

The Compensation of the Four Leading Executives of General Motors Corporation for 1940 was

\$6,644,000

Nero Was a Piker . . . by Comparison



Carlo

Congressmen and Auto Workers or:

Pensions and Priorities

Congress gave American labor another taste of what is in store for it during the imperialist war.

While a bill to provide some sort of relief to the hundreds of thousands of auto workers thrown out of work by priorities unemployment was languishing in committee, the worthy representatives of the people got down to serious business . . . by voting themselves lifelong pensions!

These very same congressmen, who used to squeal like pricked pigs when they were asked to vote relief or WPA funds for the poor, had no hesitation in voting for these "liberal" pensions.

The \$10,000-a-year congressmen were providing for their future. But in the meantime, thousands of auto workers, unemployed through no fault of their own, were asking: **WHAT ABOUT OUR PRESENT?** How are we to live while the auto plants are being retooled?

But Congress gave no answer. It was too busy . . . voting itself a pension, no doubt as a mark of its esteem for itself.

Perhaps labor would do well to give Congress a token of its esteem—by driving these capitalist boondogglers out of Washington in the next election and sending instead some representatives from a genuine independent labor party.

P. S.—As we go to press, a great row is being raised because the workers at Ford's auto plant don't want to work together with a slimy company stooge, who openly boasts that he took part in the famous beating of CIO organizers Frankenstein and Reuther a few years ago.

We'd bet our last dollar that for the next few days Congress will be filled with speeches attacking the UAW workers for "holding up production"—while nothing is done to help the 200,000 jobless UAW members who are without work because of the greed of the bosses.

Congressional Sideshow Reveals Profit Grab-bag

By ALBERT GATES

The attempt of the Vinson Naval Affairs Committee to smear the labor movement and center public attention upon it, by appending to its report on profits accruing from Navy Department war contracts, the charge that the labor organizations were also profiteering through war

contracts, received an unexpected setback when it heard the testimony of J. E. Barnes, Washington lobbyist for the Todd Shipyards.

Barnes' testimony was extremely outspoken in revealing the "unconscionable profits" gained by his company. The important aspect of the whole affair is the manner in which the big business press concealed the details, for aside from a few, the large metropolitan papers remained discreetly silent about it all or referred to the remarks made by this lobbyist in the most general terms.

Aircraft Workers, Attention!

Do you remember the big row in the papers about a year ago when the workers of Vultee Aircraft went out on strike, demanding decent wages? How they were accused of being "traitors" and similar things?

Well, the Vultee Corp. has just given out the figures for its profits for the year of 1941. Vultee after allowing for all its taxes and deductions (which often hide profits) increased its profits about 800 per cent since 1940—from \$374,457 to \$3,100,735!

Immediately after the Vinson report was made known, the press, and the companies mentioned, objected to it on the ground that the report might tend to create false impressions as to the extent of profits made on naval contracts. They asked the committee to wait a longer period (no doubt, the end of the war) before determining how much profit would actually be realized. But the cat was already out of the bag.

Mr. Barnes took the stand for the purpose of "correcting a statement" contained in the Truman committee report on his company's profits. But his testimony revealed the following facts:

Todd Shipyards Corp. is capitalized at \$40,000,000. The company expected to do about (Continued on page 2)

How the Allies Helped to Arm Japan!

It is a notorious fact that Great Britain contributed largely to the successful re-arming of Hitler Germany, thus creating the Wehrmacht—the Imperial German Army which threatens to devour one of its creators. British bankers and British industrial concerns did not hesitate for a moment to aid and supply Hitler's needs when it was a matter of (1) making profits; (2) assisting him to smash the German labor movement.

Precisely the same story is true of American trade and commercial relations between Japan and the United States, with this exception—namely, IT IS EVEN MORE FLAGRANTLY TRUE! Without American aid Japanese imperialism could not have launched or driven home its adventurous drives into Manchuria, China, French Indo-China and the South Seas. The planes, the bombs, the tanks, the explosives, the bullets that are today blacking out the lives of American workers and soldiers had their origin in the stock piles of the Allied imperialist camp. The American munitions manufacturers and the "merchants of death" culled vast profits out of the sales of metals and ores that are flung back in our faces out of cannon and rifle muzzles.

Here are the facts. All statistics are based on official United States Department of Commerce statistics.

WHAT JAPAN'S WAR MACHINE NEEDS:

RAW MATERIALS—Raw cotton for textile mills and gun cotton; wood pulp for its rayon plants; wool for the woolen mills; rubber for planes, trucks, etc.; quinine for the army; copra, hemp, fibres, etc.

METALS AND ORES—Scrap and pig iron; iron ore; copper and lead; aluminum and nickel; petroleum and its products (gasoline, airplane gasoline, etc.); tin and coal; tungsten and manganese; gold, silver, etc.

