KOSMOS 68

A Setting for
Classic Traveller –
inspired by Soviet
science fiction

CCCP

Zozer

CONTENTS

Thanks to Tom Chlebus for his useful ruling on calculating the distance to your destination world. Chris Kubasik's wonderful blog about Classic Traveller is recommended reading, and can be found here: https://talestoastound.wordpress.com/traveller-out-of-the-box/

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This setting has been inspired by many modern images of a Soviet space-future, and also to the look and feel of classic old-style Soviet movies like The Sky Beckons (*Nebo Zovyot*, 1959), A Dream Come True (*Mechte Navstrechu*, 1963) and The Planet of Storms (*Planeta Bur*, 1962). All of these movies are currently available to view on You Tube (28-08-2019). Sure, many of the old Soviet sci-fi films are low-budget and were never considered classics (although both of Tarkovsky's movies Stalker and Solaris, are today recognized as *definitive* movie milestones). But it is the look of the movies, and the tone that **KOSMOS 68** tries to emulate. **KOSMOS 68** can be played with **Classic Traveller** (the LBBs) or **The Traveller Book**. Additional Traveller Supplements 1, 2, 4 and 6 might also be useful, these are: **1001 Characters**, **Animal Encounters**, **Citizens of the Imperium** and **76 Patrons**. You will find Zozer Games' solitaire book **SOLO** invaluable, too.

Осуществление первого полета человека в космическом пространстве является сложнейшей задачей и потребует огромных усилий всех организаций-разработчиков и промышленных предприятий ракетной техники.

Для обеспечения первого полета человека на корабле-спутнике в короткие сроки и с высокой степенью надежности необходимо эту задачу поставить как основную в плане космических работ, отодвинув сроки решения других задач в этой области.

On this basis, we have made the following suggestions for a workable plan for space development in the coming period:

1. From 20 September to 8 October 1960, to launch interplanetary probe into Martian orbir (on this matter the Central Committee submitted a separate report).

2. After launching one or two test vehicles in October (Vostok) and the month of November, at the two sites at East-3A, in December we should carry out a manned flight in space from site East-3A in December 1960.

Work on preparing the launch vehicle and the Vostok vehicle for a manned mission is to start immediately.

Training of pilots and cosmonauts should be completed by December 1, 1960, including training at the facilities on the ground at East-3A

Please approve our proposals for the implementation of the first manned flight into space as a problem of special importance. We also request that we be allowed to make the changes to the previously scheduled plans, for the benfit of space exploration.

[NOTES FROM Ustinov, Malinovsky, KN Rudnev, Keldysh and S. Korolev at the CPSU Central Committee – September 10, 1960]

THƐ FUTUЯƐ IS ... ЯƐD

From those first pioneering space-shots in the Twentieth Century, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics blazed a comet-like trail across the Solar System. It's capitalist rivals could not, or would not, compete – leaving the ultimate prize to the Motherland: a future in space, amongst the planets.

With Dimitar Stoyanov's invention of the faster-than-light 'jump' drive in 2029 (the Stoyanov Drive), the future became written, not in the solar system – but in the stars!

Meanwhile, revolution, war, discontent and economic crises began to engulf all of the nations of Earth. Those who had escaped the bounds of Earth began to build a new civilization. They constructed colonies, starships, space-stations, starports and factories. And they created the Union of Soviet Socialist Planets (*Soyuz Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Planety* - CCCP) to administer it. This socialist utopia amongst the stars is Mankind's next evolutionary stage, an age of limitless resources, limitless space and limitless potential. Out here, free from want or worry or war, all men will work happily knowing that they have secured the future of the human race.

Of course, that is just the rhetoric …

Mankind's vices, arrogance, folly and greed followed him into space. Today, in 2168, the CCCP is an impersonal bureaucracy, composed of interlocking layers of redundant commissariats, councils, worker's soviets, constituent assemblies and executive committees. This Byzantine bureaucracy is essentially governed by the elite of the Global Progress Party, all members of the Politburo, the highest policy-making authority within the CCCP. The Party apparatus creates a ladder of loyalty and power for those who wish to climb it – but the party machine itself is oiled with bribes, extortions, kick-backs and threats. The frontier colonies have quotas to fulfil in order to keep the richer worlds (home to many of the Party hierarchy) supplied with food stuffs and raw materials.

Life in the CCCP is dominated by a stifling bureaucracy, a secret police force that has spies on many worlds, and a command economy without any meaningful free-market. To many, especially time-served military veterans, this way of life has become intolerable and so they make their way out to the fringes of explored space. Here, the rigid authority of the CCCP is weak, power has been devolved to local military forces and the colonies have more freedoms. There is even an established system of free market interstellar trade – a direct violation of CCCP practice, but a necessary one. Kosmos 68 is at the extreme edge of CCCP territory. So weak is the civilian government here that the Soviet military is in charge, ruling from the kosmos capital, Archangel. The military high council, the Stavka, controls all Strategic Rocket Forces, Rocket Infantry and Ground Forces throughout the kosmos.

Д SOVI€T FUTUЯ€... ШНЧ?

Chris Kubasik in his wonderful blog called *Classic Traveller: Out of the Box*, has brought Traveller back to its beginnings, as a simple but flexible set of three 'Little Black Books' that can be used to create stories in the sci-fi setting of *your own imagination*. This is how Traveller was first meant to be played, and I've spent several days doing just that, creating my own Traveller universe based on what is in those three rulebooks.

But how flexible is it? I happened to see some clips of the movie The Planet of Storms (*Planeta Bur*, 1962) recently, and became intrigued by the Soviet slant on science fiction. I dug into art from the 60s and 70s and into some of the Soviet movies of the day, particular those earlier films that were categorized as 'close aim'. This label referred to their heavy censorship that forced screenwriters to adopt socialist ideals. Science fiction in the '50s and '60s was set in 'tomorrow', and limited itself to anticipation of industrial achievements, inventions and travels within the solar system.

Can the original Traveller rules-set let me adventure in that kind of repressive, but near future, industrialized setting?

Well, the answer was always going to be 'yes'...

THЄ CCCP

The Union of Soviet Socialist Planets has its headquarters in Moscow, Russia, but it is spread over such vast distances that it is, for all intents and purposes, almost an independent interstellar power in its own right. Hundreds of millions of Russians and members of other communist nations have settled out amongst the stars. There are planets of industry, leisure, agriculture, research and mining, amongst many others. The CCCP is organized into 32 regions of space that are each 8 parsecs by 10 parsecs (a single Traveller subsector) and each one is given an identifying number (Kosmos 15, Kosmos 34, etc.). The game setting focusses on the frontier subsector named Kosmos 68 and its adjacent subsector, Kosmos 70. Subsectors are not numbered sequentially, and many numbers remain unused.

There are essential elements of the CCCP that affect the lives of its citizens, ranging from the Party, which creates an elite group that governs worlds, to the evil crime syndicates which eat away at the integrity and stability of the CCCP – like leeches.

GLOБДL PЯOGЯЄSS PДЯTЧ (GPP)

The Global Progress Party is a communist political party, the governing group on Earth and across the CCCP. The Party hierarchy still exists this far out from the core, but again its power is somewhat diminished. Many of the colony worlds govern themselves although each colonial authority varies a great deal from its neighbours. Some are bureaucratic, some are authoritarian, some are very democratic. The Party exists on all of the worlds and its members are always the ones running the government or standing for election. There is only one Party and one true allegiance and to think otherwise invites the wrath of the secret police or the Strategic Rocket Force.

