

Mr. Malcolm Dade
Chairperson
The Board of Trustees
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824

August 1, 1985

Dear Mr. Dade:

We write as members of the MSU community concerned about the stance of the university on the South African issue.

It has been brought to the attention of the University community and the public at large through the statement of Vice-President Joseph Dickinson (Lansing State Journal, May 23, 1985) that the MSU Foundation has not yet complied with the 1978 decision of the MSU Board of Trustees and the 1980 State of Michigan Educational Divestiture Act to have no part in the support of apartheid and to divest its financial portfolio of holdings in corporations profiting on South Africa's oppression.

The Southern Africa Liberation Committee (SALC) and many MSU faculty have been proud to indicate to other universities, members of the public, and representatives from Africa that ours was the first major public university to divest from South African holdings. The Board and the University community acted on the facts of South Africa, which have worsened in recent months, and on moral grounds appropriate to an academic community - without major demonstrations and sit-ins on campus such as we see at Harvard, Cornell, and other universities.

In various circles in the nation and across Africa, MSU has concretely benefited from the divestiture in being seen as a quality and far-sighted institution, which acts both locally and globally on its commitment to racial justice and equality. For instance, the university was congratulated by several African governments, and subsequently several contracts and major exchanges have been awarded to MSU, in part due to our stand on the side of majority rule in Southern Africa. Furthermore, not only did we not lose money in the divestiture through any imprudence, but the university profited on the stock divestment and reinvestment.

We would expect that the Trustees would take immediate action to bring the Foundation into compliance with the Trustees 1978 and State 1980 decisions. This would be in the spirit and intent of the existing regulations of the Board, even if the Foundation should not be legally covered by the 1980 law of the State. We note that the Western Michigan University foundation already has decided on such a course, apparently on the basis of their legal assessments that the State Educational Divestiture Law of 1980 does cover any "private foundation" which is created solely for the benefit and purposes of the university.

We find no reason for hesitation - either legal, financial, or moral, now that even the U.S. Congress is acting in harmony with MSU in voting sanctions of South Africa and of commerce there.

Sincerely yours,

for the Southern Africa Liberation Committee.