

communist movement, will we be in a position to provide real practical leadership.

Secondly in relation to the elections we have the task of exposure of the capitalist parties. We have stressed throughout that we do not see this as the only task. But this doesn't mean that it is not an important and critical part of our activity. Much of what currently passes for such exposure is hopelessly abstract and rhetorical. We need concrete and popular agitation that documents our contention that these parties do not serve the interests of the masses. For example it is a truism as far as we are concerned that the Democratic Party stands for the continued exploitation of the workers and its supposed pro-labor orientation represents mere crumbs. But how do we deal with workers who point to the 100% COPE ratings of some of these politicians. Some of this legislation is extremely important in immediate material ways to the workers. We have to be prepared to show the limitations of the AFL-CIO legislative program, its narrow and partial character as a criterion for working class interests. We have to expose those elements of this program which are clearly anti-working class. And we have to draw out the meaning of a Democratic Party politician supporting such a program on the one hand and simultaneously supporting pro-monopoly measures (Scoop Jackson is a good case in point).

Our agitation must also take into account the fact that sizeable numbers of workers are influenced by the Republican party and right-wing trends. We shouldn't forget that almost half the organized workers voted for Nixon in '72 and that a substantial number will vote for Ford this time. We have to

expose the Republicans' "trickle down" theories of prosperity, Ford's demagoguery about inflation, and the ideological underpinnings of the notion of "reverse discrimination" against whites and men.

Elections offer great opportunities for broader exposure of the working of the capitalist system. The basic contradictions are thrown into sharper relief during elections. Every day the papers are full of material that exposes the hypocrisy, corruption and subservience to the bourgeoisie of the two-party politicians. Too often we assume the lessons that are implicit in this material are obvious. This is a mistake. We should milk every incident for every drop of truth and hammer home its meaning.

Finally we must begin the practical work of developing independent political action. We must move beyond propaganda and agitation. We must seriously explore those forces, both locally and nationally, which are moving in this direction. We must begin to work with these forces to build forms for advancing independence. As this work develops we must aggressively seek to involve broader sections of the workers' and democratic movements in this activity. Particular attention must be paid to the Black Liberation Movement which is most advanced in terms of independent politics. We must look to generating independent candidacies on the local level in the coming period.

In the present election we are limited to pointing out the need for an independent electoral alternative. If we take up these tasks with energy and creativity, come next election we may very well have such an alternative.

## INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTION & THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM

In the wake of the charter change struggle and with the emergence of an independent political movement thousands of people are moving outside the orbit of the Democratic and Republican parties. The Black Political Convention, the Puerto Rican Alliance and the new prominence of the Consumer Party are all expressions of this. All these organizations have adopted programs that go against the grain of the capitalist controlled two parties. All of them in varying degrees have pledged to fight for demands that reflect the interests of the broad majority of working people versus the narrow interests of the bankers and monopolists. And all of them have organized independently of the two parties to achieve their demands. Another reflection of the growth of this independent sentiment is the response of the two party politicians who have been forced to seek the support of this movement and make concessions to it. The decision of Lucien Blackwell to accept the draft of the Black Political Convention and the Consumer Party and run for mayor is yet another expression of the growing power of the independent movement.

The PWOC supports this movement and is an active part of it. We support it because it represents a real step toward independence from the two capitalist controlled parties. We support this independence because we believe these capitalist controlled parties can never meet the needs of the masses and will never do anything by mislead and betray the people.

### THE MOVEMENT OF THE PRESENT

At the same time we recognize that the present movement for political independence is uneven and still immature. Many still retain illusions about the Democratic Party and see working outside it only as a tactic to reform this party. Others see this particular campaign as everything and give little thought to utilizing the present contest for building permanent independent political institutions. Still others see independence simply as a matter of organization and fail to grasp the centrality of an independent program—that independence is first and foremost a question of politics. Finally traditional notions of how to build a political campaign still hold sway. The need for grass roots organization and mass mobilization, for linking up with the day-to-day movements of the people, as the way to wage and win an independent campaign is only partially understood within the broad movement.

These weaknesses are inevitable in a movement that is young and charting a previously untried course. They indicate what the tasks are for ourselves and others who have a conscious commitment to independent political action. We have to translate the present independent *sentiment* into a conscious political understanding that an independent party must be built in Philadelphia and across the country. We have to combat the idea that the aim of our efforts is to pressure the Democrats or the Republicans to throw us a few more



crumbs. We have to insure that the platform of the present campaign, the Human Rights Agenda, is not pushed onto the backburner in the name of getting more votes. And we have to work to make this a genuine people's campaign—with the grass roots involved in the key decisions facing it.

At the same time, as Marxist-Leninists, we seek to bring to the independent movement, particularly its most advanced sections, our understanding that only a socialist revolution can resolve the fundamental problems of our people. The struggle for reforms, if it is not connected to the fight to build a revolutionary movement for socialism, is a treadmill. The worker's struggle for better economic conditions, the struggle for racial and sexual equality, the battle for more democracy and the fight for peace—on all these fronts we see how the capitalist class can give with one hand and take away with another. We have seen how reforms are turned into their reverse. We see how what we win one year is taken away the next. Reforms, while they can temporarily and partially alleviate our problems, cannot resolve them. They cannot because they leave the source of those problems, the monopoly capitalist system, intact. Thus the struggle for reforms must be connected to the struggle to abolish capitalism. The reform struggle must be developed as a school that teaches the masses the source of their oppression and arms them with the political knowledge and organization to emancipate themselves.

