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# Scarlet & Black

Volume 91, Number 27

May 7, 1982

## The South Africa Support Group tries again "We really hope they'll divest this time"

by Michael Alexander

### DIVEST NOW!

These days it seems impossible to get through a whole day at Grinnell without seeing or hearing that infamous phrase somewhere. But what does it mean? Read on, pilgrim . . .

The issue of corporate responsibility is not new at Grinnell College. The first record of interest in the cause goes back to 1973 when four students went before the Board of Trustees with a resolution calling for a policy of investor responsibility. The resolution was adopted without any major struggle, and was hailed by the S&B with optimism: ". . . in the area of public responsibility, Grinnell can be proud that it stands unified in favor of action to further the best interests of the society around us."

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Nine years have passed since then, and that optimism has been replaced with a feeling of frustration on the part of many students. It was in this atmosphere that the South Africa Support Group was formed.

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It all started in the fall of 1980, when exiled South African journalist Dumisani Kumalo came to give a convocation speech. Some students were extremely interested in what he had to say, but it took them a while to get organized and form a group.

They then discovered, in the beginning of the second semester, that the Board of Trustees was about to hold an open forum. About one week before it occurred, they formed a group on the spur of the moment. The group distributed a petition in three days and collected almost 500 signatures. At the forum, about 20 of the students stood up and read to the trustees a statement detailing the petition, and requesting divestment.

The trustees agreed to meet with them to talk about it the following day. "At this point we really hadn't put in a lot of work," said Joel Robbins, member of SASG. "We knew what was wrong with South Africa and why we wanted divestment, but we hadn't ever thought that there were arguments on the other side. We just hadn't worked things out. They told us a lot of their reservations, and agreed to have a formal talk with the Board at their next meeting."

Before that meeting, the group circulated a new petition and set up South Africa information tables at the post office and the dining halls. They also began to do a lot of research in an attempt to solidify their arguments. This research for-

mulated the foundation of a pamphlet which they published shortly before they met with the trustees for a second time, on May 1 of last year.

"We gave an hour-long presentation," Robbins said. "They listened politely, but finally said that they hadn't studied the situation enough in a year and a half. Intellectually, that's where it's ended."

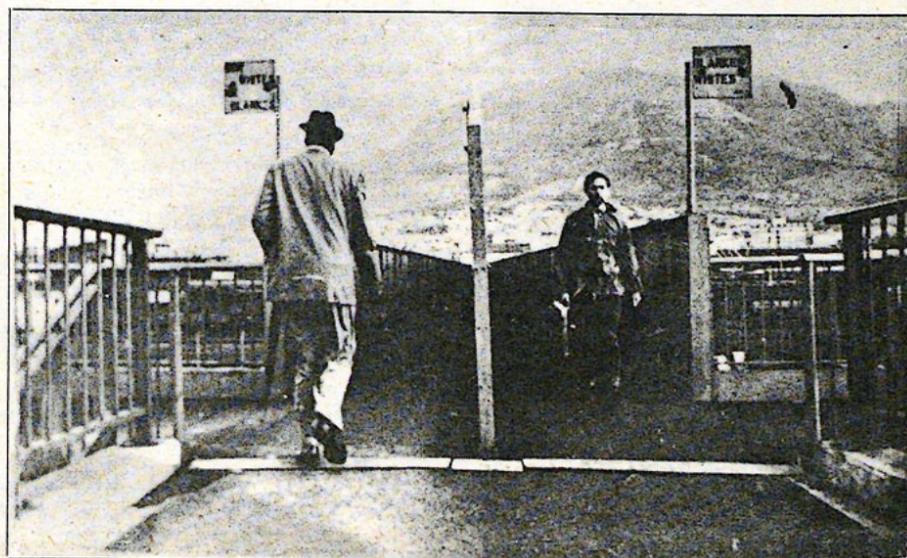
"I suppose their arguments are on several levels, but basically they say that the college divesting would do nothing to affect the situation down there, and also it would represent Grinnell College 'washing its hands.' Well, the most basic argument you can make about this is, if your hands are dirty, wash them. We're doing nothing now, we've never voted on proxy resolutions positively . . . we've never voted 'yes' on any move to change things; we've never taken any initiative. And the Board just doesn't have any time, they're here just three days a year. So essentially, they're guilty right now."

