

# AN IMPOSSIBLE VICTORY

## Game Rules

### Prologue:

*"In July 1922, the population of the working-class neighborhoods of Parma massively joined the nationwide legalitarian strike proclaimed to protest against squad violence. Fascist leaders decided to make an exemplary lesson of the city: in the first days of August, thousands of Blackshirts from all over Italy descended upon Parma and besieged the city under the leadership of Italo Balbo.*

*The citizens, united in a single anti-fascist front and led by deputy Guido Picelli, prepared to resist with the help of some groups of 'Arditi del popolo' (shock troops of the people), barricading themselves inside the working-class neighborhoods: Oltretorrente and Naviglio.*

*This game retraces the history of those days of resistance. During the game, you will guide the city's population in repelling the fascist squad attacks. Only by collaborating with each other, providing for the defense needs, and building barricades to fend off the squad assaults, can you achieve an 'impossible victory' to be delivered to history and legend."*

### Introductory Game and Expert Game

The first time you play - or when you prefer a simpler gaming experience - you can follow the rules for the introductory game. They are very similar to the full rules but omit some elements that add complexity to the game.

In subsequent games, you can choose to use the 'expert rules' explained in detail at the end of the rules, which introduce special abilities of the characters, Mission cards, and different rules for the final Fascist squad assault.

### Inside the box

1 game map  
1 history booklet  
30 Action cards (6 each of Search for Rations, Search for Ammunition, Mobilize Citizens, Erect Barricades, Repel Squads)  
7 Fascist Squad cards  
1 city defense status indicator  
6 Personality cards  
8 Mission cards  
6 Ration tokens  
8 Barricade tokens  
6 Personality pawns (attach stickers to the same color pawn)  
2 summary/ reminder cards for turn sequence and Squad attacks  
1 "current day" card  
12 Fascist Squad pawns  
6 Citizen tokens  
6 Ammunition tokens  
13 dice  
these rules

### Preparation

- Open the game board in the center of the table.
- Roll 2 dice and place 2 Rations tokens on the corresponding zones according to the dice rolls. Place the remaining 4 Rations tokens in the reserve space on the game board [B] ("Vettovaglie").
- Repeat this step for Ammunition tokens [A] ("Munizioni") and Citizen tokens [C] ("Cittadini").
- Roll 2 dice and place one Fascist Squad pawn [D] in the outer spaces of the corresponding zones. Place the remaining 10 Squad pawns in the reserve space [E] on the board ("Squadristi").
- Place Barricade tokens [F] on the designated squares on the City Defense track on the game board.
- Each player chooses - or randomly draws - one of the 6 available Personalities and places the respective card [G] in front of them, showing the side without the special ability text. Unused Personality cards can be put back in the box.
- Each player takes the corresponding Personality pawn [H], rolls a die, and places the pawn in the corresponding zone. More than one character can be in the same zone. Unused Personality pawns can be put back in the box.
- Shuffle the Action card deck and deal a number of face-up cards to each player based on the number of players in the game:
  - 6 cards in a game with 1 player;
  - 5 cards in a game with 2 players;
  - 4 cards in a game with 3 or 4 players;
  - 3 cards in a game with 5 players.
- Each player keeps their cards in front of them [I] face up so that they are visible to all players.
- Add 3 Fascist Squad cards to the remaining cards in the Action card deck, reshuffle the deck, and place it face down on the game board for the initial draw deck [L] ("Mazzo di Pesca"). Unused Squad cards [M] are placed next to the board to be used on subsequent days.
- Place the 'Current Day' card [N] on the space for August 2nd on the game board.
- Place the City Defense indicator on the leftmost space of the corresponding track [O].
- The player (or one of the players, by choice) whose character is in the zone with the lowest number will be the first player of the game.

*Note: In the introductory game, Mission cards are not used and can be kept in the box.*

### The Game in Brief

'An Impossible Victory' is a collaborative game. This means that all players will work together to achieve victory. The objective of the game is to defend Parma for four days against the fascist squads, preventing the City Defense indicator from advancing beyond the last free space on the corresponding track. If this happens, you will lose the game.

During the game, you will play your cards to build barricades, mobilize citizens, find the necessary rations and ammunition, and repel the Fascist squads.

Players in the same zone can play cards together to improve the chances of success in their actions. At the end of each turn - drawing new cards from the deck - a Fascist squad attack may be triggered, which will loot everything present in the zone and test the city's resistance. For this reason, it is important for players to carefully choose the timing and location of their actions!

