

S T O P

**WAGE-CUTS
& LAYOFFS
ON THE
RAILROADS**

a Reply

**TO PRESIDENT T. C. CASHEN
OF THE SWITCHMEN'S UNION OF NORTH AMERICA**

By

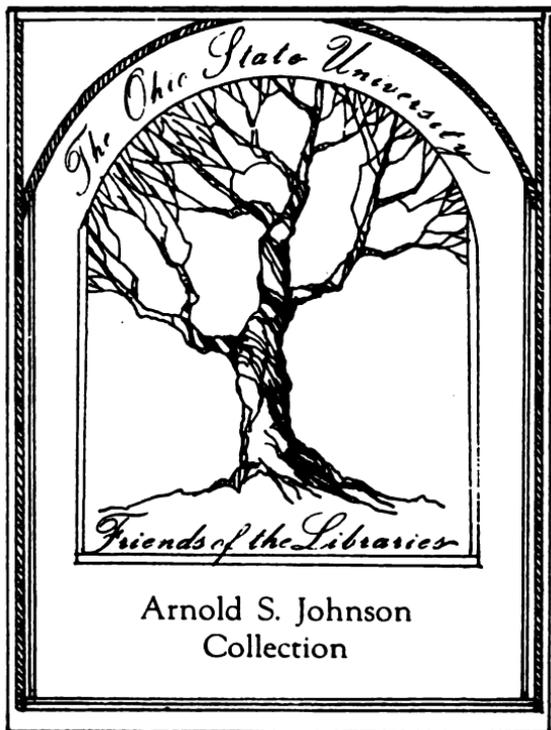
WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

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STOP WAGE-CUTS AND LAYOFFS ON THE RAILROADS

A Reply to President T. C. Cashen of the
Switchmen's Union of North America

BY WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

IN THE March number of the *Switchmen's Journal*, President T. C. Cashen of the Switchmen's Union of North America publishes a long blast against me and my recent pamphlet, *Railroad Workers Forward!** His article has been copied far and wide in the railroad labor press.

Now what is the meaning of this article—which is a collection of misrepresentations, slanders and downright lies? Experience teaches us the answer. When reactionaries want to defeat a progressive movement they always come out with a Red-baiting campaign. By this means they seek to confuse the workers and to break down their solidarity. It's a little trick they have learned from Hitler and Mussolini, who, under cover of an attack upon the Reds, have destroyed everything progressive in Germany, Italy and Austria.

On many occasions we have seen American reactionaries use this fascist method. Thus in the 1936 Presidential elec-

* *Railroad Workers Forward!* Workers Library Publishers, New York. 10 cents.

tions they denounced President Roosevelt as a Communist; in the 1937 New York elections they condemned LaGuardia as a "Red," and all the reactionary forces in the country (with Cashen's support) are at present fighting John L. Lewis, head of the C.I.O., which organized 3,000,000 workers, as a "Bolshevik." Now the same Red-baiting tactics, of which Cashen's article against my pamphlet is an outstanding example, are being used in the railroad industry.

The reasons for this are obvious. To begin with the rank and file of the railroad unions, disgusted with the bad conditions on the railroads, that have resulted from stand-pat union leadership, are beginning to demand a new deal in their organizations. This is to be seen in many unions and on many railroad systems. The members are insisting that the railroad unions and their policies be modernized and made effective. The companies and their close friend labor leaders, the Cashens, Jewells, Whartons, Harrisons, etc., are much alarmed at all this. So they turn to the favorite trick of the reactionary, Red-baiting, in an effort to confuse and break up the developing progressive spirit among the railroad workers.

An immediate and sinister reason for this fresh outburst of Red-baiting on the railroads is the demand of the companies for a general wage-cut. Already their spokesmen are shouting in the press that the railroad workers' wages must come down. There is grave danger the union heads will not fight against this. Did we not see in 1932 how the railroad union leadership, without any struggle, accepted a general wage-cut that finally cost the railroad workers \$450,000,000, and then these same leaders boasted that it was the greatest victory in the history of the American labor movement? Such Red-baiting attacks as Cashen's fit right in with the present plans of the railroad owners for wage-cuts and mass lay-offs through consolidations. They have the effect of

breaking the resistance of the workers and thus opening the way for a general reduction in railroad wages and working forces.

