The Author and Apartheid: Building Pro-Blackness at BGSU Through James Baldwin and The Anti-Apartheid Movement

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The Author and Apartheid: Building Pro-Blackness at BGSU Through James Baldwin &

The Anti-Apartheid Movement

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**Introduction**

When thinking about pro-Blackness movements in the United States, the most obvious example of that is the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s which redefined the US on all levels with lasting impacts to the present day. While significant, that seemingly monolithic period is not the only pro-Blackness movement, especially in the 21st century with the significance of Black Lives Matter that has gathered political and social attention in the past decade. Although both are important, the period of the 1970s to the 1990s are less talked about in that understanding and overshadows examples like the anti-apartheid movement that occurred during the late 20th century against the racist policies of the South African government. While not directly affecting people of color in the United States, anti-apartheid became a national issue due to the many ties that the US had and became a central issue for politics until the apartheid government’s dissolution.

While this topic may not be prevalent in present-day discussions surrounding Blackness and fighting against racist policies globally, the anti-apartheid movement also speaks to the perceptions of America during the 1980s. During the 1970s, there was a shift to a greater moral standard for politicians and American policymaking after the tremendous losses in Vietnam and the Watergate scandal that made Americans reevaluate what they expect from leaders. That political moral consciousness helped land president Jimmy Carter into the White House. That background creates a partial explanation for the relatively sudden disavowment of South African apartheid policies that had been in place since 1948. Thus that national shift brought together people from across the United States and one particular group was instrumental in these rallies: university students. Major universities like Harvard, Ohio State University, and many others divested, and pulled all financial connections, from South Africa at different times throughout the
1980s but one of the more peripheral universities that joined in on this was Bowling Green State University.¹

Bowling Green State University, or BGSU, was and still is a predominantly White university and its involvement with the anti-apartheid movement is a unique story to spotlight compared to the larger, higher enrollment universities that had millions of dollars in South Africa. BGSU was special due to the various events that occurred around the time of BGSU’s involvement which included renowned author and Civil Rights activist James Baldwin having a relationship with the university during the late 1970s. While not seemingly connected at first, both events overlap with the identity of Blackness and the creation of a pro-Black community at BGSU. I define pro-Blackness as a group that actively promotes policies for the benefit of Black communities both domestically and globally. Baldwin’s time at BGSU also coincided with the Ethnic Studies program becoming a full department and that time was the start of a major change for the university’s policies as a whole. While never completed in its work, these changing views of Blackness during the early 80s occurred during a presidential change as Dr. Hollis Moore died unexpectedly and was replaced by Dr. Paul J. Olscamp who was the president who saw the Anti-apartheid movement bloom on BGSU’s campus. These connections, while not exactly evident, became much clearer as I continued research and saw this narrative unfold as one tangible singular event rather than two separate occurrences.

This intersection between Baldwin and apartheid at BGSU is significant as they are both relatively overlooked in the grander narrative of BGSU’s history as a university. The connections between the two not only created a greater understanding of BGSU and Blackness but also how

BGSU responded to national issues like apartheid and a post-Civil Rights world. From these connections, the main question that fostered this research was the legacy of Pro-Blackness at BGSU during the late 1970s and 1980s. That question expounded into several different questions as the research began and then was settled onto these two events that compounded together into an important stream of events during the period. This research also counters the stereotype of one, all-powerful collective that made decisions in the past but rather many groups influenced, acted, and reacted to developments as they came along. This breaks the trope that one position of power, for this instance the president of BGSU, would have made these decisions rather than the president being one significant player in a multitude of players in the events that unfolded at BGSU. Overall, by shining lights on these events at BGSU can the narratives be reshaped to more accurately reflect the historical record.

This research is important because universities often highlight upbeat history rather than periods of struggle or injustice. Looking at BGSU also allowed a greater explanation of how different areas of the US were responding to national issues like apartheid as the location and area surrounding BGSU is different compared to the larger universities that were pushed to divest. Thus the narrative of what occurred at BGSU has greater significance as a different environment that was not publicly involved to get involved with the movement and to show solidarity within the greater environment of anti-apartheid. The relationship that BGSU cultivated with James Baldwin strengthened pro-Blackness at BGSU and laid the groundwork for anti-apartheid to become an issue for BGSU to become involved in.

**Literature Review**

The connection between these two events at BGSU might have been unrelated events on the surface level but are intertwined with the history of BGSU and the dealings with events
surrounding the issues of Blackness, both internally and externally. The combination of these events had little crossover in the field of secondary literature but their independent fields garnered greater results in the topics and the specific periods they were set in. The secondary literature of James Baldwin’s visit is necessary to contextualize his visits to BGSU.

