

After the Holocaust

The Nuclear Devastation of America: Recovery and Reunification

- Power Politics Series Game • Bookcase Box and mounted, three-color 22" x 34" map
- Multi-Player game with one- and two-player options • Complex Socio-economic game mechanics

The last spasm of the four day war added deliberate city-busting to the collateral damage already inflicted by mutual counter-force strikes. With one hundred twenty-five million dead and all important communications, energy and industrial complexes destroyed, the United States of America collapsed as a polity. The five or so years which followed saw the population drop below forty million as hunger, disease, and brigandage leveled the number of people to that which a bare subsistence agriculture could support.

In this ocean of unimaginable disaster a few islands of cohesion remained to which the flotsam of humanity clung. In the Northeast, Ma Bell, inured to everyday crisis in peace, with trained personnel and equipment fortuitously placed, formed the infrastructure of recovery. In Texas an overlapping coalition of National Guard, Rangers and Veterans Associations began to impose order. In central California, the Bank of America with a ready-made fort in every community and an internal hierarchy trained to lead was the kernel of hope, while in the Midwest, the Church of the Chosen Few provided the vision of a better future.

Each of these "governments" was loosely democratic with a centralized committee of strong men providing political and economic direction, and a will to restore America to a semblance of her former prosperity. Convinced that a managed capitalism promised the best hope of recovery, these men sought to create the conditions that would cause agriculture to flourish and the wheels of industry to once again turn.

Holocaust is a multi-player game with each Player cast in the role of the "government" of a region. It is overwhelmingly an economic game. Each Player has limited raw material, plant, and capital resources at his disposal. He must allocate these scarce items productively so that labor is employed, quantities of goods and services increase and population expands.

As a Player becomes richer in the sinews of civilization he can reach out, incorporating adjacent areas into his region thereby adding people, raw material and communications resources to his country. Eventually with luck and good management the four regions expand to touch one another. From this point on the Players are in a position to trade with one another, balancing short-

ages and surpluses of food, fuel, metal and manufactured goods. Mutual trust and cooperation can benefit each Player and his people. However, the possibility of trade also creates the possibility of war. A Player can produce, equip and use an army to attack and seize territories of another Player as well as he can produce consumer goods to benefit his country.

Holocaust is played on a 22" x 34" map of the United States with bordering areas of Canada and Mexico thrown in. The Players have various combat units, points and markers used to display the political status of various areas of the map and to measure the functioning of each Player's economy. The root of good or evil—money—is issued in paper Holocaust dollars. Each Player's economy is a diagramed chart split into economic sectors; agriculture, mining, fuel and manufacturing to which the Player allocates labor and money and derives "food," "fuel," "metal," and "manufacturing" points which are consumed to create additional capacities, to feed the population and eventually to provide "consumer" points for the population. As the well-being of the population rises (as measured by its consumption of food and consumer points) its social state rises and with this comes an increased capacity to use mechanization and consume more. All things being equal the Player whose country provides the highest social state will "win" the game as he simply absorbs the areas of other Players.

A healthy economy provides a decent tax base from which a Player can get money to pay armies, buy goods from fellow Players, redistribute within his own economy, corrupt an opposing Player's economy. Tax policy is key—Player input and the Game-Turn revolves around the Player's preparation of his form 1040. Light taxation provides a Player with little money but with a high probability that his economy will expand in output of points; heavy taxation provides large revenues but causes production to shrink unless primed with government spending.

The most crucial responsibility a Player has is to feed his population. He derives food from the labor and mechanization he has allocated to agriculture. The more labor and mechanization in agriculture, the more food. Of course there is a chance table reflecting the vagaries of weather and

disease which can cause a bad harvest regardless of plan. Failure to feed his people can be disastrous to a Player resulting in the return of barbarism to areas under his control, and in extreme cases, the extinction of his region as a playing entity. On the opposite extreme an overemphasis on agriculture leads to food surpluses and little else. Eventually such a Player will be eliminated by someone whose economy offers a blend of food, consumer point consumption, and a higher social state; or he will be swamped by military force to which he cannot respond.

Human nature being what it is there is always at least one Player in four who seeks to dominate by force rather than good example. This Player will build his economy to the point where he can divert labor, money food and manufacturing etc. to raise and equip military units. In doing this he will risk internal upheaval and sacrifice the well being of his people to attack and seize control of his opponents' areas. Left unopposed such a Player has some chance of eliminating the other Players by force. So he is rarely left unopposed. Whether meant for aggression or defense, military forces are expensive to maintain, consuming money and the fruits of production at a fearful pace. While this consumption can benefit an economy which has some slack capacity, the long run effect of a large army is ruinous unless it succeeds in winning valuable territory. Thus once a Player has created military forces he is sorely tempted to use them aggressively or disband them. The second option usually requires a degree of Player trust rarely present.

Far better to trade than to fight (at least don't fight until you are in a position to gain a mobilization advantage). And trade and indeed most movement usually follows the great water courses of the American continent. The Mississippi-Ohio-Missouri-Great Lakes "highway" system is the key terrain in the game and the Player who can eventually control this heartland will usually win.

The game is basically for four players, although there are one- and two-player options. A fifth Player can be introduced into Play as the Federal Reserve Bank—the last remnant of the old republic. He is in a position to loan money and uniquely placed to guide a country-wide peaceful recovery. He is also in an excellent position to win the game.

After the Holocaust will sell for \$12. Available 31 October '76.