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A. J. Christopher. *The Atlas of Changing South Africa*. Second edition. London and New York: Routledge, 2001. x + 260 pp. \$100.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-415-21178-9; \$220.00 (library), ISBN 978-0-415-21177-2.



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Apartheid has been a subject of intense scholarship, especially in the last two decades. A lot has been said about the political philosophy behind the policy, its course, and how it *went wrong*. Its effect, especially on black South Africans, and its manifestations in various areas of life have also been discussed broadly. An important question then is what is new that this textbook on apartheid tells? Clearly, we have not yet arrived at a full understanding of the total impact of apartheid. We are only now beginning to tap into the data sources being opened for scrutiny, while some will remain closed for some time. Also, the legacy of apartheid is still glaringly apparent in South African society, conspicuously so in the living space: architecture, residential settlement, personal relationships across racial lines; what is called spatial apartheid. Just how far apartheid policy caused a reconfiguration of the living space in South Africa, which is what this book is about, is one of the subjects yet to be fully explored by geographical historians. It is, therefore, a welcome addition to knowledge about political policy implications for geography and spatial planning.

In *The Atlas of Changing South Africa*, A. J. Christopher deploys a mixture of a splendid collection of cartographic illustrations and lucid narrative to 'demonstrate the spatial patterns of the planning and enforcement of the policy [of apartheid] and to examine the spatial her-

itage it has bequeathed as an indelible legacy to present South Africa' (p. 8). In looking at the geographical planning that was effected in pursuit of complete racial segregation, Christopher succeeds in demonstrating that prudent spatial planning was sacrificed in an obsession with complete separation of population groups along racial lines.

Chapter I reviews the political history of South Africa before apartheid, compressing a history spanning centuries of vital events in a mere 40 pages with great perspicuity. But with his focus on post-1948 periods, Christopher literally rushes through cardinal events of this earlier period, events that demonstrate the resilience of the African and other subordinate peoples to willingly accept white hegemony. The chapter also quickly reviews the history covering the arrival of Dutch immigrants and the dispersal of the Khoisan; state consolidation epitomized by Shaka's reign; Frontier wars and primary resistance to colonial intrusion; agricultural, mining and industrial revolutions; British colonies and Boer Republics; the Union of South Africa; and racial segregation. It will interest readers to find a condensed restatement of an all-too-familiar point that segregation started long before the official policy of Apartheid, that it became pronounced in the reconfiguration of the urban space in the late 19th century and became entrenched in

the mushrooming municipalities in the early twentieth century. Yet, interestingly, city life retained to various degrees residues of racial mixing until apartheid ended cordial contact between races.

Chapter II, entitled 'Administering Apartheid,' documents the impact of apartheid on the administrative machinery at all levels of society. Here, Christopher demonstrates that from 1948, the South African state became increasingly complex, bloated and expensive and that federal structures of government did one thing for whites and another to black people. While municipal authorities were geared towards control of the black people, they maximized the delivery of essential services in 'white areas'. Apartheid ideologues saw a difference between black groups, hence the senseless fragmentation of administration of African affairs along ethnic lines leading to the homeland system, while Coloureds and Indians were to receive parliamentary concessions.

In Chapter III, the author explores the essence of the apartheid state, arguing that the fragmentation of government was meant to consolidate rather than devolve white power. This is obvious, but the point that this consolidation happened against the trend on the continent towards fall of white colonial control and the rise of independent states is a very important paradox apartheid added to African post-war history. The author goes on to dissect the philosophical content of the apartheid state: the fears and anxieties behind a rising hegemony, and goes further to delve into the problems this experiment in social engineering scheme confronted and created, from untenable land tenure system, excessively high state expenditure, disproportionate economic growth patterns between 'white' and 'black' areas, economic stagnation and deepening abject poverty. Clearly, the white elite had one ambition in common: how to compensate for whites' numerical inferiority, although Christopher limits this desire to Afrikaner nationalists. Of course, Afrikaner nationalists had their own answer to this: the creation of a prosperous white South Africa while spending minimal resources on black development.

But, as Chapter IV demonstrates, apartheid was by and large about control of the local urban space. The author reckons that this was primarily because apartheid's ultimate test was complete residential and personal segregation rather than philosophical projects like partitioning the state. Legislative instruments such as the Population Registration Act and the Group Areas Act empowered the state to tamper with community relationships that crossed racial lines and represented a delicate re-

ordering of the urban space, a trend in global post-war white politics. Forced removals and deepening poverty added to the pain of African victims.

