

GURPS[®] Space **SPACE ATLAS 2**

A Guide to the Corporate Worlds



STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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SPACE, INCORPORATED

Welcome to the Corporate Worlds, where *everything* is for sale. If you have enough credit, you can buy a planet. If you're shrewd and efficient, you can make a profit from it. And if you can hire enough mercenaries, you may be able to *keep* it.

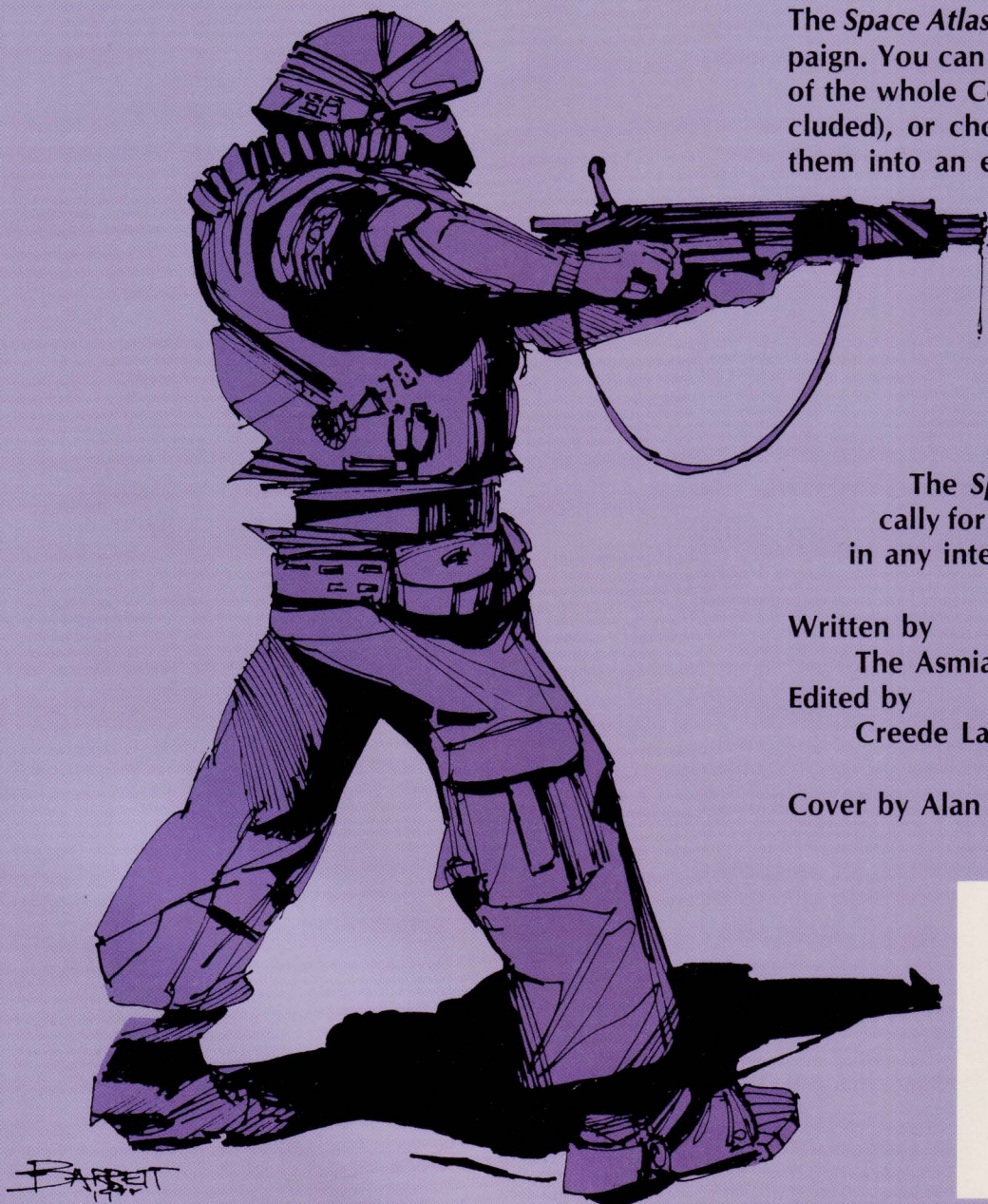
This *Space Atlas* is your guide to the 25 star systems of the Corporate Worlds sector. Each world description contains a complete Planetary Record Sheet, with an overview of the whole star system and a detailed description of the planet itself, using the *GURPS Space* format . . . planetary map, atmosphere and gravity, day and year length, population, government, resources, economy, biosphere and special features. Some worlds include specific description and game statistics for animals, plants, Precursor artifacts and other features of the planet. Adventure suggestions are included for every world.

