

12TH HISTORICAL SERIES
INTERGALACTIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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EARTH MANUSCRIPT

Discovered by the 16th Cridor Expedition

for

Intergalactic Exploration

Edited by Tren Lun, Cridorian

Cridor
At the Press of the Society
3682

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Preface

The Society is particularly proud of the fact that this number has been produced entirely with ancient materials gathered on the planet Earth by members of the 16th Expedition. It also will be readily noted that the entire work is reproduced in the ENGLISH language, which was much in vogue when the Earthmen destroyed themselves. Because the number of Cridorians who are interested in this relatively unimportant planet is exceedingly small, we have "printed" only 90 copies, all of which are done on ancient papers made by the Earthmen. This peculiar method of preservation of thought was brought to a notable stage of development by later Earthmen, a few decades prior to the end of life on the planet Earth.

The manuscript is of interest as it indicates the proximity of Earthmen to higher knowledge at the end. Creatures living within the confinement of a single planet must learn how to build a non-destructive society if continuous existence is sought.

Tren Lun.

Cridor, 3682.

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It has to begin somewhere and it did begin somewhere, but you can't mark the place with the point of a sharp pin, with a bold black X in the margin. It didn't jump into being just all of a sudden. That would have been far too easy.

There was probably a lot of infiltration long before anyone knew it had got itself under the skin of things. Creeping into the tissues, prying into the darkest and most secret places, and attaching itself, with indestructible suckers and claws, in the most intimate and personal ways without any obvious evidence, without any sign.

The first widely noted instance of the thing was in the late fall of the second year of the third world war. The battle had settled back after the first months of savagery in which the British Isles were devastated, the population of the coastal areas of the United States was wiped out and the major industrial and population centers of Russia obliterated. The atom bomb had done its work well. Bacteriological warfare had come in its wake and cut the earth's population in half in a space of twenty days. The first year was the most successful period of destruction of human life of which I have any knowledge. Three fourths of the entire population of the globe was wiped out, and the bulk of the remainder permanently maimed or crippled in some way. The effect of the scores of new types of destructive weapons was inconceivably great; areas of over one hundred square miles were blown to dust and made uninhabitable with a single atomic explosion. The effect on the nervous system of the average human was terrifying, to say the least. Less powerful countries, with large populations, were used as testing areas. Millions of lives being sacrificed with the explosion of single bombs as part of wide scale tests which were conducted prior to attacks on the enemy's industrial areas.

The instances referred to above were most peculiar and startling, in that they more or less set off a 'chain reaction' among men and women at the same intellectual level. It is hard to imagine what was in Wilton Bamford's mind when he piloted his supersonic plane into a main intersection of Pittsburgh. The fact that the explosion of the solid fuel had brought death to several score of people meant very little when compared to the loss the United States suffered with the death of Bamford, the leading physicist of the decade, and the most ingenious designer of implements of destruction in centuries.

But the investigation proved that the plane had been guided to destruction by the pilot, and no one was able to give a rational explanation of the startling suicide. Bamford was serious, idealistic, and happily married. He had been in charge of a special experimentation plant and was responsible only to the President of the United States. His death was considered of such importance that the prosecution of the war was almost halted for a few hours so that an impressive state funeral could be held.

Bamford was the first, at least the first one to which attention was brought. It was not long before others followed him. John Dranol, the inventor of the ray screen which temporarily kept all unwanted planes from crossing boundaries, was the second case which came to public attention, stabbing himself to death with a steak knife at a dinner in the presence of ranking military men, industrialists, religious leaders and government officials. A nasty mess. His blood spurted all over the plump general who sat next to him.

Then the suicides followed in rapid succession. In public places, usually, but there were many which occurred in the quiet loneliness which great men often achieve. Scientists, generals, political leaders,

industrialists and prominent men in all fields, obeying the sudden impulse to destroy themselves. And as the number of suicides grew, it was learned that the same thing was happening in the land of the enemy. It was not the effect of a new weapon, as many argued. It was something much deeper than that. The clergy had one explanation and the medical men another. The commentators made their contributions, and the matter boiled on to a terrifying climax. To a thinking man, the situation was incredible. Leaders who were one moment staunch and inspiring, were the next moment dead at their own hands. The effect was disastrous as far as prosecuting the war was concerned. In fact, the war came almost to a standstill while the people holding secondary positions fought among themselves for the recently vacated posts of greater eminence. Funerals came back into vogue. The churches had a temporary resurgence, but after about a score of suicides had occurred in each of the larger population centers, the ugly incomprehensible horror of the thing began to be felt.

The mass was helpless and ill-tempered without the reassuring balm which its former leaders had carefully supplied at regular intervals. There was even a short time when the eager ones who tried to make public explanations of the cruel mess were lynched, or mutilated. The terror had set in enough so as to transmute fear into brutal violence, panic, and ultimately mad rioting.

When the rioting became widespread, certain groups of people, who seemed to have been less affected by the whole thing, began to migrate from the population centers to the extremes of climate, trying to get out of reach of the mob hysteria. Trying to salvage some of the aspects of the complex and highly frictional civilization which had been built up. It was in one of these small groups that I made my

escape, settling in north central Canada.

The world seemed to have gone raving mad. A group of men in the plant where I worked talked constantly of getting a plane to try an escape. The looting and rioting were hard to bear. All of us were fearful for our families. Three of the men were competent pilots, and after very few discussions we carefully laid our plans, collecting all we could in the way of tools, equipment, clothing, preserved foods and medicines. After weeks of accumulation of these things, all valuables, aside from watches and precision equipment, were converted to cash so that a plane could be had, and fuelled to capacity. The cold night of our departure will always live in my memory. Fifty worried people scattered in the waiting rooms of a large air terminal. Getting the plane brought out.... the bribed petty officials helping us aboard with our equipment. Everything was so impossibly lucky.

Our settlement was one of many. We did not attempt radio contacts for fear of being attacked by a force of some 'government'. The scouting and hunting parties brought in reports of the nearness and size of settlements. The cold was unbearable, and we suffered badly in the first winter. During the second, two families left us to return to civilization, as they could not stand the imprisonment away from society. Through our receiving radio we kept in touch with the course of events in the population centers, recording the progress of the decline, and the approach of barbarism. In the fourth year the broadcasts became very irregular. After the sixth year they stopped. The population of our colony remained at about thirty for half a dozen years and then began to drop off. Our diet became more and more restricted, and our health declined. After the tenth year I had read all of the books in our collective library, some of them many times.

It was in the twelfth year that we began to notice small groups of people traveling aimlessly through the woods. At first we tried to help them with food and clothing, but our supplies and creative energies were just barely enough to sustain us; we soon reached the point where we could not help these people. The majority of them were ill-clad, undernourished and diseased. These wandering groups were observed only for a period of about two years. It was from them that we learned that the plants in cities were all destroyed or inactive: no light or running water in the cities. The governments were only local in power; fuel was fast becoming impossible to obtain. No more was being manufactured. Everything I heard and read I recorded as best I could. I wrote in a small hand on some stout sheets of paper I had from the plant where I had worked. On those sheets I have written all that I have seen and heard since the strange madness began in the third World War. I cannot imagine that man will ever reach the point again where those sheets will become objects of intellectual interest. At this point, thirty-one years since I left 'civilization', it does not seem likely that man will recover what he has lost. I seldom see other men at all any more. Those I do see are little more than beasts, and many of them not as much. It seems strange to think back to the the time when the second World War, amid hushing, was led into a mean obscurity. I seem to remember some sort of international organization of governments that chattered on like a bunch of insane monkeys, right up to the day the final war broke out.

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