

**THE POLITICS OF THE ANTI-APARTHEID
MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES,
1969-1986**

by
Donald R. Culverston

Political Science Quarterly; New York; Spring 1996

Abstract:

Culverston examines the rise of American anti-apartheid activism as a result both of opportunities created by shifting power configurations in southern Africa and of declining public confidence in US government and corporate responses to political crises in South Africa. He explores how activists capitalized on structural changes in US society to develop new resources for challenging US connections to the apartheid system.

Full Text

Copyright Academy of Political Science Spring 1996

In October 1984 the United States abstained from voting on a UN Security Council resolution condemning South Africa's apartheid policies. Later that month, Democratic presidential candidate Walter Mondale charged the Reagan administration with disregarding human rights and allying itself to reactionary rather than reformist forces. The U.S. electorate, apparently insufficiently persuaded to question Reagan's policy toward South Africa or any other country, reelected him in a landslide. Yet less than two years later the anti-apartheid movement emerged as a leading force for mobilizing domestic opposition to U.S. policy toward South Africa. Growing grassroots activism convinced state and local governments, colleges and universities, and corporations to reassess their ties to the apartheid state. Congress, spurred by these actions and by renewed unrest in black townships, approved limited sanctions against South Africa in November 1986 over Reagan's veto. This accelerated the withdrawal of millions of dollars in U.S. investments. How did anti-apartheid activism, after decades of apparent ineffectiveness, begin to influence U.S.-South Africa relations?

Two central objectives motivate this article. The first is the examination of anti-apartheid activism from 1969, when Nixon administration sought to maintain American interest in Southern Africa by promoting cooperation instead of confrontation with the settler governments in the region,(1) to 1986 when Congress began to effectively challenge similar Reagan administration efforts.(2) Policy makers historically viewed Africa as marginal to American national interests, but the proliferation and intensification of anti-apartheid activism demonstrated how citizen initiative could significantly alter the

placement of issues on the foreign policy agenda. The article's second aim is to assist the development of a theoretical framework for understanding social movements that challenge specific aspects of U.S. foreign policy. During the 1980s social movements created new political space and provided fresh perspectives on foreign, as well as domestic issues. The scope of movement strategies and tactics, the relations between ad hoc and established groups, and the mobilization of new resources compel us toward more comprehensive modes of analyzing this phenomenon.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Scholars have long recognized the role that social movements play in organizing and mobilizing challenges to political institutions. Yet they seldom adequately examine how challenging groups gain entrance into the foreign policy-making process. The emergence of new policy problems, the breakdown of consensus on issues, as well as changes in the global environment, may introduce previously unrepresented constituencies into the foreign policy arena.⁽³⁾ Many of these, unable to utilize interest-group politics, have found it necessary to resort to extra-institutional means to express their concerns. Despite numerous foreign policy studies of U.S.-South African relations,⁽⁴⁾ social scientists have only recently begun to look at anti-apartheid activism. The case studies of local anti-apartheid campaigns or organizations that dominate the literature offer little theoretical guidance for a comprehensive analysis of the anti-apartheid movement.⁽⁵⁾ Recent advances in the analysis of social movements can move scholarly inquiry forward here. This article seeks to use the political process model to study the development of anti-apartheid activism from 1969 to 1986.⁽⁶⁾ The aim is to explore the intensification of social movement activism in an issue area traditionally dominated by elite institutions. The phenomenon occurred in a climate of national and global change that rendered established institutions more receptive to grassroots activism, while affording citizens greater resources and opportunities for launching meaningful challenges.

The proliferation of activism during the 1960s reinvigorated the study of social movements. Traditionally, social-psychological theories that examined individual motives for participation in collective behavior dominated the field.⁽⁷⁾ These classical models assumed a strong correlation between the levels of discomfort experienced by aggrieved segments of society and the emergence of collective action. Scholars treated activism as detached from regular institutionalized political processes and viewed social movements as unusual moments when social tensions felt by participants found cathartic expression.