## The Game Board

The game board depicts the map of Parma in 1922. The map is divided into two districts [1], Oltretorrente and Naviglio. and into zones [2], numbered from 1 to 6. In these zones, players will move their tokens and place Barricade tokens on the corresponding symbols [3], as well as Ammunition, Rations, and Citizen tokens. Outside each zone is a space [4] where Squad pawns will be placed during the game. Squad pawns are never placed or moved within the zones of the two districts.

The game board is also used to accommodate other gaming materials. In particular, in the lower right part, the 'Current Day' card will be placed to indicate the progress of the game days (in the introductory game) or the 'Mission' cards that must be completed during the days (in the expert game). In the upper part, there is the 'City Defense' track, partially occupied at the beginning of the game by Barricade tokens. When the city undergoes a squad raid, the defense is tested, and the indicator will advance on this track to the right. On the left hand side are positions for reserve Squad, Ammunition, Rations and Citizen pawns and tokens.

## The Game Turn

Players take their turn in clockwise order, starting with the initial player.

On your turn:

- Perform one action.
- Before or after performing the action, if you wish, make a movement.
- At the end of your turn, draw cards up to the indicated number (depends on the number of players in the game) and resolve any indicated Fascist squad attacks;
- finally, pass the turn to the player on your left.

## Perform an Action

In the game, you can take 5 types of actions:

- Search for Rations

- Search for Ammunition
- Mobilize Citizens
- Repel the Squads
- Erect a Barricade

All actions are based on similar rules. To perform any type of action on your turn, proceed as follows:

- Play at least 1 action card of the corresponding type to the action you intend to take;
- Ask other players currently in your same zone if they want to play additional cards of the same type from their hands. The maximum number of cards that can be played collectively to perform an action is 4;
- Roll 1 die for each card played, and sum the rolled dice;
- Then follow the subsequent steps indicated in the corresponding action paragraph.

All cards played are placed in the discard pile (space named "Scarti").

## Search for Rations

Rations are used to improve the chance of success of the players' actions in the zone (see the "Using Rations" paragraph).

After rolling the dice, divide the sum of the dice rolls by 5. The result is the number of Rations tokens you can place in the zone you are in.

*Example: Bianca and Enore are in the same zone. Bianca plays a 'Search for Rations' card from her hand, and Enore also adds a card of the same type from her hand. Bianca rolls 2 dice (one for each card played) and gets 3+3=6. Dividing it by 5 gives 1 (the remainder is ignored), so Bianca places 1 Rations token from the reserve in the zone she is in.*

## Search for Ammunition

Ammunition is needed to remove the squads from the map (see the "Repel the Squads" paragraph).

After rolling the dice, divide the sum of the dice rolls by 5. The result is the number of Ammunition tokens you can place in the zone you are in.

*Example: Wilma plays 3 'Search for Ammunition' cards and rolls 3 dice, getting 2+4+4=10. Dividing by 5 gives 2, so Wilma places 2 Ammunition tokens from the reserve in her zone.*

## Mobilize Citizens

The citizens are the heart of the defense of the neighborhoods against the attacks of the Fascist squads: recruiting them is easier than building barricades, but - unlike the latter - they will be removed from the board when used to repel the assaults (see the "Resolve a squad attack" paragraph).

After rolling the dice, divide the sum of the dice rolls by 5. The result is the number of Citizen tokens you can place in the zone you are in.

*Example: Father Nino plays a card and rolls one die, getting a 4. The result divided by 5 is 0, and therefore, he can place no Citizens with his action.*

### **Repel the Squads**

Removing all the Fascist squads from the city will be practically impossible, but performing this action is necessary to alleviate the pressure of the Fascists on the city and avoid the most dangerous attacks.

Before performing this action, you must return one Ammunition token to the reserve from the zone you are in (if there is no Ammunition token, you cannot perform the 'Repel the Squads' action).

After rolling the dice, divide the sum of the dice rolls by 5. The result is the number of Squad pawns you can remove from the outer space of the zone you are in, moving them to their reserve.

*Example: Cecilia is in a zone with 2 Squad pawns, along with Alcide. She plays a total of 2 'Repel the Squads' cards. Before rolling the dice, she also removes an Ammunition token from her zone. With the dice, she gets a total of  $2+5=7$ , and therefore removes 1 Squad pawn from her zone.*

### **Erecting a Barricade**

Building Barricades is an essential element to succeed in resisting: they remain on the board during the game and also allow you to free up new spaces on the City Defense track, giving players more breathing room.