James Baldwin first came to BGSU during 1977 to deliver a speech but was then invited to stay for parts of 1978 and ’79 in which he was in various roles at the university. For being the first university Baldwin visited on his return to the US, the biographical literature lacks a lot of discussion surrounding his time at BGSU and universities as a whole which feels like a particularly large oversight. From the biographies that I could find, David Leeming touched upon the impact of universities, specifically BGSU, the most out of the ones surveyed and presented the best framing of Baldwin’s life to understand his time at BGSU. ² This biography considers other parts of Baldwin’s life such as his large contribution to writing as well as the intersecting parts of Baldwin’s life such as his sexuality. ³ Another, and more structured frame was the book by Dr. Ernest Champion who was the professor that facilitated Baldwin’s many appearances at BGSU as well as co-taught with Baldwin. Champion’s work provides fundamental parts to the understanding of Baldwin at BGSU and more direct accounts that Leeming’s biography lacked. This book created examples for interactions on campus with Baldwin that were otherwise lacking in primary documents as well as Baldwin’s relationship with the Department of Ethnic Studies. ⁴ These two books in tandem, while not the most insightful by themselves, provide a cross reference to how Baldwin interacted with BGSU. A third source titled Conversations With James Baldwin broke into Baldwin outside of BGSU as well as the framed discussions that

³ Ibid.
Baldwin had later in life before, during, and after Baldwin’s time at BGSU. This book acts as a cross reference for Leeming’s biography while also positioning Baldwin as the individual author rather than the celebrity academic that the universities displayed him as. *Conversations* also brought ideas that Baldwin was having during this period and his central focus at this point in his life like Pan-Africanism and the lack of improvement in race relations. That insight garnered greater understanding to look at the primary base which highlighted how BGSU interacted with Baldwin. As Baldwin’s time at BGSU happened, these ideas did not leave and came back through a movement rather than as an individual: that of the anti-apartheid Movement.

Throughout the 1980s, more people joined in protest against the apartheid government of South Africa due to the racist policies that kept the White minority of the country controlling the overwhelming majority of black South Africans. The secondary literature for apartheid and anti-apartheid material is vast, the movement coming to campuses have some solid works with some relatively rare specific texts on a singular university like Princeton. “Anti-Apartheid Organizing on Campus” by Kathie Sheldon gives a greater context around students that organized on campuses around the United States, especially historically Black colleges and universities. Sheldon’s work provides not just context to the anti-apartheid movement but also fundamental parts of the movement that can be applied and compared to the movement that occurred in the mid-1980s at BGSU due to Sheldon explicitly giving advice to other college students on how to organize divestment strategies. This article argued the processes of organizing against apartheid and how the students of the time thought about the political issue in a wider scale. In a similar but distinct vein, Amanda Joyce Hall paints the anti-apartheid movement on campuses through

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7 Ibid.
the evolving state of the movement from the mid-1970s into the 1980s as the pressure to cut business ties from South Africa increased. Hall also brings into the picture both predominantly white institutions and historically black colleges and universities and paints the similarities and differences between their respective reactions as a way of showcasing the differences and similarities around the country. In her article, Hall asserts that the Black students at predominantly White institutions were critical for the issue of anti-apartheid to become important on those college campuses. With these two articles, they both contend with student activism surrounding anti-apartheid and create a framework for the understanding BGSU within the anti-apartheid movement. This combination lends greater credibility to the discussion on campuses but leaves out the greater context of the global anti-apartheid movement and the history of apartheid which is a piece of this discussion that cannot be ignored.

**Historiography**

Before explanation of the project itself can begin, the greater discussion of how apartheid South Africa was and is written about is significant in setting this piece of research within the context of the greater history. Even before the fall of the apartheid government in 1994, people were writing about apartheid in South Africa, especially during the 1980s when the anti-apartheid movement was in full swing. One piece of literature by David M. Smith titled, *Update: Apartheid in South Africa*, outlined the active oppression of Black South Africans that included economic and living conditions. Another writer before the fall was Brian Lapping who, unlike Smith, focused on the history of South Africa and how it led to the apartheid government in the 1940s. Lapping’s history extended all the way from the beginning of the colonization of South

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8 Hall, “Students are the Spark,” 369–397.
9 Ibid.
Africa to 1986, the year he was writing the document and is mainly focused on the political and social changes that occurred throughout that lengthy period. The last source from before the fall of the apartheid government was Kathie Sheldon’s work that she wrote in 1982 to spread divestment strategies to other students around the United States. The final piece of literature is a strictly economic based article that articulated the anti-apartheid divestment movement through a look at both private divestment and public sanctions on the apartheid government. These four pieces of literature, while quite different, were important during that period to disseminate that information while the apartheid government was still operating.

There are many books and biographies about the significant political leaders like Nelson Mandela, but the transition of general anti-apartheid literature after the fall of the apartheid government are separated into generally three categories. The first category was the books that followed the apartheid government’s collapse like Lindsay Michie Eades, *The End of Apartheid in South Africa*, which details the contextual history, the racial separation of South Africa and then the slow transition to the democracy that led the African Nation Congress to victory in the 1994 elections. Eades then explained the continued transitional and new regime period that continued until the year of publication, 1999. In more contemporary literature, the anti-apartheid movement is being implemented into singular chapters of books like Lauren Frances Turek’s, *To Bring The Good News to All Nations: Evangelical Influence on Human Rights and*

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12 Ibid.
13 Sheldon, “Anti-Apartheid Organizing on Campus,” 14-16.
16 Ibid.
U.S. Foreign Relations. Turek’s work mainly focuses on the religious influences that Evangelicals put on the apartheid regime and the reversal at President Reagan’s behest, which caused a dilemma within the Evangelical ranks about apartheid South Africa. Lastly, is Amanda Joyce Hall’s “Students Are The Spark,” which details the anti-apartheid movement on college campuses around the United States during the 1970s and 1980s. Hall and Turek both published in the 2020s and shows the evolution of the nuances within the apartheid literature and the growing ways that the apartheid can be researched and viewed compared to the conventional history of Eades. Overall, this collection of literature influenced the project through understanding the events and people surrounding apartheid while also mapping the progression of the historical writings about apartheid and the anti-apartheid movement.

