OFFICE OF IMPROBABLE JURISDICTION

Department of Delegated Powers, Incarnate Emissary Welfare, Cosmic Administration, and the Protection of Free Peoples

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THE SARUMAN PROCEEDINGS

On the Corruption of Delegated Authority, the Manufacture of Necessity, and the Industrial Administration of Isengard

A Continuing Inquiry into the Misuse of an Advisory Commission, the Conversion of Knowledge into Dominion, the Instrumentalization of Living Beings, and the Administrative Consequences of Attempting to Improve Middle-earth Without Its Consent

Office of Improbable Jurisdiction
November 14, 2026

NOTICE OF CONTINUING INVESTIGATION

The Office of Improbable Jurisdiction hereby continues its examination of the conduct, authority, and responsibilities of the Maiar, with particular attention to Curumo, known in Middle-earth as Saruman.

The preceding investigation concerning the Istari Mandate established that the Wizards were commissioned to assist the peoples of Middle-earth in resisting the power of Sauron.

They were not authorized to establish dominion over those peoples.

Nor were they sent to replace the will of Middle-earth with their own.

The present inquiry concerns the consequences of an emissary's decision to abandon that distinction.

Saruman possessed extraordinary knowledge.

He understood matters of craft, history, language, and power beyond the experience of most inhabitants of Middle-earth.

He enjoyed considerable standing among the Wise.

He occupied a position of leadership within the White Council.

He was entrusted with responsibilities whose significance extended far beyond the walls of Isengard.

These circumstances warrant consideration.

They do not establish innocence.

Neither do they establish guilt.

The Office will distinguish between documented conduct, reasonable inference, and questions that remain unresolved.

It will also distinguish between the possession of expertise and the authority to impose the conclusions of that expertise upon others.

This distinction is especially important where the expert has begun to regard disagreement as evidence of ignorance and obedience as evidence of understanding.

The Office observes that a person may accurately identify a danger while proposing a remedy that reproduces the essential character of that danger.

A guardian may become convinced that freedom is too fragile to survive without supervision.

An adviser may begin to regard consultation as an unnecessary delay.

A steward may conclude that the preservation of a thing requires its complete reorganization under his authority.

And an emissary sent to oppose domination may eventually discover that domination appears to be the most efficient means of accomplishing his mission.

The Office considers this development a matter of substantial concern.

The inquiry proceeds.

I. On the Original Authority of Curumo

Saruman was one of the Maiar, associated in earlier times with Aulë, whose province included craft and the substances of the world.

The Office recognizes that an association with craft does not itself establish a disposition toward corruption.

The making of things is not inherently an act of domination.

The shaping of material is not necessarily an injury to the living world.

Knowledge, industry, and technical skill may serve legitimate purposes.

The Office therefore rejects any interpretation under which Saruman's eventual misconduct is treated as the inevitable consequence of his abilities or origins.

His fall must be examined through the uses to which he put those abilities.

As an Istar, Saruman was commissioned to assist the peoples of Middle-earth in resisting Sauron.

His authority was thus limited by the purpose for which it had been entrusted to him.

The Office acknowledges that the commission required considerable discretion.

The circumstances of Middle-earth were complex.

Its peoples were divided.

Its histories were long.

Its dangers were often concealed.

An emissary attempting to address such conditions could not reasonably be expected to operate through a rigid sequence of instructions covering every possible contingency.

Nevertheless, discretion is not identical to sovereignty.

The authority to choose methods does not necessarily include the authority to abandon the purpose those methods were intended to serve.

Nor does the possession of superior knowledge establish that the persons receiving assistance have surrendered their right to make decisions.

The Office therefore enters the following preliminary distinction:

Saruman was entrusted with knowledge for the purpose of service. He was not entrusted with the peoples of Middle-earth as objects upon which that knowledge might be exercised.

The distinction is fundamental.

The investigation continues.

II. On the Difference Between Leadership and Dominion

Saruman occupied a position of prominence among the Wise and served as head of the White Council.

The Office recognizes that such standing may have been accompanied by legitimate expectations of judgment, coordination, and leadership.

These functions are not inherently improper.

A council may require someone to organize its deliberations.

A difficult undertaking may benefit from experienced leadership.

An individual possessing unusual knowledge may contribute substantially to collective decisions.

But the Office observes that leadership within a council does not establish ownership of the council's members.

Nor does it transform disagreement into insubordination.

Nor does it confer unrestricted authority over persons who have never consented to the council's jurisdiction.

The Office finds particular significance in the distinction between an advisory institution and an executive government.

The White Council was not a sovereign state.

Its members did not possess a general mandate to govern the Free Peoples.

Its deliberations did not authorize the permanent subordination of kingdoms, forests, households, or individual persons to the preferences of its presiding member.

The Office acknowledges that a leader may become frustrated by the limitations of consultation.

Others may disagree.

Others may hesitate.

Others may misunderstand the urgency of a threat.

The process may be slow.

Nevertheless, the inconvenience of consultation does not establish its illegitimacy.

The fact that others may choose unwisely does not, by itself, authorize an adviser to abolish their opportunity to choose.

The Office further observes that institutions sometimes become most vulnerable to abuse when a leader's expertise is treated as sufficient reason to dispense with institutional restraint.

An expert may come to believe that every objection merely demonstrates the objector's inferior understanding.

At that point, disagreement ceases to be information.

It becomes an obstacle.

