

Sudan: The elusive quest for peace by RUTH IYOB and GILBERT M. KHADIAGALA

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The international interest in the ongoing crisis in Darfur has helped to stimulate a growing number of publications and reports on the conflicts in Sudan, particularly on Darfur itself. *Sudan* is part of the International Peace Academy's occasional paper series, and attempts to tackle the rather circular question of why peace has eluded Sudan, even though 'the Sudanese have never stopped talking about peace while conducting multiple wars' (p. 13). Although the authors are writing from a political science and peace studies perspective, they emphasise the need to understand Sudan's long-term history. Their general argument is that the Western media have repeatedly reduced the causes of conflict in Sudan to binary identities – Arab/African, Christian/Muslim, north/south – or to deterministic explanations such as resources, religion or environmental change. Their emphasis is instead on the socio-economic injustices and exclusion from full citizenship perpetuated by 'the hegemonic dominance of the Khartoum-centred elite over the southern, western and eastern peripheries' (p. 15).

That the political dimensions of the conflicts must be at the forefront of any understanding of them is an argument long made by certain analysts, and one which is gaining wider acceptance, intertwined with resource-based analyses. The problem is that a substantial part of this book is an extended rebuttal of the popular media stereotypes, rather than a significant furthering of academic research or analysis about Sudan. Its value hopefully lies in imparting the increasingly established understandings of the historical patterns of government and conflict in Sudan to a wider, more policy-oriented audience. But the basic argument of the book has been made more clearly and effectively by other writers, such as Douglas Johnson. Despite their up-to-date bibliography, the authors seem to feel that such insights are 'currently limited to a narrow circle of enlightened anthropologists' (p. 47).

The attempt to take a historical and geographical perspective in Chapters 2 and 3 is a worthy one, but these chapters are rather hard to follow, jumping around in both space and time, and reading more as a series of statements than a coherent narrative or argument. There are several repetitions of the problem of the binary terms used in the media (and even of the 'outdated descriptions of the medieval geographers', p. 17), and yet the authors also seem to generalise the distinction between hegemonic, enslaving invaders and indigenous victims, a tendency exacerbated by the lack of clear chronology. In particular, the 'Arabo-Islamic' ideology depicted as the enemy of multiracial, multiethnic Sudanese nationalism often appears as a static constant, with little exploration of its construction or development over time. All 'indigenous' inhabitants of Sudan are meanwhile described as 'matrilineal' (e.g. p. 22), while Southern Sudan is also inaccurately described as 'largely Christian' at the time of independence in 1956 (p. 80). Whilst emphasising Sudan's multiethnic origins and hybridity, the authors also simplify the distinction between indigenous and invading groups, masters and slaves (compared to 'settler versus native' relations in Brazil, the USA and South Africa, pp. 65–9), without exploring the historical complexity of slavery in,

for example, Darfur. There is a sense that the underlying notions of hegemony and exclusion are indeed accurate, but these are obscured in the first part of the book, as the writers appear to prove their own point that 'our present knowledge of Sudan and the formation of the Sudanese state remains very vague and sketchy' (p. 35).

Chapters 4–5 are better written, and provide a more useful narrative of the various peace initiatives and agreements, and the internationalisation of both war and peace in Sudan since the 1960s. For example, the motives for Nigerian mediation in the early 1990s are succinctly highlighted (p. 94). Although the success of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005 is yet to be proven, the authors emphasise the importance of regional efforts by the IGAD countries to achieve the peace. Chapter 6 focuses on Darfur, and here the historical sections form a more coherent and confident narrative than the earlier chapters. One notable omission is the role of Hassan al-Turabi, not simply as the ideologue of the NIF government (p. 147), but in attempting to construct alliances with Darfurians on Islamic rather than racial grounds, and hence the greater estrangement of non-'Arab' Darfurians after Turabi's split from the NIF. It also seems odd to suggest that Khartoum's brutal response to the western rebellion is 'usually a neglected dimension' (p. 148), considering the media coverage of government involvement and the genocide question.

The conclusion is a thoughtful commentary on attempts to make peace in Sudan right up to 2006, including the problems of internal divisions in rebel groups, and the positive culture of dialogue in Sudan. It again highlights the importance of regional commitment by the IGAD countries to the CPA, and the contrast in the case of Darfur. Yet while the book ends with a noteworthy attempt to draw together the long-term histories of violence in Sudan, there is a recurrence of the rather imprecise or temporally conflated assertions of its early chapters: 'Pragmatic policy-making and a spirit of reconciliation will be necessary to overcome the horrors suffered under the Old Sudan's alliance of *amirs*, *zariba* mercantilists, and militias' (p. 177). The book is strongest as an account of peacemaking efforts in Sudan since the 1960s, rather than as a fresh analysis of the elusiveness of peace or causes of conflict. To the latter it adds only the well-intentioned but rather abstract admonitions of peace advocates about the need to ensure equitable citizenship, relinquish hegemony and strengthen international commitments.

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Domestic Service in Post-Apartheid South Africa: deference and disdain by A. J. KING

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Madam & Eve, the cartoon strip published since 1992 in South Africa, captures widespread sentiments of the relationship between servants and employers. A 1994 cartoon depicts Eve reminding Madam of the country's newly obtained freedom, only to be told not to forget to do the dishes. This famous 'free at last'