

growing influence in the wider Horn region, and he predicts a clash with Egypt. There is also an insightful chapter by Perrine Duroyaume on Addis Ababa and its urban renewal (or some, like many of the displaced inhabitants, would say: urban upheaval and disfiguration) and programme of forced high-rise building, also for small owners, and social safety-net subversion. The chapter by R. Lefort on the Ethiopian economy and the one by Prunier on the 'Meles Zenawi era' are bound to be (and probably meant to be) provocative and debatable. Indeed, this contentious character is what makes this book as a whole so interesting and engaging (e.g. read some of the claims in the Introductory chapter). It generates new research questions, challenges easy interpretations of the country's entry into 'modernity' and 'development', and prevents us from following an adulatory mode of writing on this fascinating but also deeply problematic country (to which some authors here and there succumb, however). The editors hope for a 'democratic and prosperous' Ethiopia (p. 14), and one cannot but share this hope, although it is probably utopian in the case of the democracy aspect.

The book has an excellent index, and a nice map section with information about the distribution of ethnic and religious groups, natural features, and administrative divisions, and presents the interesting V-shaped Rift Valley-oriented map, indeed giving a 'new perspective' on Ethiopia. A final detail: a typo on p. v gives the date of birth of Jacques Bureau, the noted French Ethiopianist to whom the book is dedicated, as 1956 instead of 1946.

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**The Struggling State: Nationalism, Mass-Militarisation, and the Education of Eritrea**, by JENNIFER RIGGAN

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In her book *The Struggling State* Jennifer Riggan critically analyses the Eritrean governments' policy of societal militarisation and its impact on educational sector. She highlights the relations between the teachers and students of the high school at Assab in southern Eritrea. The author shares her personal experiences as a teacher in order to exemplify the suffering of the people through the narratives of students and teachers and she problematises the legacy of the EPLF/PFDJ's 'warrior ethos' that is perpetuated by indefinite national service.

The book follows a chronological flow that takes the reader inside the prison state of Eritrea and illustrates the militarisation of the entire society. The author presents an empirical study based on her sample group's imaginations of a coercive and punishing state, which has forced the younger generation to flee *en masse*. She describes how the teachers' role as educators has been challenged, since they are torn between the government's policy to produce soldier students and the societal need to create educated citizens. Accordingly, some of them have turned to be as punitive as the coercive state itself against their own students.

As an Eritrean citizen, I am highly impressed by Riggan's in-depth analysis and her detailed insights concerning the authoritarian state and its violent and punitive character. Her study illustrates how the introduction of indefinite national service has negatively affected education, social capital formation and the nation-building and development processes. Riggan shows a high level of scholarship and thorough knowledge of her subject matter; I am sure that her sophisticated literary style will attract readers from different academic disciplines, educational policymakers and a broad general readership alike.

The Introduction and Chapter 1 provide an overview of the state's policy to force the revolutionary ethos of the armed struggle on the population and shows how Eritrean nationalism was shattered at the end of the devastating border war with Ethiopia. In reaction, the state continued to force people to sacrifice their lives in defence of the nation and militarised the educational sector. Riggan explains Eritrea's socio-cultural background and depicts the emergence of the EPLF as a liberation front and its leaders' preoccupation with creating coherent national unity. One shortcoming is that she does not consider discourses that oppose the EPLF's notion of national identity and its state building agenda. Yet, she convincingly elaborates the narrow militaristic nationalism of the ruling elite.

Chapter 2 reflects the author's personal experiences with the coercive state and the methods it applies against its subjects in order to create loyal and docile citizens. She presents narratives of teachers that reflect their deep concern about being denied further education and future up-ward professional mobility. She describes various resistance tactics of teachers and students, to evade forced conscription into the national service.

I consider Chapter 3 specifically important, as it reveals the contradictions between the values of self-sacrifice and collectivism inherited from the armed struggle and embodied in the national service, and the societal need for educated citizens. Riggan analyses the policy of merging education and military training at the Sawa military camp with the aim of transforming the society by creating soldier students who study hard while sacrificing for the nation. She affirms that the alleged promotion of learner-centred pedagogy that was part of a newly introduced curriculum at the time of her field work failed due to this policy. On the contrary, education was devalued and was no longer cherished by students and teachers.

In Chapter 4 Riggan meticulously describes the daily conflicts at school resulting from the ambivalent roles of teachers as educators and as government's agents who had to indoctrinate students with revolutionary ethos to prepare them for the national service and the resulting deviant behaviour of the students. She explores how the teachers turned to be coercive and punitive towards their students in order to impose their authority, while they themselves were simultaneously suffering from the punishing behaviour of the authorities. The relationship between teachers and students became conflict-ridden due to the low motivation of both groups in the educational process: the teachers' prestige had been downgraded by their status of being national service conscripts, and students and parents looked down on them and had lost their trust in the educational system. As a result, both teachers and students developed strategies to flee the never-ending national service.

In Chapter 5, the author characterises Eritrea as a ‘prison state’, and demonstrates how the school mirrors the shape of that state. The narratives here focus on clashes between the notions of obedience, control and punishment of students by the teachers, who claim sovereign authority over the school and over their student’s bodies. The frustrated teachers embody the authoritarian state’s punitive culture, which regards physical punishment as pedagogical necessity. She concludes by observing that once abroad, some of the teachers who escaped the coercive state have reframed their relationship with the Eritrean authorities and re-established their loyalty in order to be able to visit their homeland.

I highly recommend this book as a testimony of a critical juncture in Eritrea’s troubled history.

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