Party Ranks

F	Chief Party Secretary
E	Party Secretary
D	Commissioner
C	Deputy
B	Delegate

The Party has a nested hierarchy of committees, duplicating itself at larger territorial districts. On individual worlds there are partkoms, at the kosmos level (equivalent to Traveller subsectors) there are kosmokoms, at the sektor level (equivalent to Traveller sectors) there are the sektorkoms. Standing above all of these is the General Assembly on Earth, and the Politiburo. Citizens wishing to join the Party must be nominated by a member, be of good character, excel at their job and have prospects. The Party Ranks table indicates the Social Standing levels as they relate to a kosmokom or subsector ruling council. The Chief Party Secretary is in overall change, his chief advisors and senior ministers are Secretaries. Commissioners are deputies that have been elected to carry out a set job for a number of years. Deputies are senior civil servant officials that have significant power, they are often given general ministerial jobs to do. Delegates come from the populous worlds of the subsektor, they vote on issues before returning to their worlds after a two year stint.

ИИT€ЯKOSMOS ('Ииterspace')

Interkosmos is the state shipping corporation of the CCCP, but it struggles to maintain the logistical chain so far from the core worlds. On the very limits of the CCCP, free or speculative trade that is sanctioned by the local government has to fill the gaps left by a struggling Interkosmos.

THOUGHT POLIC€ (MKB)

This is an organization that thugs like Stalin or Beria could only dream of, the *byuro korrektiruy ushchikh mysley* (or MKB) recruits, trains and then deploys telepathic individuals. The talents are rare and the numbers of agents are small. Many telepaths are latent, with no idea of the powers they could wield. The MKB unlocks and trains these powers, turning the new agent into a super spy, able to read emotions or surface thoughts and perform the task of lie detector. Experts can even conduct deep mental probes to dig out information from a captive against their will. Candidates approached by the MKB must join, or are killed since the organization cannot have rogue telepaths roaming at large (although of course, that is exactly what does exist – a network of telepathic activists and their supporters, the mythical 'Iron Circle').

Members of the Thought Police can be created using the Other career. A typical agent will have a Psionic Strength Rating (see *Book 3*) of 1D6+5 and be trained to that level in telepathy. Note the psionic skill of Telepathy is the only one that exists in this setting. Agents of the MKB make particularly good antagonists for the player characters.

ИИТЄЯLДGS

These are Inter-Corrective Labour Camps, established and run by the CCCP's Ministry of Justice to imprison enemies of the state. Here they are used as slave labour, and the mining or processing *interlags* are typically constructed on hostile planets that law-abiding citizens would never agree to settle on voluntarily. The camps are located on the fringes of the CCCP, far from the civilized worlds. Kosmos 68 is the site of one *interlag* at Baikal.

SHДЯДSHKД

The CCCP is keen to remain at the cutting edge of technology, particularly with regards to military weapons development. To that end it has established a number of top secret Experimental Design Bureaus (scientific and engineering research centres); these *sharashka* are scattered throughout the CCCP, some are duplicating the works of other *sharashka*, and all are working blindly, unaware of what progress (or lack of) the other bureau's are making. There is one *sharashka* within Kosmos 68 (we cannot tell you where, or what it is working on, your clearance is not high enough). Some *sharashka* are staffed by a mix of law-abiding engineers and scientists along with political prisoners, working out their sentence in useful work (their talents would be wasted in an *interlag*).

VOЯOVSKOЧ MIЯ

The 'Thieves World' (*Vorovsky Mir*) is the Russian equivalent of the Western term 'criminal underworld'. An established network of competing organized crime syndicates operates throughout the CCCP, some dominate an entire subsektor, some even have tendrils reaching all the way back to Earth. Much like the American Mafia, the competing groups or brotherhoods (*bratva*) fiercely defend their business interests and territories with violence and intimidation. Criminals of these various *bratvas* are either former prison members, corrupt officials and business leaders, people with ethnic ties, or people from the same region with shared criminal experiences and leaders.

Each *bratva* is led by a ruthless boss or *pakhan*; he depends on a number of trusted lieutenants called 'thieves' or *vors*, each of whom heads a 'crew' or brigade of soldiers and has major social status and influence in the organization. The number of *vors* depends on the size of a family. *Vors* run major illegal operations, passing the profits up to the boss and his book-keepers. *Vors* command a small army of *boyeviks*, or 'warriors' who carry out the illegal activity of the operation. These *boyeviks* are fully initiated into the brotherhood, being the equivalent of 'made men' in an Italian mafia gang. Many *vors* decorate their bodies with criminal tattoos, each of which has a specific meaning.

Like other crime syndicates, the *bratvas* employ associates who have not been initiated into the organization, but who wish to be. These low-level wannabes are termed *shesyorka*, and are employed as couriers, mules, informants or look-outs.

THЄ ЄИЄMЧ – THЄ ZHUKI

The CCCP maintains a large and active war fleet that both patrols the spacelanes, but also defends the borders. From what, or whom? An enemy state fringes the CCCP, it could be made up of other Earthmen, perhaps capitalists who are intent on bringing the CCCP into their free market sphere as a fresh market for their ever-hungry corporations – if only they could overthrow the Party. We might call this state the Authority (*Avtoritet*) and might equate it with the Outworld Authority in my earlier setting book for Classic Traveller, called **OUTWORLD**.

Or the nemesis of the CCCP might instead be a race of fiendish aliens resembling giant intelligent fleas or beetles. The Russians call them '*zhuki*' (singular *zhuk*). Each stands five-feet tall, resembles a pale, stretched out flea with four legs and two manipulators to the front. These manipulators are capable of wielding tools and weapons or operating complex controls. The zhuki feed on the blood of other lifeforms, and the citizens of the CCCP are a newly discovered zhuki food-source. Evolving over 200,000 years, these insectoid-like aliens are clever, intelligent and ruthless, without feelings of pity or remorse. They have evolved a sophisticated caste system, with a dozen different life-long castes. Three important castes are the drones, clever workers who set about tasks with robot-like precision and determination; the technocrats who can design and operate the sophisticated machines they make; and the lords, the violent leaders of zhuki society that get their own way through intimidation and violence. Zhuki starships are commanded by a small number of lord officers who command a crew of subservient technocrats. Some larger ships may have drones on board to repair machinery.

Zhuki ships raid CCCP systems in force, with the aim of capturing humans for transport to farms in the home zhuk systems. Here they are fed upon, or sold to other farms or worlds. Their ultimate fate is to be drained of blood in a terrifying attack from a single zhuk. Sometimes a lone zhuk raiding ship will land on a sparsely populated CCCP colony world and the lords stage a live manhunt, tracking down humans by the scent of the blood and then draining them, flushed with fear and adrenaline, of their blood. Adrenaline is unknown to the zhuk, but it has proven a powerful narcotic that has led some brave zhuk lords to engage in these hunts. Ships encountered in the CCCP all have prison cages in their holds in which live humans are held.

No progress has been made in translating the clicks, buzzes and whirrs of the zhuk language, and agents of the Thought Police have been unable to satisfactorily reach into the mind of a zhuk (or so the rumours say). *Referee's information:* Why? Because the zhuki *are* quasi-telepathic. Feeding on human blood has a telepathic component, giving a zhuk insight, information and memories of its human victim. Otherwise, zhuk cannot read human minds.

