

Convicts Sue Folsom: 'Political

By Larry D. Hatfield

Ten convicts today charged Folsom Prison authorities with using the prison's "Adjustment Center" as a political punishment tool while systematically denying them adequate medical care, chances for parole and other rights they say they are guaranteed by the Constitution.

Their suit, filed in Sacramento, is believed to be the most comprehensive ever filed against California's prison inmate segregation procedures.

It raises a variety of Constitutional questions involving due process, cruel and unusual punishment, mail censorship, political harassment and poor health care.

Asks Guidelines

Although the sweeping suit, filed by prison reform attorneys from Oakland, Sacramento and Santa Barbara, says there is "no adequate or complete remedy at law to redress the wrongs alleged," it demands a declaratory judgment against state officials, branding the current Adjustment Center practices illegal and forcing "meaningful guidelines" for putting prisoners into the AC at Folsom and elsewhere.

In the 43 page suit, the inmates protest that the Adjustment Center inmates

"are arbitrarily 'arrested,' segregated from the prison general population and kept in indefinite segregation confinement."

It documents the "arbitrary" and "unconstitutional" methods by which each of the 10 inmates was put into the Adjustment Center but also uses an unpublished study by an official of the Corrections Department itself to back up its attack on Folsom's "4A" (Adjustment Center).

A main conclusion of that study, by Robert E. Doran, chief of the department's classification section, states: "The overriding assumption of the Classification Committee (which decides inmates' status) is that even if they cannot substantiate or get a confession of guilt that each inmate must be guilty of something . . . the task of the committee then is to fit each inmate into one of five stereotypes . . . (racial problems, pressure artist, the weak and pressured, the prison rat and the residual category) . . . so that action appropriate for the stereotype may be taken."

'Political'

The "stereotyping" hits hardest at "politically active" inmates, the suit alleges.

Two of the prisoners, L. Wayne Benner and Philip

Eder, were thrown in the hole, the suit charges, because they wrote a letter to the California Legislature calling for prison reform and warning that "Attica is

coming to this prison"

Prison officials accused them of "agitation," the suit says, adding: "Their 'agitation' was to attempt to convince California legislators

Punishment'

to act on prison reform." political philosophy. He was branded a "white revolutionary" and a "Nazi trying to stir up unrest" and put in the AC, the suit charges.