

Chronology of Opposition to Apartheid by MSU Students and Faculty and the Michigan Legislature



- **1972:** Five MSU faculty and students formed the *Southern Africa Liberation Committee* (SALC) with the Peace Education Center.
- **1972-76:** SALC organized educational programs about Southern Africa and apartheid at MSU and in community, including hosting a conference on “CIA out of Angola.”
- **1976-77:** SALC mounted campaign for the East Lansing Council to pass a Selective Buying Campaign for a city boycott of U.S. firms operating in apartheid South Africa. In 1977, the City Council voted unanimously to implement one of the first selective buying policies against South Africa

in the U.S., by committing the city to seek suppliers of goods and services from companies not operating in South Africa.

- **1976-78:** SALC developed a campaign to seek MSU divestment of stocks of U.S. companies operating in apartheid South Africa. The *Associated Students of MSU* (ASMSU), *Council of Graduate Students* (COGS), and *Faculty Committee on Academic Environment* conducted studies and concluded that profiting from labor exploitation and racial oppression in South Africa was unacceptable for a U.S. institution of higher education committed to equality and human rights.



- **1977:** MSU African Studies convened a national conference of South Africans and Americans on “*South Africa - Society, Economy, and Liberation.*” The faculty conferees take the occasion to found the *Association of Concerned Africa Scholars* (ACAS) to mobilize scholars on U.S. policy on Africa with a focus on policies that support apartheid, colonialism and oppression in Southern Africa.



- **1978:** On February 28, the University of Michigan Board of Regents passed a resolution to divest only from companies operating in South Africa that did not implement the Sullivan Principles and opposed full divestment.
- **1978:** On March 31, the MSU Board of Trustees voted to divest of holdings of all U.S. companies operating in South Africa, including the Michigan firms GM, Ford, Dow Chemical, and Kellogg, some of whom strongly objected to divesting, and MSU became of the first U.S. universities to completely divest. This occurred after a year-long campus-wide active information campaign by SALC.

- **1978:** John Stockwell, former CIA head of mission in Angola, worked at MSU to complete his book, *In Search of Enemies* (1978), criticizing U.S. foreign policy and CIA for their secret campaigns against majority rule in Angola and elsewhere in Africa and abroad.
- **1979:** Almost 100 faculty of MSU African Studies Center voted to honor the United Nations Cultural Boycott by not cooperating in research, study abroad, or other activities in South Africa under apartheid.
- **1979-1984:** SALC organized the "McGoff Off" campaign demanding that the University remove the McGoff name from a stage at the Wharton Center. John McGoff, owner of a number of Michigan small-town newspapers and ITN in London, was accused by the U.S. Department of Justice of failing to register as a foreign agent for the South African Government when he received \$11.35 million to buy a U.S. newspaper as a voice for pro-apartheid propaganda in the U.S. The McGoff family made a \$1 million gift to MSU and a theater of the Wharton Center was named the "McGoff Theater." SALC made public presentations, and picketed performances at the Wharton Center. After years of demonstrations, MSU returned the \$1 million and took the McGoff name off what today is the Wharton Pasant Theater.



SALC activists Frank and Pat Beeman paint "The Rock" for the "McGoff Off campaign"

- **1979-80:** MSU SALC, cooperating with activists in Detroit and across Michigan, mounted film showings, visits, and literature campaigns in the Michigan legislature to support three bills of sanctions against apartheid initiated by Reps. Lynn Jondahl (East Lansing), Perry Bullard (Ann Arbor), and Virgil Smith (Detroit).
- **1980:** The State of Michigan Legislature adopted H.B. 5446 (Public Act 325) that prohibited depositing state funds in banks making loans in South Africa.
- **1982:** The State Legislature adopted H.B. 4553 (Public Act 512) prohibiting publicly-funded Michigan universities and colleges from investing in firms operating in South Africa.



- **1985:** SALC initiated a successful campus-wide undergraduate campaign to remove all Coca Cola products from dormitories and campus buildings in protest of Coke's remaining in apartheid South Africa. This campus initiative led by SALC President Debbie Miller eventually contributed to founding the national boycott against Coca Cola that was organized by American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and other activist organizations.