The *Space Atlas* is designed to fit into any campaign. You can use the worlds together (maps of the whole Corporate Worlds sector are included), or choose individual worlds and fit them into an existing campaign. The book's introduction includes historical and background information to fit the Corporate Worlds into four different backgrounds: Anarchy, Alliance, Federation, or Interstellar Empire.

The *Space Atlas* is designed specifically for *GURPS Space*, but can be used in any interstellar roleplaying game.

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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

GURPS® SPACE ATLAS 2

The Corporate Worlds Sector *A Compendium of Worlds for Interstellar Roleplaying*

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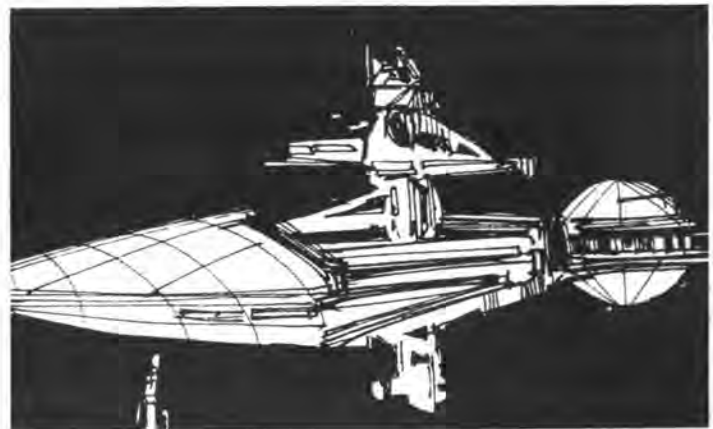
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Using This Book

Space Atlas 2 contains 25 Planetary Records, which the GM may photocopy and hand to his players when they are seeking information about a planet. This is the "publically available information" that would be contained in any standard database.

The GM should *not* show the pages of text to the players. Instead, he should give them only as much of this information as he thinks their backgrounds — or later investigations and experience — entitle them to. In general, the players can be told the general history of each world, but not all the details of its present situation. Material marked "GM's Information," and the material given as adventure ideas for each planet, should definitely remain confidential.



STEVE JACKSON GAMES

INTRODUCTION

World Maps

The world maps use the system given in *GURPS Space* — an “equal-area icosahedral” projection. Each hex represents the same amount of space. The size of a hex depends on the size of the planet. Multiply the world’s diameter by .07 to determine the distance across one hex.

Unless specified otherwise, the north pole is at the top of the map, in the hex formed by the joining of the five points. Because this tends to splinter the polar areas, a circular area centered on the North Pole is also shown at the top of the map, and an area centered on the South Pole is shown at the bottom.

The zero meridian line and the equator are shown as dashed lines. Lighter dashed lines connect hexes that are divided on the map. If this map were cut out and folded up, it would form a 20-sided “globe.”

Specific points of interest are shown by a letter, keyed to text. Note that if (for instance) a town and starport symbol appear in adjacent hexes, the starport is actually in the town hex unless the description says otherwise.

Map Key

This key shows suggested colors, for those making their own maps, and standard black-and-white symbols.

Ocean:	
Dark blue	
Freshwater Sea:	
Light blue	
Marsh/Swamp:	
Yellow-green	
Plain/Steppe:	
Light green	
Icy/Barren:	
White	
Mountain/Volcanic:	
Dark brown	
Hilly/Rough:	
Light brown	
Forest/Jungle:	
Dark green	
Desert/Barren:	
Rust-red	
Urban/Populated:	
Crosshatched lines	
Major city	
Capital	
Restricted area	
Important starport	

This book includes descriptions of 25 worlds in their respective star systems. The material is designed to fit into any interstellar campaign, but all were designed with a “corporate state” theme in mind. They are individual entities; you can link them as you choose. Some adventure seeds, however, are provided which link two or more of the worlds. If you want to use the entire “Corporate Worlds Sector,” we’ve provided maps (see pp. 9-11) so you can do so. Other worlds of your own design may be added as well.

Format

Each listing provides detailed information on the world, along with general information about its star and the other planets in the system. These are the facts that should prove most important to starfarers initially. The GM may further develop the individual systems, generating details of the other planets — their physical details, native life if any, and so on.

The systems are listed in alphabetical order by the names of the worlds. Terminology is as defined in the *Stars and Worlds* section of *GURPS Space*. All stars are main sequence unless otherwise indicated. Star class and subtype are given; a star listed, for instance, as “G3 V” is a type G star, subtype 3, of class V (main sequence).

