

Panthers Debate a Future U.S.



United Press International

Along with delegates to the Black Panther-sponsored convention were many young children. This mother found that the easiest way to watch her child was to keep him in front of her.

Philadelphia Is Quiet During Party Parley

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PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 6—The Black Panthers and their radical sympathizers, assembled here to rewrite the American Constitution, settled down today to the task of debating how they want the country to look.

Earnest young men and women collected in 15 "workshops" or seminars throughout the city to discuss such questions as "self-determination for national minorities," "sexual self-determination," and "revolutionary artists."

As a result of the Panther-sponsored "Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention," Philadelphia is enjoying one of its quietest weekends in years. In the black belt 22d Precinct in North Philadelphia, site of the two principal convention centers, only one arrest was made last night. Police there said it was the quietest Saturday in their memory.

The Panthers themselves are exercising a very close control over their followers with "security guards" watching everyone who comes in and out. The police, still mourning the death of one of their members and the wounding of six others in three incidents last weekend, are acting with a maximum of professional restraint and a minimum of irritating visibility.

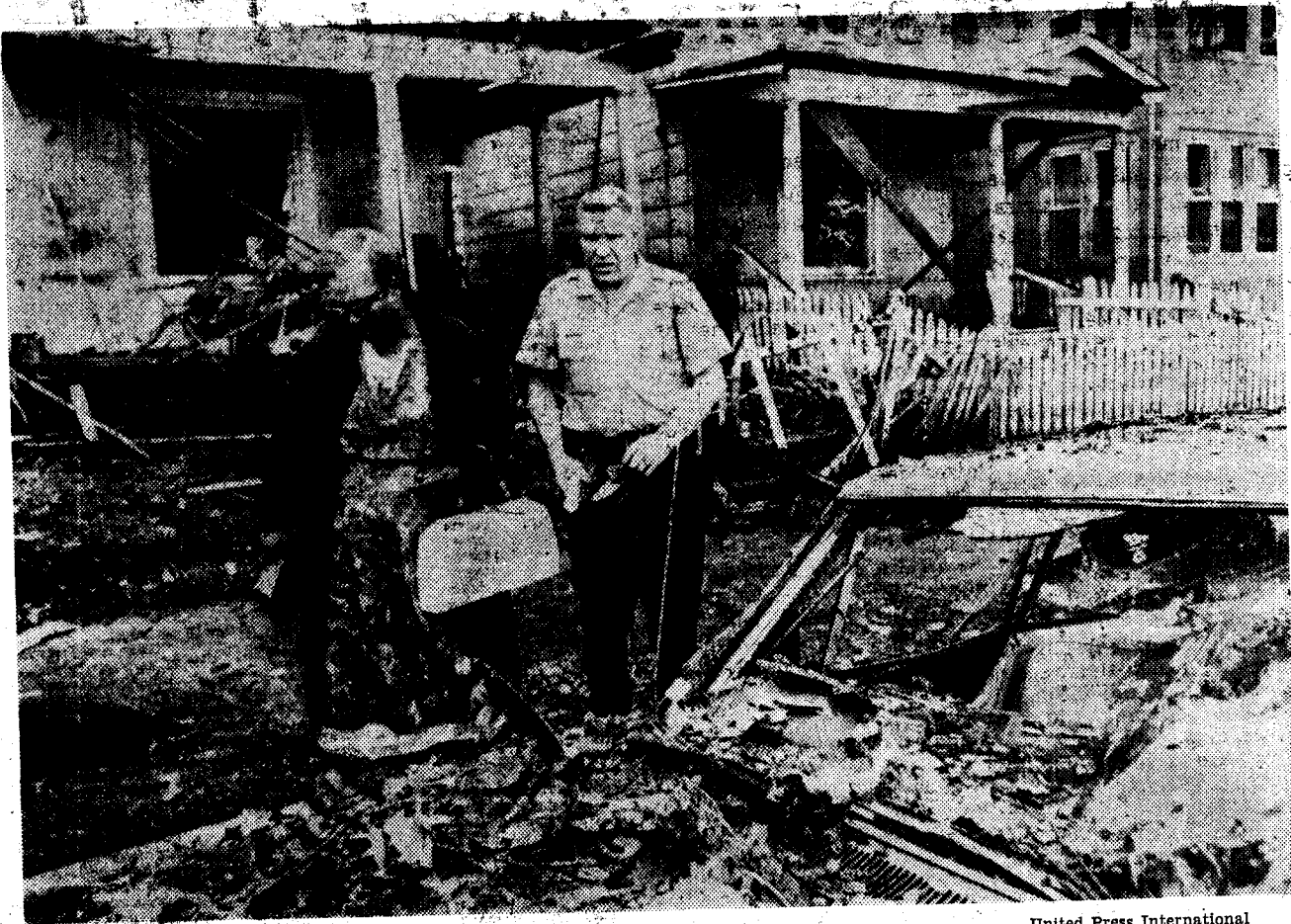
A reporter's sampling of the "workshops," held in ghetto churches and Quaker meeting houses, turned up largely an Old Left vocabulary. The favorite expressions were "exploitation," "monopoly capitalism" and "oppressed workers and minority groups." The only New Left features were the casual use of four letter Anglo-Saxonisms, the constant use of "man" and "like" (as in, "Man, that's a petit bourgeois hangup, like, . . .") and the conclusions that most problems can be solved by giving the people guns.