But the Red-baiters are not having things as easy as they once did. The workers see more and more clearly that every reactionary, whether it is a Hitler, or an American openshopper, or a Cashen, has Red-baiting as his main stock in trade, and hence the workers are not now so easily fooled. Thus, in the above-cited cases of Roosevelt, LaGuardia and Lewis, the masses saw through the wiles of the Red-baiters and defeated them. And so it will be on the railroads; the Red-baiting of Cashen will be a dud.

President Cashen, in the manner of conservatives generally, does not discuss the issues raised in my pamphlet, *Railroad Workers Forward!* He does not dare to consider them on their merits. Instead, he indulges in a general smear of denunciation, hoping thereby that the real issues will be beclouded and thus lost sight of by the workers. Let me, however, nail him down to a few facts.

Amend the Railway Labor Act

President Cashen states that I propose to destroy the Railway Labor Act. This is a deliberate lie. What I urged in my pamphlet was that: "This law should be changed to strike out all its semi-compulsory arbitration features." That is, the right to strike should be restored to the railroad unions.

As it is now, the Railway Labor Act, with its interminable delays and virtually compulsory arbitration, deeply cuts into the unions' strike right. When the railroad unions take a strike vote now nobody considers it seriously: not the government, not the companies, not the workers, and least of all the union officials. Everybody knows that the dispute,

if it is a serious one, will be finally shunted off for settlement to some more or less hostile committee.

This undermining of their strike right constitutes a serious weakening of the railroad unions. Every labor organization must jealously guard its right to strike, while at the same time, as I say in my pamphlet, it must "use the strike right judiciously and intelligently." No sincere person wants a reckless strike policy. But the historical case of the passage of the Adamson Eight-Hour Law in 1916 by a threat of the Big Four Brotherhoods to strike was a brilliant demonstration of the importance of unions maintaining their strike right. When unions are restricted in their right to strike, as under the Railway Labor Act, a large part of their bargaining power is lost. President Cashen and similar conservative union officials have surrendered this basic right.

The union-crippling character of the Railway Labor Act is emphasized by the fact that at present the marine unions, with the support of Secretary of Labor Perkins, are militantly fighting against the employers' attempts to introduce its anti-strike principles into the shipping industry. President J. Curran of the National Maritime Union says: "One of the provisions in the proposed legislation is to create machinery, similar to the Railway Mediation Board, for the shipping industry . . . it would limit the union's right to strike in its own defense." In connection with the employers' attempt to force the Railway Labor Act system upon the marine workers, Miss Perkins said: "I am also constrained to question the wisdom of establishing a fixed arbitral procedure looking forward to awards having the effect of law."

President Cashen insultingly states that the railroad companies would pay handsomely for my proposals regarding the Railway Labor Act. But such libels require little answer. If the companies are paying out money or favors, it certainly is not to people who are defending the full right of the work-

ers to strike, but to those who, whether by means of the Railway Labor Act or otherwise, are restricting that right.

The Railway Labor Executives' Association or a General Railroad Federation?

Cashen further wrongfully declares in his article that I propose to destroy the Railway Labor Executives' Association, and that any man who can accomplish that "can name his own price for the deed and it will be paid without a murmur" by the "hard-boiled" railroad companies.

This is libelous slander and a deliberate misrepresentation. What I proposed was that the twenty-one standard railroad labor organizations should be linked together into a powerful, all-embracing railroad union federation. Every railroad worker knows that under the present union set-up the unions lose enormously in power by being separate and divided. And for years the railroad companies and their good friends, such labor leaders as Cashen, have sought to perpetuate this division by fighting against every movement for federation and amalgamation.

The Railroad Labor Executives' Association does not correct this division in the railroaders' ranks. It is only a loose grouping of quarreling, jealous top officials; not a solid, well-knit organization, such as is imperatively needed. Did we not see in the recent wage demands that the operating and non-operating unions under the R.L.E.A. conducted separate negotiations, thereby weakening the power of the workers generally, with one group of unions compromising the others' demands? And if it had come to a strike there would have again been the shameful spectacle of 1922, with several unions striking while the rest of them stayed at work. The only cure for this stupid craft division is to link all the twenty-one standard unions together into a powerful fed-

eration that would stand as one unit and fight for one general national railroad agreement.

Such a broad, democratically organized federation of all railroad unions, besides being more powerful, would also be far more representative and protective of the workers' interests than the handful of high-paid top union officials who comprise the R.L.E.A. With such a federation in existence we would not be confronted with the charges, unfortunately true, of President Whitney of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, to the effect that the R.L.E.A. "circumscribes its activities by carrier limitations."