Methodology

After the literature that was used in this project, the actual methodology of the research was historical analysis of archival material found in the Center for Archival Collection (CAC) at Bowling Green State University. More specifically, this research focused on several collections in the University Archives (UA) as the central evidence of this paper. Before that evidence can be picked apart, the important part of this paper is the frame in which it was created and molded into shape. For that process, I use historical sociology as a framework to mold as that method is the best way to see the interactions between people, organizations, and the power structures at play in this narrative.

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18 Ibid.
19 Hall “Students are the Spark,” 369–397.
To that extent, the central text that I used to complete my understanding of historical sociology was *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in History and Theory* by Anna Green and Kathleen Troup. I chose this text not only because it not only contains both full explanation of the school of thought but also an example from a text chosen by the authors. It also explains many historical approaches compared to individual books only containing one approach and the many convoluted crossovers between the historical frameworks like empiricism. That confluence of ideas in addition to tangible examples gave the best framework for this project as the Green and Troup state, “historical sociology addresses directly the distinction between explanations based on structure and those based on agency.” That distinction is prevalent in this project as through the creation of the narrative of these events, the methodology presented a contrast of which individuals or organizations had agency in the outcome of the events. Through use of this historical framework combined with my Ethnic Studies background, the project was able to create a more refined final product by incorporating both lines of thought into the project as compared to just one or the other.

This combination of framework and approach created a greater appreciation and understanding of what I needed to look for in archival material and pushed beyond what a historical approach may have examined. As previously stated, the central archive that was explored was the UA, including several collections such as the records of three presidents: Hollis A. Moore Jr., Paul J. Olscamp, and Sidney A. Ribeau. Moore’s collection, as president of BGSU from 1970-1981, mainly applied to the James Baldwin portion of this project. As for Olscamp’s

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23 Office of the President [Hollis A. Moore Jr.] Records, 1941-1985, UA 002G, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
and Ribeau’s collections, they pertained to the anti-apartheid movement on campus, Olscamp being the president during the time of BGSU’s divestment.\textsuperscript{24} Due to the time restraints of this project some archives on the institutional side of the project like the BGSU Trustees records were not researched and thus could be a point of future research for these topics.

That archival gap previously mentioned garners a greater subject about the research conducted and the process for which the individual records that I have selected was. This selection process was first done by pinpointing the major organizations and structural powers invested in these subject like the Black Student Union, Department of Ethnic Studies, and the presidents during these events. Each of these collections had finding aids that I then used to pinpoint specific folders that had relevant names connected to the events like South African divestment, anti-apartheid, letters to faculty/staff, etc.. After completing the searches through these folders and finding relevant material, I reassessed what I had looked through and repeated the process with less directly involved groups like the Latino Student Union, the Undergraduate Student Government, and President Ribeau’s records to ensure that as many voices could be heard in this research. For the representation of this knowledge, I chose archival material due to the impossibility of tracking down all of these different individuals for interviews or surveys due to the time constraint in addition to many individuals that were key to this project being deceased. On the other hand, archives are also fraught with biases and potential documents lost to time that could have been crucial in constructing this research due to clerical errors and filing. Another part of this is that the archives I delved into are owned by Bowling Green State University and the decision making surrounding the creations of these archives cannot be studied.

\textsuperscript{24} Office of the President [Paul J. Olscamp] Records, 1965-1999, UA 002H, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH. And UA 002I Office of the President [Sidney A. Ribeau] Records, 1980-2006, UA 002I, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
to understand the totality of material and potential flaws in the materials presented. This research also included student organizations that may have had materials unfiled or kept by former members that never made it into the archive and these archives are in lower quality of organization and record keeping compared to the presidential archives.

Student organization archives highlight the other side of the source base in the form of the non-presidential records. The first records that were imperative in the collection of materials was the Black Student and Latino Student Unions’ archives. These archives gave this research promotional material for events on campus surrounding anti-apartheid and some contextual texts that informed and reflected the positions of students of color on campus at the time, at best they could.25 For greater context about students, the Undergraduate Student Government’s archive helped clarify the policies that students on campus were trying to pass and the potential impact that they had on both events.26 Finally, while not a student organization, the Department of Ethnic Studies records include some correspondence that Baldwin sent and received as well as many other correspondence, event planners, and other parts that showcased the efforts of the Department to get Baldwin on campus for his several trips.27 Overall, these organizations served as a counterbalance to the presidents’ and the structural responses to these two events. Another problem that occurred during this research process was the distinct lack of individual voices in the student archives and while the Presidential archives have some correspondence to and from

25 Black Student Union Records, 1972-2010. UA 079 Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH. And Latino Student Union, UA 096, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
26 Undergraduate Student Government, UA 0019, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
27 Department of Ethnic Studies Records, 1970-2003, UA 066, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
students, there are many years during which there was no correspondence which is another example of the limitations of archival material.

On a final note, in a discussion of bias, one cannot forget their own and I, as a White male, have written this project around the history of pro-Blackness on BGSU’s campus. I have tried to alleviate my own bias through the historical sociological framework and my background of Ethnic Studies that I have received from the Department of Ethnic Studies here at BGSU. By illuminating these events on BGSU’s campus, it showed the resistance and persistence of students of color at BGSU. This objective has been completed by trying to get an as complete a frame of these events as I possibly could have in the time permitted by this semester-long project and to add to the work that has already been done on these topics overall.