ЄИIGMДTIC ЯUIИS

The enigmatic remains of great alien structures exist across space. Some of these are stupendous and breath-taking, others are built on a smaller scale with some unknown purpose. The nature of their alien builders is unknown, no representations, text or biological or fossilized remains have ever been discovered. And no great technological secrets have ever been prised from the enigmatic structures, despite a great effort on behalf of the CCCP's Academy of Sciences. The hypothetical aliens are refereed to as the 'Architects'.

Any colony planet with a land-mass (and an atmosphere of 3-9) has one of these ruins on a roll of 10+. On deep-space missions carried out by player character cosmonauts, an alien ruin may sometimes be discovered for the first time. Roll 2D6:
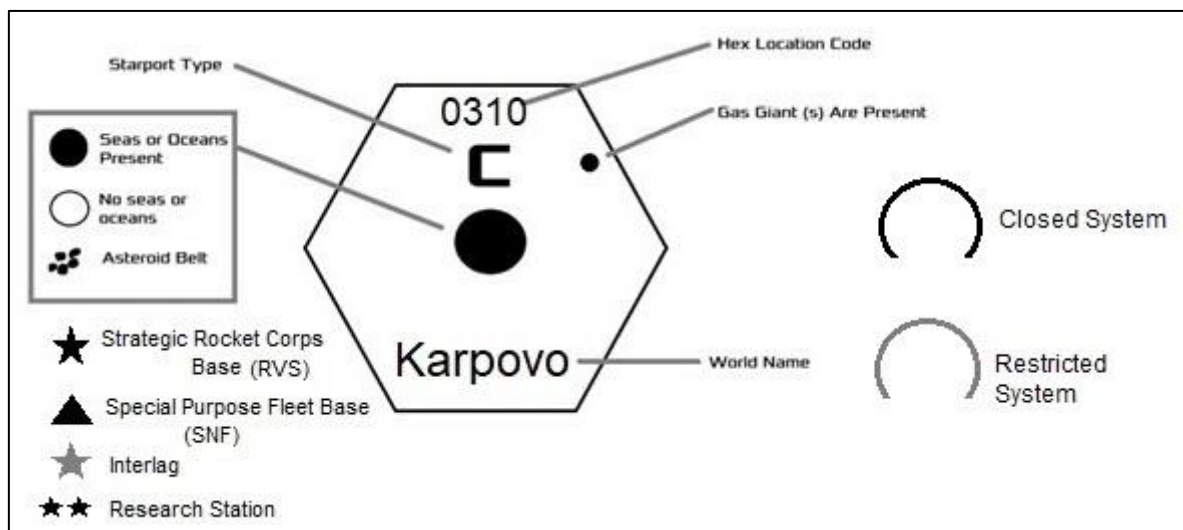
2D6	Ruin	Description
-	Niven Ringworld	Two discovered so far. Barren, with no life.
2-3	Speckled Tower	Sheer tower 30-100m tall, some with a room and window at the top, some with a central shaft, some with a spiral slope to the top, some with a roof-top platform.
4	Toroid	A doughnut-shaped building, usually empty, some have internal partions or walls.
5	Pyramid	A triangular based pyramid, 10-30m tall, many with a ground floor room, some are completely hollow.
6	Long Wall	A long wall, some 3m thick, 5-10m tall and anything from 200-2000 metres long.
7	Spiral Pit	A deep pit, some 30-40m across, often with a spiral ramp descending to the bottom.
8	Bunker	A low, heavy building with thick walls and very few rooms, usually on slightly different levels connected by ramps. At the centre of a room there might have been housed some kind of machinery (now missing).
9	Monolith	A tall rectangle, some 1-3m thick standing up to 10m tall.
10	High Road	A raised roadway, with channels or grooves running along its length. These roads can be sinuous, raised up 3m and are 5m wide. The roads are anything from 200-2000 metres long.
11-12	Asteroid-Chain	A number of asteroids artificially joined together in a long line, and spinning around their centre. The number of asteroids ranges from 5 to 35. Some asteroid-chains do not spin.

Referee's Information: The nature of these ruins is enigmatic, but the aliens that constructed them *might* be the Great Race of Yith, (the 'Great Old Ones'), the tall pyramidal creatures described in H.P. Lovecraft's story The Time out of Space. Assume the time travelling aliens moved to Earth long ago in their conical bodies to flee some horrible menace (perhaps the zhuki, who have been waiting ever since for some intelligent host to come along…).
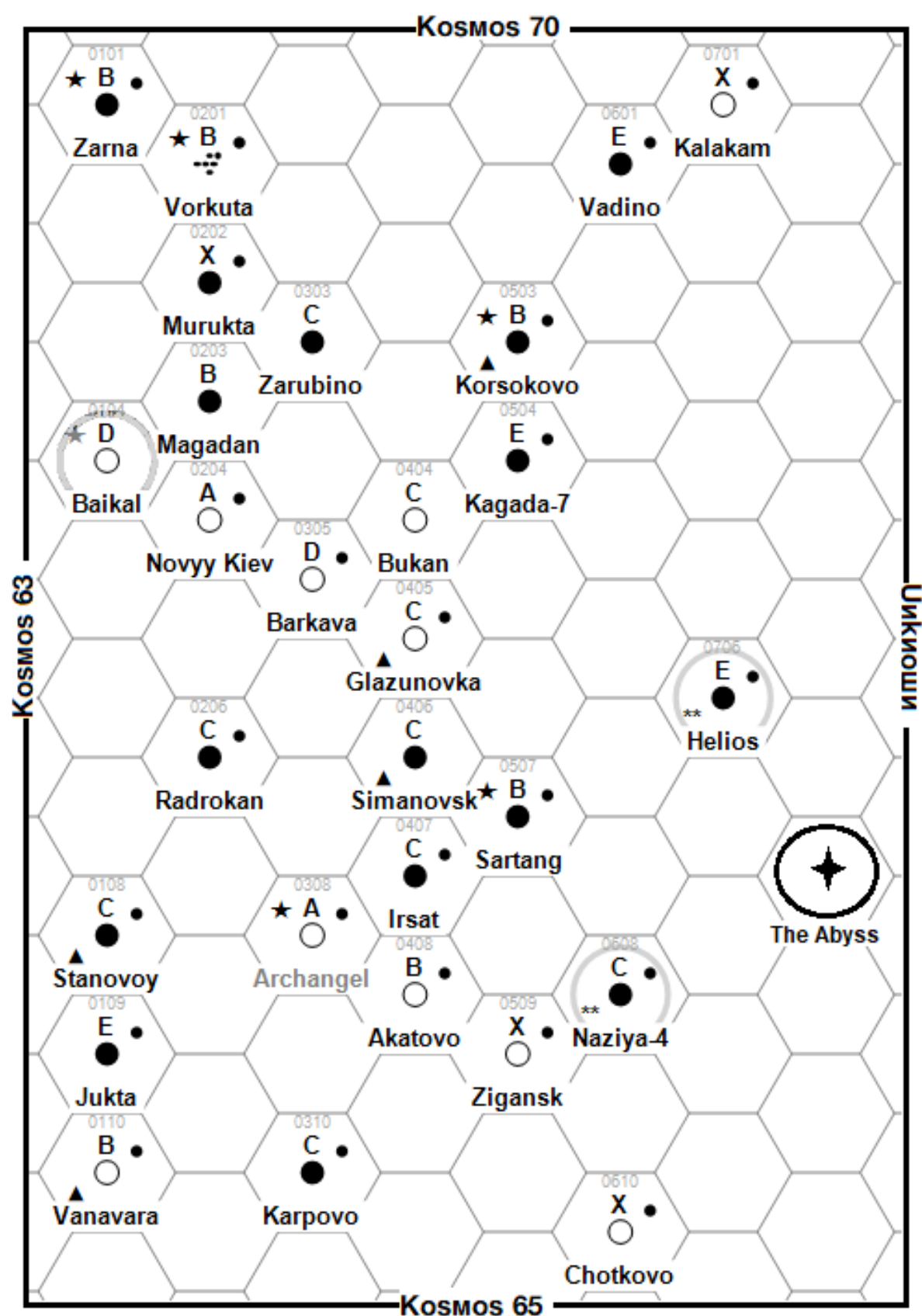
KOSMOS 68