The foregoing is what I proposed regarding the R.L.E.A.; the joining of all the railroad unions into one powerful federation. And, furthermore, the overwhelming mass of railroad workers would agree with me if they could vote upon the matter. Yes, even the majority of Cashen's own union. That is why Cashen does not dare to meet the issue fairly and squarely, by stating honestly my proposal of an all-inclusive railroad federation. His recourse is that of the reactionary: lies, slanders and Red-baiting, in the hope that thereby the true issues will be kept hidden from the rank and file of the railroad unions.

Unemployment and the Six-Hour Day

A real tragedy to railroad workers is the criminal indifference with which the conservative railroad union leaders of the caliber of President Cashen have mishandled the question of unemployment. Although leading powerful unions, they sat around for years, doing nothing, while the railroad companies drove over 1,000,000 workers out of the industry into the ranks of the poverty-stricken unemployed, thus reducing the total number of railroad workers from over 2,000,000 in 1920 to less than 1,000,000 in 1938.

The conservative leaders did not even fight for relief for these workers during the crisis, as up until only two or three years ago Mr. Cashen and other "grand chiefs" were running all over the country telling the workers (while employers enthusiastically applauded them) that unemployment insurance was an insult to the workers and would destroy the trade union movement.

It was only after 1,000,000 workers had been displaced from the industry that these officials came forward with their so-called "dismissal wage" agreement. Far from being a protection to the workers, this agreement, by peddling away for a pittance the workers' right to work, is a direct encouragement to the companies to make still further layoffs through consolidations, etc. It eases the workers out of the industry and cheaply relieves the companies of all responsibility for them. Everybody knows that such displaced workers cannot find work in other, also overcrowded, industries, but Mr. Cashen, safe with his big salary, is not worried over their unhappy fate. After foisting this miserable agreement upon the workers, he and his well-paid friends have the brass to call it a great victory (even as they did the 1932 wage cut) and to denounce me for criticizing it.

The progressive railroad workers want a stop put to the policy of driving workers out of the railroad industry and into destitution—a policy initiated by the companies and condoned by such reactionary union leaders as Cashen, Phillips, Jewell, Wharton, etc. The workers are bitterly opposed to any consolidations or coordinations that will further reduce the number of railroad jobs, whether these reductions in forces are sugar-coated with "dismissal wages" or not. This reduction of forces issue is all the more urgent in view of the plan now before Congress to consolidate all the railroads of the United States into seven great systems. The workers also want adequate relief and unemployment

insurance for those railroaders who have already lost their jobs, as well as substantial pensions for old workers.

But the workers need and demand still more. They **demand** that the displaced workers be put back to work again. And a long step in this direction will be the establishment of the six-hour day on the railroads. Cashen and other reactionary leaders, always careful not to offend the railroad corporations, have been sabotaging for years this basic railroad demand, while giving it lip service. Compare their long dilly-dallying around on this question with the militant and successful stand of the Big Four Brotherhoods for the Adamson eight-hour law in 1916.

The above is what I had to say in my pamphlet about the dismissal wage agreement and unemployment, Mr. Cashen. And at least 90 per cent of the workers in the railroad industry will agree with every word I wrote. But you, like all reactionaries, do not dare to meet honestly my real proposition. Your way is to twist and belie it and to try to kill this progressive program with a campaign of Red-baiting which serves only the interests of the railroad companies.

Amalgamation of Closely Related Crafts

One issue raised in my pamphlet, *Railroad Workers Forward!* that President Cashen is also very careful to misrepresent is that of amalgamation. Every posted railroad worker realizes that there is an urgent and immediate need for consolidating such closely related crafts as the Engineers and the Firemen into one union, and also the Conductors, Trainmen and Switchmen into another. Their constant quarrels and conflicts are a source of weakness to railroad workers generally, and their amalgamation would be a big step forward.

Time and again in the past thirty years the membership

of these unions have voted for amalgamation. But a number of their officials have been instrumental in keeping them apart. Especially has Mr. Cashen been a reactionary influence in this respect. While pretending to favor amalgamation, he has always knifed it in the back. The reason for this is twofold. First, the railroad companies, to whose wishes President Cashen is always very responsive, want these workers kept divided in order to defeat them all; and second, Cashen and a handful of other conservative union officials are afraid they will lose their jobs if these unions are amalgamated. So these closely related crafts are kept bickering and apart from each other, to the benefit of the companies and the detriment of the workers. And Cashen tries to dispose of the whole matter by a blast of Red-baiting against me.