And the institution originally established to bring multiple judgments together may gradually become an instrument for enforcing one person's judgment upon everyone else.

The Office considers this danger directly relevant to Saruman's conduct.

III. On the Manufacture of Necessity

The Office now turns to a central question.

How does an agent charged with opposing domination come to regard domination as necessary?

Saruman confronted a genuine threat.

Sauron's growing power endangered the peoples of Middle-earth.

The danger was not imaginary.

The possibility of catastrophe was not invented merely to justify extraordinary measures.

The Office therefore does not suggest that Saruman's concerns originated in an entirely fabricated emergency.

The danger was real.

The conclusions he drew from it require separate examination.

A genuine emergency may be used to justify measures that would otherwise be recognized as unacceptable.

The urgency of the circumstances may be presented as sufficient reason to suspend ordinary restraints.

Those who object may be accused of failing to appreciate the danger.

Those who hesitate may be described as obstacles to survival.

Those who question the proposed means may be treated as though they oppose the desired end.

In this manner, a legitimate concern may become the foundation of an illegitimate claim to authority.

The Office refers to this process as **the manufacture of necessity**.

The phrase does not imply that the underlying danger has been invented.

Rather, it describes the conversion of an actual danger into an assertion that one particular response has become unavoidable.

The distinction matters.

Sauron was dangerous.

It did not follow that Saruman must become like Sauron to defeat him.

The Ring was powerful.

It did not follow that the Ring must be possessed and used.

The peoples of Middle-earth were vulnerable.

It did not follow that their freedom was an obstacle to their preservation.

And Saruman possessed knowledge that others lacked.

It did not follow that his judgment must replace theirs.

The Office therefore enters a preliminary finding:

The reality of a threat does not establish the necessity of every measure proposed in response to it.

Nor does the sincerity with which an agent believes a measure necessary establish its legitimacy.

The Office recognizes that this principle places a substantial burden upon those exercising extraordinary authority during emergencies.

It considers the burden appropriate.

The greater the power claimed, the more consequential the distinction between what is genuinely necessary and what is merely preferred by the person exercising it.

IV. On Knowledge Withheld and Counsel Corrupted

The Office next considers Saruman's conduct within the White Council.

The surviving histories indicate that Saruman's knowledge concerning the Rings of Power and the movements of Sauron was not always shared with the candor expected of an adviser acting solely in the common interest.

His private interests increasingly diverged from the Council's purposes.

The Office recognizes that not every omission constitutes deception.

An adviser may lack certainty.

Information may be incomplete.

Confidentiality may sometimes be appropriate.

A recommendation may be mistaken without being dishonest.

Nevertheless, the deliberate withholding or distortion of material information for the purpose of advancing a private objective presents a different question.

An advisory institution depends upon the integrity of the information through which its members deliberate.

If one member possesses material knowledge and intentionally shapes the record to serve an undisclosed purpose, the resulting decision may retain the outward appearance of consultation while losing much of its substance.

The Office therefore distinguishes between participation in deliberation and manipulation of deliberation.

The former permits others to exercise judgment.

The latter attempts to determine the judgment they will exercise.

A council cannot meaningfully deliberate upon information that one of its members has deliberately arranged to mislead it.

The Office finds particular concern where the person controlling information is also regarded as an authority concerning that information.

The expertise that makes the person valuable to the institution may also make deception more difficult to detect.

The Office does not conclude that expertise itself should be distrusted.

It concludes that expertise should not be treated as an exemption from accountability.

Nor should the discovery of one expert's misconduct become an excuse to abandon the value of knowledge altogether.

The remedy for corrupted counsel is not necessarily the rejection of counsel.

It is the restoration of conditions under which counsel may be examined, questioned, and freely accepted or refused.

V. On the Voice of Saruman

The Office now addresses the respondent's unusual persuasive abilities.

Accounts of Saruman's voice describe a capacity to influence those who listened, making his words compelling and his interpretations difficult to resist.

The Office recognizes that influence is not inherently improper.

A person may speak beautifully.

A person may argue persuasively.

A person may possess unusual insight into the fears, hopes, and motivations of others.

These qualities do not automatically constitute coercion.

Nevertheless, the Office distinguishes between the communication of reasons and the manipulation of another person's capacity to evaluate those reasons.

This distinction is especially important when the speaker possesses extraordinary influence.

The Office therefore asks whether the listener is being assisted in understanding a situation or being induced to accept a conclusion through methods that impair independent judgment.

A persuasive argument may survive scrutiny.

Manipulation frequently attempts to prevent scrutiny from occurring.

The Office further recognizes that influence may operate without an explicit threat.

A person may be persuaded that disagreement is foolish.

That resistance is disloyal.

That obedience is the only responsible choice.

That the speaker alone understands the danger.

That the listener's doubts are evidence of weakness.

Through such methods, domination may begin before any formal command has been issued.

The Office considers the matter especially serious where the speaker was commissioned to strengthen the judgment of others.

An emissary charged with preserving freedom may not treat another person's capacity for independent judgment as a defect to be overcome.

The Office does not presume that every individual who listened to Saruman was wholly deprived of agency.

Nor does it suggest that all persuasion is equivalent to enslavement.

It does, however, find substantial grounds for concern regarding the respondent's use of influence to advance purposes inconsistent with his original commission.

Further retrospective examination is warranted.

