

solved -- by struggle against the big business interests that dominate the city and the nation.

Bowser did none of these things. He ran an entirely conventional campaign, promising to fight crime, eliminate waste and stop corruption but offered no real program to deal with the most fundamental issues. He made no serious attempt to expose Rizzo's racism and anti-labor policies. His big pitch was that he was more "qualified."

Bowser ran this kind of a campaign because he is essentially a liberal politician with no basic quarrel with the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. He is temporarily outside that Party, but he has not broken with it politically and he will undoubtedly return to the fold once the time is ripe.

#### THE INDEPENDENT ALTERNATIVE

To defeat Rizzo and Reaction it is going to be necessary for the progressive forces in the city to break out of the two-party vise and build a politi-

cal party that is genuinely independent of Big Business and is based on the interests of the working people and the oppressed national minorities.

The Philadelphia Party, backed by the likes of John Bunting (the city's biggest banker) and committed to the palest of liberal programs, was not a genuinely independent party. Bowser's poor showing underlines the need to create such a party to reinvigorate and expand the anti-Rizzo forces.

There should be no question that there is a base for an independent third party. Every student of public opinion has noted the growing disenchantment with the two parties and with conventional politics.

The spontaneous mood of hostility toward Big business and its allies in government is one of the strongest trends in US political life. Even this election gave some indication of the potential.

The US Labor Party, a pathetic reac-

tionary sect with an honorable and appealing name, garnered over 17,000 votes and actually ran ahead of Foglietta in a dozen wards. Lest anyone think this was the product of the Labor Party's "organizing" it should be noted that the Labor Party targeted the white wards of South Philadelphia as the focal point for their campaign. Here they did poorly.

Most of their votes were in the Black wards which the Labor Party described in an internal document for the campaign as "passive organizing situations." What their vote does indicate is the spontaneous appeal of the conception of a Labor Party, a party based on the working class and committed to its interests.

A real working people's Party can be built in this period. The mass organizations of the people (the trade unions, civil rights organizations, community groups, women's groups, etc.) must be won over to venturing into the political arena as an independent force. This is the task we must take up in the wake of Rizzo's victory so that we can assure it will be his last.

## RIZZO GETS OFF THE HOOK

October-November 1976

*"You believe in democracy, you work for democracy and then you get a slap in the face." . . . Volunteer for Recall Committee after hearing of Supreme Court Decision.*

*"Let's hear it for the U.S.A." . . . Shelly Yanoff, Recall Leader.*

*"I never had a doubt. . . I would have won bigger than I did last time." . . . Frank Rizzo, still the Mayor of Phila.*

Frank Rizzo was facing the biggest crisis of a crisis-strewn political career. Following his reelection, Rizzo had quickly turned his back on his main campaign promise to "hold the line on taxes" by ordering a whopping, 30% increase in wage and property taxes. Rizzo continued to cut back on city services, most notably ordering the closing of PGH.

Rizzo reacted to a satirical article in the Inquirer by getting his allies in the building trades to shut the newspaper down. While continuing to posture as the "friend of the working stiff," Rizzo took up residence in a \$400,000 Chestnut Hill mansion complete with doorknobs that cost more than many of us working stiffs make in a month.

Obviously Rizzo believed you *can* fool most of the people *all* of the time. But events proved him wrong. A recall campaign mounted by the Philadelphia Party and the Americans for Democratic Action met with surprising mass enthusiasm. Angry citizens volunteered in droves to go out and get signatures and over 200,000 voters signed the recall petition. When Rizzo's political hacks on the City Board of Commissioners threw the petitions out on a series of absurd technicalities, the Recall Committee went to court where Judge David Savitt upheld the petitions and ordered the Recall be put on the November ballot.

#### RUNNING SCARED

While Rizzo now says he never feared the recall, his behavior shows he was running scared. Suddenly Rizzo was out campaigning again after months in seclusion. He was quick to twist arms and call in political debts, announcing that unless Senatorial candidate Bill Green and Democratic Presidential nominee Jimmy Carter came out for him on the Recall issue, the local Democratic organization would not support them.

Rizzo was running scared for good rea-

son. Polls showed that a majority of the city's voters favored his recall. In 1971 at the height of his popularity Rizzo had gotten 394,000 votes. In '75 that figure slipped to 321,000 and at the present time even Rizzo's most optimistic aides admitted he could only count on 250,000 votes and at best muster 300,000. On top of this, in a Presidential year a much larger percentage of the electorate votes, particularly among the traditionally anti-Rizzo sections of the voting population.

Then, in last year's election Rizzo's businessmen buddies and political cronies had raised an unprecedented 2 million for his campaign. This time around that kind of cash wasn't available. Finally, the Recall movement had the initiative. Taking all these things together, Rizzo looked like an underdog in a tight November election.

The recall vote would have been more than a referendum on Rizzo. Rizzo has become a symbol of racism, repression, and reaction. His recall would have been a resounding statement to the powers that be that his anti-popular policies and his racist trickery and demagoguery were no longer going to be tolerated by the people of this city.

