8,700 MILES FROM PRETORIA:
THE ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT IN MADISON, WISCONSIN, 1968-1994

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For my Family, Friends, and Teachers
ABSTRACT

Since the United States played a critical role toward South Africa’s prolonging of Apartheid due to their role as an important ally in Cold War politics, within the United States existed a substantial Anti-Apartheid Movement. This article examines the American Anti-Apartheid Movement, specifically through analyzing the activism that took place in Madison, Wisconsin centered around the University of Wisconsin. The focus on Madison was based on the author’s realization that Anti-Apartheid activism was influential in shaping Madison’s politics long before the American Anti-Apartheid Movement gained momentum in the 1980s largely due to the existence of the Madison Area Committee on Southern Africa (MACSA), an active campus-based coalition against imperialism in Southern Africa. Spanning the entire existence of MACSA (1969 – 1994), including when it reformed as the Madison Anti-Apartheid Coalition (MAAC) in 1985, the author describes the Anti-Apartheid Movement’s beginnings in Madison to be largely unoriginal and insignificant. By 1976, however, Anti-Apartheid activism within Madison began to achieve inspiring political victories unseen elsewhere in the United States, influencing legislation within the City of Madison, Dane County, and the University of Wisconsin. Finally, the article chronicles Madison’s involvement during the final years of Apartheid, describing the City as active in the Movement, but not nearly a pioneer city of the movement it once was. Regardless, the article provides the Anti-Apartheid Movement within Madison and the greater United States as a prime historical example where ordinary people were able to make a difference in global politics.
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PREFACE

Growing up in Madison, Wisconsin I have always carried a strong sense of pride for my home city. When I moved from Madison to Eau Claire, Wisconsin in 2006 this sense of pride grew, thus I became particularly interested in the progressive history of my hometown, ranging from examples of the legendary progressive Robert M. LaFollette to the Anti-Vietnam War protests held on the campus of the University of Wisconsin. Simultaneously, a second historical topic I became fascinated with was Apartheid in South Africa, a seemingly unrelated topic I happened to stumble upon by accident. The topics would continue to occupy my mind for the next two years before I realized how related the two topics actually were. I soon discovered Madison was a center for Anti-Apartheid activism within the United States, a little-known historical fact that deserved not to be forgotten. Thus, here is the inspiring story of how a seemingly-unrelated city in the Midwestern United States did its part to influence global politics over 8,700 miles away.
INTRODUCTION

Amos Hegland arrived to the University of Wisconsin Madison’s historic South Hall on Saturday May 18, 1968 ready to begin his overnight shift as a custodian. In the midst of his regular custodial duties on South Hall’s third floor, at approximately 1:30 am on the morning of May 19th Hegland heard a crash coming from below. When the crash was followed by the smell of smoke Hegland began to search the building, discovering the first floor of South Hall was filled with so much smoke he had difficulty escaping. Once outside Hegland was able to yell for help, gaining the attention of the custodians of neighboring Birge Hall who then alerted authorities.

University Police were first to arrive at South Hall where they were knowledgeable enough to attempt to fight the fire from outside the building without opening any doors, which would have only caused further growth of the blaze. The Madison Fire Department arrived to South Hall shortly after and extinguished the fire by 3:38 am. The aftermath of the fire almost exclusively damaged the College of Letters and Sciences’ administration office and storage room, including 15,000 student records. In addition, one firefighter received an ankle fracture while on the scene, however, no one else was hurt.

Following the fire an investigation began to determine the cause of the fire, led by Fire Lieutenant Arthur Kaltenberg of the Fire Prevention Bureau, State Fire Marshal Frank Roberts, and various officials from the University. It soon became obvious South Hall was the target of arson as investigators discovered the remains of three broken bottles that had been thrown through a broken window filled with flammable liquid and wicks. Amos Hegland witnessed the firebombing of a historic landmark, however,
eventually it became recognized he more importantly witnessed the first serious action of the Anti-Apartheid Movement to take place in Madison. Authorities never discovered the identity of the bomber of South Hall, however, it is assumed the arsonist was an Anti-Apartheid activist due to the proximity of a sit-in that had just finished regarding the University’s investments with Chase Manhattan Bank, a bank targeted by Anti-Apartheid activists due to large loans they were providing to the South African government.¹

The events of May 18, 1968 were not affiliated with any of the major figures of Madison’s Anti-Apartheid Movement, however, following the event an increase in activism occurred within Madison. This paper will provide a history of Madison’s contributions to the Anti-Apartheid Movement, beginning with the 1969 formation and early days of the Madison Area Committee on Southern Africa (MACSA), continuing by describing the political victories the movement achieved within Madison following the Soweto Uprising of 1976, and finishing describing Madison’s role once the movement began to achieve national success. Overall, the paper will describe the Anti-Apartheid Movement as a time in history where ordinary people successfully found their voice in global politics.

REVIEW OF SECONDARY LITERATURE

The historiography of the American Anti-Apartheid Movement began before the Movement was finished. It was in 1985 Janice Love released *The U.S. Anti-Apartheid Movement: Local Activism in Global Politics*. Love provided an overview of the Movement up to 1985, specifically focusing on efforts within Michigan and Connecticut as case studies.\(^2\) Upon its release, Love offered the most complete history regarding the American Anti-Apartheid Movement, however, lacked a substantial explanation regarding the Movement’s origin.\(^3\) Love’s work is especially significant for this paper as within the overview of the Movement there are numerous references to Madison’s significance, including statistics regarding the University of Wisconsin’s divestment.