Background

Today, in our reality, space is underutilized. The only entities with sufficient resources to “develop” space are national governments and the largest corporations (which must currently go through government space programs).

In the history of the Corporate Worlds, the large corporations recognized the great value of space early on. Manufacturers saw a virtually limitless store of resources surrounded by perfect vacuum and no gravity (making almost perfect spheres ridiculously easy to form, for instance). Communications companies made their investment in space pay off within a few short years through the use of satellites. Restauranters and hotel chains knew people in space would need places to eat and sleep. And so on.

It didn’t take long for the corporations to distance themselves from the efforts of the “political governments” to control them. In particular, once FTL travel was discovered, the corporations could expand quickly enough to escape any attempt to control them from the outside.

This does not mean that the corporations run wild, of course. Most operate on a philosophy of enlightened self-interest. If they kill the goose that lays the golden egg, there will be no gold tomorrow. Each corporation does the things it does best, and lets the others do the same. All cooperate when necessary. Kaziin (p. 38) is a good example of this; the Kaziin Zoological Corporation is a subsidiary corporation designed for a specific purpose, to the benefit of all.

Control Ratings

Assume a Control Rating (p. S122) of 4 for these worlds unless specified otherwise. On some it will be higher (Faagrin, for example, has a CR of 6, if not more); it will rarely be lower. The CR of a planet may also change with circumstances. Alpenshore, for instance, has different CRs depending on how near the cities you are, and top-level officials of Xin Wu enjoy an effective CR of 1 on Tien Men.

Alternate Backgrounds

No matter what your campaign background, you will be able to use these worlds. You may have to change the background and politics a bit, of course. Here are some suggestions for building the Corporate Worlds into campaigns using different sorts of interstellar government:

Anarchy

By strict definition, the Corporate Worlds are in anarchy, since there is no external government to control them. The corporations are the law, and in theory, those not happy with their laws are free to go elsewhere. In practice, this may be difficult, since all of the known useful worlds have already been claimed; but it does happen sometimes.

So this sector may be used as-is in an anarchic background. One addition to make: the sector's border worlds will be more heavily militarized unless their neighbors are also corporate or are very trustworthy.

Alliance

The Corporate Worlds are an anomaly; they are not really governments, but they serve the same function. The Alliance Council voted long ago to treat corporate entities as de facto governments on a case-by-case basis, and this rule is applied in the Corporate Worlds.

Most of the larger corporations are members of the Alliance. Aberhard Enterprises (see the entry on Faagrín), notably, is not. Veritas *is* a member; the Alliance was quick to admit it when the people "threw off the corporate yoke," and only later discovered their embarrassing error.

Federation

With its ostensibly democratic, but strait-laced, approach, the Federation had some difficulty in assimilating the Corporate Worlds. Thus far, the Federation has stuck to its "one world, one membership" policy. This has caused some chafing in the Federation Assembly, since this effectively gives larger corporations like Mittelsohn and Xin Wu several votes.

To qualify for Federation membership, the corporate planets must guarantee certain basic civil rights to their inhabitants. Most had little trouble meeting these requirements. But some of the more paternalistic companies — Mittelsohn, for instance — had to relax some of their local controls when they entered the Federation. No Federation member world has a CR worse than 4.

Faagrín has refused to join; its rulers do not want the scrutiny that Federation membership would bring. Veritas applied for membership but was refused.

Those worlds which aren't dominated by a single corporation can be assumed to have weak political governments, of the sort described for Alpendshore (p. 12). They will be Federation members.

Center is, of course, the Federation sector capital; Survey, Patrol and Fleet are all headquartered here. A second artificial world, dubbed "Metacenter" is under construction in the system, to serve as a Federation shipyard and naval base. In a Federation campaign, the "disagreement" on Thishri simply can't take place; the Federation Fleet would suppress it.

Imperial Galaxy

The Corporate Worlds are a thriving sector on the fringe of the Empire. The Emperor is very happy with this particular sector; they pay their taxes on time and police themselves, leaving him free to deal with more important matters. The Imperial satrap for the Corporate Sector has a "live and let live" attitude, which he will maintain as long as the corporations stay in line — and not one minute longer.

The satrap for the Corporate Worlds is Prince Stevan Steiros. He is an intense man in his mid-thirties who took over some three years ago when the former satrap died of old age. The Corporate Worlds were a reward for his suppression of a rebellion in the Bright Fire Nebula sector; the sector's worlds govern themselves, leaving the Prince free time to pursue his favorite hobby, the study of history. His monograph on the history of the rise of the Corporate Worlds is considered a classic.