VI. On the Use of the Palantír of Orthanc

The Office acknowledges that Saruman made use of the palantír housed within Orthanc.

The seeing-stones were instruments of extraordinary communication and perception.

Their use was not inherently improper.

The ability to communicate across great distances may provide substantial benefit.

Information can assist coordination.

Communication can reduce uncertainty.

A council confronting a distant enemy may reasonably seek means of understanding that enemy's movements.

Nevertheless, the Office observes that a communication system does not become trustworthy merely because it is powerful.

Nor does the ability to observe something establish that the observer understands the context of what has been seen.

The Office finds particular concern in Saruman's contact with Sauron through the stone.

Such contact exposed him to an adversary possessing considerable power and skill in manipulation.

The Office does not treat every subsequent action of Saruman as mechanically dictated by that contact.

The surviving accounts do not support so simple a conclusion.

Saruman retained ambitions of his own.

His intentions were not necessarily identical to Sauron's.

The Office therefore rejects the suggestion that his misconduct can be explained entirely by external influence.

To be manipulated is not necessarily to become innocent of every choice made under that influence.

Nor is awareness of manipulation sufficient to establish freedom from it.

The Office identifies a further administrative concern.

Saruman's communications created the possibility that information received from an adversary could influence decisions undertaken under the apparent authority of an institution dedicated to opposing that adversary.

The Office regards this as a substantial conflict.

An adversary's willingness to provide information should not be mistaken for an adversary's commitment to the recipient's welfare.

The Office further notes that the possession of a sophisticated communication instrument does not resolve the question of whether its user has exercised sound judgment.

A device may transmit information across great distances.

It cannot, by itself, establish the wisdom of the conclusions drawn from that information.

The Office recommends that future custodians of comparable instruments receive appropriate warnings concerning adversarial influence, evidentiary limitations, and the risks of treating access to information as equivalent to mastery of events.

The Office has not identified a surviving user manual for the palantír of Orthanc.

It declines to infer that no instructions were ever provided.

Nevertheless, the consequences suggest that any such instructions were not sufficient to prevent serious misuse.

VII. On the Industrial Administration of Isengard

The Office now considers the transformation of Isengard under Saruman's authority.

The surviving accounts describe extensive industrial and military activity.

The construction and operation of furnaces.

The preparation of weapons.

The assembly and organization of armed forces.

The excavation and modification of the surrounding land.

And the destruction of trees and other features of the living environment.

The Office recognizes that industrial activity is not inherently illegitimate.

The making of tools is not necessarily an act of violence.

The construction of infrastructure may serve legitimate purposes.

The transformation of land may be justified under appropriate circumstances.

The Office therefore rejects the proposition that Saruman's wrongdoing consisted simply in building things.

The question is what he built, for what purpose, by what means, and at whose expense.

In Isengard, technical capacity became increasingly organized around military domination.

The landscape was altered to accommodate that purpose.

Living beings and natural systems were treated as available resources.

The practical requirements of an expanding apparatus of power were permitted to determine what would remain and what would be destroyed.

The Office considers this distinction essential.

A forest may contain timber.

It does not follow that the forest is nothing more than timber.

A river may provide water for machinery.

It does not follow that the river exists only to serve machinery.

A worker may possess strength or technical skill.

It does not follow that the worker's value is exhausted by the labor that can be extracted.

And a population may possess resources useful to an institution.

It does not follow that the institution owns the population.

The Office recognizes that societies must make use of material resources.

It does not suggest that all human activity can occur without altering the natural world.

But use and ownership are not identical.

Neither are transformation and unrestricted disposal.

The presence of a resource does not establish an unlimited entitlement to consume it.

The Office therefore finds that the industrial administration of Isengard raises questions extending beyond environmental damage alone.

It concerns the conversion of a living place into an instrument of power.

Saruman did not merely construct machinery within Isengard. He increasingly organized Isengard as though everything within reach of the machinery existed for its use.

The Office regards this as a substantial departure from the purposes of his original commission.

VIII. On the Destruction of the Forest

The Office directs particular attention to the destruction of trees surrounding Isengard.

The forests of Fangorn and the lands adjoining Isengard were not vacant spaces awaiting productive occupation.

They were part of a living world with histories, relationships, and inhabitants whose interests could not reasonably be reduced to Saruman's industrial requirements.

The Office recognizes that the Ents possessed an unusual relationship with trees.

It further recognizes that the distinctions among Ents, Huorns, and other trees should not be disregarded merely because they complicate the administrative classification of affected parties.

The fact that a being does not resemble an ordinary human complainant does not establish that its interests are nonexistent.

Nor does the inability of an institution to communicate easily with a population justify treating that population as incapable of suffering harm.

The Office therefore rejects the assumption that the absence of an ordinary system of written property claims establishes the absence of legitimate interests in the land.

The trees were not made available for destruction merely because they had not filed objections in a form Saruman preferred.

The Office considers the matter particularly serious where the destruction was undertaken to support military expansion.

The environmental harm was not merely incidental to a neutral undertaking.

It formed part of the material preparation for coercive power.

The Office acknowledges that the precise ecological consequences cannot be reconstructed through modern environmental assessment methods.

No complete inventory of destroyed trees has been produced.

The number of affected inhabitants remains uncertain.

The long-term effects upon the surrounding landscape require interpretation from the surviving accounts.

The Office will not invent measurements to create an appearance of precision.

It will, however, recognize the harm described.

