

# Journal of Retracing Africa

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Volume 2 | Issue 1

Article 6

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January 2016

Adebajo, Adekeye. *Africa's Peacemakers: Nobel Peace Laureates of African Descent*. United Kingdom: Zed Books, 2014. 336pp.

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## Recommended Citation

Houser, Myra A.. "Adebajo, Adekeye. *Africa's Peacemakers: Nobel Peace Laureates of African Descent*. United Kingdom: Zed Books, 2014. 336pp." *Journal of Retracing Africa*: Vol. 2, Issue 1 (2015): 73-75. <https://encompass.eku.edu/jora/vol2/iss1/6>

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Adebajo, Adekeye, ed. *Africa's Peacemakers: Nobel Laureates of African Descent*. Cape Town: Zed Books, 2014, iii + 336 pp.**

In fifteen chapters, *Africa's Peacemakers: Nobel Laureates of African Descent* describes the lives, careers, and Nobel significance of the thirteen Africans and people of African descent who have won the Nobel Peace Prize. This unique and creative volume features essays by luminaries in several fields, such as Adekeye Adebajo and Ali Mazrui (introduction), Pearl T. Robinson, James O.C. Noah, and Lee A. Daniels, Chris Saunders, Maureen Isaacson, Elleke Boehmer, and Gregory F. Houston, Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Morad Abou-Sabe, Janice Golding and Gwendolyn Mikell, and Adekeye Adebajo and Rosaline Daniel. This author list is comprised of researchers, colleagues of laureates, and other leaders in their fields. Laureates are grouped into sections based upon nationality. The introductory chapters tie Barack Obama to the legacy of other Peace Prize winners.

Adebajo and his authors strive to discuss Africa's relationship with the wider world through the lens of the lives profiled here. They discuss the laureates' formation through historical forces and interpret each person's role in further directing future trends. Additionally, each author pays attention to the Peace Prize's ramifications related to relations between recipients' countries and the larger world, particularly with Western powers. The themes of each article vary, with some placing more emphasis on pre-Nobel careers and others on the Peace Prize's effects on future work or giving a more general overview of laureates' lives. This approach makes for a varied and diverse work.

Within their introductory chapters, Adebajo and Mazrui discuss the long and strong connections between American civil rights and African liberation movements, marking early the connection between anti-apartheid groups in particular and Americans who drew inspiration from them. This relationship forms the basis for the work's initial chapters, honoring the three Americans and four South Africans who have won the Peace Prize. Early on, Adebajo identifies the wide range of life experiences and struggles that each laureate boasts. Importantly, he also comments on the prevalent view of the Nobel Peace Prize as an endorsement by Western powers, noting that recipients may find differing views amongst their own countries' citizens than they do from the non-African world at large. Authors of subsequent chapters elaborate on this theme.

In addition to making connections between groups of laureates, Adebajo also points out the commonalities between individuals, noting, for instance the relationships between Ralph Bunche and Martin Luther King, Jr., who marched

together during civil rights protests in the 1950s and 1960s, and Albert Luthuli and Nelson Mandela, who worked together during those same decades. These help to create a thread between some of the laureates and support another central argument, that the Peace Prize committee has been keenly interested in issues of racial reconciliation. It also helps to draw out the differences between other recipients, such as Mohamed ElBaradei or Kofi Annan, who have worked in different spheres. Additionally, the authors point out this study's limitations in assessing each laureate's accomplishments in depth and espouse a commitment to critical views that eschew hagiography.

Mazrui's chapter discusses the importance of the Gandhian tradition in Peace Prize awards and also features an extended discussion on African and diasporic identity. Mazrui makes a distinction between laureates who are African by birth and those who become African by adoption and notes that individual views of and relationships with the continent vary amongst the highlighted Peace Prize recipients. This is an important point as well, as the laureates themselves seem to view their own relationships to the continent in vastly differing terms. In chapters on the three Americans, the authors each spend time discussing tendencies toward hawkishness versus peace-mongering in their subjects. Given Obama's fairly recent reception of the Peace Prize, this is a noteworthy conversation. This long historical trajectory also, of course, lends itself to a variance in the essays' examination of lives fully lived and the one which continues to unfold. While it may be early to accurately and completely assess Obama's legacy, the authors have attempted to add historical context to their discussion. Writing about the four South Africans who have become Nobel laureates, the authors emphasized biography and relationships to the larger liberation movement when discussing Luthuli, Tutu, and Mandela. De Klerk, as the continent's only white recipient and arguably its most controversial receives a treatment that examines both his oft-peaceful rhetoric and relationship with his own National Party as well as a discussion of the Third Force and other covert operations of violence in his post-Nobel presidency.

Boutros-Ghali provides the most personal reminiscence in the book, with his writing on Sadat contrasting greatly with Abou-Sabe's on ElBaradei. These two figures are far less linked than the Americans and South Africans in terms of commonalities. Additionally, as the only two laureates who are their countries' sole representatives, Kofi Annan and Wangari Maathai combine into a section, with much discussion of their strong Western ties and relationships to wealthy nations. Finally, the last section discusses gender and class in the contrasting lives of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Leymah Gbowee. Adebajo pays careful attention to critiques of Sirleaf, including her arguable tendencies toward nepotism and corruption. As in the case of Obama, it is more difficult to assess the legacies of these last two

laureates given the fact that their careers remain far from incomplete.

This work does not include a concluding section, which is the only thing it seems to lack. Overall, each author makes important connections between their own laureate, other Peace Prize recipients, and the wider world. The lively and engaging essays present a variety of perspectives and a plurality of different lenses for examining their subjects. This makes each chapter very unique in both its scope, tone, and contribution. *Africa's Peacemakers* could likely be read as a whole or as a contribution to work on any of the individuals discussed within.

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