

opinion

No more investment in South Africa

The *least* the Oregon House of Representatives can do to protest the system of apartheid in South Africa is to pass the diluted version of House Bill 2772.

The amended bill calls for no new investment of state funds in American companies operating in South Africa, a country whose government practices apartheid, the legalized separation of the races.

The current South African regime segregates the blacks into concentration camps, referred to as "homelands" by the South African government. The government refuses to allow black union workers to strike or petition for grievances and maintains a centralized police state.

South Africa is a country whose "time is running out," in the words of a conservative Rockefeller Commission study on the continued presence of the United States in South Africa. The regime is rightly fearful of the growing anger of more than 20 million oppressed blacks against less than five million whites.

The U.S. government, most state governments, and numerous large corporations continue to support South Africa because of important minerals and cheap labor.

The United Nations has imposed numerous sanctions against South Africa including an arms embargo, boycotts, and a call for divestment of corporations and financial institutions.

Massachusetts passed a bill calling for full divestment from South Africa last January. Connecticut has a partial divestment plan. In 1977 Michigan divested their higher education funds without any loss in revenue to date.

In 1977, the Oregon State Board of Higher Education voted to divest its stocks from South Africa, but the funds have not been withdrawn from the rest of the state investments.

The full bill called for the divestiture of more than 900 million Oregon dollars invested in 140 U.S. companies based in South Africa.

Oregonians for Responsible State Investment, a statewide coalition working for divestment, suggested the state reinvest those funds within the state of Oregon.

The amended bill only calls for a halt to further state investment in South Africa — hardly a showing of our disgust for the blatantly racist South African regime. But in light of the inevitable fall of the South African government, not to mention the support our funds represent, HB 2772 should be passed.

Form filling

The University registrar's office has designed the first step in an advanced registration program for students.

All returning students for fall term are asked to take part in the "Course Request Activity." The "activity" entails students filling out a form with the classes they would like to take next year and returning it to the registrar's office in Oregon Hall. Not exactly recreational.

The forms, along with a preliminary time schedule, will be distributed in the next week to all academic departments, residence halls, the EMU and the registrar's office. Students are asked to consult with their advisers or academic advising and plan next year's schedule. This could start a trend: academic goals.

The information will be tallied, probably by hand, and for the first time in the history of the University the administration will actually have a rough idea of the classes students want to take.

"The University plans to adjust the course offerings and increase classroom offerings in high demand areas," according to page two of the preliminary time schedule. We'll wait and see.

Meanwhile, students should talk to their advisers, fill out the form and return it to the registrar's office by April 29.

This is not registering for fall term.

But it will increase students' chances of getting those necessary or desirable classes. It paves the road to computer preregistration. The more students who participate the more accurate the information will be.

So, fill out those forms.



aleta zak

One woman's El Salvador

One bumper sticker slogan hardly constitutes a grassroots political movement. A single table set up by an activist group in an EMU hallway will not cause President Reagan to make an about-face on his foreign policy. And yet, one woman, an ordained Baptist minister from the tiny country of El Salvador, has taken on the seemingly impossible job of prodding Americans into awareness about the situation in her country.

With all the problems facing Americans today, it's easy for us to overlook a small Latin American country 2,000 miles away. As students, we are more worried about shrinking financial aid budgets than about a skirmish between guerrillas and Salvadoran soldiers.

Marta Benavides didn't look like a revolutionary to me. She looked like my next-door neighbor. Somehow, in the wire reports and the magazine feature stories, the image of the Salvadoran freedom fighter had seemed larger than life.

Benavides insists she is not a politician, though the cause she works for is inherently political. The groups she represents, the United Committee of Salvadoran Women and the United Committee of Salvadoran Unions, have chosen to oppose the government rather than submit to persecution. They have chosen to resist and survive in the long run.

In El Salvador, people who speak against the government are labeled "subversives" and targeted for surveillance.

Sometimes, said Benavides, these people just quietly disappear. Others are disposed of in more graphic ways, such as the young girl who was found with the head of her boyfriend sewed into her mutilated stomach.

Benavides choice must not have been easy to make. It's never easy to choose the way of suffering and hardship that inevitably comes from opposing the established government. But considering the alternative — slow mass starvation, Benavides felt she had little choice.

"We are fighting a war for tortillas and beans," Benavides told a handful of people at the Wesley Center earlier this month. Her soft Latin accent became sharp as her voice rose with emotion. "We are accused of being subversive, but my people don't know what that means. We are not communist. All we know is that we are tired of starving to death and working in the fields without shoes. We just want to live."

Benavides has talked mostly to religious groups. But she is expanding her audiences to include students because, she said, we are the

ones who will influence policy decisions in the coming years.

The Wesley Center audience was mostly students. Benavides shook her fist at the group and told us we are too

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passive, that we are not allowing ourselves to develop ethical standards.

Benavides challenged us to protest U.S. involvement in El Salvador by writing our representatives, through the popular media, through church organizations — in short, using any and all means open to us to express our views on the subject.

Perhaps even that won't be enough to stop the course of events. In that sense, Benavides will have failed in her mission. But at least a small part of one American university now knows who the real revolutionaries in El Salvador are and why.

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