

CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK

RECORD OF INTERVIEW

SUBJECT New York Urban League: Harlem Prep

DATE 6/19/67

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PARTICIPANTS Rev. Eugene Callender, Ex. Dir., NYUL LOCATION: CC
Harvey Oostdyk, Educ'l Dir., NYUL
Mrs. Evelyn Davis, education staff member
Dr. Thomas Melady, NYUL Board member
Mother Dowd, Manhattanville College and BF

Rev. Callender and his four associates called on BF to present a proposal for Harlem Preparatory School--"Harlem Prep"--which the New York Urban League intends to open in the fall in Harlem as the next and last stage in its program to attract back to education the school dropouts in Harlem. Many of these boys and girls--really young men and women--between the ages of 16 and 21 have the capacity, the NYUL believes, to go to college. The goal of the NYUL is to get them back into school, through high school with sufficient preparation for college, and then into college. NYUL already has 34 "graduates" of its program who have just completed their freshman year in college, all of whom will return to work as "streetworkers" in Harlem this summer to recruit more kids for the program. Nelson Rockefeller has provided private funds for their summer salaries.

The NYUL has learned the importance of getting the leadership in the street into the program if others are to follow, and so they go after the leaders first, and will take everyone else who follows or they can recruit. They concentrate on boys because of the importance of the boys' getting an education and decent jobs, but they also take girls. The recruits go first to a Street Academy where the concentration is on motivation toward education, which includes some individual beginning remedial work in an effort to build up self confidence in the youth's ability to learn. Next he moves to an "Academy of Transition" where the learning effort is more formally organized and serious. When a student

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here has reached certain minimal levels in reading and math (he gets history, science, and maybe a foreign language here, too), he can then transfer to prep school. Until now, the boys have gone on to Newark Prep (daily by bus). And then to college.

Now the NYUL wants to establish a preparatory school in Harlem, to be known as Harlem Prep, for a limited number of college-bound students. It must be in Harlem, Rev. Callender believes, where its students can be a new model for the younger children in Harlem. As he puts it, the small youngster usually lives more on the street than inside for a variety of well-known reasons: overcrowding, not wanted under foot, ignored, alone, nothing to play with, etc. On the street, his natural model is the older child, now usually a dropout. If, instead, that older child could wear a blazer with a Harlem Prep shield, show confidence in the value of an education, and demonstrate it, then the attitudes and pattern of the younger children might well begin to change. In other words Harlem Prep would have symbolic value far beyond the number of students there each year.

The NYUL expects to open Harlem Prep with 50 students and expand gradually to 150 at a time, each for an average stay of two years. They anticipate a ratio of 7 or 8 boys to one girl. It would be experimental, ungraded, serve dropouts who must have gone through the pre-Prep phases, and focus on teaching the students how to learn, self-instruction, and self-motivation. Manhattanville College has agreed to provide an administrator (Mother Dowd) and two teachers for the school, and to help match students to colleges and get them in. NYUL is now looking for a headmaster. He and the rest of the teachers they hope will be Negro males, but they want good teachers.

To house the school, NYUL plans to acquire a vacated supermarket building at 136th and 8th Ave. If they do, Harold Gores has indicated that EFL might provide advice and planning on remodeling it for a school.

Credit for the NYUL plan really belongs to Rev. Callender and his "streetworkers" team at the Church of the Master. It was conceived by them and began there. When the NUL convinced Rev. Callender that the NYUL needed him and agreed to let him bring his program into the NYUL, to be tried in Harlem, he and his staff moved from the Church to the Urban League. Initially, EC tried to sell his ideas to the Board of Education but they would have none of it. Now Supt. Donovan has turned completely about face and came to the NYUL to ask that it take its program to Benjamin Franklin and Wadleigh High Schools (day and evening high schools, respectively, serving Harlem). Ford Foundation, which has provided about \$650,000 for the Street Academies and Academies in Transition programs and for tuition at Newark Prep, will support this experimental institutionalization of the program. The NYUL has already begun working on industry to take over the financing of the academies when Ford's money runs out.

Toward the cost of Harlem Prep operating, building, and capital expenses, NYUL has \$105,000 already, \$20,000 of it on a matching 9 for 1 basis, and \$130,000 toward the purchase and renovation of the building. They seek from Carnegie the balance of the first year's operating expenses, approximately \$150,000, and operating funds for the next two years. (BF explained that CC could not consider the building and its renovation.) BF agreed to take up the idea with her colleagues and to visit them in the fall after Harlem Prep opens.

BJJ

BF:sd
10/18/67

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