

NO MORE!; the G.W. - South Africa Connection — "Radicals at Large"

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Why a protest at G.W.? Our sunny, and expensive, launching pad for tomorrow's YUPPIE is being encroached upon by strange rumblings and dark words about South Africa. G.W. has taken a big bite on that far-off bullet, and several sides of the issue of apartheid are being chewed over right here.

Did you know that G.W. invests half its endowment in a 200 university consortium known as the Common Fund? C.F. runs high return portfolios for these schools; and high returns is what makes South Africa an attractive C.F. investment. D.C. delegate Walter Fauntroy called South Africa: "the cheapest labor market in the world." The reason, of course, is apartheid; the white minority system of separating and controlling the country's Black majority. The C.F. is the major G.W.-South Africa connection; G.W.'s investment in Continental Illinois Bank makes for a tasty sidedish. Cont. Illinois, also a major S. African investor, almost went down under several years ago. Even with this recent collapse, Continental still held \$ 700,000 of G.W.'s money in 1984.

On Friday, Sept. 20, a ray of possible change broke through. President Lloyd Elliot and V.P. Charles Diehl sat down, for the first time, with members of G.W. Voices for a Free South Africa. Voices is a coalition of G.W. student groups, clergy, and faculty, working to open discussion on South Africa, and affect change in G.W.'s investment policy. Last spring the university refused any meetings with Voices. Once a campus rally was organized, however, Voices was invited to air their views with an official of the treasurer's office. A promise was made to study investment alternatives over the summer. Some take the opinion that the university hoped the issue would die out as months stretched over a dormant campus. They were mistaken, for Voices returned with a full agenda beginning last Thursday, with a rally at the S. African Embassy, and intensifying in the weeks ahead. Again (coincidentally?) G.W. responded, this time with its top officials.

Rabbi Gerry Serotta, a co-founder of Voices, said of the meeting: "I'm pretty encouraged, my distinct feeling is that the President (Elliot not Reagan) has an open mind... and is strongly opposed to apartheid... He's just looking for a way for the university to do something about it."

Voices' members came away from the meeting agreeing that Elliot has not really made up his mind on the issue. He has agreed though to send University V.P. Diehl to the C.F. in order to pursue the possibilities of a S. Africa-free portfolio. Elliot has acknowledged that the Sullivan Principles, a criterion for fair investment in S. Africa that the C.F. claims to follow, are now being seriously questioned. Finally, they have agreed to continue this type of meetings with the campus community. These are solid steps for a university which has treated its critics with a certain Nixonian disdain. They still refuse to release any C.F. reports, (which would show directly the S. African connection) but hopefully this secrecy is becoming a thing of the past.

The pace of that change is now at the center of the debate. "We're trying every avenue of communication with the University, we want to talk," said Suzie Lazaroff, of the P.S.U. "But they don't seem to recognize the immediacy of the situation; that people are dying over there. If they keep delaying, we'll move on to more confrontational methods."

The stage is set for an almost infinite variety of possibilities. The Reverend Jesse Jackson comes to G.W. on Friday, and on the same day G.W. students will march with others from the Dept. of Labor to the Ellipse, protesting apartheid and U.S. policy towards S. Africa. October 11 is National Anti-Apartheid Day, and actions will be held on the G.W. campus. To sweeten the pie, the G.W. Board of Trustees meets in October. G.W. Voices wants to be on their agenda.

Meanwhile in S. Africa, over seven hundred Blacks have died this year, the Bishop Desmond Tutu has been radicalized, the government makes gestures that the people discard as empty, and more of the same. There the battle lines are drawn. Need they be here too?