

South African protest vexes Reed College community

by Robert Lothian

A group of Reed College students occupied the college president's office over the weekend, protesting Reed's investments in companies that do business in South Africa.

Seventeen students took over the office of Reed College President Paul Bragdon at 4 p.m., Friday. Of the original group, only five remained when the occupation was called off early Sunday morning.

The office occupation stirred up considerable controversy on the campus, as students, faculty and administration continued to discuss divestment.

At a Saturday afternoon rally, student protesters demanded that the Reed Board of Trustees state their intent to divest. They also demanded that the board's Executive Committee hold an emergency meeting to discuss the issue.

The Board of Trustees was supposed to discuss the issue during a meeting in January, but the protesters said that was too long to wait for so urgent an issue. They charged that their tuition money was being used to prop up an oppressive regime that is killing Blacks. The college has \$8 million invested in businesses involved in South Africa.

The protesters were supported in their efforts by Ron Herndon, himself a Reed graduate who organized an occupation of the Reed administration building as a protest of college affirmative action policies in 1968.

At the Saturday rally, Herndon pointed out the irony of an institution that teaches subjects in the humanities having investments in a country he called "the antithesis of humanity."

Meanwhile, another group of students at a rally on Sunday expressed their disapproval of the occupation. Christopher Phelps, a student member of the Africa Concerned Committee, said students apparently had an agreement with the board that they would wait to discuss the issue during the January meeting. Phelps, who did not approve of the occupation, said the protesters should have waited. The period leading up to the January meeting was supposed to be a time of discussion between students, faculty, administration and the board. The board has members throughout the country, and will not meet sooner than January, said Bragdon.

None of the protesters were arrested—the occupation will be han-

ded by the college judicial board, said Susan Crim, dean of student activities. Following their departure from the office, a meeting was held with protesters, administrators, faculty and about 200 students. Crim said the administration's attitude throughout the occupation was non-confrontational. "We are working as carefully as we can to talk with students, to negotiate with them," she said.

Bragdon said that on the positive side, the protesters' action showed that Reed students care about oppression in the world.

The students were supplied by friends outside the office during their 52-hour occupation. They were not allowed to use a nearby bathroom at first, using instead a bucket in the office. A banner reading "Divest Now" was draped from the administration building during the protest.

DMAC awards presented

Karen Powell and Sherrian Haggar were presented plaques "In honor of five years to Desegregation Monitoring Advisory Committee, Portland Public Schools and the Children of Portland. Powell and Haggar were among the founding members of DMAC.

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