

State divestment bill merits firm support

It's called "constructive engagement," a policy by which the United States government seeks to end the racist system of apartheid in South Africa. This idea is not new. For over half a century, the U.S. Government has given billions of dollars in military and economic aid to South Africa. American corporations have heavily invested there, and the two countries have remained strong and friendly allies. At the same time, through symbolic gestures known as "quiet diplomacy," the United States has expressed its dismay with apartheid. The result of this policy is clear: Apartheid has continued to entrench itself, leaving blacks without political rights, citizenship, or economic security. In South Africa, blacks continue to be non-persons.

Americans must cast off the illusion that President Ronald Reagan's policy of "constructive engagement" works. It does not. Since Reagan took office, hundreds of blacks have been killed by police, hundreds have been banned, thousands have been jailed for protesting apartheid laws, and thousands more have been forcibly evicted from "white areas" and resettled in "black areas." According to South African Bishop Desmond Tutu, 1984 Nobel Peace Prize recipient, more blacks have died at the hands of the South African police since Reagan began his policy of constructive engagement than during the previous decade. In the last three weeks alone, 80 blacks have been killed in clashes with police and 29 major black anti-apartheid organizations have been banned from holding meetings.

On Wednesday, the Oregon Legislature will begin hearings on whether or not the state should divest all financial holdings from organizations that do business with South Africa. House Bill 2001 is an attempt by Oregon legislators to offer more than just anti-apartheid rhetoric in the struggle for justice in South Africa. It deserves everyone's firm support.

Bishop Tutu has repeatedly declared that western economic pressure through divestment is the only alternative to a violent uprising in South Africa. Cecil Ramaposa, the leader of South Africa's largest black trade union, has also stated his support for divestment. Asked by ABC News if divestment would only make blacks suffer more, Ramaposa responded that the economic effects of divestment on blacks will be minimal compared to the daily suffering they now endure under the apartheid system. Other black South African leaders, including Dr. Allan Boesak, President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Albetina Sisulu, co-president of the United Democratic Front, and Winnie Mandela, wife of jailed African National Congress president Nelson Mandela, have all declared their support for divestment. Only Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, whom many black South Africans consider a traitor because of his collaboration with the apartheid government, speaks out against divestment. He is a lone voice, but one often quoted by those who claim South African blacks are anti-divestment.

Neither should Americans be fooled by the Sullivan principles. These voluntary rules require U.S. corporations in South Africa to practice non-discrimination between black and white workers. While a good idea, the Sullivan principles have had minimal impact on South Africa's apartheid system. Outside of the workplace, the violence of apartheid continues.

Black South Africans have called upon the United States to join in the struggle to end apartheid. Divestment is the way to do this. Join the fight against apartheid by supporting the Oregon divestment bill. Write to the House Human Resource Committee, State Capital Building, Salem, OR. 97310 and make your feelings known. There is no more time to waste.



letters

On abortion

In responding to Tim Swillinger's letter (ODE, March 11) I would like to remind him that 98 percent of abortions have absolutely nothing to do with rape, incest, health of the mother, or deformity of the child.

Furthermore, forcible rape rarely results in pregnancy. Studies suggest that a variety of physiological factors inhibit fertilization and/or implantation even if sperm is ejaculated into the vagina by the rapist. Interestingly enough, the people who say rape is violence, not sex, point out that rapists usually don't or can't ejaculate during rape, which substantiates the claim that rapists are motivated by hatred.

Of course, there are creeps who coerce their girlfriends to engage in sex, which often does result in pregnancy. After all, the woman probably didn't use birth control since she didn't expect to have sex. But who benefits from abortion in that case? The guy, because he knows he can force himself on a woman and if she gets pregnant, then that's her problem. Let her get an abortion will be his attitude. He had his fun.

I know women who've been in this situation. None wanted abortions, but their boyfriends threatened they'd leave them otherwise. In every case, the guy coerced the woman into an abortion, the woman regretted it, and the guy dumped her afterwards. From what I understand, that's usually the rule — not the exception.

Let's face it, abortion hasn't benefitted women, but it has liberated males from responsibility. If anything, it encourages men to take advantage of women.

Michael Cross
History/Political Science

EMU display

I would have liked to view the so-called "pornographic display" offered by the Women's Resource and Referral Service in the EMU. It deprives me of my right to an equal education when women are not allowed to express their views. I have heard men complain bitterly of the humiliation of living off the "Welfare tit." Women are entitled to express the same feelings in their own imagery.

I searched the EMU for the controversial display, but found instead two displays, both offered by men, showing naked women. I could not discern any important social statement in either display. I inquired at WRRS and they said the EMU felt pressured to remove their display early.

About the "Penk" decision: it is laughable that the judge required the women to show a "pattern" of discrimination. Discrimination is not a pretty piece of embroidery or quiltwork, Your Honor. Perhaps the message you meant to convey is that we should all go back to our sewing.

Mary Berman
Law

Ignorance

Well, once again I find myself roused from silence by another wonderful display of malicious ignorance on the part of America's less-conscientious "majority." I just flicked off the Phil Donahue show, after being told "the solution to the problem of teenage pregnancy is premarital abstinence."

Now don't get me wrong; I'm all in favor of marriage. I think it is of utmost importance to provide each new generation of American youth with a Mommy and a Daddy who love each other, and the baby they've created. (The fact that the majority of marriages in this country don't meet this criterion is a subject for a tangentially related investigation.)

I feel it necessary, however, to make an observation or two at

this point. First and foremost: Homo sapiens is a sexual animal. Secondly, this twisted fantasy that teenagers are willing, or indeed capable of abstaining from premarital sex is rank and cruel absurdity. When two people are attracted to one another, the old endocrine system cuts in, and that's all she wrote.

I feel that it's a waste of time to hotly debate the abortion issue when we still haven't addressed the foundation of the problem.

It's the 20th century now, folks. We have cars, lasers, and, yes, even birth control. God didn't specifically allow it because it didn't exist when the Bible was being written — it's a bunch of weird old men who say birth control is bad; not God Almighty. And birth control obviates the necessity of premarital abstinence. I rest my case.

Jonathan Zweig
Concerned hedonist

Street vendors

Recently, the city circulated petitions to local restaurants regarding the street vendors on 13th Avenue. In its wisdom, the city neglected to provide a place for signatures and chose to distribute the questionnaire to only a few selected businesses in the area. Understandably, the questionnaires returned with a negative response; one of the coffee vendors, as a result, has been denied a permit and is no longer in business. The same questionnaire is being distributed by the remaining vendors and I urge the students to stop and sign them. Street vendors offer a needed service to the student community; not only in terms of their products but also for their contribution to the liveability of our streets. The city and local businesses could learn a lesson from Portland, which has encouraged street vendors; they contribute to the economic vitality of the area by offering a variety of services and they attract customers to all local establishments by the activity level they generate.

The last thing this area can afford to lose is any kind of variety that draws customers; street vendors increase rather than inhibit local profits.

Bjorn Olson
Landscape Architecture
Monday, April 1, 1985

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