

Jailed N-VAC Demonstrators demand 5 more days in jail

June 24, 1964

Two N-VAC members who will have completed a 10 day jail sentence today demand to stay in jail to protest an extra sentence imposed on a fellow demonstrator. The trio were sentenced on June 11 by Judge Howard Schmidt after having been convicted by an all white jury of blocking a fire exit at Van De Kamps restaurant. Judge Schmidt imposed the longer sentence on Woodrow Coleman saying that he 'appeared to be the leader.'

The 2 men, Jerry Farber and Jay Frank say "we plan to remain in jail as long as Woodrow Coleman is here. His sentence is five days longer than ours for absolutely no reason other than the color of his skin. We intend to protest this discriminatory sentence by remaining in jail until we can all leave together."

They go on to say that the sit-in was a group action voted on by the entire organization. Furthermore each of those sittin was personally responsible for his being there. The Judge said that Woodrow Coleman was more responsible than the rest but there was no such evidence during the trial. All he did was act as spokesman during a brief conversation with one police officer. Farber, who received only 10 days was co-spokesman of the sit-in. Danny Gray, another spokesman was not even arrested. Each of the sit-ins was dealt with individually by the arresting fire officer and police. Mr. Coleman spoke for no-one other than himself. He does not have more of a police record than the others. In fact, the only defendant with a prior conviction was Farber, who was sentenced last year for a sit in at the Board of Education. Yet Farber only received 10 days. Coleman, the only one of the four (the fourth, Annette Becker is to be released from jail today) who is obviously Negro, was found guilty of exactly the same misdemeanors as the other three by the jury. The change in treatment began only when Judge Schmidt imposed sentence.

N-VAC announces that a picket line supporting the Jail-In will start at 10 am today at Lincoln Heights Jail, 401 Ave 19. The picket line will also protest the use of the Police Dept. and Fire Dept. to maintain segregation and the unequal application of the law by both agencies with regard to attacks on peaceful demonstrators by segregationists.