

The Russian Collective



Nation Gazetteer



The purpose of this book

This source book is a guide for players who are playing TRIAC operatives from the Russian Collective. It contains a number of sections detailing social structure, outlook to other nations and also a costume and roleplaying guide as well as a brief history of the nation.

This may seem a slightly restrictive way of defining your character but the Age of Aether is made up of many distinctive and defining cultures and outlooks and it is this way for a reason. If you find after reading the book that the Collective is not for you then we invite you to look at the gazetteers that detail the six other nations to see if these suit you better.

The seven playable nations are all very different and have their own unique style and quirks. After this first section that explains the reason behind the documents the rest of the gazetteer is an in character (IC) document, written by a foremost scholar of the day and can be downloaded, printed and used as a prop and reminder to help with information in game.

In any case please read through the book and choose your concept carefully. You will enjoy your experience so much more if you choose the right archetype to immerse yourself in and we hope you find your niche in one of the seven.

Happy reading
Macifaria Games

A note on the world as it is

The nations of this world are very different from the ones you know. This world is like ours in many ways and has a lot of the same history. In our version however, certain events happened, or possibly didn't, which have shaped the planet in very different ways.

In this world invaders from Mars landed on earth in the early part of the 19th century. As a result of this, history changed and we see the series of events we have laid out in front of us in these books.

Another huge difference is the change in technological advancement that resulted from the Martian invasion. Science moved down different paths leaving no room for technology as we know it to advance. Frankly, in a world with a tech derived from advanced alien thinking and new alien elements and resources, why would you continue to use the mere mundane in the wake of such wonders? Who needs cannons when you could have heat rays...?

Ultimately, this world is different. Time scales have altered; things happened or didn't happen according to the forces that affected them. It is this world you need to embrace to fully experience this alternate reality, a world inspired, but not copied from the writings of H G Wells and other great literary minds.

And with that in mind please read on...



THE DEVOUT AND RESOLUTE NATION OF

THE RUSSIAN COLLECTIVE

A GAZETTE BY RENOWNED HISTORIAN
DR HERBERT MAITLAND

It is this scholar's humble opinion that the enigma that is Russia, as it now stands, is the strangest and most inward looking nation of post war earth. Since the raising of the Wall of Iron and the nations retreat behind it after the Great War, little has been discovered about the nation that now holds sway where old imperial Russia once ruled.

I have been lucky enough to be one of a small number of foreigners to be "invited" to cross the demarcation lines and enter the world beyond the Wall. I must tell you, gentle reader, the sights that I have witnessed in that land are unique in my experience and are detailed below.

From the moment that I passed into the Russian zone of control, I was met by a squad of Collective guard who were to be my constant companions. I was escorted to an aether ship that carried us over the wall. Once the vessel cleared the wall I was met by a sight few outsiders have been permitted to see. The territory beyond the wall is a mix of the old and the new. From the other side, I saw a smaller wall stretching into the distance. I was confused by the strange sight before me until it was explained to me by one of my guides. This religious devotee of the new faith in Russia, known as, the Doctrine was a paladin of the faith, as he introduced himself. He explained that the nation of Russia was now separated into six huge archologies situated close to the Wall. These individual communities all seem to have their place in the Collective and specialise in any number of tasks relevant to the whole nation. When I asked why the nation was now huddled against the wall I was provided with a simple, grim two word answer. Red zones. It seems that Russia, as we know it has been almost completely consumed by the Martian landscape and is now lost to them.

We continued to fly across the various sectors and I realised that we were reaching our destination. In the distance, a huge cathedral appeared, its highest spires wreathed in cloud. I was told that this was Sector One and the home of the leaders of the nation and heads of the Doctrine.

The aethership moored at one of the docking spires of the cathedral and I was informed that we would not be permitted to land. I was offered refreshments and living quarters in the vessel by my hosts.

They explained that they would be happy to provide any information I needed to complete my gazette. It seemed that the Russians were happy to let me see their nation from the air but to let an outsider set foot on their soil was maybe a step too far. Nevertheless, in the position I was in, I had no choice but to either continue on this course or turn around and travel back to the wall with nothing more than what I had seen to work with. Obviously I chose to stay and this gazette is an attempt by myself to place the facts about this great nation into terms that are easy to read and understand. The Doctrine paladin and the members of the crew of the aethership were able to provide information that allowed me to write this volume...

