

General Motors Had A Bonanza Year, But Its Workers Got Nothing Out of It

By GEORGE CLARKE
1939 was a big bonanza year for General Motors.

According to the corporation's report on February 7, the coupon clippers cleaned up a cool \$183,000,000. The DuPont crowd took \$35,000,000 of the swag.

Let's break down these big numbers and see just how the profit was made:

For every one of an estimated 225,000 employees the corporation took approximately \$814. The corporation received a profit of over 50 cents for every dollar paid out in wages. A profit of roughly \$119 a car was made and shareholders received \$4.04 per share of common stock outstanding. This compares with \$2.17 received by shareholders in 1938. Par value of GM stock is \$10 per share.

These big numbers smell like prosperity. Yes, indeed. Plenty of gravy for the fat parasites whose function in production is sunning their hides on swanky yachts in Florida or rebuilding the ruined fortunes of some broken-down European count to make him a good match with one of their dissipated daughters.

It smelled like prosperity to be sure—but all the wage slaves on the assembly lines, in the press rooms, the die shop and the foundries—the men whose sweat and skill and muscle made the \$119 profit on the Chevrolets, Buicks, Cadillacs, LaSalle's, Pontiacs and Oldsmobiles—all they got was the smell.



It was battles like these that made General Motors recognize the Auto Workers' Union. This picture was taken before the huge Fisher Body No. 1 plant in Flint. When the General Motors Workers hit the ball again, they will be on the march for a living annual wage for the men who produce America's automobiles.

"THE SPIRIT OF '37"

NEGRO YOUTH BACK JAMAICA PICKET LINE

When Mary Smith, a Negro girl, and Sol Himmelfarb joined the Pharmacists' Union, their boss, owner of Leach's Pharmacy in Jamaica, Long Island, fired them. The two workers promptly set up a picket line.

Last week the Youth Council of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People investigated the dispute, and several of its members joined the picket line. The ensuing boycott forced the owner to close his store until the local Pharmacists' Association came to his aid.

They appealed to the local president of the N.A.A.C.P., Dr. H. John Singleton—who ordered the youth members of the N.A.A.C.P. to cease supporting the strike.

But the youth refused. Now the boss is dangling before the Negro community an offer of an all-Negro shop. He vows that, if Negroes will scab, he'll never employ whites again. So far his tactics have been entirely unsuccessful.

UNIONS WARNED OF FRAMEUP IN MINNEAPOLIS

(Continued from Page 1)
Minneapolis to aid in the formation of these "independent unions." At that time the anti-labor Associated Industries of Minneapolis launched a drive to raise a war fund of \$315,000 to finance an ambitious anti-union program.

In a statement published in the August 4, 1938 issue of the Northwest Organizer, the Teamsters Joint Council organ, denouncing the order then issued by Judge Reed permitting the links access to the union's records, the union said:

Records Open to Labor
"We have no hesitation whatsoever in throwing open our records to the tribunals of organized labor. So far as our financial records are concerned, these have been regularly audited, both by accountants for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, and by a reputable firm of public accountants. What we object to is permitting enemies of labor access to our records. That is the issue involved in Judge Reed's order."

Our stand is backed by the Teamsters Joint Council and by the Minneapolis Central Labor Union. In the ensuing fight we have the aid and counsel of our superior body, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. We merely continue the glorious tradition of the trade union movement, that labor and labor alone shall have access to the records of the labor movement.

Gives Secrets to Enemy
"What Judge Reed has done is to order us to surrender our innermost secrets to men who do not deny their membership in the 'Associated Council of Independent Unions,' an open enemy of all unionism, an employer-financed organization whose open ties with fascist gangster bands was clearly revealed on Friday nights, July 29, at the Silver Shirts' meeting in Ark Hall.

At this meeting, closed to the public, the 'independent union' organization, by arrangement with the Silver Shirt leaders, approached each participant and provided him with literature inviting him to join the 'independent union,' while the Silver Shirt speakers called upon their listeners to organize armed bands to raid the headquarters of Local 544.

Union-Busting Device
"If Judge Reed's order is permitted to stand unchallenged, it means that any group of reactionary bosses has only to plant a few stool-pigeons in a union; when they are exposed, have them institute suit against the union for an accounting of funds; and then the court will give the stool-pigeons' attorneys access, not only to the financial accounts, but to every written record of the union."

"Every union man everywhere will immediately understand what a deadly blow to unionism would be dealt by this process. . . . By the very nature of their function, unions are engaged in conflict, now quiescent, now sharp, with the employers from whom they are seeking better wages and working conditions. In this struggle, both sides have to solve various problems of strategy and tactics, and no union could be long successful whose strategic and tactical decisions were known to the opposing employers."

