

The Directing Oligarchs of Greyhawk

Power Groups

by Sam Weiss

In the last half of the sixth century, a political alliance seized control of the Directing Oligarchy of the City of Greyhawk and set in motion a series of events that nearly destroyed the Free City. Led by Nerof Gasgal, the machinations of this junta upset the careful balance of power on the Oligarchy that had persisted since its creation nearly four centuries earlier.

*Pluffet Smedger, the Elder
Royal University at Rel Mord
CY 998*

In CY 209, the Overking of the Great Kingdom appointed the local garrison commander Ponjes the Bull Landgraf of the Selintan after the assassination of Lucien Nial. Eager to avoid his predecessor's fate, Ponjes chose to style himself the first Lord Mayor of Greyhawk and created the Directing Oligarchy, composed of civic, religious, and military leaders, to share his rule. Self-perpetuating, the Oligarchy chooses new members as others retire, and selects one of their number to rule as Lord Mayor for life. This political structure relies on a careful balance between the conflicting interests of various groups and is susceptible to abuse if one faction becomes too strong.

Current Oligarchs

Lord Mayor Nerof Gasgal

The current Lord Mayor of Greyhawk, Nerof Gasgal (male human rogue 10/expert 5, AL LN, Bluff +35) is 58 years old and has been the Lord Mayor for 28 years. A distinguished, highly capable, and charming man, he leads a respectable life as the proprietor of a high quality gaming house. Despite these pretensions, everyone is well aware of his background, and it is likely this is the reason he remains single. Although Nerof courts the city's elite, they privately sneer at his occasional lapses into Slum Quarter accent, friendship with Org Nenshen, and fortune built on gambling. While unable to gain their acceptance, Nerof holds their silent consent out of fear; a series of business reversals, tragic "accidents," and thefts destroyed the one noble family foolish enough to snub him in public.

Sir Gavin Ambus

The Oligarchs chose Sir Gavin Ambus (male human fighter 13, AL LG) in 596 to replace the utterly corrupt Etin Derecs as Chief Constable. Despite his advanced age (he is 80 years old) Sir Gavin has a reputation for effectiveness from his long years as Guildmaster of the Nightwatchmen. That service has also made him very popular with the common people, who see him as a bastion of honesty and decency in a corrupt city. Sir Gavin has done an excellent job cleaning up the City Watch and has built a personal as well as professional relationship with Captain-General Gellner. He lives quietly with his wife. In the past he was fond of the opera, but his advanced age and duties now leave him little free time, and he prefers to spend it with his many children and grandchildren.

Glodreddi Bakkanin

The Inspector of Taxes for the Greyhawk Revenue Services, in his two centuries of life Glodreddi Bakkanin (male dwarf rogue 12, AL LE, Profession (tax man) +22) has never met a coin he did not want. Utterly corrupt and more vicious than Vesper, Glodreddi is a foul excuse for a dwarf. He is a key member of Nerof's faction, financing Nerof's schemes while skimming off as much as possible for his own coffers. No one other than Nerof and Org (who was bookkeeper for the Thieves' Guild before becoming a member of the Oligarchy) has ever come away happy from a meeting with Glodreddi. Glodreddi lives alone in a house in the High Quarter.

Stimtrin Cannasay

A virtual non-entity, Stimtrin Cannasay (male dwarf expert 6, AL LN) is an officer of the Merchants' and Traders' Union who replaced a previous officer 9 years ago, when the Oligarchs had quietly removed Laup Cobrun when they discovered Matriarch Janziduur of Tritheron was blackmailing him. His last name is actually a nickname, deriving from his oft repeated response of "I canna' say" to any question before lecturing on it until the questioner is able to escape. Stimtrin is 163 years old and has no known vices outside of being oppressively dull.

Ravel Dasinder

Ravel Dasinder (male human cleric 10/divine oracle 10 [Boccob], AL N) is the Patriarch of Boccob in Greyhawk, one of the religious leaders serving on the Oligarchy. He is well known for his oracular ability, and many wonder what he has foreseen. He is a steadfast proponent of the welfare of the city and seems quite tolerant of Nerof's actions. He is a close ally of Mordenkainen.