It is a fact of life in this time of war that knowledge is power and the world as a whole must rally together under the flag of humanity if we are to prevail against the invaders. By better understanding our neighbours we will surely have a better understanding of each other and in so doing, increase our chances of victory.

The State of the Nation

The Collective is unique in the world for many reasons. For one, the nation seems to have sacrificed its vast tundra, steppes and forests to the Martian landscape while at the same time keeping their population, for the most part intact. From what I could ascertain from my paladin guide, when the red zones began to expand and encroach on the population centres of the country, the decision was made to act. They abandoned towns and villages and evacuated the populations to move closer to the wall. Over the course of decades the huge archologies that we spoke of earlier sprung up. Vast urban sprawls grew within walls that separated the communities and also kept the red weed from encroaching any further. The walls that separated the different sectors served to isolate the communities within and soon each sector began to govern themselves under the watchful eyes of the priests and paladins of the Doctrine. Each archology has its place in the well-oiled machine that is the Collective and all are tasked with the betterment of the whole.

The Doctrine, as far as I can see, is a way of life for the people of Russia. Its influence is seen in every aspect of life in the Collective. Each sector has countless Doctrine cathedrals and smaller churches which are filled to the brim each day with Russians paying their respects and offering up prayers to what they call The Absolute. I can only assume at this point that this is their personification of God almighty but the suggestion is a disturbing one which I will discuss later on.

The main thrust of Russian society is loyalty to nation and to the

Doctrine. Each citizen of the Collective is proud of his place within his or her sector and will fight fiercely to defend its reputation and honour. The sectors are controlled by a legislature known as the authority who are advised and aided by paladins and priests of the Doctrine. They control a force of guardsmen who keep peace in the sector and distribute food, water and essential supplies to the citizens. They in turn are all answerable to the authority of sector one which as we have already discussed above is the home of the central government and religious heads of this strange and somewhat unnerving society.

From what I could ascertain from my hosts the sectors of the Collective seem to be noted for the following traits and skills within the community:

Sector One

Sector one seems to be the centre of all organisation for the entire Collective and the centre of worship and control for the Doctrine. I was unable to gain any first-hand information on this zone due to the strict security protocols that exist. My guides and the Doctrine representatives that were assigned to explain the Collective to me, refused any answers other than to say that Sector One was the heart of the nation. My academic curiosity was on fire at this point but all attempts to push the issue were met with increasing levels of hostility until I had no option but to back down and move on in my investigation...

Sector Two & Three

These areas, it seems, are the two agricultural communities in the Collective. As it was forbidden for me to travel anywhere during my stay, I was furnished with a number of aerial photographs of these sectors. They depicted vast tracts of arable farmland interspersed by huge farming communities where tonnes of grain is processed every day to feed the nation. The scale of this food production was impressive to say the least. The size of the operation and the organisation around it is in my eyes one the strengths of the Collective.

Sector Four

The might of the Collective's military strength is contained in the vast barracks and hangers of sector four. From the pictures that I was shown, it seems that this powerhouse of offensive and defensive strength is more than capable of repelling any attacks from the Martian aggressors. I cannot emphasise enough the feeling of confidence and power that emanates from the soldiers of the Collective. The religious zeal that is felt by every trooper is palpable and the war machines and aether ships that patrol their borders,

land, sea and air are just as impressive. From sector four these troops and vehicles keep order within the Collective and maintain the security of its borders. The word formidable springs to mind when trying to explain the might of the Collectives military. It occurs to me that it is of benefit to the rest of the nations of the world that the Collective's main forces are engaged in keeping people out. The main bulk of land forces are utilised in repelling Martian attacks from the red zones of their northern borders. The air forces patrol the Wall of Iron and the bulk of their navy are in an uneasy detente with the Arctic Concord. If the balance of power were to shift, I posit that the rest of the world should be very wary indeed...

Sector Five

The gargantuan factory complexes of Sector Five have a constant miasma of black smoke floating above them as they churn out the equipment and war machines that are needed to sustain the Collective and defend its borders. Even from my location, floating above the cathedral of sector one, the cloud of industrial smog is visible and the scale is immense to say the least. From tractors and farm equipment to Tsar-class aether ships and Rasputin-class fortress tanks, the manufacturing sector is a powerhouse of industry. Taking the designs and blueprints from the research sector, the industrial sector workers churn out the machines that keep this secretive nation as one of the most impressive and, at the same time terrifying nations in the world today...

