation organised by South Africa Australia & New Zealand, Brazil, the Argentine, etc. Wars of colonial pacification and consolidation; the new TF imposes System-wide pax.

Keene-Gonzales-Dillingham Theory of Non-Einsteinian Relativity, AE 172. Dillingham Hyperdrive developed, AE 183; First expedition to Alpha Centauri, 192 AE.

Third Century, to Eighth Century.

Atomic Era dating adopted, AE 200.

Period of exploration, colonisation, and expansion.

FOUR DAY PLANET -- Mid-IV Century (Putnams; 1963.)

ULLER UPRISING -- 526 AE. (in, "The Petrified Planet"; Twayne, 1953)

LITTLE FUZZY -- 654 AE. (Avon, 1962.)

FUZZY SAPIENS (Avon, 1964.)

NAUDSONCE -- Early VIII th Century (ASF January 1962.)

Ninth Century.

By this time, the Federation Government began to get into the hands of left-wing "Liberals," welfare-statists, planned-economy socialists do-gooders, etc.

OOMPHIEL IN THE SKY -- 812 AE. (ASF Nov 1960.)

.... Foxx Travis on Kwannon as captain on staff of Maj.Gen. Maith...

Growing resentment to restrictions & controls, especially on newly-colonised planets. Formation of System States' Alliance to resist encroachments on colonists' rights by Federation Government.

Secession of System States Alliance from Federation, 839 AE. System States War, 842-854. Foxx Travis now General in command of Third Fleet-Army Force.

Complete defeat of Alliance; escape of Alliance fleet from Abigor; they discover & colonise a planet outside Federation sphere of influence, which they name Excalibur, 855 AE.

The Federation, already overstrained and top-heavy, begins to crack under strains of the System States War. Economic and political "time of troubles"

JUNKYARD PLANET -- 894 AE (Putnams, 1963.)

...expanded from GRAVEYARD OF DREAMS, (Galaxy, Feb 1958.)

Breakup of Federation continues at accelerating rate. Disintegration of TF Space Navy due to apathy and even hostility of "Liberal" government; resulting in spreading anarchy.

Tenth to Eighteenth Century.

Terran Federation completely vanished by 1100 AE. A few planets, Odin, Marduk, Baldur, Aton, Isis, etc, retain civilisation, including hyperdrive. The rest have sunk to low-order civilisation in isolation, or to barbarism or out-and-out savagery.

The Old Federation : Interplanetary & Interstellar Wars. Civil Wars, revolutions, anarchy. Rise of the Neobarbarians.

The Sworld-Worlds. : Civilisation established on Excalibur; colonisation of other planets, Joyeuse, Durendal, Haultclere, Flamberge, Gram, etc.

Development of loose feudalism from earlier and even looser town-meeting democracy. Technological advances, final stagnation.

About 1450 AE, Sworld-World ships enter Old Federation space-volume, visit former Federation planets. Raiding expeditions set out, rise of the Space Vikings. By the beginning of the Seventeenth Century, Space Vikings have conquered Old Federation planets and established bases.



SPACE
VIKING
H. Beam Piper

SPACE VIKING -- Early XVIII Century (ASF Nov 1962 - Feb 1963)

Lucas Trask organises League of Civilised Worlds; work continued by the Bentricks, reigning house of Marduk.

By the end of the Nineteenth century, the League has turned into the Galactic Empire. The World Worlds have declined to near-barbarism.

Twentieth Century AE corresponds to First Century Imperial.

Period of Interstellar Wars. House of Bentricks firmly established by end of First Century; centre of Empire transferred from Marduk to Odin by Stevan IV.

Conquest of World Worlds by Empire, Second Century Imp. Era.

A SLAVE IS A SLAVE -- Mid Third Century Imp. (ASF April 1962)

Empire completely consolidated by end of Fourth Century.

Period of cultural and political stasis and self-satisfaction.

MINISTRY OF DISTURBANCE --Twelfth Century Imp (ASF Dec. 1958.)

Emperor Paul XXII and Prince Yorn Trevann undertake to arouse the Empire to new efforts

Beyond this, with the exception of one story, THE KEEPER, about 30,000 years in the future, when the Fifth Empire was at the height of its power, and Terra was in the middle of another glacial age, I have not gone. THE KEEPER was published in the now-defunct Venture.

Nothing else, with the possible exception of a novelette called THE EDGE OF THE KNIFE, Amazing, May 1957, belongs to the History of the Future. This was a story, time 1973 CE, about a history professor, who got his past and future confused, and had a lot of trouble as a result. It was written and published shortly before Sputnik I invalidated a lot of my near-future stuff, and made me swear off doing anything within a couple of centuries of now.



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