The resource mobilization approach emerged as a reaction to the deficiencies of classical models of activism. Drawing from elite theories of the American social and political system,⁽⁸⁾ resource mobilization theorists focus on the closed character of established political institutions and how excluded groups mobilize their resources

to gain access.(9) In sharp contrast to classical theorists, resource mobilization proponents view social movements as politically motivated actions, rather than psychological outbursts, and as composed of the rational actions of movement participants. Resource mobilization theory furthermore bridged the gap between formal and informal groups by targeting the crucial roles that both play in channeling diverse energies and resources toward change. It focuses on how groups such as churches, foundations, labor unions, and even agencies of government, outside of regular policy-making channels, act as major catalysts for movement growth and development.

The political process approach developed as a response to the inadequacies of resource mobilization theory. It directs attention to how social movements emerge as a function of changes within the established political system, as well as within the aggrieved population. Scholars emphasize this interaction as a crucial determinant in shaping conditions and resources that affect the direction and intensity of insurgent efforts. This approach shares several features with resource mobilization. Advocates of both view social movements as politically oriented behavior and not simply as social-psychological means for reducing individual and group tensions. Both closely examine the linkages between movement organizations and those groups external to them. There are nevertheless some important distinctions. While resource mobilization accords a significant role to elites in the social movement, the political process model more strongly privileges the insurgency of groups without formal or recognized power. Proponents question the likelihood that established elites would sponsor group activities that pose threats to their entrenched interests.

The political process model examines the transformation in movement participants' consciousness, based on the assumption that as the movement evolves, so too do participants' assessments of their prospects for successfully implementing change. An appreciation for continuity is perhaps the model's most enduring feature. Doug McAdam contends:

"... a movement represents a continuous process from generation to decline, rather than a discrete series of development stages. Accordingly, any complete model of social insurgency should offer the researcher a framework for analyzing the entire process of movement development rather than a particular phase of the same process."(10)

McAdam, studying the development of the black protest movement from 1930 to 1970, demonstrates the political process model's strength. He identifies three sets of factors crucial to the generation of social movement activity: the structure of political opportunity; organizational readiness; and the level of insurgent consciousness within the movement. Other recent works also view protests as a function of the political opportunity structure that launches them.(11) Disruptive processes and events include large-scale demographic changes, industrialization, electoral realignments, prolonged unemployment, and wars. Sidney Tarrow examined three areas of opportunity structure that

appear closely related to protest outcomes.(12) They are the openness or closure of formal political access, the stability or instability of alignments within the political system, and the availability and strategic posture of potential alliance partners.

The second element crucial to the success of a social movement is an organizational structure that transforms fragmented energies into concrete weapons for change. Unlike traditional theories that focus on charismatic leadership, the political process model attaches greater weight to how the social movement articulates its goals, whether it espouses single or multiple objectives, and the quality and availability of resources. Indicators of organization type include the degree of bureaucratization, centralization, and factionalism; the mobilization strategies used; and members' class origins, particularly the ratio between potential direct beneficiaries of movement goals and "conscience constituents." (13) These are individuals and groups who are part of the organization but do not benefit directly or materially from the accomplishment of its aims.(14)

The third essential element in the political process model is an insurgent consciousness or cognitive liberation.(15) This concept relates to how social movement activists, organizations, and participants interpret favorable shifts in political opportunity in ways that mobilize broader communities of supporters to engage in collective action. The subjective meanings that people attach to day-today events and processes convey information about how they assess the prospects for successful collective protest.(16) Stark events, like elections, court decisions, or wars may communicate this information, but so do less dramatic occurrences, such as provision of new administrative resources, formation of advisory groups, or opening new channels of access by potential allies. Still the onus falls upon movement participants to recognize when established institutions are becoming more receptive to challenges.

This article tests the ability of the political process model to account for the development of the anti-apartheid movement. As a prelude to this examination, we need to address several critical questions. The first concerns the definition of a social movement and highlights a long-standing difference between how the disciplines of sociology and political science deal with the concept. Does anti-apartheid activism constitute a social movement? Traditionally, sociologists dominated the study of social movements, while political scientists devoted more attention to interest groups. The distinction between the two forms of political activity, however, are seldom clear. Sociologists John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald define a social movement as "a set of opinions and beliefs in the population which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution of society." (17) David B. Truman's widely accepted definition of an interest group is "any group that, on the basis of one or more shared attitudes, makes certain claims upon other groups in the society for the establishment, maintenance, or enhancement of forms of

behaviour that are implied by the shared attitudes."(18) Definitions of social movements imply that groups lacking routine access to governmental power play a critical role in the mobilization process, and that these groups tend to use unconventional forms of behavior, influence, and organization. By comparison, interest groups rely primarily upon institutionalized forms of collective action.