Sector Six

The research and development labs of Sector Six are a hive of intellectual activity. The huge testing facilities work nonstop with the new materials and elements that have appeared since the Great War. They strive to bring these new inventions and machines to life from the raw materials they are given. The security in this sector seems to be the strongest in the Collective, bar Sector One. A double curtain wall surrounds the area and tops of the barriers are dense with squads of Collective guard. Hovering above the sector, huge aether ships constantly patrol, surveying and watching for any intrusion or espionage. Suffice to say, it seems that the Collective takes the protection of its intellectual property very seriously and one wonders what exactly is so secret that they take so much trouble to protect it...

Names and Personalities of Note

During my time floating above Sector One, I was privy to many conversations regarding many of the more prominent members of the Collective. These men and women are spoken of openly as heroes of the nation. Below is a collation of those overheard conversations put into a concise digest of a few of the major names in charge of

this mysterious nation.

Yuri Andropov, Sector Five Chief of Operations

It seems that the industrial sector is held firmly in the iron grip of Chief Andropov. From what I could glean, this sector chief has been in charge of manufacturing and production for over ten years and in this time he has made it his own. He is apparently, a large and imposing man that does not take failure lightly. His temper is well known in the face of inadequacy and he does not suffer fools lightly. Formally a military engineer, Andropov was raised to the position of sector chief when the previous holder of the position was tragically killed in a smelting accident...

General Natasha Vlasenko, Sector Four Chief of Operations

If gossip is to be believed, Natasha Vlasenko inherited her position from her father Nicolai after he was killed in a Martian incursion into sector 5 years ago. The story regarding Nicholai's death involves the Martians using strange alien drilling machines to invade the Collective. The once sector chief is heralded as a hero of the nation as he stood against the enemy. Dressed in a suit of Martian enhanced armour and armed with an aetheric powered hammer, he is said to have stood at the breach and held it until reinforcements arrived. They tell the story that his daughter Natasha was watching from a hiding place and saw her father's eventual fall to the Martian advance. This burned vengeance into her soul and it is said from that day, all Natasha could think of was killing the invaders. She joined the military at an early age and rose in the ranks reaching General before being assigned to her father's old position. She is a focused and cold woman who drives her sector with the fuel of vengeance in her father's name.

High Cardinal of the Doctrine, Efim Vilkin Rasputin

Little is known of this mysterious and hugely revered figure of religious power. From what I was able to deduce, Cardinal Rasputin is an old and much respected member of the church of the Doctrine. It is said that it was he who first brought the word of Doctrine to the nation and cast out the chaos and disorder that was rife in the nation at that point in its history. He is said to be an old man, blessed with a vigour that only the Doctrine can provide. Through his leadership, the nation has prospered and gained a new perspective, allowing it to thrive and survive in this war torn earth.

Head of Martian and Aether Science Division and Chief of Sector Six, Dr Katarina Pirogov

Dr Pirogov is a recluse who has allegedly not left sector six for over 20 years. It is said that she was the victim of an experiment into Martian heat ray technology that failed catastrophically. The accident

left her horribly disfigured and only able to continue living with the aid of life enhancing implant technology created specifically for her by the science division. Pirogov is said to be a child prodigy and is the driving force behind all modern Russian technology. From the depths of the research labs under Sector Six, she continues to create the designs and blueprints that make the Collective a force to be reckoned with.

TRIAM Ambassador Vicountessa Anastasia Nemerov

Ambassador Nemerov is a name that I have heard mentioned many times when discussing the foreign policy of the Collective and their dealings with the outside world. Ever since TRIAM stepped in to negotiate a peace between the Russian nation and the other world powers in 1865, the Collective has been seeking to open channels, seemingly to create opportunities for the nation to join TRIAM. Lady Anastasia resides in Sector One and is part of the Collective leadership. She is, as all members of the Collective, a staunch supporter of the Doctrine and a member of the Old Russian royal family. Suggested to be in her late thirties, early forties, ambassador Nemerov is considered to be a shrewd and open individual. I sense however, that from the wary look in the eyes of those I spoke to, there is a harsher and less approachable side to this extremely powerful individual...