Kosmos 68 is the home subsektor of this Soviet-style Traveller setting. It is on the very fringes of the CCCP and is a wilder and more unregulated region, where private enterprise has filled in the gaps left by poor logistical planning, where crime syndicates, the *bratva*, thrive, and where planetary societies are not under as much scrutiny from the KGB secret police as the rest of the CCCP. The breakdown of social and political discipline has been noted, however, and thirteen years ago a military government, the Stavka, was ordered to take control from the civilian assembly on Archangel. With the subsektor an active battleground against a neighbouring alien species (see below) and also the site of a miraculous and unexplained cosmic phenomenon (see below), military order in Kosmos 68 had to be maintained. The Stavka now runs the subsektor in an effort to stem what it calls *rastavatsaya*, or 'social breakdown'.

To Galactic West of Kosmos 68 is Kosmos 63 and the rest of the CCCP. Earth is 40 parsecs in that direction. To Galactic South is Kosmos 65, another frontier subsektor, but a little more civilized than K68. To Galactic North is Kosmos 70, or *was* Kosmos 70. K70 was invaded 15 years ago by an aggressive, hostile species of insectoid-like aliens known as the zhuki. Most colony worlds were evacuated further into the CCCP, but even so, tens of millions of loyal citizens were killed by the creatures. Today K70 is given over to the zhuki, but raiding ships frequently penetrate deep into Kosmos 68 to capture humans to stock their farms and blood banks. Any result of 'pirates' rolled on Book 2's Starship Encounter table will be a zhuki ship half of the time, the other half it will be crewed by a gang of cut-throats and commanded by a criminal *vor*, raiding merchant ships and smuggling in order to send the profits back to his crime syndicate. These human pirates always have a legitimate cover story as traders or prospectors. To Galactic East is an unknown, unexplored and untouched subsektor of galactic space. Scouts attempting to find a path across an empty rift of space into this subsektor accidentally discovered the Abyss ten years ago. Roughly a parsec across, this region of space is currently under intense scrutiny from teams sent from the Academy of Sciences, in Moscow. See below for more information.

SUБSЄKTOЯ: KOSMOS 68

Kosmos 70

Kosmos 63

Цикиоши

0101
★ B •
●
Zarna

0201
★ B •
:::
Vorkuta

0202
X •
●
Murukta

0203
B
●
Zarubino

0104
★ D
○
Baikal   Magadan

0204
A •
○
Novyy Kiev

0303
C
●

0305
D •
○
Barkava

0405
C •
○
Glazunovka

0206
C •
●
Radrokan

0406
C
●
Simanovsk

0407
C •
●
Irsat

0108
C •
●
▲
Stanovoy

0308
★ A •
○
Archangel

0109
E •
●
Jukta

0110
B •
○
▲
Vanavara

0310
C •
●
Karpovo

0404
C
○
Kagada-7

0504
E •
●

0503
★ B •
●
▲
Korsokovo

0601
E •
●
Vadino

0701
X •
○
Kalakam

0507
★ B •
●
Sartang

0408
B •
○
Akatovo

0509
X
○
Zigansk

0608
C •
●
**
Naziya-4

0706
E •
●
**
Helios

The Abyss

0610
X •
○
Chotkovo

Kosmos 65

Name		UWP		Codes	
Zarna	0101	B77A8CB-B	N	Water World	*G*
Baikal	0104	D5A636A-6	P	Non-Industrial, Restricted	G
Stanovoy	0108	C568661-5	S	Agricultural, Rich	G
Jukta	0109	E655577-4		Agricultural, Non-Industrial	G
Vanavara	0110	B100431-9	S	Non-Industrial, Vacuum	G
Vorkuta	0201	B000559-A	N	Asteroid Belt, Non-Industrial	G
Murukta	0202	X755000-0			G
Magadan	0203	B547300-9		Non-Industrial	
Novyy Kiev	0204	A8C6757-C			G
Radrokan	0206	C563555-6		Non-Industrial	G
Zarubino	0303	C59A100-B		Non_industrial, Water World	
Barkava	0305	D5505A8-6		Desert, Poor, Non-Industrial	G
Archangel	0308	A520869-D	N	Desert, Poor, Industrial, Capital	G
Karpovo	0310	C66869A-8		Agricultural	G
Bukan	0404	C520798-5		Desert, Non-Agricultural, Poor	
Glazunovka	0405	C500200-B	S	Non-Industrial, Vacuum	G
Simanovsk	0406	C566385-9	S	Non-Industrial	
Irsat	0407	C555885-7			G
Akatovo	0408	B740440-B		Desert, Non-Industrial, Poor	G
Korsokovo	0503	B588367-B	2	Non-Industrial	G
Kagada-7	0504	E667260-6		Non-Industrial	G
Sartang	0507	B533422-8	N	Non-Industrial, Poor	G
Zigansk	0509	X520000-0		Desert, Non-Agricultural, Poor	G
Vadino	0601	E744788-6			G
Naziya-4	0608	C538160-8	R	Non-Industrial, Restricted	G
Chotkovo	0610	X7C8000-0			G
Kalakam	0701	X620000-0		Desert, Poor, Non-Industrial	G
Helios	0706	E74A143-9	R	Water World, Non-Ind, Restricted	G
The Abyss	0807	Unknown		Closed	

Base Codes: N Strategic Rocket Corps, S Special Purpose Fleet, P Interlag, R Academy of Science, 2 signifies both N & S

TRAVEL ZONES
There are two types. **Closed System –** The star system is under government control, no-one may enter or leave without the approval of the subsektor government at the highest level – in K68 that is the Stavka. These systems are officially known as 'closed administrative-territorial formations' or ZATO). Even the Strategic Rocket Corps may not send ships into this system. **Restricted Systems –** The system is interdicted, guarded and patrolled, and passage in or out is strictly controlled. Authorizations, permits and pass-codes will be needed for a journey here, there may even be a 'guide' waiting for you to ensure you do not stray away from your closely defined mission within the star system.

INDUSTRIAL WORLDS
With lower population levels in this setting, an industrial world has an atmosphere of 0, 1, 2, 4, 7 or 9, a population of 8 of more **and** A type starport. Archangel is the only industrial world in the Autonomous Region

KOSMOS 68 – ZOZϵЯ GДMϵS

THϵ ДBYSS

A hole in space? A time-warp? A wormhole? What is the Abyss? Ten years ago a scout ship flown chief pilot Viktor Malenkov attempted to jump into that empty hex of space to forge a route out of Kosmos 68. One week later his ship reappeared at the point of departure, empty of fuel, its memory banks wiped and Malenkov naked, insane and gibbering … and clutching a ring of metal of unknown origin. Scientists were intrigued. Where had the ship gone? It had spent a week in jumpspace getting there, how had it gotten back without another week passing? Why had the recording devices not work? Why did the computer have no memory of what it logged as: "ƩNF 02/01/71-UNKN0WN ENTRY EVENT"? What was the metal made of? Who sent it back? And why?