The Author, 1977-1988

The first appearance of James Baldwin at Bowling Green State University was in 1977, when Baldwin gave a speech on University grounds. This one interaction and every further invitation to the university for Baldwin was through Dr. Ernest Champion, professor and future first assistant chair of the department of Ethnic Studies at BGSU in 1979. Champion was influential in every decision surrounding Baldwin’s time on campus and even wrote to the committee of honorary degrees to confer one to Baldwin, which eventually happened in 1980.\textsuperscript{28} Champion even wrote about Baldwin’s time at BGSU in the previously mentioned book, \textit{Mr. Baldwin, I Presume}, and the stories that sprung from Baldwin’s time on campus.\textsuperscript{29} While that insight is good, the reactions of Baldwin’s time on campus is diverse and the feelings on campus

\textsuperscript{28} Ernest Champion to Laura Kivlin, Oct. 11 1979, UA 066, Box 6a, Folder 3, Department of Ethnic Studies Records, 1970-2003, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
\textsuperscript{29} Champion, \textit{Mr. Baldwin, I Presume}. 
surrounding race were radically shifting by the time Baldwin stepped foot on campus as a distinguished visiting professor. All of these factors shaped the fall semester of 1979 at BGSU and influenced the future of the university’s handling of topics of race.

James Baldwin’s relationship with BGSU changed throughout the late 1970s as Baldwin had different reasons for being on campus each time he came back to campus. Baldwin’s first visit to campus was in 1977 to give the previously mentioned lecture titled, “The Role of a Student in Society” at the University. This lecture was planned primarily by Dr. Ernest Champion but the same date that Champion, through the program’s secretary, sent a letter to Baldwin’s agent, Edward Jay Acton, he was also totaling the expenditures for the visit and still needed outside support. The financial support was finally sorted out before Baldwin’s arrival but was primarily funded by various organizations across campus, with only $250 dollars from the President’s office out of the ~$3000 needed for all of the expense of the trip. This amount compared with the amounts given by the Grad Student Senate and Richard Lenhart, the central administrator of student organizations on BGSU’s campus at the time, gave $500 and $600 dollars respectively. Other than funding, this appearance would be significant for both BGSU and Baldwin as it would be the first public appearance of Baldwin in the United States since leaving for France. After all of this planning, the two days that Baldwin was on campus seemed to draw in large numbers and the Theatre Department even created a tribute of Baldwin’s works

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30 Flier for James Baldwin Lecture at BGSU, 1977, UA 066, Box 6a, Folder 6, Department of Ethnic Studies Records, 1970-2003, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
31 Beth Edusei to Edward Jay Action, April 4 1977, UA 066, Box 6a, Folder 1, Department of Ethnic Studies Records, 1970-2003, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH, and Expense Notes, April 4 1977, UA 066, Box 6a, Folder 6, Department of Ethnic Studies Records, 1970-2003, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
32 Expense Notes, Department of Ethnic Studies Records.
33 Ibid.
34 Edusei to Acton, April 4 1977, Department of Ethnic Studies Records.
and debuted it during his visit. This two day visit set in motion a greater collaboration between Baldwin and Bowling Green State University.

This further collaboration was actually started during Baldwin’s first visit in 1977 through the discussions between him, Champion, and Dr. Robert Perry, chair of Ethnic Studies. That discussion would be started only four days after Baldwin’s departure from BGSU, with Champion writing a letter to Baldwin who up till now he called Baldwin, “Mr. Baldwin” in all letters but now addressed him as “My Dear Jimmy” noting a more personal bond between the two men. In the letter, Champion stated, “When I first wrote to you, I did not realize that I would end up knowing, not only one of the greatest writers of our time, but also enjoying the unique privilege of now calling him a friend.” This relationship building between Baldwin and Champion reflected not only their personal relationship, but also the relationship of Baldwin and BGSU as Champion sent out thank you letters to all of the supporters on campus and finished each with “looking forward to further cooperative efforts.” Champion also talked about Baldwin at conferences and even got some letters asking for the information to get Baldwin on their respective campuses. Baldwin’s appearance at BGSU laid the groundwork for Baldwin to enter the sphere as academia and would continue with Baldwin’s time as Writer in Residence in 1978.

36 Ernest Champion to James Baldwin, May 16 1977, UA 066, Box 6a, Folder 1, Department of Ethnic Studies Records, 1970-2003, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
37 Ibid.
38 Ernest Champion to La Union de Los Estudiantes, May 18 1977, UA 066, Box 6a, Folder 1, Department of Ethnic Studies Records, 1970-2003, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
39 Daryl Dance to Ernest Champion, Nov. 11 1977, UA 066, Box 6a, Folder 1, Department of Ethnic Studies Records, 1970-2003, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
All of the details for the Writer in Residence position for Baldwin were finished by September 12, 1977, and his residency was slated for the following May of 1978.\textsuperscript{40} Though the details were finalized, Champion and the Creative Writing Program created two additional seminars to complement Baldwin’s visit through the seminars specifically focused on contemporary fiction that would have Baldwin lecture inside the classroom.\textsuperscript{41} These classes were confirmed for the semester and Baldwin’s time on campus was split between writing, lecturing in the seminars, and lecturing at universities around BGSU.\textsuperscript{42} After leaving in 1978, Baldwin could have returned as a Writer in Residence but the Ethnic Studies Program sought a more prestigious position in the form of the Distinguished Visiting Professor of Ethnic Studies that would be for ten weeks of a semester.\textsuperscript{43} The discussion went back and forth with this position as the first time Baldwin would be assuming the position was the same time that he was meant to promote his new book, \textit{Just Above My Head}.\textsuperscript{44} Things eventually got sorted out and Baldwin would spend November to December of 1979 in and out of BGSU as he lectured the two seminars around his works. Before Baldwin’s time on campus though, BGSU underwent a rapid change due to the death of a student.

