

East Harlem Youths Explain Garbage-Dumping Demonstration

By JOSEPH P. FRIED

Against a backdrop of decaying tenements, a low-income housing project and the Penn Central tracks that carry commuters to the suburbs, a purplebereted youth told yesterday why his group, the Young Lords Organization, had sparked a garbage-dumping protest in East Harlem on Sunday.

During the protest, residents of the area around Park Avenue and 110th Street joined in heaping and burning garbage at several intersections. Several abandoned cars were overturned and burned, traffic was blocked and heavy police reinforcements were called to the area to protect sanitationmen called to remove the refuse.

In claiming credit for spearheading the protest, a group of Young Lords said yesterday that they had acted to show the people of El Barrio, East Harlem's Puerto Rican slum, that such activity was necessary to get city action to meet community needs.

"Basically, we don't want violence for violence's sake, and we don't want to dump garbage in the street," the spokesman for the group, who identified himself only as Yoruba, said as he stood on 110th Street between Park and Madison Avenues.

Then We Have No Choice

"But if we have to go through a mountain of red tape, if there's never any action by the city, then we have no choice," he said.

The youth, who declined to give his real name because of what he contended was police harassment, said that the Young Lords were a Latin-American organization that began as a Chicago street gang and was now forming in several cities as a militant group similar to the Black Panthers.

The Lords, he said, worked closely with the Panthers and were aiming to unite Spanish-speaking Americans to end the "oppression" against them.

Yoruba declined to give the size of the Young Lords mem-

bership. He himself, he said, was a 19-year-old college student who hoped to become a lawyer and who had lived most of his life in the East Harlem and the South Bronx slums.

He said he had adopted the name Yoruba — the majority tribe in western Nigeria, today — because many Yorubans had been brought to the Caribbean as slaves and that he himself was of black Puerto Rican and Cuban ancestry.

Decline to Give Names

He and the four youths with him, who also declined to give their names, wore buttons showing a fist holding a rifle and containing a Spanish phrase that translated, "I have Puerto Rico in my heart."

The executive director of the 111th Street Betterment Association — the kind of "established" community group that the youths criticized as ineffective — said yesterday that the Young Lords were a new group that he and other com-

munity leaders did not know much about.

"How do we know what they stand for, what their aims are?" Vicente Hernandez, the 60-year-old head of the association said. His association embraces the area from 106th to 112th Streets between Park and Fifth Avenues.

Called A New Group

A spokesman at the East 126th Street police station said that the Lords were a new group and little was known about them. "Every once in a while they pop up," he said.

Encountered on 110th Street yesterday, Yoruba and his friends said that for the last five weeks the Lords had been

helping clean the streets "to show the people that the system does not serve them."

They contended that the Sanitation Department was not cooperating with their clean-up efforts, which, they said, was only one concern of the Lords. Better housing and education for Spanish-speaking Americans that includes more about their heritage are also their concerns, Yoruba said.

A Sanitation Department spokesman responded that the East Harlem area "gets maximum service," including refuse collection six times a week, and that the department extends "all possible help to neighborhood clean-up programs."