



## Uller Uprising

*H. Beam Piper*

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"ZNIDD SUDDABIT!"

So the Ulleran challenge begins, with the rantings of a prophet and a seemingly incidental street riot. Only when a dose of poison lands in the governor-general's whiskey does it become clear that the "geeks" have had it up to their double-lidded eyeballs with the imperialist Terran Federation's Chartered Uller Company. Then, overnight, war is everywhere.

How it will end is in the (merely) two Terran hands of the new governor-general, a man shrewd enough to know that "it is easier to banish a habit of thought than a piece of knowledge." The problem is, the particular piece of knowledge he needs hasn't been used in 450 years. . . .

## **Uller Uprising Details**

Date : Published June 1st 1983 by Ace (first published 1952)

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Author : H. Beam Piper

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## From Reader Review Uller Uprising for online ebook

### Wayne says

Uller Uprising is one of Piper's early books. It involves the occurrences on a planet with a native species which is silicon based, and far different culturally than humans.

Strife between the humans and the Ullerans has existed since the Chartered Uller Company was licensed to exploit the resources of the planet. This comes to a head because of a native misunderstanding of the humans.

The book is wonderful. Tons of action, strong characters, and best of all, it is totally plausible. Piper based the story on the Sepoy Mutiny. In fact if you read this book, you should also read *The Red Fort* by James Leasor. *The Red Fort* is about the East India Company and the Sepoy Mutiny, and will show you how Piper adapted real historical events to build an exciting novel.

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### Pete McCutchen says

#### Classic Midcentury SF

For those easily offended by a retrograde political subtext, this is not the book for you. Indeed, if you take this sort of thing seriously, you might even be triggered. But it is a classic. Interesting world building, crisp writing, and a quick pace. And it is not a doorstop.

Kindle formatting is a bit wonky.

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### B. Zedan says

Piper clearly has a thing about how native peoples are treated, which I was familiar with from *Oomphel*. This story was originally part of a set of novellas that were based on a seed idea written by Dr. Clark. He gave the writers two worlds to work with and they ran with it. Piper threw in the "Bengal uprising against English-held India" (as stated nicely in a very good introductory essay about Piper's work by John F. Carr). We are also introduced to the common theme of Piper's characters having a cocktail hour and smoking, something that is kind of both soothing and off-putting.

Seriously though, the intro essay is really great and pretty much covers the themes that made me want to tear through the *Terro-Human* series—

In these stories we see *Terro-Humans* at their best and at their worst: Individual heroism and bravery in the face of grave danger in *Uller Uprising*; Federation law and justice in *Little Fuzzy* and its sequels; and, in "Omnilingual" and "Naudsonce," the spirit of science and rational inquiry. Yet we also see colonial exploitation and subjugation in *Uller Uprising* and "Oomphel in the Sky," the greed and corruption of Chartered land companies in *Little Fuzzy*, and political corruption in *Four-Day Planet*. These stories are

about a living Terro-Human culture, not a utopia.

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## **Buck says**

Uller Uprising is a story about the military forces of a mining company on an extra-terrestrial planet using atomic bombs to put down a native rebellion. The story references are quite dated, perhaps understandably so since the novel was written not long after World War II. One of the main characters is an Argentine of Nazi heritage. There are references to Hitler, Luftwaffe, burp guns, bayonets, etc. The story itself is just so-so.

I heard a LibriVox audiobook. Apparently H. Beam Piper's books are in the public domain. I've heard a number of LibriVox audiobooks that were quite well read, unfortunately, in this case, the book was read by various readers and the reading was mostly amateurish. I was annoyed by mispronunciations and many instances of putting the emPHAsis on the wrong syllABLE. I suspect the quality of the reading may have affected my rating of the book.

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## **Nathan Trachta says**

At times I enjoy going into by stack of books and picking one of the “oldies” out and re-reading them. Recently I was in the mood for a good space opera and while browsing thru I bumped into the Uller Uprising by H. Beam Piper; score!!!

Uller Uprising is Mr. Piper's futuristic retelling of the Indian Mutiny (1857 CE for those that are interested). As with India in 1857; Uller is a corporate world where the native (silicon based life with four arms and looking like a lizard) is “guided” by the Uller Corporation. The similarities between Uller and India circa 1857 include Pax Terra, the use of a corporate military to protect the company's interest, and the natives not being as advanced as humans and the relationship between humans and Ullerans.

