

failure of the County Commission to hire additional personnel to process new voter registrations forms, most of them from anti-Rizzo voters. The hue and cry over the extensive fraud prompted veteran pol Pete Camiel to remark: "They tried to steal an election and they didn't even know how to do that."

YOU CAN'T FOOL ALL THE PEOPLE

Why did Rizzo lose? Rizzo forgot the maxim of Abraham Lincoln that "you can fool all of the people some of the time, some of the people all of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time". Rizzo, having fooled many in the past, fooled few this time around. His campaign was based on two cynical premises—that his "vote white" demagoguery would lead the masses of white voters to forgive all and climb on his bandwagon, and that the masses of Black voters were simply too dumb or too demoralized to mount an effective opposition to his racist program.

Instead, the majority of white voters rejected Rizzo's white power pitch. Most white voters saw Rizzo's white rights campaign for what it was—a divisive attempt to scapegoat the Black community for the city's problems, all of which have grown worse during the years of Rizzo's misrule. While rising taxes and deteriorating social services were undoubtedly factors in the minds of white voters, Rizzo's open and blatant racism was, as pre-election polls indicated, clearly repudiated by a substantial majority of whites.

Also, many were frightened by Rizzo's barely concealed contempt for the democratic process and his projection of himself as the only man who could save the city from certain chaos. For many voters these sentiments echoed the rhetoric of Hitler and Mussolini. The walloping Rizzo received in the Jewish wards, where he previously had won, is testimony to this.

The statistics underline the extent to which the call to vote white backfired among those it was aimed at. Everywhere Rizzo lost ground. Aside from the North-

east, Rizzo lost the 21st ward, Manayunk and Roxborough, where Rizzo protégé Al Pearlman is ward leader. In Harry Janotti's 7th Councilmanic district, where 6 out of 7 voters are white, the charter change went down by 7,000 votes. Janotti, a long time Rizzoite, lost his own ward by a two to one margin. The 34th ward, in West Philadelphia, with a large Italian-American population, and where council President George Schwartz is ward leader, went 2 to 1 against the charter.

The river wards of Kensington, where the charter change carried, saw Rizzo slip some ten percent from his 1975 totals. Even in his home base of South Philadelphia Rizzo did not hold his own. Having predicted a ten to one margin for the charter change, Rizzo had to content himself with 79% of the vote east of Broad St. and south of Passyunk Ave. The rest of South Philly went against the charter change 2 to 1. Voter turnout in the pro-Rizzo wards was down from 1975. Even arch organization man Jim Tayoun, leader of the 2nd ward, delivered his turf with only a 57 to 43% margin for the charter change.

BLACK VOTE DECISIVE

Rizzo's biggest miscalculation was in relation to the black vote. In 1975 he garnered nearly a third of the Black vote, relying on deals with Black organization Democrats, and lots of street money. This, combined with the low Black voter turnout that year, led Rizzo to believe he would get his "fair share" this time around.

Instead Rizzo's call for white rights and his defense of police brutality in relation to the eviction of the MOVE organization, sparked a political crusade in the Black community. The danger posed by Rizzo aroused the Black masses and produced a broad unity. Thousands of new, first time registrations poured into city hall. A strong ward by ward organization was built. The myth of Black apathy was rudely destroyed as the Black vote poured out election day—dooming the charter change, punishing Pete Flaherty and putting independent-minded Black Democrats like Milton Street and Bill Gray in office.

Black ward leaders who remained loyal to the Rizzo machine were helpless in the face of this outpouring. For example, in the 24th ward, where ward leader Choice Durham supported the charter change, the vote was 5013 no to 216 yes votes. In North Philadelphia's 28th ward the charter went down by a 51 to 1 margin.

Aside from repudiating Rizzo, the Black voters put all the politicians on notice that the interests of the Black community could be ignored only at their peril. As one politician put it: "Frank Rizzo ran an old style Southern campaign, attacking Blacks. The trouble is that he forgot that back then they couldn't vote."

The same dynamic was at work in the Puerto Rican community where registration and voter turnout is traditionally low. Neighborhood activists and the Stop Rizzo Coalition mounted an effective registration drive, canvassed the wards, turned out the vote and manned the polls. Spanish speaking voters, remembering the murder of Jose Reyes and the years of indignities visited upon them by the Rizzo administration, paid their debts by voting No.

Rizzo's defeat must be counted as a decisive repudiation of the politics of racism, repression and reaction. Rizzo ran on the most explicit white supremacist campaign of any major politician in the country. He stood strongly on a four point platform calling for an end to busing, affirmative action and low income public housing in white neighborhoods, and the restoration of the death penalty. He spent over a million dollars, hired a slick media expert, and cheated thousands of people out of their vote. And still he was overwhelmingly defeated. In a year in which political analysts are pointing to the rise of the New Right, Rizzo's defeat has national significance as an indication of the mood of the working class and oppressed nationalities.

WHO BEAT RIZZO?

December 1978

by JIM GRIFFIN

457,851 people went to the polls and voted No to beat Frank Rizzo — they are the true heroes, the real makers of history. But the massive no vote was also a product of months of hard work by a number of organizations. Who were these organizations and what role did they play?

If you read the daily newspapers you get the idea that Rich Chapman, Thacher Longstreth and their crew of professional liberals and good government types were the architects of the charter victory. Chapman is the director of the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) and the leader of the ADA-organized Committee to Protect the Charter (CPC). Longstreth, head of the Phila. Chamber of Commerce

and former Republican candidate for Mayor, was an organizer of the Charter Defense Committee (CDC) which brought together corporate and banking interests opposed to the charter change.

CHARTER DEFENSE COMMITTEE

The Charter Defense Committee's role in the struggle to defeat the charter change was minimal. The CDC raised money to put up bill boards and produce spot advertisements for TV. Consistent with the CDC's view that the issue was the two term limit and the charter in the abstract, these ads took no position on Rizzo and his eight year misrule of the

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