

Anti-boycott position morally vacuous ...

Mr Miller's letter (*Gateway*, p. 26) decrying the recon- sideration of university invest- ments in South Africa by the Board of Governors expressed a vacuous position that one cannot morally attack one in- justice as being worse than all others. This conveniently ob- scures all organised support for human rights to impotency. The letter listed a number of alleged human rights violations of different governments (both

genuine and false) but neglected to mention two important and unique points concerning South Africa. First of all, only that country enshrines racialism as an integral ideological component of its constitution and legal code. Thus, whereas the civil rights movement of the U.S.A. was able to proceed (admittedly with great opposition) by blacks simply claiming their constitutional rights, South Africa has shown countless examples of

employers, universities and town-councils having to reverse previously liberal racial policies because they were illegal or unconstitutional.

Second, racialism there is not the problem of a mis- understood minority but a case of systematic discrimination against the vast majority of the population. It is important to state here that two of the main architects of apartheid, Verwoerd and Vorster, were

both detained during the war for pro-Nazi activities, and it is this unique glorification of racialism as a political ideology which has united almost all other countries in a condemnation of South Africa.

With regard to the possible "erosion of minority freedoms" caused by the B of G's action, it should be remembered that the university is a corporation which acquires both student fees and public grants and the B of G (itself an unelected minority group) invests this money regardless of the opinions of the student body or the public. Investment suggestions made to the B of G on this issue involved both students and staff and has thus only extended democracy by allowing outside input and prompting an informed discus- sion. Furthermore, ex- South African Prime Minister Vorster's

statement that "each new invest- ment is another brick in the wall of our continued existence" has led to huge domestic anti- apartheid groups such as the African National Congress to call for a cessation of foreign investment in their country.

The universities of Wiscon- sin, Massachusetts, Oregon and Manitoba have withdrawn invest- ments from companies con- nected with South Africa and it is sad that the U of A has not taken a firm decision to follow suit instead of its weak declaration of good intent followed by enough caveats to ensure ineffectuality. Disinvestment in South Africa infringes the minority rights of nobody. On the contrary, it supports a huge majority in their attempt to be treated like human beings.

Steve Goff
Grad Studies

... and grave act of irresponsibility

Richard Miller's letter of p. 26 opposing the withdrawal of investments in South Africa demands a response. According to him, the decision by the Board of Governors to reconsider their investments in the said country is a grave act of irresponsibility. There are three parts to his argument. First, it is against the democratic process for a pressure group to "impose" its will on the larger community. The way in which Mr. Miller expresses it, one would think that these pressure groups were holding hostage the entire B of G with conditions for release being withdrawal of South African investments. Come, Mr. Miller, the democratic process is something if not a means whereby people as individuals and people

as groups attempt to persuade others into their line of thinking. Evidently some people from these pressure groups have been able to convince members of the B of G that South African investments are a very human issue.

Secondly, Miller claims that "... there is no middle road between a policy of totally open investment, or no investment at all, anywhere." Implications of this point of view? Economies cannot have anything to do with morality. And since economics is so much a part of our lives, morality has no relation to large areas of life.

To be fair, of course we run into problems. As a part of this economic system, we are subject to ambiguities. We are parties to

many kinds of oppression in many different forms, likely to a greater extent than we presently realize. This does not mean, however, that we resign ourselves to being implacable oppressors. We have the responsibility to take the steps we are able to mitigate at least the most oppressive aspects of the system we are a part of. It is on this basis that withdrawal of investments from S. Africa is justified.

A further implication of Miller's stance is that the right to invest funds takes precedence over any other consideration. Nothing should interfere with the pursuit of our material well- being. One doesn't have to read much history to know where that leads.

Finally, Miller asks why the concern is focused on South Africa and Rhodesia while other instances of oppression are ignored. As far as I'm concerned, it's the only valid point he makes. The answer, I believe, has to do with which actions are within our ability and how effective those actions would be. There are many places in the world where we cannot do much to stop human rights violations. S. Africa, as far as I can tell, is not one of them. We have economic links with that country, and these can be used either to support a repressive regime or to pressure for change. As long as we recognize that S. Africa is not the only place of repression, hypocrisy is not a part of the question.

Len Siemens
Arts 3

Send Hohol home

At a time when enrollments are dropping in the Faculty of Education and professors and academic staff are concerned about their futures, why has Hohol been hired?

The one person who had the power to help the university, its academic staff and its students, eight long years, did nothing for education. Instead of raising fees and making education a top priority in this province which abounds in wealth, he enjoys saying NO.

He considers himself to be an educator? He is an opportunist, using people on the way up the ladder and on the way down the ladder. Does he think

we have forgotten? Less than one year ago he said "As long as I am a member of this government, tuition fees will continue to rise regularly." Now our rising fees will pay his salary? To give him the honor of instructing on this campus is a tremendous *faux- pas*. What we need are humanists who really do believe education should be a top priority in this province. In the words of Paulo Freire: "Problem-posing education, as a humanist and liberating praxis, posits as fundamental that men subjected to domination must fight for their emancipation."

Lila Fahlman
Grad Studies

NUS has friends

We understand students of the University of Alberta will be voting in a NUS/UNE referendum February 9. The students council at Regina would like students to vote YES in the upcoming referendum.

The University of Regina Students' Union has been a member of NUS/UNE since it was formed in 1972, and we have affirmed our membership in 1977 when students voted the NUS/UNE fee increase into our student fees. We have had a lot of benefits from the organization since we became members. The organization has helped us formulate an analysis of what is happening to post- secondary education in Canada, as well as assisted in concrete organizing on-campus.

There are many benefits of joining the NUS — too many to go into in a short space. I urge you to seriously con- sider the NUS and after due consideration of the problems facing students during this time of fiscal restraint, vote

YES to a strong national student voice!

Hope to see U of A representatives at the next NUS conference!

Bev Crossman
President
Students' Council
University of Regina

U of Saskatchewan supports NUS

Word of your referendum to join the National Union of Students has reached Saskatchewan, and we as a member encourage you all to vote "yes."

The NUS is important to all students and their respective student unions especially at a time when federal and provincial governments are hitting hard at education. Tuition increases, unemployment, cutbacks in spending, student aid deteriora- tion and exorbitant housing costs are all part of a national problem, and therefore must be

dealt with at a national, as well as provincial and local level.

Over the past academic year NUS at the national level has published the *Student Advocate*, the *Bulletin*, performed valuable research tasks such as the paper on Established Program Finan- cing and appeared before the federal government with briefs on unemployment insurance (Bill C-14) as well as other issues. NUS conferences and meetings since May 1978 have initiated and stimulated activity all over Canada to oppose the cutbacks in post-secondary education. This work must continue and be

expanded, but NUS needs the strength of such large student bodies as the University of Alberta.

With more members, NUS can expand and intensify its work to bring a quicker end to the haphazard manner in which education is treated by the federal government — benefit- ing all post-secondary students in Canada.

Join NUS — strengthen the collective student voice in the West, and in Canada.

Fraternally and sororally,
The University of Saskatchewan Students' Union