In 1997 Robert Kinloch Massie published an expansive work regarding the relationship between the United States and Apartheid titled, *Loosing the Bonds: The United States and South Africa in the Apartheid Years*. In just under 700 pages, Massie provided a detailed analysis of the United States’ involvement with South Africa during the Apartheid-era, first describing their initial alliance and then the United States’ path toward eliminating political and economic relations with the Apartheid government. Massie’s work is filled with numerous specific examples as well as biographical segments to prove American involvement. For example, Massie described how South


African Prime Minister Vorster heavily relied on foreign intelligence agencies, most significantly the United States and Great Britain.⁴

Most significant toward understanding the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Madison, Massie includes a chapter titled, “Students and Strategists.” Specific references to Madison or the University of Wisconsin are limited, merely mentioning on May 18, 1968 hundreds of protesters rallied against the University’s investments with Chase Manhattan Bank. The value Massie does offer towards this paper, however, is his substantial overview of both the motives and actions of the movement across American campuses and the foreign policies of Presidents and prominent politicians.⁵ Where Massie leaves room for future historians, however, is he paints a picture of the movement where it is centralized on the campuses of the Ivy League schools of the East Coast, rather than describing the Movement as decentralized, loosely linked together through networks, and featuring numerous centers of influence, including Madison. As Hostetter states in a review,

Perhaps Massie’s personal identification with Episcopalian anti-apartheid activism, a significant but not singular cross-cultural connection, explains his omission of the many small but savvy grass-roots American organizations that also served the movement. His concentration on Ivy League activism, undoubtedly important for contacting and confronting the alumni at the helm of corporate America, diminishes the diverse actions that helped spread the anti-apartheid message.⁶

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⁵ Ibid. 212-259.

Hostetter’s call for an analysis of the Anti-Apartheid Movement that reflected its diversity came slightly more than a decade later.

Recently there has been an attempt to link the American Anti-Apartheid Movement with other movements taking place in the second half of the twentieth century, specifically those related to the Vietnam War, the American Civil Rights Movement, and other movements to rid Africa of imperialism (ex: Mozambique, Rhodesia, etc). As a result, several scholars collaborated together to publish in 2008 *No Easy Victories: African Liberation and American Activists Over a Half Century, 1950-2000*. Especially significant regarding the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Madison, the primary editor is William Minter, a former prominent member of MACSA. One goal the editors had in mind was to record the largely undocumented depth of the Movement. More importantly, however, the editors sought to provide readers with an example of when international solidarity regarding Africa resulted in the fall of Apartheid, one of the greatest victories for activists in the twentieth century, hoping to inspire a renewed solidarity toward Africa’s issues in the twenty-first century, including genocide, xenophobia, the AIDS epidemic, neo-colonialism, etc.\(^7\)

Solidarity is a term frequently used by the contributing authors to express African activism of the half-century. Reflecting the often forgotten relationship of mutual influence between the struggle for Civil Rights in the United States and Africa, William Minter included a segment from an interview of Nelson Mandela,

> These reciprocal connections – and in particular the influence of Africa on America – hardly appear in conventional historical accounts. When a journalist

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from *Ebony* magazine asked Mandela about how the American civil rights movement had influenced South Africans, Mandela replied, “You are correct, there are many similarities between us. We have learned a great deal from each other” (May 1990). While the reporter’s question implied one-way influence, Mandela’s tactful correction stressed that the learning process was two-way, and that the struggles on both continents shared much in common.

Minter claims this rapid expansion of international solidarity came as a result of the development of the New Left within the United States in the 1960s following growing disillusionment regarding the Vietnam War, and was further strengthened as large numbers of Southern African students and political exiles arrived in the United States while Americans ventured to Africa with organizations such as the Peace Corps, often changing their perspective on the existing imperialism. As a result, in the 1970s tens of thousands of people within the United States now identified with liberation movements in Southern Africa, thus hundreds of activist organizations within the United States formed. These organizations included Africans, African Americans, and other Americans and, as stated by Minter, “Densely interconnected but not centrally coordinated, these groups spread the message of African liberation around the United States.” These groups were short-lived, however, according to the contributing authors they would lay the foundation for the approaching push for sanctions against South Africa.8

The editors of *No Easy Victories* make no attempt to consider their work conclusive, rather they consider the book to merely begin to record the countless stories of African activism stating, “Given the limitations of time and resources, we knew that the project would have to be a modest one, a mere beginning point, to whet the appetite of reader to know more. We hope it will spur others who were involved to revisit their

8 Ibid., 11-13.
own files and memories, confirming or challenging what is presented here.” The editors’ challenge is then followed with a link to their website, claiming as scholars conduct further related research it will be added online. Regardless of the editors’ modesty, No Easy Victories easily offers the most complete history of the American activists in African movements, most significantly the Anti-Apartheid Movement. In addition, their desire to encourage others to fill in the gaps of the history the contributing authors leave out gives it the opportunity to improve. The editors state, “[W]e hope to demonstrate the richness and diversity of the history and to encourage future researchers to dig more deeply, both within the networks we cite and beyond them.” That challenge is precisely what this paper seeks to accomplish, to provide a detailed account to record the events of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Madison.⁹

⁹ Ibid., xi.
PART 1
THE EARLY YEARS (1968 – 1976)

In Need of Inspiration:

Prior to the establishment of the Madison Area Committee on Southern Africa (MACSA) in 1969, the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Madison reflected the American movement as a whole: it was largely insignificant. Since the Afrikaner Nationalist Party’s 1948 implementation of Apartheid, a system of legal segregation based on race, American activists had continually failed to gain influence over the United States government to have sanctions placed on South Africa. Even the good intentions by Presidents Kennedy and Johnson had failed due to conflicting interests within nearly every department of the United States government, causing further disappointment to the American Anti-Apartheid Movement. Unfortunately, the existing alliance between South Africa and the United States was considered too important by the US government to risk damaging as a result of listening to a small and un-influential group of activists. As Robert Massie stated of the Anti-Apartheid activists of the time, “Though a growing number of Americans had begun to ask questions about Southern Africa, the opinions of the great majority fluctuated between ignorance and apathy.”

