

sive anti-monopoly capitalist political program, such a party would be able to successfully compete on the field of political battle.

The building of a vanguard communist party (see series on "Party Building" in past issues of *the Organizer*) remains the central task of communists in this period. However, this struggle does not take place in isolation from the day-to-day struggles of the people. Communists work in and provide leadership for the mass organizations: trade unions, organizations for oppressed nationalities, community groups, etc. Communists would work in a mass people's anti-capitalist party in the same way.

It should be obvious that the development of such a party is a long way off. At present, the labor movement is organizationally firmly in the grasp of the Democratic wing of the bourgeois party and the immediate prospects for breaking it free are bleak. The broadest sections of the Black liberation movement, while generally more conscious of the need for independent political action of this kind, are also still firmly wedded to the left wing of the Democratic party.

#### NATIONAL BLACK POLITICAL ASSEMBLY CAMPAIGN

The one promising development on the general political scene is the National Black Assembly which has put forward a strategy for an independent campaign for President in 1976. Unfortunately, the Assembly is far to the left of most of the present leadership of the Black Liberation Movement, and it has not been able to mobilize sufficient support. At its recent March convention in Cincinnati, it failed to nominate a candidate for president when Oakland's John Conyers declined the nomination. It also decided against the development of multinational organization to push its campaign, determining instead that an all-Black Independent Freedom

Party would be the sole policy-making body for the campaign. While clearly most of the support for this campaign would come from the Black people, all the working people must be united in order to make such an effort have real impact.

Thus the potential for a viable challenge to the bourgeois parties' campaign of reaction this year does not look good. While the Black Independent Freedom Party could provide a form to do general agitation around the need for a mass people's party, it is clear that it itself will not be able to provide a real alternative to the bourgeois campaign.

#### BEGIN WORK TOWARD ALTERNATIVE

What can and must be accomplished, however, is the development of as wide as possible agitation in the factories, in the offices, in the mines and in the communities around the need for the development of a mass people's party. Local bodies of rank and file workers, of Black, Spanish, Chicano and Asian activists, of community workers and of other progressives should be established in every possible locality to serve as the organizational vehicle for such a campaign.

While such a party is indeed a ways down the road, it is presently possible to point out to the masses of working people that only a people's party based on the people's organizations would be capable of providing a viable alternative to the single Democratic-Republican bourgeois party. Only such a party could provide the masses with a real opportunity to express their views and have the real issues addressed from a working class perspective. Only such a party could be a viable center for people's politics.

And until this people's party is built, the working people will have to choose between such candidates as ex-football players and peanut farmers.

## CARTER & FORD NOMINATED: Two Parties Move to the Right

August-September 1976

Neither the Democratic Convention in New York City in July nor the Republican affair in Kansas City in August held many surprises. Jimmy Carter, the ex-Governor of Georgia who made his money in peanuts (and cheap, non-union labor to process them), was enthusiastically nominated by a "united" Democratic Party for whom the smell of victory in November was powerful indeed. And Gerald Ford, a petty reactionary Michigan Representative who ended up President of the United States through no fault of his own, narrowly squeaked past southern California's answer to George Wallace, Ronald Reagan. What is there of significance, from a working class point of view, behind all the ballyhoo of the two conventions?

#### TWO PARTIES MOVE TO THE RIGHT

The most outstanding development is clearly the marked *rightward drift* of both parties, formalized by their respective conventions. Focusing on the Democrats, since they are the party most able to manipulate and deceive the working people of the U.S. (and are also the party most likely to occupy the White House come November), we come up against a platform that promises little, to say the least.

There are the standard planks calling for a federal jobs program, for national health insurance, for a guaranteed annual income to replace the welfare system, for tax re-



form—but they have all been “Carterized.” That is, they have all been subjected to Jimmy Carter’s specialty: talking out of both sides of his mouth, on any given issue, and then rapidly smothering it to death with “trust me” toothy grins and “hallelujahs” to his own (alleged) “honesty, integrity, and sincerity”—accompanied by an unmistakable odor of holiness.