The Negro and the Railroad Unions

Another issue I dealt with in my pamphlet, *Railroad Workers Forward!* is the shameful practice on the railroads of barring Negroes from trade union membership. This means that they are not given the protection of the unions. They work for the lowest wages and at the worst jobs; their seniority rights are ignored; they are denied the right of promotion; they are the first fired and the last hired when jobs are scarce. And in many instances, as in the running crafts in the North, they are barred from work altogether.

This is a scandalous situation. It is a policy of treating the Negroes as inferior human beings. It is a grievous injury to the Negro people and also a harm to the white railroad workers. It is, furthermore, a violation of the National Labor Relations Act and the Railroad Labor Act, which guarantee to all workers, including Negroes, the right of collective bargaining, which includes the right of union

membership. President Cashen is very careful not to mention this disgraceful practice. This is because his union bears the disgrace of having a Jim-Crow "male, white person" clause in its constitution barring Negroes from membership. The basic principle of trade unionism is to admit all workers, regardless of race, color, creed, sex or nationality. The shameful system of discriminating against Negroes violates this union fundamental, as well as the principles of American democracy generally. It is contrary to the provisions of the Constitution of the United States of America. It is a company-inspired policy, a stench in the nostrils of every progressive unionist and it must be abolished. The Negro railroad workers must be granted the right of union membership and full union protection; and they will be, despite Mr. Cashen and other reactionary leaders.

Government Ownership of the Railroads

Another proposal in my pamphlet is government ownership of the railroads. This is becoming an increasingly burning issue. In my booklet I outline the basic conditions upon which such government ownership can be brought about on terms most advantageous to the workers, as follows:

" . . . revaluation of the railroads and the squeezing out of their watered stock and bond values, reduction of bond interest and stock dividend rates, reduction in the excessive salaries of top railroad executives, protection against loss of jobs through railroad consolidation, and thoroughgoing guarantees of adequate wages, six-hour day, right of trade union organization and participation in the management of the industry for the workers."

Now, I dare say, the overwhelming majority of railroad workers will agree with these proposals. But not Mr. Cashen. He is too solicitous of the companies' interests for that. The companies oppose such a plan of government ownership,

and so, consequently, does Mr. Cashen and other reactionary union leaders, who have their ears so attuned to the sentiments of the railroad executives. It is true that, when pressed, President Cashen will say he supports government railroad ownership; but this is mere lip service, just as in the case of the six-hour day. The true attitude of such conservatives is seen in their traditional many years' fight against nationalization of the railroads, their betrayal and discarding of the Plumb Plan, and their present-day sabotage of the government ownership movement.

I also pointed out in my pamphlet that the final solution of the railroaders' problem, as well as that of the workers, farmers and middle class elements generally, could only come through the establishment of socialism, as the Communist Party advocates. The basic meaning of the many wars, industrial crises, revolutions and counter-revolutions which we see on all sides is that the capitalist system itself is decaying, and is in the process of being supplanted by a new and higher system of society, socialism. But, of course, Mr. Cashen, who is totally innocent of any basic economic or political understanding, would not know anything about that. All he can do is to denounce socialism, without in the least understanding it.

Trade Union Democracy

Still another issue raised in my much-attacked pamphlet, *Railroad Workers Forward!* is that of the re-establishment of trade union democracy in the railroad labor organizations.

Every railroad worker knows that democracy in the railroad unions is now at a very low ebb. With few exceptions, the ruling officialdom, using every bureaucratic trick, is self-perpetuating. They go on in office endlessly like Tennyson's brook, until they either fall over from old age or quarrel among themselves and thus oust each other. It takes almost

a rank-and-file earthquake to dethrone any of them. These petty autocrats censor from the union journals all criticism or views that do not agree with their own. They sign agreements without even consulting the rank and file (as in the last wage settlement). They load up the union conventions with paid officials whose jobs are dependent upon their good will, and those workers who object to such practices are often expelled from the unions and sometimes even fired from the industry. In short, the conservative leaders run the railroad unions with the companies' blessings and do pretty much as they please, defeating rank-and-file wishes by a hundred devices.

