

Stanford Sit-in Seen as Recognition Quest

Youths Seeking Amnesty for Others Find Real Goal Is New Power for Themselves

BY JOHN DREYFUSS
Times Education Writer

"I joined the sit-in to support amnesty for students facing suspension," said Ray Anzic, a 19-year-old sophomore from Illinois.

"But as time wore on, I realized the real issue was my wish to be recognized as an important part of society."

Anzic was not alone.

Many of the 400 or more Stanford students who took over a campus administration building for 37 hours last month found that their principal reason for being there changed while they were sitting in.

They began by demanding that the proposed suspension of seven students be dropped and that certain campus judicial and legislative reforms be enacted.

By the time they left, many students who entered the building to emphasize the specific demands felt themselves part of a new community dedicated to increasing general student power in the university and, indirectly, off campus too.

Demonstrators phrased it differently, but they meant the same thing.

"I gained a feeling of personal commitment."

"I developed an awareness of belonging to a group. I sort of woke up in a new community."

"It was an experiment in involvement—a successful experiment."

"By the second day I knew I belonged. I never felt so right in my life."

Could Meet Again

In this community students now have a forum which, although decimated for the summer, could reconvene next year.

Another demonstration is probable at Stanford in the fall. Most persons at the university consider it inevitable.

That demonstration, if it occurs, could pit a zealous new community of activist students against an administration which has promised to stand firm against coercive tactics.

The community of protesters did not exist in anything like its present form before last month's sit-in at Stanford.

When they returned into the Old Student Union on May 4 to begin the sit-in, many sat in and the demonstrators had few main purposes. President J. E. Walker Sterling

threatened with suspension for their part in an anti-Central Intelligence Agency demonstration on campus last May 1.

2—Overboard the five-man faculty committee appointed by Sterling which had recommended the suspensions.

3—Permit the establishment of a permanent appellate board of four students, four professors and a chairman from the law school student body.

4—Permit the proposed appellate board to hear appeals from students but not administrators.

These demands had been made by students the week before the sit-in when the faculty board had recommended suspending the anti-CIA demonstrators.

Sterling was given until noon on May 6 to grant the demands. When he failed to do so, students broke into the Old Student Union and chained the doors open.

Although the administration closed offices in the building during part of the demonstration, students at no time barred entry. They did no significant damage, and kept the place clean.

Recommend Amnesty

On the third day of the protest, a small majority of faculty members at a special meeting recommended granting the amnesty demand and advising the other three by establishing certain student-faculty legislative and judicial boards.

Professors also voted not to punish the students who occupied the Old Student Union.

The faculty action, later reluctantly supported by Sterling, ended the sit-in.

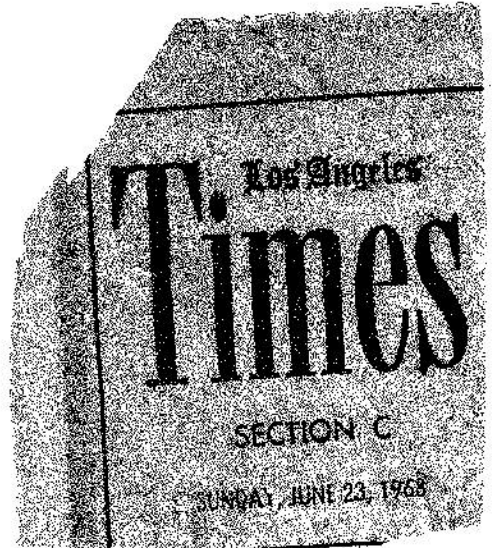
It did so despite provisions that allow Sterling to hold a new trial for the anti-CIA demonstrators before the proposed judicial board.

But appointment of the judicial board and its legislative counterpart has bogged down over differences between the students and administrators over whether faculty or students will have majorities on the boards.

The departing protesters had achieved something they considered far more important than partial compliance with their demands.

They left with a feeling of having established a community of having become part of a national radical political movement.

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CITIZEN SMITH

By Dave Gerard



"Our bridge foursome was having a nice friendly political discussion and then Emily had to bring up VIETNAM!"

Recognition Incentive of Sit-in at Stanford

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Most protesters found that beyond their specific demands was an overriding desire for recognition and power in the university.

That desire emerged in the minds of many demonstrators during the protest. It became their paramount goal.

Rank and file protesters still, in general, have a fuzzy concept of how much power they want.

How Far Unclear

How far it should extend into such areas as selecting curriculum, hiring faculty, choosing administrators and guiding university investment policy is unclear.

But that it should extend into those areas is unquestioned in the thinking and conversation of the demonstrators.

A small group of leaders—headed by graduate student Steve Weissman, 28, of San Francisco—held increased student power to be a primary sit-in goal

publish radical literature.

To a significant number of protesters, developing a political body to gain student power exclusively within the university was from the start of Stanford's sit-in at least as important as the demands for amnesty and judicial reform.

But the primary interests of most students were specific—all of them stemming from the threatened suspension of the seven anti-CIA demonstrators.

Assembly Called

The sit-in began on a Monday shortly after 1 p.m. That evening, Student Body President Cesare Massarenti, a 26-year-old graduate student from Milan, Italy, called a general student assembly.