"Grinnell's divesting stands a chance of doing something. It will get publicity, and it can help other colleges to divest, i.e. the domino effect. Also, it is encouraging news, and they would find out about it in South Africa, and that helps. There are all kinds of bodies, like the American Committee on Africa, that are set up to publicize these things. And if Grinnell imagines itself to be a moral leader, a little bit above the rest and such a fine institution, then it might as well think that its lead is worth something."

"One big thing about past groups like ours is that they come and go. People graduate. Which is one of the reasons, I think, that the trustees love to take so much time. They figure we'll graduate and the thing will just die out. It's like anything else at the college — it comes in waves. What they don't know is that this group is pretty well organized and has people of different class years in it, and hopefully we won't peter out if they don't do what we want. We'll keep the pressure on."

One breakthrough for the group occurred at Wednesday's Joint Board meeting. SASG proposed that SGA adopt the resolution that A) No student government funds be invested in corporations operating in South Africa; and B) That Grinnell College should divest its endowment of all stocks held in corporations operating in South Africa.

After some debate among members, including David Molho and Harley Liker who argued against the adoption of the proposal, there was an in-



A segregated bridge in Camp Town, South Africa. Here discrimination is not merely an idea, it is the law.

itial vote: 8-7, against. Amidst a chorus of groans, Jeff Schmidt slowly raised his hand. "I wasn't called on to vote," he said. "And I vote...yes." That tied the vote and the decision rested with SGA President Doug Rowe. All eyes were on him as he looked down, then slowly raised his head, smiled, and said one word: "yes." The room was filled with sighs and cheers and Rowe kiddingly remarked, "That's probably the most important thing I've done all year."

Apparently, the Board of Trustees will not be swayed as easily. According to several SASG members, the group has been sending them information about the situation since their first meeting with them. Yet the trustees still claim that they aren't sufficiently familiar with the issue. For this reason, members of SASG cringe over occasions such as last fall when the group tried to show trustees a slide show of South Africa, and they asked in the middle of it not to see the rest.

Larry Hecimovich, member of the support group, elaborated on the issue: "We've given them a lot of information beforehand; when we went to meet with these people — this was a special committee that had been appointed four months before — they hadn't read anything we'd sent them, they had no idea of the issues or anything. So they were saying, OK, let's start from zero and eventually maybe we'll be able to talk intelligently with you, but we aren't now. So that meant that it would be another four months before we could get anywhere again, and that's this opportunity."

Robbins echoed Hecimovich's sentiments. He said, "They've now had a lot of information sent to them, and if they don't know the issues, then it's basically their fault. There's no more we could have done. And it is their responsibility to point up their side. They can't expect us to go out and get their side for them."

He continued, "There are about two ways you can lose something like this: you can get slaughtered by arguments, or you could lose because you weren't ready. But the trustees haven't bothered to give a

good argument. All the information is our information. How are you going to win if you don't do your work?"

"Also," he continued, "we know that there are some trustees whose position is not to defend the status quo on the board. If the 'big money men' on the board aren't doing a good job supporting their position, I can't see these other trustees just being slid along in what's supposed to be a consensus decision."

"The 12-page report we sent them goes a lot deeper than anything we've sent them before. It goes through every objection that the trustees have raised and refutes them. It also comes complete with a letter telling the trustees that this time we want a coherent answer. We have given them what they asked for: a well-documented, concrete proposal for divestment, and we've supported it. If they can't do the same . . . well, no matter how intimidating it might be to be told you're wrong by a bunch of millionaires, they can't just keep exercising their power. They can't stand up there and bullshit again. That's essentially the tone of the letter."

Today at 4:30 p.m., a group of five students from the group are going to meet with the trustees. A rally, which will be taking place outside of Grinnell House, will be going on during the discussion. Food will be served, and Professors Wall, Magurshak and Guirira will be speaking.

"We really hope they'll divest this time," concluded Robbins. "I think they might, because there are a lot of students and faculty behind it, and I think that they really haven't done the work to uphold their position amidst our coherent and well-formulated opposition. If we lose again, we're not going to stop, obviously. We'll just have to begin to take a more vocal stance; we'll become annoying. So far we've been a very nice group . . . we've done everything within the realm of reason. We haven't questioned their power at all. Certainly the demonstrations won't stop, they'll only get bigger. They're not going to be able to avoid it . . . the heat's too strong, and it's not going to stop burning."