Tigran Gellner

Tigran Gellner (male fighter 12, AL LN) has been the Captain-General of the Watch and the commander of Greyhawk's armed forces for fifteen years. At 53 years of age, he is a mature, experienced leader and demonstrated his military ability this past year by driving the forces of Turrosh Mak back across the border after their invasion. A devout follower of Pholtus, he married a cleric of the faith and started a family ten years ago. His faith has not interfered with his close relationships to Eritai and Sir Gavin. Though small, this is an incredibly potent power block that controls all of the lawful armed and law enforcement groups within the city and has the support of the great mass of honest tradesmen and laborers within the city.

Carmen Halmaster

A high-ranking member of the Merchants' and Traders' Union, Carmen Halmaster (male human rogue 8, AL N) is another not-so-secret member of the Thieves' Guild and an open ally of Nerof. He is likely the wealthiest member of the Oligarchy, with a fortune built on an uncanny ability to predict changes in trade patterns. A former smuggler, he dominates the cloth trade to such an extent that the Clothworkers' Guild holds its meetings in his trading house. Carmen is 64 and lives alone behind layers of security. An attack by an assassin sent by an evil cult left him crippled shortly before the Greyhawk Wars, and he has grown more paranoid with every passing year.

Torrentz Hebvard.

The President of the Society of Magi, Torrentz Hebvard (male human wizard 12, AL LN) is one of the few wizards in the city to take an active role in politics. Torrentz is 88 years old, but has access to some form of magic that makes him considerably more able, having married a moderately wealthy cleric of Zilchus a decade ago. He advocates total neutrality for Greyhawk, opposing the support Nerof has given to Furyondy and Nyronde over the years, and constantly warning of the dangers of the United Kingdom of Ahlissa.

Gerda Hollardel

Gerda Hollardel (human female expert 5/rogue 1 AL CN) replaced her father as Guildmaster of the Jewelers' and Gemcutters' Guild ten years ago. She was involved with Dernan before then, mixing illegal business with pleasure. Years of speculation of their affair were confirmed when their engagement was announced just last month. Only his influence keeps her on the Oligarchy due to her independent nature and exceptionally poor political judgment. Gerda is 39 years old but still more than capable of holding Dernan's attention.

Kieren Jalucian

The Guildmaster of the Guild of Wizardry and Principal of the Greyhawk University of Magical Arts, Kieren Jalucian (male human wizard 13/archmage 5, AL NG) maintains a notorious relationship with Jallarzi Sallavarian of the Circle of Eight. The two of them regularly attend major social events of the city, and, rumor has it, some of the seedier ones. Kieren attracts attention for his appearance, never appearing less than perfectly groomed. He appears to be in his late 30s but is certainly more than 100 years old. How he maintains that appearance is subject to much gossip in the city.

Eritai Kaan-Ipzirel

A member of the Oligarchy for 14 years, Eritai Kaan-Ipzirel (female cleric 14 [St. Cuthbert], AL LN) has made herself Nerof's chief opponent. She is the matriarch of St. Cuthbert in the city, and has immense support from the common people as well as from the law and military of the city. Eritai is closely allied to Tigran and Sir Gavin. She would love nothing more than to clean up the government of the city, though it is unlikely Nerof will give her the chance. Eritai is 51 years old and has been divorced five times. Many bookmakers take bets on whether she will be divorced again before Nerof manages to get her off the Oligarchy.

Vesparian "Vesper" Lafanel

The Guildmaster of Assassins, Vesper Lafanel (male grey elf rogue 3/wizard 5/arcane trickster 7/assassin 3, AL NE) masquerades as the quiet owner of a pawnshop. He is one of the most dangerous people in the entire Domain. An absolute sociopath, Vesper acknowledges the existence of only a very few friends; the rest of the world are merely people he has not yet been paid to kill. Vesper has a special dislike of dwarves, something that lingers unspoken in his relation to Glodreddi Bakkanin, as both are members of Nerof's faction.

Cariel Mansharn

Another member of the Merchants' and Traders' Union, at 46 Cariel Mansharn (male human duskblade 8, AL LE) is the youngest man on the Oligarchy. His ability to deal with sudden problems quickly has gained him a position in Nerof's clique, but his increasingly violent temper is becoming an issue and he may find himself replaced if he cannot get it under control.