In the spring of 1979, Kimberly Jackson was killed in her apartment by her boyfriend at the time and her death sparked racial tensions at BGSU during the final part of the semester. Here death sparked such a reaction as BGSU did nothing about the murder and functioned as

\textsuperscript{40} Ernest Champion to J. Acton, Sept. 12 1977, UA 066, Box 6a, Folder 1, Department of Ethnic Studies Records, 1970-2003, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
\textsuperscript{41} Ernest Champion to James Baldwin, Jan. 5 1978, UA 066, Box 6a, Folder 2, Department of Ethnic Studies Records, 1970-2003, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{43} Robert Perry to James Baldwin, Mar. 15 1979, UA 066, Box 6a, Folder 3, Department of Ethnic Studies Records, 1970-2003, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
\textsuperscript{44} Leeming, \textit{James Baldwin}, 414.
usual while a student was killed right off campus.\textsuperscript{45} This was then met with sit ins at various offices on campus including the Campus Safety and Security Office which had a verbal fight between White and Black students.\textsuperscript{46} Fights broke out around campus that included throwing a brick and hitting someone with a stick that forced BGSU to double security during the rest of the semester.\textsuperscript{47} All of this culminated in the Black Student Union (BSU) and the Latino Student Union (LSU) sending a list of demands to President Moore.\textsuperscript{48} This list included the departmentalization of the Ethnic Studies Program, creation of a Human Relations Committee, commemorating MLK Day as a holiday, establishment of a legal defense service on campus, and eight other demands.\textsuperscript{49} These demands were settled through clarifications, responses, and counter offers that were concluded by the summer of 1979.\textsuperscript{50} This drastically changed the shape of the university in many ways that served as a recent memory for individuals on campus and the world that James Baldwin had to walk into when coming on campus in fall of 1979, including being a professor of the newest department on BGSU’s campus.

Although the fall of 1979 was Baldwin’s first semester as a professor at BGSU, the position was supposed to be on a continual basis with Baldwin choosing which semester he would like to be on campus.\textsuperscript{51} During his time in 1979, Baldwin was integrating into the community of BGSU with invitations to various events on campus including dances put on by

\textsuperscript{45} Toledo Blade, May 23 1979, UA 002H, Box 108, Folder 2, Office of the President [Paul J. Olscamp] Records, 1965-1999, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48} “Chronology of Events Re: Racial Tensions and Concerns,” June 4 1979, UA 002H, Box 108, Folder 2, Office of the President [Paul J. Olscamp] Records, 1965-1999, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{51} Perry to Baldwin, Mar. 15 1979, Department of Ethnic Studies.
LSU.\textsuperscript{52} At the same time, Baldwin was receiving offers from other schools including the University of California, Berkeley, that he had to turn down due to the contractual obligations that BGSU forced into the agreement of Baldwin’s professorship requiring that he hold no other faculty appointments in the country.\textsuperscript{53} After 1979, Baldwin continued to be a visiting professor and was conferred a honorary degree in Humane Letters, \textit{honoris causa}, at the summer graduation ceremony in August of 1980 by President Moore.\textsuperscript{54} Baldwin was supposed to come back in the fall of 1981 and the Department of English was trying to get Baldwin to teach more classes in order to reach more students across campus.\textsuperscript{55} This seemed to fall through, even with pleas from both Champion and Perry to have Baldwin return to campus to renew his contract.\textsuperscript{56} Unknowingly, that would be the last time Baldwin would ever be at BGSU at least in an official capacity.

In 1982, President Moore unexpectedly died and was replaced by Paul J. Olscamp which created a transitionary period for Baldwin’s potential return to campus. In 1983, an English Graduate Student wrote to Olscamp’s office and beseeched Olscamp to get Baldwin back on campus.\textsuperscript{57} Olscamp responded harshly and told the student to go through the official channels including creating a request for Baldwin to return to campus to lecture and that he is “charged

\textsuperscript{52} Carlos Foote to James Baldwin, Nov. 21 1979, UA 066, Box 6a, Folder 3, Department of Ethnic Studies Records, 1970-2003, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
\textsuperscript{53} Perry to Baldwin, Mar. 15 1979, Department of Ethnic Studies.
\textsuperscript{54} Hollis Moore to James Baldwin, UA 066, Box 6a, Folder 4, Department of Ethnic Studies Records, 1970-2003, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
\textsuperscript{55} Frank Baldanza to Ernest Champion, Mar. 31 1981, UA 066, Box 6a, Folder 8, Department of Ethnic Studies Records, 1970-2003, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
\textsuperscript{56} Ernest Champion and Robert Perry to James Baldwin, Oct. 22 1981, UA 066, Box 6a, Folder 8, Department of Ethnic Studies Records, 1970-2003, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
\textsuperscript{57} Paul Maginley to Paul Olscamp, June 29 1983, UA 066, Box 6a, Folder 8, Department of Ethnic Studies Records, 1970-2003, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
with the entire university and not just one part of it.”