Jimmy Carter “supports” the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Bill, he says; but he also says (especially to business audiences) that he opposes the government becoming the “employer of last resort”—which is an integral part of the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill. Jimmy Carter is for tax reform, because the rich get away with murder, and the present system is “an insult to the human race”; but his chief economic advisor, Larry Klein of the University of Pennsylvania, recently stated in the local papers that “tax reform” means *less taxes on corporations*, not on consumers.

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“Many Wall Streeters find it reassuring that Carter’s chief economic advisor is Lawrence Klein, president-elect of the American Economic Association. Carter’s choice of Klein, they reason, suggests that there are probably no vital differences between Carter and Ford or Reagan about inflation and interest-rates. Robert Baylis, senior vice-president of the First Boston Corp., a leading investment banking firm, concludes: ‘Within a year, the election may well not make much difference to the market.’”

(“How financial pros rate the candidates,” MONEY, August, 1976, page 35.)  
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Jimmy Carter is *for* more government spending, for national health insurance, welfare reform, federal housing programs; but he is also *against* government spending and the Washington bureaucracy it finances. Carter is *for* the Black people, but also *for* “ethnic purity”; and so on.

In fact, the only thing Jimmy Carter is 100%, clearly and definitely *for* is Jimmy Carter. . . and, of course, “restoring people’s faith in government,” “restoring morality in government,” etc. This is real nice, but it doesn’t exactly speak to the needs of the laid-off clothing worker, to the single mother with four small children, to the retired worker whose pension just got ripped-off, to the miner who risks cave-ins and explosions every day.

#### CARTER COWERS BEFORE CONTROVERSY

What’s more, the Democrats behaved in a *cowardly* fashion on the “emotional” issues that are the stock-in-trade of right-wing demagogues like Wallace and Reagan. Carter, and the entire convention, ran as fast as they could away from busing, abortion, and amnesty.

While the Democratic platform pays lip service to busing as a last resort measure and holds to the status quo on

abortion, these positions represent reluctantly-granted concessions to organized Black and women elements within the party, rather than any commitment to defending democratic rights. Certainly Carter, who personally disapproves of abortion and maintains a discreet silence on busing, is unlikely to take even these minimal planks to the voters in an aggressive fashion. What will happen is that the Democrats will try to minimize their differences with the Republicans on these questions.

#### WILL OF THE PEOPLE?

What is the meaning of Carter’s sweep of the primaries and the unification of the Democratic Party under his leadership? Carter would have it that his performance reflects “the will of the people,” that people this year are not interested in issues (he calls them formulas) but in “basic moral values.”

In fact, Carter’s popular appeal would seem to be rooted in disenchantment with politicians and their habit of freely promising everything to everybody and then forgetting all these promises (except to big business) once the polls are closed.

Carter benefited from his unfamiliarity. Since most people had never heard of him, it was easier to believe his anti-establishment rhetoric. In other words, Carter was the beneficiary of an anti-politician, post-Watergate vote in the primaries.

While Carter portrays himself as independent of the old line Democratic Party establishment and the various party factions, this is more public relations than fact. While the business elements and the labor bureaucracy would have preferred a time-tested servant like Jackson or Humphrey, it was clear early on that they could settle for Carter.

Political regulars like Chicago’s Mayor Daley came out early for Carter. And the party’s reform wing, the old McGovernites, proved ready to swallow him in exchange for a few largely meaningless phrases in the party rules and platform.

#### LABOR LEADERS’ ROLE

The role of labor here deserves special attention. The AFL-CIO, still irked at the Democrats’ delegate-selection procedures, tended to “sit out” the early primaries. At the same time, a “progressive coalition” of three AFL-CIO unions—the IAM, CWA, and AFSCME—joined with the UAW and the UMW (along with the National Education Association) in an effort to secure strong delegate representation at the convention, and threw their lot in with Carter. They reasoned that in spite of his anti-labor record (Georgia is a bastion of “right to work” laws, cheap labor, and racist discrimination), it was better to be “in” than “out.”

Leonard Woodcock, president of the UAW, took the lead here, and announced UAW support for Carter with-



out consulting his own Executive Board (who leaned toward Humphrey). Since then, the rumor has been circulating that Woodcock is Carter's first choice for Secretary of HEW after he retires at the end of '76. At the same time, the UAW is negotiating to rejoin the AFL-CIO once Meany steps down—and "their own man" in the White House would certainly put them in a position of strength.

