

Voting Begins On Policies Of Y.W.C.A.

Members of the Bartlesville Y.W.C.A. who were enrolled before April 3 were voting Wednesday on the question of whether or not to continue the organization's present policies in handling its interracial program. Ballots containing the four questions to be voted upon have been mailed to the 395 individuals who are eligible to vote under the ruling of the Y.W.C.A.'s executive board, and balloting will continue throughout Thursday. Votes will be counted Friday, it was announced.

MACHINERY FOR THE BALLOTING was set in motion after a closed membership meeting held in the Y.W.C.A. Tuesday night and attended by about 300. Protests were voiced against the restriction on voting (to members enrolled before April 3) by a large group attending Tuesday night's meeting.

The ballot sent to Y.W. members contained these four questions: (1) Do you approve of retaining the weekly meetings of the Negro Y-Teen clubs in the Y.W.C.A. building? (2) Do you approve of continuing the inter-club council? (3) Do you approve of continuing the Recognition Service? (4) Do you approve of continuing the one-day conference? All questions were to be answered simply "yes" or "no."

WITH THE DISTRIBUTED ballots went a statement "for the convenience of people voting," which outlined the policy in question. The statement said:

"The Y-Teen program is the same program which until the year 1946 bore the name Girl Reserve. For 23 years the YWCA has had two Negro girls clubs which have a present enrollment of 36, each of which has a Negro adviser. These groups meet in the building on Thursday afternoon and evening. During that time there are no other Y-Teen clubs in the building. These groups have used the other YWCA buildings from time to time as have all the Y-Teen (Girl Reserve) clubs.

"There has been no change in (Y.W.C.A.) policy. The only change has been in the weekly meeting place for all Y-Teens. All Y-Teen clubs formerly met in the schools. Now they all meet at the Y.W.C.A.

"THE INTER-CLUB COUNCIL is a program-planning group made up of two representatives from each of the seven clubs
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which meets once a month under the guidance of the Teen-age program director. This group includes 10 white girls and four Negro girls.

"THE RECOGNITION SERVICE, generally held in the fall, is a service in which new members are recognized. This service which has been held in various churches is made up of all Y-Teens and has been a part of their program for 23 years, as has the inter-club council.

"For approximately ten years a one-day conference has been held each spring to review the accomplishments of the past year and to discuss new program ideas. This conference is planned by the inter-club council. The Teen-Age committee and the advisers assist the girl members in carrying out this program.

"The entire Teen-Age program in all its phases is under the supervision of a Teen-Age committee composed of fifteen adult members of the YWCA.

"This is the inter-racial program in its entirety and this is the program which is in question."

MEMBERS WHO PROTESTED the restricted vote on the issue held that under the organization's constitution such limiting was not permissible. Mrs. H. L. Wendt read the opinions of local attorneys in support of the view that all members, regardless of the date of membership, were eligible to vote. (Mrs. Wendt's statement and the attorney's opinions quoted appear below.)

Announced purpose of Tuesday night's meeting was to educate the general membership of the YWCA on the purposes and policies of the organization. Presiding was Mrs. L. V. Chaney, president of the Bartlesville YWCA. Principal discussion of the policies from the floor came when the interracial program was brought up.

The so-called "blue book" titled "Toward Better Race Relations," was reviewed by Mrs. A. K. Wilhelm in a statement of the interracial charter of the organization.

IN HER DISCUSSION, Mrs. Wilhelm said that the book was written as a record of the experiences of 17 community YWCA's in response to a request from many associations, and that it is not an account of interracial practices existing in YWCA's. In commenting upon the autonomy of each YWCA, she quoted from the book the statement that "although all the recommendations may not apply to every YWCA, there is none to which some do not apply. It is hoped that each association will consider all the recommendations with great care in order to determine the steps that may be taken now to carry it further in the direction pointed by the purpose, and to evolve a longer-range plan that will keep future steps in that direction."

EXCERPTS FROM THE same book were read by Mrs. Don Anderson in support of the contention that its writers proposed complete racial integration. (Mrs. Anderson's statement and quotations appear below.)

A number of those present expressed approval of a proposal which has been advanced here to construct a Negro youth center which would provide facilities for all of the activities of local Negro youth organizations.

At the conclusion of the meeting, names of those who will be in charge of the balloting were read.

RACIAL QUESTION

Mrs. Don Anderson read the following statement to the board:

We realize that all has been said should be built upon the faith of Christian principles. Sometimes there is a misfaith because there is a general feeling that Christianity has been used as a weapon to accomplish an unchristian aim. I think you see from this and other demonstrations there is a loss of faith in this community in the things the YWCA has brought to us on the interracial question. For instance, we have here a publication known as "Toward Better Racial Relations" printed and published by the National YWCA. This book is a planned attack upon society by the YWCA for the purpose of carrying out a program of total integration, which mixes the youth of the communities. This book is a step by step program. As we look back over your actions, we find that you are following directly in the steps as outlined. We lose Christian faith in what you say because we know of the next steps. You have an Executive Secretary who has accelerated race relations ideas. We know that she is familiar with the steps as advocated in this book. For instance, I read a passage as follows:

RUTH W. BROWN

ARCHIVE: 3

Race Relations Committees Laid A Foundation

Some YWCA's appointed committees to keep the board or the membership informed. The following bylaws show the extent of the work of one such committee to which much credit was given for the good interracial policies of the Association:

The Race Relations Com-

mittee works in accordance with the purpose of the Association and affords an opportunity for colored women to share more fully in the fellowship and responsibility of the Association.