The anti-apartheid movement presents a dilemma in that it appears to contain elements of both a social movement and an interest group. Similar to many reform efforts in recent decades, its organizations and connections with established polity members have expanded. Movement representatives nevertheless lack routine access to a range of foreign-policy decision makers.(19) This suggests a need for closer examination of where interest groups find themselves on the continuum from nascent and spontaneous entities to organized and structured pressure groups. Consequently, the location of a group depends on the overall political climate and how successfully the group mobilizes its resources to achieve its objectives.() Tarrow offers somewhat of a compromise for both disciplines by suggesting that social protest movements are:

Groups possessing a purposive organization, whose leaders identify their goals with the preferences of an unmobilized constituency, which they attempt to mobilize in direct action in relation to a target of influence in the political system. This definition ought to be broad enough to include a variety of organized protest movements but not so broad as to merge with collective behavior in general or to spill over into the study of interest groups.(21)

The shift away from explanations emphasizing sudden increases in the discomfort level experienced by aggrieved communities, to a focus on long-term changes and conditions that structure their ability to engage in collective action, represents a particularly important advance for the study of anti-apartheid activism. Some of the major movement catalysts occurred outside the United States in South Africa and in other parts of southern Africa.(22) American anti-apartheid activists thus represented a conscience constituency, as they did not benefit immediately or directly from ending the apartheid system. Participants nevertheless derived benefits when the movement developed a stronger sense of efficacy and began to play a viable role in shaping public opinion and influencing the policy-making process. Anti-apartheid organizations did not draw heavily from the elite social classes in American society or from the politically alienated and isolated.(23) In short, the political process model rejects the major assumptions of classical and resource mobilization approaches, offering instead a broad framework for examining how changes in political opportunity, organizational resources, and collective perception gave rise and direction to anti-apartheid activism.

Since the political process model intrinsically involves long-term trends that condition the likelihood of activist development, it

requires a set of time frames to delineate stages of movement evolution. American group opposition to apartheid began early in this century,(24) but we will not attempt to recount its complete history. Three distinct periods, 1969-1976, 1977-1984, and 1984-1986, mark the evolution of a small dissident Africanist community to an increasingly influential mass movement.

The anti-apartheid movement's fortunes inversely corresponded to the rise and decline of the Nixon and Ford administrations from 1969 to 1976. Nixon's conservative orientation challenged the aspirations of the civil rights and antiwar movements, while containment of political change remained the cornerstone of its Third World policy. Corruption eventually led to Nixon's 1974 resignation and fostered widespread negative reaction to his foreign and domestic programs. The diminution of civil rights and antiwar activism in the mid-1970s encouraged redirection of substantial energy and resources into anti-apartheid activity.(25) A large array of groups capitalized on European and African crises by demonstrating their connections to U.S. foreign policy. They thus mobilized a broader reform constituency .

THE ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT, 1969-1976

The Structure of Political Opportunity

Nixon's 1969 inauguration did little to bolster the confidence of Americans who advocated putting pressure on South Africa to dismantle its racist, repressive institutions. Nixon interpreted his close victory over Democratic challenger Hubert H. Humphrey as a mandate for "law and order" at home as well as abroad. He also promised to bring "peace with honor" to the Southeast Asian conflict. In less than eighteen months, however, the Nixon administration extended the powers of domestic law enforcement agencies and expanded the Vietnam War. The administration simultaneously and secretly formulated a new African containment policy.(26) Prepared by the staff of National Security Adviser Henry A. Kissinger as a comprehensive review of U. S. policy toward Southern Africa, National Security Study Memorandum #39 (NSSM), recommended closer ties with the white governments in Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia, and South Africa. The new guidelines enabled the United States to sell South Africa aircraft and other equipment prohibited under the terms of the United Nations arms embargo. These revisions also encouraged U.S. businesses to increase South African transactions. After a decade of rhetorical support for continued decolonization in southern Africa,(27) NSSM#39 tilted U.S. policy in a direction that "selectively relaxed" restrictions on the minority-ruled states.(28)

