

FEATURES

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

REMEMBERING THE APRIL 3, 1969 MOVEMENT

By GERRY SHIP
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

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The older man was Richard W. Lyman. Slightly bent now, he once steered Stanford through the tumultuous '60s and '70s. So this was somewhat of a showdown.

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personal declaration of sympathy for either the stubborn administrator or the student rebel, roles — outdated visions, maybe — from an unforgotten period that polarized everyone. Lyman, a provost and then president from 1970 to 1980, recently completed "Campus in Turmoil," his recollection of those chaotic times.

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GERRY SHIP/The Stanford Daily

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Lenny Siegel hasn't changed much from the earnest, lower-middle class Jewish boy who appeared in an obscure 1969 documentary filmed on campus by local public television crews.

Siegel said he joined the movement after he arrived to study physics and realized, as did other students in technical fields, that his career path after graduating would be channeled towards working for the government at facilities like the Stanford Research Institute (SRI), and by association, the war machine that ravaged Vietnam.

While AEL might have been memorable, the Research Institute off Page Mill Road, a government-funded lab that also conducted

classified research, was the main target for students.

"I can't explain the level of violence here except that the students identified Stanford, and not without some truth, with the conduct of the war," said Bob Rosenzweig, a top University official loathed by radical students and one of Lyman's staunchest defenders at the time. In an interview with The Daily, "We were at the time one of the two or three preeminent engineering and technology universities with a lot of defense department money and classified research. It wasn't unreasonable to make that identification and maybe that produced greater frustration and more violence."

Never blessed with great charisma, Siegel was instead organized and cerebral, planning demonstrations or dragging consensus meetings out of the usual quagmires that plagued productivity. Siegel was never the loudest, but he tried hardest to keep

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But on May 16, 1969, Siegel did more than just plan demonstrations. It is with great pride and a wink that Siegel recounts the May protest at the SRI labs on Hinnover Street, where a traffic blockade created by students was ultimately dispersed by teargas and 100 policemen charging with batons. Many activists — and Siegel's son, he noted — know the story of how he dramatically picked up and hurled an open teargas canister 40 yards into an SRI window.

"Years of playing football paid off," Siegel said.

By forcing a lab that conducted Vietnam-related research to a halt by their mere presence, Friedman argued, the students "were harming the war machine." A famous San Francisco Chronicle columnist stopped by to chat, and the students found and operated a printing press in the basement of the building to publish leaflets and daily reports that they slipped under doors in every dorm room.

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Friday, April 3 marks 40 years since the day 14 activist groups, comprising 800 students, gathered in Dinkelspiel Auditorium and demanded an end to classified and Vietnam-related research at Stanford and closer oversight of the Stanford Research Institute in Palo Alto. That day yielded a name to an entire movement at Stanford whose first collective action, the nine-day sit-in at the Applied Electronics Laboratory (AEL), powerfully symbolized the high-water mark of an era at this institution.

The peaceful occupation of AEL, the lab which conducted classified research funded by the Defense Department during the Vietnam War, was the last major protest before demonstrations took a violent turn.

On the final day of April 1969, students who dubbed themselves the A3Mers (April 3 Movement members) seized Encina Hall, prompting Lyman, as acting head of the University, to call in police. Although the sheriff's deputies encountered no violence, that first incursion of police presence on campus crossed a line that could never be reversed. The University's internal antagonism worsened dramatically.

It is difficult today to imagine how dire campus unrest eventually became in the early '70s, when running battles between police and students, armed with teargas and rocks, raged in the open yards of Wilbur and Stern Halls. The President's office was bombed in 1968, and at some points nearly every window along the Quad was smashed and permanently boarded up. There were daily protests in White Plaza. Old Union was gridlocked by sit-ins. Alumni donors called in with concern and threats. Students yelled insults at faculty and then went home to yell at their successful, well-off parents whose cold liberalism was deemed hypocritical.

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Kevin Cool, the magazine's editor since 1999, remembered only one issue that roused a comparable reaction: exactly seven years prior, just months after September 11, the magazine ran a story suggesting that Stanford consider reinstating ROTC on campus. The program was shut down by the Faculty Senate in 1969, a year after its building near the football stadium was torched twice by antiwar protesters and ultimately razed.

The thorny backdrop of the '60s quickly overshadowed the ROTC issue as discussion heated up. The magazine never again received such a frenzy of letters, phone calls and emails, nostalgic or raging or both, until this January, when Lyman's perspective on campus turmoil in the late 1960s struck that same, singularly polarizing nerve among alumni.

Cool said he would set aside room in the two subsequent issues, the March/April and May/June issues, to run extensive letters to the editor.

"That period still inspires such passion by people who lived through it, and we knew that excerpt and the book itself would generate a reaction," Cool said in early March. "That wasn't a surprise at all."

But Cool wasn't banking on his own role being dragged into the crossfire. In interviews, alumni and faculty have accused him



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During the period that peaked with the AEL sit-in, before the minority pro-violence groups splintered and shouted the majority, the movement enjoyed broad support from the community. Women from Palo Alto brought fresh laundry and food to AEL, and students swept the floors and baked bread on each of the nine days before heading off to class.