Massie’s statement of the American Anti-Apartheid Movement was reflected in Madison during the 1960s. For example, on April 5, 1966 Robert Resha, a representative of the African National Congress (ANC) who had been exiled by the South African government, stated to the Capital Times before giving a speech in the Tripp Commons at the University of Wisconsin Memorial Union, “The American people

seem concerned, but they have very little knowledge about conditions in South Africa.”

Resha’s statement showed even a historically progressive city like Madison needed to be informed and inspired if they were to contribute to a successful Anti-Apartheid Movement.

The inspirational spark Madison needed was provided from two students from New York’s Union Theological Seminary named Charles W. Powers and David Hornbeck. The students were seeking to determine a pressure point in corporate America to force their disinvestment from South Africa, deciding to focus on American banks providing loans to South Africa. A common fear emerged among Anti-Apartheid activists of the 1960s that the South African government mistook American corporate involvement as the approval of the Apartheid system by the United States government, and unfortunately their fear was justified. A letter written from Johannesburg by Henry P. Van Dusen, Dean of Union Theological Seminary, stated,

Let there be no underestimate of the importance which the ruling minority… attaches to American financial support. I know from firsthand testimony that it is their strongest single encouragement to pursuit of their present policies… One of the foremost statesmen of South Africa remarked to me in personal conversation: “So long as United States banks and business back us, we can go ahead.”

Thus, in the 1960s American activists began to focus on pressuring American businesses to disinvest from South Africa, a shift from solely trying to influence the uninterested United States government. Among these activists included Powers and Hornbeck who dedicated months of research in order to uncover the banks that

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provided the most extensive financial assistance to the South African government were Chase Manhattan Bank and First National City Bank.\textsuperscript{12}

Following the discovery by Powers and Hornbeck, support for protest against the banks was soon found in numerous religious institutions and schools around New York City, including Columbia, and organized protest began on April 20, 1966.\textsuperscript{13} By May 17, 1968 the protest reached Madison as students organized a sit-in to demand the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents to sell $230,000 worth of stock in Chase Manhattan.\textsuperscript{14} Thus, by spring of 1968 the University of Wisconsin joined the East Coast schools in protesting Chase Manhattan’s loans to the Apartheid government.\textsuperscript{15}

\begin{figure}[h]
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\caption{Demonstration at Chase Manhattan Bank, New York City, 1966.\textsuperscript{16}}
\end{figure}

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{12} Robert K. Massie, \textit{Loosing the Bonds}, 214.
\item\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{15} Robert K. Massie, \textit{Loosing the Bonds}, 214.
\end{itemize}
The Formation of MACSA:

The previously mentioned firebombing of South Hall was the beginning to what would become a successful Anti-Apartheid Movement in Madison, however, the event proved ironic for two reasons. First, although news of the firebombing shared the front pages of Madison’s two primary newspapers, the *Wisconsin State Journal* and the *Capital Times*, with an article on the seven hour sit-in conducted by hundreds of students protesting the University’s investments in Chase Manhattan and their substantial loans to South Africa, the headlines that Sunday were careful not to link the two events. Without a clear connection to the emerging Anti-Apartheid Movement, this led to the event to be categorized by the Madison public merely as another radical student protest they assumed was related to any of the numerous issues of the decade. Even in the contemporary *Madison Magazine* in 2008 incorrectly stated of the firebombing, “1968: Amid Vietnam protests, UW's South Hall is firebombed.”17 The confusion makes sense considering since the infamous Dow Chemical Protest in October 1967 where Science Hall was bombed leaving one dead, University buildings fell victim to 10 acts of arson alone.18 In 2008 The *Isthmus*, Madison’s weekly alternative newspaper, reflected on 1968 in Madison and the greater United States by stating,

In 1968, Madison was in fiscal and political disarray. There was chaos and destruction on campus. A large segment of the industrial east side was on strike, and city workers waged sick-leave job actions. The bus system teetered on the


edge of failure. Crime spiked. Some Madison men died in Vietnam, while others — along with some Madison women — waged their war at home. Even without the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy — or the My Lai massacre and the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, and Russian repression in Prague — 1968 would be a year painful to remember... and impossible to forget.19

Indeed, the University of Wisconsin came to be the setting of so much protest that Wisconsin Governor Warren P. Knowles assured UW alumni the night of the Anti-Apartheid sit-in that the recent surge of activism would not damage the university’s reputation.20

![Wisconsin State Journal headline related to Anti-Apartheid protest, 1968.](image)

Figure 2. Wisconsin State Journal headline related to Anti-Apartheid protest, 1968.21