The policy revisions that Nixon and Kissinger set in motion represented a significant setback for the Africanist community, but other changes in the domestic political arena proved more encouraging. Among them was the rise of Michigan Representative Charles C. Diggs as the chair of the House Subcommittee on Africa. Diggs, the first black to chair that subcommittee, held hearings on southern Africa on such issues as UN

sanctions against Rhodesia, U.S. business involvement in South Africa, and political repression in both states. The subcommittee regularly invited testimony from Africanist scholars, activists, and anti-apartheid organizations, and from representatives of African liberation movements.(29) In an arena long dominated by corporate and government officials, the subcommittee gradually expanded the scope of policy discourse.

The subcommittee provided an established forum for debating alternatives to Nixon's Africa policy and became a vehicle for conveying the Africanist concerns of black Americans.(30) Expanding black electoral participation increased black congressional representation from four in 1960 to thirteen in 1971, the year that the Congressional Black Caucus was founded. Domestic concerns dominated the caucus's agenda, but its aggressive participation in the growing Africanist constituency further legitimized Afro-Americans' foreign policy interests.

Portugal and southern Africa emerged as the major external catalysts that improved the political climate for anti-apartheid activism from 1974 to 1976. The overthrow of the forty-year dictatorship in Lisbon in April 1974 precipitated the collapse of the Portuguese African empire and provoked a hasty reevaluation of U.S. policy toward the region. Within a year the United States had dealt with a new Marxist government in Mozambique and the prospect of another one establishing itself in Angola. As the civil war in Angola intensified, the policy debate over southern Africa commanded unprecedented domestic attention.(31)

The political crises in southern Africa in 1975-1976 mobilized a pattern of official responses shaped by events and issues not confined to Africa.(32) Nixon's 1974 resignation and Gerald R. Ford's inexperience left Secretary of State Kissinger as the dominant force shaping the new administration's foreign policy. However, Congress and the U.S. public, on the heels of Watergate and the Vietnam War, proved unreceptive to Kissinger's recommendations for maintaining U.S. interests in the region.(33) Congressional attempts to reassert itself on foreign policy matters continued as the Senate's committee chaired by Frank Church (D-ID) began investigating allegations of CIA abuses throughout the world.(34) It was thus not surprising that Kissinger's request for additional funds to support CIA involvement in the Angolan civil war would fall upon deaf ears.(35)

Growing southern African crises coincided with the U.S. presidential primaries in 1976 and further complicated matters for Kissinger and Ford. The Angolan civil war wound down in early spring, but the liberation struggle against white-ruled Rhodesia escalated, and in June, the Soweto uprising began. Kissinger spent much of his last year in office trying to resolve the conflicts in southern Africa, but his efforts produced no tangible assets for an incumbent president facing a major reelection battle. The southern Africa situation offered only limited prospects for an immediate solution, diverted attention from Ford's campaign, and enhanced the perception that the administration was

on the wrong side of a race war.(36) During the fall campaign the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates, as in 1960, sought to enhance their appeal to an enlarged black electorate and white liberals with a "new" African policy.(37)

The improved political opportunity structure for anti-apartheid activity from 1969 to 1976 partly derived from Nixon and Kissinger's shared illusions about the permanence of political power-both in the United States and in southern Africa.(38) Nixon's overconfidence led him to take risks that led to the Watergate scandal and his 1974 resignation. Similarly, Kissinger's 1976 attempts at shuttle diplomacy in southern Africa and the "new realism" that had earlier motivated NSSM #39 provided little more than short respites from reality as the regional conflicts escalated to global dimensions. Complex external support for various factions in the Angolan civil war invalidated Kissinger's simplistic cold war objective of trying to prevent Soviet gains at all costs. This weak approach, set against southern Africa's turmoil, provided an opening for anti-apartheid activists. They could now more readily exploit greater public awareness and furnish a broader platform to present alternative versions of U.S. interests in the region.