Prince Stevan rules from a palace on Beethoven. All the Imperial Services maintain their chief offices there. The Sector Fleet is headquartered on Beethoven, but most of the fleet is actually based on Center for fastest reaction time. This leads to constant internal power-jockeying between the "palace" officers on Beethoven and the "fleet" officers at Center!

There is an Imperial presence on any world with more than a few dozen residents. On smaller worlds, there is an Imperial General Agent to make sure all the reports are submitted on time and that no important laws are broken. On corporate homeworlds and large settlements, there will be everything from an Agent In Charge to a cell of the Imperial Secret Police to agricultural extension agents. While the Secret Police has infiltrated the corporations, Corporate Security has also infiltrated the Secret Police!

Some of the corporations have direct ties to the Imperial family. Prince Stevan, for example, has invested heavily in Crocyden. In particular, 60% of Aberhard Mining Enterprises is owned by Prince Antoniu Aberhard (Antin's great-grandson). Amallion Aberhard is Antoniu's nephew; he was given the job as security chief of AME because his uncle knew he would get results.

Animal Descriptions

Where detailed descriptions of animals are given, they follow the format of the *GURPS Bestiary*. Most of the headings are self-explanatory. Size refers to size in hexes. Habitats are abbreviated as follows:

- A = Arctic
- D = Desert, including all dry areas and scrub woodlands
- F = Forest, including all temperate forests
- FW = Fresh-Water Aquatic
- J = Jungle, including any tropical forest
- M = Mountain
- P = Plains, including all grassland, steppes, and so on
- S = Swamp
- Sub = Subterranean
- SW = Salt-Water Aquatic

* means a special ability or attack — see text.

indicates exceptions to the given entry — see text.

Tech Levels

We have assumed that the base Tech Level of the campaign is 10. If your campaign has a different TL, you can scale the TLs given accordingly. For a campaign with a higher base TL, the corporate HQ worlds (and probably some others) should be increased to campaign maximum.

Outposts, mining camps, and so on generally have equipment with the base TL of the campaign, but very limited manufacturing or repair facilities. If a world has a low general TL but higher-TL items can be bought there but not built or repaired, the higher TL will be shown in parentheses: TL9(10) would mean a TL9 world that had some TL10 equipment. An entry of TL10 (imported) means that TL10 equipment is freely available, but isn't built there . . . though it may be repaired if the world has a PR of more than 6.

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set* (Third Edition). Any page reference that begins with a B refers to a page in the *Basic Set* — e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *Basic Set*, Third Edition. An "S" page reference means a page in *GURPS Space*; "BY" refers to the *GURPS Bestiary*.

The Major Players

These are some of the major corporate entities in the sector. Feel free to invent others, or to change the names to your liking.

Mittelsohn A. G. Originally an agricultural implements manufacturer, Mittelsohn made a fortune in mechanized farm machinery, then turned to agriculture in space. They are the largest corporation in the sector in terms of worlds controlled, assets and employees. Mittelsohn has interests in almost every venture one can imagine, but its forte is still manufacturing.

Mittelsohn is wholly pragmatic. If Mittelsohn decides it wants something, it will go after its goal ruthlessly. Only a fool would stand in the way of a Mittelsohn objective — but if the fool survives, Mittelsohn may well turn right around and start doing business with him!

Xin Wu. A younger corporation than Mittelsohn, Xin Wu (pronounced “Shin Woo”) is much more diversified. As much a way of life as a way to earn a dollar, Xin Wu incorporates ethical elements into its business philosophy. They play by a strict set of rules, and do not mind being beaten at the game so long as the opponent plays by the rules. They do not tolerate “unfairness.” At best they will stop doing business with the “cheater,” and at worst they will do everything in their power to bring the cheater down. For the most part, Xin Wu considers Mittelsohn to be a worthy opponent, and considers it their duty to point out Mittelsohn’s ethical failures.

Xin Wu’s philosophy is contained in a manual entitled “On Ethics and Philosophy and Their Relation to Business,” known universally as “The White Book” because of its glossy white cover. Employees study the White Book in their spare time, and anyone who deals with Xin Wu on a regular basis should be at least somewhat familiar with its contents.

The existence of the White Book in itself says something about Xin Wu. To the average corporate citizen, the word “book” refers to a hand-held electronic text retrieval system. The White Book consists of 64 leaves of pressed wood pulp, with a static text display painted on both sides of each leaf. Xin Wu’s management considers beauty to enhance functionality, and they consider the look and feel of this archaic “book” to be beautiful.

Croyden Information Services. Croyden is the largest “specialty corporation” in the sector. It provides computer and information services as well as interworld communications and starship services such as jump beacons and planetary reports.

Croyden is a major producer of computers and software. Croyden technicians are trained in ancient and antique systems as well, for older worlds which can’t afford the latest in computing power.

