

city. To the extent the CDC exercised any influence over the campaign it was to narrow its focus to the merits of the charter and divert attention from the Rizzo question.

The bankers and corporate blue-bloods in the CDC were not always opposed to Rizzo. Earlier this year Longstreth undoubtedly spoke for many of them when he praised Rizzo for doing so much to aid big business in the city. When Rizzo embarked on a conscious and open course of provoking racial polarization, the big boys got cold feet. Rizzo's advocacy of "white rights" threatened federal funding and a healthy climate for investment. Longstreth and Co. prefer to oppress the city's Black and Spanish speaking population under the cover of hypocritical phrases about equal opportunity. Moreover, the city's rulers are genuinely attached to "their" charter which maximizes their control over city government.

Thus, it is in no way surprising that the CDC's opposition to Rizzo was limited and conditional and that they avoided discussion of Rizzo's policies like the plague. Nor is it surprising that after the people had repudiated Rizzo, Thacher Longstreth would sum up the significance of the defeat as meaning: "no man should have more than two terms."

COMMITTEE TO PROTECT THE CHARTER

The CPC was a much more real element in the anti-charter change coalition. Based primarily on the ADA-reform Democratic forces, the CPC also included Stu Dalzell, a Republican, and the Consumer Party. With a well staffed central operation the CPC organized canvassing, getting out the vote, and poll-watching on a ward by ward basis in the far Northeast, Center City, and most of West and South Philadelphia. While this effort was considerable and important, it was hardly the decisive element in the victory.

The CPC underestimated and largely ignored the Black upsurge which was the central fact this election year. The CPC

did virtually no voter registration, ignoring the vast reservoir of potential no votes largely in the Black and Hispanic communities. The CPC stood aside from the outpouring of Black anger around the beating of Delbert Africa and the boycott of the Gallery. In the face of Rizzo's blatant racist rhetoric and policies, the CPC could manage only a few weak phrases about polarization. Moreover, the CPC's campaign had a heavily anti-working class bias. Their literature focussed on Rizzo's "giveaways" to labor, specifically the city workers and the teachers.

Now Chapman and company are talking about a "new dawn" in Philadelphia politics. They are eager to fill the vacuum created by Rizzo's defeat. While this crowd would run a smoother operation at City Hall than the present administration, they have no real commitment to the interests of the masses of people and no program that promises real change.

BLACK UNITED FRONT AND THE STOP RIZZO COALITION

The most important forces in the Stop Rizzo Movement aren't to be found in the corporate board rooms or the suites of the ADA. The Black United Front (BUF) brought together the more independent-minded Black public officials, civil rights leadership, community activists and revolutionary nationalists to mobilize the Black community to defeat the charter change.

Elements of the Front organized the demonstration at City Hall that brought out 5000 people to protest the beating of Delbert Africa and oppose the charter change. The front was the principle organizational expression of the unity that developed in the Black community in the course of the campaign. BUF activists canvassed the Black wards, supplied pollwatchers, and worked to get out the vote.

Now that the election is over the BUF plans to continue to seek to maximize Black influence in the election next year and settle debts with Black leader-

ship which supported Rizzo. Given the range of differences in the Front it is unclear that a single unified course of action will emerge.

Largely ignored by the media, the Stop Rizzo Coalition consisted of some 30 odd organizations and over 1000 volunteers embracing Black, white and Puerto Rican community activists, rank and file trade unionists, tenants, consumer advocates, feminists, professionals, and a wide range of left political organizations.

The SRC sought to expose the class character of Rizzo as a spokesman for the most reactionary sectors of Big Business, and explain the stake of the oppressed nationalities and the whole working class in bringing him down. The SRC combined nuts and bolts electoral work with political agitation and actively linked the charter change struggle to the day to day struggles of the masses around police brutality, the city workers' strike, the fight for quality education and the Gallery boycott.

The SRC made a major contribution to the downfall of Rizzo, registering nearly 50,000 voters, organizing strong ward organizations in North Philadelphia, Kensington, Germantown and parts of West and South Philadelphia, and putting together the election day machinery in these areas of the city.