Organizational Strength and Readiness

Until proliferating activism in the 1960s encouraged social scientists to reevaluate existing theories, they viewed social movements largely as phenomena intermediate between spontaneous outbursts of collective behavior and formal structured organizations.(39) Scholars assumed that with time social movements would take on the characteristics of associations. They would develop extensive organization, rules and traditions would emerge, and stability and continuity would ensue. Luther Gerlach and Virginia Hine challenged these assumptions in their study of Pentecostalism and black protests. They concluded that movement organization structure could be "decentralized, segmentary, and reticulate," rather than rely upon strong centralized control. They could consist of many small units--each with a considerable degree of autonomy--and they could rely upon a network of personal and other intergroup linkages.(40)

Gerlach's and Hine's approach is quite compatible with the experiences of the anti-apartheid movement. While some organizations achieved greater visibility in the national media, no group dominated the movement. Indeed, it appears that movement participants, rather than concentrating their energies in one highly centralized organization, instead cultivated the movement's segmentary and reticulate character. Activists pursued anti-apartheid concerns within a variety of groups and arenas. These include civil rights organizations, peace movements, labor unions, financial management groups, local and state legislatures, churches, and colleges.(41) Group segmentation might also inhibit the development of the movement. Arguably, this is a major reason why anti-apartheid activism developed slowly. Yet, gradual but significant increases in the movement's organizational resources that accompany an

expanding political opportunity structure suggest that leaders capitalized on long-term changes within the larger political system. We will now examine some organizational dimensions of the anti-apartheid movement between 1969 and 1976, along with some of the factors that enhanced its effectiveness.

The American Committee on Africa (ACOA), the oldest anti-apartheid organization in the United States, was founded in 1953 by black and white civil rights activists. During its early years ACOA played a major role in the international effort to encourage United Nations intervention in South Africa. During the 1960s it expanded its range of activities to include education and information provision, demonstrations, lobbying, conferences, publishing, and fund raising for relief projects in South Africa.⁽⁴²⁾ In 1969 ACOA opened a Washington DC office. The level of information provision and lobbying expanded rapidly. ACOA joined with the Methodist, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, and Episcopalian churches in 1972 to create the Washington Office on Africa (WOA) as a permanent lobbying arm in the nation's capital.

Increasing Afro-American interest in foreign affairs during this period led to the formation of several organizations. Black employees at the Polaroid Corporation's Cambridge, MA headquarters founded the Polaroid Revolutionary Workers' Movement (PRWM) in 1970 in response to Polaroid's production and processing of film for South Africa's passbook system.⁽⁴³⁾ PRWM briefly stimulated widespread public discussion and debate on the American corporate role in South Africa. Another group, the National African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC), grew out of the uneasy coalition between black elected officials in the Congressional Black Caucus and community-based black activist groups. ALSC is best remembered for coordinating African Liberation Day marches in Washington, DC in 1972 and in thirty cities around the nation in 1973. The formation of ALSC, the African-American National Conference on Africa at Howard University in May 1972, and the African Liberation Day marches represented a major turning point in mobilizing a black American constituency for Africa. Other black organizations focused on southern Africa included the Congress of African People, the Africa Information Service, the African-American Scholars Council, the African Heritage Studies Association, and the Pan-African Liberation Committee.⁽⁴⁴⁾ However, as the coalitions that produced the organizations were short-lived, they failed to create a more substantial Afro-American grassroots base within the larger anti-apartheid movement.⁽⁴⁵⁾

A third element of the inchoate anti-apartheid community consisted of Africanist scholars and research groups. Academics, though not as visible as elected officials and activists, proved crucial in expanding the resources available to the movement. Research, travel, publication, and teaching allowed scholars to observe the human costs of the system of apartheid, to establish and illuminate its connections to U.S. prosperity, and to disseminate this information. Ironically, the training of American Africanists in the postwar era had been a project

largely underwritten by major foundations such as Ford and Carnegie.(46) It would be fitting that some scholars whose formation derived from the need for an expanded U.S. presence in Africa would rank among its most adamant critics.(47)