As part of their information services, Croyden also conducts basic research and investigations. For an example of this, see Perido. Of course, they don’t do this just to push back the frontiers of knowledge; Croyden’s information and the fruits of their research are freely available to anyone who can afford them.

Amalgamated Bionics. AmBio, as it is known, combines biomedical engineering with computers and cybernetics. Their products are as diverse as bionic prosthetics and expert systems.

If your campaign has artificial intelligence, one of AmBio’s primary lines is AI production. Unlike many AIs, AmBio AIs are licensed rather than sold. They are pre-programmed before lease with both a slave mentality and a “dead switch.” If the switch is not reset once a year by an AmBio technician (upon renewal of the lease, of course), the AI methodically erases itself at a certain time and date. Since AmBio AIs are usually used in factories, large households and similar organizations where losing the AI and the information it has stored would be disastrous, AmBio is guaranteed a steady source of income.

Maps

On the following pages are star maps of the whole Corporate Worlds Sector, for use in different types of campaigns. All maps are drawn to standard scale — 1 parsec per square — but if worlds are more distant in your campaign, just change the scale.

If you’ve got an ongoing campaign, you can use the Corporate Worlds Sector as a unit. It can serve as the backdrop of an entire campaign, or simply as a jumping-off place for a campaign set in the adjacent frontier areas. Alternatively, you can drop the individual worlds in wherever they’ll do your adventures the most good.

Normal-Space Map

Page 9 is a map of the Corporate Worlds for normal space. This will be most useful for campaigns where ships use warp drive. No worlds are shown except for those named in the atlas. The GM may add navigational hazards appropriate to his own campaign.

Jumpline Map

Page 10 is a map of the Corporate Worlds, showing jumplines. We have assumed that jumplines more than 10 parsecs long are rare.

This map is for campaigns where ships use a jump drive that only works along jumplines. If jump points are used, the GM should use the map on p. 9 and add appropriate points.

Because many inhabited worlds have no jumplines leading directly to other useful worlds, a number of extra “way-station” systems are shown on this map. These are shown by their star names, since none of their worlds are important, and are differentiated by parentheses. If a way-station star has no planets, it is shown by a *. Way-station systems without a * have at least one gas giant in campaigns where refueling is possible from such worlds, and at least one rockball where an emergency landing is possible.

Distance Table

Page 11 is a table of the distances, in parsecs, between all 25 systems described in this book. It is generally the only “map” you need for hyperspace travel, and can be used in conjunction with either of the other two maps when figuring travel times.



Janos Exploration. The largest scouting and surveying corporation in the sector, Janos survives more because of its diversification into cartography and land surveying than because the planet exploration business is booming. In fact, it is generally accepted that every body of planetary size in or near the sector has been found and mapped, and many scouts are going to new, less-explored areas. As a result, Janos' stock is selling at a hundredth of its highest value.

Goliath Weaponry GmbH. Goliath, a huge weapons conglomerate based outside the sector, is just starting to test the waters in the Corporate Worlds. Their stated goal is to bring the latest in weapons technology to this part of the galaxy. Some suspect that they are contemplating the ultimate in hostile takeovers, leading to a Corporate Sector run by one corporation, Goliath has a reputation for playing very rough, and no one is taking chances.

Riko Mining, Inc. Riko began with seven miners and a ship, working mines other companies were unwilling or unable to and making a profit because of their low overhead. They are much larger now, but they still maintain vestiges of their old maverick spirit. For instance, instead of a fancy headquarters city, the main office is housed on a mining ship. Riko still takes on "unusual" jobs such as the hell-world of Devil's Icebox, and they still use their low overhead to guarantee a profit.

ABS. Arantas Biochemical Services was started by former AmBio employees. Where AmBio combines electronics with biology, ABS tends to find strictly biological solutions to problems. For instance, AmBio would replace a missing leg arm with a bionic substitute. ABS would replace the missing arm with a clone of the original, grafted on through painstaking microsurgery or grown from the patient's shoulder. The two companies are bitter rivals.

Life in the Corporate Worlds

In some ways, life in the corporate worlds isn't very different from life anywhere else. Corporate citizens get up in the morning, eat breakfast, go to work, come home, eat dinner, watch the vidshows, and go to sleep at night.

In the corporate worlds, however, your company determines when you will get up, where you will live, and what your job is. In fact, in some corporations and on certain worlds, your corporation will decide who (or if) you will marry, how many kids or pets you are allowed to have, and maybe even what you will have for dinner on any given night.

Corporations differ from other forms of government in several different ways:

Citizenship

A government decides to whom it will give citizenship. In most democracies, children of citizens are automatically citizens; the Roman empire had many residents whose ancestors had lived in Rome for centuries, but who were not citizens.

