

Henchmen

Supporting the Glorious Leader
Morality and infighting within totalitarianism



MAIN THEME : Negotiation

Alternative Themes: Team Building

Outline

The Great Leader of Vietasia is in absolute control of the country. However, there continue to be moments of crisis and threats of intervention from neighbours and other powers. Political opposition to the rule of the Leader is virtually non-existent. The players are the Leader's main Henchmen – his circle of subordinates and supporters who need to implement the Leader's Will. However, the Leader's decision-making is very nearly random and subject to wide ranging swings in mood and policy. Those around the Leader seek to get decisions via the use of the 'Leader Order'. In addition, the Leader delegates very little of the key decision-making. Nobody can really make policy on their own – everything has to come through the Leader at some point or other. The game is about the interactions and rivalries of this group of Henchmen and how they negotiate and manoeuvre themselves into a position close enough to the Leader to influence events.

Gameplay

The core mechanism of the game is an abstract game of position, aiming to achieve a 'fireside chat' with the Leader. However, the positions



that players achieve are influenced by their negotiation with their arch-rivals, the other henchmen. Everyone is out for themselves, but must cooperate to achieve anything. This is a tense balancing act that makes this primarily a game of negotiation. There can also be a strong element of moral dilemma as player might choose to become ever more extreme in their proposals in order to curry favour.

At the end of the game there is a debrief of the process and how negotiation worked and the communication and negotiation strategies the player adopted. Players have the opportunity to reflect on how their negotiation position and decision-making was affected by the behaviour and communications of the other players. They get the chance to reflect on how this might inform their practice and planning in future

Ideal Audiences

- Organisations wishing to practice negotiation.
- Students looking at the history of totalitarianism, political studies or mediation.

Example game structures

Henchmen : For 6 players	
Team	Number in team
Inner Circle of the Leader	6
Total	6

Henchmen : for 12 players	
Team	Number in team
Inner Circle of the Leader	6
Ministry of the Interior	2
Foreign Ministry	2
Military High Command	2
Total	12