

# BLAMES POLICE FOR HARLEM VICE

## Lawlessness Reflects Indifference, Neglect

Blasts Crime



DR. CHANNING H. TOBIAS whose sensational report on crime in Harlem has stirred the entire community. Dr. Tobias spoke before the Cooper Union Forum Tuesday night.

Dr. Tobias Challenges Officials To End Harlem Jim Crowism, Bawdy Houses

By A. M. WENDELL MALLIET

The unchallenged prevalence of houses of vice all over Harlem; the fact that business seems to have written off the area as a bad risk, and that it is a common thing for little children to compete with rats for bunks, were highlights of a sensational report on conditions in Harlem by Dr. Channing H. Tobias, director of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, Tuesday night, at the Cooper Union Forum.

Admitting that "the crime situation in the Harlem area is alarmingly bad", Dr. Tobias stressed the "shocking" nature of a crime wave and killings resulting from battles fought between rival teen-age gangs, "an expression of lawlessness that neither the police authorities nor community leaders seem to be able to cope with successfully."

Lashing out against houses of vice, Dr. Tobias declared: "Even the best neighborhoods are cursed with dens of iniquity that operate brazenly and openly and apparently with the connivance of police authorities."

**House in Neighborhood**  
"I know of one house in my own neighborhood that has a police record of at least ten years, during which time there have been killings, suicides, brawls, and gross immorality of every kind, all known to the police, and nothing has been done about it in spite of repeated complaints to police headquarters and to the district attorney's office", Dr. Tobias asserted.

Dr. Tobias lashed out against housing in Harlem, declaring that it "is so generally bad, especially in the side streets where the masses live, as to constitute a continuing menace to health and life. It is a common thing for little children to compete with rats for bunks in which to try to rest at night, while seldom a week passes that some person is not burned to death in an old law tenement."

The deterioration of the Harlem area, Dr. Tobias said, has continued so steadily that "business seems to have written off the area as a bad risk. Such chain concerns as Woolworth's, McCreary's, Kress' and Grant's have been gradually withdrawing from the community, some of them claiming that petty thievery is so prevalent as to make it unprofitable to operate."

"The home life of Harlem", he declared, "is affected by a combination of circumstances that cannot be left out of account in considering the causes of crime, especially among children", which he adds includes "job limitations and low pay" for fathers and mothers. To the problems of home life, Dr. Tobias adds the indifference of Harlem landlords and managers of property.

"Almost to a man", he asserts, "they oppose housing projects whether they are administered by government or private owners, yet they do little to make their own properties livable, to say nothing of wholesome and attractive."

**Offers 12-Point Program**  
Illegitimacy, broken homes, lack of foster care for Negro children, recreational facilities, and adequate school buildings and staffs to take care of the needs of the community have been drawn into the picture by Dr. Tobias, who at the same time has offered a 12-point program for the solution of the Harlem crime problem.

First and foremost, according to Dr. Tobias, "we must do away with complete racial segregation in the City of New York whether it is based upon race, nationality, or economic status; for nothing so tends to create double standards of personality as the segregation of people on account of such accidents as color and creed. As long as Negro citizens of New York are fenced in as they are in Harlem without opportunity for living alongside other people, their personalities will be rated below par. We must support housing programs of the government and private groups and individuals that are based on sound democratic principles to the end that the major housing needs of the community may be met."

**Get Rid of Prostitution**  
"We must call upon the city and state authorities to rid the community of houses of prostitution and restrict the licensing of saloons and liquor stores; and we must support the proposal made by the Mayor's Committee for a market for the northwest Harlem area that would make it possible for people of small means to buy decent food at prices within their reach."

In his final recommendation, Dr. Tobias called upon the Negro people to do their share in the over-all job of helping to solve their own problems. He said:  
"We must call upon the people of Harlem, themselves to accept their share of responsibility for the improvement of the community. This will involve, among other things, the full utilization of the boundless resources of the churches for social service rather than the devotion of a disproportionate amount of time to purely emotional exercises. It will call also for loyal support of and cooperation with civil authorities and social and religious workers in the community in the interest of the maintenance of law and order."