Invaluable to Bosses
The minutes of the Executive Board of a strong union are worth tens of thousands of dollars to the hostile employers. Even such an apparently duplicable item as the membership mailing list, possession of which can have such manifold uses, would ordinarily be the most powerful employers' agency; where as by the courts' order these stool pigeons can photograph this as well as every other kind of record kept by the union.

Labor on Guard
Judge Reed's order was not carried out then. It was fought out in the higher courts, then sent back for modification to the lower courts. Meanwhile the union got more information on the anti-union role of the plaintiffs, and this was presented to Judge Carroll. But in spite of this he gave the finks' attorneys and accountants access to the union's records.

Minneapolis labor is on guard, waiting for the next attempt at a frameup.

WORKERS' FORUM

TYPO UNION DROPPED BY ST. LOUIS CENTRAL BODY

Editor:
The AFL Central Trades and Labor Union on Feb. 11 suspended Typographical Union Local No. 8 from membership, on orders from William Green.

William Brandt, Central Trades secretary, was instructed by the body to include in the motion a declaration that the body disapproves suspension of the printers. Brandt himself declared:

"Four-fifths of the delegates here do not want to suspend Local 8. I know Bill Green has no use for me and I have less use for him. But here is his letter, telling us to disassociate ourselves from Local 8, and if we do not comply, our charter from the AFL will be lifted. It is a cold-blooded proposition which confronts us. I don't like it. But we must cast aside all sentiment and look to the future of this body. If our charter is lifted, another central body will be set up here."

W. J. Gibbons, president of Local 8 (he is a reactionary, he was opposed to the late International President Howard), blamed the plight of the printers union on international officers who had sought to lead the printers into the CIO. "This action by Green," he declared, will do no good; it suspends 80,000 members from

the AFL nationally. And then, having kicked 80,000 members of the federation out, he will send out organizers to organize the unorganized. Green can tell this body it must suspend the printers, but when he was here recently he could not find time to adjust a dispute between the firm and others union and the engineers union." Funny thing is that Gibbons was in accord with kicking out the CIO unions four years ago.

J. W. Williams, one-time national president of the AFL Building Trades Department, and now a delegate of the Musicians Union, said:

"I predict that we will soon see a different set-up in the AFL. The skids are greased for Bill Green, he is on his way out. But we will have to vote to comply with his order. He and the higher-ups in the federation have us by the throat. I think we should express our resentment."

National leaders of the Typographical Union have indicated they intend to go along independently in the hope that the dispute between the AFL and CIO is settled. Their refusal to pay the assessment to the war-chest to fight the CIO is good pressure on the AFL for a decent peace.

H. V. Romer
St. Louis, Mo.

APPEAL ARMY

The column of Red Sunday-ites is growing—but very slowly. Too slowly to record this week an appreciable difference in Appeal circulation.

Boston and Detroit are still the only two branches definitely active carrying on Red Sundays—at least so far as we have information in this office.

We have promises, however, from branches that they intend to begin the work. We'll publish them so the branches will feel they must make good on their word.

Flint: "Now we're re-organizing Red Sunday sales and hope to be able to increase our bundle soon. . . ."—Frank Dart.

Lynn, Mass.: "We are instituting 'Red Sundays' here in Lynn which promise to be very fruitful. . . ."—F.D.

Akron, O.: "Either the coming Sunday or the Sunday after we are going to try the Red Sunday system to see what the possibilities are. . . ."—T.C.

Thanks for the promises! Now how about a little action? If you want to know how fruitful Red Sundays are and "what the possibilities are" read this letter from Detroit:

"The enclosed remittance of ten bucks was raised in three mornings in house-to-house Appeal distribution. An average of three comrades participated each time for about an hour and a half."—G. Lamonti.

And now we're in a position to tell the inside truth of how Red Sundays took hold in Boston. It comes from an actor comrade whose show is now on the road:

Faded a special election over the last weekend and our comrades there put on a special drive of street sales to bring the party program forward. From all reports the special Appeal met with considerable success in Newark.

We recommend this method to other cities—particularly those on the West Coast which have distinct problems and distinct issues. This method beats special mimeographed leaflets all hollow. Newark got a special rate on its papers. Others can expect similar treatment. It's a proposal well worth considering for relief crises, election campaigns, strikes, union conventions, etc., etc.

TRY YOUR HAND!—BIG POSSIBILITIES!
Two weeks ago we received one dollar from a sympathizer in St. Louis with an order for 33 copies of the Appeal. Last week we received two dollars doubling the order to 66. Here's the letter that came with the money:

"In the first place I don't try to sell copies. If I can, well and good, however, my main objective is to see that they're read. I watch my chance at the Public Library and place two copies on the newspaper rack. Of course they're soon discovered and ripped down, but not before eight or ten people have looked thru them. The downtown 'Y' gets three copies. Ten copies are conveniently left in shops. My analysis is that when they're found one of two things happens—it falls immediately on fertile ground and is read, or the person immediately thinks 'propaganda.' 'At least,' he thinks, 'I've found something I know to be propaganda.' So he reads it to make sure. Then he's lost; for if he can read he can partially understand. The next time he won't consider tearing it, he'll read it from page one to page four.

