

**GOLD CITY**  
REPORT ONE  
**HOT WAR**

HANDIWORK  
GAMES

## INTRODUCTION

Originally published in their first editions in 2007 and 2008, we're honoured and delighted to announce our plan to publish new editions of both Cold City and Hot War in 2024.

These won't just be new editions of these cult UK indie games: these new editions will form part of an impact study – a look at how historical research in combination with roleplaying games can affect the understanding of history and affect the wider culture. It will also be an experiment in ground-breaking presentation and the contextualisation of roleplaying games and the study of history within our wider culture.

As part of the process we'll be publishing regular updates as free PDFs, videos and web updates, introducing some of the new concepts, and talking about how they bring history and gaming together. These will provide a fascinating insight into both the design process and the history of the periods covered in both games. This report is one instance of this new material.



## CREDITS

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# COLD CITY / HOT WAR

## R E P O R T O N E

Cold City and Hot War are coming back! For those of you who know what this means, it should be very exciting. For those of you who don't, prepare to be excited!

Cold City and Hot War were 'twin' narrative RPGs that came out in 2006 and 2008 respectively. The former was set in Berlin in 1950, the latter in a post-apocalyptic Britain in 1963. Both games used similar basic systems, but with different emphases. Cold City focused on trust, mistrust, suspicion, and antagonism framed by the early Cold War. Hot War focused on relationships between characters and organisations. Both also had at their heart the 'hidden agendas' that motivated the characters. These were games that drew on the tropes of horror and science fiction, but were fundamentally rooted in real-world history.

Both games stemmed from my long-term, deep seated interest in the Cold War as a historical period and idea. However, both were written before I returned to academia and became a professional historian of - lo and behold! - the Cold War! I now feel that I'm in a position to revisit these games, to reimagine them, and to revitalise them. Having learned so much since the games first came out, I can see how they can be made even better while retaining all that made them great (if I do say so myself) in the first place.

I realise that not everyone wants to read a history of the Cold War when they buy a game. That's why I'm delighted to be working with the excellent people at Handiwork Games on these new editions. The history will be there, but it's not going to be in the form of vast essays that you need to read to grasp what's going on! Front and centre will always be the game experience: the thrill of hunting mysterious 'monsters' in 1950 Berlin or surviving in a fractured, devastated London in 1963. We're already thinking about ways we can impart the fascinating history of the period in ways that add to the game experience. Watch this space for more news on this!

We'll be bringing Cold City and Hot War to Kickstarter at some point in the future. We can't be more precise about what that 'some point' might be at the moment, but rest assured that work is already underway on game texts themselves. Each month we'll be bringing you a progress report on the two games, alongside some choice insights into the Cold War's history, distilled from the very latest historical research.

I'm tremendously excited to be returning to these games after so many years away. The prospect of reanimating them and making them even better is a thrilling one. And to have Handiwork Games as a partner in this is a huge bonus. I'm sure that almost all of you reading this will be well aware of their reputation for quality games such as BEOWULF: Age of Heroes, a|state, and Maskwitches of Forgotten Doggerland.

**Reg:** Ar4, Sec2c

**Ref:** #2c1 15/5/50

Contact with  
Humanoid male in  
tunnels under  
building 4.  
Private Smithson  
died during the  
encounter. Subject  
escaped capture.



## **HISTORY REPORT ONE**

As mentioned above, each month I'll also be looking at aspects of the Cold War that relate to Cold City and Hot War. This might be stuff you know about, it might not. Hopefully, though, it will spur your interest!

### **THE WINTER OF 1946-47**

I wonder if you've ever thought about how actual cold was a factor in bringing on the Cold War? Well, in a small way, it was.

In Europe, the winter of 1946-47 was one of the harshest since records began. The United Kingdom bore the brunt of the brutal weather. From January 1947 onwards, temperatures plummeted to lows of -21C. In February, the snow only stopped for two days. Factories, mines, and other industries began to shut down as supplies of coal and gas began to run out. The Army and Air Force had to step in to take supplies to communities in Wales, Cumbria, Northumbria, the Scottish Borders, and the Scottish Highlands.

In the Labour government headed by Clement Attlee, the Minister of Power and Energy, Emmanuel Shinwell, received death threats and had to have a police guard to protect him. The downturn in industrial production, coupled with the vast sums being spent on defence (particularly as regards the very recent decision to build an independent British atomic bomb) and the new National Health Service, caused an economic crisis. The British pound had to be massively devalued from \$4.10 to \$2.80.

