



University of Texas YMCA-YWCA Building.

UNIVERSITY YM(?)A—8

Reds Failed to Take Over Parley, Director Recalls

(Last of a Series)

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AUSTIN, Texas—Many years ago, the Communist party announced plans to infiltrate and even "take over" as many youth organizations as possible in the United States.

Frank L. Wright, executive secretary of the University of Texas YMCA-YWCA, was asked if he had ever seen any evidence of such a move in the Y, which is frequently accused of being left wing.

"Yes, I recall a very dramatic incident along that line," said Wright, who has held a similar position at other college Y's across the country during the past 24 years.

"It happened about 25 years ago—it was either in 1937 or 1941," he said. "It was at a national conference of the Y and they are held every four years. This one was in Oxford, Ohio, and there were two or three thousand students there.

"It was pretty obvious to a careful observer—and I was an observer, watching most of it from the balcony—that there was a group there with the clear intention of taking over for the Communist party. The rest were lovely, naive young Christian students who didn't know what was going on. But this unwieldy mass—slowly, by just being will-

ing to stay there and listen—finally isolated this little bit of cancer and gave it no chance.

"I CAME away from that deeply dedicated to the idea that democracy can work," said Wright. "I saw the Communists' effort completely resisted. They found out who they were and cut them out."

"Do you think the Communists gave up on trying to take over the Y after that?" he was asked.

"I think they pretty much did," he replied. "For one thing, the war came along and they were much busier with other things. After Russia's big flip-flop—it's non-aggression pact with Germany and then getting into the war—I don't see how anyone of intellectual honesty could be a Communist. That flipped out some sound, dedicated Communists."

Wright said the Y's in which he worked at Johns Hopkins University, the University of Cincinnati and the University of Washington before coming here encountered similar criticism to that now directed at the University of Texas branch.

"We provide the stimulus which causes students to take seriously their Christian responsibilities in the world in which we live," he explained. "It would be easier—but I could never do

it—to just find a way to keep the building full of innocuous people.'

THE 3-STORY YMCA-YWCA building across the street from the University of Texas campus seldom is filled with any type of people.

It now has 150 members, compared with 280 at this time last year, out of a total University enrollment of approximately 19,000. The Y's membership hit a peak last year of 300.

"But the number of students is not falling off in interest and participation," he insists. "The number of dues-paying (\$2 a year) members varies with the special emphasis of the student leaders on different subjects."

Wright vigorously denies claims that the Y's liberalism has caused a drop in contributions from non-students. Such contributions climbed, he said, from \$6,760 during the 1957-58 school year to \$7,900 in 1960-61.

"We've got to have more money, however," he added, "and it's always harder to get more."

The Y still gets the biggest single slice of the Campus Chest, a University fund-raising drive patterned after the United Fund, but that has been cut from \$3,000 a year to \$2,000.

There have been recent reports that some YMCA and YWCA groups have severed relations with the national organization because of its liberal policies. Wright says he has heard such a report but knows nothing about it.

THE VAST majority of students at the University of Texas apparently ignore the Y, paying only passing interest to most of the causes it champions and the picketing demonstrations it spawns.

A conservative organization of students did stage a "counter-demonstration" recently when members of Austin for Peaceful Alternatives, organized by Wright and headquartered in the University Y, carried picket signs for disarmament through downtown Austin.

One of the conservative students, scoffing at the Y's small membership, was asked if the conservatives had ever discussed the possibility of getting together and joining the Y in an effort to capture control of the policy-making machinery and change the liberal programs they deplore.

"Yes, it has been discussed," he admitted, "but I guess we're all just too busy. I have to spend a lot of time on my books and, besides, I like to water ski and I don't have much time for that as it is. I'm just too busy.'