

AS OTHERS SEE US

palo alto times

FREE UNIVERSITY SIT-INS SQUELCHED

by Myron Myers and Jack Rannells

Demonstrators from the Midpeninsula Free University (MFU), unhappy at being refused a lease for a meeting center "liberated" two buildings in downtown Palo Alto Friday.

Viet Cong flags flew briefly from both, the Palo Alto Office Center on University Avenue and a vacant furniture store on the corner of Emerson Street and Hamilton Avenue.

The Palo Alto Police Department called up its reserves to meet the situation, but there were no arrests or serious incidents.

The demonstrators left the office tower when ordered to by building manager Robert Purcell and Police Chief William Hydrie.

Police did not chase them out of the furniture store until after midnight, because, Hydrie said, its owner, attorney Warren Thoits, was out of town and could not sign a trespassing complaint. Hydrie acted after a subleasee said he would sign a complaint.

Spokesmen for the demonstrators said they would not try to re-enter the building but would hold a street dance tonight at 8 p.m. in Lytton Plaza on University Avenue. The "Free University" consists of a number of seminars held in private homes or dwellings. Subjects range from Marxism and economics, guitar playing and bread baking to experiments in free love.

The MFU proclaims itself "existentialist" and appeals primarily to "hippie-type" students and former students. Members held a protest rally in Lytton Plaza Friday noon at which they complained Thoits reneged on an agreement to rent them the furniture store for a coffee shop, crafts center, dance hall and a generally "turned on place."

Thoits was not available for comment. The MFU spokesman said Thoits said he turned them down because he was not in political sympathy with them, they would cause parking problems and he plans to raze the building for high-rise offices.

TO THOIT'S OFFICE

The protestors, about 150 strong, marched to the office tower and up to the 12th floor where Thoits has his office. The attorney was not there. His secretary locked the door.

The group then "sat - in" at unfinished offices nearby for more than three hours.

At 4:30 p.m. they decided they weren't getting enough attention, even with their Viet Cong flag flying from the 12th floor, and adjourned to the lobby.

The demonstrators occupied the first floor offices of Hare, Brewer & Kelley, realtors. Some reportedly made telephone calls on the company's private lines, prompting Prucell to have the telephone company disconnect the lines. It was not determined yet today whether any long-distance calls were made. MFU spokesman Robb Crist and Steve Weissman said none were.

Hydrie met with demonstrators in the lobby.

They taunted him as the protector of four property owners who "own Palo Alto."

The four owners were said to be the Thoits family, Hare, Brewer & Kelley, the Palo Alto Medical Clinic group and Stanford University.

Though interrupted by wisecracks whenever he talked, Hydrie denied his officers give preference to anyone's per-

sonal rights versus property rights. They lambasted private property as the ill of American society. Hydrie tried unsuccessfully to find Thoits to suggest he meet with the group.

STANFORDITES

Political activists from Stanford University dominated the discussion. They included Bruce Franklin, English professor and avowed Maoist, and Weissman, leader of Berkeley's Free Speech Movement and sit-in at the Stanford administration building last spring.

Others were David Ransom, Peace and Freedom Party candidate for Congress in San Mateo County; Vic Lovell, former head of the Free University, and Barry Greenberg and Marc Sapir, two longtime students who would have been expelled from Stanford last spring if the sit-in protest hadn't been successful.

Non-Stanford activists included Robert Cullenbine, a young businessman, and James Wolpman, volunteer attorney for the Free University.

Weissman urged the group to remain in the center until "that last delicious moment" when the police would evict them.

When the building manager and Hydrie ordered them out, the group marched down University Avenue singing the "Internationale," the Communist anthem.

USES KEY

They marched to the furniture store where Cullenbine used a key, which he said he obtained from a realtor during lease negotiations, to open the door.

When Wolpman told the group he didn't want to comment on their legal right to enter the building, Cullenbine dangled the key above his head and laughed: "I didn't open the front door with this key."

Twenty policemen in riot gear waited a block away behind Mac's Smoke Shop.

Hydrie, however, said he would not act without a complaint. He said he would not require the normal permit to hold a public dance unless a "police problem" arose.

The demonstrators scrawled 'liberated zone' on a show window in the store. A Viet Cong flag was taped to another window for a time. In a third window was placed a poster of a crudely drawn pig labeled "HHH," the initials of Vice President Humphrey.

A hippie band arrived from San Jose. Some demonstrators danced. Others sat cross-legged on the crowded floor. A dozen long-haired males lounged on crates of used books against the east wall.

OFFER TO SIGN

Shortly before midnight William Wreden, a Palo Alto dealer in rare books, told Hydrie he would sign a complaint if the MFU group did not leave the building.

Wreden said he had a sublease on the store and the books inside were his. His insurance agent, he said, had told him if he did not act to clear the store he would not be protected against damage to the books.

Hydrie gave the group 10 minutes to get out or face arrest. They all left without incident.

"They won't be back in again tonight," Hydrie said. "The locks have been changed."

Crist, a MFU leader, commented today: "Our hope is that pressure put on Thoits by his friends as a result of hearing how he has doublecrossed the Free University will be enough to make him change his mind."

THOITS SAYS DEAL NEVER MADE

Representatives of the Midpeninsula Free University were refused a lease of a downtown vacant store because it would have been inconsistent with the proposed use of the property, according to the property owner.

