

Report from Puerto Rico

Pro-Independence Youth Hold Parley

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — The Third National Conference of the Pro-Independence Youth Movement here, attended by almost 500 delegates and observers, evidenced a significant growth of the organization.

Equally significant was the adoption of a resolution calling for the independence and liberation of Puerto Rico and pledging support for the world-wide colonial revolution and for the "Socialist Cuban Revolution" in particular.

The conference paid tribute to Pedro Albizu Campos, the aged and imprisoned hero of the Puerto Rican independence struggle, several times with standing ovations. It was also decided to cover the island with posters celebrating his forthcoming 72nd birthday.

Foreign visitors to the conference included 12 students from the Dominican Republic. They represented several youth organizations and secondary schools. U.S. officials at the airport had confiscated almost all their belongings, even poems intended to be read at a cultural session of the conference.

There were two invited guests from the U.S. — Carl Jerome, representing the Progressive Labor Movement, and Peter Camejo, national secretary of the Young Socialist Alliance.

Jerome told the conference that the enemy of Puerto Rico, the forces occupying it, were the same forces which exploit the North American workers.

Camejo thanked the MPI youth for having been among the first to come to the defense of the three Young Socialist Alliance officers at Indiana University who face six years imprisonment for their ideas.

He also spoke on the struggle of the Negro people and youth in the U.S., giving the conference a first-hand report on the March on Washington.

A highlight of the conference was the presence of Professor José María Lima of the University of Puerto Rico. He had traveled with the student group which visited Cuba this summer. Upon his return, he said that he was a Marxist-Leninist. Since then all the reactionary forces in Puerto Rico, including the thousands of Cuban counter-revolutionaries there, have been demanding his dismissal from the university faculty.

They have formed picket lines at the university denouncing him. But these have always been countered by much larger picket lines defending him and his freedom of expression.

When Lima was introduced the conference rose and applauded. To cheers and clapping, he reaffirmed that he was a Marxist-Leninist and that he would continue to say so anywhere in the world, as he has in Cuba, the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

The conference closed with a speech by Juan Mari Bras, leader of the Movimiento Pro-Independencia, the adult organization. He had just returned from a trip to Europe and Algeria. He declared that the youth represented at the conference would lead Puerto Rico to independence and socialism.



BRAVO! Prof. Jose Maria Lima (left) receives standing ovation when introduced at San Juan conference of Pro-Independence Youth movement. At microphone is Puerto Rican youth leader Ramon Arbona. Lima was part of group that traveled to Cuba in defiance of State Department ban and is now center of storm of controversy in Puerto Rico with business and church groups leading demand that he be fired from the university.

Sept. 23 has been declared a day

of international solidarity with the Puerto Rican independence struggle. Messages and greetings from organizations and individuals should be sent to MPI, c/o Claridad, 1122 Ponce de Leon, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico.

Negro Journalist Describes Impact of Visiting New Cuba

NEW YORK — On a recent tour of Cuba, Charles P. Howard noticed a woman outside a peasant house and he asked his companion: "Why do you think she would fix her hair so carefully and be so nicely dressed way out here in the sticks?"

His companion, a young Negro woman from New York who is a psychologist, answered: "It's because someone cares about her. When you realize people care about you, you want to look your best." It doesn't have to be a boy friend or husband, she said. In Cuba, the people know the government and the country care about them.

Charles P. Howard is editor-in-chief of the Howard News Service and foreign correspondent of the *Afro-American* and *Muhammad Speaks*. He spoke to the Militant Labor Forum Sept. 13 about his trip to Cuba with a number of American writers and newsmen invited to attend the July 26 celebrations.

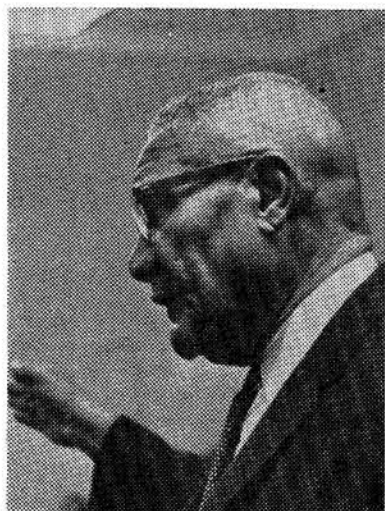
Howard was clearly overwhelmed with emotion in describing the reality of the great, liberating revolution in Cuba, especially in respect to the Negro people. An articulate man, he felt himself inadequate to convey sufficiently the wonderful atmosphere of freedom so unfamiliar to an American Negro.

Traveling through Cuba he was struck time and again by the total absence of discrimination against Negroes. He asked one young colored woman about discrimination there and she answered, "We are all Cubans here." Howard was impressed also by the fact that he discovered black people in positions of authority and in all kinds of jobs and there seemed to be no supremacist attitudes among light-skinned Cubans. One explanation for this, he felt, was that "Cubans were not stingy about recognizing the achievements of their black

citizens." He cited the fact that black participants in the war against Spain and in the Revolution are national heroes — Gen. Antonio Maceo, for example. Howard, who recently published an interview with the head of the Cuban army, Juan Almeida, described the black commander as "brilliant."

In the question-and-answer period, Howard said that he had been in every one of the new African states and knew their leaders and nowhere in the world, where a new government was evolving, have they chosen "democracy, as we like to talk about it. These leaders find out you can't build these countries on a capitalist basis. There's no one to provide the capital."