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In addition, the firebombing was ironic when compared to the following movement led by MACSA because it was violent, impulsive, and conducted without the use of careful research and reason. Despite a violent beginning to the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Madison, the primary methods of activism used in the city were non-violent, planned, and based on the use of careful research and reason. Believing the later traits were key to a successful Anti-Apartheid Movement, Madison’s primary University-based Anti-Apartheid organization, MACSA, was formed in 1969. In their formation, the founders of the MACSA reflected on the original Anti-Apartheid protests in Madison (and throughout the United States) by stating of the necessity to establish their organization,

Efforts to seek change in the U.S. context have been sporadic, symbolic, unsupported by careful research, and uninstitutionalized. They are therefore regarded as only a starburst of enthusiasm which will go away if left alone. Only four organizations (two in New York, St. Louis, and New Jersey) have sustained efforts for more than two years.22

As a result of the group’s formation, the City of Madison experienced a powerful Anti-Apartheid Movement throughout the 1970s, a movement the Isthmus later stated was, “A generation before the successful anti-apartheid divestiture movement of the 1980s.”23

Firm goals for MACSA would be established before it hosted its first meeting on Saturday March 21, 1969, symbolically one day after the ninth anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre, an event where White South African police shot and killed 69

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23 Stuart Levitan, (accessed May 11, 2010).
unarmed Blacks and seriously wounded 186 more.24 MACSA chose the anniversary of Sharpeville due to its international recognition as a day dedicated to the cause of eliminating racial discrimination. As the coalition stated in a March 14, 1969 recruitment letter,

There is much a Madison-based organization, similar to groups in other parts of the country, can do to organize concern for Southern Africa. Many Wisconsin-based firms, as well as the University of Wisconsin, have growing involvements in Southern Africa. There is a great need for information on events in Southern Africa which have no outlet here. There are a number of Congressmen and Senators from Wisconsin whose opinions are important in Washington who may be open to new interpretations of events in Africa. There is a growing body of “awakened” students, of Africanists, African students, American blacks and whites, who are seeking outlets and channels for their concerns.25

The meeting was held at the Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center on Madison’s Near-East Side and established the following topics of focus:

a. Information  
b. Political pressure  
c. Research  
d. Seeking disengagement  
e. Sanctioning  
f. Fund collection

These areas of focus were carefully designed to create awareness among the American public, pressure American businesses and politicians to halt relations with Southern Africa.


Africa, and to help fund all aspects of the movement, including legal dues and revolutionary organizations within Africa (ex: the ANC).²⁶

In MACSA’s early years, the organization was most significant in researching information and educating the general public along with fellow activists nationwide. Most significantly was MACSA News, a subscription newsletter that by 1975 was being distributed to over 400 addresses across the United States, often to other Anti-Apartheid organizations. MACSA News primarily focused on liberation movements in South Africa, Mozambique, Rhodesia (modern Zimbabwe), Angola, and Namibia. In addition, three research publications were written and published by MACSA members: Wisconsin Corporate Involvement in Southern Africa, Is Southern Africa Wisconsin’s Business, and Israel and Southern Africa. The first two were especially significant as they were designed to educate the people of Wisconsin on how close to home the issue of Apartheid was.²⁷


In the 1960s the United States saw many progressive leaders, however, none of them succeeded in bringing any changes to U.S. foreign policy. American Anti-Apartheid activists did have hopes of convincing the Federal Government to condemn Apartheid, unfortunately these hopes always ended in failure or disappointment. Even the sympathetic President John F. Kennedy failed to meet the movement’s hopes of taking a stand against Apartheid as his administration was far too motivated by Cold War politics, including the importance of South African minerals (ex: Uranium). Kennedy’s brother, Senator Robert F. Kennedy would deliver one of his most famous speeches of his career in June 1966 when he condemned Apartheid at the University of Cape Town, however, this was merely a symbolic speech and was not followed with any actions by Senator Kennedy. As reflected by William Minter, “Robert Kennedy’s June 1966 visit to South Africa – one of the few signs of awakening concern – failed to lead to any ongoing engagement.” As a result of their failure to influence the Federal Government, American Anti-Apartheid activists began to primarily focus on influencing American corporations with business in South Africa, but also attempted to influence local governments.\footnote{Minter, Hovey, and Cobb, eds., \textit{No Easy Victories}, 24.} As Henry Bucher Jr., Convener of MACSA, stated of MACSA’s strategy regarding local governments in a 1977 letter to Dane County Assemblyperson
David E. Clarenbach, “[W]e have been organizing on the principle that good foreign policy may have to begin in our local political institutions…” 29

MACSA would succeed in gaining political influence in Madison, but first they needed a spark in political and public interest in South Africa that was still absent in the mid-1970s. That spark came on June 16, 1976 with the infamous Soweto Uprising that took place in the Soweto Township, just outside of Johannesburg. By the time of the uprising, Soweto featured a prominent youth culture in which over half of its one million residents were under the age of 25. Soweto’s youth culture was dominated by angst toward their government, especially regarding education. As Robert Massie stated of the condition of Soweto’s schools,

One newspaper estimated in 1975 that more than thirty-five thousand Soweto children were receiving no schooling at all and that to accommodate them forty new schools with seven hundred new classrooms would have to be built immediately… Only twelve percent of the teachers had successfully completed high school… In 1976 each teacher had an average of forty-eight students…

The last straw for the youth of Soweto came in 1976 when Prime Minister B.J. Vorster and nationalist government began to enforce the “fifty-fifty” rule, which required all courses taught in a non-indigenous African language to be split equally between English and Afrikaans. This outraged the students of Soweto who now were required to be taught in three languages, including the despised Afrikaans, a language they associated with violence and oppression. 30


