



The afternoon following King's assassination, a hurriedly called Hyde Park memorial, sponsored by the Student Union, attracted hundreds of students. Student and instructor slowly filed to the microphone. Whether it was just a lull before the storm or turning point for many heretofore uncaring individuals remains to be seen. (La Voz photo by Bob Orr)

A college stops to think it over

By ARN HELLER
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A white college paid tribute to the late Dr. Martin Luther King when hundreds of De Anza students attended a Hyde Park gathering two Fridays ago in honor of the slain civil rights leader.

A sense of urgency, frustration and despair marked those students and instructors who spoke what they felt needed to be said.

AND WHAT NEEDED to be said, it appeared, was a kind of

group confession, memorial and determination not to have another Civil War. As hundreds of students gathered around the fountain in front of the library steps, Gary Giarretto, Student Union member, explained the purpose of the hurriedly called meeting—"to pay tribute to a great man." "Martin Luther King is dead, but racism exists still," Giarretto said. "This is a white college, we live in a white community . . . I want to know what you people intend to do about it. Do we have to go through another

Civil War?" he asked. **GIARETTO PROPOSED** setting up interaction groups with students' neighbors, something better, he said, than merely admitting "Yes, yes, it's too bad." Giarretto also suggested starting an active seminar at De Anza that would go out to Negro ghettos. "It's not a thing you're going to get a grade for—it might save your life." **REV. O'DELL** offered a prayer for non-violence that is "aggressive and loving." He called

for "new hope in a time that seems clouded over with separation and despair." English instructor Robert Bernasconi said his own words would be inadequate and read instead an excerpt from King's "Letter From Birmingham Jail." (See below.) Fellow English instructor Philip Stokes read from a note he had written. "OK, good white man, what are you going to do?" he asked. Stokes warned that "the last chance is here." (See below.)


white racists. "They're just as dangerous as the person who shot Martin Luther King last night," he charged. "I'm no longer afraid of what he was trying to do," Watkins related. He did, however, warn students who are trying to effect a change to "be careful."

TINA GRIFFIN, a Negro coed, said sadly, "I don't know what you guys are going to do now. What's left? You guys have to do something. This summer, maybe this weekend, it's going to be hell." One student pointed to the fact that the U. S. is spending \$40 million a day in Vietnam. He remarked that just one day's Vietnam allotment could set up 40 Negro banks. "It's never too late to start it."

JOSEPH BRENNAN now proposed one minute of silence. "One minute," he urged. "Please think now." And one minute of silence ensued, marked only by a hammer pounding away at the unfinished Winery. The microphone was now open to anyone wishing to speak. For many, it was, they admitted, the first time they had ever spoken publicly, but they could find no more appropriate time to begin. First to speak was Gary Watkins, who recalled standing on a street corner in North Carolina in 1962 shouting obscenities at Martin Luther King as he marched by. "I was afraid," he explained.

"I think it's time I said something," said another student. "It's our fault." He said Negroes are looting because they can't afford the material goods the white man can. "Why can't they afford them? Because we won't let them." **ANOTHER STUDENT** pointed to the fact that very few Negroes go to De Anza. "On our campus you can count them," she said. And so it went. One student remarked that the Hyde Park ceremony "relieves guilt feelings." He recalled that Martin Luther King said one must have something to die for in order to live. He asked how many De Anza students had something to die for. Slowly the crowd dispersed . . .

WATKINS RELATED his telephone conversation with his mother in North Carolina the night of King's assassination. "My mother said she was relieved." Watkins accused many students in the audience of being



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A King sampler

'I may not get there . . .'

From "Letter from Birmingham Jail" by Martin Luther King:

(1) We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God-given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jet-like speed toward gaining political independence, but we still creep at horse-and-buggy pace toward gaining a cup of coffee at a lunch counter.

Perhaps it is easy for those who never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, "Wait." But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick, and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white people;

when you have to concoct an answer for a five-year-old son who is asking: "Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?"; when you take a cross-country drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" and "colored"; when your first name becomes "nigger," your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are) and your last name becomes "John," and your wife and mother are never given the respected title "Mrs.," when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tip-toe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodiness"—then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait.

There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience.

"It may get me crucified. I may even die. But I want it said even if I die in the struggle that 'He died to make men free.'" —1962.

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but the content of their character." —March on Washington, Aug. 28, 1963.

"Some of you have knives and I ask that you put them up. Some of you have arms and I ask you to put them up. Get the weapons of non-violence, the breastplate of righteousness, the armor of truth and just keep marching." —1964

"Cowardice asks the question 'Is it safe?' Expediency asks the question 'Is it politic?' Vanity asks the question 'Is it popular?' But conscience asks the question 'Is it right?' And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but he must take it because conscience tells him that it is right." —On taking a stand against the Vietnam War, 1967.

"Like everybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. . . . I've looked over and I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the promised land." —April 3, 1968 (the day before his assassination).

'OK good white man'

The following is the first part of English instructor Phillip Stokes' message which he read at the Hyde Park ceremony:

OK good white man whata gonna do? Whata gonna say? The black man does not believe you. Whata gonna DO whitey? The black man, the H. Rap Brown, the Stokley Carmichael, and now the Martin Luther King says "white man, whata gonna do NOW?"

How is it possible to say to our black friends—and certainly our black enemies, "I'm sorry—I never thought—I didn't mean—I prayed it wouldn't—whata gonna say, white man—IT DID! Whata gonna say? You gonna say "at last I love you?" By this tragedy I was able to feel your grief? By this tragedy I am able to say, "Your hero is my hero?" I am able to admit you—because you too now have a slain King of Innocence? NO! NO! You're not gonna march into the ghettos and say by your very numbers, "Hey, man, we're with you" . . . Come on, we can do it! You're gonna put on a show that no man

—black or white—can deny! You're gonna march in such great numbers—and in such great sympathy that no one could deny your sincerity—the time has come for demonstrations! Not the demonstration of the aggrieved against the persecuted, but of the persecuted who cry out in a loud voice—"forgive us for we know not what we have done!"

The last chance is here—the last chance for us to leave our comfortable suburban rubbles and meet the black man's troubles—on masse—with questions—not answers—with pitiful cries that THEY will pity us, not vain prayers that they will understand us.

With the ultimate awareness of dignity—not with the granting of dignity will we march into the forbidden land, and together make of it a promised land. We must begin a movement of demonstration that will take the weapon from the hands of Black Power and White Power alike, and turn them both into plowshares of progress for all of us."