Things in mainland Europe were hardly any better. Snow lay across the devastated continent, temperatures plummeted, and millions of people shivered in tents and badly repaired buildings. In Washington, Truman administration policymakers and analysts worried that societal dislocation, economic upheaval, a lack of food and fuel, and the seeming inability of existing governments to take charge of the situation presaged a turn towards more extreme politics. In the Truman administration's eyes, this meant the 'menace' of communism.

So although not the key factor, the harsh winter of 1946-47 was an element that spurred the provision of the U.S. Marshall Plan and increased U.S. engagement with Western Europe. In a small way, the cold helped to solidify the Cold War. Named for U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall, the European Recovery Plan (to give it its formal name) was a vast programme of economic aid for Europe. So, why the European Recovery Plan? Ideology, fear, markets, the perceived challenge of Soviet 'expansionism', the risk of hunger, poverty, and despair causing a turn to communism, and a desire to avoid the mistakes of the post-WWI period (especially regarding Germany).

On June 5th, 1947, Marshall announced the plan. Countries that accepted aid were free to decide what to do with it, although American advisors would play a role in decision-making.

Additionally, this was a plan spread over a number of years, not just a sudden fountain of money that would be cut off after the initial flood. However, there was considerable resistance in the U.S. Congress to European aid. Much of this stemmed from the line of thinking that said why should the U.S. aid the continent that had dragged America into two wars within 25 years?

Despite this, in April 1948, the ERP was enacted. One crucial factor that drove this decision was the Prague Coup of February 1948. For observers in Washington, this represented the 'loss' of Czechoslovakia, the last non-communist democracy in Eastern Europe. Aid was offered to the states of Eastern Europe, but Stalin ordered them all to reject the American financial aid. By the end of the plan in 1952, \$13 billion had been given to European states.

The Marshall Plan did not - as many people believe - rebuild Western Europe. Western Europe was already on the road to recovery when Marshall aid started flowing. However, it did give the governments of Western Europe additional money, space, and time to pursue quite different national projects (the rebuilding of the coal and steel industries in France, the welfare state in the UK, etc.). In many ways it was Marshall money that helped to pave the road towards increased Western European integration. From a Cold War perspective, its impact was multifaceted. It demonstrated continued US commitment to Europe (further emphasised by the creation of NATO a year later). Moscow perceived this as a further hardening of the emerging Cold War and the division between Eastern and Western Europe.

### **FURTHER READING**

Hitchcock, William I., *The Bitter Road to Freedom: A New History of the Liberation of Europe* (New York: The Free Press/Simon and Schuster, 2008)

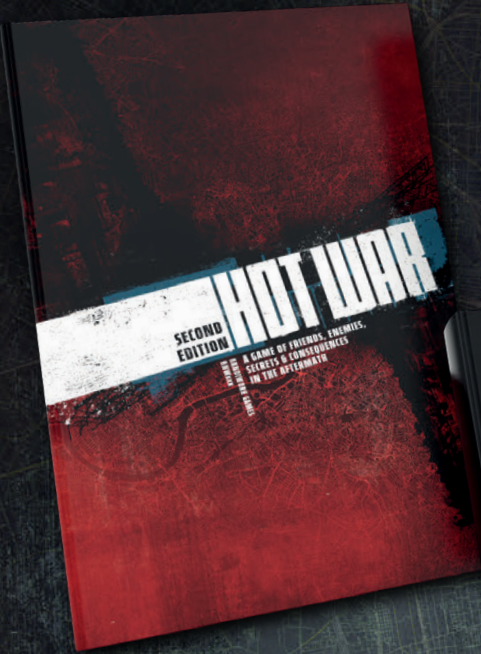
McAllister, James, *No Exit: America and the German Problem, 1943-1954* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002)

Roberts, Geoffrey, *Stalin's Wars: From World War to Cold War, 1939-1953* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006)

Westad, Odd Arne, *The Cold War: A world history* (London: Penguin, 2018)

Zubok, Vladislav, *A Failed Empire. The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007)

# COLD CITY HOT WAR



## HOT WAR

London. Winter. 1963. It is a year since the Cold War went hot.

And this was not just a nuclear war. Far more sinister, darker weapons were deployed.

Survival and re-building are all that matter now. But human nature and tragic circumstances mean that everyone has their own ambitions.

Into this maelstrom steps the Special Situations Group, a motley band of men and women tasked with the jobs too dirty or dangerous for anyone else.



## COLD CITY

In the divided city of Berlin, things hide in the darkness. Things that must be destroyed.

Those that seek out these horrors are riven by suspicion, mistrust and political ambition. The four occupying powers of Britain, France, the USA and the USSR all have their own agendas.

In Cold City, characters are defined not just by who they are and what they are like, but by the views of the other characters and the trust that they have in them.



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coming to  
**KICKSTARTER**

in 2024