The state and local space separated apartheid planners' move from 'grand apartheid' to what they called 'petty apartheid', seeking to extend racial segregation to daily lives. Chapter V, entitled 'Personal Apartheid,' discusses measures taken to eliminate and prevent personal contact between blacks and whites, not only in marriage and sexual relationships, but also in the use of public facilities, amenities, and transport with devastating effects on the personal security and well-being of the black majority.

In Chapter VI, the author turns to resistance to apartheid. Christopher runs through this long and complex road with amazing speed and some accuracy. From the largely rural resistance of the 1940s to militant mass actions against pass laws, to the inception of armed struggle and diplomatic initiatives in exile in neighbouring states in the 1960s, he details the remarkable feat of expansion of the spatial framework of the apartheid policy beyond the borders, with state operatives following liberation activists across the Southern African region. Importantly, the ruthless intensification of the state security apparatus to suppress African discontent resulted in more bloodshed and intensification of resistance. However, he fails to situate the Soweto Uprising, arguably the most important catalyst for a shift towards militant mass youth and labour mobilization, in the emergence of the militant student movement and the re-emergence of popular labour actions in the early 1970s. The narrative characteristically races with much haste through the era of controlled reforms under P.W. Botha with its 'concessions' for Coloureds and Indians. Even with abounding evidence having emerged post-1990 on the hand of the state in the virulent circle of violence among Africans, Christopher fails to weave this into his narrative.

Partly as a result of this ruthless institutionalization of racism and violence and partly due to diplomatic campaigning by liberation movements, South Africa was fast becoming a pariah state internationally. On this matter, Chapter VII maintains that the South African bungling of the SWA affair, South Africa's military incursions in neighbouring states and South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth and other multilateral actions explain this isolation. Paradoxically, trade relations with some powerful states, economic hegemony and political manoeuvring helped South Africa stay afloat for decades in isolation. What this meant in terms of South

Africa's attempts to stay in the global map without ditching apartheid policy could better have been explained.

But the weight of isolation and organized resistance from various fronts made the grandiose apartheid scheme too costly to maintain politically and economically. In this context, in Chapter VIII Christopher goes on to discuss briefly the retreat of the apartheid state from the late 1980s (erroneously put as 1990). He discusses the opening of the political space for other players, the intricate negotiations amid spiraling violence, and the political settlement in only six pages. With a new constitution, the South African map was to be redrawn, most manifestly in the collapse of homelands, desegregation of the apartheid administrative machinery and the end of international isolation. The fall of the apartheid city and dismantling of personal apartheid are discussed in some detail. The implications of the historic all-races 1994 elections also receive some attention, but the fact remains that the congestion of voters in some areas, while others were scarcely patronized, was partly an artifact of a deliberate unequal distribution of population across the land by segregationists.

In Chapter IX, the author then turns to attempts to undo the apartheid imprint on the South African nations, by creating a new sense of nationhood and oneness in diversity, as epitomized by Bishop Tutu's 'Rainbow Nation' concept and the TRC process. However, Christopher maintains that the apartheid legacy remains stubbornly

imprinted in many aspects of South African lives, no less so in socio-economic indicators casting blacks, especially Africans, to the margins of a prosperous South Africa. The country's landscape is still littered with strong reminders of the grim past and minority white hegemony over majority black population. But, the author concludes, with abundant political will and substantial investment in eradicating this legacy, gradually the spatial reconfigurations are being altered.

Christopher has succeeded in reviewing the spatial impact of apartheid over a four decades period with all its complex episodes and events in a mere 239 pages with amazing clarity. The narrative is an easy read, although the pace may be too quick for a reader sometimes. So if readers are looking for a nuanced dissection of the development of apartheid and its ramifications for South African society, they better look elsewhere. At any rate, that is not the intention of the author. He does succeed to an extent to write a 'atlas' of apartheid, blending carefully selected maps and demographic illustrations with an easy-going narrative to demonstrate spatial patterns of the apartheid policy. Perhaps, Christopher was unfair to himself in trying to be as complete about the political, as in the spatial, history of apartheid. The book will be an interesting read for university students and those interested in bringing geographical perspectives into the mainstream of South African history. It is a must for those seeking a suitable general textbook for a multi-disciplinary class on apartheid or racial segregation.

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