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Review Of "Madagascar: Conflicts Of Authority In The Great Island" By P. M. Allen

Frederic L. Pryor

Swarthmore College, fprior1@swarthmore.edu

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highlighting the development of water and energy technologies, and the alleviation of poverty through agriculture, industrial capabilities, and technology transfer. Some pieces involve straightforward description of a process (e.g., enzyme production for jute processing) with little attention to the social dimensions of the technology in question. Several advocate an immediate practical program.

A handful of articles emphasizes problems directly relevant to sociological interests. D. Fielding and K. Kirsopp-Reed discuss the importance of indigenous knowledge (IK) in tropical agricultural development, primarily by asking 15 postgraduate students from developing countries. They find extremely limited knowledge of IK and substantial bias against it within this population, with the popularity of IK approaches driven by the interest of social scientists rather than technical specialists. Charles Cooper's review of recent work on technology policy and industrialization, including the traditional idea of innovative competition and the shift from import substitution to export orientation, is a model of substance and clarity.

Probably the most integrated and intriguing set of articles could have gone under the heading of "Technology and Dependence." In their paper K. Y. Chooi, J. R. Webb, and K. N. Bernard analyze dependence on multinational firms by investigating the oil industry in two countries, focusing on localization policies and their interaction with the behavior of MNCs. Mayuri Odedra-Straub, an information technology consultant in Germany, shows how international organizations have (mis-)shaped the introduction of computers in African countries, principally through tying aid to donor-country products. Finally, M. M. Hu presents three industry case studies from Bangladesh (leather, fertilizer, and machinery manufacturing) that clearly show how the "aid-dependence syndrome" distorts the use of resources and discourages domestic production.

I have only two mild complaints: the absence of full addresses for the contributors and the lack of an index. Indexes are particularly useful for perusing such volumes, since abstracts are often unrevised and do not accurately summarize the content of the various papers. I find only two essays potentially appropriate for course work, but this was not the objective of the conference. Still, the volume as a whole is a welcome addition to current studies of science, technology, and development.

WESLEY SHRUM

Louisiana State University

MADAGASCAR: CONFLICTS OF AUTHORITY IN THE GREAT ISLAND.
By Philip M. Allen. Boulder, CO, San Francisco, and Oxford: Westview Press, 1995. Pp. xiv + 254, \$54.95.

Philip M. Allen's fact-filled book on Madagascar is one of a series of monographs covering the politics, economics, society, and history of various contemporary African nations. For nonspecialists this book provides a useful

source to gain an overall picture of Madagascar and to direct them for further reading about the Great Island.

The strongest parts of the book are in the two chapters on Malagasy politics. They cover the fight for influence between the French and the British in the nineteenth century, the gradual imposition of French rule, the bloody revolts thereafter, and the emergence of the independent Malagasy nation. Owing to his exclusive focus on Madagascar, Allen does not devote any discussions to the ways in which French colonial rule in Madagascar varied considerably from, let us say, British colonial rule in Kenya so that the historical trajectory of the independent Madagascar also differed from that of other African nations. Nevertheless, his account has many important insights for someone wishing to concentrate solely on Madagascar.

Allen describes well the flowering and decline of the Tsiranana government in the first decade of independence, the jockeying for power both before and after its collapse, and the rise and fall of the Ratsiraka government. Although the cast of characters is large, he manages to handle the analysis so that much can be learned. The political problems are clearly etched so that the reader finishes the book with considerable understanding of the problems facing the current government of Albert Zafy.

The weakest parts of the book deal with the economy and society. It is difficult to understand major differences between the ethnic groups until one has some knowledge of the different ecological zones and traditional modes of making a living. This part of the discussion is quite incomplete. The maps are frustrating because there is no real indication of climatic, topological, and soil zones. Further, although the author speaks several times of Lake Alaotra, various mountain ranges, and the deteriorating road and railroad structure, one finds no indication of this lake or these mountain ranges, roads, and railroads on either of the two maps. As a result, the nonspecialist reader may find it difficult to place much of the discussion on the economy, society, and history of the island in a context so as to remember the crucial facts.

The chapter on the economy is a blur of data that is particularly irksome. For instance, his discussion of data on land is presented partly in square miles, partly in square kilometers, so that without a conversion table comparisons cannot be made. The economic data are drawn from diverse sources so that, as the author warns the reader, their temporal consistency is in doubt. I do not understand why the author did not use readily available long-term economic series published by the World Bank and IMF. Although these, like most data for Madagascar, may not be very accurate, at least they are consistent. I also found it disappointing that the author did not draw upon the fine work on the Malagasy economy by such specialists as Guy Pourcet, Christopher Barrett, or Lynne Sherburne-Benz.

The data problem aside, it is difficult for the reader to gain a picture of what the production and foreign trade problems are all about or what strategies of development the government followed at particular periods. In large measure the course of the economy can be understood as the consequences of a few government policies that the author never seriously analyzes. These include (1) Tsiranana's

Programme des grandes opérations in the mid-1960s, which foreclosed more promising agricultural investment strategies; (2) the withdrawal from the Franc Zone in 1973, which ended the convertibility of the Malagasy currency; (3) the nationalization of the crop-purchasing agencies in the mid-1970s, which led to a downturn in the terms of trade for agriculture and a subsequent decline in production; and (4) the radical and sudden invest-to-the-hilt campaign in the late 1970s, which tripled the foreign debt and put the nation on a downward trajectory that took a decade to reverse. The author makes no comparison of the direction of investment in various periods, information that would show the reader quite graphically the changing investment strategy. As a result, the nonspecialist reader may well become quite confused.

Despite my objections concerning the author's discussion of the economy, Allen packs an enormous amount of material into this book. At least regarding politics, it can serve as a useful reference source. The author also has some good suggestions to the reader for further reading. Moreover, he has a welcome glossary of Malagasy words used in the text and, it should be added, the writings on the island by others.

FREDERIC L. PRYOR
Swarthmore College

WARNINGS FROM THE FAR SOUTH: DEMOCRACY VERSUS DICTATORSHIP IN URUGUAY, ARGENTINA, AND CHILE. *By William Columbus Davis.* Westport, CT, and London: Praeger Publishers, 1995. Pp. x + 244, \$59.95.

"The Latin American Republics are not alike," William Davis informs us in the opening sentence of this narrative history of the experiences of Uruguay, Argentina, and Chile. Thus he sets the tone for a somewhat awkward book that manages to be both informative and condescending.

At its best, *Warnings from the Far South* presents a well-written and well-paced account of South America's three southernmost countries. Davis's country case studies take up the bulk of the book. In each of these chapters, the author gives a quick summary of events in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and goes on to focus in greater detail on events from the 1950s to the 1990s. He has a good eye for key historic turning points and a fine sense of dramatic presentation; at times he depicts certain political leaders—especially Argentina's Juan Perón—with insight and flair. The text emphasizes political history, with some passages on economic history in each chapter.

Despite these merits, this is, on balance, a disappointing book. Little attention is given to social history. Its short first chapter provides sweeping and unsubstantiated generalizations about all of Latin America that, at times, border on stereotypes. Its even shorter concluding chapter seeks to draw "lessons from the Far South." These lessons are presented in large type, presumably to catch the reader's eye. They are similar to the book's opening sentence. Among them are the following: "A nation that continually lives beyond its financial means is