While James Baldwin died in France in late 1987, the relationship between Baldwin and BGSU had one final connection: the memorials on campus in his honor. For the Department of Ethnic Studies that housed Baldwin, Ernest Champion wrote a memorial that discussed Baldwin’s impact across the globe and in the hearts at BGSU. Later Champion penned a letter to PBS to support their efforts in the creation of their segment on Baldwin and wrote in reference to Baldwin’s time at BGSU “I am personally of the opinion that any documentary on James Baldwin that omits this significant portion of his life must be seriously flawed.”

For the university at large, BSU and the Ethnic Studies Department held a memorial presentation where Nikki Giovanni, “heralded as the princess of Black poetry” read some selected readings from Baldwin’s works. None of these remembrances of Baldwin and his time at BGSU, were sponsored by the president’s office or higher authority on campus.

The legacy of James Baldwin after the Civil Rights Movement and into the last decade of his life, showed his transformation from an author to an academic scholar that was willing to teach and not only create understanding but learn from students at the same time. Baldwin’s time at BGSU was not only a testament to that growth but the connections that the communities of color on BGSU’s campus created with Baldwin fomented greater recognition and understanding within the totality of the BGSU community. This is countered by many times of lackluster enthusiasm that the presidential office and other higher officials who only providing at best

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58 Paul Olscamp to Paul Maginley, July 5 1983, UA 066, Box 6a, Folder 8, Department of Ethnic Studies Records, 1970-2003, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
59 Leeming, Baldwin, 385-386.
60 “Remembering James Baldwin,” 1988, UA 066, Box 6a, Folder 8, Department of Ethnic Studies Records, 1970-2003, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
61 Ernest Champion to Karen Thorsen, April 11 1988, UA 066, Box 6a, Folder 8, Department of Ethnic Studies Records, 1970-2003, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
62 “Memorial For James Baldwin Press Release,” Feb. 12 1988, Box 3, Folder 12, UA 079, Black Student Union Records, 1972-2010, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
minimal support rather than leading the charge and bringing in prominent people of color onto campus. Baldwin’s legacy can be summarized by a quote by the man who facilitated most of these interactions, Ernest Champion, who stated:

[Baldwin’s] concern is about the captivity or superiority based upon consideration of color, race, or creed. One might even say it is a concern for the captivity of the Afrikaner in South Africa, the Catholic or the Protestant in Ireland, the Hausa in Nigeria – all the people who are unable to see that it is not possible to destroy or hurt other people without losing some part of one’s own self.63

_The Fight Against Apartheid, 1978-1988_

The 1980s were fraught with challenges both in the US and abroad that included asking about the moral implications of allies of the United States and how they reflected on the United States itself as it fought with the Soviet Union for global domination. One of these allies, the Republic of South Africa, disenfranchised the majority of its population for the small, minority White populace to fully control the nation with the system known as apartheid by 1948.64 Apartheid became especially prevalent during the latter part of the 20th century because human rights became a centralized issue for the world. This centralization of the issue fomented the anti-apartheid movement in the United States and in other countries that used economic pressure to eventually topple the apartheid government. Bowling Green State University’s part of this story is mainly focused on the middle of the 1980s under the presidency of Paul J. Olscamp. Though

important, President Olscamp is not the only player in this movement and the movement is fermented in the onset of human rights activism on campus in totality.

As the previous section laid out, the Human Rights Committee for BGSU was created in 1979 during the tense negotiations between the BSU, LSU, and President Moore that stemmed from Kimberly Jackson’s death.\textsuperscript{65} The original list of demands from BSU and LSU started with “The misconception exists that our actions are the result of either the events of the past two weeks or the course of oppression of the past 300 years. This is false! We are, instead, concerned with the consistent denial of our human rights.”\textsuperscript{66} This focus on human rights was not only occurring at BGSU, but was a larger trend in the wake of Vietnam and the repression of communities around the world, especially under the sphere of Soviet influence.\textsuperscript{67} The university continued that trend under President Olscamp as the Human Relations Committee continued to work and Olscamp also created a committee for minority affairs on campus during his early years as president.\textsuperscript{68} The Human Relations Committee would later support Olscamp during BGSU’s divestment.

At the same time as the focus turned to human rights, Black Americans were defining the Black Power Movement, with one of the originators, Stokely Carmichael, speaking at BGSU in 1976.\textsuperscript{69} In addition to authoring “Black power,” Carmichael was also the leader for the All-Africans People Revolutionary Party (AAPFP) that was a socialist party centered around the

\textsuperscript{65} “Clarification of Responses,” May 18 1979, UA 002H, Box 108, Folder 2, Office of the President [Paul J. Olscamp] Records, 1965-1999, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.


\textsuperscript{68} UA 002H, Office of the President [Paul J. Olscamp] Records, 1965-1999, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.

