

THE BIG LIE ABOUT RAILROAD RETIREMENT

A big lie is being passed around rail labor. A “big lie” is the type of lie Hitler and Stalin used to spread, something so fantastic and unbelievable that it must be true because why else would our “fearless leader” say it? A “big lie” is just that – a falsehood designed to make people fear and hate their neighbors, all to the benefit of the “big liar.”

This latest big lie comes from the UTU. The UTU is not a member of the AFL-CIO because it unsuccessfully tried to raid the BLE on the Union Pacific and other railroads. The UTU left the AFL-CIO just before it would have been kicked out. Its “big lie” to its members then was that the BLE threatened their jobs so they had to start the raid. The UTU also is the union that recently had its last two International Presidents plead guilty to federal racketeering charges.

The latest UTU big lie is that the Teamsters only merged with the BLE and only want to merge with the BMW to conduct a raid on the Railroad Retirement Trust Fund. According to the UTU, certain multi-employer pension plans negotiated by the Teamsters need cash, so the Teamsters think they will march in, amend the Railroad Retirement Act, and take whatever money they need. As we said earlier, to be a “big lie,” the lie must be something fantastic and unbelievable. On the “big lie” scale, the UTU’s latest is a “10.”

The best disinfectant for “big lies” is a little truth. First, any amendment to the Railroad Retirement Act will involve all participating unions, the rail carriers, Congress and the President. No one party, even one as strong as the Teamsters, can or will dictate terms to all these other parties. Second, the Teamsters are not the only large unions who have rail members who also have non-rail pensions in need of cash. The Machinists Union face severe cuts in some airline pensions and the Steelworkers have had some steel company pensions taken over by the Federal Government. Why haven’t they tried what the UTU claims the Teamsters want to do? The answer is simple. As we said earlier, any change to the Railroad Retirement Act would require the agreement of many parties, it cannot be changed single handedly. Second, the Machinists and Steelworkers are AFL-CIO unions like the Teamsters. AFL-CIO unions respect each others’ memberships and try to work together to improve the lot of working people generally. Others, like the UTU, try to steal members from other unions and have leaders who cannot avoid corrupt dealing. Perhaps the UTU simply thought the Teamsters would try to act like they would if they were in a real position of power.

Recently, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen President Don Hahs wrote an open letter to the UTU that rebutted and denounced the “big lie.” The BMW’s Director of Education, Rick Inclima, also wrote a thoughtful response to the UTU big lie. Now, to fully put to the rest the “big lie”, George Francisco, President of the National Conference of Firemen and Oilers, and a Rail Labor Trustee to the Railroad Retirement Trust Fund has written a letter denouncing the “big lie.” These letters are posted at www.bmwe.org, and may be accessed by clicking on “[BMW Merger Information](#)” and then clicking “[BMW Merger Correspondence and News](#).” Read them and get the truth from those who know, not those who lie.