
Michigan Central Wreck is Pretext for Raid

[events of Aug. 20, 1922]

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CHICAGO.— “There was no incendiary literature in our office. We have made no incitements to violence either in the rail strike or in any other strike.”

With this denial William Z. Foster, Secretary, Trade Union Educational League, took the ground from under State’s Attorney Crowe, who ordered a sensational raid on the league’s offices Sunday night [Aug. 20, 1922] on the pretext that a Michigan Central railway wreck at Gary, Ind., in which the engineer and fireman were both killed, was due to “red propaganda.”

In type over an inch high the *Chicago Tribune* headed its Monday edition with an 8 column page 1 line reading: “Wreck Leads to Red Raid.”

On page 3 there was a 4 column cut showing a private detective and an assistant state’s attorney going through the league files in the office at 118 N La Salle St., across the street from the Chicago City Hall. A 1 column cut below depicted Foster with the eyes touched up to make him look like a villain. In its story the *Tribune* repeated the Denver lie that Foster entered that city in disguise just preceding his illegal deportation from Colorado by state rangers Aug. 6 [1922].

The Trade Union Educational League has operated peacefully and openly with full announcement of its purpose to further amalgamation of craft unions into industrial unions, one for each industry. Its organ, *The Labor Herald*, has repeatedly outlined the method,

namely, that radicals stay within the AF of L unions instead of starting dual organizations and push their program by “boring from within.”

“They have raided the painters, the building trades council, the janitors, and other unions and our turn had to come,” Foster says. “It’s all part of the big business attack on labor. When one frame-up fails they start on another. It’s all in the day’s work.”

“In our examination of his papers we find nothing on which charges can be based. We will not issue warrants for his arrest,” Assistant State’s Attorney McLaughlin said of Foster.

“If all the derailments which have been reported to use since the strike had occurred with trains running at 60 miles an hour, the newspapers would have had no room for other news,” said J.F. McGrath, Vice President, Railway Employees Department, AF of L, commenting upon the Michigan Central wreck at Gary, Ind.

“No two reports as to the number of spikes ‘maliciously’ withdrawn agree. As a matter of fact it is argued that a long section of track was torn up after the engine left the rails. This is the natural case. Drawn spikes and torn up rails are regularly cause when a heavy engine rides the rails. Altogether to a railroad man, as contrasted with private detectives, the real cause was clearly an unfit locomotive.”

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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