Local Panther leader Reggie Schell moderated the seminar on "control and use of military." Schell and 13 other Philadelphia Panthers were bailed out just as the convention began; they had been jailed after police raided their headquarters last Monday and exchanged rifle fire.

Schell began by stressing that the Panthers did not want to impose their own view, which is that police — regarded as another aspect of the military — should live in the community in which they work and be responsible to locally chosen commissioners.

This prompted a dashiki-wearing participant to propose that street gangs, "like the Moroccos on Ridge Avenue," police each neighborhood. But he was put down by a white youngster with a mustache who said, "Man, Philadelphia is 10 years behind; there are no street gangs any more in most cities."

A white collegian who had



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FATAL BOMBING—Sophia Mae Mosby and Minneapolis policemen walk from her home to shattered auto while inspecting damage of bomb that killed a man and scattered debris over a 3½-block area. Police said they

had not yet determined if the victim, believed to be a black man, was carrying the explosive or was walking by when the blast occurred. Bombing was the seventh in the Twin Cities in three weeks but the first fatal one.

been to Cuba thought Havana's people's courts were a model. A white representative of dissident GIs ("my group here has 40 years in the service, 12 in Vietnam and 12 in the stockade") read a three-page manifesto. The central theme was that police contain no "inner contradictions" since all are "criminals," but that the military is a fruitful field for radical organizing because it contains a classic class struggle between exploiting officers and exploited GIs.

But the prevailing sentiment of the 80 or so participants was that no meaningful measure of control could be obtained over the police and the military. The system, it was agreed, had to be "smashed."

One participant drew the warmest applause by declaring that "All people should have to have weapons in their possession."

Another group labored at the "control and use of means of production," worrying whether workers councils could direct economic affairs.

A bare-chested white construction worker complained:

"I don't see anybody dealing with the reality of the worker. I don't give a s--- what I produce. All I want is that \$250 I get on Friday afternoon."

Under the maple trees on the lawn of the Friends Meeting House in downtown Cherry Street, the youths lay around discussing the "distribution of political power." They worried about "democratic centralism,"

Lenin's famous euphemism for the rule of an elite, and whether their new leaders would be responsive to "the people." Again, the prevailing view held that they would if "the people" retained weapons.

Conclusions resulting from this weekend's convention are to be embodied in a new constitution or manifesto scheduled to be adopted on Nov. 4.