

South Africa: the board should divest

Today, a State Board of Higher Education committee will consider a proposal to divest the state board of stock holdings in corporations which do business with South Africa. The committee has been gathering information about the extent of the state system of higher education's investment in such corporations, and will present those findings to the finance committee today. The final vote on the proposal will probably be taken next month.

The finance committee should accept recommendations to divest the state system of those investments. The full board should have an opportunity to review the proposals — proposals which we feel should pass without question, especially in light of recent political events.

The state system's vice-chancellor has reported that many of the corporations in which the state system has investments have only small holdings in South Africa. But some of the corporations did not respond to the survey taken, and the percentage figures used to describe South African holdings do not portray an accurate analysis of their total dollar investment in that country. Some American corporations have gross national products larger than the GNP of some nations, and that is one thing to keep in mind when using a percentage figure.

American corporations are one important factor in the ability of the white minority government to stay in power. American corporations are attracted by the area because it is a market for their products, and labor is cheap — cheap because the government views the majority of its population — blacks — as less than human. It is a particularly dirty form of American imperialism.

That blacks and persons of mixed blood are oppressed in South Africa is obvious in virtually every news report coming from that nation. It is a nation where a black man is imprisoned for spitefully kissing a white woman, while a white man accused of attempting rape against a black woman is sent on his way with a suspended sentence. A land where a nun is labelled a security risk, where black demonstrators are brutally suppressed and a security risk, where black leaders are jailed and die in jail cannot be tolerated.

U.S. policy is described by some people as aiding in the protection of democracy. But with U.S. involvement in other governments for more just than South Africa (such as Chile), it is apparent that our government protects only governments which are open to our brand of imperialism, no matter how undemocratic its leaders. And recent news reports of the jailing of over 500 black leaders and the closure of major black newspapers demonstrate that South Africa does not fit any definition whatever of a democracy. It's time to get out.

Obviously, the State Board will not bring an immediate end to apartheid by divesting itself of investments in firms operating in South Africa. But it is an opportunity to make a firm moral statement which will join other statements, the sum of which may exert enough influence to change corporate investment patterns. In an immoral nation like South Africa, economic pressure is the greatest — and maybe the only — force by which change may be accomplished.

And that this university, in whose isolated environment morals and ethics are supposed to reach a high point, should soil its hands with these investments is blatant hypocrisy. The issue has nothing to do with free speech; it has only to do with making ideology work where it counts. The State Board must not make a lie of those ideals by maintaining its investments.

Letters

Symptoms of sexism

I resisted the temptation to attack Michael Stone personally or make unkind remarks about his field of study, because I thought it would be in poor taste. Obviously he had no such qualms.

Since he says I got him all wrong, let's look at what his first letter said. He condemned Dulci Berry's letter as a "misguided feminist tirade." By that I understood that he did not agree with Dulci in her plea for women to stop trying to live up to an "ideal" feminine image. Then he went on to say he did not like what he termed the "organic look," which he described in terms of "filthy, unwashed bodies" and "frizzy, unkempt hair." There are, of course, many things in between these two extremes, and I'm sure Mr. Stone knows that, but from the

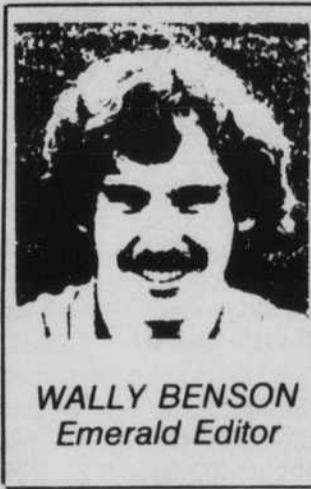
way he juxtaposed the two in his letter it would have been hard to tell that he wasn't attacking all women who didn't fall into the first category. One could have drawn any number of conclusions from his vehement and provocative letter that perhaps he never intended, and I know for a fact that I wasn't the only one who missed his real point.

To clear up a few points about my own letter that he misunderstood, I stated that the word "lady" connotes certain characteristics to many — not everyone. So the diverse meanings he found for the word in Webster's dictionary really have no bearing on the subject. He is also wrong in supposing that by expressing my opinion I am "pushing" anything on anybody. As someone who would like to see a fairer world for both

Straight Space a big hit

If you had views that were largely different from the views shared by the majority of the people around you, would you make those views publicly known and take great pains to make it easy for people with opposite viewpoints to harass you?

