

# SICKLE

A SCYTHE MEGAGAME

## Player Overview Manual

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Join 50+ other players to fight, negotiate, and harness powerful new technologies as prominent political factions, scientists, and industrialists involved in the power struggles of Eastern Europa!

At the center of these power struggles is the mysterious Factory. Originally constructed by Nikola Tesla, the Factory produced wondrous technologies utilized by the nations of Eastern Europa to destroy each other during the Great War. Although the Great War is over, the power struggles are just beginning.

*Sickle* is a fan-made, non-profit megagame event designed and produced by Minnesota Megagames and Prairie Fire Gaming. For more information about the *1920+ Universe* and associated products, Minnesota Megagames, and Prairie Fire Gaming, see the Thanks! section.

## What is a Megagame?

Megagames combine the physical mechanics of board games with the fluid emergent gameplay of role-playing games with large player counts (generally 40-80 players). Players are encouraged to be creative but must act within the existing game mechanics and established setting. Megagames range in time length, ranging from two hours to entire weekends. A team of moderators coordinate the game, adjudicate rules, and make sure players have the best experience possible!

Two common examples of megagames are high school Model UN or the alien invasion megagame, Watch the Skies! For those who are unfamiliar, we highly recommend watching the Shut Up & Sit Down playthrough of Watch the Skies! Seriously. [Watch it.](#)

Many veteran gamers quickly observe that megagames aren't particularly different from existing LARPs (Live Action Role-Playing), large boardgame events, escape room events, simulations, or other previous events they've experienced. And they're right!... In many ways!

## Nations, Roles/Factions, and Titles

When joining your nation, you will receive a **national lanyard**. This lanyard will have colors that correspond to your nation and will help you identify where a player comes from during the course of the day.

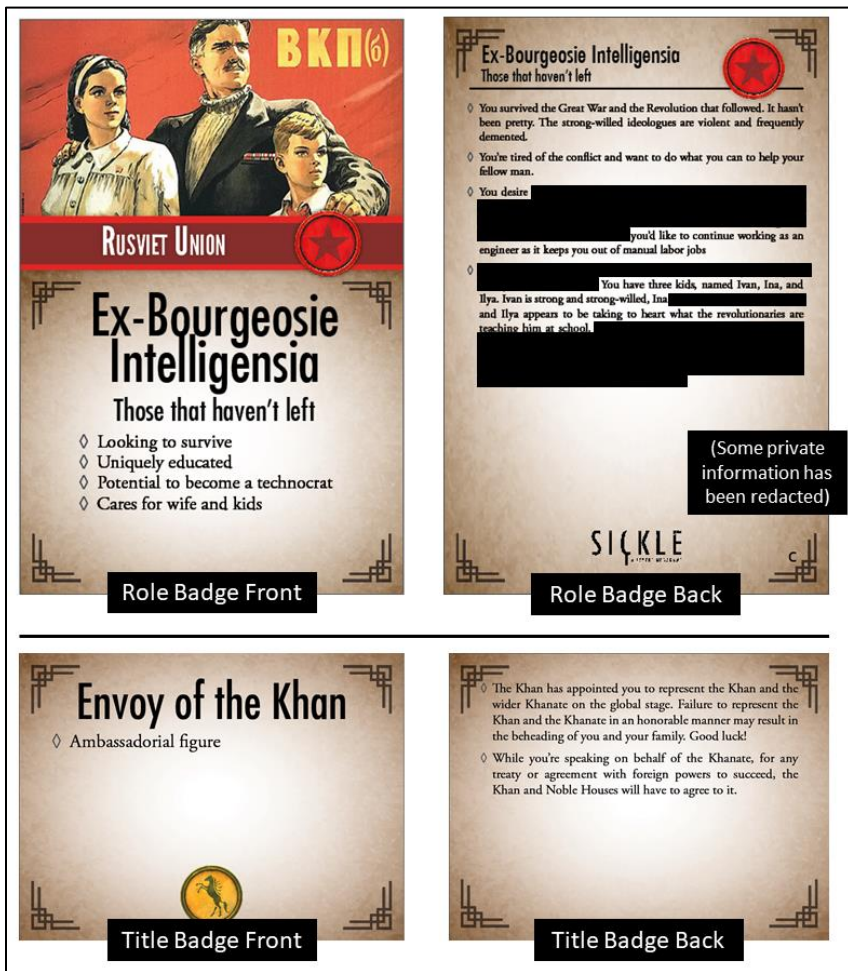
After receiving their lanyards, players will be organized into nations and assigned a **role badge** from their nation. Be wary! Just because you and your friend are in the same nation does not mean you will be allies. Often, you'll be political rivals or have drastically different goals for the nation. If you'd like to be on good terms with another player, speak with a moderator and we'll do our best to assign you to friendly roles.

