

APR 14 1985

**BURRELLE'S**

**1985**

# FAMILIAR COURSE

## But new questions asked

By PATRICK CLARK

Most of the faces were new, but the words of protest last week had a familiar ring.

Seventeen years ago, Hamilton Hall at Columbia University was the focal point of a student strike that set the pace for similar campus protests around the nation—protests that perhaps came to define the 1960s almost as much as did the Vietnam War, which the students so violently opposed.

This month, controversy again landed at Hamilton Hall's doorstep. Unlike the 1968 protest, the latest demonstration is strictly non-violent—but no less passionate.

**HUNDREDS** of students have blocked the main entrance to the building to protest university investment in firms doing business in segregated South Africa.

The protesters have heard a speech by Abbie Hoffman, a founder of the Youth International Party (Yippies), and have listened to folk songs by Pete Seeger, another familiar figure from the antiwar movement of the 1960s.

But where the 1968 protesters—led by such radical campus groups as the Students for a Democratic Society—took over administrative offices and had to be forcibly removed, the current crop of demonstrators has done nothing more physical than chain shut the front doors of Hamilton Hall.

The violence in 1968 followed a spontaneous, week-long, five-building occupation that led the school administration to call in the police. In the confrontation that followed, nearly 150 people

their actions in Afghanistan and Cambodia?"

But outside, and impossible to ignore two stories up, is the ear-shattering cacophony of automobile horns honking in support of the protesters, and the peal of bells, drums and tambourines.

**THERE ARE** "theme days": Lawyers against apartheid; churchmen against apartheid; government workers against apartheid. There

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junior Russian studies major.

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whites.

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struggle against apartheid."

The university response has been restrained in the apparent hope that the courts will uphold and enforce its claim of trespass. On Friday, Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Bruce Wright continued a court order preventing the university from using police to

paper arm bands to symbolize, they say, the blood being shed by the South African regime. They are bused to the front door of the embassy, where they knock and are denied entrance.

**THEY WALK** back a few steps, link arms and begin to sing "We Shall Overcome." On cue, police move in and arrest them on a misdemeanor charge—demonstrating within 500 feet of an embassy. The charges are dropped, since nobody wants to prosecute. The demonstra-

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Columbia University  
President Michael Sovern

Statue of Alexander Hamilton is focal point of Columbia University strike, as it was during antiwar protests in the '60s.

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# A winter of their discontent

By BARBARA REHM

Washington (News Bureau)—It's 3:30 p.m. The drums and tambourines sound. It's show time outside the South African Embassy.

For 100 days—every workday since Thanksgiving 1984—it has been the same.

The crowd gathers to march and sing a block down from the neoclassical South African Embassy on Massachusetts Ave. At 4:30 p.m., the "messengers" step forward. They wear red crepe





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are senators and celebrities ripe for arrest: Amy Carter, Stevie Wonder, Arthur Ashe, Sen. Lowell Weicker (R-Conn.), two younger members of the Kennedy family.

The crowd also includes the usual assortment of aging hippies enjoying the bright spring sunlight and a handful of the quiche-and-kiwi set out for a bit of risk-free consciousness-raising.

But there also are people like Henry Smith, who grew up on a farm in Summerfield, N.C., and who came to the embassy this day to be part of a singular exercise of free speech and assembly.

He talks of the protests with quiet pride. His black

hands slowly twist over and over again some of the pamphlets of the Free South Africa Movement. "Eventually we are going to have an effect," he says. "Eventually."

**THE REPUBLIC** of South Africa is considered a pariah among nations for its brutal rule of apartheid, or racial segregation. It has been isolated by much of the world and is even banned from international sports events.

The demonstrators who march outside South African buildings each day have the same demands: South Africa must release all political prisoners and change its constitution to give political

rights to blacks, who make up 73% of the population. The Reagan administration must end its policy of "constructive engagement" and exert political and economic sanctions on the South African government.

Lloyd Swift, a gentle-spoken white-haired man from Bethesda, Md., is retired from the State Department. He has come to the demonstration, he says, because "there is an evil and inhumane government lodged in South Africa and I believe our government is supporting it in the guise of 'constructive engagement,' which means the enslavement of 23 million blacks—the vast majority of the country."

