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Référence

DORAIS, Louis-Jacques

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2006 *Denmark-Greenland in the Twentieth Century*, Copenhagen, Meddelelser om Grønland, Man and Society, 34 and The Commission for Scientific Research in Greenland, 202 pages.

The historical developments in Greenland since 1721 when Hans Egede established a mission not only constitute a history of more than 280 years of changing Danish colonialism. It is also a history of Greenlandic nation-building and the growing aspirations of Greenlanders to manage their own affairs. The long colonial history is important to understand in order to fully appreciate the social, cultural, political and economic dynamics and path-dependencies in contemporary Greenland. The position and potentials of today's Home Rule are rarely seen among other Indigenous peoples of the world. The Home Rule institution is quite unique indeed and does not find its equal among other Arctic Indigenous peoples' self-government institutions. The present negotiations between Denmark and Greenland about more self-governance and the implementation of a self-rule institution—a process that may lead to independence in some form in the future—highlights the importance of understanding the special relationship between Denmark and Greenland in a historical perspective. Despite the overwhelming amount of Danish research produced on Greenlandic issues it is interesting to note that only a few comprehensive publications with a historical perspective have been made available to English speaking readers. Axel Kjær Sørensen's overview of Greenland's political history fills out an important gap in this respect.

The book is a reworking and translation of an earlier publication titled *Danmark-Grønland i det 20. århundrede—en historisk oversigt* by the same author published in 1983 only four years after Home Rule was established. This new version is more reader-friendly and takes the reader through detailed descriptions of important historical epochs and developments primarily seen through the works and discussion of Danish and Greenlandic political institutions. The publication gives the reader a possibility to follow the advancements of the political institutions involving Greenlanders like the guardian's council (1860s-1911) and the provincial councils (1911-1979) which paved the road to Home Rule (1979-). The political tensions and discussions on how to govern Greenland and for the benefit of whom are continuously

related to other developments in the society— *i.e.* changes in production, demography, settlement patterns, and the publication thus offers the reader an insight into the complexities of the society in the 20th century, which is the period of focus. A small chapter is dedicated to the history before 1900 in order to help the reader understand the tremendous changes in society that took off in 1900.

Keeping in mind that much has happened since 1983 one may be a bit disappointed about the up-date chapter *A more Greenlandic Greenland* (pp. 152-169), which is an addition to the Danish version of the publication, both with respect to detail, analysis and perspective. Taking into account that the Danish-Greenlandic relationship has changed quite a lot since Home Rule was introduced nearly 30 years ago a more appropriate title of the publication would have been *Denmark-Greenland before home-rule*. The publication is based on a historical research method which is descriptive and it thus departs from those writings which are more critical towards the politics of Danes and Greenlanders alike and which place the political and social developments in larger theoretical and Arctic perspectives.

The publication provides a solid overview of the history of Greenland in the period 1900 to 1979, in particular, and constitutes a platform for further studies in Greenland and for comparative studies in other Arctic regions.

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