

# Rioting in Alexandria

A mob action battle report by Ed Mills (Louisiana)

*Slingshot 27, Jan 1970*

## SITUATION

This battle was an attempt to transfer a situation of civil disturbance and street fighting to the wargame table. It was postulated that one side should consist of a small, hard core group of revolutionaries who would attempt to seize control of the city. The other side would consist of the more powerful and established forces currently ruling the city.

The revolutionaries consisted of a small force of light infantry and several "demagogues". The "demagogues" had no combat value and their effect was exclusively political (i.e. recruitment of city mobs). The revolutionaries would receive reinforcements from the city populace at a rate determined by the effectiveness of the "demagogues" and the success of their arms (the capture of the barracks would instantly create 60 recruits for the revolutionaries, the failure of any attempt to storm it would reduce the mobs by 20%, etc.).

In the manner typical of mobs, these popular forces might do what the revolutionaries wanted or they might go off on a brainless tangent of their own and burn the Library, for example, when they were needed at the Canopus Gate.

The Jews were considered to be strong Royalists and would support Ptolemy III. Some naval and military forces were available at Canopus. however, it was arranged that their loyalty would be suspect until actually committed in battle.

The revolutionaries were commanded by Charles Sanders and Ptolemy III was represented by Pierre Jollisaint. I served as Umpire.

Surprise was an essential for the revolutionaries, so when Charles Sanders and I planned this battle we informed Jack that the war game was going to be a seaborne Seleucid invasion. After situating his men to repel a sea attack we informed him of the true situation (somewhat to his surprise).



The battle was fought on a floor ten by twelve feet. The forces used were 30mm flats.

## MISSION

The revolutionaries are to capture any five of these eight objectives: the Canopus gate, Barracks, Royal harbor, Royal palace, Harbor chain, causeway, docks and Timonium.

### The Battle (First Day)

Ptolemy III had placed the bulk of his men in the eastern part of the city and on Pharos Island.

The revolutionaries began their activity in the central city. The rabble rousers were unusually effective and this coupled with the capture of the public buildings located in the central city produced a large anti-government mob. Part of this mob captured the docks and stormed the tower at the south end of the causeway, while the rest started pillaging the Jewish quarter.

Ptolemy reinforced the garrison of the besieged tower and landed a strong force at the Timonium. The mob repulsed an attempted counterattack on the Jewish quarter and in turn attempted to capture the Barracks. The failure of the attack plus the threat from the Timonium caused the mob to fall back, burning large areas of the city to cover the withdrawal.

During the night, a surprise seaborne attack captured the tower on the Timonium, trapping many of Ptolemy's soldiers on the mole. These men suffered severely from the tower's captured siege engine. These forces were finally evacuated by sea (they could have been totally destroyed but the mobs couldn't be harangued into attacking them).

### Second Day

On the morning of the second day Ptolemy attempted a two pronged attack on the central city, from the causeway and the Barracks. They were engaged by a horde of poorly equipped militia. The causeway attack was repulsed but the attack from the Barracks gained so much ground that the revolutionaries were forced to burn the Temple, Theater and Paneum areas to gain a respite.

During the afternoon three triremes arrived from Canopus. One of these triremes defected to the revolutionaries, sank one of her sister ships and chased the other inside the chain. This trireme then sailed around Pharos island and participated in an attack on the causeway which was repulsed.

### Third Day

During the night the troops from Canopus arrived. The next day an all-out attack on the fragmented and demoralised militia units resulted in a victory for Ptolemy III, but only after some severe street fighting.

## MORALE AND COMBAT

In this part of Louisiana we don't use Society rules (although we are greatly influenced by them). It might

be said that archers and cavalry are not quite as effective here as they are on Society battlefields.

