

REUNION

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dents, faculty and staff occupied Applied Electronics Laboratory and blockaded a Stanford Research Institute building. The AEL sit-in lasted nine days.

While the aging activists were reminiscing Saturday at Tresidder Union, many of their contemporaries, as well as many of today's students, were sitting in at Frost Amphitheater, listening to a concert by the Grateful Dead. Instead of the peace symbol of the 1960s, this group was characterized by tie-dyed T-shirts.

The April 3 Movement gang was always big on analysis, in deciding what to do and how to organize its tactics. The question to be analyzed Saturday was "Why Did It Happen?" — why did this Movement (with a capital M) happen, and why at Stanford? Not everyone stuck closely to the topic.

Stanford History Professor Clayborne Carson, director of the Martin Luther King Jr. Papers Project, wasn't at Stanford in the 1960s, but he advanced a theory that was supported by later speakers.

Carson believed the 1969 Stanford movement could be traced back to the civil rights sit-ins in the South that began in 1960. Previous to that, small groups of intellectuals might lead protests but the sit-ins showed "that anyone could do it ... you didn't need a political education."

The civil rights protests also developed the ideas of grassroots leadership and the participation of women, which were evident at Stanford.

David Harris, a central figure in the Stanford demonstrations who was imprisoned for resisting the draft, agreed the civil rights movement had been a major factor in his life.

"In 1963, I arrived at Stanford from Fresno and there was no movement in Fresno except away from," he said.

In 1964, he went to Mississippi to work in the Freedom Vote campaign.

"I went without politics, just because I believed black people should be allowed to vote," he said. "And I was looking for adventure. It was the most important thing going on and I wanted to be part of it. The word 'activist' was just beginning to surface then."

The brief exposure had a dramatic effect on him, because he realized America was capable of perpetuating evil.

He also witnessed the heroism and bravery of the blacks who were fighting for the right to vote

Stanford reunion

Sunday, May 7, 1989

'60s radicals certainly didn't just drop out

By Mary T. Fortney
Times Tribune staff

About 300 of the self-described radicals whose anti-war activism turned Stanford into a war zone in the 1960s returned to the university this weekend for a reunion — and what an illustrious group they are. Any university should be proud of them.

The activists who broke windows, spray-painted red signs on university buildings and castigated Stanford trustees in their protest against the perceived madness of the Vietnam War and the deceit of the military-industrial complex, have grown up.

They went out into the world to become doctors, lawyers, psychologists, psychiatrists and professors. Some of these former foes of capitalism even have joined big corporations.

But in spirit, they haven't

'We wanted to be different kinds of people. We had seen what short-haired men did.'

— David Harris

changed. They still question the establishment, still badmouth the trustees and are prone to get involved in lengthy debates.

The reunion was pegged to the 20th anniversary of the anti-war coalition known as the "April 3 Movement," formed on April 3, 1969, when several hundred stu-

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It was somehow fitting that on a day when former radicals were holding a reunion at Stanford University, the Grateful Dead played at Frost Amphitheater on the campus. As usual when the band is in town, Palo Alto was crawling with Deadheads Saturday, including these two women in search of tickets to the concert.

and it made him look at his own life.

Back at Stanford, there was a "confluence of events" that contributed to the development of activism. The Vietnam War was intensifying, draft calls were increasing and lifestyles were changing.

"We wanted to be different kinds of people," Harris said. "We had seen what short-haired men did."

Dave Ransom, now a journalist in Maryland, charged Stanford was built "by pre-eminent robber barons" and that big business "was run by modern-day robber barons and we were being trained to be part of their machine."

He declared that the activists' tactics were based on "research, analysis and education," and the

audience joined in gleeful laughter as he recalled "the glorious times we won out over the enemies."

Marjorie Cohn was a cheerleader when she entered Stanford in 1966. Later she became an ardent activist and now is a lawyer in San Diego.

"My radicalism was part intellectual analysis and part gut feeling," she said.

In the 1960s, she saw Stanford trustees as "the ones who ran corporations and wanted to keep the war going. They were the ruling class that controlled not only Stanford but the rest of the world."

Stanford's role, in her view, "was to feed the ruling class with managers uncritical with what was happening in the world."

"People in power did not surren-

der willingly, so we had to eat up their eclairs," she said. The remark evoked cheers from the audience.

Cohn's present-day view of Stanford isn't much more complimentary.

"Twenty years later there's discussion of racism at Stanford," she said. And, referring to the labor problems at Webb Ranch, Cohn commented sarcastically, "Stanford sub-contracts that labor and doesn't know anything about it."

This morning at 10 a.m., Lenny Siegel, director of the Mountain View-based Pacific Studies Center and one of the reunion organizers, will lead a guided campus tour from White Plaza to the sites of historic importance to the April 3 movement.

Photo by Ted Fink