Dernan Nathane

The current Guildmaster of the Merchants' and Traders' Union, Dernan Nathane (male human swashbuckler 2/rogue 10, AL N, knowledge [local – Core] +24) is a highly successful, well-liked, 54-year-old businessman. As the guildmaster of the Union, Dernan wields enormous influence in the city and is second only to Nerof on the

Oligarchy. There is very little about Greyhawk that he does not know, and this knowledge has secured his place in Nerof's faction. He votes with Stakaster to improve roads and infrastructure, which puts him at odds with Glodreddi. He also supports trade with all nations, including Ahlissa and perhaps even the Pomarj. His personal life is unremarkable, his only known transgression being his long running affair with Gerda Hollardel (which was confirmed when they announced their engagement.) His reputation is otherwise spotless, and he is much admired for his restraint and self-control. Conventional wisdom is that Dernan will continue to have a variety of affairs on the side, which will be kept reasonably discrete.

Org Nenshen

The Guildmaster of the Thieves' Guild, Org Nenshen (male human rogue 18, AL LN, Bluff +35) poses as a businessman for the sake of appearances, despite everyone being well aware of who and what he is. Org is 59 and in amazing shape his age. His capabilities, and routine use of them, make thieves a third his age green with envy. He is a close friend of Nerof, something that amazes observers who find it incredible that two notorious thieves truly trust each other so completely. It is this trust that has helped them to create one of the strongest and most enduring power blocks in the history of the Oligarchy.

Stakaster Villaine

The Patriarch of Zilchus, Stakaster Villaine (male human cleric 20 [Zilchus], AL LN) is 61 years old, widowed, and leads a quiet life. His economic sense and planning ability is unmatched in the city, although his opposition to taxation and insistence on spending money to improve roads and other infrastructure makes Glodreddi grind his teeth. Stakaster also supports improved relations with Nyrond and Ahlissa, something that has put him at odds with Torrentz since the wizard married into the church of Zilchus.

Recently Retired

Turin Deathstalker

The former Guildmaster of Assassins and current Commander of Safeton, Turin Deathstalker (male human level and class unknown, AL LE) is probably the most dangerous person in the entire Domain, archmages such as Tenser and Rary notwithstanding. His hatred of the orcs and goblins of the Pomarj is well known, and many suspect that given enough time he could in fact depopulate the entire "nation" of Turrosh Mak by himself.

Etin Derecs

A militia officer who became Warden of the Citadel, Etin Derecs (male human fighter 13, AL LE) replaced Derider as Constable of Greyhawk when she retired in 591. Etin was corrupt before then, and Nerof expected to put that to work for him. Unfortunately, Etin proved loyal only to himself and was soon collecting immense bribes to allow people to roam the city with whatever weapons they liked. The violence this caused soon became too great for Nerof to ignore, and Etin "retired" for health reasons. The new Constable, Sir Gavin Ambus, enforces the laws to the letter, much to the dismay of the many adventurers who rampaged freely during Etin's tenure.

Derider Fanshen

A former Constable of the City, Derider Fanshen (female human cleric 7/radiant servant 7 [Pelor], AL NG) retired at the end of 591 to pursue a life of service to Pelor. Well known for her mercy, compassion, and clumsiness, everyone misses her. Even Nerof has come to regret her leaving, as the priceless works of art she routinely tripped over and destroyed were worth considerably less than what the corruption of Etin Derecs cost, or what the uncompromising honesty of Sir Gavin Ambus now costs.

Jerome Kasinkaia

The patriarch of Rao in Greyhawk, Jerome Kasinkaia (male human cleric 20 [Rao], AL LG, Diplomacy +45) retired in 596. He was over 90 at the time, and worn out by the politics of the Oligarchy. He is a master diplomat and close friend of Bigby, and is believed to have retired to Mitrik.

Sir Anton Palmirian

The Guildmaster of the Lawyers', Scribes', and Accountants' Guild, Sir Anton Palmirian (male human expert 12, AL LE) was an evil, corrupt, vindictive man. Through his immense political power and thorough knowledge of the legal system of the city, he was able to gain a position on the Oligarchy, and then used it and his position as a judge to increase his wealth for years until his death in 597. His power was so great and Nerof so relieved to have him gone that he has not been replaced on the Oligarchy.