An incomplete account of destruction is not evidence that the destruction was insignificant.

The Office further observes that the surviving record does not establish meaningful consultation with the Ents concerning the industrial transformation of their neighboring lands.

This absence is relevant.

It does not prove that no communication occurred under any circumstances.

It does raise substantial doubt that Saruman treated the affected inhabitants as participants whose judgment deserved consideration.

The Office regards such doubt as especially troubling in a respondent commissioned to preserve the freedom of others.

IX. On Labor, Command, and the Instrumentalization of Persons

The Office now considers the labor and military organization supporting Saruman's operations.

The respondent commanded forces composed of different peoples and beings, including Orcs and Men.

The surviving accounts describe military production, preparation for war, and systems of obedience.

The Office recognizes that the individual circumstances of those serving Saruman cannot be presumed identical.

Some may have joined willingly.

Others may have acted through fear, coercion, deception, or restricted alternatives.

Some may have possessed ambitions of their own.

Others may have been subject to conditions about which the surviving histories provide little reliable detail.

The Office therefore declines to treat every person within Saruman's forces as either wholly innocent or wholly without agency.

It likewise declines to assume that service under a corrupt authority eliminates all claims to humane treatment.

A person's participation in a harmful institution does not automatically establish that every harm inflicted upon that person is justified.

The Office distinguishes responsibility for misconduct from the conditions under which individuals were compelled or encouraged to participate in it.

The inquiry recognizes that military organization requires coordination.

It does not follow that those placed within a military system become disposable objects.

Nor does the existence of an enemy justify unlimited exploitation of those recruited to oppose that enemy.

The Office finds particular concern in institutional arrangements that encourage individuals to regard themselves, and those under their command, merely as instruments for achieving an objective.

Such arrangements permit responsibility to become progressively obscured.

An order is issued because the objective requires it.

The objective is pursued because the emergency demands it.

The emergency is invoked because the institution must survive.

And the institution's survival becomes its own justification.

The persons affected by these decisions may disappear from consideration altogether.

The Office therefore enters the following preliminary principle:

No institution may establish the legitimacy of its treatment of persons merely by demonstrating that the treatment increased its capacity to pursue an objective.

Efficiency is relevant to the performance of a task.

It is not, by itself, an adequate measure of the justice of the task or the methods employed.

X. On the Use of Historical Grievance

The Office recognizes that Saruman's influence extended beyond Isengard.

His dealings with the Dunlendings and his efforts against Rohan involved communities whose historical grievances cannot simply be dismissed as inventions of his propaganda.

The Office acknowledges that grievances concerning land, power, and historical dispossession may possess genuine foundations even when subsequently exploited by those pursuing unrelated ambitions.

It is therefore necessary to distinguish between the existence of a grievance and the uses to which that grievance is put.

A person who has suffered injustice may possess legitimate reasons for anger.

A community may remember losses that others prefer to forget.

A demand for recognition or redress does not become illegitimate merely because an opportunist discovers it can be used to mobilize support.

Nevertheless, the legitimacy of an injury does not establish the legitimacy of every response proposed in its name.

Nor does it authorize an outside power to convert another community's suffering into an instrument of private ambition.

The Office identifies a recurring danger.

A leader may offer recognition to those whose grievances have been neglected.

The recognition may be welcome.

The leader may then present cooperation with his own purposes as the necessary means of correcting those grievances.

At that point, the injured population risks becoming an instrument of an agenda that does not necessarily serve its welfare.

A grievance may be genuine even when the person offering to remedy it is not acting in good faith.

The Office therefore declines to treat Saruman's exploitation of historical conflict as proof that the underlying grievances were without substance.

It likewise declines to treat those grievances as sufficient justification for the respondent's conduct.

The two questions must be examined separately.

XI. On the Entmoot and the Exercise of Independent Remedies

The Office now addresses the response of the Ents to the destruction associated with Saruman's operations.

The Ents convened.

They deliberated.

They considered the condition of the forest and the conduct of the respondent.

They subsequently undertook direct action against Isengard.

The Office recognizes that the deliberative practices of the Ents differ substantially from those employed by mortal administrative institutions.

Their proceedings may extend over periods that an ordinary office would regard as unusually long.

The Office declines to interpret this circumstance as evidence of institutional inefficiency.

The Ents possessed reasons for their manner of deliberation.

Nor does the Office presume that the absence of conventional minutes establishes that no meaningful deliberation occurred.

The resulting action included extensive destruction of Saruman's works and the diversion of water into Isengard.

The Office acknowledges that the intervention substantially altered the physical condition of the respondent's industrial premises.

It further acknowledges that these alterations were not confined to the submission of a written complaint.

The Office therefore enters the following observation:

The Ents appear to have pursued certain remedies independently.

The Office has considered whether those remedies should be evaluated according to principles of necessity, proportionality, and the protection of persons not responsible for the underlying harm.

It considers such questions appropriate.

It also recognizes that the Ents acted during an active conflict in response to serious destruction and the continuing threat posed by Saruman's operations.

Their actions cannot reasonably be assessed as though they were ordinary municipal enforcement measures undertaken under peaceful conditions.

The Office therefore declines to enter a final proportionality finding on the present record.

It does, however, recognize that the Ents were not merely passive objects of environmental harm.

They possessed agency.

They made decisions.

They acted to defend their world.

