

Model of the Lodz YMCA building.

L O D Z



The completed and in use rear of the Lodz YMCA building, and the unfinished front section for which we are seeking \$165,000 to complete the whole plant. In the right background is an old mansion now used as our temporary Boys Division headquarters, 983 boys enrolled in its activities. The completed section already in use by 7000 enrolled participants.

This great industrial city, a cotton mill center of 650,000 inhabitants, Poland's second city in size, is of unflinching interest to me. Huge, plain, but fascinating. During the past 16 years I have been there not less than 150 times but I never fail to feel its peculiar pull and appeal. It is a city of throbbing activity, of work. From its thousand smoke-stacks belch the smoke and gases of a nearly equal number of factories in which work a hundred thousand men and women.

Full of the life of business and industry, the city is painfully lacking in provision for culture and recreation. Beyond the public schools, good ones too, there is little to facilitate mental or social culture. Churches, yes, but one cannot go to church all the time. No important museums, libraries, theatres, movie houses, clubs or what not to give the people a chance at life.

No wonder, therefore, that the leading citizens of the place lined up back of the YMCA building project, and that the now only half completed \$600,000 YMCA is already in use by over 7000 enrolled men, women, and children, with a daily attendance of over 2000, and crowded rooms.

In 1820 Lodz had just 766 inhabitants, living in 106 houses. It was an old town, existing since 1300. Cotton workers from Saxony found its moist climate favorable to their cotton industry, and a wave of immigration and development began in 1823; the first larger factory, Geyer and Co., was founded in 1828. A son of this house is today president of the Lodz YMCA. By 1829 there were 4896 inhabitants. Then they came by tens of thousands, the story being told in Reymont's classic novel, "The Promised Land", which Knopf printed in English translation a few years ago. I. J. Singer's story "The Brothers Ashkenazy" is a tale of the same city.

Lodz lay in the path of the German advance and was occupied by them, after a severe battle, from December 6, 1914 to November 11, 1918, and during that period was stripped to an extent for which the word "pillage" is too mild a term. The Germans carried off 931 motors and dynamos; 459



General Felix Maciszewski
Chairman Lodz YMCA Finance Committee

We were highly fortunate in securing as the leader of the Finance Committee General Felix Maciszewski, an economist returned to business after his service in helping Poland win and hold its independence. General Maciszewski is by common consent the leading business-man of Lodz. He is president of the largest factory, of the Chamber of Commerce, and of various other things. Yet he has taken on this YMCA job. He is already interesting his business friends and is calling upon high government officials to enlist their cooperation in giving and getting the final \$165,000.

That would seem a small thing in richer countries. Even in Lodz it would not be so great a sum were it not for those colossal war losses. But it is indeed a huge task. Can we get a few large gifts in four or five figures? This note is written with the hope that it will awaken response in the hearts of a few able to give. We can get a unit here for every unit offered from abroad.

Well, this is our situation, our need, our case, our appeal. My address is at the head of this sheet. You might care to write me for further information or for my references in America, England, and Poland.

President Hoover at the Warsaw Y

March 12 the Warsaw YMCA was honored by a visit from Mr. Herbert Hoover, former President of the United States. He was welcomed by a delegation of YMCA leaders, and a thousand members filling the main floor social rooms vociferously cheered this great saviour of Polish children during post-war days.

In the picture Dr. Tadeusz Dyboski, president of the Polish YMCA, is reading an address of welcome. Just under the big Y is Mr. Filipowicz, former Ambassador to the USA., and then comes Mr. Hoover. His speeches in Poland showed deep understanding of Poland and warm sympathy with the Polish people.



Lodz, "the city of 1000 smoke-stacks" and few amenities.

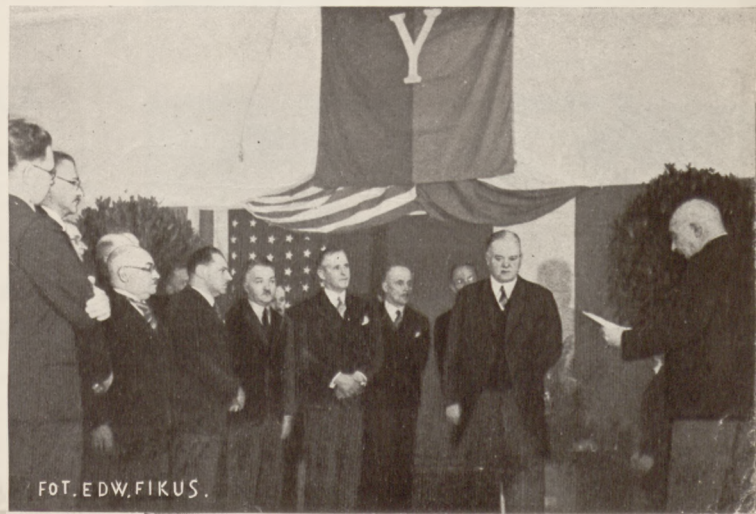
railroad car-loads of metal work, chiefly copper and brass, 812 miles of belting; 3,700 railroad car-loads of cotton and wool. The total taking amounted to \$93,000,000, plus bank deposits and valuable papers worth \$102,000,000. What they could not take was blown up to hamper a restoration of industry.

The Lodz that was left was indeed a pitiable thing. I have seen the rebuilding. With all this to restore no wonder culture had to take a back seat. Yet Lodz was one of the first cities to organize a YMCA. Several rich Americans contributed toward the erection of a modern YMCA building, the Poles matched their gift dollar for dollar, and a complete \$600,000 plant was begun. Then an awful thing happened. America depreciated its currency, and the Lodz YMCA lost \$84,000 on the deal.

So we have a partly completed and brilliantly successful plant, but to finish it we need \$165,000. If philanthropic Americans would make up that loss with a few large gifts, we here in Poland could round up the other half of the \$165,000 and finish the plant.

When I returned from my American tour in November 1937 I made the completion of this Lodz YMCA building the first claim on my time and efforts.

(cont. in next column)



FOT. EDW. FIKUS.

