

Here are my answers to the questions you prepared:

1. Please describe your role in the anti-apartheid movement at the University of Michigan. How and why did you become involved? How did you and your fellow activists go about achieving your goals?

My role. I was an activist among many, many others.

How I became involved. The Executive Committee of the African Students' Association (ASA) decided that the ASA should play a role in raising the consciousness of the campus community about Apartheid and the need to change it. I happened to be president of the ASA in those years and it was one of my duties to provide leadership for that project.

Why I became involved. We viewed ourselves as privileged people: we were university students attending one of the best universities in the world; in those days, almost all of us were on full scholarships, provided by our home governments, by the government of the USA, by NGOs, or by private organizations. After considerable debate, we resolved by majority vote, I believe, that it was reasonable, if not expected, that we do our tiny part in the struggle for the liberation of some Africans.

How I and my fellow activists went about achieving our goals

As I recall, we prepared an action agenda that included the following items:

- Recruit: Persuade and Recruit other students to join us
- Educate: Schedule programs of education
- Challenge: Challenge the Board of Regents of the UM to divest from companies and entities that did business in or with South Africa.
- Persist: Be assertive, indefatigable, but polite in implementing the agenda
- Evaluate: Evaluate our progress and, if necessary, adjust our actions and procedures to new realities.
- Hope and Pray: hope and pray that we did not get into big trouble with the university, with US Immigration, or with the various sponsors of our scholarships.

2. **How did anti-apartheid activism become an important issue on campus?**

Many students were already aware of Apartheid. However, they did not have a mechanism through which they could help those in the struggle. Our appeals gave them such a mechanism. As a consequence, many fellow students were willing to participate and help to the extent they could. In sum, it was many, many students pulling together.

Which groups or individuals began to promote it and build the movement?

The African Students' Association and many other associations. Frankly, it was a long time ago and I am afraid that I will not be able to list all of them. However, the following come immediately to mind:

- The environmental movement on campus. I believe it was called Environmental Action (ENACT);
- Various organizations of international students;
- American students had other movements that joined us: there were movements for socialism; one or two associations who were advocating communism; students in various co-ops; some fraternities; different student organizations based upon their academic majors. Some organizations of students based on religion.
- There were two radio stations that would allow us air time to announce events and discuss issues.
- Faculty and administrators at UM

- Faculty in Political science (Profs Ali Mazrui, and Joel Samoff); in History (Professor Godfrey Uzoigwe) ; in Anthropology (profs Maxwell Owusu, Niara Sudarkasa); ...
- Surprisingly, the president of the university at the time, President Fleming. He encouraged us to present our views calmly, rationally, cogently, and in such a way that all parties could hear each other, rather than shout over each other, even if we disagreed. Indeed, I remember addressing the Board of Regents once or twice on this subject, while Dr. Fleming was president of the UM. That was singularly touching, as an act of university administration. Indeed, friends took a picture of me addressing President Fleming on this topic. It may be in the archives.
- It is very important to note that, to my knowledge, we (the ASA) were never threatened ,or intimidated in any way, unlike what would have certainly happened in our own African countries! For that, we were very grateful!

3. How did the African Students' Association perceive their role in the larger movement on campus?

We wanted to provide leadership, because it was primarily an African burden. I was unreasonable to expect others to provide leadership for a struggle that was ours.

Did it work in conjunction with other local groups? Yes, it did.

4. Did the African Students' Association associate the anti-apartheid movement with other social movements, both in the U.S. and abroad, such as the civil rights movement in the U.S. or the colonial liberation struggles going on in Southern Africa during that period?

- Yes, indeed. In fact, it was other movements that inspired us; and their achievements and perseverance gave us the courage to overcome discouragement. Some examples are listed below:
- The involvement of college students in the civil rights movement in the USA.
- American students who had been killed in the American South during Freedom Rides.
- The movement against the war in Vietnam at UM. It was big on campus. It was very impressive.
- The resistance and the struggles for liberation in South Africa itself and in several other countries in Southern Africa.
- The uprising in SOWETO led by high school students;
- The activities of the ANC (African National Congress) inside and outside South Africa.
- Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa
- The thought and continuous visions of Nelson Mandela in prison, breaking stones in stone quarries.
- The antiapartheid movement was gaining momentum internationally
- The Black Action Movement that had taken place on campus in the winter of 1970.
- The Association of Teaching Fellows that became the Graduate Teaching Assistants later on.
- Local workers' unions in, and around, Ann Arbor.

This is all the time I can put into this survey. It brought back some memories of the years in Ann Arbor.

I hope that these responses help you.

Thanks for looking into this.

Best wishes in your studies.

Josué Njock Libii

GO BLUE!