SALC President Debbie Miller gives MSU President John DiBiaggio a SALC divestiture sticker.

- **1985:** SALC mounted a campaign on campus – with a shanty built in front of the Administration Building – for the MSU Foundation Board of Directors to follow the lead of MSU Trustees and completely divest all its stock holdings from U.S. companies operating in apartheid South Africa.

- **1986:** The MSU Foundation Board of Directors voted to divest completely from companies operating in South Africa.

- **1986:** The State Legislature adopted H.B. 4516 to divest the \$4 billion state employees' pension funds of any companies operating in South Africa. The Senate passed the bill after a September 9, 1986. "*Hands Around the Capitol*" rally at which demonstrators from greater Lansing, MSU, the Shrine of the Black Madonna in Detroit, and state employees surrounded the Capitol building.

- **1986:** The MSU African Studies Center convened a national conference of U.S. universities, foundations, and government donor agencies on: "*United States Initiatives for the Education and Training of South Africans and Namibians,*" MSU called on all interested parties to support refugee South Africans for admission and scholarships instead of limiting support to those nominated by institutions inside the apartheid system such as the South African Department of Education.



Michigan legislators at *Hands around the Capitol* demonstration

- **1988:** The Michigan Supreme Court overturned a 1985 ruling by the Circuit Court and found that Public Act 512, adopted by the legislature in 1983, which required publicly-funded universities to divest from companies operating in apartheid South Africa, was unconstitutional. The Supreme Court found that the law infringed on the autonomy of the University of Michigan's Board of Regents.

- **1988-89:** MSU established the *MSU Graduate Fellowship Program for South African and Namibian Refugee Scholars*, providing four full four-year fellowships for Ph.D. training to three black South Africans and one Namibian. Dozens of South Africans have obtained B.A., M.A., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees at MSU in many fields, including in Agriculture, Social Science, Arts and Letters, Education, Medicine, Communications, Human Ecology, Environmental Studies, and Business. This fellowship program was made possible with support from the Kellogg, Mott, and MSU Foundations.

- **1990:** The MSU African Studies Center, at the request of the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa, organized a North American Conference at MSU on "*Our Education for Building a Non-Racial and Democratic South Africa*" for all South African students (circa 450 in U.S. and Canada) regardless of race or political affiliation in preparation for the coming majority rule.

- **1994:** President Mandela was elected under a new constitution. MSU began cooperation and partnerships with a number of South African universities, museums, and other cultural and government institutions.



South African graduates at MSU Kgati Sathekge, B.A. and Ivy Goduka, Ph.D.



South African MP and Minister of Science and Technology Naledi Pandor speaks on US-SA academic partnerships

- **1998:** Four years after Mandela’s election, a number of South African academics noted that many of the U.S. universities coming to South Africa were not aware of the unique needs of South African higher education institutions and, often, were not even clear about their own (U.S.) ambitions for collaboration. MSU agreed to convene a national conference in the U.S. for South African and U.S. university representatives to discuss “*Academic Partnerships with South Africans for Mutual Capacity Building.*”

- **1999-2005:** Following the 1998 conference, a number of South

African university vice chancellors and technikon principals met with MSU and other U.S. university representatives in the *Higher Education Forum of the U.S.-South Africa Binational Commission* (termed the Gore-Mbeki Commission). With financial support from the Rockefeller Commission, MSU convened a consultation of several U.S. university representatives and members of the *South African Universities Vice Chancellors Association* (SAUVCA) and the *SA Committee of Technikon Principals*. In two meetings in Johannesburg, they developed 16 *Guidelines for "best practices" for Partnerships between Tertiary institutions in South Africa and the United States* to seek equitable, transparent, reciprocal, and sustainable partnerships. These guidelines went on to be adopted widely in South Africa and became the basis for principles commended in the U.S. by the African Studies Association and that are relevant today for MSU’s Alliance for African Partnerships.



Campaign buttons of the *Southern Africa Liberation Committee* (SALC) campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s.

All images are from the African Activist Archive (<http://africanactivist.msu.edu/>)

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