Some 1,500 of Stanford's 11,400 students converged on the Old Student Union. In a 3-2 ratio they voted to end the sit-in but they agreed to support the demonstrators demands.

Most students then left the administration building.

ten directed critical remarks at the existing power structure of society.

He emphasized the relationship between the lack of collective power at Stanford and the same situation at other levels of society.

Sometimes the demonstrators would talk in small groups where conversation often focused on general student unrest, protest, militancy and lack of power in running universities.

At other times, when no one was speaking from the front of the lobby, students or faculty members would lead seminars on similar subjects.

Almost always the talk would turn to the bigger issues of political radicalism, socialism and revolution throughout the world.

Demonstrators who had at the outset considered general student power to be the basis for the sit-in explained their position to those who had come because of the four specific demands.

Preach Participation

Others—a small but dedicated minority—preached participatory democracy or some kindred form of government for all society.

The importance of student power as a general goal grew steadily in the minds of protesters who had come to the sit-in principally to demand specific campus judicial reforms and amnesty for the seven anti-CIA demonstrators.

Although there were wide differences of opinion on the ideal form and degree of student power, a pervading feeling of involvement in a power-orientated community had developed among the demonstrators.

Students speculated that a demonstration next fall may involve a campus Reserve Officers Training Corps program, university relations with the large minority group population in nearby East Palo Alto or Stanford's financial investments in companies working on military

unclear. Certainly most professors would not favor another sit-in, but except for some general agreement that their previous liberal stand would not necessarily be repeated, there has been no strong indication of how the professors would react to another demonstration.

In referendums students have, by wide margins, several times condemned

the tactics. They were Massarenti for his part in the recent protest. The trustees have proclaimed that sit-ins "must no longer be tolerated at Stanford."

But the demonstrators, though a small minority of the student body, are an exceptional lot with whom Stanford may have to deal again.

They are idealistic—

sometimes to the point of fanaticism—and intelligent. The students who occupied the Old Student Union included some of Stanford's best, and were in general significantly above average in academic achievement.

They are encouraged by the partial granting of their demands last month. They see their tactics as viable.

They are righteous and honest and serious about their objectives. Most of them said they would go to jail if the police had been called to clear the administration building. But they interpreted such a possibility as an indication of total breakdown in communication between demonstrators and university administrators.

They are optimistic, particularly because recent demonstrations across the nation are causing educational administrators to reevaluate their positions.

They are united in a community which is defined by many as a student political movement.

Where it is going remains to be seen. All Stanford is watching.

Weissman, whose field is Latin American studies, defines collective decision-making as decision-making at all levels of society by vote of interested persons.

He views major decisions of today as being made by a select few at the top of the governmental and corporate structures.

Similar to New Left

The sort of decision-making Weissman advocates is sometimes called participatory democracy. It is the administrative mode of the New Left.

It worked flawlessly at the Stanford sit-in, but it often breaks down under prolonged use.

After three days of collective decision-making at a recent Peace and Freedom Party convention in Richmond, delegates got so fed up with the procedure that they allowed their moderator arbitrarily to cut off debates and call for votes.

The successful collective decision-making at Stanford can largely be attributed to Weissman's skillful leadership.

He selected speakers, choosing persons on both sides of whatever issue was in question. Nearly every student who wanted to speak did so at least once.

When the protesters' responses indicated boredom, confusion or dissatisfaction with the sit-in tactic, Weissman often urged the demonstrators to break into discussion groups.

Acted at Berkeley

Weissman is no stranger to demonstrations or the radical movement.

He was influential in the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley in 1964 while he was a student there.

And he was active in the Vietnam Day Committee in Berkeley and the Southern Student Organizing

of their opinion of the demands found the protest movement and less in his approach and apparently successful in the sit-in tactic.

Lyman Offstage

Students had expected favorable recognition for having voted to end the sit-in. But when their action was announced in Memorial Auditorium, Lyman was offstage discussing with Stanford's fire marshal what to do about the overflow crowd.

This breach in communication deepened the gulf between Lyman and the protesters.

The Stanford Observer, a newspaper published by the university news office, reported:

Bringing the meeting to a close, Lyman said, "I had hoped to thank you all for coming," but he left the sentence incomplete.

Angered by Lyman, and feeling their case had not been seriously considered, the protesters returned to the Old Student Union and resumed the sit-in.

As the demonstration continued, the four specific demands which triggered the sit-in began to appear less important than the overall question of student power.

Basis of Goal

The demands, of course, never became unimportant. Instead, they formed a foundation for a more pressing goal.

Protesters began talking more about the root of their problems.

They listened to undergraduates, graduate students and a few faculty members speak from the front of the lobby in which demonstrators were packed.

Massarenti, who had earlier advised leaving the building, led the protesters for a time.

But he soon left the Old Student Union and Weissman began selecting

Although Sterling will retire before next fall, members of his staff have registered attitudes similar to his.

Provost Lyman, who may well become acting president, co-signed Sterling's statement which also said, "... we understand the faculty to support the view of the president that future disruptions will not be tolerated."

Foresee Policing

And Vice Provost Herbert Packer recently told a meeting of Stanford professors that some students and alumni have asked that demonstrations be policed by civil authorities.

"The combination of these pressures may force us into a situation in which the Stanford community is policed just like any other suburban town," Packer said.

The faculty position is