



# Foreword

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In this issue, the first two articles are about remembering, the next two about rethinking, and the last one about reconstructing. In different ways, all these articles are about redoing important things – and it is so that in some or other way, redoing can often be very necessary. I have found it interesting to note that the prefix ‘re-’ can function in nine semantic fields, and that in one or more of the senses of *again*, *back* and *in a different way* it can be prefixed to almost any English verb or verbal derivative (Sykes 1982:860). In different, but interrelated and integrated ways, these three meanings can indeed be found in the articles of this issue.

The Mandela Centenary article is of special topical value in this year, but can be very relevant in every other year as well. It takes us back to our justifiably famous Madiba’s long life and the socio-political contexts of his time – on the one hand, the contemptible situation of contra-existential apartheid, and on the other hand the expedient emergence of a co-existential and ethical humanism. The article reminds us that such ethics had to prioritise justice and had to accommodate a spear-named strategy of confronting the relentless structural violence of apartheid with a daunting, though disciplined, forcefulness. It shows us a remarkable model of overcoming ethno-national ‘superiority’ and propagating democracy and inclusivity. It encourages us to be followers of such a ‘humble, honest and human’ leader, who was inspired by a politics of living together.

The article highlighting the need for memorialisation to consolidate transitional justice in the Democratic Republic of the Congo takes us back to a devastated situation after decades of conflict, where survivors cried ‘Never again!’ and summoned co-survivors and perpetrators to commit themselves to such a vision. In this article the never-again-atrocities call does not only recur as a refrain, but is also elaborated to include the conflict-preventing injunction never to hate the perpetrators. We can read how fieldwork informants emphasised the dual significance of memorials and memorial days: to remember and honour victims, and to prevent survivors from harbouring ongoing hatred of perpetrators. The informants further emphasised the value of apology, especially when offered by the State.

In the article on the causes, situation and solutions of the recent years of conflict in South Sudan, the keyword is ‘rethink’. Here the ‘re-’ prefix functions in the sense of ‘in a different way’. The article was prompted by the fact that when peace ‘agreements’ keep failing, the self-evident inference is that the real causes of the recurring conflict have not been addressed and that new approaches to the underlying problems and their possible solutions have to be urgently adopted. In this article ethnic animosity is identified as the root cause of the violent conflict, and the author’s rethinking has led him to creative recommendations for counteracting such enmity and promoting amity.

The next article is also about South Sudan and also about different ways of thinking. It discusses a case where parties with conflicting thought patterns were trying to put together a peace agreement. It seems as if the general aim of the parties was to work towards transitional justice, but as if they (and/or the facilitators?) did not care to venture into a debate about prioritising retributive or restorative justice. What the Agreement contained, were sections on the ‘agreed transitional justice mechanisms’ (ARCSS 2015:40 [section 1.5]), in the following order: Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing, Hybrid Court for South Sudan, and Compensation and Reparation Authority. The article focuses on overcoming the challenges and operationalising the envisaged Court as a

justice-delivering mechanism. But the implication is that the justice to be delivered is not only justice for the sake of justice, but also, and especially, justice for the sake of peace. The different ways of thinking should therefore reach further than the field of anti-impunity; it should transcend into the related and integrated fields of reparation and reconciliation.

The last article is about post-conflict recovery and reconstruction in Kenya, and community resilience. It discusses the different models the State used in implementing its recovery and reconstruction programme, and the various successes and shortcomings. But it focuses on findings about the remarkable resilience that may be revealed by internally displaced people – findings which show how social support can be regained and social capital recreated.

And the reviewed book is about rethinking the situation of religion between violence on one side and peacebuilding on the other. It frankly discusses religion's deplorable links with violence and its commendable potential for contributing towards justice, peace and reconciliation. The book shows how, in this dual context, rethinking can be transformative and lead to far-reaching effects.

From the editorial desk, I therefore trust that the contents of this issue will inspire our readers to remember and rethink, and possibly to turn best practices and research into even better practices and research.

## Sources

ARCSS (Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan) 2015. Addis Ababa, Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

Sykes, J.B. ed. 1982. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of current English*. Seventh edition. Oxford, Clarendon Press.