

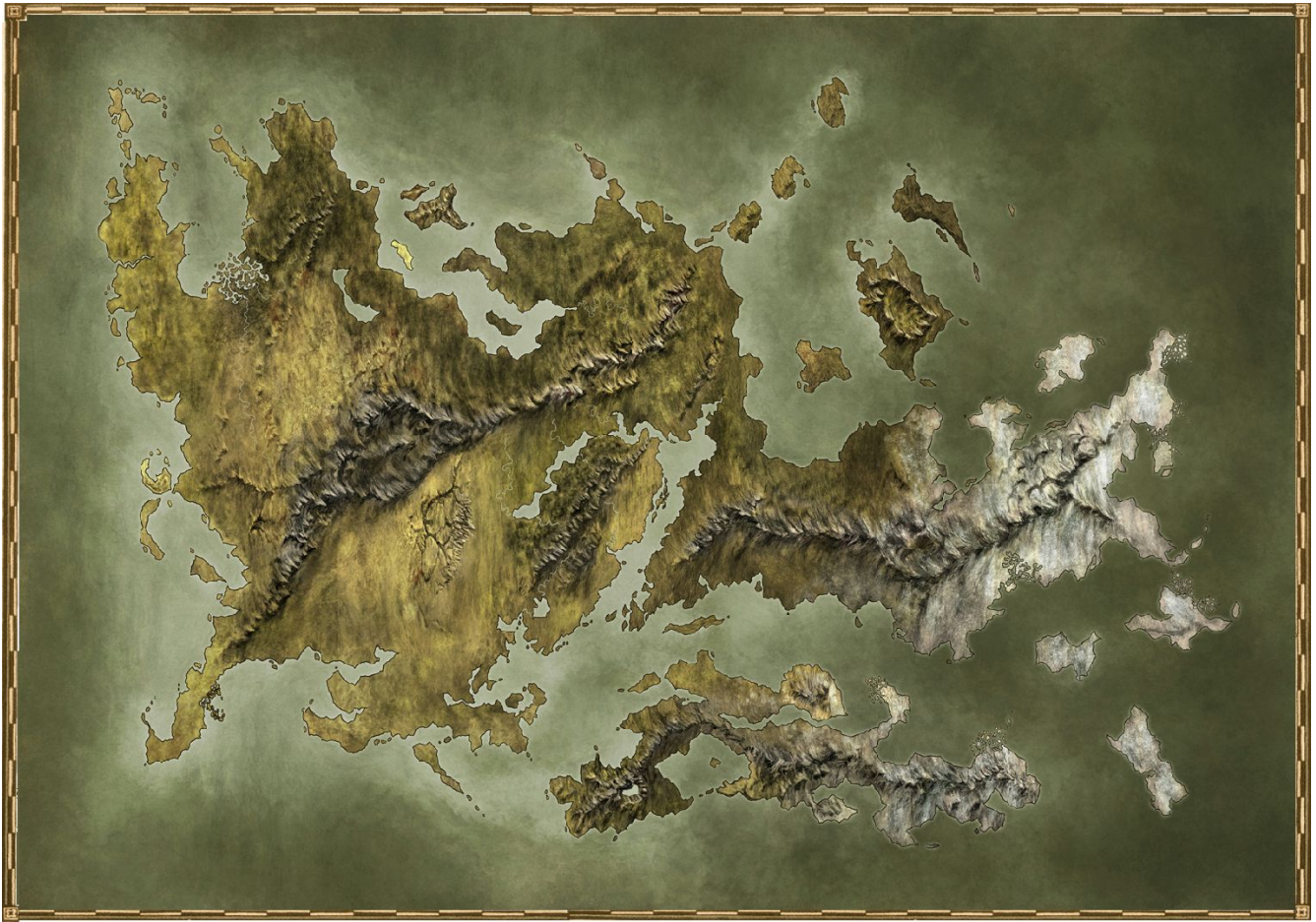
The Spirit of Nations

Introduction

The Spirit of Nations recounts the history of The People, a cluster of several Nations with related but distinct cultures facing an invasion by the powerful Conquerors, who wish to seize their land and destroy their culture. 2-5 players take on the role of lorekeepers each trying to preserve their Nation's values in face of the invasion. The Conquerors are controlled by an additional person, the GM.

