Universities, Apartheid, and Decolonisation
Uprooting university apartheid in South Africa: From Liberalism to Decolonisation

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At first glance, *Uprooting university apartheid in South Africa* by Teresa Barnes may appear to be a treatise on contemporary higher education policy in South Africa. In actuality, Barnes's book is more a work on university history, investigating the case of a professor in Political Philosophy who taught at the University of Cape Town (UCT) between 1937 and 1970. Using this biographical point of departure, Barnes lays bare the complexities and contradictions at the heart of both liberal thinking and seemingly liberal institutions operating during the apartheid era in South Africa. Barnes's research is not just an uprooting but also an uncovering of the problematic role of universities and academics, demonstrating powerfully the value of university histories as ways to unpack and explore colonial and discriminatory legacies. In the contemporary South African higher education landscape, in which decolonisation and transformation are key questions, a study such as this demonstrates the critical need to examine the histories of universities to understand and shed light on their colonial, racial, and gendered roots.

Prof. A.H. Murray is an interesting case, examined very successfully by Barnes, that highlights many of the contradictions and layers of liberal thinking under apartheid. Most

of his career was at the English medium UCT which positioned itself as liberal and critical towards the apartheid regime and was sometimes popularly referred to as 'Moscow on the hill' for the apparent communist sympathies of some of its staff and students. Murray, however, while on the staff of UCT, became a regular witness on behalf of the state in cases against anti-apartheid activists, most famously in the Treason Trials of 1956-60. As an apparent expert on communism, he was called on to prove that those prosecuted supported communism and thus also the violent overthrow of the state.

For the concise length of the book, it is a remarkably rich and contextualised study based on thorough research, whose contribution stretches much wider than just Murray and UCT. Barnes has drawn on a variety of archival and primary sources, as well as conducted a range of interviews, joining many threads together in the construction of Murray's story. The references in the book are themselves a rich and interesting resource. A striking feature of the narrative is the tracing of networks and connections between intellectuals, public figures, and their families as part of the history of Murray and UCT.

Barnes introduces the book describing her interest in the subject and her personal experiences at southern African universities. Chapter one explores Murray's background, education, and early career, a striking feature of which is the seemingly contradictory influences of Murray's youth, including relations with the Joint Council Movement and Labour Party, and also involvement in the Bantu Education Commission. These experiences are shown to underpin Murray's particular brand of liberalism. Chapter two examines frameworks of South African liberalism, distinguishing between the perspectives of temporal and spatial liberalism. Barnes categorises Murray as a spatial liberal which showed in his support for separate development and his ideas regarding pluralism. The discussion also highlights the diversity of liberal thinking during apartheid as the phenomenon of so-called liberals who supported apartheid is explored.

Chapter three considers ideas of complicity and how these relate to an institution. UCT as a university, while involved in acts of private and public resistance, also was 'an institution significantly entwined with apartheid'(49). Barnes highlights the presence of both temporal and spatial liberalism in an examination of cases of discrimination at UCT, highlighting the strength of Eurocentric and white supremacist ideologies. The focus returns to Murray in chapter four and the history of Murray's involvement in various trials as part of the prosecution on behalf of the apartheid government is presented. Despite the fact that the strategy of proving that opposers of apartheid were communists was not very successful in many of the court cases in which Murray was involved, the state continued to call on Murray to testify during a period of two decades. In chapter five Barnes considers

the presence of espionage at South African universities during apartheid. Although not verifiable in any of the available evidence, Barnes speculates in an informed manner about Murray's involvement in espionage and also considers his contribution to censorship under apartheid. This chapter further explores the role of academics as informers or consultants in the Cold War struggles of communism and anti-communism. These are certainly aspects of universities and their relationship with the state which deserve further attention.

The final chapter functions as an epilogue, exposing aspects of universities and their legacies present in the post-apartheid era. Barnes's focus remains on UCT in this discussion as a product of both the colonial and apartheid states. This chapter introduces many topics for debate in the quest for a decolonised university while drawing on ideas of knowledge and power, intersectionality, and feminist scholarship. Topics such as campus spaces and architecture and the #Rhodesmustfall movement are used here to highlight in a variety of manners the colonial and problematic racial roots and legacies of universities and raise questions for further research and debate.

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