

## Book Review

Klaus Werner /Hans Weiss

The New Black Book of Multinational  
Companies

The Intrigues of the World Concerns

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This book is a best seller on globalization with new facts, on companies and with new explosive material. It was published for the first time in 2001 in German.

Multinationals such as Adidas, McDonald's, Mercedes, Nestle, Samsung and Siemens are setting new trends in the market.

They dictate not only the fashion trends but also international affairs and agreements.

The annual turn over of these multinational companies' supercedes by the GDP and economic power of many small countries.

As a result their influence is greater than that of the government and the political institutions of these countries.

The value of their trade mark reflect the might of the company. We measure not only the might of a multinational by its product, but also its image in the world market.

The aspirin-manufacturer "Bayer" advertises its product with the slogan of "competence and responsibility" where as "Shell" makes itself famous with the words "Ecology and Social reformer" and Nike promotes itself as a "corporate citizen" working with devotion world wide it portrays itself as the "Nike family" of sportsmen, ordinary consumers and working class families.

Most people who work for multinationals are from countries where labour is cheap. Multinational have spread out in Africa, Asia, Latin America and East Europe.

Exploitation, forced labour and child-labour is normal. By multinational practices human beings and living spaces are poisoned. The governments in poor countries are black-mailed, economic crises and armed conflicts are used for the benefit of the multinational and even financed without shame.

We know (hated) brand names and their producing companies tolerate slavery, Forgery, Illegal detention and trials, discrimination, cruelty to animals, atmosphere pollution, persecution of trade unions and sponsor imperial regimes change campaigns.

At the same time, more and more consumers are trying to create minimal ethical standards. They do not want to buy those products which are manufactured on sites where child labour has been exploited or an entire tribe or group has lost its entire living space and all its productive resources.

Naturally this creates an uncertainty for consumers regarding what to buy and what not to buy. Under which brand names are the exploiters concealed?

The new Black Book of Multinational Companies gives an answer to this question with evidence, proof and authenticity.

The translation of this book in Spanish, Dutch, Turkish, Chinese, Korean and Hungarian languages is already available. However, due to the influence of the multinational lobby on American and British Policy making the English translation is not available.

The book is divided into the following chapters.

- ❖ Brand names and human rights
- ❖ A different approach to challenge the might and power a multinationals.
- ❖ Electronic Industry and the Multinationals
- ❖ Medicine & Pharma products and Multinationals
- ❖ Crude oil and the Multinationals
- ❖ Food products and the Multinationals
- ❖ Toys and the Multinationals
- ❖ Sports & Sports clothes and the Multinationals
- ❖ Export and Capital Market and the Multinationals
- ❖ Corruption and Pressure Groups
- ❖ Companies Profile (over fifty famous multinationals) with complete details.

It is very interesting to note that only two weeks after the first appearance of this book, the 9/11, accident took place and the Global Campaign against Terror started. In European society a lot of people view the 9/11 accident and the America war against terrors as a campaign for promoting American economic interests.

Many facts which are mentioned in this book could not get the full attention of the European public through media due to the American war against terrors coverage and propaganda.

The authors state that they did not analyze the economic and financial interest of multinationals in the American war against terror in Afghanistan and in Iraq. This was due to the fact that they concentrated on "three big evils", namely Bayer, Total Fina-elf and McDonald's. Bayers leads this "axis of evil" because its operation activities in chemicals, pharmaceuticals, agro business, and mineral extraction are having the greatest destructive impact.

After Bayer, the second position is occupied now by EXXON – MOBIL. Other oil-multies are doing half-heartedly something about climate and environmental protection and providing some lip service to human right. But EXXON-MOBIL enjoy the protection of the George W Bush and can afford to ignore such issues.

The third position is that of MATTEL. This concern through the production of Barbie dolls has ruthlessly exploited the Chinese working class.

There are other multinationals which are not discussed in details such as ASICS, BROOKS, FILA, NEW BALANCE and PUMA the performance of which all no better than Nike OR Adidas.

Evidence is provided on exploitative and environmentally. Unacceptable policies of MNCs in many other sectors.

Both authors agree that there are some exceptions such as the regional big companies which are socially, by responsible and practice ecologically sound policies

Klaus Werner, a free journalist was born in 1967 at Salzburg, Austria and now lives in Vienna and in Berlin. He is famous for his essays and articles in Austria as well as in Germany. He is a regular contributor to newspapers, weeklies and monthly standard magazines such as "profile", "Standard", "Presse" and "Welt am Sonntag". He studied European languages in Vienna.

Hans Weiss, born in 1950 in Hittisau in the province of Vorarlberg in Austria. Studied Psychology and Medical Sociology in Vienna, London and Cambridge. Since 1980, he is working as a free journalist and he is well known for his articles in German weekly magazines such as "STERN & SPIEGEL". He is also a contributor in Austrian Radio and Television.

This is an excellent record of the performance of world's leading multinational. A translation is ungainly needed in both English & Urdu.