

ASSAULTING THE FACTORY

SCYTHE

TO BECOME THE LORD



Europe 1920. The Great War is finished and the State-City called "The Factory", that started it, is doomed. The five Great Powers that allied to win the conflict now look at each other as they understand that a new Era started, but start to wonder who will be the new leading Race. The game, based on an alternate History, will help to probably answer this question if you are able to lead your men to the power, reinforce your Army and conquer the city of "The Factory".

Pietro Cremona

Great material and box size awaken expectations, which are met by the good rule and the mechanisms also largely, I personally had expected me something more.

Despite this premise, *Scythe* is not a wargame, but mainly a solid "German style" board-game where you must move your colons and take new regions to get more and more resources to increase your strength, to build powerful armies and to be able to eventually doom the enemies: battles are not absolutely necessary to win, but sometimes they help!

(food, wood, iron and oil), 25 wonderful plastic miniatures (5 leaders and 4 mechanized war tanks per player), 80 coins of different value, 105 cards, a handful of different tokens, 5 personal boards and 5 faction boards.

The map has a hexagonal grid superposed which is used to define the type of terrain - Farm, Forest, Mountain, Tundra, Village, Lake and The Factory: each hex has a graphic drawing and a corresponding "symbol", the movement and the starting position of each Population. In effect, each player starts with a Leader in his own "base" and two Workers, one on each of the two hexes connected to the base (a different combination of terrains for each player).

A network of rivers and lakes divide the board in different "territories": each player has three hexes on his starting area and must reach the "water" technology in order to be able to cross the rivers and expand into the central part of the board. Every hex may be "used" by the workers of one People in order to get resources which remain in the area or are moved

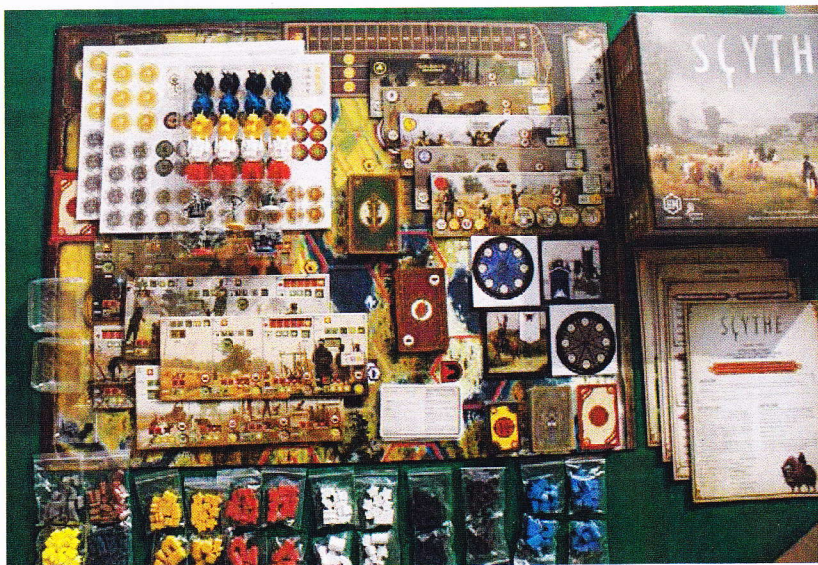


MECHs), wooden tokens, faction board and a personal board.

As you may see on Picture 3, the Faction board is used to host initially the 4 related Mech Units (on the round spaces) and to



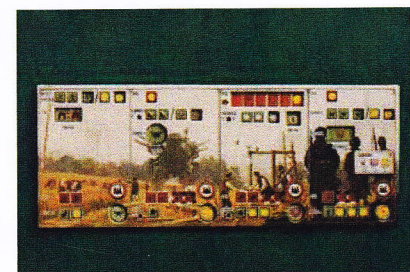
know the initial set-up of the Faction: in the photo, for example, the Rusviet will receive 3 Power Points (PP) and 2 Battle Cards (you may see their symbols on the right side of the picture). The Rusviet "special" ability will be to "repeat an action on the personal board" (an operation that usually is not allowed, as we will see shortly). Every People has different set-up resources and abilities.



When you take the big box of *Scythe* in your hand for the first time you are surprised by the "weight" and the great number of components: a nice mounted map, 5 sets of colored wooden components (one for each race), 80 wooden resources

by the units: they are never placed in a reserve and therefore they may be captured after a combat.