Nation Outlook

From the interviews and conversations that I have been privy to while floating above the majestic and imposing central Doctrine cathedral, I have been able to deduce the following about the strange and introverted civilisation that now controls Russian interests.

The nation is very religious and one that relies heavily on the leadership of the Collective and the wisdom of the Doctrine to function on the level that it does. The Doctrine is involved in every aspect of Russian life. From the workers in the agricultural sector to the Collective guard who defend the wall against Martian invasion and outsiders, the religion dictates all aspects of life and gives a purpose to their actions.

As far as I can see the sectors have been put in place to compartmentalise the nation and give everyone pride in their place. Rewards are given to sectors that outperform each other, and sanctions imposed on those that fall short.

The Wall of Iron is not simply a barrier to stop the outside coming in but more so, a metaphysical wall against new ideas and a deterrent to anyone from either side into crossing the barriers

between the nations.

The Doctrine is a strange and strict religion that teaches that all members of the Collective are important and part of a whole. Each member is a vital piece in the grand plan and only by working together can the nation emerge victorious from the war. It teaches that the other religions of the world are inferior and that Doctrine and unification through faith are the only things that will save the world. Its priests and cardinals are looked upon as divine and the direct messengers of the absolute, the name they have given to their version of the divine being. Wherever you go in the Collective it is likely that you will see agents of the Doctrine walking among the populace. These paladins of the faith as they are called, spread the word and watch for any imperfection or heresy among the masses. There is a cathedral and multiple churches in each sector, and worship is mandatory. Gentle reader, the more time I stay within this society, the more alien I feel. I am not sure whether to be awestruck at the efficiency and industry of this society or terrified by its Collective power and fanaticism. In truth, I believe it is a little of both...

The Collective Home and Abroad

It very hard to give an accurate account of life within the Collective due to my very limited exposure to the culture. The majority of my experience of the Russian people came from the soldiers and guides that were aboard the aether ship. I have the distinct impression that to believe everything that was imparted to me without factoring in the secretive nature of the culture would be foolish in the extreme. However, there is a certain allure to the Collective. A culture where everyone belongs and knows their place is something that many nations have strived for and few have achieved. To be a part of something much larger than oneself is a great aspiration. In contrast however, the downside is the devotion one must hold to this new and strange religion that permeates the very walls of their society.

The Collective abroad is a very different story. In recent years the only visibility of Collective forces on our side of the wall has been in conflicts across the globe. The arctic concord clashed with them first in the seas of the north as they seemed to attempt to conquer the ice bound nation at the top of the world. Collective land forces were first observed when they travelled over the wall and began to annex the land around it. This escalation stopped only when TRIAC interceded and a peace accord was forged, creating a demarcation zone twenty miles wide in front of the wall. It was at that point that the diplomats crept in. Now the Russian Collective have tentatively joined the TRIAC. Due to the onset of war with the Martians, only time will tell if this marriage is to be fruitful or stormy...

A note on Russian Martian technology

It seems that the Collective has stumbled on a form of technology that is based on a similar vein as the federated American union in so much as it utilises the pure Martian design and science rather than focusing on aether or gauss tech. The design and style of the tech is markedly different to the FAU but nonetheless it seems to have the same root function. Where the Americans focus their efforts on streamlining and miniaturising their designs, making them man portable, the Russian scientists have taken the age old adage that big is best. The machines and equipment of the nation are huge in the extreme with the tsar class aether ships being the largest flying vessels known to date. It is hard to say more about the research and development stratagems of the Collective without being able to get better access to sector six. It is only then that the deepest secrets of Russian science will be revealed...

A note on current weaponry and defences

It seems that the Russians have fallen on a type of Martian technology that utilises a type of electro-kinetic energy that the invaders use in some of their smaller war machines. These Tesla Arrays, as they are known are the primary weapons mounted on the war engines of the Collective. They have, it seems, been trying to miniaturise these to be man portable but as yet they have been unsuccessful. There are also rumours of a vast number of labs dedicated to some kind of research involving aether but these are buried deep below the ground in the most secret and restricted labs of Sector Six...

