

The Textron Story:

## The Bottom Line Is Union Busting, G.W. Miller's Labor Policies

Unlike the current Federal Reserve Board Chairman Arthur Burns, whom Jimmy Carter is trying to fire, George William Miller is not simply antilabor. Add up all the labor policies of Textron, under the chairmanships of both Royal Little and his successor Miller, and one coherent pattern emerges: *union busting*.

Granted Miller has taken some care to present a "pro-labor" facade echoing the style of Trilateral Commission member and AFL-CIO General Secretary Lane Kirkland, he is fully committed to corporatist "social contract"-type labor policies such as seating unions on labor-management-government boards envisioned in Felix Rohatyn's Energy Corporation of the Northeast (ENCONO). He is also committed to the Fabian "do-good" policy of hiring low-wage minorities, which he championed during his leadership of the National Alliance of Businessmen. And Miller is backing "Inner-City Industrial Parks" similar to the one Textron's Digital Equipment division hopes to sponsor in Boston.

But, the bottom line in all these policies is war on the trade unions: open strike breaking, scab herding, use of strike breaking goons, subverting local police to assault and arrest strikers, fire management if they fail to bust the union, and finally, to move production facilities with the intent of destroying the union.

*The Nashua Story*

The two most instructive examples of Textron's labor policies developed at the Nashua Mills in New Hampshire and Gorham Industries of Providence, R.I. Nashua Mills was a well-managed company founded in 1823 by Daniel Webster which earned a steady income and provided virtually the entire employment for the town of Nashua.

In 1947, after two years of ownership, Royal Little, Textron's president decided to liquidate the mill. He proceeded to milk the property by selling its cotton stockpile for a \$3 million profit, draining the working capital, and selling the equipment to the textile industry and the empty factory buildings to the town or a local development corporation.

In 1947, after Little had decided to liquidate, he called in the union, a local of the Textile Workers of America, and explained that the union was standing in the way of "progress" by refusing to accept new machinery and work rule changes. To remedy this, he proposed his "New Nashua Plan." Under this plan Textron agreed to keep 2,300 workers and spend \$1.3 million for new

machinery if the union could guarantee a labor cost saving of \$2 million a year. For its part the union had to agree to lower wages, high work loads, and the company's right to arbitrarily fire regardless of seniority. From the town, he demanded lower taxes.

The union was understandably apprehensive; Textron had already reduced the work force from 5,000 to under 2,500, and had sold two warehouses, shipped a portion of the textile machinery to a South American company, and sold the No. 7 Mill to the Great American Plastics Co.

The union agreed to all these conditions, including a time-study operation run in the mill. In effect, the union was agreeing to its own dismemberment.

The time-study report on new job specifications was a morass of details including wage calculations to the tenth of a cent per hour. On the basis of such studies, the company changed work rules and job specifications for what was to be an agreed upon two-week trial period. However, the changes became permanent. When the union complained, Textron set up meetings in Boston, only to repeatedly cancel them. At a conference that was finally held on April 15, 1948, the company said it was going to implement a "wage-incentive system" and refused to give further details. On July 27, 1948, the union accepted a piece-work system which entailed an incredible speed-up of the remaining workforce. Royal Little then announced that it would take one more year for the company to implement its promised equipment upgrading.

Seven weeks later, on Sept. 13, 1948, Little announced that the entire mill would be closed immediately and ongoing work would be finished by a reduced staff no later than Dec. 31, 1948.

In Senate hearings called by New Hampshire Senator Charles Toby, Emil Rieves, General President of the Textile Workers Union howled: "Mr. Little is a capitalist, but in the field of finance, rather than the field of production. He is in the tradition of Jim Fisk and Jay Gould and Commodore Vanderbilt — and maybe Ponzi, too.

"...Textron is a vast and tangled structure. Only the most expert work can discover the hidden meaning of its deals, both internal and external....I feel that, that is a job for the Un-American Activities Committee because I think that Mr. Little through his manipulations is doing more to undermine private enterprise than all the Communists in this country could ever do in a lifetime."