Corporations have *employees* and their dependents rather than citizens (though for our purposes, the two terms are equivalent). Employees enjoy benefits provided by the corporation, such as health care, education for themselves and their children, old age pensions and defense. They do not, however, *necessarily* have a voice in the operation or management of the corporation. This function is reserved for the *stockholders*.

Stockholders

Governments make their money by selling bonds and other obligations, and — often — by simply printing it. Corporations can raise money by borrowing, but also sell *shares* of ownership in the company.

Each shareholder is entitled to a portion of the company's profits every year. The size of his portion depends on how many shares he holds and how many ways the pie has to be cut. And shareholders get to vote on company procedures and officers at the company's "annual meeting." It's up to the GM whose year is used for the annual meeting and where it's held for any particular corporation. A small corporation may have a one-day annual meeting at which the board of directors is re-elected, and all the stockholders are invited to a banquet. Mittelsohn's annual meeting is conducted by FTL radio conference call, and simply setting the agenda can take a week or more!

The Law

If there is no legal body outside the corporations, the laws are whatever each individual corporation declares them to be. In general, the laws are similar — there are prohibitions against murder, assault, theft, and other crimes of person and property. In-

The Characters as Corporation

In the Corporate Worlds, no one is likely to take you seriously unless you are incorporated. That's just the way the corporations think; they consider governments to be just another kind of corporation, and individuals are employees and therefore beneath notice. "John Smith" wouldn't get the time of day from a middle manager's secretary. "John Smith, first mate of the Free Trader *Firebird*," might get on a waiting list. But "Mr. John Smith, vice-president of *Firebird Trading, Ltd.*" would get much more attention.

If the characters are new to the sector, the first thing they should do is incorporate. This is trivial; all they need to do is declare themselves a corporation. For added legitimacy, they should register the new corporation with the Bourse's Corporate Registry. This costs \$10 and can be done at any Bourse office. Any large corporations (and many small ones) that the PCs deal with will check the Registry to see if the PCs' corporation is legitimate.

Arbitration

Corporations often have legitimate grievances against one another, but with no external law enforcement or judicial apparatus, they must solve their problems themselves. Usually, this takes the form of *arbitration*. Like everything else in the Corporate Worlds, this is taken care of by corporations. There are over a dozen arbitration organizations; the Bourse (p. 56) is the largest and most successful. Several corporations have arbitration as a sideline, but few pursue it actively, since they might be considered to be biased in certain cases.

An arbitration fee is settled in advance; usually it is a percentage of the amount in question. The arbitrators (who may be employees of the arbitration company, or may be outside execs paid to act as a jury) listen to both sides and judge the merits of the case. They do not always merely find for one side or the other — in fact, often both sides are seen to be at fault and requested to take corrective action. Arbitration may be *binding*, where each party agrees beforehand to abide by the decision of the arbitrators. Or it may be *non-binding*, merely another point in negotiations.

Of course, the arbitrators have no legal authority, and there is no arbitrator-maintained police force to back up their decisions. In spite of this, some 97% of arbitrators' decisions are followed to the letter. Part of the reason for this is a long-standing policy of not allowing corporations or individuals who do not comply with an arbitrators' decision to appear before any of that corporation's arbitrators again until he complies!

Education

Schooling for children begins at age 5 (in Xin Wu, formal classes begin at age 3, with group activities earlier). Classroom education continues through age 16, when students begin working part-time (see below). Most employees begin working full-time at age 18, though many still attend school part-time. Certain positions involve "on-the-job training" — an employee will attend classes for a half day, then put the instruction to practical use.

Management, technical and professional jobs require university degrees, which are usually subsidized by the corporation in return for long-term binding contracts.

Religion

Corporate attitudes toward religion range from complete tolerance to abhorrence. Many have their own religions, tailored to the particular needs of that corporation. Mercenary companies, for instance, often embrace the Sword Way, which promises an afterlife reward of soldiers' pleasures in return for valor in this life. Mittelsohn has no official religion, and Xin Wu has developed a philosophy of meditation, good works and study of the White Book, called "Ethical Refinement."

News and Information

Most citizens get their news from vids and radio. Each corporation has its own broadcasting service. The larger ones have several, catering to different tastes. Independent news reporting services sell their stories to the highest bidder, or have contracts with the major corporations to supply news from particular areas, much like network correspondents do today. In addition, there are private news services who sell their product by subscription. Telestar Network 4 and the various Bourse news services are considered fair, honest and as unbiased as possible.