Chances are you wouldn't. But that's exactly what members of the University's Gay People's Alliance (GPA) have done. They are gay, which is something a large portion of the University population considers sick, and they don't mind telling people about their sexual orientation.



WALLY BENSON
Emerald Editor

And, for the last two weeks, they have been making it easy for harassment to come their way.

The GPA members have hung a huge sheet of paper outside their office in 318 EMU. Titled "Straight Space, graffiti space for non-gays and other folks," the paper is designed to give "harassers" easy access to vent their views on gays. So far, Straight Space is getting a lot of use, and Will Roscoe, current head of the GPA, says it's almost time for a new sheet.

Most of the comments on the sheet are negative and profane — too profane to print. Some of the printable ones include "Gays may be human but they have something out of wack (sic) upstairs," "I'm not gay but you do have your choice," and "Bi is best." And occasionally contributors to the sheet will get a running commentary going, much like you can see in any bathroom on campus. For example, one person wrote: "The thing I can't understand is:

Homosexuality is a mental disorder, with this in mind isn't it possible to be helped, and put back on the right track." Which was followed by "Who says 'straight' is right? Are you God?" To which yet another contributor added, "Excuse me, this is not a question of right or wrong, but of purpose, and function."

Really not your most intelligent conversation, but Roscoe uses that as an example of why the sheet was put up in the first place. "We had been getting notes scribbled to us all the time," he says. "So we just half lightheartedly, half seriously put the sheet up so everybody could write in the same place."

"What this sheet does," he continues, "is put a focus on what it is that we deal with day to day. Everyone can relate to being put down, and on a daily basis it just sits there inside your head and becomes harder to deal with. It's just hard to believe that there is that much hatred about it."

Roscoe is hopeful that by making these putdowns more public that he and other gays will gain more acceptance and will be faced with less harassment. Is it working? Roscoe isn't sure. "Not that many people get up to the third floor," he says. And few people who write on the sheet actually stop and talk to the GPA members.

"They're all chicken," says Roscoe. "The more nasty they are the more hesitant they are to talk about it."

Though Roscoe admits putting that sheet of paper up is like asking to be hit over the head, he continues to encourage others to make use of it. To make it even easier, Roscoe says the GPA office is usually vacant after two or three every afternoon, so anonymous comments can be made during that time.

And there is no limit to how long Straight Space might continue. If contributions keep rolling in, Roscoe says that will pose no problem. "We'll just put up another sheet of paper."



sexes, I feel justified in taking a stand on what I see to be a symptom of sexism in this society.

Gail Streicker
Junior, English

Story lacking

Today the Finance Committee of the State Board of Higher Education is meeting in Portland to consider the State System's hundreds of thousands of dollars of investments in corporations operating in Southern Africa. Thursday's article on this meeting left out a number of important facts.

The State Board isn't considering this issue on its own initiative. It was forced to consider it by the struggle here on campus last year in support of the liberation struggle in Southern Africa. Last May University students voted overwhelmingly to get rid of all the stock in corporations operating in Southern Africa and to not allow recruiters on campus. And more than 150 of us took part in an Afri-

can Liberation Day demonstration on campus the next day.

Vice Chancellor Holmer picks out a few of the corporations with the least involvement in Southern Africa to back up his stand. He doesn't mention the major U.S. corporate investors in South Africa — General Motors, Ford, 3M, General Electric and IBM — all of which the State System has substantial money invested in. In addition, the percentage of a company's investments that it has in a particular country is hardly the key fact here. As the corporations themselves admit, they're in South Africa because the money they do have invested yields an extremely high rate of profit due to the low wages and brutal working conditions there under the apartheid system.

Hundreds and thousands of students across the country have taken up this fight, and we're going to the State Board meeting today to continue the struggle to

get the University and the State System out of Southern Africa!

John Kaiser
Junior, Sociology
Revolutionary Student Brigade

Letters policy

The Emerald will accept and try to print all letters and opinion columns containing fair comment on ideas and topics of concern or interest to the University community. Letters and opinions will be run on a first-come first-served basis. Both letters and opinions must be typewritten, using 65 character margins, and should be triple-spaced. Letters and opinions must be signed and the authors major or faculty status noted.