Other missions were launched into the parsec-wide hex, all were summarily returned. All pilots were either insane, catatonic or had committed suicide. All who returned brought back some-*thing*, often alien sea shells, but also organic molecules that defied modern physics, objects made of new unclassified elements, or even magnetically coded cures for diseases including some cancers. Was this some sort of messaging system? Why were they sending us these little treasures? And why at such great human cost? And – who were *they*?

Better recording devices were installed on ships – it all failed. Robotic ships were sent through – they never returned. Ships with crews of scientists were sent through (as opposed to a single pilot) – they never returned.

And so, brave heroes of the 'Great Proletariat' boldly (but now more rarely) board their scout ships for the trip to … who knows where? And they do it for the Union and for the human race. So far 32 casualties of the Abyss have returned, alive or dead, and 3 crews (each of 4 cosmonauts) have never returned. The toll is great, but the rewards are infinitely greater.

The Abyss is a Closed Zone – no access is allowed by any ship or agency.

BϵYOИD THϵ ДBYSS

For a distance of two parsecs around the Abyss, it seems that its effects can still be felt. Reality can be bent, and otherworldly, inexplicable occurrences often take place. The space, two parsecs around the Abyss, including the star systems of Naziya and Helios is restricted; permission is required, and the correctly authorized papers are needed to enter this zone. The Academy of Sciences has established scientific stations on the planet Naziya-4 and a space-station orbiting Helios, an enigmatic waterworld. Perhaps the secret of the Abyss can be cracked by studying the ripples of its reality-defying energies in the space around it. Ships of the Strategic Rocket Corps pass through the Naziya and Helios systems to deter trespassers. There are gas giants, moons and other rocky worlds in those systems, perhaps the mysterious effects of the Abyss can be felt on those, too – if only a pilot could brave the patrols and sneak down to the surface?

РДGϵ 14

WORLDS OF NOTE

ARCHANGEL   A520869-D   N   Desert, Poor, Ind, Capital

A small desert planet with a very thin, tainted and polluted atmosphere. The military council called the Stavka (which rules the subsektor) is located at Archangel. The world has been turned into an industrial powerhouse, wrecking the atmosphere, and killing off much of the local plant life, but creating a beacon of progress. Six orbital towers, each with a huge city at its base, act as giant spokes that project into orbit. Connecting them is an orbital 'ring' called Koleso, essentially a vast and continuous space station. This is breath-taking construction – bold and adventurous. Nearly 350 million people live in the tower cities and on Koleso. Scavengers, colonists and criminals live in the planet's deserts. Trash and scrap is dumped in the deserts, and is picked over by scavengers, hoping to make it rich and gain enough roubles to travel up to Koleso.

BAIKAL   D5A636A-6   P   Non-Industrial

Baikal is a home to a prison camp – an interlag. The small planet has a thriving eco-system, and is an apparent garden world. But its atmosphere contains a plant-produced pheromone that can be inhaled. It is harmless, but addictive with deadly withdrawal symptoms, including fluid build-up in the lungs, choking, spasms and often death (within 1D6 days). No wonder the Ministry of Justice chose Baikal as the location for an interlag – no-one dare leave! Incarceration here is for life. The inmates live and work outdoors in large wooden camps. The guards wear full face-masks, they are rotated back to their home planets every six months. At this labour camp the political and criminal inmates repair and extend their camp, grow and harvest their own crops, process their own food, make their own clothes, etc. The available technology is equivalent to the 1940s and 1950s.

BARKAVA   **D5505A8-6**   **Desert, Poor, Non-Industrial**

Barkava is a small, Mars-sized desert planet with a thin, but breathable atmosphere. Diamonds, gold and platinum resources on the planet have sparked a mining revolution. The Party chairman on Barkava has pioneered a project to get access to these treasures quickly, since the local economy is tiny and the population relatively small. Small atomic bombs are being used to expose ores to miners who can dig out and process them quickly. The chairman is a popular figure, and the project called 'Use of Nuclear Explosive Technologies for Peace & Prosperity', is his brainchild.

HELIOS   **E74A143-9**   **R**   **Water World, Non-Industrial**

This waterworld is an enigma, the water itself (thick with microscopic colonial life) seems almost alive, almost sentient, creating eddies and currents with regular patterns that are unconnected to tidal forces or wind. Four space stations orbit Helios, although Station-4 is the current and prime scientific base. Here, a dozen scientists from the Academy of Sciences study the ocean, as well as the odd effects that the existence of this sentient force has on their psyches. Or perhaps the effects are due to being so close to the Abyss. Unknown. Hallucinations occur, there are memory lapses, time-leaks, even solid human creations of matter fashioned directly from the crew's mind. The effects are unpredictable and can be horrifying. But what do they mean?

Disputes, fuelled by the intense psychological pressures on Station 4, have led two rebel teams to split away from Station 4 and these have gone to repopulate the abandoned Stations 2 and 3. In addition, temporary islands have recently begun to form on Helios, and some rebels have gone down in shuttles to spend time there – with unexpected and alarming results.

JUKTA   **E655577-4**   **Agricultural, Non-Industrial**

Once an interlag, Jukta is now decommissioned, but the criminals live on here with their families. This is their home, despite the hard-work and primitive (steam-age) technology. The economy is organized into a dozen farming collectives manned by a total population of 300,000. These collectives have become great rivals, based on old divisions within the interlag, but the rivalries are political – not military. Not yet.

KARPOVO   **C67869A-8**   **Agricultural**

This garden world is an agricultural powerhouse, shipping food out to the masses of Archangel and Novyy Kiev. The starport is moderate in size but incredibly busy and full to capacity. A recent strike, organized by a Worker's Revolutionary Force (*rabochaya revolyutsionnaya sila*, or RRS) called for better working conditions as the pressure to produce food, process it and get it shipped out increased to impossible levels. The Party on Karpovo set up a closed committee and martial law was declared. The ringleaders of the RRS are being hunted and surveillance of the 'disloyal proletariat' is being carried out. Police presence is high here.

NAZIYA-4   C538160-8   R   Non-Industrial

Scientists on Naziya-4 do conduct research on the strange reality-bending effects that propagate out from the Abyss. However, the world mainly exists as a launch point for missions into the Abyss. They occur infrequently, perhaps once every six months, depending on the availability of pilots to commit themselves to certain death or permanent insanity. The starport has great repair facilities, with a couple of scout vessels always on standby. It is a small world with oceans, and an atmosphere requiring a compressor due to its low pressure. It has been called a 'wet Mars', with high mountains and pitch black vegetation. The following organizations have offices and personnel here: KGB, Strategic Rocket Corps, Special Purpose Fleet and the Academy of Sciences. A Major-General from the Special Purpose Fleet is in command of the forces on the planet.

NOVYY KIEV   A8C6757-C

More than 70 million people live on Novyy Kiev. This hostile world is covered in thousands of cryo-volcanoes and is encased in a dense toxic cloud-layer of fluorine, swept along by constant hurricane-force winds. The surface temperature stands around -50°C. Life is tough on this harsh world. However, extensive free-standing deposits of dysprosium were found there (a mineral normally found as part of other ore-bodies). Dysprosium is a key element in the production of quantum grids for the Stoyanov Drive. The mining colony took hold and expanded. Large cities have been built on extinct volcanic ridges and vast tunnel complexes established. Today, Novyy Kiev supplies 20% of all the dysprosium needed by the CCCP. On the surface is a scientific project to study fluorine-based life-forms that exist there. Imagine life here much like Alaska or Greenland, with transparent domes, sealed transparent corridors and vast underground caverns (excavated by atomic blasts). There are also factories here building Stoyanov Drives, starships, weaponry and consumer goods for other worlds in the subsector. The state-companies responsible for jump-drive construction rule the planet, by virtue of dominating the planetary committee with its high-ranking Party members.