For those who are interested in in-depth coverage, data searches are possible through computer networks. Information is available in much more depth and on many more subjects than even the best of broadcast networks can cover. By monitoring the user's preferences, the networks can individually tailor their news services by, for instance, suppressing sports news and emphasizing news about spaceship production and philately.

Interpretations of these laws vary widely, however. In one corporation, the definition of "murder" might include accidental manslaughter; in another, death sports might simply be an afternoon's diversion to take the kids to.

The severity of punishment depends on the crime. For many crimes, the punishment is a fine, either of money or of time (unpaid service on what would normally be time off the job). Incarceration is a possibility for violent offenders, and thieves are required to make restitution — for embezzlers, through the use of clones and braintapes (see p. S65), this could easily take several normal lifetimes!

The ultimate punishment, of course, is termination. This seldom means the individual is killed — outright, at any rate — rather, he is fired. He can no longer work for that corporation in any capacity, and no longer has access to corporate benefits such as medical care, housing and food. In short, he is an "unperson." Successful colonies have been started by unpersons, and more than one successful corporation was started by a group of unpersons, but usually they drift into the slums and vanish.

Family Life

A person's contact with the corporation can begin before conception; some areas with strict population control may require that couples wishing to have children first obtain corporate permission. (Cloning and in vitro fertilization allow artificial growth, but most people prefer to obtain their children the old-fashioned way.) The penalties can be severe; an unauthorized child usually means that one or the other of the parents has to leave the area to maintain the population balance!

During pregnancy, the mother is carefully checked by corporate medical specialists at regular intervals. After the baby is born, it spends its time from about age 5 in corporate-sponsored schooling. This schooling is designed to train the child for an eventual job with the corporation, chosen early in its life by extensive testing.

The structure of family life depends on the corporation. Xin Wu raises its children in groups of 50 to 60, with a group leader/teacher who specializes in each age group. Mittelsohn recognizes marriages for the purpose of inheriting property, provided such marriages are recorded at the Corporate Registry; there is no stigma attached to issue from an "unrecorded marriage." Other corporations recognize varying family structures, from communal to traditional.

The Job

Individuals are expected to work for their pay — including their food and rent. Most corporations place children in a job at age 16 to gain work experience. This is usually the local equivalent of working at a fast-food restaurant, and gives the new employee some spending money while he or she finishes school. Then, when placed in a job, the employee knows some of the ropes and what to expect.

There are ample opportunities for promotion in all fields, and people can easily change jobs, provided they are qualified or have been trained for the new job. Changing corporations, however, is another matter. Employees are sometimes "raided," but an employee who goes over to a different corporation is thought somewhat odd, much as we might think of someone who changes nationalities.

Executives are another matter. Execs are the nobility of the Corporate Worlds, but in some ways they have less freedom. In a setting where there are no enforceable trade-secret laws, executives (or some researchers, and possibly even a few file clerks) become important for the knowledge they carry about the company. They may be signed to lifetime contracts forbidding them to discuss certain subjects with outsiders — or, in some cases, to talk with outsiders at all. An arbitrator might rule that a company who hired away an executive with such a contract was liable to pay the executive's salary to his *former* corporation for breach of contract. And, of course, there is always the Personal Protection Branch of Corporate Security (known less formally as the Assassination Bureau).

Interstellar Organizations

With no governments to provide them, the corporations have come up with their own equivalents of interstellar organizations common in other parts of the galaxy.