Those who are presently being drawn into the independent political movement already understand some of this. They are drawn to political independence because they see from their own experience that the Democrats and Republicans represent big business, that these parties stand for racism and discrimination, and that their pledges and promises are just demagoguery to mislead the masses. Those who are coming to the need for independent political action are also increasingly open to looking at a socialist alternative.



## SOCIALIST SOLUTIONS TO PHILADELPHIA'S PROBLEMS

How would a socialist United States make a difference in terms of the concerns that underlie the present campaign?

Philadelphia's people presently see that the wealth of the city is being invested in projects that benefit downtown commercial interests while housing, education and health care are all being shortchanged. This is not just a matter of an unjust policy on the part of the Rizzo administration. It is a reflection of the laws that govern capitalist society. The greatest profit for the few dominates over the social needs of the many when it comes to where money is invested. The profit margins of the corporate and financial interests downtown are well served by the Gallery and the Center City Commuter tunnel, while construction of needed public housing offers a lower return. Good schools that can educate our children are sacrificed in the interests of the banks securing a high rate of return on their loans. Under capitalism it is always profits before people.

Socialism abolishes private ownership of production and replaces investment to make bigger profits with investment to meet human needs. For this reason the great wealth created by our labor can be invested in the things people need. A socialist US could rapidly rebuild the cities with decent housing for all, expand and improve the schools and insure everyone the health care that is a basic human right.

Jobs are probably the single biggest need of our people right now—especially Black and Hispanic youth. Only last week Goodyear shut down the Lee Tire plant, adding 800 more lost jobs to the thousands that have been lost over the last ten years. The owners of these factories are not accountable to their workers or the larger community. They take their plants to where they can make the biggest rate of profit, be it South Carolina or Taiwan. This is the jungle law of capitalism. Workers here are thrown out on the street. Workers in the south or abroad get low wages, lousy working conditions and no unions.

By way of contrast, a socialist economy is a planned economy where unemployment is unheard of. There is no incentive for runaway shops, lay-offs and the maintenance of a pool of unemployed labor to keep wages down. The working class, as the tuners, seek to employ all in an effort to expand production and raise the standard of living.

Police brutality is a big issue in Philadelphia. Again police abuse is not simply a matter of poorly trained or bigoted individual cops. Nor is it just a question of the policies of Frank Rizzo. Police brutality serves a definite function in capitalist society. Police brutality is no problem for the Thatcher Longstreths and the John Buntings. Police terrorize the poor and the oppressed in order to keep them in line. The police exist to protect the privileges of the rich and propertied. When workers engage in mass picketing during a strike, the police round them up and put them in jail. The police jail workers for fighting for better economic conditions. But who has ever heard of them rounding up businessmen for price fixing, violating pollution laws or maintaining unsafe working conditions?

Under socialism, with the state belonging to working people and with everyone sure of a job and an adequate standard of living, there is no longer a need for a huge police apparatus aimed at repressing the masses of people. To the extent there is repression it is aimed not at the working people, but at the former exploiters who refuse to accept the verdicts of the socialist revolution.

Underlying so many of Philadelphia's problems are the facts of racism and inequality. Systematic discrimination



against Blacks and other national minorities is a necessary feature of capitalist society. The employers benefit by making extra profits off the backs of the labor of oppressed nationality workers. They profit from the division between Black and white because as long as we remain divided, their power and privileges are secure.

With the winning of socialism the economic and political logic that perpetuates racial and national oppression is eliminated. The socialist economy does not require maintaining one group of workers in a subordinate position to another. It does not need division. On the contrary socialism needs racial equality and unity. Backward racist ideas do not disappear overnight and would survive a socialist revolution. A systematic educational effort would be necessary to root out these ideas and lay the foundation for a society truly and genuinely free of racism. But under socialism, unlike capitalism, these ideas go against the grain of the social order. Thus there is a firm foundation for the struggle to eradicate them.

#### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENT CAMPAIGN

Of course the present campaign does not aim at bringing socialism to Philadelphia. The masses of people presently do not see socialism as the fundamental solution to their problems. And even if they did, socialism cannot be won in a single city. Socialism can only be achieved by the working class and oppressed peoples taking power nationally. The political and economic power of the monopoly capitalist class must be broken before socialism can be built.

But this does not mean that the present campaign has nothing to do with the winning of socialism. This campaign, by breaking the grip of the capitalist parties on thousands of people and taking the first steps toward the forging of an independent political instrument, aids, if only in a small way, in the preparation for socialist revolution. To the extent the

campaign exposes capitalist domination of the city's political life and aggressively fights for reform demands in the interests of the working class and oppressed nationalities, it strengthens the political consciousness and organization of the masses in their struggles with the rulers.

Should Lucien Blackwell and the independent slate win election this fall, they will not be able to solve all this city's massive problems, nor do we expect them to. What we do expect is that they will provide leadership and active support in the struggle for solutions. For example, no city administration in the present period can "solve" the problem of unemployment. Any serious jobs program will require action in Washington. But a progressive mayor could use his office to mobilize the masses both here and across the country for the fight for jobs and for demands like the shorter work week with no cut in pay. This kind of activity is what we must expect and demand from genuinely independent elected officials.

To insure that this occurs we must guard against the assumption that the role of the mass movement is over once the ballots are counted. It is only the power of the mass movements that can provide the clout to win our demands over the determined resistance of the bankers, big businessmen and political hacks. This is true no matter who becomes mayor.

We must see electing the Human Rights Slate not as an end in itself, but as part of a process—a component of building an independent movement that will push forward the struggle for the elementary demands of the oppressed nationalities, the working class and all progressive forces. And this, in turn, is an element of an even larger process—the development of revolutionary consciousness and the understanding that a socialist transformation is our only way out of the present crisis.