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## Wright Exerts Influence On Thinking of Students

Sixth of a Series

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Austin Bureau of The News

AUSTIN, Texas — Frank L. Wright, executive secretary of the University of Texas YMCA-YWCA, is bound to be one of the busiest men in the state.

He serves as secretary-treasurer for the Central Texas Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union. He is chairman of the Peace Education Committee for the local American Friends Service Committee. He performs the duties of a Democratic precinct chairman and is running for that office. He teaches Sunday school at the University Methodist Church. He recently organized a group now known as Austin for Peaceful Alternatives. He is active in the Austin Commission on Human Relations.

And he sits in as often as possible with various discussion groups which meet every afternoon in the Y to study topics ranging from sex to nuclear war.

**HE ALSO SPENDS** part of his time answering critics who claim the Y has become a political group that is one-sided, too liberal and even left-wing.

Furthermore, Wright believes it his solemn duty to play an active role in every organization to which he belongs.

"I don't seek to belong to organizations where I'm at home and just get my own ideas supported and strengthened," he explained.

"I believe the creative role of man is to be out trying to make his ideas understandable and influential. Therefore, my participation in the church, as well as other things, has been to try to be provocative of the kind of thinking and consideration that is needed in our times. As teacher of an adult Sunday school class, I believe my role is to try to make people think.

"I believe," he added, "the Methodists need stimulation along Quaker lines and beliefs.

**MY OBJECTIVE** in most of the groups in which I belong is to try to help lead the element that is trying to stimulate. I try to be a

factor in causing the type of thought and concern that is needed to bring our practice closer to our ideals."

Student members of the YMCA-YWCA concede that he exerts a tremendous influence on their beliefs.

Wright, a conscientious objector during World War II, admits that his views have been an important factor in shaping the Y's current emphasis on peace and disarmament demands.

"My views on peace," he said, "are almost wholly a religious conviction which came to me through the teachings of the church and reading the Bible. When I had to register for the draft, it became clear to me that I couldn't participate in the armed services without completely violating everything I believed about the way problems should be handled."

**WRIGHT, A NATIVE** of Colorado, moved to St. Louis at an early age and was graduated from Washington University there in 1938. He has been in YMCA work ever since. He served Y's at the University of Cincinnati for two years, at Johns Hopkins University for seven years and at the University of Washington in Seattle for nine years before coming here five years ago.

He stirred up a major controversy here a couple of years ago when he canceled a speech by John Gates, former editor of the Communist Daily Worker, on grounds that Gates was not communistic enough. The students, he said, wanted to hear "a real, live Communist."

Both Wright and the Y itself have been accused by some of being left-wing. His reaction: "There are people who would describe as left-wing anyone who wants to change anything. If that is the definition, I am left-wing—I even want to change my own life."

**HE WAS ASKED** if he considers the American Friends Service Committee and the American Civil Liberties Union as left-wing.

"It depends on the definition, again," he said. "If working aggressively to preserve the Constitution of the United States is left-wing, then the ACLU is left-wing. If working aggressively and thoughtfully to promote world peace is left-wing, then the American Friends is left-wing.

"I am working, as is everyone

in these organizations, for these things," he added. "This is a responsibility I must fulfill—to at least work for peace in our time.

I don't know what 'left-wing' means. The ACLU is trying to conserve the freedoms we have, so in that sense it is conservative. I do not use labels. Labeling is a way to depersonalize, and I resent it."

**WRIGHT WAS ASKED** if he were disturbed by the similarity between the Communist party line and the views held by many of his Y leaders on such topics as nuclear disarmament and abolition of the House Committee on Un-American Activities.

"The thing that would disturb me," he replied, "is if a position is unsound according to American principles and traditions, I think that, on most of these things, the Communists don't really hold these views, although they say they do. For instance, they say they are for a vital labor movement. But they really aren't. All they do is subvert it.

"The thing that could bring America to its knees quicker than anything else is to claim a position has no merit simply because the Communists say they are for it," he added. "It would be pretty bad if you couldn't work for disarmament just because the Communists have a line on it. Ideas must be investigated on their own merits.

**"WHEN PEOPLE** say we are left-wing, I show them a copy of our program and ask them to judge us on what we do," said Wright.

He added that complaints the Y and much of its literature is one-sided result partly from a low budget.

"With our very limited resources, we subscribe to the Texas Observer (a liberal political weekly) but not to the Dallas Morning News," he said. "We try to give the students the things they aren't bombarded with elsewhere. If they read the Austin papers anyway, we don't need to make those available. We only subscribe to about five things, and many feel they are one-sided. The Observer presents a different view from that the students normally get.

"I don't see why we should subscribe to Time—everyone has access to it. But the Reporter Magazine and Christian Century are not so readily available."

**SATURDAY:** The enigma of the Y's board of directors.