

8,600 Miles From Cape Town:

The Anti-Apartheid Movement in Madison, Wisconsin, 1969 – 1994

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Abstract:

Though the United States played a critical role toward South Africa's prolonging of Apartheid due to their role as an important ally in Cold War politics, within the United States existed a substantial Anti-Apartheid Movement. This article examines the American Anti-Apartheid Movement, specifically through analyzing the activism that took place in Madison, WI centered around the University of Wisconsin. The focus on Madison was based on the author's realization that Anti-Apartheid activism was influential in shaping Madison politics long before the American Anti-Apartheid Movement gained momentum in the 1980's primarily due to the Madison Area Committee on Southern Africa (MACSA), an active campus-based coalition against imperialism in Southern Africa. Spanning the entire existence of MACSA (1969 – 1994), the article describes the Anti-Apartheid Movement's beginnings in Madison to be largely unoriginal and insignificant. By 1976, however, Anti-Apartheid activism within Madison began to achieve inspiring political victories unseen elsewhere in the United States, influencing legislation within the City of Madison, Dane County, the State of Wisconsin, and the University of Wisconsin. Finally, the article chronicles the final years of Apartheid, describing how Madison continued to play a prominent role in the American Anti-Apartheid Movement, however, no longer played the lead role.



Formation of MACSA and Early Years (1969 – 1976):

- Prior to the formation of MACSA, Anti-Apartheid activism in Madison was unorganized and sporadic
 - Included the infamous firebombing of South Hall on May 18, 1968
- MACSA holds first meeting on March 21, 1969
 - Symbolically one day following the ninth anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre
- Created to:
 - Create Awareness of Southern Africa Among the Madison Public
 - Place Pressure on Local, State, and National Policy Makers
 - Conduct Research and Share it with a National Network of Activists
 - Pressure Local and National Corporations to Disengage from their Involvement in South Africa
 - Campaign for Sanctions Against South Africa
 - Collect Fund for Revolutionary Groups in Southern Africa (ex: ANC) (MACSA 1969)

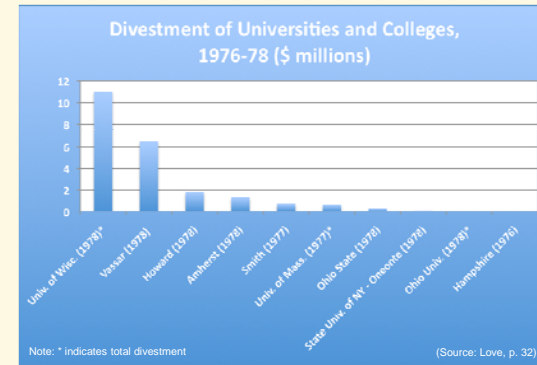
Mad Town Victories (1976 – 1978):

The American public was horrified by the news of the Soweto Uprising in June 1976. Activists in Madison took full advantage of this newfound public support against Apartheid, experiencing the following significant political victories:

- December 1976: The Madison Common Council passes Resolution 29, 355**
 - Required the City of Madison to seek companies without ties to South Africa when contracting
 - Bill was drafted and heavily lobbied by MACSA
 - Became the first ordinance of its kind within the United States (MACSA 1976)
- June 1977: The Dane County Board of Supervisors passes Resolution 377**
 - Modified version of the City of Madison's 1976 resolution (MACSA 1977)
- February 1978: The UW Board of Regents makes decision for total divestment**
 - Followed Attorney General LaFollette's interpretation of State Statute 36.29(1)
 - Results in the sale \$11 million worth of stocks in 25 corporations with ties to South Africa
 - Stock portfolio was successfully reconstructed without losses (Love 1985, 32, 42)

(Mad Town Victories cont.)

The mentioned victories were the most significant victories of Madison's Anti-Apartheid activists and would be provided as examples to activists throughout the United States. Especially significant was the decision to divest by the UW Board of Regents. The UW was not the first school to divest, however, it was one of the first and by far the most significant due to its comparative size and total divestment (see below). Due to the successful reconstruction of the University's stock portfolio, the UW became the primary example for Universities to follow (Love 1985, 32, 42).



Beyond Madison (1978 – 1994):

- With few key battles left to be fought within Madison, activists shifted their focus beyond Madison
- Segmentation of key MACSA members occurred:
 - William Minter relocated to North Carolina 1973 and began the weekly news bulletin, *Africa News*
 - David Wiley relocated to Michigan in 1977 and became crucial in their successful movement (Love 1985, 47)
- By 1979 MACSA no longer functioned regularly
- MACSA reorganized as the Madison Anti-Apartheid Coalition (MAAC) in 1985
 - The increase in activity came following renewed national interest regarding Apartheid
- Key areas of focus for MAAC included:
 - Lobbying for State Assembly Bill 54 (see picture on left)
 - Divestment of the Wisconsin Retirement Investment Trust
 - Sponsoring speakers and rallies
 - Collecting and distributing funds
- No longer a leading player in the American Anti-Apartheid Movement, Madison activists continued to contribute significantly to the national movement (MAAC 1993)

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