



DEMONSTRATORS OCCUPIED
FIVE BUSINESSES
AND SET UP
A SMALL COMMUNITY

by Karen Jarvis

On a pleasant April morning a regiment of Southeast Minneapolis residents occupied five small businesses in Dinkytown.

Barefoot youths, college students, shaggy haired kids, and radicals made themselves at home in the empty offices. They brought mattresses, sleeping bags, chairs, toys, and musical instruments. Young artists in the group supplied picketers with "Make Love Not Hamburgers," and "Ban the Barn" posters and graffiti the walls.

The demonstrators came for different reasons but with one objective in mind—to keep the Red Barn out of Dinkytown.

Cybil Graffunder, a Marshall High school sophomore, said "I don't believe in my country's way of dividing wealth and land. It is excellent when a community can stand up and decide what businesses will come in." After brushing back her hair she went on, "Red Barn is an especially repulsive place. The food is terrible."

Another demonstrator, a girl with long flowing brown hair nicknamed "Boots" was there because "Red Barn isn't any good to me. I got sick more than once there. Besides, there's one a block from

where I live and another on nine blocks from Dinkytown."

Some demonstrators also argued that the Red Barn would not fit in with the rest of the structures.

Others argued that it would cause a traffic problem.

There was the issue of the tenants too. A few of the demonstrators claimed that vice president of Red Barn Inc., Robert Lafferty, made the tenants "rush" out of their store offices without much notice.

Ann Bridell, a middle aged woman and co-owner of the Co-ed Beauty Salon, was there for almost 18 years. Lafferty gave her 30 days to move out of the building.

"It wasn't a nice thing to do to give us only 30 days to get out," she said, "but this is the way it is. We didn't have a lease. It was a shock to us when the owner sold the building. But we were as free to leave as he was to get us out. He was in his legal right. Otherwise, I would have gotten a lawyer and had some fun. Personally, I support the occupation. I go down there every day to see what is going on. It looks like fun. I wish I was 20, but I'm married and have a family."

Louis Splichal, the owner of Lou's diner was angry because he had to move so fast, but he said he was planning to

retire anyway.

"I was there for 23 years and did a good business, but I need a good rest," he said. "Lafferty gave me 30 days to get out but that really wasn't enough time. I had to sell my equipment for almost nothing. I never have liked Red Barn and I don't want to see it move in. But some people like it."

The "Red Barn Resistance" group was mobilized by the Ad Hoc committee the night before the occupation. The coalition of radicals and conservatives unanimously decided to picket and occupy the buildings.

They also formulated a three point program. The program demands, 1) that the contact between Red Barn and property owner C. M. Kallis be broken, 2) that the former tenants of the building be allowed to return and re-establish their businesses, and 3) that any shop left vacant be converted into a community service.

The third demand has at least been temporarily fulfilled. The demonstrators set up a "people's feeder." The food is donated by community businessmen and cooked at a church near-by. The "people's hotel" serves as sleeping quarters for about 50 people that stay each night. Donations from the community have paid for a medical center with trained personnel.

At one of their daily meetings the demonstrators decided to initiate several action projects. Every week they set aside a couple of days to clean the streets of Dinkytown. They have also started a petition outlining the three point program and claim to have 20,000 signatures including the support of 40 Dinkytown merchants.

Since April 1, the beginning of the occupation, the police have been involved in only minor incidents.

The demonstrators were issued a summons on April 17 for a hearing the same day. After the hearing an injunction was posted by Robert Lafferty.

"If we persist, we will be liable for contempt of court, which is an unlimited sentence," said Bruggeman.

The controversy seems to be moving toward resolution in one way or another. The striking construction workers have finally reached a tentative agreement with construction contractors.

As a result of the settlement, increased pressure will probably be put on the demonstrators because the contractors want the building demolished before May 1.

PHOTOS BY DAVE ERLER



robert lafferty denies charges

by Karen Jarvis

Robert Lafferty had been described by one of his employees as "the kind of a guy who wants to do the right thing but doesn't know which way to go."

A 35 year old businessman, Lafferty is an easy going fellow with a gentle voice and a friendly manner.

Lafferty said of the demonstrators— "I've been a student but I don't think many of them have been restaurant people. We have qualified people to examine an area to see of our services are needed there. There are so many students they can't all be served with the existing facilities."

In response to the argument that the tenants were evicted without much notice, Lafferty said that none of the tenants had leases and that he went through the proper procedures in evicting them. He added that he helped the tenants move their equipment and advertised it in the newspapers.

The second argument that demonstrators used was quiet acquisition of the land. "This is true," said Lafferty, "I didn't confer with anyone. I did the same thing with the other seven locations. No one said we should talk to anyone when we applied for the permit."

The third argument was that the Red Barn would replace five badly needed services. "This isn't true. Two of the businesses would have closed anyway..."

Some anti-Red Barn people said that the Red Barn building would destroy the aesthetic value of Dinkytown. "Our Red

Barn is designed to blend in with the existing structures. We have designed the Red Barn so it will look more like a regular restaurant. The whole style of the Red Barn has been changed."

Pointing to the picture of the Red Barn restaurant on the wall, Lafferty explained what the new Red Barn would look like. The peaked roof would be eliminated and replaced with a shake roof, the red glazed brick replaced with regular Chicago brick and the glass raised to window sill level.

"It would cost more money to renovate the present building than to start over."

What about the traffic problem? "I concur that there would be a traffic problem but it would not be initiated by us. The off street parking in back of the Red Barn would help the situation," commented Lafferty, rubbing his mustache with his hand.

Lafferty said that he would like to talk to the demonstrators personally, David Pence in particular because of the editorial he wrote in the Minnesota Daily about community control and big business/corporations controlling communities.

"I belong to a system but I am still my own businessman. The system only provides help for the small business. I don't feel anyone is governing me but myself."

Replying to the question of using civil proceedings instead of criminal proceedings, Lafferty said that he used the injunction so the police would not be involved immediately and no one would be hurt. He added that if the demonstrators didn't leave police action would be taken.

"I have a personal interest in the situation."



"MAKE LOVE NOT HAMBURGERS."