He said that Americans have been propagandized so much against socialism and communism that anyone who gets up and speaks for it is in trouble. "But as a Negro I'm in trouble already," he said, "and I'm not interested in any system that'll take me another 100 years to enjoy any of it."



Charles P. Howard, Sr.

THE NATIONAL PICKET LINE

Hauling migrant workers in trucks like cattle was responsible for the Sept. 17 accident in Salinas, Calif., in which 27 Mexican celery workers were killed and more than 30 more injured when a Southern Pacific train struck the makeshift "bus" in which they were being hauled from a celery field to the labor camp where they were lodged. At least 15 of the injured were reported in critical condition.

The "bus," which was carrying more than 60 workers, was actually a flatbed truck with benches on it. It had stopped at the rail crossing and then started up again and was half way across the track when the train rammed into it, scattering bodies for half a mile.

The driver of the truck, who survived, said he stopped at the crossing and looked down the track, but that his view was obscured by a fellow worker and he neither saw nor heard the approaching train.

Unemployment compensation benefits have been reduced in 12 states by new anti-labor laws passed in the first half of 1963. Despite a 150% increase in long-term unemployment over the last five years, several state legislatures cut the duration of benefits as well as the amount of weekly payments.

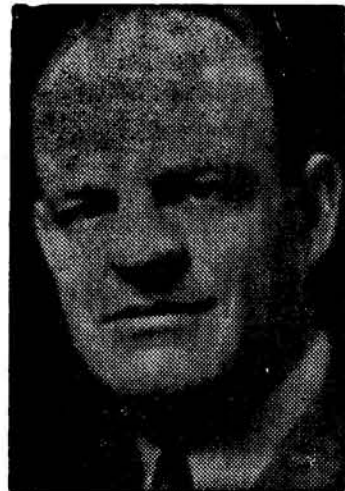
What do you do when your plant moves away and leaves 271 workers, including you, unemployed? John Woody, a former chief steward at Sterling Aluminum Products, charges that the company, in collusion with the International Association of Machinists, closed the St. Charles, Mo., plant, depriving him and the others of their jobs. On behalf of the 271 who lost their jobs, he is suing them jointly for \$19,285,312.

The Central Conference of Teamsters, which met in Chicago, heard International Brotherhood of Teamsters President James Hoffa's plans for nation-wide labor agreements. National and multi-state contracts, he said, were necessary to the union's survival. "Get into a dispute in a small town and you may find you're fighting a multi-million-dollar holding company," Hoffa said. "You may have to put pickets across the United States." As local and area contracts expire this coming year, he hopes to establish nation-wide agreements unifying 450,000 workers in inter-city and local cartage industries.

After repeated demands for the removal of an officer who, crew members said, was racially prejudiced, members of the National Maritime Union took matters into their own hands and struck the liner *America*. Louis Neurohr, first assistant engineer, allegedly refused to have Negroes and Puerto Ricans on his watch. It was further alleged that he objected to them going through a passageway with him and even had a washroom locked to prevent their use of it. This climaxed eight months of complaints which the U.S. Lines had refused to remedy by Neurohr's removal.

NMU President Joseph Curran, arriving less than two hours before sailing time, met with company representatives and, failing to get an immediate settlement of the dispute, called a ship's meeting of more than 500 crew members on the pier. A unanimous vote made the removal of the engineer the precondition for sailing.

The company argues that since Negroes and Puerto Ricans consti-



Curran

tute 40 per cent of the crew, it is free of racial prejudice.

Two courses of mediation were offered by an arbitrator: 1) that the ship sail with both a company and a union representative who would conduct an investigation en route; 2) that the ship sail, but the ship's committee — composed of six union delegates — and the officer in question remain ashore and join the ship by plane after the investigation, if the charges were not upheld.

Both offers were refused. The NMU objected to the first because it left the accused engineer aboard the ship. The Marine Engineers Beneficial Association refused the second because the engineer had already signed the ship's articles (contract) to make the trip. The entire situation was complicated by existing hostility between the NMU and the MEBA. The company contended it was in the middle because the engineers — 29 in number — would not sail if one of their number were missing.

The company's failure to settle this grievance, says Curran, might "tie up the entire fleet" of the U.S. Lines.

With definite cancellation of the *America's* sailing, the 945 passengers aboard were forced to find other means of getting to Europe. They, too, got a taste of the company's high-handedness and arbitrariness. Pleas of many to be allowed to say aboard that night because they couldn't afford or couldn't get hotel accommodations were curtly rejected. Many passengers left in high dudgeon, telling TV interviewers what they thought of the company in no uncertain terms.

The First 10 Years Of American Communism

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Weekly Calendar

DETROIT

The Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty — What It Is and What It Means for World Peace. Speaker, Frank Lovell, Mich. state chairman, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Sept. 27, 8 p.m. 3737 Woodward. Ausp. Friday Night Socialist Forum.

NEW YORK

Michael Munk, staff writer for the National Guardian discusses Jobs and Jim Crow. Fri., Sept. 27, 8:30 p.m. Adelphi Hall, 74 Fifth Ave. Contrib. \$1 (students, 50c.). Ausp. Militant Labor Forum.

OAKLAND

CUBAN REPORT by three students who defied travel ban. Fri., Oct. 4, 8 p.m. Militant Labor Forum, 563 Sixteenth St.