

SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

Thursday, April 2, 1998

Dale Shephard Room

1:00 PM

In these minutes:

Culture Fair, Burma/Total Oil Resolution, Proxy Resolutions

MINUTES

Present: Eric Bauer (Chair), Lori Clark, Frank Wood, Jean Niemiec, Friedrich Srienec, Clint Hewitt, George French, Art Geffen, Joel Nelson, Amy Mertl, Mark Ott, Catherine Forseide, Sheila Warness

Regrets: Julie Sweitzer, Lisa Albrecht, Mike Davey, Thomas Haakenson

Absent: Carla Maxwell Monacelli, Claudia Wallace-Gardner, Robin Brown, Chris Kelley, James Kroger, Neta Jo Scarpari

These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate or Twin Cities Campus Assembly; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes reflect the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate or Assembly, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.

The Social Concerns Committee met at 1:00 PM on Thursday, April 2, 1998 in the Dale Shephard Room on the East Bank of the University of Minnesota.

MEETING MINUTES.

The meeting minutes from March 4, 1998 were approved as written.

CULTURE FAIR.

Professor George French prepared and distributed a written working draft for planning the Culture Fair for discussion only (copies will be sent by mail to all members absent from the meeting). The working draft was very creative and included such ideas as a general plenary session, panel discussions, cultural lunch buffet, overture of national anthems, theater productions, and a talent festival. Although the international student organizations may have held their own culture fairs in the past, the committee hopes to plan this University-wide culture fair for all international student organizations. Professor French briefly summarized the working plan for committee members and asked them to consider planning details for these sessions very carefully and provide feedback to him as soon as possible. He also asked that the expenses for each session be estimated for consideration at the May meeting. Kate Stuckert, University Senate, agreed to contact University offices to obtain estimates for the various culture fair sessions.

BURMA/TOTAL OIL RESOLUTION.

The subcommittee working on the draft resolution regarding future investments in Burma (Myanmar) met to revise the draft after the University divested from Total Oil before the March meeting. The revised draft was distributed to committee members by e-mail prior to the meeting and by hard copy at the meeting. Although the second resolution on the draft is not actionable, it is at minimum a symbolic statement that sends a message to the University about the stand taken by the Social Concerns Committee regarding future investments. It was agreed that (Myanmar) only needs to be indicated as another name for Burma in the title of the resolution. The resolution reads as follows:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL CONCERNS

RESOLUTION REGARDING FUTURE INVESTMENTS IN BURMA (MYANMAR)

WHEREAS the University of Minnesota has established a strong tradition of concern for social issues in its investment policies, and

WHEREAS the most controversial country for U.S. investors concerned about human rights at present is Burma, and

WHEREAS the military government of Burma has systematically abused human rights, tortured and imprisoned citizens who dissent from its policies, and has failed to yield control to the legally elected party in the national elections of 1990, and

WHEREAS Total Oil Company's (Total S.A.) investment in the construction and operation of the Yadana offshore oil pipeline represents about one-third of the current foreign investments in Burma, and

WHEREAS Total Oil Company has been complicit with the Burmese government in the use of forced labor for the building of this pipeline and its supporting infrastructure,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The University of Minnesota avoid future investments in Total Oil Company (Total S.A.) stock, until the reestablishment of a democratic government and redress of human rights abuses in that nation, or until Total Oil Company suspends its operations in Burma, and;
2. The University carefully consider the social impact of future investments in companies which operate in Burma, until the reestablishment of a democratic government and redress of human rights abuses in that nation.

The committee voted unanimously in favor of the resolution that will now be forwarded to the Senate Consultative Committee (SCC) for review. It is hoped that the SCC will approve the resolution and that it will go before the Senate in May. Professor Eric Bauer also reported to committee members that the Minnesota Free Burma Coalition is continuing its efforts to push for boycotts in Burma and may ask the Social Concerns Committee to recommend divestment from all investments in Burma.

PROXY RESOLUTIONS.

Proxy resolutions drafted by committee members in response to the March 27 proxy resolution statement (listing company name, number of shares, market value, resolution, sponsor, and annual meeting date) were distributed prior to and at the meeting. The committee was instructed to vote for, against, or abstain on the issues presented, rather than voting on the company itself; in other words, voting in favor of one issue will apply to all company resolutions that focus on the exact same issue. Members who prepared a draft resolution described the issue, called for the

committee to support or not support the resolution, and the committee members voted. The committee voted on the following resolutions at the meeting:

Citicorp

Disclosing political contributions in newspapers - The committee votes not to support the resolution (5 yes, 6 no).

Citicorp

Ceres principles - The committee voted in favor of supporting the resolution.

Intel

Ceres principles - The committee voted in favor of supporting the resolution.

Walmart

Ceres principles - The committee voted in favor of supporting the resolution.

Philip Morris

Youth smoking - The committee voted in favor of supporting the resolution.

Philip Morris

Cigarette smuggling - The committee voted in favor of supporting the resolution.

GE

Nuclear reactors - The committee voted in favor of supporting the resolution.

GE

PCG's - The committee voted in favor of supporting the resolution.

United Technologies

Military contracting criteria - The committee voted in favor of supporting the resolution.

Boeing

Military contracting criteria - The committee voted in favor of supporting the resolution.

It was agreed to assume that if the statement indicates that a resolution has been omitted, if the committee does not vote on it but it later appears on the proxy, the committee's vote will be to abstain; Sheila Warness, Asset Management, will then report such information back to the committee. When the committee is not provided with information on a proxy resolution, it was agreed that the committee vote is to abstain pending further information. If information is then provided at a later date or other changes occur, the vote can be changed up until the actual annual meeting. It was also agreed that committee members continue voting on any remaining resolutions by e-mail.

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 PM.