

SEP 6 1964

For Youth

**M**OBILIZATION for youth—the controversial project, aimed at combating delinquency and poverty—is barely two years old and in trouble. Serious charges that the project has been infiltrated by Communists and agitators have been leveled; investigators have descended on the \$13.2 million Lower East Side agency. What exactly was Mobilization for Youth designed to be? What is it today? And how did it get that way? These articles by reporters Claude Lewis and Sue Reinert tell the story:

## MFY (Mobilization for Youth): What It Is and How It Was Born

By Claude Lewis

Of The Herald Tribune Staff

Seven years ago, several Lower East Side social agencies began to realize that they were losing their war on poverty. Rehabilitation programs for youths, built around basketball, baseball and swimming, had yielded to vandalism, violence, thievery and drug addiction. Something had to be done, they decided, something new, something dramatic. Their answer, after five years of thought and study, was an experimental project called Mobilization for Youth.

MFY was spawned on May 31, 1962, when President Kennedy announced the plan as a massive attack on juvenile delinquency on Manhattan's Lower East Side by Federal and city governments, voluntary agencies, neighborhood workers and Columbia University.

The program consists of intensive and coordinated projects in employment, community development, education, social services to youths and their families, and research training.

### PROJECTS

Specific projects include "coffee houses" (for social activities), with emphasis on culture and a youth corps to conduct public works.

In the main, Mobilization is a rehabilitation program with a secondary emphasis on prevention. The Lower East Side area was one of the 10 worst areas for youth offenses in the nation, and became a proving ground for the idea that a comprehensive program can turn back the rising tide of delinquency across the nation.

Most of the organizations that sat in on the original MFY planning sessions are still in existence and readily offer their facilities to the MFY project.

Winslow Carlton, a health-insurance executive, has served as chairman of the board for the two years that MFY has been operating. MFY is run by James E. McCarthy, 48, an ex-street-gang fighter and an outstanding social worker for most of his life. Two of McCarthy's closest assistants are George A. Brager, director of the program's action

projects, and Richard A. Cloward, who heads MFY's research division.

MFY employs more than 300 persons (200 of them are professionals) to run its three-year program, which will deflate a \$13.2 million budget by the summer of 1965. The original plans for MFY called for a five-year duration to demonstrate whether it would work. But the President's Committee on Poverty limited the program to a three-year life span.

As of the fiscal year beginning July 1, MFY was to receive

grants totaling \$13.2 million. Funding sources, and amounts, include the City of New York (\$4.8 million), National Institute of Mental Health (\$5.2 million), President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime (\$1.9 million), and the Ford Foundation (\$1.8 million).

The MFY area is bounded on the north by E. 14th St., on the south by the Brooklyn Bridge, on the east by the East River and on the west by Avenue B and East Broadway. More than 110,000 persons live in the area's 67 blocks. The foremost aim of the proj-

ect was to help 16-to-20-year-old high-school dropouts in the lowest 20 per cent bracket of the economic scale, while at the same time devising methods that could be used in other similarly affected areas.

MFY's target area encompasses Jews (27 per cent), other whites (36 per cent), Puerto Ricans (26 per cent),

Negroes (8 per cent) and other non-whites (3 per cent). In the period from 1959 to 1961, Lower East Side crime had soared 70 per cent; six youths in each 10 between the ages of 7 and 20 committed some offense that brought them into the courts.

Against this geographic, ethnic, and sociological background, the MFY objective, developed by Dr. Richard Cloward and Dr. Lloyd Ohlin, is to prevent and control delinquency by expanding opportunities within the area. Two examples of MFY's expanded opportunities can be seen at their own gas station and luncheonette, both of which are run by MFY trainees, who work from 9 to 4 (at \$1.25 an hour).

This, specifically, is what MFY does:

MFY's most successful operation is its homework helper program. Fred Delliquadri, vice-chairman of Mobilization and dean of Columbia University School of Social Work, says the fourth and fifth grade pupils in an experimental group made a 40 per cent greater gain in reading proficiency than those in a control group.