SIMANOVSK   C566385-9   S   Non-Industrial

An SNF scout base has been established on this exotic jungle world. There are many carnivorous plants on Simanovsk, as well as some mobile plant forms. There are indications that some, or all, have a measure of intelligence, although many doubt this last claim. There is also a peak of radioactivity at several sites, seemingly random across the planet. Are they connected to the supposed sentience of the plant-life here? And if the plant-life *is* sentient, why isn't the animal life? Around 3,000 scouts and support personnel live on this world; the starport agency runs things.

BIG PROJECTS

The CCCP is big on 'big' projects, vast works of civil engineering, like the vast caverns on Novyy Kiev or the orbiting ring around Archangel. Most of the population of the Vorkuta system, for example, live within hollow asteroids, spun for gravity; and on the waterworld of Zarna, a vast four-towered arcology rises from the seabed and up to 600m into the sky. Submerged between the four towers is a submerged industrial zone used as a base for aquaculture, oil drilling and seabed mining.

CHДЯДCT€ЯS

Characters are created exactly as explained in Book 1: Characters. There are some notes that follow explaining how the careers fit into **KOSMOS 68**.

CДЯ€€Я TЧP€S

All of the careers in Traveller Book 1 are suited perfectly to this setting. The players will create their veteran characters who are assumed to have left the core systems to make their fortunes and reputations out here in K68. It is a place where the bold and the clever must plan and execute daring schemes for the acquisition of wealth and power.

Navy: Members of the Strategic Rocket Corps (the RVS).
Marines: Members of the Strategic Rocket Infantry (the RPS).
Army: Members of the Soviet Ground Forces (VSV) – planetary defensive forces.
Scouts: Members of the Special Purpose Fleet (SNF) which operates the comms network, explores and surveys and carries out reconnaissance for the RVS.
Merchants: Members of Interkosmos, the CCCP's state interstellar shipping line. Crews of the few freelance interstellar commercial ships are also Merchants (and usually ex-Interkosmos employees).
Others: A variety of other careers, but particularly those of a shady nature and including members of one of the *bratva* crime syndicates.

Also consider using the careers below, from Supplement 4: Citizens of the Imperium. Note that Supplement 4 does reference several skills (for example Interrogation, Liaison and Carousing) which are not found in Book 1, but instead appear in Books 4, 5 and 6. Some GMs may prefer to use the Other career instead, perhaps swapping the Advanced Education table for its equivalent from Scientist to give access to some of the more legitimate skills.

Belter: Miners, prospectors and workmen who live and work in space.
Doctor: Medical personnel, trained and experienced, from paramedics to surgeons. Often referred to as 'comrade-doctor'.
Scientist: Individuals from the Academy of Sciences, who conduct investigations and experiments.
Bureaucrat: Managers and executives within the Party, world governments or state-owned companies (*predpriyatiye*). These bureaucrats are derogatorily referred to as 'apparatchiks'.
Rogue: Special agents of the KGB (Committee for State Security), responsible for the Soviet Union's intelligence gathering, counter-intelligence and espionage. It also protects the Party leadership of subsektor governments, as well as combating nationalism, dissent and anti-Soviet activities.

ЯДИК ДИD S€ЯVIC€ SKILLS

The skills offered to military characters in the Rank and Service Skill Table require a slight change:

|	
Marine …………..	Carbine-1
Marine Lt ………..	Auto-Pistol-1
Army …………….	Carbine-1
Army Lt. ………..	SMG-1

BLADE COMBAT

Blade weapons are not very common in this setting, therefore when the skill is rolled on a career table, the player gets a choice:

Army or Marines: Stick with Blade Cbt, or swap for either Gunnery or Forward Observer.
All Remaining Careers: Stick with Blade Cbt, or swap for Brawling.

FORWARD OBSERVER

A rarely used skill. I recommend expanding it to include calling in 'anything', including artillery barrages and airstrikes, helicopter assault squadrons, search and rescue assets, surveillance aircraft, fire-bombers, parachute drops (maybe from orbit) and anything else you can think of. The Forward Observer is the guy with the radio who can co-ordinate multiple assets and get them to your location, set up drop or landing zones and identify hazards and targets for those incoming assets.

ШЄДРОИS
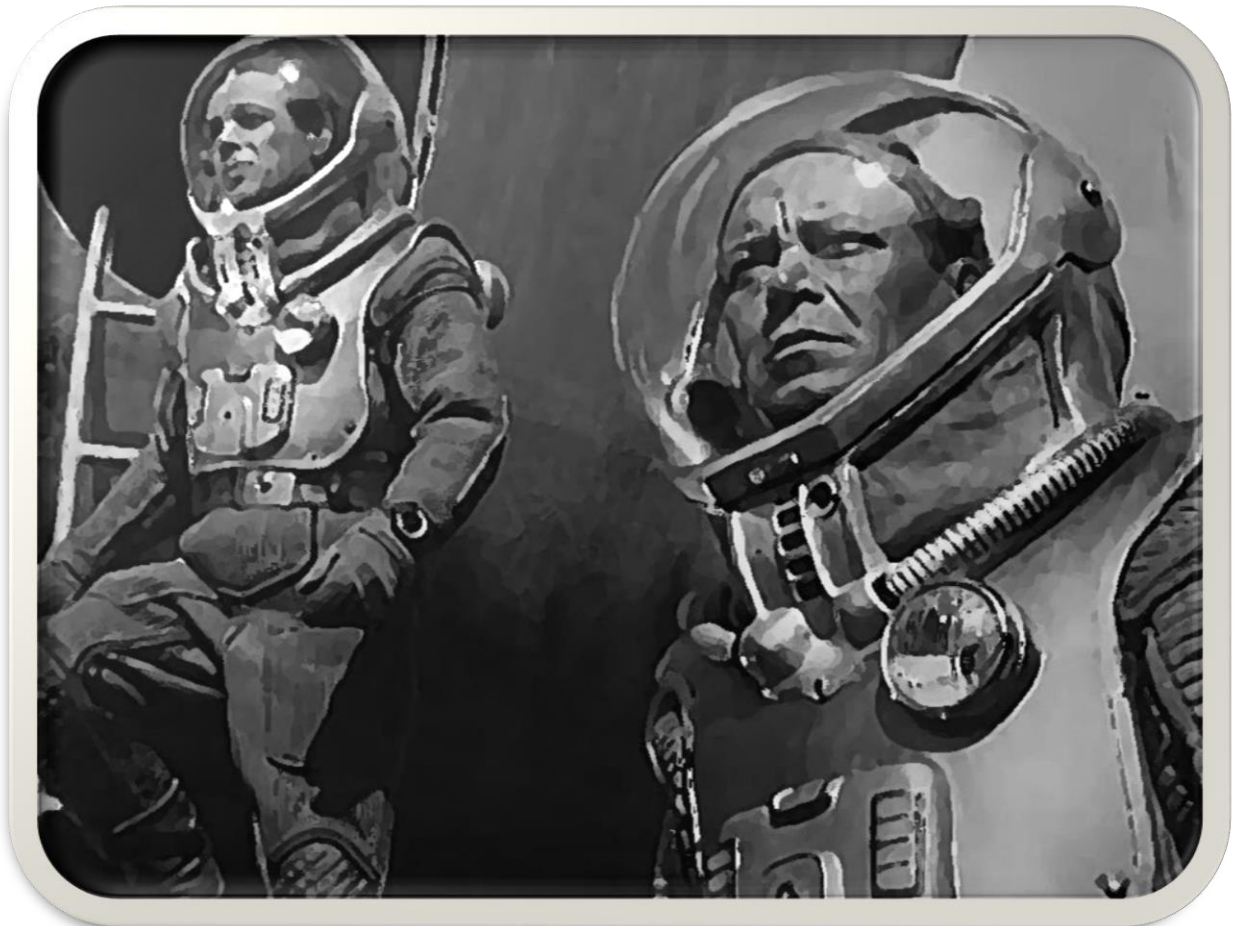
The weapons in Book 1: Characters require no modification. Here, though, we offer some guidelines and two new pieces of kit: grenades and the grenade launcher. Prices are in standard Traveller Credits, but in this setting the Credit is called a Rouble.