**Note.** Roles are often called 'factions' because players often (but not always) represent entire groups of people with shared opinions.

**Role Badges** are two-sided, containing public knowledge about the role/faction on the front and their abilities and personal motivations on the back. These are to be attached to your national lanyard. The back is hidden information! Players are not allowed to purposely show the back of their badge to other players, nor are they allowed to look at that side *until* they've settled on a role at the start of the game. *Note that, since the backs of the role badges are private, portions of the sample badge on the next page have been obscured.*

At some point after you have your **role**, some players will also receive a **title**. A **title** is very similar to a role in that it also denotes motivations, responsibilities, and additional authority. The method for receiving this title varies between different nations and the game moderators will let you know how it works for your nation. If you receive a title, you should tape it to the back of your role badge so that the front can be seen by other players at all times and that you have not obscured any portions of the back of your role/faction badge—you'll frequently want to reference the private information on the backs of these badges, so don't cover them up if you can help it. *If wearing the role badge and title badges ends up being physically unwieldy, let us know and we'll see what we can do to help you out.*

Below are an example role badge and an example title badge.



## Making Initiatives (Actions)

Doing things in *Sickle* is simple, but you'll need to get consent from the appropriate people! Here's how it works:

1. **WRITE:** Describe specifically what you want to do.
2. **SIGN:** Get all relevant players to sign it.
3. **SUBMIT:** Give it to your moderator!

After an initiative is submitted, the moderators will adjudicate it and later tell you the result (if appropriate).

Chief Sponsor: President of Polonia	Initiative: Declare State of Emergency in Polonia in response to terrorist attack	Chief Sponsor: Chair of Commerce & Trade	Initiative:
Co-Sponsors: Marshall of Polonia	• Military on guard	Co-Sponsors: The Freikorps	Smuggle Guns and Mechs into Rusviet
Minister of Justice	• Police checkpoints	Man of the White Horde,	Union to aid Cossack Rebels
National Party	• Use Military to keep Parliament closed during this time	Rise Barin	through Crimean
Young Faction		the Don	Khante
Minister of Intelligence		Cossacks	
		Sid	
		Ortagh	
Signature of Emperor/Khan/President/Other (if applicable): President of Polonia		Signature of Emperor/Khan/President/Other (if applicable): n/a	

### Common reasons initiatives are returned:

- Illegible handwriting. Write clearly!
- Too vague. "Attack Sweden" is not enough!
- Initiative signed with IRL human name, instead of relevant role or title.

### Example Initiatives (Actions)

Initiatives can be anything you can think of that seems possible. Here are just a few examples:

- Halt iron exports from Nordic Kingdom to Saxony
- Perform Vote of No Confidence against Polanian President
- Increase taxes 5 percent on landowners to pay for tax subsidies to manufacturing industries
- Sponsor genetically engineered wheat initiative led by Marie Curie
- Ready Red Army for imminent invasion of Crimea
- Have striking workers attack the capital building
- Build railroad and infrastructure from St. Petersburg to Gdansk
- Open coal-to-liquid fuel processing facility in Dresden
- Fund rural education initiative with communist literature

## Resources

Nations will compete to satisfy their resource needs. Your nation's population will desire a certain amount of each resource (see: Resource Targets). Fall short and there will be trouble! Each nation starts out with a few of the **five resources**:

- Food
- Iron
- Energy (commonly coal or oil)
- Wood
- Luxury goods (e.g. frozen coffee, cheap appliances, the *Mona Lisa*, etc.)

**Luxury goods** function slightly differently—only *unique* luxury resources are counted. It's recommended to trade away duplicate luxury resources to other nations and perhaps receive new ones in return!

Most resources are represented by poker chips while luxury goods are represented by cards which have a spot where players can write what the luxury is (e.g. cutlery, Persian rugs, a full T-rex skeleton, etc.). Luxury goods can represent both mass market goods accessible to middle class and up, and national treasures like historical artifacts, relics, high literature, or other arts.

