

The April Third Movement



JUDITH CALSON — MERCURY NEWS

Marc Weiss and Rachi Marshall listen to speakers at the 30th reunion of the "April Third Movement" at Stanford University.

'60s protesters gather, look back with no regrets

BY BARBARA FEDER
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The order is rapidly fadin'

*And the first one now
Will later be last
For the times they are
a-changin'*

- Bob Dylan

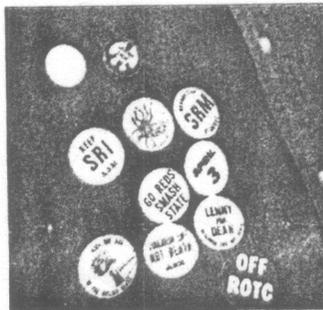
In 1969, Lenny Siegel was a Sputnik baby, a Stanford physics major being groomed for a career in what would become Silicon Valley — until he was expelled for his role in the anti-war protests of the April Third Movement.

Regrets? Forget it.

"Although we were militant and accused of criminal activities, we regarded ourselves as cultural heroes," said Siegel. Today, the 50-year-old father of two is a veteran community organizer who lives in Mountain View and directs the Center for Public Environmental

Oversight.

"I think we threw into question the basic assumption of what the university was. Was it there to promote free thought and social responsibility? Or was it an instrument of the military industrial complex?"



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Lenny Siegel displays old protest buttons at the "April Third Movement" reunion.

This weekend, Siegel returned to Stanford to join more than 100 other former activists for the 30th reunion of the "April Third Movement," a catchall term for a decade of student anti-war activism that peaked in spring 1969.

The name derives from the April 3, 1969, meeting where

Stanford students decided to occupy the Applied Electronics Laboratory to protest war-related research taking place there.

"It really was euphoric," recalled Yale Braunstein, now an information management professor

See **PROTESTERS**, Page 4B

Stanford protesters have no regrets

■ PROTESTERS

from Page 1B

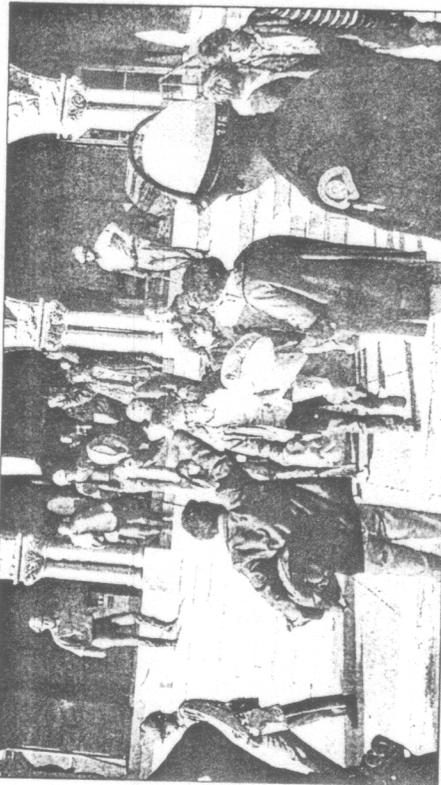
at the University of California Berkeley who headed the Stanford student legislature at the time. "There were all these diverse people who had one thing in common. The occupation kept growing and growing."

At the weekend-long retrospective, the third since 1969, panels of former activists and current students opined on lessons learned and the state of today's campus activism. They signed petitions protesting NATO bombing in Kosovo. And they shared more recent history: tales of kids, work, current battles for social change.

But the weekend belonged to 1969.

To the memories of sleeping bags and fresh-baked bread, midnight debates, teach-ins on Marxist economics, even a marriage at the Applied Electronics lab, which students peacefully occupied for nine days that April.

To breaking windows and peppy clouds of tear gas at a subsequent, more violent demonstration



STANFORD UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

Tear gas billows as police march against protesters on the Stanford University campus in the spring of 1969.

They succeeded, up to a point. Stanford eventually ended classified research on campus. But while students demanded that Stanford control research at the Stanford Research Institute, the university divested itself of the think tank, which remains independent today.

The protests had another far-reaching consequence, Lenny Siegel argues: They helped push technological research toward civilian applications, foreshadowing the personal computer boom.

At the time, though, the protests had an immediate impact for some students. Scores were arrested; some were suspended, barred from campus, even expelled. Some, like Siegel, served time in jail.

Siegel, known for his trademark dashikis, never completed college after his expulsion for disrupting a trustees meeting. But he stayed on campus for years, working at the college bookstore and for the Pacific Studies Center, a non-profit public interest group he now directs.

"We thought we'd go down as the good guys, and I think that's been the case," Siegel said. "We're basically proud of what we did."

and the way we raise our children. I'm still a fighter who believes if there's injustice, we should take action. It's part of my whole being."

With well-organized protests against the Vietnam War and conflicts in Laos and Cambodia, Bender and her comrades aimed to end Stanford's involvement in war research.

at the Stanford Research Institute. To slogans like "Research Life, Not War," and to protest anthems like "We Shall Overcome" and "Give Peace A Chance."

"It affected us for the rest of our lives," said reunion organizer Dorothy Bender, who worked at the Stanford computer science center in 1969. "It directed our values, careers