

Report: To the Central Committee
From: Free D.C. Movement

In early June, FDCM started holding street corner rallies on 7th St. (bound by New Jersey Ave, 10th st. Rhode Island and New York Ave.) A number of these rallies were held with marchers, singing and the people talking about their problems. Weekly community mass meetings were held. Several hundred people showed up at the weekly meetings. Local committees were set up with about 18 persons signing up to work on their block and in the neighborhood.

Rallies were also held on 1st and Rhode Island across from SNCC office.

In early July, FDCM started a series of block parties. The first one was broken up by cops. A warrant was sworn out by cops for Marion Barry and Lester McKinnie for holding the block party. Marion and Lester posted the \$110,000 collateral. Trial is set for Aug. 11th.

FDCM uses the block parties as a means of getting young people involved. FDCM hopes to get to the point where they can hold block parties each week. The parties stressed maximum community participation.

Marion Barry:

A number of SNCC people have raised the question as to why I am chairman of the Free D.C. Movement. When the FDCM was first announced at a press conference consisting of Rev. Walter Fauntroy, Negro bishop Paul Moore Co-Chairman of Coalition of conscience (coalition of civil rights and religious groups), Ed Hailes ex Secty NAACP, and John Diggs local barber, the chairman of the Merchants and Businessmen's Committee to Free D.C, because of the tremendous pressure most of the persons displaced from public view. Our experiences in Washington have shown that a large number of people are self advocated and have selfish interest (even grass roots and low income people). In order to try to develop a sense of militancy in DC (which didn't exist), and since I have no self interest, I along with others decided that the movement women remain purer if I remained chairman (John Diggs is case in Point) There are 1,000 "Leaders" in Washington and all of them want to

"project their thing" and want to be leaders. This is some what different from Lowndes County or rural areas of the south. (I will give a better verbal description) There has been no attempt not to project local Washingtonians and we are in the process of finding a number of local Washingtonians to Project as being involved in the FDCM.

A number of person want to know what FDCM has done "outside of Marion Barry". For those who know Washington, they know of the great difficulty of getting people to put their bodies rather than their mouths in the movement.

Julius Hobson admits to being able to get only 25 or 30 people out with regularity. CORE can get 10-15. The Meredith's rally and march (with all of the group's sponsoring it) drew about 300 people. Therefore numbers and organization are not an indication of ones effectiveness.

There are a number of concrete things we have done in terms of educating, mobilizing and organizing people in Washington.

FDCM has distributed over 700,000 pieces of literature; has sold or given away over 30,000 Free D. C. buttons; has talked to or been involved with a large number of groups. A number of neighborhood rallies have been held.

Outside of thes, I think that our biggest contribution has been to break through the psychological barrier of "can't do anything" to a feeling of power. Most people still say that "you all are beating the hell of the folks downtown". It is still a "you all" and "us" thing rather than a we. But the "we" is the next stage. People all over Washington now have a sense of "believability" in themselves. Groups are now organizing all over town. UPO is stepping up its organizing. Therefore a lot of what FDCM has created doesn't feed back into FDCM.

PROBLEMS

Washington has a population of 900,000 people and area of about 72 sq. miles. SNCC only has 2 full time staff people in Washington. (Myself and Lester) It is very difficult to get good people to work for SNCC's low salary and even worst not to get paid at all. UPO (local poverty program) steals all of the old SNCC people and any experienced field workers. Therefore experienced personel is a very serious problem --particularly skilled community organizers. In addition, some of the old SNCC people doesn't with or understand FDCM's method of operation. When they are asked for concrete suggestions, the suggestion rarely come forth.

The next problem is to find a way to get more people involved in the movement.