To play, you'll need the following:

- A whole bunch of dice of different sizes (d4 through d12)
- A pile of tokens such as glass beads or poker chips
- Pencils and some paper
- A copy of the Nation sheet for each player



World creation

As a group decide what kind of setting you want to play. Do you want to play in a Fantasy setting or is futuristic Sci Fi an option. Maybe the Nations of this world are recovering from an Apocalypse. Anything is a possibility.

As anything is possible once the setting has been decided. Decide as a group what is possible in the setting and what isn't. For example in a Fantasy setting do you want the existence of magic? Or is cloning a reality in a Sci Fi setting? Ask questions and get everyone to build the world they will be playing in.

When you're ready place a blank sheet of paper in the middle of the playing area. Maps are beneficial to help convey the lay of the land and also add a bit of personality to the player's experience. The GM should draw a coastline along at least one side of the paper, this is the ocean, across which the Conquerors have come. Each player should then write the name of their Nation somewhere on the map, and add one geographical feature such as another water body, a mountain range or a river, etc. The GM should then add the main outpost of the Conquerors to the map. Note this does not have to be near the ocean but should have some backstory to how the outpost was founded in that particular location. For example if the outpost is further inland, maybe the Conquerors got so far but then have reached a stalemate with the surrounding nations.

Nation creation

To begin, the players must first decide what values define their Nation. Values should be broad principles, able to be interpreted and lived out in many different ways. Individualism, Connection with Nature, or Respect for the Ancestors are examples of values that might define a culture. The players collectively choose one value that will be shared by all of The People. Then each player picks two more values specific to their Nation. They should write these at the top of their Nation sheet.

For each core value, a player comes up with four Traditions which are based on the following resources:

- People – the population, its health and vigor, and community spirit and trust
- Earth – the productivity of the natural world
- Spears – ability to physically resist domination, through war, geographic isolation, etc
- Trade – material wealth, interaction with others

Traditions may be laws, specific practices, social institutions, religious or philosophical beliefs. An example of these traditions can be found on this partially filled out Nation’s sheet:

Nation Kjalderssen

Tides of war						
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

		Individualism	Respect for Ancestors	Anti-Authoritarianism
People	d10			A new chief is chosen each year by casting dice – nobody can hold the office permanently
Earth	d8		A field is believed to be most productive when worked by the same family for generations – moving to a new place, on the other hand, will bring bad harvests	There is no private property in land
Spears	d6	Warriors are highly motivated and do not fear death because of the renown they can win for glorious deeds in battle	One of the most highly respected ancestors is Humawaka, who was a mighty warrior	
Trade	d8		The ancestors must receive as an offering a tenth of any money earned in trade	It is considered very rude to openly display your wealth or show off your poverty

Each resource is represented by a die between d12 and d4. Smaller values are better when rolling dice to resolve conflicts, therefore a smaller die represents a better status for that resource. To begin, each Nation will have one resource at a d6, two at a d8, and one at a d10. Go around the table and have each player assign one die to a resource. They should describe what this means for their Nation. For example, if you assign a d10 to People, you might talk about how your Nation has a very small population, or if you assign a d6 to Spears, you might indicate that your territory lies in a difficult-to-access mountain range. Draw any relevant features on the map. After the players have assigned all of their dice, the GM should add a feature relevant to each Nation that negatively impacts one of its resources. After doing this, the player must take their relevant die down one level - e.g. from a d6 to a d8. (Note that dice can never go above a d4 or below a d12).

Part of the Nation sheet is a section called the “Tides of war”. At creation this starts at 0 and how the Nation is progressing through time will decide if the war is turning in their favour, positive numbers or the Conquerors which is represented as a negative number.



