

Coalition urges UW to divest from Pepsico

By Krista Weinfurter

of The Cardinal staff DC-3-5-96

Rep. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison joined the Coalition for Socially Responsible Investments at a "Free Bucky" forum Monday to encourage students to rethink the university's continuing cooperation with corporations they cite as responsible for human rights violations.

The coalition was founded in January on this campus and is made up of about 50 students. The Madison chapter is part of a loosely-organized, nationwide student network. Most notably, the coalition is attempting a boycott of Pepsico Inc. products.

The coalition has asked the university and UW-System Board of Regents to pull its funding out of investments in companies that do business in countries with human rights violations such as Burma, China, Indonesia, Nigeria and Tibet. The university invests millions of tuition and taxpayer dollars in companies that are supported by cheap labor and poor human standards in these countries, according to forum participants.

The coalition suggested the University of Wisconsin and the

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UW System Board of Regents use a shareholder resolution to encourage companies in which they are invested in to remove their corporate activities from the countries in question and to prac-

companies, such as Pepsico Inc., of which Pizza Hut, Taco Bell and Kentucky Fried Chicken are among its many local subsidiaries.

In addition, forum participants encourage a university boycott of Reebok Intl. Ltd, with which the

Reebok apparel, as well as rights to the "Bucky Badger" logo.

The coalition argued the Board is violating a state statute by investing in these companies.

According to the statute, gifts, grants and bequests should be invested only in companies who do not discriminate due to race, creed, color or gender.

Pepsico Inc. investments in Burma and Myanmar help to continue the blatant violations of human rights, such as forced child labor. Health standards are non-existent, said Zarni. Pepsico Inc.'s and other companies' businesses continue to support oppressive government regimes who cater to their economic and business needs at the cost of their own citizens, according to Zarni.

"It is a life or death matter for many of us. Our money is directly supporting the machinery of oppression," said Zarni.

Zarni described a firsthand picture of oppression which he said tore apart his native country. Due to his exile, Zarni cannot return home and cannot see his family.

"Social consciousness will make this country great or make this country fail," said Mike Griffin, Candidate for President

of the United Paperworkers International Union.

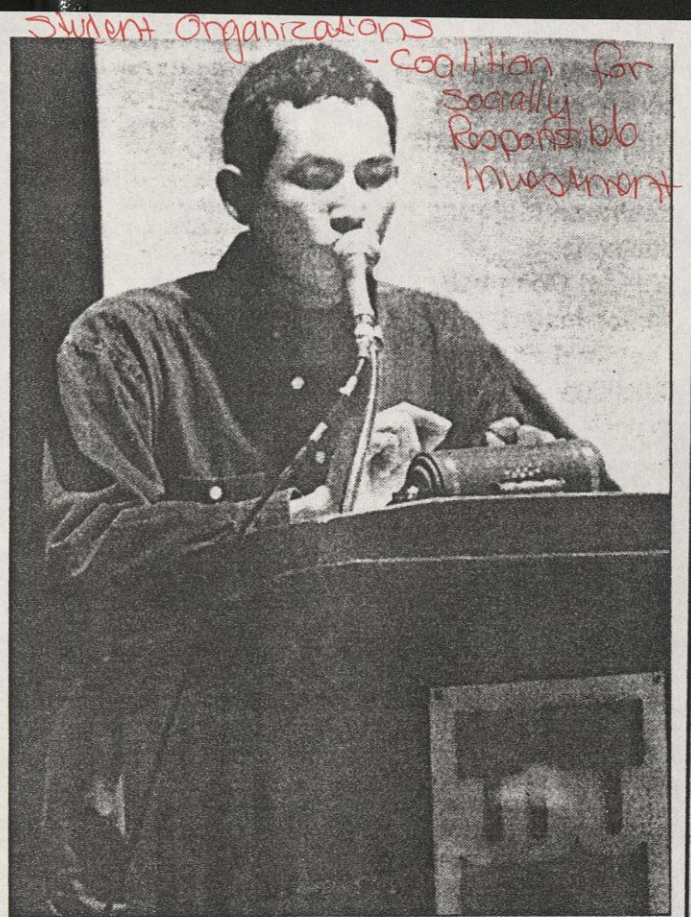
The forum, organized by Madison Coalition leaders Zarni and B. N. Marcus, expressed the university's duty to humanity and to invest the students' and taxpayers' money wisely and responsibly. The coalition also asks students and citizens of Madison to boycott Pepsico Inc. products.

"There's not many companies that you would buy products from if you knew the truth about how they do business," said Griffin.

As a student and future 'worker' in corporate America regardless of the job, it is our responsibility to monitor these companies and express the need for businesses and corporations to be socially responsible here and elsewhere."

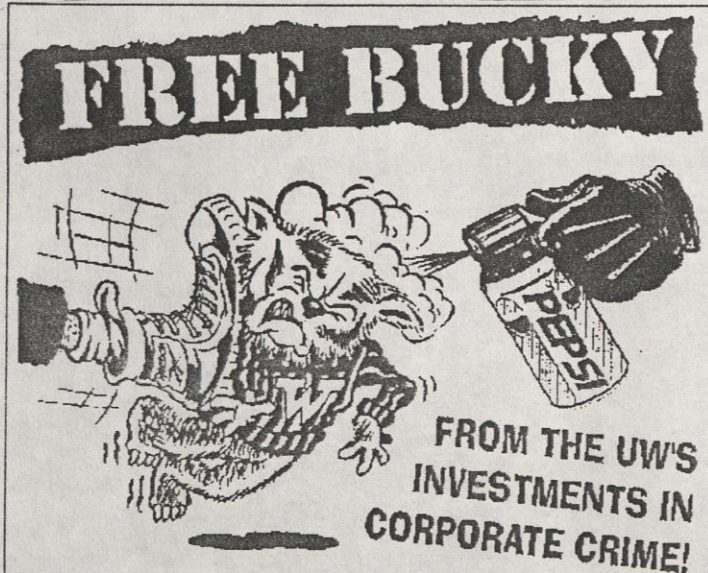
Professors Michael Apple and Joseph W. Elder were also present at the forum.

The Coalition for Socially Responsible Investment meets Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. at Catacombs Coffee House, 731 State St. If you would like more information, call B. N. Marcus at 250-9664.



THERESA SWEENEY/THE DAILY CARDINAL

Zarni, a Madison coalition leader, Burmese exile and UW student gives his opening remarks at the "Free Bucky" forum last night at the Memorial Union.



This logo has appeared all over campus on fliers promoting the forum.

tice selective purchasing.

Zarni, a Burmese exile and UW student, as well as a coalition member, urges boycotts of certain

university is negotiating a contract that includes giving the company exclusive rights to outfit all UW athletic teams with