

Organizing the Young Workers

By HERBERT ZAM.

On May 5th and 6th a Labor Youth Conference was held in New York. In spite of deliberate efforts on the part of some elements in the conference to disrupt it, or to doom it to impotency, the conference marked progress in the work for the organization of the young workers.

Militant Demands.

This progress was due entirely to the militant demands of the young workers who were present as delegates, and their insistence on refusing to be sidetracked from their purpose.

The conference was originally arranged by the Brookwood Labor College. Altho this was the second conference, the first one having been held in Katonah, N. Y., and altho Tom Tippet, in commenting on the second conference remarked that the first one had been "hot air" and the second one must do something, the Brookwood administration from the very first endeavored to confine the conference within the strait-jacket of "educational," or to quote Mr. Tippet, make it another "hot air" conference. The young workers, however, refused to permit the Brookwood administration to act as a brake on their activity, adopted a number of resolutions dealing with their pressing problems, and elected a com-

mittee to carry on the work after the conference.

To those acquainted with the first conference, it was very evident that, considering that this was the second conference, that it was in New York, and not in Katonah, etc., the second conference was narrower than the first, altho the number of unions having representatives was about the same.

Brookwood Tries To Sabotage.

This narrowness was due almost entirely to the deliberate efforts of the Brookwood administration to limit the conference. Thus, for example, no effort was made to obtain the endorsement of the New York Central Trades, which had endorsed and participated in the first one; the committee which the first conference had set up was not permitted to function; no representatives were sent to the trade union to ask for the election of delegates. This narrow policy was a result of the fear which animated Mr. Muste, the head of Brookwood, that a broad conference would result in him losing control of it.

When the conference opened, a still further effort was made to reduce the conference by the exclusion of the delegates representing the Young Workers (Communist) League. The Young Workers (Communist) League had been officially invited to participate in the conference. After the names of the delegates were sent to

Brookwood, a reply was received, over the signature of Muste, thanking the League for its interests and for having elected delegates. But at the last minute, a third letter was received saying that the League had been invited thru a mistake of the "secretary" and would not be permitted to participate. Naturally, the Young Workers (Communist) League had no intention of permitting this emasculation of the conference by eliminating the organization which had been most active in the work for the organization of the young workers, and which was the only organization that really defended the interests of the toiling youth. The delegates therefore came to the conference and presented their credentials with a request for the body itself to act on the matter.

Mr. Muste was not present at the opening session, and Mr. Saposs acted as chairman, much to the regret of the delegates and undoubtedly of Mr. Saposs himself. Mr. Saposs ruled that the delegates from the Young Workers (Communist) League could not be seated. This evoked such a storm of protest from the delegates, that Mr. Saposs was compelled to withdraw. A motion was unanimously carried to select a credentials committee to pass on the delegates. Mr. Saposs wanted to appoint the credentials committee. The delegates voted to elect it. The credentials commit-

tee of three was elected, it met, and brought in a unanimous report, in which it recommended the seating of all delegates who had come with regular credentials from their organizations, including the delegates representing the Young Workers (Communist) League.

"Democracy."

Being a good liberal, and believing in "democracy" in the trade unions, and having regard for the will of the majority, Mr. Saposs promptly ruled the report of the credentials committee out of order!

Needless to say, Mr. Saposs brought down a storm upon his own head. The delegates wanted to know why they had elected a credentials committee. Mr. Saposs had no answer. The delegates wanted to know whether the delegates to this conference had anything to say about the affairs of the conference, or whether the delegates were so many dummies for Mr. Saposs to practice parliamentary procedure on. Mr. Saposs shrugged his shoulders. Like a good democrat, he was impervious to the "ravings of the mob." Cool, collected, dignified, like the hero in the Western picture, Mr. Saposs pulled out his watch, and in a solemn, strike-me-dead tone, declared that he would adjourn the conference unless everything became quiet and his dictatorship was adopted before five minutes were up.

(To Be Continued.)