The protests are designed to keep the spotlight on the apartheid policies of the South African government while Congress debates 23 bills that would cut or curtail U.S. economic ties to the nation.

Political pressure on South Africa is gathering new power, fueled by the violence and repression inside South Africa and by domestic concerns in the United States. The issue is tailor-made for political exploitation.

The demonstrations began in Washington—but they have spread to 26 U.S. cities; more than 2,800 people have now been arrested nationwide.



Arthur Ashe—among celebrity protesters.

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ple were injured and more than 700 arrests were made.

The students had demanded that the school cease defense research and halt plans



Columbia University President Michael Sovern

to build a gym opposed by the community.

The current, carefully planned demonstration by Columbia and Barnard College students, united as the Coalition for a Free South Africa, began April 4, the anniversary of the 1968 assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King.

The demonstrators walked from an administration-sanctioned campus rally at the school's famed sun dial to begin an unsanctioned human blockade at Hamilton Hall. They chanted, "Remember '68 before it's too late" and "What do we want? Divestment now!"

The demonstrators have carried out acts of civil disobedience while being aided by a battery of lawyers, a student-run press relations group and labor union organizers. They have taken voice votes on courses of action. And their protest has included a hunger strike, appearances in court and even a litter patrol to pick up debris.

"**APARTHEID IS** horrible and I believe our protest involves questions of moral and human rights," said Patricia Safian, 21, a senior English major. "The investments in South Africa contradict what this university should stand for. Divesting won't harm the university. There are other places to invest."

"I remember the protest here in the '60s," said Tanaquil Jones, 31, a senior majoring in computer science. "I was 14 years old and in high school. Much of my political awareness was shaped in the turmoil of that time."

Yesterday, several who took part in the 1968 protest returned to show support for the blockaders.

One alumnus, Nancy Biberman, 37, an attorney from Brooklyn, was a strike steering committee member in 1968.

"We're excited by what they're doing," she said. "We still retain the same commitment to ideals, that's what we came here to say."

Reminded this protest has been nonviolent, she said: "So was ours, until police were called in and all hell broke loose."

"Having them here is fantastic," said Greg Smith, 22, a senior. "We grew out of the same spirit, but this is not a reunion of protesters, ours is different. It's a protracted struggle against apartheid."

The university response has been restrained in the apparent hope that the courts will uphold and enforce its claim of trespass. On Friday, Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Bruce Wright continued a court order preventing the university from using police to

arrest the protesters. Additional court action is expected tomorrow.

University attorney Floyd Abrams, who often defends media clients in First Amendment litigation, has asserted that chaining shut a campus building is not a protected expression of free speech.

Meanwhile, the protesters' demand for an orderly three-year divestment declaration, which has been supported by a vote of 200 faculty members, presents a dilemma for Michael Sovern, Columbia's president and a university negotiator in the 1968 protest.

**DEMONSTRATORS** contend the issue is a matter of principle—a choice between endorsing freedom or South Africa's system of racial separation and discrimination. University officials maintain that Columbia will not hold stock in firms doing business in South Africa unless they have employment programs and practices that ban segregation and afford equal pay to blacks and whites.

Columbia's current holdings include 640,000 shares of blue-chip common stock in more than 25 multinational corporations doing business in South Africa. The stock is worth more than \$30 million, and is part of a larger university endowment of \$864 million.

Sovern defended the investments, noting the companies, which include IBM, General Motors, Ford, RCA, Coca-Cola, Mobil Oil and The Washington Post, have pledged to uphold the Sullivan principles—guidelines for racially equal employment practices in South Africa.

Sovern has charged the demonstrators with deliberately misleading others into believing that Columbia supports "South Africa's racist regime." He says it is a tactic that is "hurting not only Columbia but the struggle against apartheid itself."

But several hunger strikers, who drank only juice and water for 15 days until Sovern agreed to meet with them last Monday evening, denied being duplicitous.

"I fasted to express solidarity with the blacks in South Africa," said Anthony Glover, 21, a senior pre-med major. "It's a small sacrifice when you read about people being gunned down in the streets," said another hunger striker, David Goldiner, 20, a junior Russian studies major.

Their hunger strike was noted by South African Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu, the winner of the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize. Tutu expressed gratitude to the demonstrators and hunger strikers "on behalf of the victims of apartheid."