MANUFACTURED GOODS—Machine tools; special steels; industrial and explosive chemicals; automotive and aircraft parts and products; iron and steel semi-finished products; completed machinery; ball bearings, etc.

HOW JAPAN IMPORTED THESE NEEDS:

RAW MATERIALS—METALS AND ORES—MANUFACTURED GOODS.

- (1) From Japan's colonies (Manchuria, Kwantung, China) there came: 23.4 per cent in 1939, 22.8 per cent in 1940.
- (2) From the Allies (United States, British Empire, Dutch East Indies, Philippine Islands, Latin America) there came: 75.5 per cent in 1939, 76.2 per cent in 1940.
- (3) From the United States ALONE there came 34.3 per cent in 1939; the percentage for 1940 is not available.
- (4) Specific breakdowns:
 - (a) Britain and America supplied 70 per cent of raw cotton.
 - (b) British Empire supplied 80 per cent of wool imports.
 - (c) Britain and America supplied 98 per cent of Japan's scrap iron, copper, lead, aluminum.
 - (d) America and the Dutch East Indies supplied ALL of Japan's petroleum and oil imports.
 - (e) Britain and America supplied 75 per cent of machine tools.
 - (f) Britain and America supplied 80 per cent of automotive and aircraft products.
 - (g) Britain and America supplied over 50 per cent of iron and steel semi-manufactures.
 - (h) British colonies supplied 75 per cent of ores, tin and pig iron.
 - (i) Malaya and Dutch East Indies supplied all crude rubber needs.

JAPAN'S BEST CUSTOMERS:

- EXPORTS**—Wheat flour, lumber, cotton textiles, silk, canned fish, tea, consumers' good and sundries.
- (1) To Japan's colonies (Manchuria, Kwantung, China) there went: 48.8 per cent in 1939, 53.2 per cent in 1940.
 - (2) To the Allies there went: 50.4 per cent in 1939, 45.8 per cent in 1940.

- (3) To the United States ALONE there went: 18 per cent in 1939; percentage for 1940 not available.
- (a) The United States took 86.3 per cent of Japan's silk, "thus producing the largest part of the foreign exchange required to pay for Japan's imports." (Department of Commerce Bulletin.)
- (b) The Dutch East Indies and the British Empire took the "heaviest volume" of Japanese cotton textiles and manufactured goods.

NOTE: It should be understood that Japan's economy depends largely upon its ability to EXPORT and receive foreign currency with which to purchase the imports needed for its imperialist war machine.

AMERICA AND JAPAN:

- (1) America has supplied Japan with approximately 34 per cent of its total imports.
- (2) America has purchased 16 to 20 per cent of Japan's exports annually.
- (3) Exports to Japan—(round figures):

	1939	1940
Cotton	\$12,000,000	\$30,000,000
Wood pulp	2,000,000	7,000,000
Oil products	45,000,000	55,000,000
Iron and steel	43,000,000	38,000,000
Scrap metal	33,000,000	17,000,000
Copper	28,000,000	25,000,000
Machinery	25,000,000	23,000,000
Automobiles, etc.	6,000,000	2,000,000
Totals	\$232,000,000	\$227,000,000

This is the story of the arming and supplying of Japanese militarism by its rivals.

LABOR ACTION

FEBRUARY 16, 1942

A PAPER IN THE INTERESTS OF LABOR

ONE CENT

GOVERNMENT SEEKS CEILING ON WAGES

By JACK WILSON

The Roosevelt Administration joined hands this week with the powerful corporations to prevent the CIO from obtaining a nation-wide demand for a dollar-a-day wage increase to meet the mounting cost of living.

Leon Henderson, Roosevelt's price administrator, sent a letter to the War Labor Board, which has before it two crucial CIO test cases, and urged the board not to grant any substantial wage increases.

Last Friday at the White House, President Roosevelt had read the same letter to the six-man CIO-AFL board which had its first meeting with him, according to the New York Times.

Significantly, neither Phillip Murray nor William Green told their union ranks after the meeting with Roosevelt that he had put pressure on them against getting wage increases.

The CIO has before the War Labor Board the cases involving the Little Steel companies and their 155,000 employees. The SWOC, as part of the CIO, has demanded one dollar a day wage increases and the union shop from these companies.

Apparently knowing that the Roosevelt administration would assist them to beat down labor, the steel companies refused to grant any important concessions, and now the case is before the War Labor Board.

Since the War Labor Board itself is packed with friends of business, they hardly need any encouragement to turn down pleas of the CIO for wage increases and union security.

FDR's Encouragement

However, the open assistance of Roosevelt and Henderson will give them further courage to prevent labor from getting enough wages to begin to meet the rising cost of living.