MILITARY-GRADE ARMS & ARMOUR
Modern CCCP troops are equipped with assault rifles some of which feature an underslung grenade launcher. One squad member carriers a squad machinegun, one carries an assault rifle with grenade launcher.

Assault Rifle: This is simply a carbine capable of auto-fire. When using auto fire use the Range DMs of the SMG. Remember also to use the Full Auto Fire and the Group Hits By Auto Fire rules. Some have an under barrel grenade launcher (see below).

Grenade Launcher (1000 grams unloaded; Cr200; ammunition weighs 200 grams;, ammunition Cr5; TL 7) This holds one grenade ready to fire and does 6D damage. Use the Armour DMs for the automatic rifle, and the following Range DMs:

Close/Short	*no*
Medium/Long	*+2*
V/Long	*-4*

Hand Grenade (500 grams; Cr10; TL 5) This inflicts 6D damage on a single victim. Roll 16+ to hit the target at Medium range only; add the Dexterity characteristic, and Armour DMs for the automatic rifle. A new rule, Additional Damage from HE Rounds should also come into play – after hits on the target have been determined, blast effects may cause damage to individuals adjacent to the target hit. Apply half damage, in this case 3D.

Squad Machinegun: This is simply the automatic rifle with the 100 rounds of ammo given as an option in the weapon's text. This is loaded into a box magazine.

COMБДT

The combat rules in Book 1: Characters and Combat are perfectly adequate for small scale combat in this setting, but there are one or two rules introduced in slightly later Traveller Book that would make life even easier.

COVER
Targets are considered under cover if they are behind a solid object which a shot cannot penetrate. A character who has attacked from a covered position is allowed a defending DM of -4 when attacked. If the individual has not attacked from cover, he or she is not visible at the moment and may not be attacked.

DARKNESS
Total darkness restricts engagements to close and short range. Attacks with guns at greater than short range have DM -9. Partial darkness reduces visibility to medium range; attacks with guns at greater than medium range are subject to -6. Electronic dights negate these negative DMs,

VEHICLE COMBAT
Andy Slack's article called **Vehicle Combat**, was originally published in White Dwarf 43 in 1983, it is a perfect compliment to the Book 1 combat rules, providing a simple, fast and quite effective rules for handling combat between vehicles and between vehicles and characters. The article is available on the internet, search for the title 'Rants, Rogues & Rules'. For those without it, use the following guidelines.

Some sort of conflict involving vehicles is very likely during adventures. The rules to resolve this conflict are simple and abstract in order to keep the action moving. Most vehicles can be categorised as either Soft Skin (buses, cars, aircraft, grav carriers, etc), Light Armour (APCs, space-capable small craft, self-propelled guns) or Heavy Armour (usually Main Battle Tanks and starships).

Who is shooting at whom?

Vehicle versus Vehicle
When a military vehicle wishes to engage another vehicle at a range of Medium to Very Long, the GM rolls 2D6 for a result of 8+. Apply the following DMs: + gunner's skill, apply TL advantage or disadvantage between the vehicles, -2 if Distant range, - driver's skill if his vehicle is evading and not returning fire. If a hit is scored check the damage result, below.

Small Arms versus Vehicle
When characters attack a vehicle with grenades or the weapons found in Book 1, the chances of inflicting any damage are significantly reduced. Shooting at a Soft Skin vehicle uses the Combat Armour DMs, shooting at a Light Armour vehicle uses the Combat Armour DMs -4. Heavily armoured vehicles are immune from small arms fire and grenades. If a hit is scored, check the damage result, below.

Vehicle versus Characters

Military vehicles in this setting will often have a main gun, either a cannon (like a modern tank), an autocannon or other rapid fire gun (like many APCs), or an energy weapon (perhaps a laser, plasma or fusion gun). In addition, many vehicles mount a secondary weapon, typically some kind of auto-firing gun. Use the characteristics of the automatic rifle for the secondary weapon. The range of the main weapon against characters is Long or Very Long and the roll required is 8+; Apply the following DMs: +/- Automatic Rifle Armour DMs, + gunner's skill, -2 if Distant range. No main gun can fire at Medium range or less.

- Auto Guns do 4D6 damage and use the Full Automatic Fire and Group Hits By Automatic Fire rules.
- Cannon do 6D6 and use the Additional Damage From HE Rounds rule (see grenades)
- Energy Weapons do 8D6 and use the Additional Damage From HE Rounds rule (see grenades)

If a hit is scored check the damage result, below.

Damage Result

A successful hit allows the firer to roll 2D6. Apply a DM +2 if the target is lightly armoured, or a DM +4 if the target is Soft Skin. Apply the difference in the tech levels between the vehicles (if applicable) in favour of the more sophisticated vehicle. If the final result is 8+, the target vehicle has been disabled; if the roll is 11+, then the target vehicle has been destroyed.

Disabled vehicles cannot move, and may or may not be able to use their main weapon at the discretion of the GM. They can be repaired with a roll of 8+. Apply DMs for appropriate skills when the damage is first inspected; success indicates that the damage can be repaired in 1-6 hours, failure indicates that the damage

will require a workshop and 1-6 days to repair. The mechanic will know roughly how long repairs will take before he starts work. Destroyed vehicles may not be repaired. Occupants of a destroyed vehicle take 1-6D6 damage and if conscious and mobile, can evacuate the wreck along with their armour, life support kit and a single weapon or item of their choice.

If a starship or smallcraft is the target, then a Disable shot indicates one hit on the Hit Location table in Book 2. A Destroyed result indicates *two hits* on a single location rolled on the Hit Location table. See Damage Definitions on page 32 of Book 2: Starships.

STДЯSHIPS

"Popping, humming and wheezing, the [Soviet] station had the feel of a subway and the dank metallic reek of a tramp steamer."

William Gibson

The rules for starships in Book 2: Starships need almost no addition or modification. But it is still worth looking at a few of the book's sections to see how those rules should be interpreted within **KOSMOS 68**.

PIRATES!

Who are the pirates in this setting? As mentioned in the Kosmos 68 chapter, any result of 'pirates' rolled on Book 2's Starship Encounter table will be a zhuki ship half of the time, the other half it will be crewed by a gang of cut-throats and commanded by a criminal *vor*, raiding merchant ships and smuggling in order to send the profits back to his crime syndicate. These human pirates always have a legitimate cover story as traders or prospectors.