"Your experience may lead you to smile at my theorizing. Perhaps I am wrong, but when they start asking for copies, buying them, then we shall both laugh, not for different reasons either.

"No matter. I did have a bit more than a modicum of success with my first bundle, placing about ten copies directly in the hands of workers. Workers that I know will read them.

"It's really amazing the number of people who entertain communist ideas, talk of them, and yet shout down the name of communism as something disagreeable and foreign to democracy. It's the press I suppose, but nevertheless the possibility of guiding those ideas into decisive action is there.

"Please don't regard me as a youthful proselyte who's toying with radical ideas. I can't afford to toy with anything to the tune of \$2.00 a week. That's about one-sixth of my salary. I'm working at and studying a cause which I believe to be just and practical, and I hope that I may prove a valuable member of the movement in time. . . ."—M.V.

Go to it, comrade! You're proving yourself a hundredfold today. Your experience will be of value everywhere.

An Agitator Stalks In Omaha Masses Heed His Hoarse, Compelling Voice

By CARL O'SHEA

OMAHA, Nebr.—The greatest agitator that the American working class has ever seen is at work here.

This agitator has been at work in Omaha for several years now. He has been working quietly among the unemployed. Thanks to his indefatigable work and his organizational talents, there is today a new unemployed group in Omaha, the Federal Workers Section, which already has over four hundred members and is growing daily.

Starting in December, the FWS has maintained a picket line day and night around the city courthouse. In the coldest weather, unemployed men and women march grim-faced before the courthouse, bearing signs: "Single Men Must Eat"—"Our Children Are Hungry"—"American Workers Will Not Starve Peacefully"—"All War Funds to the Unemployed."

The FWS has obtained the use of the Drivers Hall at 1222 Harney, where they meet—where hot lunches are served daily—from where 350 gunnysacks of food, collected from sympathetic merchants, have been distributed to needy families in the last ten days. The Central Labor Union is giving sympathetic support and aid to the FWS.

All efforts of public officials, local and national, to stop the great agitator have been in vain. He is described as a tall gaunt figure, hollow-eyed, with prominent cheek bones, a strange pallor. It is his voice and his persuasiveness, however, that seem to have impressed most of his listeners.

UNEMPLOYED LEARN THEY MUST FIGHT
As he talks in his deep-thundered, slow, impressive voice, the scales drop from his listeners' eyes, and they see the reality of life as it has never appeared to them before.

If I had not been to Omaha and talked with the unemployed myself, I would not have believed it. But literally hundreds of unemployed men and women, in talks with me, have indicated that the agitator has done his job well.

"Life is struggle," they tell me quietly but in dead earnest. "On one side is ourselves, the workers, the poor, who have produced everything and who have nothing. On the other side are the rich, the owners, those who produce nothing and have everything. They own the courts, the cops, the relief department, the government. They will never give us the life we need and want. We must take it. Alone we are nothing. United we can achieve everything."

It appears the agitator came to Omaha in 1936, at about the same time E. F. Magaret, business man, became County Relief Administrator.

MURDER FOR MONEY IS HIS RELIEF POLICY
Magaret has been getting away with murder—and this is no idle phrase—in Omaha for four years now. Backed by the employers of Omaha, Magaret soon put into effect a "pay-as-you-go" policy.

Magaret has a simple three-point program. If there is an employable member of the family, whether he has work or not, that family cannot get on relief rolls. There are no allowances for rent, gas, water, electricity or fuel. All single men are denied relief. "We aim to restore individual initiative by forcing men to go out and get work, instead of expecting the government to take care of their families," explains Magaret.

Magaret boasts that relief costs in Omaha are 4 cents per capita per month.

You have heard of what's happening to the unemployed in Ohio and elsewhere, but you haven't heard anything like what goes on in Omaha. If it weren't for WPA, things would have been still worse. And WPA has been cut from 11,000 last year to 5,300 today. To boot, many workers have been laid off PWA.

Actually, in the large city of Omaha only sixteen hundred families on direct relief are permitted. In December, the city spent \$9,198 for relief, not much more than it spent, in all likelihood, in 1928 and 1929.

Things got so bad recently that even the Junior League became interested, investigated, and found cases of children fainting of hunger in school, of sickness unattended, of mass malnutrition, of many cases of actual starvation.

Yet, with people dead from hunger, Magaret has available in the county treasury for relief purposes a total of \$391,092.93. Of this only \$15,000 has been earmarked—for a WPA west side sewer project. Magaret expects to end the year 1940 in the black, as he has every year.