The fact that the CIO auto union also is demanding one dollar a day and the union shop, and that the CIO aluminum workers have presented a similar set of demands to their bosses, makes the steel union demands before the War Labor Board decisive, since the verdict of the board in the steel situation will be the precedent for the other union negotiations.

The wages of nearly 1,000,000 CIO men from coast to coast are directly involved in the demands before the War Labor Board, and the action of the President and Henderson therefore is a serious frontal attack at the CIO standards.

The mood of the ranks of the CIO, under the pressure of the rising cost of living, and the terrible toll that priorities unemployment is taking, were indicated over the week-end in

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Why Thousands Died in Greece!

Thousands of soldiers died on the Greek battlefields—Australian, Canadian, British and Greek soldiers. They were told they were fighting "for poor, heroic Greek democracy." And in America the professional patrioters, "liberals" and "democrats" also wept for Greek "democracy."

On Sunday, February 8, the New York Times published an article by its Near Eastern correspondent, A. C. Sedgwick, which proved in detail what LABOR ACTION had always claimed:

- 1) "Poor, heroic" Greece was ruled by a brutal fascist dictatorship.
 - 2) This dictatorship fought for its self-preservation, and not for democracy.
 - 3) All the talk about "democracy" in Greece was just so much deliberate lying on the part of the imperialist propagandists.
- We reprint below the main sections of the article. It speaks for itself.

King George II has decided to bring to an end the Greek dictatorship. His action is greeted with marked satisfaction by representative Greek communities.

Observers in Greece in recent years could hardly have failed to note that at least 80 per cent of the Greek people

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Real Estate Gougers Jack Up Rents as High as 90%

Disclosures of how gouging real estate corporations and landlords were using the war program as the occasion to jack up rents, in some instances as much as 90 per cent, were made last week in a survey published by the WPA research department.

Of 115 areas investigated, rents "increased substantially" in 114. Only one city, sleepy Boise, Idaho, showed no rent increase.

Most of the cities surveyed, in which rent increases took place, were important war production centers, such as Wilmington, N. C., ship-building town, where rents have increased 19 per cent, or Burlington, Iowa, location of a huge munitions plant, where rents skyrocketed 27 per cent since March, 1940.

Other instances given by the survey were Leesville, La., where rents jumped 94.9 per cent and Ravenna, Ohio, arsenal center, where rents are 14 per cent higher than in 1940. (In its December 15 issue, LABOR ACTION carried an exclusive dispatch describing the Ravenna situation in detail.)

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Missouri Negroes in Defense Against Terror

Sikeston Lynching Came After Attacks on CIO Organizers

By ROY GOULD

ST. LOUIS—It's a long time since the Negro community has been so stirred as it is today. The Sikeston lynching hits near home. It is such a shocking contrast to the false sentiments of democracy being voiced on all sides that anyone can see the fakery. The murder of Cleo Wright brings out into the open the injustices felt by every American Negro. It strips Jim Crow naked so that everyone can see how awful Jim Crow is.

The Negroes of southeast Missouri are aroused. Here in St. Louis we hear that they are taking concrete steps to defend themselves. We hear that there has just been another murder down there—but that is not unusual for southeast Missouri. It did not even make the newspapers. We hear too that after the lynching a Sikeston Negro preacher helped to organize the Negroes of Sunset Village for their own defense. They set up five armed watches, day and night, over the approaches to the village. They know that they must

defend themselves with their own strength. The preacher has taken leave from his pulpit and is giving full time to organizing the Negro resistance.

"It is a strange thing for a preacher of the gospel to do," said this other-worldly minister, caught up in the swirl of history here below, "but sometimes you have to fight."

We also hear something else very significant: During the two weeks before the lynching two CIO organizers were run out of Sikeston for trying to organize white and colored workers at the shoe factories. It is no mere coincidence that the lynching followed close on the heels of this violence against organized labor. The same bosses who had Cleo Wright lynched preceded this action by using similar tactics against the white CIO organizers of the district.

Terror Deliberately Planned

We hear all these things from southeast Missouri and we are perturbed, because we know that the dayhands and sharecroppers down

there, black and white, were finding their way together on a class basis into an agricultural workers union—that way they were preparing to fight their common enemy, "Ole Boss," the landlord. And we fear that this economic movement is being diverted into a race struggle instead of a labor struggle, such as it really is and must be.

We believe that this lynching and terror were deliberately planned to confuse the real issues and divide the workers and turn their fight into a reactionary race war instead of a progressive labor struggle.

Yet the white landlords may be fooling themselves. Southeast Missouri is not the "Old South" and the "Roadside Niggers" are not the same cowed Negroes of the South. This lynching may backfire yet. For Cleo Wright—whatever he may have been—was from a race of free men, freed of their mental chains by the great roadside demonstration of 1939. You can't lynch one of them like you used to lynch the poor Negroes in the

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