The Consumer Party also played a special role in the charter change. By securing 45,000 signatures the Party got on the ballot in the gubernatorial race and thus was entitled to poll-watching certificates, which it provided to all the anti-Rizzo forces. Without these it would have been impossible to challenge the massive fraud on election day.

The role of Milton Street also needs to be highlighted. It was not accidental that Rizzo made Street the main target of his attacks on Black political leadership. From the City Council hearings to election day Street was a force for unity and militancy in the face of Frank Rizzo.

HOW THE CPUSA "BEAT" FRANK RIZZO

June 1979

by Ron Whitehorne

Ron Whitehorne was active in the movement to defeat the charter change as a member of the Executive Committee of the Stop Rizzo Coalition.

"By exposing the monopoly roots of racism and the need for Black-white unity to defeat it, in defending and expanding the standard of living of all working people, the Party played a decisive role in Rizzo's resounding defeat."

— April issue of *Political Affairs*

This bit of self-congratulation on the part of the Communist Party, USA, will come as news to the thousands of activists who were on the front lines of the fight to defeat Frank Rizzo's attempt to grab another four years as Mayor. The plain fact is the CPUSA was largely invisible in the Stop Rizzo movement. Its "decisive role" consisted of tailing behind the liberals in the Democratic Party and the AFL-CIO leadership and of slandering the movement's more militant, class-conscious wing.

WHO PLAYED DECISIVE ROLE?

The Stop Rizzo Coalition (SRC) and the Black United Front (BUF) constituted the organized left wing of the movement to defeat the charter change. It was the SRC that "exposed the monopoly roots of racism and the need for Black-white unity" in the course of organizing thousands to oppose Rizzo. The SRC registered over 50,000 new voters, mobilized and educated people in the wards, at the

shop gates and in the union halls. It organized numerous city-wide demonstrations and actions, both on its own and in concert with other forces.

The SRC organized the election day apparatus in half the wards in the city — primarily in the North, Northwest and lower Northeast — all predominantly working class neighborhoods. The initiative for organizing the SRC and much of the leadership came from left forces, including Marxist-Leninists (the PWOC among them). Milton Street and the North Philadelphia Block Corporation also played a key role in the coalition.

The Black United Front expressed the militancy of the city's aroused Black community. The BUF brought together the more independent Black elected officials, revolutionary nationalists and a wide range of grass roots community organizations. It organized voter registration and election day activity, mass meetings and motorcades and a 5000 strong demonstration in response to the raid on MOVE headquarters and in protest of Rizzo's charter change. The BUF was also a major force in the boycott of the Gallery, the downtown shopping mall which symbolizes the corporate priorities of the city's political leadership.

It was these two organizations which in fact played the decisive role in building a mass movement to beat Rizzo. Significantly, the CPUSA, in a five-page sum up of the anti-Rizzo campaign, does not even mention the SRC, and the BUF warrants no more than a sentence. Perhaps this is because the CPUSA was not a member of either coalition. In the case of the SRC, repeated efforts were made to involve the CPUSA, but the Party was apparently too busy playing its "decisive role" to reply to these invitations.

RIGHTISM MASQUERADING AS A CRITIQUE OF "LEFTISM"

The Party's actual attitude toward the SRC is revealed in the following statement:

"Ultra-left" sects, Trotskyite and Maoist groups, hoping to capitalize on the tide of democratic struggle, played an opportunist, splitting role. They consistently bucked the decision of political forces arrayed against the mayor to keep the main fire on Rizzo. Their line was racist, anti-union and anti-democratic leadership; they pitted rank and file workers against union leadership and incited rank and file community forces against those Black Democratic ward leaders who opposed the Rizzo machine in an unprecedented display of independence."

This statement is indicative of the dishonesty that permeates the Party's analysis. The "Trotskyite" SWP, which boycotted the election, is lumped together with other forces who actively mobilized for a No vote. But even more revealing is the essential tailism and right opportunism of this statement.