In our morale rules we have three kinds of morale, one each for civilised disciplined troops, barbarians, and civilized undisciplined troops (militia). The morale rules for civilized disciplined troops are, in essence, the Society's rules. However, it takes six barbarians and eight militia to make a morale point (as opposed to five regulars). So a unit of Guard hoplites might have a morale factor of "8", or about as much morale as three times their number of militia (20 men equals "4", 3 officers equals "3", Guard equals "1", 64 militia equals "8"). As a result of these rules militia are seldom able to withstand regulars in a stand up fight. In the game this resulted in frequent militia retreats, forcing the rioters to mass arson to cover the withdrawals.

The melee value of regular troops and barbarians depend on the weapons used.

Dagger or Javelin .....	1 point per soldier
Sword, Spear or Axe .....	2 points
Halberd or Lance .....	3
Any two Sword, Spear or Axe .....	4
Halberd or Lance and Sword, Spear or Axe .....	5

Pike:

- 1 In one rank or disorganised
- 2 versus infantry
- 3 versus cavalry (if pikes in two ranks)
- 4 versus cavalry (if pikes in three ranks)

Add one point if pikemen also have swords.

Militia subtract one point, per man, from the above.

## CREATION OF THE MOBS

The city was divided into several sections. Each of these sections had a percentage of the populace in favor of the revolution. In the Jewish and Royal quarters of the city 5% of the populace favored the revolution, in the central city 50% of the populace favored the revolution, and so on.

The demagogues would enter an area and stir up the populace. The number of rioting recruits they created would be chosen by chance. The demagogue would roll two dice twice and multiply the resultant numbers. For example if the demagogue rolled two 7's he would have a 49. This number 49 would be of his potential recruits. If the demagogue was operating in the Royal quarter he would gain two recruits (because 5% of this area favoured the cause), if he was operating in the central city he would gain twenty five recruits. More than one demagogue could operate in a city section. A demagogue was good for four such recruiting ventures.

If the mobs achieved some military victories their numbers would be augmented. The capture of the Royal Palace would have created one hundred extra rioters. These extra rioters would have entered the fray in the various zones (example: of this one hundred, 5 each would have appeared in the Jewish and Royal quarters, 50 would

enter in the central city and the other forty within their respective zones elsewhere). This sometimes resulted in small riots behind Royalist lines, requiring quick action on the part of Ptolemy.

### MOB ACTIONS

Once the mobs were created the problem was what to do with them. Frequently mobs are goaded to violence

and then their violence becomes uncontrolled and unpredictable.

Say a mob of one hundred contains two demagogues and two "regular" revolutionaries. We value the demagogue as three points and the regulars as two points, giving us ten points total. These ten points are divided by the total number in the mob and that gives us 10%. We then check our mob action chart:

Mob Action Chart											
Roll of dice											
%	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
0	S	S	S	S	20%	40%	20%	S	S	S	S
1-4	S	S	S	20%	40%	60%	40%	20%	S	S	S
5-9	S	S	20%	40%	60%	80%	60%	40%	20%	S	S
10	S	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	80%	60%	40%	20%	S

The **S** represents static, and indicates that the mob stayed in the same area and couldn't move, although minor tactical changes were allowed.

The percentage number indicates that portion of mob that would do that was desired (attack, retreat, move to a specific location, etc.).

Our mob leader throws a six. This means eighty men may be used to attack (for example) the Barracks.

After doing this should our mob leader change his mind and desire **not** to attack the Barracks he must go through the whole process again.

What about the other twenty men? These men also roll a die.

- 1 go home (i.e. out of the fight)
- 2 stay in the area, no arson
- 3 stay in the area, arson
- 4 divide into four groups one each moving north, south, east and west.
- 5 or 6 attack something:
  - 1 or 2 Jewish Quarter
  - 3 or 4 Royal Quarter
  - 5 or 6 Nearest public building

The result of this was that mobs tended to splinter into smaller groups, and the hard core revolutionaries would move around in a frenzy trying to keep everything under control.

Many good chances were lost because only a handful of rioters (out of hundreds) would do what was wanted. Much time was taken in collecting an effective strike force. The rioters had real trouble in responding to Royalist thrusts.

The number of rioting militia tended to fluctuate greatly. Of the new recruits 90% were light armed infantry of various types and 10% were heavy infantry.

