



Marcia Coggs

Students rally 'round Abe at morning UW teach-in

By Pamela Martin
of the Cardinal Staff

Abe wore an armband.

So did about 1,000 other people who showed up for a teach-in on Bascom Hill Wednesday that was part of a national day of action against apartheid practices in South Africa.

Protesters wore red armbands as a symbol of unity with people across the nation. In Madison, some protesters will wear the armbands until the state completely divests all its funds from South Africa.

One of the protesters tied an armband to the statue of Abraham Lincoln, the president who more than 100 years ago signed a proclamation to free black slaves in the United States.

Current policies in South Africa oppress black workers, according to one of the speakers at the teach-in. Black workers make 22 cents for every dollar that white workers make there. Forced living conditions have created a life expectancy of 49 years for blacks, and only 50 percent of black children live past the age of five.

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Peaceful crowd protests apartheid at campus teach-in

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Racism in South Africa, Dist. 5 Ald. Rosa Escamilla said "denies African men and women normal lives. It severely restricts employment and educational opportunities, and maintains an insubordinate status" of blacks. "The apartheid system goes against all human rights," she said.

University Police and Security Chief Ralph Hanson attempted to stop the teach-in from the beginning by telling organizers they would need a permit to use an amplification system on the hill. A system was set up anyway, as organizer Eric Hirschberg said to set it up "in front of our good friend Honest Abe."

As the system was set up, Hanson said only, "I'm very dismayed. Very dismayed."

Escamilla told the peaceful crowd that the Madison Anti-Apartheid Coalition had endorsed the day of action, and added that more than 60 universities and colleges across the country were joining in the action.

"We can no longer tolerate living in our own little comfortable world while our brothers and sisters suffer death and destruction in their daily lives," Escamilla said. "It is to deny our humanity if we keep silent," she continued. "It is silence which allows holocaust to happen and brutality to exist," she said.

She also spoke on racism in this country, and said that racism is not unique to South Africa, but added that what is unique is that the practices of apartheid are "socially condoned and legally endorsed" by the whites in South Africa.

State Rep. Dismas Becker, D-Milwaukee, wearing an armband, told the crowd, "This campus made a statement to the state" that they will not tolerate the state's investment in South Africa.

"We're against apartheid. We have to protect ourselves with our money. Hang yourself with your money," Becker exclaimed. "We cannot fool ourselves that we are eating filet mignon when we are being served shit," Becker said regarding the government's role in investments in

South Africa.

Wisconsin Student Association co-President Avram Rosen spoke on the support of the national action by the United Council of UW Student governments, which is the "only statewide student association which has endorsed this action."

Rosen also read the resolution passed by WSA endorsing the national action, and added that one avenue for social change that students can use is student government.

State Rep. David Clarenbach, D-Madison, said that we "have a social contract with our brothers and sisters across the world." He added that the issue at hand was racism and bigotry, and that it is a very political debate.

Professor of African language and literature Daniel Kunene, said, "There is a war going on in South Africa right now."

Kunene was born in South Africa, and told of recent incidents in that country which have been wrongly told to the public.

On March 21, 1985, he explained that a

peaceful funeral procession was interrupted by white police. The blacks were told to go home, and that they could not bury their dead (who were dead after being shot by white police). One woman, in disgust, picked up a small stone and threw it toward the police. They then opened fire on the crowd, later claiming they had to do so to save their own lives. They also claimed that the crowd of blacks was an angry mob, carrying weapons.

Reports stated that 19 blacks were killed. But later information showed that closer to 45 or 50 people were killed and police admitted that the people were not an angry mob carrying weapons, he said.

Kunene said the South African government is trying "to turn people into robots that have no feelings. He also said "our presence here shows that we understand" the situation.

Steve Swift, of the Madison Anti-Apartheid Coalition said, "We gotta get out and we gotta get out now!" regarding the state's investments in South Africa.