*"... no matter how intimidating it might be to be told you're wrong by a bunch of millionaires, they can't just keep exercising their power. They can't stand up there and bullshit again."*

## Joint Board asks Frazer to resign one of her positions SGA votes on letter to Frazer and divestment

by Melissa Kagle

In the last meeting of the current Joint Board and Cabinet Wednesday night, S.G.A. unanimously approved a proposal to send a letter to Dean Catherine Frazer asking for her resignation in either one of her two positions at the college.

Frazer's role in the denial of tenure to Assistant Professor of Philosophy Dan Magurshak is a subject of dispute around campus. In the lengthy Joint Board meeting, David Cooke, the off-campus representative, read a letter he drafted which asks for the resignation of Dean Frazer either from her position as dean of faculty or as tenured professor of philosophy. In his letter, Cooke cited the conflict of interest inherent in holding both posts, and Frazer's recent "exploitation" of her "unusual position." He noted the possibility of future misuses of

power as reasons for the request that she resign from one of the positions.

Cowles Hall Representative Harley Liker pointed out that Frazer refused to resign at a special, closed session of SGA held Tuesday night and that the letter is not likely to have any effect on her decision. Student Publications and Radio Chair David Molho reminded the representatives that as students they do not have all the facts in the case.

Auditor Leighton Nakata made an analogy between this case and that of Richard Nixon, who was asked to resign by the American people although a large majority of them did not have all the facts in the case. Nixon also refused to resign at first.

The board voted unanimously to present the letter not only to Frazer, but also to the

trustees. After the vote, Molho warned them that if the trustees found the letter to be factually incorrect, it would cause problems with letters sent to the trustees in the future.

In other business, the South African Support Group proposed the divestment of the college's and SGA's funds from South African Corporations. During a lively discussion of this proposal, Molho voiced the most opposition, arguing that the only way that the U.S. can maintain their beneficial influences is by continuing to invest in that country.

He claimed that although the U.S. corporations are not perfect, they do provide some of the best working conditions and highest wages in South Africa. Molho concluded by saying that Grinnell and other colleges should start a movement to

pressure U.S. corporations to continue to improve rather than lose our influence by withdrawing the SGA funds.

Chris Lehman and Joel Robbins refuted Molho's arguments by saying that U.S. businesses cannot have any affect on the South African government because they are required by law to stay within the rules of the apartheid government. Therefore, the two stated that the only way the U.S. can influence is through divestment.

Joint Board President Rowe was forced to cast a deciding vote after the proposal resulted in a tie vote among the hall representatives. He voted in favor of divestment.

The 1982-83 budget passed with only one ammendment, the addition of a \$200 salary for the business manager of the Student Publications and Radio Committee. The budget will be voted on again next fall.

## Library finds a temporary home in North Lounge McKee says rumors "are a distortion of things which are true"

by Kim MacDonald

Rumors about the possible closure of Burling Library have circulated for months. A small announcement in this week's Memo changed this rumor into fact.

On the day after Commencement, the reference department, including the card catalogue, the circulation desk, the interlibrary loan system and the secretary to the Librarian of the College Christopher McKee, will take up residence in North Lounge.

According to McKee, Burling will be closed to the general public only until New Students Days this fall. Some staff, including McKee himself, will remain in the building, in part to supervise the collection and because of the complexity of moving

certain equipment. The cataloguing and acquisitions departments in the basement will remain, as will the library computer system, since it is difficult to move the computers.

McKee said he will stay in order to keep a "presence of library personnel in the building," and to oversee the day to day progress. The remaining staff will keep an eye on the books to guard against water damage and excessive humidity. At times, there will be very few windows in the library and there is currently no air conditioning.

The collection will be available to the general public by means of runners who will fetch requested books from the library.

The decision to move arose from a "cluster of reasons," according to McKee. He explained that the primary reason is "the need to vacate floors as much as possible" to allow for construction and the installation of carpeting. Furthermore, North Lounge has the advantage of air conditioning, which, because of duct work, is no longer operating in the library.

As far as rumors circulating about Burling operating from North Lounge as late as next Thanksgiving, McKee claims these rumors are, "a distortion of things which are true. . . we won't finish in the basement 'til Christmas." But he expects the library to be "near normal by New Student Days." "We wouldn't like to move anymore than anyone else," said McKee, and added,

"there's no question. . . we want to be back here as soon as possible."

Although the construction is currently behind schedule in some areas, it is ahead in others. The book stacks for the penthouse floors are delayed over a month and will not arrive until July 4. However, McKee explained that the crew is working on other things and "making up the lost time as [it goes] along." According to McKee, the crew would like to start work on the mezzanine right now, but he will not allow this until after finals. "Everyone is committed to finishing on schedule," said McKee. Barring any unforeseen delays, he is confident that Burling will be usable to students when the college reopens this fall.

