

# Editorial Miscellany

## WORKERS LEAGUE: Surprise! Morrissey/Miller Betray!

Two candidates in recent union elections—Arnold Miller in the Mine workers and James Morrissey in the National Maritime Union—have stood out as leading proponents within the unions of the U.S. government's efforts to enforce anti-labor laws under the guise of restoring "union democracy." The trend they represent is thus a profound threat to the independence and future of labor.

Miller became president of the UMW in 1972 by using the courts to obtain a Labor-Department-run election. Because the corrupt gangster-like regime of Tony Boyle was already so discredited that it was a liability rather than a help to the companies, Miller was elected through the concerted efforts of government lawyers and with the financial backing of liberal sections of the bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, thousands of miners still voted for Boyle, many of them because they rightly saw the courts and Labor Department as tools of the corporations and opposed their interference in the unions. Morrissey was less successful: after years of "running" for office through the courts, his vote in the latest (1973) election was down substantially from his previous showing in 1969.

Nearly all fake-left groups jumped on the bandwagon of these liberal-favored front men for the Labor Department. The pathetically opportunist pseudo-Trotskyist Workers League, with no base of support whatsoever in either union, was typical. It backed both Morrissey and Miller, despite its formal lack of political agreement with either on the grounds that "their election would open up the struggle to break up the old bureaucracy." Now, however, in a recent article written with a fake "gee-whiz" naiveté, the WL's *Bulletin* feigns great surprise at the failure of either to "open up" any struggle whatsoever and at their inevitable betrayals. But Miller and Morrissey have simply continued along their chosen paths, as promised: it is not they, but the *Bulletin* that has changed its tune.

The theme of the *Bulletin's* new tune ("Where Is James Morrissey?" 15 January 1974) is an attempt to show how Morrissey has allegedly changed: he has been driven "rapidly to the right" because of his lack of politics and the pressure of the "crisis" (whatever that means); he has "devoted himself to challenging the elections [unsuccessfully—WV] before the National Labor Relations Board"; and his Committee for NMU Democracy has "virtually ceased to exist." None of these correct characterizations represents anything new, as the dishonest Workers League well knows. Morrissey has always had the same, right-wing bread-and-butter program, has always used the capitalist courts as his main strategy and never led a real committee (it was always run "like a private corporation," according to an unsigned letter from a seaman in the 16 December 1968 *Bulletin*). Since 1969 there has been no "Morrissey Movement" at all in the union.

As for Miller, the same *Bulletin* article unabashedly notes that "already a big opposition is developing to Miller," whose election was supposed to have "opened up" anti-bureaucratic struggle. Unfortunately, partly due to the fact that so many ostensible socialists were tailing after Miller, there is today no such "big opposition" anywhere to be seen, despite widespread dissatis-

police methods. Young championed in his campaign the more-cops-on-the-beat concept and has lost no time after his installation putting Tannian to work drafting the details for opening police storefront "mini-stations." Detroit residents can look forward to, albeit with some trepidation given the Detroit police's notoriously brutal reputation, not only having *more* cops, but also having them right down the block!

Young's railings on the law and order theme, however, have not abashed his old friends in the Communist Party. Young's long history in CP front groups (see WV No. 33) and his rise to prominence in liberal Democratic circles continue to win him jubilant coverage in the *Daily World*. The 4 January issue of *Daily World* started off with the headline "4,000 hail swearing in of Detroit Black mayor" and ended up: "All this week, young and old, Black, white and Latin, are celebrating the inauguration of this new Black mayor, who was an auto worker and who grew up in the ghetto."

Is it necessary to point out that Richard Nixon was a poor boy who worked his way through college? But for the CP, Nixon represents the reactionary section of the bourgeoisie, while Young is precisely the liberal bourgeois politician with whom it would like to consummate an "anti-monopoly coalition." Sociological origins aside, Young and Nixon simply represent different shadings within the framework of bourgeois politics. For Marxists, political support of a section of the bourgeoisie is ruled out in principle. For the CP, however, crossing the class line has become such a commonplace that one imagines it envisions an expressway over it!

Far more significant than the CP's groveling at the new mayor's feet is the support for Young from the labor bureaucracy. A fitting end to a week of inaugural celebration came with Friday's business-labor luncheon for Young, where he was flanked at the main table by Leonard Woodcock and Henry Ford II. Only a few short weeks after shoving down the throats of the Ford workers the most wretched settlement of their history, and in the midst of gigantic layoffs by the auto barons throughout the industry, Woodcock followed Ford to the podium to confirm his abject capitulation to the bourgeoisie and its politics: "Although Detroit was the focus of historic labor-management struggles, we have developed a common interest and responsibility. We are happy to join this new, new coalition. This is an historic event" (*Detroit News*, 4 January, 1974).

Woodcock notwithstanding, this chapter in Detroit politics does not represent a "new, new coalition" but a slightly refined repetition out of the old book of class collaboration, one that Woodcock has studied in earnest. The coalition of Fords and Woodcocks in the support of Coleman Young offers nothing to the working class except slick liberal demagogic wrapping on a package of intensified exploitation and oppression. As the WV noted in its initial article on Young's election: "The only way forward is the path of class struggle, beginning with the struggle to form a working-class political party based on the trade unions to fight for a workers government."