The Office considers this especially relevant because Saruman's conduct had proceeded as though the living environment surrounding Isengard possessed no interests requiring his attention.

The subsequent response demonstrated that this assumption was mistaken.

The Office further observes that the flooding of an industrial complex may be effective in extinguishing fires and disabling machinery.

It does not follow that flooding constitutes an appropriate general remedy for every environmental violation.

No general authorization to inundate industrial facilities is entered.

The Office wishes this limitation to be clearly understood.

XII. On the Question of Restoration

The Office distinguishes between the cessation of harmful activity and the restoration of conditions damaged by that activity.

An industrial operation may be disabled.

A military threat may be defeated.

A destructive policy may be abandoned.

These developments may prevent further harm.

They do not necessarily repair what has already been damaged.

The destruction of a forest cannot be reversed merely by extinguishing the furnaces that consumed it.

The death of a living being cannot be undone by dismantling the machinery associated with that death.

Nor does the defeat of an aggressor automatically restore the relationships, communities, and environments disrupted by aggression.

The Office therefore recognizes restoration as a distinct concern.

Restoration may require time.

It may require the labor of those who remain.

It may require resources that the original perpetrator is no longer able or willing to provide.

And some losses may be impossible to reverse.

The Office considers this especially important in the case of Isengard.

The removal of Saruman's military and industrial works permitted the landscape to undergo substantial change.

The Ents participated directly in that transformation.

The Office recognizes their agency in both the destruction of the respondent's works and the subsequent reclamation of the place.

It further observes that the value of restoration should not be measured solely by whether a damaged landscape can be made to resemble its earlier condition.

A living place may continue to change.

Recovery need not be identical to reversal.

Nevertheless, the possibility of new growth does not render the original destruction harmless.

The capacity of a living world to recover is not permission to injure it.

The Office enters this principle into the record.

XIII. On the Continued Exercise of Power Following Defeat

The Office next considers the respondent's activities following the collapse of his power in Isengard.

The surviving histories establish that Saruman subsequently exercised destructive influence within the Shire.

The Office finds this development particularly significant.

It demonstrates that the corrupt purposes of an institution may survive the destruction of its principal infrastructure.

Saruman no longer possessed the industrial and military apparatus he had assembled at Isengard.

Nevertheless, he continued to seek control through intimidation, manipulation, and the exploitation of existing arrangements.

The Shire was subjected to destructive changes.

Rules and authority were employed against the inhabitants.

Trees were cut down.

Property and common life were disrupted.

Fear and obedience became instruments of administration.

The Office acknowledges that the local circumstances differed substantially from those of Isengard.

The Shire was not transformed into an identical industrial fortress.

Nevertheless, important similarities remained.

The respondent continued to treat other people's homes, possessions, and choices as available for the satisfaction of his own purposes.

The exercise of control remained more important than the welfare of those being controlled.

The Office therefore rejects the proposition that the loss of Saruman's earlier powers necessarily constituted the end of his misconduct.

A person may lose the capacity to dominate on a grand scale without relinquishing the desire to dominate on a smaller one.

The Office finds the distinction important.

An institution may be dismantled.

A leader may be removed.

An army may be defeated.

Yet the habits of domination may continue wherever the means to exercise them remain available.

The Office therefore considers the events in the Shire relevant to its broader inquiry into the corruption of delegated authority.

They demonstrate that the respondent's misconduct cannot be explained solely by the strategic necessities he claimed while confronting Sauron.

By the time he exercised influence in the Shire, his earlier claim to be organizing power against the Dark Lord had lost much of its apparent relevance.

What remained was the desire to command, diminish, and injure.

The Office regards this as substantial evidence concerning the character of his departure from the original mandate.

XIV. On the Resistance of the Hobbits

The Office considers the liberation of the Shire especially relevant to the principles established in the Istari Mandate.

The Hobbits confronted the disruption of their communities and organized resistance to the authority imposed upon them.

Their efforts were not simply the execution of a plan dictated by a superior supernatural guardian.

They acted through their own relationships, knowledge, judgment, and courage.

The Office acknowledges the significance of the experience acquired by those who had traveled beyond the Shire.

That experience contributed to their ability to recognize and confront the danger.

But the exercise of such judgment remained their own.

The Office therefore observes that resistance to domination need not require the installation of another dominating authority.

A community may recover the capacity to govern its affairs through the actions of its own members.

The Office finds this development particularly significant in light of Gandalf's earlier decision to entrust the returning Hobbits with the difficulties awaiting them.

The Office does not presume that withholding assistance is always justified.

Nor does it suggest that communities must be abandoned to dangers they cannot reasonably confront.

It does, however, recognize the value of assistance that strengthens rather than replaces another's capacity for action.

The success of a guardian may become visible at the moment the guardian is no longer required to decide what happens next.

The Office further notes the work of restoration undertaken within the Shire.

The replanting of trees.

The repair of damaged places.

The renewal of ordinary life.

These activities were not incidental to the recovery of freedom.

They formed part of it.

The Office therefore distinguishes between liberation understood merely as the removal of an oppressor and liberation understood as the recovery of a community's capacity to live.

The former may be accomplished through force.

The latter requires something more enduring.

It requires care.

It requires cooperation.

It requires the willingness to rebuild what another person found convenient to destroy.

The Office considers this distinction central to the present proceedings.

XV. On the Responsibility of Gríma

The Office acknowledges that Saruman's later activities involved Gríma, called Wormtongue.

