

The Capital's Uncertain

By Haynes Johnson
Washington Post Service

Washington
Trudging down New York avenue yesterday morning, heading for the parkway and out of town, their hair whipped by a brisk wind, their sleeping bags slung over their shoulders, they looked like a scene out of an old Charlie Chaplin movie.

Part of the People's Army, sons and daughters of the middle class, was leaving the battleground.

"I got busted twice yesterday and that's enough," said one young man, carrying a hitchhiking sign asking for a ride to New Jersey.

Marching down Pennsylvania avenue toward the Justice Department in the bright afternoon sunshine, arms locked, revolutionary banners flying, chanting their slogans and shouting their battlecries, the rest of the army, several thousand strong, took up their positions in the streets and awaited arrest.

STOPS

"We're staying indefinite-ly," one protester said. "We're going to keep demonstrating and protesting until the war stops."

Washington was like that yesterday. It was a city div-



While many demonstrators left town, many others were arrested in front of the Justice Department

AP Wirephoto

ided between those who stayed and those who left. One side seemed certain that their tactics had been correct. The other appeared doubtful and dispirited. You could find evidence of both positions all over the city.

"We lost," said a 20-year-old whose first name was Dennis, but did not want to be further identified. "We got creamed. Any time you let your enemy know what you're going to do, you're in trouble. We can't let out the

battle plan like that. There were CIA people who knew more than I did."

At a local church the scene was more listless. At 1 p.m., half an hour after the scheduled start of the protest at the Justice Department

some 100 demonstrators were still inside, talking, sleeping, or singing to the accompaniment of a piano and guitars.

BLACK

A black from Berkeley named Katanga complained that people seemed more interested in singing and "running in the streets" than in political action. "In two weeks I haven't witnessed one workshop," he said. Most of the people, he went on, seemed to be going home. "I ask them why they're

Mood

going back, and they say there's nothing to do. I'm going to have to make a plea for them to get together in small groups of 10 to 12 and discuss where they've been and where they're going to."

He walked to the altar, took the microphone, and asked for the music to stop.

He urged them to talk about what had happened and what was going to happen. One youth in the group around the piano answered quietly. "We did that last night."

Someone announced, "there's a march on the Justice Department. We're going to leave now."

LEFT

Some left. Most stayed.

Katanga was reflecting what other blacks, including veterans of civil rights marches in the South, seemed to express: a lack of organization and coherence to this stage of the peace movement.

At the Justice Department the mood was militant. Protesters talked about genocide and pigs and "underground" action.

"I think revolution is change," a young man from Ohio said. "The reason we're out here is the power is out of the hands of the people.

The people who are here are the best humanity has to offer."

Another said, "what we are doing is a desperate reaction to a desperate situation. If you want to say we're doing illegal things, fine. That's their law."

It was a day, though, more for questioning than for rhetoric — principally about their own tactics of civil disobedience. They were asking where they went from here. No one seemed to be certain.

..... UNCERTAIN

If they were uncertain about their political direction, those interviewed, whether leaving or staying, were united in one respect. They were sure their own values were somehow unique and special.

"Politically, I generally agree with my parents," said a Fordham University student at the Justice Department. "But tactically, they're way off. Like they agree with last week, but I agree with this week. We're more open-minded. They're more security-minded. They have to have material things. Their main goal in life is to be rich, where most of the younger people today don't think that's why we're here."