30 Robert K. Massie, No Easy Victories, 394–396.
Despite objection from their parents and elders, on Wednesday June 16, 1976 thousands of Soweto’s youth gathered for a massive rally at a stadium in Orlando West. When it became known that the police would soon be arriving, the students were reminded to remain calm and avoid violence. The students remained quiet and calm with the arrival of the police, in sharp contrast to the police who immediately felt the need to throw canisters of tear gas into the crowd. Despite the tear gas, the students did not flinch until a white officer aimed a revolver at a group of children, thus causing them to flee. It was then that the officer shot Hector Peterson in the back of his head, killing the boy at age thirteen. The Soweto Uprising had begun. As reporter Alf Kumalo of Johannesburg’s Sunday Times reported,

[T]he children began stoning the police… and shots were fired. I remember looking at the children in their school uniforms and wondering how long they would stand up to the police. What frightened me more than anything was the attitude of the children. Many seemed oblivious to the danger. They continued running towards the police, dodging and ducking. Suddenly a small boy dropped to the ground next to me. Blood poured from his mouth and some children knelt next to him and tried to stop the flow of blood.

For the next few days, riots filled Soweto as schools, government buildings, homes of black police officers, etc. were attacked and set on fire. Jimmy Kruger, South African Minister of Police, announced on June 26 the official death toll to be 176, however, most residents and reporters estimated the actual death toll to be much higher.31

News of the Soweto Uprising soon circulated in newspapers internationally. Including the Capital Times in Madison which received the news from Soweto in time for it to make the front page story proclaiming, “Thousands Riot in South Africa,” and featuring the horrific quote of a senior police officer stating, “We fired into them, it’s no

The first decisive stage of that expansion began with students, who responded to the Soweto student uprisings in South Africa in 1976. For many Americans, television coverage of police shooting down students evoked the classic images of violence against civil rights marchers from the 1960s. Like other Anti-Apartheid organizations throughout the United States, MACSA capitalized on the public’s attention toward South Africa following Soweto, however, what made MACSA especially significant was their urgency and significance in influencing local government.

Madison Common Council:

MACSA's first political victories involved their gaining of influence over the Madison Common Council. On June 19, 1976, in the wake of the Soweto Uprising, the Madison Common Council passed a symbolic resolution, drafted by MACSA, to extend sympathy toward the Africans of South Africa. First addressing the wrongs of Apartheid, the resolution concluded with the statement,

Be it therefore resolved, that the City of Madison expresses deep shock over the large-scale killing and woundings of Africans in recent weeks by white South African authorities... And be it also resolved, that the Madison community extends its sincere sympathy to the African majority of South Africa and to their efforts toward the attainment of equal rights in their country.


33 Minter, Hovey, and Cobb, eds., No Easy Victories, 36.

Besides condemning the violence, the Apartheid system, and urging Secretary of State Henry Kissinger against following through with his plans to meet with Prime Minister Vorster, the resolution was merely a symbolic gesture.

The June resolution may have been purely symbolic, however, the Common Council resolution that followed created a city ordinance, also drafted by MACSA, designed to require the City of Madison to seek companies without economic ties to South Africa to award City contracts to.\footnote{African Activist Archive, “A Bill to Implement Madison Common Council Resolution 29,355 of June 29, 1976,” http://africanactivist.msu.edu/document_metadata.php?objectid=944 (accessed May 11, 2010).} The resolution would pass on December 7th following a statement made before the Council by Dave Wiley, a prominent member of MACSA. According to Meg Skinner, another prominent MACSA member, the ordinance had been heavily lobbied by MACSA as she stated,

This bill, an ordinance, was finally passed by a voice vote of the Council Tuesday, Dec. 7, after Dave Wiley spoke eloquently in its behalf, and MACSA members had done a great deal of lobbying for several weeks. When it was still in committee, one council member said ‘I'll vote for it if they just stop calling me about it!’ We sent out a mailing to 240 local clergy, asking them to circulate petitions supporting the bill, and those petitions, along with one from University Africanists, were presented to the Council members.

The ordinance was the first bill of its kind to be passed within the United States, though one similar had been previously defeated in Gary, Indiana.\footnote{African Activist Archive, “Madison City Council Action,” http://africanactivist.msu.edu/document_metadata.php?objectid=949 (accessed May 11, 2010).} Madison’s ordinance is truly significant as it was years ahead of the 92 other American cities that adopted similar resolutions limiting their involvement with South Africa. East Lansing, Michigan
would adopt a similar ordinance in 1977 and Berkeley, California in 1979, however, most American cities made no action until the mid-1980s.37

Dane County Board of Supervisors:

In March 1977 Resolution 344 was introduced to the Dane County Board of Supervisors by Board Supervisors Neil Kaufler and William Bird. Advertised in the March issue of MACSA News, it was stated to be essentially the same bill that was created by MACSA and passed by the Madison Common Council in 1976. The resolution stated,

The County of Dane and public corporations under the jurisdiction of the County seek to award contracts and purchase agreements to companies which have chosen not to develop economic interests in the Republic of South Africa and are not sales agents for goods and services from South Africa, except in such instances where such practices violate competitive bidding statutes of laws… 38

Following the same amount of petitioning and lobbying from MACSA which led to the Madison Common Council’s 1976 resolution, the Board of Supervisors passed Resolution 344 on June 2, 1977, thus allowing Dane County to take the same stand against South Africa as its principal city, Madison, still years ahead of the national movement. Merely eight days following the County’s decision, Dr. Henry Bucher Jr., Convener of MACSA, proclaimed in MACSA News their next target to be the State of Wisconsin, focusing on the University of Wisconsin System.39

