

## Restrictions On Meetings Bother ACLU

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The American Civil Liberties Union turned a skeptical eye yesterday on new Interior Department regulations governing public gatherings in Washington.

The group expressed particular concern about a section banning demonstrations and the distribution of circulars along five streets bordering the White House grounds.

Monroe H. Freedman, chairman of the ACLU's National Capital Area chapter, said the provision "seems to say that if someone is distributing leaflets to people passing by on any of those streets, he is subject to arrest. That would seem a clear violation of the First Amendment."

Freedman said this and other questions will be taken up when the chapter's executive board holds its monthly meeting Wednesday.

Interior also announced Saturday that permits will now be demanded for gatherings and speeches in Lafayette Square and all but six other Washington Parks.

The regulations say that

permits shall be issued unless the park superintendent finds that the event will present "a clear and present danger to public health or safety."

Freedman said the ACLU will want to know just what restrictions are being imposed on the public, what standards are in effect for issuing permits and who is applying for them.

Interior Department solicitor Frank J. Barry, a former ACLU member in Arizona, said he understood Freedman's concern but felt there were no grounds for it.

He said the regulations will "absolutely not" be used to restrict the kind of demonstrations that may be held.

Their main purpose, he said, is to insure that Park Police will have forewarning of the time, place and size of demonstrations so that proper preparation can be made.

Any refusals of permits, he said, would most likely be on grounds that the space requested was too small to accommodate the expected crowd or had been reserved by another group.

The ban on demonstrations along streets bordering the White House had already covered West and South Executive Avenues and State Place.

At the request of the Secret Service, East Executive Avenue and Alexander Hamilton Place were added to the off-limits areas Saturday, an Interior official said.