Freedom fighters creation

Each nation has it's own military might and it will depend greatly on the Nation what this force may look like. To a forest dwelling Nation this may be a guerilla strike force or to a more civilised Nation it may be that they are assassins disguised as diplomates. Each player decides on what their Freedom Fighters are like.

It is then up to the players to create a single character for each of the Nation's Freedom Fighters. This means each player will have one character per Nation. The player is expected to create the kind of character that would be part of the Nation and take into account the traditions. Respect the other players decisions as you would expect them to respect your own.

Character creation and rules for interacting at the Freedom Fighter level is not included in this rules supplement but should be based on any system your players and yourself as the GM are familiar with. Take into account the kind of game you wish to play when deciding on a system. There are a lot of generic rpgs out there but some more specific rules may be more suited to the kind of campaign you wish to run.

As a rule. All campaigns or chapters in the Nation's history revolve around the approaching Conqueror.

Conqueror creation

The rules for Conqueror creation is the same as creating a Nation but they hold a lot more power over the other Nations. To show this they have three d6's and one d4 to represent their resources.

The GM may have an idea of what the Conqueror's are like. Use this as a starting point and then as a group finish the Conqueror's Nation sheet. They will also need a description of what their army is like. This will be the main opposition to each Nation's freedom fighters.

Nation Falktiarc (Conqueror)

Tides of war						
-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

		Cleansed with Fire	Prideful	Loyalty
People	d6		Each member of society takes pride in what they are doing is right. This sometimes comes across as arrogant to outsiders	
Earth	d6	Each year the land is swept over with fire in order to make the land more fertile for harvest next year		
Spears	d4	All bodies on the battlefield must be cremated regardless of if they are friend or foe		
Trade	d6			Customers are loyal to merchants without waiver and trading is primarily a family business



Playing the game

The GM will set the scene and give any necessary background to how the invasion of the Conquerors is unveiling.

The session then proceeds in a series of “chapters”. In each chapter, the goal of the GM is to have the Conquerors come to dominate the Nations on every level. The Conquerors should be ruthless in their methods and self-righteous about the correctness of what they are doing. Philosopher Iris Marion Young's five categories of domination can be taken as a rough guide to the kinds of things the Conquerors may try to do:

- 1) exploitation: taking things of value from another without fair compensation
- 2) marginalization: exclusion from useful participation in deciding their own fate
- 3) powerlessness: lack of autonomy and scope for creativity
- 4) cultural imperialism: assertion of the superiority of one group's way of life over another
- 5) violence: threat of physical harm

The player's goal is to resist these forms of domination, ultimately leading the Conquerors to give up and abandon their plans to dominate the People. In game terms, the GM and players are trying to destroy or protect the cultural traditions listed on their Nation sheet, by employing the four resources represented by dice.

Each chapter may be initiated either by the GM or a player if they have been rewarded a chance for them to do so.

GM initiation

If a GM initiates, this is usually an overarching plot about the Conquerors and will detail their invasion plans. Something will happen that challenges a tradition of that Nation. The threats may be deliberate actions or policies, or unintended side effects of the Conquerors' presence. For example, the GM may propose that the Conquerors have passed a law requiring the Nation's people to move from their traditional fields to a centralized village, threatening the tradition of offering sacrifices to the spirits of specific sacred places. Or perhaps a disease inadvertently introduced by the Conquerors has broken out among the Nation, threatening their annual solstice ceremony (since a major gathering like that would be a good place to spread the disease).

The player, or players that are affected by the scenario then frame a scene each in which their Nation does something to respond to the threat. In the widespread disease scenario it might be that they need to enter a Conqueror camp in order to get blood samples in order to find a cure whereas another player may feel like sacrificing some of their people for the greater good maybe the better option. If it makes sense in the setting and the Nations would work together, players can work together.

Once the resistance options have been made the GM and players involved need to roll.

