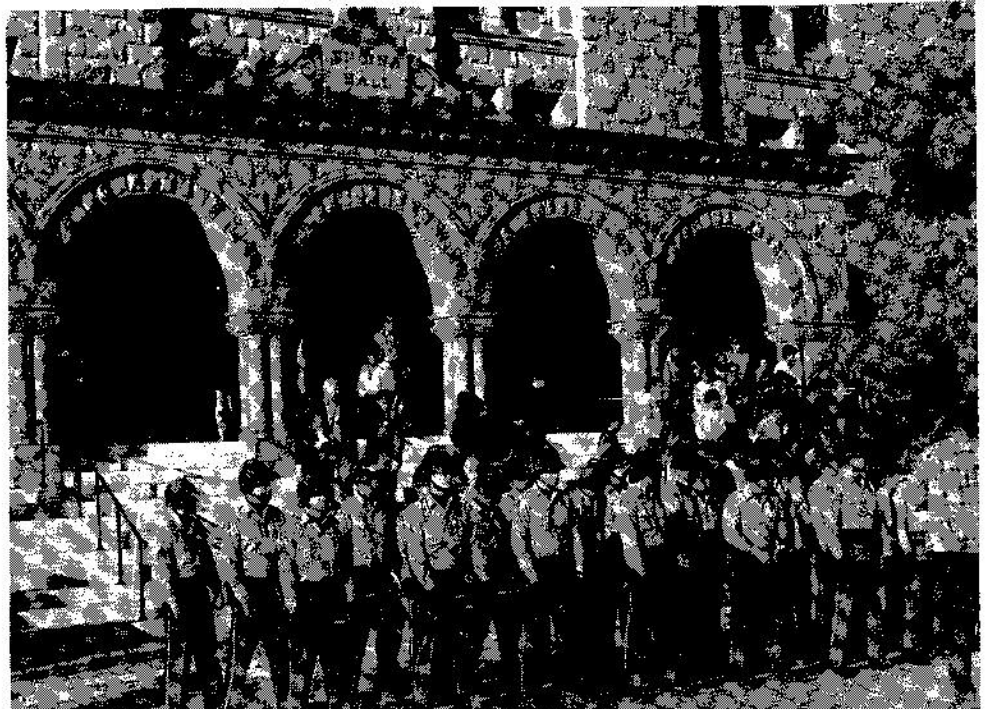




"I would be glad to see police and other civil officials bring charges against more individuals than have actually been arrested. Further steps in this direction can be taken by civil officials. Most of the key people are under suspension already."

Kenneth S. Pitzer
May 20, 1969

(Ed.: Pitzer was referring to the A3M and the May 16 demonstration at Hanover-SRI)



The April 3rd Movement

When, in early October, SDS first raised the demand that Stanford and SRI "get out of Southeast Asia" few on campus took us seriously. We found it hard to interest many students in our discussion groups or get anyone to read our information. Some of our members, disappointed, suggested that we find some other issue around which we could more easily mobilize the student body. But the dominant trend in SDS was that the War in Vietnam--and the entire imperialist system--was the most important issue that Stanford students could pursue. Our expectations were low, but we were determined.

The strategy with which we began our drive to get Stanford out of Southeast Asia was simple. We would use direct action to focus on the issues, and we would use our educational activities to involve more people in action. Fall quarter this meant symbolic, non-confrontation demonstrations and dorm discussion groups. In January, when hardly anyone at Stanford seemed to care about the War and Stanford's involvement, it meant disrupting the Board of Trustees meeting.

To most on campus--including many members of SDS--the Trustee confrontation seemed to destroy SDS. We had taken action which angered most of the community. But we didn't give up. We used this anger to engage people in discussions, or attract them to educational programs. The 29 who were disciplined by the Judicial Council used their hearings to publicize much of the information SDS had collected about Stanford and SRI. Though SDS was in no position to force its demands, the campus became aware of the issues.

The problem was that despite our documented analysis most members of the Stanford community trusted the men responsible for making the major decisions governing the University--the Stanford Trustees. We demanded an open meeting of the Trustees at which they would discuss Stanford and Southeast Asia, and hinted that we would repeat the January 14 disruption--bigger--if the Trustees refused. So, in the interests of "rational dialogue" five trustees met 1400 students in Memorial Auditorium for an open forum. Although many students were sympathetic with SDS for its anti-war stand, most of the audience wanted to hear the trustees answer SDS charges. The lying arrogance and the narrow political vision that the Trustees demonstrated that afternoon angered almost all of those present and created the spirit which was to become the April Third Movement.