After rolling the dice, compare the total of the dice rolls with the value indicated on the space occupied by a Barricade furthest to the left on the City Defense track.

If the total of the dice is equal to or greater than the indicated value, take the Barricade token from that space (only one, even if the dice result would be enough for two or more barricades) and place it in the zone you are in on one of the 'Barricade' symbols. Each zone can hold up to 3 Barricades; if no 'Barricade' symbol is free, it is not possible to build a new Barricade in the zone.

Building subsequent Barricades will become increasingly difficult, as indicated by the increasing numbers on the track.

*Example: Alcide, with the help of Bianca, plays 3 'Erect a Barricade' cards, rolls 3 dice, and gets  $1+2+6=9$ . The Barricade to be built (that is, furthest to the left on the track) requires a 7+ to be built, so Alcide takes it and places it in the zone he is in.*

### **Using Rations**

After rolling the dice for any action, you can discard (returning them to the reserve) one or more Rations tokens in the zone you are in to add +3 to the total result of the dice rolls for each discarded Rations token.

*Example: Father Nino plays 2 cards and rolls 2 dice for 'Search for Ammunition,' getting  $3+5=8$ . He decides to discard one Rations token from his zone to bring the total to  $8+3=11$ , and then place 2 tokens ( $11/5=2$ ) of Ammunition in his zone.*

### **Depleted Reserve**

If the result of an action allows you to place more tokens (Rations, Ammunition, or Citizens) in the zone than those currently in the reserve, you can take, if desired, the missing ones from other zones of the board to place them in the zone where you are performing the action.

### **Not Playing Cards on Your Turn**

If you cannot or do not want to perform any actions on your turn (for example, because you have no cards in hand or only have 'Repel the Squads' action cards and no usable ammunition, or for any other reason), you must discard at least one card (if you have any), in place of the action you do not take during the turn.

*Example: Enore starts the turn with only one 'Erect a Barricade' card, but the next Barricade requires an 8+, and no other player has cards to assist him. For this reason, he discards his card instead of taking an action.*

### **Performing a Movement**

Before or after the action on your turn, you can move your pawn on the board, from the zone you are in to any other zone (even non-adjacent).

If you move within the same district (i.e., from one zone to another in Oltretorrente or from one zone to another in Naviglio), you can bring along with your pawn a single Rations, Ammunition, or Citizen token. If you move from one district to another (from Oltretorrente to Naviglio or vice versa), crossing Parma, you cannot take any tokens with you.

There is no limit to the number of player pawns and tokens that can be present in a single zone. Moving your pawn is not mandatory; you can leave it in the zone where it was at the beginning of the turn.

*Example: After taking an action, Wilma moves from zone 3 to zone 4 in Oltretorrente, bringing a Citizen with her to help defend the zone.*

### **Drawing Cards and End of Turn**

At the end of the turn, after taking an action and potentially making a move (in any order), draw one card at a time from the Action card deck until you have the predetermined number in front of you:

- 6 cards in a game with 1 player;
- 5 cards in a game with 2 players;
- 4 cards in a game with 3 or 4 players;
- 3 cards in a game with 5 players.

If you draw a Squad card, immediately resolve its effect (see the 'Resolve a Squad Attack' paragraph), then place it next to the game board (so that the number of Squad cards already drawn during the current day is always visible) and draw a new card from the deck (Squad cards are not counted among the players' cards when refilling their hand).

If you draw the last card in the Action card deck, the current day has ended – see the paragraph “End of the Day”.

After drawing the necessary cards, the turn passes to the player to your left.

*Example: In a 3-player game, Cecilia ends her turn with 2 Action cards in front of her. Therefore, she draws 2 cards to return to having 4 cards. The second of these cards is a Squad card, so she resolves it immediately, sets it aside, and then draws a new card.*

### Resolving a Squad Attack

If you draw a Squad card at the end of the turn when refilling your hand, this means the fascists reinforce and attempt to attack the city. To resolve the effect of the card, proceed as follows:

- Roll 1 die and add 1 Squad pawn in the outer space of the zone corresponding to the result of the die (if this is not possible, you have lost the game! See the 'Exhausted Squad Reserve' paragraph).
- After adding the Squad pawn, now resolve an attack in the same zone, checking if there are enough Squad pawns to raid the zone:
  - each Barricade in a zone stops one Squad pawn. The barricade is not removed;
  - each Citizen token stops one Squad pawn. The Citizens used for this purpose are removed and returned to the reserve;
- If there are additional Squads in the zone that are not stopped by Barricades or Citizens, they raid the zone.