\textsuperscript{69} “Black Leader to Speak on Campus Press Release,” Oct. 5 1976, Box 3, Folder 11, UA 079, Black Student Union Records, 1972-2010, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
concept of Pan-Africanism. This group had at least some representation on BGSU’s campus as an informational packet for the AAPFP has been held in the BSU’s archive and details their direct opposition to racism, specifically mentioning apartheid and colonialism. The AAPFP continued to play at least a minor role on campus, at least inside BSU, as they continued getting informational packets about the AAPFP and the potential for Stokely Carmichael to return to Ohio campuses. The AAPFP and BSU both, either apart or together, disseminated the information around Pan-Africanism and to a lesser extent, anti-apartheid, which helped set in motion the anti-apartheid Rally of 1985.

The Black Student Unions of both BGSU and the University of Toledo (UT) hosted a two-day event, at least for BGSU students, which was an anti-apartheid Rally that spanned both BGSU and Toledo. For BGSU, the BSU held an open house on Thursday, October 10, 1985 that included a pizza party and sign painting in preparation for the central event in Toledo. UT BSU’s event was much larger as it was two different rallies, one on campus in the afternoon and one in the city in the evening, that was organized in tandem with MECHA, the Chicano Student Movement of Atzlan. This event had many speakers including a BGSU Firelands professor and former native of South Africa, Vernon Domingo. Domingo would be sponsored by the Democratic Socialists of America to talk at on BGSU’s main campus about apartheid roughly one month after the rally in Toledo with his talk titled “South African Apartheid: Racist Myths

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70 “What is The A-APRP?” 1979, Box 1, Folder 16, UA 079, Black Student Union Records, 1972-2010, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
71 Ibid.
72 “Pan-African Resource Center Inc.,” Nov. 1985, Box 1, Folder 18, UA 079, Black Student Union Records, 1972-2010, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
73 “Black Student Union Open House,” 1985, Box 1, Folder 18, UA 079, Black Student Union Records, 1972-2010, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
74 “Rally Against Apartheid,” 1985, Box 1, Folder 18, UA 079, Black Student Union Records, 1972-2010, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
75 Ibid.
and Revolutionary Struggle.” These collective events put apartheid into the central focus of BGSU, even if people were not in attendance, the issue of apartheid had entered BGSU’s campus.

With the discussion of anti-apartheid opened at BGSU, in 1986 the university, sponsored primarily by the Undergraduate Student Government (USG), held an anti-apartheid rally on campus on October 9th. One of the main speakers of the event was Kelly McCoy, the first woman president and the first Black president of the USG. The speech itself called out other universities that were more prevalent with previous investments who divested in South Africa like the University of California, the University of New York, Dartmouth, Harvard, Brown, and Ohio State University to name a few. McCoy referenced these as some of the standout colleges doing the work against apartheid and students organizing to force their universities to divest as well. McCoy specifically stated that:

I realize that for many of you the South African issue was difficult at first to associate with. Our university does not have investments in South Africa, so for many they saw no reason to organize and protest the apartheid system. But the simple fact is although Bowling Green State University was not in the forefront of the anti-apartheid movement, we are here now as a united student body calling for an end to apartheid.

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76 Flier for Vernon Domingo Talk, Nov. 1985, Box 1, Folder 18, UA 079, Black Student Union Records, 1972-2010, Center for Archival Collection, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
77 Kelly McCoy to Paul Olscamp, Oct. 27 1986, UA 002H, Box 129, Folder 5, Office of the President [Paul J. Olscamp] Records, 1965-1999, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
78 Ibid.
79 McCoy to Olscamp, Office of the President [Paul J. Olscamp] Records.
80 Ibid.
81 Ibid.
What McCoy was expressing with this block quotation was the separation that BGSU had from apartheid and that the commitment to ending apartheid stemmed solely from the activism of the student body. McCoy also compared the anti-apartheid movement across the nation to the student protests to the Vietnam war as well as the Civil Rights Movement that most of the students were born during. Overall, McCoy’s speech created a message of hope and inspiration as well as a form of congratulations for BGSU’s student body to rise to such an occasion while not directly being connected to the issue. But the issue was actually much closer to BGSU than what this triumphant speech alluded to.

Through his research, Dr. Ernest Champion, the same individual who brought James Baldwin to BGSU’s campus a little less than a decade prior, discovered the investments of the Bowling Green State University Foundation in South Africa. Dr. Champion penned a letter to President Olscamp only three months after Kelly McCoy’s speech, dated December 16, 1986. This letter by Dr. Champion pointed out the BGSU Foundation’s investments in companies that were doing business in South Africa at the time and even attached a newspaper article about a similar event that occurred at Harvard which Champion thought would help Olscamp make the right decision when the time came. Champion was also worried about the student body finding out about the investments and the problems that would occur as the spring semester started as the correspondence was written during winter break. Olscamp’s reply was double the length of Champion’s original letter and was an attempt to explain the situation to Dr. Champion. As it was

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82 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
Olscamp did not have direct control over the Foundation.\textsuperscript{86} Olscamp gave specific numbers, 780,000 dollars from the BGSU Foundation was invested in roughly 40 companies that did business in South Africa, not technically having a direct investment in apartheid.\textsuperscript{87} Olscamp then concluded that “I do not want you to believe that the University has either investments in economic activities in that country, or opposes divestment, or supports apartheid. All of those positions are incorrect.”\textsuperscript{88} Olscamp was technically correct in his wording but ultimately, BGSU had economic ties to apartheid through the BGSU Foundation and the only individuals that could change that fact was the Board of Trustees of the Foundation that were not directly controlled by the university that was to be brought up in their next Finance Committee meeting slated for January of 1987.\textsuperscript{89}