## Resource Targets

Several times per game, your nation's moderator will tally up the resources and see if your nation made their resource targets. If your nation failed to meet its goals, a crisis occurs!

Not having enough food could cause a famine, while not meeting iron targets could drastically slow the economy. If a nation does meet their resource goals, the target goes up by a semi-random amount which is adjudicated by the moderator.

## Movement, Communication, and Trade

The room will be divided with tape. The tape represents geopolitical borders between different regions of Eastern Europa. Unless stated otherwise, players are only allowed to move between regions once during the last two minutes of every turn. **To reiterate, players may only cross a national border, once per turn, during the last two minutes every turn.** *Don't miss your train!*

Players may freely talk, and pass notes, resources, or other items across regions between people. However, once you give a card, item, or note to another player, it belongs to them. Players can at maximum carry one resource with them at a time (resource tokens usually reside in a collected area for each nation). Players cannot take resources banked in another country unless they have the appropriate authority.

If players want to enjoy free reign of movement between regions. Representatives of each nation must rebuild the transport infrastructure devastated in the war. Rebuilding the destroyed infrastructure costs resources and takes the form of tape on the ground. Players must walk on (or next to) the tape when moving between regions. This rebuilt infrastructure additionally offers narrative opportunities. For example, the reconstruction of the railway between Dresden and Warsaw allows for free movement of players between the Saxony and Polanian section of the game – but if anarchists blow up the railway, then transportation again becomes limited or even temporarily impossible.

Moderators can mandate or give permission to violate movement rules at their discretion. For example, moderators may temporarily ask all the players representing foreign bodies to leave their nation-specific area temporarily if there is some sort of national emergency occurring. This overrules all movement rules and is done to ease the adjudication of the crisis. After the crisis is over, players may return to where they were or go back to their home nation.

**Players may violate all movement rules if they are simply getting the attention of a moderator or seeking adjudication.** They must return to where they were previously as soon as possible.

## Great Individuals

There will be a total of 0-4 great individuals per nation. These players represent single individuals instead of entire factions. Based on real people or the folk heroes of the *Scythe* board game, these individuals are some of the brightest and most capable individuals around. Though not always so, they are often apolitical—more concerned with their scientific, cultural, or business pursuits than governance.

These individuals function slightly differently than other roles/factions as they can learn new expertise and apply that expertise to real world problems or to further their own goals. *Scientists, industrialists, and other great individuals will be briefed further on their specific rules separately (see 'Great Individual' Rules Supplement).*

## The Nations of Eastern Europa

**The Crimean Khanate** – At the center of a geopolitical web that's complicated by valuable fertile land and oil wealth, five Great Noble Houses vie to influence the development of the Khanate.

**The Nordic Kingdom** – The Swedish Monarch of the Nordic Kingdom maintains absolute power over the often-disgruntled Norway and Denmark as Monarch of the Nords. To complicate things, the Kingdom still abides by an increasingly complex system of overlapping administrative and noble rankings.

**The Republic of Polania** – The newly independent Polanians are furious for being pushed around for so long. Will angry Polanians isolate potential allies and provoke wars with larger neighbors? Will Polanians self-cannibalize in the patriotic march towards national security?

**The Rusviet Union** – The Victors of the Revolution emerged triumphantly from the political dogpile caused by the Great War, consolidating all the state power into the singular Communist Party. Will the Rusviet populace learn to love climbing the Communist Party hierarchy or reject the authority outright?



**The Saxony Empire** – The Great War forced internal reform in the Empire. The Emperor now must share power with the elitist and conspiratorial Bunderstat (Senate), and the tumultuous and conspiratorial Reichstag (House of Representatives).

**The Factory** – Founded by Nikolai Tesla and now run by CEO Fenris, the Factory output wondrous inventions before and during the Great War. These inventions were all too frequently adapted for war. The Factory has now gone mysteriously dark.

**The Albion Expeditionary Force** – The A.E.F. is led by Clan Albion, staffed by rival Clan Greyson, and bankrolled by the City-State of London. What could go wrong?