Politics

It has been commonly noted that TRIAC operatives from the Russian Collective tend, on the whole, to have the following views towards the allied nations:

The Arctic Concord

The animosity between these two nations is obvious and palpable. It has been impossible for me to glean much from the Russians as to why. I can only assume that it is a matter of territory and expansion. Whatever the reason for these hostilities, it is clear that the dislike of the concord runs deep and is ingrained in the populace.

The Prussian Hegemony

The hegemony has little in common with the Collective. These two nations have never crossed swords and no disputes have ever existed between them. As such the Prussians have no real axes to grind with Russia, and vice versa. If however, the hegemony ever decided

otherwise then the two greatest land armies on the planet in open conflict is a thing that could tear the world apart...

The Eastern European Union

The lords of the orient have no love for the Russians. Ever since their opening advances of diplomacy were rejected some years ago, the union has considered the loss of honour they suffered in the eyes of the world to be too great to simply ignore. The union would like nothing better than to see the Collective fall and the Russians in turn consider the oriental nation to be one of outdated morals and honour codes that have little place in the modern world.

The Commonwealth of Britannia

The Collective have no real opinion regarding the commonwealth and the Australian protectorate. They have never clashed, and, as the British do not seem to have any designs on Russian territory or power, the Collective has no current quarrel with them. Whether the future will see these two nations being allies or enemies depends on how the British react to the rise of the Doctrine and the emergence of the Russian Collective on the world scene.

The Federated American Union

With vast oceans separating these two nations on both sides, there has been little chance for animosity or friendship to have grown between the two powers. The Collective sees the FAU as a distant nation, too distant to be of any threat. They do however, have a more than passing interest in the Martian technology of the Americans, it being so similar to their own research. Currently they have not, it seems, acted upon this but I fear that this may not be the case in the future...

The Royal Australian Protectorate

The Australians are a new nation and have been met with curiosity. There are no ill feelings towards them and their distance from Russia's borders mean they are not seen as any real threat. The Australians increasing benevolence towards the Imperial Eastern Union however could cause feelings to become decidedly less affable.

Conclusion

And so good reader, I put my pen down and thank you for reading my small gazetteer of the Russian Collective. I hope this opened your eyes to more of this nation's eccentricities and I also hope you enjoyed reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it. If you did, then please take the time to read my works on the many other nations of this new and still emerging world.

Kind regards
Dr Herbert Maitland

Roleplaying notes

Roleplaying a Russian Collective TRIAC Operative

To Role-play a Russian operative you need to remember the following things:

- You are a member of a very suspicious and introverted society that is fiercely determined to protect its territories against invaders both alien and domestic.
- Your leaders are considered to be icons of the nation and an inspiration to you.
- The Collective is everything and your sector is your home and your family. Be proud of your sector and fight to protect it and your country with every action you take.
- The Arctic Concord are the enemies of the Collective and their territory and secrets will one day be ours. They should not be trusted. TRIAC regulations do not allow for action to be taken but never let your guard down.
- The Doctrine is the answer to a divided world and the spreading of the word of Doctrine is everything and you strive to do so wherever possible.

Costume and kit guidelines

The Collective is a nation of hundreds of thousands living within a very small space. As a result, supplies are sometimes scarce. National dress is what is provided and at sometimes scavenged. Russia is cold and warm, sensible dress is the norm regardless of the style. Religious symbols and iconography are common with only priests and paladins of the Doctrine as the exception to the somewhat dour look of the national dress. Walking among the populace they stand out in the red and orange colours of the religion.

We would like you to think how you would, as a late 19th century member of a vast Russian nation of religious zealots and suspicious inward thinking citizens feel like you would want to be dressed.

In regards to military style, the Collective military dress in drab greens and browns that are emblazoned with rank and insignia. Function is important here and much of the old and extravagant uniform of the old Russia has gone leaving a nation that recognises the need for things to work and be efficient. Uniform varies between sectors as, over the years individual archologies have created their own identities.

As a member of Collective, you are from one of these sector archologies. This may have some bearing on your costume. You cannot be from sector one as no TRIAC operatives have been chosen from this sector, however all of the other five are available.

The Russian Collective is a nation that provides a wide variety of costume choices from military to civilian worker to scientist. Whether common worker or sector chief, the men and women of Russia work towards a common goal for the betterment of their Collective in the name of the Doctrine.