37 Janice Love, The U.S. Anti-Apartheid Movement, 43-44.
The University of Wisconsin Board of Regents:

The final major political victory for the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Madison is ironic because rather than a protest targeted toward the government by students and professors, it was targeted toward the University of Wisconsin by a politician. The politician was Wisconsin’s Attorney General Bronson LaFollette, grandson of the former Wisconsin Governor, U.S. Senator, and legendary progressive Robert M. LaFollette. The University of Wisconsin Board of Regents made the decision to sell its $8.9 million worth of stocks in corporations with holdings in South Africa following a statement by LaFollette proclaiming Wisconsin Stature 39.29(1) prohibits the purchase of stocks in firms practicing racial discrimination. As a result, on February 10, 1978 the Board of Regents adopted Resolution 78-1 stating,

In accordance with Wis. Stats. § 36.29(1), all investments “made in any company, corporation, subsidiary, or affiliate that practices or condones through its actions discrimination on the basis of race religion, color, creed or sex. . . .” shall be divested in as prudent but rapid a manner as possible.

The resolution resulted in the University selling stocks in 19 corporations, consisting of nearly half of its total holdings, in corporations including Exxon, Ford, Xerox, General Motors, IMB, General Electric, Mobil, Goodyear, etc.

There is very little evidence to link this victory purely to MACSA. Even Convenor Ron Lord stated of the divestment in a letter to the American Friends Service

40 Ibid.


Committee (AFSC) in Philadelphia, “We hope that success here will encourage other University groups to start pressuring their Regents to divest. MACSA has been working on this issue for 7 years, and although we don’t claim credit. We are sure that every little bit helps!”\(^{43}\) Indeed, MACSA had been working on the issue for years, however, LaFollette claims he was influenced by a claim made in the *Daily Cardinal*, a UW newspaper, that the University held $14 million worth of stocks in corporations with ties to Apartheid. It would be reasonable to state, however, that MACSA was responsible in spreading awareness around campus considering their extensive use of flyers, protests, and sharing of research. Student awareness even grew to the point that in May 1977 a dozen students occupied Chancellor Edwin Young’s office to urge divestment before being ejected by University Police.\(^{44}\)

Regardless, the University of Wisconsin’s divestment in corporations with ties to South Africa was significant to the American Anti-Apartheid Movement because it was one of the first and by far the largest school to divest. The University of Wisconsin divested its funds in 1978. Of the other schools that divested before 1978, Hampshire (’76), Massachusetts (’77), and Smith (’77), the UW was the most significant due to its substantially larger size and decision to incorporate a total divestment (only Massachusetts did the same). As a result, neither of the other schools were able to divest more than .7 million dollars in shares connected to South Africa. Meanwhile, the University of Wisconsin was one of eight schools who divested in 1978 (one of three who divested totally), and only Vassar College divested even a fraction ($6.5m) of the

\(^{43}\) Ibid.

amount divested by the University of Wisconsin. Following the divestment by the University an evaluation of the process was conducted concluding over $11 million worth of shares had been sold and the process was successfully conducted to leave no negative consequences towards the University. Janice Love reflects on the University’s divestment, “A total evaluation of investment polices resulted from this (LaFollette’s) ruling, and even though over $11 million was involved, the investment advisors concluded that the portfolio had been reconstructed with no ill effects.” Therefore, the divestment taken by the University of Wisconsin stood as an example to all schools seeking divestment.  

![Graph: Divestment of Universities and Colleges, 1976-78 ($ millions)]

Table 1. Divestment of Universities and Colleges, 1976-78 ($ millions).  

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46 Ibid.
PART 3
BEYOND MADISON (1978 – 1994)

Following the University of Wisconsin’s divestment in 1978, few major battles existed within Madison. As a result, Madison’s Anti-Apartheid activists were left to focus on the still stubborn Federal Government and the State of Wisconsin, a state much less progressive than its capital city. Without obtainable goals for Madison’s activists, by the beginning of 1979 MACSA ceased to function regularly until 1985 when it reorganized as the Madison Anti-Apartheid Coalition (MAAC). Thus, the City of Madison no longer was one of the focal points of the national movement, however, Madison was able to maintain its influence through segmentation, maintaining pressure on the State government, and joining activists nationwide as increased pressure was placed on the Federal government.

Segmentation:

Despite a decline in Anti-Apartheid activities in Madison during the late 1970’s and early 80’s, the national movement was actually expanding. Especially fascinating, though the absence of objectives within Madison damaged MACSA’s momentum, perhaps more damaging was the segmentation of many of MACSA’s most talented leaders, specifically the Minters and the Wileys. Segmentation occurred across the United States when prominent leaders of Anti-Apartheid organizations relocated, thus expanded their influence to a new city or audience and maintained their significance within the nationwide movement.