The GM decides which of the Conqueror's resources is most crucial to the threat. In the examples given above, the forced villagization program might be backed by the Conquerors' Spears because they are using military force to implement it. While the disease might be an effect of the Conquerors' People, since the disease was brought by their own infected citizens. They will roll the die associated with that resource.

At the same time, the player decides which resource their Nation is drawing on to resist the threat. Perhaps they want to resist the forced villagization with Trade by bribing the Conqueror's' soldiers, or they want to resist the disease with their own People in the form of native healing practices. The player will roll the die associated with that resource. A player may also identify one tradition that their Nation has which could be helpful in aiding their resistance to the threat. If they have one such tradition, they may roll a die one step higher than the one associated with that resource (e.g. a d8 instead of a d10).

As a GM you should be working with the players to write the most exciting history possible. If that means being tough on them, initiate a threat that they don't have a helpful tradition with. Most of the time though you will want them to succeed and should write threats that play towards their traditions.

The player and GM then roll their dice at the same time. If the player rolls less than or equal to the GM, their Nation gets the

opportunity to strike back, retaliate against the Conquerors. If they roll more than the GM, they are unsuccessful.

Player failure

If a player fails, they then have a choice to either assimilate or lose the tradition completely. Either way they will also be given the chance to initiate a chapter next time.

To assimilate, the player alters the tradition to something that still expresses the core value, but is compatible with the new social order and culture introduced by the Conquerors. Re-write the tradition on the Nation sheet, and note that it is Assimilated. An Assimilated tradition cannot be used to improve a die roll. It can still be threatened, and if a player fails to protect an Assimilated tradition from a threat, it is lost. If a tradition is lost, cross it off the Nation sheet. If all of the traditions associated with a particular value are lost, the value is also lost. Once a value is lost, its traditions can no longer be revived.

Each time a tradition assimilated, that counts as a negative point of damage to the tides of war. While a lost tradition counts as two points of damage. When the tides of war reaches negative three points the player's base die for a resource that is most applicable is taken down one step (e.g. from a d6 to a d8). If a resource is reduced below a d12, the player's Nation has entirely lost that resource, and they can no longer use it in conflicts. The tides of war are then reset to the starting position, zero.

Player succeeds

If the player succeeds, they then get the chance to enact their plan. This will then be played out in whichever supplement rules are being used. This should be dictated by the creation rules that were used for your Freedom Fighters.

In some cases multiple players may have a plan. Simply take turns to run the plan. If this is a long campaign, then you can maybe split each Nations operation into a different session.

If the outcome is successful the Nation gains one positive point in their tides of war. If their tides of war hits 3 points they can increase the appropriate resource by one step. For example if the invasion goes well, maybe the player decides his spear should increase for a d10 to a d8. Or they can choose to revive a lost tradition as long as the core value still exists. The tides of war are then reset to zero.

If the players plan is unsuccessful the Nation maybe at the mercy of the Conquerors and the next chapter may reflect this. It is up to the GM to decide what the outcome is from a failed plan. In most scenarios it will be Assimilated. In which case follow the necessary rules and the players Nation will lose 1 negative point in their tides of war.

Player initiation

When a player initiates the scene they remove the chance to initiate the next chapter so that each Nation gets a fair amount of time in the spotlight.

The player initiates by setting the scene and explaining their plan of action. As a GM try to get as much info out of them as possible. In this phase they are technically writing an entire plot hook for you so use it to your advantage. The player and GM then roll necessary resource dice. If the player is successful the GM loses one point in their tides of war.

The scenario is then played out using the Nation's freedom fighters.

If a player is successful. They get the option of having two positive points in their tide of war or one positive point and the Conqueror is given another negative point.

If the players plan is unsuccessful they will receive one negative point in their tides of war. It is up to the GM if this affects a tradition in anyway and should depend on how badly the plan went wrong. If players are captured, the Nation will be claimed down on and they will have their tradition Assimilated so that this kind of thing doesn't happen again. If the players Freedom Fighters fail but get away with leaving any traces. The Conquerors may not know who to blame. This could be bad for no one... or everyone.