Comradely,  
J.W.  
Detroit

faction with the grievance and safety clauses of the current contract. But while there continue to be widespread illusions in the new bureaucracy, Miller has opposed impeachment of Nixon, refused to broaden labor support for the striking Harlan County miners and is waging a concerted campaign to curb wildcat strikes against the pro-company provisions of the contract signed by Boyle.

For Trotskyists, "critical support" means calling for votes for a candidate who is running on a platform which claims to represent a class-struggle alternative to the flunkies of the corporations, but which stops short of a full transitional program directed against capitalism. In order to draw a class line against the companies and their agents in the labor movement, revolutionaries can call for votes for such candidates with whom there is substantial programmatic agreement, while mercilessly criticizing the inadequacies of their program. But for the opportunist WL, "critical support" means cynically calling on the workers to vote for candidates whose *entire* political thrust is counterposed to the paper demands in the *Bulletin*. And this means lies, evasions and inconsistencies.

The biggest lie of the *Bulletin's* NMU coverage is its complete failure to mention the Militant-Solidarity Caucus, from whose program it copies most of its slogans. The M-SC calls for a fight against unemployment by demanding a shorter work week with no loss in pay, through two alternating crews and a four-watch system; autonomous unions for NMU shoreside workers; international organizing; opposition to economic nationalism; and a workers party to fight for a workers government. Its candidate, Gene Herson, received 358 votes in the 1973 election running against both Morrissey and Curran's hand-picked successor, Shannon Wall. The *Bulletin*, however, despite its paper demand for a labor party and the call for "revolutionary leadership" of the NMU tacked on to the end of its articles, urged NMUers to vote for Morrissey, who had no caucus and promised nothing.

The Spartacist League rejects such "critical support" betrayals and calls instead for the building of real class-struggle opposition groups, such as the NMU Militant-Solidarity Caucus, in all unions.

## OCTOBER LEAGUE: Slinking Back to the Anti-Monopoly Coalition

The current "Unity Statement" of the October League purports to be a simple reprint of the "Statement of Political Unity of the Georgia Communist League (M-L) and the October League (M-L)" of May 1972. However, it appears the OL has continued to "learn" from its mentors, Stalin and Mao, and is now surreptitiously rewriting its own documents, as there are some important changes in the May 1973 edition. Taken together these changes amount to a blanket attempt to wipe out any remaining traces of "leftism" in the OL, which not so many months ago claimed the Revolutionary Union was trying to sneak in the reformist Communist Party's theory of "two-stage" revolution through the RU's "united front against imperialism." Now the OL openly embraces this refurbished "anti-monopoly coalition."

Characteristically for a Stalinist organization, this marked change was not proclaimed openly, but accomplished by literary sleight-of-hand. Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, in contrast, valued revolutionary honesty, and when they wished to correct errors or inadequacies in earlier works they did so by writing new introductions, not changing the original. The following are examples both of the OL's rightward shift and the dishonest way it was done:

First, the original edition states:

"...the proletariat must maintain its own ideological, political, and organizational independence. This can only be done under the leadership of a genuine Marxist-Leninist party. The party must link the immediate struggles to the final aims of the dictatorship of the proletariat and proletarian revolution. Communists must consistently sum up the experiences of the masses, raise the level of mass struggle step-by-step, and educate the masses in Marxism-Leninism and revolutionary struggle.

"To regard the immediate struggle as everything and to forget the final aims of the proletariat and the necessity to educate the masses in a revolutionary spirit, can only lead to tailing the liberal bourgeoisie and is out and out reformism.

"On the other hand, to deny any role to the non-proletarian forces opposed to imperialism, isolates the proletariat and strengthens the bourgeoisie."

—pp. 16-17 [May 1972 edition]

Now these paragraphs have been removed and replaced by the following:

"To deny the need to win over non-proletarian forces to the side of the working class, as the Trotskyites and ultra-leftists do, is to turn over to the bourgeoisie the reserves of the proletarian revolution. While intellectuals and middle classes enter the revolutionary struggle with their own petty bourgeois prejudices and are vacillating elements, the proletariat must, through patient work, win these reserves to the side of the revolution by adopting specific policies to unite with them.

"The working class and its party must maintain their political and organizational independence and initiative within the united front, by leading the day to day struggles, by promoting the fight for reforms in a revolutionary manner and by pointing out, in this context, the final aims of the movement."

—pp. 16-17 [May 1973 edition]

Secondly, we were told in the original statement that:

"Especially important, at this time, is the struggle against narrow practicalism, or placing the day-to-day struggle of the working class ahead of its final aims. The tendency to bow to the spontaneity of the mass movement, to tail behind it, must be fought by linking Marxism-Leninism with the working class movement. We must develop propaganda and agitational organs that can bring communist ideas to the working class and unite the class struggle. This must be done on a national scale with emphasis now on broad political propaganda directed primarily at the advanced workers."

—p. 20 [May 1972 edition]

The "reprint" throws out the above paragraph and replaces it with:

"While the principal danger in the general peoples' movement is posed by the right opportunist CPUSA, within the young communist forces the main danger is ultra-leftism. Due to inexperience and still shallow roots among the basic sections of the working class, the danger of a "purist" view towards the mass struggle and negation of the united front pose an important obstacle. A manifestation of this ultra-leftist influence is the view of 'building a party first, then later engaging in the mass struggle.' Sectarianism and unprincipled attacks within the communist movement are also symptoms of idealism and dogmatism."

—p. 22 [May 1973 edition]