

and individual rights in a country that continues to be a fascinating case for all who care about the frequently contradictory goals of equity and democracy.

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Consequences of Structural Adjustment: A Review of the Jamaican Experience. Edited by ELSIE LEFRANC. Kingston: Canoe Press, University of the West Indies, 1994. Graphs. Tables. Figures. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xiv, 225 pp. Paper. \$10.50.

The term *adjustment* refers to the belt tightening that a country with chronic balance-of-payments problems faces. For Jamaica, adjustment began in the early 1970s as a result of the 1973–74 OPEC oil shock. Nearly half of Jamaican output was exported, and half of Jamaican exports went to the United States (about 75 percent of exports went to the United States, Britain, and Canada). The ensuing recession in the United States, and in the OECD economies more generally, thus had a substantial impact on the Jamaican economy.

The policies of the first government of Michael Manley (1972–80) only made a bad situation worse. Between 1976 and 1980, Jamaica experienced a net capital outflow estimated at somewhere over four hundred million dollars, so the current account deficit could no longer be financed. Adjustment was inevitable. As a result, economic growth deteriorated. Between 1965 and 1980, the average annual increase in real GDP was a miserable 1.3 percent, a truly dismal performance. For most of the 1980s, unemployment was above 25 percent, which is awful. The distribution of income deteriorated as fewer people worked and those who did earned less. A variety of stabilization and adjustment plans cut private consumption and government spending in an effort to correct external imbalances and to release resources for export. Popular living standards fell, but the returns to increasingly scarce investment capital rose. To anyone who lived in Latin America during the 1980s, the story sounds depressingly familiar. Yet Jamaicans somehow managed to cope.

Middle-class Jamaicans made a number of changes in the way they lived, some obvious, some not. As spending in the public sector fell, government jobs became less remunerative, and therefore less desirable. Teachers and nurses were earning less, while artisans, blue-collar workers, and merchants made relatively more because of economic liberalization. Notions of middle-class status changed as income became more important than occupation as a determinant of status. People settled for less housing than they might have liked and deferred maintenance on what they owned. Some people exhausted their savings in an effort to keep up appearances. Others simply picked up and left the island. Small farmers turned increasingly to outside employment to supplement what they earned from the land. The social consequences

of economic adjustment were marked but not disastrous, for they produced winners as well as losers.

Given how poor Jamaica is, these findings surprised this reader a bit. Why were the consequences of adjustment not much worse? I suspect that two factors cushioned the blow. The balance-of-payments figures imply that Jamaicans living abroad sent a lot of money home. And Jamaicans borrowed substantially, at least until 1983. In 1987–88, Jamaica spent nearly half its export earnings on servicing the foreign debt. That is a staggering figure. *The Economist* puts the debt-service ratio at 25.5 percent in 1988, which is considerably less. Are the economic statistics presented in this useful study reliable?

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The Trouble in Suriname, 1975–1993. By EDWARD M. DEW. Westport: Praeger, 1994. Tables. Notes. Glossary. Bibliography. Index. xv, 243 pp. Cloth. \$55.00.

Suriname is a small country that achieved independence from the Netherlands in 1975. It has a diverse population, comprising creoles, bush negroes, Amerindians, Hindustanis, and Javanese, largely the result of the search for cheap, servile labor by the former Dutch masters. When it was newly free, this multiethnic society faced the principal task of establishing a reasonable political system to replace the controlling hand of the colonial power that kept its various elements in check. It has been a daunting task; “received institutions” did not prosper. Most of the leaders of the new nation had more experience in opposing central power than in exercising it, and most were too focused on constituent interests to build consensus.

In this book, Edward Dew traces the initial steps of the new nation with balance and scholarly detail. He knows the country and its people well and demonstrates that he cares. Suriname and the scholarly community are both fortunate to have such an able chronicler so early in the game. This is not to imply that the work is easy going, however. The initial chapters operate in a fog of acronyms and a proliferation of political parties that tax the reader severely. But it would be hard to suggest a better way, because confusion (too much democracy?) also contributed to the collapse of the first civilian governments.

The remainder of the book is easier to follow; it revolves mainly around the rule of Desi Bouterse, another in the long line of noncommissioned officers to seize power around the world. (It shakes one’s faith that the pages of history are littered with so many grubby tyrants like him.) Dew suggests that Suriname’s revolution of 1980 was influenced by events in Nicaragua and Grenada, and clearly Bouterse regarded Fidel Castro, Maurice Bishop, and Muammar Qaddafi as role models. Bouterse rapidly followed his own path, however, substituting brutal repression for vision or program. Bouterse claimed to serve the poor but enriched himself shamelessly. He delivered a beautiful Christmas Eve address in 1982, invoking “the triumph of light over dark-