William (Bill) and Ruth Minter were both active members of MACSA from 1969 – 1973. Once Bill graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a doctorate in sociology, the couple relocated to Durham, North Carolina where Bill Minter co-founded and edited a prominent weekly news bulletin on Africa, *Africa News*. As Janice Love stated of *Africa News*,

[The Minters] moved to North Carolina (after spending some time in Africa) where they began working on the weekly news bulletin about Africa, *Africa News*. This bulletin carries stories about anti-apartheid activities across the nation and has highlighted news on state and city campaigns. In this way the couple made an important contribution to the divestment and communications network.48

*Africa News* became one of the United States' premier sources for news regarding Africa and South Africa, frequently contributing print and broadcast news for the *British Broadcasting Corporation* (BBC), *National Public Radio* (NPR), *the Washington Post*, etc.49 More importantly, it allowed Minter to deliver news of individual activists' victories and strategies to a loosely networked movement throughout the United States while further educating the public regarding the horrors of Apartheid. This is evidenced by endorsements ranging from African-American news sources including the *Atlanta Voice* and Oakland’s KDIA, to Southern African diplomats including Zambian Foreign Minister Siteke Mwale, and prominent American activists such as Prexy Nesbitt and David Wiley.50 With the newsletter and its contributions to mass-media, Bill Minter was able to

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reach an expansive audience he never would have been able to reach with MACSA or its newsletter and research publications.

Figure 3. Logo for *Africa News Digest*, 1978.51

David and Marylee Crofts Wiley left Madison in 1977 when David took a job in East Lansing, Michigan as the Associate Director of Michigan State University’s African Studies Center. Once in East Lansing, the Wileys became prominent members of the campus-based Southern Africa Liberation Committee (SALC), Marylee as its outreach coordinator and David using his position as director of the African Studies Center. The activism of SALC achieved similar victories to those MACSA had already accomplished including the East Lansing Selective Purchasing Resolution in 1977 and MSU’s divestment of $8.3 million in 1978.52 In addition, David Wiley became involved with Michigan legislators and developed a decade-long plan to successfully promote sanctions toward South Africa on the state level. As Minter stated,

51 Ibid.

SALC member David Wiley met with Representatives Lynn Jondahl of East Lansing, Virgil Smith of Detroit, and Perry Bullard of Ann Arbor and developed a decade-long plan to seek state of Michigan sanctions on South Africa... These acts prohibited the state from depositing its funds in banks making loans in South African (1979); prohibited state university and college investments in firms operating in South Africa (1982); and divested the $4 billion state employees’ pension fund of any companies operating in South Africa (1988).  

The Formation of MAAC and Assembly Bill 54:

In 1985 MACSA reformed as the Madison Anti-Apartheid Coalition (MAAC) amongst growing national interest in South Africa. Unlike the spark in activism that Soweto caused in 1976, this increased national interest in the Anti-Apartheid Movement was not caused by a single event, rather is credited to decades of activism that transformed the movement into a focus of American politics. As David Goodman stated of the 1980s in No Easy Victories,

The explosion of activism in the 1980s in support of Southern African liberation was the culmination of decades of efforts, reflecting lessons learned from countless past successes and failures. The singular achievement of U.S. activism in the 1980s was the transformation of disparate African solidarity movements into a focused, multiheaded, and surprisingly successful anti-apartheid movement.

An excellent example of the growing awareness of Apartheid within the United States comes from a group of American recording artists known as the United Artists Against Apartheid and their hit single, “Sun City,” named after the popular South African resort the artists were urging fellow artists to boycott. The group was formed by Steven “Little Steven” Van Zandt and featured prominent artists including Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Run DMC, George Clinton, Ringo Starr, Pat Benatar, etc. As Leo  

53 Minter, Hovey, and Cobb, eds., No Easy Victories, 148.  
55 Minter, Hovey, and Cobb, eds., No Easy Victories, 151.
Robinson stated of the group, “They were calling for entertainers, black entertainers, to boycott South Africa. Because by then Sun City was up and running in South Africa and they were inviting black entertainers from the U.S., offering them huge sums of money to come to Sun City to entertain.”

Figure 4. Little Steven presents the group’s first $50,000 royalty check to Coretta Scott King and Julian Bond of The Africa Fund.

With increased public awareness regarding Apartheid, MAAC’s primary focus became to pressure the State of Wisconsin into divestment from South Africa, a task the group had never been able to accomplish during the era of MACSA. It was a task MAAC was also not able to accomplish, however, its efforts did keep Wisconsin’s attention on South Africa as the Anti-Apartheid Movement started to obtain its first

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56 Minter, Hovey, and Cobb, eds., No Easy Victories, 183.

Federal victories and the UW Board of Regents unsuccessfully attempted to reinvest in corporations it had divested from in 1978.\textsuperscript{58}

The State of Wisconsin’s attempt to divest from South Africa came in the form of Assembly Bill 54. Unlike the resolutions passed by the City of Madison and Dane County that were heavily influenced by MACSA, MAAC was not involved in the drafting of Assembly Bill 54, however, did extensively advocate and lobby for it. The bill was introduced to the State Assembly on March 19, 1985 in an attempt to require the State of Wisconsin to sell over $1.5 billion worth of assets with ties to South Africa. Originally the bill sought to require the State to sell over $2 worth of stocks, bonds, and any other forms of investments in companies with involvements in South Africa. Under intense criticism regarding the effects it would have had on the State’s pension system for retired government employees, however, the bill’s supporters introduced a series of three compromises within a week before its vote. First, the bill was altered to allow investments with companies who abided by the Sullivan Principles, a set of guidelines introduced by Reverend Leon Sullivan in 1977 designed to use the size and influence of corporations to influence an end to Apartheid. It was next decided the Bill should only place restrictions on companies selling “strategic” goods to South Africa, and finally pension assets were decided to be left alone. As the bill continued to be defeated in the State Assembly, more and more compromises came into existence, leaving the bill to be further discredited.\textsuperscript{59}