LOW BERTH

Low berth, also called 'cryo' or 'stasis', was designed for shipping hundreds of Soviet prisoners, either political or criminal out to the interlags that were set up as colonial start-up endeavours. As the worlds of the CCCP became more established and societies more developed, the need for forced labour lessened. Today, the low berth system is relegated as a third class method of transport for those travellers without roubles, or Party connections. However, the danger of death from using the cryogenic low berths developed for prisoners, still exists.

DISTANCE TO THE DESTINATION WORLD

Sometimes you'll want to know how much time it takes to get to your destination, so here's a quick-n-dirty Jump Navigation append: Roll 2d6 for 8+, on a success you come out of jump space 2D6 hours from the destination planet. Subtract 1 hour per skill level, minimum 1 hour. On failure you come out 1D6 days from the destination. Subtract 5 hours per skill level.

SIMPLIFIED SHIP COMBAT

If a starship combat encounter should occur it should be possible to use the combat rules in Book 2 as written. However, there may be others wishing to focus on trading, planetary adventures and interpersonal conflicts; a simple fast resolution space combat system is provided for that here, based on rules found in the skill entry for Small Craft, in Book 1.

For a ship wanting to escape an attack, throw 2D6 for a 10+, add Pilot skill to this throw. If this escape attempt fails, then roll 8+ to avoid being hit by incoming laser or missile fire. Again, add Pilot skill to this roll. Alternate between these two task rolls until the ship escapes or is hit. Add a DM here or there to simulate pursuit by a fighter, attack from a heavy missile barrage or from

several laser turrets. If the ship is hit then roll 2D6, on a result of 5-12 it is crippled and may be boarded, on a result of 2-4 then the craft is destroyed and must be abandoned. If the player's starship is attacking another vessel, then make the same set of rolls on behalf of the fleeing ship. For those times when two ships go toe to toe in a stand-up space battle, then let both sides roll 2D6 to avoid being hit as above. Skip the attempt to escape task. This system requires some adjudication and improvisation - err on the side of drama and fun! I feel that this rule perfectly fits the improvisational, free-wheeling nature of Classic Traveller.

STANDARD SHIP DESIGNS
The Classic Traveller ship designs can be given a little setting flavour. We have also added the Lab Ship and Safari Ship from The Traveller Book.

STARSHIPS

Scout/Courier	Silka S-Class Scout Craft
Scout	Skiff SB-Class Scout Craft
Seeker	Luna J-Class Mining Craft
Free Trader	Semyorka A-Class Light Transport
Far Trader	Strela AF-Class Light Transport
Subsidized Merchant	Tochka R-Class Starfreighter
Subsidized Liner	Bulava M-Class Starliner
Yacht	Elbruz Y-Class Executive Transport
Mercenary Cruiser	Novator C-Class Light Assault Carrier
Patrol Cruiser	Iskander T-Class Patrol Ship
Laboratory Ship	Desna L-Class Research Vessel
Safari Ship	Pioner K-Class Exploration Craft

PДTЯOИS

1. ALEXEI BALANOVSKAYA [INTERKOSMOS AGENT]

This Interkosmos agent hires the PCs to deliver much needed supplies to Station Donetsk in the Radrokan system. Unfortunately, the station has been taken over by a contngent of 12 prisoners on their way to a life sentence at the Baikal Interlag. Their prison ship docked due to power failures which also forced its crew to temporarily unfreeze the prisoners. They have killed the crew and now have control of the station. They need the PCs' ship to get away, and will trick them into docking as normal . This is a *Die Hard* or *Lockout* type of scenario.

2. STANISLAV MAJEWSKI [GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRAT]

Entering the Sartang system, traffic control vectors you out towards the gas giant where an unknown object is floating in space. It turns out to be a returning scoutship from the Abyss – just 3 years late and parsecs from its launch point. Is the pilot still on board (alive, dead or insane)? What did his ship bring back from the Abyss, and is it safe? Should the PCs get involved?

3. ROMAN LEBEDEV [THOUGHT POLICE AGENT]

The PCs are contacted by an officer of the 'Thought Police', the MGB (or Bureau of Corrective Thoughts - *byuro korrektiruy ushchikh mysley*) for a top secret mission. They must ferry him, one of the MGB's top operatives, onto the primitive steam-level world of Jukta. An enemy of the state has fled from captivity en route to the Baikal Interlag, with Jukta his likeliest destination. It was once an interlag and he will be able to blend in very easily amongst the primitive agricultural communities. He is a mass murderer, responsible for the bombing of the Danesh express monorail in Kosmos 21 and the deaths of 248

innocent people. The PCs must make a routine cargo drop on Jukta, fake a breakdown and then assist Lebedev in his pursuit of the criminal (named as Jacob Voss). *Referee's Information:* All may be as described, or Voss may be a dissident telepath, hoping to make contact with the banned group the Iron Circle, a rumoured secret society of rogue telepaths trying to avoid service with the Thought Police. Or both stories might be true, Voss is a dissident telepath and the Iron Circle is a terror group …

4. SASHA ORLOV [GROUND FORCES MAJOR]
Major Orlov is an intelligence officer in the army of Karpovo, currently at war with a violent uprising fought by the self-proclaimed Worker's Revolutionary Force (*rabochaya revolyutsionnaya sila*, or RRS). An automated mineral mass driver catapult on Karpovo's only moon has begun to malfunction, and one mineral rock has just hit the surface of Karpovo on uninhabited ground (thankfully). The PCs are directed by her to land at the catapult, assess the malfunction and have their engineer fix it. *Referee's Information*: Actually, the catapult is under the control of an artificially intelligent computer. An RRS terror team seized the mass driver catapult on the moon and were about to turn it against the large populated cities of peaceful Karpovo, but they botched the reprogramming so badly the computer became self aware, killed all the terrorists using its automated machinery and environmental controls and is now sending practice shots toward Karpovo ready to destroy its cities. Can the PCs stop it in time?

5. YURI SOKOLOV [MARSHAL & PARTY OFFICIAL]
What's the gossip on the Archangel orbital ring – the Koleso? If you dig deep, maybe bribe someone, or do someone a favour – the PCS might find this out: Secretary-Marshal Yuri Sokolov is a top-tier Party official, a member of the Stavka ruling committee of the subsektor. He is one of the important Party Secretaries and has been calling for civillian administration to be reinstated, claiming that the phenomenon called *rastavatsaya*, or 'social breakdown' is no more than the effect of long distance time lag between Earth and the frontier. The rumour has it that he murdered his wife a few months ago, because she was going to denounce his links with various revolutionary groups (whether true or not, the rumour-monger does not say). The Stavka keep rebuffing Secretary-Marshal Orlov, but he is an influential man who cannot be quietly silenced. They would love to hear this news (with evidence, please). It would mean the PCs following breadcrumbs, talking to people on Koleso that could connect them to a member of one of these groups … but that is dangerous in itself. Alternatively, the PCs might want to attempt extortion – Secretary-Marshal Orlov might pay well to keep this thing quiet (if true). What do you do?

6. KATYA IVANOV [SCIENTIST]
Ferry Ivanov to a lab ship studying animal morphology in the Murukta system. Nearby is a zhuki scoutship, crippled and empty. The lab ship is not responding. It is chaos on-board the lab ship (after they can force entry), the place is a mess – there has been fighting here. Rescue the crew, someone must be alive, they are signalling SOS on the radio transceiver. Two zhuki are trying to kill the scientist and recover stolen twenty zhuki eggs that the lab ship crew were experimenting on. The alien ship was hit by a volley of missiles from the lab ship's defence system. The zhuki intend to use vital parts from the lab ship's engine room to fix their ship and jump back into 'zhuki-space'.