

KKK HONORS RIZZO

May 1978

Frank Rizzo is finally getting the kind of national recognition he deserves. After his now famous "white rights" speech in Whitman Park, the *Klansman*, an organ of the Ku Klux Klan, gave Rizzo their "Racist Hero of the Month" award. Bill Wilkinson, an imperial wizard of the Klan said: "Rizzo is saying publicly what klansmen have been saying for decades, namely that whites must join hands and unite for their common good. . . Mayor Rizzo has shown the courage of his convictions and should be applauded loudly by all white people."

Rizzo was red in the face when he got the news about his newest group of supporters. "I have always been open and direct . . . They hide behind sheets," Rizzo said. While Rizzo claimed to "reject the KKK and all it represents", he was at a loss to explain just why the Klan might choose him as a comrade in arms. Rizzo returned to his feeble theme that "careless reporting" by the media is responsible for the widespread conviction that Rizzo stands for white supremacy.

Not only did Rizzo claim he is innocent

of the charge of racism. He further claimed that "no city has a better record than Philadelphia in promoting equal, fair and humane treatment for all its citizens." Given that racism and inequality are built-in features of capitalist society, it is certainly true that no city in the US has anything to brag about when it comes to "equal, fair and humane treatment". But Philadelphia under the Rizzo administration has to be near the bottom of the list.

Along with massive unemployment, rotting housing and segregated schools, Philadelphia has a mayor who opposes even the most token and modest measures to alleviate these conditions, a mayor who actively and more or less openly promotes racism. The KKK knows an ally when it sees one, even if the Mayor will not return the favor.

TRADE UNIONS BATTLE OVER CHARTER CHANGE

October–November 1978

by JIM GRIFFIN

Frank Rizzo's attempt to incite white against Black to promote the charter change and a shot at another term has stirred controversy in every quarter of the city. The trade unions are no exception. Rizzo's carefully cultivated image as "the friend of the working stiff" is badly tarnished after eight years of high taxes, runaway shops, and attacks on public employee unions. Rizzo's open attacks on Black people are rightfully perceived by many trade unionists as a dagger aimed at the heart of trade union solidarity.

The main opposition to Rizzo in the unions has come from below. The city's trade union leadership is divided on the charter change question. Rizzo maintains his key allies in the labor bureaucracy. The Building Trades are supporting the charter change. So are the leaders of both the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers (ACTWU) and the International Ladies Garment Workers.

Many unions are maintaining a neutral stance. The Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT) leadership, perhaps in exchange for the recent contract settlement, has refused to take a stand. The core of opposition comes from 1199C (Hospital workers), the Retail Clerks, and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

Rank and filers began early to organize against the charter change. The Stop Rizzo Coalition organized a trade union committee encompassing members of over 20 different locals. Beginning in August mass leafletting of the shops began. Rallies were held at shop gates, job sites and outside union meetings. Anti-Rizzo activists

sold buttons, circulated petitions, and registered their co-workers to vote.

Where union leaders supported the charter change or refused to take a stand, rank and file forces organized opposition. In the ACTWU, for example, the Rank and File Committee unanimously voted to oppose the charter change at the same time union leader Harry Goldsmith, without so much as consulting his membership, threw his weight behind Rizzo. A petition campaign opposing the charter change has won broad support from ACTWU rank and filers.

In the PFT, where Ryan and Sullivan gingerly ride the fence, the

School Employees Action Caucus (SEAC) has been mobilizing opposition to the charter change. Attempts to raise the question before the Executive Board have been bureaucratically squashed, but a SEAC petition has been signed by thousands of members.

RESOLUTIONS AGAINST RIZZO

Some rank and filers have succeeded in getting the question before the membership and thus forcing the union to take a stand. The United Paper Workers Local at the Connelly Container Corporation passed a resolution opposing the charter change and condemning Frank Rizzo for his racism and his anti-labor