"The county commissioners are behind me," he boasts. "They'd better be, or the better element in Omaha will drive them out of office."

RELIEF OFFICIAL BACKED BY FASCIST SHEET
The tax payers and property owners' associations indeed support him. Magaret's best friend and loudest supporter is Charles B. Hudson, 48, editor of "America in Danger," a weekly mimeographed sheet, avowed fascist, anti-Semite, former company union organizer, defender of Charles Coughlin and the Christian Front, friend of Rev. Gerald Winrod, aide of General Mosely with whom Hudson appeared when the general testified before the Dies committee a few months ago.

"Hudson is doing a lot of good," says Magaret. "And he is getting more support from business men all the time."

With broad layers of the community aroused against Magaret and his fascist friend, feeling is today at white heat in Omaha. Each day more jobless come to join the picket line.

"The police department has offered to interfere," states Magaret, "but I've told them to wait awhile."

The great agitator is having a field day, and is driving Magaret crazy. His spies can't discover the agitator and yesterday Magaret denied the fellow even existed.

THE AGITATOR SPELLS HIS NAME OUT
But late in the afternoon the agitator phoned from the airport. According to a Federal Workers Section member who was with him, he told Magaret he was going to make a tour of the entire country. He said he was going to organize the unemployed everywhere. He said he would be back in Omaha to find out if Magaret were still holding down his job and the unemployed. He told Magaret he was taking a plane out of town. Before he left, he said, he would fly over the courthouse and spell his name in the sky in letters fifteen hundred feet across.

It was a wonderful publicity stunt. The Omaha radio station immediately picked it up. Everybody was out watching as a small plane shot above the city and began zooming over the courthouse, leaving a wake of writing-smoke behind it. Magaret was terribly excited, they say, and called frantically to the army post to send in an anti-aircraft gun and some pursuit planes and get the sky-writer.

But the agitator zoomed towards the East. Behind him six fading letters drifted from the picketline at the courthouse over the workers' section of Omaha. The people gasped when they slowly spelled out the letters. They read H U N G E R.

IF THE NUMBER ON YOUR WRAPPER IS NUMBER 8 YOUR SUBSCRIPTION EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE. RENEW YOUR SUB NOW!

ed bathtubs, twenty-five dollar plate dinners for monkeys rigged up in swallow-tailed coats, \$40,000 for a coming-out party for some bourgeois brat, thousands for sleek nags and sleeker stables—money to burn for pleasure-mad plutocrats.

What Could Be Done
Just suppose this \$183,000,000 were turned into wages and jobs for the auto workers:
Hours could be reduced to 30 hours a week;
75,000 new workers (one-third more) could be added to the payroll at \$1500 a year;
225,000 present employees would work thirty hours per week for the same wages they now receive for forty hours' work.

Is this "reform" necessary? Every General Motors worker will agree—it is more than necessary, it is imperative.

But is it possible? Here there will be hesitation and doubt. It seems a stupendous undertaking.

It Can Be Done!
Yes, but the unionization of General Motors seemed as big a job in its time until . . . Until the workers of Flint sat down in the plants, barricaded them against cops, vigilantes and tin-horn soldiers and swore to remain in the plants until the last stretcher carrying the body of the last man was carried out. Then even Frank Murphy became a "friend." He didn't send the National Guard in after the strikers only because Sloane, DuPont, Knudsen and Co. feared lest their precious machinery be scratched by indignant workers. General Motors went down on its knees. The plants were unionized.

That was three years ago! The spirit of '37 must return! The auto workers have bigger stakes to fight for in 1940. Timid officials will wall: "it is impossible." No! Everything is possible! The rank and file must organize for action—with determination, audacity and courage the gains of 1940 will make the triumph of 1937 pale into insignificance.

The Union's Responsibility
But it is the business of the auto workers. Underpaid auto workers mean suffering, semistarvation, insecurity, malnutrition for the children, unsanitary housing conditions. Unemployed auto workers mean a constant threat to the wage scale of the employed—a steady reserve army of potential scabs and fascists. It is the business of the auto workers. It is not a hopeless problem—something can and must be done about it!

The United Automobile Worker, from which most of the figures for this article are culled suggests that \$200 more be paid the employed auto workers annually "and still leave profits above \$150,000,000. This is a profit figure that only one or two corporations in the world, aside from GM, have ever been able to touch."

A very modest suggestion. Just contrast the fabulous profit of GM for 1939 with the miserable wages of its workers, and you begin to get an idea of how modest this suggestion is. Then contrast the present annual wage of the auto worker with the minimum set for security by the U.S. Department of Labor and the modesty of the CIO suggestion becomes appalling.

\$183,000,000 profit for General Motors coupon clippers for the year 1939! And how the parasites squander the millions made for them by the workers—gold-plat-

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