## Convocation speaker comments on Chinese culture China's political state reflected in art and poetry



Jonathan Spence discusses Chinese history in last week's final convocation. Photo by Joel Aach.

by Seth Meisel

Making Chinese History accessible to the Western reader has been one of historian Jonathon Spence's main concerns in his writings on China. Spence, the George Burton Adams professor of history at Yale University, delivered the final scholar's convocation last week speaking on contemporary China. In an interview with the S&B, Spence talked about goals for his books and gave some observations on modern China.

In his last three books, *The Emperor of China*, *The Death of Woman Wang*, and *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*, Spence has been looking for the middle ground between the complex analysis of monographs which are usually reserved for serious scholars of China, and literature that has aimed for popularity with broad generalizations about China, yet without any historical references. Instead, he said he has tried to "develop an aesthetic structure around an accurate historical center which could be archivally based. And then you can draw the western reader into a level of intimate contact with the Chinese reality, rather than having it all utterly distant and broad or so distant they couldn't grasp it at all."

Spence admitted that his background in Western Humanities may be partly

responsible for his preference for aesthetic sources, such as poetry, novels and art, rather than political sources. He sees in these sources a reflection of political and cultural currents. Reviewing the contemporary cultural scene in China, Spence pointed out some of these trends.

Poetry recently has been sharply critical of the state. In its bold criticism Spence sees a parallel to the anti-Guomindag poetry of the 1940s. Film is another area that has become a forum for criticism, although within certain bounds. Safe topics for criticism have been the gang of four, the cultural revolution, and Japanese imperialism during Chiang Kai Shek's reign. However, Spence pointed out that shrewd directors have been able to imply that their criticism of events in Chinese history have parallels in modern China. Or, like Bai Hui, whose film he discussed in his convocation lecture, a filmmaker may selectively present his history of the revolutionary period.

One of his recent interests has been in Chinese photography. As a reviewer of an exhibiton of the Chinese photography which will open this week in Washington D.C. at the National Academy of Sciences, he was able to discern some interesting developments. The show was almost entirely landscapes yet he was struck by the difference in these idyllic landscapes and what would have been shown when Mao was alive. He pointed out that under Mao such landscapes would have shown a peasant working in a field or a smokestack as a symbol of China's industrial progress.

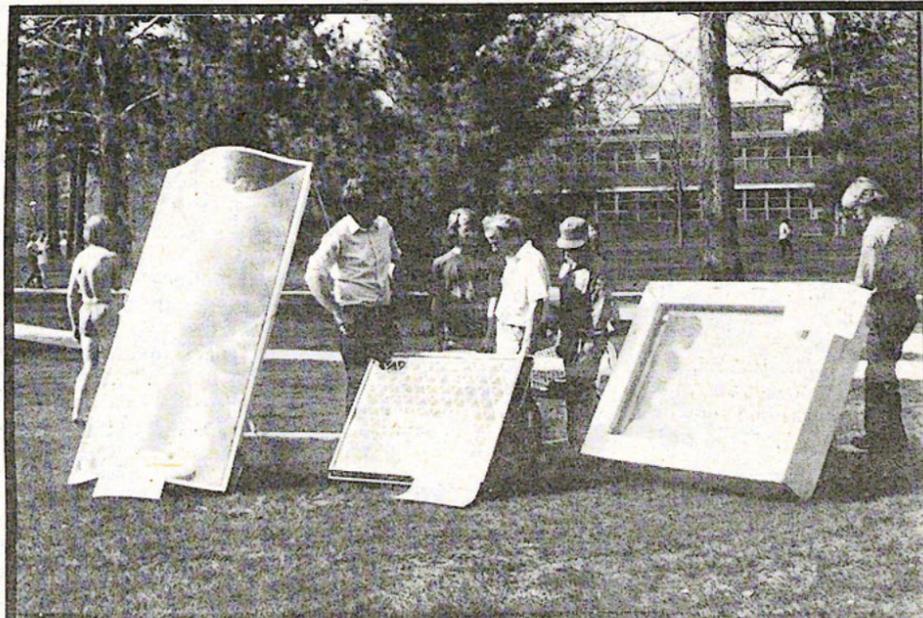
One photograph that especially intrigued him was a photograph of West Lkae, a traditionally scenic spot in China. Explaining its significance he said, "In all the conventional paintings, the traditional Chinese paintings, you'd always have willow trees hanging by the lake and a peaceful little Chinese boat, maybe a junk with a sail, lying motionless on the water and maybe a fisherman, not really catching anything. There are literally tens of

thousands of paintings like this. One of the photos in the exhibition returns to exactly the same scene and it's just a lyrical thing with the shimmering light on the lake and the hills in the background and its shot through the trailings of the willow, so the willow is very close up in the camera lens.