\textsuperscript{59} Paul Fanlund, 1985, “Assembly Unanimously Refuses to Make Decision on Divestiture,” \textit{Wisconsin State Journal}, March 20; Minter, Hovey, and Cobb, eds., \textit{No Easy Victories}, 122.
One of the most fascinating methods of protest the people of Madison incorporated in support of Assembly Bill 54 was a method that had been gaining popularity nationally known as “the shantytown.” The shantytown protest involved large groups of activists constructing mock-shantytowns in public spaces to represent the harsh living conditions for South Africa’s Blacks the targeted local government or school was supporting through their investments. The shantytown tactic was first introduced at Cornell University in the Spring of 1985 and quickly gained popularity nationwide due to its effectiveness in gathering media attention and its appeal to student activists as it accurately represented their perception of South Africa. Due to the media attention, the shantytown protest was perceived to be a success, unfortunately as Sarah Soule pointed out, “[T]he tactic was not successful. Colleges and universities that had shantytowns actually had slower rates of divestment than those that did not have them.”

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60 Madison Anti-Apartheid Coalition, 1985, Box 3 Folder 15a, Madison Anti-Apartheid Coalition Archive, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.
Regardless, thousands of activists took part in the shantytown protest across the United States.⁶¹

In the case of Madison, hundreds of Anti-Apartheid activists, from both MAAC and the community, came together on the State Capitol lawn on Friday April 4, 1986 to camp for nearly a week before police were finally able to dismantle the shantytown. The Madison Police Department was nearly successful in dismantling the shanties on the following Thursday, however, were overwhelmed when over 100 activists locked arms to protect the remaining shanties. As the Associated Press described the event,

In Madison, Wis., where demonstrators have been building shacks on the state Capitol lawn for a week only to have police tear them down, more than 100 protesters locked arms Thursday in a circle to prevent police from dismantling the shacks… After state officials denied demonstrators a permit to erect shacks Thursday, police attempted to tear down the renewed construction. They had limited success, then withdrew to the sidewalks Thursday night as shacks continued to grow side by side until they spread across the lawn, some atop the others.

The protest ended by Friday morning without any arrests, injuries, or more importantly, results.⁶²

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Victory:

Due to the efforts of activists across the United States, by the late 1980s numerous state and local governments, colleges and universities, and corporations had withdrawn from their involvement in South Africa. As reported by Richard Night of the American Committee on Africa (ACOA), “By the end of 1987 more than 200 U.S. companies had withdrawn from South Africa. New capital movement out of South Africa was R9.2 billion in 1985, R6.1 billion in 1986, R3.1 billion in 1987 and R5.5 billion in 1988.” Indeed, in 1986 the Movement enjoyed its finest victory as the United States Congress overrode a veto by President Reagan to pass the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986. The act finally placed sanctions on South Africa and place the following requirements on South Africa to end the sanctions,

Terminates the sanctions contained in title III of this Act and certain sanctions contained in title V of this Act if South Africa: (1) releases political prisoners and Nelson Mandela from prison; (2) repeals the state of emergency and releases all

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detainees held under such state of emergency; (3) urbans political parties and permits political freedom for all races; (4) repeals the Group Areas Act and the Population Registration Act and institutes no other measures with the same purposes; and (5) agrees to enter into good faith negotiations with truly representative members of the black majority without preconditions.64

Apartheid did not end until eight years later in 1994, thus American activists maintained their pressure on the United States to place harder restrictions on South Africa. Regardless, with the passage of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, American activists achieved one of their most significant victories of all time. It had taken nearly 26 years since activists first called for sanctions following the Sharpeville Massacre, however, a Federal-level victory was finally won.65 As Nelson Mandela stated of the American Anti-Apartheid Movement,

On occasion the work of our American colleagues was indispensable. The economic sanctions bill passed by the U.S. Congress in 1986 is a case in point. Without the decades-long divestment campaign undertaken by university students, churches, civil rights organizations, trade unions, and state and local governments to cut economic ties to South Africa, the U.S. Congress would not have acted, even to the extent of overriding a presidential veto. International sanctions were a key factor in the eventual victory of the African National Congress over South Africa’s white minority regime.66


66 Minter, Hovey, and Cobb, eds., *No Easy Victories*, vii.
CONCLUSION

The American Anti-Apartheid Movement remains today an example of when ordinary people were able to make a difference in global politics. This paper went a step closer as it examined the activism within the City of Madison, displaying how ordinary people within one city can make a difference within the wider movement. Though by no means was Madison the sole focal point of the American Anti-Apartheid Movement, its early involvement, victories, and influence were significant as the Movement established itself as a prominent focus of American politics. Specifically regarding the early political victories driven by MACSA from 1976-78, from Madison doing its part to end Apartheid it served as an inspiration for the greater Movement.
FUTURE WORK

As a former high school English teacher of mine used to say, “Writing is never finished, only abandoned.” I now truly understand what he meant as there will always be something I can add to this work. Should I have the opportunity to continue my research on the Anti-Apartheid Movement within Madison there are three areas I would most like to elaborate on. First, I would like to expand my focus beyond Apartheid to include the various other African liberation movements MACSA was involved with (ex: Rhodesia, Mozambique, Namibia, etc.). Next, the Wisconsin Historical Society holds numerous letters of correspondence between MACSA and MAAC with other Anti-Apartheid organizations, thus I believe researching some of those organizations would be beneficial towards understanding the extent of Madison’s influence. Finally, limitations did exist within this paper regarding my ability to contact individuals involved. Should this research be continued, I would be honored to share their experiences.
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