"We were creating this alternate sort of reality," said Jean Friedman, who headed the occupation as a political science graduate student in 1969. "It was open. Campus police could walk through, campus administration could walk through, anybody could walk through and talk on the microphone."

In many ways the movement was at its peak when it was most articulate and thoughtful, considering that there was a campus consensus that agreed with its general position on the war.

To be sure, the majority of the faculty, Lyman and most of his administration colleagues, disagreed with U.S. involvement in Vietnam — "I thought it was stupid," Lyman said recently, in typically bullish fashion. But the ideological conflicts of the '60s, for all their roughness of expression, were often

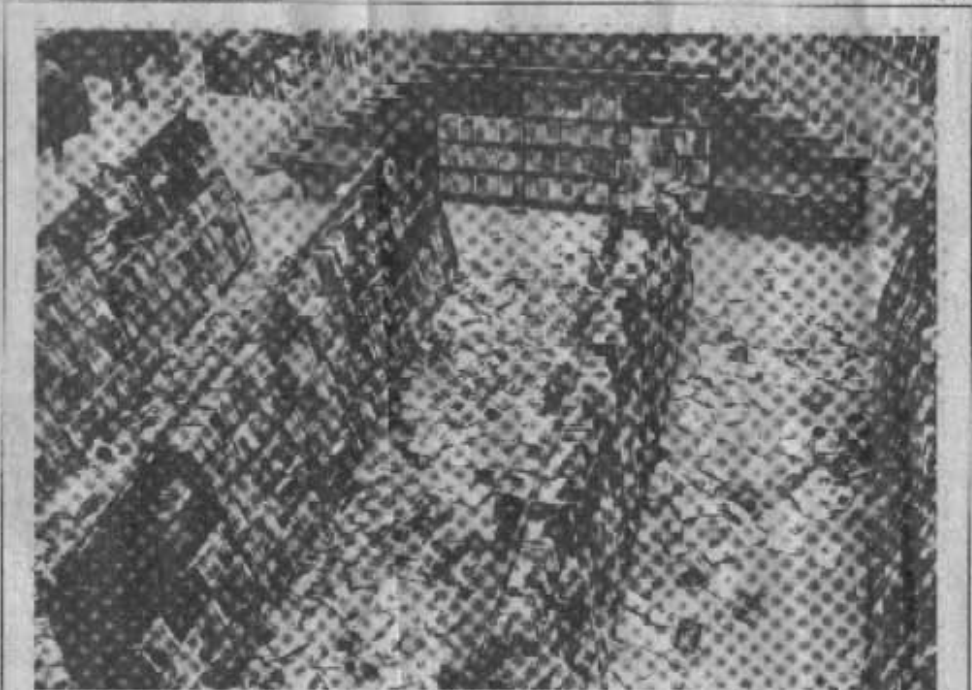
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GERRY SHIH/The Stanford Daily
Richard W. Lyman, former Stanford president from 1970 to 1980, recently completed "Campus in Turmoil," a recollection of the University's turbulent history in the midst of student antiwar unrest in the 1960s and '70s.

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The Stanford Bookstore in disarray after a 1969 student demonstration.

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grounded in more sophisticated differences than the dualisms that have come to characterize the post-1990s "culture wars."

Antiwar groups tussled over the morality of resisting the draft. Some activists pondered how to engage the civil rights issue that swirled underfoot — many students had wealthy families to return home to, while poor blacks and whites had little choice but to fight in Vietnam. Questions emerged: Interrupt disagreeable faculty or respect academic freedom? Pander to the liberal center or rebel? Violence or non-violence? Liberal democracy or socialism? Even LSD couldn't guarantee the path to discovering answers.

Ideological ferment raged along the full spectrum of political thought. Faculty and alumni alike retell the story of a nervy meeting during the spring of 1969 when students demanded that the Board of Trustees demonstrate that they were not "out of touch" by confessing their own political views. A prominent trustee — possibly William Hewlett himself — stood up and pointed out the Democratic or Republican affiliation of each trustee around the table as if to show bipartisanship.

Point proven. The students were exasperated.

"The board just didn't get it," recalled Barton Bernstein, a professor of history. "To only consider Democrat or Republican was such a narrow understanding of politics. The '60s offered a different conception; it offered a different worldview."

And this troubled parents greatly.

Born to a family of activists in Los Angeles, Siegel arrived at the farm in 1966 poorer than many of the student activists he fell in with. They included sons and daughters with names like Katzenbach and Rusk and Rockefeller, great families that recognized Stanford's ascendancy in the West, but failed to understand why their children despised them so when they returned home.

Movement leaders relished their influence over so many members from distinguished families who would become "the very top leaders of society." In November 1968, The Daily published a telling profile of the Stanford branch of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), noting, "Hal Hamilton, a junior and leader in SDS believes 'Stanford is a ruling class school. We've got the big targets here.' Hamilton told the Daily reporter, 'not only in University associations but in the student body.'"