"But instead of the old fishing vessel, there's just a canoe, maybe even a racing kayak, really low slung, in the foreground where the conventional boat would have been. But what seems to me is so clever about the photograph is that behind the kayak you can see a wake, so you realize that the guy is acutally out for exercise. The one symbol of what he's doing is this steam of white, which thus separates him out from the lazy person of a previous dynasty. This is a guy keeping fit in the

name of the People's Republic. Things like that encourage me to look for new levels of symbols in Chinese photography."

Spence felt one of the more interesting movements in the resurgence of western music and dance. He sees in this quite a change from the cultural revolution's insistence on indigenous art forms and its purge of all forms of westernization. Yet, he emphasized that the Chinese hope for a synthesis of the two traditions rather than a western dominance in art. Spence sees these two movements in the Chinese arts as significant comments on Chinese culture. Referring to Bai Hua's script he said it may be quite a while before we can assess the impact of Chinese again "playing and discussing Chopin."



The sun shone fiercely as dozens of students gathered in front of the Forum throughout the day on Monday to observe Sun Day. Organized by IPIRG, the purpose of Sun Day was to emphasize the use of alternative energy. Photo by Karl Knoepfler.

## Students should fill committees before complaining

At the administration forum last week Chairman of the Faculty Morris Parslow pointed out that students might have been able to avert the F-grade decision last year but no students on the Curriculum Committee were at the meetings. According to the campus directory for faculty and administration, four students are supposed to be on this committee. Apparently, none volunteered for the positions or they did not bother to attend the meetings on the F-grade.

If in the future Grinnell students want to effectively voice any opinions or arguments to the administration about its decisions we should make sure all of the committees we may hold positions on are filled and well attended. There is no excuse not to participate on these committees, especially if students disagree with the decisions committees have made in the past. It is also embarrassing to have an argument destroyed because of our own negligence.

Committees which have student positions include the committees on Admissions and Student Financial Aid, Curriculum, Library and Book Store, Public Events, Physical Education, Student Publications and Radio, Student Life, the All-College Judicial Council, the Rosenfield Program in Public Affairs, International Relations and Human Rights, and the Affirmative Action Advisory Committee. In addition to these committees, students are supposed to be on all of the educational policy committees.

Some of the committees are interviewing applicants now. Some have already selected members for next year. Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs James Tederman said applications "are way up" for the committee positions so far. According to Tederman, 23 students applied to be on the student life committee. This enthusiasm is encouraging and should continue. But after being appointed to the various positions students must attend the meetings regularly.

Tederman said one problem this year was that students did not show up for committee meetings and they used alternates so often that it was difficult to make any progress during meetings because it was necessary to explain the issues to the alternates. However, Tederman pointed out, absenteeism was not a problem this year in the Committee on Student Life. It seems ridiculous, then, that students complain most about decisions made by committees they could have been on but were not, such as the Curriculum Committee.

Another important fact that most students overlook is that all meetings of these committees are open to any students, not only the members. Non-members also may make proposals. So we do not have to rely solely on appointed committee members to govern what goes on in meetings.

If we take advantage of our own power and fill our committee positions we may be taken more seriously by the administration and not end up disagreeing with decisions we might have been able to influence by attending the committee meetings.

Jim Hunter

## Updating divestment

"Time Is Running Out" is the title of the recent Rockefeller Foundation study on South Africa. Time is running out, now more than ever in South Africa. In the past few years hopes have been raised by the election of a new government which pledged reforms in South Africa and by an attempt at reform through the United States corporations and the Sullivan Principles. Neither of these hopes have been fulfilled.