Perhaps that is why the Justices of the State Supreme Court were anxious to find reasons why Rizzo and the capitalist system he so ably represents should be spared such an ordeal. The Judges, by a 4 to 2 vote, threw out the Recall provisions of the City Charter as unconstitutional. Rizzo could now drink champagne instead of hemlock.

As of this writing, the Judges have not yet issued their full legal opinion but the gist of it seems to be that the State Constitution makes no provision for recall and the 1947 enabling act that allowed the city to have its own Home rule charter calls for observance of the election rules in the state constitution. Greg Harvey, attorney for the Recall Committee, argued these state election provisions apply only to state officials and not local ones.

These technical arguments may be of interest to lawyers. What stands out in the Judges decision, for the rest of us, is that these Justices do not want the people to have the right to recall public officials.

Judges and politicians generally like the idea that once elected, they are safe from the voters for several years at least. Billy Meehan, leader of the local Republican Party, spoke for them all when he said: "If everytime a public official did something unpopular and could be recalled from office, no political leader would be safe. It would be chaos."

#### **INACTION, DEMORALIZATION AHEAD?**

In the wake of the defeat of the Recall movement there will be a danger of demoralization among the anti-Rizzo forces. The liberal leadership of the Recall Committee has no plans for building the movement against Rizzo and in fact plan to dismantle it. Now that the legal op-

tions have been exhausted, the liberals are ready to go back to the Democratic party and wait until the next primary.

Greg Harvey, Recall leader, has said that there are no plans to try to utilize the 200,000 recall signatories as a base for a new political party. Without any political leadership, the many who were mobilized in the Recall Movement will fall into demoralization and inaction.

Instead of putting the anti-Rizzo movement on the shelf until the next elections, we must work to build it now. The policies that led to the recall effort in the first place will continue. We don't have to and we can't afford to wait until 1979 to protest these policies.

Mass mobilizations calling for keeping PGH open, for desegregated, quality education, and for transferring the tax burden from the city's working people to the banks, corporations and the wealthy, should be first on our agenda. We should call for Rizzo's resignation as he clearly does not represent the majority of the people. What was lost in the courts can be won in the streets.

To defeat not only Rizzo but Rizzoism, a new party in 1979 will be necessary. Neither the regular Democrats nor the liberal Democrats are an alternative. Both these elements showed that they are unreliable friends of the anti-Rizzo movement. The regular Democrats care most about their patronage and continuing their political careers. George Schwartz, for example, thought Rizzo was no better than Hitler after the Mayor had kept a squad of cops busy full-time looking into Schwartz's private life and business affairs. But Schwartz apparently finds that his political principles allow him to work with the likes of Hitler. Once Rizzo was reelected, Schwartz was quick to make his peace.

Bill Green, the darling of the liberal democrats, is another one who clearly puts his political hide before any liberal anti-Rizzo convictions. And even the Recall leaders themselves, by their efforts to keep the anti-Rizzo movement politically tame and free of any substantive political program, and by their desire to limit the movement to electoral and legal maneuvers, have shown they are inadequate for the task of getting Rizzoism out of city government.

#### **ALTERNATIVE TO LIBERALISM AND RIZZOISM**

The kind of political party we need must offer a real programmatic alternative to both Rizzoism and liberalism. It must be a party that is willing to take on and fight the Big Business interests that run Philadelphia and are responsible for its decline. It must necessarily be a party that relies on the working people -- that works to forge a coalition of labor, Black people, women and all other progressive forces.

One possibility is the Philadelphia Party, which will be on the ballot in 1979 by virtue of its showing in the last election. The Philadelphia Party presently lacks either the political leadership or the program to be the kind of real alternative that is needed. Its principal benefactor, Charles Bowser, is undoubtedly interested in it only so far as it can be used to advance his own political career.

However, the Philadelphia Party has a rank and file that supplied much of the drive for the Recall movement and who are undoubtedly more committed than before to building the party as an independent and permanent political vehicle. The Philadelphia Party needs to be challenged to adopt a program that really speaks for the city's working people, and on that basis, broaden its support.

## **WHAT'S RIZZO GOT UP HIS SLEEVE?**

April 1978

by JIM GRIFFIN

On March 15th, in front of an audience of Whitman Park loyalists, Frank Rizzo announced that he would not seek a third term as mayor. But he did not bow out quietly. In calling it quits as mayor, Rizzo made it clear that he has not abandoned his quest for political power. In his speech, and at a press conference the following day, Rizzo announced his intention to become a national crusader for "equality for white people", attacking

housing desegregation and affirmative action policies.

Racist demagoguery has been Rizzo's stock in trade throughout his political career, but in the last few years he has kept his more extreme views under wraps. Now, having decided he can't be reelected, he has chosen to let it all hang out.

The Mayor more or less openly called for

whites to band together against Blacks. "Whites have to join hands to get equal treatment", Rizzo proclaimed. "...The Poles, the Germans, the Jews, the various ethnic groups that made this country great. . .suppose they say. . .we're not going to support any black man who runs for office."

#### **CALL FOR IMPEACHMENT**

Reaction to Rizzo's new tack came quick-