### CARTER AND THE PARTY

In point of fact, no one receives the Democratic Party nomination and retains "independence." The party is dominated by the liberal wing of the capitalist class, and only those willing to do its bidding have the prize bestowed upon them. While we do not yet know all the details, we can be sure that Carter, on his road to secure the nomination, has borrowed heavily for financial support and political backing from the "special interests." We can rest assured that these debts will be collected come November.

The triumph of Carter cannot be taken as a sign that the electorate, the masses of working people who make up the Democratic Party rank and file voters, are demanding a more "conservative" program. The extreme reaction peddled by Wallace and the more sophisticated brand Henry Jackson was selling were both solidly rejected at the polls. What is true is that voters have lost confidence in the New Deal style corporate liberalism, represented by the likes of Udall, Shriver, etc., and Carter benefited from this.

It is the bourgeoisie and not the working people who are demanding a more conservative program. Faced with a severe economic crisis and a weakened position internationally, the capitalists want to "tighten up." The rightward shift of the Democratic Party is first and foremost a product of the needs and mood of the monopolists. Carter was in the right place at the right time to serve that purpose.

### REPUBLICANS "TIGHTEN UP"

These pressures on the capitalists to "tighten up" are also revealed in the recent Republican Convention. The super-profits from capitalist investments in the developing continents of Asia, Africa, and Latin America are under attack from the awakened peoples of those continents. Japan, West Germany, and the rest of the capitalist world are ever-stronger competitors for the world market; the post-World War II "security" of US monopoly capitalism is gone forever. The fight between Ronald Reagan and Jerry Ford is one of the results.

Both men are arch-conservatives, anti-labor, racist, militarist, and ferociously anti-communist. But Ford, as President, has been forced to be *realistic*—he must represent the interests of his masters, the monopolists, as a *whole*. This means detente with the socialist countries and the *gradual* increase of exploitation at home (which requires *gradually*-introduced restrictions on our demo-

cratic rights).

The ruling class of the U.S. recognizes that this is the policy with the best chance of success in preserving its rule; but its most reactionary section, the oil, defense, and agribusiness industries of the "sun belt," is less patient. They are fond of warmongering internationally and fascistic legislation at home, like the S.1 bill.

Their program for the economic crisis amounts to "Make the workers pay!"—tax breaks for big business, continued high rates of unemployment, radical cutbacks in social services—accompanied by direct attacks on the democratic gains of national minorities and women in the recent period, and vicious anti-labor measures.

This political trend must not be underestimated by the working class or progressive forces generally; Goldwater, Wallace, Reagan and other right-wing demagogues (like Louise Day Hicks in Boston and Frank Rizzo in Philadelphia) continue to demonstrate considerable appeal to substantial sections of big business in the U.S., and considerable ability to manipulate broad numbers of the middle classes and backward sections of the working class. After all, in order for Ford to beat Reagan for the nomination, he was forced to accept a thoroughly *Reagan* platform. . . .

### NEED FOR INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTION

The rightward drift of the two major capitalist political parties underscores the need for a real mass alternative on the Left: a national anti-capitalist people's party, based on the "twin pillars" of labor and the democratic movements of oppressed nationalities in the U.S. Such a party would be presented in the '76 election with unprecedented opportunities to *expose* the farce of "democracy" in our political life before the masses of working people.

Such a party is also an urgent necessity as a response to the right-wing extremists, who grow increasingly bold as ever-greater numbers of the electorate move away from the two established parties. In the absence of a Left alternative, right-wing demagoguery—"we're for the little guy, we're against big business and its friends in Washington!"—stands to make considerable gains among the disenfranchised and "forgotten" masses.

So our main concern—in the new communist movement, in the trade unions and other mass organizations of the working class, in the Black Liberation Movement, Women's Movement, and other democratic struggles—in the upcoming election must be *the need for a new people's party*.

We must begin to forge the alliances that will be its foundation, and to develop a broad program of struggle against the monopolies that will guide us, *right now*, in the fight to expose the bankruptcy of the Democrats and Republicans, and to beat back the right-wing extremists. The "bull" is less baffling every day!