All this, of course, is highly detrimental to the unions and the interests of the railroad workers. Democracy is a good thing, not only in political life, but especially in the trade unions. The railroad unions are stifled by the conservative, dictatorial bureaucrats, of whom Cashen is a classical example. The unions must be democratized, a free press instituted, representative conventions established, fresh blood brought into the leadership and the rank and file given a decisive voice in the formulation of demands and the signing of agreements. Such democratization will give the unions new life, greater vigor and a more progressive spirit. With these sound proposals, I make bold to say, the vast majority of railroad workers are in agreement, although the bureaucratic Mr. Cashen considers them stark Bolshevism.

Trade Union Unity

The present split between the A. F. of L. and C. I.O. is a tragedy for the workers and only the bosses profit from it. For this split the A. F. of L. Executive Council, of which Mr. Cashen, Mr. Wharton, Mr. Harrison, etc., are stout supporters, is fully responsible. For many years the A. F.

of L., with its antiquated system of craft unionism, failed totally to organize the steel, auto, rubber and other mass production industries. And when a group of A. F. of L. unions, under the leadership of John L. Lewis, formed a committee (the C.I.O.) to undertake this work on an industrial basis, as they were fully entitled to do under the A. F. of L. Constitution, the A. F. of L. leaders, with Mr. Cashen's assistance, arbitrarily proceeded to expel them (1,000,000 members) and thus to split the labor movement. The A. F. of L. top officials also opposed by every means possible the organizing campaigns of the C.I.O. Notwithstanding all this disruptive work, however, the C.I.O. is succeeding in its task; the steel, auto, rubber, electrical manufacturing and other mass production industries being either fully or partly organized.

Now there is the greatest urgency to unite the A. F. of L. and C.I.O. This would make a solid labor movement of some 7,000,000 members and its power would be enormous. John L. Lewis proposed a sensible plan for labor unity through the C.I.O. unions affiliating in a bloc to the A. F. of L. and then adjusting all jurisdictional questions afterward. But the A. F. of L. Executive Council bitterly opposes this sane and proper proposal. Assisted by Cashen, Wharton, etc., the Executive Council wants to split up the new industrial unions, 4,000,000 strong, into craft unions. This criminally stupid policy would surely destroy these unions and would again surrender the mass production industries back to the open shop, where they were when the C.I.O. began its work.

One of the principal reasons why Mr. Cashen makes such a bitter attack on my pamphlet, *Railroad Workers Forward!* is because it exposes this disruptive policy of the Executive Council and supports the Lewis plan of trade union unity. The pamphlet stands for a great united labor movement, to

include the A. F. of L., C.I.O. and Railroad Brotherhoods. And this is something, I am sure, the great mass of railroad workers want, despite the Red-baiting ravings of Mr. Cashen.

United Political Action

Still another reason why Mr. Cashen and other reactionary railroad union leaders are assailing my pamphlet is because it urges upon the workers a program of united political action. The workers, farmers, professionals and little business people constitute the overwhelming majority of the American people. They have basic interests in common and they should solidly organize their forces politically against their joint enemy, big business. The need for such organization is acute if the toilers are to be able to repel the offensive of reactionary big business in this country, to restrain the fascist war-makers on a world scale, and to preserve and develop the democratic rights and living standards of the American people.

The way to bring about this united political action is by consolidating the progressive forces in the Democratic and Republican Parties and by linking them up with the trade unions and such organizations as the American Labor Party, Labor's Non-Partisan League, etc., into one broad democratic front of workers, farmers, professionals, etc. This wide movement of the toiling masses, embracing a great majority of all voters and possessed of tremendous political potentialities, would gradually develop in the direction of a great Farmer-Labor Party, an American People's Front.

This is the policy of the Communist Party and I advocate it in my pamphlet. But Mr. Cashen does not like it, nor does his railway owner friends. For years the conservative union leaders have been peddling the votes of the workers back and forth between the two big capitalist parties to their own

profit and to the workers' undoing, and they wish to continue this practice. But the workers do not want this policy; they demand real political organization that will defend their interests.

Seventeen years ago the railroad workers took the lead politically along these general lines by building up the great Conference for Progressive Political Action. This promising movement was broken up by reactionaries of the type of Cashen. But the time is ripe for its rebirth on the new and higher plane of a broad democratic front of all toiling masses. The vitally important 1938 elections will witness important developments in this respect, and all the Red-baiting of Mr. Cashen and his fellow reactionaries will not be able to prevent it. Already, symptoms of the new progressive spirit among railroad workers can be seen in the many local legislative conferences held in important railroad centers.