I'll open up by saying this is a solid 4.5 book (sorry if you're a fan of Pipers and like this one, there's others he did that I prefer and I tend to factor that into my ratings a little). While parts of the story are dated a little; particularly the technology and human social structure, this takes nothing away from the story. Focus is on telling the Human/Uller relationship and the uprising of the Ullerans against the humans. This was done outstandingly by using the Indian Mutiny and manipulating it for a space opera. What makes this more amazing is Mr. Piper developed this story at an age when he couldn't access the internet to pull his “history” together but rather by knowledge or by educating himself. When you merge this with his light coating of politics you have a plot that few can beat (for those not familiar, most Piper books discuss politics in various forms. In my opinion Mr. Pipers works became the foundation for most modern political science fiction). The characters are interesting but not dominating or “memorable”. Von Schlichten is a stereo-type hero in many ways with good foils to work with. Btw, for those not familiar, there's a young Major Falkenberg mentioned in here. As a tribute to his appreciation of H. Beam's work, it's reported Mr. Pournelle reused the name for his main character. Having written this and knowing rating systems don't permit half stars, I'll round down to 4 stars because none of the characters were as strong as I like and the fact that I'd rather read Space Viking, Four Day Planet, or the Lone Star Planet by Mr. Piper.

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## **Adam Windsor says**

I am conflicted.

On the one hand, this is an eye-poppingly jingoistic SF re-telling of the Indian Rebellion of 1857, with the Indians replaced by lizard-like aliens referred to by the slur 'geeks'. And the hero, such as there is one, is canonically the descendant of Nazis.

On the other hand, the human cast is so resolutely multicultural, and said hero so frank about his ancestors being war criminals, though I can hold out some hope that old HBP was making a sly point behind all the casual speciesism.

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## **Sean Brennan says**

H. Beam Piper was one of the true unsung heroes of SF. who committed suicide in 1962 due to a lack of literary success.

This like most of his work deals more with philosophical issues and the fact that History endlessly repeating itself, the events in Uller Uprising following a similar pattern to the Indian Mutiny of the 19th Century against British rule. To lovers of the genre Piper is well worth searching out, you will be in for a pleasant surprise.

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## **Becky says**

One of Piper's longer books. I know like many of his works it's inspired from historical events, but as I don't actually know anything about British/American colonial history (it's kind of a blank spot for me), I can't draw any comparison that way. Not my favorite work of Piper's, but still enjoyable. Plenty of action, drama, heroes and heroines.

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## **Jared Millet says**

I'm kind of on the fence about this book. As a piece of military SF adventure from the Golden Age, it's pretty excellent and not nearly as clunky as many of Piper's contemporaries. Something about the whole story is a little *off*, though, and leaves a bad taste in my mouth. I'm not surprised to discover (after the fact) that the book is based in part on the Sepoy Mutiny in British-ruled India. What's unsettling is Piper's attitude toward colonialism and imperialism. At best, the case could be made (as is done in the introduction to the Gutenberg version) that Piper simply presents human nature as it always has been and as it is. However, the book reads as a full-on *endorsement* of imperialistic domination.

The hero who Piper would have us identify with is Carlos von Schlichten, proud Argentinian descendant of Nazi war-criminals. There is a token female character who begins the book standing up for "native rights" but she is quickly swayed to von Schlichten's "kill 'em all" attitude as soon as there's a whiff of danger. When the native Ullerans rebel, Piper makes no attempt whatsoever to identify with them or even explore the

reasons behind their uprising. The "good" aliens are simply those who are loyal to the Terran Federation, and the "bad guys" are all presented as savage ingrates who won't admit that being colonized and absorbed into Terran culture is the best thing for them. By the second chapter in, the Ullerans are simply referred to as "geeks" which, odd as it is for a fictitious race, becomes offensive pretty quickly.

I kept waiting for the other shoe to drop and for the natives to be presented in a different light than that seen by their human colonizers. That doesn't happen - once the uprising is inevitably stamped out and all those dirty heathens who dared to want political power *on their own planet, the scum*, no hint is ever given that their human overlords were ever in anything but the Right.

I don't know. Poe's law states that it is impossible to create a parody of an extreme viewpoint that someone won't mistake for the real thing; possibly this was all some kind of subtle satire that I just didn't get. It reads as a shockingly amoral tale of might making right, and in the end I can easily picture Gene Roddenberry wanting to kick H. Beam Piper's behind.

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### **\_ says**

I can't say that I really like this story. It is not written badly, but the perspective is Machiavellian and pro-Imperialism, which is not something I can agree with. That does not make it a bad book, but it does mean I don't care for it. The plot takes place on the Planet Uller, where the Terro-Human Uller Company (see East India Company) is in the process of 'civilizing' the native four-armed lizard men. They have allies and detractors among the natives. The detractors stage a rebellion, and the Humans respond with total war to put it down. I'm not against fighting a war with all you got, but I sympathize with any group whose home has been invaded and, despite consequential improvement in their standard of living, are still vassals. So, I give this book 2 stars and call it a Conflicted Viewpoint Read.

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### **John says**

Maybe it's the sixty-odd years of continued war in the shadow of the atomic genie, maybe it's my pacifist upbringing. While I know that love blooms even among the worst ugliness of this world, I just don't find a colonial nuclear war of subjugation a good setting for a love story.