Church groups and professional and union-affiliated activists comprised a fourth component of the movement's network. The Episcopal Church, the United Church Council for Christian Social Action, the Congregation for Reconciliation, and the Unitarian Universalist Association of Churches have all opposed apartheid. Similarly, the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the international units of the AFL-CIO, and the United Steelworkers of America assisted in education and mobilization at the local level. They also provided testimony for key congressional hearings.(48)

Level of Insurgent Consciousness

A widely shared perception that successful collective action is possible accompanies expanding political opportunity and organizational strength. That is, people experience a change in consciousness before altering their political behavior. This change involves an assessment of the political and social atmosphere and the prospects for further movement development.(49)

Few developments during Nixon's first term indicated a favorable shift in the climate for anti-apartheid activism. The Nixon-Kissinger foreign policy team displayed no special concern for elevating Southern Africa as a policy priority, although the emergence of the House Subcommittee on Africa as a forum for investigating Southern Africa and the increased visibility of an Africanist constituency in Washington seemed promising. Movement growth nevertheless had to await fundamental alterations in domestic political alignments, as well as major shifts in the balance of power in Southern Africa. The recession in Southeast Asia and expanded federal attempts at controlling dissent dominated the national political scene. Initially, this appeared to have left little collective energy for another potentially divisive, externally-induced social movement.(50)

A major turning point in the development of anti-apartheid movement consciousness occurred from 1974 to 1976 when several crises illustrated the vulnerability of apartheid and its external support systems. The Caetano regime in Portugal, which had earlier received assurances of continued support from Nixon,(51) was overthrown in April 1974, and Nixon himself had resigned by August. The acceleration of the liberation wars in Mozambique and Angola in 1974-1975, and in Rhodesia and South Africa in 1976, overwhelmed Ford and Kissinger's crisis management capability. Congress, instrumental in forcing Nixon out and in effecting the U.S. withdrawal from Southeast Asia, refused to permit application of the containment policies embodied in NSSM#39 to southern Africa. The 1976 presidential election resembled that of 1960 in that the incumbent's failure to deal effectively with an African crisis became a

significant issue. The symbolic benefits of elevating Southern Africa to center stage far outweighed the limited substantive policy benefits that flowed from it, but increased public discussion on the issue contributed to heightened feelings of efficacy among Africanists, especially within the black community.(52)

THE ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT, 1977-1984

The Structure of Political Opportunity

The anti-apartheid movement emerged as a legitimate contender in the larger policy arena during the 1977-1984 period. Several factors account for this: more consistent international attention to the conflicts in Southern Africa; the development of movement allies in Congress and in the foreign policy bureaucracy; the gradual expansion of anti-apartheid activism at the state and local level;(53) and the establishment of TransAfrica, a Black American foreign policy organization. The anti-apartheid movement still had no guaranteed, regular access to the foreign policy decision-making process. The conservative shift of the U.S. political climate in the late 1970s and early 1980s dislodged key congressional and administrative allies and contributed to rapid erosion of the movement's ability to translate political access into meaningful policy changes.

The Carter administration capitalized on Kissinger's efforts in southern Africa during the 1976 presidential campaign and made Africa a higher priority. It influenced the development of a more favorable climate for anti-apartheid activism. Carter's appointment of several top officials who were especially sensitive to the issue of majority rule illustrated this new posture. These included Ruth Schacter Morgenthau, Goler T. Butcher, Anthony Lake, and Andrew Young, who was named U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. Young felt that the civil rights battles gave the new administration special expertise on racial strife.

I think our country has established through our own experience in race relationships, and particularly in the South, an understanding of this very sensitive issue of black and white people within the same community ... with the special knowledge in our country, I think we might be a help in Africa.(54)

Young and other members of the Carter team who desired changes in Africa policy clashed with administration globalists who retained an East-West view of the developing world, particularly National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski. Until mid-1978 the pro-Africa regionalists expanded their influence within the administration. The globalists, however, soon began quietly reasserting themselves by linking Angolan and Ethiopian developments to Cuban and/or Soviet strategies.(55)

Congressional action during 1977 and 1978 reflected the high priority that the regionalists attached to Africa. Dick Clark, for example, who chaired the Senate Subcommittee on African Affairs from 1975 to 1978,

played a major role in policy liberalization. The House Subcommittee on Africa reconvened in 1977 and resumed its role of addressing the southern Africa conflict. The pinnacle of cooperation between the executive and legislative branches on African affairs occurred that year, when the administration sponsored Congress's repeal of the Byrd Amendment, which had allowed American companies to import Rhodesian chromium in violation of United Nations sanctions.

