

Money

Hypocrisy row at Games Workshop over Russia ties

👤 Elijah ⌚ February 10, 2024



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Fantasy war game: Warhammer

Warhammer owner Games Workshop has come under fire after partnering with a video game company with ties to Russia.

The company stopped selling its fantasy figures in Russia shortly after Vladimir Putin launched his invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

But it appears that Games Workshop has been licensing its intellectual property to Cyprus-based studio Owlcat Games, which has Russian investors.

In December, Owlcat released a game called Rogue Trader on platforms like Sony's PlayStation and Microsoft's Xbox.

The game's branding features the Warhammer logo prominently and is designated as an "officially licensed product", indicating that it has the Games Workshop seal of approval.

A statement from the Moral Rating Agency, an organization that collects data on companies doing business in Russia, said: "People who play Warhammer or other Owlcat games are indirectly supporting the Russian invasion of Ukraine." Games Workshop could have chosen to license it to a partner with no ties to Russia.'

A spokesman for B4Ukraine, a group that aims to prevent global companies from dealing with Russia, added: "This is disgraceful corporate behaviour."

When contacted by The Mail on Sunday, Owlcat said it previously had a development house in Russia, but its teams left the country in 2022 and it no longer operates there.

One of Owlcat's backers was GEM Capital, a Russian investment house founded in 2017 by Anatoly Paliy, a former executive at Russian state oil and gas giant Gazprom. Owlcat was said to have received at least \$1m (£790,000) in funding from GEM.

Paliy founded the energy company First Oil in 2013. One of his partners was Mark Garber, who was on the board of directors of a Russian company founded by sanctioned oligarch Oleg Deripaska.





GEM's current portfolio includes an investment in Cyprus-based video game studio Mundfish, which Ukraine accuses of spreading pro-Russian propaganda.

Games Workshop did not respond to requests for comment.

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