If this happens:

- remove all Rations and Ammunition tokens (but not Barricades) from the zone to their reserve spaces;
- advance the indicator on the City Defense track by one space for each Squad not stopped by Barricades or Citizens.

Attention! When a Squad attack is resolved, no Squad pawn is actually removed from the board (the Barricades and Citizens only prevent a raid). Squad pawns can only be removed by players using the 'Repel the Squads' action.

*Example: Cecilia resolves a drawn Squad card. She rolls a die and gets a 3, so she places a Squad pawn [1] outside zone 3. There were no other Squads in the same space. The newly*

*placed Squad is stopped by the existing Barricade [2], so no raid occurs.*

*Example: Bianca just placed a Squad pawn in zone 4, where there were already 2 other pawns. One of the three Squads [1] is stopped by a Barricade [2], another [3] by the existing Citizen [4] (which is removed and returned to the reserve), but the last one [5] is not stopped, so it raids. The two Ammunition tokens present [6] are removed from the zone and returned to the reserve, and the city defense indicator advances by one space (for the one Squad that was not stopped).*

### Exhausted Squad Reserve

If at any point during the game you are asked to add Squad pawns to the game board, but this is not possible because the reserve is empty, the game is immediately lost! The Fascist forces have overwhelmed the players, and the city succumbs to the siege.

### End of the Day

If, when drawing cards at the end of the turn, the last card in the deck is drawn, the day ends. Proceed as follows:

- If the day of August 5 has just ended, your game is almost over. However, you will have to resolve one final Squad attack: skip the next steps in this paragraph and proceed to the next paragraph ('Final Squad Attack'). Then judge victory or defeat.
- If the just-ended day is not August 5th, add one Fascist Squad card from the unused cards to the laid-aside Squad cards and shuffle these with the Action cards in the discard pile (“Scarti” space). Place these shuffled cards in the draw deck space (“Mazzo di Pesca”) face down to form a new Action deck.
- Advance the 'Current Day' card to the next day.

After creating the new Action deck, the current player draws any additional cards needed to reach the required number (see 'Drawing Cards and End of Turn' paragraph), then the turn passes to the player to their left.

### Final Squad Attack

At the end of the day on August 5, before the end of the game, you must resolve one final Squad attack. Roll 2 dice, add 1 Squad pawn outside each of the 2 zones indicated by the dice roll, and resolve a Squad attack in those two zones normally.

### Victory and Defeat

If at any time during the game the City Defense indicator must advance to a space occupied by a Barricade, or to the last space on the track (if all the barricades have been built), the city falls under Fascist attacks, which ravage the neighborhoods that dared to resist. You have lost the game!

*Example: Following a Squad attack, a raid occurs by 2 Squads that is not stopped by Barricades or Citizens. Therefore, the City Defense indicator must advance by 2*

*spaces, ending on a space occupied by a Barricade. The game is lost.*

The game is also lost if at any time a Squad pawn must be placed, but all Squads are already placed on the board.

If, on the other hand, after resolving the final Squad attack at the end of the fourth day neither of these two conditions has occurred, you have won the game! The city has successfully resisted the Fascist assaults, and the *Squadristi* retreat with their tails between their legs from where they came.

On August 6, control of the city will pass to the Prefect, and the celebrating population will surrender their weapons to the Royal Army.

The dream of a city free from fascism will last only a few months. In October of the same year, the Fascists will organize the infamous March on Rome, which will mark the beginning of twenty years of dictatorship. But the 'Barricades of Parma' are now part of history. As the poet Attilio Bertolucci will write years later, recalling the 'sultry nights' of August 1922:

*Winning for a few days,  
Winning for a lifetime.*

### **Expert Game**

After the initial games with the introductory mode, you can choose to play using the rules for experts, namely the character abilities, Mission cards, and the expert rules for the final Squad assault.

### **Character Abilities**

The special abilities indicate some exceptions or additions to the normal rules that will make each participant's way of playing different in every game, making each game different from the previous one. During the preparation phase, when choosing the character to play, each player flips their corresponding card to the side that shows the text of their special ability and reads it aloud.

### **Mission Cards**

The Mission cards represent delicate and often complex tasks assigned by Guido Picelli - in charge of the city's resistance - to the players, who will have to try to complete them during the current day.

During the preparation phase, instead of placing the "Current Day" card (which is not used), shuffle the Mission card deck and place one card face down in each of the four spaces. Put the remaining Mission cards back in the box, unseen.