Activists at the state and local level raised questions about U.S. involvement with South Africa. Beginning in the late 1970s, state legislatures and city councils began to consider, and later pass, divestment legislation. The threat to withdraw nearly \$0 billion of invested public-employee pension funds and other public funds from companies conducting business in South Africa constituted one of the major weapons in this effort.(56)

The first eighteen months of the Carter administration provided a crucial stage for expanding the political opportunity structure for anti-apartheid activism. This trend began to reverse itself during late 1978. The loss of key congressional allies paralleled the declining influence of the regionalists in the Carter administration. Clark was one of several liberal senators who lost in the midterm elections. Charles C. Diggs, chair of the House Subcommittee on Africa, resigned from office in early 1979 because of a financial scandal. Prospects for a reformed policy toward southern Africa were further undermined with Andrew Young's departure later that year.

In contrast, the decolonization process in southern Africa rapidly accelerated as the American electorate moved toward the right in 1980. The United States focused on the hostage crisis in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, while internationally supervised elections in Zimbabwe put Marxist Robert Mugabe into the prime minister's office. Ronald Reagan defeated Carter in November, and the Republican party gained control of the Senate for the first time in nearly thirty years. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker articulated the new administration's tilt toward South Africa. He argued that the United States should abandon the idealism of the Carter era and thereby "constructively engage" the South African government toward moderating apartheid.(57) Constructive engagement appeared to diminish the likelihood of improving the political climate for anti-apartheid activism.

The forces that would contribute to broadening of the political opportunity structure nevertheless began to gradually emerge. As it had done in 1969, the House Subcommittee on Africa again became a focal point for challenging administration policy toward South Africa. Representative Stephen Solarz (D-NY), who succeeded Diggs as chair of the subcommittee, played a major role in keeping the focus on southern Africa long after the Carter administration's policy had lost its urgency. In addition to leading several study missions to the region, Solarz conducted hearings on Rhodesia, South Africa, and Namibia. This

trend continued with Michigan Representative Howard Wolpe, who replaced Solarz in 1981. Wolpe and key subcommittee staff members, Anne Forrester Holloway and Stephen F. Weissman, brought impressive Africanist credentials.(58) The subcommittee under Wolpe's leadership aggressively pursued its oversight of administration policies. Other subcommittees such as International Economic Policy and Trade; Fiscal Affairs and Public Health; Human Rights and International Organization; and Financial Institution Supervision, Regulation and Insurance intensified their efforts to examine key aspects of South Africa policy.(59) The Reagan administration embarked upon constructive engagement as the South African police and army stepped up the repression of dissent. Congress, meanwhile, through the subcommittees, emerged as one of the most vital forums for contesting the administration's position.

Organizational Strength and Readiness

Perhaps the most significant organizational development in the anti-apartheid movement during this period was the formation of TransAfrica in 1977. It was a product of increased black American interest in foreign affairs and became one of the most vocal and consistent critics of apartheid. Like the House subcommittee on Africa, its leadership is a cadre of professional activists, most of whom are veterans of earlier efforts to establish a permanent Afro-American foreign policy organization. TransAfrica's most visible representative, executive director Randall Robinson, formerly worked on Representative Diggs's staff.(60) Consistent with Gerlach's and Hine's analysis of social movement organization, TransAfrica extended the anti-apartheid network without displacing other groups.