Some Lies Nailed

President Cashen, like reactionaries generally, instead of discussing issues on their merits, descends to Red-baiting and personal slander to accomplish his aims. In the foregoing I have explained the true meaning of his attack on my pamphlet and the nature of the proposals he is seeking to defeat by such devious methods. Now it remains for me to reply to at least some of the more important of the many personal slanders and misrepresentations with which his article is literally crammed. Many of his falsifications, however, do not merit reply, such as his fantastic assertion that I began to write my book about the 1919 steel strike before the strike actually took place.

Lie Number One: Cashen says: "William Z. Foster cannot point to a single instance where wage-earners have benefited from following his advice or leadership," and then

he violently assails my part in the great packing-house and steel organizing campaigns and strikes of 1917-19.

The truth is that I was the initiator and national secretary of the big A. F. of L. federated campaign that organized the national meat-packing industry in 1917, the first mass production industry ever unionized in this country. This movement resulted in the recognition of the federated union, the establishment of the eight-hour day, big wage increases, and a general betterment of conditions nationally throughout this sweated industry. When I left the packing industry in the middle of 1918 to take up my duties in the steel organizing campaign, the meat-packing unions, 200,000 strong, were practically 100 per cent organized all over the country.

On the basis of the great success of the organizing work in the packing industry, I was elected national secretary of the big campaign of the twenty-three A. F. of L. unions to organize the steel industry in 1918-19. This campaign, despite the most serious official sabotage, organized 250,000 steel workers and it forced four 2½ cents per hour wage increases, the establishment of the basic eight-hour day and the smashing of the twelve-hour day and seven-day week. It also showed that the great steel industry could be organized in spite of all terror, spy systems, company unions, etc. The 1919 campaign was the forerunner and trail blazer of the successful C.I.O. 1937 campaign. And we would have won the great strike of 365,000 workers had the A. F. of L. and railroad unions given this crucial struggle even a minimum of support.

Lie Number Two: Cashen, with a complete distortion of the facts, proceeds at length to condemn the holding of the convention of the Communist Party at Bridgeman, Michigan, in 1922, where a number of Communist delegates were arrested and charged with violation of the state's criminal syndicalism law. Then Cashen says, in italics, in order to

cast a slimy insinuation against me: "*It is significant that Foster, one of the promoters of the mutiny, was never brought to trial.*"

This is a deliberate falsehood. The fact is I was the first of the many defendants to be tried, with Frank P. Walsh as my attorney. The trial at St. Joseph, lasting over a week and resulting in a hung jury, attracted national attention. Eventually, with the help of many trade unions and other progressive organizations, the Communist Party won all these cases, forcing the reactionary Republican state authorities to abandon their persecution altogether. President Cashen's studied misrepresentation of this situation is characteristic of the tone and contents of his whole article.

Lie Number Three: When Cashen says I failed to protect the steel organizing committee in 1919 against a man whom he knew to be a spy, he just adds one more lie to the many others in his article. I presume he refers to one Beatty, representative of the Stationary Firemen on our national committee. I suspected this man and asked his international union to withdraw him as their delegate, but this they refused to do. So, on my own responsibility, I cut Beatty off the mailing list for the committee's minutes, used every means to prevent his getting information, and never notified him of the holding of our meetings. Several years later he was exposed as a spy. As for Cashen, he never opened his mouth then about the matter, evidently being quite accustomed to work peacefully with racketeers and other corrupt elements in A. F. of L. official circles. And even now Cashen in his article does not venture to mention the name of the spy in question.

Lie Number Four: One would think that President Cashen would be ashamed to mention the 1922 national shopmen's strike, considering the strike-breaking role he played in that crucial struggle. But as the old saying is, where

angels fear, fools dare to tread. So he has the foolhardiness and dishonesty to attack me about my part in the strike, alleging that the Communists were trying to "create suspicion, discord and division, and frequently outright desertion in the ranks of the strikers."

Now let us look at the facts. What did Mr. Cashen do in that strike and also what were our activities? Let's see who was trying to weaken the strike and who sought to strengthen it.