Players randomly select a faction and take their miniatures (one leader and four



The personal board is one of the best I ever saw: it is made of two layers of cardboard and one of them has "holes" where the "technology" cubes can be placed and remain firmly. It is important to describe a little bit in detail the Personal board as it is the real heart of the game: here the players decide which MAIN action they have

to perform in every turn and which "accessory action" they MAY also use if they can "pay" for it.

At the beginning of the turn each player should move his token from the previous Action to a new one and immediately perform it: as we have noted in our example only the Rusviet are allowed to repeat the same action turn after turn. The possible actions are:

A - Movement: may move two pieces (workers, Leader or Mech) one hex.

Alternatively take one coin

B - Support: pay one coin and increase your PP on the Power track.

Alternatively take one combat card

C - Commerce: pay one coin and take two resources, to be placed on the board in a hex with your workers. Alternative: Rise the Popularity Level (PL) by two points

D - Production: pay the cost (which vary with the number of workers already placed on the board) and produce resources on two different hexes (each worker produces one resource: iron on Mountains, food on Factories, oil on Tundra, wood on Forests or a new worker on a Village)

Collecting resources allows the players to later perform also the secondary actions: please note that each Player has a different mix of primary and secondary actions and each secondary action has different outcome on every board. In general, they are as follows:

a - Improve: paying the cost (2 or 3 oil tokens) allows the player to take a "technological cube" from the top of the board and to place it in a "hole" on the bottom: in this way, and step by step, the bonuses of

the primary actions are increased (every uncovered hole now shows something to get while performing that action) and the cost of the secondary actions is reduced (every hole covered by a cube subtract a resource from the total to pay). It is up to the players to decide which cube to take and which "hole" to close.

This action also offers from 0 to 3 coins as an extra bonus.

b - Deploy: this action allows the players to purchase a MECH unit paying its cost in "iron" (1 to 4): each MECH purchased free a special power for his people (described on the circle under the MECH on the Faction board): the possibility to cross the rivers, higher speed for the units, bonus in combat, etc. The player decides which MECH to use and therefore win which order to get the bonuses.

Again, this action also offers from 0 to 3 coins

c - Building: with this action (1 to 4 wood) is possible to place on the map one of the four possible buildings, and each of them has a special bonus. The "Windmill" allows an extra production on his hex; the "Mine" allows a direct passage of units from its hex to one of the tunnels on the map; the "Armory" gives one PP each time that the commerce action is performed; the "Monument" raise the PL on case each time that the "support" action is selected. As usual this action also offers 1 to 3 coins

d - Enlist: with this action (1 to 5 food) is possible to place on the Faction board one of the four possible conscript tokens: the player decides which one and the position of the token on his Faction board to immediately get one of the four possible bonuses. The tokens also free a new hole

on the Personal board and the player gets a permanent bonus (one PP, one PL, one coin or one Battle card) when a secondary action is performed. And yes, you bet it, this action too gives 1 to 4 coins.

The MECH units may transport any number of workers and/or resources and it is possible to pass from one tunnel on the map to any other in different zones: therefore, if you have the control of a hex that contains a tunnel keep in mind that it is a vulnerable one.



Your Leader may move into hexes with an "Encounter" disk (there are a dozen of them on the map at the beginning of the game): the player then takes the first card of the related deck. There are always three possibilities: the first usually is the easier to get and gives you some bonus or advantages, while the other two have increasing costs (mainly in PL) but may give some stronger benefit. It is possible to select just one of the three (but Polania may select two, as his special power).

The central hex of the map is the THE FACTORY: the first player to arrive in this City may look at the available Factory cards and select one of them: there are as many cards as players plus one, so everybody may get one (and no more than one). Of course, the later the arrival the less the opportunities to get a good card. Each card is then added to the Personal board and allows for an extra action case, usually stronger than the original four. Also, one unit gets a free two hexes move. Getting a card in The Factory early in the game gives a strong advantage in flexibility, but it is not so easy to arrive there: the players are therefore invited to program their strategy well in advance to get the resources to build the MECH that frees the ability to cross the rivers, etc.

Sometimes during the game play two rival forces will clash in a single hex: therefore, a combat session is started: the two opponents may use their PP and Combat cards to try to win the combat. Each player takes a special "Wheel" (with numbers from 0 to 7) and secretly select the





number of PP that he wishes to use. Then both players reveal their wheel and may add extra points by playing some combat cards (one per miniature involved) to increase the final total. The higher total wins and takes control of the hex. The loser goes back to his home base with the complete Army (Leader, MECH and Workers), leaving in place only eventual resources. No piece is eliminated in *Scythe*, but, of course, if you lose a combat you must spend some time to bring your pieces up front.