Warren Thoits, Palo Alto attorney, said today:

"We did meet with their representatives to discuss their proposal and as a business decision this was found to be inconsistent with the proposed use of this property.

"We regret that inadequate communication on the basis of

(see p. 34)

(from p. 34)

our decision resulted in yesterday's event and interference with the business activities of others.

"We never accepted any funds from them, nor was there any intention to grant them a right of first refusal. There is no lease nor a right of first refusal so far as we are concerned."

HYDIE HANDLED PROTESTERS ABLY

Palo Alto Police Chief William A. Hydie was the most impressive performer who got into the act Friday when Midpeninsula Free University demonstrators sat in at two downtown buildings.

To Hydie's credit, he got them out- and closed the incident without violence and without giving the motley demonstrators any pretext to extend their protest.

It wasn't easy. Claiming a businessman had reneged on a deal to rent them space, they "occupied" the Palo Alto Office Center- and some of them flew the Viet Cong flag there. In a meeting with Hydie in the lobby, they taunted him - but could not provoke him to anger. He insisted that his officers do not give preference to anyone's personal rights - a property owner's for instance- over another's. He kept communication open and pertinent.

Hydie stuck to due process in securing the proper complaints and ordering the MFU gang out of the Office Center and a store building they later occupied. At the same time, he called up police reserves and plainly was ready to use any force needed to deal with the matter.

His mature, cool-headed behavior brought out how adolescent the antics of the demonstrators were.

Pet it? Feed it? Step on it?

by Leo Handley

Conversations overheard Friday night while standing at the corner of University and Emerson streets, Palo Alto- the scene of a hippie "liberation festival":

- "Whoopee," expressed calmly by a teen-age girl as she studied her boy friend. He had paused briefly to clutch at a parking meter head, as if to strangle it.

- "I wonder if I should pet it, feed it, or step on it?" asked a middle-aged passerby. He eyed a skinny youth with tufts of straw and debris clinging to his bushy hair and surplus U.S. Navy peacoat.

- Another passerby, with a 6-year-old boy clinging to his hand, glanced across the street at the several hundred bizarrely dressed teen-agers and young adults, and uttered a single four-letter word.

Two youths, dressed in clean sport shirts and apparently from some other congregation, watched a blonde girl swish past in tight dungarees and a cut-off hospital smock tied in back with two ribbons. They smiled and said nothing. She appeared to be wearing nothing underneath.

Five adults listened to a resounding guitar and drum rendition that blocked out most evening traffic sounds except the motorcycles. One jerked his head and said, "let's go get him up and tell him what's going on." There was no further explanation.

Free University Leader Claims Threat With Gun

A leader of the Midpeninsula Free University, Robert Cullenbine, 30, has complained to Palo Alto Police that he was threatened with a gun Saturday afternoon as he was walking in the 700 block of Ramona Street in downtown Palo Alto.

Cullenbine, of 921 Ramona, said he had just left a Lytton Plaza Free University gathering when four men in a car drove past and he heard one say, "Get him."

He said he saw what looked like a 45-caliber pistol emerge from the rear window, at which point he said he dashed

into a used car lot near Homer Avenue and hid under a car. The cruising vehicle stopped, Cullenbine said, and two men emerged, then got back in and the vehicle left. Police Sgt. Al Bowra said today the case is under investigation. He said two suspects have been located, along with the car and the weapon, which turned out to be a pellet gun. A 15-inch bayonet was also found in the car, he said. The motive for the incident isn't clear, Bowra said.

About 300 persons attended the MFU's "coffee house of the streets" gathering Saturday night for a singing, dancing and lounging protest of the university's inability to secure a downtown building lease for a coffee-and-art house.

MARIJUANA

At the beginning one tries out of curiosity, a need to identify with others, a desire to see more of one's self. After 6 months the perspective has narrowed; the perception of the finite or of the moment has increased to be all encompassing.

At a year's end caring for anything or anyone outside this narrowed perspective is non-existent.

Having desired to see more of one's self the loss of empathy with others has occurred with the deadly stigma of selfishness. 948-7089.

THE NEXT ISSUE

THE NEXT ISSUE:

Deadline for the next issue is Wednesday, October 9. All contributions are welcome and should be left in the editor's box at the Free U store. During fall quarter we'll try to stick closely to a bi-weekly format, publishing on alternate Mondays. Our special thanks to Lee Reeves of Reeves photography, 322-7385, who's everywhere. This ~~week's~~ issue's cover was a long trip from dream to reality, and we can never thank Joan Larimore enough.

ART CLASS

Young, old; jaded art buffs and novices, painters all: you are invited to examine with me, by your own pictorial invention, singly and in sequence, THE SPHERES OF INFLUENCE OF COLORS ON balance, tension, space, light, form, movement and expression. You'll need eight colors and black and white poster gouache, several brushes, ebony pencils, rough newsprint paper. BURGESS RECREATION CENTER, Wednesday afternoons 1:30 to 3:30 and evenings 7:30 to 9:30. Kathleen Adair Brown, painter in attendance. \$1 charge for space/session, \$8 for eight classes. 325-4550.

REWARD

A cash reward, no questions asked, is offered for the return of a small black metal sculpture missing from 951 Bryant St., Palo Alto, 326-5284. Value much more sentimental than monetary. I really don't want to get anyone in trouble or put anyone uptight; I'd just like it back.