The surviving accounts describe a relationship marked by manipulation, degradation, and eventual violence.

The Office recognizes that Gríma committed acts for which questions of personal responsibility remain relevant.

It does not propose to eliminate that responsibility merely because he was subject to Saruman's influence.

Neither does it consider the relationship adequately understood if that influence is disregarded.

A person may participate in wrongdoing while also being subjected to coercion, humiliation, or exploitation.

The two circumstances are not mutually exclusive.

The Office therefore rejects the assumption that persons involved in a corrupt institution must be classified exclusively as perpetrators or victims.

Some may be both.

Their responsibility for harm must be examined without erasing the harm inflicted upon them.

The Office further observes that domination may operate through the deliberate destruction of another person's dignity.

A leader may cultivate dependence.

May discourage independent relationships.

May reward obedience and punish disagreement.

May progressively diminish a subordinate's sense that any future remains available beyond the leader's control.

Such conduct is relevant even when the subordinate subsequently commits wrongdoing.

The Office does not conclude that every action undertaken by Gríma was wholly determined by Saruman.

It does conclude that the respondent's treatment of him forms part of the history requiring examination.

The final violence between them demonstrates the destructive consequences of a relationship in which power, resentment, fear, and humiliation had become deeply entangled.

The Office will not treat that ending as a satisfactory substitute for accountability.

The death of a wrongdoer does not necessarily resolve the conditions that made the wrongdoing possible.

Nor does it restore those who were harmed.

The Office therefore continues its inquiry into the institutional character of Saruman's conduct despite the respondent's unavailability for direct examination.

XVI. On the Failure of Oversight

The Office now returns to the institutions responsible for the original commission.

Saruman was not an ordinary ruler who acquired authority solely through the political arrangements of Middle-earth.

He was an emissary.

His presence and mission originated in a decision made by powers beyond the societies among whom he was sent.

The Office has previously recognized the difficulty of reviewing that decision.

It does not presume compulsory jurisdiction over the Valar.

Nevertheless, a commission whose purpose is to preserve freedom raises questions concerning the supervision of those entrusted with carrying it out.

The Office therefore asks whether the limitations imposed upon Saruman were accompanied by any effective means of identifying and responding to serious departures from the commission.

The surviving record does not establish a comprehensive system of periodic review.

Nor does it establish that the commissioning Powers possessed a routine procedure for receiving complaints from the peoples affected by an emissary's conduct.

The Office does not infer that no communication or oversight occurred.

It does, however, observe that the absence of a clearly identifiable corrective mechanism complicates the assessment of institutional responsibility.

The question is not whether Saruman possessed independent will.

He did.

Nor is it whether those who commissioned him could have prevented every possible misuse of that will.

The Office makes no such assertion.

The question is whether a system that entrusts extraordinary authority to an agent should also consider how those affected by that agent's conduct may seek protection when the authority is abused.

A restriction that exists only in the instructions given to the powerful may offer limited protection to those who must endure the consequences of its violation.

The Office recognizes that this observation presents a difficult problem.

To compel Saruman's obedience through overwhelming force might itself have raised questions concerning the proper exercise of divine power.

Yet the refusal to intervene may expose others to substantial harm.

The Office does not propose that this dilemma can be resolved through a simple administrative rule.

It does, however, reject the assumption that the dilemma disappears merely because no convenient remedy has been identified.

The absence of an easy answer is not evidence that no question exists.

The inquiry remains open.

XVII. Preliminary Findings

Following review of the surviving accounts, the Office enters the following provisional findings.

First. Saruman's original authority derived from a commission whose purpose was to assist the peoples of Middle-earth in resisting domination.

Second. His knowledge, status, and position within the White Council did not establish an unrestricted right to govern those peoples.

Third. The reality of Sauron's threat did not establish the necessity or legitimacy of every measure Saruman proposed in response.

Fourth. Saruman's conduct demonstrates the danger of treating superior knowledge as sufficient justification for replacing the judgment of others.

Fifth. The manipulation or withholding of material information may compromise the integrity of collective deliberation even where the outward forms of consultation remain intact.

Sixth. Extraordinary persuasive ability creates heightened concerns where it is used to secure obedience rather than assist independent judgment.

Seventh. Access to powerful means of communication does not establish that the information received is reliable, complete, or free from adversarial manipulation.

Eighth. The respondent's industrial activities at Isengard cannot be evaluated solely by their technical sophistication or productive capacity. Their purposes and consequences are material to the inquiry.

Ninth. The destruction of forests and the disregard of their inhabitants raise substantial questions concerning the treatment of living beings as resources available for unrestricted use.

Tenth. The organization of labor and military power does not extinguish obligations toward persons subject to those systems.

Eleventh. Historical grievances may be genuine even when they are exploited by an individual pursuing unrelated or illegitimate ambitions.

Twelfth. The Ents' actions against Isengard occurred in the context of serious destruction and active conflict. Their character and consequences require analysis appropriate to those circumstances rather than mechanical classification as ordinary administrative enforcement.

Thirteenth. The cessation of harmful activity does not, by itself, constitute restoration of the conditions damaged by that activity.

Fourteenth. The respondent's subsequent conduct in the Shire demonstrates that the desire to dominate may survive the loss of the

institutional machinery through which domination was previously exercised.