The government of P.W. Botha, while it still speaks the rhetoric of reform, has continued to use strong measures in dealing with the black majority. Detentions without trial continue, student demonstrations are met with tear gas and more political leaders and journalists are being banned. Furthermore, the South African government has taken its defense of apartheid beyond its own borders. Government forces have made two major raids into Angola in the last nine months killing several hundred and leaving over one hundred thousand homeless. In addition, they have been accused of subversion and assassination inside the borders of Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

The news on the corporate front is not any better. Reports from South Africa indicate that a majority of blacks are pressing for divestment. Black leaders view the Sullivan Principles as a facade. They

argue that the Sullivan Principles operate only in the work place and have no effect on apartheid itself.

In 1978, Fortune published a scathing attack on divestment, in which it extensively quoted black South African newspaper editor Percy Qoboza, arguing that continued corporate investment could help to avert a bloodbath in South Africa. It is significant to note that according to former Senator Dick Clark, Qoboza has recently come out in favor of divestment. Another black leader who has changed his mind about divestment is South African Bishop Desmond Tutu, who states that economic pressure from abroad is indeed the only way to avert a bloodbath.

Finally, the Reagan Administration has effectively reduced pressure on South Africa during its veto of United Nations resolutions condemning the invasion of Angola and through many other actions. As Dick Clark noted in his recent remarks at Grinnell, such policies make pressure from the private sector all the more important. But time is running out in Grinnell as well as South Africa, therefore, the South African Support Group urges all concerned members of the Grinnell community to attend today's rally supporting divestment.

## Letters:

### Not as concerned with Grinnell issues

To the Editor:

My turn. I've coasted through here for most of the last two semesters and have remained pretty apathetic towards most of the earth shattering issues on campus. However, most students seem to take the same approach toward the world at large.

When controversy came up over the name of the James Gang Bang, I was a little too concerned with Reaganomics to pay much attention. I use the computer system but I never really knew who Grundler or Renaud was. I will admit to being a bit bummed when I learned that Mr. Jacobson didn't get tenure, but since he didn't get as much jaw time as the other guy (whom I haven't taken any classes from), I guess his case isn't considered a worthy cause.

I'll admit that the Loose hall ball had some sexist and racist connotations — but I've been a member of the football team and I realize that most of it was due to pure ignorance rather than malicious intent. (Maybe the problem wasn't with the members of the hall that threw the party, but with whoever chose a single-sex dorm to throw it.)

The funny thing is, when I occasionally ask students what they think about the Faulkland issue, they often giggle, profess a degree of naivete and treat me as if I have asked a very trivial and parochial question. It's true that such campus issues are important, but the chance of someone dying over them is terribly remote.

Just like most students, I have yet to engage in an honest, open conversation with Mr. Maytag. Grinnell has promised many things to me, but I don't recall a private audience with the trustees as being one of them. On the other hand, I can see three or four movies every weekend, go to an alcoholic pub on campus, use a top rate athletic facility and talk to the college president at the forum.

Not having grown up rich or in a city, I'm not quite comfortable with all of this luxury. I guess if I had, I would have just

cause to complain like a spoiled little kid. Now if I had to clean my own bathroom, it would be a different story altogether.

Finally, my financial aid was cut in half. I could spend my time complaining while I dole out borrowed money every year. Instead I'll probably transfer to a large university with reasonable tuition and a good library. Maybe a "prestigious" liberal-arts education is only for the rich and the poor kids anyway. — Scott Hildula '85

### SASES apology for FOG slur

To the Editor:

As coordinator of this year's FOG Fast I feel I owe something of an apology, in the traditional sense of the word, to the campus community. A small rage brewed last week over some of the statements SASES printed on its table tents and in the Campus Memo. The statements depicted a sarcastic, anti-Food Service attitude and the rage was epitomized by Tim Warcham's letter to the editor (S&B, April 30). "This humorous invitation (ha! ha! laughs the refugee family wondering where they will next have a meal)... is most depressing."

Students Against Suffering: El Salvador, myself in particular, take full responsibility for the statements. But while the comments reek of negligence, there is a sound premise on which SASES' actions were based. SASES has been raising funds for Salvadoran Refugees for three consecutive semesters. During this time we have learned a fair amount about how to get the greatest number of students to respond to our efforts. Last semester we organized a fund raiser during which donations were requested. Our plan was to "enlighten" the campus about El Salvador. The assumption was that knowledge of the refugee situation would lead to concern, and concern would lead to donations. I should note that the funds don't get lost in red tape, where they function solely as expressions of concern, but are channelled quickly and efficiently into areas where they are greatly needed.

The result of the fundraiser was dismal. SGA shelled out more funds for films and literature than what was raised. So much for the concern.

It is in this light that SASES has opted

## Scarlet & Black

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