While TransAfrica, ACOA, and WOA did not dominate the anti-apartheid movement, they capitalized on the enlargement of a social conscience constituency.(61) Church-sponsored groups, which formed an important element in the early years of anti-apartheid activism, continued to mobilize their following. Diverse groups such as public employee associations, university faculty and students, socially responsible investment associations, sports and cultural activists formed new movement organizations. Several anti-apartheid groups began a series of statewide and national campaigns in early 1981 to increase public awareness of apartheid, and to develop more effective coordination. The Campaign Against Investment in South Africa, composed of the American Committee on Africa, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility, TransAfrica, the Washington Office on Africa, and several other anti-apartheid organizations began a twelve-state effort to prohibit investment of public monies in companies profiting from apartheid. In 1982 the AFSC published a citizens' guide on how to pass local legislation to remove public funds from banks and corporations involved in South Africa. In October 1983 three-hundred persons convened at the National Student Conference in New York to plan a fortnight of coordinated anti-apartheid action for the following March and April.(62) Increased coordination of activities, the sharing of research and information, and the expansion

in linkages to policy makers, as well as to a variety of human rights and social justice groups, indicated that anti-apartheid activists were overcoming the political isolation that undermined their influence and effectiveness a decade earlier.(63)

Level of Insurgent Consciousness

Anti-apartheid activists found hope in the appointment of Africanists to key Carter administration positions, and in Carter's emphasis on human rights as a guideline for conducting foreign policy. Carter's commitment to human rights was selective, but it admitted new criteria for assessing American foreign relations. For a while it seemed that Andrew Young and other regionalists were winning the battle against the globalists in the effort to construct a new U.S. policy toward southern Africa. Yet the continued primacy of the globalist orientation within the executive branch, the eventual departure of Young and others, and growing conservatism did not bode well for apartheid's enemies.

Despite these setbacks, the formation of the lobby TransAfrica in 1977 reflected the institutionalization of the black community's interest in foreign affairs. The House Subcommittee on Africa's leadership and the increasing professionalization of movement organizations and congressional staff provided a formal and visible presence in Washington.(64) Growing church and socially responsible investment activism, and the expansion of the divestment movement at the state and local level and on college campuses slowly revitalized the movement at the grassroots. Ronald Reagan's 1980 election effectively prevented anti-apartheid activists from regaining direct influence with the executive branch. As a result, movement organizations began to channel energy and resources into coordinating the activities of local networks and influencing public opinion.

The anti-apartheid movement claimed a few small but significant victories. These included extensive participation in the anti-nuclear march in New York City in June 1982 and in the 1983 March on Washington; the 1983 successful defense of exiled South African poet Dennis Brutus, threatened with deportation by the Immigration and Naturalization Service; benefit from the increased Afro-American politicization attendant on the progressive mayoral campaigns of Harold Washington in Chicago and Mel King in Boston in 1983;(65) and the aggressive foreign policy advocacy of the Jesse Jackson for President campaign in 1984.(66) While these efforts provided limited direct impact, each presented an opportunity to enlarge the stage on which the apartheid issue could gain public visibility. Results of public opinion polls taken in 1977 and 1978 indicated that while South Africa remained low in public salience, themes involving human rights, avoiding another Vietnam, and containing communism and racial violence could potentially enlarge the attentive foreign policy audience.(67)

Political turmoil in southern Africa between 1977 and 1984 directed world attention to the region. Marxist-led independent Zimbabwe joined

Marxist governments in Angola and Mozambique in 1980. Inside South Africa, black and white opposition to apartheid intensified. The US anti-apartheid movement grew, surviving the initial loss of key allies in the executive branch and in Congress, and increased its network of alliances by 1981. Despite these favorable developments, major challenges confronted Reagan-era activists. Constructive engagement permitted closer ties with the South African government and temporarily shifted public perceptions of the regional crisis to a global framework that interpreted America's primary interest as containing Soviet and Cuban expansionism.(68)

THE BURST OF ANTI-APARTHEID ACTIVISM, 1984-1986

Anti-apartheid protest activities from late 1984 through 1986 commanded more public attention than any other time in the movement's history.(69) (See Figure 1.) (Figure 1 omitted) This period of heightened activism, spurred by continuing violence in South Africa, culminated in congressional passage of the 1986 Anti-Apartheid Act. Movement activity emanated from the three sets of factors consistent with a political process interpretation.

First, a supportive domestic climate for challenging Reagan's constructive engagement policy derived from reactions to worsening repression in South Africa. Congress, especially the House Subcommittee on Africa and the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), took the initiative in response to mounting criticism of constructive e