Fifteenth. The recovery of the Shire illustrates the importance of distinguishing the removal of coercive authority from the restoration of a community's capacity to act freely.

Sixteenth. The existence of individual responsibility does not eliminate the need to examine relationships of exploitation, coercion, and humiliation.

Seventeenth. The corruption of an emissary's commission raises questions concerning not only the conduct of the emissary but also the adequacy of the safeguards available to those affected by the misuse of delegated authority.

Eighteenth. The respondent's death does not extinguish the value of examining the institutional and ethical failures illustrated by his conduct.

These findings are interpretive and preliminary.

They do not constitute a judgment issued by any authority recognized within the political or metaphysical order of Arda.

The Office makes no claim to possess jurisdiction sufficient to impose punishment upon the respondent or the Powers responsible for his commission.

Its authority to conduct this inquiry remains a matter of institutional self-description.

This circumstance has been noted.

XVIII. On the Man Who Mistook the World for an Instrument

The Office considers it appropriate to conclude by returning to the central difficulty illustrated by Saruman's conduct.

He was not without knowledge.

He was not without purpose.

He was not initially without a legitimate charge.

He knew that Middle-earth faced danger.

He knew that power could be organized.

He knew that tools could be made.

He knew that labor could be directed.

He knew that alliances could be cultivated, information controlled, and armies assembled.

He understood much about the means through which events could be made to occur.

But somewhere within the exercise of that understanding, he ceased to distinguish sufficiently between knowing how something might be done and possessing the right to do it.

The world became a problem of administration.

The forests became material.

The rivers became instruments.

The peoples became forces.

The fears of others became opportunities.

The grievances of communities became means of recruitment.

The judgment of his colleagues became an inconvenience.

And the freedom he had been sent to preserve became another uncertainty to be overcome.

The Office recognizes that the desire to establish order is not inherently corrupt.

Order may protect.

Organization may permit cooperation.

Knowledge may relieve suffering.

Technology may improve the conditions of life.

There is no need to condemn these things in order to recognize their capacity for misuse.

The danger arises when the person exercising them ceases to regard the world as containing lives and interests that remain independent of his purposes.

Saruman did not merely wish to act within Middle-earth.

He increasingly wished Middle-earth to act according to his design.

This difference deserves consideration.

A forest may resist the purposes of an industrial planner simply by continuing to be a forest.

A river may refuse to remain where a machine finds it convenient.

A community may wish to preserve customs that an administrator regards as inefficient.

A person may decline advice that an expert considers unquestionably correct.

These circumstances are not necessarily defects in the world.

They may be evidence that the world contains something other than the will of the person attempting to govern it.

The Office therefore rejects the proposition that the successful organization of a thing necessarily establishes the legitimacy of its organization.

A society may be orderly and unfree.

An institution may be efficient and cruel.

A machine may function precisely as intended while producing consequences that ought never to have been intended.

And a leader may possess immense knowledge while remaining profoundly mistaken about the people upon whom that knowledge is exercised.

The world is not rendered available for possession merely because someone has learned how to control it.

This is the central error the Office identifies in the respondent's conduct.

Saruman came to regard the limitations of other beings as reasons to supersede their judgment.

He regarded their resistance as an obstacle.

Their independence as uncertainty.

Their refusal as inefficiency.

He eventually sought to overcome these difficulties through power.

But a freedom preserved only by eliminating the possibility of refusal has lost something essential to its nature.

Nor does the benevolence claimed by an administrator resolve the problem.

One may sincerely desire peace.

One may sincerely fear disorder.

One may sincerely believe that the world would be safer if everyone obeyed.

The sincerity of these beliefs does not establish the legitimacy of the authority claimed in their name.

The Office therefore returns to a principle established in the Istari Mandate:

The difference between assistance and domination does not disappear merely because the assistant is correct.

In Saruman's case, the distinction was progressively abandoned.

And the consequences did not fall upon Saruman alone.

They fell upon forests.

Upon workers and soldiers.

Upon the peoples drawn into his ambitions.

Upon those subjected to his voice.

Upon those whose homes were diminished by his need to command.

Upon those who would later undertake the labor of restoring what had been destroyed.

The Office recognizes that Saruman possessed extraordinary gifts.

It does not regard those gifts as incidental.

Their corruption is precisely what makes his history significant.

Knowledge might have served understanding.

Craft might have served life.

Leadership might have strengthened cooperation.

Influence might have encouraged courage.

And power might have been exercised with restraint.

The tragedy is not merely that Saruman became dangerous.

It is that capacities capable of serving a living world were increasingly turned toward its subordination.

He did not lack the ability to make things.

He lost the wisdom to recognize what ought not to be made.

And when the forests rose against him, they did not merely interrupt his operations.

They demonstrated that the world he had treated as an instrument contained lives and purposes beyond his own.

The trees were not merely timber.

The river was not merely water.

The Shire was not merely a territory awaiting improvement.

And the people he sought to command were not merely the means through which his preferred future might be constructed.

They had futures of their own.

The Office considers this distinction worthy of preservation.

For the corruption of stewardship does not always begin with an openly declared desire to do harm.

Sometimes it begins with the conviction that one understands what must be done.

That others cannot be trusted to recognize it.

That consultation will take too long.

That dissent will endanger success.

That extraordinary circumstances require extraordinary authority.

That the desired result is sufficiently important to justify the elimination of obstacles.

And that the lives upon which a decision will be imposed may properly be considered afterward.