Concerns about Stanford's public prestige, institutional integrity and trustee relations

Courtesy of Lenny Siegel



The May 1969 student protest of Stanford Research Institute on Hannover Street turns violent as police use teargas and batons to disperse demonstrators.

during the tumult linger prominently in Lyman's book, written almost 30 years after he stepped out of an administrative role. His critics say he misses the point, that his account is ahistorical because he was so hung up on the actions of the antiwar movement and ignored the war itself.

"It was like, 'War? What war?'" Friedman said, "as if we were in a vacuum and all he was considering was our actions. That was infuriating then, and frankly it's infuriating now. All these years later, he's still writing a book with the same analysis."

But on one level, a preoccupation with the University's security and ensuring that it did not shut down was Lyman's responsibility, and it understandably consumed him.

"He was against the war, but he was so wrapped up in trying to keep the University alive that the war fades into the background because there was a battle-ground right here," Wyman, the former dean, said. "Students got hurt, police got hurt. Police were hospitalized. Students were coming out of their rental places with M1 rifles. There was some tough stuff going on."

Friedman said for the students, the rationale for the sit-ins and property damage was that "this is what it's going to take to stop this war." She thought it was "more than tolerable in the context of an academic institution debating issues that are at the front and center of civic life."

Bernstein and, in fact, Lyman himself now agree in retrospect that the institution of the University was never fundamentally endangered.

"When I look back on American education," Bernstein said, "the story is all of these years elite places keep raising money, keep adding faculty and nothing happens. No school was ever destroyed."

On a higher level, the truly scarring battle of the '60s and '70s did not involve rocks or fire-bombs — it was over the academic institution and it represented the crux of the larger contest over the Left.

Journalist George Packer, whose father was a Stanford provost in 1969, eloquently described the traditional liberal beliefs of Lyman's generation of academics and those befuddled elite parents: "Society imposes mutual obligations from which no one is excused... The rational mind, unconstrained by religion or tradition or authority, has the capacity to solve our problems."

The clamp on emotions and the ivory tower's sedentary rationality had no challengers in that previous era of prosperous, postwar stability. But it came to be seen as just empty words. To a certain extent, as Lyman put it somewhat harshly in his book, "rationality itself was widely scorned in the 1960s and suffered setbacks... it has never entirely regained its place in its supposed Temple, the University."

So it was with great pain that even teachers who opposed the war found their ideals derided by their students, capable but unwilling to debate ad infinitum, disinterested in intellectually sparring within the system until a resolution was reached. Youth and time couldn't wait — the casualties and atrocities of war mounted in Vietnam daily, and the draft loomed inescapably over everything.

Still, the two sides saw themselves as a clash of ideals, where the stakes were limitless. Students collided with liberal academics who, for the sake of institutional integrity, offered themselves as the opposition. Lyman had something much more valuable than the physical security of the University to protect.

"The students weren't looking for our agreement, they were looking for our support," said Rosenzweig, who eventually headed the American Association of Universities. "And supporting them would've been a betrayal of what the university stands for. The university stands for making it possible for everyone to speak their mind and act within the law to make their ideas reality. It doesn't stand for supporting one side or another in a dispute."

Stanford's turmoil outlasted that of other universities. Some say it was because of the long trial and ultimate dismissal of Bruce Franklin, a professor of English who was

accused of inciting violence. Others point to Stanford's location outside a city, with the movement swelling toxically inside an isolated, suburban echo chamber of its own making. Whatever the cause, when the draft ended, so did the chaos.

No other generation has been shaped by their college years like the one that experienced it during the '60s.

"For many Stanford students from '55 to '68 or from '75 to the present, they would not have a 'defining' time," Bernstein said.

But for the A3Mers, it would be the opposite.

"If you asked the A3Mers something about their grad school or high school years they'd be fuzzy," he added.

Indeed, many activists continued work consistent with their ideals. Today, Siegel runs his Center for Public Environmental Oversight out of a cramped office in Mountain View. Others, though — including some of the most vocal activists — went on to fields like investment banking or venture capital or politics, cautious about disclosing their past.

Still, the April 3 Movement continues its reunions every 10 years. Siegel is the organizer this year, and it will be held this May 1-3. A3M also maintains an active email list, administered by Siegel, that recently lambasted Lyman's magazine excerpt.

After Lyman's book talk, there was a final moment that seemed to defy the passage of time. As Lyman walked to the parking lot with Siegel nearby, Lyman turned and bluntly asked Siegel if he was ever one of the students who threw rocks. Siegel proudly replied that no, he didn't throw rocks, but he once lobbed a teargas canister into an SRI window.

Considering all of the insults that have been hurled in the past, the distrust and antipathy, the two men were civil as they approached their respective vehicles and drove home knowing full well that even if the proposed debate occurs, they will never quite see eye-to-eye.

For both sides, deep differences in ideals so fundamentally powerful could only be buried over time, never quite resolved or forgotten. It was just 1982 when the writer David Harris '68 looked back with the heavy realization that the '60s were well and truly over and penned his memoir describing how those years at Stanford, which transformed him into a nationally famous protestor, left a lasting mark on so many students and teachers.

But Harris also foresaw the struggle for many to find and accept closure. He titled his memoir "Dreams Die Hard," and some 27 years later, those words still resonate with telling candor.

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