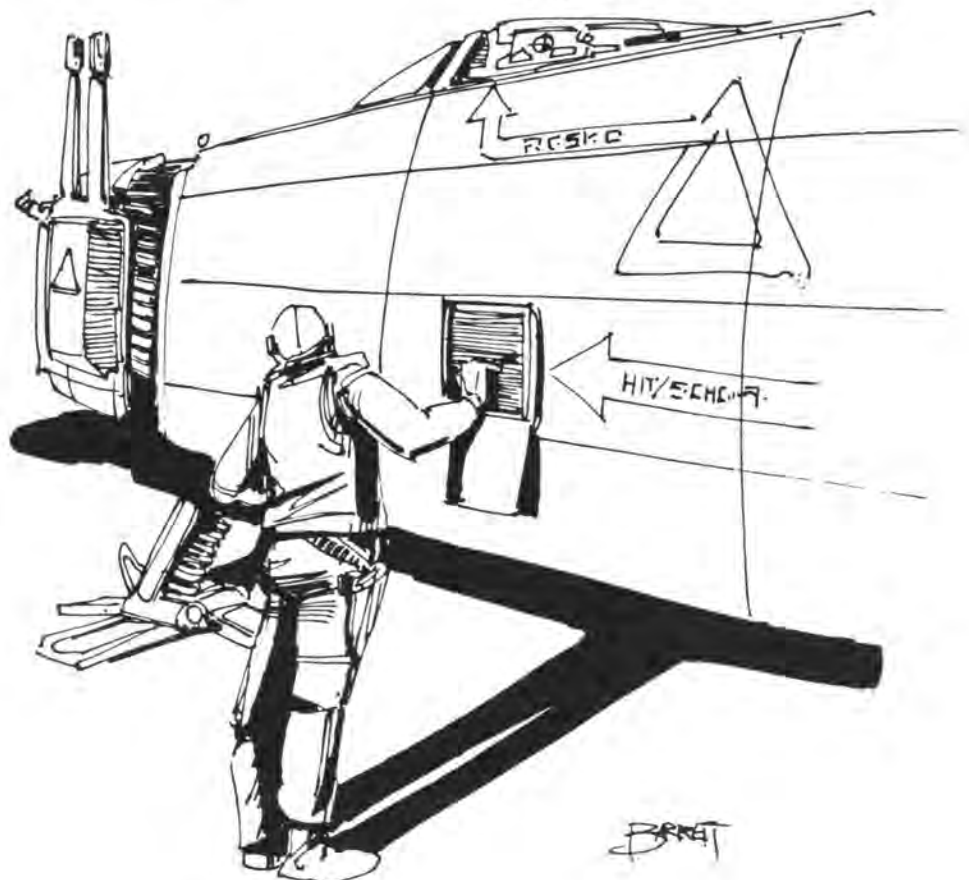
The Free Trade League

This organization (itself a company, of course), is very powerful and influential. Only corporations below a certain size are permitted to own Free Trade stock. The

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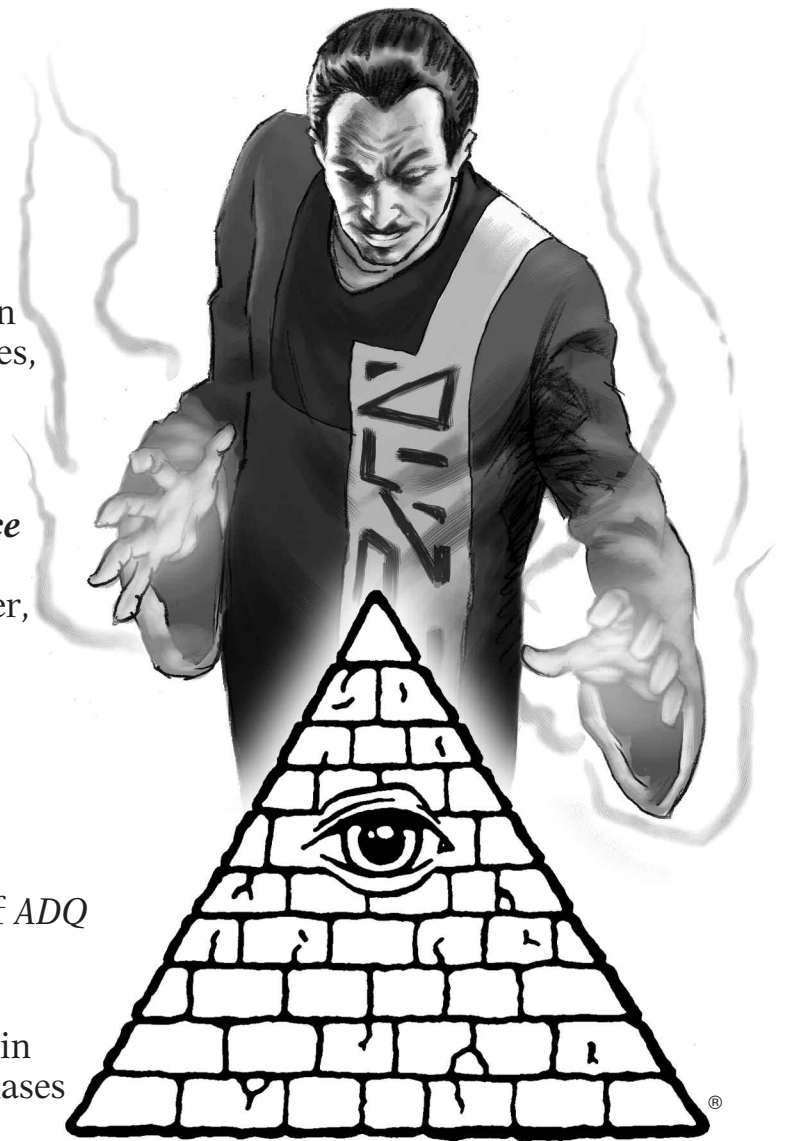
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