A variety of work programs are now available to once angry youths who stood—hands in pockets—on street corners. And more than 60 youths are now receiving on-the-job training with wages being shared by MFY and the employer. Some 240 others are tutored in the non-profit organization's Urban Youth Work Corps shops. In these shops, which are supervised by experienced people, the youngsters learn woodworking, sewing-machine operations (on machines contributed by the International Ladies Garment Worker's Union), auto repairs and other skills that will hopefully prepare them for economic survival.

Other youths train younger children in such subjects as remedial math, spelling, and reading.

"We have many success stories," said 33-year-old administrative assistant Norman Steinlauf, "and we have some failures, too. These kids are unemployable when they come to us and some of them have such deep-seated problems that we can do little

to help them."

One young man named Roy, who did very well in one of MFY's workshops, completed the program, then slipped into a state of withdrawal. "We lost him," says Steinlauf.

### SUCCESS STORY

One success story is pretty. 19-year-old Emma Fontaine, a soft-spoken Puerto Rican high-school dropout. "I just wasn't getting anywhere in school," she says. "A friend of mine told me about Mobilization and I came in to find out if I could get some help here," she said, sitting in a makeshift office. (Their rundown regular headquarters at 214 E. Second St., is undergoing renovation by a group of boys in one of MFY's shop classes. Another group is renovating an East Side synagogue.)

Emma was tested shortly after she appeared in MFY's offices and showed superior ability in clerical performance. Every day for five months she attended MFY's clerical class she punched a time card just as she would at a regular job and collected \$30 a week as she learned office skills.

Today, Emma runs an office for the Wesley Display Co. in Brooklyn. She still meets with her counselor at the MFY office two nights a week. Her counselor instructs her in personal hygiene, dress, and good working habits. "I don't know what my life would have come to," says Emma happily, "I wish I could repay MFY for their help."

## A Timetable

**JUNE, 1957**—Lower East Side community leaders decide that a new type of social agency is necessary to rehabilitate youth.

**MAY 31, 1962**—President Kennedy announces Mobilization for Youth program. Winslow Carlton named board chairman.

**JUNE 1, 1962**—James E. McCarthy, MFY administrative director, announces search for 300 staff members. Mayor Wagner announces Ford Foundation is giving \$1.8 million to help program, the city \$1.4 million a year and the Federal government \$2.1 million a year.

**JULY 5, 1963**—U. S. endorses on-job-training program for MFY!

**FEB. 11, 1964**—Four local school board districts open hearings to air charges that MFY encourages extremist groups to "war against individual schools and principals."

**AUG. 16, 1964**—Daily News breaks story that city and U.S. are investigating MFY for possible infiltration by Communists.

**AUG. 17, 1964**—MFY director James McCarthy called to White House. Wagner orders police to investigate MFY and says city will not renew MFY contract, which expired June 30, unless organization is cleared of Red charges.

**AUG. 18, 1964**—Mr. Carlton announces MFY is investigating itself.

**AUG. 19, 1964**—Rep. Charles E. Goodell, R., N. Y., demands poverty director Sargent Shriver disclose steps he'll take to prevent radicals from entrenching themselves in Federal anti-poverty program.

**AUG. 20, 1964**—U. S. and city threaten to hold back money unless MFY cleans house.

**AUG. 24, 1964**—FBI report reveals two current MFY employees are presently members of Communist party and three others belong to other leftist organizations. Report also reveals that at least 32 of agency's employees have been linked in the past to Communist party or front groups.

**AUG. 31, 1964**—Sen. Jacob K. Javits says at MFY rally that he is "confident the essential program" would gain Congressional support but that some personnel changes would have to be made and that MFY may have to "concentrate on youth activities."

**SEPT. 2, 1964**—City Council President Paul R. Screvane announces that MFY must not provide "a base of activity and a safe haven for subversives." City will hold budget contracts in abeyance until the investigation is completed. MFY to receive finances on month-to-month basis until investigation is complete.

**SEPT. 14, 1964**—Mr. Screvane disregards demands by Queens Councilman-at-large Joseph Modugno that he release FBI and city reports on staff of MFY, saying: "I won't make public raw information that could smear or destroy the reputation of people... that would be irresponsible and a throwback to McCarthyism." MFY also received support from 15 clergymen and civil leaders who presented a petition bearing 13,500 names at City Hall.

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