At the beginning of each day, reveal the card in the corresponding space and read its text. This represents a specific assignment given to the players, which they must complete during the same day to obtain certain benefits, avoid negative effects on the game, and weaken the final Fascist assault on the city.

At the end of the day (see "End of the Day" paragraph), before shuffling the cards and creating the new draw deck, check if the mission indicated on the card has been completed. If so, resolve the effect indicated on the card under "If you succeed" ("Se riuscite"). If not, resolve the effect indicated under "If you fail," ("Se fallite") and also flip the card 180° to show the text "+1 to the final assault" at the top.

The Mission cards whose text begins with "Remove" require the players to move the specified tokens or pawns from the indicated zone to their respective reserves at the end of the day. For Mission cards that require "presence," nothing needs to be removed from the zone.

Note: during the last day of the game, the text indicated under "If you succeed" and "If you fail" is ignored and replaced by the text indicated on the board.

### **New rules for the final assault**

During the phase of the final assault by the *squadristi*, instead of rolling two dice for an attack as indicated in the rules for the introductory game, roll one die and make a separate attack for each Mission failed during the four days of the game (as shown on the rotated failed Mission cards). Therefore, if all four Missions have been successfully completed, there will be no *squadristi* attack at the end of the last day.

### **They had dressed for the celebration**

They had dressed for the celebration  
for an impossible victory  
in the muddy course of History.  
They stood on guard, armed  
with old rifles, ninety-one,  
defending the freedom they had won  
for their small homeland,  
staying awake on the sultry nights  
of August with the choruses  
of our music  
with the dark wine  
of our land.  
Victorious for a few days  
victorious for a lifetime.

- Attilio Bertolucci

## Personality Cards

<b>Alcide</b>	When attempting to erect a Barricade, add +2 to the die roll total.
<b>Bianca</b>	On your turn, you can use any single card as if it were a "repel the squads" card.
<b>Cecilia</b>	When you make a move you can take an additional token with you (that is, 2 in the same district and 1 between different districts).
<b>Enore</b>	Each Rations token used in the area where you are present is worth 2 additional points
<b>Padre Nino</b>	In the area where you are present, Citizen tokens can be used as if they were Rations or Ammunition tokens.
<b>Wilma</b>	When resolving a Squad attack, your presence in a zone counts as a Barricade.

## Mission Cards

Condition	If you succeed	If you fail
At the end of the day, 1 Citizen token must be present in each zone of Naviglio.	Remove a total of 2 Squad pawns from any zones of your choice.	Throw 2 dice and place 2 Squad pawns in the corresponding zones (they do not attack). Rotate the card to show "+1 ultimo assalto".
At the end of the day, 1 Citizen token must be present in each zone of Oltretorrente.	Next day, ignore 1 Squad attack card of your choice.	Return 1 Barricade from an area of your choice to the box. Rotate the card to show "+1 ultimo assalto".
At the end of the day, remove 1 Citizen, 1 Ammunition and 1 Rations token from zone 1 to their reserve spaces.	Place 1 new Barricade in 1 zone of your choice.	Add an additional Squad card to the draw deck. Rotate the card to show "+1 ultimo assalto".
At the end of the day, remove 3 Rations tokens from zone 2 to the reserve space.	Next day, you may take 1 token with you when moving between districts.	Next day, no Personality may use their abilities. Rotate the card to show "+1 ultimo assalto".
At the end of the day, remove 1 Citizen and 2 Ammunition tokens from zone 3 to their reserve spaces.	Remove all Squad pawns from one zone of your choice.	Immediately roll 1 die, place 1 new Squad pawn, and carry out an attack there. Rotate the card to show "+1 ultimo assalto".
At the end of the day, there must be at least 2 Barricades in zone 4.	Reposition 2 Barricades from zone 4 to zones of your choice.	Remove 1 Citizen, 1 Rations and 1 Ammunition token from every zone. Rotate the card to show "+1 ultimo assalto".
At the end of the day, remove 3 Ammunition tokens from zone 5 to the reserve space.	Place up to 3 new Citizen tokens in zones of your choice.	Remove all Citizen tokens in all zones. Rotate the card to show "+1 ultimo assalto".
At the end of the day, remove 1 Citizen and 2 Rations tokens from zone 6 to their reserve spaces.	Place up to 3 new Ammunition tokens in zones of your choice.	Next day, the card limit for each player is reduced by one. Rotate the card to show "+1 ultimo assalto".
Last day of the game: August 5. <i>On August 5, ignore the Mission card's succeed or fail texts and replace it with the following.</i>	Move back one space on the Defense track.	Advance one space on the Defense track.