Fourteen organizations from Stanford and Palo Alto got together to call a community meeting April 3, but most of the people who responded to the call had no organizational affiliation. There were SDS members and other radicals who saw Stanford and SRI as critical to the maintenance and extension of U. S. imperialism. There were pacifists and others upset by America's growing militarism. And there were liberals who considered the Vietnam War an unfortunate mistake. But there was a surprising unity. Nearly unanimously, 800 members of the Stanford Community put forward the demands which were to define the A3M:

1. That SRI not be sold or severed, but brought under closer control by the University community;
2. That Stanford and SRI halt on April 8 research in the areas of:

- a. Chemical and Biological Warfare
- b. Counterinsurgency
- c. Southeast Asia War
- d. Classified research

3. That the Trustees hold an open decision-making meeting to consider these questions before April 30.

"An open meeting of the Board is the silliest suggestion I've heard in years."

John Gardner
before 150 students
at the Faculty Club
April 29, 1969

A committee was set up to clarify these demands, and to present a positive program for University research. Some radicals were disappointed that the demands did not call for a halt to studies supporting U. S. corporate expansion, and that nothing was said about the consultancies held by many science and engineering professors. But most of us were enthusiastic. We felt that the first demand was crucial. We were not merely demanding that the university expurgate "foul research" because of a medieval conception of the university. Rather, because of what Stanford's and SRI's research was doing to the Vietnamese people, we wanted it to stop.

Within the movement there were, from the beginning, many different assessments of the demands and their relationship to the interest of the Trustees and faculty. Consequently, strategic proposals varied. Some wanted an educational campaign aimed at the whole community (with the expectation of its cooperation). Others argued for a series of militant student actions designed to force an unwilling community to cut its academic and industrial ties with the war and imperialism.

Among radical students, few thought the demands would be won easily, if at all. The general understanding of our strategy might be called "revolutionary reformism." The demands seemed reasonable, and it was conceivable that they be implemented, but we believed that they clashed with the real interests of the Trustees and many of the faculty.

We had concluded that the Board of Trustees is involved in American expansion. We suspected that they would not put significant restrictions on the Institute which serves them well. We also believed that the science and engineering faculties were so strong and so dependent on government research that the faculty would not, on its own, curb counterinsurgency or war research on campus. Furthermore, as we were to verify, the rest of the faculty seemed afraid to rock the boat--lest it get wet.

If this were true, most students, despite their initial naivety about the nature of the faculty and Trustee interests, would learn quickly the serious implications of our struggle. When normal channels did not work, students would have to decide what personal risk they would make to win the demands. These decisions would depend on the degree to which our critical analysis

of the University and SRI was understood and accepted.

In the movement as a whole, there was confusion. We did not have clear and common expectations. It was not decided at any point whether we were providing the community with a radicalizing experience or whether we were going to push for victory at any cost to the movement. Because of this uncertainty, inexperience, and the difficulty of "winning," we had no clear sense of whether we could really gain the demands. The trustees were inaccessible. For all we knew, they would let the University perish rather than change.

When the Trustees rejected the April 3rd demands at their meeting on April 8, seven hundred students--and supporters from outside Stanford who were just as concerned--voted to occupy the Applied Electronics Laboratory, which was largely devoted to classified electronics warfare research. The appeal of this tactic was that it actually implemented the demands by stopping research. Furthermore, as we occupied AEL, we established a "liberated zone"--a real community--within the research bowels of the University. Utilizing the printing facilities of the building and the energy of the movement, we regarded the AEL as a base for educational forays into Stanford and the surrounding communities.

"Non-violent" guidelines were accepted with little opposition. Some regarded the guidelines as moral imperatives. Others saw them as tactical exigencies. While this tension eventually led to division within the movement, the style with which we occupied the building appealed to the bulk of Stanford's upper middle-class student body.

