

Bramwell concludes that it is about time that we plan a technology to fit people rather than adapt people to technology.

A small book with big implications.

—OCANIA CHALK

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An anecdotal account

The Coming Clash: The Impact of Multinational Corporations on National States. By Hugh Stephenson. New York, Saturday Review Press, 1972. 186 pp. \$7.95.

Following the lead of several of his countrymen, Hugh Stephenson has written another book seeking to capitalize on the current interest in multinational corporations. However, like so many of these efforts, *The Coming Clash* is designed to popularize, dramatize, and excite without contributing much at all to an understanding of such enterprises and specifically of their relations with national states. Since a substantial portion of Stephenson's book is a rehash of data, concepts, and relationships that have been discussed many times before in far more analytical and less sensational fashion, the work is for the uninitiated—but even then the picture presented relies upon the stylistic tricks of the clever publicist while forsaking analysis and in some cases accuracy.

The author's main contention is that the size and flexibility of the multinational corporation is overwhelming the national state. Indeed, at one point, he suggests that states have only two options, characteristically at the extremes. They will either have to succumb completely to the requirements of large-scale international industry or drop out of such a system altogether, as Cuba has done. He says, "there is no realistic middle position . . ." (p. 12), but in doing so he ignores the rather successful policies of a Japan and a Mexico, for example, where foreign-based multinational corporations are at least partially restricted and controlled according to the objectives and plans of the central government.

Interestingly, the author feels that the major impact and threat of the multinational corporation involves the disruption of traditional patterns of a state's control over its domestic and international economic processes and policies. He essentially dismisses, though not by name, most of the national

sovereignty issues raised by Jack Behrman, Ray Vernon, and others. The utility and validity of distinguishing between the issues of loss of control over economic policies and reduced national sovereignty are not clear to this reviewer, and the lack of a thoughtful and analytical examination of the difference involved contributes to confusion rather than understanding. Instead, here and throughout the entire book, Stephenson relies almost totally upon anecdotes and examples as opposed to analysis and explanation.

This style is particularly unsettling to the reader who is familiar with the literature in the area because it soon becomes apparent that dramatic examples have been carefully selected to carry the argument, rather than the reasoned examination of data and concepts. Within the space of five pages, the reader is told that top management of large non-American corporations will come from the ranks of successful graduates of European business schools *and* that the best students are rejecting large enterprises in favor of smaller ones. Neither explanation nor evidence is offered. Similarly, by association and innuendo, the author suggests relationships which are not really appropriate, for instance where he implies that multinational corporations exploit migrant labor in Germany while domestic German firms do not. In other instances, undocumented assertions severely undermine the credibility of the book. In the light of the many efforts by management to defeat the Burke-Hartke bill, how else can one react to the statement that international management is encouraging a new wave of protectionism?

In sum, there are many more useful books on the topic.

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Order of the Bird

When In Doubt, Mumble: A Bureaucrat's Handbook. By James H. Boren. New York, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1972. 172 pp. \$5.95.

Dr. James Boren, the author of this book, is the founder of NATAPROBU (The National Association of Professional Bureaucrats). The book, like the