The BGSU Foundation did not in fact divest that January, and it actually took them almost two years to fully divest from South Africa in late 1988.\textsuperscript{90} This divestment plagued President Olscamp due to people believing that he had some control of the Foundation’s monetary assets even though he already discussed that with Dr. Champion previously.\textsuperscript{91} Olscamp wrote a public statement in early 1988 and was followed by a resolution passed by the Human Relations Commission supporting Olscamp and imploring the Foundation to divest.\textsuperscript{92} This plea also cited the United Nations Charter of Human Rights and stated that “For the well-being of Bowling Green State University and for its moral climate, the Human Relations Commission

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{86} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{87} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{88} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{89} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{90} Dwight Burlingame to Paul Olscamp, Dec. 8 1988, Box 51, Folder 10, UA 002I Office of the President [Sidney A. Ribeau] Records, 1980-2006, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
  \item \textsuperscript{91} Champion to Olscamp, Office of the President [Paul J. Olscamp] Records, 1965-1999.
  \item \textsuperscript{92} Salvador J. Ramirez to Ashel Bryan, Feb. 3 1988, Box 51, Folder 10, UA 002I Office of the President [Sidney A. Ribeau] Records, 1980-2006, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
  \item \textsuperscript{93} Champion to Olscamp, Office of the President [Paul J. Olscamp] Records, 1965-1999.
\end{itemize}
recommends total divestment to the Bowling Green State University Foundation, Inc.” 93 That plea, although potentially convincing for the president of the Foundation, did not lead to any change so the Progressive Student Organization demanded several policy changes surrounding apartheid to President Olscamp. 94 The second rebuke of the Foundation’s Board of Trustees and the probable public outcry, none of which specifically recorded, pushed them over the edge and the Board voted in favor of total divestment on May 10th, 1988. 95

Much like Baldwin’s visits to campus, BGSU’s divestment and involvement in the Anti-apartheid Movement was not only started but influenced by students and faculty of color throughout the entire process. For the anti-apartheid movement more than Baldwin, a greater diversity of student organizations got involved and sponsored many of the events and demands that occurred on the path to divestment. That pro-active nature of the student organizations held the president’s office and other centers of control to react to the situations unfolding rather than simply steer students toward certain issues and goals. Overall, the relationship between the positions of power on campus and the student organizations were nuanced and pushed the envelope to create a better university.

Conclusion

While these two events may not seem directly related other than both ending in 1988, the connections between them are significant to BGSU and the students of color on its campus.

93 Ibid.
94 Paul Olscamp to Progressive Student Organization, Apr. 22 1988, Box 51, Folder 10, UA 002I Office of the President [Sidney A. Ribeau] Records, 1980-2006, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
94 Tanduxolo Ntozoanke to Paul Olscamp, Sept. 9 1988, Box 51, Folder 10, UA 002I Office of the President [Sidney A. Ribeau] Records, 1980-2006, Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH.
Baldwin, an American author known for his criticisms of American race and racism, was brought to a predominantly White institution through the perseverance of the students of color. Baldwin’s appearance at BGSU was significant as the first world-renown guest of the Department of Ethnic Studies as well as the first Distinguished Visiting Professor. These discussions of racism with Baldwin helped usher in discussions of morality and not just self-reflection but reflections on global issues, which enabled the students’ activism with the anti-apartheid movement. Baldwin and anti-apartheid propelled students of BGSU to not just think about racism as a concept, but racism at home and abroad. BGSU’s community was not the only thing affected in this coalescing of ideas, Baldwin also transformed from an author to a teaching scholar and was pulled back into the American public at BGSU. Overall, these two events formed a significant basis for the understanding of race and racism at BGSU in the late 20th century.

With the research I have conducted here, I have made significant headway at understanding the general narratives of these events but further research could be made into individual events, organizations, and events. The time restraints and scope of this research left many details and individual student perspectives unexplored that may change the narrative of these events or show differing perspectives compared to the ones presented. Another potential would be interviews with individuals directly involved in these events but would be difficult due to most of the presidents and faculty being deceased. The findings in this paper could also uplift a greater understanding of the history of BGSU and could lead to understanding the complexities of universities rather than the simplified image administrations give to potential students. Lastly, this research could also lead to a future project surrounding how different administrations at universities deal with significant upheaval or general protest movements on campuses across the United States.
While future research is possible, the research defined in the project is significant as it displays the difficulties and potential complications that occur within administrative duties. It also highlights the nature and policymaking of presidential administrations at universities, especially a university that was not as much in the public eye compared to larger colleges. The relationship between campus, student organizations, and presidential administrations can be fraught with problems and can lead to both positive and negative outcomes for all parties. The control of power on campuses and the potential power dynamics between students and presidential administrations are necessary to consider when it comes to the policy making of a university. A university can not run without administrators and faculty while these positions would be meaningless without students willing to learn.

Finally, the significance of movements after the 1960s is a crucial topic for researchers to reevaluate, especially under the Reagan administration. Typically, the image of the 1980s is crafted with Reagan’s revolution and the conservative shift as the sole political thought of the era. These events are in direct counter to that notion and showed how the increase in morale consciousness was used to support many different movements, not just the conventional conservative politics most people associate with the 1980s. James Baldwin and the Anti-apartheid movement at BGSU may only cast their shadow directly on BGSU, these global connections create a window to redefine social movements during the Reagan era and help connect the 20th century to the modern world.
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