

icisms of other thinkers of the Left is that they tend to become entangled in arcane debates about metaphysics and subjectivity. Such criticism might equally apply to this book; it too fails to link ideas to action. Students of international theory are better served by David Held's *Democracy and the Global Order* (1995) for an account of political ideologies and the requirements of progressive global reform.

CONSTRUCTING WORLD CULTURE

International nongovernmental organizations since 1875

Edited by John Boli and George M. Thomas

Stanford CA: 1999, Stanford University Press, xii, 363pp, US\$55.00 cloth, US\$19.95 paper

Review by Maja A. Nazaruk, Toronto

Since the mid-1980s and especially during the complex humanitarian emergencies in Somalia and Rwanda and, more recently, in Kosovo, international relations scholars have paid increased attention to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) because of their (albeit sometimes contested) efficiency in field operations and expanded scope of activity. Conflict mediation has now been added to their traditional emphasis on development or relief missions. Many of the studies are region-specific, public policy oriented (exploring for example the pros and cons of government subcontracting to NGOs) and limited to the behaviour of NGOs in relation to other actors (states, INGOs, and so on). What was missing was an overarching theory; in *Constructing World Culture*, Boli and Thomas fill precisely this gap.

According to the editors' world polity institutionalism theory, INGOs are the pivotal agents in the construction of world culture. They reason that world culture, like all other cultures, becomes embedded in social global organizations, which become the active shapers of the scenes that orient other actors, including states. This is in stark contrast to neoliberal institutionalists for whom institutions are in the end still reducible to state interests.

The book's neo-Grotian challenge is based on a number of premises: that culture is increasingly global; that world cultural principles and institutions shape the actions of states, firms, individuals, and other subunits; and that world polity is not reducible to states, transnational corporations, or interest groups. At heart is the ongoing institutional-

ization of world citizenship, which originates and persists via voluntary action. INGOs, the authors claim, carry authority that is neither coercive nor commanding; it is cultural.

NGOs are explored historically by sector area since 1870 to trace the evolution of global ideologies and their embodiment into organizations and movements. The study is divided into three parts: an overview of the INGO population; four studies of 'social movement' sectors; and technical, scientific, and developmental sectors. The numerical data is unprecedented in that it charts NGO action aggregately over the course of time and looks beyond effective NGO management to roles in defining and solving particular global problems. The authors manage to give a new spin to the buoyant discourse on the rise of international civil society. Their argument that INGOs are the main structural loci of universalistic discourse and debate, coupled with their thorough empirical evidence, is hence persuasive. Since in many respects this is a historical study, a section outlining the history of the philosophy of voluntary organizations would have been very welcome.

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

Limiting the threat

Edited by Joshua Lederberg

Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1999, xvi, 352pp, US\$40.00 cloth, US\$20.00 paper

Review by Peter Gizewski, Toronto

The past decade has witnessed considerable progress in curbing threats posed by weapons of mass destruction. Yet the challenges which such arms present continue to keep pace with advances in their control and elimination. There is no better example of the dilemmas which disarmament efforts confront than the threat posed by biological and toxin weapons. Exceedingly difficult to detect and potentially devastating when used, biological armaments may well present the most plausible mass destruction threat for the future - eclipsing nuclear arms in the ease with which they can be acquired and delivered and chemical arms in potential destructiveness. What is more, threats are real, and disarmament solutions are daunting.

This volume provides ample testament to the dangers and dilemmas which biological weapons (BW) pose. A group of international experts