

scholarship. We salute his dedication. We acknowledge his person. We will regret his absence and we will honor his choice.

On behalf of the staff, I present you, Don Cosentino with a symbol of your continued achievement and our continued esteem.

(Ed. note: Cosentino was presented with a ceramic statue of one of his own personal heroes, Don Quixote, and a card on which the signatures of staff members, present and past, were hastily forged by Verla Huckaby in the wee hours preceding the Presidential Banquet.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RESPONSE TO TIAA—CREF RESOLUTION

Dear Sirs,

For the first time in many years the Board of Directors has adopted a resolution on a strictly political issue. Unlike the CIA resolution of 1976, or the Defense Intelligence Agency resolution of 1982, or the UNESCO resolution of 1984, the TIAA—CREF resolution of November 1985 is not directly concerned with the professional conduct or associations of Africanist scholars. Plainly political in content, this resolution urges members of the ASA to support a policy of phased divestment from companies operating in South Africa.

Several years ago, members of the ASA decided, by mail vote, that official positions on political matters establish standards of conformity that are incompatible with the heterodox principle upon which scholarly membership associations are properly founded. That decision, as Donald Cosentino has observed in his "Farewell" as Executive Secretary, was a choice for "the spice of controversy and diversity" rather than "the gruel of orthodoxy". It also guards against the dual threat of (1) deterioration of the ASA to the level of a mere pressure group and (2) intellectual disintegration when serious scholars begin to drift away from a "captured" organization. Let us not forget that our last bout of politicization, during the 1970's, was not without some cost to this association in the professional quality of its membership.

Those who support our latest political resolution would have to concede that the pledges they demand of American companies in South Africa are nearly identical with the self-directed declarations of both the American Chamber of Commerce in South Africa and an elite association of some 50 larger companies, known as the U.S. Corporate Council of South Africa. However, the TIAA—CREF resolution calls for the abandonment of corporate strategies against apartheid by March 1, 1987, if the South African government has not capitulated on all of the specified points by that date. If that requirement is ever implemented, opponents of apartheid would then be deprived of powerful allies in the all-important world of business.

Those of us who do not agree with the Board's resolution may well believe that it has chosen to endorse a relatively ineffective course of anti-apartheid action as a result of conformist pressures within the ASA.

Yours sincerely,

Richard L. Sklar
Professor of Political Science
UCLA

UC INVESTMENT AND UC AFRICANISTS (continued)

Dear Sirs,

The University of California Investment Policy in South Africa statement that the Committee of UC Africanists prepared for the UC Board of Regents, and which you published as an editorial position in the *ASA News* (July/Sept. 1985), is very disappointing in its content. Events are far and away in advance of the committee's position. Its members used as their guidelines the Sullivan Principles, among other investment policies, but even Rev. Sullivan has advanced his earlier position, having given a deadline for the dismantling of apartheid, and failing that he is prepared to support full divestiture.

What would have been more useful than an expounding on Sullivan and the American Chamber of Commerce would have been a measured account of how the University of California (and more importantly its Africanists) can, in these scholars' own words, "safeguard against complicity with racism [by being] responsive to black South African opinion in the pursuit of its investment policy".

The neighboring African states and the recently formed Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) have stated their willingness to see divestiture used to bring about a collapse of the apartheid economy in order to force the whites to abandon apartheid and transfer political power to the majority. The Durban-based Institute for Black Research found in a survey taken this past summer that almost 75% of the blacks support disinvestment. Around the same time, the Markin poll that almost 80% of the black South Africans favor sanctions.

These are not new revelations. Earlier polls indicated similar opinions. Over 20 years ago the late president-general of the African National Congress and Nobel Peace Prize winner Chief Albert Luthuli said about the economic boycott proposal that "if it is a method which shortens the day of bloodshed, the suffering to us will be a price we are willing to pay".

In September Rev. Alan Boesak became the first South African to be charged with sabotage for publicly calling upon foreign states and companies to withdraw their investments. The United Democratic Front, whose leaders are presently on trial for treason, is on record for favoring an economic boycott. That really only leaves Chief Mangosuthu Gatscha Buthelezi in favor of continued investment. Buthelezi and his Inkatha organization enjoy only limited support, much of it coerced, not popular.

There is, therefore, a substantial and growing body of evidence upon which the committee could have drawn to inform the UC Regents about the African opinion. The committee simply ignored that evidence and instead chose to conclude that it would be "irresponsible for Americans to walk away from South Africa, leaving their plants and