

Narcotics Complex Split by Charges Of Cultist Activity

By WILL LISSNER

Daytop Village, a narcotics addict rehabilitation center, has been split by charges that its executive director, David Deitch, has been transforming the therapeutic community into a "New Left commune."

This charge was made by supporters of the president of Daytop's board of directors, Msgr. William B. O'Brien. Monsignor O'Brien, assistant secretary for education of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York, has called on governmental agencies to withhold financing until the controversy can be settled in the courts.

The dispute is between Mr. Deitch, a majority of the staff and a group of the ex-addict residents on the one hand, and, on the other, a majority of the directors, the medical psychiatric director, and, a group of staff and residents. Deitch supporters control the program's four

Continued on Page 29, Column 1

NARCOTICS CENTER SPLIT BY CHARGES

Continued From Page 1, Col. 2

facilities. As one consequence of the fight, rival casts of ex-addicts competed for the stage Friday night at the Sheridan Square Playhouse, each intent on presenting the drama, "The Concept," the theme of which is nonviolence.

So close to violence did the rival actors come that the producer, Arthur Cantor, called off the evening's two performances as well as those scheduled for last night and tonight. The house at Seventh Avenue and West Fourth Street, in Greenwich Village, had been sold out for performances at 7:30 and 10 P.M. each of the three evenings. It has 200 seats.

Mr. Cantor, co-producer of the play with Mortimer Levitt, the philanthropist, bemoaned the forced closing.

"It's such a moving play," he said yesterday. "And to think this beautiful play ends with the cast in the audience asking 'Will you love me?' and everybody embracing."

The police were on hand to keep the disputants apart.

The profits of the play, several thousand dollars a week, were donated by the producers, Mr. Levitt and Mr. Cantor, to the support of the program.

Several Agencies Involved

Monsignor O'Brien would have these funds withheld: \$336,000 a year provided by the New York City Community Health Board from city and state funds; \$120,000 a year granted by the National Institute of Mental Health in Washington, and \$100,000 a year from the Community Mental Health Board of Westchester County.

Daytop facilities are at 225 West 14th Street, at 143 Suffolk Street, at 450 Bayview Avenue, Princess Bay, S. I., at Swan Lake in Westchester County and in New Haven.

Mr. Deitch and many of his supporters have taken physical possession of the properties, arranged a communal kitchen and set up an organization of the kind that the New Left calls a "commune" — an arrangement for extended family living, including quarters for married couples and dormitory sleeping facilities for the separate sexes.

Meanwhile, all funds have been cut off from the facilities, according to Dr. Daniel Casriel, psychiatrist co-founder with Mr. Deitch, an ally of Monsignor O'Brien, and steps are being taken to cut off credit.

The program emphasizes lay-directed group psychotherapy in "encounters" at which anger and frustration are put into words at group sessions instead, rather than allowing these emotions to result in antisocial behavior in society. It seeks to develop responsibility to the community by integrating ex-addict residents of its houses into a "family" of "brothers" and "sisters."

It is an ideological offshoot of the West Coast's Synanon Movement. Dr. Casriel is the author of one of the definitive studies of Synanon, which, he said yesterday, he left because "it became too cultish."

"I'm afraid this is what I started to see happen to Daytop—it was becoming cultish too," he said. "So I told the board it would have to take action to stop it or I would resign."

Mr. Deitch was an assistant director of Synanon before he joined Daytop Lodge, a predecessor program set up by the Brooklyn Supreme Court's probation department. Dr. Casriel and Mr. Deitch transformed the Daytop project into Daytop Village four years ago.

Trouble began, according to Mr. Deitch's critics, when the director adopted as one of his heroes the late Ernesto Ché Guevara, the Cuban Revolution's theorists of guerrilla warfare.

Mr. Deitch arranged lectures by spokesmen for the Black Panthers and other black militant movements, they said, and began developing a theory that addiction was produced by a sick society and its cure was to involve the ex-addict in changing society.

Charges Denied

Mr. Deitch's friends denied this. They said Mr. Deitch was neither a Communist nor any other kind of revolutionist, and had no outside affiliation. He was as devoted as ever, they said, to Daytop's nonviolent philosophy.

Dr. Casriel said he thought the antagonists overemphasized the ideological issue.

"The real issue," he said, "is that Mr. Deitch loaded the paid staff with his relatives and friends and refused to carry out the directives of the board of directors and did things to which I and the board took strong exception."

The dispute came to a head during the week-long "Gaudenzia"—a celebration of Daytop's founding named after a 16th-century horse race won by a rider who, after being thrown off his horse, remounted and tried again—starting Oct. 21. At a seminar, some residents who support Mr. Deitch, disclosed plans to use the American flag for costumes at the fancy dress ball closing the challenged this use of the flag.

Dr. Casriel, pro-Deitch staff members said, denounced the intentions to use the flag for costumes as "a disgrace." He was supported by Ronald Brancato, director of the Swan Lake facility, who two years ago had failed in an effort to remove Mr. Deitch.

Dr. Casriel said the board was trying to deal with an at-

tempt by Mr. Deitch to consolidate his power with forbearance to avoid interfering with the rehabilitation of its charges. But on Nov. 1 he offered his resignation to take effect Nov. 12 unless the board had acted by that time.

Last Tuesday, (Nov. 12), the board refused the resignation and met daily through last Friday. Mr. Deitch, meanwhile, had discharged seven staff members who disagreed with him. On Thursday Mr. Deitch and the remaining 61 staff members resigned.

Dr. Casriel said the board would meet tomorrow to weed out the staff, regardless of the proffered resignations, and appoint a new executive-director. He said he was confident that the center could be reorganized and continue its successful efforts.

The two groups disagreed on the number of persons involved in the dispute. The Deitch group said it was nearly 300 including residents and staff. Dr. Casriel said the last statistics showed 209 ex-addicts, including 140 residents, and 60 staff members. In addition, there are 18 children and 11 nonaddicted wives.