Support for the sit-in was strong and immediate. Hundreds of people were involved in the small working committees (newspaper, research, dorm organizing, etc.), for in seizing AEL they had made a real commitment to the success of the movement. About a thousand people attended the general meetings, which were also broadcast over KZSU. Political positions evolved in small group discussions. Participants developed their understanding of the action by defending it to hostile faculty and students.

The sit-in lasted nine days. From the beginning there were internal doubts about our rights to be there. Long meetings debated the question "When do we leave?" The faculty asked us to leave so they could "solve problems reasonably," yet it was clear that any action they took was a direct result of pressure exerted by the A3M. Despite growing support for our demands, many people wanted to leave before our action looked "coercive."

By the ninth day the sit-in reached an impasse. It was clear that we could force no more than a phase-out of classified research--and the faculty had promised that. Fears of arrest were growing. So when Pitzer announced the closing of the building, many welcomed the excuse to leave. We threatened to return if the faculty backed down on its stand against classified research, but most of us hoped that we would not have to.

We left AEL confidently. But our confidence was misplaced. In our concern and excitement about on-campus research, we underestimated the difficulty of transforming SRI into the type of institution we thought it had to be.

Through the Days of Concern we continued our educational campaign. But our pace weakened. Without the base at AEL, we had little to keep us together.

Our most successful political work was with students. Two-thirds of the student body, according to an official university poll, backed the A3M demand for closer ties with SRI and a regulation of the institute's research.

The faculty was split between severance, severance with restrictions, and control. Many faculty members resented our intrusion into their prerogatives when we demanded a new research policy for Stanford. Yet they

were looking for solutions which would bring peace and quiet back to their academic cloister. Others saw SRI as a blemish on their professional records, and saw severance with or without restrictions, as a solution

Around this time we expanded our work with SRI employees. Though many SRI researchers support SRI policies, a large number don't, and are engaged in socially creative research. Others are trapped by the priorities of government and industry funding. But we were asking too much. Fed with scare propaganda by the SRI administration, SRI employees already concerned about the source of their livelihood were unwilling to make any sacrifices. We received, in the end, very little support from within SRI.

But we weren't conducting a public opinion poll of students, faculty, and researchers. And neither were the trustees. To us, many more people were affected than just members of our community. The people dying in Vietnam, the peasants whose villages are bombed and crops defoliated have much more right to control SRI's research--at least vis-a-vis Vietnam--than the researchers, trustees, or students. We felt we were acting for the people of Vietnam. The Trustees on the other hand were judging SRI from the perspective of maintaining a strong, profitable empire. Public opinion polls, to them, were important only inasmuch as they evaluated the strength of a social force threatening their power.

Radicals, who believed the Trustees would act in such a fashion, sought to create a situation which would cost the Trustees for not meeting the demand. The educational campaign had reached about as many as it could. Radicals, including the SDS members in A3M, felt the need to resort to "coercion."



Thousands had endorsed our demands, yet clearly Stanford students dislike the use of force. We did not know how many would go along. We knew only that we had to exercise power to win the demands. For us, power consisted of people in motion; support in a referendum doesn't really count.

The sit-in at Encina Hall was proposed as such an exercise of power. But the meeting which voted to sit-in what was perhaps the worst during the spring. Radicals did not adequately explain the reasons for the sit-in, and tensions were high. The question of physical violence was sidestepped in such a way that many who had agreed to sit-in left when they heard scuffles and saw broken glass. The movement lost its popularity. It was divided.

Only three hundred students had entered Encina Hall the morning of May 1. Many went home, as they had done nights during the AEL sit-in. In a stroke of tactical genius, Provost Lyman called in three busloads of Santa Clara County police at 7:00 am. The hundred or more students present voted to leave.

The April Third Movement was declared dead by its critics. But spurred on by the extremity of the court injunction against it, the movement resolved to rebuild, learning the lessons of the Encina debacle.

Ever since the first mass meetings, the April Third Movement had a major organizational flaw. Most business and discussion was conducted in large meetings. Most people were afraid to speak at these meetings, or could not express themselves well. The more militant and radical students dominated the meetings, both through experienced leadership and exuberant, intimidating shouting. During AEL we had broken up into small discussion groups during large meetings, but we had merely scratched the surface of creating our own democracy.