Every old-time railroad worker knows that in the great 1922 strike the thing that defeated the shopmen was that the engine, train and yard service unions stayed at work. The sentiment of the men in these unions was overwhelmingly in favor of a strike. Had everybody walked out the strike would have been victorious in a few days. But the Cashens and the Lees and the other reactionary leaders of the Brotherhoods fought against this tooth and nail. And these railroad unions' "chiefs," with the active assistance of the railroad companies, the capitalist press and the reactionary Coolidge government, managed to force their men to stay at work. In consequence, the shopmen lost their strike and the railroad workers in every craft suffered a major defeat. It was the worst case of union strike-breaking in American labor history.

That was the strike-breaking role of Cashen and Co. in 1922. Now what was the Communist policy in this great strike? We were for a united stand by all railroad workers. It was the only policy by which the great strike could be won. Among others, I traveled all over the country, urging the shopmen to stand firm and calling upon the S.U.N.A. and the Brotherhoods to join the strike. For this activity I was arrested in Denver, held incommunicado by the state police, illegally transported by them across the Wyoming border, and finally dumped out on the road near the Ne-

braska line. This kidnaping caused such an outcry among labor and progressive circles that it became a central issue in the ensuing Colorado fall elections. Sweet, who defended me against the Union Pacific gunmen, was elected Governor of Colorado and he abolished the state police for as long as he was in office.

At the time of the 1922 strike I did not hear of Mr. Cashen being arrested or kidnaped by railroad company thugs. On the contrary, Cashen, Bill Lee, Grable and the other conservative railroad union leaders were the darlings of the railroad companies and the objects of their unstinted praise as sane and sensible labor leaders. And well they deserved such company praise, because they broke the shopmen's strike. No, Mr. Cashen, I would not advise you to say much about the 1922 strike.

The Communists and the Railroad Union Leaders

My pamphlet, *Railroad Workers Forward!* contains a number of criticisms of the present policies of the union leaders. This is because these policies do not correspond to the interests of the railroad workers. Such criticism is proper and necessary. But the Communists do not limit themselves merely to criticism. We also come forward with programs that fit the workers' needs, as I have done in these pages. We also support every step in defense of the workers, regardless of who initiates it. Thus we are wholeheartedly backing the organizing campaigns of the standard railroad unions on the railroads and of the C.I.O. in the mass production industries; we give our active assistance to every A. F. of L. and C.I.O. strike; we seek to elect every genuine progressive irrespective of what ticket he may be on; we fight for every piece of legislation favorable to the toilers and as part of it the full legislative program of the standard

railroad unions, including the Crosser Six-Hour-Day Bill, the Griswold-Brown Train Limit Bill, the Griswold Full-Crew Bill, the Lonergan Safety Device Bill and the Mapes Track and Bridge Inspection Bill. We also support the conservative railroad union leaders in policies that benefit the workers, when these leaders make a real fight for them. But we must and do criticize them when their policies are wrong, or when they sabotage sound policies.

In conclusion, I once again want to warn the railroad workers not to be fooled by Cashen's Red-baiting. Don't let the Red-baiters throw dust in your eyes and thus blind you to the machinations of your enemies, the railroad capitalists. Keep your eye on the ball, not on the side-line clowning of Cashen and other reactionary union officials. Especially is this necessary at this time when there is the looming danger of a wage-cut and further mass layoffs through consolidations.

The companies have just been given \$250,000,000 in rate increases; but they want still more profits. They are determined to get the wage-cut and reductions in working forces if they can. And only the mass resistance of the workers can prevent it. Did we not see how the wage-cut was put across the last time? First, the companies came out with a demand for a cut twice as big as they expected to get. Then the railroad union leaders made a great show of resistance (as they are doing now), filling the newspapers with militant statements that they would never, never accept a wage-cut. But, finally, when the rank and file thought their wage rates were safe, the union leaders accepted a compromise wage-cut (which was about what the companies planned from the outset to get), put it into effect without letting the workers vote on it, and then hailed it as a great victory. This must not happen again. Nor should the workers allow the companies to put through their consolidation mass layoffs in

“exchange” for modifying their wage-cut demands. These steps backward will not happen if the railroad workers are on guard, strengthen their unions, build up their progressive movement; and don't allow Cashen, Wharton, and other reactionary union leaders to fill their ears with bedtime stories of Red-baiting.

FROM BRYAN TO STALIN

By **WILLIAM Z. FOSTER**

Written by one of the greatest working class leaders in the United States, this book traces the career of the Left Wing in the American labor movement during the twentieth century.

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