It aims to develop an understanding of the problems of a racial minority group. The Race Relations Committee assumes responsibility for the Board of Directors in guiding the Association in its interracial policy and program.

The functions of the committee are as follows:

1. To participate in the life of the community and to encourage a closer fellowship between the races— a. By the formation of clubs. — b. By providing speakers to address various groups. — c. By development of leadership.
2. To interpret the work of the YWCA to the colored women and girls of the community, and encourage them to take initiative in assuming responsibility for interpreting their problems.
3. To be a resource on race relations to the whole YWCA and to the community as far as possible.
4. To provide information and advice on race relations for groups in the Association.
5. To help determine Association policy on interracial situations in line with the social viewpoint of the YWCA.
6. To guide and influence the Association in appropriate action where interracial issues are involved.
7. To collect and analyze information regarding the following: a. Problems confronting Negroes through discrimination and segregation. b. Leisure time and vocational needs of colored girls and women. c. Experience of the Association and other organizations in dealing with interracial questions.
8. To keep in touch with national and international trends and developments in the field of race relations.

This you have done. You have already formed such a committee, and one of your members of the Board of Directors, Mrs. Mary Sexton, is Chairman of this committee known as the "Race Relations Committee." It also has several other members of your organization who have accelerated race relations ideas. I read you the objectives of this committee, and these objectives were presented to one of your members by Miss Betty Davis, and I read these objectives as follows:

OBJECTIVES OF RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. To study national policies and actions of the past two years, and to bring this information to the Board.
2. To study the problem of race relations in its local, national, and international aspects, in cooperation with recommendations of National.
3. To be a committee which is informed in case special local problems arise in connection with younger girls' work locally.
4. To cooperate with other organizations working on race relations, for example, in bringing a speaker to the community. (To take initiative in this.)
5. To become eventually an interracial committee.
6. To be a resource committee on matters of race relations for the whole Association.
7. To make plans for race relations education throughout the Association.

RULES QUESTIONED

Mrs. H. L. Wendt read the following statement to the board: Madam President:

I rise to the point of order and ask whether you are conducting this meeting under Roberts Rules of Order: If so, I would like to have the floor until my special privilege is disposed of, and I expect not to yield the floor until you have taken official action. In your announcement in the Bartlesville paper of this meeting, by reason of which we are here tonight, you have stated: "votes will only be cast by those who were electoral members on or before April 3." This was brought about by the action of your Board of Directors. I present here a copy of the constitution and By-Laws of the Bartlesville Y.W.C.A. This constitution was given to three of our most prominent attorneys for the purpose of determining whether or not your limitations as of April 3 were within the rights of your directors and were constitutional. We have found by unanimous opinion of these three attorneys that your limitations of April 3 were unconstitutional and that no officer, executive board or Board of Directors can impose limitations on any qualified electoral member. I am presenting you with the opinions of these three attorneys.

Inasmuch as your actions were unconstitutional and illegal, I ask that you reconsider, either by going into executive session of the Board, or by study, and bringing forth a decision in conformity with the constitution, and with your re-

spect to this situation. I ask that I not yield the floor until you have made this decision. And I further ask that I be recognized as a point of order to place before this body a motion that all electoral members, regardless of time limitation, be given the privilege to vote in this election by their constitutional rights, if you do not make the decision yourself.

I await your answer.

She then asked the president if she could make a motion and was refused.

Mrs. Preston Gaddis and Mrs. Don Anderson
Bartlesville, Oklahoma
Dear Mrs. Gaddis and Mrs. Anderson:

You have asked us for our opinion on the following question: Does the Board of Directors of the Young Women's Christian Association, of the City of Bartlesville, Oklahoma, have the authority under the Constitution of the Young Women's Christian Association, of Bartlesville, Oklahoma, to limit the right of a member of the Association to vote on a question submitted to the membership?

We have read the Constitution of the Young Women's Christian Association, of Bartlesville, Oklahoma, and call your attention to Article II thereof, Section 1:

"Types. Members of this Association shall be of three types—electors, associate members, and junior members. (a) Qualifications for electors: Any woman or girl of the community eighteen years of age, or older, who accepts this purpose by assenting to the following declaration shall be entitled to electoral membership in the association: "Together with other members of the Bartlesville Association, I desire to belong to this fellowship, and to share in the responsibilities for the realization of the purpose."

It appears to us that only qualified members of the Association who are qualified to vote are those designated as "electors".

In no place in the Constitution do we find where the Board of Directors has the right or the authority to designate who of the members shall vote upon a proposition properly submitted to the membership.

It is our opinion that under the Constitution that has been submitted to us for examination, any member who has fulfilled the qualifications set out under Article II, Section 1, Paragraph (a) would be entitled to vote upon any question properly submitted to the membership, and that it would make no difference when the elector became a member of the Association.

Yours very truly,

SHAW AND HARRIS

By Richard K. Harris

Charles Selby, attorney, concurred in the above opinion.

Mrs. Preston Gaddis,
Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

Dear Madam:

You have presented to me for my examination a copy of the Young Women's Christian Association and requested an opinion on the question of whether the Board of Directors of such organization may set certain voting qualifications for members of the organization.

My opinion is that any mem-