

left to posit a possible future in 'The Emergence of Free State', which is Ali Khan's original contribution.

The book tackles a subject that has been insufficiently considered elsewhere. It proposes one possible future for the societal organization of the world and for the discipline of international law. In so doing, it fails to be persuasive, both in its conclusion and in its method. What the work lacks throughout is an appropriate level of intellectual rigour and serious grounding in legal or political theory. Thus, the presentation of the central thesis – the concept of 'Free State' – is only thinly predicated upon the developments of 'Peaceful Conditions' (minimal war), 'Equitable Development' (general economic parity), and 'Pluralist Association' (gender/racial/religious tolerance), which are proposed as potential ultimate consequences of human rights law, global economics, and international enmeshment. The treatment of these subjects, and the possible developments flowing from them, fail to achieve the depth of analysis necessary to support the claims made. Unfortunately, this superficiality is continued into the account given of the concept of 'Free State' itself. It is based on little more than a cursory description of the EU and of one potential future for it, seemingly derived from instinct and speculation rather than from insight, reasoning and critical assessment. As a result, I am left wholly unconvinced.

Beyond its main aim of positing a serious theory of its own, the book also fails to be of use as a text on the concept of statehood specifically, or on the theory of international law generally. Its treatment of the development of the nation-state, and of the contemporary challenges to it, suffer from a lack of rigour similar to that observed in the final section. In addition, there is no bibliography and an almost complete absence of any useful references, which further inhibits the book's usefulness as a source for study or further research.

Notwithstanding these criticisms, the book is not without its merits – some of the ideas

proposed are interesting, stimulating and, at least *prima facie*, plausible. Ali Khan is to be praised for taking on a subject which has not been dealt with in sufficient depth elsewhere. However, the book's ultimate contribution must simply be in highlighting the need for others to take on this project, but in so doing, to avoid the mistakes highlighted herein. And I hope that one of the people to take on this task will be Ali Khan himself.

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Gayim, Eyassu. *The Eritrean Question: The Conflict between the Right of Self-Determination and the Interests of the States*. Uppsala: Iustus Forlag, 1993. Pp. 709. Index.

In this intricate and meticulous study of the Eritrean experience, Gayim reveals the hypocrisy and inconsistency that have become prevalent in the application of the term self-determination. Gayim dives into the minutiae, picking amongst transcripts and through proceedings and events in a methodical and pedantic manner. The amount of detail presented leaves the reader sometimes overwhelmed but none of the texts is irrelevant. They are worth the wading as each piece adds to the complex exploration of the history and experience of Eritrea. Gayim succeeds in presenting various contexts through which to assess the interpretation and use of the principle of self-determination.

By so thoroughly contextualizing the situation in Eritrea, Gayim is able to offer several case studies within the book which have implications and applications in more universal settings: the impact of colonization, the bad fit between history and nationalist identity, the dividing up of territory after war, the emergence of the right to self-determination in international law. The actions of the Four Powers after the war are given close scrutiny by Gayim, who is able to describe the backstabbing and infighting as well as the lack of concern for the people in ex-colonial territories. Another achievement in the book is the

author's close examination of the debates within the United Nations. Gayim highlights the forming of alliances and fractures within the international legal order by playing out step-by-step the process needed to reach a consensus.

Gayim presents a case that raises questions about the political realities of the new world order. He shows the powerlessness and vulnerability of a small country like Eritrea to the whims and desires of more powerful nations. For those who have optimism in the ability of the current international regime to solve difficult disputes, generate fair and equitable outcomes and promote stability and security, Gayim presents a troubling situation which raises more questions than it answers about the principles of international law and the way they are applied.

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Bouandel, Youcef. *Human Rights and Comparative Politics*. Aldershot, UK: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1997. Pp. x, 246. £38.50

This book focuses on an odd assortment of issues. It is written by a political scientist but is, for the most part, notably free of the

methodological concerns of that discipline. It begins by reviewing the content of human rights by reference mainly to the work of Jack Donnelly and Maurice Cranston. It then provides a comparison of Eastern and Western perspectives and moves on to review the literature on third generation rights. But the fall of the Berlin Wall remains almost a close-kept secret in all of this. Despite the occasional post-1989 reference, the analysis is firmly rooted in the Cold War years.

The same is true of the subsequent chapters on Amnesty International and the Human Rights Committee. The latter's work is assessed almost exclusively on the basis of its performance up until 1988, although its approach has changed dramatically in the intervening years. The purpose of all this preliminary analysis is to address questions of considerable interest: such as whether the performance of different countries can be 'measured' and then compared with one another. Alas, the material is again sadly out of date. A chapter on 'democracy' refers to none of the outpouring of literature in recent years. Instead, it relies largely upon the work of Robert Dahl, whose writings are mistakenly attributed in the bibliography to Maurice Cranston.

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