**The Togawa Shogunate's Factory Task Force** – The Shogun's niece, Akiko, has assembled a motley crew to search for her missing brother. Shinobi (ninjas), Samurai, Warrior Monks, and others must juggle social and military hierarchies as they debate how best to accomplish their objectives.

## The Media

Newspapers are powerful tools that frequently represent broad public opinion. Some newspapers may have reporters in the field, represented by players. Most do not.

Reader beware! News outlets may say they post the truth but often they're just reporting *their* truth. Below are the most influential news outlets of Eastern Europa.

Newspaper	Nation	Description
Vox Populi	Global	Pro-worker paper circulated widely underground.
Pravda	Russian	State-Owned media of the Rusviet Union.
The Standard of Warsaw	Polania	Mostly unbiased, but hyperbolically supports Polania.
The Dresden Herald	Saxony	Leans Conservative. Saxon Nationalist

The Berlin Post-Dispatch	Saxony	Serious Investigative Paper. Exposes abuses of power. Leans progressive and liberal.
The Stockholm Journal of Science & Medicine	Nordic Kingdom	Respected Science Journal.
United Nordic Tribune	Nordic Kingdom	Serious Paper. Favors united Nordic Kingdom.
The Times of Constantinople	Crimea/Turkey	Pro-Turkey. Widest circulated paper in the Crimean Khanate.
The London Chronicle	London/Albion	Serious Paper, often investigative. Disdainful of the 'mess' in mainland Europa
Edo Shimbun Press	Japan	Japanese nationalist newspaper. Culturally conservative.
The Factory Press	The Factory	Factory Paper – recently exploded.

## Thanks!

The **1920+ Universe** for which *Sickle* is set was originally conceived and fleshed out by the Polish artist, **Jakub Różalski**. You can find more of his art on his personal website: <http://jrozalski.com>

The 1920+ Universe is also the setting of the popular boardgame, *Scythe*, originally designed by **Jamey Stegmaier** of **Stonemaier Games**. Jamey is active on the Stonemaier Games facebook, active on boardgamegeek, and maintains an active blog through the Stonemaier games' official website: <https://stonemaiergames.com/e-newsletter/blog/>

We'd like to thank the Stonemaier crew for the informal encouragement to put on this fan-made event. The wildly successful *Scythe* boardgame now has three expansions (*Invaders from Afar*, *the Wind Gambit*, and *the Rise of Fenris*) and a digital edition (available on *Steam*) as well as several smaller content add-ons, including the recently released *Scythe: Encounters*. You can and should purchase these and other *Scythe* products at: <https://stonemaier-games.myshopify.com/>

We'd also like to specifically thank the lead designer of *the Rise of Fenris* expansion to the *Scythe* boardgame, **Ryan Lopez DeVinaspre**, for input into the lore of *Scythe & 1920+ Universe*. Ryan is also active on boardgamegeek and on the *Scythe* facebook group.

The **National Security Decision Making (NSDM)** system served as major inspiration for the *Sickle* megagame design. NSDM events can be found at a number of gaming conventions around the country, including Gen Con, Origins, and Dragon Con. Although they formally disavow any acknowledgement of the use of their game mechanics by non-NSDM groups in order to protect their brand (sorry!), they informally are very talkative and supportive. They can be contacted through Facebook.

This event was organized and coordinated by **Peter Nixon**, *Sickle: A Fan-Made Scythe Megagame* was designed by Peter Nixon with the invaluable assistance of **Trenton Greyoak** and **Jed Limke** of Minnesota Megagames and **Prairie Fire Gaming**, respectively. Prairie Fire Gaming runs megagame events in the Fargo, ND area. More information can be found on their website: <http://prairiefiregaming.com/>

Minnesota Megagames attempted to get permission from **Jakub Różalski** and **Stonemaier Games**. While the extremely busy Jakub Różalski did not respond to repeated outreach attempts, Stonemaier Games did encourage the project over Facebook and in person during brief encounters at board game conventions. After positive reception at gaming conventions, *Stonemaier Games LLC* officially granted the use of *Scythe* art assets for this project (while maintaining distance from the design). We wholeheartedly thank them for their support and the use of their art assets.

If there are any laws we are breaking, please let us know.

Peter would like to thank all the volunteer moderators who helped put on this event. I owe you guys a beer!

Last, thanks to the players for humoring this little passion project of ours. We hope you had fun and encourage you to leave feedback on our player feedback forms!