

300 Seized in Antiwar Protest Near White House

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 26 — About 300 antiwar demonstrators were arrested a block from the White House tonight when they sat down in the middle of Pennsylvania Avenue at the height of the evening rush hour.

The sitdown, which started shortly after 5 P.M., snarled traffic for more than an hour and caused backups of several miles on major streets in downtown Washington.

The arrests occurred after an afternoon of demonstrations by members of the Mayday Tribe, the group of youthful protesters who disputed the nation's capital last spring.

About 300 policemen were gathered at the Treasury Building, at 15th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, when more than 500 demonstrators marched up 15th Street, chanting antiwar slogans and carrying placards. They came from the Washington Monument grounds, where they had been throughout the afternoon.

The protesters wanted to march to the White House to present President Nixon with an "eviction notice." They also planned to ask the President to come to the Sylvan Theater on the mall, where the antiwar group had just completed a trans-Atlantic telephone call to members of the North Vietnamese and Vietcong delegations at the peace talks in Paris, and have Mr. Nixon join in the phone call.

As the protesters reached Pennsylvania Avenue, police lines blocked them from making the turn onto the avenue that would have taken them past the White House. Facing a line of policemen across the avenue, backed up by a line of patrolmen on motor scooters, the youths sat down in the middle of one of Washington's busiest intersections.

When the demonstrators sat down, policemen moved around them and police officers used bullhorns to warn them that they would be arrested if they did not immediately clear the road.

Some of the demonstrators remained on the pavement. Police officials signaled patrolmen on the sidewalk in front of the

Treasury Building to begin making arrests.

The protesters who were arrested—each in the custody of a single policeman—were taken to the police buses that had been pulled up on Pennsylvania Avenue during the sitdown.

Police Chief Jerry V. Wilson was at the demonstration, supervising the arrests. He said that bail had been set at \$50 and that those arrested were charged with disorderly conduct and blocking the street. "We are using our standard field arrest procedures," he said.

The police chief estimated that more than 1,000 policemen were involved in the police detail for the protest throughout the city.

The arrest procedures were in marked contrast to the mass arrests used by the police during the Mayday demonstrations last spring, when more than 13,000 demonstrators were arrested for disorderly conduct and disruptive activities. But virtually all of the arrests during the Mayday demonstrations were thrown out of court because the arrest procedures were held to be improper.

Phone Call to Paris

Before the demonstrators marched toward the White House, they listened to a telephone call placed from the Sylvan Theater to Paris.

The Rev. James Groppi, the civil rights activist priest from Milwaukee, spoke with a man who identified himself as Nguyen Van Tien, a member of the Vietcong delegation to the peace talks.

Mr. Tien spoke in Vietnamese and then in English. "You are the very persons who carry the banner of democracy in the United States," he said as the public address system carried his words clearly throughout the monument area. "We give our heartfelt thanks to all those fighting for peace in Indochina."

Father Groppi asked Mr. Tien, "If Mr. Nixon asked for total withdrawal, how soon would the prisoners of war be released?"

Mr. Tien replied: "Mr. Nixon has no intention of withdrawing his troops. If our American friends support the seven-part

peace plan and urge the Nixon Administration to accept that plan, then the war will come to an end and American servicemen—including those in captivity—will be able to return home."

Before the telephone call, the crowd danced to rock music and heard speeches by antiwar leaders at the Sylvan Theater, a few yards from the Washington Monument.

Dick Gregory, the comedian and antiwar activist, told the crowd that "my faith and hope of ever eating again is in your hands." Mr. Gregory started a fast six months ago and vowed that he will eat no solid food until the Vietnam war ends.

Rennie Davis, leader of the

demonstrations and one of five men convicted of crossing state lines to incite riots at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, told the crowd on the muddy mall that "we do not go to the White House to disrupt traffic, to confront police; we go to escort the President of the United States to the phone so this war can end today."

The rally had originally been scheduled for yesterday, but heavy rain canceled the events. The demonstrators had been granted a permit for a candlelight march around the White House yesterday, but were unable to get any permit for their activities at the White House today.