It is simply false that the SRC did not "keep the main fire on Rizzo". Nor is it true that the SRC "pitted rank and file workers against union leadership". What is true is that the SRC trade unionists mobilized the ranks against union leaders who backed Rizzo and to push those "neutral" leaders off the fence. SRC forces actively supported those union leaders who opposed Rizzo and united with them at every opportunity. In fact the demonstration at the AFL-CIO headquarters, which the CPUSA characterizes as "the grossest action" of the SRC forces, was in support of an anti-Rizzo resolution introduced by progressive trade union leadership. In contrast, the CPUSA, in the name of trade union "unity", refused to take the struggle against Rizzo to the rank and file of the labor movement.

CPUSA IN ACTION

This was dramatically brought out in the deliberations of "Trade Unionists Against the Charter Change", an ad hoc group which the Political Affairs article puffs as the expression of rank and file trade union opposition to Rizzo. This grouping, which met twice and held a single press conference, brought together the trade union committee of the SRC, some CPUSA trade unionists and a number of unaffiliated trade union leaders and rank and filers. The CPUSA line within this formation was opposed to a focus on mobilizing the ranks to compel the trade union leadership to oppose Rizzo.

Instead they counterposed going up to the Northeast on a flat bed truck and agitating in the community. This project duplicated work already being done and bore no relation to activity in the unions. Because of the CPUSA's insistence on this course, the SRC withdrew, most independent forces fell away and the group collapsed. By way of contrast the "ultra-lefts" of the SRC held a dozen shop gate rallies, passed resolutions against Rizzo in several unions, and organized a city-wide demonstration of trade unionists.

The charge that the "ultra-lefts incited rank and file community forces against the Black Democratic ward leaders who opposed the Rizzo machine" is an even grander distortion and again hides the pathetic opportunism of the CPUSA. The CPUSA does not and cannot cite a single concrete instance of such "incitement" for the simple reason that there was none. What did occur was an attack by Joseph Coleman, Black leader of the 22nd ward, on Milton Street, the BUF and the SRC.

Coleman, a voice of "moderation" within the Democratic Party called for a "de-escalation of rhetoric" and an end to street demonstrations, which Coleman argued were helping Rizzo. Yet in the Germantown area, the CPUSA worked closely with the Coleman forces and remained aloof from the more militant, independent elements in the BUF and SRC. Coleman's role has not been forgot-

ten and he is presently being challenged for his council seat by a BUF-backed candidate. The CPUSA hypocritically praises Milton Street and the Gallery Boycott while in practice lining up with elements in the Democratic Party who oppose Street's brand of politics from the right.

Also notable is the CPUSA's failure to mention the police attack on MOVE and the mass outpouring that followed it. The police beating of Delbert Africa prompted the largest demonstration of the whole Stop Rizzo campaign; but the CPUSA doesn't find it worthy of even a footnote. Clearly this issue was regarded as "too hot to handle" by these "revolutionaries."

UNITE FOR UNITY

Having played a "decisive role" in beating Rizzo, what does the CPUSA see for the future? They describe our current tasks in the following way:

"...routing Rizzo officeholders and moving to consolidate this victory is the task of the 1979 mayoral and councilmanic elections. It is estimated that about 200 citizens will file nominating petitions for the 17 City Council seats to be filled. Already four candidates have announced for mayor. Discussions are now taking place among various political forces as to how to achieve unity and consolidate the momentous victory. The Communist Party will continue to seek the maximum unity of all peoples forces for the 1979 elections, to take class and people's unity forward."

Not a word about the need for independent political action, not a word about the need for a platform that will represent the needs of the masses, not a word of criticism of the corporate liberals who oppose Rizzo for control of the Democratic Party. Undoubtedly any manifestation of class independence or criticism of the Democrats would disrupt "the people's unity" which the CPUSA places before all else. The only unity the CPUSA will serve to advance with their right opportunist politics is the false and destructive unity of class collaboration.

In spite of the miserable tailism and vicious sectarianism of the CPUSA leadership, many individual Party members made a real contribution to the struggle against Rizzo. These honest Party members must be truly embarrassed by the pretensions and the sham of these leaders. It is important to underline that the Party's performance in this struggle is not an isolated lapse of Marxist-Leninist leadership, but a manifestation of a deep-rooted disease — a consolidated revisionist outlook and political line. It is this betrayal of Marxism-Leninism that has disqualified the CPUSA from any claim to being the revolutionary vanguard of the working class and which has made the building of a new and genuine Communist Party the central task of the present period.