The Office rejects this sequence of reasoning.

The people affected by an act of power are not an administrative detail to be addressed after the power has been exercised.

They are among the reasons its legitimacy must be examined in the first place.

Perhaps this is the distinction Saruman failed to preserve.

He understood how to make the world serve a purpose.

He ceased to understand that the world was not his to command.

And when his power was finally broken, the living world continued without him.

The waters moved.

The trees grew.

The Hobbits returned to their homes.

The work of restoration began.

Not every loss was repaired.

Not every injury was undone.

But life continued beyond the design of the man who had attempted to possess it.

The Office considers this a fitting conclusion to the respondent's claim of necessity.

The world did not require Saruman's dominion in order to survive.

It required freedom from it.

XIX. Notice of Continuing Proceedings

The Office directs that the findings entered herein be preserved within the Maiar Accountability Record.

The present historical inquiry is concluded for purposes of preliminary review.

Questions concerning the adequacy of the original commission, the supervision of the Istari, and the consequences of exceptional delegated authority remain open.

The Office further directs that the environmental findings concerning Isengard be cross-referenced with any subsequent proceedings involving the Ents, Huorns, and the restoration of Fangorn and its neighboring lands.

The next scheduled inquiry shall concern:

THE PALANTÍR QUESTION

On the Acquisition of Information, the Manufacture of Certainty, and the Risks of Adversarial Communication

Particular attention will be directed toward the distinction between observation and understanding, the circumstances under which a powerful instrument may distort its user's judgment, and the ethical consequences of treating access to information as equivalent to possession of truth.

The Office anticipates that this inquiry may require consultation with individuals possessing experience in the operation of the seeing-stones.

Participation will remain voluntary.

The Office recognizes that certain potential respondents may object to being contacted through the very instruments under investigation.

Alternative methods of correspondence will be considered.

SUPPLEMENTAL ADMINISTRATIVE NOTICE

Concerning the Environmental Remediation of Isengard

The Office has received a preliminary report concerning the measures undertaken by the Ents following their occupation of Isengard.

The report indicates that the respondent's industrial operations have ceased.

Major machinery has been rendered inoperative.

Furnaces have been extinguished.

The surrounding landscape has undergone substantial alteration.

The Office acknowledges these developments.

It further acknowledges that the remediation appears to have been accomplished without the submission of a conventional environmental impact statement.

The Office has therefore requested clarification concerning the following matters:

1. Whether the diversion of the waters of the Isen was intended as a temporary or permanent measure.

2. Whether the respondent was afforded an opportunity to participate in the development of a remediation plan.

3. Whether the structural integrity of Orthanc was evaluated prior to inundation.

4. Whether affected aquatic species were consulted.

5. Whether any additional industrial facilities remain subject to similar corrective action.

The Office has been advised that the Ents considered the respondent's previous conduct sufficient reason to dispense with further consultation.

The Office recognizes the seriousness of the underlying harm.

It nevertheless requests that future actions involving the relocation of substantial quantities of water be accompanied by reasonable notice where practicable.

The Ents have indicated that they will consider this recommendation.

The Office understands that such consideration may require several days.

No response deadline has been imposed.

INTERNAL FINANCE MEMORANDUM

TO: Director, Office of Improbable Jurisdiction
FROM: Office of Finance and Appropriations
RE: Isengard Remediation Expenditures

The Finance Division acknowledges receipt of a request to establish a reimbursement category for environmental restoration undertaken by sentient trees.

The request remains under review.

The Division requires clarification concerning whether the Ents are to be classified as independent contractors, affected property holders, autonomous environmental authorities, or a category not presently recognized by the accounting system.

The Division further requests confirmation that no personnel expenses were incurred during the diversion of the river.

The Director has advised that the Ents performed the work themselves.

The Division acknowledges this response.

It nevertheless notes that **self-performance does not automatically establish eligibility for reimbursement.**

A determination will be issued upon receipt of satisfactory supporting documentation.

The Division understands that the Ents do not ordinarily issue invoices.

This circumstance does not constitute an exemption from recordkeeping requirements.

END OF CONTINUING INVESTIGATION II

Issued under the authority claimed by the Office of Improbable Jurisdiction, the existence and limits of which remain subject to examination.

The Office enters substantial preliminary findings concerning the corruption of Curumo's delegated authority.

No compulsory judgment is asserted.

No general authorization for industrial inundation is established.

The inquiry continues.

Literary and Interpretive Note

This fictional investigation draws upon J. R. R. Tolkien's accounts of Saruman and the Istari, principally in *The Lord of the Rings*, *Unfinished Tales*, and related writings concerning the history and purposes of the Wizards.

The document employs the administrative language of the Office of Improbable Jurisdiction to examine questions of authority, persuasion, coercion, stewardship, industrial power, environmental destruction, and institutional accountability.

Its findings, procedures, and recommendations are fictional. They are not presented as legal judgments within Tolkien's world or as administrative practices established by Tolkien.

The treatment of Saruman's conduct distinguishes between the narrative record and the ethical questions generated by that record. The Office's proposed principles of institutional accountability and environmental review are interpretive devices.

The inquiry also preserves the distinction between legitimate uses of knowledge, craft, and organized labor and their employment as instruments of domination.

The Office's concern is not that Saruman possessed the ability to make things.

It is that he increasingly ceased to recognize limits upon what he was entitled to make others do.