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### **Gordon Burgess says**

Read this as a kid. All I remember is the awesome section on what silicon based life would be like.

And the ridiculous names that were a combination of different earth cultures, like, Mumbe O'Leary or Lars Gonzalez

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### **Jeff says**

Well thought out species and planet creation, some annoying tropes of 40's-50's sci-fi (smoking and

cocktails, main male character seldom flustered or shocked, female characters referred to as girls, never women nor by name - except the lead characters), and quite an ingenious retelling of the historical Sepoy Mutiny (1857 colonial India) 600 years into the Atomic Era, 21 light years from Earth.

The introduction by John Carr tells us that the novella itself has had an interesting history and the novella itself opens with a scientific treatise of the book's setting: the planet Uller in the Beta Hydi, discussing its geologic, atmospheric, and environmental composition and the effects on the evolution of sentient beings.

Creating "future histories" is a time-honored and has a proud tradition in the genre. H. Beam Piper's early contribution to the form is uniquely detailed and ... visceral. This quick read has power and will elicit real emotions.

I believe there is a free edition of this book on Project Gutenberg. Give it a try. At the least you'll get a kick out of one of the earliest uses of the term "geek" - and might even be upset by its meaning and casual use - discover why the native word for Humans is "Suddabit" - and groan at the derivation - and even support the native desire to Znidd Suddabit! What've you got to lose?

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### **Paul says**

Piper always felt that the past would continue to repeat in the future, and this story follows that concept. The Sepoy Mutiny was a terrible conflict, and Piper's twist into the future was a truly enjoyable read.

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### **Checkman says**

Some books hold up better than others in later years. I first read "Uller Uprising" in 1983. I was fifteen and viewed the world through the eyes of a fifteen year old. Then "Uller Uprising" was a terrific blood and thunder adventure novel. A little bit old fashioned, but that was okay. I loved the old adventure movies with Errol Flynn, John Wayne, Tyrone Power, Stewart Granger and Burt Lancaster and (at the time) "Uller Uprising" read like one of those great old Hollywood matinees. Sadly we all change. Times change and our perceptions and ideas change. It's inevitable.

So it's still a very effective military science fiction adventure novel. Piper was a pretty damn good writer from that era. Many feel that if he had hung on for just a few more years (he committed suicide in 1964) he would have finally experienced the success that he had pursued for so many years. His books are compact, fast moving, but intelligent with well thought out details and they're entertaining. This is still true and I can see why they appealed to my fifteen/sixteen year old self.

However I now see details in Piper's writings that I missed back then. Keep in mind that Piper was born in 1904 and was writing in the mid twentieth century. Racial relations and politics were *very* different from 2016. As a result there are definite racist aspects in his writing. In past reviews I have chided those readers who are incapable of reading older works and keeping the writer's opinions in perspective. One can't judge a novel written by a middle-aged man in 1900 by modern standards and I agree with this. However I am now going to dip my big toe in the pond of hypocrisy. Sorry.

The simple fact of the matter is that "Uller Uprising" is a good old fashioned, rousing, pro-imperialism

science fiction novel. Based on the 1857 Indian Mutiny (or Indian Rebellion of 1857 if you prefer) in which the sepoys of the East India Company's army rebelled against the East Indian Trading Company in the territories controlled by that company. It was a horrific event in which tens of thousands lost their lives and resulted in the British taking over all of India and the dissolution of the East Indian Trading Company. Not surprisingly many Indians don't see it as a "mutiny" but as a failed rebellion and many there refer to the event as India's First War of Independence. Like anything involving Humans there are many opinions and strong feelings across the board. However Piper doesn't worry about perspective. In "Uller Uprising" the Humans are running things because they are more capable. End of discussion. The natives are ungrateful and a little stupid as well. They outnumber the Humans and help will take months to get to them. Luckily Piper's hero is a self-reliant man (a common theme that runs throughout Piper's works) and he sorts things out.

The novel ends with the rebellion crushed and Humans firmly in control. There is a hint that the rebellion is understood to indicate that things aren't as rosy and everyone thought and there will be some reform, but at a moderate and controlled pace. The important thing is that the better species won and all is right in the universe.

Okay. Well I didn't remember that part of the book when I last read it back in 1983. I am not a soft-headed politically correct individual, but even for me "Uller Uprising" makes me rather uncomfortable. I guess I'm as much a product of my time as Piper was of his. By 1953 the world was definitely changing. The United States Army has received one hell of a big black eye at the hands of the Chinese in Korea, the British Empire was pretty much a memory and there were definite indications that black Americans were no longer satisfied with their status as second or third class citizens. I can't help but wonder if forty-nine year old Piper was writing in reaction to the changing times. This is just speculation of course, but what isn't speculation is that "Uller Uprising" will warm the hearts of pro-imperialists across the world. It's still a very entertaining novel, but be prepared to be a little uncomfortable at times.

So does this make me a hypocrite?

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