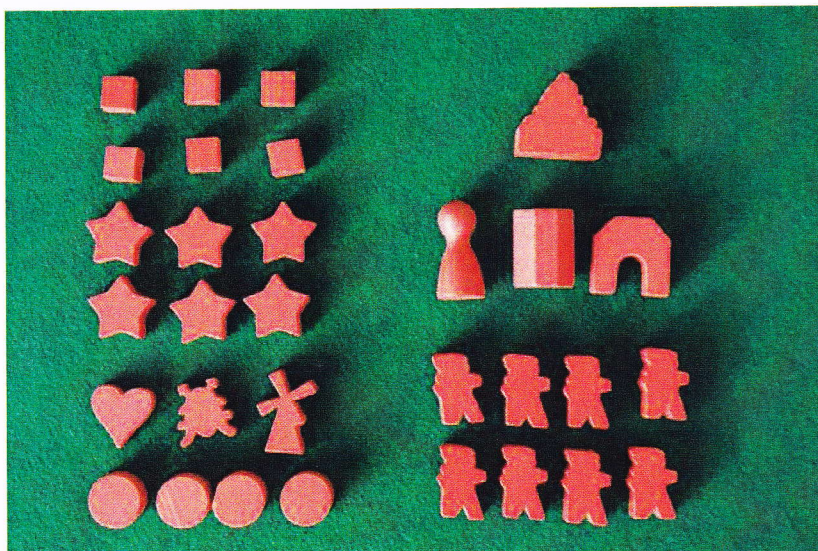
Now we know what happens on this alternate world but how we may win the game?

Each player has 6 wooden stars on his color: the first to place his last star on the board immediately stops the game. A star may be placed for:

- moving all the technologic cubes from top to bottom of the personal board
- put on map all four MECH
- placing the four building on the map
- placing all the conscripts on the Faction board
- placing on the map of eight workers
- satisfying one of the two objectives that were received at the start of the game
- winning a first combat
- winning a second combat
- reaching the end of the Power Track (16 cases)
- reaching the end of the Popularity track (18 cases)



When the game stops the Victory Points (VP) are calculated using the Popularity track, which is divided in three different zones and 3 columns: if the players' tokens are placed between 0 and 6 PL (zone A) they will get 3 VP for each star that they



played, 2 VP for every hex controlled on the map and 1 VP for every couple of resources still owned. In zone B (7 to 12 PL) they get respectively 4-3-2 VP and in Zone C (13 to 18 PL) 5-4-3 VP.

You add those points to the one gained during the game and get also 1 VP for every coin still owned. The higher total wins the game.

Under a visual appearance of a "nasty" wargame, we find worker placement with resources management: the game is well tuned and we never found something obscure on the rules or any problems during play. You just need to make a couple of games to understand how to use the specific qualities of the Race that you get. Learning the game is easy because the rule book is very well done, with lots of pictures and examples. Every single step is analyzed in detail and once learned you do not have to go back to the rules again.

The materials are also very well done: the miniatures are realistic and detailed, the wooden pieces nice and big enough to be manipulated without problems. Everything is OK but I still got a mixed feeling: I probably expected something more from such a big game and from such beautiful army miniatures. So, my personal evaluation is good but not top.

Still this game can be suggested to expert or regular gamers because it has so many strong points and, again, it plays very well. For those players that cannot find enough opponents there is also a "solitaire" version of the game where the "opponents" are handled using special cards and a separated rulebook.

Finally note that the back of the board

shows half of the map but with bigger hexes: you may double the playing surface purchasing the other half from the producer. It is the first time that I saw such an advertising ... funny. ☑

Pietro Cremona

INFORMATION

Designer: Jamey Stegmaier

Artist: Jakub Rozalski

Price: ca. 60 to 100 Euro

Publisher: Stonemaier Games 2016

www.stonemaiergames.com

PLAYERS:
1-5

AGE:
14+

TIME:
120+

BEWERTUNG

Worker placement, resources

Users: For experts

Version: de

Rules: cn cz de en es fr hu it pl pt ru

In-game text: yes

Comments:

No wargame, despite graphics * Good mix of resources management and worker placement * Very attractive components * Solo variant

Compares to:

Complex development simulations

Other editions:

Morning/Matagot (fr), Ghenos (it), Phalanx (pl), Meldito (es), Stonemaier (en), Playfun (cn), Albi (cz), Feuerland (de), Delta Vision (hu), Fire on Board (pt), Crowd Games (ru),



My rating:

