Introduction:

Our strategy which we hope to implement will be the long-term plan we prepare in order to achieve the goals and demands which we have set for the campaign. We expect that the campaign will take a long time and require basic political organizing work since it is directed against entrenched interests.

Our goal is to participate in the building of a city-wide movement which organizes people around certain specific issues through outreach (grass roots and superstructural), agitation and education. In order to build a strategy to do this, we need to pursue three elements: learning more about this city, clarifying the relationship among the issues of the campaign and taking actions which will put pressure on the bank to accede to our demands. In putting the strategic elements into practice we hope to learn how and with whom we will be able to build a city-wide movement.

Element #1: Conducting Investigation about the City

Our strategy of building a city-wide movement can only be developed through a dialectical process of learning about the city, taking action based on that knowledge, learning more, etc. We need to find out through research and outreach the actual ways in which Riggs and other banks affect the majority of people in this city.

Outreach

1. Identify groups in the city which are a priority to work with, and which have a self-interest in changing Riggs' lending practices. Since D.C. is a predominantly black city, our focus should be on predominantly black groups, such as housing, tenants and neighborhood groups, churches and trade unions.

2. Learn those issues around which these groups are organizing. Find out the ways in which local banking practices are related to these issues.

3. Establish working relations with these groups on a mutually beneficial basis. Within the limits of energies available, offer support for their work while at the same time asking them to support ours by making it part of their agenda.

The historical reality of racism in the city precludes any easy solution to collaboration between whites and black-led groups. Neither, on the other hand, should this reality stop us from struggling to establish firmer ties and alliances on the basis of mutual respect and support.

Research

1. Expand our housing analysis to cover not only redlining but also the current issues of gentrification, displacement and condominium conversion. Describe the changes which have taken place in two contrasting D.C. neighborhoods over the past decade and the role which Riggs and other banks have played in that process.

2. People in the D.C. Bank Campaign need to understand the report D.C. in the Year 2000 pinpointing the changes envisioned for various neighborhoods in city.

3. Find out the function of the Mayor's Commission on Economic Development and the role of Riggs and its President in the Commission.

4. Continue to investigate the local and international lending practices of other commercial banks in the city. Explore the political feasibility and practical means of using monies withdrawn to help create a fund to preserve and expand the stock of affordable housing for low income and modest income people.

5. Research how well Riggs delivers bank services other than mortgages and investigate how these are connected to the Riggs practices locally and abroad around which we are organizing.

6. It is important to recognize and to use the research and abilities for research that already exist in other community organizations as well as to offer our own research abilities.

Element #2: Concretizing the relation between international and domestic goals.

We should strive to clarify the role of finance capital through the specific example of Riggs National Bank. We must be able to show why there is a need for a bank campaign and why Riggs, in particular, was chosen as the target of our campaign.

In relating local and international issues concerning the role of finance capital, the Bank Campaign can play an unique role in the city. We need to be able to show why it is in the interest of working class and minority peoples to support the liberation movements of South Africa and the popular resistance in
We need to maximize action by people in the District to isolate and condemn the repressive governments of South Africa and Chile, and the financial institutions which give them aid.

We need to know more about Riggs and other local banks and their activities. We should regularly monitor the local newspapers (especially the Metro and financial sections), banking and business journals for references to Riggs and other local banks, new trends in banking, corporations related to the banks (eg. Dynalextron), etc.

We also need to define our strategic conception of winning the Bank Campaign. For example, was Riggs' admission of loans to South Africa a victory for us? By clarifying the interrelations among our goals, the campaign will not be undercut by Riggs' statements on any one particular issue or aspect.

Element #3: Waging the Fight against Riggs

At the same time that we are establishing our base of support in the city, we need to have concrete steps and actions which we and our supporters can take to put pressure on Riggs and demonstrate that the campaign can be won. Our goal is to affect Riggs in a way that will benefit the people of the District, of Chile and of South Africa. This means not only stopping redlining and other discriminatory practices by Riggs but also the opposite positive step of pressuring Riggs to make loans which meet the needs of the community and which are being demanded by community groups. We see this process as a step toward popular control over financial institutions in the city. The specific forms of action may change over time, but the general categories which we have identified thus far are:

1. Withdrawals from the bank accompanied by letters of protest. We need more consistent and systematic work in this area. We need to continue withdrawal work on targeted large institutions, endorsers of COBLSA, small groups and individuals. We are seeking withdrawals from both local institutions and national or regional offices located in the District. Large institutions (unions, churches, national associations, etc.) often need a long time for their decision-making processes and withdrawal procedures. We need to stay in contact with these institutions by calling at regular intervals and being aware of their decision-making processes. It is important to work with rank and file membership to obtain sufficient pressure to convince the groups to withdraw, in many cases.

2. Maintaining visibility of the Bank Campaign. Our leafletting at various branches of Riggs helps to maintain the visibility of the campaign and allows us to reach some people who would not otherwise be reached. We need a new up-dated leaflet with more information about ourselves and analysis of the issues. We should plan additional street actions and improve our capacity to respond quickly to local and international events.

We should try to make more creative use of our contacts with the media. Thus far we have reached many people through radio talk shows without doing much of the planning for this. We need to plan more presentations which we ourselves can take to the media.