
Open Letter to the General Managers' Association of Chicago from the Board of Directors of the American Railway Union, July 12, 1894

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Chicago, Ill, July 12th, 1894.

To the Railway Managers:

Gentlemen:—

The existing troubles growing out of the Pullman strike, having assumed continental proportions, and there being no indication of relief from the widespread business demoralization and distress incident thereto, the railway employees, through the Board of Directors of the American Railway Union, respectfully make the following proposition as a basis of settlement:

They agree to return to work in a body at once, provided they shall be restored to their former positions without prejudice except in cases, if any there be, where they have been convicted of crime.

This proposition looking to an immediate settlement of the existing strike on all lines of the railway, is inspired by a purpose to subserve the public good. The strike, small and comparatively unimportant in its inception, has extended in every direction until now it involves or threatens not only every public interest, but the peace, security, and prosperity of our common country. The contest has waged fiercely. It has extended far beyond the limits of interest originally involved, and has laid hold of a vast number of industries and enter-

prises in no wise responsible for the differences and disagreements that led to the trouble. Factory, mill, mine, and shop have been silenced. Widespread demoralization has sway. The interests of multiplied thousands of innocent people are suffering. The common welfare is seriously menaced. The public peace and tranquility are in peril. Grave apprehension for the future prevails.

This being true, and the statement will not be controverted, we conceive it to be our duty as citizens, and as men, to make extraordinary efforts to end the existing strife and avert approaching calamities whose shadows are even now upon us.

If ended now, the contest, however serious in some of its consequences, will not have been in vain. Sacrifices have been made, but there have been compensations. Indeed, if lessons shall be taught by experience the troubles now so widely deplored will prove a blessing of inestimable value in the months and years to come.

The differences that led up to the present complications need not now be discussed. At this supreme juncture every consideration of duty and patriotism demands that a remedy for existing troubles be found and applied. The employees propose to do their part by meeting their employers half way. Let it be stated that they do not impose any conditions of settlement except that they be returned to their former positions. They do not ask the recognition of their organization or any organization.

Believing this proposition to be fair, reasonable, and just, it is respectfully submitted with the belief that its acceptance will result in the prompt resumption of traffic, the revival of industry, and the restoration of peace and order.

Respectfully,

Eugene V. Debs, President,
G. W. Howard, Vice President,
Sylvester Keliber, Secretary,

American Railway Union.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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