It is doubtful that Rieves knew that he was, in fact,

dealing with a subversion operation, run by the Rothschilds, but he was properly outraged by what he did recognize as Textron's "conspiracy" in dealing with the union.

Why, for example, did the company make such insistent demands for job classifications and then only change the job descriptions of only 17 workers? Why the charade of time studies down to the last months, when Little had already sold the entire cotton stock, and decided at least two years before to asset-strip the mills and abandon them? And, finally, why the "New Nashua Plan" charade?

Textron was trying to bust the Textile Workers Union. Textron, which in 15 years would entirely desert the textile field, was not going to leave a functioning union in the wake of its wreckage of the industry. Little's dealing with the union was simply to have the union agree to its own demise. The destruction of seniority; the company's right to arbitrary firing; arbitrary job reclassification; constantly making, and immediately breaking, agreements with the union; threats of plant closings or relocation to nonunion areas are nothing more than union busting. All were part of an operation very much styled after the Rothschilds' conduct of British foreign policy.

#### *Miller's Dirty Laundry*

But, one could almost say that this is the "clean" part of union busting. The dirty part is how George William Miller ran the union-busting operation at Gorham Industries in Providence, Rhode Island in 1975-76.

This old family firm was gobbled up by Textron in 1966. "Things changed right away," said the former president of the union, United Steel Workers of America (USWA) local 1603-1. "With the old management, we had one or two strikes, but they lasted three or four weeks, and they were settled. We knew where we stood."

A longstanding grievance, subcontracting to the Far East before idled workers in the plant were recalled, triggered a strike on Sept. 13, 1975. The strike lasted seven and a half months and was known for the extraordinary violence thrown at the workers.

According to union head Bill Kennedy, "They wanted the union out. That was all. They must have told Walter Robbi (the head of Gorham Industries), and (William) Alexander (Gorham, Vice President in charge of Administration) that if they didn't bust us they were fired."

In fact, when the union won, Robbi and Alexander were fired.

Early in the strike, the company put out a call for scabs. Eventually, it became difficult to get scabs past

the effective picket lines, the company brought in the most vicious labor goon organization in the country: Wackenhut Guards, which includes a division trained especially for strike-breaking.

Strikers were assaulted by both Wackenhut guards and Providence police. Then the Providence police moved in with arrests, canning 39 strikers including Kennedy, for "obstruction of traffic," "disorderly conduct," and "assault." The local police took their orders from Providence Mayor Cianci.

"Cianci was in bed with Miller," claimed Kennedy. Cianci, who lived next door to Miller, had been involved with Textron in various tax shelter schemes, including buying the local railroad station.

As the picket line stood fast, it became difficult to get scabs through individually. Buses were hired to run the scabs in. Then came the typical Textron-Miller touch: as the Gorham workers were preparing to vote on the second company offer (which the union recommended be rejected), Textron advertised in the *Providence Journal* that it had acquired land in Los Angeles and was considering relocating. Uncowed by the threat, the workers spurned the settlement and won the strike on April 26, 1976.

#### *Has Labor Caught On?*

Miller's labor record is now becoming known to at least state-level AFL-CIO leaders. Miller's proposal to, as the *New York Times* put it, "improve the investment climate in Rhode Island," prompted Edwin C. Brown Secretary-Treasurer of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO to respond, "This program would take away unemployment benefits. Take away holidays, create a compulsory seven-day work week, and put Rhode Island in the same category with retarded Southern states with the obnoxious 'right to work' law."

What could be more logical than that George William Miller, a leading Rothschild industrial penetration agent, should be a union buster? Just as he wrecks the institutions through which American capitalists make policy for the economic growth of the nation, he will turn on working class institutions and attempt to destroy them. The very notion of a stable, increasingly productive labor force is anathema to an asset-stripper whose profit occurs from industrial chaos.

So, Mr. Labor Leader, is George William Miller really the man you want to have replace the "antilabor" Arthur Burns, managing the American currency system as head of the Federal Reserve Board?

—Leif Johnson