The most important result of the Encina sit-in, in terms of the development of the movement, was the formation of affinity groups: small groups of ten to twenty people who met together and worked together on a continuing basis. We slowly rebuilt our strength by talking out the questions which had divided us. And, working on the class boycott and political carnival, we recreated much of the community which had bound us together at AEL.

On May 13 the Trustees were to make a decision. The faculty and administration were pushing for delay -- until summer, when students have gone home. And we worried that the student body would go for this. But the Trustees, the owners and governors of Stanford University, felt they had to exert their power forcefully. Evidently they were willing to accept the disruption that President Pitzer feared for Stanford. SRI and the empire were more important. They announced, May 13, their unanimous intent to sell. To top it off, they rejected the SRI Study Committee recommendation for a restrictive covenant.

This decision not only went against the demands of the A3M, it directly countered a Faculty Senate resolution. Throughout the Spring, many liberal faculty members--and their student friends--had touted the power of the faculty. Faculty inaction, at this point, exposed the bullshit that many liberal faculty members had been peddling throughout the Spring. These faculty were merely trying to prevent confrontation to protect themselves. They had no desire to resolve the issues.

In contrast to the hurried, tense atmosphere at the April 30 meeting which preceded Encina, A3M took its time. Meeting the day after the Trustees' decision, we surprised a lot of people by not voting to destroy the University. Instead, we decided to prevent objectionable research directly. Direct action at SRI, we felt, would not only prevent research for a short time, but it would lower morale for war researchers (not just at SRI, but the whole local military complex) and make it difficult

to sell SRI. (Insurgency is bad for the investment climate.) We selected the Hanover facility of SRI because it was small, and because none of SRI's "good" research was mixed in here with the bad, as it was at the main SRI facility in Menlo Park.

500 demonstrators went to SRI Hanover the morning of May 16. Most were organized into affinity groups, and were guided by the policy of not initiating violence against people and not destroying property unless or until police took action. Many demonstrators were there just to picket. Others blocked traffic or kept researchers from entering the building. A massive traffic jam hampered work throughout the industrial park, and those SRI employees that made it through the lines were greeted with police tear gas canisters relayed into SRI by demonstrators. By the time Palo Alto could collect enough police (many had been tied up at the Battle for People's Park) to disperse the demonstration, it was starting to fade away. The demonstrators, having risen early, were tired and hungry, and were lounging in the SRI environs. The arrival of police and tear gas, however, sparked the demonstration to life. As police moved in, the demonstrators calmly--no panic whatsoever--dispersed. Barricades caught fire and rocks were hurled through windows as we retreated.

Thirteen or so were arrested that day, but with the aid of right-wing photographs and identifications, a total of 100 warrants have been issued since.

The Hanover demonstration, despite its success, was the turning point of A3M. As finals approached, and students realized that they hadn't studied much during Spring quarter, active support fell. Following an abortive attempt May 19 to repeat the Friday Han-



over demonstration, several hundred students picketed the Menlo Park SRI, bringing it all home to the rest of SRI's 4,000 employees. But a few more rallies and picket lines were all A3M could muster, and the movement withered away into the final examinations of uptight academia and the promises of California summer.

The April Third Movement was an important, largely successful experiment in political action. Masses of middle and upper class college students were united around issues which directly threatened the maintenance of the American empire.

Together with other student anti-war actions, A3M helped build the public clamor against the power of the American military. The federal CBW cutback is a small change, but if it's just a beginning, then we can hope that our efforts contributed to that beginning.

The A3M also catalyzed discontent within the research industry. Young scientists are beginning to get together in questioning the priorities of scientific research. We have driven classified research from the com-

fortable seclusion of the college campus. Across the country plans are being made to move campus research to industry and institutes like SRI--the AEL team is moving to SRI--but the researchers prefer the campus, the way it used to be. We must attack this research wherever it goes, for a "pure campus" doesn't keep them from killing or robbing Vietnamese.

And SRI itself is hurting. We do not know who will want to buy it. Morale is low and contracts are hard to come by. SRI may face the fate of all institutions which refuse to change with the times.

But most important, we have built a movement. Students who may easily have been channeled into the niches of corporate anonymity now see social purpose in radical politics. We have found community. We are questioning the whole nature of the society in which we live. And we will never forget the lessons we learned during the April Third Movement.

