

**Mandela's World: the international dimension of South Africa's political revolution 1990–99** by JAMES BARBER

Oxford: James Currey; Cape Town: David Philip; Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2004. Pp. ix, 214. £45.00; £14.95 (pbk.).

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According to the main title, one would expect this to be an analysis of South Africa's foreign relations during the presidency of Nelson Mandela (1994–99). However, as indicated by the subtitle, it also includes an examination of the international dimension pertaining to the negotiation period (1990–94) leading to the demise of apartheid. James Barber justifies this combination of time frames by arguing: 'During those years, Nelson Mandela stamped his personality on both the South African and international stages' (p. 4). While this claim is somewhat exaggerated, Barber has produced a useful overview of the key factors, issues and developments in the ten years of South Africa's foreign policy after 1990, the year that sounded the death knell of apartheid. His book addresses the main challenges faced by the two South African governments in power during this period. These were particularly evident in the post-1994 era, namely: 'to identify policy priorities; to balance Western and Third World values; to revise internal processes; to bring in black officials and representatives; to allocate resources; to expand its representation abroad; to find its place in international organisations; to rethink security needs; and to recognise its limitations while responding to the expectations of others' (p. 6).

In setting the scene, Part I outlines South Africa's international standing during the 1980s. The international dimension in the domestic transition, from the apartheid to the non-racial state, is subsequently examined. Interweaving theoretical considerations regarding a country's foreign policy making, Barber swiftly takes us to the Mandela presidency, rather eloquently bringing together the main strands in Pretoria's 'new' foreign policy. In discussing four case studies – arms sales, two-China policy, Nigeria and human rights, and military intervention in Lesotho – he appropriately summarises the problem encountered by the Mandela government in attempting to accommodate idealist ambitions with realist situations. The last part examines the legacy of the first post-apartheid government's foreign policy approach in four chapters reflecting specific themes: middle powership, the bridge builder, the African power and accommodation, and the regional giant. In conclusion, Barber's work, probably written with students as the targeted readership, is not the result of original research, but nicely wraps up the themes and trends central to South Africa's early post-apartheid foreign policy. As such, and this is our principal critique, it should have incorporated the writings of scholars more critical about the foreign policy achievements of the Mandela government, for example concerning the discussion on the democratic nature of the policy making process and the role played by civil society.

Finally, and sadly, the book is marred by poor copy-editing, with numerous errors in grammar and spelling throughout the text, particularly in the index. Factually wrong references include the 1987 (not 1997) Dakar meeting, the

Comprehensive Anti Apartheid Act, (not Bill), and the Human Sciences (not Rights) Research Council.

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**Sudan's Blood Memory: the legacy of war, ethnicity, and slavery in early south Sudan** by STEPHANIE BESWICK

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In this book, Stephanie Beswick takes on the ambitious task of reconstructing the pre-colonial history of South Sudan's largest ethnic group, the Dinka. Based on interviews with approximately 200 southern Sudanese, and on written, linguistic and archaeological evidence, she gives a lucid and largely convincing account of the migrations and expansion of the Dinka, starting in the fourteenth century, as they began to 'forge out' (p. 4) of central Sudan towards the south. Driven by ecological stress and pressure from the Nubian Christian kingdom of Alwa (p. 186), they were the last of the Western Nilotes to leave central Sudan. The direction of their migrations is attributed to topography, soil types and water availability. Their success in adapting to relatively harsh environmental conditions is attributed to their possession of drought-resistant caudatum sorghum and hardy zebu cattle. Their demographic expansion was achieved principally through intermarriage with non-Dinka groups already living in the south, while their success in dominating these groups owed much to a politico-ritual system which had been formed in close contact with the ancient central Sudanese kingdoms.

Beswick's account ends in the early nineteenth century, with the beginning of the colonial era – and yet, she does not quite end it there. As the book's subtitle indicates, an important part of her purpose (even if it is only directly addressed in the last chapter) is to demonstrate the contemporary significance of certain 'historical themes' (p. 198), which can be traced back over centuries. These include the steady southward movement of the 'Nilotic frontier', which counts also as the frontier of South Sudan, and the ethnic and political expansion of the Dinka, which still causes fear and resentment amongst smaller groups in the South today. The origins of current conflicts in Sudan, therefore, must be sought much further back than in the relatively recent north–south/Arab–Christian divide that emerged under Turkish, Egyptian and British colonial rule.

This is clearly an important and original contribution to the study of the history of Sudan and of Dinka history in particular. It will also have much to offer those who bring to it a more general interest in the role of environmental change, war and population movements in the emergence of political and ethnic identities in this part of Africa. I, for one, found much that resonated with my own attempts to interpret Mursi accounts of their movement into the Lower Omo Valley in southwestern Ethiopia, and I was sent scurrying to the library to look up some of the many sources quoted by Beswick in support of her arguments. Not surprisingly, however, the impressive scope and lucidity of her account,